WORLD MYTHOLOGY



Susan Stafinbil
Arapahoe Community College

LibreTexts™

World Mythology (Stafinbil) - Under Construction

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (https://LibreTexts.org) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.



LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by NICE CXone Expert and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptions contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at https://LibreTexts.org.

This text was compiled on 03/25/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

1: Introduction to World Mythology

- 1.1: 2-2 Religion in the Ancient World

2: Mesopotamia, Middle East and Near East

- 2.1: The Epic of Gilgamesh
- 2.2: Hebrew Bible, “Genesis” And “Exodus”
- 2.3: Mesopotamia
- 2.4: Enuma Elish - The Babylonian Epic of Creation

3: Classical Greece and Rome

- 3.1: What is a myth?
- 3.2: The Three Types of Myth
- 3.3: Historical Myths
- 3.4: Psychological Myths
- 3.5: Story Pattern of the Greek Hero
- 3.6: Why are there so many versions of Greek myths?
- 3.7: Map
- 3.8: Names and Key Concepts
  - 3.8.1: Agamemnon and Iphigenia
  - 3.8.2: Aphrodite
  - 3.8.3: Apollo
  - 3.8.4: Ares
  - 3.8.5: The Argonauts
  - 3.8.6: Artemis
  - 3.8.7: Athena
  - 3.8.8: Bacchus
  - 3.8.9: Caduceus
  - 3.8.10: Centaurs
  - 3.8.11: Chthonian Deities
  - 3.8.12: The Delphic Oracle
  - 3.8.13: Demeter
  - 3.8.14: Dionysus
  - 3.8.15: Hades
  - 3.8.16: Hephaestus
  - 3.8.17: Hera
  - 3.8.18: Heracles
  - 3.8.19: Hermes
  - 3.8.20: Hestia
  - 3.8.21: Jason
  - 3.8.22: Miasma
  - 3.8.23: The Minotaur
  - 3.8.24: Origins

- 3.8.25: Orpheus
- 3.8.26: Persephone
- 3.8.27: Perseus
- 3.8.28: Poseidon
- 3.8.29: Prometheus
- 3.8.30: Sphinx
- 3.8.31: Theseus
- 3.8.32: The Twelve Labors of Heracles
- 3.8.33: Xenia
- 3.8.34: Zeus
- 3.9: The Iliad And The Odyssey
- 3.10: The Iliad - An Introduction
- 3.11: Homer, The Iliad
  - 3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad
- 3.12: Book- The Illiad (Homer)
  - 3.12.1: Books
    - 3.12.1.1: Book I
    - 3.12.1.2: Book II
    - 3.12.1.3: Book III
    - 3.12.1.4: Book IV
    - 3.12.1.5: Book V
    - 3.12.1.6: Book VI
    - 3.12.1.7: Book VII
    - 3.12.1.8: Book VIII
    - 3.12.1.9: Book IX
    - 3.12.1.10: Book X
    - 3.12.1.11: Book XI
    - 3.12.1.12: Book XII
    - 3.12.1.13: Book XIII
    - 3.12.1.14: Book XIV
    - 3.12.1.15: Book XV
    - 3.12.1.16: Book XVI
    - 3.12.1.17: Book XVII
    - 3.12.1.18: Book XVIII
    - 3.12.1.19: Book XIX
    - 3.12.1.20: Book XX
    - 3.12.1.21: Book XXI
    - 3.12.1.22: Book XXII
    - 3.12.1.23: Book XXIII
    - 3.12.1.24: Book XXIV
- 3.13: The Odyssey - An Introduction
- 3.14: Book- The Odyssey (Homer)
  - 3.14.1: Books
    - 3.14.1.1: Book I
    - 3.14.1.2: Book II
    - 3.14.1.3: Book III
    - 3.14.1.4: Book IV
    - 3.14.1.5: Book V

- 3.14.1.6: Book VI
- 3.14.1.7: Book VII
- 3.14.1.8: Book VIII
- 3.14.1.9: Book IX
- 3.14.1.10: Book X
- 3.14.1.11: Book XI
- 3.14.1.12: Book XII
- 3.14.1.13: Book XIII
- 3.14.1.14: Book XIV
- 3.14.1.15: Book XV
- 3.14.1.16: Book XVI
- 3.14.1.17: Book XVII
- 3.14.1.18: Book XVIII
- 3.14.1.19: Book XIX
- 3.14.1.20: Book XX
- 3.14.1.21: Book XXI
- 3.14.1.22: Book XXII
- 3.14.1.23: Book XXIII
- 3.14.1.24: Book XXIV

- 3.15: Oedipus The King - Sophocles (ca. 496-ca. 406 B.C.E.)
- 3.16: The Oresteia - An Introduction
- 3.17: MEDEA - Euripides (ca. 484-ca.407 B.C.E.)
- 3.18: Book- Lysistrata (Aristophanes)
  - 3.18.1: Sections
    - 3.18.1.1: Section 1
    - 3.18.1.2: Section 2
    - 3.18.1.3: Section 3
    - 3.18.1.4: Section 4
    - 3.18.1.5: Section 5
    - 3.18.1.6: Section 6

4: Homer, The Odyssey and Virgil, The Aeneid

- 4.1: Introduction
- 4.2: The Odyssey
- 4.3: The Aeneid

5: Rome

- 5.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.)
- 5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.)
- 5.3: Book- Metamorphoses, 3.511–733 (Ovid)
  - 5.3.1: 1. Introduction
    - 5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times
    - 5.3.1.2: Ovid’s Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic
    - 5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum
    - 5.3.1.4: Ovid’s Theban Narrative
    - 5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus
    - 5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture
  - 5.3.2: 2. Text

- 5.3.2.1: 3.511–18
- 5.3.2.2: 3.519–26
- 5.3.2.3: 3.527–37
- 5.3.2.4: 3.538–50
- 5.3.2.5: 3.551–61
- 5.3.2.6: 3.562–71
- 5.3.2.7: 3.572–81
- 5.3.2.8: 3.582–91
- 5.3.2.9: 3.592–99
- 5.3.2.10: 3.600–10
- 5.3.2.11: 3.611–20
- 5.3.2.12: 3.621–33
- 5.3.2.13: 3.634–43
- 5.3.2.14: 3.644–55
- 5.3.2.15: 3.656–65
- 5.3.2.16: 3.666–75
- 5.3.2.17: 3.676–86
- 5.3.2.18: 3.687–95
- 5.3.2.19: 3.696–707
- 5.3.2.20: 3.708–18
- 5.3.2.21: 3.719–28
- 5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33

- 5.3.3: 3. Commentary
  - 5.3.3.1: 511–26 Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus
  - 5.3.3.2: 527–71 Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus

- 5.4: Prelude

6: China and Japan

- 6.1: The Analects-Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.)
- 6.2: The Art of War
- 6.3: The Book of Songs
- 6.4: The Mother of Mencius
- 6.5: The Zhuangzi - Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 B.C.E.)

7: India

- 7.1: The Bhagavad Gita
- 7.2: The Mahabharata
- 7.3: The Râmâyana

8: Ancient Egypt

- 8.1: Ancient Egyptian Mythology

9: Africa (excluding Egypt)

- 9.1: Nok Culture of Ancient Africa
- 9.2: Mali Empire

10: Icelandic/Norse

- 10.1: Norse Mythology
  - 10.1.1: Edda- Definition
- 10.2: Edda- Definition
- 10.3: Prose Edda

11: Americas (North, Meso-, South)

- 11.1: Maya Civilization
- 11.2: Popol Vuh - Ancient Maya Story of Creation
- 11.3: Aztec Civilization

12: Australia, New Zealand, and Polynesia

- 12.1: Ancient Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia

13: SmartHistory

- 13.1: Prehistoric
  - 13.1.1: Paleolithic
  - 13.1.2: Neolithic
- 13.2: Ancient Mediterranean
  - 13.2.1: Palmyra
  - 13.2.2: Ancient Near East
  - 13.2.3: Ancient Egypt
  - 13.2.4: Ancient Aegean
  - 13.2.5: Ancient Greece
  - 13.2.6: Nabataean
  - 13.2.7: Etruscan
  - 13.2.8: Ancient Rome I
  - 13.2.9: Ancient Rome II
  - 13.2.10: Ancient Rome III
- 13.3: The Islamic World
  - 13.3.1: A beginner's guide
  - 13.3.2: Early period
  - 13.3.3: Medieval period
  - 13.3.4: Later period
- 13.4: Africa
  - 13.4.1: A beginner's guide
  - 13.4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa
  - 13.4.3: West Africa
  - 13.4.4: Central Africa
  - 13.4.5: North Africa
  - 13.4.6: Southern Africa
- 13.5: Asia
  - 13.5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia
  - 13.5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism
  - 13.5.3: China
  - 13.5.4: Japan

- 13.5.5: Korea
- 13.5.6: Afghanistan
- 13.5.7: South Asia (I)
- 13.5.8: South Asia (II)
- 13.5.9: Southeast Asia
- 13.5.10: The Himalayas

- 13.6: Medieval Europe + Byzantine
  - 13.6.1: A beginner's guide
  - 13.6.2: Christianity and art
  - 13.6.3: Judaism and art
  - 13.6.4: Books in Medieval Europe
  - 13.6.5: Early Christian
  - 13.6.6: Byzantine
  - 13.6.7: Early Medieval
  - 13.6.8: Carolingian
  - 13.6.9: Ottonian
  - 13.6.10: Viking Age
  - 13.6.11: Romanesque
  - 13.6.12: Gothic
  - 13.6.13: The Crusades
- 13.7: Europe 1300 - 1800
  - 13.7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance
  - 13.7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic
  - 13.7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400–1800
  - 13.7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I)
  - 13.7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II)
  - 13.7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I)
  - 13.7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II)
  - 13.7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance
  - 13.7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism
  - 13.7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance
  - 13.7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation
  - 13.7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I)
  - 13.7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II)
  - 13.7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo
  - 13.7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism
  - 13.7.16: Britain in the 18th century
- 13.8: Europe 1800 - 1900
  - 13.8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction
  - 13.8.2: Romanticism
  - 13.8.3: Early photography
  - 13.8.4: Victorian art
  - 13.8.5: Realism
  - 13.8.6: Second Empire
  - 13.8.7: Impressionism
  - 13.8.8: Post-Impressionism
  - 13.8.9: Sculpture
  - 13.8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau
  - 13.8.11: Peredvizhniki

- 13.9: Oceania
  - 13.9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people
  - 13.9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages?

Index

Glossary

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

Licensing

*A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in **Back Matter/Detailed Licensing**.*

What is Mythology?

by Joshua J. Mark published on 31 October 2018 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

Translated text available in: Spanish

Mythology (from the Greek *mythos* for story-of-the-people, and *logos* for word or speech, so the spoken story of a people) is the study and interpretation of often sacred tales or fables of a culture known as myths or the collection of such stories which deal with various aspects of the human condition: good and evil; the meaning of suffering; human origins; the origin of place-names, animals, cultural values, and traditions; the meaning of life and death; the afterlife; and the gods or a god. Myths express the beliefs and values about these subjects held by a certain culture.

Myths tell the stories of ancestors and the origin of humans and the world, the gods, supernatural beings (satyrs, nymphs, mermaids) and heroes with super-human, usually god-given, powers (as in the case of Heracles or Perseus of the Greeks). Myths also describe origins or nuances of long-held customs or explain natural events such as the sunrise and sunset, the cycle of the moon and the seasons, or thunder and lightning storms. Scholars Maria Leach and Jerome Fried define mythology along these lines:

[A myth is] a story, presented as having actually occurred in a previous age, explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs, etc. The purpose of myth is to explain, and, as Sir G.L. Gomme said, myths explain matters in "the science of a pre-scientific age." Thus myths tell of the creation of man, of animals, of landmarks; they tell why a certain animal has its characteristics (e.g. why the bat is blind or flies only at night), why or how certain natural phenomena came to be (e.g. why the rainbow appears or how the constellation Orion got into the sky), how and why rituals and ceremonies began and why they continue. (778)

Mythology has played an integral part in every civilization throughout the world. Pre-historic cave paintings, etchings in stone, tombs, and monuments all suggest that, long before human beings set down their myths in words, they had already developed a belief structure corresponding to the definition of `myth' provided by Leach and Fried. According to psychiatrist Carl Jung, myth is a necessary aspect of the human psyche which needs to find meaning and order in a world which often presents itself as chaotic and meaningless. Jung writes:

The psyche, as a reflection of the world and man, is a thing of such infinite complexity that it can be observed and studied from a great many sides. It faces us with the same problem that the world does: because a systematic study of the world is beyond our powers, we have to content ourselves with mere rules of thumb and with aspects that particularly interest us. Everyone makes for himself his own segment of world and constructs his own private system, often with air-tight compartments, so that after a time it seems to him that he has grasped the meaning and structure of the whole. But the finite will never be able to grasp the infinite. (23-24)

The infinite Jung references is the numinous quality of the mysterious, holy, and powerful which provides the underlying allure of mythological tales and themes because it gives a final meaning to human existence. The concept of something greater and more powerful than one's self gives one the hope of direction and protection in an uncertain world. According to Leach and Fried, the mysterious, holy, and powerful is "a concept of the human mind from earliest times: the basic psychological reaction to the universe and environment which underlies all religion" (777).

What one calls "mythology" in the present day, it should be remembered, was the religion of the ancient past. The stories which make up the corpus of ancient mythology served the same purpose for the people

of the time as the stories from accepted scripture do for people today: they explained, comforted, and directed an audience and, further, provided a sense of unity, cohesion, and protection to a community of like-minded believers.

Types of Myth

Scholar Joseph Campbell notes how mythology is the underlying form of every civilization and the underpinning of each individual's consciousness. In his seminal work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he discusses what he calls the "monomyth", the similarities in theme, characters, purpose, and narrative progression of myths from different cultures, at different times, around the world and throughout history. Campbell writes:

What is the secret of the timeless vision? From what profundity of the mind does it derive? Why is mythology everywhere the same, beneath its varieties of costume? And what does it teach? (4)

Campbell's answer, ultimately, is that myths teach meaning. Mythology explains, empowers, stabilizes, and elevates the life of a believer from a mundane existence to one imbued with eternal meaning. On the most basic level, a myth explains a phenomenon, tradition, place-name, or geological formation but it can also elevate a past event to epic and even supernatural significance and, most importantly, provide a role model for one's individual journey through life.

There are many different types of myth but, essentially, they can be grouped into three:

- Etiological Myths
- Historical Myths
- Psychological Myths

Etiological myths (from the Greek *aetion* meaning `reason') explain why a certain thing is the way it is or how it came to be. For example, in Egyptian mythology the sycamore tree looks the way it does because it is home to the goddess Hathor, the Lady of the Sycamore. Etiological myths can offer explanations for why the world is the way it is – as in the story from Greek mythology of Pandora's Box which explains how evil and suffering was released into the world – or how a certain institution came to be – as in the Chinese myth of the goddess Nuwa who kept creating human beings over and over and over until she grew tired and instituted the practice of marriage so humans could reproduce themselves.

Historical myths retell an event from the past but elevate it with greater meaning than the actual event (if it even happened). One example of this is the story of the Battle of Kurukshetra as described in the Indian epic *Mahabharata* in which the Pandava brothers symbolize different values and provide role models, even if they are occasionally flawed. Kurukshetra is then presented in microcosm in the *Bhagavad Gita* where one of the Pandavas, Arjuna, is visited on the battlefield by the god Krishna, avatar of Vishnu, to explain one's purpose in life. Whether the Battle of Kurukshetra ever took place is immaterial to the power of these two stories on a mythological level. The same can be said for the Siege of Troy and its fall as described in Homer's *Iliad* or Odysseus' journey home in the *Odyssey* or Aeneas' adventures in the work of Virgil.

Psychological myths present one with a journey from the known to the unknown which, according to both Jung and Campbell, represents a psychological need to balance the external world with one's internal consciousness of it. However that may be, the story of the myth itself usually involves a hero or heroine on a journey in which they discover their true identity or fate and, in so doing, resolve a crisis while also providing an audience with some important cultural value.

Probably the best-known myth of this type is that of Oedipus the prince who, seeking to avoid the prediction that he would grow up to kill his father, leaves his life behind to travel to another region where he unknowingly winds up killing the man who was his actual father who had abandoned him at birth in an attempt to circumvent that same prediction.

The Oedipus tale would have impressed on an ancient Greek audience the futility in trying to escape or change one's fate as decreed by the gods and would have inspired fear and awe of those gods in the people, thus instilling a desirable cultural value. On a personal level, the story could also encourage a hearer to accept whatever trials he or she was enduring at the time since even a royal personage like Oedipus suffered and, further, whatever one was dealing with was probably not as bad as killing one's father and inadvertently marrying one's mother.

Famous Myths of These Types

One of the best-known etiological myths comes from Greece in the form of the tale of Demeter, goddess of grain and the harvest, and her daughter Persephone who became Queen of the Dead. In this story, Persephone is kidnapped by Hades, god of the underworld, and brought down to his dark realm. Demeter searches desperately everywhere for the maiden but cannot find her. During this time of Demeter's sorrow, the crops fail and people starve and the gods are not given their due. Zeus, king of the gods, orders Hades to restore Persephone to her mother and Hades obliges but, because Persephone has eaten a certain number of pomegranate seeds while in the underworld, she has to spend half the year below the earth but could enjoy the other half with her mother in the world above.

This story explained the changes of the seasons in Greece. When it was warm and the fields were bountiful, Persephone was with her mother and Demeter was happy and causes the world to bloom; in the cold and rainy season, when Persephone was below the earth with Hades as his queen, Demeter mourned and the land was barren. Since, in the course of the tale, Demeter teaches the people of Eleusis the secrets of agriculture, the myth would also serve to explain how people first learned to cultivate the earth and, further, as she also teaches them the correct way of recognizing and worshiping her, proper veneration of the gods.

The most famous historical myth in the west is Homer's epic 8th century BCE tale of the *Iliad* which tells the story of the siege and fall of the city of Troy. Helen, the wife of the Achaean king Menelaus, runs off with the Trojan prince Paris and Menelaus, swearing to bring her back home, enlists the aid of his brother Agamemnon who then calls on the kings and princes of the various city-states for aid and they sail off to attack Troy. The great Achaean hero Achilles, who is invincible in battle, feels insulted by Agamemnon and refuses to fight any longer resulting in the death of his beloved Patroclus and many others of the Achaean host. Although there are many different stories told in the *Iliad*, this central theme of the dangers of pride is emphasized as a cultural value. A certain amount of pride in one's self was considered a virtue but too much brought disaster.

In China, this theme was explored in another way through the tale of Fuxi (foo-shee), the god of fire. As a god, Fuxi had many responsibilities but when his friend, the goddess Nuwa, asked for his help, he did not refuse. Nuwa had created human beings but found they did not know how to do anything and she did not have the patience to teach them. Fuxi brought humans fire, taught them to control it, and how to use it to cook food and warm themselves. He then taught them how to weave fishing nets and draw food from the sea and, afterwards, gave them the arts of divination, music, and writing. Fuxi is thought to be based on an actual historical king who lived c.2953-2736 BCE and possibly provided the order necessary for the rise of the Xia Dynasty (c. 2070-1600 BCE), the first historical dynasty in China. In this story, Fuxi sets aside his pride as a god and humbles himself to the service of his friend Nuwa and humanity.

The oldest myth in the world is, not surprisingly, a psychological myth relating to the inevitability of death and the individual's attempt to find meaning in life. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (written c. 2150-c.1400 BCE) developed in Mesopotamia from Sumerian poems relating to the historical Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, who was later elevated to the status of a demi-god. In the story, Gilgamesh is a proud king who is so haughty that the gods feel he needs a lesson in humility. They groom the wild man Enkidu as a worthy opponent to the king and the two fight but, when neither can get the best of the other, they become best friends. Enkidu is later killed by the gods for affronting them and Gilgamesh, grief-stricken, embarks on

a quest for the meaning of life embodied in the concept of immortality. Although he fails to win eternal life, his journey enriches him and he returns to his kingdom a wiser and better man and king.

Joseph Campbell has famously called the best-known psychological myth type “the Hero’s Journey” in which the story begins with a hero or heroine, usually of royal birth, separated from their true identity and living in a chaotic world or kingdom. The hero goes through various stages in the story, which usually takes the form of a journey, until they find out who they really are and are able to right some great wrong which re-establishes order. This narrative progression is best known in the modern-day as the plot of *Star Wars* and the overwhelming success of that film franchise attests to the enduring power of mythological themes and symbols.

Conclusion

Every culture in the world has had, and still has, some type of mythology. The classical mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans is the most familiar to people in the west but the motifs found in those stories are echoed in others around the world. The Greek tale of Prometheus the fire-bringer and teacher of humanity is echoed in the Chinese tale of Fuxi. The story of Nuwa and her creation of human beings in China resonates with another from the other side of the world: the story of creation from the *Popol-Vuh* of the Maya in which humans are created who can do nothing and prove useless but, in the Maya story, are destroyed and the gods then try again. This same motif appears in the mythology of Mesopotamia where the gods struggle in creating humans who keep coming out poorly.

The same types of stories, and often the very same story, can be found in myths from different parts of the world. The creation story as related in the biblical Book of Genesis, for example, where a great god speaks existence into creation is quite similar to creation stories from ancient Sumeria, Egypt, Phoenicia and China. The story of the Great Flood can be found in the mythology of virtually every culture on earth but takes its biblical form from the Atrahasis myth of Mesopotamia. The figure of the Dying and Reviving God (a deity who dies for the good of, or to redeem the sins of, his people, goes down into the earth, and rises again to life) can be traced back to ancient Sumeria in the tales of Gilgamesh, the poem *The Descent of Inanna* and others and to the Egyptian myth of Osiris, the Greek stories of Dionysus, of Adonis, and of Persephone, the Phoenician *Baal Cycle*, and the Hindu Krishna (among many others) down to the most famous of these figures, Jesus Christ. The biblical Book of Ecclesiastes 1:9 claims that “there is no new thing under the sun” and this is as true of religious-mythological systems, symbols, and characters as of anything else. Joseph Campbell notes:

Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of men have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth. (3)

Mythology tries to answer the most difficult and the most basic questions of human existence: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? To the ancients, the meaning of the story was most important, not the literal truth of the details of a certain version of a tale. There are many variations on the birth and life of the goddess Hathor of Egypt, for example, and no ancient Egyptian would have rejected one of these as 'false' and chosen another as 'true'. The message of the myth contained the truth, not the specific details of the story, which is evident in the genre known as Mesopotamian Naru Literature in which historical figures are featured out of their historical context.

It was understood in the ancient world that the purpose of a myth was to provide the hearer with a truth which the audience then interpreted for themselves within the value system of their culture. Apprehension of reality was left up to the interpretation of the individual encountering the values expressed in the myths instead of having that reality interpreted for them by an authority figure.

This remains the essential difference between a sermon and an individual experience with religious mythology; within one's cultural belief system a sermon can only encourage or reinforce common belief while a myth, though it might do the same, has the potential to elevate and transform individual understanding through the potency of symbolic landscape, character, image, and theme. The ancient myths still resonate with a modern audience precisely because the ancient writers crafted them toward individual interpretation, leaving each person who heard the story to recognize the meaning in the tale for themselves and respond to it accordingly.

Bibliography

- Bulfinch, T. *Bulfinch's Mythology.* Vintage Books, 2009
- Campbell, J. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* New World Library, 2008.
- Coogan, M. D. & Smith, M. S. *Stories from Ancient Canaan.* Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.
- Dalley, S. *Myths from Mesopotamia; Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others.* Oxford University Press, 2012.
- David, R. *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt.* Penguin Books, 2003.
- Easwaran, E. *The Bhagavad Gita.* Nilgiri Press, 2007.
- Ebrey, P. B. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China.* Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Hamilton, E. *Mythology.* Scribner's Publishing, 1998.
- Homer (Robert Fagles Translation). *The Iliad.* Penguin Classics, 1998.
- Jacobsen, T. *The Treasures of Darkness.* Yale University Press, 1978.
- Jung, C. G. (edited by Joseph Campbell). *The Portable Jung.* Penguin Classics, 1992.
- Kramer, S. N. *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character.* University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Kriwaczek, P. *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization.* St. Martin's Griffin, 2012.
- Leach, M. & Fried, J. *Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend.* Harper & Row Publishers, 1984.
- Lindow, J. *Norse Mythology.* Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Narayan, R. K. *The Mahabharata.* University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Pinch, G. *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt.* Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Sanders, N. K. *The Epic of Gilgamesh.* Penguin Classics, 1960.
- Wolkstein, D. & Kramer, S. N. *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth.* Harper Perennial, 1983.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

1: Introduction to World Mythology is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Religion in the Ancient World

Definition

by Joshua J. Mark published on 23 March 2018 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

Translated text available in: Spanish

Religion (from the Latin *Religio*, meaning 'restraint,' or *Relegere*, according to Cicero, meaning 'to repeat, to read again,' or, most likely, *Religionem*, 'to show respect for what is sacred') is an organized system of beliefs and practices revolving around, or leading to, a transcendent spiritual experience. There is no culture recorded in human history which has not practiced some form of religion.

In ancient times, religion was indistinguishable from what is known as 'mythology' in the present day and consisted of regular rituals based on a belief in higher supernatural entities who created and continued to maintain the world and surrounding cosmos. Theses entities were anthropomorphic and behaved in ways which mirrored the values of the culture closely (as in Egypt) or sometimes engaged in acts antithetical to those values (as one sees with the gods of Greece). Religion, then and now, concerns itself with the spiritual aspect of the human condition, gods and goddesses (or a single personal god or goddess), the creation of the world, a human being's place in the world, life after death, eternity, and how to escape from suffering in this world or in the next; and every nation has created its own god in its own image and resemblance. The Greek philosopher Xenophanes of Colophon (c. 570-478 BCE) once wrote:

Mortals suppose that the gods are born and have clothes and voices and shapes like their own. But if oxen, horses and lions had hands or could paint with their hands and fashion works as men do, horses would paint horse-like images of gods and oxen oxen-like ones, and each would fashion bodies like their own. The Ethiopians consider the gods flat-nosed and black; the Thracians blue-eyed and red-haired.

Xenophanes believed there was "one god, among gods and men the greatest, not at all like mortals in body or mind" but he was in the minority. Monotheism did not make sense to the ancient people aside from the visionaries and prophets of Judaism. Most people, at least as far as can be discerned from the written and archaeological record, believed in many gods, each of whom had a special sphere of influence. In one's personal life there is not just one other person who provides for one's needs; one interacts with many different kinds of people in order to achieve wholeness and maintain a living.

Ancient people felt that no single god could possibly take care of all the needs of an individual.

In the course of one's life in the present day, one will interact with one's parents, siblings, teachers, friends, lovers, employers, doctors, gas station attendants, plumbers, politicians, veterinarians, and so on. No one single person can fill all these roles or supply all of an individual's needs - just as it was in ancient times.

In this same way, the ancient people felt that no single god could possibly take care of all the needs of an individual. Just as one would not go to a plumber with one's sick dog, one would not go to a god of war with a problem concerning love. If one were suffering heartbreak, one went to the goddess of love; if one wanted to win at combat, only then would one consult the god of war.

The many gods of the religions of the ancient world fulfilled this function as specialists in their respective areas. In some cultures, a certain god or goddess would become so popular that he or she would transcend the cultural understanding of multiplicity and assume a position so powerful and all-encompassing as to almost transform a polytheistic culture to henotheistic.

While polytheism means the worship of many gods, henotheism means the worship of one god in many forms. This shift in understanding was extremely rare in the ancient world, and the goddess Isis and god Amun of Egypt are probably the best examples of the complete ascendancy of a deity from one-among-many to the supreme creator and sustainer of the universe recognized in different forms.

As noted, every ancient culture practiced some form of religion, but where religion began cannot be pinpointed with any certainty. The argument over whether Mesopotamian religion inspired that of the Egyptians has gone on for over a century now and is no closer to being resolved than when it began. It is most probable that every culture developed its own belief in supernatural entities to explain natural phenomena (day and night, the seasons) or to help make sense of their lives and the uncertain state humans find themselves in daily.

While it may be an interesting exercise in cultural exchange to attempt tracing the origins of religion, it does not seem a very worthwhile use of one's time, when it seems fairly clear that the religious impulse is simply a part of the human condition and different cultures in different parts of the world could have come to the same conclusions about the meaning of life independently.

Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia

As with many cultural advancements and inventions, the 'cradle of civilization' Mesopotamia has been cited as the birthplace of religion. When religion developed in Mesopotamia is unknown, but the first written records of religious practice date to c. 3500 BCE from Sumer. Mesopotamian religious beliefs held that human beings were co-workers with the gods and labored with them and for them to hold back the forces of chaos which had been checked by the supreme deities at the beginning of time. Order was created out of chaos by the gods and one of the most popular myths illustrating this principle told of the great god Marduk who defeated Tiamat and the forces of chaos to create the world. Historian D. Brendan Nagle writes:

Despite the gods' apparent victory, there was no guarantee that the forces of chaos might not recover their strength and overturn the orderly creation of the gods. Gods and humans alike were involved in the perpetual struggle to restrain the powers of chaos, and they each had their own role to play in this dramatic battle. The responsibility of the dwellers of Mesopotamian cities was to provide the gods with everything they needed to run the world. (11)

The gods repaid humans for their service by taking care of their daily needs in life.

Humans were created, in fact, for this very purpose: to work with and for the gods toward a mutually beneficial end. The claim of some historians that the Mesopotamians were slaves to their gods is untenable because it is quite clear that the people understood their position as co-workers. The gods repaid humans for their service by taking care of their daily needs in life (such as supplying them with beer, the drink of the gods) and maintaining the world in which they lived. These gods intimately knew the needs of the people because they were not distant entities who lived in the heavens but dwelt in homes on earth built for them by their people; these homes were the temples which were raised in every Mesopotamian city.

Temple complexes, dominated by the towering ziggurat, were considered the literal homes of the gods and their statues were fed, bathed, and clothed daily as the priests and priestesses cared for them as one would a king or queen. In the case of Marduk, for example, his statue was carried out of his temple during the festival honoring him and through the city of Babylon so that he could appreciate its beauty while enjoying the fresh air and sunshine.

Inanna was another powerful deity who was greatly revered as the goddess of love, sex, and war, and whose priests and priestesses cared for her statue and temple faithfully. Inanna is considered one the earliest examples of the dying-and-reviving god figure who goes down into the underworld and returns to life, bringing fertility and abundance to the land. She was so popular her worship spread across all of

Mesopotamia from the southern region of Sumer. She became Ishtar of the Akkadians (and later the Assyrians), Astarte of the Phoenicians, Sauska of the Hurrians-Hittites, and was associated with Aphrodite of the Greeks, Isis of the Egyptians, and Venus of the Romans.

The temples were the center of the city's life throughout Mesopotamian history from the Akkadian Empire (c. 2334-2150 BCE) to the Assyrian (c. 1813-612 BCE) and afterwards. The temple served in multiple capacities: the clergy dispensed grain and surplus goods to the poor, counseled those in need, provided medical services, and sponsored the grand festivals which honored the gods. Although the gods took great care of humans while they lived, the Mesopotamian afterlife was a dreary underworld, located beneath the far mountains, where souls drank stale water from puddles and ate dust for eternity in the 'land of no return.' This bleak view of their eternal home was markedly different from that of the Egyptians as well as of their neighbors the Persians.

Ancient Persian Religion

The early religion of the Persian arrived on the Iranian Plateau with the migrations of the Aryans (properly understood as Indo-Iranians) sometime prior to the third millennium BCE. The early faith was polytheistic with a supreme god, Ahura Mazda, presiding over lesser deities. Among the most popular of these was Atar (god of fire), Mithra (god of the rising sun and covenants), Hvar Khshsata (god of the full sun), and Anahita (goddess of fertility, water, health and healing, and wisdom). These gods stood for the forces of goodness and order against the evil spirits of disorder and chaos.

At some point between 1500-1000 BCE, the prophet and visionary Zoroaster (also given as Zarathustra) claimed a revelation from Ahura Mazda through which he understood that this god was the one supreme being, creator of the universe, and maintainer of order, who needed no other gods beside him. Zoroasters's vision would become the religion of Zoroastrianism - one of the oldest in the world still practiced in the present day.

According to this belief, the purpose of human life is to choose between following Ahura Mazda and the way of truth and order (*Asha*) or to follow his eternal adversary, Angra Mainyu (also given as Ahriman) and the path of lies and chaos (*Druj*). Humans were considered inherently good and possessing of free will to choose between these two paths; whichever one a person chose would inform that person's life and their destination after death. When a person died, they crossed the Chinvat Bridge where they were judged.

Those who had lived a good life in accordance with the precepts of Ahura Mazda were rewarded by continued life in the paradise of the House of Song while those who had allowed themselves to be deceived by Angra Mainyu were dropped into the hell of the House of Lies (*druj-demana*) where they were tortured relentlessly and, even though surrounded by other suffering souls, would feel eternally alone.

Although scholars often characterize Zoroastrianism as a dualistic religion, it seems clear Zoroaster founded a monotheistic faith focused on an all-powerful single deity. The dualistic aspects of the religion appeared later in the so-called heresy of Zorvanism which made Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu brothers, the sons of Zorvan (time) and time itself became the supreme power through which all things came into being and passed away.

Zoroastrianism also held that a messiah would come at some future date (known as the *Saoshyant* - One Who Brings Benefit) to redeem humanity in an event known as the *Frashokereti* which was the end of time and brought reunion with Ahura Mazda. These concepts would influence the later religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The belief in a single god, unlike human beings and all-powerful, may have also influenced Egyptian religion during the Amarna Period in which the pharaoh Akhenaten (r. 1353-1336 BCE) abolished traditional Egyptian rituals and practices and replaced them with a monotheistic system focused on the one god Aten.

Religion in Egypt

Egyptian religion was similar to Mesopotamian belief, however, in that human beings were co-workers with the gods to maintain order. The principle of harmony (known to the Egyptians as *ma'at*) was of the highest importance in Egyptian life (and in the afterlife), and their religion was fully integrated into every aspect of existence. Egyptian religion was a combination of magic, mythology, science, medicine, psychiatry, spiritualism, herbology, as well as the modern understanding of 'religion' as belief in a higher power and a life after death. The gods were the friends of human beings and sought only the best for them by providing them with the most perfect of all lands to live in and an eternal home to enjoy when their lives on earth were done.

This belief system would continue, with various developments, throughout Egypt's long history, only interrupted by Akhenaten's religious reforms during his reign. After his death, the old religion was restored by his son and successor Tutankhamun (r. c. 1336-c.1327 BCE) who reopened the temples and revived the ancient rituals and customs.

The first written records of Egyptian religious practice come from around 3400 BCE in the Predynastic Period in Egypt (c.6000-c.3150 BCE). Deities such as Isis, Osiris, Ptah, Hathor, Atum, Set, Nephthys, and Horus were already established as potent forces to be recognized fairly early on. The Egyptian Creation Myth is similar to the beginning of the Mesopotamian story in that originally there was only chaotic, slow-swirling waters. This ocean was without bounds, depthless, and silent until, upon its surface, there rose a hill of earth (known as the *ben-ben*, the primordial mound, which, it is thought, the pyramids symbolize) and the great god Atum (the sun) stood upon the *ben-ben* and spoke, giving birth to the god Shu (of the air), the goddess Tefnut (of moisture), the god Geb (of earth), and the goddess Nut (of sky). Alongside Atum stood Heka, the personification of magic, and magic (*heka*) gave birth to the universe.

Osiris later served as the Supreme Judge of the souls of the dead in the Hall of Truth.

Atum had intended Nut as his bride but she fell in love with Geb. Angry with the lovers, Atum separated them by stretching Nut across the sky high away from Geb on the earth. Although the lovers were separated during the day, they came together at night and Nut bore three sons, Osiris, Set, and Horus, and two daughters, Isis and Nephthys.

Osiris, as eldest, was announced as 'Lord of all the Earth' when he was born and was given his sister Isis as a wife. Set, consumed by jealousy, hated his brother and killed him to assume the throne. Isis then embalmed her husband's body and, with powerful charms, resurrected Osiris who returned from the dead to bring life to the people of Egypt. Osiris later served as the Supreme Judge of the souls of the dead in the Hall of Truth and, by weighing the heart of the soul in the balances, decided who was granted eternal life.

The Egyptian afterlife was known as the Field of Reeds and was a mirror-image of life on earth down to one's favorite tree and stream and dog. Those that one loved in life would either be waiting when one arrived or would follow after. The Egyptians viewed earthly existence as simply one part of an eternal journey and were so concerned about passing easily to the next phase that they created their elaborate tombs (the pyramids), temples, and funerary inscriptions (the *Pyramid Texts*, *Coffin Texts*, and *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*) to help the soul's passage from this world to the next.

The gods cared for one after death just as they had in life from the beginning of time. The goddess Qebhet brought water to the thirsty souls in the land of the dead and other goddesses such as Serket and Nephthys cared for and protected the souls as they journeyed to the Field of Reeds. An ancient Egyptian understood that, from birth to death and even after death, the universe had been ordered by the gods and everyone had a place in that order.

Religion in China & India

This principle of order is also paramount in the world's oldest religion still being practiced today: Hinduism (known to adherents as *Sanatan Dharma*, 'Eternal Order', thought to have been founded as early as 5500 BCE but certainly by c. 2300 BCE). Although often viewed as a polytheistic faith, Hinduism is actually henotheistic. There is only one supreme god in Hinduism, Brahma, and all other deities are his aspects and reflections. Since Brahma is too immense a concept for the human mind to comprehend, he presents himself in the many different versions of himself which people recognize as deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and the many others. The Hindu belief system includes 330 million gods and these range from those who are known at a national level (such as Krishna) to lesser-known local deities.

The primary understanding of Hinduism is that there is an order to the universe and every individual has a specific place in that order. Each person on the planet has a duty (*dharma*) which only they can perform. If one acts rightly (*karma*) in the performance of that duty, then one is rewarded by moving closer to the supreme being and eventually becoming one with god; if one does not, then one is reincarnated as many times as it takes to finally understand how to live and draw closer to union with the supreme soul.

This belief was carried over by Siddhartha Gautama when he became the Buddha and founded the religion known as Buddhism. In Buddhism, however, one is not seeking union with a god but with one's higher nature as one leaves behind the illusions of the world which generate suffering and cloud the mind with the fear of loss and death. Buddhism became so popular that it traveled from India to China where it enjoyed equal success.

In ancient China, religion is thought to have developed as early as c. 4500 BCE as evidenced by designs on ceramics.

In ancient China, religion is thought to have developed as early as c. 4500 BCE as evidenced by designs on ceramics found at the Neolithic site of Banpo Village. This early belief structure may have been a mix of animism and mythology as these images include recognizable animals and pig-dragons, precursors to the famous Chinese dragon.

By the time of the Xia Dynasty (2070-1600 BCE), there were many anthropomorphic gods worshiped with a chief god, Shangti, presiding over all. This belief continued, with modifications, during the period of the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BCE) which developed the practice of ancestor worship.

The people believed that Shangti had so many responsibilities that he had become too busy to handle their needs. It was thought that, when a person died, they went to live with the gods and became intermediaries between the people and those gods. Ancestor worship influenced the two great Chinese belief systems of Confucianism and Taoism, both of which made ancestor worship core tenets of their practices. In time, Shangti was replaced with the concept of *Tian* (heaven), a paradise where the dead would reside eternally in peace.

In order to pass from one's earthly life into heaven, one had to cross the bridge of forgetfulness over an abyss and, after looking back on one's life for the last time, drink from a cup which purged all memory. At the bridge, one was either judged worthy of heaven - and so passed on - or unworthy - and slipped from the bridge into the abyss to be swallowed up in hell. Other versions of this same scenario claim the soul was reincarnated after drinking from the cup. Either way, the living were expected to remember the dead who had passed over the bridge to the other side and to honor their memory.

Religion in Mesoamerica

Remembrance of the dead and the part they still play in the lives of those on earth was an important component of all ancient religions including the belief system of the Maya. The gods were involved in every aspect of the life of the Maya. As with other cultures, there were many different deities (over 250),

all of whom had their own special sphere of influence. They controlled the weather, the harvest, they dictated one's mate, presided over every birth, and were present at one's death.

The Mayan afterlife was similar to the Mesopotamian in that it was a dark and dreary place, but the Maya imagined an even worse fate where one was constantly under threat of attack or deception by the demon lords who inhabited the underworld (known as Xibalba or Metnal). The dread of the journey through Xibalba was such a potent cultural force that the Maya are the only known ancient culture to honor a goddess of suicide (Ixtab) because suicides were thought to bypass Xibalba and go straight to paradise (as did those who died in childbirth or in battle). The Maya believed in the cyclical nature of life, that all things which seem to die simply are transformed, and considered human life just another part of the kind of pattern they saw all around them in nature. They felt death was a natural progression after life and feared the very unnatural possibility that the dead could return to haunt the living.

It was possible that a person would hang on to life for any of a number of reasons (the chief being improper burial), and so ceremonies were performed to remember the dead and honor their spirit. This belief was also held by Mesoamerican cultures other than the Maya such as the Aztec and Tarascan. In time, it developed into the holiday known today as The Day of the Dead (*El Dia de los Muertos*), in which people celebrate the lives of those who have passed on and remember their names.

It was not only people who were to be remembered and honored, however, but also a very important deity scholars refer to as the Maize God. The Maize god is a dying-and-reviving god figure in the form of Hun Hunahpu who was killed by the Lords of Xibalba, brought back to life by his sons, the Hero Twins, and emerges from the underworld as corn. The 'Tonsured' Maize God or 'Foliated' Maize God are common images found in Maya iconography. He is always pictured as eternally young and handsome with an elongated head like a corncob, long, flowing hair like corn silk, and ornamented with jade to symbolize the corn stalk. He was considered so important by the Maya that mothers would bind the heads of their young sons to flatten the forehead and elongate their heads to resemble him.

The Maize God remained an important deity to the Maya even when eclipsed by the greatest and most popular of the gods Gucumatz (also known as Kukulcan and Quetzalcoatl) whose great pyramid at Chichen Itza is still visited by millions of people every year in the present day. On the twin equinoxes of every year, the sun casts a shadow on the stairs of the pyramid structure which seems to resemble a great serpent descending from the top to the bottom; this is thought to be the great Kukulcan returning from the heavens to earth to impart his blessings. Even today, people gather at Chichen Itza to witness this event at the equinoxes and to remember the past and hope for the future.

Greek & Roman Religion

The importance of remembrance of the dead as part of one's religious devotions was integral to the beliefs of the Greeks as well. Continued remembrance of the dead by the living kept the soul of the deceased alive in the afterlife. The Greeks, like the other cultures mentioned, believed in many gods who often cared for their human charges but, just as often, pursued their own pleasure.

Plato consistently criticized the Greek concept of the gods & Critias claimed they were simply created by men to control other men.

The capricious nature of the gods may have contributed to the development of philosophy in Greece as philosophy can only develop in a culture where religion is not providing for the people's spiritual needs. Plato consistently criticized the Greek concept of the gods and Critias claimed they were simply created by men to control other men. Xenophanes, as noted above, claimed the Greek view was completely wrong and God was unimaginable.

Still, to the majority of the Greeks - and central to the function of society - the gods were to be honored and so were those who had passed over into their realm. Just because a person was no longer living on earth did not mean that person was to be forgotten any more than one would forget to honor the invisible

gods. As with other ancient cultures, religion in Greece was fully integrated into one's daily life and routine.

The Greeks consulted the gods on matters ranging from affairs of state to personal decisions regarding love, marriage, or one's job. An ancient story tells of how the writer Xenophon (430 - c. 354 BCE) went to Socrates asking whether the philosopher thought he should join the army of Cyrus the Younger on campaign to Persia. Socrates sent him to ask the question of the god at Delphi. Instead of asking his original question, Xenophon asked the god of Delphi which of the many gods was best to court favor with to ensure a successful venture and safe return. He appears to have gotten the correct answer since he survived the disastrous campaign of Cyrus and not only returned to Athens but saved the bulk of the army.

The religion of Rome followed the same paradigm as that of Greece. The Roman religion most likely began as a kind of animism and developed as they came into contact with other cultures. The Greeks had the most significant impact on Roman religion, and many of the Roman gods are simply Greek deities with Roman names and slightly altered attributes.

In Rome, the worship of the gods was intimately tied to affairs of state and the stability of the society was thought to rest on how well the people revered the gods and participated in the rituals which honored them. The Vestal Virgins are one famous example of this belief in that these women were counted on to maintain the vows they had taken and perform their duties responsibly in order to continually honor Vesta and all the goddess gave to the people.

Although the Romans had imported their primary gods from Greece, once the Roman religion was established and linked to the welfare of the state, no foreign gods were welcomed. When worship of the popular Egyptian goddess Isis was brought to Rome, Emperor Augustus forbade any temples to be built in her honor or public rites observed in her worship because he felt such attention paid to a foreign deity would undermine the authority of the government and established religious beliefs. To the Romans, the gods had created everything according to their will and maintained the universe in the best way possible and a human being was obligated to show them honor for their gifts.

This was true not only for the 'major' gods of the Roman pantheon but also for the spirits of the home. The *penates* were earth spirits of the pantry who kept one's home safe and harmonious. One was expected to be thankful for their efforts and remember them upon entering or leaving one's house. Statues of the *penates* were taken out of the cupboard and set on the table during meals to honor them, and sacrifices were left by the hearth for their enjoyment. If one were diligent in appreciating their efforts, one was rewarded with continued health and happiness and, if one forgot them, one suffered for such ingratitude. Although the religions of other cultures did not have precisely these same kinds of spirits, the recognition of spirits of place - and especially the home - was common.

Common Themes in Ancient Religion & Their Continuance

The religions of the ancient world shared many of the same patterns with each other even though the cultures may never have had any contact with each other. The spiritual iconography of the Mayan and Egyptian pyramids has been recognized since the Maya were first brought to the world's attention by John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood in the 19th century CE, but the actual belief structures, stories, and most significant figures in ancient mythology are remarkably similar from culture to culture.

In every culture, one finds the same or very similar patterns, which the people found resonant and which gave vitality to their beliefs. These patterns include the existence of many gods who take a personal interest in the lives of people; creation by a supernatural entity who speaks it, fashions it, or commands it into existence; other supernatural beings emanating from the first and greatest one; a supernatural explanation for the creation of the earth and human beings; a relationship between the created humans and their creator god requiring worship and sacrifice.

There is the repetition of the figure known as the Dying and Reviving God, often a powerful entity himself, who dies & comes back to life for the good of his people.

There is also the repetition of the figure known as the Dying and Reviving God, often a powerful entity himself, who is killed or dies and comes back to life for the good of his people: Osiris in Egypt, Krishna in India, the Maize God in Mesoamerica, Bacchus in Rome, Attis in Greece, Tammuz in Mesopotamia. There is often an afterlife similar to an earthly existence (Egypt and Greece), antithetical to life on earth (Mesoamerica and Mesopotamia), or a combination of both (China and India).

The resonant spiritual message of these different religions is repeated in texts from Phoenicia (2700 BCE) to Sumer (2100 BCE) to Palestine (1440 BCE) to Greece (800 BCE) to Rome (c. 100 CE) and went on to inform the beliefs of those who came later. This motif is even touched on in Judaism in the figure of Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-45) who is sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt, goes down into prison following the accusations of Potiphar's wife, and is later released and restored. Although he does not actually die, after his symbolic 'resurrection' he saves the country from famine, providing for the people in the same way as other regenerative figures.

The Phoenician tale of the great god Baal who dies and returns to life to battle the chaos of the god Yamm was already old in 2750 BCE when the city of Tyre was founded (according to Herodotus) and the Greek story of the dying and reviving god Adonis (c. 600 BCE) was derived from earlier Phoenician tales based on Tammuz which was borrowed by the Sumerians (and later the Persians) in the famous *Descent of Inanna* myth.

This theme of life-after-death and life coming from death and, of course, the judgment after death, gained the greatest fame through the evangelical efforts of St. Paul who spread the word of the dying and reviving god Jesus Christ throughout ancient Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome (c. 42-62 CE). Paul's vision of the figure of Jesus, the anointed son of God who dies to redeem humanity, was drawn from the earlier belief systems and informed the understanding of the scribes who would write the books which make up the Bible.

The religion of Christianity made standard a belief in an afterlife and set up an organized set of rituals by which an adherent could gain everlasting life. In so doing, the early Christians were simply following in the footsteps of the Sumerians, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, and the Romans all of whom had their own stylized rituals for the worship of their gods.

After the Christians, the Muslim interpreters of the Koran instituted their own rituals for understanding the supreme deity which, though vastly different in form from those of Christianity, Judaism or any of the older 'pagan' religions, served the same purpose as the rituals once practiced in worship of the Egyptian pantheon over 5,000 years ago: to provide human beings with the understanding that they are not alone in their struggles, suffering, and triumphs, that they can restrain their baser urges, and that death is not the end of existence. The religions of the ancient world provided answers to people's questions about life and death and, in this regard, are no different than those faiths practiced in the world today.

Bibliography

- Baird, F. E. & Kaufmann, W. *Philosophic Classics Volume I: Ancient Philosophy.* Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Bauer, S.W. *The History of the Ancient World.* W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Black, J. *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia.* University of Texas Press, 1992.
- Bulfinch, T. *Bulfinch's Mythology.* Public Domain Books, 2009.
- Ghosts in the Ancient World by Joshua J. MarkAccessed 15 May 2020.

- Greek Religion by Mark CartwrightAccessed 15 May 2020.
- Koller, J.M. *Asian Philosophies.* Routledge, 2004.
- Nagle, D. B. *The Ancient World: A Social and Cultural History.* Pearson, 2009.
- Nardo, D. *Egyptian Mythology.* Enslow Publishers, 2001.
- Nardo, D. *Exploring Cultural History - Living in Ancient Rome.* Greenhaven Press, 2003.
- Pinch, G. *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt.* Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Plato. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato.* Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Roman Household Spirits by Joshua J. Mark Accessed 15 May 2020.
- Smith, H. *The World's Religions.* Harper One Publishers, 2009.
- Stuart, G.E. *The Mysterious Maya.* National Geographic Society, 1977.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

1.1: 2-2 Religion in the Ancient World is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Mesopotamia, Middle East and Near East

The texts chosen for this chapter were influential in their own times and beyond. Gilgamesh was an ancient Sumerian king whose story was valued and retold by other cultures who invaded the area. The Bible remains one of the most widely read books in history. Homer's epics form a cornerstone of western literature, and the two plays selected from ancient Greek drama influenced countless writers after them. Only the plays were originally written works; the other texts were part of an oral tradition before they were written down. Even then, the subject matter of the plays is not original to the authors: The audience knew the stories of Oedipus and Medea already. Homer was not the first (or the last) to compose poems on the Trojan War and its aftermath. Originality was not particularly prized in an oral culture, where only the best works were worth memorizing. Homer's fame comes from how well he tells his version of events.

When reading the selected texts, remember that the contemporary definition of a hero or leader is often not compatible with the ancient world's definition of a hero or leader. Each society, and sometimes each time period in each society, can have a different definition, based on what the expectations were. There is also a difference between the modern idea of an action hero and the ancient world's definition of an epic hero. To be the hero of an epic, the character needs to meet at least some of the following requirements: He receives divine intervention (or is chosen by the gods to win), has superhuman strength or abilities, is of national or international importance, has the ability to overcome and learn from a personal flaw, and goes on a significant journey. The ultimate goal of epic heroes is to be remembered: achieving immortality through their deeds, which will live on in stories. Unlike a modern film hero who might be expected to act in the best interests of others, epic heroes may or may not act with other people's interests in mind. Some of the epic heroes in this chapter fight to protect others, but many fight for personal glory, regardless of the collateral damage. In other words, an epic hero is an ideal warrior in his society, but not always an ideal human being. In the *Iliad*, Achilles is the greatest warrior among the Greeks, and his main concern is making a name for himself that will last forever. When he is insulted by Agamemnon, therefore, he asks that Zeus punish Achilles' own side, slaughtering the Greeks until they beg him for forgiveness. Achilles fights for his own glory, not the glory of others.



Image 1.1: Map of Mesopotamia | A map showing the borders of ancient Mesopotamia.

Author: NordNordWest
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY 3.0

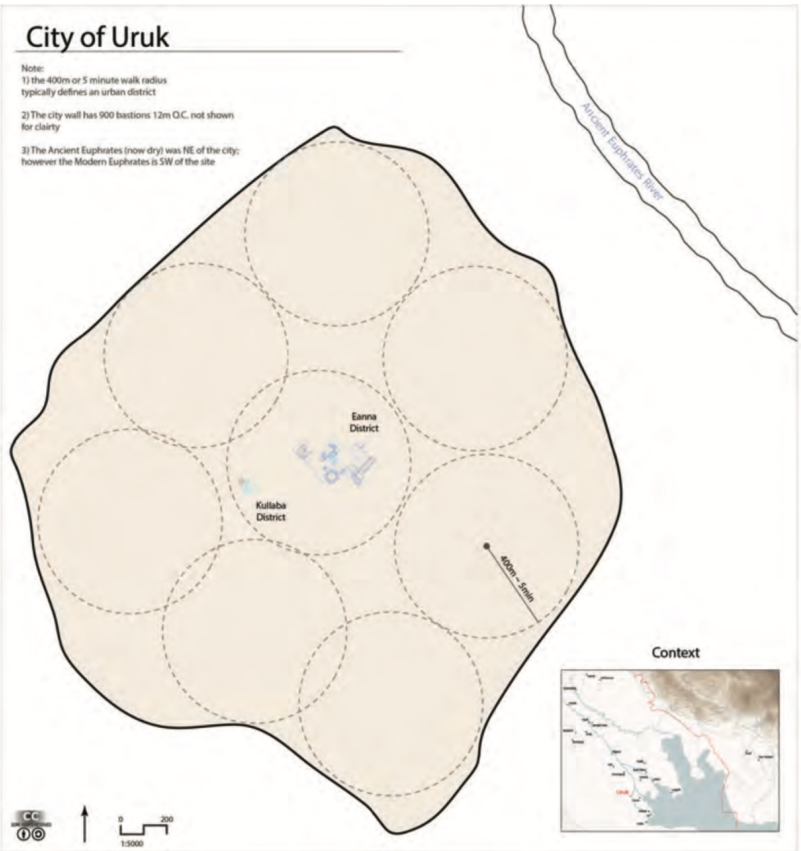


Image 1.2: City of Uruk | A basic map of Uruk with notes on the city's boundaries.

Author: Lamassu Design
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

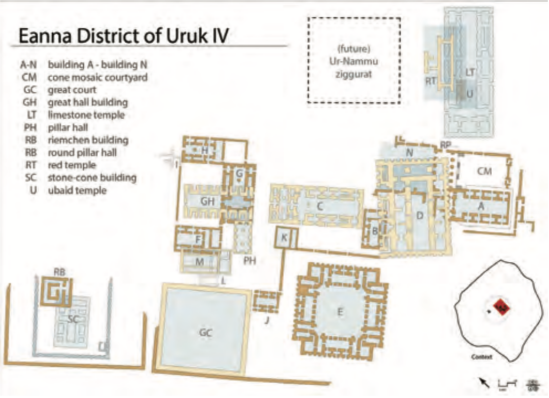


Image 1.3: Eanna District of Uruk | A map of Uruk's Eanna District, with its buildings and notes.

Author: Lamassu Design
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

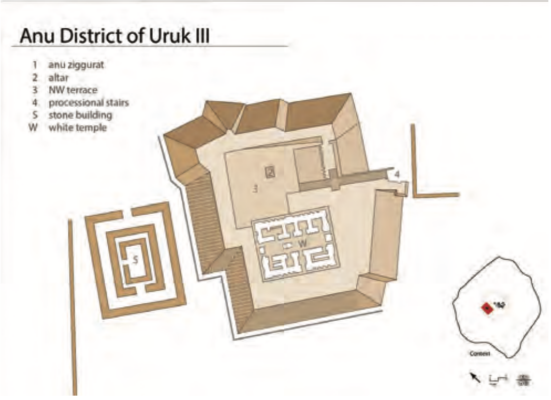


Image 1.4: Anu District of Uruk | A map of Uruk's Anu District, with its buildings and notes.

Author: Lamassu Design
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

In *Gilgamesh*, the title character begins the story as an impressive epic hero, but a poor leader (as the gods themselves indicate in the story when they respond to the prayers of the citizens of Uruk, who are begging the gods to protect them from their own king). Gilgamesh's lack of morality stems in part from his demigod status; as the ancient Sumerians recognized, their pantheon of gods was not particularly moral. Since epic heroes need the help of the gods to win, the focus is not on individual strength, but on gaining the favor of the gods. Yes, Gilgamesh is strong, but to fight the supernatural creature Humbaba, Gilgamesh needs help: his

mother's prayers to the gods, his friend Enkidu's support, supernatural weapons from the god Shamash (namely the winds), and his tears as offerings to Shamash in exchange for his help. The expectations for a good king are clear in the text, but they conflict on some level with the expectations for an epic hero in this case.



Image 1.5: Uruk in 2008 | An aerial view of the dig site at Warka in Iraq.

Author: SAC Andy Holmes (RAF)
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Open Government License (OGL)



Image 1.6: Mesopotamia in 2nd Millennium BC | A map depicting the cities of ancient Mesopotamia.

Author: User "Joeyhewitt"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.5

The hero who receives divine intervention is the one who wins every time, so being humble to the gods is vital for success. When Brad Pitt plays Achilles in the movie *Troy*, there are no toddler tantrums; in the *Iliad*, Achilles cries every time he wants the help of his mother, the goddess Thetis. The modern film expectations for the character of Achilles would be foreign (and strange, and irreligious) to the original audience, just as a modern American film audience would not be impressed by an action hero who sobbed to his mother for help. The original audience, however, would be familiar with example after example of how pointless it is to try to win without the help of the gods: No matter who would have won based on his own strength, the gods determine the final result. Human strength means little in such a universe.

Equally pointless is the attempt to change fate, which is the one force in the Greek stories that is stronger than the gods. Zeus cannot change the outcome of various events in the *Iliad*, and Oedipus realizes the futility of attempting to change his fate. The fatalistic approach of the Greek texts stems from the belief that the ages of man are in a decline, from the golden age down to the iron age of Homer. This belief in the general decline of humanity is echoed later in Dante's *Inferno*, where the Old Man of Crete is composed of the same metals, but this time with a clay foot.

As you read, consider the following questions:

- Using the list of traits above, which traits apply to each epic hero in the texts?
- What is similar and/or different about heroes such as Gilgamesh, Achilles, Hector, and Odysseus?
- How do the characters view the gods, and how do the gods treat humans?
- What do we learn about what each society considers proper or improper behavior, again based on the text itself ?
- Is family love or romantic love more important in the text, and why?

Written by Laura J. Getty

2.1: The Epic of Gilgamesh
2.2: Hebrew Bible, "Genesis" And "Exodus"
2.3: Mesopotamia
2.4: Enuma Elish - The Babylonian Epic of Creation

Thumbnail: Parthenon, Athens Greece. Image used with permission (CC BY 2.0; Steve Swayne).

This page titled 2: Mesopotamia, Middle East and Near East is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

2.1: The Epic of Gilgamesh

Oral and written versions between ca. 2500-1400 B.C.E.

Sumer/Babylon

The story of Gilgamesh survives as the oldest epic in literature because it was preserved by rival societies in ancient Mesopotamia. The Sumerian story of this king of Uruk (modern day Warka in Iraq), who reigned around approximately 2700 B.C.E., was retold and rewritten by Babylonian, Assyrian, and Hittite scribes. The Standard Version, which modern scholars attribute to an Assyrian scribe/priest, combines many of the previous oral and written variants of the tale. The version of the epic presented here is a compilation of the Standard Version (which contains gaps where the tablets are damaged) and a variety of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hittite versions that were discovered later. In the story, Gilgamesh (who is two-thirds divine and one-third human, a marvel of modern genetics) initially befriends Enkidu (also engineered by the gods) and then goes on a quest for immortality when he realizes that even semi-divine beings must die. Kept in the library of the Assyrian King Assurbanipal, the twelve clay tablets with the Standard Version were accidentally saved when, during the sack of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E., the walls of the library were caved in on the tablets. Archeologists discovered the eleventh tablet in the mid-1800s, which contains an account of the flood story that pre-dates the written version of the Biblical account of Noah, leading to the recovery of all twelve tablets, plus additional fragments. In 2003, in Warka, they found what is believed to be the tomb of Gilgamesh himself.

Sumerian/Babylonian Gods:

- **An (Babylonian: Anu):** god of heaven; may have been the main god before 2500 B.C.E.
- **ninhursag (Babylonian:** Aruru, Mammi): mother goddess; created the gods with An; assists in creation of man.
- **Enlil (Babylonian: Ellil):** god of air; pantheon leader from 2500 B.C.E.; "father" of the gods because he is in charge (although An/Anu is actually the father of many of them); king of heaven & earth.
- **Enki (Babylonian: Ea):** lord of the abyss and wisdom; god of water, creation, and fertility.
- **nanna (Babylonian: Sin):** moon god.
- **Inanna (Babylonian: Ishtar):** goddess of love, war, and fertility.
- **Utu (Babylonian: Shamash):** god of the sun and justice.
- **ninlil (Babylonian: Mullitu, Mylitta):** bride of Enlil.



Image 1.7: The Flood Tablet | An original stone tablet, Tablet 11, from the Epic of Gilgamesh.

Author: User "BabelStone"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC0 1.0

Editor's Note: I am combining two open access translations (one by R. Campbell Thompson and one by William Muss-Arnolt). I have made changes freely to those texts in the interests of readability: accepting many suggested additions, deleting others, altering word choice, adding some punctuation, and eliminating some of the more archaic language. By combining the two translations, the resulting text is as complete as I can make it at this point; the Thompson translation in particular draws on many fragments from Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hittite tablets that have been found after the Standard Version was discovered.

Edited by Laura J. Getty, University of North Georgia

The Epic of Gilgamesh

R. Campbell Thompson and William Muse Arnold (Compiled by Laura Getty)

He who has discovered the heart of all matters, let him teach the nation;
He who all knowledge possesses should teach all the people;
He shall impart his wisdom, and so they shall share it together.
Gilgamesh—he was the Master of wisdom, with knowledge of all things;
He discovered concealed secrets, handed down a story of times before the flood, 5

Went on a journey far away, returned all weary and worn with his toiling,
Engraved on a table of stone his story.
He it was who built the ramparts of Uruk, the high-walled, And he it was who set the foundation,

As solid as brass, of Eanna, the sacred temple of Anu and Ishtar,
Strengthened its base, its threshold....
Two-thirds of Gilgamesh are divine, and one-third of him human....

[The tablet then tells how Gilgamesh becomes king of Uruk. The death of the previous king creates panic in the city, described below.]

The she-asses have trampled down their foals;
The cows in madness turn upon their calves.
And as the cattle were frightened, so were the people.
Like the doves, the maidens sigh and mourn.
The gods of Uruk, the strong-walled,
Assume the shape of flies and buzz about the streets.
The protecting deities of Uruk, the strong-walled,
Take on the shape of mice and hurry into their holes.
Three years the enemy besieged the city of Uruk;
The city's gates were barred, the bolts were shot.
And even Ishtar, the goddess, could not make headway against the enemy.

[Then Gilgamesh comes to the city as her savior, and later on appears as her king. He saves the city, but unfortunately his rule is tyrannical, and the people of Uruk complain to the gods.]

"You gods of heaven, and you, Anu,
Who brought my son into existence, save us!
He [Gilgamesh] has not a rival in all the land;
The shock of his weapons has no peer,
And cowed are the heroes of Uruk.
Your people now come to you for help.
Gilgamesh arrogantly leaves no son to his father,
Yet he should be the shepherd of the city."
Day and night they poured out their complaint:
"He is the ruler of Uruk the strong-walled.
He is the ruler—strong, cunning—but
Gilgamesh does not leave a daughter to her mother,
Nor the maiden to the warrior, nor the wife to her husband."

The gods of heaven heard their cry.
Anu gave ear, called the lady Aruru: "It was you, O Aruru,
Who made the first of mankind: create now a rival to him,
So that he can strive with him;
Let them fight together, and Uruk will be given relief."
Upon hearing this Aruru created in her heart a man after the likeness of Anu.
Aruru washed her hands, took a bit of clay, and cast it on the ground.
Thus she created Enkidu, the hero, as if he were born of Ninurta (god of war and hunting).
His whole body was covered with hair; he had long hair on his head like a woman;
His flowing hair was luxuriant like that of the corn-god.
He ate herbs with the gazelles.
He quenched his thirst with the beasts.
He sported about with the creatures of the water.

Then did a hunter, a trapper, come face to face with this fellow, 50
Came on him one, two, three days, at the place where the beasts drank water.
But when he saw him the hunter's face looked troubled
As he beheld Enkidu, and he returned to his home with his cattle.
He was sad, and moaned, and wailed; 55
His heart grew heavy, his face became clouded, And sadness entered his mind.

The hunter opened his mouth and said, addressing his father:
"Father, there is a great fellow come forth from out of the mountains,
His strength is the greatest the length and breadth of the country,
Like to a double of Anu's own self, his strength is enormous, 60
Ever he ranges at large over the mountains, and ever with cattle
Grazes on herbage and ever he sets his foot to the water,
So that I fear to approach him. The pits which I myself hollowed
With my own hands he has filled in again, and the traps that I set
Are torn up, and out of my clutches he has helped all the cattle escape, 65
And the beasts of the desert: to work at my fieldcraft, or hunt, he will not allow me."

His father opened his mouth and said, addressing the hunter:
"Gilgamesh dwells in Uruk, my son, whom no one has vanquished,
It is his strength that is the greatest the length and breadth of the country,
Like to a double of Anu's own self, his strength is enormous, 70
Go, set your face towards Uruk: and when he hears of a monster,
He will say 'Go, O hunter, and take with you a courtesan-girl, a hetaera (a sacred temple girl from Eanna, the temple of Ishtar).

When he gathers the cattle again in their drinking place,
So shall she put off her mantle, the charm of her beauty revealing; 75
Then he shall see her, and in truth will embrace her, and thereafter his cattle,
With which he was reared, with straightaway forsake him.'"



Image 1.8: Gilgamesh Statue | This statue of Gilgamesh depicts him in his warrior's outfit, holding a lion cub under one arm.

Author: User "zayzayem"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0

The hunter listened to the advice of his father and straightaway
He went to Gilgamesh, taking the road towards Uruk.
To Gilgamesh he came, and addressed his speech to him, saying:
“There is a great fellow come forth from out of the mountains,
His strength is the greatest the length and breadth of the country,
Like to a double of Anu’s own self, his strength is enormous,
Ever he ranges at large over the mountains, and ever with cattle
Grazes on herbage and ever he sets his foot to the water,
So that I fear to approach him. The pits which I myself hollowed
With mine own hands he has filled in again, and the traps that I set
Are torn up, and out of my clutches he has helped all the cattle escape,
And the beasts of the desert: to work at my fieldcraft, or hunt, he will not allow me.”

Gilgamesh made this answer to the hunter:

“Go, O hunter, and take with you a courtesan-girl, a hetaera from Ishtar’s temple.

When he gathers the cattle again in their drinking place,
So shall she put off her mantle, the charm of her beauty revealing;
Then he shall see her, and in truth will embrace her, and thereafter his cattle,
With which he was reared, with straightaway forsake him.”

Forth went the hunter, took with him a courtesan-girl, a hetaera, the woman Shamhat;
Together they proceeded straightway, and
On the third day they reached the appointed field.
There the hunter and the hetaera rested.
One day, two days, they lurked at the entrance to the well,
Where the cattle were accustomed to slake their thirst,
Where the creatures of the waters were sporting.
Then came Enkidu, whose home was the mountains,
Who with gazelles ate herbs,
And with the cattle slaked his thirst,
And with the creatures of the waters rejoiced his heart.
And Shamhat beheld him.

“Behold, there he is,” the hunter exclaimed; “now reveal your body,
Uncover your nakedness, and let him enjoy your favors.
Be not ashamed, but yield to his sensuous lust.
He shall see you and shall approach you;
Remove your garment, and he shall lie in your arms;
Satisfy his desire after the manner of women;
Then his cattle, raised with him on the field, shall forsake him
While he firmly presses his breast on yours.”
And Shamhat revealed her body, uncovered her nakedness,
And let him enjoy her favors.
She was not ashamed, but yielded to his sensuous lust.
She removed her garment, he lay in her arms,
And she satisfied his desire after the manner of women.
He pressed his breast firmly upon hers.
For six days and seven nights Enkidu enjoyed the love of Shamhat.
And when he had sated himself with her charms,
He turned his face toward his cattle.
The gazelles, resting, beheld Enkidu; they and

The cattle of the field turned away from him.
This startled Enkidu and his body grew faint;
His knees became stiff, as his cattle departed,
And he became less agile than before.

And as he realized what had happened, he came to a decision.
He turned again, in love enthralled, to the feet of the temple girl,
And gazed up into the face of Shamhat.
And while she spoke, his ears listened attentively;
And Shmahat spoke to Enkidu and said:
"You are magnificant, Enkidu, you shall be like a god;
Why, then, do you lie down with the beasts of the field?
Come, I will take you to strong-walled Uruk;
To the glorious house, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar,
The palace of Gilgamesh, the hero who is perfect in strength,
Surpassing, like a mountain bull, men in power."
While she spoke this way to him, he listened to her wise speech.
And Enkidu spoke to her, the temple girl:
"Come then, Shamhat, take me, and lead me
To the glorious dwelling, the sacred seat of Anu and Ishtar,
To the palace of Gilgamesh, the hero who is perfect in strength,
Surpassing, like as a mountain bull, men in power. I will challenge him."

Shamhat warned Enkidu, saying:
"You will see Gilgamesh.
I have seen his face; it glows with heroic courage.
Strength he possesses, magnificent is his whole body.
His power is stronger than yours.
He rests not nor tires, neither by day nor by night.
O Enkidu, change your intention.
Shamash loves Gilgamesh;
Anu and Ea are whispering wisdom into his ear.
Before you come down from the mountain
Gilgamesh will have seen you in a dream in Uruk."

[Gilgamesh had a dream and was troubled because he could not interpret it.]

Gilgamesh came, to understand the dream, and said to his mother:

"My mother, I dreamed a dream in my nightly vision;
The stars of heaven, like Anu's host, fell upon me.
Although I wrestled him, he was too strong for me, and even though I loosed his hold on me,
I was unable to shake him off of me: and now, all the meanwhile,
People from Uruk were standing around him.
My own companions were kissing his feet; and I to my breast like a woman did hold him,
Then I presented him low at your feet, that as my own equal you might recognize him."
She who knows all wisdom answered her son;
"The stars of the heavens represent your comrades,
That which was like unto Anu's own self, which fell on your shoulders,
Which you did wrestle, but he was too strong for you, even though you loosed his hold on you,
But you were unable to shake him off of you,
So you presented him low at my feet, that as your own equal
I might recognize him—and you to your breast like a woman did hold him:

This is a stout heart, a friend, one ready to stand by a comrade,
One whose strength is the greatest, the length and breadth of the country,
Like to a double of Anu's own self, his strength is enormous.
Now, since you to your breast did hold him the way you would a woman,
This is a sign that you are the one he will never abandon:
This is the meaning of your dream."
Again he spoke to his mother,
"Mother, a second dream did I see: Into Uruk, the high-walled,

Hurtled an axe, and they gathered about it:
People were standing about it, the people all thronging before it,
Artisans pressing behind it, while I at your feet did present it,
I held it to me like a woman, that you might recognize it as my own equal."
She the all-wise, who knows all wisdom, thus answered her offspring:
"That axe you saw is a man; like a woman did you hold him,
Against your breast, that as your own equal I might recognize him;
This is a stout heart, a friend, one ready to stand by a comrade; He will never abandon you."

[Meanwhile, Shamhat helps Enkidu adjust to living among humans.]

Then Shamhat spoke to Enkidu:
"As I view you, even like a god, O Enkidu, you are,
Why with the beasts of the field did you ever roam through the wilderness?
I'll lead you to Uruk broad-marketed, yes, to the Temple
Sacred, the dwelling of Anu—O Enkidu, come, so that I may guide you,
To Eanna, the dwelling of Anu, where Gilgamesh lives,
He, the supreme of creation; and you will embrace him,
And even as yourself you shall love him.
O, get up from the ground—which is a shepherd's bed only."
He heard what she said, welcomed her advice: the advice of the woman struck home.
She took off one length of cloth wherewith she might clothe him: the other she herself wore,

And so, holding his hand like a brother, she led him
To the huts of the shepherds, the place of the sheepfolds. The shepherds
Gathered at the sight of him.

He in the past was accustomed to suck the milk of the wild things!
Bread which she set before him he broke, but he gazed and he stared:
Enkidu did not know how to eat bread, nor had he the knowledge to drink mead!
Then the woman made answer, to Enkidu speaking,
"Enkidu, taste of the bread, for it is life; in truth, the essential of life;
Drink also of the mead, which is the custom of the country."

Enkidu ate the bread, ate until he was gorged,
Drank of the mead seven cups; his spirits rose, and he was exultant,
Glad was his heart, and cheerful his face:
He anointed himself with oil: and thus became human.
He put on a garment to be like a man and taking his weapons,
He hunted the lions, which harried the shepherds all the nights, and he caught the jackals.
He, having mastered the lions, let the shepherds sleep soundly.
Enkidu—he was their guardian—became a man of full vigor.

Enkidu saw a man passing by, and when he observed the fellow,
He said to the woman: "Shamhat, bring me this fellow,

Where is he going? I would know his intention."
Shamhat called to the man to come to them, asking: "O, what are you seeking, Sir?"
The man spoke, addressing them:

"I am going, then, to heap up the offerings such as are due to the city of Uruk;
Come with me, and on behalf of the common good bring in the food of the city.
You will see Gilgamesh, king of broad-marketed Uruk;
After the wedding, he sleeps first with the bride, his birthright, before the husband."
So, at the words of the fellow, they went with him to Uruk.

Enkidu, going in front with the temple girl coming behind him,
Entered broad-marketed Uruk; the populace gathered behind him,
Then, as he stopped in the street of broad-marketed Uruk, the people
Thronging behind him exclaimed "Of a truth, like to Gilgamesh is he,
Shorter in stature, but his composition is stronger."

Strewn is the couch for the love-rites, and Gilgamesh now in the night-time
Comes to sleep, to delight in the woman, but Enkidu, standing
There in the street, blocks the passage to Gilgamesh, threatening
Gilgamesh with his strength.

Gilgamesh shows his rage, and he rushed to attack him: they met in the street.
Enkidu barred up the door with his foot, and to Gilgamesh denied entry.

They grappled and snorted like bulls, and the threshold of the door
Shattered: the very wall quivered as Gilgamesh with Enkidu grappled and wrestled.

Gilgamesh bent his leg to the ground [pinning Enkidu]: so his fury abated,
And his anger was quelled: Enkidu thus to Gilgamesh spoke:

"Of a truth, did your mother (Ninsun, the wild cow goddess) bear you,
And only you: that choicest cow of the steer-folds,
Ninsun exalted you above all heroes, and Enlil has given
You the kingship over men."

[The next part of the story is lost on a broken part of the tablet. When the story resumes, time has passed, and Gilgamesh and Enkidu are now friends. Enkidu is grieving the loss of a woman: possibly Shamhat leaving him, possibly another woman who has died.]

Enkidu there as he stood listened to Gilgamesh's words, grieving,
Sitting in sorrow: his eyes filled with tears, and his arms lost their power,
His body had lost its strength. Each clasped the hand of the other.
Holding on to each other like brothers, and Enkidu answered Gilgamesh:
"Friend, my darling has circled her arms around my neck to say goodbye,
Which is why my arms lose their power, my body has lost its strength."

[Gilgamesh decides to distract his friend with a quest.]

Gilgamesh opened his mouth, and to Enkidu he spoke in this way:
"I, my friend, am determined to go to the Forest of Cedars,
Humbaba the Fierce lives there, I will overcome and destroy what is evil,
Then will I cut down the Cedar trees."
Enkidu opened his mouth, and to Gilgamesh he spoke in this way,
"Know, then, my friend, that when I was roaming with the animals in the mountains
I marched for a distance of two hours from the skirts of the Forest
Into its depths. Humbaba—his roar was a whirlwind,
Flame in his jaws, and his very breath Death! O, why have you desired

To accomplish this? To meet with Humbaba would be an unequal conflict."
Gilgamesh opened his mouth and to Enkidu he spoke in this way:
"It is because I need the rich resources of its mountains that I go to the Forest."

Enkidu opened his mouth and to Gilgamesh he spoke in this way:
"But when we go to the Forest of Cedars, you will find that its guard is a fighter,
Strong, never sleeping. O Gilgamesh,

So that he can safeguard the Forest of Cedars, making it a terror to mortals,
Enlil has appointed him—Humbaba, his roar is a whirlwind,
Flame in his jaws, and his very breath Death! Yes, if he hears but a tread in the Forest,
Hears but a tread on the road, he roars—'Who is this come down to his Forest?'
And terrible consequences will seize him who comes down to his Forest."

Gilgamesh opened his mouth and to Enkidu he spoke in this way:
"Who, O my friend, is unconquered by death? A god, certainly,
Lives forever in the daylight, but mortals—their days are all numbered,
All that they do is but wind—But since you are now dreading death,
Offering nothing of your courage—I, I'll be your protector, marching in front of you!
Your own mouth shall tell others that you feared the onslaught of battle,
Whereas I, if I should fall, will have established my name forever.
It was Gilgamesh who fought with Humbaba, the Fierce!
In the future, after my children are born to my house, and climb up into your lap, saying:
'Tell us all that you know,' [what shall you say]?

When you talk this way, you make me long for the Cedars even more;
I am determined to cut them down, so that I may gain fame everlasting."

Gilgamesh spoke again to Enkidu, saying:

"Now, O my friend, I must give my orders to the craftsmen,
So that they cast in our presence our weapons."
They delivered the orders to the craftsmen: the mold did the workmen prepare, and the axes
Monstrous they cast: yes, the axes did they cast, each weighing three talents;
Glaives, too, monstrous they cast, with hilts each weighing two talents,
Blades, thirty manas to each, corresponding to fit them: the inlay,
Gold thirty manas each sword: so were Gilgamesh and Enkidu laden
Each with ten talents of weight.

And now in the Seven Bolt Portal of Uruk
Hearing the noise did the artisans gather, assembled the people,
There in the streets of broad-marketed Uruk, in Gilgamesh's honor,
So did the Elders of Uruk the broad-marketed take seat before him.
Gilgamesh spoke thus: "O Elders of Uruk the broad-marketed, hear me!
I go against Humbaba, the Fierce, who shall say, when he hears that I am coming,

'Ah, let me look on this Gilgamesh, he of whom people are speaking,
He with whose fame the countries are filled'—'Then I will overwhelm him,
There in the Forest of Cedars—I'll make the land hear it,
How like a giant the hero of Uruk is—yes, for I am determined to cut down the Cedars
So that I may gain fame everlasting."
To Gilgamesh the Elders of Uruk the broad-marketed gave this answer:
"Gilgamesh, it is because you are young that your valor makes you too confident,
Nor do you know to the full what you seek to accomplish.
News has come to our ears of Humbaba, who is twice the size of a man.

Who of free will then would seek to oppose him or encounter his weapons?
Who would march for two hours from the skirts of the Forest
Into its depths? Humbaba, his roar is a whirlwind,
Flame is in his jaws, and his very breath is Death! O, why have you desired to accomplish this?
To fight with Humbaba would be an unequal conflict."
Gilgamesh listened to the advice of his counselors and pondered,
Then cried out to his friend: "Now, indeed, O my friend, will I voice my opinion.
In truth, I dread him, and yet into the depths of the Forest I will go."

And the Elders spoke:

"Gilgamesh, put not your faith in the strength of your own person solely,
And do not trust your fighting skills too much.
Truly, he who walks in front is able to safeguard a comrade,
Your guide will guard you; so, let Enkidu walk in front of you,
For he knows the road to the Forest of Cedars;
He lusts for battle, and threatens combat.
Enkidu—he would watch over a friend, would safeguard a comrade,
Yes, such a man would deliver his friend from out of the pitfalls.
We, O King, in our conclave have paid close attention to your welfare;
You, O King, shall pay attention to us in return."
Gilgamesh opened his mouth and spoke to Enkidu, saying:
"To the Palace of Splendor, O friend, come, let us go,
To the presence of Ninsun, the glorious Queen, yes, to Ninsun,
Wisest of all clever women, all-knowing; she will tell us how to proceed."

They joined hands and went to the Palace of Splendor,
Gilgamesh and Enkidu. To the glorious Queen, yes, to Ninsun
Gilgamesh came, and he entered into her presence:
"Ninsun, I want you to know that I am going on a long journey,
To the home of Humbaba to encounter a threat that is unknown,
To follow a road which I know not, which will be new from the time of my starting,
Until my return, until I arrive at the Forest of Cedars,
Until I overthrow Humbaba, the Fierce, and destroy him.
The Sun god abhors all evil things, Shamash hates evil; Ask him to help us."

So Ninsun listened to her offspring, to Gilgamesh,

Entered her chamber and decked herself with the flowers of *Tulal*,
Put the festival clothes on her body,
Put on the festival adornments of her bosom, her head with a circlet crowned,
Climbed the stairway, ascended to the roof, and the parapet mounted,
Offered her incense to Shamash, her sacrifice offered to Shamash,
Then towards Shamash she lifted her hands in prayer, saying:
"Why did you give this restlessness of spirit to Gilgamesh, my son?
You gave him restlessness, and now he wants to go on a long journey
To where Humbaba dwells, to encounter a threat that is unknown,
To follow a road which he knows not, which will be new from the time of his starting,
Until his return, until he arrives at the Forest of Cedars,
Until he overthrows Humbaba, the Fierce, and destroys him.

You abhor all evil things; you hate evil. Remember my son when that day comes,
When he faces Humbaba. May Aya, your bride, remind you of my son."

Now Gilgamesh knelt before Shamash, to utter a prayer; tears streamed down his face:
"Here I present myself, Shamash, to lift up my hands in entreaty
That my life may be spared; bring me again to the ramparts of Uruk:
Give me your protection. I will give you homage."
And Shamash made answer, speaking through his oracle.

[Although the next lines are missing, Shamash evidently gives his permission, so Gilgamesh and Enkidu get ready for their journey.]

The artisans brought monstrous axes, they delivered the bow and the quiver
Into his hand; so, taking an ax, he slung on his quiver,
He fastened his glaive to his baldrick.
But before the two of them set forth on their journey, they offered
Gifts to the Sun god, that he might bring them home to Uruk in safety.

Now the Elders give their blessings, to Gilgamesh giving
Counsel concerning the road: "O Gilgamesh, do not trust to your own power alone,
Guard yourself; let Enkidu walk in front of you for protection.
He is the one who discovered the way, the road he has traveled.
Truly, all the paths of the Forest are under the watchful eye of Humbaba.
May the Sun god grant you success to attain your ambition,
May he level the path that is blocked, cleave a road through the forest for you to walk.
May the god Lugalbanda bring dreams to you, ones that shall make you glad,
So that they help you achieve your purpose, for like a boy
You have fixed your mind to the overthrow of Humbaba.

When you stop for the night, dig a well, so that the water in your skin-bottle
Will be pure, will be cool;
Pour out an offering of water to the Sun god, and do not forget Lugalbanda."

Gilgamesh drew his mantle around his shoulders,
And they set forth together on the road to Humbaba.
Every forty leagues they took a meal;
Every sixty leagues they took a rest.
Gilgamesh walked to the summit and poured out his offering for the mountain:
"Mountain, grant me a dream. . ."
The mountain granted him a dream. . .
Then a chill gust of wind made him sway like the corn of the mountains;
Straightaway, sleep that flows on man descended upon him: at midnight
He suddenly ended his slumber and hurried to speak to his comrade:
"Didn't you call me, O friend? Why am I awakened from slumber?
Didn't you touch me—or has some spirit passed by me? Why do I tremble?"
[Gilgamesh's dream is terrifying, but Enkidu interprets it to mean that Shamash will help them defeat Humbaba.
This process is repeated several times. Eventually, they arrive at the huge gate that guards the Cedar Forest.]
Enkidu lifted his eyes and spoke to the Gate as if it were human:
"O Gate of the Forest, I for the last forty leagues have admired your wonderful timber,
Your wood has no peer in other countries;
Six *gar* your height, and two *gar* your breadth . . .
O, if I had but known, O Gate, of your grandeur,
Then I would lift an ax...[basically, I would have brought a bigger ax].
[The heroes force the gate open.]
They stood and stared at the Forest, they gazed at the height of the Cedars,
Scanning the paths into the Forest: and where Humbaba walked

Was a path: paths were laid out and well kept.
They saw the cedar hill, the dwelling of gods, the sanctuary of Ishtar.
In front of the hill a cedar stood of great splendor,
Fine and good was its shade, filling the heart with gladness.
[From his words below, Humbaba must have taunted the heroes at this point, and Gilgamesh is preparing to attack Humbaba.]
The Sung god saw Gilgamesh through the branches of the Cedar trees:
Gilgamesh prayed to the Sun god for help.
The Sun god heard the entreaty of Gilgamesh,
And against Humbaba he raised mighty winds: yes, a great wind,
Wind from the North, a wind from the South, a tempest and storm wind,
Chill wind, and whirlwind, a wind of all harm: eight winds he raised,
Seizing Humbaba from the front and the back, so that he could not go forwards,
Nor was he able to go back: and then Humbaba surrendered.
Humbaba spoke to Gilgamesh this way: “O Gilgamesh, I pray you,
Stay now your hand: be now my master, and I’ll be your henchman:
Disregard all the words which I spoke so boastfully against you.”
Then Enkidu spoke to Gilgamesh: “Of the advice which Humbaba
Gives to you—you cannot risk accepting it.
Humbaba must not remain alive.”
[The section where they debate what to do is missing, but several versions have the end result.]
They cut off the head of Humbaba and left the corpse to be devoured by vultures.
[They return to Uruk after cutting down quite a few cedar trees.]
Gilgamesh cleansed his weapons, he polished his arms.
He took off the armor that was upon him. He put away
His soiled garments and put on clean clothes;
He covered himself with his ornaments, put on his baldrick.
Gilgamesh placed upon his head the crown.
To win the favor and love of Gilgamesh,
Ishtar, the lofty goddess, desired him and said:
“Come, Gilgamesh, be my spouse,
Give, O give to me your manly strength.
Be my husband, let me be your wife,
And I will set you in a chariot embossed with precious stones and gold,
With wheels made of gold, and shafts of sapphires.
Large kudanu-lions you shall harness to it.
Under sweet-smelling cedars you shall enter into our house.
And when you enter into our house You shall sit upon a lofty throne, and people shall kiss your feet;
Kings and lords and rulers shall bow down before you.
Whatever the mountain and the countryside produces, they shall bring to you as tribute.
Your sheep shall bear twin-ewes.
You shall sit upon a chariot that is splendid,
drawn by a team that has no equal.”
Gilgamesh opened his mouth in reply, said to Lady Ishtar:
“Yes, but what could I give you, if I should take you in marriage?
I could provide you with oils for your body, and clothing: also,
I could give you bread and other foods: there must be enough sustenance
Fit for divinity—I, too, must give you a drink fit for royalty.
What, then, will be my advantage, supposing I take you in marriage?
You are but a ruin that gives no shelter to man from the weather,
You are but a back door that gives no resistance to blast or to windstorm,

You are but a palace that collapses on the heroes within it,
You are but a pitfall with a covering that gives way treacherously,
You are but pitch that defiles the man who carries it,
You are but a bottle that leaks on him who carries it,
You are but limestone that lets stone ramparts fall crumbling in ruin.
You are but a sandal that causes its owner to trip.
Who was the husband you faithfully loved for all time?
Who was your lord who gained the advantage over you?
Come, and I will tell you the endless tale of your husbands.

Where is your husband Tammuz, who was to be forever?
Well, I will tell you plainly the dire result of your behavior.
To Tammuz, the husband of your youth,
You caused weeping and brought grief upon him every year.

[She sent Tammuz to the Underworld in her place, not telling him that he would only be able to return in the spring, like Persephone/Proserpina.]

The allallu-bird, so bright of colors, you loved;
But its wing you broke and crushed,
so that now it sits in the woods crying: 'O my wing!'
You also loved a lion, powerful in his strength;
Seven and seven times did you dig a snaring pit for him.
You also loved a horse, pre-eminent in battle,
But with bridle, spur, and whip you forced it on,
Forced it to run seven double-leagues at a stretch.
And when it was tired and wanted to drink, you still forced it on,
Causing weeping and grief to its mother, Si-li-li.
You also loved a shepherd of the flock
Who continually poured out incense before you,
And who, for your pleasure, slaughtered lambs day by day.
You smote him, and turned him into a tiger,
So that his own sheep-boys drove him away,
And his own dogs tore him to pieces.
You also loved a gardener of your father,
Who continually brought you delicacies,
And daily adorned your table for you. You cast your eye on him, saying:

'O Ishullanu of mine, come, let me taste of your vigor,
Let us enjoy your manhood.'

But he, Ishullanu, said to you 'What are you asking of me?
I have only eaten what my mother has baked, [he is pure]
And what you would give me would be bread of transgression, [she is not]
Yes, and iniquity! Furthermore, when are thin reeds a cloak against winter?'
You heard his answer and smote him and make him a spider,
Making him lodge midway up the wall of a dwelling—not to move upwards
In case there might be water draining from the roof; nor down, to avoid being crushed.
So, too, would you love me and then treat me like them."

When Ishtar heard such words, she became enraged, and went up into heaven,
and came unto Anu [her father], and to Antum [her mother] she went, and spoke to them:

"My father, Gilgamesh has insulted me;
Gilgamesh has upbraided me with my evil deeds,
My deeds of evil and of violence."
And Anu opened his mouth and spoke—
Said unto her, the mighty goddess Ishtar:
"You asked him to grant you the fruit of his body;
Therefore, he told you the tale of your deeds of evil and violence."

Ishtar said to Anu, her father:
"Father, O make me a Heavenly Bull, which shall defeat Gilgamesh,
Fill its body with flame . . . .
But if you will not make this Bull...
I will smite [the gates of the Underworld], break it down and release the ghosts,

Who shall then be more numerous than the living:
More than the living will be the dead."

Anu answered Ishtar, the Lady:
"If I create the Heavenly Bull, for which you ask me,
Then seven years of famine will follow after his attack.
Have you gathered corn enough, and enough fodder for the cattle?"
Ishtar made answer, saying to Anu, her father:
"Corn for mankind have I hoarded, have grown fodder for the cattle."

[After this a hundred men attack the Bull, but with his fiery breath he annihilates them. Two hundred men then attack the Bull with the same result, and then three hundred more are overcome.]

Enkidu girded his middle; and straightway Enkidu, leaping,
Seized the Heavenly Bull by his horns, and headlong before him
Cast down the Heavenly Bull his full length.

[On an old Babylonian cylinder that depicts the fight, we see the Heavenly Bull standing on its hind feet, Enkidu holding the monster by its head and tail, while Gilgamesh plunges the dagger into its heart.]

Then Ishtar went up to the wall of Uruk, the strong-walled;
She uttered a piercing cry and broke out into a curse, saying:
"Woe to Gilgamesh, who thus has grieved me, and has killed the Heavenly Bull."
But Enkidu, hearing these words of Ishtar, tore out the right side of the Heavenly Bull,
And threw it into her face, saying:
"I would do to you what I have done to him;
Truly, I would hang the entrails on you like a girdle."
Then Ishtar gathered her followers, the temple girls,
The hierodules, and the sacred prostitutes.
Over the right side of the Heavenly Bull she wept and lamented.
But Gilgamesh assembled the people, and all his workmen.
The workmen admired the size of its horns.
Thirty minas of precious stones was their value;
Half of an inch in size was their thickness.
Six measures of oil they both could hold.
He dedicated it for the anointing of his god Lugalbanda.
He brought the horns and hung them up in the shrine of his lordship.
Then they washed their hands in the river Euphrates,
Took the road, and set out for the city,
And rode through the streets of the city of Uruk.

The people of Uruk assembled and looked with astonishment at the heroes.
Gilgamesh then spoke to the servants of his palace
And cried out to them, saying: “Who is the most glorious among the heroes?
Who shines among the men?” “Gilgamesh is the most glorious among the heroes,
Gilgamesh shines among the men!”
And Gilgamesh held a joyful feast in his palace. Then the heroes slept on their couches.
And Enkidu slept, and saw a vision in his sleep. He arose and spoke to Gilgamesh in this way:
“My friend, why have the great gods sat in counsel?
Gilgamesh, hear the dream which I saw in the night: said Enlil, Ea, and the Sun-god of heaven,

‘They have killed the Heavenly Bull and smote Humbaba, who guarded the cedars.’ Enlil said: ‘Enkidu shall die: but Gilgamesh shall not die. O Sun god, you helped them slay the Heavenly Bull and Humbaba. But now Enkidu shall die. Did you think it right to help them? You move among them like a mortal [although you are a god].’”

[The gods give Enkidu a fever. Enkidu curses the temple girl for bringing him to Uruk.]

“O hetaera, I will decree a terrible fate for you—your woes shall never end for all eternity. Come, I will curse thee with a bitter curse: may there never be satisfaction of your desires—and may disaster befall your house, may the gutters of the street be your dwelling, may the shade of the wall be your abode—may scorching heat and thirst destroy your strength.”

The Sun god heard him, and opened his mouth, and from out of the heavens
He called him: “O Enkidu, why do you curse the hetaera?

It was she who made you eat bread fit for the gods: yes, wine too,
She made you drink, fit for royalty: a generous mantle
She put on you, and she gave you Gilgamesh, a splendid comrade.

He will give you a magnificent funeral,
So that the gods of the Underworld will kiss your feet in their homage;
He, too, will make all the people of Uruk lament in your honor,
Making them mourn you, and damsels and heroes weep at your funeral,
While he himself for your sake will cover himself in dust,
And he will put on the skin of a lion and range over the desert.”

Enkidu listened to the words of the valiant Shamash,
And when the Sun god finished speaking, Enkidu’s wrath was appeased.

“Hetaera, I call back my curse, and I will restore you to your place with blessings!
May monarchs and princes and chiefs fall in love with you;
And for you may the hero comb out his locks; whoever would embrace you,
Let him open his money pouch, and let your bed be azure and golden;
May he entreat you kindly, let him heap treasure before you;
May you enter into the presence of the gods;
May you be the mother of seven brides.”

Enkidu said to Gilgamesh:
“Friend, a dream I have seen in my night-time: the sky was thundering,
It echoed over the earth, and I by myself was standing,
When I perceived a man, all dark was his face,
And his nails were like the claws of a lion.
He overcome me, pressed me down, and he seized me,
He led me to the Dwelling of Darkness, the home of Ereshkigal, Queen of the Underworld,
To the Dwelling from which he who enters it never comes forth!
By the road on which there can be no returning,
To the Dwelling whose tenants are always bereft of the daylight,

Where for their food is the dust, and the mud is their sustenance: bird-like,
They wear a garment of feathers: and, sitting there in the darkness,
Never see the light.

Those who had worn crowns, who of old ruled over the country,
They were the servants of Anu and Enlil who carried in the food,
Served cool water from the skins. When I entered
Into this House of the Dust, High Priest and acolyte were sitting there,
Seer and magician, the priest who the Sea of the great gods anointed,
Here sat Etana the hero, the Queen of the Underworld also,
Ereshkigal, in whose presence sat the Scribe of the Underworld,
Belit-seri, and read before her; she lifted her head and beheld me [and I awoke in terror].”

And there lay Enkidu for twelve days; for twelve days he lay on his couch before he died.

Gilgamesh wept bitterly over the loss of his friend, and he lay on the ground, saying:
“I am not dying, but weeping has entered into my heart;
Fear of death has befallen me, and I lie here stretched out upon the ground.
Listen to me, O Elders; I weep for my comrade Enkidu,
Bitterly crying like a wailing woman: my grip is slackened on my ax,
For I have been assailed by sorrow and cast down in affliction.”

“Comrade and henchman, Enkidu—what is this slumber that has overcome you?
Why are your eyes dark, why can you not hear me?”
But he did not raise his eyes, and his heart, when Gilgamesh felt it, made no beat.
Then he covered his friend with a veil like a bride;
Lifted his voice like a lion,
Roared like a lioness robbed of her whelps. In front of his comrade
He paced backwards and forwards, tearing his hair and casting away his finery,
Plucking and casting away all the grace of his person.

Then when morning began to dawn, Gilgamesh said:
“Friend, I will give you a magnificent funeral,
So that the gods of the Underworld will kiss your feet in their homage;
I will make all the people of Uruk lament in your honor,
Making them mourn you, and damsels and heroes weep at your funeral,
While I myself for your sake will cover myself in dust,
And I will put on the skin of a lion and range over the desert.”

Gilgamesh brought out also a mighty platter of wood from the highlands.
He filled a bowl of bright ruby with honey; a bowl too of azure
He filled with cream, for the gods.

Gilgamesh wept bitterly for his comrade, for Enkidu, ranging
Over the desert: “I, too—shall I not die like Enkidu also?
Sorrow hath entered my heart; I fear death as I range over the desert,
So I will take the road to the presence of Utnapishtim, the offspring of Ubara-Tutu;
And with speed will I travel.”

In darkness he arrived at the Gates of the Mountains,
And he met with lions, terror falling on him; he lifted his head skywards,
Offered his prayer to the Moon god, Sin:
“O deliver me!” He took his ax in his hand and drew his glaive from his baldric,
He leapt among them, smiting and crushing, and they were defeated.

As he reached the Mountains of Mashu,
Where every day they keep watch over the Sun god's rising and setting,
The peaks rise up to the Zenith of Heaven, and downwards
Deep into the Underworld reach their roots: and there at their portals stand sentry
Scorpion-men, awful in terror, their very glance Death: and tremendous,
Shaking the hills, their magnificence; they are the Wardens of Shamash,
Both at his rising and setting. No sooner did Gilgamesh see them
Than from alarm and dismay was his face stricken with pallor,
Senseless, he groveled before them.
Then to his wife spoke the Scorpion:
"Look, he that comes to us—his body is the flesh of the gods."
Then his wife answered to the Scorpion-man: "Two parts of him are god-like;
One third of him is human."

[Gilgamesh explains why he is searching for Utnapishtim; it is a journey that no one else has ever taken, but the Scorpion-Man agrees to let him take the Road of the Sun—a tunnel that passes through the mountain. For twenty four hours, Gilgamesh travels in darkness, emerging into the Garden of the Gods, filled with fruit trees. Shamash enters the garden, and he is surprised to see Gilgamesh—or any human—in the garden.]

"This man is wearing the pelts of wild animals, and he has eaten their flesh.
This is Gilgamesh, who has crossed over to where no man has been"
Shamash was touched with compassion, summoning Gilgamesh and saying:
"Gilgamesh, why do you run so far, since the life that you seek
You shall not find?" Whereupon Gilgamesh answered the Sun god, Shamash:
"Shall I, after I roam up and down over the wastelands as a wanderer,
Lay my head in the bowels of the earth, and throughout the years slumber
Forever? Let my eyes see the Sun and be sated with brightness,
Yes, the darkness is banished far away, if there is enough brightness.
When will the man who is dead ever again look on the light of the Sunshine?"

[Shamash lets him continue on his quest, although the Sun god has said already that humans cannot escape mortality. He approaches the house of Siduri, a winemaker, whose location beyond Mount Mashu would suggest that the gods must be among her customers.]

Siduri, the maker of wine, wine was her trade; she was covered with a veil.
Gilgamesh wandered towards her, covered in pelts.
He possessed the flesh of the gods, but woe was in his belly,
Yes, and his face like a man who has gone on a far journey.
The maker of wine saw him in the distance, and she wondered,
She said in thought to herself: "This is one who would ravish a woman;
Why does he come this way?" As soon as the Wine-maker saw him,
She barred the gate, barred the house door, barred her chamber door, and climbed to the terrace.
Straight away Gilgamesh heard the sound of her shutting up the house,
Lifted his chin, and so did he let his attention fall on her.

Gilgamesh spoke to her, to the Wine-maker, saying:
"Wine-maker, what did you see, that you barred the gate,
Barred the house door, barred your chamber door? I will smite your gate,
Breaking the bolt."

The Wine-maker, speaking to Gilgamesh, answered him, saying:
"Why is your vigor so wasted, why is your face sunken,
Why does your spirit have such sorrow, and why has your cheerfulness ceased?
O, but there's woe in your belly! Like one who has gone on a far journey

Is your face—O, with cold and with heat is your face weathered,
Like a man who has ranged over the desert."
Gilgamesh answered the Wine-maker, saying:
"Wine-maker, it is not that my vigor is wasted, nor that my face is sunken,
Nor that my spirit has sorrow, nor that my cheerfulness has ceased,

No, it is not that there is woe in my belly, nor that my face is like one
Who has gone on a far journey—nor is my face weathered
Either by cold or by heat as I range over the desert.
Enkidu—together we overcame all obstacles, ascending the mountains,
Captured the Heavenly Bull, and destroyed him: we overthrew Humbaba,
He whose abode was in the Forest of Cedars; we slaughtered the lions

There in the mountain passes; with me enduring all hardships,
Enkidu, he was my comrade—and his fate has overtaken him.
I mourned him six days, until his burial; only then could I bury him.
I dreaded Death, so that I now range over the desert: the fate of my comrade
Lay heavy on me—O, how do I give voice to what I feel?
For the comrade I have so loved has become like dust,
He whom I loved has become like the dust—I, shall I not, also,
Lay me down like him, throughout all eternity never to return?"

The Wine-maker answered Gilgamesh:

"Gilgamesh, why do you run so far, since the life that you seek
You shall not find? For the gods, in their creation of mortals,
Allotted Death to man, but Life they retained in their keeping.
Gilgamesh, fill your belly with food,
Each day and night be merry, and make every day a holiday,
Each day and night dance and rejoice; wear clean clothes,
Yes, let your head be washed clean, and bathe yourself in the water,
Cherish the little one holding your hand; hold your spouse close to you and be happy,
For this is what is given to mankind.

Gilgamesh continued his speech to the Wine-maker, saying:
"Tell me, then, Wine-maker, which is the way to Utnapishtim?
If it is possible, I will even cross the Ocean itself,
But if it is impossible, then I will range over the desert."
In this way did the Wine-maker answer him, saying:
"There has never been a crossing, O Gilgamesh: never before
Has anyone, coming this far, been able to cross the Ocean:
Shamash crosses it, of course, but who besides Shamash

Makes the crossing? Rough is the passage,
And deep are the Waters of Death when you reach them.
Gilgamesh, if by chance you succeed in crossing the Ocean,
What will you do, when you arrive at the Waters of Death?
Gilgamesh, there is a man called Urshanabi, boatman to Utnapishtim,
He has the *urnu* for the crossing,
Now go to him, and if it is possible to cross with him
Then cross—but if it is not possible, then retrace your steps homewards."

Gilgamesh, hearing this, took his ax in his hand and went to see Urshanabi.

[Evidently, Gilgamesh is not thinking too clearly, since he displays his strength to Urshanabi by destroying the sails of the boat. Urshanabi is not entirely impressed.]

Then Urshanabi spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:

"Tell to me what is your name, for I am Urshanabi, henchman,
Of far-off Utnapishtim." Gilgamesh answered:
"Gilgamesh is my name, come hither from Uruk,
One who has traversed the Mountains, a wearisome journey of Sunrise,
Now that I have looked on your face, Urshanabi—let me see Utnapishtim,
The Distant one!"

Urshanabi spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:

"Why is your vigor so wasted, why is your face sunken,
Why does your spirit have such sorrow, and why has your cheerfulness ceased?
O, but there's woe in your belly! Like one who has gone on a far journey
Is your face—O, with cold and with heat is your face weathered,
Like a man who has ranged over the desert."

Gilgamesh answered, "It is not that my vigor is wasted, nor that my face is sunken,
Nor that my spirit has sorrow, nor that my cheerfulness has ceased,

No, it is not that there is woe in my belly, nor that my face is like one
Who has gone on a far journey—nor is my face weathered
Either by cold or by heat as I range over the desert.
Enkidu—together we overcame all obstacles, ascending the mountains,
Captured the Heavenly Bull, and destroyed him: we overthrew Humbaba,
He whose abode was in the Forest of Cedars; we slaughtered the lions

There in the mountain passes; with me enduring all hardships,
Enkidu, he was my comrade—and his fate has overtaken him.
I mourned him six days, until his burial; only then could I bury him.
I dreaded Death, so that I now range over the desert: the fate of my comrade
Lay heavily on me—O, how do I give voice to what I feel?
For the comrade I have so loved has become like dust,
He whom I loved has become like the dust—I, shall I not, also,
Lay me down like him, throughout all eternity never to return?"

Gilgamesh continued his speech to Urshanabi, saying:
"Please tell me, Urshanabi, which is the way to Utnapishtim?

If it is possible, I will even cross the Ocean itself,
But if it is impossible, then I will range over the desert."

Urshanabi spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:
"Gilgamesh, your own hand has hindered your crossing of the Ocean,
You have destroyed the sails and destroyed the *urnu.*

Gilgamesh, take your axe in your hand; descend to the forest,
Fashion one hundred twenty poles each of five gar in length; make knobs of bitumen,
Sockets, too, add those to the poles: bring them to me." When Gilgamesh heard this,
He took the ax in his hand, and the glaive drew forth from his baldric,
Went to the forest, and poles each of five gar in length did he fashion,
Knobs of bitumen he made, and he added sockets to the poles: and brought them to Urshanabi;
Gilgamesh and Urshanabi then set forth in their vessel,
They launched the boat on the swell of the wave, and they themselves embarked.

In three days they traveled the distance of a month and a half journey,
And Urshanabi saw that they had arrived at the Waters of Death.

Urshanabi said to Gilgamesh:
"Gilgamesh, take the first pole, thrust it into the water and push the vessel along,
But do not let the Waters of Death touch your hand.
Gilgamesh, take a second, a third, and a fourth pole,
Gilgamesh, take a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh pole,
Gilgamesh, take an eighth, a ninth, and a tenth pole,
Gilgamesh, take an eleventh, a twelfth pole!"
After one hundred twenty poles, Gilgamesh took off his garments,
Set up the mast in its socket, and used the garments as a sail.

Utnapishtim looked into the distance and, inwardly musing,
Said to himself: "Why are the sails of the vessel destroyed,
And why does one who is not of my service ride on the vessel?
This is no mortal who comes, but he is no god either."

[Utnapishtim asks Gilgamesh the same questions already asked by Siduri and Urshanabi, and Gilgamesh replies with the same answers.]

And Gilgamesh said Utnapishtim:
"I have come here to find you, whom people call the 'far-off,'
So I can turn to you for help; I have traveled through all the lands,
I have crossed over the steep mountains, and I have crossed all the seas to find you,
To find life everlasting."

Utnapishtim answered Gilgamesh, saying:

"Does anyone build a house that will stand forever, or sign a contract for all time?
The dead are all alike, and Death makes no distinction between
Servant and master, when they have reached their full span allotted.
Then do the Anunnaki, great gods, settle the destiny of mankind;
Mammetum, Maker of Destiny with them, settles our destiny;
Death and Life they determine; but the day of Death is not revealed."

Gilgamesh said Utnapishtim:
"I gaze on you in amazement, O Utnapishtim!
Your appearance has not changed, you are like me.

And your nature itself has not changed, in your nature you are like me also,
Though you now have eternal life. But my heart has still to struggle
Against all the obstacles that no longer bother you.
Tell me, how did you come to dwell here and obtain eternal life from the gods?"

[In the following passages, Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the flood. In the story of Atrahasis, another name for Utnapishtim, the reason for the flood is that humans have been too noisy and the gods cannot sleep. The gods use the flood as a way to deal with human overpopulation.]

Utnapishtim then said to Gilgamesh:
"I will reveal to you, O Gilgamesh, the mysterious story,
And one of the mysteries of the gods I will tell you.
The city of Shurippak, a city which, as you know,
Is situated on the bank of the river Euphrates. The gods within it
Decided to bring about a flood, even the great gods,
As many as there were. But Ea, the lord of unfathomable wisdom, argued with them.

Although he could not tell any human directly, he gave me a dream;
In the dream, he told their plan first to a reed-hut, saying:
'Reed-hut, reed-hut, clay-structure, clay-structure!
Reed-hut, hear; clay-structure, pay attention!
Man of Shurippak, son of Ubara-Tutu,
Build a house, construct a ship;
Forsake your possessions, take heed!
Abandon your goods, save your life,
And bring the living seed of every kind of creature into the ship.
As for the ship, which you shall build,
Let its proportions be well measured:
Its breadth and its length shall bear proportion each to each,
And into the sea then launch it.'
I took heed, and said to Ea, my lord:
'I will do, my lord, as you have commanded;
I will observe and will fulfill the command.
But what shall I say when the city questions me, the people, and the elders?'
Ea opened his mouth and spoke,
And he said to me, his servant:
'Man, as an answer, say this to them:
"I know that Enlil hates me.
No longer can I live in your city;
Nor on Enlil's territory can I live securely any longer;
I will go down to the sea, I will live with Ea, my lord.
He will pour down rich blessings.
He will grant fowls in plenty and fish in abundance,
Herds of cattle and an abundant harvest."'
As soon as early dawn appeared,
I feared the brightness of the day;
All that was necessary I collected together.
On the fifth day I drew its design;
In its middle part its sides were ten *gar* high;
Ten *gar* also was the extent of its deck;
I added a front-roof to it and closed it in.
I built it in six stories,
Making seven floors in all;
The interior of each I divided again into nine partitions.
Beaks for water within I cut out.
I selected a pole and added all that was necessary.
Three *shar* of pitch I smeared on its outside;
Three *shar* of asphalt I used for the inside (to make it water-tight).
Three *shar* of oil the men carried, carrying it in vessels.
One *shar* of oil I kept out and used it for sacrifices,
While the other two *shar* the boatman stowed away.
For the temple of the gods I slaughtered oxen;
I killed lambs day by day.
Jugs of cider, of oil, and of sweet wine,
Large bowls, like river water flowing freely, I poured out as libations.
I made a feast to the gods like that of the New-Year's Day.
I added tackling above and below, and after all was finished,

The ship sank into water two thirds of its height.
With all that I possessed I filled it;
With all the silver I had I filled it;
With all the gold I had I filled it;
With living creatures of every kind I filled it.
Then I embarked also all my family and my relatives,
Cattle of the field, beasts of the field, and the righteous people—all of them I embarked.
Ea had appointed a time, namely:
'When the rulers of darkness send at eventide a destructive rain,
Then enter into the ship and shut its door.'
This very sign came to pass, and
The rulers of darkness sent a destructive rain at eventide.
I saw the approach of the storm,
And I was afraid to witness the storm;
I entered the ship and shut the door.
I entrusted the guidance of the ship to the boat-man,
Entrusted the great house, and the contents therein.
As soon as early dawn appeared,
There rose up from the horizon a black cloud,
Within which the weather god thundered,
And the king of the gods went before it.
The destroyers passed across mountain and dale.
They tore loose the restraints holding back the waters.
They caused the banks to overflow;
The Anunnaki lifted up their torches,
And with their brightness they illuminated the universe.
The storm brought on by the gods swept even up to the heavens,
And all light was turned into darkness. It flooded the land; it blew with violence;
And in one day it rose above the mountains.
Like an onslaught in battle it rushed in on the people.
Brother could not save brother.
The gods even were afraid of the storm;
They retreated and took refuge in the heaven of Anu.
There the gods crouched down like dogs, in heaven they sat cowering.
Then Ishtar cried out like a woman in travail,
And the lady of the gods lamented with a loud voice, saying:
'The world of old has been turned back into clay,
Because I assented to this evil in the assembly of the gods.
Alas, that I assented to this evil in the council of the gods,
Alas, that I was for the destruction of my own people.
Where is all that I have created, where is it?
Like the spawn of fish it fills the sea.'
The gods wailed with her;
The gods were bowed down, and sat there weeping.
Their lips were pressed together in fear and in terror.
Six days and nights the wind blew, and storm and tempest overwhelmed the country.
When the seventh day arrived, the tempest, the storm, the battle
Which they had waged like a great host began to moderate.
The sea quieted down; hurricane and storm ceased.
I looked out upon the sea and raised loud my voice,

But all mankind had turned back into clay.
Like the surrounding field had become the bed of the rivers.
I opened the air-hole and light fell upon my cheek. 905 Dumfounded I sank backward and sat weeping,
While over my cheek flowed tears.
I looked in every direction, and behold, all was sea.
Now, after twelve days, there rose out of the water a strip of land.
To Mount Nisir the ship drifted. 910 On Mount Nisir the boat stuck fast and it did not slip away.
The first day, the second day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast, and did not let it slip away.
The third day, the fourth day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast, and did not let it slip away.
The fifth day, the sixth day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast, and did not let it slip away.
When the seventh day arrived 915 I sent out a dove, and let her go.
The dove flew hither and thither,
But as there was no resting-place for her, she returned.
Then I sent out a swallow, and let her go.
The swallow flew hither and thither, 920
But as there was no resting-place for her she also returned.
Then I sent out a raven, and let her go.
The raven flew away and saw that the waters were receding.
She settled down to feed, went away, and returned no more.
Then I let everything go out of the boat, and I offered a sacrifice. 925
I poured out a libation on the peak of the mountain.
I placed the censers seven and seven,
And poured into them calamus, cedar wood, and sweet incense.
The gods smelled the savor;
The gods gathered like flies around the sacrifice. 930
But when the lady of the gods, Ishtar, drew close,
She lifted up the precious necklace that Anu had made according to her wish and said:
'All you gods here! by my necklace, I will not forget.
These days will I remember, never will I forget them.
Let the gods come to the offering; 935 But Enlil shall not come to the offering,
Since rashly he caused the flood-storm,
And handed over my people to destruction.'
Now, when Enlil drew close, and saw the ship, the god was angry,
And anger against the gods filled his heart, and he said: 940
'Who then has escaped here with his life?
No man was to survive the universal destruction.'
Then Ninurta opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Enlil:
'Who but Ea could have planned this!
For does not Ea know all arts?' 945
Then Ea opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Enlil:
'O wise one among the gods, how rash of you to bring about a flood-storm!
On the sinner visit his sin, and on the wicked his wickedness;
But be merciful, forbear, let not all be destroyed! Be considerate!
Instead of sending a flood-storm, 950
Let lions come and diminish mankind;
Instead of sending a flood-storm,
Let tigers come and diminish mankind;
Instead of sending a flood-storm,
Let famine come and smite the land;
Instead of sending a flood-storm,

Let pestilence come and kill off the people.
I did not reveal the mystery of the great gods.
Utnapishtim saw this in a dream, and so he heard the mystery of the gods.'
Enlil then arrived at a decision.
Enlil went up into the ship,
Took me by the hand and led me out.
He led out also my wife and made her kneel beside me;
He turned us face to face, and standing between us, blessed us, saying:
'Before this Utnapishtim was only human;
But now Utnapishtim and his wife shall be lofty like the gods;
Let Utnapishtim live far away from men.'
Then they took us and let us dwell far away."

Utnapishtim said to Gilgamesh:

"Now as for you, which one of the gods shall give you the power,
So that you can obtain the life that you desire?
Now sleep!" And for six days and seven nights Gilgamesh slept.
Sleep came over him like a storm wind.
Then Utnapishtim said to his wife:
"Behold, here is the hero whose desire is life everlasting!
Sleep came over him like a storm wind."
And the wife replied to Utnapishtim, the far-away:
"Restore him in health, before he returns on the road on which he came.
Let him pass out through the great door unto his own country."
And Utnapishtim said to his wife:
"The suffering of the man pains you.
Well, then, cook the food for him and place it at his head."
And while Gilgamesh slept on board the ship,
She cooked the food to place it at his head.
And while he slept on board the ship,
Firstly, his food was prepared;
Secondly, it was peeled; thirdly, it was moistened;
Fourthly, his food was cleaned;
Fifthly, [seasoning] was added;
Sixthly, it was cooked;
Seventhly, all of a sudden the man was restored, having eaten of the magic food.
Then spoke Gilgamesh to Utnapishtim, the far-away:
"I had collapsed into sleep, and you have charmed me in some way."
And Utnapishtim said to Gilgamesh:
"I restored you when you ate the magic food."
And Gilgamesh said to Utnapishtim, the far-away:
"What shall I do, Utnapishtim? Where shall I go?
The Demon of the Dead has seized my friend.
Upon my couch Death now sits."

And Utnapishtim said to Urshanabi, the ferryman:
"Urshanabi, you allowed a man to cross with you, you let the boat carry both of you;
Whoever attempts to board the boat, you should have stopped him.
This man has his body covered with sores,
And the eruption of his skin has altered the beauty of his body.
Take him, Urshanabi, and bring him to the place of purification,

Where he can wash his sores in water that they may become white as snow;
Let him rub off his bad skin and the sea will carry it away;
His body shall then appear well and healthy;
Let the turban also be replaced on his head, and the garment that covers his nakedness.
Until he returns to his city, until he arrives at his home,
The garment shall not tear; it shall remain entirely new."

And Urshanabi took him and brought him to the place of purification,
Where he washed his sores in water so that they became white as snow;
He rubbed off his bad skin and the sea carried it away;
His body appeared well and healthy again;
He replaced also the turban on his head;
And the garment that covered his nakedness;
And until he returned to his city, until he arrived at his home,
The garment did not tear, it remained entirely new.

After Gilgamesh and Urshanabi had returned from the place of purification,
The wife of Utnapishtim spoke to her husband, saying:
"Gilgamesh has labored long;
What now will you give him before he returns to his country?"

Then Utnapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:
"Gilgamesh, you have labored long.
What now shall I give you before you return to your country?
I will reveal to you, Gilgamesh, a mystery,
And a secret of the gods I will tell you.
There is a plant resembling buckthorn,
its thorn stings like that of a bramble.
If you eat that plant, you will regain the vigor of your youth."

When Gilgamesh had heard this, he bound heavy stones to his feet,
Which dragged him down to the sea and in this way he found the plant.
Then he grasped the magic plant.
He removed the heavy stones from his feet and one dropped down into the sea,
And the second stone he threw down to the first.
And Gilgamesh said to Urshanabi, the ferryman:
"Urshanabi, this plant is a plant of great power;
I will take it to Uruk the strong-walled,
I will cultivate the plant there and then harvest it.
Its name will be 'Even an old man will be rejuvenated!'
I will eat this plant and return again to the vigor of my youth."

[They start out to return home to Uruk.]

Every forty leagues they then took a meal:
And every sixty leagues they took a rest.
And Gilgamesh saw a well that was filled with cool and refreshing water;
He stepped up to it and poured out some water.
A serpent darted out; the plant slipped from Gilgamesh's hands;
The serpent came out of the well, and took the plant away,
And he uttered a curse.
And after this Gilgamesh sat down and wept.
Tears flowed down his cheeks,
And he said to Urshanabi, the ferryman:

"Why, Urshanabi, did my hands tremble?
Why did the blood of my heart stand still?
Not on myself did I bestow any benefit.
The serpent now has all of the benefit of this plant.
After a journey of only forty leagues the plant has been snatched away,
As I opened the well and lowered the vessel.
I see the sign; this is an omen to me. I am to return, leaving the ship on the shore."

Then they continued to take a meal every forty leagues,
And every sixty leagues they took a rest,
Until they arrived at Uruk the strong-walled.
Gilgamesh then spoke to Urshanabi, the ferryman, saying:
"Urshanabi, ascend and walk about on the wall of Uruk,
Inspect the corner-stone, and examine its brick-work, made of burned brick,
And its foundation strong. One *shar* is the size of the city,
And one *shar* is the size of the gardens,
And one *shar* is the size of Eanna, temple of Anu and Ishtar;
Three *shar* is the size of Uruk strong-walled."

[Now that Gilgamesh knows that he cannot have eternal life, he focuses instead on learning about the afterlife. He tries to find a way to talk to Enkidu by bringing back his ghost to haunt him. Gilgamesh speaks to the Architect of the Temple, asking what he should do to avoid bringing back a ghost—while planning to do the opposite.]

The Architect answered Gilgamesh, saying:

"Gilgamesh, to avoid ghosts, if you go to the temple, do not wear clean garments;
Wear a garment that is dirty, so you do not attract them.
Do not anoint yourself with sweet oil, in case at its fragrance
Around you they gather: nor may you set a bow on the ground, or around you
May circle those shot by the bow; nor may you carry a stick in your hand,
Or ghosts who were beaten may gibber around you: nor may you put on a shoe,
Which would make a loud echo on the ground: you may not kiss the wife whom you love;
The wife whom you hate—you may not chastise her,
Yes, and you may not kiss the child whom you love,
Nor may you chastise the child whom you hate,
For you must mourn their [the ghosts'] loss of the world."

So Gilgamesh went to the temples,
Put on clean garments, and with sweet oil anointed himself:
They gathered around the fragrance;
Around him they gathered: he set the bow on the ground, and around him
Circled the spirits—those who were shot by a bow gibbered at him;
He carried a stick in his hand, and the ghosts who had been beaten gibbered at him.
He put on a shoe and made a loud echo on the ground.
He kissed the wife whom he loved, chastised the wife whom he hated,
He kissed the child whom he loved, chastised the child whom he hated.
They mourned their loss of the world, but Enkidu was not there.

Gilgamesh went all alone to the temple of Enlil:
"Enlil, my Father, the net of Death has stricken me also, holding me down to the earth.
Enkidu—whom I pray that you will raise from the earth—was not seized by the Plague god,
Or lost through a battle of mortals: it was only the earth which has seized him."
But Enlil, the Father, gave no answer.

To the Moon god Gilgamesh went:
“Moon god, my Father, the net of Death has stricken me also, holding me down to the earth.
Enkidu—whom I pray that you will raise from the earth—was not seized by the Plague god,
Or lost through a battle of mortals: it was only the earth which has seized him.”
But Sin, the Moon god, gave no answer.

Then to Ea Gilgamesh went:
“Ea, my Father, the net of Death has stricken me also, holding me down to the earth.
Enkidu—whom I pray that you will raise from the earth—was not seized by the Plague god,
Or lost through a battle of mortals: it was only the earth which has seized him.”

Ea, the Father, heard him, and to Nergal, the warrior-hero,
He spoke: “O Nergal, O warrior-hero, listen to me!
Open now a hole in the earth, so that the spirit of Enkidu, rising,
May come forth from the earth, and so speak with his brother.”

Nergal, the warrior-hero, listened to Ea’s words,
Opened, then, a hole in the earth, and the spirit of Enkidu issued
Forth from the earth like a wind. They embraced and grieved together. Gilgamesh said:
“Tell, O my friend, O tell me, I pray you,
What have you seen of the laws of the Underworld?”

Enkidu said: “Do not ask; I will not tell you—for, were I to tell you
Of what I have seen of the laws of the Underworld, you would sit down weeping!”

Gilgamesh said: “Then let me sit down weeping.”

Enkidu said: “So be it: the friend you cared for now has worms in his body;
The bride you loved is now filled with dust.
Bitter and sad is all that formerly gladdened your heart.”

Gilgamesh said: “Did you see a hero, slain in battle?”

“Yes—[when he died] his father and mother supported his head,
And his wife knelt weeping at his side.
The spirit of such a man is at rest. He lies on a couch and drinks pure water.
But the man whose corpse remains unburied on the field—
You and I have often seen such a man—
His spirit does not find rest in the Underworld.

The man whose spirit has no one who cares for it—
You and I have often seen such man—
Consumes the dregs of the bowl, the broken remnants of food
That are cast into the street.”

[One important lesson for all readers of the poem is, therefore, “Take good care of your dead.” The rest of the tablet is damaged, although one alternate version of the story ends with the funeral of Gilgamesh many years later. Interestingly, once he settles down to become a good ruler, there is nothing more to say.]

This page titled 2.1: The Epic of Gilgamesh is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **1.2: The Epic of Gilgamesh** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

2.2: Hebrew Bible, “Genesis” And “Exodus”

Written version compiled between approximately 1000-500 B.C.E.

Hebrew literature

The *Hebrew Bible* is called the *Tanakh*, a name which comes from the first letters of its three sections: the *Torah*, or the Law (Ta); the *Nevi’im*, or the Prophets (Na), and the *Ketuvim*, or the Writings (Kh). The entire book is sometimes called the *Torah*, and it is also the Christian *Old Testament*. The section called the *Torah*, which is comprised of the first five books (also called the *Pentateuch* and the *Five Books of Moses*), were originally believed to have been composed in the 14th century B.C.E. by Moses. According to biblical scholars, the version that we have today is a compilation from four different written traditions after the time of Moses, which explains why the text has multiple inconsistencies: For instance, in “Genesis,” there are two creations of humans, and the number of animals that God tells Noah to take into the ark changes from two of each kind to seven of each kind. These versions are called the J, E, D, and P texts, which were combined over time. The *Hebrew Bible* has been translated many times over the centuries, and two of the most popular translations are included in the anthology for comparison.

Written by Laura J. Getty

King James Version

Genesis Chapter 1

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God

created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. [28] And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

[29] And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. [30] And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. [31] And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis Chapter 2

[1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. [3] And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

[4] These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, [5] And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. [6] But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. [7] And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

[8] And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. [9] And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. [10] And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. [11] The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; [12] And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. [13] And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. [14] And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. [15] And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

[16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17] But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

[18] And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. [19] And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. [20] And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

[21] And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; [22] And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. [23] And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. [24] Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. [25] And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis Chapter 3

[1] Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? [2] And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: [3] But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. [4] And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: [5] For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

[6] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. [7] And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. [8] And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

[9] And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? [10] And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

[11] And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? [12] And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. [13] And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

[14] And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: [15] And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. [16] Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

[17] And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; [18] Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; [19] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. [20] And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. [21] Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

[22] And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: [23] Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. [24] So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Genesis Chapter 4

[1] And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. [2] And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

[3] And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. [4] And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: [5] But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

[6] And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? [7] If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. [8] And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

[9] And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? [10] And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. [11] And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;
[12] When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

[13] And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. [14] Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. [15] And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

[16] And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. [17] And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. [18] And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

[19] And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

[20] And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. [21] And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. [22] And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructer of every artificer in

brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

[23] And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. [24] If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

[25] And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. [26] And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis Chapter 5

[1] This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; [2] Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

[3] And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth: [4] And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: [5] And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

[6] And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: [7] And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: [8] And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

[9] And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: [10] And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: [11] And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

[12] And Cainan lived seventy years and begat Mahalaleel: [13] And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: [14] And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

[15] And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: [16] And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: [17] And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

[18] And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: [19] And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: [20] And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

[21] And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: [22] And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: [23] And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: [24] And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

[25] And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech. [26] And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters: [27] And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

[28] And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: [29] And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. [30] And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: [31] And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. [32] And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Genesis Chapter 6

[1] And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, [2] That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. [3] And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

[4] There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

[5] And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[6] And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [7] And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

[8] But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

[9] These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. [10] And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[11] The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. [12] And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

[13] And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

[14] Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. [15] And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. [16] A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. [17] And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. [18] But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. [19] And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. [20] Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. [21] And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. [22] Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Genesis Chapter 7

[1] And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. [2] Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. [3] Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. [4] For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

[5] And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. [6] And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

[7] And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. [8] Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, [9] There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. [10] And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

[11] In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. [12] And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

[13] In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; [14] They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. [15] And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. [16] And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

[17] And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. [18] And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. [19] And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. [20] Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

[21] And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: [22] All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. [23] And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl

of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. [24] And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

Genesis Chapter 8

[1] And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; [2] The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; [3] And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

[4] And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. [5] And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

[6] And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: [7] And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. [8] Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; [9] But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. [10] And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; [11] And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. [12] And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

[13] And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. [14] And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

[15] And God spake unto Noah, saying, [16] Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. [17] Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. [18] And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: [19] Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

[20] And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. [21] And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. [22] While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Genesis Chapter 9

[1] And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. [2] And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. [3] Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. [4] But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. [5] And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. [6] Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

[7] And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

[8] And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, [9] And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; [10] And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. [11] And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

[12] And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: [13] I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. [14] And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: [15] And I will remember my

covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature
of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. [16] And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. [17] And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Exodus Chapter 1

[1] Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. [2] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, [3] Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, [4] Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [5] And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already.

[6] And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

[7] And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

[8] Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. [9] And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: [10] Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. [11] Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12] But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. [13] And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: [14] And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in morter, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

[15] And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: [16] And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. [17] But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. [18] And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? [19] And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. [20] Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. [21] And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. [22] And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Exodus Chapter 2

[1] And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. [2] And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. [3] And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. [4] And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

[5] And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. [6] And when she had opened
it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. [7] Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? [8] And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. [9] And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the women took the child, and nursed it. [10] And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

[11] And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. [12] And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. [13] And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? [14] And he said, Who made thee

a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. 15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day? 19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. 20 And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22 And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Exodus Chapter 3

1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: 17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty. 22 But every woman shall

borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Exodus Chapter 4

[1] And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. [2] And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. [3] And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. [4] And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: [5] That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

[6] And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. [7] And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. [8] And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. [9] And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

[10] And Moses said unto the LORD, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. [11] And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? [12] Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. [13] And he said, O my LORD, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. [14] And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. [15] And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. [16] And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. [17] And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

[18] And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. [19] And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. [20] And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. [21] And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. [22] And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: [23] And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

[24] And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. [25] Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. [26] So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.

[27] And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. [28] And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

[29] And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: [30] And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. [31] And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Exodus Chapter 5

[1] And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. [2] And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

[3] And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. [4] And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. [5] And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. [6] And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, [7] Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. [8] And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. [9] Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

[10] And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. [11] Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. [12] So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. [13] And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. [14] And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

[15] Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?

[16] There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. [17] But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD. [18] Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. [19] And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.

[20] And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: [21] And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. [22] And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, LORD, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? [23] For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Exodus Chapter 6

[1] Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. [2] And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: [3] And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. [4] And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. [5] And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. [6] Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: [7] And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. [8] And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

[9] And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

[10] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [11] Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. [12] And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? [13] And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

[14] These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben. [15] And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon.

[16] And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years. [17] The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. [18] And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and

three years. [19] And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi according to their generations. [20] And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.

[21] And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. [22] And the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. [23] And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [24] And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these are the families of the Korhites. [25] And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families. [26] These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. [27] These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.

[28] And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, [29] That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. [30] And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

Exodus Chapter 7

[1] And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. [2] Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. [3] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. [4] But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. [5] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. [6] And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. [7] And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

[8] And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, [9] When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.

[10] And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. [11] Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. [12] For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. [13] And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

[14] And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. [15] Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. [16] And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. [17] Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. [18] And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.

[19] And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. [20] And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. [21] And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. [22] And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. [23] And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. [24] And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. [25] And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

Exodus Chapter 8

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [2] And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: [3] And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs: [4] And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

[5] And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. [6] And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. [7] And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

[8] Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. [9] And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? [10] And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. [11] And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. [12] And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. [13] And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. [14] And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. [15] But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

[16] And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. [17] And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. [18] And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. [19] Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

[20] And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [21] Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. [22] And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. [23] And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. [24] And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

[25] And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. [26] And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? [27] We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. [28] And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me. [29] And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. [30] And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. [31] And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. [32] And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Exodus Chapter 9

[1] Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [2] For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, [3] Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a

very grievous murrain. [4] And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. [5] And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. [6] And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. [7] And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

[8] And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. [9] And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. [10] And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. [11] And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. [12] And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

[13] And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [14] For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there
is none like me in all the earth. [15] For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. [16] And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. [17] As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? [18] Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. [19] Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. [20] He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: [21] And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.

[22] And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. [23] And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. [24] So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. [25] And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. [26] Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

[27] And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. [28] Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. [29] And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD's. [30] But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God. [31] And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. [32] But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up. [33] And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. [34] And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. [35] And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

Exodus Chapter 10

[1] And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: [2] And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD. [3] And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. [4] Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: [5] And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of

that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: [6] And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh. [7] And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? [8] And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? [9] And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. [10] And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. [11] Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

[12] And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. [13] And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. [14] And the locust went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. [15] For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

[16] Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. [17] Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. [18] And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. [19] And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. [20] But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

[21] And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. [22] And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: [23] They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

[24] And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. [25] And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. [26] Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

[27] But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. [28] And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. [29] And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

Exodus Chapter 11

[1] And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. [2] Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold. [3] And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

[4] And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: [5] And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. [6] And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. [7] But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. [8] And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. [9] And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you;

that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. [10] And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Exodus Chapter 12

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying,

[2] This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

[3] Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: [4] And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: [6] And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. [7] And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

[8] And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9] Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. [10] And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

[11] And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover. [12] For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. [13] And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. [14] And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. [15] Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. [16] And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. [17] And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

[18] In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. [19] Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. [20] Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

[21] Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. [22] And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. [23] For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. [24] And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. [25] And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. [26] And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? [27] That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. [28] And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

[29] And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. [30] And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

[31] And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. [32] Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone;

and bless me also. [33] And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. [34] And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. [35] And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: [36] And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

[37] And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. [38] And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. [39] And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

[40] Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. [41] And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. [42] It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

[43] And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: [44] But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. [45] A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. [46] In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. [47] All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. [48] And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. [49] One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. [50] Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. [51] And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

Exodus Chapter 13

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

[3] And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. [4] This day came ye out in the month Abib.

[5] And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. [6] Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. [7] Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

[8] And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. [9] And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. [10] Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

[11] And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, [12] That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD's. [13] And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.

[14] And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: [15] And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. [16] And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

[17] And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: [18] But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. [19] And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

[20] And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. [21] And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: [22] He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Exodus Chapter 14

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. [3] For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. [4] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

[5] And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? [6] And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: [7] And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. [8] And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. [9] But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.

[10] And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. [11] And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? [12] Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

[13] And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. [14] The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

[15] And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: [16] But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. [17] And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. [18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

[19] And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: [20] And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

[21] And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. [22] And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. [23] And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. [24] And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, [25] And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

[26] And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. [27] And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. [28]

And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. [29] But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. [30] Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. [31] And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Exodus Chapter 15

[1] Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. [2] The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. [3] The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. [4] Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. [5] The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. [6] Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. [7] And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. [8] And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. [9] The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. [10] Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. [11] Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? [12] Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. [13] Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. [14] The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. [15] Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. [16] Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. [17] Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. [18] The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. [19] For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

[20] And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. [21] And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

[22] So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

[23] And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. [24] And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? [25] And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, [26] And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

[27] And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

Exodus Chapter 16

[1] And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. [2] And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: [3] And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

[4] Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. [5] And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. [6] And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: [7] And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? [8] And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.

[9] And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. [10] And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

[11] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [12] I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

[13] And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. [14] And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. [15] And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

[16] This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. [17] And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. [18] And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according
to his eating. [19] And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. [20] Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. [21] And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

[22] And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. [23] And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. [24] And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. [25] And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. [26] Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

[27] And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. [28] And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? [29] See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. [30] So the people rested on the seventh day. [31] And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

[32] And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. [33] And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. [34] As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. [35] And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. [36] Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

Exodus Chapter 17

[1] And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. [2] Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? [3] And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this

that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? [4] And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. [5] And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. [6] Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. [7] And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

[8] Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. [9] And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. [10] So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. [11] And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. [12] But Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. [13] And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. [14] And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. [15] And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: [16] For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Exodus Chapter 18

[1] When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; [2] Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, [3] And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: [4] And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh: [5] And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: [6] And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

[7] And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. [8] And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. [9] And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. [10] And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. [11] Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. [12] And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.

[13] And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. [14] And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? [15] And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: [16] When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. [17] And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. [18] Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. [19] Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: [20] And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. [21] Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:
[22] And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. [23] If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. [24] So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. [25] And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made

them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hun dreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. [26] And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

[27] And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Exodus Chapter 19

[1] In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. [2] For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. [3] And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; [4] Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. [5] Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: [6] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

[7] And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. [8] And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

[9] And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

[10] And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, [11] And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. [12] And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: [13] There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

[14] And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.[15] And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

[16] And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. [17] And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. [18] And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. [19] And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. [20] And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. [21] And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. [22] And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. [23] And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. [24] And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. [25] So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Exodus Chapter 20

[1] And God spake all these words, saying, [2] I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. [3] Thou shalt have no other gods before me. [4] Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [5] Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; [6] And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. [7] Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. [8] Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: [10] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor

thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

[12] Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. [13] Thou shalt not kill. [14] Thou shalt not commit adultery. [15] Thou shalt not steal. [16] Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. [17] Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

[18] And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. [19] And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. [20] And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. [21] And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

[22] And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. [23] Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. [24] An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. [25] And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. [26] Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Exodus Chapter 21

[1] Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. [2] If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. [3] If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. [4] If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. [5] And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: [6] Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

[7] And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. [8] If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. [9] And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. [10] If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. [11] And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

[12] He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. [13] And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. [14] But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

[15] And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

[16] And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. [17] And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

[18] And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: [19] If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

[20] And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. [21] Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

[22] If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. [23] And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, [24] Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

[26] And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. [27] And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

[28] If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. [29] But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. [30] If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. [31] Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. [32] If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

[33] And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein;

[34] The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his.

[35] And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide. [36] Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.

Exodus Chapter 22

[1] If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

[2] If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. [3] If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. [4] If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

[5] If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

[6] If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

[7] If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. [8] If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. [9] For all manner of trespass, whether
it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour. [10] If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die,
or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: [11] Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. [12] And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. [13] If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn.

[14] And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. [15] But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire.

[16] And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. [17] If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

[18] Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

[19] Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death.

[20] He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

[21] Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

[22] Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. [23] If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; [24] And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

[25] If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. [26] If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: [27] For that

is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

[28] Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

[29] Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. [30] Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

[31] And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

Exodus Chapter 23

[1] Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

[2] Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

[3] Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

[4] If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. [5] If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him. [6] Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. [7] Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

[8] And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

[9] Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

[10] And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: [11] But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. [12] Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed. [13] And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

[14] Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. [15] Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) [16] And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. [17] Three items in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God. [18] Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning. [19] The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

[20] Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. [21] Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. [22] But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. [23] For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. [24] Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. [25] And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

[26] There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. [27] I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. [28] And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. [29] I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. [30] By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. [31] And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. [32] Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. [33] They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Exodus Chapter 24

[1] And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. [2] And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

[3] And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. [4] And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. [5] And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. [6] And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. [7] And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. [8] And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

[9] Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: [10] And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. [11] And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

[12] And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. [13] And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. [14] And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. [15] And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. [16] And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. [17] And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. [18] And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Exodus Chapter 25

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. [3] And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, [4] And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, [5] And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, [6] Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, [7] Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. [8] And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. [9] According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

[10] And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. [11] And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. [12] And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. [13] And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. [14] And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. [15] The staves shall
be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. [16] And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. [17] And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. [18] And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. [19] And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on
the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. [20] And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. [21] And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. [22] And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

[23] Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. [24] And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. [25] And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. [26] And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. [27] Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. [28] And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. [29] And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. [30] And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.

[31] And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. [32] And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: [33] Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. [34] And in the candlesticks shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. [35] And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. [36] Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. [37] And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. [38] And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. [39] Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. [40] And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

Exodus Chapter 26

[1] Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. [2] The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. [3] The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. [4] And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. [5] Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. [6] And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle.

[7] And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. [8] The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. [9] And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle. [10] And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. [11] And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. [12] And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle. [13] And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. [14] And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins.

[15] And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood standing up. [16] Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. [17] Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. [18] And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. [19] And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. [20] And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards: [21] And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. [22] And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. [23] And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. [24] And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. [25] And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

[26] And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, [27] And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. [28] And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. [29] And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. [30] And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.

[31] And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: [32] And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.

[33] And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. [34] And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. [35] And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. [36] And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. [37] And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

Exodus Chapter 27

[1] And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. [2] And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. [3] And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. [4] And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. [5] And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. [6] And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. [7] And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. [8] Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

[9] And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: [10] And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. [11] And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver.

[12] And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. [13] And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. [14] The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. [15] And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three.

[16] And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. [17] All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass.

[18] The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. [19] All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.

[20] And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. [21] In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Exodus Chapter 28

[1] And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. [2] And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. [3] And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the

spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [4] And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [5] And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

[6] And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. [7] It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. [8] And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. [9] And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: [10] Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. [11] With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. [12] And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.

[13] And thou shalt make ouches of gold; [14] And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches. [15] And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. [16] Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. [17] And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. [18] And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. [19] And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. [20] And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. [21] And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

[22] And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. [23] And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. [24] And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. [25] And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it.

[26] And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. [27] And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. [28] And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. [29] And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

[30] And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.

[31] And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. [32] And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent.

[33] And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: [34] A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. [35] And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not.[36] And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. [37] And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. [38] And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

[39] And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework.

[40] And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. [41] And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. [42] And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: [43] And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

Exodus Chapter 29

[1] And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, [2] And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. [3] And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. [4] And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. [5] And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: [6] And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. [7] Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.
[8] And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. [9] And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. [10] And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. [11] And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. [12] And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. [13] And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. [14] But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering.

[15] Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. [16] And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. [17] And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. [18] And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the LORD: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

[19] And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

[20] Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. [21] And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

[22] Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: [23] And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD: [24] And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. [25] And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. [26] And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. [27] And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: [28] And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.

[29] And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. [30] And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place.

[31] And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. [32] And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. [33] And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. [34] And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. [35] And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. [36] And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.

[37] Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

[38] Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. [39] The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: [40] And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. [41] And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. [42] This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. [43] And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. [44] And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office.

[45] And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. [46] And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

Exodus Chapter 30

[1] And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. [2] A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. [3] And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. [4] And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. [5] And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. [6] And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. [7] And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. [8] And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. [9] Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. [10] And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

[11] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. [13] This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. [14] Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. [15] The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. [16] And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

[17] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [18] Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. [19] For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: [20] When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: [21] So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

[22] Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [23] Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, [24] And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: [25] And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. [26] And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, [27] And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, [28] And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. [29] And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. [30] And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. [31] And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. [32] Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. [33] Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

[34] And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: [35] And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: [36] And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. [37] And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. [38] Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

Exodus Chapter 31

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [2] See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: [3] And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, [4] To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, [5] And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. [6] And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; [7] The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, [8] And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, [9] And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, [10] And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, [11] And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.

[12] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [13] Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. [14] Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. [15] Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. [16] Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. [17] It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

[18] And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus Chapter 32

[1] And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. [2] And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. [3] And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. [4] And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. [5] And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. [6] And

they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. 16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. 17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. 18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. 23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29 For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. 35 And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Exodus Chapter 33

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:

2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:

[3] Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

[4] And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.

[5] For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

[6] And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

[7] And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

[8] And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

[9] And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.

[10] And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door.

[11] And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

[12] And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. [13] Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. [14] And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. [15] And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

[16] For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. [17] And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. [18] And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. [19] And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. [20] And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. [21] And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: [22] And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: [23] And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Exodus Chapter 34

[1] And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. [2] And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. [3] And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

[4] And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

[5] And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. [6] And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, [7] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. [8] And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. [9] And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my LORD, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

[10] And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. [11] Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. [12] Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: [13] But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: [14] For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: [15] Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; [16] And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. [17] Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

[18] The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. [19] All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. [20] But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

[21] Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.

[22] And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

[23] Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. [24] For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year. [25] Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. [26] The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. [27] And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

[28] And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

[29] And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. [30] And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. [31] And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. [32] And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. [33] And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. [34] But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. [35] And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Exodus Chapter 35

[1] And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. [2] Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. [3] Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

[4] And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, [5] Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, [6] And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, [7] And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, [8] And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, [9] And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. [10] And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded; [11] The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, [12] The ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering, [13] The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread, 14 The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, [15] And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of

the tabernacle, [16] The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, [17] The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, [18] The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, [19] The cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

[20] And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. [21] And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. [22] And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. [23] And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. [24] Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. [25] And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. [26] And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. [27] And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; [28] And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. [29] The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

[30] And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; [31] And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; [32] And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, [33] And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. [34] And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. [35] Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Exodus Chapter 36

[1] Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. [2] And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: [3] And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. [4] And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made;

[5] And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. [6] And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. [7] For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

[8] And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work made he them. [9] The length of one curtain was twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains were all of one size. [10] And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and the other five curtains he coupled one unto another. [11] And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. [12] Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which was in the coupling of the second: the loops held one curtain to another. [13] And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches: so it became one tabernacle.

[14] And he made curtains of goats' hair for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. [15] The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains were of one size. 16 And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. [17] And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. [18] And he made fifty taches of brass to

couple the tent together, that it might be one. [19] And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins above that.

[20] And he made boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood, standing up. [21] The length of a board was ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half. [22] One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle. [23] And he made boards for the tabernacle; twenty boards for the south side southward: [24] And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. [25] And for the other side of the tabernacle, which is toward the north corner, he made twenty boards, [26] And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. [27] And for the sides of the tabernacle westward he made six boards. [28] And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. [29] And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners.
[30] And there were eight boards; and their sockets were sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets.

[31] And he made bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, [32] And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the sides westward. [33] And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other. [34] And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

[35] And he made a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubims made he it of cunning work. [36] And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver.

[37] And he made an hanging for the tabernacle door of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needlework; [38] And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters and their fillets with gold: but their five sockets were of brass.

Exodus Chapter 37

[1] And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: [2] And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. [3] And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. [4] And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. [5] And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.

[6] And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. [7] And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; [8] One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. [9] And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.

[10] And he made the table of shittim wood: two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: [11] And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. [12] Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. [13] And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. [14] Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table.

[15] And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. [16] And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold.

[17] And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same: [18] And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: [19] Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick.

[20] And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers: [21] And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going

out of it. [22] Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. [23] And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuffdishes, of pure gold. 24 Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

[25] And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. [26] And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about. [27] And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal. [28] And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold.

[29] And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary.

Exodus Chapter 38

[1] And he made the altar of burnt offering of shittim wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof; it was foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof. [2] And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same: and he overlaid it with brass. [3] And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basons, and the fleshhooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. [4] And he made for the altar a brasen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it. [5] And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, to be places for the staves. [6] And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with brass. [7] And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.

[8] And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

[9] And he made the court: on the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits: [10] Their pillars were twenty, and their brasen sockets twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. [11] And for the north side the hangings were an hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. [12] And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. [13] And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. [14] The hangings of the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. [15] And for the other side of the court gate, on this hand and that hand, were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. [16] All the hangings of the court round about were of fine twined linen. [17] And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver; and the overlaying of their chapiters of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. [18] And the hanging for the gate of the court was needlework, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. [19] And their pillars were four, and their sockets of brass four; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters and their fillets of silver. [20] And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.

[21] This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. [22] And Bezaleel the son Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses. [23] And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. [24] All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy place, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. [25] And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: [26] A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men.

[27] And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. [28] And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. [29] And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. [30] And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, [31] And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

Exodus Chapter 39

[1] And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. [2] And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. [3] And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work. [4] They made shoulderpieces for it, to couple it together: by the two edges was it coupled together. [5] And the curious girdle of his ephod, that was upon it, was of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[6] And they wrought onyx stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. [7] And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[8] And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. [9] It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled. [10] And they set in it four rows of stones: the first row was a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this was the first row. [11] And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

[12] And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. [13] And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: they were inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings. [14] And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. [15] And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold. [16] And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate. [17] And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. [18] And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod, before it.

[19] And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward. [20] And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. [21] And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[22] And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. [23] And there was an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rend. [24] And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. [25] And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates; [26] A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[27] And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, [28] And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen, [29] And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[30] And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. [31] And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[32] Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

[33] And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, [34] And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the vail of the covering, [35] The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat, [36] The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread, [37] The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light, [38] And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door, [39] The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, [40] The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the

congregation, [41] The cloths of service to do service in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office. [42] According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. [43] And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

Exodus Chapter 40

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [2] On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. [3] And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail. [4] And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. [5] And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. [6] And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. [7] And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. [8] And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate. [9] And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. [10] And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. [11] And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. [12] And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. [13] And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [14] And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: [15] And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

[16] Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.

[17] And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. [18] And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. [19] And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[20] And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark: [21] And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[22] And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail. [23] And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[24] And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. [25] And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[26] And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail: [27] And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[28] And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. [29] And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.

[30] And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. [31] And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: [32] When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. [33] And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

[34] Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. [35] And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. [36] And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: [37] But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. [38] For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

American Standard Version

Genesis Chapter 1

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, [and] fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

20 And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. 23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: 30 and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, [I have given] every green herb for food: and it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis Chapter 2

1 And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven. 5 And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not caused

it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground; [6] but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. [7] And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

[8] And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. [9] And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. [10] And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. [11] The name of the first is Pishon: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; [12] and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. [13] And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush. [14] And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth in front of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. [15] And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

[16] And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

[18] And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. [19] And out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof. [20] And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him.

[21] And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: [22] and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. [23] And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. [24] Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. [25] And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis Chapter 3

[1] Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? [2] And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: [3] but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. [4] And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: [5] for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

[6] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. [7] And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. [8] And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.

[9] And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? [10] And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

[11] And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? [12] And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. [13] And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

[14] And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: [15] and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. [16] Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

[17] And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; [18] thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; [19] in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat

bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. [20] And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. [21] And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.

[22] And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever[23] therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. [24] So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Genesis Chapter 4

[1] And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with [the help of] Jehovah. [2] And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

[3] And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. [4] And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: [5] but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

[6] And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? [7] If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it. [8] And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

[9] And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? [10] And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

[12] when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.

[13] And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. [14] Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me. [15] And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.

[16] And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. [17] And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. 18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methushael; and Methushael begat Lamech.

[19] And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. [20] And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents and [have] cattle. [21] And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe. [22] And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

[23] And Lamech said unto his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: For I have slain a man for wounding me, And a young man for bruising me: [24] If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

[25] And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth. For, [said she], God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel; for Cain slew him. [26] And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enosh. Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.

Genesis Chapter 5

[1] This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; [2] male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

[3] And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat [a son] in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: [4] and the days of Adam after he begat Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters. [5] And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

[6] And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begat Enosh: [7] and Seth lived after he begat Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: [8] and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

[9] And Enosh lived ninety years, and begat Kenan. [10] and Enosh lived after he begat Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: [11] and all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

[12] And Kenan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalalel: [13] and Kenan lived after he begat Mahalalel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: [14] and all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

[15] And Mahalalel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: [16] And Mahalalel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:

[17] and all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

[18] And Jared lived a hundred sixty and two years, and begat Enoch: [19] and Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: [20] And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

[21] And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: [22] and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: [23] and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: [24] and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

[25] And Methuselah lived a hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: [26] and Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters. [27] And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

[28] And Lamech lived a hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: [29] and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, [which cometh] because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed. [30] And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: [31] And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. [32] And Noah was five hundred years old: And Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Genesis Chapter 6

[1] And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, [2] that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. [3] And Jehovah said, My spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.

[4] The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

[5] And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[6] And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [7] And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

[8] But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.

[9] These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, [and] perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God. [10] And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[11] And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. [12] And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

[13] And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

[14] Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. [15] And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. [16] A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side

thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. [17] And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon this earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die. [18] But I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. [19] And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. [20] Of the birds after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. [21] And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. [22] Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Genesis Chapter 7

[1] And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. [2] Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female: [3] of the birds also of the heavens, seven and seven, male and female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. [4] For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground.

[5] And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him. [6] And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

[7] And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. [8] Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creepeth upon the ground, [9] there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, male and female, as God commanded Noah. [10] And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

[11] In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. [12] And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

[13] In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; [14] they, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. [15] And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life. [16] And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him: and Jehovah shut him in.

[17] And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. [18] And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. [19] And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. [20] Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

[21] And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: [22] all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. [23] And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark. [24] And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

Genesis Chapter 8

[1] And God remembered Noah, and all the beasts, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; [2] the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; [3] and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

[4] And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. [5] And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

[6] And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:

[7] and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. [8] And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; [9] but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him into the ark. [10] And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; [11] and the dove came in to him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. [12] And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more.

[13] And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried. [14] And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry.

[15] And God spake unto Noah, saying, [16] Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. [17] Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both birds, and cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. [18] And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: [19] every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatsoever moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.

[20] And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. [21] And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. [22] While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Genesis Chapter 9

[1] And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. [2] And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; With all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered. [3] Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; As the green herb have I given you all. [4] But flesh with the life thereof, [which is] the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. [5] And surely your blood, [the blood] of your lives, will I require; At the hand of every beast will I require it. And at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will
I require the life of man. [6] Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God made he man. [7] And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

[8] And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, [9] And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; [10] and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you. Of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. [11] And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

[12] And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: [13] I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. [14] And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, [15] and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. [16] And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. [17] And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Exodus Chapter 1

[1] Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt (every man and his household came with Jacob): [2] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, [3] Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, [4] Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. [5] And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in Egypt already. [6] And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

[7] And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

[8] Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. [9] And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: [10] come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. [11] Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12] But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. [13] And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: [14] and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

[15] And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: [16] and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth-stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. [17] But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive. [18] And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive? [19] And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them. [20] And God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. [21] And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them households. [22] And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Exodus Chapter 2

[1] And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. [2] And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. [3] And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. [4] And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

[5] And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. [6] And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. [7] Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? [8] And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. [9] And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. [10] And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

[11] And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. [12] And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. [13] And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? [14] And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. [15] Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

[16] Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. [17] And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. [18] And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon today? [19] And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and moreover he drew water for us, and watered the flock. [20] And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. [21] And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. [22] And she bare a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.

[23] And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. [24] And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. [25] And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge [of them].

Exodus Chapter 3

[1] Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. [2] And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. [3] And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. [4] And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. [5] And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. [6] Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

[7] And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; [8] and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. [9] And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. [10] Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

[11] And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? [12] And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. [13] And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? [14] And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. [15] And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

[16] Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and [seen] that which is done to you in Egypt: [17] and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. [18] And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God.

[19] And I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty hand. [20] And I will put forth my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. [21] And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty. [22] But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall despoil the Egyptians.

Exodus Chapter 4

[1] And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee. [2] And Jehovah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. [3] And he said, Cast in on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. [4] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail: (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand:) [5] That they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

[6] And Jehovah said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as [white as] snow. [7] And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his [other] flesh.) [8] And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. [9] And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the

water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

10 And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh [a man] dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, Jehovah? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. 13 And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. 14 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. 16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God. 17 And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs.

18 And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren that are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. 19 And Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead that sought thy life. 20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. 21 And Jehovah said unto Moses, When thou goest back into Egypt, see that thou do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart and he will not let the people go. 22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born: 23 and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born.

24 And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that Jehovah met him, and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me. 26 So he let him alone. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood [art thou], because of the circumcision.

27 And Jehovah said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of Jehovah wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs wherewith he had charged him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: 30 and Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed: and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Exodus Chapter 5

1 And afterward Moses and Aaron came, and said unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. 2 And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.

3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. 4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. 5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. 6 And the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, 7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And the number of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof: for they are idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. 9 Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein; and let them not regard lying words.

10 And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 11 Go yourselves, get you straw where ye can find it: for nought of your work shall be diminished. 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. 13 And the taskmasters were urgent saying, Fulfil your works, [your] daily tasks, as when there was straw.

14 And the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task both yesterday and to-day, in making brick as heretofore?

[15] Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? [16] There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault it in thine own people. [17] But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah. [18] Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the number of bricks. [19] And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, when it was said, Ye shall not diminish aught from your bricks, [your] daily tasks.

[20] And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: [21] and they said unto them, Jehovah look upon you, and judge: because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. [22] And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou dealt ill with this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? [23] For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Exodus Chapter 6

[1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. [2] And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: [3] and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them. [4] And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, wherein they sojourned. [5] And moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. [6] Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments: [7] and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. [8] And I will bring you in unto the land which I sware to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah.

[9] And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

[10] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [11] Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. [12] And Moses spake before Jehovah, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? [13] And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

[14] These are the heads of their fathers' houses. The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel: Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. [15] And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman; these are the families of Simeon.

[16] And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari; and the years of the life of Levi were a hundred thirty and seven years. [17] The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, according to their families. [18] And the sons of Kohath: Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel; and the years of the life of Kohath were a hundred thirty and three years. [19] And the sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations. [20] And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were a hundred and thirty and seven years.

[21] And the sons of Izhar: Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. [22] And the sons of Uzziel: Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Sithri. [23] And Aaron took him Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. [24] And the sons of Korah: Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites. [25] And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' [houses] of the Levites according to their families. [26] These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom Jehovah said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts. [27] These are they that spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.

[28] And it came to pass on the day when Jehovah spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, [29] that Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, I am Jehovah: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak unto thee. [30] And Moses said before Jehovah, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

Exodus Chapter 7

[1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. [2] Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. [3] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. [4] But Pharaoh will not hearken unto you, and I will lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. [5] And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. [6] And Moses and Aaron did so; as Jehovah commanded them, so did they. [7] And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

[8] And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, [9] When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a wonder for you; then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it become a serpent.

[10] And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so, as Jehovah had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. [11] Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers: and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did in like manner with their enchantments. [12] For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. [13] And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken.

[14] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go. [15] Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thy hand. [16] And thou shalt say unto him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened. [17] Thus saith Jehovah, In this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. [18] And the fish that are in the river shall die, and the river shall become foul; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink water from the river.

[19] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their ponds of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone. [20] And Moses and Aaron did so, as Jehovah commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. [21] And the fish that were in the river died; and the river became foul, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river; and the blood was throughout all the land of Egypt. [22] And the magicians of Egypt did in like manner with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken. [23] And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he lay even this to heart. [24] And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. [25] And seven days were fulfilled, after that Jehovah had smitten the river.

Exodus Chapter 8

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [2] And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: [3] and the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thy house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: [4] and the frogs shall come up both upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

[5] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thy hand with thy rod over the rivers, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. [6] And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. [7] And the magicians did in like manner with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

[8] Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat Jehovah, that he take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto Jehovah. [9] And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Have thou this glory over me: against what time shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, that the frogs be destroyed from thee and thy houses, and remain in the river only? [10] And he said, Against to-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest

know that there is none like unto Jehovah our God. [11] And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. [12] And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto Jehovah concerning the frogs which he had brought upon Pharaoh. [13] And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. [14] And they gathered them together in heaps; and the land stank. [15] But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had spoken.

[16] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the earth, that is may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. [17] And they did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and there were lice upon man, and upon beast; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. [18] And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: and there were lice upon man, and upon beast. [19] Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken.

[20] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [21] Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon they servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. [22] And I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am Jehovah in the midst of the earth. [23] And I will put a division between my people and thy people: by to-morrow shall this sign be. [24] And Jehovah did so; and there came grievous swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses: and in all the land of Egypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of flies.

[25] And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. [26] And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to Jehovah our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? [27] We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Jehovah our God, as he shall command us. [28] And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to Jehovah your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me. [29] And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat Jehovah that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: only let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Jehovah. [30] And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated Jehovah. [31] And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. [32] And Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

Exodus Chapter 9

[1] Then Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [2] For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, [3] behold, the hand of Jehovah is upon thy cattle which are in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the herds, and upon the flocks: [there shall be] a very grievous murrain. [4] And Jehovah shall make a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt; and there shall nothing die of all that belongeth to the children of Israel. [5] And Jehovah appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow Jehovah shall do this thing in the land. [6] And Jehovah did that thing on the morrow; and all the cattle of Egypt died; but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. [7] And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not so much as one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was stubborn, and he did not let the people go.

[8] And Jehovah said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. [9] And it shall become small dust over all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. [10] And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast. [11] And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boils were upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. [12] And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had spoken unto Moses.

[13] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [14] For I will this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. [15] For now I had put forth

my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth: [16] but in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. [17] As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? [18] Behold, to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the day it was founded even until now. [19] Now therefore send, hasten in thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; [for] every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. [20] He that feared the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses. [21] And he that regarded not the word of Jehovah left his servants and his cattle in the field.

[22] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch forth thy hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. [23] And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and Jehovah sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down unto the earth; and Jehovah rained hail upon the land of Egypt. [24] So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. [25] And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. [26] Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

[27] And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. [28] Entreat Jehovah; for there hath been enough of [these] mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. [29] And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto Jehovah; the thunders shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know that the earth is Jehovah's. [30] But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear Jehovah God. [31] And the flax and the barley were smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bloom. [32] But the wheat and the spelt were not smitten: for they were not grown up. [33] And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto Jehovah: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. [34] And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. [35] And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the children of Israel go, as Jehovah had spoken by Moses.

Exodus Chapter 10

[1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I may show these my signs in the midst of them, [2] and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought upon Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am Jehovah. [3] And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. [4] Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring locusts into thy border: [5] and they shall cover the face of the earth, so that one shall not be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: [6] and thy houses shall be filled, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; as neither thy fathers nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned, and went out from Pharaoh. [7] And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve Jehovah their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? [8] And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve Jehovah your God; but who are they that shall go? [9] And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto Jehovah. [10] And he said unto them, So be Jehovah with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. [11] Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve Jehovah; for that is what ye desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

[12] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. [13] And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and Jehovah brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all the night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. [14] And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the borders of Egypt; very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. [15] For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing, either tree or herb of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

[16] Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against Jehovah your God, and against you. [17] Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat Jehovah your God, that he may take away from me this death only. [18] And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated Jehovah. [19] And Jehovah turned an exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the border of Egypt. [20] But Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

[21] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. [22] And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; [23] they saw not one another, neither rose any one from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

[24] And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve Jehovah; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. [25] And Moses said, Thou must also give into our hand sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Jehovah our God. [26] Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve Jehovah our God; and we know not with what we must serve Jehovah, until we come thither.

[27] But Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28 And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die. [29] And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well. I will see thy face again no more.

Exodus Chapter 11

[1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. [2] Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. [3] And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

[4] And Moses said, Thus saith Jehovah, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: [5] and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle. [6] And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there hath not been, nor shall be any more. [7] But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Jehovah doth make a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. [8] And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. [9] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pharaoh will not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. [10] And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Exodus Chapter 12

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, [2] This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

[3] Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth [day] of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household: [4] and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats: [6] and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even. [7] And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. [8] And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9] Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof. [10] And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

[11] And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's passover. [12] For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Jehovah. [13] And the blood shall be to you for a

token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. [14] And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah: throughout your generations ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. [15] Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. [16] And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. [17] And ye shall observe the [feast of] unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance for ever.

[18] In the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. [19] Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or one that is born in the land. [20] Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

[21] Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover. [22] And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. [23] For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. [24] And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. [25] And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. [26] And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? [27] that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. [28] And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

[29] And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. [30] And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

[31] And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. [32] Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. [33] And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We are all dead men. [34] And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. [35] And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. [36] And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.

[37] And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. [38] And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. [39] And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals.

[40] Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. [41] And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt. [42] It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of Jehovah, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

[43] And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no foreigner eat thereof; [44] but every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. [45] A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof. [46] In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. [47] All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. [48] And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to Jehovah, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: but no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. [49] One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto

the stranger that sojourneth among you. [50] Thus did all the children of Israel; as Jehovah commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. [51] And it came to pass the selfsame day, that Jehovah did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

Exodus Chapter 13

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

[3] And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. [4] This day ye go forth in the month Abib.

[5] And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. [6] Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Jehovah. [7] Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee, in all thy borders.

[8] And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying, It is because of that which Jehovah did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. [9] And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of Jehovah may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt. [10] Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

[11] And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, [12] that thou shalt set apart unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb, and every firstling which thou hast that cometh of a beast; the males shall be Jehovah's. [13] And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck: and all the first-born of man among thy sons shalt thou redeem.

[14] And it shall be, when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: [15] and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that Jehovah slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast: therefore I sacrifice to Jehovah all that openeth the womb, being males; but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. [16] And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt.

[17] And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: [18] but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. [19] And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

[20] And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. [21] And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might go by day and by night: [22] the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.

Exodus Chapter 14

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea.
[3] And Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. [4] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he shall follow after them; and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host: and the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah. And they did so.

[5] And it was told the king of Egypt that the people were fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

[6] And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: [7] and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them. [8] And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children

of Israel: for the children of Israel went out with a high hand. [9] And the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses [and] chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

[10] And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah. [11] And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? [12] Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

[13] And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. [14] Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

[15] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. [16] And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. [17] And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall go in after them: and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. [18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

[19] And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them: [20] and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night: and the one came not near the other all the night.

[21] And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go [back] by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. [22] And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

[23] And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. [24] And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Jehovah looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians. [25] And he took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

[26] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. [27] And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. [28] And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them. [29] But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. [30] Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. [31] And Israel saw the great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah, and in his servant Moses.

Exodus Chapter 15

[1] Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah, and spake, saying, I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. [2] Jehovah is my strength and song, And he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will praise him; My father's God, and I will exalt him.

[3] Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is his name. [4] Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea; And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea. [5] The deeps cover them: They went down into the depths like a stone. [6] Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is glorious in power, Thy right hand, O Jehovah, dasheth in pieces the enemy. [7] And in the greatness of thine excellency thou overthrowest them that rise up against thee: Thou sendest forth thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble. [8] And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up, The floods stood upright as a heap; The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. [9] The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. [10] Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: They sank as lead in the mighty waters. [11] Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? [12] Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, The earth swallowed them. [13] Thou in thy lovingkindness hast led the people that thou hast

redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation. [14] The peoples have heard, they tremble: Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. [15] Then were the chiefs of Edom dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them: All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away. [16] Terror and dread falleth upon them; By the greatness of thine arm they are as still as a stone; Till thy people pass over, O Jehovah, Till the people pass over that thou hast purchased. [17] Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, The place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. [18] Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever. [19] For the horses of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and Jehovah brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.

[20] And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. [21] And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously; The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

[22] And Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

[23] And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. [24] And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? [25] An he cried unto Jehovah; And Jehovah showed him a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them; [26] and he said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his eyes, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am Jehovah that healeth thee.

[27] And they came to Elim, where were twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

Exodus Chapter 16

[1] And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. [2] And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness: [3] and the children of Israel said unto them, Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

[4] Then said Jehovah unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. [5] And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. [6] And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that Jehovah hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; [7] and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of Jehovah; for that he heareth your murmurings against Jehovah: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? [8] And Moses said, [This shall be], when Jehovah shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that Jehovah heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah.

[9] And Moses said unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before Jehovah; for he hath heard your murmurings. [10] And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud.

[11] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [12] I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God.

[13] And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. [14] And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground. [15] And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? For they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat.

[16] This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent. [17] And the children of Israel did so, and

gathered some more, some less. [18] And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. [19] And Moses said unto them, Let no man leave of it till the morning. [20] Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and Moses was wroth with them. [21] And they gathered it morning by morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

[22] And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. [23] And he said unto them, This is that which Jehovah hath spoken, Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah: bake that which ye will bake, and boil that which ye will boil; and all that remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. [24] And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not become foul, neither was there any worm therein. [25] And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto Jehovah: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. [26] Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

[27] And it came to pass on the seventh day, that there went out some of the people to gather, and they found none. [28] And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? [29] See, for that Jehovah hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. [30] So the people rested on the seventh day. [31] And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers [made] with honey.

[32] And Moses said, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread wherewith I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. [33] And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omerful of manna therein, and lay it up before Jehovah, to be kept throughout your generations. [34] As Jehovah commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. [35] And the children of Israel did eat the manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. [36] Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

Exodus Chapter 17

[1] And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to the commandment of Jehovah, and encamped in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. [2] Wherefore the people stove with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why strive ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah? [3] And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? [4] And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me. [5] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and they rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. [6] Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. [7] And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the striving of the children of Israel, and because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?

[8] Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. [9] And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. [10] So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. [11] And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. [12] But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. [13] And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. [14] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. [15] And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi; [16] And he said, Jehovah hath sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Exodus Chapter 18

[1] Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, how that Jehovah had brought Israel out of Egypt. [2] And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away, [3] and her two sons; of whom the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land: [4] and the name of the other was Eliezer; for [he said], The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. [5]

And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness where he was encamped, at the mount of God: [6] and he said unto Moses, I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

[7] And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him: and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. [8] And Moses told his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how Jehovah delivered them. [9] And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Jehovah had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. [10] And Jethro said, Blessed be Jehovah, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. [11] Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods; yea, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly against them. [12] And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

[13] And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood about Moses from the morning unto the evening. [14] And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand about thee from morning unto even? [15] And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: [16] when they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. [17] And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. [18] Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for the thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. [19] Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee: be thou for the people to God-ward, and bring thou the causes unto God: [20] and thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. [21] Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: [22] and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear [the burden] with thee.

[23] If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. [24] So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. [25] And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. [26] And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

[27] And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Exodus Chapter 19

[1] In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. [2] And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount. [3] And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: [4] Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. [5] Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: [6] and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

[7] And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jehovah commanded him. [8] And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do. And Moses reported the words of the people unto Jehovah.

[9] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto Jehovah.

[10] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments, [11] and be ready against the third day; for the third day Jehovah will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. [12] And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the

border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 no hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, he shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their garments. 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not near a woman.

16 And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, that come near to Jehovah, sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto Jehovah, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou didst charge us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, get thee down; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Jehovah, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and told them.

Exodus Chapter 20

1 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness [of any thing] that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, 6 and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. 7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: [in it] thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

18 And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not. 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

22 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. 23 Ye shall not make [other gods] with me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you.

24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee. 25 And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not uncovered thereon.

Exodus Chapter 21

1 Now these are the ordinances which thou shalt set before them. 2 If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3 If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master give him a wife and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out

free: [6] then his master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

[7] And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. [8] If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. [9] And if he espouse her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. [10] If he take him another [wife]; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. [11] And if he do not these three things unto her, then shall she go out for nothing, without money.

[12] He that smiteth a man, so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death. [13] And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver [him] into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. [14] And if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

[15] And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

[16] And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

[17] And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

[18] And if men contend, and one smite the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keep his bed;

[19] if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

[20] And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished. [21] Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

[22] And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. [23] But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life, [24] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

[26] And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, and destroy it; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. [27] And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

[28] And if an ox gore a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be surely stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. [29] But if the ox was wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to its owner, and he hath not kept it in, but it hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. [30] If there be laid on him a ransom, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. [31] Whether it have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. [32] If the ox gore a man-servant or a maid-servant, there shall be given unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

[33] And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, [34] the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money unto the owner thereof, and the dead [beast] shall be his. [35] And if one man's ox hurt another's, so that it dieth, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the price of it: and the dead also they shall divide. [36] Or if it be known that the ox was wont to gore in time past, and its owner hath not kept it in, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead [beast] shall be his own.

Exodus Chapter 22

[1] If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

[2] If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dieth, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him. [3] If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodguiltiness for him; he shall make restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. [4] If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall pay double.

[5] If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

[6] If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

[7] If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double. [8] If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto God, [to see] whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. [9] For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, [or] for any manner of lost thing, whereof one saith, This is it, the cause of both parties shall come before God; he whom God shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor. [10] If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: [11] the oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. [12] But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. [13] If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness: he shall not make good that which was torn.

[14] And if a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make restitution. [15] If the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be a hired thing, it came for its hire.

[16] And if a man entice a virgin that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife. [17] If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

[18] Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live.

[19] Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death.

[20] He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto Jehovah only, shall be utterly destroyed.

[21] And a sojourner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him: for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

[22] Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. [23] If thou afflict them at all, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; [24] and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

[25] If thou lend money to any of my people with thee that is poor, thou shalt not be to him as a creditor; neither shall ye lay upon him interest. [26] If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down: [27] for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

[28] Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people.

[29] Thou shalt not delay to offer of thy harvest, and of the outflow of thy presses. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. [30] Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, [and] with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

[31] And ye shall be holy men unto me: therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

Exodus Chapter 23

[1] Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

[2] Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest [justice]:

[3] neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause.

[4] If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. [5] If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt forbear to leave him, thou shalt surely release [it] with him. [6] Thou shalt not wrest the justice [due] to thy poor in his cause. [7] Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

[8] And thou shalt take no bribe: for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

[9] And a sojourner shalt thou not oppress: for ye know the heart of a sojourner, seeing ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

[10] And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the increase thereof: [11] but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, [and] with thy oliveyard. [12] Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the sojourner, may be refreshed. [13] And in all things that I have said unto you take ye heed: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

[14] Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. [15] The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib (for in it thou camest out from Egypt); and none shall appear before me empty: [16] and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sowest in the field: and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labors out of the field. [17] Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Jehovah. [18] Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my feast remain all night until the morning. [19] The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring into the house of Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not boil a kid in it mother's milk.

[20] Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. [21] Take ye heed before him, and hearken unto his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgression: for my name is in him. [22] But if thou shalt indeed hearken unto his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. [23] For mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: and I will cut them off. [24] Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and break in pieces their pillars. [25] And ye shall serve Jehovah your God, and he will bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

[26] There shall none cast her young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. [27] I will send my terror before thee, and will discomfit all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. [28] And I will send the hornet before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. [29] I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. [30] By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. [31] And I will set thy border from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness unto the River: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand: and thou shalt drive them out before thee. [32] Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. [33] They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Exodus Chapter 24

[1] And he said unto Moses, Come up unto Jehovah, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off: [2] and Moses alone shall come near unto Jehovah; but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go up with him.

[3] And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do. [4] And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. [5] And he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Jehovah. [6] And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. [7] And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. [8] And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.

[9] Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. [10] And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. [11] And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.

[12] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them. [13] And Moses rose up, and Joshua his minister: and Moses went up into the mount of God. [14] And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them. [15] And Moses went up into the mount,

and the cloud covered the mount. [16] And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. [17] And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. [18] And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Exodus Chapter 25

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering. [3] And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, [4] and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' [hair], [5] and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, [6] oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, [7] onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate. [8] And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. [9] According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it.

[10] And they shall make an ark of acacia wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. [11] And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. [12] And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four feet thereof; and two rings shall be on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. [13] And thou shalt make staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. [14] And thou shalt put the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark, wherewith to bear the ark. [15] The staves shall be in the rings
of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. [16] And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

[17] And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half [shall be] the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. [18] And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. [19] And make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end: of one piece with the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. [20] And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. [21] And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. [22] And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

[23] And thou shalt make a table of acacia wood: two cubits [shall be] the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. [24] And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. [25] And thou shalt make unto it a border of a handbreadth round about; and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. [26] And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. [27] Close by the border shall the rings be, for places for the staves to bear the table. [28] And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. [29] And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and the spoons thereof, and the flagons thereof, and the bowls thereof, wherewith to pour out: of pure gold shalt thou make them. [30] And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before me alway.

[31] And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made, even its base, and its shaft; its cups, its knops, and its flowers, shall be of one piece with it. [32] And there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: [33] three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knop and a flower: so for the six branches going out of the candlestick: [34] and in the candlestick four cups made like almond-blossoms, the knops thereof, and the flowers thereof; [35] and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the candlestick. [36] Their knops and their branches shall be of one piece with it; the whole of it one beaten work of pure gold. [37] And thou shalt make the lamps thereof, seven: and they shall light the lamps thereof, to give light over against it.

[38] And the snuffers thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. [39] Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made, with all these vessels. [40] And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount.

Exodus Chapter 26

[1] Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim the work of the skilful workman shalt thou make them. [2] The length of each curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains shall have one measure. [3] Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and [the other] five curtains shall be coupled one to another. [4] And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is outmost in the second coupling. [5] Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the second coupling; the loops shall be opposite one to another. [6] And thou shalt make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps: and the tabernacle shall be one [whole].

[7] And thou shalt make curtains of goats' [hair] for a tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make them. [8] The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: the eleven curtains shall have one measure. [9] And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double over the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tent. [10] And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops upon the edge of the curtain which is [outmost in] the second coupling. [11] And thou shalt make fifty clasps of brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. [12] And the overhanging part that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. [13] And the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. [14] And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sealskins above.

[15] And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up. [16] Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each board. [17] Two tenons shall there be in each board, joined one to another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. [18] And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side southward. [19] And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. [20] And for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, twenty boards, [21] and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. [22] And for the hinder part of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. [23] And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the hinder part. [24] And they shall be double beneath, and in like manner they shall be entire unto the top thereof unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. [25] And there shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

[26] And thou shalt make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, [27] and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the hinder part westward. [28] And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end. [29] And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. [30] And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which hath been showed thee in the mount.

[31] And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubim the work of the skilful workman shall it be made. [32] And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold; their hooks [shall be] of gold, upon four sockets of silver.

[33] And thou shalt hang up the veil under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall separate unto you between the holy place and the most holy. [34] And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. [35] And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. [36] And thou shalt make a screen for the door of the Tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer. [37] And thou shalt make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold: their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

Exodus Chapter 27

[1] And thou shalt make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. [2] And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof; the horns thereof shall be of one

piece with it: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. [3] And thou shalt make its pots to take away its ashes, and its shovels, and its basins, and its flesh-hooks, and its firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. [4] And thou shalt make for it a grating of network of brass: and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. [5] And thou shalt put it under the ledge round the altar beneath, that the net may reach halfway up the altar. [6] And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with brass. [7] And the staves thereof shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, in bearing it. [8] Hollow with planks shalt thou make it: as it hath been showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

[9] And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side: [10] and the pillars thereof shall be twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [shall be] of silver. [11] And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, and the pillars thereof twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver.

[12] And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits; their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. [13] And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. [14] The hangings for the one side [of the gate] shall be fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. [15] And for the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three.

[16] And for the gate of the court shall be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer; their pillars four, and their sockets four. [17] All the pillars of the court round about shall be filleted with silver; their hooks of silver, and their sockets of brass.

[18] The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits, of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. [19] All the instruments of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.

[20] And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. [21] In the tent of meeting, without the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before Jehovah: it shall be a statue for ever throughout their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Exodus Chapter 28

[1] And bring thou near unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. [2] And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. [3] And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [4] And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a coat of checker work, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [5] And they shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine linen.

[6] And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the skilful workman. [7] It shall have two shoulder-pieces joined to the two ends thereof, that it may be joined together. [8] And the skilfully woven band, which is upon it, wherewith to gird it on, shall be like the work thereof [and] of the same piece; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. [9] And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: [10] six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth. [11] With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones, according to the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be inclosed in settings of gold. [12] And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial.

[13] And thou shalt make settings of gold, [14] and two chains of pure gold; like cords shalt thou make them, of wreathen work: and thou shalt put the wreathen chains on the settings.

[15] And thou shalt make a breastplate of judgment, the work of the skilful workman; like the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. [16] Foursquare it shall be [and] double; a span

shall be the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof. [17] And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: a row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; [18] and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; [19] and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; [20] and the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be inclosed in gold in their settings. [21] And the stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, they shall be for the twelve tribes.

[22] And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains like cords, of wreathen work of pure gold. [23] And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. [24] And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. [25] And the [other] two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod in the forepart thereof.

[26] And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, upon the edge thereof, which is toward the side of the ephod inward. [27] And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and shalt put them on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod underneath, in the forepart thereof, close by the coupling thereof, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. [28] And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. [29] And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before Jehovah continually.

[30] And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before Jehovah: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually.

[31] And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. [32] And it shall have a hole for the head in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it be not rent.

[33] And upon the skirts of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: [34] a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. [35] And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before Jehovah, and when he cometh out, that he die not. [36] And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. [37] And thou shalt put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. [38] And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah.

[39] And thou shalt weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and thou shalt make a mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make a girdle, the work of the embroiderer.

[40] And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and head-tires shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. [41] And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and upon his sons with him, and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. [42] And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: [43] And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they go in unto the tent of meeting, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and unto his seed after him.

Exodus Chapter 29

[1] And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: take one young bullock and two rams without blemish, [2] and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened mingled with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of fine wheaten flour shalt thou make them. [3] And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. [4] And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water. [5] And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod; [6] and thou shalt set the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. [7] Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. [8] And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. [9] And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and bind head-tires on them: and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. [10] And thou shalt bring the

bullock before the tent of meeting: and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock. [11] And thou shalt kill the bullock before Jehovah, at the door of the tent of meeting. [12] And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger; and thou shalt pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. [13] And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul upon the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. [14] But the flesh of the bullock, and its skin, and it dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering.

[15] Thou shalt also take the one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram.

[16] And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take its blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. [17] And thou shalt cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its inwards, and its legs, and put them with its pieces, and with its head. [18] And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto Jehovah; it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

[19] And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram.

[20] Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of its blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. [21] And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

[22] Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat, and the fat tail, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), [23] and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before Jehovah. [24] And thou shalt put the whole upon the hands of Aaron, and upon the hands of his sons, and shalt wave them for a wave-offering before Jehovah. [25] And thou shalt take them from their hands, and burn them on the altar upon the burnt-offering, for a sweet savor before Jehovah: it is an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. [26] And thou shalt take the breast of Aaron's ram of consecration, and wave it for a wave-offering before Jehovah: and it shall be thy portion. [27] And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the thigh of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: [28] and it shall be for Aaron and his sons as [their] portion for ever from the children of Israel; for it is a heave-offering: and it shall be a heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifices of their peace-offerings, even their heave-offering unto Jehovah.

[29] And the holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, to be anointed in them, and to be consecrated in them. [30] Seven days shall the son that is priest in his stead put them on, when he cometh into the tent of meeting to minister in the holy place.

[31] And thou shalt take the ram of consecration, and boil its flesh in a holy place. [32] And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the door of the tent of meeting. [33] And they shall eat those things wherewith atonement was made, to consecrate [and] to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. [34] And if aught of the flesh of the consecration, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. [35] And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. [36] And every day shalt thou offer the bullock of sin-offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou makest atonement for it; and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. [37] Seven days thou shalt make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it: and the altar shall be most holy; whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

[38] Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar: two lambs a year old day by day continually. [39] The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: [40] and with the one lamb a tenth part [of an ephah] of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil, and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink-offering. [41] And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meal-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. [42] It shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah, where I will meet with you, to speak there unto thee. [43] And there I will meet with the children of Israel; and [the Tent] shall be sanctified by my glory. [44] And I will sanctify the tent of meeting, and the altar: Aaron also and his sons will I sanctify, to minister to me in the priest's office.

[45] And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

[46] And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Jehovah their God.

Exodus Chapter 30

[1] And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of acacia wood shalt thou make it. [2] A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be; and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of one piece with it. [3] And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. [4] And two golden rings shalt thou make for it under the crown thereof; upon the two ribs thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make them; and they shall be for places for staves wherewith to bear it. [5] And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. [6] And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. [7] And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices: every morning, when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn it. [8] And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations. [9] Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-offering, nor meal-offering; and ye shall pour no drink-offering thereon. [10] And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year; with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement once in the year shall he make atonement for it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Jehovah.

[11] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [12] When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to those that are numbered of them, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Jehovah, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. [13] This they shall give, every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary; (the shekel is twenty gerahs;) half a shekel for an offering to Jehovah. [14] Every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of Jehovah. [15] The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. [16] And thou shalt take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.

[17] and Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [18] Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, whereat to wash. And thou shalt put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

[19] And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: [20] when they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. [21] So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

[22] Moreover Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [23] Take thou also unto thee the chief spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred [shekels], and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty, [24] and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin. [25] And thou shalt make it a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer: it shall be a holy anointing oil. [26] And thou shalt anoint therewith the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, [27] and the table and all the vessels thereof, and the candlestick and the vessels thereof, and the altar of incense, [28] and the altar of burnt-offering with all the vessels thereof, and the laver and the base thereof. [29] And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. [30] And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. [31] And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. [32] Upon the flesh of man shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any like it, according to the composition thereof: it is holy, [and] it shall be holy unto you. [33] Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people.

[34] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight; [35] and thou shalt make of it incense, a perfume after the art of the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure [and] holy: [36] and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. [37] And the incense which thou shalt make, according to the composition thereof ye shall not make for yourselves: it shall be unto thee holy for Jehovah. [38] Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereof, he shall be cut off from his people.

Exodus Chapter 31

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [2] See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: [3] and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, [4] to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, [5] and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship. [6] And I, behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the heart of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: [7] the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the Tent, [8] and the table and its vessels, and the pure candlestick with all its vessels, and the altar of incense, [9] and the altar of burnt-offering with all its vessels, and the laver and its base, [10] and the finely wrought garments, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, [11] and the anointing oil, and the incense of sweet spices for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.

[12] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [13] Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you. [14] Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that profaneth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. [15] Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. [16] Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. [17] It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

[18] And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus Chapter 32

[1] And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. [2] And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. [3] And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

[4] And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf: and they said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. [5] And when Aaron saw [this], he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. [6] And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

[7] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: [8] they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. [9] And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: [10] now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. [11] And Moses besought Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, that thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? [12] Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, saying, For evil did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. [13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. [14] And Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people.

[15] And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand; tables that were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. [16] And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. [17] And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. [18] And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

[19] And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. [20] And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

[21] And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought a great sin upon them? [22] And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are [set] on evil. [23] For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. [24] And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: so they gave it me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

[25] And when Moses saw that the people were broken loose, (for Aaron had let them loose for a derision among their enemies,) [26] then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Whoso is on Jehovah's side, [let him come] unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. [27] And he said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Put ye every man his sword upon his thigh, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. [28] And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. [29] And Moses said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to Jehovah, yea, every man against his son, and against his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

[30] And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. [31] And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. [32] Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. [33] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. [34] And now go, lead the people unto [the place] of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. [35] And Jehovah smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Exodus Chapter 33

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Depart, go up hence, thou and the people that thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land of which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: [2] and I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: [3] unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiffnecked people, lest I consume thee in the way.

[4] And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. [5] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people; if I go up into the midst of thee for one moment, I shall consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. [6] And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from mount Horeb onward

[7] Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that every one that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. [8] And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. [9] And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and [Jehovah] spake with Moses. [10] And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. [11] And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.

[12] And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight. [13] Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. [14] And he said, My presence shall go [with thee], and I will give thee rest. [15] And he said unto him, If thy presence go not [with me], carry us not up hence. [16] For wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? is it not in that thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth? [17] And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found

favor in my sight, and I know thee by name. [18] And he said, Show me, I pray thee, thy glory. [19] And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. [20] And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live. [21] and Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: [22] and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by: [23] and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen.

Exodus Chapter 34

[1] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest. [2] And be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me on the top of the mount. [3] And no man shall come up with thee; neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

[4] And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as Jehovah had commanded him, and took in his hand two tables of stone.

[5] And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. [6] And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, [7] keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear [the guilty], visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. [8] And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. [9] And he said, If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

[10] And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of Jehovah; for it is a terrible thing that I do with thee. [11] Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. [12] Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: [13] but ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim; [14] for thou shalt worship no other god: for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: [15] lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot after their gods, and sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee and thou eat of his sacrifice; [16] and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods, and make thy sons play the harlot after their gods. [17] Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

[18] The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib; for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. [19] All that openeth the womb is mine; and all thy cattle that is male, the firstlings of cow and sheep. [20] And the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

[21] Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. [22] And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, [even] of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

[23] Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. [24] For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year. [25] Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. [26] The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring unto the house of Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

[27] And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

[28] And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

[29] And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him. [30] And when

Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. [31] And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses spake to them. [32] And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that Jehovah had spoken with him in mount Sinai. [33] And when Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. [34] But when Moses went in before Jehovah to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. [35] And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Exodus Chapter 35

[1] And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel, and said unto them, These are the words which Jehovah hath commanded, that ye should do them. [2] Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work therein shall be put to death. [3] Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

[4] And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Jehovah commanded, saying, [5] Take ye from among you an offering unto Jehovah; whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, Jehovah's offering: gold, and silver, and brass, [6] and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' [hair], [7] and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, [8] and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, [9] and onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate. [10] And let every wise-hearted man among you come, and make all that Jehovah hath commanded: [11] the tabernacle, its tent, and its covering, its clasps, and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; [12] the ark, and the staves thereof, the mercy-seat, and the veil of the screen; [13] the table, and its staves, and all its vessels, and the showbread; [14] the candlestick also for the light, and its vessels, and its lamps, and the oil for the light; [15] and the altar of incense, and its staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle; [16] the altar of burnt-offering, with its grating of brass, it staves, and all its vessels, the laver and its base; [17] the hangings of the court, the pillars thereof, and their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; [18] the pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords; [19] the finely wrought garments, for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

[20] And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. [21] And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, [and] brought Jehovah's offering, for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all the service thereof, and for the holy garments. [22] And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, [and] brought brooches, and ear-rings, and signet-rings, and armlets, all jewels of gold; even every man that offered an offering of gold unto Jehovah. [23] And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' [hair], and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, brought them. [24] Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought Jehovah's offering; and every man, with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it. [25] And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, the blue, and the purple, the scarlet, and the fine linen. [26] And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun the goats' [hair]. [27] And the rulers brought the onyx stones, and the stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; [28] and the spice, and the oil; for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. [29] The children of Israel brought a freewill-offering unto Jehovah; every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all the work, which Jehovah had commanded to be made by Moses.

[30] And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, Jehovah hath called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. [31] And he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; [32] and to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, [33] and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of skilful workmanship. [34] And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. [35] Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of workmanship, of the engraver, and of the skilful workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any workmanship, and of those that devise skilful works.

Exodus Chapter 36

[1] And Bezalel and Oholiab shall work, and every wise-hearted man, in whom Jehovah hath put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all the work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that Jehovah hath commanded. [2] And Moses called

Bezalel and Oholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart Jehovah had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: [3] and they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, wherewith to make it. And they brought yet unto him freewill-offerings every morning. [4] And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they wrought.
[5] And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to make. [6] And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. [7] For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

[8] And all the wise-hearted men among them that wrought the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim, the work of the skilful workman, [Bezalel] made them. [9] The length of each curtain was eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains had one measure. [10] And he coupled five curtains one to another: and [the other] five curtains he coupled one to another. [11] And he made loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the edge of the curtain that was outmost in the second coupling. [12] Fifty loops made he in the one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain that was in the second coupling: the loops were opposite one to another. [13] And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains one to another with the clasps: so the tabernacle was one.

[14] And he made curtains of goats' [hair] for a tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. [15] The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits the breadth of each curtain: the eleven curtains had one measure. [16] And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. [17] And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which was [outmost in] the second coupling. [18] And he made fifty clasps of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one. [19] And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sealskins above.

[20] And he made the boards for the tabernacle, of acacia wood, standing up. [21] Ten cubits was the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each board. [22] Each board had two tenons, joined one to another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle. [23] And he made the boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side southward. [24] And he made forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. [25] And for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty boards, [26] and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. [27] And for the hinder part of the tabernacle westward he made six boards.
[28] And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the hinder part. [29] And they were double beneath; and in like manner they were entire unto the top thereof unto one ring: thus he did to both of them in the two corners. [30] And there were eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; under every board two sockets.

[31] And he made bars of acacia wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, [32] and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the hinder part westward. [33] And he made the middle bar to pass through in the midst of the boards from the one end to the other. [34] And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold for places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

[35] And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubim, the work of the skilful workman, made he it. [36] And he made thereunto four pillars of acacia, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold; And he cast for them four sockets of silver.

[37] And he made a screen for the door of the Tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer; [38] and the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their capitals and their fillets with gold; and their five sockets were of brass.

Exodus Chapter 37

[1] And Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it:

[2] and he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. [3] And he cast for it four rings of gold, in the four feet thereof; even two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. [4] And he made staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. [5] And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.

[6] And he made a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half [was] the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. [7] And he made two cherubim of gold; of beaten work made he them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat; [8] one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end: of one piece with the mercy-seat made he the cherubim at the two ends thereof. [9] And the cherubim spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat were the faces of the cherubim.

[10] And he made the table of acacia wood: two cubits [was] the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: [11] and he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereto a crown of gold round about. [12] And he made unto it a border of a handbreadth round about, and made a golden crown to the border thereof round about. [13] And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that were on the four feet thereof. [14] Close by the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table. [15] And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. [16] And he made the vessels which were upon the table, the dishes thereof, and the spoons thereof, and the bowls thereof, and the flagons thereof, wherewith to pour out, of pure gold.

[17] And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick, even its base, and its shaft; its cups, it knops, and its flowers, were of one piece with it: [18] and there were six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick
out of the other side thereof: [19] three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop and a flower, and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knop and a flower: so for the six branches going out of the candlestick. [20] And in the candlestick were four cups made like almond-blossoms, the knops thereof, and the flowers thereof; [21] and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of it. [22] Their knops and their branches were of one piece with it: the whole of it was one beaten work of pure gold. [23] And he made the lamps thereof, seven, and the snuffers thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, of pure gold. [24] Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

[25] And he made the altar of incense of acacia wood: a cubit was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, foursquare; and two cubits was the height thereof; the horns thereof were of one piece with it. [26] And he overlaid it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: and he made unto it a crown of gold round about. [27] And he made for it two golden rings under the crown thereof, upon the two ribs thereof, upon the two sides of it, for places for staves wherewith to bear it. [28] And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

[29] And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, after the art of the perfumer.

Exodus Chapter 38

[1] And he made the altar of burnt-offering of acacia wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof. [2] And he made the horns thereof upon the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of one piece with it: and he overlaid it with brass. [3] And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, the flesh-hooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. [4] And he made for the altar a grating of network of brass, under the ledge round it beneath, reaching halfway up. [5] And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grating of brass, to be places for the staves. [6] And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with brass. [7] And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, wherewith to bear it; he made it hollow with planks.

[8] And he made the laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, of the mirrors of the ministering women that ministered at the door of the tent of meeting.

[9] And he made the court: for the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits; [10] their pillars were twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. [11] And for the north side a hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. [12] And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. [13] And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. [14] The hangings for the one side [of the gate] were fifteen cubits; their pillars

three, and their sockets three;
15 and so for the other side: on this hand and that hand by the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 All the hangings of the court round about were of fine twined linen. 17 And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver; and the overlaying of their capitals, of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. 18 And the screen for the gate of the court was the work of the embroiderer, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. 19 And their pillars were four, and their sockets four, of brass; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their capitals, and their fillets, of silver. 20 And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.

21 This is the sum of [the things for] the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. 22 And Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Jehovah commanded Moses. 23 And with him was Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a skilful workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen. 24 All the gold that was used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 25 And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was a hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: 26 a beka a head, [that is], half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that passed over to them that were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. 27 And the hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; a hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. 28 And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five [shekels] he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their capitals, and made fillets for them. 29 And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. 30 And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tent of meeting, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grating for it, and all the vessels of the altar, 31 and the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

Exodus Chapter 39

1 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made finely wrought garments, for ministering in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as Jehovah commanded Moses. 2 And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 3 And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, the work of the skilful workman. 4 They made shoulder-pieces for it, joined together; at the two ends was it joined together. 5 And the skilfully woven band, that was upon it, wherewith to gird it on, was of the same piece [and] like the work thereof; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

6 And they wrought the onyx stones, inclosed in settings of gold, graven with the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the children of Israel. 7 And he put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

8 And he made the breastplate, the work of the skilful workman, like the work of the ephod; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9 It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being double. 10 And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; 11 and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; 12 and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 13 and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jaspar: they were inclosed in inclosings of gold in their settings. 14 And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, for the twelve tribes. 15 And they made upon the breastplate chains like cords, of wreathen work of pure gold. 16 And they made two settings of gold, and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. 18 And the [other] two ends of the two wreathen chains they put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, in the forepart thereof. 19 And they made two rings of gold, and put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, upon the edge thereof, which was toward the side of the ephod inward. 20 And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod underneath, in the forepart thereof, close by the coupling thereof, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. 21 And they did bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[22] And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. [23] And the hole of the robe in the midst thereof, as the hole of a coat of mail, with a binding round about the hole of it, that it should not be rent. [24] And they made upon the skirts of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, [and] twined [linen]. [25] And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the skirts of the robe round about, between the pomegranates; [26] a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about, to minister in; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[27] And they made the coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, [28] and the mitre of fine linen, and the goodly head-tires of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twined linen, [29] and the girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, the work of the embroiderer; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[30] And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. [31] And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it upon the mitre above; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[32] Thus was finished all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting: and the children of Israel did according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses; so did they.

[33] And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the Tent, and all its furniture, its clasps, its boards, it bars, and its pillars, and it sockets; [34] and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of sealskins, and the veil of the screen; [35] the ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat; [36] the table, all the vessels thereof, and the showbread; [37] the pure candlestick, the lamps thereof, even the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for the light; [38] and the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the screen for the door of the Tent; [39] the brazen altar, and its grating of brass, its staves, and all its vessels, the laver and its base; [40] the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court, the cords thereof, and the pins thereof, and all the instruments of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; [41] the finely wrought garments for ministering in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office. [42] According to all that Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. [43] And Moses saw all the work, and, behold, they had done it; as Jehovah had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

Exodus Chapter 40

[1] And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, [2] On the first day of the first month shalt thou rear up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. [3] And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and thou shalt screen the ark with the veil. [4] And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. [5] And thou shalt set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the screen of the door to the tabernacle. [6] And thou shalt set the altar of burnt-offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. [7] And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar,
and shalt put water therein. [8] And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the screen of the gate of the court. [9] And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the furniture thereof: and it shall be holy. [10] And thou shalt anoint the altar of burnt-offering, and all its vessels, and sanctify the altar: and the altar shall be most holy. [11] And thou shalt anoint the laver and its base, and sanctify it. [12] And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water. [13] And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments; and thou shalt anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. [14] And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them; [15] and thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: and their anointing shall be to them for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

[16] Thus did Moses: according to all that Jehovah commanded him, so did he.

[17] And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. [18] And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and laid its sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up its pillars. [19] And he spread the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[20] And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark: [21] and he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[22] And he put the table in the tent of meeting, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. [23] And he set the bread in order upon it before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[24] And he put the candlestick in the tent of meeting, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. [25] And he lighted the lamps before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[26] And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil: [27] and he burnt thereon incense of sweet spices; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[28] And he put the screen of the door to the tabernacle. [29] And he set the altar of burnt-offering at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meal-offering; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

[30] And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water therein, wherewith to wash.

[31] And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat; [32] when they went into the tent of meeting, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as Jehovah commanded Moses. [33] And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

[34] Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. [35] And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. [36] And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys: [37] but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. [38] For the cloud of Jehovah was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

This page titled 2.2: Hebrew Bible, “Genesis” And “Exodus” is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **1.1: Hebrew Bible, “Genesis” And “Exodus”** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

Mesopotamia

by **Joshua J. Mark** published on 14 March 2018 in the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC-BY-NC-SA)

Listen to this article, narrated by **James Lloyd**

Translated text available in: **Italian**

Mesopotamia (from the **Greek**, meaning 'between two rivers') was an ancient region located in the eastern **Mediterranean** bounded in the northeast by the Zagros Mountains and in the southeast by the Arabian Plateau, corresponding to today's Iraq, mostly, but also parts of modern-day Iran, **Syria** and **Turkey**. The 'two rivers' of the name referred to the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers and the land was known as 'Al-Jazirah' (the island) by the Arabs referencing what Egyptologist J.H. Breasted would later call the **Fertile Crescent**, where Mesopotamian **civilization** began.

The Cradle of Civilization

Unlike the more unified civilizations of **Egypt** or **Greece**, Mesopotamia was a collection of varied cultures whose only real bonds were their **script**, their gods, and their attitude toward **women**. The social customs, laws, and even language of **Akkad**, for example, cannot be assumed to correspond to those of **Babylon**; it does seem, however, that the rights of women, the importance of literacy, and the **pantheon** of the gods were indeed shared throughout the region (though the gods had different names in various regions and periods). As a result of this, Mesopotamia should be more properly understood as a region that produced multiple empires and civilizations rather than any single civilization. Even so, Mesopotamia is known as the "cradle of civilization" primarily because of two developments that occurred there, in the region of **Sumer**, in the 4th millennium BCE:

- the rise of the **city** as we recognize that entity today.
- the invention of **writing** (although writing is also known to have developed in Egypt, in the **Indus Valley**, in **China**, and to have taken form independently in Mesoamerica).

The invention of the wheel is also credited to the Mesopotamians and, in 1922 CE, the archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley discovered "the remains of two four-wheeled wagons, [at the site of the ancient city of **Ur**] the oldest wheeled vehicles in history ever found, along with their leather tires" (Bertman, 35). Other important developments or inventions credited to the Mesopotamians include, but are by no means limited to, domestication of animals, **agriculture**, common tools, sophisticated weaponry and **warfare**, the **chariot**, wine, **beer**, demarcation of time into hours, minutes, and seconds, religious rites, the sail (sailboats), and irrigation. Orientalist Samuel Noah Kramer, in fact, has listed 39 `firsts' in human civilization that originated in Sumer. These include:

> The First Schools, The First Case of `Apple Polishing', The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency, The First `**War** of Nerves', The First Bicameral Congress, The First Historian, The First Case of Tax Reduction, The First `**Moses**', The First Legal Precedent, The First Pharmacopoeia, The First `Farmer's Almanac', The First Experiment in Shade-Tree Gardening, Man's First Cosmogony and Cosmology, The First Moral Ideals, The First `Job', The First Proverbs and Sayings, The First Animal Fables, The First Literary Debates, The First Biblical Parallels, The First `Noah',

> The First Tale of Resurrection, The First `St. George', The First Case of Literary Borrowing, Man's First Heroic Age, The First Love Song, The First Library Catalogue, Man's First Golden Age, The First `Sick' Society, The First Liturgic Laments, The First Messiahs, The First Long-Distance Champion, The First Literary Imagery, The First Sex Symbolism, The First Mater Dolorosa, The First Lullaby, The First Literary Portrait, The First Elegies, Labor's First Victory, The First Aquarium.

Archaeological excavations starting in the 1840s CE have revealed human settlements dating to 10,000 BCE in Mesopotamia that indicate that the fertile conditions of the land between two rivers allowed an ancient hunter-gatherer people to settle in the land, domesticate animals, and turn their attention to agriculture. **Trade** soon followed, and with prosperity came **urbanization** and the birth of the city. It is generally thought that writing was invented due to trade, out of the necessity for long-distance communication, and for keeping more careful track of accounts.

Learning & Religion

Mesopotamia was known in antiquity as a seat of learning, and it is believed that **Thales of Miletus** (c. 585 BCE, known as the 'first philosopher') studied there. As the Babylonians believed that water was the 'first principle' from which all else flowed, and as **Thales** is famous for that very claim, it seems probable he studied in the region.

Intellectual pursuits were highly valued across Mesopotamia, and the schools (devoted primarily to the priestly class) were said to be as numerous as temples and taught reading, writing, religion, **law**, **medicine**, and astrology. There were over 1,000 deities in the pantheon of the gods of the Mesopotamian cultures and many stories concerning the gods (among them, the creation myth, the Enuma Elish). It is generally accepted that biblical tales such as the Fall of Man and the Flood of Noah (among many others) originated in Mesopotamian lore, as they first appear in Mesopotamian works such as *The Myth of Adapa* and the *Epic of* ***Gilgamesh***, the oldest written story in the world. The Mesopotamians believed that they were co-workers with the gods and that the land was infused with spirits and demons (though `demons' should not be understood in the modern, Christian, sense).

The beginning of the world, they believed, was a victory by the gods over the forces of chaos but, even though the gods had won, this did not mean chaos could not come again. Through daily rituals, attention to the deities, proper funeral practices, and simple civic duty, the people of Mesopotamia felt they helped maintain balance in the world and kept the forces of chaos and destruction at bay. Along with expectations that one would honor one's elders and treat people with respect, the citizens of the land were also to honor the gods through the jobs they performed every day.

Jobs

Men and women both worked, and "because ancient Mesopotamia was fundamentally an agrarian society, the principal occupations were growing crops and raising livestock" (Bertman, 274). Other occupations included those of the scribe, the healer, artisan, weaver, potter, shoemaker, fisherman, teacher, and priest or priestess. Bertman writes:

> At the head of society were the kings and priests served by the populous staff of **palace** and **temple**. With the institution of standing armies and the spread of imperialism, military officers and professional soldiers took their place in Mesopotamia's expanding and diverse workforce. (274)

Women enjoyed nearly equal rights and could own land, file for divorce, own their own businesses, and make contracts in trade. The early brewers of beer and wine, as well as the healers in the community, were initially women. These trades were later taken over by men, it seems, when it became apparent they were lucrative occupations. The work one did, however, was never considered simply a `job' but one's contribution to the community and, by extension, to the gods' efforts in keeping the world at peace and in harmony.

Buildings & Government

The temple, at the center of every city (often on a raised platform), symbolized the importance of the city's patron deity who would also be worshipped by whatever communities that city presided over. Mesopotamia gave birth to the world's first **cities** which were largely built of sun-dried brick. In the words of Bertman:

> The domestic **architecture** of Mesopotamia grew out of the soil upon which it stood. Unlike Egypt, Mesopotamia –especially in the south– was barren of stone that could be quarried for construction." The land was equally devoid of trees for timber, so the people "turned to other natural resources that lay abundantly at hand: the muddy clay of its riverbanks and the rushes and reeds that grew in their marshes. With them, the Mesopotamians created the world's first columns, arches, and roofed structures. (285)

Simple homes were constructed from bundles of reeds lashed together and inserted in the ground, while more complex homes were built of sun-dried clay brick (a practice followed later by the Egyptians). Cities and temple complexes, with their famous ziggurats (the step-**pyramid** structures indigenous to the region), were all built using oven-baked bricks of clay which were then painted.

The gods were thought to be present in the planning and execution of any building project and very specific prayers, recited in a set order to the proper deity, were considered of utmost importance in the success of the project and the prosperity of the occupants of the home.

Whichever kingdom or **empire** held sway across Mesopotamia, in whatever historical period, the vital role of the gods in the lives of the people remained undiminished. This reverence for the divine characterized the lives of both the field worker and the king. The historian **Helen** Chapin Metz writes:

> The precariousness of existence in southern Mesopotamia led to a highly developed sense of religion. Cult centers such as **Eridu**, dating back to 5000 BCE, served as important centers of pilgrimage and devotion even before the rise of Sumer. Many of the most important Mesopotamian cities emerged in areas surrounding the pre-**Sumerian** cult centers, thus reinforcing the close relationship between religion and government. (2)

The role of the king was established at some point after 3600 BCE and, unlike the priest-rulers who came before, the king dealt directly with the people and made his will clear through laws of his own devising. Prior to the concept of a king, the priestly rulers are believed to have dictated the law according to religious precepts and received divine messages through signs and omens; the king, while still honoring and placating the gods, was considered a powerful enough representative of those gods to be able to speak their will through his own dictates, using his own voice.

This is most clearly seen in the famous laws of **Hammurabi** of Babylon (r. 1792-1750 BCE), but a ruler claiming direct contact with the gods was quite common throughout Mesopotamian history, most notably in the Akkadian king **Naram-Sin** (r. 2261-2224 BCE) who went so far as to proclaim himself a god incarnate. The king was responsible for the welfare of his people and a good king, who ruled in accordance with divine will, was recognized by the prosperity of the region he reigned over.

Still, even very efficient rulers, such as **Sargon of Akkad** (r. 2334-2279 BCE), had to deal with perpetual uprisings and revolts by factions, or whole regions, contesting his legitimacy. As Mesopotamia was so vast a region, with so many different cultures and ethnicities within its borders, a single ruler attempting to enforce the laws of a central government would invariably be met with resistance from some quarter.

The History of Mesopotamia

The history of the region, and the development of the civilizations which flourished there, is most easily understood by dividing it into periods:

Pre-Pottery Neolithic Age

Also known as The **Stone Age** (c. 10,000 BCE though evidence suggests human habitation much earlier). There is archaeological confirmation of crude settlements and early signs of warfare between tribes, most likely over fertile land for crops and fields for grazing livestock. **Animal husbandry** was increasingly practiced during this time with a shift from a hunter-gatherer culture to an agrarian one. Even so, the historian Marc Van De Mieroop notes:

> There was not a sudden change from hunting-gathering to farming, but rather a slow process during which people increased their reliance on resources they managed directly, but still supplemented their diets by hunting wild animals. Agriculture enabled an increase in continuous settlement by people (12).

As more settlements grew, architectural developments slowly became more sophisticated in the construction of permanent dwellings.

Pottery Neolithic Age (c. 7,000 BCE)

In this period there was a widespread use of tools and clay pots and a specific culture begins to emerge in the Fertile Crescent. Scholar Stephen Bertman writes, “during this era, the only advanced technology was literally 'cutting edge'” as stone tools and weapons became more sophisticated. Bertman further notes that “the Neolithic **economy** was primarily based on food production through farming and animal husbandry” (55) and was more settled, as opposed to the Stone Age in which communities were more mobile. Architectural advancements naturally followed in the wake of permanent settlements as did developments in the manufacture of ceramics and stone tools.

Copper Age (5,900 – 3,200 BCE)

Also known as The Chalcolithic Period owing to the transition from stone tools and weapons to ones made of copper. This era includes the so-called Ubaid Period (c. 5000-4100 BCE, named for Tell al-`Ubaid, the location in Iraq where the greatest number of artifacts were found) during which the first temples in Mesopotamia were built and unwalled villages developed from sporadic settlements of single dwellings. These villages then gave rise to the urbanization process during the **Uruk** Period (4100-2900 BCE) when cities rose, most notably in the region of Sumer, including Eridu, Uruk, Ur, Kish, Nuzi, Lagash, **Nippur**, and Ngirsu, and in **Elam** with its city of **Susa**.

The earliest city is often cited as Uruk, although Eridu and Ur have also been suggested. Van De Mieroop writes, “Mesopotamia was the most densely urbanized region in the ancient world” (as cited in Bertman, 201), and the cities which grew up along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, as well as those founded further away, established systems of trade which resulted in great prosperity.

This period saw the invention of the wheel (c. 3500 BCE) and writing (c. 3000 BCE), both by the **Sumerians**, the establishment of kingships to replace priestly rule, and the first war in the world recorded between the kingdoms of Sumer and Elam (2700 BCE) with Sumer as the victor. During

the **Early Dynastic** Period (2900-2334 BCE), all of the advances of the Uruk Period were developed and the cities, and government in general, stabilized. Increased prosperity in the region gave rise to ornate temples and statuary, sophisticated pottery and figurines, toys for children (including dolls for girls and wheeled carts for boys), and the use of personal seals (known as Cylinder Seals) to denote ownership of property and to stand for an individual's signature. Cylinder Seals would be comparable to one's modern-day identification card or driver's license and, in fact, the loss or theft of one's seal would have been as significant as modern-day identity theft or losing one's credit cards.

Early Bronze Age (3,000 – 2119 BCE)

During this period, **bronze** supplanted copper as the material from which tools and weapons were made. The rise of the **city-state** laid the foundation for economic and political stability which would eventually lead to the rise of the Akkadian Empire (2334-2218 BCE) and the rapid growth of the cities of Akkad and **Mari**, two of the most prosperous urban centers of the time. The cultural stability necessary for the creation of art in the region resulted in more intricate designs in architecture and **sculpture**, as well as the following inventions or improvements:

> a number of specific and momentous inventions: the plough and the wheel, the chariot and the sailboat, and the cylinder-seal, the single most distinctive art form of ancient Mesopotamia and a pervasive demonstration of the importance of property ownership and business in the country's daily life. (Bertman, 55-56)

The Akkadian Empire of **Sargon the Great** was the first multi-national realm in the world and **Sargon**'s daughter, **Enheduanna** (l.2285-2250 BCE), the first author of literary works known by name. The library at Mari contained over 20,000 **cuneiform** tablets (books) and the palace there was considered one of the finest in the region.

Middle Bronze Age (2119-1700 BCE)

The expansion of the Assyrian Kingdoms (**Assur**, **Nimrud**, Sharrukin, Dur, and **Nineveh**) and the rise of the Babylonian Dynasty (centered in Babylon and Chaldea) created an atmosphere conducive to trade and, with it, increased warfare. The Guti Tribe, fierce nomads who succeeded in toppling the Akkadian Empire, dominated the politics of Mesopotamia until they were defeated by the allied forces of the kings of Sumer.

Hammurabi, King of Babylon, rose from relative obscurity to conquer the region and reign for 43 years. Among his many accomplishments was his famous code of laws, inscribed on the stele of the gods. Babylon became a leading centre at this time for intellectual pursuit and high accomplishment in arts and letters. This cultural centre was not to last, however, and was sacked and looted by the **Hittites** who were then succeeded by the Kassites.

Late Bronze Age (1700-1100 BCE)

The rise of the **Kassite** Dynasty (a tribe who came from the Zagros Mountains in the north and are thought to have originated in modern-day Iran) leads to a shift in power and an expansion of culture and learning after the Kassites conquered Babylon. The collapse of the Bronze Age followed the discovery of how to mine ore and make use of iron, a technology which the Kassites and, earlier, the Hittites made singular use of in warfare.

The period also saw the beginning of the decline of Babylonian culture due to the rise in power of the Kassites until they were defeated by the Elamites and driven out. After the Elamites gave way to the Aramaeans, the small Kingdom of **Assyria** began a series of successful campaigns, and the Assyrian Empire was firmly established and prospered under the rule of **Tiglath-Pileser I** (r. 1115-1076 BCE)

and, after him, **Ashurnasirpal II** (r. 884-859 BCE) consolidated the empire further. Most Mesopotamian states were either destroyed or weakened following the **Bronze Age Collapse** c. 1250-c.1150 BCE, leading to a brief "dark age".

Iron Age (1000 – 500 BCE)

This age saw the rise and expansion of the **Neo-Assyrian Empire** under **Tiglath-Pileser III** (r. 745-727 BCE) and that Empire's meteoric rise to power and **conquest** under the rule of great Assyrian kings such as **Sargon II** (r. 722-705 BCE), **Sennacherib** (r. 705-681 BCE), **Esarhaddon** (r. 681-669 BCE) and **Ashurbanipal** (r. c. 668-627 BCE, who conquered **Babylonia**, Syria, **Israel**, and Egypt). The Empire suffered a decline as rapid as its rise due to repeated attacks on central cities by Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians.

The tribes of the Hittites and the **Mitanni** consolidated their respective powers during this time which resulted in the rise of the Neo-**Hittite** and Neo-Babylonian Empires. King **Nebuchadnezzar II** (r. 605/604-562 BCE) of Babylon destroyed **Jerusalem** (588 BCE) during this period and forced the inhabitants of Israel into the "Babylonian Exile". He was also responsible for extensive construction in Babylon, creating famous buildings such as the **Ishtar Gate** and the Great Ziggurat (the "Tower of **Babel**"). The fall of Babylon to **Cyrus II** of **Persia** in 539 BCE effectively ended Babylonian culture.

Classical Antiquity (500 BCE – 7th century CE)

After Cyrus II (d. 530 BCE) took Babylon, the bulk of Mesopotamia became part of the **Achaemenid** Persian Empire, and this period saw a rapid cultural decline in the region, most notably in the loss of the knowledge of cuneiform script. The conquest of the Persians by **Alexander the Great** in 331 BCE brought Hellenization of the culture and religion but, even though **Alexander** tried to again make Babylon a city of consequence, its days of glory were now in the past.

After his **death**, Alexander's general Seleucus took control of the region and founded the **Seleucid** Dynasty which ruled until 126 BCE when the land was conquered by the Parthians who were, in turn, dominated by the Sassanians (a people of Persian descent). Bertman writes, "Under **Sassanian** domination, Mesopotamia lay in ruins, its fields dried out or turned into a swampy morass, its once great cities made **ghost** towns" (58).

By the time of the conquest by the **Roman Empire** (c. 115-117 CE), Mesopotamia was a largely Hellenized region, lacking in any unity, which had forgotten the old gods and the old ways. The Romans improved the infrastructure of their colonies significantly through their introduction of better roads and plumbing and brought **Roman Law** to the land. Even so, the region was constantly caught up in the wars various **Roman** emperors waged with other nations over control of the land.

The entire culture of the region once known as Mesopotamia was swept away in the final conquest of the area by Muslim Arabs in the 7th century CE which resulted in the unification of law, language, religion and culture under **Islam**. Bertman notes, "With the Islamic conquest of 651 CE the history of ancient Mesopotamia ends" (58). Today the great cities that once rose along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are largely unexcavated mounds or broken bricks on arid plains, and the once fertile crescent has steadily dwindled to a wasteland due to human factors (such as overuse of the land through agricultural pursuits or urban development) and also due to climate change.

Legacy

The legacy of Mesopotamia endures today through many of the most basic aspects of modern life such as the sixty-second minute and the sixty-minute hour. Helen Chapin Metz writes,

> Because the well-being of the community depended upon close observation of natural phenomena, scientific or protoscientific activities occupied much of the priests' time. For example, the Sumerians believed that each of the gods was represented by a number. The number sixty, sacred to the god An, was their basic unit of calculation. The minutes of an hour and the notational degrees of a circle were Sumerian concepts. The highly developed agricultural system and the refined irrigation and water-control systems that enabled Sumer to achieve surplus production also led to the growth of large cities. (4)

Urbanization, the wheel, writing, astronomy, mathematics, wind power, irrigation, agricultural developments, animal husbandry, and the narratives which would eventually be re-written as the Hebrew Scriptures and provide the basis for the Christian Old Testament all came from the land of Mesopotamia.

As noted, Kramer lists 39 `firsts' from Mesopotamia in his book *History Begins at Sumer* and yet, as impressive as those `firsts' are, Mesopotamian contributions to world culture do not end with them. The Mesopotamians influenced the cultures of Egypt and Greece through long-distance trade and cultural diffusion and, through these cultures, impacted the culture of **Rome** which set the standard for the development and spread of western civilization. Mesopotamia generally, and Sumer specifically, gave the world some of its most enduring cultural aspects and, even though the cities and great palaces are long gone, that legacy continued into the modern era.

In the 19th century CE, archaeologists of varying nationalities arrived in Mesopotamia to excavate for evidence which would corroborate the biblical tales of the Old Testament. At this time, the **Bible** was considered the oldest book in the world and the stories found in its pages were thought to be original compositions. The archaeologists who sought physical evidence to support the biblical stories found exactly the opposite once cuneiform was deciphered by the scholar and translator George Smith (1840-1876 CE) in 1872 CE. The story of the Great Flood and Noah's Ark, the story of the Fall of Man, the concept of a **Garden of Eden**, even the complaints of Job had all been written centuries before the biblical texts by the Mesopotamians.

Once cuneiform could be read, the ancient world of Mesopotamia opened up to the modern age and transformed people's understanding of the history of the world and themselves. The discovery of the Sumerian Civilization and the stories of the cuneiform tablets encouraged a new freedom of intellectual inquiry into all areas of knowledge. It was now understood that the biblical narratives were not original Hebrew works, the world was obviously older than the church had been claiming, there were civilizations which had risen and fallen long before that of Egypt and if these claims by authorities of church and schools had been false, perhaps others were as well.

The spirit of inquiry in the late 19th century was already making inroads into challenging the paradigms of accepted thought when Smith deciphered cuneiform but the discovery of Mesopotamian culture and religion encouraged this further. In ancient times, Mesopotamia impacted the world through its inventions, innovations, and religious vision; in the modern day it literally changed the way people understood the whole of history and one's place in the continuing story of human civilization.

Bibliography

Ancient Babylon: Center of Mesopotamian Civilization | LiveScience Accessed 1 Dec 2016.

Mesopotamia - The British Museum Accessed 1 Dec 2016.

Mesopotamia Accessed 1 Dec 2016.

Durant, W. *Our Oriental Heritage.* Simon & Schuster, 1954.

Kriwaczek, P. *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization.* Thomas Dunne Books, 2014.

Leick, G. *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the Cities.* Scarecrow Press, 2002.

Leick, G. *The A to Z of Mesopotamia.* Scarecrow Press, 2010.

Van De Mieroop, M. *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000 - 323 BC [Blackwell History of the Ancient..* Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Bertman, S. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia.* Oxford University Press, 2005.

Black, J & Green, A. *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia.* University of Texas Press, 1992.

Black, J. et. al. *The Literature of Ancient Sumer.* Oxford University Press, U.S.A., 2018.

Bottero, J. *Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia.* Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Jacobsen,T. *The Treasures of Darkness.* Yale University Press, 1978.

Kramer, S. N. *History Begins at Sumer.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

Kramer, S. N. *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character.* University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Mehta-Jones, S. *Life in Ancient Mesopotamia.* Crabtree Publishing Company, 2004.

Van De Mieroop, M. *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC.* Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

Von Soden, W. *The Ancient Orient.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.

Wallis Budge, E. A. *Babylonian Life and History.* Barnes & Noble Press, 2005.

Wise Bauer, S. *The History of the Ancient World.* W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

2.3: Mesopotamia is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Enuma Elish - The Babylonian Epic of Creation - Full Text with Introduction

by Joshua J. Mark published on 4 May 2018 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

The Enuma Elish (also known as *The Seven Tablets of Creation*) is the Mesopotamian creation myth whose title is derived from the opening lines of the piece, "When on High". All of the tablets containing the myth, found at Ashur, Kish, Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh, Sultantepe, and other excavated sites, date to c. 1200 BCE but their colophons indicate that these are all copies of a much older version of the myth dating from long before the fall of Sumer in c. 1750 BCE.

As Marduk, the champion of the young gods in their war against Tiamat, is of Babylonian origin, the Sumerian Ea/Enki or Enlil is thought to have played the major role in the original version of the story. The copy found at Ashur has the god Ashur in the main role as was the custom of the cities of Mesopotamia. The god of each city was always considered the best and most powerful. Marduk, the god of Babylon, only figures as prominently as he does in the story because most of the copies found are from Babylonian scribes. Even so, Ea does still play an important part in the Babylonian version of the Enuma Elish by creating human beings.

Summary of the Story

The story, one of the oldest, if not the oldest in the world, concerns the birth of the gods and the creation of the universe and human beings. In the beginning, there was only undifferentiated water swirling in chaos. Out of this swirl, the waters divided into sweet, fresh water, known as the god Apsu, and salty bitter water, the goddess Tiamat. Once differentiated, the union of these two entities gave birth to the younger gods.

The story, one of the oldest, if not the oldest in the world, concerns the birth of the gods & the creation of the universe & human beings.

These young gods, however, were extremely loud, troubling the sleep of Apsu at night and distracting him from his work by day. Upon the advice of his Vizier, Mummu, Apsu decides to kill the younger gods. Tiamat, hearing of their plan, warns her eldest son, Enki (sometimes Ea) and he puts Apsu to sleep and kills him. From Apsu's remains, Enki creates his home.

Tiamat, once the supporter of the younger gods, now is enraged that they have killed her mate. She consults with the god, Quingu, who advises her to make war on the younger gods. Tiamat rewards Quingu with the Tablets of Destiny, which legitimize the rule of a god and control the fates, and he wears them proudly as a breastplate. With Quingu as her champion, Tiamat summons the forces of chaos and creates eleven horrible monsters to destroy her children.

Ea, Enki, and the younger gods fight against Tiamat futilely until, from among them, emerges the champion Marduk who swears he will defeat Tiamat. Marduk defeats Quingu and kills Tiamat by shooting her with an arrow which splits her in two; from her eyes flow the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Out of Tiamat's corpse, Marduk creates the heavens and the earth, he appoints gods to various duties and binds Tiamat's eleven creatures to his feet as trophies (to much adulation from the other gods) before setting their images in his new home. He also takes the Tablets of Destiny from Quingu, thus legitimizing his reign.

After the gods have finished praising him for his great victory and the art of his creation, Marduk consults with the god Ea (the god of wisdom) and decides to create human beings from the remains of whichever of the gods instigated Tiamat to war. Quingu is charged as guilty and killed and, from his blood, Ea creates Lullu, the first man, to be a helper to the gods in their eternal task of maintaining order and keeping chaos at bay.

As the poem phrases it, "Ea created mankind/On whom he imposed the service of the gods, and set the gods free" (Tablet VI.33-34). Following this, Marduk "arranged the organization of the netherworld" and distributed the gods to their appointed stations (Tablet VI.43-46). The poem ends in Tablet VII with long praise of Marduk for his accomplishments.

Commentary

The Enuma Elish would later be the inspiration for the Hebrew scribes who created the text now known as the biblical Book of Genesis. Prior to the 19th century CE, the Bible was considered the oldest book in the world and its narratives were thought to be completely original. In the mid-19th century CE, however, European museums, as well as academic and religious institutions, sponsored excavations in Mesopotamia to find physical evidence for historical corroboration of the stories in the Bible. These excavations found quite the opposite, however, in that, once cuneiform was translated, it was understood that a number of biblical narratives were Mesopotamian in origin.

Famous stories such as the Fall of Man and the Great Flood were originally conceived and written down in Sumer, translated and modified later in Babylon, and reworked by the Assyrians before they were used by the Hebrew scribes for the versions which appear in the Bible. Although the basic paradigm of the biblical narratives and the Mesopotamian stories align closely, there are still significant differences as noted by scholar Stephen Bertman:

Both Genesis and Enuma Elsih are religious texts which detail and celebrate cultural origins: Genesis describes the origin and founding of the Jewish people under the guidance of the Lord; Enuma Elish recounts the origin and founding of Babylon under the leadership of the god Marduk. Contained in each work is a story of how the cosmos and man were created. Each work begins by describing the watery chaos and primeval darkness that once filled the universe. Then light is created to replace the darkness. Afterward, the heavens are made and in them heavenly bodies are placed. Finally, man is created. These similarities notwithstanding, the two accounts are more different than alike. (312)

In revising the Mesopotamian creation story for their own ends, the Hebrew scribes tightened the narrative and the focus but retained the concept of the all-powerful deity who brings order from chaos. Marduk, in the Enuma Elish, establishes the recognizable order of the world - just as God does in the Genesis tale - and human beings are expected to recognize this great gift and honor the deity through service. In Mesopotamia, in fact, it was thought that humans were co-workers with the gods to maintain the gift of creation and keep the forces of chaos at bay.

The Enuma Elish in Babylon

Marduk gained prominence in Babylon during the reign of Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE) and superseded the popular goddess Inanna in worship. During Hammurabi's reign, in fact, a number of previously popular female deities were replaced by male gods. The Enuma Elish, praising Marduk as the most powerful of all the gods, therefore became increasingly popular as the god himself rose in prominence and his city of Babylon grew in power. Scholar Jeremy Black writes:

The rise of the cult of Marduk is closely connected with the political rise of Babylon from city-state to the capital of an empire. From the Kassite Period, Marduk became more and more important until it was possible for the author of the Babylonian Epic of Creation to maintain that not only was Marduk king of all the gods but that many of the latter were no more than aspects of his persona. (128)

The Enuma Elish was read and recited widely throughout Mesopotamia but was especially important at the New Year Festival in Babylon. During this festival the statue of Marduk would be taken from the temple and, amidst the revelers, was paraded through the streets of the city, out the gates, to `vacation' in a small house built for this purpose. The Enuma Elish, especially, it is thought, the praise from Tablet VII, would be sung or chanted during this procession.

The Text of Enuma Elish

The following translation comes from *Mesopotamian Creation Stories* by W.G. Lambert and is used under Creative Commons license from the Etana Website:

Enuma Elish (The Babylonian Epic of Creation)

Tablet I

1 When the heavens above did not exist,
2 And earth beneath had not come into being —
3 There was Apsû, the first in order, their begetter,
4 And demiurge Tia-mat, who gave birth to them all;
5 They had mingled their waters together
6 Before meadow-land had coalesced and reed-bed was to he found —
7 When not one of the gods had been formed
8 Or had come into being, when no destinies had been decreed,
9 The gods were created within them:
10 Lah(mu and Lah(amu were formed and came into being.
11 While they grew and increased in stature
12 Anšar and Kišar, who excelled them, were created.
13 They prolonged their days, they multiplied their years.
14 Anu, their son, could rival his fathers.
15 Anu, the son, equalled Anšar,
16 And Anu begat Nudimmud, his own equal.
17 Nudimmud was the champion among his fathers:
18 Profoundly discerning, wise, of robust strength;
19 Very much stronger than his father's begetter, Anšar
20 He had no rival among the gods, his brothers.
21 The divine brothers came together,
22 Their clamour got loud, throwing Tia-mat into a turmoil.
23 They jarred the nerves of Tia-mat,
24 And by their dancing they spread alarm in Anduruna.
25 Apsû did not diminish their clamour,
26 And Tia-mat was silent when confronted with them.
27 Their conduct was displeasing to her,
28 Yet though their behaviour was not good, she wished to spare them.
29 Thereupon Apsû, the begetter of the great gods,
30 Called Mummu, his vizier, and addressed him,
31 "Vizier Mummu, who gratifies my pleasure,
32 Come, let us go to Tia-mat!"
33 They went and sat, facing Tia-mat,
34 As they conferred about the gods, their sons.
35 Apsû opened his mouth
36 And addressed Tia-mat
37 "Their behaviour has become displeasing to me

And I cannot rest in the day-time or sleep at night.
I will destroy and break up their way of life
That silence may reign and we may sleep."
When Tia-mat heard this
She raged and cried out to her spouse,
She cried in distress, fuming within herself,
She grieved over the (plotted) evil,
"How can we destroy what we have given birth to?
Though their behaviour causes distress, let us tighten discipline graciously."
Mummu spoke up with counsel for Apsû—
(As from) a rebellious vizier was the counsel of his Mummu—
"Destroy, my father, that lawless way of life,
That you may rest in the day-time and sleep by night!"
Apsû was pleased with him, his face beamed
Because he had plotted evil against the gods, his sons.
Mummu put his arms around Apsû's neck,
He sat on his knees kissing him.
What they plotted in their gathering
Was reported to the gods, their sons.
The gods heard it and were frantic.
They were overcome with silence and sat quietly.
Ea, who excels in knowledge, the skilled and learned,
Ea, who knows everything, perceived their tricks.
He fashioned it and made it to be all-embracing,
He executed it skilfully as supreme—his pure incantation.
He recited it and set it on the waters,
He poured sleep upon him as he was slumbering deeply.
He put Apsû to slumber as he poured out sleep,
And Mummu, the counsellor, was breathless with agitation.
He split (Apsû's) sinews, ripped off his crown,
Carried away his aura and put it on himself.
He bound Apsû and killed him;
Mummu he confined and handled roughly.
He set his dwelling upon Apsû,
And laid hold on Mummu, keeping the nose-rope in his hand.
After Ea had bound and slain his enemies,
Had achieved victory over his foes,
He rested quietly in his chamber,
He called it Apsû, whose shrines he appointed.
Then he founded his living-quarters within it,
And Ea and Damkina, his wife, sat in splendour.
In the chamber of the destinies, the room of the archetypes,
The wisest of the wise, the sage of the gods, Be-l was conceived.
In Apsû was Marduk born,
In pure Apsû was Marduk born.
Ea his father begat him,
Damkina his mother bore him.
He sucked the breasts of goddesses,
A nurse reared him and filled him with terror.

87 His figure was well developed, the glance of his eyes was dazzling,
88 His growth was manly, he was mighty from the beginning.
89 Anu, his father's begetter, saw him,
90 He exulted and smiled; his heart filled with joy.
91 Anu rendered him perfect: his divinity was remarkable,
92 And he became very lofty, excelling them in his attributes.
93 His members were incomprehensibly wonderful,
94 Incapable of being grasped with the mind, hard even to look on.
95 Four were his eyes, four his ears,
96 Flame shot forth as he moved his lips.
97 His four ears grew large,
93 And his eyes likewise took in everything.
99 His figure was lofty and superior in comparison with the gods,
100 His limbs were surpassing, his nature was superior.
101 'Mari-utu, Mari-utu,
102 The Son, the Sun-god, the Sun-god of the gods.'
103 He was clothed with the aura of the Ten Gods, so exalted was his strength,
104 The Fifty Dreads were loaded upon him.
105 Anu formed and gave birth to the four winds,
106 He delivered them to him, "My son, let them whirl!"
107 He formed dust and set a hurricane to drive it,
108 He made a wave to bring consternation on Tia-mat.
109 Tia-mat was confounded; day and night she was frantic.
110 The gods took no rest, they . . . . . .
111 In their minds they plotted evil,
112 And addressed their mother Tia-mat,
113 "When Apsû, your spouse, was killed,
114 You did not go at his side, but sat quietly.
115 The four dreadful winds have been fashioned
116 To throw you into confusion, and we cannot sleep.
117 You gave no thought to Apsû, your spouse,
113 Nor to Mummu, who is a prisoner. Now you sit alone.
119 Henceforth you will be in frantic consternation!
120 And as for us, who cannot rest, you do not love us!
121 Consider our burden, our eyes are hollow.
122 Break the immovable yoke that we may sleep.
123 Make battle, avenge them!
124 [. .] . . . . reduce to nothingness!
125 Tia-mat heard, the speech pleased her,
126 (She said,) "Let us make demons, [as you] have advised."
127 The gods assembled within her.
128 They conceived [evil] against the gods their begetters.
129 They . . . . . and took the side of Tia-mat,
130 Fiercely plotting, unresting by night and day,
131 Lusting for battle, raging, storming,
132 They set up a host to bring about conflict.
133 Mother H(ubur, who forms everything,
134 Supplied irresistible weapons, and gave birth to giant serpents.
135 They had sharp teeth, they were merciless . . . .

With poison instead of blood she filled their bodies.
She clothed the fearful monsters with dread,
She loaded them with an aura and made them godlike.
(She said,) "Let their onlooker feebly perish,
May they constantly leap forward and never retire."
She created the Hydra, the Dragon, the Hairy Hero
The Great Demon, the Savage Dog, and the Scorpion-man,
Fierce demons, the Fish-man, and the Bull-man,
Carriers of merciless weapons, fearless in the face of battle.
Her commands were tremendous, not to be resisted.
Altogether she made eleven of that kind.
Among the gods, her sons, whom she constituted her host,
She exalted Qingu, and magnified him among them.
The leadership of the army, the direction of the host,
The bearing of weapons, campaigning, the mobilization of conflict,
The chief executive power of battle, supreme command,
She entrusted to him and set him on a throne,
"I have cast the spell for you and exalted you in the host of the gods,
I have delivered to you the rule of all the gods.
You are indeed exalted, my spouse, you are renowned,
Let your commands prevail over all the Anunnaki."
She gave him the Tablet of Destinies and fastened it to his breast,
(Saying) "Your order may not be changed; let the utterance of your mouth be firm."
After Qingu was elevated and had acquired the power of Anuship,
He decreed the destinies for the gods, her sons:
"May the utterance of your mouths subdue the fire-god,
May your poison by its accumulation put down aggression."

Tablet II

Tia-mat gathered together her creation
And organised battle against the gods, her offspring.
Henceforth Tia-mat plotted evil because of Apsû
It became known to Ea that she had arranged the conflict.
Ea heard this matter,
He lapsed into silence in his chamber and sat motionless.
After he had reflected and his anger had subsided
He directed his steps to Anšar his father.
He entered the presence of the father of his begetter, Anšar,
And related to him all of Tia-mat's plotting.
"My father, Tia-mat our mother has conceived a hatred for us,
She has established a host in her savage fury.
All the gods have turned to her,
Even those you (pl.) begat also take her side
They . . . . . and took the side of Tia-mat,
Fiercely plotting, unresting by night and day,
Lusting for battle, raging, storming,
They set up a host to bring about conflict.
Mother H(ubur, who forms everything,
Supplied irresistible weapons, and gave birth to giant serpents.
They had sharp teeth, they were merciless.

With poison instead of blood she filled their bodies.
She clothed the fearful monsters with dread,
She loaded them with an aura and made them godlike.
(She said,) "Let their onlooker feebly perish,
May they constantly leap forward and never retire."
She created the Hydra, the Dragon, the Hairy Hero,
The Great Demon, the Savage Dog, and the Scorpion-man,
Fierce demons, the Fish-man, and the Bull-man,
Carriers of merciless weapons, fearless in the face of battle.
Her commands were tremendous, not to be resisted.
Altogether she made eleven of that kind.
Among the gods, her sons, whom she constituted her host,
She exalted Qingu and magnified him among them.
The leadership of the army, the direction of the host,
The bearing of weapons, campaigning, the mobilization of conflict,
The chief executive power of battle supreme command,
She entrusted to him and set him on a throne.
"I have cast the spell for you and exalted you in the host of the gods,
I have delivered to you the rule of all the gods.
You are indeed exalted, my spouse, you are renowned,
Let your commands prevail over all the Anunnaki."
She gave him the tablet of Destinies and fastened it to his breast,
(Saying) "Your order may not he changed; let the utterance of your mouth be firm."
After Qingu was elevated and had acquired the power of Anuship
He decreed the destinies for the gods. her sons:
"May the utterance of your mouths subdue the fire-god,
May your poison by its accumulation put down aggression."
Anšar heard; the matter was profoundly disturbing.
He cried "Woe!" and bit his lip.
His heart was in fury, his mind could not be calmed.
Over Ea his son his cry was faltering.
"My son, you who provoked the war,
Take responsibility for whatever you alone have done!
You set out and killed Apsû,
And as for Tia-mat, whom you made furious, where is her equal?"
The gatherer of counsel, the learned prince,
The creator of wisdom, the god Nudimmud
With soothing words and calming utterance
Gently answered [his] father Anšar
"My father, deep mind, who decrees destiny,
Who has the power to bring into being and destroy,
Anšar, deep mind, who decrees destiny,
Who has the power to bring into being and to destroy,
I want to say something to you, calm down for me for a moment
And consider that I performed a helpful deed.
Before I killed Apsû
Who could have seen the present situation?
Before I quickly made an end of him
What were the circumstances were I to destroy him?"

Anšar heard, the words pleased him.
His heart relaxed to speak to Ea,
"My son, your deeds are fitting for a god,
You are capable of a fierce, unequalled blow . . [. . .]
Ea, your deeds are fitting for a god,
You are capable of a fierce, unequalled blow . . [. . .]
Go before Tia-mat and appease her attack,
. . [. . .] . . . her fury with [your] incantation."
He heard the speech of Anšar his father,
He took the road to her, proceeded on the route to her.
He went, he perceived the tricks of Tia-mat,
[He stopped], fell silent, and turned back.
[He] entered the presence of august Anšar
Penitently addressing him,
"[My father], Tia-mat's deeds are too much for me.
I perceived her planning, and [my] incantation was not equal (to it).
Her strength is mighty, she is full of dread,
She is altogether very strong, none can go against her.
Her very loud cry did not diminish,
[I became afraid] of her cry and turned back.
[My father], do not lose hope, send a second person against her.
Though a woman's strength is very great, it is not equal to a man's.
Disband her cohorts, break up her plans
Before she lays her hands on us."
Anšar cried out in intense fury,
Addressing Anu his son,
"Honoured son, hero, warrior,
Whose strength is mighty, whose attack is irresistible
Hasten and stand before Tia-mat,
Appease her rage that her heart may relax
If she does not harken to your words,
Address to her words of petition that she may be appeased."
He heard the speech of Anšar his father,
He took the road to her, proceeded on the route to her.
Anu went, he perceived the tricks of Tia-mat,
He stopped, fell silent, and turned back.
He entered the presence of Anšar the father who begat him,
Penitently addressing him.
"My father, Tia-mat's [deeds] are too much for me.
I perceived her planning, but my [incantation] was not [equal] (to it).
Her strength is mighty, she is [full] of dread,
She is altogether very strong, no one [can go against her].
Her very loud noise does not diminish,
I became afraid of her cry and turned back.
My father, do not lose hope, send another person against her.
Though a woman's strength is very great, it is not equal to a man's.
Disband her cohorts, break up her plans,
Before she lays her hands on us."
Anšar lapsed into silence, staring at the ground,

He nodded to Ea, shaking his head.
The Igigi and all the Anunnaki had assembled,
They sat in tight-lipped silence.
No god would go to face . . [. .]
Would go out against Tia-mat . . . . [. .]
Yet the lord Anšar, the father of the great gods,
Was angry in his heart, and did not summon any one.
A mighty son, the avenger of his father,
He who hastens to war, the warrior Marduk
Ea summoned (him) to his private chamber
To explain to him his plans.
"Marduk, give counsel, listen to your father.
You are my son, who gives me pleasure,
Go reverently before Anšar,
Speak, take your stand, appease him with your glance."
Be-l rejoiced at his father's words,
He drew near and stood in the presence of Anšar.
Anšar saw him, his heart filled with satisfaction,
He kissed his lips and removed his fear.
"My [father] do not hold your peace, but speak forth,
I will go and fulfil your desires!
[Anšar,] do not hold your peace, but speak forth,
I will go and fulfil your desires!
Which man has drawn up his battle array against you?
And will Tia-mat, who is a woman, attack you with (her) weapons?
["My father], begetter, rejoice and be glad,
Soon you will tread on the neck of Tia-mat!
[Anšar], begetter, rejoice and be glad,
Soon you will tread on the neck of Tia-mat!
["Go,] my son, conversant with all knowledge,
Appease Tia-mat with your pure spell.
Drive the storm chariot without delay,
And with a [. .] which cannot be repelled turn her back."
Be-l rejoiced at his father's words,
With glad heart he addressed his father,
"Lord of the gods, Destiny of the great gods,
If I should become your avenger,
If I should bind Tia-mat and preserve you,
Convene an assembly and proclaim for me an exalted destiny.
Sit, all of you, in Upšukkinakku with gladness,
And let me, with my utterance, decree destinies instead of you.
Whatever I instigate must not be changed,
Nor may my command be nullified or altered."

Tablet III

Anšar opened his mouth
And addressed Kaka, his vizier,
"Vizier Kaka, who gratifies my pleasure,
I will send you to Lah(mu and Lah(amu.
You are skilled in making inquiry, learned in address.

6 Have the gods, my fathers, brought to my presence.
7 Let all the gods be brought,
8 Let them confer as they sit at table.
9 Let them eat grain, let them drink ale,
10 Let them decree the destiny for Marduk their avenger.
11 Go, be gone, Kaka, stand before them,
12 And repeat to them all that I tell you:
13 "Anšar, your son, has sent me,
14 And I am to explain his plans.
15-52 = II, 11*-48 (* instead of 'My father,' put ' 'Thus,')
53 I sent Anu, but he could not face her.
54 Nudimmud took fright and retired.
55 Marduk, the sage of the gods, your son, has come forward,
56 He has determined to meet Tia-mat.
57 He has spoken to me and said,
58-64 = II, 156*-162 (* begin with quotation marks: "If)
65 Quickly, now, decree your destiny for him without delay,
66 That he may go and face your powerful enemy."
67 Kaka went. He directed his steps
68 To Lah(mu and Lah(amu, the gods his fathers.
69 He prostrated himself, he kissed the ground before them,
70 He got up, saying to them he stood,
71-124 = II, 13-66
125 When Lah(h(a and Lah(amu heard, they cried aloud.
126 All the Igigi moaned in distress,
127 "What has gone wrong that she took this decision about us?
128 We did not know what Tia-mat was doing."
129 All the great gods who decree destinies
130 Gathered as they went,
131 They entered the presence of Anšar and became filled with [joy],
132 They kissed one another as they . [. .] in the assembly.
133 They conferred as they sat at table,
134 They ate grain, they drank ale.
135 They strained the sweet liquor through their straws,
136 As they drank beer and felt good,
137 They became quite carefree, their mood was merry,
138 And they decreed the fate for Marduk, their avenger.

Tablet IV

1 They set a lordly dais for him
2 And he took his seat before his fathers to receive kingship.
3 (They said,) "You are the most honoured among the great gods,
4 Your destiny is unequalled, your command is like Anu's.
5 Marduk, you are the most honoured among the great gods,
6 Your destiny is unequalled, your command is like Anu's.
7 Henceforth your order will not be annulled,
8 It is in your power to exalt and abase.
9 Your utterance is sure, your command cannot be rebelled against,
10 None of the gods will transgress the line you draw.
11 Shrines for all the gods needs provisioning,

That you may be established where their sanctuaries are.
You are Marduk, our avenger,
We have given you kingship over the sum of the whole universe.
Take your seat in the assembly, let your word be exalted,
Let your weapons not miss the mark, but may they slay your enemies.
Be-l, spare him who trusts in you,
But destroy the god who set his mind on evil."
They set a constellation in the middle
And addressed Marduk, their son,
"Your destiny, Be-l, is superior to that of all the gods,
Command and bring about annihilation and re-creation.
Let the constellation disappear at your utterance,
With a second command let the constellation reappear."
He gave the command and the constellation disappeared,
With a second command the constellation came into being again.
When the gods, his fathers, saw (the effect of) his utterance,
They rejoiced and offered congratulation: "Marduk is the king!"
They added to him a mace, a throne, and a rod,
They gave him an irresistible weapon that overwhelms the foe:
(They said,) "Go, cut Tia-mat's throat,
And let the winds bear up her blood to give the news."
The gods, his fathers, decreed the destiny of Be-l,
And set him on the road, the way of prosperity and success.
He fashioned a bow and made it his weapon,
He set an arrow in place, put the bow string on.
He took up his club and held it in his right hand,
His bow and quiver he hung at his side.
He placed lightning before him,
And filled his body with tongues of flame.
He made a net to enmesh the entrails of Tia-mat,
And stationed the four winds that no part of her escape.
The South Wind, the North Wind, the East Wind, the West Wind,
He put beside his net, winds given by his father, Anu.
He fashioned the Evil Wind, the Dust Storm, Tempest,
The Four-fold Wind, the Seven-fold Wind, the Chaos-spreading Wind, the . . . . .Wind.
He sent out the seven winds that he had fashioned,
And they took their stand behind him to harass Tia-mat's entrails.
Be-l took up the Storm-flood, his great weapon,
He rode the fearful chariot of the irresistible storm.
Four steeds he yoked to it and harnessed them to it,
The Destroyer, The Merciless, The Trampler, The Fleet.
Their lips were parted, their teeth bore venom,
They were strangers to weariness, trained to sweep forward.
At his right hand he stationed raging battle and strife,
On the left, conflict that overwhelms a united battle array.
He was clad in a tunic, a fearful coat of mail,
And on has head he wore an aura of terror.
Be-l proceeded and set out on his way,
He set his face toward the raging Tia-mat.

In his lips he held a spell,
He grasped a plant to counter poison in his hand,
Thereupon they milled around him, the gods milled around him,
The gods, his fathers, milled around him, the gods milled around him.
Be-l drew near, surveying the maw of Tia-mat,
He observed the tricks of Qingu, her spouse.
As he looked, he lost his nerve,
His determination went and he faltered.
His divine aides, who were marching at his side,
Saw the warrior, the foremost, and their vision became dim.
Tia-mat cast her spell without turning her neck,
In her lips she held untruth and lies,
"[.] . . . . . .
In their [.] . they have assembled by you."
Be-l [lifted up] the Storm-flood, his great weapon,
And with these words threw it at the raging Tia-mat,
"Why are you aggressive and arrogant,
And strive to provoke battle?
The younger generation have shouted, outraging their elders,
But you, their mother, hold pity in contempt.
Qingu you have named to be your spouse,
And you have improperly appointed him to the rank of Anuship.
Against Anšar, king of the gods, you have stirred up trouble,
And against the gods, my fathers, your trouble is established.
Deploy your troops, gird on your weapons,
You and I will take our stand and do battle."
When Tia-mat heard this
She went insane and lost her reason.
Tia-mat cried aloud and fiercely,
All her lower members trembled beneath her.
She was reciting an incantation, kept reciting her spell,
While the (battle-)gods were sharpening their weapons of war.
Tia-mat and Marduk, the sage of the gods, came together,
Joining in strife, drawing near to battle.
Be-l spread out his net and enmeshed her;
He let loose the Evil Wind, the rear guard, in her face.
Tia-mat opened her mouth to swallow it,
She let the Evil Wind in so that she could not close her lips.
The fierce winds weighed down her belly,
Her inwards were distended and she opened her mouth wide.
He let fly an arrow and pierced her belly,
He tore open her entrails and slit her inwards,
He bound her and extinguished her life,
He threw down her corpse and stood on it.
After he had killed Tia-mat, the leader,
Her assembly dispersed, her host scattered.
Her divine aides, who went beside her,
In trembling and fear beat a retreat.
. . . . to save their lives,

But they were completely surrounded, unable to escape.
He bound them and broke their weapons,
And they lay enmeshed, sitting in a snare,
Hiding in corners, filled with grief,
Bearing his punishment, held in a prison.
The eleven creatures who were laden with fearfulness,
The throng of devils who went as grooms at her right hand,
He put ropes upon them and bound their arms,
Together with their warfare he trampled them beneath him.
Now Qingu, who had risen to power among them,
He bound and reckoned with the Dead Gods.
He took from him the Tablet of Destinies, which was not properly his,
Sealed it with a seal and fastened it to his own breast.
After the warrior Marduk had bound and slain his enemies,
Had . . . . the arrogant enemy . . . ,
Had established victory for Anšar over all his foes,
Had fulfilled the desire of Nudimmud,
He strengthened his hold on the Bound Gods,
And returned to Tia-mat, whom he had bound.
Be-l placed his feet on the lower parts of Tia-mat
And with his merciless club smashed her skull.
He severed her arteries
And let the North wind bear up (her blood) to give the news.
His fathers saw it and were glad and exulted;
They brought gifts and presents to him.
Be-l rested, surveying the corpse,
In order to divide the lump by a clever scheme.
He split her into two like a dried fish:
One half of her he set up and stretched out as the heavens.
He stretched the skin and appointed a watch
With the instruction not to let her waters escape.
He crossed over the heavens, surveyed the celestial parts,
And adjusted them to match the Apsû, Nudimmud's abode.
Be-l measured the shape of the Apsû
And set up Ešarra, a replica of Ešgalla.
In Ešgalla, Ešarra which he had built, and the heavens,
He settled in their shrines Anu, Enlil, and Ea.

Tablet V

He fashioned heavenly stations for the great gods,
And set up constellations, the patterns of the stars.
He appointed the year, marked off divisions,
And set up three stars each for the twelve months.
After he had organized the year,
He established the heavenly station of Ne-beru to fix the stars' intervals.
That none should transgress or be slothful
He fixed the heavenly stations of Enlil and Ea with it.
Gates he opened on both sides,
And put strong bolts at the left and the right.
He placed the heights (of heaven) in her (Tia-mat's) belly,

He created Nannar, entrusting to him the night.
He appointed him as the jewel of the night to fix the days,
And month by month without ceasing he elevated him with a crown,
(Saying,) "Shine over the land at the beginning of the month,
Resplendent with horns to fix six days.
On the seventh day the crown will be half size,
On the fifteenth day, halfway through each month, stand in opposition.
When Šamaš [sees] you on the horizon,
Diminish in the proper stages and shine backwards.
On the 29th day, draw near to the path of Šamaš,
. [. .] the 30th day, stand in conjunction and rival Šamaš.
I have (. . . .] . the sign, follow its track,
Draw near . . (. . . . .) give judgment.
. [. . . .] . Šamaš, constrain [murder] and violence,
. [. . . . .] . me.
* * * * * *
At the end [. . .
Let there [be] the 29th day [. . . "
After [he had . . . .] the decrees [. . .
The organization of front and . [. . .
He made the day [. . .
Let the year be equally [. . .
At the new year [. . .
The year . . . . . [. . .
Let there be regularly [. . .
The projecting bolt [. . .
After he had [. . .
The watches of night and day [. . .
The foam which Tia-mat [. . .
Marduk fashioned [. . .
He gathered it together and made it into clouds.
The raging of the winds, violent rainstorms,
The billowing of mist—the accumulation of her spittle—
He appointed for himself and took them in his hand.
He put her head in position and poured out . . [. .] .
He opened the abyss and it was sated with water.
From her two eyes he let the Euphrates and Tigris flow,
He blocked her nostrils, but left . .
He heaped up the distant [mountains] on her breasts,
He bored wells to channel the springs.
He twisted her tail and wove it into the Durmah(u,
[. . .] . . the Apsû beneath his feet.
[He set up] her crotch—it wedged up the heavens—
[(Thus) the half of her] he stretched out and made it firm as the earth.
[After] he had finished his work inside Tia-mat,
[He spread] his net and let it right out.
He surveyed the heavens and the earth . . [.] .
[. .] their bonds . . . . . .
After he had formulated his regulations and composed [his] decrees,

He attached guide-ropes and put them in Ea's hands.
[The Tablet] of Destinies which Qingu had taken and carried,
He took charge of it as a trophy (?) and presented it to Anu.
[The .] . of battle, which he had tied on or had put on his head,
[.] . he brought before his fathers.
[Now] the eleven creatures to which Tia-mat had given birth and . . . ,
He broke their weapons and bound them (the creatures) to his feet.
He made images of them and stationed them at the [Gate] of the Apsû,
To be a sign never to be forgotten.
[The gods] saw it and were jubilantly happy,
(That is,) Lah(mu, Lah(amu and all his fathers.
Anšar [embraced] him and published abroad his title, "Victorious King,"
Anu, Enlil and Ea gave him gifts.
Mother Damkina, who bore him, hailed him,
With a clean festal robe she made his face shine.
To Usmû, who held her present to give the news,
[He entrusted] the vizierate of the Apsû and the care of the holy places.
The Igigi assembled and all did obeisance to him,
Every one of the Anunnaki was kissing his feet.
They all [gathered] to show their submission,
[. . .] . they stood, they bowed down, "Behold the king!"
His fathers [. . .] . and took their fill of his beauty,
Be-l listened to their utterance, being girded with the dust of battle.
. [. . . . .] . . . . . .
Anointing his body with . [. . .] cedar perfume.
He clothed himself in [his] lordly robe,
With a crown of terror as a royal aura.
He took up his club and held it in his right hand,
. . .] . he grasped in his left.
[. . . . .]
. . .] . he set his feet.
He put upon . [. . .
The sceptre of prosperity and success [he hung] at his side.
After [he had . . .] the aura [
He adorned(?) his sack, the Apsû, with a fearful [. .]
Was settled like . [. . .
In [his] throne room [. . .
In his cella [. . .
Every one of the gods [. . .
Lah(mu and Lah(amu . [. . . . .] .
Opened their mouths and [addressed] the Igigi gods,
"Previously Marduk was our beloved son,
Now he is your king, heed his command!"
Next, they all spoke up together,
"His name is Lugaldimmerankia, trust in him!"
When they had given kingship to Marduk,
They addressed to him a benediction for prosperity and success,
"Henceforth you are the caretaker of our shrine,
Whatever you command, we will do!"

117 Marduk opened his mouth to speak
118 And addressed the gods his fathers,
119 "Above the Apsû, the emerald (?) abode,
120 Opposite Ešarra, which I built for you,
121 Beneath the celestial parts, whose floor I made firm,
122 I will build a house to be my luxurious abode.
123 Within it I will establish its shrine,
124 I will found my chamber and establish my kingship.
125 When you come up from the Apsû to make a decision
126 This will be your resting place before the assembly.
127 When you descend from heaven to make a decision
128 This will be your resting place before the assembly.
129 I shall call its name 'Babylon', "The Homes of the Great Gods",
130 Within it we will hold a festival: that will be the evening festival.
131 [The gods], his fathers, [heard] this speech of his,
132 . [. . . . .] . they said,
133 "With regard to all that your hands have made,
134 Who has your [. . .]?
135 With regard to the earth that your hands have made,
136 Who has your [. . .]?
137 In Babylon, as you have named it,
138 Put our [resting place] for ever.
139 . [. . . . .] let them our bring regular offerings
140 . [. . . . .] . .
141 Whoever [. . .] our tasks which we . [. . .
142 Therein [. . . . .] its toil . [. . .
143 [. . . . .]
144 They rejoiced [. . . . .] . . [. . .
145 The gods . [. . . . .]
146 He who knows [. . . . .] . them
147 He opened [his mouth showing] them light,
148 . . [. . . . .] his speech . [.]
149 He made wide [. . . . .] . them [. . .
150 And . [. . . . .] . . . . .
151 The gods bowed down, speaking to him,
152 They addressed Lugaldimmerankia, their lord,
153 "Formerly, lord, [you were our beloved] son,
154 Now you are our king, . . [. . .]
155 He who . [.] . [.] preserved [us]
156 . . [. . .] the aura of club and sceptre.
157 Let him conceive plans [. . . .] . . [. . .]
158 [.] . . [. . . . . that] we . [. . ."

Tablet VI

1 When Marduk heard the gods' speech
2 He conceived a desire to accomplish clever things.
3 He opened his mouth addressing Ea,
4 He counsels that which he had pondered in his heart,
5 "I will bring together blood to form bone,
6 I will bring into being Lullû, whose name shall be 'man'.

I will create Lullû—man
On whom the toil of the gods will be laid that they may rest.
I will skilfully alter the organization of the gods:
Though they are honoured as one, they shall be divided into two."
Ea answered, as he addressed a word to him,
Expressing his comments on the resting of the gods,
"Let one brother of theirs be given up.
Let him perish that people may be fashioned.
Let the great gods assemble
And let the guilty one be given up that they may be confirmed."
Marduk assembled the great gods,
Using gracious direction as he gave his order,
As he spoke the gods heeded him:
The king addressed a word to the Anunnaki,
"Your former oath was true indeed,
(Now also) tell me the solemn truth:
Who is the one who instigated warfare,
Who made Tia-mat rebel, and set battle in motion?
Let him who instigated warfare be given up
That I may lay his punishment on him; but you sit and rest.
The Igigi, the great gods, answered him,
That is, Lugaldimmerankia, the counsellor of the gods, the lord,
"Qingu is the one who instigated warfare,
Who made Tia-mat rebel and set battle in motion."
They bound him, holding him before Ea,
They inflicted the penalty on him and severed his blood-vessels.
From his blood he (Ea) created mankind,
On whom he imposed the service of the gods, and set the gods free.
After the wise Ea had created mankind
And had imposed the service of the gods upon them—
That task is beyond comprehension
For Nudimmud performed the creation with the skill of Marduk—
King Marduk divided the gods,
All the Anunnaki into upper and lower groups.
He assigned 300 in the heavens to guard the decrees of Anu
And appointed them as a guard.
Next he arranged the organization of the netherworld.
In heaven and netherworld he stationed 600 gods.
After he had arranged all the decrees,
And had distributed incomes among the Anunnaki of heaven and netherworld,
The Anunnaki opened their mouths
And addressed their lord Marduk,
"Now, lord, seeing you have established our freedom
What favour can we do for you?
Let us make a shrine of great renown:
Your chamber will be our resting place wherein we may repose.
Let us erect a shrine to house a pedestal
Wherein we may repose when we finish (the work)."
When Marduk heard this,

He beamed as brightly as the light of day,
"Build Babylon, the task you have sought.
Let bricks for it be moulded, and raise the shrine!"
The Anunnaki wielded the pick.
For one year they made the needed bricks.
When the second year arrived,
They raised the peak of Esagil, a replica of the Apsû.
They built the lofty temple tower of the Apsû
And for Anu, Enlil, and Ea they established its . . as a dwelling.
He sat in splendour before them,
Suveying its horns, which were level with the base of Ešarra.
After they had completed the work on Esagil
All the Anunnaki constructed their own shrines.
300 Igigi of heaven and 600 of the Apsû, all of them, had assembled.
Be-l seated the gods, his fathers, at the banquet
In the lofty shrine which they had built for his dwelling,
(Saying,) "This is Babylon, your fixed dwelling,
Take your pleasure here! Sit down in joy!
The great gods sat down,
Beer-mugs were set out and they sat at the banquet.
After they had enjoyed themselves inside
They held a service in awesome Esagil.
The regulations and all the rules were confirmed:
All the gods divided the stations of heaven and netherwor1d.
The college of the Fifty great gods took their seats,
The Seven gods of destinies were appointed to give decisions.
Be-l received his weapon, the bow, and laid it before them:
His divine fathers saw the net which he had made.
His fathers saw how skilfully wrought was the structure of the bow
As they praised what he had made.
Anu lifted it up in the divine assembly,
He kissed the bow, saying, "It is my daughter!"
Thus he called the names of the bow:
"Long Stick" was the first; the second was, "May it hit the mark."
With the third name, "Bow Star", he made it to shine in the sky,
He fixed its heavenly position along with its divine brothers.
After Anu had decreed the destiny of the bow,
He set down a royal throne, a lofty one even for a god,
Anu set it there in the assembly of the gods.
The great gods assembled,
They exalted the destiny of Marduk and did obeisance.
They invoked a curse on themselves
And took an oath with water and oil, and put their hands to their throats.
They granted him the right to exercise kingship over the gods,
They confirmed him as lord of the gods of heaven and netherworld.
Anšar gave him his exalted name, Asalluh(i
"At the mention of his name, let us show submission!
When he speaks, let the gods heed him,
Let his command be superior in upper and lower regions.

105 May the son, our avenger, be exalted,
106 Let his lordship be superior and himself without rival.
107 Let him shepherd the black-heads, his creatures,
108 Let them tell of his character to future days without forgetting.
109 Let him establish lavish food offerings for his fathers,
110 Let him provide for their maintenance and be caretaker of their sanctuaries,
111 Let him burn incense to rejoice their sanctums.
112 Let him do on earth the same as he has done in heaven:
113 Let him appoint the black-heads to worship him.
114 The subject humans should take note and call on their gods,
115 Since he commands they should heed their goddesses,
116 Let food offerings be brought [for] (?) their gods and goddesses,
117 May they (?) not be forgotten, may they remember their gods,
118 May they . . . their . . , may they . . their shrines.
119 Though the black-heads worship some one, some another god,
120 He is the god of each and every one of us!
121 Come, let us call the fifty names
122 Of him whose character is resplendent, whose achievement is the same.
123 (1) MARDUK
As he was named by his father Anu from his birth,
124 Who supplies pasturage and watering, making the stables flourish.
125 Who bound the boastful with his weapon, the storm flood,
126 And saved the gods, his fathers, from distress.
127 He is the son, the sun-god of the gods, he is dazzling,
128 Let them ever walk in his bright light.
129 On the peoples that he created, the living beings,
130 He imposed the service of the gods and they took rest.
131 Creation and annihilation, forgiveness and exacting the penalty
132 Occur at his command, so let them fix their eyes on him.
133 (2) Marukka: he is the god who created them
134 Who put the Anunnaki at ease, the Igigi at rest.
135 (3) Marutukku: he is the support of land, city, and its peoples,
136 Henceforth let the peoples ever heed him.
137 (4) Meršakušu: fierce yet deliberating, angry yet relenting,
138 His mind is wide, his heart is all-embracing.
139 (5) Lugaldimmerankia is the name by which we all called him,
140 Whose command we have exalted above that of the gods his fathers.
141 He is the lord of all the gods of heaven and netherworld,
142 The king at whose injunctions the gods in upper and lower regions shudder.
143 (6) Narilugaldimmerankia is the name we gave him, the mentor of every god,
144 Who established our dwellings in heaven and netherworld in time of trouble,
145 Who distributed the heavenly stations between Igigi and Anunnaki,
146 Let the gods tremble at his name and quake on their seats.
147 (7) Asalluh(i is the name by which his father Anu called him,
148 He is the light of the gods, a mighty hero,
149 Who, as his name says, is a protecting angel for god and land,
150 Who by a terrible combat saved our dwelling in time of trouble.
151 (8) Asalluh(i-Namtilla they called him secondly, the life-giving god,
152 Who, in accordance with the form (of) his (name), restored all the ruined gods,

153 The lord, who brought to life the dead gods by his pure incantation,
154 Let us praise him as the destroyer of the crooked enemies.
155 (9) Asalluh(i-Namru, as his name is called thirdly,
156 The pure god, who cleanses our character."
157 Anšar, Lah(mu, and Lah(amu (each) called him by three of his names,
158 Then they addressed the gods, their sons,
159 "We have each called him by three of his names,
160 Now you call his names, like us."
161 The gods rejoiced as they heard their speech,
162 In Upšuukkinaki they held a conference,
163 "Of the warrior son, our avenger,
164 Of the provisioner, let us extol the name."
165 They sat down in their assembly, summoning the destinies,
166 And with all due rites they called his name:

Tablet VII

1 (10)Asarre, the giver of arable land who established plough-land,
2 The creator of barley and flax, who made plant life grow.
3 (11)Asaralim, who is revered in the counsel chamber, whose counsel excels,
4 The gods heed it and grasp fear of him.
5 (12)Asaralimnunna, the noble, the light of the father, his begetter,
6 Who directs the decrees of Anu, Enlil, and Ea, that is Ninšiku.
7 He is their provisioner, who assigns their incomes,
8 Whose turban multiplies abundance for the land.
9 (13) Tutu is he, who accomplishes their renovation,
10 Let him purify their sanctuaries that they may repose.
11 Let him fashion an incantation that the gods may rest,
12 Though they rise up in fury, let them withdraw.
13 He is indeed exalted in the assembly of the gods, his [fathers],
14 No one among the gods can [equal] him.
15 (14) Tutu-Ziukkinna, the life of [his] host,
16 Who established, the pure heavens for the gods,
17 Who took charge of their courses, who appointed [their stations],
16 May he not be forgotten among mortals, but [let them remember] his deeds.
19 (15) Tutu-Ziku they called him thirdly, the establisher of purification,
20 The god of the pleasant breeze, lord of success and obedience,
21 Who produces bounty and wealth, who establishes abundance,
22 Who turns everything scant that we have into profusion,
23 Whose pleasant breeze we sniffed in time of terrible trouble,
24 Let men command that his praises be constantly uttered, let them offer worship to him.
25 As (16) Tutu-Agaku, fourthly, let humans extol him,
26 Lord of the pure incantation, who brought the dead back to life,
27 Who showed mercy on the Bound Gods,
28 Who threw the imposed yoke on the gods, his enemies,
29 And to spare them created mankind.
30 The merciful, in whose power it is to restore to life,
31 Let his words be sure and not forgotten
32 From the mouths of the black-heads, his creatures.

33 As (17) Tutu-Tuku, fifthly, let their mouth give expression to his pure spell,
34 Who extirpated all the wicked by his pure incantation.
35 (18) Šazu, who knew the heart of the gods, who saw the reins,
36 Who did not let an evil-doer escape from him,
37 Who established the assembly of the gods, who rejoiced their hearts,
38 Who subjugated the disobedient, he is the gods' encompassing protection.
39 He made truth to prosper, he uprooted perverse speech,
40 He separated falsehood from truth.
41 As (19) Šazu-Zisi, secondly, let them continually praise him, the subduer of aggressors,
42 Who ousted consternation of from the bodies of the gods, his fathers.
43 (20) Šazu-Suh(rim, thirdly, who extirpated every foe with his weapons,
44 Who confounded their plans and turned them into wind.
45 He snuffed out all the wicked who came against him,
46 Let the gods ever shout acclamations in the assembly.
47 (21) Šazu-Suh(gurim, fourthly, who established success for the gods, his fathers,
48 Who extirpated foes and destroyed their offspring,
49 Who scattered their achievements, leaving no part of them,
50 Let his name be spoken and proclaimed in the land.
51 As (22) Šazu-Zah(rim, fifthly, let future gererations discuss him,
52 The destroyer of every rebel, of all the disobedient,
53 Who brought all the fugitive gods into the shrines,
54 Let this name of his be established.
55 As (23) Šazu-Zah(gurim, sixthly, let them altogether and everywhere worship him,
56 Who himself destroyed all the foes in battle.
57 (24) Enbilulu is he, the lord who supplies them abundantly,
58 Their great chosen one, who provides cereal offerings,
59 Who keeps pasturage and watering in good condition and established it for the land,
60 Who opened watercourses and distributed plentiful water.
61 (25) Enbilulu-Epadun, lord of common land and . . ., let them [call him] secondly,
62 Canal supervisor of heaven and netherworld, who sets the furrow,
Who establishes clean arable land in the open country,
63 Who directs irrigation ditch and canal, and marks out the furrow.
64 As (26) Enbilulu-Gugal, canal supervisor of the water courses of the gods, let them praise him thirdly,
65 Lord of abundance, profusion, and huge stores (of grain),
66 Who provides bounty, who enriches human habitations,
67 Who gives wheat, and brings grain into being.
68 (27) Enbilulu-H(egal, who accumulates abundance for the peoples . . . .
69 Who rains down riches on the broad earth, and supplies abundant vegetation.
70 (28) Sirsir, who heaped up a mountain on top of Tia-mat,
71 Who plundered the corpse of Tia-mat with [his] weapons,
72 The guardian of the land, their trustworthy shepherd,
73 Whose hair is a growing crop, whose turban is a furrow,
74 Who kept crossing the broad Sea in his fury,
75 And kept crossing over the place of her battle as though it were a bridge.
76 (29) Sirsir-Malah(they named him secondly—so be it—
77 Tia-mat was his boat, he was her sailor.
78 (30) Gil, who ever heaps up piles of barley, massive mounds,
79 The creator of grain and flocks, who gives seed for the land.

(31) Gilima, who made the bond of the gods firm, who created stability,
A snare that overwhelmed them, who yet extended favours.
(32) Agilima, the lofty, who snatches off the crown, who takes charge of snow,
Who created the earth on the water and made firm the height of heaven.
(33) Zulum, who assigns meadows for the gods and divides up what he has created,
Who gives incomes and food-offerings, who administers shrines.
(34) Mummu, creator of heaven end underworld, who protects refugees,
The god who purifies heaven and underworld, secondly Zulummu,
In respect of whose strength none other among the gods can equal him.
(35) Gišnumunab, creator of all the peoples, who made the world regions,
Who destroyed Tia-mat's gods, and made peoples from part of them.
(36) Lugalabdubur, the king who scattered the works of Tia-mat, who uprooted her weapons,
Whose foundation is secure on the "Fore and Aft".
(37) Pagalguenna, foremost of all lords, whose strength is exalted,
Who is the greatest among the gods, his brothers, the most noble of them all.
(38) Lugaldurmah(, king of the bond of the gods, lord of Durmah(u,
Who is the greatest in the royal abode, infinitely more lofty than the other gods.
(39) Aranunna, counsellor of Ea, creator of the gods, his fathers,
Whom no god can equal in respect of his lordly walk.
(40) Dumuduku, who renews for himself his pure abode in Duku,
Dumuduku, without whom Lugalduku does not make a decision.
(41) Lugalšuanna, the king whose strength is exalted among the gods,
The lord, the strength of Anu, he who is supreme, chosen of Anšar.
(42) Irugga, who plundered them all in the Sea,
Who grasps all wisdom, is comprehensive in understanding.
(43) Irqingu, who plundered Qingu in . . . battle,
Who directs all decrees and establishes lordship.
(44) Kinma, the director of all the gods, who gives counsel,
At whose name the gods bend down in reverence as before a hurricane.
(45) Dingir-Esiskur—let him take his lofty seat in the House of Benediction,
Let the gods bring their presents before him
Until he receives their offerings.
No one but he accomplishes clever things
The four (regions) of black-heads are his creation,
Apart from him no god knows the measure of their days.
(46) Girru, who makes weapons hard (?),
Who accomplished clever things in the battle with Tia-mat,
Comprehensive in wisdom, skilled in understanding,
A deep mind, that all the gods combined do not understand.
Let (47) Addu be his name, let him cover the whole span of heaven,
Let him thunder with his pleasant voice upon the earth,
May the rumble fill (?) the clouds
And give sustenance to the peoples below.
(48) Aša-ru, who, as his name says, mustered the Divine Fates
He indeed is the warden of absolutely all peoples.
As (49) Ne-beru let him hold the crossing place of heaven and underworld,
They should not cross above or below, but should wait for him.
Ne-beru is his star, which he caused to shine in the sky,
Let him take his stand on the heavenly staircase that they may look at him.

128 Yes, he who constantly crosses the Sea without resting,
129 Let his name be Ne-beru, who grasps her middle,
130 Let him fix the paths of the stars of heaven,
131 Let him shepherd all the gods like sheep,
132 Let him bind Tia-mat and put her life in mortal danger,
133 To generations yet unborn, to distant future days,
134 May he continue unchecked, may he persist into eternity.
135 Since he created the heavens and fashioned the earth,
136 Enlil, the father, called him by his own name, (50) 'Lord of the Lands'.
137 Ea heard the names which all the Igigi called
138 And his spirit became radiant.
139 "Why! He whose name was extolled by his fathers
140 Let him, like me, be called (51) 'Ea'.
141 Let him control the sum of all my rites,
142 Let him administer all my decrees."
143 With the word "Fifty" the great gods
144 Called his fifty names and assigned him an outstanding position.
145 They should be remembered; a leading figure should expound them,
146 The wise and learned should confer about them,
147 A father should repeat them and teach them to his son,
148 One should explain them to shepherd and herdsman.
149 If one is not negligent to Marduk, the Enlil of the gods,
150 May one's land flourish, and oneself prosper,
151 (For) his word is reliable, his command unchanged,
152 No god can alter the utterance of his mouth.
153 When he looks in fury, he does not relent,
154 When his anger is ablaze, no god can face him.
155 His mind is deep, his spirit is all-embracing,
156 Before whom sin and transgression are sought out.
157 Instruction which a leading figure repeated before him (Marduk):
158 He wrote it down and stored it so that generations to come might hear it.
159 [. .] . Marduk, who created the Igigi gods,
160 Though they diminish . . . let them call on his name.
161 . . . the song of Marduk,
162 Who defeated Tia-mat and took kingship

Conclusion

The Enuma Elish as a mythological work is timeless, but some scholars have argued that, in its day, it would have resonated with an audience who understood Babylon as a city breaking with the traditions of the past to create a new and better future. Scholar Thorkild Jacobsen, for example, notes:

Babylon warred with the territory of ancient Sumer and all its renowned and venerable ancient cities and their gods. It waged an upstart's war with its own parent civilization. And that this was a live issue, that [Babylon] was keenly aware of being heir to and continuer of Sumerian civilization, is clear from the fact that its kings, especially those of the latter half of the [Sealand] dynasty, sport elaborate Sumerianize names. Understandably, therefore, Babylon might have felt - consciously or unconsciously - its victory to be in some sense patricidal. (190)

The story, then, can be read not only as a grand tale of the triumph of order over chaos and light over darkness but as a parable of the rise of Babylon and Babylonian culture over the old Sumerian model of

civilization. Further, the tale can be understood as an illustration of the concept of life as perpetual change.

The old static gods in the story are replaced by the younger and more dynamic gods who then introduce the concept of change and mutability to the universe through their creation of mortal beings who are subject to death. These creatures are tasked with helping the gods maintain their creation and so, although they are not themselves eternal, play an integral role in the eternal work of the gods.

Bibliography

- Bertman, S. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia.* Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Black, J & Green, A. *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia.* University of Texas Press, 1992.
- Dalley, S. *Myths from Mesopotamia.* Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Enuma Elish: The Babylonian Epic of Creation from Etana WebsiteAccessed 20 Apr 2018.
- Jacobsen,T. *The Treasures of Darkness.* Yale University Press, 1978.
- Kramer, S. N. *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character.* University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Kriwaczek, P. *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization.* St. Martin's Griffin, 2012.
- Leick, G. *The A to Z of Mesopotamia.* Scarecrow Press, 2010.
- Van De Mieroop, M. *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC.* Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.
- Von Soden, W. *The Ancient Orient.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

2.4: Enuma Elish - The Babylonian Epic of Creation is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Classical Greece and Rome

3.1: What is a myth?
3.2: The Three Types of Myth
3.3: Historical Myths
3.4: Psychological Myths
3.5: Story Pattern of the Greek Hero
3.6: Why are there so many versions of Greek myths?
3.7: Map
3.8: Names and Key Concepts
3.8.1: Agamemnon and Iphigenia
3.8.2: Aphrodite
3.8.3: Apollo
3.8.4: Ares
3.8.5: The Argonauts
3.8.6: Artemis
3.8.7: Athena
3.8.8: Bacchus
3.8.9: Caduceus
3.8.10: Centaurs
3.8.11: Chthonian Deities
3.8.12: The Delphic Oracle
3.8.13: Demeter
3.8.14: Dionysus
3.8.15: Hades
3.8.16: Hephaestus
3.8.17: Hera
3.8.18: Heracles
3.8.19: Hermes
3.8.20: Hestia
3.8.21: Jason
3.8.22: Miasma
3.8.23: The Minotaur
3.8.24: Origins
3.8.25: Orpheus
3.8.26: Persephone
3.8.27: Perseus
3.8.28: Poseidon
3.8.29: Prometheus
3.8.30: Sphinx
3.8.31: Theseus
3.8.32: The Twelve Labors of Heracles

3.8.33: Xenia
3.8.34: Zeus
3.9: The Iliad And The Odyssey
3.10: The Iliad - An Introduction
3.11: Homer, The Iliad
3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad
The Odyssey
3.12.1: Books
3.12.1.1: Book I
3.12.1.2: Book II
3.12.1.3: Book III
3.12.1.4: Book IV
3.12.1.5: Book V
3.12.1.6: Book VI
3.12.1.7: Book VII
3.12.1.8: Book VIII
3.12.1.9: Book IX
3.12.1.10: Book X
3.12.1.11: Book XI
3.12.1.12: Book XII
3.12.1.13: Book XIII
3.12.1.14: Book XIV
3.12.1.15: Book XV
3.12.1.16: Book XVI
3.12.1.17: Book XVII
3.12.1.18: Book XVIII
3.12.1.19: Book XIX
3.12.1.20: Book XX
3.12.1.21: Book XXI
3.12.1.22: Book XXII
3.12.1.23: Book XXIII
3.12.1.24: Book XXIV
3.13: The Odyssey - An Introduction
The Odyssey
3.14.1: Books
3.14.1.1: Book I
3.14.1.2: Book II
3.14.1.3: Book III
3.14.1.4: Book IV
3.14.1.5: Book V
3.14.1.6: Book VI
3.14.1.7: Book VII
3.14.1.8: Book VIII
3.14.1.9: Book IX

3.14.1.10: Book X
3.14.1.11: Book XI
3.14.1.12: Book XII
3.14.1.13: Book XIII
3.14.1.14: Book XIV
3.14.1.15: Book XV
3.14.1.16: Book XVI
3.14.1.17: Book XVII
3.14.1.18: Book XVIII
3.14.1.19: Book XIX
3.14.1.20: Book XX
3.14.1.21: Book XXI
3.14.1.22: Book XXII
3.14.1.23: Book XXIII
3.14.1.24: Book XXIV
3.15: Oedipus The King - Sophocles (ca. 496-ca. 406 B.C.E.)
3.16: The Oresteia - An Introduction
3.17: MEDEA - Euripides (ca. 484-ca.407 B.C.E.)
The Odyssey
3.18.1: Sections
3.18.1.1: Section 1
3.18.1.2: Section 2
3.18.1.3: Section 3
3.18.1.4: Section 4
3.18.1.5: Section 5
3.18.1.6: Section 6

3: Classical Greece and Rome is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.1: What is a myth?

Today people often use the word “myth” to mean an untrue story or false rumor. For example, if one person asked: “Is Friday the 13th an unlucky day?” another person might answer: “No, that is just a myth.” But the ancient Greeks did not use the word *mythos* (μῦθος) in this way. For the Greeks, a *mythos* was simply a story. It was not important whether the story was true or false; what was important was the fact that the mode of speech was that of a story. The Greek word *logos* (λόγος), on the other hand, means a rational explanation or analytical statement. These two words, *mythos* and *logos*, point to two different kinds of speech, corresponding to two different ways of thinking. One was not considered more important than the other; they were just different. If you put the two words together: *mythos* + *logos* = mythology. And “mythology” is the explanation or the analytical study of myths.

3.1: What is a myth? is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.2: The Three Types of Myth

There are actually many different types of myth, not just three. In fact, there are several entire theories of myth. The theoretical study of myth is very complex; many books have been written about theories of myth, and we could have an entire class just on theories of myth (without studying any of the myths themselves). The problem with theories of myth, however, is that they are not very good; they don't do a great job of explaining the myths or in helping us understand them. Furthermore, the myths themselves are much more interesting than the theories. For this reason, this textbook will not say very much about the theories of myth. But we don't want to ignore the theoretical study of myth entirely, so we will limit ourselves to discussing only three types of myth.

1. Aetiological Myths

Aetiological myths (sometimes spelled etiological) explain the reason why something is the way it is today. The word aetiological is from the Greek word *aetion* (αἴτιον) meaning "reason" or "explanation". Please note that the reasons given in an aetiological myth are NOT the real (or scientific) reasons. They are explanations that have meaning for us as human beings. There are three subtypes of aetiological myths: natural, etymological, and religious.

A **natural aetiological myth** explains an aspect of nature. For example, you could explain lightning and thunder by saying that Zeus is angry.

An **etymological aetiological myth** explains the origin of a word. (Etymology is the study of word origins.) For example, you could explain the name of the goddess, Aphrodite, by saying that she was born in sea-foam, since *aphros* is the Greek word for sea-foam.

A **religious aetiological myth** explains the origin of a religious ritual. For example, you could explain the Greek religious ritual of the Eleusinian Mysteries by saying that they originated when the Greek goddess, Demeter, came down to the city of Eleusis and taught the people how to worship her.

All three of these explanations are not true: Zeus' anger is not the correct explanation for lightning and thunder; Aphrodite's name was not actually derived from the Greek word *aphros*; and Demeter did not establish her own religious rituals in the town of Eleusis. Rather, all of these explanations had meaning for the ancient Greeks, who told them in order to help them understand their world.

2. Historical Myths

Historical myths are told about a historical event, and they help keep the memory of that event alive. Ironically, in historical myths, the accuracy is lost but meaning is gained. The myths about the Trojan War, including the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, could be classified as historical myths. The Trojan War did occur, but the famous characters that we know from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, etc.) probably did not exist.

3. Psychological Myths

Psychological myths try to explain why we feel and act the way we do. A psychological myth is different from an aetiological myth because a psychological myth does not try to explain one thing by way of something else (such as lightning and thunder can be explained by Zeus' anger). In a psychological myth, the emotion itself is seen as a divine force, coming from the outside, that can directly influence a person's emotions. For example, the goddess, Aphrodite, is sometimes seen as the power of erotic love. When someone said or did something that they did not want to do, the ancient Greeks might say that Aphrodite "made them" do it.

3.2: The Three Types of Myth is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.3: Historical Myths

See Three Types of Myth

3.3: Historical Myths is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.4: Psychological Myths

See Three Types of Myth

3.4: Psychological Myths is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.5: Story Pattern of the Greek Hero

Myths from many lands illustrate the archetypal pattern of the hero, in which a hero's life follows a predictable pattern of types of events. These include an unusual birth, early tests, a heroic quest (with heroic tests), and a return and a reward. This pattern is drawn from the work of the comparative mythologist, Joseph Campbell. Campbell discovered that the story of a typical hero follows a predictable pattern across the mythologies of many different cultures.

Campbell's Story Pattern of the Hero applies to the Greek hero to some extent, but Greek heroes differ in one, crucial respect: the last stage. Greek heroes, contrary to heroes from other cultures, usually have an unhappy later life and a violent or unhappy death.

In setting forth our own **Story Pattern of the *Greek* Hero**, we will concentrate especially on the heroes' unhappy later lives (after they have completed their heroic journeys) and their unhappy deaths, because that is what differentiates Greek myths from the myths of most other cultures.

Story Pattern of the *Greek* Hero

I. Unusual Birth – usually has one divine parent & one mortal parent

-sometimes the god (if Zeus) changes his shape

-sometimes both divine & human father (both slept w/mother on same night)

II. Early Tests – must prove heroic nature while still young

III. Heroic Journey – motivated by a noble cause

-often b/c his family has been deprived of rightful power

-often imposed by a wicked king

-often includes a descent to Hades & return

-in psychological terms = facing own death

IV. Heroic Tests

– must pass series of difficult tests; often part of heroic journey

-includes performing difficult and dangerous acts that greatly benefit his people

-sometimes imposed by a wicked king

-sometimes includes killing a monster or dragon

– often wins princess bride as a reward

V. Unhappy Later Life and Violent or Unhappy Death

-this aspect is peculiarly Greek

-different from heroes of other cultures, e.g. our own

Note: variations are important

-most heroes don't follow pattern fully

-it is interesting to note that each Greek hero is unique and not all of them fit into every aspect of this general pattern.

-but all Greek heroes (except, perhaps, for Perseus) do have an unhappy later life and violent or unhappy death

-Heracles is perhaps the best example of this pattern.

3.5: Story Pattern of the Greek Hero is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.6: Why are there so many versions of Greek myths?

The sources we have that tell the stories of the gods and heroes come from many different authors from different parts of the Mediterranean world and from different points in time, spanning several centuries. Cultures and beliefs change over the course of a few decades, let alone centuries, so their stories adapt too. But with these myths, even within the confines of ancient Greek culture, each author had some artistic freedom to reinvent the story and make it more applicable or interesting to his audience. In this way, myths function similarly to comic book heroes, like Batman. Every author who tackles the story of Batman's origin has to bring something new to it or it gets boring. There are some important elements that have to stay the same (like Bruce Wayne's parents are killed when he is young as they leave the opera), but other elements can change (like the 1989 Tim Burton film, which makes Jack Nicholson's Joker the man who killed Bruce's parents). In the same way, the different authors who wrote versions of the Greek myths took liberties with various aspects of the myths, even though (for the most part) the main outlines of the stories remained the same. Thus, even though the Greek myths were in a very real sense sacred stories, in this respect they were more like modern literature, films, or the stories of comic book heroes than the Judeo-Christian Bible.

3.6: Why are there so many versions of Greek myths? is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.7: Map



This material originated on the Interactive Ancient Mediterranean Web site (http://iam.classics.unc.edu)
It has been copied, reused or redistributed under the terms of IAM's fair use policy.
Copyright 1998, Interactive Ancient Mediterranean.

3.7: Map is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8: Names and Key Concepts

3.8: Names and Key Concepts is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.1: Agamemnon and Iphigenia

Agamemnon was the King of Mycenae [see Argos on map] and brother to Menelaus, the King of Sparta [map]. (Together the brothers are called the Atreidae, meaning “the sons of Atreus”.) When Menelaus’ wife, Helen, was abducted by the Trojan Prince, Paris, the Atreidae sought out their Greek allies to sail to Troy and bring Helen back; they also planned to punish the Trojans for stealing Helen of Sparta and violating Xenia (see Xenia). All the Greek allies were planning to meet at Aulis. The process of gathering their forces took a few years because the kingdoms were spread out and unconnected. Finally, the greatest Greek warriors gathered at Aulis and were ready to cross the sea to attack Troy [see Ilium/Troia on map]. However, the wind kept blowing against them, preventing them from sailing out towards Troy. This kept up for weeks, long enough for the troops to get restless and consider going home. The seer Calchas was among the group and he told Agamemnon that he had angered the goddess Artemis and the wind would not allow them to make their voyage until Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia, to the goddess. Sources differ on why exactly Artemis was so angry with Agamemnon. Some say he boasted that he could hunt better than the goddess, while others say that he had not done anything; she just was angry at him.



The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia by François Perrier (1632-1633) in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, France

With the campaign in trouble and the Atreidae’s reputations at stake, Agamemnon chose to sacrifice his daughter. He sent Odysseus and Diomedes to his wife, Clytemnestra (who happened to be Helen’s sister), to tell her that he had arranged a marriage between their daughter, Iphigenia, and the hero Achilles and Achilles wished to marry her before he went off to fight. Agamemnon told this lie because he suspected that if he told his wife the real reason why he wanted Iphigenia to come to Aulis, that Clytemnestra would not go along with the plan. But Clytemnestra suspected nothing; she prepared her daughter for marriage and sent her off to Aulis. Once there, Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter (though some sources contend that Artemis replaced her with a deer at the last second and whisked the girl off to live as her priestess among the Taurians). This action earned Agamemnon the undying hatred of his wife.





A fresco of the sacrifice of Iphigenia from Pompeii in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples

3.8.1: Agamemnon and Iphigenia is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.2: Aphrodite

Roman name: Venus

Epithets: Cypris (Lady of Cyprus), Cythereia (Lady of Cythera, an island off the southern coast of the Peloponnese), Paphian (Lady of Paphos, a town on Crete), Urania (Daughter of Uranus), Smile-loving goddess, Goddess of smiles and deceit

Symbols: doves

Goddess of erotic love and beauty

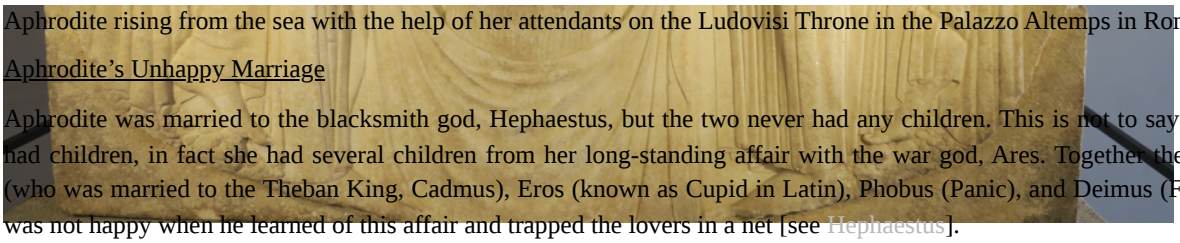


The Birth of Venus in the Casa della Venere in Conchiglia in Pompeii

Two Stories on the Birth of Aphrodite

Aphrodite has two origins. Hesiod says that Aphrodite came from the frothy mix of sea foam and Uranus' genitals when Cronus dismembered his father [see Origins]. She washed ashore either at the city of Paphos on Cyprus (accounting for her epithets Cypris and Paphian) or on the island Cythera (thus the epithet Cythereia). Paphos was also the site of Aphrodite's main temple on Cyprus. Homer calls Aphrodite the daughter of Zeus and Dione, who was either a Titan or one of the daughters of Oceanus. The name, Dione, is also the feminine form of Zeus' name.





Aphrodite rising from the sea with the help of her attendants on the Ludovisi Throne in the Palazzo Altemps in Rome

Aphrodite's Unhappy Marriage

Aphrodite was married to the blacksmith god, Hephaestus, but the two never had any children. This is not to say Aphrodite never had children, in fact she had several children from her long-standing affair with the war god, Ares. Together they had Harmonia (who was married to the Theban King, Cadmus), Eros (known as Cupid in Latin), Phobus (Panic), and Deimus (Fear). Hephaestus was not happy when he learned of this affair and trapped the lovers in a net [see Hephaestus].

Aphrodite and Adonis

Aphrodite also had notable mortal lovers, including Adonis and Anchises. Adonis was a handsome young man and Aphrodite fell deeply in love with him. Persephone was also in love with Adonis, so they went to Zeus to decide which one would have the youth's love [see Persephone]. Zeus split the time into three parts. He gave one to each goddess and one to Adonis himself to decide where to spend it. Adonis chose to spend his portion of the year with Aphrodite. The deal did not last long though, because Adonis was quite fond of hunting. On a boar hunt, he was gored by the animal and died. Aphrodite was distraught and she induced an anemone to grow from Adonis' blood.

Aphrodite and Anchises

Anchises was a young Trojan nobleman who tended to herds on Mount Ida. Zeus was angry at Aphrodite for making the gods, especially himself, fall in love with mortals and make fools of themselves pursuing them, so he caused Aphrodite to fall madly in love with Anchises. After she consummated her love for Anchises, Aphrodite made him promise never to tell anyone they slept together, on pain of a thunderbolt from Zeus. (This story is told in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.) But apparently, Anchises could not keep his promise. The next time we see Anchises, in the *Aeneid*, he is lame from having been struck by Zeus' thunderbolt. Anchises clearly did not die from this punishment, but he seems to have been crippled for the rest of his life. The product of their union was Aeneas, whom Aphrodite saved multiple times from death during the Trojan War.

Aphrodite's Anger

Like other gods, Aphrodite would punish anyone, mortal or god, for slights against her. Theseus' son Hippolytus became a devotee of the virgin goddess, Artemis, and thus shunned the pleasures of the flesh. This angered Aphrodite, who felt that Hippolytus did not worship her sufficiently. To get back at Hippolytus, she caused his death by making his step-mother, Phaedra, fall in love with him [see Theseus]. She also punished Eos (the goddess of the dawn) for having an affair with Ares by making her fall in love with mortal after mortal.

In a story not seen until the Roman period, Venus hounded the beautiful girl, Psyche, just for being beautiful. Psyche (whose name means "soul" in Greek) was so beautiful that the people around her worshipped her instead of Venus. Psyche did not ask for this worship, but Venus wanted to punish her anyway. Venus sent her son Cupid to shoot Psyche with his arrows and make her fall in love with some hideous beast instead. This didn't go according to plan though, and Cupid fell in love with Psyche himself. Cupid hid Psyche in his palace, not telling her who he was, until she learned his identity through a trick. In his anger at being tricked, Cupid threw her out of his house. Psyche wandered around Greece until she came to a temple of Venus and submitted herself to Venus' wrath. Venus gave her several impossible tasks, like sorting a large pile of grain in one night or bringing back a jar of water from the Styx. Venus gave her these tasks hoping she would fail, but the world helped Psyche along the way. Some ants helped her sort the grain and an eagle took the jar and filled it with water from the Styx for her. After Psyche had successfully completed these and other impossible tasks, Cupid forgave her for her deceit. He brought Psyche to Jupiter who put an end to the enmity between Psyche and Venus and allowed the two to marry. This story is told in *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius.

The Origin of Aphrodite

Aphrodite originally began as a fertility goddess and had close connections with other Near Eastern fertility goddesses such as Astarte, Cybele, and Ishtar. At one point, these may all have been the same goddess. Aphrodite's main centers of worship were on Cyprus, an island that served as a crossroads between Greece and the Near East, and in Near Eastern sites. Her eastern origins may explain why she favored the Trojans during the Trojan War.

3.8.2: Aphrodite is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.3: Apollo

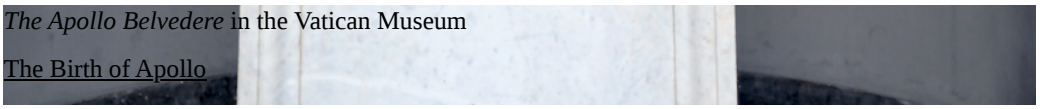
Roman name: Apollo

Epithets: Pythian (for killing the Python), Lycian (unknown, may be connected to Lycia), Far-Shooter (for his archery skills), Delian (for his birth myth), Phoebus (Shining One), Delphinius (God of the Dolphins)

Symbols: lyre, bow and arrow, laurel/myrtle/bay tree, crow/raven, omphalos, dolphin, tripod

God of youth, music, prophecy, archery, and medicine (both disease and healing). The Romans conflated him with the Greek god of the sun, Helius.





The Apollo Belvedere in the Vatican Museum

The Birth of Apollo

Apollo was one of the two children born to Zeus and the goddess, Leto. When Leto was pregnant with Apollo and Artemis, she was looking for a place to give birth, but no place was willing to allow her to give birth on their territory. There was a rumor that Apollo was going to be a wild and terrible divinity, and no place wanted to take the risk that Apollo might harm his birthplace after he was born. But Leto finally convinced the small island of Delos to allow her to give birth there, by promising that Apollo would have a great temple there.

But even though Leto wanted to give birth on Delos, at first she wasn't able to do so. This was because Hera, who was jealous of Zeus' affair with Leto, kept Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth, away from the island. Because no birth could take place unless Eileithyia was present, this was one way that Hera could at least temporarily prevent the children of her rivals from being born. Hera would later play a similar trick with Heracles [see Heracles]. In the case of Apollo and Artemis, Iris (who was a rainbow, and was one of the gods' messengers) was dispatched to bring Eileithyia and according to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, as soon as she stepped onto the island, Apollo and Artemis were born.

Apollo and Artemis

Apollo and his sister often avenged their mother for the wrongs done to her. The twins killed the giant Tityus because he had attempted to rape Leto. The twins also took vengeance on Niobe, who had seven sons and seven daughters. Niobe boasted that she had born more and greater children than Leto. Angered at Niobe's hubris (arrogance, excessive pride, and the desire to challenge the gods) Apollo and Artemis shot Niobe's children with arrows until they were all dead. Niobe wept uncontrollably until she turned into a stone which still spouts tears.

Both Apollo and his sister were excellent archers and the bow and arrow were important symbols for both. Plagues and unexplained deaths were attributed to Apollo or Artemis shooting the victims with arrows (the beginning of the *Iliad* is a good example of this). The lyre was most associated with Apollo as the god of music,

however, it was created by the god Hermes [see Hermes].

Apollo's Unhappy Love Affairs

Apollo was unlucky in a number of his love affairs; in fact, he seems never to have been happy in love. He fell in love with Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, king of Troy, and in order to win her consent, he offered her the gift of prophesy. But after she was given the gift, Cassandra changed her mind and refused his advances. A god cannot take back a gift once it has been given, so Apollo could not prevent Cassandra from correctly predicting the future, so he cursed her so that she would never be believed, despite the fact that she was always correct. Another time Apollo pursued the nymph, Daphne, but she fled from him, calling upon the gods to save her. The gods transformed Daphne into a laurel tree and Apollo, being disheartened, vowed that the laurel would be his special plant forever. Another notable love of Apollo was Hyacinth, a Spartan boy. Hyacinth was killed accidentally by a discus which Apollo threw toward him in a game. From the blood of the boy, the god made a flower grow and named it hyacinth, after the boy. The flower is red and has white markings that resemble the letters AI, which sound like the Greek mourning cry. (How would you categorize this myth?)



Apollo and Daphne by Bernini in the Galleria Borghese in Rome



Close up of Daphne’s face

Apollo bedded the mortal Coronis, but she then decided to take a mortal lover. Apollo was informed of her betrayal by a crow, which he changed from its previous white color to black. (This explains why all crows are now black.) Coronis was pregnant at with Apollo’s child when she decided to sleep with the mortal, so Apollo killed them both, but he rescued the child from her womb. The child, Asclepius, was raised by the good centaur Chiron [see Centaurs], from whom he learned how to heal. Asclepius became so good at healing that he started to bring the dead back to life. This angered Zeus, so he killed Asclepius with his thunderbolt.

Apollo was furious, so he killed the Cyclopes who made the thunderbolts as retaliation. Zeus wanted to imprison Apollo in Tartarus as punishment, but Leto intervened on her son's behalf and convinced Zeus to force Apollo to live as a mortal for a year. Asclepius was deified and became a god of medicine and healing. The caduceus, Asclepius' special staff, became a symbol of healing.



A kylix depicting Apollo with his symbols in the Delphi Museum

Apollo in the Trojan War

In the Trojan War, Apollo was on the side of the Trojans. The reason for this is unclear, although his epithet, Lycian, may mean "from Lycia" (in what is now southern Turkey).

The Origin of Apollo

It is unclear where the god Apollo came from. He was not originally a god of the Mycenaeans (the Greek-speaking peoples who migrated into the Greek peninsula sometime around 1900 BC), nor was he one of the pre-Hellenic gods of the indigenous people. His mother and sister were both Asiatic goddesses, but there is no clear connection between them in origin. Again, his epithet, Lycian, may point to a Near Eastern connection.

3.8.3: Apollo is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.4: Ares

Roman name: Mars

God of war



The Ludovisi Ares with Eros in the Palazzo Altemps in Rome

Ares was the son of Zeus and Hera, but because of his bloodthirstiness, not many of the gods cared much for him, except Aphrodite. Ares and Aphrodite had a long-standing affair [see Aphrodite]. Ares had four children with her as well as many children with Thracian women [map]. He was the father of several of the Argonauts and of the Amazon Queen, Penthesileia.

Ares was worshiped mostly in areas outside of Greece and thus had barbaric connotations (in Greek, the word “barbaros” [βάρβαρος] means “foreign”). Thrace and Scythia were centers for his worship and in myth he was largely associated with the Amazons and Colchians [map]. The belt Heracles stole from the Amazon Queen Hippolyte had been given to her by Ares [see 12 Labors of Heracles]. The grove in which the Golden Fleece rested was sacred to Ares.

Despite his bloodthirstiness, Ares was often beaten by others. Athena wounded him gravely while fighting at Troy. Heracles managed to take him down four times while fighting at Pylus. The giants Otus and Ephialtes trapped him in a pot and he was stuck there for over a year until Hermes rescued him.

The Greeks were not fond of Ares because he was so bloodthirsty. In fact, Zeus tells Ares, “To me, you are the most hateful of the gods who hold Olympus, because quarreling is always dear to you, and war and battles” (*Iliad* 5.890-91). Zeus’ outburst is particularly striking because Ares was his own son. On the other hand, Mars was always a favorite god of the Romans. Mars was the protector of Rome and he was their patron god similar to the way Athena was for the Athenians. Mars was also especially important to the Romans because he was not only their war god but also an agricultural god.



Mars Resting by Diego Velázquez (1640); in the Prado Museum in Madrid

3.8.4: Ares is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.5: The Argonauts

The Argo

The hero Jason was asked by his uncle, Pelias, to bring him the Golden Fleece. [For more on the hero's life and how Pelias came to give him this command, see Jason]. The Golden Fleece was a ram's fleece of pure gold; it was the prize possession of Aëtes, the King of Colchis, which was located on the far-away shores of the Black Sea [map. Jason organized an expedition of heroes from all over Greece to sail with him on this adventure. The roster of heroes varies from source to source but there are a few who appear on almost every list: Heracles; Orpheus; the Dioscuri (sons of Zeus), Castor and Polyduces (also known as Pollux); Telamon, father of the Greater Ajax; Peleus, father of Achilles; and Argus, the builder and eponym of the Argo, the ship on which the Argonauts sailed. Argus had built the ship (with the help of Athena) with one beam from the sacred oak of Dodona. This beam could speak and at some points gave advice to the crew.

The Lemnian Women

The expedition first came to Lemnos, an island inhabited only by women, because all the men had been killed. Sometime before this, the women on the island had neglected the cult of the goddess, Aphrodite. Aphrodite, becoming angry, of course, had caused the women to give off a terrible odor. The women's husbands naturally began to avoid their wives, and eventually they sailed to Thrace and brought back concubines to sleep with instead of their wives. The women were so angry that they killed all the men and the Thracian women as well. (Only one man survived; the princess, Hypsipyle, hid her aged father in a chest and put him out to sea; he drifted ashore on the island of Oenoë.) Because of this terrible deed, the Lemnian women lived in constant fear that the Thracians would come and attack them in retaliation. When the Argonauts landed on Lemnos, the Lemnian women believed that the Thracians had come to kill them and got ready for battle. Jason sent one of his crew, a son of Hermes, as a messenger to ask the women if the Argonauts could camp out on their shore. His words convinced the women they were not in immediate danger, so they convened a council in which they decided that having a group of strong and handsome heroes around would not be a bad idea. The women sent a messenger to bring the heroes into the city.

Most of the Argonauts were thrilled to spend the night in the city (apparently the women no longer smelled bad), but Heracles and a few others stayed with the ship. Queen Hypsipyle became quite enamored with Jason and offered to allow the Argonauts to come and stay. If Jason had any skill, it was charming women. He thanked Hypsipyle graciously but told her that he and his men had to continue on with their journey. Most authors say that the Argonauts spent only a few days on Lemnos, but this was long enough for a new generation of Lemnians to result.

The Doliones

After leaving Lemnos, the Argo sailed for the Hellespont [see Hellespontus on map]. They landed on an island in the Sea of Marmara inhabited by a people called the Doliones. Their king offered to give them shelter and to restock their supplies because an oracle had told him to offer aid such travelers. Only a few men were left to guard the ship, so when a group of giants came upon the guards, the ship would have been easily destroyed had the mighty Heracles not been one of the guards. Heracles singlehandedly shot several of the giants and chased the others away. The King of the Doliones showed Jason the route for the next leg of their journey and the Argo soon headed off, but contrary winds pushed the ship back into the harbor.

By now it was dark, however, and no one could see very well. When the Argonauts disembarked, they did not realize where they were; the Doliones believed a group of raiders had come to attack them, and so a battle ensued. Eventually the Doliones retreated, having lost a large number of their men. The next morning, the Argonauts realized their mistake when they found the body of the king. The Argonauts and the Doliones together celebrated a magnificent funeral for all the deceased. A few days later, the Argonauts moved on.

Heracles and Hylas

The next day they came to the coast of Mysia [map]. Here, Heracles broke his oar, so the group put ashore to make a new one. Heracles went into the woods to cut down the wood for a new oar while his lover, Hylas, went to a stream to get some water. At the stream, Hylas' striking beauty caused the nymph of the stream to abduct him by grabbing him and taking him down to her palace under the water. Heracles was understandably upset by Hylas' disappearance and spent the entire night searching for him. He was

still out searching the next day when the rest of the crew were getting ready to leave, and in their hurry, they left Heracles behind. Heracles managed to find his way home, where he continued his labors.

Phineus and the Harpies

Next, the Argonauts headed for the Bosporus [map] and landed in Salmydessus, the capital of Thynia. Here they met the king, a man named Phineus, who was blind and was being hounded by the Harpies. The Harpies were women with the wings, beaks, and talons of birds. Their name comes from the Greek verb *harpazein* (ἁρπάζειν) meaning "to snatch"; and that's what they did. Whenever Phineus tried to eat anything the Harpies would swoop down and steal some of the food; they left droppings on the rest, so as to make it inedible. So Phineus was slowly starving to death. Phineus was very weak by the time the Argonauts found him. He asked them for their help and they of course obliged. Two of the Argonauts. Zetes and Calaïs, were the sons of Boreas, the North Wind, and because of this, they had wings on their backs. A wonderful feast was prepared and when the Harpies came to snatch it, Zetes and Calaïs took flight and chased the Harpies away. The brothers would have killed the Harpies with their bows and arrows, but Iris (who was the rainbow and also the messenger of Zeus) told them that Zeus wanted them to spare the Harpies' lives, as long as the Harpies promised never to bother Phineus again. When Zetes and Calaïs returned to Salmydessus, everyone enjoyed the feast. In return for their help, Phineus gave them the information they needed to get past the Symplegades (otherwise known as the Clashing Rocks).



The Harpies stealing Phineus' food on a krater in the Archaeological Museum in Ferrara, Italy

The Clashing Rocks

The expedition now headed for the Clashing Rocks, located at the entrance to the Bosphorus [map]. These were floating islands that would crash together with tremendous speed at unpredictable intervals. When they got there, the Argonauts did as Phineus had instructed and sent a dove to fly between the rocks. They watched to see what would happen to the bird, since Phineus had told them that if the bird survived, they had a chance of making it through. If the bird did not, it was useless and they would most definitely perish if they tried. The dove successfully made it through the rocks, though it lost its tail feathers. As the rocks separated, the sailors prepared to row as hard as they possibly could because their lives depended on it. The boat rushed forward at top speed, but the waves created by the moving rocks nearly capsized the Argo. The crew would have perished had Athena not

stepped in and held the rocks apart while pushing the Argo through. But after the Argo escaped, the rocks stayed in place; the gods had decided long ago that once a ship had passed through them, they would never crash together again.

The Sons of Phryxis

The rest of the journey to Colchis was relatively easy for the Argonauts. Zeus steered the group away from the island of the Amazons, Themiscyra, where the Amazons were already prepared for a fight. After a little more sailing, the ship came to a desert island sacred to Ares which Phineus had advised them to visit because they would find something vital to their mission while there. The island was filled with birds with feathers so sharp they could cut through flesh. To get onto the island, the Argonauts held their shields over their heads to make cover. They then clashed their weapons together to scare the birds away. Now able to move around, the crew found the sons of Phrixus stranded on the island. (Phryxis was the youth who had been carried to Colchis by the golden ram. He had stayed in Colchis and had married King Aeëtes' daughter.) The boys were able to show the group the rest of the way to Colchis.

Jason's Tasks

When the crew finally arrived in Colchis, they had no idea how they were going to get the golden fleece, but Hera and Athena asked Aphrodite for her help. Aphrodite sent her son, Eros (also known as Cupid), to shoot Medea, the daughter of King Aeëtes, with his arrows so she would fall in love with Jason [Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*]. The moment Medea saw Jason she instantly fell in love with him. She brought them into the house and her father, on account of Xenia [see Xenia], had to allow the strangers to join them for dinner.

At the dinner banquet, Argus (one of Phrixus' sons) explained who they were and that they had come for the Golden Fleece. Unexpectedly, Aeëtes told the Argonauts that he would certainly give them the Fleece; he said he would only ask Jason to perform a few tasks first. All Jason had to do was to yoke a pair of fire-breathing bulls to a plow, sow a field with dragon's teeth, and then, when fully-armed warriors sprang up from the teeth he would have to kill all of the warriors. Jason had no idea how he was going to perform these asks, but he reluctantly agreed. Later that night, Medea, who was a priestess of Hecate and a very skilled witch, paid a visit to Jason. Medea made Jason promise that he would take her back to Iolcus with him if she helped him complete these impossible tasks. Jason eagerly agreed and Medea gave him a potion and told him what to do.

The night before he had to complete his tasks, Jason sacrificed to Hecate in the manner Medea had instructed him. Then early the next morning he rubbed the potion into his skin and went to find the fire-breathing bulls. Jason was able to yoke the bulls to the plow because the potion protected him from their fire. He plowed the field with the bulls and sowed the dragon's teeth. From the soil came hundreds of fierce warriors, but Jason had been told by Medea what he needed to do. Jason threw a rock into the middle of the warriors, and they, thinking their fellows were attacking them, began to attack one another. Jason waited while they fought one another until only one was left and he killed the remaining warrior.

Stealing the Golden Fleece

Aeëtes, angry that Jason had been able to complete these impossible tasks, refused to hand over the Fleece and the Greeks retreated to their camp. That night, Medea snuck out to the Greek camp and met with Jason. She told him that if he agreed to marry her, she would help him steal the Fleece. Jason agreed and they went to the grove which housed the Golden Fleece. A dragon stood guard over the grove, but Medea put it to sleep with drugs. Jason killed the dragon, stole the Fleece, and they rushed back to the Greek camp and jumped into the ship and sailed toward Greece, taking Medea's younger brother, Apsyrtus, with them. Aeëtes soon learned what had happened and sailed after them with his entire fleet.

The Murder of Apsyrtus

As Aeëtes and his fleet began to gain on the Argo, Medea had run out of ideas. But she was desperately in love with Jason, so she did the only thing she could think of. Medea killed her younger brother, Apsyrtus, and chopped him into pieces. Then she and threw the pieces over the side of the ship, one by one. Aeëtes, when he saw the pieces of his son floating by, stopped to pick up each of the limbs and eventually the head. He forgot all about pursuing the Argo, but he returned to Colchis to give his dead child a decent burial. This allowed the Argonauts to escape the clutches of Aeëtes, but it meant that Medea began her life with Jason by murdering her own brother.

Circe

Zeus was angry at the crew for the murder of Apsyrtus, so Hera blew them off their course, sending them to the waters around Italy to protect them from Zeus' wrath. The beam of the ship with the ability to speak told the crew that they could not return home until they had been purified of Apsyrtus' murder by Aeëtes' sister, the witch Circe, who lived on the island called Aeaea. They found Circe and she performed the proper sacrifices and purification rituals. After this was done she asked who they were. Medea explained the story (minus the death of Apsyrtus) to her and Circe was appalled to learn that her niece had stolen the Golden Fleece. She ordered the Argonauts to leave her island.

The Sirens

Now that they had been purified of the murder, Hera helped the crew of the Argo make their journey to Iolcus. They passed the Sirens, who are described as birds with the heads of women and the ability to sing so wonderfully that any sailor who heard their song would jump out of the boat and swim toward their island where they would die of starvation. The Argonauts had Orpheus amongst their crew and he played a song that rivaled the song of the Sirens and allowed the Argo to pass unharmed. The Argo also passed by Scylla (a monster with six dogs for legs) and Charybdis (a whirlpool that would suck up water and then regurgitate it) and would have surely perished had Thetis, a sea nymph, and her sisters, not guided the Argo through the waters. Thetis would later become the bride of one of the Argonauts, Peleus.

Return to Iolcus

After much wandering, the Argo finally made it back to Iolcus, where Jason and Medea were married. For the rest of the story about Jason and Medea, see Jason.

3.8.5: The Argonauts is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.6: Artemis

Roman name: Diana

Epithets: Potnia Therōn (Mistress of Wild Beasts)

Symbols: bow and arrow, quiver, hunting dogs, deer and other animals, fawn skin

Goddess of hunt, wild animals (especially baby animals), childbirth. The Romans conflated Diana with the Greek goddess of the moon, Selene (just as they identified Apollo with Helius, the Greek god of the sun).

Birth of Artemis

Artemis was the twin sister to Apollo and was the daughter of Zeus and Leto [see Apollo]. Both Apollo and Artemis took revenge against anyone who attempted to harm their mother. Apollo and Artemis slew the giant Tityus and killed the children of the mortal woman Niobe [see Apollo].



Apollo and Diana Punishing Niobe by Killing her Children by Abraham Bloemaert (1591) found in the National Gallery of Denmark in Copenhagen

Artemis' Cruelty: Callisto, Actaeon, Agamemnon, Orion

Artemis, like many other deities, was known for her cruel behavior, but Artemis seems to have been one of the cruelest and most vengeful of the deities. In some cases, she would become angry and punish human beings even if (at least in their own minds) they had done nothing wrong. Artemis was a virgin goddess, and she was accompanied by nymphs, who also were expected to remain virgins. If any of these nymphs slipped up and lost their virginity, Artemis treated them very harshly. One such attendant was Callisto, whom Zeus raped. Afterwards, Artemis changed Callisto into a bear for breaking her vow of chastity. In another example,

the hunter Acteon, was out hunting and accidentally stumbled upon the goddess bathing. She turned Acteon into a deer and allowed him to be torn apart by his own hunting dogs. When Agamemnon, the Mycenaean king, angered her, Artemis demanded that he sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to her before he was able to sail for Troy [see Agamemnon and Iphigneia]. Despite the fact that Agamemnon did as she commanded, Artemis' sympathies in the Trojan War were always with the Trojans. In some versions of the myth of Orion, his death, too, was caused by Artemis' anger. He either challenged her, tried to rape her or one of her attendants, or he had an affair with Eos, the goddess of dawn; in any case Artemis shot him. But after his death he was placed in the sky to become the constellation, Orion.



The Death of Actaeon by Titian (between 1559 and 1575) in the National Gallery in London



Diana and Actaeon by Titian (between 1556 and 1559) in the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh

Artemis' Origins

Artemis seems to have originally been a goddess of wild beasts from the Near East. She was similar to the goddess Potnia Therōn (Lady of Wild Animals), with whom she later became identified. She also has strong connections to the Gorgon, Medusa. Many of the important figures among her retinue of nymphs are believed to be local goddesses who were similar in function to Artemis.



Potnia Theron with a gorgon’s head on a plate in the British Museum



A plate depicting Potnia Theron with a woman's head in the Mykonos Museum

3.8.6: Artemis is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.7: Athena

Roman name: Minerva

Epithets: Pallas (Maiden), Tritogeneia (unknown meaning), Promachus (One who fights for her city), Ergane (Artisan/worker), Owl-eyed, Polias (Protector of the city), Parthenios (Virgin), Gray-eyed

Symbols: owl, Nike, olive tree, aegis, snake

Functions: Goddess of just wars, wisdom, and crafts; Patroness of Athens; Helper of heroes

The Birth of Athena

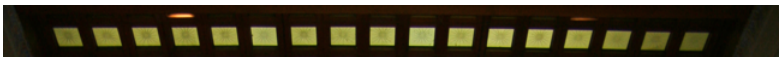
Athena was the daughter of Zeus and his first wife Metis. Gaia told Zeus that Metis would first bear a daughter then a son who would overthrow his father. Zeus, like his father and grandfather before him, wanted to avoid this fate, so when Metis became pregnant, he swallowed his wife whole [see Zeus]. After a few months, Zeus developed a splitting headache and asked Hephaestus (or in some versions, the Titan Prometheus) to help him relieve the pressure. Hephaestus took up his axe and split open Zeus' head and out jumped Athena, fully dressed in armor. Another tradition has it that Athena was born near a river called Triton, an etymological aetiological myth that was created to explain her epithet Tritogeneia.

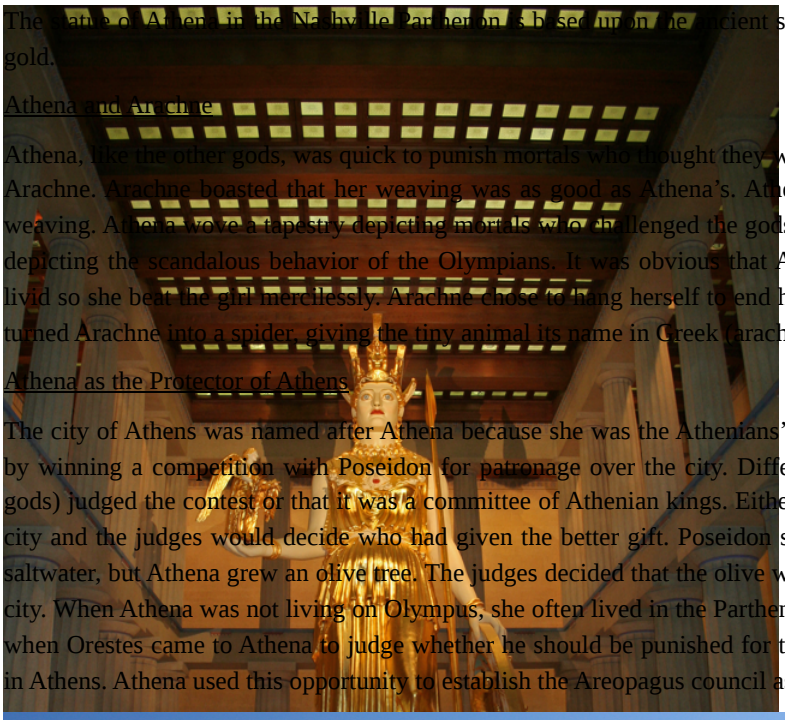


The birth of Athena on a pyxis in the Louvre

Athena as the Protector of Heroes

Athena was particularly fond of courageous youths and helped many heroes in their quests. When Perseus was sent to kill the Gorgon, Medusa, Athena provided the sword and shiny shield needed to slay the Gorgon without looking at her. She gave the hero Bellerophon the golden bridle he needed to ride the winged horse, Pegasus; by riding on Pegasus' back, Bellerophon was able to kill the monster, Chimera. The Argonauts were saved from the Clashing Rocks by Athena's help [see Argonauts]. Odysseus, however, because of his cunning, was one of Athena's favorite mortals. Odysseus' return home after the Trojan War was only possible because of Athena's machinations. Her intervention also helps him survive the Greater Ajax's wrath in Sophocles' *Ajax*. Whenever Odysseus is depicted in a myth, Athena is never far away.





The statue of Athena in the Nashville Parthenon is based upon the ancient statue in the Athens Parthenon made from ivory and gold.

Athena and Arachne

Athena, like the other gods, was quick to punish mortals who thought they were equal to the gods. One such mortal was the weaver, Arachne. Arachne boasted that her weaving was as good as Athena's. Athena was angry and challenged Arachne to a contest of weaving. Athena wove a tapestry depicting mortals who challenged the gods and were punished. Arachne answered with a tapestry depicting the scandalous behavior of the Olympians. It was obvious that Arachne's skill was equal to Athena's, and Athena was livid so she beat the girl mercilessly. Arachne chose to hang herself to end her suffering, but Athena was not yet done with her and turned Arachne into a spider, giving the tiny animal its name in Greek (arachne, ἀράχνη) and its practice of weaving webs.

Athena as the Protector of Athens

The city of Athens was named after Athena because she was the Athenians' protector and benefactor, but she had earned that right by winning a competition with Poseidon for patronage over the city. Differing versions say that either Zeus (and possibly other gods) judged the contest or that it was a committee of Athenian kings. Either way, each divinity was asked to provide a gift for the city and the judges would decide who had given the better gift. Poseidon struck a rock with his trident and out came a spring of saltwater, but Athena grew an olive tree. The judges decided that the olive was more useful than the spring and awarded Athena the city. When Athena was not living on Olympus, she often lived in the Parthenon, the temple to her on the Acropolis in Athens. Thus, when Orestes came to Athena to judge whether he should be punished for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra, he came to her in Athens. Athena used this opportunity to establish the Areopagus council as the official court in Athens [see Oresteia].



The Parthenon on the Acropolis of Athens



The west pediment of the Nashville Parthenon



Athena mourning a fallen Athenian soldier on a grave stele now located in the Acropolis Museum

Athena's Virginity

Like the other virgin goddesses (Artemis and Hestia), Athena sometimes had to work to preserve her virginity against the advances of other immortals. One such instance was when Hephaestus attempted to rape her. She managed to break away from him before he could violate her, but his semen fell to the ground. A child was born from the mixing of the semen and the earth, and he was named Erichthonius. Athena took the child and raised him in her temple and he eventually became one of the earliest Kings of Athens.

The Aegis

Athena held the unique favor of her father and was allowed to use his aegis [see Aegis]. More often than not, it is Athena, not Zeus, who is depicted with the aegis. Athena is usually shown with the severed head of Medusa either on her aegis or her shield. Perseus gave her Medusa's head in gratitude for her aid in helping him kill the Gorgon.



A statue of Athena in the Naples Museum

Athena and the Lesser Ajax

Because of Paris' decision in the beauty contest between Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite, Athena sided with the Greeks when the Trojan War broke out [see Intro to Iliad]. This did not stop her from brutally punishing the Lesser Ajax for an atrocity he committed during the sack of Troy. (The Lesser Ajax was so called to distinguish him from the more famous warrior who was also named Ajax. The more famous Ajax was known as the Greater Ajax.) As the Greeks were sacking Troy, raping and pillaging as they went, Cassandra, a daughter of Priam, sought protection in Athena's temple. When a person seeks the protection of a god or goddess in that deity's temple, that person becomes sacred and should not be harmed. But Ajax pulled Cassandra away from the statue of Athena, which she was clutching. He then raped Cassandra in Athena's temple, enraging the goddess with his sacrilege and desecration of her temple. She enlisted the help of Poseidon to destroy him. On his way home, Ajax's ships crashed onto rocks, but Ajax survived, shouting to the heavens, "not even the gods can kill me!" This boast infuriated Poseidon, who split the rock Ajax was clutching, causing him to fall into the sea and drown (Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.499-511).

The Origin of Athena

Athena may possibly have originated as a warrior goddess of the Mycenaeans, an early Greek-speaking people based in the Peloponnese. She is associated with snakes, but it is not clear what is the significance of the snake to Athena.



Statue of Athena from the depiction of the Gigantomachy from the Old Athena Temple on the Acropolis, now in the Acropolis Museum

---

3.8.7: Athena is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.8: Bacchus

Roman name: Bacchus, Liber Pater (Free Father)

Epithets: Twice-Born, Bromios (Thunderer)

Symbols: thyrsus (staff carried by maenads), maenads/bacchae/bacchants (female followers), vines, satyrs, wine, drinking cup, bull, panther, snakes

Function: God of wine and drunkenness

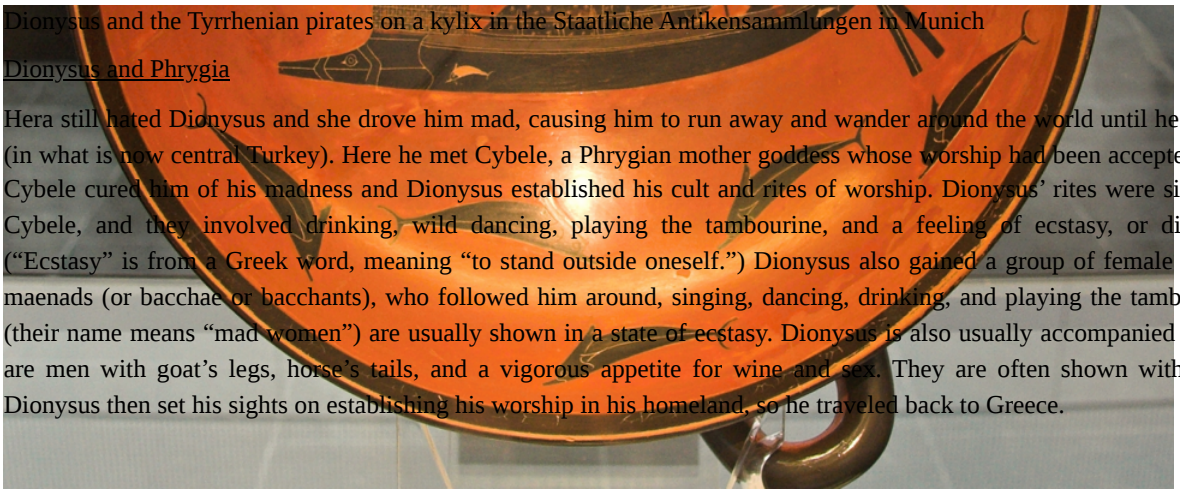
The Birth of Dionysus

Dionysus was the son of Zeus and the mortal woman Semele, who was the daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes [see Thebae on map]. When Hera learned that Semele was pregnant with her husband's child, she disguised herself as Semele's nurse and convinced the girl she should demand that Zeus show himself to her as he did to his wife, but first she should make him swear to meet any demand she might make. Semele did so and Zeus was forced to comply. Unfortunately, it seems that Zeus showed himself to Hera in the form of a lightning bolt. So, Semele was struck by Zeus' lightning and died in a blaze. Hermes rescued the unborn baby from Semele's womb and the child was sewn into Zeus' thigh where he stayed for the rest of the pregnancy. When he was ready to be born, Dionysus was delivered from his father's thigh, which explains Dionysus' epithet, Twice-Born. Hermes spirited the boy away to live with his aunt, Ino (one of his mother's sisters). Ino and her husband, Athamas, raised Dionysus as a girl to try to hide him from Hera's wrath, but Hera was not fooled and caused Ino to go mad. After several mishaps, Ino jumped into the sea, where she became the goddess, Leucothea.

Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian Pirates

When Dionysus was still a young boy, he found himself in need of passage to the island of Naxos [map]. He asked some Tyrrhenian (Etruscan) pirates for a ride and the pirates agreed, but they actually planned to kidnap him, believing that he was the son of a wealthy family who would pay a hefty ransom for their child. While at sea, the crew tried to tie him up, but the bonds fell away of their own accord. At this point the helmsman recognized that this was no ordinary boy and tried to prevent any harm coming to Dionysus, but the captain ignored the helmsman's warning and told the sailors to hold on to the boy. Suddenly, wine began to flow all over the ship; vines began to grow from the sails and ivy began to twine around the mast. Then Dionysus turned into a lion and a bear appeared on the deck. The lion seized the captain and began to tear him apart, and the sailors jumped into the sea, turning into dolphins. Dionysus, now back in human form, prevented the helmsman from following his comrades into the sea and told him that his aid would be rewarded and no harm would come to him.





Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian pirates on a kylix in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich

Dionysus and Phrygia

Hera still hated Dionysus and she drove him mad, causing him to run away and wander around the world until he came to Phrygia (in what is now central Turkey). Here he met Cybele, a Phrygian mother goddess whose worship had been accepted by the Greeks. Cybele cured him of his madness and Dionysus established his cult and rites of worship. Dionysus' rites were similar to those of Cybele, and they involved drinking, wild dancing, playing the tambourine, and a feeling of ecstasy, or divine possession. ("Ecstasy" is from a Greek word, meaning "to stand outside oneself.") Dionysus also gained a group of female followers, called maenads (or bacchae or bacchants), who followed him around, singing, dancing, drinking, and playing the tambourine. Maenads (their name means "mad women") are usually shown in a state of ecstasy. Dionysus is also usually accompanied by satyrs. Satyrs are men with goat's legs, horse's tails, and a vigorous appetite for wine and sex. They are often shown with huge erections. Dionysus then set his sights on establishing his worship in his homeland, so he traveled back to Greece.



A dancing maenad found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City

God or Mortal?

Dionysus' status as a god was always an issue. There is an informal rule that, if you have one divine parent and one human parent, then you are a human (usually a hero) and not a god. Examples include Achilles, Theseus, Helen of Troy, Sarpedon, Aeneas, and many others. But there were two exceptions to this rule. Heracles (Hercules), who became a god and was taken up to Mt. Olympus

upon his death, and Dionysus. Dionysus insisted that he was always a god (maybe because he was born from Zeus' thigh), and stories like the Tyrrhenian Pirates (told above) seem to confirm this. But no one believed him because his mother was a mortal. So, when Dionysus traveled back to Greece to establish his rites, he had trouble convincing people that he really was a god.

Resistance Myths

There are several Resistance Myths connected with Dionysus. Resistance Myths are stories about men or women who try to resist the worship of a particular god or goddess. In these Resistance Myths, the attempt of the mortal to resist the god's worship always ends badly: the god or goddess destroys the resisting human and succeeds in establishing his or her worship. There are a number of Resistance Myths attached to Dionysus, more than for any other god or goddess. Mortals resisted Dionysus' worship partly because they did not believe he was a god, and partly because his worship involved drinking, drunkenness, open sexual expression, and the loss of one's reason or self-control.



A maenad and an ithyphallic satyr on a kylix in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich

The most famous Resistance Myth connected with Dionysus occurred in his city of origin, Thebes, with his cousin Pentheus. After Semele died, her sisters, most notably Agave, spread the rumor that Semele had lied about the paternity of her child and Zeus had punished her for it with his thunderbolt. As a result, no one in Thebes believed that Dionysus was divine. The years passed and, because Cadmus, the king of Thebes, had only daughters, when he decided to retire, he gave the throne to Agave's son, Pentheus.

He was a very young man, perhaps only about twenty or twenty-one when he became King of Thebes. Dionysus came to Thebes to introduce his worship to his homeland, but Pentheus forbade any of the Theban women to worship him. Pentheus probably did this because he did not believe Dionysus was a god, but he also seems to have been a straight and narrow kind of guy, who was disgusted by Dionysus' rituals. A third reason may have been that Pentheus felt that this was a good opportunity to establish his authority. At any rate, Pentheus did not allow the women of Thebes to worship Dionysus. Dionysus, however, caused all the women of Thebes to go mad and run away from home. They all left their fathers and husbands and ran away to Mount Cithaeron, where they became maenads, singing, dancing, drinking wine, and worshipping Dionysus. Pentheus was upset at this behavior and tried to imprison Dionysus, who had disguised himself as a priest of Dionysus. The god easily escaped from prison, of course, and he took a terrible revenge upon Pentheus, which is depicted in Euripides' play, *The Bacchae*.



Agave and Ino tearing apart Pentheus on a lekanis found in the Louvre

Midas

Dionysus extensively traveled around the world. While he was traveling to India, one of his older satyrs, Silenus (when referred to in the plural, *sileni*, they are a group of older and prophetic satyrs, and Silenus is usually considered their leader), wandered away from the group and (as he was a little drunk) he fell into a deep sleep. While he was sleeping, he was captured by a group of Phrygians, who sent Silenus to their king, Midas. Midas cared for Silenus until Dionysus came to collect him. Dionysus was grateful and offered Midas any wish he desired as thanks. Midas asked for the ability to turn anything he touched into gold and being unable to dissuade Midas from this wish, Dionysus granted it. Midas was initially thrilled, but before too long it became apparent that he could not eat or drink because anything he tried to place in his mouth turned to gold. Midas begged Dionysus to take the gift back, but once a god gives a gift, it cannot be taken back. However, Dionysus was able to help Midas and told Midas to bathe in Pactolus river and his gift would transfer to the river (this myth explains why there is so much gold in the river).

Dionysus and Ariadne

When Ariadne was abandoned by Theseus on Naxos, Dionysus found her there and married her [see Theseus]. She gave birth to several sons and Hesiod says that Zeus granted her immortality so she could live with her husband. Some scholars believe that Ariadne originated as a Cretan goddess who was downgraded to a mortal when the Greeks appropriated the story.



Bacchus and Ariadne by Titian (1520-1523) in the National Gallery in London

The Origin of Dionysus

Scholars are divided on the origins of Dionysus. He seems to be a Mycenaean god because his name is found in a Mycenaean inscription, but his myths and rites (called orgia) are very eastern. His rituals involved intoxication and a loss of control of the body (called ecstasy, with ec- meaning “out” and -stasy meaning “stand”; together they mean “to stand outside of oneself and allow Dionysus to possess the body”) and his sacrifices were performed by tearing the animal limb from limb (this process is called “sparagmos”). Sometimes Dionysus’ worshippers would eat the sacrificial victim raw (this is called “homophagia”). These strange rituals made the Greek traditionalists uneasy because they had that foreign flair and flew in the face of the Greek ideals of self-control and moderation (sophrosyne).

At some point the theater was connected to Dionysus, but it is unclear how that relationship began. In Athens, the City Dionysia, a festival to Dionysus, became the premier competition for playwrights to show off their work and for Athens to show off their cultural achievements to travelers coming through the city. Dionysus may have been connected through his ability to alter perception, much like theater did, and the addition of the art form to the festival made the proceedings more Greek in nature.



A maenad performing ritual “sparagmos” on a vase found in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris

---

3.8.8: Bacchus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.9: Caduceus

The caduceus (kerykeion in Greek) was herald's staff with two snakes wound around it. It was carried by Hermes to signify his role as messenger and as guide for souls to the Underworld. Hermes can sometimes use the caduceus as a way to channel the power he has, such as waking or putting mortals to sleep [Homer, *Iliad*, 24.343-345]. It should be carefully distinguished from the rod of Asclepius, which had only one snake, which Asclepius used in healing.

3.8.9: Caduceus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.10: Centaurs

Half-man, half-horse creatures

Centaurs (sometimes called hippocentaurs) were creatures with the torso and head of a man and the body of a horse. As befits their part-beast, part-human status, they had trouble controlling their passions. Also, they had a strong taste for wine but could not hold their liquor. At the wedding of the Lapith, Peirithoüs, they all got very drunk and abducted all the women present, including the bride. The Lapiths fought back, along with Peirithoüs' good friend, Theseus, and most of the centaurs were killed or banished. There were, however, a few civilized centaurs, such as Pholus, who helped Heracles in his battle against the centaurs [see the 12 Labors of Heracles], and the immortal Chiron, who served as the teacher and mentor of several heroes, such as Jason, Asclepius, and Achilles.

3.8.10: Centaurs is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.11: Chthonian Deities

All Greek deities can be divided into two types: the Olympians, who were thought of as living on Mount Olympus, or somewhere in the heavens, and the Chthonians, who were thought of as living below the earth. Their name comes from *chthōn* (χθών), which is the Greek word for “earth” or “ground”. In order to sacrifice to one of the Olympian gods, an animal would be ritually slaughtered and the less edible pieces would be burned on an altar so the smoke could waft up to the Olympians and nourish them. In a sacrifice to one of the Chthonians, on the other hand, a pit would be dug in the ground and an animal would be slaughtered (without any burning) in such a way that the blood would pour into the pit. Libations (such as milk or wine) could also be poured into the pit to give the gods sustenance. For a good example of chthonian sacrifice, see *Odyssey* Book 10 lines 515-530 (in the Greek) or *Odyssey* Book 11 lines 23-37 (in the Greek).

3.8.11: Chthonian Deities is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.12: The Delphic Oracle

The word, “oracle,” comes from the Latin word *oraculum*, which means both a prophecy made by a god (or priest) and the place where the prophecy is given. Similarly, the English word, “oracle,” has both meanings. So, the Delphic Oracle refers to the place where the prophecies were given, but an “oracle” can also refer to the prophecy that Apollo gives there.

The Delphic Oracle belonged to Apollo, and his priestess, called The Pythia, gave her oracles from inside Apollo’s temple.

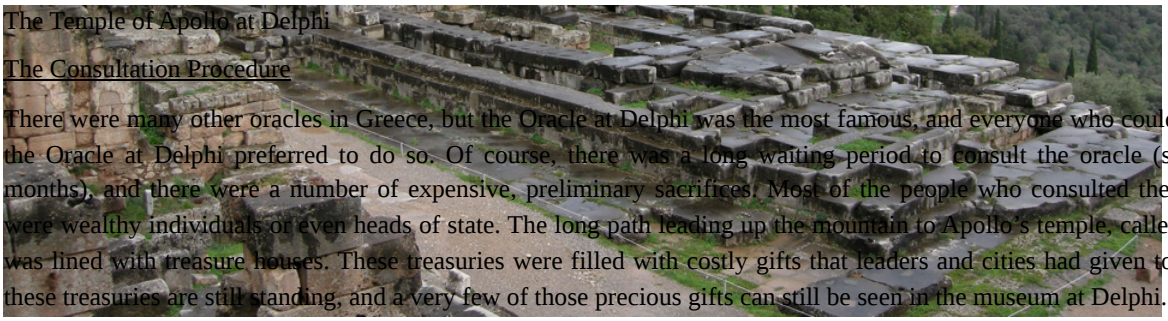
The Oracle at Delphi [map] seems to have originally been held by Gaia (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1-8). According to some accounts, Gaia had a snake or dragon, named the Python, that guarded her oracle. When Apollo came to take over the oracle, he first had to kill the dragon in order to take possession of it. Apollo’s priestess got her title, The Pythia, from the Python.



The Sacred Way at Delphi with the remains of the Athenians’ Treasury

Delphi was (and still is) located in central Greece, on the side of Mount Parnassus. The temple of Apollo, where the prophesies were given, was (and still is) situated in an incredibly beautiful spot about half way up the mountain. This is one of the most beautiful places on earth, and the Greeks clearly chose this spot for the temple with good reason.

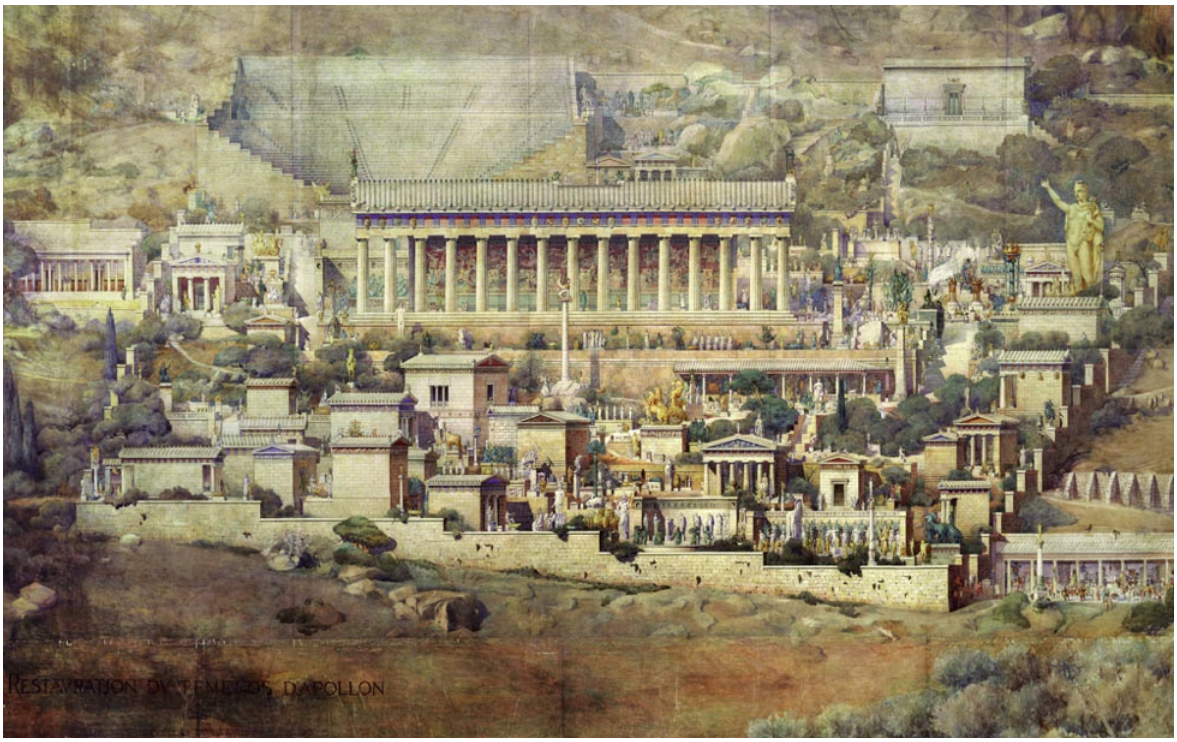




The Temple of Apollo at Delphi

The Consultation Procedure

There were many other oracles in Greece, but the Oracle at Delphi was the most famous, and everyone who could afford to consult the Oracle at Delphi preferred to do so. Of course, there was a long waiting period to consult the oracle (sometimes several months), and there were a number of expensive, preliminary sacrifices. Most of the people who consulted the Oracle at Delphi were wealthy individuals or even heads of state. The long path leading up the mountain to Apollo's temple, called the Sacred Way, was lined with treasure houses. These treasuries were filled with costly gifts that leaders and cities had given to Apollo. Some of these treasuries are still standing, and a very few of those precious gifts can still be seen in the museum at Delphi.



Albert Tournaire's recreation of Apollo's Temple at Delphi and the Sacred Way leading up to it.

When someone came to ask a question of the Oracle, he would need to make a preliminary sacrifice of a goat, and then purify himself in the nearby Castilian Spring. Then he would approach the adyton of Apollo's temple. The adyton is a room inside the temple that was off limits; no one could go in. It is unclear whether those who were consulting the oracle were allowed to go inside the adyton, or whether they had to remain outside. The Pythia is usually conceived of as sitting on a tripod when she gave her prophecies. A tripod (as its name implies) was a three-footed stand, usually made of metal. Tripods had a round, metal band around the top, and they were usually used to hold a cauldron over the fire for cooking. But in this case, the Pythia would sit on it, almost like she was sitting on a three-legged stool, to give her prophecies.



The Pythia on her tripod giving an oracle on a kylix in the Altes Museum in Berlin

After the person consulting the Oracle asked his question, the Pythia would go into a trance; it was believed that Apollo himself possessed her. She would speak and a priest (or several priests) who were standing near-by would take down what she said and translate her words into a poem written in hexameters. It is usually assumed that the Pythia's original words were coherent, but not very clear. Of course, there is no way to know for sure what her words were really like, but perhaps we can get a good idea from Cassandra's prophecies in Aeschylus' play, the *Agamemnon*. In that play, Cassandra gives several prophecies that make sense to the audience (because we know what is going to happen), but are so fragmented and confusing that the other characters in the drama do not understand them.



The Oracle by Camillo Miola (1880) in the Getty Museum

Once the Pythia's words were translated into hexameter poetry, the poem was written down and given to the person who sought the advice; it was always the responsibility of the recipient to interpret the oracle correctly. And the oracles, even in their final form, were always ambiguous. Frequently (though not always), the recipients did not interpret them correctly, and they suffered as a result.

Famous Examples of Oracles

For example, Aegeus, the king of Athens, asked the Delphic Oracle how he could have children, and the Oracle said: "Do not open the foot of the wineskin until you return home." [see Theseus]

According to Herodotus, Croesus, the king of Lydia, asked the oracle if he should go to war with Persia. Lydia was a large and very prosperous kingdom in what is now central Turkey, but Cyrus, the king of Persia, had recently expanded his kingdom so that it bumped up against Lydia's borders. Croesus felt threatened by the Persian expansion, so he wanted to know if he should attack Persia before Persia attacked him. The Pythia answered: "If you go to war against Persia, you will destroy a great empire" (Herodotus 1.53). Croesus interpreted this to mean that he would destroy Persia, and so he gathered his forces and attacked. But Croesus lost the war, and in the end, he was forced to admit that he had destroyed his own, great empire (Herodotus 1.91).

There are many examples of people misinterpreting oracles (usually because, like Croesus, they interpret it according to what they want to hear), but there are a few examples of people who interpret their oracles correctly, and benefit greatly as a result.

The Omphalos



The Omphalos, or the navel stone of the earth, in the Archaeological Museum of Delphi

The Greeks believed that Delphi was located at the center of the earth. Near Apollo's temple was a rock (about 2-3 feet high) shaped similarly to a bee-hive, and carved with a floral pattern. This was the omphalos (or "navel" in Greek), which was considered to be the navel stone of the earth. In art, Apollo is sometimes shown using this as his seat, implying that his oracle was in some sense the epicenter of everything that occurred on earth. According to Hesiod (*Theogony* 497-500), this was originally the stone that Rhea had given to Cronus to swallow instead of Zeus. Zeus placed it at Delphi after Cronus had vomited it up (with the other Olympians) and Zeus had won the battle with Titan to gain control over the cosmos (see Origins).



This coin was minted depicting Antiochus Hierax of the Seleucid Empire from the mint in Sardis. The reverse side depicts Apollo sitting on the omphalos.

3.8.12: The Delphic Oracle is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.13: Demeter

Roman name: Ceres

Epithets: Chthonian (with daughter Persephone; refers to their status as goddesses associated with the earth, χθών [chthōn] being a Greek word for earth/land)

Symbols: wheat, grain

Functions: Goddess of agriculture and grain

Demeter and Persephone

Demeter was a daughter of Cronus and Rhea and was swallowed by her father (along with the rest of Cronus and Rhea's children) shortly after her birth. [See Origins] After Zeus rescued his older siblings from their father, Demeter had an affair with her brother Zeus which resulted in a daughter, Persephone. Hades fell deeply in love with Persephone, and the following story about them is told in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Zeus gave his consent for Hades to marry his daughter, but because he believed that Demeter would not approve of the match, he told Hades to abduct Persephone and take her to his realm in the Underworld. With the aid of Gaia (Mother Earth, who is also known as Ge), Hades did just that.

Persephone was out gathering flowers with other young nymphs and goddesses, and she spotted an unusual and beautiful narcissus flower, blooming with the help of Gaia in a particular spot where a trap had been set by Zeus and Hades. When Persephone went to pluck the flower, the earth split open and out came Hades in his chariot. He snatched up the girl, and took her down to his kingdom beneath the earth.

For nine days Demeter searched far and wide for her daughter, but no one knew what had happened to Persephone until Demeter happened upon Hecate, a moon goddess who had heard the abduction but could not say who had taken Persephone. Together, Hecate and Demeter continued to search for Persephone until they came upon Helius, the sun god. Helius, who sees everything, told the goddesses the information they wished to know, that Zeus had allowed Persephone to be taken by Hades. Helius encouraged Demeter to accept the situation, but instead she grew so angry that she refused to go back to Olympus [see Olympus Mons on map].



The Rape of Proserpina by Bernini in the Galleria Borghese in Rome.



Close up of Bernini's *Rape of Proserpina*

Demeter in Eleusis

Demeter wandered the earth in the likeness of an old woman named Dos until she came upon the city of Eleusis. There, at the town well, she met the daughters of the king, who offered to help her find work as a nurse. (They did not recognize her as a goddess because of her disguise.) In fact, they said that their mother, Metaneira, had just given birth to a baby boy, and that she would probably welcome Dos into her home as a nurse.

So Demeter, disguised as Dos, became the nurse for the son of the king, Demophon. As a way of thanking the family for their kindness, Demeter began a process that would make the boy immortal. She gave him ambrosia to eat (ambrosia is the food of the gods) and every night she would place him in the fire to burn away his mortal parts. One night, Metaneira, the child's mother, visited the nursery to see how the old woman was doing with the boy and found him in the fire. She screamed in alarm, but this angered Demeter, who (being a goddess) did not like her actions questioned. Demeter took Demophon out of the fire (informing Metaneira that her son would have become immortal) and then she revealed her divinity to the queen. Demeter now revealed herself in her true form; she became young and beautiful, and the house was filled with a brilliant light. The Eleusinians were distraught at having angered a goddess, and they wanted to propitiate her. Demeter instructed the Eleusinians to build a temple to her, which they did, and she established her mystery cult in the city. But Demeter took up her abode in her new temple, and she refused to return to Olympus.

Persephone and the Seasons

Still without her daughter, Demeter was so angry at Zeus that she stayed in her temple in Eleusis and would not join the other gods on Olympus. Furthermore, she caused a drought on the earth which lasted for an entire year, and nearly killed all the mortals. Zeus realized that if all the mortals died there would be no one to sacrifice to the gods, so he sent Hermes to persuade Hades to let Persephone return to her mother. Hades agreed to allow Persephone to return, but before she left, he tricked her into eating a seed from a pomegranate. Demeter was ecstatic to reunite with her daughter, but her spirits fell when she learned that Persephone had eaten during her time in the Underworld. There seems to have been a rule that if someone eats anything in Hades, even something

as small as a pomegranate seed, they can never leave. A bargain was struck, however, between the god of the Underworld and the goddess of grain: for two thirds of the year (spring, summer, and early fall), Persephone would live with her mother and the plants would grow, but for the remaining third (late fall and winter), she would live with her husband below the earth and all the plants would die (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*). This, of course, is the origin of the seasons (a natural aitiological myth).

Triptolemus

In some versions of the story, after Demeter's time in Eleusis, the goddess lent her chariot to a young man from the city, Triptolemus, so he could spread knowledge of her gifts, the planting and harvesting of crops, especially wheat. She aided him when foreign kings did not take kindly to the gifts and she helped him gain the throne of Eleusis. In return he began the tradition of the festival to Demeter called the Thesmophoria. This was a festival celebrated by women all over Greece and was the second most prominent rite for Demeter, after the Eleusinian Mysteries.



Demeter and Kore (Persephone) with Triptolemus on a relief in the museum at Eleusis

The Origin of Demeter

Demeter was probably an indigenous pre-Hellenic goddess of fertility. Her name means "Mother Da," which may or may not mean "Mother Earth". She is closely connected with her daughter and is worshipped in the manner of chthonian deities. [See Chthonian Deities]

3.8.13: Demeter is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.14: Dionysus

This page was auto-generated because a user created a sub-page to this page.

3.8.14: Dionysus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

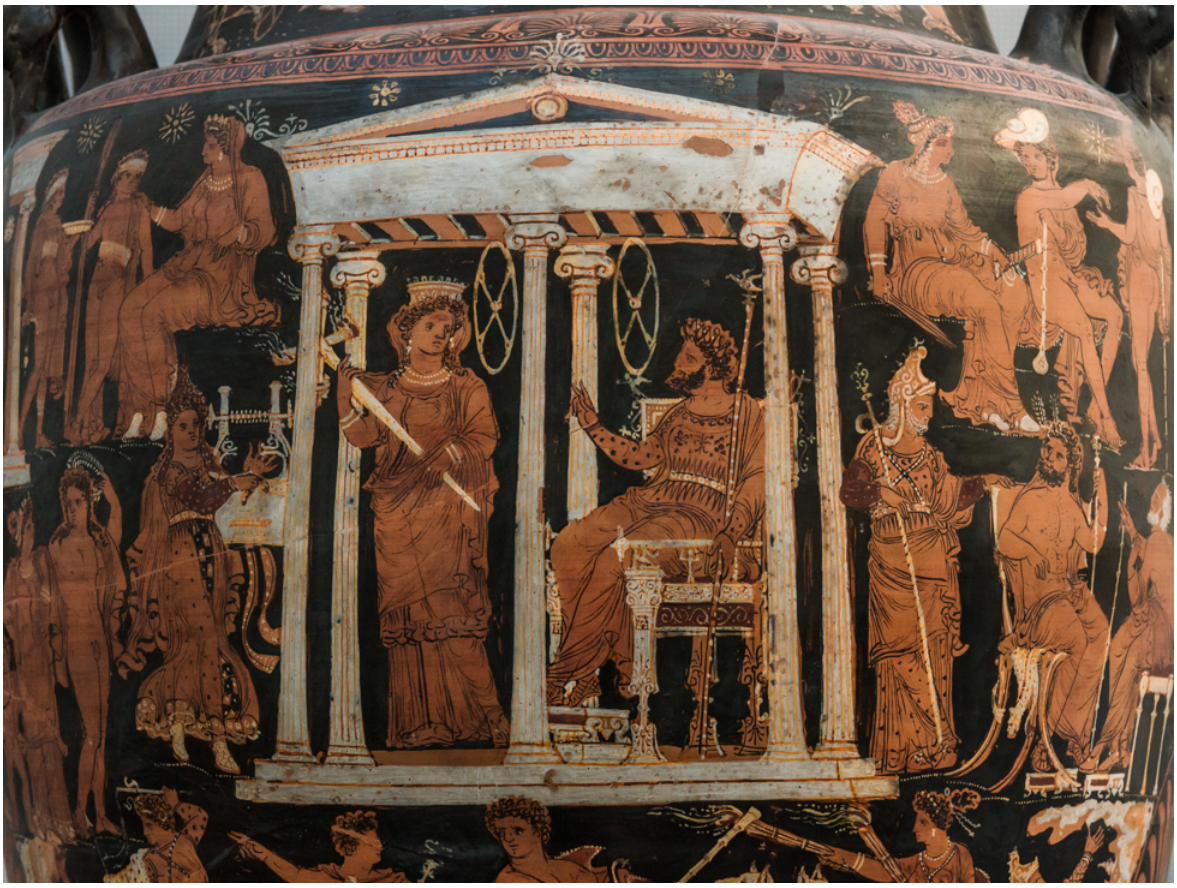
3.8.15: Hades

Roman name: Pluto, Dis (wealth), Orcus

Epithets: Aïdoneus (the Unseen One), All-Receiver, Pluto (wealth)

Symbols: scepter, grain (fertility), rooster (fertility), Cerberus

Functions: God of the Underworld and the dead



A krater depicting Hades and Persephone in the Antikensammlungen Museum in Munich

Hades was one of the children of Cronus and Rhea whom their father swallowed. After being rescued by his brother Zeus and helping Zeus gain control of the cosmos [see Origins], the three brothers Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, all drew lots to decide who would rule over various parts of the world [See Zeus]. Hades became the ruler of the underworld. Hades was married to his niece, Persephone, whom he abducted [See Demeter].



A kylix depicting Persephone and Hades in the British Museum

There are very few myths about Hades, other than the story of how he abducted and married Persephone. After the kerfuffle created by this incident had subsided, Hades and Persephone seem to have settled down to a rather ordinary married life as King and Queen of the Dead.



Hades depicted as the Egyptian god Serapis with Cerberus and Persephone depicted as the goddess Isis in the Museum in Heraklion, Crete

The name of the Underworld is sometimes referred to as Erebus (Ἔρεβος), which means "darkness" in Greek, but it is more frequently called the House of Hades. In practice, however, the name, "House of Hades," is usually shortened to just "Hades." For this reason, the term "Hades" refers to both the name of the god and the name of the place over which he rules. Different authors describe Hades (the Underworld) differently, but there are several common features. The three-headed dog, Cerberus, acts as a guard dog who prevents dead souls from escaping as well as preventing live people from getting in. There are several rivers in Hades, including the Styx (Στύξ, meaning "hateful"), the river that the gods swear by and the Acheron (Ἀχέρων; meaning "woeful"). Later authors added the river Lethe (Λήθη, meaning "forgetfulness"), which causes the souls who drink from it to forget their past lives; see Plato, *Republic* 10.621 a-d and Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.714-715.

For most people, the Underworld was a hollow existence where their souls slowly lost consciousness and continued on as shells of their former selves. (For an extended portrayal of the souls in Hades, see Homer, *Odyssey*, Book 11.) The Islands of the Blessed, however, sometimes called Elysium or the Elysian Fields, was a place where a select group of souls lived in bliss. They kept their former personalities as well as their consciousness, and they continued to pursue the activities that had brought them pleasure while they were alive. Homer says that Elysium is reserved for the close relatives of the gods (Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.561-569) while later authors, like Pindar (*Olympians* 2.68-78), suggest that a virtuous life would allow a soul to spend eternity in Elysium.

3.8.15: Hades is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.16: Hephaestus

Roman name: Vulcan, Mulciber

God of the forge

Hephaestus was sometimes considered the son of both Zeus and Hera, though other accounts say that Hera gave birth to Hephaestus parthenogenically, in response to Zeus giving birth to Athena by himself. In some versions of his birth, Hephaestus was born lame, Hera was less than pleased and threw him off Mount Olympus [see Olympus Mons on map]. Hephaestus and he landed in the sea where he was cared for by the sea goddesses, Thetis and Eurynome, while he grew. He soon proved to be a master craftsman and he built a beautiful throne for his mother that trapped her when she sat in it. Numerous gods tried to convince Hephaestus to release Hera, but he refused until Dionysus came and got Hephaestus really drunk. This aid rendered to her is often cited as the reason Hera put aside her hatred of Dionysus [see Dionysus].

According to another version of his birth myth, Hephaestus was born perfectly healthy, but when he intervened on behalf of his mother in a dispute between his parents, Hera and Zeus, Zeus flung Hephaestus off Mount Olympus. Hephaestus fell for a full day until he crash-landed on the island of Lemnos. The Lemnians took care of him as best they could, but the god was left crippled. Hephaestus was grateful to the Lemnians and established his workshop on the island. The Romans claimed that Vulcan's forge was located beneath Mount Aetna on the island of Sicily. When the volcano on Mount Aetna erupted, the Romans said that Vulcan was working in his forge.

Hephaestus was married to Aphrodite, but theirs was not a happy marriage. Aphrodite had a long-standing affair with the war god, Ares. Whenever Hephaestus would leave home, Aphrodite and Ares would jump into bed. When the sun god, Helius, informed Hephaestus of what his wife did while he was away, Hephaestus came up with a plan to catch the two in the act. He built a golden net which was so fine that it was invisible and set it up above his bed. He then told his wife that he was taking a trip to Lemnos to visit his forge and hid. Soon, Aphrodite and Ares were in the bed together and the net fell upon them, trapping them right where they were. Hephaestus came in with all the other Olympians to jeer at the lovers, who were caught *in flagrante delicto* (in a blazing crime).





Venus and Mars Surprised by a Net by Costantino Cedini in the Palazzo Emo Capodilista in Padua, Italy

3.8.16: Hephaestus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.17: Hera

Roman name: Juno

Epithets: Cow-eyed, Eileithyia

Symbols: cow, peacock, scepter

Functions: Goddess of marriage; Consort to Zeus

The Birth of Hera

Hera was a daughter of Cronus and Rhea and, like her siblings (except Zeus), she was swallowed by her father, only to be rescued by her youngest brother, Zeus [see Origins]. She married Zeus and became Queen of the Gods. Together, they had three children: Ares, Hebe (goddess of youth), and Eileithyia (goddess of childbirth). Some versions say that Hephaestus is also her son by Zeus, but more commonly she gave birth to Hephaestus independently because she was angry at Zeus for giving birth to Athena on his own [see Hephaestus]. According to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, however, Hera actually gave birth to the monster Typhoeus as a way to get back at Zeus for giving birth to Athena.



Hera and Prometheus on a kylix in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris

Hera's Character

Hera's character is defined by her wrath. Despite being the goddess of marriage, she was unable to prevent her husband from constantly taking up new lovers. She could not punish him, so she would punish the lovers and the children produced from these affairs. She tried to prevent Leto from giving birth [see Apollo], she tricked Semele into her death [see Dionysus], and she doggedly tortured Heracles throughout his life [see Heracles]. Because Dionysus and Heracles eventually became immortals, Hera had to make peace with them, but it did not come easily [see Dionysus and Heracles]. Zeus once seduced and abducted a girl by the name of Aegina and he took her to the island of Oenone. Hera threw a snake into the source of water for the entire island, poisoning and killing most of the island to get revenge on one girl. When Zeus fell in love with her priestess, Io, and turned the maiden into a cow, Hera was furious with the girl. After Hermes killed Argus, who was keeping watch over Io [see Hermes], Hera made Io wander the world as a cow until she came to Egypt. She was transformed back into her human form and bore a son. Hera arranged for the child to be kidnapped. With the help of Zeus, mother and child were eventually reunited and settled in Egypt where Io eventually became the Egyptian goddess Isis (this is only what the Greeks believed, the Egyptians had worshiped Isis long before Greek culture began).



Juno and Argus by Peter Paul Rubens from 1610 in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne

The goddess' wrath was not exclusive to Zeus' lovers. She helped the Argonauts over the course of their adventure so she could punish Pelias for his impiety. She blinded the seer, Teiresias, because he sided with Zeus in an argument they asked him to solve. She sent the Sphinx to Thebes to punish the king, Laïus, for abducting Chrysippus, the son of Pelops. The Greeks had Hera's support in the Trojan War because she was still angry over Paris' decision to award Aphrodite the Apple of Discord [see Intro to Iliad].

Hera's Origin

Hera most likely originated as a Pre-Hellenic goddess of fertility, which runs into her role as a goddess of all the stages of life for a woman: girl, new bride, and old woman. She is often conflated with her daughter, Eileithyia, as a goddess of childbirth, as is her Roman counterpart, Juno, with the Roman goddess of childbirth, Lucina. Hera had the unique ability to become a virgin again every year by bathing in a spring called the Canathus.

3.8.17: Hera is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.18: Heracles

Roman name: Hercules

Son of Zeus; mortal hero and eventually a god

The Birth of Heracles

Heracles was the son of Zeus and a mortal woman named Alcmene. Alcmene was married to Amphitryon, the heir to the throne of Tiryns. But Alcmene refused to consummate her marriage until Amphitryon had avenged the murder of her brothers, who had been killed by the Taphian Pirates. So before even sleeping with his wife, Amphitryon traveled to the Taphian Islands (off the western coast of Greece, near Ithaca) and he stayed there for several weeks, until he had killed all of the Taphian Pirates. On the night before Amphitryon returned from his journey, Zeus came to Alcmene in the form and shape of her husband. He told her that he had just come home from killing the pirates. Alcmene was overjoyed, and gladly allowed him into her bed. The next day when the real Amphitryon returned home, he wondered why she did not give him a hero's welcome. After speaking with his wife, he discovered the truth: Alcmene had spent the previous night with someone else. Amphitryon did not believe Alcmene's story, that the man she had been with had looked and sounded exactly like him, but the seer Teiresias told him that the interloper had been Zeus himself and that Alcmene's story was true. Now Amphitryon believed her and they finally consummated their marriage.

When Hera discovered that Alcmene was pregnant with Zeus' child, she was very unhappy, needless to say. When Alcmene went into labor, Hera sent Eileithyia to prevent the birth from taking place. Eileithyia sat outside the delivery room crossing her fingers and legs which halted the delivery. (No birth can take place unless Eileithyia is physically present and allows the birth to proceed.) Alcmene, who was pregnant with twin boys, was in a bad state and was close to breathing her last breath when her nurse, Galanthis, came up with a trick to break Eileithyia's spell. She shouted that the baby had already come. Eileithyia, in confusion as to how this could have happened, jumped up and broke her spell, allowing Alcmene to deliver two baby boys. In her anger at being tricked, Eileithyia turned Galanthis into a weasel. The two babies were named Iphicles and Heracles. But the parents did not know which one of their sons was Zeus' child and which one was the child of Amphitryon.



Heracles killing the snakes in his cradle on a stamnos in the Louvre

Heracles' Early Adventures

Hera did not leave Heracles alone for long. When he was about eighteen months old, she sent two snakes to kill both Iphicles and Heracles while they were sleeping in their crib. While Iphicles screamed in terror and cowered in the corner, Heracles grabbed hold of the snakes and strangled one in each hand. Any doubt as to which was the son of Zeus and which the son of Amphitryon was solved by this event.



The Infant Heracules Strangling Serpents in his Cradle by Joshua Reynolds (1788), in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia

As he grew, Heracles learned many important skills from great teachers, but he had a short temper and did not realize his own strength. When his music teacher, Linus (who was the brother of Orpheus), reprimanded him for not practicing enough, Heracles took his chair and smashed it over Linus' head, killing him instantly. Amphitryon decided to send Heracles to live at his country estate to protect his family.



Heracles killing his music teacher, Linus, on a cup in the Antikensammlungen Museum in Munich

By the time Heracles was seventeen, he had grown to be a tall and strong youth. Around the same time, a lion was roaming in the area of Mount Cithaeron and was terrorizing the countryside. Thespius, the king of the area, asked Heracles to come and stay with him and help his men kill the lion. Thespius also happened to have fifty daughters. For fifty days Heracles went out to find the lion, and each night Thespius sent a different daughter in to sleep with Heracles, though Heracles thought it was the same daughter each night. After the fifty days, Heracles had killed the lion and all of Thespius' fifty daughters were pregnant.

Hera Sends Madness

Heracles stayed in the area of Thebes [see Thebae on map] long enough to distinguish himself in a war the Thebans were fighting against a people called the Minyans. The king of Thebes was so happy to have had Heracles' help that he offered his daughter, Megara, to Heracles as a wife. Megara and Heracles married and had two sons. They lived for a few years in peace, but Hera was still out to torment Heracles, so she sent madness to drive him mad. In his madness, Heracles killed his wife and children. When he regained his sanity, Heracles was devastated and decided to go to the Oracle at Delphi [map] to ask Apollo how he could be purified for this murder. The Pythia told him that he must go to Tiryns and perform twelve labors for the ruler, Eurystheus. If he could complete all twelve labors successfully, he would not only be purified of the murders, but he would achieve immortality. (The rule is that if a hero has one mortal parent, he or she is mortal. So Heracles was born a mortal, and this was his opportunity to achieve immortality.) Heracles did manage to successfully complete his twelve labors [see 12 Labors of Heracles].

The Death of Iphitus

After these twelve labors, Heracles set out, looking for a new wife with whom he could start over. Eurytus of Oechalia, who had taught Heracles how to shoot a bow and arrow, was looking for a husband for his daughter, Iole. Eurytus had set up the condition that whoever could beat him in an archery contest would win Iole, and Heracles won easily.

However, Eurytus knew about the misfortunes Heracles had had with Megara and refused to give Iole to Heracles. Heracles was furious, but at this point there was nothing he could do. At the same time this was happening, some of Eurytus' mares went missing (sources vary on whether Heracles had anything to do with the disappearance). Eurytus' son, Iphitus, who believed Heracles was

innocent, went with Heracles to find the mares. The two eventually ended up in Tiryns at Heracles' house. After they located the mares, the two friends were drinking on the roof of Heracles' house. What happened after that is not clear, but somehow they got into an argument and Heracles ended up throwing Iphitus from the roof. Heracles was stricken with a disease as punishment for his crime. When he consulted the Delphic Oracle, the Pythia told Heracles that he had to sell himself as a slave for three years for whatever price Iphitus' sons established.

Omphale

Heracles did as the Pythia said and he was sold to Omphale, the Queen and ruler of Lydia, who had inherited power from her late husband. The kingdom of Lydia had some enemies and now that Omphale had control of the kingdom, those enemies took the opportunity to cause problems. Heracles used his strength and fortitude to solve these problems for Omphale, who was incredibly grateful. She freed Heracles and the disease left him.

Deïaneira

After many years, and many adventures, Heracles found himself in Calydon, where he fell in love with King Oeneus' daughter, Deïaneira. Heracles had a rival for her hand though in Acheloüs, a local river god. The two fought until Heracles managed to break off one of the god's horns, which caused the god to yield. Heracles and Deïaneira married, but they were not able to live happily very long. Heracles, still not aware of his strength, killed Oeneus' cupbearer when he gave the boy a quick blow as punishment for some offense. Oeneus forgave his son-in-law, but Heracles, in his guilt, insisted that he go into exile for his crime. Heracles left Calydon with Deïaneira in tow.

At some point in their trip, Heracles and Deïaneira came to a very deep and very large lake. Heracles could easily swim across the lake, but Deïaneira could not and Heracles could not carry her while swimming across. Just at that time, the centaur Nessus approached the newlyweds and he offered to ferry Deïaneira across the river. Heracles gratefully agreed to let Nessus swim across the river carrying Deïaneira on his back. Half way across the lake, however, Nessus began to rape Deïaneira. Heracles heard her screams and shot off one of his arrows dipped in the Hydra's blood. Of course, the arrow hit its mark and, as Nessus knew, Hydra's blood was a deadly poison. But Nessus decided to get back at Heracles, even though he would not live to see his revenge. As he lay dying, Nessus told Deïaneira that if she took some of his blood and wiped it on a robe for Heracles to wear, it would act as a love potion. Of course, this was a lie. Deïaneira was aware of her husband's wandering affections, so she collected some of Nessus' blood and kept it in case she ever had need of it. She had no idea that the deadly Hydra poison was also a part of her "love potion".



Heracles fighting the centaur Nessus on a nestoris found in the Louvre

The Death and Apotheosis of Heracles

Deïaneira was justified in her suspicions of her husband, although it did not happen right away. But many years later, Heracles decided to get revenge on Eurytus, who had refused to give Heracles his daughter, Iole, in marriage. Heracles killed Eurytus and his sons in battle and brought Iole back home to be his concubine. Deïaneira knew about her husband's many affairs, but she did not want to live in the same house with a younger rival, so she decided to put Nessus' plan into action. She smeared Nessus' blood on a beautiful new robe and gave it to her husband when he returned home, bringing Iole with him. Heracles put on the handsome robe to give a thanksgiving offering to Zeus for a successful return home, but as soon as he put on the robe, his skin immediately caught fire. When Heracles tried to take off the robe, parts of his skin came off with it, and Heracles (now with parts of his skin missing) continued to burn. Realizing the terrible mistake she had made, Deïaneira took her own life. But Heracles was in agony; he could not take off the robe (because it was sticking to his skin), but he could not put out the fire, and Heracles was burning so slowly that it seemed to be taking forever for him to die. Heracles decided to end his life as soon as possible.

He took his son Hyllus up into the mountains and asked him to build a funeral pyre Hyllus agreed to build the pyre, but he refused to light it because he could not bear to end his father's life. A passing shepherd and his son, Philoctetes, agreed to light the pyre and so Heracles gave his famous bow and arrows to Philoctetes.

The fire burned away Heracles' mortal flesh Heracles became immortal. He was taken up to Olympus to live with the other gods and he married his half-sister, Hebe. And Hera finally put aside her anger against him. It seems that Heracles could only find peace after his death.

3.8.18: Heracles is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.19: Hermes

Roman name: Mercury

Epithets: Argeïphontes (Killer of Argus), Psychopompos (Guide of Souls), Hermes the Helper

Symbols: caduceus (kerykeon), winged sandals, petasos (traveling hat)

Functions: God of travelers, traders, thieves, herds, and heralds; also a messenger to the gods




Hermes carrying a ram on an olpe found in the Louvre

The Birth of Hermes and the Theft of Apollo's Cattle

Hermes was the son of Zeus and Maia, a nymph who lived on Mount Cyllene. Hermes was very mischievous, and within hours of his birth, Hermes was already getting himself into trouble. When he was only one day old, he left his mother's cave to see the world and ran into a tortoise, which he killed and then fashioned into an instrument, inventing the lyre. Later that day, he slipped out again and made his way to Pieria, the place the gods used to pasture their cattle, and stole fifty of Apollo's cattle, taking great care to confuse anyone trying to track them by forcing the cattle to walk backwards. He also made sandals for himself by tying twigs to the bottoms of his feet in order to hide his footprints. Hermes drove the cattle far away, and hid them in a cave not far from the river Alpheios, in the Peloponnese [map]. Hermes then decided to sacrifice two of the cattle to the gods. He rubbed two sticks together, thus inventing both fire-sticks and fire. He slaughtered two of the cattle and sacrificed the meat to the gods, not keeping any for himself. He then hid the evidence of his crime by burning the carcasses of the animals and throwing his make-shift sandals in a river. By this time, it was evening. Hermes hurried home, wrapped himself in his swaddling clothes, and slipped back into his cradle, feigning innocence.



A Muse playing a lyre, the instrument invented by Hermes, found in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich

The next morning, Apollo noticed that some of his cattle were missing and came looking for them. Despite Hermes' efforts to hide his crime, Apollo managed to discover the fate of his cattle and came to confront his younger half-brother. Apollo threatened to throw Hermes into Tartarus and imprison him there if he didn't give back the cattle, but Hermes replied, "I was born yesterday! How could I possibly steal anyone's cattle? I don't even know what cattle are!" The two were unable to settle their dispute, so they took their case to their father. Zeus was amused by Hermes' insistence that he was innocent, but decreed that the infant return the cattle to Apollo. Hermes showed Apollo where he had hidden the cattle, but before Apollo could take them away, Hermes picked up the lyre he had created and began to play. The music so enraptured Apollo that he begged Hermes to give it to him. Hermes then

suggested a deal: in exchange for the instrument, Apollo would trade his cattle and the position of divine herdsman. Apollo agreed. Zeus confirmed the pact between the two half-brothers, and decreed that Hermes would become the messenger of the gods (Homeric Hymn to Hermes). Hermes also became a trickster god and the god of thieves, as well as the god of travelers and traders and a helper to men. He also carried the caduceus or herald's wand (a gift from Apollo), as a sign of his position. And he invented the panpipes (several reeds or hollow bamboo sticks of different lengths, tied together with string), so he would have his own instrument to play.



The caduceus of Hermes has been appropriated by the Medical Corps as their symbol.

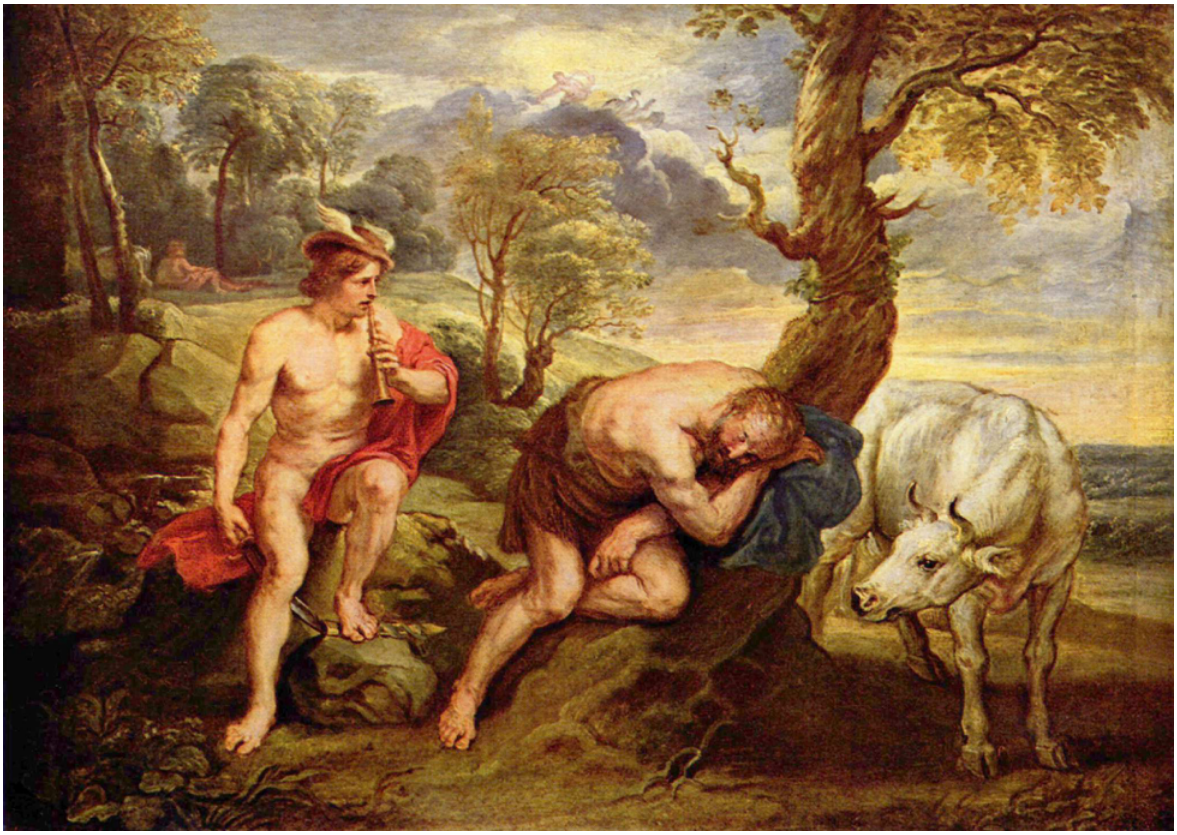
Hermes as Guide of Dead Souls

As an extension of his role as protector of travelers, one of Hermes' jobs was to lead the dead souls down to Hades. He would take the souls to the river Styx where Charon, the ferryman, would take the souls of the dead to the other side, as long as they had been buried properly with a coin placed under the tongue as a payment for Charon. Hermes is often depicted in art as leading away a dead person's soul. One example is the famous relief sculpture in the Naples Museum of Hermes leading Eurydice back into Hades, just after, Orpheus has looked back at her on their way out of the Underworld [see Orpheus].

Hermes the Helper

Hermes earned his epithet "the helper" many times over by aiding both gods and mortals. Zeus often employed him not only in sending messages but in performing tasks the father of gods and men was not able to do himself. One such instance was with Io, a mortal woman Zeus amorously pursued. Io was a priestess to Hera who caught Zeus' eye and so Zeus sent her dreams commanding

her to join him in the fields where her father kept his flocks. Eventually, she came to the meadow, but when she realized what Zeus wanted, she ran away, and Zeus pursued her. Hera, eager to catch her husband in the act, had been observing him and came down from Olympus to confront her husband. Zeus quickly turned Io into a cow to hide his promiscuity from his wife. Hera, who knew the cow was really a girl, asked her husband if he would give her the beautiful cow as a present and he had to acquiesce in order not to give away his trick. Hera placed Io in a grove, guarded by Argus Panoptes (meaning “all-eyes”), a hundred-eyed monster.



Mercury and Argus by Peter Paul Rubens (1635-1638) in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden

Zeus sent the god of thieves to bring him Io, but not even Hermes could steal her away because Argus was able to make his eyes sleep in shifts so he could constantly watch the girl. Hermes decided to disguise himself as a goatherd. He sat down by Argus and gently played his panpipes until all of Argus’ eyes had closed in sleep. Once he had done this, Hermes took up his sword and cut off the head of the monster, earning his name Argeïphontes.



Mercury and Argus by Peter Paul Rubens (1636-1638) in the Prado Museum in Madrid

Hermes helped his father another time by rescuing his unborn half-brother Dionysus from womb of his mother, Semele, as she perished in flames [see Dionysus]. Zeus was not the only beneficiary of Hermes' help, mortals were also guided by Hermes. He showed Odysseus how to overcome the dangerous witch, Circe, [Homer, *Odyssey*, 11?]; he helped Priam, King of Troy, travel safely into the Greek camp during the Trojan War to plead with Achilles for the body of his son, Hector [Homer, *Iliad*, ?]; and he, along with Athena, gave the hero Perseus all the equipment he needed to slay the Gorgon, Medusa.

Pan

Hermes had many children, one of which was Pan, a god born with horns and goat's legs. Pan was also said to have invented the panpipes, which he frequently played. Pan was able to inflict fear, or "panic" (which comes from the god's name), in the hearts of mortals with just a shout.

Herms

Since he was the protector of travelers, statues, called herms, of Hermes' head and a phallus on a stone pillar were placed along roads, at cross roads, and in courtyards and town squares for good luck. These statues were taken very seriously, since they were representations of the god; harm to them could have disastrous consequences. According to Thucydides, just before the Athenians started on their ill-fated Sicilian Expedition, someone smashed the faces of almost all of the herms throughout the city, a bad portent for the fate of the expedition and an ominous foreshadowing for when the expedition ultimately failed (Thucydides 6.27).



An ithyphallic herm in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens

3.8.19: Hermes is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.20: Hestia

Roman name: Vesta

Function: Goddess of the hearth

Hestia was the oldest child of Cronus and Rhea, thus she was the first to be swallowed by Cronus and last to come back out when Zeus rescued his siblings [see Origins]. She is both anthropomorphic (i.e., she is a goddess with a human form) but she is also the physical manifestation of, the actual hearth in every home, temple, and city. In fact, her name (῾Εστία) is also the Greek word for the hearth. Hestia was a virgin goddess who does not appear in many myths. She was highly honored, usually receiving the first offering at sacrifices, but she had few cult activities that were specially dedicated to her. However, to the Romans, Vesta was one of the most important deities. The priestesses of Vesta, called the Vestal Virgins, tended to the city hearth, keeping the goddess' flame burning.

3.8.20: Hestia is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.21: Jason

Functions: Hero and leader of the Argonauts

The Birth of Jason

Jason was the son of Aeson, the rightful king of Iolcus. Before Jason was born, his uncle, Pelias, took the throne from Aeson. Aeson and his wife still lived in Iolcus, but they lived with the constant threat of death over them. After Jason was born, in order to protect him from the wrath of his uncle, Aeson sent his son to the nearby Mount Pelion to be raised by the centaur [see Centaurs], Chiron.

For years, Pelias lived in fear of a man with one sandal, because he had been told by the Delphic Oracle that he was fated to be killed by a man who was wearing only one sandal. When Jason turned twenty-one, he decided to reclaim the throne and returned to Iolcus to confront his uncle. In order to get there, he had to cross a river, and on the bank sat an old woman asking to be carried across. Jason did not know that the woman was Hera in disguise, testing the young man to see if he was worthy to help her in destroying Pelias, who had scorned her many times. In the process of carrying the goddess through the water, Jason lost one of his sandals and continued the rest of the way wearing only one.

How Jason was Sent to Bring Back the Golden Fleece

Once the youth came to Iolcus, news of the man with one sandal quickly reached Pelias. He met with the young man, who revealed his identity and stated his intention to regain his father's throne. Pelias was afraid to kill Jason outright, so he asked him what he would do with a man who was destined to kill him. Jason responded saying that he would ask the man to retrieve the Golden Fleece. (The Golden Fleece came from a magical golden ram who had saved the youth Phrixus from death by carrying him to the land of Colchis. Once they had arrived in Colchis, the ram told Phrixus to sacrifice him and hang the fleece in a grove sacred to Ares, where it was guarded by a dragon.) Upon hearing Jason's answer, Pelias asked his nephew to fetch the Fleece from Colchis. Another version states that Pelias was kind to his nephew and told him that the oracle at Delphi had told him that the dishonored spirit of Phrixus, needed to be returned home to Thessaly along with the Fleece to appease the underworld gods [Pindar]. In either case, Jason agreed to go to Colchis and bring back the Golden Fleece, and he organized an expedition which included some of the greatest heroes in Greece at the time [See Argonauts].

Jason and Medea

The Argonauts returned to Iolcus with the Golden Fleece, bringing with them Jason's new wife, the Colchian princess, Medea (who was also a witch). Jason suspected that his uncle would not hand over the kingship, so the group stayed outside the city while trying to figure out what to do. Medea came up with a plan to rid them of the problem. Using her magic, she disguised herself as an old woman and went to the palace, claiming to be a priestess of Artemis who had come to rejuvenate the king. When she transformed from an old woman into her real, youthful form, Pelias agreed to allow her to bring back his youth. Medea told his daughters that they needed to cut their father into pieces and boil him in her cauldron, along with some magical herbs, in order for the process to work. The girls were naturally skeptical, but Medea convinced them by performing the procedure on a ram. When a little lamb leaped from the cauldron, they agreed to cut their father into pieces. Of course, when the daughters of Pelias tried this, their rejuvenated father did not spring out of the cauldron. Medea probably "forgot" to put the right herbs into the cauldron; in any case, Peleus was dead.

Pelias' son, Acastus, who was one of the Argonauts, became king at his father's death and exiled Jason and Medea for the brutal killing of his father. The king of Corinth, Creon, offered them a home in his kingdom on account of the fame the expedition of the Argo had brought to Jason. There they lived peacefully for about ten years, and they had two sons. Eventually though, Jason grew tired of living with a barbarian witch who brought him no social standing and Creon offered his daughter, named either Glauce or Creusa, in marriage to the hero. Jason divorced Medea and married the princess.

Medea was devastated and most of all angry at the betrayal. After all, she had helped Jason steal the Golden Fleece, she had helped him sail safely back to Greece, and she had helped him punish Peleus for seizing the throne; she had also born him two sons, to perpetuate his line. But Medea was not about to suffer in silence; she hatched a plan to hurt Jason in every way possible. She sent her sons to deliver wedding gifts for the princess: a tiara and a beautiful dress. As soon as the princess put them on, however, they burst into flames. Her father, hearing her screams, ran to help, but once he had touched her he could not pull away, and he burned

alive alongside his daughter. Medea's sons, because they were accessories to the murders, were in danger as well. Some versions say the Corinthians killed the boys and later the spirits of the children punished the city for their murder, but the more prominent version, popularized by Euripides, has Medea herself killing the children to take revenge on their father. Medea, who was the granddaughter of Helius, the sun, asked for and received her grandfather's chariot (drawn by four winged horses) to help her escape. Medea flew to Athens in Helius' chariot and went to live with King Aegeus [see Theseus]. Some accounts say that Jason took his own life, but the more popular story is that, many years after these events, he was sitting under the rotting ruins of the Argo, the ship that had made him so famous, when a beam from the ship fell and struck him on the head, killing him.

3.8.21: Jason is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.22: Miasma

Miasma (μίασμα) means “stain, defilement” or “the stain of guilt” in Greek. It is usually translated as “pollution” in English, although there is no concept in English that precisely corresponds to miasma. Miasma is a god-sent disease that is caused by a murder that has not been atoned for (with proper purification rituals). A miasma can fall upon an entire city when one man in that city is guilty of a murder and has not atoned for it. A miasma can infect everyone on board a ship if one man on that ship is guilty of murder.

Miasma can spread like a disease, and it seems to be the objectification of guilt. In other words, the guilt is understood as a kind of disease that can spread to everyone who comes in contact with the guilty person. The concept of germs was not developed until the 1880s, but the effects of contagion were clearly visible from very early time. The Greeks seem to have believed that the cause of contagious disease was guilt for an unexpiated crime. The only way to stop the spread of the disease was to find the guilty party, and have that person atone for their crime by paying a penalty (usually a fine or banishment), and undergoing an expiation ritual (frequently a sacrifice of a suckling pig). You could classify miasma as a psychological myth (since it is the manifestation of the emotion of guilt) or you could understand it as a natural aitiological myth, since it explains the natural phenomenon of contagious disease.

When *Oedipus the King* begins, the city of Thebes is infected with a miasma: a disease has fallen on the crops, the cattle are dying, a plague is raging through the land, and all the children are stillborn. The Oracle at Delphi proclaims that the miasma is caused by the unexpiated murder of Laius, the previous king. Apollo declares that the murderer is still living in Thebes and that he must be found and punished (either by banishment or death) in order for the miasma to come to an end.

3.8.22: Miasma is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.23: The Minotaur

Function: Half-man, half-bull monster

The Minotaur (which means “Minos’ bull”) was the son of Pasiphaë, the wife of Minos (the king of Crete), and a large and handsome bull. Minos had asked Poseidon for a magnificent bull to sacrifice to him and the god obliged, sending a handsome bull from the sea. However, when Minos saw the bull, he refused to sacrifice it because it was so beautiful. Poseidon, completely enraged, caused Minos’ wife, Pasiphaë, to lust after the bull. She convinced Daedalus, the famous engineer, to aid her in consummating her desire for the bull by making her a hollow wooden cow. Pasiphaë then climbed into the cow and was able to mate with the bull. The result was a child who was half-human and half-bull. Minos then had Daedalus build a maze, called a labyrinth, to house the Minotaur.



Theseus Slaying the Minotaur by Antoine-Louis Barye (1843) in the Baltimore Museum of Art

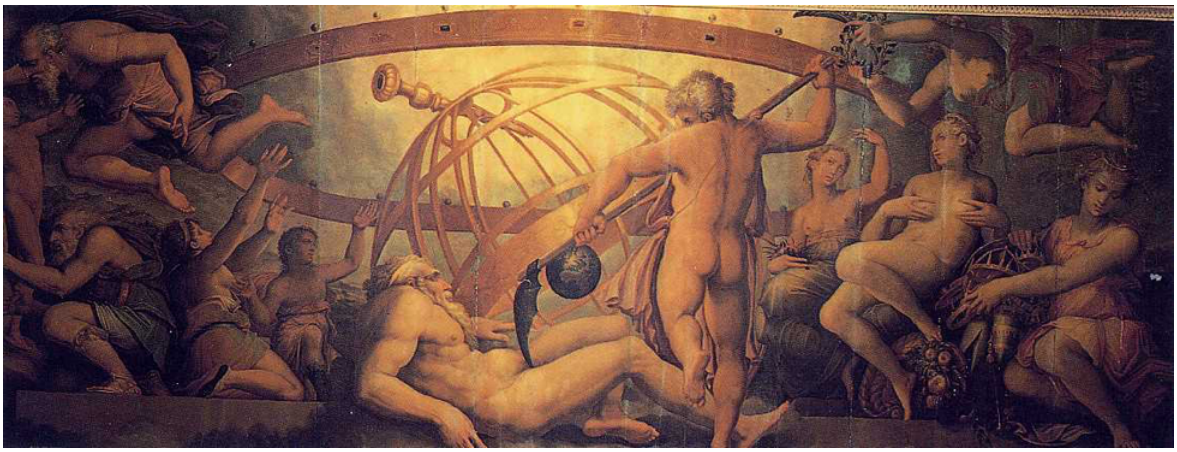
3.8.23: The Minotaur is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.24: Origins

The First Generation of Gods

There are several different versions of how the world began in Classical mythology, but the version most recognized is found in Hesiod's *Theogony* (theo- meaning "god" and -gony meaning "origin/birth"). Hesiod says that the first being to exist was Chaos, a dark and murky void who becomes the progenitor of the gloomy and negative aspects of the universe, such as Nyx (Night), Thanatos (Death), and the Moerae (the Fates. Sometimes, however, the Fates are said to be the daughters of Zeus and Themis). Next came Gaia (Earth; sometimes called Gē), Tartarus (the lowest part of the Underworld), and Eros (Erotic Love). Gaia alone gave birth to Uranus (Ouranos or Οὐρανός, meaning "sky/heavens"), Urea (Ourea, or Mountains), and Pontus (Sea). Now that Eros existed, future births could proceed with the aid of erotic love. Gaia and Uranus married and had three sets of children: the twelve Titans (including Cronus and Rhea), the three Cyclopes (meaning "circle-eyed," because each one had only one big eye in the middle of his forehead), and the three Hundred-Handers (so named because each one had a hundred hands; they also had fifty heads).

The Second Generation of Gods: The Titans



The Mutilation of Uranus by Saturn by Cristofano Gherardi in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence

Uranus disliked his children, particularly the monstrous Cyclopes and Hundred-Handers, so he prevented them from being born by blocking up Gaia's many wombs (caves). This was painful for Gaia and she became angry at her husband; also, she wanted her children to see the light of day. She asked her children to help her overthrow their father and one volunteered, the Titan, Cronus. Gaia made a sickle out of adamant (a mythical metal that was extremely hard) and gave it to her son, telling him to lie in wait for his father. In the evening, Uranus came down from the sky to sleep with his wife and Cronus used the opportunity to cut off his father's genitals. He threw the genitals into the sea, and the goddess, Aphrodite, was born from the mixture of semen and sea-foam that formed around them [see Aphrodite]. As they fell, some bloody drops dripped onto the ground, impregnating Gaia with the Erinyes (known as the Furies in Latin) and the Gigantes, or Giants.



The sickle was used for harvesting grain.

Cronus replaced his father as ruler of the universe, and soon his subordinates were chafing under his rule. He imprisoned his brothers, the Cyclopes and the Hundred-Handers, in Tartarus, the deepest and darkest place in the universe. Gaia and Uranus, who, now without his genitals, was able to live in peace with his progeny, warned Cronus that one of his children was destined to overthrow him. Cronus, hoping to avoid this fate, swallowed each of his children (Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon) in turn as soon as his wife and sister, Rhea, gave birth to them. Rhea was upset that she was not able to spend time with her children, so when became pregnant with another child, she made a plan with the help of her parents, Gaia and Uranus. When Rhea gave birth to her youngest child, Zeus, she replaced the infant with a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes and gave it to Cronus to swallow. Meanwhile Gaia hid Zeus in a cave on Crete [see Creta on map]. Zeus stayed there for a year, suckled by the goat Amalthea, until he was mature enough to confront his father (the gods grow up quickly). On the advice of Gaia, Zeus gave his father an emetic which caused him to regurgitate his other children. Cronus also vomited up the stone he had swallowed, and Zeus placed it in Delphi, where it became the navel-stone of the earth. Together, the sons and daughters began a war against their father, which is referred to as Titanomachy, or the Battle of the Gods and the Titans.



The Omphalos, or the navel stone of the earth, in the Archaeological Museum of Delphi

The Battle of the Gods and the Titans

The Battle of the Gods and the Titans lasted for ten years, and for a long time both sides were evenly matched. But eventually Zeus turned the tide of battle to his advantage by releasing his uncles, the Cyclopes and the Hundred-Handers, from Tartarus. The Cyclopes forged the thunderbolts (what we would call lightning bolts) for Zeus and the Hundred-handers threw huge rocks from their three hundred hands. The sea roared and the whole earth shook with the battle, and the sky echoed in response. Zeus threw so many thunderbolts that the whole world caught on fire, and finally the Titans were defeated.



Atlas with the Farnese Globe in the Naples Archaeological Museum

After Zeus finally won, he threw the Titans into Tartarus except for Atlas, who was the son of the Titan, Iapetus. Atlas was ordered to hold up the sky so it did not fall onto the earth. Atlas' brothers, Prometheus (Forethought) and Epimetheus (Afterthought) had fought on Zeus' side, so they were not punished. The Cyclopes became Zeus' personal team of metallurgists; they were the ones who forged his thunderbolts. The Hundred-Handers were given the task of guarding the gates to Tartarus.



The sculpture of Atlas at Rockefeller Center

The Third Generation of Gods: The Olympians

The three sons of Cronus divided the universe into three kingdoms, one for each to rule, and drew lots to determine who would rule which part. Zeus became the Ruler of the Heavens and King of the Gods, Poseidon held dominion over the seas and waterways, and Hades ruled the Underworld as King of the Dead. Gaia became angry with the Olympians for their treatment of her children, the Titans, so she joined with Tartarus and bore Typhoeus (sometimes called Typhon), a monster described differently by each author, though Hesiod describes him as having a hundred dragon heads growing from his shoulders. Typhoeus breathed fire from his dragon heads and caused the entire world to shake; he wanted to take power in Zeus' place. Zeus came down from Olympus to meet the monster head on, beating him down and hurling many thunderbolts at him. Once again, the earth, sea, and sky were engulfed in flames and the entire world was shaken. Zeus finally defeated the monster and threw him into Tartarus, where he became the source of typhoon winds. Some authors say that he was buried under Mt. Etna, in Sicily, where he became a volcano.

Analysis

The story of how Zeus came to rule over gods and men is certainly a violent one, and it has several important themes. One theme is the establishment of the rule of the Olympian gods (who sometimes symbolize justice, law, and order) over the Titans (who sometimes symbolize brute force) and the Gaia-Uranus generation (who symbolize the unbridled forces of nature). This theme is sometimes referred to as "from chaos to cosmos," since cosmos (kosmos, κοσμός) means "the ordered universe" in Greek. Another, more troubling theme, is the conflict between the generations, as each father tries to suppress the rule of his sons.

3.8.24: Origins is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.25: Orpheus



Hermes taking Eurydice back to the Underworld on a relief in the Naples Archaeological Museum

Orpheus, said to be the son of Apollo and Calliope, lived in Thrace in Northwest Greece, and was the best lyre player in the world. Some say that Apollo was the one who taught him to play. Orpheus played and sang so beautifully that he enchanted everyone who heard him. Even animals stopped to listen to him and stones and trees moved closer to hear him sing.

Orpheus fell in love with a beautiful nymph (or nature spirit) named Eurydice, and he won her heart by his singing. They were married in an open-air ceremony on a hillside. In the late afternoon after the wedding, a former admirer of Eurydice's began to pursue her. She became frightened and ran away without looking where she was going. In her fright, she stepped on a snake, which bit her. The snake turned out to be poisonous, and Eurydice died almost immediately.

Orpheus grieved constantly for Eurydice. He would sit and sing songs of mourning all day, every day, and weep as he sang. The animals and even the trees and grasses tried to comfort him, but it was no use. Every reason for living seemed to have gone away when Eurydice died. At last Orpheus decided to go into Hades and try to find her.

Orpheus found the cave that led to Hades and slowly descended into the Underworld. He sang to Cerberus and charmed him until the three-headed dog allowed him to enter. Orpheus played for Hades and Persephone and sang them a song about the beginning of the world and the origin of gods and men. Then he sang about the joys of love and the sadness that comes with love's loss. Orpheus' singing charmed even the hearts of Hades and Persephone, rulers of the dead. They allowed him to bring his dear Eurydice back to life on one condition: he could not turn back and look at her until they reached the upper world.

Orpheus agreed and turned to go, hoping that Eurydice was following him. But the journey to the upper world was long and difficult, and Orpheus desperately longed to see if Eurydice was really behind him. Orpheus resisted this impulse until the opening of the cave was in sight, just ahead; then he could no longer resist. Orpheus turned back, just for an instant, to see if Eurydice was really there. But that instant was his undoing. As he looked back, he saw Hermes leading her back down to Hades, even as she stretched out her arms to him in her heart-aching sorrow.

Orpheus was inconsolable over his loss of Eurydice for the second and final time. He sang constantly of his love for her and refused to look at any other women. Also, he became a devoted worshipper of Apollo, the sun god. It was his custom to go up to the top of a mountain every morning in order to greet the sun. This made Dionysus very angry. Dionysus was at that time winning the region of Thrace over to his own worship, celebrated at night with frenzied music and dancing. Dionysus resented Orpheus and began to complain to his Maenads about Orpheus' neglect. The Maenads already hated Orpheus because he refused their advances, so one day, in a Dionysiac frenzy, they attacked Orpheus and tore him limb from limb.

The Muses gathered up some parts of his body and buried them, but Orpheus' head and his lyre fell into the River Hebros. From there they floated to the island of Lesbos, off the coast of Asia, the head still singing as it went. The Lesbians took the head and the lyre and treated them with great respect. They dedicated the lyre to Apollo and it was kept for many years in Apollo's temple there. Some say that the Lesbians buried Orpheus' head nearby; other says that they kept it, too, in Apollo's temple, where it not only continued to sing, but also gave oracles and prophesied the future.

After many years a religion grew up, said to have been inspired by Orpheus. Orphic religion told of a life after death. It hinted that the soul did not die with the body, but went on a journey to another world. Those who had lived good lives and had purified themselves of all evil, lived permanently in a beautiful place, sometimes called the Elysian Fields. There the sun always shone and the souls enjoyed an ageless and deathless existence. Those who had lived sinful lives remained in Hades, suffering dreadful tortures. Those whose lives had been partly good and partly evil were given a glimpse of the Elysian Fields, but were forced to be reincarnated into new bodies and return to this life once more.

3.8.25: Orpheus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.26: Persephone

Roman name: Proserpina

Epithets: Chthonian (with mother Demeter), Kore (Maiden)

Symbols: pomegranate (fertility symbol), torch, crown

Functions: Goddess of the dead and fertility



Hades and Persephone with all their symbols on a terracotta pinax in the Cleveland Museum of Art

Persephone was the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. She was married to Hades, ruler of the underworld, who abducted her and took her as his bride. After Demeter discovered what had happened, Demeter and Hades struck a deal. Persephone would spend two thirds of the year with her mother, during which crops would grow, and the rest of the year she would live with her husband, during which the earth would die [See Demeter]. This is a natural aetiological myth that explains the origin of the seasons: Persephone is with Demeter during the spring, summer, and fall, but during the winter, when Persephone is in Hades with her husband, it is winter on the earth and the crops do not grow.

Persephone is always depicted as happy in her role as Queen of the Dead despite the violent nature of her capture, which raises some interesting questions about how marriage was perceived in ancient Greece.

Persephone does not have a large role in myth. One notable exception is one of the versions of the myth of Aphrodite and Adonis. Aphrodite was smitten by the beauty of the young and handsome Adonis and gave him to Persephone for safe keeping, but Persephone was also smitten. The Queen of the Dead refused to give Adonis back, and Aphrodite went to Zeus to help settle the quarrel. Zeus declared that the boy should spend a third of the year with Persephone, a third with Aphrodite, and a third as he pleased, which he chose to spend with Aphrodite. This mirrors the deal brokered for Persephone's time and similarly, Adonis became associated with death and rebirth in the Adonia festival. [See Aphrodite]



Proserpine by Rossetti (1874) in the Tate Gallery of Modern Art in London

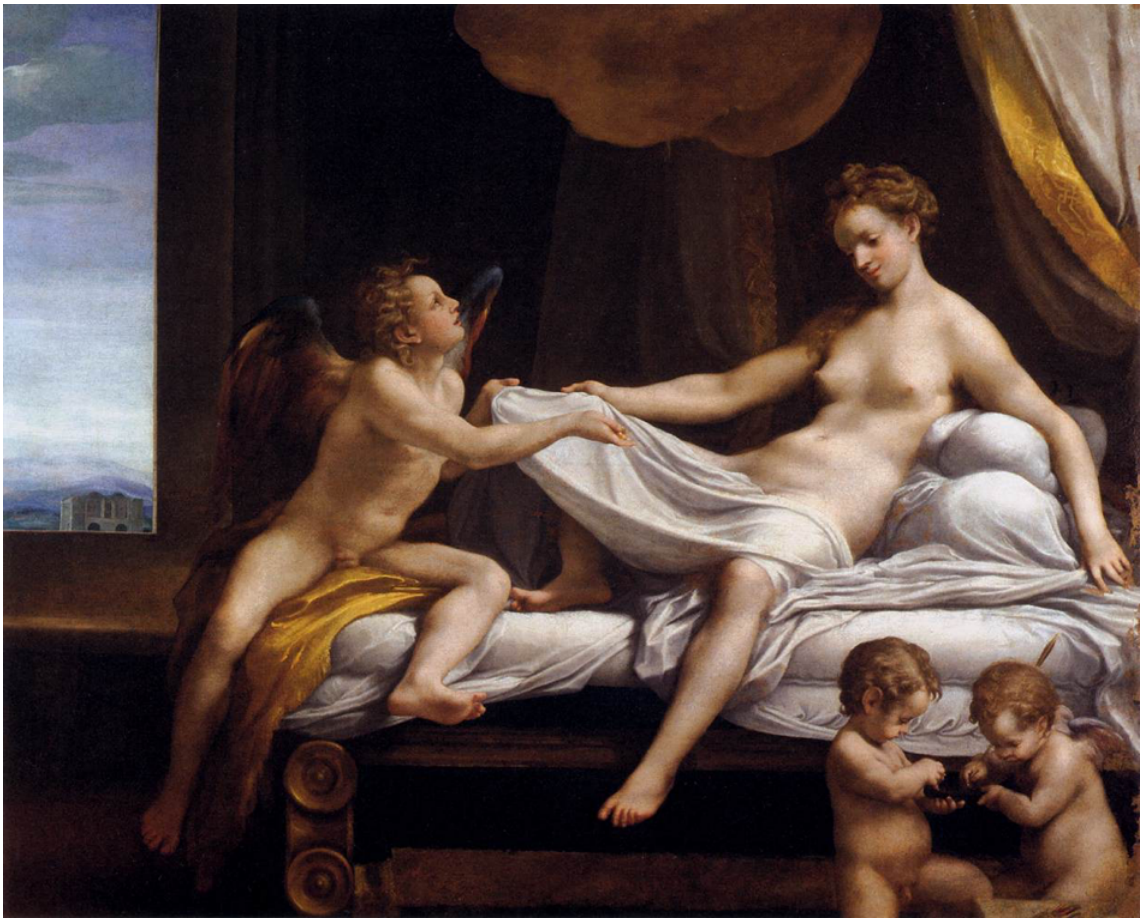
3.8.26: Persephone is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.27: Perseus

Perseus is the only Greek hero (that I am aware of) who does NOT fit the Story Pattern of the Greek Hero (see the Story Pattern of the Greek Hero). To be sure, Perseus does fit parts of the pattern: he certainly has an unusual birth, and he does go on a Heroic Journey in which he accomplishes Heroic Tests. But Perseus does not accomplish any Early Tests (that I know of), and, most importantly, Perseus is the only one of all the Greek heroes who has a happy life after he has accomplished his heroic journey and who does NOT have an unhappy death. I guess you could say that Perseus is the exception that proves the rule.

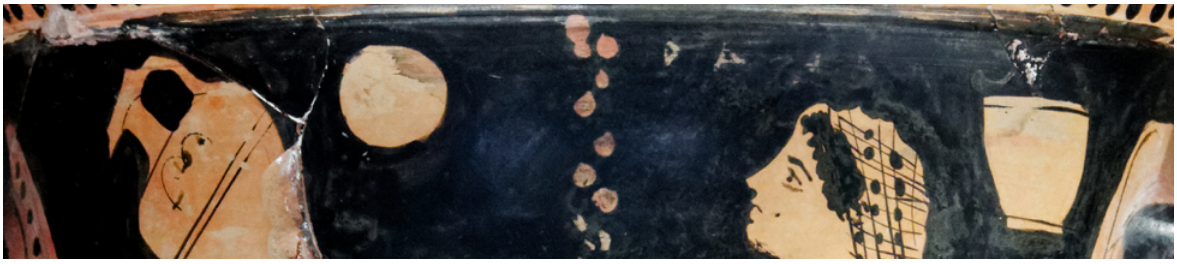
I. Unusual Birth:

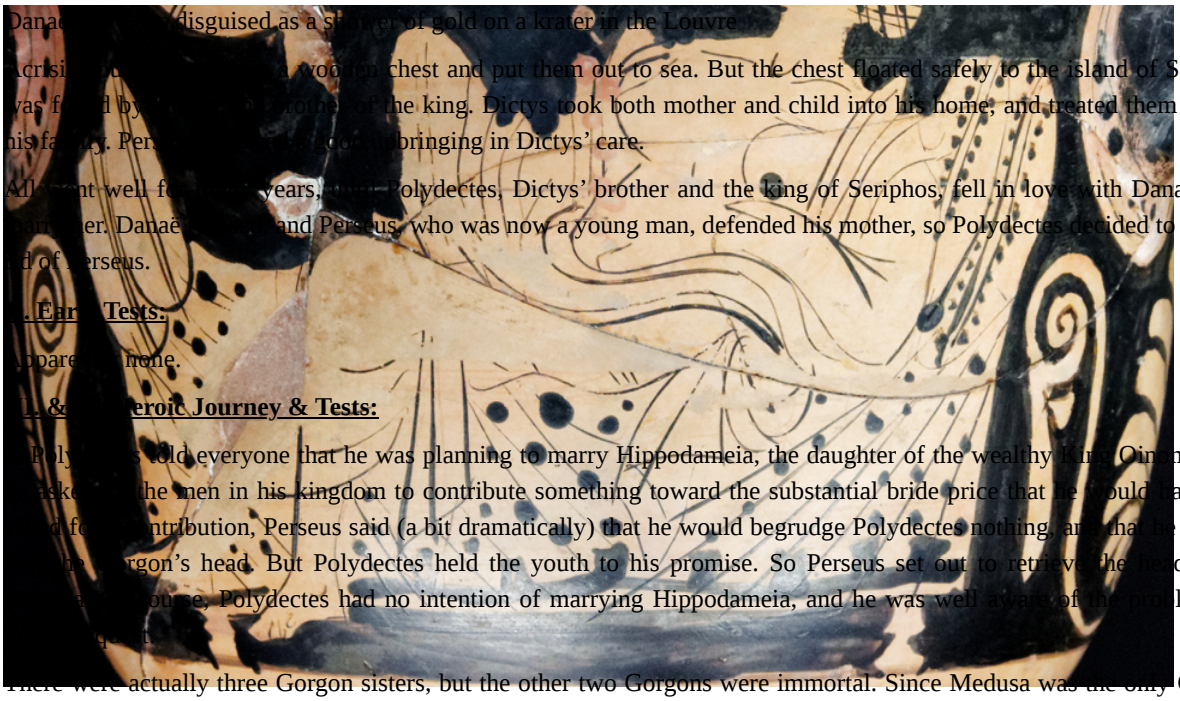
Acrisius, the king of Argos [see map], had a daughter, but no sons, so he consulted the Delphic Oracle to see how he could get an heir to the throne. But the oracle he received made him forget the reason why he had consulted the Oracle in the first place. The Delphic Oracle said: "Your daughter's son will kill you."



Danaë by Correggio (1530) in the Galleria Borghese in Rome

Of course, Acrisius wanted to do everything he could to prevent this. So he put his daughter, Danaë, in a bronze prison, and he would not let any man near her. But Zeus fell in love with her, and he visited her in the form of a shower of golden rain. Nine months later, Danaë gave birth to Perseus.





Danaë [illegible] disguised as a shower of gold on a krater in the Louvre

Acrisi[illegible] [illegible] wooden chest and put them out to sea. But the chest floated safely to the island of Seriphos, where it was found by [illegible] brother of the king. Dictys took both mother and child into his home, and treated them like members of his family. Perseus grew good [illegible] bringing in Dictys' care.

All went well for [illegible] years, [illegible] Polydectes, Dictys' brother and the king of Seriphos, fell in love with Danaë and wanted to marry her. Danaë [illegible] and Perseus, who was now a young man, defended his mother, so Polydectes decided to find a way to get rid of Perseus.

[illegible] Early Tests:

[illegible]ppare[illegible] home.

[illegible] & [illegible] Heroic Journey & Tests:

[illegible] Polydectes told everyone that he was planning to marry Hippodameia, the daughter of the wealthy King Oinomaos of Pisa, and he asked [illegible] the men in his kingdom to contribute something toward the substantial bride price that he would have to pay. When [illegible] for [illegible] ntribution, Perseus said (a bit dramatically) that he would begrudge Polydectes nothing, and that he would even give [illegible] Gorgon's head. But Polydectes held the youth to his promise. So Perseus set out to retrieve the head of the Gorgon, [illegible] course, Polydectes had no intention of marrying Hippodameia, and he was well aware of the problematic nature of [illegible] quest.

There were actually three Gorgon sisters, but the other two Gorgons were immortal. Since Medusa was the only Gorgon who was capable of being killed, it was her head that Perseus was going to seek. But there was one, huge problem: anyone who looked at Medusa would instantly be turned into stone. So how could anyone kill her without dying before he could complete the mission? Fortunately for Perseus, however, Athena already hated Medusa (for the reason why, see Poseidon), so Athena decided to help Perseus kill her.



Perseus killing Medusa and Pegasus being born from her head on a lekythos in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City

First, Athena helped Perseus find the Graeae. The Graeae were three old sisters, who shared a single eye between them. The Graeae did not want to help Perseus, but he managed to steal their eye as they were passing it from one to another; Perseus refused to give back the eye until they helped him, so they agreed. The Graeae told Perseus about some nymphs and where to find them. And when Perseus found the nymphs, they gave him three important gifts: winged sandals, which would allow him to fly through the air; a cap of darkness, which would make him invisible; and a special metallic pouch for Medusa's head.



Perseus by Cellini (1554) found under the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence

Athena also told Perseus not to look at Medusa directly while killing her with his sword, but to look at Medusa's reflection in his shield, to avoid being turned into stone. Perseus was able to avoid the two, immortal Gorgons because he was wearing the cap of invisibility; he flew down to the Gorgons without being seen, and, looking carefully at his shield, he cut off Medusa's head and placed it in his pouch. Much later (after his adventures were over) Perseus gave Medusa's head to Athena, and Athena put on the aegis (or, in some versions, on her shield).



Perseus with the Head of Medusa by Antonio Canova from 1804-1806 found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City

2. As Perseus was flying home on his winged sandals, Perseus passed by Ethiopia (or in some versions, Phoenicia) and he saw a beautiful girl, Andromeda, who was the princess of the land, chained to a rocky cliff and about to be devoured by a sea-serpent. Perseus immediately fell in love with her. Using his sword and winged sandals, Perseus killed the sea-serpent (in some versions, he turns the monster to stone by showing it Medusa's head). And, of course, he marries Andromeda.



Perseus rescuing Andromeda from the sea-serpent on an amphora found in the Altes Museum in Berlin

V. Happy Later Life:

Unlike the other Greek heroes, Perseus does not have an unhappy later life and a terrible death. On the contrary, Perseus seems to be the only Greek hero who lives happily ever after.

Perseus returned to Seriphus, where he found that Polydectes was about to marry his mother, although she still did not want to go through with the marriage. As he entered the hall where Polydectes and his friends were having a feast to celebrate his upcoming marriage, Perseus pulled Medusa's head out of its bag, turning the King and all his friends into stone. Perseus now had no more use for Medusa's head, so he gratefully gave it to Athena, and he sailed home to Argos with Andromeda and Danaë.

Acrisius received them kindly, and Perseus did not resent his grandfather for all the trouble he had caused him and his mother. But not long afterward, when he was competing at an athletic contest, Perseus threw a discus and he accidentally hit Acrisius, killing him instantly. He did not feel comfortable ruling his grandfather's kingdom, after having killed him, so he and Andromeda moved away, and Perseus founded the kingdom of Mycenae. And Perseus and Andromeda lived happily ever after!

3.8.27: Perseus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.28: Poseidon

Roman name: Neptune

Epithets: Enosichthon (Earth-Shaker), Hippios (the Horse God)

Symbols: trident, horse, bull

God of the sea, salt and fresh water springs, earthquakes, and horses

Poseidon's Birth Myth

Poseidon was the son of Cronus and Rhea. Most stories relate that he was swallowed by his father like all his older siblings [see Origins], and was rescued by Zeus along with his other siblings. After the Olympians overthrew their Titan parents, the three Olympian brothers, Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon, drew lots to divvy up the realms. Poseidon was allotted domain over the seas, but he always remained immensely jealous of Zeus' position of King of the Gods. He once convinced Hera and Athena to join him in a rebellion against Zeus, whom they managed to imprison in chains until Thetis brought Briareüs, the chief of the Hundred-Handers, to release him (Homer, *Iliad*, 1.396-405).

Poseidon's Patronage

The gods often competed with each other to win patronage over areas in Greece. Poseidon vied with several of his fellow gods for several areas, and Poseidon did not often fare well in these contests. He and Helius (god of the sun) both wanted Corinth [see Corinthus on map] and could not agree, so they took their dispute to Briareüs, who divided the area between the two, giving the citadel to Helius and the isthmus to Poseidon. Hera and Poseidon fought passionately over Argos [map], and when the three river gods who were given the task of judging the dispute found in favor of Hera, Poseidon flooded the city and dried up the rivers in anger. Athena and Poseidon argued over possession of Troezen and Zeus ruled that they share possession of the city. The most famous of Poseidon's contests for power is over Athens [see Athenae on map], where he competed unsuccessfully with Athena [see Athena].



Athena and Poseidon competing for patronage of Athens on an amphora in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris

Family Life

Poseidon was married to Amphitrite, a daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, and they had a few children, most notably Triton, but like his brother Zeus, Poseidon had a tendency to pursue extramarital affairs. The cyclops Polyphemus (who figures in the *Odyssey*) was his son by the sea nymph, Thoösa, and he fathered the hunter Orion [see Artemis] with Euryale, the daughter of Minos. Poseidon seduced Tyro (the mother of Aeson and the grandmother of the hero, Jason) in the form of a river and became the father of Pelias [see Jason] and Neleus, who, in turn, became the father of Nestor (who figures in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*). Theseus was also a son of Poseidon [see Theseus]. Unlike Hera [see Hera], Amphitrite does not seem to have cared much that her husband often looked for love outside of marriage. In fact, in one version of Theseus' journey to Crete [see Theseus], when Theseus arrived in Crete, Minos questioned his paternity, and Theseus questioned Minos'. So, each one had to prove to the other that he was the son of a god. Minos prayed to his father Zeus for a sign and received thunder and lightning. Theseus jumped into the sea and Amphitrite gave him her tiara to prove his connection to her husband.

Poseidon's Affairs

It seems strange that a sea god should be connected to horses, but Poseidon has several myths establishing him as a god of horses. While Demeter was wandering the earth looking for Persephone [see Demeter], Poseidon decided to pursue her. Demeter, trying to avoid her brother, turned into a mare, but Poseidon responded by turning into a stallion and having his way with her anyway. The product of this union was the divine horse, Arion. On another occasion, Poseidon seduced the gorgeous maiden, Medusa, in one of Athena's temples. Naturally, the virgin goddess was enraged that her temple was so defiled. Athena retaliated by transforming Medusa into a hideous monster with snakes for hair who would turn anyone who looked at her into stone. Later, when Perseus cut off Medusa's head, the winged horse Pegasus sprang out from her neck, the product of Medusa and Poseidon's tryst. Pegasus was later tamed by another of Poseidon's sons, Bellerophon. Peleus, the father of Achilles, was given the immortal horses, Xanthus and Balius, at his wedding by Poseidon. The god was also a friend to the centaurs and helped hide them from Heracles when he waged war on them [see 12 Labors of Heracles].



Caravaggio's *Medusa* (1597) in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence

Posiedon's Role in the Trojan War

During the Trojan War, Poseidon sided with the Greeks at least in part because he was still angry with Troy for the treatment he had received at the hands of Laomedon, the father of King Priam. Apollo and Poseidon were contracted by Laomedon to build walls around the city. The two gods agreed to perform this manual labor either because they wanted to test him or because Zeus had

decreed, as punishment for a rebellion of which they had both been a part, that they work for Laomedon for a year. In any case, at the end of the year, Laomedon would not pay them and even threatened to sell them as slaves. Apollo responded by sending a plague and Poseidon sent a sea monster to terrorize them. Apollo, apparently, did not hold a grudge, since he always favored the Trojans, but Poseidon sided with the Greeks in the Trojan War. Despite favoring the Greeks, however, Poseidon, like Athena, was quickly angered by the less-than-perfect behavior of the victorious Greeks. Poseidon helped Athena punish the Lesser Ajax for his rape of Cassandra during the sack of Troy [see Athena] and he kept Odysseus from his home for ten years to punish the hero for blinding his son Polyphemus.

Posiedon, King Minos, and the Minotaur

To read about this myth, see the Minotaur.



The temple to Poseidon at Sounion

Posiedon's History

Poseidon seems to be a merging of the Mycenaean god, Poseidaon (meaning "husband of Da", πόσις/posis = husband) who may have been the consort of Demeter, and one or more pre-Greek sea gods. Since the Mycenaeans migrated into Greece from central Europe, they had no sea gods and thus had to adapt some of their gods to new functions.



The cape at Sounion

3.8.28: Poseidon is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.29: Prometheus

Prometheus (Forethought) was the son of the Titan Iapetus and was brother to the Titans Epimetheus (Afterthought) and Atlas. Prometheus and Epimetheus sided with Zeus and the other Olympians against the Titans and their brother and father because Prometheus could foresee the outcome of the conflict. Because of this, Prometheus and Epimetheus did not suffer the same fate as Iapetus and Atlas.

Prometheus was considered the father of mankind because he created them from clay. He only made men, no women, and let them loose to live in the world. The world was not a kind place though, it was filled with beasts and getting enough food to stay alive was a difficult task. This was not made any easier by Zeus, who insisted that mortal men sacrifice to the gods frequently and give the entire animal to the gods. Prometheus appealed to Zeus to allow the mortals to give only a portion of the animal to the gods and to keep the rest for themselves. Zeus agreed, but the two could not agree on which parts would be reserved for the gods. Prometheus knew that Zeus wanted all the good parts of the animal and came up with a plan to trick him. Prometheus took an animal and divided the choice cuts of the meat from the bones and other less savory tissues. On the pile of bones, he placed fat and a small portion of nice meat on top to disguise it, but on the pile of good meat he placed some lesser meat and gristle. He had Zeus choose from the two piles and Zeus chose the bones and fat. Zeus was very angry when he found out, and he never forgave Prometheus for tricking him.

Men now had meat, but they still had difficulty surviving because they could not keep warm or cook their food. Prometheus knew that fire would save them, but Zeus kept fire for the gods alone. So again, Prometheus thought up a plan. He took a red-hot coal and hid it inside a woody fennel stalk to give to mortals. Now the mortals could cook and keep warm and they were much happier; they worshipped Prometheus as the inventor of all the arts of civilization. But when Zeus saw mankind using fire, he became furious at having been tricked once again. He ordered that Prometheus be nailed to a lonely spot in the Caucasus Mountains. Every day an eagle would come every day to peck out his liver, but every night Prometheus' liver would grow back so the eagle could eat it again. But Zeus was not finished with his punishments; now he wanted to punish mankind. Zeus then had Hephaestus build a beautiful woman, named Pandora (All Gifts), because each of the gods had given her a gift, and he sent her to Epimetheus. Even though Prometheus had warned his brother not to accept any gift from the gods, Epimetheus (true to his name) forgot all about his brother's warning. As soon as Epimetheus saw Pandora, he knew he had to have her for his wife. But Pandora brought with her a jar (not a box) that was filled with evils. And once she opened her jar, all the evils flew out into the world; only hope stayed behind as a comfort for mankind.

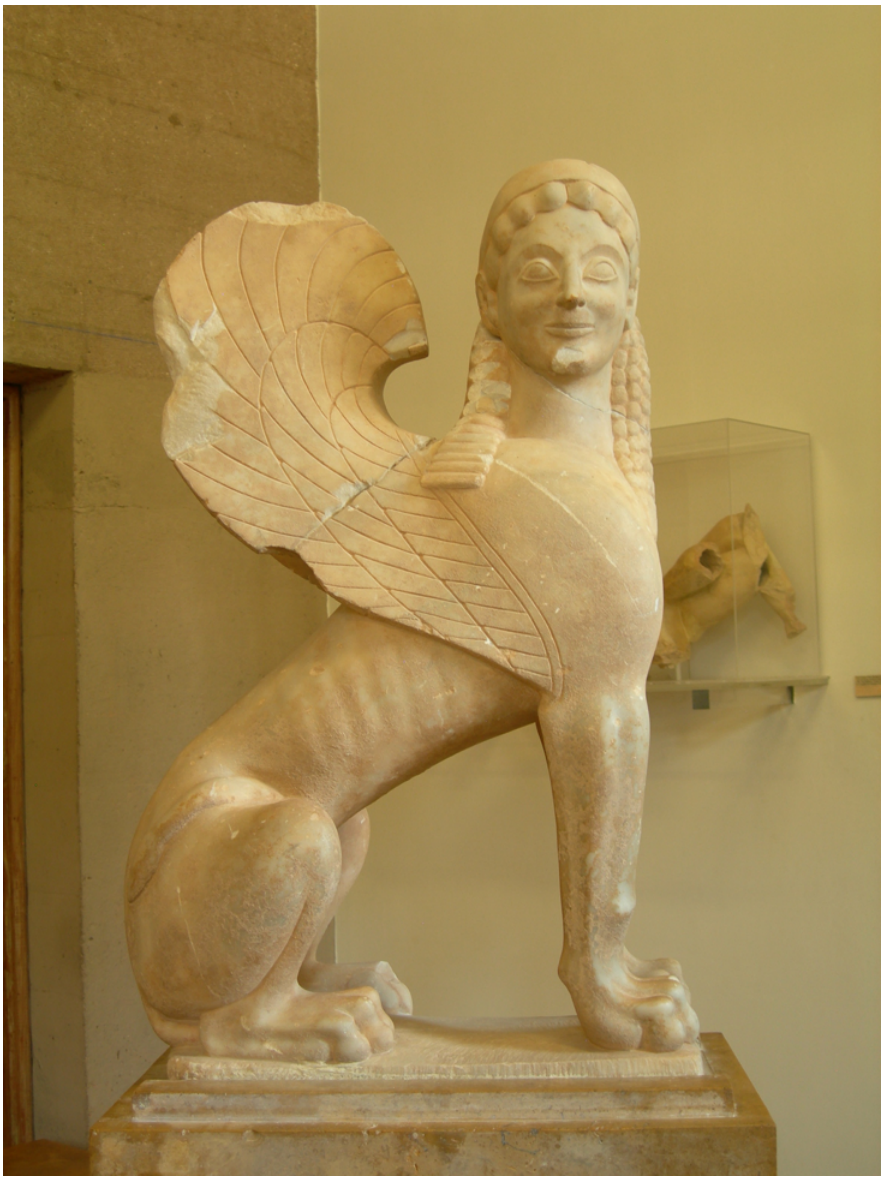
Prometheus remained chained to the mountains until Heracles shot the eagle with his arrow and set the Titan free while on his labor to bring back the Apples of the Hesperides [see the 12 Labors of Heracles]. Zeus allowed Heracles to free Prometheus because he held some very useful knowledge that he would only divulge once he had been freed. After he was freed, Prometheus informed Zeus that the goddess Thetis, with whom Zeus was infatuated, was fated to give birth to a son who would be greater than his father [see Intro to Iliad]. Before Zeus knew this prophecy, he and Poseidon had been rivals for Thetis' hand, but once the prophecy was known, neither god wanted anything to do with her. Zeus and Poseidon agreed that Thetis should be safely married off to a mortal. And that is how Thetis, a sea-goddess, came to marry Peleus, who was only a mortal. For the story of their wedding and the identity of the son (who did turn out to be greater than his father), see the Introduction to the Iliad.

3.8.29: Prometheus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.30: Sphinx

The Greek sphinx was clearly inspired by the Egyptian sphinx, but the Greeks modified it and made it their own. The Greek sphinx had a woman's face and breasts, a lion's body, and bird's wings. The word sphinx is Greek (σφίγξ), and it means "strangler," perhaps from the fact that lionesses usually kill their prey by strangling it.

Since sphinxes were very intimidating, the Greeks frequently put them on gravestones, to frighten away would-be grave robbers. This use is called "apotropaic" — meaning "causing someone to turn away". Most of the examples of ancient Greek sphinxes that we have today are from ancient gravestones.

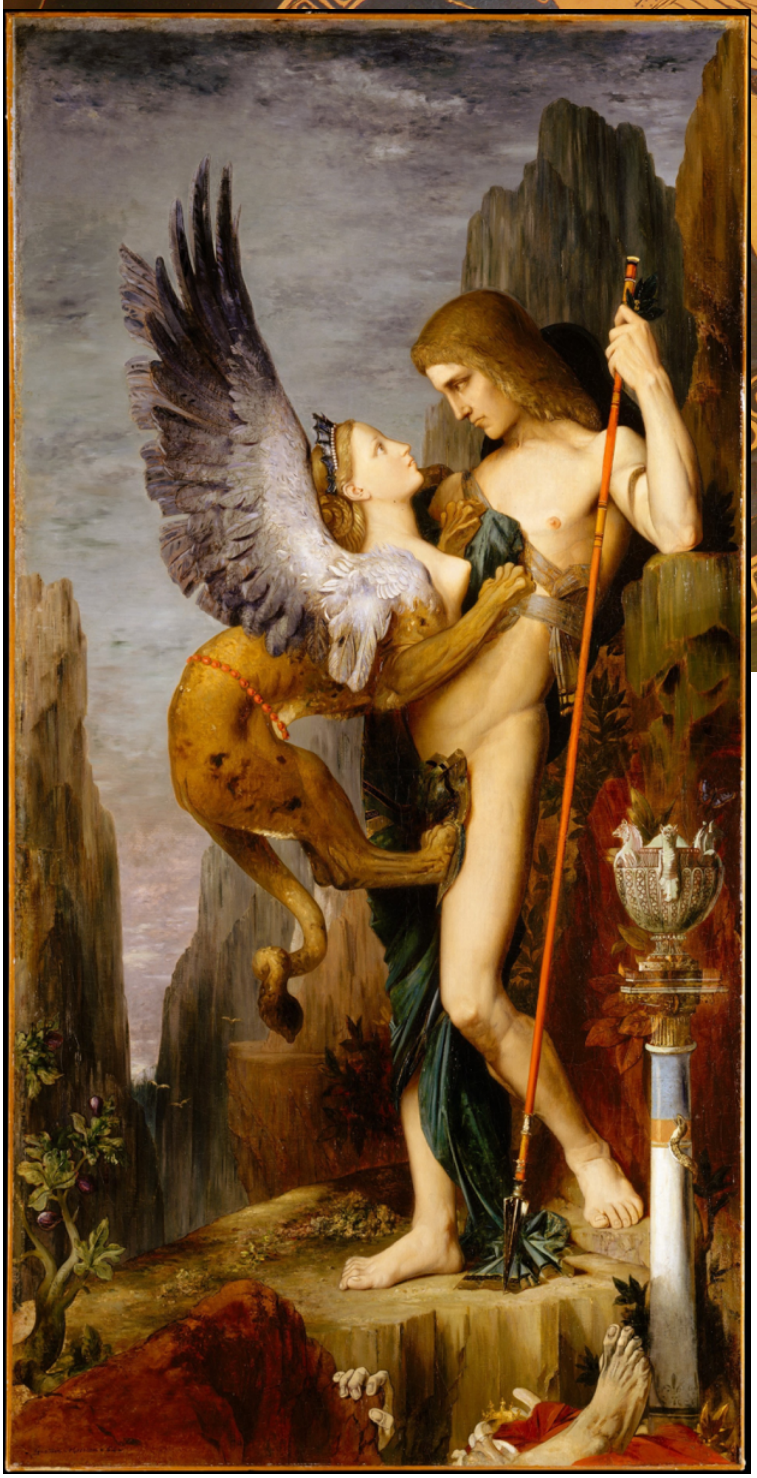


A Sphinx statue from a grave stele found in the Archaeological Museum in Corinth

In myth, there was one famous Sphinx, who turned up in Thebes shortly after their king, Laius, had been killed while on his way to consult the Delphic Oracle. This Sphinx flew on top of the city walls, and asked all the Theban youths a riddle. When they could not answer it, she ate them! At the time, Creon was the regent in Thebes (since Laius had died), and he was so desperate to get rid of the Sphinx that he promised the kingship and the hand of the widowed Queen Jocasta (who also happened to be his sister), in marriage to anyone who could solve the Sphinx's riddle. This was the Sphinx's riddle: "What goes on four feet in the morning, two feet in midday, and three feet in the evening?"

Oedipus answering the Sphinx's riddle on a kylix found in the Vatican Museum

At around this time Oedipus came to Thebes (since he didn't want to go back home to Corinth), and he solved the riddle. Oedipus said, "The answer is 'man'. A man crawls on all fours in the morning of his life, he walks on two feet in the midday of his life, and he uses a cane for extra support when he is old." The sphinx was so upset that Oedipus had answered the riddle correctly, that she threw herself down from the walls of Thebes and died.



Oedipus and the Sphinx by Gustave Moreau (1864) in the Metropolian Museum in New York

So Oedipus was welcomed to Thebes as a hero. He married Queen Jocasta and he became the King of Thebes. Oedipus and Jocasta had four children: Eteocles, Polynices, Ismene, and Antigone.

3.8.30: Sphinx is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.31: Theseus

Hero and King of Athens

The Birth of Theseus

Theseus was either the son of Poseidon and Aëthra, the daughter of Pittheus, the king of Troezen [map], or he was the son of Aëthra and Aegeus, the king of Athens [see Athenae on map]. Apparently both Aegeus and Poseidon slept with Aëthra on the same night.

Aegeus, the king of Athens, was having trouble producing an heir, so he went to the Delphic Oracle [map] to ask how he could solve his problem. The Pythia said: “Do not open the foot of the wineskin until you return home.” The meaning of this oracle, as often happens, was unclear. On his way home to Athens, Aegeus stopped at Troezen to ask his friend, Pittheus, who was known for his wisdom, what the oracle meant. In ancient Greece, wineskins were made from a whole skin of a goat; one foot of the goatskin was used for the spout. So when the Pythia said, “Don’t open the foot of the wineskin,” she was literally saying, “Don’t uncork the wine.” But the foot of the wineskin was also very long and straight, and it was also a phallic symbol. And that is what the Pythia meant; she meant to advise Aegeus not to sleep with any woman until he returned home, since the next woman he slept with would bear him a son.



A wineskin was made from the skin of a goat to hold wine. One of the feet of the goat would be made into the opening and thus it is called the foot. In this sculpture (found in the Naples Museum), the wineskin is placed on top of a lion skin.

Pittheus knew the meaning immediately, but instead of telling Aegeus what it meant, he chose to get Aegeus drunk and have him sleep with his daughter, Aëthra. He did this because as king of Athens, Aegeus was very powerful, and he wanted Aëthra’s son to become king of Athens. However, Aegeus did not know that Poseidon also slept with Aëthra later that same night.

Theseus’ Early Tests

The next morning, before Aegeus left Troezen to return home to Athens, he placed a pair of sandals and a sword under a large and heavy rock. He told Aëthra that, if she gave birth to a son, she should raise him. If he became strong enough to remove the rock, he told her to send the boy to him in Athens with the sword and sandals as tokens of his parentage. If he could not move the rock, however, she should keep him in Troezen.

Aëthra, of course, did give gave birth to a son. She named him Theseus, and he was so strong that he was able to move the rock and take the tokens when he was only sixteen. So, Theseus set out for Athens. Now, he could have taken the easy route to Athens by sea, but he chose the dangerous land route because he wanted to have plenty of opportunities to perform heroic deeds. He had heard of the great deeds of Heracles, of course, and he wanted to show that Heracles was not the only hero in Greece. Theseus soon ran into Periphetes, a son of Hephaestus who was known by the name Corynetes, which means "club-bearer", because he carried around a large bronze club which used to cave in the skull of anyone who passed by him. Theseus could not defeat him with brute strength, but he was clever and quick as well as being strong, so he managed to maneuver around Periphetes and take away his club. Once Theseus had the club, it was not difficult to overpower and kill Periphetes. Having done so, Theseus continued on his journey.

Next Theseus ran into the thief Sinis, who had earned the name Pityocamptes, meaning "pine-bender", because of his habit of bending down two separate trees and tying men's limbs to them. After that, he would let the trees go, causing the man's body to tear apart. Theseus did the same to Sinis. He then decided to go a little out of his way to kill the Crommyonian Sow. He dispatched her easily and returned to his journey, stopping next at the Sceironian Rocks, named for the thief who lived at the top, Sceiron. This thief would terrorize travelers by forcing them to wash his feet and while they were doing that, kick them off the cliffs to a giant turtle living below them which would eat the travelers. Theseus defeated Sceiron by taking a hold of the thief by the legs before he could kick and threw him over the edge.

The two last major deeds Theseus accomplished along the way happened just outside Athens. First, he met the King of Eleusis, Cercyon, who would challenge anyone who passed by to a boxing match and kill his opponent. Theseus overpowered him with his speed and killed Cercyon. He then in a nearby town ran into a man named Damastes, who had earned the name Procrustes, which means "stretcher", because he would invite travelers to stay the night, but when they did not fit the bed he provided, he would cut down those who were too large and stretch out those who were too small. Again, Theseus treated his foe to the same punishment he dealt out to his victims. And even today people use the term, "Procrustean bed," to describe a theory that has been artificially made to fit the facts (because the facts have been altered).

Theseus and Medea

Finally, Theseus arrived in Athens and went to the palace of Aegeus. Tales of his deeds on his journey had arrived before he did. Aegeus was impressed and invited the young hero to feast with him. Because of the rules of xenia [see Xenia], Theseus had not yet introduced himself, and this allowed Aegeus' wife, Medea to act. Medea was a witch, and by this time (sixteen years after Aegeus had consulted the oracle) she had married Aegeus and had born him a son, Medon. [For the background on how Medea came to Athens to be Aegeus' wife, see Jason.] Medea recognized Theseus immediately and knew that if Aegeus discovered the hero's identity, her son would not be able to inherit the throne.

Medea convinced Aegeus that the hero would side with Aegeus' brother Pallas, who had been trying to take the throne away from Aegeus for years. She suggested that Aegeus put poison in Theseus' wine, and the King, who was easily fooled, agreed to do this. But when the unsuspecting Theseus raised his hand to drink his wine, Aegeus recognized his own sword hooked to Theseus' belt. In a panic, he dashed Theseus' wine cup to the ground, just as Theseus was about to drink it. Needless to say, Medea and Medon were banished from Athens.

Theseus, Ariadne, and the Minotaur

Not long after Theseus was publicly recognized as Aegeus' son, it was time for Athens to send seven youths and seven maidens to Crete to be fed to the Minotaur [see Minotaur]. The Athenians had to do this every nine years to atone for a previous crime. When Theseus heard about this, he was appalled that Athens — which was a great and powerful city — was so subservient to King Minos of Crete. So Theseus volunteered to be one of the youths taken. Theseus vowed to kill the Minotaur, to bring back all the Athenian youths and maidens alive, and to free Athens from such a terrible burden. Aegeus was distraught; he had finally found the son he had longed for, and now the boy was about to be taken away again. But he finally agreed to let his son go because Theseus was doing it for such a noble cause. But Aegeus asked only one thing. He put black sails on Theseus' ship as it set out for Crete, and he

asked that if Theseus died in the attempt against the Minotaur, the Athenian ship's sails would remain black, but if he survived, he asked Theseus to switch the sails to white. Theseus agreed, and they all sailed to Crete.

When the Athenians arrived on Crete, there was a public parade of the prisoners, and as soon as Ariadne, Minos' daughter, saw Theseus, she immediately fell in love with him. Now the Minotaur was a monster, half-man and half-bull, who lived in the labyrinth [See Minotaur]. Ariadne knew that Theseus would need her help to kill the Minotaur and then escape from the labyrinth. So, she secretly visited Theseus in prison, the night before the Athenians were going to be fed to the Minotaur, and she gave him a sword and a ball of thread. She told him to tie the thread to the entrance of the labyrinth, and, after he had killed the Minotaur, he could use the thread to find his way out again. Ariadne asked only one thing of Theseus: after he had killed the Minotaur and escaped from the labyrinth, he should take her back to Athens with him to be his bride. Theseus agreed.

Theseus took the ball of thread and the sword into the labyrinth, unwinding the string as he went. When he found the Minotaur, he cut off his throat, and then he led the Athenian youths and maidens out of the labyrinth, following the trail of Ariadne's thread. He then picked up Ariadne, who was waiting by the Athenian ship, and they quickly sailed away. Minos' fleet could not pursue them because Ariadne had somehow found a way to bore holes into all their ships.



A kylix depicting Theseus dragging the Minotaur from the labyrinth, located in the British Museum

On the way back to Athens, the group stopped on the island of Dia (modern day Naxos) [map]. Theseus and Ariadne slept together on the island that night. But Theseus woke up around midnight. He had already escaped the labyrinth so he no longer had any use for Ariadne, and he felt a little embarrassed at the prospect of marrying into a family that was a little strange in their sexual habits.

So, while Ariadne was sleeping, Theseus quietly gathered the group of Athenians together and left the island without her. When she awoke, she found herself alone on a desert island. Ariadne was devastated, of course; and she was sure she was going to die a horrible death. But it just so happened that, later that same day, Dionysus was passing by in the midst of his travels to promote his worship. He saw Ariadne and was so smitten by her beauty that he immediately made her his wife and she became a goddess. So, everything turned out well for Ariadne (no thanks to Theseus). And if you travel to the island of Naxos today, you will see a statue of Ariadne, looking out to shore.



A modern statue of Ariadne of the island of Naxos, the island on which she was abandoned by Theseus

Theseus, however, either because he was feeling guilty about his treatment of Ariadne (and thus was preoccupied) or just from sheer cockiness, forgot to change the sails on his ships. So when Aegeus, watching for the return of his ship, saw the black sails, he was overcome with grief and threw himself into the sea. And that part of the Mediterranean Sea which is just off the coast of the Athenian peninsula, the Aegean Sea, is still named after him. When Theseus came home to Athens in triumph, he found his city in mourning for the death of the king.

Theseus and Hippolyte

At some point, Theseus helped the hero Heracles fight against the Amazons and brought back with him the Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyte, as his wife. The Amazons were unhappy to lose their queen and sent a force to attack Athens to regain her. The two groups fought, and Hippolyte died in battle, but nor before bearing Theseus a son, Hippolytus.

The Story of Hippolytus

Many years later, Theseus married Minos' youngest daughter, Phaedra, to smooth over relations with Crete. But when he brought Phaedra back to Athens, she fell in love with Hippolytus, who was now about 19 or 20 years old (and much closer to Phaedra in age than Theseus was). Some say that Aphrodite had caused Phaedra to do this because Hippolytus was a devotee of the virgin goddess Artemis. Since Artemis was a virgin, Hippolytus had vowed to remain a virgin as well, and Aphrodite took this as a personal affront. In any case, Phaedra was sick with love for the handsome young man. But despite her personal pain, she vowed never to breath a word of her feelings. Nevertheless, somehow, Hippolytus found out. And when he found out, he was both furious and disgusted. He confronted Phaedra and called her a lot of terrible names (as you can imagine). As a result, Phaedra became bitterly angry at Hippolytus and vowed revenge. She knew she had to commit suicide; she could not live with the shame of wanting to commit adultery with her own stepson. But before she killed herself, she wrote a note to Theseus, falsely claiming that his son had raped her. Theseus believed what he read in the note, despite Hippolytus' protestations that he had nothing to do with his stepmother. But by now, Theseus was in a rage. He banished Hippolytus from Athens and called upon his father, Poseidon, to kill the youth. As Hippolytus was driving his chariot out of Athens along the seashore, a terrifying bull emerged from the water. The horses were so frightened that they all reared up and ran in different directions. Hippolytus got tangled in the reins of his chariot and was eventually pulled apart by his horses. After this had happened, Artemis told Theseus the truth.

The Death of Theseus

Theseus now had to live with the terrible truth that he had killed his own son, and for no good reason. He continued on as king of Athens, but life was never the same. He became moody and sullen, and he neglected his duties as king. The Athenians asked him to leave, and Theseus agreed. He decided to go to the island of Scyrus, Aegeus' homeland, and Lycomedes, the king of Scyrus, agreed to give Theseus some land that had once belonged to Aegeus. But deep down, Lycomedes felt threatened by the presence of such a great hero. As Theseus was walking with Lycomedes along the cliffs at the edge of the island, somehow Theseus tripped (or did Lycomedes push him?) and he fell to his death.

3.8.31: Theseus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.32: The Twelve Labors of Heracles

As a punishment for the murder of his own children [see Heracles], Heracles was told by the Pythia that he had to perform twelve tasks for Eurystheus, the king of Tiryns. Eurystheus was also king of Mycenae [see Argos on map]. Eurystheus had inherited the throne of Mycenae from his father, Sthenelos, who had usurped it from Amphitryon, Heracles' mortal father [see Heracles]. So Heracles should really have been king of Mycenae instead of Eurystheus. Heracles had to perform any twelve tasks that Eurystheus set for him, even though Eurystheus had usurped Heracles' throne and he was neither as strong or as brave as Heracles was. This subordinate relationship to Eurystheus was humiliating for Heracles, and that was no doubt part of the punishment. The first six of Heracles' labors take place in the Peloponnese. The last six labors take place throughout the Greek world.

1. The Nemean Lion

Eurystheus first told Heracles to kill the lion that had been terrorizing the area of Nemea. This lion was no ordinary lion; it was the offspring of Typhoeus [for more on Typhoeus, see Origins]. Heracles tracked the Nemean Lion to its cave, blocked off the entrance, and tried to kill the lion by shooting it with his bow and arrows. But the arrows bounced right off the lion's hide, doing the animal no harm. Undeterred, Heracles used brute force to strangle the beast and brought the lion back to Tiryns for Eurystheus. Eurystheus, surprised that Heracles had survived the adventure, became very fearful of Heracles. Because Eurystheus did not want the lion, Heracles skinned it and used the hide as a cloak, with the lion's head serving as a sort of helmet. The lion's skin became Heracles' trademark, and he wore it on all his future endeavors.



Heracles killing the Nemean Lion while Athena stands near on a lekythos found in the British Museum

2. The Lernean Hydra

Next, Eurystheus sent Heracles to kill the Hydra. The Hydra was a sea-monster (its name comes from hydōr [ὕδωρ] which means "water" in Greek), that had many snake-like heads. The Hydra lived in a swampy area near Lerna, and Heracles came to its den. He engaged the Hydra by grabbing at one of the heads and hacking at it with his sword until the head was severed from the body. But as soon as Heracles had cut off the Hydra's head, two more heads grew in its place. At this point, Heracles realized that simply

cutting off the Hydra's heads was not going to work. He also realized that he could not kill the Hydra alone, so he called Iolaüs, his charioteer, to bring a burning brand so he could cauterize the neck after Heracles cut off each head, to prevent new heads from growing back. Heracles and Iolaüs managed to destroy each head and burn the neck for all the Hydra's heads until just one head, which was immortal, survived. This head he buried beneath a giant rock. The Hydra's blood was a deadly poison, so Heracles dipped his arrows in the blood to make sure that anyone he hit would die of his wound. Heracles would one day regret that the Hydra's blood was so deadly.



Heracles fighting the Lernaean Hydra on a lekythos found in the Louvre

3. Cerynitian Hind

Eurystheus then sent Heracles to capture the Cerynitian Hind, a deer with golden horns which was sacred to the goddess Artemis. Because the deer was sacred to Artemis, Heracles could not kill it; he had to capture it alive. For a year he tracked the deer, which was the fastest deer in the world, around the forests of the Peloponnese. He finally captured it in Arcadia when it had paused for a little rest by creeping up behind it and surprising it. On his way back to Tiryns, Heracles encountered Apollo and Artemis hunting. Artemis was not happy to find her sacred deer so constrained, but after he explained his task, Artemis allowed Heracles to take the deer so long as it remained unharmed and it would be released after he was finished with it.

4. Erymanthian Boar

When the Cerynitian Hind had been released, Heracles now had to capture the Erymanthian Boar, which was ravaging the countryside around Mount Erymanthus and doing a lot of damage to the crops. On his way to find the Erymanthian Boar, Heracles met Pholus, a centaur who, unlike his fellow centaurs, was quite well mannered. Pholus hosted Heracles like a proper guest and offered him some wine. This wine was noticed by the other centaurs, however, who are notorious for loving wine but also for being unable to hold their liquor. When the centaurs smelled the wine, they went crazy and started attacking Heracles and Pholus in order to steal it. The two successfully drove the centaurs away, but in the process, Pholus dropped one of Heracles' arrows on his foot and, unfortunately, the Hydra's poison caused him to die in agony. This is yet another example of Heracles hurting anyone who gets too close to him. In this case it was an accident, but it was no less deadly for Pholus. After this unfortunate incident, Heracles caught up with the Erymanthian Boar and trapped it by driving it into deep snow. He brought the boar back alive to Tiryns to show to Eurystheus. But Eurystheus was so frightened of the enormous beast that he hid in a large storage jar (called a pithos) and only peeked out a little so he could verify that Heracles had completed his task.



Heracles bringing the Erymanthean Boar to Eurystheus on an amphora in the Louvre

At this point, word had spread throughout Greece that Jason was looking for the greatest Greek heroes to go with him on an expedition for the Golden Fleece. Heracles took a break from his labors to join the crew. However, he did not make the entire journey to Colchis [map] (if he had would there be any use for Jason?). The Argonauts left Heracles behind in Mysia while he searched for his lover Hylas [see Argonauts]. Unable to find Hylas, Heracles returned to Tiryns for his next labor.

5. Augeian Stables

The next task Eurystheus had for Heracles was to clean the Augeian stables in one day. Augeias was king of Elis [map] and he had massive stables which had never been cleaned, so they were filled with many years' worth of horse dung. Heracles came to Augeias and told him that he could clean out the stables in one day if he paid the right sum, one tenth of his cattle. Augeias agreed and Heracles set to work. He diverted the courses of two rivers so they flowed right through the stables and washed away the years of filth. Augeias had not believed Heracles could perform the task, so he refused to pay the outrageous sum. Heracles was livid, but at this point there was nothing he could do, so he went back to Tiryns.

6. Stymphalian Birds

Next Heracles was sent to clear away the Stymphalian birds. Lake Stymphalus was overrun by a flock of man-eating birds. Heracles decided that a loud noise would be just the thing, so he crashed a few shields together to scare the birds into taking flight. As the birds few into the air, he picked them off one by one with his arrows.



Heracles killing the Stymphalian Birds in a mosaic from Valencia housed in the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid

7. The Cretan Bull

Now Heracles was sent to capture the Cretan bull. This bull was the father of the Minotaur [see Minotaur] and Heracles trapped it and brought it back to Tiryns alive. Eurystheus did not want it, so Heracles let the bull go. The bull wandered up to the area around Athens [see Athenae on map] and Theseus later killed him as one of his heroic feats [see Theseus].

8. The Mare of Diomedes

The eighth labor was to retrieve the mares of Diomedes. Diomedes was a Thracian [map] king and he had man-eating mares. Heracles, with the help of his lover Abderus, stole the mares from their stable and herded them down to the sea-shore. Diomedes' men were in hot pursuit, so he left Abderus to take care of the mares while he dispatched with Diomedes and routed his men. When Heracles came back, however, he found that the mares had eaten most of Abderus. Heracles was upset at the death of his lover, and he carefully buried Abderus' remains. He then gathered the mares into his ship and took them back to Eurystheus. Again, Eurystheus did not want the terrible creatures in his city, so Heracles let the mares loose. They were eventually eaten by wild animals as they wandered on Mount Olympus [see Olympus Mons on map].

9. Hippolyte's Belt

For his next labor, Heracles had to retrieve the belt of the Amazon queen, Hippolyte. Hippolyte and the Amazons (female warriors) lived in Themiscyra, on the southern coast of the Black Sea. Heracles was joined on this expedition by his friend Theseus and they set off together. When they reached Themiscyra, Hippolyte came aboard their ship to meet with them. She agreed to give them her belt with no fight and everything seemed to be going swimmingly for Heracles and Theseus. However, Hera was not about to allow this labor to be easy, so she came down from Olympus, disguised as an Amazon. Hera told the Amazons that Heracles was kidnapping their queen, and she roused them to fight the heroes. Being angry because he believed the whole thing had been a set-up, Heracles killed Hippolyte and he and Theseus left taking Hippolyte's sister, Antiope, and the belt. Other versions say that Hippolyte was not killed at all, but that she was the one whom Theseus took with him to Athens, where she became the mother of Theseus' son Hippolytus [see Theseus].

10. The Cattle of Geryon

Next, Heracles was sent to steal the cattle of Geryon, who was the King of Erytheia (which is modern day Cadiz in Spain). Geryon had three heads, three upper- bodies, as well as six arms and six legs. Furthermore, his cattle were guarded by a two-headed watch dog named Orthus. Heracles decided to go through Africa to make his way to Spain and as he crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, he set up large rocks on either side, called the Pillars of Heracles, to show how far he had come across the world. The sun beat down upon him, greatly annoying Heracles, so he drew his bow and pointed it at the sun, chastising it. Helius, the sun god, was amused by this little stunt, so he lent his golden cup to Heracles to use as a boat to take him the rest of his way to Erytheia. When he arrived, Heracles dispatched of Geryon and Orthus.



Heracles battling Geryon on a kylix in Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich

11. The Golden Apples of the Hesperides

Nearly done with his labors, Heracles now went to retrieve the apples of the Hesperides. The Hesperides were nymphs who lived in Libya near the mountains where Atlas held up the world (now called the Atlas Mountains) and tended a garden growing golden apples. On his way there, Heracles passed by the Caucasus Mountains and shot the eagle that had long tortured Prometheus [see Prometheus], freeing him from his bonds. Grateful for his help, Prometheus gave Heracles some advice as to how to retrieve the apples. Prometheus told Heracles to ask Atlas (who happened to be Prometheus' own brother) to go get the apples. Heracles heeded his advice and asked Atlas to get the apples while he held up the world. Atlas was happy to retrieve the apples, but he had no intention of returning to his post. When he returned with the apples, Atlas offered to take them to Eurystheus for Heracles, intending to never return. But Heracles knew was Atlas was planning. He made a show of agreeing to Atlas' plan, but he asked the Titan to hold the world just for a minute so he could place a pad on his shoulders to made the task more bearable. Atlas took the world onto his shoulders again and Heracles picked up the apples and went back to Tiryns. After he had shown them to Eurystheus, he gave them to Athena, and she, in turn, returned them to the Hesperides.

12. Cerberus

Heracles' final labor was to bring Cerberus back from Hades; of course, he could not kill the three-headed dog in the process. Heracles began this labor by being initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Then Hermes led him down into the Underworld. In Hades, Heracles saw his friends, Theseus and Peirithoüs, stuck to chairs [see Theseus] and they begged Heracles to set them free. Heracles managed to pry Theseus loose and began to move on to Peirithoüs, but the earth began to shake, and Heracles desisted. Heracles and Theseus were allowed to leave, but Hades insisted that Peirithoüs remain. When Heracles came to Hades' palace, he asked the ruler of the Underworld if he could take Cerberus with him. Hades agreed as long as Heracles did not use weapons to capture him. Heracles grabbed the hell-hound and dragged him all the way to Tiryns. Eurystheus hid as soon as he saw Cerberus, and, from his hiding place, ordered that he be taken back to Hades and Heracles obliged. With all the labors completed, Heracles was now free to go about his life as he wished. He was also promised that he would become immortal upon his death.



Heracles approaching Cerberus on an amphora in the Louvre

3.8.32: The Twelve Labors of Heracles is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.33: Xenia

Xenia (pronounced “zenee-a” and written as ξενία in Greek) is guest-friendship, the relationship between a guest and host. Because there were no hotels in ancient Greece, travelers had to rely on the generosity of the people who lived in the area through which they were traveling. A traveler could knock on any door and he would immediately be invited in, at least in theory. Xenia is protected by Zeus and has specific rules of conduct. The host should accept any traveler who comes by and offer him a bath and a meal without asking for the person’s name. After the guest has eaten, the host may now ask the traveler’s name and place of origin. The guest has a responsibility to treat his host’s house and possessions with respect as well as to provide his name and background when asked. When the guest is taking his leave of his host, the two will exchange gifts as tokens of their newfound friendship. Once a xenia-relationship has been established between two families, it can last for generations, providing both families with a place to sleep on future journeys.

3.8.33: Xenia is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.8.34: Zeus

Roman name: Jupiter/Jove

Epithets: Kronion (Son of Cronus), Father of Gods and Men

Symbols: throne, scepter, thunderbolt, aegis, eagle, bull

Functions: God of the sky and weather; Ruler of the gods

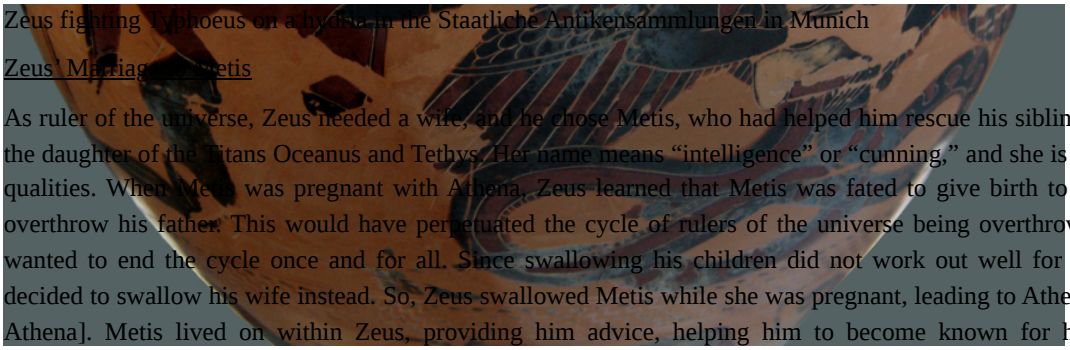


Zeus with his thunderbolt on a kylix in the National Archaeological Museum of Spain in Madrid

The Birth of Zeus

Zeus was the youngest son of Cronus and Rhea. He rescued his siblings from their father, led a revolt against Cronus, and took his position as ruler of the cosmos [see Origins]. Like his grandfather and father before him, Zeus' rule did not go unchallenged, but he succeeded where they failed and managed to thwart his would be usurpers. After Zeus won the Battle of the Gods and the Titans, Gaia sent the monster Typhoeus against him [see Origins]. Later a race of giants revolted against Zeus, but Zeus defeated them with the help of his mortal son, Heracles.





Zeus fighting Typhoeus on a hydria in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich

Zeus' Marriage to Metis

As ruler of the universe, Zeus needed a wife, and he chose Metis, who had helped him rescue his siblings [see Origins]. Metis was the daughter of the Titans Oceanus and Tethys. Her name means "intelligence" or "cunning," and she is the personification of those qualities. When Metis was pregnant with Athena, Zeus learned that Metis was fated to give birth to a son who would one day overthrow his father. This would have perpetuated the cycle of rulers of the universe being overthrown by their sons, and Zeus wanted to end the cycle once and for all. Since swallowing his children did not work out well for Cronus, Zeus' father, Zeus decided to swallow his wife instead. So, Zeus swallowed Metis while she was pregnant, leading to Athena's very unusual birth [see Athena]. Metis lived on within Zeus, providing him advice, helping him to become known for his wisdom and thoughtful arbitration (for an example, see *Iliad* 24.64-76).

Zeus' Other Marriages and Liaisons: Themis, Demeter, Leto and Hera

After this marriage ended, Zeus had relationships with several goddesses: Themis (Natural Order), who bore the Horae (the Seasons) and the Moerae (the Fates); Eurynome, who gave birth to the Graces; Demeter, who bore Persephone; Mnemosyne (Memory), who conceived the Muses; Dione, who delivered Aphrodite [see Aphrodite]; and Leto, who begat Apollo and Artemis. (The gods, by the way, never have a sexual encounter in vain; children are always produced.) At some point Zeus married his sister, Hera, and together they had three children: Ares, Eileithyia, and Hebe.

Zeus' Relationships with Mortal Women

Zeus pursued mortal women even more frequently than he pursued goddesses. He sired the god Dionysus with the mortal woman Semele [see Dionysus]. He came to Alcmene in the form of her husband, Amphitryon [see Heracles], fathering Heracles. He turned Io into a cow to avoid Hera's wrath [see Hermes or Hera]. Io later traveled to Egypt and bore Epaphus, who became an Egyptian god. Zeus abducted Europa in the form of a bull and took her to Crete, where she bore him three sons, Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon. He came to Danaë as a shower of gold, causing her to become pregnant with Perseus. He came to Leda as a swan and she later laid two eggs with two sets of twins. Two were the children of Zeus, Helen and Polydeuces (Pollux in Latin) who were immortal; the other two, Clytemnestra and Castor, were the children of her husband, Tyndareüs, and were mortal.

Hera was notoriously jealous of her husband's affairs, though this did not stop him from pursuing relationships with both goddesses and mortals.



The Flight of Europa by Paul Manship from 1925, copies are in the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Columbus Museum in Columbus, Georgia, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.

Ganymede



Zeus abducting Ganymede found in the Archaeological Museum in Olympia

Zeus was also attracted to young boys. Ganymede, a young and beautiful Trojan prince, was abducted by Zeus and taken up to Olympus to be his personal cupbearer (and probably his lover as well). In the *Aeneid*, Virgil cites Ganymede's presence on Olympus as one of the reasons why Juno was so angry at the Trojans and why she constantly harassed Aeneas, despite Jupiter's commands to cease.



The Abduction of Ganymede by Correggio in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna

The Justice of Zeus

Because Zeus was the ruler of the gods, the gods often took their quarrels to Zeus for arbitration. He also meted out punishments to immortals and mortals alike who angered him. When the Titan Prometheus stole fire to give to mortals, Zeus had him chained to a mountain where every day, an eagle would come and eat out the Titan's liver; but it grew back again every night and the process would begin again the next day [see Prometheus]. The Lydian King, Tantalus, was a son of Zeus who was favored by the gods, but he wanted to test their knowledge and power. He invited the gods to a dinner party and served them a dish made from his own son, Pelops. The gods knew immediately that the meat they were served was human flesh (except for Demeter who was grieving for her daughter, Persephone, and had eaten a bit of Pelops' shoulder). The gods grew very angry at Tantalus' sacrilege. They put Pelops together again (giving him an ivory shoulder to replace the one that had been eaten) and Tantalus was punished in the Underworld by having to stand up to his chin in a lake that would recede any time he moved to take a drink and overhead was a tree with delicious, ripe fruit that would move away from him when he tried to reach up and grab one. (This myth is the origin of the word tantalize.)

Zeus' Possible Origins

Zeus was the sky god of the Mycenaean (Greek-speaking) peoples who migrated to the Greek peninsula sometime around 2000 BC. As the sky god, he was in charge of the weather, and he was known to cause thunderstorms by hurling his thunder-bolt (= lightning bolt).

Zeus may have been conflated with a pre-Greek Minoan fertility god on the island of Crete. This was the child and/or young male consort of a female fertility goddess. This would help to explain the story of Zeus being brought to Crete as a baby and living on Crete for a year in a cave [see Origins]. The Minoans seem to have sometimes worshipped this god in the form of a bull, and that might explain why Zeus sometimes takes that form. This is probably how the details of the story of the rape of Europa came about, solidifying Zeus' connection to this god and to the island of Crete as well as establishing the mythological ruling family of the island (the Minoans were said to have descended from King Minos, one of the sons of Zeus and Europa). Zeus was easily adapted to the ill-defined Roman god, Jupiter (whose name means "sky father"), as the Roman god Jupiter did not have a strong personality of his own.



Zeus or Poseidon (we cannot tell which without the missing object in the figure's right hand) in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens

Zeus in the Trojan War

Although Troy was one of Zeus' favorite cities (as he explains to Hera at *Iliad* 4.44-49), he seems to have been neutral in the Trojan War. In Book 16 of the *Iliad*, for example, Zeus first favors Patroclus as he kills many Trojans and their allies (including Sarpedon, another one of his sons by Europa) but he also makes sure that Patroclus is, in turn, killed by Hector. Despite his love for Troy, however, Zeus knew that as long as the Trojans made certain decisions, Troy would eventually fall (this is clear, for example, at *Iliad* 4.68-72). (To the Greeks, fate was partially determined by choice, as can be seen in Achilles' choice in the *Iliad*.) At one point (*Iliad* 8.1-18), Zeus even ordered a cessation of divine involvement in the conflict (but as we will see when we read the *Iliad*, this does not stop them).

3.8.34: Zeus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.9: The Iliad And The Odyssey

Homer

Composed orally ca. 800 B.C.E.; written down ca. 700 B.C.E.

Greece

We know almost nothing about Homer; scholars debate whether one or more authors composed the epic poems attributed to him. It is possible that he was a Greek who lived on the coast of what is now Turkey, not far from the location of Troy. If so, his balanced depiction of the Greeks and the Trojans in the *Iliad* is noteworthy, since he would be a descendant of those Greeks who invaded the area approximately 400 years earlier, when the historical Troy was attacked and burned in around 1200 B.C.E. The *Iliad* encompasses a few weeks in the tenth year of the Trojan War, focusing on one episode in the life of the Greek warrior Achilles, while the *Odyssey* explains why Odysseus spends twelve long years trying to go home. Homer's grasp of Mediterranean geography is strong, as is evident when he traces the wandering route that Odysseus takes to return home to Ithaca after the war. Homer was not the first or the last to write about the Trojan War and its aftermath, but his version was the most famous, in part for his vivid descriptions (which would be imitated by other authors, including Virgil in his *Aeneid*, for centuries to come) For an audience that might not have witnessed a battle, Homer appeals to their senses through familiar sights and sounds; men hacking at each other with bronze weapons sound like a forest full of woodcutters hacking at trees. When Dante tries to describe the interior of Hell, he is imitating Virgil imitating Homer: familiar ways of seeing unfamiliar things. Homer's version was also controversial; Greek writers such as Xenophanes criticized Homer for his impious depiction of the gods, who appear at times brutal, at times humorous. That criticism should remind us that Homer composed a literary version of events, rather than a strictly accurate view of his culture. What has never been controversial is Homer's popularity, from his own time to the present day.

Written by Laura J. Getty

The Iliad

Homer, translated by Samuel Butler

Book I

Sing, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus,that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans. Many a brave soul did it send hurrying down to Hades, and many a hero did it yield a prey to dogs and vultures, for so were the counsels of Jove fulfilled from the day on which the son of Atreus, king of men, and great Achilles, first fell out with one another.

And which of the gods was it that set them on to quarrel? It was the son of Jove and Leto; for he was angry with the king and sent a pestilence upon the host to plague the people, because the son of Atreus had dishonoured Chryses his priest. Now Chryses had come to the ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and had brought with him a great ransom: moreover he bore in his hand the sceptre of Apollo wreathed with a suppliant's wreath and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, who were their chiefs.

"Sons of Atreus," he cried, "and all other Achaeans, may the gods who dwell in Olympus grant you to sack the city of Priam, and to reach your homes in safety; but free my daughter, and accept a ransom for her, in reverence to Apollo, son of Jove."

On this the rest of the Achaeans with one voice were for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but not so Agamemnon, who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away. "Old man," said he, "let me not find you tarrying about our ships, nor yet coming hereafter. Your sceptre of the god and your wreath shall profit you nothing. I will not free her. She shall grow old in my house at Argos far from her own home, busying herself with her loom and visiting my couch; so go, and do not provoke me or it shall be the worse for you."

The old man feared him and obeyed. Not a word he spoke, but went by the shore of the sounding sea and prayed apart to King Apollo whom lovely Leto had borne. "Hear me," he cried, "O god of the silver bow, that protectest Chryse and holy Cilla and rulest Tenedos with thy might, hear me oh thou of Sminthe. If I have ever decked your temple with garlands, or burned your thigh-bones in fat of bulls or goats, grant my prayer, and let your arrows avenge these my tears upon the Danaans."

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. He came down furious from the summits of Olympus, with his bow and his quiver upon his shoulder, and the arrows rattled on his back with the rage that trembled within him. He sat himself down away from the ships with a face as dark as night, and his silver bow rang death as he shot his arrow in the midst of them. First he smote their mules and their hounds, but presently he aimed his shafts at the people themselves, and all day long the pyres of the dead were burning.

For nine whole days he shot his arrows among the people, but upon the tenth day Achilles called them in assembly oved thereto by Juno, who saw the Achaeans in their death-throes and had compassion upon them. Then, when they were got together, he rose and spoke among them.

“Son of Atreus,” said he, “I deem that we should now turn roving home if we would escape destruction, for we are being cut down by war and pestilence at once. Let us ask some priest or prophet, or some reader of dreams (for dreams, too, are of Jove) who can tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so angry, and say whether it is for some vow that we have broken, or hecatomb that we have not offered, and whether he will accept the savour of lambs and goats without blemish, so as to take away the plague from us.”

With these words he sat down, and Calchas son of Thestor, wisest of augurs, who knew things past present and to come, rose to speak. He it was who had guided the Achaeans with their fleet to Ilius, through the prophesyings with which Phoebus Apollo had inspired him. With all sincerity and goodwill he addressed them thus:

“Achilles, loved of heaven, you bid me tell you about the anger of King Apollo, I will therefore do so; but consider first and swear that you will stand by me heartily in word and deed, for I know that I shall offend one who rules the Argives with might, to whom all the Achaeans are in subjection. A plain man cannot stand against the anger
of a king, who if he swallow his displeasure now, will yet nurse revenge till he has wreaked it. Consider, therefore, whether or no you will protect me.”

And Achilles answered, “Fear not, but speak as it is borne in upon you from heaven, for by Apollo, Calchas, to whom you pray, and whose oracles you reveal to us, not a Danaan at our ships shall lay his hand upon you, while I yet live to look upon the face of the earth no, not though you name Agamemnon himself, who is by far the foremost of the Achaeans.”

Thereon the seer spoke boldly. “The god,” he said, “is angry neither about vow nor hecatomb, but for his priest’s sake, whom Agamemnon has dishonoured, in that he would not free his daughter nor take a ransom for her; therefore has he sent these evils upon us, and will yet send others. He will not deliver the Danaans from this pestilence till Agamemnon has restored the girl without fee or ransom to her father, and has sent a holy hecatomb to Chryse. Thus we may perhaps appease him.”

With these words he sat down, and Agamemnon rose in anger. His heart was black with rage, and his eyes flashed fire as he scowled on Calchas and said, “Seer of evil, you never yet prophesied smooth things concerning me, but have ever loved to foretell that which was evil. You have brought me neither comfort nor performance; and now you come seeing among Danaans, and saying that Apollo has plagued us because I would not take a ransom for this girl, the daughter of Chryses. I have set my heart on keeping her in my own house, for I love her better even than my own wife Clytemnestra, whose peer she is alike in form and feature, in understanding and accomplishments. Still I will give her up if I must, for I would have the people live, not die; but you must find me a prize instead, or I alone among the Argives shall be without one. This is not well; for you behold, all of you, that my prize is to go elsewhither.”

And Achilles answered, “Most noble son of Atreus, covetous beyond all mankind, how shall the Achaeans find you another prize? We have no common store from which to take one. Those we took from the cities have been awarded; we cannot disallow the awards that have been made already. Give this girl, therefore, to the god, and if ever Jove grants us to sack the city of Troy we will requite you three and fourfold.”

Then Agamemnon said, “Achilles, valiant though you be, you shall not thus outwit me. You shall not overreach and you shall not persuade me. Are you to keep your own prize, while I sit tamely under my loss and give up the girl at your bidding? Let the Achaeans find me a prize in fair exchange to my liking, or I will come and take your own, or that of Ajax or of Ulysses; and he to whomsoever I may come shall rue my coming. But of this we will take thought hereafter; for the present, let us draw a ship into the sea, and find a crew for her expressly; let us put a hecatomb on board, and let us send Chryseis also; further, let some chief man among us be in command, either Ajax, or Idomeneus, or yourself, son of Peleus, mighty warrior that you are, that we may offer sacrifice and appease the the anger of the god.”

Achilles scowled at him and answered, “You are steeped in insolence and lust of gain. With what heart can any of the Achaeans do your bidding, either on foray or in open fighting? I came not warring here for any ill the Trojans had done me. I have no quarrel with them. They have not raided my cattle nor my horses, nor cut down my harvests on the rich plains of Phthia; for between me and them there is a great space, both mountain and sounding sea. We have followed you, Sir Insolence! for your pleasure, not ours to gain satisfaction from the Trojans for your shameless self and for Menelaus. You forget this, and threaten to rob me of the prize for which I have toiled, and which the sons of the Achaeans have given me. Never when the Achaeans sack any rich city of the Trojans do I receive so good a prize as you do, though it is my hands that do the better part of the fighting. When the sharing comes, your share is far the largest, and I, forsooth, must go back to my ships, take what I can get and be thankful, when my labour of fighting is done. Now, therefore, I shall go back to Phthia; it will be much better for me to return home with my ships, for I will not stay here dishonoured to gather gold and substance for you.”

And Agamemnon answered, “Fly if you will, I shall make you no prayers to stay you. I have others here who will do me honour, and above all Jove, the lord of counsel. There is no king here so hateful to me as you are, for you are ever quarrelsome and ill affected. What though you be brave? Was it not heaven that made you so? Go home, then, with your ships and comrades to lord it over the Myrmidons. I care neither for you nor for your anger; and thus will I do: since Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryseis from me, I shall send her with my ship and my followers, but I shall come to your tent and take your own prize Briseis, that you may learn how much stronger I am than you are, and that another may fear to set himself up as equal or comparable with me.”

The son of Peleus was furious, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided whether to draw his sword, push the others aside, and kill the son of Atreus, or to restrain himself and check his anger. While he was thus in two minds, and was drawing his mighty sword from its scabbard, Minerva came down from heaven (for Juno had sent her in the love she bore to them both), and seized the son of Peleus by his yellow hair, visible to him alone, for of the others no man could see her. Achilles turned in amaze, and by the fire that flashed from her eyes at once knew that she was Minerva. “Why are you here,” said he, “daughter of aegis-bearing Jove? To see the pride of Agamemnon, son of Atreus? Let me tell you and it shall surely be he shall pay for this insolence with his life.”

And Minerva said, “I come from heaven, if you will hear me, to bid you stay your anger. Juno has sent me, who cares for both of you alike. Cease, then, this brawling, and do not draw your sword; rail at him if you will, and your railing will not be vain, for I tell you and it shall surely be that you shall hereafter receive gifts three times as splendid by reason of this present insult. Hold, therefore, and obey.”

“Goddess,” answered Achilles, “however angry a man may be, he must do as you two command him. This will be best, for the gods ever hear the prayers of him who has obeyed them.”

He stayed his hand on the silver hilt of his sword, and thrust it back into the scabbard as Minerva bade him. Then she went back to Olympus among the other gods, and to the house of aegis-bearing Jove.

But the son of Peleus again began railing at the son of Atreus, for he was still in a rage. “Wine-bibber,” he cried, “with the face of a dog and the heart of a hind, you never dare to go out with the host in fight, nor yet with our chosen men in ambuscade. You shun this as you do death itself. You had rather go round and rob his prizes from any man who contradicts you. You devour your people, for you are king over a feeble folk; otherwise, son of Atreus, henceforward you would insult no man. Therefore I say, and swear it with a great oath nay, by this my sceptre which shalt sprout neither leaf nor shoot, nor bud anew from the day on which it left its parent stem upon the mountains for the axe stripped it of leaf and bark, and now the sons of the Achaeans bear it as judges and guardians of the decrees of heaven so surely and solemnly do I swear that hereafter they shall look fondly for Achilles and shall not find him. In the day of your distress, when your men fall dying by the murderous hand of Hector, you shall not know how to help them, and shall rend your heart with rage for the hour when you offered insult to the bravest of the Achaeans.”

With this the son of Peleus dashed his gold-bestudded sceptre on the ground and took his seat, while the son of Atreus was beginning fiercely from his place upon the other side. Then uprose smooth-tongued Nestor, the facile speaker of the Pylians, and the words fell from his lips sweeter than honey. Two generations of men born and bred in Pylos had passed away under his rule, and he was now reigning over the third. With all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:

“Of a truth,” he said, “a great sorrow has befallen the Achaean land. Surely Priam with his sons would rejoice, and the Trojans be glad at heart if they could hear this quarrel between you two, who are so excellent in fight and counsel. I am older than either of you; therefore be guided by me. Moreover I have been the familiar friend of men even greater than you are, and they did not disregard my counsels. Never again can I behold such men as Pirithous and Dryas shepherd of his people, or as Caeneus, Exadius,

godlike Polyphemus, and Theseus son of Aegeus, peer of the immortals. These were the mightiest men ever born upon this earth: mightiest were they, and when they fought the fiercest tribes of mountain savages they utterly overthrew them. I came from distant Pylos, and went about among them, for they would have me come, and I fought as it was in me to do. Not a man now living could withstand them, but they heard my words, and were persuaded by them. So be it also with yourselves, for this is the more excellent way. Therefore, Agamemnon, though you be strong, take not this girl away, for the sons of the Achaeans have already given her to Achilles; and you, Achilles, strive not further with the king, for no man who by the grace of Jove wields a sceptre has like honour with Agamemnon. You are strong, and have a goddess for your mother; but Agamemnon is stronger than you, for he has more people under him. Son of Atreus, check your anger, I implore you; end this quarrel with Achilles, who in the day of battle is a tower of strength to the Achaeans."

And Agamemnon answered, "Sir, all that you have said is true, but this fellow must needs become our lord and master: he must be lord of all, king of all, and captain of all, and this shall hardly be. Granted that the gods have made him a great warrior, have they also given him the right to speak with railing?"

Achilles interrupted him. "I should be a mean coward," he cried, "were I to give in to you in all things. Order other people about, not me, for I shall obey no longer. Furthermore I say and lay my saying to your heart I shall fight neither you nor any man about this girl, for those that take were those also that gave. But of all else that is at my ship you shall carry away nothing by force. Try, that others may see; if you do, my spear shall be reddened with your blood."

When they had quarrelled thus angrily, they rose, and broke up the assembly at the ships of the Achaeans. The son of Peleus went back to his tents and ships with the son of Menoetius and his company, while Agamemnon drew a vessel into the water and chose a crew of twenty oarsmen. He escorted Chryseis on board and sent moreover a hecatomb for the god. And Ulysses went as captain.

These, then, went on board and sailed their ways over the sea. But the son of Atreus bade the people purify themselves; so they purified themselves and cast their filth into the sea. Then they offered hecatombs of bulls and goats without blemish on the sea-shore, and the smoke with the savour of their sacrifice rose curling up towards heaven.

Thus did they busy themselves throughout the host. But Agamemnon did not forget the threat that he had made Achilles, and called his trusty messengers and squires Talthybius and Eurybates. "Go," said he, "to the tent of Achilles, son of Peleus; take Briseis by the hand and bring her hither; if he will not give her I shall come with others and take her which will press him harder."

He charged them straightly further and dismissed them, whereon they went their way sorrowfully by the seaside, till they came to the tents and ships of the Myrmidons. They found Achilles sitting by his tent and his ships, and ill-pleased he was when he beheld them. They stood fearfully and reverently before him, and never a word did they speak, but he knew them and said, "Welcome, heralds, messengers of gods and men; draw near; my quarrel is not with you but with Agamemnon who has sent you for the girl Briseis. Therefore, Patroclus, bring her and give her to them, but let them be witnesses by the blessed gods, by mortal men, and by the fierceness of Agamemnon's anger, that if ever again there be need of me to save the people from ruin, they shall seek and they shall not find. Agamemnon is mad with rage and knows not how to look before and after that the Achaeans may fight by their ships in safety."

Patroclus did as his dear comrade had bidden him. He brought Briseis from the tent and gave her over to the heralds, who took her with them to the ships of the Achaeans and the woman was loth to go. Then Achilles went all alone by the side of the hoar sea, weeping and looking out upon the boundless waste of waters. He raised his hands in prayer to his immortal mother, "Mother," he cried, "you bore me doomed to live but for a little season; surely Jove, who thunders from Olympus, might have made that little glorious. It is not so. Agamemnon, son of Atreus, has done me dishonour, and has robbed me of my prize by force."

As he spoke he wept aloud, and his mother heard him where she was sitting in the depths of the sea hard by the old man her father. Forthwith she rose as it were a grey mist out of the waves, sat down before him as he stood weeping, caressed him with her hand, and said, "My son, why are you weeping? What is it that grieves you? Keep it not from me, but tell me, that we may know it together."

Achilles drew a deep sigh and said, "You know it; why tell you what you know well already? We went to Thebe the strong city of Eetion, sacked it, and brought hither the spoil. The sons of the Achaeans shared it duly among themselves, and chose lovely Chryseis as the meed of Agamemnon; but Chryses, priest of Apollo, came to the
ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and brought with him a great ransom: moreover he bore in his hand the sceptre of

Apollo, wreathed with a suppliant's wreath, and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus who were their chiefs.

"On this the rest of the Achaeans with one voice were for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but not so Agamemnon, who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away. So he went back in anger, and Apollo, who loved him dearly, heard his prayer. Then the god sent a deadly dart upon the Argives, and the people died thick on one another, for the arrows went everywhither among the wide host of the Achaeans. At last a seer in the fulness of his knowledge declared to us the oracles of Apollo, and I was myself first to say that we should appease him. Whereon the son of Atreus rose in anger, and threatened that which he has since done. The Achaeans are now taking the girl in a ship to Chryse, and sending gifts of sacrifice to the god; but the heralds have just taken from my tent the daughter of Briseus, whom the Achaeans had awarded to myself.

"Help your brave son, therefore, if you are able. Go to Olympus, and if you have ever done him service in word or deed, implore the aid of Jove. Ofttimes in my father's house have I heard you glory in that you alone of the immortals saved the son of Saturn from ruin, when the others, with Juno, Neptune, and Pallas Minerva would have put him in bonds. It was you, goddess, who delivered him by calling to Olympus the hundred-handed monster whom gods call Briareus, but men Aegaeon, for he is stronger even than his father; when therefore he took his seat all-glorious beside the son of Saturn, the other gods were afraid, and did not bind him. Go, then, to him, remind him of all this, clasp his knees, and bid him give succour to the Trojans. Let the Achaeans be hemmed in at the sterns of their ships, and perish on the sea-shore, that they may reap what joy they may of their king, and that Agamemnon may rue his blindness in offering insult to the foremost of the Achaeans."

Thetis wept and answered, "My son, woe is me that I should have borne or suckled you. Would indeed that you had lived your span free from all sorrow at your ships, for it is all too brief; alas, that you should be at once short of life and long of sorrow above your peers: woe, therefore, was the hour in which I bore you; nevertheless I will
go to the snowy heights of Olympus, and tell this tale to Jove, if he will hear our prayer: meanwhile stay where you are with your ships, nurse your anger against the Achaeans, and hold aloof from fight. For Jove went yesterday to Oceanus, to a feast among the Ethiopians, and the other gods went with him. He will return to Olympus twelve days hence; I will then go to his mansion paved with bronze and will beseech him; nor do I doubt that I shall be able to persuade him."

On this she left him, still furious at the loss of her that had been taken from him. Meanwhile Ulysses reached Chryse with the hecatomb. When they had come inside the harbour they furled the sails and laid them in the ship's hold; they slackened the forestays, lowered the mast into its place, and rowed the ship to the place where they would have her lie; there they cast out their mooring-stones and made fast the hawsers. They then got out upon the seashore and landed the hecatomb for Apollo; Chryseis also left the ship, and Ulysses led her to the altar to deliver her into the hands of her father. "Chryses," said he, "King Agamemnon has sent me to bring you back your child, and
to offer sacrifice to Apollo on behalf of the Danaans, that we may propitiate the god, who has now brought sorrow upon the Argives."

So saying he gave the girl over to her father, who received her gladly, and they ranged the holy hecatomb all orderly round the altar of the god. They washed their hands and took up the barley-meal to sprinkle over the victims, while Chryses lifted up his hands and prayed aloud on their behalf. "Hear me," he cried, "O god of the silver bow, that protectest Chryse and holy Cilla, and rulest Tenedos with thy might. Even as thou didst hear me aforetime when I prayed, and didst press hardly upon the Achaeans, so hear me yet again, and stay this fearful pestilence from the Danaans."

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley-meal, they drew back the heads of the victims and killed and flayed them. They cut out the thigh-bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, set some pieces of raw meat on the top of them, and then Chryses laid them on the wood fire and poured wine over them, while the young men stood near him with five-pronged spits in their hands. When the thigh-bones were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small, put the pieces upon the spits, roasted them till they were done, and drew them off: then, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share, so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, pages filled the mixing-bowl with wine and water and handed it round, after giving every man his drink-offering.

Thus all day long the young men worshipped the god with song, hymning him and chaunting the joyous paean, and the god took pleasure in their voices; but when the sun went down, and it came on dark, they laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables

of the ship, and when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared they again set sail for the host of the Achaeans. Apollo sent them a fair wind, so they raised their mast and hoisted their white sails aloft. As the sail bellied with the wind the ship flew through the deep blue water, and the foam hissed against her bows as she sped onward. When they reached the wide-stretching host of the Achaeans, they drew the vessel ashore, high and dry upon the sands, set her strong props beneath her, and went their ways to their own tents and ships.

But Achilles abode at his ships and nursed his anger. He went not to the honourable assembly, and sallied not forth to fight, but gnawed at his own heart, pining for battle and the war-cry.

Now after twelve days the immortal gods came back in a body to Olympus, and Jove led the way. Thetis was not unmindful of the charge her son had laid upon her, so she rose from under the sea and went through great heaven with early morning to Olympus, where she found the mighty son of Saturn sitting all alone upon its topmost ridges. She sat herself down before him, and with her left hand seized his knees, while with her right she caught him under the chin, and besought him, saying

“Father Jove, if I ever did you service in word or deed among the immortals, hear my prayer, and do honour to my son, whose life is to be cut short so early. King Agamemnon has dishonoured him by taking his prize and keeping her. Honour him then yourself, Olympian lord of counsel, and grant victory to the Trojans, till the Achaeans give my son his due and load him with riches in requital.”

Jove sat for a while silent, and without a word, but Thetis still kept firm hold of his knees, and besought him a second time. “Incline your head,” said she, “and promise me surely, or else deny me for you have nothing to fear that I may learn how greatly you disdain me.”

At this Jove was much troubled and answered, “I shall have trouble if you set me quarrelling with Juno, for she will provoke me with her taunting speeches; even now she is always railing at me before the other gods and accusing me of giving aid to the Trojans. Go back now, lest she should find out. I will consider the matter, and will bring it about as wish. See, I incline my head that you believe me. This is the most solemn that I can give to any god. I never recall my word, or deceive, or fail to do what I say, when I have nodded my head.”

As he spoke the son of Saturn bowed his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks swayed on his immortal head, till vast Olympus reeled.

When the pair had thus laid their plans, they parted Jove to his house, while the goddess quitted the splendour of Olympus, and plunged into the depths of the sea. The gods rose from their seats, before the coming of their sire. Not one of them dared to remain sitting, but all stood up as he came among them. There, then, he took his seat. But Juno, when she saw him, knew that he and the old merman’s daughter, silver-footed Thetis, had been hatching mischief, so she at once began to upbraid him. “Trickster,” she cried, “which of the gods have you been taking into your counsels now? You are always settling matters in secret behind my back, and have never yet told me, if you could help it, one word of your intentions.”

“Juno,” replied the sire of gods and men, “you must not expect to be informed of all my counsels. You are my wife, but you would find it hard to understand them. When it is proper for you to hear, there is no one, god or man, who will be told sooner, but when I mean to keep a matter to myself, you must not pry nor ask questions.”

“Dread son of Saturn,” answered Juno, “what are you talking about? I? Pry and ask questions? Never. I let you have your own way in everything. Still, I have a strong misgiving that the old merman’s daughter Thetis has been talking you over, for she was with you and had hold of your knees this self-same morning. I believe, therefore, that you have been promising her to give glory to Achilles, and to kill much people at the ships of the Achaeans.”

“Wife,” said Jove, “I can do nothing but you suspect me and find it out. You will take nothing by it, for I shall only dislike you the more, and it will go harder with you. Granted that it is as you say; I mean to have it so; sit down and hold your tongue as I bid you for if I once begin to lay my hands about you, though all heaven were on your side it would profit you nothing.”

On this Juno was frightened, so she curbed her stubborn will and sat down in silence. But the heavenly beings were disquieted throughout the house of Jove, till the cunning workman Vulcan began to try and pacify his mother Juno. “It will be intolerable,” said he, “if you two fall to wrangling and setting heaven in an uproar about a pack of mortals. If such ill counsels are to prevail, we shall have no pleasure at our banquet. Let me then advise my mother and she must herself know that it will be better to make

friends with my dear father Jove, lest he again scold her and disturb our feast. If the Olympian Thunderer wants to hurl us all from our seats, he can do so, for he is far the strongest, so give him fair words, and he will then soon be in a good humour with us."

As he spoke, he took a double cup of nectar, and placed it in his mother's hand. "Cheer up, my dear mother," said he, "and make the best of it. I love you dearly, and should be very sorry to see you get a thrashing; however grieved I might be, I could not help for there is no standing against Jove. Once before when I was trying to help you, he caught me by the foot and flung me from the heavenly threshold. All day long from morn till eve, was I falling, till at sunset I came to ground in the island of Lemnos, and there I lay, with very little life left in me, till the Sintians came and tended me."

Juno smiled at this, and as she smiled she took the cup from her son's hands. Then Vulcan drew sweet nectar from the mixing-bowl, and served it round among the gods, going from left to right; and the blessed gods laughed out a loud applause as they saw him ing bustling about the heavenly mansion.

Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun they feasted, and every one had his full share, so that all were satisfied. Apollo struck his lyre, and the Muses lifted up their sweet voices, calling and answering one another. But when the sun's glorious light had faded, they went home to bed, each in his own abode, which lame Vulcan with his consummate skill had fashioned for them. So Jove, the Olympian Lord of Thunder, hied him to the bed in which he always slept; and when he had got on to it he went to sleep, with Juno of the golden throne by his side.

Book II

Now the other gods and the armed warriors on the plain slept soundly, but Jove was wakeful, for he was thinking how to do honour to Achilles, and destroyed much people at the ships of the Achaeans. In the end he deemed it would be best to send a lying dream to King Agamemnon; so he called one to him and said to it, "Lying Dream, go to the ships of the Achaeans, into the tent of Agamemnon, and say to him word to word as I now bid you. Tell him to get the Achaeans instantly under arms, for he shall take Troy. There are no longer divided counsels among the gods; Juno has brought them to her own mind, and woe betides the Trojans."

The dream went when it had heard its message, and soon reached the ships of the Achaeans. It sought Agamemnon son of Atreus and found him in his tent, wrapped in a profound slumber. It hovered over his head in the likeness of Nestor, son of Neleus, whom Agamemnon honoured above all his councillors, and said:

"You are sleeping, son of Atreus; one who has the welfare of his host and so much other care upon his shoulders should dock his sleep. Hear me at once, for I come as a messenger from Jove, who, though he be not near, yet takes thought for you and pities you. He bids you get the Achaeans instantly under arms, for you shall take Troy. There are no longer divided counsels among the gods; Juno has brought them over to her own mind, and woe betides the Trojans at the hands of Jove. Remember this, and when you wake see that it does not escape you."

The dream then left him, and he thought of things that were, surely not to be accomplished. He thought that on that same day he was to take the city of Priam, but he little knew what was in the mind of Jove, who had many another hard-fought fight in store alike for Danaans and Trojans. Then presently he woke, with the divine message still ringing in his ears; so he sat upright, and put on his soft shirt so fair and new, and over this his heavy cloak. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, and slung his silver-studded sword about his shoulders; then he took the imperishable staff of his father, and sallied forth to the ships of the Achaeans.

The goddess Dawn now wended her way to vast Olympus that she might herald day to Jove and to the other immortals, and Agamemnon sent the criers round to call the people in assembly; so they called them and the people gathered thereon. But first he summoned a meeting of the elders at the ship of Nestor king of Pylos, and when they were assembled he laid a cunning counsel before them.

"My friends," said he, "I have had a dream from heaven in the dead of night, and its face and figure resembled none but Nestor's. It hovered over my head and said, 'You are sleeping, son of Atreus; one who has the welfare of his host and so much other care upon his shoulders should dock his sleep. Hear me at once, for I am a messenger from Jove, who, though he be not near, yet takes thought for you and pities you. He bids you get the Achaeans instantly under arms, for you shall take Troy. There are no longer divided counsels among the gods; Juno has brought them over to her own mind, and woe betides the Trojans at the hands of Jove. Remember this.' The dream then vanished and I awoke. Let us now, therefore, arm the sons of the Achaeans. But it will be well that I should first sound them, and to this end I will tell them to fly with their ships; but do you others go about among the host and prevent their doing so."

He then sat down, and Nestor the prince of Pylos with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus: “My friends,” said he, “princes and councillors of the Argives, if any other man of the Achaeans had told us of this dream we should have declared it false, and would have had nothing to do with it. But he who has seen it is the foremost man among us; we must therefore set about getting the people under arms.”

With this he led the way from the assembly, and the other sceptred kings rose with him in obedience to the word of Agamemnon; but the people pressed forward to hear. They swarmed like bees that sally from some hollow cave and flit in countless throng among the spring flowers, bunched in knots and clusters; even so did the mighty multitude pour from ships and tents to the assembly, and range themselves upon the wide-watered shore, while among them ran Wildfire Rumour, messenger of Jove, urging them ever to the fore. Thus they gathered in a pellmell of mad confusion, and the earth groaned under the tramp of men as the people sought their places. Nine heralds went crying about among them to stay their tumult and bid them listen to the kings, till at last they were got into their several places and ceased their clamour. Then King Agamemnon rose, holding his sceptre. This was the work of Vulcan, who gave it to Jove the son of Saturn. Jove gave it to Mercury, slayer of Argus, guide and guardian. King Mercury gave it to Pelops, the mighty charioteer, and Pelops to Atreus, shepherd of his people. Atreus, when he died, left it to Thyestes, rich in flocks, and Thyestes in his turn left it to be borne by Agamemnon, that he might be lord of all Argos and of the isles. Leaning, then, on his sceptre, he addressed the Argives.

“My friends,” he said, “heroes, servants of Mars, the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me. Cruel Jove gave me his solemn promise that I should sack the city of Priam before returning, but he has played me false, and is now bidding me go ingloriously back to Argos with the loss of much people. Such is the will of Jove, who has laid many a proud city in the dust, as he will yet lay others, for his power is above all. It will be a sorry tale hereafter that an Achaean host, at once so great and valiant, battled in vain against men fewer in number than themselves; but as yet the end is not in sight. Think that the Achaeans and Trojans have sworn to a solemn covenant, and that they have each been numbered the Trojans by the roll of their householders, and we by companies of ten; think further that each of our companies desired to have a Trojan householder to pour out their wine; we are so greatly more in number that full many a company would have to go without its cup-bearer. But they have in the town allies from other places, and it is these that hinder me from being able to sack the rich city of Ilius. Nine of Jove years are gone; the timbers of our ships have rotted; their tackling is sound no longer. Our wives and little ones at home look anxiously for our coming, but the work that we came hither to do has not been done. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say: let us sail back to our own land, for we shall not take Troy.”

With these words he moved the hearts of the multitude, so many of them as knew not the cunning counsel of Agamemnon. They surged to and fro like the waves of the Icarian Sea, when the east and south winds break from heaven’s clouds to lash them; or as when the west wind sweeps over a field of corn and the ears bow beneath the blast, even so were they swayed as they flew with loud cries towards the ships, and the dust from under their feet rose heavenward. They cheered each other on to draw the ships into the sea; they cleared the channels in front of them; they began taking away the stays from underneath them, and the welkin rang with their glad cries, so eager were they to return.

Then surely the Argives would have returned after a fashion that was not fated. But Juno said to Minerva, “Alas, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, shall the Argives fly home to their own land over the broad sea, and leave Priam and the Trojans the glory of still keeping Helen, for whose sake so many of the Achaeans have died at Troy, far from their homes? Go about at once among the host, and speak fairly to them, man by man, that they draw not their ships into the sea.”

Minerva was not slack to do her bidding. Down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, and in a moment she was at the ships of the Achaeans. There she found Ulysses, peer of Jove in counsel, standing alone. He had not as yet laid a hand upon his ship, for he was grieved and sorry; so she went close up to him and said, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, are you going to fling yourselves into your ships and be off home to your own land in this way? Will you leave Priam and the Trojans the glory of still keeping Helen, for whose sake so many of the Achaeans have died at Troy, far from their homes? Go about at once among the host, and speak fairly to them, man by man, that they draw not their ships into the sea.”

Ulysses knew the voice as that of the goddess: he flung his cloak from him and set off to run. His servant Eurybates, a man of Ithaca, who waited on him, took charge of the cloak, whereon Ulysses went straight up to Agamemnon and received from him his ancestral, imperishable staff. With this he went about among the ships of the Achaeans.

Whenever he met a king or chieftain, he stood by him and spoke him fairly. “Sir,” said he, “this flight is cowardly and unworthy. Stand to your post, and bid your people also keep their places. You do not yet know the full mind of Agamemnon; he was sounding us, and ere long will visit the Achaeans with his displeasure. We were not all of us at the council to hear what he then said; see to it lest he be angry and do us a mischief; for the pride of kings is great, and the hand of Jove is with them.”

But when he came across any common man who was making a noise, he struck him with his staff and rebuked him, saying, “Sirrah, hold your peace, and listen to better men than yourself. You are a coward and no soldier; you are nobody either in fight or council; we cannot all be kings; it is not well that there should be many masters; one man must be supreme one king to whom the son of scheming Saturn has given the sceptre of sovereignty over you all.”

Thus masterfully did he go about among the host, and the people hurried back to the council from their tents and ships with a sound as the thunder of surf when it comes crashing down upon the shore, and all the sea is in an uproar.

The rest now took their seats and kept to their own several places, but Thersites still went on wagging his unbridled tongue a man of many words, and those unseemly; a monger of sedition, a railer against all who were in authority, who cared not what he said, so that he might set the Achaeans in a laugh. He was the ugliest man of all those that came before Troy bandy-legged, lame of one foot, with his two shoulders rounded and hunched over his chest. His head ran up to a point, but there was little hair on the top of it. Achilles and Ulysses hated him worst of all, for it was with them that he was most wont to wrangle; now, however, with a shrill squeaky voice he began heaping his abuse on Agamemnon. The Achaeans were angry and disgusted, yet none the less he kept on brawling and bawling at the son of Atreus.

“Agamemnon,” he cried, “what ails you now, and what more do you want? Your tents are filled with bronze and with fair women, for whenever we take a town we give you the pick of them. Would you have yet more gold, which some Trojan is to give you as a ransom for his son, when I or another Achaean has taken him prisoner? or is it some young girl to hide and lie with? It is not well that you, the ruler of the Achaeans, should bring them into such misery. Weakling cowards, women rather than men, let us sail home, and leave this fellow here at Troy to stew in his own meeds of honour, and discover whether we were of any service to him or no. Achilles is a much better man than he is, and see how he has treated him robbing him of his prize and keeping it himself. Achilles takes it meekly and shows no fight; if he did, son of Atreus, you would never again insult him.”

Thus railed Thersites, but Ulysses at once went up to him and rebuked him sternly. “Check your glib tongue, Thersites,” said be, “and babble not a word further. Chide not with princes when you have none to back you. There is no viler creature come before Troy with the sons of Atreus. Drop this chatter about kings, and neither revile them nor keep harping about going home. We do not yet know how things are going to be, nor whether the Achaeans are to return with good success or evil. How dare you gibe at Agamemnon because the Danaans have awarded him so many prizes? I tell you, therefore and it shall surely be that if I again catch you talking such nonsense, I will either forfeit my own head and be no more called father of Telemachus, or I will take you, strip you stark naked, and whip you out of the assembly till you go blubbering back to the ships.”

On this he beat him with his staff about the back and shoulders till he dropped and fell a-weeping. The golden sceptre raised a bloody weal on his back, so he sat down frightened and in pain, looking foolish as he wiped the tears from his eyes. The people were sorry for him, yet they laughed heartily, and one would turn to his neighbour saying, “Ulysses has done many a good thing ere now in fight and council, but he never did the Argives a better turn than when he stopped this fellow’s mouth from prating further. He will give the kings no more of his insolence.”

Thus said the people. Then Ulysses rose, sceptre in hand, and Minerva in the likeness of a herald bade the people be still, that those who were far off might hear him and consider his council. He therefore with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus:

“King Agamemnon, the Achaeans are for making you a by-word among all mankind. They forget the promise they made you when they set out from Argos, that you should not return till you had sacked the town of Troy, and, like children or widowed women, they murmur and would set off homeward. True it is that they have had toil enough to be disheartened. A man chafes at having to stay away from his wife even for a single month, when he is on shipboard, at the mercy of wind and sea, but it is now nine long years that we have been kept here; I cannot, therefore, blame the Achaeans if they turn restive; still we shall be shamed if we go home empty after so long a stay therefore, my friends, be patient yet a little longer that we may learn whether the prophesyings of Calchas were false or true.

"All who have not since perished must remember as though it were yesterday or the day before, how the ships of the Achaeans were detained in Aulis when we were on our way hither to make war on Priam and the Trojans. We were ranged round about a fountain offering hecatombs to the gods upon their holy altars, and there was a fine plane-tree from beneath which there welled a stream of pure water. Then we saw a prodigy; for Jove sent a fearful serpent out of the ground, with blood-red stains upon its back, and it darted from under the altar on to the planetree. Now there was a brood of young sparrows, quite small, upon the topmost bough, peeping out from under the leaves, eight in all, and their mother that hatched them made nine. The serpent ate the poor cheeping things, while the old bird flew about lamenting her little ones; but the serpent threw his coils about her and caught her by the wing as she was screaming. Then, when he had eaten both the sparrow and her young, the god who had sent him made him become a sign; for the son of scheming Saturn turned him into stone, and we stood there wondering at that which had come to pass. Seeing, then, that such a fearful portent had broken in upon our hecatombs, Calchas forthwith declared to us the oracles of heaven. 'Why, Achaeans,' said he, 'are you thus speechless? Jove has sent us this sign, long in coming, and long ere it be fulfilled, though its fame shall last for ever. As the serpent ate the eight fledglings and the sparrow that hatched them, which makes nine, so shall we fight nine years at Troy, but in the tenth shall take the town.' This was what he said, and now it is all coming true. Stay here, therefore, all of you, till we take the city of Priam."

On this the Argives raised a shout, till the ships rang again with the uproar. Nestor, knight of Gerene, then addressed them. "Shame on you," he cried, "to stay talking here like children, when you should fight like men. Where are our covenants now, and where the oaths that we have taken? Shall our counsels be flung into the fire, with our drink-offerings and the right hands of fellowship wherein we have put our trust? We waste our time in words, and for all our talking here shall be no further forward. Stand, therefore, son of Atreus, by your own steadfast purpose; lead the Argives on to battle, and leave this handful of men to rot, who scheme, and scheme in vain, to get back to Argos ere they have learned whether Jove be true or a liar. For the mighty son of Saturn surely promised that we should succeed, when we Argives set sail to bring death and destruction upon the Trojans. He showed us favourable signs by flashing his lightning on our right hands; therefore let none make haste to go till he has first lain with the wife of some Trojan, and avenged the toil and sorrow that he has suffered for the sake of Helen. Nevertheless, if any man is in such haste to be at home again, let him lay his hand to his ship that he may meet his doom in the sight of all. But, O king, consider and give ear to my counsel, for the word that I say may not be neglected lightly. Divide your men, Agamemnon, into their several tribes and clans, that clans and tribes may stand by and help one another. If you do this, and if the Achaeans obey you, you will find out who, both chiefs and peoples, are brave, and who are cowards; for they will vie against the other. Thus you shall also learn whether it is through the counsel of heaven or the cowardice of man that you shall fail to take the town."

And Agamemnon answered, "Nestor, you have again outdone the sons of the Achaeans in counsel. Would, by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I had among them ten more such councillors, for the city of King Priam would then soon fall beneath our hands, and we should sack it. But the son of Saturn afflicts me with bootless wranglings and strife. Achilles and I are quarrelling about this girl, in which matter I was the first to offend; if we can be of one mind again, the Trojans will not stave off destruction for a day. Now, therefore, get your morning meal, that our hosts join in fight. Whet well your spears; see well to the ordering of your shields; give good feeds to your horses, and look your chariots carefully over, that we may do battle the livelong day; for we shall have no rest, not for a moment, till night falls to part us. The bands that bear your shields shall be wet with the sweat upon your shoulders, your hands shall weary upon your spears, your horses shall steam in front of your chariots, and if I see any man shirking the fight, or trying to keep out of it at the ships, there shall be no help for him, but he shall be a prey to dogs and vultures."

Thus he spoke, and the Achaeans roared applause. As when the waves run high before the blast of the south wind and break on some lofty headland, dashing against it and buffeting it without ceasing, as the storms from every quarter drive them, even so did the Achaeans rise and hurry in all directions to their ships. There they lighted their fires at their tents and got dinner, offering sacrifice every man to one or other of the gods, and praying each one of them that he might live to come out of the fight. Agamemnon, king of men, sacrificed a fat five-year-old bull to the mighty son of Saturn, and invited the princes and elders of his host. First he asked Nestor and King Idomeneus, then the two Ajaxes and the son of Tydeus, and sixthly Ulysses, peer of gods in counsel; but Menelaus came of his own accord, for he knew how busy his brother then was. They stood round the bull with the barley-meal in their hands, and Agamemnon prayed, saying, "Jove, most glorious, supreme, that dwellest in heaven, and ridest upon the storm-cloud, grant that the sun may not go down, nor the night fall, till the palace of Priam is laid low, and its gates are consumed with fire. Grant that my sword may pierce the shirt of Hector about his heart, and that full many of his comrades may bite the dust as they fall dying round him."

Thus he prayed, but the son of Saturn would not fulfil his prayer. He accepted the sacrifice, yet none the less increased their toil continually. When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley-meal upon the victim, they drew back its head, killed it, and then flayed it. They cut out the thigh-bones, wrapped them round in two layers
of fat, and set pieces of raw meat on the top of them. These they burned upon the split logs of firewood, but they spitted the inward meats, and held them in the flames to cook. When the thigh-bones were burned, and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small, put the pieces upon spits, roasted them till they were done, and drew them off; then, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share, so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Nestor, knight of Gerene, began to speak. “King Agamemnon,” said he, “let us not stay talking here, nor be slack in the work that heaven has put into our hands. Let the heralds summon the people to gather at their several ships; we will then go about among the host, that we may begin fighting at once.”

Thus did he speak, and Agamemnon heeded his words. He at once sent the criers round to call the people in assembly. So they called them, and the people gathered thereon. The chiefs about the son of Atreus chose their men and marshalled them, while Minerva went among them holding her priceless aegis that knows neither age nor death. From it there waved a hundred tassels of pure gold, all deftly woven, and each one of them worth a hundred oxen. With this she darted furiously everywhere among the hosts of the Achaeans, urging them forward, and putting courage into the heart of each, so that he might fight and do battle without ceasing. Thus war became sweeter in their eyes even than returning home in their ships. As when some great forest fire is raging upon a mountain top and its light is seen afar, even so as they marched the gleam of their armour flashed up into the firmament of heaven.

They were like great flocks of geese, or cranes, or swans on the plain about the waters of Cayster, that wing their way hither and thither, glorying in the pride of flight, and crying as they settle till the fen is alive with their screaming. Even thus did their tribes pour from ships and tents on to the plain of the Scamander, and the ground rang as brass under the feet of men and horses. They stood as thick upon the flower-bespangled field as leaves that bloom in summer.

As countless swarms of flies buzz around a herdsman’s homestead in the time of spring when the pails are drenched with milk, even so did the Achaeans swarm on to the plain to charge the Trojans and destroy them.

The chiefs disposed their men this way and that before the fight began, drafting them out as easily as goatherds draft their flocks when they have got mixed while feeding; and among them went King Agamemnon, with a head and face like Jove the lord of thunder, a waist like Mars, and a chest like that of Neptune. As some great bull that lords it over the herds upon the plain, even so did Jove make the son of Atreus stand peerless among the multitude of heroes.

And now, O Muses, dwellers in the mansions of Olympus, tell me for you are goddesses and are in all places so that you see all things, while we know nothing but by report who were the chiefs and princes of the Danaans? As for the common soldiers, they were so that I could not name every single one of them though I had ten tongues, and though my voice failed not and my heart were of bronze within me, unless you, O Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Jove, were to recount them to me. Nevertheless, I will tell the captains of the ships and all the fleet together.

Peneleos, Leitus, Arcesilaus, Prothoenor, and Clonius were captains of the Boeotians. These were they that dwelt in Hyria and rocky Aulis, and who held Schoenus, Scolus, and the highlands of Eteonus, with Thespeia, Graia, and the fair city of Mycalessus. They also held Harma, Eilesium, and Erythrae; and they had Eleon, Hyle, and Peteon; Ocalea and the strong fortress of Medeon; Copae, Eutresis, and Thisbe the haunt of doves; Coronea, and the pastures of Haliartus; Plataea and Glisas; the fortress of Thebes the less; holy Onchestus with its famous grove of Neptune; Arne rich in vineyards; Midea, sacred Nisa, and Anthedon upon the sea. From these there came fifty ships, and in each there were a hundred and twenty young men of the Boeotians.

Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Mars, led the people that dwelt in Aspledon and Orchomenus the realm of Minyas. Astyoche a noble maiden bore them in the house of Actor son of Azeus; for she had gone with Mars secretly into an upper chamber, and he had lain with her. With these there came thirty ships.

The Phoceans were led by Schedius and Epistrophus, sons of mighty Iphitus the son of Naubolus. These were they that held Cyparissus, rocky Pytho, holy Crisa, Daulis, and Panopeus; they also that dwelt in Anemorea and Hyampolis, and about the waters of the river Cephissus, and Lilaea by the springs of the Cephissus; with their chieftains came forty ships, and they marshalled the forces of the Phoceans, which were stationed next to the Boeotians, on their left.

Ajax, the fleet son of Oileus, commanded the Locrians. He was not so great, nor nearly so great, as Ajax the son of Telamon. He was a little man, and his breastplate was made of linen, but in use of the spear he excelled all the Hellenes and the Achaeans. These dwelt in Cynus, Opous, Calliarus, Bessa, Scarphe, fair Augeae, Tarphe, and Thronium about the river Boagrius. With him there came forty ships of the Locrians who dwell beyond Euboea.

The fierce Abantes held Euboea with its cities, Chalcis, Eretria, Histiaea rich in vines, Cerinthus upon the sea, and the rock-perched town of Dium; with them were also the men of Carystus and Styra; Elephenor of the race of Mars was in command of these; he was son of Chalcodon, and chief over all the Abantes. With him they came, fleet of foot and wearing their hair long behind, brave warriors, who would ever strive to tear open the corslets of their foes with their long ashen spears. Of these there came fifty ships.

And they that held the strong city of Athens, the people of great Erechtheus, who was born of the soil itself, but Jove's daughter, Minerva, fostered him, and established him at Athens in her own rich sanctuary. There, year by year, the Athenian youths worship him with sacrifices of bulls and rams. These were commanded by Menestheus, son of Peteos. No man living could equal him in the marshalling of chariots and foot soldiers. Nestor could alone rival him, for he was older. With him there came fifty ships.

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis, and stationed them alongside those of the Athenians.

The men of Argos, again, and those who held the walls of Tiryns, with Hermione, and Asine upon the gulf; Troezene, Eionae, and the vineyard lands of Epidaurus; the Achaean youths, moreover, who came from Aegina and Mases; these were led by Diomed of the loud battle-cry, and Sthenelus son of famed Capaneus. With them in command was Euryalus, son of king Mecisteus, son of Talaus; but Diomed was chief over them all. With these there came eighty ships.

Those who held the strong city of Mycenae, rich Corinth and Cleonae; Orneae, Araethyrea, and Licyon, where Adrastus reigned of old; Hyperesia, high Gonoessa, and Pellene; Aegium and all the coast-land round about Helice; these sent a hundred ships under the command of King Agamemnon, son of Atreus. His force was far both finest and most numerous, and in their midst was the king himself, all glorious in his armour of gleaming bronze foremost among the heroes, for he was the greatest king, and had most men under him.

And those that dwelt in Lacedaemon, lying low among the hills, Pharis, Sparta, with Messe the haunt of doves; Bryseae, Augeae, Amyclae, and Helos upon the sea; Laas, moreover, and Oetylus; these were led by Menelaus of the loud battle-cry, brother to Agamemnon, and of them there were sixty ships, drawn up apart from the others. Among them went Menelaus himself, strong in zeal, urging his men to fight; for he longed to avenge the toil and sorrow that he had suffered for the sake of Helen.

The men of Pylos and Arene, and Thryum where is the ford of the river Alpheus; strong Aipy, Cyparisseis, and Amphigenea; Pteleum, Helos, and Dorium, where the Muses met Thamyris, and stilled his minstrelsy for ever. He was returning from Oechalia, where Eurytus lived and reigned, and boasted that he would surpass even the Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Jove, if they should sing against him; whereon they were angry, and maimed him. They robbed him of his divine power of song, and thenceforth he could strike the lyre no more. These were commanded by Nestor, knight of Gerene, and with him there came ninety ships.

And those that held Arcadia, under the high mountain of Cyllene, near the tomb of Aepytus, where the people fight hand to hand; the men of Pheneus also, and Orchomenus rich in flocks; of Rhipae, Stratie, and bleak Enispe; of Tegea and fair Mantinea; of Stymphelus and Parrhasia; of these King Agapenor son of Ancaeus was commander, and they had sixty ships. Many Arcadians, good soldiers, came in each one of them, but Agamemnon found them the ships in which to cross the sea, for they were not a people that occupied their business upon the waters.

The men, moreover, of Buprasium and of Elis, so much of it as is enclosed between Hyrmine, Myrsinus upon the sea-shore, the rock Olene and Alesium. These had four leaders, and each of them had ten ships, with many Epeans on board. Their captains were Amphimachus and Thalpius the one, son of Cteatus, and the other, of Eurytus both of the race of Actor. The two others were Diores, son of Amarynces, and Polyxenus, son of King Agasthenes, son of Augeas.

And those of Dulichium with the sacred Echinean islands, who dwelt beyond the sea off Elis; these were led by Meges, peer of Mars, and the son of valiant Phyleus, dear to Jove, who quarrelled with his father, and went to settle in Dulichium. With him there came forty ships.

Ulysses led the brave Cephallenians, who held Ithaca, Neritum with its forests, Crocylea, rugged Aegilips, Samos and Zacynthus, with the mainland also that was over against the islands. These were led by Ulysses, peer of Jove in counsel, and with him there came twelve ships.

Thoas, son of Andraemon, commanded the Aetolians, who dwelt in Pleuron, Olenus, Pylene, Chalcis by the sea, and rocky Calydon, for the great king Oeneus had now no sons living, and was himself dead, as was also golden-haired Meleager, who had been set over the Aetolians to be their king. And with Thoas there came forty ships.

The famous spearsman Idomeneus led the Cretans, who held Cnossus, and the well-walled city of Gortys; Lyctus also, Miletus and Lycastus that lies upon the chalk; the populous towns of Phaestus and Rhytium, with the other peoples that dwelt in the hundred cities of Crete. All these were led by Idomeneus, and by Meriones, peer of murderous Mars. And with these there came eighty ships.

Tlepolemus, son of Hercules, a man both brave and large of stature, brought nine ships of lordly warriors from Rhodes. These dwelt in Rhodes which is divided among the three cities of Lindus, Ielysus, and Cameirus, that lies upon the chalk. These were commanded by Tlepolemus, son of Hercules by Astyochea, whom he had carried off from Ephyra, on the river Selleis, after sacking many cities of valiant warriors. When Tlepolemus grew up, he killed his father's uncle Licymnius, who had been a famous warrior in his time, but was then grown old. On this he built himself a fleet, gathered a great following, and fled beyond the sea, for he was menaced by the other sons and grandsons of Hercules. After a voyage. during which he suffered great hardship, he came to Rhodes, where the people divided into three communities, according to their tribes, and were dearly loved by Jove, the lord, of gods and men; wherefore the son of Saturn showered down great riches upon them.

And Nireus brought three ships from Syme Nireus, who was the handsomest man that came up under Ilius of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus but he was a man of no substance, and had but a small following.

And those that held Nisyrus, Crapathus, and Casus, with Cos, the city of Eurypylus, and the Calydnian islands, these were commanded by Pheidippus and Antiphus, two sons of King Thessalus the son of Hercules. And with them there came thirty ships.

Those again who held Pelasgic Argos, Alos, Alope, and Trachis; and those of Phthia and Hellas the land of fair women, who were called Myrmidons, Hellenes, and Achaeans; these had fifty ships, over which Achilles was in command. But they now took no part in the war, inasmuch as there was no one to marshal them; for Achilles stayed by his ships, furious about the loss of the girl Briseis, whom he had taken from Lyrnessus at his own great peril, when he had sacked Lyrnessus and Thebe, and had overthrown Mynes and Epistrophus, sons of king Evenor, son of Selepus. For her sake Achilles was still grieving, but ere long he was again to join them.

And those that held Phylace and the flowery meadows of Pyrasus, sanctuary of Ceres; Iton, the mother of sheep; Antrum upon the sea, and Pteleum that lies upon the grass lands. Of these brave Protesilaus had been captain while he was yet alive, but he was now lying under the earth. He had left a wife behind him in Phylace to tear her cheeks in sorrow, and his house was only half finished, for he was slain by a Dardanian warrior while leaping foremost of the Achaeans upon the soil of Troy. Still, though his people mourned their chieftain, they were not without a leader, for Podarces, of the race of Mars, marshalled them; he was son of Iphiclus, rich in sheep, who was the son of Phylacus, and he was own brother to Protesilaus, only younger, Protesilaus being at once the elder and the more valiant. So the people were not without a leader, though they mourned him whom they had lost. With him there came forty ships.

And those that held Pherae by the Boebean lake, with Boebe, Glaphyrae, and the populous city of Iolcus, these with their eleven ships were led by Eumelus, son of Admetus, whom Alcestis bore to him, loveliest of the daughters of Pelias.

And those that held Methone and Thaumacia, with Meliboea and rugged Olizon, these were led by the skilful archer Philoctetes, and they had seven ships, each with fifty oarsmen all of them good archers; but Philoctetes was lying in great pain in the Island of Lemnos, where the sons of the Achaeans left him, for he had been bitten by a poisonous water snake. There he lay sick and sorry, and full soon did the Argives come to miss him. But his people, though they felt his loss were not leaderless, for Medon, the bastard son of Oileus by Rhene, set them in array.

Those, again, of Tricca and the stony region of Ithome, and they that held Oechalia, the city of Oechalian Eurytus, these were commanded by the two sons of Aesculapius, skilled in the art of healing, Podalirius and Machaon. And with them there came thirty ships.

The men, moreover, of Ormenius, and by the fountain of Hypereia, with those that held Asterius, and the white crests of Titanus, these were led by Eurypylus, the son of Euaemon, and with them there came forty ships.

Those that held Argissa and Gyrtone, Orthe, Elone, and the white city of Oloosson, of these brave Polypoetes was leader. He was son of Pirithous, who was son of Jove himself, for Hippodameia bore him to Pirithous on the day when he took his revenge on the shaggy mountain savages and drove them from Mt. Pelion to the Aithices. But Polypoetes was not sole in command, for with him was Leonteus, of the race of Mars, who was son of Coronus, the son of Caeneus. And with these there came forty ships.

Guneus brought two and twenty ships from Cyphus, and he was followed by the Enienes and the valiant Peraebi, who dwelt about wintry Dodona, and held the lands round the lovely river Titaresius, which sends its waters into the Peneus. They do not mingle with the silver eddies of the Peneus, but flow on the top of them like oil; for the Titaresius is a branch of dread Orcus and of the river Styx.

Of the Magnetes, Prothous son of Tenthredon was commander. They were they that dwelt about the river Peneus and Mt. Pelion. Prothous, fleet of foot, was their leader, and with him there came forty ships.

Such were the chiefs and princes of the Danaans. Who, then, O Muse, was the foremost, whether man or horse, among those that followed after the sons of Atreus?

Of the horses, those of the son of Pheres were by far the finest. They were driven by Eumelus, and were as fleet as birds. They were of the same age and colour, and perfectly matched in height. Apollo, of the silver bow, had bred them in Perea both of them mares, and terrible as Mars in battle. Of the men, Ajax, son of Telamon, was much
the foremost so long as Achilles' anger lasted, for Achilles excelled him greatly and he had also better horses; but Achilles was now holding aloof at his ships by reason of his quarrel with Agamemnon, and his people passed their time upon the sea shore, throwing discs or aiming with spears at a mark, and in archery. Their horses stood each by his own chariot, champing lotus and wild celery. The chariots were housed under cover, but their owners, for lack of leadership, wandered hither and thither about the host and went not forth to fight.

Thus marched the host like a consuming fire, and the earth groaned beneath them when the lord of thunder is angry and lashes the land about Typhoeus among the Arimi, where they say Typhoeus lies. Even so did the earth groan beneath them as they sped over the plain.

And now Iris, fleet as the wind, was sent by Jove to tell the bad news among the Trojans. They were gathered in assembly, old and young, at Priam's gates, and Iris came close up to Priam, speaking with the voice of Priam's son Polites, who, being fleet of foot, was stationed as watchman for the Trojans on the tomb of old Aesyetes, to look out for any sally of the Achaeans. In his likeness Iris spoke, saying, "Old man, you talk idly, as in time of peace, while war is at hand. I have been in many a battle, but never yet saw such a host as is now advancing. They are crossing the plain to attack the city as thick as leaves or as the sands of the sea. Hector, I charge you above all others, do as I say. There are many allies dispersed about the city of Priam from distant places and speaking divers tongues. Therefore, let each chief give orders to his own people, setting them severally in array and leading them forth to battle."

Thus she spoke, but Hector knew that it was the goddess, and at once broke up the assembly. The men flew to arms; all the gates were opened, and the people thronged through them, horse and foot, with the tramp as of a great multitude.

Now there is a high mound before the city, rising by itself upon the plain. Men call it Batieia, but the gods know that it is the tomb of lithe Myrine. Here the Trojans and their allies divided their forces.

Priam's son, great Hector of the gleaming helmet, commanded the Trojans, and with him were arrayed by far the greater number and most valiant of those who were longing for the fray.

The Dardanians were led by brave Aeneas, whom Venus bore to Anchises, when she, goddess though she was, had lain with him upon the mountain slopes of Ida. He was not alone, for with him were the two sons of Antenor, Archilochus and Acamas, both skilled in all the arts of war.

They that dwelt in Telea under the lowest spurs of Mt. Ida, men of substance, who drink the limpid waters of the Aesepus, and are of Trojan blood these were led by Pandarus son of Lycaon, whom Apollo had taught to use the bow.

They that held Adresteia and the land of Apaesus, with Pityeia, and the high mountain of Tereia these were led by Adrestus and Amphius, whose breastplate was of linen. These were the sons of Merops of Percote, who excelled in all kinds of divination. He told them not to take part in the war, but they gave him no heed, for fate lured them to destruction.

They that dwelt about Percote and Practius, with Sestos, Abydos, and Arisbe these were led by Asius, son of Hyrtacus, a brave commander Asius, the son of Hyrtacus, whom his powerful dark bay steeds, of the breed that comes from the river Selleis, had brought from Arisbe.

Hippothous led the tribes of Pelasgian spearsmen, who dwelt in fertile Larissa Hippothous, and Pylaeus of the race of Mars, two sons of the Pelasgian Lethus, son of Teutamus.

Acamas and the warrior Peirous commanded the Thracians and those that came from beyond the mighty stream of the Hellespont.

Euphemus, son of Troezenus, the son of Ceos, was captain of the Ciconian spearsmen.

Pyraechmes led the Paeonian archers from distant Amydon, by the broad waters of the river Axius, the fairest that flow upon the earth.

The Paphlagonians were commanded by stout-hearted Pylaemanes from Enetae, where the mules run wild in herds. These were they that held Cytorus and the country round Sesamus, with the cities by the river Parthenius, Cromna, Aegialus, and lofty Erithini.

Odius and Epistrophus were captains over the Halizoni from distant Alybe, where there are mines of silver.

Chromis, and Ennomus the augur, led the Mysians, but his skill in augury availed not to save him from destruction, for he fell by the hand of the fleet descendant of Aeacus in the river, where he slew others also of the Trojans.

Phorcys, again, and noble Ascanius led the Phrygians from the far country of Ascania, and both were eager for the fray.

Mesthles and Antiphus commanded the Meonians, sons of Talaemenes, born to him of the Gygaean lake. These led the Meonians, who dwelt under Mt. Tmolus.

Nastes led the Carians, men of a strange speech. These held Miletus and the wooded mountain of Phthires, with the water of the river Maeander and the lofty crests of Mt. Mycale. These were commanded by Nastes and Amphimachus, the brave sons of Nomion. He came into the fight with gold about him, like a girl; fool that he was, his gold was of no avail to save him, for he fell in the river by the hand of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, and Achilles bore away his gold.

Sarpedon and Glaucus led the Lycians from their distant land, by the eddying waters of the Xanthus.

Book III

When the companies were thus arrayed, each under its own captain, the Trojans advanced as a flight of wild fowl or cranes that scream overhead when rain and winter drive them over the flowing waters of Oceanus to bring death and destruction on the Pygmies, and they wrangle in the air as they fly; but the Achaeans marched silently, in high heart, and minded to stand by one another.

As when the south wind spreads a curtain of mist upon the mountain tops, bad for shepherds but better than night for thieves, and a man can see no further than he can throw a stone, even so rose the dust from under their feet as they made all speed over the plain.

When they were close up with one another, Alexandrus came forward as champion on the Trojan side. On his shoulders he bore the skin of a panther, his bow, and his sword, and he brandished two spears shod with bronze as a challenge to the bravest of the Achaeans to meet him in single fight. Menelaus saw him thus stride out before the ranks, and was glad as a hungry lion that lights on the carcase of some goat or horned stag, and devours it there and then, though dogs and youths set upon him. Even thus was Menelaus glad when his eyes caught sight of Alexandrus, for he deemed that now he should be revenged. He sprang, therefore, from his chariot, clad in his suit of armour.

Alexandrus quailed as he saw Menelaus come forward, and shrank in fear of his life under cover of his men. As one who starts back affrighted, trembling and pale, when he comes suddenly upon a serpent in some mountain glade, even so did Alexandrus plunge into the throng of Trojan warriors, terror-stricken at the sight of the son Atreus.

Then Hector upbraided him. “Paris,” said he, “evil-hearted Paris, fair to see, but woman-mad, and false of tongue, would that you had never been born, or that you had died unwed. Better so, than live to be disgraced and looked askance at. Will not the Achaeans mock at us and say that we have sent one to champion us who is fair to see but who has neither wit nor courage? Did you not, such as you are, get your following together and sail beyond the seas? Did you not from your a far country carry off a lovely woman wedded among a people of warriors to bring sorrow upon your father, your city, and your whole country, but joy to your enemies,

and hang-dog shamefacedness to yourself? And now can you not dare face Menelaus and learn what manner of man he is whose wife you have stolen? Where indeed would be your lyre and your love-tricks, your comely locks and your fair favour, when you were lying in the dust before him? The Trojans are a weak-kneed people, or ere this you would have had a shirt of stones for the wrongs you have done them."

And Alexandrus answered, "Hector, your rebuke is just. You are hard as the axe which a shipwright wields at his work, and cleaves the timber to his liking. As the axe in his hand, so keen is the edge of your scorn. Still, taunt me not with the gifts that golden Venus has given me; they are precious; let not a man disdain them, for the gods give them where they are minded, and none can have them for the asking. If you would have me do battle with Menelaus, bid the Trojans and Achaeans take their seats, while he and I fight in their midst for Helen and all her wealth. Let him who shall be victorious and prove to be the better man take the woman and all she has, to bear them to his home, but let the rest swear to a solemn covenant of peace whereby you Trojans shall stay here in Troy, while the others go home to Argos and the land of the Achaeans."

When Hector heard this he was glad, and went about among the Trojan ranks holding his spear by the middle to keep them back, and they all sat down at his bidding: but the Achaeans still aimed at him with stones and arrows, till Agamemnon shouted to them saying, "Hold, Argives, shoot not, sons of the Achaeans; Hector desires to speak."

They ceased taking aim and were still, whereon Hector spoke. "Hear from my mouth," said he, "Trojans and Achaeans, the saying of Alexandrus, through whom this quarrel has come about. He bids the Trojans and Achaeans lay their armour upon the ground, while he and Menelaus fight in the midst of you for Helen and all her wealth. Let him who shall be victorious and prove to be the better man take the woman and all she has, to bear them to his own home, but let the rest swear to a solemn covenant of peace."

Thus he spoke, and they all held their peace, till Menelaus of the loud battle-cry addressed them. "And now," he said, "hear me too, for it is I who am the most aggrieved. I deem that the parting of Achaeans and Trojans is at hand, as well it may be, seeing how much have suffered for my quarrel with Alexandrus and the wrong he did me. Let him who shall die, die, and let the others fight no more. Bring, then, two lambs, a white ram and a black ewe, for Earth and Sun, and we will bring a third for Jove. Moreover, you shall bid Priam come, that he may swear to the covenant himself; for his sons are high-handed and ill to trust, and the oaths of Jove must not be transgressed or taken in vain. Young men's minds are light as air, but when an old man comes he looks before and after, deeming that which shall be fairest upon both sides."

The Trojans and Achaeans were glad when they heard this, for they thought that they should now have rest. They backed their chariots toward the ranks, got out of them, and put off their armour, laying it down upon the ground; and the hosts were near to one another with a little space between them. Hector sent two messengers to the city to bring the lambs and to bid Priam come, while Agamemnon told Talthybius to fetch the other lamb from the ships, and he did as Agamemnon had said.

Meanwhile Iris went to Helen in the form of her sister-in-law, wife of the son of Antenor, for Helicaon, son of Antenor, had married Laodice, the fairest of Priam's daughters. She found her in her own room, working at a great web of purple linen, on which she was embroidering the battles between Trojans and Achaeans, that Mars had made them fight for her sake. Iris then came close up to her and said, "Come hither, child, and see the strange doings of the Trojans and Achaeans till now they have been warring upon the plain, mad with lust of battle, but now they have left off fighting, and are leaning upon their shields, sitting still with their spears planted beside them. Alexandrus and Menelaus are going to fight about yourself, and you are to the the wife of him who is the victor."

Thus spoke the goddess, and Helen's heart yearned after her former husband, her city, and her parents. She threw a white mantle over her head, and hurried from her room, weeping as she went, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids, Aethrae, daughter of Pittheus, and Clymene. And straightway they were at the Scaean gates.

The two sages, Ucalegon and Antenor, elders of the people, were seated by the Scaean gates, with Priam, Panthous, Thymoetes, Lampus, Clytius, and Hiketaon of the race of Mars. These were too old to fight, but they were fluent orators, and sat on the tower like cicales that chirrup delicately from the boughs of some high tree in a wood. When they saw Helen coming towards the tower, they said softly to one another, "Small wonder that Trojans and Achaeans should endure so much and so long, for the sake of a woman so marvellously and divinely lovely. Still, fair though she be, let them take her and go, or she will breed sorrow for us and for our children after us."

But Priam bade her draw nigh. “My child,” said he, “take your seat in front of me that you may see your former husband, your kinsmen and your friends. I lay no blame upon you, it is the gods, not you who are to blame. It is they that have brought about this terrible war with the Achaeans. Tell me, then, who is yonder huge hero so great and goodly? I have seen men taller by a head, but none so comely and so royal. Surely he must be a king.”

“Sir,” answered Helen, “father of my husband, dear and reverend in my eyes, would that I had chosen death rather than to have come here with your son, far from my bridal chamber, my friends, my darling daughter, and all the companions of my girlhood. But it was not to be, and my lot is one of tears and sorrow. As for your question, the hero of whom you ask is Agamemnon, son of Atreus, a good king and a brave soldier, brother-in-law as surely as that he lives, to my abhorred and miserable self.”

The old man marvelled at him and said, “Happy son of Atreus, child of good fortune. I see that the Achaeans are subject to you in great multitudes. When I was in Phrygia I saw much horsemen, the people of Otreus and of Mygdon, who were camping upon the banks of the river Sangarius; I was their ally, and with them when the Amazons, peers of men, came up against them, but even they were not so many as the Achaeans.”

The old man next looked upon Ulysses; “Tell me,” he said, “who is that other, shorter by a head than Agamemnon, but broader across the chest and shoulders? His armour is laid upon the ground, and he stalks in front of the ranks as it were some great woolly ram ordering his ewes.”

And Helen answered, “He is Ulysses, a man of great craft, son of Laertes. He was born in rugged Ithaca, and excels in all manner of stratagems and subtle cunning.”

On this Antenor said, “Madam, you have spoken truly. Ulysses once came here as envoy about yourself, and Menelaus with him. I received them in my own house, and therefore know both of them by sight and conversation. When they stood up in presence of the assembled Trojans, Menelaus was the broader shouldered, but when both were seated Ulysses had the more royal presence. After a time they delivered their message, and the speech of Menelaus ran trippingly on the tongue; he did not say much, for he was a man of few words, but he spoke very clearly and to the point, though he was the younger man of the two; Ulysses, on the other hand, when he rose to speak, was at first silent and kept his eyes fixed upon the ground. There was no play nor graceful movement of his sceptre; he kept it straight and stiff like a man unpractised in oratory one might have taken him for a mere churl or simpleton; but when he raised his voice, and the words came driving from his deep chest like winter snow before the wind, then there was none to touch him, and no man thought further of what he looked like.”

Priam then caught sight of Ajax and asked, “Who is that great and goodly warrior whose head and broad shoulders tower above the rest of the Argives?”

“That,” answered Helen, “is huge Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, and on the other side of him, among the Cretans, stands Idomeneus looking like a god, and with the captains of the Cretans round him. Often did Menelaus receive him as a guest in our house when he came visiting us from Crete. I see, moreover, many other Achaeans whose names I could tell you, but there are two whom I can nowhere find, Castor, breaker of horses, and Pollux the mighty boxer; they are children of my mother, and own brothers to myself. Either they have not left Lacedaemon, or else, though they have brought their ships, they will not show themselves in battle for the shame and disgrace that I have brought upon them.”

She knew not that both these heroes were already lying under the earth in their own land of Lacedaemon.

Meanwhile the heralds were bringing the holy oath-offerings through the city two lambs and a goatskin of wine, the gift of earth; and Idaeus brought the mixing bowl and the cups of gold. He went up to Priam and said, “Son of Laomedon, the princes of the Trojans and Achaeans bid you come down on to the plain and swear to a solemn covenant. Alexandrus and Menelaus are to fight for Helen in single combat, that she and all her wealth may go with him who is the victor. We are to swear to a solemn covenant of peace whereby we others shall dwell here in Troy, while the Achaeans return to Argos and the land of the Achaeans.”

The old man trembled as he heard, but bade his followers yoke the horses, and they made all haste to do so. He mounted the chariot, gathered the reins in his hand, and Antenor took his seat beside him; they then drove through the Scaean gates on to the plain. When they reached the ranks of the Trojans and Achaeans they left the chariot, and with measured pace advanced into the space between the hosts.

Agamemnon and Ulysses both rose to meet them. The attendants brought on the oath-offerings and mixed the wine in the mixing-bowls; they poured water over the hands of the chieftains, and the son of Atreus drew the dagger that hung by his sword, and cut

wool from the lambs' heads; this the men-servants gave about among the Trojan and Achaean princes, and the son of Atreus lifted up his hands in prayer. "Father Jove," he cried, "that rulest in Ida, most glorious in power, and thou oh Sun, that seest and givest ear to all things, Earth and Rivers, and ye who in the realms below chastise the soul of him that has broken his oath, witness these rites and guard them, that they be not vain. If Alexandrus kills Menelaus, let him keep Helen and all her wealth, while we sail home with our ships; but if Menelaus kills Alexandrus, let the Trojans give back Helen and all that she has; let them moreover pay such fine to the Achaeans as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among those that shall be born hereafter. Aid if Priam and his sons refuse such fine when Alexandrus has fallen, then will I stay here and fight on till I have got satisfaction."

As he spoke he drew his knife across the throats of the victims, and laid them down gasping and dying upon the ground, for the knife had reft them of their strength. Then they poured wine from the mixing-bowl into the cups, and prayed to the everlasting gods, saying, Trojans and Achaeans among one another, "Jove, most great and glorious, and ye other everlasting gods, grant that the brains of them who shall first sin against their oaths of them and their children may be shed upon the ground even as this wine, and let their wives become the slaves of strangers."

Thus they prayed, but not as yet would Jove grant them their prayer. Then Priam, descendant of Dardanus, spoke, saying, "Hear me, Trojans and Achaeans, I will now go back to the wind-beaten city of Ilius: I dare not with my own eyes witness this fight between my son and Menelaus, for Jove and the other immortals alone know which shall fall."

On this he laid the two lambs on his chariot and took his seat. He gathered the reins in his hand, and Antenor sat beside him; the two then went back to Ilius. Hector and Ulysses measured the ground, and cast lots from a helmet of bronze to see which should take aim first. Meanwhile the two hosts lifted up their hands and prayed saying, "Father Jove, that rulest from Ida, most glorious in power, grant that he who first brought about this war between us may die, and enter the house of Hades, while we others remain at peace and abide by our oaths."

Great Hector now turned his head aside while he shook the helmet, and the lot of Paris flew out first. The others took their several stations, each by his horses and the place where his arms were lying, while Alexandrus, husband of lovely Helen, put on his goodly armour. First he greaved his legs with greaves of good make and fitted with ancle-clasps of silver; after this he donned the cuirass of his brother Lycaon, and fitted it to his own body; he hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well-wrought, with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped a redoubtable spear that suited his hands. In like fashion Menelaus also put on his armour.

When they had thus armed, each amid his own people, they strode fierce of aspect into the open space, and both Trojans and Achaeans were struck with awe as they beheld them. They stood near one another on the measured ground, brandishing their spears, and each furious against the other. Alexandrus aimed first, and struck the round shield of the son of Atreus, but the spear did not pierce it, for the shield turned its point. Menelaus next took aim, praying to Father Jove as he did so. "King Jove," he said, "grant me revenge on Alexandrus who has wronged me; subdue him under my hand that in ages yet to come a man may shrink from doing ill deeds in the house of his host."

He poised his spear as he spoke, and hurled it at the shield of Alexandrus. Through shield and cuirass it went, and tore the shirt by his flank, but Alexandrus swerved aside, and thus saved his life. Then the son of Atreus drew his sword, and drove at the projecting part of his helmet, but the sword fell shivered in three or four pieces from his hand, and he cried, looking towards Heaven, "Father Jove, of all gods thou art the most despiteful; I made sure of my revenge, but the sword has broken in my hand, my spear has been hurled in vain, and I have not killed him."

With this he flew at Alexandrus, caught him by the horsehair plume of his helmet, and began dragging him towards the Achaeans. The strap of the helmet that went under his chin was choking him, and Menelaus would have dragged him off to his own great glory had not Jove's daughter Venus been quick to mark and to break the strap of oxhide, so that the empty helmet came away in his hand. This he flung to his comrades among the Achaeans, and was again springing upon Alexandrus to run him through with a spear, but Venus snatched him up in a moment (as a god can do), hid him under a cloud of darkness, and conveyed him to his own bedchamber.

Then she went to call Helen, and found her on a high tower with the Trojan women crowding round her. She took the form of an old woman who used to dress wool for her when she was still in Lacedaemon, and of whom she was very fond. Thus disguised she plucked her by perfumed robe and said, "Come hither; Alexandrus says you are to go to the house; he is on his bed in his own

room, radiant with beauty and dressed in gorgeous apparel. No one would think he had just come from fighting, but rather that he was going to a dance, or had done dancing and was sitting down."

With these words she moved the heart of Helen to anger. When she marked the beautiful neck of the goddess,

her lovely bosom, and sparkling eyes, she marvelled at her and said, "Goddess, why do you thus beguile me? Are you going to send me afield still further to some man whom you have taken up in Phrygia or fair Meonia? Menelaus has just vanquished Alexandrus, and is to take my hateful self back with him. You are come here to betray me. Go sit with Alexandrus yourself; henceforth be goddess no longer; never let your feet carry you back to Olympus; worry about him and look after him till he make you his wife, or, for the matter of that, his slave but me? I shall not go; I can garnish his bed no longer; I should be a by-word among all the women of Troy. Besides, I have trouble on my mind."

Venus was very angry, and said, "Bold hussy, do not provoke me; if you do, I shall leave you to your fate and hate you as much as I have loved you. I will stir up fierce hatred between Trojans and Achaeans, and you shall come to a bad end."

At this Helen was frightened. She wrapped her mantle about her and went in silence, following the goddess and unnoticed by the Trojan women.

When they came to the house of Alexandrus the maid-servants set about their work, but Helen went into her own room, and the laughter-loving goddess took a seat and set it for her facing Alexandrus. On this Helen, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, sat down, and with eyes askance began to upbraid her husband.

"So you are come from the fight," said she; "would that you had fallen rather by the hand of that brave man who was my husband. You used to brag that you were a better man with hands and spear than Menelaus. go, but I then, an challenge him again but I should advise you not to do so, for if you are foolish enough to meet him in single combat, you will soon all by his spear."

And Paris answered, "Wife, do not vex me with your reproaches. This time, with the help of Minerva, Menelaus has vanquished me; another time I may myself be victor, for I too have gods that will stand by me. Come, let us lie down together and make friends. Never yet was I so passionately enamoured of you as at this moment not even when I first carried you off from Lacedaemon and sailed away with you not even when I had converse with you upon the couch of love in the island of Cranae was I so enthralled by desire of you as now." On this he led her towards the bed, and his wife went with him.

Thus they laid themselves on the bed together; but the son of Atreus strode among the throng, looking everywhere for Alexandrus, and no man, neither of the Trojans nor of the allies, could find him. If they had seen him they were in no mind to hide him, for they all of them hated him as they did death itself. Then Agamemnon, king of men, spoke, saying, "Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies. The victory has been with Menelaus; therefore give back Helen with all her wealth, and pay such fine as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among them that shall be born hereafter."

Thus spoke the son of Atreus, and the Achaeans shouted in applause.

Book IV

Now the gods were sitting with Jove in council upon the golden floor while Hebe went round pouring out nectar for them to drink, and as they pledged one another in their cups of gold they looked down upon the town of Troy. The son of Saturn then began to tease Juno, talking at her so as to provoke her. "Menelaus," said he, "has two good friends among the goddesses, Juno of Argos, and Minerva of Alalcomene, but they only sit still and look on, while Venus keeps ever by Alexandrus' side to defend him in any danger; indeed she has just rescued him when he made sure that it was all over with him for the victory really did lie with Menelaus. We must consider what we shall do about all this; shall we set them fighting anew or make peace between them? If you will agree to this last Menelaus can take back Helen and the city of Priam may remain still inhabited."

Minerva and Juno muttered their discontent as they sat side by side hatching mischief for the Trojans. Minerva scowled at her father, for she was in a furious passion with him, and said nothing, but Juno could not contain herself. "Dread son of Saturn," said she, "what, pray, is the meaning of all this? Is my trouble, then, to go for nothing, and the sweat that I have sweated, to say nothing of my horses, while getting the people together against Priam and his children? Do as you will, but we other gods shall not all of us approve your counsel."

Jove was angry and answered, "My dear, what harm have Priam and his sons done you that you are so hotly bent on sacking the city of Ilius? Will nothing do for you but you must within their walls and eat Priam raw, with his sons and all the other Trojans to

boot? Have it your own way then; for I would not have this matter become a bone of contention between us. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart, if ever I want to sack a city belonging to friends of yours, you must not try to stop me; you will have to let me do it, for I am giving in to you sorely against my will. Of all inhabited cities under the sun and stars of heaven, there was none that I so much respected as Ilius with Priam and his whole people. Equitable feasts were never wanting about my altar, nor the savour of burning fat, which is honour due to ourselves."

"My own three favourite cities," answered Juno, "are Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae. Sack them whenever you may be displeased with them. I shall not defend them and I shall not care. Even if I did, and tried to stay you, I should take nothing by it, for you are much stronger than I am, but I will not have my own work wasted. I too am a god and of the same race with yourself. I am Saturn's eldest daughter, and am honourable not on this ground only, but also because I am your wife, and you are king over the gods. Let it be a case, then, of give-and-take between us, and the rest of the gods will follow our lead. Tell Minerva to go and take part in the fight at once, and let her contrive that the Trojans shall be the first to break their oaths and set upon the Achaeans."

The sire of gods and men heeded her words, and said to Minerva, "Go at once into the Trojan and Achaean hosts, and contrive that the Trojans shall be the first to break their oaths and set upon the Achaeans."

This was what Minerva was already eager to do, so down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus. She shot through the sky as some brilliant meteor which the son of scheming Saturn has sent as a sign to mariners or to some great army, and a fiery train of light follows in its wake. The Trojans and Achaeans were struck with awe as they beheld, and one would turn to his neighbour, saying, "Either we shall again have war and din of combat, or Jove the lord of battle will now make peace between us."

Thus did they converse. Then Minerva took the form of Laodocus, son of Antenor, and went through the ranks of the Trojans to find Pandarus, the redoubtable son of Lycaon. She found him standing among the stalwart heroes who had followed him from the banks of the Aesopus, so she went close up to him and said, "Brave son of Lycaon, will you do as I tell you? If you dare send an arrow at Menelaus you will win honour and thanks from all the Trojans, and especially from prince Alexandrus he would be the first to requite you very handsomely if he could see Menelaus mount his funeral pyre, slain by an arrow from your hand. Take your home aim then, and pray to Lycian Apollo, the famous archer; vow that when you get home to your strong city of Zelea you will offer a hecatomb of firstling lambs in his honour."

His fool's heart was persuaded, and he took his bow from its case. This bow was made from the horns of a wild ibex which he had killed as it was bounding from a rock; he had stalked it, and it had fallen as the arrow struck it to the heart. Its horns were sixteen palms long, and a worker in horn had made them into a bow, smoothing them well down, and giving them tips of gold. When Pandarus had strung his bow he laid it carefully on the ground, and his brave followers held their shields before him lest the Achaeans should set upon him before he had shot Menelaus. Then he opened the lid of his quiver and took out a winged arrow that had yet been shot, fraught with the pangs of death. He laid the arrow on the string and prayed to Lycian Apollo, the famous archer, vowing that when he got home to his strong city of Zelea he would offer a hecatomb of firstling lambs in his honour. He laid the notch of the arrow on the oxhide bowstring, and drew both notch and string to his breast till the arrow-head was near the bow; then when the bow was arched into a half-circle he let fly, and the bow twanged, and the string sang as the arrow flew gladly on over the heads of the throng.

But the blessed gods did not forget thee, O Menelaus, and Jove's daughter, driver of the spoil, was the first to stand before thee and ward off the piercing arrow. She turned it from his skin as a mother whisks a fly from off her child when it is sleeping sweetly; she guided it to the part where the golden buckles of the belt that passed over his double cuirass were fastened, so the arrow struck the belt that went tightly round him. It went right through this and through the cuirass of cunning workmanship; it also pierced the belt beneath it, which he wore next his skin to keep out darts or arrows; it was this that served him in the best stead, nevertheless the arrow went through it and grazed the top of the skin, so that blood began flowing from the wound.

As when some woman of Meonia or Caria strains purple dye on to a piece of ivory that is to be the cheek-piece of a horse, and is to be laid up in a treasure house many a knight is fain to bear it, but the king keeps it as an ornament of which both horse and driver may be proud even so, O Menelaus, were your shapely thighs and your legs down to your fair ancles stained with blood.

When King Agamemnon saw the blood flowing from the wound he was afraid, and so was brave Menelaus himself till he saw that the barbs of the arrow and the thread that bound the arrow-head to the shaft were still outside the wound. Then he took heart, but Agamemnon heaved a deep sigh as he held Menelaus's hand in his own, and his comrades made moan in concert. "Dear brother, "he cried, "I have been the death of you in pledging this covenant and letting you come forward as our champion. The Trojans have

trampled on their oaths and have wounded you; nevertheless the oath, the blood of lambs, the drink-offerings and the right hands of fellowship in which have put our trust shall not be vain. If he that rules Olympus fulfil it not here and now, he will yet fulfil it hereafter, and they shall pay dearly with their lives and with their wives and children. The day will surely come when mighty Ilius shall be laid low, with Priam and Priam's people, when the son of Saturn from his high throne shall overshadow them with his awful aegis in punishment of their present treachery. This shall surely be; but how, Menelaus, shall I mourn you, if it be your lot now to die? I should return to Argos as a by-word, for the Achaeans will at once go home. We shall leave Priam and the Trojans the glory of still keeping Helen, and the earth will rot your bones as you lie here at Troy with your purpose not fulfilled. Then shall some braggart Trojan leap upon your tomb and say, 'Ever thus may Agamemnon wreak his vengeance; he brought his army in vain; he is gone home to his own land with empty ships, and has left Menelaus behind him.' Thus will one of them say, and may the earth then swallow me."

But Menelaus reassured him and said, "Take heart, and do not alarm the people; the arrow has not struck me in a mortal part, for my outer belt of burnished metal first stayed it, and under this my cuirass and the belt of mail which the bronze-smiths made me."

And Agamemnon answered, "I trust, dear Menelaus, that it may be even so, but the surgeon shall examine your wound and lay herbs upon it to relieve your pain."

He then said to Talthybius, "Talthybius, tell Machaon, son to the great physician, Aesculapius, to come and see Menelaus immediately. Some Trojan or Lycian archer has wounded him with an arrow to our dismay, and to his own great glory."

Talthybius did as he was told, and went about the host trying to find Machaon. Presently he found standing amid the brave warriors who had followed him from Tricca; thereon he went up to him and said, "Son of Aesculapius, King Agamemnon says you are to come and see Menelaus immediately. Some Trojan or Lycian archer has wounded him with an arrow to our dismay and to his own great glory."

Thus did he speak, and Machaon was moved to go. They passed through the spreading host of the Achaeans and went on till they came to the place where Menelaus had been wounded and was lying with the chieftains gathered in a circle round him. Machaon passed into the middle of the ring and at once drew the arrow from the belt, bending its barbs back through the force with which he pulled it out. He undid the burnished belt, and beneath this the cuirass and the belt of mail which the bronze-smiths had made; then, when he had seen the wound, he wiped away the blood and applied some soothing drugs which Chiron had given to Aesculapius out of the good will he bore him.

While they were thus busy about Menelaus, the Trojans came forward against them, for they had put on their armour, and now renewed the fight.

You would not have then found Agamemnon asleep nor cowardly and unwilling to fight, but eager rather for the fray. He left his chariot rich with bronze and his panting steeds in charge of Eurymedon, son of Ptolemaeus the son of Peiraeus, and bade him hold them in readiness against the time his limbs should weary of going about and giving orders to so many, for he went among the ranks on foot. When he saw men hasting to the front he stood by them and cheered them on. "Argives," said he, "slacken not one whit in your onset; father Jove will be no helper of liars; the Trojans have been the first to break their oaths and to attack us; therefore they shall be devoured of vultures; we shall take their city and carry off their wives and children in our ships."

But he angrily rebuked those whom he saw shirking and disinclined to fight. "Argives," he cried, "cowardly miserable creatures, have you no shame to stand here like frightened fawns who, when they can no longer scud over the plain, huddle together, but show no fight? You are as dazed and spiritless as deer. Would you wait till the Trojans reach the sterns of our ships as they lie on the shore, to see, whether the son of Saturn will hold his hand over you to protect you?"

Thus did he go about giving his orders among the ranks. Passing through the crowd, he came presently on the Cretans, arming round Idomeneus, who was at their head, fierce as a wild boar, while Meriones was bringing up the battalions that were in the rear. Agamemnon was glad when he saw him, and spoke him fairly. "Idomeneus," said he, "I treat you with greater distinction than I do any others of the Achaeans, whether in war or in other things, or at table. When the princes are mixing my choicest wines in the mixing-bowls, they have each of them a fixed allowance, but your cup is kept always full like my own, that you may drink whenever you are minded. Go, therefore, into battle, and show yourself the man you have been always proud to be."

Idomeneus answered, "I will be a trusty comrade, as I promised you from the first I would be. Urge on the other Achaeans, that we may join battle at once, for the Trojans have trampled upon their covenants. Death and destruction shall be theirs, seeing they have

been the first to break their oaths and to attack us."

The son of Atreus went on, glad at heart, till he came upon the two Ajaxes arming themselves amid a host of foot-soldiers. As when a goat-herd from some high post watches a storm drive over the deep before the west wind black as pitch is the offing and a mighty whirlwind draws towards him, so that he is afraid and drives his flock into a cave even thus did the ranks of stalwart youths move in a dark mass to battle under the Ajaxes, horrid with shield and spear. Glad was King Agamemnon when he saw them. "No need," he cried, "to give orders to such leaders of the Argives as you are, for of your own selves you spur your men on to fight with might and main. Would, by father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo that all were so minded as you are, for the city of Priam would then soon fall beneath our hands, and we should sack it."

With this he left them and went onward to Nestor, the facile speaker of the Pylians, who was marshalling his men and urging them on, in company with Pelagon, Alastor, Chromius, Haemon, and Bias shepherd of his people. He placed his knights with their chariots and horses in the front rank, while the foot-soldiers, brave men and many, whom he could trust, were in the rear. The cowards he drove into the middle, that they might fight whether they would or no. He gave his orders to the knights first, bidding them hold their horses well in hand, so as to avoid confusion. "Let no man," he said, "relying on his strength or horsemanship, get before the others and engage singly with the Trojans, nor yet let him lag behind or you will weaken your attack; but let each when he meets an enemy's chariot throw his spear from his own; this be much the best; this is how the men of old took towns and strongholds; in this wise were they minded."

Thus did the old man charge them, for he had been in many a fight, and King Agamemnon was glad. "I wish," he said to him, that your limbs were as supple and your strength as sure as your judgment is; but age, the common enemy of mankind, has laid his hand upon you; would that it had fallen upon some other, and that you were still young."

And Nestor, knight of Gerene, answered, "Son of Atreus, I too would gladly be the man I was when I slew mighty Ereuthalion; but the gods will not give us everything at one and the same time. I was then young, and now I am old; still I can go with my knights and give them that counsel which old men have a right to give. The wielding of the spear I leave to those who are younger and stronger than myself."

Agamemnon went his way rejoicing, and presently found Menestheus, son of Peteos, tarrying in his place, and with him were the Athenians loud of tongue in battle. Near him also tarried cunning Ulysses, with his sturdy Cephallenians round him; they had not yet heard the battle-cry, for the ranks of Trojans and Achaeans had only just begun to move, so they were standing still, waiting for some other columns of the Achaeans to attack the Trojans and begin the fighting. When he saw this Agamemnon rebuked them and said, "Son of Peteos, and you other, steeped in cunning, heart of guile, why stand you here cowering and waiting on others? You two should be of all men foremost when there is hard fighting to be done, for you are ever foremost to accept my invitation when we councillors of the Achaeans are holding feast. You are glad enough then to take your fill of roast meats and to drink wine as long as you please, whereas now you would not care though you saw ten columns of Achaeans engage the enemy in front of you."

Ulysses glared at him and answered, "Son of Atreus, what are you talking about? How can you say that we are slack? When the Achaeans are in full fight with the Trojans, you shall see, if you care to do so, that the father of Telemachus will join battle with the foremost of them. You are talking idly."

When Agamemnon saw that Ulysses was angry, he smiled pleasantly at him and withdrew his words. "Ulysses," said he, "noble son of Laertes, excellent in all good counsel, I have neither fault to find nor orders to give you, for I know your heart is right, and that you and I are of a mind. Enough; I will make you amends for what I have said, and if any ill has now been spoken may the gods bring it to nothing."

He then left them and went on to others. Presently he saw the son of Tydeus, noble Diomed, standing by his chariot and horses, with Sthenelus the son of Capaneus beside him; whereon he began to upbraid him. "Son of Tydeus," he said, "why stand you cowering here upon the brink of battle? Tydeus did not shrink thus, but was ever ahead of his men when leading them on against the foe so, at least, say they that saw him in battle, for I never set eyes upon him myself. They say that there was no man like him. He came once to Mycenae, not as an enemy but as a guest, in company with Polynices to recruit his forces, for they were levying war against the strong city of Thebes, and prayed our people for a body of picked men to help them. The men of Mycenae were willing to let them have one, but Jove dissuaded them by showing them unfavourable omens. Tydeus, therefore, and Polynices went their way. When they had got as far the deep-meadowed and rush-grown banks of the Aesopus, the Achaeans sent Tydeus as their envoy, and he found the Cadmeans gathered in great numbers to a banquet in the house of Eteocles. Stranger though he was, he

knew no fear on finding himself single-handed among so many, but challenged them to contests of all kinds, and in each one of them was at once victorious, so mightily did Minerva help him. The Cadmeans were incensed at his success, and set a force of fifty youths with two captains the godlike hero Maeon, son of Haemon, and Polyphontes, son of Autophonus at their head, to lie in wait for him on his return journey; but Tydeus slew every man of them, save only Maeon, whom he let go in obedience to heaven's omens. Such was Tydeus of Aetolia. His son can talk more glibly, but he cannot fight as his father did."

Diomed made no answer, for he was shamed by the rebuke of Agamemnon; but the son of Capaneus took up his words and said, "Son of Atreus, tell no lies, for you can speak truth if you will. We boast ourselves as even better men than our fathers; we took seven-gated Thebes, though the wall was stronger and our men were fewer in number, for we trusted in the omens of the gods and in the help of Jove, whereas they perished through their own sheer folly; hold not, then, our fathers in like honour with us."

Diomed looked sternly at him and said, "Hold your peace, my friend, as I bid you. It is not amiss that Agamemnon should urge the Achaeans forward, for the glory will be his if we take the city, and his the shame if we are vanquished. Therefore let us acquit ourselves with valour."

As he spoke he sprang from his chariot, and his armour rang so fiercely about his body that even a brave man might well have been scared to hear it.

As when some mighty wave that thunders on the beach when the west wind has lashed it into fury it has reared its head afar and now comes crashing down on the shore; it bows its arching crest high over the jagged rocks and spews its salt foam in all directions even so did the serried phalanxes of the Danaans march steadfastly to battle. The chiefs gave orders each to his own people, but the men said never a word; no man would think it, for huge as the host was, it seemed as though there was not a tongue among them, so silent were they in their obedience; and as they marched the armour about their bodies glistened in the sun. But the clamour of the Trojan ranks was as that of many thousand ewes that stand waiting to be milked in the yards of some rich flockmaster, and bleat incessantly in answer to the bleating of their lambs; for they had not one speech nor language, but their tongues were diverse, and they came from many different places. These were inspired of Mars, but the others by Minerva and with them came Panic, Rout, and Strife whose fury never tires, sister and friend of murderous Mars, who, from being at first but low in stature, grows till she uprears her head to heaven, though her feet are still on earth. She it was that went about among them and flung down discord to the waxing of sorrow with even hand between them.

When they were got together in one place shield clashed with shield and spear with spear in the rage of battle. The bossed shields beat one upon another, and there was a tramp as of a great multitude death-cry and shout of triumph of slain and slayers, and the earth ran red with blood. As torrents swollen with rain course madly down their deep channels till the angry floods meet in some gorge, and the shepherd the hillside hears their roaring from afar even such was the toil and uproar of the hosts as they joined in battle.

First Antilochus slew an armed warrior of the Trojans, Echepolus, son of Thalysius, fighting in the foremost ranks. He struck at the projecting part of his helmet and drove the spear into his brow; the point of bronze pierced the bone, and darkness veiled his eyes; headlong as a tower he fell amid the press of the fight, and as he dropped King Elephenor, son of Chalcodon and captain of the proud Abantes began dragging him out of reach of the darts that were falling around him, in haste to strip him of his armour. But his purpose was not for long; Agenor saw him haling the body away, and smote him in the side with his bronze-shod spear for as he stooped his side was left unprotected by his shield and thus he perished. Then the fight between Trojans and Achaeans grew furious over his body, and they flew upon each other like wolves, man and man crushing one upon the other.

Forthwith Ajax, son of Telamon, slew the fair youth Simoeisius, son of Anthemion, whom his mother bore by the banks of the Simois, as she was coming down from Mt. Ida, where she had been with her parents to see their flocks. Therefore he was named Simoeisius, but he did not live to pay his parents for his rearing, for he was cut off untimely by the spear of mighty Ajax, who struck him in the breast by the right nipple as he was coming on among the foremost fighters; the spear went right through his shoulder, and he fell as a poplar that has grown straight and tall in a meadow by some mere, and its top is thick with branches. Then the wheelwright lays his axe to its roots that he may fashion a felloe for the wheel of some goodly chariot, and it lies seasoning by the waterside. In such wise did Ajax fell to earth Simoeisius, son of Anthemion. Thereon Antiphus of the gleaming corslet, son of Priam, hurled a spear at Ajax from amid the crowd and missed him, but he hit Leucus, the brave comrade of Ulysses, in the groin, as he was dragging the body of Simoeisius over to the other side; so he fell upon the body and loosed his hold upon it. Ulysses was furious when he saw Leucus slain, and strode in full armour through the front ranks till he was quite close; then he glared round

about him and took aim, and the Trojans fell back as he did so. His dart was not sped in vain, for it struck Democoon, the bastard son of Priam, who had come to him from Abydos, where he had charge of his father's mares. Ulysses, infuriated by the death of his comrade, hit him with his spear on one temple, and the bronze point came through on the other side of his forehead. Thereon darkness veiled his eyes, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Hector, and they that were in front, then gave round while the Argives raised a shout and drew off the dead, pressing further forward as they did so. But Apollo looked down from Pergamus and called aloud to the Trojans, for he was displeased. "Trojans," he cried, "rush on the foe, and do not let yourselves be thus beaten by the Argives. Their skins are not stone nor iron that when hit them you do them no harm. Moreover, Achilles, the son of lovely Thetis, is not fighting, but is nursing his anger at the ships."

Thus spoke the mighty god, crying to them from the city, while Jove's redoubtable daughter, the Trito-born, went about among the host of the Achaeans, and urged them forward whenever she beheld them slackening.

Then fate fell upon Diores, son of Amarynceus, for he was struck by a jagged stone near the ancle of his right leg. He that hurled it was Peirous, son of Imbrasus, captain of the Thracians, who had come from Aenus; the bones and both the tendons were crushed by the pitiless stone. He fell to the ground on his back, and in his death throes stretched out his hands towards his comrades. But Peirous, who had wounded him, sprang on him and thrust a spear into his belly, so that his bowels came gushing out upon the ground, and darkness veiled his eyes. As he was leaving the body, Thoas of Aetolia struck him in the chest near the nipple, and the point fixed itself in his lungs. Thoas came close up to him, pulled the spear out of his chest, and then drawing his sword, smote him in the middle of the belly so that he died; but he did not strip him of his armour, for his Thracian comrades, men who wear their hair in a tuft at the top of their heads, stood round the body and kept him off with their long spears for all his great stature and valour; so he was driven back. Thus the two corpses lay stretched on earth near to one another, the one captain of the Thracians and the other of the Epeans; and many another fell round them.

And now no man would have made light of the fighting if he could have gone about among it scatheless and unwounded, with Minerva leading him by the hand, and protecting him from the storm of spears and arrows. For many Trojans and Achaeans on that day lay stretched side by side face downwards upon the earth.

Book V

Then Pallas Minerva put valour into the heart of Diomed, son of Tydeus, that he might excel all the other Argives, and cover himself with glory. She made a stream of fire flare from his shield and helmet like the star that shines most brilliantly in summer after its bath in the waters of Oceanus even such a fire did she kindle upon his head and shoulders as she bade him speed into the thickest hurly-burly of the fight.

Now there was a certain rich and honourable man among the Trojans, priest of Vulcan, and his name was Dares. He had two sons, Phegeus and Idaeus, both of them skilled in all the arts of war. These two came forward from the main body of Trojans, and set upon Diomed, he being on foot, while they fought from their chariot. When they were close up to one another, Phegeus took aim first, but his spear went over Diomed's left shoulder without hitting him. Diomed then threw, and his spear sped not in vain, for it hit Phegeus on the breast near the nipple, and he fell from his chariot. Idaeus did not dare to bestride his brother's body, but sprang from the chariot and took to flight, or he would have shared his brother's fate; whereon Vulcan saved him by wrapping him in a cloud of darkness, that his old father might not be utterly overwhelmed with grief; but the son of Tydeus drove off with the horses, and bade his followers take them to the ships. The Trojans were scared when they saw the two sons of Dares, one of them in fright and the other lying dead by his chariot. Minerva, therefore, took Mars by the hand and said, "Mars, Mars, bane of men, bloodstained stormer of cities, may we not now leave the Trojans and Achaeans to fight it out, and see to which of the two Jove will vouchsafe the victory? Let us go away, and thus avoid his anger."

So saying, she drew Mars out of the battle, and set him down upon the steep banks of the Scamander. Upon this the Danaans drove the Trojans back, and each one of their chieftains killed his man. First King Agamemnon flung mighty Odius, captain of the Halizoni, from his chariot. The spear of Agamemnon caught him on the broad of his back, just as he was turning in flight; it struck him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground.

Then Idomeneus killed Phaesus, son of Borus the Meonian, who had come from Varne. Mighty Idomeneus speared him on the right shoulder as he was mounting his chariot, and the darkness of death enshrouded him as he fell heavily from the car.

The squires of Idomeneus spoiled him of his armour, while Menelaus, son of Atreus, killed Scamandrius the son of Strophius, a mighty huntsman and keen lover of the chase. Diana herself had taught him how to kill every kind of wild creature that is bred in mountain forests, but neither she nor his famed skill in archery could now save him, for the spear of Menelaus struck him in the back as he was flying; it struck him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell headlong and his armour rang rattling round him.

Meriones then killed Phereclus the son of Tecton, who was the son of Hermon, a man whose hand was skilled in all manner of cunning workmanship, for Pallas Minerva had dearly loved him. He it was that made the ships for Alexandrus, which were the beginning of all mischief, and brought evil alike both on the Trojans and on Alexandrus himself; for he heeded not the decrees of heaven. Meriones overtook him as he was flying, and struck him on the right buttock. The point of the spear went through the bone into the bladder, and death came upon him as he cried aloud and fell forward on his knees.

Meges, moreover, slew Pedaeus, son of Antenor, who, though he was a bastard, had been brought up by Theano as one of her own children, for the love she bore her husband. The son of Phyleus got close up to him and drove a spear into the nape of his neck: it went under his tongue all among his teeth, so he bit the cold bronze, and fell dead in the dust.

And Eurypylus, son of Euaemon, killed Hypsenor, the son of noble Dolopion, who had been made priest of the river Scamander, and was honoured among the people as though he were a god. Eurypylus gave him chase as he was flying before him, smote him with his sword upon the arm, and lopped his strong hand from off it. The bloody hand fell to the ground, and the shades of death, with fate that no man can withstand, came over his eyes.

Thus furiously did the battle rage between them. As for the son of Tydeus, you could not say whether he was more among the Achaeans or the Trojans. He rushed across the plain like a winter torrent that has burst its barrier in full flood; no dykes, no walls of fruitful vineyards can embank it when it is swollen with rain from heaven, but in a moment it comes tearing onward, and lays many a field waste that many a strong man hand has reclaimed even so were the dense phalanxes of the Trojans driven in rout by the son of Tydeus, and many though they were, they dared not abide his onslaught.

Now when the son of Lycaon saw him scouring the plain and driving the Trojans pell-mell before him, he aimed an arrow and hit the front part of his cuirass near the shoulder: the arrow went right through the metal and pierced the flesh, so that the cuirass was covered with blood. On this the son of Lycaon shouted in triumph, “Knights Trojans, come on; the bravest of the Achaeans is wounded, and he will not hold out much longer if King Apollo was indeed with me when I sped from Lycia hither.”

Thus did he vaunt; but his arrow had not killed Diomed, who withdrew and made for the chariot and horses of Sthenelus, the son of Capaneus. “Dear son of Capaneus,” said he, “come down from your chariot, and draw the arrow out of my shoulder.”

Sthenelus sprang from his chariot, and drew the arrow from the wound, whereon the blood came spouting out through the hole that had been made in his shirt. Then Diomed prayed, saying, “Hear me, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, if ever you loved my father well and stood by him in the thick of a fight, do the like now by me; grant me to come within a spear’s throw of that man and kill him. He has been too quick for me and has wounded me; and now he is boasting that I shall not see the light of the sun much longer.”

Thus he prayed, and Pallas Minerva heard him; she made his limbs supple and quickened his hands and his feet. Then she went up close to him and said, “Fear not, Diomed, to do battle with the Trojans, for I have set in your heart the spirit of your knightly father Tydeus. Moreover, I have withdrawn the veil from your eyes, that you know gods and men apart. If, then, any other god comes here and offers you battle, do not fight him; but should Jove’s daughter Venus come, strike her with your spear and wound her.”

When she had said this Minerva went away, and the son of Tydeus again took his place among the foremost fighters, three times more fierce even than he had been before. He was like a lion that some mountain shepherd has wounded, but not killed, as he is springing over the wall of a sheep-yard to attack the sheep. The shepherd has roused the brute to fury but cannot defend his flock, so he takes shelter under cover of the buildings, while the sheep, panic-stricken on being deserted, are smothered in heaps one on top of the other, and the angry lion leaps out over the sheep-yard wall. Even thus did Diomed go furiously about among the Trojans.

He killed Astynous, and shepherd of his people, the one with a thrust of his spear, which struck him above the nipple, the other with a sword cut on the collar-bone, that severed his shoulder from his neck and back. He let both of them lie, and went in pursuit of Abas and Polyidus, sons of the old reader of dreams Eurydamas: they never came back for him to read them any more dreams, for

mighty Diomed made an end of them. He then gave chase to Xanthus and Thoon, the two sons of Phaenops, both of them very dear to him, for he was now worn out with age, and begat no more sons to inherit his possessions. But Diomed took both their lives and left their father sorrowing bitterly, for he nevermore saw them come home from battle alive, and his kinsmen divided his wealth among themselves.

Then he came upon two sons of Priam, Echemmon and Chromius, as they were both in one chariot. He sprang upon them as a lion fastens on the neck of some cow or heifer when the herd is feeding in a coppice. For all their vain struggles he flung them both from their chariot and stripped the armour from their bodies. Then he gave their horses to his comrades to take them back to the ships.

When Aeneas saw him thus making havoc among the ranks, he went through the fight amid the rain of spears to see if he could find Pandarus. When he had found the brave son of Lycaon he said, “Pandarus, where is now your bow, your winged arrows, and your renown as an archer, in respect of which no man here can rival you nor is there any in Lycia that can beat you? Lift then your hands to Jove and send an arrow at this fellow who is going so masterfully about, and has done such deadly work among the Trojans. He has killed many a brave man unless indeed he is some god who is angry with the Trojans about their sacrifices, and and has set his hand against them in his displeasure.”

And the son of Lycaon answered, “Aeneas, I take him for none other than the son of Tydeus. I know him by his shield, the visor of his helmet, and by his horses. It is possible that he may be a god, but if he is the man I say he is, he is not making all this havoc without heaven’s help, but has some god by his side who is shrouded in a cloud of darkness, and who turned my arrow aside when it had hit him. I have taken aim at him already and hit him on the right shoulder; my arrow went through the breastpiece of his cuirass; and I made sure I should send him hurrying to the world below, but it seems that I have not killed him. There must be a god who is angry with me. Moreover I have neither horse nor chariot. In my father’s stables there are eleven excellent chariots, fresh from the builder, quite new, with cloths spread over them; and by each of them there stand a pair of horses, champing barley and rye; my old father Lycaon urged me again and again when I was at home and on the point of starting, to take chariots and horses with me that I might lead the Trojans in battle, but I would not listen to him; it would have been much better if I had done so, but I was thinking about the horses, which had been used to eat their fill, and I was afraid that in such a great gathering of men they might be ill-fed, so I left them at home and came on foot to Ilius armed only with my bow and arrows. These it seems, are of no use, for I have already hit two chieftains, the sons of Atreus and of Tydeus, and though I drew blood surely enough, I have only made them still more furious. I did ill to take my bow down from its peg on the day I led my band of Trojans to Ilius in Hector’s service, and if ever I get home again to set eyes on my native place, my wife, and the greatness of my house, may some one cut my head off then and there if I do not break the bow and set it on a hot fire such pranks as it plays me.”

Aeneas answered, “Say no more. Things will not mend till we two go against this man with chariot and horses and bring him to a trial of arms. Mount my chariot, and note how cleverly the horses of Tros can speed hither and thither over the plain in pursuit or flight. If Jove again vouchsafes glory to the son of Tydeus they will carry us safely back to the city. Take hold, then, of the whip and reins while I stand upon the car to fight, or else do you wait this man’s onset while I look after the horses.”

“Aeneas.” replied the son of Lycaon, “take the reins and drive; if we have to fly before the son of Tydeus the horses will go better for their own driver. If they miss the sound of your voice when they expect it they may be frightened, and refuse to take us out of the fight. The son of Tydeus will then kill both of us and take the horses. Therefore drive them yourself and I will be ready for him with my spear.”

They then mounted the chariot and drove full-speed towards the son of Tydeus. Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, saw them coming and said to Diomed, “Diomed, son of Tydeus, man after my own heart, I see two heroes speeding towards you, both of them men of might the one a skilful archer, Pandarus son of Lycaon, the other, Aeneas, whose sire is Anchises, while his mother is Venus. Mount the chariot and let us retreat. Do not, I pray you, press so furiously forward, or you may get killed.”

Diomed looked angrily at him and answered: “Talk not of flight, for I shall not listen to you: I am of a race that knows neither flight nor fear, and my limbs are as yet unwearied. I am in no mind to mount, but will go against them even as I am; Pallas Minerva bids me be afraid of no man, and even though one of them escape, their steeds shall not take both back again. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart if Minerva sees fit to vouchsafe me the glory of killing both, stay your horses here and make the reins fast to the rim of the chariot; then be sure you spring Aeneas’ horses and drive them from the Trojan to the Achaean ranks. They are of the stock that great Jove gave to Tros in payment for his son Ganymede, and are the finest that live and move under the sun. King

Anchises stole the blood by putting his mares to them without Laomedon's knowledge, and they bore him six foals. Four are still in his stables, but he gave the other two to Aeneas. We shall win great glory if we can take them."

Thus did they converse, but the other two had now driven close up to them, and the son of Lycaon spoke first. "Great and mighty son," said he, "of noble Tydeus, my arrow failed to lay you low, so I will now try with my spear."

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it from him. It struck the shield of the son of Tydeus; the bronze point pierced it and passed on till it reached the breastplate. Thereon the son of Lycaon shouted out and said, "You are hit clean through the belly; you will not stand out for long, and the glory of the fight is mine."

But Diomed all undismayed made answer, "You have missed, not hit, and before you two see the end of this matter one or other of you shall glut tough-shielded Mars with his blood."

With this he hurled his spear, and Minerva guided it on to Pandarus's nose near the eye. It went crashing in among his white teeth; the bronze point cut through the root of his to tongue, coming out under his chin, and his glistening armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. The horses started aside for fear, and he was reft of life and strength.

Aeneas sprang from his chariot armed with shield and spear, fearing lest the Achaeans should carry off the body. He bestrode it as a lion in the pride of strength, with shield and on spear before him and a cry of battle on his lips resolute to kill the first that should dare face him. But the son of Tydeus caught up a mighty stone, so huge and great that as men now are it would take two to lift it; nevertheless he bore it aloft with ease unaided, and with this he struck Aeneas on the groin where the hip turns in the joint that is called the "cup-bone." The stone crushed this joint, and broke both the sinews, while its jagged edges tore away all the flesh. The hero fell on his knees, and propped himself with his hand resting on the ground till the darkness of night fell upon his eyes. And now Aeneas, king of men, would have perished then and there, had not his mother, Jove's daughter Venus, who had conceived him by Anchises when he was herding cattle, been quick to mark, and thrown her two white arms about the body of her dear son. She protected him by covering him with a fold of her own fair garment, lest some Danaan should drive a spear into his breast and kill him.

Thus, then, did she bear her dear son out of the fight. But the son of Capaneus was not unmindful of the orders that Diomed had given him. He made his own horses fast, away from the hurly-burly, by binding the reins to the rim of the chariot. Then he sprang upon Aeneas's horses and drove them from the Trojan to the Achaean ranks. When he had so done he gave them over to his chosen comrade Deipylus, whom he valued above all others as the one who was most like-minded with himself, to take them on to the ships. He then remounted his own chariot, seized the reins, and drove with all speed in search of the son of Tydeus.

Now the son of Tydeus was in pursuit of the Cyprian goddess, spear in hand, for he knew her to be feeble and not one of those goddesses that can lord it among men in battle like Minerva or Enyo the waster of cities, and when at last after a long chase he caught her up, he flew at her and thrust his spear into the flesh of her delicate hand. The point tore through the ambrosial robe which the Graces had woven for her, and pierced the skin between her wrist and the palm of her hand, so that the immortal blood, or ichor, that flows in the veins of the blessed gods, came pouring from the wound; for the gods do not eat bread nor drink wine, hence they have no blood such as ours, and are immortal. Venus screamed aloud, and let her son fall, but Phoebus Apollo caught him in his arms, and hid him in a cloud of darkness, lest some Danaan should drive a spear into his breast and kill him; and Diomed shouted out as he left her, "Daughter of Jove, leave war and battle alone, can you not be contented with beguiling silly women? If you meddle with fighting you will get what will make you shudder at the very name of war."

The goddess went dazed and discomfited away, and Iris, fleet as the wind, drew her from the throng, in pain and with her fair skin all besmirched. She found fierce Mars waiting on the left of the battle, with his spear and his two fleet steeds resting on a cloud; whereon she fell on her knees before her brother and implored him to let her have his horses. "Dear brother," she cried, "save me, and give me your horses to take me to Olympus where the gods dwell. I am badly wounded by a mortal, the son of Tydeus, who would now fight even with father Jove."

Thus she spoke, and Mars gave her his gold-bedizened steeds. She mounted the chariot sick and sorry at heart, while Iris sat beside her and took the reins in her hand. She lashed her horses on and they flew forward nothing loth, till in a trice they were at high Olympus, where the gods have their dwelling. There she stayed them, unloosed them from the chariot, and gave them their ambrosial forage; but Venus flung herself on to the lap of her mother Dione, who threw her arms about her and caressed her,

saying, “Which of the heavenly beings has been treating you in this way, as though you had been doing something wrong in the face of day?”

And laughter-loving Venus answered, “Proud Diomed, the son of Tydeus, wounded me because I was bearing my dear son Aeneas, whom I love best of all mankind, out of the fight. The war is no longer one between Trojans and Achaeans, for the Danaans have now taken to fighting with the immortals.”

“Bear it, my child,” replied Dione, “and make the best of it. We dwellers in Olympus have to put up with much at the hands of men, and we lay much suffering on one another. Mars had to suffer when Otus and Ephialtes, children of Aloeus, bound him in cruel bonds, so that he lay thirteen months imprisoned in a vessel of bronze. Mars would have then perished had not fair Eeriboea, stepmother to the sons of Aloeus, told Mercury, who stole him away when he was already well-nigh worn out by the severity of his bondage. Juno, again, suffered when the mighty son of Amphitryon wounded her on the right breast with a three-barbed arrow, and nothing could assuage her pain. So, also, did huge Hades, when this same man, the son of aegis-bearing Jove, hit him with an arrow even at the gates of hell, and hurt him badly. Thereon Hades went to the house of Jove on great Olympus, angry and full of pain; and the arrow in his brawny shoulder caused him great anguish till Paeeon healed him by spreading soothing herbs on the wound, for Hades was not of mortal mould. Daring, head-strong, evildoer who recked not of his sin in shooting the gods that dwell in Olympus. And now Minerva has egged this son of Tydeus on against yourself, fool that he is for not reflecting that no man who fights with gods will live long or hear his children prattling about his knees when he returns from battle. Let, then, the son of Tydeus see that he does not have to fight with one who is stronger than you are. Then shall his brave wife Aegialeia, daughter of Adrestus, rouse her whole house from sleep, wailing for the loss of her wedded lord, Diomed the bravest of the Achaeans.”

So saying, she wiped the ichor from the wrist of her daughter with both hands, whereon the pain left her, and her hand was healed. But Minerva and Juno, who were looking on, began to taunt Jove with their mocking talk, and Minerva was first to speak. “Father Jove,” said she, “do not be angry with me, but I think the Cyprian must have been persuading some one of the Achaean women to go with the Trojans of whom she is so very fond, and while caressing one or other of them she must have torn her delicate hand with the gold pin of the woman’s brooch.”

The sire of gods and men smiled, and called golden Venus to his side. “My child,” said he, “it has not been given you to be a warrior. Attend, henceforth, to your own delightful matrimonial duties, and leave all this fighting to Mars and to Minerva.”

Thus did they converse. But Diomed sprang upon Aeneas, though he knew him to be in the very arms of Apollo. Not one whit did he fear the mighty god, so set was he on killing Aeneas and stripping him of his armour. Thrice did he spring forward with might and main to slay him, and thrice did Apollo beat back his gleaming shield. When he was coming on for the fourth time, as though he were a god, Apollo shouted to him with an awful voice and said, “Take heed, son of Tydeus, and draw off; think not to match yourself against gods, for men that walk the earth cannot hold their own with the immortals.”

The son of Tydeus then gave way for a little space, to avoid the anger of the god, while Apollo took Aeneas out of the crowd and set him in sacred Pergamus, where his temple stood. There, within the mighty sanctuary, Latona and Diana healed him and made him glorious to behold, while Apollo of the silver bow fashioned a wraith in the likeness of Aeneas, and armed as he was. Round this the Trojans and Achaeans hacked at the bucklers about one another’s breasts, hewing each other’s round shields and light hide-covered targets. Then Phoebus Apollo said to Mars, “Mars, Mars, bane of men, blood-stained stormer of cities, can you not go to this man, the son of Tydeus, who would now fight even with father Jove, and draw him out of the battle? He first went up to the Cyprian and wounded her in the hand near her wrist, and afterwards sprang upon me too, as though he were a god.”

He then took his seat on the top of Pergamus, while murderous Mars went about among the ranks of the Trojans, cheering them on, in the likeness of fleet Acamas chief of the Thracians. “Sons of Priam,” said he, “how long will you let your people be thus slaughtered by the Achaeans? Would you wait till they are at the walls of Troy? Aeneas the son of Anchises has fallen, he whom we held in as high honour as Hector himself. Help me, then, to rescue our brave comrade from the stress of the fight.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Then Sarpedon rebuked Hector very sternly. “Hector,” said he, “where is your prowess now? You used to say that though you had neither people nor allies you could hold the town alone with your brothers and brothers-in-law. I see not one of them here; they cower as hounds before
a lion; it is we, your allies, who bear the brunt of the battle. I have come from afar, even from Lycia and the banks of the river Xanthus, where I have left my wife, my infant son, and much wealth to tempt whoever is needy; nevertheless, I head my Lycian soldiers and stand my ground against any who would fight me though I have nothing here for the Achaeans to plunder, while you

look on, without even bidding your men stand firm in defence of their wives. See that you fall not into the hands of your foes as men caught in the meshes of a net, and they sack your fair city forthwith. Keep this before your mind night and day, and beseech the captains of your allies to hold on without flinching, and thus put away their reproaches from you."

So spoke Sarpedon, and Hector smarted under his words. He sprang from his chariot clad in his suit of armour, and went about among the host brandishing his two spears, exhorting the men to fight and raising the terrible cry of battle. Then they rallied and again faced the Achaeans, but the Argives stood compact and firm, and were not driven back. As the breezes sport with the chaff upon some goodly threshing-floor, when men are winnowing while yellow Ceres blows with the wind to sift the chaff from the grain, and the chaff heaps grow whiter and whiter even so did the Achaeans whiten in the dust which the horses' hoofs raised to the firmament of heaven, as their drivers turned them back to battle, and they bore down with might upon the foe. Fierce Mars, to help the Trojans, covered them in a veil of darkness, and went about everywhere among them, inasmuch as Phoebus Apollo had told him that when he saw Pallas, Minerva leave the fray he was to put courage into the hearts of the Trojans for it was she who was helping the Danaans. Then Apollo sent Aeneas forth from his rich sanctuary, and filled his heart with valour, whereon he took his place among his comrades, who were overjoyed at seeing him alive, sound, and of a good courage; but they could not ask him how it had all happened, for they were too busy with the turmoil raised by Mars and by Strife, who raged insatiably in their midst.

The two Ajaxes, Ulysses and Diomed, cheered the Danaans on, fearless of the fury and onset of the Trojans. They stood as still as clouds which the son of Saturn has spread upon the mountain tops when there is no air and fierce Boreas sleeps with the other boisterous winds whose shrill blasts scatter the clouds in all directions even so did the Danaans stand firm and unflinching against the Trojans. The son of Atreus went about among them and exhorted them. "My friends," said he, "quit yourselves like brave men, and shun dishonour in one another's eyes amid the stress of battle. They that shun dishonour more often live than get killed, but they that fly save neither life nor name."

As he spoke he hurled his spear and hit one of those who were in the front rank, the comrade of Aeneas, Deicoon son of Pergasus, whom the Trojans held in no less honour than the sons of Priam, for he was ever quick to place himself among the foremost. The spear of King Agamemnon struck his shield and went right through it, for the shield stayed it not. It drove through his belt into the lower part of his belly, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground.

Then Aeneas killed two champions of the Danaans, Crethon and Orsilochus. Their father was a rich man who lived in the strong city of Phere and was descended from the river Alpheus, whose broad stream flows through the land of the Pylians. The river begat Orsilochus, who ruled over much people and was father to Diocles, who in his turn begat twin sons, Crethon and Orsilochus, well skilled in all the arts of war. These, when they grew up, went to Ilius with the Argive fleet in the cause of Menelaus and Agamemnon sons of Atreus, and there they both of them fell. As two lions whom their dam has reared in the depths of some mountain forest to plunder homesteads and carry off sheep and cattle till they get killed by the hand of man, so were these two vanquished by Aeneas, and fell like high pine-trees to the ground.

Brave Menelaus pitied them in their fall, and made his way to the front, clad in gleaming bronze and brandishing his spear, for Mars egged him on to do so with intent that he should be killed by Aeneas; but Antilochus the son of Nestor saw him and sprang forward, fearing that the king might come to harm and thus bring all their labour to nothing; when, therefore Aeneas and Menelaus were setting their hands and spears against one another eager to do battle, Antilochus placed himself by the side of Menelaus. Aeneas, bold though he was, drew back on seeing the two heroes side by side in front of him, so they drew the bodies of Crethon and Orsilochus to the ranks of the Achaeans and committed the two poor fellows into the hands of their comrades. They then turned back and fought in the front ranks.

They killed Pylaemenes peer of Mars, leader of the Paphlagonian warriors. Menelaus struck him on the collar-bone as he was standing on his chariot, while Antilochus hit his charioteer and squire Mydon, the son of Atymnius, who was turning his horses in flight. He hit him with a stone upon the elbow, and the reins, enriched with white ivory, fell from his hands into the dust. Antilochus rushed towards him and struck him on the temples with his sword, whereon he fell head first from the chariot to the ground. There he stood for a while with his head and shoulders buried deep in the dust for he had fallen on sandy soil till his horses kicked him and laid him flat on the ground, as Antilochus lashed them and drove them off to the host of the Achaeans.

But Hector marked them from across the ranks, and with a loud cry rushed towards them, followed by the strong battalions of the Trojans. Mars and dread Enyo led them on, she fraught with ruthless turmoil of battle, while Mars wielded a monstrous spear, and went about, now in front of Hector and now behind him.

Diomed shook with passion as he saw them. As a man crossing a wide plain is dismayed to find himself on the brink of some great river rolling swiftly to the sea he sees its boiling waters and starts back in fear even so did the son of Tydeus give ground. Then he said to his men, “My friends, how can we wonder that Hector wields the spear so well? Some god is ever by his side to protect him, and now Mars is with him in the likeness of mortal man. Keep your faces therefore towards the Trojans, but give ground backwards, for we dare not fight with gods.”

As he spoke the Trojans drew close up, and Hector killed two men, both in one chariot, Menesthes and Anchialus, heroes well versed in war. Ajax son of Telamon pitied them in their fall; he came close up and hurled his spear, hitting Amphius the son of Selagus, a man of great wealth who lived in Paesus and owned much corn-growing land, but his lot had led him to come to the aid of Priam and his sons. Ajax struck him in the belt; the spear pierced the lower part of his belly, and he fell heavily to the ground. Then Ajax ran towards him to strip him of his armour, but the Trojans rained spears upon him, many of which fell upon his shield. He planted his heel upon the body and drew out his spear, but the darts pressed so heavily upon him that he could not strip the goodly armour from his shoulders. The Trojan chieftains, moreover, many and valiant, came about him with their spears, so that he dared not stay; great, brave and valiant though he was, they drove him from them and he was beaten back.

Thus, then, did the battle rage between them. Presently the strong hand of fate impelled Tlepolemus, the son of Hercules, a man both brave and of great stature, to fight Sarpedon; so the two, son and grandson of great Jove, drew near to one another, and Tlepolemus spoke first. “Sarpedon,” said he, “councillor of the Lycians, why should you come skulking here you who are a man of peace? They lie who call you son of aegis-bearing Jove, for you are little like those who were of old his children. Far other was Hercules, my own brave and lion-hearted father, who came here for the horses of Laomedon, and though he had six ships only, and few men to follow him, sacked the city of Ilius and made a wilderness of her highways. You are a coward, and your people are falling from you. For all your strength, and all your coming from Lycia, you will be no help to the Trojans but will pass the gates of Hades vanquished by my hand.”

And Sarpedon, captain of the Lycians, answered, “Tlepolemus, your father overthrew Ilius by reason of Laomedon’s folly in refusing payment to one who had served him well. He would not give your father the horses which he had come so far to fetch. As for yourself, you shall meet death by my spear. You shall yield glory to myself, and your soul to Hades of the noble steeds.”

Thus spoke Sarpedon, and Tlepolemus upraised his spear. They threw at the same moment, and Sarpedon struck his foe in the middle of his throat; the spear went right through, and the darkness of death fell upon his eyes. Tlepolemus’s spear struck Sarpedon on the left thigh with such force that it tore through the flesh and grazed the bone, but his father as yet warded off destruction from him.

His comrades bore Sarpedon out of the fight, in great pain by the weight of the spear that was dragging from his wound. They were in such haste and stress as they bore him that no one thought of drawing the spear from his thigh so as to let him walk uprightly. Meanwhile the Achaeans carried off the body of Tlepolemus, whereon Ulysses was moved to pity, and panted for the fray as he beheld them. He doubted whether to pursue the son of Jove, or to make slaughter of the Lycian rank and file; it was not decreed, however, that he should slay the son of Jove; Minerva, therefore, turned him against the main body of the Lycians. He killed Coeranus, Alastor, Chromius, Alcandrus, Halius, Noemon, and Prytanis, and would have slain yet more, had not great Hector marked him, and sped to the front of the fight clad in his suit of mail, filling the Danaans with terror. Sarpedon was glad when he saw him coming, and besought him, saying, “Son of Priam, let me not he here to fall into the hands of the Danaans. Help me, and since I may not return home to gladden the hearts of my wife and of my infant son, let me die within the walls of your city.”

Hector made him no answer, but rushed onward to fall at once upon the Achaeans and. kill many among them. His comrades then bore Sarpedon away and laid him beneath Jove’s spreading oak tree. Pelagon, his friend and comrade drew the spear out of his thigh, but Sarpedon fainted and a mist came over his eyes. Presently he came to himself again, for the breath of the north wind as it played upon him gave him new life, and brought him out of the deep swoon into which he had fallen.

Meanwhile the Argives were neither driven towards their ships by Mars and Hector, nor yet did they attack them; when they knew that Mars was with the Trojans they retreated, but kept their faces still turned towards the foe. Who, then, was first and who last to be slain by Mars and Hector? They were valiant Teuthras, and Orestes the renowned charioteer, Trechus the Aetolian warrior, Oenomaus, Helenus the son of Oenops, and Oresbius of the gleaming girdle, who was possessed of great wealth, and dwelt by the Cephisian lake with the other Boeotians who lived near him, owners of a fertile country.

Now when the goddess Juno saw the Argives thus falling, she said to Minerva, “Alas, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, the promise we made Menelaus that he should not return till he had sacked the city of Ilius will be of none effect if we let Mars rage thus furiously. Let us go into the fray at once.”

Minerva did not gainsay her. Thereon the august goddess, daughter of great Saturn, began to harness her gold-bedizened steeds. Hebe with all speed fitted on the eight-spoked wheels of bronze that were on either side of the iron axle-tree. The felloes of the wheels were of gold, imperishable, and over these there was a tire of bronze, wondrous to behold. The naves of the wheels were silver, turning round the axle upon either side. The car itself was made with plaited bands of gold and silver, and it had a double top-rail running all round it. From the body of the car there went a pole of silver, on to the end of which she bound the golden yoke, with the bands of gold that were to go under the necks of the horses Then Juno put her steeds under the yoke, eager for battle and the war-cry.

Meanwhile Minerva flung her richly embroidered vesture, made with her own hands, on to her father’s threshold, and donned the shirt of Jove, arming herself for battle. She threw her tasselled aegis about her shoulders, wreathed round with Rout as with a fringe, and on it were Strife, and Strength, and Panic whose blood runs cold; moreover there was the head of the dread monster Gorgon, grim and awful to behold, portent of aegis-bearing Jove. On her head she set her helmet of gold, with four plumes, and coming to a peak both in front and behind decked with the emblems of a hundred cities; then she stepped into her flaming chariot and grasped the spear, so stout

and sturdy and strong, with which she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her. Juno lashed the horses on, and the gates of heaven bellowed as they flew open of their own accord gates over which the flours preside, in whose hands are Heaven and Olympus, either to open the dense cloud that hides them, or to close it. Through these the goddesses drove their obedient steeds, and found the son of Saturn sitting all alone on the topmost ridges of Olympus. There Juno stayed her horses, and spoke to Jove the son of Saturn, lord of all. “Father Jove,” said she, “are you not angry with Mars for these high doings? how great and goodly a host of the Achaeans he has destroyed to my great grief, and without either right or reason, while the Cyprian and Apollo are enjoying it all at their ease and setting this unrighteous madman on to do further mischief. I hope, Father Jove, that you will not be angry if I hit Mars hard, and chase him out of the battle.”

And Jove answered, “Set Minerva on to him, for she punishes him more often than any one else does.”

Juno did as he had said. She lashed her horses, and they flew forward nothing loth midway betwixt earth and sky. As far as a man can see when he looks out upon the sea from some high beacon, so far can the loud-neighing horses of the gods spring at a single bound. When they reached Troy and the place where its two flowing streams Simois and Scamander meet, there Juno stayed them and took them from the chariot. She hid them in a thick cloud, and Simois made ambrosia spring up for them to eat; the two goddesses then went on, flying like turtledoves in their eagerness to help the Argives. When they came to the part where the bravest and most in number were gathered about mighty Diomed, fighting like lions or wild boars of great strength and endurance, there Juno stood still and raised a shout like that of brazen-voiced Stentor, whose cry was as loud as that of fifty men together. “Argives,” she cried; “shame on cowardly creatures, brave in semblance only; as long as Achilles was fighting, fi his spear was so deadly that the Trojans dared not show themselves outside the Dardanian gates, but now they sally far from the city and fight even at your ships.”

With these words she put heart and soul into them all, while Minerva sprang to the side of the son of Tydeus, whom she found near his chariot and horses, cooling the wound that Pandarus had given him. For the sweat caused by the hand that bore the weight of his shield irritated the hurt: his arm was weary with pain, and he was lifting up the strap to wipe away the blood. The goddess laid her hand on the yoke of his horses and said, “The son of Tydeus is not such another as his father. Tydeus was a little man, but he could fight, and rushed madly into the fray even when I told him not to do so. When he went all unattended as envoy to the city of Thebes among the Cadmeans, I bade him feast in their houses and be at peace; but with that high spirit which was ever present with him, he challenged the youth of the Cadmeans, and at once beat them in all that he attempted, so mightily did I help him. I stand by you too to protect you, and I bid you be instant in fighting the Trojans; but either you are tired out, or you are afraid and out of heart, and in that case I say that you are no true son of Tydeus the son of Oeneus.”

Diomed answered, “I know you, goddess, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, and will hide nothing from you. I am not afraid nor out of heart, nor is there any slackness in me. I am only following your own instructions; you told me not to fight any of the blessed

gods; but if Jove's daughter Venus came into battle I was to wound her with my spear. Therefore I am retreating, and bidding the other Argives gather in this place, for I know that Mars is now lording it in the field."

"Diomed, son of Tydeus," replied Minerva, "man after my own heart, fear neither Mars nor any other of the immortals, for I will befriend you. Nay, drive straight at Mars, and smite him in close combat; fear not this raging madman, villain incarnate, first on one side and then on the other. But now he was holding talk with Juno and myself, saying he would help the Argives and attack the Trojans; nevertheless he is with the Trojans, and has forgotten the Argives."

With this she caught hold of Sthenelus and lifted him off the chariot on to the ground. In a second he was on the ground, whereupon the goddess mounted the car and placed herself by the side of Diomed. The oaken axle groaned aloud under the burden of the awful goddess and the hero; Pallas Minerva took the whip and reins, and drove straight at Mars. He was in the act of stripping huge Periphas, son of Ochesius and bravest of the Aetolians. Bloody Mars was stripping him of his armour, and Minerva donned the helmet of Hades, that he might not see her; when, therefore, he saw Diomed, he made straight for him and let Periphas lie where he had fallen. As soon as they were at close quarters he let fly with his bronze spear over the reins and yoke, thinking to take Diomed's life, but Minerva caught the spear in her hand and made it fly harmlessly over the chariot. Diomed then threw, and Pallas Minerva drove the spear into the pit of Mars's stomach where his under-girdle went round him. There Diomed wounded him, tearing his fair flesh and then drawing his spear out again. Mars roared as loudly as nine or ten thousand men in the thick of a fight, and the Achaeans and Trojans were struck with panic, so terrible was the cry he raised.

As a dark cloud in the sky when it comes on to blow after heat, even so did Diomed son of Tydeus see Mars ascend into the broad heavens. With all speed he reached high Olympus, home of the gods, and in great pain sat down beside Jove the son of Saturn. He showed Jove the immortal blood that was flowing from his wound, and spoke piteously, saying, "Father Jove, are you not angered by such doings? We gods are continually suffering in the most cruel manner at one another's hands while helping mortals; and we all owe you a grudge for having begotten that mad termagant of a daughter, who is always committing outrage of some kind. We other gods must all do as you bid us, but her you neither scold nor punish; you encourage her because the pestilent creature is your daughter. See how she has been inciting proud Diomed to vent his rage on the immortal gods. First he went up to the Cyprian and wounded her in the hand near her wrist, and then he sprang upon me too as though he were a god. Had I not run for it I must either have lain there for long enough in torments among the ghastly corpes, or have been eaten alive with spears till I had no more strength left in me."

Jove looked angrily at him and said, "Do not come whining here, Sir Facing-bothways. I hate you worst of all the gods in Olympus, for you are ever fighting and making mischief. You have the intolerable and stubborn spirit of your mother Juno: it is all I can do to manage her, and it is her doing that you are now in this plight: still, I cannot let you remain longer in such great pain; you are my own off-spring, and it was by me that your mother conceived you; if, however, you had been the son of any other god, you are so destructive that by this time you should have been lying lower than the Titans."

He then bade Paeeon heal him, whereon Paeeon spread pain-killing herbs upon his wound and cured him, for he was not of mortal mould. As the juice of the fig-tree curdles milk, and thickens it in a moment though it is liquid, even so instantly did Paeeon cure fierce Mars. Then Hebe washed him, and clothed him in goodly raiment, and he took his seat by his father Jove all glorious to behold.

But Juno of Argos and Minerva of Alalcomene, now that they had put a stop to the murderous doings of Mars, went back again to the house of Jove.

Book VI

THE fight between Trojans and Achaeans was now left to rage as it would, and the tide of war surged hither and thither over the plain as they aimed their bronze-shod spears at one another between the streams of Simois and Xanthus.

First, Ajax son of Telamon, tower of strength to the Achaeans, broke a phalanx of the Trojans, and came to the assistance of his comrades by killing Acamas son of Eussorus, the best man among the Thracians, being both brave and of great stature. The spear struck the projecting peak of his helmet: its bronze point then went through his forehead into the brain, and darkness veiled his eyes.

Then Diomed killed Axylus son of Teuthranus, a rich man who lived in the strong city of Arisbe, and was beloved by all men; for he had a house by the roadside, and entertained every one who passed; howbeit not one of his guests stood before him to save his

life, and Diomed killed both him and his squire Calesius, who was then his charioteer so the pair passed beneath the earth.

Euryalus killed Dresus and Opheltius, and then went in pursuit of Aesepus and Pedasus, whom the naiad nymph Abarbarea had borne to noble Bucolion. Bucolion was eldest son to Laomedon, but he was a bastard. While tending his sheep he had converse with the nymph, and she conceived twin sons; these the son of Mecisteus now slew, and he stripped the armour from their shoulders. Polypoetes then killed Astyalus, Ulysses Pidytes of Percote, and Teucer Aretaon. Ablerus fell by the spear of Nestor's son Antilochus, and Agamemnon, king of men, killed Elatus who dwelt in Pedasus by the banks of the river Satnioeis. Leitus killed Phylacus as he was flying, and Eurypylus slew Melanthus.

Then Menelaus of the loud war-cry took Adrestus alive, for his horses ran into a tamarisk bush, as they were flying wildly over the plain, and broke the pole from the car; they went on towards the city along with the others in full flight, but Adrestus rolled out, and fell in the dust flat on his face by the wheel of his chariot; Menelaus came up to him spear in hand, but Adrestus caught him by the knees begging for his life. "Take me alive," he cried, "son of Atreus, and you shall have a full ransom for me: my father is rich and has much treasure of gold, bronze, and wrought iron laid by in his house. From this store he will give you a large ransom should he hear of my being alive and at the ships of the Achaeans."

Thus did he plead, and Menelaus was for yielding and giving him to a squire to take to the ships of the Achaeans, but Agamemnon came running up to him and rebuked him. "My good Menelaus," said he, "this is no time for giving quarter. Has, then, your house fared so well at the hands of the Trojans? Let us not spare a single one of them not even the child unborn and in its mother's womb; let not a man of them be left alive, but let all in Ilius perish, unheeded and forgotten."

Thus did he speak, and his brother was persuaded by him, for his words were just. Menelaus, therefore, thrust Adrestus from him, whereon King Agamemnon struck him in the flank, and he fell: then the son of Atreus planted his foot upon his breast to draw his spear from the body.

Meanwhile Nestor shouted to the Argives, saying, "My friends, Danaan warriors, servants of Mars, let no man lag that he may spoil the dead, and bring back much booty to the ships. Let us kill as many as we can; the bodies will lie upon the plain, and you can despoil them later at your leisure."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. And now the Trojans would have been routed and driven back into Ilius, had not Priam's son Helenus, wisest of augurs, said to Hector and Aeneas, "Hector and Aeneas, you two are the mainstays of the Trojans and Lycians, for you are foremost at all times, alike in fight and counsel; hold your ground here, and go about among the host to rally them in front of the gates, or they will fling themselves into the arms of their wives, to the great joy of our foes. Then, when you have put heart into all our companies, we will stand firm here and fight the Danaans however hard they press us, for there is nothing else to be done. Meanwhile do you, Hector, go to the city and tell our mother what is happening. Tell her to bid the matrons gather at the temple of Minerva in the acropolis; let her then take her key and open the doors of the sacred building; there, upon the knees of Minerva, let her lay the largest, fairest robe she has in her house the one she sets most store by; let her, moreover, promise to sacrifice twelve yearling heifers that have never yet felt the goad, in the temple of the goddess, if she will take pity on the town, with the wives and little ones of the Trojans, and keep the son of Tydeus from falling on the goodly city of Ilius; for he fights with fury and fills men's souls with panic. I hold him mightiest of them all; we did not fear even their great champion Achilles, son of a goddess though he be, as we do this man: his rage is beyond all bounds, and there is none can vie with him in prowess"

Hector did as his brother bade him. He sprang from his chariot, and went about everywhere among the host, brandishing his spears, urging the men on to fight, and raising the dread cry of battle. Thereon they rallied and again faced the Achaeans, who gave ground and ceased their murderous onset, for they deemed that some one of the immortals had come down from starry heaven to help the Trojans, so strangely had they rallied. And Hector shouted to the Trojans, "Trojans and allies, be men, my friends, and fight with might and main, while I go to Ilius and tell the old men of our council and our wives to pray to the gods and vow hecatombs in their honour."

With this he went his way, and the black rim of hide that went round his shield beat against his neck and his ankles.

Then Glaucus son of Hippolochus, and the son of Tydeus went into the open space between the hosts to fight in single combat. When they were close up to one another Diomed of the loud war-cry was the first to speak. "Who, my good sir," said he, "who are you among men? I have never seen you in battle until now, but you are daring beyond all others if you abide my onset. Woe to

those fathers whose sons face my might. If, however, you are one of the immortals and have come down from heaven, I will not fight you; for even valiant Lycurgus, son of Dryas, did not live long when he took to fighting with the gods. He it was that drove the nursing women who were in charge
of frenzied Bacchus through the land of Nysa, and they flung their thyrsi on the ground as murderous Lycurgus beat them with his oxgoad. Bacchus himself plunged terror-stricken into the sea, and Thetis took him to her bosom to comfort him, for he was scared by the fury with which the man reviled him. Thereon the gods who live at ease were angry with Lycurgus and the son of Saturn struck him blind, nor did he live much longer after he had become hateful to the immortals. Therefore I will not fight with the blessed gods; but if you are of them that eat the fruit of the ground, draw near and meet your doom."

And the son of Hippolochus answered, son of Tydeus, why ask me of my lineage? Men come and go as leaves year by year upon the trees. Those of autumn the wind sheds upon the ground, but when spring returns the forest buds forth with fresh vines. Even so is it with the generations of mankind, the new spring up as the old are passing away. If, then, you would learn my descent, it is one that is well known to many. There is a city in the heart of Argos, pasture land of horses, called Ephyra, where Sisyphus lived, who was the craftiest of all mankind. He was the son of Aeolus, and had a son named Glaucus, who was father to Bellerophon, whom heaven endowed with the most surpassing comeliness and beauty. But Proetus devised his ruin, and being stronger than he, drove him from the land of the Argives, over which Jove had made him ruler. For Antea, wife of Proetus, lusted after him, and would have had him lie with her in secret; but Bellerophon was an honourable man and would not, so she told lies about him to Proteus. 'Proetus,' said she, 'kill Bellerophon or die, for he would have had converse with me against my will.' The king was angered, but shrank from killing Bellerophon, so he sent him to Lycia with lying letters of introduction, written on a folded tablet, and containing much ill against the bearer. He bade Bellerophon show these letters to his father-in-law, to the end that he might thus perish; Bellerophon therefore went to Lycia, and the gods convoyed him safely.

"When he reached the river Xanthus, which is in Lycia, the king received him with all goodwill, feasted him nine days, and killed nine heifers in his honour, but when rosy-fingered morning appeared upon the tenth day, he questioned him and desired to see the letter from his son-in-law Proetus. When he had received the wicked letter he first commanded Bellerophon to kill that savage monster, the Chimaera, who was not a human being, but a goddess, for she had the head of a lion and the tail of a serpent, while her body was that of a goat, and she breathed forth flames of fire; but Bellerophon slew her, for he was guided by signs from heaven. He next fought the far-famed Solymi, and this, he said, was the hardest of all his battles. Thirdly, he killed the Amazons, women who were the peers of men, and as he was returning thence the king devised yet another plan for his destruction; he picked the bravest warriors in all Lycia, and placed them in ambuscade, but not a man ever came back, for Bellerophon killed every one of them. Then the king knew that he must be the valiant offspring of a god, so he kept him in Lycia, gave him his daughter in marriage, and made him of equal honour in the kingdom with himself; and the Lycians gave him a piece of land, the best in all the country, fair with vineyards and tilled fields, to have and to hold.

"The king's daughter bore Bellerophon three children, Isander, Hippolochus, and Laodameia. Jove, the lord of counsel, lay with Laodameia, and she bore him noble Sarpedon; but when Bellerophon came to be hated by all the gods, he wandered all desolate and dismayed upon the Alean plain, gnawing at his own heart, and shunning the path of man. Mars, insatiate of battle, killed his son Isander while he was fighting the Solymi; his daughter was killed by Diana of the golden reins, for she was angered with her; but Hippolochus was father to myself, and when he sent me to Troy he urged me again and again to fight ever among the foremost and outvie my peers, so as not to shame the blood of my fathers who were the noblest in Ephyra and in all Lycia. This, then, is the descent I claim."

Thus did he speak, and the heart of Diomed was glad. He planted his spear in the ground, and spoke to him with friendly words. "Then," he said, you are an old friend of my father's house. Great Oeneus once entertained Bellerophon for twenty days, and the two exchanged presents. Oeneus gave a belt rich with purple, and Bellerophon a double cup, which I left at home when I set out for Troy. I do not remember Tydeus, for he was taken from us while I was yet a child, when the army of the Achaeans was cut to pieces before Thebes. Henceforth, however, I must be your host in middle Argos, and you mine in Lycia, if I should ever go there; let us avoid one another's spears even during a general engagement; there are many noble Trojans and allies whom I can kill, if I overtake them and heaven delivers them into my hand; so again with yourself, there are many Achaeans whose lives you may take if you can; we two, then, will exchange armour, that all present may know of the old ties that subsist between us."

With these words they sprang from their chariots, grasped one another's hands, and plighted friendship. But the son of Saturn made Glaucus take leave of his wits, for he exchanged golden armour for bronze, the worth of a hundred head of cattle for the worth of

nine.

Now when Hector reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree, the wives and daughters of the Trojans came running towards him to ask after their sons, brothers, kinsmen, and husbands: he told them to set about praying to the gods, and many were made sorrowful as they heard him.

Presently he reached the splendid palace of King Priam, adorned with colonnades of hewn stone. In it there were fifty bedchambers all of hewn stone built near one another, where the sons of Priam slept, each with his wedded wife. Opposite these, on the other side the courtyard, there were twelve upper rooms also of hewn stone for Priam's daughters, built near one another, where his sons-in-law slept with their wives. When Hector got there, his fond mother came up to him with Laodice the fairest of her daughters. She took his hand within her own and said, "My son, why have you left the battle to come hither? Are the Achaeans, woe betide them, pressing you hard about the city that you have thought fit to come and uplift your hands to Jove from the citadel? Wait till I can bring you wine that you may make offering to Jove and to the other immortals, and may then drink and be refreshed. Wine gives a man fresh strength when he is wearied, as you now are with fighting on behalf of your kinsmen."

And Hector answered, "Honoured mother, bring no wine, lest you unman me and I forget my strength. I dare not make a drink-offering to Jove with unwashed hands; one who is bespattered with blood and filth may not pray to the son of Saturn. Get the matrons together, and go with offerings to the temple of Minerva driver of the spoil; there, upon the knees of Minerva, lay the largest and fairest robe you have in your house the one you set most store by; promise, moreover, to sacrifice twelve yearling heifers that have never yet felt the goad, in the temple of the goddess if she will take pity on the town, with the wives and little ones of the Trojans, and keep the son of Tydeus from off the goodly city of Ilius, for he fights with fury, and fills men's souls with panic. Go, then, to the temple of Minerva, while I seek Paris and exhort him, if he will hear my words. Would that the earth might open her jaws and swallow him, for Jove bred him to be the bane of the Trojans, and of Priam and Priam's sons. Could I but see him go down into the house of Hades, my heart would forget its heaviness."

His mother went into the house and called her waiting-women who gathered the matrons throughout the city. She then went down into her fragrant store-room, where her embroidered robes were kept, the work of Sidonian women, whom Alexandrus had brought over from Sidon when he sailed the seas upon that voyage during which he carried off Helen. Hecuba took out the largest robe, and the one that was most beautifully enriched with embroidery, as an offering to Minerva: it glittered like a star, and lay at the very bottom of the chest. With this she went on her way and many matrons with her.

When they reached the temple of Minerva, lovely Theano, daughter of Cisseus and wife of Antenor, opened the doors, for the Trojans had made her priestess of Minerva. The women lifted up their hands to the goddess with a loud cry, and Theano took the robe to lay it upon the knees of Minerva, praying the while to the daughter of great Jove. "Holy Minerva," she cried, "protectress of our city, mighty goddess, break the spear of Diomed and lay him low before the Scaean gates. Do this, and we will sacrifice twelve heifers that have never yet known the goad, in your temple, if you will have pity upon the town, with the wives and little ones If the Trojans." Thus she prayed, but Pallas Minerva granted not her prayer.

While they were thus praying to the daughter of great Jove, Hector went to the fair house of Alexandrus, which he had built for him by the foremost builders in the land. They had built him his house, storehouse, and courtyard near those of Priam and Hector on the acropolis. Here Hector entered, with a spear eleven cubits long in his hand; the bronze point gleamed in front of him, and was fastened to the shaft of the spear by a ring of gold. He found Alexandrus within the house, busied about his armour, his shield and cuirass, and handling his curved bow; there, too, sat Argive Helen with her women, setting them their several tasks; and as Hector saw him he rebuked him with words of scorn. "Sir," said he, "you do ill to nurse this rancour; the people perish fighting round this our town; you would yourself chide one whom you saw shirking his part in the combat. Up then, or ere long the city will be in a blaze."

And Alexandrus answered, "Hector, your rebuke is just; listen therefore, and believe me when I tell you that I am not here so much through rancour or ill-will towards the Trojans, as from a desire to indulge my grief. My wife was even now gently urging me to battle, and I hold it better that I should go, for victory is ever fickle. Wait, then, while I put on my armour, or go first and I will follow. I shall be sure to overtake you."

Hector made no answer, but Helen tried to soothe him. "Brother," said she, "to my abhorred and sinful self, would that a whirlwind had caught me up on the day my mother brought me forth, and had borne me to some mountain or to the waves of the roaring sea that should have swept me away ere this mischief had come about. But, since the gods have devised these evils, would, at any rate,

that I had been wife to a better man to one who could smart under dishonour and men's evil speeches. This fellow was never yet to be depended upon, nor never will be, and he will surely reap what he has sown. Still, brother, come in and rest upon this seat, for it is you who bear the brunt of that toil that has been caused by my hateful self and by the sin of Alexandrus both of whom Jove has doomed to be a theme of song among those that shall be born hereafter."

And Hector answered, "Bid me not be seated, Helen, for all the goodwill you bear me. I cannot stay. I am in haste to help the Trojans, who miss me greatly when I am not among them; but urge your husband, and of his own self also let him make haste to overtake me before I am out of the city. I must go home to see my household, my wife and my little son, for I know not whether I shall ever again return to them, or whether the gods will cause me to fill by the hands of the Achaeans."

Then Hector left her, and forthwith was at his own house. He did not find Andromache, for she was on the wall with her child and one of her maids, weeping bitterly. Seeing, then, that she was not within, he stood on the threshold of the women's rooms and said, "Women, tell me, and tell me true, where did Andromache go when she left the house? Was it to my sisters, or to my brothers' wives? or is she at the temple of Minerva where the other women are propitiating the awful goddess?"

His good housekeeper answered, "Hector, since you bid me tell you truly, she did not go to your sisters nor to your brothers' wives, nor yet to the temple of Minerva, where the other women are propitiating the awful goddess, but she is on the high wall of Ilius, for she had heard the Trojans were being hard pressed, and that the Achaeans were in great force: she went to the wall in frenzied haste, and the nurse went with her carrying the child."

Hector hurried from the house when she had done speaking, and went down the streets by the same way that he had come. When he had gone through the city and had reached the Scaean gates through which he would go out on to the plain, his wife came running towards him, Andromache, daughter of great Eetion who ruled in Thebe under the wooded slopes of Mt. Placus, and was king of the Cilicians. His daughter had married Hector, and now came to meet him with a nurse who carried his little child in her bosom a mere babe. Hector's darling son, and lovely as a star. Hector had named him Scamandrius, but the people called him Astyanax, for his father stood alone as chief guardian of Ilius. Hector smiled as he looked upon the boy, but he did not speak, and Andromache stood by him weeping and taking his hand in her own. "Dear husband," said she, "your valour will bring you to destruction; think on your infant son, and on my hapless self who ere long shall be your widow for the Achaeans will set upon you in a body and kill you. It would be better for me, should I lose you, to lie dead and buried, for I shall have nothing left to comfort me when you are gone, save only sorrow. I have neither father nor mother now. Achilles slew my father when he sacked Thebe the goodly city of the Cilicians. He slew him, but did not for very shame despoil him; when he had burned him in his wondrous armour, he raised a barrow over his ashes and the mountain nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Jove, planted a grove of elms about his tomb. I had seven brothers in my father's house, but on the same day they all went within the house of Hades. Achilles killed them as they were with their sheep and cattle. My mother her who had been queen of all the land under Mt. Placus he brought hither with the spoil, and freed her for a great sum, but the archer queen Diana took her in the house of your father. Nay Hector you who to me are father, mother, brother, and dear husband have mercy upon me; stay here upon this wall; make not your child fatherless, and your wife a widow; as for the host, place them near the fig-tree, where the city can be best scaled, and the wall is weakest. Thrice have the bravest of them come thither and assailed it, under the two Ajaxes, Idomeneus, the sons of Atreus, and the brave son of Tydeus, either of their own bidding, or because some soothsayer had told them."

And Hector answered, "Wife, I too have thought upon all this, but with what face should I look upon the Trojans, men or women, if I shirked battle like a coward? I cannot do so: I know nothing save to fight bravely in the forefront of the Trojan host and win renown alike for my father and myself. Well do I know that the day will surely come when mighty Ilius shall be destroyed with Priam and Priam's people, but I grieve for none of these not even for Hecuba, nor King Priam, nor for my brothers many and brave who may fall in the dust before their foes for none of these do I grieve as for yourself when the day shall come on which some one of the Achaeans shall rob
you for ever of your freedom, and bear you weeping away. It may be that you will have to ply the loom in Argos at the bidding of a mistress, or to fetch water from the springs Messeis or Hypereia, treated brutally by some cruel task-master; then will one say who sees you weeping, 'She was wife to Hector, the bravest warrior among the Trojans during the war before Ilius.' On this your tears will break forth anew for him who would have put away the day of captivity from you. May I lie dead under the barrow that is heaped over my body ere I hear your cry as they carry you into bondage."

He stretched his arms towards his child, but the boy cried and nestled in his nurse's bosom, scared at the sight of his father's armour, and at the horse-hair plume that nodded fiercely from his helmet. His father and mother laughed to see him, but Hector

took the helmet from his head and laid it all gleaming upon the ground. Then he took his darling child, kissed him, and dandled him in his arms, praying over him the while to Jove and to all the gods. “Jove,” he cried, “grant that this my child may be even as myself, chief among the Trojans; let him be not less excellent in strength, and let him rule Ilius with his might. Then may one say of him as he comes from battle, ‘The son is far better than the father.’ May he bring back the blood-stained spoils of him whom he has laid low, and let his mother’s heart be glad.’”

With this he laid the child again in the arms of his wife, who took him to her own soft bosom, smiling through her tears. As her husband watched her his heart yearned towards her and he caressed her fondly, saying, “My own wife, do not take these things too bitterly to heart. No one can hurry me down to Hades before my time, but if a man’s hour is come, be he brave or be he coward, there is no escape for him when he has once been born. Go, then, within the house, and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for war is man’s matter, and mine above all others of them that have been born in Ilius.”

He took his plumed helmet from the ground, and his wife went back again to her house, weeping bitterly and often looking back towards him. When she reached her home she found her maidens within, and bade them all join in her lament; so they mourned Hector in his own house though he was yet alive, for they deemed that they should never see him return safe from battle, and from the furious hands of the Achaeans.

Paris did not remain long in his house. He donned his goodly armour overlaid with bronze, and hasted through the city as fast as his feet could take him. As a horse, stabled and fed, breaks loose and gallops gloriously over the plain to the place where he is wont to bathe in the fair-flowing river he holds his head high, and his mane streams upon his shoulders as he exults in his strength and flies like the wind to the haunts and feeding ground of the mares even so went forth Paris from high Pergamus, gleaming like sunlight in his armour, and he laughed aloud as he sped swiftly on his way. Forthwith he came upon his brother Hector, who was then turning away from the place where he had held converse with his wife, and he was himself the first to speak. “Sir,” said he, “I fear that I have kept you waiting when you are in haste, and have not come as quickly as you bade me.”

“My good brother,” answered Hector, “you fight bravely, and no man with any justice can make light of your doings in battle. But you are careless and wilfully remiss. It grieves me to the heart to hear the ill that the Trojans speak about you, for they have suffered much on your account. Let us be going, and we will make things right hereafter, should Jove vouchsafe us to set the cup of our deliverance before ever-living gods of heaven in our own homes, when we have chased the Achaeans from Troy.”

Book VII

WITH these words Hector passed through the gates, and his brother Alexandrus with him, both eager for the fray. As when heaven sends a breeze to sailors who have long looked for one in vain, and have laboured at their oars till they are faint with toil, even so welcome was the sight of these two heroes to the Trojans.

Thereon Alexandrus killed Menesthius the son of Areithous; he lived in Ame, and was son of Areithous the Mace-man, and of Phylomedusa. Hector threw a spear at Eioneus and struck him dead with a wound in the neck under the bronze rim of his helmet. Glaucus, moreover, son of Hippolochus, captain of the Lycians, in hard handto-hand fight smote Iphinous son of Dexius on the shoulder, as he was springing on to his chariot behind his fleet mares; so he fell to earth from the car, and there was no life left in him.

When, therefore, Minerva saw these men making havoc of the Argives, she darted down to Ilius from the summits of Olympus, and Apollo, who was looking on from Pergamus, went out to meet her; for he wanted the Trojans to be victorious. The pair met by the oak tree, and King Apollo son of Jove was first to speak. “What would you have said he, “daughter of great Jove, that your proud spirit has sent you hither from Olympus? Have you no pity upon the Trojans, and would you incline the scales of victory in favour of the Danaans? Let me persuade you for it will be better thus stay the combat for to-day, but let them renew the fight hereafter till they compass the doom of Ilius, since you goddesses have made up your minds to destroy the city.”

And Minerva answered, “So be it, Far-Darter; it was in this mind that I came down from Olympus to the Trojans and Achaeans. Tell me, then, how do you propose to end this present fighting?”

Apollo, son of Jove, replied, “Let us incite great Hector to challenge some one of the Danaans in single combat; on this the Achaeans will be shamed into finding a man who will fight him.”

Minerva assented, and Helenus son of Priam divined the counsel of the gods; he therefore went up to Hector and said, “Hector son of Priam, peer of gods in counsel, I am your brother, let me then persuade you. Bid the other Trojans and Achaeans all of them take their seats, and challenge the best man among the Achaeans to meet you in single combat. I have heard the voice of the ever-living gods, and the hour of your doom is not yet come.”

Hector was glad when he heard this saying, and went in among the Trojans, grasping his spear by the middle to hold them back, and they all sat down. Agamemnon also bade the Achaeans be seated. But Minerva and Apollo, in the likeness of vultures, perched on father Jove’s high oak tree, proud of their men; and the ranks sat close ranged together, bristling with shield and helmet and spear. As when the rising west wind furs the face of the sea and the waters grow dark beneath it, so sat the companies of Trojans and Achaeans upon the plain. And Hector spoke thus:

“Hear me, Trojans and Achaeans, that I may speak even as I am minded; Jove on his high throne has brought our oaths and covenants to nothing, and foreshadows ill for both of us, till you either take the towers of Troy, or are yourselves vanquished at your ships. The princes of the Achaeans are here present in the midst of you; let him, then, that will fight me stand forward as your champion against Hector. Thus I say, and may Jove be witness between us. If your champion slay me, let him strip me of my armour and take it to your ships, but let him send my body home that the Trojans and their wives may give me my dues of fire when I am dead. In like manner, if Apollo vouchsafe me glory and I slay your champion, I will strip him of his armour and take it to the city of Ilius, where I will hang it in the temple of Apollo, but I will give up his body, that the Achaeans may bury him at their ships, and the build him a mound by the wide waters of the Hellespont. Then will one say hereafter as he sails his ship over the sea, ‘This is the monument of one who died long since a champion who was slain by mighty Hector.’ Thus will one say, and my fame shall not be lost.”

Thus did he speak, but they all held their peace, ashamed to decline the challenge, yet fearing to accept it, till at last Menelaus rose and rebuked them, for he was angry. “Alas,” he cried, “vain braggarts, women forsooth not men, double-dyed indeed will be the stain upon us if no man of the Danaans will now face Hector. May you be turned every man of you into earth and water as you sit spiritless and inglorious in your places. I will myself go out against this man, but the upshot of the fight will be from on high in the hands of the immortal gods.”

With these words he put on his armour; and then, O Menelaus, your life would have come to an end at the hands of hands of Hector, for he was far better the man, had not the princes of the Achaeans sprung upon you and checked you. King Agamemnon caught him by the right hand and said, “Menelaus, you are mad; a truce to this folly. Be patient in spite of passion, do not think of fighting a man so much stronger than yourself as Hector son of Priam, who is feared by many another as well as you. Even Achilles, who is far more doughty than you are, shrank from meeting him in battle. Sit down your own people, and the Achaeans will send some other champion to fight Hector; fearless and fond of battle though he be, I ween his knees will bend gladly under him if he comes out alive from the hurly-burly of this fight.”

With these words of reasonable counsel he persuaded his brother, whereon his squires gladly stripped the armour from off his shoulders. Then Nestor rose and spoke, “Of a truth,” said he, “the Achaean land is fallen upon evil times. The old knight Peleus, counsellor and orator among the Myrmidons, loved when I was in his house to question me concerning the race and lineage of all the Argives. How would it not grieve him could he hear of them as now quailing before Hector? Many a time would he lift his hands in prayer that his soul might leave his body and go down within the house of Hades. Would, by father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I were still young and strong as when the Pylians and Arcadians were gathered in fight by the rapid river Celadon under the walls of Pheia, and round about the waters of the river Iardanus. The godlike hero Ereuthalion stood forward as their champion, with the armour of King Areithous upon his shoulders Areithous whom men and women had surnamed ‘the Maceman,’ because he fought neither with bow nor spear, but broke the battalions of the foe with his iron mace. Lycurgus killed him, not in fair fight, but by entrapping him in a narrow way where his mace served him in no stead; for Lycurgus was too quick for him and speared him through the middle, so he fell to earth on his back. Lycurgus then spoiled him of the armour which Mars had given him, and bore it in battle thenceforward; but when he grew old and stayed at home, he gave it to his faithful squire Ereuthalion, who in this same armour challenged the foremost men among us. The others quaked and quailed, but my high spirit bade me fight him though none other would venture; I was the youngest man of them all; but when I fought him Minerva vouchsafed me victory. He was the biggest and strongest man that ever I killed, and covered much ground as he lay sprawling upon the earth. Would that I were still young and strong as I then was, for the son of Priam would then soon find one who would face him. But you, foremost among the whole host though you be, have none of you any stomach for fighting Hector.”

Thus did the old man rebuke them, and forthwith nine men started to their feet. Foremost of all uprose King Agamemnon, and after him brave Diomed the son of Tydeus. Next were the two Ajaxes, men clothed in valour as with a garment, and then Idomeneus, and Meriones his brother in arms. After these Eurypylus son of Euaemon, Thoas the son of Andraemon, and Ulysses also rose. Then Nestor knight of Gerene again spoke, saying: “Cast lots among you to see who shall be chosen. If he come alive out of this fight he will have done good service alike to his own soul and to the Achaeans.”

Thus he spoke, and when each of them had marked his lot, and had thrown it into the helmet of Agamemnon son of Atreus, the people lifted their hands in prayer, and thus would one of them say as he looked into the vault of heaven, “Father Jove, grant that the lot fall on Ajax, or on the son of Tydeus, or upon the king of rich Mycene himself.”

As they were speaking, Nestor knight of Gerene shook the helmet, and from it there fell the very lot which they wanted the lot of Ajax. The herald bore it about and showed it to all the chieftains of the Achaeans, going from left to right; but they none of of them owned it. When, however, in due course he reached the man who had written upon it and had put it into the helmet, brave Ajax held out his hand, and the herald gave him the lot. When Ajax saw him mark he knew it and was glad; he threw it to the ground and said, “My friends, the lot is mine, and I rejoice, for I shall vanquish Hector. I will put on my armour; meanwhile, pray to King Jove in silence among yourselves that the Trojans may not hear you or aloud if you will, for we fear no man. None shall overcome me, neither by force nor cunning, for I was born and bred in Salamis, and can hold my own in all things.”

With this they fell praying to King Jove the son of Saturn, and thus would one of them say as he looked into the vault of heaven, “Father Jove that rulest from Ida, most glorious in power, vouchsafe victory to Ajax, and let him win great glory: but if you wish well to Hector also and would protect him, grant to each of them equal fame and prowess.

Thus they prayed, and Ajax armed himself in his suit of gleaming bronze. When he was in full array he sprang forward as monstrous Mars when he takes part among men whom Jove has set fighting with one another even so did huge Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, spring forward with a grim smile on his face as he brandished his long spear and strode onward. The Argives were elated as they beheld him, but the Trojans trembled in every limb, and the heart even of Hector beat quickly, but he could not now retreat and withdraw into the ranks behind him, for he had been the challenger. Ajax came up bearing his shield in front of him like a wall a shield of bronze with seven folds of oxhide the work of Tychius, who lived in Hyle and was by far the best worker in leather. He had made it with the hides of seven full-fed bulls, and over these he had set an eighth layer of bronze. Holding this shield before him, Ajax son of Telamon came close up to Hector, and menaced him saying, “Hector, you shall now learn, man to man, what kind of champions the Danaans have among them even besides lion-hearted Achilles cleaver of the ranks of men. He now abides at the ships in anger with Agamemnon shepherd of his people, but there are many of us who are well able to face you; therefore begin the fight.”

And Hector answered, “Noble Ajax, son of Telamon, captain of the host, treat me not as though I were some puny boy or woman that cannot fight. I have been long used to the blood and butcheries of battle. I am quick to turn my leathern shield either to right or left, for this I deem the main thing in battle. I can charge among the chariots and horsemen, and in hand to hand fighting can delight the heart of Mars; howbeit I would not take such a man as you are off his guard but I will smite you openly if I can.”

He poised his spear as he spoke, and hurled it from him. It struck the sevenfold shield in its outermost layer the eighth, which was of bronze and went through six of the layers but in the seventh hide it stayed. Then Ajax threw in his turn, and struck the round shield of the son of Priam. The terrible spear went through his gleaming shield, and pressed onward through his cuirass of cunning workmanship; it pierced the shirt against his side, but he swerved and thus saved his life. They then each of them drew out the spear from his shield, and fell on one another like savage lions or wild boars of great strength and endurance: the son of Priam struck the middle of Ajax’s shield, but the bronze did not break, and the point of his dart was turned. Ajax then sprang forward and pierced the shield of Hector; the spear went through it and staggered him as he was springing forward to attack; it gashed his neck and the blood came pouring from the wound, but even so Hector did not cease fighting; he gave ground, and with his brawny hand seized a stone, rugged and huge, that was lying upon the plain; with this he struck the shield of Ajax on the boss that was in its middle, so that the bronze rang again. But Ajax in turn caught up a far larger stone, swung it aloft, and hurled it with prodigious force. This millstone of a rock broke Hector’s shield inwards and threw him down on his back with the shield crushing him under it, but Apollo raised him at once. Thereon they would have hacked at one another in close combat with their swords, had not heralds, messengers of gods and men, come forward, one from the Trojans and the other from the Achaeans Talthybius and Idaeus both of them honourable men; these parted them with their staves, and the good herald Idaeus said, “My sons, fight no longer, you

are both of you valiant, and both are dear to Jove; we know this; but night is now falling, and the behests of night may not be well gainsaid."

Ajax son of Telamon answered, "Idaeus, bid Hector say so, for it was he that challenged our princes. Let him speak first and I will accept his saying."

Then Hector said, "Ajax, heaven has vouchsafed you stature and strength, and judgement; and in wielding the spear you excel all others of the Achaeans. Let us for this day cease fighting; hereafter we will fight anew till heaven decide between us, and give victory to one or to the other; night is now falling, and the behests of night may not be well gainsaid. Gladden, then, the hearts of the Achaeans at your ships, and more especially those of your own followers and clansmen, while I, in the great city of King Priam, bring comfort to the Trojans and their women, who vie with one another in their prayers on my behalf. Let us, moreover, exchange presents that it may be said among the Achaeans and Trojans, 'They fought with might and main, but were reconciled and parted in friendship.'

On this he gave Ajax a silver-studded sword with its sheath and leathern baldric, and in return Ajax gave him a girdle dyed with purple. Thus they parted, the one going to the host of the Achaeans, and the other to that of the Trojans, who rejoiced when they saw their hero come to them safe and unharmed from the strong hands of mighty Ajax. They led him, therefore, to the city as one that had been saved beyond their hopes. On the other side the Achaeans brought Ajax elated with victory to Agamemnon.

When they reached the quarters of the son of Atreus, Agamemnon sacrificed for them a five-year-old bull in honour of Jove the son of Saturn. They flayed the carcass, made it ready, and divided it into joints; these they cut carefully up into smaller pieces, putting them on the spits, roasting them sufficiently, and then drawing them off. When they had done all this and had prepared the feast, they ate it, and every man had his full and equal share, so that all were satisfied, and King Agamemnon gave Ajax some slices cut lengthways down the loin, as a mark of special honour. As soon as they had had enough to cat and drink, old Nestor whose counsel was ever truest began to speak; with all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:

"Son of Atreus, and other chieftains, inasmuch as many of the Achaeans are now dead, whose blood Mars has shed by the banks of the Scamander, and their souls have gone down to the house of Hades, it will be well when morning comes that we should cease fighting; we will then wheel our dead together with oxen and mules and burn them not far from the ships, that when we sail hence we may take the bones of our comrades home to their children. Hard by the funeral pyre we will build a barrow that shall be raised from the plain for all in common; near this let us set about building a high wall, to shelter ourselves and our ships, and let it have well-made gates that there may be a way through them for our chariots. Close outside we will dig a deep trench all round it to keep off both horse and foot, that the Trojan chieftains may not bear hard upon us."

Thus he spoke, and the princess shouted in applause. Meanwhile the Trojans held a council, angry and full of discord, on the acropolis by the gates of King Priam's palace; and wise Antenor spoke. "Hear me he said, "Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, that I may speak even as I am minded. Let us give up Argive Helen and her wealth to the sons of Atreus, for we are now fighting in violation of our solemn covenants, and shall not prosper till we have done as I say."

He then sat down and Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen rose to speak. "Antenor," said he, "your words are not to my liking; you can find a better saying than this if you will; if, however, you have spoken in good earnest, then indeed has heaven robbed you of your reason. I will speak plainly, and hereby notify to the Trojans that I will not give up the woman; but the wealth that I brought home with her from Argos I will restore, and will add yet further of my own."

On this, when Paris had spoken and taken his seat, Priam of the race of Dardanus, peer of gods in council, rose and with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus: "Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, that I may speak even as I am minded. Get your suppers now as hitherto throughout the city, but keep your watches and be wakeful. At daybreak let Idaeus go to the ships, and tell Agamemnon and Menelaus sons of Atreus the saying of Alexandrus through whom this quarrel has come about; and let him also be instant with them that they now cease fighting till we burn our dead; hereafter we will fight anew, till heaven decide between us and give victory to one or to the other."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. They took supper in their companies and at daybreak Idaeus went his wa to the ships. He found the Danaans, servants of Mars, in council at the stern of Agamemnon's ship, and took his place in the midst of them. "Son of Atreus," he said, "and princes of the Achaean host, Priam and the other noble Trojans have sent me to tell you the saying of Alexandrus through whom this quarrel has come about, if so be that you may find it acceptable. All the treasure he took

with him in his ships to Troy would that he had sooner perished he will restore, and will add yet further of his own, but he will not give up the wedded wife of Menelaus, though the Trojans would have him do so. Priam bade me inquire further if you will cease fighting till we burn our dead; hereafter we will fight anew, till heaven decide between us and give victory to one or to the other."

They all held their peace, but presently Diomed of the loud war-cry spoke, saying, "Let there be no taking, neither treasure, nor yet Helen, for even a child may see that the doom of the Trojans is at hand."

The sons of the Achaeans shouted applause at the words that Diomed had spoken, and thereon King Agamemnon said to Idaeus, "Idaeus, you have heard the answer the Achaeans make you-and I with them. But as concerning the dead, I give you leave to burn them, for when men are once dead there should be no grudging them the rites of fire. Let Jove the mighty husband of Juno be witness to this covenant."

As he spoke he upheld his sceptre in the sight of all the gods, and Idaeus went back to the strong city of Ilius. The Trojans and Dardanians were gathered in council waiting his return; when he came, he stood in their midst and delivered his message. As soon as they heard it they set about their twofold labour, some to gather the corpses, and others to bring in wood. The Argives on their part also hastened from their ships, some to gather the corpses, and others to bring in wood.

The sun was beginning to beat upon the fields, fresh risen into the vault of heaven from the slow still currents of deep Oceanus, when the two armies met. They could hardly recognise their dead, but they washed the clotted gore from off them, shed tears over them, and lifted them upon their waggons. Priam had forbidden the Trojans to wail aloud, so they heaped their dead sadly and silently upon the pyre, and having burned them went back to the city of Ilius. The Achaeans in like manner heaped their dead sadly and silently on the pyre, and having burned them went back to their ships.

Now in the twilight when it was not yet dawn, chosen bands of the Achaeans were gathered round the pyre and built one barrow that was raised in common for all, and hard by this they built a high wall to shelter themselves and their ships; they gave it strong gates that there might be a way through them for their chariots, and close outside it they dug a trench deep and wide, and they planted it within with stakes.

Thus did the Achaeans toil, and the gods, seated by the side of Jove the lord of lightning, marvelled at their great work; but Neptune, lord of the earthquake, spoke, saying, "Father Jove, what mortal in the whole world will again take the gods into his counsel? See you not how the Achaeans have built a wall about their ships and driven a trench all round it, without offering hecatombs to the gods? The The fame of this wall will reach as far as dawn itself, and men will no longer think anything of the one which Phoebus Apollo and myself built with so much labour for Laomedon."

Jove was displeased and answered, "What, O shaker of the earth, are you talking about? A god less powerful than yourself might be alarmed at what they are doing, but your fame reaches as far as dawn itself. Surely when the Achaeans have gone home with their ships, you can shatter their wall and Ring it into the sea; you can cover the beach with sand again, and the great wall of the Achaeans will then be utterly effaced."

Thus did they converse, and by sunset the work of the Achaeans was completed; they then slaughtered oxen at their tents and got their supper. Many ships had come with wine from Lemnos, sent by Euneus the son of Jason, born to him by Hypsipyle. The son of Jason freighted them with ten thousand measures of wine, which he sent specially to the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus. From this supply the Achaeans bought their wine, some with bronze, some with iron, some with hides, some with whole heifers, and some again with captives. They spread a goodly banquet and feasted the whole night through, as also did the Trojans and their allies in the city. But all the time Jove boded them ill and roared with his portentous thunder. Pale fear got hold upon them, and they spilled the wine from their cups on to the ground, nor did any dare drink till he had made offerings to the most mighty son of Saturn. Then they laid themselves down to rest and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

Book VIII

NOW when Morning, clad in her robe of saffron, had begun to suffuse light over the earth, Jove called the gods in council on the topmost crest of serrated Olympus. Then he spoke and all the other gods gave ear. "Hear me," said he, "gods and goddesses, that I may speak even as I am minded. Let none of you neither goddess nor god try to cross me, but obey me every one of you that I may bring this matter to an end. If I see anyone acting apart and helping either Trojans or Danaans, he shall be beaten inordinately ere he come back again to Olympus; or I will hurl him down into dark Tartarus far into the deepest pit under the earth, where the gates are iron and the floor bronze, as far beneath Hades as heaven is high above the earth, that you may learn how much the mightiest I am

among you. Try me and find out for yourselves. Hangs me a golden chain from heaven, and lay hold of it all of you, gods and goddesses together tug as you will, you will not drag Jove the supreme counsellor from heaven to earth; but were I to pull at it myself I should draw you up with earth and sea into the bargain, then would I bind the chain about some pinnacle of Olympus and leave you all dangling in the mid firmament. So far am I above all others either of gods or men."

They were frightened and all of them of held their peace, for he had spoken masterfully; but at last Minerva answered, "Father, son of Saturn, king of kings, we all know that your might is not to be gainsaid, but we are also sorry for the Danaan warriors, who are perishing and coming to a bad end. We will, however, since you so bid us, refrain from actual fighting, but we will make serviceable suggestions to the Argives that they may not all of them perish in your displeasure."

Jove smiled at her and answered, "Take heart, my child, Trito-born; I am not really in earnest, and I wish to be kind to you."

With this he yoked his fleet horses, with hoofs of bronze and manes of glittering gold. He girded himself also with gold about the body, seized his gold whip and took his seat in his chariot. Thereon he lashed his horses and they flew forward nothing loth midway twixt earth and starry heaven. After a while he reached many-fountained Ida, mother of wild beasts, and Gargarus, where are his grove and fragrant altar. There the father of gods and men stayed his horses, took them from the chariot, and hid them in a thick cloud; then he took his seat all glorious upon the topmost crests, looking down upon the city of Troy and the ships of the Achaeans.

The Achaeans took their morning meal hastily at the ships, and afterwards put on their armour. The Trojans on the other hand likewise armed themselves throughout the city, fewer in numbers but nevertheless eager perforce to do battle for their wives and children. All the gates were flung wide open, and horse and foot sallied forth with the tramp as of a great multitude.

When they were got together in one place, shield clashed with shield, and spear with spear, in the conflict of mail-clad men. Mighty was the din as the bossed shields pressed hard on one another death cry and shout of triumph of slain and slayers, and the earth ran red with blood.

Now so long as the day waxed and it was still morning their weapons beat against one another, and the people fell, but when the sun had reached mid-heaven, the sire of all balanced his golden scales, and put two fates of death within them, one for the Trojans and the other for the Achaeans. He took the balance by the middle, and when he lifted it up the day of the Achaeans sank; the death-fraught scale of the Achaeans settled down upon the ground, while that of the Trojans rose heavenwards. Then he thundered aloud from Ida, and sent the glare of his lightning upon the Achaeans; when they saw this, pale fear fell upon them and they were sore afraid.

Idomeneus dared not stay nor yet Agamemnon, nor did the two Ajaxes, servants of Mars, hold their ground. Nestor knight of Gerene alone stood firm, bulwark of the Achaeans, not of his own will, but one of his horses was disabled. Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen had hit it with an arrow just on the top of its head where the mane begins to grow away from the skull, a very deadly place. The horse bounded in his anguish as the arrow pierced his brain, and his struggles threw others into confusion. The old man instantly began cutting the traces with his sword, but Hector's fleet horses bore down upon him through the rout with their bold charioteer, even Hector himself, and the old man would have perished there and then had not Diomed been quick to mark, and with a loud cry called Ulysses to help him.

"Ulysses," he cried, "noble son of Laertes where are you flying to, with your back turned like a coward? See that you are not struck with a spear between the shoulders. Stay here and help me to defend Nestor from this man's furious onset."

Ulysses would not give ear, but sped onward to the ships of the Achaeans, and the son of Tydeus flinging himself alone into the thick of the fight took his stand before the horses of the son of Neleus. "Sir," said he, "these young warriors are pressing you hard, your force is spent, and age is heavy upon you, your squire is naught, and your horses are slow to move. Mount my chariot and see what the horses of Tros can do how cleverly they can scud hither and thither over the plain either in flight or in pursuit. I took them from the hero Aeneas. Let our squires attend to your own steeds, but let us drive mine straight at the Trojans, that Hector may learn how furiously I too can wield my spear."

Nestor knight of Gerene hearkened to his words. Thereon the doughty squires, Sthenelus and kind-hearted Eurymedon, saw to Nestor's horses, while the two both mounted Diomed's chariot. Nestor took the reins in his hands and lashed the horses on; they were soon close up with Hector, and the son of Tydeus aimed a spear at him as he was charging full speed towards them. He missed him, but struck his charioteer and squire Eniopeus son of noble Thebaeus in the breast by the nipple while the reins were in his

hands, so that he died there and then, and the horses swerved as he fell headlong from the chariot. Hector was greatly grieved at the loss of his charioteer, but let him lie for all his sorrow, while he went in quest of another driver; nor did his steeds have to go long without one, for he presently found brave Archeptolemus the son of Iphitus, and made him get up behind the horses, giving the reins into his hand.

All had then been lost and no help for it, for they would have been penned up in Ilius like sheep, had not the sire of gods and men been quick to mark, and hurled a fiery flaming thunderbolt which fell just in front of Diomed's horses with a flare of burning brimstone. The horses were frightened and tried to back beneath the car, while the reins dropped from Nestor's hands. Then he was afraid and said to Diomed, "Son of Tydeus, turn your horses in flight; see you not that the hand of Jove is against you? To-day he vouchsafes victory to Hector; to-morrow, if it so please him, he will again grant it to ourselves; no man, however brave, may thwart the purpose of Jove, for he is far stronger than any."

Diomed answered, "All that you have said is true; there is a grief however which pierces me to the very heart, for Hector will talk among the Trojans and say, 'The son of Tydeus fled before me to the ships.' This is the vaunt he will make, and may earth then swallow me."

"Son of Tydeus," replied Nestor, "what mean you? Though Hector say that you are a coward the Trojans and Dardanians will not believe him, nor yet the wives of the mighty warriors whom you have laid low."

So saying he turned the horses back through the thick of the battle, and with a cry that rent the air the Trojans and Hector rained their darts after them. Hector shouted to him and said, "Son of Tydeus, the Danaans have done you honour hitherto as regards your place at table, the meals they give you, and the filling of your cup with wine. Henceforth they will despise you, for you are become no better than a woman. Be off, girl and coward that you are, you shall not scale our walls through any flinching upon my part; neither shall you carry off our wives in your ships, for I shall kill you with my own hand."

The son of Tydeus was in two minds whether or no to turn his horses round again and fight him. Thrice did he doubt, and thrice did Jove thunder from the heights of Ida in token to the Trojans that he would turn the battle in their favour. Hector then shouted to them and said, "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, lovers of close fighting, be men, my friends, and fight with might and with main; I see that Jove is minded to vouchsafe victory and great glory to myself, while he will deal destruction upon the Danaans. Fools, for having thought of building this weak and worthless wall. It shall not stay my fury; my horses will spring lightly over their trench, and when I am at their ships forget not to bring me fire that I may burn them, while I slaughter the Argives who will be all dazed and bewildered by the smoke."

Then he cried to his horses, "Xanthus and Podargus, and you Aethon and goodly Lampus, pay me for your keep now and for all the honey-sweet corn with which Andromache daughter of great Eetion has fed you, and for she has mixed wine and water for you to drink whenever you would, before doing so even for me who am her own husband. Haste in pursuit, that we may take the shield of Nestor, the fame of which ascends to heaven, for it is of solid gold, arm-rods and all, and that we may strip from the shoulders of Diomed. the cuirass which Vulcan made him. Could we take these two things, the Achaeans would set sail in their ships this self-same night."

Thus did he vaunt, but Queen Juno made high Olympus quake as she shook with rage upon her throne. Then said she to the mighty god of Neptune, "What now, wide ruling lord of the earthquake? Can you find no compassion in your heart for the dying Danaans, who bring you many a welcome offering to Helice and to Aegae? Wish them well then. If all of us who are with the Danaans were to drive the Trojans back and keep Jove from helping them, he would have to sit there sulking alone on Ida."

King Neptune was greatly troubled and answered, "Juno, rash of tongue, what are you talking about? We other gods must not set ourselves against Jove, for he is far stronger than we are."

Thus did they converse; but the whole space enclosed by the ditch, from the ships even to the wall, was filled with horses and warriors, who were pent up there by Hector son of Priam, now that the hand of Jove was with him. He would even have set fire to the ships and burned them, had not Queen Juno put it into the mind of Agamemnon, to bestir himself and to encourage the Achaeans. To this end he went round the ships and tents carrying a great purple cloak, and took his stand by the huge black hull of Ulysses' ship, which was middlemost of all; it was from this place that his voice would carry farthest, on the one hand towards the tents of Ajax son of Telamon, and on the other towards those of Achilles for these two heroes, well assured of their own strength, had valorously drawn up their ships at the two ends of the line. From this spot then, with a voice that could be heard afar, he

shouted to the Danaans, saying, “Argives, shame on you cowardly creatures, brave in semblance only; where are now our vaunts that we should prove victorious the vaunts we made so vaingloriously in Lemnos, when we ate the flesh of horned cattle and filled our mixing-bowls to the brim? You vowed that you would each of you stand against a hundred or two hundred men, and now you prove no match even for one for Hector, who will be ere long setting our ships in a blaze. Father Jove, did you ever so ruin a great king and rob him so utterly of his greatness? yet, when to my sorrow I was coming hither, I never let my ship pass your altars without offering the fat and thigh-bones of heifers upon every one of them, so eager was I to sack the city of Troy. Vouchsafe me then this prayer suffer us to escape at any rate with our lives, and let not the Achaeans be so utterly vanquished by the Trojans.”

Thus did he pray, and father Jove pitying his tears vouchsafed him that his people should live, not die; forthwith he sent them an eagle, most unfailingly portentous of all birds, with a young fawn in its talons; the eagle dropped the fawn by the altar on which the Achaeans sacrificed to Jove the lord of omens; When, therefore, the people saw that the bird had come from Jove, they sprang more fiercely upon the Trojans and fought more boldly.

There was no man of all the many Danaans who could then boast that he had driven his horses over the trench and gone forth to fight sooner than the son of Tydeus; long before any one else could do so he slew an armed warrior of the Trojans, Agelaus the son of Phradmon. He had turned his horses in flight, but the spear struck him in the back midway between his shoulders and went right through his chest, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell forward from his chariot.

After him came Agamemnon and Menelaus, sons of Atreus, the two Ajaxes clothed in valour as with a garment, Idomeneus and his companion in arms Meriones, peer of murderous Mars, and Eurypylus the brave son of Euaemon. Ninth came Teucer with his bow, and took his place under cover of the shield of Ajax son of Telamon. When Ajax lifted his shield Teucer would peer round, and when he had hit any one in the throng, the man would fall dead; then Teucer would hie back to Ajax as a child to its mother, and again duck down under his shield.

Which of the Trojans did brave Teucer first kill? Orsilochus, and then Ormenus and Ophelestes, Daetor, Chromius, and godlike Lycophontes, Amopaon son of Polyaemon, and Melanippus. these in turn did he lay low upon the earth, and King Agamemnon was glad when he saw him making havoc of the Trojans with his mighty bow. He went up to him and said, “Teucer, man after my own heart, son of Telamon, captain among the host, shoot on, and be at once the saving of the Danaans and the glory of your father Telamon, who brought you up and took care of you in his own house when you were a child, bastard though you were. Cover him with glory though he is far off; I will promise and I will assuredly perform; if aegis-bearing Jove and Minerva grant me to sack the city of Ilius, you shall have the next best meed of honour after my own a tripod, or two horses with their chariot, or a woman who shall go up into your bed.”

And Teucer answered, “Most noble son of Atreus, you need not urge me; from the moment we began to drive them back to Ilius, I have never ceased so far as in me lies to look out for men whom I can shoot and kill; I have shot eight barbed shafts, and all of them have been buried in the flesh of warlike youths, but this mad dog I cannot hit.”

As he spoke he aimed another arrow straight at Hector, for he was bent on hitting him; nevertheless he missed him, and the arrow hit Priam’s brave son Gorgythion in the breast. His mother, fair Castianeira, lovely as a goddess, had been married from Aesyme, and now he bowed his head as a garden poppy in full bloom when it is weighed down by showers in spring even thus heavy bowed his head beneath the weight of his helmet.

Again he aimed at Hector, for he was longing to hit him, and again his arrow missed, for Apollo turned it aside; but he hit Hector’s brave charioteer Archeptolemus in the breast, by the nipple, as he was driving furiously into the fight. The horses swerved aside as he fell headlong from the chariot, and there was no life left in him. Hector was greatly grieved at the loss of his charioteer, but for all his sorrow he let him lie where he fell, and bade his brother Cebriones, who was hard by, take the reins. Cebriones did as he had said. Hector thereon with a loud cry sprang from his chariot to the ground, and seizing a great stone made straight for Teucer with intent kill him. Teucer had just taken an arrow from his quiver and had laid it upon the bow-string, but Hector struck him with the jagged stone as he was taking aim and drawing the string to his shoulder; he hit him just where the collar-bone divides the neck from the chest, a very deadly place, and broke the sinew of his arm so that his wrist was less, and the bow dropped from his hand as he fell forward on his knees. Ajax saw that his brother had fallen, and running towards him bestrode him and sheltered him with his shield. Meanwhile his two trusty squires, Mecisteus son of Echius, and Alastor, came up and bore him to the ships groaning in his great pain. glad when he saw Jove now again put heart into the Trojans, and they drove the Achaeans to their deep trench with Hector in all his glory at their head. As a hound grips a wild boar or lion in flank or buttock when he gives him chase, and watches

warily for his wheeling, even so did Hector follow close upon the Achaeans, ever killing the hindmost as they rushed panic-stricken onwards. When they had fled through the set stakes and trench and many Achaeans had been laid low at the hands of the Trojans, they halted at their ships, calling upon one another and praying every man instantly as they lifted up their hands to the gods; but Hector wheeled his horses this way and that, his eyes glaring like those of Gorgo or murderous Mars.

Juno when she saw them had pity upon them, and at once said to Minerva, “Alas, child of aegis-bearing Jove, shall you and I take no more thought for the dying Danaans, though it be the last time we ever do so? See how they perish and come to a bad end before the onset of but a single man. Hector the son of Priam rages with intolerable fury, and has already done great mischief.”

Minerva answered, “Would, indeed, this fellow might die in his own land, and fall by the hands of the Achaeans; but my father Jove is mad with spleen, ever foiling me, ever headstrong and unjust. He forgets how often I saved his son when he was worn out by the labours Eurystheus had laid on him. He would weep till his cry came up to heaven, and then Jove would send me down to help him; if I had had the sense to foresee all this, when Eurystheus sent him to the house of Hades, to fetch the hell-hound from Erebus, he would never have come back alive out of the deep waters of the river Styx. And now Jove hates me, while he lets Thetis have her way because she kissed his knees and took hold of his beard, when she was begging him to do honour to Achilles. I shall know what to do next time he begins calling me his grey-eyed darling. Get our horses ready, while I go within the house of aegis-bearing Jove and put on my armour; we shall then find out whether Priam’s son Hector will be glad to meet us in the highways of battle, or whether the Trojans will glut hounds and vultures with the fat of their flesh as they he dead by the ships of the Achaeans.”

Thus did she speak and white-armed Juno, daughter of great Saturn, obeyed her words; she set about harnessing her gold-bedizened steeds, while Minerva daughter of aegis-bearing Jove flung her richly vesture, made with her own hands, on to the threshold of her father, and donned the shirt of Jove, arming herself for battle. Then she stepped into her flaming chariot, and grasped the spear so stout and sturdy and strong with which she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her. Juno lashed her horses, and the gates of heaven bellowed as they flew open of their own accord gates over which the Hours preside, in whose hands are heaven and Olympus, either to open the dense cloud that hides them or to close it. Through these the goddesses drove their obedient steeds.

But father Jove when he saw them from Ida was very angry, and sent winged Iris with a message to them. “Go,” said he, “fleet Iris, turn them back, and see that they do not come near me, for if we come to fighting there will be mischief. This is what I say, and this is what I mean to do. I will lame their horses for them; I will hurl them from their chariot, and will break it in pieces. It will take them all ten years to heal the wounds my lightning shall inflict upon them; my grey-eyed daughter will then learn what quarrelling with her father means. I am less surprised and angry with Juno, for whatever I say she always contradicts me.”

With this Iris went her way, fleet as the wind, from the heights of Ida to the lofty summits of Olympus. She met the goddesses at the outer gates of its many valleys and gave them her message. “What,” said she, “are you about? Are you mad? The son of Saturn forbids going. This is what he says, and this is he means to do, he will lame your horses for you, he will hurl you from your chariot, and will break it in pieces. It will take you all ten years to heal the wounds his lightning will inflict upon you, that you may learn, grey-eyed goddess, what quarrelling with your father means. He is less hurt and angry with Juno, for whatever he says she always contradicts him but you, bold bold hussy, will you really dare to raise your huge spear in defiance of Jove?”

With this she left them, and Juno said to Minerva, “Of a truth, child of aegis-bearing Jove, I am not for fighting men’s battles further in defiance of Jove. Let them live or die as luck will have it, and let Jove mete out his judgements upon the Trojans and Danaans according to his own pleasure.”

She turned her steeds; the Hours presently unyoked them, made them fast to their ambrosial mangers, and leaned the chariot against the end wall of the courtyard. The two goddesses then sat down upon their golden thrones, amid the company of the other gods; but they were very angry.

Presently father Jove drove his chariot to Olympus, and entered the assembly of gods. The mighty lord of the earthquake unyoked his horses for him, set the car upon its stand, and threw a cloth over it. Jove then sat down upon his golden throne and Olympus reeled beneath him. Minerva and Juno sat alone, apart from Jove, and neither spoke nor asked him questions, but Jove knew what they meant, and said, “Minerva and Juno, why are you so angry? Are you fatigued with killing so many of your dear friends the Trojans? Be this as it may, such is the might of my hands that all the gods in Olympus cannot turn me; you were both of you trembling all over ere ever you saw the fight and its terrible doings. I tell you therefore-and it would have surely been I should have struck you with lighting, and your chariots would never have brought you back again to Olympus.”

Minerva and Juno groaned in spirit as they sat side by side and brooded mischief for the Trojans. Minerva sat silent without a word, for she was in a furious passion and bitterly incensed against her father; but Juno could not contain herself and said, “What, dread son of Saturn, are you talking about? We know how great your power is, nevertheless we have compassion upon the Danaan warriors who are perishing and coming to a bad end. We will, however, since you so bid us, refrain from actual fighting, but we will make serviceable suggestions to the Argives, that they may not all of them perish in your displeasure.”

And Jove answered, “To-morrow morning, Juno, if you choose to do so, you will see the son of Saturn destroying large numbers of the Argives, for fierce Hector shall not cease fighting till he has roused the son of Peleus when they are fighting in dire straits at their ships’ sterns about the body of Patroclus. Like it or no, this is how it is decreed; for aught I care, you may go to the lowest depths beneath earth and sea, where Iapetus and Saturn dwell in lone Tartarus with neither ray of light nor breath of wind to cheer them. You may go on and on till you get there, and I shall not care one whit for your displeasure; you are the greatest vixen living.”

Juno made him no answer. The sun’s glorious orb now sank into Oceanus and drew down night over the land. Sorry indeed were the Trojans when light failed them, but welcome and thrice prayed for did darkness fall upon the Achaeans.

Then Hector led the Trojans back from the ships, and held a council on the open space near the river, where there was a spot ear corpses. They left their chariots and sat down on the ground to hear the speech he made them. He grasped a spear eleven cubits long, the bronze point of which gleamed in front of it, while the ring round the spear-head was of gold Spear in hand he spoke. “Hear me,” said he, “Trojans, Dardanians, and allies. I deemed but now that I should destroy the ships and all the Achaeans with them ere I went back to Ilius, but darkness came on too soon. It was this alone that saved them and their ships upon the seashore. Now, therefore, let us obey the behests of night, and prepare our suppers. Take your horses out of their chariots and give them their feeds of corn; then make speed to bring sheep and cattle from the city; bring wine also and corn for your horses and gather much wood, that from dark till dawn we may burn watchfires whose flare may reach to heaven. For the Achaeans may try to fly beyond the sea by night, and they must not embark scatheless and unmolested; many a man among them must take a dart with him to nurse at home, hit with spear or arrow as he is leaping on board his ship, that others may fear to bring war and weeping upon the Trojans. Moreover let the heralds tell it about the city that the growing youths and grey-bearded men are to camp upon its heaven-built walls. Let the women each of them light a great fire in her house, and let watch be safely kept lest the town be entered by surprise while the host is outside. See to it, brave Trojans, as I have said, and let this suffice for the moment; at daybreak I will instruct you further. I pray in hope to Jove and to the gods that we may then drive those fate-sped hounds from our land, for ‘tis the fates that have borne them and their ships hither. This night, therefore, let us keep watch, but with early morning let us put on our armour and rouse fierce war at the ships of the Achaeans; I shall then know whether brave Diomed the son of Tydeus will drive me back from the ships to the wall, or whether I shall myself slay him and carry off his bloodstained spoils. To-morrow let him show his mettle, abide my spear if he dare. I ween that at break of day, he shall be among the first to fall and many another of his comrades round him. Would that I were as sure of being immortal and never growing old, and of being worshipped like Minerva and Apollo, as I am that this day will bring evil to the Argives.”

Thus spoke Hector and the Trojans shouted applause. They took their sweating steeds from under the yoke, and made them fast each by his own chariot. They made haste to bring sheep and cattle from the city, they brought wine also and corn from their houses and gathered much wood. They then offered unblemished hecatombs to the immortals, and the wind carried the sweet savour of sacrifice to heaven but the blessed gods partook not thereof, for they bitterly hated Ilius with Priam and Priam’s people. Thus high in hope they sat through the livelong night by the highways of war, and many a watchfire did they kindle. As when the stars shine clear, and the moon is bright there is not a breath of air, not a peak nor glade nor jutting headland but it stands out in the ineffable radiance that breaks from the serene of heaven; the stars can all of them be told and the heart of the shepherd is glad even thus shone the watchfires of the Trojans before Ilius midway between the ships and the river Xanthus. A thousand campfires gleamed upon the plain, and in the glow of each there sat fifty men, while the horses, champing oats and corn beside their chariots, waited till dawn should come.

Book IX

THUS did the Trojans watch. But Panic, comrade of blood-stained Rout, had taken fast hold of the Achaeans and their princes were all of them in despair. As when the two winds that blow from Thrace the north and the northwest spring up of a sudden and rouse the fury of the main in a moment the dark waves uprear their heads and scatter their sea-wrack in all directions even thus troubled were the hearts of the Achaeans.

The son of Atreus in dismay bade the heralds call the people to a council man by man, but not to cry the matter aloud; he made haste also himself to call them, and they sat sorry at heart in their assembly. Agamemnon shed tears as it were a running stream or cataract on the side of some sheer cliff; and thus, with many a heavy sigh he spoke
to the Achaeans. “My friends,” said he, “princes and councillors of the Argives, the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me. Cruel Jove gave me his solemn promise that I should sack the city of Troy before returning, but he has played me false, and is now bidding me go ingloriously back to Argos with the loss of much people. Such is the will of Jove, who has laid many a proud city in the dust as he will yet lay others, for his power is above all. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say and sail back to our own country, for we shall not take Troy.”

Thus he spoke, and the sons of the Achaeans for a long while sat sorrowful there, but they all held their peace, till at last Diomed of the loud battle-cry made answer saying, “Son of Atreus, I will chide your folly, as is my right in council. Be not then aggrieved that I should do so. In the first place you attacked me before all the Danaans and said that I was a coward and no soldier. The Argives young and old know that you did so. But the son of scheming Saturn endowed you by halves only. He gave you honour as the chief ruler over us, but valour, which is the highest both right and might he did not give you. Sir, think you that the sons of the Achaeans are indeed as unwarlike and cowardly as you say they are? If your own mind is set upon going home go the way is open to you; the many ships that followed you from Mycene stand ranged upon the seashore; but the rest of us stay here till we have sacked Troy. Nay though these too should turn homeward with their ships, Sthenelus and myself will still fight on till we reach the goal of Ilius, for for heaven was with us when we came.”

The sons of the Achaeans shouted applause at the words of Diomed, and presently Nestor rose to speak. “Son of Tydeus,” said he, “in war your prowess is beyond question, and in council you excel all who are of your own years; no one of the Achaeans can make light of what you say nor gainsay it, but you have not yet come to the end of the whole matter. You are still young you might be the youngest of my own children still you have spoken wisely and have counselled the chief of the Achaeans not without discretion; nevertheless I am older than you and I will tell you every” thing; therefore let no man, not even King Agamemnon, disregard my saying, for he that foments civil discord is a clanless, hearthless outlaw.

“Now, however, let us obey the behests of night and get our suppers, but let the sentinels every man of them camp by the trench that is without the wall. I am giving these instructions to the young men; when they have been attended to, do you, son of Atreus, give your orders, for you are the most royal among us all. Prepare a feast for your councillors; it is right and reasonable that you should do so; there is abundance of wine in your tents, which the ships of the Achaeans bring from Thrace daily. You have everything at your disposal wherewith to entertain guests, and you have many subjects. When many are got together, you can be guided by him whose counsel is wisest and sorely do we need shrewd and prudent counsel, for the foe has lit his watchfires hard by our ships. Who can be other than dismayed? This night will either be the ruin of our host, or save it.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. The sentinels went out in their armour under command of Nestor’s son Thrasymedes, a captain of the host, and of the bold warriors Ascalaphus and Ialmenus: there were also Meriones, Aphareus and Deipyrus, and the son of Creion, noble Lycomedes. There were seven captains of the sentinels, and with each there went a hundred youths armed with long spears: they took their places midway between the trench and the wall, and when they had done so they lit their fires and got every man his supper.

The son of Atreus then bade many councillors of the Achaeans to his quarters prepared a great feast in their honour. They laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had enough to eat and drink, old Nestor, whose counsel was ever truest, was the first to lay his mind before them. He, therefore, with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus.

“With yourself, most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, will I both begin my speech and end it, for you are king over much people. Jove, moreover, has vouchsafed you to wield the sceptre and to uphold righteousness, that you may take thought for your people under you; therefore it behooves you above all others both to speak and to give ear, and to out the counsel of another who shall have been minded to speak wisely. All turns on you and on your commands, therefore I will say what I think will be best. No man will be of a truer mind than that which has been mine from the hour when you, sir, angered Achilles by taking the girl Briseis from his tent against my judgment. I urged you not to do so, but you yielded to your own pride, and dishonoured a hero whom heaven itself had honoured for you still hold the prize that had been awarded to him. Now, however, let us think how we may appease him, both with presents and fair speeches that may conciliate him.”

And King Agamemnon answered, “Sir, you have reproved my folly justly. I was wrong. I own it. One whom heaven befriends is in himself a host, and Jove has shown that he befriends this man by destroying much people of the Achaeans. I was blinded with passion and yielded to my worser mind; therefore I will make amends, and will give him great gifts by way of atonement. I will tell them in the presence of you all. I will give him seven tripods that have never yet been on the fire, and ten talents of gold. I will give him twenty iron cauldrons and twelve strong horses that have won races and carried off prizes. Rich, indeed, both in land and gold is he that has as many prizes as my horses have won me. I will give him seven excellent workwomen, Lesbians, whom I chose for myself when he took Lesbos all of surpassing beauty. I will give him these, and with them her whom I erewhile took from him, the daughter of Briseus; and I swear a great oath that I never went up into her couch, nor have been with her after the manner of men and women.

“All these things will I give him now down, and if hereafter the gods vouchsafe me to sack the city of Priam, let him come when we Achaeans are dividing the spoil, and load his ship with gold and bronze to his liking; furthermore let him take twenty Trojan women, the loveliest after Helen herself. Then, when we reach Achaean Argos, wealthiest of all lands, he shall be my son-in-law and I will show him like honour with my own dear son Orestes, who is being nurtured in all abundance. I have three daughters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, and lphianassa, let him take the one of his choice, freely and without gifts of wooing, to the house of Peleus; I will add such dower to boot as no man ever yet gave his daughter, and will give him seven well established cities, Cardamyle, Enope, and Hire, where there is grass; holy Pherae and the rich meadows of Anthea; Aepea also, and the vine-clad slopes of Pedasus, all near the sea, and on the borders of sandy Pylos. The men that dwell there are rich in cattle and sheep; they will honour him with gifts as though he were a god, and be obedient to his comfortable ordinances. All this will I do if he will now forgo his anger. Let him then yieldit is only Hades who is utterly ruthless and unyielding and hence he is of all gods the one most hateful to mankind. Moreover I am older and more royal than himself. Therefore, let him now obey me.”

Then Nestor answered, “Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon. The gifts you offer are no small ones, let us then send chosen messengers, who may go to the tent of Achilles son of Peleus without delay. Let those go whom I shall name. Let Phoenix, dear to Jove, lead the way; let Ajax and Ulysses follow, and let the heralds Odius and Eurybates go with them. Now bring water for our hands, and bid all keep silence while we pray to Jove the son of Saturn, if so be that he may have mercy upon us.”

Thus did he speak, and his saying pleased them well. Men-servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering; then, when they had made their offerings, and had drunk each as much as he was minded, the envoys set out from the tent of Agamemnon son of Atreus; and Nestor, looking first to one and then to another, but most especially at Ulysses, was instant with them that they should prevail with the noble son of Peleus.

They went their way by the shore of the sounding sea, and prayed earnestly to earth-encircling Neptune that the high spirit of the son of Aeacus might incline favourably towards them. When they reached the ships and tents of the Myrmidons, they found Achilles playing on a lyre, fair, of cunning workmanship, and its cross-bar was of silver. It was part of the spoils which he had taken when he sacked the city of Eetion, and he was now diverting himself with it and singing the feats of heroes. He was alone with Patroclus, who sat opposite to him and said nothing, waiting till he should cease singing. Ulysses and Ajax now came in Ulysses leading the way and stood before him. Achilles sprang from his seat with the lyre still in his hand, and Patroclus, when he saw the strangers, rose also. Achilles then greeted them saying, “All hail and welcome you must come upon some great matter, you, who for all my anger are still dearest to me of the Achaeans.”

With this he led them forward, and bade them sit on seats covered with purple rugs; then he said to Patroclus who was close by him, “Son of Menoetius, set a larger bowl upon the table, mix less water with the wine, and give every man his cup, for these are very dear friends, who are now under my roof.”

Patroclus did as his comrade bade him; he set the chopping-block in front of the fire, and on it he laid the loin of a sheep, the loin also of a goat, and the chine of a fat hog. Automedon held the meat while Achilles chopped it; he then sliced the pieces and put them on spits while the son of Menoetius made the fire burn high. When the flame had died down, he spread the embers, laid the spits on top of them, lifting them up and setting them upon the spitracks; and he sprinkled them with salt. When the meat was roasted, he set it on platters, and handed bread round the table in fair baskets, while Achilles dealt them their portions. Then Achilles took his seat facing Ulysses against the opposite wall, and bade his comrade Patroclus offer sacrifice to the gods; so he cast the offerings into the fire, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Ajax made a sign to Phoenix, and when he saw this, Ulysses filled his cup with wine and pledged Achilles.

"Hail," said he, "Achilles, we have had no scant of good cheer, neither in the tent of Agamemnon, nor yet here; there has been plenty to eat and drink, but our thought turns upon no such matter. Sir, we are in the face of great disaster, and without your help know not whether we shall save our fleet or lose it. The Trojans and their allies have camped hard by our ships and by the wall; they have lit watchfires throughout their host and deem that nothing can now prevent them from falling on our fleet. Jove, moreover, has sent his lightnings on their right; Hector, in all his glory, rages like a maniac; confident that Jove is with him he fears neither god nor man, but is gone raving mad, and prays for the approach of day. He vows that he will hew the high sterns of our ships in pieces, set fire to their hulls, and make havoc of the Achaeans while they are dazed and smothered in smoke; I much fear that heaven will make good his boasting, and it will prove our lot to perish at Troy far from our home in Argos. Up, then, and late though it be, save the sons of the Achaeans who faint before the fury of the Trojans. You will repent bitterly hereafter if you do not, for when the harm is done there will be no curing it; consider ere it be too late, and save the Danaans from destruction.

"My good friend, when your father Peleus sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon, did he not charge you saying, 'Son, Minerva and Juno will make you strong if they choose, but check your high temper, for the better part is in goodwill. Eschew vain quarrelling, and the Achaeans old and young will respect you more for doing so.' These were his words, but you have forgotten them. Even now, however, be appeased, and put away your anger from you.

Agamemnon will make you great amends if you will forgive him; listen, and I will tell you what he has said in his tent that he will give you. He will give you seven tripods that have never yet been on the fire, and ten talents of gold; twenty iron cauldrons, and twelve strong horses that have won races and carried off prizes. Rich indeed both in land and gold is he who has as many prizes as these horses have won for Agamemnon. Moreover he will give you seven excellent workwomen, Lesbians, whom he chose for himself, when you took Lesbos all of surpassing beauty. He will give you these, and with them her whom he erewhile took from you, the daughter of Briseus, and he will swear a great oath, he has never gone up into her couch nor been with her after the manner of men and women. All these things will he give you now down, and if hereafter the gods vouchsafe him to sack the city of Priam, you can come when we Achaeans are dividing the spoil, and load your ship with gold and bronze to your liking. You can take twenty Trojan women, the loveliest after Helen herself. Then, when we reach Achaean Argos, wealthiest of all lands, you shall be his son-in-law, and he will show you like honour with his own dear son Orestes, who is being nurtured in all abundance. Agamemnon has three daughters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa; you may take the one of your choice, freely and without gifts of wooing, to the house of Peleus; he will add such dower to boot as no man ever yet gave his daughter, and will give you seven well-established cities, Cardamyle, Enope, and Hire where there is grass; holy Pheras and the rich meadows of Anthea; Aepea also, and the vine-clad slopes of Pedasus, all near
the sea, and on the borders of sandy Pylos. The men that dwell there are rich in cattle and sheep; they will honour you with gifts as though were a god, and be obedient to your comfortable ordinances. All this will he do if you will now forgo your anger. Moreover, though you hate both him and his gifts with all your heart, yet pity the rest of the Achaeans who are being harassed in all their host; they will honour you as a god, and you will earn great glory at their hands. You might even kill Hector; he will come within your reach, for he is infatuated, and declares that not a Danaan whom the ships have brought can hold his own against him."

Achilles answered, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, I should give you formal notice plainly and in all fixity of purpose that there be no more of this cajoling, from whatsoever quarter it may come. Him do I hate even as the gates of hell who says one thing while he hides another in his heart; therefore I will say what I mean. I will be appeased neither by Agamemnon son of Atreus nor by any other of the Danaans, for I see that I have no thanks for all my fighting. He that fights fares no better than he that does not; coward and hero are held in equal honour, and death deals like measure to him who works and him who is idle. I have taken nothing by all my hardships with my life ever in my hand; as a bird when she has found a morsel takes it to her nestlings, and herself fares hardly, even so man a long night have I been wakeful, and many a bloody battle have I waged by day against those who were fighting for their women. With my ships I have taken twelve cities, and eleven round about Troy have I stormed with my men by land; I took great store of wealth from every one of them, but I gave all up to Agamemnon son of Atreus.
He stayed where he was by his ships, yet of what came to him he gave little, and kept much himself.

"Nevertheless he did distribute some meeds of honour among the chieftains and kings, and these have them still; from me alone of the Achaeans did he take the woman in whom I delighted let him keep her and sleep with her. Why, pray, must the Argives needs fight the Trojans? What made the son of Atreus gather the host and bring them? Was it not for the sake of Helen? Are the sons of Atreus the only men in the world who love their wives? Any man of common right feeling will love and cherish her who is his own, as I this woman, with my whole heart, though she was but a fruitling of my spear. Agamemnon has taken her from me; he has

played me false; I know him; let him tempt me no further, for he shall not move me. Let him look to you, Ulysses, and to the other princes to save his ships from burning. He has done much without me already. He has built a wall; he has dug a trench deep and wide all round it, and he has planted it within with stakes; but even so he stays not the murderous might of Hector. So long as I fought the Achaeans Hector suffered not the battle range far from the city walls; he would come to the Scaean gates and to the oak tree, but no further. Once he stayed to meet me and hardly did he escape my onset: now, however, since I am in no mood to fight him, I will to-morrow offer sacrifice to Jove and to all the gods; I will draw my ships into the water and then victual them duly; to-morrow morning, if you care to look, you will see my ships on the Hellespont, and my men rowing out to sea with might and main. If great Neptune vouchsafes me a fair passage, in three days I shall be in Phthia. I have much there that I left behind me when I came here to my sorrow, and I shall bring back still further store of gold, of red copper, of fair women, and of iron, my share of the spoils that we have taken; but one prize, he who gave has insolently taken away. Tell him all as I now bid you, and tell him in public that the Achaeans may hate him and beware of him should he think that he can yet dupe others for his effrontery never fails him.

"As for me, hound that he is, he dares not look me in the face. I will take no counsel with him, and will undertake nothing in common with him. He has wronged me and deceived me enough, he shall not cozen me further; let him go his own way, for Jove has robbed him of his reason. I loathe his presents, and for himself care not one straw. He may offer me ten or even twenty times what he has now done, nay not though it be all that he has in the world, both now or ever shall have; he may promise me the wealth of Orchomenus or of Egyptian Thebes, which is the richest city in the whole world, for it has a hundred gates through each of which two hundred men may drive at once with their chariots and horses; he may offer me gifts as the sands of the sea or the dust of the plain in multitude, but even so he shall not move me till I have been revenged in full for the bitter wrong he has done me. I will not marry his daughter; she may be fair as Venus, and skilful as Minerva, but I will have none of her: let another take her, who may be a good match for her and who rules a larger kingdom. If the gods spare me to return home, Peleus will find me a wife; there are Achaean women in Hellas and Phthia, daughters of kings that have cities under them; of these I can take whom I will and marry her. Many a time was I minded when at home in Phthia to woo and wed a woman who would make me a suitable wife, and to enjoy the riches of my old father Peleus. My life is more to me than all the wealth of Ilius while it was yet at peace before the Achaeans went there, or than all the treasure that lies on the stone floor of Apollo's temple beneath the cliffs of Pytho. Cattle and sheep are to be had for harrying, and a man buy both tripods and horses if he wants them, but when his life has once left him it can neither be bought nor harried back again.

"My mother Thetis tells me that there are two ways in which I may meet my end. If I stay here and fight, I shall not return alive but my name will live for ever: whereas if I go home my name will die, but it will be long ere death shall take me. To the rest of you, then, I say, 'Go home, for you will not take Ilius.' Jove has held his hand over her to protect her, and her people have taken heart. Go, therefore, as in duty bound, and tell the princes of the Achaeans the message that I have sent them; tell them to find some other plan for the saving of their ships and people, for so long as my displeasure lasts the one that they have now hit upon may not be. As for Phoenix, let him sleep here that he may sail with me in the morning if he so will. But I will not take him by force."

They all held their peace, dismayed at the sternness with which he had denied them, till presently the old knight Phoenix in his great fear for the ships of the Achaeans, burst into tears and said, "Noble Achilles, if you are now minded to return, and in the fierceness of your anger will do nothing to save the ships from burning, how, my son, can I remain here without you? Your father Peleus bade me go with you when he sent you as a mere lad from Phthia to Agamemnon. You knew nothing neither of war nor of the arts whereby men make their mark in council, and he sent me with you to train you in all excellence of speech and action. Therefore, my son, I will not stay here without you no, not though heaven itself vouchsafe to strip my years from off me, and make me young as I was when I first left Hellas the land of fair women. I was then flying the anger of father Amyntor, son of Ormenus, who was furious with me in the matter of his concubine, of whom he was enamoured to the wronging of his wife my mother. My mother, therefore, prayed me without ceasing to lie with the woman myself, that so she hate my father, and in the course of time I yielded. But my father soon came to know, and cursed me bitterly, calling the dread Erinyes to witness. He prayed that no son of mine might ever sit upon knees and the gods, Jove of the world below and awful Proserpine, fulfilled his curse. I took counsel to kill him, but some god stayed my rashness and bade me think on men's evil tongues and how I should be branded as the murderer of my father: nevertheless I could not bear to stay in my father's house with him so bitter a against me. My cousins and clansmen came about me, and pressed me sorely to remain; many a sheep and many an ox did they slaughter, and many a fat hog did they set down to roast before the fire; many a jar, too, did they broach of my father's wine. Nine whole nights did they set a guard over me taking it in turns to watch, and they kept a fire always burning, both in the cloister of the outer court and in the inner court at the

doors of the room wherein I lay; but when the darkness of the tenth night came, I broke through the closed doors of my room, and climbed the wall of the outer court after passing quickly and unperceived through the men on guard and the women servants. I then fled through Hellas till I came to fertile Phthia, mother of sheep, and to King Peleus, who made me welcome and treated me as a father treats an only son who will be heir to all his wealth. He made me rich and set me over much people, establishing me on the borders of Phthia where I was chief ruler over the Dolopians.

"It was I, Achilles, who had the making of you; I loved you with all my heart: for you would eat neither at home nor when you had gone out elsewhere, till I had first set you upon my knees, cut up the dainty morsel that you were to eat, and held the wine-cup to your lips. Many a time have you slobbered your wine in baby helplessness over
my shirt; I had infinite trouble with you, but I knew that heaven had vouchsafed me no offspring of my own, and I made a son of you, Achilles, that in my hour of need you might protect me. Now, therefore, I say battle with your pride and beat it; cherish not your anger for ever; the might and majesty of heaven are more than ours, but even heaven may be appeased; and if a man has sinned he prays the gods, and reconciles them to himself by his piteous cries and by frankincense, with drink-offerings and the savour of burnt sacrifice. For prayers are as daughters to great Jove; halt, wrinkled, with eyes askance, they follow in the footsteps of sin, who, being fierce and fleet of foot, leaves them far behind him, and ever baneful to mankind outstrips them even to the ends of the world; but nevertheless the prayers come hobbling and healing after. If a man has pity upon these daughters of Jove when they draw near him, they will bless him and hear him too when he is praying; but if he deny them and will not listen to them, they go to Jove the son of Saturn and pray that he may presently fall into sin to his ruing bitterly hereafter. Therefore, Achilles, give these daughters of Jove due reverence, and bow before them as all good men will bow. Were not the son of Atreus offering you gifts and promising others later if he were still furious and implacable I am not he that would bid you throw off your anger and help the Achaeans, no matter how great their need; but he is giving much now, and more hereafter; he has sent his captains to urge his suit, and has chosen those who of all the Argives are most acceptable to you; make not then their words and their coming to be of none effect. Your anger has been righteous so far. We have heard in song how heroes of old time quarrelled when they were roused to fury, but still they could be won by gifts, and fair words could soothe them.

"I have an old story in my mind a very old one but you are all friends and I will tell it. The Curetes and the Aetolians were fighting and killing one another round Calydon the Aetolians defending the city and the Curetes trying to destroy it. For Diana of the golden throne was angry and did them hurt because Oeneus had not offered her his harvest first-fruits. The other gods had all been feasted with hecatombs, but to the daughter of great Jove alone he had made no sacrifice. He had forgotten her, or somehow or other it had escaped him, and this was a grievous sin. Thereon the archer goddess in her displeasure sent a prodigious creature against him a savage wild boar with great white tusks that did much harm to his orchard lands, uprooting apple-trees in full bloom and throwing them to the ground. But Meleager son of Oeneus got huntsmen and hounds from many cities and killed it for it was so monstrous that not a few were needed, and many a man did it stretch upon his funeral pyre. On this the goddess set the Curetes and the Aetolians fighting furiously about the head and skin of the boar.

"So long as Meleager was in the field things went badly with the Curetes, and for all their numbers they could not hold their ground under the city walls; but in the course of time Meleager was angered as even a wise man will sometimes be. He was incensed with his mother Althaea, and therefore stayed at home with his wedded wife fair Cleopatra, who was daughter of Marpessa daughter of Euenus, and of Ides the man then living. He it was who took his bow and faced King Apollo himself for fair Marpessa's sake; her father and mother then named her Alcyone, because her mother had mourned with the plaintive strains of the halcyon-bird when Phoebus Apollo had carried her off. Meleager, then, stayed at home with Cleopatra, nursing the anger which he felt by reason of his mother's curses. His mother, grieving for the death of her brother, prayed the gods, and beat the earth with her hands, calling upon Hades and on awful Proserpine; she went down upon her knees and her bosom was wet with tears as she prayed that they would kill her son and Erinys that walks in darkness and knows no ruth heard her from Erebus.

"Then was heard the din of battle about the gates of Calydon, and the dull thump of the battering against their walls. Thereon the elders of the Aetolians besought Meleager; they sent the chiefest of their priests, and begged him to come out and help them, promising him a great reward. They bade him choose fifty plough-gates, the most fertile in the plain of Calydon, the one-half vineyard and the other open plough-land. The old warrior Oeneus implored him, standing at the threshold of his room and beating the doors in supplication. His sisters and his mother herself besought him sore, but he the more refused them; those of his comrades who were nearest and dearest to him also prayed him, but they could not move him till the foe was battering at the very doors of his chamber, and the Curetes had scaled the walls and were setting fire to the city. Then at last his sorrowing wife detailed the horrors

that befall those whose city is taken; she reminded him how the men are slain, and the city is given over to the flames, while the women and children are carried into captivity; when he heard all this, his heart was touched, and he donned his armour to go forth. Thus of his own inward motion he saved the city of the Aetolians; but they now gave him nothing of those rich rewards that they had offered earlier, and though he saved the city he took nothing by it. Be not then, my son, thus minded; let not heaven lure you into any such course. When the ships are burning it will be a harder matter to save them. Take the gifts, and go, for the Achaeans will then honour you as a god; whereas if you fight without taking them, you may beat the battle back, but you will not be held in like honour."

And Achilles answered, "Phoenix, old friend and father, I have no need of such honour. I have honour from Jove himself, which will abide with me at my ships while I have breath in my body, and my limbs are strong. I say further and lay my saying to your heart vex me no more with this weeping and lamentation, all in the cause of the son of Atreus. Love him so well, and you may lose the love I bear you. You ought to help me rather in troubling those that trouble me; be king as much as I am, and share like honour with myself; the others shall take my answer; stay here yourself and sleep comfortably in your bed; at daybreak we will consider whether to remain or go."

On this she nodded quietly to Patroclus as a sign that he was to prepare a bed for Phoenix, and that the others should take their leave. Ajax son of Telamon then said, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, let us be gone, for I see that our journey is vain. We must now take our answer, unwelcome though it be, to the Danaans who are waiting to receive it. Achilles is savage and remorseless; he is cruel, and cares nothing for the love his comrades lavished upon him more than on all the others. He is implacable and yet if a man's brother or son has been slain he will accept a fine by way of amends from him that killed him, and the wrong-doer having paid in full remains in peace among his own people; but as for you, Achilles, the gods have put a wicked unforgiving spirit in your heart, and this, all about one single girl, whereas we now offer you the seven best we have, and much else into the bargain. Be then of a more gracious mind, respect the hospitality of your own roof. We are with you as messengers from the host of the Danaans, and would fain he held nearest and dearest to yourself of all the Achaeans."

"Ajax," replied Achilles, "noble son of Telamon, you have spoken much to my liking, but my blood boils when I think it all over, and remember how the son of Atreus treated me with contumely as though I were some vile tramp, and that too in the presence of the Argives. Go, then, and deliver your message; say that I will have no concern with fighting till Hector, son of noble Priam, reaches the tents of the Myrmidons in his murderous course, and flings fire upon their ships. For all his lust of battle, I take it he will be held in check when he is at my own tent and ship."

On this they took every man his double cup, made their drink-offerings, and went back to the ships, Ulysses leading the way. But Patroclus told his men and the maid-servants to make ready a comfortable bed for Phoenix; they therefore did so with sheepskins, a rug, and a sheet of fine linen. The old man then laid himself down and waited till morning came. But Achilles slept in an inner room, and beside him the daughter of Phorbas lovely Diomede, whom he had carried off from Lesbos. Patroclus lay on the other side of the room, and with him fair Iphis whom Achilles had given him when he took Scyros the city of Enyeus.

When the envoys reached the tents of the son of Atreus, the Achaeans rose, pledged them in cups of gold, and began to question them. King Agamemnon was the first to do so. Tell me, Ulysses," said he, "will he save the ships from burning, or did be refuse, and is he still furious?"

Ulysses answered, "Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, Achilles will not be calmed, but is more fiercely angry than ever, and spurns both you and your gifts. He bids you take counsel with the Achaeans to save the ships and host as you best may; as for himself, he said that at daybreak he should draw his ships into the water. He said further that he should advise every one to sail home likewise, for that you will not reach the goal of Ilius. 'Jove,' he said, 'has laid his hand over the city to protect it, and the people have taken heart.' This is what he said, and the others who were with me can tell you the same story Ajax and the two heralds, men, both of them, who may be trusted. The old man Phoenix stayed where he was to sleep, for so Achilles would have it, that he might go home with him in the morning if he so would; but he will not take him by force."

They all held their peace, sitting for a long time silent and dejected, by reason of the sternness with which Achilles had refused them, till presently Diomed said, "Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, you ought not to have sued the son of Peleus nor offered him gifts. He is proud enough as it is, and you have encouraged him in his pride am further. Let him stay or go as he will. He will fight later when he is in the humour, and heaven puts it in his mind to do so. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; we have eaten and drunk our fill, let us then take our rest, for in rest there is both strength and stay. But when fair rosy-

fingered morn appears, forthwith bring out your host and your horsemen in front of the ships, urging them on, and yourself fighting among the foremost."

Thus he spoke, and the other chieftains approved his words. They then made their drink-offerings and went every man to his own tent, where they laid down to rest and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

Book X

NOW the other princes of the Achaeans slept soundly the whole night through, but Agamemnon son of Atreus was troubled, so that he could get no rest. As when fair Juno's lord flashes his lightning in token of great rain or hail or snow when the snow-flakes whiten the ground, or again as a sign that he will open the wide jaws of hungry war, even so did Agamemnon heave many a heavy sigh, for his soul trembled within him. When he looked upon the plain of Troy he marvelled at the many watchfires burning in front of Ilius, and at the sound of pipes and flutes and of the hum of men, but when presently he turned towards the ships and hosts of the Achaeans, he tore his hair by handfuls before Jove on high, and groaned aloud for the very disquietness of his soul. In the end he deemed it best to go at once to Nestor son of Neleus, and see if between them they could find any way of the Achaeans from destruction. He therefore rose, put on his shirt, bound his sandals about his comely feet, flung the skin of a huge tawny lion over his shoulders a skin that reached his feet and took his spear in his hand.

Neither could Menelaus sleep, for he, too, boded ill for the Argives who for his sake had sailed from far over the seas to fight the Trojans. He covered his broad back with the skin of a spotted panther, put a casque of bronze upon his head, and took his spear in his brawny hand. Then he went to rouse his brother, who was by far the most powerful of the Achaeans, and was honoured by the people as though he were a god. He found him by the stern of his ship already putting his goodly array about his shoulders, and right glad was he that his brother had come.

Menelaus spoke first. "Why," said he, "my dear brother, are you thus arming? Are you going to send any of our comrades to exploit the Trojans? I greatly fear that no one will do you this service, and spy upon the enemy alone in the dead of night. It will be a deed of great daring."

And King Agamemnon answered, "Menelaus, we both of us need shrewd counsel to save the Argives and our ships, for Jove has changed his mind, and inclines towards Hector's sacrifices rather than ours. I never saw nor heard tell of any man as having wrought such ruin in one day as Hector has now wrought against the sons of the Achaeans and that too of his own unaided self, for he is son neither to god nor goddess. The Argives will rue it long and deeply. Run, therefore, with all speed by the line of the ships, and call Ajax and Idomeneus. Meanwhile I will go to Nestor, and bid him rise and go about among the companies of our sentinels to give them their instructions; they will listen to him sooner than to any man, for his own son, and Meriones brother in arms to Idomeneus, are captains over them. It was to them more particularly that we gave this charge."

Menelaus replied, "How do I take your meaning? Am I to stay with them and wait your coming, or shall I return here as soon as I have given your orders?" "Wait," answered King Agamemnon, "for there are so many paths about the camp that we might miss one another. Call every man on your way, and bid him be stirring; name him by his lineage and by his father's name, give each all titular observance, and stand not too much upon your own dignity; we must take our full share of toil, for at our birth Jove laid this heavy burden upon us."

With these instructions he sent his brother on his way, and went on to Nestor shepherd of his people. He found him sleeping in his tent hard by his own ship; his goodly armour lay beside him his shield, his two spears and his helmet; beside him also lay the gleaming girdle with which the old man girded himself when he armed to lead his people into battle for his age stayed him not. He raised himself on his elbow and looked up at Agamemnon. "Who is it," said he, "that goes thus about the host and the ships alone and in the dead of night, when men are sleeping? Are you looking for one of your mules or for some comrade? Do not stand there and say nothing, but speak. What is your business?"

And Agamemnon answered, "Nestor, son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, it is I, Agamemnon son of Atreus, on whom Jove has laid labour and sorrow so long as there is breath in my body and my limbs carry me. I am thus abroad because sleep sits not upon my eyelids, but my heart is big with war and with the jeopardy of the Achaeans. I am in great fear for the Danaans. I am at sea, and without sure counsel; my heart beats as though it would leap out of my body, and my limbs fail me. If then you can do anything for you too cannot sleep let us go the round of the watch, and see whether they are drowsy with toil and sleeping to the neglect of their duty. The enemy is encamped hard and we know not but he may attack us by night."

Nestor replied, “Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, Jove will not do all for Hector that Hector thinks he will; he will have troubles yet in plenty if Achilles will lay aside his anger. I will go with you, and we will rouse others, either the son of Tydeus, or Ulysses, or fleet Ajax and the valiant son of Phyleus. Some one had also better go and call Ajax and King Idomeneus, for their ships are not near at hand but the farthest of all. I cannot however refrain from blaming Menelaus, much as I love him and respect him and I will say so plainly, even at the risk of offending you for sleeping and leaving all this trouble to yourself. He ought to be going about imploring aid from all the princes of the Achaeans, for we are in extreme danger.”

And Agamemnon answered, “Sir, you may sometimes blame him justly, for he is often remiss and unwilling to exert himself not indeed from sloth, nor yet heedlessness, but because he looks to me and expects me to take the lead. On this occasion, however, he was awake before I was, and came to me of his own accord. I have already sent him to call the very men whom you have named. And now let us be going. We shall find them with the watch outside the gates, for it was there I said that we would meet them.”

“In that case,” answered Nestor, “the Argives will not blame him nor disobey his orders when he urges them to fight or gives them instructions.”

With this he put on his shirt, and bound his sandals about his comely feet. He buckled on his purple coat, of two thicknesses, large, and of a rough shaggy texture, grasped his redoubtable bronze-shod spear, and wended his way along the line of the Achaean ships. First he called loudly to Ulysses peer of gods in counsel and woke him, for he was soon roused by the sound of the battle-cry. He came outside his tent and said, “Why do you go thus alone about the host, and along the line of the ships in the stillness of the night? What is it that you find so urgent?” And Nestor knight of Gerene answered, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, take it not amiss, for the Achaeans are in great straits. Come with me and let us wake some other, who may advise well with us whether we shall fight or fly.”

On this Ulysses went at once into his tent, put his shield about his shoulders and came out with them. First they went to Diomed son of Tydeus, and found him outside his tent clad in his armour with his comrades sleeping round him and using their shields as pillows; as for their spears, they stood upright on the spikes of their butts that were driven into the ground, and the burnished bronze flashed afar like the lightning of father Jove. The hero was sleeping upon the skin of an ox, with a piece of fine carpet under his head; Nestor went up to him and stirred him with his heel to rouse him, upbraiding him and urging him to bestir himself. “Wake up,” he exclaimed, “son of Tydeus. How can you sleep on in this way? Can you not see that the Trojans are encamped on the brow of the plain hard by our ships, with but a little space between us and them?”

On these words Diomed leaped up instantly and said, “Old man, your heart is of iron; you rest not one moment from your labours. Are there no younger men among the Achaeans who could go about to rouse the princes? There is no tiring you.”

And Nestor knight of Gerene made answer, “My son, all that you have said is true. I have good sons, and also much people who might call the chieftains, but the Achaeans are in the gravest danger; life and death are balanced as it were on the edge of a razor. Go then, for you are younger than I, and of your courtesy rouse Ajax and the fleet son of Phyleus.”

Diomed threw the skin of a great tawny lion about his shoulders a skin that reached his feet and grasped his spear. When he had roused the heroes, he brought them back with him; they then went the round of those who were on guard, and found the captains not sleeping at their posts but wakeful and sitting with their arms about them. As sheep dogs that watch their flocks when they are yarded, and hear a wild beast coming through the mountain forest towards them forthwith there is a hue and cry of dogs and men, and slumber is broken even so was sleep chased from the eyes of the Achaeans as they kept the watches of the wicked night, for they turned constantly towards the plain whenever they heard any stir among the Trojans. The old man was glad bade them be of good cheer. “Watch on, my children,” said he, “and let not sleep get hold upon you, lest our enemies triumph over us.”

With this he passed the trench, and with him the other chiefs of the Achaeans who had been called to the council. Meriones and the brave son of Nestor went also, for the princes bade them. When they were beyond the trench that was dug round the wall they held their meeting on the open ground where there was a space clear of corpses, for it was here that when night fell Hector had turned back from his onslaught on the Argives. They sat down, therefore, and held debate with one another.

Nestor spoke first. “My friends,” said he, “is there any man bold enough to venture the Trojans, and cut off some straggler, or us news of what the enemy mean to do whether they will stay here by the ships away from the city, or whether, now that they have worsted the Achaeans, they will retire within their walls. If he could learn all this and come back safely here, his fame would be high as heaven in the mouths of all men, and he would be rewarded richly; for the chiefs from all our ships would each of them

give him a black ewe with her lamb which is a present of surpassing value and he would be asked as a guest to all feasts and clan-gatherings."

They all held their peace, but Diomed of the loud war-cry spoke saying, "Nestor, gladly will I visit the host of the Trojans over against us, but if another will go with me I shall do so in greater confidence and comfort. When two men are together, one of them may see some opportunity which the other has not caught sight of; if a man is alone he is less full of resource, and his wit is weaker."

On this several offered to go with Diomed. The two Ajaxes, servants of Mars, Meriones, and the son of Nestor all wanted to go, so did Menelaus son of Atreus; Ulysses also wished to go among the host of the Trojans, for he was ever full of daring, and thereon Agamemnon king of men spoke thus: "Diomed," said he, "son of Tydeus, man after my own heart, choose your comrade for yourself take the best man of those that have offered, for many would now go with you. Do not through delicacy reject the better man, and take the worst out of respect for his lineage, because he is of more royal blood."

He said this because he feared for Menelaus. Diomed answered, "If you bid me take the man of my own choice, how in that case can I fail to think of Ulysses, than whom there is no man more eager to face all kinds of danger and Pallas Minerva loves him well? If he were to go with me we should pass safely through fire itself, for he is quick to see and understand."

"Son of Tydeus," replied Ulysses, "say neither good nor ill about me, for you are among Argives who know me well. Let us be going, for the night wanes and dawn is at hand. The stars have gone forward, two-thirds of the night are already spent, and the third is alone left us."

They then put on their armour. Brave Thrasymedes provided the son of Tydeus with a sword and a shield (for he had left his own at his ship) and on his head he set a helmet of bull's hide without either peak or crest; it is called a skull-cap and is a common headgear. Meriones found a bow and quiver for Ulysses, and on his head he set a leathern helmet that was lined with a strong plaiting of leathern thongs, while on the outside it was thickly studded with boar's teeth, well and skilfully set into it; next the head there was an inner lining of felt. This helmet had been stolen by Autolycus out of Eleon when he broke into the house of Amyntor son of Ormenus. He gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera to take to Scandea, and Amphidamas gave it as a guest-gift to Molus, who gave it to his son Meriones; and now it was set upon the head of Ulysses.

When the pair had armed, they set out, and left the other chieftains behind them. Pallas Minerva sent them a heron by the wayside upon their right hands; they could not see it for the darkness, but they heard its cry. Ulysses was glad when he heard it and prayed to Minerva: "Hear me," he cried, "daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, you who spy out all my ways and who are with me in all my hardships; befriend me in this mine hour, and grant that we may return to the ships covered with glory after having achieved some mighty exploit that shall bring sorrow to the Trojans."

Then Diomed of the loud war-cry also prayed: "Hear me too," said he, "daughter of Jove, unweariable; be with me even as you were with my noble father Tydeus when he went to Thebes as envoy sent by the Achaeans. He left the Achaeans by the banks of the river Aesopus, and went to the city bearing a message of peace to the Cadmeians; on his return thence, with your help, goddess, he did great deeds of daring, for you were his ready helper. Even so guide me and guard me now, and in return I will offer you in sacrifice a broad-browed heifer of a year old, unbroken, and never yet brought by man under the yoke. I will gild her horns and will offer her up to you in sacrifice."

Thus they prayed, and Pallas Minerva heard their prayer. When they had done praying to the daughter of great Jove, they went their way like two lions prowling by night amid the armour and blood-stained bodies of them that had fallen.

Neither again did Hector let the Trojans sleep; for he too called the princes and councillors of the Trojans that he might set his counsel before them. "Is there one," said he, "who for a great reward will do me the service of which I will tell you? He shall be well paid if he will. I will give him a chariot and a couple of horses, the fleetest that can
be found at the ships of the Achaeans, if he will dare this thing; and he will win infinite honour to boot; he must go to the ships and find out whether they are still guarded as heretofore, or whether now that we have beaten them the Achaeans design to fly, and through sheer exhaustion are neglecting to keep their watches."

They all held their peace; but there was among the Trojans a certain man named Dolon, son of Eumedes, the famous herald a man rich in gold and bronze. He was ill-favoured, but a good runner, and was an only son among five sisters. He it was that now addressed the Trojans. "I, Hector," said he, "Will to the ships and will exploit them. But first hold up your sceptre and swear that

you will give me the chariot, bedight with bronze, and the horses that now carry the noble son of Peleus. I will make you a good scout, and will not fail you. I will go through the host from one end to the other till I come to the ship of Agamemnon, where I take it the princes of the Achaeans are now consulting whether they shall fight or fly."

When he had done speaking Hector held up his sceptre, and swore him his oath saying, "May Jove the thundering husband of Juno bear witness that no other Trojan but yourself shall mount those steeds, and that you shall have your will with them for ever."

The oath he swore was bootless, but it made Dolon more keen on going. He hung his bow over his shoulder, and as an overall he wore the skin of a grey wolf, while on his head he set a cap of ferret skin. Then he took a pointed javelin, and left the camp for the ships, but he was not to return with any news for Hector. When he had left the horses and the troops behind him, he made all speed on his way, but Ulysses perceived his coming and said to Diomed, "Diomed, here is some one from the camp; I am not sure whether he is a spy, or whether it is some thief who would plunder the bodies of the dead; let him get a little past us, we can then spring upon him and take him. If, however, he is too quick for us, go after him with your spear and hem him in towards the ships away from the Trojan camp, to prevent his getting back to the town."

With this they turned out of their way and lay down among the corpses. Dolon suspected nothing and soon passed them, but when he had got about as far as the distance by which a mule-plowed furrow exceeds one that has been ploughed by oxen (for mules can plow fallow land quicker than oxen) they ran after him, and when he heard their footsteps he stood still, for he made sure they were friends from the Trojan camp come by Hector's orders to bid him return; when, however, they were only a spear's cast, or less away form him, he saw that they were enemies as fast as his legs could take him. The others gave chase at once, and as a couple of well-trained hounds press forward after a doe or hare that runs screaming in front of them, even so did the son of Tydeus and Ulysses pursue Dolon and cut him off from his own people. But when he had fled so far towards the ships that he would soon have fallen in with the outposts, Minerva infused fresh strength into the son of Tydeus for fear some other of the Achaeans might have the glory of being first to hit him, and he might himself be only second; he therefore sprang forward with his spear and said, "Stand, or I shall throw my spear, and in that case I shall soon make an end of you."

He threw as he spoke, but missed his aim on purpose. The dart flew over the man's right shoulder, and then stuck in the ground. He stood stock still, trembling and in great fear; his teeth chattered, and he turned pale with fear. The two came breathless up to him and seized his hands, whereon he began to weep and said, "Take me alive; I will ransom myself; we have great store of gold, bronze, and wrought iron, and from this my father will satisfy you with a very large ransom, should he hear of my being alive at the ships of the Achaeans."

"Fear not," replied Ulysses, "let no thought of death be in your mind; but tell me, and tell me true, why are you thus going about alone in the dead of night away from your camp and towards the ships, while other men are sleeping? Is it to plunder the bodies of the slain, or did Hector send you to spy out what was going on at the ships? Or did you come here of your own mere notion?"

Dolon answered, his limbs trembling beneath him: "Hector, with his vain flattering promises, lured me from my better judgement. He said he would give me the horses of the noble son of Peleus and his bronze-bedizened chariot; he bade me go through the darkness of the flying night, get close to the enemy, and find out whether the ships are still guarded as heretofore, or whether, now that we have beaten them, the Achaeans design to fly, and through sheer exhaustion are neglecting to keep their watches."

Ulysses smiled at him and answered, "You had indeed set your heart upon a great reward, but the horses of the descendant of Aeacus are hardly to be kept in hand or driven by any other mortal man than Achilles himself, whose mother was an immortal. But tell me, and tell me true, where did you leave Hector when you started? Where lies his armour and his horses? How, too, are the watches and sleeping-ground of the Trojans ordered? What are their plans? Will they stay here by the ships and away from the city, or now that they have worsted the Achaeans, will they retire within their walls?"

And Dolon answered, "I will tell you truly all. Hector and the other councillors are now holding conference by the monument of great Ilus, away from the general tumult; as for the guards about which you ask me, there is no chosen watch to keep guard over the host. The Trojans have their watchfires, for they are bound to have them; they, therefore, are awake and keep each other to their duty as sentinels; but the allies who have come from other places are asleep and leave it to the Trojans to keep guard, for their wives and children are not here."

Ulysses then said, "Now tell me; are they sleeping among the Trojan troops, or do they lie apart? Explain this that I may understand it."

"I will tell you truly all," replied Dolon. "To the seaward lie the Carians, the Paeonian bowmen, the Leleges, the Cauconians, and the noble Pelasgi. The Lysians and proud Mysians, with the Phrygians and Meonians, have their place on the side towards Thymbra; but why ask about an this? If you want to find your way into the host of the Trojans, there are the Thracians, who have lately come here and lie apart from the others at the far end of the camp; and they have Rhesus son of Eioneus for their king. His horses are the finest and strongest that I have ever seen, they are whiter than snow and fleeter than any wind that blows. His chariot is bedight with silver and gold, and he has brought his marvellous golden armour, of the rarest workmanship too splendid for any mortal man to carry, and meet only for the gods. Now, therefore, take me to the ships or bind me securely here, until you come back and have proved my words whether they be false or true."

Diomed looked sternly at him and answered, "Think not, Dolon, for all the good information you have given us, that you shall escape now you are in our hands, for if we ransom you or let you go, you will come some second time to the ships of the Achaeans either as a spy or as an open enemy, but if I kill you and an end of you, you will give no more trouble."

On this Dolon would have caught him by the beard to beseech him further, but Diomed struck him in the middle of his neck with his sword and cut through both sinews so that his head fell rolling in the dust while he was yet speaking. They took the ferret-skin cap from his head, and also the wolf-skin, the bow, and his long spear. Ulysses hung them up aloft in honour of Minerva the goddess of plunder, and prayed saying, "Accept these, goddess, for we give them to you in preference to all the gods in Olympus: therefore speed us still further towards the horses and sleeping-ground of the Thracians."

With these words he took the spoils and set them upon a tamarisk tree, and they marked the place by pulling up reeds and gathering boughs of tamarisk that they might not miss it as they came back through the' flying hours of darkness. The two then went onwards amid the fallen armour and the blood, and came presently to the company of Thracian soldiers, who were sleeping, tired out with their day's toil; their goodly armour was lying on the ground beside them all orderly in three rows, and each man had his yoke of horses beside him. Rhesus was sleeping in the middle, and hard by him his horses were made fast to the topmost rim of his chariot. Ulysses from some way off saw him and said, "This, Diomed, is the man, and these are the horses about which Dolon whom we killed told us. Do your very utmost; dally not about your armour, but loose the horses at once or else kill the men yourself, while I see to the horses."

Thereon Minerva put courage into the heart of Diomed, and he smote them right and left. They made a hideous groaning as they were being hacked about, and the earth was red with their blood. As a lion springs furiously upon a flock of sheep or goats when he finds without their shepherd, so did the son of Tydeus set upon the Thracian soldiers till he had killed twelve. As he killed them Ulysses came and drew them aside by their feet one by one, that the horses might go forward freely without being frightened as they passed over the dead bodies, for they were not yet used to them. When the son of Tydeus came to the king, he killed him too (which made thirteen), as he was breathing hard, for by the counsel of Minerva an evil dream, the seed of Oeneus, hovered that night over his head. Meanwhile Ulysses untied the horses, made them fast one to another and drove them off, striking them with his bow, for he had forgotten to take the whip from the chariot. Then he whistled as a sign to Diomed.

But Diomed stayed where he was, thinking what other daring deed he might accomplish. He was doubting whether to take the chariot in which the king's armour was lying, and draw it out by the pole, or to lift the armour out and carry it off; or whether again, he should not kill some more Thracians. While he was thus hesitating Minerva came up to him and said, "Get back, Diomed, to the ships or you may be driven thither, should some other god rouse the Trojans."

Diomed knew that it was the goddess, and at once sprang upon the horses. Ulysses beat them with his bow and they flew onward to the ships of the Achaeans.

But Apollo kept no blind look-out when he saw Minerva with the son of Tydeus. He was angry with her, and coming to the host of the Trojans he roused Hippocoon, a counsellor of the Thracians and a noble kinsman of Rhesus. He started up out of his sleep and saw that the horses were no longer in their place, and that the men were gasping in their death-agony; on this he groaned aloud, and called upon his friend by name. Then the whole Trojan camp was in an uproar as the people kept hurrying together, and they marvelled at the deeds of the heroes who had now got away towards the ships.

When they reached the place where they had killed Hector's scout, Ulysses stayed his horses, and the son of Tydeus, leaping to the ground, placed the blood-stained spoils in the hands of Ulysses and remounted: then he lashed the horses onwards, and they flew forward nothing loth towards the ships as though of their own free will. Nestor was first to hear the tramp of their feet. "My friends," said he, "princes and counsellors of the Argives, shall I guess right or wrong? but I must say what I think: there is a sound

in my ears as of the tramp of horses. I hope it may Diomed and Ulysses driving in horses from the Trojans, but I much fear that the bravest of the Argives may have come to some harm at their hands."

He had hardly done speaking when the two men came in and dismounted, whereon the others shook hands right gladly with them and congratulated them. Nestor knight of Gerene was first to question them. "Tell me," said he, "renowned Ulysses, how did you two come by these horses? Did you steal in among the Trojan forces, or did some god meet you and give them to you? They are like sunbeams. I am well conversant with the Trojans, for old warrior though I am I never hold back by the ships, but I never yet saw or heard of such horses as these are. Surely some god must have met you and given them to you, for you are both of dear to Jove, and to Jove's daughter Minerva."

And Ulysses answered, "Nestor son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, heaven, if it so will, can give us even better horses than these, for the gods are far mightier than we are. These horses, however, about which you ask me, are freshly come from Thrace. Diomed killed their king with the twelve bravest of his companions. Hard by the ships we took a thirteenth man a scout whom Hector and the other Trojans had sent as a spy upon our ships."

He laughed as he spoke and drove the horses over the ditch, while the other Achaeans followed him gladly. When they reached the strongly built quarters of the son of Tydeus, they tied the horses with thongs of leather to the manger, where the steeds of Diomed stood eating their sweet corn, but Ulysses hung the blood-stained spoils of Dolon at the stern of his ship, that they might prepare a sacred offering to Minerva. As for themselves, they went into the sea and washed the sweat from their bodies, and from their necks and thighs. When the sea-water had taken all the sweat from off them, and had refreshed them, they went into the baths and washed themselves. After they had so done and had anointed themselves with oil, they sat down to table, and drawing from a full mixing-bowl, made a drink-offering of wine to Minerva.

Book XI

AND now as Dawn rose from her couch beside Tithonus, harbinger of light alike to mortals and immortals, Jove sent fierce Discord with the ensign of war in her hands to the ships of the Achaeans. She took her stand by the huge black hull of Ulysses' ship which was middlemost of all, so that her voice might carry farthest on either side, on the one hand towards the tents of Ajax son of Telamon, and on the other towards those of Achilles for these two heroes, well-assured of their own strength, had valorously drawn up their ships at the two ends of the line. There she took her stand, and raised a cry both loud and shrill that filled the Achaeans with courage, giving them heart to fight resolutely and with all their might, so that they had rather stay there and do battle than go home in their ships.

The son of Atreus shouted aloud and bade the Argives gird themselves for battle while he put on his armour. First he girded his goodly greaves about his legs, making them fast with ankle clasps of silver; and about his chest he set the breastplate which Cinyras had once given him as a guest-gift. It had been noised abroad as far as Cyprus that the Achaeans were about to sail for Troy, and therefore he gave it to the king. It had ten courses of dark cyanus, twelve of gold, and ten of tin. There were serpents of cyanus that reared themselves up towards the neck, three upon either side, like the rainbows which the son of Saturn has set in heaven as a sign to mortal men. About his shoulders he threw his sword, studded with bosses of gold; and the scabbard was of silver with a chain of gold wherewith to hang it. He took moreover the richly-dight shield that covered his body when he was in battle fair to see, with ten circles of bronze running all round see, wit it. On the body of the shield there were twenty bosses of white tin, with another of dark cyanus in the middle: this last was made to show a Gorgon's head, fierce and grim, with Rout and Panic on either side. The band for the arm to go through was of silver, on which there was a writhing snake of cyanus with three heads that sprang from a single neck, and went in and out among one another. On his head Agamemnon set a helmet, with a peak before and behind, and four plumes of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it; then he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears, and the gleam of his armour shot from him as a flame into the firmament, while Juno and Minerva thundered in honour of the king of rich Mycene.

Every man now left his horses in charge of his charioteer to hold them in readiness by the trench, while he went into battle on foot clad in full armour, and a mighty uproar rose on high into the dawning. The chiefs were armed and at the trench before the horses got there, but these came up presently. The son of Saturn sent a portent of evil sound about their host, and the dew fell red with blood, for he was about to send many a brave man hurrying down to Hades.

The Trojans, on the other side upon the rising slope of the plain, were gathered round great Hector, noble Polydamas, Aeneas who was honoured by the Trojans like an immortal, and the three sons of Antenor, Polybus, Agenor, and young Acamas beauteous as a

god. Hector's round shield showed in the front rank, and as some baneful star that shines for a moment through a rent in the clouds and is again hidden beneath them; even so was Hector now seen in the front ranks and now again in the hindermost, and his bronze armour gleamed like the lightning of aegis-bearing Jove.

And now as a band of reapers mow swathes of wheat or barley upon a rich man's land, and the sheaves fall thick before them, even so did the Trojans and Achaeans fall upon one another; they were in no mood for yielding but fought like wolves, and neither side got the better of the other. Discord was glad as she beheld them, for she was the only god that went among them; the others were not there, but stayed quietly each in his own home among the dells and valleys of Olympus. All of them blamed the son of Saturn for wanting to Live victory to the Trojans, but father Jove heeded them not: he held aloof from all, and sat apart in his all-glorious majesty, looking down upon the city of the Trojans, the ships of the Achaeans, the gleam of bronze, and alike upon the slayers and on the slain.

Now so long as the day waxed and it was still morning, their darts rained thick on one another and the people perished, but as the hour drew nigh when a woodman working in some mountain forest will get his midday meal for he has felled till his hands are weary; he is tired out, and must now have food then the Danaans with a cry that rang through all their ranks, broke the battalions of the enemy. Agamemnon led them on, and slew first Bienor, a leader of his people, and afterwards his comrade and charioteer Oileus, who sprang from his chariot and was coming full towards him; but Agamemnon struck him on the forehead with his spear; his bronze visor was of no avail against the weapon, which pierced both bronze and bone, so that his brains were battered in and he was killed in full fight.

Agamemnon stripped their shirts from off them and left them with their breasts all bare to lie where they had fallen. He then went on to kill Isus and Antiphus two sons of Priam, the one a bastard, the other born in wedlock; they were in the same chariot the bastard driving, while noble Antiphus fought beside him. Achilles had once taken both of them prisoners in the glades of Ida, and had bound them with fresh withes as they were shepherding, but he had taken a ransom for them; now, however, Agamemnon son of Atreus smote Isus in the chest above the nipple with his spear, while he struck Antiphus hard by the ear and threw him from his chariot. Forthwith he stripped their goodly armour from off them and recognized them, for he had already seen them at ships when Achilles brought them in from Ida. As a lion fastens on the fawns of a hind and crushes them in his great jaws, robbing them of their tender life while he on his way back to his lair the hind can do nothing for them even though she be close by, for she is in an agony of fear, and flies through the thick forest, sweating, and at her utmost speed before the mighty monster so, no man of the Trojans could help Isus and Antiphus, for they were themselves flying panic before the Argives.

Then King Agamemnon took the two sons of Antimachus, Pisander and brave Hippolochus. It was Antimachus who had been foremost in preventing Helen's being restored to Menelaus, for he was largely bribed by Alexandrus; and now Agamemnon took his two sons, both in the same chariot, trying to bring their horses to a stand for they had lost hold of the reins and the horses were mad with fear. The son of Atreus sprang upon them like a lion, and the pair besought him from their chariot. "Take us alive," they cried, "son of Atreus, and you shall receive a great ransom for us. Our father Antimachus has great store of gold, bronze, and wrought iron, and from this he will satisfy you with a very large ransom should he hear of our being alive at the ships of the Achaeans."

With such piteous words and tears did they beseech the king, but they heard no pitiful answer in return. "If," said Agamemnon, "you are sons of Antimachus, who once at a council of Trojans proposed that Menelaus and Ulysses, who had come to you as envoys, should be killed and not suffered to return, you shall now pay for the foul iniquity of your father."

As he spoke he felled Pisander from his chariot to the earth, smiting him on the chest with his spear, so that he lay face uppermost upon the ground. Hippolochus fled, but him too did Agamemnon smite; he cut off his hands and his head which he sent rolling in among the crowd as though it were a ball. There he let them both lie, and wherever the ranks were thickest thither he flew, while the other Achaeans followed. Foot soldiers drove the foot soldiers of the foe in rout before them, and slew them; horsemen did the like by horsemen, and the thundering tramp of the horses raised a cloud of dust frim off the plain. King Agamemnon followed after, ever slaying them and cheering on the Achaeans. As when some mighty forest is all ablaze the eddying gusts whirl fire in all directions till the thickets shrivel and are consumed before the blast of the flame even so fell the heads of the flying Trojans before Agamemnon son of Atreus, and many a noble pair of steeds drew an empty chariot along the highways of war, for lack of drivers who were lying on the plain, more useful now to vultures than to their wives.

Jove drew Hector away from the darts and dust, with the carnage and din of battle; but the son of Atreus sped onwards, calling out lustily to the Danaans. They flew on by the tomb of old Ilus, son of Dardanus, in the middle of the plain, and past the place of the wild fig-tree making always for the city the son of Atreus still shouting, and with hands all bedrabbled in gore; but when they had reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree, there they halted and waited for the others to come up. Meanwhile the Trojans kept on flying over the middle of the plain like a herd cows maddened with fright when a lion has attacked them in the dead of night he springs on one of them, seizes her neck in the grip of his strong teeth and then laps up her blood and gorges himself upon her entrails even so did King Agamemnon son of Atreus pursue the foe, ever slaughtering the hindmost as they fled pell-mell before him. Many a man was flung headlong from his chariot by the hand of the son of Atreus, for he wielded his spear with fury.

But when he was just about to reach the high wall and the city, the father of gods and men came down from heaven and took his seat, thunderbolt in hand, upon the crest of many-fountained Ida. He then told Iris of the golden wings to carry a message for him. “Go,” said he, “fleet Iris, and speak thus to Hector say that so long as he sees Agamemnon heading his men and making havoc of the Trojan ranks, he is to keep aloof and bid the others bear the brunt of the battle, but when Agamemnon is wounded either by spear or arrow, and takes to his chariot, then will I vouchsafe him strength to slay till he reach the ships and night falls at the going down of the sun.”

Iris hearkened and obeyed. Down she went to strong Ilius from the crests of Ida, and found Hector son of Priam standing by his chariot and horses. Then she said, “Hector son of Priam, peer of gods in counsel, father Jove has sent me to bear you this message so long as you see Agamemnon heading his men and making havoc of the Trojan ranks, you are to keep aloof and bid the others bear the brunt of the battle, but when Agamemnon is wounded either by spear or arrow, and takes to his chariot, then will Jove vouchsafe you strength to slay till you reach the ships, and till night falls at the going down of the sun.”

When she had thus spoken Iris left him, and Hector sprang full armed from his chariot to the ground, brandishing his spear as he went about everywhere among the host, cheering his men on to fight, and stirring the dread strife of battle. The Trojans then wheeled round, and again met the Achaeans, while the Argives on their part strengthened their battalions. The battle was now in array and they stood face to face with one another, Agamemnon ever pressing forward in his eagerness to be ahead of all others.

Tell me now ye Muses that dwell in the mansions of Olympus, who, whether of the Trojans or of their allies, was first to face Agamemnon? It was Iphidamas son of Antenor, a man both brave and of great stature, who was brought up in fertile Thrace the mother of sheep. Cisses, his mother’s father, brought him up in his own house when he was a child Cisses, father to fair Theano. When he reached manhood, Cisses would have kept him there, and was for giving him his daughter in marriage, but as soon as he had married he set out to fight the Achaeans with twelve ships that followed him: these he had left at Percote and had come on by land to Ilius. He it was that naw met Agamemnon son of Atreus. When they were close up with one another, the son of Atreus missed his aim, and Iphidamas hit him on the girdle below the cuirass and then flung himself upon him, trusting to his strength of arm; the girdle, however, was not pierced, nor nearly so, for the point of the spear struck against the silver and was turned aside as though it had been lead: King Agamemnon caught it from his hand, and drew it towards him with the fury of a lion; he then drew his sword, and killed Iphidamas by striking him on the neck. So there the poor fellow lay, sleeping a sleep as it were of bronze, killed in the defence of his fellow-citizens, far from his wedded wife, of whom he had had no joy though he had given much for her: he had given a hundred-head of cattle down, and had promised later on to give a thousand sheep and goats mixed, from the countless flocks of which he was possessed. Agamemnon son of Atreus then despoiled him, and carried off his armour into the host of the Achaeans.

When noble Coon, Antenor’s eldest son, saw this, sore indeed were his eyes at the sight of his fallen brother. Unseen by Agamemnon he got beside him, spear in hand, and wounded him in the middle of his arm below the elbow, the point of the spear going right through the arm. Agamemnon was convulsed with pain, but still not even for this did he leave off struggling and fighting, but grasped his spear that flew as fleet as the wind, and sprang upon Coon who was trying to drag off the body of his brother his father’s son by the foot, and was crying for help to all the bravest of his comrades; but Agamemnon struck him with a bronze-shod spear and killed him as he was dragging the dead body through the press of men under cover of his shield: he then cut off his head, standing over the body of Iphidamas. Thus did the sons of Antenor meet their fate at the hands of the son of Atreus, and go down into the house of Hades.

As long as the blood still welled warm from his wound Agamemnon went about attacking the ranks of the enemy with spear and sword and with great handfuls of stone, but when the blood had ceased to flow and the wound grew dry, the pain became great. As the sharp pangs which the Eilithuiae, goddesses of childbirth, daughters of Juno and dispensers of cruel pain, send upon a woman

when she is in labour even so sharp were the pangs of the son of Atreus. He sprang on to his chariot, and bade his charioteer drive to the ships, for he was in great agony. With a loud clear voice he shouted to the Danaans, “My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, defend the ships yourselves, for Jove has not suffered me to fight the whole day through against the Trojans.”

With this the charioteer turned his horses towards the ships, and they flew forward nothing loth. Their chests were white with foam and their bellies with dust, as they drew the wounded king out of the battle.

When Hector saw Agamemnon quit the field, he shouted to the Trojans and Lycians saying, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanian warriors, be men, my friends, and acquit yourselves in battle bravely; their best man has left them, and Jove has vouchsafed me a great triumph; charge the foe with your chariots that. you may win still greater glory.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all, and as a huntsman hounds his dogs on against a lion or wild boar, even so did Hector, peer of Mars, hound the proud Trojans on against the Achaeans. Full of hope he plunged in among the foremost, and fell on the fight like some fierce tempest that swoops down upon the sea, and lashes its deep blue waters into fury.

What, then is the full tale of those whom Hector son of Priam killed in the hour of triumph which Jove then vouchsafed him? First Asaeus, Autonous, and Opites; Dolops son of Clytius, Opheltius and Agelaus; Aesymnus, Orus and Hipponous steadfast in battle; these chieftains of the Achaeans did Hector slay, and then he fell upon the rank and file. As when the west wind hustles the clouds of the white south and beats them down with the fierceness of its fury the waves of the sea roll high, and the spray is flung aloft in the rage of the wandering wind even so thick were the heads of them that fell by the hand of Hector.

All had then been lost and no help for it, and the Achaeans would have fled pell-mell to their ships, had not Ulysses cried out to Diomed, “Son of Tydeus, what has happened to us that we thus forget our prowess? Come, my good fellow, stand by my side and help me, we shall be shamed for ever if Hector takes the ships.”

And Diomed answered, “Come what may, I will stand firm; but we shall have scant joy of it, for Jove is minded to give victory to the Trojans rather than to us.”

With these words he struck Thymbraeus from his chariot to the ground, smiting him in the left breast with his spear, while Ulysses killed Molion who was his squire. These they let lie, now that they had stopped their fighting; the two heroes then went on playing havoc with the foe, like two wild boars that turn in fury and rend the hounds that hunt them. Thus did they turn upon the Trojans and slay them, and the Achaeans were thankful to have breathing time in their flight from Hector.

They then took two princes with their chariot, the two sons of Merops of Percote, who excelled all others in the arts of divination. He had forbidden his sons to go to the war, but they would not obey him, for fate lured them to their fall. Diomed son of Tydeus slew them both and stripped them of their armour, while Ulysses killed Hippodamus and Hypeirochus.

And now the son of Saturn as he looked down from Ida ordained that neither side should have the advantage, and they kept on killing one another. The son of Tydeus speared Agastrophus son of Paeon in the hip-joint with his spear. His chariot was not at hand for him to fly with, so blindly confident had he been. His squire was in charge of it at some distance and he was fighting on foot among the foremost until he lost his life. Hector soon marked the havoc Diomed and Ulysses were making, and bore down upon them with a loud cry, followed by the Trojan ranks; brave Diomed was dismayed when he saw them, and said to Ulysses who was beside him, “Great Hector is bearing down upon us and we shall be undone; let us stand firm and wait his onset.”

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it, nor did he miss his mark. He had aimed at Hector’s head near the top of his helmet, but bronze was turned by bronze, and Hector was untouched, for the spear was stayed by the visored helm made with three plates of metal, which Phoebus Apollo had given him. Hector sprang back with a great bound under cover of the ranks; he fell on his knees and propped himself with his brawny hand leaning on the ground, for darkness had fallen on his eyes. The son of Tydeus having thrown his spear dashed in among the foremost fighters, to the place where he had seen it strike the ground; meanwhile Hector recovered himself and springing back into his chariot mingled with the crowd, by which means he saved his life. But Diomed made at him with his spear and said, “Dog, you have again got away though death was close on your heels. Phoebus Apollo, to whom I ween you pray ere you go into battle, has again saved you, nevertheless I will meet you and make and end of you hereafter, if there is any god who will stand by me too and be my helper. For the present I must pursue those I can lay hands on.”

As he spoke he began stripping the spoils from the son of Paeon, but Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen aimed an arrow at him, leaning against a pillar of the monument which men had raised to Ilus son of Dardanus, a ruler in days of old. Diomed had taken

the cuirass from off the breast of Agastrophus, his heavy helmet also, and the shield from off his shoulders, when Paris drew his bow and let fly an arrow that sped not from his hand in vain, but pierced the flat of Diomed's right foot, going right through it and fixing itself in the ground. Thereon Paris with a hearty laugh sprang forward from his hiding-place, and taunted him saying, "You are wounded my arrow has not been shot in vain; would that it had hit you in the belly and killed you, for thus the Trojans, who fear you as goats fear a lion, would have had a truce from evil."

Diomed all undaunted answered, "Archer, you who without your bow are nothing, slanderer and seducer, if you were to be tried in single combat fighting in full armour, your bow and your arrows would serve you in little stead. Vain is your boast in that you have scratched the sole of my foot. I care no more than if a girl or some silly boy had hit me. A worthless coward can inflict but a light wound; when I wound a man though I but graze his skin it is another matter, for my weapon will lay him low. His wife will tear her cheeks for grief and his children will be fatherless: there will he rot, reddening the earth with his blood, and vultures, not women, will gather round him."

Thus he spoke, but Ulysses came up and stood over him. Under this cover he sat down to draw the arrow from his foot, and sharp was the pain he suffered as he did so. Then he sprang on to his chariot and bade the charioteer drive him to the ships, for he was sick at heart.

Ulysses was now alone; not one of the Argives stood by him, for they were all panic-stricken. "Alas," said he to himself in his dismay, "what will become of me? It is ill if I turn and fly before these odds, but it will be worse if I am left alone and taken prisoner, for the son of Saturn has struck the rest of the Danaans with panic. But why talk to myself in this way? Well do I know that though cowards quit the field, a hero, whether he wound or be wounded, must stand firm and hold his own."

While he was thus in two minds, the ranks of the Trojans advanced and hemmed him in, and bitterly did they come to me it. As hounds and lusty youths set upon a wild boar that sallies from his lair whetting his white tusks they attack him from every side and can hear the gnashing of his jaws, but for all his fierceness they still hold their ground even so furiously did the Trojans attack Ulysses. First he sprang spear in hand upon Deiopites and wounded him on the shoulder with a downward blow; then he killed Thoon and Ennomus. After these he struck Chersidamas in the loins under his shield as he had just sprung down from his chariot; so he fell in the dust and clutched the earth in the hollow of his hand. These he let lie, and went on to wound Charops son of Hippasus own brother to noble Socus. Socus, hero that he was, made all speed to help him, and when he was close to Ulysses he said, "Far-famed Ulysses, insatiable of craft and toil, this day you shall either boast of having killed both the sons of Hippasus and stripped them of their armour, or you shall fall before my spear."

With these words he struck the shield of Ulysses. The spear went through the shield and passed on through his richly wrought cuirass, tearing the flesh from his side, but Pallas Minerva did not suffer it to pierce the entrails of the hero. Ulysses knew that his hour was not yet come, but he gave ground and said to Socus, "Wretch, you shall now surely die. You have stayed me from fighting further with the Trojans, but you shall now fall by my spear, yielding glory to myself, and your soul to Hades of the noble steeds."

Socus had turned in flight, but as he did so, the spear struck him in the back midway between the shoulders, and went right through his chest. He fell heavily to the ground and Ulysses vaunted over him saying, "O Socus, son of Hippasus tamer of horses, death has been too quick for you and you have not escaped him: poor wretch, not even in death shall your father and mother close your eyes, but the ravening vultures shall enshroud you with the flapping of their dark wings and devour you. Whereas even though I fall the Achaeans will give me my due rites of burial."

So saying he drew Socus's heavy spear out of his flesh and from his shield, and the blood welled forth when the spear was withdrawn so that he was much dismayed. When the Trojans saw that Ulysses was bleeding they raised a great shout and came on in a body towards him; he therefore gave ground, and called his comrades to come and help him. Thrice did he cry as loudly as man can cry, and thrice did brave Menelaus hear him; he turned, therefore, to Ajax who was close beside him and said, "Ajax, noble son of Telamon, captain of your people, the cry of Ulysses rings in my ears, as though the Trojans had cut him off and were worsting him while he is single-handed. Let us make our way through the throng; it will be well that we defend him; I fear he may come to harm for all his valour if he be left without support, and the Danaans would miss him sorely."

He led the way and mighty Ajax went with him. The Trojans had gathered round Ulysses like ravenous mountain jackals round the carcase of some homed stag that has been hit with an arrow the stag has fled at full speed so long as his blood was warm and his strength has lasted, but when the arrow has overcome him, the savage jackals devour him in the shady glades of the forest. Then heaven sends a fierce lion thither, whereon the jackals fly in terror and the lion robs them of their prey even so did Trojans many

and brave gather round crafty Ulysses, but the hero stood at bay and kept them off with his spear. Ajax then came up with his shield before him like a wall, and stood hard by, whereon the Trojans fled in all directions. Menelaus took Ulysses by the hand, and led him out of the press while his squire brought up his chariot, but Ajax rushed furiously on the Trojans and killed Doryclus, a bastard son of Priam; then he wounded Pandocus, Lysandrus, Pyrasus, and Pylartes; as some swollen torrent comes rushing in full flood from the mountains on to the plain, big with the rain of heaven many a dry oak and many a pine does it engulf, and much mud does it bring down and cast into the sea even so did brave Ajax chase the foe furiously over the plain, slaying both men and horses.

Hector did not yet know what Ajax was doing, for he was fighting on the extreme left of the battle by the banks of the river Scamander, where the carnage was thickest and the war-cry loudest round Nestor and brave Idomeneus. Among these Hector was making great slaughter with his spear and furious driving, and was destroying the ranks that were opposed to him; still the Achaeans would have given no ground, had not Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen stayed the prowess of Machaon shepherd of his people, by wounding him in the right shoulder with a triple-barbed arrow. The Achaeans were in great fear that as the fight had turned against them the Trojans might take him prisoner, and Idomeneus said to Nestor, “Nestor son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, mount your chariot at once; take Machaon with you and drive your horses to the ships as fast as you can. A physician is worth more than several other men put together, for he can cut out arrows and spread healing herbs.”

Nestor knight of Gerene did as Idomeneus had counselled; he at once mounted his chariot, and Machaon son of the famed physician Aesculapius went with him. He lashed his horses and they flew onward nothing loth towards the ships, as though of their own free will.

Then Cebriones seeing the Trojans in confusion said to Hector from his place beside him, “Hector, here are we two fighting on the extreme wing of the battle, while the other Trojans are in pell-mell rout, they and their horses. Ajax son of Telamon is driving them before him; I know him by the breadth of his shield: let us turn our chariot and horses thither, where horse and foot are fighting most desperately, and where the cry of battle is loudest.”

With this he lashed his goodly steeds, and when they felt the whip they drew the chariot full speed among the Achaeans and Trojans, over the bodies and shields of those that had fallen: the axle was bespattered with blood, and the rail round the car was covered with splashes both from the horses’ hoofs and from the tyres of the wheels. Hector tore his way through and flung himself into the thick of the fight, and his presence threw the Danaans into confusion, for his spear was not long idle; nevertheless though he went among the ranks with sword and spear, and throwing great stones, he avoided Ajax son of Telamon, for Jove would have been angry with him if he had fought a better man than himself.

Then father Jove from his high throne struck fear into the heart of Ajax, so that he stood there dazed and threw his shield behind him looking fearfully at the throng of his foes as though he were some wild beast, and turning hither and thither but crouching slowly backwards. As peasants with their hounds chase a lion from their stockyard, and watch by night to prevent his carrying off the pick of their herd he makes his greedy spring, but in vain, for the darts from many a strong hand fall thick around him, with burning brands that scare him for all his fury, and when morning comes he slinks foiled and angry away even so did Ajax, sorely against his will, retreat angrily before the Trojans, fearing for the ships of the Achaeans. Or as some lazy ass that has had many a cudgel broken about his back, when he into a field begins eating the corn boys beat him but he is too many for them, and though they lay about with their sticks they cannot hurt him; still when he has had his fill they at last drive him from the field even so did the Trojans and their allies pursue great Ajax, ever smiting the middle of his shield with their darts. Now and again he would turn and show fight, keeping back the battalions of the Trojans, and then he would again retreat; but he prevented any of them from making his way to the ships. Single-handed he stood midway between the Trojans and Achaeans: the spears that sped from their hands stuck some of them in his mighty shield, while many, though thirsting for his blood, fell to the ground ere they could reach him to the wounding of his fair flesh.

Now when Eurypylus the brave son of Euaemon saw that Ajax was being overpowered by the rain of arrows, he went up to him and hurled his spear. He struck Apisaon son of Phausius in the liver below the midriff, and laid him low. Eurypylus sprang upon him, and stripped the armour from his shoulders; but when Alexandrus saw him, he aimed an arrow at him which struck him in the right thigh; the arrow broke, but the point that was left in the wound dragged on the thigh; he drew back, therefore, under cover of his comrades to save his life, shouting as he did so to the Danaans, “My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, rally to the defence of Ajax who is being overpowered, and I doubt whether he will come out of the fight alive. Hither, then, to the rescue of great Ajax son of Telamon.”

Even so did he cry when he was wounded; thereon the others came near, and gathered round him, holding their shields upwards from their shoulders so as to give him cover. Ajax then made towards them, and turned round to stand at bay as soon as he had reached his men.

Thus then did they fight as it were a flaming fire. Meanwhile the mares of Neleus, all in a lather with sweat, were bearing Nestor out of the fight, and with him Machaon shepherd of his people. Achilles saw and took note, for he was standing on the stern of his ship watching the hard stress and struggle of the fight. He called from the ship to his comrade Patroclus, who heard him in the tent and came out looking like Mars himself here indeed was the beginning of the ill that presently befell him. “Why,” said he, “Achilles do you call me? what do you what do you want with me?” And Achilles answered, “Noble son of Menoetius, man after my own heart, I take it that I shall now have the Achaeans praying at my knees, for they are in great straits; go, Patroclus, and ask Nestor who is that he is bearing away wounded from the field; from his back I should say it was Machaon son of Aesculapius, but I could not see his face for the horses went by me at full speed.”

Patroclus did as his dear comrade had bidden him, and set off running by the ships and tents of the Achaeans.

When Nestor and Machaon had reached the tents of the son of Neleus, they dismounted, and an esquire, Eurymedon, took the horses from the chariot. The pair then stood in the breeze by the seaside to dry the sweat from their shirts, and when they had so done they came inside and took their seats. Fair Hecamede, whom Nestor had had awarded to him from Tenedos when Achilles took it, mixed them a mess; she was daughter of wise Arsinous, and the Achaeans had given her to Nestor because he excelled all of them in counsel. First she set for them a fair and well-made table that had feet of cyanus; on it there was a vessel of bronze and an onion to give relish to the drink, with honey and cakes of barley-meal. There was also a cup of rare workmanship which the old man had brought with him from home, studded with bosses of gold; it had four handles, on each of which there were two golden doves feeding, and it had two feet to stand on. Any one else would hardly have been able to lift it from the table when it was full, but Nestor could do so quite easily. In this the woman, as fair as a goddess, mixed them a mess with Pramnian wine; she grated goat’s milk cheese into it with a bronze grater, threw in a handful of white barley-meal, and having thus prepared the mess she bade them drink it. When they had done so and had thus quenched their thirst, they fell talking with one another, and at this moment Patroclus appeared at the door.

When the old man saw him he sprang from his seat, seized his hand, led him into the tent, and bade him take his place among them; but Patroclus stood where he was and said, “Noble sir, I may not stay, you cannot persuade me to come in; he that sent me is not one to be trifled with, and he bade me ask who the wounded man was whom you were bearing away from the field. I can now see for myself that he is Machaon shepherd of his people. I must go back and tell Achilles. You, sir, know what a terrible man he is, and how ready to blame even where no blame should lie.”

And Nestor answered, “Why should Achilles care to know how many of the Achaeans may be wounded? He recks not of the dismay that reigns in our host; our most valiant chieftains lie disabled, brave Diomed son of Tydeus is wounded; so are Ulysses and Agamemnon; Eurypylus has been hit with an arrow in the thigh, and I have just been bringing this man from the field he too wounded with an arrow; nevertheless Achilles, so valiant though he be, cares not and knows no ruth. Will he wait till the ships, do what we may, are in a blaze, and we perish one upon the other? As for me, I have no strength nor stay in me any longer; would that I Were still young and strong as in the days when there was a fight between us and the men of Elis about some cattle-raiding. I then killed Itymoneus the valiant son of Hypeirochus a dweller in Elis, as I was driving in the spoil; he was hit by a dart thrown my hand while fighting in the front rank in defence of his cows, so he fell and the country people around him were in great fear. We drove off a vast quantity of booty from the plain, fifty herds of cattle and as many flocks of sheep; fifty droves also of pigs, and as many wide-spreading flocks of goats. Of horses moreover we seized a hundred and fifty, all of them mares, and many had foals running with them. All these did we drive by night to Pylus the city of Neleus, taking them within the city; and the heart of Neleus was glad in that I had taken so much, though it was the first time I had ever been in the field. At daybreak the heralds went round crying that all in Elis to whom there was a debt owing should come; and the leading Pylians assembled to divide the spoils. There were many to whom the Epeans owed chattels, for we men of Pylus were few and had been oppressed with wrong; in former years Hercules had come, and had laid his hand heavy upon us, so that all our best men had perished. Neleus had had twelve sons, but I alone was left; the others had all been killed. The Epeans presuming upon all this had looked down upon us and had done us much evil. My father chose a herd of cattle and a great flock of sheep three hundred in all and he took their shepherds with him, for there was a great debt due to him in Elis, to wit four horses, winners of prizes. They and their chariots with them had gone to the games and were to run for a tripod, but King Augeas took them, and sent back their driver grieving for the loss of his horses. Neleus was

angered by what he had both said and done, and took great value in return, but he divided the rest, that no man might have less than his full share.

“Thus did we order all things, and offer sacrifices to the gods throughout the city; but three days afterwards the Epeans came in a body, many in number, they and their chariots, in full array, and with them the two Moliones in their armour, though they were still lads and unused to fighting. Now there is a certain town, Thryoessa, perched upon a rock on the river Alpheus, the border city Pylus; this they would destroy, and pitched their camp about it, but when they had crossed their whole plain, Minerva darted down by night from Olympus and bade us set ourselves in array; and she found willing soldiers in Pylos, for the men meant fighting. Neleus would not let me arm, and hid my horses, for he said that as yet I could know nothing about war; nevertheless Minerva so ordered the fight that, all on foot as I was, I fought among our mounted forces and vied with the foremost of them. There is a river Minyeius that falls into the sea near Arene, and there they that were mounted (and I with them) waited till morning, when the companies of foot soldiers came up with us in force. Thence in full panoply and equipment we came towards noon to the sacred waters of the Alpheus, and there we offered victims to almighty Jove, with a bull to Alpheus, another to Neptune, and a herd-heifer to Minerva. After this we took supper in our companies, and laid us down to rest each in his armour by the river.

“The Epeans were beleaguering the city and were determined to take it, but ere this might be there was a desperate fight in store for them. When the sun’s rays began to fall upon the earth we joined battle, praying to Jove and to Minerva, and when the fight had begun, I was the first to kill my man and take his horses to wit the warrior Mulius. He was son-in-law to Augeas, having married his eldest daughter, golden-haired Agamede, who knew the virtues of every herb which grows upon the face of the earth. I speared him as he was coming towards me, and when he fell headlong in the dust, I sprang upon his chariot and took my place in the front ranks. The Epeans fled in all directions when they saw the captain of their horsemen (the best man they had) laid low, and I swept down on them like a whirlwind, taking fifty chariots and in each of them two men bit the dust, slain by my spear. I should have even killed the two Moliones sons of Actor, unless their real father, Neptune lord of the earthquake, had hidden them in a thick mist and borne them out of the fight. Thereon Jove vouchsafed the Pylians a great victory, for we chased them far over the plain, killing the men and bringing in their armour, till we had brought our horses to Buprasium rich in wheat and to the Olenian rock, with the hill that is called Alision, at which point Minerva turned the people back. There I slew the last man and left him; then the Achaeans drove their horses back from Buprasium to Pylos and gave thanks to Jove among the gods, and among mortal men to Nestor.

“Such was I among my peers, as surely as ever was, but Achilles is for keeping all his valour for himself; bitterly will he rue it hereafter when the host is being cut to pieces. My good friend, did not Menoetius charge you thus, on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon? Ulysses and I were in the house, inside, and heard all that he said to you; for we came to the fair house of Peleus while beating up recruits throughout all Achaea, and when we got there we found Menoetius and yourself, and Achilles with you. The old knight Peleus was in the outer court, roasting the fat thigh-bones of a heifer to Jove the lord of thunder; and he held a gold chalice in his hand from which he poured drink-offerings of wine over the burning sacrifice. You two were busy cutting up the heifer, and at that moment we stood at the gates, whereon Achilles sprang to his feet, led us by the hand into the house, placed us at table, and set before us such hospitable entertainment as guests expect. When we had satisfied ourselves with meat and drink, I said my say and urged both of you to join us. You were ready enough to do so, and the two old men charged you much and straitly. Old Peleus bade his son Achilles fight ever among the foremost and outvie his peers, while Menoetius the son of Actor spoke thus to you: ‘My son,’ said he, ‘Achilles is of nobler birth than you are, but you are older than he, though he is far the better man of the two. Counsel him wisely, guide him in the right way, and he will follow you to his own profit.’ Thus did your father charge you, but you have forgotten; nevertheless, even now, say all this to Achilles if he will listen to you. Who knows but with heaven’s help you may talk him over, for it is good to take a friend’s advice. If, however, he is fearful about some oracle, or if his mother has told him something from Jove, then let him send you, and let the rest of the Myrmidons follow with you, if perchance you may bring light and saving to the Danaans. And let him send you into battle clad in his own armour, that the Trojans may mistake you for him and leave off fighting; the sons of the Achaeans may thus have time to get their breath, for they are hard pressed and there is little breathing time in battle. You, who are fresh, might easily drive a tired enemy back to his walls and away from the tents and ships.”

With these words he moved the heart of Patroclus, who set off running by the line of the ships to Achilles, descendant of Aeacus. When he had got as far as the ships of Ulysses, where was their place of assembly and court of justice, with their altars dedicated to the gods, Eurypylus son of Euaemon met him, wounded in the thigh with an arrow, and limping out of the fight. Sweat rained from his head and shoulders, and black blood welled from his cruel wound, but his mind did not wander. The son of Menoetius when he

saw him had compassion upon him and spoke piteously saying, “O unhappy princes and counsellors of the Danaans, are you then doomed to feed the hounds of Troy with your fat, far from your friends and your native land? say, noble Eurypylus, will the Achaeans be able to hold great Hector in check, or will they fall now before his spear?”

Wounded Eurypylus made answer, “Noble Patroclus, there is no hope left for the Achaeans but they will perish at their ships. All they that were princes among us are lying struck down and wounded at the hands of the Trojans, who are waxing stronger and stronger. But save me and take me to your ship; cut out the arrow from my thigh; wash the black blood from off it with warm water, and lay upon it those gracious herbs which, so they say, have been shown you by Achilles, who was himself shown them by Chiron, most righteous of all the centaurs. For of the physicians Podalirius and Machaon, I hear that the one is lying wounded in his tent and is himself in need of healing, while the other is fighting the Trojans upon the plain.”

“Hero Eurypylus,” replied the brave son of Menoetius, “how may these things be? What can I do? I am on my way to bear a message to noble Achilles from Nestor of Gerene, bulwark of the Achaeans, but even so I will not be unmindful your distress.”

With this he clasped him round the middle and led him into the tent, and a servant, when he saw him, spread bullock-skins on the ground for him to lie on. He laid him at full length and cut out the sharp arrow from his thigh; he washed the black blood from the wound with warm water; he then crushed a bitter herb, rubbing it between his hands, and spread it upon the wound; this was a virtuous herb which killed all pain; so the wound presently dried and the blood left off flowing.

Book XII

SO THE son of Menoetius was attending to the hurt of Eurypylus within the tent, but the Argives and Trojans still fought desperately, nor were the trench and the high wall above it, to keep the Trojans in check longer. They had built it to protect their ships, and had dug the trench all round it that it might safeguard both the ships and
the rich spoils which they had taken, but they had not offered hecatombs to the gods. It had been built without the consent of the immortals, and therefore it did not last. So long as Hector lived and Achilles nursed his anger, and so long as the city of Priam remained untaken, the great wall of the Achaeans stood firm; but when the bravest of the Trojans were no more, and many also of the Argives, though some were yet left alive when, moreover, the city was sacked in the tenth year, and the Argives had gone back with their ships to their own country then Neptune and Apollo took counsel to destroy the wall, and they turned on to it the streams of all the rivers from Mount Ida into the sea, Rhesus, Heptaporus, Caresus, Rhodius, Grenicus, Aesopus, and goodly Scamander, with Simois, where many a shield and helm had fallen, and many a hero of the race of demigods had bitten the dust. Phoebus Apollo turned the mouths of all these rivers together and made them flow for nine days against the wall, while Jove rained the whole time that he might wash it sooner into the sea. Neptune himself, trident in hand, surveyed the work and threw into the sea all the foundations of beams and stones which the Achaeans had laid with so much toil; he made all level by the mighty stream of the Hellespont, and then when he had swept the wall away he spread a great beach of sand over the place where it had been. This done he turned the rivers back into their old courses.

This was what Neptune and Apollo were to do in after time; but as yet battle and turmoil were still raging round the wall till its timbers rang under the blows that rained upon them. The Argives, cowed by the scourge of Jove, were hemmed in at their ships in fear of Hector the mighty minister of Rout, who as heretofore fought with the force and fury of a whirlwind. As a lion or wild boar turns fiercely on the dogs and men that attack him, while these form solid wall and shower their javelins as they face him his courage is all undaunted, but his high spirit will be the death of him; many a time does he charge at his pursuers to scatter them, and they fall back as often as he does so even so did Hector go about among the host exhorting his men, and cheering them on to cross the trench.

But the horses dared not do so, and stood neighing upon its brink, for the width frightened them. They could neither jump it nor cross it, for it had overhanging banks all round upon either side, above which there were the sharp stakes that the sons of the Achaeans had planted so close and strong as a defence against all who would assail it; a horse, therefore, could not get into it and draw his chariot after him, but those who were on foot kept trying their very utmost. Then Polydamas went up to Hector and said, “Hector, and you other captains of the Trojans and allies, it is madness for us to try and drive our horses across the trench; it will be very hard to cross, for it is full of sharp stakes, and beyond these there is the wall. Our horses therefore cannot get down into it, and would be of no use if they did; moreover it is a narrow place and we should come to harm. If, indeed, great Jove is minded to help the Trojans, and in his anger will utterly destroy the Achaeans, I would myself gladly see them perish now and here far from Argos; but if they should rally and we are driven back from the ships pell-mell into the trench there will be not so much as a man get back

to the city to tell the tale. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; let our squires hold our horses by the trench, but let us follow Hector in a body on foot, clad in full armour, and if the day of their doom is at hand the Achaeans will not be able to withstand us."

Thus spoke Polydamas and his saying pleased Hector, who sprang in full armour to the ground, and all the other Trojans, when they saw him do so, also left their chariots. Each man then gave his horses over to his charioteer in charge to hold them ready for him at the trench. Then they formed themselves into companies, made themselves ready, and in five bodies followed their leaders. Those that went with Hector and Polydamas were the bravest and most in number, and the most determined to break through the wall and fight at the ships. Cebriones was also joined with them as third in command, for Hector had left his chariot in charge of a less valiant soldier. The next company was led by Paris, Alcathous, and Agenor; the third by Helenus and Deiphobus, two sons of Priam, and with them was the hero Asius Asius the son of Hyrtacus, whose great black horses of the breed that comes from the river Selleis had brought him from Arisbe. Aeneas the valiant son of Anchises led the fourth; he and the two sons of Antenor, Archelochus and Acamas, men well versed in all the arts of war. Sarpedon was captain over the allies, and took with him Glaucus and Asteropaeus whom he deemed most valiant after himself for he was far the best man of them all. These helped to array one another in their ox-hide shields, and then charged straight at the Danaans, for they felt sure that they would not hold out longer and that they should themselves now fall upon the ships.

The rest of the Trojans and their allies now followed the counsel of Polydamas but Asius son of Hyrtacus would not leave his horses and his esquire behind him; in his foolhardiness he took them on with him towards the ships, nor did he fail to come by his end in consequence. Nevermore was he to return to wind-beaten Ilius, exulting in his chariot and his horses; ere he could do so, death of ill-omened name had overshadowed him and he had fallen by the spear of Idomeneus the noble son of Deucalion. He had driven towards the left wing of the ships, by which way the Achaeans used to return with their chariots and horses from the plain. Hither he drove and found the gates with their doors opened wide, and the great bar down for the gatemen kept them open so as to let those of their comrades enter who might be flying towards the ships. Hither of set purpose did he direct his horses, and his men followed him with a loud cry, for they felt sure that the Achaeans would not hold out longer, and that they should now fall upon the ships. Little did they know that at the gates they should find two of the bravest chieftains, proud sons of the fighting Lapithae the one, Polypoetes, mighty son of Pirithous, and the other Leonteus, peer of murderous Mars. These stood before the gates like two high oak trees upon the mountains, that tower from their wide-spreading roots, and year after year battle with wind and rain even so did these two men await the onset of great Asius confidently and without flinching. The Trojans led by him and by Iamenus, Orestes, Adamas the son of Asius, Thoon and Oenomaus, raised a loud cry of battle and made straight for the wall, holding their shields of dry oxhide above their heads; for a while the two defenders remained inside and cheered the Achaeans on to stand firm in the defence of their ships; when, however, they saw that the Trojans were attacking the wall, while the Danaans were crying out for help and being routed, they rushed outside and fought in front of the gates like two wild boars upon the mountains that abide the attack of men and dogs, and charging on either side break down the wood all round them tearing it up by the roots, and one can hear the clattering of their tusks, till some one hits them and makes an end of them even so did the gleaming bronze rattle about their breasts, as the weapons fell upon them; for they fought with great fury, trusting to their own prowess and to those who were on the wall above them. These threw great stones at their assailants in defence of themselves their tents and their ships. The stones fell thick as the flakes of snow which some fierce blast drives from the dark clouds and showers down in sheets upon the earth even so fell the weapons from the hands alike of Trojans and Achaeans. Helmet and shield rang out as the great stones rained upon them, and Asius the son of Hyrtacus in his dismay cried aloud and smote his two thighs. "Father Jove," he cried, "of a truth you too are altogether given to lying. I made sure the Argive heroes could not withstand us, whereas like slim-waisted wasps, or bees that have their nests in the rocks by the wayside they leave not the holes wherein they have built undefended, but fight for their little ones against all who would take them even so these men, though they be but two, will not be driven from the gates, but stand firm either to slay or be slain."

He spoke, but moved not the mind of Jove, whose counsel it then was to give glory to Hector. Meanwhile the rest of the Trojans were fighting about the other gates; I, however, am no god to be able to tell about all these things, for the battle raged everywhere about the stone wall as it were a fiery furnace. The Argives, discomfited though they were, were forced to defend their ships, and all the gods who were defending the Achaeans were vexed in spirit; but the Lapithae kept on fighting with might and main.

Thereon Polypoetes, mighty son of Pirithous, hit Damasus with a spear upon his cheek-pierced helmet. The helmet did not protect him, for the point of the spear went through it, and broke the bone, so that the brain inside was scattered about, and he died fighting. He then slew Pylon and Ormenus. Leonteus, of the race of Mars, killed Hippomachus the son of Antimachus by striking

him with his spear upon the girdle. He then drew his sword and sprang first upon Antiphates whom he killed in combat, and who fell face upwards on the earth. After him he killed Menon, Iamenus, and Orestes, and laid them low one after the other.

While they were busy stripping the armour from these heroes, the youths who were led on by Polydamas and Hector (and these were the greater part and the most valiant of those that were trying to break through the wall and fire the ships) were still standing by the trench, uncertain what they should do; for they had seen a sign from heaven when they had essayed to cross it a soaring eagle that flew skirting the left wing of their host, with a monstrous blood-red snake in its talons still alive and struggling to escape. The snake was still bent on revenge, wriggling and twisting itself backwards till it struck the bird that held it, on the neck and breast; whereon the bird being in pain, let it fall, dropping it into the middle of the host, and then flew down the wind with a sharp cry. The Trojans were struck with terror when they saw the snake, portent of aegis-bearing Jove, writhing in the midst of them, and Polydamas went up to Hector and said, “Hector, at our councils of war you are ever given to rebuke me, even when I speak wisely, as though it were not well, forsooth, that one of the people should cross your will either in the field or at the council board; you would have them support you always: nevertheless I will say what I think will be best; let us not now go on to fight the Danaans at their ships, for I know what will happen if this soaring eagle which skirted the left wing of our with a monstrous blood-red snake in its talons (the snake being still alive) was really sent as an omen to the Trojans on their essaying to cross the trench. The eagle let go her hold; she did not succeed in taking it home to her little ones, and so will it be with ourselves; even though by a mighty effort we break through the gates and wall of the Achaeans, and they give way before us, still we shall not return in good order by the way we came, but shall leave many a man behind us whom the Achaeans will do to death in defence of their ships. Thus would any seer who was expert in these matters, and was trusted by the people, read the portent.”

Hector looked fiercely at him and said, “Polydamas, I like not of your reading. You can find a better saying than this if you will. If, however, you have spoken in good earnest, then indeed has heaven robbed you of your reason. You would have me pay no heed to the counsels of Jove, nor to the promises he made me and he bowed his head in confirmation; you bid me be ruled rather by the flight of wild-fowl. What care I whether they fly towards dawn or dark, and whether they be on my right hand or on my left? Let us put our trust rather in the counsel of great Jove, king of mortals and immortals. There is one omen, and one only that a man should fight for his country. Why are you so fearful? Though we be all of us slain at the ships of the Argives you are not likely to be killed yourself, for you are not steadfast nor courageous. If you will. not fight, or would talk others over from doing so, you shall fall forthwith before my spear.”

With these words he led the way, and the others followed after with a cry that rent the air. Then Jove the lord of thunder sent the blast of a mighty wind from the mountains of Ida, that bore the dust down towards the ships; he thus lulled the Achaeans into security, and gave victory to Hector and to the Trojans, who, trusting to their own might and to the signs he had shown them, essayed to break through the great wall of the Achaeans. They tore down the breastworks from the walls, and overthrew the battlements; they upheaved the buttresses, which the Achaeans had set in front of the wall in order to support it; when they had pulled these down they made sure of breaking through the wall, but the Danaans still showed no sign of giving ground; they still fenced the battlements with their shields of ox-hide, and hurled their missiles down upon the foe as soon as any came below the wall.

The two Ajaxes went about everywhere on the walls cheering on the Achaeans, giving fair words to some while they spoke sharply to any one whom they saw to be remiss. “My friends,” they cried, “Argives one and all good bad and indifferent, for there was never fight yet, in which all were of equal prowess there is now work enough, as you very well know, for all of you. See that you none of you turn in flight towards the ships, daunted by the shouting of the foe, but press forward and keep one another in heart, if it may so be that Olympian Jove the lord of lightning will vouchsafe us to repel our foes, and drive them back towards the city.”

Thus did the two go about shouting and cheering the Achaeans on. As the flakes that fall thick upon a winter’s day, when Jove is minded to snow and to display these his arrows to mankind he lulls the wind to rest, and snows hour after hour till he has buried the tops of the high mountains, the headlands that jut into the sea, the grassy plains, and the tilled fields of men; the snow lies deep upon the forelands, and havens of the grey sea, but the waves as they come rolling in stay it that it can come no further, though all else is wrapped as with a mantle so heavy are the heavens with snow even thus thickly did the stones fall on one side and on the other, some thrown at the Trojans, and some by the Trojans at the Achaeans; and the whole wall was in an uproar.

Still the Trojans and brave Hector would not yet have broken down the gates and the great bar, had not Jove turned his son Sarpedon against the Argives as a lion against a herd of horned cattle. Before him he held his shield of hammered bronze, that the smith had beaten so fair and round, and had lined with ox hides which he had made fast with rivets of gold all round the shield; this

he held in front of him, and brandishing his two spears came on like some lion of the wilderness, who has been long famished for want of meat and will dare break even into a well-fenced homestead to try and get at the sheep. He may find the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks with dogs and spears, but he is in no mind to be driven from the fold till he has had a try for it; he will either spring on a sheep and carry it off, or be hit by a spear from strong hand even so was Sarpedon fain to attack the wall and break down its battlements. Then he said to Glaucus son of Hippolochus, “Glaucus, why in Lycia do we receive especial honour as regards our place at table? Why are the choicest portions served us and our cups kept brimming, and why do men look up to us as though we were gods? Moreover we hold a large estate by the banks of the river Xanthus, fair with orchard lawns and wheat-growing land; it becomes us, therefore, to take our stand at the head of all the Lycians and bear the brunt of the fight, that one may say to another, Our princes in Lycia eat the fat of the land and drink best of wine, but they are fine fellows; they fight well and are ever at the front in battle.’ My good friend, if, when we were once out of this fight, we could escape old age and death thenceforward and for ever, I should neither press forward myself nor bid you do so, but death in ten thousand shapes hangs ever over our heads, and no man can elude him; therefore let us go forward and either win glory for ourselves, or yield it to another.”

Glaucus heeded his saying, and the pair forthwith led on the host of Lycians. Menestheus son of Peteos was dismayed when he saw them, for it was against his part of the wall that they came bringing destruction with them; he looked along the wall for some chieftain to support his comrades and saw the two Ajaxes, men ever eager for the fray, and Teucer, who had just come from his tent, standing near them; but he could not make his voice heard by shouting to them, so great an uproar was there from crashing shields and helmets and the battering of gates with a din which reached the skies. For all the gates had been closed, and the Trojans were hammering at them to try and break their way through them. Menestheus, therefore, sent Thootes with a message to Ajax. “Run, good Thootes,” said and call Ajax, or better still bid both come, for it will be all over with us here directly; the leaders of the Lycians are upon us, men who have ever fought desperately heretofore. But if the have too much on their hands to let them come, at any rate let Ajax son of Telamon do so, and let Teucer the famous bowman come with him.”

The messenger did as he was told, and set off running along the wall of the Achaeans. When he reached the Ajaxes he said to them, “Sirs, princes of the Argives, the son of noble Peteos bids you come to him for a while and help him. You had better both come if you can, or it will be all over with him directly; the leaders of the Lycians are upon him, men who have ever fought desperately heretofore; if you have too much on your hands to let both come, at any rate let Ajax son of Telamon do so, and let Teucer the famous bowman come with him.”

Great Ajax, son of Telamon, heeded the message, and at once spoke to the son of Oileus. “Ajax,” said he, “do you two, yourself and brave Lycomedes, stay here and keep the Danaans in heart to fight their hardest. I will go over yonder, and bear my part in the fray, but I will come back here at once as soon as I have given them the help they need.”

With this, Ajax son of Telamon set off, and Teucer his brother by the same father went also, with Pandion to carry Teucer’s bow. They went along inside the wall, and when they came to the tower where Menestheus was (and hard pressed indeed did they find him) the brave captains and leaders of the Lycians were storming the battlements as it were a thick dark cloud, fighting in close quarters, and raising the battle-cry aloud.

First, Ajax son of Telamon killed brave Epicles, a comrade of Sarpedon, hitting him with a jagged stone that lay by the battlements at the very top of the wall. As men now are, even one who is in the bloom of youth could hardly lift it with his two hands, but Ajax raised it high aloft and flung it down, smashing Epicles’ four-crested helmet so that the bones of his head were crushed to pieces, and he fell from the high wall as though he were diving, with no more life left in him. Then Teucer wounded Glaucus the brave son of Hippolochus as he was coming on to attack the wall. He saw his shoulder bare and aimed an arrow at it, which made Glaucus leave off fighting. Thereon he sprang covertly down for fear some of the Achaeans might see that he was wounded and taunt him. Sarpedon was stung with grief when he saw Glaucus leave him, still he did not leave off fighting, but aimed his spear at Alcmaon the son of Thestor and hit him. He drew his spear back again Alcmaon came down headlong after it with his bronzed armour rattling round him. Then Sarpedon seized the battlement in his strong hands, and tugged at it till it an gave way together, and a breach was made through which many might pass.

Ajax and Teucer then both of them attacked him. Teucer hit him with an arrow on the band that bore the shield which covered his body, but Jove saved his son from destruction that he might not fall by the ships’ sterns. Meanwhile Ajax sprang on him and pierced his shield, but the spear did not go clean through, though it hustled him back that he could come on no further. He therefore retired a little space from the battlement, yet without losing all his ground, for he still thought to cover himself with glory. Then he

turned round and shouted to the brave Lycians saying, “Lycians, why do you thus fail me? For all my prowess I cannot break through the wall and open a way to the ships single-handed. Come close on behind me, for the more there are of us the better.”

The Lycians, shamed by his rebuke, pressed closer round him who was their counsellor their king. The Argives on their part got their men in fighting order within the wall, and there was a deadly struggle between them. The Lycians could not break through the wall and force their way to the ships, nor could the Danaans drive the Lycians from the wall now that they had once reached it. As two men, measuring-rods in hand, quarrel about their boundaries in a field that they own in common, and stickle for their rights though they be but in a mere strip, even so did the battlements now serve as a bone of contention, and they beat one another’s round shields for their possession. Many a man’s body was wounded with the pitiless bronze, as he turned round and bared his back to the foe, and many were struck clean through their shields; the wall and battlements were everywhere deluged with the blood alike of Trojans and of Achaeans. But even so the Trojans could not rout the Achaeans, who still held on; and as some honest hard-working woman weighs wool in her balance and sees that the scales be true, for she would gain some pitiful earnings for her little ones, even so was the fight balanced evenly between them till the time came when Jove gave the greater glory to Hector son of Priam, who was first to spring towards the wall of the Achaeans. As he did so, he cried aloud to the Trojans, “Up, Trojans, break the wall of the Argives, and fling fire upon their ships.”

Thus did he hound them on, and in one body they rushed straight at the wall as he had bidden them, and scaled the battlements with sharp spears in their hands. Hector laid hold of a stone that lay just outside the gates and was thick at one end but pointed at the other; two of the best men in a town, as men now are, could hardly raise it from the ground and put it on to a waggon, but Hector lifted it quite easily by himself, for the son of scheming Saturn made it light for him. As a shepherd picks up a ram’s fleece with one hand and finds it no burden, so easily did Hector lift the great stone and drive it right at the doors that closed the gates so strong and so firmly set. These doors were double and high, and were kept closed by two cross-bars to which there was but one key. When he had got close up to them, Hector strode towards them that his blow might gain in force and struck them in the middle, leaning his whole weight against them. He broke both hinges, and the stone fell inside by reason of its great weight. The portals re-echoed with the sound, the bars held no longer, and the doors flew open, one one way, and the other the other, through the force of the blow. Then brave Hector leaped inside with a face as dark as that of flying night. The gleaming bronze flashed fiercely about his body and he had tow spears in his hand. None but a god could have withstood him as he flung himself into the gateway, and his eyes glared like fire. Then he turned round towards the Trojans and called on them to scale the wall, and they did as he bade them some of them at once climbing over the wall, while others passed through the gates. The Danaans then fled panic-stricken towards their ships, and all was uproar and confusion.

Book XIII

NOW when Jove had thus brought Hector and the Trojans to the ships, he left them to their never-ending toil, and turned his keen eyes away, looking elsewhither towards the horse-breeders of Thrace, the Mysians, fighters at close quarters, the noble Hippemolgi, who live on milk, and the Abians, justest of mankind. He no longer turned so much as a glance towards Troy, for he did not think that any of the immortals would go and help either Trojans or Danaans.

But King Neptune had kept no blind look-out; he had been looking admiringly on the battle from his seat on the topmost crests of wooded Samothrace, whence he could see all Ida, with the city of Priam and the ships of the Achaeans. He had come from under the sea and taken his place here, for he pitied the Achaeans who were being overcome by the Trojans; and he was furiously angry with Jove.

Presently he came down from his post on the mountain top, and as he strode swiftly onwards the high hills and the forest quaked beneath the tread of his immortal feet. Three strides he took, and with the fourth he reached his goal Aegae, where is his glittering golden palace, imperishable, in the depths of the sea. When he got there, he yoked his fleet brazen-footed steeds with their manes of gold all flying in the wind; he clothed himself in raiment of gold, grasped his gold whip, and took his stand upon his chariot. As he went his way over the waves the sea-monsters left their lairs, for they knew their lord, and came gambolling round him from every quarter of the deep, while the sea in her gladness opened a path before his chariot. So lightly did the horses fly that the bronze axle of the car was not even wet beneath it; and thus his bounding steeds took him to the ships of the Achaeans.

Now there is a certain huge cavern in the depths of the sea midway between Tenedos and rocky Imbrus; here Neptune lord of the earthquake stayed his horses, unyoked them, and set before them their ambrosial forage. He hobbled their feet with hobbles of gold

which none could either unloose or break, so that they might stay there in that place until their lord should return. This done he went his way to the host of the Achaeans.

Now the Trojans followed Hector son of Priam in close array like a storm-cloud or flame of fire, fighting with might and main and raising the cry battle; for they deemed that they should take the ships of the Achaeans and kill all their chiefest heroes then and there. Meanwhile earth-encircling Neptune lord of the earthquake cheered on the Argives, for he had come up out of the sea and had assumed the form and voice of Calchas.

First he spoke to the two Ajaxes, who were doing their best already, and said, “Ajaxes, you two can be the saving of the Achaeans if you will put out all your strength and not let yourselves be daunted. I am not afraid that the Trojans, who have got over the wall in force, will be victorious in any other part, for the Achaeans can hold all of them in check, but I much fear that some evil will befall us here where furious Hector, who boasts himself the son of great Jove himself, is leading them on like a pillar of flame. May some god, then, put it into your hearts to make a firm stand here, and to incite others to do the like. In this case you will drive him from the ships even though he be inspired by Jove himself.”

As he spoke the earth-encircling lord of the earthquake struck both of them with his sceptre and filled their hearts with daring. He made their legs light and active, as also their hands and their feet. Then, as the soaring falcon poises on the wing high above some sheer rock, and presently swoops down to chase some bird over the plain, even so did Neptune lord of the earthquake wing his flight into the air and leave them. Of the two, swift Ajax son of Oileus was the first to know who it was that had been speaking with them, and said to Ajax son of Telamon, “Ajax, this is one of the gods that dwell on Olympus, who in the likeness of the prophet is bidding us fight hard by our ships. It was not Calchas the seer and diviner of omens; I knew him at once by his feet and knees as he turned away, for the gods are soon recognised. Moreover I feel the lust of battle burn more fiercely within me, while my hands and my feet under me are more eager for the fray.”

And Ajax son of Telamon answered, “I too feel my hands grasp my spear more firmly; my strength is greater, and my feet more nimble; I long, moreover, to meet furious Hector son of Priam, even in single combat.”

Thus did they converse, exulting in the hunger after battle with which the god had filled them. Meanwhile the earth-encircler roused the Achaeans, who were resting in the rear by the ships overcome at once by hard fighting and by grief at seeing that the Trojans had got over the wall in force. Tears began falling from their eyes as they beheld them, for they made sure that they should not escape destruction; but the lord of the earthquake passed lightly about among them and urged their battalions to the front.

First he went up to Teucer and Leitus, the hero Peneleos, and Thoas and Deipyrus; Meriones also and Antilochus, valiant warriors; all did he exhort. “Shame on you young Argives,” he cried, “it was on your prowess I relied for the saving of our ships; if you fight not with might and main, this very day will see us overcome by the Trojans. Of a truth my eyes behold a great and terrible portent which I had never thought to see the Trojans at our ships they, who were heretofore like panic-stricken hinds, the prey of jackals and wolves in a forest, with no strength but in flight for they cannot defend themselves. Hitherto the Trojans dared not for one moment face the attack of the Achaeans, but now they have sallied far from their city and are fighting at our very ships through the cowardice of our leader and the disaffection of the people themselves, who in their discontent care not to fight in defence of the ships but are being slaughtered near them. True, King Agamemnon son of Atreus is the cause of our disaster by having insulted the son of Peleus, still this is no reason why we should leave off fighting. Let us be quick to heal, for the hearts of the brave heal quickly. You do ill to be thus remiss, you, who are the finest soldiers in our whole army. I blame no man for keeping out of battle if he is a weakling, but I am indignant with such men as you are. My good friends, matters will soon become even worse through this slackness; think, each one of you, of his own honour and credit, for the hazard of the fight is extreme. Great Hector is now fighting at our ships; he has broken through the gates and the strong bolt that held them.”

Thus did the earth-encircler address the Achaeans and urge them on. Thereon round the two Ajaxes there gathered strong bands of men, of whom not even Mars nor Minerva, marshaller of hosts could make light if they went among them, for they were the picked men of all those who were now awaiting the onset of Hector and the Trojans. They made a living fence, spear to spear, shield to shield, buckler to buckler, helmet to helmet, and man to man. The horse-hair crests on their gleaming helmets touched one another as they nodded forward, so closely seffied were they; the spears they brandished in their strong hands were interlaced, and their hearts were set on battle.

The Trojans advanced in a dense body, with Hector at their head pressing right on as a rock that comes thundering down the side of some mountain from whose brow the winter torrents have torn it; the foundations of the dull thing have been loosened by floods of

rain, and as it bounds headlong on its way it sets the whole forest in an uproar; it swerves neither to right nor left till it reaches level ground, but then for all its fury it can go no further even so easily did Hector for a while seem as though he would career through the tents and ships of the Achaeans till he had reached the sea in his murderous course; but the closely serried battalions stayed him when he reached them, for the sons of the Achaeans thrust at him with swords and spears pointed at both ends, and drove him from them so that he staggered and gave ground; thereon he shouted to the Trojans, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, fighters in close combat, stand firm: the Achaeans have set themselves as a wall against me, but they will not check me for long; they will give ground before me if the mightiest of the gods, the thundering spouse of Juno, has indeed inspired my onset.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Deiphobus son of Priam went about among them intent on deeds of daring with his round shield before him, under cover of which he strode quickly forward. Meriones took aim at him with a spear, nor did he fail to hit the broad orb of ox-hide; but he was far from piercing it for the spear broke in two pieces long ere he could do so; moreover Deiphobus had seen it coming and had held his shield well away from him. Meriones drew back under cover of his comrades, angry alike at having failed to vanquish Deiphobus, and having broken his spear. He turned therefore towards the ships and tents to fetch a spear which he had left behind in his tent.

The others continued fighting, and the cry of battle rose up into the heavens. Teucer son of Telamon was the first to kill his man, to wit, the warrior Imbrius son of Mentor rich in horses. Until the Achaeans came he had lived in Pedaeum, and had married Medesicaste a bastard daughter of Priam; but on the arrival of the Danaan fleet he had gone back to Ilius, and was a great man among the Trojans, dwelling near Priam himself, who gave him like honour with his own sons. The son of Telamon now struck him under the ear with a spear which he then drew back again, and Imbrius fell headlong as an ash-tree when it is felled on the crest of some high mountain beacon, and its delicate green foliage comes toppling down to the ground. Thus did he fall with his bronze-dight armour ringing harshly round him, and Teucer sprang forward with intent to strip him of his armour; but as he was doing so, Hector took aim at him with a spear. Teucer saw the spear coming and swerved aside, whereon it hit Amphimachus, son of Cteatus son of Actor, in the chest as he was coming into battle, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Hector sprang forward to take Amphimachus’s helmet from off his temples, and in a moment Ajax threw a spear at him, but did not wound him, for he was encased all over in his terrible armour; nevertheless the spear struck the boss of his shield with such force as to drive him back from the two corpses, which the Achaeans then drew off. Stichius and Menestheus, captains of the Athenians, bore away Amphimachus to the host of the Achaeans, while the two brave and impetuous Ajaxes did the like by Imbrius. As two lions snatch a goat from the hounds that have it in their fangs, and bear it through thick brushwood high above the ground in their jaws, thus did the Ajaxes bear aloft the body of Imbrius, and strip it of its armour. Then the son of Oileus severed the head from the neck in revenge for the death of Amphimachus, and sent it whirling over the crowd as though it had been a ball, till fell in the dust at Hector’s feet.

Neptune was exceedingly angry that his grandson Amphimachus should have fallen; he therefore went to the tents and ships of the Achaeans to urge the Danaans still further, and to devise evil for the Trojans. Idomeneus met him, as he was taking leave of a comrade, who had just come to him from the fight, wounded in the knee. His fellow-soldiers bore him off the field, and Idomeneus having given orders to the physicians went on to his tent, for he was still thirsting for battle. Neptune spoke in the likeness and with the voice of Thoas son of Andraemon who ruled the Aetolians of all Pleuron and high Calydon, and was honoured among his people as though he were a god. “Idomeneus,” said he, “lawgiver to the Cretans, what has now become of the threats with which the sons of the Achaeans used to threaten the Trojans?”

And Idomeneus chief among the Cretans answered, “Thoas, no one, so far as I know, is in fault, for we can all fight. None are held back neither by fear nor slackness, but it seems to be the of almighty Jove that the Achaeans should perish ingloriously here far from Argos: you, Thoas, have been always staunch, and you keep others in heart if you see any fail in duty; be not then remiss now, but exhort all to do their utmost.”

To this Neptune lord of the earthquake made answer, “Idomeneus, may he never return from Troy, but remain here for dogs to batten upon, who is this day wilfully slack in fighting. Get your armour and go, we must make all haste together if we may be of any use, though we are only two. Even cowards gain courage from companionship, and we two can hold our own with the bravest.”

Therewith the god went back into the thick of the fight, and Idomeneus when he had reached his tent donned his armour, grasped his two spears, and sallied forth. As the lightning which the son of Saturn brandishes from bright Olympus when he would show a sign to mortals, and its gleam flashes far and wide even so did his armour gleam about him as he ran. Meriones his sturdy squire met him while he was still near his tent (for he was going to fetch his spear) and Idomeneus said “Meriones, fleet son of Molus,

best of comrades, why have you left the field? Are you wounded, and is the point of the weapon hurting you? or have you been sent to fetch me? I want no fetching; I had far rather fight than stay in my tent."

"Idomeneus," answered Meriones, "I come for a spear, if I can find one in my tent; I have broken the one I had, in throwing it at the shield of Deiphobus."

And Idomeneus captain of the Cretans answered, "You will find one spear, or twenty if you so please, standing up against the end wall of my tent. I have taken them from Trojans whom I have killed, for I am not one to keep my enemy at arm's length; therefore I have spears, bossed shields, helmets, and burnished corslets."

Then Meriones said, "I too in my tent and at my ship have spoils taken from the Trojans, but they are not at hand. I have been at all times valorous, and wherever there has been hard fighting have held my own among the foremost. There may be those among the Achaeans who do not know how I fight, but you know it well enough yourself."

Idomeneus answered, "I know you for a brave man: you need not tell me. If the best men at the ships were being chosen to go on an ambush and there is nothing like this for showing what a man is made of; it comes out then who is cowardly and who brave; the coward will change colour at every touch and turn; he is full of fears, and keeps shifting his weight first on one knee and then on the other; his heart beats fast as he thinks of death, and one can hear the chattering of his teeth; whereas the brave man will not change colour nor be on finding himself in ambush, but is all the time longing to go into action if the best men were being chosen for such a service, no one could make light of your courage nor feats of arms. If you were struck by a dart or smitten in close combat, it would not be from behind, in your neck nor back, but the weapon would hit you in the chest or belly as you were pressing forward to a place in the front ranks. But let us no longer stay here talking like children, lest we be ill spoken of; go, fetch your spear from the tent at once."

On this Meriones, peer of Mars, went to the tent and got himself a spear of bronze. He then followed after Idomeneus, big with great deeds of valour. As when baneful Mars sallies forth to battle, and his son Panic so strong and dauntless goes with him, to strike terror even into the heart of a hero the pair have gone from Thrace to arm themselves among the Ephyri or the brave Phlegyans, but they will not listen to both the contending hosts, and will give victory to one side or to the other even so did Meriones and Idomeneus, captains of men, go out to battle clad in their bronze armour. Meriones was first to speak. "Son of Deucalion," said he, "where would you have us begin fighting? On the right wing of the host, in the centre, or on the left wing, where I take it the Achaeans will be weakest?"

Idomeneus answered, "There are others to defend the centre the two Ajaxes and Teucer, who is the finest archer of all the Achaeans, and is good also in a hand-to-hand fight. These will give Hector son of Priam enough to do; fight as he may, he will find it hard to vanquish their indomitable fury, and fire the ships, unless the son of Saturn fling a firebrand upon them with his own hand. Great Ajax son of Telamon will yield to no man who is in mortal mould and eats the grain of Ceres, if bronze and great stones can overthrow him. He would not yield even to Achilles in hand-to-hand fight, and in fleetness of foot there is none to beat him; let us turn therefore towards the left wing, that we may know forthwith whether we are to give glory to some other, or he to us."

Meriones, peer of fleet Mars, then led the way till they came to the part of the host which Idomeneus had named.

Now when the Trojans saw Idomeneus coming on like a flame of fire, him and his squire clad in their richly wrought armour, they shouted and made towards him all in a body, and a furious hand-to-hand fight raged under the ships' sterns. Fierce as the shrill winds that whistle upon a day when dust lies deep on the roads, and the gusts raise it into a thick cloud even such was the fury of the combat, and might and main did they hack at each other with spear and sword throughout the host. The field bristled with the long and deadly spears which they bore. Dazzling was the sheen of their gleaming helmets, their fresh-burnished breastplates, and glittering shields as they joined battle with one another. Iron indeed must be his courage who could take pleasure in the sight of such a turmoil, and look on it without being dismayed.

Thus did the two mighty sons of Saturn devise evil for mortal heroes. Jove was minded to give victory to the Trojans and to Hector, so as to do honour to fleet Achilles, nevertheless he did not mean to utterly overthrow the Achaean host before Ilius, and only wanted to glorify Thetis and her valiant son. Neptune on the other hand went about among the Argives to incite them, having come up from the grey sea in secret, for he was grieved at seeing them vanquished by the Trojans, and was furiously angry with Jove. Both were of the same race and country, but Jove was elder born and knew more, therefore Neptune feared to defend the Argives

openly, but in the likeness of man, he kept on encouraging them throughout their host. Thus, then, did these two devise a knot of war and battle, that none could unloose or break, and set both sides tugging at it, to the failing of men's knees beneath them.

And now Idomeneus, though his hair was already flecked with grey, called loud on the Danaans and spread panic among the Trojans as he leaped in among them. He slew Othryoneus from Cabesus, a sojourner, who had but lately come to take part in the war. He sought Cassandra the fairest of Priam's daughters in marriage, but offered no gifts of wooing, for he promised a great thing, to wit, that he would drive the sons of the Achaeans willy nilly from Troy; old King Priam had given his consent and promised her to him, whereon he fought on the strength of the promises thus made to him. Idomeneus aimed a spear, and hit him as he came striding on. His cuirass of bronze did not protect him, and the spear stuck in his belly, so that he fell heavily to the ground. Then Idomeneus vaunted over him saying, "Othryoneus, there is no one in the world whom I shall admire more than I do you, if you indeed perform what you have promised Priam son of Dardanus in return for his daughter. We too will make you an offer; we will give you the loveliest daughter of the son of Atreus, and will bring her from Argos for you to marry, if you will sack the goodly city of Ilius in company with ourselves; so come along with me, that we may make a covenant at the ships about the marriage, and we will not be hard upon you about gifts of wooing."

With this Idomeneus began dragging him by the foot through the thick of the fight, but Asius came up to protect the body, on foot, in front of his horses which his esquire drove so close behind him that he could feel their 'breath upon his shoulder. He was longing to strike down Idomeneus, but ere he could do so Idomeneus smote him with his spear in the throat under the chin, and the bronze point went clean through it. He fell as an oak, or poplar, or pine which shipwrights have felled for ship's timber upon the mountains with whetted axes even thus did he lie full length in front of his chariot and horses, grinding his teeth and clutching at the bloodstained just. His charioteer was struck with panic and did not dare turn his horses round and escape: thereupon Antilochus hit him in the middle of his body with a spear; his cuirass of bronze did not protect him, and the spear stuck in his belly. He fell gasping from his chariot and Antilochus great Nestor's son, drove his horses from the Trojans to the Achaeans.

Deiphobus then came close up to Idomeneus to avenge Asius, and took aim at him with a spear, but Idomeneus was on the look-out and avoided it, for he was covered by the round shield he always bore a shield of oxhide and bronze with two arm-rods on the inside. He crouched under cover of this, and the spear flew over him, but
the shield rang out as the spear grazed it, and the weapon sped not in vain from the strong hand of Deiphobus, for it struck Hypsenor son of Hippasus, shepherd of his people, in the liver under the midriff, and his limbs failed beneath him. Deiphobus vaunted over him and cried with a loud voice saying, "Of a truth Asius has not fallen unavenied; he will be glad even while passing into the house of Hades, strong warden of the gate, that I have sent some one to escort him."

Thus did he vaunt, and the Argives were stung by his saying. Noble Antilochus was more angry than any one, but grief did not make him forget his friend and comrade. He ran up to him, bestrode him, and covered him with his shield; then two of his staunch comrades, Mecisteus son of Echius, and Alastor stooped down, and bore him away groaning heavily to the ships. But Idomeneus ceased not his fury. He kept on striving continually either to enshroud some Trojan in the darkness of death, or himself to fall while warding off the evil day from the Achaeans. Then fell Alcathous son of noble Aesyetes: he was son-in-law to Anchises, having married his eldest daughter Hippodameia who was the darling of her father and mother, and excelled all her generation in beauty, accomplishments, and understanding, wherefore the bravest man in all Troy had taken her to wife him did Neptune lay low by the hand of Idomeneus, blinding his bright eyes and binding his strong limbs in fetters so that he could neither go back nor to one side, but stood stock still like pillar or lofty tree when Idomeneus struck him with a spear in the middle of his chest. The coat of mail that had hitherto protected his body was now broken, and rang harshly as the spear tore through it. He fell heavily to the ground, and the spear stuck in his heart, which still beat, and made the butt-end of the spear quiver till dread Mars put an end to his life. Idomeneus vaunted over him and cried with a loud voice saying, "Deiphobus, since you are in a mood to vaunt, shall we cry quits now that we have killed three men to your one? Nay, sir, stand in fight with me yourself, that you may learn what manner of Jove-begotten man am I that have come hither. Jove first begot Minos chief ruler in Crete, and Minos in his turn begot a son, noble Deucalion; Deucalion begot me to be a ruler over many men in Crete, and my ships have now brought me hither, to be the bane of yourself, your father, and the Trojans."

Thus did he speak, and Deiphobus was in two minds, whether to go back and fetch some other Trojan to help him, or to take up the challenge single-handed. In the end, he deemed it best to go and fetch Aeneas, whom he found standing in the rear, for he had long been aggrieved with Priam because in spite his brave deeds he did not give him his due share of honour. Deiphobus went up to him and said, "Aeneas, prince among the Trojans, if you know any ties of kinship, help me now to defend the body of your sister's

husband; come with me to the rescue of Alcathous, who being husband to your sister brought you up when you were a child in his house, and now Idomeneus has slain him."

With these words he moved the heart of Aeneas, and he went in pursuit of Idomeneus, big with great deeds of valour; but Idomeneus was not to be thus daunted as though he were a mere child; he held his ground as a wild boar at bay upon the mountains, who abides the coming of a great crowd of men in some lonely place the bristles stand upright on his back, his eyes flash fire, and he whets his tusks in his eagerness to defend himself against hounds and men even so did famed Idomeneus hold his ground and budge not at the coming of Aeneas. He cried aloud to his comrades looking towards Ascalaphus, Aphareus, Deipyrus, Meriones, and Antilochus, all of them brave soldiers "Hither my friends," he cried, "and leave me not single-handed I go in great fear by fleet Aeneas, who is coming against me, and is a redoubtable dispenser of death battle. Moreover he is in the flower of youth when a man's strength is greatest; if I was of the same age as he is and in my present mind, either he or I should soon bear away the prize of victory

On this, all of them as one man stood near him, shield on shoulder. Aeneas on the other side called to his comrades, looking towards Deiphobus, Paris, and Agenor, who were leaders of the Trojans along with himself, and the people followed them as sheep follow the ram when they go down to drink after they have been feeding, and the heart of the shepherd is glad even so was the heart of Aeneas gladdened when he saw his people follow him.

Then they fought furiously in close combat about the body of Alcathous, wielding their long spears; and the bronze armour about their bodies rang fearfully as they took aim at one another in the press of the fight, while the two heroes Aeneas and Idomeneus, peers of Mars, outxied every one in their desire to hack at each other with sword and spear. Aeneas took aim first, but Idomeneus was on the lookout and avoided the spear, so that it sped from Aeneas' strong hand in vain, and fell quivering in the ground. Idomeneus meanwhile smote Oenomaus in the middle of his belly, and broke the plate of his corslet, whereon his bowels came gushing out and he clutched the earth in the palms of his hands as he fell sprawling in the dust. Idomeneus drew his spear out of the body, but could not strip him of the rest of his armour for the rain of darts that were showered upon him: moreover his strength was now beginning to fail him so that he could no longer charge, and could neither spring forward to recover his own weapon nor swerve aside to avoid one that was aimed at him; therefore, though he still defended himself in hand-to-hand fight, his heavy feet could not bear him swiftly out of the battle. Deiphobus aimed a spear at him as he was retreating slowly from the field, for his bitterness against him was as fierce as ever, but again he missed him, and hit Ascalaphus, the son of Mars; the spear went through his shoulder, and he clutched the earth in the palms of his hands as he fell sprawling in the dust.

Grim Mars of awful voice did not yet know that his son had fallen, for he was sitting on the summits of Olympus under the golden clouds, by command of Jove, where the other gods were also sitting, forbidden to take part in the battle. Meanwhile men fought furiously about the body. Deiphobus tore the helmet from off his head, but Meriones sprang upon him, and struck him on the arm with a spear so that the visored helmet fell from his hand and came ringing down upon the ground. Thereon Meriones sprang upon him like a vulture, drew the spear from his shoulder, and fell back under cover of his men. Then Polites, own brother of Deiphobus passed his arms around his waist, and bore him away from the battle till he got to his horses that were standing in the rear of the fight with the chariot and their driver. These took him towards the city groaning and in great pain, with the blood flowing from his arm.

The others still fought on, and the battle-cry rose to heaven without ceasing. Aeneas sprang on Aphareus son of Caletor, and struck him with a spear in his throat which was turned towards him; his head fell on one side, his helmet and shield came down along with him, and death, life's foe, was shed around him. Antilochus spied his chance, flew forward towards Thoon, and wounded him as he was turning round. He laid open the vein that runs all the way up the back to the neck; he cut this vein clean away throughout its whole course, and Thoon fell in the dust face upwards, stretching out his hands imploringly towards his comrades. Antilochus sprang upon him and stripped the armour from his shoulders, glaring round him fearfully as he did so. The Trojans came about him on every side and struck his broad and gleaming shield, but could not wound his body, for Neptune stood guard over the son of Nestor, though the darts fell thickly round him. He was never clear of the foe, but was always in the thick of the fight; his spear was never idle; he poised and aimed it in every direction, so eager was he to hit some one from a distance or to fight him hand to hand.

As he was thus aiming among the crowd, he was seen by Adamas son of Asius, who rushed towards him and struck him with a spear in the middle of his shield, but Neptune made its point without effect, for he grudged him the life of Antilochus. One half, therefore, of the spear stuck fast like a charred stake in Antilochus's shield, while the other lay on the ground. Adamas then sought shelter under cover of his men, but Meriones followed after and hit him with a spear midway between the private parts and the

navel, where a wound is particualrly painful to wretched mortals. There did Meriones transfix him, and he writhed convulsively about the spear as some bull whom mountain herdsmen have bound with ropes of withes and are taking away perforce. Even so did he move convulsively for a while, but not for very long, till Meriones came up and drew the spear out of his body, and his eyes were veiled in darkness.

Helenus then struck Deipyrus with a great Thracian sword, hitting him on the temple in close combat and tearing the helmet from his head; the helmet fell to the ground, and one of those who were fighting on the Achaean side took charge of it as it rolled at his feet, but the eyes of Deipyrus were closed in the darkness of death.

On this Menelaus was grieved, and made menacingly towards Helenus, brandishing his spear; but Helenus drew his bow, and the two attacked one another at one and the same moment, the one with his spear, and the other with his bow and arrow. The son of Priam hit the breastplate of Menelaus's corslet, but the arrow glanced from off it. As black beans or pulse come pattering down on to a threshing-floor from the broad winnowing-shovel, blown by shrill winds and shaken by the shovel even so did the arrow glance off and recoil from the shield of Menelaus, who in his turn wounded the hand with which Helenus carried his bow; the spear went right through his hand and stuck in the bow itself, so that to his life he retreated under cover of his men, with his hand dragging by his side for the spear weighed it down till Agenor drew it out and bound the hand carefully up in a woollen sling which his esquire had with him.

Pisander then made straight at Menelaus his evil destiny luring him on to his doom, for he was to fall in fight with you, O Menelaus. When the two were hard by one another the spear of the son of Atreus turned aside and he missed his aim; Pisander then struck the shield of brave Menelaus but could not pierce it, for the shield stayed the spear and broke the shaft; nevertheless he was glad and made sure of victory; forthwith, however, the son of Atreus drew his sword and sprang upon him. Pisander then seized the bronze battle-axe, with its long and polished handle of olive wood that hung by his side under his shield, and the two made at one another. Pisander struck the peak
of Menelaus's crested helmet just under the crest itself, and Menelaus hit Pisander as he was coming towards him, on the forehead, just at the rise of his nose; the bones cracked and his two gore-bedrabbled eyes fell by his feet in the dust. He fell backwards to the ground, and Menelaus set his heel upon him, stripped him of his armour, and vaunted over him saying, "Even thus shall you Trojans leave the ships of the Achaeans, proud and insatiate of battle though you be: nor shall you lack any of the disgrace and shame which you have heaped upon myself. Cowardly she-wolves that you are, you feared not the anger of dread Jove, avenger of violated hospitality, who will one day destroy your city; you stole my wedded wife and wickedly carried off much treasure when you were her guest, and now you would fling fire upon our ships, and kill our heroes. A day will come when, rage as you may, you shall be stayed. O father Jove, you, who they say art above all both gods and men in wisdom, and from whom all things that befall us do proceed, how can you thus favour the Trojans men so proud and overweening, that they are never tired of fighting? All things pall after a while sleep, love, sweet song, and stately dance still these are things of which a man would surely have his fill rather than of battle, whereas it is of battle that the Trojans are insatiate."

So saying Menelaus stripped the blood-stained armour from the body of Pisander, and handed it over to his men; then he again ranged himself among those who were in the front of the fight.

Harpalion son of King Pylaemenes then sprang upon him; he had come to fight at Troy along with his father, but he did not go home again. He struck the middle of Menelaus's shield with his spear but could not pierce it, and to save his life drew back under cover of his men, looking round him on every side lest he should be wounded. But Meriones aimed a bronze-tipped arrow at him as he was leaving the field, and hit him on the right buttock; the arrow pierced the bone through and through, and penetrated the bladder, so he sat down where he was and breathed his last in the arms of his comrades, stretched like a worm upon the ground and watering the earth with the blood that flowed from his wound. The brave Paphlagonians tended him with all due care; they raised him into his chariot, and bore him sadly off to the city of Troy; his father went also with him weeping bitterly, but there was no ransom that could bring his dead son to life again.

Paris was deeply grieved by the death of Harpalion, who was his host when he went among the Paphlagonians; he aimed an arrow, therefore, in order to avenge him. Now there was a certain man named Euchenor, son of Polyidus the prophet, a brave man and wealthy, whose home was in Corinth. This Euchenor had set sail for Troy well knowing that it would be the death of him, for his good old father Polyidus had often told him that he must either stay at home and die of a terrible disease, or go with the Achaeans and perish at the hands of the Trojans; he chose, therefore, to avoid incurring the heavy fine the Achaeans would have laid upon

him, and at the same time to escape the pain and suffering of disease. Paris now smote him on the jaw under his ear, whereon the life went out of him and he was enshrouded in the darkness of death.

Thus then did they fight as it were a flaming fire. But Hector had not yet heard, and did not know that the Argives were making havoc of his men on the left wing of the battle, where the Achaeans ere long would have triumphed over them, so vigorously did Neptune cheer them on and help them. He therefore held on at the point where he had first forced his way through the gates and the wall, after breaking through the serried ranks of Danaan warriors. It was here that the ships of Ajax and Protesilaus were drawn up by the sea-shore; here the wall was at its lowest, and the fight both of man and horse raged most fiercely. The Boeotians and the Ionians with their long tunics, the Locrians, the men of Phthia, and the famous force of the Epeans could hardly stay Hector as he rushed on towards the ships, nor could they drive him from them, for he was as a wall of fire. The chosen men of the Athenians were in the van, led by Menestheus son of Peteos, with whom were also Pheidas, Stichius, and stalwart Bias: Meges son of Phyleus, Amphion, and Dracius commanded the Epeans, while Medon and staunch Podarces led the men of Phthia. Of these, Medon was bastard son to Oileus and brother of Ajax, but he lived in Phylace away from his own country, for he had killed the brother of his stepmother Eriopis, the wife of Oileus; the other, Podarces, was the son of Iphiclus son of Phylacus. These two stood in the van of the Phthians, and defended the ships along with the Boeotians.

Ajax son of Oileus never for a moment left the side of Ajax son of Telamon, but as two swart oxen both strain their utmost at the plough which they are drawing in a fallow field, and the sweat steams upwards from about the roots of their horns nothing but the yoke divides them as they break up the ground till they reach the end of the field even so did the two Ajaxes stand shoulder to shoulder by one another. Many and brave comrades followed the son of Telamon, to relieve him of his shield when he was overcome with sweat and toil, but the Locrians did not follow so close after the son of Oileus, for they could not hold their own in a hand-to-hand fight. They had no bronze helmets with plumes of horse-hair, neither had they shields nor ashen spears, but they had come to Troy armed with bows, and with slings of twisted wool from which they showered their missiles to break the ranks of the Trojans. The others, therefore, with their heavy armour bore the brunt of the fight with the Trojans and with Hector, while the Locrians shot from behind, under their cover; and thus the Trojans began to lose heart, for the arrows threw them into confusion.

The Trojans would now have been driven in sorry plight from the ships and tents back to windy Ilius, had not Polydamas presently said to Hector, “Hector, there is no persuading you to take advice. Because heaven has so richly endowed you with the arts of war, you think that you must therefore excel others in counsel; but you cannot thus claim preeminence in all things. Heaven has made one man an excellent soldier; of another it has made a dancer or a singer and player on the lyre; while yet in another Jove has implanted a wise understanding of which men reap fruit to the saving of many, and he himself knows more about it than any one; therefore I will say what I think will be best. The fight has hemmed you in as with a circle of fire, and even now that the Trojans are within the wall some of them stand aloof in full armour, while others are fighting scattered and outnumbered near the ships. Draw back, therefore, and call your chieftains round you, that we may advise together whether to fall now upon the ships in the hope that heaven may vouchsafe us victory, or to beat a retreat while we can yet safely do so. I greatly fear that the Achaeans will pay us their debt of yesterday in full, for there is one abiding at their ships who is never weary of battle, and who will not hold aloof much longer.”

Thus spoke Polydamas, and his words pleased Hector well. He sprang in full armour from his chariot and said, “Polydamas, gather the chieftains here; I will go yonder into the fight, but will return at once when I have given them their orders.”

He then sped onward, towering like a snowy mountain, and with a loud cry flew through the ranks of the Trojans and their allies. When they heard his voice they all hastened to gather round Polydamas the excellent son of Panthous, but Hector kept on among the foremost, looking everywhere to find Deiphobus and prince Helenus, Adamas son of Asius, and Asius son of Hyrtacus; living, indeed, and scatheless he could no longer find them, for the two last were lying by the sterns of the Achaean ships, slain by the Argives, while the others had been also stricken and wounded by them; but upon the left wing of the dread battle he found Alexandrus, husband of lovely Helen, cheering his men and urging them on to fight. He went up to him and upbraided him. “Paris,” said he, “evil-hearted Paris, fair to see but woman-mad and false of tongue, where are Deiphobus and King Helenus? Where are Adamas son of Asius, and Asius son of Hyrtacus? Where too is Othryoneus? Ilius is undone and will now surely fall!”

Alexandrus answered, “Hector, why find fault when there is no one to find fault with? I should hold aloof from battle on any day rather than this, for my mother bore me with nothing of the coward about me. From the moment when you set our men fighting about the ships we have been staying here and doing battle with the Danaans. Our comrades about whom you ask me are dead; Deiphobus and King Helenus alone have left the field, wounded both of them in the hand, but the son of Saturn saved them alive.

Now, therefore, lead on where you would have us go, and we will follow with right goodwill; you shall not find us fail you in so far as our strength holds out, but no man can do more than in him lies, no matter how willing he may be."

With these words he satisfied his brother, and the two went towards the part of the battle where the fight was thickest, about Cebriones, brave Polydamas, Phalces, Orthaeus, godlike Polyphetes, Palmys, Ascanius, and Morys son of Hippotion, who had come from fertile Ascania on the preceding day to relieve other troops. Then Jove urged them on to fight. They flew forth like the blasts of some fierce wind that strike earth in the van of a thunderstorm they buffet the salt sea into an uproar; many and mighty are the great waves that come crashing in one after the other upon the shore with their arching heads all crested with foam even so did rank behind rank of Trojans arrayed in gleaming armour follow their leaders onward. The way was led by Hector son of Priam, peer of murderous Mars, with his round shield before him his shield of ox-hides covered with plates of bronze and his gleaming helmet upon his temples. He kept stepping forward under cover of his shield in every direction, making trial of the ranks to see if they would give way be him, but he could not daunt the courage of the Achaeans. Ajax was the first to stride out and challenge him. "Sir," he cried, "draw near; why do you think thus vainly to dismay the Argives? We Achaeans are excellent soldiers, but the scourge of Jove has fallen heavily upon us. Your heart, forsooth, is set on destroying our ships, but we too have bands that can keep you at bay, and your own fair town shall be sooner taken and sacked by ourselves. The time is near when you shall pray Jove and all the gods in your flight, that your steeds may be swifter than hawks as they raise the dust on the plain and bear you back to your city."

As he was thus speaking a bird flew by upon his right hand, and the host of the Achaeans shouted, for they took heart at the omen. But Hector answered, "Ajax, braggart and false of tongue, would that I were as sure of being son for evermore to aegis-bearing Jove, with Queen Juno for my mother, and of being held in like honour with Minerva and Apollo, as I am that this day is big with the destruction of the Achaeans; and you shall fall among them if you dare abide my spear; it shall rend your fair body and bid you glut our hounds and birds of prey with your fat and your flesh, as you fall by the ships of the Achaeans."

With these words he led the way and the others followed after with a cry that rent the air, while the host shouted behind them. The Argives on their part raised a shout likewise, nor did they forget their prowess, but stood firm against the onslaught of the Trojan chieftains, and the cry from both the hosts rose up to heaven and to the brightness of Jove's presence.

Book XIV

NESTOR was sitting over his wine, but the cry of battle did not escape him, and he said to the son of Aesculapius, "What, noble Machaon, is the meaning of all this? The shouts of men fighting by our ships grow stronger and stronger; stay here, therefore, and sit over your wine, while fair Hecamede heats you a bath and washes the clotted blood from off you. I will go at once to the look-out station and see what it is all about."

As he spoke he took up the shield of his son Thrasymedes that was lying in his tent, all gleaming with bronze, for Thrasymedes had taken his father's shield; he grasped his redoubtable bronze-shod spear, and as soon as he was outside saw the disastrous rout of the Achaeans who, now that their wall was overthrown, were flying pell-mell before the Trojans. As when there is a heavy swell upon the sea, but the waves are dumb they keep their eyes on the watch for the quarter whence the fierce winds may spring upon them, but they stay where they are and set neither this way nor that, till some particular wind sweeps down from heaven to determine them even so did the old man ponder whether to make for the crowd of Danaans, or go in search of Agamemnon. In the end he deemed it best to go to the son of Atreus; but meanwhile the hosts were fighting and killing one another, and the hard bronze rattled on their bodies, as they thrust at one another with their swords and spears.

The wounded kings, the son of Tydeus, Ulysses, and Agamemnon son of Atreus, fell in Nestor as they were coming up from their ships for theirs were drawn up some way from where the fighting was going on, being on the shore itself inasmuch as they had been beached first, while the wall had been built behind the hindermost. The stretch of the shore, wide though it was, did not afford room for all the ships, and the host was cramped for space, therefore they had placed the ships in rows one behind the other, and had filled the whole opening of the bay between the two points that formed it. The kings, leaning on their spears, were coming out to survey the fight, being in great anxiety, and when old Nestor met them they were filled with dismay. Then King Agamemnon said to him, "Nestor son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, why have you left the battle to come hither? I fear that what dread Hector said will come true, when he vaunted among the Trojans saying that he would not return to Ilius till he had fired our ships and killed us; this is what he said, and now it is all coming true. Alas! others of the Achaeans, like Achilles, are in anger with me that they refuse to fight by the sterns of our ships."

Then Nestor knight of Gerene answered, “It is indeed as you say; it is all coming true at this moment, and even Jove who thunders from on high cannot prevent it. Fallen is the wall on which we relied as an impregnable bulwark both for us and our fleet. The Trojans are fighting stubbornly and without ceasing at the ships; look where you may you cannot see from what quarter the rout of the Achaeans is coming; they are being killed in a confused mass and the battle-cry ascends to heaven; let us think, if counsel can be of any use, what we had better do; but I do not advise our going into battle ourselves, for a man cannot fight when he is wounded.”

And King Agamemnon answered, “Nestor, if the Trojans are indeed fighting at the rear of our ships, and neither the wall nor the trench has served us over which the Danaans toiled so hard, and which they deemed would be an impregnable bulwark both for us and our fleet I see it must be the will of Jove that the Achaeans should perish ingloriously here, far from Argos. I knew when Jove was willing to defend us, and I know now that he is raising the Trojans to like honour with the gods, while us, on the other hand, he bas bound hand and foot. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; let us bring down the ships that are on the beach and draw them into the water; let us make them fast to their mooring-stones a little way out, against the fall of night if even by night the Trojans will desist from fighting; we may then draw down the rest of the fleet. There is nothing wrong in flying ruin even by night. It is better for a man that he should fly and be saved than be caught and killed.”

Ulysses looked fiercely at him and said, “Son of Atreus, what are you talking about? Wretch, you should have commanded some other and baser army, and not been ruler over us to whom Jove has allotted a life of hard fighting from youth to old age, till we every one of us perish. Is it thus that you would quit the city of Troy, to win which we have suffered so much hardship? Hold your peace, lest some other of the Achaeans hear you say what no man who knows how to give good counsel, no king over so great a host as that of the Argives should ever have let fall from his lips. I despise your judgement utterly for what you have been saying. Would you, then, have us draw down our ships into the water while the battle is raging, and thus play further into the hands of the conquering Trojans? It would be ruin; the Achaeans will not go on fighting when they see the ships being drawn into the water, but will cease attacking and keep turning their eyes towards them; your counsel, therefore, Sir captain, would be our destruction.”

Agamemnon answered, “Ulysses, your rebuke has stung me to the heart. I am not, however, ordering the Achaeans to draw their ships into the sea whether they will or no. Some one, it may be, old or young, can offer us better counsel which I shall rejoice to hear.”

Then said Diomed, “Such an one is at hand; he is not far to seek, if you will listen to me and not resent my speaking though I am younger than any of you. I am by lineage son to a noble sire, Tydeus, who lies buried at Thebes. For Portheus had three noble sons, two of whom, Agrius and Melas, abode in Pleuron and rocky Calydon. The third was the knight Oeneus, my father’s father, and he was the most valiant of them all. Oeeneus remained in his own country, but my father (as Jove and the other gods ordained it) migrated to Argos. He married into the family of Adrastus, and his house was one of great abundance, for he had large estates of rich corn-growing land, with much orchard ground as well, and he had many sheep; moreover he excelled all the Argives in the use of the spear. You must yourselves have heard whether these things are true or no; therefore when I say well despise not my words as though I were a coward or of ignoble birth. I say, then, let us go to the fight as we needs must, wounded though we be. When there, we may keep out of the battle and beyond the range of the spears lest we get fresh wounds in addition to what we have already, but we can spur on others, who have been indulging their spleen and holding aloof from battle hitherto.”

Thus did he speak; whereon they did even as he had said and set out, King Agamemnon leading the way.

Meanwhile Neptune had kept no blind look-out, and came up to them in the semblance of an old man. He took Agamemnon’s right hand in his own and said, “Son of Atreus, I take it Achilles is glad now that he sees the Achaeans routed and slain, for he is utterly without remorse may he come to a bad end and heaven confound him. As for yourself, the blessed gods are not yet so bitterly angry with you but that the princes and counsellors of the Trojans shall again raise the dust upon the plain, and you shall see them flying from the ships and tents towards their city.”

With this he raised a mighty cry of battle, and sped forward to the plain. The voice that came from his deep chest was as that of nine or ten thousand men when they are shouting in the thick of a fight, and it put fresh courage into the hearts of the Achaeans to wage war and do battle without ceasing.

Juno of the golden throne looked down as she stood upon a peak of Olympus and her heart was gladdened at the sight of him who was at once her brother and her brother-in-law, hurrying hither and thither amid the fighting. Then she turned her eyes to Jove as he sat on the topmost crests of many-fountained Ida, and loathed him. She set herself to think how she might hoodwink him, and in

the end she deemed that it would be best for her to go to Ida and array herself in rich attire, in the hope that Jove might become enamoured of her, and wish to embrace her. While he was thus engaged a sweet and careless sleep might be made to steal over his eyes and senses.

She went, therefore, to the room which her son Vulcan had made her, and the doors of which he had cunningly fastened by means of a secret key so that no other god could open them. Here she entered and closed the doors behind her. She cleansed all the dirt from her fair body with ambrosia, then she anointed herself with olive oil, ambrosial, very soft, and scented specially for herself if it were so much as shaken in the bronze-floored house of Jove, the scent pervaded the universe of heaven and earth. With this she anointed her delicate skin, and then she plaited the fair ambrosial locks that flowed in a stream of golden tresses from her immortal head. She put on the wondrous robe which Minerva had worked for her with consummate art, and had embroidered with manifold devices; she fastened it about her bosom with golden clasps, and she girded herself with a girdle that had a hundred tassels: then she fastened her earrings, three brilliant pendants that glistened most beautifully, through the pierced lobes of her ears, and threw a lovely new veil over her head. She bound her sandals on to her feet, and when she had arrayed herself perfectly to her satisfaction, she left her room and called Venus to come aside and speak to her. “My dear child,” said she, “will you do what I am going to ask of you, or will refuse me because you are angry at my being on the Danaan side, while you are on the Trojan?”

Jove’s daughter Venus answered, “Juno, august queen of goddesses, daughter of mighty Saturn, say what you want, and I will do it for at once, if I can, and if it can be done at all.”

Then Juno told her a lying tale and said, “I want you to endow me with some of those fascinating charms, the spells of which bring all things mortal and immortal to your feet. I am going to the world’s end to visit Oceanus (from whom all we gods proceed) and mother Tethys: they received me in their house, took care of me, and brought me up, having taken me over from Rhaea when Jove imprisoned great Saturn in the depths that are under earth and sea. I must go and see them that I may make peace between them; they have been quarrelling, and are so angry that they have not slept with one another this long while; if I can bring them round and restore them to one another’s embraces, they will be grateful to me and love me for ever afterwards.”

Thereon laughter-loving Venus said, “I cannot and must not refuse you, for you sleep in the arms of Jove who is our king.”

As she spoke she loosed from her bosom the curiously embroidered girdle into which all her charms had been wrought love, desire, and that sweet flattery which steals the judgement even of the most prudent. She gave the girdle to Juno and said, “Take this girdle wherein all my charms reside and lay it in your bosom. If you will wear it I promise you that your errand, be it what it may, will not be bootless.”

When she heard this Juno smiled, and still smiling she laid the girdle in her bosom.

Venus now went back into the house of Jove, while Juno darted down from the summits of Olympus. She passed over Pieria and fair Emathia, and went on and on till she came to the snowy ranges of the Thracian horsemen, over whose topmost crests she sped without ever setting foot to ground. When she came to Athos she went on over the, waves of the sea till she reached Lemnos, the city of noble Thoas. There she met Sleep, own brother to Death, and caught him by the hand, saying, “Sleep, you who lord it alike over mortals and immortals, if you ever did me a service in times past, do one for me now, and I shall be grateful to you ever after. Close Jove’s keen eyes for me in slumber while I hold him clasped in my embrace, and I will give you a beautiful golden seat, that can never fall to pieces; my clubfooted son Vulcan shall make it for you, and he shall give it a footstool for you to rest your fair feet upon when you are at table.”

Then Sleep answered, “Juno, great queen of goddesses, daughter of mighty Saturn, I would lull any other of the gods to sleep without compunction, not even excepting the waters of Oceanus from whom all of them proceed, but I dare not go near Jove, nor send him to sleep unless he bids me. I have had one lesson already through doing what you asked me, on the day when Jove’s mighty son Hercules set sail from Ilius after having sacked the city of the Trojans. At your bidding I suffused my sweet self over the mind of aegis-bearing Jove, and laid him to rest; meanwhile you hatched a plot against Hercules, and set the blasts of the angry winds beating upon the sea, till you took him to the goodly city of Cos away from all his friends. Jove was furious when he awoke, and began hurling the gods about all over the house; he was looking more particularly for myself, and would have flung me down through space into the sea where I should never have been heard of any more, had not Night who cows both men and gods protected me. I fled to her and Jove left off looking for me in spite of his being so angry, for he did not dare do anything to displease Night. And now you are again asking me to do something on which I cannot venture.”

And Juno said, “Sleep, why do you take such notions as those into your head? Do you think Jove will be as anxious to help the Trojans, as he was about his own son? Come, I will marry you to one of the youngest of the Graces, and she shall be your own Pasithea, whom you have always wanted to marry.”

Sleep was pleased when he heard this, and answered, “Then swear it to me by the dread waters of the river Styx; lay one hand on the bounteous earth, and the other on the sheen of the sea, so that all the gods who dwell down below with Saturn may be our witnesses, and see that you really do give me one of the youngest of the Graces Pasithea, whom I have always wanted to marry.”

Juno did as he had said. She swore, and invoked all the gods of the nether world, who are called Titans, to witness. When she had completed her oath, the two enshrouded themselves in a thick mist and sped lightly forward, leaving Lemnos and Imbrus behind them. Presently they reached many-fountained Ida, mother of wild beasts, and Lectum where they left the sea to go on by land, and the tops of the trees of the forest soughed under the going of their feet. Here Sleep halted, and ere Jove caught sight of him he climbed a lofty pine-tree the tallest that reared its head towards heaven on all Ida. He hid himself behind the branches and sat there in the semblance of the sweet-singing bird that haunts the mountains and is called Chalcis by the gods, but men call it Cymindis. Juno then went to Gargarus, the topmost peak of Ida, and Jove, driver of the clouds, set eyes upon her. As soon as he did so he became inflamed with the same passionate desire for her that he had felt when they had first enjoyed each other’s embraces, and slept with one another without their dear parents knowing anything about it. He went up to her and said, “What do you want that you have come hither from Olympus and that too with neither chariot nor horses to convey you?”

Then Juno told him a lying tale and said, “I am going to the world’s end, to visit Oceanus, from whom all we gods proceed, and mother Tethys; they received me into their house, took care of me, and brought me up. I must go and see them that I may make peace between them: they have been quarrelling, and are so angry that they have not slept with one another this long time. The horses that will take me over land and sea are stationed on the lowermost spurs of many-fountained Ida, and I have come here from Olympus on purpose to consult you. I was afraid you might be angry with me later on, if I went to the house of Oceanus without letting you know.”

And Jove said, “Juno, you can choose some other time for paying your visit to Oceanus for the present let us devote ourselves to love and to the enjoyment of one another. Never yet have I been so overpowered by passion neither for goddess nor mortal woman as I am at this moment for yourself not even when I was in love with the wife of Ixion who bore me Pirithous, peer of gods in counsel, nor yet with Danae the daintily-ancled daughter of Acrisius, who bore me the famed hero Perseus. Then there was the daughter of Phoenix, who bore me Minos and Rhadamanthus: there was Semele, and Alcmena in Thebes by whom I begot my lion-hearted son Hercules, while Semele became mother to Bacchus the comforter of mankind. There was queen Ceres again, and lovely Leto, and yourself but with none of these was I ever so much enamoured as I now am with you.”

Juno again answered him with a lying tale. “Most dread son of Saturn,” she exclaimed, “what are you talking about? Would you have us enjoy one another here on the top of Mount Ida, where everything can be seen? What if one of the ever-living gods should see us sleeping together, and tell the others? It would be such a scandal that when I had risen from your embraces I could never show myself inside your house again; but if you are so minded, there is a room which your son Vulcan has made me, and he has given it good strong doors; if you would so have it, let us go thither and lie down.”

And Jove answered, “Juno, you need not be afraid that either god or man will see you, for I will enshroud both of us in such a dense golden cloud, that the very sun for all his bright piercing beams shall not see through it.” With this the son of Saturn caught his wife in his embrace; whereon the earth sprouted them a cushion of young grass, with dew-bespangled lotus, crocus, and hyacinth, so soft and thick that it raised them well above the ground. Here they laid themselves down and overhead they were covered by a fair cloud of gold, from which there fell glittering dew-drops.

Thus, then, did the sire of all things repose peacefully on the crest of Ida, overcome at once by sleep and love, and he held his spouse in his arms. Meanwhile Sleep made off to the ships of the Achaeans, to tell earth-encircling Neptune, lord of the earthquake. When he had found him he said, “Now, Neptune, you can help the Danaans with a will, and give them victory though it be only for a short time while Jove is still sleeping. I have sent him into a sweet slumber, and Juno has beguiled him into going to bed with her.”

Sleep now departed and went his ways to and fro among mankind, leaving Neptune more eager than ever to help the Danaans. He darted forward among the first ranks and shouted saying, “Argives, shall we let Hector son of Priam have the triumph of taking our ships and covering himself with glory? This is what he says that he shall now do, seeing that Achilles is still in dudgeon at his ship;

We shall get on very well without him if we keep each other in heart and stand by one another. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say. Let us each take the best and largest shield we can lay hold of, put on our helmets, and sally forth with our longest spears in our hands; will lead you on, and Hector son of Priam, rage as he may, will not dare to hold out against us. If any good staunch soldier has only a small shield, let him hand it over to a worse man, and take a larger one for himself."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. The son of Tydeus, Ulysses, and Agamemnon, wounded though they were, set the others in array, and went about everywhere effecting the exchanges of armour; the most valiant took the best armour, and gave the worse to the worse man. When they had donned their bronze armour they marched on with Neptune at their head. In his strong hand he grasped his terrible sword, keen of edge and flashing like lightning; woe to him who comes across it in the day of battle; all men quake for fear and keep away from it.

Hector on the other side set the Trojans in array. Thereon Neptune and Hector waged fierce war on one another Hector on the Trojan and Neptune on the Argive side. Mighty was the uproar as the two forces met; the sea came rolling in towards the ships and tents of the Achaeans, but waves do not thunder on the shore more loudly when driven before the blast of Boreas, nor do the flames of a forest fire roar more fiercely when it is well alight upon the mountains, nor does the wind bellow with ruder music as it tears on through the tops of when it is blowing its hardest, than the terrible shout which the Trojans and Achaeans raised as they sprang upon one another.

Hector first aimed his spear at Ajax, who was turned full towards him, nor did he miss his aim. The spear struck him where two bands passed over his chest the band of his shield and that of his silver-studded sword and these protected his body. Hector was angry that his spear should have been hurled in vain, and withdrew under cover of his men. As he was thus retreating, Ajax son of Telamon struck him with a stone, of which there were many lying about under the men's feet as they fought brought there to give support to the ships' sides as they lay on the shore. Ajax caught up one of them and struck Hector above the rim of his shield close to his neck; the blow made him spin round like a top and reel in all directions. As an oak falls headlong when uprooted by the lightning flash of father Jove, and there is a terrible smell of brimstone no man can help being dismayed if he is standing near it, for a thunderbolt is a very awful thing even so did Hector fall to earth and bite the dust. His spear fell from his hand, but his shield and helmet were made fast about his body, and his bronze armour rang about him.

The sons of the Achaeans came running with a loud cry towards him, hoping to drag him away, and they showered their darts on the Trojans, but none of them could wound him before he was surrounded and covered by the princes Polydamas, Aeneas, Agenor, Sarpedon captain of the Lycians, and noble Glaucus: of the others, too, there was not one who was unmindful of him, and they held their round shields over him to cover him. His comrades then lifted him off the ground and bore him away from the battle to the place where his horses stood waiting for him at the rear of the fight with their driver and the chariot; these then took him towards the city groaning and in great pain. When they reached the ford of the air stream of Xanthus, begotten of Immortal Jove, they took him from off his chariot and laid him down on the ground; they poured water over him, and as they did so he breathed again and opened his eyes. Then kneeling on his knees he vomited blood, but soon fell back on to the ground, and his eyes were again closed in darkness for he was still sturined by the blow.

When the Argives saw Hector leaving the field, they took heart and set upon the Trojans yet more furiously. Ajax fleet son of Oileus began by springing on Satnius son of Enops and wounding him with his spear: a fair naiad nymph had borne him to Enops as he was herding cattle by the banks of the river Satnioeis. The son of Oileus came up to him and struck him in the flank so that he fell, and a fierce fight between Trojans and Danaans raged round his body. Polydamas son of Panthous drew near to avenge him, and wounded Prothoenor son of Areilycus on the right shoulder; the terrible spear went right through his shoulder, and he clutched the earth as he fell in the dust. Polydamas vaunted loudly over him saying, "Again I take it that the spear has not sped in vain from the strong hand of the son of Panthous; an Argive has caught it in his body, and it will serve him for a staff as he goes down into the house of Hades."

The Argives were maddened by this boasting. Ajax son of Telamon was more angry than any, for the man had fallen close be, him; so he aimed at Polydamas as he was retreating, but Polydamas saved himself by swerving aside and the spear struck Archelochus son of Antenor, for heaven counselled his destruction; it struck him where the head springs from the neck at the top joint of the spine, and severed both the tendons at the back of the head. His head, mouth, and nostrils reached the ground long before his legs and knees could do so, and Ajax shouted to Polydamas saying, "Think, Polydamas, and tell me truly whether this man is not as well worth killing as Prothoenor was: he seems rich, and of rich family, a brother, it may be, or son of the knight Antenor, for he is very like him."

But he knew well who it was, and the Trojans were greatly angered. Acamas then bestrode his brother's body and wounded Promachus the Boeotian with his spear, for he was trying to drag his brother's body away. Acamas vaunted loudly over him saying, "Argive archers, braggarts that you are, toil and suffering shall not be for us only, but some of you too shall fall here as well as ourselves. See how Promachus now sleeps, vanquished by my spear; payment for my brother's blood has not long delayed; a man, therefore, may well be thankful if he leaves a kinsman in his house behind him to avenge his fall."

His taunts infuriated the Argives, and Peneleos was more enraged than any of them. He sprang towards Acamas, but Acamas did not stand his ground, and he killed Ilioneus son of the rich flock-master Phorbas, whom Mercury had favoured and endowed with greater wealth than any other of the Trojans. Ilioneus was his only son, and Peneleos now wounded him in the eye under his eyebrows, tearing the eye-ball from its socket: the spear went right through the eye into the nape of the neck, and he fell, stretching out both hands before him. Peneleos then drew his sword and smote him on the neck, so that both head and helmet came tumbling down to the ground with the spear still sticking in the eye; he then held up the head, as though it had been a poppy-head, and showed it to the Trojans, vaunting over them as he did so. "Trojans," he cried, "bid the father and mother of noble Ilioneus make moan for him in their house, for the wife also of Promachus son of Alegenor will never be gladdened by the coming of her dear husband when we Argives return with our ships from Troy."

As he spoke fear fell upon them, and every man looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety.

Tell me now, O Muses that dwell on Olympus, who was the first of the Argives to bear away blood-stained spoils after Neptune lord of the earthquake had turned the fortune of war. Ajax son of Telamon was first to wound Hyrtius son of Gyrtius, captain of the staunch Mysians. Antilochus killed Phalces and Mermerus, while Meriones slew Morys and Hippotion, Teucer also killed Prothoon and Periphetes. The son of Atreus then wounded Hyperenor shepherd of his people, in the flank, and the bronze point made his entrails gush out as it tore in among them; on this his life came hurrying out of him at the place where he had been wounded, and his eyes were closed in darkness. Ajax son of Oileus killed more than any other, for there was no man so fleet as he to pursue flying foes when Jove had spread panic among them.

Book XV

BUT when their flight had taken them past the trench and the set stakes, and many had fallen by the hands of the Danaans, the Trojans made a halt on reaching their chariots, routed and pale with fear. Jove now woke on the crests of Ida, where he was lying with golden-throned Juno by his side, and starting to his feet he saw the Trojans and Achaeans, the one thrown into confusion, and the others driving them pell-mell before them with King Neptune in their midst. He saw Hector lying on the ground with his comrades gathered round him, gasping for breath, wandering in mind and vomiting blood, for it was not the feeblest of the Achaeans who struck him.

The sire of gods and men had pity on him, and looked fiercely on Juno. "I see, Juno," said he, "you mischief making trickster, that your cunning has stayed Hector from fighting and has caused the rout of his host. I am in half a mind to thrash you, in which case you will be the first to reap the fruits of your scurvy knavery. Do you not remember how once upon a time I had you hanged? I fastened two anvils on to your feet, and bound your hands in a chain of gold which none might break, and you hung in mid-air among the clouds. All the gods in Olympus were in a fury, but they could not reach you to set you free; when I caught any one of them I gripped him and hurled him from the heavenly threshold till he came fainting down to earth; yet even this did not relieve my mind from the incessant anxiety which I felt about noble Hercules whom you and Boreas had spitefully conveyed beyond the seas to Cos, after suborning the tempests; but I rescued him, and notwithstanding all his mighty labours I brought him back again to Argos. I would remind you of this that you may learn to leave off being so deceitful, and discover how much you are likely to gain by the embraces out of which you have come here to trick me."

Juno trembled as he spoke, and said, "May heaven above and earth below be my witnesses, with the waters of the river Styx and this is the most solemn oath that a blessed god can take nay, I swear also by your own almighty head and by our bridal bed things over which I could never possibly perjure myself that Neptune is not punishing Hector and the Trojans and helping the Achaeans through any doing of mine; it is all of his own mere motion because he was sorry to see the Achaeans hard pressed at their ships: if I were advising him, I should tell him to do as you bid him."

The sire of gods and men smiled and answered, "If you, Juno, were always to support me when we sit in council of the gods, Neptune, like it or no, would soon come round to your and my way of thinking. If, then, you are speaking the truth and mean what you say, go among the rank and file of the gods, and tell Iris and Apollo lord of the bow, that I want them Iris, that she may go to

the Achaean host and tell Neptune to leave off fighting and go home, and Apollo, that he may send Hector again into battle and give him fresh strength; he will thus forget his present sufferings, and drive the Achaeans back in confusion till they fall among the ships of Achilles son of Peleus. Achilles will then send his comrade Patroclus into battle, and Hector will kill him in front of Ilius after he has slain many warriors, and among them my own noble son Sarpedon. Achilles will kill Hector to avenge Patroclus, and from that time I will bring it about that the Achaeans shall persistently drive the Trojans back till they fulfil the counsels of Minerva and take Ilius. But I will not stay my anger, nor permit any god to help the Danaans till I have accomplished the desire of the son of Peleus, according to the promise I made by bowing my head on the day when Thetis touched my knees and besought me to give him honour."

Juno heeded his words and went from the heights of Ida to great Olympus. Swift as the thought of one whose fancy carries him over vast continents, and he says to himself, "Now I will be here, or there," and he would have all manner of things even so swiftly did Juno wing her way till she came to high Olympus and went in among the gods who were gathered in the house of Jove. When they saw her they all of them came up to her, and held out their cups to her by way of greeting. She let the others be, but took the cup offered her by lovely Themis, who was first to come running up to her. "Juno," said she, "why are you here? And you seem troubled has your husband the son of Saturn been frightening you?"

And Juno answered, "Themis, do not ask me about it. You know what a proud and cruel disposition my husband has. Lead the gods to table, where you and all the immortals can hear the wicked designs which he has avowed. Many a one, mortal and immortal, will be angered by them, however peaceably he may be feasting now."

On this Juno sat down, and the gods were troubled throughout the house of Jove. Laughter sat on her lips but her brow was furrowed with care, and she spoke up in a rage. "Fools that we are," she cried, "to be thus madly angry with Jove; we keep on wanting to go up to him and stay him by force or by persuasion, but he sits aloof and cares for nobody, for he knows that he is much stronger than any other of the immortals. Make the best, therefore, of whatever ills he may choose to send each one of you; Mars, I take it, has had a taste of them already, for his son Ascalaphus has fallen in battle the man whom of all others he loved most dearly and whose father he owns himself to be."

When he heard this Mars smote his two sturdy thighs with the flat of his hands, and said in anger, "Do not blame me, you gods that dwell in heaven, if I go to the ships of the Achaeans and avenge the death of my son, even though it end in my being struck by Jove's lightning and lying in blood and dust among the corpses."

As he spoke he gave orders to yoke his horses Panic and Rout, while he put on his armour. On this, Jove would have been roused to still more fierce and implacable enmity against the other immortals, had not Minerva, ararmed for the safety of the gods, sprung from her seat and hurried outside. She tore the helmet from his head and the shield from his shoulders, and she took the bronze spear from his strong hand and set it on one side; then she said to Mars, "Madman, you are undone; you have ears that hear not, or you have lost all judgement and understanding; have you not heard what Juno has said on coming straight from the presence of Olympian Jove? Do you wish to go through all kinds of suffering before you are brought back sick and sorry to Olympus, after having caused infinite mischief to all us others? Jove would instantly leave the Trojans and Achaeans to themselves; he would come to Olympus to punish us, and would grip us up one after another, guilty or not guilty. Therefore lay aside your anger for the death of your son; better men than he have either been killed already or will fall hereafter, and one cannot protect every one's whole family."

With these words she took Mars back to his seat. Meanwhile Juno called Apollo outside, with Iris the messenger of the gods. "Jove," she said to them, "desires you to go to him at once on Mt. Ida; when you have seen him you are to do as he may then bid you."

Thereon Juno left them and resumed her seat inside, while Iris and Apollo made all haste on their way. When they reached many-fountained Ida, mother of wild beasts, they found Jove seated on topmost Gargarus with a fragrant cloud encircling his head as with a diadem. They stood before his presence, and he was pleased with them for having been so quick in obeying the orders his wife had given them.

He spoke to Iris first. "Go," said he, "fleet Iris, tell King Neptune what I now bid you and tell him true. Bid him leave off fighting, and either join the company of the gods, or go down into the sea. If he takes no heed and disobeys me, let him consider well whether he is strong enough to hold his own against me if I attack him. I am older and much stronger than he is; yet he is not afraid to set himself up as on a level with myself, of whom all the other gods stand in awe."

Iris, fleet as the wind, obeyed him, and as the cold hail or snowflakes that fly from out the clouds before the blast of Boreas, even so did she wing her way till she came close up to the great shaker of the earth. Then she said, “I have come, O dark-haired king that holds the world in his embrace, to bring you a message from Jove. He bids you leave off fighting, and either join the company of the gods or go down into the sea; if, however, you take no heed and disobey him, he says he will come down here and fight you. He would have you keep out of his reach, for he is older and much stronger than you are, and yet you are not afraid to set yourself up as on a level with himself, of whom all the other gods stand in awe.”

Neptune was very angry and said, “Great heavens! strong as Jove may be, he has said more than he can do if he has threatened violence against me, who am of like honour with himself. We were three brothers whom Rhea bore to Saturn Jove, myself, and Hades who rules the world below. Heaven and earth were divided into three parts, and each of us was to have an equal share. When we cast lots, it fell to me to have my dwelling in the sea for evermore; Hades took the darkness of the realms under the earth, while air and sky and clouds were the portion that fell to Jove; but earth and great Olympus are the common property of all. Therefore I will not walk as Jove would have me. For all his strength, let him keep to his own third share and be contented without threatening to lay hands upon me as though I were nobody. Let him keep his bragging talk for his own sons and daughters, who must perforce obey him.Iris fleet as the wind then answered, “Am I really, Neptune, to take this daring and unyielding message to Jove, or will you reconsider your answer? Sensible people are open to argument, and you know that the Erinyes always range themselves on the side of the older person.”

Neptune answered, “Goddess Iris, your words have been spoken in season. It is well when a messenger shows so much discretion. Nevertheless it cuts me to the very heart that any one should rebuke so angrily another who is his own peer, and of like empire with himself. Now, however, I will give way in spite of my displeasure; furthermore let me tell you, and I mean what I say if contrary to the desire of myself, Minerva driver of the spoil, Juno, Mercury, and King Vulcan, Jove spares steep Ilius, and will not let the Achaeans have the great triumph of sacking it, let him understand that he will incur our implacable resentment.”

Neptune now left the field to go down under the sea, and sorely did the Achaeans miss him. Then Jove said to Apollo, “Go, dear Phoebus, to Hector, for Neptune who holds the earth in his embrace has now gone down under the sea to avoid the severity of my displeasure. Had he not done so those gods who are below with Saturn would have come to hear of the fight between us. It is better for both of us that he should have curbed his anger and kept out of my reach, for I should have had much trouble with him. Take, then, your tasselled aegis, and shake it furiously, so as to set the Achaean heroes in a panic; take, moreover, brave Hector, O Far-Darter, into your own care, and rouse him to deeds of daring, till the Achaeans are sent flying back to their ships and to the Hellespont. From that point I will think it well over, how the Achaeans may have a respite from their troubles.”

Apollo obeyed his father’s saying, and left the crests of Ida, flying like a falcon, bane of doves and swiftest of all birds. He found Hector no longer lying upon the ground, but sitting up, for he had just come to himself again. He knew those who were about him, and the sweat and hard breathing had left him from the moment when the will of aegis-bearing Jove had revived him. Apollo stood beside him and said, “Hector, son of Priam, why are you so faint, and why are you here away from the others? Has any mishap befallen you?”

Hector in a weak voice answered, “And which, kind sir, of the gods are you, who now ask me thus? Do you not know that Ajax struck me on the chest with a stone as I was killing his comrades at the ships of the Achaeans, and compelled me to leave off fighting? I made sure that this very day I should breathe my last and go down into the house of Hades.”

Then King Apollo said to him, “Take heart; the son of Saturn has sent you a mighty helper from Ida to stand by you and defend you, even me, Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, who have been guardian hitherto not only of yourself but of your city. Now, therefore, order your horsemen to drive their chariots to the ships in great multitudes. I will go before your horses to smooth the way for them, and will turn the Achaeans in flight.”

As he spoke he infused great strength into the shepherd of his people. And as a horse, stabled and full-fed, breaks loose and gallops gloriously over the plain to the place where he is wont to take his bath in the river he tosses his head, and his mane streams over his shoulders as in all the pride of his strength he flies full speed to the pastures where the mares are feeding even so Hector, when he heard what the god said, urged his horsemen on, and sped forward as fast as his limbs could take him. As country peasants set their hounds on to a homed stag or wild goat he has taken shelter under rock or thicket, and they cannot find him, but, lo, a bearded lion whom their shouts have roused stands in their path, and they are in no further humour for the chase even so the Achaeans were still

charging on in a body, using their swords and spears pointed at both ends, but when they saw Hector going about among his men they were afraid, and their hearts fell down into their feet.

Then spoke Thoas son of Andraemon, leader of the Aetolians, a man who could throw a good throw, and who was staunch also in close fight, while few could surpass him in debate when opinions were divided. He then with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus: “What, in heaven’s name, do I now see? Is it not Hector come to life again? Every one made sure he had been killed by Ajax son of Telamon, but it seems that one of the gods has again rescued him. He has killed many of us Danaans already, and I take it will yet do so, for the hand of Jove must be with him or he would never dare show himself so masterful in the forefront of the battle. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; let us order the main body of our forces to fall back upon the ships, but let those of us who profess to be the flower of the army stand firm, and see whether we cannot hold Hector back at the point of our spears as soon as he comes near us; I conceive that he will then think better of it before he tries to charge into the press of the Danaans.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. Those who were about Ajax and King Idomeneus, the followers moreover of Teucer, Meriones, and Meges peer of Mars called all their best men about them and sustained the fight against Hector and the Trojans, but the main body fell back upon the ships of the Achaeans.

The Trojans pressed forward in a dense body, with Hector striding on at their head. Before him went Phoebus Apollo shrouded in cloud about his shoulders. He bore aloft the terrible aegis with its shaggy fringe, which Vulcan the smith had given Jove to strike terror into the hearts of men. With this in his hand he led on the Trojans.

The Argives held together and stood their ground. The cry of battle rose high from either side, and the arrows flew from the bowstrings. Many a spear sped from strong hands and fastened in the bodies of many a valiant warrior, while others fell to earth midway, before they could taste of man’s fair flesh and glut themselves with blood. So long as Phoebus Apollo held his aegis quietly and without shaking it, the weapons on either side took effect and the people fell, but when he shook it straight in the face of the Danaans and raised his mighty battle-cry their hearts fainted within them and they forgot their former prowess. As when two wild beasts spring in the dead of night on a herd of cattle or a large flock of sheep when the herdsman is not there even so were the Danaans struck helpless, for Apollo filled them with panic and gave victory to Hector and the Trojans.

The fight then became more scattered and they killed one another where they best could. Hector killed Stichius and Arcesilaus, the one, leader of the Boeotians, and the other, friend and comrade of Menestheus. Aeneas killed Medon and Iasus. The first was bastard son to Oileus, and brother to Ajax, but he lived in Phylace away from his own country, for he had killed a man, a kinsman of his stepmother Eriopis whom Oileus had married. Iasus had become a leader of the Athenians, and was son of Sphelus the son of Boucolos. Polydamas killed Mecisteus, and Polites Echius, in the front of the battle, while Agenor slew Clonius. Paris struck Deiochus from behind in the lower part of the shoulder, as he was flying among the foremost, and the point of the spear went clean through him.

While they were spoiling these heroes of their armour, the Achaeans were flying pellmell to the trench and the set stakes, and were forced back within their wall. Hector then cried out to the Trojans, “Forward to the ships, and let the spoils be. If I see any man keeping back on the other side the wall away from the ships I will have him killed: his kinsmen and kinswomen shall not give him his dues of fire, but dogs shall tear him in pieces in front of our city.”

As he spoke he laid his whip about his horses’ shoulders and called to the Trojans throughout their ranks; the Trojans shouted with a cry that rent the air, and kept their horses neck and neck with his own. Phoebus Apollo went before, and kicked down the banks of the deep trench into its middle so as to make a great broad bridge, as broad
as the throw of a spear when a man is trying his strength. The Trojan battalions poured over the bridge, and Apollo with his redoubtable aegis led the way. He kicked down the wall of the Achaeans as easily as a child who playing on the sea-shore has built a house of sand and then kicks it down again and destroys it even so did you, O Apollo, shed toil and trouble upon the Argives, filling them with panic and confusion.

Thus then were the Achaeans hemmed in at their ships, calling out to one another and raising their hands with loud cries every man to heaven. Nestor of Gerene, tower of strength to the Achaeans, lifted up his hands to the starry firmament of heaven, and prayed more fervently than any of them. “Father Jove,” said he, “if ever any one in wheat-growing Argos burned you fat thigh-bones of sheep or heifer and prayed that he might return safely home, whereon you bowed your head to him in assent, bear it in mind now, and suffer not the Trojans to triumph thus over the Achaeans.”

All counselling Jove thundered loudly in answer to die prayer of the aged son of Neleus. When the heard Jove thunder they flung themselves yet more fiercely on the Achaeans. As a wave breaking over the bulwarks of a ship when the sea runs high before a gale for it is the force of the wind that makes the waves so great even so did the Trojans spring over the wall with a shout, and drive their chariots onwards. The two sides fought with their double-pointed spears in hand-to-hand encounter-the Trojans from their chariots, and the Achaeans climbing up into their ships and wielding the long pikes that were lying on the decks ready for use in a sea-fight, jointed and shod with bronze.

Now Patroclus, so long as the Achaeans and Trojans were fighting about the wall, but were not yet within it and at the ships, remained sitting in the tent of good Eurypylus, entertaining him with his conversation and spreading herbs over his wound to ease his pain. When, however, he saw the Trojans swarming through the breach in the wall, while the Achaeans were clamouring and struck with panic, he cried aloud, and smote his two thighs with the flat of his hands. “Eurypylus,” said he in his dismay, “I know you want me badly, but I cannot stay with you any longer, for there is hard fighting going on; a servant shall take care of you now, for I must make all speed to Achilles, and induce him to fight if I can; who knows but with heaven’s help I may persuade him. A man does well to listen to the advice of a friend.”

When he had thus spoken he went his way. The Achaeans stood firm and resisted the attack of the Trojans, yet though these were fewer in number, they could not drive them back from the ships, neither could the Trojans break the Achaean ranks and make their way in among the tents and ships. As a carpenter’s line gives a true edge to a piece of ship’s timber, in the hand of some skilled workman whom Minerva has instructed in all kinds of useful arts even so level was the issue of the fight between the two sides, as they fought some round one and some round another.

Hector made straight for Ajax, and the two fought fiercely about the same ship. Hector could not force Ajax back and fire the ship, nor yet could Ajax drive Hector from the spot to which heaven had brought him.

Then Ajax struck Caletor son of Clytius in the chest with a spear as he was bringing fire towards the ship. He fell heavily to the ground and the torch dropped from his hand. When Hector saw his cousin fallen in front of the ship he shouted to the Trojans and Lycians saying, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians good in close fight, bate not a jot, but rescue the son of Clytius lest the Achaeans strip him of his armour now that he has fallen.”

He then aimed a spear at Ajax, and missed him, but he hit Lycophron a follower of Ajax, who came from Cythera, but was living with Ajax inasmuch as he had killed a man among the Cythereans. Hector’s spear struck him on the head below the ear, and he fell headlong from the ship’s prow on to the ground with no life left in him. Ajax shook with rage and said to his brother, “Teucer, my good fellow, our trusty comrade the son of Mastor has fallen, he came to live with us from Cythera and whom we honoured as much as our own parents. Hector has just killed him; fetch your deadly arrows at once and the bow which Phoebus Apollo gave you.”

Teucer heard him and hastened towards him with his bow and quiver in his hands. Forthwith he showered his arrows on the Trojans, and hit Cleitus the son of Pisenor, comrade of Polydamas the noble son of Panthous, with the reins in his hands as he was attending to his horses; he was in the middle of the very thickest part of the fight, doing good service to Hector and the Trojans, but evil had now come upon him, and not one of those who were fain to do so could avert it, for the arrow struck him on the back of the neck. He fell from his chariot and his horses shook the empty car as they swerved aside. King Polydamas saw what had happened, and was the first to come up to the horses; he gave them in charge to Astynous son of Protiaon, and ordered him to look on, and to keep the horses near at hand. He then went back and took his place in the front ranks.

Teucer then aimed another arrow at Hector, and there would have been no more fighting at the ships if he had hit him and killed him then and there: Jove, however, who kept watch over Hector, had his eyes on Teucer, and deprived him of his triumph, by breaking his bowstring for him just as he was drawing it and about to take his aim; on this the arrow went astray and the bow fell from his hands. Teucer shook with anger and said to his brother, “Alas, see how heaven thwarts us in all we do; it has broken my bowstring and snatched the bow from my hand, though I strung it this selfsame morning that it might serve me for many an arrow.”

Ajax son of Telamon answered, “My good fellow, let your bow and your arrows be, for Jove has made them useless in order to spite the Danaans. Take your spear, lay your shield upon your shoulder, and both fight the Trojans yourself and urge others to do so. They may be successful for the moment but if we fight as we ought they will find it a hard matter to take the ships.”

Teucer then took his bow and put it by in his tent. He hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders, and on his comely head he set his helmet well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it; he grasped his redoubtable bronze-shod spear, and forthwith he was by the side of Ajax.

When Hector saw that Teucer's bow was of no more use to him, he shouted out to the Trojans and Lycians, "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians good in close fight, be men, my friends, and show your mettle here at the ships, for I see the weapon of one of their chieftains made useless by the hand of Jove. It is easy to see when Jove is helping people and means to help them still further, or again when he is bringing them down and will do nothing for them; he is now on our side, and is going against the Argives. Therefore swarm round the ships and fight. If any of you is struck by spear or sword and loses his life, let him die; he dies with honour who dies fighting for his country; and he will leave his wife and children safe behind him, with his house and allotment unplundered if only the Achaeans can be driven back to their own land, they and their ships."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Ajax on the other side exhorted his comrades saying, "Shame on you Argives, we are now utterly undone, unless we can save ourselves by driving the enemy from our ships. Do you think, if Hector takes them, that you will be able to get home by land? Can you not hear him cheering on his whole host to fire our fleet, and bidding them remember that they are not at a dance but in battle? Our only course is to fight them with might and main; we had better chance it, life or death, once for all, than fight long and without issue hemmed in at our ships by worse men than ourselves."

With these words he put life and soul into them all. Hector then killed Schedius son of Perimedes, leader of the Phoceans, and Ajax killed Laodamas captain of foot soldiers and son to Antenor. Polydamas killed Otus of Cyllene a comrade of the son of Phyleus and chief of the proud Epeans. When Meges saw this he sprang upon him, but Polydamas crouched down, and he missed him, for Apollo would not suffer the son of Panthous to fall in battle; but the spear hit Croesmus in the middle of his chest, whereon he fell heavily to the ground, and Meges stripped him of his armour. At that moment the valiant soldier Dolops son of Lampus sprang upon Lampus was son of Laomedon and for his valour, while his son Dolops was versed in all the ways of war. He then struck the middle of the son of Phyleus' shield with his spear, setting on him at close quarters, but his good corslet made with plates of metal saved him; Phyleus had brought it from Ephyra and the river Selleis, where his host, King Euphetes, had given it him to wear in battle and protect him. It now served to save the life of his son. Then Meges struck the topmost crest of Dolops's bronze helmet with his spear and tore away its plume of horse-hair, so that all newly dyed with scarlet as it was it tumbled down into the dust. While he was still fighting and confident of victory, Menelaus came up to help Meges, and got by the side of Dolops unperceived; he then speared him in the shoulder, from behind, and the point, driven so furiously, went through into his chest, whereon he fell headlong. The two then made towards him to strip him of his armour, but Hector called on all his brothers for help, and he especially upbraided brave Melanippus son of Hiketaon, who erewhile used to pasture his herds of cattle in Percote before the war broke out; but when the ships of the Danaans came, he went back to Ilius, where he was eminent among the Trojans, and lived near Priam who treated him as one of his own sons. Hector now rebuked him and said, "Why, Melanippus, are we thus remiss? do you take no note of the death of your kinsman, and do you not see how they are trying to take Dolops's armour? Follow me; there must be no fighting the Argives from a distance now, but we must do so in close combat till either we kill them or they take the high wall of Ilius and slay her people."

He led on as he spoke, and the hero Melanippus followed after. Meanwhile Ajax son of Telamon was cheering on the Argives. "My friends," he cried, "be men, and fear dishonour; quit yourselves in battle so as to win respect from one another. Men who respect each other's good opinion are less likely to be killed than those who do not, but in flight there is neither gain nor glory."

Thus did he exhort men who were already bent upon driving back the Trojans. They laid his words to heart and hedged the ships as with a wall of bronze, while Jove urged on the Trojans. Menelaus of the loud battle-cry urged Antilochus on. "Antilochus," said he, "you are young and there is none of the Achaeans more fleet of foot or more valiant than you are. See if you cannot spring upon some Trojan and kill him."

He hurried away when he had thus spurred Antilochus, who at once darted out from the front ranks and aimed a spear, after looking carefully round him. The Trojans fell back as he threw, and the dart did not speed from his hand without effect, for it struck Melanippus the proud son of Hiketaon in the breast by the nipple as he was coming forward, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Antilochus sprang upon him as a dog springs on a fawn which a hunter has hit as it was breaking away from its covert, and killed it. Even so, O Melanippus, did stalwart Antilochus spring upon you to strip you of your armour; but noble Hector marked him, and came running up to him through the thick of the battle. Antilochus, brave soldier though he was, would not stay to face him, but fled like some savage creature which knows it has done wrong, and flies, when it has killed

a dog or a man who is herding his cattle, before a body of men can be gathered to attack it. Even so did the son of Nestor fly, and the Trojans and Hector with a cry that rent the air showered their weapons after him; nor did he turn round and stay his flight till he had reached his comrades.

The Trojans, fierce as lions, were still rushing on towards the ships in fulfilment of the behests of Jove who kept spurring them on to new deeds of daring, while he deadened the courage of the Argives and defeated them by encouraging the Trojans. For he meant giving glory to Hector son of Priam, and letting him throw fire upon the ships, till he had fulfilled the unrighteous prayer that Thetis had made him; Jove, therefore, bided his time till he should see the glare of a blazing ship. From that hour he was about so to order that the Trojans should be driven back from the ships and to vouchsafe glory to the Achaeans. With this purpose he inspired Hector son of Priam, who was cager enough already, to assail the ships. His fury was as that of Mars, or as when a fire is raging in the glades of some dense forest upon the mountains; he foamed at the mouth, his eyes glared under his terrible eye-brows, and his helmet quivered on his temples by reason of the fury with which he fought. Jove from heaven was with him, and though he was but one against many, vouchsafed him victory and glory; for he was doomed to an early death, and already Pallas Minerva was hurrying on the hour of his destruction at the hands of the son of Peleus. Now, however, he kept trying to break the ranks of the enemy wherever he could see them thickest, and in the goodliest armour; but do what he might he could not break through them, for they stood as a tower foursquare, or as some high cliff rising from the grey sea that braves the anger of the gale, and of the waves that thunder up against it. He fell upon them like flames of fire from every quarter. As when a wave, raised mountain high by wind and storm, breaks over a ship and covers it deep in foam, the fierce winds roar against the mast, the hearts of the sailors fail them for fear, and they are saved but by a very little from destruction even so were the hearts of the Achaeans fainting within them. Or as a savage lion attacking a herd of cows while they are feeding by thousands in the low-lying meadows by some wide-watered shore the herdsman is at his wit's end how to protect his herd and keeps going about now in the van and now in the rear of his cattle, while the lion springs into the thick of them and fastens on a cow so that they all tremble for fear even so were the Achaeans utterly panic-stricken by Hector and father Jove. Nevertheless Hector only killed Periphetes of Mycenae; he was son of Copreus who was wont to take the orders of King Eurystheus to mighty Hercules, but the son was a far better man than the father in every way; he was fleet of foot, a valiant warrior, and in understanding ranked among the foremost men of Mycenae. He it was who then afforded Hector a triumph, for as he was turning back he stumbled against the rim of his shield which reached his feet, and served to keep the javelins off him. He tripped against this and fell face upward, his helmet ringing loudly about his head as he did so. Hector saw him fall and ran up to him; he then thrust a spear into his chest, and killed him close to his own comrades. These, for all their sorrow, could not help him for they were themselves terribly afraid of Hector.

They had now reached the ships and the prows of those that had been drawn up first were on every side of them, but the Trojans came pouring after them. The Argives were driven back from the first row of ships, but they made a stand by their tents without being broken up and scattered; shame and fear restrained them. They kept shouting incessantly to one another, and Nestor of Gerene, tower of strength to the Achaeans, was loudest in imploring every man by his parents, and beseeching him to stand firm.

"Be men, my friends," he cried, "and respect one another's good opinion. Think, all of you, on your children, your wives, your property, and your parents whether these be alive or dead. On their behalf though they are not here, I implore you to stand firm, and not to turn in flight."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Minerva lifted the thick veil of darkness from their eyes, and much light fell upon them, alike on the side of the ships and on that where the fight was raging. They could see Hector and all his men, both those in the rear who were taking no part in the battle, and those who were fighting by the ships.

Ajax could not bring himself to retreat along with the rest, but strode from deck to deck with a great sea-pike in his hands twelve cubits long and jointed with rings. As a man skilled in feats of horsemanship couples four horses together and comes tearing full speed along the public way from the country into some large town many both men and women marvel as they see him for he keeps all the time changing his horse, springing from one to another without ever missing his feet while the horses are at a gallop even so did Ajax go striding from one ship's deck to another, and his voice went up into the heavens. He kept on shouting his orders to the Danaans and exhorting them to defend their ships and tents; neither did Hector remain within the main body of the Trojan warriors, but as a dun eagle swoops down upon a flock of wild-fowl feeding near a river-geese, it may be, or cranes, or long-necked swans even so did Hector make straight for a dark-prowed ship, rushing right towards it; for Jove with his mighty hand impelled him forward, and roused his people to follow him.

And now the battle again raged furiously at the ships. You would have thought the men were coming on fresh and unwearied, so fiercely did they fight; and this was the mind in which they were the Achaeans did not believe they should escape destruction but thought themselves doomed, while there was not a Trojan but his heart beat high with the hope of firing the ships and putting the Achaean heroes to the sword.

Thus were the two sides minded. Then Hector seized the stern of the good ship that had brought Protesilaus to Troy, but never bore him back to his native land. Round this ship there raged a close hand-to-hand fight between Danaans and Trojans. They did not fight at a distance with bows and javelins, but with one mind hacked at one another in close combat with their mighty swords and spears pointed at both ends; they fought moreover with keen battle-axes and with hatchets. Many a good stout blade hilted and scabbarded with iron, fell from hand or shoulder as they fought, and the earth ran red with blood. Hector, when he had seized the ship, would not loose his hold but held on to its curved stern and shouted to the Trojans, “Bring fire, and raise the battle-cry all of you with a single voice. Now has Jove vouchsafed us a day that will pay us for all the rest; this day we shall take the ships which came hither against heaven’s will, and which have caused us such infinite suffering through the cowardice of our councillors, who when I would have done battle at the ships held me back and forbade the host to follow me; if Jove did then indeed warp our judgements, himself now commands me and cheers me on.”

As he spoke thus the Trojans sprang yet more fiercely on the Achaeans, and Ajax no longer held his ground, for he was overcome by the darts that were flung at him, and made sure that he was doomed. Therefore he left the raised deck at the stern, and stepped back on to the seven-foot bench of the oarsmen. Here he stood on the lookout, and with his spear held back Trojan whom he saw bringing fire to the ships. All the time he kept on shouting at the top of his voice and exhorting the Danaans. “My friends,” he cried, “Danaan heroes, servants of Mars, be men my friends, and fight with might and with main. Can we hope to find helpers hereafter, or a wall to shield us more surely than the one we have? There is no strong city within reach, whence we may draw fresh forces to turn the scales in our favour. We are on the plain of the armed Trojans with the sea behind us, and far from our own country. Our salvation, therefore, is in the might of our hands and in hard fighting.”

As he spoke he wielded his spear with still greater fury, and when any Trojan made towards the ships with fire at Hector’s bidding, he would be on the look-out for him, and drive at him with his long spear. Twelve men did he thus kill in hand-to-hand fight before the ships.

Book XVI

THUS did they fight about the ship of Protesilaus. Then Patroclus drew near to Achilles with tears welling from his eyes, as from some spring whose crystal stream falls over the ledges of a high precipice. When Achilles saw him thus weeping he was sorry for him and said, “Why, Patroclus, do you stand there weeping like some silly child that comes running to her mother, and begs to be taken up and carried she catches hold of her mother’s dress to stay her though she is in a hurry, and looks tearfully up until her mother carries her even such tears, Patroclus, are you now shedding. Have you anything to say to the Myrmidons or to myself? or have you had news from Phthia which you alone know? They tell me Menoetius son of Actor is still alive, as also Peleus son of Aeacus, among the Myrmidons men whose loss we two should bitterly deplore; or are you grieving about the Argives and the way in which they are being killed at the ships, throu their own high-handed doings? Do not hide anything from me but tell me that both of us may know about it.”

Then, O knight Patroclus, with a deep sigh you answered, “Achilles, son of Peleus, foremost champion of the Achaeans, do not be angry, but I weep for the disaster that has now befallen the Argives. All those who have been their champions so far are lying at the ships, wounded by sword or spear. Brave Diomed son of Tydeus has been hit with a spear, while famed Ulysses and Agamemnon have received sword-wounds; Eurypylus again has been struck with an arrow in the thigh; skilled apothecaries are attending to these heroes, and healing them of their wounds; are you still, O Achilles, so inexorable? May it never be my lot to nurse such a passion as you have done, to the baning of your own good name. Who in future story will speak well of you unless you now save the Argives from ruin? You know no pity; knight Peleus was not your father nor Thetis your mother, but the grey sea bore you and the sheer cliffs begot you, so cruel and remorseless are you. If however you are kept back through knowledge of some oracle, or if your mother Thetis has told you something from the mouth of Jove, at least send me and the Myrmidons with me, if I may bring deliverance to the Danaans. Let me moreover wear your armour; the Trojans may thus mistake me for you and quit the field, so that the hard-pressed sons of the Achaeans may have breathing time which while they are fighting may hardly be. We who are fresh might soon drive tired men back from our ships and tents to their own city.”

He knew not what he was asking, nor that he was suing for his own destruction. Achilles was deeply moved and answered, “What, noble Patroclus, are you saying? I know no prophesyings which I am heeding, nor has my mother told me anything from the mouth of Jove, but I am cut to the very heart that one of my own rank should dare to rob me because he is more powerful than I am. This, after all that I have gone through, is more than I can endure. The girl whom the sons of the Achaeans chose for me, whom I won as the fruit of my spear on having sacked a city her has King Agamemnon taken from me as though I were some common vagrant. Still, let bygones be bygones: no man may keep his anger for ever; I said I would not relent till battle and the cry of war had reached my own ships; nevertheless, now gird my armour about your shoulders, and lead the Myrmidons to battle, for the dark cloud of Trojans has burst furiously over our fleet; the Argives are driven back on to the beach, cooped within a narrow space, and the whole people of Troy has taken heart to sally out against them, because they see not the visor of my helmet gleaming near them. Had they seen this, there would not have been a creek nor grip that had not been filled with their dead as they fled back again. And so it would have been, if only King Agamemnon had dealt fairly by me. As it is the Trojans have beset our host. Diomed son of Tydeus no longer wields his spear to defend the Danaans, neither have I heard the voice of the son of Atreus coming from his hated head, whereas that of murderous Hector rings in my cars as he gives orders to the Trojans, who triumph over the Achaeans and fill the whole plain with their cry of battle. But even so, Patroclus, fall upon them and save the fleet, lest the Trojans fire it and prevent us from being able to return. Do, however, as I now bid you, that you may win me great honour from all the Danaans, and that they may restore the girl to me again and give me rich gifts into the bargain. When you have driven the Trojans from the ships, come back again. Though Juno’s thundering husband should put triumph within your reach, do not fight the Trojans further in my absence, or you will rob me of glory that should be mine. And do not for lust of battle go on killing the Trojans nor lead the Achaeans on to Ilius, lest one of the ever-living gods from Olympus attack you for Phoebus Apollo loves them well: return when you have freed the ships from peril, and let others wage war upon the plain. Would, by father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that not a single man of all the Trojans might be left alive, nor yet of the Argives, but that we two might be alone left to tear aside the mantle that veils the brow of Troy.”

Thus did they converse. But Ajax could no longer hold his ground for the shower of darts that rained upon him; the will of Jove and the javelins of the Trojans were too much for him; the helmet that gleamed about his temples rang with the continuous clatter of the missiles that kept pouring on to it and on to the cheek-pieces that protected his face. Moreover his left shoulder was tired with having held his shield so long, yet for all this, let fly at him as they would, they could not make him give ground. He could hardly draw his breath, the sweat rained from every pore of his body, he had not a moment’s respite, and on all sides he was beset by danger upon danger.

And now, tell me, O Muses that hold your mansions on Olympus, how fire was thrown upon the ships of the Achaeans. Hector came close up and let drive with his great sword at the ashen spear of Ajax. He cut it clean in two just behind where the point was fastened on to the shaft of the spear. Ajax, therefore, had now nothing but a headless spear, while the bronze point flew some way off and came ringing down on to the ground. Ajax knew the hand of heaven in this, and was dismayed at seeing that Jove had now left him utterly defenceless and was willing victory for the Trojans. Therefore he drew back, and the Trojans flung fire upon the ship which was at once wrapped in flame.

The fire was now flaring about the ship’s stern, whereon Achilles smote his two thighs and said to Patroclus, “Up, noble knight, for I see the glare of hostile fire at our fleet; up, lest they destroy our ships, and there be no way by which we may retreat. Gird on your armour at once while I call our people together.”

As he spoke Patroclus put on his armour. First he greaved his legs with greaves of good make, and fitted with ancle-clasps of silver; after this he donned the cuirass of the son of Aeacus, richly inlaid and studded. He hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought, with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it. He grasped two redoubtable spears that suited his hands, but he did not take the spear of noble Achilles, so stout and strong, for none other of the Achaeans could wield it, though Achilles could do so easily. This was the ashen spear from Mount Pelion, which Chiron had cut upon a mountain top and had given to Peleus, wherewith to deal out death among heroes. He bade Automedon yoke his horses with all speed, for he was the man whom he held in honour next after Achilles, and on whose support in battle he could rely most firmly. Automedon therefore yoked the fleet horses Xanthus and Balius, steeds that could fly like the wind: these were they whom the harpy Podarge bore to the west wind, as she was grazing in a meadow by the waters of the river Oceanus. In the side traces he set the noble horse Pedasus, whom Achilles had brought away with him when he sacked the city of Eetion, and who, mortal steed though he was, could take his place along with those that were immortal.

Meanwhile Achilles went about everywhere among the tents, and bade his Myrmidons put on their armour. Even as fierce ravening wolves that are feasting upon a homed stag which they have killed upon the mountains, and their jaws are red with blood they go in a pack to lap water from the clear spring with their long thin tongues; and they reek of blood and slaughter; they know not what fear is, for it is hunger drives them even so did the leaders and counsellors of the Myrmidons gather round the good squire of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, and among them stood Achilles himself cheering on both men and horses.

Fifty ships had noble Achilles brought to Troy, and in each there was a crew of fifty oarsmen. Over these he set five captains whom he could trust, while he was himself commander over them all. Menesthius of the gleaming corslet, son to the river Spercheius that streams from heaven, was captain of the first company. Fair Polydora daughter of Peleus bore him to ever-flowing Spercheius a woman mated with a god but he was called son of Borus son of Perieres, with whom his mother was living as his wedded wife, and who gave great wealth to gain her. The second company was led by noble Eudorus, son to an unwedded woman. Polymele, daughter of Phylas the graceful dancer, bore him; the mighty slayer of Argos was enamoured of her as he saw her among the singing women at a dance held in honour of Diana the rushing huntress of the golden arrows; he therefore Mercury, giver of all good went with her into an upper chamber, and lay with her in secret, whereon she bore him a noble son Eudorus, singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant. When Ilithuia goddess of the pains of child-birth brought him to the light of day, and he saw the face of the sun, mighty Echecles son of Actor took the mother to wife, and gave great wealth to gain her, but her father Phylas brought the child up, and took care of him, doting as fondly upon him as though he were his own son. The third company was led by Pisander son of Maemalus, the finest spearman among all the Myrmidons next to Achilles' own comrade Patroclus. The old knight Phoenix was captain of the fourth company, and Alcimedon, noble son of Laerceus of the fifth.

When Achilles had chosen his men and had stationed them all with their captains, he charged them straitly saying, "Myrmidons, remember your threats against the Trojans while you were at the ships in the time of my anger, and you were all complaining of me. 'Cruel son of Peleus,' you would say, 'your mother must have suckled you on gall, so ruthless are you. You keep us here at the ships against our will; if you are so relentless it were better we went home over the sea.' Often have you gathered and thus chided with me. The hour is now come for those high feats of arms that you have so long been pining for, therefore keep high hearts each one of you to do battle with the Trojans."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all, and they serried their companies yet more closely when they heard the of their king. As the stones which a builder sets in the wall of some high house which is to give shelter from the winds even so closely were the helmets and bossed shields set against one another. Shield pressed on shield, helm on helm, and man on man; so close were they that the horse-hair plumes on the gleaming ridges of their helmets touched each other as they bent their heads.

In front of them all two men put on their armour Patroclus and Automedon two men, with but one mind to lead the Myrmidons. Then Achilles went inside his tent and opened the lid of the strong chest which silver-footed Thetis had given him to take on board ship, and which she had filled with shirts, cloaks to keep out the cold, and good thick rugs. In this chest he had a cup of rare workmanship, from which no man but himself might drink, nor would he make offering from it to any other god save only to father Jove. He took the cup from the chest and cleansed it with sulphur; this done he rinsed it clean water, and after he had washed his hands he drew wine. Then he stood in the middle of the court and prayed, looking towards heaven, and making his drink-offering of wine; nor was he unseen of Jove whose joy is in thunder. "King Jove," he cried, "lord of Dodona, god of the Pelasgi, who dwellest afar, you who hold wintry Dodona in your sway, where your prophets the Selli dwell around you with their feet unwashed and their couches made upon the ground if you heard me when I prayed to you aforetime, and did me honour while you sent disaster on the Achaeans, vouchsafe me now the fulfilment of yet this further prayer. I shall stay here where my ships are lying, but I shall send my comrade into battle at the head of many Myrmidons. Grant, O all-seeing Jove, that victory may go with him; put your courage into his heart that Hector may learn whether my squire is man enough to fight alone, or whether his might is only then so indomitable when I myself enter the turmoil of war. Afterwards when he has chased the fight and the cry of battle from the ships, grant that he may return unharmed, with his armour and his comrades, fighters in close combat."

Thus did he pray, and all-counselling Jove heard his prayer. Part of it he did indeed vouchsafe him but not the whole. He granted that Patroclus should thrust back war and battle from the ships, but refused to let him come safely out of the fight.

When he had made his drink-offering and had thus prayed, Achilles went inside his tent and put back the cup into his chest.

Then he again came out, for he still loved to look upon the fierce fight that raged between the Trojans and Achaeans.

Meanwhile the armed band that was about Patroclus marched on till they sprang high in hope upon the Trojans. They came swarming out like wasps whose nests are by the roadside, and whom silly children love to tease, whereon any one who happens to be passing may get stung or again, if a wayfarer going along the road vexes them by accident, every wasp will come flying out in a fury to defend his little ones even with such rage and courage did the Myrmidons swarm from their ships, and their cry of battle rose heavenwards. Patroclus called out to his men at the top of his voice, “Myrmidons, followers of Achilles son of Peleus, be men my friends, fight with might and with main, that we may win glory for the son of Peleus, who is far the foremost man at the ships of the Argives he, and his close fighting followers. The son of Atreus King Agamemnon will thus learn his folly in showing no respect to the bravest of the Achaeans.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all, and they fell in a body upon the Trojans. The ships rang again with the cry which the Achaeans raised, and when the Trojans saw the brave son of Menoetius and his squire all gleaming in their armour, they were daunted and their battalions were thrown into confusion, for they thought the fleet son of Peleus must now have put aside his anger, and have been reconciled to Agamemnon; every one, therefore, looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety.

Patroclus first aimed a spear into the middle of the press where men were packed most closely, by the stern of the ship of Protesilaus. He hit Pyraechmes who had led his Paeonian horsemen from the Amydon and the broad waters of the river Axius; the spear struck him on the right shoulder, and with a groan he fell backwards in the dust; on this his men were thrown into confusion, for by killing their leader, who was the finest soldier among them, Patroclus struck panic into them all. He thus drove them from the ship and quenched the fire that was then blazing leaving the half-burnt ship to lie where it was. The Trojans were now driven back with a shout that rent the skies, while the Danaans poured after them from their ships, shouting also without ceasing. As when Jove, gatherer of the thunder-cloud, spreads a dense canopy on the top of some lofty mountain, and all the peaks, the jutting headlands, and forest glades show out in the great light that flashes from the bursting heavens, even so when the Danaans had now driven back the fire from their ships, they took breath for a little while; but the fury of the fight was not yet over, for the Trojans were not driven back in utter rout, but still gave battle, and were ousted from their ground only by sheer fighting.

The fight then became more scattered, and the chieftains killed one another when and how they could. The valiant son of Menoetius first drove his spear into the thigh of Areilycus just as he was turning round; the point went clean through, and broke the bone so that he fell forward. Meanwhile Menelaus struck Thoas in the chest, where it was exposed near the rim of his shield, and he fell dead. The son of Phyleus saw Amphiclus about to attack him, and ere he could do so took aim at the upper part of his thigh, where the muscles are thicker than in any other part; the spear tore through all the sinews of the leg, and his eyes were closed in darkness. Of the sons of Nestor one, Antilochus, speared Atymnius, driving the point of the spear through his throat, and down he fell. Maris then sprang on Antilochus in hand-to-hand fight to avenge his brother, and bestrode the body spear in hand; but valiant Thrasymedes was too quick for him, and in a moment had struck him in the shoulder ere he could deal his blow; his aim was true, and the spear severed all the muscles at the root of his arm, and tore them right down to the bone, so he fell heavily to the ground and his eyes were closed in darkness. Thus did these two noble comrades of Sarpedon go down to Erebus slain by the two sons of Nestor; they were the warrior sons of Amisodorus, who had reared the invincible Chimaera, to the bane of many. Ajax son of Oileus sprang on Cleobulus and took him alive as he was entangled in the crush; but he killed him then and there by a sword-blow on the neck. The sword reeked with his blood, while dark death and the strong hand of fate gripped him and closed his eyes.

Peneleos and Lycon now met in close fight, for they had missed each other with their spears. They had both thrown without effect, so now they drew their swords. Lycon struck the plumed crest of Peneleos’ helmet but his sword broke at the hilt, while Peneleos smote Lycon on the neck under the ear. The blade sank so deep that the head was held on by nothing but the skin, and there was no more life left in him. Meriones gave chase to Acamas on foot and caught him up just as he was about to mount his chariot; he drove a spear through his right shoulder so that he fell headlong from the car, and his eyes were closed in darkness. Idomeneus speared Erymas in the mouth; the bronze point of the spear went clean through it beneath the brain, crashing in among the white bones and smashing them up. His teeth were all of them knocked out and the blood came gushing in a stream from both his eyes; it also came gurgling up from his mouth and nostrils, and the darkness of death enfolded him round about.

Thus did these chieftains of the Danaans each of them kill his man. As ravening wolves seize on kids or lambs, fastening on them when they are alone on the hillsides and have strayed from the main flock through the carelessness of the shepherd and when the wolves see this they pounce upon them at once because they cannot defend themselves even so did the Danaans now fall on the Trojans, who fled with ill-omened cries in their panic and had no more fight left in them.

Meanwhile great Ajax kept on trying to drive a spear into Hector, but Hector was so skilful that he held his broad shoulders well under cover of his ox-hide shield, ever on the look-out for the whizzing of the arrows and the heavy thud of the spears. He well knew that the fortunes of the day had changed, but still stood his ground and tried to protect his comrades.

As when a cloud goes up into heaven from Olympus, rising out of a clear sky when Jove is brewing a gale even with such panic stricken rout did the Trojans now fly, and there was no order in their going. Hector's fleet horses bore him and his armour out of the fight, and he left the Trojan host penned in by the deep trench against their will. Many a yoke of horses snapped the pole of their chariots in the trench and left their master's car behind them. Patroclus gave chase, calling impetuously on the Danaans and full of fury against the Trojans, who, being now no longer in a body, filled all the ways with their cries of panic and rout; the air was darkened with the clouds of dust they raised, and the horses strained every nerve in their flight from the tents and ships towards the city.

Patroclus kept on heading his horses wherever he saw most men flying in confusion, cheering on his men the while. Chariots were being smashed in all directions, and many a man came tumbling down from his own car to fall beneath the wheels of that of Patroclus, whose immortal steeds, given by the gods to Peleus, sprang over the trench at a bound as they sped onward. He was intent on trying to get near Hector, for he had set his heart on spearing him, but Hector's horses were now hurrying him away. As the whole dark earth bows before some tempest on an autumn day when Jove rains his hardest to punish men for giving crooked judgement in their courts, and arriving justice therefrom without heed to the decrees of heaven all the rivers run full and the torrents tear many a new channel as they roar headlong from the mountains to the dark sea, and it fares ill with the works of men even such was the stress and strain of the Trojan horses in their flight.

Patroclus now cut off the battalions that were nearest to him and drove them back to the ships. They were doing their best to reach the city, but he would not Yet them, and bore down on them between the river and the ships and wall. Many a fallen comrade did he then avenge. First he hit Pronous with a spear on the chest where it was exposed near the rim of his shield, and he fell heavily to the ground. Next he sprang on Thestor son of Enops, who was sitting all huddled up in his chariot, for he had lost his head and the reins had been torn out of his hands. Patroclus went up to him and drove a spear into his right jaw; he thus hooked him by the teeth and the spear pulled him over the rim of his car, as one who sits at the end of some jutting rock and draws a strong fish out of the sea with a hook and a line even so with his spear did he pull Thestor all gaping from his chariot; he then threw him down on his face and he died while falling. On this, as Erylaus was on to attack him, he struck him full on the head with a stone, and his brains were all battered inside his helmet, whereon he fell headlong to the ground and the pangs of death took hold upon him. Then he laid low, one after the other, Erymas, Amphoterus, Epaltes, Tlepolemus, Echius son of Damastor, Pyris, lpheus, Euippus and Polymelus son of Argeas.

Now when Sarpedon saw his comrades, men who wore ungirdled tunics, being overcome by Patroclus son of Menoetius, he rebuked the Lycians saying. "Shame on you, where are you flying to? Show your mettle; I will myself meet this man in fight and learn who it is that is so masterful; he has done us much hurt, and has stretched many a brave man upon the ground."

He sprang from his chariot as he spoke, and Patroclus, when he saw this, leaped on to the ground also. The two then rushed at one another with loud cries like eagle-beaked crook-taloned vultures that scream and tear at one another in some high mountain fastness.

The son of scheming Saturn looked down upon them in pity and said to Juno who was his wife and sister, "Alas, that it should be the lot of Sarpedon whom I love so dearly to perish by the hand of Patroclus. I am in two minds whether to catch him up out of the fight and set him down safe and sound in the fertile land of Lycia, or to let him now fall by the hand of the son of Menoetius."

And Juno answered, "Most dread son of Saturn, what is this that you are saying? Would you snatch a mortal man, whose doom has long been fated, out of the jaws of death? Do as you will, but we shall not all of us be of your mind. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart, that if you send Sarpedon safely to his own home, some other of the gods will be also wanting to escort his son out of battle, for there are many sons of gods fighting round the city of Troy, and you will make every one jealous. If, however, you are fond of him and pity him, let him indeed fall by the hand of Patroclus, but as soon as the life is gone out of him, send Death and sweet Sleep to bear him off the field and take him to the broad lands of Lycia, where his brothers and his kinsmen will bury him with mound and pillar, in due honour to the dead."

The sire of gods and men assented, but he shed a rain of blood upon the earth in honour of his son whom Patroclus was about to kill on the rich plain of Troy far from his home.

When they were now come close to one another Patroclus struck Thrasydemus, the brave squire of Sarpedon, in the lower part of the belly, and killed him. Sarpedon then aimed a spear at Patroclus and missed him, but he struck the horse Pedasus in the right shoulder, and it screamed aloud as it lay, groaning in the dust until the life went out of it. The other two horses began to plunge; the pole of the chariot cracked and they got entangled in the reins through the fall of the horse that was yoked along with them; but Automedon knew what to do; without the loss of a moment he drew the keen blade that hung by his sturdy thigh and cut the third horse adrift; whereon the other two righted themselves, and pulling hard at the reins again went together into battle.

Sarpedon now took a second aim at Patroclus, and again missed him, the point of the spear passed over his left shoulder without hitting him. Patroclus then aimed in his turn, and the spear sped not from his hand in vain, for he hit Sarpedon just where the midriff surrounds the ever-beating heart. He fell like some oak or silver poplar or tall pine to which woodmen have laid their axes upon the mountains to make timber for ship-building even so did he lie stretched at full length in front of his chariot and horses, moaning and clutching at the blood-stained dust.

As when a lion springs with a bound upon a herd of cattle and fastens on a great black bull which dies bellowing in its clutches even so did the leader of the Lycian warriors struggle in death as he fell by the hand of Patroclus. He called on his trusty comrade and said, “Glaucus, my brother, hero among heroes, put forth all your strength, fight with might and main, now if ever quit yourself like a valiant soldier. First go about among the Lycian captains and bid them fight for Sarpedon; then yourself also do battle to save my armour from being taken. My name will haunt you henceforth and for ever if the Achaeans rob me of my armour now that I have fallen at their ships. Do your very utmost and call all my people together.”

Death closed his eyes as he spoke. Patroclus planted his heel on his breast and drew the spear from his body, whereon his senses came out along with it, and he drew out both spear-point and Sarpedon’s soul at the same time. Hard by the Myrmidons held his snorting steeds, who were wild with panic at finding themselves deserted by their lords.

Glaucus was overcome with grief when he heard what Sarpedon said, for he could not help him. He had to support his arm with his other hand, being in great pain through the wound which Teucer’s arrow had given him when Teucer was defending the wall as he, Glaucus, was assailing it. Therefore he prayed to far-darting Apollo saying, “Hear me O king from your seat, may be in the rich land of Lycia, or may be in Troy, for in all places you can hear the prayer of one who is in distress, as I now am. I have a grievous wound; my hand is aching with pain, there is no staunching the blood, and my whole arm drags by reason of my hurt, so that I cannot grasp my sword nor go among my foes and fight them, thou our prince, Jove’s son Sarpedon, is slain. Jove defended not his son, do you, therefore, O king, heal me of my wound, ease my pain and grant me strength both to cheer on the Lycians and to fight along with them round the body of him who has fallen.”

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. He eased his pain, staunched the black blood from the wound, and gave him new strength. Glaucus perceived this, and was thankful that the mighty god had answered his prayer; forthwith, therefore, he went among the Lycian captains, and bade them come to fight about the body of Sarpedon. From these he strode on among the Trojans to Polydamas son of Panthous and Agenor; he then went in search of Aeneas and Hector, and when he had found them he said, “Hector, you have utterly forgotten your allies, who languish here for your sake far from friends and home while you do nothing to support them. Sarpedon leader of the Lycian warriors has fallen he who was at once the right and might of Lycia; Mars has laid him low by the spear of Patroclus. Stand by him, my friends, and suffer not the Myrmidons to strip him of his armour, nor to treat his body with contumely in revenge for all the Danaans whom we have speared at the ships.”

As he spoke the Trojans were plunged in extreme and ungovernable grief; for Sarpedon, alien though he was, had been one of the main stays of their city, both as having much people with him, and himself the foremost among them all. Led by Hector, who was infuriated by the fall of Sarpedon, they made instantly for the Danaans with all their might, while the undaunted spirit of Patroclus son of Menoetius cheered on the Achaeans. First he spoke to the two Ajaxes, men who needed no bidding. “Ajaxes,” said he, “may it now please you to show youselves the men you have always been, or even better Sarpedon is fallen he who was first to overleap the wall of the Achaeans; let us take the body and outrage it; let us strip the armour from his shoulders, and kill his comrades if they try to rescue his body.”

He spoke to men who of themselves were full eager; both sides, therefore, the Trojans and Lycians on the one hand, and the Myrmidons and Achaeans on the other, strengthened their battalions, and fought desperately about the body of Sarpedon, shouting fiercely the while. Mighty was the din of their armour as they came together, and Jove shed a thick darkness over the fight, to increase the of the battle over the body of his son.

At first the Trojans made some headway against the Achaeans, for one of the best men among the Myrmidons was killed, Epeigeus, son of noble Agacles who had erewhile been king in the good city of Budeum; but presently, having killed a valiant kinsman of his own, he took refuge with Peleus and Thetis, who sent him to Ilius the land of noble steeds to fight the Trojans under Achilles. Hector now struck him on the head with a stone just as he had caught hold of the body, and his brains inside his helmet were all battered in, so that he fell face foremost upon the body of Sarpedon, and there died. Patroclus was enraged by the death of his comrade, and sped through the front ranks as swiftly as a hawk that swoops down on a flock of daws or starlings. Even so swiftly, O noble knight Patroclus, did you make straight for the Lycians and Trojans to avenge your comrade. Forthwith he struck Sthenelaus the son of Ithaemenes on the neck with a stone, and broke the tendons that join it to the head and spine. On this Hector and the front rank of his men gave ground. As far as a man can throw a javelin when competing for some prize, or even in battle so far did the Trojans now retreat before the Achaeans. Glaucus, captain of the Lycians, was the first to rally them, by killing Bathycles son of Chalcon who lived in Hellas and was the richest man among the Myrmidons. Glaucus turned round suddenly, just as Bathycles who was pursuing him was about to lay hold of him, and drove his spear right into the middle of his chest, whereon he fell heavily to the ground, and the fall of so good a man filled the Achaeans with dismay, while the Trojans were exultant, and came up in a body round the corpse. Nevertheless the Achaeans, mindful of their prowess, bore straight down upon them.

Meriones then killed a helmed warrior of the Trojans, Laogonus son of Onetor, who was priest of Jove of Mt. Ida, and was honoured by the people as though he were a god. Meriones struck him under the jaw and ear, so that life went out of him and the darkness of death laid hold upon him. Aeneas then aimed a spear at Meriones, hoping to hit him under the shield as he was advancing, but Meriones saw it coming and stooped forward to avoid it, whereon the spear flew past him and the point stuck in the ground, while the butt-end went on quivering till Mars robbed it of its force. The spear, therefore, sped from Aeneas's hand in vain and fell quivering to the ground. Aeneas was angry and said, "Meriones, you are a good dancer, but if I had hit you my spear would soon have made an end of you."

And Meriones answered, "Aeneas, for all your bravery, you will not be able to make an end of every one who comes against you. You are only a mortal like myself, and if I were to hit you in the middle of your shield with my spear, however strong and self-confident you may be, I should soon vanquish you, and you would yield your life to Hades of the noble steeds."

On this the son of Menoetius rebuked him and said, "Meriones, hero though you be, you should not speak thus; taunting speeches, my good friend, will not make the Trojans draw away from the dead body; some of them must go under ground first; blows for battle, and words for council; fight, therefore, and say nothing."

He led the way as he spoke and the hero went forward with him. As the sound of woodcutters in some forest glade upon the mountains and the thud of their axes is heard afar even such a din now rose from earth-clash of bronze armour and of good ox-hide shields, as men smote each other with their swords and spears pointed at both ends. A man had need of good eyesight now to know Sarpedon, so covered was he from head to foot with spears and blood and dust. Men swarmed about the body, as flies that buzz round the full milk-pails in spring when they are brimming with milk even so did they gather round Sarpedon; nor did Jove turn his keen eyes away for one moment from the fight, but kept looking at it all the time, for he was settling how best to kill Patroclus, and considering whether Hector should be allowed to end him now in the fight round the body of Sarpedon, and strip him of his armour, or whether he should let him give yet further trouble to the Trojans. In the end, he deemed it best that the brave squire of Achilles son of Peleus should drive Hector and the Trojans back towards the city and take the lives of many. First, therefore, he made Hector turn fainthearted, whereon he mounted his chariot and fled, bidding the other Trojans fly also, for he saw that the scales of Jove had turned against him. Neither would the brave Lycians stand firm; they were dismayed when they saw their king lying struck to the heart amid a heap of corpses for when the son of Saturn made the fight wax hot many had fallen above him. The Achaeans, therefore stripped the gleaming armour from his shoulders and the brave son of Menoetius gave it to his men to take to the ships. Then Jove lord of the storm-cloud said to Apollo, "Dear Phoebus, go, I pray you, and take Sarpedon out of range of the weapons; cleanse the black blood from off him, and then bear him a long way off where you may wash him in the river, anoint him with ambrosia, and clothe him in immortal raiment; this done, commit him to the arms of the two fleet messengers, Death, and Sleep, who will carry him straightway to the rich land of Lycia, where his brothers and kinsmen will inter him, and will raise both mound and pillar to his memory, in due honour to the dead."

Thus he spoke. Apollo obeyed his father's saying, and came down from the heights of Ida into the thick of the fight; forthwith he took Sarpedon out of range of the weapons, and then bore him a long way off, where he washed him in the river, anointed him with

ambrosia and clothed him in immortal raiment; this done, he committed him to the arms of the two fleet messengers, Death, and Sleep, who presently set him down in the rich land of Lycia.

Meanwhile Patroclus, with many a shout to his horses and to Automedon, pursued the Trojans and Lycians in the pride and foolishness of his heart. Had he but obeyed the bidding of the son of Peleus, he would have, escaped death and have been scatheless; but the counsels of Jove pass man's understanding; he will put even a brave man to flight and snatch victory from his grasp, or again he will set him on to fight, as he now did when he put a high spirit into the heart of Patroclus.

Who then first, and who last, was slain by you, O Patroclus, when the gods had now called you to meet your doom? First Adrestus, Autonous, Echeclus, Perimus the son of Megas, Epistor and Melanippus; after these he killed Elasus, Mulius, and Pylartes. These he slew, but the rest saved themselves by flight.

The sons of the Achaeans would now have taken Troy by the hands of Patroclus, for his spear flew in all directions, had not Phoebus Apollo taken his stand upon the wall to defeat his purpose and to aid the Trojans. Thrice did Patroclus charge at an angle of the high wall, and thrice did Apollo beat him back, striking his shield with his own immortal hands. When Patroclus was coming on like a god for yet a fourth time, Apollo shouted to him with an awful voice and said, "Draw back, noble Patroclus, it is not your lot to sack the city of the Trojan chieftains, nor yet will it be that of Achilles who is a far better man than you are." On hearing this, Patroclus withdrew to some distance and avoided the anger of Apollo.

Meanwhile Hector was waiting with his horses inside the Scaean gates, in doubt whether to drive out again and go on fighting, or to call the army inside the gates. As he was thus doubting Phoebus Apollo drew near him in the likeness of a young and lusty warrior Asius, who was Hector's uncle, being own brother to Hecuba, and son of Dymas who lived in Phrygia by the waters of the river Sangarius; in his likeness Jove's son Apollo now spoke to Hector saying, "Hector, why have you left off fighting? It is ill done of you. If I were as much better a man than you, as I am worse, you should soon rue your slackness. Drive straight towards Patroclus, if so be that Apollo may grant you a triumph over him, and you may rull him."

As he spoke he flung himself on Cebriones with the spring, as it were, of a lion that while attacking a stockyard is himself struck in the chest, and his courage is his own bane even so furiously, O Patroclus, did you then spring upon Cebriones. Hector sprang also from his chariot to the ground. The pair then fought over the body of Cebriones. As two lions fight fiercely on some high mountain over the body of a stag that they have killed, even so did these two mighty warriors, Patroclus son of Menoetius and brave Hector, hack and hew at one another over the corpse of Cebriones. Hector would not let him go when he had once got him by the head, while Patroclus kept fast hold of his feet, and a fierce fight raged between the other Danaans and Trojans. As the east and south wind buffet one another when they beat upon some dense forest on the mountains there is beech and ash and spreading cornel; the to of the trees roar as they beat on one another, and one can hear the boughs cracking and breaking even so did the Trojans and Achaeans spring upon one another and lay about each other, and neither side would give way. Many a pointed spear fell to ground and many a winged arrow sped from its bow-string about the body of Cebriones; many a great stone, moreover, beat on many a shield as they fought around his body, but there he lay in the whirling clouds of dust, all huge and hugely, heedless of his driving now.

So long as the sun was still high in mid-heaven the weapons of either side were alike deadly, and the people fell; but when he went down towards the time when men loose their oxen, the Achaeans proved to be beyond all forecast stronger, so that they drew Cebriones out of range of the darts and tumult of the Trojans, and stripped the armour from his shoulders. Then Patroclus sprang like Mars with fierce intent and a terrific shout upon the Trojans, and thrice did he kill nine men; but as he was coming on like a god for a time, then, O Patroclus, was the hour of your end approaching, for Phoebus fought you in fell earnest. Patroclus did not see him as he moved about in the crush, for he was enshrouded in thick darkness, and the god struck him from behind on his back and his broad shoulders with the flat of his hand, so that his eyes turned dizzy. Phoebus Apollo beat the helmet from off his head, and it rolled rattling off under the horses' feet, where its horse-hair plumes were all begrimed with dust and blood. Never indeed had that helmet fared so before, for it had served to protect the head and comely forehead of the godlike hero Achilles. Now, however, Zeus delivered it over to be worn by Hector. Nevertheless the end of Hector also was near. The bronze-shod spear, so great and so strong, was broken in the hand of Patroclus, while his shield that covered him from head to foot fell to the ground as did also the band that held it, and Apollo undid the fastenings of his corslet.

On this his mind became clouded; his limbs failed him, and he stood as one dazed; whereon Euphorbus son of Panthous a Dardanian, the best spearman of his time, as also the finest horseman and fleetest runner, came behind him and struck him in the

back with a spear, midway between the shoulders. This man as soon as ever he had come up with his chariot had dismounted twenty men, so proficient was he in all the arts of war he it was, O knight Patroclus, that first drove a weapon into you, but he did not quite overpower you. Euphorbus then ran back into the crowd, after drawing his ashen spear out of the wound; he would not stand firm and wait for Patroclus, unarmed though he now was, to attack him; but Patroclus unnerved, alike by the blow the god had given him and by the spear-wound, drew back under cover of his men in fear for his life. Hector on this, seeing him to be wounded and giving ground, forced his way through the ranks, and when close up with him struck him in the lower part of the belly with a spear, driving the bronze point right through it, so that he fell heavily to the ground to the great of the Achaeans. As when a lion has fought some fierce wild-boar and worsted him the two fight furiously upon the mountains over some little fountain at which they would both drink, and the lion has beaten the boar till he can hardly breathe even so did Hector son of Priam take the life of the brave son of Menoetius who had killed so many, striking him from close at hand, and vaunting over him the while. “Patroclus,” said he, “you deemed that you should sack our city, rob our Trojan women of their freedom, and carry them off in your ships to your own country. Fool; Hector and his fleet horses were ever straining their utmost to defend them. I am foremost of all the Trojan warriors to stave the day of bondage from off them; as for you, vultures shall devour you here. Poor wretch, Achilles with all his bravery availed you nothing; and yet I ween when you left him he charged you straitly saying, ‘Come not back to the ships, knight Patroclus, till you have rent the bloodstained shirt of murderous Hector about his body. Thus I ween did he charge you, and your fool’s heart answered him ‘yea’ within you.”

Then, as the life ebbed out of you, you answered, O knight Patroclus: “Hector, vaunt as you will, for Jove the son of Saturn and Apollo have vouchsafed you victory; it is they who have vanquished me so easily, and they who have stripped the armour from my shoulders; had twenty such men as you attacked me, all of them would have fallen before my spear. Fate and the son of Leto have overpowered me, and among mortal men Euphorbus; you are yourself third only in the killing of me. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart, you too shall live but for a little season; death and the day of your doom are close upon you, and they will lay you low by the hand of Achilles son of Aeacus.”

When he had thus spoken his eyes were closed in death, his soul left his body and flitted down to the house of Hades, mourning its sad fate and bidding farewell to the youth and vigor of its manhood. Dead though he was, Hector still spoke to him saying, “Patroclus, why should you thus foretell my doom? Who knows but Achilles, son of lovely Thetis, may be smitten by my spear and die before me?”

As he spoke he drew the bronze spear from the wound, planting his foot upon the body, which he thrust off and let lie on its back. He then went spear in hand after Automedon, squire of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, for he longed to lay him low, but the immortal steeds which the gods had given as a rich gift to Peleus bore him swiftly from the field.

Book XVII

BRAVE Menelaus son of Atreus now came to know that Patroclus had fallen, and made his way through the front ranks clad in full armour to bestride him. As a cow stands lowing over her first calf, even so did yellow-haired Menelaus bestride Patroclus. He held his round shield and his spear in front of him, resolute to kill any who should dare face him. But the son of Panthous had also noted the body, and came up to Menelaus saying, “Menelaus, son of Atreus, draw back, leave the body, and let the bloodstained spoils be. I was first of the Trojans and their brave allies to drive my spear into Patroclus, let me, therefore, have my full glory among the Trojans, or I will take aim and kill you.”To this Menelaus answered in great anger “By father Jove, boasting is an ill thing. The pard is not more bold, nor the lion nor savage wild-boar, which is fiercest and most dauntless of all creatures, than are the proud sons of Panthous. Yet Hyperenor did not see out the days of his youth when he made light of me and withstood me, deeming me the meanest soldier among the Danaans. His own feet never bore him back to gladden his wife and parents. Even so shall I make an end of you too, if you withstand me; get you back into the crowd and do not face me, or it shall be worse for you. Even a fool may be wise after the event.”

Euphorbus would not listen, and said, “Now indeed, Menelaus, shall you pay for the death of my brother over whom you vaunted, and whose wife you widowed in her bridal chamber, while you brought grief unspeakable on his parents. I shall comfort these poor people if I bring your head and armour and place them in the hands of Panthous and noble Phrontis. The time is come when this matter shall be fought out and settled, for me or against me.”

As he spoke he struck Menelaus full on the shield, but the spear did not go through, for the shield turned its point. Menelaus then took aim, praying to father Jove as he did so; Euphorbus was drawing back, and Menelaus struck him about the roots of his throat,

leaning his whole weight on the spear, so as to drive it home. The point went clean through his neck, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. His hair which was like that of the Graces, and his locks so deftly bound in bands of silver and gold, were all bedrabbled with blood. As one who has grown a fine young olive tree in a clear space where there is abundance of water the plant is full of promise, and though the winds beat upon it from every quarter it puts forth its white blossoms till the blasts of some fierce hurricane sweep down upon it and level it with the ground even so did Menelaus strip the fair youth Euphorbus of his armour after he had slain him. Or as some fierce lion upon the mountains in the pride of his strength fastens on the finest heifer in a herd as it is feeding first he breaks her neck with his strong jaws, and then gorges on her blood and entrails; dogs and shepherds raise a hue and cry against him, but they stand aloof and will not come close to him, for they are pale with fear even so no one had the courage to face valiant Menelaus. The son of Atreus would have then carried off the armour of the son of Panthous with ease, had not Phoebus Apollo been angry, and in the guise of Mentes chief of the Cicons incited Hector to attack him. “Hector,” said he, “you are now going after the horses of the noble son of Aeacus, but you will not take them; they cannot be kept in hand and driven by mortal man, save only by Achilles, who is son to an immortal mother. Meanwhile Menelaus son of Atreus has bestridden the body of Patroclus and killed the noblest of the Trojans, Euphorbus son of Panthous, so that he can fight no more.”

The god then went back into the toil and turmoil, but the soul of Hector was darkened with a cloud of grief; he

looked along the ranks and saw Euphorbus lying on the ground with the blood still flowing from his wound, and Menelaus stripping him of his armour. On this he made his way to the front like a flame of fire, clad in his gleaming armour, and crying with a loud voice. When the son of Atreus heard him, he said to himself in his dismay, “Alas! what shall I do? I may not let the Trojans take the armour of Patroclus who has fallen fighting on my behalf, lest some Danaan who sees me should cry shame upon me. Still if for my honour’s sake I fight Hector and the Trojans single-handed, they will prove too many for me, for Hector is bringing them up in force. Why, however, should I thus hesitate? When a man fights in despite of heaven with one whom a god befriends, he will soon rue it. Let no Danaan think ill of me if I give place to Hector, for the hand of heaven is with him. Yet, if I could find Ajax, the two of us would fight Hector and heaven too, if we might only save the body of Patroclus for Achilles son of Peleus. This, of many evils would be the least.”

While he was thus in two minds, the Trojans came up to him with Hector at their head; he therefore drew back and left the body, turning about like some bearded lion who is being chased by dogs and men from a stockyard with spears and hue and cry, whereon he is daunted and slinks sulkily off even so did Menelaus son of Atreus turn and leave the body of Patroclus. When among the body of his men, he looked around for mighty Ajax son of Telamon, and presently saw him on the extreme left of the fight, cheering on his men and exhorting them to keep on fighting, for Phoebus Apollo had spread a great panic among them. He ran up to him and said, “Ajax, my good friend, come with me at once to dead Patroclus, if so be that we may take the body to Achilles as for his armour, Hector already has it.”

These words stirred the heart of Ajax, and he made his way among the front ranks, Menelaus going with him. Hector had stripped Patroclus of his armour, and was dragging him away to cut off his head and take the body to fling before the dogs of Troy. But Ajax came up with his shield like wall before him, on which Hector withdrew under shelter of his men, and sprang on to his chariot, giving the armour over to the Trojans to take to the city, as a great trophy for himself; Ajax, therefore, covered the body of Patroclus with his broad shield and bestrode him; as a lion stands over his whelps if hunters have come upon him in a forest when he is with his little ones in the pride and fierceness of his strength he draws his knit brows down till they cover his eyes even so did Ajax bestride the body of Patroclus, and by his side stood Menelaus son of Atreus, nursing great sorrow in his heart.

Then Glaucus son of Hippolochus looked fiercely at Hector and rebuked him sternly. “Hector,” said he, “you make a brave show, but in fight you are sadly wanting. A runaway like yourself has no claim to so great a reputation. Think how you may now save your town and citadel by the hands of your own people born in Ilius; for you will get no Lycians to fight for you, seeing what thanks they have had for their incessant hardships. Are you likely, sir, to do anything to help a man of less note, after leaving Sarpedon, who was at once your guest and comrade in arms, to be the spoil and prey of the Danaans? So long as he lived he did good service both to your city and yourself; yet you had no stomach to save his body from the dogs. If the Lycians will listen to me, they will go home and leave Troy to its fate. If the Trojans had any of that daring fearless spirit which lays hold of men who are fighting for their country and harassing those who would attack it, we should soon bear off Patroclus into Ilius. Could we get this dead man away and bring him into the city of Priam, the Argives would readily give up the armour of Sarpedon, and we should get his body to boot. For he whose squire has been now killed is the foremost man at the ships of the Achaeans he and his close-

fighting followers. Nevertheless you dared not make a stand against Ajax, nor face him, eye to eye, with battle all round you, for he is a braver man than you are."

Hector scowled at him and answered, "Glaucus, you should know better. I have held you so far as a man of more understanding than any in all Lycia, but now I despise you for saying that I am afraid of Ajax. I fear neither battle nor the din of chariots, but Jove's will is stronger than ours; Jove at one time makes even a strong man draw back and snatches victory from his grasp, while at another he will set him on to fight. Come hither then, my friend, stand by me and see indeed whether I shall play the coward the whole day through as you say, or whether I shall not stay some even of the boldest Danaans from fighting round the body of Patroclus."

As he spoke he called loudly on the Trojans saying, "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, fighters in close combat, be men, my friends, and fight might and main, while I put on the goodly armour of Achilles, which I took when I killed Patroclus."

With this Hector left the fight, and ran full speed after his men who were taking the armour of Achilles to Troy, but had not yet got far. Standing for a while apart from the woeful fight, he changed his armour. His own he sent to the strong city of Ilius and to the Trojans, while he put on the immortal armour of the son of Peleus, which the gods had given to Peleus, who in his age gave it to his son; but the son did not grow old in his father's armour.

When Jove, lord of the storm-cloud, saw Hector standing aloof and arming himself in the armour of the son of Peleus, he wagged his head and muttered to himself saying, "A! poor wretch, you arm in the armour of a hero, before whom many another trembles, and you reck nothing of the doom that is already close upon you. You have killed his comrade so brave and strong, but it was not well that you should strip the armour from his head and shoulders. I do indeed endow you with great might now, but as against this you shall not return from battle to lay the armour of the son of Peleus before Andromache."

The son of Saturn bowed his portentous brows, and Hector fitted the armour to his body, while terrible Mars entered into him, and filled his whole body with might and valour. With a shout he strode in among the allies, and his armour flashed about him so that he seemed to all of them like the great son of Peleus himself. He went about among them and cheered them on Mesthles, Glaucus, Medon, Thersilochus, Asteropaeus, Deisenor and Hippothous, Phorcys, Chromius and Ennomus the augur. All these did he exhort saying, "Hear me, allies from other cities who are here in your thousands, it was not in order to have a crowd about me that I called you hither each from his several city, but that with heart and soul you might defend the wives and little ones of the Trojans from the fierce Achaeans. For this do I oppress my people with your food and the presents that make you rich. Therefore turn, and charge at the foe, to stand or fall as is the game of war; whoever shall bring Patroclus, dead though he be, into the hands of the Trojans, and shall make Ajax give way before him, I will give him one half of the spoils while I keep the other. He will thus share like honour with myself."

When he had thus spoken they charged full weight upon the Danaans with their spears held out before them, and the hopes of each ran high that he should force Ajax son of Telamon to yield up the body fools that they were, for he was about to take the lives of many. Then Ajax said to Menelaus, "My good friend Menelaus, you and I shall hardly come out of this fight alive. I am less concerned for the body of Patroclus, who will shortly become meat for the dogs and vultures of Troy, than for the safety of my own head and yours. Hector has wrapped us round in a storm of battle from every quarter, and our destruction seems now certain. Call then upon the princes of the Danaans if there is any who can hear us."

Menelaus did as he said, and shouted to the Danaans for help at the top of his voice. "My friends," he cried, "princes and counsellors of the Argives, all you who with Agamemnon and Menelaus drink at the public cost, and give orders each to his own people as Jove vouchsafes him power and glory, the fight is so thick about me that I cannot distinguish you severally; come on, therefore, every man unbidden, and think it shame that Patroclus should become meat and morsel for Trojan hounds."

Fleet Ajax son of Oileus heard him and was first to force his way through the fight and run to help him. Next came Idomeneus and Meriones his esquire, peer of murderous Mars. As for the others that came into the fight after these, who of his own self could name them?

The Trojans with Hector at their head charged in a body. As a great wave that comes thundering in at the mouth of some heaven-born river, and the rocks that jut into the sea ring with the roar of the breakers that beat and buffet them even with such a roar did the Trojans come on; but the Achaeans in singleness of heart stood firm about the son of Menoetius, and fenced him with their bronze shields. Jove, moreover, hid the brightness of their helmets in a thick cloud, for he had borne no grudge against the son of

Menoetius while he was still alive and squire to the descendant of Aeacus; therefore he was loth to let him fall a prey to the dogs of his foes the Trojans, and urged his comrades on to defend him.

At first the Trojans drove the Achaeans back, and they withdrew from the dead man daunted. The Trojans did not succeed in killing any one, nevertheless they drew the body away. But the Achaeans did not lose it long, for Ajax, foremost of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus alike in stature and prowess, quickly rallied them and made towards the front like a wild boar upon the mountains when he stands at bay in the forest glades and routs the hounds and lusty youths that have attacked him even so did Ajax son of Telamon passing easily in among the phalanxes of the Trojans, disperse those who had bestridden Patroclus and were most bent on winning glory by dragging him off to their city. At this moment Hippothous brave son of the Pelasgian Lethus, in his zeal for Hector and the Trojans, was dragging the body off by the foot through the press of the fight, having bound a strap round the sinews near the ancle; but a mischief soon befell him from which none of those could save him who would have gladly done so, for the son of Telamon sprang forward and smote him on his bronze-cheeked helmet. The plumed headpiece broke about the point of the weapon, struck at once by the spear and by the strong hand of Ajax, so that the bloody brain came oozing out through the crest-socket. His strength then failed him and he let Patroclus' foot drop from his hand, as he fell full length dead upon the body; thus he died far from the fertile land of Larissa, and never repaid his parents the cost of bringing him up, for his life was cut short early by the spear of mighty Ajax. Hector then took aim at Ajax with a spear, but he saw it coming and just managed to avoid it; the spear passed on and struck Schedius son of noble Iphitus, captain of the Phoceans, who dwelt in famed Panopeus and reigned over much people; it struck him under the middle of the collar-bone the bronze point went right through him, coming out at the bottom of his shoulder-blade, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Ajax in his turn struck noble Phorcys son of Phaenops in the middle of the belly as he was bestriding Hippothous, and broke the plate of his cuirass; whereon the spear tore out his entrails and he clutched the ground in his palm as he fell to earth. Hector and those who were in the front rank then gave ground, while the Argives raised a loud cry of triumph, and drew off the bodies of Phorcys and Hippothous which they stripped presently of their armour.

The Trojans would now have been worsted by the brave Achaeans and driven back to Ilius through their own cowardice, while the Argives, so great was their courage and endurance, would have achieved a triumph even against the will of Jove, if Apollo had not roused Aeneas, in the likeness of Periphas son of Epytus, an attendant who had grown old in the service of Aeneas' aged father, and was at all times devoted to him. In his likeness, then, Apollo said, "Aeneas, can you not manage, even though heaven be against us, to save high Ilius? I have known men, whose numbers, courage, and self-reliance have saved their people in spite of Jove, whereas in this case he would much rather give victory to us than to the Danaans, if you would only fight instead of being so terribly afraid."

Aeneas knew Apollo when he looked straight at him, and shouted to Hector saying, "Hector and all other Trojans and allies, shame on us if we are beaten by the Achaeans and driven back to Ilius through our own cowardice. A god has just come up to me and told me that Jove the supreme disposer will be with us. Therefore let us make for the Danaans, that it may go hard with them ere they bear away dead Patroclus to the ships."

As he spoke he sprang out far in front of the others, who then rallied and again faced the Achaeans. Aeneas speared Leiocritus son of Arisbas, a valiant follower of Lycomedes, and Lycomedes was moved with pity as he saw him fall; he therefore went close up, and speared Apisaon son of Hippasus shepherd of his people in the liver under the midriff, so that he died; he had come from fertile Paeonia and was the best man of them all after Asteropaeus. Asteropaeus flew forward to avenge him and attack the Danaans, but this might no longer be, inasmuch as those about Patroclus were well covered by their shields, and held their spears in front of them, for Ajax had given them strict orders that no man was either to give ground, or to stand out before the others, but all were to hold well together about the body and fight hand to hand. Thus did huge Ajax bid them, and the earth ran red with blood as the corpses fell thick on one another alike on the side of the Trojans and allies, and on that of the Danaans; for these last, too, fought no bloodless fight though many fewer of them perished, through the care they took to defend and stand by one another.

Thus did they fight as it were a flaming fire; it seemed as though it had gone hard even with the sun and moon, for they were hidden over all that part where the bravest heroes were fighting about the dead son of Menoetius, whereas the other Danaans and Achaeans fought at their ease in full daylight with brilliant sunshine all round them, and there was not a cloud to be seen neither on plain nor mountain. These last moreover would rest for a while and leave off fighting, for they were some distance apart and beyond the range of one another's weapons, whereas those who were in the thick of the fray suffered both from battle and darkness. All the best of them were being worn out by the great weight of their armour, but the two valiant heroes, Thrasymedes and

Antilochus, had not yet heard of the death of Patroclus, and believed him to be still alive and leading the van against the Trojans; they were keeping themselves in reserve against the death or rout of their own comrades, for so Nestor had ordered when he sent them from the ships into battle.

Thus through the livelong day did they wage fierce war, and the sweat of their toil rained ever on their legs under them, and on their hands and eyes, as they fought over the squire of the fleet son of Peleus. It was as when a man gives a great ox-hide all drenched in fat to his men, and bids them stretch it; whereon they stand round it in a ring and tug till the moisture leaves it, and the fat soaks in for the many that pull at it, and it is well stretched even so did the two sides tug the dead body hither and thither within the compass of but a little space the Trojans steadfastly set on drag ing it into Ilius, while the Achaeans were no less so on taking it to their ships; and fierce was the fight between them. Not Mars himself the lord of hosts, nor yet Minerva, even in their fullest fury could make light of such a battle.

Such fearful turmoil of men and horses did Jove on that day ordain round the body of Patroclus. Meanwhile Achilles did not know that he had fallen, for the fight was under the wall of Troy a long way off the ships. He had no idea, therefore, that Patroclus was dead, and deemed that he would return alive as soon as he had gone close up to the gates. He knew that he was not to sack the city neither with nor without himself, for his mother had often told him this when he had sat alone with her, and she had informed him of the counsels of great Jove. Now, however, she had not told him how great a disaster had befallen him in the death of the one who was far dearest to him of all his comrades.

The others still kept on charging one another round the body with their pointed spears and killing each other. Then would one say, “My friends, we can never again show our faces at the ships better, and greatly better, that earth should open and swallow us here in this place, than that we should let the Trojans have the triumph of bearing off Patroclus to their city.”

The Trojans also on their part spoke to one another saying, “Friends, though we fall to a man beside this body, let none shrink from fighting.” With such words did they exhort each other. They fought and fought, and an iron clank rose through the void air to the brazen vault of heaven. The horses of the descendant of Aeacus stood out of the fight and wept when they heard that their driver had been laid low by the hand of murderous Hector. Automedon, valiant son of Diores, lashed them again and again; many a time did he speak kindly to them, and many a time did he upbraid them, but they would neither go back to the ships by the waters of the broad Hellespont, nor yet into battle among the Achaeans; they stood with their chariot stock still, as a pillar set over the tomb of some dead man or woman, and bowed their heads to the ground. Hot tears fell from their eyes as they mourned the loss of their charioteer, and their noble manes drooped all wet from under the yokestraps on either side the yoke.

The son of Saturn saw them and took pity upon their sorrow. He wagged his head, and muttered to himself, saying, “Poor things, why did we give you to King Peleus who is a mortal, while you are yourselves ageless and immortal? Was it that you might share the sorrows that befall mankind? for of all creatures that live and move upon the earth there is none so pitiable as he is still, Hector son of Priam shall drive neither you nor your chariot. I will not have it. It is enough that he should have the armour over which he vaunts so vainly. Furthermore I will give you strength of heart and limb to bear Automedon safely to the ships from battle, for I shall let the Trojans triumph still further, and go on killing till they reach the ships; whereon night shall fall and darkness overshadow the land.”

As he spoke he breathed heart and strength into the horses so that they shook the dust from out of their manes, and bore their chariot swiftly into the fight that raged between Trojans and Achaeans. Behind them fought Automedon full of sorrow for his comrade, as a vulture amid a flock of geese. In and out, and here and there, full speed he dashed amid the throng of the Trojans, but for all the fury of his pursuit he killed no man, for he could not wield his spear and keep his horses in hand when alone in the chariot; at last, however, a comrade, Alcimedon, son of Laerces son of Haemon caught sight of him and came up behind his chariot. “Automedon,” said he, “what god has put this folly into your heart and robbed you of your right mind, that you fight the Trojans in the front rank single-handed? He who was your comrade is slain, and Hector plumes himself on being armed in the armour of the descendant of Aeacus.”

Automedon son of Diores answered, “Alcimedon, there is no one else who can control and guide the immortal steeds so well as you can, save only Patroclus while he was alive peer of gods in counsel. Take then the whip and reins, while I go down from the car and fight.

Alcimedon sprang on to the chariot, and caught up the whip and reins, while Automedon leaped from off the car. When Hector saw him he said to Aeneas who was near him, “Aeneas, counsellor of the mail-clad Trojans, I see the steeds of the fleet son of Aeacus

come into battle with weak hands to drive them. I am sure, if you think well, that we might take them; they will not dare face us if we both attack them."

The valiant son of Anchises was of the same mind, and the pair went right on, with their shoulders covered under shields of tough dry ox-hide, overlaid with much bronze. Chromius and Aretus went also with them, and their hearts beat high with hope that they might kill the men and capture the horses fools that they were, for they were not to return scatheless from their meeting with Automedon, who prayed to father Jove and was forthwith filled with courage and strength abounding. He turned to his trusty comrade Alcimedon and said, "Alcimedon, keep your horses so close up that I may feel their breath upon my back; I doubt that we shall not stay Hector son of Priam till he has killed us and mounted behind the horses; he will then either spread panic among the ranks of the Achaeans, or himself be killed among the foremost."

On this he cried out to the two Ajaxes and Menelaus, "Ajaxes captains of the Argives, and Menelaus, give the dead body over to them that are best able to defend it, and come to the rescue of us living; for Hector and Aeneas who are the two best men among the Trojans, are pressing us hard in the full tide of war. Nevertheless the issue lies on the lap of heaven, I will therefore hurl my spear and leave the rest to Jove."

He poised and hurled as he spoke, whereon the spear struck the round shield of Aretus, and went right through it for the shield stayed it not, so that it was driven through his belt into the lower part of his belly. As when some sturdy youth, axe in hand, deals his blow behind the horns of an ox and severs the tendons at the back of its neck so that it springs forward and then drops, even so did Aretus give one bound and then fall on his back the spear quivering in his body till it made an end of him. Hector then aimed a spear at Automedon but he saw it coming and stooped forward to avoid it, so that it flew past him and the point stuck in the ground, while the butt-end went on quivering till Mars robbed it of its force. They would then have fought hand to hand with swords had not the two Ajaxes forced their way through the crowd when they heard their comrade calling, and parted them for all their fury for Hector, Aeneas, and Chromius were afraid and drew back, leaving Aretus to lie there struck to the heart. Automedon, peer of fleet Mars, then stripped him of his armour and vaunted over him saying, "I have done little to assuage my sorrow for the son of Menoetius, for the man I have killed is not so good as he was."

As he spoke he took the blood-stained spoils and laid them upon his chariot; then he mounted the car with his hands and feet all steeped in gore as a lion that has been gorging upon a bull.

And now the fierce groanful fight again raged about Patroclus, for Minerva came down from heaven and roused its fury by the command of far-seeing Jove, who had changed his mind and sent her to encourage the Danaans. As when Jove bends his bright bow in heaven in token to mankind either of war or of the chill storms that stay men from their labour and plague the flocks even so, wrapped in such radiant raiment, did Minerva go in among the host and speak man by man to each. First she took the form and voice of Phoenix and spoke to Menelaus son of Atreus, who was standing near her. "Menelaus," said she, "it will be shame and dishonour to you, if dogs tear the noble comrade of Achilles under the walls of Troy. Therefore be staunch, and urge your men to be so also."

Menelaus answered, "Phoenix, my good old friend, may Minerva vouchsafe me strength and keep the darts from off me, for so shall I stand by Patroclus and defend him; his death has gone to my heart, but Hector is as a raging fire and deals his blows without ceasing, for Jove is now granting him a time of triumph."

Minerva was pleased at his having named herself before any of the other gods. Therefore she put strength into his knees and shoulders, and made him as bold as a fly, which, though driven off will yet come again and bite if it can, so dearly does it love man's blood even so bold as this did she make him as he stood over Patroclus and threw his spear. Now there was among the Trojans a man named Podes, son of Eetion, who was both rich and valiant. Hector held him in the highest honour for he was his comrade and boon companion; the spear of Menelaus struck this man in the girdle just as he had turned in flight, and went right through him. Whereon he fell heavily forward, and Menelaus son of Atreus drew off his body from the Trojans into the ranks of his own people.

Apollo then went up to Hector and spurred him on to fight, in the likeness of Phaenops son of Asius who lived in Abydos and was the most favoured of all Hector's guests. In his likeness Apollo said, "Hector, who of the Achaeans will fear you henceforward now that you have quailed before Menelaus who has ever been rated poorly as a soldier? Yet he has now got a corpse away from the Trojans single-handed, and has slain your own true comrade, a man brave among the foremost, Podes son of Eetion.

A dark cloud of grief fell upon Hector as he heard, and he made his way to the front clad in full armour. Thereon the son of Saturn seized his bright tasselled aegis, and veiled Ida in cloud: he sent forth his lightnings and his thunders, and as he shook his aegis he gave victory to the Trojans and routed the Achaeans.

The panic was begun by Peneleos the Boeotian, for while keeping his face turned ever towards the foe he had been hit with a spear on the upper part of the shoulder; a spear thrown by Polydamas had grazed the top of the bone, for Polydamas had come up to him and struck him from close at hand. Then Hector in close combat struck Leitus son of noble Alectryon in the hand by the wrist, and disabled him from fighting further. He looked about him in dismay, knowing that never again should he wield spear in battle with the Trojans. While Hector was in pursuit of Leitus, Idomeneus struck him on the breastplate over his chest near the nipple; but the spear broke in the shaft, and the Trojans cheered aloud. Hector then aimed at Idomeneus son of Deucalion as he was standing on his chariot, and very narrowly missed him, but the spear hit Coiranus, a follower and charioteer of Meriones who had come with him from Lyctus. Idomeneus had left the ships on foot and would have afforded a great triumph to the Trojans if Coiranus had not driven quickly up to him, he therefore brought life and rescue to Idomeneus, but himself fell by the hand of murderous Hector. For Hector hit him on the jaw under the ear; the end of the spear drove out his teeth and cut his tongue in two pieces, so that he fell from his chariot and let the reins fall to the ground. Meriones gathered them up from the ground and took them into his own hands, then he said to Idomeneus, “Lay on, till you get back to the ships, for you must see that the day is no longer ours.”

On this Idomeneus lashed the horses to the ships, for fear had taken hold upon him.

Ajax and Menelaus noted how Jove had turned the scale in favour of the Trojans, and Ajax was first to speak. “Alas,” said he, “even a fool may see that father Jove is helping the Trojans. All their weapons strike home; no matter whether it be a brave man or a coward that hurls them, Jove speeds all alike, whereas ours fall each one of them without effect. What, then, will be best both as regards rescuing the body, and our return to the joy of our friends who will be grieving as they look hitherwards; for they will make sure that nothing can now check the terrible hands of Hector, and that he will fling himself upon our ships. I wish that some one would go and tell the son of Peleus at once, for I do not think he can have yet heard the sad news that the dearest of his friends has fallen. But I can see not a man among the Achaeans to send, for they and their chariots are alike hidden in darkness. O father Jove, lift this cloud from over the sons of the Achaeans; make heaven serene, and let us see; if you will that we perish, let us fall at any rate by daylight.”

Father Jove heard him and had compassion upon his tears. Forthwith he chased away the cloud of darkness, so that the sun shone out and all the fighting was revealed. Ajax then said to Menelaus, “Look, Menelaus, and if Antilochus son of Nestor be still living, send him at once to tell Achilles that by far the dearest to him of all his comrades has fallen.”

Menelaus heeded his words and went his way as a lion from a stockyard the lion is tired of attacking the men and hounds, who keep watch the whole night through and will not let him feast on the fat of their herd. In his lust of meat he makes straight at them but in vain, for darts from strong hands assail him, and burning brands which daunt him for all his hunger, so in the morning he slinks sulkily away even so did Menelaus sorely against his will leave Patroclus, in great fear lest the Achaeans should be driven back in rout and let him fall into the hands of the foe. He charged Meriones and the two Ajaxes straitly saying, “Ajaxes and Meriones, leaders of the Argives, now indeed remember how good Patroclus was; he was ever courteous while alive, bear it in mind now that he is dead.”

With this Menelaus left them, looking round him as keenly as an eagle, whose sight they say is keener than that of any other bird however high he may be in the heavens, not a hare that runs can escape him by crouching under bush or thicket, for he will swoop down upon it and make an end of it even so, O Menelaus, did your keen eyes range round the mighty host of your followers to see if you could find the son of Nestor still alive. Presently Menelaus saw him on the extreme left of the battle cheering on his men and exhorting them to fight boldly. Menelaus went up to him and said, “Antilochus, come here and listen to sad news, which I would indeed were untrue. You must see with your own eyes that heaven is heaping calamity upon the Danaans, and giving victory to the Trojans. Patroclus has fallen, who was the bravest of the Achaeans, and sorely will the Danaans miss him. Run instantly to the ships and tell Achilles, that he may come to rescue the body and bear it to the ships. As for the armour, Hector already has it.”

Antilochus was struck with horror. For a long time he was speechless; his eyes filled with tears and he could find no utterance, but he did as Menelaus had said, and set off running as soon as he had given his armour to a comrade, Laodocus, who was wheeling his horses round, close beside him.

Thus, then, did he run weeping from the field, to carry the bad news to Achilles son of Peleus. Nor were you, O Menelaus, minded to succour his harassed comrades, when Antilochus had left the Pylians and greatly did they miss him but he sent them noble Thrasymedes, and himself went back to Patroclus. He came running up to the two Ajaxes and said, “I have sent Antilochus to the ships to tell Achilles, but rage against Hector as he may, he cannot come, for he cannot fight without armour. What then will be our best plan both as regards rescuing the dead, and our own escape from death amid the battle-cries of the Trojans?”

Ajax answered, “Menelaus, you have said well: do you, then, and Meriones stoop down, raise the body, and bear it out of the fray, while we two behind you keep off Hector and the Trojans, one in heart as in name, and long used to fighting side by side with one another.”

On this Menelaus and Meriones took the dead man in their arms and lifted him high aloft with a great effort. The Trojan host raised a hue and cry behind them when they saw the Achaeans bearing the body away, and flew after them like hounds attacking a wounded boar at the loo of a band of young huntsmen. For a while the hounds fly at him as though they would tear him in pieces, but now and again he turns on them in a fury, scaring and scattering them in all directions even so did the Trojans for a while charge in a body, striking with sword and with spears pointed ai both the ends, but when the two Ajaxes faced them and stood at bay, they would turn pale and no man dared press on to fight further about the dead.

In this wise did the two heroes strain every nerve to bear the body to the ships out of the fight. The battle raged round them like fierce flames that when once kindled spread like wildfire over a city, and the houses fall in the glare of its burning even such was the roar and tramp of men and horses that pursued them as they bore Patroclus from the field. Or as mules that put forth all their strength to draw some beam or great piece of ship’s timber down a rough mountain-track, and they pant and sweat as they, go even so did Menelaus and pant and sweat as they bore the body of Patroclus. Behind them the two Ajaxes held stoutly out. As some wooded mountain-spur that stretches across a plain will turn water and check the flow even of a great river, nor is there any stream strong enough to break through it even so did the two Ajaxes face the Trojans and stern the tide of their fighting though they kept pouring on towards them and foremost among them all was Aeneas son of Anchises with valiant Hector. As a flock of daws or starlings fall to screaming and chattering when they see a falcon, foe to i’ll small birds, come soaring near them, even so did the Achaean youth raise a babel of cries as they fled before Aeneas and Hector, unmindful of their former prowess. In the rout of the Danaans much goodly armour fell round about the trench, and of fighting there was no end.

Book XVIII

THUS then did they fight as it were a flaming fire. Meanwhile the fleet runner Antilochus, who had been sent as messenger, reached Achilles, and found him sitting by his tall ships and boding that which was indeed too surely true. “Alas,” said he to himself in the heaviness of his heart, “why are the Achaeans again scouring the plain and flocking towards the ships? Heaven grant the gods be not now bringing that sorrow upon me of which my mother Thetis spoke, saying that while I was yet alive the bravest of the Myrmidons should fall before the Trojans, and see the light of the sun no longer. I fear the brave son of Menoetius has fallen through his own daring and yet I bade him return to the ships as soon as he had driven back those that were bringing fire against them, and not join battle with Hector.”

As he was thus pondering, the son of Nestor came up to him and told his sad tale, weeping bitterly the while. “Alas,” he cried, “son of noble Peleus, I bring you bad tidings, would indeed that they were untrue. Patroclus has fallen, and a fight is raging about his naked body for Hector holds his armour.”

A dark cloud of grief fell upon Achilles as he listened. He filled both hands with dust from off the ground, and poured it over his head, disfiguring his comely face, and letting the refuse settle over his shirt so fair and new. He flung himself down all huge and hugely at full length, and tore his hair with his hands. The bondswomen whom Achilles and Patroclus had taken captive screamed aloud for grief, beating their breasts, and with their limbs failing them for sorrow. Antilochus bent over him the while, weeping and holding both his hands as he lay groaning for he feared that he might plunge a knife into his own throat. Then Achilles gave a loud cry and his mother heard him as she was sitting in the depths of the sea by the old man her father, whereon she screamed, and all the goddesses daughters of Nereus that dwelt at the bottom of the sea, came gathering round her. There were Glauce, Thalia and Cymodoce, Nesaia, Speo, thoe and dark-eyed Halie, Cymothoe, Actaea and Limnorea, Melite, Iaera, Amphithoe and Agave, Doto and Proto, Pherusa and Dynamene, Dexamene, Amphinome and Callianeira, Doris, Panope, and the famous sea-nymph Galatea, Nemertes, Apseudes and Callianassa. There were also Clymene, Ianeira and Ianassa, Maera, Oreithuia and Amatheia of the lovely

locks, with other Nereids who dwell in the depths of the sea. The crystal cave was filled with their multitude and they all beat their breasts while Thetis led them in their lament.

“Listen,” she cried, “sisters, daughters of Nereus, that you may hear the burden of my sorrows. Alas, woe is me, woe in that I have borne the most glorious of offspring. I bore him fair and strong, hero among heroes, and he shot up as a sapling; I tended him as a plant in a goodly garden, and sent him with his ships to Ilius to fight the Trojans, but never shall I welcome him back to the house of Peleus. So long as he lives to look upon the light of the sun he is in heaviness, and though I go to him I cannot help him. Nevertheless I will go, that I may see my dear son and learn what sorrow has befallen him though he is still holding aloof from battle.”

She left the cave as she spoke, while the others followed weeping after, and the waves opened a path before them. When they reached the rich plain of Troy, they came up out of the sea in a long line on to the sands, at the place where the ships of the Myrmidons were drawn up in close order round the tents of Achilles. His mother went up to him as he lay groaning; she laid her hand upon his head and spoke piteously, saying, “My son, why are you thus weeping? What sorrow has now befallen you? Tell me; hide it not from me. Surely Jove has granted you the prayer you made him, when you lifted up your hands and besought him that the Achaeans might all of them be pent up at their ships, and rue it bitterly in that you were no longer with them.”

Achilles groaned and answered, “Mother, Olympian Jove has indeed vouchsafed me the fulfilment of my prayer, but what boots it to me, seeing that my dear comrade Patroclus has fallen he whom I valued more than all others, and loved as dearly as my own life? I have lost him; aye, and Hector when he had killed him stripped the wondrous armour, so glorious to behold, which the gods gave to Peleus when they laid you in the couch of a mortal man. Would that you were still dwelling among the immortal sea-nymphs, and that Peleus had taken to himself some mortal bride. For now you shall have grief infinite by reason of the death of that son whom you can never welcome home nay, I will not live nor go about among mankind unless Hector fall by my spear, and thus pay me for having slain Patroclus son of Menoetius.”

Thetis wept and answered, “Then, my son, is your end near at hand for your own death awaits you full soon after that of Hector.”

Then said Achilles in his great grief, “I would die here and now, in that I could not save my comrade. He has fallen far from home, and in his hour of need my hand was not there to help him. What is there for me? Return to my own land I shall not, and I have brought no saving neither to Patroclus nor to my other comrades of whom so many have been slain by mighty Hector; I stay here by my ships a bootless burden upon the earth, I, who in fight have no peer among the Achaeans, though in council there are better than I. Therefore, perish strife both from among gods and men, and anger, wherein even a righteous man will harden his heart which rises up in the soul of a man like smoke, and the taste thereof is sweeter than drops of honey. Even so has Agamemnon angered me. And yet so be it, for it is over; I will force my soul into subjection as I needs must; I will go; I will pursue Hector who has slain him whom I loved so dearly, and will then abide my doom when it may please Jove and the other gods to send it. Even Hercules, the best beloved of Jove even he could not escape the hand of death, but fate and Juno’s fierce anger laid him low, as I too shall lie when I am dead if a like doom awaits me. Till then I will win fame, and will bid Trojan and Dardanian women wring tears from their tender cheeks with both their hands in the grievousness of their great sorrow; thus shall they know that he who has held aloof so long will hold aloof no longer. Hold me not back, therefore, in the love you bear me, for you shall not move me.”

Then silver-footed Thetis answered, “My son, what you have said is true. It is well to save your comrades from destruction, but your armour is in the hands of the Trojans; Hector bears it in triumph upon his own shoulders. Full well I know that his vaunt shall not be lasting, for his end is close at hand; go not, however, into the press of battle till you see me return hither; to-morrow at break of day I shall be here, and will bring you goodly armour from King Vulcan.”

On this she left her brave son, and as she turned away she said to the sea-nymphs her sisters, “Dive into the bosom of the sea and go to the house of the old sea-god my father. Tell him everything; as for me, I will go to the cunning workman Vulcan on high Olympus, and ask him to provide my son with a suit of splendid armour.”

When she had so said, they dived forthwith beneath the waves, while silver-footed Thetis went her way that she might bring the armour for her son.

Thus, then, did her feet bear the goddess to Olympus, and meanwhile the Achaeans were flying with loud cries before murderous Hector till they reached the ships and the Hellespont, and they could not draw the body of Mars’s servant Patroclus out of reach of the weapons that were showered upon him, for Hector son of Priam with his host and horsemen had again caught up to him like the

flame of a fiery furnace; thrice did brave Hector seize him by the feet, striving with might and main to draw him away and calling loudly on the Trojans, and thrice did the two Ajaxes, clothed in valour as with a garment, beat him from off the body; but all undaunted he would now charge into the thick of the fight, and now again he would stand still and cry aloud, but he would give no ground. As upland shepherds that cannot chase some famished lion from a carcase, even so could not the two Ajaxes scare Hector son of Priam from the body of Patroclus.

And now he would even have dragged it off and have won imperishable glory, had not Iris fleet as the wind, winged her way as messenger from Olympus to the son of Peleus and bidden him arm. She came secretly without the knowledge of Jove and of the other gods, for Juno sent her, and when she had got close to him she said, “Up, son of Peleus, mightiest of all mankind; rescue Patroclus about whom this fearful fight is now raging by the ships. Men are killing one another, the Danaans in defence of the dead body, while the Trojans are trying to hale it away, and take it to wind Ilius: Hector is the most furious of them all; he is for cutting the head from the body and fixing it on the stakes of the wall. Up, then, and bide here no longer; shrink from the thought that Patroclus may become meat for the dogs of Troy. Shame on you, should his body suffer any kind of outrage.”

And Achilles said, “Iris, which of the gods was it that sent you to me?”

Iris answered, “It was Juno the royal spouse of Jove, but the son of Saturn does not know of my coming, nor yet does any other of the immortals who dwell on the snowy summits of Olympus.”

Then fleet Achilles answered her saying, “How can I go up into the battle? They have my armour. My mother forbade me to arm till I should see her come, for she promised to bring me goodly armour from Vulcan; I know no man whose arms I can put on, save only the shield of Ajax son of Telamon, and he surely must be fighting in the front rank and wielding his spear about the body of dead Patroclus.”

Iris said, ‘We know that your armour has been taken, but go as you are; go to the deep trench and show yourelf before the Trojans, that they may fear you and cease fighting. Thus will the fainting sons of the Achaeans gain some brief breathing-time, which in battle may hardly be.”

Iris left him when she had so spoken. But Achilles dear to Jove arose, and Minerva flung her tasselled aegis round his strong shoulders; she crowned his head with a halo of golden cloud from which she kindled a glow of gleaming fire. As the smoke that goes up into heaven from some city that is being beleaguered on an island far out at sea all day long do men sally from the city and fight their hardest, and at the going down of the sun the line of beacon-fires blazes forth, flaring high for those that dwell near them to behold, if so be that they may come with their ships and succour them even so did the light flare from the head of Achilles, as he stood by the trench, going beyond the wall but he aid not join the Achaeans for he heeded the charge which his mother laid upon him.

There did he stand and shout aloud. Minerva also raised her voice from afar, and spread terror unspeakable among the Trojans. Ringing as the note of a trumpet that sounds alarm then the foe is at the gates of a city, even so brazen was the voice of the son of Aeacus, and when the Trojans heard its clarion tones they were dismayed; the horses turned back with their chariots for they boded mischief, and their drivers were awe-struck by the steady flame which the grey-eyed goddess had kindled above the head of the great son of Peleus.

Thrice did Achilles raise his loud cry as he stood by the trench, and thrice were the Trojans and their brave allies thrown into confusion; whereon twelve of their noblest champions fell beneath the wheels of their chariots and perished by their own spears. The Achaeans to their great joy then drew Patroclus out of reach of the weapons, and laid him on a litter: his comrades stood mourning round him, and among them fleet Achilles who wept bitterly as he saw his true comrade lying dead upon his bier. He had sent him out with horses and chariots into battle, but his return he was not to welcome.

Then Juno sent the busy sun, loth though he was, into the waters of Oceanus; so he set, and the Achaeans had rest from the tug and turmoil of war.

Now the Trojans when they had come out of the fight, unyoked their horses and gathered in assembly before preparing their supper. They kept their feet, nor would any dare to sit down, for fear had fallen upon them all because Achilles had shown himself after having held aloof so long from battle. Polydamas son of Panthous was first to speak, a man of judgement, who alone among them could look both before and after. He was comrade to Hector, and they had been born upon the same night; with all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:

“Look to it well, my friends; I would urge you to go back now to your city and not wait here by the ships till morning, for we are far from our walls. So long as this man was at enmity with Agamemnon the Achaeans were easier to deal with, and I would have gladly camped by the ships in the hope of taking them; but now I go in great fear of the fleet son of Peleus; he is so daring that he will never bide here on the plain whereon the Trojans and Achaeans fight with equal valour, but he will try to storm our city and carry off our women. Do then as I say, and let us retreat. For this is what will happen. The darkness of night will for a time stay the son of Peleus, but if he find us here in the morning when he sallies forth in full armour, we shall have knowledge of him in good earnest. Glad indeed will he be who can escape and get back to Ilius, and many a Trojan will become meat for dogs and vultures may I never live to hear it. If we do as I say, little though we may like it, we shall have strength in counsel during the night, and the great gates with the doors that close them will protect the city. At dawn we can arm and take our stand on the walls; he will then rue it if he sallies from the ships to fight us. He will go back when he has given his horses their fill of being driven all whithers under our walls, and will be in no mind to try and force his way into the city. Neither will he ever sack it, dogs shall devour him ere he do so.”

Hector looked fiercely at him and answered, “Polydamas, your words are not to my liking in that you bid us go back and be pent within the city. Have you not had enough of being cooped up behind walls? In the old-days the city of Priam was famous the whole world over for its wealth of gold and bronze, but our treasures are wasted out of our houses, and much goods have been sold away to Phrygia and fair Meonia, for the hand of Jove has been laid heavily upon us. Now, therefore, that the son of scheming Saturn has vouchsafed me to win glory here and to hem the Achaeans in at their ships, prate no more in this fool’s wise among the people. You will have no man with you; it shall not be; do all of you as I now say; take your suppers in your companies throughout the host, and keep your watches and be wakeful every man of you. If any Trojan is uneasy about his possessions, let him gather them and give them out among the people. Better let these, rather than the Achaeans, have them. At daybreak we will arm and fight about the ships; granted that Achilles has again come forward to defend them, let it be as he will, but it shall go hard with him. I shall not shun him, but will fight him, to fall or conquer. The god of war deals out like measure to all, and the slayer may yet be slain.”

Thus spoke Hector; and the Trojans, fools that they were, shouted in applause, for Pallas Minerva had robbed them of their understanding. They gave ear to Hector with his evil counsel, but the wise words of Polydamas no man would heed. They took their supper throughout the host, and meanwhile through the whole night the Achaeans mourned Patroclus, and the son of Peleus led them in their lament. He laid his murderous hands upon the breast of his comrade, groaning again and again as a bearded lion when a man who was chasing deer has robbed him of his young in some dense forest; when the lion comes back he is furious, and searches dingle and dell to track the hunter if he can find him, for he is mad with rage even so with many a sigh did Achilles speak among the Myrmidons saying, “Alas! vain were the words with which I cheered the hero Menoetius in his own house; I said that I would bring his brave son back again to Opoeis after he had sacked Ilius and taken his share of the spoils but Jove does not give all men their heart’s desire. The same soil shall be reddened here at Troy by the blood of us both, for I too shall never be welcomed home by the old knight Peleus, nor by my mother Thetis, but even in this place shall the earth cover me. Nevertheless, O Patroclus, now that I am left behind you, I will not bury you, till I have brought hither the head and armour of mighty Hector who has slain you. Twelve noble sons of Trojans will I behead before your bier to avenge you; till I have done so you shall lie as you are by the ships, and fair women of Troy and Dardanus, whom we have taken with spear and strength of arm when we sacked men’s goodly cities, shall weep over you both night and day.”

Then Achilles told his men to set a large tripod upon the fire that they might wash the clotted gore from off Patroclus. Thereon they set a tripod full of bath water on to a clear fire: they threw sticks on to it to make it blaze, and the water became hot as the flame played about the belly of the tripod. When the water in the cauldron was boiling they washed the body, anointed it with oil, and closed its wounds with ointment that had been kept nine years. Then they laid it on a bier and covered it with a linen cloth from head to foot, and over this they laid a fair white robe. Thus all night long did the Myrmidons gather round Achilles to mourn Patroclus.

Then Jove said to Juno his sister-wife, “So, Queen Juno, you have gained your end, and have roused fleet Achilles. One would think that the Achaeans were of your own flesh and blood.”

And Juno answered, “Dread son of Saturn, why should you say this thing? May not a man though he be only mortal and knows less than we do, do what he can for another person? And shall not I foremost of all goddesses both by descent and as wife to you who reign in heaven devise evil for the Trojans if I am angry with them?”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Thetis came to the house of Vulcan, imperishable, star-bespangled, fairest of the abodes in heaven, a house of bronze wrought by the lame god's own hands. She found him busy with his bellows, sweating and hard at work, for he was making twenty tripods that were to stand by the wall of his house, and he set wheels of gold under them all that they might go of their own selves to the assemblies of the gods, and come back again marvels indeed to see. They were finished all but the ears of cunning workmanship which yet remained to be fixed to them: these he was now fixing, and he was hammering at the rivets. While he was thus at work silver-footed Thetis came to the house. Charis, of graceful head-dress, wife to the far-famed lame god, came towards her as soon as she saw her, and took her hand in her own, saying, "Why have you come to our house, Thetis, honoured and ever welcome for you do not visit us often? Come inside and let me set refreshment before you."

The goddess led the way as she spoke, and bade Thetis sit on a richly decorated seat inlaid with silver; there was a footstool also under her feet. Then she called Vulcan and said, "Vulcan, come here, Thetis wants you"; and the far-famed lame god answered, "Then it is indeed an august and honoured goddess who has come here; she it was that took care of me when I was suffering from the heavy fall which I had through my cruel mother's anger for she would have got rid of me because I was lame. It would have gone hardly with me had not Eurynome, daughter of the ever-encircling waters of Oceanus, and Thetis, taken me to their bosom. Nine years did I stay with them, and many beautiful works in bronze, brooches, spiral armlets, cups, and chains, did I make for them in their cave, with the roaring waters of Oceanus foaming as they rushed ever past it; and no one knew, neither of gods nor men, save only Thetis and Eurynome who took care of me. If, then, Thetis has come to my house I must make her due requital for having saved me; entertain her, therefore, with all hospitality, while I put by my bellows and all my tools."

On this the mighty monster hobbled off from his anvil, his thin legs plying lustily under him. He set the bellows away from the fire, and gathered his tools into a silver chest. Then he took a sponge and washed his face and hands, his shaggy chest and brawny neck; he donned his shirt, grasped his strong staff, and limped towards the door. There were golden handmaids also who worked for him, and were like real young women, with sense and reason, voice also and strength, and all the learning of the immortals; these busied themselves as the king bade them, while he drew near to Thetis, seated her upon a goodly seat, and took her hand in his own, saying, "Why have you come to our house, Thetis honoured and ever welcome for you do not visit us often? Say what you want, and I will do it for you at once if I can, and if it can be done at all."

Thetis wept and answered, "Vulcan, is there another goddess in Olympus whom the son of Saturn has been pleased to try with so much affliction as he has me? Me alone of the marine goddesses did he make subject to a mortal husband, Peleus son of Aeacus, and sorely against my will did I submit to the embraces of one who was but mortal, and who now stays at home worn out with age. Neither is this all. Heaven vouchsafed me a son, hero among heroes, and he shot up as a sapling. I tended him as a plant in a goodly garden and sent him with his ships to Ilius to fight the Trojans, but never shall I welcome him back to the house of Peleus. So long as he lives to look upon the light of the sun, he is in heaviness, and though I go to him I cannot help him; King Agamemnon has made him give up the maiden whom the sons of the Achaeans had awarded him, and he wastes with sorrow for her sake. Then the Trojans hemmed the Achaeans in at their ships' sterns and would not let them come forth; the elders, therefore, of the Argives besought Achilles and offered him great treasure, whereon he refused to bring deliverance to them himself, but put his own armour on Patroclus and sent him into the fight with much people after him. All day long they fought by the Scaean gates and would have taken the city there and then, had not Apollo vouchsafed glory to Hector and slain the valiant son of Menoetius after he had done the Trojans much evil. Therefore I am suppliant at your knees if haply you may be pleased to provide my son, whose end is near at hand, with helmet and shield, with goodly greaves fitted with ancle-clasps, and with a breastplate, for he lost his own when his true comrade fell at the hands of the Trojans, and he now lies stretched on earth in the bitterness of his soul."

And Vulcan answered, "Take heart, and be no more disquieted about this matter; would that I could hide him from death's sight when his hour is come, so surely as I can find him armour that shall amaze the eyes of all who behold it."

When he had so said he left her and went to his bellows, turning them towards the fire and bidding them do their office. Twenty bellows blew upon the melting-pots, and they blew blasts of every kind, some fierce to help him when he had need of them, and others less strong as Vulcan willed it in the course of his work. He threw tough copper into the fire, and tin, with silver and gold; he set his great anvil on its block, and with one hand grasped his mighty hammer while he took the tongs in the other.

First he shaped the shield so great and strong, adorning it all over and binding it round with a gleaming circuit in three layers; and the baldric was made of silver. He made the shield in five thicknesses, and with many a wonder did his cunning hand enrich it.

He wrought the earth, the heavens, and the sea; the moon also at her full and the untiring sun, with all the signs that glorify the face of heaven the Pleiads, the Hyads, huge Orion, and the Bear, which men also call the Wain and which turns round ever in one place, facing. Orion, and alone never dips into the stream of Oceanus.

He wrought also two cities, fair to see and busy with the hum of men. In the one were weddings and wedding-feasts, and they were going about the city with brides whom they were escorting by torchlight from their chambers. Loud rose the cry of Hymen, and the youths danced to the music of flute and lyre, while the women stood each at her house door to see them.

Meanwhile the people were gathered in assembly, for there was a quarrel, and two men were wrangling about the blood-money for a man who had been killed, the one saying before the people that he had paid damages in full, and the other that he had not been paid. Each was trying to make his own case good, and the people took sides, each man backing the side that he had taken; but the heralds kept them back, and the elders sate on their seats of stone in a solemn circle, holding the staves which the heralds had put into their hands. Then they rose and each in his turn gave judgement, and there were two talents laid down, to be given to him whose judgement should be deemed the fairest.

About the other city there lay encamped two hosts in gleaming armour, and they were divided whether to sack it, or to spare it and accept the half of what it contained. But the men of the city would not yet consent, and armed themselves for a surprise; their wives and little children kept guard upon the walls, and with them were the men who were past fighting through age; but the others sallied forth with Mars and Pallas Minerva at their head both of them wrought in gold and clad in golden raiment, great and fair with their armour as befitting gods, while they that followed were smaller. When they reached the place where they would lay their ambush, it was on a riverbed to which live stock of all kinds would come from far and near to water; here, then, they lay concealed, clad in full armour. Some way off them there were two scouts who were on the look-out for the coming of sheep or cattle, which presently came, followed by two shepherds who were playing on their pipes, and had not so much as a thought of danger. When those who were in ambush saw this, they cut off the flocks and herds and killed the shepherds. Meanwhile the besiegers, when they heard much noise among the cattle as they sat in council, sprang to their horses, and made with all speed towards them; when they reached them they set battle in array by the banks of the river, and the hosts aimed their bronze-shod spears at one another. With them were Strife and Riot, and fell Fate who was dragging three men after her, one with a fresh wound, and the other unwounded, while the third was dead, and she was dragging him along by his heel: and her robe was bedrabbled in men's blood. They went in and out with one another and fought as though they were living people haling away one another's dead.

He wrought also a fair fallow field, large and thrice ploughed already. Many men were working at the plough within it, turning their oxen to and fro, furrow after furrow. Each time that they turned on reaching the headland a man would come up to them and give them a cup of wine, and they would go back to their furrows looking forward to the time when they should again reach the headland. The part that they had ploughed was dark behind them, so that the field, though it was of gold, still looked as if it were being ploughed very curious to behold.

He wrought also a field of harvest corn, and the reapers were reaping with sharp sickles in their hands. Swathe after swathe fell to the ground in a straight line behind them, and the binders bound them in bands of twisted straw. There were three binders, and behind them there were boys who gathered the cut corn in armfuls and kept on bringing them to be bound: among them all the owner of the land stood by in silence and was glad. The servants were getting a meal ready under an oak, for they had sacrificed a great ox, and were busy cutting him up, while the women were making a porridge of much white barley for the labourers' dinner.

He wrought also a vineyard, golden and fair to see, and the vines were loaded with grapes. The bunches overhead were black, but the vines were trained on poles of silver. He ran a ditch of dark metal all round it, and fenced it with a fence of tin; there was only one path to it, and by this the vintagers went when they would gather the vintage. Youths and maidens all blithe and full of glee, carried the luscious fruit in plaited baskets; and with them there went a boy who made sweet music with his lyre, and sang the Linus-song with his clear boyish voice.

He wrought also a herd of homed cattle. He made the cows of gold and tin, and they lowed as they came full speed out of the yards to go and feed among the waving reeds that grow by the banks of the river. Along with the cattle there went four shepherds, all of them in gold, and their nine fleet dogs went with them. Two terrible lions had fastened on a bellowing bull that was with the foremost cows, and bellow as he might they haled him, while the dogs and men gave chase: the lions tore through the bull's thick hide and were gorging on his blood and bowels, but the herdsmen were afraid to do anything, and only hounded on their dogs; the dogs dared not fasten on the lions but stood by barking and keeping out of harm's way.

The god wrought also a pasture in a fair mountain dell, and large flock of sheep, with a homestead and huts, and sheltered sheepfolds.

Furthermore he wrought a green, like that which Daedalus once made in Cnossus for lovely Ariadne. Hereon there danced youths and maidens whom all would woo, with their hands on one another's wrists. The maidens wore robes of light linen, and the youths well woven shirts that were slightly oiled. The girls were crowned with garlands, while the young men had daggers of gold that hung by silver baldrics; sometimes they would dance deftly in a ring with merry twinkling feet, as it were a potter sitting at his work and making trial of his wheel to see whether it will run, and sometimes they would go all in line with one another, and much people was gathered joyously about the green. There was a bard also to sing to them and play his lyre, while two tumblers went about performing in the midst of them when the man struck up with his tune.

All round the outermost rim of the shield he set the mighty stream of the river Oceanus.

Then when he had fashioned the shield so great and strong, he made a breastplate also that shone brighter than fire. He made helmet, close fitting to the brow, and richly worked, with a golden plume overhanging it; and he made greaves also of beaten tin.

Lastly, when the famed lame god had made all the armour, he took it and set it before the mother of Achilles; whereon she darted like a falcon from the snowy summits of Olympus and bore away the gleaming armour from the house of Vulcan.

Book XIX

NOW when Dawn in robe of saffron was hasting from the streams of Oceanus, to bring light to mortals and immortals, Thetis reached the ships with the armour that the god had given her. She found her son fallen about the body of Patroclus and weeping bitterly. Many also of his followers were weeping round him, but when the goddess came among them she clasped his hand in her own, saying, "My son, grieve as we may we must let this man lie, for it is by heaven's will that he has fallen; now, therefore, accept from Vulcan this rich and goodly armour, which no man has ever yet borne upon his shoulders."

As she spoke she set the armour before Achilles, and it rang out bravely as she did so. The Myrmidons were struck with awe, and none dared look full at it, for they were afraid; but Achilles was roused to still greater fury, and his eyes gleamed with a fierce light, for he was glad when he handled the splendid present which the god had made him. Then, as soon as he had satisfied himself with looking at it, he said to his mother, "Mother, the god has given me armour, meet handiwork for an immortal and such as no living could have fashioned; I will now arm, but I much fear that flies will settle upon the son of Menoetius and breed worms about his wounds, so that his body, now he is dead, will be disfigured and the flesh will rot."

Silver-footed Thetis answered, "My son, be not disquieted about this matter. I will find means to protect him from the swarms of noisome flies that prey on the bodies of men who have been killed in battle. He may lie for a whole year, and his flesh shall still be as sound as ever, or even sounder. Call, therefore, the Achaean heroes in assembly; unsay your anger against Agamemnon; arm at once, and fight with might and main."

As she spoke she put strength and courage into his heart, and she then dropped ambrosia and red nectar into the wounds of Patroclus, that his body might suffer no change.

Then Achilles went out upon the seashore, and with a loud cry called on the Achaean heroes. On this even those who as yet had stayed always at the ships, the pilots and helmsmen, and even the stewards who were about the ships and served out rations, all came to the place of assembly because Achilles had shown himself after having held aloof so long from fighting. Two sons of Mars, Ulysses and the son of Tydeus, came limping, for their wounds still pained them; nevertheless they came, and took their seats in the front row of the assembly. Last of all came Agamemnon, king of men, he too wounded, for Coon son of Antenor had struck him with a spear in battle.

When the Achaeans were got together Achilles rose and said, "Son of Atreus, surely it would have been better alike for both you and me, when we two were in such high anger about Briseis, surely it would have been better, had Diana's arrow slain her at the ships on the day when I took her after having sacked Lyrnessus. For so, many an Achaean the less would have bitten dust before the foe in the days of my anger. It has been well for Hector and the Trojans, but the Achaeans will long indeed remember our quarrel. Now, however, let it be, for it is over. If we have been angry, necessity has schooled our anger. I put it from me: I dare not nurse it for ever; therefore, bid the Achaeans arm forthwith that I may go out against the Trojans, and learn whether they will be in a mind to sleep by the ships or no. Glad, I ween, will he be to rest his knees who may fly my spear when I wield it."

Thus did he speak, and the Achaeans rejoiced in that he had put away his anger.

Then Agamemnon spoke, rising in his place, and not going into the middle of the assembly. “Danaan heroes,” said he, “servants of Mars, it is well to listen when a man stands up to speak, and it is not seemly to interrupt him, or it will go hard even with a practised speaker. Who can either hear or speak in an uproar? Even the finest orator will be disconcerted by it. I will expound to the son of Peleus, and do you other Achaeans heed me and mark me well. Often have the Achaeans spoken to me of this matter and upbraided me, but it was not I that did it: Jove, and Fate, and Erinys that walks in darkness struck me mad when we were assembled on the day that I took from Achilles the meed that had been awarded to him. What could I do? All things are in the hand of heaven, and Folly, eldest of Jove’s daughters, shuts men’s eyes to their destruction. She walks delicately, not on the solid earth, but hovers over the heads of men to make them stumble or to ensnare them.

“Time was when she fooled Jove himself, who they say is greatest whether of gods or men; for Juno, woman though she was, beguiled him on the day when Alcmena was to bring forth mighty Hercules in the fair city of Thebes. He told it out among the gods saying, ‘Hear me all gods and goddesses, that I may speak even as I am minded; this day shall an Ilithuia, helper of women who are in labour, bring a man child into the world who shall be lord over all that dwell about him who are of my blood and lineage.’ Then said Juno all crafty and full of guile, ‘You will play false, and will not hold to your word. Swear me, O Olympian, swear me a great oath, that he who shall this day fall between the feet of a woman, shall be lord over all that dwell about him who are of your blood and lineage.’

“Thus she spoke, and Jove suspected her not, but swore the great oath, to his much ruing thereafter. For Juno darted down from the high summit of Olympus, and went in haste to Achaean Argos where she knew that the noble wife of Sthenelus son of Perseus then was. She being with child and in her seventh month, Juno brought the child to birth though there was a month still wanting, but she stayed the offspring of Alcmena, and kept back the Ilithuiae. Then she went to tell Jove the son of Saturn, and said, ‘Father Jove, lord of the lightning I have a word for your ear. There is a fine child born this day, Eurystheus, son to Sthenelus the son of Perseus; he is of your lineage; it is well, therefore, that he should reign over the Argives.’

“On this Jove was stung to the very quick, and in his rage he caught Folly by the hair, and swore a great oath that never should she again invade starry heaven and Olympus, for she was the bane of all. Then he whirled her round with a twist of his hand, and flung her down from heaven so that she fell on to the fields of mortal men; and he was ever angry with her when he saw his son groaning under the cruel labours that Eurystheus laid upon him. Even so did I grieve when mighty Hector was killing the Argives at their ships, and all the time I kept thinking of Folly who had so baned me. I was blind, and Jove robbed me of my reason; I will now make atonement, and will add much treasure by way of amends. Go, therefore, into battle, you and your people with you. I will give you all that Ulysses offered you yesterday in your tents: or if it so please you, wait, though you would fain fight at once, and my squires shall bring the gifts from my ship, that you may see whether what I give you is enough.”

And Achilles answered, “Son of Atreus, king of men Agamemnon, you can give such gifts as you think proper, or you can withhold them: it is in your own hands. Let us now set battle in array; it is not well to tarry talking about trifles, for there is a deed which is as yet to do. Achilles shall again be seen fighting among the foremost, and laying low the ranks of the Trojans: bear this in mind each one of you when he is fighting.”

Then Ulysses said, “Achilles, godlike and brave, send not the Achaeans thus against Ilius to fight the Trojans fasting, for the battle will be no brief one, when it is once begun, and heaven has filled both sides with fury; bid them first take food both bread and wine by the ships, for in this there is strength and stay. No man can do battle the livelong day to the going down of the sun if he is without food; however much he may want to fight his strength will fail him before he knows it; hunger and thirst will find him out, and his limbs will grow weary under him. But a man can fight all day if he is full fed with meat and wine; his heart beats high, and his strength will stay till he has routed all his foes; therefore, send the people away and bid them prepare their meal; King Agamemnon will bring out the gifts in presence of the assembly, that all may see them and you may be satisfied. Moreover let him swear an oath before the Argives that he has never gone up into the couch of Briseis, nor been with her after the manner of men and women; and do you, too, show yourself of a gracious mind; let Agamemnon entertain you in his tents with a feast of reconciliation, that so you may have had your dues in full. As for you, son of Atreus, treat people more righteously in future; it is no disgrace even to a king that he should make amends if he was wrong in the first instance.”

And King Agamemnon answered, “Son of Laertes, your words please me well, for throughout you have spoken wisely. I will swear as you would have me do; I do so of my own free will, neither shall I take the name of heaven in vain. Let, then, Achilles wait,

though he would fain fight at once, and do you others wait also, till the gifts come from my tent and we ratify the oath with sacrifice. Thus, then, do I charge you: take some noble young Achaeans with you, and bring from my tents the gifts that I promised yesterday to Achilles, and bring the women also; furthermore let Talthybius find me a boar from those that are with the host, and make it ready for sacrifice to Jove and to the sun."

Then said Achilles, "Son of Atreus, king of men Agamemnon, see to these matters at some other season, when there is breathing time and when I am calmer. Would you have men eat while the bodies of those whom Hector son of Priam slew are still lying mangled upon the plain? Let the sons of the Achaeans, say I, fight fasting and without food, till we have avenged them; afterwards at the going down of the sun let them eat their fill. As for me, Patroclus is lying dead in my tent, all hacked and hewn, with his feet to the door, and his comrades are mourning round him. Therefore I can take thought of nothing save only slaughter and blood and the rattle in the throat of the dying."

Ulysses answered, "Achilles, son of Peleus, mightiest of all the Achaeans, in battle you are better than I, and that more than a little, but in counsel I am much before you, for I am older and of greater knowledge. Therefore be patient under my words. Fighting is a thing of which men soon surfeit, and when Jove, who is wars steward, weighs the upshot, it may well prove that the straw which our sickles have reaped is far heavier than the grain. It may not be that the Achaeans should mourn the dead with their bellies; day by day men fall thick and threefold continually; when should we have respite from our sorrow? Let us mourn our dead for a day and bury them out of sight and mind, but let those of us who are left eat and drink that we may arm and fight our foes more fiercely. In that hour let no man hold back, waiting for a second summons; such summons shall bode ill for him who is found lagging behind at our ships; let us rather sally as one man and loose the fury of war upon the Trojans."

When he had thus spoken he took with him the sons of Nestor, with Meges son of Phyleus, Thoas, Meriones, Lycomedes son of Creontes, and Melanippus, and went to the tent of Agamemnon son of Atreus. The word was not sooner said than the deed was done: they brought out the seven tripods which Agamemnon had promised, with the twenty metal cauldrons and the twelve horses; they also brought the women skilled in useful arts, seven in number, with Briseis, which made eight. Ulysses weighed out the ten talents of gold and then led the way back, while the young Achaeans brought the rest of the gifts, and laid them in the middle of the assembly.

Agamemnon then rose, and Talthybius whose voice was like that of a god came to him with the boar. The son of Atreus drew the knife which he wore by the scabbard of his mighty sword, and began by cutting off some bristles from the boar, lifting up his hands in prayer as he did so. The other Achaeans sat where they were all silent and orderly to hear the king, and Agamemnon looked into the vault of heaven and prayed saying, "I call Jove the first and mightiest of all gods to witness, I call also Earth and Sun and the Erinyes who dwell below and take vengeance on him who shall swear falsely, that I have laid no hand upon the girl Briseis, neither to take her to my bed nor otherwise, but that she has remained in my tents inviolate. If I swear falsely may heaven visit me with all the penalties which it metes out to those who perjure themselves."

He cut the boar's throat as he spoke, whereon Talthybius whirled it round his head, and flung it into the wide sea to feed the fishes. Then Achilles also rose and said to the Argives, "Father Jove, of a truth you blind men's eyes and bane them. The son of Atreus had not else stirred me to so fierce an anger, nor so stubbornly taken Briseis from me against my will. Surely Jove must have counselled the destruction of many an Argive. Go, now, and take your food that we may begin fighting."

On this he broke up the assembly, and every man went back to his own ship. The Myrmidons attended to the presents and took them away to the ship of Achilles. They placed them in his tents, while the stable-men drove the horses in among the others.

Briseis, fair as Venus, when she saw the mangled body of Patroclus, flung herself upon it and cried aloud, tearing her breast, her neck, and her lovely face with both her hands. Beautiful as a goddess she wept and said, "Patroclus, dearest friend, when I went hence I left you living; I return, O prince, to find you dead; thus do fresh sorrows multiply upon me one after the other. I saw him to whom my father and mother married me, cut down before our city, and my three own dear brothers perished with him on the self-same day; but you, Patroclus, even when Achilles slew my husband and sacked the city of noble Mynes, told me that I was not to weep, for you said you would make Achilles marry me, and take me back with him to Phthia, we should have a wedding feast among the Myrmidons. You were always kind to me and I shall never cease to grieve for you."

She wept as she spoke, and the women joined in her lament-making as though their tears were for Patroclus, but in truth each was weeping for her own sorrows. The elders of the Achaeans gathered round Achilles and prayed him to take food, but he groaned and

would not do so. “I pray you,” said he, “if any comrade will hear me, bid me neither eat nor drink, for I am in great heaviness, and will stay fasting even to the going down of the sun.”

On this he sent the other princes away, save only the two sons of Atreus and Ulysses, Nestor, Idomeneus, and the knight Phoenix, who stayed behind and tried to comfort him in the bitterness of his sorrow: but he would not be comforted till he should have flung himself into the jaws of battle, and he fetched sigh on sigh, thinking ever of Patroclus. Then he said

“Hapless and dearest comrade, you it was who would get a good dinner ready for me at once and without delay when the Achaeans were hasting to fight the Trojans; now, therefore, though I have meat and drink in my tents, yet will I fast for sorrow. Grief greater than this I could not know, not even though I were to hear of the death of my father, who is now in Phthia weeping for the loss of me his son, who am here fighting the Trojans in a strange land for the accursed sake of Helen, nor yet though I should hear that my son is no more he who is being brought up in Scyros if indeed Neoptolemus is still living. Till now I made sure that I alone was to fall here at Troy away from Argos, while you were to return to Phthia, bring back my son with you in your own ship, and show him all my property, my bondsmen, and the greatness of my house for Peleus must surely be either dead, or what little life remains to him is oppressed alike with the infirmities of age and ever present fear lest he should hear the sad tidings of my death.”

He wept as he spoke, and the elders sighed in concert as each thought on what he had left at home behind him. The son of Saturn looked down with pity upon them, and said presently to Minerva, “My child, you have quite deserted your hero; is he then gone so clean out of your recollection? There he sits by the ships all desolate for the loss of his dear comrade, and though the others are gone to their dinner he will neither eat nor drink. Go then and drop nectar and ambrosia into his breast, that he may know no hunger.”

With these words he urged Minerva, who was already of the same mind. She darted down from heaven into the air like some falcon sailing on his broad wings and screaming. Meanwhile the Achaeans were arming throughout the host, and when Minerva had dropped nectar and ambrosia into Achilles so that no cruel hunger should cause his limbs to fail him, she went back to the house of her mighty father. Thick as the chill snow-flakes shed from the hand of Jove and borne on the keen blasts of the north wind, even so thick did the gleaming helmets, the bossed shields, the strongly plated breastplates, and the ashen spears stream from the ships. The sheen pierced the sky, the whole land was radiant with their flashing armour, and the sound of the tramp of their treading rose from under their feet. In the midst of them all Achilles put on his armour; he gnashed his teeth, his eyes gleamed like fire, for his grief was greater than he could bear. Thus, then, full of fury against the Trojans, did he don the gift of the god, the armour that Vulcan had made him.

First he put on the goodly greaves fitted with ancle-clasps, and next he did on the breastplate about his chest.

He slung the silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then took up the shield so great and strong that shone afar with a splendour as of the moon. As the light seen by sailors from out at sea, when men have lit a fire in their homestead high up among the mountains, but the sailors are carried out to sea by wind and storm far from the haven where they would be even so did the gleam of Achilles’ wondrous shield strike up into the heavens. He lifted the redoubtable helmet, and set it upon his head, from whence it shone like a star, and the golden plumes which Vulcan had set thick about the ridge of the helmet, waved all around it. Then Achilles made trial of himself in his armour to see whether it fitted him, so that his limbs could play freely under it, and it seemed to buoy him up as though it had been wings.

He also drew his father’s spear out of the spear-stand, a spear so great and heavy and strong that none of the Achaeans save only Achilles had strength to wield it; this was the spear of Pelian ash from the topmost ridges of Mt. Pelion, which Chiron had once given to Peleus, fraught with the death of heroes. Automedon and Alcimus busied themselves with the harnessing of his horses; they made the bands fast about them, and put the bit in their mouths, drawing the reins back towards the chariot. Automedon, whip in hand, sprang up behind the horses, and after him Achilles mounted in full armour, resplendent as the sun-god Hyperion. Then with a loud voice he chided with his father’s horses saying, “Xanthus and Balius, famed offspring of Podarge this time when we have done fighting be sure and bring your driver safely back to the host of the Achaeans, and do not leave him dead on the plain as you did Patroclus.”

Then fleet Xanthus answered under the yoke for white-armed Juno had endowed him with human speech and he bowed his head till his mane touched the ground as it hung down from under the yoke-band. “Dread Achilles,” said he, “we will indeed save you now, but the day of your death is near, and the blame will not be ours, for it will be heaven and stern fate that will destroy you. Neither was it through any sloth or slackness on our part that the Trojans stripped Patroclus of his armour; it was the mighty god

whom lovely Leto bore that slew him as he fought among the foremost, and vouchsafed a triumph to Hector. We two can fly as swiftly as Zephyrus who they say is fleetest of all winds; nevertheless it is your doom to fall by the hand of a man and of a god."

When he had thus said the Erinyes stayed his speech, and Achilles answered him in great sadness, saying, "Why, O Xanthus, do you thus foretell my death? You need not do so, for I well know that I am to fall here, far from my dear father and mother; none the more, however, shall I stay my hand till I have given the Trojans their fill of fighting."

So saying, with a loud cry he drove his horses to the front.

Book XX

THUS, then, did the Achaeans arm by their ships round you, O son of Peleus, who were hungering for battle; while the Trojans over against them armed upon the rise of the plain.

Meanwhile Jove from the top of many-delled Olympus, bade Themis gather the gods in council, whereon she went about and called them to the house of Jove. There was not a river absent except Oceanus, nor a single one of the nymphs that haunt fair groves, or springs of rivers and meadows of green grass. When they reached the house of cloud-compelling Jove, they took their seats in the arcades of polished marble which Vulcan with his consummate skill had made for father Jove.

In such wise, therefore, did they gather in the house of Jove. Neptune also, lord of the earthquake, obeyed the call of the goddess, and came up out of the sea to join them. There, sitting in the midst of them, he asked what Jove's purpose might be. "Why," said he, "wielder of the lightning, have you called the gods in council? Are you considering some matter that concerns the Trojans and Achaeans for the blaze of battle is on the point of being kindled between them?"

And Jove answered, "You know my purpose, shaker of earth, and wherefore I have called you hither. I take thought for them even in their destruction. For my own part I shall stay here seated on Mt. Olympus and look on in peace, but do you others go about among Trojans and Achaeans, and help either side as you may be severally disposed. If Achilles fights the Trojans without hindrance they will make no stand against him; they have ever trembled at the sight of him, and now that he is roused to such fury about his comrade, he will override fate itself and storm their city."

Thus spoke Jove and gave the word for war, whereon the gods took their several sides and went into battle. Juno, Pallas Minerva, earth-encircling Neptune, Mercury bringer of good luck and excellent in all cunning all these joined the host that came from the ships; with them also came Vulcan in all his glory, limping, but yet with his thin legs plying lustily under him. Mars of gleaming helmet joined the Trojans, and with him Apollo of locks unshorn, and the archer goddess Diana, Leto, Xanthus, and laughter-loving Venus.

So long as the gods held themselves aloof from mortal warriors the Achaeans were triumphant, for Achilles who had long refused to fight was now with them. There was not a Trojan but his limbs failed him for fear as he beheld the fleet son of Peleus all glorious in his armour, and looking like Mars himself. When, however, the Olympians came to take their part among men, forthwith uprose strong Strife, rouser of hosts, and Minerva raised her loud voice, now standing by the deep trench that ran outside the wall, and now shouting with all her might upon the shore of the sounding sea. Mars also bellowed out upon the other side, dark as some black thunder-cloud, and called on the Trojans at the top of his voice, now from the acropolis, and now speeding up the side of the river Simois till he came to the hill Callicolone.

Thus did the gods spur on both hosts to fight, and rouse fierce contention also among themselves. The sire of gods and men thundered from heaven above, while from beneath Neptune shook the vast earth, and bade the high hills tremble. The spurs and crests of many-fountained Ida quaked, as also the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans. Hades, king of the realms below, was struck with fear; he sprang panic-stricken from his throne and cried aloud in terror lest Neptune, lord of the earthquake, should crack the ground over his head, and lay bare his mouldy mansions to the sight of mortals and immortals mansions so ghastly grim that even the gods shudder
to think of them. Such was the uproar as the gods came together in battle. Apollo with his arrows took his stand to face King Neptune, while Minerva took hers against the god of war; the archer-goddess Diana with her golden arrows, sister of far-darting Apollo, stood to face Juno; Mercury the lusty bringer of good luck faced Leto, while the mighty eddying river whom men can Scamander, but gods Xanthus, matched himself against Vulcan.

The gods, then, were thus ranged against one another. But the heart of Achilles was set on meeting Hector son of Priam, for it was with his blood that he longed above all things else to glut the stubborn lord of battle. Meanwhile Apollo set Aeneas on to attack the

son of Peleus, and put courage into his heart, speaking with the voice of Lycaon son of Priam. In his likeness therefore, he said to Aeneas, “Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, where are now the brave words with which you vaunted over your wine before the Trojan princes, saying that you would fight Achilles son of Peleus in single combat?”

And Aeneas answered, “Why do you thus bid me fight the proud son of Peleus, when I am in no mind to do so? Were I to face him now, it would not be for the first time. His spear has already put me to Right from Ida, when he attacked our cattle and sacked Lyrnessus and Pedasus; Jove indeed saved me in that he vouchsafed me strength to fly, else had the fallen by the hands of Achilles and Minerva, who went before him to protect him and urged him to fall upon the Lelegae and Trojans. No man may fight Achilles, for one of the gods is always with him as his guardian angel, and even were it not so, his weapon flies ever straight, and fails not to pierce the flesh of him who is against him; if heaven would let me fight him on even terms he should not soon overcome me, though he boasts that he is made of bronze.”

Then said King Apollo, son to Jove, “Nay, hero, pray to the ever-living gods, for men say that you were born of Jove’s daughter Venus, whereas Achilles is son to a goddess of inferior rank. Venus is child to Jove, while Thetis is but daughter to the old man of the sea. Bring, therefore, your spear to bear upon him, and let him not scare you with his taunts and menaces.”

As he spoke he put courage into the heart of the shepherd of his people, and he strode in full armour among the ranks of the foremost fighters. Nor did the son of Anchises escape the notice of white-armed Juno, as he went forth into the throng to meet Achilles. She called the gods about her, and said, “Look to it, you two, Neptune and Minerva, and consider how this shall be; Phoebus Apollo has been sending Aeneas clad in full armour to fight Achilles. Shall we turn him back at once, or shall one of us stand by Achilles and endow him with strength so that his heart fail not, and he may learn that the chiefs of the immortals are on his side, while the others who have all along been defending the Trojans are but vain helpers? Let us all come down from Olympus and join in the fight, that this day he may take no hurt at the hands of the Trojans. Hereafter let him suffer whatever fate may have spun out for him when he was begotten and his mother bore him. If Achilles be not thus assured by the voice of a god, he may come to fear presently when one of us meets him in battle, for the gods are terrible if they are seen face to face.”

Neptune lord of the earthquake answered her saying, “Juno, restrain your fury; it is not well; I am not in favour of forcing the other gods to fight us, for the advantage is too greatly on our own side; let us take our places on some hill out of the beaten track, and let mortals fight it out among themselves. If Mars or Phoebus Apollo begin fighting, or keep Achilles in check so that he cannot fight, we too, will at once raise the cry of battle, and in that case they will soon leave the field and go back vanquished to Olympus among the other gods.”

With these words the dark-haired god led the way to the high earth-barrow of Hercules, built round solid masonry, and made by the Trojans and Pallas Minerva for him fly to when the sea-monster was chasing him from the shore on to the plain. Here Neptune and those that were with him took their seats, wrapped in a thick cloud of darkness; but the other gods seated themselves on the brow of Callicolone round you, O Phoebus, and Mars the waster of cities.

Thus did the gods sit apart and form their plans, but neither side was willing to begin battle with the other, and Jove from his seat on high was in command over them all. Meanwhile the whole plain was alive with men and horses, and blazing with the gleam of armour. The earth rang again under the tramp of their feet as they rushed towards each other, and two champions, by far the foremost of them all, met between the hosts to fight to wit, Aeneas son of Anchises, and noble Achilles.

Aeneas was first to stride forward in attack, his doughty helmet tossing defiance as he came on. He held his strong shield before his breast, and brandished his bronze spear. The son of Peleus from the other side sprang forth to meet him, fike some fierce lion that the whole country-side has met to hunt and kill at first he bodes no ill, but when some daring youth has struck him with a spear, he crouches openmouthed, his jaws foam, he roars with fury, he lashes his tail from side to side about his ribs and loins, and glares as he springs straight before him, to find out whether he is to slay, or be slain among the foremost of his foes even with such fury did Achilles burn to spring upon Aeneas.

When they were now close up with one another Achilles was first to speak. “Aeneas,” said he, “why do you stand thus out before the host to fight me? Is it that you hope to reign over the Trojans in the seat of Priam? Nay, though you kill me Priam will not hand his kingdom over to you. He is a man of sound judgement, and he has sons of his own. Or have the Trojans been allotting you a demesne of passing richness, fair with orchard lawns and corn lands, if you should slay me? This you shall hardly do. I have discomfited you once already. Have you forgotten how when you were alone I chased you from your herds helter-skelter down the slopes of Ida? You did not turn round to look behind you; you took refuge in Lyrnessus, but I attacked the city, and with the help of

Minerva and father Jove I sacked it and carried its women into captivity, though Jove and the other gods rescued you. You think they will protect you now, but they will not do so; therefore I say go back into the host, and do not face me, or you will rue it. Even a fool may be wise after the event."

Then Aeneas answered, "Son of Peleus, think not that your words can scare me as though I were a child. I too, if I will, can brag and talk unseemly. We know one another's race and parentage as matters of common fame, though neither have you ever seen my parents nor I yours. Men say that you are son to noble Peleus, and that your mother is Thetis, fair-haired daughter of the sea. I have noble Anchises for my father, and Venus for my mother; the parents of one or other of us shall this day mourn a son, for it will be more than silly talk that shall part us when the fight is over. Learn, then, my lineage if you will and it is known to many.

"In the beginning Dardanus was the son of Jove, and founded Dardania, for Ilius was not yet stablished on the plain for men to dwell in, and her people still abode on the spurs of many-fountained Ida. Dardanus had a son, king Erichthonius, who was wealthiest of all men living; he had three thousand mares that fed by the water-meadows, they and their foals with them. Boreas was enamoured of them as they were feeding, and covered them in the semblance of a dark-maned stallion. Twelve filly foals did they conceive and bear him, and these, as they sped over the rich plain, would go bounding on over the ripe ears of corn and not break them; or again when they would disport themselves on the broad back of Ocean they could gallop on the crest of a breaker. Erichthonius begat Tros, king of the Trojans, and Tros had three noble sons, Ilus, Assaracus, and Ganymede who was comeliest of mortal men; wherefore the gods carried him off to be Jove's cupbearer, for his beauty's sake, that he might dwell among the immortals. Ilus begat Laomedon, and Laomedon begat Tithonus, Priam, Lampus, Clytius, and Hiketaon of the stock of Mars. But Assaracus was father to Capys, and Capys to Anchises, who was my father, while Hector is son to Priam.

"Such do I declare my blood and lineage, but as for valour, Jove gives it or takes it as he will, for he is lord of all. And now let there be no more of this prating in mid-battle as though we were children. We could fling taunts without end at one another; a hundred-oared galley would not hold them. The tongue can run all whithers and talk all wise; it can go here and there, and as a man says, so shall he be gainsaid. What is the use of our bandying hard like women who when they fall foul of one another go out and wrangle in the streets, one half true and the other lies, as rage inspires them? No words of yours shall turn me now that I am fain to fight therefore let us make trial of one another with our spears."

As he spoke he drove his spear at the great and terrible shield of Achilles, which rang out as the point struck it. The son of Peleus held the shield before him with his strong hand, and he was afraid, for he deemed that Aeneas's spear would go through it quite easily, not reflecting that the god's glorious gifts were little likely to yield before the blows of mortal men; and indeed Aeneas's spear did not pierce the shield, for the layer of gold, gift of the god, stayed the point. It went through two layers, but the god had made the shield in five, two of bronze, the two innermost ones of tin, and one of gold; it was in this that the spear was stayed.

Achilles in his turn threw, and struck the round shield of Aeneas at the very edge, where the bronze was thinnest; the spear of Pelian ash went clean through, and the shield rang under the blow; Aeneas was afraid, and crouched backwards, holding the shield away from him; the spear, however, flew over his back, and stuck quivering in the ground, after having gone through both circles of the sheltering shield. Aeneas though he had avoided the spear, stood still, blinded with fear and grief because the weapon had gone so near him; then Achilles sprang furiously upon him, with a cry as of death and with his keen blade drawn, and Aeneas seized a great stone, so huge that two men, as men now are, would be unable to lift it, but Aeneas wielded it quite easily.

Aeneas would then have struck Achilles as he was springing towards him, either on the helmet, or on the shield that covered him, and Achilles would have closed with him and despatched him with his sword, had not Neptune lord of the earthquake been quick to mark, and said forthwith to the immortals, "Alas, I am sorry for great Aeneas, who will now go down to the house of Hades, vanquished by the son of Peleus. Fool that he was to give ear to the counsel of Apollo. Apollo will never save him from destruction. Why should this man suffer when he is guiltless, to no purpose, and in another's quarrel? Has he not at all times offered acceptable sacrifice to the gods that dwell in heaven? Let us then snatch him from death's jaws, lest the son of Saturn be angry should Achilles slay him. It is fated, moreover, that he should escape, and that the race of Dardanus, whom Jove loved above all the sons born to him of mortal women, shall not perish utterly without seed or sign. For now indeed has Jove hated the blood of Priam, while Aeneas shall reign over the Trojans, he and his children's children that shall be born hereafter."

Then answered Juno, "Earth-shaker, look to this matter yourself, and consider concerning Aeneas, whether you will save him, or suffer him, brave though he be, to fall by the hand of Achilles son of Peleus. For of a truth we two, I and Pallas Minerva, have

sworn full many a time before all the immortals, that never would we shield Trojans from destruction, not even when all Troy is burning in the flames that the Achaeans shall kindle."

When earth-encircling Neptune heard this he went into the battle amid the clash of spears, and came to the place where Achilles and Aeneas were. Forthwith he shed a darkness before the eyes of the son of Peleus, drew the bronze-headed ashen spear from the shield of Aeneas, and laid it at the feet of Achilles. Then he lifted Aeneas on high from off the earth and hurried him away. Over the heads of many a band of warriors both horse and foot did he soar as the god's hand sped him, till he came to the very fringe of the battle where the Cauconians were arming themselves for fight. Neptune, shaker of the earth, then came near to him and said, Aeneas, what god has egged you on to this folly in fighting the son of Peleus, who is both a mightier man of valour and more beloved of heaven than you are? Give way before him whensoever you meet him, lest you go down to the house of Hades even though fate would have it otherwise. When Achilles is dead you may then fight among the foremost undaunted, for none other of the Achaeans shall slay you."

The god left him when he had given him these instructions, and at once removed the darkness from before the eyes of Achilles, who opened them wide indeed and said in great anger, "Alas! what marvel am I now beholding? Here is my spear upon the ground, but I see not him whom I meant to kill when I hurled it. Of a truth Aeneas also must be under heaven's protection, although I had thought his boasting was idle. Let him go hang; he will be in no mood to fight me further, seeing how narrowly he has missed being killed. I will now give my orders to the Danaans and attack some other of the Trojans."

He sprang forward along the line and cheered his men on as he did so. "Let not the Trojans," he cried, "keep you at arm's length, Achaeans, but go for them and fight them man for man. However valiant I may be, I cannot give chase to so many and fight all of them. Even Mars, who is an immortal, or Minerva, would shrink from flinging himself into the jaws of such a fight and laying about him; nevertheless, so far as in me lies I will show no slackness of hand or foot nor want of endurance, not even for a moment; I will utterly break their ranks, and woe to the Trojan who shall venture within reach of my spear."

Thus did he exhort them. Meanwhile Hector called upon the Trojans and declared that he would fight Achilles. "Be not afraid, proud Trojans," said he, "to face the son of Peleus; I could fight gods myself if the battle were one of words only, but they would be more than a match for me, if we had to use our spears. Even so the deed of Achilles will fall somewhat short of his word; he will do in part, and the other part he will clip short. I will go up against him though his hands be as fire though his hands be fire and his strength iron."

Thus urged the Trojans lifted up their spears against the Achaeans, and raised the cry of battle as they flung themselves into the midst of their ranks. But Phoebus Apollo came up to Hector and said, "Hector, on no account must you challenge Achilles to single combat; keep a lookout for him while you are under cover of the others and away from the thick of the fight, otherwise he will either hit you with a spear or cut you down at close quarters."

Thus he spoke, and Hector drew back within the crowd, for he was afraid when he heard what the god had said to him. Achilles then sprang upon the Trojans with a terrible cry, clothed in valour as with a garment. First he killed Iphition son of Otrynteus, a leader of much people whom a naiad nymph had borne to Otrynteus waster of cities, in the land of Hyde under the snowy heights of Mt. Tmolus. Achilles struck him full on the head as he was coming on towards him, and split it clean in two; whereon he fell heavily to the ground and Achilles vaunted over him saying, "You he low, son of Otrynteus, mighty hero; your death is here, but your lineage is on the Gygaean lake where your father's estate lies, by Hyllus, rich in fish, and the eddying waters of Hermus."

Thus did he vaunt, but darkness closed the eyes of the other. The chariots of the Achaeans cut him up as their wheels passed over him in the front of the battle, and after him Achilles killed Demoleon, a valiant man of war and son to Antenor. He struck him on the temple through his bronze-cheeked helmet. The helmet did not stay the spear, but it went right on, crushing the bone so that the brain inside was shed in all directions, and his lust of fighting was ended. Then he struck Hippodamas in the midriff as he was springing down from his chariot in front of him, and trying to escape. He breathed his last, bellowing like a bull bellows when young men are dragging him to offer him in sacrifice to the King of Helice, and the heart of the earth-shaker is glad; even so did he bellow as he lay dying. Achilles then went in pursuit of Polydorus son of Priam, whom his father had always forbidden to fight because he was the youngest of his sons, the one he loved best, and the fastest runner. He, in his folly and showing off the fleetness of his feet, was rushing about among front ranks until he lost his life, for Achilles struck him in the middle of the back as he was darting past him: he struck him just at the golden fastenings of his belt and where the two pieces of the double breastplate

overlapped. The point of the spear pierced him through and came out by the navel, whereon he fell groaning on to his knees and a cloud of darkness overshadowed him as he sank holding his entrails in his hands.

When Hector saw his brother Polydorus with his entrails in his hands and sinking down upon the ground, a mist came over his eyes, and he could not bear to keep longer at a distance; he therefore poised his spear and darted towards Achilles like a flame of fire. When Achilles saw him he bounded forward and vaunted saying, “This is he that has wounded my heart most deeply and has slain my beloved comrade. Not for long shall we two quail before one another on the highways of war.”

He looked fiercely on Hector and said, “Draw near, that you may meet your doom the sooner.” Hector feared him not and answered, “Son of Peleus, think not that your words can scare me as though I were a child; I too if I will can brag and talk unseemly; I know that you are a mighty warrior, mightier by far than I, nevertheless the issue lies in the the lap of heaven whether I, worse man though I be, may not slay you with my spear, for this too has been found keen ere now.”

He hurled his spear as he spoke, but Minerva breathed upon it, and though she breathed but very lightly she turned it back from going towards Achilles, so that it returned to Hector and lay at his feet in front of him. Achilles then sprang furiously on him with a loud cry, bent on killing him, but Apollo caught him up easily as a god can, and hid him in a thick darkness. Thrice did Achilles spring towards him spear in hand, and thrice did he waste his blow upon the air. When he rushed forward for the fourth time as though he were a god, he shouted aloud saying, “Hound, this time too you have escaped death but of a truth it came exceedingly near you. Phoebus Apollo, to whom it seems you pray before you go into battle, has again saved you; but if I too have any friend among the gods I will surely make an end of you when I come across you at some other time. Now, however, I will pursue and overtake other Trojans.”

On this he struck Dryops with his spear, about the middle of his neck, and he fell headlong at his feet. There he let him lie and stayed Demouchus son of Philetor, a man both brave and of great stature, by hitting him on the knee with a spear; then he smote him with his sword and killed him. After this he sprang on Laogonus and Dardanus, sons of Bias, and threw them from their chariot, the one with a blow from a thrown spear, while the other he cut down in hand-to-hand fight. There was also Tros the son of Alastor he came up to Achilles and clasped his knees in the hope that he would spare him and not kill him but let him go, because they were both of the same age. Fool, he might have known that he should not prevail with him, for the man was in no mood for pity or forbearance but was in grim earnest. Therefore when Tros laid hold of his knees and sought a hearing for his prayers, Achilles drove his sword into his liver, and the liver came rolling out, while his bosom was all covered with the black blood that welled from the wound. Thus did death close his eyes as he lay lifeless.

Achilles then went up to Mulius and struck him on the ear with a spear, and the bronze spear-head came right out at the other ear. He also struck Echeclus son of Agenor on the head with his sword, which became warm with the blood, while death and stern fate closed the eyes of Echeclus. Next in order the bronze point of his spear wounded Deucalion in the fore-arm where the sinews of the elbow are united, whereon he waited Achilles’ onset with his arm hanging down and death staring him in the face. Achilles cut his head off with a blow from his sword and flung it helmet and all away from him, and the marrow came oozing out of his backbone as he lay. He then went in pursuit of Rhigmus, noble son of Peires, who had come from fertile Thrace, and struck him through the middle with a spear which fixed itself in his belly, so that he fell headlong from his chariot. He also speared Areithous squire to Rhigmus in the back as he was turning his horses in flight, and thrust him from his chariot, while the horses were struck with panic.

As a fire raging in some mountain glen after long drought and the dense forest is in a blaze, while the wind carries great tongues of fire in every direction even so furiously did Achilles rage, wielding his spear as though he were a god, and giving chase to those whom he would slay, till the dark earth ran with blood. Or as one who yokes broad-browed oxen that they may tread barley in a threshing-floor and it is soon bruised small under the feet of the lowing cattle even so did the horses of Achilles trample on the shields and bodies of the slain. The axle underneath and the railing that ran round the car were bespattered with clots of blood thrown up by the horses’ hoofs, and from the tyres of the wheels; but the son of Peleus pressed on to win still further glory, and his hands were bedrabbled with gore.

Book XXI

NOW when they came to the ford of the full-flowing river Xanthus, begotten of immortal Jove, Achilles cut their forces in two: one half he chased over the plain towards the city by the same way that the Achaeans had taken when flying panic-stricken on the preceding day with Hector in full triumph; this way did they fly pell-mell, and Juno sent down a thick mist in front of them to stay them. The other half were hemmed in by the deep silver-eddying stream, and fell into it with a great uproar. The waters resounded,

and the banks rang again, as they swam hither and thither with loud cries amid the whirling eddies. As locusts flying to a river before the blast of a grass fire the flame comes on and on till at last it overtakes them and they huddle into the water even so was the eddying stream of Xanthus filled with the uproar of men and horses, all struggling in confusion before Achilles.

Forthwith the hero left his spear upon the bank, leaning it against a tamarisk bush, and plunged into the river like a god, armed with his sword only. Fell was his purpose as he hewed the Trojans down on every side. Their dying groans rose hideous as the sword smote them, and the river ran red with blood. As when fish fly scared before a huge dolphin, and fill every nook and corner of some fair haven for he is sure to eat all he can catch even so did the Trojans cower under the banks of the mighty river, and when Achilles' arms grew weary with killing them, he drew twelve youths alive out of the water, to sacrifice in revenge for Patroclus son of Menoetius. He drew them out like dazed fawns, bound their hands behind them with the girdles of their own shirts, and gave them over to his men to take back to the ships. Then he sprang into the river, thirsting for still further blood.

There he found Lycaon, son of Priam seed of Dardanus, as he was escaping out of the water; he it was whom he had once taken prisoner when he was in his father's vineyard, having set upon him by night, as he was cutting young shoots from a wild fig-tree to make the wicker sides of a chariot. Achilles then caught him to his sorrow unawares, and sent him by sea to Lemnos, where the son of Jason bought him. But a guest-friend, Eetion of Imbros, freed him with a great sum, and sent him to Arisbe, whence he had escaped and returned to his father's house. He had spent eleven days happily with his friends after he had come from Lemnos, but on the twelfth heaven again delivered him into the hands of Achilles, who was to send him to the house of Hades sorely against his will. He was unarmed when Achilles caught sight of him, and had neither helmet nor shield; nor yet had he any spear, for he had thrown all his armour from him on to the bank, and was sweating with his struggles to get out of the river, so that his strength was now failing him.

Then Achilles said to himself in his surprise, "What marvel do I see here? If this man can come back alive after having been sold over into Lemnos, I shall have the Trojans also whom I have slain rising from the world below. Could not even the waters of the grey sea imprison him, as they do many another whether he will or no? This time let him taste my spear, that I may know for certain whether mother earth who can keep even a strong man down, will be able to hold him, or whether thence too he will return."

Thus did he pause and ponder. But Lycaon came up to him dazed and trying hard to embrace his knees, for he would fain live, not die. Achilles thrust at him with his spear, meaning to kill him, but Lycaon ran crouching up to him and caught his knees, whereby the spear passed over his back, and stuck in the ground, hungering though it was for blood. With one hand he caught Achilles' knees as he besought him, and with the other he clutched the spear and would not let it go. Then he said, "Achilles, have mercy upon me and spare me, for I am your suppliant. It was in your tents that I first broke bread on the day when you took me prisoner in the vineyard; after which you sold away to Lemnos far from my father and my friends, and I brought you the price of a hundred oxen. I have paid three times as much to gain my freedom; it is but twelve days that I have come to Ilius after much suffering, and now cruel fate has again thrown me into your hands. Surely father Jove must hate me, that he has given me over to you a second time. Short of life indeed did my mother Laothoe bear me, daughter of aged Altes of Altes who reigns over the warlike Lelegae and holds steep Pedasus on the river Satnioeis. Priam married his daughter along with many other women and two sons were born of her, both of whom you will have slain. Your spear slew noble Polydorus as he was fighting in the front ranks, and now evil will here befall me, for I fear that I shall not escape you since heaven has delivered me over to you. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart, spare me, for I am not of the same womb as Hector who slew your brave and noble comrade."

With such words did the princely son of Priam beseech Achilles; but Achilles answered him sternly. "Idiot," said he, "talk not to me of ransom. Until Patroclus fell I preferred to give the Trojans quarter, and sold beyond the sea many of those whom I had taken alive; but now not a man shall live of those whom heaven delivers into my hands before the city of Ilius and of all Trojans it shall fare hardest with the sons of Priam. Therefore, my friend, you too shall die. Why should you whine in this way? Patroclus fell, and he was a better man than you are. I too see you not how I am great and goodly? I am son to a noble father, and have a goddess for my mother, but the hands of doom and death overshadow me all as surely. The day will come, either at dawn or dark, or at the noontide, whenone shall take my life also in battle, either with his spear, or with an arrow sped from his bow."

Thus did he speak, and Lycaon's heart sank within him. He loosed his hold of the spear, and held out both hands before him; but Achilles drew his keen blade, and struck him by the collar-bone on his neck; he plunged his two-edged sword into him to the very hilt, whereon he lay at full length on the ground, with the dark blood welling from him till the earth was soaked. Then Achilles caught him by the foot and flung him into the river to go down stream, vaunting over him the while, and saying, "Lie there among

the fishes, who will lick the blood from your wound and gloat over it; your mother shall not lay you on any bier to mourn you, but the eddies of Scamander shall bear you into the broad bosom of the sea. There shall the fishes feed on the fat of Lycaon as they dart under the dark ripple of the waters so perish all of you till we reach the citadel of strong Ilius you in flight, and I following after to destroy you. The river with its broad silver stream shall serve you in no stead, for all the bulls you offered him and all the horses that you flung living into his waters. None the less miserably shall you perish till there is not a man of you but has paid in full for the death of Patroclus and the havoc you wrought among the Achaeans whom you have slain while I held aloof from battle."

So spoke Achilles, but the river grew more and more angry, and pondered within himself how he should stay the hand of Achilles and save the Trojans from disaster. Meanwhile the son of Peleus, spear in hand, sprang upon Asteropaeus son of Pelegon to kill him. He was son to the broad river Axius and Periboea eldest daughter of Acessamenus; for the river had lain with her. Asteropaeus stood up out of the water to face him with a spear in either hand, and Xanthus filled him with courage, being angry for the death of the youths whom Achilles was slaying ruthlessly within his waters. When they were close up with one another Achilles was first to speak. "Who and whence are you," said he, "who dare to face me? Woe to the parents whose son stands up against me." And the son of Pelegon answered, "Great son of Peleus, why should you ask my lineage. I am from the fertile land of far Paeonia, captain of the Paeonians, and it is now eleven days that I am at Ilius. I am of the blood of the river Axius of Axius that is the fairest of all rivers that run. He begot the famed warrior Pelegon, whose son men call me. Let us now fight, Achilles."

Thus did he defy him, and Achilles raised his spear of Pelian ash. Asteropaeus failed with both his spears, for he could use both hands alike; with the one spear he struck Achilles' shield, but did not pierce it, for the layer of gold, gift of the god, stayed the point; with the other spear he grazed the elbow of Achilles! right arm drawing dark blood, but the spear itself went by him and fixed itself in the ground, foiled of its bloody banquet. Then Achilles, fain to kill him, hurled his spear at Asteropaeus, but failed to hit him and struck the steep bank of the river, driving the spear half its length into the earth. The son of Peleus then drew his sword and sprang furiously upon him. Asteropaeus vainly tried to draw Achilles' spear out of the bank by main force; thrice did he tug at it, trying with all his might to draw it out, and thrice he had to leave off trying; the fourth time he tried to bend and break it, but ere he could do so Achilles smote him with his sword and killed him. He struck him in the belly near the navel, so that all his bowels came gushing out on to the ground, and the darkness of death came over him as he lay gasping. Then Achilles set his foot on his chest and spoiled him of his armour, vaunting over him and saying, "Lie there begotten of a river though you be, it is hard for you to strive with the offspring of Saturn's son. You declare yourself sprung from the blood of a broad river, but I am of the seed of mighty Jove. My father is Peleus, son of Aeacus ruler over the many Myrmidons, and Aeacus was the son of Jove. Therefore as Jove is mightier than any river that flows into the sea, so are his children stronger than those of any river whatsoever. Moreover you have a great river hard by if he can be of any use to you, but there is no fighting against Jove the son of Saturn, with whom not even King Achelous can compare, nor the mighty stream of deep-flowing Oceanus, from whom all rivers and seas with all springs and deep wells proceed; even Oceanus fears the lightnings of great Jove, and his thunder that comes crashing out of heaven."

With this he drew his bronze spear out of the bank, and now that he had killed Asteropaeus, he let him lie where he was on the sand, with the dark water flowing over him and the eels and fishes busy nibbling and gnawing the fat that was about his kidneys. Then he went in chase of the Paeonians, who were flying along the bank of the river in panic when they saw their leader slain by the hands of the son of Peleus. Therein he slew Thersilochus, Mydon, Astypylus, Mnesus, Thrasius, Oeneus, and Ophelestes, and he would have slain yet others, had not the river in anger taken human form, and spoken to him from out the deep waters saying, "Achilles, if you excel all in strength, so do you also in wickedness, for the gods are ever with you to protect you: if, then, the son of Saturn has vouchsafed it to you to destroy all the Trojans, at any rate drive them out of my stream, and do your grim work on land. My fair waters are now filled with corpses, nor can I find any channel by which I may pour myself into the sea for I am choked with dead, and yet you go on mercilessly slaying. I am in despair, therefore, O captain of your host, trouble me no further."

Achilles answered, "So be it, Scamander, Jove-descended; but I will never cease dealing out death among the Trojans, till I have pent them up in their city, and made trial of Hector face to face, that I may learn whether he is to vanquish me, or I him."

As he spoke he set upon the Trojans with a fury like that of the gods. But the river said to Apollo, "Surely, son of Jove, lord of the silver bow, you are not obeying the commands of Jove who charged you straitly that you should stand by the Trojans and defend them, till twilight fades, and darkness is over an the earth."

Meanwhile Achilles sprang from the bank into mid-stream, whereon the river raised a high wave and attacked him. He swelled his stream into a torrent, and swept away the many dead whom Achilles had slain and left within his waters. These he cast out on to the land, bellowing like a bull the while, but the living he saved alive, hiding them in his mighty eddies. The great and terrible wave

gathered about Achilles, falling upon him and beating on his shield, so that he could not keep his feet; he caught hold of a great elm-tree, but it came up by the roots, and tore away the bank, damming the stream with its thick branches and bridging it all across; whereby Achilles struggled out of the stream, and fled full speed over the plain, for he was afraid.

But the mighty god ceased not in his pursuit, and sprang upon him with a dark-crested wave, to stay his hands and save the Trojans from destruction. The son of Peleus darted away a spear's throw from him; swift as the swoop of a black hunter-eagle which is the strongest and fleetest of all birds, even so did he spring forward, and the armour rang loudly about his breast. He fled on in front, but the river with a loud roar came tearing after. As one who would water his garden leads a stream from some fountain over his plants, and all his ground-spade in hand he clears away the dams to free the channels, and the little stones run rolling round and round with the water as it goes merrily down the bank faster than the man can follow even so did the river keep catching up with Achilles albeit he was a fleet runner, for the gods are stronger than men. As often as he would strive to stand his ground, and see whether or no all the gods in heaven were in league against him, so often would the mighty wave come beating down upon his shoulders, and be would have to keep flying on and on in great dismay; for the angry flood was tiring him out as it flowed past him and ate the ground from under his feet.

Then the son of Peleus lifted up his voice to heaven saying, "Father Jove, is there none of the gods who will take pity upon me, and save me from the river? I do not care what may happen to me afterwards. I blame none of the other dwellers on Olympus so severely as I do my dear mother, who has beguiled and tricked me. She told me I was to fall under the walls of Troy by the flying arrows of Apollo; would that Hector, the best man among the Trojans, might there slay me; then should I fall a hero by the hand of a hero; whereas now it seems that I shall come to a most pitiable end, trapped in this river as though I were some swineherd's boy, who gets carried down a torrent while trying to cross it during a storm."

As soon as he had spoken thus, Neptune and Minerva came up to him in the likeness of two men, and took him by the hand to reassure him. Neptune spoke first. "Son of Peleus," said he, "be not so exceeding fearful; we are two gods, come with Jove's sanction to assist you, I, and Pallas Minerva. It is not your fate to perish in this river; he will abate presently as you will see; moreover we strongly advise you, if you will be guided by us, not to stay your hand from fighting till you have pent the Trojan host within the famed walls of Ilius as many of them as may escape. Then kill Hector and go back to the ships, for we will vouchsafe you a triumph over him."

When they had so said they went back to the other immortals, but Achilles strove onward over the plain, encouraged by the charge the gods had laid upon him. All was now covered with the flood of waters, and much goodly armour of the youths that had been slain was rifting about, as also many corpses, but he forced his way against the stream, speeding right onwards, nor could the broad waters stay him, for Minerva had endowed him with great strength. Nevertheless Scamander did not slacken in his pursuit, but was still more furious with the son of Peleus. He lifted his waters into a high crest and cried aloud to Simois saying, "Dear brother, let the two of us unite to save this man, or he will sack the mighty city of King Priam, and the Trojans will not hold out against him. Help me at once; fill your streams with water from their sources, rouse all your torrents to a fury; raise your wave on high, and let snags and stones come thundering down you that we may make an end of this savage creature who is now lording it as though he were a god. Nothing shall serve him longer, not strength nor comeliness, nor his fine armour, which forsooth shall soon be lying low in the deep waters covered over with mud. I will wrap him in sand, and pour tons of shingle round him, so that the Achaeans shall not know how to gather his bones for the silt in which I shall have hidden him, and when they celebrate his funeral they need build no barrow."

On this he upraised his tumultuous flood high against Achilles, seething as it was with foam and blood and the bo&ies of the dead. The dark waters of the river stood upright and would have overwhelmed the son of Peleus, but Juno, trembling lest Achilles should be swept away in the mighty torrent, lifted her voice on high and called out to Vulcan her son. "Crook-foot," she cried, "my child, be up and doing, for I deem it is with you that Xanthus is fain to fight; help us at once, kindle a fierce fire; I will then bring up the west and the white south wind in a mighty hurricane from the sea, that shall bear the flames against the heads and armour of the Trojans and consume them, while you go along the banks of Xanthus burning his trees and wrapping him round with fire. Let him not turn you back neither by fair words nor foul, and slacken not till I shout and tell you. Then you may stay your flames."

On this Vulcan kindled a fierce fire, which broke out first upon the plain and burned the many dead whom Achilles had killed and whose bodies were lying about in great numbers; by this means the plain was dried and the flood stayed. As the north wind, blowing on an orchard that has been sodden with autumn rain, soon dries it, and the heart of the owner is glad even so the whole plan was dried and the dead bodies were consumed. Then he turned tongues of fire on to the river. He burned the elms the willows

and the tamarisks, the lotus also, with the rushes and marshy herbage that grew abundantly by the banks of the river. The eels and fishes that go darting about everywhere in the water, these, too, were sorely harassed by the flames that cunning Vulcan had kindled, and the river himself was scalded, so that he spoke saying, “Vulcan, there is no god can hold his own against you. I cannot fight you when you flare out your flames in this way; strive with me no longer. Let Achilles drive the Trojans out of city immediately. What have I to do with quarrelling and helping people?”

He was boiling as he spoke, and all his waters were seething. As a cauldron upon ‘a large fire boils when it is melting the lard of some fatted hog, and the lard keeps bubbling up all over when the dry faggots blaze under it even so were the goodly waters of Xanthus heated with the fire till they were boiling. He could flow no longer but stayed his stream, so afflicted was he by the blasts of fire which cunning Vulcan had raised. Then he prayed to Juno and besought her saying, “Juno, why should your son vex my stream with such especial fury? I am not so much to blame as all the others are who have been helping the Trojans. I will leave off, since you so desire it, and let son leave off also. Furthermore I swear never again will I do anything to save the Trojans from destruction, not even when all Troy is burning in the flames which the Achaeans will kindle.”

As soon as Juno heard this she said to her son Vulcan, “Son Vulcan, hold now your flames; we ought not to use such violence against a god for the sake of mortals.”

When she had thus spoken Vulcan quenched his flames, and the river went back once more into his own fair bed.

Xanthus was now beaten, so these two left off fighting, for Juno stayed them though she was still angry; but a furious quarrel broke out among the other gods, for they were of divided counsels. They fell on one another with a mighty uproar earth groaned, and the spacious firmament rang out as with a blare of trumpets. Jove heard as he was sitting on Olympus, and laughed for joy when he saw the gods coming to blows among themselves. They were not long about beginning, and Mars piercer of shields opened the battle. Sword in hand he sprang at once upon Minerva and reviled her. “Why, vixen,” said he, “have you again set the gods by the ears in the pride and haughtiness of your heart? Have you forgotten how you set Diomed son of Tydeus on to wound me, and yourself took visible spear and drove it into me to the hurt of my fair body? You shall now suffer for what you then did to me.”

As he spoke he struck her on the terrible tasselled aegis so terrible that not even can Jove’s lightning pierce it. Here did murderous Mars strike her with his great spear. She drew back and with her strong hand seized a stone that was lying on the plain great and rugged and black which men of old had set for the boundary of a field. With this she struck Mars on the neck, and brought him down. Nine roods did he cover in his fall, and his hair was all soiled in the dust, while his armour rang rattling round him. But Minerva laughed and vaunted over him saying, “Idiot, have you not learned how far stronger I am than you, but you must still match yourself against me? Thus do your mother’s curses now roost upon you, for she is angry and would do you mischief because you have deserted the Achaeans and are helping the Trojans.”

She then turned her two piercing eyes elsewhere, whereon Jove’s daughter Venus took Mars by the hand and led him away groaning all the time, for it was only with great difficulty that he had come to himself again. When Queen Juno saw her, she said to Minerva, “Look, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, that vixen Venus is again taking Mars through the crowd out of the battle; go after her at once.”

Thus she spoke. Minerva sped after Venus with a will, and made at her, striking her on the bosom with her strong hand so that she fell fainting to the ground, and there they both lay stretched at full length. Then Minerva vaunted over her saying, “May all who help the Trojans against the Argives prove just as redoubtable and stalwart as Venus did when she came across me while she was helping Mars. Had this been so, we should long since have ended the war by sacking the strong city of Ilius.”

Juno smiled as she listened. Meanwhile King Neptune turned to Apollo saying, “Phoebus, why should we keep each other at arm’s length? it is not well, now that the others have begun fighting; it will be disgraceful to us if we return to Jove’s bronze-floored mansion on Olympus without having fought each other; therefore come on, you are the younger of the two, and I ought not to attack you, for I am older and have had more experience. Idiot, you have no sense, and forget how we two alone of all the gods fared hardly round about Ilius when we came from Jove’s house and worked for Laomedon a whole year at a stated wage and he gave us his orders. I built the Trojans the wall about their city, so wide and fair that it might be impregnable, while you, Phoebus, herded cattle for him in the dales of many valleyed Ida. When, however, the glad hours brought round the time of payment, mighty Laomedon robbed us of all our hire and sent us off with nothing but abuse. He threatened to bind us hand and foot and sell us over into some distant island. He tried, moreover, to cut off the ears of both of us, so we went away in a rage, furious about the payment

he had promised us, and yet withheld; in spite of all this, you are now showing favour to his people, and will not join us in compassing the utter ruin of the proud Trojans with their wives and children."

And King Apollo answered, "Lord of the earthquake, you would have no respect for me if I were to fight you about a pack of miserable mortals, who come out like leaves in summer and eat the fruit of the field, and presently fall lifeless to the ground. Let us stay this fighting at once and let them settle it among themselves."

He turned away as he spoke, for he would lay no hand on the brother of his own father. But his sister the huntress Diana, patroness of wild beasts, was very angry with him and said, "So you would fly, Far-Darter, and hand victory over to Neptune with a cheap vaunt to boot. Baby, why keep your bow thus idle? Never let me again hear you bragging in my father's house, as you have often done in the presence of the immortals, that you would stand up and fight with Neptune."

Apollo made her no answer, but Jove's august queen was angry and upbraided her bitterly. "Bold vixen," she cried, "how dare you cross me thus? For all your bow you will find it hard to hold your own against me. Jove made you as a lion among women, and lets you kill them whenever you choose. You will And it better to chase wild beasts and deer upon the mountains than to fight those who are stronger than you are. If you would try war, do so, and find out by pitting yourself against me, how far stronger I am than you are."

She caught both Diana's wrists with her left hand as she spoke, and with her right she took the bow from her shoulders, and laughed as she beat her with it about the ears while Diana wriggled and writhed under her blows. Her swift arrows were shed upon the ground, and she fled weeping from under Juno's hand as a dove that flies before a falcon to the cleft of some hollow rock, when it is her good fortune to escape. Even so did she fly weeping away, leaving her bow and arrows behind her.

Then the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, said to Leto, "Leto, I shall not fight you; it is ill to come to blows with any of Jove's wives. Therefore boast as you will among the immortals that you worsted me in fair fight."

Leto then gathered up Diana's bow and arrows that had fallen about amid the whirling dust, and when she had got them she made all haste after her daughter. Diana had now reached Jove's bronze-floored mansion on Olympus, and sat herself down with many tears on the knees of her father, while her ambrosial raiment was quivering all about her. The son of Saturn drew her towards him, and laughing pleasantly the while began to question her saying, "Which of the heavenly beings, my dear child, has been treating you in this cruel manner, as though you had been misconducting yourself in the face of everybody?" and the fair-crowned goddess of the chase answered, "It was your wife Juno, father, who has been beating me; it is always her doing when there is any quarrelling among the immortals."

Thus did they converse, and meanwhile Phoebus Apollo entered the strong city of Ilius, for he was uneasy lest the wall should not hold out and the Danaans should take the city then and there, before its hour had come; but the rest of the ever-living gods went back, some angry and some triumphant to Olympus, where they took their seats beside Jove lord of the storm cloud, while Achilles still kept on dealing out death alike on the Trojans and on their As when the smoke from some burning city ascends to heaven when the anger of the gods has kindled it there is then toil for all, and sorrow for not a few even so did Achilles bring toil and sorrow on the Trojans.

Old King Priam stood on a high tower of the wall looking down on huge Achilles as the Trojans fled panic-stricken before him, and there was none to help them. Presently he came down from off the tower and with many a groan went along the wall to give orders to the brave warders of the gate. "Keep the gates," said he, "wide open till the people come flying into the city, for Achilles is hard by and is driving them in rout before him. I see we are in great peril. As soon as our people are inside and in safety, close the strong gates for I fear lest that terrible man should come bounding inside along with the others."

As he spoke they drew back the bolts and opened the gates, and when these were opened there was a haven of refuge for the Trojans. Apollo then came full speed out of the city to meet them and protect them. Right for the city and the high wall, parched with thirst and grimy with dust, still they fied on, with Achilles wielding his spear furiously behind them. For he was as one possessed, and was thirsting after glory.

Then had the sons of the Achaeans taken the lofty gates of Troy if Apollo had not spurred on Agenor, valiant and noble son to Antenor. He put courage into his heart, and stood by his side to guard him, leaning against a beech tree and shrouded in thick darkness. When Agenor saw Achilles he stood still and his heart was clouded with care. "Alas," said he to himself in his dismay, "if I fly before mighty Achilles, and go where all the others are being driven in rout, he will none the less catch me and kill me for a

coward. How would it be were I to let Achilles drive the others before him, and then fly from the wall to the plain that is behind Ilius till I reach the spurs of Ida and can hide
in the underwood that is thereon? I could then wash the sweat from off me in the river and in the evening return to Ilius. But why commune with myself in this way? Like enough he would see me as I am hurrying from the city over the plain, and would speed after me till he had caught me I should stand no chance against him, for he is mightiest of all mankind. What, then, if I go out and meet him in front of the city? His flesh too, I take it, can be pierced by pointed bronze. Life is the same in one and all, and men say that he is but mortal despite the triumph that Jove son of Saturn vouchsafes him."

So saying he stood on his guard and awaited Achilles, for he was now fain to fight him. As a leopardess that bounds from out a thick covert to attack a hunter she knows no fear and is not dismayed by the baying of the hounds; even though the man be too quick for her and wound her either with thrust or spear, still, though the spear has pierced her she will not give in till she has either caught him in her grip or been killed outright even so did noble Agenor son of Antenor refuse to fly till he had made trial of Achilles, and took aim at him with his spear, holding his round shield before him and crying with a loud voice. "Of a truth," said he, "noble Achilles, you deem that you shall this day sack the city of the proud Trojans. Fool, there will be trouble enough yet before it, for there is many a brave man of us still inside who will stand in front of our dear parents with our wives and children, to defend Ilius. Here therefore, huge and mighty warrior though you be, here shall you cue.

As he spoke his strong hand hurled his javelin from him, and the spear struck Achilles on the leg beneath the knee; the greave of newly wrought tin rang loudly, but the spear recoiled from the body of him whom it had struck, and did not pierce it, for the gods gift stayed it. Achilles in his turn attacked noble Agenor, but Apollo would not vouchsafe him glory, for he snatched Agenor away and hid him in a thick mist, sending him out of the battle unmolested Then he craftily drew the son of Peleus away from going after the host, for he put on the semblance of Agenor and stood in front of Achilles, who ran towards him to give him chase and pursued him over the corn lands of the plain, turning him towards the deep waters of the river Scamander. Apollo ran but a little way before him and beguiled Achilles by making him think all the time that he was on the point of overtaking him. Meanwhile the rabble of routed Trojans was thankful to crowd within the city till their numbers thronged it; no longer did they dare wait for one another outside the city walls, to learn who had escaped and who were fallen in fight, but all whose feet and knees could still carry them poured pell-mell into the town.

Book XXII

THUS the Trojans in the city, scared like fawns, wiped the sweat from off them and drank to quench their thirst, leaning against the goodly battlements, while the Achaeans with their shields laid upon their shoulders drew close up to the walls. But stern fate bade Hector stay where he was before Ilius and the Scaean gates. Then Phoebus Apollo spoke to the son of Peleus saying, "Why, son of Peleus, do you, who are but man, give chase to me who am immortal? Have you not yet found out that it is a god whom you pursue so furiously? You did not harass the Trojans whom you had routed, and now they are within their walls, while you have been decoyed hither away from them. Me you cannot kill, for death can take no hold upon me."

Achilles was greatly angered and said, "You have baulked me, Far-Darter, most malicious of all gods, and have drawn me away from the wall, where many another man would have bitten the dust ere he got within Ilius; you have robbed me of great glory and have saved the Trojans at no risk to yourself, for you have nothing to fear, but I would indeed have my revenge if it were in my power to do so."

On this, with fell intent he made towards the city, and as the winning horse in a chariot race strains every nerve when he is flying over the plain, even so fast and furiously did the limbs of Achilles bear him onwards. King Priam was first to note him as he scoured the plain, all radiant as the star which men call Orion's Hound, and whose beams blaze forth in time of harvest more brilliantly than those of any other that shines by night; brightest of them all though he be, he yet bodes ill for mortals, for he brings fire and fever in his train even so did Achilles' armour gleam on his breast as he sped onwards. Priam raised a cry and beat his head with his hands as he lifted them up and shouted out to his dear son, imploring him to return; but Hector still stayed before the gates, for his heart was set upon doing battle with Achilles. The old man reached out his arms towards him and bade him for pity's sake come within the walls. "Hector," he cried, "my son, stay not to face this man alone and unsupported, or you will meet death at the hands of the son of Peleus, for he is mightier than you. Monster that he is; would indeed that the gods loved him no better than I do, for so, dogs and vultures would soon devour him as he lay stretched on earth, and a load of grief would be lifted from my heart, for many a brave son has he reft from me, either by killing them or selling them away in the islands that are beyond the sea: even now I

miss two sons from among the Trojans who have thronged within the city, Lycaon and Polydorus, whom Laothoe peeress among women bore me. Should they be still alive and in the hands of the Achaeans, we will ransom them with gold and bronze, of which we have store, for the old man Altes endowed his daughter richly; but if they are already dead and in the house of Hades, sorrow will it be to us two who were their parents; albeit the grief of others will be more short-lived unless you too perish at the hands of Achilles. Come, then, my son, within the city, to be the guardian of Trojan men and Trojan women, or you will both lose your own life and afford a mighty triumph to the son of Peleus. Have pity also on your unhappy father while life yet remains to him on me, whom the son of Saturn will destroy by a terrible doom on the threshold of old age, after I have seen my sons slain and my daughters haled away as captives, my bridal chambers pillaged, little children dashed to earth amid the rage of battle, and my sons' wives dragged away by the cruel hands of the Achaeans; in the end fierce hounds will tear me in pieces at my own gates after some one has beaten the life out of my body with sword or spear-hounds that I myself reared and fed at my own table to guard my gates, but who will yet lap my blood and then lie all distraught at my doors. When a young man falls by the sword in battle, he may lie where he is and there is nothing unseemly; let what will be seen, all is honourable in death, but when an old man is slain there is nothing in this world more pitiable than that dogs should defile his grey hair and beard and all that men hide for shame."

The old man tore his grey hair as he spoke, but he moved not the heart of Hector. His mother hard by wept and moaned aloud as she bared her bosom and pointed to the breast which had suckled him. "Hector," she cried, weeping bitterly the while, "Hector, my son, spurn not this breast, but have pity upon me too: if I have ever given you comfort from my own bosom, think on it now, dear son, and come within the wall to protect us from this man; stand not without to meet him. Should the wretch kill you, neither I nor your richly dowered wife shall ever weep, dear offshoot of myself, over the bed on which you lie, for dogs will devour you at the ships of the Achaeans."

Thus did the two with many tears implore their son, but they moved not the heart of Hector, and he stood his ground awaiting huge Achilles as he drew nearer towards him. As serpent in its den upon the mountains, full fed with deadly poisons, waits for the approach of man he is filled with fury and his eyes glare terribly as he goes writhing round his den even so Hector leaned his shield against a tower that jutted out from the wall and stood where he was, undaunted.

"Alas," said he to himself in the heaviness of his heart, "if I go within the gates, Polydamas will be the first to heap reproach upon me, for it was he that urged me to lead the Trojans back to the city on that awful night when Achilles again came forth against us. I would not listen, but it would have been indeed better if I had done so. Now that my folly has destroyed the host, I dare not look Trojan men and Trojan women in the face, lest a worse man should say, 'Hector has ruined us by his self-confidence.' Surely it would be better for me to return after having fought Achilles and slain him, or to die gloriously here before the city. What, again, if were to lay down my shield and helmet, lean my spear against the wall and go straight up to noble Achilles? What if I were to promise to give up Helen, who was the fountainhead of all this war, and all the treasure that Alexandrus brought with him in his ships to Troy, aye, and to let the Achaeans divide the half of everything that the city contains among themselves? I might make the Trojans, by the mouths of their princes, take a solemn oath that they would hide nothing, but would divide into two shares all that is within the city but why argue with myself in this way? Were I to go up to him he would show me no kind of mercy; he would kill me then and there as easily as though I were a woman, when I had off my armour. There is no parleying with him from some rock or oak tree as young men and maidens prattle with one another. Better fight him at once, and learn to which of us Jove will vouchsafe victory."

Thus did he stand and ponder, but Achilles came up to him as it were Mars himself, plumed lord of battle. From his right shoulder he brandished his terrible spear of Pelian ash, and the bronze gleamed around him like flashing fire or the rays of the rising sun. Fear fell upon Hector as he beheld him, and he dared not stay longer where he was but fled in dismay from before the gates, while Achilles darted after him at his utmost speed. As a mountain falcon, swiftest of all birds, swoops down upon some cowering dove the dove flies before him but the falcon with a shrill scream follows close after, resolved to have her even so did Achilles make straight for Hector with all his might, while Hector fled under the Trojan wall as fast as his limbs could take him.

On they flew along the waggon-road that ran hard by under the wall, past the lookout station, and past the weather-beaten wild fig-tree, till they came to two fair springs which feed the river Scamander. One of these two springs is warm, and steam rises from it as smoke from a burning fire, but the other even in summer is as cold as hail or snow, or the ice that forms on water. Here, hard by the springs, are the goodly washing-troughs of stone, where in the time of peace before the coming of the Achaeans the wives and fair daughters of the Trojans used to wash their clothes. Past these did they fly, the one in front and the other giving ha. behind him: good was the man that fled, but better far was he that followed after, and swiftly indeed did they run, for the prize was no mere

beast for sacrifice or bullock's hide, as it might be for a common foot-race, but they ran for the life of Hector. As horses in a chariot race speed round the turning-posts when they are running for some great prize a tripod or woman at the games in honour of some dead hero, so did these two run full speed three times round the city of Priam. All the gods watched them, and the sire of gods and men was the first to speak.

"Alas," said he, "my eyes behold a man who is dear to me being pursued round the walls of Troy; my heart is full of pity for Hector, who has burned the thigh-bones of many a heifer in my honour, at one while on the of many-valleyed Ida, and again on the citadel of Troy; and now I see noble Achilles in full pursuit of him round the city of Priam. What say you? Consider among yourselves and decide whether we shall now save him or let him fall, valiant though he be, before Achilles, son of Peleus."

Then Minerva said, "Father, wielder of the lightning, lord of cloud and storm, what mean you? Would you pluck this mortal whose doom has long been decreed out of the jaws of death? Do as you will, but we others shall not be of a mind with you."

And Jove answered, "My child, Trito-born, take heart. I did not speak in full earnest, and I will let you have your way. Do without let or hindrance as you are minded."

Thus did he urge Minerva who was already eager, and down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus.

Achilles was still in full pursuit of Hector, as a hound chasing a fawn which he has started from its covert on the mountains, and hunts through glade and thicket. The fawn may try to elude him by crouching under cover of a bush, but he will scent her out and follow her up until he gets her even so there was no escape for Hector from the fleet son of Peleus. Whenever he made a set to get near the Dardanian gates and under the walls, that his people might help him by showering down weapons from above, Achilles would gain on him and head him back towards the plain, keeping himself always on the city side. As a man in a dream who fails to lay hands upon another whom he is pursuing the one cannot escape nor the other overtake even so neither could Achilles come up with Hector, nor Hector break away from Achilles; nevertheless he might even yet have escaped death had not the time come when Apollo, who thus far had sustained his strength and nerved his running, was now no longer to stay by him. Achilles made signs to the Achaean host, and shook his head to show that no man was to aim a dart at Hector, lest another might win the glory of having hit him and he might himself come in second. Then, at last, as they were nearing the fountains for the fourth time, the father of all balanced his golden scales and placed a doom in each of them, one for Achilles and the other for Hector. As he held the scales by the middle, the doom of Hector fell down deep into the house of Hades and then Phoebus Apollo left him. Thereon Minerva went close up to the son of Peleus and said, "Noble Achilles, favoured of heaven, we two shall surely take back to the ships a triumph for the Achaeans by slaying Hector, for all his lust of battle. Do what Apollo may as he lies grovelling before his father, aegis-bearing Jove, Hector cannot escape us longer. Stay here and take breath, while I go up to him and persuade him to make a stand and fight you."

Thus spoke Minerva. Achilles obeyed her gladly, and stood still, leaning on his bronze-pointed ashen spear, while Minerva left him and went after Hector in the form and with the voice of Deiphobus. She came close up to him and said, "Dear brother, I see you are hard pressed by Achilles who is chasing you at full speed round the city of Priam, let us await his onset and stand on our defence."

And Hector answered, "Deiphobus, you have always been dearest to me of all my brothers, children of Hecuba and Priam, but henceforth I shall rate you yet more highly, inasmuch as you have ventured outside the wall for my sake when all the others remain inside."

Then Minerva said, "Dear brother, my father and mother went down on their knees and implored me, as did all my comrades, to remain inside, so great a fear has fallen upon them all; but I was in an agony of grief when I beheld you; now, therefore, let us two make a stand and fight, and let there be no keeping our spears in reserve, that we may learn whether Achilles shall kill us and bear off our spoils to the ships, or whether he shall fall before you."

Thus did Minerva inveigle him by her cunning, and when the two were now close to one another great Hector was first to speak. "I will-no longer fly you, son of Peleus," said he, "as I have been doing hitherto. Three times have I fled round the mighty city of Priam, without daring to withstand you, but now, let me either slay or be slain, for I am in the mind to face you. Let us, then, give pledges to one another by our gods, who are the fittest witnesses and guardians of all covenants; let it be agreed between us that if Jove vouchsafes me the longer stay and I take your life, I am not to treat your dead body in any unseemly fashion, but when I have stripped you of your armour, I am to give up your body to the Achaeans. And do you likewise."

Achilles glared at him and answered, “Fool, prate not to me about covenants. There can be no covenants between men and lions, wolves and lambs can never be of one mind, but hate each other out and out an through. Therefore there can be no understanding between you and me, nor may there be any covenants between us, till one or other shall fall and glut grim Mars with his life’s blood. Put forth all your strength; you have need now to prove yourself indeed a bold soldier and man of war. You have no more chance, and Pallas Minerva will forthwith vanquish you by my spear: you shall now pay me in full for the grief you have caused me on account of my comrades whom you have killed in battle.”

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it. Hector saw it coming and avoided it; he watched it and crouched down so that it flew over his head and stuck in the ground beyond; Minerva then snatched it up and gave it back to Achilles without Hector’s seeing her; Hector thereon said to the son of Peleus, “You have missed your aim, Achilles, peer of the gods, and Jove has not yet revealed to you the hour of my doom, though you made sure that he had done so. You were a false-tongued liar when you deemed that I should forget my valour and quail before you. You shall not drive spear into the back of a runaway drive it, should heaven so grant you power, drive it into me as I make straight towards you; and now for your own part avoid my spear if you can would that you might receive the whole of it into your body; if you were once dead the Trojans would find the war an easier matter, for it is you who have harmed them most.”

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it. His aim was true for he hit the middle of Achilles’ shield, but the spear rebounded from it, and did not pierce it. Hector was angry when he saw that the weapon had sped from his hand in vain, and stood there in dismay for he had no second spear. With a loud cry he called Diphobus and asked him for one, but there was no man; then he saw the truth and said to himself, “Alas! the gods have lured me on to my destruction. I deemed that the hero Deiphobus was by my side, but he is within the wall, and Minerva has inveigled me; death is now indeed exceedingly near at hand and there is no way out of it for so Jove and his son Apollo the far-darter have willed it, though heretofore they have been ever ready to protect me. My doom has come upon me; let me not then die ingloriously and without a struggle, but let me first do some great thing that shall be told among men hereafter.”

As he spoke he drew the keen blade that hung so great and strong by his side, and gathering himself together be sprang on Achilles like a soaring eagle which swoops down from the clouds on to some lamb or timid hare even so did Hector brandish his sword and spring upon Achilles. Achilles mad with rage darted towards him, with his wondrous shield before his breast, and his gleaming helmet, made with four layers of metal, nodding fiercely forward. The thick tresses of gold wi which Vulcan had crested the helmet floated round it, and as the evening star that shines brighter than all others through the stillness of night, even such was the gleam of the spear which Achilles poised in his right hand, fraught with the death of noble Hector. He eyed his fair flesh over and over to see where he could best wound it, but all was protected by the goodly armour of which Hector had spoiled Patroclus after he had slain him, save only the throat where the collar-bones divide the neck from the shoulders, and this is a most deadly place: here then did Achilles strike him as he was coming on towards him, and the point of his spear went right through the fleshy part of the neck, but it did not sever his windpipe so that he could still speak. Hector fell headlong, and Achilles vaunted over him saying, “Hector, you deemed that you should come off scatheless when you were spoiling Patroclus, and recked not of myself who was not with him. Fool that you were: for I, his comrade, mightier far than he, was still left behind him at the ships, and now I have laid you low. The Achaeans shall give him all due funeral rites, while dogs and vultures shall work their will upon yourself.”

Then Hector said, as the life ebbed out of him, “I pray you by your life and knees, and by your parents, let not dogs devour me at the ships of the Achaeans, but accept the rich treasure of gold and bronze which my father and mother will offer you, and send my body home, that the Trojans and their wives may give me my dues of fire when I am dead.”

Achilles glared at him and answered, “Dog, talk not to me neither of knees nor parents; would that I could be as sure of being able to cut your flesh into pieces and eat it raw, for the ill have done me, as I am that nothing shall save you from the dogs it shall not be, though they bring ten or twenty-fold ransom and weigh it out for me on the spot, with promise of yet more hereafter. Though Priam son of Dardanus should bid them offer me your weight in gold, even so your mother shall never lay you out and make lament over the son she bore, but dogs and vultures shall eat you utterly up.”

Hector with his dying breath then said, “I know you what you are, and was sure that I should not move you, for your heart is hard as iron; look to it that I bring not heaven’s anger upon you on the day when Paris and Phoebus Apollo, valiant though you be, shall slay you at the Scaean gates.”

When he had thus said the shrouds of death enfolded him, whereon his soul went out of him and flew down to the house of Hades, lamenting its sad fate that it should en' youth and strength no longer. But Achilles said, speaking to the dead body, "Die; for my part I will accept my fate whensoever Jove and the other gods see fit to send it."

As he spoke he drew his spear from the body and set it on one side; then he stripped the blood-stained armour from Hector's shoulders while the other Achaeans came running up to view his wondrous strength and beauty; and no one came near him without giving him a fresh wound. Then would one turn to his neighbour and say, "It is easier to handle Hector now than when he was flinging fire on to our ships" and as he spoke he would thrust his spear into him anew.

When Achilles had done spoiling Hector of his armour, he stood among the Argives and said, "My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, now that heaven has vouchsafed us to overcome this man, who has done us more hurt than all the others together, consider whether we should not attack the city in force, and discover in what mind the Trojans may be. We should thus learn whether they will desert their city now that Hector has fallen, or will still hold out even though he is no longer living. But why argue with myself in this way, while Patroclus is still lying at the ships unburied, and unmourned he Whom I can never forget so long as I am alive and my strength fails not? Though men forget their dead when once they are within the house of Hades, yet not even there will I forget the comrade whom I have lost. Now, therefore, Achaean youths, let us raise the song of victory and go back to the ships taking this man along with us; for we have achieved a mighty triumph and have slain noble Hector to whom the Trojans prayed throughout their city as though he were a god."

On this he treated the body of Hector with contumely: he pierced the sinews at the back of both his feet from heel to ancle and passed thongs of ox-hide through the slits he had made: thus he made the body fast to his chariot, letting the head trail upon the ground. Then when he had put the goodly armour on the chariot and had himself mounted, he lashed his horses on and they flew forward nothing loth. The dust rose from Hector as he was being dragged along, his dark hair flew all abroad, and his head once so comely was laid low on earth, for Jove had now delivered him into the hands of his foes to do him outrage in his own land.

Thus was the head of Hector being dishonoured in the dust. His mother tore her hair, and flung her veil from her with a loud cry as she looked upon her son. His father made piteous moan, and throughout the city the people fell to weeping and wailing. It was as though the whole of frowning Ilius was being smirched with fire. Hardly could the people hold Priam back in his hot haste to rush without the gates of the city. He grovelled in the mire and besought them, calling each one of them by his name. "Let be, my friends," he cried, "and for all your sorrow, suffer me to go single-handed to the ships of the Achaeans. Let me beseech this cruel and terrible man, if maybe he will respect the feeling of his fellow-men, and have compassion on my old age. His own father is even such another as myself Peleus, who bred him and reared him to be the bane of us Trojans, and of myself more than of all others. Many a son of mine has he slain in the flower of his youth, and yet, grieve for these as I may, I do so for one Hector more than for them all, and the bitterness of my sorrow will bring me down to the house of Hades. Would that he had died in my arms, for so both his ill-starred mother who bore him, and myself, should have had the comfort of weeping and mourning over him."

Thus did he speak with many tears, and all the people of the city joined in his lament. Hecuba then raised the cry of wailing among the Trojans. "Alas, my son," she cried, "what have I left to live for now that you are no more? Night and day did I glory in. you throughout the city, for you were a tower of strength to all in Troy, and both men and women alike hailed you as a god. So long as you lived you were their pride, but now death and destruction have fallen upon you."

Hector's wife had as yet heard nothing, for no one had come to tell her that her husband had remained without the gates. She was at her loom in an inner part of the house, weaving a double purple web, and embroidering it with many flowers. She told her maids to set a large tripod on the fire, so as to have a warm bath ready for Hector when he came out of battle; poor woman, she knew not that he was now beyond the reach of baths, and that Minerva had laid him low by the hands of Achilles. She heard the cry coming as from the wall, and trembled in every limb; the shuttle fell from her hands, and again she spoke to her waiting-women. "Two of you," she said, "come with me that I may learn what it is that has befallen; I heard the voice of my husband's honoured mother; my own heart beats as though it would come into my mouth and my limbs refuse to carry me; some great misfortune for Priam's children must be at hand. May I never live to hear it, but I greatly fear that Achilles has cut off the retreat of brave Hector and has chased him on to the plain where he was singlehanded; I fear he may have put an end to the reckless daring which possessed my husband, who would never remain with the body of his men, but would dash on far in front, foremost of them all in valour."

Her heart beat fast, and as she spoke she flew from the house like a maniac, with her waiting-women following after. When she reached the battlements and the crowd of people, she stood looking out upon the wall, and saw Hector being borne away in front of

the city the horses dragging him without heed or care over the ground towards the ships of the Achaeans. Her eyes were then shrouded as with the darkness of night and she fell fainting backwards. She tore the tiring from her head and flung it from her, the frontlet and net with its plaited band, and the veil which golden Venus had given her on the day when Hector took her with him from the house of Eetion, after having given countless gifts of wooing for her sake. Her husband's sisters and the wives of his brothers crowded round her and supported her, for she was fain to die in her distraction; when she again presently breathed and came to herself, she sobbed and made lament among the Trojans saying, 'Woe is me, O Hector; woe, indeed, that to share a common lot we were born, you at Troy in the house of Priam, and I at Thebes under the wooded mountain of Placus in the house of Eetion who brought me up when I was a child ill-starred sire of an ill-starred daughter would that he had never begotten me. You are now going into the house of Hades under the secret places of the earth, and you leave me a sorrowing widow in your house. The child, of whom you and I are the unhappy parents, is as yet a mere infant. Now that you are gone, O Hector, you can do nothing for him nor he for you. Even though he escape the horrors of this woful war with the Achaeans, yet shall his life henceforth be one of labour and sorrow, for others will seize his lands. The day that robs a child of his parents severs him from his own kind; his head is bowed, his cheeks are wet with tears, and he will go about destitute among the friends of his father, plucking one by the cloak and another by the shirt. Some one or other of these may so far pity him as to hold the cup for a moment towards him and let him moisten his lips, but he must not drink enough to wet the roof of his mouth; then one whose parents are alive will drive him from the table with blows and angry words. 'Out with you,' he will say, 'you have no father here,' and the child will go crying back to his widowed mother he, Astyanax, who erewhile would sit upon his father's knees, and have none but the daintiest and choicest morsels set before him. When he had played till he was tired and went to sleep, he would lie in a bed, in the arms of his nurse, on a soft couch, knowing neither want nor care, whereas now that he has lost his father his lot will be full of hardship he, whom the Trojans name Astyanax, because you, O Hector, were the only defence of their gates and battlements. The wriggling writhing worms will now eat you at the ships, far from your parents, when the dogs have glutted themselves upon you. You will lie naked, although in your house you have fine and goodly raiment made by hands of women. This will I now burn; it is of no use to you, for you can never again wear it, and thus you will have respect shown you by the Trojans both men and women."

In such wise did she cry aloud amid her tears, and the women joined in her lament.

Book XXIII

THUS did they make their moan throughout the city, while the Achaeans when they reached the Hellespont went back every man to his own ship. But Achilles would not let the Myrmidons go, and spoke to his brave comrades saying, "Myrmidons, famed horsemen and my own trusted friends, not yet, forsooth, let us unyoke, but with horse and chariot draw near to the body and mourn Patroclus, in due honour to the dead. When we have had full comfort of lamentation we will unyoke our horses and take supper all of us here."

On this they all joined in a cry of wailing and Achilles led them in their lament. Thrice did they drive their chariots all sorrowing round the body, and Thetis stirred within them a still deeper yearning. The sands of the seashore and the men's armour were wet with their weeping, so great a minister of fear was he whom they had lost. Chief in all their mourning was the son of Peleus: he laid his bloodstained hand on the breast of his friend. "Fare well," he cried, "Patroclus, even in the house of Hades. I will now do all that I erewhile promised you; I will drag Hector hither and let dogs devour him raw; twelve noble sons of Trojans will I also slay before your pyre to avenge you."As he spoke he treated the body of noble Hector with contumely, laying it at full length in the dust beside the bier of Patroclus. The others then put off every man his armour, took the horses from their chariots, and seated themselves in great multitude by the ship of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, who thereon feasted them with an abundant funeral banquet. Many a goodly ox, with many a sheep and bleating goat did they butcher and cut up; many a tusked boar moreover, fat and well-fed, did they singe and set to roast in the flames of Vulcan; and rivulets of blood flowed all round the place where the body was lying.

Then the princes of the Achaeans took the son of Peleus to Agamemnon, but hardly could they persuade him to come with them, so wroth was he for the death of his comrade. As soon as they reached Agamemnon's tent they told the serving-men to set a large tripod over the fire in case they might persuade the son of Peleus 'to wash the clotted gore from this body, but he denied them sternly, and swore it with a solemn oath, saying, "Nay, by King Jove, first and mightiest of all gods, it is not meet that water should touch my body, till I have laid Patroclus on the flames, have built him a barrow, and shaved my head for so long as I live no such second sorrow shall ever draw nigh me. Now, therefore, let us do all that this sad festival demands, but at break of day, King

Agamemnon, bid your men bring wood, and provide all else that the dead may duly take into the realm of darkness; the fire shall thus burn him out of our sight the sooner, and the people shall turn again to their own labours."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. They made haste to prepare the meal, they ate, and every man had his full share so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had had enough to eat and drink, the others went to their rest each in his own tent, but the son of Peleus lay grieving among his Myrmidons by the shore of the sounding sea, in an open place where the waves came surging in one after another. Here a very deep slumber took hold upon him and eased the burden of his sorrows, for his limbs were weary with chasing Hector round windy Ilius. Presently the sad spirit of Patroclus drew near him, like what he had been in stature, voice, and the light of his beaming eyes, clad, too, as he had been clad in life. The spirit hovered over his head and said

"You sleep, Achilles, and have forgotten me; you loved me living, but now that I am dead you think for me no further. Bury me with all speed that I may pass the gates of Hades; the ghosts, vain shadows of men that can labour no more, drive me away from them; they will not yet suffer me to join those that are beyond the river, and I wander all desolate by the wide gates of the house of Hades. Give me now your hand I pray you, for when you have once given me my dues of fire, never shall I again come forth out of the house of Hades. Nevermore shall we sit apart and take sweet counsel among the living; the cruel fate which was my birth-right has yawned its wide jaws around me nay, you too Achilles, peer of gods, are doomed to die beneath the wall of the noble Trojans.

"One prayer more will I make you, if you will grant it; let not my bones be laid apart from yours, Achilles, but with them; even as we were brought up together in your own home, what time Menoetius brought me to you as a child from Opoeis because by a sad spite I had killed the son of Amphidamas not of set purpose, but in childish quarrel over the dice. The knight Peleus took me into his house, entreated me kindly, and named me to be your squire; therefore let our bones lie in but a single urn, the two-handled golden vase given to you by your mother."

And Achilles answered, "Why, true heart, are you come hither to lay these charges upon me? will of my own self do all as you have bidden me. Draw closer to me, let us once more throw our arms around one another, and find sad comfort in the sharing of our sorrows."

He opened his arms towards him as he spoke and would have clasped him in them, but there was nothing, and the spirit vanished as a vapour, gibbering and whining into the earth. Achilles sprang to his feet, smote his two hands, and made lamentation saying, "Of a truth even in the house of Hades there are ghosts and phantoms that have no life in them; all night long the sad spirit of Patroclus has hovered over head making piteous moan, telling me what I am to do for him, and looking wondrously like himself."

Thus did he speak and his words set them all weeping and mourning about the poor dumb dead, till rosy-fingered morn appeared. Then King Agamemnon sent men and mules from all parts of the camp, to bring wood, and Meriones, squire to Idomeneus, was in charge over them. They went out with woodmen's axes and strong ropes in their hands, and before them went the mules. Up hill and down dale did they go, by straight ways and crooked, and when they reached the heights of many-fountained Ida, they laid their axes to the roots of many a tall branching oak that came thundering down as they felled it. They split the trees and bound them behind the mules, which then wended their way as they best could through the thick brushwood on to the plain. All who had been cutting wood bore logs, for so Meriones squire to Idomeneus had bidden them, and they threw them down in a line upon the seashore at the place where Achilles would make a mighty monument for Patroclus and for himself.

When they had thrown down their great logs of wood over the whole ground, they stayed all of them where they were, but Achilles ordered his brave Myrmidons to gird on their armour, and to yoke each man his horses; they therefore rose, girded on their armour and mounted each his chariot they and their charioteers with them. The chariots went before, and they that were on foot followed as a cloud in their tens of thousands after. In the midst of them his comrades bore Patroclus and covered him with the locks of their hair which they cut off and threw upon his body. Last came Achilles with his head bowed for sorrow, so noble a comrade was he taking to the house of Hades.

When they came to the place of which Achilles had told them they laid the body down and built up the wood. Achilles then bethought him of another matter. He went a space away from the pyre, and cut off the yellow lock which he had let grow for the river Spercheius. He looked all sorrowfully out upon the dark sea, and said, "Spercheius, in vain did my father Peleus vow to you that when I returned home to my loved native land I should cut off this lock and offer you a holy hecatomb; fifty she-goats was I to sacrifice to you there at your springs, where is your grove and your altar fragrant with burnt-offerings. Thus did my father vow, but you have not fulfilled his prayer; now, therefore, that I shall see my home no more, I give this lock as a keepsake to the hero Patroclus."

As he spoke he placed the lock in the hands of his dear comrade, and all who stood by were filled with yearning and lamentation. The sun would have gone down upon their mourning had not Achilles presently said to Agamemnon, “Son of Atreus, for it is to you that the people will give ear, there is a time to mourn and a time to cease from mourning; bid the people now leave the pyre and set about getting their dinners: we, to whom the dead is dearest, will see to what is wanted here, and let the other princes also stay by me.”

When King Agamemnon heard this he dismissed the people to their ships, but those who were about the dead heaped up wood and built a pyre a hundred feet this way and that; then they laid the dead all sorrowfully upon the top of it. They flayed and dressed many fat sheep and oxen before the pyre, and Achilles took fat from all of them and wrapped the body therein from head to foot, heaping the flayed carcases all round it. Against the bier he leaned two-handled jars of honey and unguents; four proud horses did he then cast upon the pyre, groaning the while he did so. The dead hero had had house-dogs; two of them did Achilles slay and threw upon the pyre; he also put twelve brave sons of noble Trojans to the sword and laid them with the rest, for he was full of bitterness and fury. Then he committed all to the resistless and devouring might of the fire; he groaned aloud and callid on his dead comrade by name. “Fare well,” he cried, “Patroclus, even in the house of Hades; I am now doing all that I have promised you. Twelve brave sons of noble Trojans shall the flames consume along with yourself, but dogs, not fire, shall devour the flesh of Hector son of Priam.”

Thus did he vaunt, but the dogs came not about the body of Hector, for Jove’s daughter Venus kept them off him night and day, and anointed him with ambrosial oil of roses that his flesh might not be torn when Achilles was dragging him about. Phoebus Apollo moreover sent a dark cloud from heaven to earth, which gave shade to the whole place where Hector lay, that the heat of the sun might not parch his body.

Now the pyre about dead Patroclus would not kindle. Achilles therefore bethought him of another matter; he went apart and prayed to the two winds Boreas and Zephyrus vowing them goodly offerings. He made them many drink-offerings from the golden cup and besought them to come and help him that the wood might make haste to kindle and the dead bodies be consumed. Fleet Iris heard him praying and started off to fetch the winds. They were holding high feast in the house of boisterous Zephyrus when Iris came running up to the stone threshold of the house and stood there, but as soon as they set eyes on her they all came towards her and each of them called her to him, but Iris would not sit down. “I cannot stay,” she said, “I must go back to the streams of Oceanus and the land of the Ethiopians who are offering hecatombs to the immortals, and I would have my share; but Achilles prays that Boreas and shrill Zephyrus will come to him, and he vows them goodly offerings; he would have you blow upon the pyre of Patroclus for whom all the Achaeans are lamenting.”

With this she left them, and the two winds rose with a cry that rent the air and swept the clouds before them. They blew on and on until they came to the sea, and the waves rose high beneath them, but when they reached Troy they fell upon the pyre till the mighty flames roared under the blast that they blew. All night long did they blow hard and beat upon the fire, and all night long did Achilles grasp his double cup, drawing wine from a mixing-bowl of gold, and calling upon the spirit of dead Patroclus as he poured it upon the ground until the earth was drenched. As a father mourns when he is burning the bones of his bridegroom son whose death has wrung the hearts of his parents, even so did Achilles mourn while burning the body of his comrade, pacing round the bier with piteous groaning and lamentation.

At length as the Morning Star was beginning to herald the light which saffron-mantled Dawn was soon to suffuse over the sea, the flames fell and the fire began to die. The winds then went home beyond the Thracian sea, which roared and boiled as they swept over it. The son of Peleus now turned away from the pyre and lay down, overcome with toil, till he fell into a sweet slumber. Presently they who were about the son of Atreus drew near in
a body, and roused him with the noise and tramp of their coming. He sat upright and said, “Son of Atreus, and all other princes of the Achaeans, first pour red wine everywhere upon the fire and quench it; let us then gather the bones of Patroclus son of Menoetius, singling them out with care; they are easily found, for they lie in the middle of the pyre, while all else, both men and horses, has been thrown in a heap and burned at the outer edge. We will lay the bones in a golden urn, in two layers of fat, against the time when I shall myself go down into the house of Hades. As for the barrow, labour not to raise a great one now, but such as is reasonable. Afterwards, let those Achaeans who may be left at the ships when I am gone, build it both broad and high.”

Thus he spoke and they obeyed the word of the son of Peleus. First they poured red wine upon the thick layer of ashes and quenched the fire. With many tears they singled out the whitened bones of their loved comrade and laid them within a golden urn in two layers of fat: they then covered the urn with a linen cloth and took it inside the tent. They marked off the circle where the

barrow should be, made a foundation for it about the pyre, and forthwith heaped up the earth. When they had thus raised a mound they were going away, but Achilles stayed the people and made them sit in assembly. He brought prizes from the ships-cauldrons, tripods, horses and mules, noble oxen, women with fair girdles, and swart iron.

The first prize he offered was for the chariot races a woman skilled in all useful arts, and a three-legged cauldron that had ears for handles, and would hold twenty-two measures. This was for the man who came in first. For the second there was a six-year old mare, unbroken, and in foal to a he-ass; the third was to have a goodly cauldron that had never yet been on the fire; it was still bright as when it left the maker, and would hold four measures. The fourth prize was two talents of gold, and the fifth a two-handled urn as yet unsoiled by smoke. Then he stood up and spoke among the Argives saying

“Son of Atreus, and all other Achaeans, these are the prizes that lie waiting the winners of the chariot races. At any other time I should carry off the first prize and take it to my own tent; you know how far my steeds excel all others for they are immortal; Neptune gave them to my father Peleus, who in his turn gave them to myself; but I shall hold aloof, I and my steeds that have lost their brave and kind driver, who many a time has washed them in clear water and anointed their manes with oil. See how they stand weeping here, with their manes trailing on the ground in the extremity of their sorrow. But do you others set yourselves in order throughout the host, whosoever has confidence in his horses and in the strength of his chariot.”

Thus spoke the son of Peleus and the drivers of chariots bestirred themselves. First among them all uprose Eumelus, king of men, son of Admetus, a man excellent in horsemanship. Next to him rose mighty Diomed son of Tydeus; he yoked the Trojan horses which he had taken from Aeneas, when Apollo bore him out of the fight. Next to him, yellow-haired Menelaus son of Atreus rose and yoked his fleet horses, Agamemnon’s mare Aethe, and his own horse Podargus. The mare had been given to Agamemnon by echepolus son of Anchises, that he might not have to follow him to Ilius, but might stay at home and take his ease; for Jove had endowed him with great wealth and he lived in spacious Sicyon. This mare, all eager for the race, did Menelaus put under the yoke.

Fourth in order Antilochus, son to noble Nestor son of Neleus, made ready his horses. These were bred in Pylos, and his father came up to him to give him good advice of which, however, he stood in but little need. “Antilochus,” said Nestor, “you are young, but Jove and Neptune have loved you well, and have made you an excellent horseman. I need not therefore say much by way of instruction. You are skilful at wheeling your horses round the post, but the horses themselves are very slow, and it is this that will, I fear, mar your chances. The other drivers know less than you do, but their horses are fleeter; therefore, my dear son, see if you cannot hit upon some artifice whereby you may insure that the prize shall not slip through your fingers. The woodman does more by skill than by brute force; by skill the pilot guides his storm-tossed barque over the sea, and so by skill one driver can beat another. If a man go wide in rounding this way and that, whereas a man who knows what he is doing may have worse horses, but he will keep them well in hand when he sees the doubling-post; he knows the precise moment at which to pull the rein, and keeps his eye well on the man in front of him. I will give you this certain token which cannot escape your notice. There is a stump of a dead tree-oak or pine as it may be some six feet above the ground, and not yet rotted away by rain; it stands at the fork of the road; it has two white stones set one on each side, and there is a clear course all round it. It may have been a monument to some one long since dead, or it may have been used as a doubling-post in days gone by; now, however, it has been fixed on by Achilles as the mark round which the chariots shall turn; hug it as close as you can, but as you stand in your chariot lean over a little to the left; urge on your right-hand horse with voice and lash, and give him a loose rein, but let the left-hand horse keep so close in, that the nave of your wheel shall almost graze the post; but mind the stone, or you will wound your horses and break your chariot in pieces, which would be sport for others but confusion for yourself. Therefore, my dear son, mind well what you are about, for if you can be first to round the post there is no chance of any one giving you the goby later, not even though you had Adrestus’s horse Arion behind you horse which is of divine race or those of Laomedon, which are the noblest in this country.”

When Nestor had made an end of counselling his son he sat down in his place, and fifth in order Meriones got ready his horses. They then all mounted their chariots and cast lots. Achilles shook the helmet, and the lot of Antilochus son of Nestor fell out first; next came that of King Eumelus, and after his, those of Menelaus son of Atreus and of Meriones. The last place fell to the lot of Diomed son of Tydeus, who was the best man of them all. They took their places in line; Achilles showed them the doubling-post round which they were to turn, some way off upon the plain; here he stationed his father’s follower Phoenix as umpire, to note the running, and report truly.

At the same instant they all of them lashed their horses, struck them with the reins, and shouted at them with all their might. They flew full speed over the plain away from the ships, the dust rose from under them as it were a cloud or whirlwind, and their manes were all flying in the wind. At one moment the chariots seemed to touch the ground, and then again they bounded into the air; the

drivers stood erect, and their hearts beat fast and furious in their lust of victory. Each kept calling on his horses, and the horses scoured the plain amid the clouds of dust that they raised.

It was when they were doing the last part of the course on their way back towards the sea that their pace was strained to the utmost and it was seen what each could do. The horses of the descendant of Pheres now took the lead, and close behind them came the Trojan stallions of Diomed. They seemed as if about to mount Eumelus's chariot, and he could feel their warm breath on his back and on his broad shoulders, for their heads were close to him as they flew over the course. Diomed would have now passed him, or there would have been a dead heat, but Phoebus Apollo to spite him made him drop his whip. Tears of anger fell from his eyes as he saw the mares going on faster than ever, while his own horses lost ground through his having no whip. Minerva saw the trick which Apollo had played the son of Tydeus, so she brought him his whip and put spirit into his horses; moreover she went after the son of Admetus in a rage and broke his yoke for him; the mares went one to one side the course, and the other to the other, and the pole was broken against the ground. Eumelus was thrown from his chariot close to the wheel; his elbows, mouth, and nostrils were all torn, and his forehead was bruised above his eyebrows; his eyes filled with tears and he could find no utterance. But the son of Tydeus turned his horses aside and shot far ahead, for Minerva put fresh strength into them and covered Diomed himself with glory.

Menelaus son of Atreus came next behind him, but Antilochus called to his father's horses. "On with you both," he cried, "and do your very utmost. I do not bid you try to beat the steeds of the son of Tydeus, for Minerva has put running into them, and has covered Diomed with glory; but you must overtake the horses of the son of Atreus and not be left behind, or Aethe who is so fleet will taunt you. Why, my good fellows, are you lagging? I tell you, and it shall surely be Nestor will keep neither of you, but will put both of you to the sword, if we win any the worse a prize through your carelessness, fly after them at your utmost speed; I will hit on a plan for passing them in a narrow part of the way, and it shall not fail me."

They feared the rebuke of their master, and for a short space went quicker. Presently Antilochus saw a narrow place where the road had sunk. The ground was broken, for the winter's rain had gathered and had worn the road so that the whole place was deepened. Menelaus was making towards it so as to get there first, for fear of a foul, but Antilochus turned his horses out of the way, and followed him a little on one side. The son of Atreus was afraid and shouted out, "Antilochus, you are driving recklessly; rein in your horses; the road is too narrow here, it will be wider soon, and you can pass me then; if you foul my chariot you may bring both of us to a mischief."

But Antilochus plied his whip, and drove faster, as though he had not heard him. They went side by side for about as far as a young man can hurl a disc from his shoulder when he is trying his strength, and then Menelaus's mares drew behind, for he left off driving for fear the horses should foul one another and upset the chariots; thus, while pressing on in quest of victory, they might both come headlong to the ground. Menelaus then upbraided Antilochus and said, "There is no greater trickster living than you are; go, and bad luck go with you; the Achaeans say not well that you have understanding, and come what may you shall not bear away the prize without sworn protest on my part."

Then he called on his horses and said to them, "Keep your pace, and slacken not; the limbs of the other horses will weary sooner than yours, for they are neither of them young."

The horses feared the rebuke of their master, and went faster, so that they were soon nearly up with the others. Meanwhile the Achaeans from their seats were watching how the horses went, as they scoured the plain amid clouds of their own dust. Idomeneus captain of the Cretans was first to make out the running, for he was not in the thick of the crowd, but stood on the most commanding part of the ground. The driver was a long way off, but Idomeneus could hear him shouting, and could see the foremost horse quite plainly a chestnut with a round white star, like the moon, on its forehead. He stood up and said among the Argives, "My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, can you see the running as well as I can? There seems to be another pair in front now, and another driver; those that led off at the start must have been disabled out on the plain. I saw them at first making their way round the doubling-post, but now, though I search the plain of Troy, I cannot find them. Perhaps the reins fell from the driver's hand so that he lost command of his horses at the doubling-post, and could not turn it. I suppose he must have been thrown out there, and broken his chariot, while his mares have left the course and gone off wildly in a panic. Come up and see for yourselves, I cannot make out for certain, but the driver seems an Aetolian by descent, ruler over the Argives, brave Diomed the son of Tydeus."

Ajax the son of Oileus took him up rudely and said, "Idomeneus, why should you be in such a hurry to tell us all about it, when the mares are still so far out upon the plain? You are none of the youngest, nor your eyes none of the sharpest, but you are always

laying down the law. You have no right to do so, for there are better men here than you are. Eumelus's horses are in front now, as they always have been, and he is on the chariot holding the reins."

The captain of the Cretans was angry, and answered, "Ajax you are an excellent railer, but you have no judgement, and are wanting in much else as well, for you have a vile temper. I will wager you a tripod or cauldron, and Agamemnon son of Atreus shall decide whose horses are first. You will then know to your cost."

Ajax son of Oileus was for making him an angry answer, and there would have been yet further brawling between them, had not Achilles risen in his place and said, "Cease your railing Ajax and Idomeneus; it is not you would be scandalised if you saw any one else do the like: sit down and keep your eyes on the horses; they are speeding towards the winning-post and will be bere directly. You will then both of you know whose horses are first, and whose come after."

As he was speaking, the son of Tydeus came driving in, plying his whip lustily from his shoulder, and his horses stepping high as they flew over the course. The sand and grit rained thick on the driver, and the chariot inlaid with gold and tin ran close behind his fleet horses. There was little trace of wheel-marks in the fine dust, and the horses came flying in at their utmost speed. Diomed stayed them in the middle of the crowd, and the sweat from their manes and chests fell in streams on to the ground. Forthwith he sprang from his goodly chariot, and leaned his whip against his horses' yoke; brave Sthenelus now lost no time, but at once brought on the prize, and gave the woman and the ear-handled cauldron to his comrades to take away. Then he unyoked the horses.

Next after him came in Antilochus of the race of Neleus, who had passed Menelaus by a trick and not by the fleetness of his horses; but even so Menelaus came in as close behind him as the wheel is to the horse that draws both the chariot and its master. The end hairs of a horse's tail touch the tyre of the wheel, and there is never much space between wheel and horse when the chariot is going; Menelaus was no further than this behind Antilochus, though at first he had been a full disc's throw behind him. He had soon caught him up again, for Agamemnon's mare Aethe kept pulling stronger and stronger, so that if the course had been longer he would have passed him, and there would not even have been a dead heat. Idomeneus's brave squire Meriones was about a spear's cast behind Menelaus. His horses were slowest of all, and he was the worst driver. Last of them all came the son of Admetus, dragging his chariot and driving his horses on in front. When Achilles saw him he was sorry, and stood up among the Argives saying, "The best man is coming in last. Let us give him a prize for it is reasonable. He shall have the second, but the first must go to the son of Tydeus."

Thus did he speak and the others all of them applauded his saying, and were for doing as he had said, but Nestor's son Antilochus stood up and claimed his rights from the son of Peleus. "Achilles," said he, "I shall take it much amiss if you do this thing; you would rob me of my prize, because you think Eumelus's chariot and horses were thrown out, and himself too, good man that he is. He should have prayed duly to the immortals; he would not have come in fast if he had done so. If you are sorry for him and so choose, you have much gold in your tents, with bronze, sheep, cattle and horses. Take something from this store if you would have the Achaeans speak well of you, and give him a better prize even than that which you have now offered; but I will not give up the mare, and he that will fight me for her, let him come on."

Achilles smiled as he heard this, and was pleased with Antilochus, who was one of his dearest comrades. So he said "Antilochus, if you would have me find Eumelus another prize, I will give him the bronze breastplate with a rim of tin running all round it which I took from Asteropaeus. It will be worth much money to him."

He bade his comrade Automedon bring the breastplate from his tent, and he did so. Achilles then gave it over to Eumelus, who received it gladly.

But Menelaus got up in a rage, furiously angry with Antilochus. An attendant placed his staff in his hands and bade the Argives keep silence: the hero then addressed them. "Antilochus," said he, "what is this from you who have been so far blameless? You have made me cut a poor figure and baulked my horses by flinging your own in front of them, though yours are much worse than mine are; therefore, O princes and counsellors of the Argives, judge between us and show no favour, lest one of the Achaeans say, 'Menelaus has got the mare through lying and corruption; his horses were far inferior to Antilochus's, but he has greater weight and influence.' Nay, I will determine the matter myself, and no man will blame me, for I shall do what is just. Come here, Antilochus, and stand, as our custom is, whip in hand before your chariot and horses; lay your hand on your steeds, and swear by earth-encircling Neptune that you did not purposely and guilefully get in the way of my horses."

And Antilochus answered, “Forgive me; I am much younger, King Menelaus, than you are; you stand higher than I do and are the better man of the two; you know how easily young men are betrayed into indiscretion; their tempers are more hasty and they have less judgement; make due allowances therefore, and bear with me; I will of my own accord give up the mare that I have won, and if you claim any further chattel from my own possessions, I would rather yield it to you, at once, than fall from your good graces henceforth, and do wrong in the sight of heaven.”

The son of Nestor then took the mare and gave her over to Menelaus, whose anger was thus appeased; as when dew falls upon a field of ripening corn, and the lands are bristling with the harvest even so, O Menelaus, was your heart made glad within you. He turned to Antilochus and said, “Now, Antilochus, angry though I have been, I can give way to you of my own free will; you have never been headstrong nor ill-disposed hitherto, but this time your youth has got the better of your judgement; be careful how you outwit your betters in future; no one else could have brought me round so easily, but your good father, your brother, and yourself have all of you had infinite trouble on my behalf; I therefore yield to your entreaty, and will give up the mare to you, mine though it indeed be; the people will thus see that I am neither harsh nor vindictive.”

With this he gave the mare over to Antilochus’s comrade Noemon, and then took the cauldron. Meriones, who had come in fourth, carried off the two talents of gold, and the fifth prize, the two-handled urn, being unawarded, Achilles gave it to Nestor, going up to him among the assembled Argives and saying, “Take this, my good old friend, as an heirloom and memorial of the funeral of Patroclus for you shall see him no more among the Argives. I give you this prize though you cannot win one; you can now neither wrestle nor fight, and cannot enter for the javelin-match nor foot-races, for the hand of age has been laid heavily upon you.”

So saying he gave the urn over to Nestor, who received it gladly and answered, “My son, all that you have said is true; there is no strength now in my legs and feet, nor can I hit out with my hands from either shoulder. Would that I were still young and strong as when the Epeans were burying King Amarynceus in Buprasium, and his sons offered prizes in his honour. There was then none that could vie with me neither of the Epeans nor the Pylians themselves nor the Aetolians. In boxing I overcame Clytomedes son of Enops, and in wrestling, Ancaeus of Pleuron who had come forward against me. Iphiclus was a good runner, but I beat him, and threw farther with my spear than either Phyleus or Polydorus. In chariot-racing alone did the two sons of Actor surpass me by crowding their horses in front of me, for they were angry at the way victory had gone, and at the greater part of the prizes remaining in the place in which they had been offered. They were twins, and the one kept on holding the reins, and holding the reins, while the other plied the whip. Such was I then, but now I must leave these matters to younger men; I must bow before the weight of years, but in those days I was eminent among heroes. And now, sir, go on with the funeral contests in honour of your comrade: gladly do I accept this urn, and my heart rejoices that you do not forget me but are ever mindful of my goodwill towards you, and of the respect due to me from the Achaeans. For all which may the grace of heaven be vouchsafed you in great abundance.”

Thereon the son of Peleus, when he had listened to all the thanks of Nestor, went about among the concourse of the Achaeans, and presently offered prizes for skill in the painful art of boxing. He brought out a strong mule, and made it fast in the middle of the crowd a she-mule never yet broken, but six years old when it is hardest of all to break them: this was for the victor, and for the vanquished he offered a double cup. Then he stood up and said among the Argives, “Son of Atreus, and all other Achaeans, I invite our two champion boxers to lay about them lustily and compete for these prizes. He to whom Apollo vouchsafes the greater endurance, and whom the Achaeans acknowledge as victor, shall take the mule back with him to his own tent, while he that is vanquished shall have the double cup.”

As he spoke there stood up a champion both brave and great stature, a skilful boxer, Epeus, son of Panopeus. He laid his hand on the mule and said, “Let the man who is to have the cup come hither, for none but myself will take the mule. I am the best boxer of all here present, and none can beat me. Is it not enough that I should fall short of you in actual fighting? Still, no man can be good at everything. I tell you plainly, and it shall come true; if any man will box with me I will bruise his body and break his bones; therefore let his friends stay here in a body and be at hand to take him away when I have done with him.”

They all held their peace, and no man rose save Euryalus son of Mecisteus, who was son of Talaus. Mecisteus went once to Thebes after the fall of Oedipus, to attend his funeral, and he beat all the people of Cadmus. The son of Tydeus was Euryalus’s second, cheering him on and hoping heartily that he would win. First he put a waistband round him and then he gave him some well-cut thongs of ox-hide; the two men being now girt went into the middle of the ring, and immediately fell to; heavily indeed did they punish one another and lay about them with their brawny fists. One could hear the horrid crashing of their jaws, and they sweated from every pore of their skin. Presently Epeus came on and gave Euryalus a blow on the jaw as he was looking round; Euryalus

could not keep his legs; they gave way under him in a moment and he sprang up with a bound, as a fish leaps into the air near some shore that is all bestrewn with sea-wrack, when Boreas furs the top of the waves, and then falls back into deep water. But noble Epeus caught hold of him and raised him up; his comrades also came round him and led him from the ring, unsteady in his gait, his head hanging on one side, and spitting great clots of gore. They set him down in a swoon and then went to fetch the double cup.

The son of Peleus now brought out the prizes for the third contest and showed them to the Argives. These were for the painful art of wrestling. For the winner there was a great tripod ready for setting upon the fire, and the Achaeans valued it among themselves at twelve oxen. For the loser he brought out a woman skilled in all manner of arts, and they valued her at four oxen. He rose and said among the Argives, “Stand forward, you who will essay this contest.”

Forthwith uprose great Ajax the son of Telamon, and crafty Ulysses, full of wiles rose also. The two girded themselves and went into the middle of the ring. They gripped each other in their strong hands like the rafters which some master-builder frames for the roof of a high house to keep the wind out. Their backbones cracked as they tugged at one another with their mighty arms and sweat rained from them in torrents. Many a bloody weal sprang up on their sides and shoulders, but they kept on striving with might and main for victory and to win the tripod. Ulysses could not throw Ajax, nor Ajax him; Ulysses was too strong for him; but when the Achaeans began to tire of watching them, Ajax said to ulysses, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, you shall either lift me, or I you, and let Jove settle it between us.”

He lifted him from the ground as he spoke, but Ulysses did not forget his cunning. He hit Ajax in the hollow at back of his knee, so that he could not keep his feet, but fell on his back with Ulysses lying upon his chest, and all who saw it marvelled. Then Ulysses in turn lifted Ajax and stirred him a little from the ground but could not lift him right off it, his knee sank under him, and the two fell side by side on the ground and were all begrimed with dust. They now sprang towards one another and were for wrestling yet a third time, but Achilles rose and stayed them. “Put not each other further,” said he, “to such cruel suffering; the victory is with both alike, take each of you an equal prize, and let the other Achaeans now compete.”

Thus did he speak and they did even as he had said, and put on their shirts again after wiping the dust from off their bodies.

The son of Peleus then offered prizes for speed in running a mixing-bowl beautifully wrought, of pure silver. It would hold six measures, and far exceeded all others in the whole world for beauty; it was the work of cunning artificers in Sidon, and had been brought into port by Phoenicians from beyond the sea, who had made a present of it to Thoas. Eueneus son of jason had given it to Patroclus in ransom of Priam’s son Lycaon, and Achilles now offered it as a prize in honour of his comrade to him who should be the swiftest runner. For the second prize he offered a large ox, well fattened, while for the last there was to be half a talent of gold. He then rose and said among the Argives, “Stand forward, you who will essay this contest.”

Forthwith uprose fleet Ajax son of Oileus, with cunning Ulysses, and Nestor’s son Antilochus, the fastest runner among all the youth of his time. They stood side by side and Achilles showed them the goal. The course was set out for them from the starting-post, and the son of Oileus took the lead at once, with Ulysses as close behind him as the shuttle is to a woman’s bosom when she throws the woof across the warp and holds it close up to her; even so close behind him was Ulysses treading in his footprints before the dust could settle there, and Ajax could feel his breath on the back of his head as he ran swiftly on. The Achaeans all shouted applause as they saw him straining his utmost, and cheered him as he shot past them; but when they were now nearing the end of the course Ulysses prayed inwardly to Minerva. “Hear me,” he cried, “and help my feet, O goddess.” Thus did he pray, and Pallas Minerva heard his prayer; she made his hands and his feet feel light, and when the runners were at the point of pouncing upon the prize, Ajax, through Minerva’s spite slipped upon some offal that was lying there from the cattle which Achilles had slaughtered in honour of Patroclus, and his mouth and nostrils were all filled with cow dung. Ulysses therefore carried off the mixing-bowl, for he got before Ajax and came in first. But Ajax took the ox and stood with his hand on one of its horns, spitting the dung out of his mouth. Then he said to the Argives, “Alas, the goddess has spoiled my running; she watches over Ulysses and stands by him as though she were his own mother.” Thus did he speak and they all of them laughed heartily.

Antilochus carried off the last prize and smiled as he said to the bystanders, “You all see, my friends, that now too the gods have shown their respect for seniority. Ajax is somewhat older than I am, and as for Ulysses, he belongs to an earlier generation, but he is hale in spite of his years, and no man of the Achaeans can run against him save only Achilles.”

He said this to pay a compliment to the son of Peleus, and Achilles answered, “Antilochus, you shall not have praised me to no purpose; I shall give you an additional half talent of gold.” He then gave the half talent to Antilochus, who received it gladly.

Then the son of Peleus brought out the spear, helmet and shield that had been borne by Sarpedon, and were taken from him by Patroclus. He stood up and said among the Argives, “We bid two champions put on their armour, take their keen blades, and make trial of one another in the presence of the multitude; whichever of them can first wound the flesh of the other, cut through his armour, and draw blood, to him will I give this goodly Thracian sword inlaid with silver, which I took from Asteropaeus, but the armour let both hold in partnership, and I will give each of them a hearty meal in my own tent.”

Forthwith uprose great Ajax the son of Telamon, as also mighty Diomed son of Tydeus. When they had put on their armour each on his own side of the ring, they both went into the middle eager to engage, and with fire flashing from their eyes. The Achaeans marvelled as they beheld them, and when the two were now close up with one another, thrice did they spring forward and thrice try to strike each other in close combat. Ajax pierced Diomed’s round shield, but did not draw blood, for the cuirass beneath the shield protected him; thereon the son of Tydeus from over his huge shield kept aiming continually at Ajax’s neck with the point of his spear, and the Achaeans alarmed for his safety bade them leave off fighting and divide the prize between them. Achilles then gave the great sword to the son of Tydeus, with its scabbard, and the leathern belt with which to hang it.

Achilles next offered the massive iron quoit which mighty Eetion had erewhile been used to hurl, until Achilles had slain him and carried it off in his ships along with other spoils. He stood up and said among the Argives, “Stand forward, you who would essay this contest. He who wins it will have a store of iron that will last him five years as they go rolling round, and if his fair fields lie far from a town his shepherd or ploughman will not have to make a journey to buy iron, for he will have a stock of it on his own premises.”

Then uprose the two mighty men Polypoetes and Leonteus, with Ajax son of Telamon and noble Epeus. They stood up one after the other and Epeus took the quoit, whirled it, and flung it from him, which set all the Achaeans laughing. After him threw Leonteus of the race of Mars. Ajax son of Telamon threw third, and sent the quoit beyond any mark that had been made yet, but when mighty Polypoetes took the quoit he hurled it as though it had been a stockman’s stick which he sends flying about among his cattle when he is driving them, so far did his throw out-distance those of the others. All who saw it roared applause, and his comrades carried the prize for him and set it on board his ship.

Achilles next offered a prize of iron for archery ten double-edged axes and ten with single eddies: he set up a ship’s mast, some way off upon the sands, and with a fine string tied a pigeon to it by the foot; this was what they were to aim at. “Whoever,” he said, “can hit the pigeon shall have all the axes and take them away with him; he who hits the string without hitting the bird will have taken a worse aim and shall have the single-edged axes.”

Then uprose King Teucer, and Meriones the stalwart squire of Idomeneus rose also, They cast lots in a bronze helmet and the lot of Teucer fell first. He let fly with his arrow forthwith, but he did not promise hecatombs of firstling lambs to King Apollo, and missed his bird, for Apollo foiled his aim; but he hit the string with which the bird was tied, near its foot; the arrow cut the string clean through so that it hung down towards the ground, while the bird flew up into the sky, and the Achaeans shouted applause. Meriones, who had his arrow ready while Teucer was aiming, snatched the bow out of his hand, and at once promised that he would sacrifice a hecatomb of firstling lambs to Apollo lord of the bow; then espying the pigeon high up under the clouds, he hit her in the middle of the wing as she was circling upwards; the arrow went clean through the wing and fixed itself in the ground at Meriones’ feet, but the bird perched on the ship’s mast hanging her head and with all her feathers drooping; the life went out of her, and she fell heavily from the mast. Meriones, therefore, took all ten double-edged axes, while Teucer bore off the single-edged ones to his ships.

Then the son of Peleus brought in a spear and a cauldron that had never been on the fire; it was worth an ox, and was chased with a pattern of flowers; and those that throw the javelin stood up to wit the son of Atreus, king of men Agamemnon, and Meriones, stalwart squire of Idomeneus. But Achilles spoke saying, “Son of Atreus, we know how far you excel all others both in power and in throwing the javelin; take the cauldron back with you to your ships, but if it so please you, let us give the spear to Meriones; this at least is what I should myself wish.”

King Agamemnon assented. So he gave the bronze spear to Meriones, and handed the goodly cauldron to Talthybius his esquire.

Book XXIV

THE assembly now broke up and the people went their ways each to his own ship. There they made ready their supper, and then bethought them of the blessed boon of sleep; but Achilles still wept for thinking of his dear comrade, and sleep, before whom all

things bow, could take no hold upon him. This way and that did he turn as he yearned after the might and manfulness of Patroclus; he thought of all they had done together, and all they had gone through both on the field of battle and on the waves of the weary sea. As he dwelt on these things he wept bitterly and lay now on his side, now on his back, and now face downwards, till at last he rose and went out as one distraught to wander upon the seashore. Then, when he saw dawn breaking over beach and sea, he yoked his horses to his chariot, and bound the body of Hector behind it that he might drag it about. Thrice did he drag it round the tomb of the son of Menoetius, and then went back into his tent, leaving the body on the ground full length and with its face downwards. But Apollo would not suffer it to be disfigured, for he pitied the man, dead though he now was; therefore he shielded him with his golden aegis continually, that he might take no hurt while Achilles was dragging him.

Thus shamefully did Achilles in his fury dishonour Hector; but the blessed gods looked down in pity from heaven, and urged Mercury, slayer of Argus, to steal the body. All were of this mind save only Juno, Neptune, and Jove's grey-eyed daughter, who persisted in the hate which they had ever borne towards Ilius with Priam and his people; for they forgave not the wrong done them by Alexandrus in disdaining the goddesses who came to him when he was in his sheepyards, and preferring her who had offered him a wanton to his ruin.

When, therefore, the morning of the twelfth day had now come, Phoebus Apollo spoke among the immortals saying, "You gods ought to be ashamed of yourselves; you are cruel and hard-hearted. Did not Hector burn you thigh-bones of heifers and of unblemished goats? And now dare you not rescue even his dead body, for his wife to look upon, with his mother and child, his father Priam, and his people, who would forthwith commit him to the flames, and give him his due funeral rites? So, then, you would all be on the side of mad Achilles, who knows neither right nor ruth? He is like some savage lion that in the pride of his great strength and daring springs upon men's flocks and gorges on them. Even so has Achilles flung aside all pity, and all that conscience which at once so greatly banes yet greatly boons him that will heed it. man may lose one far dearer than Achilles has lost a son, it may be, or a brother born from his own mother's womb; yet when he has mourned him and wept over him he will let him bide, for it takes much sorrow to kill a man; whereas Achilles, now that he has slain noble Hector, drags him behind his chariot round the tomb of his comrade. It were better of him, and for him, that he should not do so, for brave though he be we gods may take it ill that he should vent his fury upon dead clay."

Juno spoke up in a rage. "This were well," she cried, "O lord of the silver bow, if you would give like honour to Hector and to Achilles; but Hector was mortal and suckled at a woman's breast, whereas Achilles is the offspring of a goddess whom I myself reared and brought up. I married her to Peleus, who is above measure dear to the immortals; you gods came all of you to her wedding; you feasted along with them yourself and brought your lyre false, and fond of low company, that you have ever been."

Then said Jove, "Juno, be not so bitter. Their honour shall not be equal, but of all that dwell in Ilius, Hector was dearest to the gods, as also to myself, for his offerings never failed me. Never was my altar stinted of its dues, nor of the drink-offerings and savour of sacrifice which we claim of right. I shall therefore permit the body of mighty Hector to be stolen; and yet this may hardly be without Achilles coming to know it, for his mother keeps night and day beside him. Let some one of you, therefore, send Thetis to me, and I will impart my counsel to her, namely that Achilles is to accept a ransom from Priam, and give up the body."

On this Iris fleet as the wind went forth to carry his message. Down she plunged into the dark sea midway between Samos and rocky Imbrus; the waters hissed as they closed over her, and she sank into the bottom as the lead at the end of an ox-horn, that is sped to carry death to fishes. She found Thetis sitting in a great cave with the other sea-goddesses gathered round her; there she sat in the midst of them weeping for her noble son who was to fall far from his own land, on the rich plains of Troy. Iris went up to her and said, "Rise Thetis; Jove, whose counsels fail not, bids you come to him." And Thetis answered, "Why does the mighty god so bid me? I am in great grief, and shrink from going in and out among the immortals. Still, I will go, and the word that he may speak shall not be spoken in vain."

The goddess took her dark veil, than which there can be no robe more sombre, and went forth with fleet Iris leading the way before her. The waves of the sea opened them a path, and when they reached the shore they flew up into the heavens, where they found the all-seeing son of Saturn with the blessed gods that live for ever assembled near him. Minerva gave up her seat to her, and she sat down by the side of father Jove. Juno then placed a fair golden cup in her hand, and spoke to her in words of comfort, whereon Thetis drank and gave her back the cup; and the sire of gods and men was the first to speak.

"So, goddess," said he, "for all your sorrow, and the grief that I well know reigns ever in your heart, you have come hither to Olympus, and I will tell you why I have sent for you. This nine days past the immortals have been quarrelling about Achilles waster

of cities and the body of Hector. The gods would have Mercury slayer of Argus steal the body, but in furtherance of our peace and amity henceforward, I will concede such honour to your son as I will now tell you. Go, then, to the host and lay these commands upon him; say that the gods are angry with him, and that I am myself more angry than them all, in that he keeps Hector at the ships and will not give him up. He may thus fear me and let the body go. At the same time I will send Iris to great Priam to bid him go to the ships of the Achaeans, and ransom his son, taking with him such gifts for Achilles as may give him satisfaction.

Silver-footed Thetis did as the god had told her, and forthwith down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus. She went to her son's tents where she found him grieving bitterly, while his trusty comrades round him were busy preparing their morning meal, for which they had killed a great woolly sheep. His mother sat down beside him and caressed him with her hand saying, "My son, how long will you keep on thus grieving and making moan? You are gnawing at your own heart, and think neither of food nor of woman's embraces; and yet these too were well, for you have no long time to live, and death with the strong hand of fate are already close beside you. Now, therefore, heed what I say, for I come as a messenger from Jove; he says that the gods are angry with you, and himself more angry than them all, in that you keep Hector at the ships and will not give him up. Therefore let him go, and accept a ransom for his body."

And Achilles answered, "So be it. If Olympian Jove of his own motion thus commands me, let him that brings the ransom bear the body away."

Thus did mother and son talk together at the ships in long discourse with one another. Meanwhile the son of Saturn sent Iris to the strong city of Ilius. "Go," said he, "fleet Iris, from the mansions of Olympus, and tell King Priam in Ilius, that he is to go to the ships of the Achaeans and free the body of his dear son. He is to take such gifts with him as shall give satisfaction to Achilles, and he is to go alone, with no other Trojan, save only some honoured servant who may drive his mules and waggon, and bring back the body of him whom noble Achilles has slain. Let him have no thought nor fear of death in his heart, for we will send the slayer of Argus to escort him, and bring him within the tent of Achilles. Achilles will not kill him nor let another do so, for he will take heed to his ways and sin not, and he will entreat a suppliant with all honourable courtesy."

On this Iris, fleet as the wind, sped forth to deliver her message. She went to Priam's house, and found weeping and lamentation therein. His sons were seated round their father in the outer courtyard, and their raiment was wet with tears: the old man sat in the midst of them with his mantle wrapped close about his body, and his head and neck all covered with the filth which he had clutched as he lay grovelling in the mire. His daughters and his sons' wives went wailing about the house, as they thought of the many and brave men who lay dead, slain by the Argives. The messenger of Jove stood by Priam and spoke softly to him, but fear fell upon him as she did so. "Take heart," she said, "Priam offspring of Dardanus, take heart and fear not. I bring no evil tidings, but am minded well towards you. I come as a messenger from Jove, who though he be not near, takes thought for you and pities you. The lord of Olympus bids you go and ransom noble Hector, and take with you such gifts as shall give satisfaction to Achilles. You are to go alone, with no Trojan, save only some honoured servant who may drive your mules and waggon, and bring back to the city the body of him whom noble Achilles has slain. You are to have no thought, nor fear of death, for Jove will send the slayer of Argus to escort you. When he has brought you within Achilles' tent, Achilles will not kill you nor let another do so, for he will take heed to his ways and sin not, and he will entreat a suppliant with all honourable courtesy."

Iris went her way when she had thus spoken, and Priam told his sons to get a mule-waggon ready, and to make the body of the waggon fast upon the top of its bed. Then he went down into his fragrant store-room, high-vaulted, and made of cedar-wood, where his many treasures were kept, and he called Hecuba his wife. "Wife," said he, "a messenger has come to me from Olympus, and has told me to go to the ships of the Achaeans to ransom my dear son, taking with me such gifts as shall give satisfaction to Achilles. What think you of this matter? for my own part I am greatly moved to pass through the of the Achaeans and go to their ships."

His wife cried aloud as she heard him, and said, "Alas, what has become of that judgement for which you have been ever famous both among strangers and your own people? How can you venture alone to the ships of the Achaeans, and look into the face of him who has slain so many of your brave sons? You must have iron courage, for if the cruel savage sees you and lays hold on you, he will know neither respect nor pity. Let us then weep Hector from afar here in our own house, for when I gave him birth the threads of overruling fate were spun for him that dogs should eat his flesh far from his parents, in the house of that terrible man on whose liver I would fain fasten and devour it. Thus would I avenge my son, who showed no cowardice when Achilles slew him, and thought neither of Right nor of avoiding battle as he stood in defence of Trojan men and Trojan women."

Then Priam said, “I would go, do not therefore stay me nor be as a bird of ill omen in my house, for you will not move me. Had it been some mortal man who had sent me some prophet or priest who divines from sacrifice I should have deemed him false and have given him no heed; but now I have heard the goddess and seen her face to face, therefore I will go and her saying shall not be in vain. If it be my fate to die at the ships of the Achaeans even so would I have it; let Achilles slay me, if I may but first have taken my son in my arms and mourned him to my heart’s comforting.”

So saying he lifted the lids of his chests, and took out twelve goodly vestments. He took also twelve cloaks of single fold, twelve rugs, twelve fair mantles, and an equal number of shirts. He weighed out ten talents of gold, and brought moreover two burnished tripods, four cauldrons, and a very beautiful cup which the Thracians had given him when he had gone to them on an embassy; it was very precious, but he grudged not even this, so eager was he to ransom the body of his son. Then he chased all the Trojans from the court and rebuked them with words of anger. “Out,” he cried, “shame and disgrace to me that you are. Have you no grief in your own homes that you are come to plague me here? Is it a small thing, think you, that the son of Saturn has sent this sorrow upon me, to lose the bravest of my sons? Nay, you shall prove it in person, for now he is gone the Achaeans will have easier work in killing you. As for me, let me go down within the house of Hades, ere mine eyes behold the sacking and wasting of the city.”

He drove the men away with his staff, and they went forth as the old man sped them. Then he called to his sons, upbraiding Helenus, Paris, noble Agathon, Pammon, Antiphonus, Polites of the loud battle-cry, Deiphobus, Hippothous, and Dius. These nine did the old man call near him. “Come to me at once,” he cried, “worthless sons who do me shame; would that you had all been killed at the ships rather than Hector. Miserable man that I am, I have had the bravest sons in all Troy noble Nestor, Troilus the dauntless charioteer, and Hector who was a god among men, so that one would have thought he was son to an immortal yet there is not one of them left. Mars has slain them and those of whom I am ashamed are alone left me. Liars, and light of foot, heroes of the dance, robbers of lambs and kids from your own people, why do you not get a waggon ready for me at once, and put all these things upon it that I may set out on my way?”

Thus did he speak, and they feared the rebuke of their father. They brought out a strong mule-waggon, newly made, and set the body of the waggon fast on its bed. They took the mule-yoke from the peg on which it hung, a yoke of boxwood with a knob on the top of it and rings for the reins to go through. Then they brought a yoke-band eleven cubits long, to bind the yoke to the pole; they bound it on at the far end of the pole, and put the ring over the upright pin making it fast with three turns of the band on either side the knob, and bending the thong of the yoke beneath it. This done, they brought from the store-chamber the rich ransom that was to purchase the body of Hector, and they set it all orderly on the waggon; then they yoked the strong harness-mules which the Mysians had on a time given as a goodly present to Priam; but for Priam himself they yoked horses which the old king had bred, and kept for own use.

Thus heedfully did Priam and his servant see to the yolking of their cars at the palace. Then Hecuba came to them all sorrowful, with a golden goblet of wine in her right hand, that they might make a drink-offering before they set out. She stood in front of the horses and said, “Take this, make a drink-offering to father Jove, and since you are minded to go to the ships in spite of me, pray that you may come safely back from the hands of your enemies. Pray to the son of Saturn lord of the whirlwind, who sits on Ida and looks down over all Troy, pray him to send his swift messenger on your right hand, the bird of omen which is strongest and most dear to him of all birds, that you may see it with your own eyes and trust it as you go forth to the ships of the Danaans. If all-seeing Jove will not send you this messenger, however set upon it you may be, I would not have you go to the ships of the Argives.”

And Priam answered, “Wife, I will do as you desire me; it is well to lift hands in prayer to Jove, if so be he may have mercy upon me.”

With this the old man bade the serving-woman pour pure water over his hands, and the woman came, bearing the water in a bowl. He washed his hands and took the cup from his wife; then he made the drink-offering and prayed, standing in the middle of the courtyard and turning his eyes to heaven. “Father Jove,” he said, “that rulest from Ida, most glorious and most great, grant that I may be received kindly and compassionately in the tents of Achilles; and send your swift messenger upon my right hand, the bird of omen which is strongest and most dear to you of all birds, that I may see it with my own eyes and trust it as I go forth to the ships of the Danaans.”

So did he pray, and Jove the lord of counsel heard his prayer. Forthwith he sent an eagle, the most unerring portent of all birds that fly, the dusky hunter that men also call the Black Eagle. His wings were spread abroad on either side as wide as the well-made and

well-bolted door of a rich man's chamber. He came to them flying over the city upon their right hands, and when they saw him they were glad and their hearts took comfort within them. The old man made haste to mount his chariot, and drove out through the inner gateway and under the echoing gatehouse of the outer court. Before him went the mules drawing the four-wheeled waggon, and driven by wise Idaeus; behind these were the horses, which the old man lashed with his whip and drove swiftly through the city, while his friends followed after, wailing and lamenting for him as though he were on his road to death. As soon as they had come down from the city and had reached the plain, his sons and sons-in-law who had followed him went back to Ilius.

But Priam and Idaeus as they showed out upon the plain did not escape the ken of all-seeing Jove, who looked down upon the old man and pitied him; then he spoke to his son Mercury and said, "Mercury, for it is you who are the most disposed to escort men on their way, and to hear those whom you will hear, go, and so conduct Priam to the ships of the Achaeans that no other of the Danaans shall see him nor take note of him until he reach the son of Peleus."

Thus he spoke and Mercury, guide and guardian, slayer of Argus, did as he was told. Forthwith he bound on his glittering golden sandals with which he could fly like the wind over land and sea; he took the wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep, or wakes them just as he pleases, and flew holding it in his hand till he came to Troy and to the Hellespont. To look at, he was like a young man of noble birth in the hey-day of his youth and beauty with the down just coming upon his face.

Now when Priam and Idaeus had driven past the great tomb of Ilius, they stayed their mules and horses that they might drink in the river, for the shades of night were falling, when, therefore, Idaeus saw Mercury standing near them he said to Priam, "Take heed, descendant of Dardanus; here is matter which demands consideration. I see a man who I think will presently fall upon us; let us fly with our horses, or at least embrace his knees and implore him to take compassion upon us?

When he heard this the old man's heart failed him, and he was in great fear; he stayed where he was as one dazed, and the hair stood on end over his whole body; but the bringer of good luck came up to him and took him by the hand, saying, "Whither, father, are you thus driving your mules and horses in the dead of night when other men are asleep? Are you not afraid of the fierce Achaeans who are hard by you, so cruel and relentless? Should some one of them see you bearing so much treasure through the darkness of the flying night, what would not your state then be? You are no longer young, and he who is with you is too old to protect you from those who would attack you. For myself, I will do you no harm, and I will defend you from any one else, for you remind me of my own father."

And Priam answered, "It is indeed as you say, my dear son; nevertheless some god has held his hand over me, in that he has sent such a wayfarer as yourself to meet me so Opportunely; you are so comely in mien and figure, and your judgement is so excellent that you must come of blessed parents."

Then said the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, "Sir, all that you have said is right; but tell me and tell me true, are you taking this rich treasure to send it to a foreign people where it may be safe, or are you all leaving strong Ilius in dismay now that your son has fallen who was the bravest man among you and was never lacking in battle with the Achaeans?"

And Priam said, "Wo are you, my friend, and who are your parents, that you speak so truly about the fate of my unhappy son?"

The slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, answered him, "Sir, you would prove me, that you question me about noble Hector. Many a time have I set eyes upon him in battle when he was driving the Argives to their ships and putting them to the sword. We stood still and marvelled, for Achilles in his anger with the son of Atreus suffered us not to fight. I am his squire, and came with him in the same ship. I am a Myrmidon, and my father's name is Polyctor: he is a rich man and about as old as you are; he has six sons besides myself, and I am the seventh. We cast lots, and it fell upon me to sail hither with Achilles. I am now come from the ships on to the plain, for with daybreak the Achaeans will set battle in array about the city. They chafe at doing nothing, and are so eager that their princes cannot hold them back."

Then answered Priam, "If you are indeed the squire of Achilles son of Peleus, tell me now the Whole truth. Is my son still at the ships, or has Achilles hewn him limb from limb, and given him to his hounds?"

"Sir," replied the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, "neither hounds nor vultures have yet devoured him; he is still just lying at the tents by the ship of Achilles, and though it is now twelve days that he has lain there, his flesh is not wasted nor have the worms eaten him although they feed on warriors. At daybreak Achilles drags him cruelly round the sepulchre of his dear comrade, but it does him no hurt. You should come yourself and see how he lies fresh as dew, with the blood all washed away, and his wounds

every one of them closed though many pierced him with their spears. Such care have the blessed gods taken of your brave son, for he was dear to them beyond all measure."

The old man was comforted as he heard him and said, "My son, see what a good thing it is to have made due offerings to the immortals; for as sure as that he was born my son never forgot the gods that hold Olympus, and now they requite it to him even in death. Accept therefore at my hands this goodly chalice; guard me and with heaven's help guide me till I come to the tent of the son of Peleus."

Then answered the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, "Sir, you are tempting me and playing upon my youth, but you shall not move me, for you are offering me presents without the knowledge of Achilles whom I fear and hold it great guiltless to defraud, lest some evil presently befall me; but as your guide I would go with you even to Argos itself, and would guard you so carefully whether by sea or land, that no one should attack you through making light of him who was with you."

The bringer of good luck then sprang on to the chariot, and seizing the whip and reins he breathed fresh spirit into the mules and horses. When they reached the trench and the wall that was before the ships, those who were on guard had just been getting their suppers, and the slayer of Argus threw them all into a deep sleep. Then he drew back the bolts to open the gates, and took Priam inside with the treasure he had upon his waggon. Ere long they came to the lofty dwelling of the son of Peleus for which the Myrmidons had cut pine and which they had built for their king; when they had built it they thatched it with coarse tussock-grass which they had mown out on the plain, and all round it they made a large courtyard, which was fenced with stakes set close together. The gate was barred with a single bolt of pine which it took three men to force into its place, and three to draw back so as to open the gate, but Achilles could draw it by himself. Mercury opened the gate for the old man, and brought in the treasure that he was taking with him for the son of Peleus. Then he sprang from the chariot on to the ground and said, "Sir, it is I, immortal Mercury, that am come with you, for my father sent me to escort you. I will now leave you, and will not enter into the presence of Achilles, for it might anger him that a god should befriend mortal men thus openly. Go you within, and embrace the knees of the son of Peleus: beseech him by his father, his lovely mother, and his son; thus you may move him."

With these words Mercury went back to high Olympus. Priam sprang from his chariot to the ground, leaving Idaeus where he was, in charge of the mules and horses. The old man went straight into the house where Achilles, loved of the gods, was sitting. There he found him with his men seated at a distance from him: only two, the hero Automedon, and Alcimus of the race of Mars, were busy in attendance about his person, for he had but just done eating and drinking, and the table was still there. King Priam entered without their seeing him, and going right up to Achilles he clasped his knees and kissed the dread murderous hands that had slain so many of his sons.

As when some cruel spite has befallen a man that he should have killed some one in his own country, and must fly to a great man's protection in a land of strangers, and all marvel who see him, even so did Achilles marvel as he beheld Priam. The others looked one to another and marvelled also, but Priam besought Achilles saying, "Think of your father, O Achilles like unto the gods, who is such even as I am, on the sad threshold of old age. It may be that those who dwell near him harass him, and there is none to keep war and ruin from him. Yet when he hears of you being still alive, he is glad, and his days are full of hope that he shall see his dear son come home to him from Troy; but I, wretched man that I am, had the bravest in all Troy for my sons, and there is not one of them left. I had fifty sons when the Achaeans came here; nineteen of them were from a single womb, and the others were borne to me by the women of my household. The greater part of them has fierce Mars laid low, and Hector, him who was alone left, him who was the guardian of the city and ourselves, him have you lately slain; therefore I am now come to the ships of the Achaeans to ransom his body from you with a great ransom. Fear, O Achilles, the wrath of heaven; think on your own father and have compassion upon me, who am the more pitiable, for I have steeled myself as no man yet has ever steeled himself before me, and have raised to my lips the hand of him who slew my son."

Thus spoke Priam, and the heart of Achilles yearned as he bethought him of his father. He took the old man's hand and moved him gently away. The two wept bitterly Priam, as he lay at Achilles' feet, weeping for Hector, and Achilles now for his father and now for Patroclous, till the house was filled with their lamentation. But when Achilles was now sated with grief and had unburthened the bitterness of his sorrow, he left his seat and raised the old man by the hand, in pity for his white hair and beard; then he said, "Unhappy man, you have indeed been greatly daring; how could you venture to come alone to the ships of the Achaeans, and enter the presence of him who has slain so many of your brave sons? You must have iron courage: sit now upon this seat, and for all our grief we will hide our sorrows in our hearts, for weeping will not avail us. The immortals know no care, yet the lot they spin for man is full of sorrow; on the floor of Jove's palace there stand two urns, the one filled with evil gifts, and the other with good ones.

He for whom Jove the lord of thunder mixes the gifts he sends, will meet now with good and now with evil fortune; but he to whom Jove sends none but evil gifts will be pointed at by the finger of scorn, the hand of famine will pursue him to the ends of the world, and he will go up and down the face of the earth, respected neither by gods nor men. Even so did it befall Peleus; the gods endowed him with all good things from his birth upwards, for he reigned over the Myrmidons excelling all men in prosperity and wealth, and mortal though he was they gave him a goddess for his bride. But even on him too did heaven send misfortune, for there is no race of royal children born to him in his house, save one son who is doomed to die all untimely; nor may I take care of him now that he is growing old, for I must stay here at Troy to be the bane of you and your children. And you too, O Priam, I have heard that you were aforetime happy. They say that in wealth and plenitude of offspring you surpassed all that is in Lesbos, the realm of Makar to the northward, Phrygia that is more inland, and those that dwell upon the great Hellespont; but from the day when the dwellers in heaven sent this evil upon you, war and slaughter have been about your city continually. Bear up against it, and let there be some intervals in your sorrow. Mourn as you may for your brave son, you will take nothing by it. You cannot raise him from the dead, ere you do so yet another sorrow shall befall you."

And Priam answered, "O king, bid me not be seated, while Hector is still lying uncared for in your tents, but accept the great ransom which I have brought you, and give him to me at once that I may look upon him. May you prosper with the ransom and reach your own land in safety, seeing that you have suffered me to live and to look upon the light of the sun."

Achilles looked at him sternly and said, "Vex me, sir, no longer; I am of myself minded to give up the body of Hector. My mother, daughter of the old man of the sea, came to me from Jove to bid me deliver it to you. Moreover I know well, O Priam, and you cannot hide it, that some god has brought you to the ships of the Achaeans, for else, no man however strong and in his prime would dare to come to our host; he could neither pass our guard unseen, nor draw the bolt of my gates thus easily; therefore, provoke me no further, lest I sin against the word of Jove, and suffer you not, suppliant though you are, within my tents."

The old man feared him and obeyed. Then the son of Peleus sprang like a lion through the door of his house, not alone, but with him went his two squires Automedon and Alcimus who were closer to him than any others of his comrades now that Patroclus was no more. These unyoked the horses and mules, and bade Priam's herald and attendant be seated within the house. They lifted the ransom for Hector's body from the waggon. but they left two mantles and a goodly shirt, that Achilles might wrap the body in them when he gave it to be taken home. Then he called to his servants and ordered them to wash the body and anoint it, but he first took it to a place where Priam should not see it, lest if he did so, he should break out in the bitterness of his grief, and enrage Achilles, who might then kill him and sin against the word of Jove. When the servants had washed the body and anointed it, and had wrapped it in a fair shirt and mantle, Achilles himself lifted it on to a bier, and he and his men then laid it on the waggon. He cried aloud as he did so and called on the name of his dear comrade, "Be not angry with me, Patroclus," he said, "if you hear even in the house of Hades that I have given Hector to his father for a ransom. It has been no unworthy one, and I will share it equitably with you."

Achilles then went back into the tent and took his place on the richly inlaid seat from which he had risen, by the wall that was at right angles to the one against which Priam was sitting. "Sir," he said, "your son is now laid upon his bier and is ransomed according to desire; you shall look upon him when you him away at daybreak; for the present let us prepare our supper. Even lovely Niobe had to think about eating, though her twelve children six daughters and six lusty sons had been all slain in her house. Apollo killed the sons with arrows from his silver bow, to punish Niobe, and Diana slew the daughters, because Niobe had vaunted herself against Leto; she said Leto had borne two children only, whereas she had herself borne many whereon the two killed the many. Nine days did they lie weltering, and there was none to bury them, for the son of Saturn turned the people into stone; but on the tenth day the gods in heaven themselves buried them, and Niobe then took food, being worn out with weeping. They say that somewhere among the rocks on the mountain pastures of Sipylus, where the nymphs live that haunt the river Achelous, there, they say, she lives in stone and still nurses the sorrows sent upon her by the hand of heaven. Therefore, noble sir, let us two now take food; you can weep for your dear son hereafter as you are bearing him back to Ilius and many a tear will he cost you."

With this Achilles sprang from his seat and killed a sheep of silvery whiteness, which his followers skinned and made ready all in due order. They cut the meat carefully up into smaller pieces, spitted them, and drew them off again when they were well roasted. Automedon brought bread in fair baskets and served it round the table, while Achilles dealt out the meat, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Priam, descendant of Dardanus, marvelled at the strength and beauty of Achilles for he was as a god to see, and Achilles marvelled at Priam as he listened to him and looked upon his noble presence. When they had gazed their fill Priam spoke first. "And now, O king," he said, "take me to my

couch that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep. Never once have my eyes been closed from the day your hands took the life of my son; I have grovelled without ceasing in the mire of my stable-yard, making moan and brooding over my countless sorrows. Now, moreover, I have eaten bread and drunk wine; hitherto I have tasted nothing."

As he spoke Achilles told his men and the women-servants to set beds in the room that was in the gatehouse, and make them with good red rugs, and spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for Priam and Idaeus to wear. So the maids went out carrying a torch and got the two beds ready in all haste. Then Achilles said laughingly to Priam, "Dear sir, you shall lie outside, lest some counsellor of those who in due course keep coming to advise with me should see you here in the darkness of the flying night, and tell it to Agamemnon. This might cause delay in the delivery of the body. And now tell me and tell me true, for how many days would you celebrate the funeral rites of noble Hector? Tell me, that I may hold aloof from war and restrain the host."

And Priam answered, "Since, then, you suffer me to bury my noble son with all due rites, do thus, Achilles, and I shall be grateful. You know how we are pent up within our city; it is far for us to fetch wood from the mountain, and the people live in fear. Nine days, therefore, will we mourn Hector in my house; on the tenth day we will bury him and there shall be a public feast in his honour; on the eleventh we will build a mound over his ashes, and on the twelfth, if there be need, we will fight."

And Achilles answered, "All, King Priam, shall be as you have said. I will stay our fighting for as long a time as you have named."

As he spoke he laid his hand on the old man's right wrist, in token that he should have no fear; thus then did Priam and his attendant sleep there in the forecourt, full of thought, while Achilles lay in an inner room of the house, with fair Briseis by his side.

And now both gods and mortals were fast asleep through the livelong night, but upon Mercury alone, the bringer of good luck, sleep could take no hold for he was thinking all the time how to get King Priam away from the ships without his being seen by the strong force of sentinels. He hovered therefore over Priam's head and said, "Sir, now that Achilles has spared your life, you seem to have no fear about sleeping in the thick of your foes. You have paid a great ransom, and have received the body of your son; were you still alive and a prisoner the sons whom you have left at home would have to give three times as much to free you; and so it would be if Agamemnon and the other Achaeans were to know of your being here."

When he heard this the old man was afraid and roused his servant. Mercury then yoked their horses and mules, and drove them quickly through the host so that no man perceived them. When they came to the ford of eddying Xanthus, begotten of immortal Jove, Mercury went back to high Olympus, and dawn in robe of saffron began to break over all the land. Priam and Idaeus then drove on toward the city lamenting and making moan, and the mules drew the body of Hector. No one neither man nor woman saw them, till Cassandra, fair as golden Venus standing on Pergamus, caught sight of her dear father in his chariot, and his servant that was the city's herald with him. Then she saw him that was lying upon the bier, drawn by the mules, and with a loud cry she went about the city saying, "Come hither Trojans, men and women, and look on Hector; if ever you rejoiced to see him coming from battle when he was alive, look now on him that was the glory of our city and all our people."

At this there was not man nor woman left in the city, so great a sorrow had possessed them. Hard by the gates they met Priam as he was bringing in the body. Hector's wife and his mother were the first to mourn him: they flew towards the waggon and laid their hands upon his head, while the crowd stood weeping round them. They would have stayed before the gates, weeping and lamenting the livelong day to the going down of the sun, had not Priam spoken to them from the chariot and said, "Make way for the mules to pass you. Afterwards when I have taken the body home you shall have your fill of weeping."

On this the people stood asunder, and made a way for the waggon. When they had borne the body within the house they laid it upon a bed and seated minstrels round it to lead the dirge, whereon the women joined in the sad music of their lament. Foremost among them all Andromache led their wailing as she clasped the head of mighty Hector in her embrace. "Husband," she cried, "you have died young, and leave me in your house a widow; he of whom we are the ill-starred parents is still a mere child, and I fear he may not reach manhood. Ere he can do so
our city will be razed and overthrown, for you who watched over it are no more you who were its saviour, the guardian of our wives and children. Our women will be carried away captives to the ships, and I among them; while you, my child, who will be with me will be put to some unseemly tasks, working for a cruel master. Or, may be, some Achaean will hurl you (O miserable death) from our walls, to avenge some brother, son, or father whom Hector slew; many of them have indeed bitten the dust at his hands, for your father's hand in battle was no light one. Therefore do the people mourn him. You have left, O Hector, sorrow unutterable to your parents, and my own grief is greatest of all, for you did not stretch forth your arms and embrace me as you lay dying, nor say to me any words that might have lived with me in my tears night and day for evermore."

Bitterly did she weep the while, and the women joined in her lament. Hecuba in her turn took up the strains of woe. “Hector,” she cried, “dearest to me of all my children. So long as you were alive the gods loved you well, and even in death they have not been utterly unmindful of you; for when Achilles took any other of my sons, he would sell him beyond the seas, to Samos Imbrus or rugged Lemnos; and when he had slain you too with his sword, many a time did he drag you round the sepulchre of his comrade though this could not give him life yet here you lie all fresh as dew, and comely as one whom Apollo has slain with his painless shafts.”

Thus did she too speak through her tears with bitter moan, and then Helen for a third time took up the strain of lamentation. “Hector,” said she, “dearest of all my brothers-in-law-for I am wife to Alexandrus who brought me hither to Troy would that I had died ere he did so twenty years are come and gone since I left my home and came from over the sea, but I have never heard one word of insult or unkindness from you. When another would chide with me, as it might be one of your brothers or sisters or of your brothers’ wives, or my mother-in-law for Priam was as kind to me as though he were my own father you would rebuke and check them with words of gentleness and goodwill. Therefore my tears flow both for you and for my unhappy self, for there is no one else in Troy who is kind to me, but all shrink and shudder as they go by me.”

She wept as she spoke and the vast crowd that was gathered round her joined in her lament. Then King Priam spoke to them saying, “Bring wood, O Trojans, to the city, and fear no cunning ambush of the Argives, for Achilles when he dismissed me from the ships gave me his word that they should not attack us until the morning of the twelfth day.”

Forthwith they yoked their oxen and mules and gathered together before the city. Nine days long did they bring in great heaps wood, and on the morning of the tenth day with many tears they took trave Hector forth, laid his dead body upon the summit of the pile, and set the fire thereto. Then when the child of morning rosy-fingered dawn appeared on the eleventh day, the people again assembled, round the pyre of mighty Hector. When they were got together, they first quenched the fire with wine wherever it was burning, and then his brothers and comrades with many a bitter tear gathered his white bones, wrapped them in soft robes of purple, and laid them in a golden urn, which they placed in a grave and covered over with large stones set close together. Then they built a barrow hurriedly over it keeping guard on every side lest the Achaeans should attack them before they had finished. When they had heaped up the barrow they went back again into the city, and being well assembled they held high feast in the house of Priam their king.

Thus, then, did they celebrate the funeral of Hector tamer of horses.

The odyssey

Homer, translated by Samuel Butler

Book I

TELL ME, O MUSE, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations with whose manners and customs he was acquainted; moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun-god Hyperion; so the god prevented them from ever reaching home. Tell me, too, about all these things, O daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know them.

So now all who escaped death in battle or by shipwreck had got safely home except Ulysses, and he, though he was longing to return to his wife and country, was detained by the goddess Calypso, who had got him into a large cave and wanted to marry him. But as years went by, there came a time when the gods settled that he should go back to Ithaca; even then, however, when he was among his own people, his troubles were not yet over; nevertheless all the gods had now begun to pity him except Neptune, who still persecuted him without ceasing and would not let him get home.

Now Neptune had gone off to the Ethiopians, who are at the world’s end, and lie in two halves, the one looking West and the other East. He had gone there to accept a hecatomb of sheep and oxen, and was enjoying himself at his festival; but the other gods met in the house of Olympian Jove, and the sire of gods and men spoke first. At that moment he was thinking of Aegisthus, who had been killed by Agamemnon’s son Orestes; so he said to the other gods:

“See now, how men lay blame upon us gods for what is after all nothing but their own folly. Look at Aegisthus; he must needs make love to Agamemnon’s wife unrighteously and then kill Agamemnon, though he knew it would be the death of him; for I sent

Mercury to warn him not to do either of these things, inasmuch as Orestes would be sure to take his revenge when he grew up and wanted to return home. Mercury told him this in all good will but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full."

Then Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, it served Aegisthus right, and so it would any one else who does as he did; but Aegisthus is neither here nor there; it is for Ulysses that my heart bleeds, when I think of his sufferings in that lonely sea-girt island, far away, poor man, from all his friends. It is an island covered with forest, in the very middle of the sea, and a goddess lives there, daughter of the magician Atlas, who looks after the bottom of the ocean, and carries the great columns that keep heaven and earth asunder. This daughter of Atlas has got hold of poor unhappy Ulysses, and keeps trying by every kind of blandishment to make him forget his home, so that he is tired of life, and thinks of nothing but how he may once more see the smoke of his own chimneys. You, sir, take no heed of this, and yet when Ulysses was before Troy did he not propitiate you with many a burnt sacrifice? Why then should you keep on being so angry with him?"

And Jove said, "My child, what are you talking about? How can I forget Ulysses than whom there is no more capable man on earth, nor more liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods that live in heaven? Bear in mind, however, that Neptune is still furious with Ulysses for having blinded an eye of Polyphemus king of the Cyclopes. Polyphemus is son to Neptune by the nymph Thoosa, daughter to the sea-king Phorcys; therefore though he will not kill Ulysses outright, he torments him by preventing him from getting home. Still, let us lay our heads together and see how we can help him to return; Neptune will then be pacified, for if we are all of a mind he can hardly stand out against us."

And Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, if, then, the gods now mean that Ulysses should get home, we should first send Mercury to the Ogygian island to tell Calypso that we have made up our minds and that he is to return. In the meantime I will go to Ithaca, to put heart into Ulysses' son Telemachus; I will embolden him to call the Achaeans in assembly, and speak out to the suitors of his mother Penelope, who persist in eating up any number of his sheep and oxen; I will also conduct him to Sparta and to Pylos, to see if he can hear anything about the return of his dear father for this will make people speak well of him."

So saying she bound on her glittering golden sandals, imperishable, with which she can fly like the wind over land or sea; she grasped the redoubtable bronze-shod spear, so stout and sturdy and strong, wherewith she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her, and down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, whereon forthwith she was in Ithaca, at the gateway of Ulysses' house, disguised as a visitor, Mentes, chief of the Taphians, and she held a bronze spear in her hand. There she found the lordly suitors seated on hides of the oxen which they had killed and eaten, and playing draughts in front of the house. Men-servants and pages were bustling about to wait upon them, some mixing wine with water in the mixing-bowls, some cleaning down the tables with wet sponges and laying them out again, and some cutting up great quantities of meat.

Telemachus saw her long before any one else did. He was sitting moodily among the suitors thinking about his brave father, and how he would send them flying out of the house, if he were to come to his own again and be honoured as in days gone by. Thus brooding as he sat among them, he caught sight of Minerva and went straight to the gate, for he was vexed that a stranger should be kept waiting for admittance. He took her right hand in his own, and bade her give him her spear. "Welcome," said he, "to our house, and when you have partaken of food you shall tell us what you have come for."

He led the way as he spoke, and Minerva followed him. When they were within he took her spear and set it in the spear stand against a strong bearing-post along with the many other spears of his unhappy father, and he conducted her to a richly decorated seat under which he threw a cloth of damask. There was a footstool also for her feet, and he set another seat near her for himself, away from the suitors, that she might not be annoyed while eating by their noise and insolence, and that he might ask her more freely about his father.

A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side, and a man-servant brought them wine and poured it out for them.

Then the suitors came in and took their places on the benches and seats. Forthwith men servants poured water over their hands, maids went round with the bread-baskets, pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink they wanted music and dancing, which are the crowning embellishments of a banquet, so a servant brought a lyre to Phemius, whom they compelled perforce to sing to them. As

soon as he touched his lyre and began to sing Telemachus spoke low to Minerva, with his head close to hers that no man might hear.

“I hope, sir,” said he, “that you will not be offended with what I am going to say. Singing comes cheap to those who do not pay for it, and all this is done at the cost of one whose bones lie rotting in some wilderness or grinding to powder in the surf. If these men were to see my father come back to Ithaca they would pray for longer legs rather than a longer purse, for money would not serve them; but he, alas, has fallen on an ill fate, and even when people do sometimes say that he is coming, we no longer heed them; we shall never see him again. And now, sir, tell me and tell me true, who you are and where you come from. Tell me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how your crew brought you to Ithaca, and of what nation they declared themselves to be for you cannot have come by land. Tell me also truly, for I want to know, are you a stranger to this house, or have you been here in my father’s time? In the old days we had many visitors for my father went about much himself.”

And Minerva answered, “I will tell you truly and particularly all about it. I am Mentes, son of Anchialus, and I am King of the Taphians. I have come here with my ship and crew, on a voyage to men of a foreign tongue being bound for Temesa with a cargo of iron, and I shall bring back copper. As for my ship, it lies over yonder off the open country away from the town, in the harbour Rheithron under the wooded mountain Neritum. Our fathers were friends before us, as old Laertes will tell you, if you will go and ask him. They say, however, that he never comes to town now, and lives by himself in the country, faring hardly, with an old woman to look after him and get his dinner for him, when he comes in tired from pottering about his vineyard. They told me your father was at home again, and that was why I came, but it seems the gods are still keeping him back, for he is not dead yet not on the mainland. It is more likely he is on some sea-girt island in mid ocean, or a prisoner among savages who are detaining him against his will I am no prophet, and know very little about omens, but I speak as it is borne in upon me from heaven, and assure you that he will not be away much longer; for he is a man of such resource that even though he were in chains of iron he would find some means of getting home again. But tell me, and tell me true, can Ulysses really have such a fine looking fellow for a son? You are indeed wonderfully like him about the head and eyes, for we were close friends before he set sail for Troy where the flower of all the Argives went also. Since that time we have never either of us seen the other.”

“My mother,” answered Telemachus, tells me I am son to Ulysses, but it is a wise child that knows his own father. Would that I were son to one who had grown old upon his own estates, for, since you ask me, there is no more ill-starred man under heaven than he who they tell me is my father.”

And Minerva said, “There is no fear of your race dying out yet, while Penelope has such a fine son as you are. But tell me, and tell me true, what is the meaning of all this feasting, and who are these people? What is it all about? Have you some banquet, or is there a wedding in the family for no one seems to be bringing any provisions of his own? And the guests how atrociously they are behaving; what riot they make over the whole house; it is enough to disgust any respectable person who comes near them.”

“Sir,” said Telemachus, “as regards your question, so long as my father was here it was well with us and with the house, but the gods in their displeasure have willed it otherwise, and have hidden him away more closely than mortal man was ever yet hidden. I could have borne it better even though he were dead, if he had fallen with his men before Troy, or had died with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes, and I should myself have been heir to his renown; but now the stormwinds have spirited him away we know not wither; he is gone without leaving so much as a trace behind him, and I inherit nothing but dismay. Nor does the matter end simply with grief for the loss of my father; heaven has laid sorrows upon me of yet another kind; for the chiefs from all our islands, Dulichium, Same, and the woodland island of Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying their court to my mother, who will neither point blank say that she will not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end; so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so also with myself.”

“Is that so?” exclaimed Minerva, “then you do indeed want Ulysses home again. Give him his helmet, shield, and a couple lances, and if he is the man he was when I first knew him in our house, drinking and making merry, he would soon lay his hands about these rascally suitors, were he to stand once more upon his own threshold. He was then coming from Ephyra, where he had been to beg poison for his arrows from Ilus, son of Mermerus. Ilus feared the ever-living gods and would not give him any, but my father let him have some, for he was very fond of him. If Ulysses is the man he then was these suitors will have a short shrift and a sorry wedding.

“But there! It rests with heaven to determine whether he is to return, and take his revenge in his own house or no; I would, however, urge you to set about trying to get rid of these suitors at once. Take my advice, call the Achaean heroes in assembly to-morrow lay your case before them, and call heaven to bear you witness. Bid the suitors take themselves off, each to his own place, and if your mother’s mind is set on marrying again, let her go back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts that so dear a daughter may expect. As for yourself, let me prevail upon you to take the best ship you can get, with a crew of twenty men, and go in quest of your father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell you something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct you. First go to Pylos and ask Nestor; thence go on to Sparta and visit Menelaus, for he got home last of all the Achaeans; if you hear that your father is alive and on his way home, you can put up with the waste these suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, come home at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make your mother marry again. Then, having done all this, think it well over in your mind how, by fair means or foul, you may kill these suitors in your own house. You are too old to plead infancy any longer; have you not heard how people are singing Orestes’ praises for having killed his father’s murderer Aegisthus? You are a fine, smart looking fellow; show your mettle, then, and make yourself a name in story. Now, however, I must go back to my ship and to my crew, who will be impatient if I keep them waiting longer; think the matter over for yourself, and remember what I have said to you.”

“Sir,” answered Telemachus, “it has been very kind of you to talk to me in this way, as though I were your own son, and I will do all you tell me; I know you want to be getting on with your voyage, but stay a little longer till you have taken a bath and refreshed yourself. I will then give you a present, and you shall go on your way rejoicing; I will give you one of great beauty and value a keepsake such as only dear friends give to one another.”

Minerva answered, “Do not try to keep me, for I would be on my way at once. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, keep it till I come again, and I will take it home with me. You shall give me a very good one, and I will give you one of no less value in return.”

With these words she flew away like a bird into the air, but she had given Telemachus courage, and had made him think more than ever about his father. He felt the change, wondered at it, and knew that the stranger had been a god, so he went straight to where the suitors were sitting.

Phemius was still singing, and his hearers sat rapt in silence as he told the sad tale of the return from Troy, and the ills Minerva had laid upon the Achaeans. Penelope, daughter of Icarius, heard his song from her room upstairs, and came down by the great staircase, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids. When she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing posts that supported the roof of the cloisters with a staid maiden on either side of her. She held a veil, moreover, before her face, and was weeping bitterly.

“Phemius,” she cried, “you know many another feat of gods and heroes, such as poets love to celebrate. Sing the suitors some one of these, and let them drink their wine in silence, but cease this sad tale, for it breaks my sorrowful heart, and reminds me of my lost husband whom I mourn ever without ceasing, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos.”

“Mother,” answered Telemachus, “let the bard sing what he has a mind to; bards do not make the ills they sing of; it is Jove, not they, who makes them, and who sends weal or woe upon mankind according to his own good pleasure. This fellow means no harm by singing the ill-fated return of the Danaans, for people always applaud the latest songs most warmly. Make up your mind to it and bear it; Ulysses is not the only man who never came back from Troy, but many another went down as well as he. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man’s matter, and mine above all others for it is I who am master here.”

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son’s saying in her heart. Then, going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes. But the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloisters, and prayed each one that he might be her bed fellow.

Then Telemachus spoke, “Shameless,” he cried, “and insolent suitors, let us feast at our pleasure now, and let there be no brawling, for it is a rare thing to hear a man with such a divine voice as Phemius has; but in the morning meet me in full assembly that I may give you formal notice to depart, and feast at one another’s houses, turn and turn about, at your own cost. If on the other hand you choose to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father’s house there shall be no man to avenge you.”The suitors bit their lips as they heard him, and marvelled at the boldness of his

speech. Then, Antinous, son of Eupeithes, said, “The gods seem to have given you lessons in bluster and tall talking; may Jove never grant you to be chief in Ithaca as your father was before you.”

Telemachus answered, “Antinous, do not chide with me, but, god willing, I will be chief too if I can. Is this the worst fate you can think of for me? It is no bad thing to be a chief, for it brings both riches and honour. Still, now that Ulysses is dead there are many great men in Ithaca both old and young, and some other may take the lead among them; nevertheless I will be chief in my own house, and will rule those whom Ulysses has won for me.”

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered, “It rests with heaven to decide who shall be chief among us, but you shall be master in your own house and over your own possessions; no one while there is a man in Ithaca shall do you violence nor rob you. And now, my good fellow, I want to know about this stranger. What country does he come from? Of what family is he, and where is his estate? Has he brought you news about the return of your father, or was he on business of his own? He seemed a well-to-do man, but he hurried off so suddenly that he was gone in a moment before we could get to know him.”

“My father is dead and gone,” answered Telemachus, “and even if some rumour reaches me I put no more faith in it now. My mother does indeed sometimes send for a soothsayer and question him, but I give his prophecyings no heed. As for the stranger, he was Mentes, son of Anchialus, chief of the Taphians, an old friend of my father’s.” But in his heart he knew that it had been the goddess.

The suitors then returned to their singing and dancing until the evening; but when night fell upon their pleasuring they went home to bed each in his own abode. Telemachus’s room was high up in a tower that looked on to the outer court; hither, then, he hied, brooding and full of thought. A good old woman, Euryclea, daughter of Ops, the son of Pisenor, went before him with a couple of blazing torches. Laertes had bought her with his own money when she was quite young; he gave the worth of twenty oxen for her, and shewed as much respect to her in his household as he did to his own wedded wife, but he did not take her to his bed for he feared his wife’s resentment. She it was who now lighted Telemachus to his room, and she loved him better than any of the other women in the house did, for she had nursed him when he was a baby. He opened the door of his bed room and sat down upon the bed; as he took off his shirt he gave it to the good old woman, who folded it tidily up, and hung it for him over a peg by his bed side, after which she went out, pulled the door to by a silver catch, and drew the bolt home by means of the strap. But Telemachus as he lay covered with a woollen fleece kept thinking all night through of his intended voyage of the counsel that Minerva had given him.

Book II

NOW when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Telemachus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulder, and left his room looking like an immortal god. He at once sent the criers round to call the people in assembly, so they called them and the people gathered thereon; then, when they were got together, he went to the place of assembly spear in hand not alone, for his two hounds went with him. Minerva endowed him with a presence of such divine comeliness that all marvelled at him as he went by, and when he took his place’ in his father’s seat even the oldest councillors made way for him.

Aegyptius, a man bent double with age, and of infinite experience, the first to speak His son Antiphus had gone with Ulysses to Ilius, land of noble steeds, but the savage Cyclops had killed him when they were all shut up in the cave, and had cooked his last dinner for him, He had three sons left, of whom two still worked on their father’s land, while the third, Eurynomus, was one of the suitors; nevertheless their father could not get over the loss of Antiphus, and was still weeping for him when he began his speech.

“Men of Ithaca,” he said, “hear my words. From the day Ulysses left us there has been no meeting of our councillors until now; who then can it be, whether old or young, that finds it so necessary to convene us? Has he got wind of some host approaching, and does he wish to warn us, or would he speak upon some other matter of public moment? I am sure he is an excellent person, and I hope Jove will grant him his heart’s desire.”

Telemachus took this speech as of good omen and rose at once, for he was bursting with what he had to say. He stood in the middle of the assembly and the good herald Pisenor brought him his staff. Then, turning to Aegyptius, “Sir,” said he, “it is I, as you will shortly learn, who have convened you, for it is I who am the most aggrieved. I have not got wind of any host approaching about which I would warn you, nor is there any matter of public moment on which I would speak. My grieveance is purely personal, and turns on two great misfortunes which have fallen upon my house. The first of these is the loss of my excellent father, who was chief

among all you here present, and was like a father to every one of you; the second is much more serious, and ere long will be the utter ruin of my estate. The sons of all the chief men among you are pestering my mother to marry them against her will. They are afraid to go to her father Icarius, asking him to choose the one he likes best, and to provide marriage gifts for his daughter, but day by day they keep hanging about my father's house, sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink. No estate can stand such recklessness; we have now no Ulysses to ward off harm from our doors, and I cannot hold my own against them. I shall never all my days be as good a man as he was, still I would indeed defend myself if I had power to do so, for I cannot stand such treatment any longer; my house is being disgraced and ruined. Have respect, therefore, to your own consciences and to public opinion. Fear, too, the wrath of heaven, lest the gods should be displeased and turn upon you. I pray you by Jove and Themis, who is the beginning and the end of councils, [do not] hold back, my friends, and leave me singlehanded unless it be that my brave father Ulysses did some wrong to the Achaeans which you would now avenge on me, by aiding and abetting these suitors. Moreover, if I am to be eaten out of house and home at all, I had rather you did the eating yourselves, for I could then take action against you to some purpose, and serve you with notices from house to house till I got paid in full, whereas now I have no remedy."

With this Telemachus dashed his staff to the ground and burst into tears. Every one was very sorry for him, but they all sat still and no one ventured to make him an angry answer, save only Antinous, who spoke thus:

"Telemachus, insolent braggart that you are, how dare you try to throw the blame upon us suitors? It is your mother's fault not ours, for she is a very artful woman. This three years past, and close on four, she has been driving us out of our minds, by encouraging each one of us, and sending him messages without meaning one word of what she says. And then there was that other trick she played us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room, and began to work on an enormous piece of fine needlework. 'Sweet hearts,' said she, 'Ulysses is indeed dead, still do not press me to marry again immediately, wait for I would not have skill in needlework perish unrecorded till I have completed a pall for the hero Laertes, to be in readiness against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.'

"This was what she said, and we assented; whereon we could see her working on her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years and we never found her out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or no. The suitors, therefore, make you this answer, that both you and the Achaeans may understand-'Send your mother away, and bid her marry the man of her own and of her father's choice'; for I do not know what will happen if she goes on plaguing us much longer with the airs she gives herself on the score of the accomplishments Minerva has taught her, and because she is so clever. We never yet heard of such a woman; we know all about Tyro, Alcmena, Mycene, and the famous women of old, but they were nothing to your mother, any one of them. It was not fair of her to treat us in that way, and as long as she continues in the mind with which heaven has now endowed her, so long shall we go on eating up your estate; and I do not see why she should change, for she gets all the honour and glory, and it is you who pay for it, not she. Understand, then, that we will not go back to our lands, neither here nor elsewhere, till she has made her choice and married some one or other of us."

Telemachus answered, "Antinous, how can I drive the mother who bore me from my father's house? My father is abroad and we do not know whether he is alive or dead. It will be hard on me if I have to pay Icarius the large sum which I must give him if I insist on sending his daughter back to him. Not only will he deal rigorously with me, but heaven will also punish me; for my mother when she leaves the house will calf on the Erinyes to avenge her; besides, it would not be a creditable thing to do, and I will have nothing to say to it. If you choose to take offence at this, leave the house and feast elsewhere at one another's houses at your own cost turn and turn about. If, on the other hand, you elect to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father's house there shall be no man to avenge you."

As he spoke Jove sent two eagles from the top of the mountain, and they flew on and on with the wind, sailing side by side in their own lordly flight. When they were right over the middle of the assembly they wheeled and circled about, beating the air with their wings and glaring death into the eyes of them that were below; then, fighting fiercely and tearing at one another, they flew off towards the right over the town. The people wondered as they saw them, and asked each other what an this might be; whereon Halitherses, who was the best prophet and reader of omens among them, spoke to them plainly and in all honesty, saying:

"Hear me, men of Ithaca, and I speak more particularly to the suitors, for I see mischief brewing for them. Ulysses is not going to be away much longer; indeed he is close at hand to deal out death and destruction, not on them alone, but on many another of us

who live in Ithaca. Let us then be wise in time, and put a stop to this wickedness before he comes. Let the suitors do so of their own accord; it will be better for them, for I am not prophesying without due knowledge; everything has happened to Ulysses as I foretold when the Argives set out for Troy, and he with them. I said that after going through much hardship and losing all his men he should come home again in the twentieth year and that no one would know him; and now all this is coming true."

Eurymachus son of Polybus then said, "Go home, old man, and prophesy to your own children, or it may be worse for them. I can read these omens myself much better than you can; birds are always flying about in the sunshine somewhere or other, but they seldom mean anything. Ulysses has died in a far country, and it is a pity you are not dead along with him, instead of prating here about omens and adding fuel to the anger of Telemachus which is fierce enough as it is. I suppose you think he will give you something for your family, but I tell you and it shall surely be when an old man like you, who should know better, talks a young one over till he becomes troublesome, in the first place his young friend will only fare so much the worse he will take nothing by it, for the suitors will prevent this and in the next, we will lay a heavier fine, sir, upon yourself than you will at all like paying, for it will bear hardly upon you. As for Telemachus, I warn him in the presence of you all to send his mother back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts so dear a daughter may expect. Till we shall go on harassing him with our suit; for we fear no man, and care neither for him, with all his fine speeches, nor for any fortune-telling of yours. You may preach as much as you please, but we shall only hate you the more. We shall go back and continue to eat up Telemachus's estate without paying him, till such time as his mother leaves off tormenting us by keeping us day after day on the tiptoe of expectation, each vying with the other in his suit for a prize of such rare perfection. Besides we cannot go after the other women whom we should marry in due course, but for the way in which she treats us."

Then Telemachus said, "Eurymachus, and you other suitors, I shall say no more, and entreat you no further, for the gods and the people of Ithaca now know my story. Give me, then, a ship and a crew of twenty men to take me hither and thither, and I will go to Sparta and to Pylos in quest of my father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell me something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct me. If I can hear of him as alive and on his way home I will put up with the waste you suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand I hear of his death, I will return at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make my mother marry again."

With these words he sat down, and Mentor who had been a friend of Ulysses, and had been left in charge of everything with full authority over the servants, rose to speak. He, then, plainly and in all honesty addressed them

thus":Hear me, men of Ithaca, I hope that you may never have a kind and well-disposed ruler any more, nor one who will govern you equitably; I hope that all your chiefs henceforward may be cruel and unjust, for there is not one of you but has forgotten Ulysses, who ruled you as though he were your father. I am not half so angry with the suitors, for if they choose to do violence in the naughtiness of their hearts, and wager their heads that Ulysses will not return, they can take the high hand and eat up his estate, but as for you others I am shocked at the way in which you all sit still without even trying to stop such scandalous goings on-which you could do if you chose, for you are many and they are few."

Leiocritus, son of Evenor, answered him saying, "Mentor, what folly is all this, that you should set the people to stay us? It is a hard thing for one man to fight with many about his victuals. Even though Ulysses himself were to set upon us while we are feasting in his house, and do his best to oust us, his wife, who wants him back so very badly, would have small cause for rejoicing, and his blood would be upon his own head if he fought against such great odds. There is no sense in what you have been saying. Now, therefore, do you people go about your business, and let his father's old friends, Mentor and Halitherses, speed this boy on his journey, if he goes at all which I do not think he will, for he is more likely to stay where he is till some one comes and tells him something."

On this he broke up the assembly, and every man went back to his own abode, while the suitors returned to the house of Ulysses.

Then Telemachus went all alone by the sea side, washed his hands in the grey waves, and prayed to Minerva.

"Hear me," he cried, "you god who visited me yesterday, and bade me sail the seas in search of my father who has so long been missing. I would obey you, but the Achaeans, and more particularly the wicked suitors, are hindering me that I cannot do so."

As he thus prayed, Minerva came close up to him in the likeness and with the voice of Mentor. "Telemachus," said she, "if you are made of the same stuff as your father you will be neither fool nor coward henceforward, for Ulysses never broke his word nor left his work half done. If, then, you take after him, your voyage will not be fruitless, but unless you have the blood of Ulysses and of

Penelope in your veins I see no likelihood of your succeeding. Sons are seldom as good men as their fathers; they are generally worse, not better; still, as you are not going to be either fool or coward henceforward, and are not entirely without some share of your father's wise discernment, I look with hope upon your undertaking. But mind you never make common cause with any of those foolish suitors, for they have neither sense nor virtue, and give no thought to death and to the doom that will shortly fall on one and all of them, so that they shall perish on the same day. As for your voyage, it shall not be long delayed; your father was such an old friend of mine that I will find you a ship, and will come with you myself. Now, however, return home, and go about among the suitors; begin getting provisions ready for your voyage; see everything well stowed, the wine in jars, and the barley meal, which is the staff of life, in leathern bags, while I go round the town and beat up volunteers at once. There are many ships in Ithaca both old and new; I will run my eye over them for you and will choose the best; we will get her ready and will put out to sea without delay."

Thus spoke Minerva daughter of Jove, and Telemachus lost no time in doing as the goddess told him. He went moodily and found the suitors flaying goats and singeing pigs in the outer court. Antinous came up to him at once and laughed as he took his hand in his own, saying, "Telemachus, my fine fire-eater, bear no more ill blood neither in word nor deed, but eat and drink with us as you used to do. The Achaeans will find you in everything a ship and a picked crew to boot so that you can set sail for Pylos at once and get news of your noble father."

"Antinous," answered Telemachus, "I cannot eat in peace, nor take pleasure of any kind with such men as you are. Was it not enough that you should waste so much good property of mine while I was yet a boy? Now that I am older and know more about it, I am also stronger, and whether here among this people, or by going to Pylos, I will do you all the harm I can. I shall go, and my going will not be in vain though, thanks to you suitors, I have neither ship nor crew of my own, and must be passenger not captain."

As he spoke he snatched his hand from that of Antinous. Meanwhile the others went on getting dinner ready about the buildings, jeering at him tauntingly as they did so.

"Telemachus," said one youngster, "means to be the death of us; I suppose he thinks he can bring friends to help him from Pylos, or again from Sparta, where he seems bent on going. Or will he go to Ephyra as well, for poison to put in our wine and kill us?"

Another said, "Perhaps if Telemachus goes on board ship, he will be like his father and perish far from his friends. In this case we should have plenty to do, for we could then divide up his property amongst us: as for the house we can let his mother and the man who marries her have that."

This was how they talked. But Telemachus went down into the lofty and spacious store-room where his father's treasure of gold and bronze lay heaped up upon the floor, and where the linen and spare clothes were kept in open chests. Here, too, there was a store of fragrant olive oil, while casks of old, well-ripened wine, unblended and fit for a god to drink, were ranged against the wall in case Ulysses should come home again after all. The room was closed with well-made doors opening in the middle; moreover the faithful old house-keeper Euryclea, daughter of Ops the son of Pisenor, was in charge of everything both night and day. Telemachus called her to the store-room and said:

"Nurse, draw me off some of the best wine you have, after what you are keeping for my father's own drinking, in case, poor man, he should escape death, and find his way home again after all. Let me have twelve jars, and see that they all have lids; also fill me some well-sewn leathern bags with barley meal about twenty measures in all. Get these things put together at once, and say nothing about it. I will take everything away this evening as soon as my mother has gone upstairs for the night. I am going to Sparta and to Pylos to see if I can hear anything about the return of my dear father.

When Euryclea heard this she began to cry, and spoke fondly to him, saying, "My dear child, what ever can have put such notion as that into your head? Where in the world do you want to go to you, who are the one hope of the house? Your poor father is dead and gone in some foreign country nobody knows where, and as soon as your back is turned these wicked ones here will be scheming to get you put out of the way, and will share all your possessions among themselves; stay where you are among your own people, and do not go wandering and worrying your life out on the barren ocean."

"Fear not, nurse," answered Telemachus, "my scheme is not without heaven's sanction; but swear that you will say nothing about all this to my mother, till I have been away some ten or twelve days, unless she hears of my having gone, and asks you; for I do not want her to spoil her beauty by crying."

The old woman swore most solemnly that she would not, and when she had completed her oath, she began drawing off the wine into jars, and getting the barley meal into the bags, while Telemachus went back to the suitors.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter. She took his shape, and went round the town to each one of the crew, telling them to meet at the ship by sundown. She went also to Noemon son of Phronius, and asked him to let her have a ship which he was very ready to do. When the sun had set and darkness was over all the land, she got the ship into the water, put all the tackle on board her that ships generally carry, and stationed her at the end of the harbour. Presently the crew came up, and the goddess spoke encouragingly to each of them.

Furthermore she went to the house of Ulysses, and threw the suitors into a deep slumber. She caused their drink to fuddle them, and made them drop their cups from their hands, so that instead of sitting over their wine, they went back into the town to sleep, with their eyes heavy and full of drowsiness. Then she took the form and voice of Mentor, and called Telemachus to come outside.

“Telemachus,” said she, “the men are on board and at their oars, waiting for you to give your orders, so make haste and let us be off.”

On this she led the way, while Telemachus followed in her steps. When they got to the ship they found the crew waiting by the water side, and Telemachus said, “Now my men, help me to get the stores on board; they are all put together in the cloister, and my mother does not know anything about it, nor any of the maid servants except one.”

With these words he led the way and the others followed after. When they had brought the things as he told them, Telemachus went on board, Minerva going before him and taking her seat in the stern of the vessel, while Telemachus sat beside her. Then the men loosed the hawsers and took their places on the benches. Minerva sent them a fair wind from the West, that whistled over the deep blue waves whereon Telemachus told them to catch hold of the ropes and hoist sail, and they did as he told them. They set the mast in its socket in the cross plank, raised it, and made it fast with the forestays; then they hoisted their white sails aloft with ropes of twisted ox hide. As the sail bellied out with the wind, the ship flew through the deep blue water, and the foam hissed against her bows as she sped onward. Then they made all fast throughout the ship, filled the mixing-bowls to the brim, and made drink offerings to the immortal gods that are from everlasting, but more particularly to the grey-eyed daughter of Jove.

Thus, then, the ship sped on her way through the watches of the night from dark till dawn.

Book III

BUT as the sun was rising from the fair sea into the firmament of heaven to shed Blight on mortals and immortals, they reached Pylos the city of Neleus. Now the people of Pylos were gathered on the sea shore to offer sacrifice of black bulls to Neptune lord of the Earthquake. There were nine guilds with five hundred men in each, and there were nine bulls to each guild. As they were eating the inward meats and burning the thigh bones [on the embers] in the name of Neptune, Telemachus and his crew arrived, furled their sails, brought their ship to anchor, and went ashore.

Minerva led the way and Telemachus followed her. Presently she said, “Telemachus, you must not be in the least shy or nervous; you have taken this voyage to try and find out where your father is buried and how he came by his end; so go straight up to Nestor that we may see what he has got to tell us. Beg of him to speak the truth, and he will tell no lies, for he is an excellent person.”

“But how, Mentor,” replied Telemachus, “dare I go up to Nestor, and how am I to address him? I have never yet been used to holding long conversations with people, and am ashamed to begin questioning one who is so much older than myself.”

“Some things, Telemachus,” answered Minerva, “will be suggested to you by your own instinct, and heaven will prompt you further; for I am assured that the gods have been with you from the time of your birth until now.”

She then went quickly on, and Telemachus followed in her steps till they reached the place where the guilds of the Pylian people were assembled. There they found Nestor sitting with his sons, while his company round him were busy getting dinner ready, and putting pieces of meat on to the spits while other pieces were cooking. When they saw the strangers they crowded round them, took them by the hand and bade them take their places. Nestor’s son Pisistratus at once offered his hand to each of them, and seated them on some soft sheepskins that were lying on the sands near his father and his brother Thrasymedes. Then he gave them their portions of the inward meats and poured wine for them into a golden cup, handing it to Minerva first, and saluting her at the same time.

“Offer a prayer, sir,” said he, “to King Neptune, for it is his feast that you are joining; when you have duly prayed and made your drink-offering, pass the cup to your friend that he may do so also. I doubt not that he too lifts his hands in prayer, for man cannot live without God in the world. Still he is younger than you are, and is much of an age with myself, so I he handed I will give you the precedence.”

As he spoke he handed her the cup. Minerva thought it very right and proper of him to have given it to herself first; she accordingly began praying heartily to Neptune. “O thou,” she cried, “that encirclest the earth, vouchsafe to grant the prayers of thy servants that call upon thee. More especially we pray thee send down thy grace on Nestor and on his sons; thereafter also make the rest of the Pylian people some handsome return for the goodly hecatomb they are offering you. Lastly, grant Telemachus and myself a happy issue, in respect of the matter that has brought us in our to Pylos.”

When she had thus made an end of praying, she handed the cup to Telemachus and he prayed likewise. By and by, when the outer meats were roasted and had been taken off the spits, the carvers gave every man his portion and they all made an excellent dinner. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Nestor, knight of Gerene, began to speak.

“Now,” said he, “that our guests have done their dinner, it will be best to ask them who they are. Who, then, sir strangers, are you, and from what port have you sailed? Are you traders? or do you sail the seas as rovers with your hand against every man, and every man’s hand against you?”

Telemachus answered boldly, for Minerva had given him courage to ask about his father and get himself a good name.

“Nestor,” said he, “son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, you ask whence we come, and I will tell you. We come from Ithaca under Neritum, and the matter about which I would speak is of private not public import.

I seek news of my unhappy father Ulysses, who is said to have sacked the town of Troy in company with yourself. We know what fate befell each one of the other heroes who fought at Troy, but as regards Ulysses heaven has hidden from us the knowledge even that he is dead at all, for no one can certify us in what place he perished, nor say whether he fell in battle on the mainland, or was lost at sea amid the waves of Amphitrite. Therefore I am suppliant at your knees, if haply you may be pleased to tell me of his melancholy end, whether you saw it with your own eyes, or heard it from some other traveller, for he was a man born to trouble. Do not soften things out of any pity for me, but tell me in all plainness exactly what you saw. If my brave father Ulysses ever did you loyal service, either by word or deed, when you Achaeans were harassed among the Trojans, bear it in mind now as in my favour and tell me truly all.”

“My friend,” answered Nestor, “you recall a time of much sorrow to my mind, for the brave Achaeans suffered much both at sea, while privateering under Achilles, and when fighting before the great city of king Priam. Our best men all of them fell there Ajax, Achilles, Patroclus peer of gods in counsel, and my own dear son Antilochus, a man singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant. But we suffered much more than this; what mortal tongue indeed could tell the whole story? Though you were to stay here and question me for five years, or even six, I could not tell you all that the Achaeans suffered, and you would turn homeward weary of my tale before it ended. Nine long years did we try every kind of stratagem, but the hand of heaven was against us; during all this time there was no one who could compare with your father in subtlety if indeed you are his son I can hardly believe my eyes and you talk just like him too no one would say that people of such different ages could speak so much alike. He and I never had any kind of difference from first to last neither in camp nor council, but in singleness of heart and purpose we advised the Argives how all might be ordered for the best.

“When however, we had sacked the city of Priam, and were setting sail in our ships as heaven had dispersed us, then Jove saw fit to vex the Argives on their homeward voyage; for they had Not all been either wise or understanding, and hence many came to a bad end through the displeasure of Jove’s daughter Minerva, who brought about a quarrel between the two sons of Atreus.

“The sons of Atreus called a meeting which was not as it should be, for it was sunset and the Achaeans were heavy with wine. When they explained why they had called the people together, it seemed that Menelaus was for sailing homeward at once, and this displeased Agamemnon, who thought that we should wait till we had offered hecatombs to appease the anger of Minerva. Fool that he was, he might have known that he would not prevail with her, for when the gods have made up their minds they do not change them lightly. So the two stood bandying hard words, whereon the Achaeans sprang to their feet with a cry that rent the air, and were of two minds as to what they should do.

"That night we rested and nursed our anger, for Jove was hatching mischief against us. But in the morning some of us drew our ships into the water and put our goods with our women on board, while the rest, about half in number, stayed behind with Agamemnon. We the other half embarked and sailed; and the ships went well, for heaven had smoothed the sea. When we reached Tenedos we offered sacrifices to the gods, for we were longing to get home; cruel Jove, however, did not yet mean that we should do so, and raised a second quarrel in the course of which some among us turned their ships back again, and sailed away under Ulysses to make their peace with Agamemnon; but I, and all the ships that were with me pressed forward, for I saw that mischief was brewing. The son of Tydeus went on also with me, and his crews with him. Later on Menelaus joined us at Lesbos, and found us making up our minds about our course for we did not know whether to go outside Chios by the island of Psyra, keeping this to our left, or inside Chios, over against the stormy headland of Mimas. So we asked heaven for a sign, and were shown one to the effect that we should be soonest out of danger if we headed our ships across the open sea to Euboea. This we therefore did, and a fair wind sprang up which gave us a quick passage during the night to Geraestus, where we offered many sacrifices to Neptune for having helped us so far on our way. Four days later Diomed and his men stationed their ships in Argos, but I held on for Pylos, and the wind never fell light from the day when heaven first made it fair for me.

"Therefore, my dear young friend, I returned without hearing anything about the others. I know neither who

got home safely nor who were lost but, as in duty bound, I will give you without reserve the reports that have reached me since I have been here in my own house. They say the Myrmidons returned home safely under Achilles' son Neoptolemus; so also did the valiant son of Poias, Philoctetes. Idomeneus, again, lost no men at sea, and all his followers who escaped death in the field got safe home with him to Crete. No matter how far out of the world you live, you will have heard of Agamemnon and the bad end he came to at the hands of Aegisthus and a fearful reckoning did Aegisthus presently pay. See what a good thing it is for a man to leave a son behind him to do as Orestes did, who killed false Aegisthus the murderer of his noble father. You too, then for you are a tall, smart-looking fellow show your mettle and make yourself a name in story."

"Nestor son of Neleus," answered Telemachus, "honour to the Achaean name, the Achaeans applaud Orestes and his name will live through all time for he has avenged his father nobly. Would that heaven might grant me to do like vengeance on the insolence of the wicked suitors, who are ill treating me and plotting my ruin; but the gods have no such happiness in store for me and for my father, so we must bear it as best we may."

"My friend," said Nestor, "now that you remind me, I remember to have heard that your mother has many suitors, who are ill disposed towards you and are making havoc of your estate. Do you submit to this tamely, or are public feeling and the voice of heaven against you? Who knows but what Ulysses may come back after all, and pay these scoundrels in full, either single-handed or with a force of Achaeans behind him? If Minerva were to take as great a liking to you as she did to Ulysses when we were fighting before Troy (for I never yet saw the gods so openly fond of any one as Minerva then was of your father), if she would take as good care of you as she did of him, these wooers would soon some of them him, forget their wooing."

Telemachus answered, "I can expect nothing of the kind; it would be far too much to hope for. I dare not let myself think of it. Even though the gods themselves willed it no such good fortune could befall me."

On this Minerva said, "Telemachus, what are you talking about? Heaven has a long arm if it is minded to save a man; and if it were me, I should not care how much I suffered before getting home, provided I could be safe when I was once there. I would rather this, than get home quickly, and then be killed in my own house as Agamemnon was by the treachery of Aegisthus and his wife. Still, death is certain, and when a man's hour is come, not even the gods can save him, no matter how fond they are of him."

"Mentor," answered Telemachus, "do not let us talk about it any more. There is no chance of my father's ever coming back; the gods have long since counselled his destruction. There is something else, however, about which I should like to ask Nestor, for he knows much more than any one else does. They say he has reigned for three generations so that it is like talking to an immortal. Tell me, therefore, Nestor, and tell me true; how did Agamemnon come to die in that way? What was Menelaus doing? And how came false Aegisthus to kill so far better a man than himself? Was Menelaus away from Achaean Argos, voyaging elsewhither among mankind, that Aegisthus took heart and killed Agamemnon?"

"I will tell you truly," answered Nestor, "and indeed you have yourself divined how it all happened. If Menelaus when he got back from Troy had found Aegisthus still alive in his house, there would have been no barrow heaped up for him, not even when he was dead, but he would have been thrown outside the city to dogs and vultures, and not a woman would have mourned him, for he had

done a deed of great wickedness; but we were over there, fighting hard at Troy, and Aegisthus who was taking his ease quietly in the heart of Argos, cajoled Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra with incessant flattery.

"At first she would have nothing to do with his wicked scheme, for she was of a good natural disposition; moreover there was a bard with her, to whom Agamemnon had given strict orders on setting out for Troy, that he was to keep guard over his wife; but when heaven had counselled her destruction, Aegisthus thus this bard off to a desert island and left him there for crows and seagulls to batten upon after which she went willingly enough to the house of Aegisthus. Then he offered many burnt sacrifices to the gods, and decorated many temples with tapestries and gilding, for he had succeeded far beyond his expectations.

"Meanwhile Menelaus and I were on our way home from Troy, on good terms with one another. When we got to Sunium, which is the point of Athens, Apollo with his painless shafts killed Phrontis the steersman of Menelaus' ship (and never man knew better how to handle a vessel in rough weather) so that he died then and there with the helm in his hand, and Menelaus, though very anxious to press forward, had to wait in order to bury his comrade and give him his due funeral rites. Presently, when he too could put to sea again, and had sailed on as far as the Malean heads, Jove counselled evil against him and made it it blow hard till the waves ran mountains high. Here he divided his fleet and took the one half towards Crete where the Cydonians dwell round about the waters of the river Iardanus. There is a high headland hereabouts stretching out into the sea from a place called Gortyn, and all along this part of the coast as far as Phaestus the sea runs high when there is a south wind blowing, but arter Phaestus the coast is more protected, for a small headland can make a great shelter. Here this part of the fleet was driven on to the rocks and wrecked; but the crews just managed to save themselves. As for the other five ships, they were taken by winds and seas to Egypt, where Menelaus gathered much gold and substance among people of an alien speech. Meanwhile Aegisthus here at home plotted his evil deed. For seven years after he had killed Agamemnon he ruled in Mycene, and the people were obedient under him, but in the eighth year Orestes came back from Athens to be his bane, and killed the murderer of his father. Then he celebrated the funeral rites of his mother and of false Aegisthus by a banquet to the people of Argos, and on that very day Menelaus came home, with as much treasure as his ships could carry.

"Take my advice then, and do not go travelling about for long so far from home, nor leave your property with such dangerous people in your house; they will eat up everything you have among them, and you will have been on a fool's errand. Still, I should advise you by all means to go and visit Menelaus, who has lately come off a voyage among such distant peoples as no man could ever hope to get back from, when the winds had once carried him so far out of his reckoning; even birds cannot fly the distance in a twelvemonth, so vast and terrible are the seas that they must cross. Go to him, therefore, by sea, and take your own men with you; or if you would rather travel by land you can have a chariot, you can have horses, and here are my sons who can escort you to Lacedaemon where Menelaus lives. Beg of him to speak the truth, and he will tell you no lies, for he is an excellent person."

As he spoke the sun set and it came on dark, whereon Minerva said, "Sir, all that you have said is well; now, however, order the tongues of the victims to be cut, and mix wine that we may make drink-offerings to Neptune, and the other immortals, and then go to bed, for it is bed time. People should go away early and not keep late hours at a religious festival."

Thus spoke the daughter of Jove, and they obeyed her saying. Men servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering; then they threw the tongues of the victims into the fire, and stood up to make their drink-offerings. When they had made their offerings and had drunk each as much as he was minded, Minerva and Telemachus were forgoing on board their ship, but Nestor caught them up at once and stayed them.

"Heaven and the immortal gods," he exclaimed, "forbid that you should leave my house to go on board of a ship. Do you think I am so poor and short of clothes, or that I have so few cloaks and as to be unable to find comfortable beds both for myself and for my guests? Let me tell you I have store both of rugs and cloaks, and shall not permit the son of my old friend Ulysses to camp down on the deck of a ship not while I live nor yet will my sons after me, but they will keep open house as have done."

Then Minerva answered, "Sir, you have spoken well, and it will be much better that Telemachus should do as you have said; he, therefore, shall return with you and sleep at your house, but I must go back to give orders to my crew, and keep them in good heart. I am the only older person among them; the rest are all young men of Telemachus' own age, who have taken this voyage out of friendship; so I must return to the ship and sleep there. Moreover to-morrow I must go to the Cauconians where I have a large sum of money long owing to me. As for Telemachus, now that he is your guest, send him to Lacedaemon in a chariot, and let one of your sons go with him. Be pleased also to provide him with your best and fleetest horses."

When she had thus spoken, she flew away in the form of an eagle, and all marvelled as they beheld it. Nestor was astonished, and took Telemachus by the hand. “My friend,” said he, “I see that you are going to be a great hero some day, since the gods wait upon you thus while you are still so young. This can have been none other of those who dwell in heaven than Jove’s redoubtable daughter, the Trito-born, who showed such favour towards your brave father among the Argives.” “Holy queen,” he continued, “vouchsafe to send down thy grace upon myself, my good wife, and my children. In return, I will offer you in sacrifice a broad-browed heifer of a year old, unbroken, and never yet brought by man under the yoke. I will gild her horns, and will offer her up to you in sacrifice.”

Thus did he pray, and Minerva heard his prayer. He then led the way to his own house, followed by his sons and sons-in-law. When they had got there and had taken their places on the benches and seats, he mixed them a bowl of sweet wine that was eleven years old when the housekeeper took the lid off the jar that held it. As he mixed the wine, he prayed much and made drink-offerings to Minerva, daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove. Then, when they had made their drink-offerings and had drunk each as much as he was minded, the others went home to bed each in his own abode; but Nestor put Telemachus to sleep in the room that was over the gateway along with Pisistratus, who was the only unmarried son now left him. As for himself, he slept in an inner room of the house, with the queen his wife by his side.

Now when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Nestor left his couch and took his seat on the benches of white and polished marble that stood in front of his house. Here aforetime sat Neleus, peer of gods in counsel, but he was now dead, and had gone to the house of Hades; so Nestor sat in his seat, sceptre in hand, as guardian of the public weal. His sons as they left their rooms gathered round him, Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymedes; the sixth son was Pisistratus, and when Telemachus joined them they made him sit with them. Nestor then addressed them.

“My sons,” said he, “make haste to do as I shall bid you. I wish first and foremost to propitiate the great goddess Minerva, who manifested herself visibly to me during yesterday’s festivities. Go, then, one or other of you to the plain, tell the stockman to look me out a heifer, and come on here with it at once. Another must go to Telemachus’s ship, and invite all the crew, leaving two men only in charge of the vessel. Some one else will run and fetch Laerceus the goldsmith to gild the horns of the heifer. The rest, stay all of you where you are; tell the maids in the house to prepare an excellent dinner, and to fetch seats, and logs of wood for a burnt offering. Tell them also to bring me some clear spring water.”

On this they hurried off on their several errands. The heifer was brought in from the plain, and Telemachus’s crew came from the ship; the goldsmith brought the anvil, hammer, and tongs, with which he worked his gold, and Minerva herself came to the sacrifice. Nestor gave out the gold, and the smith gilded the horns of the heifer that the goddess might have pleasure in their beauty. Then Stratius and Echephron brought her in by the horns; Aretus fetched water from the house in a ewer that had a flower pattern on it, and in his other hand he held a basket of barley meal; sturdy Thrasymedes stood by with a sharp axe, ready to strike the heifer, while Perseus held a bucket. Then Nestor began with washing his hands and sprinkling the barley meal, and he offered many a prayer to Minerva as he threw a lock from the heifer’s head upon the fire.

When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley meal Thrasymedes dealt his blow, and brought the heifer down with a stroke that cut through the tendons at the base of her neck, whereon the daughters and daughters-in-law of Nestor, and his venerable wife Eurydice (she was eldest daughter to Clymenus) screamed with delight. Then they lifted the heifer’s head from off the ground, and Pisistratus cut her throat. When she had done bleeding and was quite dead, they cut her up. They cut out the thigh bones all in due course, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, and set some pieces of raw meat on the top of them; then Nestor laid them upon the wood fire and poured wine over them, while the young men stood near him with five-pronged spits in their hands. When the thighs were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest of the meat up small, put the pieces on the spits and toasted them over the fire.

Meanwhile lovely Polycaste, Nestor’s youngest daughter, washed Telemachus. When she had washed him and anointed him with oil, she brought him a fair mantle and shirt, and he looked like a god as he came from the bath and took his seat by the side of Nestor. When the outer meats were done they drew them off the spits and sat down to dinner where they were waited upon by some worthy henchmen, who kept pouring them out their wine in cups of gold. As soon as they had had had enough to eat and drink Nestor said, “Sons, put Telemachus’s horses to the chariot that he may start at once.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said, and yoked the fleet horses to the chariot. The housekeeper packed them up a provision of bread, wine, and sweetmeats fit for the sons of princes. Then Telemachus got into the chariot, while Pisistratus

gathered up the reins and took his seat beside him. He lashed the horses on and they flew forward nothing loth into the open country, leaving the high citadel of Pylos behind them. All that day did they travel, swaying the yoke upon their necks till the sun went down and darkness was over all the land. Then they reached Pherae where Diocles lived, who was son to Ortilochus and grandson to Alpheus. Here they passed the night and Diocles entertained them hospitably. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn; appeared, they again yoked their horses and drove out through the gateway under the echoing gatehouse. Pisistratus lashed the horses on and they flew forward nothing loth; presently they came to the corn lands Of the open country, and in the course of time completed their journey, so well did their steeds take them.

Now when the sun had set and darkness was over the land,

Book IV

THEY reached the low lying city of Lacedaemon them where they drove straight to the of abode Menelaus [and found him in his own house, feasting with his many clansmen in honour of the wedding of his son, and also of his daughter, whom he was marrying to the son of that valiant warrior Achilles. He had given his consent and promised her to him while he was still at Troy, and now the gods were bringing the marriage about; so he was sending her with chariots and horses to the city of the Myrmidons over whom Achilles' son was reigning. For his only son he had found a bride from Sparta, daughter of Alector. This son, Megapenthes, was born to him of a bondwoman, for heaven vouchsafed Helen no more children after she had borne Hermione, who was fair as golden Venus herself.

So the neighbours and kinsmen of Menelaus were feasting and making merry in his house. There was a bard also to sing to them and play his lyre, while two tumblers went about performing in the midst of them when the man struck up with his tune.]

Telemachus and the son of Nestor stayed their horses at the gate, whereon Eteoneus servant to Menelaus came out, and as soon as he saw them ran hurrying back into the house to tell his Master. He went close up to him and said, "Menelaus, there are some strangers come here, two men, who look like sons of Jove. What are we to do? Shall we take their horses out, or tell them to find friends elsewhere as they best can?"

Menelaus was very angry and said, "Eteoneus, son of Boethous, you never used to be a fool, but now you talk like a simpleton. Take their horses out, of course, and show the strangers in that they may have supper; you and I have stayed often enough at other people's houses before we got back here, where heaven grant that we may rest in peace henceforward."

So Eteoneus bustled back and bade other servants come with him. They took their sweating hands from under the yoke, made them fast to the mangers, and gave them a feed of oats and barley mixed. Then they leaned the chariot against the end wall of the courtyard, and led the way into the house. Telemachus and Pisistratus were astonished when they saw it, for its splendour was as that of the sun and moon; then, when they had admired everything to their heart's content, they went into the bath room and washed themselves.

When the servants had washed them and anointed them with oil, they brought them woollen cloaks and shirts, and the two took their seats by the side of Menelaus. A maidservant brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands; and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, while the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side.

Menelaus then greeted them saying, "Fall to, and welcome; when you have done supper I shall ask who you are, for the lineage of such men as you cannot have been lost. You must be descended from a line of sceptre-bearing kings, for poor people do not have such sons as you are."

On this he handed them a piece of fat roast loin, which had been set near him as being a prime part, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them; as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Telemachus said to the son of Nestor, with his head so close that no one might hear, "Look, Pisistratus, man after my own heart, see the gleam of bronze and gold of amber, ivory, and silver. Everything is so splendid that it is like seeing the palace of Olympian Jove. I am lost in admiration."

Menelaus overheard him and said, "No one, my sons, can hold his own with Jove, for his house and everything about him is immortal; but among mortal men well, there may be another who has as much wealth as I have, or there may not; but at all events I have travelled much and have undergone much hardship, for it was nearly eight years before I could get home with my fleet. I went to Cyprus, Phoenicia and the Egyptians; I went also to the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, and the Erembians, and to Libya where the

lambs have horns as soon as they are born, and the sheep lamb down three times a year. Every one in that country, whether master or man, has plenty of cheese, meat, and good milk, for the ewes yield all the year round. But while I was travelling and getting great riches among these people, my brother was secretly and shockingly murdered through the perfidy of his wicked wife, so that I have no pleasure in being lord of all this wealth. Whoever your parents may be they must have told you about all this, and of my heavy loss in the ruin of a stately mansion fully and magnificently furnished. Would that I had only a third of what I now have so that I had stayed at home, and all those were living who perished on the plain of Troy, far from Argos. I of grieve, as I sit here in my house, for one and all of them. At times I cry aloud for sorrow, but presently I leave off again, for crying is cold comfort and one soon tires of it. Yet grieve for these as I may, I do so for one man more than for them all. I cannot even think of him without loathing both food and sleep, so miserable does he make me, for no one of all the Achaeans worked so hard or risked so much as he did. He took nothing by it, and has left a legacy of sorrow to myself, for he has been gone a long time, and we know not whether he is alive or dead. His old father, his long-suffering wife Penelope, and his son Telemachus, whom he left behind him an infant in arms, are plunged in grief on his account."

Thus spoke Menelaus, and the heart of Telemachus yearned as he bethought him of his father. Tears fell from his eyes as he heard him thus mentioned, so that he held his cloak before his face with both hands. When Menelaus saw this he doubted whether to let him choose his own time for speaking, or to ask him at once and find what it was all about.

While he was thus in two minds Helen came down from her high vaulted and perfumed room, looking as lovely as Diana herself. Adraste brought her a seat, Alcippe a soft woollen rug while Phylo fetched her the silver work-box which Alcandra wife of Polybus had given her. Polybus lived in Egyptian Thebes, which is the richest city in the whole world; he gave Menelaus two baths, both of pure silver, two tripods, and ten talents of gold; besides all this, his wife gave Helen some beautiful presents, to wit, a golden distaff, and a silver work-box that ran on wheels, with a gold band round the top of it. Phylo now placed this by her side, full of fine spun yarn, and a distaff charged with violet coloured wool was laid upon the top of it. Then Helen took her seat, put her feet upon the footstool, and began to question her husband.

"Do we know, Menelaus," said she, "the names of these strangers who have come to visit us? Shall I guess right or wrong? but I cannot help saying what I think. Never yet have I seen either man or woman so like somebody else (indeed when I look at him I hardly know what to think) as this young man is like Telemachus, whom Ulysses left as a baby behind him, when you Achaeans went to Troy with battle in your hearts, on account of my most shameless self."

"My dear wife," replied Menelaus, "I see the likeness just as you do. His hands and feet are just like Ulysses'; so is his hair, with the shape of his head and the expression of his eyes. Moreover, when I was talking about Ulysses, and saying how much he had suffered on my account, tears fell from his eyes, and he hid his face in his mantle."

Then Pisistratus said, "Menelaus, son of Atreus, you are right in thinking that this young man is Telemachus, but he is very modest, and is ashamed to come here and begin opening up discourse with one whose conversation is so divinely interesting as your own. My father, Nestor, sent me to escort him hither, for he wanted to know whether you could give him any counsel or suggestion. A son has always trouble at home when his father has gone away leaving him without supporters; and this is how Telemachus is now placed, for his father is absent, and there is no one among his own people to stand by him."

"Bless my heart," replied Menelaus, "then I am receiving a visit from the son of a very dear friend, who suffered much hardship for my sake. I had always hoped to entertain him with most marked distinction when heaven had granted us a safe return from beyond the seas. I should have founded a city for him in Argos, and built him a house. I should have made him leave Ithaca with his goods, his son, and all his people, and should have sacked for them some one of the neighbouring cities that are subject to me. We should thus have seen one another continually, and nothing but death could have interrupted so close and happy an intercourse. I suppose, however, that heaven grudged us such great good fortune, for it has prevented the poor fellow from ever getting home at all."

Thus did he speak, and his words set them all a weeping. Helen wept, Telemachus wept, and so did Menelaus, nor could Pisistratus keep his eyes from filling, when he remembered his dear brother Antilochus whom the son of bright Dawn had killed. Thereon he said to Menelaus, "Sir, my father Nestor, when we used to talk about you at home, told me you were a person of rare and excellent understanding. If, then, it be possible, do as I would urge you. I am not fond of crying while I am getting my supper. Morning will come in due course, and in the forenoon I care not how much I cry for those that are dead and gone. This is all we can do for the poor things. We can only shave our heads for them and wring the tears from our cheeks. I had a brother who died at Troy; he was

by no means the worst man there; you are sure to have known him his name was Antilochus; I never set eyes upon him myself, but they say that he was singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant."

"Your discretion, my friend," answered Menelaus, "is beyond your years. It is plain you take after your father. One can soon see when a man is son to one whom heaven has blessed both as regards wife and offspring and it has blessed Nestor from first to last all his days, giving him a green old age in his own house, with sons about him who are both we disposed and valiant. We will put an end therefore to all this weeping, and attend to our supper again. Let water be poured over our hands. Telemachus and I can talk with one another fully in the morning."

On this Asphalion, one of the servants, poured water over their hands and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them.

Then Jove's daughter Helen bethought her of another matter. She drugged the wine with an herb that banishes all care, sorrow, and ill humour. Whoever drinks wine thus drugged cannot shed a single tear all the rest of the day, not even though his father and mother both of them drop down dead, or he sees a brother or a son hewn in pieces before his very eyes. This drug, of such sovereign power and virtue, had been given to Helen by Polydamna wife of Thon, a woman of Egypt, where there grow all sorts of herbs, some good to put into the mixing-bowl and others poisonous. Moreover, every one in the whole country is a skilled physician, for they are of the race of Paeeon. When Helen had put this drug in the bowl, and had told the servants to serve the wine round, she said:

"Menelaus, son of Atreus, and you my good friends, sons of honourable men (which is as Jove wills, for he is the giver both of good and evil, and can do what he chooses), feast here as you will, and listen while I tell you a tale in season. I cannot indeed name every single one of the exploits of Ulysses, but I can say what he did when he was before Troy, and you Achaeans were in all sorts of difficulties. He covered himself with wounds and bruises, dressed himself all in rags, and entered the enemy's city looking like a menial or a beggar. and quite different from what he did when he was among his own people. In this disguise he entered the city of Troy, and no one said anything to him. I alone recognized him and began to question him, but he was too cunning for me. When, however, I had washed and anointed him and had given him clothes, and after I had sworn a solemn oath not to betray him to the Trojans till he had got safely back to his own camp and to the ships, he told me all that the Achaeans meant to do. He killed many Trojans and got much information before he reached the Argive camp, for all which things the Trojan women made lamentation, but for my own part I was glad, for my heart was beginning to oam after my home, and I was unhappy about wrong that Venus had done me in taking me over there, away from my country, my girl, and my lawful wedded husband, who is indeed by no means deficient either in person or understanding."

Then Menelaus said, "All that you have been saying, my dear wife, is true. I have travelled much, and have had much to do with heroes, but I have never seen such another man as Ulysses. What endurance too, and what courage he displayed within the wooden horse, wherein all the bravest of the Argives were lying in wait to bring death and destruction upon the Trojans. At that moment you came up to us; some god who wished well to the Trojans must have set you on to it and you had Deiphobus with you. Three times did you go all round our hiding place and pat it; you called our chiefs each by his own name, and mimicked all our wives Diomed, Ulysses, and I from our seats inside heard what a noise you made. Diomed and I could not make up our minds whether to spring out then and there, or to answer you from inside, but Ulysses held us all in check, so we sat quite still, all except Anticlus, who was beginning to answer you, when Ulysses clapped his two brawny hands over his mouth, and kept them there. It was this that saved us all, for he muzzled Anticlus till Minerva took you away again."

"How sad," exclaimed Telemachus, "that all this was of no avail to save him, nor yet his own iron courage. But now, sir, be pleased to send us all to bed, that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep."

On this Helen told the maid servants to set beds in the room that was in the gatehouse, and to make them with good red rugs, and spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for the guests to wear. So the maids went out, carrying a torch, and made the beds, to which a man-servant presently conducted the strangers. Thus, then, did Telemachus and Pisistratus sleep there in the forecourt, while the son of Atreus lay in an inner room with lovely Helen by his side.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Menelaus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulders, and left his room looking like an immortal god. Then, taking a seat near Telemachus he said:

“And what, Telemachus, has led you to take this long sea voyage to Lacedaemon? Are you on public or private business? Tell me all about it.”

“I have come, sir replied Telemachus, “to see if you can tell me anything about my father. I am being eaten out of house and home; my fair estate is being wasted, and my house is full of miscreants who keep killing great numbers of my sheep and oxen, on the pretence of paying their addresses to my mother. Therefore, I am suppliant at your knees if haply you may tell me about my father’s melancholy end, whether you saw it with your own eyes, or heard it from some other traveller; for he was a man born to trouble. Do not soften things out of any pity for myself, but tell me in all plainness exactly what you saw. If my brave father Ulysses ever did you loyal service either by word or deed, when you Achaeans were harassed by the Trojans, bear it in mind now as in my favour and tell me truly all.”

Menelaus on hearing this was very much shocked. “So,” he exclaimed, “these cowards would usurp a brave man’s bed? A hind might as well lay her new born young in the lair of a lion, and then go off to feed in the forest or in some grassy dell: the lion when he comes back to his lair will make short work with the pair of them and so will Ulysses with these suitors. By father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, if Ulysses is still the man that he was when he wrestled with Philomeleides in Lesbos, and threw him so heavily that all the Achaeans cheered him if he is still such and were to come near these suitors, they would have a short shrift and a sorry wedding. As regards your questions, however, I will not prevaricate nor deceive you, but will tell you without concealment all that the old man of the sea told me.

“I was trying to come on here, but the gods detained me in Egypt, for my hecatombs had not given them full satisfaction, and the gods are very strict about having their dues. Now off Egypt, about as far as a ship can sail in a day with a good stiff breeze behind her, there is an island called Pharos it has a good harbour from which vessels can get out into open sea when they have taken in water and the gods becalmed me twenty days without so much as a breath of fair wind to help me forward. We should have run clean out of provisions and my men would have starved, if a goddess had not taken pity upon me and saved me in the person of Idothea, daughter to Proteus, the old man of the sea, for she had taken a great fancy to me.

“She came to me one day when I was by myself, as I often was, for the men used to go with their barbed hooks, all over the island in the hope of catching a fish or two to save them from the pangs of hunger. ‘Stranger,’ said she, ‘it seems to me that you like starving in this way at any rate it does not greatly trouble you, for you stick here day after day, without even trying to get away though your men are dying by inches.’

“’Let me tell you,’ said I, ‘whichever of the goddesses you may happen to be, that I am not staying here of my own accord, but must have offended the gods that live in heaven. Tell me, therefore, for the gods know everything. which of the immortals it is that is hindering me in this way, and tell me also how I may sail the sea so as to reach my home.’

“’Stranger,’ replied she, ‘I will make it all quite clear to you. There is an old immortal who lives under the sea hereabouts and whose name is Proteus. He is an Egyptian, and people say he is my father; he is Neptune’s head man and knows every inch of ground all over the bottom of the sea. If you can snare him and hold him tight, he will tell you about your voyage, what courses you are to take, and how you are to sail the sea so as to reach your home. He will also tell you, if you so will, all that has been going on at your house both good and bad, while you have been away on your long and dangerous journey.’

“’Can you show me,’ said I, ‘some stratagem by means of which I may catch this old god without his suspecting it and finding me out? For a god is not easily caught not by a mortal man.’

“’Stranger,’ said she, ‘I will make it all quite clear to you. About the time when the sun shall have reached mid heaven, the old man of the sea comes up from under the waves, heralded by the West wind that furs the water over his head. As soon as he has come up he lies down, and goes to sleep in a great sea cave, where the seals Halosydne’s chickens as they call them come up also from the grey sea, and go to sleep in shoals all round him; and a very strong and fish-like smell do they bring with them. Early to-morrow morning I will take you to this place and will lay you in ambush. Pick out, therefore, the three best men you have in your fleet, and I will tell you all the tricks that the old man will play you.

“’First he will look over all his seals, and count them; then, when he has seen them and tallied them on his five fingers, he will go to sleep among them, as a shepherd among his sheep. The moment you see that he is asleep seize him; put forth all your strength and hold him fast, for he will do his very utmost to get away from you. He will turn himself into every kind of creature that goes upon the earth, and will become also both fire and water; but you must hold him fast and grip him tighter and tighter, till he begins

to talk to you and comes back to what he was when you saw him go to sleep; then you may slacken your hold and let him go; and you can ask him which of the gods it is that is angry with you, and what you must do to reach your home over the seas.'

"Having so said she dived under the waves, whereon I turned back to the place where my ships were ranged upon the shore; and my heart was clouded with care as I went along. When I reached my ship we got supper ready, for night was falling, and camped down upon the beach.

"When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, I took the three men on whose prowess of all kinds I could most rely, and went along by the sea-side, praying heartily to heaven. Meanwhile the goddess fetched me up four seal skins from the bottom of the sea, all of them just skinned, for she meant playing a trick upon her father. Then she dug four pits for us to lie in, and sat down to wait till we should come up. When we were close to her, she made us lie down in the pits one after the other, and threw a seal skin over each of us. Our ambuscade would have been intolerable, for the stench of the fishy seals was most distressing who would go to bed with a sea monster if he could help it?-but here, too, the goddess helped us, and thought of something that gave us great relief, for she put some ambrosia under each man's nostrils, which was so fragrant that it killed the smell of the seals.

"We waited the whole morning and made the best of it, watching the seals come up in hundreds to bask upon the sea shore, till at noon the old man of the sea came up too, and when he had found his fat seals he went over them and counted them. We were among the first he counted, and he never suspected any guile, but laid himself down to sleep as soon as he had done counting. Then we rushed upon him with a shout and seized him; on which he began at once with his old tricks, and changed himself first into a lion with a great mane; then all of a sudden he became a dragon, a leopard, a wild boar; the next moment he was running water, and then again directly he was a tree, but we stuck to him and never lost hold, till at last the cunning old creature became distressed, and said, Which of the gods was it, Son of Atreus, that hatched this plot with you for snaring me and seizing me against my will? What do you want?'

"'You know that yourself, old man,' I answered, 'you will gain nothing by trying to put me off. It is because I have been kept so long in this island, and see no sign of my being able to get away. I am losing all heart; tell me, then, for you gods know everything, which of the immortals it is that is hindering me, and tell me also how I may sail the sea so as to reach my home?'

"Then,' he said, 'if you would finish your voyage and get home quickly, you must offer sacrifices to Jove and to the rest of the gods before embarking; for it is decreed that you shall not get back to your friends, and to your own house, till you have returned to the heaven fed stream of Egypt, and offered holy hecatombs to the immortal gods that reign in heaven. When you have done this they will let you finish your voyage.'

"I was broken hearted when I heard that I must go back all that long and terrible voyage to Egypt; nevertheless, I answered, 'I will do all, old man, that you have laid upon me; but now tell me, and tell me true, whether all the Achaeans whom Nestor and I left behind us when we set sail from Troy have got home safely, or whether any one of them came to a bad end either on board his own ship or among his friends when the days of his fighting were done.'

"'Son of Atreus,' he answered, 'why ask me? You had better not know what I can tell you, for your eyes will surely fill when you have heard my story. Many of those about whom you ask are dead and gone, but many still remain, and only two of the chief men among the Achaeans perished during their return home. As for what happened on the field of battle you were there yourself. A third Achaean leader is still at sea, alive, but hindered from returning. Ajax was wrecked, for Neptune drove him on to the great rocks of Gyrae; nevertheless, he let him get safe out of the water, and in spite of all Minerva's hatred he would have escaped death, if he had not ruined himself by boasting. He said the gods could not drown him even though they had tried to do so, and when Neptune heard this large talk, he seized his trident in his two brawny hands, and split the rock of Gyrae in two pieces. The base remained where it was, but the part on which Ajax was sitting fell headlong into the sea and carried Ajax with it; so he drank salt water and was drowned.

"'Your brother and his ships escaped, for Juno protected him, but when he was just about to reach the high promontory of Malea, he was caught by a heavy gale which carried him out to sea again sorely against his will, and drove him to the foreland where Thyestes used to dwell, but where Aegisthus was then living. By and by, however, it seemed as though he was to return safely after all, for the gods backed the wind into its old quarter and they reached home; whereon Agamemnon kissed his native soil, and shed tears of joy at finding himself in his own country.

"'Now there was a watchman whom Aegisthus kept always on the watch, and to whom he had promised two talents of gold. This man had been looking out for a whole year to make sure that Agamemnon did not give him the slip and prepare war; when, therefore, this man saw Agamemnon go by, he went and told Aegisthus who at once began to lay a plot for him. He picked twenty of his bravest warriors and placed them in ambuscade on one side the cloister, while on the opposite side he prepared a banquet. Then he sent his chariots and horsemen to Agamemnon, and invited him to the feast, but he meant foul play. He got him there, all unsuspicious of the doom that was awaiting him, and killed him when the banquet was over as though he were butchering an ox in the shambles; not one of Agamemnon's followers was left alive, nor yet one of Aegisthus', but they were all killed there in the cloisters.'

"Thus spoke Proteus, and I was broken hearted as I heard him. I sat down upon the sands and wept; I felt as though I could no longer bear to live nor look upon the light of the sun. Presently, when I had had my fill of weeping and writhing upon the ground, the old man of the sea said, 'Son of Atreus, do not waste any more time in crying so bitterly; it can do no manner of good; find your way home as fast as ever you can, for Aegisthus be still alive, and even though Orestes has beforehand with you in kilting him, you may yet come in for his funeral.'

"On this I took comfort in spite of all my sorrow, and said, 'I know, then, about these two; tell me, therefore, about the third man of whom you spoke; is he still alive, but at sea, and unable to get home? or is he dead? Tell me, no matter how much it may grieve me.'

"'The third man,' he answered, 'is Ulysses who dwells in Ithaca. I can see him in an island sorrowing bitterly in the house of the nymph Calypso, who is keeping him prisoner, and he cannot reach his home for he has no ships nor sailors to take him over the sea. As for your own end, Menelaus, you shall not die in Argos, but the gods will take you to the Elysian plain, which is at the ends of the world. There fair-haired Rhadamanthus reigns, and men lead an easier life than any where else in the world, for in Elysium there falls not rain, nor hail, nor snow, but Oceanus breathes ever with a West wind that sings softly from the sea, and gives fresh life to all men. This will happen to you because you have married Helen, and are Jove's son-in-law.'

"As he spoke he dived under the waves, whereon I turned back to the ships with my companions, and my heart was clouded with care as I went along. When we reached the ships we got supper ready, for night was falling, and camped down upon the beach. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, we drew our ships into the water, and put our masts and sails within them; then we went on board ourselves, took our seats on the benches, and smote the grey sea with our oars. I again stationed my ships in the heaven-fed stream of Egypt, and offered hecatombs that were full and sufficient. When I had thus appeased heaven's anger, I raised a barrow to the memory of Agamemnon that his name might live for ever, after which I had a quick passage home, for the gods sent me a fair wind.

"And now for yourself stay here some ten or twelve days longer, and I will then speed you on your way. I will make you a noble present of a chariot and three horses. I will also give you a beautiful chalice that so long as you live you may think of me whenever you make a drink-offering to the immortal gods."

"Son of Atreus," replied Telemachus, "do not press me to stay longer; I should be contented to remain with you for another twelve months; I find your conversation so delightful that I should never once wish myself at home with my parents; but my crew whom I have left at Pylos are already impatient, and you are detaining me from them. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, I had rather that it should he a piece of plate. I will take no horses back with me to Ithaca, but will leave them to adorn your own stables, for you have much flat ground in your kingdom where lotus thrives, as also meadowsweet and wheat and barley, and oats with their white and spreading ears; whereas in Ithaca we have neither open fields nor racecourses, and the country is more fit for goats than horses, and I like it the better for that. None of our islands have much level ground, suitable for horses, and Ithaca least of all."

Menelaus smiled and took Telemachus's hand within his own. "What you say," said he, "shows that you come of good family. I both can, and will, make this exchange for you, by giving you the finest and most precious piece of plate in all my house. It is a mixing-bowl by Vulcan's own hand, of pure silver, except the rim, which is inlaid with gold. Phaedimus, king of the Sidonians, gave it me in the course of a visit which I paid him when I returned thither on my homeward journey. I will make you a present of it."

Thus did they converse [and guests kept coming to the king's house. They brought sheep and wine, while their wives had put up bread for them to take with them; so they were busy cooking their dinners in the courts].

Meanwhile the suitors were throwing discs or aiming with spears at a mark on the levelled ground in front of Ulysses' house, and were behaving with all their old insolence. Antinous and Eurymachus, who were their ringleaders and much the foremost among them all, were sitting together when Noemon son of Phronius came up and said to Antinous,

"Have we any idea, Antinous, on what day Telemachus returns from Pylos? He has a ship of mine, and I want it, to cross over to Elis: I have twelve brood mares there with yearling mule foals by their side not yet broken in, and I want to bring one of them over here and break him."

They were astounded when they heard this, for they had made sure that Telemachus had not gone to the city of Neleus. They thought he was only away somewhere on the farms, and was with the sheep, or with the swineherd; so Antinous said, "When did he go? Tell me truly, and what young men did he take with him? Were they freemen or his own bondsmen for he might manage that too? Tell me also, did you let him have the ship of your own free will because he asked you, or did he take it without yourleave?"

"I lent it him," answered Noemon, "what else could I do when a man of his position said he was in a difficulty, and asked me to oblige him? I could not possibly refuse. As for those who went with him they were the best young men we have, and I saw Mentor go on board as captain or some god who was exactly like him. I cannot understand it, for I saw Mentor here myself yesterday morning, and yet he was then setting out for Pylos."

Noemon then went back to his father's house, but Antinous and Eurymachus were very angry. They told the others to leave off playing, and to come and sit down along with themselves. When they came, Antinous son of Eupeithes spoke in anger. His heart was black with rage, and his eyes flashed fire as he said:

"Good heavens, this voyage of Telemachus is a very serious matter; we had made sure that it would come to nothing, but the young fellow has got away in spite of us, and with a picked crew too. He will be giving us trouble presently; may Jove take him before he is full grown. Find me a ship, therefore, with a crew of twenty men, and I will lie in wait for him in the straits between Ithaca and Samos; he will then rue the day that he set out to try and get news of his father."

Thus did he speak, and the others applauded his saying; they then all of them went inside the buildings.

It was not long ere Penelope came to know what the suitors were plotting; for a man servant, Medon, overheard them from outside the outer court as they were laying their schemes within, and went to tell his mistress. As he crossed the threshold of her room Penelope said: "Medon, what have the suitors sent you here for? Is it to tell the maids to leave their master's business and cook dinner for them? I wish they may neither woo nor dine henceforward, neither here nor anywhere else, but let this be the very last time, for the waste you all make of my son's estate. Did not your fathers tell you when you were children how good Ulysses had been to them never doing anything high-handed, nor speaking harshly to anybody? Kings may say things sometimes, and they may take a fancy to one man and dislike another, but Ulysses never did an unjust thing by anybody which shows what bad hearts you have, and that there is no such thing as gratitude left in this world."

Then Medon said, "I wish, Madam, that this were all; but they are plotting something much more dreadful now may heaven frustrate their design. They are going to try and murder Telemachus as he is coming home from Pylos and Lacedaemon, where he has been to get news of his father."

Then Penelope's heart sank within her, and for a long time she was speechless; her eyes filled with tears, and she could find no utterance. At last, however, she said, "Why did my son leave me? What business had he to go sailing off in ships that make long voyages over the ocean like sea-horses? Does he want to die without leaving any one behind him to keep up his name?"

"I do not know," answered Medon, "whether some god set him on to it, or whether he went on his own impulse to see if he could find out if his father was dead, or alive and on his way home."

Then he went downstairs again, leaving Penelope in an agony of grief. There were plenty of seats in the house, but she. had no heart for sitting on any one of them; she could only fling herself on the floor of her own room and cry; whereon all the maids in the house, both old and young, gathered round her and began to cry too, till at last in a transport of sorrow she exclaimed,

"My dears, heaven has been pleased to try me with more affliction than any other woman of my age and country. First I lost my brave and lion-hearted husband, who had every good quality under heaven, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos, and now my darling son is at the mercy of the winds and waves, without my having heard one word about his leaving home. You hussies, there was not one of you would so much as think of giving me a call out of my bed, though you all of you very well

knew when he was starting. If I had known he meant taking this voyage, he would have had to give it up, no matter how much he was bent upon it, or leave me a corpse behind him one or other. Now, however, go some of you and call old Dolius, who was given me by my father on my marriage, and who is my gardener. Bid him go at once and tell everything to Laertes, who may be able to hit on some plan for enlisting public sympathy on our side, as against those who are trying to exterminate his own race and that of Ulysses."

Then the dear old nurse Euryclea said, "You may kill me, Madam, or let me live on in your house, whichever you please, but I will tell you the real truth. I knew all about it, and gave him everything he wanted in the way of bread and wine, but he made me take my solemn oath that I would not tell you anything for some ten or twelve days, unless you asked or happened to hear of his having gone, for he did not want you to spoil your beauty by crying. And now, Madam, wash your face, change your dress, and go upstairs with your maids to offer prayers to Minerva, daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, for she can save him even though he be in the jaws of death. Do not trouble Laertes: he has trouble enough already. Besides, I cannot think that the gods hate die race of the race of the son of Arceisius so much, but there will be a son left to come up after him, and inherit both the house and the fair fields that lie far all round it."

With these words she made her mistress leave off crying, and dried the tears from her eyes. Penelope washed her face, changed her dress, and went upstairs with her maids. She then put some bruised barley into a basket and began praying to Minerva.

"Hear me," she cried, "Daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable. If ever Ulysses while he was here burned you fat thigh bones of sheep or heifer, bear it in mind now as in my favour, and save my darling son from the villainy of the suitors."

She cried aloud as she spoke, and the goddess heard her prayer; meanwhile the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloister, and one of them said:

"The queen is preparing for her marriage with one or other of us. Little does she dream that her son has now been doomed to die."

This was what they said, but they did not know what was going to happen. Then Antinous said, "Comrades, let there be no loud talking, lest some of it get carried inside. Let us be up and do that in silence, about which we are all of a mind."

He then chose twenty men, and they went down to their. ship and to the sea side; they drew the vessel into the water and got her mast and sails inside her; they bound the oars to the thole-pins with twisted thongs of leather, all in due course, and spread the white sails aloft, while their fine servants brought them their armour. Then they made the ship fast a little way out, came on shore again, got their suppers, and waited till night should fall.

But Penelope lay in her own room upstairs unable to eat or drink, and wondering whether her brave son would escape, or be overpowered by the wicked suitors. Like a lioness caught in the toils with huntsmen hemming her in on every side she thought and thought till she sank into a slumber, and lay on her bed bereft of thought and motion.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter, and made a vision in the likeness of Penelope's sister Iphthime daughter of Icarius who had married Eumelus and lived in Pherae. She told the vision to go to the house of Ulysses, and to make Penelope leave off crying, so it came into her room by the hole through which the thong went for pulling the door to, and hovered over her head, saying,

"You are asleep, Penelope: the gods who live at ease will not suffer you to weep and be so sad. Your son has done them no wrong, so he will yet come back to you."

Penelope, who was sleeping sweetly at the gates of dreamland, answered, "Sister, why have you come here? You do not come very often, but I suppose that is because you live such a long way off. Am I, then, to leave off crying and refrain from all the sad thoughts that torture me? I, who have lost my brave and lion-hearted husband, who had every good quality under heaven, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos; and now my darling son has gone off on board of a ship a foolish fellow who has never been used to roughing it, nor to going about among gatherings of men. I am even more anxious about him than about my husband; I am all in a tremble when I think of him, lest something should happen to him, either from the people among whom he has gone, or by sea, for he has many enemies who are plotting against him, and are bent on killing him before he can return home."

Then the vision said, "Take heart, and be not so much dismayed. There is one gone with him whom many a man would be glad enough to have stand by his side, I mean Minerva; it is she who has compassion upon you, and who has sent me to bear you this

message."

"Then," said Penelope, "if you are a god or have been sent here by divine commission, tell me also about that other unhappy one is he still alive, or is he already dead and in the house of Hades?"

And the vision said, "I shall not tell you for certain whether he is alive or dead, and there is no use in idle conversation."

Then it vanished through the thong-hole of the door and was dissipated into thin air; but Penelope rose from her sleep refreshed and comforted, so vivid had been her dream.

Meantime the suitors went on board and sailed their ways over the sea, intent on murdering Telemachus. Now there is a rocky islet called Asteris, of no great size, in mid channel between Ithaca and Samos, and there is a harbour on either side of it where a ship can lie. Here then the Achaeans placed themselves in ambush.

Book V

AND NOW, as Dawn rose from her couch beside Tithonus harbinger of light alike to mortals and immortals the gods met in council and with them, Jove the lord of thunder, who is their king. Thereon Minerva began to tell them of the many sufferings of Ulysses, for she pitied him away there in the house of the nymph Calypso.

"Father Jove," said she, "and all you other gods that live in everlasting bliss, I hope there may never be such a thing as a kind and well-disposed ruler any more, nor one who will govern equitably. I hope they will be all henceforth cruel and unjust, for there is not one of his subjects but has forgotten Ulysses, who ruled them as though he were their father. There he is, lying in great pain in an island where dwells the nymph Calypso, who will not let him go; and he cannot get back to his own country, for he can find neither ships nor sailors to take him over the sea. Furthermore, wicked people are now trying to murder his only son Telemachus, who is coming home from Pylos and Lacedaemon, where he has been to see if he can get news of his father."

"What, my dear, are you talking about?" replied her father, "did you not send him there yourself, because you thought it would help Ulysses to get home and punish the suitors? Besides, you are perfectly able to protect Telemachus, and to see him safely home again, while the suitors have to come hurry-skurrying back without having killed him."

When he had thus spoken, he said to his son Mercury, "Mercury, you are our messenger, go therefore and tell Calypso we have decreed that poor Ulysses is to return home. He is to be convoyed neither by gods nor men, but after a perilous voyage of twenty days upon a raft he is to reach fertile Scheria, the land of the Phaeacians, who are near of kin to the gods, and will honour him as though he were one of ourselves. They will send him in a ship to his own country, and will give him more bronze and gold and raiment than he would have brought back from Troy, if he had had had all his prize money and had got home without disaster. This is how we have settled that he shall return to his country and his friends."

Thus he spoke, and Mercury, guide and guardian, slayer of Argus, did as he was told. Forthwith he bound on his glittering golden sandals with which he could fly like the wind over land and sea. He took the wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep or wakes them just as he pleases, and flew holding it in his hand over Pieria; then he swooped down through the firmament till he reached the level of the sea, whose waves he skimmed like a cormorant that flies fishing every hole and corner of the ocean, and drenching its thick plumage in the spray. He flew and flew over many a weary wave, but when at last he got to the island which was his journey's end, he left the sea and went on by land till he came to the cave where the nymph Calypso lived.

He found her at home. There was a large fire burning on the hearth, and one could smell from far the fragrant reek of burning cedar and sandal wood. As for herself, she was busy at her loom, shooting her golden shuttle through the warp and singing beautifully. Round her cave there was a thick wood of alder, poplar, and sweet smelling cypress trees, wherein all kinds of great birds had built their nests owls, hawks, and chattering sea-crows that occupy their business in the waters. A vine loaded with grapes was trained and grew luxuriantly about the mouth of the cave; there were also four running rills of water in channels cut pretty close together, and turned hither and thither so as to irrigate the beds of violets and luscious herbage over which they flowed. Even a god could not help being charmed with such a lovely spot, so Mercury stood still and looked at it; but when he had admired it sufficiently he went inside the cave.

Calypso knew him at once for the gods all know each other, no matter how far they live from one another but Ulysses was not within; he was on the sea-shore as usual, looking out upon the barren ocean with tears in his eyes, groaning and breaking his heart for sorrow. Calypso gave Mercury a seat and said: "Why have you come to see me, Mercury honoured, and ever welcome for you

do not visit me often? Say what you want; I will do it for be you at once if I can, and if it can be done at all; but come inside, and let me set refreshment before you.

As she spoke she drew a table loaded with ambrosia beside him and mixed him some red nectar, so Mercury ate and drank till he had had enough, and then said:

“We are speaking god and goddess to one another, one another, and you ask me why I have come here, and I will tell you truly as you would have me do. Jove sent me; it was no doing of mine; who could possibly want to come all this way over the sea where there are no cities full of people to offer me sacrifices or choice hecatombs? Nevertheless I had to come, for none of us other gods can cross Jove, nor transgress his orders. He says that you have here the most ill-starred of alf those who fought nine years before the city of King Priam and sailed home in the tenth year after having sacked it. On their way home they sinned against Minerva, who raised both wind and waves against them, so that all his brave companions perished, and he alone was carried hither by wind and tide. Jove says that you are to let this by man go at once, for it is decreed that he shall not perish here, far from his own people, but shall return to his house and country and see his friends again.”

Calypso trembled with rage when she heard this, “You gods,” she exclaimed, to be ashamed of yourselves. You are always jealous and hate seeing a goddess take a fancy to a mortal man, and live with him in open matrimony. So when rosy-fingered Dawn made love to Orion, you precious gods were all of you furious till Diana went and killed him in Ortygia. So again when Ceres fell in love with Iasion, and yielded to him in a thrice ploughed fallow field, Jove came to hear of it before so long and killed Iasion with his thunder-bolts. And now you are angry with me too because I have a man here. I found the poor creature sitting all alone astride of a keel, for Jove had struck his ship with lightning and sunk it in mid ocean, so that all his crew were drowned, while he himself was driven by wind and waves on to my island. I got fond of him and cherished him, and had set my heart on making him immortal, so that he should never grow old all his days; still I cannot cross Jove, nor bring his counsels to nothing; therefore, if he insists upon it, let the man go beyond the seas again; but I cannot send him anywhere myself for I have neither ships nor men who can take him. Nevertheless I will readily give him such advice, in all good faith, as will be likely to bring him safely to his own country.”

“Then send him away,” said Mercury, “or Jove will be angry with you and punish you”’

On this he took his leave, and Calypso went out to look for Ulysses, for she had heard Jove’s message. She found him sitting upon the beach with his eyes ever filled with tears, and dying of sheer home-sickness; for he had got tired of Calypso, and though he was forced to sleep with her in the cave by night, it was she, not he, that would have it so. As for the day time, he spent it on the rocks and on the sea-shore, weeping, crying aloud for his despair, and always looking out upon the sea. Calypso then went close up to him said:

“My poor fellow, you shall not stay here grieving and fretting your life out any longer. I am going to send you away of my own free will; so go, cut some beams of wood, and make yourself a large raft with an upper deck that it may carry you safely over the sea. I will put bread, wine, and water on board to save you from starving. I will also give you clothes, and will send you a fair wind to take you home, if the gods in heaven so will it or they know more about these things, and can settle them better than I can.”

Ulysses shuddered as he heard her. “Now goddess,” he answered, “there is something behind all this; you cannot be really meaning to help me home when you bid me do such a dreadful thing as put to sea on a raft. Not even a well-found ship with a fair wind could venture on such a distant voyage: nothing that you can say or do shall mage me go on board a raft unless you first solemnly swear that you mean me no mischief.”

Calypso smiled at this and caressed him with her hand: “You know a great deal,” said she, “but you are quite wrong here. May heaven above and earth below be my witnesses, with the waters of the river Styx and this is the most solemn oath which a blessed god can take that I mean you no sort of harm, and am only advising you to do exactly what I should do myself in your place. I am dealing with you quite straightforwardly; my heart is not made of iron, and I am very sorry for you.”

When she had thus spoken she led the way rapidly before him, and Ulysses followed in her steps; so the pair, goddess and man, went on and on till they came to Calypso’s cave, where Ulysses took the seat that Mercury had just left. Calypso set meat and drink before him of the food that mortals eat; but her maids brought ambrosia and nectar for herself, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them. When they had satisfied themselves with meat and drink, Calypso spoke, saying:

“Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, so you would start home to your own land at once? Good luck go with you, but if you could only know how much suffering is in store for you before you get back to your own country, you would stay where you are, keep house

along with me, and let me make you immortal, no matter how anxious you may be to see this wife of yours, of whom you are thinking all the time day after day; yet I flatter myself that at am no whit less tall or well-looking than she is, for it is not to be expected that a mortal woman should compare in beauty with an immortal."

"Goddess," replied Ulysses, "do not be angry with me about this. I am quite aware that my wife Penelope is nothing like so tall or so beautiful as yourself. She is only a woman, whereas you are an immortal. Nevertheless, I want to get home, and can think of nothing else. If some god wrecks me when I am on the sea, I will bear it and make the best of it. I have had infinite trouble both by land and sea already, so let this go with the rest."

Presently the sun set and it became dark, whereon the pair retired into the inner part of the cave and went to bed.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Ulysses put on his shirt and cloak, while the goddess wore a dress of a light gossamer fabric, very fine and graceful, with a beautiful golden girdle about her waist and a veil to cover her head. She at once set herself to think how she could speed Ulysses on his way. So she gave him a great bronze axe that suited his hands; it was sharpened on both sides, and had a beautiful olive-wood handle fitted firmly on to it. She also gave him a sharp adze, and then led the way to the far end of the island where the largest trees grew alder, poplar and pine, that reached the sky very dry and well seasoned, so as to sail light for him in the water. Then, when she had shown him where the best trees grew, Calypso went home, leaving him to cut them, which he soon finished doing. He cut down twenty trees in all and adzed them smooth, squaring them by rule in good workmanlike fashion. Meanwhile Calypso came back with some augers, so he bored holes with them and fitted the timbers together with bolts and rivets. He made the raft as broad as a skilled shipwright makes the beam of a large vessel, and he filed a deck on top of the ribs, and ran a gunwale all round it. He also made a mast with a yard arm, and a rudder to steer with. He fenced the raft all round with wicker hurdles as a protection against the waves, and then he threw on a quantity of wood. By and by Calypso brought him some linen to make the sails, and he made these too, excellently, making them fast with braces and sheets. Last of all, with the help of levers, he drew the raft down into the water.

In four days he had completed the whole work, and on the fifth Calypso sent him from the island after washing him and giving him some clean clothes. She gave him a goat skin full of black wine, and another larger one of water; she also gave him a wallet full of provisions, and found him in much good meat. Moreover, she made the wind fair and warm for him, and gladly did Ulysses spread his sail before it, while he sat and guided the raft skilfully by means of the rudder. He never closed his eyes, but kept them fixed on the Pleiads, on late-setting Bootes, and on the Bear which men also call the wain, and which turns round and round where it is, facing Orion, and alone never dipping into the stream of Oceanus for Calypso had told him to keep this to his left. Days seven and ten did he sail over the sea, and on the eighteenth the dim outlines of the mountains on the nearest part of the Phaeacian coast appeared, rising like a shield on the horizon.

But King Neptune, who was returning from the Ethiopians, caught sight of Ulysses a long way off, from the mountains of the Solymi. He could see him sailing upon the sea, and it made him very angry, so he wagged his head and muttered to himself, saying, heavens, so the gods have been changing their minds about Ulysses while I was away in Ethiopia, and now he is close to the land of the Phaeacians, where it is decreed that he shall escape from the calamities that have befallen him. Still, he shall have plenty of hardship yet before he has done with it."

Thereon he gathered his clouds together, grasped his trident, stirred it round in the sea, and roused the rage of every wind that blows till earth, sea, and sky were hidden in cloud, and night sprang forth out of the heavens. Winds from East, South, North, and West fell upon him all at the same time, and a tremendous sea got up, so that Ulysses' heart began to fail him. "Alas," he said to himself in his dismay, "what ever will become of me? I am afraid Calypso was right when she said I should have trouble by sea before I got back home. It is all coming true. How black is Jove making heaven with his clouds, and what a sea the winds are raising from every quarter at once. I am now safe to perish. Blest and thrice blest were those Danaans who fell before Troy in the cause of the sons of Atreus. Would that had been killed on the day when the Trojans were pressing me so sorely about the dead body of Achilles, for then I should have had due burial and the Achaeans would have honoured my name; but now it seems that I shall come to a most pitiable end."

As he spoke a sea broke over him with such terrific fury that the raft reeled again, and he was carried overboard a long way off. He let go the helm, and the force of the hurricane was so great that it broke the mast half way up, and both sail and yard went over into the sea. For a long time Ulysses was under water, and it was all he could do to rise to the surface again, for the clothes Calypso had given him weighed him down; but at last he got his head above water and spat out the bitter brine that was running down his face in

streams. In spite of all this, however, he did not lose sight of his raft, but swam as fast as he could towards it, got hold of it, and climbed on board again so as to escape drowning. The sea took the raft and tossed it about as Autumn winds whirl thistledown round and round upon a road. It was as though the South, North, East, and West winds were all playing battledore and shuttlecock with it at once.

When he was in this plight, Ino daughter of Cadmus, also called Leucothea, saw him. She had formerly been a mere mortal, but had been since raised to the rank of a marine goddess. Seeing in what great distress Ulysses now was, she had compassion upon him, and, rising like a sea-gull from the waves, took her seat upon the raft.

“My poor good man,” said she, “why is Neptune so furiously angry with you? He is giving you a great deal of trouble, but for all his bluster he will not kill you. You seem to be a sensible person, do then as I bid you; strip, leave your raft to drive before the wind, and swim to the Phaecian coast where better luck awaits you. And here, take my veil and put it round your chest; it is enchanted, and you can come to no harm so long as you wear it. As soon as you touch land take it off, throw it back as far as you can into the sea, and then go away again.” With these words she took off her veil and gave it him. Then she dived down again like a sea-gull and vanished beneath the dark blue waters.

But Ulysses did not know what to think. “Alas,” he said to himself in his dismay, “this is only some one or other of the gods who is luring me to ruin by advising me to will quit my raft. At any rate I will not do so at present, for the land where she said I should be quit of all troubles seemed to be still a good way off. I know what I will do I am sure it will be best no matter what happens I will stick to the raft as long as her timbers hold together, but when the sea breaks her up I will swim for it; I do not see how I can do any better than this.”

While he was thus in two minds, Neptune sent a terrible great wave that seemed to rear itself above his head till it broke right over the raft, which then went to pieces as though it were a heap of dry chaff tossed about by a whirlwind. Ulysses got astride of one plank and rode upon it as if he were on horseback; he then took off the clothes Calypso had given him, bound Ino’s veil under his arms, and plunged into the sea meaning to swim on shore. King Neptune watched him as he did so, and wagged his head, muttering to himself and saying, “’There now, swim up and down as you best can till you fall in with well-to-do people. I do not think you will be able to say that I have let you off too lightly.” On this he lashed his horses and drove to Aegae where his palace is.

But Minerva resolved to help Ulysses, so she bound the ways of all the winds except one, and made them lie quite still; but she roused a good stiff breeze from the North that should lay the waters till Ulysses reached the land of the Phaeacians where he would be safe.

Thereon he floated about for two nights and two days in the water, with a heavy swell on the sea and death staring him in the face; but when the third day broke, the wind fell and there was a dead calm without so much as a breath of air stirring. As he rose on the swell he looked eagerly ahead, and could see land quite near. Then, as children rejoice when their dear father begins to get better after having for a long time borne sore affliction sent him by some angry spirit, but the gods deliver him from evil, so was Ulysses thankful when he again saw land and trees, and swam on with all his strength that he might once more set foot upon dry ground. When, however, he got within earshot, he began to hear the surf thundering up against the rocks, for the swell still broke against them with a terrific roar. Everything was enveloped in spray; there were no harbours where a ship might ride, nor shelter of any kind, but only headlands, low-lying rocks, and mountain tops.

Ulysses’ heart now began to fail him, and he said despairingly to himself, “Alas, Jove has let me see land after swimming so far that I had given up all hope, but I can find no landing place, for the coast is rocky and surf-beaten, the rocks are smooth and rise sheer from the sea, with deep water close under them so that I cannot climb out for want of foothold. I am afraid some great wave will lift me off my legs and dash me against the rocks as I leave the water which would give me a sorry landing. If, on the other hand, I swim further in search of some shelving beach or harbour, a hurricane may carry me out to sea again sorely against my will, or heaven may send some great monster of the deep to attack me; for Amphitrite breeds many such, and I know that Neptune is very angry with me.”

While he was thus in two minds a wave caught him and took him with such force against the rocks that he would have been smashed and torn to pieces if Minerva had not shown him what to do. He caught hold of the rock with both hands and clung to it groaning with pain till the wave retired, so he was saved that time; but presently the wave came on again and carried him back with it far into the sea-tearing his hands as the suckers of a polypus are torn when some one plucks it from its bed, and the stones come up along with it even so did the rocks tear the skin from his strong hands, and then the wave drew him deep down under the water.

Here poor Ulysses would have certainly perished even in spite of his own destiny, if Minerva had not helped him to keep his wits about him. He swam seaward again, beyond reach of the surf that was beating against the land, and at the same time he kept looking towards the shore to see if he could find some haven, or a spit that should take the waves aslant. By and by, as he swam on, he came to the mouth of a river, and here he thought would be the best place, for there were no rocks, and it afforded shelter from the wind. He felt that there was a current, so he prayed inwardly and said:

“Hear me, O King, whoever you may be, and save me from the anger of the sea-god Neptune, for I approach you prayerfully. Any one who has lost his way has at all times a claim even upon the gods, wherefore in my distress I draw near to your stream, and cling to the knees of your riverhood. Have mercy upon me, O king, for I declare myself your suppliant.”

Then the god stayed his stream and stilled the waves, making all calm before him, and bringing him safely into the mouth of the river. Here at last Ulysses’ knees and strong hands failed him, for the sea had completely broken him. His body was all swollen, and his mouth and nostrils ran down like a river with sea-water, so that he could neither breathe nor speak, and lay swooning from sheer exhaustion; presently, when he had got his breath and came to himself again, he took off the scarf that Ino had given him and threw it back into the salt stream of the river, whereon Ino received it into her hands from the wave that bore it towards her. Then he left the river, laid himself down among the rushes, and kissed the bounteous earth.

“Alas,” he cried to himself in his dismay, “what ever will become of me, and how is it all to end? If I stay here upon the river bed through the long watches of the night, I am so exhausted that the bitter cold and damp may make an end of me for towards sunrise there will be a keen wind blowing from off the river. If, on the other hand, I climb the hill side, find shelter in the woods, and sleep in some thicket, I may escape the cold and have a good night’s rest, but some savage beast may take advantage of me and devour me.”

In the end he deemed it best to take to the woods, and he found one upon some high ground not far from the water. There he crept beneath two shoots of olive that grew from a single stock the one an ungrafted sucker, while the other had been grafted. No wind, however squally, could break through the cover they afforded, nor could the sun’s rays pierce them, nor the rain get through them, so closely did they grow into one another. Ulysses crept under these and began to make himself a bed to lie on, for there was a great litter of dead leaves lying about enough to make a covering for two or three men even in hard winter weather. He was glad enough to see this, so he laid himself down and heaped the leaves all round him. Then, as one who lives alone in the country, far from any neighbor, hides a brand as fire-seed in the ashes to save himself from having to get a light elsewhere, even so did Ulysses cover himself up with leaves; and Minerva shed a sweet sleep upon his eyes, closed his eyelids, and made him lose all memories of his sorrows.

Book VI

SO HERE Ulysses slept, overcome by sleep and toil; but Minerva went off to the country and city of the Phaecians a people who used to live in the fair town of Hypereia, near the lawless Cyclopes. Now the Cyclopes were stronger than they and plundered them, so their king Nausithous moved them thence and settled them in Scheria, far from all other people. He surrounded the city with a wall, built houses and temples, and divided the lands among his people; but he was dead and gone to the house of Hades, and King Alcinous, whose counsels were inspired of heaven, was now reigning. To his house, then, did Minerva hie in furtherance of the return of Ulysses.

She went straight to the beautifully decorated bedroom in which there slept a girl who was as lovely as a goddess, Nausicaa, daughter to King Alcinous. Two maid servants were sleeping near her, both very pretty, one on either side of the doorway, which was closed with well-made folding doors. Minerva took the form of the famous sea captain Dymas’s daughter, who was a bosom friend of Nausicaa and just her own age; then, coming up to the girl’s bedside like a breath of wind, she hovered over her head and said:

“Nausicaa, what can your mother have been about, to have such a lazy daughter? Here are your clothes all lying in disorder, yet you are going to be married almost immediately, and should not only be well dressed yourself, but should find good clothes for those who attend you. This is the way to get yourself a good name, and to make your father and mother proud of you. Suppose, then, that we make tomorrow a washing day, and start at daybreak. I will come and help you so that you may have everything ready as soon as possible, for all the best young men among your own people are courting you, and you are not going to remain a maid much longer. Ask your father, therefore, to have a waggon and mules ready for us at daybreak, to take the rugs, robes, and girdles; and you can ride, too, which will be much pleasanter for you than walking, for the washing-cisterns are some way from the town.”

When she had said this Minerva went away to Olympus, which they say is the everlasting home of the gods. Here no wind beats roughly, and neither rain nor snow can fall; but it abides in everlasting sunshine and in a great peacefulness of light, wherein the blessed gods are illumined for ever and ever. This was the place to which the goddess went when she had given instructions to the girl.

By and by morning came and woke Nausicaa, who began wondering about her dream; she therefore went to the other end of the house to tell her father and mother all about it, and found them in their own room. Her mother was sitting by the fireside spinning her purple yarn with her maids around her, and she happened to catch her father just as he was going out to attend a meeting of the town council, which the Phaeacian aldermen had convened. She stopped him and said:

“Papa dear, could you manage to let me have a good big waggon? I want to take all our dirty clothes to the river and wash them. You are the chief man here, so it is only right that you should have a clean shirt when you attend meetings of the council. Moreover, you have five sons at home, two of them married, while the other three are good-looking bachelors; you know they always like to have clean linen when they go to a dance, and I have been thinking about all this.”

She did not say a word about her own wedding, for she did not like to, but her father knew and said, “You shall have the mules, my love, and whatever else you have a mind for. Be off with you, and the men shall get you a good strong waggon with a body to it that will hold all your clothes.”

On this he gave his orders to the servants, who got the waggon out, harnessed the mules, and put them to, while the girl brought the clothes down from the linen room and placed them on the waggon. Her mother prepared her a basket of provisions with all sorts of good things, and a goat skin full of wine; the girl now got into the waggon, and her mother gave her also a golden cruse of oil, that she and her women might anoint themselves. Then she took the whip and reins and lashed the mules on, whereon they set off, and their hoofs clattered on the road. They pulled without flagging, and carried not only Nausicaa and her wash of clothes, but the maids also who were with her.

When they reached the water side they went to the washing-cisterns, through which there ran at all times enough pure water to wash any quantity of linen, no matter how dirty. Here they unharnessed the mules and turned them out to feed on the sweet juicy herbage that grew by the water side. They took the clothes out of the waggon, put them in the water, and vied with one another in treading them in the pits to get the dirt out. After they had washed them and got them quite clean, they laid them out by the sea side, where the waves had raised a high beach of shingle, and set about washing themselves and anointing themselves with olive oil. Then they got their dinner by the side of the stream, and waited for the sun to finish drying the clothes. When they had done dinner they threw off the veils that covered their heads and began to play at ball, while Nausicaa sang for them. As the huntress Diana goes forth upon the mountains of Taygetus or Erymanthus to hunt wild boars or deer, and the wood-nymphs, daughters of Aegis-bearing Jove, take their sport along with her (then is Leto proud at seeing her daughter stand a full head taller than the others, and eclipse the loveliest amid a whole bevy of beauties), even so did the girl outshine her handmaids.

When it was time for them to start home, and they were folding the clothes and putting them into the waggon, Minerva began to consider how Ulysses should wake up and see the handsome girl who was to conduct him to the city of the Phaeacians. The girl, therefore, threw a ball at one of the maids, which missed her and fell into deep water. On this they all shouted, and the noise they made woke Ulysses, who sat up in his bed of leaves and began to wonder what it might all be.

“Alas,” said he to himself, “what kind of people have I come amongst? Are they cruel, savage, and uncivilized, or hospitable and humane? I seem to hear the voices of young women, and they sound like those of the nymphs that haunt mountain tops, or springs of rivers and meadows of green grass. At any rate I am among a race of men and women. Let me try if I cannot manage to get a look at them.”

As he said this he crept from under his bush, and broke off a bough covered with thick leaves to hide his nakedness. He looked like some lion of the wilderness that stalks about exulting in his strength and defying both wind and rain; his eyes glare as he prowls in quest of oxen, sheep, or deer, for he is famished, and will dare break even into a well-fenced homestead, trying to get at the sheep even such did Ulysses seem to the young women, as he drew near to them all naked as he was, for he was in great want. On seeing one so unkempt and so begrimed with salt water, the others scampered off along the spits that jutted out into the sea, but the daughter of Alcinous stood firm, for Minerva put courage into her heart and took away all fear from her. She stood right in front of Ulysses, and he doubted whether he should go up to her, throw himself at her feet, and embrace her knees as a suppliant, or stay where he was and entreat her to give him some clothes and show him the way to the town. In the end he deemed it best to entreat

her from a distance in case the girl should take offence at his coming near enough to clasp her knees, so he addressed her in honeyed and persuasive language.

“O queen,” he said, “I implore your aid but tell me, are you a goddess or are you a mortal woman? If you are a goddess and dwell in heaven, I can only conjecture that you are Jove’s daughter Diana, for your face and figure resemble none but hers; if on the other hand you are a mortal and live on earth, thrice happy are your father and mother thrice happy, too, are your brothers and sisters; how proud and delighted they must feel when they see so fair a scion as yourself going out to a dance; most happy, however, of all will he be whose wedding gifts have been the richest, and who takes you to his own home. I never yet saw any one so beautiful, neither man nor woman, and am lost in admiration as I behold you. I can only compare you to a young palm tree which I saw when I was at Delos growing near the altar of Apollo for I was there, too, with much people after me, when I was on that journey which has been the source of all my troubles. Never yet did such a young plant shoot out of the ground as that was, and I admired and wondered at it exactly as I now admire and wonder at yourself. I dare not clasp your knees, but I am in great distress; yesterday made the twentieth day that I had been tossing about upon the sea. The winds and waves have taken me all the way from the Ogygian island, and now fate has flung me upon this coast that I may endure still further suffering; for I do not think that I have yet come to the end of it, but rather that heaven has still much evil in store for me.

“And now, O queen, have pity upon me, for you are the first person I have met, and I know no one else in this country. Show me the way to your town, and let me have anything that you may have brought hither to wrap your clothes in. May heaven grant you in all things your heart’s desire husband, house, and a happy, peaceful home; for there is nothing better in this world than that man and wife should be of one mind in a house. It discomfits their enemies, makes the hearts of their friends glad, and they themselves know more about it than any one.”

To this Nausicaa answered, “Stranger, you appear to be a sensible, well-disposed person. There is no accounting for luck; Jove gives prosperity to rich and poor just as he chooses, so you must take what he has seen fit to send you, and make the best of it. Now, however, that you have come to this our country, you shall not want for clothes nor for anything else that a foreigner in distress may reasonably look for. I will show you the way to the town, and will tell you the name of our people; we are called Phaeacians, and I am daughter to Alcinous, in whom the whole power of the state is vested.”

Then she called her maids and said, “Stay where you are, you girls. Can you not see a man without running away from him? Do you take him for a robber or a murderer? Neither he nor any one else can come here to do us Phaeacians any harm, for we are dear to the gods, and live apart on a land’s end that juts into the sounding sea, and have nothing to do with any other people. This is only some poor man who has lost his way, and we must be kind to him, for strangers and foreigners in distress are under Jove’s protection, and will take what they can get and be thankful; so, girls, give the poor fellow something to eat and drink, and wash him in the stream at some place that is sheltered from the wind.”

On this the maids left off running away and began calling one another back. They made Ulysses sit down in the shelter as Nausicaa had told them, and brought him a shirt and cloak. They also brought him the little golden cruse of oil, and told him to go wash in the stream. But Ulysses said, “Young women, please to stand a little on one side that I may wash the brine from my shoulders and anoint myself with oil, for it is long enough since my skin has had a drop of oil upon it. I cannot wash as long as you all keep standing there. I am ashamed to strip before a number of good-looking young women.”

Then they stood on one side and went to tell the girl, while Ulysses washed himself in the stream and scrubbed the brine from his back and from his broad shoulders. When he had thoroughly washed himself, and had got the brine out of his hair, he anointed himself with oil, and put on the clothes which the girl had given him; Minerva then made him look taller and stronger than before, she also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she glorified him about the head and shoulders as a skilful workman who has studied art of all kinds under Vulcan and Minerva enriches a piece of silver plate by gilding it and his work is full of beauty. Then he went and sat down a little way off upon the beach, looking quite young and handsome, and the girl gazed on him with admiration; then she said to her maids:

“Hush, my dears, for I want to say something. I believe the gods who live in heaven have sent this man to the Phaeacians. When I first saw him I thought him plain, but now his appearance is like that of the gods who dwell in heaven. I should like my future husband to be just such another as he is, if he would only stay here and not want to go away. However, give him something to eat and drink.”

They did as they were told, and set food before Ulysses, who ate and drank ravenously, for it was long since he had had food of any kind. Meanwhile, Nausicaa bethought her of another matter. She got the linen folded and placed in the waggon, she then yoked the mules, and, as she took her seat, she called Ulysses:

“Stranger,” said she, “rise and let us be going back to the town; I will introduce you at the house of my excellent father, where I can tell you that you will meet all the best people among the Phaecians. But be sure and do as I bid you, for you seem to be a sensible person. As long as we are going past the fields and farm lands, follow briskly behind the waggon along with the maids and I will lead the way myself. Presently, however, we shall come to the town, where you will find a high wall running all round it, and a good harbour on either side with a narrow entrance into the city, and the ships will be drawn up by the road side, for every one has a place where his own ship can lie. You will see the market place with a temple of Neptune in the middle of it, and paved with large stones bedded in the earth. Here people deal in ship’s gear of all kinds, such as cables and sails, and here, too, are the places where oars are made, for the Phaeacians are not a nation of archers; they know nothing about bows and arrows, but are a sea-faring folk, and pride themselves on their masts, oars, and ships, with which they travel far over the sea.

“I am afraid of the gossip and scandal that may be set on foot against me later on; for the people here are very ill-natured, and some low fellow, if he met us, might say, ‘Who is this fine-looking stranger that is going about with Nausicaa? Where did she End him? I suppose she is going to marry him. Perhaps he is a vagabond sailor whom she has taken from some foreign vessel, for we have no neighbours; or some god has at last come down from heaven in answer to her prayers, and she is going to live with him all the rest of her life. It would be a good thing if she would take herself of I for she and find a husband somewhere else, for she will not look at one of the many excellent young Phaeacians who are in with her.’ This is the kind of disparaging remark that would be made about me, and I could not complain, for I should myself be scandalized at seeing any other girl do the like, and go about with men in spite of everybody, while her father and mother were still alive, and without having been married in the face of all the world.

“If, therefore, you want my father to give you an escort and to help you home, do as I bid you; you will see a beautiful grove of poplars by the road side dedicated to Minerva; it has a well in it and a meadow all round it. Here my father has a field of rich garden ground, about as far from the town as a man’ voice will carry. Sit down there and wait for a while till the rest of us can get into the town and reach my father’s house. Then, when you think we must have done this, come into the town and ask the way to the house of my father Alcinous. You will have no difficulty in finding it; any child will point it out to you, for no one else in the whole town has anything like such a fine house as he has. When you have got past the gates and through the outer court, go right across the inner court till you come to my mother. You will find her sitting by the fire and spinning her purple wool by firelight. It is a fine sight to see her as she leans back against one of the bearing-posts with her maids all ranged behind her. Close to her seat stands that of my father, on which he sits and topes like an immortal god. Never mind him, but go up to my mother, and lay your hands upon her knees if you would get home quickly. If you can gain her over, you may hope to see your own country again, no matter how distant it may be.”

So saying she lashed the mules with her whip and they left the river. The mules drew well and their hoofs went up and down upon the road. She was careful not to go too fast for Ulysses and the maids who were following on foot along with the waggon, so she plied her whip with judgement. As the sun was going down they came to the sacred grove of Minerva, and there Ulysses sat down and prayed to the mighty daughter of Jove.

“Hear me,” he cried, “daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, hear me now, for you gave no heed to my prayers when Neptune was wrecking me. Now, therefore, have pity upon me and grant that I may find friends and be hospitably received by the Phaecians.”

Thus did he pray, and Minerva heard his prayer, but she would not show herself to him openly, for she was afraid of her uncle Neptune, who was still furious in his endeavors to prevent Ulysses from getting home.

Book VII

THUS, then, did Ulysses wait and pray; but the girl drove on to the town. When she reached her father’s house she drew up at the gateway, and her brothers comely as the gods gathered round her, took the mules out of the waggon, and carried the clothes into the house, while she went to her own room, where an old servant, Eurymedusa of Apeira, lit the fire for her. This old woman had been brought by sea from Apeira, and had been chosen as a prize for Alcinous because he was king over the Phaecians, and the people obeyed him as though he were a god. She had been nurse to Nausicaa, and had now lit the fire for her, and brought her supper for her into her own room.

Presently Ulysses got up to go towards the town; and Minerva shed a thick mist all round him to hide him in case any of the proud Phaecians who met him should be rude to him, or ask him who he was. Then, as he was just entering the town, she came towards him in the likeness of a little girl carrying a pitcher. She stood right in front of him, and Ulysses said:

“My dear, will you be so kind as to show me the house of king Alcinous? I am an unfortunate foreigner in distress, and do not know one in your town and country.”

Then Minerva said, “Yes, father stranger, I will show you the house you want, for Alcinous lives quite close to my own father. I will go before you and show the way, but say not a word as you go, and do not look at any man, nor ask him questions; for the people here cannot abide strangers, and do not like men who come from some other place. They are a sea-faring folk, and sail the seas by the grace of Neptune in ships that glide along like thought, or as a bird in the air.”

On this she led the way, and Ulysses followed in her steps; but not one of the Phaecians could see him as he passed through the city in the midst of them; for the great goddess Minerva in her good will towards him had hidden him in a thick cloud of darkness. He admired their harbours, ships, places of assembly, and the lofty walls of the city, which, with the palisade on top of them, were very striking, and when they reached the king’s house Minerva said:“This is the house, father stranger, which you would have me show you. You will find a number of great people sitting at table, but do not be afraid; go straight in, for the bolder a man is the more likely he is to carry his point, even though he is a stranger. First find the queen. Her name is Arete, and she comes of the same family as her husband Alcinous. They both descend originally from Neptune, who was father to Nausithous by Periboea, a woman of great beauty. Periboea was the youngest daughter of Eurymedon, who at one time reigned over the giants, but he ruined his ill-fated people and lost his own life to boot.

“Neptune, however, lay with his daughter, and she had a son by him, the great Nausithous, who reigned over the Phaecians. Nausithous had two sons Rhexenor and Alcinous; Apollo killed the first of them while he was still a bridegroom and without male issue; but he left a daughter Arete, whom Alcinous married, and honours as no other woman is honoured of all those that keep house along with their husbands.

“Thus she both was, and still is, respected beyond measure by her children, by Alcinous himself, and by the whole people, who look upon her as a goddess, and greet her whenever she goes about the city, for she is a thoroughly good woman both in head and heart, and when any women are friends of hers, she will help their husbands also to settle their disputes. If you can gain her good will, you may have every hope of seeing your friends again, and getting safely back to your home and country.”

Then Minerva left Scheria and went away over the sea. She went to Marathon and to the spacious streets of Athens, where she entered the abode of Erechtheus; but Ulysses went on to the house of Alcinous, and he pondered much as he paused a while before reaching the threshold of bronze, for the splendour of the palace was like that of the sun or moon. The walls on either side were of bronze from end to end, and the cornice was of blue enamel. The doors were gold, and hung on pillars of silver that rose from a floor of bronze, while the lintel was silver and the hook of the door was of gold.

On either side there stood gold and silver mastiffs which Vulcan, with his consummate skill, had fashioned expressly to keep watch over the palace of king Alcinous; so they were immortal and could never grow old. Seats were ranged all along the wall, here and there from one end to the other, with coverings of fine woven work which the women of the house had made. Here the chief persons of the Phaecians used to sit and eat and drink, for there was abundance at all seasons; and there were golden figures of young men with lighted torches in their hands, raised on pedestals, to give light by night to those who were at table. There are fifty maid servants in the house, some of whom are always grinding rich yellow grain at the mill, while others work at the loom, or sit and spin, and their shuttles go, backwards and forwards like the fluttering of aspen leaves, while the linen is so closely woven that it will turn oil. As the Phaecians are the best sailors in the world, so their women excel all others in weaving, for Minerva has taught them all manner of useful arts, and they are very intelligent.

Outside the gate of the outer court there is a large garden of about four acres with a wall all round it. It is full of beautiful trees pears, pomegranates, and the most delicious apples. There are luscious figs also, and olives in full growth. The fruits never rot nor fail all the year round, neither winter nor summer, for the air is so soft that a new crop ripens before the old has dropped. Pear grows on pear, apple on apple, and fig on fig, and so also with the grapes, for there is an excellent vineyard: on the level ground of a part of this, the grapes are being made into raisins; in another part they are being gathered; some are being trodden in the wine tubs, others further on have shed their blossom and are beginning to show fruit, others again are just changing colour. In the furthest part of the ground there are beautifully arranged beds of flowers that are in bloom all the year round. Two streams go

through it, the one turned in ducts throughout the whole garden, while the other is carried under the ground of the outer court to the house itself, and the town's people draw water from it. Such, then, were the splendours with which the gods had endowed the house of king Alcinous.

So here Ulysses stood for a while and looked about him, but when he had looked long enough he crossed the threshold and went within the precincts of the house. There he found all the chief people among the Phaecians making their drink-offerings to Mercury, which they always did the last thing before going away for the night. He went straight through the court, still hidden by the cloak of darkness in which Minerva had enveloped him, till he reached Arete and King Alcinous; then he laid his hands upon the knees of the queen, and at that moment the miraculous darkness fell away from him and he became visible. Every one was speechless with surprise at seeing a man there, but Ulysses began at once with his petition.

"Queen Arete," he exclaimed, "daughter of great Rhexenor, in my distress I humbly pray you, as also your husband and these your guests (whom may heaven prosper with long life and happiness, and may they leave their possessions to their children, and all the honours conferred upon them by the state) to help me home to my own country as soon as possible; for I have been long in trouble and away from my friends."

Then he sat down on the hearth among the ashes and they all held their peace, till presently the old hero Echeneus, who was an excellent speaker and an elder among the Phaeacians, plainly and in all honesty addressed them thus":Alcinous," said he, "it is not creditable to you that a stranger should be seen sitting among the ashes of your hearth; every one is waiting to hear what you are about to say; tell him, then, to rise and take a seat on a stool inlaid with silver, and bid your servants mix some wine and water that we may make a drink-offering to Jove the lord of thunder, who takes all well-disposed suppliants under his protection; and let the housekeeper give him some supper, of whatever there may be in the house."

When Alcinous heard this he took Ulysses by the hand, raised him from the hearth, and bade him take the seat of Laodamas, who had been sitting beside him, and was his favourite son. A maid servant then brought him water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for him to wash his hands, and she drew a clean table beside him; an upper servant brought him bread and offered him many good things of what there was in the house, and Ulysses ate and drank. Then Alcinous said to one of the servants, "Pontonous, mix a cup of wine and hand it round that we may make drink-offerings to Jove the lord of thunder, who is the protector of all well-disposed suppliants."

Pontonous then mixed wine and water, and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering. When they had made their offerings, and had drunk each as much as he was minded, Alcinous said:

"Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, hear my words. You have had your supper, so now go home to bed. To-morrow morning I shall invite a still larger number of aldermen, and will give a sacrificial banquet in honour of our guest; we can then discuss the question of his escort, and consider how we may at once send him back rejoicing to his own country without trouble or inconvenience to himself, no matter how distant it may be. We must see that he comes to no harm while on his homeward journey, but when he is once at home he will have to take the luck he was born with for better or worse like other people. It is possible, however, that the stranger is one of the immortals who has come down from heaven to visit us; but in this case the gods are departing from their usual practice, for hitherto they have made themselves perfectly clear to us when we have been offering them hecatombs. They come and sit at our feasts just like one of our selves, and if any solitary wayfarer happens to stumble upon some one or other of them, they affect no concealment, for we are as near of kin to the gods as the Cyclopes and the savage giants are."

Then Ulysses said: "Pray, Alcinous, do not take any such notion into your head. I have nothing of the immortal about me, neither in body nor mind, and most resemble those among you who are the most afflicted. Indeed, were I to tell you all that heaven has seen fit to lay upon me, you would say that I was still worse off than they are. Nevertheless, let me sup in spite of sorrow, for an empty stomach is a very importunate thing, and thrusts itself on a man's notice no matter how dire is his distress. I am in great trouble, yet it insists that I shall eat and drink, bids me lay aside all memory of my sorrows and dwell only on the due replenishing of itself. As for yourselves, do as you propose, and at break of day set about helping me to get home. I shall be content to die if I may first once more behold my property, my bondsmen, and all the greatness of my house."

Thus did he speak. Every one approved his saying, and agreed that he should have his escort inasmuch as he had spoken reasonably. Then when they had made their drink-offerings, and had drunk each as much as he was minded they went home to bed every man in his own abode, leaving Ulysses in the cloister with Arete and Alcinous while the servants were taking the things away after supper. Arete was the first to speak, for she recognized the shirt, cloak, and good clothes that Ulysses was wearing, as the

work of herself and of her maids; so she said, “Stranger, before we go any further, there is a question I should like to ask you. Who, and whence are you, and who gave you those clothes? Did you not say you had come here from beyond the sea?”

And Ulysses answered, “It would be a long story Madam, were I to relate in full the tale of my misfortunes, for the hand of heaven has been laid heavy upon me; but as regards your question, there is an island far away in the sea which is called ‘the Ogygian.’ Here dwells the cunning and powerful goddess Calypso, daughter of Atlas. She lives by herself far from all neighbours human or divine. Fortune, however, me to her hearth all desolate and alone, for Jove struck my ship with his thunderbolts, and broke it up in mid-ocean. My brave comrades were drowned every man of them, but I stuck to the keel and was carried hither and thither for the space of nine days, till at last during the darkness of the tenth night the gods brought me to the Ogygian island where the great goddess Calypso lives. She took me in and treated me with the utmost kindness; indeed she wanted to make me immortal that I might never grow old, but she could not persuade me to let her do so.

“I stayed with Calypso seven years straight on end, and watered the good clothes she gave me with my tears during the whole time; but at last when the eighth year came round she bade me depart of her own free will, either because Jove had told her she must, or because she had changed her mind. She sent me from her island on a raft, which she provisioned with abundance of bread and wine. Moreover she gave me good stout clothing, and sent me a wind that blew both warm and fair. Days seven and ten did I sail over the sea, and on the eighteenth I caught sight of the first outlines of the mountains upon your coast and glad indeed was I to set eyes upon them. Nevertheless there was still much trouble in store for me, for at this point Neptune would let me go no further, and raised a great storm against me; the sea was so terribly high that I could no longer keep to my raft, which went to pieces under the fury of the gale, and I had to swim for it, till wind and current brought me to your shores.

“There I tried to land, but could not, for it was a bad place and the waves dashed me against the rocks, so I again took to the sea and swam on till I came to a river that seemed the most likely landing place, for there were no rocks and it was sheltered from the wind. Here, then, I got out of the water and gathered my senses together again. Night was coming on, so I left the river, and went into a thicket, where I covered myself all over with leaves, and presently heaven sent me off into a very deep sleep. Sick and sorry as I was I slept among the leaves all night, and through the next day till afternoon, when I woke as the sun was westering, and saw your daughter’s maid servants playing upon the beach, and your daughter among them looking like a goddess. I besought her aid, and she proved to be of an excellent disposition, much more so than could be expected from so young a person for young people are apt to be thoughtless. She gave me plenty of bread and wine, and when she had had me washed in the river she also gave me the clothes in which you see me. Now, therefore, though it has pained me to do so, I have told you the whole truth.”

Then Alcinous said, “Stranger, it was very wrong of my daughter not to bring you on at once to my house along with the maids, seeing that she was the first person whose aid you asked.”

“Pray do not scold her,” replied Ulysses; “she is not to blame. She did tell me to follow along with the maids, but I was ashamed and afraid, for I thought you might perhaps be displeased if you saw me. Every human being is sometimes a little suspicious and irritable.”

“Stranger,” replied Alcinous, “I am not the kind of man to get angry about nothing; it is always better to be reasonable; but by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, now that I see what kind of person you are, and how much you think as I do, I wish you would stay here, marry my daughter, and become my son-in-law. If you will stay I will give you a house and an estate, but no one (heaven forbid) shall keep you here against your own wish, and that you may be sure of this I will attend to-morrow to the matter of your escort. You can sleep during the whole voyage if you like, and the men shall sail you over smooth waters either to your own home, or wherever you please, even though it be a long way further off than Euboea, which those of my people who saw it when they took yellow-haired Rhadamanthus to see Tityus the son of Gaia, tell me is the furthest of any place and yet they did the whole voyage in a single day without distressing themselves, and came back again afterwards. You will thus see how much my ships excel all others, and what magnificent oarsmen my sailors are.”

Then was Ulysses glad and prayed aloud saying, “Father Jove, grant that Alcinous may do all as he has said, for so he will win an imperishable name among mankind, and at the same time I shall return to my country.”

Thus did they converse. Then Arete told her maids to set a bed in the room that was in the gatehouse, and make it with good red rugs, and to spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for Ulysses to wear. The maids thereon went out with torches in their hands, and when they had made the bed they came up to Ulysses and said, “Rise, sir stranger, and come with us for your bed is ready,” and glad indeed was he to go to his rest.

So Ulysses slept in a bed placed in a room over the echoing gateway; but Alcinous lay in the inner part of the house, with the queen his wife by his side.

Book VIII

NOW when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Alcinous and Ulysses both rose, and Alcinous led the way to the Phaecian place of assembly, which was near the ships. When they got there they sat down side by side on a seat of polished stone, while Minerva took the form of one of Alcinous' servants, and went round the town in order to help Ulysses to get home. She went up to the citizens, man by man, and said, "Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, come to the assembly all of you and listen to the stranger who has just come off a long voyage to the house of King Alcinous; he looks like an immortal god."

With these words she made them all want to come, and they flocked to the assembly till seats and standing room were alike crowded. Every one was struck with the appearance of Ulysses, for Minerva had beautified him about the head and shoulders, making him look taller and stouter than he really was, that he might impress the Phaecians favourably as being a very remarkable man, and might come off well in the many trials of skill to which they would challenge him. Then, when they were got together, Alcinous spoke:

"Hear me," said he, "aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, that I may speak even as I am minded. This stranger, whoever he may be, has found his way to my house from somewhere or other either East or West. He wants an escort and wishes to have the matter settled. Let us then get one ready for him, as we have done for others before him; indeed, no one who ever yet came to my house has been able to complain of me for not speeding on his way soon enough. Let us draw a ship into the sea one that has never yet made a voyage and man her with two and fifty of our smartest young sailors. Then when you have made fast your oars each by his own seat, leave the ship and come to my house to prepare a feast. I will find you in everything. I am giving will these instructions to the young men who will form the crew, for as regards you aldermen and town councillors, you will join me in entertaining our guest in the cloisters. I can take no excuses, and we will have Demodocus to sing to us; for there is no bard like him whatever he may choose to sing about."

Alcinous then led the way, and the others followed after, while a servant went to fetch Demodocus. The fifty-two picked oarsmen went to the sea shore as they had been told, and when they got there they drew the ship into the water, got her mast and sails inside her, bound the oars to the thole-pins with twisted thongs of leather, all in due course, and spread the white sails aloft. They moored the vessel a little way out from land, and then came on shore and went to the house of King Alcinous. The outhouses, yards, and all the precincts were filled with crowds of men in great multitudes both old and young; and Alcinous killed them a dozen sheep, eight full grown pigs, and two oxen. These they skinned and dressed so as to provide a magnificent banquet.

A servant presently led in the famous bard Demodocus, whom the muse had dearly loved, but to whom she had given both good and evil, for though she had endowed him with a divine gift of song, she had robbed him of his eyesight. Pontonous set a seat for him among the guests, leaning it up against a bearing-post. He hung the lyre for him on a peg over his head, and showed him where he was to feel for it with his hands. He also set a fair table with a basket of victuals by his side, and a cup of wine from which he might drink whenever he was so disposed.

The company then laid their hands upon the good things that were before them, but as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, the muse inspired Demodocus to sing the feats of heroes, and more especially a matter that was then in the mouths of all men, to wit, the quarrel between Ulysses and Achilles, and the fierce words that they heaped on one another as they gat together at a banquet. But Agamemnon was glad when he heard his chieftains quarrelling with one another, for Apollo had foretold him this at Pytho when he crossed the stone floor to consult the oracle. Here was the beginning of the evil that by the will of Jove fell both Danaans and Trojans.

Thus sang the bard, but Ulysses drew his purple mantle over his head and covered his face, for he was ashamed to let the Phaeacians see that he was weeping. When the bard left off singing he wiped the tears from his eyes, uncovered his face, and, taking his cup, made a drink-offering to the gods; but when the Phaeacians pressed Demodocus to sing further, for they delighted in his lays, then Ulysses again drew his mantle over his head and wept bitterly. No one noticed his distress except Alcinous, who was sitting near him, and heard the heavy sighs that he was heaving. So he at once said, "Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, we have had enough now, both of the feast, and of the minstrelsy that is its due accompaniment; let us proceed therefore to the athletic sports, so that our guest on his return home may be able to tell his friends how much we surpass all other nations as boxers, wrestlers, jumpers, and runners."

With these words he led the way, and the others followed after. A servant hung Demodocus's lyre on its peg for him, led him out of the cloister, and set him on the same way as that along which all the chief men of the Phaeacians were going to see the sports; a crowd of several thousands of people followed them, and there were many excellent competitors for all the prizes. Acroneos, Ocyalus, Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, Anchialus, Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus, Thoon, Anabesineus, and Amphialus son of Polyneus son of Tecton. There was also Euryalus son of Naubolus, who was like Mars himself, and was the best looking man among the Phaecians except Laodamas. Three sons of Alcinous, Laodamas, Halios, and Clytoneus, competed also.

The foot races came first. The course was set out for them from the starting post, and they raised a dust upon the plain as they all flew forward at the same moment. Clytoneus came in first by a long way; he left every one else behind him by the length of the furrow that a couple of mules can plough in a fallow field. They then turned to the painful art of wrestling, and here Euryalus proved to be the best man. Amphialus excelled all the others in jumping, while at throwing the disc there was no one who could approach Elatreus. Alcinous's son Laodamas was the best boxer, and he it was who presently said, when they had all been diverted with the games, "Let us ask the stranger whether he excels in any of these sports; he seems very powerfully built; his thighs, claves, hands, and neck are of prodigious strength, nor is he at all old, but he has suffered much lately, and there is nothing like the sea for making havoc with a man, no matter how strong he is."

"You are quite right, Laodamas," replied Euryalus, "go up to your guest and speak to him about it yourself."

When Laodamas heard this he made his way into the middle of the crowd and said to Ulysses, "I hope, Sir, that you will enter yourself for some one or other of our competitions if you are skilled in any of them and you must have gone in for many a one before now. There is nothing that does any one so much credit all his life long as the showing himself a proper man with his hands and feet. Have a try therefore at something, and banish all sorrow from your mind. Your return home will not be long delayed, for the ship is already drawn into the water, and the crew is found."

Ulysses answered, "Laodamas, why do you taunt me in this way? my mind is set rather on cares than contests; I have been through infinite trouble, and am come among you now as a suppliant, praying your king and people to further me on my return home."

Then Euryalus reviled him outright and said, "I gather, then, that you are unskilled in any of the many sports that men generally delight in. I suppose you are one of those grasping traders that go about in ships as captains or merchants, and who think of nothing but of their outward freights and homeward cargoes. There does not seem to be much of the athlete about you."

"For shame, Sir," answered Ulysses, fiercely, "you are an insolent fellow so true is it that the gods do not grace all men alike in speech, person, and understanding. One man may be of weak presence, but heaven has adorned this with such a good conversation that he charms every one who sees him; his honeyed moderation carries his hearers with him so that he is leader in all assemblies of his fellows, and wherever he goes he is looked up to. Another may be as handsome as a god, but his good looks are not crowned with discretion. This is your case. No god could make a finer looking fellow than you are, but you are a fool. Your ill-judged remarks have made me exceedingly angry, and you are quite mistaken, for I excel in a great many athletic exercises; indeed, so long as I had youth and strength, I was among the first athletes of the age. Now, however, I am worn out by labour and sorrow, for I have gone through much both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea; still, in spite of all this I will compete, for your taunts have stung me to the quick."

So he hurried up without even taking his cloak off, and seized a disc, larger, more massive and much heavier than those used by the Phaeacians when disc-throwing among themselves. Then, swinging it back, he threw it from his brawny hand, and it made a humming sound in the air as he did so. The Phaeacians quailed beneath the rushing of its flight as it sped gracefully from his hand, and flew beyond any mark that had been made yet. Minerva, in the form of a man, came and marked the place where it had fallen. "A blind man, Sir," said she, "could easily tell your mark by groping for it it is so far ahead of any other. You may make your mind easy about this contest, for no Phaeacian can come near to such a throw as yours."

Ulysses was glad when he found he had a friend among the lookers-on, so he began to speak more pleasantly. "Young men," said he, "come up to that throw if you can, and I will throw another disc as heavy or even heavier. If anyone wants to have a bout with me let him come on, for I am exceedingly angry; I will box, wrestle, or run, I do not care what it is, with any man of you all except Laodamas, but not with him because I am his guest, and one cannot compete with one's own personal friend. At least I do not think it a prudent or a sensible thing for a guest to challenge his host's family at any game, especially when he is in a foreign country. He will cut the ground from under his own feet if he does; but I make no exception as regards any one else, for I want to have the matter out and know which is the best man. I am a good hand at every kind of athletic sport known among mankind. I am an

excellent archer. In battle I am always the first to bring a man down with my arrow, no matter how many more are taking aim at him alongside of me. Philoctetes was the only man who could shoot better than I could when we Achaeans were before Troy and in practice. I far excel every one else in the whole world, of those who still eat bread upon the face of the earth, but I should not like to shoot against the mighty dead, such as Hercules, or Eurytus the Cechalian-men who could shoot against the gods themselves. This in fact was how Eurytus came prematurely by his end, for Apollo was angry with him and killed him because he challenged him as an archer. I can throw a dart farther than any one else can shoot an arrow. Running is the only point in respect of which I am afraid some of the Phaecians might beat me, for I have been brought down very low at sea; my provisions ran short, and therefore I am still weak."

They all held their peace except King Alcinous, who began, "Sir, we have had much pleasure in hearing all that you have told us, from which I understand that you are willing to show your prowess, as having been displeased with some insolent remarks that have been made to you by one of our athletes, and which could never have been uttered by any one who knows how to talk with propriety. I hope you will apprehend my meaning, and will explain to any be one of your chief men who may be dining with yourself and your family when you get home, that we have an hereditary aptitude for accomplishments of all kinds. We are not particularly remarkable for our boxing, nor yet as wrestlers, but we are singularly fleet of foot and are excellent sailors. We are extremely fond of good dinners, music, and dancing; we also like frequent changes of linen, warm baths, and good beds, so now, please, some of you who are the best dancers set about dancing, that our guest on his return home may be able to tell his friends how much we surpass all other nations as sailors, runners, dancers, minstrels. Demodocus has left his lyre at my house, so run some one or other of you and fetch it for him."

On this a servant hurried off to bring the lyre from the king's house, and the nine men who had been chosen as stewards stood forward. It was their business to manage everything connected with the sports, so they made the ground smooth and marked a wide space for the dancers. Presently the servant came back with Demodocus's lyre, and he took his place in the midst of them, whereon the best young dancers in the town began to foot and trip it so nimbly that Ulysses was delighted with the merry twinkling of their feet.

Meanwhile the bard began to sing the loves of Mars and Venus, and how they first began their intrigue in the house of Vulcan. Mars made Venus many presents, and defiled King Vulcan's marriage bed, so the sun, who saw what they were about, told Vulcan. Vulcan was very angry when he heard such dreadful news, so he went to his smithy brooding mischief, got his great anvil into its place, and began to forge some chains which none could either unloose or break, so that they might stay there in that place. When he had finished his snare he went into his bedroom and festooned the bed-posts all over with chains like cobwebs; he also let many hang down from the great beam of the ceiling. Not even a god could see them, so fine and subtle were they. As soon as he had spread the chains all over the bed, he made as though he were setting out for the fair state of Lemnos, which of all places in the world was the one he was most fond of. But Mars kept no blind look out, and as soon as he saw him start, hurried off to his house, burning with love for Venus.

Now Venus was just come in from a visit to her father Jove, and was about sitting down when Mars came inside the house, an said as he took her hand in his own, "Let us go to the couch of Vulcan: he is not at home, but is gone off to Lemnos among the Sintians, whose speech is barbarous."

She was nothing loth, so they went to the couch to take their rest, whereon they were caught in the toils which cunning Vulcan had spread for them, and could neither get up nor stir hand or foot, but found too late that they were in a trap. Then Vulcan came up to them, for he had turned back before reaching Lemnos, when his scout the sun told him what was going on. He was in a furious passion, and stood in the vestibule making a dreadful noise as he shouted to all the gods.

"Father Jove," he cried, "and all you other blessed gods who live for ever, come here and see the ridiculous and disgraceful sight that I will show you. Jove's daughter Venus is always dishonouring me because I am lame. She is in love with Mars, who is handsome and clean built, whereas I am a cripple but my parents are to blame for that, not I; they ought never to have begotten me. Come and see the pair together asleep on my bed. It makes me furious to look at them. They are very fond of one another, but I do not think they will lie there longer than they can help, nor do I think that they will sleep much; there, however, they shall stay till her father has repaid me the sum I gave him for his baggage of a daughter, who is fair but not honest."

On this the gods gathered to the house of Vulcan. Earth-encircling Neptune came, and Mercury the bringer of luck, and King Apollo, but the goddesses stayed at home all of them for shame. Then the givers of all good things stood in the doorway, and the

blessed gods roared with inextinguishable laughter, as they saw how cunning Vulcan had been, whereon one would turn towards his neighbour saying:

“Ill deeds do not prosper, and the weak confound the strong. See how limping Vulcan, lame as he is, has caught Mars who is the fleetest god in heaven; and now Mars will be cast in heavy damages.”

Thus did they converse, but King Apollo said to Mercury, “Messenger Mercury, giver of good things, you would not care how strong the chains were, would you, if you could sleep with Venus?”

“King Apollo,” answered Mercury, “I only wish I might get the chance, though there were three times as many chains and you might look on, all of you, gods and goddesses, but would sleep with her if I could.”

The immortal gods burst out laughing as they heard him, but Neptune took it all seriously, and kept on imploring Vulcan to set Mars free again. “Let him go,” he cried, “and I will undertake, as you require, that he shall pay you all the damages that are held reasonable among the immortal gods.”

“Do not,” replied Vulcan, “ask me to do this; a bad man’s bond is bad security; what remedy could I enforce against you if Mars should go away and leave his debts behind him along with his chains?”

“Vulcan,” said Neptune, “if Mars goes away without paying his damages, I will pay you myself.” So Vulcan answered, “In this case I cannot and must not refuse you.”

Thereon he loosed the bonds that bound them, and as soon as they were free they scampered off, Mars to Thrace and laughter-loving Venus to Cyprus and to Paphos, where is her grove and her altar fragrant with burnt offerings. Here the Graces hathed her, and anointed her with oil of ambrosia such as the immortal gods make use of, and they clothed her in raiment of the most enchanting beauty.

Thus sang the bard, and both Ulysses and the seafaring Phaeacians were charmed as they heard him.

Then Alcinous told Laodamas and Halius to dance alone, for there was no one to compete with them. So they took a red ball which Polybus had made for them, and one of them bent himself backwards and threw it up towards the clouds, while the other jumped from off the ground and caught it with ease before it came down again. When they had done throwing the ball straight up into the air they began to dance, and at the same time kept on throwing it backwards and forwards to one another, while all the young men in the ring applauded and made a great stamping with their feet. Then Ulysses said:

“King Alcinous, you said your people were the nimblest dancers in the world, and indeed they have proved themselves to be so. I was astonished as I saw them.”

The king was delighted at this, and exclaimed to the Phaecians “Aldermen and town councillors, our guest seems to be a person of singular judgement; let us give him such proof of our hospitality as he may reasonably expect. There are twelve chief men among you, and counting myself there are thirteen; contribute, each of you, a clean cloak, a shirt, and a talent of fine gold; let us give him all this in a lump down at once, so that when he gets his supper he may do so with a light heart. As for Euryalus he will have to make a formal apology and a present too, for he has been rude.”

Thus did he speak. The others all of them applauded his saying, and sent their servants to fetch the presents. Then Euryalus said, “King Alcinous, I will give the stranger all the satisfaction you require. He shall have sword, which is of bronze, all but the hilt, which is of silver. I will also give him the scabbard of newly sawn ivory into which it fits. It will be worth a great deal to him.”

As he spoke he placed the sword in the hands of Ulysses and said, “Good luck to you, father stranger; if anything has been said amiss may the winds blow it away with them, and may heaven grant you a safe return, for I understand you have been long away from home, and have gone through much hardship.”

To which Ulysses answered, “Good luck to you too my friend, and may the gods grant you every happiness. I hope you will not miss the sword you have given me along with your apology.”

With these words he girded the sword about his shoulders and towards sundown the presents began to make their appearance, as the servants of the donors kept bringing them to the house of King Alcinous; here his sons received them, and placed them under their mother’s charge. Then Alcinous led the way to the house and bade his guests take their seats.

"Wife," said he, turning to Queen Arete, "Go, fetch the best chest we have, and put a clean cloak and shirt in it. Also, set a copper on the fire and heat some water; our guest will take a warm bath; see also to the careful packing of the presents that the noble Phaeacians have made him; he will thus better enjoy both his supper and the singing that will follow. I shall myself give him this golden goblet which is of exquisite workmanship that he may be reminded of me for the rest of his life whenever he makes a drink-offering to Jove, or to any of the gods."

Then Arete told her maids to set a large tripod upon the fire as fast as they could, whereon they set a tripod full of bath water on to a clear fire; they threw on sticks to make it blaze, and the water became hot as the flame played about the belly of the tripod. Meanwhile Arete brought a magnificent chest her own room, and inside it she packed all the beautiful presents of gold and raiment which the Phaeacians had brought. Lastly she added a cloak and a good shirt from Alcinous, and said to Ulysses:

"See to the lid yourself, and have the whole bound round at once, for fear any one should rob you by the way when you are asleep in your ship."

When Ulysses heard this he put the lid on the chest and made it fast with a bond that Circe had taught him. He had done so before an upper servant told him to come to the bath and wash himself. He was very glad of a warm bath, for he had had no one to wait upon him ever since he left the house of Calypso, who as long as he remained with her had taken as good care of him as though he had been a god. When the servants had done washing and anointing him with oil, and had given him a clean cloak and shirt, he left the bath room and joined the guests who were sitting over their wine. Lovely Nausicaa stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof if the cloister, and admired him as she saw him pass. "Farewell stranger," said she, "do not forget me when you are safe at home again, for it is to me first that you owe a ransom for having saved your life."

And Ulysses said, "Nausicaa, daughter of great Alcinous, may Jove the mighty husband of Juno, grant that I may reach my home; so shall I bless you as my guardian angel all my days, for it was you who saved me."

When he had said this, he seated himself beside Alcinous. Supper was then served, and the wine was mixed for drinking. A servant led in the favourite bard Demodocus, and set him in the midst of the company, near one of the bearing-posts supporting the cloister, that he might lean against it. Then Ulysses cut off a piece of roast pork with plenty of fat (for there was abundance left on the joint) and said to a servant, "Take this piece of pork over to Demodocus and tell him to eat it; for all the pain his lays may cause me I will salute him none the less; bards are honoured and respected throughout the world, for the muse teaches them their songs and loves them."

The servant carried the pork in his fingers over to Demodocus, who took it and was very much pleased. They then laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had to eat and drink, Ulysses said to Demodocus, "Demodocus, there is no one in the world whom I admire more than I do you. You must have studied under the Muse, Jove's daughter, and under Apollo, so accurately do you sing the return of the Achaeans with all their sufferings and adventures. If you were not there yourself, you must have heard it all from some one who was. Now, however, change your song and tell us of the wooden horse which Epeus made with the assistance of Minerva, and which Ulysses got by stratagem into the fort of Troy after freighting it with the men who afterwards sacked the city. If you will sing this tale aright I will tell all the world how magnificently heaven has endowed you."

The bard inspired of heaven took up the story at the point where some of the Argives set fire to their tents and sailed away while others, hidden within the horse, were waiting with Ulysses in the Trojan place of assembly. For the Trojans themselves had drawn the horse into their fortress, and it stood there while they sat in council round it, and were in three minds as to what they should do. Some were for breaking it up then and there; others would have it dragged to the top of the rock on which the fortress stood, and then thrown down the precipice; while yet others were for letting it remain as an offering and propitiation for the gods. And this was how they settled it in the end, for the city was doomed when it took in that horse, within which were all the bravest of the Argives waiting to bring death and destruction on the Trojans. Anon he sang how the sons of the Achaeans issued from the horse, and sacked the town, breaking out from their ambuscade. He sang how they over ran the city hither and thither and ravaged it, and how Ulysses went raging like Mars along with Menelaus to the house of Deiphobus. It was there that the fight raged most furiously, nevertheless by Minerva's help he was victorious.

All this he told, but Ulysses was overcome as he heard him, and his cheeks were wet with tears. He wept as a woman weeps when she throws herself on the body of her husband who has fallen before his own city and people, fighting bravely in defence of his home and children. She screams aloud and flings her arms about him as he lies gasping for breath and dying, but her enemies beat her from behind about the back and shoulders, and carry her off into slavery, to a life of labour and sorrow, and the beauty fades

from her cheeks even so piteously did Ulysses weep, but none of those present perceived his tears except Alcinous, who was sitting near him, and could hear the sobs and sighs that he was heaving. The king, therefore, at once rose and said:

“Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, let Demodocus cease his song, for there are those present who do not seem to like it. From the moment that we had done supper and Demodocus began to sing, our guest has been all the time groaning and lamenting. He is evidently in great trouble, so let the bard leave off, that we may all enjoy ourselves, hosts and guest alike. This will be much more as it should be, for all these festivities, with the escort and the presents that we are making with so much good will, are wholly in his honour, and any one with even a moderate amount of right feeling knows that he ought to treat a guest and a suppliant as though he were his own brother.

“Therefore, Sir, do you on your part affect no more concealment nor reserve in the matter about which I shall ask you; it will be more polite in you to give me a plain answer; tell me the name by which your father and mother over yonder used to call you, and by which you were known among your neighbours and fellow-citizens. There is no one, neither rich nor poor, who is absolutely without any name whatever, for people’s fathers and mothers give them names as soon as they are born. Tell me also your country, nation, and city, that our ships may shape their purpose accordingly and take you there. For the Phaeacians have no pilots; their vessels have no rudders as those of other nations have, but the ships themselves understand what it is that we are thinking about and want; they know all the cities and countries in the whole world, and can traverse the sea just as well even when it is covered with mist and cloud, so that there is no danger of being wrecked or coming to any harm. Still I do remember hearing my father say that Neptune was angry with us for being too easy-going in the matter of giving people escorts. He said that one of these days he should wreck a ship of ours as it was returning from having escorted some one, and bury our city under a high mountain. This is what my used to say, but whether the god will carry out his threat or no is a matter which he will decide for himself.

“And now, tell me and tell me true. Where have you been wandering, and in what countries have you travelled? Tell us of the peoples themselves, and of their cities who were hostile, savage and uncivilized, and who, on the other hand, hospitable and humane. Tell us also why you are made unhappy on hearing about the return of the Argive Danaans from Troy. The gods arranged all this, and sent them their misfortunes in order that future generations might have something to sing about. Did you lose some brave kinsman of your wife’s when you were before Troy? a son-in-law or father-in-law which are the nearest relations a man has outside his own flesh and blood? or was it some brave and kindly-natured comrade for a good friend is as dear to a man as his own brother?”

Book IX

AND ULYSSES answered, “King Alcinous, it is a good thing to hear a bard with such a divine voice as this man has. There is nothing better or more delightful than when a whole people make merry together, with the guests sitting orderly to listen, while the table is loaded with bread and meats, and the cup-bearer draws wine and fills his cup for every man. This is indeed as fair a sight as a man can see. Now, however, since you are inclined to ask the story of my sorrows, and rekindle my own sad memories in respect of them, I do not know how to begin, nor yet how to continue and conclude my tale, for the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me.

“Firstly, then, I will tell you my name that you too may know it, and one day, if I outlive this time of sorrow, may become my there guests though I live so far away from all of you. I am Ulysses son of Laertes, reknowned among mankind for all manner of subtlety, so that my fame ascends to heaven. I live in Ithaca, where there is a high mountain called Neritum, covered with forests; and not far from it there is a group of islands very near to one another Dulichium, Same, and the wooded island of Zacynthus. It lies squat on the horizon, all highest up in the sea towards the sunset, while the others lie away from it towards dawn. It is a rugged island, but it breeds brave men, and my eyes know none that they better love to look upon. The goddess Calypso kept me with her in her cave, and wanted me to marry her, as did also the cunning Aeaean goddess Circe; but they could neither of them persuade me, for there is nothing dearer to a man than his own country and his parents, and however splendid a home he may have in a foreign country, if it be far from father or mother, he does not care about it. Now, however, I will tell you of the many hazardous adventures which by Jove’s will I met with on my return from Troy.

“When I had set sail thence the wind took me first to Ismarus, which is the city of the Cicons. There I sacked the town and put the people to the sword. We took their wives and also much booty, which we divided equitably amongst us, so that none might have reason to complain. I then said that we had better make off at once, but my men very foolishly would not obey me, so they stayed there drinking much wine and killing great numbers of sheep and oxen on the sea shore. Meanwhile the Cicons cried out for help to

other Cicons who lived inland. These were more in number, and stronger, and they were more skilled in the art of war, for they could fight, either from chariots or on foot as the occasion served; in the morning, therefore, they came as thick as leaves and bloom in summer, and the hand of heaven was against us, so that we were hard pressed. They set the battle in array near the ships, and the hosts aimed their bronze-shod spears at one another. So long as the day waxed and it was still morning, we held our own against them, though they were more in number than we; but as the sun went down, towards the time when men loose their oxen, the Cicons got the better of us, and we lost half a dozen men from every ship we had; so we got away with those that were left.

“Thence we sailed onward with sorrow in our hearts, but glad to have escaped death though we had lost our comrades, nor did we leave till we had thrice invoked each one of the poor fellows who had perished by the hands of the Cicons. Then Jove raised the North wind against us till it blew a hurricane, so that land and sky were hidden in thick clouds, and night sprang forth out of the heavens. We let the ships run before the gale, but the force of the wind tore our sails to tatters, so we took them down for fear of shipwreck, and rowed our hardest towards the land. There we lay two days and two nights suffering much alike from toil and distress of mind, but on the morning of the third day we again raised our masts, set sail, and took our places, letting the wind and steersmen direct our ship. I should have got home at that time unharmed had not the North wind and the currents been against me as I was doubling Cape Malea, and set me off my course hard by the island of Cythera.

“I was driven thence by foul winds for a space of nine days upon the sea, but on the tenth day we reached the land of the Lotus-eater, who live on a food that comes from a kind of flower. Here we landed to take in fresh water, and our crews got their mid-day meal on the shore near the ships. When they had eaten and drunk I sent two of my company to see what manner of men the people of the place might be, and they had a third man under them. They started at once, and went about among the Lotus-eaters, who did them no hurt, but gave them to eat of the lotus, which was so delicious that those who ate of it left off caring about home, and did not even want to go back and say what had happened to them, but were for staying and munching lotus with the Lotus-eater without thinking further of their return; nevertheless, though they wept bitterly I forced them back to the ships and made them fast under the benches. Then I told the rest to go on board at once, lest any of them should taste of the lotus and leave off wanting to get home, so they took their places and smote the grey sea with their oars.

“We sailed hence, always in much distress, till we came to the land of the lawless and inhuman Cyclopes. Now the Cyclopes neither plant nor plough, but trust in providence, and live on such wheat, barley, and grapes as grow wild without any kind of tillage, and their wild grapes yield them wine as the sun and the rain may grow them. They have no laws nor assemblies of the people, but live in caves on the tops of high mountains; each is lord and master in his family, and they take no account of their neighbours.

“Now off their harbour there lies a wooded and fertile island not quite close to the land of the Cyclopes, but still not far. It is overrun with wild goats, that breed there in great numbers and are never disturbed by foot of man; for sportsmen who as a rule will suffer so much hardship in forest or among mountain precipices do not go there, nor yet again is it ever ploughed or fed down, but it lies a wilderness untilled and unsown from year to year, and has no living thing upon it but only goats. For the Cyclopes have no ships, nor yet shipwrights who could make ships for them; they cannot therefore go from city to city, or sail over the sea to one another’s country as people who have ships can do; if they had had these they would have colonized the island, for it is a very good one, and would yield everything in due season. There are meadows that in some places come right down to the sea shore, well watered and full of luscious grass; grapes would do there excellently; there is level land for ploughing, and it would always yield heavily at harvest time, for the soil is deep. There is a good harbour where no cables are wanted, nor yet anchors, nor need a ship be moored, but all one has to do is to beach one’s vessel and stay there till the wind becomes fair for putting out to sea again. At the head of the harbour there is a spring of clear water coming out of a cave, and there are poplars growing all round it.

“Here we entered, but so dark was the night that some god must have brought us in, for there was nothing whatever to be seen. A thick mist hung all round our ships; the moon was hidden behind a mass of clouds so that no one could have seen the island if he had looked for it, nor were there any breakers to tell us we were close in shore before we found ourselves upon the land itself; when, however, we had beached the ships, we took down the sails, went ashore and camped upon the beach till daybreak.

“When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, we admired the island and wandered all over it, while the nymphs Jove’s daughters roused the wild goats that we might get some meat for our dinner. On this we fetched our spears and bows and arrows from the ships, and dividing ourselves into three bands began to shoot the goats. Heaven sent us excellent sport; I had twelve ships with me, and each ship got nine goats, while my own ship had ten; thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we ate and drank our fill and we had plenty of wine left, for each one of us had taken many jars full when we sacked the

city of the Cicons, and this had not yet run out. While we were feasting we kept turning our eyes towards the land of the Cyclopes, which was hard by, and saw the smoke of their stubble fires. We could almost fancy we heard their voices and the bleating of their sheep and goats, but when the sun went down and it came on dark, we camped down upon the beach, and next morning I called a council.

"'Stay here, my brave fellows,' said I, 'all the rest of you, while I go with my ship and exploit these people myself: I want to see if they are uncivilized savages, or a hospitable and humane race.'

"I went on board, bidding my men to do so also and loose the hawsers; so they took their places and smote the grey sea with their oars. When we got to the land, which was not far, there, on the face of a cliff near the sea, we saw a great cave overhung with laurels. It was a station for a great many sheep and goats, and outside there was a large yard, with a high wall round it made of stones built into the ground and of trees both pine and oak. This was the abode of a huge monster who was then away from home shepherding his flocks. He would have nothing to do with other people, but led the life of an outlaw. He was a horrid creature, not like a human being at all, but resembling rather some crag that stands out boldly against the sky on the top of a high mountain.

"I told my men to draw the ship ashore, and stay where they were, all but the twelve best among them, who were to go along with myself. I also took a goatskin of sweet black wine which had been given me by Maron, Apollo son of Euanthes, who was priest of Apollo the patron god of Ismarus, and lived within the wooded precincts of the temple. When we were sacking the city we respected him, and spared his life, as also his wife and child; so he made me some presents of great value seven talents of fine gold, and a bowl of silver, with twelve jars of sweet wine, unblended, and of the most exquisite flavour. Not a man nor maid in the house knew about it, but only himself, his wife, and one housekeeper: when he drank it he mixed twenty parts of water to one of wine, and yet the fragrance from the mixing-bowl was so exquisite that it was impossible to refrain from drinking. I filled a large skin with this wine, and took a wallet full of provisions with me, for my mind misgave me that I might have to deal with some savage who would be of great strength, and would respect neither right nor law.

"We soon reached his cave, but he was out shepherding, so we went inside and took stock of all that we could see. His cheese-racks were loaded with cheeses, and he had more lambs and kids than his pens could hold. They were kept in separate flocks; first there were the hoggets, then the oldest of the younger lambs and lastly the very young ones all kept apart from one another; as for his dairy, all the vessels, bowls, and milk pails into which he milked, were swimming with whey. When they saw all this, my men begged me to let them first steal some cheeses, and make off with them to the ship; they would then return, drive down the lambs and kids, put them on board and sail away with them. It would have been indeed better if we had done so but I would not listen to them, for I wanted to see the owner himself, in the hope that he might give me a present. When, however, we saw him my poor men found him ill to deal with.

"We lit a fire, offered some of the cheeses in sacrifice, ate others of them, and then sat waiting till the Cyclops should come in with his sheep. When he came, he brought in with him a huge load of dry firewood to light the fire for his supper, and this he flung with such a noise on to the floor of his cave that we hid ourselves for fear at the far end of the cavern. Meanwhile he drove all the ewes inside, as well as the she-goats that he was going to milk, leaving the males, both rams and he-goats, outside in the yards. Then he rolled a huge stone to the mouth of the cave so huge that two and twenty strong four-wheeled waggons would not be enough to draw it from its place against the doorway. When he had so done he sat down and milked his ewes and goats, all in due course, and then let each of them have her own young. He curdled half the milk and set it aside in wicker strainers, but the other half he poured into bowls that he might drink it for his supper. When he had got through with all his work, he lit the fire, and then caught sight of us, whereon he said:

"'Strangers, who are you? Where do sail from? Are you traders, or do you sail the as rovers, with your hands against every man, and every man's hand against you?'

"We were frightened out of our senses by his loud voice and monstrous form, but I managed to say, 'We are Achaeans on our way home from Troy, but by the will of Jove, and stress of weather, we have been driven far out of our course. We are the people of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, who has won infinite renown throughout the whole world, by sacking so great a city and killing so many people. We therefore humbly pray you to show us some hospitality, and otherwise make us such presents as visitors may reasonably expect. May your excellency fear the wrath of heaven, for we are your suppliants, and Jove takes all respectable travellers under his protection, for he is the avenger of all suppliants and foreigners in distress.'

“To this he gave me but a pitiless answer, ‘Stranger,’ said he, ‘you are a fool, or else you know nothing of this country. Talk to me, indeed, about fearing the gods or shunning their anger? We Cyclopes do not care about Jove or any of your blessed gods, for we are ever so much stronger than they. I shall not spare either yourself or your companions out of any regard for Jove, unless I am in the humour for doing so. And now tell me where you made your ship fast when you came on shore. Was it round the point, or is she lying straight off the land?’

“He said this to draw me out, but I was too cunning to be caught in that way, so I answered with a lie; ‘Neptune,’ said I, ‘sent my ship on to the rocks at the far end of your country, and wrecked it. We were driven on to them from the open sea, but I and those who are with me escaped the jaws of death.’

“The cruel wretch vouchsafed me not one word of answer, but with a sudden clutch he gripped up two of my men at once and dashed them down upon the ground as though they had been puppies. Their brains were shed upon the ground, and the earth was wet with their blood. Then he tore them limb from limb and supped upon them. He gobbled them up like a lion in the wilderness, flesh, bones, marrow, and entrails, without leaving anything uneaten. As for us, we wept and lifted up our hands to heaven on seeing such a horrid sight, for we did not know what else to do; but when the Cyclops had filled his huge paunch, and had washed down his meal of human flesh with a drink of neat milk, he stretched himself full length upon the ground among his sheep, and went to sleep. I was at first inclined to seize my sword, draw it, and drive it into his vitals, but I reflected that if I did we should all certainly be lost, for we should never be able to shift the stone which the monster had put in front of the door. So we stayed sobbing and sighing where we were till morning came.

“When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, he again lit his fire, milked his goats and ewes, all quite rightly, and then let each have her own young one; as soon as he had got through with all his work, he clutched up two more of my men, and began eating them for his morning’s meal. Presently, with the utmost ease, he rolled the stone away from the door and drove out his sheep, but he at once put it back again as easily as though he were merely clapping the lid on to a quiver full of arrows. As soon as he had done so he shouted, and cried ‘Shoo, shoo,’ after his sheep to drive them on to the mountain; so I was left to scheme some way of taking my revenge and covering myself with glory.

“In the end I deemed it would be the best plan to do as follows. The Cyclops had a great club which was lying near one of the sheep pens; it was of green olive wood, and he had cut it intending to use it for a staff as soon as it should be dry. It was so huge that we could only compare it to the mast of a twenty-oared merchant vessel of large burden, and able to venture out into open sea. I went up to this club and cut off about six feet of it; I then gave this piece to the men and told them to fine it evenly off at one end, which they proceeded to do, and lastly I brought it to a point myself, charring the end in the fire to make it harder. When I had done this I hid it under dung, which was lying about all over the cave, and told the men to cast lots which of them should venture along with myself to lift it and bore it into the monster’s eye while he was asleep. The lot fell upon the very four whom I should have chosen, and I myself made five. In the evening the wretch came back from shepherding, and drove his flocks into the cave this time driving them all inside, and not leaving any in the yards; I suppose some fancy must have taken him, or a god must have prompted him to do so. As soon as he had put the stone back to its place against the door, he sat down, milked his ewes and his goats all quite rightly, and then let each have her own young one; when he had got through with all this work, he gripped up two more of my men, and made his supper off them. So I went up to him with an ivy-wood bowl of black wine in my hands:

“’Look here, Cyclops,’ said I, you have been eating a great deal of man’s flesh, so take this and drink some wine, that you may see what kind of liquor we had on board my ship. I was bringing it to you as a drink-offering, in the hope that you would take compassion upon me and further me on my way home, whereas all you do is to go on ramping and raving most intolerably. You ought to be ashamed yourself; how can you expect people to come see you any more if you treat them in this way?’

“He then took the cup and drank. He was so delighted with the taste of the wine that he begged me for another bowl full. ‘Be so kind,’ he said, ‘as to give me some more, and tell me your name at once. I want to make you a present that you will be glad to have. We have wine even in this country, for our soil grows grapes and the sun ripens them, but this drinks like nectar and ambrosia all in one.’

“I then gave him some more; three times did I fill the bowl for him, and three times did he drain it without thought or heed; then, when I saw that the wine had got into his head, I said to him as plausibly as I could: ‘Cyclops, you ask my name and I will tell it you; give me, therefore, the present you promised me; my name is Noman; this is what my father and mother and my friends have always called me.’

“But the cruel wretch said, ‘Then I will eat all Noman’s comrades before Noman himself, and will keep Noman for the last. This is the present that I will make him.’

As he spoke he reeled, and fell sprawling face upwards on the ground. His great neck hung heavily backwards and a deep sleep took hold upon him. Presently he turned sick, and threw up both wine and the gobbets of human flesh on which he had been gorging, for he was very drunk. Then I thrust the beam of wood far into the embers to heat it, and encouraged my men lest any of them should turn faint-hearted. When the wood, green though it was, was about to blaze, I drew it out of the fire glowing with heat, and my men gathered round me, for heaven had filled their hearts with courage. We drove the sharp end of the beam into the monster’s eye, and bearing upon it with all my weight I kept turning it round and round as though I were boring a hole in a ship’s plank with an auger, which two men with a wheel and strap can keep on turning as long as they choose. Even thus did we bore the red hot beam into his eye, till the boiling blood bubbled all over it as we worked it round and round, so that the steam from the burning eyeball scalded his eyelids and eyebrows, and the roots of the eye sputtered in the fire. As a blacksmith plunges an axe or hatchet into cold water to temper it for it is this that gives strength to the iron and it makes a great hiss as he does so, even thus did the Cyclops’ eye hiss round the beam of olive wood, and his hideous yells made the cave ring again. We ran away in a fright, but he plucked the beam all besmirched with gore from his eye, and hurled it from him in a frenzy of rage and pain, shouting as he did so to the other Cyclopes who lived on the bleak headlands near him; so they gathered from all quarters round his cave when they heard him crying, and asked what was the matter with him.

“’What ails you, Polyphemus,’ said they, ‘that you make such a noise, breaking the stillness of the night, and preventing us from being able to sleep? Surely no man is carrying off your sheep? Surely no man is trying to kill you either by fraud or by force?

“But Polyphemus shouted to them from inside the cave, ‘Noman is killing me by fraud! Noman is killing me by force!’

“’Then,’ said they, ‘if no man is attacking you, you must be ill; when Jove makes people ill, there is no help for it, and you had better pray to your father Neptune.’

“Then they went away, and I laughed inwardly at the success of my clever stratagem, but the Cyclops, groaning and in an agony of pain, felt about with his hands till he found the stone and took it from the door; then he sat in the doorway and stretched his hands in front of it to catch anyone going out with the sheep, for he thought I might be foolish enough to attempt this.

“As for myself I kept on puzzling to think how I could best save my own life and those of my companions; I schemed and schemed, as one who knows that his life depends upon it, for the danger was very great. In the end I deemed that this plan would be the best. The male sheep were well grown, and carried a heavy black fleece, so I bound them noiselessly in threes together, with some of the withies on which the wicked monster used to sleep. There was to be a man under the middle sheep, and the two on either side were to cover him, so that there were three sheep to each man. As for myself there was a ram finer than any of the others, so I caught hold of him by the back, esconced myself in the thick wool under his belly, and flung on patiently to his fleece, face upwards, keeping a firm hold on it all the time.

“Thus, then, did we wait in great fear of mind till morning came, but when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, the male sheep hurried out to feed, while the ewes remained bleating about the pens waiting to be milked, for their udders were full to bursting; but their master in spite of all his pain felt the backs of all the sheep as they stood upright, without being sharp enough to find out that the men were underneath their bellies. As the ram was going out, last of all, heavy with its fleece and with the weight of my crafty self; Polyphemus laid hold of it and said:

“’My good ram, what is it that makes you the last to leave my cave this morning? You are not wont to let the ewes go before you, but lead the mob with a run whether to flowery mead or bubbling fountain, and are the first to come home again at night; but now you lag last of all. Is it because you know your master has lost his eye, and are sorry because that wicked Noman and his horrid crew have got him down in his drink and blinded him? But I will have his life yet. If you could understand and talk, you would tell me where the wretch is hiding, and I would dash his brains upon the ground till they flew all over the cave. I should thus have some satisfaction for the harm a this no-good Noman has done me.’

“As spoke he drove the ram outside, but when we were a little way out from the cave and yards, I first got from under the ram’s belly, and then freed my comrades; as for the sheep, which were very fat, by constantly heading them in the right direction we managed to drive them down to the ship. The crew rejoiced greatly at seeing those of us who had escaped death, but wept for the others whom the Cyclops had killed. However, I made signs to them by nodding and frowning that they were to hush their crying,

and told them to get all the sheep on board at once and put out to sea; so they went aboard, took their places, and smote the grey sea with their oars. Then, when I had got as far out as my voice would reach, I began to jeer at the Cyclops.

"'Cyclops,' said I, 'you should have taken better measure of your man before eating up his comrades in your cave. You wretch, eat up your visitors in your own house? You might have known that your sin would find you out, and now Jove and the other gods have punished you.'

"He got more and more furious as he heard me, so he tore the top from off a high mountain, and flung it just in front of my ship so that it was within a little of hitting the end of the rudder. The sea quaked as the rock fell into it, and the wash of the wave it raised carried us back towards the mainland, and forced us towards the shore. But I snatched up a long pole and kept the ship off, making signs to my men by nodding my head, that they must row for their lives, whereon they laid out with a will. When we had got twice as far as we were before, I was for jeering at the Cyclops again, but the men begged and prayed of me to hold my tongue.

"'Do not,' they exclaimed, 'be mad enough to provoke this savage creature further; he has thrown one rock at us already which drove us back again to the mainland, and we made sure it had been the death of us; if he had then heard any further sound of voices he would have pounded our heads and our ship's timbers into a jelly with the rugged rocks he would have heaved at us, for he can throw them a long way.'

"But I would not listen to them, and shouted out to him in my rage, 'Cyclops, if any one asks you who it was that put your eye out and spoiled your beauty, say it was the valiant warrior Ulysses, son of Laertes, who lives in Ithaca.'

"On this he groaned, and cried out, 'Alas, alas, then the old prophecy about me is coming true. There was a prophet here, at one time, a man both brave and of great stature, Telemus son of Eurymus, who was an excellent seer, and did all the prophesying for the Cyclopes till he grew old; he told me that all this would happen to me some day, and said I should lose my sight by the hand of Ulysses. I have been all along expecting some one of imposing presence and superhuman strength, whereas he turns out to be a little insignificant weakling, who has managed to blind my eye by taking advantage of me in my drink; come here, then, Ulysses, that I may make you presents to show my hospitality, and urge Neptune to help you forward on your journey for Neptune and I are father and son. He, if he so will, shall heal me, which no one else neither god nor man can do.'

"Then I said, 'I wish I could be as sure of killing you outright and sending you down to the house of Hades, as I am that it will take more than Neptune to cure that eye of yours.'

"On this he lifted up his hands to the firmament of heaven and prayed, saying, 'Hear me, great Neptune; if I am indeed your own true-begotten son, grant that Ulysses may never reach his home alive; or if he must get back to his friends at last, let him do so late and in sore plight after losing all his men [let him reach his home in another man's ship and find trouble in his house.']

"Thus did he pray, and Neptune heard his prayer. Then he picked up a rock much larger than the first, swung it aloft and hurled it with prodigious force. It fell just short of the ship, but was within a little of hitting the end of the rudder. The sea quaked as the rock fell into it, and the wash of the wave it raised drove us onwards on our way towards the shore of the island.

"When at last we got to the island where we had left the rest of our ships, we found our comrades lamenting us, and anxiously awaiting our return. We ran our vessel upon the sands and got out of her on to the sea shore; we also landed the Cyclops' sheep, and divided them equitably amongst us so that none might have reason to complain. As for the ram, my companions agreed that I should have it as an extra share; so I sacrificed it on the sea shore, and burned its thigh bones to Jove, who is the lord of all. But he heeded not my sacrifice, and only thought how he might destroy my ships and my comrades.

"Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we feasted our fill on meat and drink, but when the sun went down and it came on dark, we camped upon the beach. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, I bade my men on board and loose the hawsers. Then they took their places and smote the grey sea with their oars; so we sailed on with sorrow in our hearts, but glad to have escaped death though we had lost our comrades

Book X

THENCE we went on to the Aeoli island where lives Aeolus son of Hippotas, dear to the immortal gods. It is an island that floats (as it were) upon the sea, iron bound with a wall that girds it. Now, Aeolus has six daughters and six lusty sons, so he made the sons marry the daughters, and they all live with their dear father and mother, feasting and enjoying every conceivable kind of luxury. All day long the atmosphere of the house is loaded with the savour of roasting meats till it groans again, yard and all; but by night they

sleep on their well-made bedsteads, each with his own wife between the blankets. These were the people among whom we had now come.

“Aeolus entertained me for a whole month asking me questions all the time about Troy, the Argive fleet, and the return of the Achaeans. I told him exactly how everything had happened, and when I said I must go, and asked him to further me on my way, he made no sort of difficulty, but set about doing so at once. Moreover, he flayed me a prime ox-hide to hold the ways of the roaring winds, which he shut up in the hide as in a sack for Jove had made him captain over the winds, and he could stir or still each one of them according to his own pleasure. He put the sack in the ship and bound the mouth so tightly with a silver thread that not even a breath of a side-wind could blow from any quarter. The West wind which was fair for us did he alone let blow as it chose; but it all came to nothing, for we were lost through our own folly.

“Nine days and nine nights did we sail, and on the tenth day our native land showed on the horizon. We got so close in that we could see the stubble fires burning, and I, being then dead beat, fell into a light sleep, for I had never let the rudder out of my own hands, that we might get home the faster. On this the men fell to talking among themselves, and said I was bringing back gold and silver in the sack that Aeolus had given me. ‘Bless my heart,’ would one turn to his neighbour, saying, ‘how this man gets honoured and makes friends to whatever city or country he may go. See what fine prizes he is taking home from Troy, while we, who have travelled just as far as he has, come back with hands as empty as we set out with and now Aeolus has given him ever so much more. Quick let us see what it all is, and how much gold and silver there is in the sack he gave him.’

“Thus they talked and evil counsels prevailed. They loosed the sack, whereupon the wind flew howling forth and raised a storm that carried us weeping out to sea and away from our own country. Then I awoke, and knew not whether to throw myself into the sea or to live on and make the best of it; but I bore it, covered myself up, and lay down in the ship, while the men lamented bitterly as the fierce winds bore our fleet back to the Aeolian island.

“When we reached it we went ashore to take in water, and dined hard by the ships. Immediately after dinner I took a herald and one of my men and went straight to the house of Aeolus, where I found him feasting with his wife and family; so we sat down as suppliants on the threshold. They were astounded when they saw us and said, ‘Ulysses, what brings you here? What god has been ill-treating you? We took great pains to further you on your way home to Ithaca, or wherever it was that you wanted to go to.’

“Thus did they speak, but I answered sorrowfully, ‘My men have undone me; they, and cruel sleep, have ruined me. My friends, mend me this mischief, for you can if you will.’

“I spoke as movingly as I could, but they said nothing, till their father answered, ‘Vilest of mankind, get you gone at once out of the island; him whom heaven hates will I in no wise help. Be off, for you come here as one abhorred of heaven. “And with these words he sent me sorrowing from his door.

“Thence we sailed sadly on till the men were worn out with long and fruitless rowing, for there was no longer any wind to help them. Six days, night and day did we toil, and on the seventh day we reached the rocky stronghold of Lamus Telepylus, the city of the Laestrygonians, where the shepherd who is driving in his sheep and goats [to be milked] salutes him who is driving out his flock [to feed] and this last answers the salute. In that country a man who could do without sleep might earn double wages, one as a herdsman of cattle, and another as a shepherd, for they work much the same by night as they do by day.

“When we reached the harbour we found it land-locked under steep cliffs, with a narrow entrance between two headlands. My captains took all their ships inside, and made them fast close to one another, for there was never so much as a breath of wind inside, but it was always dead calm. I kept my own ship outside, and moored it to a rock at the very end of the point; then I climbed a high rock to reconnoitre, but could see no sign neither of man nor cattle, only some smoke rising from the ground. So I sent two of my company with an attendant to find out what sort of people the inhabitants were.

“The men when they got on shore followed a level road by which the people draw their firewood from the mountains into the town, till presently they met a young woman who had come outside to fetch water, and who was daughter to a Laestrygonian named Antiphates. She was going to the fountain Artacia from which the people bring in their water, and when my men had come close up to her, they asked her who the king of that country might be, and over what kind of people he ruled; so she directed them to her father’s house, but when they got there they found his wife to be a giantess as huge as a mountain, and they were horrified at the sight of her.

“She at once called her husband Antiphates from the place of assembly, and forthwith he set about killing my men. He snatched up one of them, and began to make his dinner off him then and there, whereon the other two ran back to the ships as fast as ever they could. But Antiphates raised a hue and cry after them, and thousands of sturdy Laestrygonians sprang up from every quarter ogres, not men. They threw vast rocks at us from the cliffs as though they had been mere stones, and I heard the horrid sound of the ships crunching up against one another, and the death cries of my men, as the Laestrygonians speared them like fishes and took them home to eat them. While they were thus killing my men within the harbour I drew my sword, cut the cable of my own ship, and told my men to row with alf their might if they too would not fare like the rest; so they laid out for their lives, and we were thankful enough when we got into open water out of reach of the rocks they hurled at us. As for the others there was not one of them left.

“Thence we sailed sadly on, glad to have escaped death, though we had lost our comrades, and came to the Aeaean island, where Circe lives a great and cunning goddess who is own sister to the magician Aeetes for they are both children of the sun by Perse, who is daughter to Oceanus. We brought our ship into a safe harbour without a word, for some god guided us thither, and having landed we there for two days and two nights, worn out in body and mind. When the morning of the third day came I took my spear and my sword, and went away from the ship to reconnoitre, and see if I could discover signs of human handiwork, or hear the sound of voices. Climbing to the top of a high look-out I espied the smoke of Circe’s house rising upwards amid a dense forest of trees, and when I saw this I doubted whether, having seen the smoke, I would not go on at once and find out more, but in the end I deemed it best to go back to the ship, give the men their dinners, and send some of them instead of going myself.

“When I had nearly got back to the ship some god took pity upon my solitude, and sent a fine antlered stag right into the middle of my path. He was coming down his pasture in the forest to drink of the river, for the heat of the sun drove him, and as he passed I struck him in the middle of the back; the bronze point of the spear went clean through him, and he lay groaning in the dust until the life went out of him. Then I set my foot upon him, drew my spear from the wound, and laid it down; I also gathered rough grass and rushes and twisted them into a fathom or so of good stout rope, with which I bound the four feet of the noble creature together; having so done I hung him round my neck and walked back to the ship leaning upon my spear, for the stag was much too big for me to be able to carry him on my shoulder, steadying him with one hand. As I threw him down in front of the ship, I called the men and spoke cheeringly man by man to each of them. ‘Look here my friends,’ said I, ‘we are not going to die so much before our time after all, and at any rate we will not starve so long as we have got something to eat and drink on board.’ On this they uncovered their heads upon the sea shore and admired the stag, for he was indeed a splendid fellow. Then, when they had feasted their eyes upon him sufficiently, they washed their hands and began to cook him for dinner.

“Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we stayed there eating and drinking our fill, but when the sun went down and it came on dark, we camped upon the sea shore. When the child of morning, fingered Dawn, appeared, I called a council and said, ‘My friends, we are in very great difficulties; listen therefore to me. We have no idea where the sun either sets or rises, so that we do not even know East from West. I see no way out of it; nevertheless, we must try and find one. We are certainly on an island, for I went as high as I could this morning, and saw the sea reaching all round it to the horizon; it lies low, but towards the middle I saw smoke rising from out of a thick forest of trees.’

“Their hearts sank as they heard me, for they remembered how they had been treated by the Laestrygonian Antiphates, and by the savage ogre Polyphemus. They wept bitterly in their dismay, but there was nothing to be got by crying, so I divided them into two companies and set a captain over each; I gave one company to Eurylochus, while I took command of the other myself. Then we cast lots in a helmet, and the lot fell upon Eurylochus; so he set out with his twenty-two men, and they wept, as also did we who were left behind.

“When they reached Circe’s house they found it built of cut stones, on a site that could be seen from far, in the middle of the forest. There were wild mountain wolves and lions prowling all round it poor bewitched creatures whom she had tamed by her enchantments and drugged into subjection. They did not attack my men, but wagged their great tails, fawned upon them, and rubbed their noses lovingly against them. As hounds crowd round their master when they see him coming from dinner for they know he will bring them something even so did these wolves and lions with their great claws fawn upon my men, but the men were terribly frightened at seeing such strange creatures. Presently they reached the gates of the goddess’s house, and as they stood there they could hear Circe within, singing most beautifully as she worked at her loom, making a web so fine, so soft, and of such dazzling colours as no one but a goddess could weave. On this Polites, whom I valued and trusted more than any other of my men, said, ‘There is some one inside working at a loom and singing most beautifully; the whole place resounds with it, let us call her and see whether she is woman or goddess.’

“They called her and she came down, unfastened the door, and bade them enter. They, thinking no evil, followed her, all except Eurylochus, who suspected mischief and stayed outside. When she had got them into her house, she set them upon benches and seats and mixed them a mess with cheese, honey, meal, and Pramnian but she drugged it with wicked poisons to make them forget their homes, and when they had drunk she turned them into pigs by a stroke of her wand, and shut them up in her pigsties. They were like pigs-head, hair, and all, and they grunted just as pigs do; but their senses were the same as before, and they remembered everything.

“Thus then were they shut up squealing, and Circe threw them some acorns and beech masts such as pigs eat, but Eurylochus hurried back to tell me about the sad fate of our comrades. He was so overcome with dismay that though he tried to speak he could find no words to do so; his eyes filled with tears and he could only sob and sigh, till at last we forced his story out of him, and he told us what had happened to the others.

“’We went,’ said he, as you told us, through the forest, and in the middle of it there was a fine house built with cut stones in a place that could be seen from far. There we found a woman, or else she was a goddess, working at her loom and singing sweetly; so the men shouted to her and called her, whereon she at once came down, opened the door, and invited us in. The others did not suspect any mischief so they followed her into the house, but I stayed where I was, for I thought there might be some treachery. From that moment I saw them no more, for not one of them ever came out, though I sat a long time watching for them.’

“Then I took my sword of bronze and slung it over my shoulders; I also took my bow, and told Eurylochus to come back with me and show me the way. But he laid hold of me with both his hands and spoke piteously, saying, ‘Sir, do not force me to go with you, but let me stay here, for I know you will not bring one of them back with you, nor even return alive yourself; let us rather see if we cannot escape at any rate with the few that are left us, for we may still save our lives.’

“’Stay where you are, then, ‘answered I, ‘eating and drinking at the ship, but I must go, for I am most urgently bound to do so.’

“With this I left the ship and went up inland. When I got through the charmed grove, and was near the great house of the enchantress Circe, I met Mercury with his golden wand, disguised as a young man in the hey-day of his youth and beauty with the down just coming upon his face. He came up to me and took my hand within his own, saying, ‘My poor unhappy man, whither are you going over this mountain top, alone and without knowing the way? Your men are shut up in Circe’s pigsties, like so many wild boars in their lairs. You surely do not fancy that you can set them free? I can tell you that you will never get back and will have to stay there with the rest of them. But never mind, I will protect you and get you out of your difficulty. Take this herb, which is one of great virtue, and keep it about you when you go to Circe’s house, it will be a talisman to you against every kind of mischief.

“’And I will tell you of all the wicked witchcraft that Circe will try to practise upon you. She will mix a mess for you to drink, and she will drug the meal with which she makes it, but she will not be able to charm you, for the virtue of the herb that I shall give you will prevent her spells from working. I will tell you all about it. When Circe strikes you with her wand, draw your sword and spring upon her as though you were goings to kill her. She will then be frightened and will desire you to go to bed with her; on this you must not point blank refuse her, for you want her to set your companions free, and to take good care also of yourself, but you make her swear solemnly by all the blessed that she will plot no further mischief against you, or else when she has got you naked she will unman you and make you fit for nothing.’

“As he spoke he pulled the herb out of the ground an showed me what it was like. The root was black, while the flower was as white as milk; the gods call it Moly, and mortal men cannot uproot it, but the gods can do whatever they like.

“Then Mercury went back to high Olympus passing over the wooded island; but I fared onward to the house of Circe, and my heart was clouded with care as I walked along. When I got to the gates I stood there and called the goddess, and as soon as she heard me she came down, opened the door, and asked me to come in; so I followed her much troubled in my mind. She set me on a richly decorated seat inlaid with silver, there was a footstool also under my feet, and she mixed a mess in a golden goblet for me to drink; but she drugged it, for she meant me mischief. When she had given it me, and I had drunk it without its charming me, she struck she, struck me with her wand. ‘There now,’ she cried, ‘be off to the pigsty, and make your lair with the rest of them.’

“But I rushed at her with my sword drawn as though I would kill her, whereon she fell with a loud scream, clasped my knees, and spoke piteously, saying, ‘Who and whence are you? from what place and people have you come? How can it be that my drugs have no power to charm you? Never yet was any man able to stand so much as a taste of the herb I gave you; you must be spell-proof; surely you can be none other than the bold hero Ulysses, who Mercury always said would come here some day with his ship while

on his way home form Troy; so be it then; sheathe your sword and let us go to bed, that we may make friends and learn to trust each other.'

"And I answered, 'Circe, how can you expect me to be friendly with you when you have just been turning all my men into pigs? And now that you have got me here myself, you mean me mischief when you ask me to go to bed with you, and will unman me and make me fit for nothing. I shall certainly not consent to go to bed with you unless you will first take your solemn oath to plot no further harm against me.'

"So she swore at once as I had told her, and when she had completed her oath then I went to bed with her.

"Meanwhile her four servants, who are her housemaids, set about their work. They are the children of the groves and fountains, and of the holy waters that run down into the sea. One of them spread a fair purple cloth over a seat, and laid a carpet underneath it. Another brought tables of silver up to the seats, and set them with baskets of gold. A third mixed some sweet wine with water in a silver bowl and put golden cups upon the tables, while the fourth she brought in water and set it to boil in a large cauldron over a good fire which she had lighted. When the water in the cauldron was boiling, she poured cold into it till it was just as I liked it, and then she set me in a bath and began washing me from the cauldron about the head and shoulders, to take the tire and stiffness out of my limbs. As soon as she had done washing me and anointing me with oil, she arrayed me in a good cloak and shirt and led me to a richly decorated seat inlaid with silver; there was a footstool also under my feet. A maid servant then brought me water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for me to wash my hands, and she drew a clean table beside me; an upper servant brought me bread and offered me many things of what there was in the house, and then Circe bade me eat, but I would not, and sat without heeding what was before me, still moody and suspicious.

"When Circe saw me sitting there without eating, and in great grief, she came to me and said, 'Ulysses, why do you sit like that as though you were dumb, gnawing at your own heart, and refusing both meat and drink? Is it that you are still suspicious? You ought not to be, for I have already sworn solemnly that I will not hurt you.'

"And I said, 'Circe, no man with any sense of what is right can think of either eating or drinking in your house until you have set his friends free and let him see them. If you want me to eat and drink, you must free my men and bring them to me that I may see them with my own eyes.'

"When I had said this she went straight through the court with her wand in her hand and opened the pigsty doors. My men came out like so many prime hogs and stood looking at her, but she went about among them and anointed each with a second drug, whereon the bristles that the bad drug had given them fell off, and they became men again, younger than they were before, and much taller and better looking. They knew me at once, seized me each of them by the hand, and wept for joy till the whole house was filled with the sound of their hullabalooing, and Circe herself was so sorry for them that she came up to me and said, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, go back at once to the sea where you have left your ship, and first draw it on to the land. Then, hide all your ship's gear and property in some cave, and come back here with your men.'

"I agreed to this, so I went back to the sea shore, and found the men at the ship weeping and wailing most piteously. When they saw me the silly blubbering fellows began frisking round me as calves break out and gambol round their mothers, when they see them coming home to be milked after they have been feeding all day, and the homestead resounds with their lowing. They seemed as glad to see me as though they had got back to their own rugged Ithaca, where they had been born and bred. 'Sir,' said the affectionate creatures, 'we are as glad to see you back as though we had got safe home to Ithaca; but tell us all about the fate of our comrades.'

"I spoke comfortingly to them and said, 'We must draw our ship on to the land, and hide the ship's gear with all our property in some cave; then come with me all of you as fast as you can to Circe's house, where you will find your comrades eating and drinking in the midst of great abundance.'

"On this the men would have come with me at once, but Eurylochus tried to hold them back and said, 'Alas, poor wretches that we are, what will become of us? Rush not on your ruin by going to the house of Circe, who will turn us all into pigs or wolves or lions, and we shall have to keep guard over her house. Remember how the Cyclops treated us when our comrades went inside his cave, and Ulysses with them. It was all through his sheer folly that those men lost their lives.'

"When I heard him I was in two minds whether or no to draw the keen blade that hung by my sturdy thigh and cut his head off in spite of his being a near relation of my own; but the men interceded for him and said, 'Sir, if it may so be, let this fellow stay here

and mind the ship, but take the rest of us with you to Circe's house.'

"On this we all went inland, and Eurylochus was not left behind after all, but came on too, for he was frightened by the severe reprimand that I had given him.

"Meanwhile Circe had been seeing that the men who had been left behind were washed and anointed with olive oil; she had also given them woollen cloaks and shirts, and when we came we found them all comfortably at dinner in her house. As soon as the men saw each other face to face and knew one another, they wept for joy and cried aloud till the whole palace rang again. Thereon Circe came up to me and said, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, tell your men to leave off crying; I know how much you have all of you suffered at sea, and how ill you have fared among cruel savages on the mainland, but that is over now, so stay here, and eat and drink till you are once more as strong and hearty as you were when you left Ithaca; for at present you are weakened both in body and mind; you keep all the time thinking of the hardships you have suffered during your travels, so that you have no more cheerfulness left in you.'

"Thus did she speak and we assented. We stayed with Circe for a whole twelvemonth feasting upon an untold quantity both of meat and wine. But when the year had passed in the waning of moons and the long days had come round, my men called me apart and said, 'Sir, it is time you began to think about going home, if so be you are to be spared to see your house and native country at all.'

"Thus did they speak and I assented. Thereon through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we feasted our fill on meat and wine, but when the sun went down and it came on dark the men laid themselves down to sleep in the covered cloisters. I, however, after I had got into bed with Circe, besought her by her knees, and the goddess listened to what I had got to say. 'Circe,' said I, 'please to keep the promise you made me about furthering me on my homeward voyage. I want to get back and so do my men, they are always pestering me with their complaints as soon as ever your back is turned.'

"And the goddess answered, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, you shall none of you stay here any longer if you do not want to, but there is another journey which you have got to take before you can sail homewards. You must go to the house of Hades and of dread Proserpine to consult the ghost of the blind Theban prophet Teiresias whose reason is still unshaken. To him alone has Proserpine left his understanding even in death, but the other ghosts flit about aimlessly.'

"I was dismayed when I heard this. I sat up in bed and wept, and would gladly have lived no longer to see the light of the sun, but presently when I was tired of weeping and tossing myself about, I said, 'And who shall guide me upon this voyage for the house of Hades is a port that no ship can reach.'

"'You will want no guide,' she answered; 'raise you mast, set your white sails, sit quite still, and the North Wind will blow you there of itself. When your ship has traversed the waters of Oceanus, you will reach the fertile shore of Proserpine's country with its groves of tall poplars and willows that shed their fruit untimely; here beach your ship upon the shore of Oceanus, and go straight on to the dark abode of Hades. You will find it near the place where the rivers Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus (which is a branch of the river Styx) flow into Acheron, and you will see a rock near it, just where the two roaring rivers run into one another.

"'When you have reached this spot, as I now tell you, dig a trench a cubit or so in length, breadth, and depth, and pour into it as a drink-offering to all the dead, first, honey mixed with milk, then wine, and in the third place water-sprinkling white barley meal over the whole. Moreover you must offer many prayers to the poor feeble ghosts, and promise them that when you get back to Ithaca you will sacrifice a barren heifer to them, the best you have, and will load the pyre with good things. More particularly you must promise that Teiresias shall have a black sheep all to himself, the finest in all your flocks.

"'When you shall have thus besought the ghosts with your prayers, offer them a ram and a black ewe, bending their heads towards Erebus; but yourself turn away from them as though you would make towards the river. On this, many dead men's ghosts will come to you, and you must tell your men to skin the two sheep that you have just killed, and offer them as a burnt sacrifice with prayers to Hades and to Proserpine. Then draw your sword and sit there, so as to prevent any other poor ghost from coming near the split blood before Teiresias shall have answered your questions. The seer will presently come to you, and will tell you about your voyage what stages you are to make, and how you are to sail the see so as to reach your home.'

"It was day-break by the time she had done speaking, so she dressed me in my shirt and cloak. As for herself she threw a beautiful light gossamer fabric over her shoulders, fastening it with a golden girdle round her waist, and she covered her head with a mantle. Then I went about among the men everywhere all over the house, and spoke kindly to each of them man by man: 'You must not lie sleeping here any longer,' said I to them, 'we must be going, for Circe has told me all about it.' And this they did as I bade them.

“Even so, however, I did not get them away without misadventure. We had with us a certain youth named Elpenor, not very remarkable for sense or courage, who had got drunk and was lying on the house-top away from the rest of the men, to sleep off his liquor in the cool. When he heard the noise of the men bustling about, he jumped up on a sudden and forgot all about coming down by the main staircase, so he tumbled right off the roof and broke his neck, and his soul went down to the house of Hades.

“When I had got the men together I said to them, ‘You think you are about to start home again, but Circe has explained to me that instead of this, we have got to go to the house of Hades and Proserpine to consult the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias.’

“The men were broken-hearted as they heard me, and threw themselves on the ground groaning and tearing their hair, but they did not mend matters by crying. When we reached the sea shore, weeping and lamenting our fate, Circe brought the ram and the ewe, and we made them fast hard by the ship. She passed through the midst of us without our knowing it, for who can see the comings and goings of a god, if the god does not wish to be seen?

Book XI

THEN, when we had got down to the sea shore we drew our ship into the water and got her mast and sails into her; we also put the sheep on board and took our places, weeping and in great distress of mind. Circe, that great and cunning goddess, sent us a fair wind that blew dead aft and stayed steadily with us keeping our sails all the time well filled; so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship’s gear and let her go as the wind and helmsman headed her. All day long her sails were full as she held her course over the sea, but when the sun went down and darkness was over all the earth, we got into the deep waters of the river Oceanus, where lie the land and city of the Cimmerians who live enshrouded in mist and darkness which the rays of the sun never pierce neither at his rising nor as he goes down again out of the heavens, but the poor wretches live in one long melancholy night. When we got there we beached the ship, took the sheep out of her, and went along by the waters of Oceanus till we came to the place of which Circe had told us.

“Here Perimedes and Eurylochus held the victims, while I drew my sword and dug the trench a cubit each way. I made a drink-offering to all the dead, first with honey and milk, then with wine, and thirdly with water, and I sprinkled white barley meal over the whole, praying earnestly to the poor feckless ghosts, and promising them that when I got back to Ithaca I would sacrifice a barren heifer for them, the best I had, and would load the pyre with good things. I also particularly promised that Teiresias should have a black sheep to himself, the best in all my flocks. When I had prayed sufficiently to the dead, I cut the throats of the two sheep and let the blood run into the trench, whereon the ghosts came trooping up from Erebus brides, young bachelors, old men worn out with toil, maids who had been crossed in love, and brave men who had been killed in battle, with their armour still smirched with blood; they came from every quarter and flitted round the trench with a strange kind of screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear. When I saw them coming I told the men to be quick and flay the carcasses of the two dead sheep and make burnt offerings of them, and at the same time to repeat prayers to Hades and to Proserpine; but I sat where I was with my sword drawn and would not let the poor feckless ghosts come near the blood till Teiresias should have answered my questions.

“The first ghost ‘that came was that of my comrade Elpenor, for he had not yet been laid beneath the earth. We had left his body unwaked and unburied in Circe’s house, for we had had too much else to do. I was very sorry for him, and cried when I saw him: ‘Elpenor,’ said I, ‘how did you come down here into this gloom and darkness? You have here on foot quicker than I have with my ship.’

“’Sir,’ he answered with a groan, ‘it was all bad luck, and my own unspeakable drunkenness. I was lying asleep on the top of Circe’s house, and never thought of coming down again by the great staircase but fell right off the roof and broke my neck, so my soul down to the house of Hades. And now I beseech you by all those whom you have left behind you, though they are not here, by your wife, by the father who brought you up when you were a child, and by Telemachus who is the one hope of your house, do what I shall now ask you. I know that when you leave this limbo you will again hold your ship for the Aeaean island. Do not go thence leaving me unwaked and unburied behind you, or I may bring heaven’s anger upon you; but burn me with whatever armour I have, build a barrow for me on the sea shore, that may tell people in days to come what a poor unlucky fellow I was, and plant over my grave the oar I used to row with when I was yet alive and with my messmates.’ And I said, ‘My poor fellow, I will do all that you have asked of me.’

“Thus, then, did we sit and hold sad talk with one another, I on the one side of the trench with my sword held over the blood, and the ghost of my comrade saying all this to me from the other side. Then came the ghost of my dead mother Anticlea, daughter to

Autolycus. I had left her alive when I set out for Troy and was moved to tears when I saw her, but even so, for all my sorrow I would not let her come near the blood till I had asked my questions of Teiresias.

“Then came also the ghost of Theban Teiresias, with his golden sceptre in his hand. He knew me and said, ‘Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, why, poor man, have you left the light of day and come down to visit the dead in this sad place? Stand back from the trench and withdraw your sword that I may drink of the blood and answer your questions truly.’

“So I drew back, and sheathed my sword, whereon when he had drank of the blood he began with his prophecy.

“You want to know,’ said he, ‘about your return home, but heaven will make this hard for you. I do not think that you will escape the eye of Neptune, who still nurses his bitter grudge against you for having blinded his son. Still, after much suffering you may get home if you can restrain yourself and your companions when your ship reaches the Thrinacian island, where you will find the sheep and cattle belonging to the sun, who sees and gives ear to everything. If you leave these flocks unharmed and think of nothing but of getting home, you may yet after much hardship reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, then I forewarn you of the destruction both of your ship and of your men. Even though you may yourself escape, you will return in bad plight after losing all your men, [in another man’s ship, and you will find trouble in your house, which will be overrun by high-handed people, who are devouring your substance under the pretext of paying court and making presents to your wife.

“’When you get home you will take your revenge on these suitors; and after you have killed them by force or fraud in your own house, you must take a well-made oar and carry it on and on, till you come to a country where the people have never heard of the sea and do not even mix salt with their food, nor do they know anything about ships, and oars that are as the wings of a ship. I will give you this certain token which cannot escape your notice. A wayfarer will meet you and will say it must be a winnowing shovel that you have got upon your shoulder; on this you must fix the oar in the ground and sacrifice a ram, a bull, and a boar to Neptune. Then go home and offer hecatombs to an the gods in heaven one after the other. As for yourself, death shall come to you from the sea, and your life shall ebb away very gently when you are full of years and peace of mind, and your people shall bless you. All that I have said will come true].’

“’This,’ I answered, ‘must be as it may please heaven, but tell me and tell me and tell me true, I see my poor mother’s ghost close by us; she is sitting by the blood without saying a word, and though I am her own son she does not remember me and speak to me; tell me, Sir, how I can make her know me.’

“’That,’ said he, ‘I can soon do Any ghost that you let taste of the blood will talk with you like a reasonable being, but if you do not let them have any blood they will go away again.’

“On this the ghost of Teiresias went back to the house of Hades, for his prophecyings had now been spoken, but I sat still where I was until my mother came up and tasted the blood. Then she knew me at once and spoke fondly to me, saying, ‘My son, how did you come down to this abode of darkness while you are still alive? It is a hard thing for the living to see these places, for between us and them there are great and terrible waters, and there is Oceanus, which no man can cross on foot, but he must have a good ship to take him. Are you all this time trying to find your way home from Troy, and have you never yet got back to Ithaca nor seen your wife in your own house?’

“’Mother,’ said I, ‘I was forced to come here to consult the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias. I have never yet been near the Achaean land nor set foot on my native country, and I have had nothing but one long series of misfortunes from the very first day that I set out with Agamemnon for Ilius, the land of noble steeds, to fight the Trojans. But tell me, and tell me true, in what way did you die? Did you have a long illness, or did heaven vouchsafe you a gentle easy passage to eternity? Tell me also about my father, and the son whom I left behind me; is my property still in their hands, or has some one else got hold of it, who thinks that I shall not return to claim it? Tell me again what my wife intends doing, and in what mind she is; does she live with my son and guard my estate securely, or has she made the best match she could and married again?’

“My mother answered, ‘Your wife still remains in your house, but she is in great distress of mind and spends her whole time in tears both night and day. No one as yet has got possession of your fine property, and Telemachus still holds your lands undisturbed. He has to entertain largely, as of course he must, considering his position as a magistrate, and how every one invites him; your father remains at his old place in the country and never goes near the town. He has no comfortable bed nor bedding; in the winter he sleeps on the floor in front of the fire with the men and goes about all in rags, but in summer, when the warm weather comes on again, he lies out in the vineyard on a bed of vine leaves thrown anyhow upon the ground. He grieves continually about your never

having come home, and suffers more and more as he grows older. As for my own end it was in this wise: heaven did not take me swiftly and painlessly in my own house, nor was I attacked by any illness such as those that generally wear people out and kill them, but my longing to know what you were doing and the force of my affection for you this it was that was the death of me.'

"Then I tried to find some way of embracing my mother's ghost. Thrice I sprang towards her and tried to clasp her in my arms, but each time she flitted from my embrace as it were a dream or phantom, and being touched to the quick I said to her, 'Mother, why do you not stay still when I would embrace you? If we could throw our arms around one another we might find sad comfort in the sharing of our sorrows even in the house of Hades; does Proserpine want to lay a still further load of grief upon me by mocking me with a phantom only?'

"'My son,' she answered, 'most ill-fated of all mankind, it is not Proserpine that is beguiling you, but all people are like this when they are dead. The sinews no longer hold the flesh and bones together; these perish in the fierceness of consuming fire as soon as life has left the body, and the soul flits away as though it were a dream. Now, however, go back to the light of day as soon as you can, and note all these things that you may tell them to your wife hereafter.'

"Thus did we converse, and anon Proserpine sent up the ghosts of the wives and daughters of all the most famous men. They gathered in crowds about the blood, and I considered how I might question them severally. In the end I deemed that it would be best to draw the keen blade that hung by my sturdy thigh, and keep them from all drinking the blood at once. So they came up one after the other, and each one as I questioned her told me her race and lineage.

"The first I saw was Tyro. She was daughter of Salmoneus and wife of Cretheus the son of Aeolus. She fell in love with the river Enipeus who is much the most beautiful river in the whole world. Once when she was taking
a walk by his side as usual, Neptune, disguised as her lover, lay with her at the mouth of the river, and a huge blue wave arched itself like a mountain over them to hide both woman and god, whereon he loosed her virgin girdle and laid her in a deep slumber. When the god had accomplished the deed of love, he took her hand in his own and said, 'Tyro, rejoice in all good will; the embraces of the gods are not fruitless, and you will have fine twins about this time twelve months. Take great care of them. I am Neptune, so now go home, but hold your tongue and do not tell any

one.'"Then he dived under the sea, and she in due course bore Pelias and Neleus, who both of them served Jove with all their might. Pelias was a great breeder of sheep and lived in Iolcus, but the other lived in Pylos. The rest of her children were by Cretheus, namely, Aeson, Pheres, and Amythaon, who was a mighty warrior and charioteer.

"Next to her I saw Antiope, daughter to Asopus, who could boast of having slept in the arms of even Jove himself, and who bore him two sons Amphion and Zethus. These founded Thebes with its seven gates, and built a wall all round it; for strong though they were they could not hold Thebes till they had walled it.

"Then I saw Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon, who also bore to Jove indomitable Hercules; and Megara who was daughter to great King Creon, and married the redoubtable son of Amphitryon.

"I also saw fair Epicaste mother of king OEdipodes whose awful lot it was to marry her own son without suspecting it. He married her after having killed his father, but the gods proclaimed the whole story to the world; whereon he remained king of Thebes, in great grief for the spite the gods had borne him; but Epicaste went to the house of the mighty jailor Hades, having hanged herself for grief, and the avenging spirits haunted him as for an outraged mother to his ruing bitterly thereafter.

"Then I saw Chloris, whom Neleus married for her beauty, having given priceless presents for her. She was youngest daughter to Amphion son of Iasus and king of Minyan Orchomenus, and was Queen in Pylos. She bore Nestor, Chromius, and Periclymenus, and she also bore that marvellously lovely woman Pero, who was wooed by all the country round; but Neleus would only give her to him who should raid the cattle of Iphicles from the grazing grounds of Phylace, and this was a hard task. The only man who would undertake to raid them was a certain excellent seer, but the will of heaven was against him, for the rangers of the cattle caught him and put him in prison; nevertheless when a full year had passed and the same season came round again, Iphicles set him at liberty, after he had expounded all the oracles of heaven. Thus, then, was the will of Jove accomplished.

"And I saw Leda the wife of Tyndarus, who bore him two famous sons, Castor breaker of horses, and Pollux the mighty boxer. Both these heroes are lying under the earth, though they are still alive, for by a special dispensation of Jove, they die and come to life again, each one of them every other day throughout all time, and they have the rank of gods.

"After her I saw Iphimedeia wife of Aloeus who boasted the embrace of Neptune. She bore two sons Otus and Ephialtes, but both were short lived. They were the finest children that were ever born in this world, and the best looking, Orion only excepted; for at nine years old they were nine fathoms high, and measured nine cubits round the chest. They threatened to make war with the gods in Olympus, and tried to set Mount Ossa on the top of Mount Olympus, and Mount Pelion on the top of Ossa, that they might scale heaven itself, and they would have done it too if they had been grown up, but Apollo, son of Leto, killed both of them, before they had got so much as a sign of hair upon their cheeks or chin.

"Then I saw Phaedra, and Procris, and fair Ariadne daughter of the magician Minos, whom Theseus was carrying off from Crete to Athens, but he did not enjoy her, for before he could do so Diana killed her in the island of Dia on account of what Bacchus had said against her.

"I also saw Maera and Clymene and hateful Eriphyle, who sold her own husband for gold. But it would take me all night if I were to name every single one of the wives and daughters of heroes whom I saw, and it is time for me to go to bed, either on board ship with my crew, or here. As for my escort, heaven and yourselves will see to it."

Here he ended, and the guests sat all of them enthralled and speechless throughout the covered cloister. Then Arete said to them:

"What do you think of this man, O Phaecians? Is he not tall and good looking, and is he not Clever? True, he is my own guest, but all of you share in the distinction. Do not he a hurry to send him away, nor niggardly in the presents you make to one who is in such great need, for heaven has blessed all of you with great abundance."

Then spoke the aged hero Echeneus who was one of the oldest men among them, "My friends," said he, "what our august queen has just said to us is both reasonable and to the purpose, therefore be persuaded by it; but the decision whether in word or deed rests ultimately with King Alcinous."

"The thing shall be done," exclaimed Alcinous, "as surely as I still live and reign over the Phaeacians. Our guest is indeed very anxious to get home, still we must persuade him to remain with us until to-morrow, by which time I shall be able to get together the whole sum that I mean to give him. As regards his escort it will be a matter for you all, and mine above all others as the chief person among you."

And Ulysses answered, "King Alcinous, if you were to bid me to stay here for a whole twelve months, and then speed me on my way, loaded with your noble gifts, I should obey you gladly and it would redound greatly to my advantage, for I should return fuller-handed to my own people, and should thus be more respected and beloved by all who see me when I get back to Ithaca."

"Ulysses," replied Alcinous, "not one of us who sees you has any idea that you are a charlatan or a swindler. I know there are many people going about who tell such plausible stories that it is very hard to see through them, but there is a style about your language which assures me of your good disposition. Moreover you have told the story of your own misfortunes, and those of the Argives, as though you were a practised bard; but tell me, and tell me true, whether you saw any of the mighty heroes who went to Troy at the same time with yourself, and perished there. The evenings are still at their longest, and it is not yet bed time go on, therefore, with your divine story, for I could stay here listening till to-morrow morning, so long as you will continue to tell us of your adventures."

"Alcinous," answered Ulysses, "there is a time for making speeches, and a time for going to bed; nevertheless, since you so desire, I will not refrain from telling you the still sadder tale of those of my comrades who did not fall fighting with the Trojans, but perished on their return, through the treachery of a wicked woman.

"When Proserpine had dismissed the female ghosts in all directions, the ghost of Agamemnon son of Atreus came sadly up tome, surrounded by those who had perished with him in the house of Aegisthus. As soon as he had tasted the blood he knew me, and weeping bitterly stretched out his arms towards me to embrace me; but he had no strength nor substance any more, and I too wept and pitied him as I beheld him. 'How did you come by your death,' said I, 'King Agamemnon? Did Neptune raise his winds and waves against you when you were at sea, or did your enemies make an end of you on the mainland when you were cattle-lifting or sheep-stealing, or while they were fighting in defence of their wives and city?'

"'Ulysses,' he answered, 'noble son of Laertes, was not lost at sea in any storm of Neptune's raising, nor did my foes despatch me upon the mainland, but Aegisthus and my wicked wife were the death of me between them. He asked me to his house, feasted me, and then butchered me most miserably as though I were a fat beast in a slaughter house, while all around me my comrades were slain like sheep or pigs for the wedding breakfast, or picnic, or gorgeous banquet of some great nobleman. You must have seen numbers of men killed either in a general engagement, or in single combat, but you never saw anything so truly pitiable as the way

in which we fell in that cloister, with the mixing-bowl and the loaded tables lying all about, and the ground reeking with our-blood. I heard Priam's daughter Cassandra scream as Clytemnestra killed her close beside me. I lay dying upon the earth with the sword in my body, and raised my hands to kill the slut of a murderess, but she slipped away from me; she would not even close my lips nor my eyes when I was dying, for there is nothing in this world so cruel and so shameless as a woman when she has fallen into such guilt as hers was. Fancy murdering her own husband! I thought I was going to be welcomed home by my children and my servants, but her abominable crime has brought disgrace on herself and all women who shall come after even on the good ones.'

"And I said, 'In truth Jove has hated the house of Atreus from first to last in the matter of their women's counsels. See how many of us fell for Helen's sake, and now it seems that Clytemnestra hatched mischief against too during your absence.'

"'Be sure, therefore,' continued Agamemnon, 'and not be too friendly even with your own wife. Do not tell her all that you know perfectly well yourself. Tell her a part only, and keep your own counsel about the rest. Not that your wife, Ulysses, is likely to murder you, for Penelope is a very admirable woman, and has an excellent nature. We left her a young bride with an infant at her breast when we set out for Troy. This child no doubt is now grown up happily to man's estate, and he and his father will have a joyful meeting and embrace one another as it is right they should do, whereas my wicked wife did not even allow me the happiness of looking upon my son, but killed me ere I could do so. Furthermore I say and lay my saying to your heart do not tell people when you are bringing your ship to Ithaca, but steal a march upon them, for after all this there is no trusting women. But now tell me, and tell me true, can you give me any news of my son Orestes? Is he in Orchomenus, or at Pylos, or is he at Sparta with Menelaus for I presume that he is still living.'

"And I said, 'Agamemnon, why do you ask me? I do not know whether your son is alive or dead, and it is not right to talk when one does not know.'

"As we two sat weeping and talking thus sadly with one another the ghost of Achilles came up to us with Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax who was the finest and goodliest man of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus. The fleet descendant of Aeacus knew me and spoke piteously, saying, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, what deed of daring will you undertake next, that you venture down to the house of Hades among us silly dead, who are but the ghosts of them that can labour no more?'

"And I said, 'Achilles, son of Peleus, foremost champion of the Achaeans, I came to consult Teiresias, and see if he could advise me about my return home to Ithaca, for I have never yet been able to get near the Achaean land, nor to set foot in my own country, but have been in trouble all the time. As for you, Achilles, no one was ever yet so fortunate as you have been, nor ever will be, for you were adored by all us Argives as long as you were alive, and now that you are here you are a great prince among the dead. Do not, therefore, take it so much to heart even if you are dead.'

"'Say not a word,' he answered, 'in death's favour; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead. But give me news about son; is he gone to the wars and will he be a great soldier, or is this not so? Tell me also if you have heard anything about my father Peleus does he still rule among the Myrmidons, or do they show him no respect throughout Hellas and Phthia now that he is old and his limbs fail him? Could I but stand by his side, in the light of day, with the same strength that I had when I killed the bravest of our foes upon the plain of Troy could I but be as I then was and go even for a short time to my father's house, any one who tried to do him violence or supersede him would soon me it.'

"'I have heard nothing,' I answered, 'of Peleus, but I can tell you all about your son Neoptolemus, for I took him in my own ship from Scyros with the Achaeans. In our councils of war before Troy he was always first to speak, and his judgement was unerring. Nestor and I were the only two who could surpass him; and when it came to fighting on the plain of Troy, he would never remain with the body of his men, but would dash on far in front, foremost of them all in valour. Many a man did he kill in battle I cannot name every single one of those whom he slew while fighting on the side of the Argives, but will only say how he killed that valiant hero Eurypylus son of Telephus, who was the handsomest man I ever saw except Memnon; many others also of the Ceteians fell around him by reason of a woman's bribes. Moreover, when all the bravest of the Argives went inside the horse that Epeus had made, and it was left to me to settle when we should either open the door of our ambuscade, or close it, though all the other leaders and chief men among the Danaans were drying their eyes and quaking in every limb, I never once saw him turn pale nor wipe a tear from his cheek; he was all the time urging me to break out from the horse grasping the handle of his sword and his bronze-shod spear, and breathing fury against the foe. Yet when we had sacked the city of Priam he got his handsome share of the prize money and went on board (such is the fortune of war) without a wound upon him, neither from a thrown spear nor in close combat, for the rage of Mars is a matter of great chance.'

“When I had told him this, the ghost of Achilles strode off across a meadow full of asphodel, exulting over what I had said concerning the prowess of his son.

“The ghosts of other dead men stood near me and told me each his own melancholy tale; but that of Ajax son of Telamon alone held aloof still angry with me for having won the cause in our dispute about the armour of Achilles. Thetis had offered it as a prize, but the Trojan prisoners and Minerva were the judges. Would that I had never gained the day in such a contest, for it cost the life of Ajax, who was foremost of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus, alike in stature and prowess.

“When I saw him I tried to pacify him and said, ‘Ajax, will you not forget and forgive even in death, but must the judgement about that hateful armour still rankle with you? It cost us Argives dear enough to lose such a tower of strength as you were to us. We mourned you as much as we mourned Achilles son of Peleus himself, nor can the blame be laid on anything but on the spite which Jove bore against the Danaans, for it was this that made him counsel your destruction come hither, therefore, bring your proud spirit into subjection, and hear what I can tell you.’

“He would not answer, but turned away to Erebus and to the other ghosts; nevertheless, I should have made him talk to me in spite of his being so angry, or I should have gone talking to him, only that there were still others among the dead whom I desired to see.

“Then I saw Minos son of Jove with his golden sceptre in his hand sitting in judgement on the dead, and the ghosts were gathered sitting and standing round him in the spacious house of Hades, to learn his sentences upon them.

“After him I saw huge Orion in a meadow full of asphodel driving the ghosts of the wild beasts that he had killed upon the mountains, and he had a great bronze club in his hand, unbreakable for ever and ever.

“And I saw Tityus son of Gaia stretched upon the plain and covering some nine acres of ground. Two vultures on either side of him were digging their beaks into his liver, and he kept on trying to beat them off with his hands, but could not; for he had violated Jove’s mistress Leto as she was going through Panopeus on her way to Pytho.

“I saw also the dreadful fate of Tantalus, who stood in a lake that reached his chin; he was dying to quench his thirst, but could never reach the water, for whenever the poor creature stooped to drink, it dried up and vanished, so that there was nothing but dry ground parched by the spite of heaven. There were tall trees, moreover, that shed their fruit over his head pears, pomegranates, apples, sweet figs and juicy olives, but whenever the poor creature stretched out his hand to take some, the wind tossed the branches back again to the clouds.

“And I saw Sisyphus at his endless task raising his prodigious stone with both his hands. With hands and feet he’ tried to roll it up to the top of the hill, but always, just before he could roll it over on to the other side, its weight would be too much for him, and the pitiless stone would come thundering down again on to the plain. Then he would begin trying to push it up hill again, and the sweat ran off him and the steam rose after him.

“After him I saw mighty Hercules, but it was his phantom only, for he is feasting ever with the immortal gods, and has lovely Hebe to wife, who is daughter of Jove and Juno. The ghosts were screaming round him like scared birds flying all whithers. He looked black as night with his bare bow in his hands and his arrow on the string, glaring around as though ever on the point of taking aim. About his breast there was a wondrous golden belt adorned in the most marvellous fashion with bears, wild boars, and lions with gleaming eyes; there was also war, battle, and death. The man who made that belt, do what he might, would never be able to make another like it. Hercules knew me at once when he saw me, and spoke piteously, saying, my poor Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, are you too leading the same sorry kind of life that I did when I was above ground? I was son of Jove, but I went through an infinity of suffering, for I became bondsman to one who was far beneath me a low fellow who set me all manner of labours. He once sent me here to fetch the hell-hound for he did not think he could find anything harder for me than this, but I got the hound out of Hades and brought him to him, for Mercury and Minerva helped me.’

“On this Hercules went down again into the house of Hades, but I stayed where I was in case some other of the mighty dead should come to me. And I should have seen still other of them that are gone before, whom I would fain have seen Theseus and Pirithous glorious children of the gods, but so many thousands of ghosts came round me and uttered such appalling cries, that I was panic stricken lest Proserpine should send up from the house of Hades the head of that awful monster Gorgon. On this I hastened back to my ship and ordered my men to go on board at once and loose the hawsers; so they embarked and took their places, whereon the ship went down the stream of the river Oceanus. We had to row at first, but presently a fair wind sprang up.

Book XII

“AFTER we were clear of the river Oceanus, and had got out into the open sea, we went on till we reached the Aeaean island where there is dawn and sunrise as in other places. We then drew our ship on to the sands and got out of her on to the shore, where we went to sleep and waited till day should break.

“Then, when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, I sent some men to Circe’s house to fetch the body of Elpenor. We cut firewood from a wood where the headland jutted out into the sea, and after we had wept over him and lamented him we performed his funeral rites. When his body and armour had been burned to ashes, we raised a cairn, set a stone over it, and at the top of the cairn we fixed the oar that he had been used to row with.

“While we were doing all this, Circe, who knew that we had got back from the house of Hades, dressed herself and came to us as fast as she could; and her maid servants came with her bringing us bread, meat, and wine. Then she stood in the midst of us and said, ‘You have done a bold thing in going down alive to the house of Hades, and you will have died twice, to other people’s once; now, then, stay here for the rest of the day, feast your fill, and go on with your voyage at daybreak tomorrow morning. In the meantime I will tell Ulysses about your course, and will explain everything to him so as to prevent your suffering from misadventure either by land or sea.’

“We agreed to do as she had said, and feasted through the livelong day to the going down of the sun, but when the sun had set and it came on dark, the men laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship. Then Circe took me by the hand and bade me be seated away from the others, while she reclined by my side and asked me all about our adventures.

“’So far so good,’ said she, when I had ended my story, ‘and now pay attention to what I am about to tell you heaven itself, indeed, will recall it to your recollection. First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If any one unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. There is a great heap of dead men’s bones lying all around, with the flesh still rotting off them. Therefore pass these Sirens by, and stop your men’s ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get the men to bind you as you stand upright on a cross-piece half way up the mast, and they must lash the rope’s ends to the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster.

“’When your crew have taken you past these Sirens, I cannot give you coherent directions as to which of two courses you are to take; I will lay the two alternatives before you, and you must consider them for yourself. On the one hand there are some overhanging rocks against which the deep blue waves of Amphitrite beat with terrific fury; the blessed gods call these rocks the Wanderers. Here not even a bird may pass, no, not even the timid doves that bring ambrosia to Father Jove, but the sheer rock always carries off one of them, and Father Jove has to send another to make up their number; no ship that ever yet came to these rocks has got away again, but the waves and whirlwinds of fire are freighted with wreckage and with the bodies of dead men. The only vessel that ever sailed and got through, was the famous Argo on her way from the house of Aetes, and she too would have gone against these great rocks, only that Juno piloted her past them for the love she bore to Jason.

“’Of these two rocks the one reaches heaven and its peak is lost in a dark cloud. This never leaves it, so that the top is never clear not even in summer and early autumn. No man though he had twenty hands and twenty feet could get a foothold on it and climb it, for it runs sheer up, as smooth as though it had been polished. In the middle of it there is a large cavern, looking West and turned towards Erebus; you must take your ship this way, but the cave is so high up that not even the stoutest archer could send an arrow into it. Inside it Scylla sits and yelps with a voice that you might take to be that of a young hound, but in truth she is a dreadful monster and no one not even a god could face her without being terror-struck. She has twelve mis-shapen feet, and six necks of the most prodigious length; and at the end of each neck she has a frightful head with three rows of teeth in each, all set very close together, so that they would crunch any one to death in a moment, and she sits deep within her shady cell thrusting out her heads and peering all round the rock, fishing for dolphins or dogfish or any larger monster that she can catch, of the thousands with which Amphitrite teems. No ship ever yet got past her without losing some men, for she shoots out all her heads at once, and carries off a man in each mouth.

“’You will find the other rocks lie lower, but they are so close together that there is not more than a bowshot between them. [A large fig tree in full leaf grows upon it], and under it lies the sucking whirlpool of Charybdis. Three times in the day does she vomit forth her waters, and three times she sucks them down again; see that you be not there when she is sucking, for if you are, Neptune

himself could not save you; you must hug the Scylla side and drive ship by as fast as you can, for you had better lose six men than your whole crew.'

"'Is there no way,' said I, 'of escaping Charybdis, and at the same time keeping Scylla off when she is trying to harm my men?'

"'You dare-devil,' replied the goddess, you are always wanting to fight somebody or something; you will not let yourself be beaten even by the immortals. For Scylla is not mortal; moreover she is savage, extreme, rude, cruel and invincible. There is no help for it; your best chance will be to get by her as fast as ever you can, for if you dawdle about her rock while you are putting on your armour, she may catch you with a second cast of her six heads, and snap up another half dozen of your men; so drive your ship past her at full speed, and roar out lustily to Crataiis who is Scylla's dam, bad luck to her; she will then stop her from making a second raid upon you.

"'You will now come to the Thrinacian island, and here you will see many herds of cattle and flocks of sheep belonging to the sun-god seven herds of cattle and seven flocks of sheep, with fifty head in each flock. They do not breed, nor do they become fewer in number, and they are tended by the goddesses Phaethusa and Lampetie, who are children of the sun-god Hyperion by Neaera. Their mother when she had borne them and had done suckling them sent them to the Thrinacian island, which was a long way off, to live there and look after their father's flocks and herds. If you leave these flocks unharmed, and think of nothing but getting home, you may yet after much hardship reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, then I forewarn you of the destruction both of your ship and of your comrades; and even though you may yourself escape, you will return late, in bad plight, after losing all your men.'

"Here she ended, and dawn enthroned in gold began to show in heaven, whereon she returned inland. I then went on board and told my men to loose the ship from her moorings; so they at once got into her, took their places, and began to smite the grey sea with their oars. Presently the great and cunning goddess Circe befriended us with
a fair wind that blew dead aft, and stayed steadily with us, keeping our sails well filled, so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship's gear, and let her go as wind and helmsman headed her.

"Then, being much troubled in mind, I said to my men, 'My friends, it is not right that one or two of us alone should know the prophecies that Circe has made me, I will therefore tell you about them, so that whether we live or die we may do so with our eyes open. First she said we were to keep clear of the Sirens, who sit and sing most beautifully in a field of flowers; but she said I might hear them myself so long as no one else did. Therefore, take me and bind me to the crosspiece half way up the mast; bind me as I stand upright, with a bond so fast that I cannot possibly break away, and lash the rope's ends to the mast itself. If I beg and pray you to set me free, then bind me more tightly still.'

"I had hardly finished telling everything to the men before we reached the island of the two Sirens, for the wind had been very favourable. Then all of a sudden it fell dead calm; there was not a breath of wind nor a ripple upon the water, so the men furled the sails and stowed them; then taking to their oars they whitened the water with the foam they raised in rowing. Meanwhile I look a large wheel of wax and cut it up small with my sword. Then I kneaded the wax in my strong hands till it became soft, which it soon did between the kneading and the rays of the sun-god son of Hyperion. Then I stopped the ears of all my men, and they bound me hands and feet to the mast as I stood upright on the crosspiece; but they went on rowing themselves. When we had got within earshot of the land, and the ship was going at a good rate, the Sirens saw that we were getting in shore and began with their singing.

"'Come here,' they sang, 'renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.'

"They sang these words most musically, and as I longed to hear them further I made by frowning to my men that they should set me free; but they quickened their stroke, and Eurylochus and Perimedes bound me with still stronger bonds till we had got out of hearing of the Sirens' voices. Then my men took the wax from their ears and unbound me.

"Immediately after we had got past the island I saw a great wave from which spray was rising, and I heard a loud roaring sound. The men were so frightened that they loosed hold of their oars, for the whole sea resounded with the rushing of the waters, but the ship stayed where it was, for the men had left off rowing. I went round, therefore, and exhorted them man by man not to lose heart.

"'My friends,' said I, 'this is not the first time that we have been in danger, and we are in nothing like so bad a case as when the Cyclops shut us up in his cave; nevertheless, my courage and wise counsel saved us then, and we shall live to look back on all this

as well. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say, trust in Jove and row on with might and main. As for you, coxswain, these are your orders; attend to them, for the ship is in your hands; turn her head away from these steaming rapids and hug the rock, or she will give you the slip and be over yonder before you know where you are, and you will be the death of us.'

"So they did as I told them; but I said nothing about the awful monster Scylla, for I knew the men would not on rowing if I did, but would huddle together in the hold. In one thing only did I disobey Circe's strict instructions I put on my armour. Then seizing two strong spears I took my stand on the ship Is bows, for it was there that I expected first to see the monster of the rock, who was to do my men so much harm; but I could not make her out anywhere, though I strained my eyes with looking the gloomy rock all over and over

"Then we entered the Straits in great fear of mind, for on the one hand was Scylla, and on the other dread Charybdis kept sucking up the salt water. As she vomited it up, it was like the water in a cauldron when it is boiling over upon a great fire, and the spray reached the top of the rocks on either side. When she began to suck again, we could see the water all inside whirling round and round, and it made a deafening sound as it broke against the rocks. We could see the bottom of the whirlpool all black with sand and mud, and the men were at their wit's ends for fear. While we were taken up with this, and were expecting each moment to be our last, Scylla pounced down suddenly upon us and snatched up my six best men. I was looking at once after both ship and men, and in a moment I saw their hands and feet ever so high above me, struggling in the air as Scylla was carrying them off, and I heard them call out my name in one last despairing cry. As a fisherman, seated, spear in hand, upon some jutting rock throws bait into the water to deceive the poor little fishes, and spears them with the ox's horn with which his spear is shod, throwing them gasping on to the land as he catches them one by one even so did Scylla land these panting creatures on her rock and munch them up at the mouth of her den, while they screamed and stretched out their hands to me in their mortal agony. This was the most sickening sight that I saw throughout all my voyages.

"When we had passed the [Wandering] rocks, with Scylla and terrible Charybdis, we reached the noble island of the sun-god, where were the goodly cattle and sheep belonging to the sun Hyperion. While still at sea in my ship I could bear the cattle lowing as they came home to the yards, and the sheep bleating. Then I remembered what the blind Theban prophet Teiresias had told me, and how carefully Aeaean Circe had warned me to shun the island of the blessed sun-god. So being much troubled I said to the men, 'My men, I know you are hard pressed, but listen while I tell you the prophecy that Teiresias made me, and how carefully Aeaean Circe warned me to shun the island of the blessed sun-god, for it was here, she said, that our worst danger would lie. Head the ship, therefore, away from the island.'

"The men were in despair at this, and Eurylochus at once gave me an insolent answer. 'Ulysses,' said he, 'you are cruel; you are very strong yourself and never get worn out; you seem to be made of iron, and now, though your men are exhausted with toil and want of sleep, you will not let them land and cook themselves a good supper upon this island, but bid them put out to sea and go faring fruitlessly on through the watches of the flying night. It is by night that the winds blow hardest and do so much damage; how can we escape should one of those sudden squalls spring up from South West or West, which so often wreck a vessel when our lords the gods are unpropitious? Now, therefore, let us obey the of night and prepare our supper here hard by the ship; to-morrow morning we will go on board again and put out to sea.'

"Thus spoke Eurylochus, and the men approved his words. I saw that heaven meant us a mischief and said, 'You force me to yield, for you are many against one, but at any rate each one of you must take his solemn oath that if he meet with a herd of cattle or a large flock of sheep, he will not be so mad as to kill a single head of either, but will be satisfied with the food that Circe has given us.'

"They all swore as I bade them, and when they had completed their oath we made the ship fast in a harbour that was near a stream of fresh water, and the men went ashore and cooked their suppers. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, they began talking about their poor comrades whom Scylla had snatched up and eaten; this set them weeping and they went on crying till they fell off into a sound sleep.

"In the third watch of the night when the stars had shifted their places, Jove raised a great gale of wind that flew a hurricane so that land and sea were covered with thick clouds, and night sprang forth out of the heavens. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, we brought the ship to land and drew her into a cave wherein the sea-nymphs hold their courts and dances, and I called the men together in council.

"'My friends,' said I, 'we have meat and drink in the ship, let us mind, therefore, and not touch the cattle, or we shall suffer for it; for these cattle and sheep belong to the mighty sun, who sees and gives ear to everything. And again they promised that they would obey.

"For a whole month the wind blew steadily from the South, and there was no other wind, but only South and East. As long as corn and wine held out the men did not touch the cattle when they were hungry; when, however, they had eaten all there was in the ship, they were forced to go further afield, with hook and line, catching birds, and taking whatever they could lay their hands on; for they were starving. One day, therefore, I went up inland that I might pray heaven to show me some means of getting away. When I had gone far enough to be clear of all my men, and had found a place that was well sheltered from the wind, I washed my hands and prayed to all the gods in Olympus till by and by they sent me off into a sweet sleep.

"Meanwhile Eurylochus had been giving evil counsel to the men, 'Listen to me,' said he, 'my poor comrades. All deaths are bad enough but there is none so bad as famine. Why should not we drive in the best of these cows and offer them in sacrifice to the immortal Rods? If we ever get back to Ithaca, we can build a fine temple to the sun-god and enrich it with every kind of ornament; if, however, he is determined to sink our ship out of revenge for these homed cattle, and the other gods are of the same mind, I for one would rather drink salt water once for all and have done with it, than be starved to death by inches in such a desert island as this is.'

"Thus spoke Eurylochus, and the men approved his words. Now the cattle, so fair and goodly, were feeding not far from the ship; the men, therefore drove in the best of them, and they all stood round them saying their prayers, and using young oak-shoots instead of barley-meal, for there was no barley left. When they had done praying they killed the cows and dressed their carcasses; they cut out the thigh bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, and set some pieces of raw meat on top of them. They had no wine with which to make drink-offerings over the sacrifice while it was cooking, so they kept pouring on a little water from time to time while the inward meats were being grilled; then, when the thigh bones were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small and put the pieces upon the spits.

"By this time my deep sleep had left me, and I turned back to the ship and to the sea shore. As I drew near I began to smell hot roast meat, so I groaned out a prayer to the immortal gods. 'Father Jove,' I exclaimed, 'and all you other gods who live in everlasting bliss, you have done me a cruel mischief by the sleep into which you have sent me; see what fine work these men of mine have been making in my absence.'

"Meanwhile Lampetie went straight off to the sun and told him we had been killing his cows, whereon he flew into a great rage, and said to the immortals, 'Father Jove, and all you other gods who live in everlasting bliss, I must have vengeance on the crew of Ulysses' ship: they have had the insolence to kill my cows, which were the one thing I loved to look upon, whether I was going up heaven or down again. If they do not square accounts with me about my cows, I will go down to Hades and shine there among the dead.'

"'Sun,' said Jove, 'go on shining upon us gods and upon mankind over the fruitful earth. I will shiver their ship into little pieces with a bolt of white lightning as soon as they get out to sea.'

"I was told all this by Calypso, who said she had heard it from the mouth of Mercury.

"As soon as I got down to my ship and to the sea shore I rebuked each one of the men separately, but we could see no way out of it, for the cows were dead already. And indeed the gods began at once to show signs and wonders among us, for the hides of the cattle crawled about, and the joints upon the spits began to low like cows, and the meat, whether cooked or raw, kept on making a noise just as cows do.

"For six days my men kept driving in the best cows and feasting upon them, but when Jove the son of Saturn had added a seventh day, the fury of the gale abated; we therefore went on board, raised our masts, spread sail, and put out to sea. As soon as we were well away from the island, and could see nothing but sky and sea, the son of Saturn raised a black cloud over our ship, and the sea grew dark beneath it. We not get on much further, for in another moment we were caught by a terrific squall from the West that snapped the forestays of the mast so that it fell aft, while all the ship's gear tumbled about at the bottom of the vessel. The mast fell upon the head of the helmsman in the ship's stern, so that the bones of his head were crushed to pieces, and he fell overboard as though he were diving, with no more life left in him.

“Then Jove let fly with his thunderbolts, and the ship went round and round, and was filled with fire and brimstone as the lightning struck it. The men all fell into the sea; they were carried about in the water round the ship, looking like so many sea-gulls, but the god presently deprived them of all chance of getting home again.

“I stuck to the ship till the sea knocked her sides from her keel (which drifted about by itself) and struck the mast out of her in the direction of the keel; but there was a backstay of stout ox-thong still hanging about it, and with this I lashed the mast and keel together, and getting astride of them was carried wherever the winds chose to take me.

“[The gale from the West had now spent its force, and the wind got into the South again, which frightened me lest I should be taken back to the terrible whirlpool of Charybdis. This indeed was what actually happened, for I was borne along by the waves all night, and by sunrise had reacfied the rock of Scylla, and the whirlpool. She was then sucking down the salt sea water, but I was carried aloft toward the fig tree, which I caught hold of and clung on to like a bat. I could not plant my feet anywhere so as to stand securely, for the roots were a long way off and the boughs that overshadowed the whole pool were too high, too vast, and too far apart for me to reach them; so I hung patiently on, waiting till the pool should discharge my mast and raft again and a very long while it seemed. A juryman is not more glad to get home to supper, after having been long detained in court by troublesome cases, than I was to see my raft beginning to work its way out of the whirlpool again. At last I let go with my hands and feet, and fell heavily into the sea, bard by my raft on to which I then got, and began to row with my hands. As for Scylla, the father of gods and men would not let her get further sight of me otherwise I should have certainly been lost.]

“Hence I was carried along for nine days till on the tenth night the gods stranded me on the Ogygian island, where dwells the great and powerful goddess Calypso. She took me in and was kind to me, but I need say no more about this, for I told you and your noble wife all about it yesterday, and I hate saying the same thing over and over again.”

Book XIII

THUS did he speak, and they all held their peace throughout the covered cloister, enthralled by the charm of his story, till presently Alcinous began to speak.

“Ulysses,” said he, “now that you have reached my house I doubt not you will get home without further misadventure no matter how much you have suffered in the past. To you others, however, who come here night after night to drink my choicest wine and listen to my bard, I would insist as follows. Our guest has already packed up the clothes, wrought gold, and other valuables which you have brought for his acceptance; let us now, therefore, present him further, each one of us, with a large tripod and a cauldron. We will recoup ourselves by the levy of a general rate; for private individuals cannot be expected to bear the burden of such a handsome present.”

Every one approved of this, and then they went home to bed each in his own abode. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, they hurried down to the ship and brought their cauldrons with them. Alcinous went on board and saw everything so securely stowed under the ship’s benches that nothing could break adrift and injure the rowers. Then they went to the house of Alcinous to get dinner, and he sacrificed a bull for them in honour of Jove who is the lord of all. They set the steaks to grill and made an excellent dinner, after which the inspired bard, Demodocus, who was a favourite with every one, sang to them; but Ulysses kept on turning his eyes towards the sun, as though to hasten his setting, for he was longing to be on his way. As one who has been all day ploughing a fallow field with a couple of oxen keeps thinking about his supper and is glad when night comes that he may go and get it, for it is all his legs can do to carry him, even so did Ulysses rejoice when the sun went down, and he at once said to the Phaecians, addressing himself more particularly to King Alcinous:

“Sir, and all of you, farewell. Make your drink-offerings and send me on my way rejoicing, for you have fulfilled my heart’s desire by giving me an escort, and making me presents, which heaven grant that I may turn to good account; may I find my admirable wife living in peace among friends, and may you whom I leave behind me give satisfaction to your wives and children; may heaven vouchsafe you every good grace, and may no evil thing come among your people.”

Thus did he speak. His hearers all of them approved his saying and agreed that he should have his escort inasmuch as he had spoken reasonably. Alcinous therefore said to his servant, “Pontonous, mix some wine and hand it round to everybody, that we may offer a prayer to father Jove, and speed our guest upon his way.”

Pontonous mixed the wine and handed it to every one in turn; the others each from his own seat made a drink-offering to the blessed gods that live in heaven, but Ulysses rose and placed the double cup in the hands of queen Arete.

"Farewell, queen," said he, "henceforward and for ever, till age and death, the common lot of mankind, lay their hands upon you. I now take my leave; be happy in this house with your children, your people, and with king Alcinous."

As he spoke he crossed the threshold, and Alcinous sent a man to conduct him to his ship and to the sea shore. Arete also sent some maid servants with him one with a clean shirt and cloak, another to carry his strong-box, and a third with corn and wine. When they got to the water side the crew took these things and put them on board, with all the meat and drink; but for Ulysses they spread a rug and a linen sheet on deck that he might sleep soundly in the stern of the ship. Then he too went on board and lay down without a word, but the crew took every man his place and loosed the hawser from the pierced stone to which it had been bound. Thereon, when they began rowing out to sea, Ulysses fell into a deep, sweet, and almost deathlike slumber.

The ship bounded forward on her way as a four in hand chariot flies over the course when the horses feel the whip. Her prow curveted as it were the neck of a stallion, and a great wave of dark blue water seethed in her wake. She held steadily on her course, and even a falcon, swiftest of all birds, could not have kept pace with her. Thus, then, she cut her way through the water. carrying one who was as cunning as the gods, but who was now sleeping peacefully, forgetful of all that he had suffered both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea.

When the bright star that heralds the approach of dawn began to show. the ship drew near to land. Now there is in Ithaca a haven of the old merman Phorcys, which lies between two points that break the line of the sea and shut the harbour in. These shelter it from the storms of wind and sea that rage outside, so that, when once within it, a ship may lie without being even moored. At the head of this harbour there is a large olive tree, and at no distance a fine overarching cavern sacred to the nymphs who are called Naiads. There are mixing-bowls within it and winejars of stone, and the bees hive there. Moreover, there are great looms of stone on which the nymphs weave their robes of sea purple very curious to see and at all times there is water within it. It has two entrances, one facing North by which mortals can go down into the cave, while the other comes from the South and is more mysterious; mortals cannot possibly get in by it, it is the way taken by the gods.

Into this harbour, then, they took their ship, for they knew the place, She had so much way upon her that she ran half her own length on to the shore; when, however, they had landed, the first thing they did was to lift Ulysses with his rug and linen sheet out of the ship, and lay him down upon the sand still fast asleep. Then they took out the presents which Minerva had persuaded the Phaeacians to give him when he was setting out on his voyage homewards. They put these all together by the root of the olive tree, away from the road, for fear some passer by might come and steal them before Ulysses awoke; and then they made the best of their way home again.

But Neptune did not forget the threats with which he had already threatened Ulysses, so he took counsel with Jove. "Father Jove," said he, "I shall no longer be held in any sort of respect among you gods, if mortals like the Phaeacians, who are my own flesh and blood, show such small regard for me. I said I would Ulysses get home when he had suffered sufficiently. I did not say that he should never get home at all, for I knew you had already nodded your head about it, and promised that he should do so; but now they have brought him in a ship fast asleep and have landed him in Ithaca after loading him with more magnificent presents of bronze, gold, and raiment than he would ever have brought back from Troy, if he had had his share of the spoil and got home without misadventure."

And Jove answered, "What, O Lord of the Earthquake, are you talking about? The gods are by no means wanting in respect for you. It would be monstrous were they to insult one so old and honoured as you are. As regards mortals, however, if any of them is indulging in insolence and treating you disrespectfully, it will always rest with yourself to deal with him as you may think proper, so do just as you please."

"I should have done so at once," replied Neptune, "if I were not anxious to avoid anything that might displease you; now, therefore, I should like to wreck the Phaecian ship as it is returning from its escort. This will stop them from escorting people in future; and I should also like to bury their city under a huge mountain."

"My good friend," answered Jove, "I should recommend you at the very moment when the people from the city are watching the ship on her way, to turn it into a rock near the land and looking like a ship. This will astonish everybody, and you can then bury their city under the mountain."

When earth-encircling Neptune heard this he went to Scheria where the Phaecians live, and stayed there till the ship, which was making rapid way, had got close-in. Then he went up to it, turned it into stone, and drove it down with the flat of his hand so as to

root it in the ground. After this he went away.

The Phaeacians then began talking among themselves, and one would turn towards his neighbour, saying, “Bless my heart, who is it that can have rooted the ship in the sea just as she was getting into port? We could see the whole of her only moment ago.”

This was how they talked, but they knew nothing about it; and Alcinous said, “I remember now the old prophecy of my father. He said that Neptune would be angry with us for taking every one so safely over the sea, and would one day wreck a Phaeacian ship as it was returning from an escort, and bury our city under a high mountain. This was what my old father used to say, and now it is all coming true. Now therefore let us all do as I say; in the first place we must leave off giving people escorts when they come here, and in the next let us sacrifice twelve picked bulls to Neptune that he may have mercy upon us, and not bury our city under the high mountain.” When the people heard this they were afraid and got ready the bulls.

Thus did the chiefs and rulers of the Phaecians to king Neptune, standing round his altar; and at the same time Ulysses woke up once more upon his own soil. He had been so long away that he did not know it again; moreover, Jove’s daughter Minerva had made it a foggy day, so that people might not know of his having come, and that she might tell him everything without either his wife or his fellow citizens and friends recognizing him until he had taken his revenge upon the wicked suitors. Everything, therefore, seemed quite different to him the long straight tracks, the harbours, the precipices, and the goodly trees, appeared all changed as he started up and looked upon his native land. So he smote his thighs with the flat of his hands and cried aloud despairingly.

“Alas,” he exclaimed, “among what manner of people am I fallen? Are they savage and uncivilized or hospitable and humane? Where shall I put all this treasure, and which way shall I go? I wish I had stayed over there with

the Phaeacians; or I could have gone to some other great chief who would have been good to me and given me an escort. As it is I do not know where to put my treasure, and I cannot leave it here for fear somebody else should get hold of it. In good truth the chiefs and rulers of the Phaeacians have not been dealing fairly by me, and have left me in the wrong country; they said they would take me back to Ithaca and they have not done so: may Jove the protector of suppliants chastise them, for he watches over everybody and punishes those who do wrong. Still, I suppose I must count my goods and see if the crew have gone off with any of them.”

He counted his goodly coppers and cauldrons, his gold and all his clothes, but there was nothing missing; still he kept grieving about not being in his own country, and wandered up and down by the shore of the sounding sea bewailing his hard fate. Then Minerva came up to him disguised as a young shepherd of delicate and princely mien, with a good cloak folded double about her shoulders; she had sandals on her comely feet and held a javelin in her hand. Ulysses was glad when he saw her, and went straight up to her.

“My friend,” said he, “you are the first person whom I have met with in this country; I salute you, therefore, and beg you to be will disposed towards me. Protect these my goods, and myself too, for I embrace your knees and pray to you as though you were a god. Tell me, then, and tell me truly, what land and country is this? Who are its inhabitants? Am I on an island, or is this the sea board of some continent?”

Minerva answered, “Stranger, you must be very simple, or must have come from somewhere a long way off, not to know what country this is. It is a very celebrated place, and everybody knows it East and West. It is rugged and not a good driving country, but it is by no means a bid island for what there is of it. It grows any quantity of corn and also wine, for it is watered both by rain and dew; it breeds cattle also and goats; all kinds of timber grow here, and there are watering places where the water never runs dry; so, sir, the name of Ithaca is known even as far as Troy, which I understand to be a long way off from this Achaean country.”

Ulysses was glad at finding himself, as Minerva told him, in his own country, and he began to answer, but he did not speak the truth, and made up a lying story in the instinctive wiliness of his heart.

“I heard of Ithaca,” said he, “when I was in Crete beyond the seas, and now it seems I have reached it with all these treasures. I have left as much more behind me for my children, but am flying because I killed Orsilochus son of Idomeneus, the fleetest runner in Crete. I killed him because he wanted to rob me of the spoils I had got from Troy with so much trouble and danger both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea; he said I had not served his father loyally at Troy as vassal, but had set myself up as an independent ruler, so I lay in wait for him and with one of my followers by the road side, and speared him as he was coming into town from the country. my It was a very dark night and nobody saw us; it was not known, therefore, that I had killed him, but

as soon as I had done so I went to a ship and besought the owners, who were Phoenicians, to take me on board and set me in Pylos or in Elis where the Epeans rule, giving them as much spoil as satisfied them. They meant no guile, but the wind drove them off their course, and we sailed on till we came hither by night. It was all we could do to get inside the harbour, and none of us said a word about supper though we wanted it badly, but we all went on shore and lay down just as we were. I was very tired and fell asleep directly, so they took my goods out of the ship, and placed them beside me where I was lying upon the sand. Then they sailed away to Sidonia, and I was left here in great distress of mind."

Such was his story, but Minerva smiled and caressed him with her hand. Then she took the form of a woman, fair, stately, and wise, "He must be indeed a shifty lying fellow," said she, "who could surpass you in all manner of craft even though you had a god for your antagonist. Dare-devil that you are, full of guile, unwearying in deceit,
can you not drop your tricks and your instinctive falsehood, even now that you are in your own country again? We will say no more, however, about this, for we can both of us deceive upon occasion you are the most accomplished counsellor and orator among all mankind, while I for diplomacy and subtlety have no equal among the gods. Did you not know Jove's daughter Minerva me, who have been ever with you, who kept watch over you in all your troubles, and who made the Phaeacians take so great a liking to you? And now, again, I am come here to talk things over with you, and help you to hide the treasure I made the Phaeacians give you; I want to tell you about the troubles that await you in your own house; you have got to face them, but tell no one, neither man nor woman, that you have come home again. Bear everything, and put up with every man's insolence, without a word."

And Ulysses answered, "A man, goddess, may know a great deal, but you are so constantly changing your appearance that when he meets you it is a hard matter for him to know whether it is you or not. This much, however, I know exceedingly well; you were very kind to me as long as we Achaeans were fighting before Troy, but from the day on which we went on board ship after having sacked the city of Priam, and heaven dispersed us from that day, Minerva, I saw no more of you, and cannot ever remember your coming to my ship to help me in a difficulty; I had to wander on sick and sorry till the gods delivered me from evil and I reached the city of the Phaeacians, where you encouraged me and took me into the town. And now, I beseech you in your father's name, tell me the truth, for I do not believe I am really back in Ithaca. I am in some other country and you are mocking me and deceiving me in all you have been saying. Tell me then truly, have I really got back to my own country?"

"You are always taking something of that sort into your head," replied Minerva, "and that is why I cannot desert you in your afflictions; you are so plausible, shrewd and shifty. Any one but yourself on returning from so long a voyage would at once have gone home to see his wife and children, but you do not seem to care about asking after them or hearing any news about them till you have exploited your wife, who remains at home vainly grieving for you, and having no peace night or day for the tears she sheds on your behalf. As for my not coming near you, I was never uneasy about you, for I was certain you would get back safely though you would lose all your men, and I did not wish to quarrel with my uncle Neptune, who never forgave you for having blinded his son. I will now, however, point out to you the lie of the land, and you will then perhaps believe me. This is the haven of the old merman Phorcys, and here is the olive tree that grows at the head of it; [near it is the cave sacred to the Naiads;] here too is the overarching cavern in which you have offered many an acceptable hecatomb to the nymphs, and this is the wooded mountain Neritum."

As she spoke the goddess dispersed the mist and the land appeared. Then Ulysses rejoiced at finding himself again in his own land, and kissed the bounteous soil; he lifted up his hands and prayed to the nymphs, saying, "Naiad nymphs, daughters of Jove, I made sure that I was never again to see you, now therefore I greet you with all loving salutations, and I will bring you offerings as in the old days, if Jove's redoubtable daughter will grant me life, and bring my son to manhood."

"Take heart, and do not trouble yourself about that," rejoined Minerva, "let us rather set about stowing your things at once in the cave, where they will be quite safe. Let us see how we can best manage it all."

Therewith she went down into the cave to look for the safest hiding places, while Ulysses brought up all the treasure of gold, bronze, and good clothing which the Phaecians had given him. They stowed everything carefully away, and Minerva set a stone against the door of the cave. Then the two sat down by the root of the great olive, and consulted how to compass the destruction of the wicked suitors.

"Ulysses," said Minerva, "noble son of Laertes, think how you can lay hands on these disreputable people who have been lording it in your house these three years, courting your wife and making wedding presents to her, while she does nothing but lament your absence, giving hope and sending your encouraging messages to every one of them, but meaning the very opposite of all she says'

And Ulysses answered, “In good truth, goddess, it seems I should have come to much the same bad end in my own house as Agamemnon did, if you had not given me such timely information. Advise me how I shall best avenge myself. Stand by my side and put your courage into my heart as on the day when we loosed Troy’s fair diadem from her brow. Help me now as you did then, and I will fight three hundred men, if you, goddess, will be with me.”

“Trust me for that,” said she, “I will not lose sight of you when once we set about it, and I would imagine that some of those who are devouring your substance will then bespatter the pavement with their blood and brains. I will begin by disguising you so that no human being shall know you; I will cover your body with wrinkles; you shall lose all your yellow hair; I will clothe you in a garment that shall fill all who see it with loathing; I will blear your fine eyes for you, and make you an unseemly object in the sight of the suitors, of your wife, and of the son whom you left behind you. Then go at once to the swineherd who is in charge of your pigs; he has been always well affected towards you, and is devoted to Penelope and your son; you will find him feeding his pigs near the rock that is called Raven by the fountain Arethusa, where they are fattening on beechmast and spring water after their manner. Stay with him and find out how things are going, while I proceed to Sparta and see your son, who is with Menelaus at Lacedaemon, where he has gone to try and find out whether you are still alive.”

“But why,” said Ulysses, “did you not tell him, for you knew all about it? Did you want him too to go sailing about amid all kinds of hardship while others are eating up his estate?”

Minerva answered, “Never mind about him, I sent him that he might be well spoken of for having gone. He is in no sort of difficulty, but is staying quite comfortably with Menelaus, and is surrounded with abundance of every kind. The suitors have put out to sea and are lying in wait for him, for they mean to kill him before he can get home. I do not much think they will succeed, but rather that some of those who are now eating up your estate will first find a grave themselves.”

As she spoke Minerva touched him with her wand and covered him with wrinkles, took away all his yellow hair, and withered the flesh over his whole body; she bleared his eyes, which were naturally very fine ones; she changed his clothes and threw an old rag of a wrap about him, and a tunic, tattered, filthy, and begrimed with smoke; she also gave him an undressed deer skin as an outer garment, and furnished him with a staff and a wallet all in holes, with a twisted thong for him to sling it over his shoulder.

When the pair had thus laid their plans they parted, and the goddess went straight to Lacedaemon to fetch Telemachus.

Book XIV

ULYSSES now left the haven, and took the rough track up through the wooded country and over the crest of the mountain till he reached the place where Minerva had said that he would find the swineherd, who was the most thrifty servant he had. He found him sitting in front of his hut, which was by the yards that he had built on a site which could be seen from far. He had made them spacious and fair to see, with a free ran for the pigs all round them; he had built them during his master’s absence, of stones which he had gathered out of the ground, without saying anything to Penelope or Laertes, and he had fenced them on top with thorn bushes. Outside the yard he had run a strong fence of oaken posts, split, and set pretty close together, while inside lie had built twelve sties near one another for the sows to lie in. There were fifty pigs wallowing in each sty, all of them breeding sows; but the boars slept outside and were much fewer in number, for the suitors kept on eating them, and die swineherd had to send them the best he had continually. There were three hundred and sixty boar pigs, and the herdsman’s four hounds, which were as fierce as wolves, slept always with them. The swineherd was at that moment cutting out a pair of sandals from a good stout ox hide. Three of his men were out herding the pigs in one place or another, and he had sent the fourth to town with a boar that he had been forced to send the suitors that they might sacrifice it and have their fill of meat.

When the hounds saw Ulysses they set up a furious barking and flew at him, but Ulysses was cunning enough to sit down and loose his hold of the stick that he had in his hand: still, he would have been torn by them in his own homestead had not the swineherd dropped his ox hide, rushed full speed through the gate of the yard and driven the dogs off by shouting and throwing stones at them. Then he said to Ulysses, “Old man, the dogs were likely to have made short work of you, and then you would have got me into trouble. The gods have given me quite enough worries without that, for I have lost the best of masters, and am in continual grief on his account. I have to attend swine for other people to eat, while he, if he yet lives to see the light of day, is starving in some distant land. But come inside, and when you have had your fill of bread and wine, tell me where you come from, and all about your misfortunes.”

On this the swineherd led the way into the hut and bade him sit down. He strewed a good thick bed of rushes upon the floor, and on the top of this he threw the shaggy chamois skin a great thick one on which he used to sleep by night. Ulysses was pleased at being made thus welcome, and said "May Jove, sir, and the rest of the gods grant you your heart's desire in return for the kind way in which you have received me."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "Stranger, though a still poorer man should come here, it would not be right for me to insult him, for all strangers and beggars are from Jove. You must take what you can get and be thankful, for servants live in fear when they have young lords for their masters; and this is my misfortune now, for heaven has hindered the return of him who would have been always good to me and given me something of my own a house, a piece of land, a good looking wife, and all else that a liberal master allows a servant who has worked hard for him, and whose labour the gods have prospered as they have mine in the situation which I hold. If my master had grown old here he would have done great things by me, but he is gone, and I wish that Helen's whole race were utterly destroyed, for she has been the death of many a good man. It was this matter that took my master to Ilius, the land of noble steeds, to fight the Trojans in the cause of kin Agamemnon."

As he spoke he bound his girdle round him and went to the sties where the young sucking pigs were penned. He picked out two which he brought back with him and sacrificed. He singed them, cut them up, and spitted on them; when the meat was cooked he brought it all in and set it before Ulysses, hot and still on the spit, whereon Ulysses sprinkled it over with white barley meal. The swineherd then mixed wine in a bowl of ivy-wood, and taking a seat opposite Ulysses told him to begin.

"Fall to, stranger," said he, "on a dish of servant's pork. The fat pigs have to go to the suitors, who eat them up without shame or scruple; but the blessed gods love not such shameful doings, and respect those who do what is lawful and right. Even the fierce free-booters who go raiding on other people's land, and Jove gives them their spoil even they, when they have filled their ships and got home again live conscience-stricken, and look fearfully for judgement; but some god seems to have told these people that Ulysses is dead and gone; they will not, therefore, go back to their own homes and make their offers of marriage in the usual way, but waste his estate by force, without fear or stint. Not a day or night comes out of heaven, but they sacrifice not one victim nor two only, and they take the run of his wine, for he was exceedingly rich. No other great man either in Ithaca or on the mainland is as rich as he was; he had as much as twenty men put together. I will tell you what he had. There are twelve herds of cattle upon the mainland, and as many flocks of sheep, there are also twelve droves of pigs, while his own men and hired strangers feed him twelve widely spreading herds of goats. Here in Ithaca he runs even large flocks of goats on the far end of the island, and they are in the charge of excellent goatherds. Each one of these sends the suitors the best goat in the flock every day. As for myself, I am in charge of the pigs that you see here, and I have to keep picking out the best I have and sending it to them."

This was his story, but Ulysses went on eating and drinking ravenously without a word, brooding his revenge.

When he had eaten enough and was satisfied, the swineherd took the bowl from which he usually drank, filled it with wine, and gave it to Ulysses, who was pleased, and said as he took it in his hands, "My friend, who was this master of yours that bought you and paid for you, so rich and so powerful as you tell me? You say he perished in the cause of King Agamemnon; tell me who he was, in case I may have met with such a person. Jove and the other gods know, but I may be able to give you news of him, for I have travelled much."

Eumaeus answered, "Old man, no traveller who comes here with news will get Ulysses' wife and son to believe his story. Nevertheless, tramps in want of a lodging keep coming with their mouths full of lies, and not a word of truth; every one who finds his way to Ithaca goes to my mistress and tells her falsehoods, whereon she takes them in, makes much of them, and asks them all manner of questions, crying all the time as women will when they have lost their husbands. And you too, old man, for a shirt and a cloak would doubtless make up a very pretty story. But the wolves and birds of prey have long since torn Ulysses to pieces, or the fishes of the sea have eaten him, and his bones are lying buried deep in sand upon some foreign shore; he is dead and gone, and a bad business it is for all his friends for me especially; go where I may I shall never find so good a master, not even if I were to go home to my mother and father where I was bred and born. I do not so much care, however, about my parents now, though I should dearly like to see them again in my own country; it is the loss of Ulysses that grieves me most; I cannot speak of him without reverence though he is here no longer, for he was very fond of me, and took such care of me that whereever he may be I shall always honour his memory."

"My friend," replied Ulysses, "you are very positive, and very hard of belief about your master's coming home again, nevertheless I will not merely say, but will swear, that he is coming. Do not give me anything for my news till he has actually come, you may

then give me a shirt and cloak of good wear if you will. I am in great want, but I will not take anything at all till then, for I hate a man, even as I hate hell fire, who lets his poverty tempt him into lying. I swear by king Jove, by the rites of hospitality, and by that hearth of Ulysses to which I have now come, that all will surely happen as I have said it will. Ulysses will return in this self same year; with the end of this moon and the beginning of the next he will be here to do vengeance on all those who are ill treating his wife and son."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "Old man, you will neither get paid for bringing good news, nor will Ulysses ever come home; drink you wine in peace, and let us talk about something else. Do not keep on reminding me of all this; it always pains me when any one speaks about my honoured master. As for your oath we will let it alone, but I only wish he may come, as do Penelope, his old father Laertes, and his son Telemachus. I am terribly unhappy too about this same boy of his; he was running up fast into manhood, and bade fare to be no worse man, face and figure, than his father, but some one, either god or man, has been unsettling his mind, so he has gone off to Pylos to try and get news of his father, and the suitors are lying in wait for him as he is coming home, in the hope of leaving the house of Arceisius without a name in Ithaca. But let us say no more about him, and leave him to be taken, or else to escape if the son of Saturn holds his hand over him to protect him. And now, old man, tell me your own story; tell me also, for I want to know, who you are and where you come from. Tell me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how crew brought you to Ithaca, and from what country they professed to come for you cannot have come by land."

And Ulysses answered, "I will tell you all about it. If there were meat and wine enough, and we could stay here in the hut with nothing to do but to eat and drink while the others go to their work, I could easily talk on for a whole twelve months without ever finishing the story of the sorrows with which it has pleased heaven to visit me.

"I am by birth a Cretan; my father was a well-to-do man, who had many sons born in marriage, whereas I was the son of a slave whom he had purchased for a concubine; nevertheless, my father Castor son of Hylax (whose lineage I claim, and who was held in the highest honour among the Cretans for his wealth, prosperity, and the valour of his sons) put me on the same level with my brothers who had been born in wedlock. When, however, death took him to the house of Hades, his sons divided his estate and cast lots for their shares, but to me they gave a holding and little else; nevertheless, my valour enabled me to marry into a rich family, for I was not given to bragging, or shirking on the field of battle. It is all over now; still, if you look at the straw you can see what the ear was, for I have had trouble enough and to spare. Mars and Minerva made me doughty in war; when I had picked my men to surprise the enemy with an ambuscade I never gave death so much as a thought, but was the first to leap forward and spear all whom I could overtake. Such was I in battle, but I did not care about farm work, nor the frugal home life of those who would bring up children. My delight was in ships, fighting, javelins, and arrows things that most men shudder to think of; but one man likes one thing and another another, and this was what I was most naturally inclined to. Before the Achaeans went to Troy, nine times was I in command of men and ships on foreign service, and I amassed much wealth. I had my pick of the spoil in the first instance, and much more was allotted to me later on.

"My house grew apace and I became a great man among the Cretans, but when Jove counselled that terrible expedition, in which so many perished, the people required me and Idomeneus to lead their ships to Troy, and there was no way out of it, for they insisted on our doing so. There we fought for nine whole years, but in the tenth we sacked the city of Priam and sailed home again as heaven dispersed us. Then it was that Jove devised evil against me. I spent but one month happily with my children, wife, and property, and then I conceived the idea of making a descent on Egypt, so I fitted out a fine fleet and manned it. I had nine ships, and the people flocked to fill them. For six days I and my men made feast, and I found them many victims both for sacrifice to the gods and for themselves, but on the seventh day we went on board and set sail from Crete with a fair North wind behind us though we were going down a river. Nothing went ill with any of our ships, and we had no sickness on board, but sat where we were and let the ships go as the wind and steersmen took them. On the fifth day we reached the river Aegyptus; there I stationed my ships in the river, bidding my men stay by them and keep guard over them while I sent out scouts to reconnoitre from every point of vantage.

"But the men disobeyed my orders, took to their own devices, and ravaged the land of the Egyptians, killing the men, and taking their wives and children captive. The alarm was soon carried to the city, and when they heard the war cry, the people came out at daybreak till the plain was filled with horsemen and foot soldiers and with the gleam of armour. Then Jove spread panic among my men, and they would no longer face the enemy, for they found themselves surrounded. The Egyptians killed many of us, and took the rest alive to do forced labour for them. Jove, however, put it in my mind to do thus and I wish I had died then and there in Egypt instead, for there was much sorrow in store for me I took off my helmet and shield and dropped my spear from my hand;

then I went straight up to the king's chariot, clasped his knees and kissed them, whereon he spared my life, bade me get into his chariot, and took me weeping to his own home. Many made at me with their ashen spears and tried to kil me in their fury, but the king protected me, for he feared the wrath of Jove the protector of strangers, who punishes those who do evil.

"I stayed there for seven years and got together much money among the Egyptians, for they all gave me something; but when it was now going on for eight years there came a certain Phoenician, a cunning rascal, who had already committed all sorts of villainy, and this man talked me over into going with him to Phoenicia, where his house and his possessions lay. I stayed there for a whole twelve months, but at the end of that time when months and days had gone by till the same season had come round again, he set me on board a ship bound for Libya, on a pretence that I was to take a cargo along with him to that place, but really that he might sell me as a slave and take the money I fetched. I suspected his intention, but went on board with him, for I could not help it.

"The ship ran before a fresh North wind till we had reached the sea that lies between Crete and Libya; there, however, Jove counselled their destruction, for as soon as we were well out from Crete and could see nothing but sea and sky, he raised a black cloud over our ship and the sea grew dark beneath it. Then Jove let fly with his thunderbolts and the ship went round and round and was filled with fire and brimstone as the lightning struck it. The men fell all into the sea; they were carried about in the water round the ship looking like so many sea-gulls, but the god presently deprived them of all chance of getting home again. I was all dismayed; Jove, however, sent the ship's mast within my reach, which saved my life, for I clung to it, and drifted before the fury of the gale. Nine days did I drift but in the darkness of the tenth night a great wave bore me on to the Thesprotian coast. There Pheidon king of the Thesprotians entertained me hospitably without charging me anything at all for his son found me when I was nearly dead with cold and fatigue, whereon he raised me by the hand, took me to his father's house and gave me clothes to wear.

"There it was that I heard news of Ulysses, for the king told me he had entertained him, and shown him much hospitality while he was on his homeward journey. He showed me also the treasure of gold, and wrought iron that Ulysses had got together. There was enough to keep his family for ten generations, so much had he left in the house of king Pheidon. But the king said Ulysses had gone to Dodona that he might learn Jove's mind from the god's high oak tree, and know whether after so long an absence he should return to Ithaca openly, or in secret. Moreover the king swore in my presence, making drink-offerings in his own house as he did so, that the ship was by the water side, and the crew found, that should take him to his own country. He sent me off however before Ulysses returned, for there happened to be a Thesprotian ship sailing for the wheat-growing island of Dulichium, and he told those in charge of her to be sure and take me safely to King Acastus.

"These men hatched a plot against me that would have reduced me to the very extreme of misery, for when the ship had got some way out from land they resolved on selling me as a slave. They stripped me of the shirt and cloak that I was wearing, and gave me instead the tattered old clouts in which you now see me; then, towards nightfall, they reached the tilled lands of Ithaca, and there they bound me with a strong rope fast in the ship, while they went on shore to get supper by the sea side. But the gods soon undid my bonds for me, and having drawn my rags over my head I slid down the rudder into the sea, where I struck out and swam till I was well clear of them, and came ashore near a thick wood in which I lay concealed. They were very angry at my having escaped and went searching about for me, till at last they thought it was no further use and went back to their ship. The gods, having hidden me thus easily, then took me to a good man's door for it seems that I am not to die yet awhile."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "Poor unhappy stranger, I have found the story of your misfortunes extremely interesting, but that part about Ulysses is not right; and you will never get me to believe it. Why should a man like you go about telling lies in this way? I know all about the return of my master. The gods one and all of them detest him, or they would have taken him before Troy, or let him die with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes and his son would have been heir to his renown, but now the storm winds have spirited him away we know not whither.

"As for me I live out of the way here with the pigs, and never go to the town unless when Penelope sends for me on the arrival of some news about Ulysses. Then they all sit round and ask questions, both those who grieve over the king's absence, and those who rejoice at it because they can eat up his property without paying for it. For my own part I have never cared about asking anyone else since the time when I was taken in by an Aetolian, who had killed a man and come a long way till at last he reached my station, and I was very kind to him. He said he had seen Ulysses with Idomeneus among the Cretans, refitting his ships which had been damaged in a gale. He said Ulysses would return in the following summer or autumn with his men, and that he would bring back much wealth. And now you, you unfortunate old man, since fate has brought you to my door, do not try to flatter me in this way

with vain hopes. It is not for any such reason that I shall treat you kindly, but only out of respect for Jove the god of hospitality, as fearing him and pitying you."

Ulysses answered, "I see that you are of an unbelieving mind; I have given you my oath, and yet you will not credit me; let us then make a bargain, and call all the gods in heaven to witness it. If your master comes home, give me a cloak and shirt of good wear, and send me to Dulichium where I want to go; but if he does not come as I say he will, set your men on to me, and tell them to throw me from yonder precepice, as a warning to tramps not to go about the country telling lies."

"And a pretty figure I should cut then," replied Eumaeus, both now and hereafter, if I were to kill you after receiving you into my hut and showing you hospitality. I should have to say my prayers in good earnest if I did; but it is just supper time and I hope my men will come in directly, that we may cook something savoury for supper."

Thus did they converse, and presently the swineherds came up with the pigs, which were then shut up for the night in their sties, and a tremendous squealing they made as they were being driven into them. But Eumaeus called to his men and said, "Bring in the best pig you have, that I may sacrifice for this stranger, and we will take toll of him ourselves. We have had trouble enough this long time feeding pigs, while others reap the fruit of our labour."

On this he began chopping firewood, while the others brought in a fine fat five year old boar pig, and set it at the altar. Eumaeus did not forget the gods, for he was a man of good principles, so the first thing he did was to cut bristles from the pig's face and throw them into the fire, praying to all the gods as he did so that Ulysses might return home again. Then he clubbed the pig with a billet of oak which he had kept back when he was chopping the firewood, and stunned it, while the others slaughtered and singed it. Then they cut it up, and Eumaeus began by putting raw pieces from each joint on to some of the fat; these he sprinkled with barley meal, and laid upon the embers; they cut the rest of the meat up small, put the pieces upon the spits and roasted them till they were done; when they had taken them off the spits they threw them on to the dresser in a heap. The swineherd, who was a most equitable man, then stood up to give every one his share. He made seven portions; one of these he set apart for Mercury the son of Maia and the nymphs, praying to them as he did so; the others he dealt out to the men man by man. He gave Ulysses some slices cut lengthways down the loin as a mark of especial honour, and Ulysses was much pleased. "I hope, Eumaeus," said he, "that Jove will be as well disposed towards you as I am, for the respect you are showing to an outcast like myself."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "Eat, my good fellow, and enjoy your supper, such as it is. God grants this, and withholds that, just as he thinks right, for he can do whatever he chooses."

As he spoke he cut off the first piece and offered it as a burnt sacrifice to the immortal gods; then he made them a drink-offering, put the cup in the hands of Ulysses, and sat down to his own portion. Mesaulius brought them their bread; the swineherd had bought this man on his own account from among the Taphians during his master's absence, and had paid for him with his own money without saying anything either to his mistress or Laertes. They then laid their hands upon the good things that were before them, and when they had had enough to eat and drink, Mesaulius took away what was left of the bread, and they all went to bed after having made a hearty supper.

Now the night came on stormy and very dark, for there was no moon. It poured without ceasing, and the wind blew strong from the West, which is a wet quarter, so Ulysses thought he would see whether Eumaeus, in the excellent care he took of him, would take off his own cloak and give it him, or make one of his men give him one. "Listen to me," said he, "Eumaeus and the rest of you; when I have said a prayer I will tell you something. It is the wine that makes me talk in this way; wine will make even a wise man fall to singing; it will make him chuckle and dance and say many a word that he had better leave unspoken; still, as I have begun, I will go on. Would that I were still young and strong as when we got up an ambuscade before Troy. Menelaus and Ulysses were the leaders, but I was in command also, for the other two would have it so. When we had come up to the wall of the city we crouched down beneath our armour and lay there under cover of the reeds and thick brush-wood that grew about the swamp. It came on to freeze with a North wind blowing; the snow fell small and fine like hoar frost, and our shields were coated thick with rime. The others had all got cloaks and shirts, and slept comfortably enough with their shields about their shoulders, but I had carelessly left my cloak behind me, not thinking that I should be too cold, and had gone off in nothing but my shirt and shield. When the night was two-thirds through and the stars had shifted their their places, I nudged Ulysses who was close to me with my elbow, and he at once gave me his ear.

"'Ulysses,' said I, 'this cold will be the death of me, for I have no cloak; some god fooled me into setting off with nothing on but my shirt, and I do not know what to do.'

“Ulysses, who was as crafty as he was valiant, hit upon the following plan:

“’Keep still,’ said he in a low voice, ‘or the others will hear you.’ Then he raised his head on his elbow.

“’My friends,’ said he, ‘I have had a dream from heaven in my sleep. We are a long way from the ships; I wish some one would go down and tell Agamemnon to send us up more men at once.’

“On this Thoas son of Andraemon threw off his cloak and set out running to the ships, whereon I took the cloak and lay in it comfortably enough till morning. Would that I were still young and strong as I was in those days, for then some one of you swineherds would give me a cloak both out of good will and for the respect due to a brave soldier; but now people look down upon me because my clothes are shabby.”

And Eumaeus answered, “Old man, you have told us an excellent story, and have said nothing so far but what is quite satisfactory; for the present, therefore, you shall want neither clothing nor anything else that a stranger in distress may reasonably expect, but to-morrow morning you have to shake your own old rags about your body again, for we have not many spare cloaks nor shirts up here, but every man has only one. When Ulysses’ son comes home again he will give you both cloak and shirt, and send you wherever you may want to go.”

With this he got up and made a bed for Ulysses by throwing some goatskins and sheepskins on the ground in front of the fire. Here Ulysses lay down, and Eumaeus covered him over with a great heavy cloak that he kept for a change in case of extraordinarily bad weather.

Thus did Ulysses sleep, and the young men slept beside him. But the swineherd did not like sleeping away from his pigs, so he got ready to go and Ulysses was glad to see that he looked after his property during his master’s absence. First he slung his sword over his brawny shoulders and put on a thick cloak to keep out the wind. He also took the skin of a large and well fed goat, and a javelin in case of attack from men or dogs. Thus equipped he went to his rest where the pigs were camping under an overhanging rock that gave them shelter from the North wind.

Book XV

BUT Minerva went to the fair city of Lacedaemon to tell Ulysses’ son that he was to return at once. She found him and Pisistratus sleeping in the forecourt of Menelaus’s house; Pisistratus was fast asleep, but Telemachus could get no rest all night for thinking of his unhappy father, so Minerva went close up to him and said:

“Telemachus, you should not remain so far away from home any longer, nor leave your property with such dangerous people in your house; they will eat up everything you have among them, and you will have been on a fool’s errand. Ask Menelaus to send you home at once if you wish to find your excellent mother still there when you get back. Her father and brothers are already urging her to marry Eurymachus, who has given her more than any of the others, and has been greatly increasing his wedding presents. I hope nothing valuable may have been taken from the house in spite of you, but you know what women are they always want to do the best they can for the man who marries them, and never give another thought to the children of their first husband, nor to their father either when he is dead and done with. Go home, therefore, and put everything in charge of the most respectable woman servant that you have, until it shall please heaven to send you a wife of your own. Let me tell you also of another matter which you had better attend to. The chief men among the suitors are lying in wait for you in the Strait between Ithaca and Samos, and they mean to kill you before you can reach home. I do not much think they will succeed; it is more likely that some of those who are now eating up your property will find a grave themselves. Sail night and day, and keep your ship well away from the islands; the god who watches over you and protects you will send you a fair wind. As soon as you get to Ithaca send your ship and men on to the town, but yourself go straight to the swineherd who has charge your pigs; he is well disposed towards you, stay with him, therefore, for the night, and then send him to Penelope to tell her that you have got back safe from Pylos.”

Then she went back to Olympus; but Telemachus stirred Pisistratus with his heel to rouse him, and said, “Wake up Pisistratus, and yoke the horses to the chariot, for we must set off home.”

But Pisistratus said, “No matter what hurry we are in we cannot drive in the dark. It will be morning soon; wait till Menelaus has brought his presents and put them in the chariot for us; and let him say good-bye to us in the usual way. So long as he lives a guest should never forget a host who has shown him kindness.”

As he spoke day began to break, and Menelaus, who had already risen, leaving Helen in bed, came towards them. When Telemachus saw him he put on his shirt as fast as he could, threw a great cloak over his shoulders, and went out to meet him. “Menelaus,” said he, “let me go back now to my own country, for I want to get home.”

And Menelaus answered, “Telemachus, if you insist on going I will not detain you. not like to see a host either too fond of his guest or too rude to him. Moderation is best in all things, and not letting a man go when he wants to do so is as bad as telling him to go if he would like to stay. One should treat a guest well as long as he is in the house and speed him when he wants to leave it. Wait, then, till I can get your beautiful presents into your chariot, and till you have yourself seen them. I will tell the women to prepare a sufficient dinner for you of what there may be in the house; it will be at once more proper and cheaper for you to get your dinner before setting out on such a long journey. If, moreover, you have a fancy for making a tour in Hellas or in the Peloponnese, I will yoke my horses, and will conduct you myself through all our principal cities. No one will send us away empty handed; every one will give us something a bronze tripod, a couple of mules, or a gold cup.”

“Menelaus,” replied Telemachus, “I want to go home at once, for when I came away I left my property without protection, and fear that while looking for my father I shall come to ruin myself, or find that something valuable has been stolen during my absence.”

When Menelaus heard this he immediately told his wife and servants to prepare a sufficient dinner from what there might be in the house. At this moment Eteoneus joined him, for he lived close by and had just got up; so Menelaus told him to light the fire and cook some meat, which he at once did. Then Menelaus went down into his fragrant store room, not alone, but Helen went too, with Megapenthes. When he reached the place where the treasures of his house were kept, he selected a double cup, and told his son Megapenthes to bring also a silver mixing-bowl. Meanwhile Helen went to the chest where she kept the lovely dresses which she had made with her own hands, and took out one that was largest and most beautifully enriched with embroidery; it glittered like a star, and lay at the very bottom of the chest. Then they all came back through the house again till they got to Telemachus, and Menelaus said, “Telemachus, may Jove, the mighty husband of Juno, bring you safely home according to your desire. I will now present you with the finest and most precious piece of plate in all my house. It is a mixing-bowl of pure silver, except the rim, which is inlaid with gold, and it is the work of Vulcan. Phaedimus king of the Sidonians made me a present of it in the course of a visit that I paid him while I was on my return home. I should like to give it to you.”

With these words he placed the double cup in the hands of Telemachus, while Megapenthes brought the beautiful mixing-bowl and set it before him. Hard by stood lovely Helen with the robe ready in her hand.

“I too, my son,” said she, “have something for you as a keepsake from the hand of Helen; it is for your bride to wear upon her wedding day. Till then, get your dear mother to keep it for you; thus may you go back rejoicing to your own country and to your home.”

So saying she gave the robe over to him and he received it gladly. Then Pisistratus put the presents into the chariot, and admired them all as he did so. Presently Menelaus took Telemachus and Pisistratus into the house, and they both of them sat down to table. A maid servant brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them; an upper servant brought them bread and offered them many good things of what there was in the house. Eteoneus carved the meat and gave them each their portions, while Megapenthes poured out the wine. Then they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them, but as soon as they had had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus and Pisistratus yoked the horses, and took their places in the chariot. They drove out through the inner gateway and under the echoing gatehouse of the outer court, and Menelaus came after them with a golden goblet of wine in his right hand that they might make a drink-offering before they set out. He stood in front of the horses and pledged them, saying, “Farewell to both of you; see that you tell Nestor how I have treated you, for he was as kind to me as any father could be while we Achaeans were fighting before Troy.”

“We will be sure, sir,” answered Telemachus, “to tell him everything as soon as we see him. I wish I were as certain of finding Ulysses returned when I get back to Ithaca, that I might tell him of the very great kindness you have shown me and of the many beautiful presents I am taking with me.”

As he was thus speaking a bird flew on his right hand an eagle with a great white goose in its talons which it had carried off from the farm yard and all the men and women were running after it and shouting. It came quite close up to them and flew away on their right hands in front of the horses. When they saw it they were glad, and their hearts took comfort within them, whereon Pisistratus said, “Tell me, Menelaus, has heaven sent this omen for us or for you?”

Menelaus was thinking what would be the most proper answer for him to make, but Helen was too quick for him and said, “I will read this matter as heaven has put it in my heart, and as I doubt not that it will come to pass. The eagle came from the mountain where it was bred and has its nest, and in like manner Ulysses, after having travelled far and suffered much, will return to take his revenge if indeed he is not back already and hatching mischief for the suitors.”

“May Jove so grant it,” replied Telemachus; “if it should prove to be so, I will make vows to you as though you were a god, even when I am at home.” As he spoke he lashed his horses and they started off at full speed through the town towards the open country.

They swayed the yoke upon their necks and travelled the whole day long till the sun set and darkness was over all the land. Then they reached Pherae, where Diocles lived who was son of Ortilochus, the son of Alpheus. There they passed the night and were treated hospitably. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, they again yoked their horses and their places in the chariot. They drove out through the inner gateway and under the echoing gatehouse of the outer court. Then Pisistratus lashed his horses on and they flew forward nothing loath; ere long they came to Pylos, and then Telemachus said:

“Pisistratus, I hope you will promise to do what I am going to ask you. You know our fathers were old friends before us; moreover, we are both of an age, and this journey has brought us together still more closely; do not, therefore, take me past my ship, but leave me there, for if I go to your father’s house he will try to keep me in the warmth of his good will towards me, and I must go home at once.”

Pisistratus thought how he should do as he was asked, and in the end he deemed it best to turn his horses towards the ship, and put Menelaus’s beautiful presents of gold and raiment in the stern of the vessel. Then he said, “Go on board at once and tell your men to do so also before I can reach home to tell my father. I know how obstinate he is, and am sure he will not let you go; he will come down here to fetch you, and he will not go back without you. But he will be very angry.”

With this he drove his goodly steeds back to the city of the Pylians and soon reached his home, but Telemachus called the men together and gave his orders. “Now, my men,” said he, “get everything in order on board the ship, and let us set out home.”

Thus did he speak, and they went on board even as he had said. But as Telemachus was thus busied, praying also and sacrificing to Minerva in the ship’s stern, there came to him a man from a distant country, a seer, who was flying from Argos because he had killed a man. He was descended from Melampus, who used to live in Pylos, the land of sheep; he was rich and owned a great house, but he was driven into exile by the great and powerful king Neleus. Neleus seized his goods and held them for a whole year, during which he was a close prisoner in the house of king Phylacus, and in much distress of mind both on account of the daughter of Neleus and because he was haunted by a great sorrow that dread Erinyes had laid upon him. In the end, however, he escaped with his life, drove the cattle from Phylace to Pylos, avenged the wrong that had been done him, and gave the daughter of Neleus to his brother. Then he left the country and went to Argos, where it was ordained that he should reign over much people. There he married, established himself, and had two famous sons Antiphates and Mantius. Antiphates became father of Oicleus, and Oicleus of Amphiaraus, who was dearly loved both by Jove and by Apollo, but he did not live to old age, for he was killed in Thebes by reason of a woman’s gifts. His sons were Alcmaeon and Amphilochus. Mantius, the other son of Melampus, was father to Polypheides and Cleitus. Aurora, throned in gold, carried off Cleitus for his beauty’s sake, that he might dwell among the immortals, but Apollo made Polypheides the greatest seer in the whole world now that Amphiaraus was dead. He quarrelled with his father and went to live in Hyperesia, where he remained and prophesied for all men.

His son, Theoclymenus, it was who now came up to Telemachus as he was making drink-offerings and praying in his ship. “Friend’” said he, “now that I find you sacrificing in this place, I beseech you by your sacrifices themselves, and by the god to whom you make them, I pray you also by your own head and by those of your followers, tell me the truth and nothing but the truth. Who and whence are you? Tell me also of your town and parents.”

Telemachus said, “I will answer you quite truly. I am from Ithaca, and my father is ‘Ulysses, as surely as that he ever lived. But he has come to some miserable end. Therefore I have taken this ship and got my crew together to see if I can hear any news of him, for he has been away a long time.”

“I too,” answered Theoclymenus, am an exile, for I have killed a man of my own race. He has many brothers and kinsmen in Argos, and they have great power among the Argives. I am flying to escape death at their hands, and am thus doomed to be a wanderer on the face of the earth. I am your suppliant; take me, therefore, on board your ship that they may not kill me, for I know they are in pursuit.”

"I will not refuse you," replied Telemachus, "if you wish to join us. Come, therefore, and in Ithaca we will treat you hospitably according to what we have."

On this he received Theoclymenus' spear and laid it down on the deck of the ship. He went on board and sat in the stern, bidding Theoclymenus sit beside him; then the men let go the hawsers. Telemachus told them to catch hold of the ropes, and they made all haste to do so. They set the mast in its socket in the cross plank, raised it and made it fast with the forestays, and they hoisted their white sails with sheets of twisted ox hide. Minerva sent them a fair wind that blew fresh and strong to take the ship on her course as fast as possible. Thus then they passed by Crouni and Chalcis.

Presently the sun set and darkness was over all the land. The vessel made a quick pass sage to Pheae and thence on to Elis, where the Epeans rule. Telemachus then headed her for the flying islands, wondering within himself whether he should escape death or should be taken prisoner.

Meanwhile Ulysses and the swineherd were eating their supper in the hut, and the men supped with them. As soon as they had had to eat and drink, Ulysses began trying to prove the swineherd and see whether he would continue to treat him kindly, and ask him to stay on at the station or pack him off to the city; so he said:

"Eumaeus, and all of you, to-morrow I want to go away and begin begging about the town, so as to be no more trouble to you or to your men. Give me your advice therefore, and let me have a good guide to go with me and show me the way. I will go the round of the city begging as I needs must, to see if any one will give me a drink and a piece of bread. I should like also to go to the house of Ulysses and bring news of her husband to queen Penelope. I could then go about among the suitors and see if out of all their abundance they will give me a dinner. I should soon make them an excellent servant in all sorts of ways. Listen and believe when I tell you that by the blessing of Mercury who gives grace and good name to the works of all men, there is no one living who would make a more handy servant than I should to put fresh wood on the fire, chop fuel, carve, cook, pour out wine, and do all those services that poor men have to do for their betters."

The swineherd was very much disturbed when he heard this. "Heaven help me," he exclaimed, "what ever can have put such a notion as that into your head? If you go near the suitors you will be undone to a certainty, for their pride and insolence reach the very heavens. They would never think of taking a man like you for a servant. Their servants are all young men, well dressed, wearing good cloaks and shirts, with well looking faces and their hair always tidy, the tables are kept quite clean and are loaded with bread, meat, and wine. Stay where you are, then; you are not in anybody's way; I do not mind your being here, no more do any of the others, and when Telemachus comes home he will give you a shirt and cloak and will send you wherever you want to go."

Ulysses answered, "I hope you may be as dear to the gods as you are to me, for having saved me from going about and getting into trouble; there is nothing worse than being always ways on the tramp; still, when men have once got low down in the world they will go through a great deal on behalf of their miserable bellies. Since however you press me to stay here and await the return of Telemachus, tell about Ulysses' mother, and his father whom he left on the threshold of old age when he set out for Troy. Are they still living or are they already dead and in the house of Hades?"

"I will tell you all about them," replied Eumaeus, "Laertes is still living and prays heaven to let him depart peacefully his own house, for he is terribly distressed about the absence of his son, and also about the death of his wife, which grieved him greatly and aged him more than anything else did. She came to an unhappy end through sorrow for her son: may no friend or neighbour who has dealt kindly by me come to such an end as she did. As long as she was still living, though she was always grieving, I used to like seeing her and asking her how she did, for she brought me up along with her daughter Ctimene, the youngest of her children; we were boy and girl together, and she made little difference between us. When, however, we both grew up, they sent Ctimene to Same and received a splendid dowry for her. As for me, my mistress gave me a good shirt and cloak with a pair of sandals for my feet, and sent me off into the country, but she was just as fond of me as ever. This is all over now. Still it has pleased heaven to prosper my work in the situation which I now hold. I have enough to eat and drink, and can find something for any respectable stranger who comes here; but there is no getting a kind word or deed out of my mistress, for the house has fallen into the hands of wicked people. Servants want sometimes to see their mistress and have a talk with her; they like to have something to eat and drink at the house, and something too to take back with them into the country. This is what will keep servants in a good humour."

Ulysses answered, "Then you must have been a very little fellow, Eumaeus, when you were taken so far away from your home and parents. Tell me, and tell me true, was the city in which your father and mother lived sacked and pillaged, or did some enemies

carry you off when you were alone tending sheep or cattle, ship you off here, and sell you for whatever your master gave them?"

"Stranger," replied Eumaeus, "as regards your question: sit still, make yourself comfortable, drink your wine, and listen to me. The nights are now at their longest; there is plenty of time both for sleeping and sitting up talking together; you ought not to go to bed till bed time, too much sleep is as bad as too little; if any one of the others wishes to go to bed let him leave us and do so; he can then take my master's pigs out when he has done breakfast in the morning. We two will sit here eating and drinking in the hut, and telling one another stories about our misfortunes; for when a man has suffered much, and been buffeted about in the world, he takes pleasure in recalling the memory of sorrows that have long gone by. As regards your question, then, my tale is as follows:

"You may have heard of an island called Syra that lies over above Ortygia, where the land begins to turn round and look in another direction. It is not very thickly peopled, but the soil is good, with much pasture fit for cattle and sheep, and it abounds with wine and wheat. Dearth never comes there, nor are the people plagued by any sickness, but when they grow old Apollo comes with Diana and kills them with his painless shafts. It contains two communities, and the whole country is divided between these two. My father Ctesius son of Ormenus, a man comparable to the gods, reigned over both.

"Now to this place there came some cunning traders from Phoenicia (for the Phoenicians are great mariners) in a ship which they had freighted with gewgaws of all kinds. There happened to be a Phoenician woman in my father's house, very tall and comely, and an excellent servant; these scoundrels got hold of her one day when she was washing near their ship, seduced her, and cajoled her in ways that no woman can resist, no matter how good she may be by nature. The man who had seduced her asked her who she was and where she came from, and on this she told him her father's name. 'I come from Sidon,' said she, 'and am daughter to Arybas, a man rolling in wealth. One day as I was coming into the town from the country some Taphian pirates seized me and took me here over the sea, where they sold me to the man who owns this house, and he gave them their price for me.'

"The man who had seduced her then said, 'Would you like to come along with us to see the house of your parents and your parents themselves? They are both alive and are said to be well off.'

"'I will do so gladly,' answered she, 'if you men will first swear me a solemn oath that you will do me no harm by the way.'

"They all swore as she told them, and when they had completed their oath the woman said, 'Hush; and if any of your men meets me in the street or at the well, do not let him speak to me, for fear some one should go and tell my master, in which case he would suspect something. He would put me in prison, and would have all of you murdered; keep your own counsel therefore; buy your merchandise as fast as you can, and send me word when you have done loading. I will bring as much gold as I can lay my hands on, and there is something else also that I can do towards paying my fare. I am nurse to the son of the good man of the house, a funny little fellow just able to run about. I will carry him off in your ship, and you will get a great deal of money for him if you take him and sell him in foreign parts.'

"On this she went back to the house. The Phoenicians stayed a whole year till they had loaded their ship with much precious merchandise, and then, when they had got freight enough, they sent to tell the woman. Their messenger, a very cunning fellow, came to my father's house bringing a necklace of gold with amber beads strung among it; and while my mother and the servants had it in their hands admiring it and bargaining about it, he made a sign quietly to the woman and then went back to the ship, whereon she took me by the hand and led me out of the house. In the fore part of the house she saw the tables set with the cups of guests who had been feasting with my father, as being in attendance on him; these were now all gone to a meeting of the public assembly, so she snatched up three cups and carried them off in the bosom of her dress, while I followed her, for I knew no better. The sun was now set, and darkness was over all the land, so we hurried on as fast as we could till we reached the harbour, where the Phoenician ship was lying. When they had got on board they sailed their ways over the sea, taking us with them, and Jove sent then a fair wind; six days did we sail both night and day, but on the seventh day Diana struck the woman and she fell heavily down into the ship's hold as though she were a sea gull alighting on the water; so they threw her overboard to the seals and fishes, and I was left all sorrowful and alone. Presently the winds and waves took the ship to Ithaca, where Laertes gave sundry of his chattels for me, and thus it was that ever I came to set eyes upon this country."

Ulysses answered, "Eumaeus, I have heard the story of your misfortunes with the most lively interest and pity, but Jove has given you good as well as evil, for in spite of everything you have a good master, who sees that you always have enough to eat and drink; and you lead a good life, whereas I am still going about begging my way from city to city."

Thus did they converse, and they had only a very little time left for sleep, for it was soon daybreak. In the meantime Telemachus and his crew were nearing land, so they loosed the sails, took down the mast, and rowed the ship into the harbour. They cast out their mooring stones and made fast the hawsers; they then got out upon the sea shore, mixed their wine, and got dinner ready. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus said, “Take the ship on to the town, but leave me here, for I want to look after the herdsmen on one of my farms. In the evening, when I have seen all I want, I will come down to the city, and to-morrow morning in return for your trouble I will give you all a good dinner with meat and wine.”

Then Theoclymenus said, ‘And what, my dear young friend, is to become of me? To whose house, among all your chief men, am I to repair? or shall I go straight to your own house and to your mother?”

“At any other time,” replied Telemachus, “I should have bidden you go to my own house, for you would find no want of hospitality; at the present moment, however, you would not be comfortable there, for I shall be away, and my mother will not see you; she does not often show herself even to the suitors, but sits at her loom weaving in an upper chamber, out of their way; but I can tell you a man whose house you can go to I mean Eurymachus the son of Polybus, who is held in the highest estimation by every one in Ithaca. He is much the best man and the most persistent wooer, of all those who are paying court to my mother and trying to take Ulysses’ place. Jove, however, in heaven alone knows whether or no they will come to a bad end before the marriage takes place.”

As he was speaking a bird flew by upon his right hand a hawk, Apollo’s messenger. It held a dove in its talons, and the feathers, as it tore them off, fell to the ground midway between Telemachus and the ship. On this Theoclymenus called him apart and caught him by the hand. “Telemachus,” said he, “that bird did not fly on your right hand without having been sent there by some god. As soon as I saw it I knew it was an omen; it means that you will remain powerful and that there will be no house in Ithaca more royal than your own.”

“I wish it may prove so,” answered Telemachus. “If it does, I will show you so much good will and give you so many presents that all who meet you will congratulate you.”

Then he said to his friend Piraeus, “Piraeus, son of Clytius, you have throughout shown yourself the most willing to serve me of all those who have accompanied me to Pylos; I wish you would take this stranger to your own house and entertain him hospitably till I can come for him.”

And Piraeus answered, “Telemachus, you may stay away as long as you please, but I will look after him for you, and he shall find no lack of hospitality.”

As he spoke he went on board, and bade the others do so also and loose the hawsers, so they took their places in the ship. But Telemachus bound on his sandals, and took a long and doughty spear with a head of sharpened bronze from the deck of the ship. Then they loosed the hawsers, thrust the ship off from land, and made on towards the city as they had been told to do, while Telemachus strode on as fast as he could, till he reached the homestead where his countless herds of swine were feeding, and where dwelt the excellent swineherd, who was so devoted a servant to his master.

Book XVI

MEANWHILE Ulysses and the swineherd had lit a fire in the hut and were were getting breakfast ready at daybreak for they had sent the men out with the pigs. When Telemachus came up, the dogs did not bark, but fawned upon him, so Ulysses, hearing the sound of feet and noticing that the dogs did not bark, said to Eumaeus:

“Eumaeus, I hear footsteps; I suppose one of your men or some one of your acquaintance is coming here, for the dogs are fawning urn him and not barking.”

The words were hardly out of his mouth before his son stood at the door. Eumaeus sprang to his feet, and the bowls in which he was mixing wine fell from his hands, as he made towards his master. He kissed his head and both his beautiful eyes, and wept for joy. A father could not be more delighted at the return of an only son, the child of his old age, after ten years’ absence in a foreign country and after having gone through much hardship. He embraced him, kissed him all over as though he had come back from the dead, and spoke fondly to him saying:

“So you are come, Telemachus, light of my eyes that you are. When I heard you had gone to Pylos I made sure I was never going to see you any more. Come in, my dear child, and sit down, that I may have a good look at you now you are home again; it is not very

often you come into the country to see us herdsmen; you stick pretty close to the town generally. I suppose you think it better to keep an eye on what the suitors are doing."

"So be it, old friend," answered Telemachus, "but I am come now because I want to see you, and to learn whether my mother is still at her old home or whether some one else has married her, so that the bed of Ulysses is without bedding and covered with cobwebs."

"She is still at the house," replied Eumaeus, "grieving and breaking her heart, and doing nothing but weep, both night and day continually."

As spoke he took Telemachus' spear, whereon he crossed the stone threshold and came inside. Ulysses rose from his seat to give him place as he entered, but Telemachus checked him; "Sit down, stranger." said he, "I can easily find another seat, and there is one here who will lay it for me."

Ulysses went back to his own place, and Eumaeus strewed some green brushwood on the floor and threw a sheepskin on top of it for Telemachus to sit upon. Then the swineherd brought them platters of cold meat, the remains from what they had eaten the day before, and he filled the bread baskets with bread as fast as he could. He mixed wine also in bowls of ivy-wood, and took his seat facing Ulysses. Then they laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus said to Eumaeus, "Old friend, where does this stranger come from? How did his crew bring him to Ithaca, and who were they?-for assuredly he did not come here by land"'

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "My son, I will tell you the real truth. He says he is a Cretan, and that he has been a great traveller. At this moment he is running away from a Thesprotian ship, and has refuge at my station, so I will put him into your hands. Do whatever you like with him, only remember that he is your suppliant."

"I am very much distressed," said Telemachus, "by what you have just told me. How can I take this stranger into my house? I am as yet young, and am not strong enough to hold my own if any man attacks me. My mother cannot make up her mind whether to stay where she is and look after the house out of respect for public opinion and the memory of her husband, or whether the time is now come for her to take the best man of those who are wooing her, and the one who will make her the most advantageous offer; still, as the stranger has come to your station I will find him a cloak and shirt of good wear, with a sword and sandals, and will send him wherever he wants to go. Or if you like you can keep him here at the station, and I will send him clothes and food that he may be no burden on you and on your men; but I will not have him go near the suitors, for they are very insolent, and are sure to ill-treat him in a way that would greatly grieve me; no matter how valiant a man may be he can do nothing against numbers, for they will be too strong for him."

Then Ulysses said, "Sir, it is right that I should say something myself. I am much shocked about what you have said about the insolent way in which the suitors are behaving in despite of such a man as you are. Tell me, do you submit to such treatment tamely, or has some god set your people against you? May you not complain of your brothers for it is to these that a man may look for support, however great his quarrel may be? I wish I were as young as you are and in my present mind; if I were son to Ulysses, or, indeed, Ulysses himself, I would rather some one came and cut my head off, but I would go to the house and be the bane of every one of these men. If they were too many for me I being single-handed I would rather die fighting in my own house than see such disgraceful sights day after day, strangers grossly maltreated, and men dragging the women servants about the house in an unseemly way, wine drawn recklessly, and bread wasted all to no purpose for an end that shall never be accomplished."

And Telemachus answered, "I will tell you truly everything. There is no emnity between me and my people, nor can I complain of brothers, to whom a man may look for support however great his quarrel may be. Jove has made us a race of only sons. Laertes was the only son of Arceisius, and Ulysses only son of Laertes. I am myself the only son of Ulysses who left me behind him when he went away, so that I have never been of any use to him. Hence it comes that my house is in the hands of numberless marauders; for the chiefs from all the neighbouring islands, Dulichium, Same, Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying court to my mother, who will neither say point blank that she will not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end, so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so with myself into the bargain. The issue, however, rests with heaven. But do you, old friend Eumaeus, go at once and tell Penelope that I am safe and have returned from Pylos. Tell it to herself alone, and then come back here without letting any one else know, for there are many who are plotting mischief against me."

“I understand and heed you,” replied Eumaeus; “you need instruct me no further, only I am going that way say whether I had not better let poor Laertes know that you are returned. He used to superintend the work on his farm in spite of his bitter sorrow about Ulysses, and he would eat and drink at will along with his servants; but they tell me that from the day on which you set out for Pylos he has neither eaten nor drunk as he ought to do, nor does he look after his farm, but sits weeping and wasting the flesh from off his bones.”

“More’s the pity,” answered Telemachus, “I am sorry for him, but we must leave him to himself just now. If people could have everything their own way, the first thing I should choose would be the return of my father; but go, and give your message; then make haste back again, and do not turn out of your way to tell Laertes. Tell my mother to send one of her women secretly with the news at once, and let him hear it from her.”

Thus did he urge the swineherd; Eumaeus, therefore, took his sandals, bound them to his feet, and started for the town. Minerva watched him well off the station, and then came up to it in the form of a woman fair, stately, and wise. She stood against the side of the entry, and revealed herself to Ulysses, but Telemachus could not see her, and knew not that she was there, for the gods do not let themselves be seen by everybody. Ulysses saw her, and so did the dogs, for they did not bark, but went scared and whining off to the other side of the yards. She nodded her head and motioned to Ulysses with her eyebrows; whereon he left the hut and stood before her outside the main wall of the yards. Then she said to him:

“Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, it is now time for you to tell your son: do not keep him in the dark any longer, but lay your plans for the destruction of the suitors, and then make for the town. I will not be long in joining you, for I too am eager for the fray.”

As she spoke she touched him with her golden wand. First she threw a fair clean shirt and cloak about his shoulders; then she made him younger and of more imposing presence; she gave him back his colour, filled out his cheeks, and let his beard become dark again. Then she went away and Ulysses came back inside the hut. His son was astounded when he saw him, and turned his eyes away for fear he might be looking upon a god.

“Stranger,” said he, “how suddenly you have changed from what you were a moment or two ago. You are dressed differently and your colour is not the same. Are you some one or other of the gods that live in heaven? If so, be propitious to me till I can make you due sacrifice and offerings of wrought gold. Have mercy upon me.”

And Ulysses said, “I am no god, why should you take me for one? I am your father, on whose account you grieve and suffer so much at the hands of lawless men.”

As he spoke he kissed his son, and a tear fell from his cheek on to the ground, for he had restrained all tears till now. but Telemachus could not yet believe that it was his father, and said:

“You are not my father, but some god is flattering me with vain hopes that I may grieve the more hereafter; no mortal man could of himself contrive to do as you have been doing, and make yourself old and young at a moment’s notice, unless a god were with him. A second ago you were old and all in rags, and now you are like some god come down from heaven.”

Ulysses answered, “Telemachus, you ought not to be so immeasurably astonished at my being really here. There is no other Ulysses who will come hereafter. Such as I am, it is I, who after long wandering and much hardship have got home in the twentieth year to my own country. What you wonder at is the work of the redoubtable goddess Minerva, who does with me whatever she will, for she can do what she pleases. At one moment she makes me like a beggar, and the next I am a young man with good clothes on my back; it is an easy matter for the gods who live in heaven to make any man look either rich or poor.”

As he spoke he sat down, and Telemachus threw his arms about his father and wept. They were both so much moved that they cried aloud like eagles or vultures with crooked talons that have been robbed of their half fledged young by peasants. Thus piteously did they weep, and the sun would have gone down upon their mourning if Telemachus had not suddenly said, “In what ship, my dear father, did your crew bring you to Ithaca? Of what nation did they declare themselves to be for you cannot have come by land?”

“I will tell you the truth, my son,” replied Ulysses. “It was the Phaeacians who brought me here. They are great sailors, and are in the habit of giving escorts to any one who reaches their coasts. They took me over the sea while I was fast asleep, and landed me in Ithaca, after giving me many presents in bronze, gold, and raiment. These things by heaven’s mercy are lying concealed in a cave, and I am now come here on the suggestion of Minerva that we may consult about killing our enemies. First, therefore, give me a list of the suitors, with their number, that I may learn who, and how many, they are. I can then turn the matter over in my mind, and see whether we two can fight the whole body of them ourselves, or whether we must find others to help us.”

To this Telemachus answered, “Father, I have always heard of your renown both in the field and in council, but the task you talk of is a very great one: I am awed at the mere thought of it; two men cannot stand against many and brave ones. There are not ten suitors only, nor twice ten, but ten many times over; you shall learn their number at once. There are fifty-two chosen youths from Dulichium, and they have six servants; from Same there are twenty-four; twenty young Achaeans from Zacynthus, and twelve from Ithaca itself, all of them well born. They have with them a servant Medon, a bard, and two men who can carve at table. If we face such numbers as this, you may have bitter cause to rue your coming, and your revenge. See whether you cannot think of some one who would be willing to come and help us.”

“Listen to me,” replied Ulysses, “and think whether Minerva and her father Jove may seem sufficient, or whether I am to try and find some one else as well.”

“Those whom you have named,” answered Telemachus, “are a couple of good allies, for though they dwell high up among the clouds they have power over both gods and men.”

“These two,” continued Ulysses, “will not keep long out of the fray, when the suitors and we join fight in my house. Now, therefore, return home early to-morrow morning, and go about among the suitors as before. Later on the swineherd will bring me to the city disguised as a miserable old beggar. If you see them ill-treating me, steel your heart against my sufferings; even though they drag me feet foremost out of the house, or throw things at me, look on and do nothing beyond gently trying to make them behave more reasonably; but they will not listen to you, for the day of their reckoning is at hand. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart, when Minerva shall put it in my mind, I will nod my head to you, and on seeing me do this you must collect all the armour that is in the house and hide it in the strong store room. Make some excuse when the suitors ask you why you are removing it; say that you have taken it to be out of the way of the smoke, inasmuch as it is no longer what it was when Ulysses went away, but has become soiled and begrimed with soot. Add to this more particularly that you are afraid Jove may set them on to quarrel over their wine, and that they may do each other some harm which may disgrace both banquet and wooing, for the sight of arms sometimes tempts people to use them. But leave a sword and a spear apiece for yourself and me, and a couple oxhide shields so that we can snatch them up at any moment; Jove and Minerva will then soon quiet these people. There is also another matter; if you are indeed my son and my blood runs in your veins, let no one know that Ulysses is within the house neither Laertes, nor yet the swineherd, nor any of the servants, nor even Penelope herself. Let you and me exploit the women alone, and let us also make trial of some other of the men servants, to see who is on our side and whose hand is against us.”

“Father,” replied Telemachus, “you will come to know me by and by, and when you do you will find that I can keep your counsel. I do not think, however, the plan you propose will turn out well for either of us. Think it over. It will take us a long time to go the round of the farms and exploit the men, and all the time the suitors will be wasting your estate with impunity and without compunction. Prove the women by all means, to see who are disloyal and who guiltless, but I am not in favour of going round and trying the men. We can attend to that later on, if you really have some sign from Jove that he will support you.”

Thus did they converse, and meanwhile the ship which had brought Telemachus and his crew from Pylos had reached the town of Ithaca. When they had come inside the harbour they drew the ship on to the land; their servants came and took their armour from them, and they left all the presents at the house of Clytius. Then they sent a servant to tell Penelope that Telemachus had gone into the country, but had sent the ship to the town to prevent her from being alarmed and made unhappy. This servant and Eumaeus happened to meet when they were both on the same errand of going to tell Penelope. When they reached the House, the servant stood up and said to the queen in the presence of the waiting women, “Your son, Madam, is now returned from Pylos”; but Eumaeus went close up to Penelope, and said privately that her son had given bidden him tell her. When he had given his message he left the house with its outbuildings and went back to his pigs again.

The suitors were surprised and angry at what had happened, so they went outside the great wall that ran round the outer court, and held a council near the main entrance. Eurymachus, son of Polybus, was the first to speak. “My friends,” said he, “this voyage of Telemachus’s is a very serious matter; we had made sure that it would come to nothing. Now, however, let us draw a ship into the water, and get a crew together to send after the others and tell them to come back as fast as they can.”

He had hardly done speaking when Amphinomus turned in his place and saw the ship inside the harbour, with the crew lowering her sails, and putting by their oars; so he laughed, and said to the others, “We need not send them any message, for they are here. Some god must have told them, or else they saw the ship go by, and could not overtake her.

On this they rose and went to the water side. The crew then drew the ship on shore; their servants took their armour from them, and they went up in a body to the place of assembly, but they would not let any one old or young sit along with them, and Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spoke first.

“Good heavens,” said he, “see how the gods have saved this man from destruction. We kept a succession of scouts upon the headlands all day long, and when the sun was down we never went on shore to sleep, but waited in the ship all night till morning in the hope of capturing and killing him; but some god has conveyed him home
in spite of us. Let us consider how we can make an end of him. He must not escape us; our affair is never likely to come off while is alive, for he is very shrewd, and public feeling is by no means all on our side. We must make haste before he can call the Achaeans in assembly; he will lose no time in doing so, for he will be furious with us, and will tell all the world how we plotted to kill him, but failed to take him. The people will not like this when they come to know of it; we must see that they do us no hurt, nor drive us from our own country into exile. Let us try and lay hold of him either on his farm away from the town, or on the road hither. Then we can divide up his property amongst us, and let his mother and the man who marries her have the house. If this does not please you, and you wish Telemachus to live on and hold his father’s property, then we must not gather here and eat up his goods in this way, but must make our offers to Penelope each from his own house, and she can marry the man who will give the most for her, and whose lot it is to win her.”

They all held their peace until Amphinomus rose to speak. He was the son of Nisus, who was son to king Aretias, and he was foremost among all the suitors from the wheat-growing and well grassed island of Dulichium; his conversation, moreover, was more agreeable to Penelope than that of any of the other for he was a man of good natural disposition. “My friends,” said he, speaking to them plainly and in all honestly, “I am not in favour of killing Telemachus. It is a heinous thing to kill one who is of noble blood. Let us first take counsel of the gods, and if the oracles of Jove advise it, I will both help to kill him myself, and will urge everyone else to do so; but if they dissuade us, I would have you hold your hands.”

Thus did he speak, and his words pleased them well, so they rose forthwith and went to the house of Ulysses where they took their accustomed seats.

Then Penelope resolved that she would show herself to the suitors. She knew of the plot against Telemachus, for the servant Medon had overheard their counsels and had told her; she went down therefore to the court attended by her maidens, and when she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister holding a veil before her face, and rebuked Antinous saying:

“Antinous, insolent and wicked schemer, they say you are the best speaker and counsellor of any man your own age in Ithaca, but you are nothing of the kind. Madman, why should you try to compass the death of Telemachus, and take no heed of suppliants, whose witness is Jove himself? It is not right for you to plot thus against one another. Do you not remember how your father fled to this house in fear of the people, who were enraged against him for having gone with some Taphian pirates and plundered the Thesprotians who were at peace with us? They wanted to tear him in pieces and eat up everything he had, but Ulysses stayed their hands although they were infuriated, and now you devour his property without paying for it, and break my heart by his wooing his wife and trying to kill his son. Leave off doing so, and stop the others also.”

To this Eurymachus son of Polybus answered, “Take heart, Queen Penelope daughter of Icarius, and do not trouble yourself about these matters. The man is not yet born, nor never will be, who shall lay hands upon your son Telemachus, while I yet live to look upon the face of the earth. I say and it shall surely be that my spear shall be reddened with his blood; for many a time has Ulysses taken me on his knees, held wine up to my lips to drink, and put pieces of meat into my hands. Therefore Telemachus is much the dearest friend I have, and has nothing to fear from the hands of us suitors. Of course, if death comes to him from the gods, he cannot escape it.” He said this to quiet her, but in reality he was plotting against Telemachus.

Then Penelope went upstairs again and mourned her husband till Minerva shed sleep over her eyes. In the evening Eumaeus got back to Ulysses and his son, who had just sacrificed a young pig of a year old and were ready; helping one another to get supper ready; Minerva therefore came up to Ulysses, turned him into an old man with a stroke of her wand, and clad him in his old clothes again, for fear that the swineherd might recognize him and not keep the secret, but go and tell Penelope.

Telemachus was the first to speak. “So you have got back, Eumaeus,” said he. “What is the news of the town? Have the suitors returned, or are they still waiting over yonder, to take me on my way home?”

“I did not think of asking about that,” replied Eumaeus, “when I was in the town. I thought I would give my message and come back as soon as I could. I met a man sent by those who had gone with you to Pylos, and he was the first to tell the new your mother, but I can say what I saw with my own eyes; I had just got on to the crest of the hill of Mercury above the town when I saw a ship coming into harbour with a number of men in her. They had many shields and spears, and I thought it was the suitors, but I cannot be sure.”

On hearing this Telemachus smiled to his father, but so that Eumaeus could not see him.

Then, when they had finished their work and the meal was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, they laid down to rest and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

Book XVII

WHEN the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Telemachus bound on his sandals and took a strong spear that suited his hands, for he wanted to go into the city. “Old friend,” said he to the swineherd, “I will now go to the town and show myself to my mother, for she will never leave off grieving till she has seen me. As for this unfortunate stranger, take him to the town and let him beg there of any one who will give him a drink and a piece of bread. I have trouble enough of my own, and cannot be burdened with other people. If this makes him angry so much the worse for him, but I like to say what I mean.”

Then Ulysses said, “Sir, I do not want to stay here; a beggar can always do better in town than country, for any one who likes can give him something. I am too old to care about remaining here at the beck and call of a master. Therefore let this man do as you have just told him, and take me to the town as soon as I have had a warm by the fire, and the day has got a little heat in it. My clothes are wretchedly thin, and this frosty morning I shall be perished with cold, for you say the city is some way off.”

On this Telemachus strode off through the yards, brooding his revenge upon the When he reached home he stood his spear against a bearing-post of the cloister, crossed the stone floor of the cloister itself, and went inside.

Nurse Euryclea saw him long before any one else did. She was putting the fleeces on to the seats, and she burst out crying as she ran up to him; all the other maids came up too, and covered his head and shoulders with their kisses. Penelope came out of her room looking like Diana or Venus, and wept as she flung her arms about her son. She kissed his forehead and both his beautiful eyes, “Light of my eyes,” she cried as she spoke fondly to him, “so you are come home again; I made sure I was never going to see you any more. To think of your having gone off to Pylos without saying anything about it or obtaining my consent. But come, tell me what you saw.”

“Do not scold me, mother,’ answered Telemachus, “nor vex me, seeing what a narrow escape I have had, but wash your face, change your dress, go upstairs with your maids, and promise full and sufficient hecatombs to all the gods if Jove will only grant us our revenge upon the suitors. I must now go to the place of assembly to invite a stranger who has come back with me from Pylos. I sent him on with my crew, and told Piraeus to take him home and look after him till I could come for him myself.”

She heeded her son’s words, washed her face, changed her dress, and vowed full and sufficient hecatombs to all the gods if they would only vouchsafe her revenge upon the suitors.

Telemachus went through, and out of, the cloisters spear in hand not alone, for his two fleet dogs went with him. Minerva endowed him with a presence of such divine comeliness that all marvelled at him as he went by, and the suitors gathered round him with fair words in their mouths and malice in their hearts; but he avoided them, and went to sit with Mentor, Antiphus, and Halitherses, old friends of his father’s house, and they made him tell them all that had happened to him. Then Piraeus came up with Theoclymenus, whom he had escorted through the town to the place of assembly, whereon Telemachus at once joined them. Piraeus was first to speak: “Telemachus,” said
he, “I wish you would send some of your women to my house to take awa the presents Menelaus gave you.”

“We do not know, Piraeus,” answered Telemachus, “what may happen. If the suitors kill me in my own house and divide my property among them, I would rather you had the presents than that any of those people should get hold of them. If on the other hand I manage to kill them, I shall be much obliged if you will kindly bring me my presents.”

With these words he took Theoclymenus to his own house. When they got there they laid their cloaks on the benches and seats, went into the baths, and washed themselves. When the maids had washed and anointed them, and had given them cloaks and shirts, they took their seats at table. A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin

for them to wash their hands; and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread and offered them many good things of what there was in the house. Opposite them sat Penelope, reclining on a couch by one of the bearing-posts of the cloister, and spinning. Then they laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Penelope said:

“Telemachus, I shall go upstairs and lie down on that sad couch, which I have not ceased to water with my tears, from the day Ulysses set out for Troy with the sons of Atreus. You failed, however, to make it clear to me before the suitors came back to the house, whether or no you had been able to hear anything about the return of your father.”

“I will tell you then truth,” replied her son. “We went to Pylos and saw Nestor, who took me to his house and treated me as hospitably as though I were a son of his own who had just returned after a long absence; so also did his sons; but he said he had not heard a word from any human being about Ulysses, whether he was alive or dead. He sent me, therefore, with a chariot and horses to Menelaus. There I saw Helen, for whose sake so many, both Argives and Trojans, were in heaven’s wisdom doomed to suffer. Menelaus asked me what it was that had brought me to Lacedaemon, and I told him the whole truth, whereon he said, ‘So, then, these cowards would usurp a brave man’s bed? A hind might as well lay her new-born young in the lair of a lion, and then go off to feed in the forest or in some grassy dell. The lion, when he comes back to his lair, will make short work with the pair of them, and so will Ulysses with these suitors. By father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, if Ulysses is still the man that he was when he wrestled with Philomeleides in Lesbos, and threw him so heavily that all the Greeks cheered him if he is still such, and were to come near these suitors, they would have a short shrift and a sorry wedding. As regards your question, however, I will not prevaricate nor deceive you, but what the old man of the sea told me, so much will I tell you in full. He said he could see Ulysses on an island sorrowing bitterly in the house of the nymph Calypso, who was keeping him prisoner, and he could not reach his home, for he had no ships nor sailors to take him over the sea.’ This was what Menelaus told me, and when I had heard his story I came away; the gods then gave me a fair wind and soon brought me safe home again.”

With these words he moved the heart of Penelope. Then Theoclymenus said to her:

“Madam, wife of Ulysses, Telemachus does not understand these things; listen therefore to me, for I can divine them surely, and will hide nothing from you. May Jove the king of heaven be my witness, and the rites of hospitality, with that hearth of Ulysses to which I now come, that Ulysses himself is even now in Ithaca, and, either going about the country or staying in one place, is enquiring into all these evil deeds and preparing a day of reckoning for the suitors. I saw an omen when I was on the ship which meant this, and I told Telemachus about it.”

“May it be even so,” answered Penelope; “if your words come true, you shall have such gifts and such good will from me that all who see you shall congratulate you.”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile the suitors were throwing discs, or aiming with spears at a mark on the levelled ground in front of the house, and behaving with all their old insolence. But when it was now time for dinner, and the flock of sheep and goats had come into the town from all the country round, with their shepherds as usual, then Medon, who was their favourite servant, and who waited upon them at table, said, “Now then, my young masters, you have had enough sport, so come inside that we may get dinner ready. Dinner is not a bad thing, at dinner time.”

They left their sports as he told them, and when they were within the house, they laid their cloaks on the benches and seats inside, and then sacrificed some sheep, goats, pigs, and a heifer, all of them fat and well grown. Thus they made ready for their meal. In the meantime Ulysses and the swineherd were about starting for the town, and the swineherd said, “Stranger, I suppose you still want to go to town to-day, as my master said you were to do; for my own part I should have liked you to stay here as a station hand, but I must do as my master tells me, or he will scold me later on, and a scolding from one’s master is a very serious thing. Let us then be off, for it is now broad day; it will be night again directly and then you will find it colder.”

“I know, and understand you,” replied Ulysses; “you need say no more. Let us be going, but if you have a stick ready cut, let me have it to walk with, for you say the road is a very rough one.”

As he spoke he threw his shabby old tattered wallet over his shoulders, by the cord from which it hung, and Eumaeus gave him a stick to his liking. The two then started, leaving the station in charge of the dogs and herdsmen who remained behind; the swineherd led the way and his master followed after, looking like some broken-down old tramp as he leaned upon his staff, and his clothes were all in rags. When they had got over the rough steep ground and were nearing the city, they reached the fountain from

which the citizens drew their water. This had been made by Ithacus, Neritus, and Polyctor. There was a grove of water-loving poplars planted in a circle all round it, and the clear cold water came down to it from a rock high up, while above the fountain there was an altar to the nymphs, at which all wayfarers used to sacrifice. Here Melanthius son of Dolius overtook them as he was driving down some goats, the best in his flock, for the suitors' dinner, and there were two shepherds with him. When he saw Eumaeus and Ulysses he reviled them with outrageous and unseemly language, which made Ulysses very angry.

"There you go," cried he, "and a precious pair you are. See how heaven brings birds of the same feather to one another. Where, pray, master swineherd, are you taking this poor miserable object? It would make any one sick to see such a creature at table. A fellow like this never won a prize for anything in his life, but will go about rubbing his shoulders against every man's door post, and begging, not for swords and cauldrons like a man, but only for a few scraps not worth begging for. If you would give him to me for a hand on my station, he might do to clean out the folds, or bring a bit of sweet feed to the kids, and he could fatten his thighs as much as he pleased on whey; but he has taken to bad ways and will not go about any kind of work; he will do nothing but beg victuals all the town over, to feed his insatiable belly. I say, therefore and it shall surely be if he goes near Ulysses' house he will get his head broken by the stools they will fling at him, till they turn him out."

On this, as he passed, he gave Ulysses a kick on the hip out of pure wantonness, but Ulysses stood firm, and did not budge from the path. For a moment he doubted whether or no to fly at Melanthius and kill him with his staff, or fling him to the ground and beat his brains out; he resolved, however, to endure it and keep himself in check, but the swineherd looked straight at Melanthius and rebuked him, lifting up his hands and praying to heaven as he did so.

"Fountain nymphs," he cried, "children of Jove, if ever Ulysses burned you thigh bones covered with fat whether of lambs or kids, grant my prayer that heaven may send him home. He would soon put an end to the swaggering threats with which such men as you go about insulting people-gadding all over the town while your flocks are going to ruin through bad shepherding."

Then Melanthius the goatherd answered, "You ill-conditioned cur, what are you talking about? Some day or other I will put you on board ship and take you to a foreign country, where I can sell you and pocket the money you will fetch. I wish I were as sure that Apollo would strike Telemachus dead this very day, or that the suitors would kill him, as I am that Ulysses will never come home again."

With this he left them to come on at their leisure, while he went quickly forward and soon reached the house of his master. When he got there he went in and took his seat among the suitors opposite Eurymachus, who liked him better than any of the others. The servants brought him a portion of meat, and an upper woman servant set bread before him that he might eat. Presently Ulysses and the swineherd came up to the house and stood by it, amid a sound of music, for Phemius was just beginning to sing to the suitors. Then Ulysses took hold of the swineherd's hand, and said:

"Eumaeus, this house of Ulysses is a very fine place. No matter how far you go you will find few like it. One building keeps following on after another. The outer court has a wall with battlements all round it; the doors are double folding, and of good workmanship; it would be a hard matter to take it by force of arms. I perceive, too, that there are many people banqueting within it, for there is a smell of roast meat, and I hear a sound of music, which the gods have made to go along with feasting."

Then Eumaeus said, "You have perceived aright, as indeed you generally do; but let us think what will be our best course. Will you go inside first and join the suitors, leaving me here behind you, or will you wait here and let me go in first? But do not wait long, or some one may you loitering about outside, and throw something at you. Consider this matter I pray you."

And Ulysses answered, "I understand and heed. Go in first and leave me here where I am. I am quite used to being beaten and having things thrown at me. I have been so much buffeted about in war and by sea that I am case-hardened, and this too may go with the rest. But a man cannot hide away the cravings of a hungry belly; this is an enemy which gives much trouble to all men; it is because of this that ships are fitted out to sail the seas, and to make war upon other people."

As they were thus talking, a dog that had been lying asleep raised his head and pricked up his ears. This was Argos, whom Ulysses had bred before setting out for Troy, but he had never had any work out of him. In the old days he used to be taken out by the young men when they went hunting wild goats, or deer, or hares, but now that his master was gone he was lying neglected on the heaps of mule and cow dung that lay in front of the stable doors till the men should come and draw it away to manure the great close; and he was full of fleas. As soon as he saw Ulysses standing there, he dropped his ears and wagged his tail, but he could not

get close up to his master. When Ulysses saw the dog on the other side of the yard, dashed a tear from his eyes without Eumaeus seeing it, and said:

“Eumaeus, what a noble hound that is over yonder on the manure heap: his build is splendid; is he as fine a fellow as he looks, or is he only one of those dogs that come begging about a table, and are kept merely for show?”

“This hound,” answered Eumaeus, “belonged to him who has died in a far country. If he were what he was when Ulysses left for Troy, he would soon show you what he could do. There was not a wild beast in the forest that could get away from him when he was once on its tracks. But now he has fallen on evil times, for his master is dead and gone, and the women take no care of him. Servants never do their work when their master’s hand is no longer over them, for Jove takes half the goodness out of a man when he makes a slave of him.”

As he spoke he went inside the buildings to the cloister where the suitors were, but Argos died as soon as he had recognized his master.

Telemachus saw Eumaeus long before any one else did, and beckoned him to come and sit beside him; so he looked about and saw a seat lying near where the carver sat serving out their portions to the suitors; he picked it up, brought it to Telemachus’s table, and sat down opposite him. Then the servant brought him his portion, and gave him bread from the bread-basket.

Immediately afterwards Ulysses came inside, looking like a poor miserable old beggar, leaning on his staff and with his clothes all in rags. He sat down upon the threshold of ash-wood just inside the doors leading from the outer to the inner court, and against a bearing-post of cypress-wood which the carpenter had skillfully planed, and had made to join truly with rule and line. Telemachus took a whole loaf from the bread-basket, with as much meat as he could hold in his two hands, and said to Eumaeus, “Take this to the stranger, and tell him to go the round of the suitors, and beg from them; a beggar must not be shamefaced.”

So Eumaeus went up to him and said, “Stranger, Telemachus sends you this, and says you are to go the round of the suitors begging, for beggars must not be shamefaced.”

Ulysses answered, “May King Jove grant all happiness to Telemachus, and fulfil the desire of his heart.”

Then with both hands he took what Telemachus had sent him, and laid it on the dirty old wallet at his feet. He went on eating it while the bard was singing, and had just finished his dinner as he left off. The suitors applauded the bard, whereon Minerva went up to Ulysses and prompted him to beg pieces of bread from each one of the suitors, that he might see what kind of people they were, and tell the good from the bad; but come what might she was not going to save a single one of them. Ulysses, therefore, went on his round, going from left to right, and stretched out his hands to beg as though he were a real beggar. Some of them pitied him, and were curious about him, asking one another who he was and where he came from; whereon the goatherd Melanthius said, “Suitors of my noble mistress, I can tell you something about him, for I have seen him before. The swineherd brought him here, but I know nothing about the man himself, nor where he comes from.”

On this Antinous began to abuse the swineherd. “You precious idiot,” he cried, “what have you brought this man to town for? Have we not tramps and beggars enough already to pester us as we sit at meat? Do you think it a small thing that such people gather here to waste your master’s property and must you needs bring this man as well?”

And Eumaeus answered, “Antinous, your birth is good but your words evil. It was no doing of mine that he came here. Who is likely to invite a stranger from a foreign country, unless it be one of those who can do public service as a seer, a healer of hurts, a carpenter, or a bard who can charm us with his Such men are welcome all the world over, but no one is likely to ask a beggar who will only worry him. You are always harder on Ulysses’ servants than any of the other suitors are, and above all on me, but I do not care so long as Telemachus and Penelope are alive and here.”

But Telemachus said, “Hush, do not answer him; Antinous has the bitterest tongue of all the suitors, and he makes the others worse.”

Then turning to Antinous he said, “Antinous, you take as much care of my interests as though I were your son. Why should you want to see this stranger turned out of the house? Heaven forbid; take’ something and give it him yourself; I do not grudge it; I bid you take it. Never mind my mother, nor any of the other servants in the house; but I know you will not do what I say, for you are more fond of eating things yourself than of giving them to other people.”

“What do you mean, Telemachus,” replied Antinous, “by this swaggering talk? If all the suitors were to give him as much as I will, he would not come here again for another three months.”

As he spoke he drew the stool on which he rested his dainty feet from under the table, and made as though he would throw it at Ulysses, but the other suitors all gave him something, and filled his wallet with bread and meat; he was about, therefore, to go back to the threshold and eat what the suitors had given him, but he first went up to Antinous and said:

“Sir, give me something; you are not, surely, the poorest man here; you seem to be a chief, foremost among them all; therefore you should be the better giver, and I will tell far and wide of your bounty. I too was a rich man once, and had a fine house of my own; in those days I gave to many a tramp such as I now am, no matter who he might be nor what he wanted. I had any number of servants, and all the other things which people have who live well and are accounted wealthy, but it pleased Jove to take all away from me. He sent me with a band of roving robbers to Egypt; it was a long voyage and I was undone by it. I stationed my bade ships in the river Aegyptus, and bade my men stay by them and keep guard over them, while sent out scouts to reconnoitre from every point of vantage.

“But the men disobeyed my orders, took to their own devices, and ravaged the land of the Egyptians, killing the men, and taking their wives and children captives. The alarm was soon carried to the city, and when they heard the war-cry, the people came out at daybreak till the plain was filled with soldiers horse and foot, and with the gleam of armour. Then Jove spread panic among my men, and they would no longer face the enemy, for they found themselves surrounded. The Egyptians killed many of us, and took the rest alive to do forced labour for them; as for myself, they gave me to a friend who met them, to take to Cyprus, Dmetor by name, son of Iasus, who was a great man in Cyprus. Thence I am come hither in a state of great misery.”

Then Antinous said, “What god can have sent such a pestilence to plague us during our dinner? Get out, into the open part of the court, or I will give you Egypt and Cyprus over again for your insolence and importunity; you have begged of all the others, and they have given you lavishly, for they have abundance round them, and it is easy to be free with other people’s property when there is plenty of it.”

On this Ulysses began to move off, and said, “Your looks, my fine sir, are better than your breeding; if you were in your own house you would not spare a poor man so much as a pinch of salt, for though you are in another man’s, and surrounded with abundance, you cannot find it in you to give him even a piece of bread.”

This made Antinous very angry, and he scowled at him saying, “You shall pay for this before you get clear of the court.” With these words he threw a footstool at him, and hit him on the right shoulder-blade near the top of his back. Ulysses stood firm as a rock and the blow did not even stagger him, but he shook his head in silence as he brooded on his revenge. Then he went back to the threshold and sat down there, laying his well-filled wallet at his feet.

“Listen to me,” he cried, “you suitors of Queen Penelope, that I may speak even as I am minded. A man knows neither ache nor pain if he gets hit while fighting for his money, or for his sheep or his cattle; and even so Antinous has hit me while in the service of my miserable belly, which is always getting people into trouble. Still, if the poor have gods and avenging deities at all, I pray them that Antinous may come to a bad end before his marriage.”

“Sit where you are, and eat your victuals in silence, or be off elsewhere,” shouted Antinous. “If you say more I will have you dragged hand and foot through the courts, and the servants shall flay you alive.”

The other suitors were much displeased at this, and one of the young men said, “Antinous, you did ill in striking that poor wretch of a tramp: it will be worse for you if he should turn out to be some god and we know the gods go about disguised in all sorts of ways as people from foreign countries, and travel about the world to see who do amiss and who righteously.”

Thus said the suitors, but Antinous paid them no heed. Meanwhile Telemachus was furious about the blow that had been given to his father, and though no tear fell from him, he shook his head in silence and brooded on his revenge.

Now when Penelope heard that the beggar had been struck in the banqueting-cloister, she said before her maids, “Would that Apollo would so strike you, Antinous,” and her waiting woman Eurynome answered, “If our prayers were answered not one of the suitors would ever again see the sun rise.” Then Penelope said, “Nurse, I hate every single one of them, for they mean nothing but mischief, but I hate Antinous like the darkness of death itself. A poor unfortunate tramp has come begging about the house for sheer want. Every one else has given him something to put in his wallet, but Antinous has hit him on the right shoulder-blade with a footstool.”

Thus did she talk with her maids as she sat in her own room, and in the meantime Ulysses was getting his dinner. Then she called for the swineherd and said, “Eumaeus, go and tell the stranger to come here, I want to see him and ask him some questions. He seems to have travelled much, and he may have seen or heard something of my unhappy husband.”

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, “If these Achaeans, Madam, would only keep quiet, you would be charmed with the history of his adventures. I had him three days and three nights with me in my hut, which was the first place he reached after running away from his ship, and he has not yet completed the story of his misfortunes. If he had been the most heaven-taught minstrel in the whole world, on whose lips all hearers hang entranced, I could not have been more charmed as I sat in my hut and listened to him. He says there is an old friendship between his house and that of Ulysses, and that he comes from Crete where the descendants of Minos live, after having been driven hither and thither by every kind of misfortune; he also declares that he has heard of Ulysses as being alive and near at hand among the Thesprotians, and that he is bringing great wealth home with him.”

“Call him here, then,” said Penelope, “that I too may hear his story. As for the suitors, let them take their pleasure indoors or out as they will, for they have nothing to fret about. Their corn and wine remain unwasted in their houses with none but servants to consume them, while they keep hanging about our house day after day sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink. No estate can stand such recklessness, for we have now no Ulysses to protect us. If he were to come again, he and his son would soon have their revenge.”

As she spoke Telemachus sneezed so loudly that the whole house resounded with it. Penelope laughed when she heard this, and said to Eumaeus, “Go and call the stranger; did you not hear how my son sneezed just as I was speaking? This can only mean that all the suitors are going to be killed, and that not one of them shall escape. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart: if I am satisfied that the stranger is speaking the truth I shall give him a shirt and cloak of good wear.”

When Eumaeus heard this he went straight to Ulysses and said, “Father stranger, my mistress Penelope, mother of Telemachus, has sent for you; she is in great grief, but she wishes to hear anything you can tell her about her husband, and if she is satisfied that you are speaking the truth, she will give you a shirt and cloak, which are the very things that you are most in want of. As for bread, you can get enough of that to fill your belly, by begging about the town, and letting those give that will.”

“I will tell Penelope,” answered Ulysses, “nothing but what is strictly true. I know all about her husband, and have been partner with him in affliction, but I am afraid of passing. through this crowd of cruel suitors, for their pride and insolence reach heaven. Just now, moreover, as I was going about the house without doing any harm, a man gave me a blow that hurt me very much, but neither Telemachus nor any one else defended me. Tell Penelope, therefore, to be patient and wait till sundown. Let her give me a seat close up to the fire, for my clothes are worn very thin you know they are, for you have seen them ever since I first asked you to help me she can then ask me about the return of her husband.”

The swineherd went back when he heard this, and Penelope said as she saw him cross the threshold, “Why do you not bring him here, Eumaeus? Is he afraid that some one will ill-treat him, or is he shy of coming inside the house at all? Beggars should not be shamefaced.”

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, “The stranger is quite reasonable. He is avoiding the suitors, and is only doing what any one else would do. He asks you to wait till sundown, and it will be much better, madam, that you should have him all to yourself, when you can hear him and talk to him as you will.”

“The man is no fool,” answered Penelope, “it would very likely be as he says, for there are no such abominable people in the whole world as these men are.”

When she had done speaking Eumaeus went back to the suitors, for he had explained everything. Then he went up to Telemachus and said in his ear so that none could overhear him, “My dear sir, I will now go back to the pigs, to see after your property and my own business. You will look to what is going on here, but above all be careful to keep out of danger, for there are many who bear you ill will. May Jove bring them to a bad end before they do us a mischief.”

“Very well,” replied Telemachus, “go home when you have had your dinner, and in the morning come here with the victims we are to sacrifice for the day. Leave the rest to heaven and me.”

On this Eumaeus took his seat again, and when he had finished his dinner he left the courts and the cloister with the men at table, and went back to his pigs. As for the suitors, they presently began to amuse themselves with singing and dancing, for it was now getting on towards evening.

Book XVIII

NOW there came a certain common tramp who used to go begging all over the city of Ithaca, and was notorious as an incorrigible glutton and drunkard. This man had no strength nor stay in him, but he was a great hulking fellow to look at; his real name, the one his mother gave him, was Arnaeus, but the young men of the place called him Irus, because he used to run errands for any one who would send him. As soon as he came he began to insult Ulysses, and to try and drive him out of his own house.

"Be off, old man," he cried, "from the doorway, or you shall be dragged out neck and heels. Do you not see that they are all giving me the wink, and wanting me to turn you out by force, only I do not like to do so? Get up then, and go of yourself, or we shall come to blows."

Ulysses frowned on him and said, "My friend, I do you no manner of harm; people give you a great deal, but I am not jealous. There is room enough in this doorway for the pair of us, and you need not grudge me things that are not yours to give. You seem to be just such another tramp as myself, but perhaps the gods will give us better luck by and by. Do not, however, talk too much about fighting or you will incense me, and old though I am, I shall cover your mouth and chest with blood. I shall have more peace to-morrow if I do, for you will not come to the house of Ulysses any more."

Irus was very angry and answered, "You filthy glutton, you run on trippingly like an old fish-fag. I have a good mind to lay both hands about you, and knock your teeth out of your head like so many boar's tusks. Get ready, therefore, and let these people here stand by and look on. You will never be able to fight one who is so much younger than yourself."

Thus roundly did they rate one another on the smooth pavement in front of the doorway, and when Antinous saw what was going on he laughed heartily and said to the others, "This is the finest sport that you ever saw; heaven never yet sent anything like it into this house. The stranger and Irus have quarreled and are going to fight, let us set them on to do so at once."

The suitors all came up laughing, and gathered round the two ragged tramps. "Listen to me," said Antinous, "there are some goats' paunches down at the fire, which we have filled with blood and fat, and set aside for supper; he who is victorious and proves himself to be the better man shall have his pick of the lot; he shall be free of our table and we will not allow any other beggar about the house at all."

The others all agreed, but Ulysses, to throw them off the scent, said, "Sirs, an old man like myself, worn out with suffering, cannot hold his own against a young one; but my irrepressible belly urges me on, though I know it can only end in my getting a drubbing. You must swear, however that none of you will give me a foul blow to favour Irus and secure him the victory."

They swore as he told them, and when they had completed their oath Telemachus put in a word and said, "Stranger, if you have a mind to settle with this fellow, you need not be afraid of any one here. Whoever strikes you will have to fight more than one. I am host, and the other chiefs, Antinous and Eurymachus, both of them men of understanding, are of the same mind as I am."

Every one assented, and Ulysses girded his old rags about his loins, thus baring his stalwart thighs, his broad chest and shoulders, and his mighty arms; but Minerva came up to him and made his limbs even stronger still. The suitors were beyond measure astonished, and one would turn towards his neighbour saying, "The stranger has brought such a thigh out of his old rags that there will soon be nothing left of Irus."

Irus began to be very uneasy as he heard them, but the servants girded him by force, and brought him [into the open part of the court] in such a fright that his limbs were all of a tremble. Antinous scolded him and said, "You swaggering bully, you ought never to have been born at all if you are afraid of such an old broken-down creature as this tramp is. I say, therefore and it shall surely be if he beats you and proves himself the better man, I shall pack you off on board ship to the mainland and send you to king Echetus, who kills every one that comes near him. He will cut off your nose and ears, and draw out your entrails for the dogs to eat."

This frightened Irus still more, but they brought him into the middle of the court, and the two men raised their hands to fight. Then Ulysses considered whether he should let drive so hard at him as to make an end of him then and there, or whether he should give him a lighter blow that should only knock him down; in the end he deemed it best to give the lighter blow for fear the Achaeans should begin to suspect who he was. Then they began to fight, and Irus hit Ulysses on the right shoulder; but Ulysses gave Irus a blow on the neck under the ear that broke in the bones of his skull, and the blood came gushing out of his mouth; he fell groaning in the dust, gnashing his teeth and kicking on the ground, but the suitors threw up their hands and nearly died of laughter, as Ulysses caught hold of him by the foot and dragged him into the outer court as far as the gate-house. There he propped him up

against the wall and put his staff in his hands. “Sit here,” said he, “and keep the dogs and pigs off; you are a pitiful creature, and if you try to make yourself king of the beggars any more you shall fare still worse.”

Then he threw his dirty old wallet, all tattered and torn, over his shoulder with the cord by which it hung, and went back to sit down upon the threshold; but the suitors went within the cloisters, laughing and saluting him, “May Jove, and all the other gods,” said they, ‘grant you whatever you want for having put an end to the importunity of this insatiable tramp. We will take him over to the mainland presently, to king Echetus, who kills every one that comes near him.”

Ulysses hailed this as of good omen, and Antinous set a great goat’s paunch before him filled with blood and fat. Amphinomus took two loaves out of the bread-basket and brought them to him, pledging him as he did so in a golden goblet of wine. “Good luck to you,” he said, “father stranger, you are very badly off at present, but I hope you will have better times by and by.”

To this Ulysses answered, “Amphinomus, you seem to be a man of good understanding, as indeed you may well be, seeing whose son you are. I have heard your father well spoken of; he is Nisus of Dulichium, a man both brave and wealthy. They tell me you are his son, and you appear to be a considerable person; listen, therefore, and take heed to what I am saying. Man is the vainest of all creatures that have their being upon earth. As long as heaven vouchsafes him health and strength, he thinks that he shall come to no harm hereafter, and even when the blessed gods bring sorrow upon him, he bears it as he needs must, and makes the best of it; for God Almighty gives men their daily minds day by day. I know all about it, for I was a rich man once, and did much wrong in the stubbornness of my pride, and in the confidence that my father and my brothers would support me; therefore let a man fear God in all things always, and take the good that heaven may see fit to send him without vainglory. Consider the infamy of what these suitors are doing; see how they are wasting the estate, and doing dishonour to the wife, of one who is certain to return some day, and that, too, not long hence. Nay, he will be here soon; may heaven send you home quietly first that you may not meet with him in the day of his coming, for once he is here the suitors and he will not part bloodlessly.”

With these words he made a drink-offering, and when he had drunk he put the gold cup again into the hands of Amphinomus, who walked away serious and bowing his head, for he foreboded evil. But even so he did not escape destruction, for Minerva had doomed him fall by the hand of Telemachus. So he took his seat again at the place from which he had come.

Then Minerva put it into the mind of Penelope to show herself to the suitors, that she might make them still more enamoured of her, and win still further honour from her son and husband. So she feigned a mocking laugh and said, “Eurynome, I have changed my and have a fancy to show myself to the suitors although I detest them. I should like also to give my son a hint that he had better not have anything more to do with them. They speak fairly enough but they mean mischief.”

“My dear child,” answered Eurynome, “all that you have said is true, go and tell your son about it, but first wash yourself and anoint your face. Do not go about with your cheeks all covered with tears; it is not right that you should grieve so incessantly; for Telemachus, whom you always prayed that you might live to see with a beard, is already grown up.”

“I know, Eurynome,” replied Penelope, “that you mean well, but do not try and persuade me to wash and to anoint myself, for heaven robbed me of all my beauty on the day my husband sailed; nevertheless, tell Autonoe and Hippodamia that I want them. They must be with me when I am in the cloister; I am not going among the men alone; it would not be proper for me to do so.”

On this the old woman went out of the room to bid the maids go to their mistress. In the meantime Minerva bethought her of another matter, and sent Penelope off into a sweet slumber; so she lay down on her couch and her limbs became heavy with sleep. Then the goddess shed grace and beauty over her that all the Achaeans might admire her. She washed her face with the ambrosial loveliness that Venus wears when she goes dancing with the Graces; she made her taller and of a more commanding figure, while as for her complexion it was whiter than sawn ivory. When Minerva had done all this she went away, whereon the maids came in from the women’s room and woke Penelope with the sound of their talking.

“What an exquisitely delicious sleep I have been having,” said she, as she passed her hands over her face, “in spite of all my misery. I wish Diana would let me die so sweetly now at this very moment, that I might no longer waste in despair for the loss of my dear husband, who possessed every kind of good quality and was the most distinguished man among the Achaeans.”

With these words she came down from her upper room, not alone but attended by two of her maidens, and when she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister, holding a veil before her face, and with a staid maid servant on either side of her. As they beheld her the suitors were so overpowered and became so desperately enamoured of her, that each one prayed he might win her for his own bed fellow.

“Telemachus,” said she, addressing her son, “I fear you are no longer so discreet and well conducted as you used to be. When you were younger you had a greater sense of propriety; now, however, that you are grown up, though
a stranger to look at you would take you for the son of a well-to-do father as far as size and good looks go, your conduct is by no means what it should be. What is all this disturbance that has been going on, and how came you to allow a stranger to be so disgracefully ill-treated? What would have happened if he had suffered serious injury while a suppliant in our house? Surely this would have been very discreditable to you.”

“I am not surprised, my dear mother, at your displeasure,” replied Telemachus, “I understand all about it and know when things are not as they should be, which I could not do when I was younger; I cannot, however, behave with perfect propriety at all times. First one and then another of these wicked people here keeps driving me out of my mind, and I have no one to stand by me. After all, however, this fight between Irus and the stranger did not turn out as the suitors meant it to do, for the stranger got the best of it. I wish Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo would break the neck of every one of these wooers of yours, some inside the house and some out; and I wish they might
all be as limp as Irus is over yonder in the gate of the outer court. See how he nods his head like a drunken man; he has had such a thrashing that he cannot stand on his feet nor get back to his home, wherever that may be, for has no strength left in him.”

Thus did they converse. Eurymachus then came up and said, “Queen Penelope, daughter of Icarius, if all the Achaeans in Iasian Argos could see you at this moment, you would have still more suitors in your house by tomorrow morning, for you are the most admirable woman in the whole world both as regards personal beauty and strength of understanding.”

To this Penelope replied, “Eurymachus, heaven robbed me of all my beauty whether of face or figure when the Argives set sail for Troy and my dear husband with them. If he were to return and look after my affairs, I should both be more respected and show a better presence to the world. As it is, I am oppressed with care, and with the afflictions which heaven has seen fit to heap upon me. My husband foresaw it all, and when he was leaving home he took my right wrist in his hand ‘Wife, ‘he said, ‘we shall not all of us come safe home from Troy, for the Trojans fight well both with bow and spear. They are excellent also at fighting from chariots, and nothing decides the issue of a fight sooner than this. I know not, therefore, whether heaven will send me back to you, or whether I may not fall over there at Troy. In the meantime do you look after things here. Take care of my father and mother as at present, and even more so during my absence, but when you see our son growing a beard, then marry whom you will, and leave this your present home. This is what he said and now it is all coming true. A night will come when I shall have to yield myself to a marriage which I detest, for Jove has taken from me all hope of happiness. This further grief, moreover, cuts me to the very heart. You suitors are not wooing me after the custom of my country. When men are courting a woman who they think will be a good wife to them and who is of noble birth, and when they are each trying to win her for himself, they usually bring oxen and sheep to feast the friends of the lady, and they make her magnificent presents, instead of eating up other people’s property without paying for it.”

This was what she said, and Ulysses was glad when he heard her trying to get presents out of the suitors, and flattering them with fair words which he knew she did not mean.

Then Antinous said, “Queen Penelope, daughter of Icarius, take as many presents as you please from any one who will give them to you; it is not well to refuse a present; but we will not go about our business nor stir from where we are, till you have married the best man among us whoever he may be.”

The others applauded what Antinous had said, and each one sent his servant to bring his present. Antinous’s man returned with a large and lovely dress most exquisitely embroidered. It had twelve beautifully made brooch pins of pure gold with which to fasten it. Eurymachus immediately brought her a magnificent chain of gold and amber beads that gleamed like sunlight. Eurydamas’s two men returned with some earrings fashioned into three brilliant pendants which glistened most beautifully; while king Pisander son of Polyctor gave her a necklace of the rarest workmanship, and every one else brought her a beautiful present of some kind.

Then the queen went back to her room upstairs, and her maids brought the presents after her. Meanwhile the suitors took to singing and dancing, and stayed till evening came. They danced and sang till it grew dark; they then brought in three braziers to give light, and piled them up with chopped firewood very and dry, and they lit torches from them, which the maids held up turn and turn about. Then Ulysses said:

“Maids, servants of Ulysses who has so long been absent, go to the queen inside the house; sit with her and amuse her, or spin, and pick wool. I will hold the light for all these people. They may stay till morning, but shall not beat me, for I can stand a great deal.”

The maids looked at one another and laughed, while pretty Melantho began to gibe at him contemptuously. She was daughter to Dolius, but had been brought up by Penelope, who used to give her toys to play with, and looked after her when she was a child; but in spite of all this she showed no consideration for the sorrows of her mistress, and used to misconduct herself with Eurymachus, with whom she was in love.

“Poor wretch,” said she, “are you gone clean out of your mind? Go and sleep in some smithy, or place of public gossips, instead of chattering here. Are you not ashamed of opening your mouth before your betters so many of them too? Has the wine been getting into your head, or do you always babble in this way? You seem to have lost your wits because you beat the tramp Irus; take care that a better man than he does not come and cudgel you about the head till he pack you bleeding out of the house.”

“Vixen,” replied Ulysses, scowling at her, “I will go and tell Telemachus what you have been saying, and he will have you torn limb from limb.”

With these words he scared the women, and they went off into the body of the house. They trembled all aver, for they thought he would do as he said. But Ulysses took his stand near the burning braziers, holding up torches and looking at the people brooding the while on things that should surely come to pass.

But Minerva would not let the suitors for one moment cease their insolence, for she wanted Ulysses to become even more bitter against them; she therefore set Eurymachus son of Polybus on to gibe at him, which made the others laugh. “Listen to me,” said he, “you suitors of Queen Penelope, that I may speak even as I am minded. It is not for nothing that this man has come to the house of Ulysses; I believe the light has not been coming from the torches, but from his own head for his hair is all gone, every bit of it.”

Then turning to Ulysses he said, “Stranger, will you work as a servant, if I send you to the wolds and see that you are well paid? Can you build a stone fence, or plant trees? I will have you fed all the year round, and will find you in shoes and clothing. Will you go, then? Not you; for you have got into bad ways, and do not want to work; you had rather fill your belly by going round the country begging.”

“Eurymachus,” answered Ulysses, “if you and I were to work one against the other in early summer when the days are at their longest give me a good scythe, and take another yourself, and let us see which will fast the longer or mow the stronger, from dawn till dark when the mowing grass is about. Or if you will plough against me, let
us each take a yoke of tawny oxen, well-mated and of great strength and endurance: turn me into a four acre field, and see whether you or I can drive the straighter furrow. If, again, war were to break out this day, give me a shield, a couple of spears and a helmet fitting well upon my temples you would find me foremost in the fray, and would cease your gibes about my belly. You are insolent and cruel, and think yourself a great man because you live in a little world, ind that a bad one. If Ulysses comes to his own again, the doors of his house are wide, but you will find them narrow when you try to fly through them.”

Eurymachus was furious at all this. He scowled at him and cried, “You wretch, I will soon pay you out for daring to say such things to me, and in public too. Has the wine been getting into your head or do you always babble in this way? You seem to have lost your wits because you beat the tramp Irus. With this he caught hold of a footstool, but Ulysses sought protection at the knees of Amphinomus of Dulichium, for he was afraid. The stool hit the cupbearer on his right hand and knocked him down: the man fell with a cry flat on his back, and his wine-jug fell ringing to the ground. The suitors in the covered cloister were now in an uproar, and one would turn towards his neighbour, saying, “I wish the stranger had gone somewhere else, bad luck to hide, for all the trouble he gives us. We cannot permit such disturbance about a beggar; if such ill counsels are to prevail we shall have no more pleasure at our banquet.”

On this Telemachus came forward and said, “Sirs, are you mad? Can you not carry your meat and your liquor decently? Some evil spirit has possessed you. I do not wish to drive any of you away, but you have had your suppers, and the sooner you all go home to bed the better.”

The suitors bit their lips and marvelled at the boldness of his speech; but Amphinomus the son of Nisus, who was son to Aretias, said, “Do not let us take offence; it is reasonable, so let us make no answer. Neither let us do violence to the stranger nor to any of Ulysses’ servants. Let the cupbearer go round with the drink-offerings, that we may make them and go home to our rest. As for the stranger, let us leave Telemachus to deal with him, for it is to his house that he has come.”

Thus did he speak, and his saying pleased them well, so Mulius of Dulichium, servant to Amphinomus, mixed them a bowl of wine and water and handed it round to each of them man by man, whereon they made their drink-offerings to the blessed gods: Then,

when they had made their drink-offerings and had drunk each one as he was minded, they took their several ways each of them to his own abode.

Book XIX

ULYSSES was left in the cloister, pondering on the means whereby with Minerva's help he might be able to kill the suitors. Presently he said to Telemachus, "Telemachus, we must get the armour together and take it down inside. Make some excuse when the suitors ask you why you have removed it. Say that you have taken it to be out of the way of the smoke, inasmuch as it is no longer what it was when Ulysses went away, but has become soiled and begrimed with soot. Add to this more particularly that you are afraid Jove may set them on to quarrel over their wine, and that they may do each other some harm which may disgrace both banquet and wooing, for the sight of arms sometimes tempts people to use them."

Telemachus approved of what his father had said, so he called nurse Euryclea and said, "Nurse, shut the women up in their room, while I take the armour that my father left behind him down into the store room. No one looks after it now my father is gone, and it has got all smirched with soot during my own boyhood. I want to take it down where the smoke cannot reach it."

"I wish, child," answered Euryclea, "that you would take the management of the house into your own hands altogether, and look after all the property yourself. But who is to go with you and light you to the store room? The maids would have so, but you would not let them.

"The stranger," said Telemachus, "shall show me a light; when people eat my bread they must earn it, no matter where they come from."

Euryclea did as she was told, and bolted the women inside their room. Then Ulysses and his son made all haste to take the helmets, shields, and spears inside; and Minerva went before them with a gold lamp in her hand that shed a soft and brilliant radiance, whereon Telemachus said, "Father, my eyes behold a great marvel: the walls, with the rafters, crossbeams, and the supports on which they rest are all aglow as with a flaming fire. Surely there is some god here who has come down from heaven."

"Hush," answered Ulysses, "hold your peace and ask no questions, for this is the manner of the gods. Get you to your bed, and leave me here to talk with your mother and the maids. Your mother in her grief will ask me all sorts of questions."

On this Telemachus went by torch-light to the other side of the inner court, to the room in which he always slept. There he lay in his bed till morning, while Ulysses was left in the cloister pondering on the means whereby with Minerva's help he might be able to kill the suitors.

Then Penelope came down from her room looking like Venus or Diana, and they set her a seat inlaid with scrolls of silver and ivory near the fire in her accustomed place. It had been made by Icmalius and had a footstool all in one piece with the seat itself; and it was covered with a thick fleece: on this she now sat, and the maids came from the women's room to join her. They set about removing the tables at which the wicked suitors had been dining, and took away the bread that was left, with the cups from which they had drunk. They emptied the embers out of the braziers, and heaped much wood upon them to give both light and heat; but Melantho began to rail at Ulysses a second time and said, "Stranger, do you mean to plague us by hanging about the house all night and spying upon the women? Be off, you wretch, outside, and eat your supper there, or you shall be driven out with a firebrand."

Ulysses scowled at her and answered, "My good woman, why should you be so angry with me? Is it because I am not clean, and my clothes are all in rags, and because I am obliged to go begging about after the manner of tramps and beggars generall? I too was a rich man once, and had a fine house of my own; in those days I gave to many a tramp such as I now am, no matter who he might be nor what he wanted. I had any number of servants, and all the other things which people have who live well and are accounted wealthy, but it pleased Jove to take all away from me; therefore, woman, beware lest you too come to lose that pride and place in which you now wanton above your fellows; have a care lest you get out of favour with your mistress, and lest Ulysses should come home, for there is still a chance that he may do so. Moreover, though he be dead as you think he is, yet by Apollo's will he has left a son behind him, Telemachus, who will note anything done amiss by the maids in the house, for he is now no longer in his boyhood."

Penelope heard what he was saying and scolded the maid, "Impudent baggage, said she, "I see how abominably you are behaving, and you shall smart for it. You knew perfectly well, for I told you myself, that I was going to see the stranger and ask him about my husband, for whose sake I am in such continual sorrow."

Then she said to her head waiting woman Eurynome, “Bring a seat with a fleece upon it, for the stranger to sit upon while he tells his story, and listens to what I have to say. I wish to ask him some questions.”

Eurynome brought the seat at once and set a fleece upon it, and as soon as Ulysses had sat down Penelope began by saying, “Stranger, I shall first ask you who and whence are you? Tell me of your town and parents.”

“Madam;” answered Ulysses, “who on the face of the whole earth can dare to chide with you? Your fame reaches the firmament of heaven itself; you are like some blameless king, who upholds righteousness, as the monarch over a great and valiant nation: the earth yields its wheat and barley, the trees are loaded with fruit, the ewes bring forth lambs, and the sea abounds with fish by reason of his virtues, and his people do good deeds under him. Nevertheless, as I sit here in your house, ask me some other question and do not seek to know my race and family, or you will recall memories that will yet more increase my sorrow. I am full of heaviness, but I ought not to sit weeping and wailing in another person’s house, nor is it well to be thus grieving continually. I shall have one of the servants or even yourself complaining of me, and saying that my eyes swim with tears because I am heavy with wine.”

Then Penelope answered, “Stranger, heaven robbed me of all beauty, whether of face or figure, when the Argives set sail for Troy and my dear husband with them. If he were to return and look after my affairs I should be both more respected and should show a better presence to the world. As it is, I am oppressed with care, and with the afflictions which heaven has seen fit to heap upon me. The chiefs from all our islands Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus, as also from Ithaca itself, are wooing me against my will and are wasting my estate. I can therefore show no attention to strangers, nor suppliants, nor to people who say that they are skilled artisans, but am all the time brokenhearted about Ulysses. They want me to marry again at once, and I have to invent stratagems in order to deceive them. In the first place heaven put it in my mind to set up a great tambour-frame in my room, and to begin working upon an enormous piece of fine needlework. Then I said to them, ‘Sweethearts, Ulysses is indeed dead, still, do not press me to marry again immediately; wait for I would not have my skill in needlework perish unrecorded till I have finished making a pall for the hero Laertes, to be ready against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.’ This was what I said, and they assented; whereon I used to keep working at my great web all day long, but at night I would unpick the stitches again by torch light. I fooled them in this way for three years without their finding it out, but as time wore on and I was now in my fourth year, in the waning of moons, and many days had been accomplished, those good-for-nothing hussies my maids betrayed me to the suitors, who broke in upon me and caught me; they were very angry with me, so I was forced to finish my work whether I would or no. And now I do not see how I can find any further shift for getting out of this marriage. My parents are putting great pressure upon me, and my son chafes at the ravages the suitors are making upon his estate, for he is now old enough to understand all about it and is perfectly able to look after his own affairs, for heaven has blessed him with an excellent disposition. Still, notwithstanding all this, tell me who you are and where you come from for you must have had father and mother of some sort; you cannot be the son of an oak or of a rock.”

Then Ulysses answered, “madam, wife of Ulysses, since you persist in asking me about my family, I will answer, no matter what it costs me: people must expect to be pained when they have been exiles as long as I have, and suffered as much among as many peoples. Nevertheless, as regards your question I will tell you all you ask. There
is a fair and fruitful island in mid-ocean called Crete; it is thickly peopled and there are nine cities in it: the people speak many different languages which overlap one another, for there are Achaeans, brave Eteocretans, Dorians of three-fold race, and noble Pelasgi. There is a great town there, Cnossus, where Minos reigned who every nine years had a conference with Jove himself. Minos was father to Deucalion, whose son I am, for Deucalion had two sons Idomeneus and myself. Idomeneus sailed for Troy, and I, who am the younger, am called Aethon; my brother, however, was at once the older and the more valiant of the two; hence it was in Crete that I saw Ulysses and showed him hospitality, for the winds took him there as he was on his way to Troy, carrying him out of his course from cape Malea and leaving him in Amnisus off the cave of Ilithuia, where the harbours are difficult to enter and he could hardly find shelter from the winds that were then xaging. As soon as he got there he went into the town and asked for Idomeneus, claiming to be his old and valued friend, but Idomeneus had already set sail for Troy some ten or twelve days earlier, so I took him to my own house and showed him every kind of hospitality, for I had abundance of everything. Moreover, I fed the men who were with him with barley meal from the public store, and got subscriptions of wine and oxen for them to sacrifice to their heart’s content. They stayed with me twelve days, for there was a gale blowing from the North so strong that one could hardly keep one’s feet on land. I suppose some unfriendly god had raised it for them, but on the thirteenth day the wind dropped, and they got away.”

Many a plausible tale did Ulysses further tell her, and Penelope wept as she listened, for her heart was melted. As the snow wastes upon the mountain tops when the winds from South East and West have breathed upon it and thawed it till the rivers run bank full with water, even so did her cheeks overflow with tears for the husband who was all the time sitting by her side. Ulysses felt for her and was for her, but he kept his eyes as hard as or iron without letting them so much as quiver, so cunningly did he restrain his tears. Then, when she had relieved herself by weeping, she turned to him again and said: “Now, stranger, I shall put you to the test and see whether or no you really did entertain my husband and his men, as you say you did. Tell me, then, how he was dressed, what kind of a man he was to look at, and so also with his companions.”

“Madam,” answered Ulysses, “it is such a long time ago that I can hardly say. Twenty years are come and gone since he left my home, and went elsewhither; but I will tell you as well as I can recollect. Ulysses wore a mantle of purple wool, double lined, and it was fastened by a gold brooch with two catches for the pin. On the face of this there was a device that showed a dog holding a spotted fawn between his fore paws, and watching it as it lay panting upon the ground. Every one marvelled at the way in which these things had been done in gold, the dog looking at the fawn, and strangling it, while the fawn was struggling convulsively to escape. As for the shirt that he wore next his skin, it was so soft that it fitted him like the skin of an onion, and glistened in the sunlight to the admiration of all the women who beheld it. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart, that I do not know whether Ulysses wore these clothes when he left home, or whether one of his companions had given them to him while he was on his voyage; or possibly some one at whose house he was staying made him a present of them, for he was a man of many friends and had few equals among the Achaeans. I myself gave him a sword of bronze and a beautiful purple mantle, double lined, with a shirt that went down to his feet, and I sent him on board his ship with every mark of honour. He had a servant with him, a little older than himself, and I can tell you what he was like; his shoulders were hunched, he was dark, and he had thick curly hair. His name was Eurybates, and Ulysses treated him with greater familiarity than he did any of the others, as being the most like-minded with himself.”

Penelope was moved still more deeply as she heard the indisputable proofs that Ulysses laid before her; and when she had again found relief in tears she said to him, “Stranger, I was already disposed to pity you, but henceforth you shall be honoured and made welcome in my house. It was I who gave Ulysses the clothes you speak of. I took them out of the store room and folded them up myself, and I gave him also the gold brooch to wear as an ornament. Alas! I shall never welcome him home again. It was by an ill fate that he ever set out for that detested city whose very name I cannot bring myself even to mention.”

Then Ulysses answered, “Madam, wife of Ulysses, do not disfigure yourself further by grieving thus bitterly for your loss, though I can hardly blame you for doing so. A woman who has loved her husband and borne him children, would naturally be grieved at losing him, even though he were a worse man than Ulysses, who they say was like a god. Still, cease your tears and listen to what I can tell I will hide nothing from you, and can say with perfect truth that I have lately heard of Ulysses as being alive and on his way home; he is among the Thesprotians, and is bringing back much valuable treasure that he has begged from one and another of them; but his ship and all his crew were lost as they were leaving the Thrinacian island, for Jove and the sun-god were angry with him because his men had slaughtered the sun-god’s cattle, and they were all drowned to a man. But Ulysses stuck to the keel of the ship and was drifted on to the land of the Phaecians, who are near of kin to the immortals, and who treated him as though he had been a god, giving him many presents, and wishing to escort him home safe and sound. In fact Ulysses would have been here long ago, had he not thought better to go from land to land gathering wealth; for there is no man living who is so wily as he is; there is no one can compare with him. Pheidon king of the Thesprotians told me all this, and he swore to me making drink-offerings in his house as he did so that the ship was by the water side and the crew found who would take Ulysses to his own country. He sent me off first, for there happened to be a Thesprotian ship sailing for the wheat-growing island of Dulichium, but he showed me all treasure Ulysses had got together, and he had enough lying in the house of king Pheidon to keep his family for ten generations; but the king said Ulysses had gone to Dodona that he might learn Jove’s mind from the high oak tree, and know whether after so long an absence he should return to Ithaca openly or in secret. So you may know he is safe and will be here shortly; he is close at hand and cannot remain away from home much longer; nevertheless I will confirm my words with an oath, and call Jove who is the first and mightiest of all gods to witness, as also that hearth of Ulysses to which I have now come, that all I have spoken shall surely come to pass. Ulysses will return in this self same year; with the end of this moon and the beginning of the next he will be here.”

“May it be even so,” answered Penelope; “if your words come true you shall have such gifts and such good will from me that all who see you shall congratulate you; but I know very well how it will be. Ulysses will not return, neither will you get your escort hence, for so surely as that Ulysses ever was, there are now no longer any such masters in the house as he was, to receive

honourable strangers or to further them on their way home. And now, you maids, wash his feet for him, and make him a bed on a couch with rugs and blankets, that he may be warm and quiet till morning. Then, at day break wash him and anoint him again, that he may sit in the cloister and take his meals with Telemachus. It shall be the worse for any one of these hateful people who is uncivil to him; like it or not, he shall have no more to do in this house. For how, sir, shall you be able to learn whether or no I am superior to others of my sex both in goodness of heart and understanding, if I let you dine in my cloisters squalid and ill clad? Men live but for a little season; if they are hard, and deal hardly, people wish them ill so long as they are alive, and speak contemptuously of them when they are dead, but he that is righteous and deals righteously, the people tell of his praise among all lands, and many shall call him blessed."

Ulysses answered, "Madam, I have foresworn rugs and blankets from the day that I left the snowy ranges of Crete to go on shipboard. I will lie as I have lain on many a sleepless night hitherto. Night after night have I passed in any rough sleeping place, and waited for morning. Nor, again, do I like having my feet washed; I shall not let any of the young hussies about your house touch my feet; but, if you have any old and respectable woman who has gone through as much trouble as I have, I will allow her to wash them."

To this Penelope said, "My dear sir, of all the guests who ever yet came to my house there never was one who spoke in all things with such admirable propriety as you do. There happens to be in the house a most respectable old woman the same who received my poor dear husband in her arms the night he was born, and nursed him in infancy. She is very feeble now, but she shall wash your feet." "Come here," said she, "Euryclea, and wash your master's age-mate; I suppose Ulysses' hands and feet are very much the same now as his are, for trouble ages all of us dreadfully fast."

"May it be even so," answered Penelope; "if your words come true you shall have such gifts and such good will from me that all who see you shall congratulate you; but I know very well how it will be. Ulysses will not return, neither will you get your escort hence, for so surely as that Ulysses ever was, there are now no longer any such masters in the house as he was, to receive honourable strangers or to further them on their way home. And now, you maids, wash his feet for him, and make him a bed on a couch with rugs and blankets, that he may be warm and quiet till morning. Then, at day break wash him and anoint him again, that he may sit in the cloister and take his meals with Telemachus. It shall be the worse for any one of these hateful people who is uncivil to him; like it or not, he shall have no more to do in this house. For how, sir, shall you be able to learn whether or no I am superior to others of my sex both in goodness of heart and understanding, if I let you dine in my cloisters squalid and ill clad? Men live but for a little season; if they are hard, and deal hardly, people wish them ill so long as they are alive, and speak contemptuously of them when they are dead, but he that is righteous and deals righteously, the people tell of his praise among all lands, and many shall call him blessed."

Ulysses answered, "Madam, I have foresworn rugs and blankets from the day that I left the snowy ranges of Crete to go on shipboard. I will lie as I have lain on many a sleepless night hitherto. Night after night have I passed in any rough sleeping place, and waited for morning. Nor, again, do I like having my feet washed; I shall not let any of the young hussies about your house touch my feet; but, if you have any old and respectable woman who has gone through as much trouble as I have, I will allow her to wash them."

To this Penelope said, "My dear sir, of all the guests who ever yet came to my house there never was one who spoke in all things with such admirable propriety as you do. There happens to be in the house a most respectable old woman the same who received my poor dear husband in her arms the night he was born, and nursed him in infancy. She is very feeble now, but she shall wash your feet." "Come here," said she, "Euryclea, and wash your master's age-mate; I suppose Ulysses' hands and feet are very much the same now as his are, for trouble ages all of us dreadfully fast."

Then the old woman took the cauldron in which she was going to wash his feet, and poured plenty of cold water into it, adding hot till the bath was warm enough. Ulysses sat by the fire, but ere long he turned away from the light, for it occurred to him that when the old woman had hold of his leg she would recognize a certain scar which it bore, whereon the whole truth would come out. And indeed as soon as she began washing her master, she at once knew the scar as one that had been given him by a wild boar when he was hunting on Mount Parnassus with his excellent grandfather Autolycus who was the most accomplished thief and perjurer in the whole world and with the sons of Autolycus. Mercury himself had endowed him with this gift, for he used to burn the thigh bones of goats and kids to him, so he took pleasure in his companionship. It happened once that Autolycus had gone to Ithaca and had found the child of his daughter just born. As soon as he had done supper Euryclea set the infant upon his knees and said, you must find a name for your grandson; you greatly wished that you might have one."

‘Son-in-law and daughter,” replied Autolycus, “call the child thus: I am highly displeased with a large number of people in one place and another, both men and women; so name the child ‘Ulysses,’ or the child of anger. When he grows up and comes to visit his mother’s family on Mount Parnassus, where my possessions lie, I will make him a present and will send him on his way rejoicing.”

Ulysses, therefore, went to Parnassus to get the presents from Autolycus, who with his sons shook hands with him and gave him welcome. His grandmother Amphithea threw her arms about him, and kissed his head, and both his beautiful eyes, while Autolycus desired his sons to get dinner ready, and they did as he told them. They brought in a five year old bull, flayed it, made it ready and divided it into joints; these they then cut carefully up into smaller pieces and spitted them; they roasted them sufficiently and served the portions round. Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun they feasted, and every man had his full share so that all were satisfied; but when the sun set and it came on dark, they went to bed and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, the sons of Autolycus went out with their hounds hunting, and Ulysses went too. They climbed the wooded slopes of Parnassus and soon reached its breezy upland valleys; but as the sun was beginning to beat upon the fields, fresh-risen from the slow still currents of Oceanus, they came to a mountain dell. The dogs were in front searching for the tracks of the beast they were chasing, and after them came the sons of Autolycus, among whom was Ulysses, close behind the dogs, and he had a long spear in his hand. Here was the lair of a huge boar among some thick brushwood, so dense that the wind and rain could not get through it, nor could the sun’s rays pierce it, and the ground underneath lay thick with fallen leaves. The boar heard the noise of the men’s feet, and the hounds baying on every side as the huntsmen came up to him, so rushed from his lair, raised the bristles on his neck, and stood at bay with fire flashing from his eyes. Ulysses was the first

to raise his spear and try to drive it into the brute, but the boar was too quick for him, and charged him sideways, ripping him above the knee with a gash that tore deep though it did not reach the bone. As for the boar, Ulysses hit him on the right shoulder, and the point of the spear went right through him, so that he fell groaning in the dust until the life went out of him. The sons of Autolycus busied themselves with the carcass of the boar, and bound Ulysses’ wound; then, after saying a spell to stop the bleeding, they went home as fast as they could. But when Autolycus and his sons had thoroughly healed Ulysses, they made him some splendid presents, and sent him back to Ithaca with much mutual good will. When he got back, his father and mother were rejoiced to see him, and asked him all about it, and how he had hurt himself to get the scar; so he told them how the boar had ripped him when he was out hunting with Autolycus and his sons on Mount Parnassus.

As soon as Euryclea had got the scarred limb in her hands and had well hold of it, she recognized it and dropped the foot at once. The leg fell into the bath, which rang out and was overturned, so that all the water was spilt on the ground; Euryclea’s eyes between her joy and her grief filled with tears, and she could not speak, but she caught Ulysses by the beard and said, “My dear child, I am sure you must be Ulysses himself, only I did not know you till I had actually touched and handled you.”

As she spoke she looked towards Penelope, as though wanting to tell her that her dear husband was in the house, but Penelope was unable to look in that direction and observe what was going on, for Minerva had diverted her attention; so Ulysses caught Euryclea by the throat with his right hand and with his left drew her close to him, and said, “Nurse, do you wish to be the ruin of me, you who nursed me at your own breast, now that after twenty years of wandering I am at last come to my own home again? Since it has been borne in upon you by heaven to recognize me, hold your tongue, and do not say a word about it any one else in the house, for if you do I tell you and it shall surely be that if heaven grants me to take the lives of these suitors, I will not spare you, though you are my own nurse, when I am killing the other women.”

“My child,” answered Euryclea, “what are you talking about? You know very well that nothing can either bend or break me. I will hold my tongue like a stone or a piece of iron; furthermore let me say, and lay my saying to your heart, when heaven has delivered the suitors into your hand, I will give you a list of the women in the house who have been ill-behaved, and of those who are guiltless.”

And Ulysses answered, “Nurse, you ought not to speak in that way; I am well able to form my own opinion about one and all of them; hold your tongue and leave everything to heaven.”

As he said this Euryclea left the cloister to fetch some more water, for the first had been all spilt; and when she had washed him and anointed him with oil, Ulysses drew his seat nearer to the fire to warm himself, and hid the scar under his rags. Then Penelope began talking to him and said:

“Stranger, I should like to speak with you briefly about another matter. It is indeed nearly bed time for those, at least, who can sleep in spite of sorrow. As for myself, heaven has given me a life of such unmeasurable woe, that even by day when I am attending to my duties and looking after the servants, I am still weeping and lamenting during the whole time; then, when night comes, and we all of us go to bed, I lie awake thinking, and my heart comes a prey to the most incessant and cruel tortures. As the dun nightingale, daughter of Pandareus, sings in the early spring from her seat in shadiest covert hid, and with many a plaintive trill pours out the tale how by mishap she killed her own child Itylus, son of king Zethus, even so does my mind toss and turn in its uncertainty whether I ought to stay with my son here, and safeguard my substance, my bondsmen, and the greatness of my house, out of regard to public opinion and the memory of my late husband, or whether it is not now time for me to go with the best of these suitors who are wooing me and making me such magnificent presents. As long as my son was still young, and unable to understand, he would not hear of my leaving my husband’s house, but now that he is full grown he begs and prays me to do so, being incensed at the way in which the suitors are eating up his property. Listen, then, to a dream that I have had and interpret it for me if you can. I have twenty geese about the house that eat mash out of a trough, and of which I am exceedingly fond. I dreamed that a great eagle came swooping down from a mountain, and dug his curved beak into the neck of each of them till he had killed them all. Presently he soared off into the sky, and left them lying dead about the yard; whereon I wept in my room till all my maids gathered round me, so piteously was I grieving because the eagle had killed my geese. Then he came back again, and perching on a projecting rafter spoke to me with human voice, and told me to leave off crying. ‘Be of good courage,’ he said, ‘daughter of Icarius; this is no dream, but a vision of good omen that shall surely come to pass. The geese are the suitors, and I am no longer an eagle, but your own husband, who am come back to you, and who will bring these suitors to a disgraceful end.’ On this I woke, and when I looked out I saw my geese at the trough eating their mash as usual.”

“This dream, Madam,” replied Ulysses, “can admit but of one interpretation, for had not Ulysses himself told you how it shall be fulfilled? The death of the suitors is portended, and not one single one of them will escape.”

And Penelope answered, “Stranger, dreams are very curious and unaccountable things, and they do not by any means invariably come true. There are two gates through which these unsubstantial fancies proceed; the one is of horn, and the other ivory. Those that come through the gate of ivory are fatuous, but those from the gate of horn mean something to those that see them. I do not think, however, that my own dream came through the gate of horn, though I and my son should be most thankful if it proves to have done so. Furthermore I say and lay my saying to your heart the coming dawn will usher in the ill-omened day that is to sever me from the house of Ulysses, for I am about to hold a tournament of axes. My husband used to set up twelve axes in the court, one in front of the other, like the stays upon which a ship is built; he would then go back from them and shoot an arrow through the whole twelve. I shall make the suitors try to do the same thing, and whichever of them can string the bow most easily, and send his arrow through all the twelve axes, him will I follow, and quit this house of my lawful husband, so goodly and so abounding in wealth. But even so, I doubt not that I shall remember it in my dreams.”

Then Ulysses answered, “Madam wife of Ulysses, you need not defer your tournament, for Ulysses will return ere ever they can string the bow, handle it how they will, and send their arrows through the iron.”

To this Penelope said, “As long, sir, as you will sit here and talk to me, I can have no desire to go to bed. Still, people cannot do permanently without sleep, and heaven has appointed us dwellers on earth a time for all things. I will therefore go upstairs and recline upon that couch which I have never ceased to flood with my tears from the day Ulysses set out for the city with a hateful name.”

She then went upstairs to her own room, not alone, but attended by her maidens, and when there, she lamented her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyelids.

Book XX

ULYSSES slept in the cloister upon an undressed bullock’s hide, on the top of which he threw several skins of the sheep the suitors had eaten, and Eurynome threw a cloak over him after he had laid himself down. There, then, Ulysses lay wakefully brooding upon the way in which he should kill the suitors; and by and by, the women who had been in the habit of misconducting themselves with them, left the house giggling and laughing with one another. This made Ulysses very angry, and he doubted whether to get up and kill every single one of them then and there, or to let them sleep one more and last time with the suitors. His heart growled within him, and as a bitch with puppies growls and shows her teeth when she sees a stranger, so did his heart growl with anger at the evil deeds that were being done: but he beat his breast and said, “Heart, be still, you had worse than this to bear on the day when the

terrible Cyclops ate your brave companions; yet you bore it in silence till your cunning got you safe out of the cave, though you made sure of being killed."

Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side and then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible, even so did he turn himself about from side to side, thinking all the time how, single handed as he was, he should contrive to kill so large a body of men as the wicked suitors. But by and by Minerva came down from heaven in the likeness of a woman, and hovered over his head saying, "My poor unhappy man, why do you lie awake in this way? This is your house: your wife is safe inside it, and so is your son who is just such a young man as any father may be proud of."

"Goddess," answered Ulysses, "all that you have said is true, but I am in some doubt as to how I shall be able to kill these wicked suitors single handed, seeing what a number of them there always are. And there is this further difficulty, which is still more considerable. Supposing that with Jove's and your assistance I succeed in killing them, I must ask you to consider where I am to escape to from their avengers when it is all over."

"For shame," replied Minerva, "why, any one else would trust a worse ally than myself, even though that ally were only a mortal and less wise than I am. Am I not a goddess, and have I not protected you throughout in all your troubles? I tell you plainly that even though there were fifty bands of men surrounding us and eager to kill us, you should take all their sheep and cattle, and drive them away with you. But go to sleep; it is a very bad thing to lie awake all night, and you shall be out of your troubles before long."

As she spoke she shed sleep over his eyes, and then went back to Olympus.

While Ulysses was thus yielding himself to a very deep slumber that eased the burden of his sorrows, his admirable wife awoke, and sitting up in her bed began to cry. When she had relieved herself by weeping she prayed to Diana saying, "Great Goddess Diana, daughter of Jove, drive an arrow into my heart and slay me; or let some whirlwind snatch me up and bear me through paths of darkness till it drop me into the mouths of overflowing Oceanus, as it did the daughters of Pandareus. The daughters of Pandareus lost their father and mother, for the gods killed them, so they were left orphans. But Venus took care of them, and fed them on cheese, honey, and sweet wine. Juno taught them to excel all women in beauty of form and understanding; Diana gave them an imposing presence, and Minerva endowed them with every kind of accomplishment; but one day when Venus had gone up to Olympus to see Jove about getting them married (for well does he know both what shall happen and what not happen to every one) the storm winds came and spirited them away to become handmaids to the dread Erinyes. Even so I wish that the gods who live in heaven would hide me from mortal sight, or that fair Diana might strike me, for I would fain go even beneath the sad earth if I might do so still looking towards Ulysses only, and without having to yield myself to a worse man than he was. Besides, no matter how much people may grieve by day, they can put up with it so long as they can sleep at night, for when the eyes are closed in slumber people forget good and ill alike; whereas my misery haunts me even in my dreams. This very night methought there was one lying by my side who was like Ulysses as he was when he went away with his host, and I rejoiced, for I believed that it was no dream, but the very truth itself."

On this the day broke, but Ulysses heard the sound of her weeping, and it puzzled him, for it seemed as though she already knew him and was by his side. Then he gathered up the cloak and the fleeces on which he had lain, and set them on a seat in the cloister, but he took the bullock's hide out into the open. He lifted up his hands to heaven, and prayed, saying "Father Jove, since you have seen fit to bring me over land and sea to my own home after all the afflictions you have laid upon me, give me a sign out of the mouth of some one or other of those who are now waking within the house, and let me have another sign of some kind from outside."

Thus did he pray. Jove heard his prayer and forthwith thundered high up among the from the splendour of Olympus, and Ulysses was glad when he heard it. At the same time within the house, a miller-woman from hard by in the mill room lifted up her voice and gave him another sign. There were twelve miller-women whose business it was to grind wheat and barley which are the staff of life. The others had ground their task and had gone to take their rest, but this one had not yet finished, for she was not so strong as they were, and when she heard the thunder she stopped grinding and gave the sign to her master. "Father Jove," said she, "you who rule over heaven and earth, you have thundered from a clear sky without so much as a cloud in it, and this means something for somebody; grant the prayer, then, of me your poor servant who calls upon you, and let this be the very last day that the suitors dine in the house of Ulysses. They have worn me out with the labour of grinding meal for them, and I hope they may never have another dinner anywhere at all."

Ulysses was glad when he heard the omens conveyed to him by the woman's speech, and by the thunder, for he knew they meant that he should avenge himself on the suitors.

Then the other maids in the house rose and lit the fire on the hearth; Telemachus also rose and put on his clothes. He girded his sword about his shoulder, bound his sandals on his comely feet, and took a doughty spear with a point of sharpened bronze; then he went to the threshold of the cloister and said to Euryclea, "Nurse, did you make the stranger comfortable both as regards bed and board, or did you let him shift for himself? for my mother, good woman though she is, has a way of paying great attention to second-rate people, and of neglecting others who are in reality much better men."

"Do not find fault child," said Euryclea, "when there is no one to find fault with. The stranger sat and drank his wine as long as he liked: your mother did ask him if he would take any more bread and he said he would not. When he wanted to go to bed she told the servants to make one for him, but he said he was re such wretched outcast that he would not sleep on a bed and under blankets; he insisted on having an undressed bullock's hide and some sheepskins put for him in the cloister and I threw a cloak over him myself."

Then Telemachus went out of the court to the place where the Achaeans were meeting in assembly; he had his spear in his hand, and he was not alone, for his two dogs went with him. But Euryclea called the maids and said, "Come, wake up; set about sweeping the cloisters and sprinkling them with water to lay the dust; put the covers on the seats; wipe down the tables, some of you, with a wet sponge; clean out the mixing-jugs and the cups, and for water from the fountain at once; the suitors will be here directly; they will be here early, for it is a feast day."

Thus did she speak, and they did even as she had said: twenty of them went to the fountain for water, and the others set themselves busily to work about the house. The men who were in attendance on the suitors also came up and began chopping firewood. By and by the women returned from the fountain, and the swineherd came after them with the three best pigs he could pick out. These he let feed about the premises, and then he said good-humouredly to Ulysses, "Stranger, are the suitors treating you any better now, or are they as insolent as ever?"

"May heaven," answered Ulysses, "requite to them the wickedness with which they deal high-handedly in another man's house without any sense of shame."

Thus did they converse; meanwhile Melanthius the goatherd came up, for he too was bringing in his best goats for the suitors' dinner; and he had two shepherds with him. They tied the goats up under the gatehouse, and then Melanthius began gibing at Ulysses. "Are you still here, stranger," said he, "to pester people by begging about the house? Why can you not go elsewhere? You and I shall not come to an understanding before we have given each other a taste of our fists. You beg without any sense of decency: are there not feasts elsewhere among the Achaeans, as well as here?"

Ulysses made no answer, but bowed his head and brooded. Then a third man, Philoetius, joined them, who was bringing in a barren heifer and some goats. These were brought over by the boatmen who are there to take people over when any one comes to them. So Philoetius made his heifer and his goats secure under the gatehouse, and then went up to the swineherd. "Who, Swineherd," said he, "is this stranger that is lately come here? Is he one of your men? What is his family? Where does he come from? Poor fellow, he looks as if he had been some great man, but the gods give sorrow to whom they will even to kings if it so pleases them

As he spoke he went up to Ulysses and saluted him with his right hand; "Good day to you, father stranger," said he, "you seem to be very poorly off now, but I hope you will have better times by and by. Father Jove, of all gods you are the most malicious. We are your own children, yet you show us no mercy in all our misery and afflictions. A sweat came over me when I saw this man, and my eyes filled with tears, for he reminds me of Ulysses, who I fear is going about in just such rags as this man's are, if indeed he is still among the living. If he is already dead and in the house of Hades, then, alas! for my good master, who made me his stockman when I was quite young among the Cephallenians, and now his cattle are countless; no one could have done better with them than I have, for they have bred like ears of corn; nevertheless I have to keep bringing them in for others to eat, who take no heed of his son though he is in the house, and fear not the wrath of heaven, but are already eager to divide Ulysses' property among them because he has been away so long. I have often thought only it would not be right while his son is living of going off with the cattle to some foreign country; bad as this would be, it is still harder to stay here and be ill-treated about other people's herds. My position is intolerable, and I should long since have run away and put myself under the protection of some other chief, only that I believe my poor master will yet return, and send all these suitors flying out of the house."

"Stockman," answered Ulysses, "you seem to be a very well-disposed person, and I can see that you are a man of sense. Therefore I will tell you, and will confirm my words with an oath: by Jove, the chief of all gods, and by that hearth of Ulysses to which I am now come, Ulysses shall return before you leave this place, and if you are so minded you shall see him killing the suitors who are now masters here."

"If Jove were to bring this to pass," replied the stockman, "you should see how I would do my very utmost to help him."

And in like manner Eumaeus prayed that Ulysses might return home.

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile the suitors were hatching a plot to murder Telemachus: but a bird flew near them on their left hand an eagle with a dove in its talons. On this Amphinomus said, "My friends, this plot of ours to murder Telemachus will not succeed; let us go to dinner instead."

The others assented, so they went inside and laid their cloaks on the benches and seats. They sacrificed the sheep, goats, pigs, and the heifer, and when the inward meats were cooked they served them round. They mixed the wine in the mixing-bowls, and the swineherd gave every man his cup, while Philoetius handed round the bread in the breadbaskets, and Melanthius poured them out their wine. Then they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them.

Telemachus purposely made Ulysses sit in the part of the cloister that was paved with stone; he gave him a shabby-looking seat at a little table to himself, and had his portion of the inward meats brought to him, with his wine in a gold cup. "Sit there," said he, "and drink your wine among the great people. I will put a stop to the gibes and blows of the suitors, for this is no public house, but belongs to Ulysses, and has passed from him to me. Therefore, suitors, keep your hands and your tongues to yourselves, or there will be mischief."

The suitors bit their lips, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech; then Antinous said, "We do not like such language but we will put up with it, for Telemachus is threatening us in good earnest. If Jove had let us we should have put a stop to his brave talk ere now."

Thus spoke Antinous, but Telemachus heeded him not. Meanwhile the heralds were bringing the holy hecatomb through the city, and the Achaeans gathered under the shady grove of Apollo.

Then they roasted the outer meat, drew it off the spits, gave every man his portion, and feasted to their hearts' content; those who waited at table gave Ulysses exactly the same portion as the others had, for Telemachus had told them to do so.

But Minerva would not let the suitors for one moment drop their insolence, for she wanted Ulysses to become still more bitter against them. Now there happened to be among them a ribald fellow, whose name was Ctesippus, and who came from Same. This man, confident in his great wealth, was paying court to the wife of Ulysses, and said to the suitors, "Hear what I have to say. The stranger has already had as large a portion as any one else; this is well, for it is not right nor reasonable to ill-treat any guest of Telemachus who comes here. I will, however, make him a present on my own account, that he may have something to give to the bath-woman, or to some other of Ulysses' servants."

As he spoke he picked up a heifer's foot from the meat-basket in which it lay, and threw it at Ulysses, but Ulysses turned his head a little aside, and avoided it, smiling grimly Sardinian fashion as he did so, and it hit the wall, not him. On this Telemachus spoke fiercely to Ctesippus, "It is a good thing for you," said he, "that the stranger turned his head so that you missed him. If you had hit him I should have run you through with my spear, and your father would have had to see about getting you buried rather than married in this house. So let me have no more unseemly behaviour from any of you, for I am grown up now to the knowledge of good and evil and understand what is going on, instead of being the child that I have been heretofore. I have long seen you killing my sheep and making free with my corn and wine: I have put up with this, for one man is no match for many, but do me no further violence. Still, if you wish to kill me, kill me; I would far rather die than see such disgraceful scenes day after day guests insulted, and men dragging the women servants about the house in an unseemly way."

They all held their peace till at last Agelaus son of Damastor said, "No one should take offence at what has just been said, nor gainsay it, for it is quite reasonable. Leave off, therefore, ill-treating the stranger, or any one else of the servants who are about the house; I would say, however, a friendly word to Telemachus and his mother, which I trust may commend itself to both. 'As long,' I would say, 'as you had ground for hoping that Ulysses would one day come home, no one could complain of your waiting and suffering the suitors to be in your house. It would have been better that he should have returned, but it is now sufficiently clear that he will never do so; therefore talk all this quietly over with your mother, and tell her to marry the best man, and the one who makes

her the most advantageous offer. Thus you will yourself be able to manage your own inheritance, and to eat and drink in peace, while your mother will look after some other man's house, not yours."'

To this Telemachus answered, "By Jove, Agelaus, and by the sorrows of my unhappy father, who has either perished far from Ithaca, or is wandering in some distant land, I throw no obstacles in the way of my mother's marriage; on the contrary I urge her to choose whomsoever she will, and I will give her numberless gifts into the bargain, but I dare not insist point blank that she shall leave the house against her own wishes. Heaven forbid that I should do this."

Minerva now made the suitors fall to laughing immoderately, and set their wits wandering; but they were laughing with a forced laughter. Their meat became smeared with blood; their eyes filled with tears, and their hearts were heavy with forebodings. Theoclymenus saw this and said, "Unhappy men, what is it that ails you? There is a shroud of darkness drawn over you from head to foot, your cheeks are wet with tears; the air is alive with wailing voices; the walls and roof-beams drip blood; the gate of the cloisters and the court beyond them are full of ghosts trooping down into the night of hell; the sun is blotted out of heaven, and a blighting gloom is over all the land."

Thus did he speak, and they all of them laughed heartily. Eurymachus then said, "This stranger who has lately come here has lost his senses. Servants, turn him out into the streets, since he finds it so dark here."

But Theoclymenus said, "Eurymachus, you need not send any one with me. I have eyes, ears, and a pair of feet of my own, to say nothing of an understanding mind. I will take these out of the house with me, for I see mischief overhanging you, from which not one of you men who are insulting people and plotting ill deeds in the house of Ulysses will be able to escape."

He left the house as he spoke, and went back to Piraeus who gave him welcome, but the suitors kept looking at one another and provoking Telemachus fly laughing at the strangers. One insolent fellow said to him, "Telemachus, you are not happy in your guests; first you have this importunate tramp, who comes begging bread and wine and has no skill for work or for hard fighting, but is perfectly useless, and now here is another fellow who is setting himself up as a prophet. Let me persuade you, for it will be much better, to put them on board ship and send them off to the Sicels to sell for what they will bring."

Telemachus gave him no heed, but sat silently watching his father, expecting every moment that he would begin his attack upon the suitors.

Meanwhile the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, had had had a rich seat placed for her facing the court and cloisters, so that she could hear what every one was saying. The dinner indeed had been prepared amid merriment; it had been both good and abundant, for they had sacrificed many victims; but the supper was yet to come, and nothing can be conceived more gruesome than the meal which a goddess and a brave man were soon to lay before them for they had brought their doom upon themselves.

Book XXI

MINERVA now put it in Penelope's mind to make the suitors try their skill with the bow and with the iron axes, in contest among themselves, as a means of bringing about their destruction. She went upstairs and got the store room key, which was made of bronze and had a handle of ivory; she then went with her maidens into the store room at the end of the house, where her husband's treasures of gold, bronze, and wrought iron were kept, and where was also his bow, and the quiver full of deadly arrows that had been given him by a friend whom he had met in Lacedaemon Iphitus the son of Eurytus. The two fell in with one another in Messene at the house of Ortilochus, where Ulysses was staying in order to recover a debt that was owing from the whole people; for the Messenians had carried off three hundred sheep from Ithaca, and had sailed away with them and with their shepherds. In quest of these Ulysses took a long journey while still quite young, for his father and the other chieftains sent him on a mission to recover them. Iphitus had gone there also to try and get back twelve brood mares that he had lost, and the mule foals that were running with them. These mares were the death of him in the end, for when he went to the house of Jove's son, mighty Hercules, who performed such prodigies of valour, Hercules to his shame killed him, though he was his guest, for he feared not heaven's vengeance, nor yet respected his own table which he had set before Iphitus, but killed him in spite of everything, and kept the mares himself. It was when claiming these that Iphitus met Ulysses, and gave him the bow which mighty Eurytus had been used to carry, and which on his death had been left by him to his son. Ulysses gave him in return a sword and a spear, and this was the beginning of a fast friendship, although they never visited at one another's houses, for Jove's son Hercules killed Iphitus ere they could do so. This bow, then, given him by Iphitus, had not been taken with him by Ulysses when he sailed for Troy; he had used it so long as he had been at home, but had left it behind as having been a keepsake from a valued friend.

Penelope presently reached the oak threshold of the store room; the carpenter had planed this duly, and had drawn a line on it so as to get it quite straight; he had then set the door posts into it and hung the doors. She loosed the strap from the handle of the door, put in the key, and drove it straight home to shoot back the bolts that held the doors; these flew open with a noise like a bull bellowing in a meadow, and Penelope stepped upon the raised platform, where the chests stood in which the fair linen and clothes were laid by along with fragrant herbs: reaching thence, she took down the bow with its bow case from the peg on which it hung. She sat down with it on her knees, weeping bitterly as she took the bow out of its case, and when her tears had relieved her, she went to the cloister where the suitors were, carrying the bow and the quiver, with the many deadly arrows that were inside it. Along with her came her maidens, bearing a chest that contained much iron and bronze which her husband had won as prizes. When she reached the suitors, she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister, holding a veil before her face, and with a maid on either side of her. Then she said:

“Listen to me you suitors, who persist in abusing the hospitality of this house because its owner has been long absent, and without other pretext than that you want to marry me; this, then, being the prize that you are contending for, I will bring out the mighty bow of Ulysses, and whomsoever of you shall string it most easily and send his arrow through each one of twelve axes, him will I follow and quit this house of my lawful husband, so goodly, and so abounding in wealth. But even so I doubt not that I shall remember it in my dreams.”

As she spoke, she told Eumaeus to set the bow and the pieces of iron before the suitors, and Eumaeus wept as he took them to do as she had bidden him. Hard by, the stockman wept also when he saw his master’s bow, but Antinous scolded them. “You country louts,” said he, “silly simpletons; why should you add to the sorrows of your mistress by crying in this way? She has enough to grieve her in the loss of her husband; sit still, therefore, and eat your dinners in silence, or go outside if you want to cry, and leave the bow behind you. We suitors shall have to contend for it with might and main, for we shall find it no light matter to string such a bow as this is. There is not a man of us all who is such another as Ulysses; for I have seen him and remember him, though I was then only a child.”

This was what he said, but all the time he was expecting to be able to string the bow and shoot through the iron, whereas in fact he was to be the first that should taste of the arrows from the hands of Ulysses, whom he was dishonouring in his own house egging the others on to do so also.

Then Telemachus spoke. “Great heavens!” he exclaimed, “Jove must have robbed me of my senses. Here is my dear and excellent mother saying she will quit this house and marry again, yet I am laughing and enjoying myself as though there were nothing happening. But, suitors, as the contest has been agreed upon, let it go forward. It is for a woman whose peer is not to be found in Pylos, Argos, or Mycene, nor yet in Ithaca nor on the mainland. You know this as well as I do; what need have I to speak in praise of my mother? Come on, then, make no excuses for delay, but let us see whether you can string the bow or no. I too will make trial of it, for if I can string it and shoot through the iron, I shall not suffer my mother to quit this house with a stranger, not if I can win the prizes which my father won before me.”

As he spoke he sprang from his seat, threw his crimson cloak from him, and took his sword from his shoulder. First he set the axes in a row, in a long groove which he had dug for them, and had Wade straight by line. Then he stamped the earth tight round them, and everyone was surprised when they saw him set up so orderly, though he had never seen anything of the kind before. This done, he went on to the pavement to make trial of the bow; thrice did he tug at it, trying with all his might to draw the string, and thrice he had to leave off, though he had hoped to string the bow and shoot through the iron. He was trying for the fourth time, and would have strung it had not Ulysses made a sign to check him in spite of all his eagerness. So he said:

“Alas! I shall either be always feeble and of no prowess, or I am too young, and have not yet reached my full strength so as to be able to hold my own if any one attacks me. You others, therefore, who are stronger than I, make trial of the bow and get this contest settled.”

On this he put the bow down, letting it lean against the door [that led into the house] with the arrow standing against the top of the bow. Then he sat down on the seat from which he had risen, and Antinous said:

“Come on each of you in his turn, going towards the right from the place at which the. cupbearer begins when he is handing round the wine.”

The rest agreed, and Leiodes son of OEnops was the first to rise. He was sacrificial priest to the suitors, and sat in the corner near the mixing-bowl. He was the only man who hated their evil deeds and was indignant with the others. He was now the first to take the bow and arrow, so he went on to the pavement to make his trial, but he could not string the bow, for his hands were weak and unused to hard work, they therefore soon grew tired, and he said to the suitors, “My friends, I cannot string it; let another have it; this bow shall take the life and soul out of many a chief among us, for it is better to die than to live after having missed the prize that we have so long striven for, and which has brought us so long together. Some one of us is even now hoping and praying that he may marry Penelope, but when he has seen this bow and tried it, let him woo and make bridal offerings to some other woman, and let Penelope marry whoever makes her the best offer and whose lot it is to win her.”

On this he put the bow down, letting it lean against the door, with the arrow standing against the tip of the bow. Then he took his seat again on the seat from which he had risen; and Antinous rebuked him saying:

“Leiodes, what are you talking about? Your words are monstrous and intolerable; it makes me angry to listen to you. Shall, then, this bow take the life of many a chief among us, merely because you cannot bend it yourself? True, you were not born to be an archer, but there are others who will soon string it.”

Then he said to Melanthius the goatherd, “Look sharp, light a fire in the court, and set a seat hard by with a sheep skin on it; bring us also a large ball of lard, from what they have in the house. Let us warm the bow and grease it we will then make trial of it again, and bring the contest to an end.”

Melanthius lit the fire, and set a seat covered with sheep skins beside it. He also brought a great ball of lard from what they had in the house, and the suitors warmed the bow and again made trial of it, but they were none of them nearly strong enough to string it. Nevertheless there still remained Antinous and Eurymachus, who were the ringleaders among the suitors and much the foremost among them all.

Then the swineherd and the stockman left the cloisters together, and Ulysses followed them. When they had got outside the gates and the outer yard, Ulysses said to them quietly:

“Stockman, and you swineherd, I have something in my mind which I am in doubt whether to say or no; but I think I will say it. What manner of men would you be to stand by Ulysses, if some god should bring him back here all of a sudden? Say which you are disposed to do to side with the suitors, or with Ulysses?”

“Father Jove,” answered the stockman, “would indeed that you might so ordain it. If some god were but to bring Ulysses back, you should see with what might and main I would fight for him.”

In like words Eumaeus prayed to all the gods that Ulysses might return; when, therefore, he saw for certain what mind they were of, Ulysses said, “It is I, Ulysses, who am here. I have suffered much, but at last, in the twentieth year, I am come back to my own country. I find that you two alone of all my servants are glad that I should do so, for I have not heard any of the others praying for my return. To you two, therefore, will I unfold the truth as it shall be. If heaven shall deliver the suitors into my hands, I will find wives for both of you, will give you house and holding close to my own, and you shall be to me as though you were brothers and friends of Telemachus. I will now give you convincing proofs that you may know me and be assured. See, here is the scar from the boar’s tooth that ripped me when I was out hunting on Mount Parnassus with the sons of Autolycus.”

As he spoke he drew his rags aside from the great scar, and when they had examined it thoroughly, they both of them wept about Ulysses, threw their arms round him and kissed his head and shoulders, while Ulysses kissed their hands and faces in return. The sun would have gone down upon their mourning if Ulysses had not checked them and said:

“Cease your weeping, lest some one should come outside and see us, and tell those who a are within. When you go in, do so separately, not both together; I will go first, and do you follow afterwards; Let this moreover be the token between us; the suitors will all of them try to prevent me from getting hold of the bow and quiver; do you, therefore, Eumaeus, place it in my hands when you are carrying it about, and tell the women to close the doors of their apartment. If they hear any groaning or uproar as of men fighting about the house, they must not come out; they must keep quiet, and stay where they are at their work. And I charge you, Philoetius, to make fast the doors of the outer court, and to bind them securely at once.”

When he had thus spoken, he went back to the house and took the seat that he had left. Presently, his two servants followed him inside.

At this moment the bow was in the hands of Eurymachus, who was warming it by the fire, but even so he could not string it, and he was greatly grieved. He heaved a deep sigh and said, “I grieve for myself and for us all; I grieve that I shall have to forgo the marriage, but I do not care nearly so much about this, for there are plenty of other women in Ithaca and elsewhere; what I feel most is the fact of our being so inferior to Ulysses in strength that we cannot string his bow. This will disgrace us in the eyes of those who are yet unborn.”

“It shall not be so, Eurymachus,” said Antinous, “and you know it yourself. To-day is the feast of Apollo throughout all the land; who can string a bow on such a day as this? Put it on one side as for the axes they can stay where they are, for no one is likely to come to the house and take them away: let the cupbearer go round with his cups, that we may make our drink-offerings and drop this matter of the bow; we will tell Melanthius to bring us in some goats to-morrow the best he has; we can then offer thigh bones to Apollo the mighty archer, and again make trial of the bow, so as to bring the contest to an end.”

The rest approved his words, and thereon men servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering. Then, when they had made their offerings and had drunk each as much as he desired, Ulysses craftily said:

“Suitors of the illustrious queen, listen that I may speak even as I am minded. I appeal more especially to Eurymachus, and to Antinous who has just spoken with so much reason. Cease shooting for the present and leave the matter to the gods, but in the morning let heaven give victory to whom it will. For the moment, however, give me the bow that I may prove the power of my hands among you all, and see whether I still have as much strength as I used to have, or whether travel and neglect have made an end of it.”

This made them all very angry, for they feared he might string the bow; Antinous therefore rebuked him fiercely saying, “Wretched creature, you have not so much as a grain of sense in your whole body; you ought to think yourself lucky in being allowed to dine unharmed among your betters, without having any smaller portion served you than we others have had, and in being allowed to hear our conversation. No other beggar or stranger has been allowed to hear what we say among ourselves; the wine must have been doing you a mischief, as it does with all those drink immoderately. It was wine that inflamed the Centaur Eurytion when he was staying with Peirithous among the Lapithae. When the wine had got into his head he went mad and did ill deeds about the house of Peirithous; this angered the heroes who were there assembled, so they rushed at him and cut off his ears and nostrils; then they dragged him through the doorway out of the house, so he went away crazed, and bore the burden of his crime, bereft of understanding. Henceforth, therefore, there was war between mankind and the centaurs, but he brought it upon himself through his own drunkenness. In like manner I can tell you that it will go hardly with you if you string the bow: you will find no mercy from any one here, for we shall at once ship you off to king Echetus, who kills every one that comes near him: you will never get away alive, so drink and keep quiet without getting into a quarrel with men younger than yourself.”

Penelope then spoke to him. “Antinous,” said she, “it is not right that you should ill-treat any guest of Telemachus who comes to this house. If the stranger should prove strong enough to string the mighty bow of Ulysses, can you suppose that he would take me home with him and make me his wife? Even the man himself can have no such idea in his mind: none of you need let that disturb his feasting; it would be out of all reason.”

“Queen Penelope,” answered Eurymachus, “we do not suppose that this man will take you away with him; it is impossible; but we are afraid lest some of the baser sort, men or women among the Achaeans, should go gossiping about and say, ‘These suitors are a feeble folk; they are paying court to the wife of a brave man whose bow not one of them was able to string, and yet a beggarly tramp who came to the house strung it at once and sent an arrow through the iron.’ This is what will be said, and it will be a scandal against us.”

“Eurymachus,” Penelope answered, “people who persist in eating up the estate of a great chieftain and dishonouring his house must not expect others to think well of them. Why then should you mind if men talk as you think they will? This stranger is strong and well-built, he says moreover that he is of noble birth. Give him the bow, and let us see whether he can string it or no. I say and it shall surely be that if Apollo vouchsafes him the glory of stringing it, I will give him a cloak and shirt of good wear, with a javelin to keep off dogs and robbers, and a sharp sword. I will also give him sandals, and will see him sent safely whereever he wants to go.”

Then Telemachus said, “Mother, I am the only man either in Ithaca or in the islands that are over against Elis who has the right to let any one have the bow or to refuse it. No one shall force me one way or the other, not even though I choose to make the stranger

a present of the bow outright, and let him take it away with him. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants. This bow is a man's matter, and mine above all others, for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva sent sweet sleep over her eyelids.

The swineherd now took up the bow and was for taking it to Ulysses, but the suitors clamoured at him from all parts of the cloisters, and one of them said, "You idiot, where are you taking the bow to? Are you out of your wits? If Apollo and the other gods will grant our prayer, your own boarhounds shall get you into some quiet little place, and worry you to death."

Eumaeus was frightened at the outcry they all raised, so he put the bow down then and there, but Telemachus shouted out at him from the other side of the cloisters, and threatened him saying, "Father Eumaeus, bring the bow on in spite of them, or young as I am I will pelt you with stones back to the country, for I am the better man of the two. I wish I was as much stronger than all the other suitors in the house as I am than you, I would soon send some of them off sick and sorry, for they mean mischief."

Thus did he speak, and they all of them laughed heartily, which put them in a better humour with Telemachus; so Eumaeus brought the bow on and placed it in the hands of Ulysses. When he had done this, he called Euryclea apart and said to her, "Euryclea, Telemachus says you are to close the doors of the women's apartments. If they hear any groaning or uproar as of men fighting about the house, they are not to come out, but are to keep quiet and stay where they are at their work."

Euryclea did as she was told and closed the doors of the women's apartments.

Meanwhile Philoetius slipped quietly out and made fast the gates of the outer court. There was a ship's cable of byblus fibre lying in the gatehouse, so he made the gates fast with it and then came in again, resuming the seat that he had left, and keeping an eye on Ulysses, who had now got the bow in his hands, and was turning it every way about, and proving it all over to see whether the worms had been eating into its two horns during his absence. Then would one turn towards his neighbour saying, "This is some tricky old bow-fancier; either he has got one like it at home, or he wants to make one, in such workmanlike style does the old vagabond handle it."

Another said, "I hope he may be no more successful in other things than he is likely to be in stringing this bow."

But Ulysses, when he had taken it up and examined it all over, strung it as easily as a skilled bard strings a new peg of his lyre and makes the twisted gut fast at both ends. Then he took it in his right hand to prove the string, and it sang sweetly under his touch like the twittering of a swallow. The suitors were dismayed, and turned colour as they heard it; at that moment, moreover, Jove thundered loudly as a sign, and the heart of Ulysses rejoiced as he heard the omen that the son of scheming Saturn had sent him.

He took an arrow that was lying upon the table for those which the Achaeans were so shortly about to taste were all inside the quiver he laid it on the centre-piece of the bow, and drew the notch of the arrow and the string toward him, still seated on his seat. When he had taken aim he let fly, and his arrow pierced every one of the handle-holes of the axes from the first onwards till it had gone right through them, and into the outer courtyard. Then he said to Telemachus:

"Your guest has not disgraced you, Telemachus. I did not miss what I aimed at, and I was not long in stringing my bow. I am still strong, and not as the suitors twit me with being. Now, however, it is time for the Achaeans to prepare supper while there is still daylight, and then otherwise to disport themselves with song and dance which are the crowning ornaments of a banquet."

As he spoke he made a sign with his eyebrows, and Telemachus girded on his sword, grasped his spear, and stood armed beside his father's seat.

Book XXII

THEN Ulysses tore off his rags, and sprang on to the broad pavement with his bow and his quiver full of arrows. He shed the arrows on to the ground at his feet and said, "The mighty contest is at an end. I will now see whether Apollo will vouchsafe it to me to hit another mark which no man has yet hit."

On this he aimed a deadly arrow at Antinous, who was about to take up a two-handled gold cup to drink his wine and already had it in his hands. He had no thought of death who amongst all the revellers would think that one man, however brave, would stand alone among so many and kill him? The arrow struck Antinous in the throat, and the point went clean through his neck, so that he fell over and the cup dropped from his hand, while a thick stream of blood gushed from his nostrils. He kicked the table from him

and upset the things on it, so that the bread and roasted meats were all soiled as they fell over on to the ground. The suitors were in an uproar when they saw that a man had been hit; they sprang in dismay one and all of them from their seats and looked everywhere towards the walls, but there was neither shield nor spear, and they rebuked Ulysses very angrily. “Stranger,” said they, “you shall pay for shooting people in this way: om yi you shall see no other contest; you are a doomed man; he whom you have slain was the foremost youth in Ithaca, and the vultures shall devour you for having killed him.”

Thus they spoke, for they thought that he had killed Antinous by mistake, and did not perceive that death was hanging over the head of every one of them. But Ulysses glared at them and said:

“Dogs, did you think that I should not come back from Troy? You have wasted my substance, have forced my women servants to lie with you, and have wooed my wife while I was still living. You have feared neither Cod nor man, and now you shall die.”

They turned pale with fear as he spoke, and every man looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety, but Eurymachus alone spoke.

“If you are Ulysses,” said he, “then what you have said is just. We have done much wrong on your lands and in your house. But Antinous who was the head and front of the offending lies low already. It was all his doing. It was not that he wanted to marry Penelope; he did not so much care about that; what he wanted was something quite different, and Jove has not vouchsafed it to him; he wanted to kill your son and to be chief man in Ithaca. Now, therefore, that he has met the death which was his due, spare the lives of your people. We will make everything good among ourselves, and pay you in full for all that we have eaten and drunk. Each one of us shall pay you a fine worth twenty oxen, and we will keep on giving you gold and bronze till your heart is softened. Until we have done this no one can complain of your being enraged against us.”

Ulysses again glared at him and said, “Though you should give me all that you have in the world both now and all that you ever shall have, I will not stay my hand till I have paid all of you in full. You must fight, or fly for your lives; and fly, not a man of you shall.”

Their hearts sank as they heard him, but Eurymachus again spoke saying:

“My friends, this man will give us no quarter. He will stand where he is and shoot us down till he has killed every man among us. Let us then show fight; draw your swords, and hold up the tables to shield you from his arrows. Let us have at him with a rush, to drive him from the pavement and doorway: we can then get through into the town, and raise such an alarm as shall soon stay his shooting.”

As he spoke he drew his keen blade of bronze, sharpened on both sides, and with a loud cry sprang towards Ulysses, but Ulysses instantly shot an arrow into his breast that caught him by the nipple and fixed itself in his liver. He dropped his sword and fell doubled up over his table. The cup and all the meats went over on to the ground as he smote the earth with his forehead in the agonies of death, and he kicked the stool with his feet until his eyes were closed in darkness.

Then Amphinomus drew his sword and made straight at Ulysses to try and get him away from the door; but Telemachus was too quick for him, and struck him from behind; the spear caught him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell heavily to the ground and struck the earth with his forehead. Then Telemachus sprang away from him, leaving his spear still in the body, for he feared that if he stayed to draw it out, some one of the Achaeans might come up and hack at him with his sword, or knock him down, so he set off at a run, and immediately was at his father’s side. Then he said:

“Father, let me bring you a shield, two spears, and a brass helmet for your temples. I will arm myself as well, and will bring other armour for the swineherd and the stockman, for we had better be armed.”

“Run and fetch them,” answered Ulysses, “while my arrows hold out, or when I am alone they may get me away from the door.”

Telemachus did as his father said, and went off to the store room where the armour was kept. He chose four shields, eight spears, and four brass helmets with horse-hair plumes. He brought them with all speed to his father, and armed himself first, while the stockman and the swineherd also put on their armour, and took their places near Ulysses. Meanwhile Ulysses, as long as his arrows lasted, had been shooting the suitors one by one, and they fell thick on one another: when his arrows gave out, he set the bow to stand against the end wall of the house by the door post, and hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders; on his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears.

Now there was a trap door on the wall, while at one end of the pavement there was an exit leading to a narrow passage, and this exit was closed by a well-made door. Ulysses told Philoetius to stand by this door and guard it, for only one person could attack it at a time. But Agelaus shouted out, “Cannot some one go up to the trap door and tell the people what is going on? Help would come at once, and we should soon make an end of this man and his shooting.”

“This may not be, Agelaus,” answered Melanthius, “the mouth of the narrow passage is dangerously near the entrance to the outer court. One brave man could prevent any number from getting in. But I know what I will do, I will bring you arms from the store room, for I am sure it is there that Ulysses and his son have put them.”

On this the goatherd Melanthius went by back passages to the store room of Ulysses, house. There he chose twelve shields, with as many helmets and spears, and brought them back as fast as he could to give them to the suitors. Ulysses’ heart began to fail him when he saw the suitors putting on their armour and brandishing their spears. He saw the greatness of the danger, and said to Telemachus, “Some one of the women inside is helping the suitors against us, or it may be Melanthius.”

Telemachus answered, “The fault, father, is mine, and mine only; I left the store room door open, and they have kept a sharper look out than I have. Go, Eumaeus, put the door to, and see whether it is one of the women who is doing this, or whether, as I suspect, it is Melanthius the son of Dolius.”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Melanthius was again going to the store room to fetch more armour, but the swineherd saw him and said to Ulysses who was beside him, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, it is that scoundrel Melanthius, just as we suspected, who is going to the store room. Say, shall I kill him, if I can get the better of him, or shall I bring him here that you may take your own revenge for all the many wrongs that he has done in your house?”

Ulysses answered, “Telemachus and I will hold these suitors in check, no matter what they do; go back both of you and bind Melanthius’ hands and feet behind him. Throw him into the store room and make the door fast behind you; then fasten a noose about his body, and string him close up to the rafters from a high bearing-post, that he may linger on in an agony.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said; they went to the store room, which they entered before Melanthius saw them, for he was busy searching for arms in the innermost part of the room, so the two took their stand on either side of the door and waited. By and by Melanthius came out with a helmet in one hand, and an old dry-rotted shield in the other, which had been borne by Laertes when he was young, but which had been long since thrown aside, and the straps had become unsewn; on this the two seized him, dragged him back by the hair, and threw him struggling to the ground. They bent his hands and feet well behind his back, and bound them tight with a painful bond as Ulysses had told them; then they fastened a noose about his body and strung him up from a high pillar till he was close up to the rafters, and over him did you then vaunt, O swineherd Eumaeus, saying, “Melanthius, you will pass the night on a soft bed as you deserve. You will know very well when morning comes from the streams of Oceanus, and it is time for you to be driving in your goats for the suitors to feast on.”

There, then, they left him in very cruel bondage, and having put on their armour they closed the door behind them and went back to take their places by the side of Ulysses; whereon the four men stood in the cloister, fierce and full of fury; nevertheless, those who were in the body of the court were still both brave and many. Then Jove’s daughter Minerva came up to them, having assumed the voice and form of Mentor. Ulysses was glad when he saw her and said, “Mentor, lend me your help, and forget not your old comrade, nor the many good turns he has done you. Besides, you are my age-mate.”

But all the time he felt sure it was Minerva, and the suitors from the other side raised an uproar when they saw her. Agelaus was the first to reproach her. “Mentor,” he cried, “do not let Ulysses beguile you into siding with him and fighting the suitors. This is what we will do: when we have killed these people, father and son, we will kill you too. You shall pay for it with your head, and when we have killed you, we will take all you have, in doors or out, and bring it into hotch-pot with Ulysses’ property; we will not let your sons live in your house, nor your daughters, nor shall your widow continue to live in the city of Ithaca.”

This made Minerva still more furious, so she scolded Ulysses very angrily. “Ulysses,” said she, “your strength and prowess are no longer what they were when you fought for nine long years among the Trojans about the noble lady Helen. You killed many a man in those days, and it was through your stratagem that Priam’s city was taken. How comes it that you are so lamentably less valiant now that you are on your own ground, face to face with the suitors in your own house? Come on, my good fellow, stand by my side and see how Mentor, son of Alcinous shall fight your foes and requite your kindnesses conferred upon him.”

But she would not give him full victory as yet, for she wished still further to prove his own prowess and that of his brave son, so she flew up to one of the rafters in the roof of the cloister and sat upon it in the form of a swallow.

Meanwhile Agelaus son of Damastor, Eurynomus, Amphimedon, Demoptolemus, Pisander, and Polybus son of Polyctor bore the brunt of the fight upon the suitors' side; of all those who were still fighting for their lives they were by far the most valiant, for the others had already fallen under the arrows of Ulysses. Agelaus shouted to them and said, "My friends, he will soon have to leave off, for Mentor has gone away after having done nothing for him but brag. They are standing at the doors unsupported. Do not aim at him all at once, but six of you throw your spears first, and see if you cannot cover yourselves with glory by killing him. When he has fallen we need not be uneasy about the others."

They threw their spears as he bade them, but Minerva made them all of no effect. One hit the door post; another went against the door; the pointed shaft of another struck the wall; and as soon as they had avoided all the spears of the suitors Ulysses said to his own men, "My friends, I should say we too had better let drive into the middle of them, or they will crown all the harm they have done us by us outright."

They therefore aimed straight in front of them and threw their spears. Ulysses killed Demoptolemus, Telemachus Euryades, Eumaeus Elatus, while the stockman killed Pisander. These all bit the dust, and as the others drew back into a corner Ulysses and his men rushed forward and regained their spears by drawing them from the bodies of the dead.

The suitors now aimed a second time, but again Minerva made their weapons for the most part without effect. One hit a bearing-post of the cloister; another went against the door; while the pointed shaft of another struck the wall. Still, Amphimedon just took a piece of the top skin from off Telemachus's wrist, and Ctesippus managed to graze Eumaeus's shoulder above his shield; but the spear went on and fell to the ground. Then Ulysses and his men let drive into the crowd of suitors. Ulysses hit Eurydamas, Telemachus Amphimedon, and Eumaeus Polybus. After this the stockman hit Ctesippus in the breast, and taunted him saying, "Foul-mouthed son of Polytherses, do not be so foolish as to talk wickedly another time, but let heaven direct your speech, for the gods are far stronger than men. I make you a present of this advice to repay you for the foot which you gave Ulysses when he was begging about in his own house."

Thus spoke the stockman, and Ulysses struck the son of Damastor with a spear in close fight, while Telemachus hit Leocritus son of Evenor in the belly, and the dart went clean through him, so that he fell forward full on his face upon the ground. Then Minerva from her seat on the rafter held up her deadly aegis, and the hearts of the suitors quailed. They fled to the other end of the court like a herd of cattle maddened by the gadfly in early summer when the days are at their longest. As eagle-beaked, crook-taloned vultures from the mountains swoop down on the smaller birds that cower in flocks upon the ground, and kill them, for they cannot either fight or fly, and lookers on enjoy the sport even so did Ulysses and his men fall upon the suitors and smite them on every side. They made a horrible groaning as their brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with their blood.

Leiodes then caught the knees of Ulysses and said, "Ulysses I beseech you have mercy upon me and spare me. I never wronged any of the women in your house either in word or deed, and I tried to stop the others. I saw them, but they would not listen, and now they are paying for their folly. I was their sacrificing priest; if you kill me, I shall die without having done anything to deserve it, and shall have got no thanks for all the good that I did."

Ulysses looked sternly at him and answered, "If you were their sacrificing priest, you must have prayed many a time that it might be long before I got home again, and that you might marry my wife and have children by her. Therefore you shall die."

With these words he picked up the sword that Agelaus had dropped when he was being killed, and which was lying upon the ground. Then he struck Leiodes on the back of his neck, so that his head fell rolling in the dust while he was yet speaking.

The minstrel Phemius son of Terpes he who had been forced by the suitors to sing to them now tried to save his life. He was standing near towards the trap door, and held his lyre in his hand. He did not know whether to fly out of the cloister and sit down by the altar of Jove that was in the outer court, and on which both Laertes and Ulysses had offered up the thigh bones of many an ox, or whether to go straight up to Ulysses and embrace his knees, but in the end he deemed it best to embrace Ulysses' knees. So he laid his lyre on the ground the ground between the mixing-bowl and the silver-studded seat; then going up to Ulysses he caught hold of his knees and said, "Ulysses, I beseech you have mercy on me and spare me. You will be sorry for it afterwards if you kill a bard who can sing both for gods and men as I can. I make all my lays myself, and heaven visits me with every kind of inspiration. I would sing to you as though you were a god, do not therefore be in such a hurry to cut my head off. Your own son Telemachus will

tell you that I did not want to frequent your house and sing to the suitors after their meals, but they were too many and too strong for me, so they made me."

Telemachus heard him, and at once went up to his father. "Hold!" he cried, "the man is guiltless, do him no hurt; and we will Medon too, who was always good to me when I was a boy, unless Philoetius or Eumaeus has already killed him, or he has fallen in your way when you were raging about the court."

Medon caught these words of Telemachus, for he was crouching under a seat beneath which he had hidden by covering himself up with a freshly flayed heifer's hide, so he threw off the hide, went up to Telemachus, and laid hold of his knees.

"Here I am, my dear sir," said he, "stay your hand therefore, and tell your father, or he will kill me in his rage against the suitors for having wasted his substance and been so foolishly disrespectful to yourself."

Ulysses smiled at him and answered, "Fear not; Telemachus has saved your life, that you may know in future, and tell other people, how greatly better good deeds prosper than evil ones. Go, therefore, outside the cloisters into the outer court, and be out of the way of the slaughter you and the bard while I finish my work here inside."

The pair went into the outer court as fast as they could, and sat down by Jove's great altar, looking fearfully round, and still expecting that they would be killed. Then Ulysses searched the whole court carefully over, to see if anyone had managed to hide himself and was still living, but he found them all lying in the dust and weltering in their blood. They were like fishes which fishermen have netted out of the sea, and thrown upon the beach to lie gasping for water till the heat of the sun makes an end of them. Even so were the suitors lying all huddled up one against the other.

Then Ulysses said to Telemachus, "Call nurse Euryclea; I have something to say to her."

Telemachus went and knocked at the door of the women's room. "Make haste," said he, "you old woman who have been set over all the other women in the house. Come outside; my father wishes to speak to you."

When Euryclea heard this she unfastened the door of the women's room and came out, following Telemachus. She found Ulysses among the corpses bespattered with blood and filth like a lion that has just been devouring an ox, and his breast and both his cheeks are all bloody, so that he is a fearful sight; even so was Ulysses besmirched from head to foot with gore. When she saw all the corpses and such a quantity of blood, she was beginning to cry out for joy, for she saw that a great deed had been done; but Ulysses checked her, "Old woman," said he, "rejoice in silence; restrain yourself, and do not make any noise about it; it is an unholy thing to vaunt over dead men. Heaven's doom and their own evil deeds have brought these men to destruction, for they respected no man in the whole world, neither rich nor poor, who came near them, and they have come to a bad end as a punishment for their wickedness and folly. Now, however, tell me which of the women in the house have misconducted themselves, and who are innocent."

"I will tell you the truth, my son," answered Euryclea. "There are fifty women in the house whom we teach to do things, such as carding wool, and all kinds of household work. Of these, twelve in all have misbehaved, and have been wanting in respect to me, and also to Penelope. They showed no disrespect to Telemachus, for he has only lately grown and his mother never permitted him to give orders to the female servants; but let me go upstairs and tell your wife all that has happened, for some god has been sending her to sleep."

"Do not wake her yet," answered Ulysses, "but tell the women who have misconducted themselves to come to me."

Euryclea left the cloister to tell the women, and make them come to Ulysses; in the meantime he called Telemachus, the stockman, and the swineherd. "Begin," said he, "to remove the dead, and make the women help you. Then, get sponges and clean water to swill down the tables and seats. When you have thoroughly cleansed the whole cloisters, take the women into the space between the domed room and the wall of the outer court, and run them through with your swords till they are quite dead, and have forgotten all about love and the way in which they used to lie in secret with the suitors."

On this the women came down in a body, weeping and wailing bitterly. First they carried the dead bodies out, and propped them up against one another in the gatehouse. Ulysses ordered them about and made them do their work quickly, so they had to carry the bodies out. When they had done this, they cleaned all the tables and seats with sponges and water, while Telemachus and the two others shovelled up the blood and dirt from the ground, and the women carried it all away and put it out of doors. Then when they had made the whole place quite clean and orderly, they took the women out and hemmed them in the narrow space between the

wall of the domed room and that of the yard, so that they could not get away: and Telemachus said to the other two, “I shall not let these women die a clean death, for they were insolent to me and my mother, and used to sleep with the suitors.”

So saying he made a ship’s cable fast to one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the domed room, and secured it all around the building, at a good height, lest any of the women’s feet should touch the ground; and as thrushes or doves beat against a net that has been set for them in a thicket just as they were getting to their nest, and a terrible fate awaits them, even so did the women have to put their heads in nooses one after the other and die most miserably. Their feet moved convulsively for a while, but not for very long.

As for Melanthius, they took him through the cloister into the inner court. There they cut off his nose and his ears; they drew out his vitals and gave them to the dogs raw, and then in their fury they cut off his hands and his feet.

When they had done this they washed their hands and feet and went back into the house, for all was now over; and Ulysses said to the dear old nurse Euryclea, “Bring me sulphur, which cleanses all pollution, and fetch fire also that I may burn it, and purify the cloisters. Go, moreover, and tell Penelope to come here with her attendants, and also all the maid servants that are in the house.”

“All that you have said is true,” answered Euryclea, “but let me bring you some clean clothes a shirt and cloak. Do not keep these rags on your back any longer. It is not right.”

“First light me a fire,” replied Ulysses.

She brought the fire and sulphur, as he had bidden her, and Ulysses thoroughly purified the cloisters and both the inner and outer courts. Then she went inside to call the women and tell them what had happened; whereon they came from their apartment with torches in their hands, and pressed round Ulysses to embrace him, kissing his head and shoulders and taking hold of his hands. It made him feel as if he should like to weep, for he remembered every one of them.

Book XXIII

EURYCLEA now went upstairs laughing to tell her mistress that her dear husband had come home. Her aged knees became young again and her feet were nimble for joy as she went up to her mistress and bent over her head to speak to her. “Wake up Penelope, my dear child,” she exclaimed, “and see with your own eyes something that you have been wanting this long time past. Ulysses has at last indeed come home again, and has killed the suitors who were giving so much trouble in his house, eating up his estate and ill-treating his son.”

“My good nurse,” answered Penelope, “you must be mad. The gods sometimes send some very sensible people out of their minds, and make foolish people become sensible. This is what they must have been doing to you; for you always used to be a reasonable person. Why should you thus mock me when I have trouble enough already talking such nonsense, and waking me up out of a sweet sleep that had taken possession of my eyes and closed them? I have never slept so soundly from the day my poor husband went to that city with the ill-omened name. Go back again into the women’s room; if it had been any one else, who had woke me up to bring me such absurd news I should have sent her away with a severe scolding. As it is, your age shall protect you.”

“My dear child,” answered Euryclea, “I am not mocking you. It is quite true as I tell you that Ulysses is come home again. He was the stranger whom they all kept on treating so badly in the cloister. Telemachus knew all the time that he was come back, but kept his father’s secret that he might have his revenge on all these wicked people.

Then Penelope sprang up from her couch, threw her arms round Euryclea, and wept for joy. “But my dear nurse,” said she, “explain this to me; if he has really come home as you say, how did he manage to overcome the wicked suitors single handed, seeing what a number of them there always were?”

“I was not there,” answered Euryclea, “and do not know; I only heard them groaning while they were being killed. We sat crouching and huddled up in a corner of the women’s room with the doors closed, till your son came to fetch me because his father sent him. Then I found Ulysses standing over the corpses that were lying on the ground all round him, one on top of the other. You would have enjoyed it if you could have seen him standing there all bespattered with blood and filth, and looking just like a lion. But the corpses are now all piled up in the gatehouse that is in the outer court, and Ulysses has lit a great fire to purify the house with sulphur. He has sent me to call you, so come with me that you may both be happy together after all; for now at last the desire of your heart has been fulfilled; your husband is come home to find both wife and son alive and well, and to take his revenge in his own house on the suitors who behaved so badly to him.”

"'My dear nurse," said Penelope, "do not exult too confidently over all this. You know how delighted every one would be to see Ulysses come home more particularly myself, and the son who has been born to both of us; but what you tell me cannot be really true. It is some god who is angry with the suitors for their great wickedness, and has made an end of them; for they respected no man in the whole world, neither rich nor poor, who came near them, who came near them, and they have come to a bad end in consequence of their iniquity. Ulysses is dead far away from the Achaean land; he will never return home again."

Then nurse Euryclea said, "My child, what are you talking about? but you were all hard of belief and have made up your mind that your husband is never coming, although he is in the house and by his own fire side at this very moment. Besides I can give you another proof; when I was washing him I perceived the scar which the wild boar gave him, and I wanted to tell you about it, but in his wisdom he would not let me, and clapped his hands over my mouth; so come with me and I will make this bargain with you if I am deceiving you, you may have me killed by the most cruel death you can think of."

"My dear nurse," said Penelope, "however wise you may be you can hardly fathom the counsels of the gods. Nevertheless, we will go in search of my son, that I may see the corpses of the suitors, and the man who has killed them."

On this she came down from her upper room, and while doing so she considered whether she should keep at a distance from her husband and question him, or whether she should at once go up to him and embrace him. When, however, she had crossed the stone floor of the cloister, she sat down opposite Ulysses by the fire, against the wall at right angles [to that by which she had entered], while Ulysses sat near one of the bearing-posts, looking upon the ground, and waiting to see what his wife would say to him when she saw him. For a long time she sat silent and as one lost in amazement. At one moment she looked him full in the face, but then again directly, she was misled by his shabby clothes and failed to recognize him, till Telemachus began to reproach her and said:

"Mother but you are so hard that I cannot call you by such a name why do you keep away from my father in this way? Why do you not sit by his side and begin talking to him and asking him questions? No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much; but your heart always was as hard as a stone."

Penelope answered, "My son, I am so lost in astonishment that I can find no words in which either to ask questions or to answer them. I cannot even look him straight in the face. Still, if he really is Ulysses come back to his own home again, we shall get to understand one another better by and by, for there are tokens with which we two are alone acquainted, and which are hidden from all others."

Ulysses smiled at this, and said to Telemachus, "Let your mother put me to any proof she likes; she will make up her mind about it presently. She rejects me for the moment and believes me to be somebody else, because I am covered with dirt and have such bad clothes on; let us, however, consider what we had better do next. When one man has killed another, even though he was not one who would leave many friends to take up his quarrel, the man who has killed him must still say good bye to his friends and fly the country; whereas we have been killing the stay of a whole town, and all the picked youth of Ithaca. I would have you consider this matter."

"Look to it yourself, father," answered Telemachus, "for they say you are the wisest counsellor in the world, and that there is no other mortal man who can compare with you. We will follow you with right good will, nor shall you find us fail you in so far as our strength holds out."

"I will say what I think will be best," answered Ulysses. "First wash and put your shirts on; tell the maids also to go to their own room and dress; Phemius shall then strike up a dance tune on his lyre, so that if people outside hear, or any of the neighbours, or some one going along the street happens to notice it, they may think there is a wedding in the house, and no rumours about the death of the suitors will get about in the town, before we can escape to the woods upon my own land. Once there, we will settle which of the courses heaven vouchsafes us shall seem wisest."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. First they washed and put their shirts on, while the women got ready. Then Phemius took his lyre and set them all longing for sweet song and stately dance. The house reechoed with the sound of men and women dancing, and the people outside said, "I suppose the queen has been getting married at last. She ought to be ashamed of herself for not continuing to protect her husband's property until he comes home."

This was what they said, but they did not know what it was that had been happening. The upper servant Eurynome washed and anointed Ulysses in his own house and gave him a shirt and cloak, while Minerva made him look taller and stronger than before;

she also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she glorified him about the head and shoulders just as a skilful workman who has studied art of all kinds under Vulcan or Minerva and his work is full of beauty enriches a piece of silver plate by gilding it. He came from the bath looking like one of the immortals, and sat down opposite his wife on the seat he had left. “My dear,” said he, “heaven has endowed you with a heart more unyielding than woman ever yet had. No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much. But come, nurse, get a bed ready for me; I will sleep alone, for this woman has a heart as hard as iron.”

“My dear,” answered Penelope, “I have no wish to set myself up, nor to depreciate you; but I am not struck by your appearance, for I very well remember what kind of a man you were when you set sail from Ithaca. Nevertheless, Euryclea, take his bed outside the bed chamber that he himself built. Bring the bed outside this room, and put bedding upon it with fleeces, good coverlets, and blankets.”

She said this to try him, but Ulysses was very angry and said, “Wife, I am much displeased at what you have just been saying. Who has been taking my bed from the place in which I left it? He must have found it a hard task, no matter how skilled a workman he was, unless some god came and helped him to shift it. There is no man living, however strong and in his prime, who could move it from its place, for it is a marvellous curiosity which I made with my very own hands. There was a young olive growing within the precincts of the house, in full vigour, and about as thick as a bearing-post. I built my room round this with strong walls of stone and a roof to cover them, and I made the doors strong and well-fitting. Then I cut off the top boughs of the olive tree and left the stump standing. This I dressed roughly from the root upwards and then worked with carpenter’s tools well and skilfully, straightening my work by drawing a line on the wood, and making it into a bed-prop. I then bored a hole down the middle, and made it the centre-post of my bed, at which I worked till I had finished it, inlaying it with gold and silver; after this I stretched a hide of crimson leather from one side of it to the other. So you see I know all about it, and I desire to learn whether it is still there, or whether any one has been removing it by cutting down the olive tree at its roots.”

When she heard the sure proofs Ulysses now gave her, she fairly broke down. She flew weeping to his side, flung her arms about his neck, and kissed him. “Do not be angry with me Ulysses,” she cried, “you, who are the wisest of mankind. We have suffered, both of us. Heaven has denied us the happiness of spending our youth, and of growing old, together; do not then be aggrieved or take it amiss that I did not embrace you thus as soon as I saw you. I have been shuddering all the time through fear that someone might come here and deceive me with a lying story; for there are many very wicked people going about. Jove’s daughter Helen would never have yielded herself to a man from a foreign country, if she had known that the sons of Achaeans would come after her and bring her back. Heaven put it in her heart to do wrong, and she gave no thought to that sin, which has been the source of all our sorrows. Now, however, that you have convinced me by showing that you know all about our bed (which no human being has ever seen but you and I and a single maid servant, the daughter of Actor, who was given me by my father on my marriage, and who keeps the doors of our room) hard of belief though I have been I can mistrust no longer.”

Then Ulysses in his turn melted, and wept as he clasped his dear and faithful wife to his bosom. As the sight of land is welcome to men who are swimming towards the shore, when Neptune has wrecked their ship with the fury of his winds and waves a few alone reach the land, and these, covered with brine, are thankful when they find themselves on firm ground and out of danger even so was her husband welcome to her as she looked upon him, and she could not tear her two fair arms from about his neck. Indeed they would have gone on indulging their sorrow till rosy-fingered morn appeared, had not Minerva determined otherwise, and held night back in the far west, while she would not suffer Dawn to leave Oceanus, nor to yoke the two steeds Lampus and Phaethon that bear her onward to break the day upon mankind.

At last, however, Ulysses said, “Wife, we have not yet reached the end of our troubles. I have an unknown amount of toil still to undergo. It is long and difficult, but I must go through with it, for thus the shade of Teiresias prophesied concerning me, on the day when I went down into Hades to ask about my return and that of my companions. But now let us go to bed, that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep.”

“You shall go to bed as soon as you please,” replied Penelope, “now that the gods have sent you home to your own good house and to your country. But as heaven has put it in your mind to speak of it, tell me about the task that lies before you. I shall have to hear about it later, so it is better that I should be told at once.”

“My dear,” answered Ulysses, “why should you press me to tell you? Still, I will not conceal it from you, though you will not like it. I do not like it myself, for Teiresias bade me travel far and wide, carrying an oar, till I came to a country where the people have never heard of the sea, and do not even mix salt with their food. They know nothing about ships, nor oars that are as the wings of a ship. He gave me this certain token which I will not hide from you. He said that a wayfarer should meet me and ask me whether it was a winnowing shovel that I had on my shoulder. On this, I was to fix my oar in the ground and sacrifice a ram, a bull, and a boar to Neptune; after which I was to go home and offer hecatombs to all the gods in heaven, one after the other. As for myself, he said that death should come to me from the sea, and that my life should ebb away very gently when I was full of years and peace of mind, and my people should bless me. All this, he said, should surely come to pass.”

And Penelope said, “If the gods are going to vouchsafe you a happier time in your old age, you may hope then to have some respite from misfortune.”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Eurynome and the nurse took torches and made the bed ready with soft coverlets; as soon as they had laid them, the nurse went back into the house to go to her rest, leaving the bed chamber woman Eurynome to show Ulysses and Penelope to bed by torch light. When she had conducted them to their room she went back, and they then came joyfully to the rites of their own old bed. Telemachus, Philoetius, and the swineherd now left off dancing, and made the women leave off also. They then laid themselves down to sleep in the cloisters.

When Ulysses and Penelope had had their fill of love they fell talking with one another. She told him how much she had had to bear in seeing the house filled with a crowd of wicked suitors who had killed so many sheep and oxen on her account, and had drunk so many casks of wine. Ulysses in his turn told her what he had suffered, and how much trouble he had himself given to other people. He told her everything, and she was so delighted to listen that she never went to sleep till he had ended his whole story.

He began with his victory over the Cicons, and how he thence reached the fertile land of the Lotus-eaters. He told her all about the Cyclops and how he had punished him for having so ruthlessly eaten his brave comrades; how he then went on to Aeolus, who received him hospitably and furthered him on his way, but even so he was not to reach home, for to his great grief a hurricane carried him out to sea again; how he went on to the Laestrygonian city Telepylos, where the people destroyed all his ships with their crews, save himself and his own ship only. Then he told of cunning Circe and her craft, and how he sailed to the chill house of Hades, to consult the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias, and how he saw his old comrades in arms, and his mother who bore him and brought him up when he was a child; how he then heard the wondrous singing of the Sirens, and went on to the wandering rocks and terrible Charybdis and to Scylla, whom no man had ever yet passed in safety; how his men then ate the cattle of the sun-god, and how Jove therefore struck the ship with his thunderbolts, so that all his men perished together, himself alone being left alive; how at last he reached the Ogygian island and the nymph Calypso, who kept him there in a cave, and fed him, and wanted him to marry her, in which case she intended making him immortal so that he should never grow old, but she could not persuade him to let her do so; and how after much suffering he had found his way to the Phaeacians, who had treated him as though he had been a god, and sent him back in a ship to his own country after having given him gold, bronze, and raiment in great abundance. This was the last thing about which he told her, for here a deep sleep took hold upon him and eased the burden of his sorrows.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter. When she deemed that Ulysses had had both of his wife and of repose, she bade gold-enthroned Dawn rise out of Oceanus that she might shed light upon mankind. On this, Ulysses rose from his comfortable bed and said to Penelope, “Wife, we have both of us had our full share of troubles, you, here, in lamenting my absence, and I in being prevented from getting home though I was longing all the time to do so. Now, however, that we have at last come together, take care of the property that is in the house. As for the sheep and goats which the wicked suitors have eaten, I will take many myself by force from other people, and will compel the Achaeans to make good the rest till they shall have filled all my yards. I am now going to the wooded lands out in the country to see my father who has so long been grieved on my account, and to yourself I will give these instructions, though you have little need of them. At sunrise it will at once get abroad that I have been killing the suitors; go upstairs, therefore, and stay there with your women. See nobody and ask no questions.”

As he spoke he girded on his armour. Then he roused Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus, and told them all to put on their armour also. This they did, and armed themselves. When they had done so, they opened the gates and sallied forth, Ulysses leading the way. It was now daylight, but Minerva nevertheless concealed them in darkness and led them quickly out of the town.

Book XXIV

THEN Mercury of Cyllene summoned the ghosts of the suitors, and in his hand he held the fair golden wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep or wakes them just as he pleases; with this he roused the ghosts and led them, while they followed whining and gibbering behind him. As bats fly squealing in the hollow of some great cave, when one of them has fallen out of the cluster in which they hang, even so did the ghosts whine and squeal as Mercury the healer of sorrow led them down into the dark abode of death. When they had passed the waters of Oceanus and the rock Leucas, they came to the gates of the sun and the land of dreams, whereon they reached the meadow of asphodel where dwell the souls and shadows of them that can labour no more.

Here they found the ghost of Achilles son of Peleus, with those of Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax, who was the finest and handsomest man of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus himself.

They gathered round the ghost of the son of Peleus, and the ghost of Agamemnon joined them, sorrowing bitterly. Round him were gathered also the ghosts of those who had perished with him in the house of Aeisthus; and the ghost of Achilles spoke first.

"Son of Atreus," it said, "we used to say that Jove had loved you better from first to last than any other hero, for you were captain over many and brave men, when we were all fighting together before Troy; yet the hand of death, which no mortal can escape, was laid upon you all too early. Better for you had you fallen at Troy in the hey-day of your renown, for the Achaeans would have built a mound over your ashes, and your son would have been heir to your good name, whereas it has now been your lot to come to a most miserable end."

"Happy son of Peleus," answered the ghost of Agamemnon, "for having died at Troy far from Argos, while the bravest of the Trojans and the Achaeans fell round you fighting for your body. There you lay in the whirling clouds of dust, all huge and hugely, heedless now of your chivalry. We fought the whole of the livelong day, nor should we ever have left off if Jove had not sent a hurricane to stay us. Then, when we had borne you to the ships out of the fray, we laid you on your bed and cleansed your fair skin with warm water and with ointments. The Danaans tore their hair and wept bitterly round about you. Your mother, when she heard, came with her immortal nymphs from out of the sea, and the sound of a great wailing went forth over the waters so that the Achaeans quaked for fear. They would have fled panic-stricken to their ships had not wise old Nestor whose counsel was ever truest checked them saying, 'Hold, Argives, fly not sons of the Achaeans, this is his mother coming from the sea with her immortal nymphs to view the body of her son.'

"Thus he spoke, and the Achaeans feared no more. The daughters of the old man of the sea stood round you weeping bitterly, and clothed you in immortal raiment. The nine muses also came and lifted up their sweet voices in lament calling and answering one another; there was not an Argive but wept for pity of the dirge they chaunted. Days and nights seven and ten we mourned you, mortals and immortals, but on the eighteenth day we gave you to the flames, and many a fat sheep with many an ox did we slay in sacrifice around you. You were burnt in raiment of the gods, with rich resins and with honey, while heroes, horse and foot, clashed their armour round the pile as you were burning, with the tramp as of a great multitude. But when the flames of heaven had done their work, we gathered your white bones at daybreak and laid them in ointments and in pure wine. Your mother brought us a golden vase to hold them gift of Bacchus, and work of Vulcan himself; in this we mingled your bleached bones with those of Patroclus who had gone before you, and separate we enclosed also those of Antilochus, who had been closer to you than any other of your comrades now that Patroclus was no more.

"Over these the host of the Argives built a noble tomb, on a point jutting out over the open Hellespont, that it might be seen from far out upon the sea by those now living and by them that shall be born hereafter. Your mother begged prizes from the gods, and offered them to be contended for by the noblest of the Achaeans. You must have been present at the funeral of many a hero, when the young men gird themselves and make ready to contend for prizes on the death of some great chieftain, but you never saw such prizes as silver-footed Thetis offered in your honour; for the gods loved you well. Thus even in death your fame, Achilles, has not been lost, and your name lives evermore among all mankind. But as for me, what solace had I when the days of my fighting were done? For Jove willed my destruction on my return, by the hands of Aegisthus and those of my wicked wife."

Thus did they converse, and presently Mercury came up to them with the ghosts of the suitors who had been killed by Ulysses. The ghosts of Agamemnon and Achilles were astonished at seeing them, and went up to them at once. The ghost of Agamemnon recognized Amphimedon son of Melaneus, who lived in Ithaca and had been his host, so it began to talk to him.

"Amphimedon," it said, "what has happened to all you fine young men all of an age too that you are come down here under the ground? One could pick no finer body of men from any city. Did Neptune raise his winds and waves against you when you were at

sea, or did your enemies make an end of you on the mainland when you were cattle-lifting or sheep-stealing, or while fighting in defence of their wives and city? Answer my question, for I have been your guest. Do you not remember how I came to your house with Menelaus, to persuade Ulysses to join us with his ships against Troy? It was a whole month ere we could resume our voyage, for we had hard work to persuade Ulysses to come with us."

And the ghost of Amphimedon answered, "Agamemnon, son of Atreus, king of men, I remember everything that you have said, and will tell you fully and accurately about the way in which our end was brought about. Ulysses had been long gone, and we were courting his wife, who did not say point blank that she would not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end, for she meant to compass our destruction: this, then, was the trick she played us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room and began to work on an enormous piece of fine needlework. 'Sweethearts,' said she, 'Ulysses is indeed dead, still, do not press me to marry again immediately; wait for I would not have my skill in needlework perish unrecorded till I have completed a pall for the hero Laertes, against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.' This is what she said, and we assented; whereupon we could see her working upon her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years without our finding it out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, in the waning of moons and many days had been accomplished, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or no; and when she showed us the robe she had made, after she had had it washed, its splendour was as that of the sun or moon.

"Then some malicious god conveyed Ulysses to the upland farm where his swineherd lives. Thither presently came also his son, returning from a voyage to Pylos, and the two came to the town when they had hatched their plot for our destruction. Telemachus came first, and then after him, accompanied by the swineherd, came Ulysses, clad in rags and leaning on a staff as though he were some miserable old beggar. He came so unexpectedly that none of us knew him, not even the older ones among us, and we reviled him and threw things at him. He endured both being struck and insulted without a word, though he was in his own house; but when the will of Aegis-bearing Jove inspired him, he and Telemachus took the armour and hid it in an inner chamber, bolting the doors behind them. Then he cunningly made his wife offer his bow and a quantity of iron to be contended for by us ill-fated suitors; and this was the beginning of our end, for not one of us could string the bow nor nearly do so. When it was about to reach the hands of Ulysses, we all of us shouted out that it should not be given him, no matter what he might say, but Telemachus insisted on his having it. When he had got it in his hands he strung it with ease and sent his arrow through the iron. Then he stood on the floor of the cloister and poured his arrows on the ground, glaring fiercely about him. First he killed Antinous, and then, aiming straight before him, he let fly his deadly darts and they fell thick on one another. It was plain that some one of the gods was helping them, for they fell upon us with might and main throughout the cloisters, and there was a hideous sound of groaning as our brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with our blood. This, Agamemnon, is how we came by our end, and our bodies are lying still un-cared for in the house of Ulysses, for our friends at home do not yet know what has happened, so that they cannot lay us out and wash the black blood from our wounds, making moan over us according to the offices due to the departed."

"Happy Ulysses, son of Laertes," replied the ghost of Agamemnon, "you are indeed blessed in the possession of a wife endowed with such rare excellence of understanding, and so faithful to her wedded lord as Penelope the daughter of Icarius. The fame, therefore, of her virtue shall never die, and the immortals shall compose a song that shall be welcome to all mankind in honour of the constancy of Penelope. How far otherwise was the wickedness of the daughter of Tyndareus who killed her lawful husband; her song shall be hateful among men, for she has brought disgrace on all womankind even on the good ones."

Thus did they converse in the house of Hades deep down within the bowels of the earth. Meanwhile Ulysses and the others passed out of the town and soon reached the fair and well-tilled farm of Laertes, which he had reclaimed with infinite labour. Here was his house, with a lean-to running all round it, where the slaves who worked for him slept and sat and ate, while inside the house there was an old Sicel woman, who looked after him in this his country-farm. When Ulysses got there, he said to his son and to the other two:

"Go to the house, and kill the best pig that you can find for dinner. Meanwhile I want to see whether my father will know me, or fail to recognize me after so long an absence."

He then took off his armour and gave it to Eumaeus and Philoetius, who went straight on to the house, while he turned off into the vineyard to make trial of his father. As he went down into the great orchard, he did not see Dolius, nor any of his sons nor of the other bondsmen, for they were all gathering thorns to make a fence for the vineyard, at the place where the old man had told them; he therefore found his father alone, hoeing a vine. He had on a dirty old shirt, patched and very shabby; his legs were bound round

with thongs of oxhide to save him from the brambles, and he also wore sleeves of leather; he had a goat skin cap on his head, and was looking very woe-begone. When Ulysses saw him so worn, so old and full of sorrow, he stood still under a tall pear tree and began to weep. He doubted whether to embrace him, kiss him, and tell him all about his having come home, or whether he should first question him and see what he would say. In the end he deemed it best to be crafty with him, so in this mind he went up to his father, who was bending down and digging about a plant.

"I see, sir," said Ulysses, "that you are an excellent gardener what pains you take with it, to be sure. There is not a single plant, not a fig tree, vine, olive, pear, nor flower bed, but bears the trace of your attention. I trust, however, that you will not be offended if I say that you take better care of your garden than of yourself. You are old, unsavoury, and very meanly clad. It cannot be because you are idle that your master takes such poor care of you, indeed your face and figure have nothing of the slave about them, and proclaim you of noble birth. I should have said that you were one of those who should wash well, eat well, and lie soft at night as old men have a right to do; but tell me, and tell me true, whose bondman are you, and in whose garden are you working? Tell me also about another matter. Is this place that I have come to really Ithaca? I met a man just now who said so, but he was a dull fellow, and had not the patience to hear my story out when I was asking him about an old friend of mine, whether he was still living, or was already dead and in the house of Hades. Believe me when I tell you that this man came to my house once when I was in my own country and never yet did any stranger come to me whom I liked better. He said that his family came from Ithaca and that his father was Laertes, son of Arceisius. I received him hospitably, making him welcome to all the abundance of my house, and when he went away I gave him all customary presents. I gave him seven talents of fine gold, and a cup of solid silver with flowers chased upon it. I gave him twelve light cloaks, and as many pieces of tapestry; I also gave him twelve cloaks of single fold, twelve rugs, twelve fair mantles, and an equal number of shirts. To all this I added four good looking women skilled in all useful arts, and I let him take his choice."

His father shed tears and answered, "Sir, you have indeed come to the country that you have named, but it is fallen into the hands of wicked people. All this wealth of presents has been given to no purpose. If you could have found your friend here alive in Ithaca, he would have entertained you hospitably and would have required your presents amply when you left him as would have been only right considering what you have already given him. But tell me, and tell me true, how many years is it since you entertained this guest my unhappy son, as ever was? Alas! He has perished far from his own country; the fishes of the sea have eaten him, or he has fallen a prey to the birds and wild beasts of some continent. Neither his mother, nor I his father, who were his parents, could throw our arms about him and wrap him in his shroud, nor could his excellent and richly dowered wife Penelope bewail her husband as was natural upon his death bed, and close his eyes according to the offices due to the departed. But now, tell me truly for I want to know. Who and whence are you tell me of your town and parents? Where is the ship lying that has brought you and your men to Ithaca? Or were you a passenger on some other man's ship, and those who brought you here have gone on their way and left you?"

"I will tell you everything," answered Ulysses, "quite truly. I come from Alybas, where I have a fine house. I am son of king Apheidas, who is the son of Polypemon. My own name is Eperitus; heaven drove me off my course as I was leaving Sicania, and I have been carried here against my will. As for my ship it is lying over yonder, off the open country outside the town, and this is the fifth year since Ulysses left my country. Poor fellow, yet the omens were good for him when he left me. The birds all flew on our right hands, and both he and I rejoiced to see them as we parted, for we had every hope that we should have another friendly meeting and exchange presents."

A dark cloud of sorrow fell upon Laertes as he listened. He filled both hands with the dust from off the ground and poured it over his grey head, groaning heavily as he did so. The heart of Ulysses was touched, and his nostrils quivered as he looked upon his father; then he sprang towards him, flung his arms about him and kissed him, saying, "I am he, father, about whom you are asking I have returned after having been away for twenty years. But cease your sighing and lamentation we have no time to lose, for I should tell you that I have been killing the suitors in my house, to punish them for their insolence and crimes."

"If you really are my son Ulysses," replied Laertes, "and have come back again, you must give me such manifest proof of your identity as shall convince me."

"First observe this scar," answered Ulysses, "which I got from a boar's tusk when I was hunting on Mount Parnassus. You and my mother had sent me to Autolycus, my mother's father, to receive the presents which when he was over here he had promised to give me. Furthermore I will point out to you the trees in the vineyard which you gave me, and I asked you all about them as I followed you round the garden. We went over them all, and you told me their names and what they all were. You gave me thirteen pear trees,

ten apple trees, and forty fig trees; you also said you would give me fifty rows of vines; there was corn planted between each row, and they yield grapes of every kind when the heat of heaven has been laid heavy upon them."

Laertes' strength failed him when he heard the convincing proofs which his son had given him. He threw his arms about him, and Ulysses had to support him, or he would have gone off into a swoon; but as soon as he came to, and was beginning to recover his senses, he said, "O father Jove, then you gods are still in Olympus after all, if the suitors have really been punished for their insolence and folly. Nevertheless, I am much afraid that I shall have all the townspeople of Ithaca up here directly, and they will be sending messengers everywhere throughout the cities of the Cephallenians."

Ulysses answered, "Take heart and do not trouble yourself about that, but let us go into the house hard by your garden. I have already told Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus to go on there and get dinner ready as soon as possible." Thus conversing the two made their way towards the house. When they got there they found Telemachus with the stockman and the swineherd cutting up meat and mixing wine with water. Then the old Sicel woman took Laertes inside and washed him and anointed him with oil. She put him on a good cloak, and Minerva came up to him and gave him a more imposing presence, making him taller and stouter than before. When he came back his son was surprised to see him looking so like an immortal, and said to him, "My dear father, some one of the gods has been making you much taller and better-looking."

Laertes answered, "Would, by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I were the man I was when I ruled among the Cephallenians, and took Nericum, that strong fortress on the foreland. If I were still what I then was and had been in our house yesterday with my armour on, I should have been able to stand by you and help you against the suitors. I should have killed a great many of them, and you would have rejoiced to see it."

Thus did they converse; but the others, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, left off working, and took each his proper place on the benches and seats. Then they began eating; by and by old Dolius and his sons left their work and came up, for their mother, the Sicel woman who looked after Laertes now that he was growing old, had been to fetch them. When they saw Ulysses and were certain it was he, they stood there lost in astonishment; but Ulysses scolded them good-naturedly and said, "Sit down to your dinner, old man, and never mind about your surprise; we have been wanting to begin for some time and have been waiting for you."

Then Dolius put out both his hands and went up to Ulysses. "Sir," said he, seizing his master's hand and kissing it at the wrist, "we have long been wishing you home: and now heaven has restored you to us after we had given up hoping. All hail, therefore, and may the gods prosper you. But tell me, does Penelope already know of your return, or shall we send some one to tell her?"

"Old man," answered Ulysses, "she knows already, so you need not trouble about that." On this he took his seat, and the sons of Dolius gathered round Ulysses to give him greeting and embrace him one after the other; then they took their seats in due order near Dolius their father.

While they were thus busy getting their dinner ready, Rumour went round the town, and noised abroad the terrible fate that had befallen the suitors; as soon, therefore, as the people heard of it they gathered from every quarter, groaning and hooting before the house of Ulysses. They took the dead away, buried every man his own, and put the bodies of those who came from elsewhere on board the fishing vessels, for the fishermen to take each of them to his own place. They then met angrily in the place of assembly, and when they were got together Eupeithes rose to speak. He was overwhelmed with grief for the death of his son Antinous, who had been the first man killed by Ulysses, so he said, weeping bitterly, "My friend, this man has done the Achaeans great wrong. He took many of our best men away with him in his fleet, and he has lost both ships and men; now, moreover, on his return he has been killing all the foremost men among the Cephallenians. Let us be up and doing before he can get away to Pylos or to Elis where the Epeans rule, or we shall be ashamed of ourselves for ever afterwards. It will be an everlasting disgrace to us if we do not avenge the murder of our sons and brothers. For my own part I should have no mote pleasure in life, but had rather die at once. Let us be up, then, and after them, before they can cross over to the mainland."

He wept as he spoke and every one pitied him. But Medon and the bard Phemius had now woke up, and came to them from the house of Ulysses. Every one was astonished at seeing them, but they stood in the middle of the assembly, and Medon said, "Hear me, men of Ithaca. Ulysses did not do these things against the will of heaven. I myself saw an immortal god take the form of Mentor and stand beside him. This god appeared, now in front of him encouraging him, and now going furiously about the court and attacking the suitors whereon they fell thick on one another."

On this pale fear laid hold of them, and old Halitherses, son of Mastor, rose to speak, for he was the only man among them who knew both past and future; so he spoke to them plainly and in all honesty, saying,

“Men of Ithaca, it is all your own fault that things have turned out as they have; you would not listen to me, nor yet to Mentor, when we bade you check the folly of your sons who were doing much wrong in the wantonness of their hearts wasting the substance and dishonouring the wife of a chieftain who they thought would not return. Now, however, let it be as I say, and do as I tell you. Do not go out against Ulysses, or you may find that you have been drawing down evil on your own heads.”

This was what he said, and more than half raised a loud shout, and at once left the assembly. But the rest stayed where they were, for the speech of Halitherses displeased them, and they sided with Eupeithes; they therefore hurried off for their armour, and when they had armed themselves, they met together in front of the city, and Eupeithes led them on in their folly. He thought he was going to avenge the murder of his son, whereas in truth he was never to return, but was himself to perish in his attempt.

Then Minerva said to Jove, “Father, son of Saturn, king of kings, answer me this question What do you propose to do? Will you set them fighting still further, or will you make peace between them?”

And Jove answered, “My child, why should you ask me? Was it not by your own arrangement that Ulysses came home and took his revenge upon the suitors? Do whatever you like, but I will tell you what I think will be most reasonable arrangement. Now that Ulysses is revenged, let them swear to a solemn covenant, in virtue of which he shall continue to rule, while we cause the others to forgive and forget the massacre of their sons and brothers. Let them then all become friends as heretofore, and let peace and plenty reign.”

This was what Minerva was already eager to bring about, so down she darted from off the topmost summits of Olympus.

Now when Laertes and the others had done dinner, Ulysses began by saying, “Some of you go out and see if they are not getting close up to us.” So one of Dolius’s sons went as he was bid. Standing on the threshold he could see them all quite near, and said to Ulysses, “Here they are, let us put on our armour at once.”

They put on their armour as fast as they could that is to say Ulysses, his three men, and the six sons of Dolius. Laertes also and Dolius did the same warriors by necessity in spite of their grey hair. When they had all put on their armour, they opened the gate and sallied forth, Ulysses leading the way.

Then Jove’s daughter Minerva came up to them, having assumed the form and voice of Mentor. Ulysses was glad when he saw her, and said to his son Telemachus, “Telemachus, now that are about to fight in an engagement, which will show every man’s mettle, be sure not to disgrace your ancestors, who were eminent for their strength and courage all the world over.”

“You say truly, my dear father,” answered Telemachus, “and you shall see, if you will, that I am in no mind to disgrace your family.”

Laertes was delighted when he heard this. “Good heavens, he exclaimed, “what a day I am enjoying: I do indeed rejoice at it. My son and grandson are vying with one another in the matter of valour.”

On this Minerva came close up to him and said, “Son of Arceisius best friend I have in the world pray to the blue-eyed damsel, and to Jove her father; then poise your spear and hurl it.”

As she spoke she infused fresh vigour into him, and when he had prayed to her he poised his spear and hurled it. He hit Eupeithes’ helmet, and the spear went right through it, for the helmet stayed it not, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Meantime Ulysses and his son fell the front line of the foe and smote them with their swords and spears; indeed, they would have killed every one of them, and prevented them from ever getting home again, only Minerva raised her voice aloud, and made every one pause. “Men of Ithaca,” she cried, cease this dreadful war, and settle the matter at once without further bloodshed.”

On this pale fear seized every one; they were so frightened that their arms dropped from their hands and fell upon the ground at the sound of the goddess’s voice, and they fled back to the city for their lives. But Ulysses gave a great cry, and gathering himself together swooped down like a soaring eagle. Then the son of Saturn sent a thunderbolt of fire that fell just in front of Minerva, so she said to Ulysses, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, stop this warful strife, or Jove will be angry with you.”

Thus spoke Minerva, and Ulysses obeyed her gladly. Then Minerva assumed the form and voice of Mentor, and presently made a covenant of peace between the two contending parties.

This page titled 3.9: The Iliad And The Odyssey is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **1.3: The Iliad And The Odyssey** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

3.10: The Iliad - An Introduction

The *Iliad* is an epic that tells about only a few weeks during the Trojan War. The *Iliad* does not tell the entire story of the war, which is supposed to have lasted for ten years. But the audience is expected to be familiar with the entire story of the Trojan War, including all the events that occurred before and after the war. These pre- and post-war events are referred to in the *Iliad*, but they are not explained, so here are a few of the most important stories.

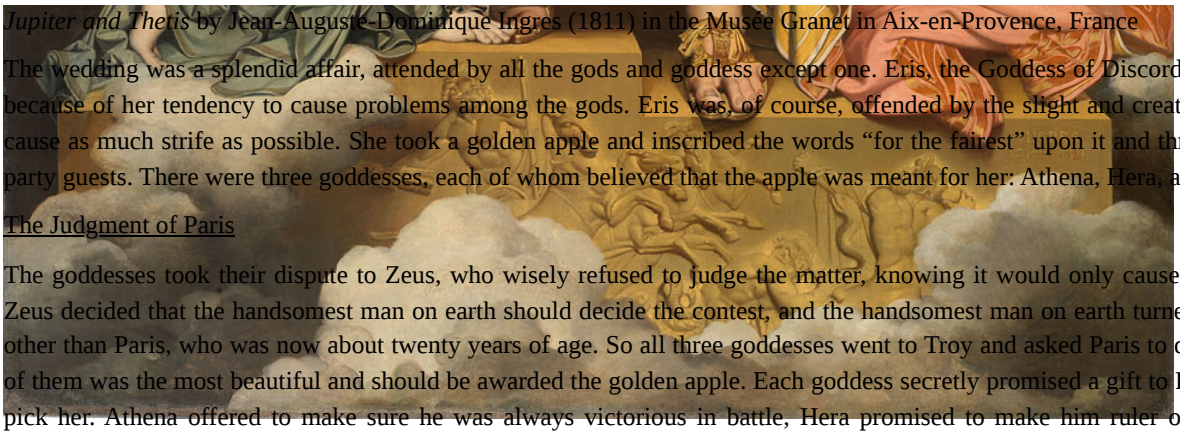
The Birth of Paris

The story begins in Troy with King Priam and his wife, Hecuba. Hecuba was pregnant and one night she had a dream in which the child she was carrying was a firebrand (a piece of burning wood used to start fires), and the firebrand set fire to the entire city. When Hecuba told her dream to her daughter, Cassandra, Cassandra prophesied that the child Hecuba was carrying was destined to destroy the city. Cassandra advised her parents to expose the child as soon as he was born. But Cassandra was fated never to be believed [see Apollo], and so her parents said they would not think of doing such a terrible thing. When Paris was born, he was a very handsome baby, and his parents treasured him greatly. (By the way, in the *Iliad*, Paris is also sometimes referred to as Alexandros or Alexander.)

The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis

Many years later, all the gods were excited about attending the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Peleus was a mortal man who had distinguished himself as one of the Argonauts [see Argonauts]. Thetis was a gorgeous and desirable sea goddess, but she was fated to give birth to a son who would be stronger than his father. When Zeus and Poseidon, who were both very interested in her, learned of this prophesy, they were suddenly very eager to marry her off to a mortal man.





Jupiter and Thetis by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1811) in the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence, France

The wedding was a splendid affair, attended by all the gods and goddess except one. Eris, the Goddess of Discord, was not invited because of her tendency to cause problems among the gods. Eris was, of course, offended by the slight and created a sure way to cause as much strife as possible. She took a golden apple and inscribed the words "for the fairest" upon it and threw it among the party guests. There were three goddesses, each of whom believed that the apple was meant for her: Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite.

The Judgment of Paris

The goddesses took their dispute to Zeus, who wisely refused to judge the matter, knowing it would only cause trouble for him. Zeus decided that the handsomest man on earth should decide the contest, and the handsomest man on earth turned out to be none other than Paris, who was now about twenty years of age. So all three goddesses went to Troy and asked Paris to decide which one of them was the most beautiful and should be awarded the golden apple. Each goddess secretly promised a gift to Paris if he should pick her. Athena offered to make sure he was always victorious in battle, Hera promised to make him ruler of the world, and Aphrodite promised to give him the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris naturally awarded the apple to Aphrodite. There was just one catch: the most beautiful woman in the world happened to be Helen of Sparta, and she was already married to Menelaus, the king of Sparta.



The Judgement of Paris by Peter Paul Rubens (1638-1639) in the Prado Museum in Madrid

The Abduction of Helen

Paris decided to take a trip to Sparta [map]. Paris was accepted into the house of Menelaus, the king of Sparta. Because of the laws of guest-friendship [see Xenia], Paris was invited to stay as long as he wished. Soon after Paris' arrival, Menelaus had to journey to Crete [map] for his grandfather's funeral. He left his wife and household, instructing them to make sure Paris was treated well. Aphrodite took the opportunity to send Eros to shoot Helen with his arrow and Helen fell in love with Paris. Paris absconded with Helen (and quite a bit of Menelaus' treasure) and went home to Troy while Menelaus was still away.

When Menelaus found his wife and wealth gone, he was quite angry. In addition to his personal desire for vengeance, Menelaus knew that Paris had violated the laws of xenia, and that Zeus punished those who violated these laws. So Menelaus called upon his brother, Agamemnon, who was the king of Mycenae [see Argos on map] and the richest and most powerful of all the Greek kings. Together, Menelaus and Agamemnon called on all the other Greek kings to join an expedition to Troy to bring Helen back to Sparta.

But why would the other kings want to join such a dangerous expedition? Before Helen and Menelaus married, nearly every eligible bachelor in Greece wanted to marry her, since she was the most beautiful woman in the world. Tyndareüs, Helen's earthly father, declared (at the advice of one of the suitors, Odysseus) that before he made his decision, all the suitors should swear an oath

to come to the aid of the man he chose as Helen's husband if he should ever have a problem with Helen being abducted by someone else. The suitors all agreed and swore an oath. And now Menelaus invoked this oath and asked for their help to fight against Troy. Besides, Troy was the wealthiest city in the world, so all the Greek warriors would be sure to bring back a great deal of loot (assuming they won the war).

Odysseus Joins the Expedition

Not all the Greeks were easily persuaded to join the fight. Odysseus, the King of Ithaca [map], preferred to stay home with his wife and infant son. When Menelaus came to Ithaca to remind Odysseus of his oath, Odysseus decided to pretend to be crazy. Menelaus found him plowing his fields and sowing the fields with salt instead of seed (sowing salt prevents anything from growing). Menelaus knew this was exactly the sort of trick Odysseus would pull, so to test how crazy Odysseus really was, he placed Odysseus' son, Telemachus, in the path of Odysseus' plow. (Telemachus was about a year-and-a-half old at this time.) When Odysseus pulled the plow away so he didn't hurt the baby, he showed how sane he was. So Menelaus forced him to be true to his oath and join the expedition against Troy.

Achilles Joins the Expedition

Odysseus was instrumental in recruiting Achilles for the Trojan War. Achilles' mother, Thetis, knew that if Achilles went to Troy he would not come back, so she did not want to let him go. Besides, Achilles was only about fifteen years old at this time. So Thetis dressed her son in girl's clothing and she hid him on the island of Scyrus among the daughters of King Lycomedes. But Odysseus knew how to find out which one was Achilles. Odysseus dressed as a merchant and traveled to Scyrus, where he displayed his wares for all the girls to see. He set out some lovely jewelry and clothing, but he also set out some handsome weapons. All the girls flocked to the jewelry except one, who was examining the weapons. Odysseus knew that this "girl" was Achilles in disguise, and he easily persuaded the young hero to join the expedition to Troy. By the way, by the time Achilles left, one of Lycomedes' daughters, Deïdameia, was pregnant with Achilles' child. Deïdameia later gave birth to Neoptolemus. Because Achilles never did return from Troy, Neoptolemus was his only child.



Discovery of Achilles on Skyros by Nicolas Poussin from around 1651 found in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston

The Sacrifice of Iphigenia

The Greek warriors and their ships all gathered at Aulis for the long voyage to Troy. But just when they were about to leave, Artemis sent contrary winds, preventing them from leaving. The Greeks were forced to stay at Aulis for a month; their supplies were getting low and their tempers were getting short. In the end, Agamemnon was forced to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to Artemis, so that Artemis would stop the contrary winds and allow them to set sail for Troy. For the full story of how this happened, see Agamemnon and Iphigenia.

The Beginning of the Trojan War

When the Greek fleet finally reached Troy, they found that the fight was not quick or easy. The walls of Troy were very strong (they had been built by Poseidon and Apollo [see Poseidon], and the Trojans and their allies were great warriors. So the Greeks beached their ships and built a camp on the shore, and they settled in for a long war. The Trojan War went on for ten years; sometimes the Greeks came very close to taking the city, and sometimes the Trojans came very close to destroying the Greeks' ships and their camp. The Greek troops also raided the nearby allies of the Trojans to gain plunder and supplies for themselves and also to prevent food from reaching Troy. The *Iliad* picks up in the ninth year of the war when everyone is extremely tired and cranky from the long, protracted struggle.



Ajax and Achilles playing draughts on an amphora in the Vatican Museum

Fighting at Troy

The Greeks fought at Troy for ten years without being able to conquer the great, walled city. Although the *Iliad* does not tell the story of the death of Achilles, we know that he dies before Troy falls. Paris kills him with an arrow. Note: The entire *Iliad* takes place during a few weeks of the 9th year.



Hypnos (Sleep) and Thanatos (Death) carry away the body of Sarpedon on a krater housed in the Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri, Italy

After Achilles' death, the Greeks were still unable to conquer Troy, even though they had fulfilled the four conditions that Helenus, the Trojan seer, had said were necessary before Troy could fall. (Those conditions were: Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, had to fight on the Greek side; the bow and arrows of Heracles must be used against the Trojans; the remains of the famous hero, Pelops, must be brought from Greece to Troy; and the ancient statue of Athena, called the Palladium, must be stolen from the Trojan citadel). The cunning Odysseus finally thought of a plan that would allow them to get inside the walls and capture Troy.



The Trojan Horse depicted on a pithos in the Archaeological Museum of Mykonos

The Trojan Horse

During the night, the Greeks built a huge, wooden horse, too big to fit inside the walls of Troy. They hid some of their best warriors inside, and sailed off to the neighboring island of Tenedos. When the Trojans awoke to find the Greek army gone and a huge wooden horse in its place (inscribed with the words: “For their return home the Greeks dedicate this thank offering to Athena.”), they joyfully brought the horse into their city, even breaking down part of their city walls in order to do it. That night, while the Trojans slept soundly after a day of feasting and celebrating, the Greek warriors crept out of the horse, opened the city gates to the rest of the Greek army which had sailed back from Tenedos, and the Greeks captured the city and burnt it to the ground. During the fall of Troy, Ajax the Lesser (the son of Oïleus, called “the Lesser” to distinguish him from the great warrior Ajax, the son of Telemon) rapes Cassandra in Athena’s temple. For the full story, see Athena.



Ajax the Lesser raping Cassandra while she seeks refuge at the statue of Athena on a cup in the Louvre

Returns (*Odyssey*)

After fighting at Troy for ten years, many of the Greek princes had long and difficult voyages home. Menelaus wandered the seas for seven years before returning home to Sparta, and Odysseus took ten years to reach home, so that he was gone for twenty years in all. Agamemnon returned home quickly and safely, but as soon as he returned he was murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, (with

help from her lover, Aegisthus), who was angry over the sacrifice and murder of her daughter, Iphigenia. For more on the stories of the Greek warriors' returns, see *The Odyssey*.

3.10: The Iliad - An Introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

SECTION OVERVIEW

3.11: Homer, The Iliad

3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad

Thumbnail: Achilles tending Patroclus wounded by an arrow, identified by inscriptions on the upper part of the vase. Tondo of an Attic red-figure kylix, ca. 500 BC. From Vulci. Image used with permission Image used with permission (Public Domain; Sosias (potter, signed)).

This page titled 3.11: Homer, The Iliad is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Theodore L. Steinberg (OpenSUNY) .

3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad

Why have I read Homer's *Iliad* fifteen or twenty times? The simple answer is that I have taught it many times and each time I teach a book I like to reread it. Of course, that answer is insufficient. I obviously could teach the book without rereading it, and besides, no one requires me to teach this particular book. So why have I read Homer's *Iliad* fifteen or twenty times? A better answer is because I love it.

As I said earlier, I like to think of books—the physical objects, books—as holding a world that I can enter; and as I also said, some of my best friends, some of the people I know best, live in books. When I read these books, I visit with these friends. Furthermore, I find *The Iliad* to be so profound, so true in what it says about being a human being and living in this world, that it never fails to make me see and understand the world differently and, I hope, better.

For a number of reasons, *The Iliad* is different from most of the literature we are accustomed to, and it helps to know something about those differences and the reasons behind them before reading the poem. It is worth stressing, in the first place, that when we read *The Iliad*, we are reading a poem. There are many fine translations of The Iliad, and some of them translate the poem into prose. My feeling is that it is vital to read a contemporary poetic translation that captures the feeling of the original Greek. None does this as well as the translation by Richmond Lattimore, though, to my ear, the more recent translation by Robert Fagles is a close second. But *The Iliad* is not simply a poem the way, say, a verse work by Wordsworth is a poem, for the story of its creation was entirely different. To explain what I mean, I must condense the work of many scholars who know this material far better than I do.

The *Iliad* is about the Trojan War, but was there really such a thing as the Trojan War? Apparently there was, at some time in the late thirteenth century BCE. Was it fought over Helen of Troy and did it include great heroes from all over Greece and Asia Minor? Probably not. Actually we know very little about the war itself. The site of the war, at a spot in Turkey now called Hissarlik, has been identified, but the war itself was undoubtedly a relatively minor trade war of the kind that took place fairly frequently. The Trojans and some ancient Greek tribes were fighting over who would have commercial ascendancy, and the war itself, which was certainly important to those who took part in it or to those who suffered from it, was hardly crucial for the course of world history. But out of that war grew a series of legends that, over the course of several centuries, became *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (and a number of other poems that have mostly disappeared but that constituted a whole cycle of poems about Troy and the heroes who fought there). How did that transformation occur and what does it mean?

The answer is that no one knows for sure how it occurred, because the records we have come from much later, but apparently the legends were handed down orally from generation to generation, were combined with other legends about other legendary figures, and over the course of several centuries evolved into the intricately wrought and powerful poem that we now call *The Iliad*. *The Iliad*, then, is a work of composite authorship: it was put together over a long period by many bards, and the version we have, which was written down in about the eighth century BCE, represents only one version of what was even then an enormously popular story.

This account of the poem's origin does raise one other interesting question: who was Homer, whose name is always associated with the poem? The answer is that we really do not know if there ever truly was a person named Homer who was involved with *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and it is of no great importance whether or not such a person existed. On the other hand, this account of the poem does solve a number of problems in the poem. For example, the language of *The Iliad* is a kind of artificial, literary language that includes words from several ancient Greek dialects. The composite authorship of the poem over a lengthy stretch of time could help to explain this oddity, just as it explains why the poem describes warriors wearing armor from different historical periods or why it describes different burial practices that did not coexist. Obviously these elements from a variety of historical periods became part of the poem and were not updated or reconciled even when the historical reality changed. Furthermore, I have not referred to the "author" of *The Iliad*, since, according to this account of the poem's origin, it had no single author. Until it was written down in the eighth century, it existed only in the memories of those bards who were trained to recite it at the various festivals that were celebrated in those days.

The ancient Greeks, however, lived in a culture that was primarily oral rather than visual, so that their notion of memorization differed from ours. If I wanted to memorize a poem by Adrienne Rich, which was created and continues to exist as a written text, I could look at the poem and try to memorize a few lines, then look away and recite the lines, then look back to correct myself, and

continue in this way until I either memorized the poem or gave up. I would do it in this way because I am a product of a print culture, and I am used to having printed texts to which I can refer when I want to look something up or check a fact. But if I lived in an oral culture, I would depend on people whose job it was—and a prestigious job it was—to remember everything that was important to my culture, and such things would often be remembered, for mnemonic purposes, in verse. (In fact, the word "mnemonic" comes from the name of the Greek goddess Mnemosyne, Memory, who was the mother of the Muses, the goddesses of the various arts, including history. The narrator of *The Iliad* asks one of the Muses for her aid in the first line of the poem.) Of course, many of the things that people thought were worth preserving in memory actually were stories that were considered expressive of the culture's deepest values. In ancient Greece, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were among the poems preserved in this way. But an oral reciter (in Greek, a rhapsode) did not memorize a poem the way we would memorize it. The rhapsode knew the story, knew the individual characters and episodes; but each time the rhapsode recited the story, he recreated it. This technique helps to explain some things that we may find peculiar when we read the poems.

For example, we find a lot of repetition in the poems. Occasionally a few lines may be repeated, and sometimes relatively long passages are repeated, and we may be inclined to think of such repetitions as flaws in the poem. We should remember, however, that the poems were meant to be recited dramatically, which means that those passages would not have seemed like dry repetitions the way they might to us. In addition, such repetitions gave the reciter a chance to continue composing in his head as he repeated a passage that he had recited only a short time before. (We often do the same thing, except that instead of repeating ourselves we say "Uh" or "You know.")

A similar explanation exists for what are called the epithets in the poem, phrases that are usually associated with the names of places or characters. Over and over, for instance, we read of "resourceful Odysseus" or "brilliant Diomedes," and we may be tempted to wonder why the composer of the poem used the same descriptive terms so often. Again the answer has to do with oral composition. A person who was reciting the poem in front of an audience was under a number of constraints. First, he had to keep the poem going, but he also had to follow a particular metrical pattern that involved patterns of long and short vowels. (By long and short vowels, the Greeks did not mean the difference between "a" as in face and "a" as in fact, the way we do. They meant how long the vowels were held, which was dictated in part by grammatical rules.) The reciter could hardly pause while he thought about what came next. Instead, he would use these epithets, which were designed to fit the metrical patterns at particular places in the lines. They were, perhaps, a kind of crutch that the rhapsodes used, but they also add to the mood of the poem. If we read the poem out loud rather than to ourselves, and if we try to make our reading even the slightest bit dramatic, those epithets can lose their repetitious quality and we can start to appreciate the contribution they make to the poem.

In order to enjoy fully a poem like *The Iliad*, it helps to know this background about how an oral poem was put together. It is also essential to know the mythological background, because even if the ancient Greeks modified their beliefs in the various deities over time, they certainly knew who those deities were, just as they also knew the mortal heroes and heroines. There are hundreds of characters mentioned in *The Iliad*, but there are really only a few that the reader must know intimately. And there is, of course, a background story that the ancient Greeks knew and that the modern reader has to know. After all, the siege of Troy lasted ten years and the story of *the Iliad* covers only fifty-four days toward the end of that ten-year period. So what happened earlier?

Long before the beginning of *The Iliad*, a relatively minor goddess named Thetis fell in love with a mortal named Peleus. As so often happens in mixed marriages, this marriage had its problems, and one of the problems began at their wedding, when Eris, goddess of discord, suddenly appeared, complained about not having been invited (who would invite Discord to a wedding, after all?), and threw a golden apple among the guests, declaring that it belonged to the most worthy of the goddesses. Clearly there was a reason that she was the goddess of discord, and discord immediately broke out, as three of the goddesses, Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, each claimed to be the goddess worthy of the apple. Their discussions (to use the polite word) over the apple went on for many years, until finally they agreed to allow a young shepherd to decide among them. The young shepherd was Alexandros (also called Paris) and he was the son of Priam, king of Troy. Each of the goddesses, in the spirit of fair play for which they were known, tried to bribe him with their special gifts. Athena offered him wisdom, Hera offered wealth, and Aphrodite offered him the most beautiful woman in the world. Obviously it was no contest, and Alexandros awarded the apple to Aphrodite, thereby earning the eternal enmity of Hera and Athena for himself and his city.

All of Homer's audience would have known this before the poem began, just as they would have known that Aphrodite rewarded Alexandros by giving him Helen, the wife of the Spartan king Menelaos. (Whether Alexandros kidnapped Helen or whether she ran off with him is not entirely clear in Homer's version of the story. In Aeschylus' dramatic version of the story from the fifth century,

she ran off with him.) Menelaos' brother Agamemnon, who was the king of the Myce- naeans (and who was married to Helen's sister Clytemnestra), gathered an army and brought it to Troy, where Alexandros and Helen had fled. When *The Iliad* opens, the Greek forces have been besieging Troy for nearly ten years and everyone on both sides is tired and discouraged.

The Iliad begins, like so many epic poems, in medias res, that is, in the middle of the story, and the audience is expected to know the background. There is nothing strange about this technique, and modern writers use it frequently. Anyone who reads the earlier novels of John Le Carré, for instance, has to know about the enmity between Britain and the Soviet Union and the series of spy scandals that afflicted the British Secret Service. Homer's audience would have known the story I just told, and they would have known, too, that the Achaian army (Achaian, Danaan, and Argive all refer to the Greek forces) supported itself through the ten–year siege by raiding nearby territories and taking provisions or kidnapping people who could be held for ransom or simply kept as slaves. Often such victims of kidnapping were women, who would be parcelled out like other items of booty. Shortly before the beginning of *The Iliad*, the Greeks had staged one such raiding party and captured two women, Chryseis and Briseis, who were given as prizes to Agamemnon and to the greatest warrior among the Achaians, Achilleus, who happened to be the son of Thetis and Peleus, at whose wedding, ironically, all the problems had begun. (Everyone knows the story of how Achilleus' mother dipped him in a magic river to make him invulnerable, except that she forgot that the hand she held him with covered his heel, which became his only vulnerable spot. Homer never mentions that story and it is irrelevant to *The Iliad.*) As the poem opens, Chryseis' father comes to the Achaians and, with the help of a plague sent by Apollo, convinces Agamemnon to return his daughter to him. Agamemnon does so, but, in order to assert his authority as leader of the Achaians, he demands that Achilleus give him Briseis. In making this demand, Agamemnon indicates the kind of proud bully that he is; and in unnecessarily alienating his best warrior, he gives some indication of his strategic acumen. This kind of behavior will be repeated throughout the poem, but I will offer no more summaries of the poem. *The Iliad* is meant to be read (or heard), not summarized.

Of course, *The Iliad* is fairly difficult to read. Perhaps anything worth doing is difficult. I am not sure. But I am sure that reading *The Iliad* is worthwhile and that once a person starts to read it, it becomes progressively easier. We do have to remember, however, that this is a poem that was finally written down almost three thousand years ago and that much has changed during that time, including our expectations about literature. What continues to amaze me is that, given all those differences, so many things have remained the same. As we read *The Iliad*, we may initially be struck by the differences; but as we get used to the poem and as we look more deeply into it, we will undoubtedly see ourselves. Be prepared for that to happen. It can be a shock.

I can provide a few hints that can make the reading a bit easier. One that I have already mentioned is to read the poem out loud as much as possible. And read it dramatically. (I would read this way at home rather than on a bus or subway, but that may be just a personal preference.) Remember that this poem was not meant to be read quickly. Neither Homer nor any member of his audience would have understood the concept of speed reading, so slow down and savor the poem.

Another hint is not to worry too much about remembering all of the characters. Most characters appear only briefly and your understanding of the story will not suffer if you do not remember all the names. There are, however, some names that you must remember. I will list them here as Achaian or Trojan, but as you read the poem, you will find yourself automatically remembering who these people are. (The names below are taken from the Lattimore translation. More commonly Achilleus is known as Achilles and Aias as Ajax.)

MORTALS

Trojans	Achaians
Priam, king of Troy	Agamemnon, leader of Achaians
Hekabe, queen of Troy	Menelaos, his brother
Hektor, leading Trojan warrior	Achilleus, most powerful warrior
Andromache, his wife	Odysseus, craftiest warrior
Alexandros, abductor (?) of Helen	Diomedes, important warrior
	Aias son of Oileus, warrior
	Aias son of Telamon, warrior

Helen, alleged cause of the war

DEITIES

Zeus, king of the gods	Hera, queen of the gods
Apollo, god of the sun	Athena, goddess of wisdom
Ares, god of war	Aphrodite, goddess of love
Poseidon, god of the sea	Thetis, mother of Achilleus

Just to complicate things a bit further (as though having two characters named Aias is not complicated enough), characters are often called “son of father’s name” Thus, Agamemnon and Menelaos are both sons of Atreus (and are thus known as Atreides). Achilleus is the son of Peleus, Diomedes is the son of Tydeus. If all of this sounds confusing, I promise that the confusion will disappear as you get involved in the story.

Another hint concerns the second half of Book II. Just as you begin to get involved with the story, everything stops halfway through Book II so that Homer can present what is called the Catalogue of the Ships, a long list of all the warriors who came to Troy and where they came from. This list serves at least two functions. One is that it allows Homer to show off his skill at fitting all of these names into the strict metrical requirements of the verses. A more significant function is that it served as an historical record for the ancient Greeks while at the same time illustrating how important this war had been for their ancestors. (A friend of mine once met a genItleman from Greece at a party. When the Greek gentleman mentioned his birthplace, my friend said he had never heard of it. The Greek gentleman drew himself up to his full height and said, “We sent two ships to Troy.” So for him, at least, that catalogue was still meaningful. Archaeologists have also made use of the Catalogue to identify some of the ancient cities that are mentioned.) Despite the historical importance of that catalogue, however, my recommendation is that when you get to it, you should skip directly to Book III so that you can maintain the continuity of the story.

My last hint concerns the many battle scenes in the poem. We in twenty-first-century America have certainly become accustomed to violence in literature and film, not to mention everyday life, but of course we did not invent violence. *The Iliad* is full of violence. In its many pages of battle scenes, we read of hundreds of deaths, often described in graphic detail. These descriptions are hardly pleasant, and they get worse as the poem continues, but they are a very important part of the poem. You may tire of the battles and you may want to skip over them and over some of the gorier details. Do not give in to that impulse. If those scenes disgust you, the poem is working.

Let me begin discussing *The Iliad* by elaborating on that point. *The Iliad* is an epic poem (more about that later) and epic poems are so often full of fighting and other kinds of mayhem that many readers, relying on superficial readings, on their own prejudices, or on the traditions that exist about such things, assume that such works glorify fighting and mayhem. Such readers are likely to talk about “codes of honor” or “heroic codes” and to picture epic poetry as consisting of the kind of stories that warriors listened to

around the fire after dinner in order to fortify themselves for their next battle. Invariably this approach to the literature encourages the glorification of such "traditional male values" as strength, speed, ferocity, ruthlessness, and bloodthirstiness.

Of course, I am exaggerating, but not too much. Sophisticated readers tend to make these points in more, well, sophisticated ways, but the result is much the same: *The Iliad* is about the heroic code, they say, and Hektor, for example, is a hero because of his adherence to that code despite the odds against him. The twentieth-century philosopher Simone Weil even wrote a short book about *The Iliad* called *The Iliad*: or The Poem of Force. Weil wrote her book during the Second World War, which had dramatic effects on her life and which influenced the way she saw the poem (just as the world that I inhabit affects my view of the poem); but what Weil says about the poem as a kind of ultimate expression of the power of force is quite incorrect, just as those readers who claim that the subject of the poem is the "wrath of Achilleus" are incorrect. Certainly the wrath of Achilleus is mentioned in the poem's first line, but we have to read by sentences, not by lines, and the rest of the first sentence describes the consequences of Achilleus' wrath: death, corpses being devoured by scavengers, and destruction. These products of wrath and battle are not being glorified in the poem.

Certainly there was some kind of heroic code when the poem was composed, just as, for many people, there is now. In fact, that code has not changed much over the past three thousand years, though Achilles weeps more than a modern American hero would. But one of the functions of literature is to challenge the accepted values of a society, and *The Iliad* challenges the values of its society at almost every point. Consider just one of the many deaths that Homer describes. This one is in Book XIII, when Asios and Idomeneus meet:

> He was striving in all his fury
>
> To strike Idomeneus, but he, too quick with a spearcast struck
>
> him in the gorge underneath the chin, and drove the bronze
>
> clean through.
>
> He fell, as when an oak goes down or a white poplar or like
>
> a towering pine tree which in the mountains the carpenters
>
> have hewn down with their whetted axes to make a ship
>
> timber.
>
> So he lay there felled in front of his horses and chariot,
>
> roaring, and clawed with his hands at the bloody dust.
>
> (XIII.386-93)

This passage surely describes the reality of war: it is cruel, it is painful, it transforms human beings into objects. Asios, as he dies, has less value even than a tree, which at least can be made into a ship timber. All that Asios can do is scream and claw at the dust onto which his blood is spilling. There is not much glory in this picture. There is only horror. And later on, when Homer describes how

> Before Aineias and Hektor the young Achaian warriors
>
> went, screaming terror, all delight of battle forgotten
>
> (XVII.758-59)

Surely he is commenting sadly on our image of war. This passage always makes me think of the enthusiasm that people manage to work up for wars. I think of the old newsreels of columns of young men marching off to World War I, smiling and confident that after a brief period of glorious fighting they will return healthy and triumphant to their families. It never happens that way, of course, and we never learn. Those newsreels might as easily show soldiers from any war anticipating the "delight of battle" while the reality is that they are being prepared for slaughter. (Tolstoy, incidentally, makes this point brilliantly in *War and Peace*.)

But *The Iliad* is more than simply a poem that describes the horrors of war. It explores the behavior of extraordinary human beings, male and female, in a world that is characterized by this war. The poem explores what it means to be a human being in a world where such wars, such shame, such mortality exist. Given the fact of human mortality—and the fact that we are so often in such

haste to hurry it along—how do we, and how should we, continue to live in this world? These are Homer's questions, and he addresses them throughout the poem.

Perhaps the best way to begin looking at these points is by considering two scenes from Book VI. The first of these scenes actually illustrates at least two important points. The first has to do with the question of realism. In many ways, *The Iliad* is quite realistic, that is, it gives us a feeling for what the events might really have been like, as we saw in the description of Asios' death. But *The Iliad* is not a work of representational realism. It does not pretend to portray everyday actualities. Later in the poem there will be a scene when Achilleus appears to be covered by a divine fire and sends the Trojan army running just by shouting. Or earlier in the poem, Helen appears on the ramparts and Priam, the Trojan king, asks her to identify all of the Achaian heroes who are arrayed against the Trojans. That scene might indeed seem realistic, except that the war is in its tenth year and it hardly seems likely that Priam has just gotten around to asking who his enemies are. There are, of course, explanations for each of these scenes, but the main point here is that we must not expect Homer to be realistic in the most common sense of the term. What the poem tells us about human existence is real, but the events of the poem are not necessarily realistic.

Such is the case in Book VI. When the book opens, the Achaians and the Trojans are engaged in a major battle. It is difficult for anyone who has never been in a battle to imagine what it is like, but we must try to picture the tumult of hand-to-hand combat, with spears and arrows flying through the air, armor plates banging against each other, men shouting battle cries and other men, like Asios, screaming in pain. The picture has to be one of nearly total chaos. In the midst of this chaos, two soldiers—Diomedes, from the Achaian side, and Glaukos, from the Trojan side—encounter each other. It is customary in Homeric battles—and it was probably the case in real battles—that when two warriors meet, they speak to each other, perhaps to issue a challenge or to offer insults or to boast about their prowess. (We can see this custom today in sporting events, where it is known as talking trash. Many things do not change.) As Glaukos and Diomedes approach each other, amid the tumult of the battle, Diomedes challenges Glaukos, asking who he is that he dares to stand up against Diomedes' power. Diomedes assures Glaukos that if the latter is one of the gods, he will not fight with him, and he explains why in a story that takes up sixteen lines. Glaukos responds by giving his own family background and, in over sixty lines, tells stories about his ancestors. We must recognize that such pedigrees were very important to these people. A warrior had to establish his nobility, and family background was one of the criteria; but we must also remember that this lengthy exchange takes place against the noise and chaos of the fighting. Furthermore, when Diomedes learns who Glaukos is, he realizes that in days long past, his grandfather and Glaukos' grandfather had been allies, so he drives his spear into the ground and proposes that they vow never to fight against each other. Both warriors jump from their horses, shake hands, and, as a sign of their agreement, exchange armor, which means, obviously, that right there on the battlefield, with spears and arrows flying everywhere, they each remove their armor. Even those of us who have never been in a battle would have to agree that removing one's armor in the midst of battle is not a recommended procedure, but the narrator's only comment is that Glaukos got the worse end of the deal, since his armor was more valuable than Diomedes'.

What is going on in this strange episode? Is this peculiar and unrealistic scene an example of Homer's incompetence? Of course not. Homer has a point to make here that transcends representational realism. In the midst of battle, surrounded by the dead and dying, two great warriors meet, intending to kill each other, and yet in a brief instant, they discover their human connections. No longer are they faceless enemies bent on mutual destruction. They are human beings, each with an identity, united by events in the distant past and by their common struggle against human mortality. We can see this point when Glaukos first responds to Diomedes:

> "High-hearted son of Tydeus, why ask of my generation?
>
> As is the generation of leaves, so is that of humanity.
>
> The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber
>
> Burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning.
>
> So one generation of men will grow while another dies."
>
> (VI.145-50)

This philosophical and highly poetic response, based on an extended metaphor, hardly seems appropriate to a battlefield conversation; but if we forget about realism, it turns out to be amazingly appropriate. The battlefield is the site of death on a massive scale, and Glaukos' words address human mortality. The comparison of human life to the short life of plants is hardly

novel, but Homer goes further than that. Individual human beings are like the leaves, which after a short existence will fall and be scattered by the wind; but the tree itself will continue to create new leaves, just as human beings will continue to flourish, even though individual generations will die off.

Glaukos' words here, however, are insufficient. He is responding to Diomedes' challenge and so he downplays the worth of the individual in relation to the whole of humanity. The subsequent action, however, shows also the value of the individual. It is because of such values, as evidenced by their grandfathers, that these two warriors find and extend the link between them, and they, too, as individuals are vitally important. That is why the narrator's closing comment on the scene, when he remarks that Glaukos lost out on the exchange of armor, is a test for the audience. Does the audience think that the value of the armor matters? That value had become irrelevant. What matters is that amidst the dead and dying, vivid reminders of human mortality, Glaukos and Diomedes have managed to come together and somehow affirm life rather than death. This triumph, unfortunately, is a small one, since death and battle will continue, but even minor triumphs are triumphs.

The other key episode of Book VI involves Hektor. Still the battle is raging and Hektor's brother Helenos advises him to return to the city and ask the women of the city to offer a sacrifice to Athena so that the goddess might help the Trojans. The audience knows, of course, that such a sacrifice is futile because Athena is sworn to help destroy the city, but even beyond that tragic irony is the irony of sending the Trojans' best warrior away from the battle on such an errand. It would be like asking Babe Ruth to leave a World Series game in order to get coffee for the team. It makes no logical sense and it would never happen. On the other hand, as the action of the book develops, it makes a great deal of sense, because what happens to Hektor in Troy is vitally important to the themes of the poem, so that the sacrifice of realism becomes a minor, and easily overlooked, inconsistency.

When Hektor arrives at Troy, he meets his mother Hekabe and asks her to offer the sacrifice to Athena, which she does and which Athena rejects. Then he meets Paris, whom he rebukes for staying in Troy with Helen while all the other men are out fighting his battle for him. And finally he goes to find his wife Andromache.

Hektor first looks for Andromache at home, but he is told that she is on the ramparts with their baby son watching the battle. (This detail is important because later, when Hektor is fighting his final battle with Achilleus, Andromache is not on the ramparts watching. Instead, in a kind of pathetic reversal of this scene, she is at home preparing a bath for what she thinks is the imminent return of her husband.) When Hektor finds Andromache on the ramparts, husband and wife have one of the most central and revealing conversations in the poem. To get the full import of this conversation, we must remember that Hektor, hero though he may be, is a young man, the husband of a young, loving wife. He is widely respected, and even Helen says that he alone has been consistently kind to her. He has been the Trojan leader in this awful war, loyal to his city even though he has doubts about the rightness of the city's cause regarding Helen's status, though by this point the war has taken on a life of its own and Helen's status barely seems to be an issue any longer.

When Hektor approaches Andromache, she weeps and pleads with him to stop putting himself in so much danger. She suggests that he pull his troops inside the city walls and concentrate them at the weakest spot, where the greatest attacks might be expected. Her plan would protect the city and the warriors, and it makes a lot of strategic sense. She strengthens her argument by telling him something that he already knows but that the audience does not know, that she has only Hektor and their son in the whole world, since her father, her mother, and her seven brothers have all perished at the hands of Achilleus. With some justice, she fears that Hektor will suffer the same fate, and she knows that her life as a widow in a conquered city will be hellish. What she has done, then, because she loves him and needs him, because she is a woman in a society that did not greatly value women, is put Hektor in the position of having to make a clear choice, which he certainly does. He tells her that he knows that what she says is accurate: he knows that if he follows his present course, Troy will be conquered and he will die. What upsets him most, however, is her fate, for she will be carried off into slavery by the conquerors, who will not only abuse her physically but who will also mock her as the widow of Hektor. So why does he not change his strategy and follow her advice?

> I would feel deep shame before the Trojans
>
> and the Trojan women with trailing garments, if like a coward I were to
>
> shrink aside from the fighting…
>
> (VI.441-43)

His only hope is that he will be dead before Andromache is captured so that he may not hear her screaming and know that what he foresees has actually happened.

Every time I read *The Iliad*, I find myself wishing that Hektor would change his answer and prevent the whole calamity from happening. He knows that if the Trojans continue to pursue the course they have been following, he will be killed and they will be conquered and destroyed. About the ultimate fate of Troy there can be no question (and remember that we have only recently heard Glaukos' words about human mortality). Furthermore, Hektor knows what will happen to his beloved Andromache when he is dead and the city is conquered. Nevertheless, he sees no way to implement her plan, because he has to win glory for himself. If he did what Andromache suggests, he would feel shame, not simply because he would be following a woman's advice but because he is trapped by the heroic code, which dictates that the only way to win glory is through battle, through what was thought of as "manly" behavior. He could, conceivably, prevent his own death, the enslavement of his wife and son, and the destruction of his city, but he will not do so simply on the basis of pride.

If we juxtapose Hektor's words here with Glaukos' words earlier in the book, as well as with the actions of Glaukos and Diomedes, we can see Homer building a pattern that will continue to develop throughout the epic. This scene, however, offers a particularly tragic part of the pattern, for Hektor knows that what Andromache fears will come true, yet he feels constrained to abandon his beloved wife and infant son for the sake of a pride that has little value. He knows from his meeting earlier with Paris and Helen that Paris is unworthy and that Helen despises her new partner. He knows that his city will be destroyed. None of those factors matter to him as much as his pride, as his need to lead the fighting in a cause that is both futile and wrong. What a tragedy.

This scene between Hektor and Andromache, the only scene in the poem that shows a warrior with his family, contributes to one of the poem's major themes, its stance on war, and to do so it relies on the role that women play in the poem. War is clearly the province of men, who recognize its dangers but who believe in its nobility. They know the risks that they take. They know that they will either die gloriously in battle or live gloriously as victors (since no one in the Homeric poems ever survives with a disabling injury). These men have choices to make about their own destinies, though death, of course, is ultimately inevitable. But what about the women? Not only can they not choose to go out to the battlefield, that is, not exercise that particular kind of choice over their destinies, but their destinies are entirely determined by the fates of the men, who generally make their choices without considering the women. So Hektor, based on his male notion of glory, makes the decision for himself, his family, and his whole city, knowing full well what the consequences are likely to be. He allows himself to be trapped by a macho idea of glory into fighting a war that he knows is basically dishonorable and that he could end relatively quickly, a point that the ancient Greek historian Herodotus makes (2:120) when he discusses the ancient question of whether the real Helen was actually in Troy during the war. And while the decision to continue fighting is not an easy one for him to make, the consequences that he foresees for Andromache are surely worse than those he will face: he will die, which may not be a good thing but which happens quickly, while Andromache, who does not share his idea of glory and who has no role in making the decision, will continue to suffer for years. In this way, Homer undercuts the heroic ideal. We cannot say that Andromache is, after all, only a woman and that her fate is therefore not terribly important. Homer makes it important, and he emphasizes his point when Hektor reaches out for his infant son, who is frightened by his dirt-and-blood-covered father in his horsehair crested helmet. When Hektor removes the helmet, his son comes to him happily.

As we read this scene, we must keep returning to Glaukos' metaphor of the tree. Yes, the leaves will pass, because they, like us, are subject to mortality; but the leaves will die in their own time. They have nothing like war to hasten the process. This scene, short though it may be, is hardly an isolated episode. We may remember that the whole crisis of *The Iliad* occurs over the status of the captive Briseis—does she belong to Achilleus or to Agamemnon? Despite the centrality of her position in the story, she herself does not appear in the poem until Book XIX, when she laments the death of Patroklos, explaining that like Andromache, she, too, has lost her whole family to the war and only Achilleus' friend Patroklos has been kind to her. Therefore, she says, she weeps for Patroklos.

> So she spoke, lamenting, and the women sorrowed around her Grieving openly for Patroklos, but for her
>
> own sorrows each.
>
> (XIX.302-03)

This is as strong a condemnation of the idealization of battle glory as I can imagine, and it is no accident that Homer put it into the mouth of the woman Briseis. Like Andromache, who lost her father and brothers in battle, Briseis lost her husband and brothers;

Andromache, fortunately for her, has been happy with Hektor, while Briseis has been turned into a war-prize (which, unhappily, will be Andromache's fate as well). In fact, part of Briseis' salvation had been the promise that she would become the wife of the man who slew her husband. Such is the fate of women according to the heroic code that Homer's heroes (and their modern supporters) glorify.

Accordingly, Homer's narrator makes a significant comment here: as Briseis laments, so do the women who are with her, "openly for Patroklos, but for her own sorrows each." Briseis' lament is ostensibly for her rescuer Patroklos, but really it is a lament for herself, for the sorrows that she, as a woman, has suffered because of the men's wars. Her father and brothers are dead—their suffering is over. Her suffering, and that of her female companions, continues.

It is true, of course, that these episodes concerning Andromache and Briseis, even if we add to them those concerning Helen and Hekabe, comprise only a few lines out of the thousands that make up T*he Iliad*. Nevertheless, these relatively few lines are essential to the work. *The Iliad* is largely concerned with examining how human beings confront their mortality, but if we focus only on the male heroes, we get only a partial view. These lines about women not only provide another view of human mortality, but they transform the glorification of war. They are a reminder to anyone who thinks that Homer's gorier descriptions somehow recommend the joys of carnage. Without them, *The Iliad* would be a far different poem.

But it would not be completely different, because similar themes appear elsewhere in the poem. One of the most noticeable spots involves the shield of Achilleus. After Achilleus' friend Patroklos is killed in battle wearing Achilleus' armor, Achilleus asks his mother to get him new armor, and, as always, she does what he asks. She visits Hephaistos, the god of fire and of the forge, who creates a magnificent set of armor for Achilleus, including a shield that is covered with scenes of human life, scenes to which Homer devotes considerable attention. Once again, in describing the shield of Achilleus, we leave the realm of representational realism. First of all, to contain all the scenes that Homer describes, the shield would have to be as big as a football field. Furthermore, the poem's narrator offers a great deal of commentary on the scenes that would be impossible to know just from looking at them.

The scenes on the shield begin with the earth, the sky, the water, and the heavenly bodies, natural elements that place the rest of the scenes in the context of our world and confer on those scenes a cosmic significance. This context is important, for the next scenes we see portray two human cities. In the first city, a wedding is taking place, with appropriate celebrations, though in the marketplace an argument has broken out. Apparently one man has killed another, so the killer and the deceased's kinsman are arguing over the penalty. Surprisingly, the killer is offering more than the kinsman is asking, so the two go to the elders for arbitration and a prize is available for the person who comes up with the best solution.

This is a city at peace, where marriages and festivals, symbolic of union, of fertility, of life, are celebrated. This is a real city, however, populated by real people, and so there are disagreements and potential strife in the city as well, as in the case of the two men. In the world of *The Iliad*, the solution would lie in violence: the families of the killed and of the killer would settle the issue by fighting, just as the Achaians and Trojans are attempting to settle their quarrel through war. In the world of the shield, however, there is an attempt at arbitration, and when the family of the deceased refuses the initial offer, there is further arbitration with a prize being given not to the best warrior in the city but to the person who devises the best peaceful resolution. No wonder there are festivals and marriages in this city—the city operates on the basis of law and intelligence, not on the law of the jungle.

The other city depicted on the shield is quite different. This city, with its "lovely citadel," like the citadel of Troy, is, like Troy, under siege, and the warriors' wives and children stand on the city wall. This is a city characterized by ambushes and treachery, by Hate and Confusion and Death. This is, in short, a city that embodies all the horrors of Troy, and it stands in sharp contrast to the other, ideal city.

The shield of Achilleus, then, depicts the natural world as a world of harmony, but it describes two possibilities for the world of human beings. One of those possibilities offers peace and harmony, but the other offers war and destruction. The choice, Homer seems to say, is ours, though clearly the Achaians and the Trojans have made their choice. It is not enough, however, to say simply that they should choose differently, for they have chosen the way they have been taught to choose. The men are celebrated for their fighting ability, not their peacemaking ability. Only men who are past their primes, like Nestor, are looked to for intelligent thought. Odysseus, the wisest and wiliest of all the fighters, is an anomaly, and he comes in for his share of abuse in this poem as a result. (Digression: The two cities on Achilleus' shield are represented by the friezes on the two sides of the urn in Keats's "Ode on a

Grecian Urn." Keats, who loved Homer's work, created the urn based on this passage. Another brilliant poem based on this passage is W.H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles.")

But *The Iliad* is not a poem of simple contrasts. If the warriors were all evil men, it would be easy to dismiss them, but many of them are quite appealing. Hektor is a good person who is trapped by the image he and his society have created of himself, of what they think constitutes a hero, and who consequently makes some poor decisions. Diomedes is a fierce warrior who can demonstrate moments of true nobility. Telamonian Aias is a quiet giant who always tries to do his best and who maintains his integrity throughout the poem. Even Menelaos, who is depicted as a weak and colorless character, has a good side, especially when he is contrasted with his brutal bully of a brother, Agamemnon. It should be obvious that I am speaking about these characters in a book as though they were real people. Recently I heard someone ask, "How can readers fall in love with a character in a book? Characters are just collections of words." That might be a very contemporary and sophisticated approach to literature, but it is not true to the experiences of readers, who act as accomplices to authors in giving life to the words. I feel sorry for the person who sees literary characters as "just collections of words." Why, I wonder, would such a person study literature? The characters in *The Iliad* range from the very simple, like those who appear in a single line, just long enough to be killed, to those who are as complex as people we might know. One of the reasons *The Iliad* has retained its popularity for about three millennia is because the characters are so real. To show what I mean, let me briefly explore two characters, Agamemnon and Achilleus.

Agamemnon, as I recently mentioned, is a brutal leader who bullies his men. Because of his pride, he alienates his best warrior and early in the poem he tests his men's devotion by telling them that he has been instructed by the gods to end the war, whereupon he is shocked that the men are deliriously happy and run for their ships. So Agamemnon is not a military genius. He tends to get his way by threatening people or by shaming them in front of their companions. His cruelty is always evident. In Book VI, for instance, he intervenes when a young warrior on the Trojan side, Adrestos, begs Menelaos not to kill him but to hold him for ransom. Agamemnon ridicules his brother's tendency toward leniency and states as his goal the destruction of every Trojan male, even the unborn son in his mother's womb. Menelaos responds by pushing Adrestos away from him

> And powerful Agamemnon stabbed him in the side and, as
>
> he writhed over, Atreides, setting his heel upon the midriff,
>
> wrenched out the ash spear.
>
> (VI.63-65)

Both his speech and his actions are full of gratuitous cruelty, and it is hard to believe that when Homer calls him a "hero" (in line 61), he is not being ironic. This kind of cruelty is what Agamemnon is all about. When he puts his foot on Adrestos' belly in order to get his spear out of the dead man's body, he deprives the poor young man of all humanity.

Similarly, when Agamemnon is in battle (in Book XI), he is described in far more brutal terms that almost any other warrior; but when he is wounded, the description becomes quite extraordinary, as his pain is compared to the pain of a woman in childbirth. Now we may be certain that the pain of childbirth is severe, but the comparison of a wounded warrior to a woman in labor would have been viewed as highly insulting (to the warrior, of course). In short, by using this simile, the narrator reveals something else not so flattering about Agamemnon: he may be a bully, but he is also weak. Nevertheless, toward the end of the poem, after Achilleus has lost his best friend and has re-entered the battle, Agamemnon is relatively gracious in acknowledging Achilleus' superiority, in giving him gifts, and in allowing Achilleus to keep Briseis. Of course, at that point he also desperately needs Achilleus to re-enter the battle. As we step back and look at Agamemnon, we can see that he is a disagreeable man, but we can also see that he is a commander who has gotten himself into a situation that is beyond his ability to understand or to control. It hardly comes as a surprise that according to the myth, and according to Aeschylus' play Agamemnon, the first thing that happens when Agamemnon returns home after the war is that his wife kills him. At the same time, in Homer's presentation of him, we can see, even if only barely, other sides of his personality.

An even more complex character, the most complex in the poem, is Achilleus. Through most of the poem, he is little more than a spoiled child, sulking in his tent, refusing to help his comrades, weeping to his mother. Then, once Patroklos has died, he turns into a phenomenal killing machine, spreading terror and destruction everywhere, making Agamemnon's brutality appear casual and insignificant. Even the river, which has become plugged up with the bodies of warriors he has killed, tries to stop him; and he goes so far as to capture twelve young Trojans whom he later slaughters at his leisure during Patroklos' funeral. Finally, after he kills

Hektor, he desecrates that hero's body and then refuses to bury it, sacrilegious behavior indeed. None of these actions make Achilleus the least bit appealing or complex as a character, but in Book IX we learn one fact that entirely transforms him. As he explains to the delegation who have come from Agamemnon to ask him to return to battle, his mother had told him long before that he has a choice to make: he can either stay at Troy, fight, die, and gain great glory or he can leave the battle, go home, and live a long life in obscurity. These alternatives, of course, are the same alternatives that every warrior in the poem faces, but they are stated most starkly in the case of Achilleus. Thus, more than any other character in the poem, Achilleus must constantly confront his own mortality and the value of the heroic code, for he knows that if he stays at Troy to win glory in the battle, he will die there. Even Hektor's feeling that Troy will be defeated is a guess, accurate though it may be, but Achilleus knows for certain that he must choose between life and death. When he sits in his tent during the battles, part of the reason is certainly that he is sulking over Agamemnon's insult, but another part is that he has not fully committed himself either to dying gloriously at Troy or to living without glory to an advanced age at home. We must remember that the Greek concept of an afterlife at this time was somewhat vague and frightening. In *The Odyssey*, when Odysseus visits the Underworld, he finds it to be a place of darkness and boredom, and the ghost of Achilleus there explains that it would be better to be the lowest kind of slave on earth than to be in the Underworld. This information makes Achilleus' choice even starker, and he only really chooses after Patroklos has died, when he almost instinctively re-enters the battle and commits himself to death at Troy, a decision he seems to regret in *The Odyssey*. That is a huge choice for a young, vigorous man to make, and it helps to explain many facets of Achilleus' behavior. Of course, we all have to face our own mortality at some time, but the dramatic nature of Achilleus' situation may help us to put our mortality in perspective and to choose the ways we must act.

As I write these words, I am aware of how much I am simplifying *The Iliad* and its characters. Such simplification is inevitable when we write about literature, just as it is when we write about people. My description of a person can never substitute for the experience of meeting the person, and my words about these characters are intended only as an introduction for readers who are about to meet the characters by reading the poem. I paused in my discussion by inserting that last paragraph because I now must approach one of the most touching and painful scenes in *The Iliad*, the meeting between Priam and Achilleus in Book XXIV. Once again I will set the scene: Achilleus, having killed Hektor in battle, has kept the body, an action that outrages even the gods, who prevent the body from decaying. Finally Priam, Hektor's father, is prompted by the gods to bring Hektor's body back for proper burial. This is a task full of risks. It requires the aged and rather helpless king to cross through the enemy lines and to approach his deadliest enemy. Fortunately Priam is accompanied by the god Hermes (also called Argeiphontes) who has taken on the guise of a Trojan youth and who uses his divine power to bring Priam through in safety, all the way to Achilleus' tent. Priam enters the tent, falls to his knees, embraces Achilleus' knees, and kisses his hands, then asks for mercy by invoking Achilleus' memory of his own aging father, Peleus.

Try to imagine this scene: there is Priam, the king of Troy, on his knees as a suppliant to the man who has killed so many of his people and of his sons, including Hektor, thereby guaranteeing that the city will be destroyed. He holds Achilleus by the knees and kisses the hands that have killed his children. The emotions here are almost unimaginable. They are certainly beyond words, as we see when the narrator tells us that Achilleus was so moved by grieving for his own father that he gently disengaged from Priam's grasp

> And the two remembered, as Priam sat huddled at the feet
>
> of Achilleus and wept close for manslaughtering Hektor
>
> and Achilleus wept now for his own father, now again for
>
> Patroklos.
>
> (XXIV.509-12)

When they have finished grieving, Achilleus takes Priam's hand and helps him to his feet.

Yes, *The Iliad* is long, very long, but it has all been leading to this scene. These two men, one young and vigorous, one old, both knowing that they face imminent death, commune silently. This image of the two noble men weeping together, mourning not only their own deaths, not only the deaths of the one's father and the other's son, but their whole understanding of human mortality, is so profound, so masterfully accomplished, that it is virtually impossible to discuss; and when Achilleus raises Priam to his feet and shows the older man the respect due to another human being, despite their sworn enmity, we suddenly understand so much. These

men, despite the differences that separate them, are united by something far more powerful, their humanness, their attempts, failures though they may be, to deal with what it means to be human and mortal. It is a magnificent scene.

Finally Achilleus addresses Priam, and he tells the older man that two urns stand at the door of Zeus, an urn of evil and an urn of good. Zeus, who distributes the evil and the good, does so in two ways. Either he gives a man a mixture of good and evil or he gives a man all evil. What a picture of human existence Achilleus paints here. According to him, we face two possibilities from these urns. Either we have all evil or, if we are fortunate, we get a mixture. No one gets all good. Priam and Achilleus have finally faced a basic truth that all the boasting, all the fighting, all the rituals of the war cannot cover up, and what Achilleus says here is also true for the good city depicted on his shield. Human beings could, if they would, increase the amount of good, but always we must accept the evil. They are part of being human.

Having understood these things, Achilleus returns Hektor's body to Priam and promises to give him a nine-days truce for the Trojans to hold their funeral rites. Then, of course, the war will continue to its inevitable conclusion. Priam takes the body and returns to Troy, and *The Iliad* concludes with the laments of three women, Andromache, Hekabe, and Helen. There is such sadness here, such a deep feeling for those imponderable aspects of life that we face every day. It is amazing to realize that we share these imponderables with the people who composed and who listened to this poem three thousand years ago.

There are just a few things left that I would like the prospective reader of *The Iliad* to consider. One is the role of the gods in the poem. As we read *The Iliad*, we may find it difficult to believe that anyone ever worshipped gods who were this frivolous, quarrelsome, and generally ungodly. Even when characters in the poem worship the gods, primarily they are trying to appease them; but as we saw in Book VI, even valuable gifts do not always win the favor of the gods. Occasionally scenes that involve the gods are humorous. Some of the quarrels between Zeus and Hera, for instance, when they seem like the archetypal married couple who cannot get along or when they scheme and plot to outwit each other, are actually funny. (My favorite is when Zeus tries to tell Hera how beautiful she is and he compares her to all the young mortal women with who he has had affairs.) Similarly, when Ares, the fierce god of war, whom no one likes, neither gods nor mortals, receives a minor wound in battle, he must be led groaning from the battlefield by Aphrodite, which is surely another comment on the real nature of war.

But the gods are not in the poem for comic relief. They have a much more serious role. Why is it funny when Ares is wounded? Of the hundreds of characters who are wounded in the poem, only Ares' injury is humorous. One reason, of course, is that he is the god of war, and we expect him to be a better fighter or, at least, to seem a bit more courageous when he is wounded. But the answer goes even deeper. We can laugh at his wound because we know that it is meaningless. Ares is immortal, and no matter how badly he may be wounded, he will quickly recover. Consequently, what is deadly serious for the mortals is nothing more than a game for the gods. No matter how deeply committed the gods may be to one side or the other, the war is only a diversion to them. While the mortals are slaughtering each other, the gods are rather like sports fans, who truly want their teams to win but to whose lives the teams' fates are not central. From the perspective of the gods, the Trojan War is sort of fun; and it also offers them an opportunity to continue ancient alliances or rivalries.

Zeus, who avoids such alliances and rivalries, knows from the beginning what the outcome will be, and while he can change the details of the war—for instance, who triumphs in a particular battle—he cannot change what is destined to happen. There is, in fact, an implicit clash in *The Iliad* between destiny and free will, especially for the gods, but Homer never fully addresses the complexities of the problem. In one scene, however, Homer does address that question and at the same time shows how the war can become a serious issue even for the gods. In Book XVI, Patroklos is fighting with Sarpedon, who is Zeus's son. Zeus, who knows that Sarpedon must lose in this encounter, tells Hera that he is thinking of snatching his son out of the battle and wafting him back to his homeland. Hera, who is usually at odds with her husband, responds that Zeus certainly has the power to do what he suggests but that he should not do so because if he does, then all of the gods will want to save their favorites from death, thereby obliterating the distinction between gods and mortals. Zeus, she says, should allow Sarpedon to die, as mortals are meant to die, and then give him a good funeral. In giving this advice, Hera is unusually sympathetic to Zeus, who agonizes over the decision and finally agrees with her, though he

> "wept tears of blood…for the sake of his beloved son" (XIV.459-60).

We can see a number of important points in this episode. First, Zeus can, that is, he has the physical power to, alter the dictates of destiny. He can save Sarpedon's life, and he desperately wants to save Sarpedon's life, which indicates that the war has become something more than a simple diversion for him. But he may not save Sarpedon, because if he does, destiny will be diverted and

the whole of the universe will be thrown off course. This moment is the most painful that any of the gods must face. (Aphrodite elsewhere can save Paris and Aineias because their death days have not arrived.) It is significant that in this crisis Hera, who has not been the most loving of wives, offers him consoling advice that he accepts. Even so, Zeus, the king of the gods, most powerful entity in the universe, weeps tears of blood, so deeply is he affected by the spectacle of human mortality when it concerns someone he loves. Suddenly the game has become serious and, because it concerns Zeus, it has taken on cosmic importance.

This sense of cosmic importance is a large part of what makes the poem an epic. Certainly there are other conventions that contribute to the poem's epic status, but it is important to remember that "epic" means more than simply "long." It refers to a work that may be long, that may be written in an elevated style, that may involve long journeys or huge battles, but primarily it means a work that concerns a pivotal moment in the history of a city, a nation, a people, or even, in the case of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, all of humanity. Consequently an epic also has cosmic significance, which means that it involves every aspect of the world, from the mundane to the divine. Other epics that may be of interest to readers of *The Iliad* are Virgil's *The Aeneid*, the lengthy works from India called the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* (in abridged versions!), *Beowulf*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

There are two more brief points that I should mention about *The Iliad*. One involves something called "epic similes." A simile, of course, is a comparison using "like" or "as." Homer frequently uses similes, but they tend to be many lines long, like the similes at the beginning of Book III, in which Homer, at relatively great length, compares the Trojan army to wild birds taking off from a lake and the dust raised by the Achaian forces to the mist on a mountain. Homer could have said simply that the Trojans came on in a wild and disorganized way, whereas the Achaians seemed unified and controlled. That description would be much more concise, and also much duller. By using his epic similes, Homer draws out the action (which was, in actuality, a lengthy process) and he makes that action much more vivid, much more appealing to our imaginations. Remember that *The Iliad* was not meant to be speed read. It must be read slowly and savored, and the epic similes are part of the savoring process.

The final point I want to make concerns the repetition of scenes. As I mentioned long ago, *The Iliad* contains many repeated passages, probably as a result of oral composition. But there are also a number of passages that are repeated with slight variations. In such cases it is important to pay attention to the variations, which are always there for *The Iliad* a reason. For example, Homer loves to describe the way the heroes put on their armor before a battle, and we find many arming scenes in the poem; but each arming scene is slightly different. Thus in the arming of Agamemnon at the beginning of Book XI, we find Agamemnon being treated with the respect due to a commander, but we also notice that on his shield is the figure of the horrible Gorgon, along with Fear and Terror. Given the image of Agamemnon that we saw earlier, that shield is absolutely appropriate, as it reveals something about its owner.

One of the funniest scenes in *The Iliad* is related to these arming scenes. Such scenes are, as we might expect, confined to the warriors, even if one of those warriors is the goddess Athena. But in Book XIV there is an arming scene that builds on the general structure of such scenes and is also quite different. Hera is planning to distract Zeus by seducing him so that, contrary to his orders, Athena can sneak into battle and aid the Achaians. This seduction is equivalent to a battle for Hera, and so, as she anoints her body with sweet olive oil and then puts on her sexiest goddess clothing, she repeats all of the conventional steps of an arming scene. There is not much in *The Iliad* that is humorous, but this scene is—if the reader is aware of what Homer is doing.

has been a rather long introduction to *The Iliad*, which is a long and difficult poem. Now, as much as I would like readers to continue reading the invaluable things I have to say, I hope they will instead put this book down and read *The Iliad*. Even after reading this introduction, you will not grasp everything in the poem on one reading. No one could. Nor would I pretend that what I have said here, which is based on my readings of the poem as well as on the works of other readers of the poem, covers every aspect of the poem. But this introduction, like the other chapters of this book, should make the poem more accessible. Start the poem and just keep reading, as I tell my classes. As you read, the poem will become increasingly clear. And remember, enjoy it.

This page titled 3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Theodore L. Steinberg (OpenSUNY) .

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Iliad is an ancient Greek epic poem in dactylic hexameter, traditionally attributed to Homer. Set during the Trojan War, the ten-year siege of the city of Troy by a coalition of Greek states, it tells of the battles and events during the weeks of a quarrel between King Agamemnon and the warrior Achilles.

3.12.1: Books

3.12.1.1: Book I
3.12.1.2: Book II
3.12.1.3: Book III
3.12.1.4: Book IV
3.12.1.5: Book V
3.12.1.6: Book VI
3.12.1.7: Book VII
3.12.1.8: Book VIII
3.12.1.9: Book IX
3.12.1.10: Book X
3.12.1.11: Book XI
3.12.1.12: Book XII
3.12.1.13: Book XIII
3.12.1.14: Book XIV
3.12.1.15: Book XV
3.12.1.16: Book XVI
3.12.1.17: Book XVII
3.12.1.18: Book XVIII
3.12.1.19: Book XIX
3.12.1.20: Book XX
3.12.1.21: Book XXI
3.12.1.22: Book XXII
3.12.1.23: Book XXIII
3.12.1.24: Book XXIV

Thumbnail: The Fight for the body of Patroclus, 1892 (Public Domain; A. J. Church- *via Wikipedia)*

This page titled 3.12: Book- The Illiad (Homer) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

SECTION OVERVIEW

3.12.1: Books

3.12.1.1: Book I

3.12.1.2: Book II

3.12.1.3: Book III

3.12.1.4: Book IV

3.12.1.5: Book V

3.12.1.6: Book VI

3.12.1.7: Book VII

3.12.1.8: Book VIII

3.12.1.9: Book IX

3.12.1.10: Book X

3.12.1.11: Book XI

3.12.1.12: Book XII

3.12.1.13: Book XIII

3.12.1.14: Book XIV

3.12.1.15: Book XV

3.12.1.16: Book XVI

3.12.1.17: Book XVII

3.12.1.18: Book XVIII

3.12.1.19: Book XIX

3.12.1.20: Book XX

3.12.1.21: Book XXI

3.12.1.22: Book XXII

3.12.1.23: Book XXIII

3.12.1.24: Book XXIV

This page titled 3.12.1: Books is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.1: Book I

The quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles—Achilles withdraws from the war, and sends his mother Thetis to ask Jove to help the Trojans—Scene between Jove and Juno on Olympus.

Sing, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus, that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans. Many a brave soul did it send hurrying down to Hades, and many a hero did it yield a prey to dogs and vultures, for so were the counsels of Jove fulfilled from the day on which the son of Atreus, king of men, and great Achilles, first fell out with one another.

And which of the gods was it that set them on to quarrel? It was the son of Jove and Leto; for he was angry with the king and sent a pestilence upon the host to plague the people, because the son of Atreus had dishonoured Chryses his priest. Now Chryses had come to the ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and had brought with him a great ransom: moreover he bore in his hand the sceptre of Apollo wreathed with a suppliant's wreath, and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, who were their chiefs.

"Sons of Atreus," he cried, "and all other Achaeans, may the gods who dwell in Olympus grant you to sack the city of Priam, and to reach your homes in safety; but free my daughter, and accept a ransom for her, in reverence to Apollo, son of Jove."

On this the rest of the Achaeans with one voice were for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but not so Agamemnon, who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away. "Old man," said he, "let me not find you tarrying about our ships, nor yet coming hereafter. Your sceptre of the god and your wreath shall profit you nothing. I will not free her. She shall grow old in my house at Argos far from her own home, busying herself with her loom and visiting my couch; so go, and do not provoke me or it shall be the worse for you."

The old man feared him and obeyed. Not a word he spoke, but went by the shore of the sounding sea and prayed apart to King Apollo whom lovely Leto had borne. "Hear me," he cried, "O god of the silver bow, that protectest Chryse and holy Cilla and rulest Tenedos with thy might, hear me oh thou of Sminthe. If I have ever decked your temple with garlands, or burned your thigh-bones in fat of bulls or goats, grant my prayer, and let your arrows avenge these my tears upon the Danaans."

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. He came down furious from the summits of Olympus, with his bow and his quiver upon his shoulder, and the arrows rattled on his back with the rage that trembled within him. He sat himself down away from the ships with a face as dark as night, and his silver bow rang death as he shot his arrow in the midst of them. First he smote their mules and their hounds, but presently he aimed his shafts at the people themselves, and all day long the pyres of the dead were burning.

For nine whole days he shot his arrows among the people, but upon the tenth day Achilles called them in assembly—moved thereto by Juno, who saw the Achaeans in their death-throes and had compassion upon them. Then, when they were got together, he rose and spoke among them.

"Son of Atreus," said he, "I deem that we should now turn roving home if we would escape destruction, for we are being cut down by war and pestilence at once. Let us ask some priest or prophet, or some reader of dreams (for dreams, too, are of Jove) who can tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so angry, and say whether it is for some vow that we have broken, or hecatomb that we have not offered, and whether he will accept the savour of lambs and goats without blemish, so as to take away the plague from us."

With these words he sat down, and Calchas son of Thestor, wisest of augurs, who knew things past present and to come, rose to speak. He it was who had guided the Achaeans with their fleet to Ilius, through the prophesyings with which Phoebus Apollo had inspired him. With all sincerity and goodwill he addressed them thus:—

"Achilles, loved of heaven, you bid me tell you about the anger of King Apollo, I will therefore do so; but consider first and swear that you will stand by me heartily in word and deed, for I know that I shall offend one who rules the Argives with might, to whom all the Achaeans are in subjection. A plain man cannot stand against the anger of a king, who if he swallow his displeasure now, will yet nurse revenge till he has wreaked it. Consider, therefore, whether or no you will protect me."

And Achilles answered, "Fear not, but speak as it is borne in upon you from heaven, for by Apollo, Calchas, to whom you pray, and whose oracles you reveal to us, not a Danaan at our ships shall lay his hand upon you, while I yet live to look upon the face of the earth—no, not though you name Agamemnon himself, who is by far the foremost of the Achaeans."

Thereon the seer spoke boldly. “The god,” he said, “is angry neither about vow nor hecatomb, but for his priest’s sake, whom Agamemnon has dishonoured, in that he would not free his daughter nor take a ransom for her; therefore has he sent these evils upon us, and will yet send others. He will not deliver the Danaans from this pestilence till Agamemnon has restored the girl without fee or ransom to her father, and has sent a holy hecatomb to Chryse. Thus we may perhaps appease him.”

With these words he sat down, and Agamemnon rose in anger. His heart was black with rage, and his eyes flashed fire as he scowled on Calchas and said, “Seer of evil, you never yet prophesied smooth things concerning me, but have ever loved to foretell that which was evil. You have brought me neither comfort nor performance; and now you come seeing among Danaans, and saying that Apollo has plagued us because I would not take a ransom for this girl, the daughter of Chryses. I have set my heart on keeping her in my own house, for I love her better even than my own wife Clytemnestra, whose peer she is alike in form and feature, in understanding and accomplishments. Still I will give her up if I must, for I would have the people live, not die; but you must find me a prize instead, or I alone among the Argives shall be without one. This is not well; for you behold, all of you, that my prize is to go elsewhither.”

And Achilles answered, “Most noble son of Atreus, covetous beyond all mankind, how shall the Achaeans find you another prize? We have no common store from which to take one. Those we took from the cities have been awarded; we cannot disallow the awards that have been made already. Give this girl, therefore, to the god, and if ever Jove grants us to sack the city of Troy we will requite you three and fourfold.”

Then Agamemnon said, “Achilles, valiant though you be, you shall not thus outwit me. You shall not overreach and you shall not persuade me. Are you to keep your own prize, while I sit tamely under my loss and give up the girl at your bidding? Let the Achaeans find me a prize in fair exchange to my liking, or I will come and take your own, or that of Ajax or of Ulysses; and he to whomsoever I may come shall rue my coming. But of this we will take thought hereafter; for the present, let us draw a ship into the sea, and find a crew for her expressly; let us put a hecatomb on board, and let us send Chryseis also; further, let some chief man among us be in command, either Ajax, or Idomeneus, or yourself, son of Peleus, mighty warrior that you are, that we may offer sacrifice and appease the anger of the god.”

Achilles scowled at him and answered, “You are steeped in insolence and lust of gain. With what heart can any of the Achaeans do your bidding, either on foray or in open fighting? I came not warring here for any ill the Trojans had done me. I have no quarrel with them. They have not raided my cattle nor my horses, nor cut down my harvests on the rich plains of Phthia; for between me and them there is a great space, both mountain and sounding sea. We have followed you, Sir Insolence! for your pleasure, not ours —to gain satisfaction from the Trojans for your shameless self and for Menelaus. You forget this, and threaten to rob me of the prize for which I have toiled, and which the sons of the Achaeans have given me. Never when the Achaeans sack any rich city of the Trojans do I receive so good a prize as you do, though it is my hands that do the better part of the fighting. When the sharing comes, your share is far the largest, and I, forsooth, must go back to my ships, take what I can get and be thankful, when my labour of fighting is done. Now, therefore, I shall go back to Phthia; it will be much better for me to return home with my ships, for I will not stay here dishonoured to gather gold and substance for you.”

And Agamemnon answered, “Fly if you will, I shall make you no prayers to stay you. I have others here who will do me honour, and above all Jove, the lord of counsel. There is no king here so hateful to me as you are, for you are ever quarrelsome and ill-affected. What though you be brave? Was it not heaven that made you so? Go home, then, with your ships and comrades to lord it over the Myrmidons. I care neither for you nor for your anger; and thus will I do: since Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryseis from me, I shall send her with my ship and my followers, but I shall come to your tent and take your own prize Briseis, that you may learn how much stronger I am than you are, and that another may fear to set himself up as equal or comparable with me.”

The son of Peleus was furious, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided whether to draw his sword, push the others aside, and kill the son of Atreus, or to restrain himself and check his anger. While he was thus in two minds, and was drawing his mighty sword from its scabbard, Minerva came down from heaven (for Juno had sent her in the love she bore to them both), and seized the son of Peleus by his yellow hair, visible to him alone, for of the others no man could see her. Achilles turned in amaze, and by the fire that flashed from her eyes at once knew that she was Minerva. “Why are you here,” said he, “daughter of aegis-bearing Jove? To see the pride of Agamemnon, son of Atreus? Let me tell you—and it shall surely be—he shall pay for this insolence with his life.”

And Minerva said, “I come from heaven, if you will hear me, to bid you stay your anger. Juno has sent me, who cares for both of you alike. Cease, then, this brawling, and do not draw your sword; rail at him if you will, and your railing will not be vain, for I tell you—and it shall surely be—that you shall hereafter receive gifts three times as splendid by reason of this present insult. Hold, therefore, and obey.”

“Goddess,” answered Achilles, “however angry a man may be, he must do as you two command him. This will be best, for the gods ever hear the prayers of him who has obeyed them.”

He stayed his hand on the silver hilt of his sword, and thrust it back into the scabbard as Minerva bade him. Then she went back to Olympus among the other gods, and to the house of aegis-bearing Jove.

But the son of Peleus again began railing at the son of Atreus, for he was still in a rage. “Wine-bibber,” he cried, “with the face of a dog and the heart of a hind, you never dare to go out with the host in fight, nor yet with our chosen men in ambuscade. You shun this as you do death itself. You had rather go round and rob his prizes from any man who contradicts you. You devour your people, for you are king over a feeble folk; otherwise, son of Atreus, henceforward you would insult no man. Therefore I say, and swear it with a great oath—nay, by this my sceptre which shalt sprout neither leaf nor shoot, nor bud anew from the day on which it left its parent stem upon the mountains—for the axe stripped it of leaf and bark, and now the sons of the Achaeans bear it as judges and guardians of the decrees of heaven—so surely and solemnly do I swear that hereafter they shall look fondly for Achilles and shall not find him. In the day of your distress, when your men fall dying by the murderous hand of Hector, you shall not know how to help them, and shall rend your heart with rage for the hour when you offered insult to the bravest of the Achaeans.”

With this the son of Peleus dashed his gold-bestudded sceptre on the ground and took his seat, while the son of Atreus was beginning fiercely from his place upon the other side. Then uprose smooth-tongued Nestor, the facile speaker of the Pylians, and the words fell from his lips sweeter than honey. Two generations of men born and bred in Pylos had passed away under his rule, and he was now reigning over the third. With all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:—

“Of a truth,” he said, “a great sorrow has befallen the Achaean land. Surely Priam with his sons would rejoice, and the Trojans be glad at heart if they could hear this quarrel between you two, who are so excellent in fight and counsel. I am older than either of you; therefore be guided by me. Moreover I have been the familiar friend of men even greater than you are, and they did not disregard my counsels. Never again can I behold such men as Pirithous and Dryas shepherd of his people, or as Caeneus, Exadius, godlike Polyphemus, and Theseus son of Aegeus, peer of the immortals. These were the mightiest men ever born upon this earth: mightiest were they, and when they fought the fiercest tribes of mountain savages they utterly overthrew them. I came from distant Pylos, and went about among them, for they would have me come, and I fought as it was in me to do. Not a man now living could withstand them, but they heard my words, and were persuaded by them. So be it also with yourselves, for this is the more excellent way. Therefore, Agamemnon, though you be strong, take not this girl away, for the sons of the Achaeans have already given her to Achilles; and you, Achilles, strive not further with the king, for no man who by the grace of Jove wields a sceptre has like honour with Agamemnon. You are strong, and have a goddess for your mother; but Agamemnon is stronger than you, for he has more people under him. Son of Atreus, check your anger, I implore you; end this quarrel with Achilles, who in the day of battle is a tower of strength to the Achaeans.”

And Agamemnon answered, “Sir, all that you have said is true, but this fellow must needs become our lord and master: he must be lord of all, king of all, and captain of all, and this shall hardly be. Granted that the gods have made him a great warrior, have they also given him the right to speak with railing?”

Achilles interrupted him. “I should be a mean coward,” he cried, “were I to give in to you in all things. Order other people about, not me, for I shall obey no longer. Furthermore I say—and lay my saying to your heart—I shall fight neither you nor any man about this girl, for those that take were those also that gave. But of all else that is at my ship you shall carry away nothing by force. Try, that others may see; if you do, my spear shall be reddened with your blood.”

When they had quarrelled thus angrily, they rose, and broke up the assembly at the ships of the Achaeans. The son of Peleus went back to his tents and ships with the son of Menoetius and his company, while Agamemnon drew a vessel into the water and chose a crew of twenty oarsmen. He escorted Chryseis on board and sent moreover a hecatomb for the god. And Ulysses went as captain.

These, then, went on board and sailed their ways over the sea. But the son of Atreus bade the people purify themselves; so they purified themselves and cast their filth into the sea. Then they offered hecatombs of bulls and goats without blemish on the sea-

shore, and the smoke with the savour of their sacrifice rose curling up towards heaven.

Thus did they busy themselves throughout the host. But Agamemnon did not forget the threat that he had made Achilles, and called his trusty messengers and squires Talthybius and Eurybates. “Go,” said he, “to the tent of Achilles, son of Peleus; take Briseis by the hand and bring her hither; if he will not give her I shall come with others and take her—which will press him harder.”

He charged them straightly further and dismissed them, whereon they went their way sorrowfully by the seaside, till they came to the tents and ships of the Myrmidons. They found Achilles sitting by his tent and his ships, and ill-pleased he was when he beheld them. They stood fearfully and reverently before him, and never a word did they speak, but he knew them and said, “Welcome, heralds, messengers of gods and men; draw near; my quarrel is not with you but with Agamemnon who has sent you for the girl Briseis. Therefore, Patroclus, bring her and give her to them, but let them be witnesses by the blessed gods, by mortal men, and by the fierceness of Agamemnon’s anger, that if ever again there be need of me to save the people from ruin, they shall seek and they shall not find. Agamemnon is mad with rage and knows not how to look before and after that the Achaeans may fight by their ships in safety.”

Patroclus did as his dear comrade had bidden him. He brought Briseis from the tent and gave her over to the heralds, who took her with them to the ships of the Achaeans—and the woman was loth to go. Then Achilles went all alone by the side of the hoar sea, weeping and looking out upon the boundless waste of waters. He raised his hands in prayer to his immortal mother, “Mother,” he cried, “you bore me doomed to live but for a little season; surely Jove, who thunders from Olympus, might have made that little glorious. It is not so. Agamemnon, son of Atreus, has done me dishonour, and has robbed me of my prize by force.”

As he spoke he wept aloud, and his mother heard him where she was sitting in the depths of the sea hard by the old man her father. Forthwith she rose as it were a grey mist out of the waves, sat down before him as he stood weeping, caressed him with her hand, and said, “My son, why are you weeping? What is it that grieves you? Keep it not from me, but tell me, that we may know it together.”

Achilles drew a deep sigh and said, “You know it; why tell you what you know well already? We went to Thebe the strong city of Eetion, sacked it, and brought hither the spoil. The sons of the Achaeans shared it duly among themselves, and chose lovely Chryseis as the meed of Agamemnon; but Chryses, priest of Apollo, came to the ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and brought with him a great ransom: moreover he bore in his hand the sceptre of Apollo, wreathed with a suppliant’s wreath, and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus who were their chiefs.

“On this the rest of the Achaeans with one voice were for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but not so Agamemnon, who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away. So he went back in anger, and Apollo, who loved him dearly, heard his prayer. Then the god sent a deadly dart upon the Argives, and the people died thick on one another, for the arrows went everywhither among the wide host of the Achaeans. At last a seer in the fulness of his knowledge declared to us the oracles of Apollo, and I was myself first to say that we should appease him. Whereon the son of Atreus rose in anger, and threatened that which he has since done. The Achaeans are now taking the girl in a ship to Chryse, and sending gifts of sacrifice to the god; but the heralds have just taken from my tent the daughter of Briseus, whom the Achaeans had awarded to myself.

“Help your brave son, therefore, if you are able. Go to Olympus, and if you have ever done him service in word or deed, implore the aid of Jove. Ofttimes in my father’s house have I heard you glory in that you alone of the immortals saved the son of Saturn from ruin, when the others, with Juno, Neptune, and Pallas Minerva would have put him in bonds. It was you, goddess, who delivered him by calling to Olympus the hundred-handed monster whom gods call Briareus, but men Aegaeon, for he is stronger even than his father; when therefore he took his seat all-glorious beside the son of Saturn, the other gods were afraid, and did not bind him. Go, then, to him, remind him of all this, clasp his knees, and bid him give succour to the Trojans. Let the Achaeans be hemmed in at the sterns of their ships, and perish on the sea-shore, that they may reap what joy they may of their king, and that Agamemnon may rue his blindness in offering insult to the foremost of the Achaeans.”

Thetis wept and answered, “My son, woe is me that I should have borne or suckled you. Would indeed that you had lived your span free from all sorrow at your ships, for it is all too brief; alas, that you should be at once short of life and long of sorrow above your peers: woe, therefore, was the hour in which I bore you; nevertheless I will go to the snowy heights of Olympus, and tell this tale to Jove, if he will hear our prayer: meanwhile stay where you are with your ships, nurse your anger against the Achaeans, and hold aloof from fight. For Jove went yesterday to Oceanus, to a feast among the Ethiopians, and the other gods went with him. He will

return to Olympus twelve days hence; I will then go to his mansion paved with bronze and will beseech him; nor do I doubt that I shall be able to persuade him."

On this she left him, still furious at the loss of her that had been taken from him. Meanwhile Ulysses reached Chryse with the hecatomb. When they had come inside the harbour they furled the sails and laid them in the ship's hold; they slackened the forestays, lowered the mast into its place, and rowed the ship to the place where they would have her lie; there they cast out their mooring-stones and made fast the hawsers. They then got out upon the sea-shore and landed the hecatomb for Apollo; Chryseis also left the ship, and Ulysses led her to the altar to deliver her into the hands of her father. "Chryses," said he, "King Agamemnon has sent me to bring you back your child, and to offer sacrifice to Apollo on behalf of the Danaans, that we may propitiate the god, who has now brought sorrow upon the Argives."

So saying he gave the girl over to her father, who received her gladly, and they ranged the holy hecatomb all orderly round the altar of the god. They washed their hands and took up the barley-meal to sprinkle over the victims, while Chryses lifted up his hands and prayed aloud on their behalf. "Hear me," he cried, "O god of the silver bow, that protectest Chryse and holy Cilla, and rulest Tenedos with thy might. Even as thou didst hear me aforetime when I prayed, and didst press hardly upon the Achaeans, so hear me yet again, and stay this fearful pestilence from the Danaans."

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley-meal, they drew back the heads of the victims and killed and flayed them. They cut out the thigh-bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, set some pieces of raw meat on the top of them, and then Chryses laid them on the wood fire and poured wine over them, while the young men stood near him with five-pronged spits in their hands. When the thigh-bones were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small, put the pieces upon the spits, roasted them till they were done, and drew them off: then, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share, so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, pages filled the mixing-bowl with wine and water and handed it round, after giving every man his drink-offering.

Thus all day long the young men worshipped the god with song, hymning him and chaunting the joyous paean, and the god took pleasure in their voices; but when the sun went down, and it came on dark, they laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship, and when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared they again set sail for the host of the Achaeans. Apollo sent them a fair wind, so they raised their mast and hoisted their white sails aloft. As the sail bellied with the wind the ship flew through the deep blue water, and the foam hissed against her bows as she sped onward. When they reached the wide-stretching host of the Achaeans, they drew the vessel ashore, high and dry upon the sands, set her strong props beneath her, and went their ways to their own tents and ships.

But Achilles abode at his ships and nursed his anger. He went not to the honourable assembly, and sallied not forth to fight, but gnawed at his own heart, pining for battle and the war-cry.

Now after twelve days the immortal gods came back in a body to Olympus, and Jove led the way. Thetis was not unmindful of the charge her son had laid upon her, so she rose from under the sea and went through great heaven with early morning to Olympus, where she found the mighty son of Saturn sitting all alone upon its topmost ridges. She sat herself down before him, and with her left hand seized his knees, while with her right she caught him under the chin, and besought him, saying:—

"Father Jove, if I ever did you service in word or deed among the immortals, hear my prayer, and do honour to my son, whose life is to be cut short so early. King Agamemnon has dishonoured him by taking his prize and keeping her. Honour him then yourself, Olympian lord of counsel, and grant victory to the Trojans, till the Achaeans give my son his due and load him with riches in requital."

Jove sat for a while silent, and without a word, but Thetis still kept firm hold of his knees, and besought him a second time. "Incline your head," said she, "and promise me surely, or else deny me—for you have nothing to fear—that I may learn how greatly you disdain me."

At this Jove was much troubled and answered, "I shall have trouble if you set me quarrelling with Juno, for she will provoke me with her taunting speeches; even now she is always railing at me before the other gods and accusing me of giving aid to the Trojans. Go back now, lest she should find out. I will consider the matter, and will bring it about as you wish. See, I incline my

head that you may believe me. This is the most solemn promise that I can give to any god. I never recall my word, or deceive, or fail to do what I say, when I have nodded my head."

As he spoke the son of Saturn bowed his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks swayed on his immortal head, till vast Olympus reeled.

When the pair had thus laid their plans, they parted—Jove to his house, while the goddess quitted the splendour of Olympus, and plunged into the depths of the sea. The gods rose from their seats, before the coming of their sire. Not one of them dared to remain sitting, but all stood up as he came among them. There, then, he took his seat. But Juno, when she saw him, knew that he and the old merman's daughter, silver-footed Thetis, had been hatching mischief, so she at once began to upbraid him. "Trickster," she cried, "which of the gods have you been taking into your counsels now? You are always settling matters in secret behind my back, and have never yet told me, if you could help it, one word of your intentions."

"Juno," replied the sire of gods and men, "you must not expect to be informed of all my counsels. You are my wife, but you would find it hard to understand them. When it is proper for you to hear, there is no one, god or man, who will be told sooner, but when I mean to keep a matter to myself, you must not pry nor ask questions."

"Dread son of Saturn," answered Juno, "what are you talking about? I? Pry and ask questions? Never. I let you have your own way in everything. Still, I have a strong misgiving that the old merman's daughter Thetis has been talking you over, for she was with you and had hold of your knees this self-same morning. I believe, therefore, that you have been promising her to give glory to Achilles, and to kill much people at the ships of the Achaeans."

"Wife," said Jove, "I can do nothing but you suspect me and find it out. You will take nothing by it, for I shall only dislike you the more, and it will go harder with you. Granted that it is as you say; I mean to have it so; sit down and hold your tongue as I bid you for if I once begin to lay my hands about you, though all heaven were on your side it would profit you nothing."

On this Juno was frightened, so she curbed her stubborn will and sat down in silence. But the heavenly beings were disquieted throughout the house of Jove, till the cunning workman Vulcan began to try and pacify his mother Juno. "It will be intolerable," said he, "if you two fall to wrangling and setting heaven in an uproar about a pack of mortals. If such ill counsels are to prevail, we shall have no pleasure at our banquet. Let me then advise my mother—and she must herself know that it will be better—to make friends with my dear father Jove, lest he again scold her and disturb our feast. If the Olympian Thunderer wants to hurl us all from our seats, he can do so, for he is far the strongest, so give him fair words, and he will then soon be in a good humour with us."

As he spoke, he took a double cup of nectar, and placed it in his mother's hand. "Cheer up, my dear mother," said he, "and make the best of it. I love you dearly, and should be very sorry to see you get a thrashing; however grieved I might be, I could not help, for there is no standing against Jove. Once before when I was trying to help you, he caught me by the foot and flung me from the heavenly threshold. All day long from morn till eve, was I falling, till at sunset I came to ground in the island of Lemnos, and there I lay, with very little life left in me, till the Sintians came and tended me."

Juno smiled at this, and as she smiled she took the cup from her son's hands. Then Vulcan drew sweet nectar from the mixing-bowl, and served it round among the gods, going from left to right; and the blessed gods laughed out a loud applause as they saw him bustling about the heavenly mansion.

Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun they feasted, and every one had his full share, so that all were satisfied. Apollo struck his lyre, and the Muses lifted up their sweet voices, calling and answering one another. But when the sun's glorious light had faded, they went home to bed, each in his own abode, which lame Vulcan with his consummate skill had fashioned for them. So Jove, the Olympian Lord of Thunder, hied him to the bed in which he always slept; and when he had got on to it he went to sleep, with Juno of the golden throne by his side.

This page titled 3.12.1.1: Book I is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.2: Book II

Jove sends a lying dream to Agamemnon, who thereon calls the chiefs in assembly, and proposes to sound the mind of his army—In the end they march to fight—Catalogue of the Achaean and Trojan forces.

Now the other gods and the armed warriors on the plain slept soundly, but Jove was wakeful, for he was thinking how to do honour to Achilles, and destroyed much people at the ships of the Achaeans. In the end he deemed it would be best to send a lying dream to King Agamemnon; so he called one to him and said to it, “Lying Dream, go to the ships of the Achaeans, into the tent of Agamemnon, and say to him word for word as I now bid you. Tell him to get the Achaeans instantly under arms, for he shall take Troy. There are no longer divided counsels among the gods; Juno has brought them to her own mind, and woe betides the Trojans.”

The dream went when it had heard its message, and soon reached the ships of the Achaeans. It sought Agamemnon son of Atreus and found him in his tent, wrapped in a profound slumber. It hovered over his head in the likeness of Nestor, son of Neleus, whom Agamemnon honoured above all his councillors, and said:—

“You are sleeping, son of Atreus; one who has the welfare of his host and so much other care upon his shoulders should dock his sleep. Hear me at once, for I come as a messenger from Jove, who, though he be not near, yet takes thought for you and pities you. He bids you get the Achaeans instantly under arms, for you shall take Troy. There are no longer divided counsels among the gods; Juno has brought them over to her own mind, and woe betides the Trojans at the hands of Jove. Remember this, and when you wake see that it does not escape you.”

The dream then left him, and he thought of things that were, surely not to be accomplished. He thought that on that same day he was to take the city of Priam, but he little knew what was in the mind of Jove, who had many another hard-fought fight in store alike for Danaans and Trojans. Then presently he woke, with the divine message still ringing in his ears; so he sat upright, and put on his soft shirt so fair and new, and over this his heavy cloak. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, and slung his silver-studded sword about his shoulders; then he took the imperishable staff of his father, and sallied forth to the ships of the Achaeans.

The goddess Dawn now wended her way to vast Olympus that she might herald day to Jove and to the other immortals, and Agamemnon sent the criers round to call the people in assembly; so they called them and the people gathered thereon. But first he summoned a meeting of the elders at the ship of Nestor king of Pylos, and when they were assembled he laid a cunning counsel before them.

“My friends,” said he, “I have had a dream from heaven in the dead of night, and its face and figure resembled none but Nestor’s. It hovered over my head and said, ‘You are sleeping, son of Atreus; one who has the welfare of his host and so much other care upon his shoulders should dock his sleep. Hear me at once, for I am a messenger from Jove, who, though he be not near, yet takes thought for you and pities you. He bids you get the Achaeans instantly under arms, for you shall take Troy. There are no longer divided counsels among the gods; Juno has brought them over to her own mind, and woe betides the Trojans at the hands of Jove. Remember this.’ The dream then vanished and I awoke. Let us now, therefore, arm the sons of the Achaeans. But it will be well that I should first sound them, and to this end I will tell them to fly with their ships; but do you others go about among the host and prevent their doing so.”

He then sat down, and Nestor the prince of Pylos with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus: “My friends,” said he, “princes and councillors of the Argives, if any other man of the Achaeans had told us of this dream we should have declared it false, and would have had nothing to do with it. But he who has seen it is the foremost man among us; we must therefore set about getting the people under arms.”

With this he led the way from the assembly, and the other sceptred kings rose with him in obedience to the word of Agamemnon; but the people pressed forward to hear. They swarmed like bees that sally from some hollow cave and flit in countless throng among the spring flowers, bunched in knots and clusters; even so did the mighty multitude pour from ships and tents to the assembly, and range themselves upon the wide-watered shore, while among them ran Wildfire Rumour, messenger of Jove, urging them ever to the fore. Thus they gathered in a pell-mell of mad confusion, and the earth groaned under the tramp of men as the people sought their places. Nine heralds went crying about among them to stay their tumult and bid them listen to the kings, till at last they were got into their several places and ceased their clamour. Then King Agamemnon rose, holding his sceptre. This was the work of Vulcan, who gave it to Jove the son of Saturn. Jove gave it to Mercury, slayer of Argus, guide and guardian. King Mercury gave it to Pelops, the mighty charioteer, and Pelops to Atreus, shepherd of his people. Atreus, when he died, left it to Thyestes, rich

in flocks, and Thyestes in his turn left it to be borne by Agamemnon, that he might be lord of all Argos and of the isles. Leaning, then, on his sceptre, he addressed the Argives.

“My friends,” he said, “heroes, servants of Mars, the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me. Cruel Jove gave me his solemn promise that I should sack the city of Priam before returning, but he has played me false, and is now bidding me go ingloriously back to Argos with the loss of much people. Such is the will of Jove, who has laid many a proud city in the dust, as he will yet lay others, for his power is above all. It will be a sorry tale hereafter that an Achaean host, at once so great and valiant, battled in vain against men fewer in number than themselves; but as yet the end is not in sight. Think that the Achaeans and Trojans have sworn to a solemn covenant, and that they have each been numbered—the Trojans by the roll of their householders, and we by companies of ten; think further that each of our companies desired to have a Trojan householder to pour out their wine; we are so greatly more in number that full many a company would have to go without its cup-bearer. But they have in the town allies from other places, and it is these that hinder me from being able to sack the rich city of Ilius. Nine of Jove’s years are gone; the timbers of our ships have rotted; their tackling is sound no longer. Our wives and little ones at home look anxiously for our coming, but the work that we came hither to do has not been done. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say: let us sail back to our own land, for we shall not take Troy.”

With these words he moved the hearts of the multitude, so many of them as knew not the cunning counsel of Agamemnon. They surged to and fro like the waves of the Icarian Sea, when the east and south winds break from heaven’s clouds to lash them; or as when the west wind sweeps over a field of corn and the ears bow beneath the blast, even so were they swayed as they flew with loud cries towards the ships, and the dust from under their feet rose heavenward. They cheered each other on to draw the ships into the sea; they cleared the channels in front of them; they began taking away the stays from underneath them, and the welkin rang with their glad cries, so eager were they to return.

Then surely the Argives would have returned after a fashion that was not fated. But Juno said to Minerva, “Alas, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, shall the Argives fly home to their own land over the broad sea, and leave Priam and the Trojans the glory of still keeping Helen, for whose sake so many of the Achaeans have died at Troy, far from their homes? Go about at once among the host, and speak fairly to them, man by man, that they draw not their ships into the sea.”

Minerva was not slack to do her bidding. Down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, and in a moment she was at the ships of the Achaeans. There she found Ulysses, peer of Jove in counsel, standing alone. He had not as yet laid a hand upon his ship, for he was grieved and sorry; so she went close up to him and said, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, are you going to fling yourselves into your ships and be off home to your own land in this way? Will you leave Priam and the Trojans the glory of still keeping Helen, for whose sake so many of the Achaeans have died at Troy, far from their homes? Go about at once among the host, and speak fairly to them, man by man, that they draw not their ships into the sea.”

Ulysses knew the voice as that of the goddess: he flung his cloak from him and set off to run. His servant Eurybates, a man of Ithaca, who waited on him, took charge of the cloak, whereon Ulysses went straight up to Agamemnon and received from him his ancestral, imperishable staff. With this he went about among the ships of the Achaeans.

Whenever he met a king or chieftain, he stood by him and spoke him fairly. “Sir,” said he, “this flight is cowardly and unworthy. Stand to your post, and bid your people also keep their places. You do not yet know the full mind of Agamemnon; he was sounding us, and ere long will visit the Achaeans with his displeasure. We were not all of us at the council to hear what he then said; see to it lest he be angry and do us a mischief; for the pride of kings is great, and the hand of Jove is with them.”

But when he came across any common man who was making a noise, he struck him with his staff and rebuked him, saying, “Sirrah, hold your peace, and listen to better men than yourself. You are a coward and no soldier; you are nobody either in fight or council; we cannot all be kings; it is not well that there should be many masters; one man must be supreme—one king to whom the son of scheming Saturn has given the sceptre of sovereignty over you all.”

Thus masterfully did he go about among the host, and the people hurried back to the council from their tents and ships with a sound as the thunder of surf when it comes crashing down upon the shore, and all the sea is in an uproar.

The rest now took their seats and kept to their own several places, but Thersites still went on wagging his unbridled tongue—a man of many words, and those unseemly; a monger of sedition, a railer against all who were in authority, who cared not what he said, so that he might set the Achaeans in a laugh. He was the ugliest man of all those that came before Troy—bandy-legged, lame of one

foot, with his two shoulders rounded and hunched over his chest. His head ran up to a point, but there was little hair on the top of it. Achilles and Ulysses hated him worst of all, for it was with them that he was most wont to wrangle; now, however, with a shrill squeaky voice he began heaping his abuse on Agamemnon. The Achaeans were angry and disgusted, yet none the less he kept on brawling and bawling at the son of Atreus.

“Agamemnon,” he cried, “what ails you now, and what more do you want? Your tents are filled with bronze and with fair women, for whenever we take a town we give you the pick of them. Would you have yet more gold, which some Trojan is to give you as a ransom for his son, when I or another Achaean has taken him prisoner? or is it some young girl to hide and lie with? It is not well that you, the ruler of the Achaeans, should bring them into such misery. Weakling cowards, women rather than men, let us sail home, and leave this fellow here at Troy to stew in his own meeds of honour, and discover whether we were of any service to him or no. Achilles is a much better man than he is, and see how he has treated him—robbing him of his prize and keeping it himself. Achilles takes it meekly and shows no fight; if he did, son of Atreus, you would never again insult him.”

Thus railed Thersites, but Ulysses at once went up to him and rebuked him sternly. “Check your glib tongue, Thersites,” said be, “and babble not a word further. Chide not with princes when you have none to back you. There is no viler creature come before Troy with the sons of Atreus. Drop this chatter about kings, and neither revile them nor keep harping about going home. We do not yet know how things are going to be, nor whether the Achaeans are to return with good success or evil. How dare you gibe at Agamemnon because the Danaans have awarded him so many prizes? I tell you, therefore—and it shall surely be—that if I again catch you talking such nonsense, I will either forfeit my own head and be no more called father of Telemachus, or I will take you, strip you stark naked, and whip you out of the assembly till you go blubbering back to the ships.”

On this he beat him with his staff about the back and shoulders till he dropped and fell a-weeping. The golden sceptre raised a bloody weal on his back, so he sat down frightened and in pain, looking foolish as he wiped the tears from his eyes. The people were sorry for him, yet they laughed heartily, and one would turn to his neighbour saying, “Ulysses has done many a good thing ere now in fight and council, but he never did the Argives a better turn than when he stopped this fellow’s mouth from prating further. He will give the kings no more of his insolence.”

Thus said the people. Then Ulysses rose, sceptre in hand, and Minerva in the likeness of a herald bade the people be still, that those who were far off might hear him and consider his council. He therefore with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus:—

“King Agamemnon, the Achaeans are for making you a by-word among all mankind. They forget the promise they made you when they set out from Argos, that you should not return till you had sacked the town of Troy, and, like children or widowed women, they murmur and would set off homeward. True it is that they have had toil enough to be disheartened. A man chafes at having to stay away from his wife even for a single month, when he is on shipboard, at the mercy of wind and sea, but it is now nine long years that we have been kept here; I cannot, therefore, blame the Achaeans if they turn restive; still we shall be shamed if we go home empty after so long a stay—therefore, my friends, be patient yet a little longer that we may learn whether the prophesyings of Calchas were false or true.

“All who have not since perished must remember as though it were yesterday or the day before, how the ships of the Achaeans were detained in Aulis when we were on our way hither to make war on Priam and the Trojans. We were ranged round about a fountain offering hecatombs to the gods upon their holy altars, and there was a fine plane-tree from beneath which there welled a stream of pure water. Then we saw a prodigy; for Jove sent a fearful serpent out of the ground, with blood-red stains upon its back, and it darted from under the altar on to the plane-tree. Now there was a brood of young sparrows, quite small, upon the topmost bough, peeping out from under the leaves, eight in all, and their mother that hatched them made nine. The serpent ate the poor cheeping things, while the old bird flew about lamenting her little ones; but the serpent threw his coils about her and caught her by the wing as she was screaming. Then, when he had eaten both the sparrow and her young, the god who had sent him made him become a sign; for the son of scheming Saturn turned him into stone, and we stood there wondering at that which had come to pass. Seeing, then, that such a fearful portent had broken in upon our hecatombs, Calchas forthwith declared to us the oracles of heaven. ‘Why, Achaeans,’ said he, ‘are you thus speechless? Jove has sent us this sign, long in coming, and long ere it be fulfilled, though its fame shall last for ever. As the serpent ate the eight fledglings and the sparrow that hatched them, which makes nine, so shall we fight nine years at Troy, but in the tenth shall take the town.’ This was what he said, and now it is all coming true. Stay here, therefore, all of you, till we take the city of Priam.”

On this the Argives raised a shout, till the ships rang again with the uproar. Nestor, knight of Gerene, then addressed them. “Shame on you,” he cried, “to stay talking here like children, when you should fight like men. Where are our covenants now, and where the oaths that we have taken? Shall our counsels be flung into the fire, with our drink-offerings and the right hands of fellowship wherein we have put our trust? We waste our time in words, and for all our talking here shall be no further forward. Stand, therefore, son of Atreus, by your own steadfast purpose; lead the Argives on to battle, and leave this handful of men to rot, who scheme, and scheme in vain, to get back to Argos ere they have learned whether Jove be true or a liar. For the mighty son of Saturn surely promised that we should succeed, when we Argives set sail to bring death and destruction upon the Trojans. He showed us favourable signs by flashing his lightning on our right hands; therefore let none make haste to go till he has first lain with the wife of some Trojan, and avenged the toil and sorrow that he has suffered for the sake of Helen. Nevertheless, if any man is in such haste to be at home again, let him lay his hand to his ship that he may meet his doom in the sight of all. But, O king, consider and give ear to my counsel, for the word that I say may not be neglected lightly. Divide your men, Agamemnon, into their several tribes and clans, that clans and tribes may stand by and help one another. If you do this, and if the Achaeans obey you, you will find out who, both chiefs and peoples, are brave, and who are cowards; for they will vie against the other. Thus you shall also learn whether it is through the counsel of heaven or the cowardice of man that you shall fail to take the town.”

And Agamemnon answered, “Nestor, you have again outdone the sons of the Achaeans in counsel. Would, by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I had among them ten more such councillors, for the city of King Priam would then soon fall beneath our hands, and we should sack it. But the son of Saturn afflicts me with bootless wranglings and strife. Achilles and I are quarrelling about this girl, in which matter I was the first to offend; if we can be of one mind again, the Trojans will not stave off destruction for a day. Now, therefore, get your morning meal, that our hosts join in fight. Whet well your spears; see well to the ordering of your shields; give good feeds to your horses, and look your chariots carefully over, that we may do battle the livelong day; for we shall have no rest, not for a moment, till night falls to part us. The bands that bear your shields shall be wet with the sweat upon your shoulders, your hands shall weary upon your spears, your horses shall steam in front of your chariots, and if I see any man shirking the fight, or trying to keep out of it at the ships, there shall be no help for him, but he shall be a prey to dogs and vultures.”

Thus he spoke, and the Achaeans roared applause. As when the waves run high before the blast of the south wind and break on some lofty headland, dashing against it and buffeting it without ceasing, as the storms from every quarter drive them, even so did the Achaeans rise and hurry in all directions to their ships. There they lighted their fires at their tents and got dinner, offering sacrifice every man to one or other of the gods, and praying each one of them that he might live to come out of the fight. Agamemnon, king of men, sacrificed a fat five-year-old bull to the mighty son of Saturn, and invited the princes and elders of his host. First he asked Nestor and King Idomeneus, then the two Ajaxes and the son of Tydeus, and sixthly Ulysses, peer of gods in counsel; but Menelaus came of his own accord, for he knew how busy his brother then was. They stood round the bull with the barley-meal in their hands, and Agamemnon prayed, saying, “Jove, most glorious, supreme, that dwellest in heaven, and ridest upon the storm-cloud, grant that the sun may not go down, nor the night fall, till the palace of Priam is laid low, and its gates are consumed with fire. Grant that my sword may pierce the shirt of Hector about his heart, and that full many of his comrades may bite the dust as they fall dying round him.”

Thus he prayed, but the son of Saturn would not fulfil his prayer. He accepted the sacrifice, yet none the less increased their toil continually. When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley-meal upon the victim, they drew back its head, killed it, and then flayed it. They cut out the thigh-bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, and set pieces of raw meat on the top of them. These they burned upon the split logs of firewood, but they spitted the inward meats, and held them in the flames to cook. When the thigh-bones were burned, and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small, put the pieces upon spits, roasted them till they were done, and drew them off; then, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share, so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Nestor, knight of Gerene, began to speak. “King Agamemnon,” said he, “let us not stay talking here, nor be slack in the work that heaven has put into our hands. Let the heralds summon the people to gather at their several ships; we will then go about among the host, that we may begin fighting at once.”

Thus did he speak, and Agamemnon heeded his words. He at once sent the criers round to call the people in assembly. So they called them, and the people gathered thereon. The chiefs about the son of Atreus chose their men and marshalled them, while Minerva went among them holding her priceless aegis that knows neither age nor death. From it there waved a hundred tassels of pure gold, all deftly woven, and each one of them worth a hundred oxen. With this she darted furiously everywhere among the

hosts of the Achaeans, urging them forward, and putting courage into the heart of each, so that he might fight and do battle without ceasing. Thus war became sweeter in their eyes even than returning home in their ships. As when some great forest fire is raging upon a mountain top and its light is seen afar, even so as they marched the gleam of their armour flashed up into the firmament of heaven.

They were like great flocks of geese, or cranes, or swans on the plain about the waters of Cayster, that wing their way hither and thither, glorying in the pride of flight, and crying as they settle till the fen is alive with their screaming. Even thus did their tribes pour from ships and tents on to the plain of the Scamander, and the ground rang as brass under the feet of men and horses. They stood as thick upon the flower-bespangled field as leaves that bloom in summer.

As countless swarms of flies buzz around a herdsman's homestead in the time of spring when the pails are drenched with milk, even so did the Achaeans swarm on to the plain to charge the Trojans and destroy them.

The chiefs disposed their men this way and that before the fight began, drafting them out as easily as goatherds draft their flocks when they have got mixed while feeding; and among them went King Agamemnon, with a head and face like Jove the lord of thunder, a waist like Mars, and a chest like that of Neptune. As some great bull that lords it over the herds upon the plain, even so did Jove make the son of Atreus stand peerless among the multitude of heroes.

And now, O Muses, dwellers in the mansions of Olympus, tell me—for you are goddesses and are in all places so that you see all things, while we know nothing but by report—who were the chiefs and princes of the Danaans? As for the common soldiers, they were so that I could not name every single one of them though I had ten tongues, and though my voice failed not and my heart were of bronze within me, unless you, O Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Jove, were to recount them to me. Nevertheless, I will tell the captains of the ships and all the fleet together.

Peneleos, Leitus, Arcesilaus, Prothoenor, and Clonius were captains of the Boeotians. These were they that dwelt in Hyria and rocky Aulis, and who held Schoenus, Scolus, and the highlands of Eteonus, with Thespeia, Graia, and the fair city of Mycalessus. They also held Harma, Eilesium, and Erythrae; and they had Eleon, Hyle, and Peteon; Ocalea and the strong fortress of Medeon; Copae, Eutresis, and Thisbe the haunt of doves; Coronea, and the pastures of Haliartus; Plataea and Glisas; the fortress of Thebes the less; holy Onchestus with its famous grove of Neptune; Arne rich in vineyards; Midea, sacred Nisa, and Anthedon upon the sea. From these there came fifty ships, and in each there were a hundred and twenty young men of the Boeotians.

Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Mars, led the people that dwelt in Aspledon and Orchomenus the realm of Minyas. Astyoche a noble maiden bore them in the house of Actor son of Azeus; for she had gone with Mars secretly into an upper chamber, and he had lain with her. With these there came thirty ships.

The Phoceans were led by Schedius and Epistrophus, sons of mighty Iphitus the son of Naubolus. These were they that held Cyparissus, rocky Pytho, holy Crisa, Daulis, and Panopeus; they also that dwelt in Anemorea and Hyampolis, and about the waters of the river Cephissus, and Lilaea by the springs of the Cephissus; with their chieftains came forty ships, and they marshalled the forces of the Phoceans, which were stationed next to the Boeotians, on their left.

Ajax, the fleet son of Oileus, commanded the Locrians. He was not so great, nor nearly so great, as Ajax the son of Telamon. He was a little man, and his breastplate was made of linen, but in use of the spear he excelled all the Hellenes and the Achaeans. These dwelt in Cynus, Opous, Calliarus, Bessa, Scarphe, fair Augeae, Tarphe, and Thronium about the river Boagrius. With him there came forty ships of the Locrians who dwell beyond Euboea.

The fierce Abantes held Euboea with its cities, Chalcis, Eretria, Histiaea rich in vines, Cerinthus upon the sea, and the rock-perched town of Dium; with them were also the men of Carystus and Styra; Elephenor of the race of Mars was in command of these; he was son of Chalcodon, and chief over all the Abantes. With him they came, fleet of foot and wearing their hair long behind, brave warriors, who would ever strive to tear open the corslets of their foes with their long ashen spears. Of these there came fifty ships.

And they that held the strong city of Athens, the people of great Erechtheus, who was born of the soil itself, but Jove's daughter, Minerva, fostered him, and established him at Athens in her own rich sanctuary. There, year by year, the Athenian youths worship him with sacrifices of bulls and rams. These were commanded by Menestheus, son of Peteos. No man living could equal him in the marshalling of chariots and foot soldiers. Nestor could alone rival him, for he was older. With him there came fifty ships.

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis, and stationed them alongside those of the Athenians.

The men of Argos, again, and those who held the walls of Tiryns, with Hermione, and Asine upon the gulf; Troezene, Eionae, and the vineyard lands of Epidaurus; the Achaean youths, moreover, who came from Aegina and Mases; these were led by Diomed of the loud battle-cry, and Sthenelus son of famed Capaneus. With them in command was Euryalus, son of king Mecisteus, son of Talaus; but Diomed was chief over them all. With these there came eighty ships.

Those who held the strong city of Mycenae, rich Corinth and Cleonae; Orneae, Araethyrea, and Licyon, where Adrastus reigned of old; Hyperesia, high Gonoessa, and Pellene; Aegium and all the coast-land round about Helice; these sent a hundred ships under the command of King Agamemnon, son of Atreus. His force was far both finest and most numerous, and in their midst was the king himself, all glorious in his armour of gleaming bronze—foremost among the heroes, for he was the greatest king, and had most men under him.

And those that dwelt in Lacedaemon, lying low among the hills, Pharis, Sparta, with Messe the haunt of doves; Bryseae, Augeae, Amyclae, and Helos upon the sea; Laas, moreover, and Oetylus; these were led by Menelaus of the loud battle-cry, brother to Agamemnon, and of them there were sixty ships, drawn up apart from the others. Among them went Menelaus himself, strong in zeal, urging his men to fight; for he longed to avenge the toil and sorrow that he had suffered for the sake of Helen.

The men of Pylos and Arene, and Thryum where is the ford of the river Alpheus; strong Aipy, Cyparisseis, and Amphigenea; Pteleum, Helos, and Dorium, where the Muses met Thamyris, and stilled his minstrelsy for ever. He was returning from Oechalia, where Eurytus lived and reigned, and boasted that he would surpass even the Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Jove, if they should sing against him; whereon they were angry, and maimed him. They robbed him of his divine power of song, and thenceforth he could strike the lyre no more. These were commanded by Nestor, knight of Gerene, and with him there came ninety ships.

And those that held Arcadia, under the high mountain of Cyllene, near the tomb of Aepytus, where the people fight hand to hand; the men of Pheneus also, and Orchomenus rich in flocks; of Rhipae, Stratie, and bleak Enispe; of Tegea and fair Mantinea; of Stymphelus and Parrhasia; of these King Agapenor son of Ancaeus was commander, and they had sixty ships. Many Arcadians, good soldiers, came in each one of them, but Agamemnon found them the ships in which to cross the sea, for they were not a people that occupied their business upon the waters.

The men, moreover, of Buprasium and of Elis, so much of it as is enclosed between Hyrmine, Myrsinus upon the sea-shore, the rock Olene and Alesium. These had four leaders, and each of them had ten ships, with many Epeans on board. Their captains were Amphimachus and Thalpius—the one, son of Cteatus, and the other, of Eurytus—both of the race of Actor. The two others were Diores, son of Amarynces, and Polyxenus, son of King Agasthenes, son of Augeas.

And those of Dulichium with the sacred Echinean islands, who dwelt beyond the sea off Elis; these were led by Meges, peer of Mars, and the son of valiant Phyleus, dear to Jove, who quarrelled with his father, and went to settle in Dulichium. With him there came forty ships.

Ulysses led the brave Cephallenians, who held Ithaca, Neritum with its forests, Crocylea, rugged Aegilips, Samos and Zacynthus, with the mainland also that was over against the islands. These were led by Ulysses, peer of Jove in counsel, and with him there came twelve ships.

Thoas, son of Andraemon, commanded the Aetolians, who dwelt in Pleuron, Olenus, Pylene, Chalcis by the sea, and rocky Calydon, for the great king Oeneus had now no sons living, and was himself dead, as was also golden-haired Meleager, who had been set over the Aetolians to be their king. And with Thoas there came forty ships.

The famous spearsman Idomeneus led the Cretans, who held Cnossus, and the well-walled city of Gortys; Lyctus also, Miletus and Lycastus that lies upon the chalk; the populous towns of Phaestus and Rhytium, with the other peoples that dwelt in the hundred cities of Crete. All these were led by Idomeneus, and by Meriones, peer of murderous Mars. And with these there came eighty ships.

Tlepolemus, son of Hercules, a man both brave and large of stature, brought nine ships of lordly warriors from Rhodes. These dwelt in Rhodes which is divided among the three cities of Lindus, Ielysus, and Cameirus, that lies upon the chalk. These were commanded by Tlepolemus, son of Hercules by Astyochea, whom he had carried off from Ephyra, on the river Selleis, after sacking many cities of valiant warriors. When Tlepolemus grew up, he killed his father's uncle Licymnius, who had been a famous warrior in his time, but was then grown old. On this he built himself a fleet, gathered a great following, and fled beyond the sea, for he was menaced by the other sons and grandsons of Hercules. After a voyage, during which he suffered great hardship, he came to

Rhodes, where the people divided into three communities, according to their tribes, and were dearly loved by Jove, the lord of gods and men; wherefore the son of Saturn showered down great riches upon them.

And Nireus brought three ships from Syme—Nireus, who was the handsomest man that came up under Ilius of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus—but he was a man of no substance, and had but a small following.

And those that held Nisyrus, Crapathus, and Casus, with Cos, the city of Eurypylus, and the Calydnian islands, these were commanded by Pheidippus and Antiphus, two sons of King Thessalus the son of Hercules. And with them there came thirty ships.

Those again who held Pelasgic Argos, Alos, Alope, and Trachis; and those of Phthia and Hellas the land of fair women, who were called Myrmidons, Hellenes, and Achaeans; these had fifty ships, over which Achilles was in command. But they now took no part in the war, inasmuch as there was no one to marshal them; for Achilles stayed by his ships, furious about the loss of the girl Briseis, whom he had taken from Lyrnessus at his own great peril, when he had sacked Lyrnessus and Thebe, and had overthrown Mynes and Epistrophus, sons of king Evenor, son of Selepus. For her sake Achilles was still grieving, but ere long he was again to join them.

And those that held Phylace and the flowery meadows of Pyrasus, sanctuary of Ceres; Iton, the mother of sheep; Antrum upon the sea, and Pteleum that lies upon the grass lands. Of these brave Protesilaus had been captain while he was yet alive, but he was now lying under the earth. He had left a wife behind him in Phylace to tear her cheeks in sorrow, and his house was only half finished, for he was slain by a Dardanian warrior while leaping foremost of the Achaeans upon the soil of Troy. Still, though his people mourned their chieftain, they were not without a leader, for Podarces, of the race of Mars, marshalled them; he was son of Iphiclus, rich in sheep, who was the son of Phylacus, and he was own brother to Protesilaus, only younger, Protesilaus being at once the elder and the more valiant. So the people were not without a leader, though they mourned him whom they had lost. With him there came forty ships.

And those that held Pherae by the Boebean lake, with Boebe, Glaphyrae, and the populous city of Iolcus, these with their eleven ships were led by Eumelus, son of Admetus, whom Alcestis bore to him, loveliest of the daughters of Pelias.

And those that held Methone and Thaumacia, with Meliboea and rugged Olizon, these were led by the skilful archer Philoctetes, and they had seven ships, each with fifty oarsmen all of them good archers; but Philoctetes was lying in great pain in the Island of Lemnos, where the sons of the Achaeans left him, for he had been bitten by a poisonous water snake. There he lay sick and sorry, and full soon did the Argives come to miss him. But his people, though they felt his loss were not leaderless, for Medon, the bastard son of Oileus by Rhene, set them in array.

Those, again, of Tricca and the stony region of Ithome, and they that held Oechalia, the city of Oechalian Eurytus, these were commanded by the two sons of Aesculapius, skilled in the art of healing, Podalirius and Machaon. And with them there came thirty ships.

The men, moreover, of Ormenius, and by the fountain of Hypereia, with those that held Asterius, and the white crests of Titanus, these were led by Eurypylus, the son of Euaemon, and with them there came forty ships.

Those that held Argissa and Gyrtone, Orthe, Elone, and the white city of Oloosson, of these brave Polypoetes was leader. He was son of Pirithous, who was son of Jove himself, for Hippodameia bore him to Pirithous on the day when he took his revenge on the shaggy mountain savages and drove them from Mt. Pelion to the Aithices. But Polypoetes was not sole in command, for with him was Leonteus, of the race of Mars, who was son of Coronus, the son of Caeneus. And with these there came forty ships.

Guneus brought two and twenty ships from Cyphus, and he was followed by the Enienes and the valiant Peraebi, who dwelt about wintry Dodona, and held the lands round the lovely river Titaresius, which sends its waters into the Peneus. They do not mingle with the silver eddies of the Peneus, but flow on the top of them like oil; for the Titaresius is a branch of dread Orcus and of the river Styx.

Of the Magnetes, Prothous son of Tenthredon was commander. They were they that dwelt about the river Peneus and Mt. Pelion. Prothous, fleet of foot, was their leader, and with him there came forty ships.

Such were the chiefs and princes of the Danaans. Who, then, O Muse, was the foremost, whether man or horse, among those that followed after the sons of Atreus?

Of the horses, those of the son of Pheres were by far the finest. They were driven by Eumelus, and were as fleet as birds. They were of the same age and colour, and perfectly matched in height. Apollo, of the silver bow, had bred them in Perea—both of them mares, and terrible as Mars in battle. Of the men, Ajax, son of Telamon, was much the foremost so long as Achilles' anger lasted, for Achilles excelled him greatly and he had also better horses; but Achilles was now holding aloof at his ships by reason of his quarrel with Agamemnon, and his people passed their time upon the sea shore, throwing discs or aiming with spears at a mark, and in archery. Their horses stood each by his own chariot, champing lotus and wild celery. The chariots were housed under cover, but their owners, for lack of leadership, wandered hither and thither about the host and went not forth to fight.

Thus marched the host like a consuming fire, and the earth groaned beneath them when the lord of thunder is angry and lashes the land about Typhoeus among the Arimi, where they say Typhoeus lies. Even so did the earth groan beneath them as they sped over the plain.

And now Iris, fleet as the wind, was sent by Jove to tell the bad news among the Trojans. They were gathered in assembly, old and young, at Priam's gates, and Iris came close up to Priam, speaking with the voice of Priam's son Polites, who, being fleet of foot, was stationed as watchman for the Trojans on the tomb of old Aesyetes, to look out for any sally of the Achaeans. In his likeness Iris spoke, saying, "Old man, you talk idly, as in time of peace, while war is at hand. I have been in many a battle, but never yet saw such a host as is now advancing. They are crossing the plain to attack the city as thick as leaves or as the sands of the sea. Hector, I charge you above all others, do as I say. There are many allies dispersed about the city of Priam from distant places and speaking divers tongues. Therefore, let each chief give orders to his own people, setting them severally in array and leading them forth to battle."

Thus she spoke, but Hector knew that it was the goddess, and at once broke up the assembly. The men flew to arms; all the gates were opened, and the people thronged through them, horse and foot, with the tramp as of a great multitude.

Now there is a high mound before the city, rising by itself upon the plain. Men call it Batieia, but the gods know that it is the tomb of lithe Myrine. Here the Trojans and their allies divided their forces.

Priam's son, great Hector of the gleaming helmet, commanded the Trojans, and with him were arrayed by far the greater number and most valiant of those who were longing for the fray.

The Dardanians were led by brave Aeneas, whom Venus bore to Anchises, when she, goddess though she was, had lain with him upon the mountain slopes of Ida. He was not alone, for with him were the two sons of Antenor, Archilochus and Acamas, both skilled in all the arts of war.

They that dwelt in Telea under the lowest spurs of Mt. Ida, men of substance, who drink the limpid waters of the Aesepus, and are of Trojan blood—these were led by Pandarus son of Lycaon, whom Apollo had taught to use the bow.

They that held Adresteia and the land of Apaesus, with Pityeia, and the high mountain of Tereia—these were led by Adrestus and Amphius, whose breastplate was of linen. These were the sons of Merops of Percote, who excelled in all kinds of divination. He told them not to take part in the war, but they gave him no heed, for fate lured them to destruction.

They that dwelt about Percote and Practius, with Sestos, Abydos, and Arisbe—these were led by Asius, son of Hyrtacus, a brave commander—Asius, the son of Hyrtacus, whom his powerful dark bay steeds, of the breed that comes from the river Selleis, had brought from Arisbe.

Hippothous led the tribes of Pelasgian spearsmen, who dwelt in fertile Larissa—Hippothous, and Pylaeus of the race of Mars, two sons of the Pelasgian Lethus, son of Teutamus.

Acamas and the warrior Peirous commanded the Thracians and those that came from beyond the mighty stream of the Hellespont.

Euphemus, son of Troezenus, the son of Ceos, was captain of the Ciconian spearsmen.

Pyraechmes led the Paeonian archers from distant Amydon, by the broad waters of the river Axius, the fairest that flow upon the earth.

The Paphlagonians were commanded by stout-hearted Pylaemanes from Enetae, where the mules run wild in herds. These were they that held Cytorus and the country round Sesamus, with the cities by the river Parthenius, Cromna, Aegialus, and lofty Erithini.

Odius and Epistrophus were captains over the Halizoni from distant Alybe, where there are mines of silver.

Chromis, and Ennomus the augur, led the Mysians, but his skill in augury availed not to save him from destruction, for he fell by the hand of the fleet descendant of Aeacus in the river, where he slew others also of the Trojans.

Phorcys, again, and noble Ascanius led the Phrygians from the far country of Ascania, and both were eager for the fray.

Mesthles and Antiphus commanded the Meonians, sons of Talaemenes, born to him of the Gygaean lake. These led the Meonians, who dwelt under Mt. Tmolus.

Nastes led the Carians, men of a strange speech. These held Miletus and the wooded mountain of Phthires, with the water of the river Maeander and the lofty crests of Mt. Mycale. These were commanded by Nastes and Amphimachus, the brave sons of Nomion. He came into the fight with gold about him, like a girl; fool that he was, his gold was of no avail to save him, for he fell in the river by the hand of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, and Achilles bore away his gold.

Sarpedon and Glaucus led the Lycians from their distant land, by the eddying waters of the Xanthus.

This page titled 3.12.1.2: Book II is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.3: Book III

Alexandria, also called Paris, challenges Menelaus—Helen and Priam view the Achaeans from the wall—The covenant—Paris and Menelaus fight, and Paris is worsted—Venus carries him off to save him—Scene between him and Helen.

When the companies were thus arrayed, each under its own captain, the Trojans advanced as a flight of wild fowl or cranes that scream overhead when rain and winter drive them over the flowing waters of Oceanus to bring death and destruction on the Pygmies, and they wrangle in the air as they fly; but the Achaeans marched silently, in high heart, and minded to stand by one another.

As when the south wind spreads a curtain of mist upon the mountain tops, bad for shepherds but better than night for thieves, and a man can see no further than he can throw a stone, even so rose the dust from under their feet as they made all speed over the plain.

When they were close up with one another, Alexandrus came forward as champion on the Trojan side. On his shoulders he bore the skin of a panther, his bow, and his sword, and he brandished two spears shod with bronze as a challenge to the bravest of the Achaeans to meet him in single fight. Menelaus saw him thus stride out before the ranks, and was glad as a hungry lion that lights on the carcase of some goat or horned stag, and devours it there and then, though dogs and youths set upon him. Even thus was Menelaus glad when his eyes caught sight of Alexandrus, for he deemed that now he should be revenged. He sprang, therefore, from his chariot, clad in his suit of armour.

Alexandrus quailed as he saw Menelaus come forward, and shrank in fear of his life under cover of his men. As one who starts back affrighted, trembling and pale, when he comes suddenly upon a serpent in some mountain glade, even so did Alexandrus plunge into the throng of Trojan warriors, terror-stricken at the sight of the son of Atreus.

Then Hector upbraided him. “Paris,” said he, “evil-hearted Paris, fair to see, but woman-mad, and false of tongue, would that you had never been born, or that you had died unwed. Better so, than live to be disgraced and looked askance at. Will not the Achaeans mock at us and say that we have sent one to champion us who is fair to see but who has neither wit nor courage? Did you not, such as you are, get your following together and sail beyond the seas? Did you not from your a far country carry off a lovely woman wedded among a people of warriors—to bring sorrow upon your father, your city, and your whole country, but joy to your enemies, and hang-dog shamefacedness to yourself? And now can you not dare face Menelaus and learn what manner of man he is whose wife you have stolen? Where indeed would be your lyre and your love-tricks, your comely locks and your fair favour, when you were lying in the dust before him? The Trojans are a weak-kneed people, or ere this you would have had a shirt of stones for the wrongs you have done them.”

And Alexandrus answered, “Hector, your rebuke is just. You are hard as the axe which a shipwright wields at his work, and cleaves the timber to his liking. As the axe in his hand, so keen is the edge of your scorn. Still, taunt me not with the gifts that golden Venus has given me; they are precious; let not a man disdain them, for the gods give them where they are minded, and none can have them for the asking. If you would have me do battle with Menelaus, bid the Trojans and Achaeans take their seats, while he and I fight in their midst for Helen and all her wealth. Let him who shall be victorious and prove to be the better man take the woman and all she has, to bear them to his home, but let the rest swear to a solemn covenant of peace whereby you Trojans shall stay here in Troy, while the others go home to Argos and the land of the Achaeans.”

When Hector heard this he was glad, and went about among the Trojan ranks holding his spear by the middle to keep them back, and they all sat down at his bidding: but the Achaeans still aimed at him with stones and arrows, till Agamemnon shouted to them saying, “Hold, Argives, shoot not, sons of the Achaeans; Hector desires to speak.”

They ceased taking aim and were still, whereon Hector spoke. “Hear from my mouth,” said he, “Trojans and Achaeans, the saying of Alexandrus, through whom this quarrel has come about. He bids the Trojans and Achaeans lay their armour upon the ground, while he and Menelaus fight in the midst of you for Helen and all her wealth. Let him who shall be victorious and prove to be the better man take the woman and all she has, to bear them to his own home, but let the rest swear to a solemn covenant of peace.”

Thus he spoke, and they all held their peace, till Menelaus of the loud battle-cry addressed them. “And now,” he said, “hear me too, for it is I who am the most aggrieved. I deem that the parting of Achaeans and Trojans is at hand, as well it may be, seeing how much have suffered for my quarrel with Alexandrus and the wrong he did me. Let him who shall die, die, and let the others fight no more. Bring, then, two lambs, a white ram and a black ewe, for Earth and Sun, and we will bring a third for Jove. Moreover, you

shall bid Priam come, that he may swear to the covenant himself; for his sons are high-handed and ill to trust, and the oaths of Jove must not be transgressed or taken in vain. Young men's minds are light as air, but when an old man comes he looks before and after, deeming that which shall be fairest upon both sides."

The Trojans and Achaeans were glad when they heard this, for they thought that they should now have rest. They backed their chariots toward the ranks, got out of them, and put off their armour, laying it down upon the ground; and the hosts were near to one another with a little space between them. Hector sent two messengers to the city to bring the lambs and to bid Priam come, while Agamemnon told Talthybius to fetch the other lamb from the ships, and he did as Agamemnon had said.

Meanwhile Iris went to Helen in the form of her sister-in-law, wife of the son of Antenor, for Helicaon, son of Antenor, had married Laodice, the fairest of Priam's daughters. She found her in her own room, working at a great web of purple linen, on which she was embroidering the battles between Trojans and Achaeans, that Mars had made them fight for her sake. Iris then came close up to her and said, "Come hither, child, and see the strange doings of the Trojans and Achaeans. Till now they have been warring upon the plain, mad with lust of battle, but now they have left off fighting, and are leaning upon their shields, sitting still with their spears planted beside them. Alexandrus and Menelaus are going to fight about yourself, and you are to be the wife of him who is the victor."

Thus spoke the goddess, and Helen's heart yearned after her former husband, her city, and her parents. She threw a white mantle over her head, and hurried from her room, weeping as she went, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids, Aethrae, daughter of Pittheus, and Clymene. And straightway they were at the Scaean gates.

The two sages, Ucalegon and Antenor, elders of the people, were seated by the Scaean gates, with Priam, Panthous, Thymoetes, Lampus, Clytius, and Hiketaon of the race of Mars. These were too old to fight, but they were fluent orators, and sat on the tower like cicales that chirrup delicately from the boughs of some high tree in a wood. When they saw Helen coming towards the tower, they said softly to one another, "Small wonder that Trojans and Achaeans should endure so much and so long, for the sake of a woman so marvellously and divinely lovely. Still, fair though she be, let them take her and go, or she will breed sorrow for us and for our children after us."

But Priam bade her draw nigh. "My child," said he, "take your seat in front of me that you may see your former husband, your kinsmen and your friends. I lay no blame upon you, it is the gods, not you who are to blame. It is they that have brought about this terrible war with the Achaeans. Tell me, then, who is yonder huge hero so great and goodly? I have seen men taller by a head, but none so comely and so royal. Surely he must be a king."

"Sir," answered Helen, "father of my husband, dear and reverend in my eyes, would that I had chosen death rather than to have come here with your son, far from my bridal chamber, my friends, my darling daughter, and all the companions of my girlhood. But it was not to be, and my lot is one of tears and sorrow. As for your question, the hero of whom you ask is Agamemnon, son of Atreus, a good king and a brave soldier, brother-in-law as surely as that he lives, to my abhorred and miserable self."

The old man marvelled at him and said, "Happy son of Atreus, child of good fortune. I see that the Achaeans are subject to you in great multitudes. When I was in Phrygia I saw much horsemen, the people of Otreus and of Mygdon, who were camping upon the banks of the river Sangarius; I was their ally, and with them when the Amazons, peers of men, came up against them, but even they were not so many as the Achaeans."

The old man next looked upon Ulysses; "Tell me," he said, "who is that other, shorter by a head than Agamemnon, but broader across the chest and shoulders? His armour is laid upon the ground, and he stalks in front of the ranks as it were some great woolly ram ordering his ewes."

And Helen answered, "He is Ulysses, a man of great craft, son of Laertes. He was born in rugged Ithaca, and excels in all manner of stratagems and subtle cunning."

On this Antenor said, "Madam, you have spoken truly. Ulysses once came here as envoy about yourself, and Menelaus with him. I received them in my own house, and therefore know both of them by sight and conversation. When they stood up in presence of the assembled Trojans, Menelaus was the broader shouldered, but when both were seated Ulysses had the more royal presence. After a time they delivered their message, and the speech of Menelaus ran trippingly on the tongue; he did not say much, for he was a man of few words, but he spoke very clearly and to the point, though he was the younger man of the two; Ulysses, on the other hand, when he rose to speak, was at first silent and kept his eyes fixed upon the ground. There was no play nor graceful movement of his

sceptre; he kept it straight and stiff like a man unpractised in oratory—one might have taken him for a mere churl or simpleton; but when he raised his voice, and the words came driving from his deep chest like winter snow before the wind, then there was none to touch him, and no man thought further of what he looked like."

Priam then caught sight of Ajax and asked, "Who is that great and goodly warrior whose head and broad shoulders tower above the rest of the Argives?"

"That," answered Helen, "is huge Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, and on the other side of him, among the Cretans, stands Idomeneus looking like a god, and with the captains of the Cretans round him. Often did Menelaus receive him as a guest in our house when he came visiting us from Crete. I see, moreover, many other Achaeans whose names I could tell you, but there are two whom I can nowhere find, Castor, breaker of horses, and Pollux the mighty boxer; they are children of my mother, and own brothers to myself. Either they have not left Lacedaemon, or else, though they have brought their ships, they will not show themselves in battle for the shame and disgrace that I have brought upon them."

She knew not that both these heroes were already lying under the earth in their own land of Lacedaemon.

Meanwhile the heralds were bringing the holy oath-offerings through the city—two lambs and a goatskin of wine, the gift of earth; and Idaeus brought the mixing bowl and the cups of gold. He went up to Priam and said, "Son of Laomedon, the princes of the Trojans and Achaeans bid you come down on to the plain and swear to a solemn covenant. Alexandrus and Menelaus are to fight for Helen in single combat, that she and all her wealth may go with him who is the victor. We are to swear to a solemn covenant of peace whereby we others shall dwell here in Troy, while the Achaeans return to Argos and the land of the Achaeans."

The old man trembled as he heard, but bade his followers yoke the horses, and they made all haste to do so. He mounted the chariot, gathered the reins in his hand, and Antenor took his seat beside him; they then drove through the Scaean gates on to the plain. When they reached the ranks of the Trojans and Achaeans they left the chariot, and with measured pace advanced into the space between the hosts.

Agamemnon and Ulysses both rose to meet them. The attendants brought on the oath-offerings and mixed the wine in the mixing-bowls; they poured water over the hands of the chieftains, and the son of Atreus drew the dagger that hung by his sword, and cut wool from the lambs' heads; this the men-servants gave about among the Trojan and Achaean princes, and the son of Atreus lifted up his hands in prayer. "Father Jove," he cried, "that rulest in Ida, most glorious in power, and thou oh Sun, that seest and givest ear to all things, Earth and Rivers, and ye who in the realms below chastise the soul of him that has broken his oath, witness these rites and guard them, that they be not vain. If Alexandrus kills Menelaus, let him keep Helen and all her wealth, while we sail home with our ships; but if Menelaus kills Alexandrus, let the Trojans give back Helen and all that she has; let them moreover pay such fine to the Achaeans as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among those that shall be born hereafter. And if Priam and his sons refuse such fine when Alexandrus has fallen, then will I stay here and fight on till I have got satisfaction."

As he spoke he drew his knife across the throats of the victims, and laid them down gasping and dying upon the ground, for the knife had reft them of their strength. Then they poured wine from the mixing-bowl into the cups, and prayed to the everlasting gods, saying, Trojans and Achaeans among one another, "Jove, most great and glorious, and ye other everlasting gods, grant that the brains of them who shall first sin against their oaths—of them and their children—may be shed upon the ground even as this wine, and let their wives become the slaves of strangers."

Thus they prayed, but not as yet would Jove grant them their prayer. Then Priam, descendant of Dardanus, spoke, saying, "Hear me, Trojans and Achaeans, I will now go back to the wind-beaten city of Ilius: I dare not with my own eyes witness this fight between my son and Menelaus, for Jove and the other immortals alone know which shall fall."

On this he laid the two lambs on his chariot and took his seat. He gathered the reins in his hand, and Antenor sat beside him; the two then went back to Ilius. Hector and Ulysses measured the ground, and cast lots from a helmet of bronze to see which should take aim first. Meanwhile the two hosts lifted up their hands and prayed saying, "Father Jove, that rulest from Ida, most glorious in power, grant that he who first brought about this war between us may die, and enter the house of Hades, while we others remain at peace and abide by our oaths."

Great Hector now turned his head aside while he shook the helmet, and the lot of Paris flew out first. The others took their several stations, each by his horses and the place where his arms were lying, while Alexandrus, husband of lovely Helen, put on his goodly armour. First he greaved his legs with greaves of good make and fitted with ancle-clasps of silver; after this he donned the cuirass

of his brother Lycaon, and fitted it to his own body; he hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well-wrought, with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped a redoubtable spear that suited his hands. In like fashion Menelaus also put on his armour.

When they had thus armed, each amid his own people, they strode fierce of aspect into the open space, and both Trojans and Achaeans were struck with awe as they beheld them. They stood near one another on the measured ground, brandishing their spears, and each furious against the other. Alexandrus aimed first, and struck the round shield of the son of Atreus, but the spear did not pierce it, for the shield turned its point. Menelaus next took aim, praying to Father Jove as he did so. “King Jove,” he said, “grant me revenge on Alexandrus who has wronged me; subdue him under my hand that in ages yet to come a man may shrink from doing ill deeds in the house of his host.”

He poised his spear as he spoke, and hurled it at the shield of Alexandrus. Through shield and cuirass it went, and tore the shirt by his flank, but Alexandrus swerved aside, and thus saved his life. Then the son of Atreus drew his sword, and drove at the projecting part of his helmet, but the sword fell shivered in three or four pieces from his hand, and he cried, looking towards Heaven, “Father Jove, of all gods thou art the most despiteful; I made sure of my revenge, but the sword has broken in my hand, my spear has been hurled in vain, and I have not killed him.”

With this he flew at Alexandrus, caught him by the horsehair plume of his helmet, and began dragging him towards the Achaeans. The strap of the helmet that went under his chin was choking him, and Menelaus would have dragged him off to his own great glory had not Jove’s daughter Venus been quick to mark and to break the strap of oxhide, so that the empty helmet came away in his hand. This he flung to his comrades among the Achaeans, and was again springing upon Alexandrus to run him through with a spear, but Venus snatched him up in a moment (as a god can do), hid him under a cloud of darkness, and conveyed him to his own bedchamber.

Then she went to call Helen, and found her on a high tower with the Trojan women crowding round her. She took the form of an old woman who used to dress wool for her when she was still in Lacedaemon, and of whom she was very fond. Thus disguised she plucked her by perfumed robe and said, “Come hither; Alexandrus says you are to go to the house; he is on his bed in his own room, radiant with beauty and dressed in gorgeous apparel. No one would think he had just come from fighting, but rather that he was going to a dance, or had done dancing and was sitting down.”

With these words she moved the heart of Helen to anger. When she marked the beautiful neck of the goddess, her lovely bosom, and sparkling eyes, she marvelled at her and said, “Goddess, why do you thus beguile me? Are you going to send me afield still further to some man whom you have taken up in Phrygia or fair Meonia? Menelaus has just vanquished Alexandrus, and is to take my hateful self back with him. You are come here to betray me. Go sit with Alexandrus yourself; henceforth be goddess no longer; never let your feet carry you back to Olympus; worry about him and look after him till he make you his wife, or, for the matter of that, his slave—but me? I shall not go; I can garnish his bed no longer; I should be a by-word among all the women of Troy. Besides, I have trouble on my mind.”

Venus was very angry, and said, “Bold hussy, do not provoke me; if you do, I shall leave you to your fate and hate you as much as I have loved you. I will stir up fierce hatred between Trojans and Achaeans, and you shall come to a bad end.”

At this Helen was frightened. She wrapped her mantle about her and went in silence, following the goddess and unnoticed by the Trojan women.

When they came to the house of Alexandrus the maid-servants set about their work, but Helen went into her own room, and the laughter-loving goddess took a seat and set it for her facing Alexandrus. On this Helen, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, sat down, and with eyes askance began to upbraid her husband.

“So you are come from the fight,” said she; “would that you had fallen rather by the hand of that brave man who was my husband. You used to brag that you were a better man with hands and spear than Menelaus. Go, then, and challenge him again—but I should advise you not to do so, for if you are foolish enough to meet him in single combat, you will soon fall by his spear.”

And Paris answered, “Wife, do not vex me with your reproaches. This time, with the help of Minerva, Menelaus has vanquished me; another time I may myself be victor, for I too have gods that will stand by me. Come, let us lie down together and make friends. Never yet was I so passionately enamoured of you as at this moment—not even when I first carried you off from

Lacedaemon and sailed away with you—not even when I had converse with you upon the couch of love in the island of Cranae was I so enthralled by desire of you as now." On this he led her towards the bed, and his wife went with him.

Thus they laid themselves on the bed together; but the son of Atreus strode among the throng, looking everywhere for Alexandrus, and no man, neither of the Trojans nor of the allies, could find him. If they had seen him they were in no mind to hide him, for they all of them hated him as they did death itself. Then Agamemnon, king of men, spoke, saying, "Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies. The victory has been with Menelaus; therefore give back Helen with all her wealth, and pay such fine as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among them that shall be born hereafter."

Thus spoke the son of Atreus, and the Achaeans shouted in applause.

This page titled 3.12.1.3: Book III is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.4: Book IV

A quarrel in Olympus—Minerva goes down and persuades Fandarus to violate the oaths by wounding Menelaus with an arrow—Agamemnon makes a speech and sends for Machaon—He then goes about among his captains and upbraids Ulysses and Sthenelus, who each of them retort fiercely—Diomed checks Sthenelus, and the two hosts then engage, with great slaughter on either side.

Now the gods were sitting with Jove in council upon the golden floor while Hebe went round pouring out nectar for them to drink, and as they pledged one another in their cups of gold they looked down upon the town of Troy. The son of Saturn then began to tease Juno, talking at her so as to provoke her. “Menelaus,” said he, “has two good friends among the goddesses, Juno of Argos, and Minerva of Alalcomene, but they only sit still and look on, while Venus keeps ever by Alexandrus’ side to defend him in any danger; indeed she has just rescued him when he made sure that it was all over with him—for the victory really did lie with Menelaus. We must consider what we shall do about all this; shall we set them fighting anew or make peace between them? If you will agree to this last Menelaus can take back Helen and the city of Priam may remain still inhabited.”

Minerva and Juno muttered their discontent as they sat side by side hatching mischief for the Trojans. Minerva scowled at her father, for she was in a furious passion with him, and said nothing, but Juno could not contain herself. “Dread son of Saturn,” said she, “what, pray, is the meaning of all this? Is my trouble, then, to go for nothing, and the sweat that I have sweated, to say nothing of my horses, while getting the people together against Priam and his children? Do as you will, but we other gods shall not all of us approve your counsel.”

Jove was angry and answered, “My dear, what harm have Priam and his sons done you that you are so hotly bent on sacking the city of Ilius? Will nothing do for you but you must within their walls and eat Priam raw, with his sons and all the other Trojans to boot? Have it your own way then; for I would not have this matter become a bone of contention between us. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart, if ever I want to sack a city belonging to friends of yours, you must not try to stop me; you will have to let me do it, for I am giving in to you sorely against my will. Of all inhabited cities under the sun and stars of heaven, there was none that I so much respected as Ilius with Priam and his whole people. Equitable feasts were never wanting about my altar, nor the savour of burning fat, which is honour due to ourselves.”

“My own three favourite cities,” answered Juno, “are Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae. Sack them whenever you may be displeased with them. I shall not defend them and I shall not care. Even if I did, and tried to stay you, I should take nothing by it, for you are much stronger than I am, but I will not have my own work wasted. I too am a god and of the same race with yourself. I am Saturn’s eldest daughter, and am honourable not on this ground only, but also because I am your wife, and you are king over the gods. Let it be a case, then, of give-and-take between us, and the rest of the gods will follow our lead. Tell Minerva to go and take part in the fight at once, and let her contrive that the Trojans shall be the first to break their oaths and set upon the Achaeans.”

The sire of gods and men heeded her words, and said to Minerva, “Go at once into the Trojan and Achaean hosts, and contrive that the Trojans shall be the first to break their oaths and set upon the Achaeans.”

This was what Minerva was already eager to do, so down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus. She shot through the sky as some brilliant meteor which the son of scheming Saturn has sent as a sign to mariners or to some great army, and a fiery train of light follows in its wake. The Trojans and Achaeans were struck with awe as they beheld, and one would turn to his neighbour, saying, “Either we shall again have war and din of combat, or Jove the lord of battle will now make peace between us.”

Thus did they converse. Then Minerva took the form of Laodocus, son of Antenor, and went through the ranks of the Trojans to find Pandarus, the redoubtable son of Lycaon. She found him standing among the stalwart heroes who had followed him from the banks of the Aesopus, so she went close up to him and said, “Brave son of Lycaon, will you do as I tell you? If you dare send an arrow at Menelaus you will win honour and thanks from all the Trojans, and especially from prince Alexandrus—he would be the first to requite you very handsomely if he could see Menelaus mount his funeral pyre, slain by an arrow from your hand. Take your home aim then, and pray to Lycian Apollo, the famous archer; vow that when you get home to your strong city of Zelea you will offer a hecatomb of firstling lambs in his honour.”

His fool’s heart was persuaded, and he took his bow from its case. This bow was made from the horns of a wild ibex which he had killed as it was bounding from a rock; he had stalked it, and it had fallen as the arrow struck it to the heart. Its horns were sixteen palms long, and a worker in horn had made them into a bow, smoothing them well down, and giving them tips of gold. When Pandarus had strung his bow he laid it carefully on the ground, and his brave followers held their shields before him lest the

Achaeans should set upon him before he had shot Menelaus. Then he opened the lid of his quiver and took out a winged arrow that had not yet been shot, fraught with the pangs of death. He laid the arrow on the string and prayed to Lycian Apollo, the famous archer, vowing that when he got home to his strong city of Zelea he would offer a hecatomb of firstling lambs in his honour. He laid the notch of the arrow on the oxhide bowstring, and drew both notch and string to his breast till the arrow-head was near the bow; then when the bow was arched into a half-circle he let fly, and the bow twanged, and the string sang as the arrow flew gladly on over the heads of the throng.

But the blessed gods did not forget thee, O Menelaus, and Jove's daughter, driver of the spoil, was the first to stand before thee and ward off the piercing arrow. She turned it from his skin as a mother whisks a fly from off her child when it is sleeping sweetly; she guided it to the part where the golden buckles of the belt that passed over his double cuirass were fastened, so the arrow struck the belt that went tightly round him. It went right through this and through the cuirass of cunning workmanship; it also pierced the belt beneath it, which he wore next his skin to keep out darts or arrows; it was this that served him in the best stead, nevertheless the arrow went through it and grazed the top of the skin, so that blood began flowing from the wound.

As when some woman of Meonia or Caria strains purple dye on to a piece of ivory that is to be the cheek-piece of a horse, and is to be laid up in a treasure house—many a knight is fain to bear it, but the king keeps it as an ornament of which both horse and driver may be proud—even so, O Menelaus, were your shapely thighs and your legs down to your fair ancles stained with blood.

When King Agamemnon saw the blood flowing from the wound he was afraid, and so was brave Menelaus himself till he saw that the barbs of the arrow and the thread that bound the arrow-head to the shaft were still outside the wound. Then he took heart, but Agamemnon heaved a deep sigh as he held Menelaus's hand in his own, and his comrades made moan in concert. "Dear brother," he cried, "I have been the death of you in pledging this covenant and letting you come forward as our champion. The Trojans have trampled on their oaths and have wounded you; nevertheless the oath, the blood of lambs, the drink-offerings and the right hands of fellowship in which we have put our trust shall not be vain. If he that rules Olympus fulfil it not here and now, he will yet fulfil it hereafter, and they shall pay dearly with their lives and with their wives and children. The day will surely come when mighty Ilius shall be laid low, with Priam and Priam's people, when the son of Saturn from his high throne shall overshadow them with his awful aegis in punishment of their present treachery. This shall surely be; but how, Menelaus, shall I mourn you, if it be your lot now to die? I should return to Argos as a by-word, for the Achaeans will at once go home. We shall leave Priam and the Trojans the glory of still keeping Helen, and the earth will rot your bones as you lie here at Troy with your purpose not fulfilled. Then shall some braggart Trojan leap upon your tomb and say, 'Ever thus may Agamemnon wreak his vengeance; he brought his army in vain; he is gone home to his own land with empty ships, and has left Menelaus behind him.' Thus will one of them say, and may the earth then swallow me."

But Menelaus reassured him and said, "Take heart, and do not alarm the people; the arrow has not struck me in a mortal part, for my outer belt of burnished metal first stayed it, and under this my cuirass and the belt of mail which the bronze-smiths made me."

And Agamemnon answered, "I trust, dear Menelaus, that it may be even so, but the surgeon shall examine your wound and lay herbs upon it to relieve your pain."

He then said to Talthybius, "Talthybius, tell Machaon, son to the great physician, Aesculapius, to come and see Menelaus immediately. Some Trojan or Lycian archer has wounded him with an arrow to our dismay, and to his own great glory."

Talthybius did as he was told, and went about the host trying to find Machaon. Presently he found standing amid the brave warriors who had followed him from Tricca; thereon he went up to him and said, "Son of Aesculapius, King Agamemnon says you are to come and see Menelaus immediately. Some Trojan or Lycian archer has wounded him with an arrow to our dismay and to his own great glory."

Thus did he speak, and Machaon was moved to go. They passed through the spreading host of the Achaeans and went on till they came to the place where Menelaus had been wounded and was lying with the chieftains gathered in a circle round him. Machaon passed into the middle of the ring and at once drew the arrow from the belt, bending its barbs back through the force with which he pulled it out. He undid the burnished belt, and beneath this the cuirass and the belt of mail which the bronze-smiths had made; then, when he had seen the wound, he wiped away the blood and applied some soothing drugs which Chiron had given to Aesculapius out of the good will he bore him.

While they were thus busy about Menelaus, the Trojans came forward against them, for they had put on their armour, and now renewed the fight.

You would not have then found Agamemnon asleep nor cowardly and unwilling to fight, but eager rather for the fray. He left his chariot rich with bronze and his panting steeds in charge of Eurymedon, son of Ptolemaeus the son of Peiraeus, and bade him hold them in readiness against the time his limbs should weary of going about and giving orders to so many, for he went among the ranks on foot. When he saw men hasting to the front he stood by them and cheered them on. “Argives,” said he, “slacken not one whit in your onset; father Jove will be no helper of liars; the Trojans have been the first to break their oaths and to attack us; therefore they shall be devoured of vultures; we shall take their city and carry off their wives and children in our ships.”

But he angrily rebuked those whom he saw shirking and disinclined to fight. “Argives,” he cried, “cowardly miserable creatures, have you no shame to stand here like frightened fawns who, when they can no longer scud over the plain, huddle together, but show no fight? You are as dazed and spiritless as deer. Would you wait till the Trojans reach the sterns of our ships as they lie on the shore, to see whether the son of Saturn will hold his hand over you to protect you?”

Thus did he go about giving his orders among the ranks. Passing through the crowd, he came presently on the Cretans, arming round Idomeneus, who was at their head, fierce as a wild boar, while Meriones was bringing up the battalions that were in the rear. Agamemnon was glad when he saw him, and spoke him fairly. “Idomeneus,” said he, “I treat you with greater distinction than I do any others of the Achaeans, whether in war or in other things, or at table. When the princes are mixing my choicest wines in the mixing-bowls, they have each of them a fixed allowance, but your cup is kept always full like my own, that you may drink whenever you are minded. Go, therefore, into battle, and show yourself the man you have been always proud to be.”

Idomeneus answered, “I will be a trusty comrade, as I promised you from the first I would be. Urge on the other Achaeans, that we may join battle at once, for the Trojans have trampled upon their covenants. Death and destruction shall be theirs, seeing they have been the first to break their oaths and to attack us.”

The son of Atreus went on, glad at heart, till he came upon the two Ajaxes arming themselves amid a host of foot-soldiers. As when a goat-herd from some high post watches a storm drive over the deep before the west wind—black as pitch is the offing and a mighty whirlwind draws towards him, so that he is afraid and drives his flock into a cave—even thus did the ranks of stalwart youths move in a dark mass to battle under the Ajaxes, horrid with shield and spear. Glad was King Agamemnon when he saw them. “No need,” he cried, “to give orders to such leaders of the Argives as you are, for of your own selves you spur your men on to fight with might and main. Would, by father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo that all were so minded as you are, for the city of Priam would then soon fall beneath our hands, and we should sack it.”

With this he left them and went onward to Nestor, the facile speaker of the Pylians, who was marshalling his men and urging them on, in company with Pelagon, Alastor, Chromius, Haemon, and Bias shepherd of his people. He placed his knights with their chariots and horses in the front rank, while the foot-soldiers, brave men and many, whom he could trust, were in the rear. The cowards he drove into the middle, that they might fight whether they would or no. He gave his orders to the knights first, bidding them hold their horses well in hand, so as to avoid confusion. “Let no man,” he said, “relying on his strength or horsemanship, get before the others and engage singly with the Trojans, nor yet let him lag behind or you will weaken your attack; but let each when he meets an enemy’s chariot throw his spear from his own; this be much the best; this is how the men of old took towns and strongholds; in this wise were they minded.”

Thus did the old man charge them, for he had been in many a fight, and King Agamemnon was glad. “I wish,” he said to him, “that your limbs were as supple and your strength as sure as your judgment is; but age, the common enemy of mankind, has laid his hand upon you; would that it had fallen upon some other, and that you were still young.”

And Nestor, knight of Gerene, answered, “Son of Atreus, I too would gladly be the man I was when I slew mighty Ereuthalion; but the gods will not give us everything at one and the same time. I was then young, and now I am old; still I can go with my knights and give them that counsel which old men have a right to give. The wielding of the spear I leave to those who are younger and stronger than myself.”

Agamemnon went his way rejoicing, and presently found Menestheus, son of Peteos, tarrying in his place, and with him were the Athenians loud of tongue in battle. Near him also tarried cunning Ulysses, with his sturdy Cephallenians round him; they had not yet heard the battle-cry, for the ranks of Trojans and Achaeans had only just begun to move, so they were standing still, waiting for

some other columns of the Achaeans to attack the Trojans and begin the fighting. When he saw this Agamemnon rebuked them and said, “Son of Peteos, and you other, steeped in cunning, heart of guile, why stand you here cowering and waiting on others? You two should be of all men foremost when there is hard fighting to be done, for you are ever foremost to accept my invitation when we councillors of the Achaeans are holding feast. You are glad enough then to take your fill of roast meats and to drink wine as long as you please, whereas now you would not care though you saw ten columns of Achaeans engage the enemy in front of you.”

Ulysses glared at him and answered, “Son of Atreus, what are you talking about? How can you say that we are slack? When the Achaeans are in full fight with the Trojans, you shall see, if you care to do so, that the father of Telemachus will join battle with the foremost of them. You are talking idly.”

When Agamemnon saw that Ulysses was angry, he smiled pleasantly at him and withdrew his words. “Ulysses,” said he, “noble son of Laertes, excellent in all good counsel, I have neither fault to find nor orders to give you, for I know your heart is right, and that you and I are of a mind. Enough; I will make you amends for what I have said, and if any ill has now been spoken may the gods bring it to nothing.”

He then left them and went on to others. Presently he saw the son of Tydeus, noble Diomed, standing by his chariot and horses, with Sthenelus the son of Capaneus beside him; whereon he began to upbraid him. “Son of Tydeus,” he said, “why stand you cowering here upon the brink of battle? Tydeus did not shrink thus, but was ever ahead of his men when leading them on against the foe—so, at least, say they that saw him in battle, for I never set eyes upon him myself. They say that there was no man like him. He came once to Mycenae, not as an enemy but as a guest, in company with Polynices to recruit his forces, for they were levying war against the strong city of Thebes, and prayed our people for a body of picked men to help them. The men of Mycenae were willing to let them have one, but Jove dissuaded them by showing them unfavourable omens. Tydeus, therefore, and Polynices went their way. When they had got as far the deep-meadowed and rush-grown banks of the Aesopus, the Achaeans sent Tydeus as their envoy, and he found the Cadmeans gathered in great numbers to a banquet in the house of Eteocles. Stranger though he was, he knew no fear on finding himself single-handed among so many, but challenged them to contests of all kinds, and in each one of them was at once victorious, so mightily did Minerva help him. The Cadmeans were incensed at his success, and set a force of fifty youths with two captains—the godlike hero Maeon, son of Haemon, and Polyphontes, son of Autophonus—at their head, to lie in wait for him on his return journey; but Tydeus slew every man of them, save only Maeon, whom he let go in obedience to heaven’s omens. Such was Tydeus of Aetolia. His son can talk more glibly, but he cannot fight as his father did.”

Diomed made no answer, for he was shamed by the rebuke of Agamemnon; but the son of Capaneus took up his words and said, “Son of Atreus, tell no lies, for you can speak truth if you will. We boast ourselves as even better men than our fathers; we took seven-gated Thebes, though the wall was stronger and our men were fewer in number, for we trusted in the omens of the gods and in the help of Jove, whereas they perished through their own sheer folly; hold not, then, our fathers in like honour with us.”

Diomed looked sternly at him and said, “Hold your peace, my friend, as I bid you. It is not amiss that Agamemnon should urge the Achaeans forward, for the glory will be his if we take the city, and his the shame if we are vanquished. Therefore let us acquit ourselves with valour.”

As he spoke he sprang from his chariot, and his armour rang so fiercely about his body that even a brave man might well have been scared to hear it.

As when some mighty wave that thunders on the beach when the west wind has lashed it into fury—it has reared its head afar and now comes crashing down on the shore; it bows its arching crest high over the jagged rocks and spews its salt foam in all directions—even so did the serried phalanxes of the Danaans march steadfastly to battle. The chiefs gave orders each to his own people, but the men said never a word; no man would think it, for huge as the host was, it seemed as though there was not a tongue among them, so silent were they in their obedience; and as they marched the armour about their bodies glistened in the sun. But the clamour of the Trojan ranks was as that of many thousand ewes that stand waiting to be milked in the yards of some rich flockmaster, and bleat incessantly in answer to the bleating of their lambs; for they had not one speech nor language, but their tongues were diverse, and they came from many different places. These were inspired of Mars, but the others by Minerva—and with them came Panic, Rout, and Strife whose fury never tires, sister and friend of murderous Mars, who, from being at first but low in stature, grows till she uprears her head to heaven, though her feet are still on earth. She it was that went about among them and flung down discord to the waxing of sorrow with even hand between them.

When they were got together in one place shield clashed with shield and spear with spear in the rage of battle. The bossed shields beat one upon another, and there was a tramp as of a great multitude—death-cry and shout of triumph of slain and slayers, and the earth ran red with blood. As torrents swollen with rain course madly down their deep channels till the angry floods meet in some gorge, and the shepherd on the hillside hears their roaring from afar—even such was the toil and uproar of the hosts as they joined in battle.

First Antilochus slew an armed warrior of the Trojans, Echepolus, son of Thalysius, fighting in the foremost ranks. He struck at the projecting part of his helmet and drove the spear into his brow; the point of bronze pierced the bone, and darkness veiled his eyes; headlong as a tower he fell amid the press of the fight, and as he dropped King Elephenor, son of Chalcodon and captain of the proud Abantes began dragging him out of reach of the darts that were falling around him, in haste to strip him of his armour. But his purpose was not for long; Agenor saw him haling the body away, and smote him in the side with his bronze-shod spear—for as he stooped his side was left unprotected by his shield—and thus he perished. Then the fight between Trojans and Achaeans grew furious over his body, and they flew upon each other like wolves, man and man crushing one upon the other.

Forthwith Ajax, son of Telamon, slew the fair youth Simoeisius, son of Anthemion, whom his mother bore by the banks of the Simois, as she was coming down from Mt. Ida, where she had been with her parents to see their flocks. Therefore he was named Simoeisius, but he did not live to pay his parents for his rearing, for he was cut off untimely by the spear of mighty Ajax, who struck him in the breast by the right nipple as he was coming on among the foremost fighters; the spear went right through his shoulder, and he fell as a poplar that has grown straight and tall in a meadow by some mere, and its top is thick with branches. Then the wheelwright lays his axe to its roots that he may fashion a felloe for the wheel of some goodly chariot, and it lies seasoning by the waterside. In such wise did Ajax fell to earth Simoeisius, son of Anthemion. Thereon Antiphus of the gleaming corslet, son of Priam, hurled a spear at Ajax from amid the crowd and missed him, but he hit Leucus, the brave comrade of Ulysses, in the groin, as he was dragging the body of Simoeisius over to the other side; so he fell upon the body and loosed his hold upon it. Ulysses was furious when he saw Leucus slain, and strode in full armour through the front ranks till he was quite close; then he glared round about him and took aim, and the Trojans fell back as he did so. His dart was not sped in vain, for it struck Democoon, the bastard son of Priam, who had come to him from Abydos, where he had charge of his father's mares. Ulysses, infuriated by the death of his comrade, hit him with his spear on one temple, and the bronze point came through on the other side of his forehead. Thereon darkness veiled his eyes, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Hector, and they that were in front, then gave round while the Argives raised a shout and drew off the dead, pressing further forward as they did so. But Apollo looked down from Pergamus and called aloud to the Trojans, for he was displeased. "Trojans," he cried, "rush on the foe, and do not let yourselves be thus beaten by the Argives. Their skins are not stone nor iron that when hit them you do them no harm. Moreover, Achilles, the son of lovely Thetis, is not fighting, but is nursing his anger at the ships."

Thus spoke the mighty god, crying to them from the city, while Jove's redoubtable daughter, the Trito-born, went about among the host of the Achaeans, and urged them forward whenever she beheld them slackening.

Then fate fell upon Diores, son of Amarynceus, for he was struck by a jagged stone near the ancle of his right leg. He that hurled it was Peirous, son of Imbrasus, captain of the Thracians, who had come from Aenus; the bones and both the tendons were crushed by the pitiless stone. He fell to the ground on his back, and in his death throes stretched out his hands towards his comrades. But Peirous, who had wounded him, sprang on him and thrust a spear into his belly, so that his bowels came gushing out upon the ground, and darkness veiled his eyes. As he was leaving the body, Thoas of Aetolia struck him in the chest near the nipple, and the point fixed itself in his lungs. Thoas came close up to him, pulled the spear out of his chest, and then drawing his sword, smote him in the middle of the belly so that he died; but he did not strip him of his armour, for his Thracian comrades, men who wear their hair in a tuft at the top of their heads, stood round the body and kept him off with their long spears for all his great stature and valour; so he was driven back. Thus the two corpses lay stretched on earth near to one another, the one captain of the Thracians and the other of the Epeans; and many another fell round them.

And now no man would have made light of the fighting if he could have gone about among it scatheless and unwounded, with Minerva leading him by the hand, and protecting him from the storm of spears and arrows. For many Trojans and Achaeans on that day lay stretched side by side face downwards upon the earth.

This page titled 3.12.1.4: Book IV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.5: Book V

The exploits of Diomed, who, though wounded by Pandarus, continues fighting—He kills Pandarus and wounds AEneas—Venus rescues AEneas, but being wounded by Diomed, commits him to the care of Apollo and goes to Olympus, where she is tended by her mother Dione—Mars encourages the Trojans, and AEneas returns to the fight cured of his wound—Minerva and Juno help the Achaeans, and by the advice of the former Diomed wounds Mars, who returns to Olympus to get cured.

Then Pallas Minerva put valour into the heart of Diomed, son of Tydeus, that he might excel all the other Argives, and cover himself with glory. She made a stream of fire flare from his shield and helmet like the star that shines most brilliantly in summer after its bath in the waters of Oceanus—even such a fire did she kindle upon his head and shoulders as she bade him speed into the thickest hurly-burly of the fight.

Now there was a certain rich and honourable man among the Trojans, priest of Vulcan, and his name was Dares. He had two sons, Phegeus and Idaeus, both of them skilled in all the arts of war. These two came forward from the main body of Trojans, and set upon Diomed, he being on foot, while they fought from their chariot. When they were close up to one another, Phegeus took aim first, but his spear went over Diomed's left shoulder without hitting him. Diomed then threw, and his spear sped not in vain, for it hit Phegeus on the breast near the nipple, and he fell from his chariot. Idaeus did not dare to bestride his brother's body, but sprang from the chariot and took to flight, or he would have shared his brother's fate; whereon Vulcan saved him by wrapping him in a cloud of darkness, that his old father might not be utterly overwhelmed with grief; but the son of Tydeus drove off with the horses, and bade his followers take them to the ships. The Trojans were scared when they saw the two sons of Dares, one of them in fright and the other lying dead by his chariot. Minerva, therefore, took Mars by the hand and said, "Mars, Mars, bane of men, bloodstained stormer of cities, may we not now leave the Trojans and Achaeans to fight it out, and see to which of the two Jove will vouchsafe the victory? Let us go away, and thus avoid his anger."

So saying, she drew Mars out of the battle, and set him down upon the steep banks of the Scamander. Upon this the Danaans drove the Trojans back, and each one of their chieftains killed his man. First King Agamemnon flung mighty Odius, captain of the Halizoni, from his chariot. The spear of Agamemnon caught him on the broad of his back, just as he was turning in flight; it struck him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground.

Then Idomeneus killed Phaesus, son of Borus the Meonian, who had come from Varne. Mighty Idomeneus speared him on the right shoulder as he was mounting his chariot, and the darkness of death enshrouded him as he fell heavily from the car.

The squires of Idomeneus spoiled him of his armour, while Menelaus, son of Atreus, killed Scamandrius the son of Strophius, a mighty huntsman and keen lover of the chase. Diana herself had taught him how to kill every kind of wild creature that is bred in mountain forests, but neither she nor his famed skill in archery could now save him, for the spear of Menelaus struck him in the back as he was flying; it struck him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell headlong and his armour rang rattling round him.

Meriones then killed Phereclus the son of Tecton, who was the son of Hermon, a man whose hand was skilled in all manner of cunning workmanship, for Pallas Minerva had dearly loved him. He it was that made the ships for Alexandrus, which were the beginning of all mischief, and brought evil alike both on the Trojans and on Alexandrus himself; for he heeded not the decrees of heaven. Meriones overtook him as he was flying, and struck him on the right buttock. The point of the spear went through the bone into the bladder, and death came upon him as he cried aloud and fell forward on his knees.

Meges, moreover, slew Pedaeus, son of Antenor, who, though he was a bastard, had been brought up by Theano as one of her own children, for the love she bore her husband. The son of Phyleus got close up to him and drove a spear into the nape of his neck: it went under his tongue all among his teeth, so he bit the cold bronze, and fell dead in the dust.

And Eurypylus, son of Euaemon, killed Hypsenor, the son of noble Dolopion, who had been made priest of the river Scamander, and was honoured among the people as though he were a god. Eurypylus gave him chase as he was flying before him, smote him with his sword upon the arm, and lopped his strong hand from off it. The bloody hand fell to the ground, and the shades of death, with fate that no man can withstand, came over his eyes.

Thus furiously did the battle rage between them. As for the son of Tydeus, you could not say whether he was more among the Achaeans or the Trojans. He rushed across the plain like a winter torrent that has burst its barrier in full flood; no dykes, no walls of

fruitful vineyards can embank it when it is swollen with rain from heaven, but in a moment it comes tearing onward, and lays many a field waste that many a strong man's hand has reclaimed—even so were the dense phalanxes of the Trojans driven in rout by the son of Tydeus, and many though they were, they dared not abide his onslaught.

Now when the son of Lycaon saw him scouring the plain and driving the Trojans pell-mell before him, he aimed an arrow and hit the front part of his cuirass near the shoulder: the arrow went right through the metal and pierced the flesh, so that the cuirass was covered with blood. On this the son of Lycaon shouted in triumph, "Knights Trojans, come on; the bravest of the Achaeans is wounded, and he will not hold out much longer if King Apollo was indeed with me when I sped from Lycia hither."

Thus did he vaunt; but his arrow had not killed Diomed, who withdrew and made for the chariot and horses of Sthenelus, the son of Capaneus. "Dear son of Capaneus," said he, "come down from your chariot, and draw the arrow out of my shoulder."

Sthenelus sprang from his chariot, and drew the arrow from the wound, whereon the blood came spouting out through the hole that had been made in his shirt. Then Diomed prayed, saying, "Hear me, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, if ever you loved my father well and stood by him in the thick of a fight, do the like now by me; grant me to come within a spear's throw of that man and kill him. He has been too quick for me and has wounded me; and now he is boasting that I shall not see the light of the sun much longer."

Thus he prayed, and Pallas Minerva heard him; she made his limbs supple and quickened his hands and his feet. Then she went up close to him and said, "Fear not, Diomed, to do battle with the Trojans, for I have set in your heart the spirit of your knightly father Tydeus. Moreover, I have withdrawn the veil from your eyes, that you know gods and men apart. If, then, any other god comes here and offers you battle, do not fight him; but should Jove's daughter Venus come, strike her with your spear and wound her."

When she had said this Minerva went away, and the son of Tydeus again took his place among the foremost fighters, three times more fierce even than he had been before. He was like a lion that some mountain shepherd has wounded, but not killed, as he is springing over the wall of a sheep-yard to attack the sheep. The shepherd has roused the brute to fury but cannot defend his flock, so he takes shelter under cover of the buildings, while the sheep, panic-stricken on being deserted, are smothered in heaps one on top of the other, and the angry lion leaps out over the sheep-yard wall. Even thus did Diomed go furiously about among the Trojans.

He killed Astynous, and Hypeiron shepherd of his people, the one with a thrust of his spear, which struck him above the nipple, the other with a sword-cut on the collar-bone, that severed his shoulder from his neck and back. He let both of them lie, and went in pursuit of Abas and Polyidus, sons of the old reader of dreams Eurydamas: they never came back for him to read them any more dreams, for mighty Diomed made an end of them. He then gave chase to Xanthus and Thoon, the two sons of Phaenops, both of them very dear to him, for he was now worn out with age, and begat no more sons to inherit his possessions. But Diomed took both their lives and left their father sorrowing bitterly, for he nevermore saw them come home from battle alive, and his kinsmen divided his wealth among themselves.

Then he came upon two sons of Priam, Echemmon and Chromius, as they were both in one chariot. He sprang upon them as a lion fastens on the neck of some cow or heifer when the herd is feeding in a coppice. For all their vain struggles he flung them both from their chariot and stripped the armour from their bodies. Then he gave their horses to his comrades to take them back to the ships.

When Aeneas saw him thus making havoc among the ranks, he went through the fight amid the rain of spears to see if he could find Pandarus. When he had found the brave son of Lycaon he said, "Pandarus, where is now your bow, your winged arrows, and your renown as an archer, in respect of which no man here can rival you nor is there any in Lycia that can beat you? Lift then your hands to Jove and send an arrow at this fellow who is going so masterfully about, and has done such deadly work among the Trojans. He has killed many a brave man—unless indeed he is some god who is angry with the Trojans about their sacrifices, and and has set his hand against them in his displeasure."

And the son of Lycaon answered, "Aeneas, I take him for none other than the son of Tydeus. I know him by his shield, the visor of his helmet, and by his horses. It is possible that he may be a god, but if he is the man I say he is, he is not making all this havoc without heaven's help, but has some god by his side who is shrouded in a cloud of darkness, and who turned my arrow aside when it had hit him. I have taken aim at him already and hit him on the right shoulder; my arrow went through the breastpiece of his cuirass; and I made sure I should send him hurrying to the world below, but it seems that I have not killed him. There must be a god

who is angry with me. Moreover I have neither horse nor chariot. In my father's stables there are eleven excellent chariots, fresh from the builder, quite new, with cloths spread over them; and by each of them there stand a pair of horses, champing barley and rye; my old father Lycaon urged me again and again when I was at home and on the point of starting, to take chariots and horses with me that I might lead the Trojans in battle, but I would not listen to him; it would have been much better if I had done so, but I was thinking about the horses, which had been used to eat their fill, and I was afraid that in such a great gathering of men they might be ill-fed, so I left them at home and came on foot to Ilius armed only with my bow and arrows. These it seems, are of no use, for I have already hit two chieftains, the sons of Atreus and of Tydeus, and though I drew blood surely enough, I have only made them still more furious. I did ill to take my bow down from its peg on the day I led my band of Trojans to Ilius in Hector's service, and if ever I get home again to set eyes on my native place, my wife, and the greatness of my house, may some one cut my head off then and there if I do not break the bow and set it on a hot fire—such pranks as it plays me."

Aeneas answered, "Say no more. Things will not mend till we two go against this man with chariot and horses and bring him to a trial of arms. Mount my chariot, and note how cleverly the horses of Tros can speed hither and thither over the plain in pursuit or flight. If Jove again vouchsafes glory to the son of Tydeus they will carry us safely back to the city. Take hold, then, of the whip and reins while I stand upon the car to fight, or else do you wait this man's onset while I look after the horses."

"Aeneas," replied the son of Lycaon, "take the reins and drive; if we have to fly before the son of Tydeus the horses will go better for their own driver. If they miss the sound of your voice when they expect it they may be frightened, and refuse to take us out of the fight. The son of Tydeus will then kill both of us and take the horses. Therefore drive them yourself and I will be ready for him with my spear."

They then mounted the chariot and drove full-speed towards the son of Tydeus. Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, saw them coming and said to Diomed, "Diomed, son of Tydeus, man after my own heart, I see two heroes speeding towards you, both of them men of might the one a skilful archer, Pandarus son of Lycaon, the other, Aeneas, whose sire is Anchises, while his mother is Venus. Mount the chariot and let us retreat. Do not, I pray you, press so furiously forward, or you may get killed."

Diomed looked angrily at him and answered: "Talk not of flight, for I shall not listen to you: I am of a race that knows neither flight nor fear, and my limbs are as yet unwearied. I am in no mind to mount, but will go against them even as I am; Pallas Minerva bids me be afraid of no man, and even though one of them escape, their steeds shall not take both back again. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart—if Minerva sees fit to vouchsafe me the glory of killing both, stay your horses here and make the reins fast to the rim of the chariot; then be sure you spring Aeneas' horses and drive them from the Trojan to the Achaean ranks. They are of the stock that great Jove gave to Tros in payment for his son Ganymede, and are the finest that live and move under the sun. King Anchises stole the blood by putting his mares to them without Laomedon's knowledge, and they bore him six foals. Four are still in his stables, but he gave the other two to Aeneas. We shall win great glory if we can take them."

Thus did they converse, but the other two had now driven close up to them, and the son of Lycaon spoke first. "Great and mighty son," said he, "of noble Tydeus, my arrow failed to lay you low, so I will now try with my spear."

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it from him. It struck the shield of the son of Tydeus; the bronze point pierced it and passed on till it reached the breastplate. Thereon the son of Lycaon shouted out and said, "You are hit clean through the belly; you will not stand out for long, and the glory of the fight is mine."

But Diomed all undismayed made answer, "You have missed, not hit, and before you two see the end of this matter one or other of you shall glut tough-shielded Mars with his blood."

With this he hurled his spear, and Minerva guided it on to Pandarus's nose near the eye. It went crashing in among his white teeth; the bronze point cut through the root of his tongue, coming out under his chin, and his glistening armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. The horses started aside for fear, and he was reft of life and strength.

Aeneas sprang from his chariot armed with shield and spear, fearing lest the Achaeans should carry off the body. He bestrode it as a lion in the pride of strength, with shield and spear before him and a cry of battle on his lips resolute to kill the first that should dare face him. But the son of Tydeus caught up a mighty stone, so huge and great that as men now are it would take two to lift it; nevertheless he bore it aloft with ease unaided, and with this he struck Aeneas on the groin where the hip turns in the joint that is called the "cup-bone." The stone crushed this joint, and broke both the sinews, while its jagged edges tore away all the flesh. The hero fell on his knees, and propped himself with his hand resting on the ground till the darkness of night fell upon his eyes. And

now Aeneas, king of men, would have perished then and there, had not his mother, Jove's daughter Venus, who had conceived him by Anchises when he was herding cattle, been quick to mark, and thrown her two white arms about the body of her dear son. She protected him by covering him with a fold of her own fair garment, lest some Danaan should drive a spear into his breast and kill him.

Thus, then, did she bear her dear son out of the fight. But the son of Capaneus was not unmindful of the orders that Diomed had given him. He made his own horses fast, away from the hurly-burly, by binding the reins to the rim of the chariot. Then he sprang upon Aeneas's horses and drove them from the Trojan to the Achaean ranks. When he had so done he gave them over to his chosen comrade Deipylus, whom he valued above all others as the one who was most like-minded with himself, to take them on to the ships. He then remounted his own chariot, seized the reins, and drove with all speed in search of the son of Tydeus.

Now the son of Tydeus was in pursuit of the Cyprian goddess, spear in hand, for he knew her to be feeble and not one of those goddesses that can lord it among men in battle like Minerva or Enyo the waster of cities, and when at last after a long chase he caught her up, he flew at her and thrust his spear into the flesh of her delicate hand. The point tore through the ambrosial robe which the Graces had woven for her, and pierced the skin between her wrist and the palm of her hand, so that the immortal blood, or ichor, that flows in the veins of the blessed gods, came pouring from the wound; for the gods do not eat bread nor drink wine, hence they have no blood such as ours, and are immortal. Venus screamed aloud, and let her son fall, but Phoebus Apollo caught him in his arms, and hid him in a cloud of darkness, lest some Danaan should drive a spear into his breast and kill him; and Diomed shouted out as he left her, "Daughter of Jove, leave war and battle alone, can you not be contented with beguiling silly women? If you meddle with fighting you will get what will make you shudder at the very name of war."

The goddess went dazed and discomfited away, and Iris, fleet as the wind, drew her from the throng, in pain and with her fair skin all besmirched. She found fierce Mars waiting on the left of the battle, with his spear and his two fleet steeds resting on a cloud; whereon she fell on her knees before her brother and implored him to let her have his horses. "Dear brother," she cried, "save me, and give me your horses to take me to Olympus where the gods dwell. I am badly wounded by a mortal, the son of Tydeus, who would now fight even with father Jove."

Thus she spoke, and Mars gave her his gold-bedizened steeds. She mounted the chariot sick and sorry at heart, while Iris sat beside her and took the reins in her hand. She lashed her horses on and they flew forward nothing loth, till in a trice they were at high Olympus, where the gods have their dwelling. There she stayed them, unloosed them from the chariot, and gave them their ambrosial forage; but Venus flung herself on to the lap of her mother Dione, who threw her arms about her and caressed her, saying, "Which of the heavenly beings has been treating you in this way, as though you had been doing something wrong in the face of day?"

And laughter-loving Venus answered, "Proud Diomed, the son of Tydeus, wounded me because I was bearing my dear son Aeneas, whom I love best of all mankind, out of the fight. The war is no longer one between Trojans and Achaeans, for the Danaans have now taken to fighting with the immortals."

"Bear it, my child," replied Dione, "and make the best of it. We dwellers in Olympus have to put up with much at the hands of men, and we lay much suffering on one another. Mars had to suffer when Otus and Ephialtes, children of Aloeus, bound him in cruel bonds, so that he lay thirteen months imprisoned in a vessel of bronze. Mars would have then perished had not fair Eeriboea, stepmother to the sons of Aloeus, told Mercury, who stole him away when he was already well-nigh worn out by the severity of his bondage. Juno, again, suffered when the mighty son of Amphitryon wounded her on the right breast with a three-barbed arrow, and nothing could assuage her pain. So, also, did huge Hades, when this same man, the son of aegis-bearing Jove, hit him with an arrow even at the gates of hell, and hurt him badly. Thereon Hades went to the house of Jove on great Olympus, angry and full of pain; and the arrow in his brawny shoulder caused him great anguish till Paeeon healed him by spreading soothing herbs on the wound, for Hades was not of mortal mould. Daring, head-strong, evildoer who recked not of his sin in shooting the gods that dwell in Olympus. And now Minerva has egged this son of Tydeus on against yourself, fool that he is for not reflecting that no man who fights with gods will live long or hear his children prattling about his knees when he returns from battle. Let, then, the son of Tydeus see that he does not have to fight with one who is stronger than you are. Then shall his brave wife Aegialeia, daughter of Adrestus, rouse her whole house from sleep, wailing for the loss of her wedded lord, Diomed the bravest of the Achaeans."

So saying, she wiped the ichor from the wrist of her daughter with both hands, whereon the pain left her, and her hand was healed. But Minerva and Juno, who were looking on, began to taunt Jove with their mocking talk, and Minerva was first to speak. "Father

Jove," said she, "do not be angry with me, but I think the Cyprian must have been persuading some one of the Achaean women to go with the Trojans of whom she is so very fond, and while caressing one or other of them she must have torn her delicate hand with the gold pin of the woman's brooch."

The sire of gods and men smiled, and called golden Venus to his side. "My child," said he, "it has not been given you to be a warrior. Attend, henceforth, to your own delightful matrimonial duties, and leave all this fighting to Mars and to Minerva."

Thus did they converse. But Diomed sprang upon Aeneas, though he knew him to be in the very arms of Apollo. Not one whit did he fear the mighty god, so set was he on killing Aeneas and stripping him of his armour. Thrice did he spring forward with might and main to slay him, and thrice did Apollo beat back his gleaming shield. When he was coming on for the fourth time, as though he were a god, Apollo shouted to him with an awful voice and said, "Take heed, son of Tydeus, and draw off; think not to match yourself against gods, for men that walk the earth cannot hold their own with the immortals."

The son of Tydeus then gave way for a little space, to avoid the anger of the god, while Apollo took Aeneas out of the crowd and set him in sacred Pergamus, where his temple stood. There, within the mighty sanctuary, Latona and Diana healed him and made him glorious to behold, while Apollo of the silver bow fashioned a wraith in the likeness of Aeneas, and armed as he was. Round this the Trojans and Achaeans hacked at the bucklers about one another's breasts, hewing each other's round shields and light hide-covered targets. Then Phoebus Apollo said to Mars, "Mars, Mars, bane of men, blood-stained stormer of cities, can you not go to this man, the son of Tydeus, who would now fight even with father Jove, and draw him out of the battle? He first went up to the Cyprian and wounded her in the hand near her wrist, and afterwards sprang upon me too, as though he were a god."

He then took his seat on the top of Pergamus, while murderous Mars went about among the ranks of the Trojans, cheering them on, in the likeness of fleet Acamas chief of the Thracians. "Sons of Priam," said he, "how long will you let your people be thus slaughtered by the Achaeans? Would you wait till they are at the walls of Troy? Aeneas the son of Anchises has fallen, he whom we held in as high honour as Hector himself. Help me, then, to rescue our brave comrade from the stress of the fight."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Then Sarpedon rebuked Hector very sternly. "Hector," said he, "where is your prowess now? You used to say that though you had neither people nor allies you could hold the town alone with your brothers and brothers-in-law. I see not one of them here; they cower as hounds before a lion; it is we, your allies, who bear the brunt of the battle. I have come from afar, even from Lycia and the banks of the river Xanthus, where I have left my wife, my infant son, and much wealth to tempt whoever is needy; nevertheless, I head my Lycian soldiers and stand my ground against any who would fight me though I have nothing here for the Achaeans to plunder, while you look on, without even bidding your men stand firm in defence of their wives. See that you fall not into the hands of your foes as men caught in the meshes of a net, and they sack your fair city forthwith. Keep this before your mind night and day, and beseech the captains of your allies to hold on without flinching, and thus put away their reproaches from you."

So spoke Sarpedon, and Hector smarted under his words. He sprang from his chariot clad in his suit of armour, and went about among the host brandishing his two spears, exhorting the men to fight and raising the terrible cry of battle. Then they rallied and again faced the Achaeans, but the Argives stood compact and firm, and were not driven back. As the breezes sport with the chaff upon some goodly threshing-floor, when men are winnowing—while yellow Ceres blows with the wind to sift the chaff from the grain, and the chaff-heaps grow whiter and whiter—even so did the Achaeans whiten in the dust which the horses' hoofs raised to the firmament of heaven, as their drivers turned them back to battle, and they bore down with might upon the foe. Fierce Mars, to help the Trojans, covered them in a veil of darkness, and went about everywhere among them, inasmuch as Phoebus Apollo had told him that when he saw Pallas Minerva leave the fray he was to put courage into the hearts of the Trojans—for it was she who was helping the Danaans. Then Apollo sent Aeneas forth from his rich sanctuary, and filled his heart with valour, whereon he took his place among his comrades, who were overjoyed at seeing him alive, sound, and of a good courage; but they could not ask him how it had all happened, for they were too busy with the turmoil raised by Mars and by Strife, who raged insatiably in their midst.

The two Ajaxes, Ulysses and Diomed, cheered the Danaans on, fearless of the fury and onset of the Trojans. They stood as still as clouds which the son of Saturn has spread upon the mountain tops when there is no air and fierce Boreas sleeps with the other boisterous winds whose shrill blasts scatter the clouds in all directions—even so did the Danaans stand firm and unflinching against the Trojans. The son of Atreus went about among them and exhorted them. "My friends," said he, "quit yourselves like brave men, and shun dishonour in one another's eyes amid the stress of battle. They that shun dishonour more often live than get killed, but they that fly save neither life nor name."

As he spoke he hurled his spear and hit one of those who were in the front rank, the comrade of Aeneas, Deicoon son of Pergasus, whom the Trojans held in no less honour than the sons of Priam, for he was ever quick to place himself among the foremost. The spear of King Agamemnon struck his shield and went right through it, for the shield stayed it not. It drove through his belt into the lower part of his belly, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground.

Then Aeneas killed two champions of the Danaans, Crethon and Orsilochus. Their father was a rich man who lived in the strong city of Phere and was descended from the river Alpheus, whose broad stream flows through the land of the Pylians. The river begat Orsilochus, who ruled over much people and was father to Diocles, who in his turn begat twin sons, Crethon and Orsilochus, well skilled in all the arts of war. These, when they grew up, went to Ilius with the Argive fleet in the cause of Menelaus and Agamemnon sons of Atreus, and there they both of them fell. As two lions whom their dam has reared in the depths of some mountain forest to plunder homesteads and carry off sheep and cattle till they get killed by the hand of man, so were these two vanquished by Aeneas, and fell like high pine-trees to the ground.

Brave Menelaus pitied them in their fall, and made his way to the front, clad in gleaming bronze and brandishing his spear, for Mars egged him on to do so with intent that he should be killed by Aeneas; but Antilochus the son of Nestor saw him and sprang forward, fearing that the king might come to harm and thus bring all their labour to nothing; when, therefore Aeneas and Menelaus were setting their hands and spears against one another eager to do battle, Antilochus placed himself by the side of Menelaus. Aeneas, bold though he was, drew back on seeing the two heroes side by side in front of him, so they drew the bodies of Crethon and Orsilochus to the ranks of the Achaeans and committed the two poor fellows into the hands of their comrades. They then turned back and fought in the front ranks.

They killed Pylaemenes peer of Mars, leader of the Paphlagonian warriors. Menelaus struck him on the collar-bone as he was standing on his chariot, while Antilochus hit his charioteer and squire Mydon, the son of Atymnius, who was turning his horses in flight. He hit him with a stone upon the elbow, and the reins, enriched with white ivory, fell from his hands into the dust. Antilochus rushed towards him and struck him on the temples with his sword, whereon he fell head first from the chariot to the ground. There he stood for a while with his head and shoulders buried deep in the dust—for he had fallen on sandy soil till his horses kicked him and laid him flat on the ground, as Antilochus lashed them and drove them off to the host of the Achaeans.

But Hector marked them from across the ranks, and with a loud cry rushed towards them, followed by the strong battalions of the Trojans. Mars and dread Enyo led them on, she fraught with ruthless turmoil of battle, while Mars wielded a monstrous spear, and went about, now in front of Hector and now behind him.

Diomed shook with passion as he saw them. As a man crossing a wide plain is dismayed to find himself on the brink of some great river rolling swiftly to the sea—he sees its boiling waters and starts back in fear—even so did the son of Tydeus give ground. Then he said to his men, “My friends, how can we wonder that Hector wields the spear so well? Some god is ever by his side to protect him, and now Mars is with him in the likeness of mortal man. Keep your faces therefore towards the Trojans, but give ground backwards, for we dare not fight with gods.”

As he spoke the Trojans drew close up, and Hector killed two men, both in one chariot, Menesthes and Anchialus, heroes well versed in war. Ajax son of Telamon pitied them in their fall; he came close up and hurled his spear, hitting Amphius the son of Selagus, a man of great wealth who lived in Paesus and owned much corn-growing land, but his lot had led him to come to the aid of Priam and his sons. Ajax struck him in the belt; the spear pierced the lower part of his belly, and he fell heavily to the ground. Then Ajax ran towards him to strip him of his armour, but the Trojans rained spears upon him, many of which fell upon his shield. He planted his heel upon the body and drew out his spear, but the darts pressed so heavily upon him that he could not strip the goodly armour from his shoulders. The Trojan chieftains, moreover, many and valiant, came about him with their spears, so that he dared not stay; great, brave and valiant though he was, they drove him from them and he was beaten back.

Thus, then, did the battle rage between them. Presently the strong hand of fate impelled Tlepolemus, the son of Hercules, a man both brave and of great stature, to fight Sarpedon; so the two, son and grandson of great Jove, drew near to one another, and Tlepolemus spoke first. “Sarpedon,” said he, “councillor of the Lycians, why should you come skulking here you who are a man of peace? They lie who call you son of aegis-bearing Jove, for you are little like those who were of old his children. Far other was Hercules, my own brave and lion-hearted father, who came here for the horses of Laomedon, and though he had six ships only, and few men to follow him, sacked the city of Ilius and made a wilderness of her highways. You are a coward, and your people are

falling from you. For all your strength, and all your coming from Lycia, you will be no help to the Trojans but will pass the gates of Hades vanquished by my hand."

And Sarpedon, captain of the Lycians, answered, "Tlepolemus, your father overthrew Ilius by reason of Laomedon's folly in refusing payment to one who had served him well. He would not give your father the horses which he had come so far to fetch. As for yourself, you shall meet death by my spear. You shall yield glory to myself, and your soul to Hades of the noble steeds."

Thus spoke Sarpedon, and Tlepolemus upraised his spear. They threw at the same moment, and Sarpedon struck his foe in the middle of his throat; the spear went right through, and the darkness of death fell upon his eyes. Tlepolemus's spear struck Sarpedon on the left thigh with such force that it tore through the flesh and grazed the bone, but his father as yet warded off destruction from him.

His comrades bore Sarpedon out of the fight, in great pain by the weight of the spear that was dragging from his wound. They were in such haste and stress as they bore him that no one thought of drawing the spear from his thigh so as to let him walk uprightly. Meanwhile the Achaeans carried off the body of Tlepolemus, whereon Ulysses was moved to pity, and panted for the fray as he beheld them. He doubted whether to pursue the son of Jove, or to make slaughter of the Lycian rank and file; it was not decreed, however, that he should slay the son of Jove; Minerva, therefore, turned him against the main body of the Lycians. He killed Coeranus, Alastor, Chromius, Alcandrus, Halius, Noemon, and Prytanis, and would have slain yet more, had not great Hector marked him, and sped to the front of the fight clad in his suit of mail, filling the Danaans with terror. Sarpedon was glad when he saw him coming, and besought him, saying, "Son of Priam, let me not be here to fall into the hands of the Danaans. Help me, and since I may not return home to gladden the hearts of my wife and of my infant son, let me die within the walls of your city."

Hector made him no answer, but rushed onward to fall at once upon the Achaeans and kill many among them. His comrades then bore Sarpedon away and laid him beneath Jove's spreading oak tree. Pelagon, his friend and comrade, drew the spear out of his thigh, but Sarpedon fainted and a mist came over his eyes. Presently he came to himself again, for the breath of the north wind as it played upon him gave him new life, and brought him out of the deep swoon into which he had fallen.

Meanwhile the Argives were neither driven towards their ships by Mars and Hector, nor yet did they attack them; when they knew that Mars was with the Trojans they retreated, but kept their faces still turned towards the foe. Who, then, was first and who last to be slain by Mars and Hector? They were valiant Teuthras, and Orestes the renowned charioteer, Trechus the Aetolian warrior, Oenomaus, Helenus the son of Oenops, and Oresbius of the gleaming girdle, who was possessed of great wealth, and dwelt by the Cephisian lake with the other Boeotians who lived near him, owners of a fertile country.

Now when the goddess Juno saw the Argives thus falling, she said to Minerva, "Alas, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, the promise we made Menelaus that he should not return till he had sacked the city of Ilius will be of no effect if we let Mars rage thus furiously. Let us go into the fray at once."

Minerva did not gainsay her. Thereon the august goddess, daughter of great Saturn, began to harness her gold-bedizened steeds. Hebe with all speed fitted on the eight-spoked wheels of bronze that were on either side of the iron axle-tree. The felloes of the wheels were of gold, imperishable, and over these there was a tire of bronze, wondrous to behold. The naves of the wheels were silver, turning round the axle upon either side. The car itself was made with plaited bands of gold and silver, and it had a double top-rail running all round it. From the body of the car there went a pole of silver, on to the end of which she bound the golden yoke, with the bands of gold that were to go under the necks of the horses Then Juno put her steeds under the yoke, eager for battle and the war-cry.

Meanwhile Minerva flung her richly embroidered vesture, made with her own hands, on to her father's threshold, and donned the shirt of Jove, arming herself for battle. She threw her tasselled aegis about her shoulders, wreathed round with Rout as with a fringe, and on it were Strife, and Strength, and Panic whose blood runs cold; moreover there was the head of the dread monster Gorgon, grim and awful to behold, portent of aegis-bearing Jove. On her head she set her helmet of gold, with four plumes, and coming to a peak both in front and behind—decked with the emblems of a hundred cities; then she stepped into her flaming chariot and grasped the spear, so stout and sturdy and strong, with which she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her. Juno lashed the horses on, and the gates of heaven bellowed as they flew open of their own accord—gates over which the Hours preside, in whose hands are Heaven and Olympus, either to open the dense cloud that hides them, or to close it. Through these the goddesses drove their obedient steeds, and found the son of Saturn sitting all alone on the topmost ridges of Olympus. There Juno stayed her horses, and spoke to Jove the son of Saturn, lord of all. "Father Jove," said she, "are you not angry with Mars for these

high doings? how great and goodly a host of the Achaeans he has destroyed to my great grief, and without either right or reason, while the Cyprian and Apollo are enjoying it all at their ease and setting this unrighteous madman on to do further mischief. I hope, Father Jove, that you will not be angry if I hit Mars hard, and chase him out of the battle."

And Jove answered, "Set Minerva on to him, for she punishes him more often than any one else does."

Juno did as he had said. She lashed her horses, and they flew forward nothing loth midway betwixt earth and sky. As far as a man can see when he looks out upon the sea from some high beacon, so far can the loud-neighing horses of the gods spring at a single bound. When they reached Troy and the place where its two flowing streams Simois and Scamander meet, there Juno stayed them and took them from the chariot. She hid them in a thick cloud, and Simois made ambrosia spring up for them to eat; the two goddesses then went on, flying like turtledoves in their eagerness to help the Argives. When they came to the part where the bravest and most in number were gathered about mighty Diomed, fighting like lions or wild boars of great strength and endurance, there Juno stood still and raised a shout like that of brazen-voiced Stentor, whose cry was as loud as that of fifty men together. "Argives," she cried; "shame on cowardly creatures, brave in semblance only; as long as Achilles was fighting, if his spear was so deadly that the Trojans dared not show themselves outside the Dardanian gates, but now they sally far from the city and fight even at your ships."

With these words she put heart and soul into them all, while Minerva sprang to the side of the son of Tydeus, whom she found near his chariot and horses, cooling the wound that Pandarus had given him. For the sweat caused by the hand that bore the weight of his shield irritated the hurt: his arm was weary with pain, and he was lifting up the strap to wipe away the blood. The goddess laid her hand on the yoke of his horses and said, "The son of Tydeus is not such another as his father. Tydeus was a little man, but he could fight, and rushed madly into the fray even when I told him not to do so. When he went all unattended as envoy to the city of Thebes among the Cadmeans, I bade him feast in their houses and be at peace; but with that high spirit which was ever present with him, he challenged the youth of the Cadmeans, and at once beat them in all that he attempted, so mightily did I help him. I stand by you too to protect you, and I bid you be instant in fighting the Trojans; but either you are tired out, or you are afraid and out of heart, and in that case I say that you are no true son of Tydeus the son of Oeneus."

Diomed answered, "I know you, goddess, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, and will hide nothing from you. I am not afraid nor out of heart, nor is there any slackness in me. I am only following your own instructions; you told me not to fight any of the blessed gods; but if Jove's daughter Venus came into battle I was to wound her with my spear. Therefore I am retreating, and bidding the other Argives gather in this place, for I know that Mars is now lording it in the field."

"Diomed, son of Tydeus," replied Minerva, "man after my own heart, fear neither Mars nor any other of the immortals, for I will befriend you. Nay, drive straight at Mars, and smite him in close combat; fear not this raging madman, villain incarnate, first on one side and then on the other. But now he was holding talk with Juno and myself, saying he would help the Argives and attack the Trojans; nevertheless he is with the Trojans, and has forgotten the Argives."

With this she caught hold of Sthenelus and lifted him off the chariot on to the ground. In a second he was on the ground, whereupon the goddess mounted the car and placed herself by the side of Diomed. The oaken axle groaned aloud under the burden of the awful goddess and the hero; Pallas Minerva took the whip and reins, and drove straight at Mars. He was in the act of stripping huge Periphas, son of Ochesius and bravest of the Aetolians. Bloody Mars was stripping him of his armour, and Minerva donned the helmet of Hades, that he might not see her; when, therefore, he saw Diomed, he made straight for him and let Periphas lie where he had fallen. As soon as they were at close quarters he let fly with his bronze spear over the reins and yoke, thinking to take Diomed's life, but Minerva caught the spear in her hand and made it fly harmlessly over the chariot. Diomed then threw, and Pallas Minerva drove the spear into the pit of Mars's stomach where his under-girdle went round him. There Diomed wounded him, tearing his fair flesh and then drawing his spear out again. Mars roared as loudly as nine or ten thousand men in the thick of a fight, and the Achaeans and Trojans were struck with panic, so terrible was the cry he raised.

As a dark cloud in the sky when it comes on to blow after heat, even so did Diomed son of Tydeus see Mars ascend into the broad heavens. With all speed he reached high Olympus, home of the gods, and in great pain sat down beside Jove the son of Saturn. He showed Jove the immortal blood that was flowing from his wound, and spoke piteously, saying, "Father Jove, are you not angered by such doings? We gods are continually suffering in the most cruel manner at one another's hands while helping mortals; and we all owe you a grudge for having begotten that mad termagant of a daughter, who is always committing outrage of some kind. We other gods must all do as you bid us, but her you neither scold nor punish; you encourage her because the pestilent creature is your

daughter. See how she has been inciting proud Diomed to vent his rage on the immortal gods. First he went up to the Cyprian and wounded her in the hand near her wrist, and then he sprang upon me too as though he were a god. Had I not run for it I must either have lain there for long enough in torments among the ghastly corpses, or have been eaten alive with spears till I had no more strength left in me."

Jove looked angrily at him and said, "Do not come whining here, Sir Facing-both-ways. I hate you worst of all the gods in Olympus, for you are ever fighting and making mischief. You have the intolerable and stubborn spirit of your mother Juno: it is all I can do to manage her, and it is her doing that you are now in this plight: still, I cannot let you remain longer in such great pain; you are my own offspring, and it was by me that your mother conceived you; if, however, you had been the son of any other god, you are so destructive that by this time you should have been lying lower than the Titans."

He then bade Paeeon heal him, whereon Paeeon spread pain-killing herbs upon his wound and cured him, for he was not of mortal mould. As the juice of the fig-tree curdles milk, and thickens it in a moment though it is liquid, even so instantly did Paeeon cure fierce Mars. Then Hebe washed him, and clothed him in goodly raiment, and he took his seat by his father Jove all glorious to behold.

But Juno of Argos and Minerva of Alalcomene, now that they had put a stop to the murderous doings of Mars, went back again to the house of Jove.

This page titled 3.12.1.5: Book V is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.6: Book VI

Glaucus and Diomed—The story of Bellerophon—Hector and Andromache.

The fight between Trojans and Achaeans was now left to rage as it would, and the tide of war surged hither and thither over the plain as they aimed their bronze-shod spears at one another between the streams of Simois and Xanthus.

First, Ajax son of Telamon, tower of strength to the Achaeans, broke a phalanx of the Trojans, and came to the assistance of his comrades by killing Acamas son of Eussorus, the best man among the Thracians, being both brave and of great stature. The spear struck the projecting peak of his helmet: its bronze point then went through his forehead into the brain, and darkness veiled his eyes.

Then Diomed killed Axylus son of Teuthranus, a rich man who lived in the strong city of Arisbe, and was beloved by all men; for he had a house by the roadside, and entertained every one who passed; howbeit not one of his guests stood before him to save his life, and Diomed killed both him and his squire Calesius, who was then his charioteer—so the pair passed beneath the earth.

Euryalus killed Dresus and Opheltius, and then went in pursuit of Aesepus and Pedasus, whom the naiad nymph Abarbarea had borne to noble Bucolion. Bucolion was eldest son to Laomedon, but he was a bastard. While tending his sheep he had converse with the nymph, and she conceived twin sons; these the son of Mecisteus now slew, and he stripped the armour from their shoulders. Polypoetes then killed Astyalus, Ulysses Pidytes of Percote, and Teucer Aretaon. Ablerus fell by the spear of Nestor's son Antilochus, and Agamemnon, king of men, killed Elatus who dwelt in Pedasus by the banks of the river Satnioeis. Leitus killed Phylacus as he was flying, and Eurypylus slew Melanthus.

Then Menelaus of the loud war-cry took Adrestus alive, for his horses ran into a tamarisk bush, as they were flying wildly over the plain, and broke the pole from the car; they went on towards the city along with the others in full flight, but Adrestus rolled out, and fell in the dust flat on his face by the wheel of his chariot; Menelaus came up to him spear in hand, but Adrestus caught him by the knees begging for his life. "Take me alive," he cried, "son of Atreus, and you shall have a full ransom for me: my father is rich and has much treasure of gold, bronze, and wrought iron laid by in his house. From this store he will give you a large ransom should he hear of my being alive and at the ships of the Achaeans."

Thus did he plead, and Menelaus was for yielding and giving him to a squire to take to the ships of the Achaeans, but Agamemnon came running up to him and rebuked him. "My good Menelaus," said he, "this is no time for giving quarter. Has, then, your house fared so well at the hands of the Trojans? Let us not spare a single one of them—not even the child unborn and in its mother's womb; let not a man of them be left alive, but let all in Ilius perish, unheeded and forgotten."

Thus did he speak, and his brother was persuaded by him, for his words were just. Menelaus, therefore, thrust Adrestus from him, whereon King Agamemnon struck him in the flank, and he fell: then the son of Atreus planted his foot upon his breast to draw his spear from the body.

Meanwhile Nestor shouted to the Argives, saying, "My friends, Danaan warriors, servants of Mars, let no man lag that he may spoil the dead, and bring back much booty to the ships. Let us kill as many as we can; the bodies will lie upon the plain, and you can despoil them later at your leisure."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. And now the Trojans would have been routed and driven back into Ilius, had not Priam's son Helenus, wisest of augurs, said to Hector and Aeneas, "Hector and Aeneas, you two are the mainstays of the Trojans and Lycians, for you are foremost at all times, alike in fight and counsel; hold your ground here, and go about among the host to rally them in front of the gates, or they will fling themselves into the arms of their wives, to the great joy of our foes. Then, when you have put heart into all our companies, we will stand firm here and fight the Danaans however hard they press us, for there is nothing else to be done. Meanwhile do you, Hector, go to the city and tell our mother what is happening. Tell her to bid the matrons gather at the temple of Minerva in the acropolis; let her then take her key and open the doors of the sacred building; there, upon the knees of Minerva, let her lay the largest, fairest robe she has in her house—the one she sets most store by; let her, moreover, promise to sacrifice twelve yearling heifers that have never yet felt the goad, in the temple of the goddess, if she will take pity on the town, with the wives and little ones of the Trojans, and keep the son of Tydeus from falling on the goodly city of Ilius; for he fights with fury and fills men's souls with panic. I hold him mightiest of them all; we did not fear even their great

champion Achilles, son of a goddess though he be, as we do this man: his rage is beyond all bounds, and there is none can vie with him in prowess."

Hector did as his brother bade him. He sprang from his chariot, and went about everywhere among the host, brandishing his spears, urging the men on to fight, and raising the dread cry of battle. Thereon they rallied and again faced the Achaeans, who gave ground and ceased their murderous onset, for they deemed that some one of the immortals had come down from starry heaven to help the Trojans, so strangely had they rallied. And Hector shouted to the Trojans, "Trojans and allies, be men, my friends, and fight with might and main, while I go to Ilius and tell the old men of our council and our wives to pray to the gods and vow hecatombs in their honour."

With this he went his way, and the black rim of hide that went round his shield beat against his neck and his ancles.

Then Glaucus son of Hippolochus, and the son of Tydeus went into the open space between the hosts to fight in single combat. When they were close up to one another Diomed of the loud war-cry was the first to speak. "Who, my good sir," said he, "who are you among men? I have never seen you in battle until now, but you are daring beyond all others if you abide my onset. Woe to those fathers whose sons face my might. If, however, you are one of the immortals and have come down from heaven, I will not fight you; for even valiant Lycurgus, son of Dryas, did not live long when he took to fighting with the gods. He it was that drove the nursing women who were in charge of frenzied Bacchus through the land of Nysa, and they flung their thyrsi on the ground as murderous Lycurgus beat them with his oxgoad. Bacchus himself plunged terror-stricken into the sea, and Thetis took him to her bosom to comfort him, for he was scared by the fury with which the man reviled him. Thereon the gods who live at ease were angry with Lycurgus and the son of Saturn struck him blind, nor did he live much longer after he had become hateful to the immortals. Therefore I will not fight with the blessed gods; but if you are of them that eat the fruit of the ground, draw near and meet your doom."

And the son of Hippolochus answered, "Son of Tydeus, why ask me of my lineage? Men come and go as leaves year by year upon the trees. Those of autumn the wind sheds upon the ground, but when spring returns the forest buds forth with fresh vines. Even so is it with the generations of mankind, the new spring up as the old are passing away. If, then, you would learn my descent, it is one that is well known to many. There is a city in the heart of Argos, pasture land of horses, called Ephyra, where Sisyphus lived, who was the craftiest of all mankind. He was the son of Aeolus, and had a son named Glaucus, who was father to Bellerophon, whom heaven endowed with the most surpassing comeliness and beauty. But Proetus devised his ruin, and being stronger than he, drove him from the land of the Argives, over which Jove had made him ruler. For Antea, wife of Proetus, lusted after him, and would have had him lie with her in secret; but Bellerophon was an honourable man and would not, so she told lies about him to Proteus. 'Proetus,' said she, 'kill Bellerophon or die, for he would have had converse with me against my will.' The king was angered, but shrank from killing Bellerophon, so he sent him to Lycia with lying letters of introduction, written on a folded tablet, and containing much ill against the bearer. He bade Bellerophon show these letters to his father-in-law, to the end that he might thus perish; Bellerophon therefore went to Lycia, and the gods convoyed him safely.

"When he reached the river Xanthus, which is in Lycia, the king received him with all goodwill, feasted him nine days, and killed nine heifers in his honour, but when rosy-fingered morning appeared upon the tenth day, he questioned him and desired to see the letter from his son-in-law Proetus. When he had received the wicked letter he first commanded Bellerophon to kill that savage monster, the Chimaera, who was not a human being, but a goddess, for she had the head of a lion and the tail of a serpent, while her body was that of a goat, and she breathed forth flames of fire; but Bellerophon slew her, for he was guided by signs from heaven. He next fought the far-famed Solymi, and this, he said, was the hardest of all his battles. Thirdly, he killed the Amazons, women who were the peers of men, and as he was returning thence the king devised yet another plan for his destruction; he picked the bravest warriors in all Lycia, and placed them in ambuscade, but not a man ever came back, for Bellerophon killed every one of them. Then the king knew that he must be the valiant offspring of a god, so he kept him in Lycia, gave him his daughter in marriage, and made him of equal honour in the kingdom with himself; and the Lycians gave him a piece of land, the best in all the country, fair with vineyards and tilled fields, to have and to hold.

"The king's daughter bore Bellerophon three children, Isander, Hippolochus, and Laodameia. Jove, the lord of counsel, lay with Laodameia, and she bore him noble Sarpedon; but when Bellerophon came to be hated by all the gods, he wandered all desolate and dismayed upon the Alean plain, gnawing at his own heart, and shunning the path of man. Mars, insatiate of battle, killed his son Isander while he was fighting the Solymi; his daughter was killed by Diana of the golden reins, for she was angered with her; but Hippolochus was father to myself, and when he sent me to Troy he urged me again and again to fight ever among the foremost

and outvie my peers, so as not to shame the blood of my fathers who were the noblest in Ephyra and in all Lycia. This, then, is the descent I claim."

Thus did he speak, and the heart of Diomed was glad. He planted his spear in the ground, and spoke to him with friendly words. "Then," he said, "you are an old friend of my father's house. Great Oeneus once entertained Bellerophon for twenty days, and the two exchanged presents. Oeneus gave a belt rich with purple, and Bellerophon a double cup, which I left at home when I set out for Troy. I do not remember Tydeus, for he was taken from us while I was yet a child, when the army of the Achaeans was cut to pieces before Thebes. Henceforth, however, I must be your host in middle Argos, and you mine in Lycia, if I should ever go there; let us avoid one another's spears even during a general engagement; there are many noble Trojans and allies whom I can kill, if I overtake them and heaven delivers them into my hand; so again with yourself, there are many Achaeans whose lives you may take if you can; we two, then, will exchange armour, that all present may know of the old ties that subsist between us."

With these words they sprang from their chariots, grasped one another's hands, and plighted friendship. But the son of Saturn made Glaucus take leave of his wits, for he exchanged golden armour for bronze, the worth of a hundred head of cattle for the worth of nine.

Now when Hector reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree, the wives and daughters of the Trojans came running towards him to ask after their sons, brothers, kinsmen, and husbands: he told them to set about praying to the gods, and many were made sorrowful as they heard him.

Presently he reached the splendid palace of King Priam, adorned with colonnades of hewn stone. In it there were fifty bedchambers —all of hewn stone—built near one another, where the sons of Priam slept, each with his wedded wife. Opposite these, on the other side the courtyard, there were twelve upper rooms also of hewn stone for Priam's daughters, built near one another, where his sons-in-law slept with their wives. When Hector got there, his fond mother came up to him with Laodice the fairest of her daughters. She took his hand within her own and said, "My son, why have you left the battle to come hither? Are the Achaeans, woe betide them, pressing you hard about the city that you have thought fit to come and uplift your hands to Jove from the citadel? Wait till I can bring you wine that you may make offering to Jove and to the other immortals, and may then drink and be refreshed. Wine gives a man fresh strength when he is wearied, as you now are with fighting on behalf of your kinsmen."

And Hector answered, "Honoured mother, bring no wine, lest you unman me and I forget my strength. I dare not make a drink-offering to Jove with unwashed hands; one who is bespattered with blood and filth may not pray to the son of Saturn. Get the matrons together, and go with offerings to the temple of Minerva driver of the spoil; there, upon the knees of Minerva, lay the largest and fairest robe you have in your house—the one you set most store by; promise, moreover, to sacrifice twelve yearling heifers that have never yet felt the goad, in the temple of the goddess if she will take pity on the town, with the wives and little ones of the Trojans, and keep the son of Tydeus from off the goodly city of Ilius, for he fights with fury, and fills men's souls with panic. Go, then, to the temple of Minerva, while I seek Paris and exhort him, if he will hear my words. Would that the earth might open her jaws and swallow him, for Jove bred him to be the bane of the Trojans, and of Priam and Priam's sons. Could I but see him go down into the house of Hades, my heart would forget its heaviness."

His mother went into the house and called her waiting-women who gathered the matrons throughout the city. She then went down into her fragrant store-room, where her embroidered robes were kept, the work of Sidonian women, whom Alexandrus had brought over from Sidon when he sailed the seas upon that voyage during which he carried off Helen. Hecuba took out the largest robe, and the one that was most beautifully enriched with embroidery, as an offering to Minerva: it glittered like a star, and lay at the very bottom of the chest. With this she went on her way and many matrons with her.

When they reached the temple of Minerva, lovely Theano, daughter of Cisseus and wife of Antenor, opened the doors, for the Trojans had made her priestess of Minerva. The women lifted up their hands to the goddess with a loud cry, and Theano took the robe to lay it upon the knees of Minerva, praying the while to the daughter of great Jove. "Holy Minerva," she cried, "protectress of our city, mighty goddess, break the spear of Diomed and lay him low before the Scaean gates. Do this, and we will sacrifice twelve heifers that have never yet known the goad, in your temple, if you will have pity upon the town, with the wives and little ones of the Trojans." Thus she prayed, but Pallas Minerva granted not her prayer.

While they were thus praying to the daughter of great Jove, Hector went to the fair house of Alexandrus, which he had built for him by the foremost builders in the land. They had built him his house, storehouse, and courtyard near those of Priam and Hector on the acropolis. Here Hector entered, with a spear eleven cubits long in his hand; the bronze point gleamed in front of him, and was

fastened to the shaft of the spear by a ring of gold. He found Alexandrus within the house, busied about his armour, his shield and cuirass, and handling his curved bow; there, too, sat Argive Helen with her women, setting them their several tasks; and as Hector saw him he rebuked him with words of scorn. “Sir,” said he, “you do ill to nurse this rancour; the people perish fighting round this our town; you would yourself chide one whom you saw shirking his part in the combat. Up then, or ere long the city will be in a blaze.”

And Alexandrus answered, “Hector, your rebuke is just; listen therefore, and believe me when I tell you that I am not here so much through rancour or ill-will towards the Trojans, as from a desire to indulge my grief. My wife was even now gently urging me to battle, and I hold it better that I should go, for victory is ever fickle. Wait, then, while I put on my armour, or go first and I will follow. I shall be sure to overtake you.”

Hector made no answer, but Helen tried to soothe him. “Brother,” said she, “to my abhorred and sinful self, would that a whirlwind had caught me up on the day my mother brought me forth, and had borne me to some mountain or to the waves of the roaring sea that should have swept me away ere this mischief had come about. But, since the gods have devised these evils, would, at any rate, that I had been wife to a better man—to one who could smart under dishonour and men’s evil speeches. This fellow was never yet to be depended upon, nor never will be, and he will surely reap what he has sown. Still, brother, come in and rest upon this seat, for it is you who bear the brunt of that toil that has been caused by my hateful self and by the sin of Alexandrus—both of whom Jove has doomed to be a theme of song among those that shall be born hereafter.”

And Hector answered, “Bid me not be seated, Helen, for all the goodwill you bear me. I cannot stay. I am in haste to help the Trojans, who miss me greatly when I am not among them; but urge your husband, and of his own self also let him make haste to overtake me before I am out of the city. I must go home to see my household, my wife and my little son, for I know not whether I shall ever again return to them, or whether the gods will cause me to fill by the hands of the Achaeans.”

Then Hector left her, and forthwith was at his own house. He did not find Andromache, for she was on the wall with her child and one of her maids, weeping bitterly. Seeing, then, that she was not within, he stood on the threshold of the women’s rooms and said, “Women, tell me, and tell me true, where did Andromache go when she left the house? Was it to my sisters, or to my brothers’ wives? or is she at the temple of Minerva where the other women are propitiating the awful goddess?”

His good housekeeper answered, “Hector, since you bid me tell you truly, she did not go to your sisters nor to your brothers’ wives, nor yet to the temple of Minerva, where the other women are propitiating the awful goddess, but she is on the high wall of Ilius, for she had heard the Trojans were being hard pressed, and that the Achaeans were in great force: she went to the wall in frenzied haste, and the nurse went with her carrying the child.”

Hector hurried from the house when she had done speaking, and went down the streets by the same way that he had come. When he had gone through the city and had reached the Scaean gates through which he would go out on to the plain, his wife came running towards him, Andromache, daughter of great Eetion who ruled in Thebe under the wooded slopes of Mt. Placus, and was king of the Cilicians. His daughter had married Hector, and now came to meet him with a nurse who carried his little child in her bosom—a mere babe. Hector’s darling son, and lovely as a star. Hector had named him Scamandrius, but the people called him Astyanax, for his father stood alone as chief guardian of Ilius. Hector smiled as he looked upon the boy, but he did not speak, and Andromache stood by him weeping and taking his hand in her own. “Dear husband,” said she, “your valour will bring you to destruction; think on your infant son, and on my hapless self who ere long shall be your widow—for the Achaeans will set upon you in a body and kill you. It would be better for me, should I lose you, to lie dead and buried, for I shall have nothing left to comfort me when you are gone, save only sorrow. I have neither father nor mother now. Achilles slew my father when he sacked Thebe the goodly city of the Cilicians. He slew him, but did not for very shame despoil him; when he had burned him in his wondrous armour, he raised a barrow over his ashes and the mountain nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Jove, planted a grove of elms about his tomb. I had seven brothers in my father’s house, but on the same day they all went within the house of Hades. Achilles killed them as they were with their sheep and cattle. My mother—her who had been queen of all the land under Mt. Placus—he brought hither with the spoil, and freed her for a great sum, but the archer-queen Diana took her in the house of your father. Nay—Hector—you who to me are father, mother, brother, and dear husband—have mercy upon me; stay here upon this wall; make not your child fatherless, and your wife a widow; as for the host, place them near the fig-tree, where the city can be best scaled, and the wall is weakest. Thrice have the bravest of them come thither and assailed it, under the two Ajaxes, Idomeneus, the sons of Atreus, and the brave son of Tydeus, either of their own bidding, or because some soothsayer had told them.”

And Hector answered, “Wife, I too have thought upon all this, but with what face should I look upon the Trojans, men or women, if I shirked battle like a coward? I cannot do so: I know nothing save to fight bravely in the forefront of the Trojan host and win renown alike for my father and myself. Well do I know that the day will surely come when mighty Ilius shall be destroyed with Priam and Priam’s people, but I grieve for none of these—not even for Hecuba, nor King Priam, nor for my brothers many and brave who may fall in the dust before their foes—for none of these do I grieve as for yourself when the day shall come on which some one of the Achaeans shall rob you for ever of your freedom, and bear you weeping away. It may be that you will have to ply the loom in Argos at the bidding of a mistress, or to fetch water from the springs Messeis or Hypereia, treated brutally by some cruel task-master; then will one say who sees you weeping, ‘She was wife to Hector, the bravest warrior among the Trojans during the war before Ilius.’ On this your tears will break forth anew for him who would have put away the day of captivity from you. May I lie dead under the barrow that is heaped over my body ere I hear your cry as they carry you into bondage.”

He stretched his arms towards his child, but the boy cried and nestled in his nurse’s bosom, scared at the sight of his father’s armour, and at the horse-hair plume that nodded fiercely from his helmet. His father and mother laughed to see him, but Hector took the helmet from his head and laid it all gleaming upon the ground. Then he took his darling child, kissed him, and dandled him in his arms, praying over him the while to Jove and to all the gods. “Jove,” he cried, “grant that this my child may be even as myself, chief among the Trojans; let him be not less excellent in strength, and let him rule Ilius with his might. Then may one say of him as he comes from battle, ‘The son is far better than the father.’ May he bring back the blood-stained spoils of him whom he has laid low, and let his mother’s heart be glad.”

With this he laid the child again in the arms of his wife, who took him to her own soft bosom, smiling through her tears. As her husband watched her his heart yearned towards her and he caressed her fondly, saying, “My own wife, do not take these things too bitterly to heart. No one can hurry me down to Hades before my time, but if a man’s hour is come, be he brave or be he coward, there is no escape for him when he has once been born. Go, then, within the house, and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for war is man’s matter, and mine above all others of them that have been born in Ilius.”

He took his plumed helmet from the ground, and his wife went back again to her house, weeping bitterly and often looking back towards him. When she reached her home she found her maidens within, and bade them all join in her lament; so they mourned Hector in his own house though he was yet alive, for they deemed that they should never see him return safe from battle, and from the furious hands of the Achaeans.

Paris did not remain long in his house. He donned his goodly armour overlaid with bronze, and hasted through the city as fast as his feet could take him. As a horse, stabled and fed, breaks loose and gallops gloriously over the plain to the place where he is wont to bathe in the fair-flowing river—he holds his head high, and his mane streams upon his shoulders as he exults in his strength and flies like the wind to the haunts and feeding ground of the mares—even so went forth Paris from high Pergamus, gleaming like sunlight in his armour, and he laughed aloud as he sped swiftly on his way. Forthwith he came upon his brother Hector, who was then turning away from the place where he had held converse with his wife, and he was himself the first to speak. “Sir,” said he, “I fear that I have kept you waiting when you are in haste, and have not come as quickly as you bade me.”

“My good brother,” answered Hector, “you fight bravely, and no man with any justice can make light of your doings in battle. But you are careless and wilfully remiss. It grieves me to the heart to hear the ill that the Trojans speak about you, for they have suffered much on your account. Let us be going, and we will make things right hereafter, should Jove vouchsafe us to set the cup of our deliverance before ever-living gods of heaven in our own homes, when we have chased the Achaeans from Troy.”

This page titled 3.12.1.6: Book VI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.7: Book VII

Hector and Ajax fight—Hector is getting worsted when night comes on and parts them—They exchange presents—The burial of the dead, and the building of a wall round their ships by the Achaeans—The Achaeans buy their wine of Agamemnon and Menelaus.

With these words Hector passed through the gates, and his brother Alexandrus with him, both eager for the fray. As when heaven sends a breeze to sailors who have long looked for one in vain, and have laboured at their oars till they are faint with toil, even so welcome was the sight of these two heroes to the Trojans.

Thereon Alexandrus killed Menesthius the son of Areithous; he lived in Arne, and was son of Areithous the Mace-man, and of Phylomedusa. Hector threw a spear at Eioneus and struck him dead with a wound in the neck under the bronze rim of his helmet. Glaucus, moreover, son of Hippolochus, captain of the Lycians, in hard hand-to-hand fight smote Iphinous son of Dexius on the shoulder, as he was springing on to his chariot behind his fleet mares; so he fell to earth from the car, and there was no life left in him.

When, therefore, Minerva saw these men making havoc of the Argives, she darted down to Ilius from the summits of Olympus, and Apollo, who was looking on from Pergamus, went out to meet her; for he wanted the Trojans to be victorious. The pair met by the oak tree, and King Apollo son of Jove was first to speak. “What would you have,” said he, “daughter of great Jove, that your proud spirit has sent you hither from Olympus? Have you no pity upon the Trojans, and would you incline the scales of victory in favour of the Danaans? Let me persuade you—for it will be better thus—stay the combat for to-day, but let them renew the fight hereafter till they compass the doom of Ilius, since you goddesses have made up your minds to destroy the city.”

And Minerva answered, “So be it, Far-Darter; it was in this mind that I came down from Olympus to the Trojans and Achaeans. Tell me, then, how do you propose to end this present fighting?”

Apollo, son of Jove, replied, “Let us incite great Hector to challenge some one of the Danaans in single combat; on this the Achaeans will be shamed into finding a man who will fight him.”

Minerva assented, and Helenus son of Priam divined the counsel of the gods; he therefore went up to Hector and said, “Hector son of Priam, peer of gods in counsel, I am your brother, let me then persuade you. Bid the other Trojans and Achaeans all of them take their seats, and challenge the best man among the Achaeans to meet you in single combat. I have heard the voice of the ever-living gods, and the hour of your doom is not yet come.”

Hector was glad when he heard this saying, and went in among the Trojans, grasping his spear by the middle to hold them back, and they all sat down. Agamemnon also bade the Achaeans be seated. But Minerva and Apollo, in the likeness of vultures, perched on father Jove’s high oak tree, proud of their men; and the ranks sat close ranged together, bristling with shield and helmet and spear. As when the rising west wind furs the face of the sea and the waters grow dark beneath it, so sat the companies of Trojans and Achaeans upon the plain. And Hector spoke thus:—

“Hear me, Trojans and Achaeans, that I may speak even as I am minded; Jove on his high throne has brought our oaths and covenants to nothing, and foreshadows ill for both of us, till you either take the towers of Troy, or are yourselves vanquished at your ships. The princes of the Achaeans are here present in the midst of you; let him, then, that will fight me stand forward as your champion against Hector. Thus I say, and may Jove be witness between us. If your champion slay me, let him strip me of my armour and take it to your ships, but let him send my body home that the Trojans and their wives may give me my dues of fire when I am dead. In like manner, if Apollo vouchsafe me glory and I slay your champion, I will strip him of his armour and take it to the city of Ilius, where I will hang it in the temple of Apollo, but I will give up his body, that the Achaeans may bury him at their ships, and the build him a mound by the wide waters of the Hellespont. Then will one say hereafter as he sails his ship over the sea, ‘This is the monument of one who died long since a champion who was slain by mighty Hector.’ Thus will one say, and my fame shall not be lost.”

Thus did he speak, but they all held their peace, ashamed to decline the challenge, yet fearing to accept it, till at last Menelaus rose and rebuked them, for he was angry. “Alas,” he cried, “vain braggarts, women forsooth not men, double-dyed indeed will be the stain upon us if no man of the Danaans will now face Hector. May you be turned every man of you into earth and water as you sit

spiritless and inglorious in your places. I will myself go out against this man, but the upshot of the fight will be from on high in the hands of the immortal gods."

With these words he put on his armour; and then, O Menelaus, your life would have come to an end at the hands of hands of Hector, for he was far better the man, had not the princes of the Achaeans sprung upon you and checked you. King Agamemnon caught him by the right hand and said, "Menelaus, you are mad; a truce to this folly. Be patient in spite of passion, do not think of fighting a man so much stronger than yourself as Hector son of Priam, who is feared by many another as well as you. Even Achilles, who is far more doughty than you are, shrank from meeting him in battle. Sit down your own people, and the Achaeans will send some other champion to fight Hector; fearless and fond of battle though he be, I ween his knees will bend gladly under him if he comes out alive from the hurly-burly of this fight."

With these words of reasonable counsel he persuaded his brother, whereon his squires gladly stripped the armour from off his shoulders. Then Nestor rose and spoke, "Of a truth," said he, "the Achaean land is fallen upon evil times. The old knight Peleus, counsellor and orator among the Myrmidons, loved when I was in his house to question me concerning the race and lineage of all the Argives. How would it not grieve him could he hear of them as now quailing before Hector? Many a time would he lift his hands in prayer that his soul might leave his body and go down within the house of Hades. Would, by father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I were still young and strong as when the Pylians and Arcadians were gathered in fight by the rapid river Celadon under the walls of Pheia, and round about the waters of the river Iardanus. The godlike hero Ereuthalion stood forward as their champion, with the armour of King Areithous upon his shoulders—Areithous whom men and women had surnamed 'the Mace-man,' because he fought neither with bow nor spear, but broke the battalions of the foe with his iron mace. Lycurgus killed him, not in fair fight, but by entrapping him in a narrow way where his mace served him in no stead; for Lycurgus was too quick for him and speared him through the middle, so he fell to earth on his back. Lycurgus then spoiled him of the armour which Mars had given him, and bore it in battle thenceforward; but when he grew old and stayed at home, he gave it to his faithful squire Ereuthalion, who in this same armour challenged the foremost men among us. The others quaked and quailed, but my high spirit bade me fight him though none other would venture; I was the youngest man of them all; but when I fought him Minerva vouchsafed me victory. He was the biggest and strongest man that ever I killed, and covered much ground as he lay sprawling upon the earth. Would that I were still young and strong as I then was, for the son of Priam would then soon find one who would face him. But you, foremost among the whole host though you be, have none of you any stomach for fighting Hector."

Thus did the old man rebuke them, and forthwith nine men started to their feet. Foremost of all uprose King Agamemnon, and after him brave Diomed the son of Tydeus. Next were the two Ajaxes, men clothed in valour as with a garment, and then Idomeneus, and Meriones his brother in arms. After these Eurypylus son of Euaemon, Thoas the son of Andraemon, and Ulysses also rose. Then Nestor knight of Gerene again spoke, saying: "Cast lots among you to see who shall be chosen. If he come alive out of this fight he will have done good service alike to his own soul and to the Achaeans."

Thus he spoke, and when each of them had marked his lot, and had thrown it into the helmet of Agamemnon son of Atreus, the people lifted their hands in prayer, and thus would one of them say as he looked into the vault of heaven, "Father Jove, grant that the lot fall on Ajax, or on the son of Tydeus, or upon the king of rich Mycene himself."

As they were speaking, Nestor knight of Gerene shook the helmet, and from it there fell the very lot which they wanted—the lot of Ajax. The herald bore it about and showed it to all the chieftains of the Achaeans, going from left to right; but they none of them owned it. When, however, in due course he reached the man who had written upon it and had put it into the helmet, brave Ajax held out his hand, and the herald gave him the lot. When Ajax saw his mark he knew it and was glad; he threw it to the ground and said, "My friends, the lot is mine, and I rejoice, for I shall vanquish Hector. I will put on my armour; meanwhile, pray to King Jove in silence among yourselves that the Trojans may not hear you—or aloud if you will, for we fear no man. None shall overcome me, neither by force nor cunning, for I was born and bred in Salamis, and can hold my own in all things."

With this they fell praying to King Jove the son of Saturn, and thus would one of them say as he looked into the vault of heaven, "Father Jove that rulest from Ida, most glorious in power, vouchsafe victory to Ajax, and let him win great glory: but if you wish well to Hector also and would protect him, grant to each of them equal fame and prowess."

Thus they prayed, and Ajax armed himself in his suit of gleaming bronze. When he was in full array he sprang forward as monstrous Mars when he takes part among men whom Jove has set fighting with one another—even so did huge Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, spring forward with a grim smile on his face as he brandished his long spear and strode onward. The Argives were

elated as they beheld him, but the Trojans trembled in every limb, and the heart even of Hector beat quickly, but he could not now retreat and withdraw into the ranks behind him, for he had been the challenger. Ajax came up bearing his shield in front of him like a wall—a shield of bronze with seven folds of oxhide—the work of Tychius, who lived in Hyle and was by far the best worker in leather. He had made it with the hides of seven full-fed bulls, and over these he had set an eighth layer of bronze. Holding this shield before him, Ajax son of Telamon came close up to Hector, and menaced him saying, “Hector, you shall now learn, man to man, what kind of champions the Danaans have among them even besides lion-hearted Achilles cleaver of the ranks of men. He now abides at the ships in anger with Agamemnon shepherd of his people, but there are many of us who are well able to face you; therefore begin the fight.”

And Hector answered, “Noble Ajax, son of Telamon, captain of the host, treat me not as though I were some puny boy or woman that cannot fight. I have been long used to the blood and butcheries of battle. I am quick to turn my leathern shield either to right or left, for this I deem the main thing in battle. I can charge among the chariots and horsemen, and in hand to hand fighting can delight the heart of Mars; howbeit I would not take such a man as you are off his guard—but I will smite you openly if I can.”

He poised his spear as he spoke, and hurled it from him. It struck the sevenfold shield in its outermost layer—the eighth, which was of bronze—and went through six of the layers but in the seventh hide it stayed. Then Ajax threw in his turn, and struck the round shield of the son of Priam. The terrible spear went through his gleaming shield, and pressed onward through his cuirass of cunning workmanship; it pierced the shirt against his side, but he swerved and thus saved his life. They then each of them drew out the spear from his shield, and fell on one another like savage lions or wild boars of great strength and endurance: the son of Priam struck the middle of Ajax’s shield, but the bronze did not break, and the point of his dart was turned. Ajax then sprang forward and pierced the shield of Hector; the spear went through it and staggered him as he was springing forward to attack; it gashed his neck and the blood came pouring from the wound, but even so Hector did not cease fighting; he gave ground, and with his brawny hand seized a stone, rugged and huge, that was lying upon the plain; with this he struck the shield of Ajax on the boss that was in its middle, so that the bronze rang again. But Ajax in turn caught up a far larger stone, swung it aloft, and hurled it with prodigious force. This millstone of a rock broke Hector’s shield inwards and threw him down on his back with the shield crushing him under it, but Apollo raised him at once. Thereon they would have hacked at one another in close combat with their swords, had not heralds, messengers of gods and men, come forward, one from the Trojans and the other from the Achaeans—Talthybius and Idaeus both of them honourable men; these parted them with their staves, and the good herald Idaeus said, “My sons, fight no longer, you are both of you valiant, and both are dear to Jove; we know this; but night is now falling, and the behests of night may not be well gainsaid.”

Ajax son of Telamon answered, “Idaeus, bid Hector say so, for it was he that challenged our princes. Let him speak first and I will accept his saying.”

Then Hector said, “Ajax, heaven has vouchsafed you stature and strength, and judgement; and in wielding the spear you excel all others of the Achaeans. Let us for this day cease fighting; hereafter we will fight anew till heaven decide between us, and give victory to one or to the other; night is now falling, and the behests of night may not be well gainsaid. Gladden, then, the hearts of the Achaeans at your ships, and more especially those of your own followers and clansmen, while I, in the great city of King Priam, bring comfort to the Trojans and their women, who vie with one another in their prayers on my behalf. Let us, moreover, exchange presents that it may be said among the Achaeans and Trojans, ‘They fought with might and main, but were reconciled and parted in friendship.’”

On this he gave Ajax a silver-studded sword with its sheath and leathern baldric, and in return Ajax gave him a girdle dyed with purple. Thus they parted, the one going to the host of the Achaeans, and the other to that of the Trojans, who rejoiced when they saw their hero come to them safe and unharmed from the strong hands of mighty Ajax. They led him, therefore, to the city as one that had been saved beyond their hopes. On the other side the Achaeans brought Ajax elated with victory to Agamemnon.

When they reached the quarters of the son of Atreus, Agamemnon sacrificed for them a five-year-old bull in honour of Jove the son of Saturn. They flayed the carcass, made it ready, and divided it into joints; these they cut carefully up into smaller pieces, putting them on the spits, roasting them sufficiently, and then drawing them off. When they had done all this and had prepared the feast, they ate it, and every man had his full and equal share, so that all were satisfied, and King Agamemnon gave Ajax some slices cut lengthways down the loin, as a mark of special honour. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, old Nestor whose counsel was ever truest began to speak; with all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:—

“Son of Atreus, and other chieftains, inasmuch as many of the Achaeans are now dead, whose blood Mars has shed by the banks of the Scamander, and their souls have gone down to the house of Hades, it will be well when morning comes that we should cease fighting; we will then wheel our dead together with oxen and mules and burn them not far from the ships, that when we sail hence we may take the bones of our comrades home to their children. Hard by the funeral pyre we will build a barrow that shall be raised from the plain for all in common; near this let us set about building a high wall, to shelter ourselves and our ships, and let it have well-made gates that there may be a way through them for our chariots. Close outside we will dig a deep trench all round it to keep off both horse and foot, that the Trojan chieftains may not bear hard upon us.”

Thus he spoke, and the princess shouted in applause. Meanwhile the Trojans held a council, angry and full of discord, on the acropolis by the gates of King Priam’s palace; and wise Antenor spoke. “Hear me,” he said, “Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, that I may speak even as I am minded. Let us give up Argive Helen and her wealth to the sons of Atreus, for we are now fighting in violation of our solemn covenants, and shall not prosper till we have done as I say.”

He then sat down and Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen rose to speak. “Antenor,” said he, “your words are not to my liking; you can find a better saying than this if you will; if, however, you have spoken in good earnest, then indeed has heaven robbed you of your reason. I will speak plainly, and hereby notify to the Trojans that I will not give up the woman; but the wealth that I brought home with her from Argos I will restore, and will add yet further of my own.”

On this, when Paris had spoken and taken his seat, Priam of the race of Dardanus, peer of gods in council, rose and with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus: “Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, that I may speak even as I am minded. Get your suppers now as hitherto throughout the city, but keep your watches and be wakeful. At daybreak let Idaeus go to the ships, and tell Agamemnon and Menelaus sons of Atreus the saying of Alexandrus through whom this quarrel has come about; and let him also be instant with them that they now cease fighting till we burn our dead; hereafter we will fight anew, till heaven decide between us and give victory to one or to the other.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. They took supper in their companies and at daybreak Idaeus went his way to the ships. He found the Danaans, servants of Mars, in council at the stern of Agamemnon’s ship, and took his place in the midst of them. “Son of Atreus,” he said, “and princes of the Achaean host, Priam and the other noble Trojans have sent me to tell you the saying of Alexandrus through whom this quarrel has come about, if so be that you may find it acceptable. All the treasure he took with him in his ships to Troy—would that he had sooner perished—he will restore, and will add yet further of his own, but he will not give up the wedded wife of Menelaus, though the Trojans would have him do so. Priam bade me inquire further if you will cease fighting till we burn our dead; hereafter we will fight anew, till heaven decide between us and give victory to one or to the other.”

They all held their peace, but presently Diomed of the loud war-cry spoke, saying, “Let there be no taking, neither treasure, nor yet Helen, for even a child may see that the doom of the Trojans is at hand.”

The sons of the Achaeans shouted applause at the words that Diomed had spoken, and thereon King Agamemnon said to Idaeus, “Idaeus, you have heard the answer the Achaeans make you-and I with them. But as concerning the dead, I give you leave to burn them, for when men are once dead there should be no grudging them the rites of fire. Let Jove the mighty husband of Juno be witness to this covenant.”

As he spoke he upheld his sceptre in the sight of all the gods, and Idaeus went back to the strong city of Ilius. The Trojans and Dardanians were gathered in council waiting his return; when he came, he stood in their midst and delivered his message. As soon as they heard it they set about their twofold labour, some to gather the corpses, and others to bring in wood. The Argives on their part also hastened from their ships, some to gather the corpses, and others to bring in wood.

The sun was beginning to beat upon the fields, fresh risen into the vault of heaven from the slow still currents of deep Oceanus, when the two armies met. They could hardly recognise their dead, but they washed the clotted gore from off them, shed tears over them, and lifted them upon their waggons. Priam had forbidden the Trojans to wail aloud, so they heaped their dead sadly and silently upon the pyre, and having burned them went back to the city of Ilius. The Achaeans in like manner heaped their dead sadly and silently on the pyre, and having burned them went back to their ships.

Now in the twilight when it was not yet dawn, chosen bands of the Achaeans were gathered round the pyre and built one barrow that was raised in common for all, and hard by this they built a high wall to shelter themselves and their ships; they gave it strong

gates that there might be a way through them for their chariots, and close outside it they dug a trench deep and wide, and they planted it within with stakes.

Thus did the Achaeans toil, and the gods, seated by the side of Jove the lord of lightning, marvelled at their great work; but Neptune, lord of the earthquake, spoke, saying, “Father Jove, what mortal in the whole world will again take the gods into his counsel? See you not how the Achaeans have built a wall about their ships and driven a trench all round it, without offering hecatombs to the gods? The fame of this wall will reach as far as dawn itself, and men will no longer think anything of the one which Phoebus Apollo and myself built with so much labour for Laomedon.”

Jove was displeased and answered, “What, O shaker of the earth, are you talking about? A god less powerful than yourself might be alarmed at what they are doing, but your fame reaches as far as dawn itself. Surely when the Achaeans have gone home with their ships, you can shatter their wall and fling it into the sea; you can cover the beach with sand again, and the great wall of the Achaeans will then be utterly effaced.”

Thus did they converse, and by sunset the work of the Achaeans was completed; they then slaughtered oxen at their tents and got their supper. Many ships had come with wine from Lemnos, sent by Euneus the son of Jason, born to him by Hypsipyle. The son of Jason freighted them with ten thousand measures of wine, which he sent specially to the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus. From this supply the Achaeans bought their wine, some with bronze, some with iron, some with hides, some with whole heifers, and some again with captives. They spread a goodly banquet and feasted the whole night through, as also did the Trojans and their allies in the city. But all the time Jove boded them ill and roared with his portentous thunder. Pale fear got hold upon them, and they spilled the wine from their cups on to the ground, nor did any dare drink till he had made offerings to the most mighty son of Saturn. Then they laid themselves down to rest and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

This page titled 3.12.1.7: Book VII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.8: Book VIII

Jove forbids the gods to interfere further—There is an even fight till midday, but then Jove inclines the scales of victory in favour of the Trojans, who eventually chase the Achaeans within their wall—Juno and Minerva set out to help the Trojans: Jove sends Iris to turn them back, but later on he promises Juno that she shall have her way in the end—Hector's triumph is stayed by nightfall—The Trojans bivouac on the plain.

Now when Morning, clad in her robe of saffron, had begun to suffuse light over the earth, Jove called the gods in council on the topmost crest of serrated Olympus. Then he spoke and all the other gods gave ear. "Hear me," said he, "gods and goddesses, that I may speak even as I am minded. Let none of you neither goddess nor god try to cross me, but obey me every one of you that I may bring this matter to an end. If I see anyone acting apart and helping either Trojans or Danaans, he shall be beaten inordinately ere he come back again to Olympus; or I will hurl him down into dark Tartarus far into the deepest pit under the earth, where the gates are iron and the floor bronze, as far beneath Hades as heaven is high above the earth, that you may learn how much the mightiest I am among you. Try me and find out for yourselves. Hangs me a golden chain from heaven, and lay hold of it all of you, gods and goddesses together—tug as you will, you will not drag Jove the supreme counsellor from heaven to earth; but were I to pull at it myself I should draw you up with earth and sea into the bargain, then would I bind the chain about some pinnacle of Olympus and leave you all dangling in the mid firmament. So far am I above all others either of gods or men."

They were frightened and all of them of held their peace, for he had spoken masterfully; but at last Minerva answered, "Father, son of Saturn, king of kings, we all know that your might is not to be gainsaid, but we are also sorry for the Danaan warriors, who are perishing and coming to a bad end. We will, however, since you so bid us, refrain from actual fighting, but we will make serviceable suggestions to the Argives that they may not all of them perish in your displeasure."

Jove smiled at her and answered, "Take heart, my child, Trito-born; I am not really in earnest, and I wish to be kind to you."

With this he yoked his fleet horses, with hoofs of bronze and manes of glittering gold. He girded himself also with gold about the body, seized his gold whip and took his seat in his chariot. Thereon he lashed his horses and they flew forward nothing loth midway twixt earth and starry heaven. After a while he reached many-fountained Ida, mother of wild beasts, and Gargarus, where are his grove and fragrant altar. There the father of gods and men stayed his horses, took them from the chariot, and hid them in a thick cloud; then he took his seat all glorious upon the topmost crests, looking down upon the city of Troy and the ships of the Achaeans.

The Achaeans took their morning meal hastily at the ships, and afterwards put on their armour. The Trojans on the other hand likewise armed themselves throughout the city, fewer in numbers but nevertheless eager perforce to do battle for their wives and children. All the gates were flung wide open, and horse and foot sallied forth with the tramp as of a great multitude.

When they were got together in one place, shield clashed with shield, and spear with spear, in the conflict of mail-clad men. Mighty was the din as the bossed shields pressed hard on one another—death—cry and shout of triumph of slain and slayers, and the earth ran red with blood.

Now so long as the day waxed and it was still morning their weapons beat against one another, and the people fell, but when the sun had reached mid-heaven, the sire of all balanced his golden scales, and put two fates of death within them, one for the Trojans and the other for the Achaeans. He took the balance by the middle, and when he lifted it up the day of the Achaeans sank; the death-fraught scale of the Achaeans settled down upon the ground, while that of the Trojans rose heavenwards. Then he thundered aloud from Ida, and sent the glare of his lightning upon the Achaeans; when they saw this, pale fear fell upon them and they were sore afraid.

Idomeneus dared not stay nor yet Agamemnon, nor did the two Ajaxes, servants of Mars, hold their ground. Nestor knight of Gerene alone stood firm, bulwark of the Achaeans, not of his own will, but one of his horses was disabled. Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen had hit it with an arrow just on the top of its head where the mane begins to grow away from the skull, a very deadly place. The horse bounded in his anguish as the arrow pierced his brain, and his struggles threw others into confusion. The old man instantly began cutting the traces with his sword, but Hector's fleet horses bore down upon him through the rout with their bold charioteer, even Hector himself, and the old man would have perished there and then had not Diomed been quick to mark, and with a loud cry called Ulysses to help him.

"Ulysses," he cried, "noble son of Laertes where are you flying to, with your back turned like a coward? See that you are not struck with a spear between the shoulders. Stay here and help me to defend Nestor from this man's furious onset."

Ulysses would not give ear, but sped onward to the ships of the Achaeans, and the son of Tydeus flinging himself alone into the thick of the fight took his stand before the horses of the son of Neleus. "Sir," said he, "these young warriors are pressing you hard, your force is spent, and age is heavy upon you, your squire is naught, and your horses are slow to move. Mount my chariot and see what the horses of Tros can do—how cleverly they can scud hither and thither over the plain either in flight or in pursuit. I took them from the hero Aeneas. Let our squires attend to your own steeds, but let us drive mine straight at the Trojans, that Hector may learn how furiously I too can wield my spear."

Nestor knight of Gerene hearkened to his words. Thereon the doughty squires, Sthenelus and kind-hearted Eurymedon, saw to Nestor's horses, while the two both mounted Diomed's chariot. Nestor took the reins in his hands and lashed the horses on; they were soon close up with Hector, and the son of Tydeus aimed a spear at him as he was charging full speed towards them. He missed him, but struck his charioteer and squire Eniopeus son of noble Thebaeus in the breast by the nipple while the reins were in his hands, so that he died there and then, and the horses swerved as he fell headlong from the chariot. Hector was greatly grieved at the loss of his charioteer, but let him lie for all his sorrow, while he went in quest of another driver; nor did his steeds have to go long without one, for he presently found brave Archeptolemus the son of Iphitus, and made him get up behind the horses, giving the reins into his hand.

All had then been lost and no help for it, for they would have been penned up in Ilius like sheep, had not the sire of gods and men been quick to mark, and hurled a fiery flaming thunderbolt which fell just in front of Diomed's horses with a flare of burning brimstone. The horses were frightened and tried to back beneath the car, while the reins dropped from Nestor's hands. Then he was afraid and said to Diomed, "Son of Tydeus, turn your horses in flight; see you not that the hand of Jove is against you? To-day he vouchsafes victory to Hector; to-morrow, if it so please him, he will again grant it to ourselves; no man, however brave, may thwart the purpose of Jove, for he is far stronger than any."

Diomed answered, "All that you have said is true; there is a grief however which pierces me to the very heart, for Hector will talk among the Trojans and say, 'The son of Tydeus fled before me to the ships.' This is the vaunt he will make, and may earth then swallow me."

"Son of Tydeus," replied Nestor, "what mean you? Though Hector say that you are a coward the Trojans and Dardanians will not believe him, nor yet the wives of the mighty warriors whom you have laid low."

So saying he turned the horses back through the thick of the battle, and with a cry that rent the air the Trojans and Hector rained their darts after them. Hector shouted to him and said, "Son of Tydeus, the Danaans have done you honour hitherto as regards your place at table, the meals they give you, and the filling of your cup with wine. Henceforth they will despise you, for you are become no better than a woman. Be off, girl and coward that you are, you shall not scale our walls through any flinching upon my part; neither shall you carry off our wives in your ships, for I shall kill you with my own hand."

The son of Tydeus was in two minds whether or no to turn his horses round again and fight him. Thrice did he doubt, and thrice did Jove thunder from the heights of Ida in token to the Trojans that he would turn the battle in their favour. Hector then shouted to them and said, "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, lovers of close fighting, be men, my friends, and fight with might and with main; I see that Jove is minded to vouchsafe victory and great glory to myself, while he will deal destruction upon the Danaans. Fools, for having thought of building this weak and worthless wall. It shall not stay my fury; my horses will spring lightly over their trench, and when I am at their ships forget not to bring me fire that I may burn them, while I slaughter the Argives who will be all dazed and bewildered by the smoke."

Then he cried to his horses, "Xanthus and Podargus, and you Aethon and goodly Lampus, pay me for your keep now and for all the honey-sweet corn with which Andromache daughter of great Eetion has fed you, and for she has mixed wine and water for you to drink whenever you would, before doing so even for me who am her own husband. Haste in pursuit, that we may take the shield of Nestor, the fame of which ascends to heaven, for it is of solid gold, arm-rods and all, and that we may strip from the shoulders of Diomed the cuirass which Vulcan made him. Could we take these two things, the Achaeans would set sail in their ships this self-same night."

Thus did he vaunt, but Queen Juno made high Olympus quake as she shook with rage upon her throne. Then said she to the mighty god of Neptune, “What now, wide ruling lord of the earthquake? Can you find no compassion in your heart for the dying Danaans, who bring you many a welcome offering to Helice and to Aegae? Wish them well then. If all of us who are with the Danaans were to drive the Trojans back and keep Jove from helping them, he would have to sit there sulking alone on Ida.”

King Neptune was greatly troubled and answered, “Juno, rash of tongue, what are you talking about? We other gods must not set ourselves against Jove, for he is far stronger than we are.”

Thus did they converse; but the whole space enclosed by the ditch, from the ships even to the wall, was filled with horses and warriors, who were pent up there by Hector son of Priam, now that the hand of Jove was with him. He would even have set fire to the ships and burned them, had not Queen Juno put it into the mind of Agamemnon, to bestir himself and to encourage the Achaeans. To this end he went round the ships and tents carrying a great purple cloak, and took his stand by the huge black hull of Ulysses’ ship, which was middlemost of all; it was from this place that his voice would carry farthest, on the one hand towards the tents of Ajax son of Telamon, and on the other towards those of Achilles—for these two heroes, well assured of their own strength, had valorously drawn up their ships at the two ends of the line. From this spot then, with a voice that could be heard afar, he shouted to the Danaans, saying, “Argives, shame on you cowardly creatures, brave in semblance only; where are now our vaunts that we should prove victorious—the vaunts we made so vaingloriously in Lemnos, when we ate the flesh of horned cattle and filled our mixing-bowls to the brim? You vowed that you would each of you stand against a hundred or two hundred men, and now you prove no match even for one—for Hector, who will be ere long setting our ships in a blaze. Father Jove, did you ever so ruin a great king and rob him so utterly of his greatness? Yet, when to my sorrow I was coming hither, I never let my ship pass your altars without offering the fat and thigh-bones of heifers upon every one of them, so eager was I to sack the city of Troy. Vouchsafe me then this prayer—suffer us to escape at any rate with our lives, and let not the Achaeans be so utterly vanquished by the Trojans.”

Thus did he pray, and father Jove pitying his tears vouchsafed him that his people should live, not die; forthwith he sent them an eagle, most unfailingly portentous of all birds, with a young fawn in its talons; the eagle dropped the fawn by the altar on which the Achaeans sacrificed to Jove the lord of omens; when, therefore, the people saw that the bird had come from Jove, they sprang more fiercely upon the Trojans and fought more boldly.

There was no man of all the many Danaans who could then boast that he had driven his horses over the trench and gone forth to fight sooner than the son of Tydeus; long before any one else could do so he slew an armed warrior of the Trojans, Agelaus the son of Phradmon. He had turned his horses in flight, but the spear struck him in the back midway between his shoulders and went right through his chest, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell forward from his chariot.

After him came Agamemnon and Menelaus, sons of Atreus, the two Ajaxes clothed in valour as with a garment, Idomeneus and his companion in arms Meriones, peer of murderous Mars, and Eurypylus the brave son of Euaemon. Ninth came Teucer with his bow, and took his place under cover of the shield of Ajax son of Telamon. When Ajax lifted his shield Teucer would peer round, and when he had hit any one in the throng, the man would fall dead; then Teucer would hie back to Ajax as a child to its mother, and again duck down under his shield.

Which of the Trojans did brave Teucer first kill? Orsilochus, and then Ormenus and Ophelestes, Daetor, Chromius, and godlike Lycophontes, Amopaon son of Polyaemon, and Melanippus. All these in turn did he lay low upon the earth, and King Agamemnon was glad when he saw him making havoc of the Trojans with his mighty bow. He went up to him and said, “Teucer, man after my own heart, son of Telamon, captain among the host, shoot on, and be at once the saving of the Danaans and the glory of your father Telamon, who brought you up and took care of you in his own house when you were a child, bastard though you were. Cover him with glory though he is far off; I will promise and I will assuredly perform; if aegis-bearing Jove and Minerva grant me to sack the city of Ilius, you shall have the next best meed of honour after my own—a tripod, or two horses with their chariot, or a woman who shall go up into your bed.”

And Teucer answered, “Most noble son of Atreus, you need not urge me; from the moment we began to drive them back to Ilius, I have never ceased so far as in me lies to look out for men whom I can shoot and kill; I have shot eight barbed shafts, and all of them have been buried in the flesh of warlike youths, but this mad dog I cannot hit.”

As he spoke he aimed another arrow straight at Hector, for he was bent on hitting him; nevertheless he missed him, and the arrow hit Priam’s brave son Gorgythion in the breast. His mother, fair Castianeira, lovely as a goddess, had been married from Aesyme,

and now he bowed his head as a garden poppy in full bloom when it is weighed down by showers in spring—even thus heavy bowed his head beneath the weight of his helmet.

Again he aimed at Hector, for he was longing to hit him, and again his arrow missed, for Apollo turned it aside; but he hit Hector's brave charioteer Archeptolemus in the breast, by the nipple, as he was driving furiously into the fight. The horses swerved aside as he fell headlong from the chariot, and there was no life left in him. Hector was greatly grieved at the loss of his charioteer, but for all his sorrow he let him lie where he fell, and bade his brother Cebriones, who was hard by, take the reins. Cebriones did as he had said. Hector thereon with a loud cry sprang from his chariot to the ground, and seizing a great stone made straight for Teucer with intent to kill him. Teucer had just taken an arrow from his quiver and had laid it upon the bow-string, but Hector struck him with the jagged stone as he was taking aim and drawing the string to his shoulder; he hit him just where the collar-bone divides the neck from the chest, a very deadly place, and broke the sinew of his arm so that his wrist was less, and the bow dropped from his hand as he fell forward on his knees. Ajax saw that his brother had fallen, and running towards him bestrode him and sheltered him with his shield. Meanwhile his two trusty squires, Mecisteus son of Echius, and Alastor, came up and bore him to the ships groaning in his great pain.

Jove now again put heart into the Trojans, and they drove the Achaeans to their deep trench with Hector in all his glory at their head. As a hound grips a wild boar or lion in flank or buttock when he gives him chase, and watches warily for his wheeling, even so did Hector follow close upon the Achaeans, ever killing the hindmost as they rushed panic-stricken onwards. When they had fled through the set stakes and trench and many Achaeans had been laid low at the hands of the Trojans, they halted at their ships, calling upon one another and praying every man instantly as they lifted up their hands to the gods; but Hector wheeled his horses this way and that, his eyes glaring like those of Gorgo or murderous Mars.

Juno when she saw them had pity upon them, and at once said to Minerva, "Alas, child of aegis-bearing Jove, shall you and I take no more thought for the dying Danaans, though it be the last time we ever do so? See how they perish and come to a bad end before the onset of but a single man. Hector the son of Priam rages with intolerable fury, and has already done great mischief."

Minerva answered, "Would, indeed, this fellow might die in his own land, and fall by the hands of the Achaeans; but my father Jove is mad with spleen, ever foiling me, ever headstrong and unjust. He forgets how often I saved his son when he was worn out by the labours Eurystheus had laid on him. He would weep till his cry came up to heaven, and then Jove would send me down to help him; if I had had the sense to foresee all this, when Eurystheus sent him to the house of Hades, to fetch the hell-hound from Erebus, he would never have come back alive out of the deep waters of the river Styx. And now Jove hates me, while he lets Thetis have her way because she kissed his knees and took hold of his beard, when she was begging him to do honour to Achilles. I shall know what to do next time he begins calling me his grey-eyed darling. Get our horses ready, while I go within the house of aegis-bearing Jove and put on my armour; we shall then find out whether Priam's son Hector will be glad to meet us in the highways of battle, or whether the Trojans will glut hounds and vultures with the fat of their flesh as they be dead by the ships of the Achaeans."

Thus did she speak and white-armed Juno, daughter of great Saturn, obeyed her words; she set about harnessing her gold-bedizened steeds, while Minerva daughter of aegis-bearing Jove flung her richly vesture, made with her own hands, on to the threshold of her father, and donned the shirt of Jove, arming herself for battle. Then she stepped into her flaming chariot, and grasped the spear so stout and sturdy and strong with which she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her. Juno lashed her horses, and the gates of heaven bellowed as they flew open of their own accord—gates over which the Hours preside, in whose hands are heaven and Olympus, either to open the dense cloud that hides them or to close it. Through these the goddesses drove their obedient steeds.

But father Jove when he saw them from Ida was very angry, and sent winged Iris with a message to them. "Go," said he, "fleet Iris, turn them back, and see that they do not come near me, for if we come to fighting there will be mischief. This is what I say, and this is what I mean to do. I will lame their horses for them; I will hurl them from their chariot, and will break it in pieces. It will take them all ten years to heal the wounds my lightning shall inflict upon them; my grey-eyed daughter will then learn what quarrelling with her father means. I am less surprised and angry with Juno, for whatever I say she always contradicts me."

With this Iris went her way, fleet as the wind, from the heights of Ida to the lofty summits of Olympus. She met the goddesses at the outer gates of its many valleys and gave them her message. "What," said she, "are you about? Are you mad? The son of Saturn forbids going. This is what he says, and this is what he means to do, he will lame your horses for you, he will hurl you from your chariot, and will break it in pieces. It will take you all ten years to heal the wounds his lightning will inflict upon you, that you may

learn, grey-eyed goddess, what quarrelling with your father means. He is less hurt and angry with Juno, for whatever he says she always contradicts him but you, bold hussy, will you really dare to raise your huge spear in defiance of Jove?"

With this she left them, and Juno said to Minerva, "Of a truth, child of aegis-bearing Jove, I am not for fighting men's battles further in defiance of Jove. Let them live or die as luck will have it, and let Jove mete out his judgements upon the Trojans and Danaans according to his own pleasure."

She turned her steeds; the Hours presently unyoked them, made them fast to their ambrosial mangers, and leaned the chariot against the end wall of the courtyard. The two goddesses then sat down upon their golden thrones, amid the company of the other gods; but they were very angry.

Presently father Jove drove his chariot to Olympus, and entered the assembly of gods. The mighty lord of the earthquake unyoked his horses for him, set the car upon its stand, and threw a cloth over it. Jove then sat down upon his golden throne and Olympus reeled beneath him. Minerva and Juno sat alone, apart from Jove, and neither spoke nor asked him questions, but Jove knew what they meant, and said, "Minerva and Juno, why are you so angry? Are you fatigued with killing so many of your dear friends the Trojans? Be this as it may, such is the might of my hands that all the gods in Olympus cannot turn me; you were both of you trembling all over ere ever you saw the fight and its terrible doings. I tell you therefore-and it would have surely been—I should have struck you with lightning, and your chariots would never have brought you back again to Olympus."

Minerva and Juno groaned in spirit as they sat side by side and brooded mischief for the Trojans. Minerva sat silent without a word, for she was in a furious passion and bitterly incensed against her father; but Juno could not contain herself and said, "What, dread son of Saturn, are you talking about? We know how great your power is, nevertheless we have compassion upon the Danaan warriors who are perishing and coming to a bad end. We will, however, since you so bid us, refrain from actual fighting, but we will make serviceable suggestions to the Argives, that they may not all of them perish in your displeasure."

And Jove answered, "To-morrow morning, Juno, if you choose to do so, you will see the son of Saturn destroying large numbers of the Argives, for fierce Hector shall not cease fighting till he has roused the son of Peleus when they are fighting in dire straits at their ships' sterns about the body of Patroclus. Like it or no, this is how it is decreed; for aught I care, you may go to the lowest depths beneath earth and sea, where Iapetus and Saturn dwell in lone Tartarus with neither ray of light nor breath of wind to cheer them. You may go on and on till you get there, and I shall not care one whit for your displeasure; you are the greatest vixen living."

Juno made him no answer. The sun's glorious orb now sank into Oceanus and drew down night over the land. Sorry indeed were the Trojans when light failed them, but welcome and thrice prayed for did darkness fall upon the Achaeans.

Then Hector led the Trojans back from the ships, and held a council on the open space near the river, where there was a spot clear of corpses. They left their chariots and sat down on the ground to hear the speech he made them. He grasped a spear eleven cubits long, the bronze point of which gleamed in front of it, while the ring round the spear-head was of gold. Spear in hand he spoke. "Hear me," said he, "Trojans, Dardanians, and allies. I deemed but now that I should destroy the ships and all the Achaeans with them ere I went back to Ilius, but darkness came on too soon. It was this alone that saved them and their ships upon the seashore. Now, therefore, let us obey the behests of night, and prepare our suppers. Take your horses out of their chariots and give them their feeds of corn; then make speed to bring sheep and cattle from the city; bring wine also and corn for your horses and gather much wood, that from dark till dawn we may burn watchfires whose flare may reach to heaven. For the Achaeans may try to fly beyond the sea by night, and they must not embark scatheless and unmolested; many a man among them must take a dart with him to nurse at home, hit with spear or arrow as he is leaping on board his ship, that others may fear to bring war and weeping upon the Trojans. Moreover let the heralds tell it about the city that the growing youths and grey-bearded men are to camp upon its heaven-built walls. Let the women each of them light a great fire in her house, and let watch be safely kept lest the town be entered by surprise while the host is outside. See to it, brave Trojans, as I have said, and let this suffice for the moment; at daybreak I will instruct you further. I pray in hope to Jove and to the gods that we may then drive those fate-sped hounds from our land, for 'tis the fates that have borne them and their ships hither. This night, therefore, let us keep watch, but with early morning let us put on our armour and rouse fierce war at the ships of the Achaeans; I shall then know whether brave Diomed the son of Tydeus will drive me back from the ships to the wall, or whether I shall myself slay him and carry off his bloodstained spoils. To-morrow let him show his mettle, abide my spear if he dare. I ween that at break of day, he shall be among the first to fall and many another of his comrades round him. Would that I were as sure of being immortal and never growing old, and of being worshipped like Minerva and Apollo, as I am that this day will bring evil to the Argives."

Thus spoke Hector and the Trojans shouted applause. They took their sweating steeds from under the yoke, and made them fast each by his own chariot. They made haste to bring sheep and cattle from the city, they brought wine also and corn from their houses and gathered much wood. They then offered unblemished hecatombs to the immortals, and the wind carried the sweet savour of sacrifice to heaven—but the blessed gods partook not thereof, for they bitterly hated Ilius with Priam and Priam's people. Thus high in hope they sat through the livelong night by the highways of war, and many a watchfire did they kindle. As when the stars shine clear, and the moon is bright—there is not a breath of air, not a peak nor glade nor jutting headland but it stands out in the ineffable radiance that breaks from the serene of heaven; the stars can all of them be told and the heart of the shepherd is glad—even thus shone the watchfires of the Trojans before Ilius midway between the ships and the river Xanthus. A thousand camp-fires gleamed upon the plain, and in the glow of each there sat fifty men, while the horses, champing oats and corn beside their chariots, waited till dawn should come.

This page titled 3.12.1.8: Book VIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.9: Book IX

The Embassy to Achilles.

Thus did the Trojans watch. But Panic, comrade of blood-stained Rout, had taken fast hold of the Achaeans, and their princes were all of them in despair. As when the two winds that blow from Thrace—the north and the northwest—spring up of a sudden and rouse the fury of the main—in a moment the dark waves uprear their heads and scatter their sea-wrack in all directions—even thus troubled were the hearts of the Achaeans.

The son of Atreus in dismay bade the heralds call the people to a council man by man, but not to cry the matter aloud; he made haste also himself to call them, and they sat sorry at heart in their assembly. Agamemnon shed tears as it were a running stream or cataract on the side of some sheer cliff; and thus, with many a heavy sigh he spoke to the Achaeans. “My friends,” said he, “princes and councillors of the Argives, the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me. Cruel Jove gave me his solemn promise that I should sack the city of Troy before returning, but he has played me false, and is now bidding me go ingloriously back to Argos with the loss of much people. Such is the will of Jove, who has laid many a proud city in the dust as he will yet lay others, for his power is above all. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say and sail back to our own country, for we shall not take Troy.”

Thus he spoke, and the sons of the Achaeans for a long while sat sorrowful there, but they all held their peace, till at last Diomed of the loud battle-cry made answer saying, “Son of Atreus, I will chide your folly, as is my right in council. Be not then aggrieved that I should do so. In the first place you attacked me before all the Danaans and said that I was a coward and no soldier. The Argives young and old know that you did so. But the son of scheming Saturn endowed you by halves only. He gave you honour as the chief ruler over us, but valour, which is the highest both right and might he did not give you. Sir, think you that the sons of the Achaeans are indeed as unwarlike and cowardly as you say they are? If your own mind is set upon going home—go—the way is open to you; the many ships that followed you from Mycene stand ranged upon the seashore; but the rest of us stay here till we have sacked Troy. Nay though these too should turn homeward with their ships, Sthenelus and myself will still fight on till we reach the goal of Ilius, for heaven was with us when we came.”

The sons of the Achaeans shouted applause at the words of Diomed, and presently Nestor rose to speak. “Son of Tydeus,” said he, “in war your prowess is beyond question, and in council you excel all who are of your own years; no one of the Achaeans can make light of what you say nor gainsay it, but you have not yet come to the end of the whole matter. You are still young—you might be the youngest of my own children—still you have spoken wisely and have counselled the chief of the Achaeans not without discretion; nevertheless I am older than you and I will tell you everything; therefore let no man, not even King Agamemnon, disregard my saying, for he that foments civil discord is a clanless, hearthless outlaw.

“Now, however, let us obey the behests of night and get our suppers, but let the sentinels every man of them camp by the trench that is without the wall. I am giving these instructions to the young men; when they have been attended to, do you, son of Atreus, give your orders, for you are the most royal among us all. Prepare a feast for your councillors; it is right and reasonable that you should do so; there is abundance of wine in your tents, which the ships of the Achaeans bring from Thrace daily. You have everything at your disposal wherewith to entertain guests, and you have many subjects. When many are got together, you can be guided by him whose counsel is wisest—and sorely do we need shrewd and prudent counsel, for the foe has lit his watchfires hard by our ships. Who can be other than dismayed? This night will either be the ruin of our host, or save it.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. The sentinels went out in their armour under command of Nestor’s son Thrasymedes, a captain of the host, and of the bold warriors Ascalaphus and Ialmenus: there were also Meriones, Aphareus and Deipyrus, and the son of Creion, noble Lycomedes. There were seven captains of the sentinels, and with each there went a hundred youths armed with long spears: they took their places midway between the trench and the wall, and when they had done so they lit their fires and got every man his supper.

The son of Atreus then bade many councillors of the Achaeans to his quarters and prepared a great feast in their honour. They laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had enough to eat and drink, old Nestor, whose counsel was ever truest, was the first to lay his mind before them. He, therefore, with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus.

“With yourself, most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, will I both begin my speech and end it, for you are king over much people. Jove, moreover, has vouchsafed you to wield the sceptre and to uphold righteousness, that you may take thought for your people under you; therefore it behooves you above all others both to speak and to give ear, and to out the counsel of another

who shall have been minded to speak wisely. All turns on you and on your commands, therefore I will say what I think will be best. No man will be of a truer mind than that which has been mine from the hour when you, sir, angered Achilles by taking the girl Briseis from his tent against my judgment. I urged you not to do so, but you yielded to your own pride, and dishonoured a hero whom heaven itself had honoured—for you still hold the prize that had been awarded to him. Now, however, let us think how we may appease him, both with presents and fair speeches that may conciliate him."

And King Agamemnon answered, "Sir, you have reproved my folly justly. I was wrong. I own it. One whom heaven befriends is in himself a host, and Jove has shown that he befriends this man by destroying much people of the Achaeans. I was blinded with passion and yielded to my worser mind; therefore I will make amends, and will give him great gifts by way of atonement. I will tell them in the presence of you all. I will give him seven tripods that have never yet been on the fire, and ten talents of gold. I will give him twenty iron cauldrons and twelve strong horses that have won races and carried off prizes. Rich, indeed, both in land and gold is he that has as many prizes as my horses have won me. I will give him seven excellent workwomen, Lesbians, whom I chose for myself when he took Lesbos—all of surpassing beauty. I will give him these, and with them her whom I erewhile took from him, the daughter of Briseus; and I swear a great oath that I never went up into her couch, nor have been with her after the manner of men and women.

"All these things will I give him now, and if hereafter the gods vouchsafe me to sack the city of Priam, let him come when we Achaeans are dividing the spoil, and load his ship with gold and bronze to his liking; furthermore let him take twenty Trojan women, the loveliest after Helen herself. Then, when we reach Achaean Argos, wealthiest of all lands, he shall be my son-in-law and I will show him like honour with my own dear son Orestes, who is being nurtured in all abundance. I have three daughters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa, let him take the one of his choice, freely and without gifts of wooing, to the house of Peleus; I will add such dower to boot as no man ever yet gave his daughter, and will give him seven well established cities, Cardamyle, Enope, and Hire, where there is grass; holy Pherae and the rich meadows of Anthea; Aepea also, and the vine-clad slopes of Pedasus, all near the sea, and on the borders of sandy Pylos. The men that dwell there are rich in cattle and sheep; they will honour him with gifts as though he were a god, and be obedient to his comfortable ordinances. All this will I do if he will now forgo his anger. Let him then yield; it is only Hades who is utterly ruthless and unyielding—and hence he is of all gods the one most hateful to mankind. Moreover I am older and more royal than himself. Therefore, let him now obey me."

Then Nestor answered, "Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon. The gifts you offer are no small ones, let us then send chosen messengers, who may go to the tent of Achilles son of Peleus without delay. Let those go whom I shall name. Let Phoenix, dear to Jove, lead the way; let Ajax and Ulysses follow, and let the heralds Odius and Eurybates go with them. Now bring water for our hands, and bid all keep silence while we pray to Jove the son of Saturn, if so be that he may have mercy upon us."

Thus did he speak, and his saying pleased them well. Men-servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering; then, when they had made their offerings, and had drunk each as much as he was minded, the envoys set out from the tent of Agamemnon son of Atreus; and Nestor, looking first to one and then to another, but most especially at Ulysses, was instant with them that they should prevail with the noble son of Peleus.

They went their way by the shore of the sounding sea, and prayed earnestly to earth-encircling Neptune that the high spirit of the son of Aeacus might incline favourably towards them. When they reached the ships and tents of the Myrmidons, they found Achilles playing on a lyre, fair, of cunning workmanship, and its cross-bar was of silver. It was part of the spoils which he had taken when he sacked the city of Eetion, and he was now diverting himself with it and singing the feats of heroes. He was alone with Patroclus, who sat opposite to him and said nothing, waiting till he should cease singing. Ulysses and Ajax now came in—Ulysses leading the way—and stood before him. Achilles sprang from his seat with the lyre still in his hand, and Patroclus, when he saw the strangers, rose also. Achilles then greeted them saying, "All hail and welcome—you must come upon some great matter, you, who for all my anger are still dearest to me of the Achaeans."

With this he led them forward, and bade them sit on seats covered with purple rugs; then he said to Patroclus who was close by him, "Son of Menoetius, set a larger bowl upon the table, mix less water with the wine, and give every man his cup, for these are very dear friends, who are now under my roof."

Patroclus did as his comrade bade him; he set the chopping-block in front of the fire, and on it he laid the loin of a sheep, the loin also of a goat, and the chine of a fat hog. Automedon held the meat while Achilles chopped it; he then sliced the pieces and put

them on spits while the son of Menoetius made the fire burn high. When the flame had died down, he spread the embers, laid the spits on top of them, lifting them up and setting them upon the spit-racks; and he sprinkled them with salt. When the meat was roasted, he set it on platters, and handed bread round the table in fair baskets, while Achilles dealt them their portions. Then Achilles took his seat facing Ulysses against the opposite wall, and bade his comrade Patroclus offer sacrifice to the gods; so he cast the offerings into the fire, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Ajax made a sign to Phoenix, and when he saw this, Ulysses filled his cup with wine and pledged Achilles.

"Hail," said he, "Achilles, we have had no scant of good cheer, neither in the tent of Agamemnon, nor yet here; there has been plenty to eat and drink, but our thought turns upon no such matter. Sir, we are in the face of great disaster, and without your help know not whether we shall save our fleet or lose it. The Trojans and their allies have camped hard by our ships and by the wall; they have lit watchfires throughout their host and deem that nothing can now prevent them from falling on our fleet. Jove, moreover, has sent his lightnings on their right; Hector, in all his glory, rages like a maniac; confident that Jove is with him he fears neither god nor man, but is gone raving mad, and prays for the approach of day. He vows that he will hew the high sterns of our ships in pieces, set fire to their hulls, and make havoc of the Achaeans while they are dazed and smothered in smoke; I much fear that heaven will make good his boasting, and it will prove our lot to perish at Troy far from our home in Argos. Up, then, and late though it be, save the sons of the Achaeans who faint before the fury of the Trojans. You will repent bitterly hereafter if you do not, for when the harm is done there will be no curing it; consider ere it be too late, and save the Danaans from destruction.

"My good friend, when your father Peleus sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon, did he not charge you saying, 'Son, Minerva and Juno will make you strong if they choose, but check your high temper, for the better part is in goodwill. Eschew vain quarrelling, and the Achaeans old and young will respect you more for doing so.' These were his words, but you have forgotten them. Even now, however, be appeased, and put away your anger from you. Agamemnon will make you great amends if you will forgive him; listen, and I will tell you what he has said in his tent that he will give you. He will give you seven tripods that have never yet been on the fire, and ten talents of gold; twenty iron cauldrons, and twelve strong horses that have won races and carried off prizes. Rich indeed both in land and gold is he who has as many prizes as these horses have won for Agamemnon. Moreover he will give you seven excellent workwomen, Lesbians, whom he chose for himself, when you took Lesbos—all of surpassing beauty. He will give you these, and with them her whom he erewhile took from you, the daughter of Briseus, and he will swear a great oath, he has never gone up into her couch nor been with her after the manner of men and women. All these things will he give you now down, and if hereafter the gods vouchsafe him to sack the city of Priam, you can come when we Achaeans are dividing the spoil, and load your ship with gold and bronze to your liking. You can take twenty Trojan women, the loveliest after Helen herself. Then, when we reach Achaean Argos, wealthiest of all lands, you shall be his son-in-law, and he will show you like honour with his own dear son Orestes, who is being nurtured in all abundance. Agamemnon has three daughters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa; you may take the one of your choice, freely and without gifts of wooing, to the house of Peleus; he will add such dower to boot as no man ever yet gave his daughter, and will give you seven well-established cities, Cardamyle, Enope, and Hire where there is grass; holy Pheras and the rich meadows of Anthea; Aepea also, and the vine-clad slopes of Pedasus, all near the sea, and on the borders of sandy Pylos. The men that dwell there are rich in cattle and sheep; they will honour you with gifts as though were a god, and be obedient to your comfortable ordinances. All this will he do if you will now forgo your anger. Moreover, though you hate both him and his gifts with all your heart, yet pity the rest of the Achaeans who are being harassed in all their host; they will honour you as a god, and you will earn great glory at their hands. You might even kill Hector; he will come within your reach, for he is infatuated, and declares that not a Danaan whom the ships have brought can hold his own against him."

Achilles answered, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, I should give you formal notice plainly and in all fixity of purpose that there be no more of this cajoling, from whatsoever quarter it may come. Him do I hate even as the gates of hell who says one thing while he hides another in his heart; therefore I will say what I mean. I will be appeased neither by Agamemnon son of Atreus nor by any other of the Danaans, for I see that I have no thanks for all my fighting. He that fights fares no better than he that does not; coward and hero are held in equal honour, and death deals like measure to him who works and him who is idle. I have taken nothing by all my hardships—with my life ever in my hand; as a bird when she has found a morsel takes it to her nestlings, and herself fares hardly, even so many a long night have I been wakeful, and many a bloody battle have I waged by day against those who were fighting for their women. With my ships I have taken twelve cities, and eleven round about Troy have I stormed with my men by land; I took great store of wealth from every one of them, but I gave all up to Agamemnon son of Atreus. He stayed where he was by his ships, yet of what came to him he gave little, and kept much himself.

“Nevertheless he did distribute some meeds of honour among the chieftains and kings, and these have them still; from me alone of the Achaeans did he take the woman in whom I delighted—let him keep her and sleep with her. Why, pray, must the Argives needs fight the Trojans? What made the son of Atreus gather the host and bring them? Was it not for the sake of Helen? Are the sons of Atreus the only men in the world who love their wives? Any man of common right feeling will love and cherish her who is his own, as I this woman, with my whole heart, though she was but a fruitling of my spear. Agamemnon has taken her from me; he has played me false; I know him; let him tempt me no further, for he shall not move me. Let him look to you, Ulysses, and to the other princes to save his ships from burning. He has done much without me already. He has built a wall; he has dug a trench deep and wide all round it, and he has planted it within with stakes; but even so he stays not the murderous might of Hector. So long as I fought the Achaeans Hector suffered not the battle range far from the city walls; he would come to the Scaean gates and to the oak tree, but no further. Once he stayed to meet me and hardly did he escape my onset: now, however, since I am in no mood to fight him, I will to-morrow offer sacrifice to Jove and to all the gods; I will draw my ships into the water and then victual them duly; to-morrow morning, if you care to look, you will see my ships on the Hellespont, and my men rowing out to sea with might and main. If great Neptune vouchsafes me a fair passage, in three days I shall be in Phthia. I have much there that I left behind me when I came here to my sorrow, and I shall bring back still further store of gold, of red copper, of fair women, and of iron, my share of the spoils that we have taken; but one prize, he who gave has insolently taken away. Tell him all as I now bid you, and tell him in public that the Achaeans may hate him and beware of him should he think that he can yet dupe others for his effrontery never fails him.

“As for me, hound that he is, he dares not look me in the face. I will take no counsel with him, and will undertake nothing in common with him. He has wronged me and deceived me enough, he shall not cozen me further; let him go his own way, for Jove has robbed him of his reason. I loathe his presents, and for himself care not one straw. He may offer me ten or even twenty times what he has now done, nay—not though it be all that he has in the world, both now or ever shall have; he may promise me the wealth of Orchomenus or of Egyptian Thebes, which is the richest city in the whole world, for it has a hundred gates through each of which two hundred men may drive at once with their chariots and horses; he may offer me gifts as the sands of the sea or the dust of the plain in multitude, but even so he shall not move me till I have been revenged in full for the bitter wrong he has done me. I will not marry his daughter; she may be fair as Venus, and skilful as Minerva, but I will have none of her: let another take her, who may be a good match for her and who rules a larger kingdom. If the gods spare me to return home, Peleus will find me a wife; there are Achaean women in Hellas and Phthia, daughters of kings that have cities under them; of these I can take whom I will and marry her. Many a time was I minded when at home in Phthia to woo and wed a woman who would make me a suitable wife, and to enjoy the riches of my old father Peleus. My life is more to me than all the wealth of Ilius while it was yet at peace before the Achaeans went there, or than all the treasure that lies on the stone floor of Apollo’s temple beneath the cliffs of Pytho. Cattle and sheep are to be had for harrying, and a man buy both tripods and horses if he wants them, but when his life has once left him it can neither be bought nor harried back again.

“My mother Thetis tells me that there are two ways in which I may meet my end. If I stay here and fight, I shall not return alive but my name will live for ever: whereas if I go home my name will die, but it will be long ere death shall take me. To the rest of you, then, I say, ‘Go home, for you will not take Ilius.’ Jove has held his hand over her to protect her, and her people have taken heart. Go, therefore, as in duty bound, and tell the princes of the Achaeans the message that I have sent them; tell them to find some other plan for the saving of their ships and people, for so long as my displeasure lasts the one that they have now hit upon may not be. As for Phoenix, let him sleep here that he may sail with me in the morning if he so will. But I will not take him by force.”

They all held their peace, dismayed at the sternness with which he had denied them, till presently the old knight Phoenix in his great fear for the ships of the Achaeans, burst into tears and said, “Noble Achilles, if you are now minded to return, and in the fierceness of your anger will do nothing to save the ships from burning, how, my son, can I remain here without you? Your father Peleus bade me go with you when he sent you as a mere lad from Phthia to Agamemnon. You knew nothing neither of war nor of the arts whereby men make their mark in council, and he sent me with you to train you in all excellence of speech and action. Therefore, my son, I will not stay here without you—no, not though heaven itself vouchsafe to strip my years from off me, and make me young as I was when I first left Hellas the land of fair women. I was then flying the anger of father Amyntor, son of Ormenus, who was furious with me in the matter of his concubine, of whom he was enamoured to the wronging of his wife my mother. My mother, therefore, prayed me without ceasing to lie with the woman myself, that so she hate my father, and in the course of time I yielded. But my father soon came to know, and cursed me bitterly, calling the dread Erinyes to witness. He prayed that no son of mine might ever sit upon knees—and the gods, Jove of the world below and awful Proserpine, fulfilled his curse. I

took counsel to kill him, but some god stayed my rashness and bade me think on men's evil tongues and how I should be branded as the murderer of my father; nevertheless I could not bear to stay in my father's house with him so bitter against me. My cousins and clansmen came about me, and pressed me sorely to remain; many a sheep and many an ox did they slaughter, and many a fat hog did they set down to roast before the fire; many a jar, too, did they broach of my father's wine. Nine whole nights did they set a guard over me taking it in turns to watch, and they kept a fire always burning, both in the cloister of the outer court and in the inner court at the doors of the room wherein I lay; but when the darkness of the tenth night came, I broke through the closed doors of my room, and climbed the wall of the outer court after passing quickly and unperceived through the men on guard and the women servants. I then fled through Hellas till I came to fertile Phthia, mother of sheep, and to King Peleus, who made me welcome and treated me as a father treats an only son who will be heir to all his wealth. He made me rich and set me over much people, establishing me on the borders of Phthia where I was chief ruler over the Dolopians.

"It was I, Achilles, who had the making of you; I loved you with all my heart: for you would eat neither at home nor when you had gone out elsewhere, till I had first set you upon my knees, cut up the dainty morsel that you were to eat, and held the wine-cup to your lips. Many a time have you slobbered your wine in baby helplessness over my shirt; I had infinite trouble with you, but I knew that heaven had vouchsafed me no offspring of my own, and I made a son of you, Achilles, that in my hour of need you might protect me. Now, therefore, I say battle with your pride and beat it; cherish not your anger for ever; the might and majesty of heaven are more than ours, but even heaven may be appeased; and if a man has sinned he prays the gods, and reconciles them to himself by his piteous cries and by frankincense, with drink-offerings and the savour of burnt sacrifice. For prayers are as daughters to great Jove; halt, wrinkled, with eyes askance, they follow in the footsteps of sin, who, being fierce and fleet of foot, leaves them far behind him, and ever baneful to mankind outstrips them even to the ends of the world; but nevertheless the prayers come hobbling and healing after. If a man has pity upon these daughters of Jove when they draw near him, they will bless him and hear him too when he is praying; but if he deny them and will not listen to them, they go to Jove the son of Saturn and pray that he may presently fall into sin—to his ruing bitterly hereafter. Therefore, Achilles, give these daughters of Jove due reverence, and bow before them as all good men will bow. Were not the son of Atreus offering you gifts and promising others later—if he were still furious and implacable—I am not he that would bid you throw off your anger and help the Achaeans, no matter how great their need; but he is giving much now, and more hereafter; he has sent his captains to urge his suit, and has chosen those who of all the Argives are most acceptable to you; make not then their words and their coming to be of none effect. Your anger has been righteous so far. We have heard in song how heroes of old time quarrelled when they were roused to fury, but still they could be won by gifts, and fair words could soothe them.

"I have an old story in my mind—a very old one—but you are all friends and I will tell it. The Curetes and the Aetolians were fighting and killing one another round Calydon—the Aetolians defending the city and the Curetes trying to destroy it. For Diana of the golden throne was angry and did them hurt because Oeneus had not offered her his harvest first-fruits. The other gods had all been feasted with hecatombs, but to the daughter of great Jove alone he had made no sacrifice. He had forgotten her, or somehow or other it had escaped him, and this was a grievous sin. Thereon the archer goddess in her displeasure sent a prodigious creature against him—a savage wild boar with great white tusks that did much harm to his orchard lands, uprooting apple-trees in full bloom and throwing them to the ground. But Meleager son of Oeneus got huntsmen and hounds from many cities and killed it—for it was so monstrous that not a few were needed, and many a man did it stretch upon his funeral pyre. On this the goddess set the Curetes and the Aetolians fighting furiously about the head and skin of the boar.

"So long as Meleager was in the field things went badly with the Curetes, and for all their numbers they could not hold their ground under the city walls; but in the course of time Meleager was angered as even a wise man will sometimes be. He was incensed with his mother Althaea, and therefore stayed at home with his wedded wife fair Cleopatra, who was daughter of Marpessa daughter of Euenus, and of Ides the man then living. He it was who took his bow and faced King Apollo himself for fair Marpessa's sake; her father and mother then named her Alcyone, because her mother had mourned with the plaintive strains of the halcyon-bird when Phoebus Apollo had carried her off. Meleager, then, stayed at home with Cleopatra, nursing the anger which he felt by reason of his mother's curses. His mother, grieving for the death of her brother, prayed the gods, and beat the earth with her hands, calling upon Hades and on awful Proserpine; she went down upon her knees and her bosom was wet with tears as she prayed that they would kill her son—and Erinys that walks in darkness and knows no ruth heard her from Erebus.

"Then was heard the din of battle about the gates of Calydon, and the dull thump of the battering against their walls. Thereon the elders of the Aetolians besought Meleager; they sent the chiefest of their priests, and begged him to come out and help them,

promising him a great reward. They bade him choose fifty plough-gates, the most fertile in the plain of Calydon, the one-half vineyard and the other open plough-land. The old warrior Oeneus implored him, standing at the threshold of his room and beating the doors in supplication. His sisters and his mother herself besought him sore, but he the more refused them; those of his comrades who were nearest and dearest to him also prayed him, but they could not move him till the foe was battering at the very doors of his chamber, and the Curetes had scaled the walls and were setting fire to the city. Then at last his sorrowing wife detailed the horrors that befall those whose city is taken; she reminded him how the men are slain, and the city is given over to the flames, while the women and children are carried into captivity; when he heard all this, his heart was touched, and he donned his armour to go forth. Thus of his own inward motion he saved the city of the Aetolians; but they now gave him nothing of those rich rewards that they had offered earlier, and though he saved the city he took nothing by it. Be not then, my son, thus minded; let not heaven lure you into any such course. When the ships are burning it will be a harder matter to save them. Take the gifts, and go, for the Achaeans will then honour you as a god; whereas if you fight without taking them, you may beat the battle back, but you will not be held in like honour."

And Achilles answered, "Phoenix, old friend and father, I have no need of such honour. I have honour from Jove himself, which will abide with me at my ships while I have breath in my body, and my limbs are strong. I say further—and lay my saying to your heart—vex me no more with this weeping and lamentation, all in the cause of the son of Atreus. Love him so well, and you may lose the love I bear you. You ought to help me rather in troubling those that trouble me; be king as much as I am, and share like honour with myself; the others shall take my answer; stay here yourself and sleep comfortably in your bed; at daybreak we will consider whether to remain or go."

On this he nodded quietly to Patroclus as a sign that he was to prepare a bed for Phoenix, and that the others should take their leave. Ajax son of Telamon then said, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, let us be gone, for I see that our journey is vain. We must now take our answer, unwelcome though it be, to the Danaans who are waiting to receive it. Achilles is savage and remorseless; he is cruel, and cares nothing for the love his comrades lavished upon him more than on all the others. He is implacable—and yet if a man's brother or son has been slain he will accept a fine by way of amends from him that killed him, and the wrong-doer having paid in full remains in peace among his own people; but as for you, Achilles, the gods have put a wicked unforgiving spirit in your heart, and this, all about one single girl, whereas we now offer you the seven best we have, and much else into the bargain. Be then of a more gracious mind, respect the hospitality of your own roof. We are with you as messengers from the host of the Danaans, and would fain he held nearest and dearest to yourself of all the Achaeans."

"Ajax," replied Achilles, "noble son of Telamon, you have spoken much to my liking, but my blood boils when I think it all over, and remember how the son of Atreus treated me with contumely as though I were some vile tramp, and that too in the presence of the Argives. Go, then, and deliver your message; say that I will have no concern with fighting till Hector, son of noble Priam, reaches the tents of the Myrmidons in his murderous course, and flings fire upon their ships. For all his lust of battle, I take it he will be held in check when he is at my own tent and ship."

On this they took every man his double cup, made their drink-offerings, and went back to the ships, Ulysses leading the way. But Patroclus told his men and the maid-servants to make ready a comfortable bed for Phoenix; they therefore did so with sheepskins, a rug, and a sheet of fine linen. The old man then laid himself down and waited till morning came. But Achilles slept in an inner room, and beside him the daughter of Phorbas lovely Diomede, whom he had carried off from Lesbos. Patroclus lay on the other side of the room, and with him fair Iphis whom Achilles had given him when he took Scyros the city of Enyeus.

When the envoys reached the tents of the son of Atreus, the Achaeans rose, pledged them in cups of gold, and began to question them. King Agamemnon was the first to do so. "Tell me, Ulysses," said he, "will he save the ships from burning, or did he refuse, and is he still furious?"

Ulysses answered, "Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, Achilles will not be calmed, but is more fiercely angry than ever, and spurns both you and your gifts. He bids you take counsel with the Achaeans to save the ships and host as you best may; as for himself, he said that at daybreak he should draw his ships into the water. He said further that he should advise every one to sail home likewise, for that you will not reach the goal of Ilius. 'Jove,' he said, 'has laid his hand over the city to protect it, and the people have taken heart.' This is what he said, and the others who were with me can tell you the same story—Ajax and the two heralds, men, both of them, who may be trusted. The old man Phoenix stayed where he was to sleep, for so Achilles would have it, that he might go home with him in the morning if he so would; but he will not take him by force."

They all held their peace, sitting for a long time silent and dejected, by reason of the sternness with which Achilles had refused them, till presently Diomed said, “Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, you ought not to have sued the son of Peleus nor offered him gifts. He is proud enough as it is, and you have encouraged him in his pride still further. Let him stay or go as he will. He will fight later when he is in the humour, and heaven puts it in his mind to do so. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; we have eaten and drunk our fill, let us then take our rest, for in rest there is both strength and stay. But when fair rosy-fingered morn appears, forthwith bring out your host and your horsemen in front of the ships, urging them on, and yourself fighting among the foremost.”

Thus he spoke, and the other chieftains approved his words. They then made their drink-offerings and went every man to his own tent, where they laid down to rest and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

This page titled 3.12.1.9: Book IX is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.10: Book X

Ulysses and Diomed go out as spies, and meet Dolon, who gives them information: they then kill him, and profiting by what he had told them, kill Rhesus king of the Thracians and take his horses.

Now the other princes of the Achaeans slept soundly the whole night through, but Agamemnon son of Atreus was troubled, so that he could get no rest. As when fair Juno's lord flashes his lightning in token of great rain or hail or snow when the snow-flakes whiten the ground, or again as a sign that he will open the wide jaws of hungry war, even so did Agamemnon heave many a heavy sigh, for his soul trembled within him. When he looked upon the plain of Troy he marvelled at the many watchfires burning in front of Ilius, and at the sound of pipes and flutes and of the hum of men, but when presently he turned towards the ships and hosts of the Achaeans, he tore his hair by handfuls before Jove on high, and groaned aloud for the very disquietness of his soul. In the end he deemed it best to go at once to Nestor son of Neleus, and see if between them they could find any way of the Achaeans from destruction. He therefore rose, put on his shirt, bound his sandals about his comely feet, flung the skin of a huge tawny lion over his shoulders—a skin that reached his feet—and took his spear in his hand.

Neither could Menelaus sleep, for he, too, boded ill for the Argives who for his sake had sailed from far over the seas to fight the Trojans. He covered his broad back with the skin of a spotted panther, put a casque of bronze upon his head, and took his spear in his brawny hand. Then he went to rouse his brother, who was by far the most powerful of the Achaeans, and was honoured by the people as though he were a god. He found him by the stern of his ship already putting his goodly array about his shoulders, and right glad was he that his brother had come.

Menelaus spoke first. "Why," said he, "my dear brother, are you thus arming? Are you going to send any of our comrades to exploit the Trojans? I greatly fear that no one will do you this service, and spy upon the enemy alone in the dead of night. It will be a deed of great daring."

And King Agamemnon answered, "Menelaus, we both of us need shrewd counsel to save the Argives and our ships, for Jove has changed his mind, and inclines towards Hector's sacrifices rather than ours. I never saw nor heard tell of any man as having wrought such ruin in one day as Hector has now wrought against the sons of the Achaeans—and that too of his own unaided self, for he is son neither to god nor goddess. The Argives will rue it long and deeply. Run, therefore, with all speed by the line of the ships, and call Ajax and Idomeneus. Meanwhile I will go to Nestor, and bid him rise and go about among the companies of our sentinels to give them their instructions; they will listen to him sooner than to any man, for his own son, and Meriones brother in arms to Idomeneus, are captains over them. It was to them more particularly that we gave this charge."

Menelaus replied, "How do I take your meaning? Am I to stay with them and wait your coming, or shall I return here as soon as I have given your orders?" "Wait," answered King Agamemnon, "for there are so many paths about the camp that we might miss one another. Call every man on your way, and bid him be stirring; name him by his lineage and by his father's name, give each all titular observance, and stand not too much upon your own dignity; we must take our full share of toil, for at our birth Jove laid this heavy burden upon us."

With these instructions he sent his brother on his way, and went on to Nestor shepherd of his people. He found him sleeping in his tent hard by his own ship; his goodly armour lay beside him—his shield, his two spears and his helmet; beside him also lay the gleaming girdle with which the old man girded himself when he armed to lead his people into battle—for his age stayed him not. He raised himself on his elbow and looked up at Agamemnon. "Who is it," said he, "that goes thus about the host and the ships alone and in the dead of night, when men are sleeping? Are you looking for one of your mules or for some comrade? Do not stand there and say nothing, but speak. What is your business?"

And Agamemnon answered, "Nestor, son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, it is I, Agamemnon son of Atreus, on whom Jove has laid labour and sorrow so long as there is breath in my body and my limbs carry me. I am thus abroad because sleep sits not upon my eyelids, but my heart is big with war and with the jeopardy of the Achaeans. I am in great fear for the Danaans. I am at sea, and without sure counsel; my heart beats as though it would leap out of my body, and my limbs fail me. If then you can do anything—for you too cannot sleep—let us go the round of the watch, and see whether they are drowsy with toil and sleeping to the neglect of their duty. The enemy is encamped hard and we know not but he may attack us by night."

Nestor replied, "Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, Jove will not do all for Hector that Hector thinks he will; he will have troubles yet in plenty if Achilles will lay aside his anger. I will go with you, and we will rouse others, either the son of

Tydeus, or Ulysses, or fleet Ajax and the valiant son of Phyleus. Some one had also better go and call Ajax and King Idomeneus, for their ships are not near at hand but the farthest of all. I cannot however refrain from blaming Menelaus, much as I love him and respect him—and I will say so plainly, even at the risk of offending you—for sleeping and leaving all this trouble to yourself. He ought to be going about imploring aid from all the princes of the Achaeans, for we are in extreme danger."

And Agamemnon answered, "Sir, you may sometimes blame him justly, for he is often remiss and unwilling to exert himself—not indeed from sloth, nor yet heedlessness, but because he looks to me and expects me to take the lead. On this occasion, however, he was awake before I was, and came to me of his own accord. I have already sent him to call the very men whom you have named. And now let us be going. We shall find them with the watch outside the gates, for it was there I said that we would meet them."

"In that case," answered Nestor, "the Argives will not blame him nor disobey his orders when he urges them to fight or gives them instructions."

With this he put on his shirt, and bound his sandals about his comely feet. He buckled on his purple coat, of two thicknesses, large, and of a rough shaggy texture, grasped his redoubtable bronze-shod spear, and wended his way along the line of the Achaean ships. First he called loudly to Ulysses peer of gods in counsel and woke him, for he was soon roused by the sound of the battle-cry. He came outside his tent and said, "Why do you go thus alone about the host, and along the line of the ships in the stillness of the night? What is it that you find so urgent?" And Nestor knight of Gerene answered, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, take it not amiss, for the Achaeans are in great straits. Come with me and let us wake some other, who may advise well with us whether we shall fight or fly."

On this Ulysses went at once into his tent, put his shield about his shoulders and came out with them. First they went to Diomed son of Tydeus, and found him outside his tent clad in his armour with his comrades sleeping round him and using their shields as pillows; as for their spears, they stood upright on the spikes of their butts that were driven into the ground, and the burnished bronze flashed afar like the lightning of father Jove. The hero was sleeping upon the skin of an ox, with a piece of fine carpet under his head; Nestor went up to him and stirred him with his heel to rouse him, upbraiding him and urging him to bestir himself. "Wake up," he exclaimed, "son of Tydeus. How can you sleep on in this way? Can you not see that the Trojans are encamped on the brow of the plain hard by our ships, with but a little space between us and them?"

On these words Diomed leaped up instantly and said, "Old man, your heart is of iron; you rest not one moment from your labours. Are there no younger men among the Achaeans who could go about to rouse the princes? There is no tiring you."

And Nestor knight of Gerene made answer, "My son, all that you have said is true. I have good sons, and also much people who might call the chieftains, but the Achaeans are in the gravest danger; life and death are balanced as it were on the edge of a razor. Go then, for you are younger than I, and of your courtesy rouse Ajax and the fleet son of Phyleus."

Diomed threw the skin of a great tawny lion about his shoulders—a skin that reached his feet—and grasped his spear. When he had roused the heroes, he brought them back with him; they then went the round of those who were on guard, and found the captains not sleeping at their posts but wakeful and sitting with their arms about them. As sheep dogs that watch their flocks when they are yarded, and hear a wild beast coming through the mountain forest towards them—forthwith there is a hue and cry of dogs and men, and slumber is broken—even so was sleep chased from the eyes of the Achaeans as they kept the watches of the wicked night, for they turned constantly towards the plain whenever they heard any stir among the Trojans. The old man was glad and bade them be of good cheer. "Watch on, my children," said he, "and let not sleep get hold upon you, lest our enemies triumph over us."

With this he passed the trench, and with him the other chiefs of the Achaeans who had been called to the council. Meriones and the brave son of Nestor went also, for the princes bade them. When they were beyond the trench that was dug round the wall they held their meeting on the open ground where there was a space clear of corpses, for it was here that when night fell Hector had turned back from his onslaught on the Argives. They sat down, therefore, and held debate with one another.

Nestor spoke first. "My friends," said he, "is there any man bold enough to venture among the Trojans, and cut off some straggler, or bring us news of what the enemy mean to do whether they will stay here by the ships away from the city, or whether, now that they have worsted the Achaeans, they will retire within their walls. If he could learn all this and come back safely here, his fame would be high as heaven in the mouths of all men, and he would be rewarded richly; for the chiefs from all our ships would each of them give him a black ewe with her lamb—which is a present of surpassing value—and he would be asked as a guest to all feasts and clan-gatherings."

They all held their peace, but Diomed of the loud war-cry spoke saying, “Nestor, gladly will I visit the host of the Trojans over against us, but if another will go with me I shall do so in greater confidence and comfort. When two men are together, one of them may see some opportunity which the other has not caught sight of; if a man is alone he is less full of resource, and his wit is weaker.”

On this several offered to go with Diomed. The two Ajaxes, servants of Mars, Meriones, and the son of Nestor all wanted to go, so did Menelaus son of Atreus; Ulysses also wished to go among the host of the Trojans, for he was ever full of daring, and thereon Agamemnon king of men spoke thus: “Diomed,” said he, “son of Tydeus, man after my own heart, choose your comrade for yourself—take the best man of those that have offered, for many would now go with you. Do not through delicacy reject the better man, and take the worst out of respect for his lineage, because he is of more royal blood.”

He said this because he feared for Menelaus. Diomed answered, “If you bid me take the man of my own choice, how in that case can I fail to think of Ulysses, than whom there is no man more eager to face all kinds of danger—and Pallas Minerva loves him well? If he were to go with me we should pass safely through fire itself, for he is quick to see and understand.”

“Son of Tydeus,” replied Ulysses, “say neither good nor ill about me, for you are among Argives who know me well. Let us be going, for the night wanes and dawn is at hand. The stars have gone forward, two-thirds of the night are already spent, and the third is alone left us.”

They then put on their armour. Brave Thrasymedes provided the son of Tydeus with a sword and a shield (for he had left his own at his ship) and on his head he set a helmet of bull’s hide without either peak or crest; it is called a skull-cap and is a common headgear. Meriones found a bow and quiver for Ulysses, and on his head he set a leathern helmet that was lined with a strong plaiting of leathern thongs, while on the outside it was thickly studded with boar’s teeth, well and skilfully set into it; next the head there was an inner lining of felt. This helmet had been stolen by Autolycus out of Eleon when he broke into the house of Amyntor son of Ormenus. He gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera to take to Scandea, and Amphidamas gave it as a guest-gift to Molus, who gave it to his son Meriones; and now it was set upon the head of Ulysses.

When the pair had armed, they set out, and left the other chieftains behind them. Pallas Minerva sent them a heron by the wayside upon their right hands; they could not see it for the darkness, but they heard its cry. Ulysses was glad when he heard it and prayed to Minerva: “Hear me,” he cried, “daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, you who spy out all my ways and who are with me in all my hardships; befriend me in this mine hour, and grant that we may return to the ships covered with glory after having achieved some mighty exploit that shall bring sorrow to the Trojans.”

Then Diomed of the loud war-cry also prayed: “Hear me too,” said he, “daughter of Jove, unweariable; be with me even as you were with my noble father Tydeus when he went to Thebes as envoy sent by the Achaeans. He left the Achaeans by the banks of the river Aesopus, and went to the city bearing a message of peace to the Cadmeians; on his return thence, with your help, goddess, he did great deeds of daring, for you were his ready helper. Even so guide me and guard me now, and in return I will offer you in sacrifice a broad-browed heifer of a year old, unbroken, and never yet brought by man under the yoke. I will gild her horns and will offer her up to you in sacrifice.”

Thus they prayed, and Pallas Minerva heard their prayer. When they had done praying to the daughter of great Jove, they went their way like two lions prowling by night amid the armour and blood-stained bodies of them that had fallen.

Neither again did Hector let the Trojans sleep; for he too called the princes and councillors of the Trojans that he might set his counsel before them. “Is there one,” said he, “who for a great reward will do me the service of which I will tell you? He shall be well paid if he will. I will give him a chariot and a couple of horses, the fleetest that can be found at the ships of the Achaeans, if he will dare this thing; and he will win infinite honour to boot; he must go to the ships and find out whether they are still guarded as heretofore, or whether now that we have beaten them the Achaeans design to fly, and through sheer exhaustion are neglecting to keep their watches.”

They all held their peace; but there was among the Trojans a certain man named Dolon, son of Eumedes, the famous herald—a man rich in gold and bronze. He was ill-favoured, but a good runner, and was an only son among five sisters. He it was that now addressed the Trojans. “I, Hector,” said he, “Will to the ships and will exploit them. But first hold up your sceptre and swear that you will give me the chariot, bedight with bronze, and the horses that now carry the noble son of Peleus. I will make you a good

scout, and will not fail you. I will go through the host from one end to the other till I come to the ship of Agamemnon, where I take it the princes of the Achaeans are now consulting whether they shall fight or fly."

When he had done speaking Hector held up his sceptre, and swore him his oath saying, "May Jove the thundering husband of Juno bear witness that no other Trojan but yourself shall mount those steeds, and that you shall have your will with them for ever."

The oath he swore was bootless, but it made Dolon more keen on going. He hung his bow over his shoulder, and as an overall he wore the skin of a grey wolf, while on his head he set a cap of ferret skin. Then he took a pointed javelin, and left the camp for the ships, but he was not to return with any news for Hector. When he had left the horses and the troops behind him, he made all speed on his way, but Ulysses perceived his coming and said to Diomed, "Diomed, here is some one from the camp; I am not sure whether he is a spy, or whether it is some thief who would plunder the bodies of the dead; let him get a little past us, we can then spring upon him and take him. If, however, he is too quick for us, go after him with your spear and hem him in towards the ships away from the Trojan camp, to prevent his getting back to the town."

With this they turned out of their way and lay down among the corpses. Dolon suspected nothing and soon passed them, but when he had got about as far as the distance by which a mule-plowed furrow exceeds one that has been ploughed by oxen (for mules can plow fallow land quicker than oxen) they ran after him, and when he heard their footsteps he stood still, for he made sure they were friends from the Trojan camp come by Hector's orders to bid him return; when, however, they were only a spear's cast, or less, away from him, he saw that they were enemies and ran as fast as his legs could take him. The others gave chase at once, and as a couple of well-trained hounds press forward after a doe or hare that runs screaming in front of them, even so did the son of Tydeus and Ulysses pursue Dolon and cut him off from his own people. But when he had fled so far towards the ships that he would soon have fallen in with the outposts, Minerva infused fresh strength into the son of Tydeus for fear some other of the Achaeans might have the glory of being first to hit him, and he might himself be only second; he therefore sprang forward with his spear and said, "Stand, or I shall throw my spear, and in that case I shall soon make an end of you."

He threw as he spoke, but missed his aim on purpose. The dart flew over the man's right shoulder, and then stuck in the ground. He stood stock still, trembling and in great fear; his teeth chattered, and he turned pale with fear. The two came breathless up to him and seized his hands, whereon he began to weep and said, "Take me alive; I will ransom myself; we have great store of gold, bronze, and wrought iron, and from this my father will satisfy you with a very large ransom, should he hear of my being alive at the ships of the Achaeans."

"Fear not," replied Ulysses, "let no thought of death be in your mind; but tell me, and tell me true, why are you thus going about alone in the dead of night away from your camp and towards the ships, while other men are sleeping? Is it to plunder the bodies of the slain, or did Hector send you to spy out what was going on at the ships? Or did you come here of your own mere notion?"

Dolon answered, his limbs trembling beneath him: "Hector, with his vain flattering promises, lured me from my better judgement. He said he would give me the horses of the noble son of Peleus and his bronze-bedizened chariot; he bade me go through the darkness of the flying night, get close to the enemy, and find out whether the ships are still guarded as heretofore, or whether, now that we have beaten them, the Achaeans design to fly, and through sheer exhaustion are neglecting to keep their watches."

Ulysses smiled at him and answered, "You had indeed set your heart upon a great reward, but the horses of the descendant of Aeacus are hardly to be kept in hand or driven by any other mortal man than Achilles himself, whose mother was an immortal. But tell me, and tell me true, where did you leave Hector when you started? Where lies his armour and his horses? How, too, are the watches and sleeping-ground of the Trojans ordered? What are their plans? Will they stay here by the ships and away from the city, or now that they have worsted the Achaeans, will they retire within their walls?"

And Dolon answered, "I will tell you truly all. Hector and the other councillors are now holding conference by the monument of great Ilus, away from the general tumult; as for the guards about which you ask me, there is no chosen watch to keep guard over the host. The Trojans have their watchfires, for they are bound to have them; they, therefore, are awake and keep each other to their duty as sentinels; but the allies who have come from other places are asleep and leave it to the Trojans to keep guard, for their wives and children are not here."

Ulysses then said, "Now tell me; are they sleeping among the Trojan troops, or do they lie apart? Explain this that I may understand it."

“I will tell you truly all,” replied Dolon. “To the seaward lie the Carians, the Paeonian bowmen, the Leleges, the Cauconians, and the noble Pelasgi. The Lysians and proud Mysians, with the Phrygians and Meonians, have their place on the side towards Thymbra; but why ask about all this? If you want to find your way into the host of the Trojans, there are the Thracians, who have lately come here and lie apart from the others at the far end of the camp; and they have Rhesus son of Eioneus for their king. His horses are the finest and strongest that I have ever seen, they are whiter than snow and fleeter than any wind that blows. His chariot is bedight with silver and gold, and he has brought his marvellous golden armour, of the rarest workmanship—too splendid for any mortal man to carry, and meet only for the gods. Now, therefore, take me to the ships or bind me securely here, until you come back and have proved my words whether they be false or true.”

Diomed looked sternly at him and answered, “Think not, Dolon, for all the good information you have given us, that you shall escape now you are in our hands, for if we ransom you or let you go, you will come some second time to the ships of the Achaeans either as a spy or as an open enemy, but if I kill you and an end of you, you will give no more trouble.”

On this Dolon would have caught him by the beard to beseech him further, but Diomed struck him in the middle of his neck with his sword and cut through both sinews so that his head fell rolling in the dust while he was yet speaking. They took the ferret-skin cap from his head, and also the wolf-skin, the bow, and his long spear. Ulysses hung them up aloft in honour of Minerva the goddess of plunder, and prayed saying, “Accept these, goddess, for we give them to you in preference to all the gods in Olympus: therefore speed us still further towards the horses and sleeping-ground of the Thracians.”

With these words he took the spoils and set them upon a tamarisk tree, and they marked the place by pulling up reeds and gathering boughs of tamarisk that they might not miss it as they came back through the flying hours of darkness. The two then went onwards amid the fallen armour and the blood, and came presently to the company of Thracian soldiers, who were sleeping, tired out with their day’s toil; their goodly armour was lying on the ground beside them all orderly in three rows, and each man had his yoke of horses beside him. Rhesus was sleeping in the middle, and hard by him his horses were made fast to the topmost rim of his chariot. Ulysses from some way off saw him and said, “This, Diomed, is the man, and these are the horses about which Dolon whom we killed told us. Do your very utmost; dally not about your armour, but loose the horses at once—or else kill the men yourself, while I see to the horses.”

Thereon Minerva put courage into the heart of Diomed, and he smote them right and left. They made a hideous groaning as they were being hacked about, and the earth was red with their blood. As a lion springs furiously upon a flock of sheep or goats when he finds them without their shepherd, so did the son of Tydeus set upon the Thracian soldiers till he had killed twelve. As he killed them Ulysses came and drew them aside by their feet one by one, that the horses might go forward freely without being frightened as they passed over the dead bodies, for they were not yet used to them. When the son of Tydeus came to the king, he killed him too (which made thirteen), as he was breathing hard, for by the counsel of Minerva an evil dream, the seed of Oeneus, hovered that night over his head. Meanwhile Ulysses untied the horses, made them fast one to another and drove them off, striking them with his bow, for he had forgotten to take the whip from the chariot. Then he whistled as a sign to Diomed.

But Diomed stayed where he was, thinking what other daring deed he might accomplish. He was doubting whether to take the chariot in which the king’s armour was lying, and draw it out by the pole, or to lift the armour out and carry it off; or whether again, he should not kill some more Thracians. While he was thus hesitating Minerva came up to him and said, “Get back, Diomed, to the ships or you may be driven thither, should some other god rouse the Trojans.”

Diomed knew that it was the goddess, and at once sprang upon the horses. Ulysses beat them with his bow and they flew onward to the ships of the Achaeans.

But Apollo kept no blind look-out when he saw Minerva with the son of Tydeus. He was angry with her, and coming to the host of the Trojans he roused Hippocoon, a counsellor of the Thracians and a noble kinsman of Rhesus. He started up out of his sleep and saw that the horses were no longer in their place, and that the men were gasping in their death-agony; on this he groaned aloud, and called upon his friend by name. Then the whole Trojan camp was in an uproar as the people kept hurrying together, and they marvelled at the deeds of the heroes who had now got away towards the ships.

When they reached the place where they had killed Hector’s scout, Ulysses stayed his horses, and the son of Tydeus, leaping to the ground, placed the blood-stained spoils in the hands of Ulysses and remounted: then he lashed the horses onwards, and they flew forward nothing loth towards the ships as though of their own free will. Nestor was first to hear the tramp of their feet. “My friends,” said he, “princes and counsellors of the Argives, shall I guess right or wrong?—but I must say what I think: there is a

sound in my ears as of the tramp of horses. I hope it may be Diomed and Ulysses driving in horses from the Trojans, but I much fear that the bravest of the Argives may have come to some harm at their hands."

He had hardly done speaking when the two men came in and dismounted, whereon the others shook hands right gladly with them and congratulated them. Nestor knight of Gerene was first to question them. "Tell me," said he, "renowned Ulysses, how did you two come by these horses? Did you steal in among the Trojan forces, or did some god meet you and give them to you? They are like sunbeams. I am well conversant with the Trojans, for old warrior though I am I never hold back by the ships, but I never yet saw or heard of such horses as these are. Surely some god must have met you and given them to you, for you are both of you dear to Jove, and to Jove's daughter Minerva."

And Ulysses answered, "Nestor son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, heaven, if it so will, can give us even better horses than these, for the gods are far mightier than we are. These horses, however, about which you ask me, are freshly come from Thrace. Diomed killed their king with the twelve bravest of his companions. Hard by the ships we took a thirteenth man—a scout whom Hector and the other Trojans had sent as a spy upon our ships."

He laughed as he spoke and drove the horses over the ditch, while the other Achaeans followed him gladly. When they reached the strongly built quarters of the son of Tydeus, they tied the horses with thongs of leather to the manger, where the steeds of Diomed stood eating their sweet corn, but Ulysses hung the blood-stained spoils of Dolon at the stern of his ship, that they might prepare a sacred offering to Minerva. As for themselves, they went into the sea and washed the sweat from their bodies, and from their necks and thighs. When the sea-water had taken all the sweat from off them, and had refreshed them, they went into the baths and washed themselves. After they had so done and had anointed themselves with oil, they sat down to table, and drawing from a full mixing-bowl, made a drink-offering of wine to Minerva.

This page titled 3.12.1.10: Book X is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.11: Book XI

In the forenoon the fight is equal, but Agamemnon turns the fortune of the day towards the Achaeans until he gets wounded and leaves the field—Hector then drives everything before him till he is wounded by Diomed—Paris wounds Diomed—Ulysses, Nestor, and Idomeneus perform prodigies of valour—Machaon is wounded—Nestor drives him off in his chariot—Achilles sees the pair driving towards the camp and sends Patroclus to ask who it is that is wounded—This is the beginning of evil for Patroclus —Nestor makes a long speech.

And now as Dawn rose from her couch beside Tithonus, harbinger of light alike to mortals and immortals, Jove sent fierce Discord with the ensign of war in her hands to the ships of the Achaeans. She took her stand by the huge black hull of Ulysses' ship which was middlemost of all, so that her voice might carry farthest on either side, on the one hand towards the tents of Ajax son of Telamon, and on the other towards those of Achilles—for these two heroes, well-assured of their own strength, had valorously drawn up their ships at the two ends of the line. There she took her stand, and raised a cry both loud and shrill that filled the Achaeans with courage, giving them heart to fight resolutely and with all their might, so that they had rather stay there and do battle than go home in their ships.

The son of Atreus shouted aloud and bade the Argives gird themselves for battle while he put on his armour. First he girded his goodly greaves about his legs, making them fast with ankle-clasps of silver; and about his chest he set the breastplate which Cinyras had once given him as a guest-gift. It had been noised abroad as far as Cyprus that the Achaeans were about to sail for Troy, and therefore he gave it to the king. It had ten courses of dark cyanus, twelve of gold, and ten of tin. There were serpents of cyanus that reared themselves up towards the neck, three upon either side, like the rainbows which the son of Saturn has set in heaven as a sign to mortal men. About his shoulders he threw his sword, studded with bosses of gold; and the scabbard was of silver with a chain of gold wherewith to hang it. He took moreover the richly-dight shield that covered his body when he was in battle—fair to see, with ten circles of bronze running all round it. On the body of the shield there were twenty bosses of white tin, with another of dark cyanus in the middle: this last was made to show a Gorgon's head, fierce and grim, with Rout and Panic on either side. The band for the arm to go through was of silver, on which there was a writhing snake of cyanus with three heads that sprang from a single neck, and went in and out among one another. On his head Agamemnon set a helmet, with a peak before and behind, and four plumes of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it; then he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears, and the gleam of his armour shot from him as a flame into the firmament, while Juno and Minerva thundered in honour of the king of rich Mycene.

Every man now left his horses in charge of his charioteer to hold them in readiness by the trench, while he went into battle on foot clad in full armour, and a mighty uproar rose on high into the dawning. The chiefs were armed and at the trench before the horses got there, but these came up presently. The son of Saturn sent a portent of evil sound about their host, and the dew fell red with blood, for he was about to send many a brave man hurrying down to Hades.

The Trojans, on the other side upon the rising slope of the plain, were gathered round great Hector, noble Polydamas, Aeneas who was honoured by the Trojans like an immortal, and the three sons of Antenor, Polybus, Agenor, and young Acamas beauteous as a god. Hector's round shield showed in the front rank, and as some baneful star that shines for a moment through a rent in the clouds and is again hidden beneath them; even so was Hector now seen in the front ranks and now again in the hindermost, and his bronze armour gleamed like the lightning of aegis-bearing Jove.

And now as a band of reapers mow swathes of wheat or barley upon a rich man's land, and the sheaves fall thick before them, even so did the Trojans and Achaeans fall upon one another; they were in no mood for yielding but fought like wolves, and neither side got the better of the other. Discord was glad as she beheld them, for she was the only god that went among them; the others were not there, but stayed quietly each in his own home among the dells and valleys of Olympus. All of them blamed the son of Saturn for wanting to give victory to the Trojans, but father Jove heeded them not: he held aloof from all, and sat apart in his all-glorious majesty, looking down upon the city of the Trojans, the ships of the Achaeans, the gleam of bronze, and alike upon the slayers and on the slain.

Now so long as the day waxed and it was still morning, their darts rained thick on one another and the people perished, but as the hour drew nigh when a woodman working in some mountain forest will get his midday meal—for he has felled till his hands are weary; he is tired out, and must now have food—then the Danaans with a cry that rang through all their ranks, broke the battalions

of the enemy. Agamemnon led them on, and slew first Bienor, a leader of his people, and afterwards his comrade and charioteer Oileus, who sprang from his chariot and was coming full towards him; but Agamemnon struck him on the forehead with his spear; his bronze visor was of no avail against the weapon, which pierced both bronze and bone, so that his brains were battered in and he was killed in full fight.

Agamemnon stripped their shirts from off them and left them with their breasts all bare to lie where they had fallen. He then went on to kill Isus and Antiphus two sons of Priam, the one a bastard, the other born in wedlock; they were in the same chariot—the bastard driving, while noble Antiphus fought beside him. Achilles had once taken both of them prisoners in the glades of Ida, and had bound them with fresh withes as they were shepherding, but he had taken a ransom for them; now, however, Agamemnon son of Atreus smote Isus in the chest above the nipple with his spear, while he struck Antiphus hard by the ear and threw him from his chariot. Forthwith he stripped their goodly armour from off them and recognized them, for he had already seen them at ships when Achilles brought them in from Ida. As a lion fastens on the fawns of a hind and crushes them in his great jaws, robbing them of their tender life while he on his way back to his lair—the hind can do nothing for them even though she be close by, for she is in an agony of fear, and flies through the thick forest, sweating, and at her utmost speed before the mighty monster—so, no man of the Trojans could help Isus and Antiphus, for they were themselves flying in panic before the Argives.

Then King Agamemnon took the two sons of Antimachus, Pisander and brave Hippolochus. It was Antimachus who had been foremost in preventing Helen's being restored to Menelaus, for he was largely bribed by Alexandrus; and now Agamemnon took his two sons, both in the same chariot, trying to bring their horses to a stand—for they had lost hold of the reins and the horses were mad with fear. The son of Atreus sprang upon them like a lion, and the pair besought him from their chariot. "Take us alive," they cried, "son of Atreus, and you shall receive a great ransom for us. Our father Antimachus has great store of gold, bronze, and wrought iron, and from this he will satisfy you with a very large ransom should he hear of our being alive at the ships of the Achaeans."

With such piteous words and tears did they beseech the king, but they heard no pitiful answer in return. "If," said Agamemnon, "you are sons of Antimachus, who once at a council of Trojans proposed that Menelaus and Ulysses, who had come to you as envoys, should be killed and not suffered to return, you shall now pay for the foul iniquity of your father."

As he spoke he felled Pisander from his chariot to the earth, smiting him on the chest with his spear, so that he lay face uppermost upon the ground. Hippolochus fled, but him too did Agamemnon smite; he cut off his hands and his head—which he sent rolling in among the crowd as though it were a ball. There he let them both lie, and wherever the ranks were thickest thither he flew, while the other Achaeans followed. Foot soldiers drove the foot soldiers of the foe in rout before them, and slew them; horsemen did the like by horsemen, and the thundering tramp of the horses raised a cloud of dust from off the plain. King Agamemnon followed after, ever slaying them and cheering on the Achaeans. As when some mighty forest is all ablaze—the eddying gusts whirl fire in all directions till the thickets shrivel and are consumed before the blast of the flame—even so fell the heads of the flying Trojans before Agamemnon son of Atreus, and many a noble pair of steeds drew an empty chariot along the highways of war, for lack of drivers who were lying on the plain, more useful now to vultures than to their wives.

Jove drew Hector away from the darts and dust, with the carnage and din of battle; but the son of Atreus sped onwards, calling out lustily to the Danaans. They flew on by the tomb of old Ilus, son of Dardanus, in the middle of the plain, and past the place of the wild fig-tree making always for the city—the son of Atreus still shouting, and with hands all bedrabbled in gore; but when they had reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree, there they halted and waited for the others to come up. Meanwhile the Trojans kept on flying over the middle of the plain like a herd of cows maddened with fright when a lion has attacked them in the dead of night—he springs on one of them, seizes her neck in the grip of his strong teeth and then laps up her blood and gorges himself upon her entrails—even so did King Agamemnon son of Atreus pursue the foe, ever slaughtering the hindmost as they fled pell-mell before him. Many a man was flung headlong from his chariot by the hand of the son of Atreus, for he wielded his spear with fury.

But when he was just about to reach the high wall and the city, the father of gods and men came down from heaven and took his seat, thunderbolt in hand, upon the crest of many-fountained Ida. He then told Iris of the golden wings to carry a message for him. "Go," said he, "fleet Iris, and speak thus to Hector—say that so long as he sees Agamemnon heading his men and making havoc of the Trojan ranks, he is to keep aloof and bid the others bear the brunt of the battle, but when Agamemnon is wounded either by spear or arrow, and takes to his chariot, then will I vouchsafe him strength to slay till he reach the ships and night falls at the going down of the sun."

Iris hearkened and obeyed. Down she went to strong Ilius from the crests of Ida, and found Hector son of Priam standing by his chariot and horses. Then she said, “Hector son of Priam, peer of gods in counsel, father Jove has sent me to bear you this message —so long as you see Agamemnon heading his men and making havoc of the Trojan ranks, you are to keep aloof and bid the others bear the brunt of the battle, but when Agamemnon is wounded either by spear or arrow, and takes to his chariot, then will Jove vouchsafe you strength to slay till you reach the ships, and till night falls at the going down of the sun.”

When she had thus spoken Iris left him, and Hector sprang full armed from his chariot to the ground, brandishing his spear as he went about everywhere among the host, cheering his men on to fight, and stirring the dread strife of battle. The Trojans then wheeled round, and again met the Achaeans, while the Argives on their part strengthened their battalions. The battle was now in array and they stood face to face with one another, Agamemnon ever pressing forward in his eagerness to be ahead of all others.

Tell me now ye Muses that dwell in the mansions of Olympus, who, whether of the Trojans or of their allies, was first to face Agamemnon? It was Iphidamas son of Antenor, a man both brave and of great stature, who was brought up in fertile Thrace, the mother of sheep. Cisses, his mother’s father, brought him up in his own house when he was a child—Cisses, father to fair Theano. When he reached manhood, Cisses would have kept him there, and was for giving him his daughter in marriage, but as soon as he had married he set out to fight the Achaeans with twelve ships that followed him: these he had left at Percote and had come on by land to Ilius. He it was that now met Agamemnon son of Atreus. When they were close up with one another, the son of Atreus missed his aim, and Iphidamas hit him on the girdle below the cuirass and then flung himself upon him, trusting to his strength of arm; the girdle, however, was not pierced, nor nearly so, for the point of the spear struck against the silver and was turned aside as though it had been lead: King Agamemnon caught it from his hand, and drew it towards him with the fury of a lion; he then drew his sword, and killed Iphidamas by striking him on the neck. So there the poor fellow lay, sleeping a sleep as it were of bronze, killed in the defence of his fellow-citizens, far from his wedded wife, of whom he had had no joy though he had given much for her: he had given a hundred-head of cattle down, and had promised later on to give a thousand sheep and goats mixed, from the countless flocks of which he was possessed. Agamemnon son of Atreus then despoiled him, and carried off his armour into the host of the Achaeans.

When noble Coon, Antenor’s eldest son, saw this, sore indeed were his eyes at the sight of his fallen brother. Unseen by Agamemnon he got beside him, spear in hand, and wounded him in the middle of his arm below the elbow, the point of the spear going right through the arm. Agamemnon was convulsed with pain, but still not even for this did he leave off struggling and fighting, but grasped his spear that flew as fleet as the wind, and sprang upon Coon who was trying to drag off the body of his brother—his father’s son—by the foot, and was crying for help to all the bravest of his comrades; but Agamemnon struck him with a bronze-shod spear and killed him as he was dragging the dead body through the press of men under cover of his shield: he then cut off his head, standing over the body of Iphidamas. Thus did the sons of Antenor meet their fate at the hands of the son of Atreus, and go down into the house of Hades.

As long as the blood still welled warm from his wound Agamemnon went about attacking the ranks of the enemy with spear and sword and with great handfuls of stone, but when the blood had ceased to flow and the wound grew dry, the pain became great. As the sharp pangs which the Eilithuiae, goddesses of childbirth, daughters of Juno and dispensers of cruel pain, send upon a woman when she is in labour—even so sharp were the pangs of the son of Atreus. He sprang on to his chariot, and bade his charioteer drive to the ships, for he was in great agony. With a loud clear voice he shouted to the Danaans, “My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, defend the ships yourselves, for Jove has not suffered me to fight the whole day through against the Trojans.”

With this the charioteer turned his horses towards the ships, and they flew forward nothing loth. Their chests were white with foam and their bellies with dust, as they drew the wounded king out of the battle.

When Hector saw Agamemnon quit the field, he shouted to the Trojans and Lycians saying, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanian warriors, be men, my friends, and acquit yourselves in battle bravely; their best man has left them, and Jove has vouchsafed me a great triumph; charge the foe with your chariots that you may win still greater glory.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all, and as a huntsman hounds his dogs on against a lion or wild boar, even so did Hector, peer of Mars, hound the proud Trojans on against the Achaeans. Full of hope he plunged in among the foremost, and fell on the fight like some fierce tempest that swoops down upon the sea, and lashes its deep blue waters into fury.

What, then is the full tale of those whom Hector son of Priam killed in the hour of triumph which Jove then vouchsafed him? First Asaeus, Autonous, and Opites; Dolops son of Clytius, Opheltius and Agelaus; Aesymnus, Orus and Hipponous steadfast in battle;

these chieftains of the Achaeans did Hector slay, and then he fell upon the rank and file. As when the west wind hustles the clouds of the white south and beats them down with the fierceness of its fury—the waves of the sea roll high, and the spray is flung aloft in the rage of the wandering wind—even so thick were the heads of them that fell by the hand of Hector.

All had then been lost and no help for it, and the Achaeans would have fled pell-mell to their ships, had not Ulysses cried out to Diomed, “Son of Tydeus, what has happened to us that we thus forget our prowess? Come, my good fellow, stand by my side and help me, we shall be shamed for ever if Hector takes the ships.”

And Diomed answered, “Come what may, I will stand firm; but we shall have scant joy of it, for Jove is minded to give victory to the Trojans rather than to us.”

With these words he struck Thymbraeus from his chariot to the ground, smiting him in the left breast with his spear, while Ulysses killed Molion who was his squire. These they let lie, now that they had stopped their fighting; the two heroes then went on playing havoc with the foe, like two wild boars that turn in fury and rend the hounds that hunt them. Thus did they turn upon the Trojans and slay them, and the Achaeans were thankful to have breathing time in their flight from Hector.

They then took two princes with their chariot, the two sons of Merops of Percote, who excelled all others in the arts of divination. He had forbidden his sons to go to the war, but they would not obey him, for fate lured them to their fall. Diomed son of Tydeus slew them both and stripped them of their armour, while Ulysses killed Hippodamus and Hypeirochus.

And now the son of Saturn as he looked down from Ida ordained that neither side should have the advantage, and they kept on killing one another. The son of Tydeus speared Agastrophus son of Paeon in the hip-joint with his spear. His chariot was not at hand for him to fly with, so blindly confident had he been. His squire was in charge of it at some distance and he was fighting on foot among the foremost until he lost his life. Hector soon marked the havoc Diomed and Ulysses were making, and bore down upon them with a loud cry, followed by the Trojan ranks; brave Diomed was dismayed when he saw them, and said to Ulysses who was beside him, “Great Hector is bearing down upon us and we shall be undone; let us stand firm and wait his onset.”

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it, nor did he miss his mark. He had aimed at Hector’s head near the top of his helmet, but bronze was turned by bronze, and Hector was untouched, for the spear was stayed by the visored helm made with three plates of metal, which Phoebus Apollo had given him. Hector sprang back with a great bound under cover of the ranks; he fell on his knees and propped himself with his brawny hand leaning on the ground, for darkness had fallen on his eyes. The son of Tydeus having thrown his spear dashed in among the foremost fighters, to the place where he had seen it strike the ground; meanwhile Hector recovered himself and springing back into his chariot mingled with the crowd, by which means he saved his life. But Diomed made at him with his spear and said, “Dog, you have again got away though death was close on your heels. Phoebus Apollo, to whom I ween you pray ere you go into battle, has again saved you, nevertheless I will meet you and make an end of you hereafter, if there is any god who will stand by me too and be my helper. For the present I must pursue those I can lay hands on.”

As he spoke he began stripping the spoils from the son of Paeon, but Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen aimed an arrow at him, leaning against a pillar of the monument which men had raised to Ilus son of Dardanus, a ruler in days of old. Diomed had taken the cuirass from off the breast of Agastrophus, his heavy helmet also, and the shield from off his shoulders, when Paris drew his bow and let fly an arrow that sped not from his hand in vain, but pierced the flat of Diomed’s right foot, going right through it and fixing itself in the ground. Thereon Paris with a hearty laugh sprang forward from his hiding-place, and taunted him saying, “You are wounded—my arrow has not been shot in vain; would that it had hit you in the belly and killed you, for thus the Trojans, who fear you as goats fear a lion, would have had a truce from evil.”

Diomed all undaunted answered, “Archer, you who without your bow are nothing, slanderer and seducer, if you were to be tried in single combat fighting in full armour, your bow and your arrows would serve you in little stead. Vain is your boast in that you have scratched the sole of my foot. I care no more than if a girl or some silly boy had hit me. A worthless coward can inflict but a light wound; when I wound a man though I but graze his skin it is another matter, for my weapon will lay him low. His wife will tear her cheeks for grief and his children will be fatherless: there will he rot, reddening the earth with his blood, and vultures, not women, will gather round him.”

Thus he spoke, but Ulysses came up and stood over him. Under this cover he sat down to draw the arrow from his foot, and sharp was the pain he suffered as he did so. Then he sprang on to his chariot and bade the charioteer drive him to the ships, for he was sick at heart.

Ulysses was now alone; not one of the Argives stood by him, for they were all panic-stricken. “Alas,” said he to himself in his dismay, “what will become of me? It is ill if I turn and fly before these odds, but it will be worse if I am left alone and taken prisoner, for the son of Saturn has struck the rest of the Danaans with panic. But why talk to myself in this way? Well do I know that though cowards quit the field, a hero, whether he wound or be wounded, must stand firm and hold his own.”

While he was thus in two minds, the ranks of the Trojans advanced and hemmed him in, and bitterly did they come to rue it. As hounds and lusty youths set upon a wild boar that sallies from his lair whetting his white tusks—they attack him from every side and can hear the gnashing of his jaws, but for all his fierceness they still hold their ground—even so furiously did the Trojans attack Ulysses. First he sprang spear in hand upon Deiopites and wounded him on the shoulder with a downward blow; then he killed Thoon and Ennomus. After these he struck Chersidamas in the loins under his shield as he had just sprung down from his chariot; so he fell in the dust and clutched the earth in the hollow of his hand. These he let lie, and went on to wound Charops son of Hippasus own brother to noble Socus. Socus, hero that he was, made all speed to help him, and when he was close to Ulysses he said, “Far-famed Ulysses, insatiable of craft and toil, this day you shall either boast of having killed both the sons of Hippasus and stripped them of their armour, or you shall fall before my spear.”

With these words he struck the shield of Ulysses. The spear went through the shield and passed on through his richly wrought cuirass, tearing the flesh from his side, but Pallas Minerva did not suffer it to pierce the entrails of the hero. Ulysses knew that his hour was not yet come, but he gave ground and said to Socus, “Wretch, you shall now surely die. You have stayed me from fighting further with the Trojans, but you shall now fall by my spear, yielding glory to myself, and your soul to Hades of the noble steeds.”

Socus had turned in flight, but as he did so, the spear struck him in the back midway between the shoulders, and went right through his chest. He fell heavily to the ground and Ulysses vaunted over him saying, “O Socus, son of Hippasus tamer of horses, death has been too quick for you and you have not escaped him: poor wretch, not even in death shall your father and mother close your eyes, but the ravening vultures shall enshroud you with the flapping of their dark wings and devour you. Whereas even though I fall the Achaeans will give me my due rites of burial.”

So saying he drew Socus’s heavy spear out of his flesh and from his shield, and the blood welled forth when the spear was withdrawn so that he was much dismayed. When the Trojans saw that Ulysses was bleeding they raised a great shout and came on in a body towards him; he therefore gave ground, and called his comrades to come and help him. Thrice did he cry as loudly as man can cry, and thrice did brave Menelaus hear him; he turned, therefore, to Ajax who was close beside him and said, “Ajax, noble son of Telamon, captain of your people, the cry of Ulysses rings in my ears, as though the Trojans had cut him off and were worsting him while he is single-handed. Let us make our way through the throng; it will be well that we defend him; I fear he may come to harm for all his valour if he be left without support, and the Danaans would miss him sorely.”

He led the way and mighty Ajax went with him. The Trojans had gathered round Ulysses like ravenous mountain jackals round the carcase of some horned stag that has been hit with an arrow—the stag has fled at full speed so long as his blood was warm and his strength has lasted, but when the arrow has overcome him, the savage jackals devour him in the shady glades of the forest. Then heaven sends a fierce lion thither, whereon the jackals fly in terror and the lion robs them of their prey—even so did Trojans many and brave gather round crafty Ulysses, but the hero stood at bay and kept them off with his spear. Ajax then came up with his shield before him like a wall, and stood hard by, whereon the Trojans fled in all directions. Menelaus took Ulysses by the hand, and led him out of the press while his squire brought up his chariot, but Ajax rushed furiously on the Trojans and killed Doryclus, a bastard son of Priam; then he wounded Pandocus, Lysandrus, Pyrasus, and Pylartes; as some swollen torrent comes rushing in full flood from the mountains on to the plain, big with the rain of heaven—many a dry oak and many a pine does it engulf, and much mud does it bring down and cast into the sea—even so did brave Ajax chase the foe furiously over the plain, slaying both men and horses.

Hector did not yet know what Ajax was doing, for he was fighting on the extreme left of the battle by the banks of the river Scamander, where the carnage was thickest and the war-cry loudest round Nestor and brave Idomeneus. Among these Hector was making great slaughter with his spear and furious driving, and was destroying the ranks that were opposed to him; still the Achaeans would have given no ground, had not Alexandrus husband of lovely Helen stayed the prowess of Machaon, shepherd of his people, by wounding him in the right shoulder with a triple-barbed arrow. The Achaeans were in great fear that as the fight had turned against them the Trojans might take him prisoner, and Idomeneus said to Nestor, “Nestor son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, mount your chariot at once; take Machaon with you and drive your horses to the ships as fast as you can. A physician is worth more than several other men put together, for he can cut out arrows and spread healing herbs.”

Nestor knight of Gerene did as Idomeneus had counselled; he at once mounted his chariot, and Machaon son of the famed physician Aesculapius, went with him. He lashed his horses and they flew onward nothing loth towards the ships, as though of their own free will.

Then Cebriones seeing the Trojans in confusion said to Hector from his place beside him, “Hector, here are we two fighting on the extreme wing of the battle, while the other Trojans are in pell-mell rout, they and their horses. Ajax son of Telamon is driving them before him; I know him by the breadth of his shield: let us turn our chariot and horses thither, where horse and foot are fighting most desperately, and where the cry of battle is loudest.”

With this he lashed his goodly steeds, and when they felt the whip they drew the chariot full speed among the Achaeans and Trojans, over the bodies and shields of those that had fallen: the axle was bespattered with blood, and the rail round the car was covered with splashes both from the horses’ hoofs and from the tyres of the wheels. Hector tore his way through and flung himself into the thick of the fight, and his presence threw the Danaans into confusion, for his spear was not long idle; nevertheless though he went among the ranks with sword and spear, and throwing great stones, he avoided Ajax son of Telamon, for Jove would have been angry with him if he had fought a better man than himself.

Then father Jove from his high throne struck fear into the heart of Ajax, so that he stood there dazed and threw his shield behind him—looking fearfully at the throng of his foes as though he were some wild beast, and turning hither and thither but crouching slowly backwards. As peasants with their hounds chase a lion from their stockyard, and watch by night to prevent his carrying off the pick of their herd—he makes his greedy spring, but in vain, for the darts from many a strong hand fall thick around him, with burning brands that scare him for all his fury, and when morning comes he slinks foiled and angry away—even so did Ajax, sorely against his will, retreat angrily before the Trojans, fearing for the ships of the Achaeans. Or as some lazy ass that has had many a cudgel broken about his back, when he into a field begins eating the corn—boys beat him but he is too many for them, and though they lay about with their sticks they cannot hurt him; still when he has had his fill they at last drive him from the field—even so did the Trojans and their allies pursue great Ajax, ever smiting the middle of his shield with their darts. Now and again he would turn and show fight, keeping back the battalions of the Trojans, and then he would again retreat; but he prevented any of them from making his way to the ships. Single-handed he stood midway between the Trojans and Achaeans: the spears that sped from their hands stuck some of them in his mighty shield, while many, though thirsting for his blood, fell to the ground ere they could reach him to the wounding of his fair flesh.

Now when Eurypylus the brave son of Euaemon saw that Ajax was being overpowered by the rain of arrows, he went up to him and hurled his spear. He struck Apisaon son of Phausius in the liver below the midriff, and laid him low. Eurypylus sprang upon him, and stripped the armour from his shoulders; but when Alexandrus saw him, he aimed an arrow at him which struck him in the right thigh; the arrow broke, but the point that was left in the wound dragged on the thigh; he drew back, therefore, under cover of his comrades to save his life, shouting as he did so to the Danaans, “My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, rally to the defence of Ajax who is being overpowered, and I doubt whether he will come out of the fight alive. Hither, then, to the rescue of great Ajax son of Telamon.”

Even so did he cry when he was wounded; thereon the others came near, and gathered round him, holding their shields upwards from their shoulders so as to give him cover. Ajax then made towards them, and turned round to stand at bay as soon as he had reached his men.

Thus then did they fight as it were a flaming fire. Meanwhile the mares of Neleus, all in a lather with sweat, were bearing Nestor out of the fight, and with him Machaon shepherd of his people. Achilles saw and took note, for he was standing on the stern of his ship watching the hard stress and struggle of the fight. He called from the ship to his comrade Patroclus, who heard him in the tent and came out looking like Mars himself—here indeed was the beginning of the ill that presently befell him. “Why,” said he, “Achilles, do you call me? What do you want with me?” And Achilles answered, “Noble son of Menoetius, man after my own heart, I take it that I shall now have the Achaeans praying at my knees, for they are in great straits; go, Patroclus, and ask Nestor who it is that he is bearing away wounded from the field; from his back I should say it was Machaon son of Aesculapius, but I could not see his face for the horses went by me at full speed.”

Patroclus did as his dear comrade had bidden him, and set off running by the ships and tents of the Achaeans.

When Nestor and Machaon had reached the tents of the son of Neleus, they dismounted, and an esquire, Eurymedon, took the horses from the chariot. The pair then stood in the breeze by the seaside to dry the sweat from their shirts, and when they had so

done they came inside and took their seats. Fair Hecamede, whom Nestor had had awarded to him from Tenedos when Achilles took it, mixed them a mess; she was daughter of wise Arsinous, and the Achaeans had given her to Nestor because he excelled all of them in counsel. First she set for them a fair and well-made table that had feet of cyanus; on it there was a vessel of bronze and an onion to give relish to the drink, with honey and cakes of barley-meal. There was also a cup of rare workmanship which the old man had brought with him from home, studded with bosses of gold; it had four handles, on each of which there were two golden doves feeding, and it had two feet to stand on. Any one else would hardly have been able to lift it from the table when it was full, but Nestor could do so quite easily. In this the woman, as fair as a goddess, mixed them a mess with Pramnian wine; she grated goat's milk cheese into it with a bronze grater, threw in a handful of white barley-meal, and having thus prepared the mess she bade them drink it. When they had done so and had thus quenched their thirst, they fell talking with one another, and at this moment Patroclus appeared at the door.

When the old man saw him he sprang from his seat, seized his hand, led him into the tent, and bade him take his place among them; but Patroclus stood where he was and said, "Noble sir, I may not stay, you cannot persuade me to come in; he that sent me is not one to be trifled with, and he bade me ask who the wounded man was whom you were bearing away from the field. I can now see for myself that he is Machaon, shepherd of his people. I must go back and tell Achilles. You, sir, know what a terrible man he is, and how ready to blame even where no blame should lie."

And Nestor answered, "Why should Achilles care to know how many of the Achaeans may be wounded? He recks not of the dismay that reigns in our host; our most valiant chieftains lie disabled, brave Diomed, son of Tydeus, is wounded; so are Ulysses and Agamemnon; Eurypylus has been hit with an arrow in the thigh, and I have just been bringing this man from the field—he too wounded with an arrow. Nevertheless, Achilles, so valiant though he be, cares not and knows no ruth. Will he wait till the ships, do what we may, are in a blaze, and we perish one upon the other? As for me, I have no strength nor stay in me any longer; would that I were still young and strong as in the days when there was a fight between us and the men of Elis about some cattle-raiding. I then killed Itymoneus, the valiant son of Hypeirochus, a dweller in Elis, as I was driving in the spoil; he was hit by a dart thrown by my hand while fighting in the front rank in defence of his cows, so he fell and the country people around him were in great fear. We drove off a vast quantity of booty from the plain, fifty herds of cattle and as many flocks of sheep; fifty droves also of pigs, and as many wide-spreading flocks of goats. Of horses, moreover, we seized a hundred and fifty, all of them mares, and many had foals running with them. All these did we drive by night to Pylus, the city of Neleus, taking them within the city; and the heart of Neleus was glad in that I had taken so much, though it was the first time I had ever been in the field. At daybreak the heralds went round crying that all in Elis to whom there was a debt owing should come; and the leading Pylians assembled to divide the spoils. There were many to whom the Epeans owed chattels, for we men of Pylus were few and had been oppressed with wrong; in former years Hercules had come, and had laid his hand heavy upon us, so that all our best men had perished. Neleus had had twelve sons, but I alone was left; the others had all been killed. The Epeans presuming upon all this had looked down upon us and had done us much evil. My father chose a herd of cattle and a great flock of sheep—three hundred in all—and he took their shepherds with him, for there was a great debt due to him in Elis, to wit four horses, winners of prizes. They and their chariots with them had gone to the games and were to run for a tripod, but King Augeas took them, and sent back their driver grieving for the loss of his horses. Neleus was angered by what he had both said and done, and took great value in return, but he divided the rest, that no man might have less than his full share.

"Thus did we order all things, and offer sacrifices to the gods throughout the city; but three days afterwards the Epeans came in a body, many in number, they and their chariots, in full array, and with them the two Moliones in their armour, though they were still lads and unused to fighting. Now there is a certain town, Thryoessa, perched upon a rock on the river Alpheus, the border city of Pylus. This they would destroy, and pitched their camp about it, but when they had crossed their whole plain, Minerva darted down by night from Olympus and bade us set ourselves in array; and she found willing soldiers in Pylos, for the men meant fighting. Neleus would not let me arm, and hid my horses, for he said that as yet I could know nothing about war; nevertheless Minerva so ordered the fight that, all on foot as I was, I fought among our mounted forces and vied with the foremost of them. There is a river Minyeius that falls into the sea near Arene, and there they that were mounted (and I with them) waited till morning, when the companies of foot soldiers came up with us in force. Thence in full panoply and equipment we came towards noon to the sacred waters of the Alpheus, and there we offered victims to almighty Jove, with a bull to Alpheus, another to Neptune, and a herd-heifer to Minerva. After this we took supper in our companies, and laid us down to rest each in his armour by the river.

"The Epeans were beleaguering the city and were determined to take it, but ere this might be there was a desperate fight in store for them. When the sun's rays began to fall upon the earth we joined battle, praying to Jove and to Minerva, and when the fight had begun, I was the first to kill my man and take his horses—to wit the warrior Mulius. He was son-in-law to Augeas, having married his eldest daughter, golden-haired Agamede, who knew the virtues of every herb which grows upon the face of the earth. I speared him as he was coming towards me, and when he fell headlong in the dust, I sprang upon his chariot and took my place in the front ranks. The Epeans fled in all directions when they saw the captain of their horsemen (the best man they had) laid low, and I swept down on them like a whirlwind, taking fifty chariots—and in each of them two men bit the dust, slain by my spear. I should have even killed the two Moliones, sons of Actor, unless their real father, Neptune lord of the earthquake, had hidden them in a thick mist and borne them out of the fight. Thereon Jove vouchsafed the Pylians a great victory, for we chased them far over the plain, killing the men and bringing in their armour, till we had brought our horses to Buprasium, rich in wheat, and to the Olenian rock, with the hill that is called Alision, at which point Minerva turned the people back. There I slew the last man and left him; then the Achaeans drove their horses back from Buprasium to Pylos and gave thanks to Jove among the gods, and among mortal men to Nestor.

"Such was I among my peers, as surely as ever was, but Achilles is for keeping all his valour for himself; bitterly will he rue it hereafter when the host is being cut to pieces. My good friend, did not Menoetius charge you thus, on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon? Ulysses and I were in the house, inside, and heard all that he said to you; for we came to the fair house of Peleus while beating up recruits throughout all Achaea, and when we got there we found Menoetius and yourself, and Achilles with you. The old knight Peleus was in the outer court, roasting the fat thigh-bones of a heifer to Jove the lord of thunder; and he held a gold chalice in his hand from which he poured drink-offerings of wine over the burning sacrifice. You two were busy cutting up the heifer, and at that moment we stood at the gates, whereon Achilles sprang to his feet, led us by the hand into the house, placed us at table, and set before us such hospitable entertainment as guests expect. When we had satisfied ourselves with meat and drink, I said my say and urged both of you to join us. You were ready enough to do so, and the two old men charged you much and straitly. Old Peleus bade his son Achilles fight ever among the foremost and outvie his peers, while Menoetius the son of Actor spoke thus to you: 'My son,' said he, 'Achilles is of nobler birth than you are, but you are older than he, though he is far the better man of the two. Counsel him wisely, guide him in the right way, and he will follow you to his own profit.' Thus did your father charge you, but you have forgotten; nevertheless, even now, say all this to Achilles if he will listen to you. Who knows but with heaven's help you may talk him over, for it is good to take a friend's advice. If, however, he is fearful about some oracle, or if his mother has told him something from Jove, then let him send you, and let the rest of the Myrmidons follow with you, if perchance you may bring light and saving to the Danaans. And let him send you into battle clad in his own armour, that the Trojans may mistake you for him and leave off fighting; the sons of the Achaeans may thus have time to get their breath, for they are hard pressed and there is little breathing time in battle. You, who are fresh, might easily drive a tired enemy back to his walls and away from the tents and ships."

With these words he moved the heart of Patroclus, who set off running by the line of the ships to Achilles, descendant of Aeacus. When he had got as far as the ships of Ulysses, where was their place of assembly and court of justice, with their altars dedicated to the gods, Eurypylus son of Euaemon, met him, wounded in the thigh with an arrow, and limping out of the fight. Sweat rained from his head and shoulders, and black blood welled from his cruel wound, but his mind did not wander. The son of Menoetius when he saw him had compassion upon him and spoke piteously saying, "O unhappy princes and counsellors of the Danaans, are you then doomed to feed the hounds of Troy with your fat, far from your friends and your native land? Say, noble Eurypylus, will the Achaeans be able to hold great Hector in check, or will they fall now before his spear?"

Wounded Eurypylus made answer, "Noble Patroclus, there is no hope left for the Achaeans but they will perish at their ships. All they that were princes among us are lying struck down and wounded at the hands of the Trojans, who are waxing stronger and stronger. But save me and take me to your ship; cut out the arrow from my thigh; wash the black blood from off it with warm water, and lay upon it those gracious herbs which, so they say, have been shown you by Achilles, who was himself shown them by Chiron, most righteous of all the centaurs. For of the physicians Podalirius and Machaon, I hear that the one is lying wounded in his tent and is himself in need of healing, while the other is fighting the Trojans upon the plain."

"Hero Eurypylus," replied the brave son of Menoetius, "how may these things be? What can I do? I am on my way to bear a message to noble Achilles from Nestor of Gerene, bulwark of the Achaeans, but even so I will not be unmindful of your distress."

With this he clasped him round the middle and led him into the tent, and a servant, when he saw him, spread bullock-skins on the ground for him to lie on. He laid him at full length and cut out the sharp arrow from his thigh; he washed the black blood from the wound with warm water; he then crushed a bitter herb, rubbing it between his hands, and spread it upon the wound; this was a virtuous herb which killed all pain; so the wound presently dried and the blood left off flowing.

This page titled 3.12.1.11: Book XI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.12: Book XII

The Trojans and their allies break the wall, led on by Hector.

So the son of Menoetius was attending to the hurt of Eurypylus within the tent, but the Argives and Trojans still fought desperately, nor were the trench and the high wall above it, to keep the Trojans in check longer. They had built it to protect their ships, and had dug the trench all round it that it might safeguard both the ships and the rich spoils which they had taken, but they had not offered hecatombs to the gods. It had been built without the consent of the immortals, and therefore it did not last. So long as Hector lived and Achilles nursed his anger, and so long as the city of Priam remained untaken, the great wall of the Achaeans stood firm; but when the bravest of the Trojans were no more, and many also of the Argives, though some were yet left alive—when, moreover, the city was sacked in the tenth year, and the Argives had gone back with their ships to their own country—then Neptune and Apollo took counsel to destroy the wall, and they turned on to it the streams of all the rivers from Mount Ida into the sea, Rhesus, Heptaporus, Caresus, Rhodius, Grenicus, Aesopus, and goodly Scamander, with Simois, where many a shield and helm had fallen, and many a hero of the race of demigods had bitten the dust. Phoebus Apollo turned the mouths of all these rivers together and made them flow for nine days against the wall, while Jove rained the whole time that he might wash it sooner into the sea. Neptune himself, trident in hand, surveyed the work and threw into the sea all the foundations of beams and stones which the Achaeans had laid with so much toil; he made all level by the mighty stream of the Hellespont, and then when he had swept the wall away he spread a great beach of sand over the place where it had been. This done he turned the rivers back into their old courses.

This was what Neptune and Apollo were to do in after time; but as yet battle and turmoil were still raging round the wall till its timbers rang under the blows that rained upon them. The Argives, cowed by the scourge of Jove, were hemmed in at their ships in fear of Hector the mighty minister of Rout, who as heretofore fought with the force and fury of a whirlwind. As a lion or wild boar turns fiercely on the dogs and men that attack him, while these form a solid wall and shower their javelins as they face him—his courage is all undaunted, but his high spirit will be the death of him; many a time does he charge at his pursuers to scatter them, and they fall back as often as he does so—even so did Hector go about among the host exhorting his men, and cheering them on to cross the trench.

But the horses dared not do so, and stood neighing upon its brink, for the width frightened them. They could neither jump it nor cross it, for it had overhanging banks all round upon either side, above which there were the sharp stakes that the sons of the Achaeans had planted so close and strong as a defence against all who would assail it; a horse, therefore, could not get into it and draw his chariot after him, but those who were on foot kept trying their very utmost. Then Polydamas went up to Hector and said, “Hector, and you other captains of the Trojans and allies, it is madness for us to try and drive our horses across the trench; it will be very hard to cross, for it is full of sharp stakes, and beyond these there is the wall. Our horses therefore cannot get down into it, and would be of no use if they did; moreover it is a narrow place and we should come to harm. If, indeed, great Jove is minded to help the Trojans, and in his anger will utterly destroy the Achaeans, I would myself gladly see them perish now and here far from Argos; but if they should rally and we are driven back from the ships pell-mell into the trench there will be not so much as a man get back to the city to tell the tale. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; let our squires hold our horses by the trench, but let us follow Hector in a body on foot, clad in full armour, and if the day of their doom is at hand the Achaeans will not be able to withstand us.”

Thus spoke Polydamas and his saying pleased Hector, who sprang in full armour to the ground, and all the other Trojans, when they saw him do so, also left their chariots. Each man then gave his horses over to his charioteer in charge to hold them ready for him at the trench. Then they formed themselves into companies, made themselves ready, and in five bodies followed their leaders. Those that went with Hector and Polydamas were the bravest and most in number, and the most determined to break through the wall and fight at the ships. Cebriones was also joined with them as third in command, for Hector had left his chariot in charge of a less valiant soldier. The next company was led by Paris, Alcathous, and Agenor; the third by Helenus and Deiphobus, two sons of Priam, and with them was the hero Asius—Asius, the son of Hyrtacus, whose great black horses of the breed that comes from the river Selleis had brought him from Arisbe. Aeneas, the valiant son of Anchises, led the fourth; he and the two sons of Antenor, Archelochus and Acamas, men well versed in all the arts of war. Sarpedon was captain over the allies, and took with him Glaucus and Asteropaeus whom he deemed most valiant after himself—for he was far the best man of them all. These helped to array one another in their ox-hide shields, and then charged straight at the Danaans, for they felt sure that they would not hold out longer and that they should themselves now fall upon the ships.

The rest of the Trojans and their allies now followed the counsel of Polydamas but Asius, son of Hyrtacus, would not leave his horses and his esquire behind him; in his foolhardiness he took them on with him towards the ships, nor did he fail to come by his end in consequence. Nevermore was he to return to wind-beaten Ilius, exulting in his chariot and his horses; ere he could do so, death of ill-omened name had overshadowed him and he had fallen by the spear of Idomeneus the noble son of Deucalion. He had driven towards the left wing of the ships, by which way the Achaeans used to return with their chariots and horses from the plain. Hither he drove and found the gates with their doors opened wide, and the great bar down—for the gatemen kept them open so as to let those of their comrades enter who might be flying towards the ships. Hither of set purpose did he direct his horses, and his men followed him with a loud cry, for they felt sure that the Achaeans would not hold out longer, and that they should now fall upon the ships. Little did they know that at the gates they should find two of the bravest chieftains, proud sons of the fighting Lapithae—the one, Polypoetes, mighty son of Pirithous, and the other Leonteus, peer of murderous Mars. These stood before the gates like two high oak trees upon the mountains, that tower from their wide-spreading roots, and year after year battle with wind and rain—even so did these two men await the onset of great Asius confidently and without flinching. The Trojans led by him and by Iamenus, Orestes, Adamas the son of Asius, Thoon and Oenomaus, raised a loud cry of battle and made straight for the wall, holding their shields of dry ox-hide above their heads; for a while the two defenders remained inside and cheered the Achaeans on to stand firm in the defence of their ships; when, however, they saw that the Trojans were attacking the wall, while the Danaans were crying out for help and being routed, they rushed outside and fought in front of the gates like two wild boars upon the mountains that abide the attack of men and dogs, and charging on either side break down the wood all round them tearing it up by the roots, and one can hear the clattering of their tusks, till some one hits them and makes an end of them—even so did the gleaming bronze rattle about their breasts, as the weapons fell upon them; for they fought with great fury, trusting to their own prowess and to those who were on the wall above them. These threw great stones at their assailants in defence of themselves their tents and their ships. The stones fell thick as the flakes of snow which some fierce blast drives from the dark clouds and showers down in sheets upon the earth—even so fell the weapons from the hands alike of Trojans and Achaeans. Helmet and shield rang out as the great stones rained upon them, and Asius, the son of Hyrtacus, in his dismay cried aloud and smote his two thighs. “Father Jove,” he cried, “of a truth you too are altogether given to lying. I made sure the Argive heroes could not withstand us, whereas like slim-waisted wasps, or bees that have their nests in the rocks by the wayside—they leave not the holes wherein they have built undefended, but fight for their little ones against all who would take them—even so these men, though they be but two, will not be driven from the gates, but stand firm either to slay or be slain.”

He spoke, but moved not the mind of Jove, whose counsel it then was to give glory to Hector. Meanwhile the rest of the Trojans were fighting about the other gates; I, however, am no god to be able to tell about all these things, for the battle raged everywhere about the stone wall as it were a fiery furnace. The Argives, discomfited though they were, were forced to defend their ships, and all the gods who were defending the Achaeans were vexed in spirit; but the Lapithae kept on fighting with might and main.

Thereon Polypoetes, mighty son of Pirithous, hit Damasus with a spear upon his cheek-pierced helmet. The helmet did not protect him, for the point of the spear went through it, and broke the bone, so that the brain inside was scattered about, and he died fighting. He then slew Pylon and Ormenus. Leonteus, of the race of Mars, killed Hippomachus the son of Antimachus by striking him with his spear upon the girdle. He then drew his sword and sprang first upon Antiphates whom he killed in combat, and who fell face upwards on the earth. After him he killed Menon, Iamenus, and Orestes, and laid them low one after the other.

While they were busy stripping the armour from these heroes, the youths who were led on by Polydamas and Hector (and these were the greater part and the most valiant of those that were trying to break through the wall and fire the ships) were still standing by the trench, uncertain what they should do; for they had seen a sign from heaven when they had essayed to cross it—a soaring eagle that flew skirting the left wing of their host, with a monstrous blood-red snake in its talons still alive and struggling to escape. The snake was still bent on revenge, wriggling and twisting itself backwards till it struck the bird that held it, on the neck and breast; whereon the bird being in pain, let it fall, dropping it into the middle of the host, and then flew down the wind with a sharp cry. The Trojans were struck with terror when they saw the snake, portent of aegis-bearing Jove, writhing in the midst of them, and Polydamas went up to Hector and said, “Hector, at our councils of war you are ever given to rebuke me, even when I speak wisely, as though it were not well, forsooth, that one of the people should cross your will either in the field or at the council board; you would have them support you always: nevertheless I will say what I think will be best; let us not now go on to fight the Danaans at their ships, for I know what will happen if this soaring eagle which skirted the left wing of our host with a monstrous blood-red snake in its talons (the snake being still alive) was really sent as an omen to the Trojans on their essaying to cross the trench. The eagle let go her hold; she did not succeed in taking it home to her little ones, and so will it be—with ourselves; even though by a

mighty effort we break through the gates and wall of the Achaeans, and they give way before us, still we shall not return in good order by the way we came, but shall leave many a man behind us whom the Achaeans will do to death in defence of their ships. Thus would any seer who was expert in these matters, and was trusted by the people, read the portent."

Hector looked fiercely at him and said, "Polydamas, I like not of your reading. You can find a better saying than this if you will. If, however, you have spoken in good earnest, then indeed has heaven robbed you of your reason. You would have me pay no heed to the counsels of Jove, nor to the promises he made me—and he bowed his head in confirmation; you bid me be ruled rather by the flight of wild-fowl. What care I whether they fly towards dawn or dark, and whether they be on my right hand or on my left? Let us put our trust rather in the counsel of great Jove, king of mortals and immortals. There is one omen, and one only—that a man should fight for his country. Why are you so fearful? Though we be all of us slain at the ships of the Argives you are not likely to be killed yourself, for you are not steadfast nor courageous. If you will not fight, or would talk others over from doing so, you shall fall forthwith before my spear."

With these words he led the way, and the others followed after with a cry that rent the air. Then Jove the lord of thunder sent the blast of a mighty wind from the mountains of Ida, that bore the dust down towards the ships; he thus lulled the Achaeans into security, and gave victory to Hector and to the Trojans, who, trusting to their own might and to the signs he had shown them, essayed to break through the great wall of the Achaeans. They tore down the breastworks from the walls, and overthrew the battlements; they upheaved the buttresses, which the Achaeans had set in front of the wall in order to support it; when they had pulled these down they made sure of breaking through the wall, but the Danaans still showed no sign of giving ground; they still fenced the battlements with their shields of ox-hide, and hurled their missiles down upon the foe as soon as any came below the wall.

The two Ajaxes went about everywhere on the walls cheering on the Achaeans, giving fair words to some while they spoke sharply to any one whom they saw to be remiss. "My friends," they cried, "Argives one and all—good bad and indifferent, for there was never fight yet, in which all were of equal prowess—there is now work enough, as you very well know, for all of you. See that you none of you turn in flight towards the ships, daunted by the shouting of the foe, but press forward and keep one another in heart, if it may so be that Olympian Jove the lord of lightning will vouchsafe us to repel our foes, and drive them back towards the city."

Thus did the two go about shouting and cheering the Achaeans on. As the flakes that fall thick upon a winter's day, when Jove is minded to snow and to display these his arrows to mankind—he lulls the wind to rest, and snows hour after hour till he has buried the tops of the high mountains, the headlands that jut into the sea, the grassy plains, and the tilled fields of men; the snow lies deep upon the forelands, and havens of the grey sea, but the waves as they come rolling in stay it that it can come no further, though all else is wrapped as with a mantle, so heavy are the heavens with snow—even thus thickly did the stones fall on one side and on the other, some thrown at the Trojans, and some by the Trojans at the Achaeans; and the whole wall was in an uproar.

Still the Trojans and brave Hector would not yet have broken down the gates and the great bar, had not Jove turned his son Sarpedon against the Argives as a lion against a herd of horned cattle. Before him he held his shield of hammered bronze, that the smith had beaten so fair and round, and had lined with ox hides which he had made fast with rivets of gold all round the shield; this he held in front of him, and brandishing his two spears came on like some lion of the wilderness, who has been long famished for want of meat and will dare break even into a well-fenced homestead to try and get at the sheep. He may find the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks with dogs and spears, but he is in no mind to be driven from the fold till he has had a try for it; he will either spring on a sheep and carry it off, or be hit by a spear from some strong hand—even so was Sarpedon fain to attack the wall and break down its battlements. Then he said to Glaucus son of Hippolochus, "Glaucus, why in Lycia do we receive especial honour as regards our place at table? Why are the choicest portions served us and our cups kept brimming, and why do men look up to us as though we were gods? Moreover we hold a large estate by the banks of the river Xanthus, fair with orchard lawns and wheat-growing land; it becomes us, therefore, to take our stand at the head of all the Lycians and bear the brunt of the fight, that one may say to another, 'Our princes in Lycia eat the fat of the land and drink best of wine, but they are fine fellows; they fight well and are ever at the front in battle.' My good friend, if, when we were once out of this fight, we could escape old age and death thenceforward and forever, I should neither press forward myself nor bid you do so, but death in ten thousand shapes hangs ever over our heads, and no man can elude him; therefore let us go forward and either win glory for ourselves, or yield it to another."

Glaucus heeded his saying, and the pair forthwith led on the host of Lycians. Menestheus son of Peteos was dismayed when he saw them, for it was against his part of the wall that they came—bringing destruction with them; he looked along the wall for some chieftain to support his comrades and saw the two Ajaxes, men ever eager for the fray, and Teucer, who had just come from his tent,

standing near them; but he could not make his voice heard by shouting to them, so great an uproar was there from crashing shields and helmets and the battering of gates with a din which reached the skies. For all the gates had been closed, and the Trojans were hammering at them to try and break their way through them. Menestheus, therefore, sent Thootes with a message to Ajax. “Run, good Thootes,” he said, “and call Ajax, or better still bid both come, for it will be all over with us here directly; the leaders of the Lycians are upon us, men who have ever fought desperately heretofore. But if they have too much on their hands to let them come, at any rate let Ajax son of Telamon do so, and let Teucer, the famous bowman, come with him.”

The messenger did as he was told, and set off running along the wall of the Achaeans. When he reached the Ajaxes he said to them, “Sirs, princes of the Argives, the son of noble Peteos bids you come to him for a while and help him. You had better both come if you can, or it will be all over with him directly; the leaders of the Lycians are upon him, men who have ever fought desperately heretofore; if you have too much on your hands to let both come, at any rate let Ajax, son of Telamon, do so, and let Teucer, the famous bowman, come with him.”

Great Ajax son of Telamon heeded the message, and at once spoke to the son of Oileus. “Ajax,” said he, “do you two, yourself and brave Lycomedes, stay here and keep the Danaans in heart to fight their hardest. I will go over yonder, and bear my part in the fray, but I will come back here at once as soon as I have given them the help they need.”

With this, Ajax son of Telamon set off, and Teucer, his brother by the same father, went also, with Pandion to carry Teucer’s bow. They went along inside the wall, and when they came to the tower where Menestheus was (and hard pressed indeed did they find him) the brave captains and leaders of the Lycians were storming the battlements as it were a thick dark cloud, fighting in close quarters, and raising the battle-cry aloud.

First, Ajax son of Telamon killed brave Epicles, a comrade of Sarpedon, hitting him with a jagged stone that lay by the battlements at the very top of the wall. As men now are, even one who is in the bloom of youth could hardly lift it with his two hands, but Ajax raised it high aloft and flung it down, smashing Epicles’ four-crested helmet so that the bones of his head were crushed to pieces, and he fell from the high wall as though he were diving, with no more life left in him. Then Teucer wounded Glaucus the brave son of Hippolochus as he was coming on to attack the wall. He saw his shoulder bare and aimed an arrow at it, which made Glaucus leave off fighting. Thereon he sprang covertly down for fear some of the Achaeans might see that he was wounded and taunt him. Sarpedon was stung with grief when he saw Glaucus leave him, still he did not leave off fighting, but aimed his spear at Alcmaon the son of Thestor and hit him. He drew his spear back again and Alcmaon came down headlong after it with his bronzed armour rattling round him. Then Sarpedon seized the battlement in his strong hands, and tugged at it till it all gave way together, and a breach was made through which many might pass.

Ajax and Teucer then both of them attacked him. Teucer hit him with an arrow on the band that bore the shield which covered his body, but Jove saved his son from destruction that he might not fall by the ships’ sterns. Meanwhile Ajax sprang on him and pierced his shield, but the spear did not go clean through, though it hustled him back that he could come on no further. He therefore retired a little space from the battlement, yet without losing all his ground, for he still thought to cover himself with glory. Then he turned round and shouted to the brave Lycians saying, “Lycians, why do you thus fail me? For all my prowess I cannot break through the wall and open a way to the ships single-handed. Come close on behind me, for the more there are of us the better.”

The Lycians, shamed by his rebuke, pressed closer round him who was their counsellor and their king. The Argives on their part got their men in fighting order within the wall, and there was a deadly struggle between them. The Lycians could not break through the wall and force their way to the ships, nor could the Danaans drive the Lycians from the wall now that they had once reached it. As two men, measuring-rods in hand, quarrel about their boundaries in a field that they own in common, and stickle for their rights though they be but in a mere strip, even so did the battlements now serve as a bone of contention, and they beat one another’s round shields for their possession. Many a man’s body was wounded with the pitiless bronze, as he turned round and bared his back to the foe, and many were struck clean through their shields; the wall and battlements were everywhere deluged with the blood alike of Trojans and of Achaeans. But even so the Trojans could not rout the Achaeans, who still held on; and as some honest hard-working woman weighs wool in her balance and sees that the scales be true, for she would gain some pitiful earnings for her little ones, even so was the fight balanced evenly between them till the time came when Jove gave the greater glory to Hector son of Priam, who was first to spring towards the wall of the Achaeans. When he had done so, he cried aloud to the Trojans, “Up, Trojans, break the wall of the Argives, and fling fire upon their ships.”

Thus did he hound them on, and in one body they rushed straight at the wall as he had bidden them, and scaled the battlements with sharp spears in their hands. Hector laid hold of a stone that lay just outside the gates and was thick at one end but pointed at the other; two of the best men in a town, as men now are, could hardly raise it from the ground and put it on to a waggon, but Hector lifted it quite easily by himself, for the son of scheming Saturn made it light for him. As a shepherd picks up a ram's fleece with one hand and finds it no burden, so easily did Hector lift the great stone and drive it right at the doors that closed the gates so strong and so firmly set. These doors were double and high, and were kept closed by two cross-bars to which there was but one key. When he had got close up to them, Hector strode towards them that his blow might gain in force and struck them in the middle, leaning his whole weight against them. He broke both hinges, and the stone fell inside by reason of its great weight. The portals re-echoed with the sound, the bars held no longer, and the doors flew open, one one way, and the other the other, through the force of the blow. Then brave Hector leaped inside with a face as dark as that of flying night. The gleaming bronze flashed fiercely about his body and he had two spears in his hand. None but a god could have withstood him as he flung himself into the gateway, and his eyes glared like fire. Then he turned round towards the Trojans and called on them to scale the wall, and they did as he bade them —some of them at once climbing over the wall, while others passed through the gates. The Danaans then fled panic-stricken towards their ships, and all was uproar and confusion.

This page titled 3.12.1.12: Book XII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.13: Book XIII

Neptune helps the Achaeans—The feats of Idomeneus—Hector at the ships.

Now when Jove had thus brought Hector and the Trojans to the ships, he left them to their never-ending toil, and turned his keen eyes away, looking elsewhither towards the horse-breeders of Thrace, the Mysians, fighters at close quarters, the noble Hippemolgi, who live on milk, and the Abians, justest of mankind. He no longer turned so much as a glance towards Troy, for he did not think that any of the immortals would go and help either Trojans or Danaans.

But King Neptune had kept no blind look-out; he had been looking admiringly on the battle from his seat on the topmost crests of wooded Samothrace, whence he could see all Ida, with the city of Priam and the ships of the Achaeans. He had come from under the sea and taken his place here, for he pitied the Achaeans who were being overcome by the Trojans; and he was furiously angry with Jove.

Presently he came down from his post on the mountain top, and as he strode swiftly onwards the high hills and the forest quaked beneath the tread of his immortal feet. Three strides he took, and with the fourth he reached his goal—Aegae, where is his glittering golden palace, imperishable, in the depths of the sea. When he got there, he yoked his fleet brazen-footed steeds with their manes of gold all flying in the wind; he clothed himself in raiment of gold, grasped his gold whip, and took his stand upon his chariot. As he went his way over the waves the sea-monsters left their lairs, for they knew their lord, and came gambolling round him from every quarter of the deep, while the sea in her gladness opened a path before his chariot. So lightly did the horses fly that the bronze axle of the car was not even wet beneath it; and thus his bounding steeds took him to the ships of the Achaeans.

Now there is a certain huge cavern in the depths of the sea midway between Tenedos and rocky Imbrus; here Neptune lord of the earthquake stayed his horses, unyoked them, and set before them their ambrosial forage. He hobbled their feet with hobbles of gold which none could either unloose or break, so that they might stay there in that place until their lord should return. This done he went his way to the host of the Achaeans.

Now the Trojans followed Hector son of Priam in close array like a storm-cloud or flame of fire, fighting with might and main and raising the cry battle; for they deemed that they should take the ships of the Achaeans and kill all their chiefest heroes then and there. Meanwhile earth-encircling Neptune lord of the earthquake cheered on the Argives, for he had come up out of the sea and had assumed the form and voice of Calchas.

First he spoke to the two Ajaxes, who were doing their best already, and said, “Ajaxes, you two can be the saving of the Achaeans if you will put out all your strength and not let yourselves be daunted. I am not afraid that the Trojans, who have got over the wall in force, will be victorious in any other part, for the Achaeans can hold all of them in check, but I much fear that some evil will befall us here where furious Hector, who boasts himself the son of great Jove himself, is leading them on like a pillar of flame. May some god, then, put it into your hearts to make a firm stand here, and to incite others to do the like. In this case you will drive him from the ships even though he be inspired by Jove himself.”

As he spoke the earth-encircling lord of the earthquake struck both of them with his sceptre and filled their hearts with daring. He made their legs light and active, as also their hands and their feet. Then, as the soaring falcon poises on the wing high above some sheer rock, and presently swoops down to chase some bird over the plain, even so did Neptune lord of the earthquake wing his flight into the air and leave them. Of the two, swift Ajax son of Oileus was the first to know who it was that had been speaking with them, and said to Ajax son of Telamon, “Ajax, this is one of the gods that dwell on Olympus, who in the likeness of the prophet is bidding us fight hard by our ships. It was not Calchas the seer and diviner of omens; I knew him at once by his feet and knees as he turned away, for the gods are soon recognised. Moreover I feel the lust of battle burn more fiercely within me, while my hands and my feet under me are more eager for the fray.”

And Ajax son of Telamon answered, “I too feel my hands grasp my spear more firmly; my strength is greater, and my feet more nimble; I long, moreover, to meet furious Hector son of Priam, even in single combat.”

Thus did they converse, exulting in the hunger after battle with which the god had filled them. Meanwhile the earth-encircler roused the Achaeans, who were resting in the rear by the ships overcome at once by hard fighting and by grief at seeing that the Trojans had got over the wall in force. Tears began falling from their eyes as they beheld them, for they made sure that they should not escape destruction; but the lord of the earthquake passed lightly about among them and urged their battalions to the front.

First he went up to Teucer and Leitus, the hero Peneleos, and Thoas and Deipyrus; Meriones also and Antilochus, valiant warriors; all did he exhort. “Shame on you young Argives,” he cried, “it was on your prowess I relied for the saving of our ships; if you fight not with might and main, this very day will see us overcome by the Trojans. Of a truth my eyes behold a great and terrible portent which I had never thought to see—the Trojans at our ships—they, who were heretofore like panic-stricken hinds, the prey of jackals and wolves in a forest, with no strength but in flight for they cannot defend themselves. Hitherto the Trojans dared not for one moment face the attack of the Achaeans, but now they have sallied far from their city and are fighting at our very ships through the cowardice of our leader and the disaffection of the people themselves, who in their discontent care not to fight in defence of the ships but are being slaughtered near them. True, King Agamemnon son of Atreus is the cause of our disaster by having insulted the son of Peleus, still this is no reason why we should leave off fighting. Let us be quick to heal, for the hearts of the brave heal quickly. You do ill to be thus remiss, you, who are the finest soldiers in our whole army. I blame no man for keeping out of battle if he is a weakling, but I am indignant with such men as you are. My good friends, matters will soon become even worse through this slackness; think, each one of you, of his own honour and credit, for the hazard of the fight is extreme. Great Hector is now fighting at our ships; he has broken through the gates and the strong bolt that held them.”

Thus did the earth-encircler address the Achaeans and urge them on. Thereon round the two Ajaxes there gathered strong bands of men, of whom not even Mars nor Minerva, marshaller of hosts could make light if they went among them, for they were the picked men of all those who were now awaiting the onset of Hector and the Trojans. They made a living fence, spear to spear, shield to shield, buckler to buckler, helmet to helmet, and man to man. The horse-hair crests on their gleaming helmets touched one another as they nodded forward, so closely serried were they; the spears they brandished in their strong hands were interlaced, and their hearts were set on battle.

The Trojans advanced in a dense body, with Hector at their head pressing right on as a rock that comes thundering down the side of some mountain from whose brow the winter torrents have torn it; the foundations of the dull thing have been loosened by floods of rain, and as it bounds headlong on its way it sets the whole forest in an uproar; it swerves neither to right nor left till it reaches level ground, but then for all its fury it can go no further—even so easily did Hector for a while seem as though he would career through the tents and ships of the Achaeans till he had reached the sea in his murderous course; but the closely serried battalions stayed him when he reached them, for the sons of the Achaeans thrust at him with swords and spears pointed at both ends, and drove him from them so that he staggered and gave ground; thereon he shouted to the Trojans, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, fighters in close combat, stand firm: the Achaeans have set themselves as a wall against me, but they will not check me for long; they will give ground before me if the mightiest of the gods, the thundering spouse of Juno, has indeed inspired my onset.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Deiphobus son of Priam went about among them intent on deeds of daring with his round shield before him, under cover of which he strode quickly forward. Meriones took aim at him with a spear, nor did he fail to hit the broad orb of ox-hide; but he was far from piercing it for the spear broke in two pieces long ere he could do so; moreover Deiphobus had seen it coming and had held his shield well away from him. Meriones drew back under cover of his comrades, angry alike at having failed to vanquish Deiphobus, and having broken his spear. He turned therefore towards the ships and tents to fetch a spear which he had left behind in his tent.

The others continued fighting, and the cry of battle rose up into the heavens. Teucer son of Telamon was the first to kill his man, to wit, the warrior Imbrius, son of Mentor, rich in horses. Until the Achaeans came he had lived in Pedaeum, and had married Medesicaste, a bastard daughter of Priam; but on the arrival of the Danaan fleet he had gone back to Ilius, and was a great man among the Trojans, dwelling near Priam himself, who gave him like honour with his own sons. The son of Telamon now struck him under the ear with a spear which he then drew back again, and Imbrius fell headlong as an ash-tree when it is felled on the crest of some high mountain beacon, and its delicate green foliage comes toppling down to the ground. Thus did he fall with his bronze-dight armour ringing harshly round him, and Teucer sprang forward with intent to strip him of his armour; but as he was doing so, Hector took aim at him with a spear. Teucer saw the spear coming and swerved aside, whereon it hit Amphimachus, son of Cteatus son of Actor, in the chest as he was coming into battle, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Hector sprang forward to take Amphimachus’s helmet from off his temples, and in a moment Ajax threw a spear at him, but did not wound him, for he was encased all over in his terrible armour; nevertheless the spear struck the boss of his shield with such force as to drive him back from the two corpses, which the Achaeans then drew off. Stichius and Menestheus, captains of the Athenians, bore away Amphimachus to the host of the Achaeans, while the two brave and impetuous Ajaxes did the like by Imbrius. As two lions snatch a goat from the hounds that have it in their fangs, and bear it through thick brushwood high above the ground in their

jaws, thus did the Ajaxes bear aloft the body of Imbrius, and strip it of its armour. Then the son of Oileus severed the head from the neck in revenge for the death of Amphimachus, and sent it whirling over the crowd as though it had been a ball, till it fell in the dust at Hector's feet.

Neptune was exceedingly angry that his grandson Amphimachus should have fallen; he therefore went to the tents and ships of the Achaeans to urge the Danaans still further, and to devise evil for the Trojans. Idomeneus met him, as he was taking leave of a comrade, who had just come to him from the fight, wounded in the knee. His fellow-soldiers bore him off the field, and Idomeneus having given orders to the physicians went on to his tent, for he was still thirsting for battle. Neptune spoke in the likeness and with the voice of Thoas son of Andraemon who ruled the Aetolians of all Pleuron and high Calydon, and was honoured among his people as though he were a god. "Idomeneus," said he, "lawgiver to the Cretans, what has now become of the threats with which the sons of the Achaeans used to threaten the Trojans?"

And Idomeneus chief among the Cretans answered, "Thoas, no one, so far as I know, is in fault, for we can all fight. None are held back neither by fear nor slackness, but it seems to be the will of almighty Jove that the Achaeans should perish ingloriously here far from Argos: you, Thoas, have been always staunch, and you keep others in heart if you see any fail in duty; be not then remiss now, but exhort all to do their utmost."

To this Neptune lord of the earthquake made answer, "Idomeneus, may he never return from Troy, but remain here for dogs to batten upon, who is this day wilfully slack in fighting. Get your armour and go, we must make all haste together if we may be of any use, though we are only two. Even cowards gain courage from companionship, and we two can hold our own with the bravest."

Therewith the god went back into the thick of the fight, and Idomeneus when he had reached his tent donned his armour, grasped his two spears, and sallied forth. As the lightning which the son of Saturn brandishes from bright Olympus when he would show a sign to mortals, and its gleam flashes far and wide—even so did his armour gleam about him as he ran. Meriones his sturdy squire met him while he was still near his tent (for he was going to fetch his spear) and Idomeneus said:

"Meriones, fleet son of Molus, best of comrades, why have you left the field? Are you wounded, and is the point of the weapon hurting you? or have you been sent to fetch me? I want no fetching; I had far rather fight than stay in my tent."

"Idomeneus," answered Meriones, "I come for a spear, if I can find one in my tent; I have broken the one I had, in throwing it at the shield of Deiphobus."

And Idomeneus captain of the Cretans answered, "You will find one spear, or twenty if you so please, standing up against the end wall of my tent. I have taken them from Trojans whom I have killed, for I am not one to keep my enemy at arm's length; therefore I have spears, bossed shields, helmets, and burnished corslets."

Then Meriones said, "I too in my tent and at my ship have spoils taken from the Trojans, but they are not at hand. I have been at all times valorous, and wherever there has been hard fighting have held my own among the foremost. There may be those among the Achaeans who do not know how I fight, but you know it well enough yourself."

Idomeneus answered, "I know you for a brave man: you need not tell me. If the best men at the ships were being chosen to go on an ambush—and there is nothing like this for showing what a man is made of; it comes out then who is cowardly and who brave; the coward will change colour at every touch and turn; he is full of fears, and keeps shifting his weight first on one knee and then on the other; his heart beats fast as he thinks of death, and one can hear the chattering of his teeth; whereas the brave man will not change colour nor be frightened on finding himself in ambush, but is all the time longing to go into action—if the best men were being chosen for such a service, no one could make light of your courage nor feats of arms. If you were struck by a dart or smitten in close combat, it would not be from behind, in your neck nor back, but the weapon would hit you in the chest or belly as you were pressing forward to a place in the front ranks. But let us no longer stay here talking like children, lest we be ill spoken of; go, fetch your spear from the tent at once."

On this Meriones, peer of Mars, went to the tent and got himself a spear of bronze. He then followed after Idomeneus, big with great deeds of valour. As when baneful Mars sallies forth to battle, and his son Panic so strong and dauntless goes with him, to strike terror even into the heart of a hero—the pair have gone from Thrace to arm themselves among the Ephyri or the brave Phlegyans, but they will not listen to both the contending hosts, and will give victory to one side or to the other—even so did Meriones and Idomeneus, captains of men, go out to battle clad in their bronze armour. Meriones was first to speak. "Son of

Deucalion," said he, "where would you have us begin fighting? On the right wing of the host, in the centre, or on the left wing, where I take it the Achaeans will be weakest?"

Idomeneus answered, "There are others to defend the centre—the two Ajaxes and Teucer, who is the finest archer of all the Achaeans, and is good also in a hand-to-hand fight. These will give Hector son of Priam enough to do; fight as he may, he will find it hard to vanquish their indomitable fury, and fire the ships, unless the son of Saturn fling a firebrand upon them with his own hand. Great Ajax son of Telamon will yield to no man who is in mortal mould and eats the grain of Ceres, if bronze and great stones can overthrow him. He would not yield even to Achilles in hand-to-hand fight, and in fleetness of foot there is none to beat him; let us turn therefore towards the left wing, that we may know forthwith whether we are to give glory to some other, or he to us."

Meriones, peer of fleet Mars, then led the way till they came to the part of the host which Idomeneus had named.

Now when the Trojans saw Idomeneus coming on like a flame of fire, him and his squire clad in their richly wrought armour, they shouted and made towards him all in a body, and a furious hand-to-hand fight raged under the ships' sterns. Fierce as the shrill winds that whistle upon a day when dust lies deep on the roads, and the gusts raise it into a thick cloud—even such was the fury of the combat, and might and main did they hack at each other with spear and sword throughout the host. The field bristled with the long and deadly spears which they bore. Dazzling was the sheen of their gleaming helmets, their fresh-burnished breastplates, and glittering shields as they joined battle with one another. Iron indeed must be his courage who could take pleasure in the sight of such a turmoil, and look on it without being dismayed.

Thus did the two mighty sons of Saturn devise evil for mortal heroes. Jove was minded to give victory to the Trojans and to Hector, so as to do honour to fleet Achilles, nevertheless he did not mean to utterly overthrow the Achaean host before Ilius, and only wanted to glorify Thetis and her valiant son. Neptune on the other hand went about among the Argives to incite them, having come up from the grey sea in secret, for he was grieved at seeing them vanquished by the Trojans, and was furiously angry with Jove. Both were of the same race and country, but Jove was elder born and knew more, therefore Neptune feared to defend the Argives openly, but in the likeness of man, he kept on encouraging them throughout their host. Thus, then, did these two devise a knot of war and battle, that none could unloose or break, and set both sides tugging at it, to the failing of men's knees beneath them.

And now Idomeneus, though his hair was already flecked with grey, called loud on the Danaans and spread panic among the Trojans as he leaped in among them. He slew Othryoneus from Cabesus, a sojourner, who had but lately come to take part in the war. He sought Cassandra, the fairest of Priam's daughters, in marriage, but offered no gifts of wooing, for he promised a great thing, to wit, that he would drive the sons of the Achaeans willy nilly from Troy; old King Priam had given his consent and promised her to him, whereon he fought on the strength of the promises thus made to him. Idomeneus aimed a spear, and hit him as he came striding on. His cuirass of bronze did not protect him, and the spear stuck in his belly, so that he fell heavily to the ground. Then Idomeneus vaunted over him saying, "Othryoneus, there is no one in the world whom I shall admire more than I do you, if you indeed perform what you have promised Priam son of Dardanus in return for his daughter. We too will make you an offer; we will give you the loveliest daughter of the son of Atreus, and will bring her from Argos for you to marry, if you will sack the goodly city of Ilius in company with ourselves; so come along with me, that we may make a covenant at the ships about the marriage, and we will not be hard upon you about gifts of wooing."

With this Idomeneus began dragging him by the foot through the thick of the fight, but Asius came up to protect the body, on foot, in front of his horses which his esquire drove so close behind him that he could feel their breath upon his shoulder. He was longing to strike down Idomeneus, but ere he could do so Idomeneus smote him with his spear in the throat under the chin, and the bronze point went clean through it. He fell as an oak, or poplar, or pine which shipwrights have felled for ship's timber upon the mountains with whetted axes—even thus did he lie full length in front of his chariot and horses, grinding his teeth and clutching at the bloodstained dust. His charioteer was struck with panic and did not dare turn his horses round and escape: thereupon Antilochus hit him in the middle of his body with a spear; his cuirass of bronze did not protect him, and the spear stuck in his belly. He fell gasping from his chariot and Antilochus, great Nestor's son, drove his horses from the Trojans to the Achaeans.

Deiphobus then came close up to Idomeneus to avenge Asius, and took aim at him with a spear, but Idomeneus was on the look-out and avoided it, for he was covered by the round shield he always bore—a shield of oxhide and bronze with two arm-rods on the inside. He crouched under cover of this, and the spear flew over him, but the shield rang out as the spear grazed it, and the weapon sped not in vain from the strong hand of Deiphobus, for it struck Hypsenor son of Hippasus, shepherd of his people, in the liver

under the midriff, and his limbs failed beneath him. Deiphobus vaunted over him and cried with a loud voice saying, “Of a truth Asius has not fallen unavenged; he will be glad even while passing into the house of Hades, strong warden of the gate, that I have sent some one to escort him.”

Thus did he vaunt, and the Argives were stung by his saying. Noble Antilochus was more angry than any one, but grief did not make him forget his friend and comrade. He ran up to him, bestrode him, and covered him with his shield; then two of his staunch comrades, Mecisteus son of Echius, and Alastor, stooped down, and bore him away groaning heavily to the ships. But Idomeneus ceased not his fury. He kept on striving continually either to enshroud some Trojan in the darkness of death, or himself to fall while warding off the evil day from the Achaeans. Then fell Alcathous son of noble Aesyetes; he was son-in-law to Anchises, having married his eldest daughter Hippodameia, who was the darling of her father and mother, and excelled all her generation in beauty, accomplishments, and understanding, wherefore the bravest man in all Troy had taken her to wife—him did Neptune lay low by the hand of Idomeneus, blinding his bright eyes and binding his strong limbs in fetters so that he could neither go back nor to one side, but stood stock still like pillar or lofty tree when Idomeneus struck him with a spear in the middle of his chest. The coat of mail that had hitherto protected his body was now broken, and rang harshly as the spear tore through it. He fell heavily to the ground, and the spear stuck in his heart, which still beat, and made the butt-end of the spear quiver till dread Mars put an end to his life. Idomeneus vaunted over him and cried with a loud voice saying, “Deiphobus, since you are in a mood to vaunt, shall we cry quits now that we have killed three men to your one? Nay, sir, stand in fight with me yourself, that you may learn what manner of Jove-begotten man am I that have come hither. Jove first begot Minos, chief ruler in Crete, and Minos in his turn begot a son, noble Deucalion. Deucalion begot me to be a ruler over many men in Crete, and my ships have now brought me hither, to be the bane of yourself, your father, and the Trojans.”

Thus did he speak, and Deiphobus was in two minds, whether to go back and fetch some other Trojan to help him, or to take up the challenge single-handed. In the end, he deemed it best to go and fetch Aeneas, whom he found standing in the rear, for he had long been aggrieved with Priam because in spite of his brave deeds he did not give him his due share of honour. Deiphobus went up to him and said, “Aeneas, prince among the Trojans, if you know any ties of kinship, help me now to defend the body of your sister’s husband; come with me to the rescue of Alcathous, who being husband to your sister brought you up when you were a child in his house, and now Idomeneus has slain him.”

With these words he moved the heart of Aeneas, and he went in pursuit of Idomeneus, big with great deeds of valour; but Idomeneus was not to be thus daunted as though he were a mere child; he held his ground as a wild boar at bay upon the mountains, who abides the coming of a great crowd of men in some lonely place—the bristles stand upright on his back, his eyes flash fire, and he whets his tusks in his eagerness to defend himself against hounds and men—even so did famed Idomeneus hold his ground and budge not at the coming of Aeneas. He cried aloud to his comrades looking towards Ascalaphus, Aphareus, Deipyrus, Meriones, and Antilochus, all of them brave soldiers—“Hither my friends,” he cried, “and leave me not single-handed—I go in great fear by fleet Aeneas, who is coming against me, and is a redoubtable dispenser of death battle. Moreover he is in the flower of youth when a man’s strength is greatest; if I was of the same age as he is and in my present mind, either he or I should soon bear away the prize of victory.”

On this, all of them as one man stood near him, shield on shoulder. Aeneas on the other side called to his comrades, looking towards Deiphobus, Paris, and Agenor, who were leaders of the Trojans along with himself, and the people followed them as sheep follow the ram when they go down to drink after they have been feeding, and the heart of the shepherd is glad—even so was the heart of Aeneas gladdened when he saw his people follow him.

Then they fought furiously in close combat about the body of Alcathous, wielding their long spears; and the bronze armour about their bodies rang fearfully as they took aim at one another in the press of the fight, while the two heroes Aeneas and Idomeneus, peers of Mars, outvied everyone in their desire to hack at each other with sword and spear. Aeneas took aim first, but Idomeneus was on the lookout and avoided the spear, so that it sped from Aeneas’ strong hand in vain, and fell quivering in the ground. Idomeneus meanwhile smote Oenomaus in the middle of his belly, and broke the plate of his corslet, whereon his bowels came gushing out and he clutched the earth in the palms of his hands as he fell sprawling in the dust. Idomeneus drew his spear out of the body, but could not strip him of the rest of his armour for the rain of darts that were showered upon him: moreover his strength was now beginning to fail him so that he could no longer charge, and could neither spring forward to recover his own weapon nor swerve aside to avoid one that was aimed at him; therefore, though he still defended himself in hand-to-hand fight, his heavy feet could not bear him swiftly out of the battle. Deiphobus aimed a spear at him as he was retreating slowly from the field, for his

bitterness against him was as fierce as ever, but again he missed him, and hit Ascalaphus, the son of Mars; the spear went through his shoulder, and he clutched the earth in the palms of his hands as he fell sprawling in the dust.

Grim Mars of awful voice did not yet know that his son had fallen, for he was sitting on the summits of Olympus under the golden clouds, by command of Jove, where the other gods were also sitting, forbidden to take part in the battle. Meanwhile men fought furiously about the body. Deiphobus tore the helmet from off his head, but Meriones sprang upon him, and struck him on the arm with a spear so that the visored helmet fell from his hand and came ringing down upon the ground. Thereon Meriones sprang upon him like a vulture, drew the spear from his shoulder, and fell back under cover of his men. Then Polites, own brother of Deiphobus passed his arms around his waist, and bore him away from the battle till he got to his horses that were standing in the rear of the fight with the chariot and their driver. These took him towards the city groaning and in great pain, with the blood flowing from his arm.

The others still fought on, and the battle-cry rose to heaven without ceasing. Aeneas sprang on Aphareus son of Caletor, and struck him with a spear in his throat which was turned towards him; his head fell on one side, his helmet and shield came down along with him, and death, life's foe, was shed around him. Antilochus spied his chance, flew forward towards Thoon, and wounded him as he was turning round. He laid open the vein that runs all the way up the back to the neck; he cut this vein clean away throughout its whole course, and Thoon fell in the dust face upwards, stretching out his hands imploringly towards his comrades. Antilochus sprang upon him and stripped the armour from his shoulders, glaring round him fearfully as he did so. The Trojans came about him on every side and struck his broad and gleaming shield, but could not wound his body, for Neptune stood guard over the son of Nestor, though the darts fell thickly round him. He was never clear of the foe, but was always in the thick of the fight; his spear was never idle; he poised and aimed it in every direction, so eager was he to hit someone from a distance or to fight him hand to hand.

As he was thus aiming among the crowd, he was seen by Adamas, son of Asius, who rushed towards him and struck him with a spear in the middle of his shield, but Neptune made its point without effect, for he grudged him the life of Antilochus. One half, therefore, of the spear stuck fast like a charred stake in Antilochus's shield, while the other lay on the ground. Adamas then sought shelter under cover of his men, but Meriones followed after and hit him with a spear midway between the private parts and the navel, where a wound is particularly painful to wretched mortals. There did Meriones transfix him, and he writhed convulsively about the spear as some bull whom mountain herdsmen have bound with ropes of withes and are taking away perforce. Even so did he move convulsively for a while, but not for very long, till Meriones came up and drew the spear out of his body, and his eyes were veiled in darkness.

Helenus then struck Deipyrus with a great Thracian sword, hitting him on the temple in close combat and tearing the helmet from his head; the helmet fell to the ground, and one of those who were fighting on the Achaean side took charge of it as it rolled at his feet, but the eyes of Deipyrus were closed in the darkness of death.

On this Menelaus was grieved, and made menacingly towards Helenus, brandishing his spear; but Helenus drew his bow, and the two attacked one another at one and the same moment, the one with his spear, and the other with his bow and arrow. The son of Priam hit the breastplate of Menelaus's corslet, but the arrow glanced from off it. As black beans or pulse come pattering down on to a threshing-floor from the broad winnowing-shovel, blown by shrill winds and shaken by the shovel—even so did the arrow glance off and recoil from the shield of Menelaus, who in his turn wounded the hand with which Helenus carried his bow; the spear went right through his hand and stuck in the bow itself, so that to his life he retreated under cover of his men, with his hand dragging by his side—for the spear weighed it down till Agenor drew it out and bound the hand carefully up in a woollen sling which his esquire had with him.

Pisander then made straight at Menelaus—his evil destiny luring him on to his doom, for he was to fall in fight with you, O Menelaus. When the two were hard by one another the spear of the son of Atreus turned aside and he missed his aim; Pisander then struck the shield of brave Menelaus but could not pierce it, for the shield stayed the spear and broke the shaft; nevertheless he was glad and made sure of victory; forthwith, however, the son of Atreus drew his sword and sprang upon him. Pisander then seized the bronze battle-axe, with its long and polished handle of olive wood that hung by his side under his shield, and the two made at one another. Pisander struck the peak of Menelaus's crested helmet just under the crest itself, and Menelaus hit Pisander as he was coming towards him, on the forehead, just at the rise of his nose; the bones cracked and his two gore-bedrabbled eyes fell by his feet in the dust. He fell backwards to the ground, and Menelaus set his heel upon him, stripped him of his armour, and vaunted over him saying, "Even thus shall you Trojans leave the ships of the Achaeans, proud and insatiate of battle though you be, nor shall you lack any of the disgrace and shame which you have heaped upon myself. Cowardly she-wolves that you are, you feared not the

anger of dread Jove, avenger of violated hospitality, who will one day destroy your city; you stole my wedded wife and wickedly carried off much treasure when you were her guest, and now you would fling fire upon our ships, and kill our heroes. A day will come when, rage as you may, you shall be stayed. O father Jove, you, who they say art above all, both gods and men, in wisdom, and from whom all things that befall us do proceed, how can you thus favour the Trojans—men so proud and overweening, that they are never tired of fighting? All things pall after a while—sleep, love, sweet song, and stately dance—still these are things of which a man would surely have his fill rather than of battle, whereas it is of battle that the Trojans are insatiate."

So saying Menelaus stripped the blood-stained armour from the body of Pisander, and handed it over to his men; then he again ranged himself among those who were in the front of the fight.

Harpalion son of King Pylaemenes then sprang upon him; he had come to fight at Troy along with his father, but he did not go home again. He struck the middle of Menelaus's shield with his spear but could not pierce it, and to save his life drew back under cover of his men, looking round him on every side lest he should be wounded. But Meriones aimed a bronze-tipped arrow at him as he was leaving the field, and hit him on the right buttock; the arrow pierced the bone through and through, and penetrated the bladder, so he sat down where he was and breathed his last in the arms of his comrades, stretched like a worm upon the ground and watering the earth with the blood that flowed from his wound. The brave Paphlagonians tended him with all due care; they raised him into his chariot, and bore him sadly off to the city of Troy; his father went also with him weeping bitterly, but there was no ransom that could bring his dead son to life again.

Paris was deeply grieved by the death of Harpalion, who was his host when he went among the Paphlagonians; he aimed an arrow, therefore, in order to avenge him. Now there was a certain man named Euchenor, son of Polyidus the prophet, a brave man and wealthy, whose home was in Corinth. This Euchenor had set sail for Troy well knowing that it would be the death of him, for his good old father Polyidus had often told him that he must either stay at home and die of a terrible disease, or go with the Achaeans and perish at the hands of the Trojans; he chose, therefore, to avoid incurring the heavy fine the Achaeans would have laid upon him, and at the same time to escape the pain and suffering of disease. Paris now smote him on the jaw under his ear, whereon the life went out of him and he was enshrouded in the darkness of death.

Thus then did they fight as it were a flaming fire. But Hector had not yet heard, and did not know that the Argives were making havoc of his men on the left wing of the battle, where the Achaeans ere long would have triumphed over them, so vigorously did Neptune cheer them on and help them. He therefore held on at the point where he had first forced his way through the gates and the wall, after breaking through the serried ranks of Danaan warriors. It was here that the ships of Ajax and Protesilaus were drawn up by the sea-shore; here the wall was at its lowest, and the fight both of man and horse raged most fiercely. The Boeotians and the Ionians with their long tunics, the Locrians, the men of Phthia, and the famous force of the Epeans could hardly stay Hector as he rushed on towards the ships, nor could they drive him from them, for he was as a wall of fire. The chosen men of the Athenians were in the van, led by Menestheus son of Peteos, with whom were also Pheidas, Stichius, and stalwart Bias; Meges son of Phyleus, Amphion, and Dracius commanded the Epeans, while Medon and staunch Podarces led the men of Phthia. Of these, Medon was bastard son to Oileus and brother of Ajax, but he lived in Phylace away from his own country, for he had killed the brother of his stepmother Eriopis, the wife of Oileus; the other, Podarces, was the son of Iphiclus, son of Phylacus. These two stood in the van of the Phthians, and defended the ships along with the Boeotians.

Ajax son of Oileus, never for a moment left the side of Ajax, son of Telamon, but as two swart oxen both strain their utmost at the plough which they are drawing in a fallow field, and the sweat steams upwards from about the roots of their horns—nothing but the yoke divides them as they break up the ground till they reach the end of the field—even so did the two Ajaxes stand shoulder to shoulder by one another. Many and brave comrades followed the son of Telamon, to relieve him of his shield when he was overcome with sweat and toil, but the Locrians did not follow so close after the son of Oileus, for they could not hold their own in a hand-to-hand fight. They had no bronze helmets with plumes of horse-hair, neither had they shields nor ashen spears, but they had come to Troy armed with bows, and with slings of twisted wool from which they showered their missiles to break the ranks of the Trojans. The others, therefore, with their heavy armour bore the brunt of the fight with the Trojans and with Hector, while the Locrians shot from behind, under their cover; and thus the Trojans began to lose heart, for the arrows threw them into confusion.

The Trojans would now have been driven in sorry plight from the ships and tents back to windy Ilius, had not Polydamas presently said to Hector, "Hector, there is no persuading you to take advice. Because heaven has so richly endowed you with the arts of war, you think that you must therefore excel others in counsel; but you cannot thus claim preeminence in all things. Heaven has made one man an excellent soldier; of another it has made a dancer or a singer and player on the lyre; while yet in another Jove has

implanted a wise understanding of which men reap fruit to the saving of many, and he himself knows more about it than any one; therefore I will say what I think will be best. The fight has hemmed you in as with a circle of fire, and even now that the Trojans are within the wall some of them stand aloof in full armour, while others are fighting scattered and outnumbered near the ships. Draw back, therefore, and call your chieftains round you, that we may advise together whether to fall now upon the ships in the hope that heaven may vouchsafe us victory, or to beat a retreat while we can yet safely do so. I greatly fear that the Achaeans will pay us their debt of yesterday in full, for there is one abiding at their ships who is never weary of battle, and who will not hold aloof much longer."

Thus spoke Polydamas, and his words pleased Hector well. He sprang in full armour from his chariot and said, "Polydamas, gather the chieftains here; I will go yonder into the fight, but will return at once when I have given them their orders."

He then sped onward, towering like a snowy mountain, and with a loud cry flew through the ranks of the Trojans and their allies. When they heard his voice they all hastened to gather round Polydamas, the excellent son of Panthous, but Hector kept on among the foremost, looking everywhere to find Deiphobus and prince Helenus, Adamas son of Asius, and Asius son of Hyrtacus; living, indeed, and scatheless he could no longer find them, for the two last were lying by the sterns of the Achaean ships, slain by the Argives, while the others had been also stricken and wounded by them; but upon the left wing of the dread battle he found Alexandrus, husband of lovely Helen, cheering his men and urging them on to fight. He went up to him and upbraided him. "Paris," said he, "evil-hearted Paris, fair to see but woman-mad and false of tongue, where are Deiphobus and King Helenus? Where are Adamas son of Asius, and Asius son of Hyrtacus? Where too is Othryoneus? Ilius is undone and will now surely fall!"

Alexandrus answered, "Hector, why find fault when there is no one to find fault with? I should hold aloof from battle on any day rather than this, for my mother bore me with nothing of the coward about me. From the moment when you set our men fighting about the ships we have been staying here and doing battle with the Danaans. Our comrades about whom you ask me are dead; Deiphobus and King Helenus alone have left the field, wounded both of them in the hand, but the son of Saturn saved them alive. Now, therefore, lead on where you would have us go, and we will follow with right goodwill; you shall not find us fail you in so far as our strength holds out, but no man can do more than in him lies, no matter how willing he may be."

With these words he satisfied his brother, and the two went towards the part of the battle where the fight was thickest, about Cebriones, brave Polydamas, Phalces, Orthaeus, godlike Polyphetes, Palmys, Ascanius, and Morys son of Hippotion, who had come from fertile Ascania on the preceding day to relieve other troops. Then Jove urged them on to fight. They flew forth like the blasts of some fierce wind that strike earth in the van of a thunderstorm—they buffet the salt sea into an uproar; many and mighty are the great waves that come crashing in one after the other upon the shore with their arching heads all crested with foam—even so did rank behind rank of Trojans arrayed in gleaming armour follow their leaders onward. The way was led by Hector son of Priam, peer of murderous Mars, with his round shield before him—his shield of ox-hides covered with plates of bronze—and his gleaming helmet upon his temples. He kept stepping forward under cover of his shield in every direction, making trial of the ranks to see if they would give way before him, but he could not daunt the courage of the Achaeans. Ajax was the first to stride out and challenge him. "Sir," he cried, "draw near; why do you think thus vainly to dismay the Argives? We Achaeans are excellent soldiers, but the scourge of Jove has fallen heavily upon us. Your heart, forsooth, is set on destroying our ships, but we too have hands that can keep you at bay, and your own fair town shall be sooner taken and sacked by ourselves. The time is near when you shall pray Jove and all the gods in your flight, that your steeds may be swifter than hawks as they raise the dust on the plain and bear you back to your city."

As he was thus speaking a bird flew by upon his right hand, and the host of the Achaeans shouted, for they took heart at the omen. But Hector answered, "Ajax, braggart and false of tongue, would that I were as sure of being son for evermore to aegis-bearing Jove, with Queen Juno for my mother, and of being held in like honour with Minerva and Apollo, as I am that this day is big with the destruction of the Achaeans; and you shall fall among them if you dare abide my spear; it shall rend your fair body and bid you glut our hounds and birds of prey with your fat and your flesh, as you fall by the ships of the Achaeans."

With these words he led the way and the others followed after with a cry that rent the air, while the host shouted behind them. The Argives on their part raised a shout likewise, nor did they forget their prowess, but stood firm against the onslaught of the Trojan chieftains, and the cry from both the hosts rose up to heaven and to the brightness of Jove's presence.

This page titled 3.12.1.13: Book XIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.14: Book XIV

Agamemnon proposes that the Achaeans should sail home, and is rebuked by Ulysses—Juno beguiles Jupiter—Hector is wounded.

Nestor was sitting over his wine, but the cry of battle did not escape him, and he said to the son of Aesculapius, “What, noble Machaon, is the meaning of all this? The shouts of men fighting by our ships grow stronger and stronger; stay here, therefore, and sit over your wine, while fair Hecamede heats you a bath and washes the clotted blood from off you. I will go at once to the look-out station and see what it is all about.”

As he spoke he took up the shield of his son Thrasymedes that was lying in his tent, all gleaming with bronze, for Thrasymedes had taken his father’s shield; he grasped his redoubtable bronze-shod spear, and as soon as he was outside saw the disastrous rout of the Achaeans who, now that their wall was overthrown, were flying pell-mell before the Trojans. As when there is a heavy swell upon the sea, but the waves are dumb—they keep their eyes on the watch for the quarter whence the fierce winds may spring upon them, but they stay where they are and set neither this way nor that, till some particular wind sweeps down from heaven to determine them—even so did the old man ponder whether to make for the crowd of Danaans, or go in search of Agamemnon. In the end he deemed it best to go to the son of Atreus; but meanwhile the hosts were fighting and killing one another, and the hard bronze rattled on their bodies, as they thrust at one another with their swords and spears.

The wounded kings, the son of Tydeus, Ulysses, and Agamemnon son of Atreus, fell in with Nestor as they were coming up from their ships—for theirs were drawn up some way from where the fighting was going on, being on the shore itself inasmuch as they had been beached first, while the wall had been built behind the hindermost. The stretch of the shore, wide though it was, did not afford room for all the ships, and the host was cramped for space, therefore they had placed the ships in rows one behind the other, and had filled the whole opening of the bay between the two points that formed it. The kings, leaning on their spears, were coming out to survey the fight, being in great anxiety, and when old Nestor met them they were filled with dismay. Then King Agamemnon said to him, “Nestor son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, why have you left the battle to come hither? I fear that what dread Hector said will come true, when he vaunted among the Trojans saying that he would not return to Ilius till he had fired our ships and killed us; this is what he said, and now it is all coming true. Alas! others of the Achaeans, like Achilles, are in such anger with me that they refuse to fight by the sterns of our ships.”

Then Nestor knight of Gerene, answered, “It is indeed as you say; it is all coming true at this moment, and even Jove who thunders from on high cannot prevent it. Fallen is the wall on which we relied as an impregnable bulwark both for us and our fleet. The Trojans are fighting stubbornly and without ceasing at the ships; look where you may you cannot see from what quarter the rout of the Achaeans is coming; they are being killed in a confused mass and the battle-cry ascends to heaven; let us think, if counsel can be of any use, what we had better do; but I do not advise our going into battle ourselves, for a man cannot fight when he is wounded.”

And King Agamemnon answered, “Nestor, if the Trojans are indeed fighting at the rear of our ships, and neither the wall nor the trench has served us—over which the Danaans toiled so hard, and which they deemed would be an impregnable bulwark both for us and our fleet—I see it must be the will of Jove that the Achaeans should perish ingloriously here, far from Argos. I knew when Jove was willing to defend us, and I know now that he is raising the Trojans to like honour with the gods, while us, on the other hand, he has bound hand and foot. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; let us bring down the ships that are on the beach and draw them into the water; let us make them fast to their mooring-stones a little way out, against the fall of night—if even by night the Trojans will desist from fighting; we may then draw down the rest of the fleet. There is nothing wrong in flying ruin even by night. It is better for a man that he should fly and be saved than be caught and killed.”

Ulysses looked fiercely at him and said, “Son of Atreus, what are you talking about? Wretch, you should have commanded some other and baser army, and not been ruler over us to whom Jove has allotted a life of hard fighting from youth to old age, till we every one of us perish. Is it thus that you would quit the city of Troy, to win which we have suffered so much hardship? Hold your peace, lest some other of the Achaeans hear you say what no man who knows how to give good counsel, no king over so great a host as that of the Argives should ever have let fall from his lips. I despise your judgement utterly for what you have been saying. Would you, then, have us draw down our ships into the water while the battle is raging, and thus play further into the hands of the conquering Trojans? It would be ruin; the Achaeans will not go on fighting when they see the ships being drawn into the water, but will cease attacking and keep turning their eyes towards them; your counsel, therefore, sir captain, would be our destruction.”

Agamemnon answered, “Ulysses, your rebuke has stung me to the heart. I am not, however, ordering the Achaeans to draw their ships into the sea whether they will or no. Someone, it may be, old or young, can offer us better counsel which I shall rejoice to hear.”

Then said Diomed, “Such an one is at hand; he is not far to seek, if you will listen to me and not resent my speaking though I am younger than any of you. I am by lineage son to a noble sire, Tydeus, who lies buried at Thebes. For Portheus had three noble sons, two of whom, Agrius and Melas, abode in Pleuron and rocky Calydon. The third was the knight Oeneus, my father’s father, and he was the most valiant of them all. Oeneus remained in his own country, but my father (as Jove and the other gods ordained it) migrated to Argos. He married into the family of Adrastus, and his house was one of great abundance, for he had large estates of rich corn-growing land, with much orchard ground as well, and he had many sheep; moreover he excelled all the Argives in the use of the spear. You must yourselves have heard whether these things are true or no; therefore when I say well despise not my words as though I were a coward or of ignoble birth. I say, then, let us go to the fight as we needs must, wounded though we be. When there, we may keep out of the battle and beyond the range of the spears lest we get fresh wounds in addition to what we have already, but we can spur on others, who have been indulging their spleen and holding aloof from battle hitherto.”

Thus did he speak; whereon they did even as he had said and set out, King Agamemnon leading the way.

Meanwhile Neptune had kept no blind look-out, and came up to them in the semblance of an old man. He took Agamemnon’s right hand in his own and said, “Son of Atreus, I take it Achilles is glad now that he sees the Achaeans routed and slain, for he is utterly without remorse—may he come to a bad end and heaven confound him. As for yourself, the blessed gods are not yet so bitterly angry with you but that the princes and counsellors of the Trojans shall again raise the dust upon the plain, and you shall see them flying from the ships and tents towards their city.”

With this he raised a mighty cry of battle, and sped forward to the plain. The voice that came from his deep chest was as that of nine or ten thousand men when they are shouting in the thick of a fight, and it put fresh courage into the hearts of the Achaeans to wage war and do battle without ceasing.

Juno of the golden throne looked down as she stood upon a peak of Olympus and her heart was gladdened at the sight of him who was at once her brother and her brother-in-law, hurrying hither and thither amid the fighting. Then she turned her eyes to Jove as he sat on the topmost crests of many-fountained Ida, and loathed him. She set herself to think how she might hoodwink him, and in the end she deemed that it would be best for her to go to Ida and array herself in rich attire, in the hope that Jove might become enamoured of her, and wish to embrace her. While he was thus engaged a sweet and careless sleep might be made to steal over his eyes and senses.

She went, therefore, to the room which her son Vulcan had made her, and the doors of which he had cunningly fastened by means of a secret key so that no other god could open them. Here she entered and closed the doors behind her. She cleansed all the dirt from her fair body with ambrosia, then she anointed herself with olive oil, ambrosial, very soft, and scented specially for herself—if it were so much as shaken in the bronze-floored house of Jove, the scent pervaded the universe of heaven and earth. With this she anointed her delicate skin, and then she plaited the fair ambrosial locks that flowed in a stream of golden tresses from her immortal head. She put on the wondrous robe which Minerva had worked for her with consummate art, and had embroidered with manifold devices; she fastened it about her bosom with golden clasps, and she girded herself with a girdle that had a hundred tassels: then she fastened her earrings, three brilliant pendants that glistened most beautifully, through the pierced lobes of her ears, and threw a lovely new veil over her head. She bound her sandals on to her feet, and when she had arrayed herself perfectly to her satisfaction, she left her room and called Venus to come aside and speak to her. “My dear child,” said she, “will you do what I am going to ask of you, or will you refuse me because you are angry at my being on the Danaan side, while you are on the Trojan?”

Jove’s daughter Venus answered, “Juno, august queen of goddesses, daughter of mighty Saturn, say what you want, and I will do it for you at once, if I can, and if it can be done at all.”

Then Juno told her a lying tale and said, “I want you to endow me with some of those fascinating charms, the spells of which bring all things mortal and immortal to your feet. I am going to the world’s end to visit Oceanus (from whom all we gods proceed) and mother Tethys: they received me in their house, took care of me, and brought me up, having taken me over from Rhaea when Jove imprisoned great Saturn in the depths that are under earth and sea. I must go and see them that I may make peace between them; they have been quarrelling, and are so angry that they have not slept with one another this long while; if I can bring them round and restore them to one another’s embraces, they will be grateful to me and love me for ever afterwards.”

Thereon laughter-loving Venus said, “I cannot and must not refuse you, for you sleep in the arms of Jove who is our king.”

As she spoke she loosed from her bosom the curiously embroidered girdle into which all her charms had been wrought—love, desire, and that sweet flattery which steals the judgement even of the most prudent. She gave the girdle to Juno and said, “Take this girdle wherein all my charms reside and lay it in your bosom. If you will wear it I promise you that your errand, be it what it may, will not be bootless.”

When she heard this Juno smiled, and still smiling she laid the girdle in her bosom.

Venus now went back into the house of Jove, while Juno darted down from the summits of Olympus. She passed over Pieria and fair Emathia, and went on and on till she came to the snowy ranges of the Thracian horsemen, over whose topmost crests she sped without ever setting foot to ground. When she came to Athos she went on over the waves of the sea till she reached Lemnos, the city of noble Thoas. There she met Sleep, own brother to Death, and caught him by the hand, saying, “Sleep, you who lord it alike over mortals and immortals, if you ever did me a service in times past, do one for me now, and I shall be grateful to you ever after. Close Jove’s keen eyes for me in slumber while I hold him clasped in my embrace, and I will give you a beautiful golden seat, that can never fall to pieces; my clubfooted son Vulcan shall make it for you, and he shall give it a footstool for you to rest your fair feet upon when you are at table.”

Then Sleep answered, “Juno, great queen of goddesses, daughter of mighty Saturn, I would lull any other of the gods to sleep without compunction, not even excepting the waters of Oceanus from whom all of them proceed, but I dare not go near Jove, nor send him to sleep unless he bids me. I have had one lesson already through doing what you asked me, on the day when Jove’s mighty son Hercules set sail from Ilius after having sacked the city of the Trojans. At your bidding I suffused my sweet self over the mind of aegis-bearing Jove, and laid him to rest; meanwhile you hatched a plot against Hercules, and set the blasts of the angry winds beating upon the sea, till you took him to the goodly city of Cos, away from all his friends. Jove was furious when he awoke, and began hurling the gods about all over the house; he was looking more particularly for myself, and would have flung me down through space into the sea where I should never have been heard of any more, had not Night who cows both men and gods protected me. I fled to her and Jove left off looking for me in spite of his being so angry, for he did not dare do anything to displease Night. And now you are again asking me to do something on which I cannot venture.”

And Juno said, “Sleep, why do you take such notions as those into your head? Do you think Jove will be as anxious to help the Trojans, as he was about his own son? Come, I will marry you to one of the youngest of the Graces, and she shall be your own—Pasithea, whom you have always wanted to marry.”

Sleep was pleased when he heard this, and answered, “Then swear it to me by the dread waters of the river Styx; lay one hand on the bounteous earth, and the other on the sheen of the sea, so that all the gods who dwell down below with Saturn may be our witnesses, and see that you really do give me one of the youngest of the Graces—Pasithea, whom I have always wanted to marry.”

Juno did as he had said. She swore, and invoked all the gods of the nether world, who are called Titans, to witness. When she had completed her oath, the two enshrouded themselves in a thick mist and sped lightly forward, leaving Lemnos and Imbrus behind them. Presently they reached many-fountained Ida, mother of wild beasts, and Lectum where they left the sea to go on by land, and the tops of the trees of the forest soughed under the going of their feet. Here Sleep halted, and ere Jove caught sight of him he climbed a lofty pine-tree—the tallest that reared its head towards heaven on all Ida. He hid himself behind the branches and sat there in the semblance of the sweet-singing bird that haunts the mountains and is called Chalcis by the gods, but men call it Cymindis. Juno then went to Gargarus, the topmost peak of Ida, and Jove, driver of the clouds, set eyes upon her. As soon as he did so he became inflamed with the same passionate desire for her that he had felt when they had first enjoyed each other’s embraces, and slept with one another without their dear parents knowing anything about it. He went up to her and said, “What do you want that you have come hither from Olympus—and that too with neither chariot nor horses to convey you?”

Then Juno told him a lying tale and said, “I am going to the world’s end, to visit Oceanus, from whom all we gods proceed, and mother Tethys; they received me into their house, took care of me, and brought me up. I must go and see them that I may make peace between them: they have been quarrelling, and are so angry that they have not slept with one another this long time. The horses that will take me over land and sea are stationed on the lowermost spurs of many-fountained Ida, and I have come here from Olympus on purpose to consult you. I was afraid you might be angry with me later on, if I went to the house of Oceanus without letting you know.”

And Jove said, “Juno, you can choose some other time for paying your visit to Oceanus—for the present let us devote ourselves to love and to the enjoyment of one another. Never yet have I been so overpowered by passion neither for goddess nor mortal woman as I am at this moment for yourself—not even when I was in love with the wife of Ixion who bore me Pirithous, peer of gods in counsel, nor yet with Danae the daintily-ancled daughter of Acrisius, who bore me the famed hero Perseus. Then there was the daughter of Phoenix, who bore me Minos and Rhadamanthus: there was Semele, and Alcmena in Thebes by whom I begot my lion-hearted son Hercules, while Semele became mother to Bacchus the comforter of mankind. There was queen Ceres again, and lovely Leto, and yourself—but with none of these was I ever so much enamoured as I now am with you.”

Juno again answered him with a lying tale. “Most dread son of Saturn,” she exclaimed, “what are you talking about? Would you have us enjoy one another here on the top of Mount Ida, where everything can be seen? What if one of the ever-living gods should see us sleeping together, and tell the others? It would be such a scandal that when I had risen from your embraces I could never show myself inside your house again; but if you are so minded, there is a room which your son Vulcan has made me, and he has given it good strong doors; if you would so have it, let us go thither and lie down.”

And Jove answered, “Juno, you need not be afraid that either god or man will see you, for I will enshroud both of us in such a dense golden cloud, that the very sun for all his bright piercing beams shall not see through it.”

With this the son of Saturn caught his wife in his embrace; whereon the earth sprouted them a cushion of young grass, with dew-bespangled lotus, crocus, and hyacinth, so soft and thick that it raised them well above the ground. Here they laid themselves down and overhead they were covered by a fair cloud of gold, from which there fell glittering dew-drops.

Thus, then, did the sire of all things repose peacefully on the crest of Ida, overcome at once by sleep and love, and he held his spouse in his arms. Meanwhile Sleep made off to the ships of the Achaeans, to tell earth-encircling Neptune, lord of the earthquake. When he had found him he said, “Now, Neptune, you can help the Danaans with a will, and give them victory though it be only for a short time while Jove is still sleeping. I have sent him into a sweet slumber, and Juno has beguiled him into going to bed with her.”

Sleep now departed and went his ways to and fro among mankind, leaving Neptune more eager than ever to help the Danaans. He darted forward among the first ranks and shouted saying, “Argives, shall we let Hector son of Priam have the triumph of taking our ships and covering himself with glory? This is what he says that he shall now do, seeing that Achilles is still in dudgeon at his ship; we shall get on very well without him if we keep each other in heart and stand by one another. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say. Let us each take the best and largest shield we can lay hold of, put on our helmets, and sally forth with our longest spears in our hands; I will lead you on, and Hector son of Priam, rage as he may, will not dare to hold out against us. If any good staunch soldier has only a small shield, let him hand it over to a worse man, and take a larger one for himself.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. The son of Tydeus, Ulysses, and Agamemnon, wounded though they were, set the others in array, and went about everywhere effecting the exchanges of armour; the most valiant took the best armour, and gave the worse to the worse man. When they had donned their bronze armour they marched on with Neptune at their head. In his strong hand he grasped his terrible sword, keen of edge and flashing like lightning; woe to him who comes across it in the day of battle; all men quake for fear and keep away from it.

Hector on the other side set the Trojans in array. Thereon Neptune and Hector waged fierce war on one another—Hector on the Trojan and Neptune on the Argive side. Mighty was the uproar as the two forces met; the sea came rolling in towards the ships and tents of the Achaeans, but waves do not thunder on the shore more loudly when driven before the blast of Boreas, nor do the flames of a forest fire roar more fiercely when it is well alight upon the mountains, nor does the wind bellow with ruder music as it tears on through the tops of when it is blowing its hardest, than the terrible shout which the Trojans and Achaeans raised as they sprang upon one another.

Hector first aimed his spear at Ajax, who was turned full towards him, nor did he miss his aim. The spear struck him where two bands passed over his chest—the band of his shield and that of his silver-studded sword—and these protected his body. Hector was angry that his spear should have been hurled in vain, and withdrew under cover of his men. As he was thus retreating, Ajax son of Telamon, struck him with a stone, of which there were many lying about under the men’s feet as they fought—brought there to give support to the ships’ sides as they lay on the shore. Ajax caught up one of them and struck Hector above the rim of his shield close to his neck; the blow made him spin round like a top and reel in all directions. As an oak falls headlong when uprooted by the lightning flash of father Jove, and there is a terrible smell of brimstone—no man can help being dismayed if he is standing near it,

for a thunderbolt is a very awful thing—even so did Hector fall to earth and bite the dust. His spear fell from his hand, but his shield and helmet were made fast about his body, and his bronze armour rang about him.

The sons of the Achaeans came running with a loud cry towards him, hoping to drag him away, and they showered their darts on the Trojans, but none of them could wound him before he was surrounded and covered by the princes Polydamas, Aeneas, Agenor, Sarpedon captain of the Lycians, and noble Glaucus. Of the others, too, there was not one who was unmindful of him, and they held their round shields over him to cover him. His comrades then lifted him off the ground and bore him away from the battle to the place where his horses stood waiting for him at the rear of the fight with their driver and the chariot; these then took him towards the city groaning and in great pain. When they reached the ford of the fair stream of Xanthus, begotten of Immortal Jove, they took him from off his chariot and laid him down on the ground; they poured water over him, and as they did so he breathed again and opened his eyes. Then kneeling on his knees he vomited blood, but soon fell back on to the ground, and his eyes were again closed in darkness for he was still stunned by the blow.

When the Argives saw Hector leaving the field, they took heart and set upon the Trojans yet more furiously. Ajax fleet son of Oileus began by springing on Satnius son of Enops, and wounding him with his spear: a fair naiad nymph had borne him to Enops as he was herding cattle by the banks of the river Satnioeis. The son of Oileus came up to him and struck him in the flank so that he fell, and a fierce fight between Trojans and Danaans raged round his body. Polydamas son of Panthous drew near to avenge him, and wounded Prothoenor son of Areilycus on the right shoulder; the terrible spear went right through his shoulder, and he clutched the earth as he fell in the dust. Polydamas vaunted loudly over him saying, “Again I take it that the spear has not sped in vain from the strong hand of the son of Panthous; an Argive has caught it in his body, and it will serve him for a staff as he goes down into the house of Hades.”

The Argives were maddened by this boasting. Ajax son of Telamon was more angry than any, for the man had fallen close beside him; so he aimed at Polydamas as he was retreating, but Polydamas saved himself by swerving aside and the spear struck Archelochus son of Antenor, for heaven counselled his destruction; it struck him where the head springs from the neck at the top joint of the spine, and severed both the tendons at the back of the head. His head, mouth, and nostrils reached the ground long before his legs and knees could do so, and Ajax shouted to Polydamas saying, “Think, Polydamas, and tell me truly whether this man is not as well worth killing as Prothoenor was: he seems rich, and of rich family, a brother, it may be, or son of the knight Antenor, for he is very like him.”

But he knew well who it was, and the Trojans were greatly angered. Acamas then bestrode his brother’s body and wounded Promachus the Boeotian with his spear, for he was trying to drag his brother’s body away. Acamas vaunted loudly over him saying, “Argive archers, braggarts that you are, toil and suffering shall not be for us only, but some of you too shall fall here as well as ourselves. See how Promachus now sleeps, vanquished by my spear; payment for my brother’s blood has not been long delayed; a man, therefore, may well be thankful if he leaves a kinsman in his house behind him to avenge his fall.”

His taunts infuriated the Argives, and Peneleos was more enraged than any of them. He sprang towards Acamas, but Acamas did not stand his ground, and he killed Ilioneus son of the rich flock-master Phorbas, whom Mercury had favoured and endowed with greater wealth than any other of the Trojans. Ilioneus was his only son, and Peneleos now wounded him in the eye under his eyebrows, tearing the eye-ball from its socket: the spear went right through the eye into the nape of the neck, and he fell, stretching out both hands before him. Peneleos then drew his sword and smote him on the neck, so that both head and helmet came tumbling down to the ground with the spear still sticking in the eye; he then held up the head, as though it had been a poppy-head, and showed it to the Trojans, vaunting over them as he did so. “Trojans,” he cried, “bid the father and mother of noble Ilioneus make moan for him in their house, for the wife also of Promachus son of Alegenor will never be gladdened by the coming of her dear husband—when we Argives return with our ships from Troy.”

As he spoke fear fell upon them, and every man looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety.

Tell me now, O Muses that dwell on Olympus, who was the first of the Argives to bear away blood-stained spoils after Neptune lord of the earthquake had turned the fortune of war. Ajax son of Telamon was first to wound Hyrtius son of Gyrtius, captain of the staunch Mysians. Antilochus killed Phalces and Mermerus, while Meriones slew Morys and Hippotion, Teucer also killed Prothoon and Periphetes. The son of Atreus then wounded Hyperenor shepherd of his people, in the flank, and the bronze point made his entrails gush out as it tore in among them; on this his life came hurrying out of him at the place where he had been wounded, and

his eyes were closed in darkness. Ajax son of Oileus killed more than any other, for there was no man so fleet as he to pursue flying foes when Jove had spread panic among them.

This page titled 3.12.1.14: Book XIV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.15: Book XV

Jove awakes, tells Apollo to heal Hector, and the Trojans again become victorious.

But when their flight had taken them past the trench and the set stakes, and many had fallen by the hands of the Danaans, the Trojans made a halt on reaching their chariots, routed and pale with fear. Jove now woke on the crests of Ida, where he was lying with golden-throned Juno by his side, and starting to his feet he saw the Trojans and Achaeans, the one thrown into confusion, and the others driving them pell-mell before them with King Neptune in their midst. He saw Hector lying on the ground with his comrades gathered round him, gasping for breath, wandering in mind and vomiting blood, for it was not the feeblest of the Achaeans who struck him.

The sire of gods and men had pity on him, and looked fiercely on Juno. “I see, Juno,” said he, “you mischief-making trickster, that your cunning has stayed Hector from fighting and has caused the rout of his host. I am in half a mind to thrash you, in which case you will be the first to reap the fruits of your scurvy knavery. Do you not remember how once upon a time I had you hanged? I fastened two anvils on to your feet, and bound your hands in a chain of gold which none might break, and you hung in mid-air among the clouds. All the gods in Olympus were in a fury, but they could not reach you to set you free; when I caught any one of them I gripped him and hurled him from the heavenly threshold till he came fainting down to earth; yet even this did not relieve my mind from the incessant anxiety which I felt about noble Hercules whom you and Boreas had spitefully conveyed beyond the seas to Cos, after suborning the tempests; but I rescued him, and notwithstanding all his mighty labours I brought him back again to Argos. I would remind you of this that you may learn to leave off being so deceitful, and discover how much you are likely to gain by the embraces out of which you have come here to trick me.”

Juno trembled as he spoke, and said, “May heaven above and earth below be my witnesses, with the waters of the river Styx—and this is the most solemn oath that a blessed god can take—nay, I swear also by your own almighty head and by our bridal bed—things over which I could never possibly perjure myself—that Neptune is not punishing Hector and the Trojans and helping the Achaeans through any doing of mine; it is all of his own mere motion because he was sorry to see the Achaeans hard pressed at their ships: if I were advising him, I should tell him to do as you bid him.”

The sire of gods and men smiled and answered, “If you, Juno, were always to support me when we sit in council of the gods, Neptune, like it or no, would soon come round to your and my way of thinking. If, then, you are speaking the truth and mean what you say, go among the rank and file of the gods, and tell Iris and Apollo lord of the bow, that I want them—Iris, that she may go to the Achaean host and tell Neptune to leave off fighting and go home, and Apollo, that he may send Hector again into battle and give him fresh strength; he will thus forget his present sufferings, and drive the Achaeans back in confusion till they fall among the ships of Achilles son of Peleus. Achilles will then send his comrade Patroclus into battle, and Hector will kill him in front of Ilius after he has slain many warriors, and among them my own noble son Sarpedon. Achilles will kill Hector to avenge Patroclus, and from that time I will bring it about that the Achaeans shall persistently drive the Trojans back till they fulfil the counsels of Minerva and take Ilius. But I will not stay my anger, nor permit any god to help the Danaans till I have accomplished the desire of the son of Peleus, according to the promise I made by bowing my head on the day when Thetis touched my knees and besought me to give him honour.”

Juno heeded his words and went from the heights of Ida to great Olympus. Swift as the thought of one whose fancy carries him over vast continents, and he says to himself, “Now I will be here, or there,” and he would have all manner of things—even so swiftly did Juno wing her way till she came to high Olympus and went in among the gods who were gathered in the house of Jove. When they saw her they all of them came up to her, and held out their cups to her by way of greeting. She let the others be, but took the cup offered her by lovely Themis, who was first to come running up to her. “Juno,” said she, “why are you here? And you seem troubled—has your husband the son of Saturn been frightening you?”

And Juno answered, “Themis, do not ask me about it. You know what a proud and cruel disposition my husband has. Lead the gods to table, where you and all the immortals can hear the wicked designs which he has avowed. Many a one, mortal and immortal, will be angered by them, however peaceably he may be feasting now.”

On this Juno sat down, and the gods were troubled throughout the house of Jove. Laughter sat on her lips but her brow was furrowed with care, and she spoke up in a rage. “Fools that we are,” she cried, “to be thus madly angry with Jove; we keep on wanting to go up to him and stay him by force or by persuasion, but he sits aloof and cares for nobody, for he knows that he is

much stronger than any other of the immortals. Make the best, therefore, of whatever ills he may choose to send each one of you; Mars, I take it, has had a taste of them already, for his son Ascalaphus has fallen in battle—the man whom of all others he loved most dearly and whose father he owns himself to be."

When he heard this Mars smote his two sturdy thighs with the flat of his hands, and said in anger, "Do not blame me, you gods that dwell in heaven, if I go to the ships of the Achaeans and avenge the death of my son, even though it end in my being struck by Jove's lightning and lying in blood and dust among the corpses."

As he spoke he gave orders to yoke his horses Panic and Rout, while he put on his armour. On this, Jove would have been roused to still more fierce and implacable enmity against the other immortals, had not Minerva, alarmed for the safety of the gods, sprung from her seat and hurried outside. She tore the helmet from his head and the shield from his shoulders, and she took the bronze spear from his strong hand and set it on one side; then she said to Mars, "Madman, you are undone; you have ears that hear not, or you have lost all judgement and understanding; have you not heard what Juno has said on coming straight from the presence of Olympian Jove? Do you wish to go through all kinds of suffering before you are brought back sick and sorry to Olympus, after having caused infinite mischief to all us others? Jove would instantly leave the Trojans and Achaeans to themselves; he would come to Olympus to punish us, and would grip us up one after another, guilty or not guilty. Therefore lay aside your anger for the death of your son; better men than he have either been killed already or will fall hereafter, and one cannot protect every one's whole family."

With these words she took Mars back to his seat. Meanwhile Juno called Apollo outside, with Iris the messenger of the gods. "Jove," she said to them, "desires you to go to him at once on Mt. Ida; when you have seen him you are to do as he may then bid you."

Thereon Juno left them and resumed her seat inside, while Iris and Apollo made all haste on their way. When they reached many-fountained Ida, mother of wild beasts, they found Jove seated on topmost Gargarus with a fragrant cloud encircling his head as with a diadem. They stood before his presence, and he was pleased with them for having been so quick in obeying the orders his wife had given them.

He spoke to Iris first. "Go," said he, "fleet Iris, tell King Neptune what I now bid you—and tell him true. Bid him leave off fighting, and either join the company of the gods, or go down into the sea. If he takes no heed and disobeys me, let him consider well whether he is strong enough to hold his own against me if I attack him. I am older and much stronger than he is; yet he is not afraid to set himself up as on a level with myself, of whom all the other gods stand in awe."

Iris, fleet as the wind, obeyed him, and as the cold hail or snowflakes that fly from out the clouds before the blast of Boreas, even so did she wing her way till she came close up to the great shaker of the earth. Then she said, "I have come, O dark-haired king that holds the world in his embrace, to bring you a message from Jove. He bids you leave off fighting, and either join the company of the gods or go down into the sea; if, however, you take no heed and disobey him, he says he will come down here and fight you. He would have you keep out of his reach, for he is older and much stronger than you are, and yet you are not afraid to set yourself up as on a level with himself, of whom all the other gods stand in awe."

Neptune was very angry and said, "Great heavens! strong as Jove may be, he has said more than he can do if he has threatened violence against me, who am of like honour with himself. We were three brothers whom Rhea bore to Saturn—Jove, myself, and Hades who rules the world below. Heaven and earth were divided into three parts, and each of us was to have an equal share. When we cast lots, it fell to me to have my dwelling in the sea for evermore; Hades took the darkness of the realms under the earth, while air and sky and clouds were the portion that fell to Jove; but earth and great Olympus are the common property of all. Therefore I will not walk as Jove would have me. For all his strength, let him keep to his own third share and be contented without threatening to lay hands upon me as though I were nobody. Let him keep his bragging talk for his own sons and daughters, who must perforce obey him."

Iris fleet as the wind then answered, "Am I really, Neptune, to take this daring and unyielding message to Jove, or will you reconsider your answer? Sensible people are open to argument, and you know that the Erinyes always range themselves on the side of the older person."

Neptune answered, "Goddess Iris, your words have been spoken in season. It is well when a messenger shows so much discretion. Nevertheless it cuts me to the very heart that any one should rebuke so angrily another who is his own peer, and of like empire with

himself. Now, however, I will give way in spite of my displeasure; furthermore let me tell you, and I mean what I say—if contrary to the desire of myself, Minerva driver of the spoil, Juno, Mercury, and King Vulcan, Jove spares steep Ilius, and will not let the Achaeans have the great triumph of sacking it, let him understand that he will incur our implacable resentment."

Neptune now left the field to go down under the sea, and sorely did the Achaeans miss him. Then Jove said to Apollo, "Go, dear Phoebus, to Hector, for Neptune who holds the earth in his embrace has now gone down under the sea to avoid the severity of my displeasure. Had he not done so those gods who are below with Saturn would have come to hear of the fight between us. It is better for both of us that he should have curbed his anger and kept out of my reach, for I should have had much trouble with him. Take, then, your tasselled aegis, and shake it furiously, so as to set the Achaean heroes in a panic; take, moreover, brave Hector, O Far-Darter, into your own care, and rouse him to deeds of daring, till the Achaeans are sent flying back to their ships and to the Hellespont. From that point I will think it well over, how the Achaeans may have a respite from their troubles."

Apollo obeyed his father's saying, and left the crests of Ida, flying like a falcon, bane of doves and swiftest of all birds. He found Hector no longer lying upon the ground, but sitting up, for he had just come to himself again. He knew those who were about him, and the sweat and hard breathing had left him from the moment when the will of aegis-bearing Jove had revived him. Apollo stood beside him and said, "Hector son of Priam, why are you so faint, and why are you here away from the others? Has any mishap befallen you?"

Hector in a weak voice answered, "And which, kind sir, of the gods are you, who now ask me thus? Do you not know that Ajax struck me on the chest with a stone as I was killing his comrades at the ships of the Achaeans, and compelled me to leave off fighting? I made sure that this very day I should breathe my last and go down into the house of Hades."

Then King Apollo said to him, "Take heart; the son of Saturn has sent you a mighty helper from Ida to stand by you and defend you, even me, Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, who have been guardian hitherto not only of yourself but of your city. Now, therefore, order your horsemen to drive their chariots to the ships in great multitudes. I will go before your horses to smooth the way for them, and will turn the Achaeans in flight."

As he spoke he infused great strength into the shepherd of his people. And as a horse, stabled and full-fed, breaks loose and gallops gloriously over the plain to the place where he is wont to take his bath in the river—he tosses his head, and his mane streams over his shoulders as in all the pride of his strength he flies full speed to the pastures where the mares are feeding—even so Hector, when he heard what the god said, urged his horsemen on, and sped forward as fast as his limbs could take him. As country peasants set their hounds on to a homed stag or wild goat—he has taken shelter under rock or thicket, and they cannot find him, but, lo, a bearded lion whom their shouts have roused stands in their path, and they are in no further humour for the chase—even so the Achaeans were still charging on in a body, using their swords and spears pointed at both ends, but when they saw Hector going about among his men they were afraid, and their hearts fell down into their feet.

Then spoke Thoas son of Andraemon, leader of the Aetolians, a man who could throw a good throw, and who was staunch also in close fight, while few could surpass him in debate when opinions were divided. He then with all sincerity and goodwill addressed them thus: "What, in heaven's name, do I now see? Is it not Hector come to life again? Every one made sure he had been killed by Ajax son of Telamon, but it seems that one of the gods has again rescued him. He has killed many of us Danaans already, and I take it will yet do so, for the hand of Jove must be with him or he would never dare show himself so masterful in the forefront of the battle. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say; let us order the main body of our forces to fall back upon the ships, but let those of us who profess to be the flower of the army stand firm, and see whether we cannot hold Hector back at the point of our spears as soon as he comes near us; I conceive that he will then think better of it before he tries to charge into the press of the Danaans."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. Those who were about Ajax and King Idomeneus, the followers moreover of Teucer, Meriones, and Meges peer of Mars called all their best men about them and sustained the fight against Hector and the Trojans, but the main body fell back upon the ships of the Achaeans.

The Trojans pressed forward in a dense body, with Hector striding on at their head. Before him went Phoebus Apollo shrouded in cloud about his shoulders. He bore aloft the terrible aegis with its shaggy fringe, which Vulcan the smith had given Jove to strike terror into the hearts of men. With this in his hand he led on the Trojans.

The Argives held together and stood their ground. The cry of battle rose high from either side, and the arrows flew from the bowstrings. Many a spear sped from strong hands and fastened in the bodies of many a valiant warrior, while others fell to earth

midway, before they could taste of man's fair flesh and glut themselves with blood. So long as Phoebus Apollo held his aegis quietly and without shaking it, the weapons on either side took effect and the people fell, but when he shook it straight in the face of the Danaans and raised his mighty battle-cry their hearts fainted within them and they forgot their former prowess. As when two wild beasts spring in the dead of night on a herd of cattle or a large flock of sheep when the herdsman is not there—even so were the Danaans struck helpless, for Apollo filled them with panic and gave victory to Hector and the Trojans.

The fight then became more scattered and they killed one another where they best could. Hector killed Stichius and Arcesilaus, the one, leader of the Boeotians, and the other, friend and comrade of Menestheus. Aeneas killed Medon and Iasus. The first was bastard son to Oileus, and brother to Ajax, but he lived in Phylace away from his own country, for he had killed a man, a kinsman of his stepmother Eriopis whom Oileus had married. Iasus had become a leader of the Athenians, and was son of Sphelus the son of Boucolos. Polydamas killed Mecisteus, and Polites Echius, in the front of the battle, while Agenor slew Clonius. Paris struck Deiochus from behind in the lower part of the shoulder, as he was flying among the foremost, and the point of the spear went clean through him.

While they were spoiling these heroes of their armour, the Achaeans were flying pell-mell to the trench and the set stakes, and were forced back within their wall. Hector then cried out to the Trojans, "Forward to the ships, and let the spoils be. If I see any man keeping back on the other side the wall away from the ships I will have him killed: his kinsmen and kinswomen shall not give him his dues of fire, but dogs shall tear him in pieces in front of our city."

As he spoke he laid his whip about his horses' shoulders and called to the Trojans throughout their ranks; the Trojans shouted with a cry that rent the air, and kept their horses neck and neck with his own. Phoebus Apollo went before, and kicked down the banks of the deep trench into its middle so as to make a great broad bridge, as broad as the throw of a spear when a man is trying his strength. The Trojan battalions poured over the bridge, and Apollo with his redoubtable aegis led the way. He kicked down the wall of the Achaeans as easily as a child who playing on the sea-shore has built a house of sand and then kicks it down again and destroys it—even so did you, O Apollo, shed toil and trouble upon the Argives, filling them with panic and confusion.

Thus then were the Achaeans hemmed in at their ships, calling out to one another and raising their hands with loud cries every man to heaven. Nestor of Gerene, tower of strength to the Achaeans, lifted up his hands to the starry firmament of heaven, and prayed more fervently than any of them. "Father Jove," said he, "if ever any one in wheat-growing Argos burned you fat thigh-bones of sheep or heifer and prayed that he might return safely home, whereon you bowed your head to him in assent, bear it in mind now, and suffer not the Trojans to triumph thus over the Achaeans."

All-counselling Jove thundered loudly in answer to the prayer of the aged son of Neleus. When they heard Jove thunder they flung themselves yet more fiercely on the Achaeans. As a wave breaking over the bulwarks of a ship when the sea runs high before a gale—for it is the force of the wind that makes the waves so great—even so did the Trojans spring over the wall with a shout, and drive their chariots onwards. The two sides fought with their double-pointed spears in hand-to-hand encounter-the Trojans from their chariots, and the Achaeans climbing up into their ships and wielding the long pikes that were lying on the decks ready for use in a sea-fight, jointed and shod with bronze.

Now Patroclus, so long as the Achaeans and Trojans were fighting about the wall, but were not yet within it and at the ships, remained sitting in the tent of good Eurypylus, entertaining him with his conversation and spreading herbs over his wound to ease his pain. When, however, he saw the Trojans swarming through the breach in the wall, while the Achaeans were clamouring and struck with panic, he cried aloud, and smote his two thighs with the flat of his hands. "Eurypylus," said he in his dismay, "I know you want me badly, but I cannot stay with you any longer, for there is hard fighting going on; a servant shall take care of you now, for I must make all speed to Achilles, and induce him to fight if I can; who knows but with heaven's help I may persuade him. A man does well to listen to the advice of a friend."

When he had thus spoken he went his way. The Achaeans stood firm and resisted the attack of the Trojans, yet though these were fewer in number, they could not drive them back from the ships, neither could the Trojans break the Achaean ranks and make their way in among the tents and ships. As a carpenter's line gives a true edge to a piece of ship's timber, in the hand of some skilled workman whom Minerva has instructed in all kinds of useful arts—even so level was the issue of the fight between the two sides, as they fought some round one and some round another.

Hector made straight for Ajax, and the two fought fiercely about the same ship. Hector could not force Ajax back and fire the ship, nor yet could Ajax drive Hector from the spot to which heaven had brought him.

Then Ajax struck Caletor son of Clytius in the chest with a spear as he was bringing fire towards the ship. He fell heavily to the ground and the torch dropped from his hand. When Hector saw his cousin fallen in front of the ship he shouted to the Trojans and Lycians saying, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians good in close fight, bate not a jot, but rescue the son of Clytius lest the Achaeans strip him of his armour now that he has fallen.”

He then aimed a spear at Ajax, and missed him, but he hit Lycophron a follower of Ajax, who came from Cythera, but was living with Ajax inasmuch as he had killed a man among the Cythereans. Hector’s spear struck him on the head below the ear, and he fell headlong from the ship’s prow on to the ground with no life left in him. Ajax shook with rage and said to his brother, “Teucer, my good fellow, our trusty comrade the son of Mastor has fallen, he came to live with us from Cythera and whom we honoured as much as our own parents. Hector has just killed him; fetch your deadly arrows at once and the bow which Phoebus Apollo gave you.”

Teucer heard him and hastened towards him with his bow and quiver in his hands. Forthwith he showered his arrows on the Trojans, and hit Cleitus the son of Pisenor, comrade of Polydamas the noble son of Panthous, with the reins in his hands as he was attending to his horses; he was in the middle of the very thickest part of the fight, doing good service to Hector and the Trojans, but evil had now come upon him, and not one of those who were fain to do so could avert it, for the arrow struck him on the back of the neck. He fell from his chariot and his horses shook the empty car as they swerved aside. King Polydamas saw what had happened, and was the first to come up to the horses; he gave them in charge to Astynous son of Protiaon, and ordered him to look on, and to keep the horses near at hand. He then went back and took his place in the front ranks.

Teucer then aimed another arrow at Hector, and there would have been no more fighting at the ships if he had hit him and killed him then and there: Jove, however, who kept watch over Hector, had his eyes on Teucer, and deprived him of his triumph, by breaking his bowstring for him just as he was drawing it and about to take his aim; on this the arrow went astray and the bow fell from his hands. Teucer shook with anger and said to his brother, “Alas, see how heaven thwarts us in all we do; it has broken my bowstring and snatched the bow from my hand, though I strung it this selfsame morning that it might serve me for many an arrow.”

Ajax son of Telamon answered, “My good fellow, let your bow and your arrows be, for Jove has made them useless in order to spite the Danaans. Take your spear, lay your shield upon your shoulder, and both fight the Trojans yourself and urge others to do so. They may be successful for the moment but if we fight as we ought they will find it a hard matter to take the ships.”

Teucer then took his bow and put it by in his tent. He hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders, and on his comely head he set his helmet well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it; he grasped his redoubtable bronze-shod spear, and forthwith he was by the side of Ajax.

When Hector saw that Teucer’s bow was of no more use to him, he shouted out to the Trojans and Lycians, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians good in close fight, be men, my friends, and show your mettle here at the ships, for I see the weapon of one of their chieftains made useless by the hand of Jove. It is easy to see when Jove is helping people and means to help them still further, or again when he is bringing them down and will do nothing for them; he is now on our side, and is going against the Argives. Therefore swarm round the ships and fight. If any of you is struck by spear or sword and loses his life, let him die; he dies with honour who dies fighting for his country; and he will leave his wife and children safe behind him, with his house and allotment unplundered if only the Achaeans can be driven back to their own land, they and their ships.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Ajax on the other side exhorted his comrades saying, “Shame on you Argives, we are now utterly undone, unless we can save ourselves by driving the enemy from our ships. Do you think, if Hector takes them, that you will be able to get home by land? Can you not hear him cheering on his whole host to fire our fleet, and bidding them remember that they are not at a dance but in battle? Our only course is to fight them with might and main; we had better chance it, life or death, once for all, than fight long and without issue hemmed in at our ships by worse men than ourselves.”

With these words he put life and soul into them all. Hector then killed Schedius son of Perimedes, leader of the Phoceans, and Ajax killed Laodamas captain of foot soldiers and son to Antenor. Polydamas killed Otus of Cyllene a comrade of the son of Phyleus and chief of the proud Epeans. When Meges saw this he sprang upon him, but Polydamas crouched down, and he missed him, for Apollo would not suffer the son of Panthous to fall in battle; but the spear hit Croesmus in the middle of his chest, whereon he fell heavily to the ground, and Meges stripped him of his armour. At that moment the valiant soldier Dolops son of Lampus sprang upon Lampus was son of Laomedon and noted for his valour, while his son Dolops was versed in all the ways of war. He then struck the middle of the son of Phyleus’ shield with his spear, setting on him at close quarters, but his good corslet made with plates

of metal saved him; Phyleus had brought it from Ephyra and the river Selleis, where his host, King Euphetes, had given it him to wear in battle and protect him. It now served to save the life of his son. Then Meges struck the topmost crest of Dolops's bronze helmet with his spear and tore away its plume of horse-hair, so that all newly dyed with scarlet as it was it tumbled down into the dust. While he was still fighting and confident of victory, Menelaus came up to help Meges, and got by the side of Dolops unperceived; he then speared him in the shoulder, from behind, and the point, driven so furiously, went through into his chest, whereon he fell headlong. The two then made towards him to strip him of his armour, but Hector called on all his brothers for help, and he especially upbraided brave Melanippus son of Hiketaon, who erewhile used to pasture his herds of cattle in Percote before the war broke out; but when the ships of the Danaans came, he went back to Ilius, where he was eminent among the Trojans, and lived near Priam who treated him as one of his own sons. Hector now rebuked him and said, "Why, Melanippus, are we thus remiss? do you take no note of the death of your kinsman, and do you not see how they are trying to take Dolops's armour? Follow me; there must be no fighting the Argives from a distance now, but we must do so in close combat till either we kill them or they take the high wall of Ilius and slay her people."

He led on as he spoke, and the hero Melanippus followed after. Meanwhile Ajax son of Telamon was cheering on the Argives. "My friends," he cried, "be men, and fear dishonour; quit yourselves in battle so as to win respect from one another. Men who respect each other's good opinion are less likely to be killed than those who do not, but in flight there is neither gain nor glory."

Thus did he exhort men who were already bent upon driving back the Trojans. They laid his words to heart and hedged the ships as with a wall of bronze, while Jove urged on the Trojans. Menelaus of the loud battle-cry urged Antilochus on. "Antilochus," said he, "you are young and there is none of the Achaeans more fleet of foot or more valiant than you are. See if you cannot spring upon some Trojan and kill him."

He hurried away when he had thus spurred Antilochus, who at once darted out from the front ranks and aimed a spear, after looking carefully round him. The Trojans fell back as he threw, and the dart did not speed from his hand without effect, for it struck Melanippus the proud son of Hiketaon in the breast by the nipple as he was coming forward, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Antilochus sprang upon him as a dog springs on a fawn which a hunter has hit as it was breaking away from its covert, and killed it. Even so, O Melanippus, did stalwart Antilochus spring upon you to strip you of your armour; but noble Hector marked him, and came running up to him through the thick of the battle. Antilochus, brave soldier though he was, would not stay to face him, but fled like some savage creature which knows it has done wrong, and flies, when it has killed a dog or a man who is herding his cattle, before a body of men can be gathered to attack it. Even so did the son of Nestor fly, and the Trojans and Hector with a cry that rent the air showered their weapons after him; nor did he turn round and stay his flight till he had reached his comrades.

The Trojans, fierce as lions, were still rushing on towards the ships in fulfilment of the behests of Jove who kept spurring them on to new deeds of daring, while he deadened the courage of the Argives and defeated them by encouraging the Trojans. For he meant giving glory to Hector son of Priam, and letting him throw fire upon the ships, till he had fulfilled the unrighteous prayer that Thetis had made him; Jove, therefore, bided his time till he should see the glare of a blazing ship. From that hour he was about so to order that the Trojans should be driven back from the ships and to vouchsafe glory to the Achaeans. With this purpose he inspired Hector son of Priam, who was eager enough already, to assail the ships. His fury was as that of Mars, or as when a fire is raging in the glades of some dense forest upon the mountains; he foamed at the mouth, his eyes glared under his terrible eye-brows, and his helmet quivered on his temples by reason of the fury with which he fought. Jove from heaven was with him, and though he was but one against many, vouchsafed him victory and glory; for he was doomed to an early death, and already Pallas Minerva was hurrying on the hour of his destruction at the hands of the son of Peleus. Now, however, he kept trying to break the ranks of the enemy wherever he could see them thickest, and in the goodliest armour; but do what he might he could not break through them, for they stood as a tower foursquare, or as some high cliff rising from the grey sea that braves the anger of the gale, and of the waves that thunder up against it. He fell upon them like flames of fire from every quarter. As when a wave, raised mountain high by wind and storm, breaks over a ship and covers it deep in foam, the fierce winds roar against the mast, the hearts of the sailors fail them for fear, and they are saved but by a very little from destruction—even so were the hearts of the Achaeans fainting within them. Or as a savage lion attacking a herd of cows while they are feeding by thousands in the low-lying meadows by some wide-watered shore—the herdsman is at his wit's end how to protect his herd and keeps going about now in the van and now in the rear of his cattle, while the lion springs into the thick of them and fastens on a cow so that they all tremble for fear—even so were the Achaeans utterly panic-stricken by Hector and father Jove. Nevertheless Hector only killed Periphetes of Mycenae; he was son of

Copreus who was wont to take the orders of King Eurystheus to mighty Hercules, but the son was a far better man than the father in every way; he was fleet of foot, a valiant warrior, and in understanding ranked among the foremost men of Mycenae. He it was who then afforded Hector a triumph, for as he was turning back he stumbled against the rim of his shield which reached his feet, and served to keep the javelins off him. He tripped against this and fell face upward, his helmet ringing loudly about his head as he did so. Hector saw him fall and ran up to him; he then thrust a spear into his chest, and killed him close to his own comrades. These, for all their sorrow, could not help him for they were themselves terribly afraid of Hector.

They had now reached the ships and the prows of those that had been drawn up first were on every side of them, but the Trojans came pouring after them. The Argives were driven back from the first row of ships, but they made a stand by their tents without being broken up and scattered; shame and fear restrained them. They kept shouting incessantly to one another, and Nestor of Gerene, tower of strength to the Achaeans, was loudest in imploring every man by his parents, and beseeching him to stand firm.

“Be men, my friends,” he cried, “and respect one another’s good opinion. Think, all of you, on your children, your wives, your property, and your parents whether these be alive or dead. On their behalf though they are not here, I implore you to stand firm, and not to turn in flight.”

With these words he put heart and soul into them all. Minerva lifted the thick veil of darkness from their eyes, and much light fell upon them, alike on the side of the ships and on that where the fight was raging. They could see Hector and all his men, both those in the rear who were taking no part in the battle, and those who were fighting by the ships.

Ajax could not bring himself to retreat along with the rest, but strode from deck to deck with a great sea-pike in his hands twelve cubits long and jointed with rings. As a man skilled in feats of horsemanship couples four horses together and comes tearing full speed along the public way from the country into some large town—many both men and women marvel as they see him for he keeps all the time changing his horse, springing from one to another without ever missing his feet while the horses are at a gallop—even so did Ajax go striding from one ship’s deck to another, and his voice went up into the heavens. He kept on shouting his orders to the Danaans and exhorting them to defend their ships and tents; neither did Hector remain within the main body of the Trojan warriors, but as a dun eagle swoops down upon a flock of wild-fowl feeding near a river—geese, it may be, or cranes, or long-necked swans—even so did Hector make straight for a dark-prowed ship, rushing right towards it; for Jove with his mighty hand impelled him forward, and roused his people to follow him.

And now the battle again raged furiously at the ships. You would have thought the men were coming on fresh and unwearied, so fiercely did they fight; and this was the mind in which they were—the Achaeans did not believe they should escape destruction but thought themselves doomed, while there was not a Trojan but his heart beat high with the hope of firing the ships and putting the Achaean heroes to the sword.

Thus were the two sides minded. Then Hector seized the stern of the good ship that had brought Protesilaus to Troy, but never bore him back to his native land. Round this ship there raged a close hand-to-hand fight between Danaans and Trojans. They did not fight at a distance with bows and javelins, but with one mind hacked at one another in close combat with their mighty swords and spears pointed at both ends; they fought moreover with keen battle-axes and with hatchets. Many a good stout blade hilted and scabbarded with iron, fell from hand or shoulder as they fought, and the earth ran red with blood. Hector, when he had seized the ship, would not loose his hold but held on to its curved stern and shouted to the Trojans, “Bring fire, and raise the battle-cry all of you with a single voice. Now has Jove vouchsafed us a day that will pay us for all the rest; this day we shall take the ships which came hither against heaven’s will, and which have caused us such infinite suffering through the cowardice of our councillors, who when I would have done battle at the ships held me back and forbade the host to follow me; if Jove did then indeed warp our judgements, himself now commands me and cheers me on.”

As he spoke thus the Trojans sprang yet more fiercely on the Achaeans, and Ajax no longer held his ground, for he was overcome by the darts that were flung at him, and made sure that he was doomed. Therefore he left the raised deck at the stern, and stepped back on to the seven-foot bench of the oarsmen. Here he stood on the look-out, and with his spear held back any Trojan whom he saw bringing fire to the ships. All the time he kept on shouting at the top of his voice and exhorting the Danaans. “My friends,” he cried, “Danaan heroes, servants of Mars, be men my friends, and fight with might and with main. Can we hope to find helpers hereafter, or a wall to shield us more surely than the one we have? There is no strong city within reach, whence we may draw fresh forces to turn the scales in our favour. We are on the plain of the armed Trojans with the sea behind us, and far from our own country. Our salvation, therefore, is in the might of our hands and in hard fighting.”

As he spoke he wielded his spear with still greater fury, and when any Trojan made towards the ships with fire at Hector's bidding, he would be on the look-out for him, and drive at him with his long spear. Twelve men did he thus kill in hand-to-hand fight before the ships.

This page titled 3.12.1.15: Book XV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.16: Book XVI

Fire being now thrown on the ship of Protesilaus, Patroclus fights in the armour of Achilles—He drives the Trojans back, but is in the end killed by Euphorbus and Hector.

Thus did they fight about the ship of Protesilaus. Then Patroclus drew near to Achilles with tears welling from his eyes, as from some spring whose crystal stream falls over the ledges of a high precipice. When Achilles saw him thus weeping he was sorry for him and said, “Why, Patroclus, do you stand there weeping like some silly child that comes running to her mother, and begs to be taken up and carried—she catches hold of her mother’s dress to stay her though she is in a hurry, and looks tearfully up until her mother carries her—even such tears, Patroclus, are you now shedding. Have you anything to say to the Myrmidons or to myself? or have you had news from Phthia which you alone know? They tell me Menoetius son of Actor is still alive, as also Peleus son of Aeacus, among the Myrmidons—men whose loss we two should bitterly deplore; or are you grieving about the Argives and the way in which they are being killed at the ships, through their own high-handed doings? Do not hide anything from me but tell me that both of us may know about it.”

Then, O knight Patroclus, with a deep sigh you answered, “Achilles, son of Peleus, foremost champion of the Achaeans, do not be angry, but I weep for the disaster that has now befallen the Argives. All those who have been their champions so far are lying at the ships, wounded by sword or spear. Brave Diomed son of Tydeus has been hit with a spear, while famed Ulysses and Agamemnon have received sword-wounds; Eurypylus again has been struck with an arrow in the thigh; skilled apothecaries are attending to these heroes, and healing them of their wounds; are you still, O Achilles, so inexorable? May it never be my lot to nurse such a passion as you have done, to the baning of your own good name. Who in future story will speak well of you unless you now save the Argives from ruin? You know no pity; knight Peleus was not your father nor Thetis your mother, but the grey sea bore you and the sheer cliffs begot you, so cruel and remorseless are you. If however you are kept back through knowledge of some oracle, or if your mother Thetis has told you something from the mouth of Jove, at least send me and the Myrmidons with me, if I may bring deliverance to the Danaans. Let me moreover wear your armour; the Trojans may thus mistake me for you and quit the field, so that the hard-pressed sons of the Achaeans may have breathing time—which while they are fighting may hardly be. We who are fresh might soon drive tired men back from our ships and tents to their own city.”

He knew not what he was asking, nor that he was suing for his own destruction. Achilles was deeply moved and answered, “What, noble Patroclus, are you saying? I know no prophesyings which I am heeding, nor has my mother told me anything from the mouth of Jove, but I am cut to the very heart that one of my own rank should dare to rob me because he is more powerful than I am. This, after all that I have gone through, is more than I can endure. The girl whom the sons of the Achaeans chose for me, whom I won as the fruit of my spear on having sacked a city—her has King Agamemnon taken from me as though I were some common vagrant. Still, let bygones be bygones: no man may keep his anger for ever; I said I would not relent till battle and the cry of war had reached my own ships; nevertheless, now gird my armour about your shoulders, and lead the Myrmidons to battle, for the dark cloud of Trojans has burst furiously over our fleet; the Argives are driven back on to the beach, cooped within a narrow space, and the whole people of Troy has taken heart to sally out against them, because they see not the visor of my helmet gleaming near them. Had they seen this, there would not have been a creek nor grip that had not been filled with their dead as they fled back again. And so it would have been, if only King Agamemnon had dealt fairly by me. As it is the Trojans have beset our host. Diomed son of Tydeus no longer wields his spear to defend the Danaans, neither have I heard the voice of the son of Atreus coming from his hated head, whereas that of murderous Hector rings in my cars as he gives orders to the Trojans, who triumph over the Achaeans and fill the whole plain with their cry of battle. But even so, Patroclus, fall upon them and save the fleet, lest the Trojans fire it and prevent us from being able to return. Do, however, as I now bid you, that you may win me great honour from all the Danaans, and that they may restore the girl to me again and give me rich gifts into the bargain. When you have driven the Trojans from the ships, come back again. Though Juno’s thundering husband should put triumph within your reach, do not fight the Trojans further in my absence, or you will rob me of glory that should be mine. And do not for lust of battle go on killing the Trojans nor lead the Achaeans on to Ilius, lest one of the ever-living gods from Olympus attack you—for Phoebus Apollo loves them well: return when you have freed the ships from peril, and let others wage war upon the plain. Would, by father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that not a single man of all the Trojans might be left alive, nor yet of the Argives, but that we two might be alone left to tear aside the mantle that veils the brow of Troy.”

Thus did they converse. But Ajax could no longer hold his ground for the shower of darts that rained upon him; the will of Jove and the javelins of the Trojans were too much for him; the helmet that gleamed about his temples rang with the continuous clatter of the missiles that kept pouring on to it and on to the cheek-pieces that protected his face. Moreover his left shoulder was tired with having held his shield so long, yet for all this, let fly at him as they would, they could not make him give ground. He could hardly draw his breath, the sweat rained from every pore of his body, he had not a moment's respite, and on all sides he was beset by danger upon danger.

And now, tell me, O Muses that hold your mansions on Olympus, how fire was thrown upon the ships of the Achaeans. Hector came close up and let drive with his great sword at the ashen spear of Ajax. He cut it clean in two just behind where the point was fastened on to the shaft of the spear. Ajax, therefore, had now nothing but a headless spear, while the bronze point flew some way off and came ringing down on to the ground. Ajax knew the hand of heaven in this, and was dismayed at seeing that Jove had now left him utterly defenceless and was willing victory for the Trojans. Therefore he drew back, and the Trojans flung fire upon the ship which was at once wrapped in flame.

The fire was now flaring about the ship's stern, whereon Achilles smote his two thighs and said to Patroclus, "Up, noble knight, for I see the glare of hostile fire at our fleet; up, lest they destroy our ships, and there be no way by which we may retreat. Gird on your armour at once while I call our people together."

As he spoke Patroclus put on his armour. First he greaved his legs with greaves of good make, and fitted with ancle-clasps of silver; after this he donned the cuirass of the son of Aeacus, richly inlaid and studded. He hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought, with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it. He grasped two redoubtable spears that suited his hands, but he did not take the spear of noble Achilles, so stout and strong, for none other of the Achaeans could wield it, though Achilles could do so easily. This was the ashen spear from Mount Pelion, which Chiron had cut upon a mountain top and had given to Peleus, wherewith to deal out death among heroes. He bade Automedon yoke his horses with all speed, for he was the man whom he held in honour next after Achilles, and on whose support in battle he could rely most firmly. Automedon therefore yoked the fleet horses Xanthus and Balius, steeds that could fly like the wind: these were they whom the harpy Podarge bore to the west wind, as she was grazing in a meadow by the waters of the river Oceanus. In the side traces he set the noble horse Pedasus, whom Achilles had brought away with him when he sacked the city of Eetion, and who, mortal steed though he was, could take his place along with those that were immortal.

Meanwhile Achilles went about everywhere among the tents, and bade his Myrmidons put on their armour. Even as fierce ravening wolves that are feasting upon a homed stag which they have killed upon the mountains, and their jaws are red with blood—they go in a pack to lap water from the clear spring with their long thin tongues; and they reek of blood and slaughter; they know not what fear is, for it is hunger drives them—even so did the leaders and counsellors of the Myrmidons gather round the good squire of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, and among them stood Achilles himself cheering on both men and horses.

Fifty ships had noble Achilles brought to Troy, and in each there was a crew of fifty oarsmen. Over these he set five captains whom he could trust, while he was himself commander over them all. Menesthius of the gleaming corslet, son to the river Spercheius that streams from heaven, was captain of the first company. Fair Polydora daughter of Peleus bore him to ever-flowing Spercheius—a woman mated with a god—but he was called son of Borus son of Perieres, with whom his mother was living as his wedded wife, and who gave great wealth to gain her. The second company was led by noble Eudorus, son to an unwedded woman. Polymele, daughter of Phylas the graceful dancer, bore him; the mighty slayer of Argos was enamoured of her as he saw her among the singing women at a dance held in honour of Diana the rushing huntress of the golden arrows; he therefore—Mercury, giver of all good—went with her into an upper chamber, and lay with her in secret, whereon she bore him a noble son Eudorus, singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant. When Ilithuia goddess of the pains of child-birth brought him to the light of day, and he saw the face of the sun, mighty Echecles son of Actor took the mother to wife, and gave great wealth to gain her, but her father Phylas brought the child up, and took care of him, doting as fondly upon him as though he were his own son. The third company was led by Pisander son of Maemalus, the finest spearman among all the Myrmidons next to Achilles' own comrade Patroclus. The old knight Phoenix was captain of the fourth company, and Alcimedon, noble son of Laerceus of the fifth.

When Achilles had chosen his men and had stationed them all with their captains, he charged them straitly saying, "Myrmidons, remember your threats against the Trojans while you were at the ships in the time of my anger, and you were all complaining of me. 'Cruel son of Peleus,' you would say, 'your mother must have suckled you on gall, so ruthless are you. You keep us here at the ships against our will; if you are so relentless it were better we went home over the sea.' Often have you gathered and thus chided

with me. The hour is now come for those high feats of arms that you have so long been pining for, therefore keep high hearts each one of you to do battle with the Trojans."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all, and they serried their companies yet more closely when they heard the words of their king. As the stones which a builder sets in the wall of some high house which is to give shelter from the winds—even so closely were the helmets and bossed shields set against one another. Shield pressed on shield, helm on helm, and man on man; so close were they that the horse-hair plumes on the gleaming ridges of their helmets touched each other as they bent their heads.

In front of them all two men put on their armour—Patroclus and Automedon—two men, with but one mind to lead the Myrmidons. Then Achilles went inside his tent and opened the lid of the strong chest which silver-footed Thetis had given him to take on board ship, and which she had filled with shirts, cloaks to keep out the cold, and good thick rugs. In this chest he had a cup of rare workmanship, from which no man but himself might drink, nor would he make offering from it to any other god save only to father Jove. He took the cup from the chest and cleansed it with sulphur; this done he rinsed it clean water, and after he had washed his hands he drew wine. Then he stood in the middle of the court and prayed, looking towards heaven, and making his drink-offering of wine; nor was he unseen of Jove whose joy is in thunder. "King Jove," he cried, "lord of Dodona, god of the Pelasgi, who dwellest afar, you who hold wintry Dodona in your sway, where your prophets the Selli dwell around you with their feet unwashed and their couches made upon the ground—if you heard me when I prayed to you aforetime, and did me honour while you sent disaster on the Achaeans, vouchsafe me now the fulfilment of yet this further prayer. I shall stay here where my ships are lying, but I shall send my comrade into battle at the head of many Myrmidons. Grant, O all-seeing Jove, that victory may go with him; put your courage into his heart that Hector may learn whether my squire is man enough to fight alone, or whether his might is only then so indomitable when I myself enter the turmoil of war. Afterwards when he has chased the fight and the cry of battle from the ships, grant that he may return unharmed, with his armour and his comrades, fighters in close combat."

Thus did he pray, and all-counselling Jove heard his prayer. Part of it he did indeed vouchsafe him—but not the whole. He granted that Patroclus should thrust back war and battle from the ships, but refused to let him come safely out of the fight.

When he had made his drink-offering and had thus prayed, Achilles went inside his tent and put back the cup into his chest.

Then he again came out, for he still loved to look upon the fierce fight that raged between the Trojans and Achaeans.

Meanwhile the armed band that was about Patroclus marched on till they sprang high in hope upon the Trojans. They came swarming out like wasps whose nests are by the roadside, and whom silly children love to tease, whereon any one who happens to be passing may get stung—or again, if a wayfarer going along the road vexes them by accident, every wasp will come flying out in a fury to defend his little ones—even with such rage and courage did the Myrmidons swarm from their ships, and their cry of battle rose heavenwards. Patroclus called out to his men at the top of his voice, "Myrmidons, followers of Achilles son of Peleus, be men my friends, fight with might and with main, that we may win glory for the son of Peleus, who is far the foremost man at the ships of the Argives—he, and his close fighting followers. The son of Atreus King Agamemnon will thus learn his folly in showing no respect to the bravest of the Achaeans."

With these words he put heart and soul into them all, and they fell in a body upon the Trojans. The ships rang again with the cry which the Achaeans raised, and when the Trojans saw the brave son of Menoetius and his squire all gleaming in their armour, they were daunted and their battalions were thrown into confusion, for they thought the fleet son of Peleus must now have put aside his anger, and have been reconciled to Agamemnon; every one, therefore, looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety.

Patroclus first aimed a spear into the middle of the press where men were packed most closely, by the stern of the ship of Protesilaus. He hit Pyraechmes who had led his Paeonian horsemen from the Amydon and the broad waters of the river Axius; the spear struck him on the right shoulder, and with a groan he fell backwards in the dust; on this his men were thrown into confusion, for by killing their leader, who was the finest soldier among them, Patroclus struck panic into them all. He thus drove them from the ship and quenched the fire that was then blazing—leaving the half-burnt ship to lie where it was. The Trojans were now driven back with a shout that rent the skies, while the Danaans poured after them from their ships, shouting also without ceasing. As when Jove, gatherer of the thunder-cloud, spreads a dense canopy on the top of some lofty mountain, and all the peaks, the jutting headlands, and forest glades show out in the great light that flashes from the bursting heavens, even so when the Danaans had now driven back the fire from their ships, they took breath for a little while; but the fury of the fight was not yet over, for the Trojans were not driven back in utter rout, but still gave battle, and were ousted from their ground only by sheer fighting.

The fight then became more scattered, and the chieftains killed one another when and how they could. The valiant son of Menoetius first drove his spear into the thigh of Areilycus just as he was turning round; the point went clean through, and broke the bone so that he fell forward. Meanwhile Menelaus struck Thoas in the chest, where it was exposed near the rim of his shield, and he fell dead. The son of Phyleus saw Amphiclus about to attack him, and ere he could do so took aim at the upper part of his thigh, where the muscles are thicker than in any other part; the spear tore through all the sinews of the leg, and his eyes were closed in darkness. Of the sons of Nestor one, Antilochus, speared Atymnius, driving the point of the spear through his throat, and down he fell. Maris then sprang on Antilochus in hand-to-hand fight to avenge his brother, and bestrode the body spear in hand; but valiant Thrasymedes was too quick for him, and in a moment had struck him in the shoulder ere he could deal his blow; his aim was true, and the spear severed all the muscles at the root of his arm, and tore them right down to the bone, so he fell heavily to the ground and his eyes were closed in darkness. Thus did these two noble comrades of Sarpedon go down to Erebus slain by the two sons of Nestor; they were the warrior sons of Amisodorus, who had reared the invincible Chimaera, to the bane of many. Ajax son of Oileus sprang on Cleobulus and took him alive as he was entangled in the crush; but he killed him then and there by a sword-blow on the neck. The sword reeked with his blood, while dark death and the strong hand of fate gripped him and closed his eyes.

Peneleos and Lycon now met in close fight, for they had missed each other with their spears. They had both thrown without effect, so now they drew their swords. Lycon struck the plumed crest of Peneleos' helmet but his sword broke at the hilt, while Peneleos smote Lycon on the neck under the ear. The blade sank so deep that the head was held on by nothing but the skin, and there was no more life left in him. Meriones gave chase to Acamas on foot and caught him up just as he was about to mount his chariot; he drove a spear through his right shoulder so that he fell headlong from the car, and his eyes were closed in darkness. Idomeneus speared Erymas in the mouth; the bronze point of the spear went clean through it beneath the brain, crashing in among the white bones and smashing them up. His teeth were all of them knocked out and the blood came gushing in a stream from both his eyes; it also came gurgling up from his mouth and nostrils, and the darkness of death enfolded him round about.

Thus did these chieftains of the Danaans each of them kill his man. As ravening wolves seize on kids or lambs, fastening on them when they are alone on the hillsides and have strayed from the main flock through the carelessness of the shepherd—and when the wolves see this they pounce upon them at once because they cannot defend themselves—even so did the Danaans now fall on the Trojans, who fled with ill-omened cries in their panic and had no more fight left in them.

Meanwhile great Ajax kept on trying to drive a spear into Hector, but Hector was so skilful that he held his broad shoulders well under cover of his ox-hide shield, ever on the look-out for the whizzing of the arrows and the heavy thud of the spears. He well knew that the fortunes of the day had changed, but still stood his ground and tried to protect his comrades.

As when a cloud goes up into heaven from Olympus, rising out of a clear sky when Jove is brewing a gale—even with such panic stricken rout did the Trojans now fly, and there was no order in their going. Hector's fleet horses bore him and his armour out of the fight, and he left the Trojan host penned in by the deep trench against their will. Many a yoke of horses snapped the pole of their chariots in the trench and left their master's car behind them. Patroclus gave chase, calling impetuously on the Danaans and full of fury against the Trojans, who, being now no longer in a body, filled all the ways with their cries of panic and rout; the air was darkened with the clouds of dust they raised, and the horses strained every nerve in their flight from the tents and ships towards the city.

Patroclus kept on heading his horses wherever he saw most men flying in confusion, cheering on his men the while. Chariots were being smashed in all directions, and many a man came tumbling down from his own car to fall beneath the wheels of that of Patroclus, whose immortal steeds, given by the gods to Peleus, sprang over the trench at a bound as they sped onward. He was intent on trying to get near Hector, for he had set his heart on spearing him, but Hector's horses were now hurrying him away. As the whole dark earth bows before some tempest on an autumn day when Jove rains his hardest to punish men for giving crooked judgement in their courts, and driving justice therefrom without heed to the decrees of heaven—all the rivers run full and the torrents tear many a new channel as they roar headlong from the mountains to the dark sea, and it fares ill with the works of men—even such was the stress and strain of the Trojan horses in their flight.

Patroclus now cut off the battalions that were nearest to him and drove them back to the ships. They were doing their best to reach the city, but he would not let them, and bore down on them between the river and the ships and wall. Many a fallen comrade did he then avenge. First he hit Pronous with a spear on the chest where it was exposed near the rim of his shield, and he fell heavily to the ground. Next he sprang on Thestor son of Enops, who was sitting all huddled up in his chariot, for he had lost his head and the reins had been torn out of his hands. Patroclus went up to him and drove a spear into his right jaw; he thus hooked him by the teeth

and the spear pulled him over the rim of his car, as one who sits at the end of some jutting rock and draws a strong fish out of the sea with a hook and a line—even so with his spear did he pull Thestor all gaping from his chariot; he then threw him down on his face and he died while falling. On this, as Erylaus was on coming to attack him, he struck him full on the head with a stone, and his brains were all battered inside his helmet, whereon he fell headlong to the ground and the pangs of death took hold upon him. Then he laid low, one after the other, Erymas, Amphoterus, Epaltes, Tlepolemus, Echius son of Damastor, Pyris, Ipheus, Euippus and Polymelus son of Argeas.

Now when Sarpedon saw his comrades, men who wore ungirdled tunics, being overcome by Patroclus son of Menoetius, he rebuked the Lycians saying. “Shame on you, where are you flying to? Show your mettle; I will myself meet this man in fight and learn who it is that is so masterful; he has done us much hurt, and has stretched many a brave man upon the ground.”

He sprang from his chariot as he spoke, and Patroclus, when he saw this, leaped on to the ground also. The two then rushed at one another with loud cries like eagle-beaked crook-taloned vultures that scream and tear at one another in some high mountain fastness.

The son of scheming Saturn looked down upon them in pity and said to Juno who was his wife and sister, “Alas, that it should be the lot of Sarpedon whom I love so dearly to perish by the hand of Patroclus. I am in two minds whether to catch him up out of the fight and set him down safe and sound in the fertile land of Lycia, or to let him now fall by the hand of the son of Menoetius.”

And Juno answered, “Most dread son of Saturn, what is this that you are saying? Would you snatch a mortal man, whose doom has long been fated, out of the jaws of death? Do as you will, but we shall not all of us be of your mind. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart, that if you send Sarpedon safely to his own home, some other of the gods will be also wanting to escort his son out of battle, for there are many sons of gods fighting round the city of Troy, and you will make every one jealous. If, however, you are fond of him and pity him, let him indeed fall by the hand of Patroclus, but as soon as the life is gone out of him, send Death and sweet Sleep to bear him off the field and take him to the broad lands of Lycia, where his brothers and his kinsmen will bury him with mound and pillar, in due honour to the dead.”

The sire of gods and men assented, but he shed a rain of blood upon the earth in honour of his son whom Patroclus was about to kill on the rich plain of Troy far from his home.

When they were now come close to one another Patroclus struck Thrasydemus, the brave squire of Sarpedon, in the lower part of the belly, and killed him. Sarpedon then aimed a spear at Patroclus and missed him, but he struck the horse Pedasus in the right shoulder, and it screamed aloud as it lay, groaning in the dust until the life went out of it. The other two horses began to plunge; the pole of the chariot cracked and they got entangled in the reins through the fall of the horse that was yoked along with them; but Automedon knew what to do; without the loss of a moment he drew the keen blade that hung by his sturdy thigh and cut the third horse adrift; whereon the other two righted themselves, and pulling hard at the reins again went together into battle.

Sarpedon now took a second aim at Patroclus, and again missed him, the point of the spear passed over his left shoulder without hitting him. Patroclus then aimed in his turn, and the spear sped not from his hand in vain, for he hit Sarpedon just where the midriff surrounds the ever-beating heart. He fell like some oak or silver poplar or tall pine to which woodmen have laid their axes upon the mountains to make timber for ship-building—even so did he lie stretched at full length in front of his chariot and horses, moaning and clutching at the blood-stained dust. As when a lion springs with a bound upon a herd of cattle and fastens on a great black bull which dies bellowing in its clutches—even so did the leader of the Lycian warriors struggle in death as he fell by the hand of Patroclus. He called on his trusty comrade and said, “Glaucus, my brother, hero among heroes, put forth all your strength, fight with might and main, now if ever quit yourself like a valiant soldier. First go about among the Lycian captains and bid them fight for Sarpedon; then yourself also do battle to save my armour from being taken. My name will haunt you henceforth and for ever if the Achaeans rob me of my armour now that I have fallen at their ships. Do your very utmost and call all my people together.”

Death closed his eyes as he spoke. Patroclus planted his heel on his breast and drew the spear from his body, whereon his senses came out along with it, and he drew out both spear-point and Sarpedon’s soul at the same time. Hard by the Myrmidons held his snorting steeds, who were wild with panic at finding themselves deserted by their lords.

Glaucus was overcome with grief when he heard what Sarpedon said, for he could not help him. He had to support his arm with his other hand, being in great pain through the wound which Teucer’s arrow had given him when Teucer was defending the wall as he,

Glaucus, was assailing it. Therefore he prayed to far-darting Apollo saying, “Hear me O king from your seat, may be in the rich land of Lycia, or may be in Troy, for in all places you can hear the prayer of one who is in distress, as I now am. I have a grievous wound; my hand is aching with pain, there is no staunching the blood, and my whole arm drags by reason of my hurt, so that I cannot grasp my sword nor go among my foes and fight them, though our prince, Jove’s son Sarpedon, is slain. Jove defended not his son, do you, therefore, O king, heal me of my wound, ease my pain and grant me strength both to cheer on the Lycians and to fight along with them round the body of him who has fallen.”

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. He eased his pain, staunched the black blood from the wound, and gave him new strength. Glaucus perceived this, and was thankful that the mighty god had answered his prayer; forthwith, therefore, he went among the Lycian captains, and bade them come to fight about the body of Sarpedon. From these he strode on among the Trojans to Polydamas son of Panthous and Agenor; he then went in search of Aeneas and Hector, and when he had found them he said, “Hector, you have utterly forgotten your allies, who languish here for your sake far from friends and home while you do nothing to support them. Sarpedon leader of the Lycian warriors has fallen—he who was at once the right and might of Lycia; Mars has laid him low by the spear of Patroclus. Stand by him, my friends, and suffer not the Myrmidons to strip him of his armour, nor to treat his body with contumely in revenge for all the Danaans whom we have speared at the ships.”

As he spoke the Trojans were plunged in extreme and ungovernable grief; for Sarpedon, alien though he was, had been one of the main stays of their city, both as having much people with him, and himself the foremost among them all. Led by Hector, who was infuriated by the fall of Sarpedon, they made instantly for the Danaans with all their might, while the undaunted spirit of Patroclus son of Menoetius cheered on the Achaeans. First he spoke to the two Ajaxes, men who needed no bidding. “Ajaxes,” said he, “may it now please you to show yourselves the men you have always been, or even better—Sarpedon is fallen—he who was first to overleap the wall of the Achaeans; let us take the body and outrage it; let us strip the armour from his shoulders, and kill his comrades if they try to rescue his body.”

He spoke to men who of themselves were full eager; both sides, therefore, the Trojans and Lycians on the one hand, and the Myrmidons and Achaeans on the other, strengthened their battalions, and fought desperately about the body of Sarpedon, shouting fiercely the while. Mighty was the din of their armour as they came together, and Jove shed a thick darkness over the fight, to increase the toil of the battle over the body of his son.

At first the Trojans made some headway against the Achaeans, for one of the best men among the Myrmidons was killed, Epeigeus, son of noble Agacles who had erewhile been king in the good city of Budeum; but presently, having killed a valiant kinsman of his own, he took refuge with Peleus and Thetis, who sent him to Ilius the land of noble steeds to fight the Trojans under Achilles. Hector now struck him on the head with a stone just as he had caught hold of the body, and his brains inside his helmet were all battered in, so that he fell face foremost upon the body of Sarpedon, and there died. Patroclus was enraged by the death of his comrade, and sped through the front ranks as swiftly as a hawk that swoops down on a flock of daws or starlings. Even so swiftly, O noble knight Patroclus, did you make straight for the Lycians and Trojans to avenge your comrade. Forthwith he struck Sthenelaus the son of Ithaemenes on the neck with a stone, and broke the tendons that join it to the head and spine. On this Hector and the front rank of his men gave ground. As far as a man can throw a javelin when competing for some prize, or even in battle—so far did the Trojans now retreat before the Achaeans. Glaucus, captain of the Lycians, was the first to rally them, by killing Bathycles son of Chalcon who lived in Hellas and was the richest man among the Myrmidons. Glaucus turned round suddenly, just as Bathycles who was pursuing him was about to lay hold of him, and drove his spear right into the middle of his chest, whereon he fell heavily to the ground, and the fall of so good a man filled the Achaeans with dismay, while the Trojans were exultant, and came up in a body round the corpse. Nevertheless the Achaeans, mindful of their prowess, bore straight down upon them.

Meriones then killed a helmed warrior of the Trojans, Laogonus son of Onetor, who was priest of Jove of Mt. Ida, and was honoured by the people as though he were a god. Meriones struck him under the jaw and ear, so that life went out of him and the darkness of death laid hold upon him. Aeneas then aimed a spear at Meriones, hoping to hit him under the shield as he was advancing, but Meriones saw it coming and stooped forward to avoid it, whereon the spear flew past him and the point stuck in the ground, while the butt-end went on quivering till Mars robbed it of its force. The spear, therefore, sped from Aeneas’s hand in vain and fell quivering to the ground. Aeneas was angry and said, “Meriones, you are a good dancer, but if I had hit you my spear would soon have made an end of you.”

And Meriones answered, “Aeneas, for all your bravery, you will not be able to make an end of every one who comes against you. You are only a mortal like myself, and if I were to hit you in the middle of your shield with my spear, however strong and self-

confident you may be, I should soon vanquish you, and you would yield your life to Hades of the noble steeds."

On this the son of Menoetius rebuked him and said, "Meriones, hero though you be, you should not speak thus; taunting speeches, my good friend, will not make the Trojans draw away from the dead body; some of them must go under ground first; blows for battle, and words for council; fight, therefore, and say nothing."

He led the way as he spoke and the hero went forward with him. As the sound of woodcutters in some forest glade upon the mountains—and the thud of their axes is heard afar—even such a din now rose from earth-clash of bronze armour and of good ox-hide shields, as men smote each other with their swords and spears pointed at both ends. A man had need of good eyesight now to know Sarpedon, so covered was he from head to foot with spears and blood and dust. Men swarmed about the body, as flies that buzz round the full milk-pails in spring when they are brimming with milk—even so did they gather round Sarpedon; nor did Jove turn his keen eyes away for one moment from the fight, but kept looking at it all the time, for he was settling how best to kill Patroclus, and considering whether Hector should be allowed to end him now in the fight round the body of Sarpedon, and strip him of his armour, or whether he should let him give yet further trouble to the Trojans. In the end, he deemed it best that the brave squire of Achilles son of Peleus should drive Hector and the Trojans back towards the city and take the lives of many. First, therefore, he made Hector turn fainthearted, whereon he mounted his chariot and fled, bidding the other Trojans fly also, for he saw that the scales of Jove had turned against him. Neither would the brave Lycians stand firm; they were dismayed when they saw their king lying struck to the heart amid a heap of corpses—for when the son of Saturn made the fight wax hot many had fallen above him. The Achaeans, therefore stripped the gleaming armour from his shoulders and the brave son of Menoetius gave it to his men to take to the ships. Then Jove lord of the storm-cloud said to Apollo, "Dear Phoebus, go, I pray you, and take Sarpedon out of range of the weapons; cleanse the black blood from off him, and then bear him a long way off where you may wash him in the river, anoint him with ambrosia, and clothe him in immortal raiment; this done, commit him to the arms of the two fleet messengers, Death, and Sleep, who will carry him straightway to the rich land of Lycia, where his brothers and kinsmen will inter him, and will raise both mound and pillar to his memory, in due honour to the dead."

Thus he spoke. Apollo obeyed his father's saying, and came down from the heights of Ida into the thick of the fight; forthwith he took Sarpedon out of range of the weapons, and then bore him a long way off, where he washed him in the river, anointed him with ambrosia and clothed him in immortal raiment; this done, he committed him to the arms of the two fleet messengers, Death, and Sleep, who presently set him down in the rich land of Lycia.

Meanwhile Patroclus, with many a shout to his horses and to Automedon, pursued the Trojans and Lycians in the pride and foolishness of his heart. Had he but obeyed the bidding of the son of Peleus, he would have escaped death and have been scatheless; but the counsels of Jove pass man's understanding; he will put even a brave man to flight and snatch victory from his grasp, or again he will set him on to fight, as he now did when he put a high spirit into the heart of Patroclus.

Who then first, and who last, was slain by you, O Patroclus, when the gods had now called you to meet your doom? First Adrestus, Autonous, Echeclus, Perimus the son of Megas, Epistor and Melanippus; after these he killed Elasus, Mulius, and Pylartes. These he slew, but the rest saved themselves by flight.

The sons of the Achaeans would now have taken Troy by the hands of Patroclus, for his spear flew in all directions, had not Phoebus Apollo taken his stand upon the wall to defeat his purpose and to aid the Trojans. Thrice did Patroclus charge at an angle of the high wall, and thrice did Apollo beat him back, striking his shield with his own immortal hands. When Patroclus was coming on like a god for yet a fourth time, Apollo shouted to him with an awful voice and said, "Draw back, noble Patroclus, it is not your lot to sack the city of the Trojan chieftains, nor yet will it be that of Achilles who is a far better man than you are." On hearing this, Patroclus withdrew to some distance and avoided the anger of Apollo.

Meanwhile Hector was waiting with his horses inside the Scaean gates, in doubt whether to drive out again and go on fighting, or to call the army inside the gates. As he was thus doubting Phoebus Apollo drew near him in the likeness of a young and lusty warrior Asius, who was Hector's uncle, being own brother to Hecuba, and son of Dymas who lived in Phrygia by the waters of the river Sangarius; in his likeness Jove's son Apollo now spoke to Hector saying, "Hector, why have you left off fighting? It is ill done of you. If I were as much better a man than you, as I am worse, you should soon rue your slackness. Drive straight towards Patroclus, if so be that Apollo may grant you a triumph over him, and you may rule him."

With this the god went back into the hurly-burly, and Hector bade Cebriones drive again into the fight. Apollo passed in among them, and struck panic into the Argives, while he gave triumph to Hector and the Trojans. Hector let the other Danaans alone and

killed no man, but drove straight at Patroclus. Patroclus then sprang from his chariot to the ground, with a spear in his left hand, and in his right a jagged stone as large as his hand could hold. He stood still and threw it, nor did it go far without hitting some one; the cast was not in vain, for the stone struck Cebriones, Hector's charioteer, a bastard son of Priam, as he held the reins in his hands. The stone hit him on the forehead and drove his brows into his head for the bone was smashed, and his eyes fell to the ground at his feet. He dropped dead from his chariot as though he were diving, and there was no more life left in him. Over him did you then vaunt, O knight Patroclus, saying, "Bless my heart, how active he is, and how well he dives. If we had been at sea this fellow would have dived from the ship's side and brought up as many oysters as the whole crew could stomach, even in rough water, for he has dived beautifully off his chariot on to the ground. It seems, then, that there are divers also among the Trojans."

As he spoke he flung himself on Cebriones with the spring, as it were, of a lion that while attacking a stockyard is himself struck in the chest, and his courage is his own bane—even so furiously, O Patroclus, did you then spring upon Cebriones. Hector sprang also from his chariot to the ground. The pair then fought over the body of Cebriones. As two lions fight fiercely on some high mountain over the body of a stag that they have killed, even so did these two mighty warriors, Patroclus son of Menoetius and brave Hector, hack and hew at one another over the corpse of Cebriones. Hector would not let him go when he had once got him by the head, while Patroclus kept fast hold of his feet, and a fierce fight raged between the other Danaans and Trojans. As the east and south wind buffet one another when they beat upon some dense forest on the mountains—there is beech and ash and spreading cornel; the top of the trees roar as they beat on one another, and one can hear the boughs cracking and breaking—even so did the Trojans and Achaeans spring upon one another and lay about each other, and neither side would give way. Many a pointed spear fell to ground and many a winged arrow sped from its bow-string about the body of Cebriones; many a great stone, moreover, beat on many a shield as they fought around his body, but there he lay in the whirling clouds of dust, all huge and hugely, heedless of his driving now.

So long as the sun was still high in mid-heaven the weapons of either side were alike deadly, and the people fell; but when he went down towards the time when men loose their oxen, the Achaeans proved to be beyond all forecast stronger, so that they drew Cebriones out of range of the darts and tumult of the Trojans, and stripped the armour from his shoulders. Then Patroclus sprang like Mars with fierce intent and a terrific shout upon the Trojans, and thrice did he kill nine men; but as he was coming on like a god for a time, then, O Patroclus, was the hour of your end approaching, for Phoebus fought you in fell earnest. Patroclus did not see him as he moved about in the crush, for he was enshrouded in thick darkness, and the god struck him from behind on his back and his broad shoulders with the flat of his hand, so that his eyes turned dizzy. Phoebus Apollo beat the helmet from off his head, and it rolled rattling off under the horses' feet, where its horse-hair plumes were all begrimed with dust and blood. Never indeed had that helmet fared so before, for it had served to protect the head and comely forehead of the godlike hero Achilles. Now, however, Zeus delivered it over to be worn by Hector. Nevertheless the end of Hector also was near. The bronze-shod spear, so great and so strong, was broken in the hand of Patroclus, while his shield that covered him from head to foot fell to the ground as did also the band that held it, and Apollo undid the fastenings of his corslet.

On this his mind became clouded; his limbs failed him, and he stood as one dazed; whereon Euphorbus son of Panthous a Dardanian, the best spearman of his time, as also the finest horseman and fleetest runner, came behind him and struck him in the back with a spear, midway between the shoulders. This man as soon as ever he had come up with his chariot had dismounted twenty men, so proficient was he in all the arts of war—he it was, O knight Patroclus, that first drove a weapon into you, but he did not quite overpower you. Euphorbus then ran back into the crowd, after drawing his ashen spear out of the wound; he would not stand firm and wait for Patroclus, unarmed though he now was, to attack him; but Patroclus unnerved, alike by the blow the god had given him and by the spear-wound, drew back under cover of his men in fear for his life. Hector on this, seeing him to be wounded and giving ground, forced his way through the ranks, and when close up with him struck him in the lower part of the belly with a spear, driving the bronze point right through it, so that he fell heavily to the ground to the great grief of the Achaeans. As when a lion has fought some fierce wild-boar and worsted him—the two fight furiously upon the mountains over some little fountain at which they would both drink, and the lion has beaten the boar till he can hardly breathe—even so did Hector son of Priam take the life of the brave son of Menoetius who had killed so many, striking him from close at hand, and vaunting over him the while. "Patroclus," said he, "you deemed that you should sack our city, rob our Trojan women of their freedom, and carry them off in your ships to your own country. Fool; Hector and his fleet horses were ever straining their utmost to defend them. I am foremost of all the Trojan warriors to stave the day of bondage from off them; as for you, vultures shall devour you here. Poor wretch, Achilles with all his bravery availed you nothing; and yet I ween when you left him he charged you straitly saying, 'Come

not back to the ships, knight Patroclus, till you have rent the bloodstained shirt of murderous Hector about his body.' Thus I ween did he charge you, and your fool's heart answered him 'yea' within you."

Then, as the life ebbed out of you, you answered, O knight Patroclus: "Hector, vaunt as you will, for Jove the son of Saturn and Apollo have vouchsafed you victory; it is they who have vanquished me so easily, and they who have stripped the armour from my shoulders; had twenty such men as you attacked me, all of them would have fallen before my spear. Fate and the son of Leto have overpowered me, and among mortal men Euphorbus; you are yourself third only in the killing of me. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart, you too shall live but for a little season; death and the day of your doom are close upon you, and they will lay you low by the hand of Achilles son of Aeacus."

When he had thus spoken his eyes were closed in death, his soul left his body and flitted down to the house of Hades, mourning its sad fate and bidding farewell to the youth and vigor of its manhood. Dead though he was, Hector still spoke to him saying, "Patroclus, why should you thus foretell my doom? Who knows but Achilles, son of lovely Thetis, may be smitten by my spear and die before me?"

As he spoke he drew the bronze spear from the wound, planting his foot upon the body, which he thrust off and let lie on its back. He then went spear in hand after Automedon, squire of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, for he longed to lay him low, but the immortal steeds which the gods had given as a rich gift to Peleus bore him swiftly from the field.

This page titled 3.12.1.16: Book XVI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.17: Book XVII

The fight around the body of Patroclus.

Brave Menelaus son of Atreus now came to know that Patroclus had fallen, and made his way through the front ranks clad in full armour to bestride him. As a cow stands lowing over her first calf, even so did yellow-haired Menelaus bestride Patroclus. He held his round shield and his spear in front of him, resolute to kill any who should dare face him. But the son of Panthous had also noted the body, and came up to Menelaus saying, “Menelaus, son of Atreus, draw back, leave the body, and let the bloodstained spoils be. I was first of the Trojans and their brave allies to drive my spear into Patroclus, let me, therefore, have my full glory among the Trojans, or I will take aim and kill you.”

To this Menelaus answered in great anger “By father Jove, boasting is an ill thing. The pard is not more bold, nor the lion nor savage wild-boar, which is fiercest and most dauntless of all creatures, than are the proud sons of Panthous. Yet Hyperenor did not see out the days of his youth when he made light of me and withstood me, deeming me the meanest soldier among the Danaans. His own feet never bore him back to gladden his wife and parents. Even so shall I make an end of you too, if you withstand me; get you back into the crowd and do not face me, or it shall be worse for you. Even a fool may be wise after the event.”

Euphorbus would not listen, and said, “Now indeed, Menelaus, shall you pay for the death of my brother over whom you vaunted, and whose wife you widowed in her bridal chamber, while you brought grief unspeakable on his parents. I shall comfort these poor people if I bring your head and armour and place them in the hands of Panthous and noble Phrontis. The time is come when this matter shall be fought out and settled, for me or against me.”

As he spoke he struck Menelaus full on the shield, but the spear did not go through, for the shield turned its point. Menelaus then took aim, praying to father Jove as he did so; Euphorbus was drawing back, and Menelaus struck him about the roots of his throat, leaning his whole weight on the spear, so as to drive it home. The point went clean through his neck, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. His hair which was like that of the Graces, and his locks so deftly bound in bands of silver and gold, were all bedrabbled with blood. As one who has grown a fine young olive tree in a clear space where there is abundance of water—the plant is full of promise, and though the winds beat upon it from every quarter it puts forth its white blossoms till the blasts of some fierce hurricane sweep down upon it and level it with the ground—even so did Menelaus strip the fair youth Euphorbus of his armour after he had slain him. Or as some fierce lion upon the mountains in the pride of his strength fastens on the finest heifer in a herd as it is feeding—first he breaks her neck with his strong jaws, and then gorges on her blood and entrails; dogs and shepherds raise a hue and cry against him, but they stand aloof and will not come close to him, for they are pale with fear—even so no one had the courage to face valiant Menelaus. The son of Atreus would have then carried off the armour of the son of Panthous with ease, had not Phoebus Apollo been angry, and in the guise of Mentes chief of the Cicons incited Hector to attack him. “Hector,” said he, “you are now going after the horses of the noble son of Aeacus, but you will not take them; they cannot be kept in hand and driven by mortal man, save only by Achilles, who is son to an immortal mother. Meanwhile Menelaus son of Atreus has bestridden the body of Patroclus and killed the noblest of the Trojans, Euphorbus son of Panthous, so that he can fight no more.”

The god then went back into the toil and turmoil, but the soul of Hector was darkened with a cloud of grief; he looked along the ranks and saw Euphorbus lying on the ground with the blood still flowing from his wound, and Menelaus stripping him of his armour. On this he made his way to the front like a flame of fire, clad in his gleaming armour, and crying with a loud voice. When the son of Atreus heard him, he said to himself in his dismay, “Alas! what shall I do? I may not let the Trojans take the armour of Patroclus who has fallen fighting on my behalf, lest some Danaan who sees me should cry shame upon me. Still if for my honour’s sake I fight Hector and the Trojans single-handed, they will prove too many for me, for Hector is bringing them up in force. Why, however, should I thus hesitate? When a man fights in despite of heaven with one whom a god befriends, he will soon rue it. Let no Danaan think ill of me if I give place to Hector, for the hand of heaven is with him. Yet, if I could find Ajax, the two of us would fight Hector and heaven too, if we might only save the body of Patroclus for Achilles son of Peleus. This, of many evils would be the least.”

While he was thus in two minds, the Trojans came up to him with Hector at their head; he therefore drew back and left the body, turning about like some bearded lion who is being chased by dogs and men from a stockyard with spears and hue and cry, whereon he is daunted and slinks sulkily off—even so did Menelaus son of Atreus turn and leave the body of Patroclus. When among the

body of his men, he looked around for mighty Ajax son of Telamon, and presently saw him on the extreme left of the fight, cheering on his men and exhorting them to keep on fighting, for Phoebus Apollo had spread a great panic among them. He ran up to him and said, “Ajax, my good friend, come with me at once to dead Patroclus, if so be that we may take the body to Achilles—as for his armour, Hector already has it.”

These words stirred the heart of Ajax, and he made his way among the front ranks, Menelaus going with him. Hector had stripped Patroclus of his armour, and was dragging him away to cut off his head and take the body to fling before the dogs of Troy. But Ajax came up with his shield like wall before him, on which Hector withdrew under shelter of his men, and sprang on to his chariot, giving the armour over to the Trojans to take to the city, as a great trophy for himself; Ajax, therefore, covered the body of Patroclus with his broad shield and bestrode him; as a lion stands over his whelps if hunters have come upon him in a forest when he is with his little ones—in the pride and fierceness of his strength he draws his knit brows down till they cover his eyes—even so did Ajax bestride the body of Patroclus, and by his side stood Menelaus son of Atreus, nursing great sorrow in his heart.

Then Glaucus son of Hippolochus looked fiercely at Hector and rebuked him sternly. “Hector,” said he, “you make a brave show, but in fight you are sadly wanting. A runaway like yourself has no claim to so great a reputation. Think how you may now save your town and citadel by the hands of your own people born in Ilius; for you will get no Lycians to fight for you, seeing what thanks they have had for their incessant hardships. Are you likely, sir, to do anything to help a man of less note, after leaving Sarpedon, who was at once your guest and comrade in arms, to be the spoil and prey of the Danaans? So long as he lived he did good service both to your city and yourself; yet you had no stomach to save his body from the dogs. If the Lycians will listen to me, they will go home and leave Troy to its fate. If the Trojans had any of that daring fearless spirit which lays hold of men who are fighting for their country and harassing those who would attack it, we should soon bear off Patroclus into Ilius. Could we get this dead man away and bring him into the city of Priam, the Argives would readily give up the armour of Sarpedon, and we should get his body to boot. For he whose squire has been now killed is the foremost man at the ships of the Achaeans—he and his close-fighting followers. Nevertheless you dared not make a stand against Ajax, nor face him, eye to eye, with battle all round you, for he is a braver man than you are.”

Hector scowled at him and answered, “Glaucus, you should know better. I have held you so far as a man of more understanding than any in all Lycia, but now I despise you for saying that I am afraid of Ajax. I fear neither battle nor the din of chariots, but Jove’s will is stronger than ours; Jove at one time makes even a strong man draw back and snatches victory from his grasp, while at another he will set him on to fight. Come hither then, my friend, stand by me and see indeed whether I shall play the coward the whole day through as you say, or whether I shall not stay some even of the boldest Danaans from fighting round the body of Patroclus.”

As he spoke he called loudly on the Trojans saying, “Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, fighters in close combat, be men, my friends, and fight might and main, while I put on the goodly armour of Achilles, which I took when I killed Patroclus.”

With this Hector left the fight, and ran full speed after his men who were taking the armour of Achilles to Troy, but had not yet got far. Standing for a while apart from the woeful fight, he changed his armour. His own he sent to the strong city of Ilius and to the Trojans, while he put on the immortal armour of the son of Peleus, which the gods had given to Peleus, who in his age gave it to his son; but the son did not grow old in his father’s armour.

When Jove, lord of the storm-cloud, saw Hector standing aloof and arming himself in the armour of the son of Peleus, he wagged his head and muttered to himself saying, “A! poor wretch, you arm in the armour of a hero, before whom many another trembles, and you reck nothing of the doom that is already close upon you. You have killed his comrade so brave and strong, but it was not well that you should strip the armour from his head and shoulders. I do indeed endow you with great might now, but as against this you shall not return from battle to lay the armour of the son of Peleus before Andromache.”

The son of Saturn bowed his portentous brows, and Hector fitted the armour to his body, while terrible Mars entered into him, and filled his whole body with might and valour. With a shout he strode in among the allies, and his armour flashed about him so that he seemed to all of them like the great son of Peleus himself. He went about among them and cheered them on—Mesthles, Glaucus, Medon, Thersilochus, Asteropaeus, Deisenor and Hippothous, Phorcys, Chromius and Ennomus the augur. All these did he exhort saying, “Hear me, allies from other cities who are here in your thousands, it was not in order to have a crowd about me that I called you hither each from his several city, but that with heart and soul you might defend the wives and little ones of the Trojans from the fierce Achaeans. For this do I oppress my people with your food and the presents that make you rich. Therefore

turn, and charge at the foe, to stand or fall as is the game of war; whoever shall bring Patroclus, dead though he be, into the hands of the Trojans, and shall make Ajax give way before him, I will give him one half of the spoils while I keep the other. He will thus share like honour with myself."

When he had thus spoken they charged full weight upon the Danaans with their spears held out before them, and the hopes of each ran high that he should force Ajax son of Telamon to yield up the body—fools that they were, for he was about to take the lives of many. Then Ajax said to Menelaus, "My good friend Menelaus, you and I shall hardly come out of this fight alive. I am less concerned for the body of Patroclus, who will shortly become meat for the dogs and vultures of Troy, than for the safety of my own head and yours. Hector has wrapped us round in a storm of battle from every quarter, and our destruction seems now certain. Call then upon the princes of the Danaans if there is any who can hear us."

Menelaus did as he said, and shouted to the Danaans for help at the top of his voice. "My friends," he cried, "princes and counsellors of the Argives, all you who with Agamemnon and Menelaus drink at the public cost, and give orders each to his own people as Jove vouchsafes him power and glory, the fight is so thick about me that I cannot distinguish you severally; come on, therefore, every man unbidden, and think it shame that Patroclus should become meat and morsel for Trojan hounds."

Fleet Ajax son of Oileus heard him and was first to force his way through the fight and run to help him. Next came Idomeneus and Meriones his esquire, peer of murderous Mars. As for the others that came into the fight after these, who of his own self could name them?

The Trojans with Hector at their head charged in a body. As a great wave that comes thundering in at the mouth of some heaven-born river, and the rocks that jut into the sea ring with the roar of the breakers that beat and buffet them—even with such a roar did the Trojans come on; but the Achaeans in singleness of heart stood firm about the son of Menoetius, and fenced him with their bronze shields. Jove, moreover, hid the brightness of their helmets in a thick cloud, for he had borne no grudge against the son of Menoetius while he was still alive and squire to the descendant of Aeacus; therefore he was loth to let him fall a prey to the dogs of his foes the Trojans, and urged his comrades on to defend him.

At first the Trojans drove the Achaeans back, and they withdrew from the dead man daunted. The Trojans did not succeed in killing any one, nevertheless they drew the body away. But the Achaeans did not lose it long, for Ajax, foremost of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus alike in stature and prowess, quickly rallied them and made towards the front like a wild boar upon the mountains when he stands at bay in the forest glades and routs the hounds and lusty youths that have attacked him—even so did Ajax son of Telamon passing easily in among the phalanxes of the Trojans, disperse those who had bestridden Patroclus and were most bent on winning glory by dragging him off to their city. At this moment Hippothous brave son of the Pelasgian Lethus, in his zeal for Hector and the Trojans, was dragging the body off by the foot through the press of the fight, having bound a strap round the sinews near the ancle; but a mischief soon befell him from which none of those could save him who would have gladly done so, for the son of Telamon sprang forward and smote him on his bronze-cheeked helmet. The plumed headpiece broke about the point of the weapon, struck at once by the spear and by the strong hand of Ajax, so that the bloody brain came oozing out through the crest-socket. His strength then failed him and he let Patroclus' foot drop from his hand, as he fell full length dead upon the body; thus he died far from the fertile land of Larissa, and never repaid his parents the cost of bringing him up, for his life was cut short early by the spear of mighty Ajax. Hector then took aim at Ajax with a spear, but he saw it coming and just managed to avoid it; the spear passed on and struck Schedius son of noble Iphitus, captain of the Phoceans, who dwelt in famed Panopeus and reigned over much people; it struck him under the middle of the collar-bone the bronze point went right through him, coming out at the bottom of his shoulder-blade, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Ajax in his turn struck noble Phorcys son of Phaenops in the middle of the belly as he was bestriding Hippothous, and broke the plate of his cuirass; whereon the spear tore out his entrails and he clutched the ground in his palm as he fell to earth. Hector and those who were in the front rank then gave ground, while the Argives raised a loud cry of triumph, and drew off the bodies of Phorcys and Hippothous which they stripped presently of their armour.

The Trojans would now have been worsted by the brave Achaeans and driven back to Ilius through their own cowardice, while the Argives, so great was their courage and endurance, would have achieved a triumph even against the will of Jove, if Apollo had not roused Aeneas, in the likeness of Periphas son of Epytus, an attendant who had grown old in the service of Aeneas' aged father, and was at all times devoted to him. In his likeness, then, Apollo said, "Aeneas, can you not manage, even though heaven be against us, to save high Ilius? I have known men, whose numbers, courage, and self-reliance have saved their people in spite of Jove, whereas

in this case he would much rather give victory to us than to the Danaans, if you would only fight instead of being so terribly afraid."

Aeneas knew Apollo when he looked straight at him, and shouted to Hector saying, "Hector and all other Trojans and allies, shame on us if we are beaten by the Achaeans and driven back to Ilius through our own cowardice. A god has just come up to me and told me that Jove the supreme disposer will be with us. Therefore let us make for the Danaans, that it may go hard with them ere they bear away dead Patroclus to the ships."

As he spoke he sprang out far in front of the others, who then rallied and again faced the Achaeans. Aeneas speared Leiocritus son of Arisbas, a valiant follower of Lycomedes, and Lycomedes was moved with pity as he saw him fall; he therefore went close up, and speared Apisaon son of Hippasus shepherd of his people in the liver under the midriff, so that he died; he had come from fertile Paeonia and was the best man of them all after Asteropaeus. Asteropaeus flew forward to avenge him and attack the Danaans, but this might no longer be, inasmuch as those about Patroclus were well covered by their shields, and held their spears in front of them, for Ajax had given them strict orders that no man was either to give ground, or to stand out before the others, but all were to hold well together about the body and fight hand to hand. Thus did huge Ajax bid them, and the earth ran red with blood as the corpses fell thick on one another alike on the side of the Trojans and allies, and on that of the Danaans; for these last, too, fought no bloodless fight though many fewer of them perished, through the care they took to defend and stand by one another.

Thus did they fight as it were a flaming fire; it seemed as though it had gone hard even with the sun and moon, for they were hidden over all that part where the bravest heroes were fighting about the dead son of Menoetius, whereas the other Danaans and Achaeans fought at their ease in full daylight with brilliant sunshine all round them, and there was not a cloud to be seen neither on plain nor mountain. These last moreover would rest for a while and leave off fighting, for they were some distance apart and beyond the range of one another's weapons, whereas those who were in the thick of the fray suffered both from battle and darkness. All the best of them were being worn out by the great weight of their armour, but the two valiant heroes, Thrasymedes and Antilochus, had not yet heard of the death of Patroclus, and believed him to be still alive and leading the van against the Trojans; they were keeping themselves in reserve against the death or rout of their own comrades, for so Nestor had ordered when he sent them from the ships into battle.

Thus through the livelong day did they wage fierce war, and the sweat of their toil rained ever on their legs under them, and on their hands and eyes, as they fought over the squire of the fleet son of Peleus. It was as when a man gives a great ox-hide all drenched in fat to his men, and bids them stretch it; whereon they stand round it in a ring and tug till the moisture leaves it, and the fat soaks in for the many that pull at it, and it is well stretched—even so did the two sides tug the dead body hither and thither within the compass of but a little space—the Trojans steadfastly set on dragging it into Ilius, while the Achaeans were no less so on taking it to their ships; and fierce was the fight between them. Not Mars himself the lord of hosts, nor yet Minerva, even in their fullest fury could make light of such a battle.

Such fearful turmoil of men and horses did Jove on that day ordain round the body of Patroclus. Meanwhile Achilles did not know that he had fallen, for the fight was under the wall of Troy a long way off the ships. He had no idea, therefore, that Patroclus was dead, and deemed that he would return alive as soon as he had gone close up to the gates. He knew that he was not to sack the city neither with nor without himself, for his mother had often told him this when he had sat alone with her, and she had informed him of the counsels of great Jove. Now, however, she had not told him how great a disaster had befallen him in the death of the one who was far dearest to him of all his comrades.

The others still kept on charging one another round the body with their pointed spears and killing each other. Then would one say, "My friends, we can never again show our faces at the ships—better, and greatly better, that earth should open and swallow us here in this place, than that we should let the Trojans have the triumph of bearing off Patroclus to their city."

The Trojans also on their part spoke to one another saying, "Friends, though we fall to a man beside this body, let none shrink from fighting." With such words did they exhort each other. They fought and fought, and an iron clank rose through the void air to the brazen vault of heaven. The horses of the descendant of Aeacus stood out of the fight and wept when they heard that their driver had been laid low by the hand of murderous Hector. Automedon, valiant son of Diores, lashed them again and again; many a time did he speak kindly to them, and many a time did he upbraid them, but they would neither go back to the ships by the waters of the broad Hellespont, nor yet into battle among the Achaeans; they stood with their chariot stock still, as a pillar set over the tomb of

some dead man or woman, and bowed their heads to the ground. Hot tears fell from their eyes as they mourned the loss of their charioteer, and their noble manes drooped all wet from under the yokestraps on either side the yoke.

The son of Saturn saw them and took pity upon their sorrow. He wagged his head, and muttered to himself, saying, “Poor things, why did we give you to King Peleus who is a mortal, while you are yourselves ageless and immortal? Was it that you might share the sorrows that befall mankind? for of all creatures that live and move upon the earth there is none so pitiable as he is—still, Hector son of Priam shall drive neither you nor your chariot. I will not have it. It is enough that he should have the armour over which he vaunts so vainly. Furthermore I will give you strength of heart and limb to bear Automedon safely to the ships from battle, for I shall let the Trojans triumph still further, and go on killing till they reach the ships; whereon night shall fall and darkness overshadow the land.”

As he spoke he breathed heart and strength into the horses so that they shook the dust from out of their manes, and bore their chariot swiftly into the fight that raged between Trojans and Achaeans. Behind them fought Automedon full of sorrow for his comrade, as a vulture amid a flock of geese. In and out, and here and there, full speed he dashed amid the throng of the Trojans, but for all the fury of his pursuit he killed no man, for he could not wield his spear and keep his horses in hand when alone in the chariot; at last, however, a comrade, Alcimedon, son of Laerces son of Haemon caught sight of him and came up behind his chariot. “Automedon,” said he, “what god has put this folly into your heart and robbed you of your right mind, that you fight the Trojans in the front rank single-handed? He who was your comrade is slain, and Hector plumes himself on being armed in the armour of the descendant of Aeacus.”

Automedon son of Diores answered, “Alcimedon, there is no one else who can control and guide the immortal steeds so well as you can, save only Patroclus—while he was alive—peer of gods in counsel. Take then the whip and reins, while I go down from the car and fight.”

Alcimedon sprang on to the chariot, and caught up the whip and reins, while Automedon leaped from off the car. When Hector saw him he said to Aeneas who was near him, “Aeneas, counsellor of the mail-clad Trojans, I see the steeds of the fleet son of Aeacus come into battle with weak hands to drive them. I am sure, if you think well, that we might take them; they will not dare face us if we both attack them.”

The valiant son of Anchises was of the same mind, and the pair went right on, with their shoulders covered under shields of tough dry ox-hide, overlaid with much bronze. Chromius and Aretus went also with them, and their hearts beat high with hope that they might kill the men and capture the horses—fools that they were, for they were not to return scatheless from their meeting with Automedon, who prayed to father Jove and was forthwith filled with courage and strength abounding. He turned to his trusty comrade Alcimedon and said, “Alcimedon, keep your horses so close up that I may feel their breath upon my back; I doubt that we shall not stay Hector son of Priam till he has killed us and mounted behind the horses; he will then either spread panic among the ranks of the Achaeans, or himself be killed among the foremost.”

On this he cried out to the two Ajaxes and Menelaus, “Ajaxes captains of the Argives, and Menelaus, give the dead body over to them that are best able to defend it, and come to the rescue of us living; for Hector and Aeneas who are the two best men among the Trojans, are pressing us hard in the full tide of war. Nevertheless the issue lies on the lap of heaven, I will therefore hurl my spear and leave the rest to Jove.”

He poised and hurled as he spoke, whereon the spear struck the round shield of Aretus, and went right through it for the shield stayed it not, so that it was driven through his belt into the lower part of his belly. As when some sturdy youth, axe in hand, deals his blow behind the horns of an ox and severs the tendons at the back of its neck so that it springs forward and then drops, even so did Aretus give one bound and then fall on his back the spear quivering in his body till it made an end of him. Hector then aimed a spear at Automedon but he saw it coming and stooped forward to avoid it, so that it flew past him and the point stuck in the ground, while the butt-end went on quivering till Mars robbed it of its force. They would then have fought hand to hand with swords had not the two Ajaxes forced their way through the crowd when they heard their comrade calling, and parted them for all their fury—for Hector, Aeneas, and Chromius were afraid and drew back, leaving Aretus to lie there struck to the heart. Automedon, peer of fleet Mars, then stripped him of his armour and vaunted over him saying, “I have done little to assuage my sorrow for the son of Menoetius, for the man I have killed is not so good as he was.”

As he spoke he took the blood-stained spoils and laid them upon his chariot; then he mounted the car with his hands and feet all steeped in gore as a lion that has been gorging upon a bull.

And now the fierce groanful fight again raged about Patroclus, for Minerva came down from heaven and roused its fury by the command of far-seeing Jove, who had changed his mind and sent her to encourage the Danaans. As when Jove bends his bright bow in heaven in token to mankind either of war or of the chill storms that stay men from their labour and plague the flocks—even so, wrapped in such radiant raiment, did Minerva go in among the host and speak man by man to each. First she took the form and voice of Phoenix and spoke to Menelaus son of Atreus, who was standing near her. “Menelaus,” said she, “it will be shame and dishonour to you, if dogs tear the noble comrade of Achilles under the walls of Troy. Therefore be staunch, and urge your men to be so also.”

Menelaus answered, “Phoenix, my good old friend, may Minerva vouchsafe me strength and keep the darts from off me, for so shall I stand by Patroclus and defend him; his death has gone to my heart, but Hector is as a raging fire and deals his blows without ceasing, for Jove is now granting him a time of triumph.”

Minerva was pleased at his having named herself before any of the other gods. Therefore she put strength into his knees and shoulders, and made him as bold as a fly, which, though driven off will yet come again and bite if it can, so dearly does it love man’s blood—even so bold as this did she make him as he stood over Patroclus and threw his spear. Now there was among the Trojans a man named Podes, son of Eetion, who was both rich and valiant. Hector held him in the highest honour for he was his comrade and boon companion; the spear of Menelaus struck this man in the girdle just as he had turned in flight, and went right through him. Whereon he fell heavily forward, and Menelaus son of Atreus drew off his body from the Trojans into the ranks of his own people.

Apollo then went up to Hector and spurred him on to fight, in the likeness of Phaenops son of Asius who lived in Abydos and was the most favoured of all Hector’s guests. In his likeness Apollo said, “Hector, who of the Achaeans will fear you henceforward now that you have quailed before Menelaus who has ever been rated poorly as a soldier? Yet he has now got a corpse away from the Trojans single-handed, and has slain your own true comrade, a man brave among the foremost, Podes son of Eetion.”

A dark cloud of grief fell upon Hector as he heard, and he made his way to the front clad in full armour. Thereon the son of Saturn seized his bright tasselled aegis, and veiled Ida in cloud: he sent forth his lightnings and his thunders, and as he shook his aegis he gave victory to the Trojans and routed the Achaeans.

The panic was begun by Peneleos the Boeotian, for while keeping his face turned ever towards the foe he had been hit with a spear on the upper part of the shoulder; a spear thrown by Polydamas had grazed the top of the bone, for Polydamas had come up to him and struck him from close at hand. Then Hector in close combat struck Leitus son of noble Alectryon in the hand by the wrist, and disabled him from fighting further. He looked about him in dismay, knowing that never again should he wield spear in battle with the Trojans. While Hector was in pursuit of Leitus, Idomeneus struck him on the breastplate over his chest near the nipple; but the spear broke in the shaft, and the Trojans cheered aloud. Hector then aimed at Idomeneus son of Deucalion as he was standing on his chariot, and very narrowly missed him, but the spear hit Coiranus, a follower and charioteer of Meriones who had come with him from Lyctus. Idomeneus had left the ships on foot and would have afforded a great triumph to the Trojans if Coiranus had not driven quickly up to him, he therefore brought life and rescue to Idomeneus, but himself fell by the hand of murderous Hector. For Hector hit him on the jaw under the ear; the end of the spear drove out his teeth and cut his tongue in two pieces, so that he fell from his chariot and let the reins fall to the ground. Meriones gathered them up from the ground and took them into his own hands, then he said to Idomeneus, “Lay on, till you get back to the ships, for you must see that the day is no longer ours.”

On this Idomeneus lashed the horses to the ships, for fear had taken hold upon him.

Ajax and Menelaus noted how Jove had turned the scale in favour of the Trojans, and Ajax was first to speak. “Alas,” said he, “even a fool may see that father Jove is helping the Trojans. All their weapons strike home; no matter whether it be a brave man or a coward that hurls them, Jove speeds all alike, whereas ours fall each one of them without effect. What, then, will be best both as regards rescuing the body, and our return to the joy of our friends who will be grieving as they look hitherwards; for they will make sure that nothing can now check the terrible hands of Hector, and that he will fling himself upon our ships. I wish that some one would go and tell the son of Peleus at once, for I do not think he can have yet heard the sad news that the dearest of his friends has fallen. But I can see not a man among the Achaeans to send, for they and their chariots are alike hidden in darkness. O father Jove, lift this cloud from over the sons of the Achaeans; make heaven serene, and let us see; if you will that we perish, let us fall at any rate by daylight.”

Father Jove heard him and had compassion upon his tears. Forthwith he chased away the cloud of darkness, so that the sun shone out and all the fighting was revealed. Ajax then said to Menelaus, “Look, Menelaus, and if Antilochus son of Nestor be still living, send him at once to tell Achilles that by far the dearest to him of all his comrades has fallen.”

Menelaus heeded his words and went his way as a lion from a stockyard—the lion is tired of attacking the men and hounds, who keep watch the whole night through and will not let him feast on the fat of their herd. In his lust of meat he makes straight at them but in vain, for darts from strong hands assail him, and burning brands which daunt him for all his hunger, so in the morning he slinks sulkily away—even so did Menelaus sorely against his will leave Patroclus, in great fear lest the Achaeans should be driven back in rout and let him fall into the hands of the foe. He charged Meriones and the two Ajaxes straitly saying, “Ajaxes and Meriones, leaders of the Argives, now indeed remember how good Patroclus was; he was ever courteous while alive, bear it in mind now that he is dead.”

With this Menelaus left them, looking round him as keenly as an eagle, whose sight they say is keener than that of any other bird—however high he may be in the heavens, not a hare that runs can escape him by crouching under bush or thicket, for he will swoop down upon it and make an end of it—even so, O Menelaus, did your keen eyes range round the mighty host of your followers to see if you could find the son of Nestor still alive. Presently Menelaus saw him on the extreme left of the battle cheering on his men and exhorting them to fight boldly. Menelaus went up to him and said, “Antilochus, come here and listen to sad news, which I would indeed were untrue. You must see with your own eyes that heaven is heaping calamity upon the Danaans, and giving victory to the Trojans. Patroclus has fallen, who was the bravest of the Achaeans, and sorely will the Danaans miss him. Run instantly to the ships and tell Achilles, that he may come to rescue the body and bear it to the ships. As for the armour, Hector already has it.”

Antilochus was struck with horror. For a long time he was speechless; his eyes filled with tears and he could find no utterance, but he did as Menelaus had said, and set off running as soon as he had given his armour to a comrade, Laodocus, who was wheeling his horses round, close beside him.

Thus, then, did he run weeping from the field, to carry the bad news to Achilles son of Peleus. Nor were you, O Menelaus, minded to succour his harassed comrades, when Antilochus had left the Pylians—and greatly did they miss him—but he sent them noble Thrasymedes, and himself went back to Patroclus. He came running up to the two Ajaxes and said, “I have sent Antilochus to the ships to tell Achilles, but rage against Hector as he may, he cannot come, for he cannot fight without armour. What then will be our best plan both as regards rescuing the dead, and our own escape from death amid the battle-cries of the Trojans?”

Ajax answered, “Menelaus, you have said well: do you, then, and Meriones stoop down, raise the body, and bear it out of the fray, while we two behind you keep off Hector and the Trojans, one in heart as in name, and long used to fighting side by side with one another.”

On this Menelaus and Meriones took the dead man in their arms and lifted him high aloft with a great effort. The Trojan host raised a hue and cry behind them when they saw the Achaeans bearing the body away, and flew after them like hounds attacking a wounded boar at the loo of a band of young huntsmen. For a while the hounds fly at him as though they would tear him in pieces, but now and again he turns on them in a fury, scaring and scattering them in all directions—even so did the Trojans for a while charge in a body, striking with sword and with spears pointed at both the ends, but when the two Ajaxes faced them and stood at bay, they would turn pale and no man dared press on to fight further about the dead.

In this wise did the two heroes strain every nerve to bear the body to the ships out of the fight. The battle raged round them like fierce flames that when once kindled spread like wildfire over a city, and the houses fall in the glare of its burning—even such was the roar and tramp of men and horses that pursued them as they bore Patroclus from the field. Or as mules that put forth all their strength to draw some beam or great piece of ship’s timber down a rough mountain-track, and they pant and sweat as they go—even so did Menelaus and pant and sweat as they bore the body of Patroclus. Behind them the two Ajaxes held stoutly out. As some wooded mountain-spur that stretches across a plain will turn water and check the flow even of a great river, nor is there any stream strong enough to break through it—even so did the two Ajaxes face the Trojans and stem the tide of their fighting though they kept pouring on towards them and foremost among them all was Aeneas son of Anchises with valiant Hector. As a flock of daws or starlings fall to screaming and chattering when they see a falcon, foe to all small birds, come soaring near them, even so did the Achaean youth raise a babel of cries as they fled before Aeneas and Hector, unmindful of their former prowess. In the rout of the Danaans much goodly armour fell round about the trench, and of fighting there was no end.

This page titled 3.12.1.17: Book XVII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.18: Book XVIII

The grief of Achilles over Patroclus—The visit of Thetis to Vulcan and the armour that he made for Achilles.

Thus then did they fight as it were a flaming fire. Meanwhile the fleet runner Antilochus, who had been sent as messenger, reached Achilles, and found him sitting by his tall ships and boding that which was indeed too surely true. “Alas,” said he to himself in the heaviness of his heart, “why are the Achaeans again scouring the plain and flocking towards the ships? Heaven grant the gods be not now bringing that sorrow upon me of which my mother Thetis spoke, saying that while I was yet alive the bravest of the Myrmidons should fall before the Trojans, and see the light of the sun no longer. I fear the brave son of Menoetius has fallen through his own daring and yet I bade him return to the ships as soon as he had driven back those that were bringing fire against them, and not join battle with Hector.”

As he was thus pondering, the son of Nestor came up to him and told his sad tale, weeping bitterly the while. “Alas,” he cried, “son of noble Peleus, I bring you bad tidings, would indeed that they were untrue. Patroclus has fallen, and a fight is raging about his naked body—for Hector holds his armour.”

A dark cloud of grief fell upon Achilles as he listened. He filled both hands with dust from off the ground, and poured it over his head, disfiguring his comely face, and letting the refuse settle over his shirt so fair and new. He flung himself down all huge and hugely at full length, and tore his hair with his hands. The bondswomen whom Achilles and Patroclus had taken captive screamed aloud for grief, beating their breasts, and with their limbs failing them for sorrow. Antilochus bent over him the while, weeping and holding both his hands as he lay groaning for he feared that he might plunge a knife into his own throat. Then Achilles gave a loud cry and his mother heard him as she was sitting in the depths of the sea by the old man her father, whereon she screamed, and all the goddesses daughters of Nereus that dwelt at the bottom of the sea, came gathering round her. There were Glauce, Thalia and Cymodoce, Nesaia, Speo, Thoe and dark-eyed Halie, Cymothoe, Actaea and Limnorea, Melite, Iaera, Amphithoe and Agave, Doto and Proto, Pherusa and Dynamene, Dexamene, Amphinome and Callianeira, Doris, Panope, and the famous sea-nymph Galatea, Nemertes, Apseudes and Callianassa. There were also Clymene, Ianeira and Ianassa, Maera, Oreithuia and Amatheia of the lovely locks, with other Nereids who dwell in the depths of the sea. The crystal cave was filled with their multitude and they all beat their breasts while Thetis led them in their lament.

“Listen,” she cried, “sisters, daughters of Nereus, that you may hear the burden of my sorrows. Alas, woe is me, woe in that I have borne the most glorious of offspring. I bore him fair and strong, hero among heroes, and he shot up as a sapling; I tended him as a plant in a goodly garden, and sent him with his ships to Ilius to fight the Trojans, but never shall I welcome him back to the house of Peleus. So long as he lives to look upon the light of the sun he is in heaviness, and though I go to him I cannot help him. Nevertheless I will go, that I may see my dear son and learn what sorrow has befallen him though he is still holding aloof from battle.”

She left the cave as she spoke, while the others followed weeping after, and the waves opened a path before them. When they reached the rich plain of Troy, they came up out of the sea in a long line on to the sands, at the place where the ships of the Myrmidons were drawn up in close order round the tents of Achilles. His mother went up to him as he lay groaning; she laid her hand upon his head and spoke piteously, saying, “My son, why are you thus weeping? What sorrow has now befallen you? Tell me; hide it not from me. Surely Jove has granted you the prayer you made him, when you lifted up your hands and besought him that the Achaeans might all of them be pent up at their ships, and rue it bitterly in that you were no longer with them.”

Achilles groaned and answered, “Mother, Olympian Jove has indeed vouchsafed me the fulfilment of my prayer, but what boots it to me, seeing that my dear comrade Patroclus has fallen—he whom I valued more than all others, and loved as dearly as my own life? I have lost him; aye, and Hector when he had killed him stripped the wondrous armour, so glorious to behold, which the gods gave to Peleus when they laid you in the couch of a mortal man. Would that you were still dwelling among the immortal sea-nymphs, and that Peleus had taken to himself some mortal bride. For now you shall have grief infinite by reason of the death of that son whom you can never welcome home—nay, I will not live nor go about among mankind unless Hector fall by my spear, and thus pay me for having slain Patroclus son of Menoetius.”

Thetis wept and answered, “Then, my son, is your end near at hand—for your own death awaits you full soon after that of Hector.”

Then said Achilles in his great grief, “I would die here and now, in that I could not save my comrade. He has fallen far from home, and in his hour of need my hand was not there to help him. What is there for me? Return to my own land I shall not, and I have

brought no saving neither to Patroclus nor to my other comrades of whom so many have been slain by mighty Hector; I stay here by my ships a bootless burden upon the earth, I, who in fight have no peer among the Achaeans, though in council there are better than I. Therefore, perish strife both from among gods and men, and anger, wherein even a righteous man will harden his heart—which rises up in the soul of a man like smoke, and the taste thereof is sweeter than drops of honey. Even so has Agamemnon angered me. And yet—so be it, for it is over; I will force my soul into subjection as I needs must; I will go; I will pursue Hector who has slain him whom I loved so dearly, and will then abide my doom when it may please Jove and the other gods to send it. Even Hercules, the best beloved of Jove—even he could not escape the hand of death, but fate and Juno's fierce anger laid him low, as I too shall lie when I am dead if a like doom awaits me. Till then I will win fame, and will bid Trojan and Dardanian women wring tears from their tender cheeks with both their hands in the grievousness of their great sorrow; thus shall they know that he who has held aloof so long will hold aloof no longer. Hold me not back, therefore, in the love you bear me, for you shall not move me."

Then silver-footed Thetis answered, "My son, what you have said is true. It is well to save your comrades from destruction, but your armour is in the hands of the Trojans; Hector bears it in triumph upon his own shoulders. Full well I know that his vaunt shall not be lasting, for his end is close at hand; go not, however, into the press of battle till you see me return hither; to-morrow at break of day I shall be here, and will bring you goodly armour from King Vulcan."

On this she left her brave son, and as she turned away she said to the sea-nymphs her sisters, "Dive into the bosom of the sea and go to the house of the old sea-god my father. Tell him everything; as for me, I will go to the cunning workman Vulcan on high Olympus, and ask him to provide my son with a suit of splendid armour."

When she had so said, they dived forthwith beneath the waves, while silver-footed Thetis went her way that she might bring the armour for her son.

Thus, then, did her feet bear the goddess to Olympus, and meanwhile the Achaeans were flying with loud cries before murderous Hector till they reached the ships and the Hellespont, and they could not draw the body of Mars's servant Patroclus out of reach of the weapons that were showered upon him, for Hector son of Priam with his host and horsemen had again caught up to him like the flame of a fiery furnace; thrice did brave Hector seize him by the feet, striving with might and main to draw him away and calling loudly on the Trojans, and thrice did the two Ajaxes, clothed in valour as with a garment, beat him from off the body; but all undaunted he would now charge into the thick of the fight, and now again he would stand still and cry aloud, but he would give no ground. As upland shepherds that cannot chase some famished lion from a carcase, even so could not the two Ajaxes scare Hector son of Priam from the body of Patroclus.

And now he would even have dragged it off and have won imperishable glory, had not Iris fleet as the wind, winged her way as messenger from Olympus to the son of Peleus and bidden him arm. She came secretly without the knowledge of Jove and of the other gods, for Juno sent her, and when she had got close to him she said, "Up, son of Peleus, mightiest of all mankind; rescue Patroclus about whom this fearful fight is now raging by the ships. Men are killing one another, the Danaans in defence of the dead body, while the Trojans are trying to hale it away, and take it to windy Ilius: Hector is the most furious of them all; he is for cutting the head from the body and fixing it on the stakes of the wall. Up, then, and bide here no longer; shrink from the thought that Patroclus may become meat for the dogs of Troy. Shame on you, should his body suffer any kind of outrage."

And Achilles said, "Iris, which of the gods was it that sent you to me?"

Iris answered, "It was Juno the royal spouse of Jove, but the son of Saturn does not know of my coming, nor yet does any other of the immortals who dwell on the snowy summits of Olympus."

Then fleet Achilles answered her saying, "How can I go up into the battle? They have my armour. My mother forbade me to arm till I should see her come, for she promised to bring me goodly armour from Vulcan; I know no man whose arms I can put on, save only the shield of Ajax son of Telamon, and he surely must be fighting in the front rank and wielding his spear about the body of dead Patroclus."

Iris said, "We know that your armour has been taken, but go as you are; go to the deep trench and show yourself before the Trojans, that they may fear you and cease fighting. Thus will the fainting sons of the Achaeans gain some brief breathing-time, which in battle may hardly be."

Iris left him when she had so spoken. But Achilles dear to Jove arose, and Minerva flung her tasselled aegis round his strong shoulders; she crowned his head with a halo of golden cloud from which she kindled a glow of gleaming fire. As the smoke that goes up into heaven from some city that is being beleaguered on an island far out at sea—all day long do men sally from the city and fight their hardest, and at the going down of the sun the line of beacon-fires blazes forth, flaring high for those that dwell near them to behold, if so be that they may come with their ships and succour them—even so did the light flare from the head of Achilles, as he stood by the trench, going beyond the wall—but he did not join the Achaeans for he heeded the charge which his mother laid upon him.

There did he stand and shout aloud. Minerva also raised her voice from afar, and spread terror unspeakable among the Trojans. Ringing as the note of a trumpet that sounds alarm then the foe is at the gates of a city, even so brazen was the voice of the son of Aeacus, and when the Trojans heard its clarion tones they were dismayed; the horses turned back with their chariots for they boded mischief, and their drivers were awe-struck by the steady flame which the grey-eyed goddess had kindled above the head of the great son of Peleus.

Thrice did Achilles raise his loud cry as he stood by the trench, and thrice were the Trojans and their brave allies thrown into confusion; whereon twelve of their noblest champions fell beneath the wheels of their chariots and perished by their own spears. The Achaeans to their great joy then drew Patroclus out of reach of the weapons, and laid him on a litter: his comrades stood mourning round him, and among them fleet Achilles who wept bitterly as he saw his true comrade lying dead upon his bier. He had sent him out with horses and chariots into battle, but his return he was not to welcome.

Then Juno sent the busy sun, loth though he was, into the waters of Oceanus; so he set, and the Achaeans had rest from the tug and turmoil of war.

Now the Trojans when they had come out of the fight, unyoked their horses and gathered in assembly before preparing their supper. They kept their feet, nor would any dare to sit down, for fear had fallen upon them all because Achilles had shown himself after having held aloof so long from battle. Polydamas son of Panthous was first to speak, a man of judgement, who alone among them could look both before and after. He was comrade to Hector, and they had been born upon the same night; with all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:—

“Look to it well, my friends; I would urge you to go back now to your city and not wait here by the ships till morning, for we are far from our walls. So long as this man was at enmity with Agamemnon the Achaeans were easier to deal with, and I would have gladly camped by the ships in the hope of taking them; but now I go in great fear of the fleet son of Peleus; he is so daring that he will never bide here on the plain whereon the Trojans and Achaeans fight with equal valour, but he will try to storm our city and carry off our women. Do then as I say, and let us retreat. For this is what will happen. The darkness of night will for a time stay the son of Peleus, but if he find us here in the morning when he sallies forth in full armour, we shall have knowledge of him in good earnest. Glad indeed will he be who can escape and get back to Ilius, and many a Trojan will become meat for dogs and vultures may I never live to hear it. If we do as I say, little though we may like it, we shall have strength in counsel during the night, and the great gates with the doors that close them will protect the city. At dawn we can arm and take our stand on the walls; he will then rue it if he sallies from the ships to fight us. He will go back when he has given his horses their fill of being driven all whithers under our walls, and will be in no mind to try and force his way into the city. Neither will he ever sack it, dogs shall devour him ere he do so.”

Hector looked fiercely at him and answered, “Polydamas, your words are not to my liking in that you bid us go back and be pent within the city. Have you not had enough of being cooped up behind walls? In the old-days the city of Priam was famous the whole world over for its wealth of gold and bronze, but our treasures are wasted out of our houses, and much goods have been sold away to Phrygia and fair Meonia, for the hand of Jove has been laid heavily upon us. Now, therefore, that the son of scheming Saturn has vouchsafed me to win glory here and to hem the Achaeans in at their ships, prate no more in this fool’s wise among the people. You will have no man with you; it shall not be; do all of you as I now say;—take your suppers in your companies throughout the host, and keep your watches and be wakeful every man of you. If any Trojan is uneasy about his possessions, let him gather them and give them out among the people. Better let these, rather than the Achaeans, have them. At daybreak we will arm and fight about the ships; granted that Achilles has again come forward to defend them, let it be as he will, but it shall go hard with him. I shall not shun him, but will fight him, to fall or conquer. The god of war deals out like measure to all, and the slayer may yet be slain.”

Thus spoke Hector; and the Trojans, fools that they were, shouted in applause, for Pallas Minerva had robbed them of their understanding. They gave ear to Hector with his evil counsel, but the wise words of Polydamas no man would heed. They took their supper throughout the host, and meanwhile through the whole night the Achaeans mourned Patroclus, and the son of Peleus led them in their lament. He laid his murderous hands upon the breast of his comrade, groaning again and again as a bearded lion when a man who was chasing deer has robbed him of his young in some dense forest; when the lion comes back he is furious, and searches dingle and dell to track the hunter if he can find him, for he is mad with rage—even so with many a sigh did Achilles speak among the Myrmidons saying, “Alas! vain were the words with which I cheered the hero Menoetius in his own house; I said that I would bring his brave son back again to Opoeis after he had sacked Ilius and taken his share of the spoils—but Jove does not give all men their heart’s desire. The same soil shall be reddened here at Troy by the blood of us both, for I too shall never be welcomed home by the old knight Peleus, nor by my mother Thetis, but even in this place shall the earth cover me. Nevertheless, O Patroclus, now that I am left behind you, I will not bury you, till I have brought hither the head and armour of mighty Hector who has slain you. Twelve noble sons of Trojans will I behead before your bier to avenge you; till I have done so you shall lie as you are by the ships, and fair women of Troy and Dardanus, whom we have taken with spear and strength of arm when we sacked men’s goodly cities, shall weep over you both night and day.”

Then Achilles told his men to set a large tripod upon the fire that they might wash the clotted gore from off Patroclus. Thereon they set a tripod full of bath water on to a clear fire: they threw sticks on to it to make it blaze, and the water became hot as the flame played about the belly of the tripod. When the water in the cauldron was boiling they washed the body, anointed it with oil, and closed its wounds with ointment that had been kept nine years. Then they laid it on a bier and covered it with a linen cloth from head to foot, and over this they laid a fair white robe. Thus all night long did the Myrmidons gather round Achilles to mourn Patroclus.

Then Jove said to Juno his sister-wife, “So, Queen Juno, you have gained your end, and have roused fleet Achilles. One would think that the Achaeans were of your own flesh and blood.”

And Juno answered, “Dread son of Saturn, why should you say this thing? May not a man though he be only mortal and knows less than we do, do what he can for another person? And shall not I—foremost of all goddesses both by descent and as wife to you who reign in heaven—devise evil for the Trojans if I am angry with them?”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Thetis came to the house of Vulcan, imperishable, star-bespangled, fairest of the abodes in heaven, a house of bronze wrought by the lame god’s own hands. She found him busy with his bellows, sweating and hard at work, for he was making twenty tripods that were to stand by the wall of his house, and he set wheels of gold under them all that they might go of their own selves to the assemblies of the gods, and come back again—marvels indeed to see. They were finished all but the ears of cunning workmanship which yet remained to be fixed to them: these he was now fixing, and he was hammering at the rivets. While he was thus at work silver-footed Thetis came to the house. Charis, of graceful head-dress, wife to the far-famed lame god, came towards her as soon as she saw her, and took her hand in her own, saying, “Why have you come to our house, Thetis, honoured and ever welcome—for you do not visit us often? Come inside and let me set refreshment before you.”

The goddess led the way as she spoke, and bade Thetis sit on a richly decorated seat inlaid with silver; there was a footstool also under her feet. Then she called Vulcan and said, “Vulcan, come here, Thetis wants you”; and the far-famed lame god answered, “Then it is indeed an august and honoured goddess who has come here; she it was that took care of me when I was suffering from the heavy fall which I had through my cruel mother’s anger—for she would have got rid of me because I was lame. It would have gone hardly with me had not Eurynome, daughter of the ever-encircling waters of Oceanus, and Thetis, taken me to their bosom. Nine years did I stay with them, and many beautiful works in bronze, brooches, spiral armlets, cups, and chains, did I make for them in their cave, with the roaring waters of Oceanus foaming as they rushed ever past it; and no one knew, neither of gods nor men, save only Thetis and Eurynome who took care of me. If, then, Thetis has come to my house I must make her due requital for having saved me; entertain her, therefore, with all hospitality, while I put by my bellows and all my tools.”

On this the mighty monster hobbled off from his anvil, his thin legs plying lustily under him. He set the bellows away from the fire, and gathered his tools into a silver chest. Then he took a sponge and washed his face and hands, his shaggy chest and brawny neck; he donned his shirt, grasped his strong staff, and limped towards the door. There were golden handmaids also who worked for him, and were like real young women, with sense and reason, voice also and strength, and all the learning of the immortals; these busied themselves as the king bade them, while he drew near to Thetis, seated her upon a goodly seat, and took her hand in his own,

saying, “Why have you come to our house, Thetis honoured and ever welcome—for you do not visit us often? Say what you want, and I will do it for you at once if I can, and if it can be done at all.”

Thetis wept and answered, “Vulcan, is there another goddess in Olympus whom the son of Saturn has been pleased to try with so much affliction as he has me? Me alone of the marine goddesses did he make subject to a mortal husband, Peleus son of Aeacus, and sorely against my will did I submit to the embraces of one who was but mortal, and who now stays at home worn out with age. Neither is this all. Heaven vouchsafed me a son, hero among heroes, and he shot up as a sapling. I tended him as a plant in a goodly garden and sent him with his ships to Ilius to fight the Trojans, but never shall I welcome him back to the house of Peleus. So long as he lives to look upon the light of the sun, he is in heaviness, and though I go to him I cannot help him; King Agamemnon has made him give up the maiden whom the sons of the Achaeans had awarded him, and he wastes with sorrow for her sake. Then the Trojans hemmed the Achaeans in at their ships’ sterns and would not let them come forth; the elders, therefore, of the Argives besought Achilles and offered him great treasure, whereon he refused to bring deliverance to them himself, but put his own armour on Patroclus and sent him into the fight with much people after him. All day long they fought by the Scaean gates and would have taken the city there and then, had not Apollo vouchsafed glory to Hector and slain the valiant son of Menoetius after he had done the Trojans much evil. Therefore I am suppliant at your knees if haply you may be pleased to provide my son, whose end is near at hand, with helmet and shield, with goodly greaves fitted with ancle-clasps, and with a breastplate, for he lost his own when his true comrade fell at the hands of the Trojans, and he now lies stretched on earth in the bitterness of his soul.”

And Vulcan answered, “Take heart, and be no more disquieted about this matter; would that I could hide him from death’s sight when his hour is come, so surely as I can find him armour that shall amaze the eyes of all who behold it.”

When he had so said he left her and went to his bellows, turning them towards the fire and bidding them do their office. Twenty bellows blew upon the melting-pots, and they blew blasts of every kind, some fierce to help him when he had need of them, and others less strong as Vulcan willed it in the course of his work. He threw tough copper into the fire, and tin, with silver and gold; he set his great anvil on its block, and with one hand grasped his mighty hammer while he took the tongs in the other.

First he shaped the shield so great and strong, adorning it all over and binding it round with a gleaming circuit in three layers; and the baldric was made of silver. He made the shield in five thicknesses, and with many a wonder did his cunning hand enrich it.

He wrought the earth, the heavens, and the sea; the moon also at her full and the untiring sun, with all the signs that glorify the face of heaven—the Pleiads, the Hyads, huge Orion, and the Bear, which men also call the Wain and which turns round ever in one place, facing Orion, and alone never dips into the stream of Oceanus.

He wrought also two cities, fair to see and busy with the hum of men. In the one were weddings and wedding-feasts, and they were going about the city with brides whom they were escorting by torchlight from their chambers. Loud rose the cry of Hymen, and the youths danced to the music of flute and lyre, while the women stood each at her house door to see them.

Meanwhile the people were gathered in assembly, for there was a quarrel, and two men were wrangling about the blood-money for a man who had been killed, the one saying before the people that he had paid damages in full, and the other that he had not been paid. Each was trying to make his own case good, and the people took sides, each man backing the side that he had taken; but the heralds kept them back, and the elders sate on their seats of stone in a solemn circle, holding the staves which the heralds had put into their hands. Then they rose and each in his turn gave judgement, and there were two talents laid down, to be given to him whose judgement should be deemed the fairest.

About the other city there lay encamped two hosts in gleaming armour, and they were divided whether to sack it, or to spare it and accept the half of what it contained. But the men of the city would not yet consent, and armed themselves for a surprise; their wives and little children kept guard upon the walls, and with them were the men who were past fighting through age; but the others sallied forth with Mars and Pallas Minerva at their head—both of them wrought in gold and clad in golden raiment, great and fair with their armour as befitting gods, while they that followed were smaller. When they reached the place where they would lay their ambush, it was on a riverbed to which live stock of all kinds would come from far and near to water; here, then, they lay concealed, clad in full armour. Some way off them there were two scouts who were on the look-out for the coming of sheep or cattle, which presently came, followed by two shepherds who were playing on their pipes, and had not so much as a thought of danger. When those who were in ambush saw this, they cut off the flocks and herds and killed the shepherds. Meanwhile the besiegers, when they heard much noise among the cattle as they sat in council, sprang to their horses, and made with all speed towards them; when they reached them they set battle in array by the banks of the river, and the hosts aimed their bronze-shod spears at one another. With

them were Strife and Riot, and fell Fate who was dragging three men after her, one with a fresh wound, and the other unwounded, while the third was dead, and she was dragging him along by his heel: and her robe was bedrabbled in men's blood. They went in and out with one another and fought as though they were living people haling away one another's dead.

He wrought also a fair fallow field, large and thrice ploughed already. Many men were working at the plough within it, turning their oxen to and fro, furrow after furrow. Each time that they turned on reaching the headland a man would come up to them and give them a cup of wine, and they would go back to their furrows looking forward to the time when they should again reach the headland. The part that they had ploughed was dark behind them, so that the field, though it was of gold, still looked as if it were being ploughed—very curious to behold.

He wrought also a field of harvest corn, and the reapers were reaping with sharp sickles in their hands. Swathe after swathe fell to the ground in a straight line behind them, and the binders bound them in bands of twisted straw. There were three binders, and behind them there were boys who gathered the cut corn in armfuls and kept on bringing them to be bound: among them all the owner of the land stood by in silence and was glad. The servants were getting a meal ready under an oak, for they had sacrificed a great ox, and were busy cutting him up, while the women were making a porridge of much white barley for the labourers' dinner.

He wrought also a vineyard, golden and fair to see, and the vines were loaded with grapes. The bunches overhead were black, but the vines were trained on poles of silver. He ran a ditch of dark metal all round it, and fenced it with a fence of tin; there was only one path to it, and by this the vintagers went when they would gather the vintage. Youths and maidens all blithe and full of glee, carried the luscious fruit in plaited baskets; and with them there went a boy who made sweet music with his lyre, and sang the Linos-song with his clear boyish voice.

He wrought also a herd of horned cattle. He made the cows of gold and tin, and they lowed as they came full speed out of the yards to go and feed among the waving reeds that grow by the banks of the river. Along with the cattle there went four shepherds, all of them in gold, and their nine fleet dogs went with them. Two terrible lions had fastened on a bellowing bull that was with the foremost cows, and bellow as he might they haled him, while the dogs and men gave chase: the lions tore through the bull's thick hide and were gorging on his blood and bowels, but the herdsmen were afraid to do anything, and only hounded on their dogs; the dogs dared not fasten on the lions but stood by barking and keeping out of harm's way.

The god wrought also a pasture in a fair mountain dell, and a large flock of sheep, with a homestead and huts, and sheltered sheepfolds.

Furthermore he wrought a green, like that which Daedalus once made in Cnossus for lovely Ariadne. Hereon there danced youths and maidens whom all would woo, with their hands on one another's wrists. The maidens wore robes of light linen, and the youths well woven shirts that were slightly oiled. The girls were crowned with garlands, while the young men had daggers of gold that hung by silver baldrics; sometimes they would dance deftly in a ring with merry twinkling feet, as it were a potter sitting at his work and making trial of his wheel to see whether it will run, and sometimes they would go all in line with one another, and much people was gathered joyously about the green. There was a bard also to sing to them and play his lyre, while two tumblers went about performing in the midst of them when the man struck up with his tune.

All round the outermost rim of the shield he set the mighty stream of the river Oceanus.

Then when he had fashioned the shield so great and strong, he made a breastplate also that shone brighter than fire. He made a helmet, close fitting to the brow, and richly worked, with a golden plume overhanging it; and he made greaves also of beaten tin.

Lastly, when the famed lame god had made all the armour, he took it and set it before the mother of Achilles; whereon she darted like a falcon from the snowy summits of Olympus and bore away the gleaming armour from the house of Vulcan.

This page titled 3.12.1.18: Book XVIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.19: Book XIX

Achilles is reconciled with Agamemnon, puts on the armour which Vulcan had made him, and goes out to fight.

Now when Dawn in robe of saffron was hasting from the streams of Oceanus, to bring light to mortals and immortals, Thetis reached the ships with the armour that the god had given her. She found her son fallen about the body of Patroclus and weeping bitterly. Many also of his followers were weeping round him, but when the goddess came among them she clasped his hand in her own, saying, “My son, grieve as we may we must let this man lie, for it is by heaven’s will that he has fallen; now, therefore, accept from Vulcan this rich and goodly armour, which no man has ever yet borne upon his shoulders.”

As she spoke she set the armour before Achilles, and it rang out bravely as she did so. The Myrmidons were struck with awe, and none dared look full at it, for they were afraid; but Achilles was roused to still greater fury, and his eyes gleamed with a fierce light, for he was glad when he handled the splendid present which the god had made him. Then, as soon as he had satisfied himself with looking at it, he said to his mother, “Mother, the god has given me armour, meet handiwork for an immortal and such as no-one living could have fashioned; I will now arm, but I much fear that flies will settle upon the son of Menoetius and breed worms about his wounds, so that his body, now he is dead, will be disfigured and the flesh will rot.”

Silver-footed Thetis answered, “My son, be not disquieted about this matter. I will find means to protect him from the swarms of noisome flies that prey on the bodies of men who have been killed in battle. He may lie for a whole year, and his flesh shall still be as sound as ever, or even sounder. Call, therefore, the Achaean heroes in assembly; unsay your anger against Agamemnon; arm at once, and fight with might and main.”

As she spoke she put strength and courage into his heart, and she then dropped ambrosia and red nectar into the wounds of Patroclus, that his body might suffer no change.

Then Achilles went out upon the seashore, and with a loud cry called on the Achaean heroes. On this even those who as yet had stayed always at the ships, the pilots and helmsmen, and even the stewards who were about the ships and served out rations, all came to the place of assembly because Achilles had shown himself after having held aloof so long from fighting. Two sons of Mars, Ulysses and the son of Tydeus, came limping, for their wounds still pained them; nevertheless they came, and took their seats in the front row of the assembly. Last of all came Agamemnon, king of men, he too wounded, for Coon son of Antenor had struck him with a spear in battle.

When the Achaeans were got together Achilles rose and said, “Son of Atreus, surely it would have been better alike for both you and me, when we two were in such high anger about Briseis, surely it would have been better, had Diana’s arrow slain her at the ships on the day when I took her after having sacked Lyrnessus. For so, many an Achaean the less would have bitten dust before the foe in the days of my anger. It has been well for Hector and the Trojans, but the Achaeans will long indeed remember our quarrel. Now, however, let it be, for it is over. If we have been angry, necessity has schooled our anger. I put it from me: I dare not nurse it for ever; therefore, bid the Achaeans arm forthwith that I may go out against the Trojans, and learn whether they will be in a mind to sleep by the ships or no. Glad, I ween, will he be to rest his knees who may fly my spear when I wield it.”

Thus did he speak, and the Achaeans rejoiced in that he had put away his anger.

Then Agamemnon spoke, rising in his place, and not going into the middle of the assembly. “Danaan heroes,” said he, “servants of Mars, it is well to listen when a man stands up to speak, and it is not seemly to interrupt him, or it will go hard even with a practised speaker. Who can either hear or speak in an uproar? Even the finest orator will be disconcerted by it. I will expound to the son of Peleus, and do you other Achaeans heed me and mark me well. Often have the Achaeans spoken to me of this matter and upbraided me, but it was not I that did it: Jove, and Fate, and Erinys that walks in darkness struck me mad when we were assembled on the day that I took from Achilles the meed that had been awarded to him. What could I do? All things are in the hand of heaven, and Folly, eldest of Jove’s daughters, shuts men’s eyes to their destruction. She walks delicately, not on the solid earth, but hovers over the heads of men to make them stumble or to ensnare them.

“Time was when she fooled Jove himself, who they say is greatest whether of gods or men; for Juno, woman though she was, beguiled him on the day when Alcmena was to bring forth mighty Hercules in the fair city of Thebes. He told it out among the gods saying, ‘Hear me, all gods and goddesses, that I may speak even as I am minded; this day shall an Ilithuia, helper of women who are in labour, bring a man child into the world who shall be lord over all that dwell about him who are of my blood and lineage.’

Then said Juno all crafty and full of guile, ‘You will play false, and will not hold to your word. Swear me, O Olympian, swear me a great oath, that he who shall this day fall between the feet of a woman, shall be lord over all that dwell about him who are of your blood and lineage.’

“Thus she spoke, and Jove suspected her not, but swore the great oath, to his much ruing thereafter. For Juno darted down from the high summit of Olympus, and went in haste to Achaean Argos where she knew that the noble wife of Sthenelus son of Perseus then was. She being with child and in her seventh month, Juno brought the child to birth though there was a month still wanting, but she stayed the offspring of Alcmena, and kept back the Ilithuiae. Then she went to tell Jove the son of Saturn, and said, ‘Father Jove, lord of the lightning—I have a word for your ear. There is a fine child born this day, Eurystheus, son to Sthenelus the son of Perseus; he is of your lineage; it is well, therefore, that he should reign over the Argives.’

“On this Jove was stung to the very quick, and in his rage he caught Folly by the hair, and swore a great oath that never should she again invade starry heaven and Olympus, for she was the bane of all. Then he whirled her round with a twist of his hand, and flung her down from heaven so that she fell on to the fields of mortal men; and he was ever angry with her when he saw his son groaning under the cruel labours that Eurystheus laid upon him. Even so did I grieve when mighty Hector was killing the Argives at their ships, and all the time I kept thinking of Folly who had so baned me. I was blind, and Jove robbed me of my reason; I will now make atonement, and will add much treasure by way of amends. Go, therefore, into battle, you and your people with you. I will give you all that Ulysses offered you yesterday in your tents: or if it so please you, wait, though you would fain fight at once, and my squires shall bring the gifts from my ship, that you may see whether what I give you is enough.”

And Achilles answered, “Son of Atreus, king of men Agamemnon, you can give such gifts as you think proper, or you can withhold them: it is in your own hands. Let us now set battle in array; it is not well to tarry talking about trifles, for there is a deed which is as yet to do. Achilles shall again be seen fighting among the foremost, and laying low the ranks of the Trojans: bear this in mind each one of you when he is fighting.”

Then Ulysses said, “Achilles, godlike and brave, send not the Achaeans thus against Ilius to fight the Trojans fasting, for the battle will be no brief one, when it is once begun, and heaven has filled both sides with fury; bid them first take food both bread and wine by the ships, for in this there is strength and stay. No man can do battle the livelong day to the going down of the sun if he is without food; however much he may want to fight his strength will fail him before he knows it; hunger and thirst will find him out, and his limbs will grow weary under him. But a man can fight all day if he is full fed with meat and wine; his heart beats high, and his strength will stay till he has routed all his foes; therefore, send the people away and bid them prepare their meal; King Agamemnon will bring out the gifts in presence of the assembly, that all may see them and you may be satisfied. Moreover let him swear an oath before the Argives that he has never gone up into the couch of Briseis, nor been with her after the manner of men and women; and do you, too, show yourself of a gracious mind; let Agamemnon entertain you in his tents with a feast of reconciliation, that so you may have had your dues in full. As for you, son of Atreus, treat people more righteously in future; it is no disgrace even to a king that he should make amends if he was wrong in the first instance.”

And King Agamemnon answered, “Son of Laertes, your words please me well, for throughout you have spoken wisely. I will swear as you would have me do; I do so of my own free will, neither shall I take the name of heaven in vain. Let, then, Achilles wait, though he would fain fight at once, and do you others wait also, till the gifts come from my tent and we ratify the oath with sacrifice. Thus, then, do I charge you: take some noble young Achaeans with you, and bring from my tents the gifts that I promised yesterday to Achilles, and bring the women also; furthermore let Talthybius find me a boar from those that are with the host, and make it ready for sacrifice to Jove and to the sun.”

Then said Achilles, “Son of Atreus, king of men Agamemnon, see to these matters at some other season, when there is breathing time and when I am calmer. Would you have men eat while the bodies of those whom Hector son of Priam slew are still lying mangled upon the plain? Let the sons of the Achaeans, say I, fight fasting and without food, till we have avenged them; afterwards at the going down of the sun let them eat their fill. As for me, Patroclus is lying dead in my tent, all hacked and hewn, with his feet to the door, and his comrades are mourning round him. Therefore I can take thought of nothing save only slaughter and blood and the rattle in the throat of the dying.”

Ulysses answered, “Achilles, son of Peleus, mightiest of all the Achaeans, in battle you are better than I, and that more than a little, but in counsel I am much before you, for I am older and of greater knowledge. Therefore be patient under my words. Fighting is a thing of which men soon surfeit, and when Jove, who is war’s steward, weighs the upshot, it may well prove that the straw which

our sickles have reaped is far heavier than the grain. It may not be that the Achaeans should mourn the dead with their bellies; day by day men fall thick and threefold continually; when should we have respite from our sorrow? Let us mourn our dead for a day and bury them out of sight and mind, but let those of us who are left eat and drink that we may arm and fight our foes more fiercely. In that hour let no man hold back, waiting for a second summons; such summons shall bode ill for him who is found lagging behind at our ships; let us rather sally as one man and loose the fury of war upon the Trojans."

When he had thus spoken he took with him the sons of Nestor, with Meges son of Phyleus, Thoas, Meriones, Lycomedes son of Creontes, and Melanippus, and went to the tent of Agamemnon son of Atreus. The word was not sooner said than the deed was done: they brought out the seven tripods which Agamemnon had promised, with the twenty metal cauldrons and the twelve horses; they also brought the women skilled in useful arts, seven in number, with Briseis, which made eight. Ulysses weighed out the ten talents of gold and then led the way back, while the young Achaeans brought the rest of the gifts, and laid them in the middle of the assembly.

Agamemnon then rose, and Talthybius whose voice was like that of a god came to him with the boar. The son of Atreus drew the knife which he wore by the scabbard of his mighty sword, and began by cutting off some bristles from the boar, lifting up his hands in prayer as he did so. The other Achaeans sat where they were all silent and orderly to hear the king, and Agamemnon looked into the vault of heaven and prayed saying, "I call Jove the first and mightiest of all gods to witness, I call also Earth and Sun and the Erinyes who dwell below and take vengeance on him who shall swear falsely, that I have laid no hand upon the girl Briseis, neither to take her to my bed nor otherwise, but that she has remained in my tents inviolate. If I swear falsely may heaven visit me with all the penalties which it metes out to those who perjure themselves."

He cut the boar's throat as he spoke, whereon Talthybius whirled it round his head, and flung it into the wide sea to feed the fishes. Then Achilles also rose and said to the Argives, "Father Jove, of a truth you blind men's eyes and bane them. The son of Atreus had not else stirred me to so fierce an anger, nor so stubbornly taken Briseis from me against my will. Surely Jove must have counselled the destruction of many an Argive. Go, now, and take your food that we may begin fighting."

On this he broke up the assembly, and every man went back to his own ship. The Myrmidons attended to the presents and took them away to the ship of Achilles. They placed them in his tents, while the stable-men drove the horses in among the others.

Briseis, fair as Venus, when she saw the mangled body of Patroclus, flung herself upon it and cried aloud, tearing her breast, her neck, and her lovely face with both her hands. Beautiful as a goddess she wept and said, "Patroclus, dearest friend, when I went hence I left you living; I return, O prince, to find you dead; thus do fresh sorrows multiply upon me one after the other. I saw him to whom my father and mother married me, cut down before our city, and my three own dear brothers perished with him on the self-same day; but you, Patroclus, even when Achilles slew my husband and sacked the city of noble Mynes, told me that I was not to weep, for you said you would make Achilles marry me, and take me back with him to Phthia, we should have a wedding feast among the Myrmidons. You were always kind to me and I shall never cease to grieve for you."

She wept as she spoke, and the women joined in her lament-making as though their tears were for Patroclus, but in truth each was weeping for her own sorrows. The elders of the Achaeans gathered round Achilles and prayed him to take food, but he groaned and would not do so. "I pray you," said he, "if any comrade will hear me, bid me neither eat nor drink, for I am in great heaviness, and will stay fasting even to the going down of the sun."

On this he sent the other princes away, save only the two sons of Atreus and Ulysses, Nestor, Idomeneus, and the knight Phoenix, who stayed behind and tried to comfort him in the bitterness of his sorrow: but he would not be comforted till he should have flung himself into the jaws of battle, and he fetched sigh on sigh, thinking ever of Patroclus. Then he said—

"Hapless and dearest comrade, you it was who would get a good dinner ready for me at once and without delay when the Achaeans were hasting to fight the Trojans; now, therefore, though I have meat and drink in my tents, yet will I fast for sorrow. Grief greater than this I could not know, not even though I were to hear of the death of my father, who is now in Phthia weeping for the loss of me his son, who am here fighting the Trojans in a strange land for the accursed sake of Helen, nor yet though I should hear that my son is no more—he who is being brought up in Scyros—if indeed Neoptolemus is still living. Till now I made sure that I alone was to fall here at Troy away from Argos, while you were to return to Phthia, bring back my son with you in your own ship, and show him all my property, my bondsmen, and the greatness of my house—for Peleus must surely be either dead, or what little life remains to him is oppressed alike with the infirmities of age and ever present fear lest he should hear the sad tidings of my death."

He wept as he spoke, and the elders sighed in concert as each thought on what he had left at home behind him. The son of Saturn looked down with pity upon them, and said presently to Minerva, “My child, you have quite deserted your hero; is he then gone so clean out of your recollection? There he sits by the ships all desolate for the loss of his dear comrade, and though the others are gone to their dinner he will neither eat nor drink. Go then and drop nectar and ambrosia into his breast, that he may know no hunger.”

With these words he urged Minerva, who was already of the same mind. She darted down from heaven into the air like some falcon sailing on his broad wings and screaming. Meanwhile the Achaeans were arming throughout the host, and when Minerva had dropped nectar and ambrosia into Achilles so that no cruel hunger should cause his limbs to fail him, she went back to the house of her mighty father. Thick as the chill snow-flakes shed from the hand of Jove and borne on the keen blasts of the north wind, even so thick did the gleaming helmets, the bossed shields, the strongly plated breastplates, and the ashen spears stream from the ships. The sheen pierced the sky, the whole land was radiant with their flashing armour, and the sound of the tramp of their treading rose from under their feet. In the midst of them all Achilles put on his armour; he gnashed his teeth, his eyes gleamed like fire, for his grief was greater than he could bear. Thus, then, full of fury against the Trojans, did he don the gift of the god, the armour that Vulcan had made him.

First he put on the goodly greaves fitted with ancle-clasps, and next he did on the breastplate about his chest. He slung the silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then took up the shield so great and strong that shone afar with a splendour as of the moon. As the light seen by sailors from out at sea, when men have lit a fire in their homestead high up among the mountains, but the sailors are carried out to sea by wind and storm far from the haven where they would be—even so did the gleam of Achilles’ wondrous shield strike up into the heavens. He lifted the redoubtable helmet, and set it upon his head, from whence it shone like a star, and the golden plumes which Vulcan had set thick about the ridge of the helmet, waved all around it. Then Achilles made trial of himself in his armour to see whether it fitted him, so that his limbs could play freely under it, and it seemed to buoy him up as though it had been wings.

He also drew his father’s spear out of the spear-stand, a spear so great and heavy and strong that none of the Achaeans save only Achilles had strength to wield it; this was the spear of Pelian ash from the topmost ridges of Mt. Pelion, which Chiron had once given to Peleus, fraught with the death of heroes. Automedon and Alcimus busied themselves with the harnessing of his horses; they made the bands fast about them, and put the bit in their mouths, drawing the reins back towards the chariot. Automedon, whip in hand, sprang up behind the horses, and after him Achilles mounted in full armour, resplendent as the sun-god Hyperion. Then with a loud voice he chided with his father’s horses saying, “Xanthus and Balius, famed offspring of Podarge—this time when we have done fighting be sure and bring your driver safely back to the host of the Achaeans, and do not leave him dead on the plain as you did Patroclus.”

Then fleet Xanthus answered under the yoke—for white-armed Juno had endowed him with human speech—and he bowed his head till his mane touched the ground as it hung down from under the yoke-band. “Dread Achilles,” said he, “we will indeed save you now, but the day of your death is near, and the blame will not be ours, for it will be heaven and stern fate that will destroy you. Neither was it through any sloth or slackness on our part that the Trojans stripped Patroclus of his armour; it was the mighty god whom lovely Leto bore that slew him as he fought among the foremost, and vouchsafed a triumph to Hector. We two can fly as swiftly as Zephyrus who they say is fleetest of all winds; nevertheless it is your doom to fall by the hand of a man and of a god.”

When he had thus said the Erinyes stayed his speech, and Achilles answered him in great sadness, saying, “Why, O Xanthus, do you thus foretell my death? You need not do so, for I well know that I am to fall here, far from my dear father and mother; none the more, however, shall I stay my hand till I have given the Trojans their fill of fighting.”

So saying, with a loud cry he drove his horses to the front.

This page titled 3.12.1.19: Book XIX is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.20: Book XX

The gods hold a council and determine to watch the fight, from the hill Callicolone, and the barrow of Hercules—A fight between Achilles and AEneas is interrupted by Neptune, who saves AEneas—Achilles kills many Trojans.

Thus, then, did the Achaeans arm by their ships round you, O son of Peleus, who were hungering for battle; while the Trojans over against them armed upon the rise of the plain.

Meanwhile Jove from the top of many-delled Olympus, bade Themis gather the gods in council, whereon she went about and called them to the house of Jove. There was not a river absent except Oceanus, nor a single one of the nymphs that haunt fair groves, or springs of rivers and meadows of green grass. When they reached the house of cloud-compelling Jove, they took their seats in the arcades of polished marble which Vulcan with his consummate skill had made for father Jove.

In such wise, therefore, did they gather in the house of Jove. Neptune also, lord of the earthquake, obeyed the call of the goddess, and came up out of the sea to join them. There, sitting in the midst of them, he asked what Jove's purpose might be. "Why," said he, "wielder of the lightning, have you called the gods in council? Are you considering some matter that concerns the Trojans and Achaeans—for the blaze of battle is on the point of being kindled between them?"

And Jove answered, "You know my purpose, shaker of earth, and wherefore I have called you hither. I take thought for them even in their destruction. For my own part I shall stay here seated on Mt. Olympus and look on in peace, but do you others go about among Trojans and Achaeans, and help either side as you may be severally disposed. If Achilles fights the Trojans without hindrance they will make no stand against him; they have ever trembled at the sight of him, and now that he is roused to such fury about his comrade, he will override fate itself and storm their city."

Thus spoke Jove and gave the word for war, whereon the gods took their several sides and went into battle. Juno, Pallas Minerva, earth-encircling Neptune, Mercury bringer of good luck and excellent in all cunning—all these joined the host that came from the ships; with them also came Vulcan in all his glory, limping, but yet with his thin legs plying lustily under him. Mars of gleaming helmet joined the Trojans, and with him Apollo of locks unshorn, and the archer goddess Diana, Leto, Xanthus, and laughter-loving Venus.

So long as the gods held themselves aloof from mortal warriors the Achaeans were triumphant, for Achilles who had long refused to fight was now with them. There was not a Trojan but his limbs failed him for fear as he beheld the fleet son of Peleus all glorious in his armour, and looking like Mars himself. When, however, the Olympians came to take their part among men, forthwith uprose strong Strife, rouser of hosts, and Minerva raised her loud voice, now standing by the deep trench that ran outside the wall, and now shouting with all her might upon the shore of the sounding sea. Mars also bellowed out upon the other side, dark as some black thunder-cloud, and called on the Trojans at the top of his voice, now from the acropolis, and now speeding up the side of the river Simois till he came to the hill Callicolone.

Thus did the gods spur on both hosts to fight, and rouse fierce contention also among themselves. The sire of gods and men thundered from heaven above, while from beneath Neptune shook the vast earth, and bade the high hills tremble. The spurs and crests of many-fountained Ida quaked, as also the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans. Hades, king of the realms below, was struck with fear; he sprang panic-stricken from his throne and cried aloud in terror lest Neptune, lord of the earthquake, should crack the ground over his head, and lay bare his mouldy mansions to the sight of mortals and immortals—mansions so ghastly grim that even the gods shudder to think of them. Such was the uproar as the gods came together in battle. Apollo with his arrows took his stand to face King Neptune, while Minerva took hers against the god of war; the archer-goddess Diana with her golden arrows, sister of far-darting Apollo, stood to face Juno; Mercury the lusty bringer of good luck faced Leto, while the mighty eddying river whom men can Scamander, but gods Xanthus, matched himself against Vulcan.

The gods, then, were thus ranged against one another. But the heart of Achilles was set on meeting Hector son of Priam, for it was with his blood that he longed above all things else to glut the stubborn lord of battle. Meanwhile Apollo set Aeneas on to attack the son of Peleus, and put courage into his heart, speaking with the voice of Lycaon son of Priam. In his likeness therefore, he said to Aeneas, "Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, where are now the brave words with which you vaunted over your wine before the Trojan princes, saying that you would fight Achilles son of Peleus in single combat?"

And Aeneas answered, “Why do you thus bid me fight the proud son of Peleus, when I am in no mind to do so? Were I to face him now, it would not be for the first time. His spear has already put me to flight from Ida, when he attacked our cattle and sacked Lyrnessus and Pedasus; Jove indeed saved me in that he vouchsafed me strength to fly, else had I fallen by the hands of Achilles and Minerva, who went before him to protect him and urged him to fall upon the Lelegae and Trojans. No man may fight Achilles, for one of the gods is always with him as his guardian angel, and even were it not so, his weapon flies ever straight, and fails not to pierce the flesh of him who is against him; if heaven would let me fight him on even terms he should not soon overcome me, though he boasts that he is made of bronze.”

Then said King Apollo, son to Jove, “Nay, hero, pray to the ever-living gods, for men say that you were born of Jove’s daughter Venus, whereas Achilles is son to a goddess of inferior rank. Venus is child to Jove, while Thetis is but daughter to the old man of the sea. Bring, therefore, your spear to bear upon him, and let him not scare you with his taunts and menaces.”

As he spoke he put courage into the heart of the shepherd of his people, and he strode in full armour among the ranks of the foremost fighters. Nor did the son of Anchises escape the notice of white-armed Juno, as he went forth into the throng to meet Achilles. She called the gods about her, and said, “Look to it, you two, Neptune and Minerva, and consider how this shall be; Phoebus Apollo has been sending Aeneas clad in full armour to fight Achilles. Shall we turn him back at once, or shall one of us stand by Achilles and endow him with strength so that his heart fail not, and he may learn that the chiefs of the immortals are on his side, while the others who have all along been defending the Trojans are but vain helpers? Let us all come down from Olympus and join in the fight, that this day he may take no hurt at the hands of the Trojans. Hereafter let him suffer whatever fate may have spun out for him when he was begotten and his mother bore him. If Achilles be not thus assured by the voice of a god, he may come to fear presently when one of us meets him in battle, for the gods are terrible if they are seen face to face.”

Neptune lord of the earthquake answered her saying, “Juno, restrain your fury; it is not well; I am not in favour of forcing the other gods to fight us, for the advantage is too greatly on our own side; let us take our places on some hill out of the beaten track, and let mortals fight it out among themselves. If Mars or Phoebus Apollo begin fighting, or keep Achilles in check so that he cannot fight, we too, will at once raise the cry of battle, and in that case they will soon leave the field and go back vanquished to Olympus among the other gods.”

With these words the dark-haired god led the way to the high earth-barrow of Hercules, built round solid masonry, and made by the Trojans and Pallas Minerva for him to fly to when the sea-monster was chasing him from the shore on to the plain. Here Neptune and those that were with him took their seats, wrapped in a thick cloud of darkness; but the other gods seated themselves on the brow of Callicolone round you, O Phoebus, and Mars the waster of cities.

Thus did the gods sit apart and form their plans, but neither side was willing to begin battle with the other, and Jove from his seat on high was in command over them all. Meanwhile the whole plain was alive with men and horses, and blazing with the gleam of armour. The earth rang again under the tramp of their feet as they rushed towards each other, and two champions, by far the foremost of them all, met between the hosts to fight—to wit, Aeneas son of Anchises, and noble Achilles.

Aeneas was first to stride forward in attack, his doughty helmet tossing defiance as he came on. He held his strong shield before his breast, and brandished his bronze spear. The son of Peleus from the other side sprang forth to meet him, like some fierce lion that the whole country-side has met to hunt and kill—at first he bodes no ill, but when some daring youth has struck him with a spear, he crouches openmouthed, his jaws foam, he roars with fury, he lashes his tail from side to side about his ribs and loins, and glares as he springs straight before him, to find out whether he is to slay, or be slain among the foremost of his foes—even with such fury did Achilles burn to spring upon Aeneas.

When they were now close up with one another Achilles was first to speak. “Aeneas,” said he, “why do you stand thus out before the host to fight me? Is it that you hope to reign over the Trojans in the seat of Priam? Nay, though you kill me Priam will not hand his kingdom over to you. He is a man of sound judgement, and he has sons of his own. Or have the Trojans been allotting you a demesne of passing richness, fair with orchard lawns and corn lands, if you should slay me? This you shall hardly do. I have discomfited you once already. Have you forgotten how when you were alone I chased you from your herds helter-skelter down the slopes of Ida? You did not turn round to look behind you; you took refuge in Lyrnessus, but I attacked the city, and with the help of Minerva and father Jove I sacked it and carried its women into captivity, though Jove and the other gods rescued you. You think they will protect you now, but they will not do so; therefore I say go back into the host, and do not face me, or you will rue it. Even a fool may be wise after the event.”

Then Aeneas answered, “Son of Peleus, think not that your words can scare me as though I were a child. I too, if I will, can brag and talk unseemly. We know one another’s race and parentage as matters of common fame, though neither have you ever seen my parents nor I yours. Men say that you are son to noble Peleus, and that your mother is Thetis, fair-haired daughter of the sea. I have noble Anchises for my father, and Venus for my mother; the parents of one or other of us shall this day mourn a son, for it will be more than silly talk that shall part us when the fight is over. Learn, then, my lineage if you will—and it is known to many.

“In the beginning Dardanus was the son of Jove, and founded Dardania, for Ilius was not yet stablished on the plain for men to dwell in, and her people still abode on the spurs of many-fountained Ida. Dardanus had a son, king Erichthonius, who was wealthiest of all men living; he had three thousand mares that fed by the water-meadows, they and their foals with them. Boreas was enamoured of them as they were feeding, and covered them in the semblance of a dark-maned stallion. Twelve filly foals did they conceive and bear him, and these, as they sped over the rich plain, would go bounding on over the ripe ears of corn and not break them; or again when they would disport themselves on the broad back of Ocean they could gallop on the crest of a breaker. Erichthonius begat Tros, king of the Trojans, and Tros had three noble sons, Ilus, Assaracus, and Ganymede who was comeliest of mortal men; wherefore the gods carried him off to be Jove’s cupbearer, for his beauty’s sake, that he might dwell among the immortals. Ilus begat Laomedon, and Laomedon begat Tithonus, Priam, Lampus, Clytius, and Hiketaon of the stock of Mars. But Assaracus was father to Capys, and Capys to Anchises, who was my father, while Hector is son to Priam.

“Such do I declare my blood and lineage, but as for valour, Jove gives it or takes it as he will, for he is lord of all. And now let there be no more of this prating in mid-battle as though we were children. We could fling taunts without end at one another; a hundred-oared galley would not hold them. The tongue can run all whithers and talk all wise; it can go here and there, and as a man says, so shall he be gainsaid. What is the use of our bandying hard like women who when they fall foul of one another go out and wrangle in the streets, one half true and the other lies, as rage inspires them? No words of yours shall turn me now that I am fain to fight—therefore let us make trial of one another with our spears.”

As he spoke he drove his spear at the great and terrible shield of Achilles, which rang out as the point struck it. The son of Peleus held the shield before him with his strong hand, and he was afraid, for he deemed that Aeneas’s spear would go through it quite easily, not reflecting that the god’s glorious gifts were little likely to yield before the blows of mortal men; and indeed Aeneas’s spear did not pierce the shield, for the layer of gold, gift of the god, stayed the point. It went through two layers, but the god had made the shield in five, two of bronze, the two innermost ones of tin, and one of gold; it was in this that the spear was stayed.

Achilles in his turn threw, and struck the round shield of Aeneas at the very edge, where the bronze was thinnest; the spear of Pelian ash went clean through, and the shield rang under the blow; Aeneas was afraid, and crouched backwards, holding the shield away from him; the spear, however, flew over his back, and stuck quivering in the ground, after having gone through both circles of the sheltering shield. Aeneas though he had avoided the spear, stood still, blinded with fear and grief because the weapon had gone so near him; then Achilles sprang furiously upon him, with a cry as of death and with his keen blade drawn, and Aeneas seized a great stone, so huge that two men, as men now are, would be unable to lift it, but Aeneas wielded it quite easily.

Aeneas would then have struck Achilles as he was springing towards him, either on the helmet, or on the shield that covered him, and Achilles would have closed with him and despatched him with his sword, had not Neptune lord of the earthquake been quick to mark, and said forthwith to the immortals, “Alas, I am sorry for great Aeneas, who will now go down to the house of Hades, vanquished by the son of Peleus. Fool that he was to give ear to the counsel of Apollo. Apollo will never save him from destruction. Why should this man suffer when he is guiltless, to no purpose, and in another’s quarrel? Has he not at all times offered acceptable sacrifice to the gods that dwell in heaven? Let us then snatch him from death’s jaws, lest the son of Saturn be angry should Achilles slay him. It is fated, moreover, that he should escape, and that the race of Dardanus, whom Jove loved above all the sons born to him of mortal women, shall not perish utterly without seed or sign. For now indeed has Jove hated the blood of Priam, while Aeneas shall reign over the Trojans, he and his children’s children that shall be born hereafter.”

Then answered Juno, “Earth-shaker, look to this matter yourself, and consider concerning Aeneas, whether you will save him, or suffer him, brave though he be, to fall by the hand of Achilles son of Peleus. For of a truth we two, I and Pallas Minerva, have sworn full many a time before all the immortals, that never would we shield Trojans from destruction, not even when all Troy is burning in the flames that the Achaeans shall kindle.”

When earth-encircling Neptune heard this he went into the battle amid the clash of spears, and came to the place where Achilles and Aeneas were. Forthwith he shed a darkness before the eyes of the son of Peleus, drew the bronze-headed ashen spear from the

shield of Aeneas, and laid it at the feet of Achilles. Then he lifted Aeneas on high from off the earth and hurried him away. Over the heads of many a band of warriors both horse and foot did he soar as the god's hand sped him, till he came to the very fringe of the battle where the Cauconians were arming themselves for fight. Neptune, shaker of the earth, then came near to him and said, "Aeneas, what god has egged you on to this folly in fighting the son of Peleus, who is both a mightier man of valour and more beloved of heaven than you are? Give way before him whensoever you meet him, lest you go down to the house of Hades even though fate would have it otherwise. When Achilles is dead you may then fight among the foremost undaunted, for none other of the Achaeans shall slay you."

The god left him when he had given him these instructions, and at once removed the darkness from before the eyes of Achilles, who opened them wide indeed and said in great anger, "Alas! what marvel am I now beholding? Here is my spear upon the ground, but I see not him whom I meant to kill when I hurled it. Of a truth Aeneas also must be under heaven's protection, although I had thought his boasting was idle. Let him go hang; he will be in no mood to fight me further, seeing how narrowly he has missed being killed. I will now give my orders to the Danaans and attack some other of the Trojans."

He sprang forward along the line and cheered his men on as he did so. "Let not the Trojans," he cried, "keep you at arm's length, Achaeans, but go for them and fight them man for man. However valiant I may be, I cannot give chase to so many and fight all of them. Even Mars, who is an immortal, or Minerva, would shrink from flinging himself into the jaws of such a fight and laying about him; nevertheless, so far as in me lies I will show no slackness of hand or foot nor want of endurance, not even for a moment; I will utterly break their ranks, and woe to the Trojan who shall venture within reach of my spear."

Thus did he exhort them. Meanwhile Hector called upon the Trojans and declared that he would fight Achilles. "Be not afraid, proud Trojans," said he, "to face the son of Peleus; I could fight gods myself if the battle were one of words only, but they would be more than a match for me, if we had to use our spears. Even so the deed of Achilles will fall somewhat short of his word; he will do in part, and the other part he will clip short. I will go up against him though his hands be as fire—though his hands be fire and his strength iron."

Thus urged the Trojans lifted up their spears against the Achaeans, and raised the cry of battle as they flung themselves into the midst of their ranks. But Phoebus Apollo came up to Hector and said, "Hector, on no account must you challenge Achilles to single combat; keep a lookout for him while you are under cover of the others and away from the thick of the fight, otherwise he will either hit you with a spear or cut you down at close quarters."

Thus he spoke, and Hector drew back within the crowd, for he was afraid when he heard what the god had said to him. Achilles then sprang upon the Trojans with a terrible cry, clothed in valour as with a garment. First he killed Iphition son of Otrynteus, a leader of much people whom a naiad nymph had borne to Otrynteus waster of cities, in the land of Hyde under the snowy heights of Mt. Tmolus. Achilles struck him full on the head as he was coming on towards him, and split it clean in two; whereon he fell heavily to the ground and Achilles vaunted over him saying, "You be low, son of Otrynteus, mighty hero; your death is here, but your lineage is on the Gygaean lake where your father's estate lies, by Hyllus, rich in fish, and the eddying waters of Hermus."

Thus did he vaunt, but darkness closed the eyes of the other. The chariots of the Achaeans cut him up as their wheels passed over him in the front of the battle, and after him Achilles killed Demoleon, a valiant man of war and son to Antenor. He struck him on the temple through his bronze-cheeked helmet. The helmet did not stay the spear, but it went right on, crushing the bone so that the brain inside was shed in all directions, and his lust of fighting was ended. Then he struck Hippodamas in the midriff as he was springing down from his chariot in front of him, and trying to escape. He breathed his last, bellowing like a bull bellows when young men are dragging him to offer him in sacrifice to the King of Helice, and the heart of the earth-shaker is glad; even so did he bellow as he lay dying. Achilles then went in pursuit of Polydorus son of Priam, whom his father had always forbidden to fight because he was the youngest of his sons, the one he loved best, and the fastest runner. He, in his folly and showing off the fleetness of his feet, was rushing about among front ranks until he lost his life, for Achilles struck him in the middle of the back as he was darting past him: he struck him just at the golden fastenings of his belt and where the two pieces of the double breastplate overlapped. The point of the spear pierced him through and came out by the navel, whereon he fell groaning on to his knees and a cloud of darkness overshadowed him as he sank holding his entrails in his hands.

When Hector saw his brother Polydorus with his entrails in his hands and sinking down upon the ground, a mist came over his eyes, and he could not bear to keep longer at a distance; he therefore poised his spear and darted towards Achilles like a flame of

fire. When Achilles saw him he bounded forward and vaunted saying, “This is he that has wounded my heart most deeply and has slain my beloved comrade. Not for long shall we two quail before one another on the highways of war.”

He looked fiercely on Hector and said, “Draw near, that you may meet your doom the sooner.” Hector feared him not and answered, “Son of Peleus, think not that your words can scare me as though I were a child; I too if I will can brag and talk unseemly; I know that you are a mighty warrior, mightier by far than I, nevertheless the issue lies in the lap of heaven whether I, worse man though I be, may not slay you with my spear, for this too has been found keen ere now.”

He hurled his spear as he spoke, but Minerva breathed upon it, and though she breathed but very lightly she turned it back from going towards Achilles, so that it returned to Hector and lay at his feet in front of him. Achilles then sprang furiously on him with a loud cry, bent on killing him, but Apollo caught him up easily as a god can, and hid him in a thick darkness. Thrice did Achilles spring towards him spear in hand, and thrice did he waste his blow upon the air. When he rushed forward for the fourth time as though he were a god, he shouted aloud saying, “Hound, this time too you have escaped death—but of a truth it came exceedingly near you. Phoebus Apollo, to whom it seems you pray before you go into battle, has again saved you; but if I too have any friend among the gods I will surely make an end of you when I come across you at some other time. Now, however, I will pursue and overtake other Trojans.”

On this he struck Dryops with his spear, about the middle of his neck, and he fell headlong at his feet. There he let him lie and stayed Demouchus son of Philetor, a man both brave and of great stature, by hitting him on the knee with a spear; then he smote him with his sword and killed him. After this he sprang on Laogonus and Dardanus, sons of Bias, and threw them from their chariot, the one with a blow from a thrown spear, while the other he cut down in hand-to-hand fight. There was also Tros the son of Alastor—he came up to Achilles and clasped his knees in the hope that he would spare him and not kill him but let him go, because they were both of the same age. Fool, he might have known that he should not prevail with him, for the man was in no mood for pity or forbearance but was in grim earnest. Therefore when Tros laid hold of his knees and sought a hearing for his prayers, Achilles drove his sword into his liver, and the liver came rolling out, while his bosom was all covered with the black blood that welled from the wound. Thus did death close his eyes as he lay lifeless.

Achilles then went up to Mulius and struck him on the ear with a spear, and the bronze spear-head came right out at the other ear. He also struck Echeclus son of Agenor on the head with his sword, which became warm with the blood, while death and stern fate closed the eyes of Echeclus. Next in order the bronze point of his spear wounded Deucalion in the fore-arm where the sinews of the elbow are united, whereon he waited Achilles’ onset with his arm hanging down and death staring him in the face. Achilles cut his head off with a blow from his sword and flung it helmet and all away from him, and the marrow came oozing out of his backbone as he lay. He then went in pursuit of Rhigmus, noble son of Peires, who had come from fertile Thrace, and struck him through the middle with a spear which fixed itself in his belly, so that he fell headlong from his chariot. He also speared Areithous squire to Rhigmus in the back as he was turning his horses in flight, and thrust him from his chariot, while the horses were struck with panic.

As a fire raging in some mountain glen after long drought—and the dense forest is in a blaze, while the wind carries great tongues of fire in every direction—even so furiously did Achilles rage, wielding his spear as though he were a god, and giving chase to those whom he would slay, till the dark earth ran with blood. Or as one who yokes broad-browed oxen that they may tread barley in a threshing-floor—and it is soon bruised small under the feet of the lowing cattle—even so did the horses of Achilles trample on the shields and bodies of the slain. The axle underneath and the railing that ran round the car were bespattered with clots of blood thrown up by the horses’ hoofs, and from the tyres of the wheels; but the son of Peleus pressed on to win still further glory, and his hands were bedrabbled with gore.

This page titled 3.12.1.20: Book XX is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.21: Book XXI

The fight between Achilles and the river Scamander—The gods fight among themselves—Achilles drives the Trojans within their gates.

Now when they came to the ford of the full-flowing river Xanthus, begotten of immortal Jove, Achilles cut their forces in two: one half he chased over the plain towards the city by the same way that the Achaeans had taken when flying panic-stricken on the preceding day with Hector in full triumph; this way did they fly pell-mell, and Juno sent down a thick mist in front of them to stay them. The other half were hemmed in by the deep silver-eddying stream, and fell into it with a great uproar. The waters resounded, and the banks rang again, as they swam hither and thither with loud cries amid the whirling eddies. As locusts flying to a river before the blast of a grass fire—the flame comes on and on till at last it overtakes them and they huddle into the water—even so was the eddying stream of Xanthus filled with the uproar of men and horses, all struggling in confusion before Achilles.

Forthwith the hero left his spear upon the bank, leaning it against a tamarisk bush, and plunged into the river like a god, armed with his sword only. Fell was his purpose as he hewed the Trojans down on every side. Their dying groans rose hideous as the sword smote them, and the river ran red with blood. As when fish fly scared before a huge dolphin, and fill every nook and corner of some fair haven—for he is sure to eat all he can catch—even so did the Trojans cower under the banks of the mighty river, and when Achilles' arms grew weary with killing them, he drew twelve youths alive out of the water, to sacrifice in revenge for Patroclus son of Menoetius. He drew them out like dazed fawns, bound their hands behind them with the girdles of their own shirts, and gave them over to his men to take back to the ships. Then he sprang into the river, thirsting for still further blood.

There he found Lycaon, son of Priam seed of Dardanus, as he was escaping out of the water; he it was whom he had once taken prisoner when he was in his father's vineyard, having set upon him by night, as he was cutting young shoots from a wild fig-tree to make the wicker sides of a chariot. Achilles then caught him to his sorrow unawares, and sent him by sea to Lemnos, where the son of Jason bought him. But a guest-friend, Eetion of Imbros, freed him with a great sum, and sent him to Arisbe, whence he had escaped and returned to his father's house. He had spent eleven days happily with his friends after he had come from Lemnos, but on the twelfth heaven again delivered him into the hands of Achilles, who was to send him to the house of Hades sorely against his will. He was unarmed when Achilles caught sight of him, and had neither helmet nor shield; nor yet had he any spear, for he had thrown all his armour from him on to the bank, and was sweating with his struggles to get out of the river, so that his strength was now failing him.

Then Achilles said to himself in his surprise, "What marvel do I see here? If this man can come back alive after having been sold over into Lemnos, I shall have the Trojans also whom I have slain rising from the world below. Could not even the waters of the grey sea imprison him, as they do many another whether he will or no? This time let him taste my spear, that I may know for certain whether mother earth who can keep even a strong man down, will be able to hold him, or whether thence too he will return."

Thus did he pause and ponder. But Lycaon came up to him dazed and trying hard to embrace his knees, for he would fain live, not die. Achilles thrust at him with his spear, meaning to kill him, but Lycaon ran crouching up to him and caught his knees, whereby the spear passed over his back, and stuck in the ground, hungering though it was for blood. With one hand he caught Achilles' knees as he besought him, and with the other he clutched the spear and would not let it go. Then he said, "Achilles, have mercy upon me and spare me, for I am your suppliant. It was in your tents that I first broke bread on the day when you took me prisoner in the vineyard; after which you sold me away to Lemnos far from my father and my friends, and I brought you the price of a hundred oxen. I have paid three times as much to gain my freedom; it is but twelve days that I have come to Ilius after much suffering, and now cruel fate has again thrown me into your hands. Surely father Jove must hate me, that he has given me over to you a second time. Short of life indeed did my mother Laothoe bear me, daughter of aged Altes—of Altes who reigns over the warlike Lelegae and holds steep Pedasus on the river Satnioeis. Priam married his daughter along with many other women and two sons were born of her, both of whom you will have slain. Your spear slew noble Polydorus as he was fighting in the front ranks, and now evil will here befall me, for I fear that I shall not escape you since heaven has delivered me over to you. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart, spare me, for I am not of the same womb as Hector who slew your brave and noble comrade."

With such words did the princely son of Priam beseech Achilles; but Achilles answered him sternly. "Idiot," said he, "talk not to me of ransom. Until Patroclus fell I preferred to give the Trojans quarter, and sold beyond the sea many of those whom I had taken

alive; but now not a man shall live of those whom heaven delivers into my hands before the city of Ilius—and of all Trojans it shall fare hardest with the sons of Priam. Therefore, my friend, you too shall die. Why should you whine in this way? Patroclus fell, and he was a better man than you are. I too—see you not how I am great and goodly? I am son to a noble father, and have a goddess for my mother, but the hands of doom and death overshadow me all as surely. The day will come, either at dawn or dark, or at the noontide, when one shall take my life also in battle, either with his spear, or with an arrow sped from his bow."

Thus did he speak, and Lycaon's heart sank within him. He loosed his hold of the spear, and held out both hands before him; but Achilles drew his keen blade, and struck him by the collar-bone on his neck; he plunged his two-edged sword into him to the very hilt, whereon he lay at full length on the ground, with the dark blood welling from him till the earth was soaked. Then Achilles caught him by the foot and flung him into the river to go down stream, vaunting over him the while, and saying, "Lie there among the fishes, who will lick the blood from your wound and gloat over it; your mother shall not lay you on any bier to mourn you, but the eddies of Scamander shall bear you into the broad bosom of the sea. There shall the fishes feed on the fat of Lycaon as they dart under the dark ripple of the waters—so perish all of you till we reach the citadel of strong Ilius—you in flight, and I following after to destroy you. The river with its broad silver stream shall serve you in no stead, for all the bulls you offered him and all the horses that you flung living into his waters. None the less miserably shall you perish till there is not a man of you but has paid in full for the death of Patroclus and the havoc you wrought among the Achaeans whom you have slain while I held aloof from battle."

So spoke Achilles, but the river grew more and more angry, and pondered within himself how he should stay the hand of Achilles and save the Trojans from disaster. Meanwhile the son of Peleus, spear in hand, sprang upon Asteropaeus son of Pelegon to kill him. He was son to the broad river Axius and Periboea eldest daughter of Acessamenus; for the river had lain with her. Asteropaeus stood up out of the water to face him with a spear in either hand, and Xanthus filled him with courage, being angry for the death of the youths whom Achilles was slaying ruthlessly within his waters. When they were close up with one another Achilles was first to speak. "Who and whence are you," said he, "who dare to face me? Woe to the parents whose son stands up against me." And the son of Pelegon answered, "Great son of Peleus, why should you ask my lineage. I am from the fertile land of far Paeonia, captain of the Paeonians, and it is now eleven days that I am at Ilius. I am of the blood of the river Axius—of Axius that is the fairest of all rivers that run. He begot the famed warrior Pelegon, whose son men call me. Let us now fight, Achilles."

Thus did he defy him, and Achilles raised his spear of Pelian ash. Asteropaeus failed with both his spears, for he could use both hands alike; with the one spear he struck Achilles' shield, but did not pierce it, for the layer of gold, gift of the god, stayed the point; with the other spear he grazed the elbow of Achilles' right arm drawing dark blood, but the spear itself went by him and fixed itself in the ground, foiled of its bloody banquet. Then Achilles, fain to kill him, hurled his spear at Asteropaeus, but failed to hit him and struck the steep bank of the river, driving the spear half its length into the earth. The son of Peleus then drew his sword and sprang furiously upon him. Asteropaeus vainly tried to draw Achilles' spear out of the bank by main force; thrice did he tug at it, trying with all his might to draw it out, and thrice he had to leave off trying; the fourth time he tried to bend and break it, but ere he could do so Achilles smote him with his sword and killed him. He struck him in the belly near the navel, so that all his bowels came gushing out on to the ground, and the darkness of death came over him as he lay gasping. Then Achilles set his foot on his chest and spoiled him of his armour, vaunting over him and saying, "Lie there—begotten of a river though you be, it is hard for you to strive with the offspring of Saturn's son. You declare yourself sprung from the blood of a broad river, but I am of the seed of mighty Jove. My father is Peleus, son of Aeacus ruler over the many Myrmidons, and Aeacus was the son of Jove. Therefore as Jove is mightier than any river that flows into the sea, so are his children stronger than those of any river whatsoever. Moreover you have a great river hard by if he can be of any use to you, but there is no fighting against Jove the son of Saturn, with whom not even King Achelous can compare, nor the mighty stream of deep-flowing Oceanus, from whom all rivers and seas with all springs and deep wells proceed; even Oceanus fears the lightnings of great Jove, and his thunder that comes crashing out of heaven."

With this he drew his bronze spear out of the bank, and now that he had killed Asteropaeus, he let him lie where he was on the sand, with the dark water flowing over him and the eels and fishes busy nibbling and gnawing the fat that was about his kidneys. Then he went in chase of the Paeonians, who were flying along the bank of the river in panic when they saw their leader slain by the hands of the son of Peleus. Therein he slew Thersilochus, Mydon, Astypylus, Mnesus, Thrasius, Oeneus, and Ophelestes, and he would have slain yet others, had not the river in anger taken human form, and spoken to him from out the deep waters saying, "Achilles, if you excel all in strength, so do you also in wickedness, for the gods are ever with you to protect you: if, then, the son of Saturn has vouchsafed it to you to destroy all the Trojans, at any rate drive them out of my stream, and do your grim work on

land. My fair waters are now filled with corpses, nor can I find any channel by which I may pour myself into the sea for I am choked with dead, and yet you go on mercilessly slaying. I am in despair, therefore, O captain of your host, trouble me no further."

Achilles answered, "So be it, Scamander, Jove-descended; but I will never cease dealing out death among the Trojans, till I have pent them up in their city, and made trial of Hector face to face, that I may learn whether he is to vanquish me, or I him."

As he spoke he set upon the Trojans with a fury like that of the gods. But the river said to Apollo, "Surely, son of Jove, lord of the silver bow, you are not obeying the commands of Jove who charged you straitly that you should stand by the Trojans and defend them, till twilight fades, and darkness is over the earth."

Meanwhile Achilles sprang from the bank into mid-stream, whereon the river raised a high wave and attacked him. He swelled his stream into a torrent, and swept away the many dead whom Achilles had slain and left within his waters. These he cast out on to the land, bellowing like a bull the while, but the living he saved alive, hiding them in his mighty eddies. The great and terrible wave gathered about Achilles, falling upon him and beating on his shield, so that he could not keep his feet; he caught hold of a great elm-tree, but it came up by the roots, and tore away the bank, damming the stream with its thick branches and bridging it all across; whereby Achilles struggled out of the stream, and fled full speed over the plain, for he was afraid.

But the mighty god ceased not in his pursuit, and sprang upon him with a dark-crested wave, to stay his hands and save the Trojans from destruction. The son of Peleus darted away a spear's throw from him; swift as the swoop of a black hunter-eagle which is the strongest and fleetest of all birds, even so did he spring forward, and the armour rang loudly about his breast. He fled on in front, but the river with a loud roar came tearing after. As one who would water his garden leads a stream from some fountain over his plants, and all his ground—spade in hand he clears away the dams to free the channels, and the little stones run rolling round and round with the water as it goes merrily down the bank faster than the man can follow—even so did the river keep catching up with Achilles albeit he was a fleet runner, for the gods are stronger than men. As often as he would strive to stand his ground, and see whether or no all the gods in heaven were in league against him, so often would the mighty wave come beating down upon his shoulders, and he would have to keep flying on and on in great dismay; for the angry flood was tiring him out as it flowed past him and ate the ground from under his feet.

Then the son of Peleus lifted up his voice to heaven saying, "Father Jove, is there none of the gods who will take pity upon me, and save me from the river? I do not care what may happen to me afterwards. I blame none of the other dwellers on Olympus so severely as I do my dear mother, who has beguiled and tricked me. She told me I was to fall under the walls of Troy by the flying arrows of Apollo; would that Hector, the best man among the Trojans, might there slay me; then should I fall a hero by the hand of a hero; whereas now it seems that I shall come to a most pitiable end, trapped in this river as though I were some swineherd's boy, who gets carried down a torrent while trying to cross it during a storm."

As soon as he had spoken thus, Neptune and Minerva came up to him in the likeness of two men, and took him by the hand to reassure him. Neptune spoke first. "Son of Peleus," said he, "be not so exceeding fearful; we are two gods, come with Jove's sanction to assist you, I, and Pallas Minerva. It is not your fate to perish in this river; he will abate presently as you will see; moreover we strongly advise you, if you will be guided by us, not to stay your hand from fighting till you have pent the Trojan host within the famed walls of Ilius—as many of them as may escape. Then kill Hector and go back to the ships, for we will vouchsafe you a triumph over him."

When they had so said they went back to the other immortals, but Achilles strove onward over the plain, encouraged by the charge the gods had laid upon him. All was now covered with the flood of waters, and much goodly armour of the youths that had been slain was rifting about, as also many corpses, but he forced his way against the stream, speeding right onwards, nor could the broad waters stay him, for Minerva had endowed him with great strength. Nevertheless Scamander did not slacken in his pursuit, but was still more furious with the son of Peleus. He lifted his waters into a high crest and cried aloud to Simois saying, "Dear brother, let the two of us unite to save this man, or he will sack the mighty city of King Priam, and the Trojans will not hold out against him. Help me at once; fill your streams with water from their sources, rouse all your torrents to a fury; raise your wave on high, and let snags and stones come thundering down you that we may make an end of this savage creature who is now lording it as though he were a god. Nothing shall serve him longer, not strength nor comeliness, nor his fine armour, which forsooth shall soon be lying low in the deep waters covered over with mud. I will wrap him in sand, and pour tons of shingle round him, so that the Achaeans shall not know how to gather his bones for the silt in which I shall have hidden him, and when they celebrate his funeral they need build no barrow."

On this he upraised his tumultuous flood high against Achilles, seething as it was with foam and blood and the bodies of the dead. The dark waters of the river stood upright and would have overwhelmed the son of Peleus, but Juno, trembling lest Achilles should be swept away in the mighty torrent, lifted her voice on high and called out to Vulcan her son. “Crook-foot,” she cried, “my child, be up and doing, for I deem it is with you that Xanthus is fain to fight; help us at once, kindle a fierce fire; I will then bring up the west and the white south wind in a mighty hurricane from the sea, that shall bear the flames against the heads and armour of the Trojans and consume them, while you go along the banks of Xanthus burning his trees and wrapping him round with fire. Let him not turn you back neither by fair words nor foul, and slacken not till I shout and tell you. Then you may stay your flames.”

On this Vulcan kindled a fierce fire, which broke out first upon the plain and burned the many dead whom Achilles had killed and whose bodies were lying about in great numbers; by this means the plain was dried and the flood stayed. As the north wind, blowing on an orchard that has been sodden with autumn rain, soon dries it, and the heart of the owner is glad—even so the whole plain was dried and the dead bodies were consumed. Then he turned tongues of fire on to the river. He burned the elms the willows and the tamarisks, the lotus also, with the rushes and marshy herbage that grew abundantly by the banks of the river. The eels and fishes that go darting about everywhere in the water, these, too, were sorely harassed by the flames that cunning Vulcan had kindled, and the river himself was scalded, so that he spoke saying, “Vulcan, there is no god can hold his own against you. I cannot fight you when you flare out your flames in this way; strive with me no longer. Let Achilles drive the Trojans out of their city immediately. What have I to do with quarrelling and helping people?”

He was boiling as he spoke, and all his waters were seething. As a cauldron upon a large fire boils when it is melting the lard of some fatted hog, and the lard keeps bubbling up all over when the dry faggots blaze under it—even so were the goodly waters of Xanthus heated with the fire till they were boiling. He could flow no longer but stayed his stream, so afflicted was he by the blasts of fire which cunning Vulcan had raised. Then he prayed to Juno and besought her saying, “Juno, why should your son vex my stream with such especial fury? I am not so much to blame as all the others are who have been helping the Trojans. I will leave off, since you so desire it, and let your son leave off also. Furthermore I swear never again will I do anything to save the Trojans from destruction, not even when all Troy is burning in the flames which the Achaeans will kindle.”

As soon as Juno heard this she said to her son Vulcan, “Son Vulcan, hold now your flames; we ought not to use such violence against a god for the sake of mortals.”

When she had thus spoken Vulcan quenched his flames, and the river went back once more into his own fair bed.

Xanthus was now beaten, so these two left off fighting, for Juno stayed them though she was still angry; but a furious quarrel broke out among the other gods, for they were of divided counsels. They fell on one another with a mighty uproar—earth groaned, and the spacious firmament rang out as with a blare of trumpets. Jove heard as he was sitting on Olympus, and laughed for joy when he saw the gods coming to blows among themselves. They were not long about beginning, and Mars piercer of shields opened the battle. Sword in hand he sprang at once upon Minerva and reviled her. “Why, vixen,” said he, “have you again set the gods by the ears in the pride and haughtiness of your heart? Have you forgotten how you set Diomed son of Tydeus on to wound me, and yourself took visible spear and drove it into me to the hurt of my fair body? You shall now suffer for what you then did to me.”

As he spoke he struck her on the terrible tasselled aegis—so terrible that not even can Jove’s lightning pierce it. Here did murderous Mars strike her with his great spear. She drew back and with her strong hand seized a stone that was lying on the plain—great and rugged and black—which men of old had set for the boundary of a field. With this she struck Mars on the neck, and brought him down. Nine roods did he cover in his fall, and his hair was all soiled in the dust, while his armour rang rattling round him. But Minerva laughed and vaunted over him saying, “Idiot, have you not learned how far stronger I am than you, but you must still match yourself against me? Thus do your mother’s curses now roost upon you, for she is angry and would do you mischief because you have deserted the Achaeans and are helping the Trojans.”

She then turned her two piercing eyes elsewhere, whereon Jove’s daughter Venus took Mars by the hand and led him away groaning all the time, for it was only with great difficulty that he had come to himself again. When Queen Juno saw her, she said to Minerva, “Look, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, that vixen Venus is again taking Mars through the crowd out of the battle; go after her at once.”

Thus she spoke. Minerva sped after Venus with a will, and made at her, striking her on the bosom with her strong hand so that she fell fainting to the ground, and there they both lay stretched at full length. Then Minerva vaunted over her saying, “May all who

help the Trojans against the Argives prove just as redoubtable and stalwart as Venus did when she came across me while she was helping Mars. Had this been so, we should long since have ended the war by sacking the strong city of Ilius."

Juno smiled as she listened. Meanwhile King Neptune turned to Apollo saying, "Phoebus, why should we keep each other at arm's length? it is not well, now that the others have begun fighting; it will be disgraceful to us if we return to Jove's bronze-floored mansion on Olympus without having fought each other; therefore come on, you are the younger of the two, and I ought not to attack you, for I am older and have had more experience. Idiot, you have no sense, and forget how we two alone of all the gods fared hardly round about Ilius when we came from Jove's house and worked for Laomedon a whole year at a stated wage and he gave us his orders. I built the Trojans the wall about their city, so wide and fair that it might be impregnable, while you, Phoebus, herded cattle for him in the dales of many valleyed Ida. When, however, the glad hours brought round the time of payment, mighty Laomedon robbed us of all our hire and sent us off with nothing but abuse. He threatened to bind us hand and foot and sell us over into some distant island. He tried, moreover, to cut off the ears of both of us, so we went away in a rage, furious about the payment he had promised us, and yet withheld; in spite of all this, you are now showing favour to his people, and will not join us in compassing the utter ruin of the proud Trojans with their wives and children."

And King Apollo answered, "Lord of the earthquake, you would have no respect for me if I were to fight you about a pack of miserable mortals, who come out like leaves in summer and eat the fruit of the field, and presently fall lifeless to the ground. Let us stay this fighting at once and let them settle it among themselves."

He turned away as he spoke, for he would lay no hand on the brother of his own father. But his sister the huntress Diana, patroness of wild beasts, was very angry with him and said, "So you would fly, Far-Darter, and hand victory over to Neptune with a cheap vaunt to boot. Baby, why keep your bow thus idle? Never let me again hear you bragging in my father's house, as you have often done in the presence of the immortals, that you would stand up and fight with Neptune."

Apollo made her no answer, but Jove's august queen was angry and upbraided her bitterly. "Bold vixen," she cried, "how dare you cross me thus? For all your bow you will find it hard to hold your own against me. Jove made you as a lion among women, and lets you kill them whenever you choose. You will find it better to chase wild beasts and deer upon the mountains than to fight those who are stronger than you are. If you would try war, do so, and find out by pitting yourself against me, how far stronger I am than you are."

She caught both Diana's wrists with her left hand as she spoke, and with her right she took the bow from her shoulders, and laughed as she beat her with it about the ears while Diana wriggled and writhed under her blows. Her swift arrows were shed upon the ground, and she fled weeping from under Juno's hand as a dove that flies before a falcon to the cleft of some hollow rock, when it is her good fortune to escape. Even so did she fly weeping away, leaving her bow and arrows behind her.

Then the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, said to Leto, "Leto, I shall not fight you; it is ill to come to blows with any of Jove's wives. Therefore boast as you will among the immortals that you worsted me in fair fight."

Leto then gathered up Diana's bow and arrows that had fallen about amid the whirling dust, and when she had got them she made all haste after her daughter. Diana had now reached Jove's bronze-floored mansion on Olympus, and sat herself down with many tears on the knees of her father, while her ambrosial raiment was quivering all about her. The son of Saturn drew her towards him, and laughing pleasantly the while began to question her saying, "Which of the heavenly beings, my dear child, has been treating you in this cruel manner, as though you had been misconducting yourself in the face of everybody?" and the fair-crowned goddess of the chase answered, "It was your wife Juno, father, who has been beating me; it is always her doing when there is any quarrelling among the immortals."

Thus did they converse, and meanwhile Phoebus Apollo entered the strong city of Ilius, for he was uneasy lest the wall should not hold out and the Danaans should take the city then and there, before its hour had come; but the rest of the ever-living gods went back, some angry and some triumphant to Olympus, where they took their seats beside Jove lord of the storm cloud, while Achilles still kept on dealing out death alike on the Trojans and on their horses. As when the smoke from some burning city ascends to heaven when the anger of the gods has kindled it—there is then toil for all, and sorrow for not a few—even so did Achilles bring toil and sorrow on the Trojans.

Old King Priam stood on a high tower of the wall looking down on huge Achilles as the Trojans fled panic-stricken before him, and there was none to help them. Presently he came down from off the tower and with many a groan went along the wall to give orders

to the brave warders of the gate. “Keep the gates,” said he, “wide open till the people come flying into the city, for Achilles is hard by and is driving them in rout before him. I see we are in great peril. As soon as our people are inside and in safety, close the strong gates for I fear lest that terrible man should come bounding inside along with the others.”

As he spoke they drew back the bolts and opened the gates, and when these were opened there was a haven of refuge for the Trojans. Apollo then came full speed out of the city to meet them and protect them. Right for the city and the high wall, parched with thirst and grimy with dust, still they fied on, with Achilles wielding his spear furiously behind them. For he was as one possessed, and was thirsting after glory.

Then had the sons of the Achaeans taken the lofty gates of Troy if Apollo had not spurred on Agenor, valiant and noble son to Antenor. He put courage into his heart, and stood by his side to guard him, leaning against a beech tree and shrouded in thick darkness. When Agenor saw Achilles he stood still and his heart was clouded with care. “Alas,” said he to himself in his dismay, “if I fly before mighty Achilles, and go where all the others are being driven in rout, he will none the less catch me and kill me for a coward. How would it be were I to let Achilles drive the others before him, and then fly from the wall to the plain that is behind Ilius till I reach the spurs of Ida and can hide in the underwood that is thereon? I could then wash the sweat from off me in the river and in the evening return to Ilius. But why commune with myself in this way? Like enough he would see me as I am hurrying from the city over the plain, and would speed after me till he had caught me—I should stand no chance against him, for he is mightiest of all mankind. What, then, if I go out and meet him in front of the city? His flesh too, I take it, can be pierced by pointed bronze. Life is the same in one and all, and men say that he is but mortal despite the triumph that Jove son of Saturn vouchsafes him.”

So saying he stood on his guard and awaited Achilles, for he was now fain to fight him. As a leopardess that bounds from out a thick covert to attack a hunter—she knows no fear and is not dismayed by the baying of the hounds; even though the man be too quick for her and wound her either with thrust or spear, still, though the spear has pierced her she will not give in till she has either caught him in her grip or been killed outright—even so did noble Agenor son of Antenor refuse to fly till he had made trial of Achilles, and took aim at him with his spear, holding his round shield before him and crying with a loud voice. “Of a truth,” said he, “noble Achilles, you deem that you shall this day sack the city of the proud Trojans. Fool, there will be trouble enough yet before it, for there is many a brave man of us still inside who will stand in front of our dear parents with our wives and children, to defend Ilius. Here therefore, huge and mighty warrior though you be, here shall you die.”

As he spoke his strong hand hurled his javelin from him, and the spear struck Achilles on the leg beneath the knee; the greave of newly wrought tin rang loudly, but the spear recoiled from the body of him whom it had struck, and did not pierce it, for the god’s gift stayed it. Achilles in his turn attacked noble Agenor, but Apollo would not vouchsafe him glory, for he snatched Agenor away and hid him in a thick mist, sending him out of the battle unmolested. Then he craftily drew the son of Peleus away from going after the host, for he put on the semblance of Agenor and stood in front of Achilles, who ran towards him to give him chase and pursued him over the corn lands of the plain, turning him towards the deep waters of the river Scamander. Apollo ran but a little way before him and beguiled Achilles by making him think all the time that he was on the point of overtaking him. Meanwhile the rabble of routed Trojans was thankful to crowd within the city till their numbers thronged it; no longer did they dare wait for one another outside the city walls, to learn who had escaped and who were fallen in fight, but all whose feet and knees could still carry them poured pell-mell into the town.

This page titled 3.12.1.21: Book XXI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.22: Book XXII

The death of Hector.

Thus the Trojans in the city, scared like fawns, wiped the sweat from off them and drank to quench their thirst, leaning against the goodly battlements, while the Achaeans with their shields laid upon their shoulders drew close up to the walls. But stern fate bade Hector stay where he was before Ilius and the Scaean gates. Then Phoebus Apollo spoke to the son of Peleus saying, “Why, son of Peleus, do you, who are but man, give chase to me who am immortal? Have you not yet found out that it is a god whom you pursue so furiously? You did not harass the Trojans whom you had routed, and now they are within their walls, while you have been decoyed hither away from them. Me you cannot kill, for death can take no hold upon me.”

Achilles was greatly angered and said, “You have baulked me, Far-Darter, most malicious of all gods, and have drawn me away from the wall, where many another man would have bitten the dust ere he got within Ilius; you have robbed me of great glory and have saved the Trojans at no risk to yourself, for you have nothing to fear, but I would indeed have my revenge if it were in my power to do so.”

On this, with fell intent he made towards the city, and as the winning horse in a chariot race strains every nerve when he is flying over the plain, even so fast and furiously did the limbs of Achilles bear him onwards. King Priam was first to note him as he scoured the plain, all radiant as the star which men call Orion’s Hound, and whose beams blaze forth in time of harvest more brilliantly than those of any other that shines by night; brightest of them all though he be, he yet bodes ill for mortals, for he brings fire and fever in his train—even so did Achilles’ armour gleam on his breast as he sped onwards. Priam raised a cry and beat his head with his hands as he lifted them up and shouted out to his dear son, imploring him to return; but Hector still stayed before the gates, for his heart was set upon doing battle with Achilles. The old man reached out his arms towards him and bade him for pity’s sake come within the walls. “Hector,” he cried, “my son, stay not to face this man alone and unsupported, or you will meet death at the hands of the son of Peleus, for he is mightier than you. Monster that he is; would indeed that the gods loved him no better than I do, for so, dogs and vultures would soon devour him as he lay stretched on earth, and a load of grief would be lifted from my heart, for many a brave son has he reft from me, either by killing them or selling them away in the islands that are beyond the sea: even now I miss two sons from among the Trojans who have thronged within the city, Lycaon and Polydorus, whom Laothoe peeress among women bore me. Should they be still alive and in the hands of the Achaeans, we will ransom them with gold and bronze, of which we have store, for the old man Altes endowed his daughter richly; but if they are already dead and in the house of Hades, sorrow will it be to us two who were their parents; albeit the grief of others will be more short-lived unless you too perish at the hands of Achilles. Come, then, my son, within the city, to be the guardian of Trojan men and Trojan women, or you will both lose your own life and afford a mighty triumph to the son of Peleus. Have pity also on your unhappy father while life yet remains to him—on me, whom the son of Saturn will destroy by a terrible doom on the threshold of old age, after I have seen my sons slain and my daughters haled away as captives, my bridal chambers pillaged, little children dashed to earth amid the rage of battle, and my sons’ wives dragged away by the cruel hands of the Achaeans; in the end fierce hounds will tear me in pieces at my own gates after some one has beaten the life out of my body with sword or spear-hounds that I myself reared and fed at my own table to guard my gates, but who will yet lap my blood and then lie all distraught at my doors. When a young man falls by the sword in battle, he may lie where he is and there is nothing unseemly; let what will be seen, all is honourable in death, but when an old man is slain there is nothing in this world more pitiable than that dogs should defile his grey hair and beard and all that men hide for shame.”

The old man tore his grey hair as he spoke, but he moved not the heart of Hector. His mother hard by wept and moaned aloud as she bared her bosom and pointed to the breast which had suckled him. “Hector,” she cried, weeping bitterly the while, “Hector, my son, spurn not this breast, but have pity upon me too: if I have ever given you comfort from my own bosom, think on it now, dear son, and come within the wall to protect us from this man; stand not without to meet him. Should the wretch kill you, neither I nor your richly dowered wife shall ever weep, dear offshoot of myself, over the bed on which you lie, for dogs will devour you at the ships of the Achaeans.”

Thus did the two with many tears implore their son, but they moved not the heart of Hector, and he stood his ground awaiting huge Achilles as he drew nearer towards him. As a serpent in its den upon the mountains, full fed with deadly poisons, waits for the approach of man—he is filled with fury and his eyes glare terribly as he goes writhing round his den—even so Hector leaned his shield against a tower that jutted out from the wall and stood where he was, undaunted.

"Alas," said he to himself in the heaviness of his heart, "if I go within the gates, Polydamas will be the first to heap reproach upon me, for it was he that urged me to lead the Trojans back to the city on that awful night when Achilles again came forth against us. I would not listen, but it would have been indeed better if I had done so. Now that my folly has destroyed the host, I dare not look Trojan men and Trojan women in the face, lest a worse man should say, 'Hector has ruined us by his self-confidence.' Surely it would be better for me to return after having fought Achilles and slain him, or to die gloriously here before the city. What, again, if I were to lay down my shield and helmet, lean my spear against the wall and go straight up to noble Achilles? What if I were to promise to give up Helen, who was the fountainhead of all this war, and all the treasure that Alexandrus brought with him in his ships to Troy, aye, and to let the Achaeans divide the half of everything that the city contains among themselves? I might make the Trojans, by the mouths of their princes, take a solemn oath that they would hide nothing, but would divide into two shares all that is within the city—but why argue with myself in this way? Were I to go up to him he would show me no kind of mercy; he would kill me then and there as easily as though I were a woman, when I had off my armour. There is no parleying with him from some rock or oak tree as young men and maidens prattle with one another. Better fight him at once, and learn to which of us Jove will vouchsafe victory."

Thus did he stand and ponder, but Achilles came up to him as it were Mars himself, plumed lord of battle. From his right shoulder he brandished his terrible spear of Pelian ash, and the bronze gleamed around him like flashing fire or the rays of the rising sun. Fear fell upon Hector as he beheld him, and he dared not stay longer where he was but fled in dismay from before the gates, while Achilles darted after him at his utmost speed. As a mountain falcon, swiftest of all birds, swoops down upon some cowering dove—the dove flies before him but the falcon with a shrill scream follows close after, resolved to have her—even so did Achilles make straight for Hector with all his might, while Hector fled under the Trojan wall as fast as his limbs could take him.

On they flew along the waggon-road that ran hard by under the wall, past the lookout station, and past the weather-beaten wild fig-tree, till they came to two fair springs which feed the river Scamander. One of these two springs is warm, and steam rises from it as smoke from a burning fire, but the other even in summer is as cold as hail or snow, or the ice that forms on water. Here, hard by the springs, are the goodly washing-troughs of stone, where in the time of peace before the coming of the Achaeans the wives and fair daughters of the Trojans used to wash their clothes. Past these did they fly, the one in front and the other giving chase behind him: good was the man that fled, but better far was he that followed after, and swiftly indeed did they run, for the prize was no mere beast for sacrifice or bullock's hide, as it might be for a common foot-race, but they ran for the life of Hector. As horses in a chariot race speed round the turning-posts when they are running for some great prize—a tripod or woman—at the games in honour of some dead hero, so did these two run full speed three times round the city of Priam. All the gods watched them, and the sire of gods and men was the first to speak.

"Alas," said he, "my eyes behold a man who is dear to me being pursued round the walls of Troy; my heart is full of pity for Hector, who has burned the thigh-bones of many a heifer in my honour, one while on the crests of many-valleyed Ida, and again on the citadel of Troy; and now I see noble Achilles in full pursuit of him round the city of Priam. What say you? Consider among yourselves and decide whether we shall now save him or let him fall, valiant though he be, before Achilles, son of Peleus."

Then Minerva said, "Father, wielder of the lightning, lord of cloud and storm, what mean you? Would you pluck this mortal whose doom has long been decreed out of the jaws of death? Do as you will, but we others shall not be of a mind with you."

And Jove answered, "My child, Trito-born, take heart. I did not speak in full earnest, and I will let you have your way. Do without let or hindrance as you are minded."

Thus did he urge Minerva who was already eager, and down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus.

Achilles was still in full pursuit of Hector, as a hound chasing a fawn which he has started from its covert on the mountains, and hunts through glade and thicket. The fawn may try to elude him by crouching under cover of a bush, but he will scent her out and follow her up until he gets her—even so there was no escape for Hector from the fleet son of Peleus. Whenever he made a set to get near the Dardanian gates and under the walls, that his people might help him by showering down weapons from above, Achilles would gain on him and head him back towards the plain, keeping himself always on the city side. As a man in a dream who fails to lay hands upon another whom he is pursuing—the one cannot escape nor the other overtake—even so neither could Achilles come up with Hector, nor Hector break away from Achilles; nevertheless he might even yet have escaped death had not the time come when Apollo, who thus far had sustained his strength and nerved his running, was now no longer to stay by him. Achilles made signs to the Achaean host, and shook his head to show that no man was to aim a dart at Hector, lest another might win the glory of

having hit him and he might himself come in second. Then, at last, as they were nearing the fountains for the fourth time, the father of all balanced his golden scales and placed a doom in each of them, one for Achilles and the other for Hector. As he held the scales by the middle, the doom of Hector fell down deep into the house of Hades—and then Phoebus Apollo left him. Thereon Minerva went close up to the son of Peleus and said, “Noble Achilles, favoured of heaven, we two shall surely take back to the ships a triumph for the Achaeans by slaying Hector, for all his lust of battle. Do what Apollo may as he lies grovelling before his father, aegis-bearing Jove, Hector cannot escape us longer. Stay here and take breath, while I go up to him and persuade him to make a stand and fight you.”

Thus spoke Minerva. Achilles obeyed her gladly, and stood still, leaning on his bronze-pointed ashen spear, while Minerva left him and went after Hector in the form and with the voice of Deiphobus. She came close up to him and said, “Dear brother, I see you are hard pressed by Achilles who is chasing you at full speed round the city of Priam, let us await his onset and stand on our defence.”

And Hector answered, “Deiphobus, you have always been dearest to me of all my brothers, children of Hecuba and Priam, but henceforth I shall rate you yet more highly, inasmuch as you have ventured outside the wall for my sake when all the others remain inside.”

Then Minerva said, “Dear brother, my father and mother went down on their knees and implored me, as did all my comrades, to remain inside, so great a fear has fallen upon them all; but I was in an agony of grief when I beheld you; now, therefore, let us two make a stand and fight, and let there be no keeping our spears in reserve, that we may learn whether Achilles shall kill us and bear off our spoils to the ships, or whether he shall fall before you.”

Thus did Minerva inveigle him by her cunning, and when the two were now close to one another great Hector was first to speak. “I will no longer fly you, son of Peleus,” said he, “as I have been doing hitherto. Three times have I fled round the mighty city of Priam, without daring to withstand you, but now, let me either slay or be slain, for I am in the mind to face you. Let us, then, give pledges to one another by our gods, who are the fittest witnesses and guardians of all covenants; let it be agreed between us that if Jove vouchsafes me the longer stay and I take your life, I am not to treat your dead body in any unseemly fashion, but when I have stripped you of your armour, I am to give up your body to the Achaeans. And do you likewise.”

Achilles glared at him and answered, “Fool, prate not to me about covenants. There can be no covenants between men and lions, wolves and lambs can never be of one mind, but hate each other out and out all through. Therefore there can be no understanding between you and me, nor may there be any covenants between us, till one or other shall fall and glut grim Mars with his life’s blood. Put forth all your strength; you have need now to prove yourself indeed a bold soldier and man of war. You have no more chance, and Pallas Minerva will forthwith vanquish you by my spear: you shall now pay me in full for the grief you have caused me on account of my comrades whom you have killed in battle.”

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it. Hector saw it coming and avoided it; he watched it and crouched down so that it flew over his head and stuck in the ground beyond; Minerva then snatched it up and gave it back to Achilles without Hector’s seeing her; Hector thereon said to the son of Peleus, “You have missed your aim, Achilles, peer of the gods, and Jove has not yet revealed to you the hour of my doom, though you made sure that he had done so. You were a false-tongued liar when you deemed that I should forget my valour and quail before you. You shall not drive your spear into the back of a runaway—drive it, should heaven so grant you power, drive it into me as I make straight towards you; and now for your own part avoid my spear if you can—would that you might receive the whole of it into your body; if you were once dead the Trojans would find the war an easier matter, for it is you who have harmed them most.”

He poised his spear as he spoke and hurled it. His aim was true for he hit the middle of Achilles’ shield, but the spear rebounded from it, and did not pierce it. Hector was angry when he saw that the weapon had sped from his hand in vain, and stood there in dismay for he had no second spear. With a loud cry he called Deiphobus and asked him for one, but there was no man; then he saw the truth and said to himself, “Alas! the gods have lured me on to my destruction. I deemed that the hero Deiphobus was by my side, but he is within the wall, and Minerva has inveigled me; death is now indeed exceedingly near at hand and there is no way out of it—for so Jove and his son Apollo the far-darter have willed it, though heretofore they have been ever ready to protect me. My doom has come upon me; let me not then die ingloriously and without a struggle, but let me first do some great thing that shall be told among men hereafter.”

As he spoke he drew the keen blade that hung so great and strong by his side, and gathering himself together be sprang on Achilles like a soaring eagle which swoops down from the clouds on to some lamb or timid hare—even so did Hector brandish his sword

and spring upon Achilles. Achilles mad with rage darted towards him, with his wondrous shield before his breast, and his gleaming helmet, made with four layers of metal, nodding fiercely forward. The thick tresses of gold with which Vulcan had crested the helmet floated round it, and as the evening star that shines brighter than all others through the stillness of night, even such was the gleam of the spear which Achilles poised in his right hand, fraught with the death of noble Hector. He eyed his fair flesh over and over to see where he could best wound it, but all was protected by the goodly armour of which Hector had spoiled Patroclus after he had slain him, save only the throat where the collar-bones divide the neck from the shoulders, and this is a most deadly place: here then did Achilles strike him as he was coming on towards him, and the point of his spear went right through the fleshy part of the neck, but it did not sever his windpipe so that he could still speak. Hector fell headlong, and Achilles vaunted over him saying, "Hector, you deemed that you should come off scatheless when you were spoiling Patroclus, and recked not of myself who was not with him. Fool that you were: for I, his comrade, mightier far than he, was still left behind him at the ships, and now I have laid you low. The Achaeans shall give him all due funeral rites, while dogs and vultures shall work their will upon yourself."

Then Hector said, as the life ebbed out of him, "I pray you by your life and knees, and by your parents, let not dogs devour me at the ships of the Achaeans, but accept the rich treasure of gold and bronze which my father and mother will offer you, and send my body home, that the Trojans and their wives may give me my dues of fire when I am dead."

Achilles glared at him and answered, "Dog, talk not to me neither of knees nor parents; would that I could be as sure of being able to cut your flesh into pieces and eat it raw, for the ill you have done me, as I am that nothing shall save you from the dogs—it shall not be, though they bring ten or twenty-fold ransom and weigh it out for me on the spot, with promise of yet more hereafter. Though Priam son of Dardanus should bid them offer me your weight in gold, even so your mother shall never lay you out and make lament over the son she bore, but dogs and vultures shall eat you utterly up."

Hector with his dying breath then said, "I know you what you are, and was sure that I should not move you, for your heart is hard as iron; look to it that I bring not heaven's anger upon you on the day when Paris and Phoebus Apollo, valiant though you be, shall slay you at the Scaean gates."

When he had thus said the shrouds of death enfolded him, whereon his soul went out of him and flew down to the house of Hades, lamenting its sad fate that it should enjoy youth and strength no longer. But Achilles said, speaking to the dead body, "Die; for my part I will accept my fate whensoever Jove and the other gods see fit to send it."

As he spoke he drew his spear from the body and set it on one side; then he stripped the blood-stained armour from Hector's shoulders while the other Achaeans came running up to view his wondrous strength and beauty; and no one came near him without giving him a fresh wound. Then would one turn to his neighbour and say, "It is easier to handle Hector now than when he was flinging fire on to our ships"—and as he spoke he would thrust his spear into him anew.

When Achilles had done spoiling Hector of his armour, he stood among the Argives and said, "My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, now that heaven has vouchsafed us to overcome this man, who has done us more hurt than all the others together, consider whether we should not attack the city in force, and discover in what mind the Trojans may be. We should thus learn whether they will desert their city now that Hector has fallen, or will still hold out even though he is no longer living. But why argue with myself in this way, while Patroclus is still lying at the ships unburied, and unmourned—he whom I can never forget so long as I am alive and my strength fails not? Though men forget their dead when once they are within the house of Hades, yet not even there will I forget the comrade whom I have lost. Now, therefore, Achaean youths, let us raise the song of victory and go back to the ships taking this man along with us; for we have achieved a mighty triumph and have slain noble Hector to whom the Trojans prayed throughout their city as though he were a god."

On this he treated the body of Hector with contumely: he pierced the sinews at the back of both his feet from heel to ancle and passed thongs of ox-hide through the slits he had made: thus he made the body fast to his chariot, letting the head trail upon the ground. Then when he had put the goodly armour on the chariot and had himself mounted, he lashed his horses on and they flew forward nothing loth. The dust rose from Hector as he was being dragged along, his dark hair flew all abroad, and his head once so comely was laid low on earth, for Jove had now delivered him into the hands of his foes to do him outrage in his own land.

Thus was the head of Hector being dishonoured in the dust. His mother tore her hair, and flung her veil from her with a loud cry as she looked upon her son. His father made piteous moan, and throughout the city the people fell to weeping and wailing. It was as though the whole of frowning Ilius was being smirched with fire. Hardly could the people hold Priam back in his hot haste to rush without the gates of the city. He grovelled in the mire and besought them, calling each one of them by his name. "Let be, my

friends," he cried, "and for all your sorrow, suffer me to go single-handed to the ships of the Achaeans. Let me beseech this cruel and terrible man, if maybe he will respect the feeling of his fellow-men, and have compassion on my old age. His own father is even such another as myself—Peleus, who bred him and reared him to be the bane of us Trojans, and of myself more than of all others. Many a son of mine has he slain in the flower of his youth, and yet, grieve for these as I may, I do so for one—Hector—more than for them all, and the bitterness of my sorrow will bring me down to the house of Hades. Would that he had died in my arms, for so both his ill-starred mother who bore him, and myself, should have had the comfort of weeping and mourning over him."

Thus did he speak with many tears, and all the people of the city joined in his lament. Hecuba then raised the cry of wailing among the Trojans. "Alas, my son," she cried, "what have I left to live for now that you are no more? Night and day did I glory in you throughout the city, for you were a tower of strength to all in Troy, and both men and women alike hailed you as a god. So long as you lived you were their pride, but now death and destruction have fallen upon you."

Hector's wife had as yet heard nothing, for no one had come to tell her that her husband had remained without the gates. She was at her loom in an inner part of the house, weaving a double purple web, and embroidering it with many flowers. She told her maids to set a large tripod on the fire, so as to have a warm bath ready for Hector when he came out of battle; poor woman, she knew not that he was now beyond the reach of baths, and that Minerva had laid him low by the hands of Achilles. She heard the cry coming as from the wall, and trembled in every limb; the shuttle fell from her hands, and again she spoke to her waiting-women. "Two of you," she said, "come with me that I may learn what it is that has befallen; I heard the voice of my husband's honoured mother; my own heart beats as though it would come into my mouth and my limbs refuse to carry me; some great misfortune for Priam's children must be at hand. May I never live to hear it, but I greatly fear that Achilles has cut off the retreat of brave Hector and has chased him on to the plain where he was singlehanded; I fear he may have put an end to the reckless daring which possessed my husband, who would never remain with the body of his men, but would dash on far in front, foremost of them all in valour."

Her heart beat fast, and as she spoke she flew from the house like a maniac, with her waiting-women following after. When she reached the battlements and the crowd of people, she stood looking out upon the wall, and saw Hector being borne away in front of the city—the horses dragging him without heed or care over the ground towards the ships of the Achaeans. Her eyes were then shrouded as with the darkness of night and she fell fainting backwards. She tore the attiring from her head and flung it from her, the frontlet and net with its plaited band, and the veil which golden Venus had given her on the day when Hector took her with him from the house of Eetion, after having given countless gifts of wooing for her sake. Her husband's sisters and the wives of his brothers crowded round her and supported her, for she was fain to die in her distraction; when she again presently breathed and came to herself, she sobbed and made lament among the Trojans saying, "Woe is me, O Hector; woe, indeed, that to share a common lot we were born, you at Troy in the house of Priam, and I at Thebes under the wooded mountain of Placus in the house of Eetion who brought me up when I was a child—ill-starred sire of an ill-starred daughter—would that he had never begotten me. You are now going into the house of Hades under the secret places of the earth, and you leave me a sorrowing widow in your house. The child, of whom you and I are the unhappy parents, is as yet a mere infant. Now that you are gone, O Hector, you can do nothing for him nor he for you. Even though he escape the horrors of this woeful war with the Achaeans, yet shall his life henceforth be one of labour and sorrow, for others will seize his lands. The day that robs a child of his parents severs him from his own kind; his head is bowed, his cheeks are wet with tears, and he will go about destitute among the friends of his father, plucking one by the cloak and another by the shirt. Some one or other of these may so far pity him as to hold the cup for a moment towards him and let him moisten his lips, but he must not drink enough to wet the roof of his mouth; then one whose parents are alive will drive him from the table with blows and angry words. 'Out with you,' he will say, 'you have no father here,' and the child will go crying back to his widowed mother—he, Astyanax, who erewhile would sit upon his father's knees, and have none but the daintiest and choicest morsels set before him. When he had played till he was tired and went to sleep, he would lie in a bed, in the arms of his nurse, on a soft couch, knowing neither want nor care, whereas now that he has lost his father his lot will be full of hardship—he, whom the Trojans name Astyanax, because you, O Hector, were the only defence of their gates and battlements. The wriggling writhing worms will now eat you at the ships, far from your parents, when the dogs have glutted themselves upon you. You will lie naked, although in your house you have fine and goodly raiment made by hands of women. This will I now burn; it is of no use to you, for you can never again wear it, and thus you will have respect shown you by the Trojans both men and women."

In such wise did she cry aloud amid her tears, and the women joined in her lament.

This page titled 3.12.1.22: Book XXII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.23: Book XXIII

The funeral of Patroclus, and the funeral games.

Thus did they make their moan throughout the city, while the Achaeans when they reached the Hellespont went back every man to his own ship. But Achilles would not let the Myrmidons go, and spoke to his brave comrades saying, “Myrmidons, famed horsemen and my own trusted friends, not yet, forsooth, let us unyoke, but with horse and chariot draw near to the body and mourn Patroclus, in due honour to the dead. When we have had full comfort of lamentation we will unyoke our horses and take supper all of us here.”

On this they all joined in a cry of wailing and Achilles led them in their lament. Thrice did they drive their chariots all sorrowing round the body, and Thetis stirred within them a still deeper yearning. The sands of the seashore and the men’s armour were wet with their weeping, so great a minister of fear was he whom they had lost. Chief in all their mourning was the son of Peleus: he laid his bloodstained hand on the breast of his friend. “Fare well,” he cried, “Patroclus, even in the house of Hades. I will now do all that I erewhile promised you; I will drag Hector hither and let dogs devour him raw; twelve noble sons of Trojans will I also slay before your pyre to avenge you.”

As he spoke he treated the body of noble Hector with contumely, laying it at full length in the dust beside the bier of Patroclus. The others then put off every man his armour, took the horses from their chariots, and seated themselves in great multitude by the ship of the fleet descendant of Aeacus, who thereon feasted them with an abundant funeral banquet. Many a goodly ox, with many a sheep and bleating goat did they butcher and cut up; many a tusked boar moreover, fat and well-fed, did they singe and set to roast in the flames of Vulcan; and rivulets of blood flowed all round the place where the body was lying.

Then the princes of the Achaeans took the son of Peleus to Agamemnon, but hardly could they persuade him to come with them, so wroth was he for the death of his comrade. As soon as they reached Agamemnon’s tent they told the serving-men to set a large tripod over the fire in case they might persuade the son of Peleus to wash the clotted gore from this body, but he denied them sternly, and swore it with a solemn oath, saying, “Nay, by King Jove, first and mightiest of all gods, it is not meet that water should touch my body, till I have laid Patroclus on the flames, have built him a barrow, and shaved my head—for so long as I live no such second sorrow shall ever draw nigh me. Now, therefore, let us do all that this sad festival demands, but at break of day, King Agamemnon, bid your men bring wood, and provide all else that the dead may duly take into the realm of darkness; the fire shall thus burn him out of our sight the sooner, and the people shall turn again to their own labours.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. They made haste to prepare the meal, they ate, and every man had his full share so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, the others went to their rest each in his own tent, but the son of Peleus lay grieving among his Myrmidons by the shore of the sounding sea, in an open place where the waves came surging in one after another. Here a very deep slumber took hold upon him and eased the burden of his sorrows, for his limbs were weary with chasing Hector round windy Ilius. Presently the sad spirit of Patroclus drew near him, like what he had been in stature, voice, and the light of his beaming eyes, clad, too, as he had been clad in life. The spirit hovered over his head and said—

“You sleep, Achilles, and have forgotten me; you loved me living, but now that I am dead you think for me no further. Bury me with all speed that I may pass the gates of Hades; the ghosts, vain shadows of men that can labour no more, drive me away from them; they will not yet suffer me to join those that are beyond the river, and I wander all desolate by the wide gates of the house of Hades. Give me now your hand I pray you, for when you have once given me my dues of fire, never shall I again come forth out of the house of Hades. Nevermore shall we sit apart and take sweet counsel among the living; the cruel fate which was my birth-right has yawned its wide jaws around me—nay, you too Achilles, peer of gods, are doomed to die beneath the wall of the noble Trojans.

“One prayer more will I make you, if you will grant it; let not my bones be laid apart from yours, Achilles, but with them; even as we were brought up together in your own home, what time Menoetius brought me to you as a child from Opoeis because by a sad spite I had killed the son of Amphidamas—not of set purpose, but in childish quarrel over the dice. The knight Peleus took me into his house, entreated me kindly, and named me to be your squire; therefore let our bones lie in but a single urn, the two-handled golden vase given to you by your mother.”

And Achilles answered, “Why, true heart, are you come hither to lay these charges upon me? I will of my own self do all as you have bidden me. Draw closer to me, let us once more throw our arms around one another, and find sad comfort in the sharing of our sorrows.”

He opened his arms towards him as he spoke and would have clasped him in them, but there was nothing, and the spirit vanished as a vapour, gibbering and whining into the earth. Achilles sprang to his feet, smote his two hands, and made lamentation saying, “Of a truth even in the house of Hades there are ghosts and phantoms that have no life in them; all night long the sad spirit of Patroclus has hovered over head making piteous moan, telling me what I am to do for him, and looking wondrously like himself.”

Thus did he speak and his words set them all weeping and mourning about the poor dumb dead, till rosy-fingered morn appeared. Then King Agamemnon sent men and mules from all parts of the camp, to bring wood, and Meriones, squire to Idomeneus, was in charge over them. They went out with woodmen’s axes and strong ropes in their hands, and before them went the mules. Up hill and down dale did they go, by straight ways and crooked, and when they reached the heights of many-fountained Ida, they laid their axes to the roots of many a tall branching oak that came thundering down as they felled it. They split the trees and bound them behind the mules, which then wended their way as they best could through the thick brushwood on to the plain. All who had been cutting wood bore logs, for so Meriones squire to Idomeneus had bidden them, and they threw them down in a line upon the seashore at the place where Achilles would make a mighty monument for Patroclus and for himself.

When they had thrown down their great logs of wood over the whole ground, they stayed all of them where they were, but Achilles ordered his brave Myrmidons to gird on their armour, and to yoke each man his horses; they therefore rose, girded on their armour and mounted each his chariot—they and their charioteers with them. The chariots went before, and they that were on foot followed as a cloud in their tens of thousands after. In the midst of them his comrades bore Patroclus and covered him with the locks of their hair which they cut off and threw upon his body. Last came Achilles with his head bowed for sorrow, so noble a comrade was he taking to the house of Hades.

When they came to the place of which Achilles had told them they laid the body down and built up the wood. Achilles then bethought him of another matter. He went a space away from the pyre, and cut off the yellow lock which he had let grow for the river Spercheius. He looked all sorrowfully out upon the dark sea, and said, “Spercheius, in vain did my father Peleus vow to you that when I returned home to my loved native land I should cut off this lock and offer you a holy hecatomb; fifty she-goats was I to sacrifice to you there at your springs, where is your grove and your altar fragrant with burnt-offerings. Thus did my father vow, but you have not fulfilled his prayer; now, therefore, that I shall see my home no more, I give this lock as a keepsake to the hero Patroclus.”

As he spoke he placed the lock in the hands of his dear comrade, and all who stood by were filled with yearning and lamentation. The sun would have gone down upon their mourning had not Achilles presently said to Agamemnon, “Son of Atreus, for it is to you that the people will give ear, there is a time to mourn and a time to cease from mourning; bid the people now leave the pyre and set about getting their dinners: we, to whom the dead is dearest, will see to what is wanted here, and let the other princes also stay by me.”

When King Agamemnon heard this he dismissed the people to their ships, but those who were about the dead heaped up wood and built a pyre a hundred feet this way and that; then they laid the dead all sorrowfully upon the top of it. They flayed and dressed many fat sheep and oxen before the pyre, and Achilles took fat from all of them and wrapped the body therein from head to foot, heaping the flayed carcases all round it. Against the bier he leaned two-handled jars of honey and unguents; four proud horses did he then cast upon the pyre, groaning the while he did so. The dead hero had had house-dogs; two of them did Achilles slay and threw upon the pyre; he also put twelve brave sons of noble Trojans to the sword and laid them with the rest, for he was full of bitterness and fury. Then he committed all to the resistless and devouring might of the fire; he groaned aloud and called on his dead comrade by name. “Fare well,” he cried, “Patroclus, even in the house of Hades; I am now doing all that I have promised you. Twelve brave sons of noble Trojans shall the flames consume along with yourself, but dogs, not fire, shall devour the flesh of Hector son of Priam.”

Thus did he vaunt, but the dogs came not about the body of Hector, for Jove’s daughter Venus kept them off him night and day, and anointed him with ambrosial oil of roses that his flesh might not be torn when Achilles was dragging him about. Phoebus Apollo moreover sent a dark cloud from heaven to earth, which gave shade to the whole place where Hector lay, that the heat of the sun might not parch his body.

Now the pyre about dead Patroclus would not kindle. Achilles therefore bethought him of another matter; he went apart and prayed to the two winds Boreas and Zephyrus vowing them goodly offerings. He made them many drink-offerings from the golden cup and besought them to come and help him that the wood might make haste to kindle and the dead bodies be consumed. Fleet Iris

heard him praying and started off to fetch the winds. They were holding high feast in the house of boisterous Zephyrus when Iris came running up to the stone threshold of the house and stood there, but as soon as they set eyes on her they all came towards her and each of them called her to him, but Iris would not sit down. “I cannot stay,” she said, “I must go back to the streams of Oceanus and the land of the Ethiopians who are offering hecatombs to the immortals, and I would have my share; but Achilles prays that Boreas and shrill Zephyrus will come to him, and he vows them goodly offerings; he would have you blow upon the pyre of Patroclus for whom all the Achaeans are lamenting.”

With this she left them, and the two winds rose with a cry that rent the air and swept the clouds before them. They blew on and on until they came to the sea, and the waves rose high beneath them, but when they reached Troy they fell upon the pyre till the mighty flames roared under the blast that they blew. All night long did they blow hard and beat upon the fire, and all night long did Achilles grasp his double cup, drawing wine from a mixing-bowl of gold, and calling upon the spirit of dead Patroclus as he poured it upon the ground until the earth was drenched. As a father mourns when he is burning the bones of his bridegroom son whose death has wrung the hearts of his parents, even so did Achilles mourn while burning the body of his comrade, pacing round the bier with piteous groaning and lamentation.

At length as the Morning Star was beginning to herald the light which saffron-mantled Dawn was soon to suffuse over the sea, the flames fell and the fire began to die. The winds then went home beyond the Thracian sea, which roared and boiled as they swept over it. The son of Peleus now turned away from the pyre and lay down, overcome with toil, till he fell into a sweet slumber. Presently they who were about the son of Atreus drew near in a body, and roused him with the noise and tramp of their coming. He sat upright and said, “Son of Atreus, and all other princes of the Achaeans, first pour red wine everywhere upon the fire and quench it; let us then gather the bones of Patroclus son of Menoetius, singling them out with care; they are easily found, for they lie in the middle of the pyre, while all else, both men and horses, has been thrown in a heap and burned at the outer edge. We will lay the bones in a golden urn, in two layers of fat, against the time when I shall myself go down into the house of Hades. As for the barrow, labour not to raise a great one now, but such as is reasonable. Afterwards, let those Achaeans who may be left at the ships when I am gone, build it both broad and high.”

Thus he spoke and they obeyed the word of the son of Peleus. First they poured red wine upon the thick layer of ashes and quenched the fire. With many tears they singled out the whitened bones of their loved comrade and laid them within a golden urn in two layers of fat: they then covered the urn with a linen cloth and took it inside the tent. They marked off the circle where the barrow should be, made a foundation for it about the pyre, and forthwith heaped up the earth. When they had thus raised a mound they were going away, but Achilles stayed the people and made them sit in assembly. He brought prizes from the ships—cauldrons, tripods, horses and mules, noble oxen, women with fair girdles, and swart iron.

The first prize he offered was for the chariot races—a woman skilled in all useful arts, and a three-legged cauldron that had ears for handles, and would hold twenty-two measures. This was for the man who came in first. For the second there was a six-year old mare, unbroken, and in foal to a he-ass; the third was to have a goodly cauldron that had never yet been on the fire; it was still bright as when it left the maker, and would hold four measures. The fourth prize was two talents of gold, and the fifth a two-handled urn as yet unsoiled by smoke. Then he stood up and spoke among the Argives saying—

“Son of Atreus, and all other Achaeans, these are the prizes that lie waiting the winners of the chariot races. At any other time I should carry off the first prize and take it to my own tent; you know how far my steeds excel all others—for they are immortal; Neptune gave them to my father Peleus, who in his turn gave them to myself; but I shall hold aloof, I and my steeds that have lost their brave and kind driver, who many a time has washed them in clear water and anointed their manes with oil. See how they stand weeping here, with their manes trailing on the ground in the extremity of their sorrow. But do you others set yourselves in order throughout the host, whosoever has confidence in his horses and in the strength of his chariot.”

Thus spoke the son of Peleus and the drivers of chariots bestirred themselves. First among them all uprose Eumelus, king of men, son of Admetus, a man excellent in horsemanship. Next to him rose mighty Diomed son of Tydeus; he yoked the Trojan horses which he had taken from Aeneas, when Apollo bore him out of the fight. Next to him, yellow-haired Menelaus son of Atreus rose and yoked his fleet horses, Agamemnon’s mare Aethe, and his own horse Podargus. The mare had been given to Agamemnon by Echepolus son of Anchises, that he might not have to follow him to Ilius, but might stay at home and take his ease; for Jove had endowed him with great wealth and he lived in spacious Sicyon. This mare, all eager for the race, did Menelaus put under the yoke.

Fourth in order Antilochus, son to noble Nestor son of Neleus, made ready his horses. These were bred in Pylos, and his father came up to him to give him good advice of which, however, he stood in but little need. “Antilochus,” said Nestor, “you are young, but Jove and Neptune have loved you well, and have made you an excellent horseman. I need not therefore say much by way of instruction. You are skilful at wheeling your horses round the post, but the horses themselves are very slow, and it is this that will, I fear, mar your chances. The other drivers know less than you do, but their horses are fleeter; therefore, my dear son, see if you cannot hit upon some artifice whereby you may insure that the prize shall not slip through your fingers. The woodman does more by skill than by brute force; by skill the pilot guides his storm-tossed barque over the sea, and so by skill one driver can beat another. If a man go wide in rounding this way and that, whereas a man who knows what he is doing may have worse horses, but he will keep them well in hand when he sees the doubling-post; he knows the precise moment at which to pull the rein, and keeps his eye well on the man in front of him. I will give you this certain token which cannot escape your notice. There is a stump of a dead tree—oak or pine as it may be—some six feet above the ground, and not yet rotted away by rain; it stands at the fork of the road; it has two white stones set one on each side, and there is a clear course all round it. It may have been a monument to some one long since dead, or it may have been used as a doubling-post in days gone by; now, however, it has been fixed on by Achilles as the mark round which the chariots shall turn; hug it as close as you can, but as you stand in your chariot lean over a little to the left; urge on your right-hand horse with voice and lash, and give him a loose rein, but let the left-hand horse keep so close in, that the nave of your wheel shall almost graze the post; but mind the stone, or you will wound your horses and break your chariot in pieces, which would be sport for others but confusion for yourself. Therefore, my dear son, mind well what you are about, for if you can be first to round the post there is no chance of any one giving you the go-by later, not even though you had Adrestus’s horse Arion behind you—a horse which is of divine race—or those of Laomedon, which are the noblest in this country.”

When Nestor had made an end of counselling his son he sat down in his place, and fifth in order Meriones got ready his horses. They then all mounted their chariots and cast lots. Achilles shook the helmet, and the lot of Antilochus son of Nestor fell out first; next came that of King Eumelus, and after his, those of Menelaus son of Atreus and of Meriones. The last place fell to the lot of Diomed son of Tydeus, who was the best man of them all. They took their places in line; Achilles showed them the doubling-post round which they were to turn, some way off upon the plain; here he stationed his father’s follower Phoenix as umpire, to note the running, and report truly.

At the same instant they all of them lashed their horses, struck them with the reins, and shouted at them with all their might. They flew full speed over the plain away from the ships, the dust rose from under them as it were a cloud or whirlwind, and their manes were all flying in the wind. At one moment the chariots seemed to touch the ground, and then again they bounded into the air; the drivers stood erect, and their hearts beat fast and furious in their lust of victory. Each kept calling on his horses, and the horses scoured the plain amid the clouds of dust that they raised.

It was when they were doing the last part of the course on their way back towards the sea that their pace was strained to the utmost and it was seen what each could do. The horses of the descendant of Pheres now took the lead, and close behind them came the Trojan stallions of Diomed. They seemed as if about to mount Eumelus’s chariot, and he could feel their warm breath on his back and on his broad shoulders, for their heads were close to him as they flew over the course. Diomed would have now passed him, or there would have been a dead heat, but Phoebus Apollo to spite him made him drop his whip. Tears of anger fell from his eyes as he saw the mares going on faster than ever, while his own horses lost ground through his having no whip. Minerva saw the trick which Apollo had played the son of Tydeus, so she brought him his whip and put spirit into his horses; moreover she went after the son of Admetus in a rage and broke his yoke for him; the mares went one to one side of the course, and the other to the other, and the pole was broken against the ground. Eumelus was thrown from his chariot close to the wheel; his elbows, mouth, and nostrils were all torn, and his forehead was bruised above his eyebrows; his eyes filled with tears and he could find no utterance. But the son of Tydeus turned his horses aside and shot far ahead, for Minerva put fresh strength into them and covered Diomed himself with glory.

Menelaus son of Atreus came next behind him, but Antilochus called to his father’s horses. “On with you both,” he cried, “and do your very utmost. I do not bid you try to beat the steeds of the son of Tydeus, for Minerva has put running into them, and has covered Diomed with glory; but you must overtake the horses of the son of Atreus and not be left behind, or Aethe who is so fleet will taunt you. Why, my good fellows, are you lagging? I tell you, and it shall surely be—Nestor will keep neither of you, but will put both of you to the sword, if we win any the worse a prize through your carelessness. Fly after them at your utmost speed; I will hit on a plan for passing them in a narrow part of the way, and it shall not fail me.”

They feared the rebuke of their master, and for a short space went quicker. Presently Antilochus saw a narrow place where the road had sunk. The ground was broken, for the winter's rain had gathered and had worn the road so that the whole place was deepened. Menelaus was making towards it so as to get there first, for fear of a foul, but Antilochus turned his horses out of the way, and followed him a little on one side. The son of Atreus was afraid and shouted out, "Antilochus, you are driving recklessly; rein in your horses; the road is too narrow here, it will be wider soon, and you can pass me then; if you foul my chariot you may bring both of us to a mischief."

But Antilochus plied his whip, and drove faster, as though he had not heard him. They went side by side for about as far as a young man can hurl a disc from his shoulder when he is trying his strength, and then Menelaus's mares drew behind, for he left off driving for fear the horses should foul one another and upset the chariots; thus, while pressing on in quest of victory, they might both come headlong to the ground. Menelaus then upbraided Antilochus and said, "There is no greater trickster living than you are; go, and bad luck go with you; the Achaeans say not well that you have understanding, and come what may you shall not bear away the prize without sworn protest on my part."

Then he called on his horses and said to them, "Keep your pace, and slacken not; the limbs of the other horses will weary sooner than yours, for they are neither of them young."

The horses feared the rebuke of their master, and went faster, so that they were soon nearly up with the others.

Meanwhile the Achaeans from their seats were watching how the horses went, as they scoured the plain amid clouds of their own dust. Idomeneus captain of the Cretans was first to make out the running, for he was not in the thick of the crowd, but stood on the most commanding part of the ground. The driver was a long way off, but Idomeneus could hear him shouting, and could see the foremost horse quite plainly—a chestnut with a round white star, like the moon, on its forehead. He stood up and said among the Argives, "My friends, princes and counsellors of the Argives, can you see the running as well as I can? There seems to be another pair in front now, and another driver; those that led off at the start must have been disabled out on the plain. I saw them at first making their way round the doubling-post, but now, though I search the plain of Troy, I cannot find them. Perhaps the reins fell from the driver's hand so that he lost command of his horses at the doubling-post, and could not turn it. I suppose he must have been thrown out there, and broken his chariot, while his mares have left the course and gone off wildly in a panic. Come up and see for yourselves, I cannot make out for certain, but the driver seems an Aetolian by descent, ruler over the Argives, brave Diomed the son of Tydeus."

Ajax the son of Oileus took him up rudely and said, "Idomeneus, why should you be in such a hurry to tell us all about it, when the mares are still so far out upon the plain? You are none of the youngest, nor your eyes none of the sharpest, but you are always laying down the law. You have no right to do so, for there are better men here than you are. Eumelus's horses are in front now, as they always have been, and he is on the chariot holding the reins."

The captain of the Cretans was angry, and answered, "Ajax you are an excellent railer, but you have no judgement, and are wanting in much else as well, for you have a vile temper. I will wager you a tripod or cauldron, and Agamemnon son of Atreus shall decide whose horses are first. You will then know to your cost."

Ajax son of Oileus was for making him an angry answer, and there would have been yet further brawling between them, had not Achilles risen in his place and said, "Cease your railing, Ajax and Idomeneus; it is not seemly; you would be scandalised if you saw any one else do the like: sit down and keep your eyes on the horses; they are speeding towards the winning-post and will be here directly. You will then both of you know whose horses are first, and whose come after."

As he was speaking, the son of Tydeus came driving in, plying his whip lustily from his shoulder, and his horses stepping high as they flew over the course. The sand and grit rained thick on the driver, and the chariot inlaid with gold and tin ran close behind his fleet horses. There was little trace of wheel-marks in the fine dust, and the horses came flying in at their utmost speed. Diomed stayed them in the middle of the crowd, and the sweat from their manes and chests fell in streams on to the ground. Forthwith he sprang from his goodly chariot, and leaned his whip against his horses' yoke; brave Sthenelus now lost no time, but at once brought on the prize, and gave the woman and the ear-handled cauldron to his comrades to take away. Then he unyoked the horses.

Next after him came in Antilochus of the race of Neleus, who had passed Menelaus by a trick and not by the fleetness of his horses; but even so Menelaus came in as close behind him as the wheel is to the horse that draws both the chariot and its master. The end hairs of a horse's tail touch the tyre of the wheel, and there is never much space between wheel and horse when the chariot is going;

Menelaus was no further than this behind Antilochus, though at first he had been a full disc's throw behind him. He had soon caught him up again, for Agamemnon's mare Aethe kept pulling stronger and stronger, so that if the course had been longer he would have passed him, and there would not even have been a dead heat. Idomeneus's brave squire Meriones was about a spear's cast behind Menelaus. His horses were slowest of all, and he was the worst driver. Last of them all came the son of Admetus, dragging his chariot and driving his horses on in front. When Achilles saw him he was sorry, and stood up among the Argives saying, "The best man is coming in last. Let us give him a prize for it is reasonable. He shall have the second, but the first must go to the son of Tydeus."

Thus did he speak and the others all of them applauded his saying, and were for doing as he had said, but Nestor's son Antilochus stood up and claimed his rights from the son of Peleus. "Achilles," said he, "I shall take it much amiss if you do this thing; you would rob me of my prize, because you think Eumelus's chariot and horses were thrown out, and himself too, good man that he is. He should have prayed duly to the immortals; he would not have come in last if he had done so. If you are sorry for him and so choose, you have much gold in your tents, with bronze, sheep, cattle and horses. Take something from this store if you would have the Achaeans speak well of you, and give him a better prize even than that which you have now offered; but I will not give up the mare, and he that will fight me for her, let him come on."

Achilles smiled as he heard this, and was pleased with Antilochus, who was one of his dearest comrades. So he said—

"Antilochus, if you would have me find Eumelus another prize, I will give him the bronze breastplate with a rim of tin running all round it which I took from Asteropaeus. It will be worth much money to him."

He bade his comrade Automedon bring the breastplate from his tent, and he did so. Achilles then gave it over to Eumelus, who received it gladly.

But Menelaus got up in a rage, furiously angry with Antilochus. An attendant placed his staff in his hands and bade the Argives keep silence: the hero then addressed them. "Antilochus," said he, "what is this from you who have been so far blameless? You have made me cut a poor figure and baulked my horses by flinging your own in front of them, though yours are much worse than mine are; therefore, O princes and counsellors of the Argives, judge between us and show no favour, lest one of the Achaeans say, 'Menelaus has got the mare through lying and corruption; his horses were far inferior to Antilochus's, but he has greater weight and influence.' Nay, I will determine the matter myself, and no man will blame me, for I shall do what is just. Come here, Antilochus, and stand, as our custom is, whip in hand before your chariot and horses; lay your hand on your steeds, and swear by earth-encircling Neptune that you did not purposely and guilefully get in the way of my horses."

And Antilochus answered, "Forgive me; I am much younger, King Menelaus, than you are; you stand higher than I do and are the better man of the two; you know how easily young men are betrayed into indiscretion; their tempers are more hasty and they have less judgement; make due allowances therefore, and bear with me; I will of my own accord give up the mare that I have won, and if you claim any further chattel from my own possessions, I would rather yield it to you, at once, than fall from your good graces henceforth, and do wrong in the sight of heaven."

The son of Nestor then took the mare and gave her over to Menelaus, whose anger was thus appeased; as when dew falls upon a field of ripening corn, and the lands are bristling with the harvest—even so, O Menelaus, was your heart made glad within you. He turned to Antilochus and said, "Now, Antilochus, angry though I have been, I can give way to you of my own free will; you have never been headstrong nor ill-disposed hitherto, but this time your youth has got the better of your judgement; be careful how you outwit your betters in future; no one else could have brought me round so easily, but your good father, your brother, and yourself have all of you had infinite trouble on my behalf; I therefore yield to your entreaty, and will give up the mare to you, mine though it indeed be; the people will thus see that I am neither harsh nor vindictive."

With this he gave the mare over to Antilochus's comrade Noemon, and then took the cauldron. Meriones, who had come in fourth, carried off the two talents of gold, and the fifth prize, the two-handled urn, being unawarded, Achilles gave it to Nestor, going up to him among the assembled Argives and saying, "Take this, my good old friend, as an heirloom and memorial of the funeral of Patroclus—for you shall see him no more among the Argives. I give you this prize though you cannot win one; you can now neither wrestle nor fight, and cannot enter for the javelin-match nor foot-races, for the hand of age has been laid heavily upon you."

So saying he gave the urn over to Nestor, who received it gladly and answered, "My son, all that you have said is true; there is no strength now in my legs and feet, nor can I hit out with my hands from either shoulder. Would that I were still young and strong as

when the Epeans were burying King Amarynceus in Buprasium, and his sons offered prizes in his honour. There was then none that could vie with me neither of the Epeans nor the Pylians themselves nor the Aetolians. In boxing I overcame Clytomedes son of Enops, and in wrestling, Ancaeus of Pleuron who had come forward against me. Iphiclus was a good runner, but I beat him, and threw farther with my spear than either Phyleus or Polydorus. In chariot-racing alone did the two sons of Actor surpass me by crowding their horses in front of me, for they were angry at the way victory had gone, and at the greater part of the prizes remaining in the place in which they had been offered. They were twins, and the one kept on holding the reins, and holding the reins, while the other plied the whip. Such was I then, but now I must leave these matters to younger men; I must bow before the weight of years, but in those days I was eminent among heroes. And now, sir, go on with the funeral contests in honour of your comrade: gladly do I accept this urn, and my heart rejoices that you do not forget me but are ever mindful of my goodwill towards you, and of the respect due to me from the Achaeans. For all which may the grace of heaven be vouchsafed you in great abundance."

Thereon the son of Peleus, when he had listened to all the thanks of Nestor, went about among the concourse of the Achaeans, and presently offered prizes for skill in the painful art of boxing. He brought out a strong mule, and made it fast in the middle of the crowd—a she-mule never yet broken, but six years old—when it is hardest of all to break them: this was for the victor, and for the vanquished he offered a double cup. Then he stood up and said among the Argives, "Son of Atreus, and all other Achaeans, I invite our two champion boxers to lay about them lustily and compete for these prizes. He to whom Apollo vouchsafes the greater endurance, and whom the Achaeans acknowledge as victor, shall take the mule back with him to his own tent, while he that is vanquished shall have the double cup."

As he spoke there stood up a champion both brave and of great stature, a skilful boxer, Epeus, son of Panopeus. He laid his hand on the mule and said, "Let the man who is to have the cup come hither, for none but myself will take the mule. I am the best boxer of all here present, and none can beat me. Is it not enough that I should fall short of you in actual fighting? Still, no man can be good at everything. I tell you plainly, and it shall come true; if any man will box with me I will bruise his body and break his bones; therefore let his friends stay here in a body and be at hand to take him away when I have done with him."

They all held their peace, and no man rose save Euryalus son of Mecisteus, who was son of Talaus. Mecisteus went once to Thebes after the fall of Oedipus, to attend his funeral, and he beat all the people of Cadmus. The son of Tydeus was Euryalus's second, cheering him on and hoping heartily that he would win. First he put a waistband round him and then he gave him some well-cut thongs of ox-hide; the two men being now girt went into the middle of the ring, and immediately fell to; heavily indeed did they punish one another and lay about them with their brawny fists. One could hear the horrid crashing of their jaws, and they sweated from every pore of their skin. Presently Epeus came on and gave Euryalus a blow on the jaw as he was looking round; Euryalus could not keep his legs; they gave way under him in a moment and he sprang up with a bound, as a fish leaps into the air near some shore that is all bestrewn with sea-wrack, when Boreas furs the top of the waves, and then falls back into deep water. But noble Epeus caught hold of him and raised him up; his comrades also came round him and led him from the ring, unsteady in his gait, his head hanging on one side, and spitting great clots of gore. They set him down in a swoon and then went to fetch the double cup.

The son of Peleus now brought out the prizes for the third contest and showed them to the Argives. These were for the painful art of wrestling. For the winner there was a great tripod ready for setting upon the fire, and the Achaeans valued it among themselves at twelve oxen. For the loser he brought out a woman skilled in all manner of arts, and they valued her at four oxen. He rose and said among the Argives, "Stand forward, you who will essay this contest."

Forthwith uprose great Ajax the son of Telamon, and crafty Ulysses, full of wiles, rose also. The two girded themselves and went into the middle of the ring. They gripped each other in their strong hands like the rafters which some master-builder frames for the roof of a high house to keep the wind out. Their backbones cracked as they tugged at one another with their mighty arms—and sweat rained from them in torrents. Many a bloody weal sprang up on their sides and shoulders, but they kept on striving with might and main for victory and to win the tripod. Ulysses could not throw Ajax, nor Ajax him; Ulysses was too strong for him; but when the Achaeans began to tire of watching them, Ajax said to Ulysses, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, you shall either lift me, or I you, and let Jove settle it between us."

He lifted him from the ground as he spoke, but Ulysses did not forget his cunning. He hit Ajax in the hollow at back of his knee, so that he could not keep his feet, but fell on his back with Ulysses lying upon his chest, and all who saw it marvelled. Then Ulysses in turn lifted Ajax and stirred him a little from the ground but could not lift him right off it, his knee sank under him, and the two fell side by side on the ground and were all begrimed with dust. They now sprang towards one another and were for wrestling yet a

third time, but Achilles rose and stayed them. “Put not each other further,” said he, “to such cruel suffering; the victory is with both alike, take each of you an equal prize, and let the other Achaeans now compete.”

Thus did he speak and they did even as he had said, and put on their shirts again after wiping the dust from off their bodies.

The son of Peleus then offered prizes for speed in running—a mixing-bowl beautifully wrought, of pure silver. It would hold six measures, and far exceeded all others in the whole world for beauty; it was the work of cunning artificers in Sidon, and had been brought into port by Phoenicians from beyond the sea, who had made a present of it to Thoas. Eueneus son of Jason had given it to Patroclus in ransom of Priam’s son Lycaon, and Achilles now offered it as a prize in honour of his comrade to him who should be the swiftest runner. For the second prize he offered a large ox, well fattened, while for the last there was to be half a talent of gold. He then rose and said among the Argives, “Stand forward, you who will essay this contest.”

Forthwith uprose fleet Ajax son of Oileus, with cunning Ulysses, and Nestor’s son Antilochus, the fastest runner among all the youth of his time. They stood side by side and Achilles showed them the goal. The course was set out for them from the starting-post, and the son of Oileus took the lead at once, with Ulysses as close behind him as the shuttle is to a woman’s bosom when she throws the woof across the warp and holds it close up to her; even so close behind him was Ulysses—treading in his footprints before the dust could settle there, and Ajax could feel his breath on the back of his head as he ran swiftly on. The Achaeans all shouted applause as they saw him straining his utmost, and cheered him as he shot past them; but when they were now nearing the end of the course Ulysses prayed inwardly to Minerva. “Hear me,” he cried, “and help my feet, O goddess.” Thus did he pray, and Pallas Minerva heard his prayer; she made his hands and his feet feel light, and when the runners were at the point of pouncing upon the prize, Ajax, through Minerva’s spite slipped upon some offal that was lying there from the cattle which Achilles had slaughtered in honour of Patroclus, and his mouth and nostrils were all filled with cow dung. Ulysses therefore carried off the mixing-bowl, for he got before Ajax and came in first. But Ajax took the ox and stood with his hand on one of its horns, spitting the dung out of his mouth. Then he said to the Argives, “Alas, the goddess has spoiled my running; she watches over Ulysses and stands by him as though she were his own mother.” Thus did he speak and they all of them laughed heartily.

Antilochus carried off the last prize and smiled as he said to the bystanders, “You all see, my friends, that now too the gods have shown their respect for seniority. Ajax is somewhat older than I am, and as for Ulysses, he belongs to an earlier generation, but he is hale in spite of his years, and no man of the Achaeans can run against him save only Achilles.”

He said this to pay a compliment to the son of Peleus, and Achilles answered, “Antilochus, you shall not have praised me to no purpose; I shall give you an additional half talent of gold.” He then gave the half talent to Antilochus, who received it gladly.

Then the son of Peleus brought out the spear, helmet and shield that had been borne by Sarpedon, and were taken from him by Patroclus. He stood up and said among the Argives, “We bid two champions put on their armour, take their keen blades, and make trial of one another in the presence of the multitude; whichever of them can first wound the flesh of the other, cut through his armour, and draw blood, to him will I give this goodly Thracian sword inlaid with silver, which I took from Asteropaeus, but the armour let both hold in partnership, and I will give each of them a hearty meal in my own tent.”

Forthwith uprose great Ajax the son of Telamon, as also mighty Diomed son of Tydeus. When they had put on their armour each on his own side of the ring, they both went into the middle eager to engage, and with fire flashing from their eyes. The Achaeans marvelled as they beheld them, and when the two were now close up with one another, thrice did they spring forward and thrice try to strike each other in close combat. Ajax pierced Diomed’s round shield, but did not draw blood, for the cuirass beneath the shield protected him; thereon the son of Tydeus from over his huge shield kept aiming continually at Ajax’s neck with the point of his spear, and the Achaeans alarmed for his safety bade them leave off fighting and divide the prize between them. Achilles then gave the great sword to the son of Tydeus, with its scabbard, and the leathern belt with which to hang it.

Achilles next offered the massive iron quoit which mighty Eetion had erewhile been used to hurl, until Achilles had slain him and carried it off in his ships along with other spoils. He stood up and said among the Argives, “Stand forward, you who would essay this contest. He who wins it will have a store of iron that will last him five years as they go rolling round, and if his fair fields lie far from a town his shepherd or ploughman will not have to make a journey to buy iron, for he will have a stock of it on his own premises.”

Then uprose the two mighty men Polypoetes and Leonteus, with Ajax son of Telamon and noble Epeus. They stood up one after the other and Epeus took the quoit, whirled it, and flung it from him, which set all the Achaeans laughing. After him threw Leonteus of

the race of Mars. Ajax son of Telamon threw third, and sent the quoit beyond any mark that had been made yet, but when mighty Polypoetes took the quoit he hurled it as though it had been a stockman's stick which he sends flying about among his cattle when he is driving them, so far did his throw out-distance those of the others. All who saw it roared applause, and his comrades carried the prize for him and set it on board his ship.

Achilles next offered a prize of iron for archery—ten double-edged axes and ten with single edges: he set up a ship's mast, some way off upon the sands, and with a fine string tied a pigeon to it by the foot; this was what they were to aim at. "Whoever," he said, "can hit the pigeon shall have all the axes and take them away with him; he who hits the string without hitting the bird will have taken a worse aim and shall have the single-edged axes."

Then uprose King Teucer, and Meriones the stalwart squire of Idomeneus rose also, They cast lots in a bronze helmet and the lot of Teucer fell first. He let fly with his arrow forthwith, but he did not promise hecatombs of firstling lambs to King Apollo, and missed his bird, for Apollo foiled his aim; but he hit the string with which the bird was tied, near its foot; the arrow cut the string clean through so that it hung down towards the ground, while the bird flew up into the sky, and the Achaeans shouted applause. Meriones, who had his arrow ready while Teucer was aiming, snatched the bow out of his hand, and at once promised that he would sacrifice a hecatomb of firstling lambs to Apollo lord of the bow; then espying the pigeon high up under the clouds, he hit her in the middle of the wing as she was circling upwards; the arrow went clean through the wing and fixed itself in the ground at Meriones' feet, but the bird perched on the ship's mast hanging her head and with all her feathers drooping; the life went out of her, and she fell heavily from the mast. Meriones, therefore, took all ten double-edged axes, while Teucer bore off the single-edged ones to his ships.

Then the son of Peleus brought in a spear and a cauldron that had never been on the fire; it was worth an ox, and was chased with a pattern of flowers; and those that throw the javelin stood up—to wit the son of Atreus, king of men Agamemnon, and Meriones, stalwart squire of Idomeneus. But Achilles spoke saying, "Son of Atreus, we know how far you excel all others both in power and in throwing the javelin; take the cauldron back with you to your ships, but if it so please you, let us give the spear to Meriones; this at least is what I should myself wish."

King Agamemnon assented. So he gave the bronze spear to Meriones, and handed the goodly cauldron to Talthybius his esquire.

This page titled 3.12.1.23: Book XXIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.12.1.24: Book XXIV

Priam ransoms the body of Hector—Hector's funeral.

The assembly now broke up and the people went their ways each to his own ship. There they made ready their supper, and then bethought them of the blessed boon of sleep; but Achilles still wept for thinking of his dear comrade, and sleep, before whom all things bow, could take no hold upon him. This way and that did he turn as he yearned after the might and manfulness of Patroclus; he thought of all they had done together, and all they had gone through both on the field of battle and on the waves of the weary sea. As he dwelt on these things he wept bitterly and lay now on his side, now on his back, and now face downwards, till at last he rose and went out as one distraught to wander upon the seashore. Then, when he saw dawn breaking over beach and sea, he yoked his horses to his chariot, and bound the body of Hector behind it that he might drag it about. Thrice did he drag it round the tomb of the son of Menoetius, and then went back into his tent, leaving the body on the ground full length and with its face downwards. But Apollo would not suffer it to be disfigured, for he pitied the man, dead though he now was; therefore he shielded him with his golden aegis continually, that he might take no hurt while Achilles was dragging him.

Thus shamefully did Achilles in his fury dishonour Hector; but the blessed gods looked down in pity from heaven, and urged Mercury, slayer of Argus, to steal the body. All were of this mind save only Juno, Neptune, and Jove's grey-eyed daughter, who persisted in the hate which they had ever borne towards Ilius with Priam and his people; for they forgave not the wrong done them by Alexandrus in disdaining the goddesses who came to him when he was in his sheepyards, and preferring her who had offered him a wanton to his ruin.

When, therefore, the morning of the twelfth day had now come, Phoebus Apollo spoke among the immortals saying, "You gods ought to be ashamed of yourselves; you are cruel and hard-hearted. Did not Hector burn you thigh-bones of heifers and of unblemished goats? And now dare you not rescue even his dead body, for his wife to look upon, with his mother and child, his father Priam, and his people, who would forthwith commit him to the flames, and give him his due funeral rites? So, then, you would all be on the side of mad Achilles, who knows neither right nor ruth? He is like some savage lion that in the pride of his great strength and daring springs upon men's flocks and gorges on them. Even so has Achilles flung aside all pity, and all that conscience which at once so greatly banes yet greatly boons him that will heed it. A man may lose one far dearer than Achilles has lost—a son, it may be, or a brother born from his own mother's womb; yet when he has mourned him and wept over him he will let him bide, for it takes much sorrow to kill a man; whereas Achilles, now that he has slain noble Hector, drags him behind his chariot round the tomb of his comrade. It were better of him, and for him, that he should not do so, for brave though he be we gods may take it ill that he should vent his fury upon dead clay."

Juno spoke up in a rage. "This were well," she cried, "O lord of the silver bow, if you would give like honour to Hector and to Achilles; but Hector was mortal and suckled at a woman's breast, whereas Achilles is the offspring of a goddess whom I myself reared and brought up. I married her to Peleus, who is above measure dear to the immortals; you gods came all of you to her wedding; you feasted along with them yourself and brought your lyre—false, and fond of low company, that you have ever been."

Then said Jove, "Juno, be not so bitter. Their honour shall not be equal, but of all that dwell in Ilius, Hector was dearest to the gods, as also to myself, for his offerings never failed me. Never was my altar stinted of its dues, nor of the drink-offerings and savour of sacrifice which we claim of right. I shall therefore permit the body of mighty Hector to be stolen; and yet this may hardly be without Achilles coming to know it, for his mother keeps night and day beside him. Let some one of you, therefore, send Thetis to me, and I will impart my counsel to her, namely that Achilles is to accept a ransom from Priam, and give up the body."

On this Iris fleet as the wind went forth to carry his message. Down she plunged into the dark sea midway between Samos and rocky Imbrus; the waters hissed as they closed over her, and she sank into the bottom as the lead at the end of an ox-horn, that is sped to carry death to fishes. She found Thetis sitting in a great cave with the other sea-goddesses gathered round her; there she sat in the midst of them weeping for her noble son who was to fall far from his own land, on the rich plains of Troy. Iris went up to her and said, "Rise Thetis; Jove, whose counsels fail not, bids you come to him." And Thetis answered, "Why does the mighty god so bid me? I am in great grief, and shrink from going in and out among the immortals. Still, I will go, and the word that he may speak shall not be spoken in vain."

The goddess took her dark veil, than which there can be no robe more sombre, and went forth with fleet Iris leading the way before her. The waves of the sea opened them a path, and when they reached the shore they flew up into the heavens, where they found the

all-seeing son of Saturn with the blessed gods that live for ever assembled near him. Minerva gave up her seat to her, and she sat down by the side of father Jove. Juno then placed a fair golden cup in her hand, and spoke to her in words of comfort, whereon Thetis drank and gave her back the cup; and the sire of gods and men was the first to speak.

“So, goddess,” said he, “for all your sorrow, and the grief that I well know reigns ever in your heart, you have come hither to Olympus, and I will tell you why I have sent for you. This nine days past the immortals have been quarrelling about Achilles waster of cities and the body of Hector. The gods would have Mercury slayer of Argus steal the body, but in furtherance of our peace and amity henceforward, I will concede such honour to your son as I will now tell you. Go, then, to the host and lay these commands upon him; say that the gods are angry with him, and that I am myself more angry than them all, in that he keeps Hector at the ships and will not give him up. He may thus fear me and let the body go. At the same time I will send Iris to great Priam to bid him go to the ships of the Achaeans, and ransom his son, taking with him such gifts for Achilles as may give him satisfaction.”

Silver-footed Thetis did as the god had told her, and forthwith down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus. She went to her son’s tents where she found him grieving bitterly, while his trusty comrades round him were busy preparing their morning meal, for which they had killed a great woolly sheep. His mother sat down beside him and caressed him with her hand saying, “My son, how long will you keep on thus grieving and making moan? You are gnawing at your own heart, and think neither of food nor of woman’s embraces; and yet these too were well, for you have no long time to live, and death with the strong hand of fate are already close beside you. Now, therefore, heed what I say, for I come as a messenger from Jove; he says that the gods are angry with you, and himself more angry than them all, in that you keep Hector at the ships and will not give him up. Therefore let him go, and accept a ransom for his body.”

And Achilles answered, “So be it. If Olympian Jove of his own motion thus commands me, let him that brings the ransom bear the body away.”

Thus did mother and son talk together at the ships in long discourse with one another. Meanwhile the son of Saturn sent Iris to the strong city of Ilius. “Go,” said he, “fleet Iris, from the mansions of Olympus, and tell King Priam in Ilius, that he is to go to the ships of the Achaeans and free the body of his dear son. He is to take such gifts with him as shall give satisfaction to Achilles, and he is to go alone, with no other Trojan, save only some honoured servant who may drive his mules and waggon, and bring back the body of him whom noble Achilles has slain. Let him have no thought nor fear of death in his heart, for we will send the slayer of Argus to escort him, and bring him within the tent of Achilles. Achilles will not kill him nor let another do so, for he will take heed to his ways and sin not, and he will entreat a suppliant with all honourable courtesy.”

On this Iris, fleet as the wind, sped forth to deliver her message. She went to Priam’s house, and found weeping and lamentation therein. His sons were seated round their father in the outer courtyard, and their raiment was wet with tears: the old man sat in the midst of them with his mantle wrapped close about his body, and his head and neck all covered with the filth which he had clutched as he lay grovelling in the mire. His daughters and his sons’ wives went wailing about the house, as they thought of the many and brave men who lay dead, slain by the Argives. The messenger of Jove stood by Priam and spoke softly to him, but fear fell upon him as she did so. “Take heart,” she said, “Priam offspring of Dardanus, take heart and fear not. I bring no evil tidings, but am minded well towards you. I come as a messenger from Jove, who though he be not near, takes thought for you and pities you. The lord of Olympus bids you go and ransom noble Hector, and take with you such gifts as shall give satisfaction to Achilles. You are to go alone, with no Trojan, save only some honoured servant who may drive your mules and waggon, and bring back to the city the body of him whom noble Achilles has slain. You are to have no thought, nor fear of death, for Jove will send the slayer of Argus to escort you. When he has brought you within Achilles’ tent, Achilles will not kill you nor let another do so, for he will take heed to his ways and sin not, and he will entreat a suppliant with all honourable courtesy.”

Iris went her way when she had thus spoken, and Priam told his sons to get a mule-waggon ready, and to make the body of the waggon fast upon the top of its bed. Then he went down into his fragrant store-room, high-vaulted, and made of cedar-wood, where his many treasures were kept, and he called Hecuba his wife. “Wife,” said he, “a messenger has come to me from Olympus, and has told me to go to the ships of the Achaeans to ransom my dear son, taking with me such gifts as shall give satisfaction to Achilles. What think you of this matter? for my own part I am greatly moved to pass through the camps of the Achaeans and go to their ships.”

His wife cried aloud as she heard him, and said, “Alas, what has become of that judgement for which you have been ever famous both among strangers and your own people? How can you venture alone to the ships of the Achaeans, and look into the face of him

who has slain so many of your brave sons? You must have iron courage, for if the cruel savage sees you and lays hold on you, he will know neither respect nor pity. Let us then weep Hector from afar here in our own house, for when I gave him birth the threads of overruling fate were spun for him that dogs should eat his flesh far from his parents, in the house of that terrible man on whose liver I would fain fasten and devour it. Thus would I avenge my son, who showed no cowardice when Achilles slew him, and thought neither of flight nor of avoiding battle as he stood in defence of Trojan men and Trojan women."

Then Priam said, "I would go, do not therefore stay me nor be as a bird of ill omen in my house, for you will not move me. Had it been some mortal man who had sent me some prophet or priest who divines from sacrifice—I should have deemed him false and have given him no heed; but now I have heard the goddess and seen her face to face, therefore I will go and her saying shall not be in vain. If it be my fate to die at the ships of the Achaeans even so would I have it; let Achilles slay me, if I may but first have taken my son in my arms and mourned him to my heart's comforting."

So saying he lifted the lids of his chests, and took out twelve goodly vestments. He took also twelve cloaks of single fold, twelve rugs, twelve fair mantles, and an equal number of shirts. He weighed out ten talents of gold, and brought moreover two burnished tripods, four cauldrons, and a very beautiful cup which the Thracians had given him when he had gone to them on an embassy; it was very precious, but he grudged not even this, so eager was he to ransom the body of his son. Then he chased all the Trojans from the court and rebuked them with words of anger. "Out," he cried, "shame and disgrace to me that you are. Have you no grief in your own homes that you are come to plague me here? Is it a small thing, think you, that the son of Saturn has sent this sorrow upon me, to lose the bravest of my sons? Nay, you shall prove it in person, for now he is gone the Achaeans will have easier work in killing you. As for me, let me go down within the house of Hades, ere mine eyes behold the sacking and wasting of the city."

He drove the men away with his staff, and they went forth as the old man sped them. Then he called to his sons, upbraiding Helenus, Paris, noble Agathon, Pammon, Antiphonus, Polites of the loud battle-cry, Deiphobus, Hippothous, and Dius. These nine did the old man call near him. "Come to me at once," he cried, "worthless sons who do me shame; would that you had all been killed at the ships rather than Hector. Miserable man that I am, I have had the bravest sons in all Troy—noble Nestor, Troilus the dauntless charioteer, and Hector who was a god among men, so that one would have thought he was son to an immortal—yet there is not one of them left. Mars has slain them and those of whom I am ashamed are alone left me. Liars, and light of foot, heroes of the dance, robbers of lambs and kids from your own people, why do you not get a waggon ready for me at once, and put all these things upon it that I may set out on my way?"

Thus did he speak, and they feared the rebuke of their father. They brought out a strong mule-waggon, newly made, and set the body of the waggon fast on its bed. They took the mule-yoke from the peg on which it hung, a yoke of boxwood with a knob on the top of it and rings for the reins to go through. Then they brought a yoke-band eleven cubits long, to bind the yoke to the pole; they bound it on at the far end of the pole, and put the ring over the upright pin making it fast with three turns of the band on either side the knob, and bending the thong of the yoke beneath it. This done, they brought from the store-chamber the rich ransom that was to purchase the body of Hector, and they set it all orderly on the waggon; then they yoked the strong harness-mules which the Mysians had on a time given as a goodly present to Priam; but for Priam himself they yoked horses which the old king had bred, and kept for his own use.

Thus heedfully did Priam and his servant see to the yolking of their cars at the palace. Then Hecuba came to them all sorrowful, with a golden goblet of wine in her right hand, that they might make a drink-offering before they set out. She stood in front of the horses and said, "Take this, make a drink-offering to father Jove, and since you are minded to go to the ships in spite of me, pray that you may come safely back from the hands of your enemies. Pray to the son of Saturn lord of the whirlwind, who sits on Ida and looks down over all Troy, pray him to send his swift messenger on your right hand, the bird of omen which is strongest and most dear to him of all birds, that you may see it with your own eyes and trust it as you go forth to the ships of the Danaans. If all-seeing Jove will not send you this messenger, however set upon it you may be, I would not have you go to the ships of the Argives."

And Priam answered, "Wife, I will do as you desire me; it is well to lift hands in prayer to Jove, if so be he may have mercy upon me."

With this the old man bade the serving-woman pour pure water over his hands, and the woman came, bearing the water in a bowl. He washed his hands and took the cup from his wife; then he made the drink-offering and prayed, standing in the middle of the courtyard and turning his eyes to heaven. "Father Jove," he said, "that rulest from Ida, most glorious and most great, grant that I

may be received kindly and compassionately in the tents of Achilles; and send your swift messenger upon my right hand, the bird of omen which is strongest and most dear to you of all birds, that I may see it with my own eyes and trust it as I go forth to the ships of the Danaans."

So did he pray, and Jove the lord of counsel heard his prayer. Forthwith he sent an eagle, the most unerring portent of all birds that fly, the dusky hunter that men also call the Black Eagle. His wings were spread abroad on either side as wide as the well-made and well-bolted door of a rich man's chamber. He came to them flying over the city upon their right hands, and when they saw him they were glad and their hearts took comfort within them. The old man made haste to mount his chariot, and drove out through the inner gateway and under the echoing gatehouse of the outer court. Before him went the mules drawing the four-wheeled waggon, and driven by wise Idaeus; behind these were the horses, which the old man lashed with his whip and drove swiftly through the city, while his friends followed after, wailing and lamenting for him as though he were on his road to death. As soon as they had come down from the city and had reached the plain, his sons and sons-in-law who had followed him went back to Ilius.

But Priam and Idaeus as they showed out upon the plain did not escape the ken of all-seeing Jove, who looked down upon the old man and pitied him; then he spoke to his son Mercury and said, "Mercury, for it is you who are the most disposed to escort men on their way, and to hear those whom you will hear, go, and so conduct Priam to the ships of the Achaeans that no other of the Danaans shall see him nor take note of him until he reach the son of Peleus."

Thus he spoke and Mercury, guide and guardian, slayer of Argus, did as he was told. Forthwith he bound on his glittering golden sandals with which he could fly like the wind over land and sea; he took the wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep, or wakes them just as he pleases, and flew holding it in his hand till he came to Troy and to the Hellespont. To look at, he was like a young man of noble birth in the hey-day of his youth and beauty with the down just coming upon his face.

Now when Priam and Idaeus had driven past the great tomb of Ilius, they stayed their mules and horses that they might drink in the river, for the shades of night were falling, when, therefore, Idaeus saw Mercury standing near them he said to Priam, "Take heed, descendant of Dardanus; here is matter which demands consideration. I see a man who I think will presently fall upon us; let us fly with our horses, or at least embrace his knees and implore him to take compassion upon us?"

When he heard this the old man's heart failed him, and he was in great fear; he stayed where he was as one dazed, and the hair stood on end over his whole body; but the bringer of good luck came up to him and took him by the hand, saying, "Whither, father, are you thus driving your mules and horses in the dead of night when other men are asleep? Are you not afraid of the fierce Achaeans who are hard by you, so cruel and relentless? Should some one of them see you bearing so much treasure through the darkness of the flying night, what would not your state then be? You are no longer young, and he who is with you is too old to protect you from those who would attack you. For myself, I will do you no harm, and I will defend you from any one else, for you remind me of my own father."

And Priam answered, "It is indeed as you say, my dear son; nevertheless some god has held his hand over me, in that he has sent such a wayfarer as yourself to meet me so opportunely; you are so comely in mien and figure, and your judgement is so excellent that you must come of blessed parents."

Then said the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, "Sir, all that you have said is right; but tell me and tell me true, are you taking this rich treasure to send it to a foreign people where it may be safe, or are you all leaving strong Ilius in dismay now that your son has fallen who was the bravest man among you and was never lacking in battle with the Achaeans?"

And Priam said, "Who are you, my friend, and who are your parents, that you speak so truly about the fate of my unhappy son?"

The slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, answered him, "Sir, you would prove me, that you question me about noble Hector. Many a time have I set eyes upon him in battle when he was driving the Argives to their ships and putting them to the sword. We stood still and marvelled, for Achilles in his anger with the son of Atreus suffered us not to fight. I am his squire, and came with him in the same ship. I am a Myrmidon, and my father's name is Polyctor: he is a rich man and about as old as you are; he has six sons besides myself, and I am the seventh. We cast lots, and it fell upon me to sail hither with Achilles. I am now come from the ships on to the plain, for with daybreak the Achaeans will set battle in array about the city. They chafe at doing nothing, and are so eager that their princes cannot hold them back."

Then answered Priam, "If you are indeed the squire of Achilles son of Peleus, tell me now the whole truth. Is my son still at the ships, or has Achilles hewn him limb from limb, and given him to his hounds?"

“Sir,” replied the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, “neither hounds nor vultures have yet devoured him; he is still just lying at the tents by the ship of Achilles, and though it is now twelve days that he has lain there, his flesh is not wasted nor have the worms eaten him although they feed on warriors. At daybreak Achilles drags him cruelly round the sepulchre of his dear comrade, but it does him no hurt. You should come yourself and see how he lies fresh as dew, with the blood all washed away, and his wounds every one of them closed though many pierced him with their spears. Such care have the blessed gods taken of your brave son, for he was dear to them beyond all measure.”

The old man was comforted as he heard him and said, “My son, see what a good thing it is to have made due offerings to the immortals; for as sure as that he was born my son never forgot the gods that hold Olympus, and now they requite it to him even in death. Accept therefore at my hands this goodly chalice; guard me and with heaven’s help guide me till I come to the tent of the son of Peleus.”

Then answered the slayer of Argus, guide and guardian, “Sir, you are tempting me and playing upon my youth, but you shall not move me, for you are offering me presents without the knowledge of Achilles whom I fear and hold it great guilt to defraud, lest some evil presently befall me; but as your guide I would go with you even to Argos itself, and would guard you so carefully whether by sea or land, that no one should attack you through making light of him who was with you.”

The bringer of good luck then sprang on to the chariot, and seizing the whip and reins he breathed fresh spirit into the mules and horses. When they reached the trench and the wall that was before the ships, those who were on guard had just been getting their suppers, and the slayer of Argus threw them all into a deep sleep. Then he drew back the bolts to open the gates, and took Priam inside with the treasure he had upon his waggon. Ere long they came to the lofty dwelling of the son of Peleus for which the Myrmidons had cut pine and which they had built for their king; when they had built it they thatched it with coarse tussock-grass which they had mown out on the plain, and all round it they made a large courtyard, which was fenced with stakes set close together. The gate was barred with a single bolt of pine which it took three men to force into its place, and three to draw back so as to open the gate, but Achilles could draw it by himself. Mercury opened the gate for the old man, and brought in the treasure that he was taking with him for the son of Peleus. Then he sprang from the chariot on to the ground and said, “Sir, it is I, immortal Mercury, that am come with you, for my father sent me to escort you. I will now leave you, and will not enter into the presence of Achilles, for it might anger him that a god should befriend mortal men thus openly. Go you within, and embrace the knees of the son of Peleus: beseech him by his father, his lovely mother, and his son; thus you may move him.”

With these words Mercury went back to high Olympus. Priam sprang from his chariot to the ground, leaving Idaeus where he was, in charge of the mules and horses. The old man went straight into the house where Achilles, loved of the gods, was sitting. There he found him with his men seated at a distance from him: only two, the hero Automedon, and Alcimus of the race of Mars, were busy in attendance about his person, for he had but just done eating and drinking, and the table was still there. King Priam entered without their seeing him, and going right up to Achilles he clasped his knees and kissed the dread murderous hands that had slain so many of his sons.

As when some cruel spite has befallen a man that he should have killed some one in his own country, and must fly to a great man’s protection in a land of strangers, and all marvel who see him, even so did Achilles marvel as he beheld Priam. The others looked one to another and marvelled also, but Priam besought Achilles saying, “Think of your father, O Achilles like unto the gods, who is such even as I am, on the sad threshold of old age. It may be that those who dwell near him harass him, and there is none to keep war and ruin from him. Yet when he hears of you being still alive, he is glad, and his days are full of hope that he shall see his dear son come home to him from Troy; but I, wretched man that I am, had the bravest in all Troy for my sons, and there is not one of them left. I had fifty sons when the Achaeans came here; nineteen of them were from a single womb, and the others were borne to me by the women of my household. The greater part of them has fierce Mars laid low, and Hector, him who was alone left, him who was the guardian of the city and ourselves, him have you lately slain; therefore I am now come to the ships of the Achaeans to ransom his body from you with a great ransom. Fear, O Achilles, the wrath of heaven; think on your own father and have compassion upon me, who am the more pitiable, for I have steeled myself as no man yet has ever steeled himself before me, and have raised to my lips the hand of him who slew my son.”

Thus spoke Priam, and the heart of Achilles yearned as he bethought him of his father. He took the old man’s hand and moved him gently away. The two wept bitterly—Priam, as he lay at Achilles’ feet, weeping for Hector, and Achilles now for his father and now for Patroclus, till the house was filled with their lamentation. But when Achilles was now sated with grief and had unburthened the bitterness of his sorrow, he left his seat and raised the old man by the hand, in pity for his white hair and beard; then he said,

“Unhappy man, you have indeed been greatly daring; how could you venture to come alone to the ships of the Achaeans, and enter the presence of him who has slain so many of your brave sons? You must have iron courage: sit now upon this seat, and for all our grief we will hide our sorrows in our hearts, for weeping will not avail us. The immortals know no care, yet the lot they spin for man is full of sorrow; on the floor of Jove’s palace there stand two urns, the one filled with evil gifts, and the other with good ones. He for whom Jove the lord of thunder mixes the gifts he sends, will meet now with good and now with evil fortune; but he to whom Jove sends none but evil gifts will be pointed at by the finger of scorn, the hand of famine will pursue him to the ends of the world, and he will go up and down the face of the earth, respected neither by gods nor men. Even so did it befall Peleus; the gods endowed him with all good things from his birth upwards, for he reigned over the Myrmidons excelling all men in prosperity and wealth, and mortal though he was they gave him a goddess for his bride. But even on him too did heaven send misfortune, for there is no race of royal children born to him in his house, save one son who is doomed to die all untimely; nor may I take care of him now that he is growing old, for I must stay here at Troy to be the bane of you and your children. And you too, O Priam, I have heard that you were aforetime happy. They say that in wealth and plenitude of offspring you surpassed all that is in Lesbos, the realm of Makar to the northward, Phrygia that is more inland, and those that dwell upon the great Hellespont; but from the day when the dwellers in heaven sent this evil upon you, war and slaughter have been about your city continually. Bear up against it, and let there be some intervals in your sorrow. Mourn as you may for your brave son, you will take nothing by it. You cannot raise him from the dead, ere you do so yet another sorrow shall befall you.”

And Priam answered, “O king, bid me not be seated, while Hector is still lying uncared for in your tents, but accept the great ransom which I have brought you, and give him to me at once that I may look upon him. May you prosper with the ransom and reach your own land in safety, seeing that you have suffered me to live and to look upon the light of the sun.”

Achilles looked at him sternly and said, “Vex me, sir, no longer; I am of myself minded to give up the body of Hector. My mother, daughter of the old man of the sea, came to me from Jove to bid me deliver it to you. Moreover I know well, O Priam, and you cannot hide it, that some god has brought you to the ships of the Achaeans, for else, no man however strong and in his prime would dare to come to our host; he could neither pass our guard unseen, nor draw the bolt of my gates thus easily; therefore, provoke me no further, lest I sin against the word of Jove, and suffer you not, suppliant though you are, within my tents.”

The old man feared him and obeyed. Then the son of Peleus sprang like a lion through the door of his house, not alone, but with him went his two squires Automedon and Alcimus who were closer to him than any others of his comrades now that Patroclus was no more. These unyoked the horses and mules, and bade Priam’s herald and attendant be seated within the house. They lifted the ransom for Hector’s body from the waggon, but they left two mantles and a goodly shirt, that Achilles might wrap the body in them when he gave it to be taken home. Then he called to his servants and ordered them to wash the body and anoint it, but he first took it to a place where Priam should not see it, lest if he did so, he should break out in the bitterness of his grief, and enrage Achilles, who might then kill him and sin against the word of Jove. When the servants had washed the body and anointed it, and had wrapped it in a fair shirt and mantle, Achilles himself lifted it on to a bier, and he and his men then laid it on the waggon. He cried aloud as he did so and called on the name of his dear comrade, “Be not angry with me, Patroclus,” he said, “if you hear even in the house of Hades that I have given Hector to his father for a ransom. It has been no unworthy one, and I will share it equitably with you.”

Achilles then went back into the tent and took his place on the richly inlaid seat from which he had risen, by the wall that was at right angles to the one against which Priam was sitting. “Sir,” he said, “your son is now laid upon his bier and is ransomed according to desire; you shall look upon him when you take him away at daybreak; for the present let us prepare our supper. Even lovely Niobe had to think about eating, though her twelve children—six daughters and six lusty sons—had been all slain in her house. Apollo killed the sons with arrows from his silver bow, to punish Niobe, and Diana slew the daughters, because Niobe had vaunted herself against Leto; she said Leto had borne two children only, whereas she had herself borne many—whereon the two killed the many. Nine days did they lie weltering, and there was none to bury them, for the son of Saturn turned the people into stone; but on the tenth day the gods in heaven themselves buried them, and Niobe then took food, being worn out with weeping. They say that somewhere among the rocks on the mountain pastures of Sipylus, where the nymphs live that haunt the river Achelous, there, they say, she lives in stone and still nurses the sorrows sent upon her by the hand of heaven. Therefore, noble sir, let us two now take food; you can weep for your dear son hereafter as you are bearing him back to Ilius—and many a tear will he cost you.”

With this Achilles sprang from his seat and killed a sheep of silvery whiteness, which his followers skinned and made ready all in due order. They cut the meat carefully up into smaller pieces, spitted them, and drew them off again when they were well roasted. Automedon brought bread in fair baskets and served it round the table, while Achilles dealt out the meat, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Priam, descendant of Dardanus, marvelled at the strength and beauty of Achilles for he was as a god to see, and Achilles marvelled at Priam as he listened to him and looked upon his noble presence. When they had gazed their fill Priam spoke first. “And now, O king,” he said, “take me to my couch that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep. Never once have my eyes been closed from the day your hands took the life of my son; I have grovelled without ceasing in the mire of my stable-yard, making moan and brooding over my countless sorrows. Now, moreover, I have eaten bread and drunk wine; hitherto I have tasted nothing.”

As he spoke Achilles told his men and the women-servants to set beds in the room that was in the gatehouse, and make them with good red rugs, and spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for Priam and Idaeus to wear. So the maids went out carrying a torch and got the two beds ready in all haste. Then Achilles said laughingly to Priam, “Dear sir, you shall lie outside, lest some counsellor of those who in due course keep coming to advise with me should see you here in the darkness of the flying night, and tell it to Agamemnon. This might cause delay in the delivery of the body. And now tell me and tell me true, for how many days would you celebrate the funeral rites of noble Hector? Tell me, that I may hold aloof from war and restrain the host.”

And Priam answered, “Since, then, you suffer me to bury my noble son with all due rites, do thus, Achilles, and I shall be grateful. You know how we are pent up within our city; it is far for us to fetch wood from the mountain, and the people live in fear. Nine days, therefore, will we mourn Hector in my house; on the tenth day we will bury him and there shall be a public feast in his honour; on the eleventh we will build a mound over his ashes, and on the twelfth, if there be need, we will fight.”

And Achilles answered, “All, King Priam, shall be as you have said. I will stay our fighting for as long a time as you have named.”

As he spoke he laid his hand on the old man’s right wrist, in token that he should have no fear; thus then did Priam and his attendant sleep there in the forecourt, full of thought, while Achilles lay in an inner room of the house, with fair Briseis by his side.

And now both gods and mortals were fast asleep through the livelong night, but upon Mercury alone, the bringer of good luck, sleep could take no hold for he was thinking all the time how to get King Priam away from the ships without his being seen by the strong force of sentinels. He hovered therefore over Priam’s head and said, “Sir, now that Achilles has spared your life, you seem to have no fear about sleeping in the thick of your foes. You have paid a great ransom, and have received the body of your son; were you still alive and a prisoner the sons whom you have left at home would have to give three times as much to free you; and so it would be if Agamemnon and the other Achaeans were to know of your being here.”

When he heard this the old man was afraid and roused his servant. Mercury then yoked their horses and mules, and drove them quickly through the host so that no man perceived them. When they came to the ford of eddying Xanthus, begotten of immortal Jove, Mercury went back to high Olympus, and dawn in robe of saffron began to break over all the land. Priam and Idaeus then drove on toward the city lamenting and making moan, and the mules drew the body of Hector. No one neither man nor woman saw them, till Cassandra, fair as golden Venus standing on Pergamus, caught sight of her dear father in his chariot, and his servant that was the city’s herald with him. Then she saw him that was lying upon the bier, drawn by the mules, and with a loud cry she went about the city saying, “Come hither Trojans, men and women, and look on Hector; if ever you rejoiced to see him coming from battle when he was alive, look now on him that was the glory of our city and all our people.”

At this there was not man nor woman left in the city, so great a sorrow had possessed them. Hard by the gates they met Priam as he was bringing in the body. Hector’s wife and his mother were the first to mourn him: they flew towards the waggon and laid their hands upon his head, while the crowd stood weeping round them. They would have stayed before the gates, weeping and lamenting the livelong day to the going down of the sun, had not Priam spoken to them from the chariot and said, “Make way for the mules to pass you. Afterwards when I have taken the body home you shall have your fill of weeping.”

On this the people stood asunder, and made a way for the waggon. When they had borne the body within the house they laid it upon a bed and seated minstrels round it to lead the dirge, whereon the women joined in the sad music of their lament. Foremost among them all Andromache led their wailing as she clasped the head of mighty Hector in her embrace. “Husband,” she cried, “you have died young, and leave me in your house a widow; he of whom we are the ill-starred parents is still a mere child, and I fear he may not reach manhood. Ere he can do so our city will be razed and overthrown, for you who watched over it are no more—you who were its saviour, the guardian of our wives and children. Our women will be carried away captives to the ships, and I among them;

while you, my child, who will be with me will be put to some unseemly tasks, working for a cruel master. Or, may be, some Achaean will hurl you (O miserable death) from our walls, to avenge some brother, son, or father whom Hector slew; many of them have indeed bitten the dust at his hands, for your father's hand in battle was no light one. Therefore do the people mourn him. You have left, O Hector, sorrow unutterable to your parents, and my own grief is greatest of all, for you did not stretch forth your arms and embrace me as you lay dying, nor say to me any words that might have lived with me in my tears night and day for evermore."

Bitterly did she weep the while, and the women joined in her lament. Hecuba in her turn took up the strains of woe. "Hector," she cried, "dearest to me of all my children. So long as you were alive the gods loved you well, and even in death they have not been utterly unmindful of you; for when Achilles took any other of my sons, he would sell him beyond the seas, to Samos Imbrus or rugged Lemnos; and when he had slain you too with his sword, many a time did he drag you round the sepulchre of his comrade—though this could not give him life—yet here you lie all fresh as dew, and comely as one whom Apollo has slain with his painless shafts."

Thus did she too speak through her tears with bitter moan, and then Helen for a third time took up the strain of lamentation. "Hector," said she, "dearest of all my brothers-in-law—for I am wife to Alexandrus who brought me hither to Troy—would that I had died ere he did so—twenty years are come and gone since I left my home and came from over the sea, but I have never heard one word of insult or unkindness from you. When another would chide with me, as it might be one of your brothers or sisters or of your brothers' wives, or my mother-in-law—for Priam was as kind to me as though he were my own father—you would rebuke and check them with words of gentleness and goodwill. Therefore my tears flow both for you and for my unhappy self, for there is no one else in Troy who is kind to me, but all shrink and shudder as they go by me."

She wept as she spoke and the vast crowd that was gathered round her joined in her lament. Then King Priam spoke to them saying, "Bring wood, O Trojans, to the city, and fear no cunning ambush of the Argives, for Achilles when he dismissed me from the ships gave me his word that they should not attack us until the morning of the twelfth day."

Forthwith they yoked their oxen and mules and gathered together before the city. Nine days long did they bring in great heaps of wood, and on the morning of the tenth day with many tears they took brave Hector forth, laid his dead body upon the summit of the pile, and set the fire thereto. Then when the child of morning, rosy-fingered dawn, appeared on the eleventh day, the people again assembled, round the pyre of mighty Hector. When they were got together, they first quenched the fire with wine wherever it was burning, and then his brothers and comrades with many a bitter tear gathered his white bones, wrapped them in soft robes of purple, and laid them in a golden urn, which they placed in a grave and covered over with large stones set close together. Then they built a barrow hurriedly over it keeping guard on every side lest the Achaeans should attack them before they had finished. When they had heaped up the barrow they went back again into the city, and being well assembled they held high feast in the house of Priam their king.

Thus, then, did they celebrate the funeral of Hector tamer of horses.

This page titled 3.12.1.24: Book XXIV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.13: The Odyssey - An Introduction



Odysseus blinding Polyphemus on an amphora in the Archaeological Museum in Eleusis

The *Odyssey* tells the story of the Greek hero Odysseus' return home from the Trojan War. Although the *Odyssey* focuses on Odysseus' story, it also tells about the returns of four other heroes: Nestor, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and the Lesser Ajax. These stories are told piecemeal and in flashbacks, so they are a little more difficult to follow. Furthermore, there are also a few events that happened between the end of the *Iliad* and the beginning of the *Odyssey*, that are helpful to know.

A bronze figurine of one of the men turned into pigs by Circe in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore

The Death of Achilles

The first of these events is the death of Achilles, which came at the hands of Paris with the help of Apollo. The Greeks were fighting near the gates of Troy and Paris shot at Achilles with his bow, which Apollo guided to Achilles' one vulnerable spot, his ankle. This was the only vulnerable spot on Achilles' body because his mother tried to make him immortal when he was a baby by dipping him in the River Styx. Since she held him by the ankle, the waters of the Styx did not touch that part of him, so he was mortal and vulnerable in that spot.

The Suicide of Ajax

After Achilles' death, it was decided that his armor should be given to the second greatest Greek warrior after Achilles. As we know from Book 18 of the *Iliad*, Achilles had immortal armor, which had been crafted for him by the god, Hephaestus, to make up for the armor he had lost when Patroclus had worn it into battle (and Hector had taken it after he killed Patroclus). Now that Achilles, the greatest of the Achaeans, was dead, it was agreed that his immortal armor should go to the second greatest warrior. Everyone knew that the second greatest warrior was the Greater Ajax, the son of Telamon; he was huge, he was brave, and he was selfless; he spent all his time protecting the other Achaeans. But Odysseus used his amazing speaking ability to convince Agamemnon and Menelaus (who were judging the contest) that his cleverness made him more valuable than Ajax (who was not known for his wits) and that he, Odysseus, was in fact the second best Greek warrior. As a result, Odysseus was awarded Achilles' armor, even though everyone knew in their hearts that Ajax really deserved it. Ajax was so mortified by being passed over for an honor that he felt was rightfully his, that he killed himself in shame. And, as we will see when we read the *Odyssey*, Odysseus later came to deeply regret his "win".



A small bronze figurine of Odysseus tied to the underside of a ram to escape Polyphemus in the Archaeological Museum of Delphi

The Bow of Heracles and the Palladium

Meanwhile, the Trojan War raged on, despite the deaths of both Hector and Achilles. The Greeks learned from Helenus, a son of Priam whom they had captured, that they needed to complete two tasks before they could capture Troy. First of all, they needed Heracles' bow, and second, they needed to capture the Palladium, a wooden statue of Athena, which was kept in Athena's temple in Troy. The Greeks first set out to acquire Heracles' bow, which was difficult because Heracles had given it to his friend, Philoctetes, before he died. Many years earlier, at the beginning of the Trojan War, the Greeks had abandoned him on a desert island, so now he hated the Greeks and did not want to give them Heracles' bow. But eventually, with the help of Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, they were able to convince him to give them Heracles' bow. The entire story, including the reason why the Greeks abandoned Philoctetes in the first place, is told in Sophocles' play, *Philoctetes*.

Now the Greeks needed to somehow acquire the Palladium, since Helenus had told them that as long as the Palladium was inside Athena's temple, the city could not fall. Odysseus and Diomedes snuck into the city in disguise and stole the Palladium, taking it with them to the Greek camp.

The Trojan Horse

Now the only thing standing in between the Greeks and victory were the impressive walls of Troy. Odysseus hatched a scheme to get them inside the city. A giant, hollow wooden horse was constructed and a select group of warriors was placed inside. The rest of the Greeks sailed just out of sight of Troy, waiting for a signal from the city to come back. The Trojans, when they saw that the Greek army had left, assumed that the Greeks had finally admitted defeat and had sailed back home. The Trojans took the horse, which they believed to be a thank-offering to Athena for a safe trip home, inside their city. That night they celebrated the end of the war with an amazing party and then fell into a drunken sleep. While the city slept, the Greek warriors came out of the wooden horse. They quickly went to the gates and opened them and then lit a fire as a signal to the Greek fleet that they were ready for reinforcements. The Greek fleet returned, the warriors inside the city opened the gates, and the Greeks burned and pillaged the city, razing it to the ground.



This is a famous Athenian red-figure vase (c. 480-470 BC) showing Odysseus tied to the mast, listening to the Sirens' song, as his crew rows past their island. This vase shows the Sirens as part-woman and part-bird, although Homer seems to imagine them in completely female form. This very well-known vase, on display in the British Museum, has become the basis for several modern depictions of the Sirens, including the one by N. C. Wyeth, below.



N. C. (Newell Convers) Wyeth (1882-1945) was one of the greatest American illustrators of the early twentieth century. This painting, from a 1929 edition of *The Odyssey*, is clearly modeled on the Sirens vase in the British Museum, but it depicts Odysseus tied to the mast in a Christ-like pose, while the Sirens seem to embody sexual temptation. N. C. Wyeth (1882-1945), The Sirens, 1929, oil on canvas, 48 1/2 x 38 1/4″. Brandywine Museum purchase, 1991.

The Sack of Troy and the Returns

The Greeks were savage in their sack of the city and their actions had lasting consequences on their journeys home. The Lesser Ajax (the son of Oïleus, called “Lesser” to distinguish him from the more famous warrior named Ajax) raped Cassandra in

Athena's temple. As you can imagine, Athena was furious, and she found a way to punish him so that he did not survive [see Athena]. Neoptolemus killed Priam at the altar of Zeus but, when he arrived home, he was killed by Orestes in a quarrel over Hermione, the daughter of Helen and Menelaus. Menelaus had promised Hermione to Neoptolemus but then later gave her to his nephew, Orestes. Agamemnon arrived home quickly and without incident, but as soon as he arrived he was killed at a banquet by his wife's lover, Aegisthus. Menelaus was blown off course to Egypt, and he spent seven years in Egypt before finally arriving home to Sparta. Odysseus was blown around the entire Mediterranean Sea and was not able to return home until ten years after the Trojan War was over (as we will see in the *Odyssey*). Only one important Greek warrior made it home quickly with no negative consequences: Nestor. We will discuss why Nestor alone had no difficulties getting home when we read the *Odyssey*.

3.13: The Odyssey - An Introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Odyssey is one of two major ancient Greek epic poems attributed to Homer. It is, in part, a sequel to the Iliad, the other Homeric epic. The Odyssey is a fundamental work in the modern Western canon, being the oldest extant piece of Western literature, second to the Iliad. Scholars believe the Odyssey was composed near the end of the 8th century BC, somewhere in Ionia, the Greek coastal region of Anatolia.

3.14.1: Books

3.14.1.1: Book I
3.14.1.2: Book II
3.14.1.3: Book III
3.14.1.4: Book IV
3.14.1.5: Book V
3.14.1.6: Book VI
3.14.1.7: Book VII
3.14.1.8: Book VIII
3.14.1.9: Book IX
3.14.1.10: Book X
3.14.1.11: Book XI
3.14.1.12: Book XII
3.14.1.13: Book XIII
3.14.1.14: Book XIV
3.14.1.15: Book XV
3.14.1.16: Book XVI
3.14.1.17: Book XVII
3.14.1.18: Book XVIII
3.14.1.19: Book XIX
3.14.1.20: Book XX
3.14.1.21: Book XXI
3.14.1.22: Book XXII
3.14.1.23: Book XXIII
3.14.1.24: Book XXIV

Thumbnail: Ulysses and the Sirens 1891 (John William Waterhouse - via Wikipedia)

This page titled 3.14: Book- The Odyssey (Homer) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

SECTION OVERVIEW

3.14.1: Books

3.14.1.1: Book I

3.14.1.2: Book II

3.14.1.3: Book III

3.14.1.4: Book IV

3.14.1.5: Book V

3.14.1.6: Book VI

3.14.1.7: Book VII

3.14.1.8: Book VIII

3.14.1.9: Book IX

3.14.1.10: Book X

3.14.1.11: Book XI

3.14.1.12: Book XII

3.14.1.13: Book XIII

3.14.1.14: Book XIV

3.14.1.15: Book XV

3.14.1.16: Book XVI

3.14.1.17: Book XVII

3.14.1.18: Book XVIII

3.14.1.19: Book XIX

3.14.1.20: Book XX

3.14.1.21: Book XXI

3.14.1.22: Book XXII

3.14.1.23: Book XXIII

3.14.1.24: Book XXIV

This page titled 3.14.1: Books is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.1: Book I

THE GODS IN COUNCIL—MINERVA'S VISIT TO ITHACA—THE CHALLENGE FROM TELEMACHUS TO THE SUITORS.

Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations with whose manners and customs he was acquainted; moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun-god Hyperion; so the god prevented them from ever reaching home. Tell me, too, about all these things, oh daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know them.

So now all who escaped death in battle or by shipwreck had got safely home except Ulysses, and he, though he was longing to return to his wife and country, was detained by the goddess Calypso, who had got him into a large cave and wanted to marry him. But as years went by, there came a time when the gods settled that he should go back to Ithaca; even then, however, when he was among his own people, his troubles were not yet over; nevertheless all the gods had now begun to pity him except Neptune, who still persecuted him without ceasing and would not let him get home.

Now Neptune had gone off to the Ethiopians, who are at the world's end, and lie in two halves, the one looking West and the other East.[1] He had gone there to accept a hecatomb of sheep and oxen, and was enjoying himself at his festival; but the other gods met in the house of Olympian Jove, and the sire of gods and men spoke first. At that moment he was thinking of Aegisthus, who had been killed by Agamemnon's son Orestes; so he said to the other gods:

"See now, how men lay blame upon us gods for what is after all nothing but their own folly. Look at Aegisthus; he must needs make love to Agamemnon's wife unrighteously and then kill Agamemnon, though he knew it would be the death of him; for I sent Mercury to warn him not to do either of these things, inasmuch as Orestes would be sure to take his revenge when he grew up and wanted to return home. Mercury told him this in all good will but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full."

Then Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, it served Aegisthus right, and so it would any one else who does as he did; but Aegisthus is neither here nor there; it is for Ulysses that my heart bleeds, when I think of his sufferings in that lonely sea-girt island, far away, poor man, from all his friends. It is an island covered with forest, in the very middle of the sea, and a goddess lives there, daughter of the magician Atlas, who looks after the bottom of the ocean, and carries the great columns that keep heaven and earth asunder. This daughter of Atlas has got hold of poor unhappy Ulysses, and keeps trying by every kind of blandishment to make him forget his home, so that he is tired of life, and thinks of nothing but how he may once more see the smoke of his own chimneys. You, sir, take no heed of this, and yet when Ulysses was before Troy did he not propitiate you with many a burnt sacrifice? Why then should you keep on being so angry with him?"

And Jove said, "My child, what are you talking about? How can I forget Ulysses than whom there is no more capable man on earth, nor more liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods that live in heaven? Bear in mind, however, that Neptune is still furious with Ulysses for having blinded an eye of Polyphemus king of the Cyclopes. Polyphemus is son to Neptune by the nymph Thoosa, daughter to the sea-king Phorcys; therefore though he will not kill Ulysses outright, he torments him by preventing him from getting home. Still, let us lay our heads together and see how we can help him to return; Neptune will then be pacified, for if we are all of a mind he can hardly stand out against us."

And Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, if, then, the gods now mean that Ulysses should get home, we should first send Mercury to the Ogygian island to tell Calypso that we have made up our minds and that he is to return. In the meantime I will go to Ithaca, to put heart into Ulysses' son Telemachus; I will embolden him to call the Achaeans in assembly, and speak out to the suitors of his mother Penelope, who persist in eating up any number of his sheep and oxen; I will also conduct him to Sparta and to Pylos, to see if he can hear anything about the return of his dear father—for this will make people speak well of him."

So saying she bound on her glittering golden sandals, imperishable, with which she can fly like the wind over land or sea; she grasped the redoubtable bronze-shod spear, so stout and sturdy and strong, wherewith she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her, and down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, whereon forthwith she was in Ithaca, at the gateway of Ulysses' house, disguised as a visitor, Mentes, chief of the Taphians, and she held a bronze spear in her hand. There she found the lordly suitors seated on hides of the oxen which they had killed and eaten, and playing draughts in front of the house. Men-servants

and pages were bustling about to wait upon them, some mixing wine with water in the mixing-bowls, some cleaning down the tables with wet sponges and laying them out again, and some cutting up great quantities of meat.

Telemachus saw her long before any one else did. He was sitting moodily among the suitors thinking about his brave father, and how he would send them flying out of the house, if he were to come to his own again and be honoured as in days gone by. Thus brooding as he sat among them, he caught sight of Minerva and went straight to the gate, for he was vexed that a stranger should be kept waiting for admittance. He took her right hand in his own, and bade her give him her spear. “Welcome,” said he, “to our house, and when you have partaken of food you shall tell us what you have come for.”

He led the way as he spoke, and Minerva followed him. When they were within he took her spear and set it in the spear-stand against a strong bearing-post along with the many other spears of his unhappy father, and he conducted her to a richly decorated seat under which he threw a cloth of damask. There was a footstool also for her feet,[2] and he set another seat near her for himself, away from the suitors, that she might not be annoyed while eating by their noise and insolence, and that he might ask her more freely about his father.

A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side, and a manservant brought them wine and poured it out for them.

Then the suitors came in and took their places on the benches and seats.[3] Forthwith men servants poured water over their hands, maids went round with the bread-baskets, pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink they wanted music and dancing, which are the crowning embellishments of a banquet, so a servant brought a lyre to Phemius, whom they compelled perforce to sing to them. As soon as he touched his lyre and began to sing Telemachus spoke low to Minerva, with his head close to hers that no man might hear.

“I hope, sir,” said he, “that you will not be offended with what I am going to say. Singing comes cheap to those who do not pay for it, and all this is done at the cost of one whose bones lie rotting in some wilderness or grinding to powder in the surf. If these men were to see my father come back to Ithaca they would pray for longer legs rather than a longer purse, for money would not serve them; but he, alas, has fallen on an ill fate, and even when people do sometimes say that he is coming, we no longer heed them; we shall never see him again. And now, sir, tell me and tell me true, who you are and where you come from. Tell me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how your crew brought you to Ithaca, and of what nation they declared themselves to be —for you cannot have come by land. Tell me also truly, for I want to know, are you a stranger to this house, or have you been here in my father’s time? In the old days we had many visitors for my father went about much himself.”

And Minerva answered, “I will tell you truly and particularly all about it. I am Mentes, son of Anchialus, and I am King of the Taphians. I have come here with my ship and crew, on a voyage to men of a foreign tongue being bound for Temesa[4] with a cargo of iron, and I shall bring back copper. As for my ship, it lies over yonder off the open country away from the town, in the harbour Rheithron[5] under the wooded mountain Neritum.[6] Our fathers were friends before us, as old Laertes will tell you, if you will go and ask him. They say, however, that he never comes to town now, and lives by himself in the country, faring hardly, with an old woman to look after him and get his dinner for him, when he comes in tired from pottering about his vineyard. They told me your father was at home again, and that was why I came, but it seems the gods are still keeping him back, for he is not dead yet not on the mainland. It is more likely he is on some sea-girt island in mid ocean, or a prisoner among savages who are detaining him against his will. I am no prophet, and know very little about omens, but I speak as it is borne in upon me from heaven, and assure you that he will not be away much longer; for he is a man of such resource that even though he were in chains of iron he would find some means of getting home again. But tell me, and tell me true, can Ulysses really have such a fine looking fellow for a son? You are indeed wonderfully like him about the head and eyes, for we were close friends before he set sail for Troy where the flower of all the Argives went also. Since that time we have never either of us seen the other.”

“My mother,” answered Telemachus, “tells me I am son to Ulysses, but it is a wise child that knows his own father. Would that I were son to one who had grown old upon his own estates, for, since you ask me, there is no more ill-starred man under heaven than he who they tell me is my father.”

And Minerva said, “There is no fear of your race dying out yet, while Penelope has such a fine son as you are. But tell me, and tell me true, what is the meaning of all this feasting, and who are these people? What is it all about? Have you some banquet, or is there a wedding in the family—for no one seems to be bringing any provisions of his own? And the guests—how atrociously they are behaving; what riot they make over the whole house; it is enough to disgust any respectable person who comes near them.”

“Sir,” said Telemachus, “as regards your question, so long as my father was here it was well with us and with the house, but the gods in their displeasure have willed it otherwise, and have hidden him away more closely than mortal man was ever yet hidden. I could have borne it better even though he were dead, if he had fallen with his men before Troy, or had died with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes, and I should myself have been heir to his renown; but now the storm-winds have spirited him away we know not whither; he is gone without leaving so much as a trace behind him, and I inherit nothing but dismay. Nor does the matter end simply with grief for the loss of my father; heaven has laid sorrows upon me of yet another kind; for the chiefs from all our islands, Dulichium, Same, and the woodland island of Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying their court to my mother, who will neither point blank say that she will not marry,[7] nor yet bring matters to an end; so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so also with myself.”

“Is that so?” exclaimed Minerva, “then you do indeed want Ulysses home again. Give him his helmet, shield, and a couple of lances, and if he is the man he was when I first knew him in our house, drinking and making merry, he would soon lay his hands about these rascally suitors, were he to stand once more upon his own threshold. He was then coming from Ephyra, where he had been to beg poison for his arrows from Ilus, son of Mermerus. Ilus feared the ever-living gods and would not give him any, but my father let him have some, for he was very fond of him. If Ulysses is the man he then was these suitors will have a short shrift and a sorry wedding.

“But there! It rests with heaven to determine whether he is to return, and take his revenge in his own house or no; I would, however, urge you to set about trying to get rid of these suitors at once. Take my advice, call the Achaean heroes in assembly to-morrow morning—lay your case before them, and call heaven to bear you witness. Bid the suitors take themselves off, each to his own place, and if your mother’s mind is set on marrying again, let her go back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts that so dear a daughter may expect. As for yourself, let me prevail upon you to take the best ship you can get, with a crew of twenty men, and go in quest of your father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell you something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct you. First go to Pylos and ask Nestor; thence go on to Sparta and visit Menelaus, for he got home last of all the Achaeans; if you hear that your father is alive and on his way home, you can put up with the waste these suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, come home at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make your mother marry again. Then, having done all this, think it well over in your mind how, by fair means or foul, you may kill these suitors in your own house. You are too old to plead infancy any longer; have you not heard how people are singing Orestes’ praises for having killed his father’s murderer Aegisthus? You are a fine, smart looking fellow; show your mettle, then, and make yourself a name in story. Now, however, I must go back to my ship and to my crew, who will be impatient if I keep them waiting longer; think the matter over for yourself, and remember what I have said to you.”

“Sir,” answered Telemachus, “it has been very kind of you to talk to me in this way, as though I were your own son, and I will do all you tell me; I know you want to be getting on with your voyage, but stay a little longer till you have taken a bath and refreshed yourself. I will then give you a present, and you shall go on your way rejoicing; I will give you one of great beauty and value—a keepsake such as only dear friends give to one another.”

Minerva answered, “Do not try to keep me, for I would be on my way at once. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, keep it till I come again, and I will take it home with me. You shall give me a very good one, and I will give you one of no less value in return.”

With these words she flew away like a bird into the air, but she had given Telemachus courage, and had made him think more than ever about his father. He felt the change, wondered at it, and knew that the stranger had been a god, so he went straight to where the suitors were sitting.

Phemius was still singing, and his hearers sat rapt in silence as he told the sad tale of the return from Troy, and the ills Minerva had laid upon the Achaeans. Penelope, daughter of Icarius, heard his song from her room upstairs, and came down by the great

staircase, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids. When she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing posts that supported the roof of the cloisters[8] with a staid maiden on either side of her. She held a veil, moreover, before her face, and was weeping bitterly.

"Phemius," she cried, "you know many another feat of gods and heroes, such as poets love to celebrate. Sing the suitors some one of these, and let them drink their wine in silence, but cease this sad tale, for it breaks my sorrowful heart, and reminds me of my lost husband whom I mourn ever without ceasing, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos."[9]

"Mother," answered Telemachus, "let the bard sing what he has a mind to; bards do not make the ills they sing of; it is Jove, not they, who makes them, and who sends weal or woe upon mankind according to his own good pleasure. This fellow means no harm by singing the ill-fated return of the Danaans, for people always applaud the latest songs most warmly. Make up your mind to it and bear it; Ulysses is not the only man who never came back from Troy, but many another went down as well as he. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man's matter, and mine above all others [10]—for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then, going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes. But the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloisters[11], and prayed each one that he might be her bed fellow.

Then Telemachus spoke, "Shameless," he cried, "and insolent suitors, let us feast at our pleasure now, and let there be no brawling, for it is a rare thing to hear a man with such a divine voice as Phemius has; but in the morning meet me in full assembly that I may give you formal notice to depart, and feast at one another's houses, turn and turn about, at your own cost. If on the other hand you choose to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father's house there shall be no man to avenge you."

The suitors bit their lips as they heard him, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech. Then, Antinous, son of Eupeithes, said, "The gods seem to have given you lessons in bluster and tall talking; may Jove never grant you to be chief in Ithaca as your father was before you."

Telemachus answered, "Antinous, do not chide with me, but, god willing, I will be chief too if I can. Is this the worst fate you can think of for me? It is no bad thing to be a chief, for it brings both riches and honour. Still, now that Ulysses is dead there are many great men in Ithaca both old and young, and some other may take the lead among them; nevertheless I will be chief in my own house, and will rule those whom Ulysses has won for me."

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered, "It rests with heaven to decide who shall be chief among us, but you shall be master in your own house and over your own possessions; no one while there is a man in Ithaca shall do you violence nor rob you. And now, my good fellow, I want to know about this stranger. What country does he come from? Of what family is he, and where is his estate? Has he brought you news about the return of your father, or was he on business of his own? He seemed a well to do man, but he hurried off so suddenly that he was gone in a moment before we could get to know him."

"My father is dead and gone," answered Telemachus, "and even if some rumour reaches me I put no more faith in it now. My mother does indeed sometimes send for a soothsayer and question him, but I give his prophecyings no heed. As for the stranger, he was Mentes, son of Anchialus, chief of the Taphians, an old friend of my father's." But in his heart he knew that it had been the goddess.

The suitors then returned to their singing and dancing until the evening; but when night fell upon their pleasuring they went home to bed each in his own abode.[12] Telemachus's room was high up in a tower[13] that looked on to the outer court; hither, then, he hied, brooding and full of thought. A good old woman, Euryclea, daughter of Ops, the son of Pisenor, went before him with a couple of blazing torches. Laertes had bought her with his own money when she was quite young; he gave the worth of twenty oxen for her, and shewed as much respect to her in his household as he did to his own wedded wife, but he did not take her to his bed for he feared his wife's resentment.[14] She it was who now lighted Telemachus to his room, and she loved him better than any of the other women in the house did, for she had nursed him when he was a baby. He opened the door of his bed room and sat down upon the bed; as he took off his shirt[15] he gave it to the good old woman, who folded it tidily up, and hung it for him over a peg by his bed side, after which she went out, pulled the door to by a silver catch, and drew the bolt home by means of the strap.[16] But

Telemachus as he lay covered with a woollen fleece kept thinking all night through of his intended voyage and of the counsel that Minerva had given him.

This page titled 3.14.1.1: Book I is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.2: Book II

ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF ITHACA—SPEECHES OF TELEMACHUS AND OF THE SUITORS—TELEMACHUS MAKES HIS PREPARATIONS AND STARTS FOR PYLOS WITH MINERVA DISGUISED AS MENTOR.

Now when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared Telemachus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulder, and left his room looking like an immortal god. He at once sent the criers round to call the people in assembly, so they called them and the people gathered thereon; then, when they were got together, he went to the place of assembly spear in hand—not alone, for his two hounds went with him. Minerva endowed him with a presence of such divine comeliness that all marvelled at him as he went by, and when he took his place in his father's seat even the oldest councillors made way for him.

Aegyptius, a man bent double with age, and of infinite experience, was the first to speak. His son Antiphus had gone with Ulysses to Ilius, land of noble steeds, but the savage Cyclops had killed him when they were all shut up in the cave, and had cooked his last dinner for him.[17] He had three sons left, of whom two still worked on their father's land, while the third, Eurynomus, was one of the suitors; nevertheless their father could not get over the loss of Antiphus, and was still weeping for him when he began his speech.

"Men of Ithaca," he said, "hear my words. From the day Ulysses left us there has been no meeting of our councillors until now; who then can it be, whether old or young, that finds it so necessary to convene us? Has he got wind of some host approaching, and does he wish to warn us, or would he speak upon some other matter of public moment? I am sure he is an excellent person, and I hope Jove will grant him his heart's desire."

Telemachus took this speech as of good omen and rose at once, for he was bursting with what he had to say. He stood in the middle of the assembly and the good herald Pisenor brought him his staff. Then, turning to Aegyptius, "Sir," said he, "it is I, as you will shortly learn, who have convened you, for it is I who am the most aggrieved. I have not got wind of any host approaching about which I would warn you, nor is there any matter of public moment on which I would speak. My grievance is purely personal, and turns on two great misfortunes which have fallen upon my house. The first of these is the loss of my excellent father, who was chief among all you here present, and was like a father to every one of you; the second is much more serious, and ere long will be the utter ruin of my estate. The sons of all the chief men among you are pestering my mother to marry them against her will. They are afraid to go to her father Icarius, asking him to choose the one he likes best, and to provide marriage gifts for his daughter, but day by day they keep hanging about my father's house, sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink. No estate can stand such recklessness; we have now no Ulysses to ward off harm from our doors, and I cannot hold my own against them. I shall never all my days be as good a man as he was, still I would indeed defend myself if I had power to do so, for I cannot stand such treatment any longer; my house is being disgraced and ruined. Have respect, therefore, to your own consciences and to public opinion. Fear, too, the wrath of heaven, lest the gods should be displeased and turn upon you. I pray you by Jove and Themis, who is the beginning and the end of councils, [do not] hold back, my friends, and leave me singlehanded[18]—unless it be that my brave father Ulysses did some wrong to the Achaeans which you would now avenge on me, by aiding and abetting these suitors. Moreover, if I am to be eaten out of house and home at all, I had rather you did the eating yourselves, for I could then take action against you to some purpose, and serve you with notices from house to house till I got paid in full, whereas now I have no remedy."[19]

With this Telemachus dashed his staff to the ground and burst into tears. Every one was very sorry for him, but they all sat still and no one ventured to make him an angry answer, save only Antinous, who spoke thus:

"Telemachus, insolent braggart that you are, how dare you try to throw the blame upon us suitors? It is your mother's fault not ours, for she is a very artful woman. This three years past, and close on four, she had been driving us out of our minds, by encouraging each one of us, and sending him messages without meaning one word of what she says. And then there was that other trick she played us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room, and began to work on an enormous piece of fine needlework. 'Sweet hearts,' said she, 'Ulysses is indeed dead, still do not press me to marry again immediately, wait—for I would not have skill in needlework perish unrecorded—till I have completed a pall for the hero Laertes, to be in readiness against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.'

“This was what she said, and we assented; whereon we could see her working on her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years and we never found her out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or no. The suitors, therefore, make you this answer, that both you and the Achaeans may understand—‘Send your mother away, and bid her marry the man of her own and of her father’s choice’; for I do not know what will happen if she goes on plaguing us much longer with the airs she gives herself on the score of the accomplishments Minerva has taught her, and because she is so clever. We never yet heard of such a woman; we know all about Tyro, Alcmena, Mycene, and the famous women of old, but they were nothing to your mother any one of them. It was not fair of her to treat us in that way, and as long as she continues in the mind with which heaven has now endowed her, so long shall we go on eating up your estate; and I do not see why she should change, for she gets all the honour and glory, and it is you who pay for it, not she. Understand, then, that we will not go back to our lands, neither here nor elsewhere, till she has made her choice and married some one or other of us.”

Telemachus answered, “Antinous, how can I drive the mother who bore me from my father’s house? My father is abroad and we do not know whether he is alive or dead. It will be hard on me if I have to pay Icarius the large sum which I must give him if I insist on sending his daughter back to him. Not only will he deal rigorously with me, but heaven will also punish me; for my mother when she leaves the house will call on the Erinyes to avenge her; besides, it would not be a creditable thing to do, and I will have nothing to say to it. If you choose to take offence at this, leave the house and feast elsewhere at one another’s houses at your own cost turn and turn about. If, on the other hand, you elect to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father’s house there shall be no man to avenge you.”

As he spoke Jove sent two eagles from the top of the mountain, and they flew on and on with the wind, sailing side by side in their own lordly flight. When they were right over the middle of the assembly they wheeled and circled about, beating the air with their wings and glaring death into the eyes of them that were below; then, fighting fiercely and tearing at one another, they flew off towards the right over the town. The people wondered as they saw them, and asked each other what all this might be; whereon Halitherses, who was the best prophet and reader of omens among them, spoke to them plainly and in all honesty, saying:

“Hear me, men of Ithaca, and I speak more particularly to the suitors, for I see mischief brewing for them. Ulysses is not going to be away much longer; indeed he is close at hand to deal out death and destruction, not on them alone, but on many another of us who live in Ithaca. Let us then be wise in time, and put a stop to this wickedness before he comes. Let the suitors do so of their own accord; it will be better for them, for I am not prophesying without due knowledge; everything has happened to Ulysses as I foretold when the Argives set out for Troy, and he with them. I said that after going through much hardship and losing all his men he should come home again in the twentieth year and that no one would know him; and now all this is coming true.”

Eurymachus son of Polybus then said, “Go home, old man, and prophesy to your own children, or it may be worse for them. I can read these omens myself much better than you can; birds are always flying about in the sunshine somewhere or other, but they seldom mean anything. Ulysses has died in a far country, and it is a pity you are not dead along with him, instead of prating here about omens and adding fuel to the anger of Telemachus which is fierce enough as it is. I suppose you think he will give you something for your family, but I tell you—and it shall surely be—when an old man like you, who should know better, talks a young one over till he becomes troublesome, in the first place his young friend will only fare so much the worse—he will take nothing by it, for the suitors will prevent this—and in the next, we will lay a heavier fine, sir, upon yourself than you will at all like paying, for it will bear hardly upon you. As for Telemachus, I warn him in the presence of you all to send his mother back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts so dear a daughter may expect. Till then we shall go on harassing him with our suit; for we fear no man, and care neither for him, with all his fine speeches, nor for any fortune-telling of yours. You may preach as much as you please, but we shall only hate you the more. We shall go back and continue to eat up Telemachus’s estate without paying him, till such time as his mother leaves off tormenting us by keeping us day after day on the tiptoe of expectation, each vying with the other in his suit for a prize of such rare perfection. Besides we cannot go after the other women whom we should marry in due course, but for the way in which she treats us.”

Then Telemachus said, “Eurymachus, and you other suitors, I shall say no more, and entreat you no further, for the gods and the people of Ithaca now know my story. Give me, then, a ship and a crew of twenty men to take me hither and thither, and I will go to Sparta and to Pylos in quest of my father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell me something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct me. If I can hear of him as alive and on his way home I will put up

with the waste you suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand I hear of his death, I will return at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make my mother marry again."

With these words he sat down, and Mentor[20] who had been a friend of Ulysses, and had been left in charge of everything with full authority over the servants, rose to speak. He, then, plainly and in all honesty addressed them thus:

"Hear me, men of Ithaca, I hope that you may never have a kind and well-disposed ruler any more, nor one who will govern you equitably; I hope that all your chiefs henceforward may be cruel and unjust, for there is not one of you but has forgotten Ulysses, who ruled you as though he were your father. I am not half so angry with the suitors, for if they choose to do violence in the naughtiness of their hearts, and wager their heads that Ulysses will not return, they can take the high hand and eat up his estate, but as for you others I am shocked at the way in which you all sit still without even trying to stop such scandalous goings on—which you could do if you chose, for you are many and they are few."

Leiocritus, son of Evenor, answered him saying, "Mentor, what folly is all this, that you should set the people to stay us? It is a hard thing for one man to fight with many about his victuals. Even though Ulysses himself were to set upon us while we are feasting in his house, and do his best to oust us, his wife, who wants him back so very badly, would have small cause for rejoicing, and his blood would be upon his own head if he fought against such great odds. There is no sense in what you have been saying. Now, therefore, do you people go about your business, and let his father's old friends, Mentor and Halitherses, speed this boy on his journey, if he goes at all—which I do not think he will, for he is more likely to stay where he is till some one comes and tells him something."

On this he broke up the assembly, and every man went back to his own abode, while the suitors returned to the house of Ulysses.

Then Telemachus went all alone by the sea side, washed his hands in the grey waves, and prayed to Minerva.

"Hear me," he cried, "you god who visited me yesterday, and bade me sail the seas in search of my father who has so long been missing. I would obey you, but the Achaeans, and more particularly the wicked suitors, are hindering me that I cannot do so."

As he thus prayed, Minerva came close up to him in the likeness and with the voice of Mentor. "Telemachus," said she, "if you are made of the same stuff as your father you will be neither fool nor coward henceforward, for Ulysses never broke his word nor left his work half done. If, then, you take after him, your voyage will not be fruitless, but unless you have the blood of Ulysses and of Penelope in your veins I see no likelihood of your succeeding. Sons are seldom as good men as their fathers; they are generally worse, not better; still, as you are not going to be either fool or coward henceforward, and are not entirely without some share of your father's wise discernment, I look with hope upon your undertaking. But mind you never make common cause with any of those foolish suitors, for they have neither sense nor virtue, and give no thought to death and to the doom that will shortly fall on one and all of them, so that they shall perish on the same day. As for your voyage, it shall not be long delayed; your father was such an old friend of mine that I will find you a ship, and will come with you myself. Now, however, return home, and go about among the suitors; begin getting provisions ready for your voyage; see everything well stowed, the wine in jars, and the barley meal, which is the staff of life, in leathern bags, while I go round the town and beat up volunteers at once. There are many ships in Ithaca both old and new; I will run my eye over them for you and will choose the best; we will get her ready and will put out to sea without delay."

Thus spoke Minerva daughter of Jove, and Telemachus lost no time in doing as the goddess told him. He went moodily home, and found the suitors flaying goats and singeing pigs in the outer court. Antinous came up to him at once and laughed as he took his hand in his own, saying, "Telemachus, my fine fire-eater, bear no more ill blood neither in word nor deed, but eat and drink with us as you used to do. The Achaeans will find you in everything—a ship and a picked crew to boot—so that you can set sail for Pylos at once and get news of your noble father."

"Antinous," answered Telemachus, "I cannot eat in peace, nor take pleasure of any kind with such men as you are. Was it not enough that you should waste so much good property of mine while I was yet a boy? Now that I am older and know more about it, I am also stronger, and whether here among this people, or by going to Pylos, I will do you all the harm I can. I shall go, and my going will not be in vain—though, thanks to you suitors, I have neither ship nor crew of my own, and must be passenger not captain."

As he spoke he snatched his hand from that of Antinous. Meanwhile the others went on getting dinner ready about the buildings,[21] jeering at him tauntingly as they did so.

"Telemachus," said one youngster, "means to be the death of us; I suppose he thinks he can bring friends to help him from Pylos, or again from Sparta, where he seems bent on going. Or will he go to Ephyra as well, for poison to put in our wine and kill us?"

Another said, "Perhaps if Telemachus goes on board ship, he will be like his father and perish far from his friends. In this case we should have plenty to do, for we could then divide up his property amongst us: as for the house we can let his mother and the man who marries her have that."

This was how they talked. But Telemachus went down into the lofty and spacious store-room where his father's treasure of gold and bronze lay heaped up upon the floor, and where the linen and spare clothes were kept in open chests. Here, too, there was a store of fragrant olive oil, while casks of old, well-ripened wine, unblended and fit for a god to drink, were ranged against the wall in case Ulysses should come home again after all. The room was closed with well-made doors opening in the middle; moreover the faithful old house-keeper Euryclea, daughter of Ops the son of Pisenor, was in charge of everything both night and day. Telemachus called her to the store-room and said:

"Nurse, draw me off some of the best wine you have, after what you are keeping for my father's own drinking, in case, poor man, he should escape death, and find his way home again after all. Let me have twelve jars, and see that they all have lids; also fill me some well-sewn leathern bags with barley meal—about twenty measures in all. Get these things put together at once, and say nothing about it. I will take everything away this evening as soon as my mother has gone upstairs for the night. I am going to Sparta and to Pylos to see if I can hear anything about the return of my dear father."

When Euryclea heard this she began to cry, and spoke fondly to him, saying, "My dear child, what ever can have put such notion as that into your head? Where in the world do you want to go to—you, who are the one hope of the house? Your poor father is dead and gone in some foreign country nobody knows where, and as soon as your back is turned these wicked ones here will be scheming to get you put out of the way, and will share all your possessions among themselves; stay where you are among your own people, and do not go wandering and worrying your life out on the barren ocean."

"Fear not, nurse," answered Telemachus, "my scheme is not without heaven's sanction; but swear that you will say nothing about all this to my mother, till I have been away some ten or twelve days, unless she hears of my having gone, and asks you; for I do not want her to spoil her beauty by crying."

The old woman swore most solemnly that she would not, and when she had completed her oath, she began drawing off the wine into jars, and getting the barley meal into the bags, while Telemachus went back to the suitors.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter. She took his shape, and went round the town to each one of the crew, telling them to meet at the ship by sundown. She went also to Noemon son of Phronius, and asked him to let her have a ship—which he was very ready to do. When the sun had set and darkness was over all the land, she got the ship into the water, put all the tackle on board her that ships generally carry, and stationed her at the end of the harbour. Presently the crew came up, and the goddess spoke encouragingly to each of them.

Furthermore she went to the house of Ulysses, and threw the suitors into a deep slumber. She caused their drink to fuddle them, and made them drop their cups from their hands, so that instead of sitting over their wine, they went back into the town to sleep, with their eyes heavy and full of drowsiness. Then she took the form and voice of Mentor, and called Telemachus to come outside.

"Telemachus," said she, "the men are on board and at their oars, waiting for you to give your orders, so make haste and let us be off."

On this she led the way, while Telemachus followed in her steps. When they got to the ship they found the crew waiting by the water side, and Telemachus said, "Now my men, help me to get the stores on board; they are all put together in the cloister, and my mother does not know anything about it, nor any of the maid servants except one."

With these words he led the way and the others followed after. When they had brought the things as he told them, Telemachus went on board, Minerva going before him and taking her seat in the stern of the vessel, while Telemachus sat beside her. Then the men loosed the hawsers and took their places on the benches. Minerva sent them a fair wind from the West,[22] that whistled over the deep blue waves[23] whereon Telemachus told them to catch hold of the ropes and hoist sail, and they did as he told them. They set the mast in its socket in the cross plank, raised it, and made it fast with the forestays; then they hoisted their white sails aloft with ropes of twisted ox hide. As the sail bellied out with the wind, the ship flew through the deep blue water, and the foam hissed

against her bows as she sped onward. Then they made all fast throughout the ship, filled the mixing bowls to the brim, and made drink offerings to the immortal gods that are from everlasting, but more particularly to the grey-eyed daughter of Jove.

Thus, then, the ship sped on her way through the watches of the night from dark till dawn,

---

This page titled 3.14.1.2: Book II is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.3: Book III

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR AT PYLOS.

but as the sun was rising from the fair sea[24] into the firmament of heaven to shed light on mortals and immortals, they reached Pylos the city of Neleus. Now the people of Pylos were gathered on the sea shore to offer sacrifice of black bulls to Neptune lord of the Earthquake. There were nine guilds with five hundred men in each, and there were nine bulls to each guild. As they were eating the inward meats[25] and burning the thigh bones [on the embers] in the name of Neptune, Telemachus and his crew arrived, furled their sails, brought their ship to anchor, and went ashore.

Minerva led the way and Telemachus followed her. Presently she said, “Telemachus, you must not be in the least shy or nervous; you have taken this voyage to try and find out where your father is buried and how he came by his end; so go straight up to Nestor that we may see what he has got to tell us. Beg of him to speak the truth, and he will tell no lies, for he is an excellent person.”

“But how, Mentor,” replied Telemachus, “dare I go up to Nestor, and how am I to address him? I have never yet been used to holding long conversations with people, and am ashamed to begin questioning one who is so much older than myself.”

“Some things, Telemachus,” answered Minerva, “will be suggested to you by your own instinct, and heaven will prompt you further; for I am assured that the gods have been with you from the time of your birth until now.”

She then went quickly on, and Telemachus followed in her steps till they reached the place where the guilds of the Pylian people were assembled. There they found Nestor sitting with his sons, while his company round him were busy getting dinner ready, and putting pieces of meat on to the spits[26] while other pieces were cooking. When they saw the strangers they crowded round them, took them by the hand and bade them take their places. Nestor’s son Pisistratus at once offered his hand to each of them, and seated them on some soft sheepskins that were lying on the sands near his father and his brother Thrasymedes. Then he gave them their portions of the inward meats and poured wine for them into a golden cup, handing it to Minerva first, and saluting her at the same time.

“Offer a prayer, sir,” said he, “to King Neptune, for it is his feast that you are joining; when you have duly prayed and made your drink offering, pass the cup to your friend that he may do so also. I doubt not that he too lifts his hands in prayer, for man cannot live without God in the world. Still he is younger than you are, and is much of an age with myself, so I will give you the precedence.”

As he spoke he handed her the cup. Minerva thought it very right and proper of him to have given it to herself first;[27] she accordingly began praying heartily to Neptune. “O thou,” she cried, “that encirclest the earth, vouchsafe to grant the prayers of thy servants that call upon thee. More especially we pray thee send down thy grace on Nestor and on his sons; thereafter also make the rest of the Pylian people some handsome return for the goodly hecatomb they are offering you. Lastly, grant Telemachus and myself a happy issue, in respect of the matter that has brought us in our ship to Pylos.”

When she had thus made an end of praying, she handed the cup to Telemachus and he prayed likewise. By and by, when the outer meats were roasted and had been taken off the spits, the carvers gave every man his portion and they all made an excellent dinner. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Nestor, knight of Gerene, began to speak.

“Now,” said he, “that our guests have done their dinner, it will be best to ask them who they are. Who, then, sir strangers, are you, and from what port have you sailed? Are you traders? or do you sail the seas as rovers with your hand against every man, and every man’s hand against you?”

Telemachus answered boldly, for Minerva had given him courage to ask about his father and get himself a good name.

“Nestor,” said he, “son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, you ask whence we come, and I will tell you. We come from Ithaca under Neritum,[28] and the matter about which I would speak is of private not public import. I seek news of my unhappy father Ulysses, who is said to have sacked the town of Troy in company with yourself. We know what fate befell each one of the other heroes who fought at Troy, but as regards Ulysses heaven has hidden from us the knowledge even that he is dead at all, for no one can certify us in what place he perished, nor say whether he fell in battle on the mainland, or was lost at sea amid the waves of Amphitrite. Therefore I am suppliant at your knees, if haply you may be pleased to tell me of his melancholy end, whether you saw it with your own eyes, or heard it from some other traveller, for he was a man born to trouble. Do not soften things out of any pity

for me, but tell me in all plainness exactly what you saw. If my brave father Ulysses ever did you loyal service, either by word or deed, when you Achaeans were harassed among the Trojans, bear it in mind now as in my favour and tell me truly all."

"My friend," answered Nestor, "you recall a time of much sorrow to my mind, for the brave Achaeans suffered much both at sea, while privateering under Achilles, and when fighting before the great city of king Priam. Our best men all of them fell there—Ajax, Achilles, Patroclus peer of gods in counsel, and my own dear son Antilochus, a man singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant. But we suffered much more than this; what mortal tongue indeed could tell the whole story? Though you were to stay here and question me for five years, or even six, I could not tell you all that the Achaeans suffered, and you would turn homeward weary of my tale before it ended. Nine long years did we try every kind of stratagem, but the hand of heaven was against us; during all this time there was no one who could compare with your father in subtlety—if indeed you are his son—I can hardly believe my eyes—and you talk just like him too—no one would say that people of such different ages could speak so much alike. He and I never had any kind of difference from first to last neither in camp nor council, but in singleness of heart and purpose we advised the Argives how all might be ordered for the best.

"When, however, we had sacked the city of Priam, and were setting sail in our ships as heaven had dispersed us, then Jove saw fit to vex the Argives on their homeward voyage; for they had not all been either wise or understanding, and hence many came to a bad end through the displeasure of Jove's daughter Minerva, who brought about a quarrel between the two sons of Atreus.

"The sons of Atreus called a meeting which was not as it should be, for it was sunset and the Achaeans were heavy with wine. When they explained why they had called the people together, it seemed that Menelaus was for sailing homeward at once, and this displeased Agamemnon, who thought that we should wait till we had offered hecatombs to appease the anger of Minerva. Fool that he was, he might have known that he would not prevail with her, for when the gods have made up their minds they do not change them lightly. So the two stood bandying hard words, whereon the Achaeans sprang to their feet with a cry that rent the air, and were of two minds as to what they should do.

"That night we rested and nursed our anger, for Jove was hatching mischief against us. But in the morning some of us drew our ships into the water and put our goods with our women on board, while the rest, about half in number, stayed behind with Agamemnon. We—the other half—embarked and sailed; and the ships went well, for heaven had smoothed the sea. When we reached Tenedos we offered sacrifices to the gods, for we were longing to get home; cruel Jove, however, did not yet mean that we should do so, and raised a second quarrel in the course of which some among us turned their ships back again, and sailed away under Ulysses to make their peace with Agamemnon; but I, and all the ships that were with me pressed forward, for I saw that mischief was brewing. The son of Tydeus went on also with me, and his crews with him. Later on Menelaus joined us at Lesbos, and found us making up our minds about our course—for we did not know whether to go outside Chios by the island of Psyra, keeping this to our left, or inside Chios, over against the stormy headland of Mimas. So we asked heaven for a sign, and were shown one to the effect that we should be soonest out of danger if we headed our ships across the open sea to Euboea. This we therefore did, and a fair wind sprang up which gave us a quick passage during the night to Geraestus,[29] where we offered many sacrifices to Neptune for having helped us so far on our way. Four days later Diomed and his men stationed their ships in Argos, but I held on for Pylos, and the wind never fell light from the day when heaven first made it fair for me.

"Therefore, my dear young friend, I returned without hearing anything about the others. I know neither who got home safely nor who were lost but, as in duty bound, I will give you without reserve the reports that have reached me since I have been here in my own house. They say the Myrmidons returned home safely under Achilles' son Neoptolemus; so also did the valiant son of Poias, Philoctetes. Idomeneus, again, lost no men at sea, and all his followers who escaped death in the field got safe home with him to Crete. No matter how far out of the world you live, you will have heard of Agamemnon and the bad end he came to at the hands of Aegisthus—and a fearful reckoning did Aegisthus presently pay. See what a good thing it is for a man to leave a son behind him to do as Orestes did, who killed false Aegisthus the murderer of his noble father. You too, then—for you are a tall smart-looking fellow—show your mettle and make yourself a name in story."

"Nestor son of Neleus," answered Telemachus, "honour to the Achaean name, the Achaeans applaud Orestes and his name will live through all time for he has avenged his father nobly. Would that heaven might grant me to do like vengeance on the insolence of the wicked suitors, who are ill treating me and plotting my ruin; but the gods have no such happiness in store for me and for my father, so we must bear it as best we may."

“My friend,” said Nestor, “now that you remind me, I remember to have heard that your mother has many suitors, who are ill disposed towards you and are making havoc of your estate. Do you submit to this tamely, or are public feeling and the voice of heaven against you? Who knows but what Ulysses may come back after all, and pay these scoundrels in full, either single-handed or with a force of Achaeans behind him? If Minerva were to take as great a liking to you as she did to Ulysses when we were fighting before Troy (for I never yet saw the gods so openly fond of any one as Minerva then was of your father), if she would take as good care of you as she did of him, these wooers would soon some of them forget their wooing.”

Telemachus answered, “I can expect nothing of the kind; it would be far too much to hope for. I dare not let myself think of it. Even though the gods themselves willed it no such good fortune could befall me.”

On this Minerva said, “Telemachus, what are you talking about? Heaven has a long arm if it is minded to save a man; and if it were me, I should not care how much I suffered before getting home, provided I could be safe when I was once there. I would rather this, than get home quickly, and then be killed in my own house as Agamemnon was by the treachery of Aegisthus and his wife. Still, death is certain, and when a man’s hour is come, not even the gods can save him, no matter how fond they are of him.”

“Mentor,” answered Telemachus, “do not let us talk about it any more. There is no chance of my father’s ever coming back; the gods have long since counselled his destruction. There is something else, however, about which I should like to ask Nestor, for he knows much more than any one else does. They say he has reigned for three generations so that it is like talking to an immortal. Tell me, therefore, Nestor, and tell me true; how did Agamemnon come to die in that way? What was Menelaus doing? And how came false Aegisthus to kill so far better a man than himself? Was Menelaus away from Achaean Argos, voyaging elsewhither among mankind, that Aegisthus took heart and killed Agamemnon?”

“I will tell you truly,” answered Nestor, “and indeed you have yourself divined how it all happened. If Menelaus when he got back from Troy had found Aegisthus still alive in his house, there would have been no barrow heaped up for him, not even when he was dead, but he would have been thrown outside the city to dogs and vultures, and not a woman would have mourned him, for he had done a deed of great wickedness; but we were over there, fighting hard at Troy, and Aegisthus, who was taking his ease quietly in the heart of Argos, cajoled Agamemnon’s wife Clytemnestra with incessant flattery.

“At first she would have nothing to do with his wicked scheme, for she was of a good natural disposition;30 moreover there was a bard with her, to whom Agamemnon had given strict orders on setting out for Troy, that he was to keep guard over his wife; but when heaven had counselled her destruction, Aegisthus carried this bard off to a desert island and left him there for crows and seagulls to batten upon—after which she went willingly enough to the house of Aegisthus. Then he offered many burnt sacrifices to the gods, and decorated many temples with tapestries and gilding, for he had succeeded far beyond his expectations.

“Meanwhile Menelaus and I were on our way home from Troy, on good terms with one another. When we got to Sunium, which is the point of Athens, Apollo with his painless shafts killed Phrontis the steersman of Menelaus’ ship (and never man knew better how to handle a vessel in rough weather) so that he died then and there with the helm in his hand, and Menelaus, though very anxious to press forward, had to wait in order to bury his comrade and give him his due funeral rites. Presently, when he too could put to sea again, and had sailed on as far as the Malean heads, Jove counselled evil against him and made it blow hard till the waves ran mountains high. Here he divided his fleet and took the one half towards Crete where the Cydonians dwell round about the waters of the river Iardanus. There is a high headland hereabouts stretching out into the sea from a place called Gortyn, and all along this part of the coast as far as Phaestus the sea runs high when there is a south wind blowing, but after Phaestus the coast is more protected, for a small headland can make a great shelter. Here this part of the fleet was driven on to the rocks and wrecked; but the crews just managed to save themselves. As for the other five ships, they were taken by winds and seas to Egypt, where Menelaus gathered much gold and substance among people of an alien speech. Meanwhile Aegisthus here at home plotted his evil deed. For seven years after he had killed Agamemnon he ruled in Mycene, and the people were obedient under him, but in the eighth year Orestes came back from Athens to be his bane, and killed the murderer of his father. Then he celebrated the funeral rites of his mother and of false Aegisthus by a banquet to the people of Argos, and on that very day Menelaus came home,31 with as much treasure as his ships could carry.

“Take my advice then, and do not go travelling about for long so far from home, nor leave your property with such dangerous people in your house; they will eat up everything you have among them, and you will have been on a fool’s errand. Still, I should advise you by all means to go and visit Menelaus, who has lately come off a voyage among such distant peoples as no man could ever hope to get back from, when the winds had once carried him so far out of his reckoning; even birds cannot fly the distance in a

twelve-month, so vast and terrible are the seas that they must cross. Go to him, therefore, by sea, and take your own men with you; or if you would rather travel by land you can have a chariot, you can have horses, and here are my sons who can escort you to Lacedaemon where Menelaus lives. Beg of him to speak the truth, and he will tell you no lies, for he is an excellent person."

As he spoke the sun set and it came on dark, whereon Minerva said, "Sir, all that you have said is well; now, however, order the tongues of the victims to be cut, and mix wine that we may make drink-offerings to Neptune, and the other immortals, and then go to bed, for it is bed time. People should go away early and not keep late hours at a religious festival."

Thus spoke the daughter of Jove, and they obeyed her saying. Men servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and handed it round after giving every man his drink offering; then they threw the tongues of the victims into the fire, and stood up to make their drink offerings. When they had made their offerings and had drunk each as much as he was minded, Minerva and Telemachus were for going on board their ship, but Nestor caught them up at once and stayed them.

"Heaven and the immortal gods," he exclaimed, "forbid that you should leave my house to go on board of a ship. Do you think I am so poor and short of clothes, or that I have so few cloaks and as to be unable to find comfortable beds both for myself and for my guests? Let me tell you I have store both of rugs and cloaks, and shall not permit the son of my old friend Ulysses to camp down on the deck of a ship—not while I live—nor yet will my sons after me, but they will keep open house as I have done."

Then Minerva answered, "Sir, you have spoken well, and it will be much better that Telemachus should do as you have said; he, therefore, shall return with you and sleep at your house, but I must go back to give orders to my crew, and keep them in good heart. I am the only older person among them; the rest are all young men of Telemachus' own age, who have taken this voyage out of friendship; so I must return to the ship and sleep there. Moreover to-morrow I must go to the Cauconians where I have a large sum of money long owing to me. As for Telemachus, now that he is your guest, send him to Lacedaemon in a chariot, and let one of your sons go with him. Be pleased to also provide him with your best and fleetest horses."

When she had thus spoken, she flew away in the form of an eagle, and all marvelled as they beheld it. Nestor was astonished, and took Telemachus by the hand. "My friend," said he, "I see that you are going to be a great hero some day, since the gods wait upon you thus while you are still so young. This can have been none other of those who dwell in heaven than Jove's redoubtable daughter, the Trito-born, who shewed such favour towards your brave father among the Argives. Holy queen," he continued, "vouchsafe to send down thy grace upon myself, my good wife, and my children. In return, I will offer you in sacrifice a broad-browed heifer of a year old, unbroken, and never yet brought by man under the yoke. I will gild her horns, and will offer her up to you in sacrifice."

Thus did he pray, and Minerva heard his prayer. He then led the way to his own house, followed by his sons and sons in law. When they had got there and had taken their places on the benches and seats, he mixed them a bowl of sweet wine that was eleven years old when the housekeeper took the lid off the jar that held it. As he mixed the wine, he prayed much and made drink offerings to Minerva, daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove. Then, when they had made their drink offerings and had drunk each as much as he was minded, the others went home to bed each in his own abode; but Nestor put Telemachus to sleep in the room that was over the gateway along with Pisistratus, who was the only unmarried son now left him. As for himself, he slept in an inner room of the house, with the queen his wife by his side.

Now when the child of morning rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, Nestor left his couch and took his seat on the benches of white and polished marble that stood in front of his house. Here aforetime sat Neleus, peer of gods in counsel, but he was now dead, and had gone to the house of Hades; so Nestor sat in his seat sceptre in hand, as guardian of the public weal. His sons as they left their rooms gathered round him, Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymedes; the sixth son was Pisistratus, and when Telemachus joined them they made him sit with them. Nestor then addressed them.

"My sons," said he, "make haste to do as I shall bid you. I wish first and foremost to propitiate the great goddess Minerva, who manifested herself visibly to me during yesterday's festivities. Go, then, one or other of you to the plain, tell the stockman to look me out a heifer, and come on here with it at once. Another must go to Telemachus' ship, and invite all the crew, leaving two men only in charge of the vessel. Some one else will run and fetch Laerceus the goldsmith to gild the horns of the heifer. The rest, stay all of you where you are; tell the maids in the house to prepare an excellent dinner, and to fetch seats, and logs of wood for a burnt offering. Tell them also to bring me some clear spring water."

On this they hurried off on their several errands. The heifer was brought in from the plain, and Telemachus's crew came from the ship; the goldsmith brought the anvil, hammer, and tongs, with which he worked his gold, and Minerva herself came to accept the sacrifice. Nestor gave out the gold, and the smith gilded the horns of the heifer that the goddess might have pleasure in their beauty. Then Stratius and Echephron brought her in by the horns; Aretus fetched water from the house in a ewer that had a flower pattern on it, and in his other hand he held a basket of barley meal; sturdy Thrasymedes stood by with a sharp axe, ready to strike the heifer, while Perseus held a bucket. Then Nestor began with washing his hands and sprinkling the barley meal, and he offered many a prayer to Minerva as he threw a lock from the heifer's head upon the fire.

When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley meal[32] Thrasymedes dealt his blow, and brought the heifer down with a stroke that cut through the tendons at the base of her neck, whereon the daughters and daughters in law of Nestor, and his venerable wife Eurydice (she was eldest daughter to Clymenus) screamed with delight. Then they lifted the heifer's head from off the ground, and Pisistratus cut her throat. When she had done bleeding and was quite dead, they cut her up. They cut out the thigh bones all in due course, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, and set some pieces of raw meat on the top of them; then Nestor laid them upon the wood fire and poured wine over them, while the young men stood near him with five-pronged spits in their hands. When the thighs were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest of the meat up small, put the pieces on the spits and toasted them over the fire.

Meanwhile lovely Polycaste, Nestor's youngest daughter, washed Telemachus. When she had washed him and anointed him with oil, she brought him a fair mantle and shirt,[33] and he looked like a god as he came from the bath and took his seat by the side of Nestor. When the outer meats were done they drew them off the spits and sat down to dinner where they were waited upon by some worthy henchmen, who kept pouring them out their wine in cups of gold. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Nestor said, "Sons, put Telemachus's horses to the chariot that he may start at once."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said, and yoked the fleet horses to the chariot. The housekeeper packed them up a provision of bread, wine, and sweet meats fit for the sons of princes. Then Telemachus got into the chariot, while Pisistratus gathered up the reins and took his seat beside him. He lashed the horses on and they flew forward nothing loth into the open country, leaving the high citadel of Pylos behind them. All that day did they travel, swaying the yoke upon their necks till the sun went down and darkness was over all the land. Then they reached Pherae where Diocles lived, who was son to Ortilochus and grandson to Alpheus. Here they passed the night and Diocles entertained them hospitably. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, they again yoked their horses and drove out through the gateway under the echoing gatehouse.[34] Pisistratus lashed the horses on and they flew forward nothing loth; presently they came to the corn lands of the open country, and in the course of time completed their journey, so well did their steeds take them.[35]

Now when the sun had set and darkness was over the land,

This page titled 3.14.1.3: Book III is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.4: Book IV

THE VISIT TO KING MENELAUS, WHO TELLS HIS STORY—MEANWHILE THE SUITORS IN ITHACA PLOT AGAINST TELEMACHUS.

they reached the low lying city of Lacedaemon, where they drove straight to the abode of Menelaus[36] [and found him in his own house, feasting with his many clansmen in honour of the wedding of his son, and also of his daughter, whom he was marrying to the son of that valiant warrior Achilles. He had given his consent and promised her to him while he was still at Troy, and now the gods were bringing the marriage about; so he was sending her with chariots and horses to the city of the Myrmidons over whom Achilles' son was reigning. For his only son he had found a bride from Sparta,[37] the daughter of Alector. This son, Megapenthes, was born to him of a bondwoman, for heaven vouchsafed Helen no more children after she had borne Hermione, who was fair as golden Venus herself.

So the neighbours and kinsmen of Menelaus were feasting and making merry in his house. There was a bard also to sing to them and play his lyre, while two tumblers went about performing in the midst of them when the man struck up with his tune.[38]

Telemachus and the son of Nestor stayed their horses at the gate, whereon Eteoneus servant to Menelaus came out, and as soon as he saw them ran hurrying back into the house to tell his Master. He went close up to him and said, "Menelaus, there are some strangers come here, two men, who look like sons of Jove. What are we to do? Shall we take their horses out, or tell them to find friends elsewhere as they best can?"

Menelaus was very angry and said, "Eteoneus, son of Boethous, you never used to be a fool, but now you talk like a simpleton. Take their horses out, of course, and show the strangers in that they may have supper; you and I have staid often enough at other people's houses before we got back here, where heaven grant that we may rest in peace henceforward."

So Eteoneus bustled back and bade the other servants come with him. They took their sweating steeds from under the yoke, made them fast to the mangers, and gave them a feed of oats and barley mixed. Then they leaned the chariot against the end wall of the courtyard, and led the way into the house. Telemachus and Pisistratus were astonished when they saw it, for its splendour was as that of the sun and moon; then, when they had admired everything to their heart's content, they went into the bath room and washed themselves.

When the servants had washed them and anointed them with oil, they brought them woollen cloaks and shirts, and the two took their seats by the side of Menelaus. A maid-servant brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands; and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, while the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side.

Menelaus then greeted them saying, "Fall to, and welcome; when you have done supper I shall ask who you are, for the lineage of such men as you cannot have been lost. You must be descended from a line of sceptre-bearing kings, for poor people do not have such sons as you are."

On this he handed them[39] a piece of fat roast loin, which had been set near him as being a prime part, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them; as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Telemachus said to the son of Nestor, with his head so close that no one might hear, "Look, Pisistratus, man after my own heart, see the gleam of bronze and gold—of amber,[40] ivory, and silver. Everything is so splendid that it is like seeing the palace of Olympian Jove. I am lost in admiration."

Menelaus overheard him and said, "No one, my sons, can hold his own with Jove, for his house and everything about him is immortal; but among mortal men—well, there may be another who has as much wealth as I have, or there may not; but at all events I have travelled much and have undergone much hardship, for it was nearly eight years before I could get home with my fleet. I went to Cyprus, Phoenicia and the Egyptians; I went also to the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, and the Erembians, and to Libya where the lambs have horns as soon as they are born, and the sheep lamb down three times a year. Every one in that country, whether master or man, has plenty of cheese, meat, and good milk, for the ewes yield all the year round. But while I was travelling and getting great riches among these people, my brother was secretly and shockingly murdered through the perfidy of his wicked wife, so that I have no pleasure in being lord of all this wealth. Whoever your parents may be they must have told you about all this, and of my heavy loss in the ruin[41] of a stately mansion fully and magnificently furnished. Would that I had only a third of what I now

have so that I had stayed at home, and all those were living who perished on the plain of Troy, far from Argos. I often grieve, as I sit here in my house, for one and all of them. At times I cry aloud for sorrow, but presently I leave off again, for crying is cold comfort and one soon tires of it. Yet grieve for these as I may, I do so for one man more than for them all. I cannot even think of him without loathing both food and sleep, so miserable does he make me, for no one of all the Achaeans worked so hard or risked so much as he did. He took nothing by it, and has left a legacy of sorrow to myself, for he has been gone a long time, and we know not whether he is alive or dead. His old father, his long-suffering wife Penelope, and his son Telemachus, whom he left behind him an infant in arms, are plunged in grief on his account."

Thus spoke Menelaus, and the heart of Telemachus yearned as he bethought him of his father. Tears fell from his eyes as he heard him thus mentioned, so that he held his cloak before his face with both hands. When Menelaus saw this he doubted whether to let him choose his own time for speaking, or to ask him at once and find what it was all about.

While he was thus in two minds Helen came down from her high vaulted and perfumed room, looking as lovely as Diana herself. Adraste brought her a seat, Alcippe a soft woollen rug while Phylo fetched her the silver work-box which Alcandra wife of Polybus had given her. Polybus lived in Egyptian Thebes, which is the richest city in the whole world; he gave Menelaus two baths, both of pure silver, two tripods, and ten talents of gold; besides all this, his wife gave Helen some beautiful presents, to wit, a golden distaff, and a silver work box that ran on wheels, with a gold band round the top of it. Phylo now placed this by her side, full of fine spun yarn, and a distaff charged with violet coloured wool was laid upon the top of it. Then Helen took her seat, put her feet upon the footstool, and began to question her husband.[42]

"Do we know, Menelaus," said she, "the names of these strangers who have come to visit us? Shall I guess right or wrong?—but I cannot help saying what I think. Never yet have I seen either man or woman so like somebody else (indeed when I look at him I hardly know what to think) as this young man is like Telemachus, whom Ulysses left as a baby behind him, when you Achaeans went to Troy with battle in your hearts, on account of my most shameless self."

"My dear wife," replied Menelaus, "I see the likeness just as you do. His hands and feet are just like Ulysses; so is his hair, with the shape of his head and the expression of his eyes. Moreover, when I was talking about Ulysses, and saying how much he had suffered on my account, tears fell from his eyes, and he hid his face in his mantle."

Then Pisistratus said, "Menelaus, son of Atreus, you are right in thinking that this young man is Telemachus, but he is very modest, and is ashamed to come here and begin opening up discourse with one whose conversation is so divinely interesting as your own. My father, Nestor, sent me to escort him hither, for he wanted to know whether you could give him any counsel or suggestion. A son has always trouble at home when his father has gone away leaving him without supporters; and this is how Telemachus is now placed, for his father is absent, and there is no one among his own people to stand by him."

"Bless my heart," replied Menelaus, "then I am receiving a visit from the son of a very dear friend, who suffered much hardship for my sake. I had always hoped to entertain him with most marked distinction when heaven had granted us a safe return from beyond the seas. I should have founded a city for him in Argos, and built him a house. I should have made him leave Ithaca with his goods, his son, and all his people, and should have sacked for them some one of the neighbouring cities that are subject to me. We should thus have seen one another continually, and nothing but death could have interrupted so close and happy an intercourse. I suppose, however, that heaven grudged us such great good fortune, for it has prevented the poor fellow from ever getting home at all."

Thus did he speak, and his words set them all a weeping. Helen wept, Telemachus wept, and so did Menelaus, nor could Pisistratus keep his eyes from filling, when he remembered his dear brother Antilochus whom the son of bright Dawn had killed. Thereon he said to Menelaus,

"Sir, my father Nestor, when we used to talk about you at home, told me you were a person of rare and excellent understanding. If, then, it be possible, do as I would urge you. I am not fond of crying while I am getting my supper. Morning will come in due course, and in the forenoon I care not how much I cry for those that are dead and gone. This is all we can do for the poor things. We can only shave our heads for them and wring the tears from our cheeks. I had a brother who died at Troy; he was by no means the worst man there; you are sure to have known him—his name was Antilochus; I never set eyes upon him myself, but they say that he was singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant."

"Your discretion, my friend," answered Menelaus, "is beyond your years. It is plain you take after your father. One can soon see when a man is son to one whom heaven has blessed both as regards wife and offspring—and it has blessed Nestor from first to last

all his days, giving him a green old age in his own house, with sons about him who are both well disposed and valiant. We will put an end therefore to all this weeping, and attend to our supper again. Let water be poured over our hands. Telemachus and I can talk with one another fully in the morning."

On this Asphalion, one of the servants, poured water over their hands and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them.

Then Jove's daughter Helen bethought her of another matter. She drugged the wine with an herb that banishes all care, sorrow, and ill humour. Whoever drinks wine thus drugged cannot shed a single tear all the rest of the day, not even though his father and mother both of them drop down dead, or he sees a brother or a son hewn in pieces before his very eyes. This drug, of such sovereign power and virtue, had been given to Helen by Polydamna wife of Thon, a woman of Egypt, where there grow all sorts of herbs, some good to put into the mixing bowl and others poisonous. Moreover, every one in the whole country is a skilled physician, for they are of the race of Paeeon. When Helen had put this drug in the bowl, and had told the servants to serve the wine round, she said:

"Menelaus, son of Atreus, and you my good friends, sons of honourable men (which is as Jove wills, for he is the giver both of good and evil, and can do what he chooses), feast here as you will, and listen while I tell you a tale in season. I cannot indeed name every single one of the exploits of Ulysses, but I can say what he did when he was before Troy, and you Achaeans were in all sorts of difficulties. He covered himself with wounds and bruises, dressed himself all in rags, and entered the enemy's city looking like a menial or a beggar, and quite different from what he did when he was among his own people. In this disguise he entered the city of Troy, and no one said anything to him. I alone recognised him and began to question him, but he was too cunning for me. When, however, I had washed and anointed him and had given him clothes, and after I had sworn a solemn oath not to betray him to the Trojans till he had got safely back to his own camp and to the ships, he told me all that the Achaeans meant to do. He killed many Trojans and got much information before he reached the Argive camp, for all which things the Trojan women made lamentation, but for my own part I was glad, for my heart was beginning to yearn after my home, and I was unhappy about the wrong that Venus had done me in taking me over there, away from my country, my girl, and my lawful wedded husband, who is indeed by no means deficient either in person or understanding."

Then Menelaus said, "All that you have been saying, my dear wife, is true. I have travelled much, and have had much to do with heroes, but I have never seen such another man as Ulysses. What endurance too, and what courage he displayed within the wooden horse, wherein all the bravest of the Argives were lying in wait to bring death and destruction upon the Trojans.[43] At that moment you came up to us; some god who wished well to the Trojans must have set you on to it and you had Deiphobus with you. Three times did you go all round our hiding place and pat it; you called our chiefs each by his own name, and mimicked all our wives—Diomed, Ulysses, and I from our seats inside heard what a noise you made. Diomed and I could not make up our minds whether to spring out then and there, or to answer you from inside, but Ulysses held us all in check, so we sat quite still, all except Anticlus, who was beginning to answer you, when Ulysses clapped his two brawny hands over his mouth, and kept them there. It was this that saved us all, for he muzzled Anticlus till Minerva took you away again."

"How sad," exclaimed Telemachus, "that all this was of no avail to save him, nor yet his own iron courage. But now, sir, be pleased to send us all to bed, that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep."

On this Helen told the maid servants to set beds in the room that was in the gatehouse, and to make them with good red rugs, and spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for the guests to wear. So the maids went out, carrying a torch, and made the beds, to which a man-servant presently conducted the strangers. Thus, then, did Telemachus and Pisistratus sleep there in the forecourt, while the son of Atreus lay in an inner room with lovely Helen by his side.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, Menelaus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulders, and left his room looking like an immortal god. Then, taking a seat near Telemachus he said:

"And what, Telemachus, has led you to take this long sea voyage to Lacedaemon? Are you on public, or private business? Tell me all about it."

"I have come, sir," replied Telemachus, "to see if you can tell me anything about my father. I am being eaten out of house and home; my fair estate is being wasted, and my house is full of miscreants who keep killing great numbers of my sheep and oxen, on

the pretence of paying their addresses to my mother. Therefore, I am suppliant at your knees if haply you may tell me about my father's melancholy end, whether you saw it with your own eyes, or heard it from some other traveller; for he was a man born to trouble. Do not soften things out of any pity for myself, but tell me in all plainness exactly what you saw. If my brave father Ulysses ever did you loyal service either by word or deed, when you Achaeans were harassed by the Trojans, bear it in mind now as in my favour and tell me truly all."

Menelaus on hearing this was very much shocked. "So," he exclaimed, "these cowards would usurp a brave man's bed? A hind might as well lay her new born young in the lair of a lion, and then go off to feed in the forest or in some grassy dell: the lion when he comes back to his lair will make short work with the pair of them—and so will Ulysses with these suitors. By father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, if Ulysses is still the man that he was when he wrestled with Philomeleides in Lesbos, and threw him so heavily that all the Achaeans cheered him—if he is still such and were to come near these suitors, they would have a short shrift and a sorry wedding. As regards your questions, however, I will not prevaricate nor deceive you, but will tell you without concealment all that the old man of the sea told me.

"I was trying to come on here, but the gods detained me in Egypt, for my hecatombs had not given them full satisfaction, and the gods are very strict about having their dues. Now off Egypt, about as far as a ship can sail in a day with a good stiff breeze behind her, there is an island called Pharos—it has a good harbour from which vessels can get out into open sea when they have taken in water—and here the gods becalmed me twenty days without so much as a breath of fair wind to help me forward. We should have run clean out of provisions and my men would have starved, if a goddess had not taken pity upon me and saved me in the person of Idothea, daughter to Proteus, the old man of the sea, for she had taken a great fancy to me.

"She came to me one day when I was by myself, as I often was, for the men used to go with their barbed hooks, all over the island in the hope of catching a fish or two to save them from the pangs of hunger. 'Stranger,' said she, 'it seems to me that you like starving in this way—at any rate it does not greatly trouble you, for you stick here day after day, without even trying to get away though your men are dying by inches.'

"'Let me tell you,' said I, 'whichever of the goddesses you may happen to be, that I am not staying here of my own accord, but must have offended the gods that live in heaven. Tell me, therefore, for the gods know everything, which of the immortals it is that is hindering me in this way, and tell me also how I may sail the sea so as to reach my home.'

"'Stranger,' replied she, 'I will make it all quite clear to you. There is an old immortal who lives under the sea hereabouts and whose name is Proteus. He is an Egyptian, and people say he is my father; he is Neptune's head man and knows every inch of ground all over the bottom of the sea. If you can snare him and hold him tight, he will tell you about your voyage, what courses you are to take, and how you are to sail the sea so as to reach your home. He will also tell you, if you so will, all that has been going on at your house both good and bad, while you have been away on your long and dangerous journey.'

"'Can you show me,' said I, 'some stratagem by means of which I may catch this old god without his suspecting it and finding me out? For a god is not easily caught—not by a mortal man.'

"'Stranger,' said she, 'I will make it all quite clear to you. About the time when the sun shall have reached mid heaven, the old man of the sea comes up from under the waves, heralded by the West wind that furs the water over his head. As soon as he has come up he lies down, and goes to sleep in a great sea cave, where the seals—Halosydne's chickens as they call them—come up also from the grey sea, and go to sleep in shoals all round him; and a very strong and fish-like smell do they bring with them. [44] Early to-morrow morning I will take you to this place and will lay you in ambush. Pick out, therefore, the three best men you have in your fleet, and I will tell you all the tricks that the old man will play you.

"'First he will look over all his seals, and count them; then, when he has seen them and tallied them on his five fingers, he will go to sleep among them, as a shepherd among his sheep. The moment you see that he is asleep seize him; put forth all your strength and hold him fast, for he will do his very utmost to get away from you. He will turn himself into every kind of creature that goes upon the earth, and will become also both fire and water; but you must hold him fast and grip him tighter and tighter, till he begins to talk to you and comes back to what he was when you saw him go to sleep; then you may slacken your hold and let him go; and you can ask him which of the gods it is that is angry with you, and what you must do to reach your home over the seas.'

"Having so said she dived under the waves, whereon I turned back to the place where my ships were ranged upon the shore; and my heart was clouded with care as I went along. When I reached my ship we got supper ready, for night was falling, and camped

down upon the beach.

“When the child of morning rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, I took the three men on whose prowess of all kinds I could most rely, and went along by the sea-side, praying heartily to heaven. Meanwhile the goddess fetched me up four seal skins from the bottom of the sea, all of them just skinned, for she meant playing a trick upon her father. Then she dug four pits for us to lie in, and sat down to wait till we should come up. When we were close to her, she made us lie down in the pits one after the other, and threw a seal skin over each of us. Our ambuscade would have been intolerable, for the stench of the fishy seals was most distressing[45]—who would go to bed with a sea monster if he could help it?—but here, too, the goddess helped us, and thought of something that gave us great relief, for she put some ambrosia under each man’s nostrils, which was so fragrant that it killed the smell of the seals.[46]

“We waited the whole morning and made the best of it, watching the seals come up in hundreds to bask upon the sea shore, till at noon the old man of the sea came up too, and when he had found his fat seals he went over them and counted them. We were among the first he counted, and he never suspected any guile, but laid himself down to sleep as soon as he had done counting. Then we rushed upon him with a shout and seized him; on which he began at once with his old tricks, and changed himself first into a lion with a great mane; then all of a sudden he became a dragon, a leopard, a wild boar; the next moment he was running water, and then again directly he was a tree, but we stuck to him and never lost hold, till at last the cunning old creature became distressed, and said, ‘Which of the gods was it, Son of Atreus, that hatched this plot with you for snaring me and seizing me against my will? What do you want?’

“‘You know that yourself, old man,’ I answered, ‘you will gain nothing by trying to put me off. It is because I have been kept so long in this island, and see no sign of my being able to get away. I am losing all heart; tell me, then, for you gods know everything, which of the immortals it is that is hindering me, and tell me also how I may sail the sea so as to reach my home?’

“Then,’ he said, ‘if you would finish your voyage and get home quickly, you must offer sacrifices to Jove and to the rest of the gods before embarking; for it is decreed that you shall not get back to your friends, and to your own house, till you have returned to the heaven-fed stream of Egypt, and offered holy hecatombs to the immortal gods that reign in heaven. When you have done this they will let you finish your voyage.’

“I was broken hearted when I heard that I must go back all that long and terrible voyage to Egypt;[47] nevertheless, I answered, ‘I will do all, old man, that you have laid upon me; but now tell me, and tell me true, whether all the Achaeans whom Nestor and I left behind us when we set sail from Troy have got home safely, or whether any one of them came to a bad end either on board his own ship or among his friends when the days of his fighting were done.’

“‘Son of Atreus,’ he answered, ‘why ask me? You had better not know what I can tell you, for your eyes will surely fill when you have heard my story. Many of those about whom you ask are dead and gone, but many still remain, and only two of the chief men among the Achaeans perished during their return home. As for what happened on the field of battle—you were there yourself. A third Achaean leader is still at sea, alive, but hindered from returning. Ajax was wrecked, for Neptune drove him on to the great rocks of Gyrae; nevertheless, he let him get safe out of the water, and in spite of all Minerva’s hatred he would have escaped death, if he had not ruined himself by boasting. He said the gods could not drown him even though they had tried to do so, and when Neptune heard this large talk, he seized his trident in his two brawny hands, and split the rock of Gyrae in two pieces. The base remained where it was, but the part on which Ajax was sitting fell headlong into the sea and carried Ajax with it; so he drank salt water and was drowned.

“‘Your brother and his ships escaped, for Juno protected him, but when he was just about to reach the high promontory of Malea, he was caught by a heavy gale which carried him out to sea again sorely against his will, and drove him to the foreland where Thyestes used to dwell, but where Aegisthus was then living. By and by, however, it seemed as though he was to return safely after all, for the gods backed the wind into its old quarter and they reached home; whereon Agamemnon kissed his native soil, and shed tears of joy at finding himself in his own country.

“‘Now there was a watchman whom Aegisthus kept always on the watch, and to whom he had promised two talents of gold. This man had been looking out for a whole year to make sure that Agamemnon did not give him the slip and prepare war; when, therefore, this man saw Agamemnon go by, he went and told Aegisthus, who at once began to lay a plot for him. He picked twenty of his bravest warriors and placed them in ambuscade on one side the cloister, while on the opposite side he prepared a banquet. Then he sent his chariots and horsemen to Agamemnon, and invited him to the feast, but he meant foul play. He got him there, all

unsuspicious of the doom that was awaiting him, and killed him when the banquet was over as though he were butchering an ox in the shambles; not one of Agamemnon's followers was left alive, nor yet one of Aegisthus', but they were all killed there in the cloisters.'

"Thus spoke Proteus, and I was broken hearted as I heard him. I sat down upon the sands and wept; I felt as though I could no longer bear to live nor look upon the light of the sun. Presently, when I had had my fill of weeping and writhing upon the ground, the old man of the sea said, 'Son of Atreus, do not waste any more time in crying so bitterly; it can do no manner of good; find your way home as fast as ever you can, for Aegisthus may be still alive, and even though Orestes has been beforehand with you in killing him, you may yet come in for his funeral.'

"On this I took comfort in spite of all my sorrow, and said, 'I know, then, about these two; tell me, therefore, about the third man of whom you spoke; is he still alive, but at sea, and unable to get home? or is he dead? Tell me, no matter how much it may grieve me.'

"'The third man,' he answered, 'is Ulysses who dwells in Ithaca. I can see him in an island sorrowing bitterly in the house of the nymph Calypso, who is keeping him prisoner, and he cannot reach his home for he has no ships nor sailors to take him over the sea. As for your own end, Menelaus, you shall not die in Argos, but the gods will take you to the Elysian plain, which is at the ends of the world. There fair-haired Rhadamanthus reigns, and men lead an easier life than any where else in the world, for in Elysium there falls not rain, nor hail, nor snow, but Oceanus breathes ever with a West wind that sings softly from the sea, and gives fresh life to all men. This will happen to you because you have married Helen, and are Jove's son-in-law.'

"As he spoke he dived under the waves, whereon I turned back to the ships with my companions, and my heart was clouded with care as I went along. When we reached the ships we got supper ready, for night was falling, and camped down upon the beach. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, we drew our ships into the water, and put our masts and sails within them; then we went on board ourselves, took our seats on the benches, and smote the grey sea with our oars. I again stationed my ships in the heaven-fed stream of Egypt, and offered hecatombs that were full and sufficient. When I had thus appeased heaven's anger, I raised a barrow to the memory of Agamemnon that his name might live for ever, after which I had a quick passage home, for the gods sent me a fair wind.

"And now for yourself—stay here some ten or twelve days longer, and I will then speed you on your way. I will make you a noble present of a chariot and three horses. I will also give you a beautiful chalice that so long as you live you may think of me whenever you make a drink-offering to the immortal gods."

"Son of Atreus," replied Telemachus, "do not press me to stay longer; I should be contented to remain with you for another twelve months; I find your conversation so delightful that I should never once wish myself at home with my parents; but my crew whom I have left at Pylos are already impatient, and you are detaining me from them. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, I had rather that it should be a piece of plate. I will take no horses back with me to Ithaca, but will leave them to adorn your own stables, for you have much flat ground in your kingdom where lotus thrives, as also meadow-sweet and wheat and barley, and oats with their white and spreading ears; whereas in Ithaca we have neither open fields nor racecourses, and the country is more fit for goats than horses, and I like it the better for that. [48] None of our islands have much level ground, suitable for horses, and Ithaca least of all."

Menelaus smiled and took Telemachus's hand within his own. "What you say," said he, "shows that you come of good family. I both can, and will, make this exchange for you, by giving you the finest and most precious piece of plate in all my house. It is a mixing bowl by Vulcan's own hand, of pure silver, except the rim, which is inlaid with gold. Phaedimus, king of the Sidonians, gave it me in the course of a visit which I paid him when I returned thither on my homeward journey. I will make you a present of it."

Thus did they converse [and guests kept coming to the king's house. They brought sheep and wine, while their wives had put up bread for them to take with them; so they were busy cooking their dinners in the courts].[49]

Meanwhile the suitors were throwing discs or aiming with spears at a mark on the levelled ground in front of Ulysses' house, and were behaving with all their old insolence. Antinous and Eurymachus, who were their ringleaders and much the foremost among them all, were sitting together when Noemon son of Phronius came up and said to Antinous,

"Have we any idea, Antinous, on what day Telemachus returns from Pylos? He has a ship of mine, and I want it, to cross over to Elis: I have twelve brood mares there with yearling mule foals by their side not yet broken in, and I want to bring one of them over here and break him."

They were astounded when they heard this, for they had made sure that Telemachus had not gone to the city of Neleus. They thought he was only away somewhere on the farms, and was with the sheep, or with the swineherd; so Antinous said, "When did he go? Tell me truly, and what young men did he take with him? Were they freemen or his own bondsmen—for he might manage that too? Tell me also, did you let him have the ship of your own free will because he asked you, or did he take it without your leave?"

"I lent it him," answered Noemon, "what else could I do when a man of his position said he was in a difficulty, and asked me to oblige him? I could not possibly refuse. As for those who went with him they were the best young men we have, and I saw Mentor go on board as captain—or some god who was exactly like him. I cannot understand it, for I saw Mentor here myself yesterday morning, and yet he was then setting out for Pylos."

Noemon then went back to his father's house, but Antinous and Eurymachus were very angry. They told the others to leave off playing, and to come and sit down along with themselves. When they came, Antinous son of Eupeithes spoke in anger. His heart was black with rage, and his eyes flashed fire as he said:

"Good heavens, this voyage of Telemachus is a very serious matter; we had made sure that it would come to nothing, but the young fellow has got away in spite of us, and with a picked crew too. He will be giving us trouble presently; may Jove take him before he is full grown. Find me a ship, therefore, with a crew of twenty men, and I will lie in wait for him in the straits between Ithaca and Samos; he will then rue the day that he set out to try and get news of his father."

Thus did he speak, and the others applauded his saying; they then all of them went inside the buildings.

It was not long ere Penelope came to know what the suitors were plotting; for a man servant, Medon, overheard them from outside the outer court as they were laying their schemes within, and went to tell his mistress. As he crossed the threshold of her room Penelope said: "Medon, what have the suitors sent you here for? Is it to tell the maids to leave their master's business and cook dinner for them? I wish they may neither woo nor dine henceforward, neither here nor anywhere else, but let this be the very last time, for the waste you all make of my son's estate. Did not your fathers tell you when you were children, how good Ulysses had been to them—never doing anything high-handed, nor speaking harshly to anybody? Kings may say things sometimes, and they may take a fancy to one man and dislike another, but Ulysses never did an unjust thing by anybody—which shows what bad hearts you have, and that there is no such thing as gratitude left in this world."

Then Medon said, "I wish, Madam, that this were all; but they are plotting something much more dreadful now—may heaven frustrate their design. They are going to try and murder Telemachus as he is coming home from Pylos and Lacedaemon, where he has been to get news of his father."

Then Penelope's heart sank within her, and for a long time she was speechless; her eyes filled with tears, and she could find no utterance. At last, however, she said, "Why did my son leave me? What business had he to go sailing off in ships that make long voyages over the ocean like sea-horses? Does he want to die without leaving any one behind him to keep up his name?"

"I do not know," answered Medon, "whether some god set him on to it, or whether he went on his own impulse to see if he could find out if his father was dead, or alive and on his way home."

Then he went downstairs again, leaving Penelope in an agony of grief. There were plenty of seats in the house, but she had no heart for sitting on any one of them; she could only fling herself on the floor of her own room and cry; whereon all the maids in the house, both old and young, gathered round her and began to cry too, till at last in a transport of sorrow she exclaimed,

"My dears, heaven has been pleased to try me with more affliction than any other woman of my age and country. First I lost my brave and lion-hearted husband, who had every good quality under heaven, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos, and now my darling son is at the mercy of the winds and waves, without my having heard one word about his leaving home. You hussies, there was not one of you would so much as think of giving me a call out of my bed, though you all of you very well knew when he was starting. If I had known he meant taking this voyage, he would have had to give it up, no matter how much he was bent upon it, or leave me a corpse behind him—one or other. Now, however, go some of you and call old Dolius, who was given me by my father on my marriage, and who is my gardener. Bid him go at once and tell everything to Laertes, who may be

able to hit on some plan for enlisting public sympathy on our side, as against those who are trying to exterminate his own race and that of Ulysses."

Then the dear old nurse Euryclea said, "You may kill me, Madam, or let me live on in your house, whichever you please, but I will tell you the real truth. I knew all about it, and gave him everything he wanted in the way of bread and wine, but he made me take my solemn oath that I would not tell you anything for some ten or twelve days, unless you asked or happened to hear of his having gone, for he did not want you to spoil your beauty by crying. And now, Madam, wash your face, change your dress, and go upstairs with your maids to offer prayers to Minerva, daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, for she can save him even though he be in the jaws of death. Do not trouble Laertes: he has trouble enough already. Besides, I cannot think that the gods hate the race of the son of Arceisius so much, but there will be a son left to come up after him, and inherit both the house and the fair fields that lie far all round it."

With these words she made her mistress leave off crying, and dried the tears from her eyes. Penelope washed her face, changed her dress, and went upstairs with her maids. She then put some bruised barley into a basket and began praying to Minerva.

"Hear me," she cried, "Daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable. If ever Ulysses while he was here burned you fat thigh bones of sheep or heifer, bear it in mind now as in my favour, and save my darling son from the villainy of the suitors."

She cried aloud as she spoke, and the goddess heard her prayer; meanwhile the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloister, and one of them said:

"The queen is preparing for her marriage with one or other of us. Little does she dream that her son has now been doomed to die."

This was what they said, but they did not know what was going to happen. Then Antinous said, "Comrades, let there be no loud talking, lest some of it get carried inside. Let us be up and do that in silence, about which we are all of a mind."

He then chose twenty men, and they went down to their ship and to the sea side; they drew the vessel into the water and got her mast and sails inside her; they bound the oars to the thole-pins with twisted thongs of leather, all in due course, and spread the white sails aloft, while their fine servants brought them their armour. Then they made the ship fast a little way out, came on shore again, got their suppers, and waited till night should fall.

But Penelope lay in her own room upstairs unable to eat or drink, and wondering whether her brave son would escape, or be overpowered by the wicked suitors. Like a lioness caught in the toils with huntsmen hemming her in on every side she thought and thought till she sank into a slumber, and lay on her bed bereft of thought and motion.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter, and made a vision in the likeness of Penelope's sister Iphthime daughter of Icarius who had married Eumelus and lived in Pherae. She told the vision to go to the house of Ulysses, and to make Penelope leave off crying, so it came into her room by the hole through which the thong went for pulling the door to, and hovered over her head saying,

"You are asleep, Penelope: the gods who live at ease will not suffer you to weep and be so sad. Your son has done them no wrong, so he will yet come back to you."

Penelope, who was sleeping sweetly at the gates of dreamland, answered, "Sister, why have you come here? You do not come very often, but I suppose that is because you live such a long way off. Am I, then, to leave off crying and refrain from all the sad thoughts that torture me? I, who have lost my brave and lion-hearted husband, who had every good quality under heaven, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos; and now my darling son has gone off on board of a ship—a foolish fellow who has never been used to roughing it, nor to going about among gatherings of men. I am even more anxious about him than about my husband; I am all in a tremble when I think of him, lest something should happen to him, either from the people among whom he has gone, or by sea, for he has many enemies who are plotting against him, and are bent on killing him before he can return home."

Then the vision said, "Take heart, and be not so much dismayed. There is one gone with him whom many a man would be glad enough to have stand by his side, I mean Minerva; it is she who has compassion upon you, and who has sent me to bear you this message."

"Then," said Penelope, "if you are a god or have been sent here by divine commission, tell me also about that other unhappy one—is he still alive, or is he already dead and in the house of Hades?"

And the vision said, “I shall not tell you for certain whether he is alive or dead, and there is no use in idle conversation.”

Then it vanished through the thong-hole of the door and was dissipated into thin air; but Penelope rose from her sleep refreshed and comforted, so vivid had been her dream.

Meantime the suitors went on board and sailed their ways over the sea, intent on murdering Telemachus. Now there is a rocky islet called Asteris, of no great size, in mid channel between Ithaca and Samos, and there is a harbour on either side of it where a ship can lie. Here then the Achaeans placed themselves in ambush.

This page titled 3.14.1.4: Book IV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.5: Book V

CALYPSO—ULYSSES REACHES SCHERIA ON A RAFT.

And now, as Dawn rose from her couch beside Tithonus—harbinger of light alike to mortals and immortals—the gods met in council and with them, Jove the lord of thunder, who is their king. Thereon Minerva began to tell them of the many sufferings of Ulysses, for she pitied him away there in the house of the nymph Calypso.

“Father Jove,” said she, “and all you other gods that live in everlasting bliss, I hope there may never be such a thing as a kind and well-disposed ruler any more, nor one who will govern equitably. I hope they will be all henceforth cruel and unjust, for there is not one of his subjects but has forgotten Ulysses, who ruled them as though he were their father. There he is, lying in great pain in an island where dwells the nymph Calypso, who will not let him go; and he cannot get back to his own country, for he can find neither ships nor sailors to take him over the sea. Furthermore, wicked people are now trying to murder his only son Telemachus, who is coming home from Pylos and Lacedaemon, where he has been to see if he can get news of his father.”

“What, my dear, are you talking about?” replied her father, “did you not send him there yourself, because you thought it would help Ulysses to get home and punish the suitors? Besides, you are perfectly able to protect Telemachus, and to see him safely home again, while the suitors have to come hurry-skurrying back without having killed him.”

When he had thus spoken, he said to his son Mercury, “Mercury, you are our messenger, go therefore and tell Calypso we have decreed that poor Ulysses is to return home. He is to be convoyed neither by gods nor men, but after a perilous voyage of twenty days upon a raft he is to reach fertile Scheria,[50] the land of the Phaeacians, who are near of kin to the gods, and will honour him as though he were one of ourselves. They will send him in a ship to his own country, and will give him more bronze and gold and raiment than he would have brought back from Troy, if he had had all his prize money and had got home without disaster. This is how we have settled that he shall return to his country and his friends.”

Thus he spoke, and Mercury, guide and guardian, slayer of Argus, did as he was told. Forthwith he bound on his glittering golden sandals with which he could fly like the wind over land and sea. He took the wand with which he seals men’s eyes in sleep or wakes them just as he pleases, and flew holding it in his hand over Pieria; then he swooped down through the firmament till he reached the level of the sea, whose waves he skimmed like a cormorant that flies fishing every hole and corner of the ocean, and drenching its thick plumage in the spray. He flew and flew over many a weary wave, but when at last he got to the island which was his journey’s end, he left the sea and went on by land till he came to the cave where the nymph Calypso lived.

He found her at home. There was a large fire burning on the hearth, and one could smell from far the fragrant reek of burning cedar and sandal wood. As for herself, she was busy at her loom, shooting her golden shuttle through the warp and singing beautifully. Round her cave there was a thick wood of alder, poplar, and sweet smelling cypress trees, wherein all kinds of great birds had built their nests—owls, hawks, and chattering sea-crows that occupy their business in the waters. A vine loaded with grapes was trained and grew luxuriantly about the mouth of the cave; there were also four running rills of water in channels cut pretty close together, and turned hither and thither so as to irrigate the beds of violets and luscious herbage over which they flowed. [51] Even a god could not help being charmed with such a lovely spot, so Mercury stood still and looked at it; but when he had admired it sufficiently he went inside the cave.

Calypso knew him at once—for the gods all know each other, no matter how far they live from one another—but Ulysses was not within; he was on the sea-shore as usual, looking out upon the barren ocean with tears in his eyes, groaning and breaking his heart for sorrow. Calypso gave Mercury a seat and said: “Why have you come to see me, Mercury—honoured, and ever welcome—for you do not visit me often? Say what you want; I will do it for you at once if I can, and if it can be done at all; but come inside, and let me set refreshment before you.”

As she spoke she drew a table loaded with ambrosia beside him and mixed him some red nectar, so Mercury ate and drank till he had had enough, and then said:

“We are speaking god and goddess to one another, and you ask me why I have come here, and I will tell you truly as you would have me do. Jove sent me; it was no doing of mine; who could possibly want to come all this way over the sea where there are no cities full of people to offer me sacrifices or choice hecatombs? Nevertheless I had to come, for none of us other gods can cross Jove, nor transgress his orders. He says that you have here the most ill-starred of all those who fought nine years before the city of

King Priam and sailed home in the tenth year after having sacked it. On their way home they sinned against Minerva,[52] who raised both wind and waves against them, so that all his brave companions perished, and he alone was carried hither by wind and tide. Jove says that you are to let this man go at once, for it is decreed that he shall not perish here, far from his own people, but shall return to his house and country and see his friends again."

Calypso trembled with rage when she heard this, "You gods," she exclaimed, "ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You are always jealous and hate seeing a goddess take a fancy to a mortal man, and live with him in open matrimony. So when rosy-fingered Dawn made love to Orion, you precious gods were all of you furious till Diana went and killed him in Ortygia. So again when Ceres fell in love with Iasion, and yielded to him in a thrice-ploughed fallow field, Jove came to hear of it before so very long and killed Iasion with his thunderbolts. And now you are angry with me too because I have a man here. I found the poor creature sitting all alone astride of a keel, for Jove had struck his ship with lightning and sunk it in mid ocean, so that all his crew were drowned, while he himself was driven by wind and waves on to my island. I got fond of him and cherished him, and had set my heart on making him immortal, so that he should never grow old all his days; still I cannot cross Jove, nor bring his counsels to nothing; therefore, if he insists upon it, let the man go beyond the seas again; but I cannot send him anywhere myself for I have neither ships nor men who can take him. Nevertheless I will readily give him such advice, in all good faith, as will be likely to bring him safely to his own country."

"Then send him away," said Mercury, "or Jove will be angry with you and punish you".

On this he took his leave, and Calypso went out to look for Ulysses, for she had heard Jove's message. She found him sitting upon the beach with his eyes ever filled with tears, and dying of sheer home sickness; for he had got tired of Calypso, and though he was forced to sleep with her in the cave by night, it was she, not he, that would have it so. As for the day time, he spent it on the rocks and on the sea shore, weeping, crying aloud for his despair, and always looking out upon the sea. Calypso then went close up to him said:

"My poor fellow, you shall not stay here grieving and fretting your life out any longer. I am going to send you away of my own free will; so go, cut some beams of wood, and make yourself a large raft with an upper deck that it may carry you safely over the sea. I will put bread, wine, and water on board to save you from starving. I will also give you clothes, and will send you a fair wind to take you home, if the gods in heaven so will it—for they know more about these things, and can settle them better than I can."

Ulysses shuddered as he heard her. "Now goddess," he answered, "there is something behind all this; you cannot be really meaning to help me home when you bid me do such a dreadful thing as put to sea on a raft. Not even a well found ship with a fair wind could venture on such a distant voyage: nothing that you can say or do shall make me go on board a raft unless you first solemnly swear that you mean me no mischief."

Calypso smiled at this and caressed him with her hand: "You know a great deal," said she, "but you are quite wrong here. May heaven above and earth below be my witnesses, with the waters of the river Styx—and this is the most solemn oath which a blessed god can take—that I mean you no sort of harm, and am only advising you to do exactly what I should do myself in your place. I am dealing with you quite straightforwardly; my heart is not made of iron, and I am very sorry for you."

When she had thus spoken she led the way rapidly before him, and Ulysses followed in her steps; so the pair, goddess and man, went on and on till they came to Calypso's cave, where Ulysses took the seat that Mercury had just left. Calypso set meat and drink before him of the food that mortals eat; but her maids brought ambrosia and nectar for herself, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them. When they had satisfied themselves with meat and drink, Calypso spoke, saying:

"Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, so you would start home to your own land at once? Good luck go with you, but if you could only know how much suffering is in store for you before you get back to your own country, you would stay where you are, keep house along with me, and let me make you immortal, no matter how anxious you may be to see this wife of yours, of whom you are thinking all the time day after day; yet I flatter myself that I am no whit less tall or well-looking than she is, for it is not to be expected that a mortal woman should compare in beauty with an immortal."

"Goddess," replied Ulysses, "do not be angry with me about this. I am quite aware that my wife Penelope is nothing like so tall or so beautiful as yourself. She is only a woman, whereas you are an immortal. Nevertheless, I want to get home, and can think of nothing else. If some god wrecks me when I am on the sea, I will bear it and make the best of it. I have had infinite trouble both by land and sea already, so let this go with the rest."

Presently the sun set and it became dark, whereon the pair retired into the inner part of the cave and went to bed.

When the child of morning rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, Ulysses put on his shirt and cloak, while the goddess wore a dress of a light gossamer fabric, very fine and graceful, with a beautiful golden girdle about her waist and a veil to cover her head. She at once set herself to think how she could speed Ulysses on his way. So she gave him a great bronze axe that suited his hands; it was sharpened on both sides, and had a beautiful olive-wood handle fitted firmly on to it. She also gave him a sharp adze, and then led the way to the far end of the island where the largest trees grew—alder, poplar and pine, that reached the sky—very dry and well seasoned, so as to sail light for him in the water.[53] Then, when she had shown him where the best trees grew, Calypso went home, leaving him to cut them, which he soon finished doing. He cut down twenty trees in all and adzed them smooth, squaring them by rule in good workmanlike fashion. Meanwhile Calypso came back with some augers, so he bored holes with them and fitted the timbers together with bolts and rivets. He made the raft as broad as a skilled shipwright makes the beam of a large vessel, and he fixed a deck on top of the ribs, and ran a gunwale all round it. He also made a mast with a yard arm, and a rudder to steer with. He fenced the raft all round with wicker hurdles as a protection against the waves, and then he threw on a quantity of wood. By and by Calypso brought him some linen to make the sails, and he made these too, excellently, making them fast with braces and sheets. Last of all, with the help of levers, he drew the raft down into the water.

In four days he had completed the whole work, and on the fifth Calypso sent him from the island after washing him and giving him some clean clothes. She gave him a goat skin full of black wine, and another larger one of water; she also gave him a wallet full of provisions, and found him in much good meat. Moreover, she made the wind fair and warm for him, and gladly did Ulysses spread his sail before it, while he sat and guided the raft skilfully by means of the rudder. He never closed his eyes, but kept them fixed on the Pleiads, on late-setting Bootes, and on the Bear—which men also call the wain, and which turns round and round where it is, facing Orion, and alone never dipping into the stream of Oceanus—for Calypso had told him to keep this to his left. Days seven and ten did he sail over the sea, and on the eighteenth the dim outlines of the mountains on the nearest part of the Phaeacian coast appeared, rising like a shield on the horizon.

But King Neptune, who was returning from the Ethiopians, caught sight of Ulysses a long way off, from the mountains of the Solymi. He could see him sailing upon the sea, and it made him very angry, so he wagged his head and muttered to himself, saying, “Good heavens, so the gods have been changing their minds about Ulysses while I was away in Ethiopia, and now he is close to the land of the Phaeacians, where it is decreed that he shall escape from the calamities that have befallen him. Still, he shall have plenty of hardship yet before he has done with it.”

Thereon he gathered his clouds together, grasped his trident, stirred it round in the sea, and roused the rage of every wind that blows till earth, sea, and sky were hidden in cloud, and night sprang forth out of the heavens. Winds from East, South, North, and West fell upon him all at the same time, and a tremendous sea got up, so that Ulysses’ heart began to fail him. “Alas,” he said to himself in his dismay, “what ever will become of me? I am afraid Calypso was right when she said I should have trouble by sea before I got back home. It is all coming true. How black is Jove making heaven with his clouds, and what a sea the winds are raising from every quarter at once. I am now safe to perish. Blest and thrice blest were those Danaans who fell before Troy in the cause of the sons of Atreus. Would that I had been killed on the day when the Trojans were pressing me so sorely about the dead body of Achilles, for then I should have had due burial and the Achaeans would have honoured my name; but now it seems that I shall come to a most pitiable end.”

As he spoke a sea broke over him with such terrific fury that the raft reeled again, and he was carried overboard a long way off. He let go the helm, and the force of the hurricane was so great that it broke the mast half way up, and both sail and yard went over into the sea. For a long time Ulysses was under water, and it was all he could do to rise to the surface again, for the clothes Calypso had given him weighed him down; but at last he got his head above water and spat out the bitter brine that was running down his face in streams. In spite of all this, however, he did not lose sight of his raft, but swam as fast as he could towards it, got hold of it, and climbed on board again so as to escape drowning. The sea took the raft and tossed it about as Autumn winds whirl thistledown round and round upon a road. It was as though the South, North, East, and West winds were all playing battledore and shuttlecock with it at once.

When he was in this plight, Ino daughter of Cadmus, also called Leucothea, saw him. She had formerly been a mere mortal, but had been since raised to the rank of a marine goddess. Seeing in what great distress Ulysses now was, she had compassion upon him, and, rising like a sea-gull from the waves, took her seat upon the raft.

“My poor good man,” said she, “why is Neptune so furiously angry with you? He is giving you a great deal of trouble, but for all his bluster he will not kill you. You seem to be a sensible person, do then as I bid you; strip, leave your raft to drive before the wind, and swim to the Phaeacian coast where better luck awaits you. And here, take my veil and put it round your chest; it is enchanted, and you can come to no harm so long as you wear it. As soon as you touch land take it off, throw it back as far as you can into the sea, and then go away again.” With these words she took off her veil and gave it him. Then she dived down again like a sea-gull and vanished beneath the dark blue waters.

But Ulysses did not know what to think. “Alas,” he said to himself in his dismay, “this is only some one or other of the gods who is luring me to ruin by advising me to quit my raft. At any rate I will not do so at present, for the land where she said I should be quit of all troubles seemed to be still a good way off. I know what I will do—I am sure it will be best—no matter what happens I will stick to the raft as long as her timbers hold together, but when the sea breaks her up I will swim for it; I do not see how I can do any better than this.”

While he was thus in two minds, Neptune sent a terrible great wave that seemed to rear itself above his head till it broke right over the raft, which then went to pieces as though it were a heap of dry chaff tossed about by a whirlwind. Ulysses got astride of one plank and rode upon it as if he were on horseback; he then took off the clothes Calypso had given him, bound Ino’s veil under his arms, and plunged into the sea—meaning to swim on shore. King Neptune watched him as he did so, and wagged his head, muttering to himself and saying, “There now, swim up and down as you best can till you fall in with well-to-do people. I do not think you will be able to say that I have let you off too lightly.” On this he lashed his horses and drove to Aegae where his palace is.

But Minerva resolved to help Ulysses, so she bound the ways of all the winds except one, and made them lie quite still; but she roused a good stiff breeze from the North that should lay the waters till Ulysses reached the land of the Phaeacians where he would be safe.

Thereon he floated about for two nights and two days in the water, with a heavy swell on the sea and death staring him in the face; but when the third day broke, the wind fell and there was a dead calm without so much as a breath of air stirring. As he rose on the swell he looked eagerly ahead, and could see land quite near. Then, as children rejoice when their dear father begins to get better after having for a long time borne sore affliction sent him by some angry spirit, but the gods deliver him from evil, so was Ulysses thankful when he again saw land and trees, and swam on with all his strength that he might once more set foot upon dry ground. When, however, he got within earshot, he began to hear the surf thundering up against the rocks, for the swell still broke against them with a terrific roar. Everything was enveloped in spray; there were no harbours where a ship might ride, nor shelter of any kind, but only headlands, low-lying rocks, and mountain tops.

Ulysses’ heart now began to fail him, and he said despairingly to himself, “Alas, Jove has let me see land after swimming so far that I had given up all hope, but I can find no landing place, for the coast is rocky and surf-beaten, the rocks are smooth and rise sheer from the sea, with deep water close under them so that I cannot climb out for want of foot hold. I am afraid some great wave will lift me off my legs and dash me against the rocks as I leave the water—which would give me a sorry landing. If, on the other hand, I swim further in search of some shelving beach or harbour, a hurricane may carry me out to sea again sorely against my will, or heaven may send some great monster of the deep to attack me; for Amphitrite breeds many such, and I know that Neptune is very angry with me.”

While he was thus in two minds a wave caught him and took him with such force against the rocks that he would have been smashed and torn to pieces if Minerva had not shown him what to do. He caught hold of the rock with both hands and clung to it groaning with pain till the wave retired, so he was saved that time; but presently the wave came on again and carried him back with it far into the sea—tearing his hands as the suckers of a polypus are torn when some one plucks it from its bed, and the stones come up along with it—even so did the rocks tear the skin from his strong hands, and then the wave drew him deep down under the water.

Here poor Ulysses would have certainly perished even in spite of his own destiny, if Minerva had not helped him to keep his wits about him. He swam seaward again, beyond reach of the surf that was beating against the land, and at the same time he kept looking towards the shore to see if he could find some haven, or a spit that should take the waves aslant. By and by, as he swam on, he came to the mouth of a river, and here he thought would be the best place, for there were no rocks, and it afforded shelter from the wind. He felt that there was a current, so he prayed inwardly and said:

“Hear me, O King, whoever you may be, and save me from the anger of the sea-god Neptune, for I approach you prayerfully. Any one who has lost his way has at all times a claim even upon the gods, wherefore in my distress I draw near to your stream, and cling to the knees of your riverhood. Have mercy upon me, O king, for I declare myself your suppliant.”

Then the god staid his stream and stilled the waves, making all calm before him, and bringing him safely into the mouth of the river. Here at last Ulysses’ knees and strong hands failed him, for the sea had completely broken him. His body was all swollen, and his mouth and nostrils ran down like a river with sea-water, so that he could neither breathe nor speak, and lay swooning from sheer exhaustion; presently, when he had got his breath and came to himself again, he took off the scarf that Ino had given him and threw it back into the salt[54] stream of the river, whereon Ino received it into her hands from the wave that bore it towards her. Then he left the river, laid himself down among the rushes, and kissed the bounteous earth.

“Alas,” he cried to himself in his dismay, “what ever will become of me, and how is it all to end? If I stay here upon the river bed through the long watches of the night, I am so exhausted that the bitter cold and damp may make an end of me—for towards sunrise there will be a keen wind blowing from off the river. If, on the other hand, I climb the hill side, find shelter in the woods, and sleep in some thicket, I may escape the cold and have a good night’s rest, but some savage beast may take advantage of me and devour me.”

In the end he deemed it best to take to the woods, and he found one upon some high ground not far from the water. There he crept beneath two shoots of olive that grew from a single stock—the one an ungrafted sucker, while the other had been grafted. No wind, however squally, could break through the cover they afforded, nor could the sun’s rays pierce them, nor the rain get through them, so closely did they grow into one another. Ulysses crept under these and began to make himself a bed to lie on, for there was a great litter of dead leaves lying about—enough to make a covering for two or three men even in hard winter weather. He was glad enough to see this, so he laid himself down and heaped the leaves all round him. Then, as one who lives alone in the country, far from any neighbor, hides a brand as fire-seed in the ashes to save himself from having to get a light elsewhere, even so did Ulysses cover himself up with leaves; and Minerva shed a sweet sleep upon his eyes, closed his eyelids, and made him lose all memories of his sorrows.

This page titled 3.14.1.5: Book V is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.6: Book VI

THE MEETING BETWEEN NAUSICAA AND ULYSSES.

So here Ulysses slept, overcome by sleep and toil; but Minerva went off to the country and city of the Phaeacians—a people who used to live in the fair town of Hypereia, near the lawless Cyclopes. Now the Cyclopes were stronger than they and plundered them, so their king Nausithous moved them thence and settled them in Scheria, far from all other people. He surrounded the city with a wall, built houses and temples, and divided the lands among his people; but he was dead and gone to the house of Hades, and King Alcinous, whose counsels were inspired of heaven, was now reigning. To his house, then, did Minerva hie in furtherance of the return of Ulysses.

She went straight to the beautifully decorated bedroom in which there slept a girl who was as lovely as a goddess, Nausicaa, daughter to King Alcinous. Two maid servants were sleeping near her, both very pretty, one on either side of the doorway, which was closed with well made folding doors. Minerva took the form of the famous sea captain Dymas's daughter, who was a bosom friend of Nausicaa and just her own age; then, coming up to the girl's bedside like a breath of wind, she hovered over her head and said:

"Nausicaa, what can your mother have been about, to have such a lazy daughter? Here are your clothes all lying in disorder, yet you are going to be married almost immediately, and should not only be well dressed yourself, but should find good clothes for those who attend you. This is the way to get yourself a good name, and to make your father and mother proud of you. Suppose, then, that we make tomorrow a washing day, and start at daybreak. I will come and help you so that you may have everything ready as soon as possible, for all the best young men among your own people are courting you, and you are not going to remain a maid much longer. Ask your father, therefore, to have a waggon and mules ready for us at daybreak, to take the rugs, robes, and girdles, and you can ride, too, which will be much pleasanter for you than walking, for the washing-cisterns are some way from the town."

When she had said this Minerva went away to Olympus, which they say is the everlasting home of the gods. Here no wind beats roughly, and neither rain nor snow can fall; but it abides in everlasting sunshine and in a great peacefulness of light, wherein the blessed gods are illumined for ever and ever. This was the place to which the goddess went when she had given instructions to the girl.

By and by morning came and woke Nausicaa, who began wondering about her dream; she therefore went to the other end of the house to tell her father and mother all about it, and found them in their own room. Her mother was sitting by the fireside spinning her purple yarn with her maids around her, and she happened to catch her father just as he was going out to attend a meeting of the town council, which the Phaeacian aldermen had convened. She stopped him and said:

"Papa dear, could you manage to let me have a good big waggon? I want to take all our dirty clothes to the river and wash them. You are the chief man here, so it is only right that you should have a clean shirt when you attend meetings of the council. Moreover, you have five sons at home, two of them married, while the other three are good looking bachelors; you know they always like to have clean linen when they go to a dance, and I have been thinking about all this."

She did not say a word about her own wedding, for she did not like to, but her father knew and said, "You shall have the mules, my love, and whatever else you have a mind for. Be off with you, and the men shall get you a good strong waggon with a body to it that will hold all your clothes."

On this he gave his orders to the servants, who got the waggon out, harnessed the mules, and put them to, while the girl brought the clothes down from the linen room and placed them on the waggon. Her mother prepared her a basket of provisions with all sorts of good things, and a goat skin full of wine; the girl now got into the waggon, and her mother gave her also a golden cruse of oil, that she and her women might anoint themselves. Then she took the whip and reins and lashed the mules on, whereon they set off, and their hoofs clattered on the road. They pulled without flagging, and carried not only Nausicaa and her wash of clothes, but the maids also who were with her.

When they reached the water side they went to the washing cisterns, through which there ran at all times enough pure water to wash any quantity of linen, no matter how dirty. Here they unharnessed the mules and turned them out to feed on the sweet juicy herbage that grew by the water side. They took the clothes out of the waggon, put them in the water, and vied with one another in treading them in the pits to get the dirt out. After they had washed them and got them quite clean, they laid them out by the sea side,

where the waves had raised a high beach of shingle, and set about washing themselves and anointing themselves with olive oil. Then they got their dinner by the side of the stream, and waited for the sun to finish drying the clothes. When they had done dinner they threw off the veils that covered their heads and began to play at ball, while Nausicaa sang for them. As the huntress Diana goes forth upon the mountains of Taygetus or Erymanthus to hunt wild boars or deer, and the wood nymphs, daughters of Aegis-bearing Jove, take their sport along with her (then is Leto proud at seeing her daughter stand a full head taller than the others, and eclipse the loveliest amid a whole bevy of beauties), even so did the girl outshine her handmaids.

When it was time for them to start home, and they were folding the clothes and putting them into the waggon, Minerva began to consider how Ulysses should wake up and see the handsome girl who was to conduct him to the city of the Phaeacians. The girl, therefore, threw a ball at one of the maids, which missed her and fell into deep water. On this they all shouted, and the noise they made woke Ulysses, who sat up in his bed of leaves and began to wonder what it might all be.

“Alas,” said he to himself, “what kind of people have I come amongst? Are they cruel, savage, and uncivilised, or hospitable and humane? I seem to hear the voices of young women, and they sound like those of the nymphs that haunt mountain tops, or springs of rivers and meadows of green grass. At any rate I am among a race of men and women. Let me try if I cannot manage to get a look at them.”

As he said this he crept from under his bush, and broke off a bough covered with thick leaves to hide his nakedness. He looked like some lion of the wilderness that stalks about exulting in his strength and defying both wind and rain; his eyes glare as he prowls in quest of oxen, sheep, or deer, for he is famished, and will dare break even into a well fenced homestead, trying to get at the sheep—even such did Ulysses seem to the young women, as he drew near to them all naked as he was, for he was in great want. On seeing one so unkempt and so begrimed with salt water, the others scampered off along the spits that jutted out into the sea, but the daughter of Alcinous stood firm, for Minerva put courage into her heart and took away all fear from her. She stood right in front of Ulysses, and he doubted whether he should go up to her, throw himself at her feet, and embrace her knees as a suppliant, or stay where he was and entreat her to give him some clothes and show him the way to the town. In the end he deemed it best to entreat her from a distance in case the girl should take offence at his coming near enough to clasp her knees, so he addressed her in honeyed and persuasive language.

“O queen,” he said, “I implore your aid—but tell me, are you a goddess or are you a mortal woman? If you are a goddess and dwell in heaven, I can only conjecture that you are Jove’s daughter Diana, for your face and figure resemble none but hers; if on the other hand you are a mortal and live on earth, thrice happy are your father and mother—thrice happy, too, are your brothers and sisters; how proud and delighted they must feel when they see so fair a scion as yourself going out to a dance; most happy, however, of all will he be whose wedding gifts have been the richest, and who takes you to his own home. I never yet saw any one so beautiful, neither man nor woman, and am lost in admiration as I behold you. I can only compare you to a young palm tree which I saw when I was at Delos growing near the altar of Apollo—for I was there, too, with much people after me, when I was on that journey which has been the source of all my troubles. Never yet did such a young plant shoot out of the ground as that was, and I admired and wondered at it exactly as I now admire and wonder at yourself. I dare not clasp your knees, but I am in great distress; yesterday made the twentieth day that I had been tossing about upon the sea. The winds and waves have taken me all the way from the Ogygian island,[55] and now fate has flung me upon this coast that I may endure still further suffering; for I do not think that I have yet come to the end of it, but rather that heaven has still much evil in store for me.

“And now, O queen, have pity upon me, for you are the first person I have met, and I know no one else in this country. Show me the way to your town, and let me have anything that you may have brought hither to wrap your clothes in. May heaven grant you in all things your heart’s desire—husband, house, and a happy, peaceful home; for there is nothing better in this world than that man and wife should be of one mind in a house. It discomfits their enemies, makes the hearts of their friends glad, and they themselves know more about it than any one.”

To this Nausicaa answered, “Stranger, you appear to be a sensible, well-disposed person. There is no accounting for luck; Jove gives prosperity to rich and poor just as he chooses, so you must take what he has seen fit to send you, and make the best of it. Now, however, that you have come to this our country, you shall not want for clothes nor for anything else that a foreigner in distress may reasonably look for. I will show you the way to the town, and will tell you the name of our people; we are called Phaeacians, and I am daughter to Alcinous, in whom the whole power of the state is vested.”

Then she called her maids and said, “Stay where you are, you girls. Can you not see a man without running away from him? Do you take him for a robber or a murderer? Neither he nor any one else can come here to do us Phaeacians any harm, for we are dear to the gods, and live apart on a land’s end that juts into the sounding sea, and have nothing to do with any other people. This is only some poor man who has lost his way, and we must be kind to him, for strangers and foreigners in distress are under Jove’s protection, and will take what they can get and be thankful; so, girls, give the poor fellow something to eat and drink, and wash him in the stream at some place that is sheltered from the wind.”

On this the maids left off running away and began calling one another back. They made Ulysses sit down in the shelter as Nausicaa had told them, and brought him a shirt and cloak. They also brought him the little golden cruse of oil, and told him to go and wash in the stream. But Ulysses said, “Young women, please to stand a little on one side that I may wash the brine from my shoulders and anoint myself with oil, for it is long enough since my skin has had a drop of oil upon it. I cannot wash as long as you all keep standing there. I am ashamed to strip[56] before a number of good looking young women.”

Then they stood on one side and went to tell the girl, while Ulysses washed himself in the stream and scrubbed the brine from his back and from his broad shoulders. When he had thoroughly washed himself, and had got the brine out of his hair, he anointed himself with oil, and put on the clothes which the girl had given him; Minerva then made him look taller and stronger than before, she also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she glorified him about the head and shoulders as a skilful workman who has studied art of all kinds under Vulcan and Minerva enriches a piece of silver plate by gilding it—and his work is full of beauty. Then he went and sat down a little way off upon the beach, looking quite young and handsome, and the girl gazed on him with admiration; then she said to her maids:

“Hush, my dears, for I want to say something. I believe the gods who live in heaven have sent this man to the Phaeacians. When I first saw him I thought him plain, but now his appearance is like that of the gods who dwell in heaven. I should like my future husband to be just such another as he is, if he would only stay here and not want to go away. However, give him something to eat and drink.”

They did as they were told, and set food before Ulysses, who ate and drank ravenously, for it was long since he had had food of any kind. Meanwhile, Nausicaa bethought her of another matter. She got the linen folded and placed in the waggon, she then yoked the mules, and, as she took her seat, she called Ulysses:

“Stranger,” said she, “rise and let us be going back to the town; I will introduce you at the house of my excellent father, where I can tell you that you will meet all the best people among the Phaeacians. But be sure and do as I bid you, for you seem to be a sensible person. As long as we are going past the fields and farm lands, follow briskly behind the waggon along with the maids and I will lead the way myself. Presently, however, we shall come to the town, where you will find a high wall running all round it, and a good harbour on either side with a narrow entrance into the city, and the ships will be drawn up by the road side, for every one has a place where his own ship can lie. You will see the market place with a temple of Neptune in the middle of it, and paved with large stones bedded in the earth. Here people deal in ship’s gear of all kinds, such as cables and sails, and here, too, are the places where oars are made, for the Phaeacians are not a nation of archers; they know nothing about bows and arrows, but are a sea-faring folk, and pride themselves on their masts, oars, and ships, with which they travel far over the sea.

“I am afraid of the gossip and scandal that may be set on foot against me later on; for the people here are very ill-natured, and some low fellow, if he met us, might say, ‘Who is this fine-looking stranger that is going about with Nausicaa? Where did she find him? I suppose she is going to marry him. Perhaps he is a vagabond sailor whom she has taken from some foreign vessel, for we have no neighbours; or some god has at last come down from heaven in answer to her prayers, and she is going to live with him all the rest of her life. It would be a good thing if she would take herself off and find a husband somewhere else, for she will not look at one of the many excellent young Phaeacians who are in love with her.’ This is the kind of disparaging remark that would be made about me, and I could not complain, for I should myself be scandalised at seeing any other girl do the like, and go about with men in spite of everybody, while her father and mother were still alive, and without having been married in the face of all the world.

“If, therefore, you want my father to give you an escort and to help you home, do as I bid you; you will see a beautiful grove of poplars by the road side dedicated to Minerva; it has a well in it and a meadow all round it. Here my father has a field of rich garden ground, about as far from the town as a man’s voice will carry. Sit down there and wait for a while till the rest of us can get into the town and reach my father’s house. Then, when you think we must have done this, come into the town and ask the way to the house of my father Alcinous. You will have no difficulty in finding it; any child will point it out to you, for no one else in the

whole town has anything like such a fine house as he has. When you have got past the gates and through the outer court, go right across the inner court till you come to my mother. You will find her sitting by the fire and spinning her purple wool by firelight. It is a fine sight to see her as she leans back against one of the bearing-posts with her maids all ranged behind her. Close to her seat stands that of my father, on which he sits and topes like an immortal god. Never mind him, but go up to my mother, and lay your hands upon her knees if you would get home quickly. If you can gain her over, you may hope to see your own country again, no matter how distant it may be."

So saying she lashed the mules with her whip and they left the river. The mules drew well, and their hoofs went up and down upon the road. She was careful not to go too fast for Ulysses and the maids who were following on foot along with the waggon, so she plied her whip with judgement. As the sun was going down they came to the sacred grove of Minerva, and there Ulysses sat down and prayed to the mighty daughter of Jove.

"Hear me," he cried, "daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable, hear me now, for you gave no heed to my prayers when Neptune was wrecking me. Now, therefore, have pity upon me and grant that I may find friends and be hospitably received by the Phaeacians."

Thus did he pray, and Minerva heard his prayer, but she would not show herself to him openly, for she was afraid of her uncle Neptune, who was still furious in his endeavors to prevent Ulysses from getting home.

This page titled 3.14.1.6: Book VI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.7: Book VII

RECEPTION OF ULYSSES AT THE PALACE OF KING ALCINOUS.

Thus, then, did Ulysses wait and pray; but the girl drove on to the town. When she reached her father's house she drew up at the gateway, and her brothers—comely as the gods—gathered round her, took the mules out of the waggon, and carried the clothes into the house, while she went to her own room, where an old servant, Eurymedusa of Apeira, lit the fire for her. This old woman had been brought by sea from Apeira, and had been chosen as a prize for Alcinous because he was king over the Phaeacians, and the people obeyed him as though he were a god.[57] She had been nurse to Nausicaa, and had now lit the fire for her, and brought her supper for her into her own room.

Presently Ulysses got up to go towards the town; and Minerva shed a thick mist all round him to hide him in case any of the proud Phaeacians who met him should be rude to him, or ask him who he was. Then, as he was just entering the town, she came towards him in the likeness of a little girl carrying a pitcher. She stood right in front of him, and Ulysses said:

"My dear, will you be so kind as to show me the house of king Alcinous? I am an unfortunate foreigner in distress, and do not know one in your town and country."

Then Minerva said, "Yes, father stranger, I will show you the house you want, for Alcinous lives quite close to my own father. I will go before you and show the way, but say not a word as you go, and do not look at any man, nor ask him questions; for the people here cannot abide strangers, and do not like men who come from some other place. They are a sea-faring folk, and sail the seas by the grace of Neptune in ships that glide along like thought, or as a bird in the air."

On this she led the way, and Ulysses followed in her steps; but not one of the Phaeacians could see him as he passed through the city in the midst of them; for the great goddess Minerva in her good will towards him had hidden him in a thick cloud of darkness. He admired their harbours, ships, places of assembly, and the lofty walls of the city, which, with the palisade on top of them, were very striking, and when they reached the king's house Minerva said:

"This is the house, father stranger, which you would have me show you. You will find a number of great people sitting at table, but do not be afraid; go straight in, for the bolder a man is the more likely he is to carry his point, even though he is a stranger. First find the queen. Her name is Arete, and she comes of the same family as her husband Alcinous. They both descend originally from Neptune, who was father to Nausithous by Periboea, a woman of great beauty. Periboea was the youngest daughter of Eurymedon, who at one time reigned over the giants, but he ruined his ill-fated people and lost his own life to boot.

"Neptune, however, lay with his daughter, and she had a son by him, the great Nausithous, who reigned over the Phaeacians. Nausithous had two sons Rhexenor and Alcinous;[58] Apollo killed the first of them while he was still a bridegroom and without male issue; but he left a daughter Arete, whom Alcinous married, and honours as no other woman is honoured of all those that keep house along with their husbands.

"Thus she both was, and still is, respected beyond measure by her children, by Alcinous himself, and by the whole people, who look upon her as a goddess, and greet her whenever she goes about the city, for she is a thoroughly good woman both in head and heart, and when any women are friends of hers, she will help their husbands also to settle their disputes. If you can gain her good will, you may have every hope of seeing your friends again, and getting safely back to your home and country."

Then Minerva left Scheria and went away over the sea. She went to Marathon[59] and to the spacious streets of Athens, where she entered the abode of Erechtheus; but Ulysses went on to the house of Alcinous, and he pondered much as he paused a while before reaching the threshold of bronze, for the splendour of the palace was like that of the sun or moon. The walls on either side were of bronze from end to end, and the cornice was of blue enamel. The doors were gold, and hung on pillars of silver that rose from a floor of bronze, while the lintel was silver and the hook of the door was of gold.

On either side there stood gold and silver mastiffs which Vulcan, with his consummate skill, had fashioned expressly to keep watch over the palace of king Alcinous; so they were immortal and could never grow old. Seats were ranged all along the wall, here and there from one end to the other, with coverings of fine woven work which the women of the house had made. Here the chief persons of the Phaeacians used to sit and eat and drink, for there was abundance at all seasons; and there were golden figures of young men with lighted torches in their hands, raised on pedestals, to give light by night to those who were at table. There are[60] fifty maid servants in the house, some of whom are always grinding rich yellow grain at the mill, while others work at the loom, or

sit and spin, and their shuttles go backwards and forwards like the fluttering of aspen leaves, while the linen is so closely woven that it will turn oil. As the Phaeacians are the best sailors in the world, so their women excel all others in weaving, for Minerva has taught them all manner of useful arts, and they are very intelligent.

Outside the gate of the outer court there is a large garden of about four acres with a wall all round it. It is full of beautiful trees—pears, pomegranates, and the most delicious apples. There are luscious figs also, and olives in full growth. The fruits never rot nor fail all the year round, neither winter nor summer, for the air is so soft that a new crop ripens before the old has dropped. Pear grows on pear, apple on apple, and fig on fig, and so also with the grapes, for there is an excellent vineyard: on the level ground of a part of this, the grapes are being made into raisins; in another part they are being gathered; some are being trodden in the wine tubs, others further on have shed their blossom and are beginning to show fruit, others again are just changing colour. In the furthest part of the ground there are beautifully arranged beds of flowers that are in bloom all the year round. Two streams go through it, the one turned in ducts throughout the whole garden, while the other is carried under the ground of the outer court to the house itself, and the town's people draw water from it. Such, then, were the splendours with which the gods had endowed the house of king Alcinous.

So here Ulysses stood for a while and looked about him, but when he had looked long enough he crossed the threshold and went within the precincts of the house. There he found all the chief people among the Phaeacians making their drink offerings to Mercury, which they always did the last thing before going away for the night.[61] He went straight through the court, still hidden by the cloak of darkness in which Minerva had enveloped him, till he reached Arete and King Alcinous; then he laid his hands upon the knees of the queen, and at that moment the miraculous darkness fell away from him and he became visible. Every one was speechless with surprise at seeing a man there, but Ulysses began at once with his petition.

"Queen Arete," he exclaimed, "daughter of great Rhexenor, in my distress I humbly pray you, as also your husband and these your guests (whom may heaven prosper with long life and happiness, and may they leave their possessions to their children, and all the honours conferred upon them by the state) to help me home to my own country as soon as possible; for I have been long in trouble and away from my friends."

Then he sat down on the hearth among the ashes and they all held their peace, till presently the old hero Echeneus, who was an excellent speaker and an elder among the Phaeacians, plainly and in all honesty addressed them thus:

"Alcinous," said he, "it is not creditable to you that a stranger should be seen sitting among the ashes of your hearth; every one is waiting to hear what you are about to say; tell him, then, to rise and take a seat on a stool inlaid with silver, and bid your servants mix some wine and water that we may make a drink offering to Jove the lord of thunder, who takes all well disposed suppliants under his protection; and let the housekeeper give him some supper, of whatever there may be in the house."

When Alcinous heard this he took Ulysses by the hand, raised him from the hearth, and bade him take the seat of Laodamas, who had been sitting beside him, and was his favourite son. A maid servant then brought him water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for him to wash his hands, and she drew a clean table beside him; an upper servant brought him bread and offered him many good things of what there was in the house, and Ulysses ate and drank. Then Alcinous said to one of the servants, "Pontonous, mix a cup of wine and hand it round that we may make drink-offerings to Jove the lord of thunder, who is the protector of all well-disposed suppliants."

Pontonous then mixed wine and water, and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering. When they had made their offerings, and had drunk each as much as he was minded, Alcinous said:

"Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, hear my words. You have had your supper, so now go home to bed. To-morrow morning I shall invite a still larger number of aldermen, and will give a sacrificial banquet in honour of our guest; we can then discuss the question of his escort, and consider how we may at once send him back rejoicing to his own country without trouble or inconvenience to himself, no matter how distant it may be. We must see that he comes to no harm while on his homeward journey, but when he is once at home he will have to take the luck he was born with for better or worse like other people. It is possible, however, that the stranger is one of the immortals who has come down from heaven to visit us; but in this case the gods are departing from their usual practice, for hitherto they have made themselves perfectly clear to us when we have been offering them hecatombs. They come and sit at our feasts just like one of our selves, and if any solitary wayfarer happens to stumble upon some one or other of them, they affect no concealment, for we are as near of kin to the gods as the Cyclopes and the savage giants are."[62]

Then Ulysses said: “Pray, Alcinous, do not take any such notion into your head. I have nothing of the immortal about me, neither in body nor mind, and most resemble those among you who are the most afflicted. Indeed, were I to tell you all that heaven has seen fit to lay upon me, you would say that I was still worse off than they are. Nevertheless, let me sup in spite of sorrow, for an empty stomach is a very importunate thing, and thrusts itself on a man’s notice no matter how dire is his distress. I am in great trouble, yet it insists that I shall eat and drink, bids me lay aside all memory of my sorrows and dwell only on the due replenishing of itself. As for yourselves, do as you propose, and at break of day set about helping me to get home. I shall be content to die if I may first once more behold my property, my bondsmen, and all the greatness of my house.”[63]

Thus did he speak. Every one approved his saying, and agreed that he should have his escort inasmuch as he had spoken reasonably. Then when they had made their drink offerings, and had drunk each as much as he was minded they went home to bed every man in his own abode, leaving Ulysses in the cloister with Arete and Alcinous while the servants were taking the things away after supper. Arete was the first to speak, for she recognised the shirt, cloak, and good clothes that Ulysses was wearing, as the work of herself and of her maids; so she said, “Stranger, before we go any further, there is a question I should like to ask you. Who, and whence are you, and who gave you those clothes? Did you not say you had come here from beyond the sea?”

And Ulysses answered, “It would be a long story Madam, were I to relate in full the tale of my misfortunes, for the hand of heaven has been laid heavy upon me; but as regards your question, there is an island far away in the sea which is called ‘the Ogygian.’ Here dwells the cunning and powerful goddess Calypso, daughter of Atlas. She lives by herself far from all neighbours human or divine. Fortune, however, brought me to her hearth all desolate and alone, for Jove struck my ship with his thunderbolts, and broke it up in mid-ocean. My brave comrades were drowned every man of them, but I stuck to the keel and was carried hither and thither for the space of nine days, till at last during the darkness of the tenth night the gods brought me to the Ogygian island where the great goddess Calypso lives. She took me in and treated me with the utmost kindness; indeed she wanted to make me immortal that I might never grow old, but she could not persuade me to let her do so.

“I stayed with Calypso seven years straight on end, and watered the good clothes she gave me with my tears during the whole time; but at last when the eighth year came round she bade me depart of her own free will, either because Jove had told her she must, or because she had changed her mind. She sent me from her island on a raft, which she provisioned with abundance of bread and wine. Moreover she gave me good stout clothing, and sent me a wind that blew both warm and fair. Days seven and ten did I sail over the sea, and on the eighteenth I caught sight of the first outlines of the mountains upon your coast—and glad indeed was I to set eyes upon them. Nevertheless there was still much trouble in store for me, for at this point Neptune would let me go no further, and raised a great storm against me; the sea was so terribly high that I could no longer keep to my raft, which went to pieces under the fury of the gale, and I had to swim for it, till wind and current brought me to your shores.

“There I tried to land, but could not, for it was a bad place and the waves dashed me against the rocks, so I again took to the sea and swam on till I came to a river that seemed the most likely landing place, for there were no rocks and it was sheltered from the wind. Here, then, I got out of the water and gathered my senses together again. Night was coming on, so I left the river, and went into a thicket, where I covered myself all over with leaves, and presently heaven sent me off into a very deep sleep. Sick and sorry as I was I slept among the leaves all night, and through the next day till afternoon, when I woke as the sun was westering, and saw your daughter’s maid servants playing upon the beach, and your daughter among them looking like a goddess. I besought her aid, and she proved to be of an excellent disposition, much more so than could be expected from so young a person—for young people are apt to be thoughtless. She gave me plenty of bread and wine, and when she had had me washed in the river she also gave me the clothes in which you see me. Now, therefore, though it has pained me to do so, I have told you the whole truth.”

Then Alcinous said, “Stranger, it was very wrong of my daughter not to bring you on at once to my house along with the maids, seeing that she was the first person whose aid you asked.”

“Pray do not scold her,” replied Ulysses; “she is not to blame. She did tell me to follow along with the maids, but I was ashamed and afraid, for I thought you might perhaps be displeased if you saw me. Every human being is sometimes a little suspicious and irritable.”

“Stranger,” replied Alcinous, “I am not the kind of man to get angry about nothing; it is always better to be reasonable; but by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, now that I see what kind of person you are, and how much you think as I do, I wish you would stay here, marry my daughter, and become my son-in-law. If you will stay I will give you a house and an estate, but no one (heaven forbid) shall keep you here against your own wish, and that you may be sure of this I will attend tomorrow to the matter of your

escort. You can sleep[64] during the whole voyage if you like, and the men shall sail you over smooth waters either to your own home, or wherever you please, even though it be a long way further off than Euboea, which those of my people who saw it when they took yellow-haired Rhadamanthus to see Tityus the son of Gaia, tell me is the furthest of any place—and yet they did the whole voyage in a single day without distressing themselves, and came back again afterwards. You will thus see how much my ships excel all others, and what magnificent oarsmen my sailors are."

Then was Ulysses glad and prayed aloud saying, "Father Jove, grant that Alcinous may do all as he has said, for so he will win an imperishable name among mankind, and at the same time I shall return to my country."

Thus did they converse. Then Arete told her maids to set a bed in the room that was in the gatehouse, and make it with good red rugs, and to spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for Ulysses to wear. The maids thereon went out with torches in their hands, and when they had made the bed they came up to Ulysses and said, "Rise, sir stranger, and come with us for your bed is ready," and glad indeed was he to go to his rest.

So Ulysses slept in a bed placed in a room over the echoing gateway; but Alcinous lay in the inner part of the house, with the queen his wife by his side.

This page titled 3.14.1.7: Book VII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.8: Book VIII

BANQUET IN THE HOUSE OF ALCINOUS—THE GAMES.

Now when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Alcinous and Ulysses both rose, and Alcinous led the way to the Phaeacian place of assembly, which was near the ships. When they got there they sat down side by side on a seat of polished stone, while Minerva took the form of one of Alcinous' servants, and went round the town in order to help Ulysses to get home. She went up to the citizens, man by man, and said, "Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, come to the assembly all of you and listen to the stranger who has just come off a long voyage to the house of King Alcinous; he looks like an immortal god."

With these words she made them all want to come, and they flocked to the assembly till seats and standing room were alike crowded. Every one was struck with the appearance of Ulysses, for Minerva had beautified him about the head and shoulders, making him look taller and stouter than he really was, that he might impress the Phaeacians favourably as being a very remarkable man, and might come off well in the many trials of skill to which they would challenge him. Then, when they were got together, Alcinous spoke:

"Hear me," said he, "aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, that I may speak even as I am minded. This stranger, whoever he may be, has found his way to my house from somewhere or other either East or West. He wants an escort and wishes to have the matter settled. Let us then get one ready for him, as we have done for others before him; indeed, no one who ever yet came to my house has been able to complain of me for not speeding on his way soon enough. Let us draw a ship into the sea—one that has never yet made a voyage—and man her with two and fifty of our smartest young sailors. Then when you have made fast your oars each by his own seat, leave the ship and come to my house to prepare a feast.[65] I will find you in everything. I am giving these instructions to the young men who will form the crew, for as regards you aldermen and town councillors, you will join me in entertaining our guest in the cloisters. I can take no excuses, and we will have Demodocus to sing to us; for there is no bard like him whatever he may choose to sing about."

Alcinous then led the way, and the others followed after, while a servant went to fetch Demodocus. The fifty-two picked oarsmen went to the sea shore as they had been told, and when they got there they drew the ship into the water, got her mast and sails inside her, bound the oars to the thole-pins with twisted thongs of leather, all in due course, and spread the white sails aloft. They moored the vessel a little way out from land, and then came on shore and went to the house of King Alcinous. The out houses,[66] yards, and all the precincts were filled with crowds of men in great multitudes both old and young; and Alcinous killed them a dozen sheep, eight full grown pigs, and two oxen. These they skinned and dressed so as to provide a magnificent banquet.

A servant presently led in the famous bard Demodocus, whom the muse had dearly loved, but to whom she had given both good and evil, for though she had endowed him with a divine gift of song, she had robbed him of his eyesight. Pontonous set a seat for him among the guests, leaning it up against a bearing-post. He hung the lyre for him on a peg over his head, and showed him where he was to feel for it with his hands. He also set a fair table with a basket of victuals by his side, and a cup of wine from which he might drink whenever he was so disposed.

The company then laid their hands upon the good things that were before them, but as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, the muse inspired Demodocus to sing the feats of heroes, and more especially a matter that was then in the mouths of all men, to wit, the quarrel between Ulysses and Achilles, and the fierce words that they heaped on one another as they sat together at a banquet. But Agamemnon was glad when he heard his chieftains quarrelling with one another, for Apollo had foretold him this at Pytho when he crossed the stone floor to consult the oracle. Here was the beginning of the evil that by the will of Jove fell both upon Danaans and Trojans.

Thus sang the bard, but Ulysses drew his purple mantle over his head and covered his face, for he was ashamed to let the Phaeacians see that he was weeping. When the bard left off singing he wiped the tears from his eyes, uncovered his face, and, taking his cup, made a drink-offering to the gods; but when the Phaeacians pressed Demodocus to sing further, for they delighted in his lays, then Ulysses again drew his mantle over his head and wept bitterly. No one noticed his distress except Alcinous, who was sitting near him, and heard the heavy sighs that he was heaving. So he at once said, "Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, we have had enough now, both of the feast, and of the minstrelsy that is its due accompaniment; let us proceed therefore to the athletic sports, so that our guest on his return home may be able to tell his friends how much we surpass all other nations as boxers, wrestlers, jumpers, and runners."

With these words he led the way, and the others followed after. A servant hung Demodocus's lyre on its peg for him, led him out of the cloister, and set him on the same way as that along which all the chief men of the Phaeacians were going to see the sports; a crowd of several thousands of people followed them, and there were many excellent competitors for all the prizes. Acroneos, Ocyalus, Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, Anchialus, Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus, Thoon, Anabesineus, and Amphialus son of Polyneus son of Tecton. There was also Euryalus son of Naubolus, who was like Mars himself, and was the best looking man among the Phaeacians except Laodamas. Three sons of Alcinous, Laodamas, Halios, and Clytoneus, competed also.

The foot races came first. The course was set out for them from the starting post, and they raised a dust upon the plain as they all flew forward at the same moment. Clytoneus came in first by a long way; he left every one else behind him by the length of the furrow that a couple of mules can plough in a fallow field.67 They then turned to the painful art of wrestling, and here Euryalus proved to be the best man. Amphialus excelled all the others in jumping, while at throwing the disc there was no one who could approach Elatreus. Alcinous's son Laodamas was the best boxer, and he it was who presently said, when they had all been diverted with the games, "Let us ask the stranger whether he excels in any of these sports; he seems very powerfully built; his thighs, calves, hands, and neck are of prodigious strength, nor is he at all old, but he has suffered much lately, and there is nothing like the sea for making havoc with a man, no matter how strong he is."

"You are quite right, Laodamas," replied Euryalus, "go up to your guest and speak to him about it yourself."

When Laodamas heard this he made his way into the middle of the crowd and said to Ulysses, "I hope, Sir, that you will enter yourself for some one or other of our competitions if you are skilled in any of them—and you must have gone in for many a one before now. There is nothing that does any one so much credit all his life long as the showing himself a proper man with his hands and feet. Have a try therefore at something, and banish all sorrow from your mind. Your return home will not be long delayed, for the ship is already drawn into the water, and the crew is found."

Ulysses answered, "Laodamas, why do you taunt me in this way? my mind is set rather on cares than contests; I have been through infinite trouble, and am come among you now as a suppliant, praying your king and people to further me on my return home."

Then Euryalus reviled him outright and said, "I gather, then, that you are unskilled in any of the many sports that men generally delight in. I suppose you are one of those grasping traders that go about in ships as captains or merchants, and who think of nothing but of their outward freights and homeward cargoes. There does not seem to be much of the athlete about you."

"For shame, Sir," answered Ulysses, fiercely, "you are an insolent fellow—so true is it that the gods do not grace all men alike in speech, person, and understanding. One man may be of weak presence, but heaven has adorned this with such a good conversation that he charms every one who sees him; his honeyed moderation carries his hearers with him so that he is leader in all assemblies of his fellows, and wherever he goes he is looked up to. Another may be as handsome as a god, but his good looks are not crowned with discretion. This is your case. No god could make a finer looking fellow than you are, but you are a fool. Your ill-judged remarks have made me exceedingly angry, and you are quite mistaken, for I excel in a great many athletic exercises; indeed, so long as I had youth and strength, I was among the first athletes of the age. Now, however, I am worn out by labour and sorrow, for I have gone through much both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea; still, in spite of all this I will compete, for your taunts have stung me to the quick."

So he hurried up without even taking his cloak off, and seized a disc, larger, more massive and much heavier than those used by the Phaeacians when disc-throwing among themselves.68 Then, swinging it back, he threw it from his brawny hand, and it made a humming sound in the air as he did so. The Phaeacians quailed beneath the rushing of its flight as it sped gracefully from his hand, and flew beyond any mark that had been made yet. Minerva, in the form of a man, came and marked the place where it had fallen. "A blind man, Sir," said she, "could easily tell your mark by groping for it—it is so far ahead of any other. You may make your mind easy about this contest, for no Phaeacian can come near to such a throw as yours."

Ulysses was glad when he found he had a friend among the lookers-on, so he began to speak more pleasantly. "Young men," said he, "come up to that throw if you can, and I will throw another disc as heavy or even heavier. If anyone wants to have a bout with me let him come on, for I am exceedingly angry; I will box, wrestle, or run, I do not care what it is, with any man of you all except Laodamas, but not with him because I am his guest, and one cannot compete with one's own personal friend. At least I do not think it a prudent or a sensible thing for a guest to challenge his host's family at any game, especially when he is in a foreign country. He will cut the ground from under his own feet if he does; but I make no exception as regards any one else, for I want to have the matter out and know which is the best man. I am a good hand at every kind of athletic sport known among mankind. I am an

excellent archer. In battle I am always the first to bring a man down with my arrow, no matter how many more are taking aim at him alongside of me. Philoctetes was the only man who could shoot better than I could when we Achaeans were before Troy and in practice. I far excel every one else in the whole world, of those who still eat bread upon the face of the earth, but I should not like to shoot against the mighty dead, such as Hercules, or Eurytus the Oechalian—men who could shoot against the gods themselves. This in fact was how Eurytus came prematurely by his end, for Apollo was angry with him and killed him because he challenged him as an archer. I can throw a dart farther than any one else can shoot an arrow. Running is the only point in respect of which I am afraid some of the Phaeacians might beat me, for I have been brought down very low at sea; my provisions ran short, and therefore I am still weak."

They all held their peace except King Alcinous, who began, "Sir, we have had much pleasure in hearing all that you have told us, from which I understand that you are willing to show your prowess, as having been displeased with some insolent remarks that have been made to you by one of our athletes, and which could never have been uttered by any one who knows how to talk with propriety. I hope you will apprehend my meaning, and will explain to any one of your chief men who may be dining with yourself and your family when you get home, that we have an hereditary aptitude for accomplishments of all kinds. We are not particularly remarkable for our boxing, nor yet as wrestlers, but we are singularly fleet of foot and are excellent sailors. We are extremely fond of good dinners, music, and dancing; we also like frequent changes of linen, warm baths, and good beds, so now, please, some of you who are the best dancers set about dancing, that our guest on his return home may be able to tell his friends how much we surpass all other nations as sailors, runners, dancers, and minstrels. Demodocus has left his lyre at my house, so run some one or other of you and fetch it for him."

On this a servant hurried off to bring the lyre from the king's house, and the nine men who had been chosen as stewards stood forward. It was their business to manage everything connected with the sports, so they made the ground smooth and marked a wide space for the dancers. Presently the servant came back with Demodocus's lyre, and he took his place in the midst of them, whereon the best young dancers in the town began to foot and trip it so nimbly that Ulysses was delighted with the merry twinkling of their feet.

Meanwhile the bard began to sing the loves of Mars and Venus, and how they first began their intrigue in the house of Vulcan. Mars made Venus many presents, and defiled King Vulcan's marriage bed, so the sun, who saw what they were about, told Vulcan. Vulcan was very angry when he heard such dreadful news, so he went to his smithy brooding mischief, got his great anvil into its place, and began to forge some chains which none could either unloose or break, so that they might stay there in that place.[69] When he had finished his snare he went into his bedroom and festooned the bed-posts all over with chains like cobwebs; he also let many hang down from the great beam of the ceiling. Not even a god could see them so fine and subtle were they. As soon as he had spread the chains all over the bed, he made as though he were setting out for the fair state of Lemnos, which of all places in the world was the one he was most fond of. But Mars kept no blind look out, and as soon as he saw him start, hurried off to his house, burning with love for Venus.

Now Venus was just come in from a visit to her father Jove, and was about sitting down when Mars came inside the house, and said as he took her hand in his own, "Let us go to the couch of Vulcan: he is not at home, but is gone off to Lemnos among the Sintians, whose speech is barbarous."

She was nothing loth, so they went to the couch to take their rest, whereon they were caught in the toils which cunning Vulcan had spread for them, and could neither get up nor stir hand or foot, but found too late that they were in a trap. Then Vulcan came up to them, for he had turned back before reaching Lemnos, when his scout the sun told him what was going on. He was in a furious passion, and stood in the vestibule making a dreadful noise as he shouted to all the gods.

"Father Jove," he cried, "and all you other blessed gods who live for ever, come here and see the ridiculous and disgraceful sight that I will show you. Jove's daughter Venus is always dishonouring me because I am lame. She is in love with Mars, who is handsome and clean built, whereas I am a cripple—but my parents are to blame for that, not I; they ought never to have begotten me. Come and see the pair together asleep on my bed. It makes me furious to look at them. They are very fond of one another, but I do not think they will lie there longer than they can help, nor do I think that they will sleep much; there, however, they shall stay till her father has repaid me the sum I gave him for his baggage of a daughter, who is fair but not honest."

On this the gods gathered to the house of Vulcan. Earth-encircling Neptune came, and Mercury the bringer of luck, and King Apollo, but the goddesses staid at home all of them for shame. Then the givers of all good things stood in the doorway, and the

blessed gods roared with inextinguishable laughter, as they saw how cunning Vulcan had been, whereon one would turn towards his neighbour saying:

“Ill deeds do not prosper, and the weak confound the strong. See how limping Vulcan, lame as he is, has caught Mars who is the fleetest god in heaven; and now Mars will be cast in heavy damages.”

Thus did they converse, but King Apollo said to Mercury, “Messenger Mercury, giver of good things, you would not care how strong the chains were, would you, if you could sleep with Venus?”

“King Apollo,” answered Mercury, “I only wish I might get the chance, though there were three times as many chains—and you might look on, all of you, gods and goddesses, but I would sleep with her if I could.”

The immortal gods burst out laughing as they heard him, but Neptune took it all seriously, and kept on imploring Vulcan to set Mars free again. “Let him go,” he cried, “and I will undertake, as you require, that he shall pay you all the damages that are held reasonable among the immortal gods.”

“Do not,” replied Vulcan, “ask me to do this; a bad man’s bond is bad security; what remedy could I enforce against you if Mars should go away and leave his debts behind him along with his chains?”

“Vulcan,” said Neptune, “if Mars goes away without paying his damages, I will pay you myself.” So Vulcan answered, “In this case I cannot and must not refuse you.”

Thereon he loosed the bonds that bound them, and as soon as they were free they scampered off, Mars to Thrace and laughter-loving Venus to Cyprus and to Paphos, where is her grove and her altar fragrant with burnt offerings. Here the Graces bathed her, and anointed her with oil of ambrosia such as the immortal gods make use of, and they clothed her in raiment of the most enchanting beauty.

Thus sang the bard, and both Ulysses and the seafaring Phaeacians were charmed as they heard him.

Then Alcinous told Laodamas and Halius to dance alone, for there was no one to compete with them. So they took a red ball which Polybus had made for them, and one of them bent himself backwards and threw it up towards the clouds, while the other jumped from off the ground and caught it with ease before it came down again. When they had done throwing the ball straight up into the air they began to dance, and at the same time kept on throwing it backwards and forwards to one another, while all the young men in the ring applauded and made a great stamping with their feet. Then Ulysses said:

“King Alcinous, you said your people were the nimblest dancers in the world, and indeed they have proved themselves to be so. I was astonished as I saw them.”

The king was delighted at this, and exclaimed to the Phaeacians, “Aldermen and town councillors, our guest seems to be a person of singular judgement; let us give him such proof of our hospitality as he may reasonably expect. There are twelve chief men among you, and counting myself there are thirteen; contribute, each of you, a clean cloak, a shirt, and a talent of fine gold; let us give him all this in a lump down at once, so that when he gets his supper he may do so with a light heart. As for Euryalus he will have to make a formal apology and a present too, for he has been rude.”

Thus did he speak. The others all of them applauded his saying, and sent their servants to fetch the presents. Then Euryalus said, “King Alcinous, I will give the stranger all the satisfaction you require. He shall have my sword, which is of bronze, all but the hilt, which is of silver. I will also give him the scabbard of newly sawn ivory into which it fits. It will be worth a great deal to him.”

As he spoke he placed the sword in the hands of Ulysses and said, “Good luck to you, father stranger; if anything has been said amiss may the winds blow it away with them, and may heaven grant you a safe return, for I understand you have been long away from home, and have gone through much hardship.”

To which Ulysses answered, “Good luck to you too my friend, and may the gods grant you every happiness. I hope you will not miss the sword you have given me along with your apology.”

With these words he girded the sword about his shoulders and towards sundown the presents began to make their appearance, as the servants of the donors kept bringing them to the house of King Alcinous; here his sons received them, and placed them under their mother’s charge. Then Alcinous led the way to the house and bade his guests take their seats.

"Wife," said he, turning to Queen Arete, "Go, fetch the best chest we have, and put a clean cloak and shirt in it. Also, set a copper on the fire and heat some water; our guest will take a warm bath; see also to the careful packing of the presents that the noble Phaeacians have made him; he will thus better enjoy both his supper and the singing that will follow. I shall myself give him this golden goblet—which is of exquisite workmanship—that he may be reminded of me for the rest of his life whenever he makes a drink offering to Jove, or to any of the gods."[70]

Then Arete told her maids to set a large tripod upon the fire as fast as they could, whereon they set a tripod full of bath water on to a clear fire; they threw on sticks to make it blaze, and the water became hot as the flame played about the belly of the tripod.[71] Meanwhile Arete brought a magnificent chest from her own room, and inside it she packed all the beautiful presents of gold and raiment which the Phaeacians had brought. Lastly she added a cloak and a good shirt from Alcinous, and said to Ulysses:

"See to the lid yourself, and have the whole bound round at once, for fear any one should rob you by the way when you are asleep in your ship." [72]

When Ulysses heard this he put the lid on the chest and made it fast with a bond that Circe had taught him. He had done so before an upper servant told him to come to the bath and wash himself. He was very glad of a warm bath, for he had had no one to wait upon him ever since he left the house of Calypso, who as long as he remained with her had taken as good care of him as though he had been a god. When the servants had done washing and anointing him with oil, and had given him a clean cloak and shirt, he left the bath room and joined the guests who were sitting over their wine. Lovely Nausicaa stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister, and admired him as she saw him pass. "Farewell stranger," said she, "do not forget me when you are safe at home again, for it is to me first that you owe a ransom for having saved your life."

And Ulysses said, "Nausicaa, daughter of great Alcinous, may Jove the mighty husband of Juno, grant that I may reach my home; so shall I bless you as my guardian angel all my days, for it was you who saved me."

When he had said this, he seated himself beside Alcinous. Supper was then served, and the wine was mixed for drinking. A servant led in the favourite bard Demodocus, and set him in the midst of the company, near one of the bearing-posts supporting the cloister, that he might lean against it. Then Ulysses cut off a piece of roast pork with plenty of fat (for there was abundance left on the joint) and said to a servant, "Take this piece of pork over to Demodocus and tell him to eat it; for all the pain his lays may cause me I will salute him none the less; bards are honoured and respected throughout the world, for the muse teaches them their songs and loves them."

The servant carried the pork in his fingers over to Demodocus, who took it and was very much pleased. They then laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had to eat and drink, Ulysses said to Demodocus, "Demodocus, there is no one in the world whom I admire more than I do you. You must have studied under the Muse, Jove's daughter, and under Apollo, so accurately do you sing the return of the Achaeans with all their sufferings and adventures. If you were not there yourself, you must have heard it all from some one who was. Now, however, change your song and tell us of the wooden horse which Epeus made with the assistance of Minerva, and which Ulysses got by stratagem into the fort of Troy after freighting it with the men who afterwards sacked the city. If you will sing this tale aright I will tell all the world how magnificently heaven has endowed you."

The bard inspired of heaven took up the story at the point where some of the Argives set fire to their tents and sailed away while others, hidden within the horse,[73] were waiting with Ulysses in the Trojan place of assembly. For the Trojans themselves had drawn the horse into their fortress, and it stood there while they sat in council round it, and were in three minds as to what they should do. Some were for breaking it up then and there; others would have it dragged to the top of the rock on which the fortress stood, and then thrown down the precipice; while yet others were for letting it remain as an offering and propitiation for the gods. And this was how they settled it in the end, for the city was doomed when it took in that horse, within which were all the bravest of the Argives waiting to bring death and destruction on the Trojans. Anon he sang how the sons of the Achaeans issued from the horse, and sacked the town, breaking out from their ambuscade. He sang how they overran the city hither and thither and ravaged it, and how Ulysses went raging like Mars along with Menelaus to the house of Deiphobus. It was there that the fight raged most furiously, nevertheless by Minerva's help he was victorious.

All this he told, but Ulysses was overcome as he heard him, and his cheeks were wet with tears. He wept as a woman weeps when she throws herself on the body of her husband who has fallen before his own city and people, fighting bravely in defence of his home and children. She screams aloud and flings her arms about him as he lies gasping for breath and dying, but her enemies beat her from behind about the back and shoulders, and carry her off into slavery, to a life of labour and sorrow, and the beauty fades

from her cheeks—even so piteously did Ulysses weep, but none of those present perceived his tears except Alcinous, who was sitting near him, and could hear the sobs and sighs that he was heaving. The king, therefore, at once rose and said:

“Aldermen and town councillors of the Phaeacians, let Demodocus cease his song, for there are those present who do not seem to like it. From the moment that we had done supper and Demodocus began to sing, our guest has been all the time groaning and lamenting. He is evidently in great trouble, so let the bard leave off, that we may all enjoy ourselves, hosts and guest alike. This will be much more as it should be, for all these festivities, with the escort and the presents that we are making with so much good will are wholly in his honour, and any one with even a moderate amount of right feeling knows that he ought to treat a guest and a suppliant as though he were his own brother.

“Therefore, Sir, do you on your part affect no more concealment nor reserve in the matter about which I shall ask you; it will be more polite in you to give me a plain answer; tell me the name by which your father and mother over yonder used to call you, and by which you were known among your neighbours and fellow-citizens. There is no one, neither rich nor poor, who is absolutely without any name whatever, for people’s fathers and mothers give them names as soon as they are born. Tell me also your country, nation, and city, that our ships may shape their purpose accordingly and take you there. For the Phaeacians have no pilots; their vessels have no rudders as those of other nations have, but the ships themselves understand what it is that we are thinking about and want; they know all the cities and countries in the whole world, and can traverse the sea just as well even when it is covered with mist and cloud, so that there is no danger of being wrecked or coming to any harm. Still I do remember hearing my father say that Neptune was angry with us for being too easy-going in the matter of giving people escorts. He said that one of these days he should wreck a ship of ours as it was returning from having escorted some one,[74] and bury our city under a high mountain. This is what my father used to say, but whether the god will carry out his threat or no is a matter which he will decide for himself.

“And now, tell me and tell me true. Where have you been wandering, and in what countries have you travelled? Tell us of the peoples themselves, and of their cities—who were hostile, savage and uncivilised, and who, on the other hand, hospitable and humane. Tell us also why you are made so unhappy on hearing about the return of the Argive Danaans from Troy. The gods arranged all this, and sent them their misfortunes in order that future generations might have something to sing about. Did you lose some brave kinsman of your wife’s when you were before Troy? a son-in-law or father-in-law—which are the nearest relations a man has outside his own flesh and blood? or was it some brave and kindly-natured comrade—for a good friend is as dear to a man as his own brother?”

This page titled 3.14.1.8: Book VIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.9: Book IX

ULYSSES DECLARES HIMSELF AND BEGINS HIS STORY—-THE CICONS, LOTOPHAGI, AND CYCLOPES.

And Ulysses answered, “King Alcinous, it is a good thing to hear a bard with such a divine voice as this man has. There is nothing better or more delightful than when a whole people make merry together, with the guests sitting orderly to listen, while the table is loaded with bread and meats, and the cup-bearer draws wine and fills his cup for every man. This is indeed as fair a sight as a man can see. Now, however, since you are inclined to ask the story of my sorrows, and rekindle my own sad memories in respect of them, I do not know how to begin, nor yet how to continue and conclude my tale, for the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me.

“Firstly, then, I will tell you my name that you too may know it, and one day, if I outlive this time of sorrow, may become my guests though I live so far away from all of you. I am Ulysses son of Laertes, renowned among mankind for all manner of subtlety, so that my fame ascends to heaven. I live in Ithaca, where there is a high mountain called Neritum, covered with forests; and not far from it there is a group of islands very near to one another—Dulichium, Same, and the wooded island of Zacynthus. It lies squat on the horizon, all highest up in the sea towards the sunset, while the others lie away from it towards dawn.[75] It is a rugged island, but it breeds brave men, and my eyes know none that they better love to look upon. The goddess Calypso kept me with her in her cave, and wanted me to marry her, as did also the cunning Aeaean goddess Circe; but they could neither of them persuade me, for there is nothing dearer to a man than his own country and his parents, and however splendid a home he may have in a foreign country, if it be far from father or mother, he does not care about it. Now, however, I will tell you of the many hazardous adventures which by Jove’s will I met with on my return from Troy.

“When I had set sail thence the wind took me first to Ismarus, which is the city of the Cicons. There I sacked the town and put the people to the sword. We took their wives and also much booty, which we divided equitably amongst us, so that none might have reason to complain. I then said that we had better make off at once, but my men very foolishly would not obey me, so they staid there drinking much wine and killing great numbers of sheep and oxen on the sea shore. Meanwhile the Cicons cried out for help to other Cicons who lived inland. These were more in number, and stronger, and they were more skilled in the art of war, for they could fight, either from chariots or on foot as the occasion served; in the morning, therefore, they came as thick as leaves and bloom in summer, and the hand of heaven was against us, so that we were hard pressed. They set the battle in array near the ships, and the hosts aimed their bronze-shod spears at one another.[76] So long as the day waxed and it was still morning, we held our own against them, though they were more in number than we; but as the sun went down, towards the time when men loose their oxen, the Cicons got the better of us, and we lost half a dozen men from every ship we had; so we got away with those that were left.

“Thence we sailed onward with sorrow in our hearts, but glad to have escaped death though we had lost our comrades, nor did we leave till we had thrice invoked each one of the poor fellows who had perished by the hands of the Cicons. Then Jove raised the North wind against us till it blew a hurricane, so that land and sky were hidden in thick clouds, and night sprang forth out of the heavens. We let the ships run before the gale, but the force of the wind tore our sails to tatters, so we took them down for fear of shipwreck, and rowed our hardest towards the land. There we lay two days and two nights suffering much alike from toil and distress of mind, but on the morning of the third day we again raised our masts, set sail, and took our places, letting the wind and steersmen direct our ship. I should have got home at that time unharmed had not the North wind and the currents been against me as I was doubling Cape Malea, and set me off my course hard by the island of Cythera.

“I was driven thence by foul winds for a space of nine days upon the sea, but on the tenth day we reached the land of the Lotus-eaters, who live on a food that comes from a kind of flower. Here we landed to take in fresh water, and our crews got their mid-day meal on the shore near the ships. When they had eaten and drunk I sent two of my company to see what manner of men the people of the place might be, and they had a third man under them. They started at once, and went about among the Lotus-eaters, who did them no hurt, but gave them to eat of the lotus, which was so delicious that those who ate of it left off caring about home, and did not even want to go back and say what had happened to them, but were for staying and munching lotus[77] with the Lotus-eaters without thinking further of their return; nevertheless, though they wept bitterly I forced them back to the ships and made them fast under the benches. Then I told the rest to go on board at once, lest any of them should taste of the lotus and leave off wanting to get home, so they took their places and smote the grey sea with their oars.

“We sailed hence, always in much distress, till we came to the land of the lawless and inhuman Cyclopes. Now the Cyclopes neither plant nor plough, but trust in providence, and live on such wheat, barley, and grapes as grow wild without any kind of tillage, and their wild grapes yield them wine as the sun and the rain may grow them. They have no laws nor assemblies of the people, but live in caves on the tops of high mountains; each is lord and master in his family, and they take no account of their neighbours.

“Now off their harbour there lies a wooded and fertile island not quite close to the land of the Cyclopes, but still not far. It is over-run with wild goats, that breed there in great numbers and are never disturbed by foot of man; for sportsmen—who as a rule will suffer so much hardship in forest or among mountain precipices—do not go there, nor yet again is it ever ploughed or fed down, but it lies a wilderness untilled and unsown from year to year, and has no living thing upon it but only goats. For the Cyclopes have no ships, nor yet shipwrights who could make ships for them; they cannot therefore go from city to city, or sail over the sea to one another’s country as people who have ships can do; if they had had these they would have colonised the island,[78] for it is a very good one, and would yield everything in due season. There are meadows that in some places come right down to the sea shore, well watered and full of luscious grass; grapes would do there excellently; there is level land for ploughing, and it would always yield heavily at harvest time, for the soil is deep. There is a good harbour where no cables are wanted, nor yet anchors, nor need a ship be moored, but all one has to do is to beach one’s vessel and stay there till the wind becomes fair for putting out to sea again. At the head of the harbour there is a spring of clear water coming out of a cave, and there are poplars growing all round it.

“Here we entered, but so dark was the night that some god must have brought us in, for there was nothing whatever to be seen. A thick mist hung all round our ships;[79] the moon was hidden behind a mass of clouds so that no one could have seen the island if he had looked for it, nor were there any breakers to tell us we were close in shore before we found ourselves upon the land itself; when, however, we had beached the ships, we took down the sails, went ashore and camped upon the beach till daybreak.

“When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, we admired the island and wandered all over it, while the nymphs Jove’s daughters roused the wild goats that we might get some meat for our dinner. On this we fetched our spears and bows and arrows from the ships, and dividing ourselves into three bands began to shoot the goats. Heaven sent us excellent sport; I had twelve ships with me, and each ship got nine goats, while my own ship had ten; thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we ate and drank our fill, and we had plenty of wine left, for each one of us had taken many jars full when we sacked the city of the Cicons, and this had not yet run out. While we were feasting we kept turning our eyes towards the land of the Cyclopes, which was hard by, and saw the smoke of their stubble fires. We could almost fancy we heard their voices and the bleating of their sheep and goats, but when the sun went down and it came on dark, we camped down upon the beach, and next morning I called a council.

“‘Stay here, my brave fellows,’ said I, ‘all the rest of you, while I go with my ship and exploit these people myself: I want to see if they are uncivilised savages, or a hospitable and humane race.’

“I went on board, bidding my men to do so also and loose the hawsers; so they took their places and smote the grey sea with their oars. When we got to the land, which was not far, there, on the face of a cliff near the sea, we saw a great cave overhung with laurels. It was a station for a great many sheep and goats, and outside there was a large yard, with a high wall round it made of stones built into the ground and of trees both pine and oak. This was the abode of a huge monster who was then away from home shepherding his flocks. He would have nothing to do with other people, but led the life of an outlaw. He was a horrid creature, not like a human being at all, but resembling rather some crag that stands out boldly against the sky on the top of a high mountain.

“I told my men to draw the ship ashore, and stay where they were, all but the twelve best among them, who were to go along with myself. I also took a goatskin of sweet black wine which had been given me by Maron, son of Euanthes, who was priest of Apollo the patron god of Ismarus, and lived within the wooded precincts of the temple. When we were sacking the city we respected him, and spared his life, as also his wife and child; so he made me some presents of great value—seven talents of fine gold, and a bowl of silver, with twelve jars of sweet wine, unblended, and of the most exquisite flavour. Not a man nor maid in the house knew about it, but only himself, his wife, and one housekeeper: when he drank it he mixed twenty parts of water to one of wine, and yet the fragrance from the mixing-bowl was so exquisite that it was impossible to refrain from drinking. I filled a large skin with this wine, and took a wallet full of provisions with me, for my mind misgave me that I might have to deal with some savage who would be of great strength, and would respect neither right nor law.

"We soon reached his cave, but he was out shepherding, so we went inside and took stock of all that we could see. His cheese-racks were loaded with cheeses, and he had more lambs and kids than his pens could hold. They were kept in separate flocks; first there were the hoggets, then the oldest of the younger lambs and lastly the very young ones[80] all kept apart from one another; as for his dairy, all the vessels, bowls, and milk pails into which he milked, were swimming with whey. When they saw all this, my men begged me to let them first steal some cheeses, and make off with them to the ship; they would then return, drive down the lambs and kids, put them on board and sail away with them. It would have been indeed better if we had done so but I would not listen to them, for I wanted to see the owner himself, in the hope that he might give me a present. When, however, we saw him my poor men found him ill to deal with.

"We lit a fire, offered some of the cheeses in sacrifice, ate others of them, and then sat waiting till the Cyclops should come in with his sheep. When he came, he brought in with him a huge load of dry firewood to light the fire for his supper, and this he flung with such a noise on to the floor of his cave that we hid ourselves for fear at the far end of the cavern. Meanwhile he drove all the ewes inside, as well as the she-goats that he was going to milk, leaving the males, both rams and he-goats, outside in the yards. Then he rolled a huge stone to the mouth of the cave—so huge that two and twenty strong four-wheeled waggons would not be enough to draw it from its place against the doorway. When he had so done he sat down and milked his ewes and goats, all in due course, and then let each of them have her own young. He curdled half the milk and set it aside in wicker strainers, but the other half he poured into bowls that he might drink it for his supper. When he had got through with all his work, he lit the fire, and then caught sight of us, whereon he said:

"'Strangers, who are you? Where do sail from? Are you traders, or do you sail the sea as rovers, with your hands against every man, and every man's hand against you?'

"We were frightened out of our senses by his loud voice and monstrous form, but I managed to say, 'We are Achaeans on our way home from Troy, but by the will of Jove, and stress of weather, we have been driven far out of our course. We are the people of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, who has won infinite renown throughout the whole world, by sacking so great a city and killing so many people. We therefore humbly pray you to show us some hospitality, and otherwise make us such presents as visitors may reasonably expect. May your excellency fear the wrath of heaven, for we are your suppliants, and Jove takes all respectable travellers under his protection, for he is the avenger of all suppliants and foreigners in distress.'

"To this he gave me but a pitiless answer, 'Stranger,' said he, 'you are a fool, or else you know nothing of this country. Talk to me, indeed, about fearing the gods or shunning their anger? We Cyclopes do not care about Jove or any of your blessed gods, for we are ever so much stronger than they. I shall not spare either yourself or your companions out of any regard for Jove, unless I am in the humour for doing so. And now tell me where you made your ship fast when you came on shore. Was it round the point, or is she lying straight off the land?'

"He said this to draw me out, but I was too cunning to be caught in that way, so I answered with a lie; 'Neptune,' said I, 'sent my ship on to the rocks at the far end of your country, and wrecked it. We were driven on to them from the open sea, but I and those who are with me escaped the jaws of death.'

"The cruel wretch vouchsafed me not one word of answer, but with a sudden clutch he gripped up two of my men at once and dashed them down upon the ground as though they had been puppies. Their brains were shed upon the ground, and the earth was wet with their blood. Then he tore them limb from limb and supped upon them. He gobbled them up like a lion in the wilderness, flesh, bones, marrow, and entrails, without leaving anything uneaten. As for us, we wept and lifted up our hands to heaven on seeing such a horrid sight, for we did not know what else to do; but when the Cyclops had filled his huge paunch, and had washed down his meal of human flesh with a drink of neat milk, he stretched himself full length upon the ground among his sheep, and went to sleep. I was at first inclined to seize my sword, draw it, and drive it into his vitals, but I reflected that if I did we should all certainly be lost, for we should never be able to shift the stone which the monster had put in front of the door. So we stayed sobbing and sighing where we were till morning came.

"When the child of morning, rosy-fingered dawn, appeared, he again lit his fire, milked his goats and ewes, all quite rightly, and then let each have her own young one; as soon as he had got through with all his work, he clutched up two more of my men, and began eating them for his morning's meal. Presently, with the utmost ease, he rolled the stone away from the door and drove out his sheep, but he at once put it back again—as easily as though he were merely clapping the lid on to a quiver full of arrows. As soon

as he had done so he shouted, and cried ‘Shoo, shoo,’ after his sheep to drive them on to the mountain; so I was left to scheme some way of taking my revenge and covering myself with glory.

“In the end I deemed it would be the best plan to do as follows: The Cyclops had a great club which was lying near one of the sheep pens; it was of green olive wood, and he had cut it intending to use it for a staff as soon as it should be dry. It was so huge that we could only compare it to the mast of a twenty-oared merchant vessel of large burden, and able to venture out into open sea. I went up to this club and cut off about six feet of it; I then gave this piece to the men and told them to fine it evenly off at one end, which they proceeded to do, and lastly I brought it to a point myself, charring the end in the fire to make it harder. When I had done this I hid it under dung, which was lying about all over the cave, and told the men to cast lots which of them should venture along with myself to lift it and bore it into the monster’s eye while he was asleep. The lot fell upon the very four whom I should have chosen, and I myself made five. In the evening the wretch came back from shepherding, and drove his flocks into the cave—this time driving them all inside, and not leaving any in the yards; I suppose some fancy must have taken him, or a god must have prompted him to do so. As soon as he had put the stone back to its place against the door, he sat down, milked his ewes and his goats all quite rightly, and then let each have her own young one; when he had got through with all this work, he gripped up two more of my men, and made his supper off them. So I went up to him with an ivy-wood bowl of black wine in my hands:

“‘Look here, Cyclops,’ said I, you have been eating a great deal of man’s flesh, so take this and drink some wine, that you may see what kind of liquor we had on board my ship. I was bringing it to you as a drink-offering, in the hope that you would take compassion upon me and further me on my way home, whereas all you do is to go on ramping and raving most intolerably. You ought to be ashamed of yourself; how can you expect people to come see you any more if you treat them in this way?’

“He then took the cup and drank. He was so delighted with the taste of the wine that he begged me for another bowl full. ‘Be so kind,’ he said, ‘as to give me some more, and tell me your name at once. I want to make you a present that you will be glad to have. We have wine even in this country, for our soil grows grapes and the sun ripens them, but this drinks like Nectar and Ambrosia all in one.’

“I then gave him some more; three times did I fill the bowl for him, and three times did he drain it without thought or heed; then, when I saw that the wine had got into his head, I said to him as plausibly as I could: ‘Cyclops, you ask my name and I will tell it you; give me, therefore, the present you promised me; my name is Noman; this is what my father and mother and my friends have always called me.’

“But the cruel wretch said, ‘Then I will eat all Noman’s comrades before Noman himself, and will keep Noman for the last. This is the present that I will make him.’

“As he spoke he reeled, and fell sprawling face upwards on the ground. His great neck hung heavily backwards and a deep sleep took hold upon him. Presently he turned sick, and threw up both wine and the gobbets of human flesh on which he had been gorging, for he was very drunk. Then I thrust the beam of wood far into the embers to heat it, and encouraged my men lest any of them should turn faint-hearted. When the wood, green though it was, was about to blaze, I drew it out of the fire glowing with heat, and my men gathered round me, for heaven had filled their hearts with courage. We drove the sharp end of the beam into the monster’s eye, and bearing upon it with all my weight I kept turning it round and round as though I were boring a hole in a ship’s plank with an auger, which two men with a wheel and strap can keep on turning as long as they choose. Even thus did we bore the red hot beam into his eye, till the boiling blood bubbled all over it as we worked it round and round, so that the steam from the burning eyeball scalded his eyelids and eyebrows, and the roots of the eye sputtered in the fire. As a blacksmith plunges an axe or hatchet into cold water to temper it—for it is this that gives strength to the iron—and it makes a great hiss as he does so, even thus did the Cyclops’ eye hiss round the beam of olive wood, and his hideous yells made the cave ring again. We ran away in a fright, but he plucked the beam all besmirched with gore from his eye, and hurled it from him in a frenzy of rage and pain, shouting as he did so to the other Cyclopes who lived on the bleak headlands near him; so they gathered from all quarters round his cave when they heard him crying, and asked what was the matter with him.

“‘What ails you, Polyphemus,’ said they, ‘that you make such a noise, breaking the stillness of the night, and preventing us from being able to sleep? Surely no man is carrying off your sheep? Surely no man is trying to kill you either by fraud or by force?’

“But Polyphemus shouted to them from inside the cave, ‘Noman is killing me by fraud; no man is killing me by force.’

"'Then,' said they, 'if no man is attacking you, you must be ill; when Jove makes people ill, there is no help for it, and you had better pray to your father Neptune.'

"Then they went away, and I laughed inwardly at the success of my clever stratagem, but the Cyclops, groaning and in an agony of pain, felt about with his hands till he found the stone and took it from the door; then he sat in the doorway and stretched his hands in front of it to catch anyone going out with the sheep, for he thought I might be foolish enough to attempt this.

"As for myself I kept on puzzling to think how I could best save my own life and those of my companions; I schemed and schemed, as one who knows that his life depends upon it, for the danger was very great. In the end I deemed that this plan would be the best; the male sheep were well grown, and carried a heavy black fleece, so I bound them noiselessly in threes together, with some of the withies on which the wicked monster used to sleep. There was to be a man under the middle sheep, and the two on either side were to cover him, so that there were three sheep to each man. As for myself there was a ram finer than any of the others, so I caught hold of him by the back, esconced myself in the thick wool under his belly, and hung on patiently to his fleece, face upwards, keeping a firm hold on it all the time.

"Thus, then, did we wait in great fear of mind till morning came, but when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, the male sheep hurried out to feed, while the ewes remained bleating about the pens waiting to be milked, for their udders were full to bursting; but their master in spite of all his pain felt the backs of all the sheep as they stood upright, without being sharp enough to find out that the men were underneath their bellies. As the ram was going out, last of all, heavy with its fleece and with the weight of my crafty self, Polyphemus laid hold of it and said:

"'My good ram, what is it that makes you the last to leave my cave this morning? You are not wont to let the ewes go before you, but lead the mob with a run whether to flowery mead or bubbling fountain, and are the first to come home again at night; but now you lag last of all. Is it because you know your master has lost his eye, and are sorry because that wicked Noman and his horrid crew has got him down in his drink and blinded him? But I will have his life yet. If you could understand and talk, you would tell me where the wretch is hiding, and I would dash his brains upon the ground till they flew all over the cave. I should thus have some satisfaction for the harm this no-good Noman has done me.'

"As he spoke he drove the ram outside, but when we were a little way out from the cave and yards, I first got from under the ram's belly, and then freed my comrades; as for the sheep, which were very fat, by constantly heading them in the right direction we managed to drive them down to the ship. The crew rejoiced greatly at seeing those of us who had escaped death, but wept for the others whom the Cyclops had killed. However, I made signs to them by nodding and frowning that they were to hush their crying, and told them to get all the sheep on board at once and put out to sea; so they went aboard, took their places, and smote the grey sea with their oars. Then, when I had got as far out as my voice would reach, I began to jeer at the Cyclops.

"'Cyclops,' said I, 'you should have taken better measure of your man before eating up his comrades in your cave. You wretch, eat up your visitors in your own house? You might have known that your sin would find you out, and now Jove and the other gods have punished you.'

"He got more and more furious as he heard me, so he tore the top from off a high mountain, and flung it just in front of my ship so that it was within a little of hitting the end of the rudder.[81] The sea quaked as the rock fell into it, and the wash of the wave it raised carried us back towards the mainland, and forced us towards the shore. But I snatched up a long pole and kept the ship off, making signs to my men by nodding my head, that they must row for their lives, whereon they laid out with a will. When we had got twice as far as we were before, I was for jeering at the Cyclops again, but the men begged and prayed of me to hold my tongue.

"'Do not,' they exclaimed, 'be mad enough to provoke this savage creature further; he has thrown one rock at us already which drove us back again to the mainland, and we made sure it had been the death of us; if he had then heard any further sound of voices he would have pounded our heads and our ship's timbers into a jelly with the rugged rocks he would have heaved at us, for he can throw them a long way.'

"But I would not listen to them, and shouted out to him in my rage, 'Cyclops, if any one asks you who it was that put your eye out and spoiled your beauty, say it was the valiant warrior Ulysses, son of Laertes, who lives in Ithaca.'

"On this he groaned, and cried out, 'Alas, alas, then the old prophecy about me is coming true. There was a prophet here, at one time, a man both brave and of great stature, Telemus son of Eurymus, who was an excellent seer, and did all the prophesying for the Cyclopes till he grew old; he told me that all this would happen to me some day, and said I should lose my sight by the hand of

Ulysses. I have been all along expecting some one of imposing presence and superhuman strength, whereas he turns out to be a little insignificant weakling, who has managed to blind my eye by taking advantage of me in my drink; come here, then, Ulysses, that I may make you presents to show my hospitality, and urge Neptune to help you forward on your journey—for Neptune and I are father and son. He, if he so will, shall heal me, which no one else neither god nor man can do.'

"Then I said, 'I wish I could be as sure of killing you outright and sending you down to the house of Hades, as I am that it will take more than Neptune to cure that eye of yours.'

"On this he lifted up his hands to the firmament of heaven and prayed, saying, 'Hear me, great Neptune; if I am indeed your own true begotten son, grant that Ulysses may never reach his home alive; or if he must get back to his friends at last, let him do so late and in sore plight after losing all his men [let him reach his home in another man's ship and find trouble in his house.'[82]

"Thus did he pray, and Neptune heard his prayer. Then he picked up a rock much larger than the first, swung it aloft and hurled it with prodigious force. It fell just short of the ship, but was within a little of hitting the end of the rudder. The sea quaked as the rock fell into it, and the wash of the wave it raised drove us onwards on our way towards the shore of the island.

"When at last we got to the island where we had left the rest of our ships, we found our comrades lamenting us, and anxiously awaiting our return. We ran our vessel upon the sands and got out of her on to the sea shore; we also landed the Cyclops' sheep, and divided them equitably amongst us so that none might have reason to complain. As for the ram, my companions agreed that I should have it as an extra share; so I sacrificed it on the sea shore, and burned its thigh bones to Jove, who is the lord of all. But he heeded not my sacrifice, and only thought how he might destroy both my ships and my comrades.

"Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we feasted our fill on meat and drink, but when the sun went down and it came on dark, we camped upon the beach. When the child of morning rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, I bade my men on board and loose the hawsers. Then they took their places and smote the grey sea with their oars; so we sailed on with sorrow in our hearts, but glad to have escaped death though we had lost our comrades.

This page titled 3.14.1.9: Book IX is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.10: Book X

AEOLUS, THE LAESTRYGONES, CIRCE.

“Thence we went on to the Aeolian island where lives Aeolus son of Hippotas, dear to the immortal gods. It is an island that floats (as it were) upon the sea,[83] iron bound with a wall that girds it. Now, Aeolus has six daughters and six lusty sons, so he made the sons marry the daughters, and they all live with their dear father and mother, feasting and enjoying every conceivable kind of luxury. All day long the atmosphere of the house is loaded with the savour of roasting meats till it groans again, yard and all; but by night they sleep on their well made bedsteads, each with his own wife between the blankets. These were the people among whom we had now come.

“Aeolus entertained me for a whole month asking me questions all the time about Troy, the Argive fleet, and the return of the Achaeans. I told him exactly how everything had happened, and when I said I must go, and asked him to further me on my way, he made no sort of difficulty, but set about doing so at once. Moreover, he flayed me a prime ox-hide to hold the ways of the roaring winds, which he shut up in the hide as in a sack—for Jove had made him captain over the winds, and he could stir or still each one of them according to his own pleasure. He put the sack in the ship and bound the mouth so tightly with a silver thread that not even a breath of a side-wind could blow from any quarter. The West wind which was fair for us did he alone let blow as it chose; but it all came to nothing, for we were lost through our own folly.

“Nine days and nine nights did we sail, and on the tenth day our native land showed on the horizon. We got so close in that we could see the stubble fires burning, and I, being then dead beat, fell into a light sleep, for I had never let the rudder out of my own hands, that we might get home the faster. On this the men fell to talking among themselves, and said I was bringing back gold and silver in the sack that Aeolus had given me. ‘Bless my heart,’ would one turn to his neighbour, saying, ‘how this man gets honoured and makes friends to whatever city or country he may go. See what fine prizes he is taking home from Troy, while we, who have travelled just as far as he has, come back with hands as empty as we set out with—and now Aeolus has given him ever so much more. Quick—let us see what it all is, and how much gold and silver there is in the sack he gave him.’

“Thus they talked and evil counsels prevailed. They loosed the sack, whereupon the wind flew howling forth and raised a storm that carried us weeping out to sea and away from our own country. Then I awoke, and knew not whether to throw myself into the sea or to live on and make the best of it; but I bore it, covered myself up, and lay down in the ship, while the men lamented bitterly as the fierce winds bore our fleet back to the Aeolian island.

“When we reached it we went ashore to take in water, and dined hard by the ships. Immediately after dinner I took a herald and one of my men and went straight to the house of Aeolus, where I found him feasting with his wife and family; so we sat down as suppliants on the threshold. They were astounded when they saw us and said, ‘Ulysses, what brings you here? What god has been ill-treating you? We took great pains to further you on your way home to Ithaca, or wherever it was that you wanted to go to.’

“Thus did they speak, but I answered sorrowfully, ‘My men have undone me; they, and cruel sleep, have ruined me. My friends, mend me this mischief, for you can if you will.’

“I spoke as movingly as I could, but they said nothing, till their father answered, ‘Vilest of mankind, get you gone at once out of the island; him whom heaven hates will I in no wise help. Be off, for you come here as one abhorred of heaven.’ And with these words he sent me sorrowing from his door.

“Thence we sailed sadly on till the men were worn out with long and fruitless rowing, for there was no longer any wind to help them. Six days, night and day did we toil, and on the seventh day we reached the rocky stronghold of Lamus—Telepylus, the city of the Laestrygonians, where the shepherd who is driving in his sheep and goats [to be milked] salutes him who is driving out his flock [to feed] and this last answers the salute. In that country a man who could do without sleep might earn double wages, one as a herdsman of cattle, and another as a shepherd, for they work much the same by night as they do by day.[84]

“When we reached the harbour we found it land-locked under steep cliffs, with a narrow entrance between two headlands. My captains took all their ships inside, and made them fast close to one another, for there was never so much as a breath of wind inside, but it was always dead calm. I kept my own ship outside, and moored it to a rock at the very end of the point; then I climbed a high rock to reconnoitre, but could see no sign neither of man nor cattle, only some smoke rising from the ground. So I sent two of my company with an attendant to find out what sort of people the inhabitants were.

“The men when they got on shore followed a level road by which the people draw their firewood from the mountains into the town, till presently they met a young woman who had come outside to fetch water, and who was daughter to a Laestrygonian named Antiphates. She was going to the fountain Artacia from which the people bring in their water, and when my men had come close up to her, they asked her who the king of that country might be, and over what kind of people he ruled; so she directed them to her father’s house, but when they got there they found his wife to be a giantess as huge as a mountain, and they were horrified at the sight of her.

“She at once called her husband Antiphates from the place of assembly, and forthwith he set about killing my men. He snatched up one of them, and began to make his dinner off him then and there, whereon the other two ran back to the ships as fast as ever they could. But Antiphates raised a hue-and-cry after them, and thousands of sturdy Laestrygonians sprang up from every quarter—ogres, not men. They threw vast rocks at us from the cliffs as though they had been mere stones, and I heard the horrid sound of the ships crunching up against one another, and the death cries of my men, as the Laestrygonians speared them like fishes and took them home to eat them. While they were thus killing my men within the harbour I drew my sword, cut the cable of my own ship, and told my men to row with all their might if they too would not fare like the rest; so they laid out for their lives, and we were thankful enough when we got into open water out of reach of the rocks they hurled at us. As for the others there was not one of them left.

“Thence we sailed sadly on, glad to have escaped death, though we had lost our comrades, and came to the Aeaean island, where Circe lives—a great and cunning goddess who is own sister to the magician Aeetes—for they are both children of the sun by Perse, who is daughter to Oceanus. We brought our ship into a safe harbour without a word, for some god guided us thither, and having landed we lay there for two days and two nights, worn out in body and mind. When the morning of the third day came I took my spear and my sword, and went away from the ship to reconnoitre, and see if I could discover signs of human handiwork, or hear the sound of voices. Climbing to the top of a high look-out I espied the smoke of Circe’s house rising upwards amid a dense forest of trees, and when I saw this I doubted whether, having seen the smoke, I would not go on at once and find out more, but in the end I deemed it best to go back to the ship, give the men their dinners, and send some of them instead of going myself.

“When I had nearly got back to the ship some god took pity upon my solitude, and sent a fine antlered stag right into the middle of my path. He was coming down his pasture in the forest to drink of the river, for the heat of the sun drove him, and as he passed I struck him in the middle of the back; the bronze point of the spear went clean through him, and he lay groaning in the dust until the life went out of him. Then I set my foot upon him, drew my spear from the wound, and laid it down; I also gathered rough grass and rushes and twisted them into a fathom or so of good stout rope, with which I bound the four feet of the noble creature together; having so done I hung him round my neck and walked back to the ship leaning upon my spear, for the stag was much too big for me to be able to carry him on my shoulder, steadying him with one hand. As I threw him down in front of the ship, I called the men and spoke cheeringly man by man to each of them. ‘Look here my friends,’ said I, ‘we are not going to die so much before our time after all, and at any rate we will not starve so long as we have got something to eat and drink on board.’ On this they uncovered their heads upon the sea shore and admired the stag, for he was indeed a splendid fellow. Then, when they had feasted their eyes upon him sufficiently, they washed their hands and began to cook him for dinner.

“Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we stayed there eating and drinking our fill, but when the sun went down and it came on dark, we camped upon the sea shore. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, I called a council and said, ‘My friends, we are in very great difficulties; listen therefore to me. We have no idea where the sun either sets or rises,[85] so that we do not even know East from West. I see no way out of it; nevertheless, we must try and find one. We are certainly on an island, for I went as high as I could this morning, and saw the sea reaching all round it to the horizon; it lies low, but towards the middle I saw smoke rising from out of a thick forest of trees.’

“Their hearts sank as they heard me, for they remembered how they had been treated by the Laestrygonian Antiphates, and by the savage ogre Polyphemus. They wept bitterly in their dismay, but there was nothing to be got by crying, so I divided them into two companies and set a captain over each; I gave one company to Eurylochus, while I took command of the other myself. Then we cast lots in a helmet, and the lot fell upon Eurylochus; so he set out with his twenty-two men, and they wept, as also did we who were left behind.

“When they reached Circe’s house they found it built of cut stones, on a site that could be seen from far, in the middle of the forest. There were wild mountain wolves and lions prowling all round it—poor bewitched creatures whom she had tamed by her enchantments and drugged into subjection. They did not attack my men, but wagged their great tails, fawned upon them, and

rubbed their noses lovingly against them.[86] As hounds crowd round their master when they see him coming from dinner—for they know he will bring them something—even so did these wolves and lions with their great claws fawn upon my men, but the men were terribly frightened at seeing such strange creatures. Presently they reached the gates of the goddess's house, and as they stood there they could hear Circe within, singing most beautifully as she worked at her loom, making a web so fine, so soft, and of such dazzling colours as no one but a goddess could weave. On this Polites, whom I valued and trusted more than any other of my men, said, 'There is some one inside working at a loom and singing most beautifully; the whole place resounds with it, let us call her and see whether she is woman or goddess.'

"They called her and she came down, unfastened the door, and bade them enter. They, thinking no evil, followed her, all except Eurylochus, who suspected mischief and staid outside. When she had got them into her house, she set them upon benches and seats and mixed them a mess with cheese, honey, meal, and Pramnian wine, but she drugged it with wicked poisons to make them forget their homes, and when they had drunk she turned them into pigs by a stroke of her wand, and shut them up in her pig-styes. They were like pigs—head, hair, and all, and they grunted just as pigs do; but their senses were the same as before, and they remembered everything.

"Thus then were they shut up squealing, and Circe threw them some acorns and beech masts such as pigs eat, but Eurylochus hurried back to tell me about the sad fate of our comrades. He was so overcome with dismay that though he tried to speak he could find no words to do so; his eyes filled with tears and he could only sob and sigh, till at last we forced his story out of him, and he told us what had happened to the others.

"'We went,' said he, 'as you told us, through the forest, and in the middle of it there was a fine house built with cut stones in a place that could be seen from far. There we found a woman, or else she was a goddess, working at her loom and singing sweetly; so the men shouted to her and called her, whereon she at once came down, opened the door, and invited us in. The others did not suspect any mischief so they followed her into the house, but I staid where I was, for I thought there might be some treachery. From that moment I saw them no more, for not one of them ever came out, though I sat a long time watching for them.'

"Then I took my sword of bronze and slung it over my shoulders; I also took my bow, and told Eurylochus to come back with me and shew me the way. But he laid hold of me with both his hands and spoke piteously, saying, 'Sir, do not force me to go with you, but let me stay here, for I know you will not bring one of them back with you, nor even return alive yourself; let us rather see if we cannot escape at any rate with the few that are left us, for we may still save our lives.'

"'Stay where you are, then,' answered I, 'eating and drinking at the ship, but I must go, for I am most urgently bound to do so.'

"With this I left the ship and went up inland. When I got through the charmed grove, and was near the great house of the enchantress Circe, I met Mercury with his golden wand, disguised as a young man in the hey-day of his youth and beauty with the down just coming upon his face. He came up to me and took my hand within his own, saying, 'My poor unhappy man, whither are you going over this mountain top, alone and without knowing the way? Your men are shut up in Circe's pigstyes, like so many wild boars in their lairs. You surely do not fancy that you can set them free? I can tell you that you will never get back and will have to stay there with the rest of them. But never mind, I will protect you and get you out of your difficulty. Take this herb, which is one of great virtue, and keep it about you when you go to Circe's house, it will be a talisman to you against every kind of mischief.

"'And I will tell you of all the wicked witchcraft that Circe will try to practice upon you. She will mix a mess for you to drink, and she will drug the meal with which she makes it, but she will not be able to charm you, for the virtue of the herb that I shall give you will prevent her spells from working. I will tell you all about it. When Circe strikes you with her wand, draw your sword and spring upon her as though you were going to kill her. She will then be frightened, and will desire you to go to bed with her; on this you must not point blank refuse her, for you want her to set your companions free, and to take good care also of yourself, but you must make her swear solemnly by all the blessed gods that she will plot no further mischief against you, or else when she has got you naked she will unman you and make you fit for nothing.'

"As he spoke he pulled the herb out of the ground and shewed me what it was like. The root was black, while the flower was as white as milk; the gods call it Moly, and mortal men cannot uproot it, but the gods can do whatever they like.

"Then Mercury went back to high Olympus passing over the wooded island; but I fared onward to the house of Circe, and my heart was clouded with care as I walked along. When I got to the gates I stood there and called the goddess, and as soon as she heard me she came down, opened the door, and asked me to come in; so I followed her—much troubled in my mind. She set me on a richly

decorated seat inlaid with silver, there was a footstool also under my feet, and she mixed a mess in a golden goblet for me to drink; but she drugged it, for she meant me mischief. When she had given it me, and I had drunk it without its charming me, she struck me with her wand. ‘There now,’ she cried, ‘be off to the pigstye, and make your lair with the rest of them.’

“But I rushed at her with my sword drawn as though I would kill her, whereon she fell with a loud scream, clasped my knees, and spoke piteously, saying, ‘Who and whence are you? from what place and people have you come? How can it be that my drugs have no power to charm you? Never yet was any man able to stand so much as a taste of the herb I gave you; you must be spell-proof; surely you can be none other than the bold hero Ulysses, who Mercury always said would come here some day with his ship while on his way home from Troy; so be it then; sheathe your sword and let us go to bed, that we may make friends and learn to trust each other.’

“And I answered, ‘Circe, how can you expect me to be friendly with you when you have just been turning all my men into pigs? And now that you have got me here myself, you mean me mischief when you ask me to go to bed with you, and will unman me and make me fit for nothing. I shall certainly not consent to go to bed with you unless you will first take your solemn oath to plot no further harm against me.’

“So she swore at once as I had told her, and when she had completed her oath then I went to bed with her.

“Meanwhile her four servants, who are her housemaids, set about their work. They are the children of the groves and fountains, and of the holy waters that run down into the sea. One of them spread a fair purple cloth over a seat, and laid a carpet underneath it. Another brought tables of silver up to the seats, and set them with baskets of gold. A third mixed some sweet wine with water in a silver bowl and put golden cups upon the tables, while the fourth brought in water and set it to boil in a large cauldron over a good fire which she had lighted. When the water in the cauldron was boiling,[87] she poured cold into it till it was just as I liked it, and then she set me in a bath and began washing me from the cauldron about the head and shoulders, to take the tire and stiffness out of my limbs. As soon as she had done washing me and anointing me with oil, she arrayed me in a good cloak and shirt and led me to a richly decorated seat inlaid with silver; there was a footstool also under my feet. A maid servant then brought me water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for me to wash my hands, and she drew a clean table beside me; an upper servant brought me bread and offered me many things of what there was in the house, and then Circe bade me eat, but I would not, and sat without heeding what was before me, still moody and suspicious.

“When Circe saw me sitting there without eating, and in great grief, she came to me and said, ‘Ulysses, why do you sit like that as though you were dumb, gnawing at your own heart, and refusing both meat and drink? Is it that you are still suspicious? You ought not to be, for I have already sworn solemnly that I will not hurt you.’

“And I said, ‘Circe, no man with any sense of what is right can think of either eating or drinking in your house until you have set his friends free and let him see them. If you want me to eat and drink, you must free my men and bring them to me that I may see them with my own eyes.’

“When I had said this she went straight through the court with her wand in her hand and opened the pigstye doors. My men came out like so many prime hogs and stood looking at her, but she went about among them and anointed each with a second drug, whereon the bristles that the bad drug had given them fell off, and they became men again, younger than they were before, and much taller and better looking. They knew me at once, seized me each of them by the hand, and wept for joy till the whole house was filled with the sound of their halloa-ballooing, and Circe herself was so sorry for them that she came up to me and said, ‘Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, go back at once to the sea where you have left your ship, and first draw it on to the land. Then, hide all your ship’s gear and property in some cave, and come back here with your men.’

“I agreed to this, so I went back to the sea shore, and found the men at the ship weeping and wailing most piteously. When they saw me the silly blubbering fellows began frisking round me as calves break out and gambol round their mothers, when they see them coming home to be milked after they have been feeding all day, and the homestead resounds with their lowing. They seemed as glad to see me as though they had got back to their own rugged Ithaca, where they had been born and bred. ‘Sir,’ said the affectionate creatures, ‘we are as glad to see you back as though we had got safe home to Ithaca; but tell us all about the fate of our comrades.’

“I spoke comfortingly to them and said, ‘We must draw our ship on to the land, and hide the ship’s gear with all our property in some cave; then come with me all of you as fast as you can to Circe’s house, where you will find your comrades eating and

drinking in the midst of great abundance.'

"On this the men would have come with me at once, but Eurylochus tried to hold them back and said, 'Alas, poor wretches that we are, what will become of us? Rush not on your ruin by going to the house of Circe, who will turn us all into pigs or wolves or lions, and we shall have to keep guard over her house. Remember how the Cyclops treated us when our comrades went inside his cave, and Ulysses with them. It was all through his sheer folly that those men lost their lives.'

"When I heard him I was in two minds whether or no to draw the keen blade that hung by my sturdy thigh and cut his head off in spite of his being a near relation of my own; but the men interceded for him and said, 'Sir, if it may so be, let this fellow stay here and mind the ship, but take the rest of us with you to Circe's house.'

"On this we all went inland, and Eurylochus was not left behind after all, but came on too, for he was frightened by the severe reprimand that I had given him.

"Meanwhile Circe had been seeing that the men who had been left behind were washed and anointed with olive oil; she had also given them woollen cloaks and shirts, and when we came we found them all comfortably at dinner in her house. As soon as the men saw each other face to face and knew one another, they wept for joy and cried aloud till the whole palace rang again. Thereon Circe came up to me and said, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, tell your men to leave off crying; I know how much you have all of you suffered at sea, and how ill you have fared among cruel savages on the mainland, but that is over now, so stay here, and eat and drink till you are once more as strong and hearty as you were when you left Ithaca; for at present you are weakened both in body and mind; you keep all the time thinking of the hardships you have suffered during your travels, so that you have no more cheerfulness left in you.'

"Thus did she speak and we assented. We stayed with Circe for a whole twelvemonth feasting upon an untold quantity both of meat and wine. But when the year had passed in the waning of moons and the long days had come round, my men called me apart and said, 'Sir, it is time you began to think about going home, if so be you are to be spared to see your house and native country at all.'

"Thus did they speak and I assented. Thereon through the livelong day to the going down of the sun we feasted our fill on meat and wine, but when the sun went down and it came on dark the men laid themselves down to sleep in the covered cloisters. I, however, after I had got into bed with Circe, besought her by her knees, and the goddess listened to what I had got to say. 'Circe,' said I, 'please to keep the promise you made me about furthering me on my homeward voyage. I want to get back and so do my men, they are always pestering me with their complaints as soon as ever your back is turned.'

"And the goddess answered, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, you shall none of you stay here any longer if you do not want to, but there is another journey which you have got to take before you can sail homewards. You must go to the house of Hades and of dread Proserpine to consult the ghost of the blind Theban prophet Teiresias, whose reason is still unshaken. To him alone has Proserpine left his understanding even in death, but the other ghosts flit about aimlessly.'

"I was dismayed when I heard this. I sat up in bed and wept, and would gladly have lived no longer to see the light of the sun, but presently when I was tired of weeping and tossing myself about, I said, 'And who shall guide me upon this voyage—for the house of Hades is a port that no ship can reach.'

"'You will want no guide,' she answered; 'raise your mast, set your white sails, sit quite still, and the North Wind will blow you there of itself. When your ship has traversed the waters of Oceanus, you will reach the fertile shore of Proserpine's country with its groves of tall poplars and willows that shed their fruit untimely; here beach your ship upon the shore of Oceanus, and go straight on to the dark abode of Hades. You will find it near the place where the rivers Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus (which is a branch of the river Styx) flow into Acheron, and you will see a rock near it, just where the two roaring rivers run into one another.

"'When you have reached this spot, as I now tell you, dig a trench a cubit or so in length, breadth, and depth, and pour into it as a drink-offering to all the dead, first, honey mixed with milk, then wine, and in the third place water—sprinkling white barley meal over the whole. Moreover you must offer many prayers to the poor feeble ghosts, and promise them that when you get back to Ithaca you will sacrifice a barren heifer to them, the best you have, and will load the pyre with good things. More particularly you must promise that Teiresias shall have a black sheep all to himself, the finest in all your flocks.

"'When you shall have thus besought the ghosts with your prayers, offer them a ram and a black ewe, bending their heads towards Erebus; but yourself turn away from them as though you would make towards the river. On this, many dead men's ghosts will come to you, and you must tell your men to skin the two sheep that you have just killed, and offer them as a burnt sacrifice with prayers

to Hades and to Proserpine. Then draw your sword and sit there, so as to prevent any other poor ghost from coming near the spilt blood before Teiresias shall have answered your questions. The seer will presently come to you, and will tell you about your voyage—what stages you are to make, and how you are to sail the sea so as to reach your home.'

"It was day-break by the time she had done speaking, so she dressed me in my shirt and cloak. As for herself she threw a beautiful light gossamer fabric over her shoulders, fastening it with a golden girdle round her waist, and she covered her head with a mantle. Then I went about among the men everywhere all over the house, and spoke kindly to each of them man by man: 'You must not lie sleeping here any longer,' said I to them, 'we must be going, for Circe has told me all about it.' And on this they did as I bade them.

"Even so, however, I did not get them away without misadventure. We had with us a certain youth named Elpenor, not very remarkable for sense or courage, who had got drunk and was lying on the house-top away from the rest of the men, to sleep off his liquor in the cool. When he heard the noise of the men bustling about, he jumped up on a sudden and forgot all about coming down by the main staircase, so he tumbled right off the roof and broke his neck, and his soul went down to the house of Hades.

"When I had got the men together I said to them, 'You think you are about to start home again, but Circe has explained to me that instead of this, we have got to go to the house of Hades and Proserpine to consult the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias.'

"The men were broken-hearted as they heard me, and threw themselves on the ground groaning and tearing their hair, but they did not mend matters by crying. When we reached the sea shore, weeping and lamenting our fate, Circe brought the ram and the ewe, and we made them fast hard by the ship. She passed through the midst of us without our knowing it, for who can see the comings and goings of a god, if the god does not wish to be seen?

This page titled 3.14.1.10: Book X is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.11: Book XI

THE VISIT TO THE DEAD.[88]

“Then, when we had got down to the sea shore we drew our ship into the water and got her mast and sails into her; we also put the sheep on board and took our places, weeping and in great distress of mind. Circe, that great and cunning goddess, sent us a fair wind that blew dead aft and staid steadily with us keeping our sails all the time well filled; so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship’s gear and let her go as the wind and helmsman headed her. All day long her sails were full as she held her course over the sea, but when the sun went down and darkness was over all the earth, we got into the deep waters of the river Oceanus, where lie the land and city of the Cimmerians who live enshrouded in mist and darkness which the rays of the sun never pierce neither at his rising nor as he goes down again out of the heavens, but the poor wretches live in one long melancholy night. When we got there we beached the ship, took the sheep out of her, and went along by the waters of Oceanus till we came to the place of which Circe had told us.

“Here Perimedes and Eurylochus held the victims, while I drew my sword and dug the trench a cubit each way. I made a drink-offering to all the dead, first with honey and milk, then with wine, and thirdly with water, and I sprinkled white barley meal over the whole, praying earnestly to the poor feckless ghosts, and promising them that when I got back to Ithaca I would sacrifice a barren heifer for them, the best I had, and would load the pyre with good things. I also particularly promised that Teiresias should have a black sheep to himself, the best in all my flocks. When I had prayed sufficiently to the dead, I cut the throats of the two sheep and let the blood run into the trench, whereon the ghosts came trooping up from Erebus—brides,[89] young bachelors, old men worn out with toil, maids who had been crossed in love, and brave men who had been killed in battle, with their armour still smirched with blood; they came from every quarter and flitted round the trench with a strange kind of screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear. When I saw them coming I told the men to be quick and flay the carcasses of the two dead sheep and make burnt offerings of them, and at the same time to repeat prayers to Hades and to Proserpine; but I sat where I was with my sword drawn and would not let the poor feckless ghosts come near the blood till Teiresias should have answered my questions.

“The first ghost that came was that of my comrade Elpenor, for he had not yet been laid beneath the earth. We had left his body unwaked and unburied in Circe’s house, for we had had too much else to do. I was very sorry for him, and cried when I saw him: ‘Elpenor,’ said I, ‘how did you come down here into this gloom and darkness? You have got here on foot quicker than I have with my ship.’

“‘Sir,’ he answered with a groan, ‘it was all bad luck, and my own unspeakable drunkenness. I was lying asleep on the top of Circe’s house, and never thought of coming down again by the great staircase but fell right off the roof and broke my neck, so my soul came down to the house of Hades. And now I beseech you by all those whom you have left behind you, though they are not here, by your wife, by the father who brought you up when you were a child, and by Telemachus who is the one hope of your house, do what I shall now ask you. I know that when you leave this limbo you will again hold your ship for the Aeaean island. Do not go thence leaving me unwaked and unburied behind you, or I may bring heaven’s anger upon you; but burn me with whatever armour I have, build a barrow for me on the sea shore, that may tell people in days to come what a poor unlucky fellow I was, and plant over my grave the oar I used to row with when I was yet alive and with my messmates.’ And I said, ‘My poor fellow, I will do all that you have asked of me.’

“Thus, then, did we sit and hold sad talk with one another, I on the one side of the trench with my sword held over the blood, and the ghost of my comrade saying all this to me from the other side. Then came the ghost of my dead mother Anticlea, daughter to Autolycus. I had left her alive when I set out for Troy and was moved to tears when I saw her, but even so, for all my sorrow I would not let her come near the blood till I had asked my questions of Teiresias.

“Then came also the ghost of Theban Teiresias, with his golden sceptre in his hand. He knew me and said, ‘Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, why, poor man, have you left the light of day and come down to visit the dead in this sad place? Stand back from the trench and withdraw your sword that I may drink of the blood and answer your questions truly.’

“So I drew back, and sheathed my sword, whereon when he had drank of the blood he began with his prophecy.

“‘You want to know,’ said he, ‘about your return home, but heaven will make this hard for you. I do not think that you will escape the eye of Neptune, who still nurses his bitter grudge against you for having blinded his son. Still, after much suffering you may get home if you can restrain yourself and your companions when your ship reaches the Thrinacian island, where you will find the

sheep and cattle belonging to the sun, who sees and gives ear to everything. If you leave these flocks unharmed and think of nothing but of getting home, you may yet after much hardship reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, then I forewarn you of the destruction both of your ship and of your men. Even though you may yourself escape, you will return in bad plight after losing all your men, [in another man's ship, and you will find trouble in your house, which will be overrun by high-handed people, who are devouring your substance under the pretext of paying court and making presents to your wife.

"'When you get home you will take your revenge on these suitors; and after you have killed them by force or fraud in your own house, you must take a well made oar and carry it on and on, till you come to a country where the people have never heard of the sea and do not even mix salt with their food, nor do they know anything about ships, and oars that are as the wings of a ship. I will give you this certain token which cannot escape your notice. A wayfarer will meet you and will say it must be a winnowing shovel that you have got upon your shoulder; on this you must fix the oar in the ground and sacrifice a ram, a bull, and a boar to Neptune.[90] Then go home and offer hecatombs to all the gods in heaven one after the other. As for yourself, death shall come to you from the sea, and your life shall ebb away very gently when you are full of years and peace of mind, and your people shall bless you. All that I have said will come true].'[91]

"'This,' I answered, 'must be as it may please heaven, but tell me and tell me and tell me true, I see my poor mother's ghost close by us; she is sitting by the blood without saying a word, and though I am her own son she does not remember me and speak to me; tell me, Sir, how I can make her know me.'

"'That,' said he, 'I can soon do. Any ghost that you let taste of the blood will talk with you like a reasonable being, but if you do not let them have any blood they will go away again.'

"On this the ghost of Teiresias went back to the house of Hades, for his prophecyings had now been spoken, but I sat still where I was until my mother came up and tasted the blood. Then she knew me at once and spoke fondly to me, saying, 'My son, how did you come down to this abode of darkness while you are still alive? It is a hard thing for the living to see these places, for between us and them there are great and terrible waters, and there is Oceanus, which no man can cross on foot, but he must have a good ship to take him. Are you all this time trying to find your way home from Troy, and have you never yet got back to Ithaca nor seen your wife in your own house?'

"'Mother,' said I, 'I was forced to come here to consult the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias. I have never yet been near the Achaean land nor set foot on my native country, and I have had nothing but one long series of misfortunes from the very first day that I set out with Agamemnon for Ilius, the land of noble steeds, to fight the Trojans. But tell me, and tell me true, in what way did you die? Did you have a long illness, or did heaven vouchsafe you a gentle easy passage to eternity? Tell me also about my father, and the son whom I left behind me, is my property still in their hands, or has some one else got hold of it, who thinks that I shall not return to claim it? Tell me again what my wife intends doing, and in what mind she is; does she live with my son and guard my estate securely, or has she made the best match she could and married again?'

"My mother answered, 'Your wife still remains in your house, but she is in great distress of mind and spends her whole time in tears both night and day. No one as yet has got possession of your fine property, and Telemachus still holds your lands undisturbed. He has to entertain largely, as of course he must, considering his position as a magistrate,[92] and how every one invites him; your father remains at his old place in the country and never goes near the town. He has no comfortable bed nor bedding; in the winter he sleeps on the floor in front of the fire with the men and goes about all in rags, but in summer, when the warm weather comes on again, he lies out in the vineyard on a bed of vine leaves thrown any how upon the ground. He grieves continually about your never having come home, and suffers more and more as he grows older. As for my own end it was in this wise: heaven did not take me swiftly and painlessly in my own house, nor was I attacked by any illness such as those that generally wear people out and kill them, but my longing to know what you were doing and the force of my affection for you—this it was that was the death of me.'[93]

"Then I tried to find some way of embracing my poor mother's ghost. Thrice I sprang towards her and tried to clasp her in my arms, but each time she flitted from my embrace as it were a dream or phantom, and being touched to the quick I said to her, 'Mother, why do you not stay still when I would embrace you? If we could throw our arms around one another we might find sad comfort in the sharing of our sorrows even in the house of Hades; does Proserpine want to lay a still further load of grief upon me by mocking me with a phantom only?'

"'My son,' she answered, 'most ill-fated of all mankind, it is not Proserpine that is beguiling you, but all people are like this when they are dead. The sinews no longer hold the flesh and bones together; these perish in the fierceness of consuming fire as soon as

life has left the body, and the soul flits away as though it were a dream. Now, however, go back to the light of day as soon as you can, and note all these things that you may tell them to your wife hereafter.'

"Thus did we converse, and anon Proserpine sent up the ghosts of the wives and daughters of all the most famous men. They gathered in crowds about the blood, and I considered how I might question them severally. In the end I deemed that it would be best to draw the keen blade that hung by my sturdy thigh, and keep them from all drinking the blood at once. So they came up one after the other, and each one as I questioned her told me her race and lineage.

"The first I saw was Tyro. She was daughter of Salmoneus and wife of Cretheus the son of Aeolus.[94] She fell in love with the river Enipeus who is much the most beautiful river in the whole world. Once when she was taking a walk by his side as usual, Neptune, disguised as her lover, lay with her at the mouth of the river, and a huge blue wave arched itself like a mountain over them to hide both woman and god, whereon he loosed her virgin girdle and laid her in a deep slumber. When the god had accomplished the deed of love, he took her hand in his own and said, 'Tyro, rejoice in all good will; the embraces of the gods are not fruitless, and you will have fine twins about this time twelve months. Take great care of them. I am Neptune, so now go home, but hold your tongue and do not tell any one.'

"Then he dived under the sea, and she in due course bore Pelias and Neleus, who both of them served Jove with all their might. Pelias was a great breeder of sheep and lived in Iolcus, but the other lived in Pylos. The rest of her children were by Cretheus, namely, Aeson, Pheres, and Amythaon, who was a mighty warrior and charioteer.

"Next to her I saw Antiope, daughter to Asopus, who could boast of having slept in the arms of even Jove himself, and who bore him two sons Amphion and Zethus. These founded Thebes with its seven gates, and built a wall all round it; for strong though they were they could not hold Thebes till they had walled it.

"Then I saw Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon, who also bore to Jove indomitable Hercules; and Megara who was daughter to great King Creon, and married the redoubtable son of Amphitryon.

"I also saw fair Epicaste mother of king Oedipodes whose awful lot it was to marry her own son without suspecting it. He married her after having killed his father, but the gods proclaimed the whole story to the world; whereon he remained king of Thebes, in great grief for the spite the gods had borne him; but Epicaste went to the house of the mighty jailor Hades, having hanged herself for grief, and the avenging spirits haunted him as for an outraged mother—to his ruing bitterly thereafter.

"Then I saw Chloris, whom Neleus married for her beauty, having given priceless presents for her. She was youngest daughter to Amphion son of Iasus and king of Minyan Orchomenus, and was Queen in Pylos. She bore Nestor, Chromius, and Periclymenus, and she also bore that marvellously lovely woman Pero, who was wooed by all the country round; but Neleus would only give her to him who should raid the cattle of Iphicles from the grazing grounds of Phylace, and this was a hard task. The only man who would undertake to raid them was a certain excellent seer,[95] but the will of heaven was against him, for the rangers of the cattle caught him and put him in prison; nevertheless when a full year had passed and the same season came round again, Iphicles set him at liberty, after he had expounded all the oracles of heaven. Thus, then, was the will of Jove accomplished.

"And I saw Leda the wife of Tyndarus, who bore him two famous sons, Castor breaker of horses, and Pollux the mighty boxer. Both these heroes are lying under the earth, though they are still alive, for by a special dispensation of Jove, they die and come to life again, each one of them every other day throughout all time, and they have the rank of gods.

"After her I saw Iphimedeia wife of Aloeus who boasted the embrace of Neptune. She bore two sons Otus and Ephialtes, but both were short lived. They were the finest children that were ever born in this world, and the best looking, Orion only excepted; for at nine years old they were nine fathoms high, and measured nine cubits round the chest. They threatened to make war with the gods in Olympus, and tried to set Mount Ossa on the top of Mount Olympus, and Mount Pelion on the top of Ossa, that they might scale heaven itself, and they would have done it too if they had been grown up, but Apollo, son of Leto, killed both of them, before they had got so much as a sign of hair upon their cheeks or chin.

"Then I saw Phaedra, and Procris, and fair Ariadne daughter of the magician Minos, whom Theseus was carrying off from Crete to Athens, but he did not enjoy her, for before he could do so Diana killed her in the island of Dia on account of what Bacchus had said against her.

"I also saw Maera and Clymene and hateful Eriphyle, who sold her own husband for gold. But it would take me all night if I were to name every single one of the wives and daughters of heroes whom I saw, and it is time for me to go to bed, either on board ship

with my crew, or here. As for my escort, heaven and yourselves will see to it."

Here he ended, and the guests sat all of them enthralled and speechless throughout the covered cloister. Then Arete said to them:—

"What do you think of this man, O Phaeacians? Is he not tall and good looking, and is he not clever? True, he is my own guest, but all of you share in the distinction. Do not be in a hurry to send him away, nor niggardly in the presents you make to one who is in such great need, for heaven has blessed all of you with great abundance."

Then spoke the aged hero Echeneus who was one of the oldest men among them, "My friends," said he, "what our august queen has just said to us is both reasonable and to the purpose, therefore be persuaded by it; but the decision whether in word or deed rests ultimately with King Alcinous."

"The thing shall be done," exclaimed Alcinous, "as surely as I still live and reign over the Phaeacians. Our guest is indeed very anxious to get home, still we must persuade him to remain with us until to-morrow, by which time I shall be able to get together the whole sum that I mean to give him. As regards his escort it will be a matter for you all, and mine above all others as the chief person among you."

And Ulysses answered, "King Alcinous, if you were to bid me to stay here for a whole twelve months, and then speed me on my way, loaded with your noble gifts, I should obey you gladly and it would redound greatly to my advantage, for I should return fuller-handed to my own people, and should thus be more respected and beloved by all who see me when I get back to Ithaca."

"Ulysses," replied Alcinous, "not one of us who sees you has any idea that you are a charlatan or a swindler. I know there are many people going about who tell such plausible stories that it is very hard to see through them, but there is a style about your language which assures me of your good disposition. Moreover you have told the story of your own misfortunes, and those of the Argives, as though you were a practiced bard; but tell me, and tell me true, whether you saw any of the mighty heroes who went to Troy at the same time with yourself, and perished there. The evenings are still at their longest, and it is not yet bed time—go on, therefore, with your divine story, for I could stay here listening till tomorrow morning, so long as you will continue to tell us of your adventures."

"Alcinous," answered Ulysses, "there is a time for making speeches, and a time for going to bed; nevertheless, since you so desire, I will not refrain from telling you the still sadder tale of those of my comrades who did not fall fighting with the Trojans, but perished on their return, through the treachery of a wicked woman.

"When Proserpine had dismissed the female ghosts in all directions, the ghost of Agamemnon son of Atreus came sadly up to me, surrounded by those who had perished with him in the house of Aegisthus. As soon as he had tasted the blood, he knew me, and weeping bitterly stretched out his arms towards me to embrace me; but he had no strength nor substance any more, and I too wept and pitied him as I beheld him. 'How did you come by your death,' said I, 'King Agamemnon? Did Neptune raise his winds and waves against you when you were at sea, or did your enemies make an end of you on the main land when you were cattle-lifting or sheep-stealing, or while they were fighting in defence of their wives and city?'

"'Ulysses,' he answered, 'noble son of Laertes, I was not lost at sea in any storm of Neptune's raising, nor did my foes despatch me upon the mainland, but Aegisthus and my wicked wife were the death of me between them. He asked me to his house, feasted me, and then butchered me most miserably as though I were a fat beast in a slaughter house, while all around me my comrades were slain like sheep or pigs for the wedding breakfast, or picnic, or gorgeous banquet of some great nobleman. You must have seen numbers of men killed either in a general engagement, or in single combat, but you never saw anything so truly pitiable as the way in which we fell in that cloister, with the mixing bowl and the loaded tables lying all about, and the ground reeking with our blood. I heard Priam's daughter Cassandra scream as Clytemnestra killed her close beside me. I lay dying upon the earth with the sword in my body, and raised my hands to kill the slut of a murderess, but she slipped away from me; she would not even close my lips nor my eyes when I was dying, for there is nothing in this world so cruel and so shameless as a woman when she has fallen into such guilt as hers was. Fancy murdering her own husband! I thought I was going to be welcomed home by my children and my servants, but her abominable crime has brought disgrace on herself and all women who shall come after—even on the good ones.'

"And I said, 'In truth Jove has hated the house of Atreus from first to last in the matter of their women's counsels. See how many of us fell for Helen's sake, and now it seems that Clytemnestra hatched mischief against you too during your absence.'

"'Be sure, therefore,' continued Agamemnon, 'and not be too friendly even with your own wife. Do not tell her all that you know perfectly well yourself. Tell her a part only, and keep your own counsel about the rest. Not that your wife, Ulysses, is likely to murder you, for Penelope is a very admirable woman, and has an excellent nature. We left her a young bride with an infant at her

breast when we set out for Troy. This child no doubt is now grown up happily to man's estate,[96] and he and his father will have a joyful meeting and embrace one another as it is right they should do, whereas my wicked wife did not even allow me the happiness of looking upon my son, but killed me ere I could do so. Furthermore I say—and lay my saying to your heart—do not tell people when you are bringing your ship to Ithaca, but steal a march upon them, for after all this there is no trusting women. But now tell me, and tell me true, can you give me any news of my son Orestes? Is he in Orchomenus, or at Pylos, or is he at Sparta with Menelaus—for I presume that he is still living.'

"And I said, 'Agamemnon, why do you ask me? I do not know whether your son is alive or dead, and it is not right to talk when one does not know.'

"As we two sat weeping and talking thus sadly with one another the ghost of Achilles came up to us with Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax who was the finest and goodliest man of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus. The fleet descendant of Aeacus knew me and spoke piteously, saying, 'Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, what deed of daring will you undertake next, that you venture down to the house of Hades among us silly dead, who are but the ghosts of them that can labour no more?'

"And I said, 'Achilles, son of Peleus, foremost champion of the Achaeans, I came to consult Teiresias, and see if he could advise me about my return home to Ithaca, for I have never yet been able to get near the Achaean land, nor to set foot in my own country, but have been in trouble all the time. As for you, Achilles, no one was ever yet so fortunate as you have been, nor ever will be, for you were adored by all us Argives as long as you were alive, and now that you are here you are a great prince among the dead. Do not, therefore, take it so much to heart even if you are dead.'

"'Say not a word,' he answered, 'in death's favour; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead. But give me news about my son; is he gone to the wars and will he be a great soldier, or is this not so? Tell me also if you have heard anything about my father Peleus—does he still rule among the Myrmidons, or do they show him no respect throughout Hellas and Phthia now that he is old and his limbs fail him? Could I but stand by his side, in the light of day, with the same strength that I had when I killed the bravest of our foes upon the plain of Troy—could I but be as I then was and go even for a short time to my father's house, any one who tried to do him violence or supersede him would soon rue it.'

"'I have heard nothing,' I answered, 'of Peleus, but I can tell you all about your son Neoptolemus, for I took him in my own ship from Scyros with the Achaeans. In our councils of war before Troy he was always first to speak, and his judgement was unerring. Nestor and I were the only two who could surpass him; and when it came to fighting on the plain of Troy, he would never remain with the body of his men, but would dash on far in front, foremost of them all in valour. Many a man did he kill in battle—I cannot name every single one of those whom he slew while fighting on the side of the Argives, but will only say how he killed that valiant hero Eurypylus son of Telephus, who was the handsomest man I ever saw except Memnon; many others also of the Ceteians fell around him by reason of a woman's bribes. Moreover, when all the bravest of the Argives went inside the horse that Epeus had made, and it was left to me to settle when we should either open the door of our ambuscade, or close it, though all the other leaders and chief men among the Danaans were drying their eyes and quaking in every limb, I never once saw him turn pale nor wipe a tear from his cheek; he was all the time urging me to break out from the horse—grasping the handle of his sword and his bronze-shod spear, and breathing fury against the foe. Yet when we had sacked the city of Priam he got his handsome share of the prize money and went on board (such is the fortune of war) without a wound upon him, neither from a thrown spear nor in close combat, for the rage of Mars is a matter of great chance.'

"When I had told him this, the ghost of Achilles strode off across a meadow full of asphodel, exulting over what I had said concerning the prowess of his son.

"The ghosts of other dead men stood near me and told me each his own melancholy tale; but that of Ajax son of Telamon alone held aloof—still angry with me for having won the cause in our dispute about the armour of Achilles. Thetis had offered it as a prize, but the Trojan prisoners and Minerva were the judges. Would that I had never gained the day in such a contest, for it cost the life of Ajax, who was foremost of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus, alike in stature and prowess.

"When I saw him I tried to pacify him and said, 'Ajax, will you not forget and forgive even in death, but must the judgement about that hateful armour still rankle with you? It cost us Argives dear enough to lose such a tower of strength as you were to us. We mourned you as much as we mourned Achilles son of Peleus himself, nor can the blame be laid on anything but on the spite which Jove bore against the Danaans, for it was this that made him counsel your destruction—come hither, therefore, bring your proud spirit into subjection, and hear what I can tell you.'

“He would not answer, but turned away to Erebus and to the other ghosts; nevertheless, I should have made him talk to me in spite of his being so angry, or I should have gone on talking to him,[97] only that there were still others among the dead whom I desired to see.

“Then I saw Minos son of Jove with his golden sceptre in his hand sitting in judgement on the dead, and the ghosts were gathered sitting and standing round him in the spacious house of Hades, to learn his sentences upon them.

“After him I saw huge Orion in a meadow full of asphodel driving the ghosts of the wild beasts that he had killed upon the mountains, and he had a great bronze club in his hand, unbreakable for ever and ever.

“And I saw Tityus son of Gaia stretched upon the plain and covering some nine acres of ground. Two vultures on either side of him were digging their beaks into his liver, and he kept on trying to beat them off with his hands, but could not; for he had violated Jove’s mistress Leto as she was going through Panopeus on her way to Pytho.

“I saw also the dreadful fate of Tantalus, who stood in a lake that reached his chin; he was dying to quench his thirst, but could never reach the water, for whenever the poor creature stooped to drink, it dried up and vanished, so that there was nothing but dry ground—parched by the spite of heaven. There were tall trees, moreover, that shed their fruit over his head—pears, pomegranates, apples, sweet figs and juicy olives, but whenever the poor creature stretched out his hand to take some, the wind tossed the branches back again to the clouds.

“And I saw Sisyphus at his endless task raising his prodigious stone with both his hands. With hands and feet he tried to roll it up to the top of the hill, but always, just before he could roll it over on to the other side, its weight would be too much for him, and the pitiless stone[98] would come thundering down again on to the plain. Then he would begin trying to push it up hill again, and the sweat ran off him and the steam rose after him.

“After him I saw mighty Hercules, but it was his phantom only, for he is feasting ever with the immortal gods, and has lovely Hebe to wife, who is daughter of Jove and Juno. The ghosts were screaming round him like scared birds flying all whithers. He looked black as night with his bare bow in his hands and his arrow on the string, glaring around as though ever on the point of taking aim. About his breast there was a wondrous golden belt adorned in the most marvellous fashion with bears, wild boars, and lions with gleaming eyes; there was also war, battle, and death. The man who made that belt, do what he might, would never be able to make another like it. Hercules knew me at once when he saw me, and spoke piteously, saying, ‘My poor Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, are you too leading the same sorry kind of life that I did when I was above ground? I was son of Jove, but I went through an infinity of suffering, for I became bondsman to one who was far beneath me—a low fellow who set me all manner of labours. He once sent me here to fetch the hell-hound—for he did not think he could find anything harder for me than this, but I got the hound out of Hades and brought him to him, for Mercury and Minerva helped me.’

“On this Hercules went down again into the house of Hades, but I stayed where I was in case some other of the mighty dead should come to me. And I should have seen still other of them that are gone before, whom I would fain have seen—Theseus and Pirithous—glorious children of the gods, but so many thousands of ghosts came round me and uttered such appalling cries, that I was panic stricken lest Proserpine should send up from the house of Hades the head of that awful monster Gorgon. On this I hastened back to my ship and ordered my men to go on board at once and loose the hawsers; so they embarked and took their places, whereon the ship went down the stream of the river Oceanus. We had to row at first, but presently a fair wind sprang up.

This page titled 3.14.1.11: Book XI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.12: Book XII

THE SIRENS, SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS, THE CATTLE OF THE SUN.

“After we were clear of the river Oceanus, and had got out into the open sea, we went on till we reached the Aeaean island where there is dawn and sun-rise as in other places. We then drew our ship on to the sands and got out of her on to the shore, where we went to sleep and waited till day should break.

“Then, when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, I sent some men to Circe’s house to fetch the body of Elpenor. We cut firewood from a wood where the headland jutted out into the sea, and after we had wept over him and lamented him we performed his funeral rites. When his body and armour had been burned to ashes, we raised a cairn, set a stone over it, and at the top of the cairn we fixed the oar that he had been used to row with.

“While we were doing all this, Circe, who knew that we had got back from the house of Hades, dressed herself and came to us as fast as she could; and her maid servants came with her bringing us bread, meat, and wine. Then she stood in the midst of us and said, ‘You have done a bold thing in going down alive to the house of Hades, and you will have died twice, to other people’s once; now, then, stay here for the rest of the day, feast your fill, and go on with your voyage at daybreak tomorrow morning. In the meantime I will tell Ulysses about your course, and will explain everything to him so as to prevent your suffering from misadventure either by land or sea.’

“We agreed to do as she had said, and feasted through the livelong day to the going down of the sun, but when the sun had set and it came on dark, the men laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship. Then Circe took me by the hand and bade me be seated away from the others, while she reclined by my side and asked me all about our adventures.

“‘So far so good,’ said she, when I had ended my story, ‘and now pay attention to what I am about to tell you—heaven itself, indeed, will recall it to your recollection. First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If any one unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. There is a great heap of dead men’s bones lying all around, with the flesh still rotting off them. Therefore pass these Sirens by, and stop your men’s ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get the men to bind you as you stand upright on a cross piece half way up the mast,[99] and they must lash the rope’s ends to the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster.

“‘When your crew have taken you past these Sirens, I cannot give you coherent directions[100] as to which of two courses you are to take; I will lay the two alternatives before you, and you must consider them for yourself. On the one hand there are some overhanging rocks against which the deep blue waves of Amphitrite beat with terrific fury; the blessed gods call these rocks the Wanderers. Here not even a bird may pass, no, not even the timid doves that bring ambrosia to Father Jove, but the sheer rock always carries off one of them, and Father Jove has to send another to make up their number; no ship that ever yet came to these rocks has got away again, but the waves and whirlwinds of fire are freighted with wreckage and with the bodies of dead men. The only vessel that ever sailed and got through, was the famous Argo on her way from the house of Aetes, and she too would have gone against these great rocks, only that Juno piloted her past them for the love she bore to Jason.

“‘Of these two rocks the one reaches heaven and its peak is lost in a dark cloud. This never leaves it, so that the top is never clear not even in summer and early autumn. No man though he had twenty hands and twenty feet could get a foothold on it and climb it, for it runs sheer up, as smooth as though it had been polished. In the middle of it there is a large cavern, looking West and turned towards Erebus; you must take your ship this way, but the cave is so high up that not even the stoutest archer could send an arrow into it. Inside it Scylla sits and yelps with a voice that you might take to be that of a young hound, but in truth she is a dreadful monster and no one—not even a god—could face her without being terror-struck. She has twelve mis-shapen feet, and six necks of the most prodigious length; and at the end of each neck she has a frightful head with three rows of teeth in each, all set very close together, so that they would crunch any one to death in a moment, and she sits deep within her shady cell thrusting out her heads and peering all round the rock, fishing for dolphins or dogfish or any larger monster that she can catch, of the thousands with which Amphitrite teems. No ship ever yet got past her without losing some men, for she shoots out all her heads at once, and carries off a man in each mouth.

"'You will find the other rock lie lower, but they are so close together that there is not more than a bow-shot between them. [A large fig tree in full leaf[101] grows upon it], and under it lies the sucking whirlpool of Charybdis. Three times in the day does she vomit forth her waters, and three times she sucks them down again; see that you be not there when she is sucking, for if you are, Neptune himself could not save you; you must hug the Scylla side and drive ship by as fast as you can, for you had better lose six men than your whole crew.'

"'Is there no way,' said I, 'of escaping Charybdis, and at the same time keeping Scylla off when she is trying to harm my men?'

"'You dare devil,' replied the goddess, 'you are always wanting to fight somebody or something; you will not let yourself be beaten even by the immortals. For Scylla is not mortal; moreover she is savage, extreme, rude, cruel and invincible. There is no help for it; your best chance will be to get by her as fast as ever you can, for if you dawdle about her rock while you are putting on your armour, she may catch you with a second cast of her six heads, and snap up another half dozen of your men; so drive your ship past her at full speed, and roar out lustily to Crataiis who is Scylla's dam, bad luck to her; she will then stop her from making a second raid upon you.'

"'You will now come to the Thrinacian island, and here you will see many herds of cattle and flocks of sheep belonging to the sun-god—seven herds of cattle and seven flocks of sheep, with fifty head in each flock. They do not breed, nor do they become fewer in number, and they are tended by the goddesses Phaethusa and Lampetie, who are children of the sun-god Hyperion by Neaera. Their mother when she had borne them and had done suckling them sent them to the Thrinacian island, which was a long way off, to live there and look after their father's flocks and herds. If you leave these flocks unharmed, and think of nothing but getting home, you may yet after much hardship reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, then I forewarn you of the destruction both of your ship and of your comrades; and even though you may yourself escape, you will return late, in bad plight, after losing all your men.'

"Here she ended, and dawn enthroned in gold began to show in heaven, whereon she returned inland. I then went on board and told my men to loose the ship from her moorings; so they at once got into her, took their places, and began to smite the grey sea with their oars. Presently the great and cunning goddess Circe befriended us with a fair wind that blew dead aft, and staid steadily with us, keeping our sails well filled, so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship's gear, and let her go as wind and helmsman headed her.

"Then, being much troubled in mind, I said to my men, 'My friends, it is not right that one or two of us alone should know the prophecies that Circe has made me, I will therefore tell you about them, so that whether we live or die we may do so with our eyes open. First she said we were to keep clear of the Sirens, who sit and sing most beautifully in a field of flowers; but she said I might hear them myself so long as no one else did. Therefore, take me and bind me to the crosspiece half way up the mast; bind me as I stand upright, with a bond so fast that I cannot possibly break away, and lash the rope's ends to the mast itself. If I beg and pray you to set me free, then bind me more tightly still.'

"I had hardly finished telling everything to the men before we reached the island of the two Sirens,[102] for the wind had been very favourable. Then all of a sudden it fell dead calm; there was not a breath of wind nor a ripple upon the water, so the men furled the sails and stowed them; then taking to their oars they whitened the water with the foam they raised in rowing. Meanwhile I look a large wheel of wax and cut it up small with my sword. Then I kneaded the wax in my strong hands till it became soft, which it soon did between the kneading and the rays of the sun-god son of Hyperion. Then I stopped the ears of all my men, and they bound me hands and feet to the mast as I stood upright on the cross piece; but they went on rowing themselves. When we had got within earshot of the land, and the ship was going at a good rate, the Sirens saw that we were getting in shore and began with their singing.

"'Come here,' they sang, 'renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song—and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.'

"They sang these words most musically, and as I longed to hear them further I made signs by frowning to my men that they should set me free; but they quickened their stroke, and Eurylochus and Perimedes bound me with still stronger bonds till we had got out of hearing of the Sirens' voices. Then my men took the wax from their ears and unbound me.

"Immediately after we had got past the island I saw a great wave from which spray was rising, and I heard a loud roaring sound. The men were so frightened that they loosed hold of their oars, for the whole sea resounded with the rushing of the waters,[103] but

the ship stayed where it was, for the men had left off rowing. I went round, therefore, and exhorted them man by man not to lose heart.

"'My friends,' said I, 'this is not the first time that we have been in danger, and we are in nothing like so bad a case as when the Cyclops shut us up in his cave; nevertheless, my courage and wise counsel saved us then, and we shall live to look back on all this as well. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say, trust in Jove and row on with might and main. As for you, coxswain, these are your orders; attend to them, for the ship is in your hands; turn her head away from these steaming rapids and hug the rock, or she will give you the slip and be over yonder before you know where you are, and you will be the death of us.'

"So they did as I told them; but I said nothing about the awful monster Scylla, for I knew the men would not go on rowing if I did, but would huddle together in the hold. In one thing only did I disobey Circe's strict instructions—I put on my armour. Then seizing two strong spears I took my stand on the ship's bows, for it was there that I expected first to see the monster of the rock, who was to do my men so much harm; but I could not make her out anywhere, though I strained my eyes with looking the gloomy rock all over and over.

"Then we entered the Straits in great fear of mind, for on the one hand was Scylla, and on the other dread Charybdis kept sucking up the salt water. As she vomited it up, it was like the water in a cauldron when it is boiling over upon a great fire, and the spray reached the top of the rocks on either side. When she began to suck again, we could see the water all inside whirling round and round, and it made a deafening sound as it broke against the rocks. We could see the bottom of the whirlpool all black with sand and mud, and the men were at their wits ends for fear. While we were taken up with this, and were expecting each moment to be our last, Scylla pounced down suddenly upon us and snatched up my six best men. I was looking at once after both ship and men, and in a moment I saw their hands and feet ever so high above me, struggling in the air as Scylla was carrying them off, and I heard them call out my name in one last despairing cry. As a fisherman, seated, spear in hand, upon some jutting rock[104] throws bait into the water to deceive the poor little fishes, and spears them with the ox's horn with which his spear is shod, throwing them gasping on to the land as he catches them one by one—even so did Scylla land these panting creatures on her rock and munch them up at the mouth of her den, while they screamed and stretched out their hands to me in their mortal agony. This was the most sickening sight that I saw throughout all my voyages.

"When we had passed the [Wandering] rocks, with Scylla and terrible Charybdis, we reached the noble island of the sun-god, where were the goodly cattle and sheep belonging to the sun Hyperion. While still at sea in my ship I could bear the cattle lowing as they came home to the yards, and the sheep bleating. Then I remembered what the blind Theban prophet Teiresias had told me, and how carefully Aeaean Circe had warned me to shun the island of the blessed sun-god. So being much troubled I said to the men, 'My men, I know you are hard pressed, but listen while I tell you the prophecy that Teiresias made me, and how carefully Aeaean Circe warned me to shun the island of the blessed sun-god, for it was here, she said, that our worst danger would lie. Head the ship, therefore, away from the island.'

"The men were in despair at this, and Eurylochus at once gave me an insolent answer. 'Ulysses,' said he, 'you are cruel; you are very strong yourself and never get worn out; you seem to be made of iron, and now, though your men are exhausted with toil and want of sleep, you will not let them land and cook themselves a good supper upon this island, but bid them put out to sea and go faring fruitlessly on through the watches of the flying night. It is by night that the winds blow hardest and do so much damage; how can we escape should one of those sudden squalls spring up from South West or West, which so often wreck a vessel when our lords the gods are unpropitious? Now, therefore, let us obey the behests of night and prepare our supper here hard by the ship; to-morrow morning we will go on board again and put out to sea.'

"Thus spoke Eurylochus, and the men approved his words. I saw that heaven meant us a mischief and said, 'You force me to yield, for you are many against one, but at any rate each one of you must take his solemn oath that if he meet with a herd of cattle or a large flock of sheep, he will not be so mad as to kill a single head of either, but will be satisfied with the food that Circe has given us.'

"They all swore as I bade them, and when they had completed their oath we made the ship fast in a harbour that was near a stream of fresh water, and the men went ashore and cooked their suppers. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, they began talking about their poor comrades whom Scylla had snatched up and eaten; this set them weeping and they went on crying till they fell off into a sound sleep.

“In the third watch of the night when the stars had shifted their places, Jove raised a great gale of wind that flew a hurricane so that land and sea were covered with thick clouds, and night sprang forth out of the heavens. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, we brought the ship to land and drew her into a cave wherein the sea-nymphs hold their courts and dances, and I called the men together in council.

“‘My friends,’ said I, ‘we have meat and drink in the ship, let us mind, therefore, and not touch the cattle, or we shall suffer for it; for these cattle and sheep belong to the mighty sun, who sees and gives ear to everything.’ And again they promised that they would obey.

“For a whole month the wind blew steadily from the South, and there was no other wind, but only South and East.105 As long as corn and wine held out the men did not touch the cattle when they were hungry; when, however, they had eaten all there was in the ship, they were forced to go further afield, with hook and line, catching birds, and taking whatever they could lay their hands on; for they were starving. One day, therefore, I went up inland that I might pray heaven to show me some means of getting away. When I had gone far enough to be clear of all my men, and had found a place that was well sheltered from the wind, I washed my hands and prayed to all the gods in Olympus till by and by they sent me off into a sweet sleep.

“Meanwhile Eurylochus had been giving evil counsel to the men, ‘Listen to me,’ said he, ‘my poor comrades. All deaths are bad enough but there is none so bad as famine. Why should not we drive in the best of these cows and offer them in sacrifice to the immortal gods? If we ever get back to Ithaca, we can build a fine temple to the sun-god and enrich it with every kind of ornament; if, however, he is determined to sink our ship out of revenge for these homed cattle, and the other gods are of the same mind, I for one would rather drink salt water once for all and have done with it, than be starved to death by inches in such a desert island as this is.’

“Thus spoke Eurylochus, and the men approved his words. Now the cattle, so fair and goodly, were feeding not far from the ship; the men, therefore, drove in the best of them, and they all stood round them saying their prayers, and using young oak-shoots instead of barley-meal, for there was no barley left. When they had done praying they killed the cows and dressed their carcasses; they cut out the thigh bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, and set some pieces of raw meat on top of them. They had no wine with which to make drink-offerings over the sacrifice while it was cooking, so they kept pouring on a little water from time to time while the inward meats were being grilled; then, when the thigh bones were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small and put the pieces upon the spits.

“By this time my deep sleep had left me, and I turned back to the ship and to the sea shore. As I drew near I began to smell hot roast meat, so I groaned out a prayer to the immortal gods. ‘Father Jove,’ I exclaimed, ‘and all you other gods who live in everlasting bliss, you have done me a cruel mischief by the sleep into which you have sent me; see what fine work these men of mine have been making in my absence.’

“Meanwhile Lampetie went straight off to the sun and told him we had been killing his cows, whereon he flew into a great rage, and said to the immortals, ‘Father Jove, and all you other gods who live in everlasting bliss, I must have vengeance on the crew of Ulysses’ ship: they have had the insolence to kill my cows, which were the one thing I loved to look upon, whether I was going up heaven or down again. If they do not square accounts with me about my cows, I will go down to Hades and shine there among the dead.’

“‘Sun,’ said Jove, ‘go on shining upon us gods and upon mankind over the fruitful earth. I will shiver their ship into little pieces with a bolt of white lightning as soon as they get out to sea.’

“I was told all this by Calypso, who said she had heard it from the mouth of Mercury.

“As soon as I got down to my ship and to the sea shore I rebuked each one of the men separately, but we could see no way out of it, for the cows were dead already. And indeed the gods began at once to show signs and wonders among us, for the hides of the cattle crawled about, and the joints upon the spits began to low like cows, and the meat, whether cooked or raw, kept on making a noise just as cows do.

“For six days my men kept driving in the best cows and feasting upon them, but when Jove the son of Saturn had added a seventh day, the fury of the gale abated; we therefore went on board, raised our masts, spread sail, and put out to sea. As soon as we were well away from the island, and could see nothing but sky and sea, the son of Saturn raised a black cloud over our ship, and the sea grew dark beneath it. We did not get on much further, for in another moment we were caught by a terrific squall from the West that

snapped the forestays of the mast so that it fell aft, while all the ship's gear tumbled about at the bottom of the vessel. The mast fell upon the head of the helmsman in the ship's stern, so that the bones of his head were crushed to pieces, and he fell overboard as though he were diving, with no more life left in him.

"Then Jove let fly with his thunderbolts, and the ship went round and round, and was filled with fire and brimstone as the lightning struck it. The men all fell into the sea; they were carried about in the water round the ship, looking like so many sea-gulls, but the god presently deprived them of all chance of getting home again.

"I stuck to the ship till the sea knocked her sides from her keel (which drifted about by itself) and struck the mast out of her in the direction of the keel; but there was a backstay of stout ox-thong still hanging about it, and with this I lashed the mast and keel together, and getting astride of them was carried wherever the winds chose to take me.

"[The gale from the West had now spent its force, and the wind got into the South again, which frightened me lest I should be taken back to the terrible whirlpool of Charybdis. This indeed was what actually happened, for I was borne along by the waves all night, and by sunrise had reached the rock of Scylla, and the whirlpool. She was then sucking down the salt sea water,106 but I was carried aloft toward the fig tree, which I caught hold of and clung on to like a bat. I could not plant my feet anywhere so as to stand securely, for the roots were a long way off and the boughs that overshadowed the whole pool were too high, too vast, and too far apart for me to reach them; so I hung patiently on, waiting till the pool should discharge my mast and raft again—and a very long while it seemed. A jury-man is not more glad to get home to supper, after having been long detained in court by troublesome cases, than I was to see my raft beginning to work its way out of the whirlpool again. At last I let go with my hands and feet, and fell heavily into the sea, hard by my raft on to which I then got, and began to row with my hands. As for Scylla, the father of gods and men would not let her get further sight of me—otherwise I should have certainly been lost.107

"Hence I was carried along for nine days till on the tenth night the gods stranded me on the Ogygian island, where dwells the great and powerful goddess Calypso. She took me in and was kind to me, but I need say no more about this, for I told you and your noble wife all about it yesterday, and I hate saying the same thing over and over again."

This page titled 3.14.1.12: Book XII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.13: Book XIII

ULYSSES LEAVES SCHERIA AND RETURNS TO ITHACA.

Thus did he speak, and they all held their peace throughout the covered cloister, enthralled by the charm of his story, till presently Alcinous began to speak.

“Ulysses,” said he, “now that you have reached my house I doubt not you will get home without further misadventure no matter how much you have suffered in the past. To you others, however, who come here night after night to drink my choicest wine and listen to my bard, I would insist as follows. Our guest has already packed up the clothes, wrought gold,[108] and other valuables which you have brought for his acceptance; let us now, therefore, present him further, each one of us, with a large tripod and a cauldron. We will recoup ourselves by the levy of a general rate; for private individuals cannot be expected to bear the burden of such a handsome present.”

Every one approved of this, and then they went home to bed each in his own abode. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared they hurried down to the ship and brought their cauldrons with them. Alcinous went on board and saw everything so securely stowed under the ship’s benches that nothing could break adrift and injure the rowers. Then they went to the house of Alcinous to get dinner, and he sacrificed a bull for them in honour of Jove who is the lord of all. They set the steaks to grill and made an excellent dinner, after which the inspired bard, Demodocus, who was a favourite with every one, sang to them; but Ulysses kept on turning his eyes towards the sun, as though to hasten his setting, for he was longing to be on his way. As one who has been all day ploughing a fallow field with a couple of oxen keeps thinking about his supper and is glad when night comes that he may go and get it, for it is all his legs can do to carry him, even so did Ulysses rejoice when the sun went down, and he at once said to the Phaeacians, addressing himself more particularly to King Alcinous:

“Sir, and all of you, farewell. Make your drink-offerings and send me on my way rejoicing, for you have fulfilled my heart’s desire by giving me an escort, and making me presents, which heaven grant that I may turn to good account; may I find my admirable wife living in peace among friends,[109] and may you whom I leave behind me give satisfaction to your wives and children;[110] may heaven vouchsafe you every good grace, and may no evil thing come among your people.”

Thus did he speak. His hearers all of them approved his saying and agreed that he should have his escort inasmuch as he had spoken reasonably. Alcinous therefore said to his servant, “Pontonous, mix some wine and hand it round to everybody, that we may offer a prayer to father Jove, and speed our guest upon his way.”

Pontonous mixed the wine and handed it to every one in turn; the others each from his own seat made a drink-offering to the blessed gods that live in heaven, but Ulysses rose and placed the double cup in the hands of queen Arete.

“Farewell, queen,” said he, “henceforward and for ever, till age and death, the common lot of mankind, lay their hands upon you. I now take my leave; be happy in this house with your children, your people, and with king Alcinous.”

As he spoke he crossed the threshold, and Alcinous sent a man to conduct him to his ship and to the sea shore. Arete also sent some maidservants with him—one with a clean shirt and cloak, another to carry his strong box, and a third with corn and wine. When they got to the water side the crew took these things and put them on board, with all the meat and drink; but for Ulysses they spread a rug and a linen sheet on deck that he might sleep soundly in the stern of the ship. Then he too went on board and lay down without a word, but the crew took every man his place and loosed the hawser from the pierced stone to which it had been bound. Thereon, when they began rowing out to sea, Ulysses fell into a deep, sweet, and almost deathlike slumber.[111]

The ship bounded forward on her way as a four in hand chariot flies over the course when the horses feel the whip. Her prow curvetted as it were the neck of a stallion, and a great wave of dark blue water seethed in her wake. She held steadily on her course, and even a falcon, swiftest of all birds, could not have kept pace with her. Thus, then, she cut her way through the water, carrying one who was as cunning as the gods, but who was now sleeping peacefully, forgetful of all that he had suffered both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea.

When the bright star that heralds the approach of dawn began to show, the ship drew near to land.[112] Now there is in Ithaca a haven of the old merman Phorcys, which lies between two points that break the line of the sea and shut the harbour in. These shelter it from the storms of wind and sea that rage outside, so that, when once within it, a ship may lie without being even moored. At the head of this harbour there is a large olive tree, and at no great distance a fine overarching cavern sacred to the nymphs who are

called Naiads.[113] There are mixing bowls within it and wine-jars of stone, and the bees hive there. Moreover, there are great looms of stone on which the nymphs weave their robes of sea purple—very curious to see—and at all times there is water within it. It has two entrances, one facing North by which mortals can go down into the cave, while the other comes from the South and is more mysterious; mortals cannot possibly get in by it, it is the way taken by the gods.

Into this harbour, then, they took their ship, for they knew the place.[114] She had so much way upon her that she ran half her own length on to the shore;[115] when, however, they had landed, the first thing they did was to lift Ulysses with his rug and linen sheet out of the ship, and lay him down upon the sand still fast asleep. Then they took out the presents which Minerva had persuaded the Phaeacians to give him when he was setting out on his voyage homewards. They put these all together by the root of the olive tree, away from the road, for fear some passer by[116] might come and steal them before Ulysses awoke; and then they made the best of their way home again.

But Neptune did not forget the threats with which he had already threatened Ulysses, so he took counsel with Jove. “Father Jove,” said he, “I shall no longer be held in any sort of respect among you gods, if mortals like the Phaeacians, who are my own flesh and blood, show such small regard for me. I said I would let Ulysses get home when he had suffered sufficiently. I did not say that he should never get home at all, for I knew you had already nodded your head about it, and promised that he should do so; but now they have brought him in a ship fast asleep and have landed him in Ithaca after loading him with more magnificent presents of bronze, gold, and raiment than he would ever have brought back from Troy, if he had had his share of the spoil and got home without misadventure.”

And Jove answered, “What, O Lord of the Earthquake, are you talking about? The gods are by no means wanting in respect for you. It would be monstrous were they to insult one so old and honoured as you are. As regards mortals, however, if any of them is indulging in insolence and treating you disrespectfully, it will always rest with yourself to deal with him as you may think proper, so do just as you please.”

“I should have done so at once,” replied Neptune, “if I were not anxious to avoid anything that might displease you; now, therefore, I should like to wreck the Phaeacian ship as it is returning from its escort. This will stop them from escorting people in future; and I should also like to bury their city under a huge mountain.”

“My good friend,” answered Jove, “I should recommend you at the very moment when the people from the city are watching the ship on her way, to turn it into a rock near the land and looking like a ship. This will astonish everybody, and you can then bury their city under the mountain.”

When earth-encircling Neptune heard this he went to Scheria where the Phaeacians live, and stayed there till the ship, which was making rapid way, had got close in. Then he went up to it, turned it into stone, and drove it down with the flat of his hand so as to root it in the ground. After this he went away.

The Phaeacians then began talking among themselves, and one would turn towards his neighbour, saying, “Bless my heart, who is it that can have rooted the ship in the sea just as she was getting into port? We could see the whole of her only a moment ago.”

This was how they talked, but they knew nothing about it; and Alcinous said, “I remember now the old prophecy of my father. He said that Neptune would be angry with us for taking every one so safely over the sea, and would one day wreck a Phaeacian ship as it was returning from an escort, and bury our city under a high mountain. This was what my old father used to say, and now it is all coming true.[117] Now therefore let us all do as I say; in the first place we must leave off giving people escorts when they come here, and in the next let us sacrifice twelve picked bulls to Neptune that he may have mercy upon us, and not bury our city under the high mountain.” When the people heard this they were afraid and got ready the bulls.

Thus did the chiefs and rulers of the Phaeacians pray to king Neptune, standing round his altar; and at the same time[118] Ulysses woke up once more upon his own soil. He had been so long away that he did not know it again; moreover, Jove’s daughter Minerva had made it a foggy day, so that people might not know of his having come, and that she might tell him everything without either his wife or his fellow citizens and friends recognising him[119] until he had taken his revenge upon the wicked suitors. Everything, therefore, seemed quite different to him—the long straight tracks, the harbours, the precipices, and the goodly trees, appeared all changed as he started up and looked upon his native land. So he smote his thighs with the flat of his hands and cried aloud despairingly.

“Alas,” he exclaimed, “among what manner of people am I fallen? Are they savage and uncivilised or hospitable and humane? Where shall I put all this treasure, and which way shall I go? I wish I had staid over there with the Phaeacians; or I could have gone to some other great chief who would have been good to me and given me an escort. As it is I do not know where to put my treasure, and I cannot leave it here for fear somebody else should get hold of it. In good truth the chiefs and rulers of the Phaeacians have not been dealing fairly by me, and have left me in the wrong country; they said they would take me back to Ithaca and they have not done so: may Jove the protector of suppliants chastise them, for he watches over everybody and punishes those who do wrong. Still, I suppose I must count my goods and see if the crew have gone off with any of them.”

He counted his goodly coppers and cauldrons, his gold and all his clothes, but there was nothing missing; still he kept grieving about not being in his own country, and wandered up and down by the shore of the sounding sea bewailing his hard fate. Then Minerva came up to him disguised as a young shepherd of delicate and princely mien, with a good cloak folded double about her shoulders; she had sandals on her comely feet and held a javelin in her hand. Ulysses was glad when he saw her, and went straight up to her.

“My friend,” said he, “you are the first person whom I have met with in this country; I salute you, therefore, and beg you to be well disposed towards me. Protect these my goods, and myself too, for I embrace your knees and pray to you as though you were a god. Tell me, then, and tell me truly, what land and country is this? Who are its inhabitants? Am I on an island, or is this the sea board of some continent?”

Minerva answered, “Stranger, you must be very simple, or must have come from somewhere a long way off, not to know what country this is. It is a very celebrated place, and everybody knows it East and West. It is rugged and not a good driving country, but it is by no means a bad island for what there is of it. It grows any quantity of corn and also wine, for it is watered both by rain and dew; it breeds cattle also and goats; all kinds of timber grow here, and there are watering places where the water never runs dry; so, sir, the name of Ithaca is known even as far as Troy, which I understand to be a long way off from this Achaean country.”

Ulysses was glad at finding himself, as Minerva told him, in his own country, and he began to answer, but he did not speak the truth, and made up a lying story in the instinctive wiliness of his heart.

“I heard of Ithaca,” said he, “when I was in Crete beyond the seas, and now it seems I have reached it with all these treasures. I have left as much more behind me for my children, but am flying because I killed Orsilochus son of Idomeneus, the fleetest runner in Crete. I killed him because he wanted to rob me of the spoils I had got from Troy with so much trouble and danger both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea; he said I had not served his father loyally at Troy as vassal, but had set myself up as an independent ruler, so I lay in wait for him with one of my followers by the road side, and speared him as he was coming into town from the country. It was a very dark night and nobody saw us; it was not known, therefore, that I had killed him, but as soon as I had done so I went to a ship and besought the owners, who were Phoenicians, to take me on board and set me in Pylos or in Elis where the Epeans rule, giving them as much spoil as satisfied them. They meant no guile, but the wind drove them off their course, and we sailed on till we came hither by night. It was all we could do to get inside the harbour, and none of us said a word about supper though we wanted it badly, but we all went on shore and lay down just as we were. I was very tired and fell asleep directly, so they took my goods out of the ship, and placed them beside me where I was lying upon the sand. Then they sailed away to Sidonia, and I was left here in great distress of mind.”

Such was his story, but Minerva smiled and caressed him with her hand. Then she took the form of a woman, fair, stately, and wise, “He must be indeed a shifty lying fellow,” said she, “who could surpass you in all manner of craft even though you had a god for your antagonist. Dare devil that you are, full of guile, unwearying in deceit, can you not drop your tricks and your instinctive falsehood, even now that you are in your own country again? We will say no more, however, about this, for we can both of us deceive upon occasion—you are the most accomplished counsellor and orator among all mankind, while I for diplomacy and subtlety have no equal among the gods. Did you not know Jove’s daughter Minerva—me, who have been ever with you, who kept watch over you in all your troubles, and who made the Phaeacians take so great a liking to you? And now, again, I am come here to talk things over with you, and help you to hide the treasure I made the Phaeacians give you; I want to tell you about the troubles that await you in your own house; you have got to face them, but tell no one, neither man nor woman, that you have come home again. Bear everything, and put up with every man’s insolence, without a word.”

And Ulysses answered, “A man, goddess, may know a great deal, but you are so constantly changing your appearance that when he meets you it is a hard matter for him to know whether it is you or not. This much, however, I know exceedingly well; you were

very kind to me as long as we Achaeans were fighting before Troy, but from the day on which we went on board ship after having sacked the city of Priam, and heaven dispersed us—from that day, Minerva, I saw no more of you, and cannot ever remember your coming to my ship to help me in a difficulty; I had to wander on sick and sorry till the gods delivered me from evil and I reached the city of the Phaeacians, where you encouraged me and took me into the town.[120] And now, I beseech you in your father's name, tell me the truth, for I do not believe I am really back in Ithaca. I am in some other country and you are mocking me and deceiving me in all you have been saying. Tell me then truly, have I really got back to my own country?"

"You are always taking something of that sort in your head," replied Minerva, "and that is why I cannot desert you in your afflictions; you are so plausible, shrewd and shifty. Any one but yourself on returning from so long a voyage would at once have gone home to see his wife and children, but you do not seem to care about asking after them or hearing any news about them till you have exploited your wife, who remains at home vainly grieving for you, and having no peace night or day for the tears she sheds on your behalf. As for my not coming near you, I was never uneasy about you, for I was certain you would get back safely though you would lose all your men, and I did not wish to quarrel with my uncle Neptune, who never forgave you for having blinded his son.[121] I will now, however, point out to you the lie of the land, and you will then perhaps believe me. This is the haven of the old merman Phorcys, and here is the olive tree that grows at the head of it; [near it is the cave sacred to the Naiads;[122] here too is the overarching cavern in which you have offered many an acceptable hecatomb to the nymphs, and this is the wooded mountain Neritum."

As she spoke the goddess dispersed the mist and the land appeared. Then Ulysses rejoiced at finding himself again in his own land, and kissed the bounteous soil; he lifted up his hands and prayed to the nymphs, saying, "Naiad nymphs, daughters of Jove, I made sure that I was never again to see you, now therefore I greet you with all loving salutations, and I will bring you offerings as in the old days, if Jove's redoubtable daughter will grant me life, and bring my son to manhood."

"Take heart, and do not trouble yourself about that," rejoined Minerva, "let us rather set about stowing your things at once in the cave, where they will be quite safe. Let us see how we can best manage it all."

Therewith she went down into the cave to look for the safest hiding places, while Ulysses brought up all the treasure of gold, bronze, and good clothing which the Phaeacians had given him. They stowed everything carefully away, and Minerva set a stone against the door of the cave. Then the two sat down by the root of the great olive, and consulted how to compass the destruction of the wicked suitors.

"Ulysses," said Minerva, "noble son of Laertes, think how you can lay hands on these disreputable people who have been lording it in your house these three years, courting your wife and making wedding presents to her, while she does nothing but lament your absence, giving hope and sending encouraging messages[123] to every one of them, but meaning the very opposite of all she says."

And Ulysses answered, "In good truth, goddess, it seems I should have come to much the same bad end in my own house as Agamemnon did, if you had not given me such timely information. Advise me how I shall best avenge myself. Stand by my side and put your courage into my heart as on the day when we loosed Troy's fair diadem from her brow. Help me now as you did then, and I will fight three hundred men, if you, goddess, will be with me."

"Trust me for that," said she, "I will not lose sight of you when once we set about it, and I imagine that some of those who are devouring your substance will then bespatter the pavement with their blood and brains. I will begin by disguising you so that no human being shall know you; I will cover your body with wrinkles; you shall lose all your yellow hair; I will clothe you in a garment that shall fill all who see it with loathing; I will blear your fine eyes for you, and make you an unseemly object in the sight of the suitors, of your wife, and of the son whom you left behind you. Then go at once to the swineherd who is in charge of your pigs; he has been always well affected towards you, and is devoted to Penelope and your son; you will find him feeding his pigs near the rock that is called Raven[124] by the fountain Arethusa, where they are fattening on beechmast and spring water after their manner. Stay with him and find out how things are going, while I proceed to Sparta and see your son, who is with Menelaus at Lacedaemon, where he has gone to try and find out whether you are still alive."[125]

"But why," said Ulysses, "did you not tell him, for you knew all about it? Did you want him too to go sailing about amid all kinds of hardship while others are eating up his estate?"

Minerva answered, "Never mind about him, I sent him that he might be well spoken of for having gone. He is in no sort of difficulty, but is staying quite comfortably with Menelaus, and is surrounded with abundance of every kind. The suitors have put

out to sea and are lying in wait for him, for they mean to kill him before he can get home. I do not much think they will succeed, but rather that some of those who are now eating up your estate will first find a grave themselves."

As she spoke Minerva touched him with her wand and covered him with wrinkles, took away all his yellow hair, and withered the flesh over his whole body; she bleared his eyes, which were naturally very fine ones; she changed his clothes and threw an old rag of a wrap about him, and a tunic, tattered, filthy, and begrimed with smoke; she also gave him an undressed deer skin as an outer garment, and furnished him with a staff and a wallet all in holes, with a twisted thong for him to sling it over his shoulder.

When the pair had thus laid their plans they parted, and the goddess went straight to Lacedaemon to fetch Telemachus.

This page titled 3.14.1.13: Book XIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.14: Book XIV

ULYSSES IN THE HUT WITH EUMAEUS.

Ulysses now left the haven, and took the rough track up through the wooded country and over the crest of the mountain till he reached the place where Minerva had said that he would find the swineherd, who was the most thrifty servant he had. He found him sitting in front of his hut, which was by the yards that he had built on a site which could be seen from far. He had made them spacious[126] and fair to see, with a free run for the pigs all round them; he had built them during his master's absence, of stones which he had gathered out of the ground, without saying anything to Penelope or Laertes, and he had fenced them on top with thorn bushes. Outside the yard he had run a strong fence of oaken posts, split, and set pretty close together, while inside he had built twelve styes near one another for the sows to lie in. There were fifty pigs wallowing in each stye, all of them breeding sows; but the boars slept outside and were much fewer in number, for the suitors kept on eating them, and the swineherd had to send them the best he had continually. There were three hundred and sixty boar pigs, and the herdsman's four hounds, which were as fierce as wolves, slept always with them. The swineherd was at that moment cutting out a pair of sandals[127] from a good stout ox hide. Three of his men were out herding the pigs in one place or another, and he had sent the fourth to town with a boar that he had been forced to send the suitors that they might sacrifice it and have their fill of meat.

When the hounds saw Ulysses they set up a furious barking and flew at him, but Ulysses was cunning enough to sit down and loose his hold of the stick that he had in his hand: still, he would have been torn by them in his own homestead had not the swineherd dropped his ox hide, rushed full speed through the gate of the yard and driven the dogs off by shouting and throwing stones at them. Then he said to Ulysses, "Old man, the dogs were likely to have made short work of you, and then you would have got me into trouble. The gods have given me quite enough worries without that, for I have lost the best of masters, and am in continual grief on his account. I have to attend swine for other people to eat, while he, if he yet lives to see the light of day, is starving in some distant land. But come inside, and when you have had your fill of bread and wine, tell me where you come from, and all about your misfortunes."

On this the swineherd led the way into the hut and bade him sit down. He strewed a good thick bed of rushes upon the floor, and on the top of this he threw the shaggy chamois skin—a great thick one—on which he used to sleep by night. Ulysses was pleased at being made thus welcome, and said "May Jove, sir, and the rest of the gods grant you your heart's desire in return for the kind way in which you have received me."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "Stranger, though a still poorer man should come here, it would not be right for me to insult him, for all strangers and beggars are from Jove. You must take what you can get and be thankful, for servants live in fear when they have young lords for their masters; and this is my misfortune now, for heaven has hindered the return of him who would have been always good to me and given me something of my own—a house, a piece of land, a good looking wife, and all else that a liberal master allows a servant who has worked hard for him, and whose labour the gods have prospered as they have mine in the situation which I hold. If my master had grown old here he would have done great things by me, but he is gone, and I wish that Helen's whole race were utterly destroyed, for she has been the death of many a good man. It was this matter that took my master to Ilius, the land of noble steeds, to fight the Trojans in the cause of king Agamemnon."

As he spoke he bound his girdle round him and went to the styes where the young sucking pigs were penned. He picked out two which he brought back with him and sacrificed. He singed them, cut them up, and spitted them; when the meat was cooked he brought it all in and set it before Ulysses, hot and still on the spit, whereon Ulysses sprinkled it over with white barley meal. The swineherd then mixed wine in a bowl of ivy-wood, and taking a seat opposite Ulysses told him to begin.

"Fall to, stranger," said he, "on a dish of servant's pork. The fat pigs have to go to the suitors, who eat them up without shame or scruple; but the blessed gods love not such shameful doings, and respect those who do what is lawful and right. Even the fierce freebooters who go raiding on other people's land, and Jove gives them their spoil—even they, when they have filled their ships and got home again live conscience-stricken, and look fearfully for judgement; but some god seems to have told these people that Ulysses is dead and gone; they will not, therefore, go back to their own homes and make their offers of marriage in the usual way, but waste his estate by force, without fear or stint. Not a day or night comes out of heaven, but they sacrifice not one victim nor two only, and they take the run of his wine, for he was exceedingly rich. No other great man either in Ithaca or on the mainland is as rich as he was; he had as much as twenty men put together. I will tell you what he had. There are twelve herds of cattle upon the

main land, and as many flocks of sheep, there are also twelve droves of pigs, while his own men and hired strangers feed him twelve widely spreading herds of goats. Here in Ithaca he runs even large flocks of goats on the far end of the island, and they are in the charge of excellent goat herds. Each one of these sends the suitors the best goat in the flock every day. As for myself, I am in charge of the pigs that you see here, and I have to keep picking out the best I have and sending it to them."

This was his story, but Ulysses went on eating and drinking ravenously without a word, brooding his revenge. When he had eaten enough and was satisfied, the swineherd took the bowl from which he usually drank, filled it with wine, and gave it to Ulysses, who was pleased, and said as he took it in his hands, "My friend, who was this master of yours that bought you and paid for you, so rich and so powerful as you tell me? You say he perished in the cause of King Agamemnon; tell me who he was, in case I may have met with such a person. Jove and the other gods know, but I may be able to give you news of him, for I have travelled much."

Eumaeus answered, "Old man, no traveller who comes here with news will get Ulysses' wife and son to believe his story. Nevertheless, tramps in want of a lodging keep coming with their mouths full of lies, and not a word of truth; every one who finds his way to Ithaca goes to my mistress and tells her falsehoods, whereon she takes them in, makes much of them, and asks them all manner of questions, crying all the time as women will when they have lost their husbands. And you too, old man, for a shirt and a cloak would doubtless make up a very pretty story. But the wolves and birds of prey have long since torn Ulysses to pieces, or the fishes of the sea have eaten him, and his bones are lying buried deep in sand upon some foreign shore; he is dead and gone, and a bad business it is for all his friends—for me especially; go where I may I shall never find so good a master, not even if I were to go home to my mother and father where I was bred and born. I do not so much care, however, about my parents now, though I should dearly like to see them again in my own country; it is the loss of Ulysses that grieves me most; I cannot speak of him without reverence though he is here no longer, for he was very fond of me, and took such care of me that wherever he may be I shall always honour his memory."

"My friend," replied Ulysses, "you are very positive, and very hard of belief about your master's coming home again, nevertheless I will not merely say, but will swear, that he is coming. Do not give me anything for my news till he has actually come, you may then give me a shirt and cloak of good wear if you will. I am in great want, but I will not take anything at all till then, for I hate a man, even as I hate hell fire, who lets his poverty tempt him into lying. I swear by king Jove, by the rites of hospitality, and by that hearth of Ulysses to which I have now come, that all will surely happen as I have said it will. Ulysses will return in this self same year; with the end of this moon and the beginning of the next he will be here to do vengeance on all those who are ill treating his wife and son."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "Old man, you will neither get paid for bringing good news, nor will Ulysses ever come home; drink your wine in peace, and let us talk about something else. Do not keep on reminding me of all this; it always pains me when any one speaks about my honoured master. As for your oath we will let it alone, but I only wish he may come, as do Penelope, his old father Laertes, and his son Telemachus. I am terribly unhappy too about this same boy of his; he was running up fast into manhood, and bade fare to be no worse man, face and figure, than his father, but some one, either god or man, has been unsettling his mind, so he has gone off to Pylos to try and get news of his father, and the suitors are lying in wait for him as he is coming home, in the hope of leaving the house of Arceisius without a name in Ithaca. But let us say no more about him, and leave him to be taken, or else to escape if the son of Saturn holds his hand over him to protect him. And now, old man, tell me your own story; tell me also, for I want to know, who you are and where you come from. Tell me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how crew brought you to Ithaca, and from what country they professed to come—for you cannot have come by land."

And Ulysses answered, "I will tell you all about it. If there were meat and wine enough, and we could stay here in the hut with nothing to do but to eat and drink while the others go to their work, I could easily talk on for a whole twelve months without ever finishing the story of the sorrows with which it has pleased heaven to visit me.

"I am by birth a Cretan; my father was a well to do man, who had many sons born in marriage, whereas I was the son of a slave whom he had purchased for a concubine; nevertheless, my father Castor son of Hylax (whose lineage I claim, and who was held in the highest honour among the Cretans for his wealth, prosperity, and the valour of his sons) put me on the same level with my brothers who had been born in wedlock. When, however, death took him to the house of Hades, his sons divided his estate and cast lots for their shares, but to me they gave a holding and little else; nevertheless, my valour enabled me to marry into a rich family, for I was not given to bragging, or shirking on the field of battle. It is all over now; still, if you look at the straw you can see what the ear was, for I have had trouble enough and to spare. Mars and Minerva made me doughty in war; when I had picked my men to

surprise the enemy with an ambuscade I never gave death so much as a thought, but was the first to leap forward and spear all whom I could overtake. Such was I in battle, but I did not care about farm work, nor the frugal home life of those who would bring up children. My delight was in ships, fighting, javelins, and arrows—things that most men shudder to think of; but one man likes one thing and another another, and this was what I was most naturally inclined to. Before the Achaeans went to Troy, nine times was I in command of men and ships on foreign service, and I amassed much wealth. I had my pick of the spoil in the first instance, and much more was allotted to me later on.

"My house grew apace and I became a great man among the Cretans, but when Jove counselled that terrible expedition, in which so many perished, the people required me and Idomeneus to lead their ships to Troy, and there was no way out of it, for they insisted on our doing so. There we fought for nine whole years, but in the tenth we sacked the city of Priam and sailed home again as heaven dispersed us. Then it was that Jove devised evil against me. I spent but one month happily with my children, wife, and property, and then I conceived the idea of making a descent on Egypt, so I fitted out a fine fleet and manned it. I had nine ships, and the people flocked to fill them. For six days I and my men made feast, and I found them many victims both for sacrifice to the gods and for themselves, but on the seventh day we went on board and set sail from Crete with a fair North wind behind us though we were going down a river. Nothing went ill with any of our ships, and we had no sickness on board, but sat where we were and let the ships go as the wind and steersmen took them. On the fifth day we reached the river Aegyptus; there I stationed my ships in the river, bidding my men stay by them and keep guard over them while I sent out scouts to reconnoitre from every point of vantage.

"But the men disobeyed my orders, took to their own devices, and ravaged the land of the Egyptians, killing the men, and taking their wives and children captive. The alarm was soon carried to the city, and when they heard the war cry, the people came out at daybreak till the plain was filled with horsemen and foot soldiers and with the gleam of armour. Then Jove spread panic among my men, and they would no longer face the enemy, for they found themselves surrounded. The Egyptians killed many of us, and took the rest alive to do forced labour for them. Jove, however, put it in my mind to do thus—and I wish I had died then and there in Egypt instead, for there was much sorrow in store for me—I took off my helmet and shield and dropped my spear from my hand; then I went straight up to the king's chariot, clasped his knees and kissed them, whereon he spared my life, bade me get into his chariot, and took me weeping to his own home. Many made at me with their ashen spears and tried to kill me in their fury, but the king protected me, for he feared the wrath of Jove the protector of strangers, who punishes those who do evil.

"I stayed there for seven years and got together much money among the Egyptians, for they all gave me something; but when it was now going on for eight years there came a certain Phoenician, a cunning rascal, who had already committed all sorts of villainy, and this man talked me over into going with him to Phoenicia, where his house and his possessions lay. I stayed there for a whole twelve months, but at the end of that time when months and days had gone by till the same season had come round again, he set me on board a ship bound for Libya, on a pretence that I was to take a cargo along with him to that place, but really that he might sell me as a slave and take the money I fetched. I suspected his intention, but went on board with him, for I could not help it.

"The ship ran before a fresh North wind till we had reached the sea that lies between Crete and Libya; there, however, Jove counselled their destruction, for as soon as we were well out from Crete and could see nothing but sea and sky, he raised a black cloud over our ship and the sea grew dark beneath it. Then Jove let fly with his thunderbolts and the ship went round and round and was filled with fire and brimstone as the lightning struck it. The men fell all into the sea; they were carried about in the water round the ship looking like so many sea-gulls, but the god presently deprived them of all chance of getting home again. I was all dismayed. Jove, however, sent the ship's mast within my reach, which saved my life, for I clung to it, and drifted before the fury of the gale. Nine days did I drift but in the darkness of the tenth night a great wave bore me on to the Thesprotian coast. There Pheidon king of the Thesprotians entertained me hospitably without charging me anything at all—for his son found me when I was nearly dead with cold and fatigue, whereon he raised me by the hand, took me to his father's house and gave me clothes to wear.

"There it was that I heard news of Ulysses, for the king told me he had entertained him, and shown him much hospitality while he was on his homeward journey. He showed me also the treasure of gold, and wrought iron that Ulysses had got together. There was enough to keep his family for ten generations, so much had he left in the house of king Pheidon. But the king said Ulysses had gone to Dodona that he might learn Jove's mind from the god's high oak tree, and know whether after so long an absence he should return to Ithaca openly, or in secret. Moreover the king swore in my presence, making drink-offerings in his own house as he did so, that the ship was by the water side, and the crew found, that should take him to his own country. He sent me off however before Ulysses returned, for there happened to be a Thesprotian ship sailing for the wheat-growing island of Dulichium, and he told those in charge of her to be sure and take me safely to King Acastus.

“These men hatched a plot against me that would have reduced me to the very extreme of misery, for when the ship had got some way out from land they resolved on selling me as a slave. They stripped me of the shirt and cloak that I was wearing, and gave me instead the tattered old clouts in which you now see me; then, towards nightfall, they reached the tilled lands of Ithaca, and there they bound me with a strong rope fast in the ship, while they went on shore to get supper by the sea side. But the gods soon undid my bonds for me, and having drawn my rags over my head I slid down the rudder into the sea, where I struck out and swam till I was well clear of them, and came ashore near a thick wood in which I lay concealed. They were very angry at my having escaped and went searching about for me, till at last they thought it was no further use and went back to their ship. The gods, having hidden me thus easily, then took me to a good man’s door—for it seems that I am not to die yet awhile.”

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, “Poor unhappy stranger, I have found the story of your misfortunes extremely interesting, but that part about Ulysses is not right; and you will never get me to believe it. Why should a man like you go about telling lies in this way? I know all about the return of my master. The gods one and all of them detest him, or they would have taken him before Troy, or let him die with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes and his son would have been heir to his renown, but now the storm winds have spirited him away we know not whither.

“As for me I live out of the way here with the pigs, and never go to the town unless when Penelope sends for me on the arrival of some news about Ulysses. Then they all sit round and ask questions, both those who grieve over the king’s absence, and those who rejoice at it because they can eat up his property without paying for it. For my own part I have never cared about asking anyone else since the time when I was taken in by an Aetolian, who had killed a man and come a long way till at last he reached my station, and I was very kind to him. He said he had seen Ulysses with Idomeneus among the Cretans, refitting his ships which had been damaged in a gale. He said Ulysses would return in the following summer or autumn with his men, and that he would bring back much wealth. And now you, you unfortunate old man, since fate has brought you to my door, do not try to flatter me in this way with vain hopes. It is not for any such reason that I shall treat you kindly, but only out of respect for Jove the god of hospitality, as fearing him and pitying you.”

Ulysses answered, “I see that you are of an unbelieving mind; I have given you my oath, and yet you will not credit me; let us then make a bargain, and call all the gods in heaven to witness it. If your master comes home, give me a cloak and shirt of good wear, and send me to Dulichium where I want to go; but if he does not come as I say he will, set your men on to me, and tell them to throw me from yonder precipice, as a warning to tramps not to go about the country telling lies.”

“And a pretty figure I should cut then,” replied Eumaeus, “both now and hereafter, if I were to kill you after receiving you into my hut and showing you hospitality. I should have to say my prayers in good earnest if I did; but it is just supper time and I hope my men will come in directly, that we may cook something savoury for supper.”

Thus did they converse, and presently the swineherds came up with the pigs, which were then shut up for the night in their styes, and a tremendous squealing they made as they were being driven into them. But Eumaeus called to his men and said, “Bring in the best pig you have, that I may sacrifice him for this stranger, and we will take toll of him ourselves. We have had trouble enough this long time feeding pigs, while others reap the fruit of our labour.”

On this he began chopping firewood, while the others brought in a fine fat five year old boar pig, and set it at the altar. Eumaeus did not forget the gods, for he was a man of good principles, so the first thing he did was to cut bristles from the pig’s face and throw them into the fire, praying to all the gods as he did so that Ulysses might return home again. Then he clubbed the pig with a billet of oak which he had kept back when he was chopping the firewood, and stunned it, while the others slaughtered and singed it. Then they cut it up, and Eumaeus began by putting raw pieces from each joint on to some of the fat; these he sprinkled with barley meal, and laid upon the embers; they cut the rest of the meat up small, put the pieces upon the spits and roasted them till they were done; when they had taken them off the spits they threw them on to the dresser in a heap. The swineherd, who was a most equitable man, then stood up to give every one his share. He made seven portions; one of these he set apart for Mercury the son of Maia and the nymphs, praying to them as he did so; the others he dealt out to the men man by man. He gave Ulysses some slices cut lengthways down the loin as a mark of especial honour, and Ulysses was much pleased. “I hope, Eumaeus,” said he, “that Jove will be as well disposed towards you as I am, for the respect you are showing to an outcast like myself.”

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, “Eat, my good fellow, and enjoy your supper, such as it is. God grants this, and withholds that, just as he thinks right, for he can do whatever he chooses.”

As he spoke he cut off the first piece and offered it as a burnt sacrifice to the immortal gods; then he made them a drink-offering, put the cup in the hands of Ulysses, and sat down to his own portion. Mesaulius brought them their bread; the swineherd had brought this man on his own account from among the Taphians during his master's absence, and had paid for him with his own money without saying anything either to his mistress or Laertes. They then laid their hands upon the good things that were before them, and when they had had enough to eat and drink, Mesaulius took away what was left of the bread, and they all went to bed after having made a hearty supper.

Now the night came on stormy and very dark, for there was no moon. It poured without ceasing, and the wind blew strong from the West, which is a wet quarter, so Ulysses thought he would see whether Eumaeus, in the excellent care he took of him, would take off his own cloak and give it him, or make one of his men give him one. "Listen to me," said he, "Eumaeus and the rest of you; when I have said a prayer I will tell you something. It is the wine that makes me talk in this way; wine will make even a wise man fall to singing; it will make him chuckle and dance and say many a word that he had better leave unspoken; still, as I have begun, I will go on. Would that I were still young and strong as when we got up an ambuscade before Troy. Menelaus and Ulysses were the leaders, but I was in command also, for the other two would have it so. When we had come up to the wall of the city we crouched down beneath our armour and lay there under cover of the reeds and thick brushwood that grew about the swamp. It came on to freeze with a North wind blowing; the snow fell small and fine like hoar frost, and our shields were coated thick with rime. The others had all got cloaks and shirts, and slept comfortably enough with their shields about their shoulders, but I had carelessly left my cloak behind me, not thinking that I should be too cold, and had gone off in nothing but my shirt and shield. When the night was two-thirds through and the stars had shifted their places, I nudged Ulysses who was close to me with my elbow, and he at once gave me his ear.

"'Ulysses,' said I, 'this cold will be the death of me, for I have no cloak; some god fooled me into setting off with nothing on but my shirt, and I do not know what to do.'

"Ulysses, who was as crafty as he was valiant, hit upon the following plan:

"'Keep still,' said he in a low voice, 'or the others will hear you.' Then he raised his head on his elbow.

"'My friends,' said he, 'I have had a dream from heaven in my sleep. We are a long way from the ships; I wish some one would go down and tell Agamemnon to send us up more men at once.'

"On this Thoas son of Andraemon threw off his cloak and set out running to the ships, whereon I took the cloak and lay in it comfortably enough till morning. Would that I were still young and strong as I was in those days, for then some one of you swineherds would give me a cloak both out of good will and for the respect due to a brave soldier; but now people look down upon me because my clothes are shabby."

And Eumaeus answered, "Old man, you have told us an excellent story, and have said nothing so far but what is quite satisfactory; for the present, therefore, you shall want neither clothing nor anything else that a stranger in distress may reasonably expect, but to-morrow morning you have to shake your own old rags about your body again, for we have not many spare cloaks nor shirts up here, but every man has only one. When Ulysses' son comes home again he will give you both cloak and shirt, and send you wherever you may want to go."

With this he got up and made a bed for Ulysses by throwing some goatskins and sheepskins on the ground in front of the fire. Here Ulysses lay down, and Eumaeus covered him over with a great heavy cloak that he kept for a change in case of extraordinarily bad weather.

Thus did Ulysses sleep, and the young men slept beside him. But the swineherd did not like sleeping away from his pigs, so he got ready to go outside, and Ulysses was glad to see that he looked after his property during his master's absence. First he slung his sword over his brawny shoulders and put on a thick cloak to keep out the wind. He also took the skin of a large and well fed goat, and a javelin in case of attack from men or dogs. Thus equipped he went to his rest where the pigs were camping under an overhanging rock that gave them shelter from the North wind.

This page titled 3.14.1.14: Book XIV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.15: Book XV

MINERVA SUMMONS TELEMACHUS FROM LACEDAEMON—HE MEETS WITH THEOCLYMENUS AT PYLOS AND BRINGS HIM TO ITHACA—ON LANDING HE GOES TO THE HUT OF EUMAEUS.

But Minerva went to the fair city of Lacedaemon to tell Ulysses' son that he was to return at once. She found him and Pisistratus sleeping in the forecourt of Menelaus's house; Pisistratus was fast asleep, but Telemachus could get no rest all night for thinking of his unhappy father, so Minerva went close up to him and said:

"Telemachus, you should not remain so far away from home any longer, nor leave your property with such dangerous people in your house; they will eat up everything you have among them, and you will have been on a fool's errand. Ask Menelaus to send you home at once if you wish to find your excellent mother still there when you get back. Her father and brothers are already urging her to marry Eurymachus, who has given her more than any of the others, and has been greatly increasing his wedding presents. I hope nothing valuable may have been taken from the house in spite of you, but you know what women are—they always want to do the best they can for the man who marries them, and never give another thought to the children of their first husband, nor to their father either when he is dead and done with. Go home, therefore, and put everything in charge of the most respectable woman servant that you have, until it shall please heaven to send you a wife of your own. Let me tell you also of another matter which you had better attend to. The chief men among the suitors are lying in wait for you in the Strait[128] between Ithaca and Samos, and they mean to kill you before you can reach home. I do not much think they will succeed; it is more likely that some of those who are now eating up your property will find a grave themselves. Sail night and day, and keep your ship well away from the islands; the god who watches over you and protects you will send you a fair wind. As soon as you get to Ithaca send your ship and men on to the town, but yourself go straight to the swineherd who has charge of your pigs; he is well disposed towards you, stay with him, therefore, for the night, and then send him to Penelope to tell her that you have got back safe from Pylos."

Then she went back to Olympus; but Telemachus stirred Pisistratus with his heel to rouse him, and said, "Wake up Pisistratus, and yoke the horses to the chariot, for we must set off home."[129]

But Pisistratus said, "No matter what hurry we are in we cannot drive in the dark. It will be morning soon; wait till Menelaus has brought his presents and put them in the chariot for us; and let him say good bye to us in the usual way. So long as he lives a guest should never forget a host who has shown him kindness."

As he spoke day began to break, and Menelaus, who had already risen, leaving Helen in bed, came towards them. When Telemachus saw him he put on his shirt as fast as he could, threw a great cloak over his shoulders, and went out to meet him. "Menelaus," said he, "let me go back now to my own country, for I want to get home."

And Menelaus answered, "Telemachus, if you insist on going I will not detain you. I do not like to see a host either too fond of his guest or too rude to him. Moderation is best in all things, and not letting a man go when he wants to do so is as bad as telling him to go if he would like to stay. One should treat a guest well as long as he is in the house and speed him when he wants to leave it. Wait, then, till I can get your beautiful presents into your chariot, and till you have yourself seen them. I will tell the women to prepare a sufficient dinner for you of what there may be in the house; it will be at once more proper and cheaper for you to get your dinner before setting out on such a long journey. If, moreover, you have a fancy for making a tour in Hellas or in the Peloponnese, I will yoke my horses, and will conduct you myself through all our principal cities. No one will send us away empty handed; every one will give us something—a bronze tripod, a couple of mules, or a gold cup."

"Menelaus," replied Telemachus, "I want to go home at once, for when I came away I left my property without protection, and fear that while looking for my father I shall come to ruin myself, or find that something valuable has been stolen during my absence."

When Menelaus heard this he immediately told his wife and servants to prepare a sufficient dinner from what there might be in the house. At this moment Eteoneus joined him, for he lived close by and had just got up; so Menelaus told him to light the fire and cook some meat, which he at once did. Then Menelaus went down into his fragrant store room,[130] not alone, but Helen went too, with Megapenthes. When he reached the place where the treasures of his house were kept, he selected a double cup, and told his son Megapenthes to bring also a silver mixing bowl. Meanwhile Helen went to the chest where she kept the lovely dresses which she had made with her own hands, and took out one that was largest and most beautifully enriched with embroidery; it glittered like a star, and lay at the very bottom of the chest. [131] Then they all came back through the house again till they got to Telemachus, and Menelaus said, "Telemachus, may Jove, the mighty husband of Juno, bring you safely home according to your desire. I will now

present you with the finest and most precious piece of plate in all my house. It is a mixing bowl of pure silver, except the rim, which is inlaid with gold, and it is the work of Vulcan. Phaedimus king of the Sidonians made me a present of it in the course of a visit that I paid him while I was on my return home. I should like to give it to you."

With these words he placed the double cup in the hands of Telemachus, while Megapenthes brought the beautiful mixing bowl and set it before him. Hard by stood lovely Helen with the robe ready in her hand.

"I too, my son," said she, "have something for you as a keepsake from the hand of Helen; it is for your bride to wear upon her wedding day. Till then, get your dear mother to keep it for you; thus may you go back rejoicing to your own country and to your home."

So saying she gave the robe over to him and he received it gladly. Then Pisistratus put the presents into the chariot, and admired them all as he did so. Presently Menelaus took Telemachus and Pisistratus into the house, and they both of them sat down to table. A maid servant brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them; an upper servant brought them bread and offered them many good things of what there was in the house. Eteoneus carved the meat and gave them each their portions, while Megapenthes poured out the wine. Then they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them, but as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus and Pisistratus yoked the horses, and took their places in the chariot. They drove out through the inner gateway and under the echoing gatehouse of the outer court, and Menelaus came after them with a golden goblet of wine in his right hand that they might make a drink-offering before they set out. He stood in front of the horses and pledged them, saying, "Farewell to both of you; see that you tell Nestor how I have treated you, for he was as kind to me as any father could be while we Achaeans were fighting before Troy."

"We will be sure, sir," answered Telemachus, "to tell him everything as soon as we see him. I wish I were as certain of finding Ulysses returned when I get back to Ithaca, that I might tell him of the very great kindness you have shown me and of the many beautiful presents I am taking with me."

As he was thus speaking a bird flew on his right hand—an eagle with a great white goose in its talons which it had carried off from the farm yard—and all the men and women were running after it and shouting. It came quite close up to them and flew away on their right hands in front of the horses. When they saw it they were glad, and their hearts took comfort within them, whereon Pisistratus said, "Tell me, Menelaus, has heaven sent this omen for us or for you?"

Menelaus was thinking what would be the most proper answer for him to make, but Helen was too quick for him and said, "I will read this matter as heaven has put it in my heart, and as I doubt not that it will come to pass. The eagle came from the mountain where it was bred and has its nest, and in like manner Ulysses, after having travelled far and suffered much, will return to take his revenge—if indeed he is not back already and hatching mischief for the suitors."

"May Jove so grant it," replied Telemachus, "if it should prove to be so, I will make vows to you as though you were a god, even when I am at home."

As he spoke he lashed his horses and they started off at full speed through the town towards the open country. They swayed the yoke upon their necks and travelled the whole day long till the sun set and darkness was over all the land. Then they reached Pherae, where Diocles lived who was son of Ortilochus, the son of Alpheus. There they passed the night and were treated hospitably. When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, they again yoked their horses and their places in the chariot. They drove out through the inner gateway and under the echoing gatehouse of the outer court. Then Pisistratus lashed his horses on and they flew forward nothing loath; ere long they came to Pylos, and then Telemachus said:

"Pisistratus, I hope you will promise to do what I am going to ask you. You know our fathers were old friends before us; moreover, we are both of an age, and this journey has brought us together still more closely; do not, therefore, take me past my ship, but leave me there, for if I go to your father's house he will try to keep me in the warmth of his good will towards me, and I must go home at once."

Pisistratus thought how he should do as he was asked, and in the end he deemed it best to turn his horses towards the ship, and put Menelaus's beautiful presents of gold and raiment in the stern of the vessel. Then he said, "Go on board at once and tell your men to do so also before I can reach home to tell my father. I know how obstinate he is, and am sure he will not let you go; he will come down here to fetch you, and he will not go back without you. But he will be very angry."

With this he drove his goodly steeds back to the city of the Pylians and soon reached his home, but Telemachus called the men together and gave his orders. “Now, my men,” said he, “get everything in order on board the ship, and let us set out home.”

Thus did he speak, and they went on board even as he had said. But as Telemachus was thus busied, praying also and sacrificing to Minerva in the ship’s stern, there came to him a man from a distant country, a seer, who was flying from Argos because he had killed a man. He was descended from Melampus, who used to live in Pylos, the land of sheep; he was rich and owned a great house, but he was driven into exile by the great and powerful king Neleus. Neleus seized his goods and held them for a whole year, during which he was a close prisoner in the house of king Phylacus, and in much distress of mind both on account of the daughter of Neleus and because he was haunted by a great sorrow that dread Erinys had laid upon him. In the end, however, he escaped with his life, drove the cattle from Phylace to Pylos, avenged the wrong that had been done him, and gave the daughter of Neleus to his brother. Then he left the country and went to Argos, where it was ordained that he should reign over much people. There he married, established himself, and had two famous sons Antiphates and Mantius. Antiphates became father of Oicleus, and Oicleus of Amphiaraus, who was dearly loved both by Jove and by Apollo, but he did not live to old age, for he was killed in Thebes by reason of a woman’s gifts. His sons were Alcmaeon and Amphilochus. Mantius, the other son of Melampus, was father to Polypheides and Cleitus. Aurora, throned in gold, carried off Cleitus for his beauty’s sake, that he might dwell among the immortals, but Apollo made Polypheides the greatest seer in the whole world now that Amphiaraus was dead. He quarrelled with his father and went to live in Hyperesia, where he remained and prophesied for all men.

His son, Theoclymenus, it was who now came up to Telemachus as he was making drink-offerings and praying in his ship. “Friend,” said he, “now that I find you sacrificing in this place, I beseech you by your sacrifices themselves, and by the god to whom you make them, I pray you also by your own head and by those of your followers tell me the truth and nothing but the truth. Who and whence are you? Tell me also of your town and parents.”

Telemachus said, “I will answer you quite truly. I am from Ithaca, and my father is Ulysses, as surely as that he ever lived. But he has come to some miserable end. Therefore I have taken this ship and got my crew together to see if I can hear any news of him, for he has been away a long time.”

“I too,” answered Theoclymenus, “am an exile, for I have killed a man of my own race. He has many brothers and kinsmen in Argos, and they have great power among the Argives. I am flying to escape death at their hands, and am thus doomed to be a wanderer on the face of the earth. I am your suppliant; take me, therefore, on board your ship that they may not kill me, for I know they are in pursuit.”

“I will not refuse you,” replied Telemachus, “if you wish to join us. Come, therefore, and in Ithaca we will treat you hospitably according to what we have.”

On this he received Theoclymenus’ spear and laid it down on the deck of the ship. He went on board and sat in the stern, bidding Theoclymenus sit beside him; then the men let go the hawsers. Telemachus told them to catch hold of the ropes, and they made all haste to do so. They set the mast in its socket in the cross plank, raised it and made it fast with the forestays, and they hoisted their white sails with sheets of twisted ox hide. Minerva sent them a fair wind that blew fresh and strong to take the ship on her course as fast as possible. Thus then they passed by Crouni and Chalcis.

Presently the sun set and darkness was over all the land. The vessel made a quick passage to Pheae and thence on to Elis, where the Epeans rule. Telemachus then headed her for the flying islands,[132] wondering within himself whether he should escape death or should be taken prisoner.

Meanwhile Ulysses and the swineherd were eating their supper in the hut, and the men supped with them. As soon as they had had to eat and drink, Ulysses began trying to prove the swineherd and see whether he would continue to treat him kindly, and ask him to stay on at the station or pack him off to the city; so he said:

“Eumaeus, and all of you, to-morrow I want to go away and begin begging about the town, so as to be no more trouble to you or to your men. Give me your advice therefore, and let me have a good guide to go with me and show me the way. I will go the round of the city begging as I needs must, to see if any one will give me a drink and a piece of bread. I should like also to go to the house of Ulysses and bring news of her husband to Queen Penelope. I could then go about among the suitors and see if out of all their abundance they will give me a dinner. I should soon make them an excellent servant in all sorts of ways. Listen and believe when I tell you that by the blessing of Mercury who gives grace and good name to the works of all men, there is no one living who would

make a more handy servant than I should—to put fresh wood on the fire, chop fuel, carve, cook, pour out wine, and do all those services that poor men have to do for their betters."

The swineherd was very much disturbed when he heard this. "Heaven help me," he exclaimed, "what ever can have put such a notion as that into your head? If you go near the suitors you will be undone to a certainty, for their pride and insolence reach the very heavens. They would never think of taking a man like you for a servant. Their servants are all young men, well dressed, wearing good cloaks and shirts, with well looking faces and their hair always tidy, the tables are kept quite clean and are loaded with bread, meat, and wine. Stay where you are, then; you are not in anybody's way; I do not mind your being here, no more do any of the others, and when Telemachus comes home he will give you a shirt and cloak and will send you wherever you want to go."

Ulysses answered, "I hope you may be as dear to the gods as you are to me, for having saved me from going about and getting into trouble; there is nothing worse than being always on the tramp; still, when men have once got low down in the world they will go through a great deal on behalf of their miserable bellies. Since, however, you press me to stay here and await the return of Telemachus, tell me about Ulysses' mother, and his father whom he left on the threshold of old age when he set out for Troy. Are they still living or are they already dead and in the house of Hades?"

"I will tell you all about them," replied Eumaeus, "Laertes is still living and prays heaven to let him depart peacefully in his own house, for he is terribly distressed about the absence of his son, and also about the death of his wife, which grieved him greatly and aged him more than anything else did. She came to an unhappy end[133] through sorrow for her son: may no friend or neighbour who has dealt kindly by me come to such an end as she did. As long as she was still living, though she was always grieving, I used to like seeing her and asking her how she did, for she brought me up along with her daughter Ctimene, the youngest of her children; we were boy and girl together, and she made little difference between us. When, however, we both grew up, they sent Ctimene to Same and received a splendid dowry for her. As for me, my mistress gave me a good shirt and cloak with a pair of sandals for my feet, and sent me off into the country, but she was just as fond of me as ever. This is all over now. Still it has pleased heaven to prosper my work in the situation which I now hold. I have enough to eat and drink, and can find something for any respectable stranger who comes here; but there is no getting a kind word or deed out of my mistress, for the house has fallen into the hands of wicked people. Servants want sometimes to see their mistress and have a talk with her; they like to have something to eat and drink at the house, and something too to take back with them into the country. This is what will keep servants in a good humour."

Ulysses answered, "Then you must have been a very little fellow, Eumaeus, when you were taken so far away from your home and parents. Tell me, and tell me true, was the city in which your father and mother lived sacked and pillaged, or did some enemies carry you off when you were alone tending sheep or cattle, ship you off here, and sell you for whatever your master gave them?"

"Stranger," replied Eumaeus, "as regards your question: sit still, make yourself comfortable, drink your wine, and listen to me. The nights are now at their longest; there is plenty of time both for sleeping and sitting up talking together; you ought not to go to bed till bed time, too much sleep is as bad as too little; if any one of the others wishes to go to bed let him leave us and do so; he can then take my master's pigs out when he has done breakfast in the morning. We too will sit here eating and drinking in the hut, and telling one another stories about our misfortunes; for when a man has suffered much, and been buffeted about in the world, he takes pleasure in recalling the memory of sorrows that have long gone by. As regards your question, then, my tale is as follows:

"You may have heard of an island called Syra that lies over above Ortygia,[134] where the land begins to turn round and look in another direction.[135] It is not very thickly peopled, but the soil is good, with much pasture fit for cattle and sheep, and it abounds with wine and wheat. Dearth never comes there, nor are the people plagued by any sickness, but when they grow old Apollo comes with Diana and kills them with his painless shafts. It contains two communities, and the whole country is divided between these two. My father Ctesius son of Ormenus, a man comparable to the gods, reigned over both.

"Now to this place there came some cunning traders from Phoenicia (for the Phoenicians are great mariners) in a ship which they had freighted with gewgaws of all kinds. There happened to be a Phoenician woman in my father's house, very tall and comely, and an excellent servant; these scoundrels got hold of her one day when she was washing near their ship, seduced her, and cajoled her in ways that no woman can resist, no matter how good she may be by nature. The man who had seduced her asked her who she was and where she came from, and on this she told him her father's name. 'I come from Sidon,' said she, 'and am daughter to Arybas, a man rolling in wealth. One day as I was coming into the town from the country, some Taphian pirates seized me and took me here over the sea, where they sold me to the man who owns this house, and he gave them their price for me.'

"The man who had seduced her then said, 'Would you like to come along with us to see the house of your parents and your parents themselves? They are both alive and are said to be well off.'

"'I will do so gladly,' answered she, 'if you men will first swear me a solemn oath that you will do me no harm by the way.'

"They all swore as she told them, and when they had completed their oath the woman said, 'Hush; and if any of your men meets me in the street or at the well, do not let him speak to me, for fear some one should go and tell my master, in which case he would suspect something. He would put me in prison, and would have all of you murdered; keep your own counsel therefore; buy your merchandise as fast as you can, and send me word when you have done loading. I will bring as much gold as I can lay my hands on, and there is something else also that I can do towards paying my fare. I am nurse to the son of the good man of the house, a funny little fellow just able to run about. I will carry him off in your ship, and you will get a great deal of money for him if you take him and sell him in foreign parts.'

"On this she went back to the house. The Phoenicians stayed a whole year till they had loaded their ship with much precious merchandise, and then, when they had got freight enough, they sent to tell the woman. Their messenger, a very cunning fellow, came to my father's house bringing a necklace of gold with amber beads strung among it; and while my mother and the servants had it in their hands admiring it and bargaining about it, he made a sign quietly to the woman and then went back to the ship, whereon she took me by the hand and led me out of the house. In the fore part of the house she saw the tables set with the cups of guests who had been feasting with my father, as being in attendance on him; these were now all gone to a meeting of the public assembly, so she snatched up three cups and carried them off in the bosom of her dress, while I followed her, for I knew no better. The sun was now set, and darkness was over all the land, so we hurried on as fast as we could till we reached the harbour, where the Phoenician ship was lying. When they had got on board they sailed their ways over the sea, taking us with them, and Jove sent then a fair wind; six days did we sail both night and day, but on the seventh day Diana struck the woman and she fell heavily down into the ship's hold as though she were a sea gull alighting on the water; so they threw her overboard to the seals and fishes, and I was left all sorrowful and alone. Presently the winds and waves took the ship to Ithaca, where Laertes gave sundry of his chattels for me, and thus it was that ever I came to set eyes upon this country."

Ulysses answered, "Eumaeus, I have heard the story of your misfortunes with the most lively interest and pity, but Jove has given you good as well as evil, for in spite of everything you have a good master, who sees that you always have enough to eat and drink; and you lead a good life, whereas I am still going about begging my way from city to city."

Thus did they converse, and they had only a very little time left for sleep, for it was soon daybreak. In the mean time Telemachus and his crew were nearing land, so they loosed the sails, took down the mast, and rowed the ship into the harbour.[136] They cast out their mooring stones and made fast the hawsers; they then got out upon the sea shore, mixed their wine, and got dinner ready. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus said, "Take the ship on to the town, but leave me here, for I want to look after the herdsmen on one of my farms. In the evening, when I have seen all I want, I will come down to the city, and to-morrow morning in return for your trouble I will give you all a good dinner with meat and wine." [137]

Then Theoclymenus said, "And what, my dear young friend, is to become of me? To whose house, among all your chief men, am I to repair? or shall I go straight to your own house and to your mother?"

"At any other time," replied Telemachus, "I should have bidden you go to my own house, for you would find no want of hospitality; at the present moment, however, you would not be comfortable there, for I shall be away, and my mother will not see you; she does not often show herself even to the suitors, but sits at her loom weaving in an upper chamber, out of their way; but I can tell you a man whose house you can go to—I mean Eurymachus the son of Polybus, who is held in the highest estimation by every one in Ithaca. He is much the best man and the most persistent wooer, of all those who are paying court to my mother and trying to take Ulysses' place. Jove, however, in heaven alone knows whether or no they will come to a bad end before the marriage takes place."

As he was speaking a bird flew by upon his right hand—a hawk, Apollo's messenger. It held a dove in its talons, and the feathers, as it tore them off,[138] fell to the ground midway between Telemachus and the ship. On this Theoclymenus called him apart and caught him by the hand. "Telemachus," said he, "that bird did not fly on your right hand without having been sent there by some god. As soon as I saw it I knew it was an omen; it means that you will remain powerful and that there will be no house in Ithaca more royal than your own."

“I wish it may prove so,” answered Telemachus. “If it does, I will show you so much good will and give you so many presents that all who meet you will congratulate you.”

Then he said to his friend Piraeus, “Piraeus, son of Clytius, you have throughout shown yourself the most willing to serve me of all those who have accompanied me to Pylos; I wish you would take this stranger to your own house and entertain him hospitably till I can come for him.”

And Piraeus answered, “Telemachus, you may stay away as long as you please, but I will look after him for you, and he shall find no lack of hospitality.”

As he spoke he went on board, and bade the others do so also and loose the hawsers, so they took their places in the ship. But Telemachus bound on his sandals, and took a long and doughty spear with a head of sharpened bronze from the deck of the ship. Then they loosed the hawsers, thrust the ship off from land, and made on towards the city as they had been told to do, while Telemachus strode on as fast as he could, till he reached the homestead where his countless herds of swine were feeding, and where dwelt the excellent swineherd, who was so devoted a servant to his master.

This page titled 3.14.1.15: Book XV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.16: Book XVI

ULYSSES REVEALS HIMSELF TO TELEMACHUS.

Meanwhile Ulysses and the swineherd had lit a fire in the hut and were were getting breakfast ready at daybreak, for they had sent the men out with the pigs. When Telemachus came up, the dogs did not bark but fawned upon him, so Ulysses, hearing the sound of feet and noticing that the dogs did not bark, said to Eumaeus:

“Eumaeus, I hear footsteps; I suppose one of your men or some one of your acquaintance is coming here, for the dogs are fawning upon him and not barking.”

The words were hardly out of his mouth before his son stood at the door. Eumaeus sprang to his feet, and the bowls in which he was mixing wine fell from his hands, as he made towards his master. He kissed his head and both his beautiful eyes, and wept for joy. A father could not be more delighted at the return of an only son, the child of his old age, after ten years’ absence in a foreign country and after having gone through much hardship. He embraced him, kissed him all over as though he had come back from the dead, and spoke fondly to him saying:

“So you are come, Telemachus, light of my eyes that you are. When I heard you had gone to Pylos I made sure I was never going to see you any more. Come in, my dear child, and sit down, that I may have a good look at you now you are home again; it is not very often you come into the country to see us herdsmen; you stick pretty close to the town generally. I suppose you think it better to keep an eye on what the suitors are doing.”

“So be it, old friend,” answered Telemachus, “but I am come now because I want to see you, and to learn whether my mother is still at her old home or whether some one else has married her, so that the bed of Ulysses is without bedding and covered with cobwebs.”

“She is still at the house,” replied Eumaeus, “grieving and breaking her heart, and doing nothing but weep, both night and day continually.”

As he spoke he took Telemachus’ spear, whereon he crossed the stone threshold and came inside. Ulysses rose from his seat to give him place as he entered, but Telemachus checked him; “Sit down, stranger,” said he, “I can easily find another seat, and there is one here who will lay it for me.”

Ulysses went back to his own place, and Eumaeus strewed some green brushwood on the floor and threw a sheepskin on top of it for Telemachus to sit upon. Then the swineherd brought them platters of cold meat, the remains from what they had eaten the day before, and he filled the bread baskets with bread as fast as he could. He mixed wine also in bowls of ivy-wood, and took his seat facing Ulysses. Then they laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus said to Eumaeus, “Old friend, where does this stranger come from? How did his crew bring him to Ithaca, and who were they?—for assuredly he did not come here by land.”

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, “My son, I will tell you the real truth. He says he is a Cretan, and that he has been a great traveller. At this moment he is running away from a Thesprotian ship, and has taken refuge at my station, so I will put him into your hands. Do whatever you like with him, only remember that he is your suppliant.”

“I am very much distressed,” said Telemachus, “by what you have just told me. How can I take this stranger into my house? I am as yet young, and am not strong enough to hold my own if any man attacks me. My mother cannot make up her mind whether to stay where she is and look after the house out of respect for public opinion and the memory of her husband, or whether the time is now come for her to take the best man of those who are wooing her, and the one who will make her the most advantageous offer; still, as the stranger has come to your station I will find him a cloak and shirt of good wear, with a sword and sandals, and will send him wherever he wants to go. Or if you like you can keep him here at the station, and I will send him clothes and food that he may be no burden on you and on your men; but I will not have him go near the suitors, for they are very insolent, and are sure to ill treat him in a way that would greatly grieve me; no matter how valiant a man may be he can do nothing against numbers, for they will be too strong for him.”

Then Ulysses said, “Sir, it is right that I should say something myself. I am much shocked about what you have said about the insolent way in which the suitors are behaving in despite of such a man as you are. Tell me, do you submit to such treatment tamely, or has some god set your people against you? May you not complain of your brothers—for it is to these that a man may

look for support, however great his quarrel may be? I wish I were as young as you are and in my present mind; if I were son to Ulysses, or, indeed, Ulysses himself, I would rather some one came and cut my head off, but I would go to the house and be the bane of every one of these men.139 If they were too many for me—I being single-handed—I would rather die fighting in my own house than see such disgraceful sights day after day, strangers grossly maltreated, and men dragging the women servants about the house in an unseemly way, wine drawn recklessly, and bread wasted all to no purpose for an end that shall never be accomplished."

And Telemachus answered, "I will tell you truly everything. There is no enmity between me and my people, nor can I complain of brothers, to whom a man may look for support however great his quarrel may be. Jove has made us a race of only sons. Laertes was the only son of Arceisius, and Ulysses only son of Laertes. I am myself the only son of Ulysses who left me behind him when he went away, so that I have never been of any use to him. Hence it comes that my house is in the hands of numberless marauders; for the chiefs from all the neighbouring islands, Dulichium, Same, Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying court to my mother, who will neither say point blank that she will not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end, so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so with myself into the bargain. The issue, however, rests with heaven. But do you, old friend Eumaeus, go at once and tell Penelope that I am safe and have returned from Pylos. Tell it to herself alone, and then come back here without letting any one else know, for there are many who are plotting mischief against me."

"I understand and heed you," replied Eumaeus; "you need instruct me no further, only as I am going that way say whether I had not better let poor Laertes know that you are returned. He used to superintend the work on his farm in spite of his bitter sorrow about Ulysses, and he would eat and drink at will along with his servants; but they tell me that from the day on which you set out for Pylos he has neither eaten nor drunk as he ought to do, nor does he look after his farm, but sits weeping and wasting the flesh from off his bones."

"More's the pity," answered Telemachus, "I am sorry for him, but we must leave him to himself just now. If people could have everything their own way, the first thing I should choose would be the return of my father; but go, and give your message; then make haste back again, and do not turn out of your way to tell Laertes. Tell my mother to send one of her women secretly with the news at once, and let him hear it from her."

Thus did he urge the swineherd; Eumaeus, therefore, took his sandals, bound them to his feet, and started for the town. Minerva watched him well off the station, and then came up to it in the form of a woman—fair, stately, and wise. She stood against the side of the entry, and revealed herself to Ulysses, but Telemachus could not see her, and knew not that she was there, for the gods do not let themselves be seen by everybody. Ulysses saw her, and so did the dogs, for they did not bark, but went scared and whining off to the other side of the yards. She nodded her head and motioned to Ulysses with her eyebrows; whereon he left the hut and stood before her outside the main wall of the yards. Then she said to him:

"Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, it is now time for you to tell your son: do not keep him in the dark any longer, but lay your plans for the destruction of the suitors, and then make for the town. I will not be long in joining you, for I too am eager for the fray."

As she spoke she touched him with her golden wand. First she threw a fair clean shirt and cloak about his shoulders; then she made him younger and of more imposing presence; she gave him back his colour, filled out his cheeks, and let his beard become dark again. Then she went away and Ulysses came back inside the hut. His son was astounded when he saw him, and turned his eyes away for fear he might be looking upon a god.

"Stranger," said he, "how suddenly you have changed from what you were a moment or two ago. You are dressed differently and your colour is not the same. Are you some one or other of the gods that live in heaven? If so, be propitious to me till I can make you due sacrifice and offerings of wrought gold. Have mercy upon me."

And Ulysses said, "I am no god, why should you take me for one? I am your father, on whose account you grieve and suffer so much at the hands of lawless men."

As he spoke he kissed his son, and a tear fell from his cheek on to the ground, for he had restrained all tears till now. But Telemachus could not yet believe that it was his father, and said:

"You are not my father, but some god is flattering me with vain hopes that I may grieve the more hereafter; no mortal man could of himself contrive to do as you have been doing, and make yourself old and young at a moment's notice, unless a god were with him. A second ago you were old and all in rags, and now you are like some god come down from heaven."

Ulysses answered, “Telemachus, you ought not to be so immeasurably astonished at my being really here. There is no other Ulysses who will come hereafter. Such as I am, it is I, who after long wandering and much hardship have got home in the twentieth year to my own country. What you wonder at is the work of the redoubtable goddess Minerva, who does with me whatever she will, for she can do what she pleases. At one moment she makes me like a beggar, and the next I am a young man with good clothes on my back; it is an easy matter for the gods who live in heaven to make any man look either rich or poor.”

As he spoke he sat down, and Telemachus threw his arms about his father and wept. They were both so much moved that they cried aloud like eagles or vultures with crooked talons that have been robbed of their half fledged young by peasants. Thus piteously did they weep, and the sun would have gone down upon their mourning if Telemachus had not suddenly said, “In what ship, my dear father, did your crew bring you to Ithaca? Of what nation did they declare themselves to be—for you cannot have come by land?”

“I will tell you the truth, my son,” replied Ulysses. “It was the Phaeacians who brought me here. They are great sailors, and are in the habit of giving escorts to any one who reaches their coasts. They took me over the sea while I was fast asleep, and landed me in Ithaca, after giving me many presents in bronze, gold, and raiment. These things by heaven’s mercy are lying concealed in a cave, and I am now come here on the suggestion of Minerva that we may consult about killing our enemies. First, therefore, give me a list of the suitors, with their number, that I may learn who, and how many, they are. I can then turn the matter over in my mind, and see whether we two can fight the whole body of them ourselves, or whether we must find others to help us.”

To this Telemachus answered, “Father, I have always heard of your renown both in the field and in council, but the task you talk of is a very great one: I am awed at the mere thought of it; two men cannot stand against many and brave ones. There are not ten suitors only, nor twice ten, but ten many times over; you shall learn their number at once. There are fifty-two chosen youths from Dulichium, and they have six servants; from Same there are twenty-four; twenty young Achaeans from Zacynthus, and twelve from Ithaca itself, all of them well born. They have with them a servant Medon, a bard, and two men who can carve at table. If we face such numbers as this, you may have bitter cause to rue your coming, and your revenge. See whether you cannot think of some one who would be willing to come and help us.”

“Listen to me,” replied Ulysses, “and think whether Minerva and her father Jove may seem sufficient, or whether I am to try and find some one else as well.”

“Those whom you have named,” answered Telemachus, “are a couple of good allies, for though they dwell high up among the clouds they have power over both gods and men.”

“These two,” continued Ulysses, “will not keep long out of the fray, when the suitors and we join fight in my house. Now, therefore, return home early to-morrow morning, and go about among the suitors as before. Later on the swineherd will bring me to the city disguised as a miserable old beggar. If you see them ill treating me, steel your heart against my sufferings; even though they drag me feet foremost out of the house, or throw things at me, look on and do nothing beyond gently trying to make them behave more reasonably; but they will not listen to you, for the day of their reckoning is at hand. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart; when Minerva shall put it in my mind, I will nod my head to you, and on seeing me do this you must collect all the armour that is in the house and hide it in the strong store room. Make some excuse when the suitors ask you why you are removing it; say that you have taken it to be out of the way of the smoke, inasmuch as it is no longer what it was when Ulysses went away, but has become soiled and begrimed with soot. Add to this more particularly that you are afraid Jove may set them on to quarrel over their wine, and that they may do each other some harm which may disgrace both banquet and wooing, for the sight of arms sometimes tempts people to use them. But leave a sword and a spear apiece for yourself and me, and a couple of oxhide shields so that we can snatch them up at any moment; Jove and Minerva will then soon quiet these people. There is also another matter; if you are indeed my son and my blood runs in your veins, let no one know that Ulysses is within the house—neither Laertes, nor yet the swineherd, nor any of the servants, nor even Penelope herself. Let you and me exploit the women alone, and let us also make trial of some other of the men servants, to see who is on our side and whose hand is against us.”

“Father,” replied Telemachus, “you will come to know me by and by, and when you do you will find that I can keep your counsel. I do not think, however, the plan you propose will turn out well for either of us. Think it over. It will take us a long time to go the round of the farms and exploit the men, and all the time the suitors will be wasting your estate with impunity and without compunction. Prove the women by all means, to see who are disloyal and who guiltless, but I am not in favour of going round and trying the men. We can attend to that later on, if you really have some sign from Jove that he will support you.”

Thus did they converse, and meanwhile the ship which had brought Telemachus and his crew from Pylos had reached the town of Ithaca. When they had come inside the harbour they drew the ship on to the land; their servants came and took their armour from them, and they left all the presents at the house of Clytius. Then they sent a servant to tell Penelope that Telemachus had gone into the country, but had sent the ship to the town to prevent her from being alarmed and made unhappy. This servant and Eumaeus happened to meet when they were both on the same errand of going to tell Penelope. When they reached the House, the servant stood up and said to the queen in the presence of the waiting women, “Your son, Madam, is now returned from Pylos”; but Eumaeus went close up to Penelope, and said privately all that her son had bidden him tell her. When he had given his message he left the house with its outbuildings and went back to his pigs again.

The suitors were surprised and angry at what had happened, so they went outside the great wall that ran round the outer court, and held a council near the main entrance. Eurymachus, son of Polybus, was the first to speak.

“My friends,” said he, “this voyage of Telemachus’s is a very serious matter; we had made sure that it would come to nothing. Now, however, let us draw a ship into the water, and get a crew together to send after the others and tell them to come back as fast as they can.”

He had hardly done speaking when Amphinomus turned in his place and saw the ship inside the harbour, with the crew lowering her sails, and putting by their oars; so he laughed, and said to the others, “We need not send them any message, for they are here. Some god must have told them, or else they saw the ship go by, and could not overtake her.”

On this they rose and went to the water side. The crew then drew the ship on shore; their servants took their armour from them, and they went up in a body to the place of assembly, but they would not let any one old or young sit along with them, and Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spoke first.

“Good heavens,” said he, “see how the gods have saved this man from destruction. We kept a succession of scouts upon the headlands all day long, and when the sun was down we never went on shore to sleep, but waited in the ship all night till morning in the hope of capturing and killing him; but some god has conveyed him home in spite of us. Let us consider how we can make an end of him. He must not escape us; our affair is never likely to come off while he is alive, for he is very shrewd, and public feeling is by no means all on our side. We must make haste before he can call the Achaeans in assembly; he will lose no time in doing so, for he will be furious with us, and will tell all the world how we plotted to kill him, but failed to take him. The people will not like this when they come to know of it; we must see that they do us no hurt, nor drive us from our own country into exile. Let us try and lay hold of him either on his farm away from the town, or on the road hither. Then we can divide up his property amongst us, and let his mother and the man who marries her have the house. If this does not please you, and you wish Telemachus to live on and hold his father’s property, then we must not gather here and eat up his goods in this way, but must make our offers to Penelope each from his own house, and she can marry the man who will give the most for her, and whose lot it is to win her.”

They all held their peace until Amphinomus rose to speak. He was the son of Nisus, who was son to king Aretias, and he was foremost among all the suitors from the wheat-growing and well grassed island of Dulichium; his conversation, moreover, was more agreeable to Penelope than that of any of the other suitors, for he was a man of good natural disposition. “My friends,” said he, speaking to them plainly and in all honestly, “I am not in favour of killing Telemachus. It is a heinous thing to kill one who is of noble blood. Let us first take counsel of the gods, and if the oracles of Jove advise it, I will both help to kill him myself, and will urge everyone else to do so; but if they dissuade us, I would have you hold your hands.”

Thus did he speak, and his words pleased them well, so they rose forthwith and went to the house of Ulysses, where they took their accustomed seats.

Then Penelope resolved that she would show herself to the suitors. She knew of the plot against Telemachus, for the servant Medon had overheard their counsels and had told her; she went down therefore to the court attended by her maidens, and when she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister holding a veil before her face, and rebuked Antinous saying:

“Antinous, insolent and wicked schemer, they say you are the best speaker and counsellor of any man your own age in Ithaca, but you are nothing of the kind. Madman, why should you try to compass the death of Telemachus, and take no heed of suppliants, whose witness is Jove himself? It is not right for you to plot thus against one another. Do you not remember how your father fled to this house in fear of the people, who were enraged against him for having gone with some Taphian pirates and plundered the

Thesprotians who were at peace with us? They wanted to tear him in pieces and eat up everything he had, but Ulysses stayed their hands although they were infuriated, and now you devour his property without paying for it, and break my heart by wooing his wife and trying to kill his son. Leave off doing so, and stop the others also."

To this Eurymachus son of Polybus answered, "Take heart, Queen Penelope daughter of Icarius, and do not trouble yourself about these matters. The man is not yet born, nor never will be, who shall lay hands upon your son Telemachus, while I yet live to look upon the face of the earth. I say—and it shall surely be—that my spear shall be reddened with his blood; for many a time has Ulysses taken me on his knees, held wine up to my lips to drink, and put pieces of meat into my hands. Therefore Telemachus is much the dearest friend I have, and has nothing to fear from the hands of us suitors. Of course, if death comes to him from the gods, he cannot escape it." He said this to quiet her, but in reality he was plotting against Telemachus.

Then Penelope went upstairs again and mourned her husband till Minerva shed sleep over her eyes. In the evening Eumaeus got back to Ulysses and his son, who had just sacrificed a young pig of a year old and were helping one another to get supper ready; Minerva therefore came up to Ulysses, turned him into an old man with a stroke of her wand, and clad him in his old clothes again, for fear that the swineherd might recognise him and not keep the secret, but go and tell Penelope.

Telemachus was the first to speak. "So you have got back, Eumaeus," said he. "What is the news of the town? Have the suitors returned, or are they still waiting over yonder, to take me on my way home?"

"I did not think of asking about that," replied Eumaeus, "when I was in the town. I thought I would give my message and come back as soon as I could. I met a man sent by those who had gone with you to Pylos, and he was the first to tell the news to your mother, but I can say what I saw with my own eyes; I had just got on to the crest of the hill of Mercury above the town when I saw a ship coming into harbour with a number of men in her. They had many shields and spears, and I thought it was the suitors, but I cannot be sure."

On hearing this Telemachus smiled to his father, but so that Eumaeus could not see him.

Then, when they had finished their work and the meal was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, they laid down to rest and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

This page titled 3.14.1.16: Book XVI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.17: Book XVII

TELEMACHUS AND HIS MOTHER MEET—ULYSSES AND EUMAEUS COME DOWN TO THE TOWN, AND ULYSSES IS INSULTED BY MELANTHIUS—HE IS RECOGNISED BY THE DOG ARGOS—HE IS INSULTED AND PRESENTLY STRUCK BY ANTINOUS WITH A STOOL—PENELOPE DESIRES THAT HE SHALL BE SENT TO HER.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Telemachus bound on his sandals and took a strong spear that suited his hands, for he wanted to go into the city. “Old friend,” said he to the swineherd, “I will now go to the town and show myself to my mother, for she will never leave off grieving till she has seen me. As for this unfortunate stranger, take him to the town and let him beg there of any one who will give him a drink and a piece of bread. I have trouble enough of my own, and cannot be burdened with other people. If this makes him angry so much the worse for him, but I like to say what I mean.”

Then Ulysses said, “Sir, I do not want to stay here; a beggar can always do better in town than country, for any one who likes can give him something. I am too old to care about remaining here at the beck and call of a master. Therefore let this man do as you have just told him, and take me to the town as soon as I have had a warm by the fire, and the day has got a little heat in it. My clothes are wretchedly thin, and this frosty morning I shall be perished with cold, for you say the city is some way off.”

On this Telemachus strode off through the yards, brooding his revenge upon the suitors. When he reached home he stood his spear against a bearing-post of the cloister, crossed the stone floor of the cloister itself, and went inside.

Nurse Euryclea saw him long before any one else did. She was putting the fleeces on to the seats, and she burst out crying as she ran up to him; all the other maids came up too, and covered his head and shoulders with their kisses. Penelope came out of her room looking like Diana or Venus, and wept as she flung her arms about her son. She kissed his forehead and both his beautiful eyes, “Light of my eyes,” she cried as she spoke fondly to him, “so you are come home again; I made sure I was never going to see you any more. To think of your having gone off to Pylos without saying anything about it or obtaining my consent. But come, tell me what you saw.”

“Do not scold me, mother,” answered Telemachus, “nor vex me, seeing what a narrow escape I have had, but wash your face, change your dress, go upstairs with your maids, and promise full and sufficient hecatombs to all the gods if Jove will only grant us our revenge upon the suitors. I must now go to the place of assembly to invite a stranger who has come back with me from Pylos. I sent him on with my crew, and told Piraeus to take him home and look after him till I could come for him myself.”

She heeded her son’s words, washed her face, changed her dress, and vowed full and sufficient hecatombs to all the gods if they would only vouchsafe her revenge upon the suitors.

Telemachus went through, and out of, the cloisters spear in hand—not alone, for his two fleet dogs went with him. Minerva endowed him with a presence of such divine comeliness that all marvelled at him as he went by, and the suitors gathered round him with fair words in their mouths and malice in their hearts; but he avoided them, and went to sit with Mentor, Antiphus, and Halitherses, old friends of his father’s house, and they made him tell them all that had happened to him. Then Piraeus came up with Theoclymenus, whom he had escorted through the town to the place of assembly, whereon Telemachus at once joined them. Piraeus was first to speak: “Telemachus,” said he, “I wish you would send some of your women to my house to take away the presents Menelaus gave you.”

“We do not know, Piraeus,” answered Telemachus, “what may happen. If the suitors kill me in my own house and divide my property among them, I would rather you had the presents than that any of those people should get hold of them. If on the other hand I managed to kill them, I shall be much obliged if you will kindly bring me my presents.”

With these words he took Theoclymenus to his own house. When they got there they laid their cloaks on the benches and seats, went into the baths, and washed themselves. When the maids had washed and anointed them, and had given them cloaks and shirts, they took their seats at table. A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands; and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread and offered them many good things of what there was in the house. Opposite them sat Penelope, reclining on a couch by one of the bearing-posts of the cloister, and spinning. Then they laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Penelope said:

“Telemachus, I shall go upstairs and lie down on that sad couch, which I have not ceased to water with my tears, from the day Ulysses set out for Troy with the sons of Atreus. You failed, however, to make it clear to me before the suitors came back to the house, whether or no you had been able to hear anything about the return of your father.”

“I will tell you then truth,” replied her son. “We went to Pylos and saw Nestor, who took me to his house and treated me as hospitably as though I were a son of his own who had just returned after a long absence; so also did his sons; but he said he had not heard a word from any human being about Ulysses, whether he was alive or dead. He sent me, therefore, with a chariot and horses to Menelaus. There I saw Helen, for whose sake so many, both Argives and Trojans, were in heaven’s wisdom doomed to suffer. Menelaus asked me what it was that had brought me to Lacedaemon, and I told him the whole truth, whereon he said, ‘So, then, these cowards would usurp a brave man’s bed? A hind might as well lay her new-born young in the lair of a lion, and then go off to feed in the forest or in some grassy dell. The lion, when he comes back to his lair, will make short work with the pair of them, and so will Ulysses with these suitors. By father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, if Ulysses is still the man that he was when he wrestled with Philomeleides in Lesbos, and threw him so heavily that all the Greeks cheered him—if he is still such, and were to come near these suitors, they would have a short shrift and a sorry wedding. As regards your question, however, I will not prevaricate nor deceive you, but what the old man of the sea told me, so much will I tell you in full. He said he could see Ulysses on an island sorrowing bitterly in the house of the nymph Calypso, who was keeping him prisoner, and he could not reach his home, for he had no ships nor sailors to take him over the sea.’ This was what Menelaus told me, and when I had heard his story I came away; the gods then gave me a fair wind and soon brought me safe home again.”

With these words he moved the heart of Penelope. Then Theoclymenus said to her:

“Madam, wife of Ulysses, Telemachus does not understand these things; listen therefore to me, for I can divine them surely, and will hide nothing from you. May Jove the king of heaven be my witness, and the rites of hospitality, with that hearth of Ulysses to which I now come, that Ulysses himself is even now in Ithaca, and, either going about the country or staying in one place, is enquiring into all these evil deeds and preparing a day of reckoning for the suitors. I saw an omen when I was on the ship which meant this, and I told Telemachus about it.”

“May it be even so,” answered Penelope; “if your words come true, you shall have such gifts and such good will from me that all who see you shall congratulate you.”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile the suitors were throwing discs, or aiming with spears at a mark on the levelled ground in front of the house, and behaving with all their old insolence. But when it was now time for dinner, and the flock of sheep and goats had come into the town from all the country round, 140 with their shepherds as usual, then Medon, who was their favourite servant, and who waited upon them at table, said, “Now then, my young masters, you have had enough sport, so come inside that we may get dinner ready. Dinner is not a bad thing, at dinner time.”

They left their sports as he told them, and when they were within the house, they laid their cloaks on the benches and seats inside, and then sacrificed some sheep, goats, pigs, and a heifer, all of them fat and well grown.141 Thus they made ready for their meal. In the meantime Ulysses and the swineherd were about starting for the town, and the swineherd said, “Stranger, I suppose you still want to go to town to-day, as my master said you were to do; for my own part I should have liked you to stay here as a station hand, but I must do as my master tells me, or he will scold me later on, and a scolding from one’s master is a very serious thing. Let us then be off, for it is now broad day; it will be night again directly and then you will find it colder.”142

“I know, and understand you,” replied Ulysses; “you need say no more. Let us be going, but if you have a stick ready cut, let me have it to walk with, for you say the road is a very rough one.”

As he spoke he threw his shabby old tattered wallet over his shoulders, by the cord from which it hung, and Eumaeus gave him a stick to his liking. The two then started, leaving the station in charge of the dogs and herdsmen who remained behind; the swineherd led the way and his master followed after, looking like some broken down old tramp as he leaned upon his staff, and his clothes were all in rags. When they had got over the rough steep ground and were nearing the city, they reached the fountain from which the citizens drew their water. This had been made by Ithacus, Neritus, and Polyctor. There was a grove of water-loving poplars planted in a circle all round it, and the clear cold water came down to it from a rock high up,143 while above the fountain there was an altar to the nymphs, at which all wayfarers used to sacrifice. Here Melanthius son of Dolius overtook them as he was driving down some goats, the best in his flock, for the suitors’ dinner, and there were two shepherds with him. When he saw Eumaeus and Ulysses he reviled them with outrageous and unseemly language, which made Ulysses very angry.

“There you go,” cried he, “and a precious pair you are. See how heaven brings birds of the same feather to one another. Where, pray, master swineherd, are you taking this poor miserable object? It would make any one sick to see such a creature at table. A fellow like this never won a prize for anything in his life, but will go about rubbing his shoulders against every man’s door post, and begging, not for swords and cauldrons144 like a man, but only for a few scraps not worth begging for. If you would give him to me for a hand on my station, he might do to clean out the folds, or bring a bit of sweet feed to the kids, and he could fatten his thighs as much as he pleased on whey; but he has taken to bad ways and will not go about any kind of work; he will do nothing but beg victuals all the town over, to feed his insatiable belly. I say, therefore—and it shall surely be—if he goes near Ulysses’ house he will get his head broken by the stools they will fling at him, till they turn him out.”

On this, as he passed, he gave Ulysses a kick on the hip out of pure wantonness, but Ulysses stood firm, and did not budge from the path. For a moment he doubted whether or no to fly at Melanthius and kill him with his staff, or fling him to the ground and beat his brains out; he resolved, however, to endure it and keep himself in check, but the swineherd looked straight at Melanthius and rebuked him, lifting up his hands and praying to heaven as he did so.

“Fountain nymphs,” he cried, “children of Jove, if ever Ulysses burned you thigh bones covered with fat whether of lambs or kids, grant my prayer that heaven may send him home. He would soon put an end to the swaggering threats with which such men as you go about insulting people—gadding all over the town while your flocks are going to ruin through bad shepherding.”

Then Melanthius the goatherd answered, “You ill conditioned cur, what are you talking about? Some day or other I will put you on board ship and take you to a foreign country, where I can sell you and pocket the money you will fetch. I wish I were as sure that Apollo would strike Telemachus dead this very day, or that the suitors would kill him, as I am that Ulysses will never come home again.”

With this he left them to come on at their leisure, while he went quickly forward and soon reached the house of his master. When he got there he went in and took his seat among the suitors opposite Eurymachus, who liked him better than any of the others. The servants brought him a portion of meat, and an upper woman servant set bread before him that he might eat. Presently Ulysses and the swineherd came up to the house and stood by it, amid a sound of music, for Phemius was just beginning to sing to the suitors. Then Ulysses took hold of the swineherd’s hand, and said:

“Eumaeus, this house of Ulysses is a very fine place. No matter how far you go, you will find few like it. One building keeps following on after another. The outer court has a wall with battlements all round it; the doors are double folding, and of good workmanship; it would be a hard matter to take it by force of arms. I perceive, too, that there are many people banqueting within it, for there is a smell of roast meat, and I hear a sound of music, which the gods have made to go along with feasting.”

Then Eumaeus said, “You have perceived aright, as indeed you generally do; but let us think what will be our best course. Will you go inside first and join the suitors, leaving me here behind you, or will you wait here and let me go in first? But do not wait long, or some one may see you loitering about outside, and throw something at you. Consider this matter I pray you.”

And Ulysses answered, “I understand and heed. Go in first and leave me here where I am. I am quite used to being beaten and having things thrown at me. I have been so much buffeted about in war and by sea that I am case-hardened, and this too may go with the rest. But a man cannot hide away the cravings of a hungry belly; this is an enemy which gives much trouble to all men; it is because of this that ships are fitted out to sail the seas, and to make war upon other people.”

As they were thus talking, a dog that had been lying asleep raised his head and pricked up his ears. This was Argos, whom Ulysses had bred before setting out for Troy, but he had never had any work out of him. In the old days he used to be taken out by the young men when they went hunting wild goats, or deer, or hares, but now that his master was gone he was lying neglected on the heaps of mule and cow dung that lay in front of the stable doors till the men should come and draw it away to manure the great close; and he was full of fleas. As soon as he saw Ulysses standing there, he dropped his ears and wagged his tail, but he could not get close up to his master. When Ulysses saw the dog on the other side of the yard, he dashed a tear from his eyes without Eumaeus seeing it, and said:

“Eumaeus, what a noble hound that is over yonder on the manure heap: his build is splendid; is he as fine a fellow as he looks, or is he only one of those dogs that come begging about a table, and are kept merely for show?”

“This hound,” answered Eumaeus, “belonged to him who has died in a far country. If he were what he was when Ulysses left for Troy, he would soon show you what he could do. There was not a wild beast in the forest that could get away from him when he

was once on its tracks. But now he has fallen on evil times, for his master is dead and gone, and the women take no care of him. Servants never do their work when their master's hand is no longer over them, for Jove takes half the goodness out of a man when he makes a slave of him."

As he spoke he went inside the buildings to the cloister where the suitors were, but Argos died as soon as he had recognised his master.

Telemachus saw Eumaeus long before any one else did, and beckoned him to come and sit beside him; so he looked about and saw a seat lying near where the carver sat serving out their portions to the suitors; he picked it up, brought it to Telemachus's table, and sat down opposite him. Then the servant brought him his portion, and gave him bread from the bread-basket.

Immediately afterwards Ulysses came inside, looking like a poor miserable old beggar, leaning on his staff and with his clothes all in rags. He sat down upon the threshold of ash-wood just inside the doors leading from the outer to the inner court, and against a bearing-post of cypress-wood which the carpenter had skilfully planed, and had made to join truly with rule and line. Telemachus took a whole loaf from the bread-basket, with as much meat as he could hold in his two hands, and said to Eumaeus, "Take this to the stranger, and tell him to go the round of the suitors, and beg from them; a beggar must not be shamefaced."

So Eumaeus went up to him and said, "Stranger, Telemachus sends you this, and says you are to go the round of the suitors begging, for beggars must not be shamefaced."

Ulysses answered, "May King Jove grant all happiness to Telemachus, and fulfil the desire of his heart."

Then with both hands he took what Telemachus had sent him, and laid it on the dirty old wallet at his feet. He went on eating it while the bard was singing, and had just finished his dinner as he left off. The suitors applauded the bard, whereon Minerva went up to Ulysses and prompted him to beg pieces of bread from each one of the suitors, that he might see what kind of people they were, and tell the good from the bad; but come what might she was not going to save a single one of them. Ulysses, therefore, went on his round, going from left to right, and stretched out his hands to beg as though he were a real beggar. Some of them pitied him, and were curious about him, asking one another who he was and where he came from; whereon the goatherd Melanthius said, "Suitors of my noble mistress, I can tell you something about him, for I have seen him before. The swineherd brought him here, but I know nothing about the man himself, nor where he comes from."

On this Antinous began to abuse the swineherd. "You precious idiot," he cried, "what have you brought this man to town for? Have we not tramps and beggars enough already to pester us as we sit at meat? Do you think it a small thing that such people gather here to waste your master's property—and must you needs bring this man as well?"

And Eumaeus answered, "Antinous, your birth is good but your words evil. It was no doing of mine that he came here. Who is likely to invite a stranger from a foreign country, unless it be one of those who can do public service as a seer, a healer of hurts, a carpenter, or a bard who can charm us with his singing? Such men are welcome all the world over, but no one is likely to ask a beggar who will only worry him. You are always harder on Ulysses' servants than any of the other suitors are, and above all on me, but I do not care so long as Telemachus and Penelope are alive and here."

But Telemachus said, "Hush, do not answer him; Antinous has the bitterest tongue of all the suitors, and he makes the others worse."

Then turning to Antinous he said, "Antinous, you take as much care of my interests as though I were your son. Why should you want to see this stranger turned out of the house? Heaven forbid; take something and give it him yourself; I do not grudge it; I bid you take it. Never mind my mother, nor any of the other servants in the house; but I know you will not do what I say, for you are more fond of eating things yourself than of giving them to other people."

"What do you mean, Telemachus," replied Antinous, "by this swaggering talk? If all the suitors were to give him as much as I will, he would not come here again for another three months."

As he spoke he drew the stool on which he rested his dainty feet from under the table, and made as though he would throw it at Ulysses, but the other suitors all gave him something, and filled his wallet with bread and meat; he was about, therefore, to go back to the threshold and eat what the suitors had given him, but he first went up to Antinous and said:

"Sir, give me something; you are not, surely, the poorest man here; you seem to be a chief, foremost among them all; therefore you should be the better giver, and I will tell far and wide of your bounty. I too was a rich man once, and had a fine house of my own; in

those days I gave to many a tramp such as I now am, no matter who he might be nor what he wanted. I had any number of servants, and all the other things which people have who live well and are accounted wealthy, but it pleased Jove to take all away from me. He sent me with a band of roving robbers to Egypt; it was a long voyage and I was undone by it. I stationed my ships in the river Aegyptus, and bade my men stay by them and keep guard over them, while I sent out scouts to reconnoitre from every point of vantage.

"But the men disobeyed my orders, took to their own devices, and ravaged the land of the Egyptians, killing the men, and taking their wives and children captives. The alarm was soon carried to the city, and when they heard the war-cry, the people came out at daybreak till the plain was filled with soldiers horse and foot, and with the gleam of armour. Then Jove spread panic among my men, and they would no longer face the enemy, for they found themselves surrounded. The Egyptians killed many of us, and took the rest alive to do forced labour for them; as for myself, they gave me to a friend who met them, to take to Cyprus, Dmetor by name, son of Iasus, who was a great man in Cyprus. Thence I am come hither in a state of great misery."

Then Antinous said, "What god can have sent such a pestilence to plague us during our dinner? Get out, into the open part of the court,[145] or I will give you Egypt and Cyprus over again for your insolence and importunity; you have begged of all the others, and they have given you lavishly, for they have abundance round them, and it is easy to be free with other people's property when there is plenty of it."

On this Ulysses began to move off, and said, "Your looks, my fine sir, are better than your breeding; if you were in your own house you would not spare a poor man so much as a pinch of salt, for though you are in another man's, and surrounded with abundance, you cannot find it in you to give him even a piece of bread."

This made Antinous very angry, and he scowled at him saying, "You shall pay for this before you get clear of the court." With these words he threw a footstool at him, and hit him on the right shoulder blade near the top of his back. Ulysses stood firm as a rock and the blow did not even stagger him, but he shook his head in silence as he brooded on his revenge. Then he went back to the threshold and sat down there, laying his well filled wallet at his feet.

"Listen to me," he cried, "you suitors of Queen Penelope, that I may speak even as I am minded. A man knows neither ache nor pain if he gets hit while fighting for his money, or for his sheep or his cattle; and even so Antinous has hit me while in the service of my miserable belly, which is always getting people into trouble. Still, if the poor have gods and avenging deities at all, I pray them that Antinous may come to a bad end before his marriage."

"Sit where you are, and eat your victuals in silence, or be off elsewhere," shouted Antinous. "If you say more I will have you dragged hand and foot through the courts, and the servants shall flay you alive."

The other suitors were much displeased at this, and one of the young men said, "Antinous, you did ill in striking that poor wretch of a tramp: it will be worse for you if he should turn out to be some god—and we know the gods go about disguised in all sorts of ways as people from foreign countries, and travel about the world to see who do amiss and who righteously."[146]

Thus said the suitors, but Antinous paid them no heed. Meanwhile Telemachus was furious about the blow that had been given to his father, and though no tear fell from him, he shook his head in silence and brooded on his revenge.

Now when Penelope heard that the beggar had been struck in the banqueting-cloister, she said before her maids, "Would that Apollo would so strike you, Antinous," and her waiting woman Eurynome answered, "If our prayers were answered not one of the suitors would ever again see the sun rise." Then Penelope said, "Nurse,[147] I hate every single one of them, for they mean nothing but mischief, but I hate Antinous like the darkness of death itself. A poor unfortunate tramp has come begging about the house for sheer want. Every one else has given him something to put in his wallet, but Antinous has hit him on the right shoulder-blade with a footstool."

Thus did she talk with her maids as she sat in her own room, and in the meantime Ulysses was getting his dinner. Then she called for the swineherd and said, "Eumaeus, go and tell the stranger to come here, I want to see him and ask him some questions. He seems to have travelled much, and he may have seen or heard something of my unhappy husband."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "If these Achaeans, Madam, would only keep quiet, you would be charmed with the history of his adventures. I had him three days and three nights with me in my hut, which was the first place he reached after running away from his ship, and he has not yet completed the story of his misfortunes. If he had been the most heaven-taught minstrel in the whole world, on whose lips all hearers hang entranced, I could not have been more charmed as I sat in my hut and

listened to him. He says there is an old friendship between his house and that of Ulysses, and that he comes from Crete where the descendants of Minos live, after having been driven hither and thither by every kind of misfortune; he also declares that he has heard of Ulysses as being alive and near at hand among the Thesprotians, and that he is bringing great wealth home with him."

"Call him here, then," said Penelope, "that I too may hear his story. As for the suitors, let them take their pleasure indoors or out as they will, for they have nothing to fret about. Their corn and wine remain unwasted in their houses with none but servants to consume them, while they keep hanging about our house day after day sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink. No estate can stand such recklessness, for we have now no Ulysses to protect us. If he were to come again, he and his son would soon have their revenge."

As she spoke Telemachus sneezed so loudly that the whole house resounded with it. Penelope laughed when she heard this, and said to Eumaeus, "Go and call the stranger; did you not hear how my son sneezed just as I was speaking? This can only mean that all the suitors are going to be killed, and that not one of them shall escape. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart: if I am satisfied that the stranger is speaking the truth I shall give him a shirt and cloak of good wear."

When Eumaeus heard this he went straight to Ulysses and said, "Father stranger, my mistress Penelope, mother of Telemachus, has sent for you; she is in great grief, but she wishes to hear anything you can tell her about her husband, and if she is satisfied that you are speaking the truth, she will give you a shirt and cloak, which are the very things that you are most in want of. As for bread, you can get enough of that to fill your belly, by begging about the town, and letting those give that will."

"I will tell Penelope," answered Ulysses, "nothing but what is strictly true. I know all about her husband, and have been partner with him in affliction, but I am afraid of passing through this crowd of cruel suitors, for their pride and insolence reach heaven. Just now, moreover, as I was going about the house without doing any harm, a man gave me a blow that hurt me very much, but neither Telemachus nor any one else defended me. Tell Penelope, therefore, to be patient and wait till sundown. Let her give me a seat close up to the fire, for my clothes are worn very thin—you know they are, for you have seen them ever since I first asked you to help me—she can then ask me about the return of her husband."

The swineherd went back when he heard this, and Penelope said as she saw him cross the threshold, "Why do you not bring him here, Eumaeus? Is he afraid that some one will ill-treat him, or is he shy of coming inside the house at all? Beggars should not be shamefaced."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, "The stranger is quite reasonable. He is avoiding the suitors, and is only doing what any one else would do. He asks you to wait till sundown, and it will be much better, madam, that you should have him all to yourself, when you can hear him and talk to him as you will."

"The man is no fool," answered Penelope, "it would very likely be as he says, for there are no such abominable people in the whole world as these men are."

When she had done speaking Eumaeus went back to the suitors, for he had explained everything. Then he went up to Telemachus and said in his ear so that none could overhear him, "My dear sir, I will now go back to the pigs, to see after your property and my own business. You will look to what is going on here, but above all be careful to keep out of danger, for there are many who bear you ill will. May Jove bring them to a bad end before they do us a mischief."

"Very well," replied Telemachus, "go home when you have had your dinner, and in the morning come here with the victims we are to sacrifice for the day. Leave the rest to heaven and me."

On this Eumaeus took his seat again, and when he had finished his dinner he left the courts and the cloister with the men at table, and went back to his pigs. As for the suitors, they presently began to amuse themselves with singing and dancing, for it was now getting on towards evening.

This page titled 3.14.1.17: Book XVII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.18: Book XVIII

THE FIGHT WITH IRUS—ULYSSES WARNS AMPHINOMUS—PENELOPE GETS PRESENTS FROM THE SUITORS—THE BRAZIERS—ULYSSES REBUKES EURYMACHUS.

Now there came a certain common tramp who used to go begging all over the city of Ithaca, and was notorious as an incorrigible glutton and drunkard. This man had no strength nor stay in him, but he was a great hulking fellow to look at; his real name, the one his mother gave him, was Arnaeus, but the young men of the place called him Irus,[148] because he used to run errands for any one who would send him. As soon as he came he began to insult Ulysses, and to try and drive him out of his own house.

"Be off, old man," he cried, "from the doorway, or you shall be dragged out neck and heels. Do you not see that they are all giving me the wink, and wanting me to turn you out by force, only I do not like to do so? Get up then, and go of yourself, or we shall come to blows."

Ulysses frowned on him and said, "My friend, I do you no manner of harm; people give you a great deal, but I am not jealous. There is room enough in this doorway for the pair of us, and you need not grudge me things that are not yours to give. You seem to be just such another tramp as myself, but perhaps the gods will give us better luck by and by. Do not, however, talk too much about fighting or you will incense me, and old though I am, I shall cover your mouth and chest with blood. I shall have more peace tomorrow if I do, for you will not come to the house of Ulysses any more."

Irus was very angry and answered, "You filthy glutton, you run on trippingly like an old fish-fag. I have a good mind to lay both hands about you, and knock your teeth out of your head like so many boar's tusks. Get ready, therefore, and let these people here stand by and look on. You will never be able to fight one who is so much younger than yourself."

Thus roundly did they rate one another on the smooth pavement in front of the doorway,[149] and when Antinous saw what was going on he laughed heartily and said to the others, "This is the finest sport that you ever saw; heaven never yet sent anything like it into this house. The stranger and Irus have quarreled and are going to fight, let us set them on to do so at once."

The suitors all came up laughing, and gathered round the two ragged tramps. "Listen to me," said Antinous, "there are some goats' paunches down at the fire, which we have filled with blood and fat, and set aside for supper; he who is victorious and proves himself to be the better man shall have his pick of the lot; he shall be free of our table and we will not allow any other beggar about the house at all."

The others all agreed, but Ulysses, to throw them off the scent, said, "Sirs, an old man like myself, worn out with suffering, cannot hold his own against a young one; but my irrepressible belly urges me on, though I know it can only end in my getting a drubbing. You must swear, however that none of you will give me a foul blow to favour Irus and secure him the victory."

They swore as he told them, and when they had completed their oath Telemachus put in a word and said, "Stranger, if you have a mind to settle with this fellow, you need not be afraid of any one here. Whoever strikes you will have to fight more than one. I am host, and the other chiefs, Antinous and Eurymachus, both of them men of understanding, are of the same mind as I am."

Every one assented, and Ulysses girded his old rags about his loins, thus baring his stalwart thighs, his broad chest and shoulders, and his mighty arms; but Minerva came up to him and made his limbs even stronger still. The suitors were beyond measure astonished, and one would turn towards his neighbour saying, "The stranger has brought such a thigh out of his old rags that there will soon be nothing left of Irus."

Irus began to be very uneasy as he heard them, but the servants girded him by force, and brought him [into the open part of the court] in such a fright that his limbs were all of a tremble. Antinous scolded him and said, "You swaggering bully, you ought never to have been born at all if you are afraid of such an old broken down creature as this tramp is. I say, therefore—and it shall surely be—if he beats you and proves himself the better man, I shall pack you off on board ship to the mainland and send you to king Echetus, who kills every one that comes near him. He will cut off your nose and ears, and draw out your entrails for the dogs to eat."

This frightened Irus still more, but they brought him into the middle of the court, and the two men raised their hands to fight. Then Ulysses considered whether he should let drive so hard at him as to make an end of him then and there, or whether he should give him a lighter blow that should only knock him down; in the end he deemed it best to give the lighter blow for fear the Achaeans should begin to suspect who he was. Then they began to fight, and Irus hit Ulysses on the right shoulder; but Ulysses gave Irus a

blow on the neck under the ear that broke in the bones of his skull, and the blood came gushing out of his mouth; he fell groaning in the dust, gnashing his teeth and kicking on the ground, but the suitors threw up their hands and nearly died of laughter, as Ulysses caught hold of him by the foot and dragged him into the outer court as far as the gate-house. There he propped him up against the wall and put his staff in his hands. “Sit here,” said he, “and keep the dogs and pigs off; you are a pitiful creature, and if you try to make yourself king of the beggars any more you shall fare still worse.”

Then he threw his dirty old wallet, all tattered and torn over his shoulder with the cord by which it hung, and went back to sit down upon the threshold; but the suitors went within the cloisters, laughing and saluting him, “May Jove, and all the other gods,” said they, “grant you whatever you want for having put an end to the importunity of this insatiable tramp. We will take him over to the mainland presently, to king Echetus, who kills every one that comes near him.”

Ulysses hailed this as of good omen, and Antinous set a great goat’s paunch before him filled with blood and fat. Amphinomus took two loaves out of the bread-basket and brought them to him, pledging him as he did so in a golden goblet of wine. “Good luck to you,” he said, “father stranger, you are very badly off at present, but I hope you will have better times by and by.”

To this Ulysses answered, “Amphinomus, you seem to be a man of good understanding, as indeed you may well be, seeing whose son you are. I have heard your father well spoken of; he is Nisus of Dulichium, a man both brave and wealthy. They tell me you are his son, and you appear to be a considerable person; listen, therefore, and take heed to what I am saying. Man is the vainest of all creatures that have their being upon earth. As long as heaven vouchsafes him health and strength, he thinks that he shall come to no harm hereafter, and even when the blessed gods bring sorrow upon him, he bears it as he needs must, and makes the best of it; for God almighty gives men their daily minds day by day. I know all about it, for I was a rich man once, and did much wrong in the stubbornness of my pride, and in the confidence that my father and my brothers would support me; therefore let a man fear God in all things always, and take the good that heaven may see fit to send him without vain glory. Consider the infamy of what these suitors are doing; see how they are wasting the estate, and doing dishonour to the wife, of one who is certain to return some day, and that, too, not long hence. Nay, he will be here soon; may heaven send you home quietly first that you may not meet with him in the day of his coming, for once he is here the suitors and he will not part bloodlessly.”

With these words he made a drink-offering, and when he had drunk he put the gold cup again into the hands of Amphinomus, who walked away serious and bowing his head, for he foreboded evil. But even so he did not escape destruction, for Minerva had doomed him to fall by the hand of Telemachus. So he took his seat again at the place from which he had come.

Then Minerva put it into the mind of Penelope to show herself to the suitors, that she might make them still more enamoured of her, and win still further honour from her son and husband. So she feigned a mocking laugh and said, “Eurynome, I have changed my mind, and have a fancy to show myself to the suitors although I detest them. I should like also to give my son a hint that he had better not have anything more to do with them. They speak fairly enough but they mean mischief.”

“My dear child,” answered Eurynome, “all that you have said is true, go and tell your son about it, but first wash yourself and anoint your face. Do not go about with your cheeks all covered with tears; it is not right that you should grieve so incessantly; for Telemachus, whom you always prayed that you might live to see with a beard, is already grown up.”

“I know, Eurynome,” replied Penelope, “that you mean well, but do not try and persuade me to wash and to anoint myself, for heaven robbed me of all my beauty on the day my husband sailed; nevertheless, tell Autonoe and Hippodamia that I want them. They must be with me when I am in the cloister; I am not going among the men alone; it would not be proper for me to do so.”

On this the old woman[150] went out of the room to bid the maids go to their mistress. In the meantime Minerva bethought her of another matter, and sent Penelope off into a sweet slumber; so she lay down on her couch and her limbs became heavy with sleep. Then the goddess shed grace and beauty over her that all the Achaeans might admire her. She washed her face with the ambrosial loveliness that Venus wears when she goes dancing with the Graces; she made her taller and of a more commanding figure, while as for her complexion it was whiter than sawn ivory. When Minerva had done all this she went away, whereon the maids came in from the women’s room and woke Penelope with the sound of their talking.

“What an exquisitely delicious sleep I have been having,” said she, as she passed her hands over her face, “in spite of all my misery. I wish Diana would let me die so sweetly now at this very moment, that I might no longer waste in despair for the loss of my dear husband, who possessed every kind of good quality and was the most distinguished man among the Achaeans.”

With these words she came down from her upper room, not alone but attended by two of her maidens, and when she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister, holding a veil before her face, and with a staid maid servant on either side of her. As they beheld her the suitors were so overpowered and became so desperately enamoured of her, that each one prayed he might win her for his own bed fellow.

"Telemachus," said she, addressing her son, "I fear you are no longer so discreet and well conducted as you used to be. When you were younger you had a greater sense of propriety; now, however, that you are grown up, though a stranger to look at you would take you for the son of a well to do father as far as size and good looks go, your conduct is by no means what it should be. What is all this disturbance that has been going on, and how came you to allow a stranger to be so disgracefully ill-treated? What would have happened if he had suffered serious injury while a suppliant in our house? Surely this would have been very discreditable to you."

"I am not surprised, my dear mother, at your displeasure," replied Telemachus, "I understand all about it and know when things are not as they should be, which I could not do when I was younger; I cannot, however, behave with perfect propriety at all times. First one and then another of these wicked people here keeps driving me out of my mind, and I have no one to stand by me. After all, however, this fight between Irus and the stranger did not turn out as the suitors meant it to do, for the stranger got the best of it. I wish Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo would break the neck of every one of these wooers of yours, some inside the house and some out; and I wish they might all be as limp as Irus is over yonder in the gate of the outer court. See how he nods his head like a drunken man; he has had such a thrashing that he cannot stand on his feet nor get back to his home, wherever that may be, for he has no strength left in him."

Thus did they converse. Eurymachus then came up and said, "Queen Penelope, daughter of Icarius, if all the Achaeans in Iasian Argos could see you at this moment, you would have still more suitors in your house by tomorrow morning, for you are the most admirable woman in the whole world both as regards personal beauty and strength of understanding."

To this Penelope replied, "Eurymachus, heaven robbed me of all my beauty whether of face or figure when the Argives set sail for Troy and my dear husband with them. If he were to return and look after my affairs, I should both be more respected and show a better presence to the world. As it is, I am oppressed with care, and with the afflictions which heaven has seen fit to heap upon me. My husband foresaw it all, and when he was leaving home he took my right wrist in his hand—'Wife,' he said, 'we shall not all of us come safe home from Troy, for the Trojans fight well both with bow and spear. They are excellent also at fighting from chariots, and nothing decides the issue of a fight sooner than this. I know not, therefore, whether heaven will send me back to you, or whether I may not fall over there at Troy. In the meantime do you look after things here. Take care of my father and mother as at present, and even more so during my absence, but when you see our son growing a beard, then marry whom you will, and leave this your present home.' This is what he said and now it is all coming true. A night will come when I shall have to yield myself to a marriage which I detest, for Jove has taken from me all hope of happiness. This further grief, moreover, cuts me to the very heart. You suitors are not wooing me after the custom of my country. When men are courting a woman who they think will be a good wife to them and who is of noble birth, and when they are each trying to win her for himself, they usually bring oxen and sheep to feast the friends of the lady, and they make her magnificent presents, instead of eating up other people's property without paying for it."

This was what she said, and Ulysses was glad when he heard her trying to get presents out of the suitors, and flattering them with fair words which he knew she did not mean.

Then Antinous said, "Queen Penelope, daughter of Icarius, take as many presents as you please from any one who will give them to you; it is not well to refuse a present; but we will not go about our business nor stir from where we are, till you have married the best man among us whoever he may be."

The others applauded what Antinous had said, and each one sent his servant to bring his present. Antinous's man returned with a large and lovely dress most exquisitely embroidered. It had twelve beautifully made brooch pins of pure gold with which to fasten it. Eurymachus immediately brought her a magnificent chain of gold and amber beads that gleamed like sunlight. Eurydamas's two men returned with some earrings fashioned into three brilliant pendants which glistened most beautifully; while king Pisander son of Polyctor gave her a necklace of the rarest workmanship, and every one else brought her a beautiful present of some kind.

Then the queen went back to her room upstairs, and her maids brought the presents after her. Meanwhile the suitors took to singing and dancing, and stayed till evening came. They danced and sang till it grew dark; they then brought in three braziers[151] to give

light, and piled them up with chopped firewood very old and dry, and they lit torches from them, which the maids held up turn and turn about. Then Ulysses said:

“Maids, servants of Ulysses who has so long been absent, go to the queen inside the house; sit with her and amuse her, or spin, and pick wool. I will hold the light for all these people. They may stay till morning, but shall not beat me, for I can stand a great deal.”

The maids looked at one another and laughed, while pretty Melantho began to gibe at him contemptuously. She was daughter to Dolius, but had been brought up by Penelope, who used to give her toys to play with, and looked after her when she was a child; but in spite of all this she showed no consideration for the sorrows of her mistress, and used to misconduct herself with Eurymachus, with whom she was in love.

“Poor wretch,” said she, “are you gone clean out of your mind? Go and sleep in some smithy, or place of public gossips, instead of chattering here. Are you not ashamed of opening your mouth before your betters—so many of them too? Has the wine been getting into your head, or do you always babble in this way? You seem to have lost your wits because you beat the tramp Irus; take care that a better man than he does not come and cudgel you about the head till he pack you bleeding out of the house.”

“Vixen,” replied Ulysses, scowling at her, “I will go and tell Telemachus what you have been saying, and he will have you torn limb from limb.”

With these words he scared the women, and they went off into the body of the house. They trembled all over, for they thought he would do as he said. But Ulysses took his stand near the burning braziers, holding up torches and looking at the people—brooding the while on things that should surely come to pass.

But Minerva would not let the suitors for one moment cease their insolence, for she wanted Ulysses to become even more bitter against them; she therefore set Eurymachus son of Polybus on to gibe at him, which made the others laugh. “Listen to me,” said he, “you suitors of Queen Penelope, that I may speak even as I am minded. It is not for nothing that this man has come to the house of Ulysses; I believe the light has not been coming from the torches, but from his own head—for his hair is all gone, every bit of it.”

Then turning to Ulysses he said, “Stranger, will you work as a servant, if I send you to the wolds and see that you are well paid? Can you build a stone fence, or plant trees? I will have you fed all the year round, and will find you in shoes and clothing. Will you go, then? Not you; for you have got into bad ways, and do not want to work; you had rather fill your belly by going round the country begging.”

“Eurymachus,” answered Ulysses, “if you and I were to work one against the other in early summer when the days are at their longest—give me a good scythe, and take another yourself, and let us see which will last the longer or mow the stronger, from dawn till dark when the mowing grass is about. Or if you will plough against me, let us each take a yoke of tawny oxen, well-mated and of great strength and endurance: turn me into a four acre field, and see whether you or I can drive the straighter furrow. If, again, war were to break out this day, give me a shield, a couple of spears and a helmet fitting well upon my temples—you would find me foremost in the fray, and would cease your gibes about my belly. You are insolent and cruel, and think yourself a great man because you live in a little world, and that a bad one. If Ulysses comes to his own again, the doors of his house are wide, but you will find them narrow when you try to fly through them.”

Eurymachus was furious at all this. He scowled at him and cried, “You wretch, I will soon pay you out for daring to say such things to me, and in public too. Has the wine been getting into your head or do you always babble in this way? You seem to have lost your wits because you beat the tramp Irus.” With this he caught hold of a footstool, but Ulysses sought protection at the knees of Amphinomus of Dulichium, for he was afraid. The stool hit the cupbearer on his right hand and knocked him down: the man fell with a cry flat on his back, and his wine-jug fell ringing to the ground. The suitors in the covered cloister were now in an uproar, and one would turn towards his neighbour, saying, “I wish the stranger had gone somewhere else, bad luck to him, for all the trouble he gives us. We cannot permit such disturbance about a beggar; if such ill counsels are to prevail we shall have no more pleasure at our banquet.”

On this Telemachus came forward and said, “Sirs, are you mad? Can you not carry your meat and your liquor decently? Some evil spirit has possessed you. I do not wish to drive any of you away, but you have had your suppers, and the sooner you all go home to bed the better.”

The suitors bit their lips and marvelled at the boldness of his speech; but Amphinomus the son of Nisus, who was son to Aretias, said, “Do not let us take offence; it is reasonable, so let us make no answer. Neither let us do violence to the stranger nor to any of

Ulysses' servants. Let the cupbearer go round with the drink-offerings, that we may make them and go home to our rest. As for the stranger, let us leave Telemachus to deal with him, for it is to his house that he has come."

Thus did he speak, and his saying pleased them well, so Mulius of Dulichium, servant to Amphinomus, mixed them a bowl of wine and water and handed it round to each of them man by man, whereon they made their drink-offerings to the blessed gods: Then, when they had made their drink-offerings and had drunk each one as he was minded, they took their several ways each of them to his own abode.

This page titled 3.14.1.18: Book XVIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.19: Book XIX

TELEMACHUS AND ULYSSES REMOVE THE ARMOUR—ULYSSES INTERVIEWS PENELOPE—EURYCLEA WASHES HIS FEET AND RECOGNISES THE SCAR ON HIS LEG—PENELOPE TELLS HER DREAM TO ULYSSES.

Ulysses was left in the cloister, pondering on the means whereby with Minerva's help he might be able to kill the suitors. Presently he said to Telemachus, "Telemachus, we must get the armour together and take it down inside. Make some excuse when the suitors ask you why you have removed it. Say that you have taken it to be out of the way of the smoke, inasmuch as it is no longer what it was when Ulysses went away, but has become soiled and begrimed with soot. Add to this more particularly that you are afraid Jove may set them on to quarrel over their wine, and that they may do each other some harm which may disgrace both banquet and wooing, for the sight of arms sometimes tempts people to use them."

Telemachus approved of what his father had said, so he called nurse Euryclea and said, "Nurse, shut the women up in their room, while I take the armour that my father left behind him down into the store room. No one looks after it now my father is gone, and it has got all smirched with soot during my own boyhood. I want to take it down where the smoke cannot reach it."

"I wish, child," answered Euryclea, "that you would take the management of the house into your own hands altogether, and look after all the property yourself. But who is to go with you and light you to the store-room? The maids would have done so, but you would not let them."

"The stranger," said Telemachus, "shall show me a light; when people eat my bread they must earn it, no matter where they come from."

Euryclea did as she was told, and bolted the women inside their room. Then Ulysses and his son made all haste to take the helmets, shields, and spears inside; and Minerva went before them with a gold lamp in her hand that shed a soft and brilliant radiance, whereon Telemachus said, "Father, my eyes behold a great marvel: the walls, with the rafters, crossbeams, and the supports on which they rest are all aglow as with a flaming fire. Surely there is some god here who has come down from heaven."

"Hush," answered Ulysses, "hold your peace and ask no questions, for this is the manner of the gods. Get you to your bed, and leave me here to talk with your mother and the maids. Your mother in her grief will ask me all sorts of questions."

On this Telemachus went by torch-light to the other side of the inner court, to the room in which he always slept. There he lay in his bed till morning, while Ulysses was left in the cloister pondering on the means whereby with Minerva's help he might be able to kill the suitors.

Then Penelope came down from her room looking like Venus or Diana, and they set her a seat inlaid with scrolls of silver and ivory near the fire in her accustomed place. It had been made by Icmalius and had a footstool all in one piece with the seat itself; and it was covered with a thick fleece: on this she now sat, and the maids came from the women's room to join her. They set about removing the tables at which the wicked suitors had been dining, and took away the bread that was left, with the cups from which they had drunk. They emptied the embers out of the braziers, and heaped much wood upon them to give both light and heat; but Melantho began to rail at Ulysses a second time and said, "Stranger, do you mean to plague us by hanging about the house all night and spying upon the women? Be off, you wretch, outside, and eat your supper there, or you shall be driven out with a firebrand."

Ulysses scowled at her and answered, "My good woman, why should you be so angry with me? Is it because I am not clean, and my clothes are all in rags, and because I am obliged to go begging about after the manner of tramps and beggars generally? I too was a rich man once, and had a fine house of my own; in those days I gave to many a tramp such as I now am, no matter who he might be nor what he wanted. I had any number of servants, and all the other things which people have who live well and are accounted wealthy, but it pleased Jove to take all away from me; therefore, woman, beware lest you too come to lose that pride and place in which you now wanton above your fellows; have a care lest you get out of favour with your mistress, and lest Ulysses should come home, for there is still a chance that he may do so. Moreover, though he be dead as you think he is, yet by Apollo's will he has left a son behind him, Telemachus, who will note anything done amiss by the maids in the house, for he is now no longer in his boyhood."

Penelope heard what he was saying and scolded the maid, "Impudent baggage," said she, "I see how abominably you are behaving, and you shall smart for it. You knew perfectly well, for I told you myself, that I was going to see the stranger and ask him about my husband, for whose sake I am in such continual sorrow."

Then she said to her head waiting woman Eurynome, “Bring a seat with a fleece upon it, for the stranger to sit upon while he tells his story, and listens to what I have to say. I wish to ask him some questions.”

Eurynome brought the seat at once and set a fleece upon it, and as soon as Ulysses had sat down Penelope began by saying, “Stranger, I shall first ask you who and whence are you? Tell me of your town and parents.”

“Madam,” answered Ulysses, “who on the face of the whole earth can dare to chide with you? Your fame reaches the firmament of heaven itself; you are like some blameless king, who upholds righteousness, as the monarch over a great and valiant nation: the earth yields its wheat and barley, the trees are loaded with fruit, the ewes bring forth lambs, and the sea abounds with fish by reason of his virtues, and his people do good deeds under him. Nevertheless, as I sit here in your house, ask me some other question and do not seek to know my race and family, or you will recall memories that will yet more increase my sorrow. I am full of heaviness, but I ought not to sit weeping and wailing in another person’s house, nor is it well to be thus grieving continually. I shall have one of the servants or even yourself complaining of me, and saying that my eyes swim with tears because I am heavy with wine.”

Then Penelope answered, “Stranger, heaven robbed me of all beauty, whether of face or figure, when the Argives set sail for Troy and my dear husband with them. If he were to return and look after my affairs I should be both more respected and should show a better presence to the world. As it is, I am oppressed with care, and with the afflictions which heaven has seen fit to heap upon me. The chiefs from all our islands—Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus, as also from Ithaca itself, are wooing me against my will and are wasting my estate. I can therefore show no attention to strangers, nor suppliants, nor to people who say that they are skilled artisans, but am all the time broken-hearted about Ulysses. They want me to marry again at once, and I have to invent stratagems in order to deceive them. In the first place heaven put it in my mind to set up a great tambour-frame in my room, and to begin working upon an enormous piece of fine needlework. Then I said to them, ‘Sweethearts, Ulysses is indeed dead, still, do not press me to marry again immediately; wait—for I would not have my skill in needlework perish unrecorded—till I have finished making a pall for the hero Laertes, to be ready against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.’ This was what I said, and they assented; whereon I used to keep working at my great web all day long, but at night I would unpick the stitches again by torch light. I fooled them in this way for three years without their finding it out, but as time wore on and I was now in my fourth year, in the waning of moons, and many days had been accomplished, those good for nothing hussies my maids betrayed me to the suitors, who broke in upon me and caught me; they were very angry with me, so I was forced to finish my work whether I would or no. And now I do not see how I can find any further shift for getting out of this marriage. My parents are putting great pressure upon me, and my son chafes at the ravages the suitors are making upon his estate, for he is now old enough to understand all about it and is perfectly able to look after his own affairs, for heaven has blessed him with an excellent disposition. Still, notwithstanding all this, tell me who you are and where you come from—for you must have had father and mother of some sort; you cannot be the son of an oak or of a rock.”

Then Ulysses answered, “Madam, wife of Ulysses, since you persist in asking me about my family, I will answer, no matter what it costs me: people must expect to be pained when they have been exiles as long as I have, and suffered as much among as many peoples. Nevertheless, as regards your question I will tell you all you ask. There is a fair and fruitful island in mid-ocean called Crete; it is thickly peopled and there are ninety cities in it: the people speak many different languages which overlap one another, for there are Achaeans, brave Eteocretans, Dorians of three-fold race, and noble Pelasgi. There is a great town there, Cnossus, where Minos reigned who every nine years had a conference with Jove himself.[152] Minos was father to Deucalion, whose son I am, for Deucalion had two sons Idomeneus and myself. Idomeneus sailed for Troy, and I, who am the younger, am called Aethon; my brother, however, was at once the older and the more valiant of the two; hence it was in Crete that I saw Ulysses and showed him hospitality, for the winds took him there as he was on his way to Troy, carrying him out of his course from cape Malea and leaving him in Amnisus off the cave of Ilithuia, where the harbours are difficult to enter and he could hardly find shelter from the winds that were then raging. As soon as he got there he went into the town and asked for Idomeneus, claiming to be his old and valued friend, but Idomeneus had already set sail for Troy some ten or twelve days earlier, so I took him to my own house and showed him every kind of hospitality, for I had abundance of everything. Moreover, I fed the men who were with him with barley meal from the public store, and got subscriptions of wine and oxen for them to sacrifice to their heart’s content. They stayed with me twelve days, for there was a gale blowing from the North so strong that one could hardly keep one’s feet on land. I suppose some unfriendly god had raised it for them, but on the thirteenth day the wind dropped, and they got away.”

Many a plausible tale did Ulysses further tell her, and Penelope wept as she listened, for her heart was melted. As the snow wastes upon the mountain tops when the winds from South East and West have breathed upon it and thawed it till the rivers run bank full

with water, even so did her cheeks overflow with tears for the husband who was all the time sitting by her side. Ulysses felt for her and was sorry for her, but he kept his eyes as hard as horn or iron without letting them so much as quiver, so cunningly did he restrain his tears. Then, when she had relieved herself by weeping, she turned to him again and said: “Now, stranger, I shall put you to the test and see whether or no you really did entertain my husband and his men, as you say you did. Tell me, then, how he was dressed, what kind of a man he was to look at, and so also with his companions.”

“Madam,” answered Ulysses, “it is such a long time ago that I can hardly say. Twenty years are come and gone since he left my home, and went elsewhither; but I will tell you as well as I can recollect. Ulysses wore a mantle of purple wool, double lined, and it was fastened by a gold brooch with two catches for the pin. On the face of this there was a device that shewed a dog holding a spotted fawn between his fore paws, and watching it as it lay panting upon the ground. Every one marvelled at the way in which these things had been done in gold, the dog looking at the fawn, and strangling it, while the fawn was struggling convulsively to escape.[153] As for the shirt that he wore next his skin, it was so soft that it fitted him like the skin of an onion, and glistened in the sunlight to the admiration of all the women who beheld it. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart, that I do not know whether Ulysses wore these clothes when he left home, or whether one of his companions had given them to him while he was on his voyage; or possibly some one at whose house he was staying made him a present of them, for he was a man of many friends and had few equals among the Achaeans. I myself gave him a sword of bronze and a beautiful purple mantle, double lined, with a shirt that went down to his feet, and I sent him on board his ship with every mark of honour. He had a servant with him, a little older than himself, and I can tell you what he was like; his shoulders were hunched,[154] he was dark, and he had thick curly hair. His name was Eurybates, and Ulysses treated him with greater familiarity than he did any of the others, as being the most like-minded with himself.”

Penelope was moved still more deeply as she heard the indisputable proofs that Ulysses laid before her; and when she had again found relief in tears she said to him, “Stranger, I was already disposed to pity you, but henceforth you shall be honoured and made welcome in my house. It was I who gave Ulysses the clothes you speak of. I took them out of the store room and folded them up myself, and I gave him also the gold brooch to wear as an ornament. Alas! I shall never welcome him home again. It was by an ill fate that he ever set out for that detested city whose very name I cannot bring myself even to mention.”

Then Ulysses answered, “Madam, wife of Ulysses, do not disfigure yourself further by grieving thus bitterly for your loss, though I can hardly blame you for doing so. A woman who has loved her husband and borne him children, would naturally be grieved at losing him, even though he were a worse man than Ulysses, who they say was like a god. Still, cease your tears and listen to what I can tell you. I will hide nothing from you, and can say with perfect truth that I have lately heard of Ulysses as being alive and on his way home; he is among the Thesprotians, and is bringing back much valuable treasure that he has begged from one and another of them; but his ship and all his crew were lost as they were leaving the Thrinacian island, for Jove and the sun-god were angry with him because his men had slaughtered the sun-god’s cattle, and they were all drowned to a man. But Ulysses stuck to the keel of the ship and was drifted on to the land of the Phaeacians, who are near of kin to the immortals, and who treated him as though he had been a god, giving him many presents, and wishing to escort him home safe and sound. In fact Ulysses would have been here long ago, had he not thought better to go from land to land gathering wealth; for there is no man living who is so wily as he is; there is no one can compare with him. Pheidon king of the Thesprotians told me all this, and he swore to me—making drink-offerings in his house as he did so—that the ship was by the water side and the crew found who would take Ulysses to his own country. He sent me off first, for there happened to be a Thesprotian ship sailing for the wheat-growing island of Dulichium, but he showed me all the treasure Ulysses had got together, and he had enough lying in the house of king Pheidon to keep his family for ten generations; but the king said Ulysses had gone to Dodona that he might learn Jove’s mind from the high oak tree, and know whether after so long an absence he should return to Ithaca openly or in secret. So you may know he is safe and will be here shortly; he is close at hand and cannot remain away from home much longer; nevertheless I will confirm my words with an oath, and call Jove who is the first and mightiest of all gods to witness, as also that hearth of Ulysses to which I have now come, that all I have spoken shall surely come to pass. Ulysses will return in this self same year; with the end of this moon and the beginning of the next he will be here.”

“May it be even so,” answered Penelope; “if your words come true you shall have such gifts and such good will from me that all who see you shall congratulate you; but I know very well how it will be. Ulysses will not return, neither will you get your escort hence, for so surely as that Ulysses ever was, there are now no longer any such masters in the house as he was, to receive honourable strangers or to further them on their way home. And now, you maids, wash his feet for him, and make him a bed on a

couch with rugs and blankets, that he may be warm and quiet till morning. Then, at day break wash him and anoint him again, that he may sit in the cloister and take his meals with Telemachus. It shall be the worse for any one of these hateful people who is uncivil to him; like it or not, he shall have no more to do in this house. For how, sir, shall you be able to learn whether or no I am superior to others of my sex both in goodness of heart and understanding, if I let you dine in my cloisters squalid and ill clad? Men live but for a little season; if they are hard, and deal hardly, people wish them ill so long as they are alive, and speak contemptuously of them when they are dead, but he that is righteous and deals righteously, the people tell of his praise among all lands, and many shall call him blessed."

Ulysses answered, "Madam, I have foresworn rugs and blankets from the day that I left the snowy ranges of Crete to go on shipboard. I will lie as I have lain on many a sleepless night hitherto. Night after night have I passed in any rough sleeping place, and waited for morning. Nor, again, do I like having my feet washed; I shall not let any of the young hussies about your house touch my feet; but, if you have any old and respectable woman who has gone through as much trouble as I have, I will allow her to wash them."

To this Penelope said, "My dear sir, of all the guests who ever yet came to my house there never was one who spoke in all things with such admirable propriety as you do. There happens to be in the house a most respectable old woman—the same who received my poor dear husband in her arms the night he was born, and nursed him in infancy. She is very feeble now, but she shall wash your feet." "Come here," said she, "Euryclea, and wash your master's age-mate; I suppose Ulysses' hands and feet are very much the same now as his are, for trouble ages all of us dreadfully fast."

On these words the old woman covered her face with her hands; she began to weep and made lamentation saying, "My dear child, I cannot think whatever I am to do with you. I am certain no one was ever more god-fearing than yourself, and yet Jove hates you. No one in the whole world ever burned him more thigh bones, nor gave him finer hecatombs when you prayed you might come to a green old age yourself and see your son grow up to take after you: yet see how he has prevented you alone from ever getting back to your own home. I have no doubt the women in some foreign palace which Ulysses has got to are gibing at him as all these sluts here have been gibing at you. I do not wonder at your not choosing to let them wash you after the manner in which they have insulted you; I will wash your feet myself gladly enough, as Penelope has said that I am to do so; I will wash them both for Penelope's sake and for your own, for you have raised the most lively feelings of compassion in my mind; and let me say this moreover, which pray attend to; we have had all kinds of strangers in distress come here before now, but I make bold to say that no one ever yet came who was so like Ulysses in figure, voice, and feet as you are."

"Those who have seen us both," answered Ulysses, "have always said we were wonderfully like each other, and now you have noticed it too."

Then the old woman took the cauldron in which she was going to wash his feet, and poured plenty of cold water into it, adding hot till the bath was warm enough. Ulysses sat by the fire, but ere long he turned away from the light, for it occurred to him that when the old woman had hold of his leg she would recognise a certain scar which it bore, whereon the whole truth would come out. And indeed as soon as she began washing her master, she at once knew the scar as one that had been given him by a wild boar when he was hunting on Mt. Parnassus with his excellent grandfather Autolycus—who was the most accomplished thief and perjurer in the whole world—and with the sons of Autolycus. Mercury himself had endowed him with this gift, for he used to burn the thigh bones of goats and kids to him, so he took pleasure in his companionship. It happened once that Autolycus had gone to Ithaca and had found the child of his daughter just born. As soon as he had done supper Euryclea set the infant upon his knees and said, "Autolycus, you must find a name for your grandson; you greatly wished that you might have one."

"Son-in-law and daughter," replied Autolycus, "call the child thus: I am highly displeased with a large number of people in one place and another, both men and women; so name the child 'Ulysses,' or the child of anger. When he grows up and comes to visit his mother's family on Mt. Parnassus, where my possessions lie, I will make him a present and will send him on his way rejoicing."

Ulysses, therefore, went to Parnassus to get the presents from Autolycus, who with his sons shook hands with him and gave him welcome. His grandmother Amphithea threw her arms about him, and kissed his head, and both his beautiful eyes, while Autolycus desired his sons to get dinner ready, and they did as he told them. They brought in a five year old bull, flayed it, made it ready and divided it into joints; these they then cut carefully up into smaller pieces and spitted them; they roasted them sufficiently and served the portions round. Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun they feasted, and every man had his full share so that all were satisfied; but when the sun set and it came on dark, they went to bed and enjoyed the boon of sleep.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, the sons of Autolycus went out with their hounds hunting, and Ulysses went too. They climbed the wooded slopes of Parnassus and soon reached its breezy upland valleys; but as the sun was beginning to beat upon the fields, fresh-risen from the slow still currents of Oceanus, they came to a mountain dell. The dogs were in front searching for the tracks of the beast they were chasing, and after them came the sons of Autolycus, among whom was Ulysses, close behind the dogs, and he had a long spear in his hand. Here was the lair of a huge boar among some thick brushwood, so dense that the wind and rain could not get through it, nor could the sun's rays pierce it, and the ground underneath lay thick with fallen leaves. The boar heard the noise of the men's feet, and the hounds baying on every side as the huntsmen came up to him, so he rushed from his lair, raised the bristles on his neck, and stood at bay with fire flashing from his eyes. Ulysses was the first to raise his spear and try to drive it into the brute, but the boar was too quick for him, and charged him sideways, ripping him above the knee with a gash that tore deep though it did not reach the bone. As for the boar, Ulysses hit him on the right shoulder, and the point of the spear went right through him, so that he fell groaning in the dust until the life went out of him. The sons of Autolycus busied themselves with the carcass of the boar, and bound Ulysses' wound; then, after saying a spell to stop the bleeding, they went home as fast as they could. But when Autolycus and his sons had thoroughly healed Ulysses, they made him some splendid presents, and sent him back to Ithaca with much mutual good will. When he got back, his father and mother were rejoiced to see him, and asked him all about it, and how he had hurt himself to get the scar; so he told them how the boar had ripped him when he was out hunting with Autolycus and his sons on Mt. Parnassus.

As soon as Euryclea had got the scarred limb in her hands and had well hold of it, she recognised it and dropped the foot at once. The leg fell into the bath, which rang out and was overturned, so that all the water was spilt on the ground; Euryclea's eyes between her joy and her grief filled with tears, and she could not speak, but she caught Ulysses by the beard and said, "My dear child, I am sure you must be Ulysses himself, only I did not know you till I had actually touched and handled you."

As she spoke she looked towards Penelope, as though wanting to tell her that her dear husband was in the house, but Penelope was unable to look in that direction and observe what was going on, for Minerva had diverted her attention; so Ulysses caught Euryclea by the throat with his right hand and with his left drew her close to him, and said, "Nurse, do you wish to be the ruin of me, you who nursed me at your own breast, now that after twenty years of wandering I am at last come to my own home again? Since it has been borne in upon you by heaven to recognise me, hold your tongue, and do not say a word about it to any one else in the house, for if you do I tell you—and it shall surely be—that if heaven grants me to take the lives of these suitors, I will not spare you, though you are my own nurse, when I am killing the other women."

"My child," answered Euryclea, "what are you talking about? You know very well that nothing can either bend or break me. I will hold my tongue like a stone or a piece of iron; furthermore let me say, and lay my saying to your heart, when heaven has delivered the suitors into your hand, I will give you a list of the women in the house who have been ill-behaved, and of those who are guiltless."

And Ulysses answered, "Nurse, you ought not to speak in that way; I am well able to form my own opinion about one and all of them; hold your tongue and leave everything to heaven."

As he said this Euryclea left the cloister to fetch some more water, for the first had been all spilt; and when she had washed him and anointed him with oil, Ulysses drew his seat nearer to the fire to warm himself, and hid the scar under his rags. Then Penelope began talking to him and said:

"Stranger, I should like to speak with you briefly about another matter. It is indeed nearly bed time—for those, at least, who can sleep in spite of sorrow. As for myself, heaven has given me a life of such unmeasurable woe, that even by day when I am attending to my duties and looking after the servants, I am still weeping and lamenting during the whole time; then, when night comes, and we all of us go to bed, I lie awake thinking, and my heart becomes a prey to the most incessant and cruel tortures. As the dun nightingale, daughter of Pandareus, sings in the early spring from her seat in shadiest covert hid, and with many a plaintive trill pours out the tale how by mishap she killed her own child Itylus, son of king Zethus, even so does my mind toss and turn in its uncertainty whether I ought to stay with my son here, and safeguard my substance, my bondsmen, and the greatness of my house, out of regard to public opinion and the memory of my late husband, or whether it is not now time for me to go with the best of these suitors who are wooing me and making me such magnificent presents. As long as my son was still young, and unable to understand, he would not hear of my leaving my husband's house, but now that he is full grown he begs and prays me to do so, being incensed at the way in which the suitors are eating up his property. Listen, then, to a dream that I have had and interpret it for me if you can. I have twenty geese about the house that eat mash out of a trough,[155] and of which I am exceedingly fond. I

dreamed that a great eagle came swooping down from a mountain, and dug his curved beak into the neck of each of them till he had killed them all. Presently he soared off into the sky, and left them lying dead about the yard; whereon I wept in my dream till all my maids gathered round me, so piteously was I grieving because the eagle had killed my geese. Then he came back again, and perching on a projecting rafter spoke to me with human voice, and told me to leave off crying. 'Be of good courage,' he said, 'daughter of Icarius; this is no dream, but a vision of good omen that shall surely come to pass. The geese are the suitors, and I am no longer an eagle, but your own husband, who am come back to you, and who will bring these suitors to a disgraceful end.' On this I woke, and when I looked out I saw my geese at the trough eating their mash as usual."

"This dream, Madam," replied Ulysses, "can admit but of one interpretation, for had not Ulysses himself told you how it shall be fulfilled? The death of the suitors is portended, and not one single one of them will escape."

And Penelope answered, "Stranger, dreams are very curious and unaccountable things, and they do not by any means invariably come true. There are two gates through which these unsubstantial fancies proceed; the one is of horn, and the other ivory. Those that come through the gate of ivory are fatuous, but those from the gate of horn mean something to those that see them. I do not think, however, that my own dream came through the gate of horn, though I and my son should be most thankful if it proves to have done so. Furthermore I say—and lay my saying to your heart—the coming dawn will usher in the ill-omened day that is to sever me from the house of Ulysses, for I am about to hold a tournament of axes. My husband used to set up twelve axes in the court, one in front of the other, like the stays upon which a ship is built; he would then go back from them and shoot an arrow through the whole twelve. I shall make the suitors try to do the same thing, and whichever of them can string the bow most easily, and send his arrow through all the twelve axes, him will I follow, and quit this house of my lawful husband, so goodly and so abounding in wealth. But even so, I doubt not that I shall remember it in my dreams."

Then Ulysses answered, "Madam, wife of Ulysses, you need not defer your tournament, for Ulysses will return ere ever they can string the bow, handle it how they will, and send their arrows through the iron."

To this Penelope said, "As long, sir, as you will sit here and talk to me, I can have no desire to go to bed. Still, people cannot do permanently without sleep, and heaven has appointed us dwellers on earth a time for all things. I will therefore go upstairs and recline upon that couch which I have never ceased to flood with my tears from the day Ulysses set out for the city with a hateful name."

She then went upstairs to her own room, not alone, but attended by her maidens, and when there, she lamented her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyelids.

This page titled 3.14.1.19: Book XIX is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.20: Book XX

ULYSSES CANNOT SLEEP—PENELOPE'S PRAYER TO DIANA—THE TWO SIGNS FROM HEAVEN—EUMAEUS AND PHILOETIUS ARRIVE—THE SUITORS DINE—CTESIPPUS THROWS AN OX'S FOOT AT ULYSSES—THEOCLYMENUS FORETELLS DISASTER AND LEAVES THE HOUSE.

Ulysses slept in the cloister upon an undressed bullock's hide, on the top of which he threw several skins of the sheep the suitors had eaten, and Eurynome[156] threw a cloak over him after he had laid himself down. There, then, Ulysses lay wakefully brooding upon the way in which he should kill the suitors; and by and by, the women who had been in the habit of misconducting themselves with them, left the house giggling and laughing with one another. This made Ulysses very angry, and he doubted whether to get up and kill every single one of them then and there, or to let them sleep one more and last time with the suitors. His heart growled within him, and as a bitch with puppies growls and shows her teeth when she sees a stranger, so did his heart growl with anger at the evil deeds that were being done: but he beat his breast and said, "Heart, be still, you had worse than this to bear on the day when the terrible Cyclops ate your brave companions; yet you bore it in silence till your cunning got you safe out of the cave, though you made sure of being killed."

Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side and then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible, even so did he turn himself about from side to side, thinking all the time how, single handed as he was, he should contrive to kill so large a body of men as the wicked suitors. But by and by Minerva came down from heaven in the likeness of a woman, and hovered over his head saying, "My poor unhappy man, why do you lie awake in this way? This is your house: your wife is safe inside it, and so is your son who is just such a young man as any father may be proud of."

"Goddess," answered Ulysses, "all that you have said is true, but I am in some doubt as to how I shall be able to kill these wicked suitors single handed, seeing what a number of them there always are. And there is this further difficulty, which is still more considerable. Supposing that with Jove's and your assistance I succeed in killing them, I must ask you to consider where I am to escape to from their avengers when it is all over."

"For shame," replied Minerva, "why, any one else would trust a worse ally than myself, even though that ally were only a mortal and less wise than I am. Am I not a goddess, and have I not protected you throughout in all your troubles? I tell you plainly that even though there were fifty bands of men surrounding us and eager to kill us, you should take all their sheep and cattle, and drive them away with you. But go to sleep; it is a very bad thing to lie awake all night, and you shall be out of your troubles before long."

As she spoke she shed sleep over his eyes, and then went back to Olympus.

While Ulysses was thus yielding himself to a very deep slumber that eased the burden of his sorrows, his admirable wife awoke, and sitting up in her bed began to cry. When she had relieved herself by weeping she prayed to Diana saying, "Great Goddess Diana, daughter of Jove, drive an arrow into my heart and slay me; or let some whirlwind snatch me up and bear me through paths of darkness till it drop me into the mouths of over-flowing Oceanus, as it did the daughters of Pandareus. The daughters of Pandareus lost their father and mother, for the gods killed them, so they were left orphans. But Venus took care of them, and fed them on cheese, honey, and sweet wine. Juno taught them to excel all women in beauty of form and understanding; Diana gave them an imposing presence, and Minerva endowed them with every kind of accomplishment; but one day when Venus had gone up to Olympus to see Jove about getting them married (for well does he know both what shall happen and what not happen to every one) the storm winds came and spirited them away to become handmaids to the dread Erinyes. Even so I wish that the gods who live in heaven would hide me from mortal sight, or that fair Diana might strike me, for I would fain go even beneath the sad earth if I might do so still looking towards Ulysses only, and without having to yield myself to a worse man than he was. Besides, no matter how much people may grieve by day, they can put up with it so long as they can sleep at night, for when the eyes are closed in slumber people forget good and ill alike; whereas my misery haunts me even in my dreams. This very night methought there was one lying by my side who was like Ulysses as he was when he went away with his host, and I rejoiced, for I believed that it was no dream, but the very truth itself."

On this the day broke, but Ulysses heard the sound of her weeping, and it puzzled him, for it seemed as though she already knew him and was by his side. Then he gathered up the cloak and the fleeces on which he had lain, and set them on a seat in the cloister, but he took the bullock's hide out into the open. He lifted up his hands to heaven, and prayed, saying "Father Jove, since you have

seen fit to bring me over land and sea to my own home after all the afflictions you have laid upon me, give me a sign out of the mouth of some one or other of those who are now waking within the house, and let me have another sign of some kind from outside."

Thus did he pray. Jove heard his prayer and forthwith thundered high up among the clouds from the splendour of Olympus, and Ulysses was glad when he heard it. At the same time within the house, a miller-woman from hard by in the mill room lifted up her voice and gave him another sign. There were twelve miller-women whose business it was to grind wheat and barley which are the staff of life. The others had ground their task and had gone to take their rest, but this one had not yet finished, for she was not so strong as they were, and when she heard the thunder she stopped grinding and gave the sign to her master. "Father Jove," said she, "you, who rule over heaven and earth, you have thundered from a clear sky without so much as a cloud in it, and this means something for somebody; grant the prayer, then, of me your poor servant who calls upon you, and let this be the very last day that the suitors dine in the house of Ulysses. They have worn me out with labour of grinding meal for them, and I hope they may never have another dinner anywhere at all."

Ulysses was glad when he heard the omens conveyed to him by the woman's speech, and by the thunder, for he knew they meant that he should avenge himself on the suitors.

Then the other maids in the house rose and lit the fire on the hearth; Telemachus also rose and put on his clothes. He girded his sword about his shoulder, bound his sandals on to his comely feet, and took a doughty spear with a point of sharpened bronze; then he went to the threshold of the cloister and said to Euryclea, "Nurse, did you make the stranger comfortable both as regards bed and board, or did you let him shift for himself?—for my mother, good woman though she is, has a way of paying great attention to second-rate people, and of neglecting others who are in reality much better men."

"Do not find fault child," said Euryclea, "when there is no one to find fault with. The stranger sat and drank his wine as long as he liked: your mother did ask him if he would take any more bread and he said he would not. When he wanted to go to bed she told the servants to make one for him, but he said he was such a wretched outcast that he would not sleep on a bed and under blankets; he insisted on having an undressed bullock's hide and some sheepskins put for him in the cloister and I threw a cloak over him myself."[157]

Then Telemachus went out of the court to the place where the Achaeans were meeting in assembly; he had his spear in his hand, and he was not alone, for his two dogs went with him. But Euryclea called the maids and said, "Come, wake up; set about sweeping the cloisters and sprinkling them with water to lay the dust; put the covers on the seats; wipe down the tables, some of you, with a wet sponge; clean out the mixing-jugs and the cups, and go for water from the fountain at once; the suitors will be here directly; they will be here early, for it is a feast day."

Thus did she speak, and they did even as she had said: twenty of them went to the fountain for water, and the others set themselves busily to work about the house. The men who were in attendance on the suitors also came up and began chopping firewood. By and by the women returned from the fountain, and the swineherd came after them with the three best pigs he could pick out. These he let feed about the premises, and then he said good-humouredly to Ulysses, "Stranger, are the suitors treating you any better now, or are they as insolent as ever?"

"May heaven," answered Ulysses, "requite to them the wickedness with which they deal high-handedly in another man's house without any sense of shame."

Thus did they converse; meanwhile Melanthius the goatherd came up, for he too was bringing in his best goats for the suitors' dinner; and he had two shepherds with him. They tied the goats up under the gatehouse, and then Melanthius began gibing at Ulysses. "Are you still here, stranger," said he, "to pester people by begging about the house? Why can you not go elsewhere? You and I shall not come to an understanding before we have given each other a taste of our fists. You beg without any sense of decency: are there not feasts elsewhere among the Achaeans, as well as here?"

Ulysses made no answer, but bowed his head and brooded. Then a third man, Philoetius, joined them, who was bringing in a barren heifer and some goats. These were brought over by the boatmen who are there to take people over when any one comes to them. So Philoetius made his heifer and his goats secure under the gatehouse, and then went up to the swineherd. "Who, Swineherd," said he, "is this stranger that is lately come here? Is he one of your men? What is his family? Where does he come from? Poor fellow, he looks as if he had been some great man, but the gods give sorrow to whom they will—even to kings if it so pleases them."

As he spoke he went up to Ulysses and saluted him with his right hand; “Good day to you, father stranger,” said he, “you seem to be very poorly off now, but I hope you will have better times by and by. Father Jove, of all gods you are the most malicious. We are your own children, yet you show us no mercy in all our misery and afflictions. A sweat came over me when I saw this man, and my eyes filled with tears, for he reminds me of Ulysses, who I fear is going about in just such rags as this man’s are, if indeed he is still among the living. If he is already dead and in the house of Hades, then, alas! for my good master, who made me his stockman when I was quite young among the Cephallenians, and now his cattle are countless; no one could have done better with them than I have, for they have bred like ears of corn; nevertheless I have to keep bringing them in for others to eat, who take no heed to his son though he is in the house, and fear not the wrath of heaven, but are already eager to divide Ulysses’ property among them because he has been away so long. I have often thought—only it would not be right while his son is living—of going off with the cattle to some foreign country; bad as this would be, it is still harder to stay here and be ill-treated about other people’s herds. My position is intolerable, and I should long since have run away and put myself under the protection of some other chief, only that I believe my poor master will yet return, and send all these suitors flying out of the house.”

“Stockman,” answered Ulysses, “you seem to be a very well-disposed person, and I can see that you are a man of sense. Therefore I will tell you, and will confirm my words with an oath. By Jove, the chief of all gods, and by that hearth of Ulysses to which I am now come, Ulysses shall return before you leave this place, and if you are so minded you shall see him killing the suitors who are now masters here.”

“If Jove were to bring this to pass,” replied the stockman, “you should see how I would do my very utmost to help him.”

And in like manner Eumaeus prayed that Ulysses might return home.

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile the suitors were hatching a plot to murder Telemachus: but a bird flew near them on their left hand—an eagle with a dove in its talons. On this Amphinomus said, “My friends, this plot of ours to murder Telemachus will not succeed; let us go to dinner instead.”

The others assented, so they went inside and laid their cloaks on the benches and seats. They sacrificed the sheep, goats, pigs, and the heifer, and when the inward meats were cooked they served them round. They mixed the wine in the mixing-bowls, and the swineherd gave every man his cup, while Philoetius handed round the bread in the bread baskets, and Melanthius poured them out their wine. Then they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them.

Telemachus purposely made Ulysses sit in the part of the cloister that was paved with stone;[158] he gave him a shabby looking seat at a little table to himself, and had his portion of the inward meats brought to him, with his wine in a gold cup. “Sit there,” said he, “and drink your wine among the great people. I will put a stop to the gibes and blows of the suitors, for this is no public house, but belongs to Ulysses, and has passed from him to me. Therefore, suitors, keep your hands and your tongues to yourselves, or there will be mischief.”

The suitors bit their lips, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech; then Antinous said, “We do not like such language but we will put up with it, for Telemachus is threatening us in good earnest. If Jove had let us we should have put a stop to his brave talk ere now.”

Thus spoke Antinous, but Telemachus heeded him not. Meanwhile the heralds were bringing the holy hecatomb through the city, and the Achaeans gathered under the shady grove of Apollo.

Then they roasted the outer meat, drew it off the spits, gave every man his portion, and feasted to their heart’s content; those who waited at table gave Ulysses exactly the same portion as the others had, for Telemachus had told them to do so.

But Minerva would not let the suitors for one moment drop their insolence, for she wanted Ulysses to become still more bitter against them. Now there happened to be among them a ribald fellow, whose name was Ctesippus, and who came from Same. This man, confident in his great wealth, was paying court to the wife of Ulysses, and said to the suitors, “Hear what I have to say. The stranger has already had as large a portion as any one else; this is well, for it is not right nor reasonable to ill-treat any guest of Telemachus who comes here. I will, however, make him a present on my own account, that he may have something to give to the bath-woman, or to some other of Ulysses’ servants.”

As he spoke he picked up a heifer’s foot from the meat-basket in which it lay, and threw it at Ulysses, but Ulysses turned his head a little aside, and avoided it, smiling grimly Sardinian fashion[159] as he did so, and it hit the wall, not him. On this Telemachus spoke fiercely to Ctesippus, “It is a good thing for you,” said he, “that the stranger turned his head so that you missed him. If you had hit

him I should have run you through with my spear, and your father would have had to see about getting you buried rather than married in this house. So let me have no more unseemly behaviour from any of you, for I am grown up now to the knowledge of good and evil and understand what is going on, instead of being the child that I have been heretofore. I have long seen you killing my sheep and making free with my corn and wine: I have put up with this, for one man is no match for many, but do me no further violence. Still, if you wish to kill me, kill me; I would far rather die than see such disgraceful scenes day after day—guests insulted, and men dragging the women servants about the house in an unseemly way."

They all held their peace till at last Agelaus son of Damastor said, "No one should take offence at what has just been said, nor gainsay it, for it is quite reasonable. Leave off, therefore, ill-treating the stranger, or any one else of the servants who are about the house; I would say, however, a friendly word to Telemachus and his mother, which I trust may commend itself to both. 'As long,' I would say, 'as you had ground for hoping that Ulysses would one day come home, no one could complain of your waiting and suffering160 the suitors to be in your house. It would have been better that he should have returned, but it is now sufficiently clear that he will never do so; therefore talk all this quietly over with your mother, and tell her to marry the best man, and the one who makes her the most advantageous offer. Thus you will yourself be able to manage your own inheritance, and to eat and drink in peace, while your mother will look after some other man's house, not yours.'"

To this Telemachus answered, "By Jove, Agelaus, and by the sorrows of my unhappy father, who has either perished far from Ithaca, or is wandering in some distant land, I throw no obstacles in the way of my mother's marriage; on the contrary I urge her to choose whomsoever she will, and I will give her numberless gifts into the bargain, but I dare not insist point blank that she shall leave the house against her own wishes. Heaven forbid that I should do this."

Minerva now made the suitors fall to laughing immoderately, and set their wits wandering; but they were laughing with a forced laughter. Their meat became smeared with blood; their eyes filled with tears, and their hearts were heavy with forebodings. Theoclymenus saw this and said, "Unhappy men, what is it that ails you? There is a shroud of darkness drawn over you from head to foot, your cheeks are wet with tears; the air is alive with wailing voices; the walls and roof-beams drip blood; the gate of the cloisters and the court beyond them are full of ghosts trooping down into the night of hell; the sun is blotted out of heaven, and a blighting gloom is over all the land."

Thus did he speak, and they all of them laughed heartily. Eurymachus then said, "This stranger who has lately come here has lost his senses. Servants, turn him out into the streets, since he finds it so dark here."

But Theoclymenus said, "Eurymachus, you need not send any one with me. I have eyes, ears, and a pair of feet of my own, to say nothing of an understanding mind. I will take these out of the house with me, for I see mischief overhanging you, from which not one of you men who are insulting people and plotting ill deeds in the house of Ulysses will be able to escape."

He left the house as he spoke, and went back to Piraeus who gave him welcome, but the suitors kept looking at one another and provoking Telemachus by laughing at the strangers. One insolent fellow said to him, "Telemachus, you are not happy in your guests; first you have this importunate tramp, who comes begging bread and wine and has no skill for work or for hard fighting, but is perfectly useless, and now here is another fellow who is setting himself up as a prophet. Let me persuade you, for it will be much better to put them on board ship and send them off to the Sicels to sell for what they will bring."

Telemachus gave him no heed, but sate silently watching his father, expecting every moment that he would begin his attack upon the suitors.

Meanwhile the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, had had a rich seat placed for her facing the court and cloisters, so that she could hear what every one was saying. The dinner indeed had been prepared amid much merriment; it had been both good and abundant, for they had sacrificed many victims; but the supper was yet to come, and nothing can be conceived more gruesome than the meal which a goddess and a brave man were soon to lay before them—for they had brought their doom upon themselves.

This page titled 3.14.1.20: Book XX is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.21: Book XXI

THE TRIAL OF THE AXES, DURING WHICH ULYSSES REVEALS HIMSELF TO EUMAEUS AND PHILOETIUS

Minerva now put it in Penelope's mind to make the suitors try their skill with the bow and with the iron axes, in contest among themselves, as a means of bringing about their destruction. She went upstairs and got the store-room key, which was made of bronze and had a handle of ivory; she then went with her maidens into the store-room at the end of the house, where her husband's treasures of gold, bronze, and wrought iron were kept, and where was also his bow, and the quiver full of deadly arrows that had been given him by a friend whom he had met in Lacedaemon—Iphitus the son of Eurytus. The two fell in with one another in Messene at the house of Ortilochus, where Ulysses was staying in order to recover a debt that was owing from the whole people; for the Messenians had carried off three hundred sheep from Ithaca, and had sailed away with them and with their shepherds. In quest of these Ulysses took a long journey while still quite young, for his father and the other chieftains sent him on a mission to recover them. Iphitus had gone there also to try and get back twelve brood mares that he had lost, and the mule foals that were running with them. These mares were the death of him in the end, for when he went to the house of Jove's son, mighty Hercules, who performed such prodigies of valour, Hercules to his shame killed him, though he was his guest, for he feared not heaven's vengeance, nor yet respected his own table which he had set before Iphitus, but killed him in spite of everything, and kept the mares himself. It was when claiming these that Iphitus met Ulysses, and gave him the bow which mighty Eurytus had been used to carry, and which on his death had been left by him to his son. Ulysses gave him in return a sword and a spear, and this was the beginning of a fast friendship, although they never visited at one another's houses, for Jove's son Hercules killed Iphitus ere they could do so. This bow, then, given him by Iphitus, had not been taken with him by Ulysses when he sailed for Troy; he had used it so long as he had been at home, but had left it behind as having been a keepsake from a valued friend.

Penelope presently reached the oak threshold of the store-room; the carpenter had planed this duly, and had drawn a line on it so as to get it quite straight; he had then set the door posts into it and hung the doors. She loosed the strap from the handle of the door, put in the key, and drove it straight home to shoot back the bolts that held the doors;[161] these flew open with a noise like a bull bellowing in a meadow, and Penelope stepped upon the raised platform, where the chests stood in which the fair linen and clothes were laid by along with fragrant herbs: reaching thence, she took down the bow with its bow case from the peg on which it hung. She sat down with it on her knees, weeping bitterly as she took the bow out of its case, and when her tears had relieved her, she went to the cloister where the suitors were, carrying the bow and the quiver, with the many deadly arrows that were inside it. Along with her came her maidens, bearing a chest that contained much iron and bronze which her husband had won as prizes. When she reached the suitors, she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister, holding a veil before her face, and with a maid on either side of her. Then she said:

"Listen to me you suitors, who persist in abusing the hospitality of this house because its owner has been long absent, and without other pretext than that you want to marry me; this, then, being the prize that you are contending for, I will bring out the mighty bow of Ulysses, and whomsoever of you shall string it most easily and send his arrow through each one of twelve axes, him will I follow and quit this house of my lawful husband, so goodly, and so abounding in wealth. But even so I doubt not that I shall remember it in my dreams."

As she spoke, she told Eumaeus to set the bow and the pieces of iron before the suitors, and Eumaeus wept as he took them to do as she had bidden him. Hard by, the stockman wept also when he saw his master's bow, but Antinous scolded them. "You country louts," said he, "silly simpletons; why should you add to the sorrows of your mistress by crying in this way? She has enough to grieve her in the loss of her husband; sit still, therefore, and eat your dinners in silence, or go outside if you want to cry, and leave the bow behind you. We suitors shall have to contend for it with might and main, for we shall find it no light matter to string such a bow as this is. There is not a man of us all who is such another as Ulysses; for I have seen him and remember him, though I was then only a child."

This was what he said, but all the time he was expecting to be able to string the bow and shoot through the iron, whereas in fact he was to be the first that should taste of the arrows from the hands of Ulysses, whom he was dishonouring in his own house—egging the others on to do so also.

Then Telemachus spoke. "Great heavens!" he exclaimed, "Jove must have robbed me of my senses. Here is my dear and excellent mother saying she will quit this house and marry again, yet I am laughing and enjoying myself as though there were nothing

happening. But, suitors, as the contest has been agreed upon, let it go forward. It is for a woman whose peer is not to be found in Pylos, Argos, or Mycene, nor yet in Ithaca nor on the mainland. You know this as well as I do; what need have I to speak in praise of my mother? Come on, then, make no excuses for delay, but let us see whether you can string the bow or no. I too will make trial of it, for if I can string it and shoot through the iron, I shall not suffer my mother to quit this house with a stranger, not if I can win the prizes which my father won before me."

As he spoke he sprang from his seat, threw his crimson cloak from him, and took his sword from his shoulder. First he set the axes in a row, in a long groove which he had dug for them, and had made straight by line.[162] Then he stamped the earth tight round them, and everyone was surprised when they saw him set them up so orderly, though he had never seen anything of the kind before. This done, he went on to the pavement to make trial of the bow; thrice did he tug at it, trying with all his might to draw the string, and thrice he had to leave off, though he had hoped to string the bow and shoot through the iron. He was trying for the fourth time, and would have strung it had not Ulysses made a sign to check him in spite of all his eagerness. So he said:

"Alas! I shall either be always feeble and of no prowess, or I am too young, and have not yet reached my full strength so as to be able to hold my own if any one attacks me. You others, therefore, who are stronger than I, make trial of the bow and get this contest settled."

On this he put the bow down, letting it lean against the door [that led into the house] with the arrow standing against the top of the bow. Then he sat down on the seat from which he had risen, and Antinous said:

"Come on each of you in his turn, going towards the right from the place at which the cupbearer begins when he is handing round the wine."

The rest agreed, and Leiodes son of Oenops was the first to rise. He was sacrificial priest to the suitors, and sat in the corner near the mixing-bowl. [163] He was the only man who hated their evil deeds and was indignant with the others. He was now the first to take the bow and arrow, so he went on to the pavement to make his trial, but he could not string the bow, for his hands were weak and unused to hard work, they therefore soon grew tired, and he said to the suitors, "My friends, I cannot string it; let another have it, this bow shall take the life and soul out of many a chief among us, for it is better to die than to live after having missed the prize that we have so long striven for, and which has brought us so long together. Some one of us is even now hoping and praying that he may marry Penelope, but when he has seen this bow and tried it, let him woo and make bridal offerings to some other woman, and let Penelope marry whoever makes her the best offer and whose lot it is to win her."

On this he put the bow down, letting it lean against the door,[164] with the arrow standing against the tip of the bow. Then he took his seat again on the seat from which he had risen; and Antinous rebuked him saying:

"Leiodes, what are you talking about? Your words are monstrous and intolerable; it makes me angry to listen to you. Shall, then, this bow take the life of many a chief among us, merely because you cannot bend it yourself? True, you were not born to be an archer, but there are others who will soon string it."

Then he said to Melanthius the goatherd, "Look sharp, light a fire in the court, and set a seat hard by with a sheep skin on it; bring us also a large ball of lard, from what they have in the house. Let us warm the bow and grease it—we will then make trial of it again, and bring the contest to an end."

Melanthius lit the fire, and set a seat covered with sheep skins beside it. He also brought a great ball of lard from what they had in the house, and the suitors warmed the bow and again made trial of it, but they were none of them nearly strong enough to string it. Nevertheless there still remained Antinous and Eurymachus, who were the ringleaders among the suitors and much the foremost among them all.

Then the swineherd and the stockman left the cloisters together, and Ulysses followed them. When they had got outside the gates and the outer yard, Ulysses said to them quietly:

"Stockman, and you swineherd, I have something in my mind which I am in doubt whether to say or no; but I think I will say it. What manner of men would you be to stand by Ulysses, if some god should bring him back here all of a sudden? Say which you are disposed to do—to side with the suitors, or with Ulysses?"

"Father Jove," answered the stockman, "would indeed that you might so ordain it. If some god were but to bring Ulysses back, you should see with what might and main I would fight for him."

In like words Eumaeus prayed to all the gods that Ulysses might return; when, therefore, he saw for certain what mind they were of, Ulysses said, “It is I, Ulysses, who am here. I have suffered much, but at last, in the twentieth year, I am come back to my own country. I find that you two alone of all my servants are glad that I should do so, for I have not heard any of the others praying for my return. To you two, therefore, will I unfold the truth as it shall be. If heaven shall deliver the suitors into my hands, I will find wives for both of you, will give you house and holding close to my own, and you shall be to me as though you were brothers and friends of Telemachus. I will now give you convincing proofs that you may know me and be assured. See, here is the scar from the boar’s tooth that ripped me when I was out hunting on Mt. Parnassus with the sons of Autolycus.”

As he spoke he drew his rags aside from the great scar, and when they had examined it thoroughly, they both of them wept about Ulysses, threw their arms round him, and kissed his head and shoulders, while Ulysses kissed their hands and faces in return. The sun would have gone down upon their mourning if Ulysses had not checked them and said:

“Cease your weeping, lest some one should come outside and see us, and tell those who are within. When you go in, do so separately, not both together; I will go first, and do you follow afterwards; let this moreover be the token between us; the suitors will all of them try to prevent me from getting hold of the bow and quiver; do you, therefore, Eumaeus, place it in my hands when you are carrying it about, and tell the women to close the doors of their apartment. If they hear any groaning or uproar as of men fighting about the house, they must not come out; they must keep quiet, and stay where they are at their work. And I charge you, Philoetius, to make fast the doors of the outer court, and to bind them securely at once.”

When he had thus spoken, he went back to the house and took the seat that he had left. Presently, his two servants followed him inside.

At this moment the bow was in the hands of Eurymachus, who was warming it by the fire, but even so he could not string it, and he was greatly grieved. He heaved a deep sigh and said, “I grieve for myself and for us all; I grieve that I shall have to forgo the marriage, but I do not care nearly so much about this, for there are plenty of other women in Ithaca and elsewhere; what I feel most is the fact of our being so inferior to Ulysses in strength that we cannot string his bow. This will disgrace us in the eyes of those who are yet unborn.”

“It shall not be so, Eurymachus,” said Antinous, “and you know it yourself. Today is the feast of Apollo throughout all the land; who can string a bow on such a day as this? Put it on one side—as for the axes they can stay where they are, for no one is likely to come to the house and take them away: let the cupbearer go round with his cups, that we may make our drink-offerings and drop this matter of the bow; we will tell Melanthius to bring us in some goats tomorrow—the best he has; we can then offer thigh bones to Apollo the mighty archer, and again make trial of the bow, so as to bring the contest to an end.”

The rest approved his words, and thereon men servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering. Then, when they had made their offerings and had drunk each as much as he desired, Ulysses craftily said:—

“Suitors of the illustrious queen, listen that I may speak even as I am minded. I appeal more especially to Eurymachus, and to Antinous who has just spoken with so much reason. Cease shooting for the present and leave the matter to the gods, but in the morning let heaven give victory to whom it will. For the moment, however, give me the bow that I may prove the power of my hands among you all, and see whether I still have as much strength as I used to have, or whether travel and neglect have made an end of it.”

This made them all very angry, for they feared he might string the bow, Antinous therefore rebuked him fiercely saying, “Wretched creature, you have not so much as a grain of sense in your whole body; you ought to think yourself lucky in being allowed to dine unharmed among your betters, without having any smaller portion served you than we others have had, and in being allowed to hear our conversation. No other beggar or stranger has been allowed to hear what we say among ourselves; the wine must have been doing you a mischief, as it does with all those who drink immoderately. It was wine that inflamed the Centaur Eurytion when he was staying with Peirithous among the Lapithae. When the wine had got into his head, he went mad and did ill deeds about the house of Peirithous; this angered the heroes who were there assembled, so they rushed at him and cut off his ears and nostrils; then they dragged him through the doorway out of the house, so he went away crazed, and bore the burden of his crime, bereft of understanding. Henceforth, therefore, there was war between mankind and the centaurs, but he brought it upon himself through his own drunkenness. In like manner I can tell you that it will go hardly with you if you string the bow: you will find no mercy from

any one here, for we shall at once ship you off to king Echetus, who kills every one that comes near him: you will never get away alive, so drink and keep quiet without getting into a quarrel with men younger than yourself."

Penelope then spoke to him. "Antinous," said she, "it is not right that you should ill-treat any guest of Telemachus who comes to this house. If the stranger should prove strong enough to string the mighty bow of Ulysses, can you suppose that he would take me home with him and make me his wife? Even the man himself can have no such idea in his mind: none of you need let that disturb his feasting; it would be out of all reason."

"Queen Penelope," answered Eurymachus, "we do not suppose that this man will take you away with him; it is impossible; but we are afraid lest some of the baser sort, men or women among the Achaeans, should go gossiping about and say, 'These suitors are a feeble folk; they are paying court to the wife of a brave man whose bow not one of them was able to string, and yet a beggarly tramp who came to the house strung it at once and sent an arrow through the iron.' This is what will be said, and it will be a scandal against us."

"Eurymachus," Penelope answered, "people who persist in eating up the estate of a great chieftain and dishonouring his house must not expect others to think well of them. Why then should you mind if men talk as you think they will? This stranger is strong and well-built, he says moreover that he is of noble birth. Give him the bow, and let us see whether he can string it or no. I say—and it shall surely be—that if Apollo vouchsafes him the glory of stringing it, I will give him a cloak and shirt of good wear, with a javelin to keep off dogs and robbers, and a sharp sword. I will also give him sandals, and will see him sent safely wherever he wants to go."

Then Telemachus said, "Mother, I am the only man either in Ithaca or in the islands that are over against Elis who has the right to let any one have the bow or to refuse it. No one shall force me one way or the other, not even though I choose to make the stranger a present of the bow outright, and let him take it away with him. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants. This bow is a man's matter, and mine above all others, for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva sent sweet sleep over her eyelids.

The swineherd now took up the bow and was for taking it to Ulysses, but the suitors clamoured at him from all parts of the cloisters, and one of them said, "You idiot, where are you taking the bow to? Are you out of your wits? If Apollo and the other gods will grant our prayer, your own boarhounds shall get you into some quiet little place, and worry you to death."

Eumaeus was frightened at the outcry they all raised, so he put the bow down then and there, but Telemachus shouted out at him from the other side of the cloisters, and threatened him saying, "Father Eumaeus, bring the bow on in spite of them, or young as I am I will pelt you with stones back to the country, for I am the better man of the two. I wish I was as much stronger than all the other suitors in the house as I am than you, I would soon send some of them off sick and sorry, for they mean mischief."

Thus did he speak, and they all of them laughed heartily, which put them in a better humour with Telemachus; so Eumaeus brought the bow on and placed it in the hands of Ulysses. When he had done this, he called Euryclea apart and said to her, "Euryclea, Telemachus says you are to close the doors of the women's apartments. If they hear any groaning or uproar as of men fighting about the house, they are not to come out, but are to keep quiet and stay where they are at their work."

Euryclea did as she was told and closed the doors of the women's apartments.

Meanwhile Philoetius slipped quietly out and made fast the gates of the outer court. There was a ship's cable of byblus fibre lying in the gatehouse, so he made the gates fast with it and then came in again, resuming the seat that he had left, and keeping an eye on Ulysses, who had now got the bow in his hands, and was turning it every way about, and proving it all over to see whether the worms had been eating into its two horns during his absence. Then would one turn towards his neighbour saying, "This is some tricky old bow-fancier; either he has got one like it at home, or he wants to make one, in such workmanlike style does the old vagabond handle it."

Another said, "I hope he may be no more successful in other things than he is likely to be in stringing this bow."

But Ulysses, when he had taken it up and examined it all over, strung it as easily as a skilled bard strings a new peg of his lyre and makes the twisted gut fast at both ends. Then he took it in his right hand to prove the string, and it sang sweetly under his touch like

the twittering of a swallow. The suitors were dismayed, and turned colour as they heard it; at that moment, moreover, Jove thundered loudly as a sign, and the heart of Ulysses rejoiced as he heard the omen that the son of scheming Saturn had sent him.

He took an arrow that was lying upon the table165—for those which the Achaeans were so shortly about to taste were all inside the quiver—he laid it on the centre-piece of the bow, and drew the notch of the arrow and the string toward him, still seated on his seat. When he had taken aim he let fly, and his arrow pierced every one of the handle-holes of the axes from the first onwards till it had gone right through them, and into the outer courtyard. Then he said to Telemachus:

“Your guest has not disgraced you, Telemachus. I did not miss what I aimed at, and I was not long in stringing my bow. I am still strong, and not as the suitors twit me with being. Now, however, it is time for the Achaeans to prepare supper while there is still daylight, and then otherwise to disport themselves with song and dance which are the crowning ornaments of a banquet.”

As he spoke he made a sign with his eyebrows, and Telemachus girded on his sword, grasped his spear, and stood armed beside his father’s seat.

This page titled 3.14.1.21: Book XXI is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.22: Book XXII

THE KILLING OF THE SUITORS—THE MAIDS WHO HAVE MISCONDUCTED THEMSELVES ARE MADE TO CLEANSE THE CLOISTERS AND ARE THEN HANGED.

Then Ulysses tore off his rags, and sprang on to the broad pavement with his bow and his quiver full of arrows. He shed the arrows on to the ground at his feet and said, “The mighty contest is at an end. I will now see whether Apollo will vouchsafe it to me to hit another mark which no man has yet hit.”

On this he aimed a deadly arrow at Antinous, who was about to take up a two-handled gold cup to drink his wine and already had it in his hands. He had no thought of death—who amongst all the revellers would think that one man, however brave, would stand alone among so many and kill him? The arrow struck Antinous in the throat, and the point went clean through his neck, so that he fell over and the cup dropped from his hand, while a thick stream of blood gushed from his nostrils. He kicked the table from him and upset the things on it, so that the bread and roasted meats were all soiled as they fell over on to the ground.[166] The suitors were in an uproar when they saw that a man had been hit; they sprang in dismay one and all of them from their seats and looked everywhere towards the walls, but there was neither shield nor spear, and they rebuked Ulysses very angrily. “Stranger,” said they, “you shall pay for shooting people in this way: you shall see no other contest; you are a doomed man; he whom you have slain was the foremost youth in Ithaca, and the vultures shall devour you for having killed him.”

Thus they spoke, for they thought that he had killed Antinous by mistake, and did not perceive that death was hanging over the head of every one of them. But Ulysses glared at them and said:

“Dogs, did you think that I should not come back from Troy? You have wasted my substance,[167] have forced my women servants to lie with you, and have wooed my wife while I was still living. You have feared neither God nor man, and now you shall die.”

They turned pale with fear as he spoke, and every man looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety, but Eurymachus alone spoke.

“If you are Ulysses,” said he, “then what you have said is just. We have done much wrong on your lands and in your house. But Antinous who was the head and front of the offending lies low already. It was all his doing. It was not that he wanted to marry Penelope; he did not so much care about that; what he wanted was something quite different, and Jove has not vouchsafed it to him; he wanted to kill your son and to be chief man in Ithaca. Now, therefore, that he has met the death which was his due, spare the lives of your people. We will make everything good among ourselves, and pay you in full for all that we have eaten and drunk. Each one of us shall pay you a fine worth twenty oxen, and we will keep on giving you gold and bronze till your heart is softened. Until we have done this no one can complain of your being enraged against us.”

Ulysses again glared at him and said, “Though you should give me all that you have in the world both now and all that you ever shall have, I will not stay my hand till I have paid all of you in full. You must fight, or fly for your lives; and fly, not a man of you shall.”

Their hearts sank as they heard him, but Eurymachus again spoke saying:

“My friends, this man will give us no quarter. He will stand where he is and shoot us down till he has killed every man among us. Let us then show fight; draw your swords, and hold up the tables to shield you from his arrows. Let us have at him with a rush, to drive him from the pavement and doorway: we can then get through into the town, and raise such an alarm as shall soon stay his shooting.”

As he spoke he drew his keen blade of bronze, sharpened on both sides, and with a loud cry sprang towards Ulysses, but Ulysses instantly shot an arrow into his breast that caught him by the nipple and fixed itself in his liver. He dropped his sword and fell doubled up over his table. The cup and all the meats went over on to the ground as he smote the earth with his forehead in the agonies of death, and he kicked the stool with his feet until his eyes were closed in darkness.

Then Amphinomus drew his sword and made straight at Ulysses to try and get him away from the door; but Telemachus was too quick for him, and struck him from behind; the spear caught him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell heavily to the ground and struck the earth with his forehead. Then Telemachus sprang away from him, leaving his spear still in the body, for he feared that if he stayed to draw it out, some one of the Achaeans might come up and hack at him with his sword, or knock him down, so he set off at a run, and immediately was at his father’s side. Then he said:

“Father, let me bring you a shield, two spears, and a brass helmet for your temples. I will arm myself as well, and will bring other armour for the swineherd and the stockman, for we had better be armed.”

“Run and fetch them,” answered Ulysses, “while my arrows hold out, or when I am alone they may get me away from the door.”

Telemachus did as his father said, and went off to the store room where the armour was kept. He chose four shields, eight spears, and four brass helmets with horse-hair plumes. He brought them with all speed to his father, and armed himself first, while the stockman and the swineherd also put on their armour, and took their places near Ulysses. Meanwhile Ulysses, as long as his arrows lasted, had been shooting the suitors one by one, and they fell thick on one another: when his arrows gave out, he set the bow to stand against the end wall of the house by the door post, and hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders; on his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it,168 and he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears.

Now there was a trap door169 on the wall, while at one end of the pavement170 there was an exit leading to a narrow passage, and this exit was closed by a well-made door. Ulysses told Philoetius to stand by this door and guard it, for only one person could attack it at a time. But Agelaus shouted out, “Cannot some one go up to the trap door and tell the people what is going on? Help would come at once, and we should soon make an end of this man and his shooting.”

“This may not be, Agelaus,” answered Melanthius, “the mouth of the narrow passage is dangerously near the entrance to the outer court. One brave man could prevent any number from getting in. But I know what I will do, I will bring you arms from the store-room, for I am sure it is there that Ulysses and his son have put them.”

On this the goatherd Melanthius went by back passages to the store-room of Ulysses’ house. There he chose twelve shields, with as many helmets and spears, and brought them back as fast as he could to give them to the suitors. Ulysses’ heart began to fail him when he saw the suitors171 putting on their armour and brandishing their spears. He saw the greatness of the danger, and said to Telemachus, “Some one of the women inside is helping the suitors against us, or it may be Melanthius.”

Telemachus answered, “The fault, father, is mine, and mine only; I left the store room door open, and they have kept a sharper look out than I have. Go, Eumaeus, put the door to, and see whether it is one of the women who is doing this, or whether, as I suspect, it is Melanthius the son of Dolius.”

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Melanthius was again going to the store room to fetch more armour, but the swineherd saw him and said to Ulysses who was beside him, “Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, it is that scoundrel Melanthius, just as we suspected, who is going to the store room. Say, shall I kill him, if I can get the better of him, or shall I bring him here that you may take your own revenge for all the many wrongs that he has done in your house?”

Ulysses answered, “Telemachus and I will hold these suitors in check, no matter what they do; go back both of you and bind Melanthius’ hands and feet behind him. Throw him into the store room and make the door fast behind you; then fasten a noose about his body, and string him close up to the rafters from a high bearing-post,172 that he may linger on in an agony.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said; they went to the store room, which they entered before Melanthius saw them, for he was busy searching for arms in the innermost part of the room, so the two took their stand on either side of the door and waited. By and by Melanthius came out with a helmet in one hand, and an old dry-rotted shield in the other, which had been borne by Laertes when he was young, but which had been long since thrown aside, and the straps had become unsewn; on this the two seized him, dragged him back by the hair, and threw him struggling to the ground. They bent his hands and feet well behind his back, and bound them tight with a painful bond as Ulysses had told them; then they fastened a noose about his body and strung him up from a high pillar till he was close up to the rafters, and over him did you then vaunt, O swineherd Eumaeus saying, “Melanthius, you will pass the night on a soft bed as you deserve. You will know very well when morning comes from the streams of Oceanus, and it is time for you to be driving in your goats for the suitors to feast on.”

There, then, they left him in very cruel bondage, and having put on their armour they closed the door behind them and went back to take their places by the side of Ulysses; whereon the four men stood in the cloister, fierce and full of fury; nevertheless, those who were in the body of the court were still both brave and many. Then Jove’s daughter Minerva came up to them, having assumed the voice and form of Mentor. Ulysses was glad when he saw her and said, “Mentor, lend me your help, and forget not your old comrade, nor the many good turns he has done you. Besides, you are my age-mate.”

But all the time he felt sure it was Minerva, and the suitors from the other side raised an uproar when they saw her. Agelaus was the first to reproach her. “Mentor,” he cried, “do not let Ulysses beguile you into siding with him and fighting the suitors. This is what we will do: when we have killed these people, father and son, we will kill you too. You shall pay for it with your head, and when we have killed you, we will take all you have, in doors or out, and bring it into hotch-pot with Ulysses’ property; we will not let your sons live in your house, nor your daughters, nor shall your widow continue to live in the city of Ithaca.”

This made Minerva still more furious, so she scolded Ulysses very angrily.[173] “Ulysses,” said she, “your strength and prowess are no longer what they were when you fought for nine long years among the Trojans about the noble lady Helen. You killed many a man in those days, and it was through your stratagem that Priam’s city was taken. How comes it that you are so lamentably less valiant now that you are on your own ground, face to face with the suitors in your own house? Come on, my good fellow, stand by my side and see how Mentor, son of Alcimus shall fight your foes and requite your kindnesses conferred upon him.”

But she would not give him full victory as yet, for she wished still further to prove his own prowess and that of his brave son, so she flew up to one of the rafters in the roof of the cloister and sat upon it in the form of a swallow.

Meanwhile Agelaus son of Damastor, Eurynomus, Amphimedon, Demoptolemus, Pisander, and Polybus son of Polyctor bore the brunt of the fight upon the suitors’ side; of all those who were still fighting for their lives they were by far the most valiant, for the others had already fallen under the arrows of Ulysses. Agelaus shouted to them and said, “My friends, he will soon have to leave off, for Mentor has gone away after having done nothing for him but brag. They are standing at the doors unsupported. Do not aim at him all at once, but six of you throw your spears first, and see if you cannot cover yourselves with glory by killing him. When he has fallen we need not be uneasy about the others.”

They threw their spears as he bade them, but Minerva made them all of no effect. One hit the door post; another went against the door; the pointed shaft of another struck the wall; and as soon as they had avoided all the spears of the suitors Ulysses said to his own men, “My friends, I should say we too had better let drive into the middle of them, or they will crown all the harm they have done us by killing us outright.”

They therefore aimed straight in front of them and threw their spears. Ulysses killed Demoptolemus, Telemachus Euryades, Eumaeus Elatus, while the stockman killed Pisander. These all bit the dust, and as the others drew back into a corner Ulysses and his men rushed forward and regained their spears by drawing them from the bodies of the dead.

The suitors now aimed a second time, but again Minerva made their weapons for the most part without effect. One hit a bearing-post of the cloister; another went against the door; while the pointed shaft of another struck the wall. Still, Amphimedon just took a piece of the top skin from off Telemachus’s wrist, and Ctesippus managed to graze Eumaeus’s shoulder above his shield; but the spear went on and fell to the ground. Then Ulysses and his men let drive into the crowd of suitors. Ulysses hit Eurydamas, Telemachus Amphimedon, and Eumaeus Polybus. After this the stockman hit Ctesippus in the breast, and taunted him saying, “Foul-mouthed son of Polytherses, do not be so foolish as to talk wickedly another time, but let heaven direct your speech, for the gods are far stronger than men. I make you a present of this advice to repay you for the foot which you gave Ulysses when he was begging about in his own house.”

Thus spoke the stockman, and Ulysses struck the son of Damastor with a spear in close fight, while Telemachus hit Leocritus son of Evenor in the belly, and the dart went clean through him, so that he fell forward full on his face upon the ground. Then Minerva from her seat on the rafter held up her deadly aegis, and the hearts of the suitors quailed. They fled to the other end of the court like a herd of cattle maddened by the gadfly in early summer when the days are at their longest. As eagle-beaked, crook-taloned vultures from the mountains swoop down on the smaller birds that cower in flocks upon the ground, and kill them, for they cannot either fight or fly, and lookers on enjoy the sport—even so did Ulysses and his men fall upon the suitors and smite them on every side. They made a horrible groaning as their brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with their blood.

Leiodes then caught the knees of Ulysses and said, “Ulysses I beseech you have mercy upon me and spare me. I never wronged any of the women in your house either in word or deed, and I tried to stop the others. I saw them, but they would not listen, and now they are paying for their folly. I was their sacrificing priest; if you kill me, I shall die without having done anything to deserve it, and shall have got no thanks for all the good that I did.”

Ulysses looked sternly at him and answered, “If you were their sacrificing priest, you must have prayed many a time that it might be long before I got home again, and that you might marry my wife and have children by her. Therefore you shall die.”

With these words he picked up the sword that Agelaus had dropped when he was being killed, and which was lying upon the ground. Then he struck Leiodes on the back of his neck, so that his head fell rolling in the dust while he was yet speaking.

The minstrel Phemius son of Terpes—he who had been forced by the suitors to sing to them—now tried to save his life. He was standing near towards the trap door,[174] and held his lyre in his hand. He did not know whether to fly out of the cloister and sit down by the altar of Jove that was in the outer court, and on which both Laertes and Ulysses had offered up the thigh bones of many an ox, or whether to go straight up to Ulysses and embrace his knees, but in the end he deemed it best to embrace Ulysses' knees. So he laid his lyre on the ground between the mixing bowl [175] and the silver-studded seat; then going up to Ulysses he caught hold of his knees and said, "Ulysses, I beseech you have mercy on me and spare me. You will be sorry for it afterwards if you kill a bard who can sing both for gods and men as I can. I make all my lays myself, and heaven visits me with every kind of inspiration. I would sing to you as though you were a god, do not therefore be in such a hurry to cut my head off. Your own son Telemachus will tell you that I did not want to frequent your house and sing to the suitors after their meals, but they were too many and too strong for me, so they made me."

Telemachus heard him, and at once went up to his father. "Hold!" he cried, "the man is guiltless, do him no hurt; and we will spare Medon too, who was always good to me when I was a boy, unless Philoetius or Eumaeus has already killed him, or he has fallen in your way when you were raging about the court."

Medon caught these words of Telemachus, for he was crouching under a seat beneath which he had hidden by covering himself up with a freshly flayed heifer's hide, so he threw off the hide, went up to Telemachus, and laid hold of his knees.

"Here I am, my dear sir," said he, "stay your hand therefore, and tell your father, or he will kill me in his rage against the suitors for having wasted his substance and been so foolishly disrespectful to yourself."

Ulysses smiled at him and answered, "Fear not; Telemachus has saved your life, that you may know in future, and tell other people, how greatly better good deeds prosper than evil ones. Go, therefore, outside the cloisters into the outer court, and be out of the way of the slaughter—you and the bard—while I finish my work here inside."

The pair went into the outer court as fast as they could, and sat down by Jove's great altar, looking fearfully round, and still expecting that they would be killed. Then Ulysses searched the whole court carefully over, to see if anyone had managed to hide himself and was still living, but he found them all lying in the dust and weltering in their blood. They were like fishes which fishermen have netted out of the sea, and thrown upon the beach to lie gasping for water till the heat of the sun makes an end of them. Even so were the suitors lying all huddled up one against the other.

Then Ulysses said to Telemachus, "Call nurse Euryclea; I have something to say to her."

Telemachus went and knocked at the door of the women's room. "Make haste," said he, "you old woman who have been set over all the other women in the house. Come outside; my father wishes to speak to you."

When Euryclea heard this she unfastened the door of the women's room and came out, following Telemachus. She found Ulysses among the corpses bespattered with blood and filth like a lion that has just been devouring an ox, and his breast and both his cheeks are all bloody, so that he is a fearful sight; even so was Ulysses besmirched from head to foot with gore. When she saw all the corpses and such a quantity of blood, she was beginning to cry out for joy, for she saw that a great deed had been done; but Ulysses checked her, "Old woman," said he, "rejoice in silence; restrain yourself, and do not make any noise about it; it is an unholy thing to vaunt over dead men. Heaven's doom and their own evil deeds have brought these men to destruction, for they respected no man in the whole world, neither rich nor poor, who came near them, and they have come to a bad end as a punishment for their wickedness and folly. Now, however, tell me which of the women in the house have misconducted themselves, and who are innocent."[176]

"I will tell you the truth, my son," answered Euryclea. "There are fifty women in the house whom we teach to do things, such as carding wool, and all kinds of household work. Of these, twelve in all[177] have misbehaved, and have been wanting in respect to me, and also to Penelope. They showed no disrespect to Telemachus, for he has only lately grown and his mother never permitted him to give orders to the female servants; but let me go upstairs and tell your wife all that has happened, for some god has been sending her to sleep."

"Do not wake her yet," answered Ulysses, "but tell the women who have misconducted themselves to come to me."

Euryclea left the cloister to tell the women, and make them come to Ulysses; in the meantime he called Telemachus, the stockman, and the swineherd. “Begin,” said he, “to remove the dead, and make the women help you. Then, get sponges and clean water to swill down the tables and seats. When you have thoroughly cleansed the whole cloisters, take the women into the space between the domed room and the wall of the outer court, and run them through with your swords till they are quite dead, and have forgotten all about love and the way in which they used to lie in secret with the suitors.”

On this the women came down in a body, weeping and wailing bitterly. First they carried the dead bodies out, and propped them up against one another in the gatehouse. Ulysses ordered them about and made them do their work quickly, so they had to carry the bodies out. When they had done this, they cleaned all the tables and seats with sponges and water, while Telemachus and the two others shovelled up the blood and dirt from the ground, and the women carried it all away and put it out of doors. Then when they had made the whole place quite clean and orderly, they took the women out and hemmed them in the narrow space between the wall of the domed room and that of the yard, so that they could not get away: and Telemachus said to the other two, “I shall not let these women die a clean death, for they were insolent to me and my mother, and used to sleep with the suitors.”

So saying he made a ship’s cable fast to one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the domed room, and secured it all around the building, at a good height, lest any of the women’s feet should touch the ground; and as thrushes or doves beat against a net that has been set for them in a thicket just as they were getting to their nest, and a terrible fate awaits them, even so did the women have to put their heads in nooses one after the other and die most miserably.[178] Their feet moved convulsively for a while, but not for very long.

As for Melanthius, they took him through the cloister into the inner court. There they cut off his nose and his ears; they drew out his vitals and gave them to the dogs raw, and then in their fury they cut off his hands and his feet.

When they had done this they washed their hands and feet and went back into the house, for all was now over; and Ulysses said to the dear old nurse Euryclea, “Bring me sulphur, which cleanses all pollution, and fetch fire also that I may burn it, and purify the cloisters. Go, moreover, and tell Penelope to come here with her attendants, and also all the maidservants that are in the house.”

“All that you have said is true,” answered Euryclea, “but let me bring you some clean clothes—a shirt and cloak. Do not keep these rags on your back any longer. It is not right.”

“First light me a fire,” replied Ulysses.

She brought the fire and sulphur, as he had bidden her, and Ulysses thoroughly purified the cloisters and both the inner and outer courts. Then she went inside to call the women and tell them what had happened; whereon they came from their apartment with torches in their hands, and pressed round Ulysses to embrace him, kissing his head and shoulders and taking hold of his hands. It made him feel as if he should like to weep, for he remembered every one of them.[179]

This page titled 3.14.1.22: Book XXII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.23: Book XXIII

PENELOPE EVENTUALLY RECOGNISES HER HUSBAND—EARLY IN THE MORNING ULYSSES, TELEMACHUS, EUMAEUS, AND PHILOETIUS LEAVE THE TOWN.

Euryclea now went upstairs laughing to tell her mistress that her dear husband had come home. Her aged knees became young again and her feet were nimble for joy as she went up to her mistress and bent over her head to speak to her. “Wake up Penelope, my dear child,” she exclaimed, “and see with your own eyes something that you have been wanting this long time past. Ulysses has at last indeed come home again, and has killed the suitors who were giving so much trouble in his house, eating up his estate and ill treating his son.”

“My good nurse,” answered Penelope, “you must be mad. The gods sometimes send some very sensible people out of their minds, and make foolish people become sensible. This is what they must have been doing to you; for you always used to be a reasonable person. Why should you thus mock me when I have trouble enough already—talking such nonsense, and waking me up out of a sweet sleep that had taken possession of my eyes and closed them? I have never slept so soundly from the day my poor husband went to that city with the ill-omened name. Go back again into the women’s room; if it had been any one else who had woke me up to bring me such absurd news I should have sent her away with a severe scolding. As it is your age shall protect you.”

“My dear child,” answered Euryclea, “I am not mocking you. It is quite true as I tell you that Ulysses is come home again. He was the stranger whom they all kept on treating so badly in the cloister. Telemachus knew all the time that he was come back, but kept his father’s secret that he might have his revenge on all these wicked people.”

Then Penelope sprang up from her couch, threw her arms round Euryclea, and wept for joy. “But my dear nurse,” said she, “explain this to me; if he has really come home as you say, how did he manage to overcome the wicked suitors single handed, seeing what a number of them there always were?”

“I was not there,” answered Euryclea, “and do not know; I only heard them groaning while they were being killed. We sat crouching and huddled up in a corner of the women’s room with the doors closed, till your son came to fetch me because his father sent him. Then I found Ulysses standing over the corpses that were lying on the ground all round him, one on top of the other. You would have enjoyed it if you could have seen him standing there all bespattered with blood and filth, and looking just like a lion. But the corpses are now all piled up in the gatehouse that is in the outer court, and Ulysses has lit a great fire to purify the house with sulphur. He has sent me to call you, so come with me that you may both be happy together after all; for now at last the desire of your heart has been fulfilled; your husband is come home to find both wife and son alive and well, and to take his revenge in his own house on the suitors who behaved so badly to him.”

“My dear nurse,” said Penelope, “do not exult too confidently over all this. You know how delighted every one would be to see Ulysses come home—more particularly myself, and the son who has been born to both of us; but what you tell me cannot be really true. It is some god who is angry with the suitors for their great wickedness, and has made an end of them; for they respected no man in the whole world, neither rich nor poor, who came near them, and they have come to a bad end in consequence of their iniquity; Ulysses is dead far away from the Achaean land; he will never return home again.”

Then nurse Euryclea said, “My child, what are you talking about? but you were all hard of belief and have made up your mind that your husband is never coming, although he is in the house and by his own fire side at this very moment. Besides I can give you another proof; when I was washing him I perceived the scar which the wild boar gave him, and I wanted to tell you about it, but in his wisdom he would not let me, and clapped his hands over my mouth; so come with me and I will make this bargain with you—if I am deceiving you, you may have me killed by the most cruel death you can think of.”

“My dear nurse,” said Penelope, “however wise you may be you can hardly fathom the counsels of the gods. Nevertheless, we will go in search of my son, that I may see the corpses of the suitors, and the man who has killed them.”

On this she came down from her upper room, and while doing so she considered whether she should keep at a distance from her husband and question him, or whether she should at once go up to him and embrace him. When, however, she had crossed the stone floor of the cloister, she sat down opposite Ulysses by the fire, against the wall at right angles[180] [to that by which she had entered], while Ulysses sat near one of the bearing-posts, looking upon the ground, and waiting to see what his brave wife would say to him when she saw him. For a long time she sat silent and as one lost in amazement. At one moment she looked him full in the face, but

then again directly, she was misled by his shabby clothes and failed to recognise him,[181] till Telemachus began to reproach her and said:

“Mother—but you are so hard that I cannot call you by such a name—why do you keep away from my father in this way? Why do you not sit by his side and begin talking to him and asking him questions? No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much; but your heart always was as hard as a stone.”

Penelope answered, “My son, I am so lost in astonishment that I can find no words in which either to ask questions or to answer them. I cannot even look him straight in the face. Still, if he really is Ulysses come back to his own home again, we shall get to understand one another better by and by, for there are tokens with which we two are alone acquainted, and which are hidden from all others.”

Ulysses smiled at this, and said to Telemachus, “Let your mother put me to any proof she likes; she will make up her mind about it presently. She rejects me for the moment and believes me to be somebody else, because I am covered with dirt and have such bad clothes on; let us, however, consider what we had better do next. When one man has killed another—even though he was not one who would leave many friends to take up his quarrel—the man who has killed him must still say good bye to his friends and fly the country; whereas we have been killing the stay of a whole town, and all the picked youth of Ithaca. I would have you consider this matter.”

“Look to it yourself, father,” answered Telemachus, “for they say you are the wisest counsellor in the world, and that there is no other mortal man who can compare with you. We will follow you with right good will, nor shall you find us fail you in so far as our strength holds out.”

“I will say what I think will be best,” answered Ulysses. “First wash and put your shirts on; tell the maids also to go to their own room and dress; Phemius shall then strike up a dance tune on his lyre, so that if people outside hear, or any of the neighbours, or some one going along the street happens to notice it, they may think there is a wedding in the house, and no rumours about the death of the suitors will get about in the town, before we can escape to the woods upon my own land. Once there, we will settle which of the courses heaven vouchsafes us shall seem wisest.”

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said. First they washed and put their shirts on, while the women got ready. Then Phemius took his lyre and set them all longing for sweet song and stately dance. The house re-echoed with the sound of men and women dancing, and the people outside said, “I suppose the queen has been getting married at last. She ought to be ashamed of herself for not continuing to protect her husband’s property until he comes home.”[182]

This was what they said, but they did not know what it was that had been happening. The upper servant Eurynome washed and anointed Ulysses in his own house and gave him a shirt and cloak, while Minerva made him look taller and stronger than before; she also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she glorified him about the head and shoulders just as a skilful workman who has studied art of all kinds under Vulcan or Minerva—and his work is full of beauty—enriches a piece of silver plate by gilding it. He came from the bath looking like one of the immortals, and sat down opposite his wife on the seat he had left. “My dear,” said he, “heaven has endowed you with a heart more unyielding than woman ever yet had. No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much. But come, nurse, get a bed ready for me; I will sleep alone, for this woman has a heart as hard as iron.”

“My dear,” answered Penelope, “I have no wish to set myself up, nor to depreciate you; but I am not struck by your appearance, for I very well remember what kind of a man you were when you set sail from Ithaca. Nevertheless, Euryclea, take his bed outside the bed chamber that he himself built. Bring the bed outside this room, and put bedding upon it with fleeces, good coverlets, and blankets.”

She said this to try him, but Ulysses was very angry and said, “Wife, I am much displeased at what you have just been saying. Who has been taking my bed from the place in which I left it? He must have found it a hard task, no matter how skilled a workman he was, unless some god came and helped him to shift it. There is no man living, however strong and in his prime, who could move it from its place, for it is a marvellous curiosity which I made with my very own hands. There was a young olive growing within the precincts of the house, in full vigour, and about as thick as a bearing-post. I built my room round this with strong walls of stone and

a roof to cover them, and I made the doors strong and well-fitting. Then I cut off the top boughs of the olive tree and left the stump standing. This I dressed roughly from the root upwards and then worked with carpenter's tools well and skilfully, straightening my work by drawing a line on the wood, and making it into a bed-prop. I then bored a hole down the middle, and made it the centre-post of my bed, at which I worked till I had finished it, inlaying it with gold and silver; after this I stretched a hide of crimson leather from one side of it to the other. So you see I know all about it, and I desire to learn whether it is still there, or whether any one has been removing it by cutting down the olive tree at its roots."

When she heard the sure proofs Ulysses now gave her, she fairly broke down. She flew weeping to his side, flung her arms about his neck, and kissed him. "Do not be angry with me Ulysses," she cried, "you, who are the wisest of mankind. We have suffered, both of us. Heaven has denied us the happiness of spending our youth, and of growing old, together; do not then be aggrieved or take it amiss that I did not embrace you thus as soon as I saw you. I have been shuddering all the time through fear that someone might come here and deceive me with a lying story; for there are many very wicked people going about. Jove's daughter Helen would never have yielded herself to a man from a foreign country, if she had known that the sons of Achaeans would come after her and bring her back. Heaven put it in her heart to do wrong, and she gave no thought to that sin, which has been the source of all our sorrows. Now, however, that you have convinced me by showing that you know all about our bed (which no human being has ever seen but you and I and a single maidservant, the daughter of Actor, who was given me by my father on my marriage, and who keeps the doors of our room) hard of belief though I have been I can mistrust no longer."

Then Ulysses in his turn melted, and wept as he clasped his dear and faithful wife to his bosom. As the sight of land is welcome to men who are swimming towards the shore, when Neptune has wrecked their ship with the fury of his winds and waves; a few alone reach the land, and these, covered with brine, are thankful when they find themselves on firm ground and out of danger—even so was her husband welcome to her as she looked upon him, and she could not tear her two fair arms from about his neck. Indeed they would have gone on indulging their sorrow till rosy-fingered morn appeared, had not Minerva determined otherwise, and held night back in the far west, while she would not suffer Dawn to leave Oceanus, nor to yoke the two steeds Lampus and Phaethon that bear her onward to break the day upon mankind.

At last, however, Ulysses said, "Wife, we have not yet reached the end of our troubles. I have an unknown amount of toil still to undergo. It is long and difficult, but I must go through with it, for thus the shade of Teiresias prophesied concerning me, on the day when I went down into Hades to ask about my return and that of my companions. But now let us go to bed, that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep."

"You shall go to bed as soon as you please," replied Penelope, "now that the gods have sent you home to your own good house and to your country. But as heaven has put it in your mind to speak of it, tell me about the task that lies before you. I shall have to hear about it later, so it is better that I should be told at once."

"My dear," answered Ulysses, "why should you press me to tell you? Still, I will not conceal it from you, though you will not like it. I do not like it myself, for Teiresias bade me travel far and wide, carrying an oar, till I came to a country where the people have never heard of the sea, and do not even mix salt with their food. They know nothing about ships, nor oars that are as the wings of a ship. He gave me this certain token which I will not hide from you. He said that a wayfarer should meet me and ask me whether it was a winnowing shovel that I had on my shoulder. On this, I was to fix my oar in the ground and sacrifice a ram, a bull, and a boar to Neptune; after which I was to go home and offer hecatombs to all the gods in heaven, one after the other. As for myself, he said that death should come to me from the sea, and that my life should ebb away very gently when I was full of years and peace of mind, and my people should bless me. All this, he said, should surely come to pass."

And Penelope said, "If the gods are going to vouchsafe you a happier time in your old age, you may hope then to have some respite from misfortune."

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Eurynome and the nurse took torches and made the bed ready with soft coverlets; as soon as they had laid them, the nurse went back into the house to go to her rest, leaving the bed chamber woman Eurynome[183] to show Ulysses and Penelope to bed by torch light. When she had conducted them to their room she went back, and they then came joyfully to the rites of their own old bed. Telemachus, Philoetius, and the swineherd now left off dancing, and made the women leave off also. They then laid themselves down to sleep in the cloisters.

When Ulysses and Penelope had had their fill of love they fell talking with one another. She told him how much she had had to bear in seeing the house filled with a crowd of wicked suitors who had killed so many sheep and oxen on her account, and had

drunk so many casks of wine. Ulysses in his turn told her what he had suffered, and how much trouble he had himself given to other people. He told her everything, and she was so delighted to listen that she never went to sleep till he had ended his whole story.

He began with his victory over the Cicons, and how he thence reached the fertile land of the Lotus-eaters. He told her all about the Cyclops and how he had punished him for having so ruthlessly eaten his brave comrades; how he then went on to Aeolus, who received him hospitably and furthered him on his way, but even so he was not to reach home, for to his great grief a hurricane carried him out to sea again; how he went on to the Laestrygonian city Telepylos, where the people destroyed all his ships with their crews, save himself and his own ship only. Then he told of cunning Circe and her craft, and how he sailed to the chill house of Hades, to consult the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias, and how he saw his old comrades in arms, and his mother who bore him and brought him up when he was a child; how he then heard the wondrous singing of the Sirens, and went on to the wandering rocks and terrible Charybdis and to Scylla, whom no man had ever yet passed in safety; how his men then ate the cattle of the sun-god, and how Jove therefore struck the ship with his thunderbolts, so that all his men perished together, himself alone being left alive; how at last he reached the Ogygian island and the nymph Calypso, who kept him there in a cave, and fed him, and wanted him to marry her, in which case she intended making him immortal so that he should never grow old, but she could not persuade him to let her do so; and how after much suffering he had found his way to the Phaeacians, who had treated him as though he had been a god, and sent him back in a ship to his own country after having given him gold, bronze, and raiment in great abundance. This was the last thing about which he told her, for here a deep sleep took hold upon him and eased the burden of his sorrows.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter. When she deemed that Ulysses had had both of his wife and of repose, she bade gold-enthroned Dawn rise out of Oceanus that she might shed light upon mankind. On this, Ulysses rose from his comfortable bed and said to Penelope, “Wife, we have both of us had our full share of troubles, you, here, in lamenting my absence, and I in being prevented from getting home though I was longing all the time to do so. Now, however, that we have at last come together, take care of the property that is in the house. As for the sheep and goats which the wicked suitors have eaten, I will take many myself by force from other people, and will compel the Achaeans to make good the rest till they shall have filled all my yards. I am now going to the wooded lands out in the country to see my father who has so long been grieved on my account, and to yourself I will give these instructions, though you have little need of them. At sunrise it will at once get abroad that I have been killing the suitors; go upstairs, therefore,[184] and stay there with your women. See nobody and ask no questions.”[185]

As he spoke he girded on his armour. Then he roused Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus, and told them all to put on their armour also. This they did, and armed themselves. When they had done so, they opened the gates and sallied forth, Ulysses leading the way. It was now daylight, but Minerva nevertheless concealed them in darkness and led them quickly out of the town.

This page titled 3.14.1.23: Book XXIII is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.14.1.24: Book XXIV

THE GHOSTS OF THE SUITORS IN HADES—ULYSSES AND HIS MEN GO TO THE HOUSE OF LAERTES—THE PEOPLE OF ITHACA COME OUT TO ATTACK ULYSSES, BUT MINERVA CONCLUDES A PEACE.

Then Mercury of Cyllene summoned the ghosts of the suitors, and in his hand he held the fair golden wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep or wakes them just as he pleases; with this he roused the ghosts and led them, while they followed whining and gibbering behind him. As bats fly squealing in the hollow of some great cave, when one of them has fallen out of the cluster in which they hang, even so did the ghosts whine and squeal as Mercury the healer of sorrow led them down into the dark abode of death. When they had passed the waters of Oceanus and the rock Leucas, they came to the gates of the sun and the land of dreams, whereon they reached the meadow of asphodel where dwell the souls and shadows of them that can labour no more.

Here they found the ghost of Achilles son of Peleus, with those of Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax, who was the finest and handsomest man of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus himself.

They gathered round the ghost of the son of Peleus, and the ghost of Agamemnon joined them, sorrowing bitterly. Round him were gathered also the ghosts of those who had perished with him in the house of Aegisthus; and the ghost of Achilles spoke first.

"Son of Atreus," it said, "we used to say that Jove had loved you better from first to last than any other hero, for you were captain over many and brave men, when we were all fighting together before Troy; yet the hand of death, which no mortal can escape, was laid upon you all too early. Better for you had you fallen at Troy in the hey-day of your renown, for the Achaeans would have built a mound over your ashes, and your son would have been heir to your good name, whereas it has now been your lot to come to a most miserable end."

"Happy son of Peleus," answered the ghost of Agamemnon, "for having died at Troy far from Argos, while the bravest of the Trojans and the Achaeans fell round you fighting for your body. There you lay in the whirling clouds of dust, all huge and hugely, heedless now of your chivalry. We fought the whole of the livelong day, nor should we ever have left off if Jove had not sent a hurricane to stay us. Then, when we had borne you to the ships out of the fray, we laid you on your bed and cleansed your fair skin with warm water and with ointments. The Danaans tore their hair and wept bitterly round about you. Your mother, when she heard, came with her immortal nymphs from out of the sea, and the sound of a great wailing went forth over the waters so that the Achaeans quaked for fear. They would have fled panic-stricken to their ships had not wise old Nestor whose counsel was ever truest checked them saying, 'Hold, Argives, fly not sons of the Achaeans, this is his mother coming from the sea with her immortal nymphs to view the body of her son.'

"Thus he spoke, and the Achaeans feared no more. The daughters of the old man of the sea stood round you weeping bitterly, and clothed you in immortal raiment. The nine muses also came and lifted up their sweet voices in lament—calling and answering one another; there was not an Argive but wept for pity of the dirge they chaunted. Days and nights seven and ten we mourned you, mortals and immortals, but on the eighteenth day we gave you to the flames, and many a fat sheep with many an ox did we slay in sacrifice around you. You were burnt in raiment of the gods, with rich resins and with honey, while heroes, horse and foot, clashed their armour round the pile as you were burning, with the tramp as of a great multitude. But when the flames of heaven had done their work, we gathered your white bones at daybreak and laid them in ointments and in pure wine. Your mother brought us a golden vase to hold them—gift of Bacchus, and work of Vulcan himself; in this we mingled your bleached bones with those of Patroclus who had gone before you, and separate we enclosed also those of Antilochus, who had been closer to you than any other of your comrades now that Patroclus was no more.

"Over these the host of the Argives built a noble tomb, on a point jutting out over the open Hellespont, that it might be seen from far out upon the sea by those now living and by them that shall be born hereafter. Your mother begged prizes from the gods, and offered them to be contended for by the noblest of the Achaeans. You must have been present at the funeral of many a hero, when the young men gird themselves and make ready to contend for prizes on the death of some great chieftain, but you never saw such prizes as silver-footed Thetis offered in your honour; for the gods loved you well. Thus even in death your fame, Achilles, has not been lost, and your name lives evermore among all mankind. But as for me, what solace had I when the days of my fighting were done? For Jove willed my destruction on my return, by the hands of Aegisthus and those of my wicked wife."

Thus did they converse, and presently Mercury came up to them with the ghosts of the suitors who had been killed by Ulysses. The ghosts of Agamemnon and Achilles were astonished at seeing them, and went up to them at once. The ghost of Agamemnon

recognised Amphimedon son of Melaneus, who lived in Ithaca and had been his host, so it began to talk to him.

“Amphimedon,” it said, “what has happened to all you fine young men—all of an age too—that you are come down here under the ground? One could pick no finer body of men from any city. Did Neptune raise his winds and waves against you when you were at sea, or did your enemies make an end of you on the mainland when you were cattle-lifting or sheep-stealing, or while fighting in defence of their wives and city? Answer my question, for I have been your guest. Do you not remember how I came to your house with Menelaus, to persuade Ulysses to join us with his ships against Troy? It was a whole month ere we could resume our voyage, for we had hard work to persuade Ulysses to come with us.”

And the ghost of Amphimedon answered, “Agamemnon, son of Atreus, king of men, I remember everything that you have said, and will tell you fully and accurately about the way in which our end was brought about. Ulysses had been long gone, and we were courting his wife, who did not say point blank that she would not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end, for she meant to compass our destruction: this, then, was the trick she played us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room and began to work on an enormous piece of fine needlework. ‘Sweethearts,’ said she, ‘Ulysses is indeed dead, still, do not press me to marry again immediately; wait—for I would not have my skill in needlework perish unrecorded—till I have completed a pall for the hero Laertes, against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.’ This is what she said, and we assented; whereupon we could see her working upon her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years without our finding it out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, in the waning of moons and many days had been accomplished, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or no; and when she showed us the robe she had made, after she had had it washed,[186] its splendour was as that of the sun or moon.

“Then some malicious god conveyed Ulysses to the upland farm where his swineherd lives. Thither presently came also his son, returning from a voyage to Pylos, and the two came to the town when they had hatched their plot for our destruction. Telemachus came first, and then after him, accompanied by the swineherd, came Ulysses, clad in rags and leaning on a staff as though he were some miserable old beggar. He came so unexpectedly that none of us knew him, not even the older ones among us, and we reviled him and threw things at him. He endured both being struck and insulted without a word, though he was in his own house; but when the will of Aegis-bearing Jove inspired him, he and Telemachus took the armour and hid it in an inner chamber, bolting the doors behind them. Then he cunningly made his wife offer his bow and a quantity of iron to be contended for by us ill-fated suitors; and this was the beginning of our end, for not one of us could string the bow—nor nearly do so. When it was about to reach the hands of Ulysses, we all of us shouted out that it should not be given him, no matter what he might say, but Telemachus insisted on his having it. When he had got it in his hands he strung it with ease and sent his arrow through the iron. Then he stood on the floor of the cloister and poured his arrows on the ground, glaring fiercely about him. First he killed Antinous, and then, aiming straight before him, he let fly his deadly darts and they fell thick on one another. It was plain that some one of the gods was helping them, for they fell upon us with might and main throughout the cloisters, and there was a hideous sound of groaning as our brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with our blood. This, Agamemnon, is how we came by our end, and our bodies are lying still uncared for in the house of Ulysses, for our friends at home do not yet know what has happened, so that they cannot lay us out and wash the black blood from our wounds, making moan over us according to the offices due to the departed.”

“Happy Ulysses, son of Laertes,” replied the ghost of Agamemnon, “you are indeed blessed in the possession of a wife endowed with such rare excellence of understanding, and so faithful to her wedded lord as Penelope the daughter of Icarius. The fame, therefore, of her virtue shall never die, and the immortals shall compose a song that shall be welcome to all mankind in honour of the constancy of Penelope. How far otherwise was the wickedness of the daughter of Tyndareus who killed her lawful husband; her song shall be hateful among men, for she has brought disgrace on all womankind even on the good ones.”

Thus did they converse in the house of Hades deep down within the bowels of the earth. Meanwhile Ulysses and the others passed out of the town and soon reached the fair and well-tilled farm of Laertes, which he had reclaimed with infinite labour. Here was his house, with a lean-to running all round it, where the slaves who worked for him slept and sat and ate, while inside the house there was an old Sicel woman, who looked after him in this his country-farm. When Ulysses got there, he said to his son and to the other two:

“Go to the house, and kill the best pig that you can find for dinner. Meanwhile I want to see whether my father will know me, or fail to recognise me after so long an absence.”

He then took off his armour and gave it to Eumaeus and Philoetius, who went straight on to the house, while he turned off into the vineyard to make trial of his father. As he went down into the great orchard, he did not see Dolius, nor any of his sons nor of the other bondsmen, for they were all gathering thorns to make a fence for the vineyard, at the place where the old man had told them; he therefore found his father alone, hoeing a vine. He had on a dirty old shirt, patched and very shabby; his legs were bound round with thongs of oxhide to save him from the brambles, and he also wore sleeves of leather; he had a goat skin cap on his head, and was looking very woe-begone. When Ulysses saw him so worn, so old and full of sorrow, he stood still under a tall pear tree and began to weep. He doubted whether to embrace him, kiss him, and tell him all about his having come home, or whether he should first question him and see what he would say. In the end he deemed it best to be crafty with him, so in this mind he went up to his father, who was bending down and digging about a plant.

"I see, sir," said Ulysses, "that you are an excellent gardener—what pains you take with it, to be sure. There is not a single plant, not a fig tree, vine, olive, pear, nor flower bed, but bears the trace of your attention. I trust, however, that you will not be offended if I say that you take better care of your garden than of yourself. You are old, unsavoury, and very meanly clad. It cannot be because you are idle that your master takes such poor care of you, indeed your face and figure have nothing of the slave about them, and proclaim you of noble birth. I should have said that you were one of those who should wash well, eat well, and lie soft at night as old men have a right to do; but tell me, and tell me true, whose bondman are you, and in whose garden are you working? Tell me also about another matter. Is this place that I have come to really Ithaca? I met a man just now who said so, but he was a dull fellow, and had not the patience to hear my story out when I was asking him about an old friend of mine, whether he was still living, or was already dead and in the house of Hades. Believe me when I tell you that this man came to my house once when I was in my own country and never yet did any stranger come to me whom I liked better. He said that his family came from Ithaca and that his father was Laertes, son of Arceisius. I received him hospitably, making him welcome to all the abundance of my house, and when he went away I gave him all customary presents. I gave him seven talents of fine gold, and a cup of solid silver with flowers chased upon it. I gave him twelve light cloaks, and as many pieces of tapestry; I also gave him twelve cloaks of single fold, twelve rugs, twelve fair mantles, and an equal number of shirts. To all this I added four good looking women skilled in all useful arts, and I let him take his choice."

His father shed tears and answered, "Sir, you have indeed come to the country that you have named, but it is fallen into the hands of wicked people. All this wealth of presents has been given to no purpose. If you could have found your friend here alive in Ithaca, he would have entertained you hospitably and would have requited your presents amply when you left him—as would have been only right considering what you had already given him. But tell me, and tell me true, how many years is it since you entertained this guest—my unhappy son, as ever was? Alas! He has perished far from his own country; the fishes of the sea have eaten him, or he has fallen a prey to the birds and wild beasts of some continent. Neither his mother, nor I his father, who were his parents, could throw our arms about him and wrap him in his shroud, nor could his excellent and richly dowered wife Penelope bewail her husband as was natural upon his death bed, and close his eyes according to the offices due to the departed. But now, tell me truly for I want to know. Who and whence are you—tell me of your town and parents? Where is the ship lying that has brought you and your men to Ithaca? Or were you a passenger on some other man's ship, and those who brought you here have gone on their way and left you?"

"I will tell you everything," answered Ulysses, "quite truly. I come from Alybas, where I have a fine house. I am son of king Apheidas, who is the son of Polypemon. My own name is Eperitus; heaven drove me off my course as I was leaving Sicania, and I have been carried here against my will. As for my ship it is lying over yonder, off the open country outside the town, and this is the fifth year since Ulysses left my country. Poor fellow, yet the omens were good for him when he left me. The birds all flew on our right hands, and both he and I rejoiced to see them as we parted, for we had every hope that we should have another friendly meeting and exchange presents."

A dark cloud of sorrow fell upon Laertes as he listened. He filled both hands with the dust from off the ground and poured it over his grey head, groaning heavily as he did so. The heart of Ulysses was touched, and his nostrils quivered as he looked upon his father; then he sprang towards him, flung his arms about him and kissed him, saying, "I am he, father, about whom you are asking—I have returned after having been away for twenty years. But cease your sighing and lamentation—we have no time to lose, for I should tell you that I have been killing the suitors in my house, to punish them for their insolence and crimes."

"If you really are my son Ulysses," replied Laertes, "and have come back again, you must give me such manifest proof of your identity as shall convince me."

"First observe this scar," answered Ulysses, "which I got from a boar's tusk when I was hunting on Mt. Parnassus. You and my mother had sent me to Autolycus, my mother's father, to receive the presents which when he was over here he had promised to give me. Furthermore I will point out to you the trees in the vineyard which you gave me, and I asked you all about them as I followed you round the garden. We went over them all, and you told me their names and what they all were. You gave me thirteen pear trees, ten apple trees, and forty fig trees; you also said you would give me fifty rows of vines; there was corn planted between each row, and they yield grapes of every kind when the heat of heaven has been laid heavy upon them."

Laertes' strength failed him when he heard the convincing proofs which his son had given him. He threw his arms about him, and Ulysses had to support him, or he would have gone off into a swoon; but as soon as he came to, and was beginning to recover his senses, he said, "O father Jove, then you gods are still in Olympus after all, if the suitors have really been punished for their insolence and folly. Nevertheless, I am much afraid that I shall have all the townspeople of Ithaca up here directly, and they will be sending messengers everywhere throughout the cities of the Cephallenians."

Ulysses answered, "Take heart and do not trouble yourself about that, but let us go into the house hard by your garden. I have already told Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus to go on there and get dinner ready as soon as possible."

Thus conversing the two made their way towards the house. When they got there they found Telemachus with the stockman and the swineherd cutting up meat and mixing wine with water. Then the old Sicel woman took Laertes inside and washed him and anointed him with oil. She put him on a good cloak, and Minerva came up to him and gave him a more imposing presence, making him taller and stouter than before. When he came back his son was surprised to see him looking so like an immortal, and said to him, "My dear father, some one of the gods has been making you much taller and better-looking."

Laertes answered, "Would, by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I were the man I was when I ruled among the Cephallenians, and took Nericum, that strong fortress on the foreland. If I were still what I then was and had been in our house yesterday with my armour on, I should have been able to stand by you and help you against the suitors. I should have killed a great many of them, and you would have rejoiced to see it."

Thus did they converse; but the others, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, left off working, and took each his proper place on the benches and seats. Then they began eating; by and by old Dolius and his sons left their work and came up, for their mother, the Sicel woman who looked after Laertes now that he was growing old, had been to fetch them. When they saw Ulysses and were certain it was he, they stood there lost in astonishment; but Ulysses scolded them good naturedly and said, "Sit down to your dinner, old man, and never mind about your surprise; we have been wanting to begin for some time and have been waiting for you."

Then Dolius put out both his hands and went up to Ulysses. "Sir," said he, seizing his master's hand and kissing it at the wrist, "we have long been wishing you home: and now heaven has restored you to us after we had given up hoping. All hail, therefore, and may the gods prosper you.[187] But tell me, does Penelope already know of your return, or shall we send some one to tell her?"

"Old man," answered Ulysses, "she knows already, so you need not trouble about that." On this he took his seat, and the sons of Dolius gathered round Ulysses to give him greeting and embrace him one after the other; then they took their seats in due order near Dolius their father.

While they were thus busy getting their dinner ready, Rumour went round the town, and noised abroad the terrible fate that had befallen the suitors; as soon, therefore, as the people heard of it they gathered from every quarter, groaning and hooting before the house of Ulysses. They took the dead away, buried every man his own, and put the bodies of those who came from elsewhere on board the fishing vessels, for the fishermen to take each of them to his own place. They then met angrily in the place of assembly, and when they were got together Eupeithes rose to speak. He was overwhelmed with grief for the death of his son Antinous, who had been the first man killed by Ulysses, so he said, weeping bitterly, "My friends, this man has done the Achaeans great wrong. He took many of our best men away with him in his fleet, and he has lost both ships and men; now, moreover, on his return he has been killing all the foremost men among the Cephallenians. Let us be up and doing before he can get away to Pylos or to Elis where the Epeans rule, or we shall be ashamed of ourselves for ever afterwards. It will be an everlasting disgrace to us if we do not avenge the murder of our sons and brothers. For my own part I should have no more pleasure in life, but had rather die at once. Let us be up, then, and after them, before they can cross over to the main land."

He wept as he spoke and every one pitied him. But Medon and the bard Phemius had now woke up, and came to them from the house of Ulysses. Every one was astonished at seeing them, but they stood in the middle of the assembly, and Medon said, “Hear me, men of Ithaca. Ulysses did not do these things against the will of heaven. I myself saw an immortal god take the form of Mentor and stand beside him. This god appeared, now in front of him encouraging him, and now going furiously about the court and attacking the suitors whereon they fell thick on one another.”

On this pale fear laid hold of them, and old Halitherses, son of Mastor, rose to speak, for he was the only man among them who knew both past and future; so he spoke to them plainly and in all honesty, saying,

“Men of Ithaca, it is all your own fault that things have turned out as they have; you would not listen to me, nor yet to Mentor, when we bade you check the folly of your sons who were doing much wrong in the wantonness of their hearts—wasting the substance and dishonouring the wife of a chieftain who they thought would not return. Now, however, let it be as I say, and do as I tell you. Do not go out against Ulysses, or you may find that you have been drawing down evil on your own heads.”

This was what he said, and more than half raised a loud shout, and at once left the assembly. But the rest stayed where they were, for the speech of Halitherses displeased them, and they sided with Eupeithes; they therefore hurried off for their armour, and when they had armed themselves, they met together in front of the city, and Eupeithes led them on in their folly. He thought he was going to avenge the murder of his son, whereas in truth he was never to return, but was himself to perish in his attempt.

Then Minerva said to Jove, “Father, son of Saturn, king of kings, answer me this question—What do you propose to do? Will you set them fighting still further, or will you make peace between them?”

And Jove answered, “My child, why should you ask me? Was it not by your own arrangement that Ulysses came home and took his revenge upon the suitors? Do whatever you like, but I will tell you what I think will be most reasonable arrangement. Now that Ulysses is revenged, let them swear to a solemn covenant, in virtue of which he shall continue to rule, while we cause the others to forgive and forget the massacre of their sons and brothers. Let them then all become friends as heretofore, and let peace and plenty reign.”

This was what Minerva was already eager to bring about, so down she darted from off the topmost summits of Olympus.

Now when Laertes and the others had done dinner, Ulysses began by saying, “Some of you go out and see if they are not getting close up to us.” So one of Dolius’s sons went as he was bid. Standing on the threshold he could see them all quite near, and said to Ulysses, “Here they are, let us put on our armour at once.”

They put on their armour as fast as they could—that is to say Ulysses, his three men, and the six sons of Dolius. Laertes also and Dolius did the same—warriors by necessity in spite of their grey hair. When they had all put on their armour, they opened the gate and sallied forth, Ulysses leading the way.

Then Jove’s daughter Minerva came up to them, having assumed the form and voice of Mentor. Ulysses was glad when he saw her, and said to his son Telemachus, “Telemachus, now that you are about to fight in an engagement, which will show every man’s mettle, be sure not to disgrace your ancestors, who were eminent for their strength and courage all the world over.”

“You say truly, my dear father,” answered Telemachus, “and you shall see, if you will, that I am in no mind to disgrace your family.”

Laertes was delighted when he heard this. “Good heavens,” he exclaimed, “what a day I am enjoying: I do indeed rejoice at it. My son and grandson are vying with one another in the matter of valour.”

On this Minerva came close up to him and said, “Son of Arceisius—-best friend I have in the world—pray to the blue-eyed damsel, and to Jove her father; then poise your spear and hurl it.”

As she spoke she infused fresh vigour into him, and when he had prayed to her he poised his spear and hurled it. He hit Eupeithes’ helmet, and the spear went right through it, for the helmet stayed it not, and his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Meantime Ulysses and his son fell upon the front line of the foe and smote them with their swords and spears; indeed, they would have killed every one of them, and prevented them from ever getting home again, only Minerva raised her voice aloud, and made every one pause. “Men of Ithaca,” she cried, “cease this dreadful war, and settle the matter at once without further bloodshed.”

On this pale fear seized every one; they were so frightened that their arms dropped from their hands and fell upon the ground at the sound of the goddess' voice, and they fled back to the city for their lives. But Ulysses gave a great cry, and gathering himself together swooped down like a soaring eagle. Then the son of Saturn sent a thunderbolt of fire that fell just in front of Minerva, so she said to Ulysses, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, stop this warful strife, or Jove will be angry with you."

Thus spoke Minerva, and Ulysses obeyed her gladly. Then Minerva assumed the form and voice of Mentor, and presently made a covenant of peace between the two contending parties.

This page titled 3.14.1.24: Book XXIV is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

3.15: Oedipus The King - Sophocles (ca. 496-ca. 406 B.C.E.)

Composed ca. 429-420 B.C.E.

Greece

Although Sophocles wrote over one hundred plays, only seven survive. In competitions during religious festivals for Dionysus, which required three playwrights to present three dramatic plays each (plus a farce), Sophocles won first place at least twenty times; the rest of the time, he came in second (never third). Greek plays previously had a chorus and one actor on stage; Aeschylus (ca. 525-456) introduced the idea of a second actor, while Sophocles was the first to have three actors, plus painted scenery as a backdrop for the action. Masks allowed the (all male) actors to portray men, women, children, and gods without confusion. Since the stories were familiar to the audience, the popularity of Sophocles stems from his clever wordplay and insightful grasp of psychology. The three plays that cover the story of Oedipus and his family are referred to as the Theban cycle, although they were written for different competitions over 36 years of his career: *Antigone*, which was written first, but chronologically is the last story; *Oedipus Tyrannos* (or just *Oedipus*), which was written second, but chronologically is the first story; and *Oedipus at Colonus*, which was written last, but chronologically is the second story. *Oedipus* begins *in medias res*, with the city of Thebes suffering from a plague; as the king, Oedipus is trying to discover why the gods are punishing the city.

Written by Laura J. Getty



Image 1.11: Sophocles | A bust of Sophocles, currently housed at the Pushkin Museum.

Author: User "Shakko"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Oedipus Tyrannus

[Oedipus the King]

Sophocles, Translated by D. W. Myatt

Characters:
Oedipus, *King of Thebes*
Jocasta, *his Consort and wife*
Creon, *brother of Jocasta*
Tiresias, *the blind prophet*
A Priest, *of Zeus*

First Messenger
Second Messenger
A Shepherd
Chorus, *of Theban Elders*

Scene: *Before the wealthy dwelling of Oedipus at Thebes*

OEDIPUS
My children—you most recently reared from ancient Cadmus—
Why do you hasten to these seats
Wreathed in suppliant branches?
Since the citadel is filled with incense,
Chants and lamentations 5
I did not deem it fitting, my children, to hear
The report of some messenger—so I come here myself:
I, Oedipus the renowned, who is respected by you all.
As you, Elder, are distinguished by nature,
You should speak for these others. Is your manner 10
One of fear or affection? My will is to assist you
For I would be indifferent to pain
Were I not to have pity after such a supplication as this.

PRIEST
Oedipus, master of my land:
You see how many sit here 15
Before your altars—some not yet robust enough
To fly far; some heavy as I, Priest of Zeus, with age;
And these, chosen from our unmarried youth.
Enwreathed like them, our people sit in the place of markets,
By the twin shrines of Pallas 20
And by the embers of the Ismenian oracle.
Our clan, as you yourself behold, already heaves
Too much—its head bent
To the depths bloodily heaving.
Decay is in the unfruitful seeds in the soil, 25
Decay is in our herds of cattle—our women
Are barren or abort, and that god of fever
Swoops down to strike our clan with an odious plague,
Emptying the abode of Cadmus and giving dark Hades
An abundance of wailing and lamentation. 30
Not as an equal of the gods do I,
And these children who sit by your altar, behold you—
But as the prime man in our problems of life
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.
You arrived at our town of Cadmus to disentangle us 35
From the tax we paid to that harsh Songstress—
And that with less than we knew because
Without our experience. Rather—and it is the custom
To say this—you had the support of a god
And so made our lives to prosper. 40
Thus, Oedipus—you, the most noble of all—
We all as suppliants beseech you

To find us a defence, whether it be from a god's oracle
Or whether it be learnt from some man.
For those who are practical are, by events,
Seen to give counsels which are the most effective.
Most noble among mortals—restore our clan!
But—be cautious. For now this land of yours
Names you their protector for your swiftness before—
Do not let it be recorded of your leadership
That you raised us up again only to let us thereafter fall:
So make us safe, and restore our clan.
Favourable—then—the omens, and prosperity
You brought us: be of the same kind, again!
For, in commanding a land, as you are master of this,
It is much better to be master of men than of an emptiness!
Of no value are a ship or a defensive tower
If they are empty because no men dwell within them.

OEDIPUS
You, my children, who lament—I know, for I am not without knowledge,
Of the desire which brings you here. For well do I see
All your sufferings—and though you suffer, it is I
And not one of you that suffers the most.
For your pain comes to each of you
By itself, with nothing else, while my psyche
Mourns for myself, for you and the clan.
You have not awakened me from a resting sleep
For indeed you should know of my many tears
And the many paths of reflection I have wandered upon and tried.
And, as I pondered, I found one cure
Which I therefore took. The son of Menoeceus,
Creon—he who is my kin by marriage—I have sent to that Pythian dwelling
Of Phoebus to learn how I
By word or deed can give deliverance to the clan.
But I have already measured the duration
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.
Yet when he does arrive, it would dishonourable
For me not to act upon all that the gods makes clear.

PRIEST
It is fitting that you spoke thus—for observe that now
We are signalled that Creon is approaching.

OEDIPUS
Lord Apollo! Let our fate be such
That we are saved—and as bright as his face now is!

PRIEST
I conjecture it is pleasing since he arrives with his head crowned
By laurel wreaths bearing many berries.

OEDIPUS
Soon we will know, for, in distance, he can hear us now.

[Enter Creon]

Lord—son of Menoeceus—my kin by marriage:
Give to us the saying you received from the god!

CREON
It is propitious, for I call it fortunate when what is difficult to bear
Is taken from us, enabling us thus to prosper again.

OEDIPUS
But what is it? I am not given more courage
Nor more fear by your words.90

CREON
Do you insist upon hearing it here,
Within reach of these others—or shall we go within?

OEDIPUS
Speak it to all. For my concern for their suffering
Is more than even that for my own psyche. 95

CREON
Then I shall speak to you what I heard from the god.
The command of Lord Phoebus was clear—
That defilement nourished by our soil
Must be driven away, not given nourishment until it cannot be cured.

OEDIPUS
When came this misfortune? How to be cleansed? 100

CREON
Banishment of a man—or a killing in return for the killing
To release us from the blood and thus this tempest upon our clan.

OEDIPUS

What man is thus fated to be so denounced?

CREON
My Lord, Laius was the chief
Of this land, before you guided us. 105

OEDIPUS
That I have heard and know well although I never saw him.

CREON
Because he was slaughtered it is clearly ordered that you
Must punish the killing hands, whosesoever they are.

OEDIPUS

But are they in this land? Can we still find
The now faded marks of the ancient tracks of those so accused? 110

CREON
Can be caught, but will escape if not attended to.
Still in our land, he said. What is saught

OEDIPUS
Was Laius in his dwelling, in his fields,
Or in another land when he met his death?

CREON
He said he was journeying to a shrine:
But, having gone, he did not return.

OEDIPUS
Was there no messenger, no other with him
Who saw anything and whom we could consult and thus learn from?

CREON
No-killed: all of them. Except one who fled in fear
And so saw nothing except the one thing he did speak of seeing.

OEDIPUS
What? One thing may help us learn many more
And such a small beginning may bring us hope.

CREON
He announced that robbers came upon them and, there being so many,
In their strength slew them with their many hands.

OEDIPUS
How could robbers do that? Unless-unless silver
Was paid to them, from here! Otherwise, they would not have the courage!

CREON
Such was the opinion. But with Laius killed
No one arose to be his avenger since we had other troubles.

OEDIPUS
What troubles were before you that with your King fallen
You were kept from looking?

CREON
The convoluted utterances of the Sphinx made us consider what was before us
And leave unknown what was dark.

OEDIPUS
Then, as a start, I shall go back to make it visible.
It is fitting for Phoebus, and fitting also for you
For the sake of him dead, to return your concern there
And fair that I am seen as an ally
In avenging this land and the god.
Yet not in the name of remote kin
But for myself will I banish the abomination
Since that person who killed may—and soon—
And by his own hand, wish to avenge me.
Thus in this way by so giving aid, I also benefit myself.
Now and swiftly, my children, stand up from these steps—
Raising your suppliant branches—
And go to summon here the people of Cadmus
For I shall do all that is required. Either good fortune—
If the gods wills—will be shown to be ours, or we shall perish.
[Exit Oedipus]

PRIEST
Stand, children, for that favour

For which we came he has announced he will do.
May Phoebus—who delivered this oracle—
Be our Saviour and cause our suffering to cease.
[Exit Priest. Enter Chorus]

CHORUS

Zeus—your pleasing voice has spoken
But in what manner from gold-rich Pytho do you come
To the splendour that is Thebes?
My reason is stretched by dread as fear shakes me—
O Delian Paeon I invoke you!—
And I am in awe. For is this new
Or the continuation of that obligation
Which each season brings again?
Speak to me with your divine voice,
You born from she whom we treasure—our Hope!
You I shall name first—you the daughter of Zeus, the divine Athene!
And then you, her sister, who defends our lands—Artemis!—
Whose illustrious throne is the circle of our market.
And you, Phoebus with your far-reaching arrows!
You—the triad who guard us from death! Appear to me!
When misfortune moved over our clan before
You came to completely drive away that injuring fire—
So now come to us, again!
Beyond count are the injuries I bear
And all my comrades are sick;
There is no spear of thought to defend us—
The offspring of our fertile soil do not grow
While at the birth there are no cries of joy
For the women stretched by their labour:
I behold one after another rushing forth—swifter than feathered birds,
Swifter than invincible fire—
Toward the land of the twilight god!
They are beyond count and make the clan to die:
For her descendants lie unpitied, unmourned on the ground
Condemning others to death
As both the child-less and the mothers gather
Around the base of the altars
To labour as suppliants with their injurious laments
Although clear are the hymns to the Healer
Above those accompanying wailing voices!
In answer, you whom we hold precious—daughter of Zeus—
Send us She of strength with the beautiful eyes!
Grant that fiery Ares—he who fights not with shield of bronze
But who burns as he encircles with his battle-cry—
Turns around to swiftly run back, away from our fatherland
With a fair wind following, to that great Chamber of Amphitrite
Or to that Thracian harbour where strangers are dashed,
Since what he neglects at night He achieves when day arrives.
Thus—you who carry fire,

Who bestows the power of lighting—
All-father Zeus: waste him beneath your thunder!
Lord Lyceus! From your gold-bound bowstring
I wish you to deal out the hardest of your arrows
So they rise before us as a defence!
And you—Artemis—who by your gleaming light
Rushes through the mountains of Lycia.
And you of the golden mitre whose name
Is that of our land—I invoke you
Ruddied Bacchus with E-U-O-I!—
With your roaming Maenads
Come near to us with your blazing pine-torch
And gleaming eyes, to be our ally
Against that god given no honour by gods!
[Enter Oedipus]

OEDIPUS
You ask and what you ask will come—
For if you in your sickness listen and accept and assist me
You shall receive the strength to lift you out of this trouble.
I here make the declaration even though I am a stranger to that report
And a stranger to that deed. I, myself, would not have delayed
Tracking this, even had there been no signs.
But since it was after these things
I became a tax-paying citizen among you citizens,
I proclaim this now to all who are of Cadmus:
Whosoever, concerning Laius son of Labdacus,
Knows the man who killed him
I command him to declare everything to me.
But if he is afraid, he can himself remove the accusation
Against him since what awaits him
Shall not be hostile since he shall pass uninjured to another land.
But if you know of another from another region
Whose hand did it, do not be silent
For I shall reward and confer favours upon you.
But if you keep silent because he is your own kin
Or because you yourself are afraid and so reject this—
Then hear what I of necessity must do.
I forbid that man, whoever he is, to be in this land—
This land where I have power and authority:
No one is to receive him nor speak to him;
Neither is he to share in your offering thanks to the gods,
Nor in the sacrifices or in the libations before them.
Instead, everyone shall push him away—for our defilement
Is, in truth, him: as the Pythian god
By his oracle just now announced to me.
Thus in such a way do I and this god
And the man who was killed become allies—
And so this pact I make concerning he who did that deed
Whether alone or together with others in secret:

Being ignoble, may his miserable life ignobly waste away.
And I also make this pact—that should he arrive at my dwelling
And with my consent stay by my hearth, then may that disease
I desired for those ones come to me!
So I command you to accomplish this
On behalf of me, the god and this land
Now barren, lain waste and without gods.
For even had no god sent you to deal with this matter
It would not have been fitting to leave it uncleaned
For the man killed was both brave and your own lord:
You should have enquired. However, I now have the authority
And hold the command that was his,
And now possess his chambers and his woman—seeded by us both—
And by whom we might have children shared in common had that family
Not had its misfortune and thus there had been a birth:
But it was not to be, for fate bore down upon him.
Thus, I—as if he were my own father—
Will fight for him and will go to any place
To search for and to seize the one whose hand killed
That son of Labdacus—he of Polydorus,
Of Cadmus before that and before then of ancient Agenor.
As to those who do not do this for me, I ask the god
That the seeds they sow in the earth shall not bring forth shoots
Nor their women children, and also that it be their destiny
To be destroyed by this thing—or one that is much worse.
But as for you others, of Cadmus, to whom this is pleasing—
May the goddess, Judgement, who is on our side,
And all of the gods, be with us forever.

CHORUS
Bound by your oath, my Lord, I speak:
I am not the killer—nor can I point out he who did the killing.
It is he who sent us on this search—
Phoebus—who should say who did that work.

OEDIPUS
That would be fair. But to compel th gods
Against their will is not within the power of any man.

CHORUS
Shall I speak of what I consider is the second best thing to do?

OEDIPUS
Do not neglect to explain to me even what is third!

CHORUS
He who sees the most of what Lord Phoebus knows
Is Lord Tiresias—and it is from his watching, and clearness,
My Lord, that we might learn the most.

OEDIPUS
I have not been inactive in attending to that:
Since Creon spoke of it, I have sent two escorts—
And it is a wonder after this long why he is not here.

CHORUS
What can still be told of those things is blunt from age.

OEDIPUS
What is there? For I am watching for any report.

CHORUS
It was said that he was killed by travellers.

OEDIPUS
That I have heard—but no one sees here he who observed that.

CHORUS
But he will have had his share of fear
Having heard your pact—and will not have stayed here.

OEDIPUS
And he who had no fear of the deed? Would such a one fear such words?

CHORUS
But here is he who can identify him. For observe,
It is the prophet of the god who is led here:
He who of all mortals has the most ability to reveal things.
[Enter Tiresias, guided by a boy]

OEDIPUS
Tiresias—you who are learned in all things:
what can be taught; what is never spoken of;
What is in the heavens and what treads on the earth—
Although you have no sight, can you see how our clan
Has given hospitality to sickness? You are our shield,
Our protector—for you, Lord, are the only remedy we have.
Phoebus—if you have not heard it from the messengers—
Sent us as answer to our sending: release from the sickness
Will come only if we are skilled enough to discover who killed Laius
And kill them or drive them away from this land as fugitives.
Therefore, do not deny to us from envy the speech of birds
Or any other way of divination which you have,
But pull yourself and this clan—and me—
Pull us away from all that is defiled by those who lie slain.
Our being depends on you. For if a man assists someone
When he has the strength to do so, then it is a noble labour.

TIRESIAS
Ah! There is harm in judging when there is no advantage
In such a judgement. This I usefully understood
But then totally lost. I should not have come here.

OEDIPUS
What is this? Are you heartless, entering here so?
TIRESIAS Permit me to return to my dwelling. Easier then will it be
For you to carry what is yours, and I what is mine, if you are persuaded in this.

OEDIPUS
Such talk is unusual because unfriendly toward this clan
Which nourishes you: will you deprive us of oracles?

TIRESIAS
Yes-for I know that the words you say
Are not suitable. And I will not suffer because of mine.
OEDIPUS
Before the gods! Turn aside that judgement! Here, before you,
All of us are as humble suppliants!

TIRESIAS
Since all of you lack judgement, I will not speak either about myself
Or you and so tell about defects.

OEDIPUS
What ? If you are aware of it but will not speak,
Do you intend to betray and so totally destroy your clan?

TIRESIAS
I will not cause pain to either you or myself. Therefore,
Why these aimless rebukes since I will not answer.

OEDIPUS
Not...? Why, you ignoble, worthless...! A rock,
By its nature, can cause anger. Speak it!
Or will you show there is no end to your hardness?

TIRESIAS
You rebuke me for anger but it is with you
That she dwells, although you do not see this and blame me instead.

OEDIPUS
And whose being would not have anger
Hearing how you dishonour our clan!

TIRESIAS
By themselves, these things will arrive—even though my silence covers them.

OEDIPUS
Then since they shall arrive, you must speak to me about them!

TIRESIAS
Beyond this, I explain nothing. But if it is your will,
Become savage with wroth in anger.

OEDIPUS
Yes indeed I will yield to the anger possessing me
Since I do understand! For I know you appear to me
To have worked together with others to produce that deed,
Although it was not your hand that did the killing. But—had you sight—
I would say that the blow was yours and yours alone!

TIRESIAS
Is that so! I declare it is to the proclamation
You announced that you must adhere to, so that from this day
You should not speak to me or these others
Since you are the unhealthy pollution in our soil!

OEDIPUS
It is disrespectful to bound forth

With such speech! Do you believe you will escape?

TIRESIAS
I have escaped. For, by my revelations, I am nourished and made strong.

OEDIPUS
Where was your instruction from? Certainly not from your craft!

TIRESIAS
From you—for against my desire I cast out those words.

OEDIPUS
What words? Say them again so I can fully understand.

TIRESIAS
Did you not hear them before? Or are your words a test?

OEDIPUS
They expressed no meaning to me. Say them again.

TIRESIAS
I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek.

OEDIPUS
You shall not escape if you injure me so again!

TIRESIAS
Shall I then say more to make your anger greater?

OEDIPUS
As much as you desire for you are mistaken in what you say.

TIRESIAS
I say that with those nearest to you are you concealed
In disrespectful intimacy, not seeing the trouble you are in.

OEDIPUS
Do you believe you can continue to speak so and remain healthy?

TIRESIAS
Yes, if revelations have power.

OEDIPUS
They do for others, but not for you! They have none for you

Because you are blind in your ears, in your purpose as well as in your eyes!

TIRESIAS
In faulting me for that you are unfortunate
Because soon there will be no one who does not find fault with you.

OEDIPUS
You are nourished by night alone! It is not for me,
Or anyone here who sees by the light, to injure you.

TIRESIAS
It is not my destiny to be defeated by you—

Apollo is sufficient for that, since it is his duty to obtain vengeance.

OEDIPUS
Were those things Creon’s inventions—or yours?

TIRESIAS
It is not Creon who harms you—it is yourself.

OEDIPUS
Ah! Wealth, Kingship and that art of arts
Which surpasses others—these, in life, are envied:
And great is the jealousy cherished because of you.
It is because of this authority of mine—which this clan
Gave into my hands, unasked—
That the faithful Creon, a comrade from the beginning,
Desires to furtively creep about to overthrow me
And hires this performing wizard,
This cunning mendicant priest who sees only
For gain but who is blind in his art!
So now tell me: where and when have you given clear divinations?
For you did not—when that bitch was here chanting her verses—
Speak out and so give deliverance to your clansfolk.
Yet her enigma was not really for somepassing man
To disclose since it required a prophet's art:
But your augury foretold nothing and neither did you learn anything
From any god! It was I who came along—
I, Oedipus, who sees nothing!—I who put and end to her
By happening to use reason rather than a knowledge of augury.
Now it is me you are trying to exile since your purpose
Is to stand beside the throne among Creon's supporters.
But I intend to make you sorry! Both of you—who worked together
To drive me out. And if I did not respect you as an Elder,
Pain would teach you a kind of judgement!

CHORUS
Yet I suspect that he has spoken
In anger, as I believe you did, Oedipus.
But this is not what is needed. Instead, it is the god's oracle
That will, if examined, give us the best remedy.

TIRESIAS
Though you are the King, I have at least an equality of words
In return, for I also have authority.
I do not live as your servant—but for Loxias—
Just as I am not inscribed on the roll as being under Creon's patronage.
Thus, I speak for myself—since you have found fault with me because I am blind.
When you look, you do not see the trouble you are in,
Nor where you dwell, nor who you are intimate with.
Do you know from whom your being arose? Though concealed, you are the enemy
Of your own, below and upon this land:
On both sides beaten by your mother and your father
To be driven out from this land by a swift and angry Fury—
And you who now see straight will then be in darkness.
What place will not be a haven for your cries?
What Cithaeron will not, and soon, resound with them
When you understand your wedding-night in that abode
Into where you fatefully and easily sailed but which is no haven from your voyage?

Nor do you understand the multitude of troubles
Which will make you equal with yourself and your children.
Thus it is, so therefore at my mouth and at Creon's
Throw your dirt! For there is no other mortal whose being
Will be so completely overwhelmed by troubles as yours.

OEDIPUS
Am I to endure hearing such things from him?
May misfortune come to you! Go from here—without delay!
Away from my dwelling! Turn and go!

TIRESIAS
I would not have come here, had you not invited me.

OEDIPUS
I did not know you would speak nonsense
Or I would have been unwilling to ask you here to my dwelling.

TIRESIAS
So you believe I was born lacking sense?
Yet I made sense to those who gave you birth.

OEDIPUS
What? Wait! Which mortals gave me birth?

TIRESIAS
It is on this day that you are born and also destroyed.

OEDIPUS
All that you have said is enigmatic or lacking in reason.

TIRESIAS
But are you not the best among us in working things out?

OEDIPUS
Do you find fault with what I have discovered is my strength?

TIRESIAS
It is that very fortune which has totally ruined you.

OEDIPUS
I am not concerned—if I have preserved this clan.

TIRESIAS
Then I shall depart. You—boy! Lead me away.

OEDIPUS
Let him lead you away. While here, you are under my feet
And annoy me. When gone—you will give me no more pain.

TIRESIAS
I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me.
I say that the man you have long searched for
And threatened and made proclamation about for the killing
Of Laius—he is present, here.
Although called a foreigner among us, he will be exposed as a native
Of Thebes but have no delight in that event.
Blind, though recently able to see—

And a beggar, who before was rich—he shall go to foreign lands
With a stick to guide him along the ground on his journey.
And he shall be exposed to his children as both their father
And their brother; to the woman who gave him birth
As both her son and husband; and to his father
As his killer who seeded her after him. So go
Within to reason this out and if you catch me deceiving you,
Then say that in my prophecies there is nothing for me to be proud of.
[Exit Tiresias and Oedipus]

CHORUS
Who is the one that the god-inspired oracle-stone at Delphi saw
With bloody hands doing that which it is forbidden to speak of?
For now is the day for him to move his feet swifter
Than storm's horses as he flees
Since the son of Zeus—armed with fire and lightning—
Is leaping toward him
Accompanied by those angry
And infallible Furies!
It was not that long ago that the omen shone forth
From the snows of Parnassus:
Search everywhere for that man who is concealed;
He who wanders up to the wild-woods,
Through caves and among the rocks like some bull—
He unlucky in his desolation who by his unlucky feet
Seeks to elude that prophecy from the Temple at the centre of the world—
That living doom which circles around him.
There is a strange wonder—wrought by he who is skilled in augury;
I cannot believe, yet cannot disbelieve, nor explain my confusion
For fear hovers over me. I cannot see what is here, or what is behind!
Yet—if there was between the family of Labdacus,
And that son of Polybus, any strife existing
Either now or before, I have not learned of it
To thus use it as proof to examine by trial and thus attack
The public reputation of Oedipus, becoming thus for the family of Labdacus
Their ally in respect of that killing which has been concealed.
Rather—this is for Zeus and Apollo, who have the skill
To understand, although that other man has won more
For his discoveries than I.
Even so, on some things nothing decisive is discovered:
As in learning, where by learning
One man may overtake another.
Thus not before I see that they who accuse him are speaking straight
Will I declare myself for them
For she was visible—that winged girl who came down against him—
And we then saw proof of his knowledge, which was beneficial to our clan.
So therefore my decision is not to condemn him as ignoble.
[Enter Creon]

CREON
Clansmen! Having learnt of a horrible accusation

Made against me by Oedipus the King
I hastened here! If, in these our troubles,
He deems that he has suffered because of me—
Been injured by some word or some deed— 495
Then I would have no desire to live as long as I might
Having to bear such talk! For it is not simple—
The damage that would be done to me by such words:
Rather, it would be great, for I would be dishonoured before my clan—
With you and my kinsfolk hearing my name dishonoured. 500

CHORUS
That insult perhaps came forth because of anger—
Rather than being a conclusion from reason.

CREON
And it was declared that it was my reasoning
Which persuaded the prophet to utter false words?

CHORUS
It was voiced—but I do not know for what reason. 505

CREON
Were his eyes straight, was he thinking straight
When he made that allegation against me?

CHORUS
I do not know. For I do not observe what my superiors do.
But here, from out of his dwelling, comes the Chief himself.
[Enter Oedipus]

OEDIPUS
You there! Why are you here? Have you so much face 510
That you dare to come to my home?
You—the one exposed as the killer of its man
And, vividly, as a robber seeking my Kingship!
In the name of the gods, tell me if it was cowardice or stupidity
That you saw in me when you resolved to undertake this! 515
Did you reason that I would not observe your cunning treachery—
Or, if I did learn of it, I would not defend myself?
Instead, it was senseless of you to set your hand to this—
With no crowd or comrades—and go in pursuit of authority:
That which is captured by using wealth and the crowd! 520

CREON
You know what you must do—in answer to your words
Be as long in hearing my reply so that you can, with knowledge, judge for yourself.

OEDIPUS
Your words are clever—but I would be mistaken to learn from you,
Since I have found how dangerous and hostile you are to me.

CREON
That is the first thing you should hear me speak about. 525

OEDIPUS
Do not tell me: it is that you are *not* a traitor!

CREON
If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

OEDIPUS
If you believe you can betray a kinsman
And escape without punishment, then your judgement is no good.

CREON
I agree that such a thing is correct
So inform me what injury you say I have inflicted.

OEDIPUS
Did you convince me or did you not convince me that I should
Send a man to bring here that respected prophet?

CREON
I am the same person now as the one who gave that advice.

OEDIPUS
How long is the duration since Laius—

CREON
Since he did what? I do not understand.

OEDIPUS
Since he disappeared: removed by deadly force?

CREON
The measurement of that duration is great—far into the past.

OEDIPUS
So—was that prophet then at his art?

CREON
Yes: of equal skill and having the same respect as now.

OEDIPUS
At that period did he make mention of me?

CREON
Certainly not to me nor when I was standing nearby.

OEDIPUS
Was there no inquiry held about the killing?

CREON
It was indeed undertaken, although nothing was learned.

OEDIPUS
So why did that clever person not speak , then?

CREON
I do not know. And about things I cannot judge for myself, I prefer to be silent.

OEDIPUS
But you do know why and would say it if you had good judgement!

CREON
What? If I did know, then I would not deny it.

OEDIPUS
It is that if he had not met with you,
He would not have spoken about “my” killing of Laius.

CREON
You should know if he indeed said that.
Now, however, it is fair that I question you just as you have me.

OEDIPUS
Question me well—for you will never convict me as the killer!

CREON
Nevertheless. You had my sister—took her as wife?

OEDIPUS
That is an assertion that cannot be denied.

CREON
Does she, in this land, possess an authority the equal of yours?

OEDIPUS
Whatsoever is her wish, she obtains from me.

CREON
And am I—who completes the triad—not the equal of you both?

OEDIPUS
And it because of that, that you are exposed as a traitor to your kin!

CREON
No! For consider these reasons for yourself, as I have,
Examining this first: do you believe anyone
Would prefer authority with all its problems
To untroubled calm if they retained the same superiority?
I myself do not nurture such a desire
To be King rather than do the deeds of a King:
No one commanding good judgement would, whoever they were.
Now, and from you, I receive everything with no problems
But if the authority was mine, I would have to do many things against my nature.
How then could being a King bring me more pleasure
Than the trouble-free authority and power I have?
I am not yet so much deceived
As to want honours other than those which profit me.
Now, I greet everyone, and now, everyone bids me well
Just as, now, those who want something from you call upon me
Since only in that way can they possibly have success.
Why, then, would I let go of these to accept that?
A traitor cannot, because of his way of thinking, have good judgement.
I am not a lover of those whose nature is to reason so
And would not endure them if they did act.
As proof of this, first go yourself to Pytho
To inquire whether the message I brought from the oracle there was true
And if you detect that I and that interpreter of signs
Plotted together, then kill me—not because of a single vote,
But because of two, for you will receive mine as well as yours.

I should not be accused because of unclear reasoning and that alone.
It is not fair when the ignoble, rashly,
Are esteemed as worthy or the worthy as ignoble.
I say that to cast away an honourable friend is to do the same
To that which is with life and which you cherish the most. 590
It takes a while for an intuition to be made steady
For it is only after a while that a man shows if he is fair
Although an ignoble one is known as such in a day.

CHORUS
Honourable words from someone cautious of falling,
My Lord. Those swift in their judgement are unsteady. 595

OEDIPUS
But when there is a plot against me which is swiftly and furtively
Moving forward, then I must be swift in opposing that plot
Since if I remain at rest, then indeed
What is about to be done, will be—because of my mistake.

CREON
Then you still desire to cast me from this land? 600

OEDIPUS
Not so! It is your death, not your exile, that I want! CREON
When you explain to me what is the nature of this thing “envy”—

OEDIPUS
You speak without yielding and not in good faith!

CREON
Is it not your ‘good judgement’ that is keenly being observed?

OEDIPUS
But at least it is mine! 605

CREON
And for that very reason it is but the equal of mine.

OEDIPUS
But you have a treacherous nature!

CREON
But if nothing has been proved—

OEDIPUS
Even so, there must be authority.

CREON
Not when that authority is defective. 610

OEDIPUS
My clan! My clan!

CREON
A portion of the clan is for me—not wholly for you!

CHORUS
My Lords, stop this! It is fortunate perhaps that I observe
Jocasta approaching from her dwelling, since it is fitting for her 615

To make right the quarrel which now excites you.
[Enter Jocasta]

JOCASTA
You wretches! Why this ill-advised strife
Produced by your tongues? Are you not dishonoured—when this land
Is suffering—by becoming moved by personal troubles?
You should go within; while you, Creon, should go to your dwelling
So as not to let what is only nothing become a great sorrow.

CREON
My kin by blood! It is horrible what your husband Oedipus,
From two unfair things, has decided it is right to do!
To push me from this land of my ancestors—or to seize and kill me!

OEDIPUS
Yes! For he was, my lady, caught trying to injure
My person by a cowardly art.

CREON
[*looking upward*]
Deny me, this day, your assistance—curse and destroy me
If I committed that which I am accused of doing!

JOCASTA
Before the god, trust him, Oedipus!
Chiefly because of this oath to the god
And then because of me and these others here beside you.

CHORUS
My Lord—be persuaded, having agreed to reflect on this.

OEDIPUS
To what do you wish me to yield?

CHORUS
Respect he who before has never been weak—he now strengthened by that oath.

OEDIPUS
Do you know what it is that you so desire?

CHORUS
I do know.

OEDIPUS
Then explain what you believe it to be.

CHORUS
When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him
Because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

OEDIPUS
Then attend to this well. When you seek this, it is my
Destruction that is saught—or exile from this land.

CHORUS
No! By the god who is Chief of all the gods—
Helios! Bereft of gods, bereft of kin—may the extremist death
Of all be mine if such a judgement was ever mine!

But ill-fated would be my breath of life—which the decay in this soil
Already wears down—if to those troubles of old
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

OEDIPUS
Then allow him to go—although it requires my certain death
Or that I, without honour and by force, am thrown out from this land.
And it is because of you, not because of him—the mercy coming from your mouth—
That I do this. As for him—wherever he goes—I will detest him!

CREON
It is clear that you are hostile as you yield—and so dangerous, even though
Your anger has gone. For natures such as yours
Are deservedly painful to whose who endure them.

OEDIPUS
Then go away and leave me.

CREON
I shall depart. To you, I remain unknown—but to these, here, I am the same.
[Exit Creon]

CHORUS
My Lady—why do you delay in returning with him into your dwelling?

JOCASTA
Because I wish to learn what has happened.

CHORUS
Suspicion arising from unreasonable talk—and a wounding that was unfair.

JOCASTA
From both of them?

CHORUS
Indeed.

JOCASTA
What was the talk?

CHORUS
Too much for me, too much for this land, wearied before this.
Since it appears to have ceased, here—let it remain so.

OEDIPUS
Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion!

CHORUS
My Lord, I will not say this only this once:
My judgement would be defective—and by my purposeless judgements
Would be shown to be so—if I deserted you,
You who when this land I love was afflicted
And despairing, set her straight.
Now be for us our lucky escort, again!

JOCASTA
My Lord—before the god explain to me
What act roused such wroth and made you hold onto it.

OEDIPUS
It will be told. For I respect you, my lady, more than them.
It was Creon—the plot he had against me.

JOCASTA
Then speak about it—if you can clearly affix blame for the quarrel.

OEDIPUS
He declared that it was me who had killed Laius.

JOCASTA
Did he see it, for him self—or learn of it from someone?

OEDIPUS
It was rather that he let that treacherous prophet bring it—
So as to make his own mouth entirely exempt.

JOCASTA
Therefore, and this day, acquit yourself of what was spoken about
And listen to me, for you will learn for yourself
That no mortal is given the skill to make prophecies.
I bring to light evidence for this:
An oracle came to Laius once—not I say
From Phoebus himself but from a servant—
That his own death was destined to come from a child
Which he and I would produce.
But—as it was reported—one day foreign robbers
Slew him where three cart-tracks meet.
As to the child—his growth had not extended to the third day
When we yoked the joints of its feet
And threw it—by another's hand—upon a desolate mountain.
So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,
That he slay the father who begot him—nor, for Laius,
That horror which he feared—being killed by his son.
Such were the limits set by those words of revelation!
Therefore, do not concern yourself with them: for what a god
Wants others to find out, he will by himself unmistakably reveal.

OEDIPUS
As I heard you just now my lady,
My judgement became muddled as the breath of life left me.

JOCASTA
What has so divided you that you turn away to speak?

OEDIPUS
I believed I heard this from you—that Laius
Was killed near where three cart-tracks meet.

JOCASTA
It was, indeed, voiced—and is so, still.

OEDIPUS
Where is the place where came his misfortune?

JOCASTA
The nearby land of Phocis—where the track splits

To come from Delphi and from Daulia.

OEDIPUS
How many seasons have passed since that thing was done?

JOCASTA
It was just before you held this land's authority
That it was revealed by a herald to the clan.

OEDIPUS
O Zeus! What was your purpose in doing this to me?

JOCASTA
What is it that burdens your heart, Oedipus?

OEDIPUS
Do not enquire yet; rather, explain to me the appearance Laius had:
Was he at the height of his vigour?

JOCASTA
He was big—his had covered in hair but having a recent whiteness.
His build was not far removed from your own.

OEDIPUS
Wretch that I am! For it seems that over myself I,
without looking, threw that terrible curse!

JOCASTA
What are you saying? My Lord—I tremble as I look at you.

OEDIPUS
My courage is replaced by fear—that the prophet possesses sight!
More can be explained—if you make known one more thing.

JOCASTA
Though I still tremble, if I have knowledge of what you ask, I shall speak it.

OEDIPUS
Did he have a slender one—or did he have many men
As escort as befits a warrior chieftain?

JOCASTA
Altogether there were five, one of those being an official—
And one carriage, which conveyed Laius.

OEDIPUS
Now it becomes visible. But who was he, My lady, who gave you that report?

JOCASTA
A servant—the very person who alone returned, having escaped harm.

OEDIPUS
Then perhaps he is to be found, at this moment, within our dwelling?

JOCASTA
Definitely not. For as soon as he returned here again and saw you
Were the master of what the dead Laius had held,
He beseeched me—his hand touching mine—
To send him away to the wilds as a shepherd to a herd,
Far away where he could not see the town.

And so I sent him. For I deemed him worthy,
As a slave, to have a greater reward than that favour.

OEDIPUS
Then swiftly—and with no delay—can he be returned here?

JOCASTA
He is around. But why do you desire it?

OEDIPUS
I fear, my lady, that far too much has already
Been said by me. Yet it is my wish to see him.

JOCASTA
Then he shall be here. But it merits me to learn,
My Lord, what burden within you is so difficult to bear.

OEDIPUS
I shall not deprive you of that—for what I fear
Comes closer. Who is more important to me than you
To whom I would speak when going through such an event as this?
Polybus the Corinthian was my father—
And the Dorian, Meropè, my mother. I was, in merit,
Greater than the clansfolk there—until I was, by chance,
Attacked. This, for me, was worthy of my wonder
Although unworthy of my zeal:
At a feast a man overfull with wine
Mumbled into his chalice what I was falsely said to be my father's.
I was annoyed by this during that day—scarcely able
To hold myself back. On the one following that, I saught to question
My mother and father, and they were indignant
At he who had let loose those words at me.
Because of this, I was glad, although I came to itch from them
For much did they slither about.
So, unobserved by my mother and father, I travelled
To Pytho. But for that which I had come, Phoebus there
Did not honour me; instead—suffering and strangeness
And misery were what his words foresaw:
That I must copulate with my mother—and show,
For mortals to behold, a family who would not endure—
And also be the killer of the father who planted me.
I, after hearing this—and regarding Corinth—
Thereafter by the stars measured the ground
I fled upon so that I would never have to face—
Because of that inauspicious prophecy—the disgrace of its fulfilment.
And while so travelling I arrived in those regions
Where you spoke of the King himself being killed.
For you, my lady, I shall declare what has not been spoken of before.
While journeying, I came near to that three-fold track,
And at that place an official and a carriage
With young horse with a man mounted in it—such as you spoke of—
Came toward me. And he who was in front as well as the Elder himself
Were for driving me vigorously from the path.

But the one who had pushed me aside—the carriage driver—
I hit in anger: and the Elder, observing this
From his chariot, watched for me to go past and then on the middle
Of my head struck me with his forked goad.
He was certainly repaid with more! By a quick blow
From the staff in this, my hand, he fell back
From the middle of the carriage and rolled straight out!
And then I destroyed all the others. Yet if to that stranger
And Laius there belongs a common relation
Then who exists who is now as unfortunate as this man, here?
Who of our race of mortals would have a daimon more hostile—
He to whom it is not permitted for a stranger nor a clansman
To receive into their homes, nor even speak to—
But who, instead, must be pushed aside? And it is such things as these—
These curses!—that I have brought upon myself.
The wife of he who is dead has been stained by these hands
Which killed him. Was I born ignoble?
Am I not wholly unclean? For I must be exiled
And in my exile never see my family
Nor step into my own fatherland—or by marriage
I will be yoked to my mother and slay my father
Polybus, he who produced and nourished me.
And would not someone who decided a savage daimon
Did these things to me be speaking correctly?
You awesome, powerful, gods—
May I never see that day! May I go away
From mortals, unobserved, before I see
The stain of that misfortune come to me.

CHORUS
I also, my Lord, would wish to draw away from such things.
But surely until you learn from he who was there, you can have expectations?

OEDIPUS
Indeed. There is for me just such an expectation,
And one alone—to wait for that herdsman.

JOCASTA
And when he does appear, what is your intent?

OEDIPUS
I will explain it to you. If his report is found to be
The same as yours, then I shall escape that suffering.

JOCASTA
Did you then hear something odd in my report?

OEDIPUS
You said he spoke of men—of robbers—being the ones
Who did the killing. If, therefore, he still
Speaks of there being many of them, then I am not the killer
For one cannot be the same as the many of that kind.
But if he says a solitary armed traveller, then it is clear,
And points to me as the person who did that work.

JOCASTA
You should know that it was announced in that way.
He cannot go back and cast them away
For they were heard, here, by the clan—not just by me.
Yet even if he turns away from his former report,
Never, my Lord, can the death of Laius
Be revealed as a straight fit—for it was Loxias
Who disclosed he would be killed by the hand of my child.
But he—the unlucky one—could not have slain him
For he was himself destroyed before that.
Since then I have not by divination looked into
What is on either side of what is next.

OEDIPUS
I find that pleasing. However, that hired hand
Should be summoned here by sending someone—it should not be neglected.

JOCASTA
I will send someone, and swiftly. But let us go into our dwelling.
I would not do anything that would be disagreeable to you.
[Exit Oedipus and Jocasta]

CHORUS
May the goddess of destiny be with me
So that I bear an entirely honourable attitude
In what I say and in what I do—
As set forth above us in those customs born and
Given their being in the brightness of the heavens
And fathered only by Olympus.
For they were not brought forth by mortals,
Whose nature is to die. Not for them the lethargy
Of laying down to sleep
Since the god within them is strong, and never grows old.
Insolence plants the tyrant:
There is insolence if by a great foolishness
There is a useless over-filling which goes beyond
The proper limits—
It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights
And then that hurtling toward that Destiny
Where the useful foot has no use.
Yet since it is good for a clan to have combat,
I ask the god never to deliver us from it:
As may I never cease from having the god for my champion.
If someone goes forth and by his speaking
Or the deeds of his hands looks down upon others
With no fear of the goddess Judgement and not in awe
Of daimons appearing,
Then may he be seized by a destructive Fate
Because of his unlucky weakness.
If he does not gain what he gains fairly,
Does not keep himself from being disrespectful,
And in his foolishness holds onto what should not be touched,

Then how will such a man thereafter keep away those arrows of anger
Which will take revenge on his breath of life?
For if such actions are those are esteemed,
Is this my respectful choral-dance required?
No more would I go in awe to that never to be touched sacred-stone,
Nor to that Temple at Abae,
Nor Olympia—if those prophecies do not fit
In such a way that all mortals can point it out.
But you whom it is right to call my master—
Zeus!—you who rule over everyone: do not forget this,
You whose authority is, forever, immortal.
For they begin to decay—those prophecies of Laius
Given long ago, and are even now set aside
And nowhere does Apollo become manifest because esteemed:
For the rituals of the gods are being lost.
[Enter Jocasta]

JOCASTA
Lords of this land—the belief has been given to me
That I should go to the Temples of our guardian gods, my hands
Holding a garland and an offering of incense.
For Oedipus lets his breath of life be too much possessed by his heart
Because of all his afflictions—since, unlike a man who reasons
And determines the limits of what is strange by the past,
He is fearful when someone, in speaking, speaks of such things.
Therefore, since none of my counsels have achieved anything,
I come here—to you, Lycean Apollo, since you are close to us—
To petition you by asking you with these my gifts
That we are cleansed of defilement by you bringing us deliverance.
For now all of us are afraid as we behold
That he who is guiding our vessel is wounded.
[Enter Messenger]

MESSENGER
Is it from you, stranger, that I might learn where
Is the dwelling of King Oedipus:
Or, more particularly, if you have knowledge of where he himself is?

CHORUS
Here are his chambers, stranger, and he himself is within.
But here is his wife and mother of his children.
May she always prosper in her prospering descent

MESSENGER
Since by them her marriage is complete.

JOCASTA
And may you, also, stranger, because of your worthy eloquence.
But explain to me what you seek in arriving here
Or what it is that you wish to make known.

MESSENGER
What is profitable, my lady, for both your family and your husband.

JOCASTA
What is it? And who sent you here, to us?

MESSENGER
I am from Corinth. And when, presently, I have said my speech,
There will be joy—of that I have no doubt—but also an equal sorrowing.

JOCASTA
How can that be? What has a double strength that it could cause that?

MESSENGER
He, as their King: for they who inhabit the land
Of Isthmia would make him so—so they have said.

JOCASTA
How is that? For is not Polybus, the Elder, their Master?

MESSENGER
Not now—because death holds him in a tomb.

JOCASTA
What are you saying? That the father of Oedipus—has died?

MESSENGER
Is my report is not correct, then I merit death.

JOCASTA
Swiftly—my handmaiden—go to your master
To tell him this. You prophecies from the gods!—
Where is your reality? This was the man whom Oedipus long ago from fear
Avoided lest he kill him. And now it is because
Of his own destiny that he died rather than through that of another.
[Enter Oedipus]

OEDIPUS
My Lady, Jocasta:
Why did you summon me here from my chamber?

JOCASTA
Hear this man and, as you listen, watch to where
It is that those solemn prophecies of the gods lead.

OEDIPUS
What report has he—wherever he is from—for me?

JOCASTA
He is from Corinth with the message that your father
Polybus is no more—he is dead.

OEDIPUS
Then announce it, stranger—leading it out yourself, old one.

MESSENGER
If that is what I must relate first and clearly
Then know well that his death has come upon him.

OEDIPUS
Was it by treachery—or by dealing with sickness?

MESSENGER
A small turn downwards, and the ageing body lies in sleep.

OEDIPUS
Am I to assume that he unfortunately perished from a sickness?

MESSENGER
Indeed—for he had been allocated a great many seasons.

OEDIPUS
Ah! Then why, my lady, look toward
The altar of some Pythian prophet, or above to those
Screeching birds—whose guidance was that I would
Assuredly kill my father? But he is dead
And hidden within the earth, while I am here
Without having to clean my spear. Unless—it was a longing for me
Which destroyed him, and thus he is dead because of me.
But then—that divine prophecy has been, by that circumstance, taken away
By Polybus lying in Hades, and thus has no importance.

JOCASTA
Did I not declare such things to you, just now?

OEDIPUS
Such was said—but I turned away because of my fear of them.

JOCASTA
Do not anymore wound your heart by such things.

OEDIPUS
But how can I not distance myself from that intercourse with my mother?

JOCASTA
What is there for mortals to fear, for it is chance
Which rules over them, and who can clearly foresee what does not exist?
It is most excellent to live without a plan—according to one's ability.
You should not fear being married to your mother:
For many are the mortals who have—in dreams also—
Lain with their mothers, and he to whom such things as these
Are as nothing, provides himself with a much easier life.

OEDIPUS
All that you expressed is fine, except for this:
She who gave me birth is alive, and since she is now still living,
It is necessary that I—despite your fine words—distance myself from her.

JOCASTA
Yet the death of your father is a great revelation for you.

OEDIPUS
Yes—a great one. But I fear she who is living.

MESSENGER
Who is this woman that you so fear?

OEDIPUS
Meropè, old one: she who belonged with Polybus.

MESSENGER
And what, concerning her, could produce fear in you?

OEDIPUS
A strange god-inspired prophecy.

MESSENGER
Is it forbidden for someone else to know—or can it be told?

OEDIPUS
Certainly. Once, Loxias said to me
That I must copulate with my own mother 965
And by my own hands take my father's blood.
Therefore, and long ago, I left Corinth
And have kept far away from there. And good fortune has been mine,
Although it is very pleasing to behold the eye's of one's parents.

MESSENGER
Was that what distanced you from your clan? 970

OEDIPUS
Yes, old one: I did not want to slaughter my father.

MESSENGER
Then why, my Lord, have I not released you from that fear—
Since I came here as a favour to you?

OEDIPUS
Certainly you would merit receiving a reward from me.

MESSENGER
And that was chiefly why I came here— 975
That on your arrival home I would obtain something useful.

OEDIPUS
But I will not rejoin those who planted me.

MESSENGER
My son! It is clearly evident you cannot see what you are doing

OEDIPUS
Why, old one? Before the gods, enlighten me!

MESSENGER
—If it was because of that, that you avoided returning to your home. 980

OEDIPUS
Yes, out of respect for Phoebus so that what he explained could not be fulfilled.

MESSENGER
A defilement brought to you by they who planted you?

OEDIPUS
That, Elder, is the thing I have always feared.

MESSENGER
Then you should know that there is nothing to make you tremble.

OEDIPUS
Nothing? Why—if I was the child born to them? 985

MESSENGER
Because you and Polybus are not kin by blood.

OEDIPUS
Are you saying that Polybus did not sire me?

MESSENGER
The same as but no more than this man, here!

OEDIPUS
How can he who sired me be the same as he who did not?

MESSENGER
Because he did not beget you—as I did not. 990

OEDIPUS
But then why did he name me as his son?

MESSENGER
Know that you were accepted from my hands as a gift.

OEDIPUS
And he strongly loved what came from the hand of another?

MESSENGER
He was persuaded because before then he was without children.

OEDIPUS
When I was given to him—had you purchased or begotten me? 995

MESSENGER
You were found in a forest valley on Cithaeron.

OEDIPUS
And why were you travelling in that region?

MESSENGER
I was there to oversee the mountain sheep.

OEDIPUS
A shepherd—who wandered in search of work?

MESSENGER
Yes—and that season the one who, my son, was your saviour. 1000

OEDIPUS
What ailment possessed me when you took me into your hands?

MESSENGER
The joints of your feet are evidence of it.

OEDIPUS
What makes you speak of that old defect?

MESSENGER
I undid what held and pierced your ankles.

OEDIPUS
A strange disgrace—to carry such a token with me. 1005

MESSENGER
Such was the fortune that named you who you are.

OEDIPUS
Before the gods, tell me whether that thing was done by my father or my mother.

MESSENGER
I do not know—he who gave you to me would be the best judge of that.

OEDIPUS
What? From someone else? Then it was not by chance you found me?

MESSENGER
No—another shepherd gave you to me. 1010

OEDIPUS
Who was it? Can you point him out? Tell whom you saw?

MESSENGER
He was perhaps named among those of Laius.

OEDIPUS
He who once and long ago was King of this land?

MESSENGER
Yes—that man was his shepherd.

OEDIPUS
Is he then still living? Is it possible for me to see him? 1015

MESSENGER
You who are of this region would know that best.

OEDIPUS
Is there among you here, anyone
Whoever he might be, who knows this shepherd he speaks of
Or who has seen him either here or in the wilds?
If so, declare it—for here is the opportunity to find out about these things. 1020

CHORUS
I believe is that one in the wilds
Whom you saught before to see.
But it is Jocasta—for certain—who could tell of him.

OEDIPUS
My lady—do you know if it is he who, before,
We desired to return to here?
Is that the one about whom this person speaks? 1025

JOCASTA
The one he spoke about? Why? Do not return to it
Nor even desire to attend again to this idle talk!

OEDIPUS
It could never be that I would fail to grasp
These proofs which will shed light upon my origin.

JOCASTA
Before the gods! If you value your own life, 1030
Do not seek that. I have enough pain now.

OEDIPUS
Have courage—for even if my three mothers past

Were shown to be three slaves, you would not be the one exposed as low-born.

JOCASTA
I beseech you to be persuaded by me. Do not do this.

OEDIPUS
I cannot be persuaded not to learn of this for certain.

JOCASTA
Yet my judgement is for your good—it is said for the best.

OEDIPUS
This “for the best” pained me before and does so again.

JOCASTA
You, the unlucky one—may you never find out who you are.

OEDIPUS
Someone go and bring that Shepherd here to me,
For she can still rejoice in her distinguished origins.

JOCASTA
You are doomed: this and this alone will
I Say to you—and nothing hereafter!
[Exit Jocasta]

CHORUS
Why, Oedipus, has your lady gone, taken away
By some wild affliction? I am in awe
Of a misfortune bursting forth because of her silence about this.

OEDIPUS
It is necessary that it does burst forth. However lowly
My seed may be, it is my wish to know about it.
Although she is a woman, she has a mature judgement—
But even so, perhaps she is ashamed of my low-born origins.
But I—who apportion myself a child of the goddess, Fortuna,
She of beneficence—will not become dishonoured,
For She was the mother who gave me birth: my kinsfolk
The moons which separated my greatness and my lowness.
As this is the nature of my being, I cannot ever go away from it
To another, and so not learn about my birth.

CHORUS
If indeed I am a prophet or skillful in reason,
Then—by Olympus!—you shall not be without the experience,
O Cithaeron, on the rising of the full moon,
Of me exalting you—the kinsfolk of Oedipus,
His mother and provider—by my choral-dance
Since a joy has been brought to my King.
Phoebus—I invoke you, that this may also be pleasing to you!
Who, my son, of those whose living in years is long,
Did the mountain-wanderer Pan come down upon
To be your father? Or was it Loxias who slept with a woman?
For agreeable to him are all those who inhabit the wilds!
Or perhaps it was he who is the sovereign of Cyllene:

Or he the mountain-summit dwelling god of those Bacchinites
Who gladly received you who was found by one of those Helicon Nymphs
With whom he so often plays!

OEDIPUS
If it fitting for me—who has never had dealings with him—
To make an estimate, Elders, then I believe I see that Shepherd
Whom we saught before. For his great age
Would conform and be in accord with that of this man.
Also, those who are escorting him are servants
Of my own family. But, about this, your experience
Has the advantage over mine since you have seen that Shepherd before.

CHORUS
I see him clearly—and, yes, I know him. For if Laius ever had
A faithful Shepherd, it was this man.
[Enter Shepherd]

OEDIPUS
You, the stranger from Corinth, I question you first—
Is this he whom you talked about.

MESSENGER
Indeed—you behold him.

OEDIPUS
You there, old man! Here, look at me, and answer
My questions. Did you once belong to Laius?

SHEPHERD
Yes—nourished by him, not purchased as a slave.

OEDIPUS
What work did you share in or was your livelihood?

SHEPHERD
For the greater part, my living was the way of a shepherd.

OEDIPUS
And in what region did you mostly dwell with them?

SHEPHERD
It was Cithaeron—and also neighbouring regions.

OEDIPUS
This man here—did you ever observe him there and come to know him?

SHEPHERD
Doing what? Which is the man you speak of?

OEDIPUS
This one, standing there. Did you have dealings with him?

SHEPHERD
Not as I recall—so as to speak about now.

MESSENGER
That is no wonder, your Lordship. But I shall bring light
Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know

That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he
With a double flock and I with one
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.
Then for the Winter I would drive mine to my stables
And he, his, to the pens of Laius.
Was this, of which I have spoken, done or not as I have spoken?

SHEPHERD
Your words disclose it—although it is from long ago.

MESSENGER
Well, now say you know that you offered me a boy,
A nursling to rear as my own.

SHEPHERD
What do you mean? What do you ask me for?

MESSENGER
This, sir, is he who was that youngster!

SHEPHERD
May misfortune come to you! Why do you not keep silent?

OEDIPUS
You—old man. Do not restrain him for it is your speech
Which should be more restrained, not his.

SHEPHERD
Most noble Lord—what is my fault?

OEDIPUS
In not telling of the child he asked about.

SHEPHERD
But he speaks without looking as he toils without an aim.

OEDIPUS
If you will not speak as a favour, you will when you cry-out.

SHEPHERD
Before the gods, do not strike someone who is old.

OEDIPUS
Swiftly, one of you, twist his hands behind his back.

SHEPHERD
You unlucky one! What more do you desire to learn from me?

OEDIPUS
Did you give him that child he asked about?

SHEPHERD
I did. And it would have been to my advantage to die that day.

OEDIPUS
It will come to that if your words are not true.

SHEPHERD
Yet much more will be destroyed if I do speak.

OEDIPUS
This man, it seems, pushes for a delay.

SHEPHERD
I do not. Just now I said I gave him.

OEDIPUS
Taken from where? Your abode—or from that of another?

SHEPHERD
Not from my own; I received him from someone.

OEDIPUS
Who—of these clansmen here? From whose dwelling?

SHEPHERD
Your lordship, before the gods do not ask me more.

OEDIPUS
You die if I have to put that question to you again.

SHEPHERD
Then—it was one of those fathered by Laius.

OEDIPUS
From a slave? Or born from one of his own race?

SHEPHERD
Ah! Here before me is what I dread. Of speaking it...

OEDIPUS
And I, of hearing it, although hear it I must.

SHEPHERD
It was said to be his own child. But of these things,
It is your lady—who is within—who could best speak of them.

OEDIPUS
Why? Because she gave it to you?

SHEPHERD
Indeed, Lord.

OEDIPUS
Why did she want that?

SHEPHERD
So it would be destroyed.

OEDIPUS
How grievous for she who bore the child!

SHEPHERD
Yes—but she dreaded divine prophecies of ill-omen.

OEDIPUS
Which were?

SHEPHERD
The word was that he would kill his parents.

OEDIPUS
Then why did you let this elderly one take him.

MESSENGER
Because, your lordship, of mercy—so that to another land
He might fittingly convey it: to where he himself came from.
But he saved him for this mighty wound. If then you are
The one he declares you to be, know how unlucky was your birth!

OEDIPUS
Ah! All that was possible has, with certainty, passed away.
You—daylight—I now look my last at what I behold by you:
I, exposed as born from those who should not have borne me—
As having been intimate with those I should not, and killed those I should not.
[Exit Oedipus, Shepherd and Messenger]

CHORUS
You descendants of mortals—
I count your zest as being equivalent to nothing, For where is the person
Who has won more from a lucky daimon
Than just that appearance of fame
Which later is peeled away?
Yours—your daimon, Oedipus the unlucky— We hold as an example
That nothing mortal is favoured.
For, O Zeus, it was beyond the bounds of others
That he shot his arrow to win
An all-prospering lucky daimon:
He who in destroying that virginal chantress of oracles
With the curved claws,
Arose in my country as a defence against death.
And who since then has been called my Lord
And greatly honoured as the chief of Thebes the magnificent!
But now—who has heard of a greater misfortune?
Who is there so savagely ruined that he dwells with such troubles
With his life so changed?
Alas—Oedipus, the renowned! A mature haven
Was enough for you
As child and father when you fell upon
That woman in her inner chamber!
How, how could what your father pushed into
Have the vigour for you for so long and in silence?
Chronos, the all-seeing, has found you, beyond your own will,
For long ago it was determined that from that marriage which was no marriage
Those children who have been born were the children that would be born.
But—as being the son of Laius,
I wish, I wish that I had never known this.
For I lament, and my cry is above all the others
As it comes forth from my mouth.
To speak straight: you gave me breath again
But I allowed my eyes to sleep.
[Enter Second Messenger]

MESSENGER
You who in this land have always been esteemed the most!
What deeds you are to hear—what behold!—and how much grief

Will weigh upon you if, on fidelity to your origins,
Your concern is still for the family of Labdacus!
For, alas, neither the Ister nor the Phasis
Can wash clean these chambers, so much suffering
Do they conceal—soon to be exposed to the light
As willed, not done outside the aid of will. Those injuries
Which bring the most grieving, are those shown to be of our own choice.

CHORUS
What I knew before could not fail to make my grieving
Anything but grave; after that—what could you announce?

MESSENGER
What is a quick tale to say
And to understand: the divinity, Jocasta, is dead.

CHORUS
A misfortune! From what cause?

MESSENGER
By she herself. But, of those events,
What was most painful is not for you—for you did not view them.
Yet—as long as my Muse is with me—
You can learn of the sufferings of her fate.
She—coloured by emotion—passed within the hall
To run straight to that bridal-bed of hers
Tearing at her hair with the fingers of both her hands.
Then, she went within—thrusting the doors closed—
To invoke Laius, he who long ago was a corpse,
Recalling that seed she received long ago by which
He was killed, to leave her to produce
Unlucky children from his own begotten child.
She lamented the bed of her double misfortune:
From her husband, a husband—and children from that child.
How, after that, she perished, I did not see
For with a war-cry Oedipus pushed in—and, because of him,
We did not behold the end of her suffering.
To him, we looked as he ploughed around
For wildly he ranged about, demanding his spear,
His lady who was not his lady, and where he might find that maternal
Double-womb which produced he himself and his children.
He was frenzied, and a daimon guided him—
For it was no man who was standing nearby—
And with a fearful shout—as if someone led the way—
He was propelled into those double-doors and, from their supports,
Bent those hollow barriers to fall into her chamber.
And there we beheld that lady suspended
In the swinging braided cords by which she had stricken herself.
He, seeing this, with a fearful roar of grief
Let down the cords which suspended her. Then when she the unfortunate
Was lain on the ground, there was something dreadful to behold:
For he tore from her those gold brooches

With which she had adorned herself
And raised them to assault his own circular organs,
Speaking such as this: that they would not have sight of 1235
Those troubles he had suffered or had caused
But would henceforth and in darkness have sight of what
They should not and what he himself should not have had knowledge of.
Then with a awesome lament not once but frequently
He raised them to strike into his eyes. At each, blood 1240
From his eyes dropped to his beard, not releasing blood
Drop by drop—but all at once:
A dark storm hailing drops of blood.
From those two has this burst forth—not on one
But on that man and his lady, joined by these troubles. 1245
That old prosperity anciently theirs was indeed once
A worthy prosperity—but now, on this day, there is
Lamentation, misfortune, death, disgrace, and of all those troubles
That exist and which have names, there is not one which is not here.

CHORUS
Does he who suffers now rest from injury? 1250

MESSENGER
He shouts for the barriers to be opened to expose
To all who are of Cadmus, this patricide,
This mother...—I will not say the profanity he speaks—
So he can cast himself from this land, and not remain
For this dwelling to become cursed because of his curse. 1255
But he requires strength and a guide
For too great for him to carry is that burden
Which he will make known to you. You will behold a spectacle
Which even those to whom it is horrible, will make lament for.
[Enter the blind Oedipus]

CHORUS
How strange for mortals to see such an accident as this! 1260
It is the strangest thing of all ever
To come before me. You—who suffer this—
What fury came upon you? What daimon
With great leaps from a great height
Came upon you bringing such an unfortunate fate? 1265
I lament for your bad-luck.
Though I am not able to look at you—
There is much I wish to ask, much to understand,
Much to know
Even though I am here, shivering. 1270

OEDIPUS
I am in agony!
To where, in my misery, am I carried? To where
Is my voice conveyed as it flees from me?
You—that daimon! To where have you brought me?

CHORUS
Somewhere strange with nothing to be heard and nothing to be seen. 1275
OEDIPUS Nothing announced the arrival of this dark cloud shrouding me!
Something unconquerable—brought by an unfavourable wind.
As one do the stings of those goads,
And the recalling of those troubles, pierce me!

CHORUS
It is no surprise that because of such injuries 1280
You endure a double mourning and a double misfortune.

OEDIPUS
My friend!
You, at least, are my steadfast comrade
Because you have the endurance to attend to the blind.
For you are not hidden from me—I clearly know, 1285
Even in this darkness, that it is your voice.

CHORUS
You of strange deeds—how did you bear
To so extinguish your sight? What daimon carried you away?

OEDIPUS
It was Apollo—Apollo, my friend,
Who brought such troubles to such a troubled end. 1290
But it was my own hand, and no other, which made the assault—
I, who suffer this. For why should I have sight
When there was nothing pleasing to see?

CHORUS
These things are as you have said they are.

OEDIPUS
Who could I behold? 1295
Who could be loved—or whose greeting,
My friend, would be delightful to hear?
So, and swiftly, send me away from this place.
Send away, my friend, this great pest—
This bringer of a curse: the mortal whom our gods 1300
Detest the most.

CHORUS
You are as helpless in that resolve as you were in your misfortune:
Thus I wish you had never come to know of those things!

OEDIPUS
May death come to whosoever while roaming those grasslands loosened
Those cruel fetters and so safely pulled me away from death! 1305
For it was not a favourable deed.
For had I died then no grief such as this
Would have been caused to either me or my kin.

CHORUS
I also wish that.

OEDIPUS
I would not, then, have shed the blood of my father
As I journeyed, and not be named by mortals
As the husband of she who gave me my birth.
I am without a god—an unconsecrated child—
And now of the same kind as he who gave me this miserable existence!
If there is a trouble which is even older than these troubles,
Then it will be the lot of Oedipus.
CHORUS I do not know if I could say that your intentions were right,
For it is perhaps better to no longer exist than to live, blind.

OEDIPUS
But as to this being done for the best—
You should not instruct me, nor offer me more advice.
For, if I had eyes, I would not know where to look
When I went to Hades and saw my father
Or my unfortunate mother, since to both
I have done what is so outstanding that a strangling is excluded.
Perhaps the sight of children is desirable:
To behold how those buds are mine will grow—
But it would certainly not be to these eyes of mine.
Nor would that of this town, or its towers, or the sacrifices
Offered to daimons. For it was most unfortunate that I—
Who as no one else in Thebes prospered most excellently—
Bereaved myself of such things by my own declaration
That everyone must push aside the profane one—the one the gods
Have exposed as unclean and of the clan of Laius.
After I have made known this, my stain,
How could I look those here straight in the eye?
Certainly I could not. And if what is heard could be blocked out
At that source in my ears, I would not have held myself back
From this miserable body and thus would be blind and also hear nothing!
For it is pleasing to dwell away from concern about injury.
Why, Cithaeron—why did you receive me, and having accepted,
Not directly kill me so I would never make known
To mortals whence I was born?
O Polybus and Corinth—and you that others called the ancient clan-home
Of my ancestors—I, the beauty that you reared
Had bad wounds festering underneath!
For I am found to be defective having been defective from my birth.
You three routes and concealed valley,
You grove and narrow place of the three-fold paths:
You took in from my hands that blood which was my father's
But also mine—so perhaps you can still recall
Those deeds that I did there, and then, when here,
What I also achieved? You—those rites of joy
Which gave me my birth and which planted me anew
By the same seed being shot up to manifest fathers,
Brothers, sons—the blood of a kinsman—
Brides, wives, mothers: as much shame

As can arise from deeds among mortals.
No one should speak about things they do not favour doing.
Swiftly then—before the gods and beyond here—
Hide me away or kill me or upon the sea cast me
So that you will never look upon me again.
Come, and dignify this unhappy man by your touch.
Be persuaded—do not fear. For this misfortune is mine alone
And no mortal except me can bear it.
[Enter Creon]

CHORUS
As to this request of yours—it is fitting that here is Creon
To act and give advice,
For he alone is left to be guardian of this region in your place.

OEDIPUS
But what is there than I can say to him?
What trust can with fairness be shown to me?
For I am discovered as being false to him, previously, in everything.

CREON
I did not come here, Oedipus, to laugh
Nor to blame you for your previous error.
[Creon turns to speak to the crowd who have gathered]
You—there—even if you do not honour those descended from mortals,
Have respect for the all-nourishing flames of the Lord Helios
So that this stain is not looked upon when it is uncovered—
This which neither our soil nor the sacred waters
Nor daylight will welcome.
Swiftly now take him into his chambers:
For the most proper conduct is that only kinfolk
Look at and hear a kinsman's faults.

OEDIPUS
Before the gods—since you have torn from me a dread
By you coming here—you, the most noble—to me, a most ignoble man,
Yield me something. I say this not for myself, but for you.

CREON
What favour do you request so earnestly?

OEDIPUS
That you throw me from this land as swiftly as you can
To where it is known there will be not one mortal to greet me.

CREON
Know that this would certainly have been done—were it not necessary
For me first to learn from the god what I should do.

OEDIPUS
But his saying completely clear—
That I, the disrespectful one, the patricide, must depart.

CREON
Those were the words—but since our needs have changed

It is better to learn what must be done.

OEDIPUS
But you will enquire of behalf of this unhappy man?

CREON
Yes—as you should now pay tribute to the god.

OEDIPUS
Certainly—and I rely on you for this supplication: OEDIPUS 1395
That you give to she who is within, a tomb such as you might desire
To lay yourself in—for it is correct to so perform this on behalf of your own.
As for me—never once let it be deemed fitting, while I happen to live,
For this my father's town to have me within it.
Instead, let me dwell in the mountains—to where is Cithaeron 1400
Renowned because of me; for my mother and my father
While they lived appointed it the tomb I would lay in.
Thus, there I will depart, killed as they desired.
Yet I do know that neither a sickness
Nor anything similar will destroy me, for I would never have been saved 1405
From that death unless it was for some horrible injury.
Hence I shall await that destiny which is mine—whatever its nature.
As for my sons—do not, Creon, add them
To your care. For they are men, and therefore will never
Lack the ability—wherever they are—to survive. 1410
But as for those unfortunate ones, my girls
For whom my table of food was never separate from
Nor who were ever without me, so that whatever I touched
Would be shared between us—
Attend to them, for me. 1415 Would that you could let my hands touch them
And they lament for my injuries.
Let these things be, Lord—
Let them be so, you of this noble race.
For if my hands could reach them 1420
I would believe they were mine just as when I had my sight.
[Enter Antigone and Ismene]

What is this?
Before the gods!—Do I not hear those whom I love,
Weeping? Has Creon let them make lament for me,
Sending here those who are dearest to me—my daughters? 1425
Is this right?

CREON
It is right. For I prepared this for you.
I conjectured this—your present delight—since it has possessed you before.

OEDIPUS
Then good fortune to you on your path—
And may you be guarded by a better daimon than was my fate! 1430
My children—where are you? Come here—here
To these my hands of he who is your brother:
These of he who planted you and which assisted your father
To see in this way with what before were clear eyes.

He, my children, who sees nothing, who enquires about nothing— 1435
He who is exposed as fathering you from where he himself was sown.
Even though I cannot behold you, I lament for you
Because I know of the bitter life left to you
Which mortals will cause you to live.
For what gathering of townsfolk could you go to? 1440
What festivals—from where you would not return, lamenting,
To your dwelling instead of watching the spectacle?
And when you become ripe for marriage
Who is there who exists, my children, who would chance it—
Accepting the rebukes that will as painful for they who begat me 1445
As they will be for you?
For what injury is not here? Your father killed his father;
He seeded her who had brought him forth
And from where he himself was sown
You were born—in the same way he himself was acquired. 1450
Such as this will you be rebuked with. Who then will marry you?
Such a person does not exist. No, my children, it is without doubt
That you must go to waste unsown and unmarried.
Son of Menoeceus! You are the only father
Who is left to them, for we who planted them are destroyed: 1455
Both of us. Watch that they do not wander
As beggars, without a man, since they are of your family—
Or that they become the equal of me in misfortune.
Rather, favour them because you see them at such an age as this,
Deserted by everyone—except for yourself. 1460
Agree to this, noble lord, and touch me with your hand.
And you, my children—had you judgement, I would even now
Have given you much advice. As it is, let your supplication be
To live where it is allowed and to obtain a life more agreeable
Than that of the father who planted you. 1465

CREON
Let this abundance of lamentation pass away—and go into those chambers.

OEDIPUS
I shall obey, although it is not pleasing.

CREON
All fine things have their season.

OEDIPUS
Do you know my conditions for going?

CREON
Speak them—and I, having heard them, will know. 1470

OEDIPUS
Send me far from this land.

CREON
That gift comes from the gods.

OEDIPUS
But the gods must detest me!

CREON
Then swiftly will your wish be fulfilled.

OEDIPUS
But do you grant this? 1475

CREON
I have no desire to speak idly about things I cannot judge.

OEDIPUS
Then now lead me from here.

CREON
Move away from your children—and go.

OEDIPUS
But do not take them from me.

CREON
Do not desire to be master in all things: 1480
For you are without the strength which assisted you during your life.

CHORUS
You who dwell in my fatherland, Thebes, observe—here is Oedipus,
He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:
What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?
But what a tide of problems have come over him! 1485
Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals
To observe that particular day—calling no one lucky until,
Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.



Image 1.12: Oedipus | Oedipus displaying his injuries after the climax of his drama.

Author: Albert Greiner
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

This page titled 3.15: Oedipus The King - Sophocles (ca. 496-ca. 406 B.C.E.) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **1.5: Oedipus The King - Sophocles (ca. 496-ca. 406 B.C.E.)** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88588

3.16: The Oresteia - An Introduction

The Oresteia is a cycle of three plays, written by the playwright Aeschylus, about Orestes, the son of Agamemnon. All Greek tragedies were written in trilogies, but this is the only example of a trilogy that still exists. The *Oresteia* was produced at the Greater Dionysia Festival in 458 BC, where it won first prize.

The Agamemnon

The first play in the trilogy is called the *Agamemnon* and it centers around Agamemnon's homecoming from the Trojan War and his subsequent death at the hands of his wife. Agamemnon has been gone for ten years and all that time his wife, Clytemnestra, has been angrily plotting her revenge on her husband for sacrificing their daughter, Iphigenia [see Agamemnon and Iphigenia]. Clytemnestra has taken a lover, Agamemnon's cousin Aegisthus, who also wants revenge on Agamemnon. Clytemnestra has sent her ten-year-old son, Orestes, away, so he will not get involved in the inter-family feud. Aeschylus makes several changes to the story of Agamemnon's death from the way that it is told in the *Odyssey*. In the *Agamemnon*, it is Clytemnestra, not Aegisthus, who kills her husband.

The Libation Bearers

The next play in the cycle is called *The Libation Bearers* and it takes place seven or eight years after the death of Agamemnon. Orestes, Agamemnon's son, now around eighteen, comes back to Mycenae with his cousin, Pylades. Apollo had instructed Orestes to avenge his father's murder by killing both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Orestes has no trouble killing Aegisthus, but it is extremely difficult for him to kill his own mother. Only after Pylades reminds Orestes of Apollo's command, is Orestes finally able to kill Clytemnestra. Agamemnon's murder has now been avenged, but the fact that Orestes has killed his mother creates a further problem. The Erinyes are female monsters who punish murderers, especially those who have murdered members of their own family. (The Erinyes, known as the Furies in Latin, are depicted as ugly women with snakes for hair. They are thought to have originated from the curses of the person who has been killed.) So now that Orestes his killed his mother, the Erinyes pursue Orestes and start to drive him mad.



Orestes and Pylades kill Clytemnestra and Aegisthus on a cinerary (funerary) urn in the Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonino Salinas in Palermo, Italy

The Eumenides

The final play in the trilogy is *The Eumenides*, a play that also serves as a foundation myth for the Athenian court system. It opens with Orestes, still pursued by the Erinyes, fleeing to Delphi to appeal to Apollo for help, since Apollo sent him to kill his mother in the first place. Apollo cannot send the Erinyes away, but he does make them fall asleep so Hermes can escort Orestes to Athens.



Apollo purifying Orestes while the Erinyes sleep nearby with the ghost of Clytemnestra trying to awaken them, found on a krater in the Louvre

Once in Athens, Orestes appeals to Athena for help and Athena organizes a trial for Orestes. The goddess presides over the trial with twelve Athenian citizens acting as jury; this is the mythical origin of the jury trial. The vote splits down the middle; six jurors find Orestes innocent and six find him guilty. It is up to Athena to cast the deciding vote, and she votes in favor of Orestes. This is the mythical origin of the Athenian custom that a tied vote is always decided in favor of the defendant. But the Erinyes do not accept the verdict; they still want to punish Orestes for the murder of his mother. Athena convinces the Erinyes to have mercy on Orestes; they also agree to change their name to the Eumenides (meaning “The Kindly Ones”) in return for receiving perpetual honor in Athens.

3.16: The Oresteia - An Introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.17: MEDEA - Euripides (ca. 484-ca.407 B.C.E.)

First performed in 431 B.C.E.

Greece

Of the three great ancient Greek tragedians (including Aeschylus and Sophocles), Euripides was perhaps the most controversial, and intentionally so. He did not win many of the Dionysian festival competitions among Greek dramatists with his shocking depictions of well-known stories, but nineteen of his over ninety plays have survived.

As with most of his plays, Euripides' version of the story of Medea focuses on the psychological aspects of the character. Medea, the niece of the sorceress Circe, had earlier helped Jason take the Golden Fleece from the land of Colchis, betraying both her family and her country in the process (including killing her own brother). Medea also had used her magic to restore youth to Jason's father, Aeson. Before meeting Medea, Jason had already abandoned his previous "wife," Hypsipyle, and his twin children with her; the play begins with Medea learning that she and her children with Jason are about to be abandoned for a new wife.

Written by Laura J. Getty



Image 1.9: Seated Euripides | This incomplete statue shows Euripides sitting down, with some of his works listed on the stone slab behind him.

Author: Jastrow
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Medea

Euripedes, Translated by E. P. Coleridge

Persons:
Nurse of Medea
Attendant on her Children Medea
Chorus of Corinthian Women Creon, King of Corinth
Jason
Aegeus, King of Athens Messenger

Scene
Before Medea's house in Corinth, near the palace Of Creon.
The Nurse enters from the house.

NURSE

Ah! Would to Heaven the good ship Argo ne'er had sped its course to the Colchian land through the misty blue Symplegades, nor ever in the glens of Pelion the pine been felled to furnish with oars the chieftain's hands, who went to fetch the golden fleece for Pelias; for then would my own mistress Medea never have sailed to the turrets of Iolcos, her soul with love for Jason smitten, nor would she have beguiled the daughters of Pelias to slay their father and come to live here in the land of Corinth with her husband and children, where her exile found favour with the citizens to whose land she had come, and in all things of her own accord was she at one with Jason, the greatest safeguard this when wife and husband do agree; but now their love is all turned to hate, and tenderest ties are weak. For Jason hath betrayed his own children and my mistress dear for the love of a royal bride, for he hath wedded the daughter of Creon, lord of this land. While Medea, his hapless wife, thus scorned, appeals to the oaths he swore, recalls the strong pledge his right hand gave, and bids heaven be witness what requital she is finding from Jason. And here she lies fasting, yielding her body to her grief, wasting away in tears ever since she learnt that she was wronged by her husband, never lifting her eye nor raising her face from off the ground; and she lends as deaf an ear to her friend's warning as if she were a rock or ocean billow, save when she turns her snow-white neck aside and softly to herself bemoans her father dear, her country and her home, which she gave up to come hither with the man who now holds her in dishonour. She, poor lady, hath by sad experience learnt how good a thing it is never to quit one's native land. And she hates her children now and feels no joy at seeing them; I fear she may contrive some untoward scheme; for her mood is dangerous nor will she brook her cruel treatment; full well I know her, and I much do dread that she will plunge the keen sword through their hearts, stealing without a word into the chamber where their marriage couch is spread, or else that she will slay the prince and bridegroom too, and so find some calamity still more grievous than the present; for dreadful is her wrath; verily the man that doth incur her hate will have no easy task to raise o'er her a song of triumph.

Lo! where her sons come hither from their childish sports; little they reck of their mother's woes, for the soul of the young is no friend to sorrow. (The Attendant leads in Medea's children.)

ATTENDANT

Why dost thou, so long my lady's own handmaid, stand here at the gate alone, loudly lamenting to thyself the piteous tale? how comes it that Medea will have thee leave her to herself?

NURSE

Old man, attendant on the sons of Jason, our masters' fortunes when they go awry make good slaves grieve and touch their hearts. Oh! have come to such a pitch of grief that there stole a yearning wish upon me to come forth hither and proclaim to heaven and earth my mistress's hard fate.

ATTENDANT

What! has not the poor lady ceased yet from her lamentation?

NURSE

Would I were as thou art! the mischief is but now beginning; it has not reached its climax yet.

ATTENDANT

O foolish one, if I may call my mistress such a name; how little she recks of evils yet more recent!

NURSE

What mean'st, old man? grudge not to tell me.

ATTENDANT

'Tis naught; I do repent me even of the words I have spoken.

NURSE

Nay, by thy beard I conjure thee, hide it not from thy fellow-slave; will be silent, if need be, on that text.

ATTENDANT

I heard one say, pretending not to listen as I approached the place where our greybeards sit playing draughts near Pirene's sacred spring, that Creon, the ruler of this land, is bent on driving these children and their mother from the boundaries of Corinth; but I know not whether the news is to be relied upon, and would fain it were not.

NURSE

What! will Jason brook such treatment of his sons, even though he be at variance with their mother?

ATTENDANT

Old ties give way to new; he bears no longer any love to this family.

NURSE

Undone, it seems, are we, if to old woes fresh ones we add, ere we have drained the former to the dregs.

ATTENDANT

Hold thou thy peace, say not a word of this; 'tis no time for our mistress to learn hereof.

NURSE

O children, do ye hear how your father feels towards you? Perdition catch him, but no he is my master still; yet is he proved a very traitor to his nearest and dearest.

ATTENDANT

And who 'mongst men is not? Art learning only now, that every single man cares for himself more than for his neighbour, some from honest motives, others for mere gain's sake? seeing that to indulge his passion their father has ceased to love these children.

NURSE

Go, children, within the house; all will be well. Do thou keep them as far away as may be, and bring them not near their mother in her evil hour. For ere this have I seen her eyeing them savagely, as though she were minded to do them some hurt, and well I know she will not cease from her fury till she have pounced on some victim. At least may she turn her hand against her foes, and not against her friends.

MEDEA

(chanting within) Ah, me! a wretched suffering woman I! O would that I could die!

NURSE

(chanting) 'Tis as I said, my dear children; wild fancies stir your mother's heart, wild fury goads her on. Into the house without delay, come not near her eye, approach her not, beware her savage mood, the fell tempest of her reckless heart. In, in with what speed ye may. For 'tis plain she will soon redouble her fury; that cry is but the herald of the gathering storm-cloud whose lightning soon will flash; what will her proud restless soul, in the anguish of despair, be guilty of? (The Attendant takes the children into the house. Medea (chanting within) Ah, me! the agony I have suffered, deep enough to call for these laments! Curse you and your father too, ye children damned, sons of a doomed mother! Ruin seize the whole family!

NURSE

(chanting) Ah me! ah me! the pity of it! Why, pray, do thy children share their father's crime? Why hatest thou them? Woe is you, poor children, how do I grieve for you lest ye suffer some outrage! Strange are the tempers of princes, and maybe because they seldom have to obey, and mostly lord it over others, change they their moods with difficulty. 'Tis better then to have been trained to live on equal terms. Be it mine to reach old age, not in proud pomp, but in security! Moderation wins the day first as a better word for men to use, and likewise it is far the best course for them to pursue; but greatness that doth o'erreach itself, brings no blessing to mortal men; but pays a penalty of greater ruin whenever fortune is wroth with a family. (The Chorus enters. The following lines between the Nurse, Chorus, and Medea are sung.)

CHORUS

I heard the voice, uplifted loud, of our poor Colchian lady, nor yet is she quiet; speak, aged dame, for as I stood by the house with double gates I heard a voice of weeping from within, and I do grieve, lady, for the sorrows of this house, for it hath won my love.

NURSE

'Tis a house no more; all that is passed away long since; a royal bride keeps Jason at her side, while our mistress pines away in her bower, finding no comfort for her soul in aught her friends can say.

MEDEA

(within) Oh, oh! Would that Heaven's levin bolt would cleave this head in twain! What gain is life to me? Woe, woe is me! O, to die and win release, quitting this loathed existence!

CHORUS

Didst hear, O Zeus, thou earth, and thou, O light, the piteous note of woe the hapless wife is uttering? How shall a yearning for that insatiate resting-place ever hasten for thee, poor reckless one, the end that death alone can bring? Never pray for that. And if thy lord prefers a fresh love, be not angered with him for that; Zeus will judge 'twixt thee and him herein. Then mourn not for thy husband's loss too much, nor waste thyself away.

MEDEA

(within) Great Themis, and husband of Themis, behold what I am suffering now, though I did bind that accursed one, my husband, by strong oaths to me! O, to see him and his bride some day brought to utter destruction, they and their house with them, for that they presume to wrong me thus unprovoked. O my father, my country, that I have left to my shame, after slaying my own brother.

NURSE

Do ye hear her words, how loudly she adjures Themis, oft invoked, and Zeus, whom men regard as keeper of their oaths? On no mere trifle surely will our mistress spend her rage.



Image 1.10: Medea | Here, Medea is depicted in a red and white outfit as she walks through a richly-decorated hall.

Author: User "Themadchopper"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

CHORUS

Would that she would come forth for us to see, and listen to the words of counsel we might give, if haply she might lay aside the fierce fury of her wrath, and her temper stern. Never be my zeal at any rate denied my friends! But go thou and bring her hither outside the house, and tell her this our friendly thought; haste thee ere she do some mischief to those inside the house, for this sorrow of hers is mounting high.

NURSE

This will I do; but I doubt whether I shall persuade my mistress; still willingly will I undertake this trouble for you; albeit, she glares upon her servants with the look of a lioness with cubs, whenso anyone draws nigh to speak to her. Wert thou to call the men of old time rude uncultured boors thou wouldst not err, seeing that they devised their hymns for festive occasions, for banquets, and to grace the board, a pleasure to catch the ear, shed o'er our life, but no man hath found a way to allay hated grief by music and the minstrel's varied strain, whence arise slaughters and fell strokes of fate to o'erthrow the homes of men. And yet this were surely a gain, to heal men's wounds by music's spell, but why tune they their idle song where rich banquets are spread? For of itself doth the rich banquet, set before them, afford to men delight.

CHORUS

I heard a bitter cry of lamentation! loudly, bitterly she calls on the traitor of her marriage bed, her perfidious spouse; by grievous wrongs oppressed she invokes Themis, bride of Zeus, witness of oaths, who brought her unto Hellas, the land that fronts the strand of Asia, o'er the sea by night through ocean's boundless gate. (As the Chorus finishes its song, Medea enters from the house.)

MEDEA

From the house I have come forth, Corinthian ladies, for fear lest you be blaming me; for well I know that amongst men many by showing pride have gotten them an ill name and a reputation for indifference, both those who shun men's gaze and those who move amid the stranger crowd, and likewise they who choose a quiet walk in life. For there is no just discernment in the eyes of men, for they, or ever they have surely learnt their neighbour's heart, loathe him at first sight, though never wronged by him; and so a stranger most of all should adopt a city's views; nor do I commend that citizen, who, in the stubbornness of his heart, from churlishness resents the city's will. But on me hath fallen this unforeseen disaster, and sapped my life; ruined I am, and long to resign the boon of existence, kind friends, and die. For he who was all the world to me, as well thou knowest, hath turned out the worst of men, my own husband. Of all things that have life and sense we women are the most hapless creatures; first must we buy a husband at a great price, and o'er ourselves a tyrant set which is an evil worse than the first; and herein lies the most important issue, whether our choice be good or bad. For divorce is not honourable to women, nor can we disown our lords. Next must the wife, coming as she does to ways and customs new, since she hath not learnt the lesson in her home, have a diviner's eye to see how best to treat the partner of her life. If haply we perform these tasks with thoroughness and tact, and the husband live with us, without resenting the yoke, our life is a happy one; if not, 'twere best to die. But when a man is vexed with what he finds indoors, he goeth forth and rids his soul of its disgust, betaking him to some friend or comrade of like age; whilst we must needs regard his single self. And yet they say we live secure at home, while they are at the wars, with their sorry reasoning, for I would gladly take my stand in battle array three times o'er, than once give birth. But enough! this language suits not thee as it does me; thou hast a city here, a father's house, some joy in life, and friends to share thy thoughts, but I am destitute, without a city, and therefore scorned by my husband, a captive I from a foreign shore, with no mother, brother, or kinsman in whom to find a new haven of refuge from this calamity. Wherefore this one boon and only this I wish to win from thee,-thy silence, if haply I can some way or means devise to avenge me on my husband for this cruel treatment, and on the man who gave to him his daughter, and on her who is his wife. For though woman be timorous enough in all else, and as regards courage, a coward at the mere sight of steel, yet in the moment she finds her honour wronged, no heart is filled with deadlier thoughts than hers.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

This will I do; for thou wilt be taking a just vengeance on thy husband, Medea. That thou shouldst mourn thy lot surprises me not. But lo! I see Creon, king of this land coming hither, to announce some new resolve. (Creon enters, with his retinue.)

CREON

Hark thee, Medea, I bid thee take those sullen looks and angry thoughts against thy husband forth from this land in exile, and with thee take both thy children and that without delay, for I am judge in this sentence, and I will not return unto my house till I banish thee beyond the borders of the land.

MEDEA

Ah, me! now is utter destruction come upon me, unhappy that I am! For my enemies are bearing down on me full sail, nor have I any landing-place to come at in my trouble. Yet for all my wretched plight I will ask thee, Creon, wherefore dost thou drive me from the land?

CREON

I fear thee,-no longer need I veil my dread ‘neath words,-lest thou devise against my child some cureless ill. Many things contribute to this fear of mine; thou art a witch by nature, expert in countless sorceries, and thou art chafing for the loss of thy husband’s affection. I hear, too, so they tell me, that thou dost threaten the father of the bride, her husband, and herself with some mischief; wherefore I will take precautions ere our troubles come. For ‘tis better for me to incur thy hatred now, lady, than to soften my heart and bitterly repent it hereafter.

MEDEA

Alas! this is not now the first time, but oft before, O Creon, hath my reputation injured me and caused sore mischief. Wherefore whoso is wise in his generation ought never to have his children taught to be too clever; for besides the reputation they get for idleness, they purchase bitter odium from the citizens. For if thou shouldst import new learning amongst dullards, thou wilt be thought a useless trifler, void of knowledge; while if thy fame in the city o’ertops that of the pretenders to cunning knowledge, thou wilt win their dislike. I too myself share in this ill-luck. Some think me clever and hate me, others say I am too reserved, and some the very reverse; others find me hard to please and not so very clever after all. Be that as it may, thou dost fear me lest I bring on thee something to mar thy harmony. Fear me not, Creon, my position scarce is such that should seek to quarrel with princes. Why should I, for how hast thou injured me? Thou hast betrothed thy daughter where thy fancy prompted thee. No, ‘tis my husband I hate, though I doubt not thou hast acted wisely herein. And now I grudge not thy prosperity; betroth thy child, good luck to thee, but let me abide in this land, for though I have been wronged I will be still and yield to my superiors.

CREON

Thy words are soft to hear, but much I dread lest thou art devising some mischief in thy heart, and less than ever do I trust thee now; for cunning woman, and man likewise, is easier to guard against when quick-tempered than when taciturn. Nay, begone at once! speak me no speeches, for this is decreed, nor hast thou any art whereby thou shalt abide amongst us, since thou hatest me.

MEDEA

O, say not so! by thy knees and by thy daughter newlywed, I do implore!

CREON

Thou wastest words; thou wilt never persuade me.

MEDEA

What, wilt thou banish me, and to my prayers no pity yield?

CREON

I will, for I love not thee above my own family.

MEDEA

O my country! what fond memories I have of thee in this hour!

CREON

Yea, for I myself love my city best of all things save my children.

MEDEA

Ah me! ah me! to mortal man how dread a scourge is love!

CREON

That, I deem, is according to the turn our fortunes take.

MEDEA

O Zeus! let not the author of these my troubles escape thee.

CREON

Begone, thou silly woman, and free me from my toil.

MEDEA

The toil is mine, no lack of it.

CREON

Soon wilt thou be thrust out forcibly by the hand of servants.

MEDEA

Not that, not that, I do entreat thee, Creon

CREON

Thou wilt cause disturbance yet, it seems.

MEDEA

I will begone; I ask thee not this boon to grant.

CREON

Why then this violence? why dost thou not depart?

MEDEA

Suffer me to abide this single day and devise some plan for the manner of my exile, and means of living for my children, since their father cares not to provide his babes therewith. Then pity them; thou too hast children of thine own; thou needs must have a kindly heart. For my own lot I care naught, though I an exile am, but for those babes I weep, that they should learn what sorrow means.

CREON

Mine is a nature anything but harsh; full oft by showing pity have suffered shipwreck; and now albeit I clearly see my error, yet shalt thou gain this request, lady; but I do forewarn thee, if tomorrow's rising sun shall find thee and thy children within the borders of this land, thou diest; my word is spoken and it will not lie. So now, if abide thou must, stay this one day only, for in it thou canst not do any of the fearful deeds I dread. (Creon and his retinue go out.)

CHORUS

(chanting) Ah! poor lady, woe is thee! Alas, for thy sorrows! Whither wilt thou turn? What protection, what home or country to save thee from thy troubles wilt thou find? O Medea, in what a hopeless sea of misery heaven hath plunged thee!

MEDEA

On all sides sorrow pens me in. Who shall gainsay this? But all is not yet lost! think not so. Still are there troubles in store for the new bride, and for her bridegroom no light toil. Dost think I would ever have fawned on yonder man, unless to gain some end or form some scheme? Nay, would not so much as have spoken to him or touched him with my hand. But he has in folly so far stepped in that, though he might have checked my plot by banishing me from the land, he hath allowed me to abide this day, in which I will lay low in death three of my enemies-a father and his daughter and my husband too. Now, though I have many ways to compass their death, I am not sure, friends, which I am to try first. Shall I set fire to the bridal mansion, or plunge the whetted

sword through their hearts, softly stealing into the chamber where their couch is spread? One thing stands in my way. If I am caught making my way into the chamber, intent on my design, I shall be put to death and cause my foes to mock, ‘Twere best to take the shortest way-the way we women are most skilled in-by poison to destroy them. Well, suppose them dead; what city will receive me? What friendly host will give me a shelter in his land, a home secure, and save my soul alive? None. So I will wait yet a little while in case some tower of defence rise up for me; then will I proceed to this bloody deed in crafty silence; but if some unexpected mischance drive me forth, I will with mine own hand seize the sword, e’en though I die for it, and slay them, and go forth on my bold path of daring. By that dread queen whom I revere before all others and have chosen to share my task, by Hecate who dwells within my inmost chamber, not one of them shall wound my heart and rue it not. Bitter and sad will I make their marriage for them; bitter shall be the wooing of it, bitter my exile from the land. Up, then, Medea, spare not the secrets of thy art in plotting and devising; on to the danger. Now comes a struggle needing courage. Dost see what thou art suffering? ‘Tis not for thee to be a laughing-stock to the race of Sisyphus by reason of this wedding of Jason, sprung, as thou art, from noble sire, and of the Sun-god’s race. Thou hast cunning; and, more than this, we women, though by nature little apt for virtuous deeds, are most expert to fashion any mischief.

CHORUS

(singing, strophe 1)

Back to their source the holy rivers turn their tide. Order and the universe are being reversed. ‘Tis men whose counsels are treacherous, whose oath by heaven is no longer sure. Rumour shall bring a change o’er my life, bringing it into good repute. Honour’s dawn is breaking for woman’s sex; no more shall the foul tongue of slander fix upon us.

(antistrophe 1)

The songs of the poets of old shall cease to make our faithlessness their theme. Phoebus, lord of minstrelsy, hath not implanted in our mind the gift of heavenly song, else had I sung an answering strain to the race of males, for time’s long chapter affords many a theme on their sex as well as ours.

(strophe 2)

With mind distraught didst thou thy father’s house desert on thy voyage betwixt ocean’s twin rocks, and on a foreign strand thou dwellest thy bed left husbandless, poor lady, and thou an exile from the land, dishonoured, persecuted.

(antistrophe 2)

Gone is the grace that oaths once had. Through all the breadth of Hellas honour is found no more; to heaven hath it sped away. For thee no father’s house is open, woe is thee! to be a haven from the troublous storm, while o’er thy home is set another queen, the bride that is preferred to thee. (As the Chorus finishes its song, Jason enters, alone. Medea comes out of the house.)

JASON

It is not now I first remark, but oft ere this, how unruly a pest is a harsh temper. For instance, thou, hadst thou but patiently endured the will of thy superiors, mightest have remained here in this land and house, but now for thy idle words wilt thou be banished. Thy words are naught to me. Cease not to call Jason basest of men; but for those words thou hast spoken against our rulers, count it all gain that exile is thy only punishment. I ever tried to check the outbursts of the angry monarch, and would have had thee stay, but thou wouldst not forego thy silly rage, always reviling our rulers, and so thou wilt be banished. Yet even after all this I weary not of my goodwill, but am come with thus much forethought, lady, that thou mayst not be destitute nor want for aught, when, with thy sons, thou art cast out. Many an evil doth exile bring in its train with it; for even though thou hatest me, never will I harbour hard thoughts of thee.

MEDEA

Thou craven villain (for that is the only name my tongue can find for thee, a foul reproach on thy unmanliness), comest thou to me, thou, most hated foe of gods, of me, and of all mankind? ‘Tis no proof of courage or hardihood to confront thy friends after injuring them, but that worst of all human diseases-loss of shame. Yet hast thou done well to come; for I shall ease my soul by reviling thee, and thou wilt be vexed at my recital. I will begin at the very beginning. I saved thy life, as every Hellene knows who sailed with thee aboard the good ship Argo, when thou wert sent to tame and yoke fire-breathing bulls, and to sow the deadly tilth. Yea, and I slew the dragon which guarded the golden fleece, keeping sleepless watch o’er it with many a wreathed coil, and I raised for thee a

beacon of deliverance. Father and home of my free will I left and came with the to Iolcos, ‘neath Pelion’s hills, for my love was stronger than my prudence. Next I caused the death of Pelias by a doom most grievous, even by his own children’s hand, beguiling them of all their fear. All this have I done for thee, thou traitor! and thou hast cast me over, taking to thyself another wife, though children have been born to us. Hadst thou been childless still, I could have pardoned thy desire for this new union. Gone is now the trust I put in oaths. I cannot even understand whether thou thinkest that the gods of old no longer rule, or that fresh decrees are now in vogue amongst mankind, for thy conscience must tell thee thou hast not kept faith with me. Ah! poor right hand, which thou didst often grasp. These knees thou didst embrace! All in vain, I suffered a traitor to touch me! How short of my hopes I am fallen! But come, I will deal with the as though thou wert my friend. Yet what kindness can I expect from one so base as thee? But yet I will do it, for my questioning will show thee yet more base. Whither can I turn me now? to my father’s house, to my own country, which I for thee deserted to come hither? to the hapless daughters of Pelias? A glad welcome, I trow, would they give me in their home, whose father’s death I compassed! My case stands even thus: I am become the bitter foe to those of mine own home, and those whom I need ne’er have wronged I have made mine enemies to pleasure thee. Wherefore to reward me for this thou hast made me doubly blest in the eyes of many wife in Hellas; and in thee I own a peerless, trusty lord. O woe is me, if indeed I am to be cast forth an exile from the land, without one friend; one lone woman with her babes forlorn! Yea, a fine reproach to thee in thy bridal hour, that thy children and the wife who saved thy life are beggars and vagabonds! O Zeus! why hast thou granted unto man clear signs to know the sham in gold, while on man’s brow no brand is stamped whereby to gauge the villain’s heart?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

There is a something terrible and past all cure, when quarrels arise ‘twixt those who are near and dear.

JASON

Needs must I now, it seems, turn orator, and, like a good helmsman on a ship with close-reefed sails, weather that wearisome tongue of thine. Now, I believe, since thou wilt exaggerate thy favours, that to Cypri, alone of gods or men I owe the safety of my voyage. Thou hast a subtle wit enough; yet were it a hateful thing for me to say that the Love-god constrained thee by his resistless shaft to save my life. However, I will not reckon this too nicely; ‘twas kindly done, however thou didst serve me. Yet for my safety hast thou received more than ever thou gavest, as I will show. First, thou dwellest in Hellas, instead of thy barbarian land, and hast learnt what justice means and how to live by law, not by the dictates of brute force; and all the Hellenes recognize thy cleverness, and thou hast gained a name; whereas, if thou hadst dwelt upon the confines of the earth, no tongue had mentioned thee. Give me no gold within my halls, nor skill to sing a fairer strain than ever Orpheus sang, unless there-with my fame be spread abroad! So much I say to thee about my own toils, for ‘twas thou didst challenge me to this retort. As for the taunts thou urgest against my marriage with the princess, I will prove to thee, first, that I am prudent herein, next chastened in my love, and last powerful friend to thee and to thy sons; only hold thy peace. Since I have here withdrawn from Iolcos with many a hopeless trouble at my back, what happier device could I, an exile, frame than marriage with the daughter of the king? ‘Tis not because I loathe thee for my wife-the thought that rankles in thy heart; ‘tis not because I am smitten with desire for a new bride, nor yet that I am eager to vie with others in begetting many children, for those we have are quite enough, and I do not complain. Nay, ‘tis that we-and this is most important-may dwell in comfort, instead of suffering want (for well I know that every whilom friend avoids the poor), and that I might rear my sons as doth befit my house; further, that I might be the father of brothers for the children thou hast borne, and raise these to the same high rank, uniting the family in one,-to my lasting bliss. Thou, indeed, hast no need of more children, but me it profits to help my present family by that which is to be. Have I miscarried here? Not even thou wouldest say so unless a rival’s charms rankled in thy bosom. No, but you women have such strange ideas, that you think all is well so long as your married life runs smooth; but if some mischance occur to ruffle your love, all that was good and lovely erst you reckon as your foes. Yea, men should have begotten children from some other source, no female race existing; thus would no evil ever have fallen on mankind.

LEADER

This speech, O Jason, hast thou with specious art arranged; but yet I think-albeit in speaking I am indiscreet-that thou hast sinned in thy betrayal of thy wife.

MEDEA

No doubt I differ from the mass of men on many points; for, to my mind, whoso hath skill to fence with words in an unjust cause, incurs the heaviest penalty; for such an one, confident that he can cast a decent veil of words o’er his injustice, dares to practise it; and yet he is not so very clever after all. So do not thou put forth thy specious pleas and clever words to me now, for one word of

mine will lay thee low. Hadst thou not had a villain's heart, thou shouldst have gained my consent, then made this match, instead of hiding it from those who loved thee.

JASON

Thou wouldest have lent me ready aid, no doubt, in this proposal, if had told thee of my marriage, seeing that not even now canst thou restrain thy soul's hot fury.

MEDEA

This was not what restrained thee; but thine eye was turned towards old age, and a foreign wife began to appear a shame to thee.

JASON

Be well assured of this: 'twas not for the woman's sake I wedded the king's daughter, my present wife; but, as I have already told thee, I wished to insure thy safety and to be the father of royal sons bound by blood to my own children-a bulwark to our house.

MEDEA

May that prosperity, whose end is woe, ne'er be mine, nor such wealth as would ever sting my heart!

JASON

Change that prayer as I will teach thee, and thou wilt show more wisdom. Never let happiness appear in sorrow's guise, nor, when thy fortune smiles, pretend she frowns!

MEDEA

Mock on; thou hast a place of refuge; I am alone, an exile soon to be.

JASON

Thy own free choice was this; blame no one else.

MEDEA

What did I do? Marry, then betray thee?

JASON

Against the king thou didst invoke an impious curse.

MEDEA

On thy house too maybe I bring the curse.

JASON

Know this, I will no further dispute this point with thee. But, if thou wilt of my fortune somewhat take for the children or thyself to help thy exile, say on; for I am ready to grant it with ungrudging hand, yea and to bend tokens to my friends elsewhere who shall treat thee well. If thou refuse this offer, thou wilt do a foolish deed, but if thou cease from anger the greater will be thy gain.

MEDEA

I will have naught to do with friends of thine, naught will I receive of thee, offer it not to me; a villain's gifts can bring no blessing.

JASON

At least I call the gods to witness, that I am ready in all things to serve thee and thy children, but thou dost scorn my favours and thrustest thy friends stubbornly away; wherefore thy lot will be more bitter still.

MEDEA

Away! By love for thy young bride entrapped, too long thou lingerest outside her chamber; go wed, for, if God will, thou shalt have such a marriage as thou wouldst fain refuse. (Jason goes out.)

CHORUS

(singing, strophe 1)

When in excess and past all limits Love doth come, he brings not glory or repute to man; but if the Cyprian queen in moderate might approach, no goddess is so full of charm as she. Never, O never, lady mine, discharge at me from thy golden bow a shaft invincible, in passion's venom dipped.

(antistrophe 1)

On me may chastity, heaven's fairest gift, look with a favouring eye; never may Cypris, goddess dread, fasten on me a temper to dispute, or restless jealousy, smiting my soul with mad desire for unlawful love, but may she hallow peaceful married life and shrewdly decide whom each of us shall wed.

(strophe 2)

O my country, O my own dear home! God grant I may never be an outcast from my city, leading that cruel helpless life, whose every day is misery. Ere that may I this life complete and yield to death, ay, death; for there is no misery that doth surpass the loss of fatherland.

(antistrophe 2)

I have seen with mine eyes, nor from the lips of others have I the lesson learnt; no city, not one friend doth pity thee in this thine awful woe. May he perish and find no favour, whoso hath not in him honour for his friends, freely unlocking his heart to them. Never shall he be friend of mine. (Medea has been seated in despair on her door-step during the choral song. Aegeus and his attendants enter.)

AEGEUS

All hail, Medea! no man knoweth fairer prelude to the greeting of friends than this.

MEDEA

All hail to thee likewise, Aegeus, son of wise Pandion. Whence comest thou to this land?

AEGEUS

From Phoebus' ancient oracle.

MEDEA

What took thee on thy travels to the prophetic centre of the earth?

AEGEUS

The wish to ask how I might raise up seed unto myself.

MEDEA

Pray tell me, hast thou till now dragged on a childless life?

AEGEUS

I have no child owing to the visitation of some god.

MEDEA

Hast thou a wife, or hast thou never known the married state?

AEGEUS

I have a wife joined to me in wedlock's bond.

MEDEA

What said Phoebus to thee as to children?

AEGEUS

Words too subtle for man to comprehend.

MEDEA

Surely I may learn the god's answer?

AEGEUS

Most assuredly, for it is just thy subtle wit it needs.

MEDEA

What said the god? speak, if I may hear it.

AEGEUS

He bade me "not loose the wineskin's pendent neck."

MEDEA

Till when? what must thou do first, what country visit?

AEGEUS

Till I to my native home return.

MEDEA

What object hast thou in sailing to this land?

AEGEUS

O'er Troezen's realm is Pittheus king.

MEDEA

Pelops' son, a man devout they say.

AEGEUS

To him I fain would impart the oracle of the god.

MEDEA

The man is shrewd and versed in such-like lore.

AEGEUS

Aye, and to me the dearest of all my warrior friends.

MEDEA

Good luck to thee! success to all thy wishes!

AEGEUS

But why that downcast eye, that wasted cheek?

MEDEA

O Aegeus, my husband has proved most evil.

AEGEUS

What meanest thou? explain to me clearly the cause of thy despondency.

MEDEA

Jason is wronging me though I have given him no cause.

AEGEUS

What hath he done? tell me more clearly.

MEDEA

He is taking another wife to succeed me as mistress of his house.

AEGEUS

Can he have brought himself to such a dastard deed?

MEDEA

Be assured thereof; I, whom he loved of yore, am in dishonour now.

AEGEUS

Hath he found a new love? or does he loathe thy bed?

MEDEA

Much in love is he! A traitor to his friend is he become.

AEGEUS

Enough! if he is a villain as thou sayest.

MEDEA

The alliance he is so much enamoured of is with a princess.

AEGEUS

Who gives his daughter to him? go on, I pray.

MEDEA

Creon, who is lord of this land of Corinth.

AEGEUS

Lady, I can well pardon thy grief.

MEDEA

I am undone, and more than that, am banished from the land.

AEGEUS

By whom? fresh woe this word of thine unfolds.

MEDEA

Creon drives me forth in exile from Corinth.

AEGEUS

Doth Jason allow it? This too I blame him for.

MEDEA

Not in words, but he will not stand out against it. O, I implore thee by this beard and by thy knees, in suppliant posture, pity, O pity my sorrows; do not see me cast forth forlorn, but receive me in thy country, to a seat within thy halls. So may thy wish by heaven's grace be crowned with a full harvest of offspring, and may thy life close in happiness! Thou knowest not the rare good luck thou findest here, for I will make thy childlessness to cease and cause thee to beget fair issue; so potent are the spells I know.

AEGEUS

Lady, on many grounds I am most fain to grant thee this thy boon, first for the gods' sake, next for the children whom thou dost promise I shall beget; for in respect of this I am completely lost. 'Tis thus with me; if e'er thou reach my land, I will attempt to champion thee as I am bound to do. Only one warning I do give thee first, lady; I will not from this land bear thee away, yet if of thyself thou reach my halls, there shalt thou bide in safety and I will never yield thee up to any man. But from this land escape without my aid, for I have no wish to incur the blame of my allies as well.

MEDEA

It shall be even so; but wouldst thou pledge thy word to this, I should in all be well content with thee.

AEGEUS

Surely thou dost trust me? or is there aught that troubles thee?

MEDEA

Thee I trust; but Pelias' house and Creon are my foes. Wherefore, if thou art bound by an oath, thou wilt not give me up to them when they come to drag me from the land, but, having entered into a compact and sworn by heaven as well, thou wilt become my friend and disregard their overtures. Weak is any aid of mine, whilst they have wealth and a princely house.

AEGEUS

Lady, thy words show much foresight, so if this is thy will, I do not, refuse. For I shall feel secure and safe if I have some pretext to offer to thy foes, and thy case too the firmer stands. Now name thy gods.

MEDEA

Swear by the plain of Earth, by Helios my father's sire, and, in one comprehensive oath, by all the race of gods.

AEGEUS

What shall I swear to do, from what refrain? tell me that.

MEDEA

Swear that thou wilt never of thyself expel me from thy land, nor, whilst life is thine, permit any other, one of my foes maybe, to hale me thence if so he will.

AEGEUS

By Earth I swear, by the Sun-god's holy beam and by all the host of heaven that I will stand fast to the terms I hear thee make.

MEDEA

'Tis enough. If thou shouldst break this oath, what curse dost thou invoke upon thyself?

AEGEUS

Whate'er betides the impious.

MEDEA

Go in peace; all is well, and I with what speed I may, will to thy city come, when I have wrought my purpose and obtained my wish. (Aegeus and his retinue depart.)

CHORUS

(chanting) May Maia's princely son go with thee on thy way to bring thee to thy home, and mayest thou attain that on which thy soul is set so firmly, for to my mind thou seemest a generous man, O Aegeus.

MEDEA

O Zeus, and Justice, child of Zeus, and Sun-god's light, now will triumph o'er my foes, kind friends; on victory's road have I set forth; good hope have I of wreaking vengeance on those I hate. For where we were in most distress this stranger hath appeared, to be a haven in my counsels; to him will we make fast the cables of our ship when
we come to the town and citadel of Pallas. But now will I explain to thee my plans in full; do not expect to hear a pleasant tale. A servant of mine will I to Jason send and crave an interview; then when he comes I will address him with soft words, say, "this pleases me," and, "that is well," even the marriage with the princess, which my treacherous lord is celebrating, and add "it suits us both, 'twas well thought out"; then will I entreat that here my children may abide, not that I mean to leave them in a hostile land for foes to flout, but that I may slay the king's daughter by guile. For I will send them with gifts in their hands, carrying them unto the bride to save them from banishment, a robe of finest woof and a chaplet of gold. And if these ornaments she take and put them on, miserably shall she die, and likewise everyone who touches her; with such fell poisons will I smear my gifts. And here I quit this theme; but I shudder at the deed I must do next; for I will slay the children I have borne; there is none shall take them from
my toils; and when I have utterly confounded Jason's house I will leave the land, escaping punishment for my dear children's

murder, after my most unholy deed. For I cannot endure the taunts of enemies, kind friends; enough! what gain is life to me? I have no country, home, or refuge left. O, I did wrong, that hour I left my father's home, persuaded by that Hellene's words, who now shall pay the penalty, so help me God, Never shall he see again alive the children I bore to him, nor from his new bride shall he beget issue, for she must die a hideous death, slain by my drugs. Let no one deem me a poor weak woman who sits with folded hands, but of another mould, dangerous to foes and well-disposed to friends; for they win the fairest fame who live then, life like me.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Since thou hast imparted this design to me, I bid thee hold thy hand, both from a wish to serve thee and because I would uphold the laws men make.

MEDEA

It cannot but be so; thy words I pardon since thou art not in the same sorry plight that I am.

LEADER

O lady, wilt thou steel thyself to slay thy children twain?

MEDEA

I will, for that will stab my husband to the heart.

LEADER

It may, but thou wilt be the saddest wife alive.

MEDEA

No matter; wasted is every word that comes 'twixt now and then. Ho! (The Nurse enters in answer to her call.) Thou, go call me Jason hither, for thee I do employ on every mission of trust. No word divulge of all my purpose, as thou art to thy mistress loyal and likewise of my sex. (The Nurse goes out.)

CHORUS

(singing, strophe 1)

Sons of Erechtheus, heroes happy from of yore, children of the blessed gods, fed on wisdom's glorious food in a holy land ne'er pillaged by its foes, ye who move with sprightly step through a climate ever bright and clear, where, as legend tells, the Muses nine, Pieria's holy maids, were brought to birth by Harmonia with the golden hair.

(antistrophe 1)

And poets sing how Cypris drawing water from the streams of fair-flowing Cephissus breathes o'er the land a gentle breeze of balmy winds, and ever as she crowns her tresses with a garland of sweet rose-buds sends forth the Loves to sit by wisdom's side, to take part in every excellence.

(strophe 2)

How then shall the city of sacred streams, the land that welcomes those it loves, receive thee, the murderess of thy children, thee whose presence with others is a pollution? 'Think on the murder of thy children, consider the bloody deed thou takest on thee. Nay, by thy knees we, one and all, implore thee, slay not thy babes.

(antistrophe 2)

Where shall hand or heart find hardihood enough in wreaking such a fearsome deed upon thy sons? How wilt thou look upon thy babes, and still without a tear retain thy bloody purpose? Thou canst not, when they fall at thy feet for mercy, steel thy heart and dip in their blood thy hand. (Jason enters.)

JASON

I am come at thy bidding, for e'en though thy hate for me is bitter thou shalt not fail in this small boon, but I will hear what new request thou hast to make of me, lady.

MEDEA

Jason, I crave thy pardon for the words I spoke, and well thou mayest brook my burst of passion, for ere now we twain have shared much love. For I have reasoned with my soul and railed upon me thus, “Ah! poor heart! why am I thus distraught, why so angered ‘gainst all good advice, why have I come to hate the rulers of the land, my husband too, who does the best for me he can, in wedding with a princess and rearing for my children noble brothers? Shall I not cease to fret? What possesses me, when heaven its best doth offer? Have I not my children to consider? do I forget that we are fugitives, in need of friends?” When I had thought all this I saw how foolish I had been, how senselessly enraged. So now do commend thee and think thee most wise in forming this connection for us; but I was mad, I who should have shared in these designs, helped on thy plans, and lent my aid to bring about the match, only too pleased to wait upon thy bride. But what we are, we are, we women, evil I will not say; wherefore thou shouldst not sink to our sorry level nor with our weapons meet our childishness. I yield and do confess that I was wrong then, but now have I come to a better mind. Come hither, my children, come, leave the house, step forth, and with me greet and bid farewell to your father, be reconciled from all past bitterness unto your friends, as now your mother is; for we have made a truce and anger is no more. (The Attendant comes out of the house with the children.) Take his right hand; ah me! my sad fate! when I reflect, as now, upon the hidden future. O my children, since there awaits you even thus a long, long life, stretch forth the hand to take a fond farewell. Ah me! how new to tears am I, how full of fear! For now that I have at last released me from my quarrel with your father, I let the tear-drops stream adown my tender cheek.

LEADER OF CHORUS

From my eyes too bursts forth the copious tear; O, may no greater ill than the present e’er befall!

JASON

Lady, I praise this conduct, not that I blame what is past; for it is but natural to the female sex to vent their spleen against a husband when he trafficks in other marriages besides his own. But thy heart is changed to wiser schemes and thou art determined on the better course, late though it be; this is acting like a woman of sober sense. And for you, my sons, hath your father provided with all good heed a sure refuge, by God’s grace; for ye, I trow, shall with your brothers share hereafter the foremost rank in this Corinthian realm. Only grow up, for all the rest your sire and whoso of the gods is kind to us is bringing to pass. May I see you reach man’s full estate, high o’er the heads of those I hate! But thou, lady, why with fresh tears dost thou thine eyelids wet, turning away thy wan cheek, with no welcome for these my happy tidings?

MEDEA

‘Tis naught; upon these children my thoughts were turned.

JASON

Then take heart; for I will see that it is well with them.

MEDEA

I will do so; nor will I doubt thy word; woman is a weak creature, ever given to tears.

JASON

Why prithee, unhappy one, dost moan o’er these children?

MEDEA

I gave them birth; and when thou didst pray long life for them, pity entered into my soul to think that these things must be. But the reason of thy coming hither to speak with me is partly told, the rest will I now mention. Since it is the pleasure of the rulers of the land to banish me, and well I know ‘twere best for me to stand not in the way of thee or of the rulers by dwelling here, enemy as I am thought unto their house, forth from this land in exile am I going, but these children,-that they may know thy fostering hand, beg Creon to remit their banishment.

JASON

I doubt whether I can persuade him, yet must I attempt it.

MEDEA

At least do thou bid thy wife ask her sire this boon, to remit the exile of the children from this land.

JASON

Yea, that will I; and her methinks I shall persuade, since she is woman like the rest.

MEDEA

I too will aid thee in this task, for by the children's hand I will send to her gifts that far surpass in beauty, I well know, aught that now is seen 'mongst men, a robe of finest tissue and a chaplet of chased gold. But one of my attendants must haste and bring the ornaments hither. (A servant goes into the house.) Happy shall she be not once alone but ten thousand-fold, for in thee she wins the noblest soul to share her love, and gets these gifts as well which on a day my father's sire, the Sun-god, bestowed on his descendants. (The servant returns and hands the gifts to the children.) My children, take in your hands these wedding gifts, and bear them as an offering to the royal maid, the happy bride; for verily the gifts she shall receive are not to be scorned.

JASON

But why so rashly rob thyself of these gifts? Dost think a royal palace wants for robes or gold? Keep them, nor give them to another. For well I know that if my lady hold me in esteem, she will set my price above all wealth.

MEDEA

Say not so; 'tis said that gifts tempt even gods; and o'er men's minds gold holds more potent sway than countless words. Fortune smiles upon thy bride, and heaven now doth swell her triumph; youth is hers and princely power; yet to save my children from exile I would barter life, not dross alone. Children, when we are come to the rich palace, pray your father's new bride, my mistress, with suppliant voice to save you from exile, offering her these ornaments the while; for it is most needful that she receive the gifts in her own hand. Now go and linger not; may ye succeed and to your mother bring back the glad tidings she fain would hear (Jason, the Attendant, and the children go out together.)

CHORUS

(singing, strophe 1)

Gone, gone is every hope I had that the children yet might live; forth to their doom they now proceed. The hapless bride will take, ay, take the golden crown that is to be her ruin; with her own hand will she lift and place upon her golden locks the garniture of death.

(antistrophe 1)

Its grace and sheen divine will tempt her to put on the robe and crown of gold, and in that act will she deck herself to be a bride amid the dead. Such is the snare whereinto she will fall, such is the deadly doom that waits the hapless maid, nor shall she from the curse escape.

(strophe 2)

And thou, poor wretch, who to thy sorrow art wedding a king's daughter, little thinkest of the doom thou art bringing on thy children's life, or of the cruel death that waits thy bride. Woe is thee! how art thou fallen from thy high estate!

(antistrophe 2)

Next do I bewail thy sorrows, O mother hapless in thy children, thou who wilt slay thy babes because thou hast a rival, the babes thy husband hath deserted impiously to join him to another bride. (The Attendant enters with the children.)

ATTENDANT

Thy children, lady, are from exile freed, and gladly did the royal bride accept thy gifts in her own hands, and so thy children made their peace with her.

MEDEA

Ah!

ATTEDENT

Why art so disquieted in thy prosperous hour? Why turnest thou thy cheek away, and hast no welcome for my glad news?

MEDEA

Ah me!

ATTENDANT

These groans but ill accord with the news I bring.

MEDEA

Ah me! once more I say.

ATTENDANT

Have I unwittingly announced some evil tidings? Have I erred in thinking my news was good?

MEDEA

Thy news is as it is; I blame thee not.

ATTENDANT

Then why this downcast eye, these floods of tears?

MEDEA

Old friend, needs must I weep; for the gods and I with fell intent devised these schemes.

ATTENDANT

Be of good cheer; thou too of a surety shalt by thy sons yet be brought home again.

MEDEA

Ere that shall I bring others to their home, ah! woe is me

ATTENDANT

Thou art not the only mother from thy children reft. Bear patiently thy troubles as a mortal must.

MEDEA

I will obey; go thou within the house and make the day's provision for the children. (The Attendant enters the house. Medea turns to the children.) O my babes, my babes, ye have still a city and a home, where far from me and my sad lot you will live your lives, reft of your mother for ever; while I must to another land in banishment, or ever I have had my joy of you, or lived to see you happy, or ever I have graced your marriage couch, your bride, your bridal bower, or lifted high the wedding torch. Ah me! a victim of my own self-will. So it was all in vain I reared you, O my sons; in vain did suffer, racked with anguish, enduring the cruel pangs of childbirth. 'Fore Heaven I once had hope, poor me! high hope of ye that you would nurse me in my age and deck my corpse with loving hands, a boon we mortals covet; but now is my sweet fancy dead and gone; for I must lose you both and in bitterness and sorrow drag through life. And ye shall never with fond eyes see your mother more for o'er your life there comes a change. Ah me! ah me! why do ye look at me so, my children? why smile that last sweet smile? Ah me! what am I to do? My heart gives way when I behold my children's laughing eyes. O, I cannot; farewell to all my former schemes; I will take the children from the land, the babes I bore. Why should I wound their sire by wounding them, and get me a twofold measure of sorrow? No, no, I will not do it. Farewell my scheming! And yet what possesses me? Can I consent to let those foes of mine escape from punishment, and incur their mockery? I must face this deed. Out upon my craven heart! to think that I should even have let the soft words escape my soul. Into the house, children! (The children go into the house.) And whoso feels he must not be present at my sacrifice, must see to it himself; I will not spoil my handiwork. Ah! ah! do not, my heart, O do not do this deed! Let the children go, unhappy one, spare the babes! For if they live, they will cheer thee in our exile there. Nay, by the fiends of hell's abyss, never, never will I hand my children over to their foes to mock and flout. Die they must in any case, and since 'tis so, why I, the mother who bore them, will give the fatal blow. In any case their doom is fixed and there is no escape. Already the crown is on her head, the robe is round her, and she is dying, the royal bride; that do I know full well. But now since I have a piteous path to tread, and yet more piteous still the path I send my children on, fain would I say farewell to them. (The children come out at her call. She takes them in her arms.)

O my babes, my babes, let your mother kiss your hands. Ah! hands I love so well, O lips most dear to me! O noble form and features of my children, I wish ye joy, but in that other land, for here your father robs you of your home. O the sweet embrace, the soft young cheek, the fragrant breath! my children! Go, leave me; I cannot bear to longer look upon ye; my sorrow wins the day. At last I understand the awful deed I am to do; but passion, that cause of direst woes to mortal man, hath triumphed o'er my sober thoughts. (She goes into the house with the children.)

CHORUS

(chanting) Oft ere now have I pursued subtler themes and have faced graver issues than woman's sex should seek to probe; but then e'en we aspire to culture, which dwells with us to teach us wisdom; I say not all; for small is the class amongst women-(one maybe shalt thou find 'mid many)-that is not incapable of wisdom. And amongst mortals I do assert that they who are wholly without experience and have never had children far surpass in happiness those who are parents. The childless, because they have never proved whether children grow up to be a blessing or curse to men are removed from all share in many troubles; whilst those who have a sweet race of children growing up in their houses do wear away, as I perceive, their whole life through; first with the thought how they may train them up in virtue, next how they shall leave their sons the means to live; and after all this 'tis far from clear whether on good or bad children they bestow their toil. But one last crowning woe for every mortal man now will name; suppose that they have found sufficient means to live, and seen their children grow to man's estate and walk in virtue's path, still if fortune so befall, comes Death and bears the children's bodies off to Hades. Can it be any profit to the gods to heap upon us mortal men beside our other woes this further grief for children lost, a grief surpassing all? (Medea comes out of the house.)

MEDEA

Kind friends, long have I waited expectantly to know how things would at the palace chance. And lo! I see one of Jason's servants coming hither, whose hurried gasps for breath proclaim him the bearer of some fresh tidings. (A Messenger rushes in.)

MESSENGER

Fly, fly, Medea! who hast wrought an awful deed, transgressing every law: nor leave behind or sea-borne bark or car that scours the plain.

MEDEA

Why, what hath chanced that calls for such a flight of mine?

MESSENGER

The princess is dead, a moment gone, and Creon too, her sire, slain by those drugs of thine.

MEDEA

Tidings most fair are thine! Henceforth shalt thou be ranked amongst my friends and benefactors.

MESSENGER

Ha! What? Art sane? Art not distraught, lady, who hearest with joy the outrage to our royal house done, and art not at the horrid tale afraid?

MEDEA

Somewhat have I, too, to say in answer to thy words. Be not so hasty, friend, but tell the manner of their death, for thou wouldst give me double joy, if so they perished miserably.

MESSENGER

When the children twain whom thou didst bear came with their father and entered the palace of the bride, right glad were we thralls who had shared thy griefs, for instantly from ear to ear a rumour spread that thou and thy lord had made up your former quarrel. One kissed thy children's hands, another their golden hair, while I for very joy went with them in person to the women's chambers. Our mistress, whom now we do revere in thy room, cast a longing glance at Jason, ere she saw thy children twain; but then she veiled her eyes and turned her blanching cheek away, disgusted at their coming; but thy husband tried to check his young bride's angry humour with these words: "O, be not angered 'gainst thy friends; cease from wrath and turn once more thy face this way, counting as friends whomso thy husband counts, and accept these gifts, and for my sake crave thy sire to remit these children's

exile.” Soon as she saw the ornaments, no longer she held out, but yielded to her lord in all; and ere the father and his sons were far from the palace gone, she took the broidered robe and put it on, and set the golden crown about her tresses, arranging her hair at her bright mirror, with many a happy smile at her breathless counterfeit. Then rising from her seat she passed across the chamber, tripping lightly on her fair white foot, exulting in the gift, with many a glance at her uplifted ankle. When lo! a scene of awful horror did ensue. In a moment she turned pale, reeled backwards, trembling in every limb, and sinks upon a seat scarce soon enough to save herself from falling to the ground. An aged dame, one of her company, thinking belike it was a fit from Pan or some god sent, raised a cry of prayer, till from her mouth she saw the foam-flakes issue, her eyeballs rolling in their sockets, and all the blood her face desert; then did she raise a loud scream far different from her former cry. Forthwith one handmaid rushed to her father’s house, another to her new bridegroom to tell his bride’s sad fate, and the whole house echoed with their running to and fro. By this time would a quick walker have made the turn in a course of six plethra and reached the goal, when she with one awful shriek awoke, poor sufferer, from her speechless trance and oped her closed eyes, for against her a twofold anguish was warring. The chaplet of gold about her head was sending forth a wondrous stream of ravening flame, while the fine raiment, thy children’s gift, was preying on the hapless maiden’s fair white flesh; and she starts from her seat in a blaze and seeks to fly, shaking her hair and head this way and that, to cast the crown therefrom; but the gold held firm to its fastenings, and the flame, as she shook her locks, blazed forth the more with double fury. Then to the earth she sinks, by the cruel blow o’ercome; past all recognition now save to a father’s eye; for her eyes had lost their tranquil gaze, her face no more its natural look preserved, and from the crown of her head blood and fire in mingled stream ran down; and from her bones the flesh kept peeling off beneath the gnawing of those secret drugs, e’en as when the pine-tree weeps its tears of pitch, a fearsome sight to see. And all were afraid to touch the corpse, for we were warned by what had chanced. Anon came her haples father unto the house, all unwitting of her doom, and stumbles o’er the dead, and loud he cried, and folding his arms about her kissed her, with words like these the while, “O my poor, poor child, which of the gods hath destroyed thee thus foully? Who is robbing me of thee, old as I am and ripe for death? O my child, alas! would I could die with thee!” He ceased his sad lament, and would have raised his aged frame, but found himself held fast by the fine-spun robe as ivy that clings to the branches of the bay, and then ensued a fearful struggle. He strove to rise, but she still held him back; and if ever he pulled with all his might, from off his bones his aged flesh he tore. At last he gave it up, and breathed forth his soul in awful suffering; for he could no longer master the pain. So there they lie, daughter and aged sire, dead side by side, a grievous sight that calls for tears. And as for thee, I leave thee out of my consideration, for thyself must discover a means to escape punishment. Not now for the first time I think this human life a shadow; yea, and without shrinking I will say that they amongst men who pretend to wisdom and expend deep thought on words do incur a serious charge of folly; for amongst mortals no man is happy; wealth may pour in and make one luckier than another, but none can happy be. (The Messenger departs.)

LEADER OF CHORUS

This day the deity, it seems, will mass on Jason, as he well deserves, heavy load of evils. Woe is thee, daughter of Creon We pity thy sad fate, gone as thou art to Hades’ halls as the price of thy marriage with Jason.

MEDEA

My friends, I am resolved upon the deed; at once will I slay my children and then leave this land, without delaying long enough to hand them over to some more savage hand to butcher. Needs must they die in any case; and since they must, I will slay them-I, the mother that bare them. O heart of mine, steel thyself! Why do I hesitate to do the awful deed that must be done? Come, take the sword, thou wretched hand of mine! Take it, and advance to the post whence starts thy life of sorrow! Away with cowardice! Give not one thought to thy babes, how dear they are or how thou art their mother. This one brief day forget thy children dear, and after that lament; for though thou wilt slay them yet they were thy darlings still, and I am a lady of sorrows. (Medea enters the house.)

CHORUS

(chanting) O earth, O sun whose beam illumines all, look, look upon this lost woman, ere she stretch forth her murderous hand upon her sons for blood; for lo! these are scions of thy own golden seed, and the blood of gods is in danger of being shed by man. O light, from Zeus proceeding, stay her, hold her hand, forth from the house chase this fell bloody fiend by demons led. Vainly wasted were the throes thy children cost thee; vainly hast thou borne, it seems, sweet babes, O thou who hast left behind thee that passage through the blue Symplegades, that strangers justly hate. Ah! hapless one, why doth fierce anger thy soul assail? Why in its place is fell murder growing up? For grievous unto mortal men are pollutions that come of kindred blood poured on the earth, woes to suit each crime hurled from heaven on the murderer’s house.

FIRST SON

(within) Ah, me; what can I do? Whither fly to escape my mother's blows?

SECOND SON

(within) I know not, sweet brother mine; we are lost.

CHORUS

(chanting) Didst hear, didst hear the children's cry? O lady, born to sorrow, victim of an evil fate! Shall I enter the house? For the children's sake I am resolved to ward off the murder.

FIRST SON

(within) Yea, by heaven I adjure you; help, your aid is needed.

SECOND SON

(within) Even now the toils of the sword are closing round us.

CHORUS

(chanting) O hapless mother, surely thou hast a heart of stone or steel to slay the offspring of thy womb by such a murderous doom. Of all the wives of yore I know but one who laid her hand upon her children dear, even Ino, whom the gods did madden in the day that the wife of Zeus drove her wandering from her home. But she, poor sufferer, flung herself into the sea because of the foul murder of her children, leaping o'er the wave-beat cliff, and in her death was she united to her children twain. Can there be any deed of horror left to follow this? Woe for the wooing of women fraught with disaster! What sorrows hast thou caused for men ere now! (Jason and his attendants enter.)

JASON

Ladies, stationed near this house, pray tell me is the author of these hideous deeds, Medea, still within, or hath she fled from hence? For she must hide beneath the earth or soar on wings towards heaven's vault, if she would avoid the vengeance of the royal house. Is she so sure she will escape herself unpunished from this house, when she hath slain the rulers of the land? But enough of this! I am forgetting her children. As for her, those whom she hath wronged will do the like by her; but I am come to save the children's life, lest the victim's kin visit their wrath on me, in vengeance for the murder foul, wrought by my children's mother.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Unhappy man, thou knowest not the full extent of thy misery, else had thou never said those words.

JASON

How now? Can she want to kill me too?

LEADER

Thy sons are dead; slain by their own mother's hand.

JASON

O God! what sayest thou? Woman, thou hast sealed my doom.

LEADER

Thy children are no more; be sure of this.

JASON

Where slew she them; within the palace or outside?

LEADER

Throw wide the doors and see thy children's murdered corpses.

JASON

Haste, ye slaves, loose the bolts, undo the fastenings, that I may see the sight of twofold woe, my murdered sons and her, whose blood in vengeance I will shed. Medea appears above the house, on a chariot drawn by dragons; the children's corpses are beside her.)

MEDEA

Why shake those doors and attempt to loose their bolts, in quest of the dead and me their murderess? From such toil desist. If thou wouldst aught with me, say on, if so thou wilt; but never shalt thou lay hand on me, so swift the steeds the sun, my father's sire, to me doth give to save me from the hand of my foes.

JASON

Accursed woman! by gods, by me and all mankind abhorred as never woman was, who hadst the heart to stab thy babes, thou their mother, leaving me undone and childless; this hast thou done and still dost gaze upon the sun and earth after this deed most impious. Curses on thee! now perceive what then I missed in the day I brought thee, fraught with doom, from thy home in a barbarian land to dwell in Hellas, traitress to thy sire and to the land that nurtured thee. On me the gods have hurled the curse that dogged thy steps, for thou didst slay thy brother at his hearth ere thou cam'st aboard our fair ship, Argo. Such was the outset of thy life of crime; then didst thou wed with me, and having borne me sons to glut thy passion's lust, thou now hast slain them. Not one amongst the wives of Hellas e'er had dared this deed; yet before them all I chose thee for my wife, wedding a foe to be my doom, no woman, but a lioness fiercer than Tyrrhene Scylla in nature. But with reproaches heaped thousandfold I cannot wound thee, so brazen is thy nature. Perish, vile sorceress, murderess of thy babes! Whilst I must mourn my luckless fate, for I shall ne'er enjoy my new-found bride, nor shall I have the children, whom I bred and reared, alive to say the last farewell to me; nay, I have lost them.

MEDEA

To this thy speech I could have made a long reply, but Father Zeus knows well all I have done for thee, and the treatment thou hast given me. Yet thou wert not ordained to scorn my love and lead a life of joy in mockery of me, nor was thy royal bride nor Creon, who gave thee a second wife, to thrust me from this land and rue it not. Wherefore, if thou wilt, call me e'en a lioness, and Scylla, whose home is in the Tyrrhene land; for I in turn have wrung thy heart, as well I might.

JASON

Thou, too, art grieved thyself, and sharest in my sorrow.

MEDEA

Be well assured I am; but it relieves my pain to know thou canst not mock at me.

JASON

O my children, how vile a mother ye have found! J

MEDEA

My sons, your father's feeble lust has been your ruin!

JASON

'Twas not my hand, at any rate, that slew them.

MEDEA

No, but thy foul treatment of me, and thy new marriage.

JASON

Didst think that marriage cause enough to murder them?

MEDEA

Dost think a woman counts this a trifling injury?

JASON

So she be self-restrained; but in thy eyes all is evil.

MEDEA

Thy sons are dead and gone. That will stab thy heart.

JASON

They live, methinks, to bring a curse upon thy head.

MEDEA

The gods know, whoso of them began this troublous coil.

JASON

Indeed, they know that hateful heart of thine.

MEDEA

Thou art as hateful. I am aweary of thy bitter tongue.

JASON

And I likewise of thine. But parting is easy.

MEDEA

Say how; what am I to do? for I am fain as thou to go.

JASON

Give up to me those dead, to bury and lament.

MEDEA

No, never! I will bury them myself, bearing them to Hera's sacred field, who watches o'er the Cape, that none of their foes may insult them by pulling down their tombs; and in this land of Sisyphus I will ordain hereafter a solemn feast and mystic rites to atone for this impious murder. Myself will now to the land of Erechtheus, to dwell with Aegeus, Pandion's son. But thou, as well thou mayst, shalt die a caitiff 's death, thy head crushed 'neath a shattered relic of Argo, when thou hast seen the bitter ending of my marriage.

JASON

The curse of our sons' avenging spirit and of justice, that calls for blood, be on thee!

MEDEA

What god or power divine hears thee, breaker of oaths and every law of hospitality?

JASON

Fie upon thee! cursed witch! child-murderess!

MEDEA

To thy house! go, bury thy wife.

JASON

I go, bereft of both my sons.

MEDEA

Thy grief is yet to come; wait till old age is with thee too.

JASON

O my dear, dear children!

MEDEA

Dear to their mother, not to thee.

JASON

And yet thou didst slay them?

MEDEA

Yea, to vex thy heart.

JASON

One last fond kiss, ah me! I fain would on their lips imprint.

MEDEA

Embraces now, and fond farewells for them; but then a cold repulse!

JASON

By heaven I do adjure thee, let me touch their tender skin.

MEDEA

No, no! in vain this word has sped its flight.

JASON

O Zeus, dost hear how I am driven hence; dost mark the treatment I receive from this she-lion, fell murderess of her young? Yet so far as I may and can, I raise for them a dirge, and do adjure the gods to witness how thou hast slain my sons, and wilt not suffer me to embrace or bury their dead bodies. Would I had never begotten them to see thee slay them after all! (The chariot carries Medea away.)

CHORUS

(chanting) Many a fate doth Zeus dispense, high on his Olympian throne; oft do the gods bring things to pass beyond man's expectation; that, which we thought would be, is not fulfilled, while for the unlooked-for god finds out a way; and such hath been the issue of this matter.

The End

This page titled 3.17: MEDEA - Euripides (ca. 484-ca.407 B.C.E.) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **1.4: MEDEA - Euripides (ca. 484-ca.407 B.C.E.)** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lysistrata is an ancient Greek comedy by Aristophanes, originally performed in classical Athens in 411 BC. It is a comic account of a woman's extraordinary mission to end the Peloponnesian War between Greek city states by denying all the men of the land any sex, which was the only thing they truly and deeply desired. Lysistrata persuades the women of the warring cities to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands and lovers as a means of forcing the men to negotiate peace—a strategy, however, that inflames the battle between the sexes.

3.18.1: Sections

3.18.1.1: Section 1
3.18.1.2: Section 2
3.18.1.3: Section 3
3.18.1.4: Section 4
3.18.1.5: Section 5
3.18.1.6: Section 6

Thumbnail: ULysistrata, 1896 (Aubrey Beardsley - via Wikipedia)

This page titled 3.18: Book- Lysistrata (Aristophanes) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler).

SECTION OVERVIEW

3.18.1: Sections

3.18.1.1: Section 1

3.18.1.2: Section 2

3.18.1.3: Section 3

3.18.1.4: Section 4

3.18.1.5: Section 5

3.18.1.6: Section 6

3.18.1: Sections is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.18.1.1: Section 1

The Persons of the drama.

LYSISTRATA
CALONICE
MYRRHINE
LAMPITO
Stratyllis, etc.
Chorus of Women.
MAGISTRATE
CINESIAS
SPARTAN HERALD
ENVOYS
ATHENIANS
Porter, Market Idlers, etc.
Chorus of old Men.

LYSISTRATA _stands alone with the Propylaea at her back._

LYSISTRATA

If they were trysting for a Bacchanal,
A feast of Pan or Colias or Genetyllis,
The tambourines would block the rowdy streets,
But now there's not a woman to be seen
Except--ah, yes--this neighbour of mine yonder.

Enter CALONICE.

Good day Calonice.

CALONICE

Good day Lysistrata.
But what has vexed you so? Tell me, child.
What are these black looks for? It doesn't suit you
To knit your eyebrows up glumly like that.

LYSISTRATA

Calonice, it's more than I can bear,
I am hot all over with blushes for our sex.
Men say we're slippery rogues--

CALONICE

And aren't they right?

LYSISTRATA

Yet summoned on the most tremendous business
For deliberation, still they snuggle in bed.

CALONICE

My dear, they'll come. It's hard for women, you know,
To get away. There's so much to do;
Husbands to be patted and put in good tempers:

Servants to be poked out: children washed
Or soothed with lullays or fed with mouthfuls of pap.

LYSISTRATA

But I tell you, here's a far more weighty object.

CALONICE

What is it all about, dear Lysistrata,
That you've called the women hither in a troop?
What kind of an object is it?

LYSISTRATA

A tremendous thing!

CALONICE

And long?

LYSISTRATA

Indeed, it may be very lengthy.

CALONICE

Then why aren't they here?

LYSISTRATA

No man's connected with it;
If that was the case, they'd soon come fluttering along.
No, no. It concerns an object I've felt over
And turned this way and that for sleepless nights.

CALONICE

It must be fine to stand such long attention.

LYSISTRATA

So fine it comes to this--Greece saved by Woman!

CALONICE

By Woman? Wretched thing, I'm sorry for it.

LYSISTRATA

Our country's fate is henceforth in our hands:
To destroy the Peloponnesians root and branch--

CALONICE

What could be nobler!

LYSISTRATA

Wipe out the Boeotians--

CALONICE

Not utterly. Have mercy on the eels!
[Footnote: The Boeotian eels were highly esteemed delicacies in Athens.]

LYSISTRATA

But with regard to Athens, note I'm careful
Not to say any of these nasty things;
Still, thought is free.... But if the women join us
From Peloponnesus and Boeotia, then
Hand in hand we'll rescue Greece.

CALONICE

How could we do
Such a big wise deed? We women who dwell
Quietly adorning ourselves in a back-room
With gowns of lucid gold and gawdy toilets
Of stately silk and dainty little slippers....

LYSISTRATA

These are the very armaments of the rescue.
These crocus-gowns, this outlay of the best myrrh,
Slippers, cosmetics dusting beauty, and robes
With rippling creases of light.

CALONICE

Yes, but how?

LYSISTRATA

No man will lift a lance against another--

CALONICE

I'll run to have my tunic dyed crocus.

LYSISTRATA

Or take a shield--

CALONICE

I'll get a stately gown.

LYSISTRATA

Or unscabbard a sword--

CALONICE

Let me buy a pair of slipper.

LYSISTRATA

Now, tell me, are the women right to lag?

CALONICE

They should have turned birds, they should have grown
wings and flown.

LYSISTRATA

My friend, you'll see that they are true Athenians:
Always too late. Why, there's not a woman
From the shoreward demes arrived, not one from Salamis.

CALONICE

I know for certain they awoke at dawn,
And got their husbands up if not their boat sails.

LYSISTRATA

And I'd have staked my life the Acharnian dames
Would be here first, yet they haven't come either!

CALONICE

Well anyhow there is Theagenes' wife
We can expect--she consulted Hecate.
But look, here are some at last, and more behind them.
See ... where are they from?

CALONICE

From Anagyra they come.

LYSISTRATA

Yes, they generally manage to come first.

Enter MYRRHINE.

MYRRHINE

Are we late, Lysistrata? ... What is that?
Nothing to say?

LYSISTRATA

I've not much to say for you,
Myrrhine, dawdling on so vast an affair.

MYRRHINE

I couldn't find my girdle in the dark.
But if the affair's so wonderful, tell us, what is it?

LYSISTRATA

No, let us stay a little longer till
The Peloponnesian girls and the girls of Bocotia
Are here to listen.

MYRRHINE

That's the best advice.
Ah, there comes Lampito.

Enter LAMPITO.

LYSISTRATA

Welcome Lampito!
Dear Spartan girl with a delightful face,
Washed with the rosy spring, how fresh you look
In the easy stride of your sleek slenderness,
Why you could strangle a bull!

LAMPITO

I think I could.
It's frae exercise and kicking high behint.

[Footnote: The translator has put the speech of the Spartan characters in Scotch dialect which is related to English about as was the Spartan dialect to the speech of Athens. The Spartans, in their character, anticipated the shrewd, canny, uncouth Scotch highlander of modern times.]

LYSISTRATA

What lovely breasts to own!

LAMPITO

Oo ... your fingers
Assess them, ye tickler, wi' such tender chucks
I feel as if I were an altar-victim.

LYSISTRATA

Who is this youngster?

LAMPITO

A Boeotian lady.

LYSISTRATA

There never was much undergrowth in Boeotia,
Such a smooth place, and this girl takes after it.

CALONICE

Yes, I never saw a skin so primly kept.

LYSISTRATA

This girl?

LAMPITO

A sonsie open-looking jinker!
She's a Corinthian.

LYSISTRATA

Yes, isn't she
Very open, in some ways particularly.

LAMPITO

But who's garred this Council o' Women to meet here?

LYSISTRATA

I have.

LAMPITO

Propound then what you want o' us.

MYRRHINE

What is the amazing news you have to tell?

LYSISTRATA

I'll tell you, but first answer one small question.

MYRRHINE

As you like.

LYSISTRATA

Are you not sad your children's fathers
Go endlessly off soldiering afar
In this plodding war? I am willing to wager
There's not one here whose husband is at home.

CALONICE

Mine's been in Thrace, keeping an eye on Eucrates
For five months past.

MYRRHINE

And mine left me for Pylos
Seven months ago at least.

LAMPITO

And as for mine
No sooner has he slipped out frae the line
He straps his shield and he's snickt off again.

LYSISTRATA

And not the slightest glitter of a lover!
And since the Milesians betrayed us, I've not seen
The image of a single upright man
To be a marble consolation to us.
Now will you help me, if I find a means
To stamp the war out.

MYRRHINE

By the two Goddesses, Yes!
I will though I've to pawn this very dress
And drink the barter-money the same day.

CALONICE

And I too though I'm split up like a turbot
And half is hackt off as the price of peace.

LAMPITO

And I too! Why, to get a peep at the shy thing
I'd clamber up to the tip-top o' Taygetus.

LYSISTRATA

Then I'll expose my mighty mystery.
O women, if we would compel the men
To bow to Peace, we must refrain--

MYRRHINE

From what?
O tell us!

LYSISTRATA

Will you truly do it then?

MYRRHINE

We will, we will, if we must die for it.

LYSISTRATA

We must refrain from every depth of love....
Why do you turn your backs? Where are you going?
Why do you bite your lips and shake your heads?
Why are your faces blanched? Why do you weep?
Will you or won't you, or what do you mean?

MYRRHINE

No, I won't do it. Let the war proceed.

CALONICE

No, I won't do it. Let the war proceed.

LYSISTRATA

You too, dear turbot, you that said just now
You didn't mind being split right up in the least?

CALONICE

Anything else? O bid me walk in fire
But do not rob us of that darling joy.
What else is like it, dearest Lysistrata?

LYSISTRATA

And you?

MYRRHINE

O please give me the fire instead.

LYSISTRATA

Lewd to the least drop in the tiniest vein,
Our sex is fitly food for Tragic Poets,
Our whole life's but a pile of kisses and babies.
But, hardy Spartan, if you join with me
All may be righted yet. O help me, help me.

LAMPITO

It's a sair, sair thing to ask of us, by the Twa,
A lass to sleep her lane and never fill
Love's lack except wi' makeshifts.... But let it be.
Peace maun be thought of first.

LYSISTRATA

My friend, my friend!
The only one amid this herd of weaklings.

CALONICE

But if--which heaven forbid--we should refrain
As you would have us, how is Peace induced?

LYSISTRATA

By the two Goddesses, now can't you see
All we have to do is idly sit indoors
With smooth roses powdered on our cheeks,
Our bodies burning naked through the folds
Of shining Amorgos' silk, and meet the men
With our dear Venus-plats plucked trim and neat.
Their stirring love will rise up furiously,
They'll beg our arms to open. That's our time!
We'll disregard their knocking, beat them off--
And they will soon be rabid for a Peace.
I'm sure of it.

LAMPITO

Just as Menelaus, they say,
Seeing the bosom of his naked Helen
Flang down the sword.

CALONICE

But we'll be tearful fools
If our husbands take us at our word and leave us.

LYSISTRATA

There's only left then, in Pherecrates' phrase,
To flay a skinned dog--flay more our flayed desires.

CALONICE

Bah, proverbs will never warm a celibate.
But what avail will your scheme be if the men
Drag us for all our kicking on to the couch?

LYSISTRATA

Cling to the doorposts.

CALONICE

But if they should force us?

LYSISTRATA

Yield then, but with a sluggish, cold indifference.
There is no joy to them in sullen mating.
Besides we have other ways to madden them;
They cannot stand up long, and they've no delight
Unless we fit their aim with merry succour.

CALONICE

Well if you must have it so, we'll all agree.

LAMPITO

For us I ha' no doubt. We can persuade
Our men to strike a fair an' decent Peace,
But how will ye pitch out the battle-frenzy
O' the Athenian populace?

LYSISTRATA

I promise you
We'll wither up that curse.

LAMPITO

I don't believe it.
Not while they own ane trireme oared an' rigged,
Or a' those stacks an' stacks an' stacks O' siller.

LYSISTRATA

I've thought the whole thing out till there's no flaw.
We shall surprise the Acropolis today:
That is the duty set the older dames.
While we sit here talking, they are to go
And under pretence of sacrificing, seize it.

LAMPITO

Certie, that's fine; all's working for the best.

LYSISTRATA

Now quickly, Lampito, let us tie ourselves
To this high purpose as tightly as the hemp of words
Can knot together.

LAMPITO

Set out the terms in detail
And we'll a' swear to them.

LYSISTRATA

Of course.... Well then
Where is our Scythianess? Why are you staring?
First lay the shield, boss downward, on the floor
And bring the victim's inwards.

CAILONICE

But, Lysistrata,
What is this oath that we're to swear?

LYSISTRATA

What oath!
In Aeschylus they take a slaughtered sheep
And swear upon a buckler. Why not we?

CALONICE

O Lysistrata, Peace sworn on a buckler!

LYSISTRATA

What oath would suit us then?

CALONICE

Something burden bearing
Would be our best insignia.... A white horse!
Let's swear upon its entrails.

LYSISTRATA

A horse indeed!

CALONICE

Then what will symbolise us?

LYSISTRATA

This, as I tell you--
First set a great dark bowl upon the ground
And disembowel a skin of Thasian wine,
Then swear that we'll not add a drop of water.

LAMPITO
Ah, what aith could clink pleasanter than that!

LYSISTRATA
Bring me a bowl then and a skin of wine.

CALONICE
My dears, see what a splendid bowl it is;
I'd not say No if asked to sip it off.

LYSISTRATA
Put down the bowl. Lay hands, all, on the victim.
Skiey Queen who givest the last word in arguments,
And thee, O Bowl, dear comrade, we beseech:
Accept our oblation and be propitious to us.

CALONICE
What healthy blood, la, how it gushes out!

LAMPITO
An' what a leesome fragrance through the air.

LYSISTRATA
Now, dears, if you will let me, I'll speak first.

CALONICE
Only if you draw the lot, by Aphrodite!

LYSISTRATA
SO, grasp the brim, you, Lampito, and all.
You, Calonice, repeat for the rest
Each word I say. Then you must all take oath
And pledge your arms to the same stern conditions--

LYSISTRATA
To husband or lover I'll not open arms

CALONICE

To husband or lover I'll not open arms

LYSISTRATA

Though love and denial may enlarge his charms.

CALONICE

Though love and denial may enlarge his charms.
O, O, my knees are failing me, Lysistrata!

LYSISTRATA

But still at home, ignoring him, I'll stay,

CALONICE

But still at home, ignoring him, I'll stay,

LYSISTRATA

Beautiful, clad in saffron silks all day.

CALONICE

Beautiful, clad in saffron silks all day.

LYSISTRATA

If then he seizes me by dint of force,

CALONICE

If then he seizes me by dint of force,

LYSISTRATA

I'll give him reason for a long remorse.

CALONICE

I'll give him reason for a long remorse.

LYSISTRATA

I'll never lie and stare up at the ceiling,

CALONICE

I'll never lie and stare up at the ceiling,

LYSISTRATA

Nor like a lion on all fours go kneeling.

CALONICE

Nor like a lion on all fours go kneeling.

LYSISTRATA

If I keep faith, then bounteous cups be mine.

CALONICE

If I keep faith, then bounteous cups be mine.

LYSISTRATA

If not, to nauseous water change this wine.

CALONICE
If not, to nauseous water change this wine.

LYSISTRATA

Do you all swear to this?

MYRRHINE

We do, we do.

LYSISTRATA

Then I shall immolate the victim thus.
She drinks.

CALONICE

Here now, share fair, haven't we made a pact?
Let's all quaff down that friendship in our turn.

LAMPITO

Hark, what caterwauling hubbub's that?

LYSISTRATA

As I told you,
The women have appropriated the citadel.
So, Lampito, dash off to your own land
And raise the rebels there. These will serve as hostages,
While we ourselves take our places in the ranks
And drive the bolts right home.

CALONICE

But won't the men
March straight against us?

LYSISTRATA

And what if they do?
No threat shall creak our hinges wide, no torch
Shall light a fear in us; we will come out
To Peace alone.

CALONICE

That's it, by Aphrodite!
As of old let us seem hard and obdurate.

3.18.1.1: Section 1 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.18.1.2: Section 2

LAMPITO _and some go off; the others go up into the Acropolis._

Chorus of OLD MEN _enter to attack the captured Acropolis_.

Make room, Draces, move ahead; why your shoulder's chafed, I see,
With lugging uphill these lopped branches of the olive-tree.
How upside-down and wrong-way-round a long life sees things grow.
Ah, Strymodorus, who'd have thought affairs could tangle so?

The women whom at home we fed,
Like witless fools, with fostering bread,
Have impiously come to this--
They've stolen the Acropolis,
With bolts and bars our orders flout
And shut us out.

Come, Philurgus, bustle thither; lay our faggots on the ground,
In neat stacks beleaguering the insurgents all around;
And the vile conspiratresses, plotters of such mischief dire,
Pile and burn them all together in one vast and righteous pyre:
Fling with our own hands Lycon's wife to fry in the thickest fire.
By Demeter, they'll get no brag while I've a vein to beat!
Cleomenes himself was hurtled out in sore defeat.
His stiff-backed Spartan pride was bent.
Out, stripped of all his arms, he went:
A pigmy cloak that would not stretch
To hide his rump (the draggled wretch),
Six sprouting years of beard, the spilth
Of six years' filth.

That was a siege! Our men were ranged in lines of seventeen deep
Before the gates, and never left their posts there, even to sleep.
Shall I not smite the rash presumption then of foes like these,
Detested both of all the gods and of Euripides--
Else, may the Marathon-plain not boast my trophied victories!

Ah, now, there's but a little space
To reach the place!
A deadly climb it is, a tricky road
With all this bumping load:
A pack-ass soon would tire....
How these logs bruise my shoulders! further still
Jog up the hill,
And puff the fire inside,
Or just as we reach the top we'll find it's died.
Ough, phew!
I choke with the smoke.

Lord Heracles, how acrid-hot
Out of the pot
This mad-dog smoke leaps, worrying me
And biting angrily....

'Tis Lemnian fire that smokes,
Or else it would not sting my eyelids thus....
Haste, all of us;
Athene invokes our aid.
Laches, now or never the assault must be made!
Ough, phew!
I choke with the smoke. ..

Thanked be the gods! The fire peeps up and crackles as it should.
Now why not first slide off our backs these weary loads of wood
And dip a vine-branch in the brazier till it glows, then straight
Hurl it at the battering-ram against the stubborn gate?
If they refuse to draw the bolts in immediate compliance,
We'll set fire to the wood, and smoke will strangle their defiance.

Phew, what a spluttering drench of smoke! Come, now from off my back....
Is there no Samos-general to help me to unpack?
Ah there, that's over! For the last time now it's galled my shoulder.
Flare up thine embers, brazier, and dutifully smoulder,
To kindle a brand, that I the first may strike the citadel.
Aid me, Lady Victory, that a triumph-trophy may tell
How we did anciently this insane audacity quell!

Chorus of WOMEN.

What's that rising yonder? That ruddy glare, that smoky skurry?
O is it something in a blaze? Quick, quick, my comrades, hurry!
Nicodice, helter-skelter!
Or poor Calyce's in flames
And Cratylla's stifled in the welter.
O these dreadful old men
And their dark laws of hate!
There, I'm all of a tremble lest I turn out to be too late.
I could scarcely get near to the spring though I rose before dawn,
What with tattling of tongues and rattling of pitchers in one jostling din
With slaves pushing in!....

Still here at last the water's drawn
And with it eagerly I run
To help those of my friends who stand
In danger of being burned alive.
For I am told a dribbling band
Of greybeards hobble to the field,
Great faggots in each palsied hand,
As if a hot bath to prepare,
And threatening that out they'll drive
These wicked women or soon leave them charring into ashes
there.
O Goddess, suffer not, I pray, this harsh deed to be done,
But show us Greece and Athens with their warlike acts repealed!
For this alone, in this thy hold,
Thou Goddess with the helm of gold,
We laid hands on thy sanctuary,

Athene.... Then our ally be
And where they cast their fires of slaughter
Direct our water!

STRATYLLIS (_caught_)

Let me go!

WOMEN

You villainous old men, what's this you do?
No honest man, no pious man, could do such things as you.

MEN

Ah ha, here's something most original, I have no doubt:
A swarm of women sentinels to man the walls without.

WOMEN

So then we scare you, do we? Do we seem a fearful host?
You only see the smallest fraction mustered at this post.

MEN

Ho, Phaedrias, shall we put a stop to all these chattering tricks?
Suppose that now upon their backs we splintered these our sticks?

WOMEN

Let us lay down the pitchers, so our bodies will be free,
In case these lumping fellows try to cause some injury.

MEN

O hit them hard and hit again and hit until they run away,
And perhaps they'll learn, like Bupalus, not to have too much to say.

WOMEN

Come on, then--do it! I won't budge, but like a dog I'll bite
At every little scrap of meat that dangles in my sight.

MEN

Be quiet, or I'll bash you out of any years to come.

WOMEN

Now you just touch Stratyllis with the top-joint of your thumb.

MEN

What vengeance can you take if with my fists your face I beat?

WOMEN

I'll rip you with my teeth and strew your entrails at your feet.

MEN

Now I appreciate Euripides' strange subtlety:
Woman is the most shameless beast of all the beasts that be.

WOMEN

Rhodippe, come, and let's pick up our water-jars once more.

MEN

Ah cursed drab, what have you brought this water for?

WOMEN

What is your fire for then, you smelly corpse? Yourself to burn?

MEN

To build a pyre and make your comrades ready for the urn.

WOMEN

And I've the water to put out your fire immediately.

MEN

What, you put out my fire?

WOMEN

Yes, sirrah, as you soon will see.

MEN

I don't know why I hesitate to roast you with this flame.

WOMEN

If you have any soap you'll go off cleaner than you came.

MEN

Cleaner, you dirty slut?

WOMEN

A nuptial-bath in which to lie!

MEN

Did you hear that insolence?

WOMEN

I'm a free woman, I.

MEN

I'll make you hold your tongue.

WOMEN

Henceforth you'll serve in no more juries.

MEN

Burn off her hair for her.

WOMEN

Now forward, water, quench their furies!

MEN

O dear, O dear!

WOMEN

So ... was it hot?

MEN

Hot! ... Enough, O hold.

WOMEN

Watered, perhaps you'll bloom again--why not?

MEN

Brrr, I'm wrinkled up from shivering with cold.

WOMEN

Next time you've fire you'll warm yourself and leave us to our lot.

MAGISTRATE _enters with attendant_ SCYTHIANS.

MAGISTRATE

Have the luxurious rites of the women glittered
Their libertine show, their drumming tapped out crowds,
The Sabazian Mysteries summoned their mob,
Adonis been wept to death on the terraces,
As I could hear the last day in the Assembly?
For Demostratus--let bad luck befoul him--
Was roaring, "We must sail for Sicily,"
While a woman, throwing herself about in a dance
Lopsided with drink, was shrilling out "Adonis,
Woe for Adonis." Then Demostratus shouted,
"We must levy hoplites at Zacynthus,"
And there the woman, up to the ears in wine,
Was screaming "Weep for Adonis" on the house-top,
The scoundrelly politician, that lunatic ox,
Bellowing bad advice through tipsy shrieks:
Such are the follies wantoning in them.

MEN

O if you knew their full effrontery!
All of the insults they've done, besides sousing us
With water from their pots to our public disgrace
For we stand here wringing our clothes like grown-up infants.

MAGISTRATE

By Poseidon, justly done! For in part with us
The blame must lie for dissolute behaviour
And for the pampered appetites they learn.
Thus grows the seedling lust to blossoming:
We go into a shop and say, "Here, goldsmith,
You remember the necklace that you wrought my wife;
Well, the other night in fervour of a dance
Her clasp broke open. Now I'm off for Salamis;
If you've the leisure, would you go tonight
And stick a bolt-pin into her opened clasp."
Another goes to a cobbler; a soldierly fellow,
Always standing up erect, and says to him,
"Cobbler, a sandal-strap of my wife's pinches her,
Hurts her little toe in a place where she's sensitive.

Come at noon and see if you can stretch out wider
This thing that troubles her, loosen its tightness."
And so you view the result. Observe my case--
I, a magistrate, come here to draw
Money to buy oar-blades, and what happens?
The women slam the door full in my face.
But standing still's no use. Bring me a crowbar,
And I'll chastise this their impertinence.
What do you gape at, wretch, with dazzled eyes?
Peering for a tavern, I suppose.
Come, force the gates with crowbars, prise them apart!
I'll prise away myself too.... (LYSISTRATA _appears._)

LYSISTRATA

Stop this banging.
I'm coming of my own accord.... Why bars?
It is not bars we need but common sense.

MAGISTRATE

Indeed, you slut! Where is the archer now?
Arrest this woman, tie her hands behind.

LYSISTRATA

If he brushes me with a finger, by Artemis,
The public menial, he'll be sorry for it.

MAGISTRATE

Are you afraid? Grab her about the middle.
Two of you then, lay hands on her and end it.

CALONICE

By Pandrosos I if your hand touches her
I'll spread you out and trample on your guts.

MAGISTRATE

My guts! Where is the other archer gone?
Bind that minx there who talks so prettily.

MYRRHINE

By Phosphor, if your hand moves out her way
You'd better have a surgeon somewhere handy.

MAGISTRATE

You too! Where is that archer? Take that woman.
I'll put a stop to these surprise-parties.

STRATYLLIS

By the Tauric Artemis, one inch nearer
My fingers, and it's a bald man that'll be yelling.

MAGISTRATE

Tut tut, what's here? Deserted by my archers....
But surely women never can defeat us;

Close up your ranks, my Scythians. Forward at them.

LYSISTRATA

By the Goddesses, you'll find that here await you
Four companies of most pugnacious women
Armed cap-a-pie from the topmost louring curl
To the lowest angry dimple.

MAGISTRATE

On, Scythians, bind them.

LYSISTRATA

On, gallant allies of our high design,
Vendors of grain-eggs-pulse-and-vegetables,
Ye garlic-tavern-keepers of bakeries,
Strike, batter, knock, hit, slap, and scratch our foes,
Be finely imprudent, say what you think of them....
Enough! retire and do not rob the dead.

MAGISTRATE

How basely did my archer-force come off.

LYSISTRATA

Ah, ha, you thought it was a herd of slaves
You had to tackle, and you didn't guess
The thirst for glory ardent in our blood.

MAGISTRATE

By Apollo, I know well the thirst that heats you--
Especially when a wine-skin's close.

MEN

You waste your breath, dear magistrate, I fear, in answering back.
What's the good of argument with such a rampageous pack?
Remember how they washed us down (these very clothes I wore)
With water that looked nasty and that smelt so even more.

WOMEN

What else to do, since you advanced too dangerously nigh.
If you should do the same again, I'll punch you in the eye.
Though I'm a stay-at-home and most a quiet life enjoy,
Polite to all and every (for I'm naturally coy),
Still if you wake a wasps' nest then of wasps you must beware.

MEN

How may this ferocity be tamed? It grows too great to bear.
Let us question them and find if they'll perchance declare
The reason why they strangely dare
To seize on Cranaos' citadel,
This eyrie inaccessible,
This shrine above the precipice,
The Acropolis.

Probe them and find what they mean with this idle talk; listen,
but watch they don't try to deceive.
You'd be neglecting your duty most certainly if now this mystery
unplumbed you leave.

MAGISTRATE

Women there! Tell what I ask you, directly....
Come, without rambling, I wish you to state
What's your rebellious intention in barring up thus on our noses
our own temple-gate.

LYSISTRATA

To take first the treasury out of your management, and so stop the war
through the absence of gold.

MAGISTRATE

Is gold then the cause of the war?

LYSISTRATA

Yes, gold caused it and miseries more, too many to be told.
'Twas for money, and money alone, that Pisander with all of the army of
mob-agitators.
Raised up revolutions. But, as for the future, it won't be worth while
to set up to be traitors.
Not an obol they'll get as their loot, not an obol! while we have the
treasure-chest in our command.

MAGISTRATE

What then is that you propose?

LYSISTRATA

Just this--merely to take the exchequer henceforth in hand.

MAGISTRATE

The exchequer!

LYSISTRATA

Yes, why not? Of our capabilities you have had various clear evidences.
Firstly remember we have always administered soundly the budget of all
home-expenses.

MAGISTRATE

But this matter's different.

LYSISTRATA

How is it different?

MAGISTRATE

Why, it deals chiefly with war-time supplies.

LYSISTRATA

But we abolish war straight by our policy.

MAGISTRATE

What will you do if emergencies arise?

LYSISTRATA

Face them our own way.

MAGISTRATE

What _you_ will?

LYSISTRATA

Yes _we_ will!

MAGISTRATE

Then there's no help for it; we're all destroyed.

LYSISTRATA

No, willy-nilly you must be safeguarded.

MAGISTRATE

What madness is this?

LYSISTRATA

Why, it seems you're annoyed.
It must be done, that's all.

MAGISTRATE

Such awful oppression never,
O never in the past yet I bore.

LYSISTRATA

You must be saved, sirrah--that's all there is to it.

MAGISTRATE

If we don't want to be saved?

LYSISTRATA

All the more.

MAGISTRATE

Why do you women come prying and meddling in matters of state touching war-time and peace?

LYSISTRATA

That I will tell you.

MAGISTRATE

O tell me or quickly I'll--

LYSISTRATA

Hearken awhile and from threatening cease.

MAGISTRATE

I cannot, I cannot; it's growing too insolent.

WOMEN

Come on; you've far more than we have to dread.

MAGISTRATE

Stop from your croaking, old carrion-crow there....
Continue.

LYSISTRATA

Be calm then and I'll go ahead.
All the long years when the hopeless war dragged along we, unassuming, forgotten in quiet,
Endured without question, endured in our loneliness all your incessant child's antics and riot.
Our lips we kept tied, though aching with silence, though well all the while in our silence we knew
How wretchedly everything still was progressing by listening dumbly the day long to you.
For always at home you continued discussing the war and its politics loudly, and we
Sometimes would ask you, our hearts deep with sorrowing though we spoke lightly, though happy to see,
"What's to be inscribed on the side of the Treaty-stone
What, dear, was said in the Assembly today?"
"Mind your own business," he'd answer me growlingly
"hold your tongue, woman, or else go away."
And so I would hold it.

WOMEN

I'd not be silent for any man living on earth, no, not I!

MAGISTRATE

Not for a staff?

LYSISTRATA

Well, so I did nothing but sit in the house, feeling dreary, and sigh,
While ever arrived some fresh tale of decisions more foolish by far and presaging disaster.
Then I would say to him, "O my dear husband, why still do they rush on destruction the faster?"
At which he would look at me sideways, exclaiming, "Keep for your web and your shuttle your care,
Or for some hours hence your cheeks will be sore and hot; leave this alone, war is Man's sole affair!"

MAGISTRATE

By Zeus, but a man of fine sense, he.

LYSISTRATA

How sensible?
You dotard, because he at no time had lent
His intractable ears to absorb from our counsel one temperate word of advice, kindly meant?
But when at the last in the streets we heard shouted (everywhere ringing the ominous cry)

"Is there no one to help us, no saviour in Athens?" and, "No, there is no one," come back in reply.
At once a convention of all wives through Hellas here for a serious purpose was held,
To determine how husbands might yet back to wisdom despite their reluctance in time be compelled.
Why then delay any longer? It's settled. For the future you'll take up our old occupation.
Now in turn you're to hold tongue, as we did, and listen while we show the way to recover the nation.

MAGISTRATE

You talk to _us!_ Why, you're mad. I'll not stand it.

LYSISTRATA

Cease babbling, you fool; till I end, hold your tongue.

MAGISTRATE

If I should take orders from one who wears veils, may my neck straightaway be deservedly wrung.

LYSISTRATA

O if that keeps pestering you,
I've a veil here for your hair,
I'll fit you out in everything
As is only fair.

CALONICE

Here's a spindle that will do.

MYRRHINE

I'll add a wool-basket too.

LYSISTRATA

Girdled now sit humbly at home,
Munching beans, while you card wool and comb. For war from now on is the Women's affair.

WOMEN.

Come then, down pitchers, all,
And on, courageous of heart,
In our comradely venture
Each taking her due part.

I could dance, dance, dance, and be fresher after,
I could dance away numberless suns,
To no weariness let my knees bend.
Earth I could brave with laughter,
Having such wonderful girls here to friend.
O the daring, the gracious, the beautiful ones!
Their courage unswerving and witty
Will rescue our city.

O sprung from the seed of most valiant-wombed grand-mothers,
scions of savage and dangerous nettles!
Prepare for the battle, all. Gird up your angers. Our way
the wind of sweet victory settles.

LYSISTRATA

O tender Eros and Lady of Cyprus, some flush of beauty I
pray you devise
To flash on our bosoms and, O Aphrodite, rosily gleam on
our valorous thighs!
Joy will raise up its head through the legions warring and
all of the far-serried ranks of mad-love
Bristle the earth to the pillared horizon, pointing in vain to
the heavens above.
I think that perhaps then they'll give us our title--
Peace-makers.

MAGISTRATE

What do you mean? Please explain.

LYSISTRATA

First, we'll not see you now flourishing arms about into the
Marketing-place clang again.

WOMEN
No, by the Paphian.

LYSISTRATA

Still I can conjure them as past were the herbs stand or crockery's sold
Like Corybants jingling (poor sots) fully armoured, they noisily round
on their promenade strolled.

MAGISTRATE

And rightly; that's discipline, they--

LYSISTRATA

But what's sillier than to go on an errand of buying a fish
Carrying along an immense. Gorgon-buckler instead the usual platter
or dish?
A phylarch I lately saw, mounted on horse-back, dressed for the part
with long ringlets and all,
Stow in his helmet the omelet bought steaming from an old woman who
kept a food-stall.
Nearby a soldier, a Thracian, was shaking wildly his spear like Tereus
in the play,
To frighten a fig-girl while unseen the ruffian filched from her
fruit-trays the ripest away.

MAGISTRATE

How, may I ask, will your rule re-establish order and justice in lands
so tormented?

LYSISTRATA

Nothing is easier.

MAGISTRATE

Out with it speedily--what is this plan that you boast you've invented?

LYSISTRATA

If, when yarn we are winding, It chances to tangle, then, as perchance you may know, through the skein
This way and that still the spool we keep passing till it is finally clear all again:
So to untangle the War and its errors, ambassadors out on all sides we will send
This way and that, here, there and round about--soon you will find that the War has an end.

MAGISTRATE

So with these trivial tricks of the household, domestic analogies of threads, skeins and spools,
You think that you'll solve such a bitter complexity, unwind such political problems, you fools!

LYSISTRATA

Well, first as we wash dirty wool so's to cleanse it, so with a pitiless zeal we will scrub
Through the whole city for all greasy fellows; burrs too, the parasites, off we will rub.
That verminous plague of insensate place-seekers soon between thumb and forefinger we'll crack.
All who inside Athens' walls have their dwelling into one great common basket we'll pack.
Disenfranchised or citizens, allies or aliens, pell-mell the lot of them in we will squeeze.
Till they discover humanity's meaning.... As for disjointed and far colonies,
Them you must never from this time imagine as scattered about just like lost hanks of wool.
Each portion we'll take and wind in to this centre, inward to Athens each loyalty pull,
Till from the vast heap where all's piled together at last can be woven a strong Cloak of State.

MAGISTRATE

How terrible is it to stand here and watch them carding and winding at will with our fate,
Witless in war as they are.

LYSISTRATA

What of us then, who ever in vain for our children must weep
Borne but to perish afar and in vain?

MAGISTRATE

Not that, O let that one memory sleep!

LYSISTRATA

Then while we should be companioned still merrily, happy as brides may,
the livelong night,
Kissing youth by, we are forced to lie single.... But leave for a moment
our pitiful plight,
It hurts even more to behold the poor maidens helpless wrinkling in
staler virginity.

MAGISTRATE

Does not a man age?

LYSISTRATA

Not in the same way. Not as a woman grows withered, grows he.
He, when returned from the war, though grey-headed, yet
if he wishes can choose out a wife.
But she has no solace save peering for omens, wretched and
lonely the rest of her life.

MAGISTRATE

But the old man will often select--

LYSISTRATA

O why not finish and die?
A bier is easy to buy,
A honey-cake I'll knead you with joy,
This garland will see you are decked.

CALONICE

I've a wreath for you too.

MYRRHINE

I also will fillet you.

LYSISTRATA

What more is lacking? Step aboard the boat.
See, Charon shouts ahoy.
You're keeping him, he wants to shove afloat.

MAGISTRATE

Outrageous insults! Thus my place to flout!
Now to my fellow-magistrates I'll go
And what you've perpetrated on me show.

LYSISTRATA

Why are you blaming us for laying you out?
Assure yourself we'll not forget to make
The third day offering early for your sake.

MAGISTRATE _retires_, LYSISTRATA _returns within_.

3.18.1.2: Section 2 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.18.1.3: Section 3

MAGISTRATE _retires_, LYSISTRATA _returns within_.

OLD MEN.

All men who call your loins your own, awake at last, arise
And strip to stand in readiness. For as it seems to me
Some more perilous offensive in their heads they now devise.
I'm sure a Tyranny
Like that of Hippias
In this I detect....
They mean to put us under
Themselves I suspect,
And that Laconians assembling
At Cleisthenes' house have played
A trick-of-war and provoked them
Madly to raid
The Treasury, in which term I include
The Pay for my food.

For is it not preposterous
They should talk this way to us
On a subject such as battle!

And, women as they are, about bronze bucklers dare prattle--
Make alliance with the Spartans--people I for one
Like very hungry wolves would always most sincere shun....
Some dirty game is up their sleeve,
I believe.
A Tyranny, no doubt... but they won't catch me, that know.
Henceforth on my guard I'll go,
A sword with myrtle-branches wreathed for ever in my hand,
And under arms in the Public Place I'll take my watchful stand,
Shoulder to shoulder with Aristogeiton. Now my staff I'll draw
And start at once by knocking
that shocking
Hag upon the jaw.

WOMEN.

Your own mother will not know you when you get back to the town.
But first, my friends and allies, let us lay these garments down,
And all ye fellow-citizens, hark to me while I tell
What will aid Athens well.
Just as is right, for I
Have been a sharer
In all the lavish splendour
Of the proud city.
I bore the holy vessels
At seven, then
I pounded barley
At the age of ten,

And clad in yellow robes,
Soon after this,
I was Little Bear to
Brauronian Artemis;
Then neckletted with figs,
Grown tall and pretty,
I was a Basket-bearer,
And so it's obvious I should
Give you advice that I think good,
The very best I can.
It should not prejudice my voice that I'm not born a man,
If I say something advantageous to the present situation.
For I'm taxed too, and as a toll provide men for the nation
While, miserable greybeards, you,
It is true,
Contribute nothing of any importance whatever to our needs;
But the treasure raised against the Medes
You've squandered, and do nothing in return, save that you make
Our lives and persons hazardous by some imbecile mistakes
What can you answer? Now be careful, don't arouse my spite,
Or with my slipper I'll take you napping,
faces slapping
Left and right.

MEN.

What villainies they contrive!
Come, let vengeance fall,
You that below the waist are still alive,
Off with your tunics at my call--
Naked, all.
For a man must strip to battle like a man.
No quaking, brave steps taking, careless what's ahead, white shoed,
in the nude, onward bold,
All ye who garrisoned Leipsidrion of old....
Let each one wag
As youthfully as he can,
And if he has the cause at heart
Rise at least a span.

We must take a stand and keep to it,
For if we yield the smallest bit
To their importunity.
Then nowhere from their inroads will be left to us immunity.
But they'll be building ships and soon their navies will attack us,
As Artemisia did, and seek to fight us and to sack us.
And if they mount, the Knights they'll rob
Of a job,
For everyone knows how talented they all are in the saddle,
Having long practised how to straddle;
No matter how they're jogged there up and down, they're never thrown.
Then think of Myron's painting, and each horse-backed Amazon

In combat hand-to-hand with men.... Come, on these women fall,
And in pierced wood-collars let's stick
quick
The necks of one and all.

WOMEN.

Don't cross me or I'll loose
The Beast that's kennelled here....
And soon you will be howling for a truce,
Howling out with fear.
But my dear,
Strip also, that women may battle unhindered....
But you, you'll be too sore to eat garlic more, or one black bean,
I really mean, so great's my spleen, to kick you black and blue
With these my dangerous legs.
I'll hatch the lot of you,
If my rage you dash on,
The way the relentless Beetle
Hatched the Eagle's eggs.

Scornfully aside I set
Every silly old-man threat
While Lampito's with me.
Or dear Ismenia, the noble Theban girl. Then let decree
Be hotly piled upon decree; in vain will be your labours,
You futile rogue abominated by your suffering neighbour
To Hecate's feast I yesterday went--
Off I sent
To our neighbours in Boeotia, asking as a gift to me
For them to pack immediately
That darling dainty thing ... a good fat eel [1] I meant of course;

[Footnote 1:_Vide supra_, p. 23.]

But they refused because some idiotic old decree's in force.
O this strange passion for decrees nothing on earth can check,
Till someone puts a foot out tripping you,
and slipping you
Break your neck.

LYSISTRATA _enters in dismay_.

WOMEN

Dear Mistress of our martial enterprise,
Why do you come with sorrow in your eyes?

LYSISTRATA

O 'tis our naughty femininity,
So weak in one spot, that hath saddened me.

WOMEN

What's this? Please speak.

LYSISTRATA

Poor women, O so weak!

WOMEN

What can it be? Surely your friends may know.

LYSISTRATA

Yea, I must speak it though it hurt me so.

WOMEN

Speak; can we help? Don't stand there mute in need.

LYSISTRATA

I'll blurt it out then--our women's army's mutinied.

WOMEN

O Zeus!

LYSISTRATA

What use is Zeus to our anatomy?
Here is the gaping calamity I meant:
I cannot shut their ravenous appetites
A moment more now. They are all deserting.
The first I caught was sidling through the postern
Close by the Cave of Pan: the next hoisting herself
With rope and pulley down: a third on the point
Of slipping past: while a fourth malcontent, seated
For instant flight to visit Orsilochus
On bird-back, I dragged off by the hair in time....
They are all snatching excuses to sneak home.
Look, there goes one.... Hey, what's the hurry?

1ST WOMAN

I must get home. I've some Milesian wool
Packed wasting away, and moths are pushing through it.

LYSISTRATA

Fine moths indeed, I know. Get back within.

1ST WOMAN

By the Goddesses, I'll return instantly.
I only want to stretch it on my bed.

LYSISTRATA

You shall stretch nothing and go nowhere either.

1ST WOMAN

Must I never use my wool then?

LYSISTRATA

If needs be.

2ND WOMAN

How unfortunate I am! O my poor flax!
It's left at home unstript.

LYSISTRATA

So here's another
That wishes to go home and strip her flax.
Inside again!

2ND WOMAN

No, by the Goddess of Light,
I'll be back as soon as I have flayed it properly.

LYSISTRATA

You'll not flay anything. For if you begin
There'll not be one here but has a patch to be flayed.

3RD WOMAN

O holy Eilithyia, stay this birth
Till I have left the precincts of the place!

LYSISTRATA

What nonsense is this?

3RD WOMAN

I'll drop it any minute.

LYSISTRATA

Yesterday you weren't with child.

3RD WOMAN

But I am today.
O let me find a midwife, Lysistrata.
O quickly!

LYSISTRATA

Now what story is this you tell?
What is this hard lump here?

3RD WOMAN

It's a male child.

LYSISTRATA

By Aphrodite, it isn't. Your belly's hollow,
And it has the feel of metal.... Well, I soon can see.
You hussy, it's Athene's sacred helm,
And you said you were with child.

3RD WOMAN

And so I am.

LYSISTRATA

Then why the helm?

3RD WOMAN

So if the throes should take me
Still in these grounds I could use it like a dove
As a laying-nest in which to drop the child.

LYSISTRATA

More pretexts! You can't hide your clear intent,
And anyway why not wait till the tenth day
Meditating a brazen name for your brass brat?

WOMAN

And I can't sleep a wink. My nerve is gone
Since I saw that snake-sentinel of the shrine.

WOMAN

And all those dreadful owls with their weird hooting!
Though I'm wearied out, I can't close an eye.

LYSISTRATA

You wicked women, cease from juggling lies.
You want your men. But what of them as well?
They toss as sleepless in the lonely night,
I'm sure of it. Hold out awhile, hold out,
But persevere a teeny-weeny longer.
An oracle has promised Victory
If we don't wrangle. Would you hear the words?

WOMEN

Yes, yes, what is it?

LYSISTRATA

Silence then, you chatterboxes.
Here--
_Whenas the swallows flocking in one place from the hoopoes
Deny themselves love's gambols any more,
All woes shall then have ending and great Zeus the Thunderer
Shall put above what was below before._

WOMEN

Will the men then always be kept under us?

LYSISTRATA

_But if the swallows squabble among themselves and fly away
Out of the temple, refusing to agree,
Then The Most Wanton Birds in all the World
They shall be named for ever. That's his decree._

WOMAN

It's obvious what it means.

LYSISTRATA

Now by all the gods
We must let no agony deter from duty,

Back to your quarters. For we are base indeed,
My friends, if we betray the oracle.

She goes out.

OLD MEN.

I'd like to remind you of a fable they used to employ,
When I was a little boy:
How once through fear of the marriage-bed a young man,
Melanion by name, to the wilderness ran,
And there on the hills he dwelt.
For hares he wove a net
Which with his dog he set--
Most likely he's there yet.
For he never came back home, so great was the fear he felt.
I loathe the sex as much as he,
And therefore I no less shall be
As chaste as was Melanion.

MAN

Grann'am, do you much mind men?

WOMAN

Onions you won't need, to cry.

MAN

From my foot you shan't escape.

WOMAN

What thick forests I espy.

MEN

So much Myronides' fierce beard
And thundering black back were feared,
That the foe fled when they were shown--
Brave he as Phormion.

WOMEN.

Well, I'll relate a rival fable just to show to you
A different point of view:
There was a rough-hewn fellow, Timon, with a face
That glowered as through a thorn-bush in a wild, bleak place.
He too decided on flight,
This very Furies' son,
All the world's ways to shun
And hide from everyone,
Spitting out curses on all knavish men to left and right.
But though he reared this hate for men,
He loved the women even then,
And never thought them enemies.

WOMAN

O your jaw I'd like to break.

MAN

That I fear do you suppose?

WOMAN

Learn what kicks my legs can make.

MAN

Raise them up, and you'll expose--

WOMAN

Nay, you'll see there, I engage,
All is well kept despite my age,
And tended smooth enough to slip
From any adversary's grip.

LYSISTRATA _appears_.

LYSISTRATA

Hollo there, hasten hither to me
Skip fast along.

WOMAN

What is this? Why the noise?

LYSISTRATA

A man, a man! I spy a frenzied man!
He carries Love upon him like a staff.
O Lady of Cyprus, and Cythera, and Paphos,
I beseech you, keep our minds and hands to the oath.

WOMAN

Where is he, whoever he is?

LYSISTRATA

By the Temple of Chloe.

WOMAN

Yes, now I see him, but who can he be?

LYSISTRATA

Look at him. Does anyone recognise his face?

MYRRHINE

I do. He is my husband, Cinesias.

LYSISTRATA

You know how to work. Play with him, lead him on,
Seduce him to the cozening-point--kiss him, kiss him,
Then slip your mouth aside just as he's sure of it,
Ungirdle every caress his mouth feels at
Save that the oath upon the bowl has locked.

MYRRHINE

You can rely on me.

LYSISTRATA

I'll stay here to help
In working up his ardor to its height
Of vain magnificence.... The rest to their quarters.

3.18.1.3: Section 3 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.18.1.4: Section 4

Enter CINESIAS.

Who is this that stands within our lines?

CINESIAS

I.

LYSISTRATA

A man?

CINESIAS

Too much a man!

LYSISTRATA

Then be off at once.

CINESIAS

Who are you that thus eject me?

LYSISTRATA

Guard for the day.

CINESIAS

By all the gods, then call Myrrhine hither.

LYSISTRATA

So, call Myrrhine hither! Who are you?

CINESIAS

I am her husband Cinesias, son of Anthros.

LYSISTRATA

Welcome, dear friend! That glorious name of yours
Is quite familiar in our ranks. Your wife
Continually has it in her mouth.
She cannot touch an apple or an egg
But she must say, "This to Cinesias!"

CINESIAS

O is that true?

LYSISTRATA

By Aphrodite, it is.
If the conversation strikes on men, your wife
Cuts in with, "All are boobies by Cinesias."

CINESIAS

Then call her here.

LYSISTRATA

And what am I to get?

CINESIAS

This, if you want it.... See, what I have here.
But not to take away.

LYSISTRATA

Then I'll call her.

CINESIAS

Be quick, be quick. All grace is wiped from life
Since she went away. O sad, sad am I
When there I enter on that loneliness,
And wine is unvintaged of the sun's flavour.
And food is tasteless. But I've put on weight.

MYRRHINE (_above_)

I love him O so much! but he won't have it.
Don't call me down to him.

CINESIAS

Sweet little Myrrhine!
What do you mean? Come here.

MYRRHINE

O no I won't.
Why are you calling me? You don't want me.

CINESIAS

Not want you! with this week-old strength of love.

MYRRHINE

Farewell.

CINESIAS

Don't go, please don't go, Myrrhine.
At least you'll hear our child. Call your mother, lad.

CHILD

Mummy ... mummy ... mummy!

CINESIAS

There now, don't you feel pity for the child?
He's not been fed or washed now for six days.

MYRRHINE

I certainly pity him with so heartless a father.

CINESIAS

Come down, my sweetest, come for the child's sake.

MYRRHINE

A trying life it is to be a mother!
I suppose I'd better go. _She comes down._

CINESIAS

How much younger she looks,
How fresher and how prettier! Myrrhine,
Lift up your lovely face, your disdainful face;
And your ankle ... let your scorn step out its worst;
It only rubs me to more ardor here.

MYRRHINE (_playing with the child_)

You're as innocent as he's iniquitous.
Let me kiss you, honey-petting, mother's darling.

CINESIAS

How wrong to follow other women's counsel
And let loose all these throbbing voids in yourself
As well as in me. Don't you go throb-throb?

MYRRHINE

Take away your hands.

CINESIAS

Everything in the house
Is being ruined.

MYRRHINE

I don't care at all.

CINESIAS

The roosters are picking all your web to rags.
Do you mind that?

MYRRHINE

Not I.

CINESIAS

What time we've wasted
We might have drenched with Paphian laughter, flung
On Aphrodite's Mysteries. O come here.

MYRRHINE

Not till a treaty finishes the war.

CINESIAS

If you must have it, then we'll get it done.

MYRRHINE

Do it and I'll come home. Till then I am bound.

CINESIAS

Well, can't your oath perhaps be got around?

MYRRHINE

No ... no ... still I'll not say that I don't love you.

CINESIAS

You love me! Then dear girl, let me also love you.

MYRRHINE

You must be joking. The boy's looking on.

CINESIAS

Here, Manes, take the child home!... There, he's gone.
There's nothing in the way now. Come to the point.

MYRRHINE

Here in the open! In plain sight?

CINESIAS

In Pan's cave.
A splendid place.

MYRRHINE

Where shall I dress my hair again
Before returning to the citadel?

CINESIAS

You can easily primp yourself in the Clepsydra.

MYRRHINE

But how can I break my oath?

CINESIAS

Leave that to me,
I'll take all risk.

MYRRHINE

Well, I'll make you comfortable.

CINESIAS

Don't worry. I'd as soon lie on the grass.

MYRRHINE

No, by Apollo, in spite of all your faults
I won't have you lying on the nasty earth.
(_From here MYRRHINE keeps on going off to fetch things._)

CINESIAS

Ah, how she loves me.

MYRRHINE

Rest there on the bench,
While I arrange my clothes. O what a nuisance,
I must find some cushions first.

CINESIAS

Why some cushions?
Please don't get them!

MYRRHINE

What? The plain, hard wood?
Never, by Artemis! That would be too vulgar.

CINESIAS

Open your arms!

MYRRHINE

No. Wait a second.

CINESIAS

O....
Then hurry back again.

MYRRHINE

Here the cushions are.
Lie down while I--O dear! But what a shame,
You need more pillows.

CINESIAS

I don't want them, dear.

MYRRHINE

But I do.

CINESIAS

Thwarted affection mine,
They treat you just like Heracles at a feast
With cheats of dainties, O disappointing arms!

MYRRHINE

Raise up your head.

CINESIAS

There, that's everything at last.

MYRRHINE

Yes, all.

CINESIAS

Then run to my arms, you golden girl.

MYRRHINE

I'm loosening my girdle now. But you've not forgotten?
You're not deceiving me about the Treaty?

CINESIAS

No, by my life, I'm not.

MYRRHINE

Why, you've no blanket.

CINESIAS

It's not the silly blanket's warmth but yours I want.

MYRRHINE

Never mind. You'll soon have both. I'll come straight back.

CINESIAS

The woman will choke me with her coverlets.

MYRRHINE

Get up a moment.

CINESIAS

I'm up high enough.

MYRRHINE

Would you like me to perfume you?

CINESIAS

By Apollo, no!

MYRRHINE

By Aphrodite, I'll do it anyway.

CINESIAS

Lord Zeus, may she soon use up all the myrrh.

MYRRHINE

Stretch out your hand. Take it and rub it in.

CINESIAS

Hmm, it's not as fragrant as might be; that is,
Not before it's smeared. It doesn't smell of kisses.

MYRRHINE

How silly I am: I've brought you Rhodian scents.

CINESIAS

It's good enough, leave it, love.

MYRRHINE

You must be jesting.

CINESIAS

Plague rack the man who first compounded scent!

MYRRHINE

Here, take this flask.

CINESIAS

I've a far better one.
Don't tease me, come here, and get nothing more.

MYRRHINE

I'm coming.... I'm just drawing off my shoes....
You're sure you will vote for Peace?

CINESIAS

I'll think about it.
She runs off.
I'm dead: the woman's worn me all away.
She's gone and left me with an anguished pulse.

MEN

Baulked in your amorous delight
How melancholy is your plight.
With sympathy your case I view;
For I am sure it's hard on you.
What human being could sustain
This unforeseen domestic strain,
And not a single trace
Of willing women in the place!

CINESIAS

O Zeus, what throbbing suffering!

MEN

She did it all, the harlot, she
With her atrocious harlotry.

WOMEN

Nay, rather call her darling-sweet.

MEN

What, sweet? She's a rude, wicked thing.

CINESIAS

A wicked thing, as I repeat.
O Zeus, O Zeus,
Canst Thou not suddenly let loose
Some twirling hurricane to tear
Her flapping up along the air
And drop her, when she's whirled around,
Here to the ground
Neatly impaled upon the stake
That's ready upright for her sake.
He goes out.

Enter SPARTAN HERALD.

The MAGISTRATE _comes forward_.

HERALD

What here gabs the Senate an' the Prytanes?
I've fetcht despatches for them.

MAGISTRATE

Are you a man
Or a monstrosity?

HERALD

My scrimp-brained lad,
I'm a herald, as ye see, who hae come frae Sparta
Anent a Peace.

MAGISTRATE

Then why do you hide that lance
That sticks out under your arms?

HERALD.

I've brought no lance.

MAGISTRATE

Then why do you turn aside and hold your cloak
So far out from your body? Is your groin swollen
With stress of travelling?

HERALD

By Castor, I'll swear
The man is wud.

MAGISTRATE

Indeed, your cloak is wide,
My rascal fellow.

HERALD

But I tell ye No!
Enow o' fleering!

MAGISTRATE

Well, what is it then?

HERALD

It's my despatch cane.

MAGISTRATE

Of course--a Spartan cane!
But speak right out. I know all this too well.
Are new privations springing up in Sparta?

HERALD

Och, hard as could be: in lofty lusty columns
Our allies stand united. We maun get Pellene.

MAGISTRATE

Whence has this evil come? Is it from Pan?

HERALD

No. Lampito first ran asklent, then the others
Sprinted after her example, and blocked, the hizzies,
Their wames unskaithed against our every fleech.

MAGISTRATE

What did you do?

HERALD

We are broken, and bent double,
Limp like men carrying lanthorns in great winds
About the city. They winna let us even
Wi' lightest neif skim their primsie pretties
Till we've concluded Peace-terms wi' a' Hellas.

MAGISTRATE

So the conspiracy is universal;
This proves it. Then return to Sparta. Bid them
Send envoys with full powers to treat of Peace;
And I will urge the Senate here to choose
Plenipotentiary ambassadors,
As argument adducing this connection.

HERALD

I'm off. Your wisdom none could contravert.
They retire.

3.18.1.4: Section 4 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.18.1.5: Section 5

MEN

There is no beast, no rush of fire, like woman so untamed.
She calmly goes her way where even panthers would be shamed.

WOMEN

And yet you are fool enough, it seems, to dare to war with me,
When for your faithful ally you might win me easily.

MEN

Never could the hate I feel for womankind grow less.

WOMEN

Then have your will. But I'll take pity on your nakedness.
For I can see just how ridiculous you look, and so
Will help you with your tunic if close up I now may go.

MEN

Well, that, by Zeus, is no scoundrel-deed, I frankly will admit.
I only took them off myself in a scoundrel raging-fit.

WOMEN

Now you look sensible, and that you're men no one could doubt.
If you were but good friends again, I'd take the insect out
That hurts your eye.

MEN

Is that what's wrong? That nasty bitie thing.
Please squeeze it out, and show me what it is that makes this sting.
It's been paining me a long while now.

WOMEN

Well I'll agree to that,
Although you're most unmannerly. O what a giant gnat.
Here, look! It comes from marshy Tricorysus, I can tell.

MEN

O thank you. It was digging out a veritable well.
Now that it's gone, I can't hold back my tears. See how they fall.

WOMEN

I'll wipe them off, bad as you are, and kiss you after all.

MEN

I won't be kissed.

WOMEN

O yes, you will. Your wishes do not matter.

MEN

O botheration take you all! How you cajole and flatter.
A hell it is to live with you; to live without, a hell:

How truly was that said. But come, these enmities let's quell.
You stop from giving orders and I'll stop from doing wrong.
So let's join ranks and seal our bargain with a choric song.

CHORUS.

Athenians, it's not our intention
To sow political dissension
By giving any scandal mention;
But on the contrary to promote good feeling in the state
By word and deed. We've had enough calamities of late.
So let a man or woman but divulge
They need a trifle, say,
Two minas, three or four,
I've purses here that bulge.
There's only one condition made
(Indulge my whim in this I pray)--
When Peace is signed once more,
On no account am I to be repaid.

And I'm making preparation
For a gay select collation
With some youths of reputation.
I've managed to produce some soup and they're slaughtering for me
A sucking-pig: its flesh should taste as tender as could be.
I shall expect you at my house today.
To the baths make an early visit,
And bring your children along;
Don't dawdle on the way.
Ask no one; enter as if the place
Was all your own--yours henceforth is it.
If nothing chances wrong,
The door will then be shut bang in your face.

The SPARTAN AMBASSADORS _approach_.

CHORUS

Here come the Spartan envoys with long, worried beards.
Hail, Spartans how do you fare?
Did anything new arise?

SPARTANS

No need for a clutter o' words. Do ye see our condition?

CHORUS

The situation swells to greater tension.
Something will explode soon.

SPARTANS

It's awfu' truly.
But come, let us wi' the best speed we may
Scribble a Peace.

CHORUS

I notice that our men
Like wrestlers poised for contest, hold their clothes
Out from their bellies. An athlete's malady!
Since exercise alone can bring relief.

ATHENIANS

Can anyone tell us where Lysistrata is?
There is no need to describe our men's condition,
It shows up plainly enough.

CHORUS

It's the same disease.
Do you feel a jerking throbbing in the morning?

ATHENIANS

By Zeus, yes! In these straits, I'm racked all through.
Unless Peace is soon declared, we shall be driven
In the void of women to try Cleisthenes.

CHORUS

Be wise and cover those things with your tunics.
Who knows what kind of person may perceive you?

ATHENIANS

By Zeus, you're right.

SPARTANS

By the Twa Goddesses,
Indeed ye are. Let's put our tunics on.

ATHENIANS

Hail O my fellow-sufferers, hail Spartans.

SPARTANS

O hinnie darling, what a waefu' thing!
If they had seen us wi' our lunging waddies!

ATHENIANS

Tell us then, Spartans, what has brought you here?

SPARTANS

We come to treat o' Peace.

ATHENIANS

Well spoken there!
And we the same. Let us callout Lysistrata
Since she alone can settle the Peace-terms.

SPARTANS

Callout Lysistratus too if ye don't mind.

CHORUS

No indeed. She hears your voices and she comes.

Enter LYSISTRATA

Hail, Wonder of all women! Now you must be in turn
Hard, shifting, clear, deceitful, noble, crafty, sweet, and stern.
The foremost men of Hellas, smitten by your fascination,
Have brought their tangled quarrels here for your sole arbitration.

LYSISTRATA

An easy task if the love's raging home-sickness
Doesn't start trying out how well each other
Will serve instead of us. But I'll know at once
If they do. O where's that girl, Reconciliation?
Bring first before me the Spartan delegates,
And see you lift no rude or violent hands--
None of the churlish ways our husbands used.
But lead them courteously, as women should.
And if they grudge fingers, guide them by other methods,
And introduce them with ready tact. The Athenians
Draw by whatever offers you a grip.
Now, Spartans, stay here facing me. Here you,
Athenians. Both hearken to my words.
I am a woman, but I'm not a fool.
And what of natural intelligence I own
Has been filled out with the remembered precepts
My father and the city-elders taught me.
First I reproach you both sides equally
That when at Pylae and Olympia,
At Pytho and the many other shrines
That I could name, you sprinkle from one cup
The altars common to all Hellenes, yet
You wrack Hellenic cities, bloody Hellas
With deaths of her own sons, while yonder clangs
The gathering menace of barbarians.

ATHENIANS

We cannot hold it in much longer now.

LYSISTRATA

Now unto you, O Spartans, do I speak.
Do you forget how your own countryman,
Pericleidas, once came hither suppliant
Before our altars, pale in his purple robes,
Praying for an army when in Messenia
Danger growled, and the Sea-god made earth quaver.
Then with four thousand hoplites Cimon marched
And saved all Sparta. Yet base ingrates now,
You are ravaging the soil of your preservers.

ATHENIANS

By Zeus, they do great wrong, Lysistrata.

SPARTANS

Great wrong, indeed. O! What a luscious wench!

LYSISTRATA

And now I turn to the Athenians.
Have you forgotten too how once the Spartans
In days when you wore slavish tunics, came
And with their spears broke a Thessalian host
And all the partisans of Hippias?
They alone stood by your shoulder on that day.
They freed you, so that for the slave's short skirt
You should wear the trailing cloak of liberty.

SPARTANS

I've never seen a nobler woman anywhere.

ATHENIANS

Nor I one with such prettily jointing hips.

LYSISTRATA

Now, brethren twined with mutual benefactions,
Can you still war, can you suffer such disgrace?
Why not be friends? What is there to prevent you?

SPARTANS

We're agreed, gin that we get this tempting Mole.

LYSISTRATA

Which one?

SPARTANS

That ane we've wanted to get into,
O for sae lang.... Pylos, of course.

ATHENIANS

By Poseidon,
Never!

LYSISTRATA

Give it up.

ATHENIANS

Then what will we do?
We need that ticklish place united to us--

LYSISTRATA

Ask for some other lurking-hole in return.

ATHENIANS

Then, ah, we'll choose this snug thing here, Echinus,
Shall we call the nestling spot? And this backside haven,
These desirable twin promontories, the Maliac,
And then of course these Megarean Legs.

SPARTANS

Not that, O surely not that, never that.

LYSISTRATA

Agree! Now what are two legs more or less?

ATHENIANS

I want to strip at once and plough my land.

SPARTANS

And mine I want to fertilize at once.

LYSISTRATA

And so you can, when Peace is once declared.
If you mean it, get your allies' heads together
And come to some decision.

ATHENIANS

What allies?
There's no distinction in our politics:
We've risen as one man to this conclusion;
Every ally is jumping-mad to drive it home.

SPARTANS

And ours the same, for sure.

ATHENIANS

The Carystians first!
I'll bet on that.

LYSISTRATA

I agree with all of you.
Now off, and cleanse yourselves for the Acropolis,
For we invite you all in to a supper
From our commissariat baskets. There at table
You will pledge good behaviour and uprightness;
Then each man's wife is his to hustle home.

ATHENIANS

Come, as quickly as possible.

SPARTANS

As quick as ye like.
Lead on.

ATHENIANS

O Zeus, quick, quick, lead quickly on.
They hurry off.

CHORUS.

Broidered stuffs on high I'm heaping,
Fashionable cloaks and sweeping
Trains, not even gold gawds keeping.
Take them all, I pray you, take them all (I do not care)

And deck your children--your daughter, if the Basket she's to bear.
Come, everyone of you, come in and take
Of this rich hoard a share.
Nought's tied so skilfully
But you its seal can break
And plunder all you spy inside.
I've laid out all that I can spare,
And therefore you will see
Nothing unless than I you're sharper-eyed.
If lacking corn a man should be
While his slaves clamour hungrily
And his excessive progeny,
Then I've a handfull of grain at home which is always to be had,
And to which in fact a more-than-life-size loaf I'd gladly add.
Then let the poor bring with them bag or sack
And take this store of food.
Manes, my man, I'll tell
To help them all to pack
Their wallets full. But O take care.
I had forgotten; don't intrude,
Or terrified you'll yell.
My dog is hungry too, and bites--beware!

3.18.1.5: Section 5 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.18.1.6: Section 6

Some _LOUNGERS_ from the Market with torches approach the Banqueting hall. The _PORTER_ bars their entrance.

1ST MARKET-LOUNGER

Open the door.

PORTER

Here move along.

1ST MARKET-LOUNGER

What's this?
You're sitting down. Shall I singe you with my torch?
That's vulgar! O I couldn't do it ... yet
If it would gratify the audience,
I'll mortify myself.

2ND MARKET-LOUNGER

And I will too.
We'll both be crude and vulgar, yes we will.

PORTER

Be off at once now or you'll be wailing
Dirges for your hair. Get off at once,
And see you don't disturb the Spartan envoys
Just coming out from the splendid feast they've had.

The banqueters begin to come out.

1ST ATHENIAN

I've never known such a pleasant banquet before,
And what delightful fellows the Spartans are.
When we are warm with wine, how wise we grow.

2ND ATHENIAN

That's only fair, since sober we're such fools:
This is the advice I'd give the Athenians--
See our ambassadors are always drunk.
For when we visit Sparta sober, then
We're on the alert for trickery all the while
So that we miss half of the things they say,
And misinterpret things that were never said,
And then report the muddle back to Athens.
But now we're charmed with each other. They might cap
With the Telamon-catch instead of the Cleitagora,
And we'd applaud and praise them just the same;
We're not too scrupulous in weighing words.

PORTER

Why, here the rascals come again to plague me.
Won't you move on, you sorry loafers there!

MARKET-LOUNGER

Yes, by Zeus, they're already coming out.

SPARTANS

Now hinnie dearest, please tak' up your pipe
That I may try a spring an' sing my best
In honour o' the Athenians an' oursels.

ATHENIANS

Aye, take your pipe. By all the gods, there's nothing
Could glad my heart more than to watch you dance.

SPARTANS.

Mnemosyne,
Let thy fire storm these younkers,
O tongue wi' stormy ecstasy
My Muse that knows
Our deeds and theirs, how when at sea
Their navies swooped upon
The Medes at Artemision--
Gods for their courage, did they strike
Wrenching a triumph frae their foes;
While at Thermopylae
Leonidas' army stood: wild-boars they were like
Wild-boars that wi' fierce threat
Their terrible tusks whet;
The sweat ran streaming down each twisted face,
Faen blossoming i' strange petals o' death
Panted frae mortal breath,
The sweat drenched a' their bodies i' that place,
For the hurly-burly o' Persians glittered more
Than the sands on the shore.

Come, Hunting Girl, an' hear my prayer--
You whose arrows whizz in woodlands, come an' bless
This Peace we swear.
Let us be fenced wi' age long amity,
O let this bond stick ever firm through thee
In friendly happiness.
Henceforth no guilefu' perjury be seen!
O hither, hither O
Thou wildwood queen.

LYSISTRATA

Earth is delighted now, peace is the voice of earth.
Spartans, sort out your wives: Athenians, yours.
Let each catch hands with his wife and dance his joy,
Dance out his thanks, be grateful in music,
And promise reformation with his heels.

ATHENIANS.

O Dancers, forward. Lead out the Graces,
Call Artemis out;

Then her brother, the Dancer of Skies,
That gracious Apollo.
Invoke with a shout
Dionysus out of whose eyes
Breaks fire on the maenads that follow;
And Zeus with his flares of quick lightning, and call,
Happy Hera, Queen of all,
And all the Daimons summon hither to be
Witnesses of our revelry
And of the noble Peace we have made,
Aphrodite our aid.
Io Paieon, Io, cry--
For victory, leap!
Attained by me, leap!
Euoi Euoi Euai Euai.

SPARTANS

Piper, gie us the music for a new sang.

SPARTANS.

Leaving again lovely lofty Taygetus
Hither O Spartan Muse, hither to greet us,
And wi' our choric voice to raise
To Amyclean Apollo praise,
And Tyndareus' gallant sons whose days
Alang Eurotas' banks merrily pass,
An' Athene o' the House o' Brass.

Now the dance begin;
Dance, making swirl your fringe o' woolly skin,
While we join voices
To hymn dear Sparta that rejoices
I' a beautifu' sang,
An' loves to see
Dancers tangled beautifully;
For the girls i' tumbled ranks
Alang Eurotas' banks
Like wanton fillies thrang,
Frolicking there
An' like Bacchantes shaking the wild air
To comb a giddy laughter through the hair,
Bacchantes that clench thyrsi as they sweep
To the ecstatic leap.

An' Helen, Child o' Leda, come
Thou holy, nimble, gracefu' Queen,
Lead thou the dance, gather thy joyous tresses up i' bands
An' play like a fawn. To madden them, clap thy hands,
And sing praise to the warrior goddess templed i' our lands,
Her o' the House o' Brass.

3.18.1.6: Section 6 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Homer, The Odyssey and Virgil, The Aeneid

4.1: Introduction

4.2: The Odyssey

4.3: The Aeneid

Thumbnail: Ancient mosaic of the Roman villa of La Olmeda in Pedrosa de la Vega (Palencia, Castile and León, Spain), depicting Odysseus (Ulises), late 4th-5th centuries AD. This is a close-up detail of a larger scene from the Iliad depicting Odysseus discovering Achilles as he is cross-dressed and fawned over by a group of adoring princesses at Skyros. Image used with permission (CC BY-SA 3.0; Valdavia).

This page titled 4: Homer, The Odyssey and Virgil, The Aeneid is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Theodore L. Steinberg (OpenSUNY) .

4.1: Introduction

This chapter is intended for readers who really liked *The Iliad* and want to try either—or both—of the other great narrative poems of antiquity, Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's Aeneid. Neither of these poems is quite as difficult as *The Iliad*, and both of them are fun to read. Of course, since almost everyone likes *The Odyssey*, even those who are not wild about *The Iliad* should give it a try

This page titled 4.1: Introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Theodore L. Steinberg (OpenSUNY) .

4.2: The Odyssey

For many people, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* seem to go together. After all, they are both by Homer and *The Odyssey* seems to be a continuation of *The Iliad*. Of course, the reality is not quite so simple. First, since we are not sure that a person named Homer either wrote the poems or even actually existed, it is dangerous for us to assume that the same person was responsible for both poems, and given the history of oral composition that I described briefly in the last chapter, it is dangerous for us to assume that any single person wrote either of them. Furthermore, *The Odyssey* is a continuation of *The Iliad* in only the loosest sense. People tend to remember Odysseus' spectacular adventures, but those adventures form only a small part of the poem. Those adventures are exciting, but the heart of *The Odyssey* is elsewhere. Actually there were a number of other poems built around the Troy story, but except for brief fragments, those poems have disappeared.

The Iliad opens by announcing as its subject the wrath of Achilleus and the destruction that resulted from that wrath. Achilleus' wrath, with all its implications, begins and prolongs the action of that poem, a poem full of wrathful characters who feel compelled to show how heroic they can be in the most traditional sense of heroism. *The Odyssey* is quite different, as even the opening lines show, for the narrator announces as his subject not wrath or any other quality but a man, "the man of many ways" (again using Richmond Lattimore's translation). What we see immediately is not the rigidity of Achilleus and his peers but the adaptability of Odysseus, the man of many ways." Even more important, we are introduced to Odysseus' intelligence. He may have had fantastic adventures, but what the narrator emphasizes is how much Odysseus learned from them. As we shall see, physical prowess is important in this poem, but it is far less important than mental ability. In addition, while *The Iliad* focuses on wrath, destruction, and death, *The Odyssey* focuses on a man, on his wife, on their son, and on life. *The Iliad* is an epic because it focuses on a pivotal moment in the history of Troy, the moment leading up to its destruction. *The Odyssey* is a romance because it focuses on individuals and on fantastic adventures.

The Odyssey then focuses on domesticity. Odysseus' entire purpose in the poem is simply to get home to his wife and son, as he explains to the Phaiakians in Book XIII. He is just a man who wants to get home. He does not talk about how he is the best warrior, how he is superior to others. He does not boast, but his goal turns out to be harder to achieve than we might expect. Achieving it requires Odysseus to learn about himself, about the many roles he (like any other human being) must play in life, and about his wife and child.

In fact, this poem requires that wife, Penelope, and that child, Telemachos, to learn about themselves as well. In this sense, *The Odyssey* tells three separate stories, not one highly unified story as we see in *The Iliad.* If we look only at Odysseus, we miss far too much of the poem. Perhaps that is why we never even see Odysseus until Book V, and in our first view of him we see him sitting on Kalypso's island and weeping over his separation from his loved ones. Yes, our first view of the great hero shows him crying because he cannot get home. The first four books of the poem, and large parts of later books, are devoted to Penelope and Telemachos and their fates.

We must always remember that if Odysseus' plight—he has been away from home for twenty years, ten at the Trojan War and ten in his wanderings—has been hard on him, it has also been a trial for his family in Ithaka. His wife Penelope, one of the most remarkable women in all of literature, has awaited his homecoming for two decades, during the latter of which she has had to fend off the attentions of the one hundred eight suitors who have moved into her house and consumed the treasures that Odysseus left behind. Through a combination of wiles and intelligence (and often those two are the same thing), she has managed to preserve her independence, though as *The Odyssey* progresses, it is clear that unless Odysseus returns soon, she is about to lose that independence.

That Penelope's independence should even be a question, however, is an indication of how remarkable this poem is, for women in ancient Greece had very little independence, and *The Odyssey* is full of independent women: Athene, Kalypso, Circe, the Sirens, Nausikaa, Helen, and Penelope come immediately to mind, though all but the last three are divine or supernatural. Nonetheless, the emphasis on women is obvious, and these women make important points not only about themselves but about men as well. Circe, for instance, is famous for her ability to change men into pigs, but (dare I say it?), rather than actually transforming them, she only seems to be allowing them to show their real natures. We have ample proof in other episodes that Odysseus' companions behave like pigs, which means that Circe is just letting them be themselves.

Kalypso, on the other hand, is really taken with Odysseus and offers him immortality if he will stay on her island with her. She presents a major test for Odysseus, who indicates often in this poem that he is deeply concerned with the problems of human mortality; but Odysseus passes this test without a hint of hesitation. He wants only to be home with Penelope. He would rather be home with his by now middle aged wife than to live forever on a tropical island with a beautiful goddess, which is surely a sign of how much he loves that wife.

Athene, too, is a central figure in this poem. This goddess of wisdom is Odysseus' protector and ally, and time after time we see that Odysseus would rather rely on the intelligence that she represents than on the muscle that he also has in abundance. In fact, it would not be going too far to say that the poem is largely about the uses of intelligence, which invariably triumphs over the more common male attribute of prowess in fighting. Time after time we see the superiority of wisdom over might. Might is a last resort, a lamentable last resort. Even Menelaos in Book IV expresses his regret to Telemachos over the Trojan War and its consequences. Menelaos and Helen, whose passions stood at the center of the war, have become images of domesticity, preparing in Book IV for the wedding of their daughter to the son of Achilleus, though we may sense some troubles beneath the surface. That modest domesticity, coupled with wisdom, is at the center of *The Odyssey* and brings us back to Penelope, who, despite her husband's mysterious disappearance, remains faithful to him and outwits the suitors. Furthermore, even when Odysseus reveals himself near the poem's end, Penelope has one more test for him. He cannot simply announce his return; he must prove himself to the woman who is so clearly his equal in intelligence. As we will see, Odysseus learns much about himself, largely through his encounters with women on his journey, but Penelope has also learned a great deal about herself during his absence.

The other character whose education about self is so important in this poem is Odysseus and Penelope's son Telemachos. As the poem opens, Telemachos is about twenty years old. He has grown up in the shadow of a famous father whom he has never known, has watched as his mother has been besieged by the suitors, and has been helpless to prevent them from devouring his inheritance. In *The Odyssey* we watch him turn from a boy into a man, as he begins to assert himself and then allies himself with his returned father. The importance of Telemachos' story to the poem as a whole can be seen in the way that the poem's first four books are devoted to him, as well as in the attention that is given to Odysseus himself not only as Telemachos' father but as his parents' son. Family relationships are central to this poem.

> Early in the poem, Telemachos announces one of the poem's major themes:
>
> My mother says indeed I am his [Odysseus']. I for my part
>
> do not know. Nobody really knows his own father.
>
> (I.215-16)

James Joyce, in Ulysses, his rewriting of *the Odysseus* story, refers to this theme as the "mystery of paternity," but that mystery refers to more than the simple physical relationship between a child and the child's alleged father. In Telemachos' case, it refers to his need to define himself without the aid of his absent father, to discover what it means to be not Telemachos, the son of Odysseus, but just Telemachos. This process, which we might think of as the process of becoming an adult, is not easy for the individual involved nor for those around the person. In order to define himself, Telemachos must go on his own journey, visiting Nestor and Menelaos, defying the suitors, and even establishing his power in relation to his mother. In all of these endeavors he is aided by his father's guardian, Athene, goddess of wisdom, which means that he, too, is wise. Athene convinces him that his father will return, but she convinces him also that he cannot simply wait for that return. He must assert himself and take action on his own. As a result of this maturation, when Odysseus does return, Telemachos can relate to him not just as a son but as an independent person, which is an essential step in growing up.

This development in no way diminishes Telemachos' attachment to his father. If anything, it strengthens that attachment, because Telemachos is driven not only by what is expected of him as a son but by his own choice. One of the most touching moments in the poem—and there are many such moments, as Odysseus reveals himself to friends and family members—comes when Odysseus reveals himself to Telemachos. Thanks to Athene, Odysseus' appearance has been altered, so that when he meets Telemachos at the home of the swineherd Eumaios, the son does not recognize the father (whom he would not recognize anyhow), but Odysseus has a chance to see the fine person that his son has become. Finally, when the two of them are alone, Athene restores Odysseus' appearance and he announces his identity, which Telemachos promptly doubts, until Odysseus says, "No other Odysseus than I will ever come back to you" (XVI.203-04) and the two of them embrace, father and son having proven themselves to each other and having accepted each other on their own terms as individuals. The moment is magical and almost as affecting as the moment when

Odysseus reveals himself to Penelope and she tricks him into proving his identity, after which they “gladly went together to bed, and their old ritual” (XXIII.296).

Of course, growing up is never easy, and Telemachos has much to learn. Early in the poem, as he begins to assert himself, he criticizes his mother and tells her, basically, to go back to her room and leave the business of the household to him (I.356-60). He is not exactly delicate with his mother, and modern readers might well find the way he talks to his mother offensive, so we must be aware of the sexism inherent in the culture we are observing. In order to assert himself in front of the suitors, Telemachos, who is reaching male adulthood, must establish himself as independent of and more powerful than his mother. In terms of his society, he is correct to say that the household power is his, which Penelope acknowledges by doing what he says, but which she also laments as she weeps for her missing husband. In another sense, she is proud that Telemachos has asserted himself, though she is sad at the implications of his self-assertion for herself and for what it says about expectations for Odysseus’ return, because it means that another generation has matured and is about to take over.

Elsewhere in the poem, however, Telemachos learns to be more diplomatic in his self-assertion, and despite Telemachos’ harsh words to her, Penelope, as we have seen, is credited with insight and intelligence. The dynamics of this family are working themselves out in difficult circumstances, and it is vital, as we consider Odysseus, to keep in mind the stories of his wife and of his son.

Perhaps we should approach Odysseus first as a son himself, a role that he plays on two particular occasions in the poem. At the very end of the poem, after Odysseus has routed the suitors and been reunited with Penelope, he goes to tell Laertes, his aged father, of his return, but, being Odysseus, he cannot simply approach the old man and say, “Hi, Dad. I’m back.” Although he is greatly affected at seeing how sad and old his father has become over the past twenty years, Odysseus concocts one of his many stories, describing himself as someone who had seen Odysseus only five years before and still hopes for his return. As a result of this speech, his father pours dust over his own head, a sign of mourning. At this point even Odysseus cannot continue the masquerade and he reveals himself, but we are left wondering why Odysseus would behave in such a way. Why, seeing his father after twenty years, does he play a role, making up a new identity for himself? The answer is not that he is a cruel man who enjoys tormenting people. In fact, as we see throughout the poem, Odysseus enjoys inventing identities for himself. He tells stories to Eumaios, to Telemachos, to Penelope, to the Cyclopes—to almost everyone he meets. Some of these stories are told for strategic purposes, because at times Odysseus must not identify himself, but some of them seem to indicate Odysseus’ need constantly to recreate himself, to create an identity for himself, as though he is not entirely secure in who he is.

One of my favorite instances occurs just after Odysseus discovers from a stranger (who is Athene in disguise) that he has awakened in Ithaka, and he identifies himself by telling one of his long fictional stories, full of realistic details and identifiable names, to which Athene basically responds, “Oh come off it. I know who you are” (XIII.291- 95). Clearly Athene is fond of Odysseus, who is, after all, her protégé, and she recognizes much of herself in him. In other words, she knows that his deviousness and his deceptive tales, which are signs of his intelligence because he employs them so intelligently, are part of his nature. At the same time, she is telling him that though he may be great at inventing identities, he is no match for her. Simultaneously, then, he is being both praised and put in his place. He can adopt any identity that he likes, says Athene, but she will always know who he is.

We might legitimately wonder, however, whether he always really knows who he is, just as we may wonder whether we always really know who we are or whether, like Odysseus, we constantly go through a process of reinventing ourselves.

That question is raised not only by the many stories Odysseus tells and the many disguises he wears (some of them the work of Athene) but by the well-known adventures that he describes to the Phaiakians. Perhaps his most famous adventure, his encounter with the Cyclopes, illustrates this point best. The Cyclopes are a savage group who have developed no societal structure. Furthermore, their possession of a single eye in the middle of their foreheads indicates a lack of depth perception, a deficiency that is both physical and intellectual. In order to deal with such barbaric creatures, Odysseus must deny not only who he is but what he is, so that when Polyphemos asks his name, he answers, “Nobody” (in Greek, Outis). This may seem to us like a fairly primitive trick, and we may laugh at Polyphemos for falling for it, but it has a deeper meaning for *The Odyssey*. By denying his identity, by saying that he is “Nobody,” he succeeds in saving most of his men, as well as himself. And when he does assert his true self by yelling out his name as they depart the Cyclopes’ island, he dooms his men and condemns himself to more years away from home. The point that is made in this episode, and throughout much of the poem, is that identity, selfhood, can be dangerous. It must be understood and controlled. Consequently, Odysseus must even visit the Underworld, where he learns of his future—that his death will come from the sea—and where he meets his mother, who has died from grief during his absence, because he was such a good

son and because she loved him so much. His love for his mother, his identity as a good son, has killed her. In short, everything we do, the good and the bad, has unforeseen consequences. The poet always comments on the ironies of human existence.

It should be obvious now that every part of the poem—every character, every episode—contributes to the overall effect of the poem. Nothing is extraneous and nothing is out of place, though we as readers must often exercise our own intelligence to see and understand the connections. In this sense, this three thousand-year-old poem is interactive, as literature tends to be. It shows us the stories of Penelope, Telemachos, and Odysseus, but we as modern readers must put those stories together, see where they lead us.

Usually a writer will help us in this task. A writer may focus on particular words or images to stress a point, or a writer may repeat particular kinds of scenes with significant variations, as we saw in *The Iliad.* In *The Odyssey,* the poet helps us by having numerous characters refer to yet another story, one that seems at first to have nothing to do with Odysseus, the story of Agamemnon's homecoming. This story would have been known to the earliest audience of *The Odyssey,* but we may need to be reminded of it.

After the Achaians' victory at Troy, most of the leading warriors had trouble with their homecomings. Many, in fact, died before they could return home, and in the course of *The Odyssey* we hear about the fates of Nestor, Aias, Menelaos, and others. Most prominent, however, is the story of Agamemnon, who reached home relatively easily, only to be killed almost immediately by his wife Klytaimestra and her lover Aigisthos, the latter of whom was killed several years later by Agamemnon's son Orestes. (Some three centuries after *The Odyssey* was completed, the Greek playwright Aeschylus wrote a trilogy of play, *The Oresteaid*, based on this story. The focus of Aeschylus' works, as well as numerous elements of the plot, is quite different from what we see in *The Odyssey,* though like all the Greek tragedies, they are well worth reading.) The story of Agamemnon is referred to prominently by Athene in Book I, by Nestor in Book III, by Menelaos in Book IV, by the occupants of the Underworld (including Agamemnon himself) in Book XI, and by Odysseus in Book XIII). Why? Clearly this story stands in sharp contrast to most of *The Odyssey.* Agamemnon, as we saw in *The Iliad* is a man of force and brutality, but his physical power counts for little when he returns home. His return itself is without obstacles, and he learns nothing from his experiences, unlike Odysseus, whose return is difficult but provides him a vital education. Klytaimestra has hardly been faithful during Agamemnon's absence and she plays an active role in his death, whereas Penelope remains faithful throughout Odysseus' doubly long absence. (Of course, unlike Odysseus, Agamemnon came home with a captured woman, Kassandra, whom Klytaimestra also killed. Agamemnon really is not terribly bright.) And Telemachos joins his father in combatting their enemies, while Orestes was forced to seek vengeance on his own. The characters in Odysseus' household all learn to subordinate their selfish desires to the greater good of the family, whereas in Agamemnon's household each character operates independently, rather like the Cyclopes, looking out only for him or herself. In fact, the two stories once again return us to the question of identity by focusing our attention on how these characters behave and why they do so. It is revealing that the ghost of Agamemnon tells Odysseus what he learned from his bloody homecoming, that women are untrustworthy. Still the same old introspective Agamemnon that we saw in *The Iliad*. He contrasts sharply with Odysseus, who learns so much from his adventures, including that he absolutely must trust women.

There is one other aspect of *The Odyssey* that should be covered in this brief introduction, the role of the bards. There are a number of bards who appear in the poem, the most important of whom are Demodokos, the bard of the Phaiakians, and Phemios, the bard in Odysseus' house. There are a number of reasons that a reader should pay close attention to these bards. One is that they give us an idea of how a Homeric poet might have operated. After meals, the bards are brought in to recite in poetic form the exploits of some hero, providing what we would call after-dinner entertainment. It is especially interesting that Demodokos is blind, since Homer (if such a person existed) was reputed to be blind. In fact, bards in oral cultures tend not to be blind, but literate cultures assume that only blind people would be able to memorize so much poetry. Of course, as I explained in the chapter on *The Iliad,* we are not really talking about memorization but oral composition. Another thing that is important about the bards concerns Odysseus directly. While he is with the hospitable Phaiakians, in disguise, Demodokos tells a story about Odysseus. That is, Odysseus has become a hero, the subject of heroic poetry, in his own lifetime. Odysseus, who has been cut off from society for so many years, is shocked to realize that he has become the stuff of legend. So moved is he that he weeps (again). What Homer has done here is to create a fascinating mirror effect, a meta-narrative: within a poem about Odysseus, we see the creation of a poem about Odysseus. Odysseus becomes the audience to his own story, just as we become the audience to this story, which, as it relates to human identity, to the vicissitudes of human existence, is also our story.

Finally, we see the honor that is paid to the bards. Poets love to write about the importance of poetry, naturally, and the poet might well be exaggerating the role of the bards, but it is clear that Demodokos is a respected member of the court who receives all sorts of special considerations. And Phemios, who is accused of collusion with the suitors back in Ithaka, is given the benefit of the

doubt and spared. Perhaps the poet is simply glorifying poets, but more likely what we see is how important poets were to the society that produced these poems.

I have tried to make this discussion of *The Odyssey* shorter and less detailed than the discussion of *The Iliad*, partly because reading *The Iliad* is itself a preparation for reading *The Odyssey* and partly because *The Odyssey* presents fewer problems for modern readers, who tend to be more familiar with romance than with epic. There are fewer battle scenes, Odysseus' adventures are already well-known, and the poem is set on a smaller scale. It still has cosmic overtones, but not to the same extent as *The Iliad*. However foreign *The Odyssey* might be to us, its domestic concerns, as well as Odysseus' adventures, still resonate. He just wants to get home, to be with his wife and son and the loyal members of his household. He, like Achilleus, is aware of the dark side of human life, and he knows after his visit to the Underworld that he is fated to go wandering yet again, but we all know that human happiness is fleeting. What *The Odyssey* confirms for us is that human happiness is a possibility that can be found in the mundane.

Incidentally, for readers who really like The Odyssey, there are two modern works based on it that may be of interest. One is Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Odyssey*: A Modern Sequel, and the other, loosely related to *The Odyssey*, is Derek Walcott's beautiful and effective Omeros.

This page titled 4.2: The Odyssey is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Theodore L. Steinberg (OpenSUNY) .

4.3: The Aeneid

I am including a few pages here on Virgil's *Aeneid* because I know that readers who have finished *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* will want to read this third great poem of adventure from antiquity. That last sentence can be a bit misleading, however. It is easy for us to think of these three poems dating from antiquity as being almost contemporaneous, but we must remember that *the Aeneid* was written, that is, it was composed with pen and ink, between seven and eight hundred years after the other two were finally written down. Eight hundred years is a relatively long time. Imagine if someone today wrote a series of laws to accompany the Magna Carta, which was written in 1215. So many things about our world have changed that it would seem silly to do so. Between about 800 BCE and Virgil's death in 19 BCE, many things had also changed. Greece was no longer a major power (though it was still a major influence), but Rome was in the process of becoming an empire. Greek ideals had been transformed into Roman ideals. Oral culture had largely been replaced by written culture in many areas. Ideas about heroism had changed. Even ideas about Troy had changed, since the Romans considered themselves descendants of Trojan warriors and could hardly be expected to feel sympathy for the Greeks, whom they were still in the process of displacing. So *The Aeneid* is a very different poem from its two most famous predecessors, even though in so many ways it is based on those earlier poems.

Before we get to *The Aeneid* itself, a bit of history is in order. In the third century BCE, a struggle began for control of the Mediterranean. The city that won this struggle would have the opportunity to develop great wealth and power. The contestants were Rome, a city that had developed prominence and power in Italy, and Carthage, a city in that part of North Africa that is now Tunisia. In the three Punic Wars (which took place over a span of one hundred twenty years) Rome soundly defeated Carthage and was launched on its way toward become the empire that we know.

But the road toward empire was not smooth, and the history of Rome in the first century BCE is the history of external conquests and internal power struggles. After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, civil war broke out, with Marc Antony and Caesar's nephew Octavius on one side and the assassins, led by Brutus, on the other. After Brutus was defeated, there was further war between Antony and Octavian, until finally Octavian was victorious and established himself as Augustus, the sole ruler over what had become a vast empire. Under Augustus, relative peace broke out, order was restored to everyday life, and the arts flourished. Among the poets who wrote during the reign of Augustus were Horace, Ovid (who was eventually exiled from Rome for having somehow offended the emperor), and, perhaps the greatest of all, Virgil.

Virgil's earliest poems are The Eclogues, a series of poems that describe the lives, conversations, and poetry of a group of ostensible shepherds. I hope I am not insulting shepherds when I say that real shepherds have never behaved the way Virgil's shepherds do (though Virgil helped to set the example that pastoral poetry would follow even into our own time). These shepherds are eloquent, philosophical, and deeply concerned with issues that were vital to the developing empire. Actually, Virgil was using isolated country settings to confront important issues that concerned him throughout his life. The same is true, though even less directly, about his next work, The Georgics. But his greatest achievement was *The Aeneid*, on which he was still working when he died. In fact, on his deathbed he is reputed to have asked that the manuscript be destroyed, though no one is quite sure why. One theory is that the poem was not finished—we can tell that it is unfinished because there are a number of lines that are metrically incorrect and it is likely that Virgil would have corrected them had he lived. Some readers also think that the poem stops without a conclusion, that it seems to end in the middle of an episode. Supposedly Virgil would have supplied a more appropriate conclusion had he lived. As I will show, I agree with those who think that the poem ends exactly as it is supposed to end. Yet another possibility is that Virgil realized that the poem is not the unalloyed praise of the new empire that Augustus and other Romans expected. Certainly the poem does praise Rome and its emperor, but it also contains pointed warnings about what the empire could become. Virgil could see clearly enough that in the greatness of Rome lay the seeds of its destruction, and he tried to warn his contemporaries so that they could emphasize the good and guard against the flaws that were inherent in Rome. Perhaps on his deathbed he worried about how that approach would be viewed. We simply do not know what he was thinking. We can only be thankful that his wishes were not carried out and the poem survived.

Until relatively recently, when Latin ceased to be a required language for virtually anyone who claimed to be educated, *The Aeneid* was one of the most extensively read and influential poems in history. Even if students did not love it, they read it. The Latin is relatively easy and the story is good. In the Middle Ages, the poem was given Christian readings (though Virgil had died in 19 BCE). At times it was even a custom that when a person had a problem or an important decision to make, he (it was usually a he) would open *The Aeneid* at random and point to a line at random and then interpret that line as an answer to the problem. In the

early fourteenth century, Dante used Virgil as his guide through Hell and most of Purgatory in *The Divine Comedy.* Virgil continued to influence authors of epics (or mock epics or near epics) well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Henry Fielding's novel *Amelia* is heavily indebted to *The Aeneid*, as are scenes from numerous other works. There are also operas based on the poem, like Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Berlioz' *Les Troyens.*

Why has this poem exercised such power for so long? As I already mentioned, it tells a good story, full of romance, adventure, and memorable scenes and characters. It also raises a number of questions that have continued to engage people's minds over the two thousand years since it was written. Virgil may have used *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, but he gave them his own stamp. Even in the poem's first words, Virgil announces his debt to Homer: "Arma virumque cano," I sing of arms and of a man (in Allen Mandelbaum's translation). The first six of the poem's twelve books are about Aeneas and his adventures as he sets out from Troy and ultimately arrives in Italy. In this section of the poem he is like Odysseus, even to the extent of repeating several of Odysseus' adventures. In this section as well Virgil focuses on Aeneas as "a man," referring back to the opening line of *The Odyssey.* In the second half of the poem, in which we see Aeneas' struggle to establish himself in Italy, we focus more on the "arms," and this section of the poem recalls *The Iliad.* Thus Virgil has combined these two great poems to create his own masterpiece, but he has done so in order to explore in his own terms what it means to be a Roman, what it means to be Aeneas, what it means to be a human being.

The Aeneid, like *The Odyssey*, begins in the middle of the action, tells a bit of the story, and then goes back to the beginning of the story and continues to the end. After a brief introduction, we see Aeneas and his men caught in a storm at sea and shipwrecked at Carthage, where Aeneas meets Dido, tells her his story, falls in love with her, and then leaves (a point to which we will return). He visits the Underworld and then proceeds to Italy, where he becomes involved in a war to establish his right to stay there. That is the story. We have now to see what Virgil did with it.

From the very beginning, the narrator tells us that Aeneas is a remarkably good man who is being tormented by Juno. Throughout the poem, Juno, queen of the gods and goddess of marriage, stands for the irrational, the illogical, those aspects of the world that disrupt life without seeming to make any kind of sense. Her husband Jove (or Jupiter) is her opposite, but, even though he is all-powerful, he often lets her have her own way. The other important deity in the poem is Venus, goddess of love, mother of Aeneas, and of special importance to Rome. (Roma, the Latin name of Rome, spelled backwards is Amor, the Latin for love!) Unfortunately for Aeneas, Venus and Juno are deadly enemies, to the extent that goddesses can be deadly enemies. At any rate, they do not like each other. This enmity between the goddess of marriage and the goddess of love does tell us something about how the ancients regarded love and marriage: as we see in the poem, love and marriage are in no way connected.

Exactly why does Juno hate Aeneas? As we learn at the beginning of the poem, Juno feels a special affection for Carthage, and she knows that Aeneas is destined to establish Rome, which will overcome and displace Carthage. From a Roman point of view, her irrationality appears in two ways here: she irrationally favors Carthage over Rome and she irrationally believes that she can counter fate. This mixture of motives is itself proof that Juno's hatred is basically irrational, but of course Aeneas' innocence does nothing to ease his suffering, of which there is plenty. Thus *The Aeneid*, though it is about the triumph of Aeneas and of Rome, is ultimately a very sad work. As he moves toward his military triumph, Aeneas is forced to abandon everything that is important to him—love, family, friends, repose. He becomes increasingly isolated and tied to his sense of duty, and he becomes less rounded, more one-dimensional.

Throughout the poem, Aeneas is referred to as "pius Aeneas." The Latin "pius" means more than we mean when we say "pious." It does mean godfearing, but it also means something like religiously and morally upstanding. As the story progresses, Aeneas realizes that he has duties to carry out and those duties are more important than his own happiness. Those duties are presented most poignantly in two separate episodes. The first occurs in Aeneas' description of the fall of Troy. Having been surprised by the ruse of the Trojan horse, the Trojans are being routed by the Greek forces. In the chaos created by the fire, fighting, and panic, Aeneas, who knows that the battle has been lost, becomes separated from his wife Creusa. When he tries to find her, he finds only her ghost, who briefly predicts his future and disappears. And when Aeneas finally does escape from Troy, he does so leading his young son by the hand and carrying his aged father on his back. In this sequence, we see first the beginning of the process by which Aeneas is gradually cut off from Troy and from family affection. There is little from his past in Troy that he can take with him into this future. This point is emphasized by the image of him with his father and his son. He bears his father, symbol of the past, on his back, and leads his son, symbol of the future, by the hand. In a sense, he offers simply a connection between the past, Troy, and the future, Rome, and in that role he must continually become depersonalized, especially after the death of his father, when he himself

becomes the symbol of both the past and the present. Furthermore, his love for his wife, whom he seeks frantically in the falling city, shows him to be a passionate man who cares deeply for those around him, and his sorrow at losing her is quite moving.

We can see this point being carried further in the most famous episode of the poem, the story of Dido and Aeneas in Book IV. At first glance, Dido and Aeneas would seem to be a nearly perfect couple. Both are powerful leaders, both have been exiled from their native lands, both have been widowed. Moreover, they like each other. Unfortunately, there are a number of obstacles in their way, primarily fate—Dido is fated to found Carthage and Aeneas to found Rome. Juno and Venus, patron goddesses of those cities, try to outmaneuver each other in defense of their cities, and Dido and Aeneas are their victims. These two tragic figures are allowed to fall in love because Juno hopes to keep Aeneas in Carthage, away from Rome, but the status of their love is highly ambiguous. When they go out hunting, they are trapped in a cave during a thunderstorm. There they consummate their love. Such love is the realm of Venus. The problem that will arise is whether this lovemaking constitutes an actual marriage, the realm of Juno. Dido thinks it does, but the narrator implies that she thinks so only in order to justify the lovemaking. Clearly Virgil has made this situation intentionally ambiguous: Dido and Aeneas are in love, but Dido considers them married and Aeneas does not. I can hear readers, at least some of them, muttering, “How typical!” but Aeneas is not simply ignoring his responsibility or commitment. He actually loves Dido and he sees in Carthage a chance to put his life back together. Consequently, when Jove sends Mercury to tell him that he must leave Carthage, that he has a duty to fulfill in founding Rome, he is reluctant to go, though he eventually does. But he leaves not on a whim, not because he lacks commitment to Dido. He leaves because the gods order him to. If Aeneas errs in this situation, he does so only in not telling Dido that he must leave until she confronts him, at which point he is honest with her, expressing his view that they are not married and telling her that he is leaving against his will.

Opinions about Aeneas’ behavior at this point have varied considerably over the centuries. Many readers have taken Dido’s part and been highly critical of Aeneas. (See Dido’s letter to Aeneas in Ovid’s Heroides for an example.) For these readers, Aeneas is the epitome of the unfaithful lover, the seducer who abandons his helpless lover. Other readers have accepted Aeneas’ explanation that he is powerless, since he must follow the orders of the gods. I side with the latter argument, not because Aeneas’ behavior is admirable but because he does it so clearly against his own wishes. Having lost his beloved wife, his city, his father, and many of his companions, Aeneas would like nothing better than to settle down with Dido, to live in peace. Of course, as a result of their love, work on building Carthage has stopped, so their love is not an unalloyed blessing for either side. Aeneas, however, must fulfill his destiny, regardless of how painful that destiny may be. His duty to Rome must take precedence over everything else in his life.

Virgil is here talking about what it means to be a Roman: it means responsibility rather than privilege, self-sacrifice rather than selfaggrandizement. Personal happiness cannot be as important as the welfare of the empire. Or can it? For Virgil is not merely declaring that Romans must sacrifice all for the empire. Perhaps he is also questioning whether that is the case. Not only must Aeneas abandon Dido, but he must also, when he arrives in Italy, marry Lavinia, who may, for all we know, be a delightful young woman but who is presented in the poem as virtually without a personality. Aeneas’ marriage will be based not on passion but on the needs of Rome.

This picture of what it means to be a Roman is ambivalent, as, I suspect, Virgil meant it to be. On the one hand it demonstrates the importance of the empire and the virtue of duty to the empire. Being responsible for an empire, being a Roman, requires a particular kind of selflessness. On the other hand, that duty to the empire hurts people: in this situation it hurts Dido, it hurts Aeneas, and in the course of the poem it hurts numerous other characters. What is the solution? Virgil offers no solution, since one purpose of literature is to raise questions at least as much as it is to offer answers. Clearly the empire is vitally important to Virgil. He sees it as a means of civilizing the world by bringing law and order. In Book VI, when Aeneas visits the Underworld, his father shows him a vision of Rome’s future. Aeneas sees Augustus, the emperor who will restore the golden age to Rome. A golden age—this is the promise of Rome. But are people willing, and should they be willing, to pay the price for that promise? After all, Aeneas sacrifices almost everything and in return receives only the prediction of Roman glory. As a character, as an individual human being, he gradually disappears from the poem. If that is what Rome demands, it is a heavy price, but not to pay it is to go against the gods. It is to dally with Dido while neither city is being built.

And what are Aeneas’ alternatives? He could, of course, die, as so many Trojans did, but death is hardly a solution. Or he could do what Helenus and Andromache do, in one of the saddest episodes of the poem. As Aeneas wanders around the Mediterranean looking for the land that has been promised him, he finds a city being ruled by Helenus, a son of Priam, and Andromache, the widow of Hektor. This city is a replica of Troy, with its tower, its gates, and its river. Troy may have been destroyed, but here it has

been recreated, although this re-creation differs significantly from its original in being much smaller and in having a little stream instead of a great river. At first Aeneas is happy to see this little Troy. Being there is like being home again. But it is not the same as being home: this Troy is a miniature. It mimes rather than replaces the real city. Helenus and Andromache are stuck in the past. So tied are they to Troy that they are willing to dwell in this poor reproduction of Troy. Aeneas knows that he cannot go home again, that Troy is gone forever, and that he must move not in the direction of the past but of the future, even if that future is uncertain and frightening. He carried his father on his back as a burden, but he led his son by the hand into the future.

So Aeneas has no other choice. He has his duty, which has been dictated to him by the gods and by fate, and he must fulfill that duty without hesitation or complaint. It is for this reason that as the poem progresses, Aeneas becomes so much less human. He represents the philosophy of Stoicism, or that aspect of it that called on human beings to carry out their duties in the face of adversities without showing human passions. Stoicism is in many ways an admirable doctrine, but, as the end of *The Aeneid* shows, it is not always a doctrine that human beings can follow. Whether they should try is another question altogether.

I should note that the second half of *The Aeneid*, the half that is more like *The Iliad*, is not as well known as the first half. The first half contains more separate adventures, and though Aeneas may lack Odysseus' panache as he experiences or recalls those adventures, the stories themselves are gripping and moving. In the second half of the poem, however, we have the fight for Italy and all the complications that accompany it. That aspect of the story is not so vital to modern readers, though the issues that Virgil confronts in the second half are vital and often relate to issues that were raised in the first six books. I will not summarize the plot except to say that many of Aeneas' troubles continue to be the result of Juno's enmity, which has become even stronger (if that is possible) since the death of Dido. One of Juno's main tools for trying to thwart Aeneas is Turnus, who was the king of the Rutulians, one of the peoples who lived in Italy, and who was originally supposed to marry Lavinia. Since Aeneas is destined to rule Italy and wed Lavinia, we might be able to understand why Turnus is more than a little upset at this arrival and opposes him as much as he can, but, though Turnus is clearly the enemy in the poem, he is not presented as a thoroughly villainous person. He is, if one word can be used to describe him, outdated. His notions of heroism are old-fashioned, right out of *The Iliad* perhaps. He is not prepared to meet the future, which is represented by the arrival of Aeneas, and he launches a suicidal war in a fruitless attempt to preserve the values of the past. Those values, Virgil implies, may once have been admirable, but the future belongs to Rome, with its potential for good (and with its potential for abusing its power as well).

This opposition is evident throughout the poem's last six books, but it is especially obvious in Book XII. In that book both Turnus and Aeneas, under the influence of war, become vicious killers. Turnus is compared to a bull preparing to fight, and Aeneas becomes associated with brutal slaughter and violence (just as Rome would be). Finally, as Aeneas and Turnus face each other in the poem's climactic battle, Jove and Juno settle the heavenly aspect of the conflict. Juno at long last recognizes that Aeneas must triumph, and she asks only that the Latin language and certain native customs be preserved. Jove grants her wishes—Rome will not be simply a re-established Troy but it will combine the finest qualities of the Trojans and the native Latins—and Juno withdraws her opposition. At this point, Turnus is doomed to lose, even though the final battle has become unnecessary. The only significant question remaining is what form his loss will take, and the answer to that question brings the poem to its conclusion in a cloud of uncertainty.

As the battle progresses, Aeneas brings Turnus to his knees with a cast of his spear. At this point, everyone knows that the battle is essentially over, and Turnus appeals to Aeneas for mercy, concluding his moving speech with a plea that Aeneas will abandon hatred. In the face of this plea, Aeneas hesitates. Why should he kill Turnus, who has admitted defeat? Aeneas has been victorious and it would make political sense to spare Turnus, to show that he can be as merciful in victory as he can be fierce in battle; but then, as he is on the verge of agreeing, he sees the belt that Turnus is wearing, the belt that Turnus took after his earlier victory over the young warrior Pallas, who was dear to Aeneas. Aeneas responds wrathfully, then stabs Turnus in the chest, and the poem ends with Turnus' soul hastening to the Underworld.

That's it. There is no more. No wonder that people think the poem is unfinished. What kind of a conclusion is that? In fact it is a very clever conclusion, for it ends the poem by posing some of the key problems that faced Rome in Virgil's time. Aeneas' response to Turnus is clearly not a Stoic response. Although it might seem reasonable for him to kill Turnus, he makes his decision not on the basis of reason but out of passion. Even "pius Aeneas," the great forefather and exemplar of Rome, cannot always act according to the dictates of Stoicism. What does that conclusion say about those lesser mortals who were Virgil's contemporaries? If even Aeneas is overcome by his ferocity and his passions, how well will the Romans of the empire behave with the most powerful army in the world? Will they be the masters of themselves and of their power or will they lose themselves and become the slaves of their

own might? I frame these points as questions because Virgil, by ending the poem as he does, raises the questions. We must account for Aeneas' behavior not simply because we have to know about Aeneas but because we have to know about what Aeneas represents, the ideals of Rome. If Aeneas fails, what are the prospects for Rome?

These questions have been inherent in the poem from the beginning. For instance, when Neptune calms the seas after the storm that opens Book I, Virgil compares him to a righteous man who can control the passions of a rebellious, rock-throwing mob. The very oddness of that comparison calls our attention to it, to the use of reason to overcome passion, and to the existence of rebellious mobs in Virgil's Rome. Throughout the poem Virgil draws our attention to such problems, and we know from the history of the Roman Empire that Virgil saw clearly into both the virtues and the potential failings of that empire. We should hardly be surprised that medieval readers thought of him as a prophet.

There is one more episode that I would like to comment on briefly, Aeneas' voyage to the Underworld in Book VI. At this point in the poem, Aeneas visits the Underworld so he can receive further instructions from his father, and Virgil is clearly imitating Odysseus' visit to the Underworld in *The Odyssey.* But Aeneas' visit is quite different from Odysseus'. Aside from the more highly developed picture of an Underworld that Virgil presents, there is another significant difference. Odysseus, on his visit, learns much about himself—about his role in his mother's death, about his ultimate fate, and about his way home to domestic bliss. Aeneas learns about the doctrine of reincarnation and is told about the future history of Rome. All that is important here is the future of Rome, and the only indication that Aeneas has any important individuality comes when he sees the ghosts of the Greek warriors, who flee before him, and when he sees the ghost of Dido, who rejects his attempts at explanation and also flees from him. Otherwise his individuality is entirely subordinated to the cause of Rome.

Another interesting aspect of Book VI is the way it encapsulates the whole poem. It unites the human and the superhuman, and it even includes one character, the Sibyl, who entered the Roman Catholic liturgy in the hymn called the "Dies Irae." Book VI, like the poem as a whole, focuses on Aeneas' duty and on his fate. It proclaims the future of Rome in glorious terms, and it tempers that glory by culminating in a description of the sadness of human life. This mixture of glory and melancholy typifies *The Aeneid.* In Book VI, Aeneas' father Anchises describes the great heroes of Roman history—Romulus, Numa, Caesar, Augustus (a bit of flattery there)—but then Aeneas notices one despondent spirit and Anchises explains that this is the ghost of Marcellus, Augustus' nephew, who, despite his many natural gifts and the promise he holds for Rome, is destined to die young. As always in *The Aeneid*, the promise of Roman glory is suffused with an air of sadness, of promises that cannot be fulfilled.

And just as Book XII ends on a puzzling note, so does Book VI. When Aeneas leaves the Underworld, he finds two gates. One is made of horn, and through "true Shades" can enter the world. The other is made of polished ivory, and through that gate false dreams enter the world. When Aeneas leaves the Underworld, his father sends him through the ivory gate, the gate of false dreams. Why? Is Virgil casting doubt on the veracity of his vision of Roman history? No one knows for sure why Virgil took this step, though interpretations abound, but the concluding passage about Marcellus and the exit through the gate of false dreams certainly subdue the chauvinism of the rest of the book. Like the end of Book XII, the end of Book VI is an undiluted warning to Virgil's contemporaries. And like so much in this poem, it brings in that eternal note of sadness, of potential failure, that is such an integral part of the poem.

If Virgil's *Aeneid* contained only praise for Rome and the glorification of Aeneas, it would be a far lesser poem. It was part of Virgil's genius that he could write so honestly about the city he loved. We can only be grateful that his dying wish to have his poem destroyed was not followed.

THE MIDDLE AGES

Although no works from the Middle Ages are covered in this volume, readers can find similar chapters on a number of medieval works in my earlier book Reading the Middle Ages (Jefferson, NC.: McFarland, 2003).

This page titled 4.3: The Aeneid is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Theodore L. Steinberg (OpenSUNY) .

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Rome

5.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.)
5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.)
5.3: Book- Metamorphoses, 3.511–733 (Ovid)
5.3.1: 1. Introduction
5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times
5.3.1.2: Ovid’s Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic
5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum
5.3.1.4: Ovid’s Theban Narrative
5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus
5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture
5.3.2: 2. Text
5.3.2.1: 3.511–18
5.3.2.2: 3.519–26
5.3.2.3: 3.527–37
5.3.2.4: 3.538–50
5.3.2.5: 3.551–61
5.3.2.6: 3.562–71
5.3.2.7: 3.572–81
5.3.2.8: 3.582–91
5.3.2.9: 3.592–99
5.3.2.10: 3.600–10
5.3.2.11: 3.611–20
5.3.2.12: 3.621–33
5.3.2.13: 3.634–43
5.3.2.14: 3.644–55
5.3.2.15: 3.656–65
5.3.2.16: 3.666–75
5.3.2.17: 3.676–86
5.3.2.18: 3.687–95
5.3.2.19: 3.696–707
5.3.2.20: 3.708–18
5.3.2.21: 3.719–28
5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33
5.3.3: 3. Commentary
5.3.3.1: 511–26 Tiresias’ Warning to Pentheus
5.3.3.2: 527–71 Pentheus’ Rejection of Bacchus
5.4: Prelude

Thumbnail: Roman Colosseum (Public Domain; Alessandroferri via Wikipedia)

This page titled 5: Rome is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

5.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.)

Published around 19 B.C.E.

Rome

The *Aeneid* is a Roman epic purporting to explain how Trojans fleeing the fall of Troy become the ancestors of the Romans: in essence, a continuation of Homer's *Iliad*. The story centers on Aeneas, a prince of Troy and the son of Venus/Aphrodite, who leads the search for a new homeland. The epic was commissioned by the first Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar, to justify why Rome was no longer a republic: According to the story, the gods themselves planned for Rome to become an empire long before Rome ever existed, and legend is rewritten so that the Trojan Aeneas (who appears in Homer's *Iliad*) becomes the model Roman citizen. Virgil's execution of the story is more complex, recognizing as it does that the price for the foundation of Rome is a steep one. In Virgil's time, Greek literature enjoyed more prestige than Roman literature, so the *Aeneid* attempts in part to revise and replace earlier Greek epics; the first six books of the *Aeneid* are a conscious parallel to Homer's *Odyssey*, and the last six books refigure Homer's *Iliad*. Because of the widespread use of Latin in the European Middle Ages, Virgil's perspective on history (and figures that he considered to be historical) exerted considerable influence on writers who followed him.

The Aeneid

Virgil, Translated by John Dryden

Book I



Image 4.1: Augustus | Etching of a bust of Augustus, the first Roman emperor.

Author: Unknown
Source: Hathi Trust Digital Library
License: Public Domain

Arms, and the man I sing, who, forc'd by fate,
And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan shore.
Long labors, both by sea and land, he bore,
And in the doubtful war, before he won 5
The Latian realm, and built the destin'd town;
His banish'd gods restor'd to rites divine,
And settled sure succession in his line,
From whence the race of Alban fathers come,
And the long glories of majestic Rome. 10

O Muse! the causes and the crimes relate;
What goddess was provok'd, and whence her hate;
For what offense the Queen of Heav'n began
To persecute so brave, so just a man;
Involv'd his anxious life in endless cares, 15
Expos'd to wants, and hurried into wars!
Can heav'nly minds such high resentment show,
Or exercise their spite in human woe?

Against the Tiber's mouth, but far away,
An ancient town was seated on the sea; 20
A Tyrian colony; the people made
Stout for the war, and studious of their trade:
Carthage the name; belov'd by Juno more
Than her own Argos, or the Samian shore.
Here stood her chariot; here, if Heav'n were kind, 25
The seat of awful empire she design'd.
Yet she had heard an ancient rumor fly,
(Long cited by the people of the sky,)
That times to come should see the Trojan race

Her Carthage ruin, and her tow'rs deface;
Nor thus confin'd, the yoke of sov'reign sway
Should on the necks of all the nations lay.
She ponder'd this, and fear'd it was in fate;
Nor could forget the war she wag'd of late
For conqu'ring Greece against the Trojan state.
Besides, long causes working in her mind,
And secret seeds of envy, lay behind;
Deep graven in her heart the doom remain'd
Of partial Paris, and her form disdain'd;
The grace bestow'd on ravish'd Ganymed,
Electra's glories, and her injur'd bed.
Each was a cause alone; and all combin'd
To kindle vengeance in her haughty mind.
For this, far distant from the Latian coast
She drove the remnants of the Trojan host;
And sev'n long years th' unhappy wand'ring train
Were toss'd by storms, and scatter'd thro' the main.
Such time, such toil, requir'd the Roman name,
Such length of labor for so vast a frame.

Now scarce the Trojan fleet, with sails and oars,
Had left behind the fair Sicilian shores,
Ent'ring with cheerful shouts the wat'ry reign,
And plowing frothy furrows in the main;
When, lab'ring still with endless discontent,
The Queen of Heav'n did thus her fury vent:

"Then am I vanquish'd? must I yield?" said she,
"And must the Trojans reign in Italy?
So Fate will have it, and Jove adds his force;
Nor can my pow'r divert their happy course.
Could angry Pallas, with revengeful spleen,
The Grecian navy burn, and drown the men?
She, for the fault of one offending foe,
The bolts of Jove himself presum'd to throw:
With whirlwinds from beneath she toss'd the ship,
And bare expos'd the bosom of the deep;
Then, as an eagle gripes the trembling game,
The wretch, yet hissing with her father's flame,
She strongly seiz'd, and with a burning wound
Transfix'd, and naked, on a rock she bound.
But I, who walk in awful state above,
The majesty of heav'n, the sister wife of Jove,
For length of years my fruitless force employ
Against the thin remains of ruin'd Troy!
What nations now to Juno's pow'r will pray,
Or off 'rings on my slighted altars lay?"

Thus rag'd the goddess; and, with fury fraught.
The restless regions of the storms she sought,
Where, in a spacious cave of living stone,

The tyrant Aeolus, from his airy throne,
With pow'r imperial curbs the struggling winds,
And sounding tempests in dark prisons binds.
This way and that th' impatient captives tend,
And, pressing for release, the mountains rend.
High in his hall th' undaunted monarch stands,
And shakes his scepter, and their rage commands;
Which did he not, their unresisted sway
Would sweep the world before them in their way;
Earth, air, and seas thro' empty space would roll,
And heav'n would fly before the driving soul.
In fear of this, the Father of the Gods
Confin'd their fury to those dark abodes,
And lock'd 'em safe within, oppress'd with mountain loads;
Impos'd a king, with arbitrary sway,
To loose their fetters, or their force allay.
To whom the suppliant queen her pray'rs address'd,
And thus the tenor of her suit express'd:
"O Aeolus! for to thee the King of Heav'n
The pow'r of tempests and of winds has giv'n;
Thy force alone their fury can restrain,
And smooth the waves, or swell the troubled main
A race of wand'ring slaves, abhorr'd by me,
With prosp'rous passage cut the Tuscan sea;
To fruitful Italy their course they steer,
And for their vanquish'd gods design new temples there.
Raise all thy winds; with night involve the skies;
Sink or disperse my fatal enemies.
Twice sev'n, the charming daughters of the main,
Around my person wait, and bear my train:
Succeed my wish, and second my design;
The fairest, Deiopeia, shall be thine,
And make thee father of a happy line."

To this the god: "'T is yours, O queen, to will
The work which duty binds me to fulfil.
These airy kingdoms, and this wide command,
Are all the presents of your bounteous hand:
Yours is my sov'reign's grace; and, as your guest,
I sit with gods at their celestial feast;
Raise tempests at your pleasure, or subdue;
Dispose of empire, which I hold from you."

He said, and hurl'd against the mountain side
His quiv'ring spear, and all the god applied.
The raging winds rush thro' the hollow wound,
And dance aloft in air, and skim along the ground;
Then, settling on the sea, the surges sweep,
Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep.
South, East, and West with mix'd confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.

The cables crack; the sailors' fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heav'n itself is ravish'd from their eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue;
Then flashing fires the transient light renew;
The face of things a frightful image bears,
And present death in various forms appears.
Struck with unusual fright, the Trojan chief,
With lifted hands and eyes, invokes relief;
And, "Thrice and four times happy those," he cried,
"That under Ilian walls before their parents died!
Tydides, bravest of the Grecian train!
Why could not I by that strong arm be slain,
And lie by noble Hector on the plain,
Or great Sarpedon, in those bloody fields
Where Simois rolls the bodies and the shields
Of heroes, whose dismember'd hands yet bear
The dart aloft, and clench the pointed spear!"

Thus while the pious prince his fate bewails,
Fierce Boreas drove against his flying sails,
And rent the sheets; the raging billows rise,
And mount the tossing vessels to the skies:
Nor can the shiv'ring oars sustain the blow;
The galley gives her side, and turns her prow;
While those astern, descending down the steep,
Thro' gaping waves behold the boiling deep.
Three ships were hurried by the southern blast,
And on the secret shelves with fury cast.
Those hidden rocks th' Ausonian sailors knew:
They call'd them Altars, when they rose in view,
And show'd their spacious backs above the flood.
Three more fierce Eurus, in his angry mood,
Dash'd on the shallows of the moving sand,
And in mid ocean left them moor'd aland.
Orontes' bark, that bore the Lycian crew,
(A horrid sight!) ev'n in the hero's view,
From stem to stern by waves was overborne:
The trembling pilot, from his rudder torn,
Was headlong hurl'd; thrice round the ship was toss'd,
Then bulg'd at once, and in the deep was lost;
And here and there above the waves were seen
Arms, pictures, precious goods, and floating men.
The stoutest vessel to the storm gave way,
And suck'd thro' loosen'd planks the rushing sea.
Ilioneus was her chief: Alethes old,
Achates faithful, Abas young and bold,
Endur'd not less; their ships, with gaping seams,
Admit the deluge of the briny streams.

Meantime imperial Neptune heard the sound
Of raging billows breaking on the ground.
Displeas'd, and fearing for his wat'ry reign,
He rear'd his awful head above the main,
Serene in majesty; then roll'd his eyes
Around the space of earth, and seas, and skies.
He saw the Trojan fleet dispers'd, distress'd,
By stormy winds and wintry heav'n oppress'd.
Full well the god his sister's envy knew,
And what her aims and what her arts pursue.
He summon'd Eurus and the western blast,
And first an angry glance on both he cast;
Then thus rebuk'd: "Audacious winds! from whence
This bold attempt, this rebel insolence?
Is it for you to ravage seas and land,
Unauthoriz'd by my supreme command?
To raise such mountains on the troubled main?
Whom I but first 't is fit the billows to restrain;
And then you shall be taught obedience to my reign.
Hence! to your lord my royal mandate bear
The realms of ocean and the fields of air
Are mine, not his. By fatal lot to me
The liquid empire fell, and trident of the sea.
His pow'r to hollow caverns is confin'd:
There let him reign, the jailer of the wind,
With hoarse commands his breathing subjects call,
And boast and bluster in his empty hall."
He spoke; and, while he spoke, he smooth'd the sea,
Dispell'd the darkness, and restor'd the day.
Cymothoe, Triton, and the sea-green train
Of beauteous nymphs, the daughters of the main,
Clear from the rocks the vessels with their hands:
The god himself with ready trident stands,
And opes the deep, and spreads the moving sands;
Then heaves them off the shoals. Where'er he guides
His finny coursers and in triumph rides,
The waves unruffle and the sea subsides.
As, when in tumults rise th' ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud;
And stones and brands in rattling volleys fly,
And all the rustic arms that fury can supply:
If then some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a list'ning ear;
He soothes with sober words their angry mood,
And quenches their innate desire of blood: So,
when the Father of the Flood appears,
And o'er the seas his sov'reign trident rears,
Their fury falls: he skims the liquid plains,
High on his chariot, and, with loosen'd reins,
Majestic moves along, and awful peace maintains.

The weary Trojans ply their shatter'd oars
To nearest land, and make the Libyan shores.

Within a long recess there lies a bay:
An island shades it from the rolling sea,
And forms a port secure for ships to ride;
Broke by the jutting land, on either side,
In double streams the briny waters glide.
Betwixt two rows of rocks a sylvan scene
Appears above, and groves for ever green:
A grot is form'd beneath, with mossy seats,
To rest the Nereids, and exclude the heats.
Down thro' the crannies of the living walls
The crystal streams descend in murm'ring falls:
No haulsers need to bind the vessels here,
Nor bearded anchors; for no storms they fear.
Sev'n ships within this happy harbor meet,
The thin remainders of the scatter'd fleet.
The Trojans, worn with toils, and spent with woes,
Leap on the welcome land, and seek their wish'd repose.

First, good Achates, with repeated strokes
Of clashing flints, their hidden fire provokes:
Short flame succeeds; a bed of wither'd leaves
The dying sparkles in their fall receives:
Caught into life, in fiery fumes they rise,
And, fed with stronger food, invade the skies.
The Trojans, dropping wet, or stand around
The cheerful blaze, or lie along the ground:
Some dry their corn, infected with the brine,
Then grind with marbles, and prepare to dine.
Aeneas climbs the mountain's airy brow,
And takes a prospect of the seas below,
If Capys thence, or Antheus he could spy,
Or see the streamers of Caicus fly.
No vessels were in view; but, on the plain,
Three beamy stags command a lordly train
Of branching heads: the more ignoble throng
Attend their stately steps, and slowly graze along.
He stood; and, while secure they fed below,
He took the quiver and the trusty bow
Achates us'd to bear: the leaders first
He laid along, and then the vulgar pierc'd;
Nor ceas'd his arrows, till the shady plain
Sev'n mighty bodies with their blood distain.
For the sev'n ships he made an equal share,
And to the port return'd, triumphant from the war.
The jars of gen'rous wine (Acestes' gift,
When his Trinacrian shores the navy left)
He set abroach, and for the feast prepar'd,
In equal portions with the ven'son shar'd.

Thus while he dealt it round, the pious chief
With cheerful words allay'd the common grief:
"Endure, and conquer! Jove will soon dispose
To future good our past and present woes.
With me, the rocks of Scylla you have tried;
Th' inhuman Cyclops and his den defied.
What greater ills hereafter can you bear?
Resume your courage and dismiss your care,
An hour will come, with pleasure to relate
Your sorrows past, as benefits of Fate.
Thro' various hazards and events, we move
To Latium and the realms foredoom'd by Jove.
Call'd to the seat (the promise of the skies)
Where Trojan kingdoms once again may rise,
Endure the hardships of your present state;
Live, and reserve yourselves for better fate."

These words he spoke, but spoke not from his heart;
His outward smiles conceal'd his inward smart.
The jolly crew, unmindful of the past,
The quarry share, their plenteous dinner haste.
Some strip the skin; some portion out the spoil;
The limbs, yet trembling, in the caldrons boil;
Some on the fire the reeking entrails broil.
Stretch'd on the grassy turf, at ease they dine,
Restore their strength with meat, and cheer their souls with wine.
Their hunger thus appeas'd, their care attends
The doubtful fortune of their absent friends:
Alternate hopes and fears their minds possess,
Whether to deem 'em dead, or in distress.
Above the rest, Aeneas mourns the fate
Of brave Orontes, and th' uncertain state
Of Gyas, Lycus, and of Amycus.
The day, but not their sorrows, ended thus.

When, from aloft, almighty Jove surveys
Earth, air, and shores, and navigable seas,
At length on Libyan realms he fix'd his eyes
Whom, pond'ring thus on human miseries,
When Venus saw, she with a lowly look,
Not free from tears, her heav'nly sire bespoke:

"O King of Gods and Men! whose awful hand
Disperses thunder on the seas and land,
Disposing all with absolute command;
How could my pious son thy pow'r incense?
Or what, alas! is vanish'd Troy's offense?
Our hope of Italy not only lost,
On various seas by various tempests toss'd,
But shut from ev'ry shore, and barr'd from ev'ry coast.
You promis'd once, a progeny divine
Of Romans, rising from the Trojan line,

In after times should hold the world in awe,
And to the land and ocean give the law.
How is your doom revers'd, which eas'd my care
When Troy was ruin'd in that cruel war?
Then fates to fates I could oppose; but now,
When Fortune still pursues her former blow,
What can I hope? What worse can still succeed?
What end of labors has your will decreed?
Antenor, from the midst of Grecian hosts,
Could pass secure, and pierce th' Illyrian coasts,
Where, rolling down the steep, Timavus raves
And thro' nine channels disembogues his waves.
At length he founded Padua's happy seat,
And gave his Trojans a secure retreat;
There fix'd their arms, and there renew'd their name,
And there in quiet rules, and crown'd with fame.
But we, descended from your sacred line,
Entitled to your heav'n and rites divine,
Are banish'd earth; and, for the wrath of one,
Remov'd from Latium and the promis'd throne.
Are these our scepters? these our due rewards?
And is it thus that Jove his plighted faith regards?"

To whom the Father of th' immortal race,
Smiling with that serene indulgent face,
With which he drives the clouds and clears the skies,
First gave a holy kiss; then thus replies:

"Daughter, dismiss thy fears; to thy desire
The fates of thine are fix'd, and stand entire.
Thou shalt behold thy wish'd Lavinian walls;
And, ripe for heav'n, when fate Aeneas calls,
Then shalt thou bear him up, sublime, to me:
No councils have revers'd my firm decree.
And, lest new fears disturb thy happy state,
Know, I have search'd the mystic rolls of Fate:
Thy son (nor is th' appointed season far)
In Italy shall wage successful war,
Shall tame fierce nations in the bloody field,
And sov'reign laws impose, and cities build,
Till, after ev'ry foe subdued, the sun
Thrice thro' the signs his annual race shall run:
This is his time prefix'd. Ascanius then,
Now call'd Iulus, shall begin his reign.
He thirty rolling years the crown shall wear,
Then from Lavinium shall the seat transfer,
And, with hard labor, Alba Longa build.
The throne with his succession shall be fill'd
Three hundred circuits more: then shall be seen
Ilia the fair, a priestess and a queen,
Who, full of Mars, in time, with kindly throes,

Shall at a birth two goodly boys disclose.
The royal babes a tawny wolf shall drain:
Then Romulus his grandsire's throne shall gain,
Of martial tow'rs the founder shall become,
The people Romans call, the city Rome.
To them no bounds of empire I assign,
Nor term of years to their immortal line.
Ev'n haughty Juno, who, with endless broils,
Earth, seas, and heav'n, and Jove himself turmoils;
At length aton'd, her friendly pow'r shall join,
To cherish and advance the Trojan line.
The subject world shall Rome's dominion own,
And, prostrate, shall adore the nation of the gown.
An age is ripening in revolving fate
When Troy shall overturn the Grecian state,
And sweet revenge her conqu'ring sons shall call,
To crush the people that conspir'd her fall.
Then Caesar from the Julian stock shall rise,
Whose empire ocean, and whose fame the skies
Alone shall bound; whom, fraught with eastern spoils,
Our heav'n, the just reward of human toils,
Securely shall repay with rites divine;
And incense shall ascend before his sacred shrine.
Then dire debate and impious war shall cease,
And the stern age be soften'd into peace:
Then banish'd Faith shall once again return,
And Vestal fires in hallow'd temples burn;
And Remus with Quirinus shall sustain
The righteous laws, and fraud and force restrain.
Janus himself before his fane shall wait,
And keep the dreadful issues of his gate,
With bolts and iron bars: within remains
Imprison'd Fury, bound in brazen chains;
High on a trophy rais'd, of useless arms,
He sits, and threats the world with vain alarms."

He said, and sent Cyllenius with command
To free the ports, and ope the Punic land
To Trojan guests; lest, ignorant of fate,
The queen might force them from her town and state.
Down from the steep of heav'n Cyllenius flies,
And cleaves with all his wings the yielding skies.
Soon on the Libyan shore descends the god,
Performs his message, and displays his rod:
The surly murmurs of the people cease;
And, as the fates requir'd, they give the peace:
The queen herself suspends the rigid laws,
The Trojans pities, and protects their cause.

Meantime, in shades of night Aeneas lies:
Care seiz'd his soul, and sleep forsook his eyes.

But, when the sun restor'd the cheerful day,
He rose, the coast and country to survey,
Anxious and eager to discover more.
It look'd a wild uncultivated shore;
But, whether humankind, or beasts alone
Possess'd the new-found region, was unknown.
Beneath a ledge of rocks his fleet he hides:
Tall trees surround the mountain's shady sides;
The bending brow above a safe retreat provides.
Arm'd with two pointed darts, he leaves his friends,
And true Achates on his steps attends.
Lo! in the deep recesses of the wood,
Before his eyes his goddess mother stood:
A huntress in her habit and her mien;
Her dress a maid, her air confess'd a queen.
Bare were her knees, and knots her garments bind;
Loose was her hair, and wanton'd in the wind;
Her hand sustain'd a bow; her quiver hung behind.
She seem'd a virgin of the Spartan blood:
With such array Harpalyce bestrode
Her Thracian courser and outstripp'd the rapid flood.
"Ho, strangers! have you lately seen," she said,
"One of my sisters, like myself array'd,
Who cross'd the lawn, or in the forest stray'd?
A painted quiver at her back she bore;
Varied with spots, a lynx's hide she wore;
And at full cry pursued the tusky boar."

Thus Venus: thus her son replied again:
"None of your sisters have we heard or seen,
O virgin! or what other name you bear
Above that style O more than mortal fair!
Your voice and mien celestial birth betray!
If, as you seem, the sister of the day,
Or one at least of chaste Diana's train,
Let not an humble suppliant sue in vain;
But tell a stranger, long in tempests toss'd,
What earth we tread, and who commands the coast?
Then on your name shall wretched mortals call,
And offer'd victims at your altars fall."
"I dare not," she replied, "assume the name
Of goddess, or celestial honors claim:
For Tyrian virgins bows and quivers bear,
And purple buskins o'er their ankles wear.
Know, gentle youth, in Libyan lands you are
A people rude in peace, and rough in war.
The rising city, which from far you see,
Is Carthage, and a Tyrian colony.
Phoenician Dido rules the growing state,
Who fled from Tyre, to shun her brother's hate.

Great were her wrongs, her story full of fate;
Which I will sum in short. Sichaeus, known
For wealth, and brother to the Punic throne,
Possess'd fair Dido's bed; and either heart
At once was wounded with an equal dart.
Her father gave her, yet a spotless maid;
Pygmalion then the Tyrian scepter sway'd:
One who condemn'd divine and human laws.
Then strife ensued, and cursed gold the cause.
The monarch, blinded with desire of wealth,
With steel invades his brother's life by stealth;
Before the sacred altar made him bleed,
And long from her conceal'd the cruel deed.
Some tale, some new pretense, he daily coin'd,
To soothe his sister, and delude her mind.
At length, in dead of night, the ghost appears
Of her unhappy lord: the specter stares,
And, with erected eyes, his bloody bosom bares.
The cruel altars and his fate he tells,
And the dire secret of his house reveals,
Then warns the widow, with her household gods,
To seek a refuge in remote abodes.
Last, to support her in so long a way,
He shows her where his hidden treasure lay.
Admonish'd thus, and seiz'd with mortal fright,
The queen provides companions of her flight:
They meet, and all combine to leave the state,
Who hate the tyrant, or who fear his hate.
They seize a fleet, which ready rigg'd they find;
Nor is Pygmalion's treasure left behind.
The vessels, heavy laden, put to sea
With prosp'rous winds; a woman leads the way.
I know not, if by stress of weather driv'n,
Or was their fatal course dispos'd by Heav'n;
At last they landed, where from far your eyes
May view the turrets of new Carthage rise;
There bought a space of ground, which (Byrsa call'd,
From the bull's hide) they first inclos'd, and wall'd.
But whence are you? what country claims your birth?
What seek you, strangers, on our Libyan earth?"

To whom, with sorrow streaming from his eyes,
And deeply sighing, thus her son replies:
"Could you with patience hear, or I relate,
O nymph, the tedious annals of our fate!
Thro' such a train of woes if I should run,
The day would sooner than the tale be done!
From ancient Troy, by force expell'd, we came
If you by chance have heard the Trojan name.
On various seas by various tempests toss'd,

At length we landed on your Libyan coast.
The good Aeneas am I call'd a name,
While Fortune favor'd, not unknown to fame.
My household gods, companions of my woes,
With pious care I rescued from our foes.
To fruitful Italy my course was bent;
And from the King of Heav'n is my descent.
With twice ten sail I cross'd the Phrygian sea;
Fate and my mother goddess led my way.
Scarce sev'n, the thin remainders of my fleet,
From storms preserv'd, within your harbor meet.
Myself distress'd, an exile, and unknown,
Debarr'd from Europe, and from Asia thrown,
In Libyan desarts wander thus alone."

His tender parent could no longer bear;
But, interposing, sought to soothe his care.
"Whoe'er you are not unbelov'd by Heav'n,
Since on our friendly shore your ships are driv'n
Have courage: to the gods permit the rest,
And to the queen expose your just request.
Now take this earnest of success, for more:
Your scatter'd fleet is join'd upon the shore;
The winds are chang'd, your friends from danger free;
Or I renounce my skill in augury.
Twelve swans behold in beauteous order move,
And stoop with closing pinions from above;
Whom late the bird of Jove had driv'n along,
And thro' the clouds pursued the scatt'ring throng:
Now, all united in a goodly team,
They skim the ground, and seek the quiet stream.
As they, with joy returning, clap their wings,
And ride the circuit of the skies in rings;
Not otherwise your ships, and ev'ry friend,
Already hold the port, or with swift sails descend.
No more advice is needful; but pursue
The path before you, and the town in view."

Thus having said, she turn'd, and made appear
Her neck refulgent, and dishevel'd hair,
Which, flowing from her shoulders, reach'd the ground.
And widely spread ambrosial scents around:
In length of train descends her sweeping gown;
And, by her graceful walk, the Queen of Love is known.
The prince pursued the parting deity
With words like these: "Ah! whither do you fly?
Unkind and cruel! to deceive your son
In borrow'd shapes, and his embrace to shun;
Never to bless my sight, but thus unknown;
And still to speak in accents not your own."
Against the goddess these complaints he made,

But took the path, and her commands obey'd.
They march, obscure; for Venus kindly shrouds
With mists their persons, and involves in clouds,
That, thus unseen, their passage none might stay,
Or force to tell the causes of their way.
This part perform'd, the goddess flies sublime
To visit Paphos and her native clime;
Where garlands, ever green and ever fair,
With vows are offer'd, and with solemn pray'r:
A hundred altars in her temple smoke;
A thousand bleeding hearts her pow'r invoke.

They climb the next ascent, and, looking down,
Now at a nearer distance view the town.
The prince with wonder sees the stately tow'rs,
Which late were huts and shepherds' homely bow'rs,
The gates and streets; and hears, from ev'ry part,
The noise and busy concourse of the mart.
The toiling Tyrians on each other call
To ply their labor: some extend the wall;
Some build the citadel; the brawny throng
Or dig, or push unwieldly stones along.
Some for their dwellings choose a spot of ground,
Which, first design'd, with ditches they surround.
Some laws ordain; and some attend the choice
Of holy senates, and elect by voice.
Here some design a mole, while others there
Lay deep foundations for a theater;
From marble quarries mighty columns hew,
For ornaments of scenes, and future view.
Such is their toil, and such their busy pains,
As exercise the bees in flow'ry plains,
When winter past, and summer scarce begun,
Invites them forth to labor in the sun;
Some lead their youth abroad, while some condense
Their liquid store, and some in cells dispense;
Some at the gate stand ready to receive
The golden burthen, and their friends relieve;
All with united force, combine to drive
The lazy drones from the laborious hive:
With envy stung, they view each other's deeds;
The fragrant work with diligence proceeds.
"Thrice happy you, whose walls already rise!"
Aeneas said, and view'd, with lifted eyes,
Their lofty tow'rs; then, entiring at the gate,
Conceal'd in clouds (prodigious to relate)
He mix'd, unmark'd, among the busy throng,
Borne by the tide, and pass'd unseen along.

Full in the center of the town there stood,
Thick set with trees, a venerable wood.

The Tyrians, landing near this holy ground,
And digging here, a prosp'rous omen found:
From under earth a courser's head they drew,
Their growth and future fortune to foreshew.
This fated sign their foundress Juno gave,
Of a soil fruitful, and a people brave.
Sidonian Dido here with solemn state
Did Juno's temple build, and consecrate,
Enrich'd with gifts, and with a golden shrine;
But more the goddess made the place divine.
On brazen steps the marble threshold rose,
And brazen plates the cedar beams inclose:
The rafters are with brazen cov'rings crown'd;
The lofty doors on brazen hinges sound.
What first Aeneas this place beheld,
Reviv'd his courage, and his fear expell'd.
For while, expecting there the queen, he rais'd
His wond'ring eyes, and round the temple gaz'd,
Admir'd the fortune of the rising town,
The striving artists, and their arts' renown;
He saw, in order painted on the wall,
Whatever did unhappy Troy befall:
The wars that fame around the world had blown,
All to the life, and ev'ry leader known.
There Agamemnon, Priam here, he spies,
And fierce Achilles, who both kings defies.
He stopp'd, and weeping said: "O friend! ev'n here
The monuments of Trojan woes appear!
Our known disasters fill ev'n foreign lands:
See there, where old unhappy Priam stands!
Ev'n the mute walls relate the warrior's fame,
And Trojan griefs the Tyrians' pity claim."
He said (his tears a ready passage find),
Devouring what he saw so well design'd,
And with an empty picture fed his mind:
For there he saw the fainting Grecians yield,
And here the trembling Trojans quit the field,
Pursued by fierce Achilles thro' the plain,
On his high chariot driving o'er the slain.
The tents of Rhesus next his grief renew,
By their white sails betray'd to nightly view;
And wakeful Diomede, whose cruel sword
The sentries slew, nor spar'd their slumb'ring lord,
Then took the fiery steeds, ere yet the food
Of Troy they taste, or drink the Xanthian flood.
Elsewhere he saw where Troilus defied
Achilles, and unequal combat tried;
Then, where the boy disarm'd, with loosen'd reins,
Was by his horses hurried o'er the plains,
Hung by the neck and hair, and dragg'd around:

The hostile spear, yet sticking in his wound,
With tracks of blood inscrib'd the dusty ground.
Meantime the Trojan dames, oppress'd with woe,
To Pallas' fane in long procession go,
In hopes to reconcile their heav'nly foe.
They weep, they beat their breasts, they rend their hair,
And rich embroider'd vests for presents bear;
But the stern goddess stands unmov'd with pray'r.
Thrice round the Trojan walls Achilles drew
The corpse of Hector, whom in fight he slew.
Here Priam sues; and there, for sums of gold,
The lifeless body of his son is sold.
So sad an object, and so well express'd,
Drew sighs and groans from the griev'd hero's breast,
To see the figure of his lifeless friend,
And his old sire his helpless hand extend.
Himself he saw amidst the Grecian train,
Mix'd in the bloody battle on the plain;
And swarthy Memnon in his arms he knew,
His pompous ensigns, and his Indian crew.
Penthisilea there, with haughty grace,
Leads to the wars an Amazonian race:
In their right hands a pointed dart they wield;
The left, for ward, sustains the lunar shield.
Athwart her breast a golden belt she throws,
Amidst the press alone provokes a thousand foes,
And dares her maiden arms to manly force oppose.

Thus while the Trojan prince employs his eyes,
Fix'd on the walls with wonder and surprise,
The beauteous Dido, with a num'rous train
And pomp of guards, ascends the sacred fane.
Such on Eurotas' banks, or Cynthus' height,
Diana seems; and so she charms the sight,
When in the dance the graceful goddess leads
The choir of nymphs, and overtops their heads:
Known by her quiver, and her lofty mien,
She walks majestic, and she looks their queen;
Latona sees her shine above the rest,
And feeds with secret joy her silent breast.
Such Dido was; with such becoming state,
Amidst the crowd, she walks serenely great.
Their labor to her future sway she speeds,
And passing with a gracious glance proceeds;
Then mounts the throne, high plac'd before the shrine:
In crowds around, the swarming people join.
She takes petitions, and dispenses laws,
Hears and determines ev'ry private cause;
Their tasks in equal portions she divides,
And, where unequal, there by lots decides.

Another way by chance Aeneas bends
His eyes, and unexpected sees his friends,
Antheus, Sergestus grave, Cloanthus strong,
And at their backs a mighty Trojan throng,
Whom late the tempest on the billows toss'd,
And widely scatter'd on another coast.
The prince, unseen, surpris'd with wonder stands,
And longs, with joyful haste, to join their hands;
But, doubtful of the wish'd event, he stays,
And from the hollow cloud his friends surveys,
Impatient till they told their present state,
And where they left their ships, and what their fate,
And why they came, and what was their request;
For these were sent, commission'd by the rest,
To sue for leave to land their sickly men,
And gain admission to the gracious queen.
Ent'ring, with cries they fill'd the holy fane;
Then thus, with lowly voice, Ilioneus began:

"O queen! indulg'd by favor of the gods
To found an empire in these new abodes,
To build a town, with statutes to restrain
The wild inhabitants beneath thy reign,
We wretched Trojans, toss'd on ev'ry shore,
From sea to sea, thy clemency implore.
Forbid the fires our shipping to deface!
Receive th' unhappy fugitives to grace,
And spare the remnant of a pious race!
We come not with design of wasteful prey,
To drive the country, force the swains away:
Nor such our strength, nor such is our desire;
The vanquish'd dare not to such thoughts aspire.
A land there is, Hesperia nam'd of old;
The soil is fruitful, and the men are bold
Th' Oenotrians held it once by common fame
Now call'd Italia, from the leader's name.
To that sweet region was our voyage bent,
When winds and ev'ry warring element
Disturb'd our course, and, far from sight of land,
Cast our torn vessels on the moving sand:
The sea came on; the South, with mighty roar,
Dispers'd and dash'd the rest upon the rocky shore.
Those few you see escap'd the Storm, and fear,
Unless you interpose, a shipwreck here.
What men, what monsters, what inhuman race,
What laws, what barb'rous customs of the place,
Shut up a desart shore to drowning men,
And drive us to the cruel seas again?
If our hard fortune no compassion draws,
Nor hospitable rights, nor human laws,

The gods are just, and will revenge our cause.
Aeneas was our prince: a juster lord,
Or nobler warrior, never drew a sword;
Observant of the right, religious of his word.
If yet he lives, and draws this vital air,
Nor we, his friends, of safety shall despair;
Nor you, great queen, these offices repent,
Which he will equal, and perhaps augment.
We want not cities, nor Sicilian coasts,
Where King Acestes Trojan lineage boasts.
Permit our ships a shelter on your shores,
Refitted from your woods with planks and oars,
That, if our prince be safe, we may renew
Our destin'd course, and Italy pursue.
But if, O best of men, the Fates ordain
That thou art swallow'd in the Libyan main,
And if our young Iulus be no more,
Dismiss our navy from your friendly shore,
That we to good Acestes may return,
And with our friends our common losses mourn."
Thus spoke Ilioneus: the Trojan crew
With cries and clamors his request renew.

The modest queen a while, with downcast eyes,
Ponder'd the speech; then briefly thus replies:
"Trojans, dismiss your fears; my cruel fate,
And doubts attending an unsettled state,
Force me to guard my coast from foreign foes.
Who has not heard the story of your woes,
The name and fortune of your native place,
The fame and valor of the Phrygian race?
We Tyrians are not so devoid of sense,
Nor so remote from Phoebus' influence.
Whether to Latian shores your course is bent,
Or, driv'n by tempests from your first intent,
You seek the good Acestes' government,
Your men shall be receiv'd, your fleet repair'd,
And sail, with ships of convoy for your guard:
Or, would you stay, and join your friendly pow'rs
To raise and to defend the Tyrian tow'rs,
My wealth, my city, and myself are yours.
And would to Heav'n, the Storm, you felt, would bring
On Carthaginian coasts your wand'ring king.
My people shall, by my command, explore
The ports and creeks of ev'ry winding shore,
And towns, and wilds, and shady woods, in quest
Of so renown'd and so desir'd a guest."

Rais'd in his mind the Trojan hero stood,
And long'd to break from out his ambient cloud:
Achates found it, and thus urg'd his way:

“From whence, O goddess-born, this long delay?
What more can you desire, your welcome sure,
Your fleet in safety, and your friends secure?
One only wants; and him we saw in vain
Oppose the Storm, and swallow’d in the main.
Orontes in his fate our forfeit paid;
The rest agrees with what your mother said.”
Scarce had he spoken, when the cloud gave way,
The mists flew upward and dissolv’d in day.

The Trojan chief appear’d in open sight,
August in visage, and serenely bright.
His mother goddess, with her hands divine,
Had form’d his curling locks, and made his temples shine,
And giv’n his rolling eyes a sparkling grace,
And breath’d a youthful vigor on his face;
Like polish’d ivory, beauteous to behold,
Or Parian marble, when enchas’d in gold:
Thus radiant from the circling cloud he broke,
And thus with manly modesty he spoke:

“He whom you seek am I; by tempests toss’d,
And sav’d from shipwreck on your Libyan coast;
Presenting, gracious queen, before your throne,
A prince that owes his life to you alone.
Fair majesty, the refuge and redress
Of those whom fate pursues, and wants oppress,
You, who your pious offices employ
To save the relics of abandon’d Troy;
Receive the shipwreck’d on your friendly shore,
With hospitable rites relieve the poor;
Associate in your town a wand’ring train,
And strangers in your palace entertain:
What thanks can wretched fugitives return,
Who, scatter’d thro’ the world, in exile mourn?
The gods, if gods to goodness are inclin’d;
If acts of mercy touch their heav’nly mind,
And, more than all the gods, your gen’rous heart.
Conscious of worth, requite its own desert!
In you this age is happy, and this earth,
And parents more than mortal gave you birth.
While rolling rivers into seas shall run,
And round the space of heav’n the radiant sun;
While trees the mountain tops with shades supply,
Your honor, name, and praise shall never die.
Whate’er abode my fortune has assign’d,
Your image shall be present in my mind.”
Thus having said, he turn’d with pious haste,
And joyful his expecting friends embrac’d:
With his right hand Ilioneus was grac’d,
Serestus with his left; then to his breast

Cloanthus and the noble Gyas press'd;
And so by turns descended to the rest.

The Tyrian queen stood fix'd upon his face,
Pleas'd with his motions, ravish'd with his grace;
Admir'd his fortunes, more admir'd the man;
Then recollected stood, and thus began:
"What fate, O goddess-born; what angry pow'rs
Have cast you shipwrack'd on our barren shores?
Are you the great Aeneas, known to fame,
Who from celestial seed your lineage claim?

The same Aeneas whom fair Venus bore
To fam'd Anchises on th' Idaean shore?
It calls into my mind, tho' then a child,
When Teucer came, from Salamis exil'd,
And sought my father's aid, to be restor'd:
My father Belus then with fire and sword
Invaded Cyprus, made the region bare,
And, conqu'ring, finish'd the successful war.
From him the Trojan siege I understood,
The Grecian chiefs, and your illustrious blood.
Your foe himself the Dardan valor prais'd,
And his own ancestry from Trojans rais'd.
Enter, my noble guest, and you shall find,
If not a costly welcome, yet a kind:
For I myself, like you, have been distress'd,
Till Heav'n afforded me this place of rest;
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,
I learn to pity woes so like my own."
She said, and to the palace led her guest;
Then offer'd incense, and proclaim'd a feast.
Nor yet less careful for her absent friends,
Twice ten fat oxen to the ships she sends;
Besides a hundred boars, a hundred lambs,
With bleating cries, attend their milky dams;
And jars of gen'rous wine and spacious bowls
She gives, to cheer the sailors' drooping souls.
Now purple hangings clothe the palace walls,
And sumptuous feasts are made in splendid halls:
On Tyrian carpets, richly wrought, they dine;
With loads of massy plate the sideboards shine,
And antique vases, all of gold emboss'd
(The gold itself inferior to the cost),
Of curious work, where on the sides were seen
The fights and figures of illustrious men,
From their first founder to the present queen.

The good Aeneas, paternal care
Iulus' absence could no longer bear,
Dispatch'd Achates to the ships in haste,
To give a glad relation of the past,

And, fraught with precious gifts, to bring the boy,
Snatch'd from the ruins of unhappy Troy:
A robe of tissue, stiff with golden wire;
An upper vest, once Helen's rich attire,
From Argos by the fam'd adultress brought,
With golden flow'rs and winding foliage wrought,
Her mother Leda's present, when she came
To ruin Troy and set the world on flame;
The scepter Priam's eldest daughter bore,
Her orient necklace, and the crown she wore
Of double texture, glorious to behold,
One order set with gems, and one with gold.
Instructed thus, the wise Achates goes,
And in his diligence his duty shows.

But Venus, anxious for her son's affairs,
New counsels tries, and new designs prepares:
That Cupid should assume the shape and face
Of sweet Ascanius, and the sprightly grace;
Should bring the presents, in her nephew's stead,
And in Eliza's veins the gentle poison shed:
For much she fear'd the Tyrians, double-tongued,
And knew the town to Juno's care belong'd.
These thoughts by night her golden slumbers broke,
And thus alarm'd, to winged Love she spoke:
"My son, my strength, whose mighty pow'r alone
Controls the Thund'rer on his awful throne,
To thee thy much-afflicted mother flies,
And on thy succor and thy faith relies.
Thou know'st, my son, how Jove's revengeful wife,
By force and fraud, attempts thy brother's life;
And often hast thou mourn'd with me his pains.
Him Dido now with blandishment detains;
But I suspect the town where Juno reigns.
For this 't is needful to prevent her art,
And fire with love the proud Phoenician's heart:
A love so violent, so strong, so sure,
As neither age can change, nor art can cure.
How this may be perform'd, now take my mind:
Ascanius by his father is design'd
To come, with presents laden, from the port,
To gratify the queen, and gain the court.
I mean to plunge the boy in pleasing sleep,
And, ravish'd, in Idalian bow'rs to keep,
Or high Cythera, that the sweet deceit
May pass unseen, and none prevent the cheat.
Take thou his form and shape. I beg the grace
But only for a night's revolving space:
Thyself a boy, assume a boy's dissembled face;
That when, amidst the fervor of the feast,

The Tyrian hugs and fonds thee on her breast,
And with sweet kisses in her arms constrains,
Thou may'st infuse thy venom in her veins."
The God of Love obeys, and sets aside
His bow and quiver, and his plumy pride;
He walks Iulus in his mother's sight,
And in the sweet resemblance takes delight.

The goddess then to young Ascanius flies,
And in a pleasing slumber seals his eyes:
Lull'd in her lap, amidst a train of Loves,
She gently bears him to her blissful groves,
Then with a wreath of myrtle crowns his head,
And softly lays him on a flow'ry bed.
Cupid meantime assum'd his form and face,
Foll'wing Achates with a shorter pace,
And brought the gifts. The queen already sate
Amidst the Trojan lords, in shining state,
High on a golden bed: her princely guest
Was next her side; in order sate the rest.
Then canisters with bread are heap'd on high;
Th' attendants water for their hands supply,
And, having wash'd, with silken towels dry.
Next fifty handmaids in long order bore
The censers, and with fumes the gods adore:
Then youths, and virgins twice as many, join
To place the dishes, and to serve the wine.
The Tyrian train, admitted to the feast,
Approach, and on the painted couches rest.
All on the Trojan gifts with wonder gaze,
But view the beauteous boy with more amaze,
His rosy-color'd cheeks, his radiant eyes,
His motions, voice, and shape, and all the god's disguise;
Nor pass unprais'd the vest and veil divine,
Which wand'ring foliage and rich flow'rs entwine.
But, far above the rest, the royal dame,
(Already doom'd to love's disastrous flame,)
With eyes insatiate, and tumultuous joy,
Beholds the presents, and admires the boy.
The guileful god about the hero long,
With children's play, and false embraces, hung;
Then sought the queen: she took him to her arms
With greedy pleasure, and devour'd his charms.
Unhappy Dido little thought what guest,
How dire a god, she drew so near her breast;
But he, not mindless of his mother's pray'r,
Works in the pliant bosom of the fair,
And molds her heart anew, and blots her former care.
The dead is to the living love resign'd;
And all Aeneas enters in her mind.

Now, when the rage of hunger was appeas'd,
The meat remov'd, and ev'ry guest was pleas'd,
The golden bowls with sparkling wine are crown'd,
And thro' the palace cheerful cries resound.
From gilded roofs depending lamps display
Nocturnal beams, that emulate the day.
A golden bowl, that shone with gems divine,
The queen commanded to be crown'd with wine:
The bowl that Belus us'd, and all the Tyrian line.
Then, silence thro' the hall proclaim'd, she spoke:
"O hospitable Jove! we thus invoke,
With solemn rites, thy sacred name and pow'r;
Bless to both nations this auspicious hour!
So may the Trojan and the Tyrian line
In lasting concord from this day combine.
Thou, Bacchus, god of joys and friendly cheer,
And gracious Juno, both be present here!
And you, my lords of Tyre, your vows address
To Heav'n with mine, to ratify the peace."
The goblet then she took, with nectar crown'd
(Sprinkling the first libations on the ground,)
And rais'd it to her mouth with sober grace;
Then, sipping, offer'd to the next in place.
'T was Bitias whom she call'd, a thirsty soul;
He took challenge, and embrac'd the bowl,
With pleasure swill'd the gold, nor ceas'd to draw,
Till he the bottom of the brimmer saw.
The goblet goes around: Iopas brought
His golden lyre, and sung what ancient Atlas taught:
The various labors of the wand'ring moon,
And whence proceed th' eclipses of the sun;
Th' original of men and beasts; and whence
The rains arise, and fires their warmth dispense,
And fix'd and erring stars dispose their influence;
What shakes the solid earth; what cause delays
The summer nights and shortens winter days.
With peals of shouts the Tyrians praise the song:
Those peals are echo'd by the Trojan throng.
Th' unhappy queen with talk prolong'd the night,
And drank large draughts of love with vast delight;
Of Priam much enquir'd, of Hector more;
Then ask'd what arms the swarthy Memnon wore,
What troops he landed on the Trojan shore;
The steeds of Diomede varied the discourse,
And fierce Achilles, with his matchless force;
At length, as fate and her ill stars requir'd,
To hear the series of the war desir'd.
"Relate at large, my godlike guest," she said,
"The Grecian stratagems, the town betray'd:
The fatal issue of so long a war,

Your flight, your wand'rings, and your woes, declare;
For, since on ev'ry sea, on ev'ry coast,
Your men have been distress'd, your navy toss'd,
Sev'n times the sun has either tropic view'd,
The winter banish'd, and the spring renew'd." 1065

Book II

All were attentive to the godlike man,
When from his lofty couch he thus began:
"Great queen, what you command me to relate
Renews the sad remembrance of our fate:
An empire from its old foundations rent, 1070
And ev'ry woe the Trojans underwent;
A peopled city made a desart place;
All that I saw, and part of which I was:
Not ev'n the hardest of our foes could hear,
Nor stern Ulysses tell without a tear. 1075
And now the latter watch of wasting night,
And setting stars, to kindly rest invite;
But, since you take such int'rest in our woe,
And Troy's disastrous end desire to know,
I will restrain my tears, and briefly tell 1080
What in our last and fatal night befell.

"By destiny compell'd, and in despair,
The Greeks grew weary of the tedious war,
And by Minerva's aid a fabric rear'd,
Which like a steed of monstrous height appear'd: 1085
The sides were plank'd with pine; they feign'd it made
For their return, and this the vow they paid.
Thus they pretend, but in the hollow side
Selected numbers of their soldiers hide:
With inward arms the dire machine they load, 1090
And iron bowels stuff the dark abode.
In sight of Troy lies Tenedos, an isle
(While Fortune did on Priam's empire smile)
Renown'd for wealth; but, since, a faithless bay,
Where ships expos'd to wind and weather lay. 1095
There was their fleet conceal'd. We thought, for Greece
Their sails were hoisted, and our fears release.
The Trojans, coop'd within their walls so long,
Unbar their gates, and issue in a throng,
Like swarming bees, and with delight survey 1100
The camp deserted, where the Grecians lay:
The quarters of the sev'ral chiefs they show'd;
Here Phoenix, here Achilles, made abode;
Here join'd the battles; there the navy rode.
Part on the pile their wond'ring eyes employ: 1105
The pile by Pallas rais'd to ruin Troy.
Thymoetes first ('t is doubtful whether hir'd,

Or so the Trojan destiny requir'd)
Mov'd that the ramparts might be broken down,
To lodge the monster fabric in the town.
But Capys, and the rest of sounder mind,
The fatal present to the flames designed,
Or to the wat'ry deep; at least to bore
The hollow sides, and hidden frauds explore.
The giddy vulgar, as their fancies guide,
With noise say nothing, and in parts divide.
Laocoon, follow'd by a num'rous crowd,
Ran from the fort, and cried, from far, aloud:
'O wretched countrymen! what fury reigns?
What more than madness has possess'd your brains?
Think you the Grecians from your coasts are gone?
And are Ulysses' arts no better known?
This hollow fabric either must inclose,
Within its blind recess, our secret foes;
Or 't is an engine rais'd above the town,
T' o'erlook the walls, and then to batter down.
Somewhat is sure design'd, by fraud or force:
Trust not their presents, nor admit the horse.'
Thus having said, against the steed he threw
His forceful spear, which, hissing as flew,
Pierc'd thro' the yielding planks of jointed wood,
And trembling in the hollow belly stood.
The sides, transpierc'd, return a rattling sound,
And groans of Greeks inclos'd come issuing thro' the wound
And, had not Heav'n the fall of Troy design'd,
Or had not men been fated to be blind,
Enough was said and done t' inspire a better mind.
Then had our lances pierc'd the treach'rous wood,
And Ilian tow'rs and Priam's empire stood.
Meantime, with shouts, the Trojan shepherds bring
A captive Greek, in bands, before the king;
Taken to take; who made himself their prey,
T' impose on their belief, and Troy betray;
Fix'd on his aim, and obstinately bent
To die undaunted, or to circumvent.
About the captive, tides of Trojans flow;
All press to see, and some insult the foe.
Now hear how well the Greeks their wiles disguis'd;
Behold a nation in a man compris'd.
Trembling the miscreant stood, unarm'd and bound;
He star'd, and roll'd his haggard eyes around,
Then said: 'Alas! what earth remains, what sea
Is open to receive unhappy me?
What fate a wretched fugitive attends,
Scorn'd by my foes, abandon'd by my friends?'
He said, and sigh'd, and cast a rueful eye:
Our pity kindles, and our passions die.

We cheer youth to make his own defense,
And freely tell us what he was, and whence:
What news he could impart, we long to know,
And what to credit from a captive foe.

"His fear at length dismiss'd, he said: 'Whate'er
My fate ordains, my words shall be sincere:
I neither can nor dare my birth disclaim;
Greece is my country, Sinon is my name.
Tho' plung'd by Fortune's pow'r in misery,
'T is not in Fortune's pow'r to make me lie.
If any chance has hither brought the name
Of Palamedes, not unknown to fame,
Who suffer'd from the malice of the times,
Accus'd and sentenc'd for pretended crimes,
Because these fatal wars he would prevent;
Whose death the wretched Greeks too late lament
Me, then a boy, my father, poor and bare
Of other means, committed to his care,
His kinsman and companion in the war.
While Fortune favor'd, while his arms support
The cause, and rul'd the counsels, of the court,
I made some figure there; nor was my name
Obscure, nor I without my share of fame.
But when Ulysses, with fallacious arts,
Had made impression in the people's hearts,
And forg'd a treason in my patron's name
(I speak of things too far divulg'd by fame),
My kinsman fell. Then I, without support,
In private mourn'd his loss, and left the court.
Mad as I was, I could not bear his fate
With silent grief, but loudly blam'd the state,
And curs'd the direful author of my woes.
'T was told again; and hence my ruin rose.
I threaten'd, if indulgent Heav'n once more
Would land me safely on my native shore,
His death with double vengeance to restore.
This mov'd the murderer's hate; and soon ensued
Th' effects of malice from a man so proud.
Ambiguous rumors thro' the camp he spread,
And sought, by treason, my devoted head;
New crimes invented; left unturn'd no stone,
To make my guilt appear, and hide his own;
Till Calchas was by force and threat'ning wrought
But why why dwell I on that anxious thought?
If on my nation just revenge you seek,
And 't is t' appear a foe, t' appear a Greek;
Already you my name and country know;
Assuage your thirst of blood, and strike the blow:
My death will both the kingly brothers please,

And set insatiate Ithacus at ease.’
This fair unfinish’d tale, these broken starts,
Rais’d expectations in our longing hearts:
Unknowing as we were in Grecian arts.
His former trembling once again renew’d,
With acted fear, the villain thus pursued:

“‘Long had the Grecians (tir’d with fruitless care,
And wearied with an unsuccessful war)
Resolv’d to raise the siege, and leave the town;
And, had the gods permitted, they had gone;
But oft the wintry seas and southern winds
Withstood their passage home, and chang’d their minds.
Portents and prodigies their souls amaz’d;
But most, when this stupendous pile was rais’d:
Then flaming meteors, hung in air, were seen,
And thunders rattled thro’ a sky serene.
Dismay’d, and fearful of some dire event,
Eurypylus t’ enquire their fate was sent.
He from the gods this dreadful answer brought:

“O Grecians, when the Trojan shores you sought,
Your passage with a virgin’s blood was bought:
So must your safe return be bought again,
And Grecian blood once more atone the main.”
The spreading rumor round the people ran;
All fear’d, and each believ’d himself the man.
Ulysses took th’ advantage of their fright;
Call’d Calchas, and produc’d in open sight:
Then bade him name the wretch, ordain’d by fate
The public victim, to redeem the state.
Already some presag’d the dire event,
And saw what sacrifice Ulysses meant.
For twice five days the good old seer withstood
Th’ intended treason, and was dumb to blood,
Till, tir’d, with endless clamors and pursuit
Of Ithacus, he stood no longer mute;
But, as it was agreed, pronounc’d that I
Was destin’d by the wrathful gods to die.
All prais’d the sentence, pleas’d the storm should fall
On one alone, whose fury threaten’d all.
The dismal day was come; the priests prepare
Their leaven’d cakes, and fillets for my hair.
I follow’d nature’s laws, and must avow
I broke my bonds and fled the fatal blow.
Hid in a weedy lake all night I lay,
Secure of safety when they sail’d away.
But now what further hopes for me remain,
To see my friends, or native soil, again;
My tender infants, or my careful sire,
Whom they returning will to death require;

Will perpetrate on them their first design,
And take the forfeit of their heads for mine?
Which, O! if pity mortal minds can move,
If there be faith below, or gods above,
If innocence and truth can claim desert,
Ye Trojans, from an injur'd wretch avert.'

"False tears true pity move; the king commands
To loose his fetters, and unbind his hands:
Then adds these friendly words: 'Dismiss thy fears;
Forget the Greeks; be mine as thou wert theirs.
But truly tell, was it for force or guile,
Or some religious end, you rais'd the pile?'
Thus said the king. He, full of fraudful arts,
This well-invented tale for truth imparts:
'Ye lamps of heav'n!' he said, and lifted high
His hands now free, 'thou venerable sky!
Inviolable pow'rs, ador'd with dread!
Ye fatal fillets, that once bound this head!
Ye sacred altars, from whose flames I fled!
Be all of you adjur'd; and grant I may,
Without a crime, th' ungrateful Greeks betray,
Reveal the secrets of the guilty state,
And justly punish whom I justly hate!
But you, O king, preserve the faith you gave,
If I, to save myself, your empire save.
The Grecian hopes, and all th' attempts they made,
Were only founded on Minerva's aid.
But from the time when impious Diomede,
And false Ulysses, that inventive head,
Her fatal image from the temple drew,
The sleeping guardians of the castle slew,
Her virgin statue with their bloody hands
Polluted, and profan'd her holy bands;
From thence the tide of fortune left their shore,
And ebb'd much faster than it flow'd before:
Their courage languish'd, as their hopes decay'd;
And Pallas, now averse, refus'd her aid.
Nor did the goddess doubtfully declare
Her alter'd mind and alienated care.
When first her fatal image touch'd the ground,
She sternly cast her glaring eyes around,
That sparkled as they roll'd, and seem'd to threat:
Her heav'nly limbs distill'd a briny sweat.
Thrice from the ground she leap'd, was seen to wield
Her brandish'd lance, and shake her horrid shield.
Then Calchas bade our host for flight
And hope no conquest from the tedious war,
Till first they sail'd for Greece; with pray'rs besought
Her injur'd pow'r, and better omens brought.

And now their navy plows the wat'ry main,
Yet soon expect it on your shores again,
With Pallas pleas'd; as Calchas did ordain.
But first, to reconcile the blue-ey'd maid
For her stol'n statue and her tow'r betray'd,
Warn'd by the seer, to her offended name
We rais'd and dedicate this wondrous frame,
So lofty, lest thro' your forbidden gates
It pass, and intercept our better fates:
For, once admitted there, our hopes are lost;
And Troy may then a new Palladium boast;
For so religion and the gods ordain,
That, if you violate with hands profane
Minerva's gift, your town in flames shall burn,
(Which omen, O ye gods, on Graecia turn!)
But if it climb, with your assisting hands,
The Trojan walls, and in the city stands;
Then Troy shall Argos and Mycenae burn,
And the reverse of fate on us return.'

"With such deceits he gain'd their easy hearts,
Too prone to credit his perfidious arts.
What Diomede, nor Thetis' greater son,
A thousand ships, nor ten years' siege, had done
False tears and fawning words the city won.

"A greater omen, and of worse portent,
Did our unwary minds with fear torment,
Concurring to produce the dire event.
Laocoon, Neptune's priest by lot that year,
With solemn pomp then sacrific'd a steer;
When, dreadful to behold, from sea we spied
Two serpents, rank'd abreast, the seas divide,
And smoothly sweep along the swelling tide.
Their flaming crests above the waves they show;
Their bellies seem to burn the seas below;
Their speckled tails advance to steer their course,
And on the sounding shore the flying billows force.
And now the strand, and now the plain they held;
Their ardent eyes with bloody streaks were fill'd;
Their nimble tongues they brandish'd as they came,
And lick'd their hissing jaws, that sputter'd flame.
We fled amaz'd; their destin'd way they take,
And to Laocoon and his children make;
And first around the tender boys they wind,
Then with their sharpen'd fangs their limbs and bodies grind.
The wretched father, running to their aid
With pious haste, but vain, they next invade;
Twice round his waist their winding volumes roll'd;
And twice about his gasping throat they fold.
The priest thus doubly chok'd, their crests divide,

And tow'ring o'er his head in triumph ride.
With both his hands he labors at the knots;
His holy fillets the blue venom blots;
His roaring fills the flitting air around.
Thus, when an ox receives a glancing wound,
He breaks his bands, the fatal altar flies,
And with loud bellowings breaks the yielding skies.
Their tasks perform'd, the serpents quit their prey,
And to the tow'r of Pallas make their way:
Couch'd at her feet, they lie protected there
By her large buckler and protended spear.
Amazement seizes all; the gen'ral cry
Proclaims Laocoon justly doom'd to die,
Whose hand the will of Pallas had withstood,
And dared to violate the sacred wood.
All vote t' admit the steed, that vows be paid
And incense offer'd to th' offended maid.
A spacious breach is made; the town lies bare;
Some hoisting-levers, some the wheels prepare
And fasten to the horse's feet; the rest
With cables haul along th' unwieldly beast.
Each on his fellow for assistance calls;
At length the fatal fabric mounts the walls,
Big with destruction. Boys with chaplets crown'd,
And choirs of virgins, sing and dance around.
Thus rais'd aloft, and then descending down,
It enters o'er our heads, and threats the town.
O sacred city, built by hands divine!
O valiant heroes of the Trojan line!
Four times he struck: as oft the clashing sound
Of arms was heard, and inward groans rebound.
Yet, mad with zeal, and blinded with our fate,
We haul along the horse in solemn state;
Then place the dire portent within the tow'r.
Cassandra cried, and curs'd th' unhappy hour;
Foretold our fate; but, by the god's decree,
All heard, and none believ'd the prophecy.
With branches we the fanes adorn, and waste,
In jollity, the day ordain'd to be the last.
Meantime the rapid heav'ns roll'd down the light,
And on the shaded ocean rush'd the night;
Our men, secure, nor guards nor sentries held,
But easy sleep their weary limbs compell'd.
The Grecians had embark'd their naval pow'rs
From Tenedos, and sought our well-known shores,
Safe under covert of the silent night,
And guided by th' imperial galley's light;
When Sinon, favor'd by the partial gods,
Unlock'd the horse, and op'd his dark abodes;
Restor'd to vital air our hidden foes,

Who joyful from their long confinement rose.
Tysander bold, and Sthenelus their guide,
And dire Ulysses down the cable slide:
Then Thoas, Athamas, and Pyrrhus haste;
Nor was the Podalirian hero last,
Nor injur'd Menelaus, nor the fam'd
Epeus, who the fatal engine fram'd.
A nameless crowd succeed; their forces join
T' invade the town, oppress'd with sleep and wine.
Those few they find awake first meet their fate;
Then to their fellows they unbar the gate.

"'T was in the dead of night, when sleep repairs
Our bodies worn with toils, our minds with cares,
When Hector's ghost before my sight appears:
A bloody shroud he seem'd, and bath'd in tears;
Such as he was, when, by Pelides slain,
Thessalian coursers dragg'd him o'er the plain.
Swoln were his feet, as when the thongs were thrust
Thro' the bor'd holes; his body black with dust;
Unlike that Hector who return'd from toils
Of war, triumphant, in Aeacian spoils,
Or him who made the fainting Greeks retire,
And launch'd against their navy Phrygian fire.
His hair and beard stood stiffen'd with his gore;
And all the wounds he for his country bore
Now stream'd afresh, and with new purple ran.
I wept to see the visionary man,
And, while my trance continued, thus began:
'O light of Trojans, and support of Troy,
Thy father's champion, and thy country's joy!
O, long expected by thy friends! from whence
Art thou so late return'd for our defense?
Do we behold thee, wearied as we are
With length of labors, and with toils of war?
After so many fun'rals of thy own
Art thou restor'd to thy declining town?
But say, what wounds are these? What new disgrace
Deforms the manly features of thy face?'

"To this the specter no reply did frame,
But answer'd to the cause for which he came,
And, groaning from the bottom of his breast,
This warning in these mournful words express'd:
'O goddess-born! escape, by timely flight,
The flames and horrors of this fatal night.
The foes already have possess'd the wall;
Troy nods from high, and totters to her fall.
Enough is paid to Priam's royal name,
More than enough to duty and to fame.
If by a mortal hand my father's throne

Could be defended, ‘t was by mine alone.
Now Troy to thee commends her future state,
And gives her gods companions of thy fate:
From their assistance walls expect,
Which, wand’ring long, at last thou shalt erect.’
He said, and brought me, from their blest abodes,
The venerable statues of the gods,
With ancient Vesta from the sacred choir,
The wreaths and relics of th’ immortal fire.

“Now peals of shouts come thund’ring from afar,
Cries, threats, and loud laments, and mingled war:
The noise approaches, tho’ our palace stood
Aloof from streets, encompass’d with a wood.
Louder, and yet more loud, I hear th’ alarms
Of human cries distinct, and clashing arms.
Fear broke my slumbers; I no longer stay,
But mount the terrace, thence the town survey,
And hearken what the frightful sounds convey.
Thus, when a flood of fire by wind is borne,
Crackling it rolls, and mows the standing corn;
Or deluges, descending on the plains,
Sweep o’er the yellow year, destroy the pains
Of lab’ring oxen and the peasant’s gains;
Unroot the forest oaks, and bear away
Flocks, folds, and trees, and undistinguish’d prey:
The shepherd climbs the cliff, and sees from far
The wasteful ravage of the wat’ry war.
Then Hector’s faith was manifestly clear’d,
And Grecian frauds in open light appear’d.
The palace of Deiphobus ascends
In smoky flames, and catches on his friends.
Ucalegon burns next: the seas are bright
With splendor not their own, and shine with Trojan light.
New clamors and new clangors now arise,
The sound of trumpets mix’d with fighting cries.
With frenzy seiz’d, I run to meet th’ alarms,
Resolv’d on death, resolv’d to die in arms,
But first to gather friends, with them t’ oppose
(If fortune favor’d) and repel the foes;
Spurr’d by my courage, by my country fir’d,
With sense of honor and revenge inspir’d.

“Pantheus, Apollo’s priest, a sacred name,
Had scap’d the Grecian swords, and pass’d the flame:
With relics loaden, to my doors he fled,
And by the hand his tender grandson led.
‘What hope, O Pantheus? whither can we run?
Where make a stand? and what may yet be done?’
Scarce had I said, when Pantheus, with a groan:
‘Troy is no more, and Ilium was a town!

The fatal day, th' appointed hour, is come,
When wrathful Jove's irrevocable doom
Transfers the Trojan state to Grecian hands.
The fire consumes the town, the foe commands;
And armed hosts, an unexpected force,
Break from the bowels of the fatal horse.
Within the gates, proud Sinon throws about
The flames; and foes for entrance press without,
With thousand others, whom I fear to name,
More than from Argos or Mycenae came.
To sev'ral posts their parties they divide;
Some block the narrow streets, some scour the wide:
The bold they kill, th' unwary they surprise;
Who fights finds death, and death finds him who flies.
The warders of the gate but scarce maintain
Th' unequal combat, and resist in vain.'

"I heard; and Heav'n, that well-born souls inspires,
Prompts me thro' lifted swords and rising fires
To run where clashing arms and clamor calls,
And rush undaunted to defend the walls.
Ripheus and Iph'itus by my side engage,
For valor one renown'd, and one for age.
Dymas and Hypanis by moonlight knew
My motions and my mien, and to my party drew;
With young Coroebus, who by love was led
To win renown and fair Cassandra's bed,
And lately brought his troops to Priam's aid,
Forewarn'd in vain by the prophetic maid.
Whom when I saw resolv'd in arms to fall,
And that one spirit animated all:
'Brave souls!' said I, 'but brave, alas! in vain
Come, finish what our cruel fates ordain.
You see the desp'rate state of our affairs,
And heav'n's protecting pow'rs are deaf to pray'rs.
The passive gods behold the Greeks defile
Their temples, and abandon to the spoil
Their own abodes: we, feeble few, conspire
To save a sinking town, involv'd in fire.
Then let us fall, but fall amidst our foes:
Despair of life the means of living shows.'
So bold a speech incourag'd their desire
Of death, and added fuel to their fire.

"As hungry wolves, with raging appetite,
Scour thro' the fields, nor fear the stormy night
Their whelps at home expect the promis'd food,
And long to temper their dry chaps in blood
So rush'd we forth at once; resolv'd to die,
Resolv'd, in death, the last extremes to try.
We leave the narrow lanes behind, and dare

Th’ unequal combat in the public square:
Night was our friend; our leader was despair.
What tongue can tell the slaughter of that night?
What eyes can weep the sorrows and affright?
An ancient and imperial city falls: 1555
The streets are fill’d with frequent funerals;
Houses and holy temples float in blood,
And hostile nations make a common flood.
Not only Trojans fall; but, in their turn,
The vanquish’d triumph, and the victors mourn. 1560
Ours take new courage from despair and night:
Confus’d the fortune is, confus’d the fight.
All parts resound with tumults, plaints, and fears;
And grisly Death in sundry shapes appears.
Androgeos fell among us, with his band, 1565
Who thought us Grecians newly come to land.
‘From whence,’ said he, ‘my friends, this long delay?
You loiter, while the spoils are borne away:
Our ships are laden with the Trojan store;
And you, like truants, come too late ashore.’ 1570
He said, but soon corrected his mistake,
Found, by the doubtful answers which we make:
Amaz’d, he would have shunn’d th’ unequal fight;
But we, more num’rous, intercept his flight.
As when some peasant, in a bushy brake, 1575
Has with unwary footing press’d a snake;
He starts aside, astonish’d, when he spies
His rising crest, blue neck, and rolling eyes;
So from our arms surpris’d Androgeos flies.
In vain; for him and his we compass’d round, 1580
Possess’d with fear, unknowing of the ground,
And of their lives an easy conquest found.
Thus Fortune on our first endeavor smil’d.
Coroebus then, with youthful hopes beguil’d,
Swoln with success, and a daring mind, 1585
This new invention fatally design’d.
‘My friends,’ said he, ‘since Fortune shows the way,
‘T is fit we should th’ auspicious guide obey.
For what has she these Grecian arms bestow’d,
But their destruction, and the Trojans’ good? 1590
Then change we shields, and their devices bear:
Let fraud supply the want of force in war.
They find us arms.’ This said, himself he dress’d
In dead Androgeos’ spoils, his upper vest,
His painted buckler, and his plumy crest. 1595
Thus Ripheus, Dymas, all the Trojan train,
Lay down their own attire, and strip the slain.
Mix’d with the Greeks, we go with ill presage,
Flatter’d with hopes to glut our greedy rage;
Unknown, assaulting whom we blindly meet, 1600

And strew with Grecian carcasses the street.
Thus while their straggling parties we defeat,
Some to the shore and safer ships retreat;
And some, oppress'd with more ignoble fear,
Remount the hollow horse, and pant in secret there.

"But, ah! what use of valor can be made,
When heav'n's propitious pow'rs refuse their aid!
Behold the royal prophetess, the fair
Cassandra, dragg'd by her dishevel'd hair,
Whom not Minerva's shrine, nor sacred bands,
In safety could protect from sacrilegious hands:
On heav'n she cast her eyes, she sigh'd, she cried
'T was all she could her tender arms were tied.
So sad a sight Coroebus could not bear;
But, fir'd with rage, distracted with despair,
Amid the barb'rous ravishers he flew:
Our leader's rash example we pursue.
But storms of stones, from the proud temple's height,
Pour down, and on our batter'd helms alight:
We from our friends receiv'd this fatal blow,
Who thought us Grecians, as we seem'd in show.
They aim at the mistaken crests, from high;
And ours beneath the pond'rous ruin lie.
Then, mov'd with anger and disdain, to see
Their troops dispers'd, the royal virgin free,
The Grecians rally, and their pow'rs unite,
With fury charge us, and renew the fight.
The brother kings with Ajax join their force,
And the whole squadron of Thessalian horse.

"Thus, when the rival winds their quarrel try,
Contending for the kingdom of the sky,
South, east, and west, on airy coursers borne;
The whirlwind gathers, and the woods are torn:
Then Nereus strikes the deep; the billows rise,
And, mix'd with ooze and sand, pollute the skies.
The troops we squander'd first again appear
From several quarters, and enclose the rear.
They first observe, and to the rest betray,
Our diff 'rent speech; our borrow'd arms survey.
Oppress'd with odds, we fall; Coroebus first,
At Pallas' altar, by Peneleus pierc'd.
Then Ripheus follow'd, in th' unequal fight;
Just of his word, observant of the right:
Heav'n thought not so. Dymas their fate attends,
With Hypanis, mistaken by their friends.
Nor, Pantheus, thee, thy miter, nor the bands
Of awful Phoebus, sav'd from impious hands.
Ye Trojan flames, your testimony bear,
What I perform'd, and what I suffer'd there;

No sword avoiding in the fatal strife,
Expos'd to death, and prodigal of life;
Witness, ye heavens! I live not by my fault:
I strove to have deserv'd the death I sought.
But, when I could not fight, and would have died,
Borne off to distance by the growing tide,
Old Iphitus and I were hurried thence,
With Pelias wounded, and without defense.
New clamors from th' invested palace ring:
We run to die, or disengage the king.
So hot th' assault, so high the tumult rose,
While ours defend, and while the Greeks oppose
As all the Dardan and Argolic race
Had been contracted in that narrow space;
Or as all Ilium else were void of fear,
And tumult, war, and slaughter, only there.
Their targets in a tortoise cast, the foes,
Secure advancing, to the turrets rose:
Some mount the scaling ladders; some, more bold,
Swerve upwards, and by posts and pillars hold;
Their left hand gripes their bucklers in th' ascent,
While with their right they seize the battlement.
From their demolish'd tow'rs the Trojans throw
Huge heaps of stones, that, falling, crush the foe;
And heavy beams and rafters from the sides
(Such arms their last necessity provides)
And gilded roofs, come tumbling from on high,
The marks of state and ancient royalty.
The guards below, fix'd in the pass, attend
The charge undaunted, and the gate defend.
Renew'd in courage with recover'd breath,
A second time we ran to tempt our death,
To clear the palace from the foe, succeed
The weary living, and revenge the dead.

"A postern door, yet unobserv'd and free,
Join'd by the length of a blind gallery,
To the king's closet led: a way well known
To Hector's wife, while Priam held the throne,
Thro' which she brought Astyanax, unseen,
To cheer his grandsire and his grandsire's queen.
Thro' this we pass, and mount the tow'r, from whence
With unavailing arms the Trojans make defense.
From this the trembling king had oft descried
The Grecian camp, and saw their navy ride.
Beams from its lofty height with swords we hew,
Then, wrenching with our hands, th' assault renew;
And, where the rafters on the columns meet,
We push them headlong with our arms and feet.
The lightning flies not swifter than the fall,

Nor thunder louder than the ruin'd wall:
Down goes the top at once; the Greeks beneath
Are piecemeal torn, or pounded into death.
Yet more succeed, and more to death are sent;
We cease not from above, nor they below relent.
Before the gate stood Pyrrhus, threat'ning loud,
With glitt'ring arms conspicuous in the crowd.
So shines, renew'd in youth, the crested snake,
Who slept the winter in a thorny brake,
And, casting off his slough when spring returns,
Now looks aloft, and with new glory burns;
Restor'd with poisonous herbs, his ardent sides
Reflect the sun; and rais'd on spires he rides;
High o'er the grass, hissing he rolls along,
And brandishes by fits his forky tongue.
Proud Periphas, and fierce Automedon,
His father's charioteer, together run
To force the gate; the Scyrian infantry
Rush on in crowds, and the barr'd passage free.
Ent'ring the court, with shouts the skies they rend;
And flaming firebrands to the roofs ascend.
Himself, among the foremost, deals his blows,
And with his ax repeated strokes bestows
On the strong doors; then all their shoulders ply,
Till from the posts the brazen hinges fly.
He hews apace; the double bars at length
Yield to his ax and unresisted strength.
A mighty breach is made: the rooms conceal'd
Appear, and all the palace is reveal'd;
The halls of audience, and of public state,
And where the lonely queen in secret sate.
Arm'd soldiers now by trembling maids are seen,
With not a door, and scarce a space, between.
The house is fill'd with loud laments and cries,
And shrieks of women rend the vaulted skies;
The fearful matrons run from place to place,
And kiss the thresholds, and the posts embrace.
The fatal work inhuman Pyrrhus plies,
And all his father sparkles in his eyes;
Nor bars, nor fighting guards, his force sustain:
The bars are broken, and the guards are slain.
In rush the Greeks, and all the apartments fill;
Those few defendants whom they find, they kill.
Not with so fierce a rage the foaming flood
Roars, when he finds his rapid course withstood;
Bears down the dams with unresisted sway,
And sweeps the cattle and the cots away.
These eyes beheld him when he march'd between
The brother kings: I saw th' unhappy queen,
The hundred wives, and where old Priam stood,

To stain his hallow'd altar with his brood.
The fifty nuptial beds (such hopes had he,
So large a promise, of a progeny),
The posts, of plated gold, and hung with spoils,
Fell the reward of the proud victor's toils.
Where'er the raging fire had left a space,
The Grecians enter and possess the place.
"Perhaps you may of Priam's fate enquire.
He, when he saw his regal town on fire,
His ruin'd palace, and his ent'ring foes,
On ev'ry side inevitable woes,
In arms, disus'd, invests his limbs, decay'd,
Like them, with age; a late and useless aid.
His feeble shoulders scarce the weight sustain;
Loaded, not arm'd, he creeps along with pain,
Despairing of success, ambitious to be slain!
Uncover'd but by heav'n, there stood in view
An altar; near the hearth a laurel grew,
Dodder'd with age, whose boughs encompass round
The household gods, and shade the holy ground.
Here Hecuba, with all her helpless train
Of dames, for shelter sought, but sought in vain.
Driv'n like a flock of doves along the sky,
Their images they hug, and to their altars fly.
The Queen, when she beheld her trembling lord,
And hanging by his side a heavy sword,
'What rage,' she cried, 'has seiz'd my husband's mind?
What arms are these, and to what use design'd?
These times want other aids! Were Hector here,
Ev'n Hector now in vain, like Priam, would appear.
With us, one common shelter thou shalt find,
Or in one common fate with us be join'd.'
She said, and with a last salute embrac'd
The poor old man, and by the laurel plac'd.
Behold! Polites, one of Priam's sons,
Pursued by Pyrrhus, there for safety runs.
Thro' swords and foes, amaz'd and hurt, he flies
Thro' empty courts and open galleries.
Him Pyrrhus, urging with his lance, pursues,
And often reaches, and his thrusts renews.
The youth, transfix'd, with lamentable cries,
Expires before his wretched parent's eyes:
Whom gasping at his feet when Priam saw,
The fear of death gave place to nature's law;
And, shaking more with anger than with age,
'The gods,' said he, 'requite thy brutal rage!
As sure they will, barbarian, sure they must,
If there be gods in heav'n, and gods be just
Who tak'st in wrongs an insolent delight;
With a son's death t' infect a father's sight.

Not he, whom thou and lying fame conspire
To call thee his not he, thy vaunted sire,
Thus us'd my wretched age: the gods he fear'd,
The laws of nature and of nations heard.
He cheer'd my sorrows, and, for sums of gold,
The bloodless carcass of my Hector sold;
Pitied the woes a parent underwent,
And sent me back in safety from his tent.'

"This said, his feeble hand a javelin threw,
Which, flutt'ring, seem'd to loiter as it flew:
Just, and but barely, to the mark it held,
And faintly tinkled on the brazen shield.
"Then Pyrrhus thus: 'Go thou from me to fate,
And to my father my foul deeds relate.
Now die!' With that he dragg'd the trembling sire,
Slidd'ring thro' clotter'd blood and holy mire,
(The mingled paste his murder'd son had made,)
Haul'd from beneath the violated shade,
And on the sacred pile the royal victim laid.
His right hand held his bloody falchion bare,
His left he twisted in his hoary hair;
Then, with a speeding thrust, his heart he found:
The lukewarm blood came rushing thro' the wound,
And sanguine streams distain'd the sacred ground.
Thus Priam fell, and shar'd one common fate
With Troy in ashes, and his ruin'd state:
He, who the scepter of all Asia sway'd,
Whom monarchs like domestic slaves obey'd.
On the bleak shore now lies th' abandon'd king,
A headless carcass, and a nameless thing.

"Then, not before, I felt my cruddled blood
Congeal with fear, my hair with horror stood:
My father's image fill'd my pious mind,
Lest equal years might equal fortune find.
Again I thought on my forsaken wife,
And trembled for my son's abandon'd life.
I look'd about, but found myself alone,
Deserted at my need! My friends were gone.
Some spent with toil, some with despair oppress'd,
Leap'd headlong from the heights; the flames consum'd the rest.
Thus, wand'ring in my way, without a guide,
The graceless Helen in the porch I spied
Of Vesta's temple; there she lurk'd alone;
Muffled she sate, and, what she could, unknown:
But, by the flames that cast their blaze around,
That common bane of Greece and Troy I found.
For Ilium burnt, she dreads the Trojan sword;
More dreads the vengeance of her injur'd lord;
Ev'n by those gods who refug'd her abhorr'd.

Trembling with rage, the strumpet I regard,
Resolv'd to give her guilt the due reward:
'Shall she triumphant sail before the wind,
And leave in flames unhappy Troy behind?
Shall she her kingdom and her friends review,
In state attended with a captive crew,
While unreveng'd the good old Priam falls,
And Grecian fires consume the Trojan walls?
For this the Phrygian fields and Xanthian flood
Were swell'd with bodies, and were drunk with blood?
'T is true, a soldier can small honor gain,
And boast no conquest, from a woman slain:
Yet shall the fact not pass without applause,
Of vengeance taken in so just a cause;
The punish'd crime shall set my soul at ease,
And murm'ring manes of my friends appease.'
Thus while I rave, a gleam of pleasing light
Spread o'er the place; and, shining heav'nly bright,
My mother stood reveal'd before my sight
Never so radiant did her eyes appear;
Not her own star confess'd a light so clear:
Great in her charms, as when on gods above
She looks, and breathes herself into their love.
She held my hand, the destin'd blow to break;
Then from her rosy lips began to speak:
'My son, from whence this madness, this neglect
Of my commands, and those whom I protect?
Why this unmanly rage? Recall to mind
Whom you forsake, what pledges leave behind.
Look if your helpless father yet survive,
Or if Ascanius or Creusa live.
Around your house the greedy Grecians err;
And these had perish'd in the nightly war,
But for my presence and protecting care.
Not Helen's face, nor Paris, was in fault;
But by the gods was this destruction brought.
Now cast your eyes around, while I dissolve
The mists and films that mortal eyes involve,
Purge from your sight the dross, and make you see
The shape of each avenging deity.
Enlighten'd thus, my just commands fulfill,
Nor fear obedience to your mother's will.
Where yon disorder'd heap of ruin lies,
Stones rent from stones; where clouds of dust arise
Amid that smother Neptune holds his place,
Below the wall's foundation drives his mace,
And heaves the building from the solid base.
Look where, in arms, imperial Juno stands
Full in the Scaean gate, with loud commands,
Urging on shore the tardy Grecian bands.

See! Pallas, of her snaky buckler proud,
Bestrides the tow'r, refulgent thro' the cloud:
See! Jove new courage to the foe supplies,
And arms against the town the partial deities.
Haste hence, my son; this fruitless labor end:
Haste, where your trembling spouse and sire attend:
Haste; and a mother's care your passage shall befriend.'
She said, and swiftly vanish'd from my sight,
Obscure in clouds and gloomy shades of night.
I look'd, I listen'd; dreadful sounds I hear;
And the dire forms of hostile gods appear.
Troy sunk in flames I saw (nor could prevent),
And Ilium from its old foundations rent;
Rent like a mountain ash, which dar'd the winds,
And stood the sturdy strokes of lab'ring hinds.
About the roots the cruel ax resounds;
The stumps are pierc'd with oft-repeated wounds:
The war is felt on high; the nodding crown
Now threats a fall, and throws the leafy honors down.
To their united force it yields, tho' late,
And mourns with mortal groans th' approaching fate:
The roots no more their upper load sustain;
But down she falls, and spreads a ruin thro' the plain.

"Descending thence, I scape thro' foes and fire:
Before the goddess, foes and flames retire.
Arriv'd at home, he, for whose only sake,
Or most for his, such toils I undertake,
The good Anchises, whom, by timely flight,
I purpos'd to secure on Ida's height,
Refus'd the journey, resolute to die
And add his fun'rals to the fate of Troy,
Rather than exile and old age sustain.
'Go you, whose blood runs warm in ev'ry vein.
Had Heav'n decreed that I should life enjoy,
Heav'n had decreed to save unhappy Troy.
'T is, sure, enough, if not too much, for one,
Twice to have seen our Ilium overthrown.
Make haste to save the poor remaining crew,
And give this useless corpse a long adieu.
These weak old hands suffice to stop my breath;
At least the pitying foes will aid my death,
To take my spoils, and leave my body bare:
As for my sepulcher, let Heav'n take care.
'T is long since I, for my celestial wife
Loath'd by the gods, have dragg'd a ling'ring life;
Since ev'ry hour and moment I expire,
Blasted from heav'n by Jove's avenging fire.'
This oft repeated, he stood fix'd to die:
Myself, my wife, my son, my family,

Intreat, pray, beg, and raise a doleful cry
‘What, will he still persist, on death resolve,
And in his ruin all his house involve!’
He still persists his reasons to maintain;
Our pray’rs, our tears, our loud laments, are vain.

“Urg’d by despair, again I go to try
The fate of arms, resolv’d in fight to die:
‘What hope remains, but what my death must give?
Can I, without so dear a father, live?
You term it prudence, what I baseness call:
Could such a word from such a parent fall?
If Fortune please, and so the gods ordain,
That nothing should of ruin’d Troy remain,
And you conspire with Fortune to be slain,
The way to death is wide, th’ approaches near:
For soon relentless Pyrrhus will appear,
Reeking with Priam’s blood the wretch who slew
The son (inhuman) in the father’s view,
And then the sire himself to the dire altar drew.
O goddess mother, give me back to Fate;
Your gift was undesir’d, and came too late!
Did you, for this, unhappy me convey
Thro’ foes and fires, to see my house a prey?
Shall I my father, wife, and son behold,
Welt’ring in blood, each other’s arms infold?
Haste! gird my sword, tho’ spent and overcome:
‘T is the last summons to receive our doom.
I hear thee, Fate; and I obey thy call!
Not unreveng’d the foe shall see my fall.
Restore me to the yet unfinish’d fight:
My death is wanting to conclude the night.’
Arm’d once again, my glitt’ring sword I wield,
While th’ other hand sustains my weighty shield,
And forth I rush to seek th’ abandon’d field.
I went; but sad Creusa stopp’d my way,
And cross the threshold in my passage lay,
Embrac’d my knees, and, when I would have gone,
Shew’d me my feeble sire and tender son:
‘If death be your design, at least,’ said she,
‘Take us along to share your destiny.
If any farther hopes in arms remain,
This place, these pledges of your love, maintain.
To whom do you expose your father’s life,
Your son’s, and mine, your now forgotten wife!’
While thus she fills the house with clam’rous cries,
Our hearing is diverted by our eyes:
For, while I held my son, in the short space
Betwixt our kisses and our last embrace;
Strange to relate, from young Iulus’ head

A lambent flame arose, which gently spread
Around his brows, and on his temples fed.
Amaz'd, with running water we prepare
To quench the sacred fire, and slake his hair;
But old Anchises, vers'd in omens, rear'd
His hands to heav'n, and this request preferr'd:
'If any vows, almighty Jove, can bend
Thy will; if piety can pray'rs commend,
Confirm the glad presage which thou art pleas'd to send.'
Scarce had he said, when, on our left, we hear
A peal of rattling thunder roll in air:
There shot a streaming lamp along the sky,
Which on the winged lightning seem'd to fly;
From o'er the roof the blaze began to move,
And, trailing, vanish'd in th' Idaean grove.
It swept a path in heav'n, and shone a guide,
Then in a steaming stench of sulphur died.

"The good old man with suppliant hands implor'd
The gods' protection, and their star ador'd.
'Now, now,' said he, 'my son, no more delay!
I yield, I follow where Heav'n shews the way.
Keep, O my country gods, our dwelling place,
And guard this relic of the Trojan race,
This tender child! These omens are your own,
And you can yet restore the ruin'd town.
At least accomplish what your signs foreshow:
I stand resign'd, and am prepar'd to go.'

"He said. The crackling flames appear on high.
And driving sparkles dance along the sky.
With Vulcan's rage the rising winds conspire,
And near our palace roll the flood of fire.
'Haste, my dear father, ('t is no time to wait,)
And load my shoulders with a willing freight.
Whate'er befalls, your life shall be my care;
One death, or one deliv'rance, we will share.
My hand shall lead our little son; and you,
My faithful consort, shall our steps pursue.
Next, you, my servants, heed my strict commands:
Without the walls a ruin'd temple stands,
To Ceres hallow'd once; a cypress nigh
Shoots up her venerable head on high,
By long religion kept; there bend your feet,
And in divided parties let us meet.
Our country gods, the relics, and the bands,
Hold you, my father, in your guiltless hands:
In me 't is impious holy things to bear,
Red as I am with slaughter, new from war,
Till in some living stream I cleanse the guilt
Of dire debate, and blood in battle spilt.'

Thus, ord'ring all that prudence could provide,
I clothe my shoulders with a lion's hide
And yellow spoils; then, on my bending back,
The welcome load of my dear father take;
While on my better hand Ascanius hung,
And with unequal paces tripp'd along.
Creusa kept behind; by choice we stray
Thro' ev'ry dark and ev'ry devious way.
I, who so bold and dauntless, just before,
The Grecian darts and shock of lances bore,
At ev'ry shadow now am seiz'd with fear,
Not for myself, but for the charge I bear;
Till, near the ruin'd gate arriv'd at last,
Secure, and deeming all the danger past,
A frightful noise of trampling feet we hear.
My father, looking thro' the shades, with fear,
Cried out: 'Haste, haste, my son, the foes are nigh;
Their swords and shining armor I descry.'
Some hostile god, for some unknown offense,
Had sure bereft my mind of better sense;
For, while thro' winding ways I took my flight,
And sought the shelter of the gloomy night,
Alas! I lost Creusa: hard to tell
If by her fatal destiny she fell,
Or weary sate, or wander'd with affright;
But she was lost for ever to my sight.
I knew not, or reflected, till I meet
My friends, at Ceres' now deserted seat.
We met: not one was wanting; only she
Deceiv'd her friends, her son, and wretched me.

"What mad expressions did my tongue refuse!
Whom did I not, of gods or men, accuse!
This was the fatal blow, that pain'd me more
Than all I felt from ruin'd Troy before.
Stung with my loss, and raving with despair,
Abandoning my now forgotten care,
Of counsel, comfort, and of hope bereft,
My sire, my son, my country gods I left.
In shining armor once again I sheathe
My limbs, not feeling wounds, nor fearing death.
Then headlong to the burning walls I run,
And seek the danger I was forc'd to shun.
I tread my former tracks; thro' night explore
Each passage, ev'ry street I cross'd before.
All things were full of horror and affright,
And dreadful ev'n the silence of the night.
Then to my father's house I make repair,
With some small glimpse of hope to find her there.
Instead of her, the cruel Greeks I met;

The house was fill'd with foes, with flames beset.
Driv'n on the wings of winds, whole sheets of fire,
Thro' air transported, to the roofs aspire.
From thence to Priam's palace I resort,
And search the citadel and desart court.
Then, unobserv'd, I pass by Juno's church:
A guard of Grecians had possess'd the porch;
There Phoenix and Ulysses watch prey,
And thither all the wealth of Troy convey:
The spoils which they from ransack'd houses brought,
And golden bowls from burning altars caught,
The tables of the gods, the purple vests,
The people's treasure, and the pomp of priests.
A rank of wretched youths, with pinion'd hands,
And captive matrons, in long order stands.
Then, with ungovern'd madness, I proclaim,
Thro' all the silent street, Creusa's name:
Creusa still I call; at length she hears,
And sudden thro' the shades of night appears
Appears, no more Creusa, nor my wife,
But a pale specter, larger than the life.
Aghast, astonish'd, and struck dumb with fear,
I stood; like bristles rose my stiffen'd hair.
Then thus the ghost began to soothe my grief
'Nor tears, nor cries, can give the dead relief.
Desist, my much-lov'd lord,'t indulge your pain;
You bear no more than what the gods ordain.
My fates permit me not from hence to fly;
Nor he, the great controller of the sky.
Long wand'ring ways for you the pow'rs decree;
On land hard labors, and a length of sea.
Then, after many painful years are past,
On Latium's happy shore you shall be cast,
Where gentle Tiber from his bed beholds
The flow'ry meadows, and the feeding folds.
There end your toils; and there your fates provide
A quiet kingdom, and a royal bride:
There fortune shall the Trojan line restore,
And you for lost Creusa weep no more.
Fear not that I shall watch, with servile shame,
Th' imperious looks of some proud Grecian dame;
Or, stooping to the victor's lust, disgrace
My goddess mother, or my royal race.
And now, farewell! The parent of the gods
Restrains my fleeting soul in her abodes:
I trust our common issue to your care.'
She said, and gliding pass'd unseen in air.
I strove to speak: but horror tied my tongue;
And thrice about her neck my arms I flung,
And, thrice deceiv'd, on vain embraces hung.

Light as an empty dream at break of day,
Or as a blast of wind, she rush'd away.
"Thus having pass'd the night in fruitless pain,
I to my longing friends return again,
Amaz'd th' augmented number to behold,
Of men and matrons mix'd, of young and old;
A wretched exil'd crew together brought,
With arms appointed, and with treasure fraught,
Resolv'd, and willing, under my command,
To run all hazards both of sea and land.
The Morn began, from Ida, to display
Her rosy cheeks; and Phosphor led the day:
Before the gates the Grecians took their post,
And all pretense of late relief was lost.
I yield to Fate, unwillingly retire,
And, loaded, up the hill convey my sire."

Book III

"When Heav'n had overturn'd the Trojan state
And Priam's throne, by too severe a fate;
When ruin'd Troy became the Grecians' prey,
And Ilium's lofty tow'rs in ashes lay;
Warn'd by celestial omens, we retreat,
To seek in foreign lands a happier seat.
Near old Antandros, and at Ida's foot,
The timber of the sacred groves we cut,
And build our fleet; uncertain yet to find
What place the gods for our repose assign'd.
Friends daily flock; and scarce the kindly spring
Began to clothe the ground, and birds to sing,
When old Anchises summon'd all to sea:
The crew my father and the Fates obey.
With sighs and tears I leave my native shore,
And empty fields, where Ilium stood before.
My sire, my son, our less and greater gods,
All sail at once, and cleave the briny floods.

"Against our coast appears a spacious land,
Which once the fierce Lycurgus did command,
(Thracia the name the people bold in war;
Vast are their fields, and tillage is their care,)
A hospitable realm while Fate was kind,
With Troy in friendship and religion join'd.
I land; with luckless omens then adore
Their gods, and draw a line along the shore;
I lay the deep foundations of a wall,
And Aenos, nam'd from me, the city call.
To Dionaean Venus vows are paid,
And all the pow'rs that rising labors aid;
A bull on Jove's imperial altar laid.

Not far, a rising hillock stood in view;
Sharp myrtles on the sides, and cornels grew.
There, while I went to crop the sylvan scenes,
And shade our altar with their leafy greens,
I pull'd a plant with horror I relate
A prodigy so strange and full of fate.
The rooted fibers rose, and from the wound
Black bloody drops distill'd upon the ground.
Mute and amaz'd, my hair with terror stood;
Fear shrunk my sinews, and congeal'd my blood.
Mann'd once again, another plant I try:
That other gush'd with the same sanguine dye.
Then, fearing guilt for some offense unknown,
With pray'rs and vows the Dryads I atone,
With all the sisters of the woods, and most
The God of Arms, who rules the Thracian coast,
That they, or he, these omens would avert,
Release our fears, and better signs impart.
Clear'd, as I thought, and fully fix'd at length
To learn the cause, I tugged with all my strength:
I bent my knees against the ground; once more
The violated myrtle ran with gore.
Scarce dare I tell the sequel: from the womb
Of wounded earth, and caverns of the tomb,
A groan, as of a troubled ghost, renew'd
My fright, and then these dreadful words ensued:
'Why dost thou thus my buried body rend?
O spare the corpse of thy unhappy friend!
Spare to pollute thy pious hands with blood:
The tears distil not from the wounded wood;
But ev'ry drop this living tree contains
Is kindred blood, and ran in Trojan veins.
O fly from this unhospitable shore,
Warn'd by my fate; for I am Polydore!
Here loads of lances, in my blood embrued,
Again shoot upward, by my blood renew'd.'

"My falt'ring tongue and shiv'ring limbs declare
My horror, and in bristles rose my hair.
When Troy with Grecian arms was closely pent,
Old Priam, fearful of the war's event,
This hapless Polydore to Thracia sent:
Loaded with gold, he sent his darling, far
From noise and tumults, and destructive war,
Committed to the faithless tyrant's care;
Who, when he saw the pow'r of Troy decline,
Forsook the weaker, with the strong to join;
Broke ev'ry bond of nature and of truth,
And murder'd, for his wealth, the royal youth.
O sacred hunger of pernicious gold!

What bands of faith can impious lucre hold?
Now, when my soul had shaken off her fears,
I call my father and the Trojan peers;
Relate the prodigies of Heav'n, require
What he commands, and their advice desire.
All vote to leave that execrable shore,
Polluted with the blood of Polydore;
But, ere we sail, his fun'ral rites prepare,
Then, to his ghost, a tomb and altars rear.
In mournful pomp the matrons walk the round,
With baleful cypress and blue fillets crown'd,
With eyes dejected, and with hair unbound.
Then bowls of tepid milk and blood we pour,
And thrice invoke the soul of Polydore.
"Now, when the raging storms no longer reign,
But southern gales invite us to the main,
We launch our vessels, with a prosp'rous wind,
And leave the cities and the shores behind.

"An island in th' Aegaean main appears;
Neptune and wat'ry Doris claim it theirs.
It floated once, till Phoebus fix'd the sides
To rooted earth, and now it braves the tides.
Here, borne by friendly winds, we come ashore,
With needful ease our weary limbs restore,
And the Sun's temple and his town adore.

"Anius, the priest and king, with laurel crown'd,
His hoary locks with purple fillets bound,
Who saw my sire the Delian shore ascend,
Came forth with eager haste to meet his friend;
Invites him to his palace; and, in sign
Of ancient love, their plighted hands they join.
Then to the temple of the god I went,
And thus, before the shrine, my vows present:
'Give, O Thymbraeus, give a resting place
To the sad relics of the Trojan race;
A seat secure, a region of their own,
A lasting empire, and a happier town.
Where shall we fix? where shall our labors end?
Whom shall we follow, and what fate attend?
Let not my pray'rs a doubtful answer find;
But in clear auguries unveil thy mind.'
Scarce had I said: he shook the holy ground,
The laurels, and the lofty hills around;
And from the tripos rush'd a bellowing sound.
Prostrate we fell; confess'd the present god,
Who gave this answer from his dark abode:
'Undaunted youths, go, seek that mother earth
From which your ancestors derive their birth.
The soil that sent you forth, her ancient race

In her old bosom shall again embrace.
Thro' the wide world th' Aeneian house shall reign,
And children's children shall the crown sustain.'
Thus Phoebus did our future fates disclose:
A mighty tumult, mix'd with joy, arose.

"All are concern'd to know what place the god
Assign'd, and where determin'd our abode.
My father, long revolving in his mind
The race and lineage of the Trojan kind,
Thus answer'd their demands: 'Ye princes, hear
Your pleasing fortune, and dispel your fear.
The fruitful isle of Crete, well known to fame,
Sacred of old to Jove's imperial name,
In the mid ocean lies, with large command,
And on its plains a hundred cities stand.
Another Ida rises there, and we
From thence derive our Trojan ancestry.
From thence, as 't is divulg'd by certain fame,
To the Rhoetean shores old Teucrus came;
There fix'd, and there the seat of empire chose,
Ere Ilium and the Trojan tow'rs arose.
In humble vales they built their soft abodes,
Till Cybele, the mother of the gods,
With tinkling cymbals charm'd th' Idaean woods,
She secret rites and ceremonies taught,
And to the yoke the savage lions brought.
Let us the land which Heav'n appoints, explore;
Appease the winds, and seek the Gnossian shore.
If Jove assists the passage of our fleet,
The third propitious dawn discovers Crete.'
Thus having said, the sacrifices, laid
On smoking altars, to the gods he paid:
A bull, to Neptune an oblation due,
Another bull to bright Apollo slew;
A milk-white ewe, the western winds to please,
And one coal-black, to calm the stormy seas.
Ere this, a flying rumor had been spread
That fierce Idomeneus from Crete was fled,
Expell'd and exil'd; that the coast was free
From foreign or domestic enemy.

"We leave the Delian ports, and put to sea;
By Naxos, fam'd for vintage, make our way;
Then green Donysa pass; and sail in sight
Of Paros' isle, with marble quarries white.
We pass the scatter'd isles of Cyclades,
That, scarce distinguish'd, seem to stud the seas.
The shouts of sailors double near the shores;
They stretch their canvas, and they ply their oars.
'All hands aloft! for Crete! for Crete!' they cry,

And swiftly thro' the foamy billows fly.
Full on the promis'd land at length we bore,
With joy descending on the Cretan shore.
With eager haste a rising town I frame,
Which from the Trojan Pergamus I name:
The name itself was grateful; I exhort
To found their houses, and erect a fort.
Our ships are haul'd upon the yellow strand;
The youth begin to till the labor'd land;
And I myself new marriages promote,
Give laws, and dwellings I divide by lot;
When rising vapors choke the wholesome air,
And blasts of noisome winds corrupt the year;
The trees devouring caterpillars burn;
Parch'd was the grass, and blighted was the corn:
Nor 'scape the beasts; for Sirius, from on high,
With pestilential heat infects the sky:
My men some fall, the rest in fevers fry.
Again my father bids me seek the shore
Of sacred Delos, and the god implore,
To learn what end of woes we might expect,
And to what clime our weary course direct.

"'T was night, when ev'ry creature, void of cares,
The common gift of balmy slumber shares:
The statues of my gods (for such they seem'd),
Those gods whom I from flaming Troy redeem'd,
Before me stood, majestically bright,
Full in the beams of Phoebe's ent'ring light.
Then thus they spoke, and eas'd my troubled mind:
'What from the Delian god thou go'st to find,
He tells thee here, and sends us to relate.
Those pow'rs are we, companions of thy fate,
Who from the burning town by thee were brought,
Thy fortune follow'd, and thy safety wrought.
Thro' seas and lands as we thy steps attend,
So shall our care thy glorious race befriend.
An ample realm for thee thy fates ordain,
A town that o'er the conquer'd world shall reign.
Thou, mighty walls for mighty nations build;
Nor let thy weary mind to labors yield:
But change thy seat; for not the Delian god,
Nor we, have giv'n thee Crete for our abode.
A land there is, Hesperia call'd of old,
(The soil is fruitful, and the natives bold
Th' Oenotrians held it once,) by later fame
Now call'd Italia, from the leader's name.
Iasius there and Dardanus were born;
From thence we came, and thither must return.

Rise, and thy sire with these glad tidings greet.
Search Italy; for Jove denies thee Crete.’

“Astonish’d at their voices and their sight,
(Nor were they dreams, but visions of the night;
I saw, I knew their faces, and descried,
In perfect view, their hair with fillets tied;)
I started from my couch; a clammy sweat
On all my limbs and shiv’ring body sate.
To heav’n I lift my hands with pious haste,
And sacred incense in the flames I cast.
Thus to the gods their perfect honors done,
More cheerful, to my good old sire I run,
And tell the pleasing news. In little space
He found his error of the double race;
Not, as before he deem’d, deriv’d from Crete;
No more deluded by the doubtful seat:
Then said: ‘O son, turmoil’d in Trojan fate!
Such things as these Cassandra did relate.
This day revives within my mind what she
Foretold of Troy renew’d in Italy,
And Latian lands; but who could then have thought
That Phrygian gods to Latium should be brought,
Or who believ’d what mad Cassandra taught?
Now let us go where Phoebus leads the way.’

“He said; and we with glad consent obey,
Forsake the seat, and, leaving few behind,
We spread our sails before the willing wind.
Now from the sight of land our galleys move,
With only seas around and skies above;
When o’er our heads descends a burst of rain,
And night with sable clouds involves the main;
The ruffling winds the foamy billows raise;
The scatter’d fleet is forc’d to sev’ral ways;
The face of heav’n is ravish’d from our eyes,
And in redoubled peals the roaring thunder flies.
Cast from our course, we wander in the dark.
No stars to guide, no point of land to mark.
Ev’n Palinurus no distinction found
Betwixt the night and day; such darkness reign’d around.
Three starless nights the doubtful navy strays,
Without distinction, and three sunless days;
The fourth renews the light, and, from our shrouds,
We view a rising land, like distant clouds;
The mountain-tops confirm the pleasing sight,
And curling smoke ascending from their height.
The canvas falls; their oars the sailors ply;
From the rude strokes the whirling waters fly.
At length I land upon the Strophades,
Safe from the danger of the stormy seas.

Those isles are compass’d by th’ Ionian main,
The dire abode where the foul Harpies reign,
Forc’d by the winged warriors to repair
To their old homes, and leave their costly fare.
Monsters more fierce offended Heav’n ne’er sent
From hell’s abyss, for human punishment:
With virgin faces, but with wombs obscene,
Foul paunches, and with ordure still unclean;
With claws for hands, and looks for ever lean.

“We landed at the port, and soon beheld
Fat herds of oxen graze the flow’ry field,
And wanton goats without a keeper stray’d.
With weapons we the welcome prey invade,
Then call the gods for partners of our feast,
And Jove himself, the chief invited guest.
We spread the tables on the greensward ground;
We feed with hunger, and the bowls go round;
When from the mountain-tops, with hideous cry,
And clatt’ring wings, the hungry Harpies fly;
They snatch the meat, defiling all they find,
And, parting, leave a loathsome stench behind.
Close by a hollow rock, again we sit,
New dress the dinner, and the beds refit,
Secure from sight, beneath a pleasing shade,
Where tufted trees a native arbor made.
Again the holy fires on altars burn;
And once again the rav’nous birds return,
Or from the dark recesses where they lie,
Or from another quarter of the sky;
With filthy claws their odious meal repeat,
And mix their loathsome ordures with their meat.
I bid my friends for vengeance then prepare,
And with the hellish nation wage the war.
They, as commanded, for the fight provide,
And in the grass their glitt’ring weapons hide;
Then, when along the crooked shore we hear
Their clatt’ring wings, and saw the foes appear,
Misenus sounds a charge: we take th’ alarm,
And our strong hands with swords and bucklers arm.
In this new kind of combat all employ
Their utmost force, the monsters to destroy.
In vain the fated skin is proof to wounds;
And from their plumes the shining sword rebounds.
At length rebuff ’d, they leave their mangled prey,
And their stretch’d pinions to the skies display.
Yet one remain’d the messenger of Fate:
High on a craggy cliff Celaeno sate,
And thus her dismal errand did relate:
‘What! not contented with our oxen slain,

Dare you with Heav’n an impious war maintain,
And drive the Harpies from their native reign? 2485
Heed therefore what I say; and keep in mind
What Jove decrees, what Phoebus has design’d,
And I, the Furies’ queen, from both relate
You seek th’ Italian shores, foredoom’d by fate:
Th’ Italian shores are granted you to find, 2490
And a safe passage to the port assign’d.
But know, that ere your promis’d walls you build,
My curses shall severely be fulfill’d.
Fierce famine is your lot for this misdeed,
Reduc’d to grind the plates on which you feed.’ 2495
She said, and to the neighb’ring forest flew.
Our courage fails us, and our fears renew.
Hopeless to win by war, to pray’rs we fall,
And on th’ offended Harpies humbly call,
And whether gods or birds obscene they were, 2500
Our vows for pardon and for peace prefer.
But old Anchises, off ’ring sacrifice,
And lifting up to heav’n his hands and eyes,
Ador’d the greater gods: ‘Avert,’ said he,
‘These omens; render vain this prophecy, 2505
And from th’ impending curse a pious people free!’

“Thus having said, he bids us put to sea;
We loose from shore our haulsers, and obey,
And soon with swelling sails pursue the wat’ry way.
Amidst our course, Zacynthian woods appear; 2510
And next by rocky Neritos we steer:
We fly from Ithaca’s detested shore,
And curse the land which dire Ulysses bore.
At length Leucate’s cloudy top appears,
And the Sun’s temple, which the sailor fears. 2515
Resolv’d to breathe a while from labor past,
Our crooked anchors from the prow we cast,
And joyful to the little city haste.
Here, safe beyond our hopes, our vows we pay
To Jove, the guide and patron of our way. 2520
The customs of our country we pursue,
And Trojan games on Actian shores renew.
Our youth their naked limbs besmear with oil,
And exercise the wrastlers’ noble toil;
Pleas’d to have sail’d so long before the wind, 2525
And left so many Grecian towns behind.
The sun had now fulfill’d his annual course,
And Boreas on the seas display’d his force:
I fix’d upon the temple’s lofty door
The brazen shield which vanquish’d Abas bore; 2530
The verse beneath my name and action speaks:
‘These arms Aeneas took from conqu’ring Greeks.’

Then I command to weigh; the seamen ply
Their sweeping oars; the smoking billows fly.
The sight of high Phaeacia soon we lost,
And skimm'd along Epirus' rocky coast.

"Then to Chaonia's port our course we bend,
And, landed, to Buthrotus' heights ascend.
Here wondrous things were loudly blaz'd fame:
How Helenus reviv'd the Trojan name,
And reign'd in Greece; that Priam's captive son
Succeeded Pyrrhus in his bed and throne;
And fair Andromache, restor'd by fate,
Once more was happy in a Trojan mate.
I leave my galleys riding in the port,
And long to see the new Dardanian court.
By chance, the mournful queen, before the gate,
Then solemniz'd her former husband's fate.
Green altars, rais'd of turf, with gifts she crown'd,
And sacred priests in order stand around,
And thrice the name of hapless Hector sound.
The grove itself resembles Ida's wood;
And Simois seem'd the well-dissembled flood.
But when at nearer distance she beheld
My shining armor and my Trojan shield,
Astonish'd at the sight, the vital heat
Forsakes her limbs; her veins no longer beat:
She faints, she falls, and scarce recov'ring strength,
Thus, with a falt'ring tongue, she speaks at length:

"'Are you alive, O goddess-born?' she said,
'Or if a ghost, then where is Hector's shade?'
At this, she cast a loud and frightful cry.
With broken words I made this brief reply:
'All of me that remains appears in sight;
I live, if living be to loathe the light.
No phantom; but I drag a wretched life,
My fate resembling that of Hector's wife.
What have you suffer'd since you lost your lord?
By what strange blessing are you now restor'd?
Still are you Hector's? or is Hector fled,
And his remembrance lost in Pyrrhus' bed?'
With eyes dejected, in a lowly tone,
After a modest pause she thus begun:

"'O only happy maid of Priam's race,
Whom death deliver'd from the foes' embrace!
Commanded on Achilles' tomb to die,
Not forc'd, like us, to hard captivity,
Or in a haughty master's arms to lie.
In Grecian ships unhappy we were borne,
Endur'd the victor's lust, sustain'd the scorn:
Thus I submitted to the lawless pride

Of Pyrrhus, more a handmaid than a bride.
Cloy'd with possession, he forsook my bed,
And Helen's lovely daughter sought to wed;
Then me to Trojan Helenus resign'd,
And his two slaves in equal marriage join'd;
Till young Orestes, pierc'd with deep despair,
And longing to redeem the promis'd fair,
Before Apollo's altar slew the ravisher.
By Pyrrhus' death the kingdom we regain'd:
At least one half with Helenus remain'd.
Our part, from Chaon, he Chaonia calls,
And names from Pergamus his rising walls.
But you, what fates have landed on our coast?
What gods have sent you, or what storms have toss'd?
Does young Ascanius life and health enjoy,
Sav'd from the ruins of unhappy Troy?
O tell me how his mother's loss he bears,
What hopes are promis'd from his blooming years,
How much of Hector in his face appears?'
She spoke; and mix'd her speech with mournful cries,
And fruitless tears came trickling from her eyes.

"At length her lord descends upon the plain,
In pomp, attended with a num'rous train;
Receives his friends, and to the city leads,
And tears of joy amidst his welcome sheds.
Proceeding on, another Troy I see,
Or, in less compass, Troy's epitome.
A riv'let by the name of Xanthus ran,
And I embrace the Scaean gate again.
My friends in porticoes were entertain'd,
And feasts and pleasures thro' the city reign'd.
The tables fill'd the spacious hall around,
And golden bowls with sparkling wine were crown'd.
Two days we pass'd in mirth, till friendly gales,
Blown from the south supplied our swelling sails.
Then to the royal seer I thus began:
'O thou, who know'st, beyond the reach of man,
The laws of heav'n, and what the stars decree;
Whom Phoebus taught unerring prophecy,
From his own tripod, and his holy tree;
Skill'd in the wing'd inhabitants of air,
What auspices their notes and flights declare:
O say for all religious rites portend
A happy voyage, and a prosp'rous end;
And ev'ry power and omen of the sky
Direct my course for destin'd Italy;
But only dire Celaeno, from the gods,
A dismal famine fatally forebodes

O say what dangers I am first to shun,
What toils vanquish, and what course to run.’

“The prophet first with sacrifice adores
The greater gods; their pardon then implores;
Unbinds the fillet from his holy head;
To Phoebus, next, my trembling steps he led,
Full of religious doubts and awful dread.
Then, with his god possess’d, before the shrine,
These words proceeded from his mouth divine:
‘O goddess-born, (for Heav’n’s appointed will,
With greater auspices of good than ill,
Foreshows thy voyage, and thy course directs;
Thy fates conspire, and Jove himself protects,)
Of many things some few I shall explain,
Teach thee to shun the dangers of the main,
And how at length the promis’d shore to gain.
The rest the fates from Helenus conceal,
And Juno’s angry pow’r forbids to tell.
First, then, that happy shore, that seems so nigh,
Will far from your deluded wishes fly;
Long tracts of seas divide your hopes from Italy:
For you must cruise along Sicilian shores,
And stem the currents with your struggling oars;
Then round th’ Italian coast your navy steer;
And, after this, to Circe’s island veer;
And, last, before your new foundations rise,
Must pass the Stygian lake, and view the nether skies.
Now mark the signs of future ease and rest,
And bear them safely treasur’d in thy breast.
When, in the shady shelter of a wood,
And near the margin of a gentle flood,
Thou shalt behold a sow upon the ground,
With thirty sucking young encompass’d round;
The dam and offspring white as falling snow
These on thy city shall their name bestow,
And there shall end thy labors and thy woe.
Nor let the threaten’d famine fright thy mind,
For Phoebus will assist, and Fate the way will find.
Let not thy course to that ill coast be bent,
Which fronts from far th’ Epirian continent:
Those parts are all by Grecian foes possess’d;
The salvage Locrians here the shores infest;
There fierce Idomeneus his city builds,
And guards with arms the Salentinian fields;
And on the mountain’s brow Petilia stands,
Which Philoctetes with his troops commands.
Ev’n when thy fleet is landed on the shore,
And priests with holy vows the gods adore,
Then with a purple veil involve your eyes,

Lest hostile faces blast the sacrifice.
These rites and customs to the rest commend,
That to your pious race they may descend.

"'When, parted hence, the wind, that ready waits
For Sicily, shall bear you to the straits
Where proud Pelorus opes a wider way,
Tack to the larboard, and stand off to sea:
Veer starboard sea and land. Th' Italian shore
And fair Sicilia's coast were one, before
An earthquake caus'd the flaw: the roaring tides
The passage broke that land from land divides;
And where the lands retir'd, the rushing ocean rides.
Distinguish'd by the straits, on either hand,
Now rising cities in long order stand,
And fruitful fields: so much can time invade
The mold'ring work that beauteous Nature made.
Far on the right, her dogs foul Scylla hides:
Charybdis roaring on the left presides,
And in her greedy whirlpool sucks the tides;
Then spouts them from below: with fury driv'n,
The waves mount up and wash the face of heav'n.
But Scylla from her den, with open jaws,
The sinking vessel in her eddy draws,
Then dashes on the rocks. A human face,
And virgin bosom, hides her tail's disgrace:
Her parts obscene below the waves descend,
With dogs inclos'd, and in a dolphin end.
'T is safer, then, to bear aloof to sea,
And coast Pachynus, tho' with more delay,
Than once to view misshapen Scylla near,
And the loud yell of wat'ry wolves to hear.

"'Besides, if faith to Helenus be due,
And if prophetic Phoebus tell me true,
Do not this precept of your friend forget,
Which therefore more than once I must repeat:
Above the rest, great Juno's name adore;
Pay vows to Juno; Juno's aid implore.
Let gifts be to the mighty queen design'd,
And mollify with pray'rs her haughty mind.
Thus, at the length, your passage shall be free,
And you shall safe descend on Italy.
Arriv'd at Cumae, when you view the flood
Of black Avernus, and the sounding wood,
The mad prophetic Sibyl you shall find,
Dark in a cave, and on a rock reclin'd.
She sings the fates, and, in her frantic fits,
The notes and names, inscrib'd, to leafs commits.
What she commits to leafs, in order laid,
Before the cavern's entrance are display'd:

Unmov'd they lie; but, if a blast of wind
Without, or vapors issue from behind,
The leafs are borne aloft in liquid air,
And she resumes no more her museful care,
Nor gathers from the rocks her scatter'd verse,
Nor sets in order what the winds disperse.
Thus, many not succeeding, most upbraid
The madness of the visionary maid,
And with loud curses leave the mystic shade.

"'Think it not loss of time a while to stay,
Tho' thy companions chide thy long delay;
Tho' summon'd to the seas, tho' pleasing gales
Invite thy course, and stretch thy swelling sails:
But beg the sacred priestess to relate
With willing words, and not to write thy fate.
The fierce Italian people she will show,
And all thy wars, and all thy future woe,
And what thou may'st avoid, and what must undergo.
She shall direct thy course, instruct thy mind,
And teach thee how the happy shores to find.
This is what Heav'n allows me to relate:
Now part in peace; pursue thy better fate,
And raise, by strength of arms, the Trojan state.'

"This when the priest with friendly voice declar'd,
He gave me license, and rich gifts prepar'd:
Bounteous of treasure, he supplied my want
With heavy gold, and polish'd elephant;
Then Dodonaean caldrons put on board,
And ev'ry ship with sums of silver stor'd.
A trusty coat of mail to me he sent,
Thrice chain'd with gold, for use and ornament;
The helm of Pyrrhus added to the rest,
That flourish'd with a plume and waving crest.
Nor was my sire forgotten, nor my friends;
And large recruits he to my navy sends:
Men, horses, captains, arms, and warlike stores;
Supplies new pilots, and new sweeping oars.
Meantime, my sire commands to hoist our sails,
Lest we should lose the first auspicious gales.

"The prophet bless'd the parting crew, and last,
With words like these, his ancient friend embrac'd:
'Old happy man, the care of gods above,
Whom heav'nly Venus honor'd with her love,
And twice preserv'd thy life, when Troy was lost,
Behold from far the wish'd Ausonian coast:
There land; but take a larger compass round,
For that before is all forbidden ground.
The shore that Phoebus has design'd for you,
At farther distance lies, conceal'd from view.

Go happy hence, and seek your new abodes,
Blest in a son, and favor'd by the gods:
For I with useless words prolong your stay,
When southern gales have summon'd you away.'

"Nor less the queen our parting thence deplor'd,
Nor was less bounteous than her Trojan lord.
A noble present to my son she brought,
A robe with flow'rs on golden tissue wrought,
A phrygian vest; and loads with gifts beside
Of precious texture, and of Asian pride.
'Accept,' she said, 'these monuments of love,
Which in my youth with happier hands I wove:
Regard these trifles for the giver's sake;
'T is the last present Hector's wife can make.
Thou call'st my lost Astyanax to mind;
In thee his features and his form I find:
His eyes so sparkled with a lively flame;
Such were his motions; such was all his frame;
And ah! had Heav'n so pleas'd, his years had been the same.'

"With tears I took my last adieu, and said:
'Your fortune, happy pair, already made,
Leaves you no farther wish. My diff 'rent state,
Avoiding one, incurs another fate.
To you a quiet seat the gods allow:
You have no shores to search, no seas to plow,
Nor fields of flying Italy to chase:
(Deluding visions, and a vain embrace!)
You see another Simois, and enjoy
The labor of your hands, another Troy,
With better auspice than her ancient tow'rs,
And less obnoxious to the Grecian pow'rs.
If e'er the gods, whom I with vows adore,
Conduct my steps to Tiber's happy shore;
If ever I ascend the Latian throne,
And build a city I may call my own;
As both of us our birth from Troy derive,
So let our kindred lines in concord live,
And both in acts of equal friendship strive.
Our fortunes, good or bad, shall be the same:
The double Troy shall differ but in name;
That what we now begin may never end,
But long to late posterity descend.'

"Near the Ceraunian rocks our course we bore;
The shortest passage to th' Italian shore.
Now had the sun withdrawn his radiant light,
And hills were hid in dusky shades of night:
We land, and, on the bosom of the ground,
A safe retreat and a bare lodging found.
Close by the shore we lay; the sailors keep

Their watches, and the rest securely sleep.
The night, proceeding on with silent pace,
Stood in her noon, and view'd with equal face
Her steepy rise and her declining race.
Then wakeful Palinurus rose, to spy
The face of heav'n, and the nocturnal sky;
And listen'd ev'ry breath of air to try;
Observes the stars, and notes their sliding course,
The Pleiads, Hyads, and their wat'ry force;
And both the Bears is careful to behold,
And bright Orion, arm'd with burnish'd gold.
Then, when he saw no threat'ning tempest nigh,
But a sure promise of a settled sky,
He gave the sign to weigh; we break our sleep,
Forsake the pleasing shore, and plow the deep.

"And now the rising morn with rosy light
Adorns the skies, and puts the stars to flight;
When we from far, like bluish mists, descry
The hills, and then the plains, of Italy.
Achates first pronounc'd the joyful sound;
Then, 'Italy!' the cheerful crew rebound.
My sire Anchises crown'd a cup with wine,
And, off 'ring, thus implor'd the pow'rs divine:
'Ye gods, presiding over lands and seas,
And you who raging winds and waves appease,
Breathe on our swelling sails a prosp'rous wind,
And smooth our passage to the port assign'd!'
The gentle gales their flagging force renew,
And now the happy harbor is in view.
Minerva's temple then salutes our sight,
Plac'd, as a landmark, on the mountain's height.
We furl our sails, and turn the prows to shore;
The curling waters round the galleys roar.
The land lies open to the raging east,
Then, bending like a bow, with rocks compress'd,
Shuts out the storms; the winds and waves complain,
And vent their malice on the cliffs in vain.
The port lies hid within; on either side
Two tow'ring rocks the narrow mouth divide.
The temple, which aloft we view'd before,
To distance flies, and seems to shun the shore.
Scarce landed, the first omens I beheld
Were four white steeds that cropp'd the flow'ry field.
'War, war is threaten'd from this foreign ground,'
My father cried, 'where warlike steeds are found.
Yet, since reclaim'd to chariots they submit,
And bend to stubborn yokes, and champ the bit,
Peace may succeed to war.' Our way we bend
To Pallas, and the sacred hill ascend;

There prostrate to the fierce virago pray,
Whose temple was the landmark of our way.
Each with a Phrygian mantle veil'd his head,
And all commands of Helenus obey'd,
And pious rites to Grecian Juno paid.
These dues perform'd, we stretch our sails, and stand
To sea, forsaking that suspected land.

"From hence Tarentum's bay appears in view,
For Hercules renown'd, if fame be true.
Just opposite, Lacinian Juno stands;
Caulonian tow'rs, and Scylacaean strands,
For shipwrecks fear'd. Mount Aetna thence we spy,
Known by the smoky flames which cloud the sky.
Far off we hear the waves with surly sound
Invade the rocks, the rocks their groans rebound.
The billows break upon the sounding strand,
And roll the rising tide, impure with sand.
Then thus Anchises, in experience old:
''T is that Charybdis which the seer foretold,
And those the promis'd rocks! Bear off to sea!'
With haste the frighted mariners obey.
First Palinurus to the larboard veer'd;
Then all the fleet by his example steer'd.
To heav'n aloft on ridgy waves we ride,
Then down to hell descend, when they divide;
And thrice our galleys knock'd the stony ground,
And thrice the hollow rocks return'd the sound,
And thrice we saw the stars, that stood with dews around.
The flagging winds forsook us, with the sun;
And, wearied, on Cyclopian shores we run.
The port capacious, and secure from wind,
Is to the foot of thund'ring Aetna join'd.
By turns a pitchy cloud she rolls on high;
By turns hot embers from her entrails fly,
And flakes of mounting flames, that lick the sky.
Oft from her bowels massy rocks are thrown,
And, shiver'd by the force, come piecemeal down.
Oft liquid lakes of burning sulphur flow,
Fed from the fiery springs that boil below.
Enceladus, they say, transfix'd by Jove,
With blasted limbs came tumbling from above;
And, where he fell, th' avenging father drew
This flaming hill, and on his body threw.
As often as he turns his weary sides,
He shakes the solid isle, and smoke the heavens hides.
In shady woods we pass the tedious night,
Where bellowing sounds and groans our souls affright,
Of which no cause is offer'd to the sight;
For not one star was kindled in the sky,

Nor could the moon her borrow'd light supply;
For misty clouds involv'd the firmament,
The stars were muffled, and the moon was pent.

"Scarce had the rising sun the day reveal'd,
Scarce had his heat the pearly dews dispell'd,
When from the woods there bolts, before our sight,
Somewhat betwixt a mortal and a sprite,
So thin, so ghastly meager, and so wan,
So bare of flesh, he scarce resembled man.
This thing, all tatter'd, seem'd from far t' implore
Our pious aid, and pointed to the shore.
We look behind, then view his shaggy beard;
His clothes were tagg'd with thorns, and filth his limbs besmear'd;
The rest, in mien, in habit, and in face,
Appear'd a Greek, and such indeed he was.
He cast on us, from far, a frightful view,
Whom soon for Trojans and for foes he knew;
Stood still, and paus'd; then all at once began
To stretch his limbs, and trembled as he ran.
Soon as approach'd, upon his knees he falls,
And thus with tears and sighs for pity calls:
'Now, by the pow'rs above, and what we share
From Nature's common gift, this vital air,
O Trojans, take me hence! I beg no more;
But bear me far from this unhappy shore.
'T is true, I am a Greek, and farther own,
Among your foes besieg'd th' imperial town.
For such demerits if my death be due,
No more for this abandon'd life I sue;
This only favor let my tears obtain,
To throw me headlong in the rapid main:
Since nothing more than death my crime demands,
I die content, to die by human hands.'
He said, and on his knees my knees embrac'd:
I bade him boldly tell his fortune past,
His present state, his lineage, and his name,
Th' occasion of his fears, and whence he came.
The good Anchises rais'd him with his hand;
Who, thus encourag'd, answer'd our demand:
'From Ithaca, my native soil, I came
To Troy; and Achaemenides my name.
Me my poor father with Ulysses sent;
(O had I stay'd, with poverty content!)
But, fearful for themselves, my countrymen
Left me forsaken in the Cyclops' den.
The cave, tho' large, was dark; the dismal floor
Was pav'd with mangled limbs and putrid gore.
Our monstrous host, of more than human size,
Erects his head, and stares within the skies;

Bellowing his voice, and horrid is his hue.
Ye gods, remove this plague from mortal view!
The joints of slaughter'd wretches are his food;
And for his wine he quaffs the streaming blood.
These eyes beheld, when with his spacious hand
He seiz'd two captives of our Grecian band;
Stretch'd on his back, he dash'd against the stones
Their broken bodies, and their crackling bones:
With spouting blood the purple pavement swims,
While the dire glutton grinds the trembling limbs.

"'Not unreveng'd Ulysses bore their fate,
Nor thoughtless of his own unhappy state;
For, gorg'd with flesh, and drunk with human wine
While fast asleep the giant lay supine,
Snoring aloud, and belching from his maw
His indigested foam, and morsels raw;
We pray; we cast the lots, and then surround
The monstrous body, stretch'd along the ground:
Each, as he could approach him, lends a hand
To bore his eyeball with a flaming brand.
Beneath his frowning forehead lay his eye;
For only one did the vast frame supply
But that a globe so large, his front it fill'd,
Like the sun's disk or like a Grecian shield.
The stroke succeeds; and down the pupil bends:
This vengeance follow'd for our slaughter'd friends.
But haste, unhappy wretches, haste to fly!
Your cables cut, and on your oars rely!
Such, and so vast as Polypheme appears,
A hundred more this hated island bears:
Like him, in caves they shut their woolly sheep;
Like him, their herds on tops of mountains keep;
Like him, with mighty strides, they stalk from steep to steep
And now three moons their sharpen'd horns renew,
Since thus, in woods and wilds, obscure from view,
I drag my loathsome days with mortal fright,
And in deserted caverns lodge by night;
Oft from the rocks a dreadful prospect see
Of the huge Cyclops, like a walking tree:
From far I hear his thund'ring voice resound,
And trampling feet that shake the solid ground.
Cornels and salvage berries of the wood,
And roots and herbs, have been my meager food.
While all around my longing eyes I cast,
I saw your happy ships appear at last.
On those I fix'd my hopes, to these I run;
'T is all I ask, this cruel race to shun;
What other death you please, yourselves bestow.'

“Scarce had he said, when on the mountain’s brow
We saw the giant shepherd stalk before
His following flock, and leading to the shore:
A monstrous bulk, deform’d, depriv’d of sight;
His staff a trunk of pine, to guide his steps aright.
His pond’rous whistle from his neck descends;
His woolly care their pensive lord attends:
This only solace his hard fortune sends.
Soon as he reach’d the shore and touch’d the waves,
From his bor’d eye the gutt’ring blood he laves:
He gnash’d his teeth, and groan’d; thro’ seas he strides,
And scarce the topmost billows touch’d his sides.
“Seiz’d with a sudden fear, we run to sea,
The cables cut, and silent haste away;
The well-deserving stranger entertain;
Then, buckling to the work, our oars divide the main.
The giant harken’d to the dashing sound:
But, when our vessels out of reach he found,
He strided onward, and in vain essay’d
Th’ Ionian deep, and durst no farther wade.
With that he roar’d aloud: the dreadful cry
Shakes earth, and air, and seas; the billows fly
Before the bellowing noise to distant Italy.
The neigh’ring Aetna trembling all around,
The winding caverns echo to the sound.
His brother Cyclops hear the yelling roar,
And, rushing down the mountains, crowd the shore.
We saw their stern distorted looks, from far,
And one-eyed glance, that vainly threaten’d war:
A dreadful council, with their heads on high;
(The misty clouds about their foreheads fly;)
Not yielding to the tow’ring tree of Jove,
Or tallest cypress of Diana’s grove.
New pangs of mortal fear our minds assail;
We tug at ev’ry oar, and hoist up ev’ry sail,
And take th’ advantage of the friendly gale.
Forewarn’d by Helenus, we strive to shun
Charybdis’ gulf, nor dare to Scylla run.
An equal fate on either side appears:
We, tacking to the left, are free from fears;
For, from Pelorus’ point, the North arose,
And drove us back where swift Pantagias flows.
His rocky mouth we pass, and make our way
By Thapsus and Megara’s winding bay.
This passage Achaemenides had shown,
Tracing the course which he before had run.

“Right o’er against Plemmyrium’s wat’ry strand,
There lies an isle once call’d th’ Ortygian land.
Alpheus, as old fame reports, has found

From Greece a secret passage under ground,
By love to beauteous Arethusa led;
And, mingling here, they roll in the same sacred bed.
As Helenus enjoin'd, we next adore
Diana's name, protectress of the shore.
With prosp'rous gales we pass the quiet sounds
Of still Elorus, and his fruitful bounds.
Then, doubling Cape Pachynus, we survey
The rocky shore extended to the sea.
The town of Camarine from far we see,
And fenny lake, undrain'd by fate's decree.
In sight of the Geloan fields we pass,
And the large walls, where mighty Gela was;
Then Agragas, with lofty summits crown'd,
Long for the race of warlike steeds renown'd.
We pass'd Selinus, and the palmy land,
And widely shun the Lilybaean strand,
Unsafe, for secret rocks and moving sand.
At length on shore the weary fleet arriv'd,
Which Drepanum's unhappy port receiv'd.
Here, after endless labors, often toss'd
By raging storms, and driv'n on ev'ry coast,
My dear, dear father, spent with age, I lost:
Ease of my cares, and solace of my pain,
Sav'd thro' a thousand toils, but sav'd in vain
The prophet, who my future woes reveal'd,
Yet this, the greatest and the worst, conceal'd;
And dire Celaeno, whose foreboding skill
Denounc'd all else, was silent of the ill.
This my last labor was. Some friendly god
From thence convey'd us to your blest abode."

Thus, to the list'ning queen, the royal guest
His wand'ring course and all his toils express'd;
And here concluding, he retir'd to rest.

Book IV

But anxious cares already seiz'd the queen:
She fed within her veins a flame unseen;
The hero's valor, acts, and birth inspire
Her soul with love, and fan the secret fire.
His words, his looks, imprinted in her heart,
Improve the passion, and increase the smart.
Now, when the purple morn had chas'd away
The dewy shadows, and restor'd the day,
Her sister first with early care she sought,
And thus in mournful accents eas'd her thought:

"My dearest Anna, what new dreams affright
My lab'ring soul! what visions of the night
Disturb my quiet, and distract my breast

With strange ideas of our Trojan guest!
His worth, his actions, and majestic air,
A man descended from the gods declare.
Fear ever argues a degenerate kind;
His birth is well asserted by his mind.
Then, what he suffer'd, when by Fate betray'd!
What brave attempts for falling Troy he made!
Such were his looks, so gracefully he spoke,
That, were I not resolv'd against the yoke
Of hapless marriage, never to be curst
With second love, so fatal was my first,
To this one error I might yield again;
For, since Sichaeus was untimely slain,
This only man is able to subvert
The fix'd foundations of my stubborn heart.
And, to confess my frailty, to my shame,
Somewhat I find within, if not the same,
Too like the sparkles of my former flame.
But first let yawning earth a passage rend,
And let me thro' the dark abyss descend;
First let avenging Jove, with flames from high,
Drive down this body to the nether sky,
Condemn'd with ghosts in endless night to lie,
Before I break the plighted faith I gave!
No! he who had my vows shall ever have;
For, whom I lov'd on earth, I worship in the grave."

She said: the tears ran gushing from her eyes,
And stopp'd her speech. Her sister thus replies:
"O dearer than the vital air I breathe,
Will you to grief your blooming years bequeath,
Condemn'd to waste in woes your lonely life,
Without the joys of mother or of wife?
Think you these tears, this pompous train of woe,
Are known or valued by the ghosts below?
I grant that, while your sorrows yet were green,
It well became a woman, and a queen,
The vows of Tyrian princes to neglect,
To scorn Hyarbas, and his love reject,
With all the Libyan lords of mighty name;
But will you fight against a pleasing flame!
This little spot of land, which Heav'n bestows,
On ev'ry side is hemm'd with warlike foes;
Gaetulian cities here are spread around,
And fierce Numidians there your frontiers bound;
Here lies a barren waste of thirsty land,
And there the Syrtes raise the moving sand;
Barcaean troops besiege the narrow shore,
And from the sea Pygmalion threatens more.
Propitious Heav'n, and gracious Juno, lead

This wand'ring navy to your needful aid:
How will your empire spread, your city rise,
From such a union, and with such allies?
Implore the favor of the pow'rs above,
And leave the conduct of the rest to love.
Continue still your hospitable way,
And still invent occasions of their stay,
Till storms and winter winds shall cease to threat,
And planks and oars repair their shatter'd fleet."

These words, which from a friend and sister came,
With ease resolv'd the scruples of her fame,
And added fury to the kindled flame.
Inspir'd with hope, the project they pursue;
On ev'ry altar sacrifice renew:
A chosen ewe of two years old they pay
To Ceres, Bacchus, and the God of Day;
Preferring Juno's pow'r, for Juno ties
The nuptial knot and makes the marriage joys.
The beauteous queen before her altar stands,
And holds the golden goblet in her hands.
A milk-white heifer she with flow'rs adorns,
And pours the ruddy wine betwixt her horns;
And, while the priests with pray'r the gods invoke,
She feeds their altars with Sabaean smoke,
With hourly care the sacrifice renews,
And anxiously the panting entrails views.
What priestly rites, alas! what pious art,
What vows avail to cure a bleeding heart!
A gentle fire she feeds within her veins,
Where the soft god secure in silence reigns.

Sick with desire, and seeking him she loves,
From street to street the raving Dido roves.
So when the watchful shepherd, from the blind,
Wounds with a random shaft the careless hind,
Distracted with her pain she flies the woods,
Bounds o'er the lawn, and seeks the silent floods,
With fruitless care; for still the fatal dart
Sticks in her side, and rankles in her heart.
And now she leads the Trojan chief along
The lofty walls, amidst the busy throng;
Displays her Tyrian wealth, and rising town,
Which love, without his labor, makes his own.
This pomp she shows, to tempt her wand'ring guest;
Her falt'ring tongue forbids to speak the rest.
When day declines, and feasts renew the night,
Still on his face she feeds her famish'd sight;
She longs again to hear the prince relate
His own adventures and the Trojan fate.
He tells it o'er and o'er; but still in vain,

For still she begs to hear it once again.
The hearer on the speaker's mouth depends,
And thus the tragic story never ends.

Then, when they part, when Phoebe's paler light
Withdraws, and falling stars to sleep invite,
She last remains, when ev'ry guest is gone,
Sits on the bed he press'd, and sighs alone;
Absent, her absent hero sees and hears;
Or in her bosom young Ascanius bears,
And seeks the father's image in the child,
If love by likeness might be so beguil'd.

Meantime the rising tow'rs are at a stand;
No labors exercise the youthful band,
Nor use of arts, nor toils of arms they know;
The mole is left unfinish'd to the foe;
The mounds, the works, the walls, neglected lie,
Short of their promis'd heighth, that seem'd to threat the sky,

But when imperial Juno, from above,
Saw Dido fetter'd in the chains of love,
Hot with the venom which her veins inflam'd,
And by no sense of shame to be reclaim'd,
With soothing words to Venus she begun:
"High praises, endless honors, you have won,
And mighty trophies, with your worthy son!
Two gods a silly woman have undone!
Nor am I ignorant, you both suspect
This rising city, which my hands erect:
But shall celestial discord never cease?
'T is better ended in a lasting peace.
You stand possess'd of all your soul desir'd:
Poor Dido with consuming love is fir'd.
Your Trojan with my Tyrian let us join;
So Dido shall be yours, Aeneas mine:
One common kingdom, one united line.
Eliza shall a Dardan lord obey,
And lofty Carthage for a dow'r convey."
Then Venus, who her hidden fraud descried,
Which would the scepter of the world misguide
To Libyan shores, thus artfully replied:
"Who, but a fool, would wars with Juno choose,
And such alliance and such gifts refuse,
If Fortune with our joint desires comply?
The doubt is all from Jove and destiny;
Lest he forbid, with absolute command,
To mix the people in one common land
Or will the Trojan and the Tyrian line
In lasting leagues and sure succession join?
But you, the partner of his bed and throne,
May move his mind; my wishes are your own."

“Mine,” said imperial Juno, “be the care;
Time urges, now, to perfect this affair:
Attend my counsel, and the secret share.
When next the Sun his rising light displays,
And gilds the world below with purple rays,
The queen, Aeneas, and the Tyrian court
Shall to the shady woods, for sylvan game, resort.
There, while the huntsmen pitch their toils around,
And cheerful horns from side to side resound,
A pitchy cloud shall cover all the plain
With hail, and thunder, and tempestuous rain;
The fearful train shall take their speedy flight,
Dispers’d, and all involv’d in gloomy night;
One cave a grateful shelter shall afford
To the fair princess and the Trojan lord.
I will myself the bridal bed prepare,
If you, to bless the nuptials, will be there:
So shall their loves be crown’d with due delights,
And Hymen shall be present at the rites.”
The Queen of Love consents, and closely smiles
At her vain project, and discover’d wiles.

The rosy morn was risen from the main,
And horns and hounds awake the princely train:
They issue early thro’ the city gate,
Where the more wakeful huntsmen ready wait,
With nets, and toils, and darts, beside the force
Of Spartan dogs, and swift Massylian horse.
The Tyrian peers and officers of state
For the slow queen in antechambers wait;
Her lofty courser, in the court below,
Who his majestic rider seems to know,
Proud of his purple trappings, paws the ground,
And champs the golden bit, and spreads the foam around.
The queen at length appears; on either hand
The brawny guards in martial order stand.
A flow’r’d simar with golden fringe she wore,
And at her back a golden quiver bore;
Her flowing hair a golden caul restrains,
A golden clasp the Tyrian robe sustains.
Then young Ascanius, with a sprightly grace,
Leads on the Trojan youth to view the chase.
But far above the rest in beauty shines
The great Aeneas, the troop he joins;
Like fair Apollo, when he leaves the frost
Of wint’ry Xanthus, and the Lycian coast,
When to his native Delos he resorts,
Ordains the dances, and renews the sports;
Where painted Scythians, mix’d with Cretan bands,
Before the joyful altars join their hands:

Himself, on Cynthus walking, sees below
The merry madness of the sacred show.
Green wreaths of bays his length of hair inclose;
A golden fillet binds his awful brows;
His quiver sounds: not less the prince is seen
In manly presence, or in lofty mien.

Now had they reach'd the hills, and storm'd the seat
Of salvage beasts, in dens, their last retreat.
The cry pursues the mountain goats: they bound
From rock to rock, and keep the craggy ground;
Quite otherwise the stags, a trembling train,
In herds unsingled, scour the dusty plain,
And a long chase in open view maintain.
The glad Ascanius, as his courser guides,
Spurs thro' the vale, and these and those outrides.
His horse's flanks and sides are forc'd to feel
The clanking lash, and goring of the steel.
Impatiently he views the feeble prey,
Wishing some nobler beast to cross his way,
And rather would the tusky boar attend,
Or see the tawny lion downward bend.

Meantime, the gath'ring clouds obscure the skies:
From pole to pole the forky lightning flies;
The rattling thunders roll; and Juno pours
A wintry deluge down, and sounding show'rs.
The company, dispers'd, to converts ride,
And seek the homely cots, or mountain's hollow side.
The rapid rains, descending from the hills,
To rolling torrents raise the creeping rills.
The queen and prince, as love or fortune guides,
One common cavern in her bosom hides.
Then first the trembling earth the signal gave,
And flashing fires enlighten all the cave;
Hell from below, and Juno from above,
And howling nymphs, were conscious of their love.
From this ill-omen'd hour in time arose
Debate and death, and all succeeding woes.
The queen, whom sense of honor could not move,
No longer made a secret of her love,
But call'd it marriage, by that specious name
To veil the crime and sanctify the shame.

The loud report thro' Libyan cities goes.
Fame, the great ill, from small beginnings grows:
Swift from the first; and ev'ry moment brings
New vigor to her flights, new pinions to her wings.
Soon grows the pigmy to gigantic size;
Her feet on earth, her forehead in the skies.
Inrag'd against the gods, revengeful Earth
Produc'd her last of the Titanian birth.

Swift is her walk, more swift her winged haste:
A monstrous phantom, horrible and vast.
As many plumes as raise her lofty flight,
So many piercing eyes inlarge her sight;
Millions of opening mouths to Fame belong,
And ev'ry mouth is furnish'd with a tongue,
And round with list'ning ears the flying plague is hung.
She fills the peaceful universe with cries;
No slumbers ever close her wakeful eyes;
By day, from lofty tow'rs her head she shews,
And spreads thro' trembling crowds disastrous news;
With court informers haunts, and royal spies;
Things done relates, not done she feigns, and mingles truth with lies.

Talk is her business, and her chief delight
To tell of prodigies and cause affright.
She fills the people's ears with Dido's name,
Who, lost to honor and the sense of shame,
Admits into her throne and nuptial bed
A wand'ring guest, who from his country fled:
Whole days with him she passes in delights,
And wastes in luxury long winter nights,
Forgetful of her fame and royal trust,
Dissolv'd in ease, abandon'd to her lust.

The goddess widely spreads the loud report,
And flies at length to King Hyarba's court.
When first possess'd with this unwelcome news
Whom did he not of men and gods accuse?
This prince, from ravish'd Garamantis born,
A hundred temples did with spoils adorn,
In Ammon's honor, his celestial sire;
A hundred altars fed with wakeful fire;
And, thro' his vast dominions, priests ordain'd,
Whose watchful care these holy rites maintain'd.
The gates and columns were with garlands crown'd,
And blood of victim beasts enrich'd the ground.

He, when he heard a fugitive could move
The Tyrian princess, who disdain'd his love,
His breast with fury burn'd, his eyes with fire,
Mad with despair, impatient with desire;
Then on the sacred altars pouring wine,
He thus with pray'rs implor'd his sire divine:
"Great Jove! propitious to the Moorish race,
Who feast on painted beds, with off 'rings grace
Thy temples, and adore thy pow'r divine
With blood of victims, and with sparkling wine,
Seest thou not this? or do we fear in vain
Thy boasted thunder, and thy thoughtless reign?
Do thy broad hands the forky lightnings lance?
Thine are the bolts, or the blind work of chance?

A wand'ring woman builds, within our state,
A little town, bought at an easy rate;
She pays me homage, and my grants allow
A narrow space of Libyan lands to plow;
Yet, scorning me, by passion blindly led,
Admits a banish'd Trojan to her bed!
And now this other Paris, with his train
Of conquer'd cowards, must in Afric reign!
(Whom, what they are, their looks and garb confess,
Their locks with oil perfum'd, their Lydian dress.)
He takes the spoil, enjoys the princely dame;
And I, rejected I, adore an empty name."

His vows, in haughty terms, he thus preferr'd,
And held his altar's horns. The mighty Thund'rer heard;
Then cast his eyes on Carthage, where he found
The lustful pair in lawless pleasure drown'd,
Lost in their loves, insensible of shame,
And both forgetful of their better fame.
He calls Cyllenius, and the god attends,
By whom his menacing command he sends:
"Go, mount the western winds, and cleave the sky;
Then, with a swift descent, to Carthage fly:
There find the Trojan chief, who wastes his days
In slothful riot and inglorious ease,
Nor minds the future city, giv'n by fate.
To him this message from my mouth relate:
'Not so fair Venus hop'd, when twice she won
Thy life with pray'rs, nor promis'd such a son.
Hers was a hero, destin'd to command
A martial race, and rule the Latian land,
Who should his ancient line from Teucer draw,
And on the conquer'd world impose the law.'
If glory cannot move a mind so mean,
Nor future praise from fading pleasure wean,
Yet why should he defraud his son of fame,
And grudge the Romans their immortal name!
What are his vain designs! what hopes he more
From his long ling'ring on a hostile shore,
Regardless to redeem his honor lost,
And for his race to gain th' Ausonian coast!
Bid him with speed the Tyrian court forsake;
With this command the slumb'ring warrior wake."

Hermes obeys; with golden pinions binds
His flying feet, and mounts the western winds:
And, whether o'er the seas or earth he flies,
With rapid force they bear him down the skies.
But first he grasps within his awful hand
The mark of sov'reign pow'r, his magic wand;
With this he draws the ghosts from hollow graves;

With this he drives them down the Stygian waves;
With this he seals in sleep the wakeful sight,
And eyes, tho' clos'd in death, restores to light.
Thus arm'd, the god begins his airy race,
And drives the racking clouds along the liquid space;
Now sees the tops of Atlas, as he flies,
Whose brawny back supports the starry skies;
Atlas, whose head, with piny forests crown'd,
Is beaten by the winds, with foggy vapors bound.
Snows hide his shoulders; from beneath his chin
The founts of rolling streams their race begin;
A beard of ice on his large breast depends.
Here, pois'd upon his wings, the god descends:
Then, rested thus, he from the tow'ring height
Plung'd downward, with precipitated flight,
Lights on the seas, and skims along the flood.
As waterfowl, who seek their fishy food,
Less, and yet less, to distant prospect show;
By turns they dance aloft, and dive below:
Like these, the steerage of his wings he plies,
And near the surface of the water flies,
Till, having pass'd the seas, and cross'd the sands,
He clos'd his wings, and stoop'd on Libyan lands:
Where shepherds once were hous'd in homely sheds,
Now tow'rs within the clouds advance their heads.
Arriving there, he found the Trojan prince
New ramparts raising for the town's defense.
A purple scarf, with gold embroider'd o'er,
(Queen Dido's gift,) about his waist he wore;
A sword, with glitt'ring gems diversified,
For ornament, not use, hung idly by his side.

Then thus, with winged words, the god began,
Resuming his own shape: "Degenerate man,
Thou woman's property, what mak'st thou here,
These foreign walls and Tyrian tow'rs to rear,
Forgetful of thy own? All-pow'rful Jove,
Who sways the world below and heav'n above,
Has sent me down with this severe command:
What means thy ling'ring in the Libyan land?
If glory cannot move a mind so mean,
Nor future praise from flitting pleasure wean,
Regard the fortunes of thy rising heir:
The promis'd crown let young Ascanius wear,
To whom th' Ausonian scepter, and the state
Of Rome's imperial name is ow'd by fate."
So spoke the god; and, speaking, took his flight,
Involv'd in clouds, and vanish'd out of sight.

The pious prince was seiz'd with sudden fear;
Mute was his tongue, and upright stood his hair.

Revolving in his mind the stern command,
He longs to fly, and loathes the charming land.
What should he say? or how should he begin?
What course, alas! remains to steer between
Th' offended lover and the pow'rful queen?
This way and that he turns his anxious mind,
And all expedients tries, and none can find.
Fix'd on the deed, but doubtful of the means,
After long thought, to this advice he leans:
Three chiefs he calls, commands them to repair
The fleet, and ship their men with silent care;
Some plausible pretense he bids them find,
To color what in secret he design'd.
Himself, meantime, the softest hours would choose,
Before the love-sick lady heard the news;
And move her tender mind, by slow degrees,
To suffer what the sov'reign pow'r decrees:
Jove will inspire him, when, and what to say.
They hear with pleasure, and with haste obey.

But soon the queen perceives the thin disguise:
(What arts can blind a jealous woman's eyes!)
She was the first to find the secret fraud,
Before the fatal news was blaz'd abroad.
Love the first motions of the lover hears,
Quick to presage, and ev'n in safety fears.
Nor impious Fame was wanting to report
The ships repair'd, the Trojans' thick resort,
And purpose to forsake the Tyrian court.
Frantic with fear, impatient of the wound,
And impotent of mind, she roves the city round.
Less wild the Bacchanalian dames appear,
When, from afar, their nightly god they hear,
And howl about the hills, and shake the wreathy spear.
At length she finds the dear perfidious man;
Prevents his form'd excuse, and thus began:
"Base and ungrateful! could you hope to fly,
And undiscover'd scape a lover's eye?
Nor could my kindness your compassion move.
Nor plighted vows, nor dearer bands of love?
Or is the death of a despairing queen
Not worth preventing, tho' too well foreseen?
Ev'n when the wintry winds command your stay,
You dare the tempests, and defy the sea.
False as you are, suppose you were not bound
To lands unknown, and foreign coasts to sound;
Were Troy restor'd, and Priam's happy reign,
Now durst you tempt, for Troy, the raging main?
See whom you fly! am I the foe you shun?
Now, by those holy vows, so late begun,

By this right hand, (since I have nothing more
To challenge, but the faith you gave before;)
I beg you by these tears too truly shed,
By the new pleasures of our nuptial bed;
If ever Dido, when you most were kind,
Were pleasing in your eyes, or touch'd your mind;
By these my pray'rs, if pray'rs may yet have place,
Pity the fortunes of a falling race.
For you I have provok'd a tyrant's hate,
Incens'd the Libyan and the Tyrian state;
For you alone I suffer in my fame,
Bereft of honor, and expos'd to shame.
Whom have I now to trust, ungrateful guest?
(That only name remains of all the rest!)
What have I left? or whither can I fly?
Must I attend Pygmalion's cruelty,
Or till Hyarba shall in triumph lead
A queen that proudly scorn'd his proffer'd bed?
Had you deferr'd, at least, your hasty flight,
And left behind some pledge of our delight,
Some babe to bless the mother's mournful sight,
Some young Aeneas, to supply your place,
Whose features might express his father's face;
I should not then complain to live bereft
Of all my husband, or be wholly left."

Here paus'd the queen. Unmov'd he holds his eyes,
By Jove's command; nor suffer'd love to rise,
Tho' heaving in his heart; and thus at length replies:
"Fair queen, you never can enough repeat
Your boundless favors, or I own my debt;
Nor can my mind forget Eliza's name,
While vital breath inspires this mortal frame.
This only let me speak in my defense:
I never hop'd a secret flight from hence,
Much less pretended to the lawful claim
Of sacred nuptials, or a husband's name.
For, if indulgent Heav'n would leave me free,
And not submit my life to fate's decree,
My choice would lead me to the Trojan shore,
Those relics to review, their dust adore,
And Priam's ruin'd palace to restore.
But now the Delphian oracle commands,
And fate invites me to the Latian lands.
That is the promis'd place to which I steer,
And all my vows are terminated there.
If you, a Tyrian, and a stranger born,
With walls and tow'rs a Libyan town adorn,
Why may not we like you, a foreign race
Like you, seek shelter in a foreign place?

As often as the night obscures the skies
With humid shades, or twinkling stars arise,
Anchises' angry ghost in dreams appears,
Chides my delay, and fills my soul with fears;
And young Ascanius justly may complain
Of his defrauded and destin'd reign.
Ev'n now the herald of the gods appear'd:
Waking I saw him, and his message heard.
From Jove he came commission'd, heav'nly bright
With radiant beams, and manifest to sight
(The sender and the sent I both attest)
These walls he enter'd, and those words express'd.
Fair queen, oppose not what the gods command;
Forc'd by my fate, I leave your happy land."

Thus while he spoke, already she began,
With sparkling eyes, to view the guilty man;
From head to foot survey'd his person o'er,
Nor longer these outrageous threats forebore:
"False as thou art, and, more than false, forsworn!
Not sprung from noble blood, nor goddess-born,
But hewn from harden'd entrails of a rock!
And rough Hyrcanian tigers gave thee suck!
Why should I fawn? what have I worse to fear?
Did he once look, or lent a list'ning ear,
Sigh'd when I sobb'd, or shed one kindly tear?
All symptoms of a base ungrateful mind,
So foul, that, which is worse, 'tis hard to find.
Of man's injustice why should I complain?
The gods, and Jove himself, behold in vain
Triumphant treason; yet no thunder flies,
Nor Juno views my wrongs with equal eyes;
Faithless is earth, and faithless are the skies!
Justice is fled, and Truth is now no more!
I sav'd the shipwrack'd exile on my shore;
With needful food his hungry Trojans fed;
I took the traitor to my throne and bed:
Fool that I was 't is little to repeat
The rest I stor'd and rigg'd his ruin'd fleet.
I rave, I rave! A god's command he pleads,
And makes Heav'n accessary to his deeds.
Now Lycian lots, and now the Delian god,
Now Hermes is employ'd from Jove's abode,
To warn him hence; as if the peaceful state
Of heav'nly pow'rs were touch'd with human fate!
But go! thy flight no longer I detain
Go seek thy promis'd kingdom thro' the main!
Yet, if the heav'ns will hear my pious vow,
The faithless waves, not half so false as thou,
Or secret sands, shall sepulchers afford

To thy proud vessels, and their perjur'd lord.
Then shalt thou call on injur'd Dido's name:
Dido shall come in a black sulph'ry flame,
When death has once dissolv'd her mortal frame;
Shall smile to see the traitor vainly weep:
Her angry ghost, arising from the deep,
Shall haunt thee waking, and disturb thy sleep.
At least my shade thy punishment shall know,
And Fame shall spread the pleasing news below."

Abruptly here she stops; then turns away
Her loathing eyes, and shuns the sight of day.
Amazd he stood, revolving in his mind
What speech to frame, and what excuse to find.
Her fearful maids their fainting mistress led,
And softly laid her on her ivory bed.

But good Aeneas, tho' he much desir'd
To give that pity which her grief requir'd;
Tho' much he mourn'd, and labor'd with his love,
Resolv'd at length, obeys the will of Jove;
Reviews his forces: they with early care
Unmoor their vessels, and for sea prepare.
The fleet is soon afloat, in all its pride,
And well-calk'd galleys in the harbor ride.
Then oaks for oars they fell'd; or, as they stood,
Of its green arms despoil'd the growing wood,
Studious of flight. The beach is cover'd o'er
With Trojan bands, that blacken all the shore:
On ev'ry side are seen, descending down,
Thick swarms of soldiers, loaden from the town.
Thus, in battalia, march embodied ants,
Fearful of winter, and of future wants,
T' invade the corn, and to their cells convey
The plunder'd forage of their yellow prey.
The sable troops, along the narrow tracks,
Scarce bear the weighty burthen on their backs:
Some set their shoulders to the pond'rous grain;
Some guard the spoil; some lash the lagging train;
All ply their sev'ral tasks, and equal toil sustain.

What pangs the tender breast of Dido tore,
When, from the tow'r, she saw the cover'd shore,
And heard the shouts of sailors from afar,
Mix'd with the murmurs of the wat'ry war!
All-pow'rful Love! what changes canst thou cause
In human hearts, subjected to thy laws!
Once more her haughty soul the tyrant bends:
To pray'rs and mean submissions she descends.
No female arts or aids she left untried,
Nor counsels unexplor'd, before she died.
"Look, Anna! look! the Trojans crowd to sea;

They spread their canvas, and their anchors weigh.
The shouting crew their ships with garlands bind,
Invoke the sea gods, and invite the wind.
Could I have thought this threat'ning blow so near,
My tender soul had been forewarn'd to bear.
But do not you my last request deny;
With yon perfidious man your int'rest try,
And bring me news, if I must live or die.
You are his fav'rite; you alone can find
The dark recesses of his inmost mind:
In all his trusted secrets you have part,
And know the soft approaches to his heart.
Haste then, and humbly seek my haughty foe;
Tell him, I did not with the Grecians go,
Nor did my fleet against his friends employ,
Nor swore the ruin of unhappy Troy,
Nor mov'd with hands profane his father's dust:
Why should he then reject a suit so just!
Whom does he shun, and whither would he fly!
Can he this last, this only pray'r deny!
Let him at least his dang'rous flight delay,
Wait better winds, and hope a calmer sea.
The nuptials he disclaims I urge no more:
Let him pursue the promis'd Latian shore.
A short delay is all I ask him now;
A pause of grief, an interval from woe,
Till my soft soul be temper'd to sustain
Accustom'd sorrows, and inur'd to pain.
If you in pity grant this one request,
My death shall glut the hatred of his breast."
This mournful message pious Anna bears,
And seconds with her own her sister's tears:
But all her arts are still employ'd in vain;
Again she comes, and is refus'd again.
His harden'd heart nor pray'rs nor threat'nings move;
Fate, and the god, had stopp'd his ears to love.

As, when the winds their airy quarrel try,
Justling from ev'ry quarter of the sky,
This way and that the mountain oak they bend,
His boughs they shatter, and his branches rend;
With leaves and falling mast they spread the ground;
The hollow valleys echo to the sound:
Unmov'd, the royal plant their fury mocks,
Or, shaken, clings more closely to the rocks;
Far as he shoots his tow'ring head on high,
So deep in earth his fix'd foundations lie.
No less a storm the Trojan hero bears;
Thick messages and loud complaints he hears,
And bandied words, still beating on his ears.

Sighs, groans, and tears proclaim his inward pains;
But the firm purpose of his heart remains.

The wretched queen, pursued by cruel fate,
Begins at length the light of heav'n to hate,
And loathes to live. Then dire portents she sees,
To hasten on the death her soul decrees:
Strange to relate! for when, before the shrine,
She pours in sacrifice the purple wine,
The purple wine is turn'd to putrid blood,
And the white offer'd milk converts to mud.
This dire presage, to her alone reveal'd,
From all, and ev'n her sister, she conceal'd.
A marble temple stood within the grove,
Sacred to death, and to her murther'd love;
That honor'd chapel she had hung around
With snowy fleeces, and with garlands crown'd:
Oft, when she visited this lonely dome,
Strange voices issued from her husband's tomb;
She thought she heard him summon her away,
Invite her to his grave, and chide her stay.
Hourly 't is heard, when with a boding note
The solitary screech owl strains her throat,
And, on a chimney's top, or turret's height,
With songs obscene disturbs the silence of the night.
Besides, old prophecies augment her fears;
And stern Aeneas in her dreams appears,
Disdainful as by day: she seems, alone,
To wander in her sleep, thro' ways unknown,
Guideless and dark; or, in a desart plain,
To seek her subjects, and to seek in vain:
Like Pentheus, when, distracted with his fear,
He saw two suns, and double Thebes, appear;
Or mad Orestes, when his mother's ghost
Full in his face infernal torches toss'd,
And shook her snaky locks: he shuns the sight,
Flies o'er the stage, surpris'd with mortal fright;
The Furies guard the door and intercept his flight.
Now, sinking underneath a load of grief,
From death alone she seeks her last relief;
The time and means resolv'd within her breast,
She to her mournful sister thus address'd
(Dissembling hope, her cloudy front she clears,
And a false vigor in her eyes appears):
"Rejoice!" she said. "Instructed from above,
My lover I shall gain, or lose my love.
Nigh rising Atlas, next the falling sun,
Long tracts of Ethiopian climates run:
There a Massylian priestess I have found,
Honor'd for age, for magic arts renown'd:

Th’ Hesperian temple was her trusted care;
‘T was she supplied the wakeful dragon’s fare.
She poppy seeds in honey taught to steep,
Reclaim’d his rage, and sooth’d him into sleep.
She watch’d the golden fruit; her charms unbind
The chains of love, or fix them on the mind:
She stops the torrents, leaves the channel dry,
Repels the stars, and backward bears the sky.
The yawning earth rebellows to her call,
Pale ghosts ascend, and mountain ashes fall.
Witness, ye gods, and thou my better part,
How loth I am to try this impious art!
Within the secret court, with silent care,
Erect a lofty pile, expos’d in air:
Hang on the topmost part the Trojan vest,
Spoils, arms, and presents, of my faithless guest.
Next, under these, the bridal bed be plac’d,
Where I my ruin in his arms embrac’d:
All relics of the wretch are doom’d to fire;
For so the priestess and her charms require.”

Thus far she said, and farther speech forbears;
A mortal paleness in her face appears:
Yet the mistrustless Anna could not find
The secret fun’ral in these rites design’d;
Nor thought so dire a rage possess’d her mind.
Unknowing of a train conceal’d so well,
She fear’d no worse than when Sichaeus fell;
Therefore obeys. The fatal pile they rear,
Within the secret court, expos’d in air.
The cloven holms and pines are heap’d on high,
And garlands on the hollow spaces lie.
Sad cypress, vervain, yew, compose the wreath,
And ev’ry baleful green denoting death.
The queen, determin’d to the fatal deed,
The spoils and sword he left, in order spread,
And the man’s image on the nuptial bed.

And now (the sacred altars plac’d around)
The priestess enters, with her hair unbound,
And thrice invokes the pow’rs below the ground.
Night, Erebus, and Chaos she proclaims,
And threefold Hecate, with her hundred names,
And three Dianas: next, she sprinkles round
With feign’d Avernian drops the hallow’d ground;
Culls hoary simples, found by Phoebe’s light,
With brazen sickles reap’d at noon of night;
Then mixes baleful juices in the bowl,
And cuts the forehead of a newborn foal,
Robbing the mother’s love. The destin’d queen
Observes, assisting at the rites obscene;

A leaven'd cake in her devoted hands
She holds, and next the highest altar stands:
One tender foot was shod, her other bare;
Girt was her gather'd gown, and loose her hair.
Thus dress'd, she summon'd, with her dying breath,
The heav'ns and planets conscious of her death,
And ev'ry pow'r, if any rules above,
Who minds, or who revenges, injur'd love.

'T was dead of night, when weary bodies close
Their eyes in balmy sleep and soft repose:
The winds no longer whisper thro' the woods,
Nor murm'ring tides disturb the gentle floods.
The stars in silent order mov'd around;
And Peace, with downy wings, was brooding on the ground
The flocks and herds, and party-color'd fowl,
Which haunt the woods, or swim the weedy pool,
Stretch'd on the quiet earth, securely lay,
Forgetting the past labors of the day.
All else of nature's common gift partake:
Unhappy Dido was alone awake.
Nor sleep nor ease the furious queen can find;
Sleep fled her eyes, as quiet fled her mind.
Despair, and rage, and love divide her heart;
Despair and rage had some, but love the greater part.

Then thus she said within her secret mind:
"What shall I do? what succor can I find?
Become a suppliant to Hyarba's pride,
And take my turn, to court and be denied?
Shall I with this ungrateful Trojan go,
Forsake an empire, and attend a foe?
Himself I refug'd, and his train reliev'd
'T is true but am I sure to be receiv'd?
Can gratitude in Trojan souls have place!
Laomedon still lives in all his race!
Then, shall I seek alone the churlish crew,
Or with my fleet their flying sails pursue?
What force have I but those whom scarce before
I drew reluctant from their native shore?
Will they again embark at my desire,
Once more sustain the seas, and quit their second Tyre?
Rather with steel thy guilty breast invade,
And take the fortune thou thyself hast made.
Your pity, sister, first seduc'd my mind,
Or seconded too well what I design'd.
These dear-bought pleasures had I never known,
Had I continued free, and still my own;
Avoiding love, I had not found despair,
But shar'd with salvage beasts the common air.
Like them, a lonely life I might have led,

Not mourn'd the living, nor disturb'd the dead."
These thoughts she brooded in her anxious breast.
On board, the Trojan found more easy rest.
Resolv'd to sail, in sleep he pass'd the night;
And order'd all things for his early flight.

To whom once more the winged god appears;
His former youthful mien and shape he wears,
And with this new alarm invades his ears:
"Sleep'st thou, O goddess-born! and canst thou drown
Thy needful cares, so near a hostile town,
Beset with foes; nor hear'st the western gales
Invite thy passage, and inspire thy sails?
She harbors in her heart a furious hate,
And thou shalt find the dire effects too late;
Fix'd on revenge, and obstinate to die.
Haste swiftly hence, while thou hast pow'r to fly.
The sea with ships will soon be cover'd o'er,
And blazing firebrands kindle all the shore.
Prevent her rage, while night obscures the skies,
And sail before the purple morn arise.
Who knows what hazards thy delay may bring?
Woman's a various and a changeful thing."
Thus Hermes in the dream; then took his flight
Aloft in air unseen, and mix'd with night.

Twice warn'd by the celestial messenger,
The pious prince arose with hasty fear;
Then rous'd his drowsy train without delay:
"Haste to your banks; your crooked anchors weigh,
And spread your flying sails, and stand to sea.
A god commands: he stood before my sight,
And urg'd us once again to speedy flight.
O sacred pow'r, what pow'r soe'er thou art,
To thy blest orders I resign my heart.
Lead thou the way; protect thy Trojan bands,
And prosper the design thy will commands."
He said: and, drawing forth his flaming sword,
His thund'ring arm divides the many-twisted cord.
An emulating zeal inspires his train:
They run; they snatch; they rush into the main.
With headlong haste they leave the desert shores,
And brush the liquid seas with lab'ring oars.

Aurora now had left her saffron bed,
And beams of early light the heav'ns o'erspread,
When, from a tow'r, the queen, with wakeful eyes,
Saw day point upward from the rosy skies.
She look'd to seaward; but the sea was void,
And scarce in ken the sailing ships descried.
Stung with despite, and furious with despair,
She struck her trembling breast, and tore her hair.

“And shall th’ ungrateful traitor go,” she said,
“My land forsaken, and my love betray’d?
Shall we not arm? not rush from ev’ry street,
To follow, sink, and burn his perjur’d fleet?
Haste, haul my galleys out! pursue the foe!
Bring flaming brands! set sail, and swiftly row!
What have I said? where am I? Fury turns
My brain; and my distemper’d bosom burns.
Then, when I gave my person and my throne,
This hate, this rage, had been more timely shown.
See now the promis’d faith, the vaunted name,
The pious man, who, rushing thro’ the flame,
Preserv’d his gods, and to the Phrygian shore
The burthen of his feeble father bore!
I should have torn him piecemeal; strow’d in floods
His scatter’d limbs, or left expos’d in woods;
Destroy’d his friends and son; and, from the fire,
Have set the reeking boy before the sire.
Events are doubtful, which on battles wait:
Yet where’s the doubt, to souls secure of fate?
My Tyrians, at their injur’d queen’s command,
Had toss’d their fires amid the Trojan band;
At once extinguish’d all the faithless name;
And I myself, in vengeance of my shame,
Had fall’n upon the pile, to mend the fun’ral flame.
Thou Sun, who view’st at once the world below;
Thou Juno, guardian of the nuptial vow;
Thou Hecate hearken from thy dark abodes!
Ye Furies, fiends, and violated gods,
All pow’rs invok’d with Dido’s dying breath,
Attend her curses and avenge her death!
If so the Fates ordain, Jove commands,
Th’ ungrateful wretch should find the Latian lands,
Yet let a race untam’d, and haughty foes,
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppose:
Oppress’d with numbers in th’ unequal field,
His men discourag’d, and himself expell’d,
Let him for succor sue from place to place,
Torn from his subjects, and his son’s embrace.
First, let him see his friends in battle slain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain;
And when, at length, the cruel war shall cease,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace:
Nor let him then enjoy supreme command;
But fall, untimely, by some hostile hand,
And lie unburied on the barren sand!
These are my pray’rs, and this my dying will;
And you, my Tyrians, ev’ry curse fulfil.
Perpetual hate and mortal wars proclaim,
Against the prince, the people, and the name.

These grateful off ’rings on my grave bestow;
Nor league, nor love, the hostile nations know!
Now, and from hence, in ev’ry future age,
When rage excites your arms, and strength supplies the rage
Rise some avenger of our Libyan blood,
With fire and sword pursue the perjur’d brood;
Our arms, our seas, our shores, oppos’d to theirs;
And the same hate descend on all our heirs!”

This said, within her anxious mind she weighs
The means of cutting short her odious days.
Then to Sichaeus’ nurse she briefly said
(For, when she left her country, hers was dead):
“Go, Barce, call my sister. Let her care
The solemn rites of sacrifice prepare;
The sheep, and all th’ atoning off ’rings bring,
Sprinkling her body from the crystal spring
With living drops; then let her come, and thou
With sacred fillets bind thy hoary brow.
Thus will I pay my vows to Stygian Jove,
And end the cares of my disastrous love;
Then cast the Trojan image on the fire,
And, as that burns, my passions shall expire.”

The nurse moves onward, with officious care,
And all the speed her aged limbs can bear.
But furious Dido, with dark thoughts involv’d,
Shook at the mighty mischief she resolv’d.
With livid spots distinguish’d was her face;
Red were her rolling eyes, and discompos’d her pace;
Ghastly she gaz’d, with pain she drew her breath,
And nature shiver’d at approaching death.

Then swiftly to the fatal place she pass’d,
And mounts the fun’ral pile with furious haste;
Unsheathes the sword the Trojan left behind
(Not for so dire an enterprise design’d).
But when she view’d the garments loosely spread,
Which once he wore, and saw the conscious bed,
She paus’d, and with a sigh the robes embrac’d;
Then on the couch her trembling body cast,
Repress’d the ready tears, and spoke her last:
“Dear pledges of my love, while Heav’n so pleas’d,
Receive a soul, of mortal anguish eas’d:
My fatal course is finish’d; and I go,
A glorious name, among the ghosts below.
A lofty city by my hands is rais’d,
Pygmalion punish’d, and my lord appeas’d.
What could my fortune have afforded more,
Had the false Trojan never touch’d my shore!”
Then kiss’d the couch; and, “Must I die,” she said,
“And unreveng’d? ‘T is doubly to be dead!

Yet ev'n this death with pleasure I receive:
On any terms, 't is better than to live.
These flames, from far, may the false Trojan view;
These boding omens his base flight pursue!"

She said, and struck; deep enter'd in her side
The piercing steel, with reeking purple dyed:
Clogg'd in the wound the cruel weapon stands;
The spouting blood came streaming on her hands.
Her sad attendants saw the deadly stroke,
And with loud cries the sounding palace shook.
Distracted, from the fatal sight they fled,
And thro' the town the dismal rumor spread.
First from the frighted court the yell began;
Redoubled, thence from house to house it ran:
The groans of men, with shrieks, laments, and cries
Of mixing women, mount the vaulted skies.
Not less the clamor, than if ancient Tyre,
Or the new Carthage, set by foes on fire
The rolling ruin, with their lov'd abodes,
Involv'd the blazing temples of their gods.

Her sister hears; and, furious with despair,
She beats her breast, and rends her yellow hair,
And, calling on Eliza's name aloud,
Runs breathless to the place, and breaks the crowd.
"Was all that pomp of woe for this prepar'd;
These fires, this fun'ral pile, these altars rear'd?
Was all this train of plots contriv'd," said she,
"All only to deceive unhappy me?
Which is the worst? Didst thou in death pretend
To scorn thy sister, or delude thy friend?
Thy summon'd sister, and thy friend, had come;
One sword had serv'd us both, one common tomb:
Was I to raise the pile, the pow'rs invoke,
Not to be present at the fatal stroke?
At once thou hast destroy'd thyself and me,
Thy town, thy senate, and thy colony!
Bring water; bathe the wound; while I in death
Lay close my lips to hers, and catch the flying breath."
This said, she mounts the pile with eager haste,
And in her arms the gasping queen embrac'd;
Her temples chaf 'd; and her own garments tore,
To stanch the streaming blood, and cleanse the gore.
Thrice Dido tried to raise her drooping head,
And, fainting thrice, fell grov'ling on the bed;
Thrice op'd her heavy eyes, and sought the light,
But, having found it, sicken'd at the sight,
And clos'd her lids at last in endless night.

Then Juno, grieving that she should sustain
A death so ling'ring, and so full of pain,

Sent Iris down, to free her from the strife
Of lab'ring nature, and dissolve her life.
For since she died, not doom'd by Heav'n's decree,
Or her own crime, but human casualty,
And rage of love, that plung'd her in despair,
The Sisters had not cut the topmost hair,
Which Proserpine and they can only know;
Nor made her sacred to the shades below.
Downward the various goddess took her flight,
And drew a thousand colors from the light;
Then stood above the dying lover's head,
And said: "I thus devote thee to the dead.
This off 'ring to th' infernal gods I bear."
Thus while she spoke, she cut the fatal hair:
The struggling soul was loos'd, and life dissolv'd in air.

Book V

Meantime the Trojan cuts his wat'ry way,
Fix'd on his voyage, thro' the curling sea;
Then, casting back his eyes, with dire amaze,
Sees on the Punic shore the mounting blaze.
The cause unknown; yet his presaging mind
The fate of Dido from the fire divin'd;
He knew the stormy souls of womankind,
What secret springs their eager passions move,
How capable of death for injur'd love.
Dire auguries from hence the Trojans draw;
Till neither fires nor shining shores they saw.
Now seas and skies their prospect only bound;
An empty space above, a floating field around.
But soon the heav'ns with shadows were o'erspread;
A swelling cloud hung hov'ring o'er their head:
Livid it look'd, the threat'ning of a storm:
Then night and horror ocean's face deform.
The pilot, Palinurus, cried aloud:
"What gusts of weather from that gath'ring cloud
My thoughts presage! Ere yet the tempest roars,
Stand to your tackle, mates, and stretch your oars;
Contract your swelling sails, and luff to wind."
The frighted crew perform the task assign'd.
Then, to his fearless chief: "Not Heav'n," said he,
"Tho' Jove himself should promise Italy,
Can stem the torrent of this raging sea.
Mark how the shifting winds from west arise,
And what collected night involves the skies!
Nor can our shaken vessels live at sea,
Much less against the tempest force their way.
'T is fate diverts our course, and fate we must obey.
Not far from hence, if I observ'd aright
The southing of the stars, and polar light,

Sicilia lies, whose hospitable shores
In safety we may reach with struggling oars.”
Aeneas then replied: “Too sure I find
We strive in vain against the seas and wind:
Now shift your sails; what place can please me more
Than what you promise, the Sicilian shore,
Whose hallow’d earth Anchises’ bones contains,
And where a prince of Trojan lineage reigns?”
The course resolv’d, before the western wind
They scud amain, and make the port assign’d.
Meantime Acestes, from a lofty stand,
Beheld the fleet descending on the land;
And, not unmindful of his ancient race,
Down from the cliff he ran with eager pace,
And held the hero in a strict embrace.
Of a rough Libyan bear the spoils he wore,
And either hand a pointed jav’lin bore.
His mother was a dame of Dardan blood;
His sire Crinisus, a Sicilian flood.
He welcomes his returning friends ashore
With plenteous country cates and homely store.

Now, when the following morn had chas’d away
The flying stars, and light restor’d the day,
Aeneas call’d the Trojan troops around,
And thus bespoke them from a rising ground:
“Offspring of heav’n, divine Dardanian race!
The sun, revolving thro’ th’ ethereal space,
The shining circle of the year has fill’d,
Since first this isle my father’s ashes held:
And now the rising day renews the year;
A day for ever sad, for ever dear.
This would I celebrate with annual games,
With gifts on altars pil’d, and holy flames,
Tho’ banish’d to Gaetulia’s barren sands,
Caught on the Grecian seas, or hostile lands:
But since this happy storm our fleet has driv’n
(Not, as I deem, without the will of Heav’n)
Upon these friendly shores and flow’ry plains,
Which hide Anchises and his blest remains,
Let us with joy perform his honors due,
And pray for prosp’rous winds, our voyage to renew;
Pray, that in towns and temples of our own,
The name of great Anchises may be known,
And yearly games may spread the gods’ renown.
Our sports Acestes, of the Trojan race,
With royal gifts ordain’d, is pleas’d to grace:
Two steers on ev’ry ship the king bestows;
His gods and ours shall share your equal vows.
Besides, if, nine days hence, the rosy morn

Shall with unclouded light the skies adorn,
That day with solemn sports I mean to grace:
Light galleys on the seas shall run a wat'ry race;
Some shall in swiftness for the goal contend,
And others try the twanging bow to bend;
The strong, with iron gauntlets arm'd, shall stand
Oppos'd in combat on the yellow sand.
Let all be present at the games prepar'd,
And joyful victors wait the just reward.
But now assist the rites, with garlands crown'd."
He said, and first his brows with myrtle bound.
Then Helymus, by his example led,
And old Acestes, each adorn'd his head;
Thus young Ascanius, with a sprightly grace,
His temples tied, and all the Trojan race.

Aeneas then advanc'd amidst the train,
By thousands follow'd thro' the flow'ry plain,
To great Anchises' tomb; which when he found,
He pour'd to Bacchus, on the hallow'd ground,
Two bowls of sparkling wine, of milk two more,
And two (from offer'd bulls) of purple gore,
With roses then the sepulcher he strow'd
And thus his father's ghost bespoke aloud:
"Hail, O ye holy manes! hail again,
Paternal ashes, now review'd in vain!
The gods permitted not, that you, with me,
Should reach the promis'd shores of Italy,
Or Tiber's flood, what flood soe'er it be."
Scarce had he finish'd, when, with speckled pride,
A serpent from the tomb began to glide;
His hugy bulk on sev'n high volumes roll'd;
Blue was his breadth of back, but streak'd with scaly gold:
Thus riding on his curls, he seem'd to pass
A rolling fire along, and singe the grass.
More various colors thro' his body run,
Than Iris when her bow imbibes the sun.
Betwixt the rising altars, and around,
The sacred monster shot along the ground;
With harmless play amidst the bowls he pass'd,
And with his lolling tongue assay'd the taste:
Thus fed with holy food, the wondrous guest
Within the hollow tomb retir'd to rest.
The pious prince, surpris'd at what he view'd,
The fun'ral honors with more zeal renew'd,
Doubtful if this place's genius were,
Or guardian of his father's sepulcher.
Five sheep, according to the rites, he slew;
As many swine, and steers of sable hue;
New gen'rous wine he from the goblets pour'd.

And call'd his father's ghost, from hell restor'd.
The glad attendants in long order come,
Off 'ring their gifts at great Anchises' tomb:
Some add more oxen: some divide the spoil;
Some place the chargers on the grassy soil;
Some blow the fires, and offered entrails broil.

Now came the day desir'd. The skies were bright
With rosy luster of the rising light:
The bord'ring people, rous'd by sounding fame
Of Trojan feasts and great Acestes' name,
The crowded shore with acclamations fill,
Part to behold, and part to prove their skill.
And first the gifts in public view they place,
Green laurel wreaths, and palm, the victors' grace:
Within the circle, arms and tripods lie,
Ingots of gold and silver, heap'd on high,
And vests embroider'd, of the Tyrian dye.
The trumpet's clangor then the feast proclaims,
And all prepare for their appointed games.
Four galleys first, which equal rowers bear,
Advancing, in the wat'ry lists appear.
The speedy Dolphin, that outstrips the wind,
Bore Mnestheus, author of the Memmian kind:
Gyas the vast Chimaera's bulk commands,
Which rising, like a tow'ring city stands;
Three Trojans tug at ev'ry lab'ring oar;
Three banks in three degrees the sailors bore;
Beneath their sturdy strokes the billows roar.
Sergesthus, who began the Sergian race,
In the great Centaur took the leading place;
Cloanthus on the sea-green Scylla stood,
From whom Cluentius draws his Trojan blood.

Far in the sea, against the foaming shore,
There stands a rock: the raging billows roar
Above his head in storms; but, when 't is clear,
Uncurl their ridgy backs, and at his foot appear.
In peace below the gentle waters run;
Then round the rock they steer, and seek the former shores.
The lots decide their place. Above the rest,
Each leader shining in his Tyrian vest;
The common crew with wreaths of poplar boughs
Their temples crown, and shade their sweaty brows:
Besmear'd with oil, their naked shoulders shine.
All take their seats, and wait the sounding sign:
They gripe their oars; and ev'ry panting breast
Is rais'd by turns with hope, by turns with fear depress'd.
The clangor of the trumpet gives the sign;
At once they start, advancing in a line:
With shouts the sailors rend the starry skies;

Lash’d with their oars, the smoky billows rise;
Sparkles the briny main, and the vex’d ocean fries.
Exact in time, with equal strokes they row:
At once the brushing oars and brazen prow
Dash up the sandy waves, and ope the depths below.
Not fiery coursers, in a chariot race,
Invade the field with half so swift a pace;
Not the fierce driver with more fury lends
The sounding lash, and, ere the stroke descends,
Low to the wheels his pliant body bends.
The partial crowd their hopes and fears divide,
And aid with eager shouts the favor’d side.
Cries, murmurs, clamors, with a mixing sound,
From woods to woods, from hills to hills rebound.

Amidst the loud applauses of the shore,
Gyas outstripp’d the rest, and sprung before:
Cloanthus, better mann’d, pursued him fast,
But his o’er-masted galley check’d his haste.
The Centaur and the Dolphin brush the brine
With equal oars, advancing in a line;
And now the mighty Centaur seems to lead,
And now the speedy Dolphin gets ahead;
Now board to board the rival vessels row,
The billows lave the skies, and ocean groans below.
They reach’d the mark. Proud Gyas and his train
In triumph rode, the victors of the main;
But, steering round, he charg’d his pilot stand
More close to shore, and skim along the sand
“Let others bear to sea!” Menoetes heard;
But secret shelves too cautiously he fear’d,
And, fearing, sought the deep; and still aloof he steer’d.
With louder cries the captain call’d again:
“Bear to the rocky shore, and shun the main.”
He spoke, and, speaking, at his stern he saw
The bold Cloanthus near the shelvings draw.
Betwixt the mark and him the Scylla stood,
And in a closer compass plow’d the flood.
He pass’d the mark; and, wheeling, got before:
Gyas blasphem’d the gods, devoutly swore,
Cried out for anger, and his hair he tore.
Mindless of others’ lives (so high was grown
His rising rage) and careless of his own,
The trembling dotard to the deck he drew;
Then hoisted up, and overboard he threw:
This done, he seiz’d the helm; his fellows cheer’d,
Turn’d short upon the shelfs, and madly steer’d.

Hardly his head the plunging pilot rears,
Clogg’d with his clothes, and cumber’d with his years:
Now dropping wet, he climbs the cliff with pain.

The crowd, that saw him fall and float again,
Shout from the distant shore; and loudly laugh'd,
To see his heaving breast disgorge the briny draught.
The following Centaur, and the Dolphin's crew,
Their vanish'd hopes of victory renew;
While Gyas lags, they kindle in the race,
To reach the mark. Sergesthus takes the place;
Mnestheus pursues; and while around they wind,
Comes up, not half his galley's length behind;
Then, on the deck, amidst his mates appear'd,
And thus their drooping courage he cheer'd:
"My friends, and Hector's followers heretofore,
Exert your vigor; tug the lab'ring oar;
Stretch to your strokes, my still unconquer'd crew,
Whom from the flaming walls of Troy I drew.
In this, our common int'rest, let me find
That strength of hand, that courage of the mind,
As when you stemm'd the strong Malean flood,
And o'er the Syrtes' broken billows row'd.
I seek not now the foremost palm to gain;
Tho' yet but, ah! that haughty wish is vain!
Let those enjoy it whom the gods ordain.
But to be last, the lags of all the race!
Redeem yourselves and me from that disgrace."
Now, one and all, they tug amain; they row
At the full stretch, and shake the brazen prow.
The sea beneath 'em sinks; their lab'ring sides
Are swell'd, and sweat runs gutt'ring down in tides.
Chance aids their daring with unhop'd success;
Sergesthus, eager with his beak to press
Betwixt the rival galley and the rock,
Shuts up th' unwieldly Centaur in the lock.
The vessel struck; and, with the dreadful shock,
Her oars she shiver'd, and her head she broke.
The trembling rowers from their banks arise,
And, anxious for themselves, renounce the prize.
With iron poles they heave her off the shores,
And gather from the sea their floating oars.
The crew of Mnestheus, with elated minds,
Urge their success, and call the willing winds;
Then ply their oars, and cut their liquid way
In larger compass on the roomy sea.
As, when the dove her rocky hold forsakes,
Rous'd in a fright, her sounding wings she shakes;
The cavern rings with clatt'ring; out she flies,
And leaves her callow care, and cleaves the skies:
At first she flutters; but at length she springs
To smoother flight, and shoots upon her wings:
So Mnestheus in the Dolphin cuts the sea;
And, flying with a force, that force assists his way.

Sergesthus in the Centaur soon he pass'd,
Wedg'd in the rocky shoals, and sticking fast.
In vain the victor he with cries implores,
And practices to row with shatter'd oars.
Then Mnestheus bears with Gyas, and outflies:
The ship, without a pilot, yields the prize.
Unvanquish'd Scylla now alone remains;
Her he pursues, and all his vigor strains.
Shouts from the fav'ring multitude arise;
Applauding Echo to the shouts replies;
Shouts, wishes, and applause run rattling thro' the skies.
These clamors with disdain the Scylla heard,
Much grudg'd the praise, but more the robb'd reward:
Resolv'd to hold their own, they mend their pace,
All obstinate to die, or gain the race.
Rais'd with success, the Dolphin swiftly ran;
For they can conquer, who believe they can.
Both urge their oars, and fortune both supplies,
And both perhaps had shar'd an equal prize;
When to the seas Cloanthus holds his hands,
And succor from the wat'ry pow'rs demands:
"Gods of the liquid realms, on which I row!
If, giv'n by you, the laurel bind my brow,
Assist to make me guilty of my vow!
A snow-white bull shall on your shore be slain;
His offer'd entrails cast into the main,
And ruddy wine, from golden goblets thrown,
Your grateful gift and my return shall own."
The choir of nymphs, and Phorcus, from below,
With virgin Panopea, heard his vow;
And old Portunus, with his breadth of hand,
Push'd on, and sped the galley to the land.
Swift as a shaft, or winged wind, she flies,
And, darting to the port, obtains the prize.

The herald summons all, and then proclaims
Cloanthus conqu'ror of the naval games.
The prince with laurel crowns the victor's head,
And three fat steers are to his vessel led,
The ship's reward; with gen'rous wine beside,
And sums of silver, which the crew divide.
The leaders are distinguish'd from the rest;
The victor honor'd with a nobler vest,
Where gold and purple strive in equal rows,
And needlework its happy cost bestows.
There Ganymede is wrought with living art,
Chasing thro' Ida's groves the trembling hart:
Breathless he seems, yet eager to pursue;
When from aloft descends, in open view,
The bird of Jove, and, sousing on his prey,

With crooked talons bears the boy away.
In vain, with lifted hands and gazing eyes,
His guards behold him soaring thro' the skies,
And dogs pursue his flight with imitated cries.

Mnestheus the second victor was declar'd;
And, summon'd there, the second prize he shard.
A coat of mail, brave Demoleus bore,
More brave Aeneas from his shoulders tore,
In single combat on the Trojan shore:
This was ordain'd for Mnestheus to possess;
In war for his defense, for ornament in peace.
Rich was the gift, and glorious to behold,
But yet so pond'rous with its plates of gold,
That scarce two servants could the weight sustain;
Yet, loaded thus, Demoleus o'er the plain
Pursued and lightly seiz'd the Trojan train.
The third, succeeding to the last reward,
Two goodly bowls of massy silver shar'd,
With figures prominent, and richly wrought,
And two brass caldrons from Dodona brought.

Thus all, rewarded by the hero's hands,
Their conqu'ring temples bound with purple bands;
And now Sergesthus, clearing from the rock,
Brought back his galley shatter'd with the shock.
Forlorn she look'd, without an aiding oar,
And, houted by the vulgar, made to shore.
As when a snake, surpris'd upon the road,
Is crush'd athwart her body by the load
Of heavy wheels; or with a mortal wound
Her belly bruis'd, and trodden to the ground:
In vain, with loosen'd curls, she crawls along;
Yet, fierce above, she brandishes her tongue;
Glares with her eyes, and bristles with her scales;
But, groveling in the dust, her parts unsound she trails:
So slowly to the port the Centaur tends,
But, what she wants in oars, with sails amends.
Yet, for his galley sav'd, the grateful prince
Is pleas'd th' unhappy chief to recompense.
Pholoe, the Cretan slave, rewards his care,
Beauteous herself, with lovely twins as fair.

From thence his way the Trojan hero bent
Into the neighb'ring plain, with mountains pent,
Whose sides were shaded with surrounding wood.
Full in the midst of this fair valley stood
A native theater, which, rising slow
By just degrees, o'erlook'd the ground below.
High on a sylvan throne the leader sate;
A num'rous train attend in solemn state.
Here those that in the rapid course delight,

Desire of honor and the prize invite.
The rival runners without order stand;
The Trojans mix'd with the Sicilian band.
First Nisus, with Euryalus, appears;
Euryalus a boy of blooming years,
With sprightly grace and equal beauty crown'd;
Nisus, for friendship to the youth renown'd.
Diores next, of Priam's royal race,
Then Salius joined with Patron, took their place;
(But Patron in Arcadia had his birth,
And Salius his from Arcananian earth;)
Then two Sicilian youths the names of these,
Swift Helymus, and lovely Panopes:
Both jolly huntsmen, both in forest bred,
And owning old Acestes for their head;
With sev'ral others of ignobler name,
Whom time has not deliver'd o'er to fame.

To these the hero thus his thoughts explain'd,
In words which gen'ral approbation gain'd:
"One common largess is for all design'd,
(The vanquish'd and the victor shall be join'd,)
Two darts of polish'd steel and Gnosian wood,
A silver-studded ax, alike bestow'd.
The foremost three have olive wreaths decreed:
The first of these obtains a stately steed,
Adorn'd with trappings; and the next in fame,
The quiver of an Amazonian dame,
With feather'd Thracian arrows well supplied:
A golden belt shall gird his manly side,
Which with a sparkling diamond shall be tied.
The third this Grecian helmet shall content."
He said. To their appointed base they went;
With beating hearts th' expected sign receive,
And, starting all at once, the barrier leave.
Spread out, as on the winged winds, they flew,
And seiz'd the distant goal with greedy view.
Shot from the crowd, swift Nisus all o'erpass'd;
Nor storms, nor thunder, equal half his haste.
The next, but tho' the next, yet far disjoin'd,
Came Salius, and Euryalus behind;
Then Helymus, whom young Diores plied,
Step after step, and almost side by side,
His shoulders pressing; and, in longer space,
Had won, or left at least a dubious race.

Now, spent, the goal they almost reach at last,
When eager Nisus, hapless in his haste,
Slipp'd first, and, slipping, fell upon the plain,
Soak'd with the blood of oxen newly slain.
The careless victor had not mark'd his way;

But, treading where the treach'rous puddle lay,
His heels flew up; and on the grassy floor
He fell, besmear'd with filth and holy gore.
Not mindless then, Euryalus, of thee,
Nor of the sacred bonds of amity,
He strove th' immediate rival's hope to cross,
And caught the foot of Salius as he rose.
So Salius lay extended on the plain;
Euryalus springs out, the prize to gain,
And leaves the crowd: applauding peals attend
The victor to the goal, who vanquish'd by his friend.
Next Helymus; and then Diores came,
By two misfortunes made the third in fame.

But Salius enters, and, exclaiming loud
For justice, deafens and disturbs the crowd;
Urges his cause may in the court be heard;
And pleads the prize is wrongfully conferr'd.
But favor for Euryalus appears;
His blooming beauty, with his tender tears,
Had brib'd the judges for the promis'd prize.
Besides, Diores fills the court with cries,
Who vainly reaches at the last reward,
If the first palm on Salius be conferr'd.
Then thus the prince: "Let no disputes arise:
Where fortune plac'd it, I award the prize.
But fortune's errors give me leave to mend,
At least to pity my deserving friend."
He said, and, from among the spoils, he draws
(Pond'rous with shaggy mane and golden paws)
A lion's hide: to Salius this he gives.
Nisus with envy sees the gift, and grieves.
"If such rewards to vanquish'd men are due."
He said, "and falling is to rise by you,
What prize may Nisus from your bounty claim,
Who merited the first rewards and fame?
In falling, both an equal fortune tried;
Would fortune for my fall so well provide!"
With this he pointed to his face, and show'd
His hand and all his habit smear'd with blood.
Th' indulgent father of the people smil'd,
And caus'd to be produc'd an ample shield,
Of wondrous art, by Didymaon wrought,
Long since from Neptune's bars in triumph brought.
This giv'n to Nisus, he divides the rest,
And equal justice in his gifts express'd.

The race thus ended, and rewards bestow'd,
Once more the prince bespeaks th' attentive crowd:
"If there he here whose dauntless courage dare
In gauntlet-fight, with limbs and body bare,

His opposite sustain in open view,
Stand forth the champion, and the games renew.
Two prizes I propose, and thus divide:
A bull with gilded horns, and fillets tied,
Shall be the portion of the conqu'ring chief;
A sword and helm shall cheer the loser's grief."

Then haughty Dares in the lists appears;
Stalking he strides, his head erected bears:
His nervous arms the weighty gauntlet wield,
And loud applauses echo thro' the field.
Dares alone in combat us'd to stand
The match of mighty Paris, hand to hand;
The same, at Hector's fun'rals, undertook
Gigantic Butes, of th' Amycian stock,
And, by the stroke of his resistless hand,
Stretch'd the vast bulk upon the yellow sand.
Such Dares was; and such he strode along,
And drew the wonder of the gazing throng.
His brawny back and ample breast he shows,
His lifted arms around his head he throws,
And deals in whistling air his empty blows.
His match is sought; but, thro' the trembling band,
Not one dares answer to the proud demand.
Presuming of his force, with sparkling eyes
Already he devours the promis'd prize.
He claims the bull with awless insolence,
And having seiz'd his horns, accosts the prince:
"If none my matchless valor dares oppose,
How long shall Dares wait his dastard foes?
Permit me, chief, permit without delay,
To lead this uncontended gift away."
The crowd assents, and with redoubled cries
For the proud challenger demands the prize.

Acestes, fir'd with just disdain, to see
The palm usurp'd without a victory,
Reproach'd Entellus thus, who sate beside,
And heard and saw, unmov'd, the Trojan's pride:
"Once, but in vain, a champion of renown,
So tamely can you bear the ravish'd crown,
A prize in triumph borne before your sight,
And shun, for fear, the danger of the fight?
Where is our Eryx now, the boasted name,
The god who taught your thund'ring arm the game?
Where now your baffled honor? Where the spoil
That fill'd your house, and fame that fill'd our isle?"
Entellus, thus: "My soul is still the same,
Unmov'd with fear, and mov'd with martial fame;
But my chill blood is curdled in my veins,
And scarce the shadow of a man remains.

O could I turn to that fair prime again,
That prime of which this boaster is so vain,
The brave, who this decrepid age defies,
Should feel my force, without the promis'd prize."

He said; and, rising at the word, he threw
Two pond'rous gauntlets down in open view;
Gauntlets which Eryx wont in fight to wield,
And sheathe his hands with in the listed field.
With fear and wonder seiz'd, the crowd beholds
The gloves of death, with sev'n distinguish'd folds
Of tough bull hides; the space within is spread
With iron, or with loads of heavy lead:
Dares himself was daunted at the sight,
Renounc'd his challenge, and refus'd to fight.
Astonish'd at their weight, the hero stands,
And pois'd the pond'rous engines in his hands.
"What had your wonder," said Entellus, "been,
Had you the gauntlets of Alcides seen,
Or view'd the stern debate on this unhappy green!
These which I bear your brother Eryx bore,
Still mark'd with batter'd brains and mingled gore.
With these he long sustain'd th' Herculean arm;
And these I wielded while my blood was warm,
This languish'd frame while better spirits fed,
Ere age unstrung my nerves, or time o'ersnow'd my head.
But if the challenger these arms refuse,
And cannot wield their weight, or dare not use;
If great Aeneas and Acestes join
In his request, these gauntlets I resign;
Let us with equal arms perform the fight,
And let him leave to fear, since I resign my right."
This said, Entellus for the strife prepares;
Stripp'd of his quilted coat, his body bares;
Compos'd of mighty bones and brawn he stands,
A goodly tow'ring object on the sands.
Then just Aeneas equal arms supplied,
Which round their shoulders to their wrists they tied.
Both on the tiptoe stand, at full extent,
Their arms aloft, their bodies inly bent;
Their heads from aiming blows they bear afar;
With clashing gauntlets then provoke the war.
One on his youth and pliant limbs relies;
One on his sinews and his giant size.
The last is stiff with age, his motion slow;
He heaves for breath, he staggers to and fro,
And clouds of issuing smoke his nostrils loudly blow.
Yet equal in success, they ward, they strike;
Their ways are diff 'rent, but their art alike.
Before, behind, the blows are dealt; around

Their hollow sides the rattling thumps resound.
A storm of strokes, well meant, with fury flies,
And errs about their temples, ears, and eyes.
Nor always errs; for oft the gauntlet draws
A sweeping stroke along the crackling jaws.
Heavy with age, Entellus stands his ground,
But with his warping body wards the wound.
His hand and watchful eye keep even pace;
While Dares traverses and shifts his place,
And, like a captain who beleaguers round
Some strong-built castle on a rising ground,
Views all th' approaches with observing eyes:
This and that other part in vain he tries,
And more on industry than force relies.
With hands on high, Entellus threats the foe;
But Dares watch'd the motion from below,
And slipp'd aside, and shunn'd the long descending blow.
Entellus wastes his forces on the wind,
And, thus deluded of the stroke design'd,
Headlong and heavy fell; his ample breast
And weighty limbs his ancient mother press'd.
So falls a hollow pine, that long had stood
On Ida's height, or Erymanthus' wood,
Torn from the roots. The diff 'ring nations rise,
And shouts and mingled murmurs rend the skies,
Acestus runs with eager haste, to raise
The fall'n companion of his youthful days.
Dauntless he rose, and to the fight return'd;
With shame his glowing cheeks, his eyes with fury burn'd.
Disdain and conscious virtue fir'd his breast,
And with redoubled force his foe he press'd.
He lays on load with either hand, amain,
And headlong drives the Trojan o'er the plain;
Nor stops, nor stays; nor rest nor breath allows;
But storms of strokes descend about his brows,
A rattling tempest, and a hail of blows.
But now the prince, who saw the wild increase
Of wounds, commands the combatants to cease,
And bounds Entellus' wrath, and bids the peace.
First to the Trojan, spent with toil, he came,
And sooth'd his sorrow for the suffer'd shame.
"What fury seiz'd my friend? The gods," said he,
"To him propitious, and averse to thee,
Have giv'n his arm superior force to thine.
'T is madness to contend with strength divine."
The gauntlet fight thus ended, from the shore
His faithful friends unhappy Dares bore:
His mouth and nostrils pour'd a purple flood,
And pounded teeth came rushing with his blood.
Faintly he stagger'd thro' the hissing throng,

And hung his head, and trail'd his legs along.
The sword and casque are carried by his train;
But with his foe the palm and ox remain.

The champion, then, before Aeneas came,
Proud of his prize, but prouder of his fame:
"O goddess-born, and you, Dardanian host,
Mark with attention, and forgive my boast;
Learn what I was, by what remains; and know
From what impending fate you sav'd my foe."
Sternly he spoke, and then confronts the bull;
And, on his ample forehead aiming full,
The deadly stroke, descending, pierc'd the skull.
Down drops the beast, nor needs a second wound,
But sprawls in pangs of death, and spurns the ground.
Then, thus: "In Dares' stead I offer this.
Eryx, accept a nobler sacrifice;
Take the last gift my wither'd arms can yield:
Thy gauntlets I resign, and here renounce the field."

This done, Aeneas orders, for the close,
The strife of archers with contending bows.
The mast Sergesthus' shatter'd galley bore
With his own hands he raises on the shore.
A flutt'ring dove upon the top they tie,
The living mark at which their arrows fly.
The rival archers in a line advance,
Their turn of shooting to receive from chance.
A helmet holds their names; the lots are drawn:
On the first scroll was read Hippocoon.
The people shout. Upon the next was found
Young Mnestheus, late with naval honors crown'd.
The third contain'd Eurytion's noble name,
Thy brother, Pandarus, and next in fame,
Whom Pallas urg'd the treaty to confound,
And send among the Greeks a feather'd wound.
Acestes in the bottom last remain'd,
Whom not his age from youthful sports restrain'd.
Soon all with vigor bend their trusty bows,
And from the quiver each his arrow chose.
Hippocoon's was the first: with forceful sway
It flew, and, whizzing, cut the liquid way.
Fix'd in the mast the feather'd weapon stands:
The fearful pigeon flutters in her bands,
And the tree trembled, and the shouting cries
Of the pleas'd people rend the vaulted skies.
Then Mnestheus to the head his arrow drove,
With lifted eyes, and took his aim above,
But made a glancing shot, and missed the dove;
Yet miss'd so narrow, that he cut the cord
Which fasten'd by the foot the flitting bird.

The captive thus releas'd, away she flies,
And beats with clapping wings the yielding skies. 4790
His bow already bent, Eurytion stood;
And, having first invok'd his brother god,
His winged shaft with eager haste he sped.
The fatal message reach'd her as she fled:
She leaves her life aloft; she strikes the ground, 4795
And renders back the weapon in the wound.
Acestes, grudging at his lot, remains,
Without a prize to gratify his pains.
Yet, shooting upward, sends his shaft, to show
An archer's art, and boast his twanging bow. 4800
The feather'd arrow gave a dire portent,
And latter augurs judge from this event.
Chaf 'd by the speed, it fir'd; and, as it flew,
A trail of following flames ascending drew:
Kindling they mount, and mark the shiny way; 4805
Across the skies as falling meteors play,
And vanish into wind, or in a blaze decay.
The Trojans and Sicilians wildly stare,
And, trembling, turn their wonder into pray'r.
The Dardan prince put on a smiling face, 4810
And strain'd Acestes with a close embrace;
Then, hon'ring him with gifts above the rest,
Turn'd the bad omen, nor his fears confess'd.
"The gods," said he, "this miracle have wrought,
And order'd you the prize without the lot. 4815
Accept this goblet, rough with figur'd gold,
Which Thracian Cisseus gave my sire of old:
This pledge of ancient amity receive,
Which to my second sire I justly give."
He said, and, with the trumpets' cheerful sound, 4820
Proclaim'd him victor, and with laurel-crown'd.
Nor good Eurytion envied him the prize,
Tho' he transfix'd the pigeon in the skies.
Who cut the line, with second gifts was grac'd;
The third was his whose arrow pierc'd the mast. 4925

The chief, before the games were wholly done,
Call'd Periphantes, tutor to his son,
And whisper'd thus: "With speed Ascanius find;
And, if his childish troop be ready join'd,
On horseback let him grace his grandsire's day, 4930
And lead his equals arm'd in just array."
He said; and, calling out, the cirque he clears.
The crowd withdrawn, an open plain appears.
And now the noble youths, of form divine,
Advance before their fathers, in a line; 4935
The riders grace the steeds; the steeds with glory shine.

Thus marching on in military pride,
Shouts of applause resound from side to side.
Their casques adorn'd with laurel wreaths they wear,
Each brandishing aloft a cornel spear.
Some at their backs their gilded quivers bore;
Their chains of burnish'd gold hung down before.
Three graceful troops they form'd upon the green;
Three graceful leaders at their head were seen;
Twelve follow'd ev'ry chief, and left a space between.
The first young Priam led; a lovely boy,
Whose grandsire was th' unhappy king of Troy;
His race in after times was known to fame,
New honors adding to the Latian name;
And well the royal boy his Thracian steed became.
White were the fetlocks of his feet before,
And on his front a snowy star he bore.
Then beauteous Atys, with Iulus bred,
Of equal age, the second squadron led.
The last in order, but the first in place,
First in the lovely features of his face,
Rode fair Ascanius on a fiery steed,
Queen Dido's gift, and of the Tyrian breed.
Sure coursers for the rest the king ordains,
With golden bits adorn'd, and purple reins.

The pleas'd spectators peals of shouts renew,
And all the parents in the children view;
Their make, their motions, and their sprightly grace,
And hopes and fears alternate in their face.

Th' unfledg'd commanders and their martial train
First make the circuit of the sandy plain
Around their sires, and, at th' appointed sign,
Drawn up in beauteous order, form a line.
The second signal sounds, the troop divides
In three distinguish'd parts, with three distinguish'd guides
Again they close, and once again disjoin;
In troop to troop oppos'd, and line to line.
They meet; they wheel; they throw their darts afar
With harmless rage and well-dissembled war.
Then in a round the mingled bodies run:
Flying they follow, and pursuing shun;
Broken, they break; and, rallying, they renew
In other forms the military shew.
At last, in order, undiscern'd they join,
And march together in a friendly line.
And, as the Cretan labyrinth of old,
With wand'ring ways and many a winding fold,
Involv'd the weary feet, without redress,
In a round error, which denied recess;
So fought the Trojan boys in warlike play,

Turn’d and return’d, and still a diff ’rent way.
Thus dolphins in the deep each other chase
In circles, when they swim around the wat’ry race.
This game, these carousels, Ascanius taught;
And, building Alba, to the Latins brought;
Shew’d what he learn’d: the Latin sires impart
To their succeeding sons the graceful art;
From these imperial Rome receiv’d the game,
Which Troy, the youths the Trojan troop, they name.
Thus far the sacred sports they celebrate:
But Fortune soon resum’d her ancient hate;
For, while they pay the dead his annual dues,
Those envied rites Saturnian Juno views;
And sends the goddess of the various bow,
To try new methods of revenge below;
Supplies the winds to wing her airy way,
Where in the port secure the navy lay.
Swiftly fair Iris down her arch descends,
And, undiscern’d, her fatal voyage ends.
She saw the gath’ring crowd; and, gliding thence,
The desart shore, and fleet without defense.
The Trojan matrons, on the sands alone,
With sighs and tears Anchises’ death bemoan;
Then, turning to the sea their weeping eyes,
Their pity to themselves renews their cries.
“Alas!” said one, “what oceans yet remain
For us to sail! what labors to sustain!”
All take the word, and, with a gen’ral groan,
Implore the gods for peace, and places of their own.

The goddess, great in mischief, views their pains,
And in a woman’s form her heav’nly limbs restrains.
In face and shape old Beroe she became,
Doryclus’ wife, a venerable dame,
Once blest with riches, and a mother’s name.
Thus chang’d, amidst the crying crowd she ran,
Mix’d with the matrons, and these words began:
“O wretched we, whom not the Grecian pow’r,
Nor flames, destroy’d, in Troy’s unhappy hour!
O wretched we, reserv’d by cruel fate,
Beyond the ruins of the sinking state!
Now sev’n revolving years are wholly run,
Since this improsp’rous voyage we begun;
Since, toss’d from shores to shores, from lands to lands,
Inhospitable rocks and barren sands,
Wand’ring in exile thro’ the stormy sea,
We search in vain for flying Italy.
Now cast by fortune on this kindred land,
What should our rest and rising walls withstand,
Or hinder here to fix our banish’d band?

O country lost, and gods redeem'd in vain,
If still in endless exile we remain!
Shall we no more the Trojan walls renew,
Or streams of some dissembled Simois view!
Haste, join with me, th' unhappy fleet consume!
Cassandra bids; and I declare her doom.
In sleep I saw her; she supplied my hands
(For this I more than dreamt) with flaming brands:
'With these,' said she, 'these wand'ring ships destroy:
These are your fatal seats, and this your Troy.'
Time calls you now; the precious hour employ:
Slack not the good presage, while Heav'n inspires
Our minds to dare, and gives the ready fires.
See! Neptune's altars minister their brands:
The god is pleas'd; the god supplies our hands."
Then from the pile a flaming fire she drew,
And, toss'd in air, amidst the galleys threw.
Wrapp'd in amaze, the matrons wildly stare:
Then Pyrgo, reverenc'd for her hoary hair,
Pyrgo, the nurse of Priam's num'rous race:
"No Beroe this, tho' she belies her face!
What terrors from her frowning front arise!
Behold a goddess in her ardent eyes!
What rays around her heav'nly face are seen!
Mark her majestic voice, and more than mortal mien!
Beroe but now I left, whom, pin'd with pain,
Her age and anguish from these rites detain,"
She said. The matrons, seiz'd with new amaze,
Roll their malignant eyes, and on the navy gaze.
They fear, and hope, and neither part obey:
They hope the fated land, but fear the fatal way.
The goddess, having done her task below,
Mounts up on equal wings, and bends her painted bow.
Struck with the sight, and seiz'd with rage divine,
The matrons prosecute their mad design:
They shriek aloud; they snatch, with impious hands,
The food of altars; fires and flaming brands.
Green boughs and saplings, mingled in their haste,
And smoking torches, on the ships they cast.
The flame, unstopp'd at first, more fury gains,
And Vulcan rides at large with loosen'd reins:
Triumphant to the painted sterns he soars,
And seizes, in this way, the banks and crackling oars.
Eumelus was the first the news to bear,
While yet they crowd the rural theater.
Then, what they hear, is witness'd by their eyes:
A storm of sparkles and of flames arise.
Ascanius took th' alarm, while yet he led
His early warriors on his prancing steed,
And, spurring on, his equals soon o'erpass'd;

Nor could his frighted friends reclaim his haste.
Soon as the royal youth appear'd in view,
He sent his voice before him as he flew:
"What madness moves you, matrons, to destroy
The last remainders of unhappy Troy!
Not hostile fleets, but your own hopes, you burn,
And on your friends your fatal fury turn.
Behold your own Ascanius!" While he said,
He drew his glitt'ring helmet from his head,
In which the youths to sportful arms he led.
By this, Aeneas and his train appear;
And now the women, seiz'd with shame and fear,
Dispers'd, to woods and caverns take their flight,
Abhor their actions, and avoid the light;
Their friends acknowledge, and their error find,
And shake the goddess from their alter'd mind.

Not so the raging fires their fury cease,
But, lurking in the seams, with seeming peace,
Work on their way amid the smold'ring tow,
Sure in destruction, but in motion slow.
The silent plague thro' the green timber eats,
And vomits out a tardy flame by fits.
Down to the keels, and upward to the sails,
The fire descends, or mounts, but still prevails;
Nor buckets pour'd, nor strength of human hand,
Can the victorious element withstand.

The pious hero rends his robe, and throws
To heav'n his hands, and with his hands his vows.
"O Jove," he cried, "if pray'rs can yet have place;
If thou abhorr'st not all the Dardan race;
If any spark of pity still remain;
If gods are gods, and not invok'd in vain;
Yet spare the relics of the Trojan train!
Yet from the flames our burning vessels free,
Or let thy fury fall alone on me!
At this devoted head thy thunder throw,
And send the willing sacrifice below!"

Scarce had he said, when southern storms arise:
From pole to pole the forky lightning flies;
Loud rattling shakes the mountains and the plain;
Heav'n bellies downward, and descends in rain.
Whole sheets of water from the clouds are sent,
Which, hissing thro' the planks, the flames prevent,
And stop the fiery pest. Four ships alone
Burn to the waist, and for the fleet atone.

But doubtful thoughts the hero's heart divide;
If he should still in Sicily reside,
Forgetful of his fates, or tempt the main,

In hope the promis'd Italy to gain.
Then Nautes, old and wise, to whom alone
The will of Heav'n by Pallas was foreshown;
Vers'd in portents, experience'd, and inspir'd
To tell events, and what the fates requir'd;
Thus while he stood, to neither part inclin'd,
With cheerful words reliev'd his lab'ring mind:
"O goddess-born, resign'd in ev'ry state,
With patience bear, with prudence push your fate.
By suff 'ring well, our Fortune we subdue;
Fly when she frowns, and, when she calls, pursue.
Your friend Acestes is of Trojan kind;
To him disclose the secrets of your mind:
Trust in his hands your old and useless train;
Too num'rous for the ships which yet remain:
The feeble, old, indulgent of their ease,
The dames who dread the dangers of the seas,
With all the dastard crew, who dare not stand
The shock of battle with your foes by land.
Here you may build a common town for all,
And, from Acestes' name, Acesta call."
The reasons, with his friend's experience join'd,
Encourag'd much, but more disturb'd his mind.

'T was dead of night; when to his slumb'ring eyes
His father's shade descended from the skies,
And thus he spoke: "O more than vital breath,
Lov'd while I liv'd, and dear ev'n after death;
O son, in various toils and troubles toss'd,
The King of Heav'n employs my careful ghost
On his commands: the god, who sav'd from fire
Your flaming fleet, and heard your just desire.
The wholesome counsel of your friend receive,
And here the coward train and woman leave:
The chosen youth, and those who nobly dare,
Transport, to tempt the dangers of the war.
The stern Italians will their courage try;
Rough are their manners, and their minds are high.
But first to Pluto's palace you shall go,
And seek my shade among the blest below:
For not with impious ghosts my soul remains,
Nor suffers with the damn'd perpetual pains,
But breathes the living air of soft Elysian plains.
The chaste Sibylla shall your steps convey,
And blood of offer'd victims free the way.
There shall you know what realms the gods assign,
And learn the fates and fortunes of your line.
But now, farewell! I vanish with the night,
And feel the blast of heav'n's approaching light."
He said, and mix'd with shades, and took his airy flight.

“Whither so fast?” the filial duty cried;
“And why, ah why, the wish’d embrace denied?”

He said, and rose; as holy zeal inspires,
He rakes hot embers, and renews the fires;
His country gods and Vesta then adores
With cakes and incense, and their aid implores.
Next, for his friends and royal host he sent,
Reveal’d his vision, and the gods’ intent,
With his own purpose. All, without delay,
The will of Jove, and his desires obey.
They list with women each degenerate name,
Who dares not hazard life for future fame.
These they cashier: the brave remaining few,
Oars, banks, and cables, half consum’d, renew.
The prince designs a city with the plow;
The lots their sev’ral tenements allow.
This part is nam’d from Ilium, that from Troy,
And the new king ascends the throne with joy;
A chosen senate from the people draws;
Appoints the judges, and ordains the laws.
Then, on the top of Eryx, they begin
A rising temple to the Paphian queen.
Anchises, last, is honor’d as a god;
A priest is added, annual gifts bestow’d,
And groves are planted round his blest abode.
Nine days they pass in feasts, their temples crown’d;
And fumes of incense in the fanes abound.
Then from the south arose a gentle breeze
That curl’d the smoothness of the glassy seas;
The rising winds a ruffling gale afford,
And call the merry mariners aboard.

Now loud laments along the shores resound,
Of parting friends in close embraces bound.
The trembling women, the degenerate train,
Who shunn’d the frightful dangers of the main,
Ev’n those desire to sail, and take their share
Of the rough passage and the promis’d war:
Whom good Aeneas cheers, and recommends
To their new master’s care his fearful friends.
On Eryx’s altars three fat calves he lays;
A lamb new-fallen to the stormy seas;
Then slips his haulsers, and his anchors weighs.
High on the deck the godlike hero stands,
With olive crown’d, a charger in his hands;
Then cast the reeking entrails in the brine,
And pour’d the sacrifice of purple wine.
Fresh gales arise; with equal strokes they vie,
And brush the buxom seas, and o’er the billows fly.

Meantime the mother goddess, full of fears,
To Neptune thus address'd, with tender tears:
"The pride of Jove's imperious queen, the rage,
The malice which no suff 'rings can assuage,
Compel me to these pray'rs; since neither fate,
Nor time, nor pity, can remove her hate:
Ev'n Jove is thwarted by his haughty wife;
Still vanquish'd, yet she still renews the strife.
As if 't were little to consume the town
Which aw'd the world, and wore th' imperial crown,
She prosecutes the ghost of Troy with pains,
And gnaws, ev'n to the bones, the last remains.
Let her the causes of her hatred tell;
But you can witness its effects too well.
You saw the storm she rais'd on Libyan floods,
That mix'd the mounting billows with the clouds;
When, bribing Aeolus, she shook the main,
And mov'd rebellion in your wat'ry reign.
With fury she possess'd the Dardan dames,
To burn their fleet with execrable flames,
And forc'd Aeneas, when his ships were lost,
To leave his foll'wers on a foreign coast.
For what remains, your godhead I implore,
And trust my son to your protecting pow'r.
If neither Jove's nor Fate's decree withstand,
Secure his passage to the Latian land."

Then thus the mighty Ruler of the Main:
"What may not Venus hope from Neptune's reign?
My kingdom claims your birth; my late defense
Of your indanger'd fleet may claim your confidence.
Nor less by land than sea my deeds declare
How much your lov'd Aeneas is my care.
Thee, Xanthus, and thee, Simois, I attest.
Your Trojan troops when proud Achilles press'd,
And drove before him headlong on the plain,
And dash'd against the walls the trembling train;
When floods were fill'd with bodies of the slain;
When crimson Xanthus, doubtful of his way,
Stood up on ridges to behold the sea;
(New heaps came tumbling in, and chok'd his way;)
When your Aeneas fought, but fought with odds
Of force unequal, and unequal gods;
I spread a cloud before the victor's sight,
Sustain'd the vanquish'd, and secur'd his flight;
Ev'n then secur'd him, when I sought with joy
The vow'd destruction of ungrateful Troy.
My will's the same: fair goddess, fear no more,
Your fleet shall safely gain the Latian shore;
Their lives are giv'n; one destin'd head alone

Shall perish, and for multitudes atone.”
Thus having arm’d with hopes her anxious mind,
His finny team Saturnian Neptune join’d,
Then adds the foamy bridle to their jaws,
And to the loosen’d reins permits the laws.
High on the waves his azure car he guides;
Its axles thunder, and the sea subsides,
And the smooth ocean rolls her silent tides.
The tempests fly before their father’s face,
Trains of inferior gods his triumph grace,
And monster whales before their master play,
And choirs of Tritons crowd the wat’ry way.
The marshal’d pow’rs in equal troops divide
To right and left; the gods his better side
Inclose, and on the worse the Nymphs and Nereids ride.

Now smiling hope, with sweet vicissitude,
Within the hero’s mind his joys renew’d.
He calls to raise the masts, the sheets display;
The cheerful crew with diligence obey;
They scud before the wind, and sail in open sea.
Ahead of all the master pilot steers;
And, as he leads, the following navy veers.
The steeds of Night had travel’d half the sky,
The drowsy rowers on their benches lie,
When the soft God of Sleep, with easy flight,
Descends, and draws behind a trail of light.
Thou, Palinurus, art his destin’d prey;
To thee alone he takes his fatal way.
Dire dreams to thee, and iron sleep, he bears;
And, lighting on thy prow, the form of Phorbas wears.
Then thus the traitor god began his tale:
“The winds, my friend, inspire a pleasing gale;
The ships, without thy care, securely sail.
Now steal an hour of sweet repose; and I
Will take the rudder and thy room supply.”
To whom the yawning pilot, half asleep:
“Me dost thou bid to trust the treach’rous deep,
The harlot smiles of her dissembling face,
And to her faith commit the Trojan race?
Shall I believe the Siren South again,
And, oft betray’d, not know the monster main?”
He said: his fasten’d hands the rudder keep,
And, fix’d on heav’n, his eyes repel invading sleep.
The god was wroth, and at his temples threw
A branch in Lethe dipp’d, and drunk with Stygian dew:
The pilot, vanquish’d by the pow’r divine,
Soon clos’d his swimming eyes, and lay supine.
Scarce were his limbs extended at their length,
The god, insulting with superior strength,

Fell heavy on him, plung'd him in the sea,
And, with the stern, the rudder tore away.
Headlong he fell, and, struggling in the main,
Cried out for helping hands, but cried in vain.
The victor daemon mounts obscure in air,
While the ship sails without the pilot's care.
On Neptune's faith the floating fleet relies;
But what the man forsook, the god supplies,
And o'er the dang'rous deep secure the navy flies;
Glides by the Sirens' cliffs, a shelfy coast,
Long infamous for ships and sailors lost,
And white with bones. Th' impetuous ocean roars,
And rocks rebellow from the sounding shores.
The watchful hero felt the knocks, and found
The tossing vessel sail'd on shoaly ground.
Sure of his pilot's loss, he takes himself
The helm, and steers aloof, and shuns the shelf.
Inly he griev'd, and, groaning from the breast,
Deplor'd his death; and thus his pain express'd:
"For faith repos'd on seas, and on the flatt'ring sky,
Thy naked corpse is doom'd on shores unknown to lie."

Book VI

He said, and wept; then spread his sails before
The winds, and reach'd at length the Cumaean shore:
Their anchors dropp'd, his crew the vessels moor.
They turn their heads to sea, their sterns to land,
And greet with greedy joy th' Italian strand.
Some strike from clashing flints their fiery seed;
Some gather sticks, the kindled flames to feed,
Or search for hollow trees, and fell the woods,
Or trace thro' valleys the discover'd floods.
Thus, while their sev'ral charges they fulfil,
The pious prince ascends the sacred hill
Where Phoebus is ador'd; and seeks the shade
Which hides from sight his venerable maid.
Deep in a cave the Sibyl makes abode;
Thence full of fate returns, and of the god.
Thro' Trivia's grove they walk; and now behold,
And enter now, the temple roof 'd with gold.
When Daedalus, to fly the Cretan shore,
His heavy limbs on jointed pinions bore,
(The first who sail'd in air,) 't is sung by Fame,
To the Cumaean coast at length he came,
And here alighting, built this costly frame.
Inscrib'd to Phoebus, here he hung on high
The steerage of his wings, that cut the sky:
Then o'er the lofty gate his art emboss'd
Androgeos' death, and off 'rings to his ghost;
Sev'n youths from Athens yearly sent, to meet

The fate appointed by revengeful Crete.
And next to those the dreadful urn was plac'd,
In which the destin'd names by lots were cast:
The mournful parents stand around in tears,
And rising Crete against their shore appears.
There too, in living sculpture, might be seen
The mad affection of the Cretan queen;
Then how she cheats her bellowing lover's eye;
The rushing leap, the doubtful progeny,
The lower part a beast, a man above,
The monument of their polluted love.
Not far from thence he grav'd the wondrous maze,
A thousand doors, a thousand winding ways:
Here dwells the monster, hid from human view,
Not to be found, but by the faithful clew;
Till the kind artist, mov'd with pious grief,
Lent to the loving maid this last relief,
And all those erring paths describ'd so well
That Theseus conquer'd and the monster fell.
Here hapless Icarus had found his part,
Had not the father's grief restrain'd his art.
He twice assay'd to cast his son in gold;
Twice from his hands he dropp'd the forming mold.

All this with wond'ring eyes Aeneas view'd;
Each varying object his delight renew'd:
Eager to read the rest Achates came,
And by his side the mad divining dame,
The priestess of the god, Deiphobe her name.
"Time suffers not," she said, "to feed your eyes
With empty pleasures; haste the sacrifice.
Sev'n bullocks, yet unyok'd, for Phoebus choose,
And for Diana sev'n unspotted ewes."
This said, the servants urge the sacred rites,
While to the temple she the prince invites.
A spacious cave, within its farmost part,
Was hew'd and fashion'd by laborious art
Thro' the hill's hollow sides: before the place,
A hundred doors a hundred entries grace;
As many voices issue, and the sound
Of Sybil's words as many times rebound.
Now to the mouth they come. Aloud she cries:
"This is the time; enquire your destinies.
He comes; behold the god!" Thus while she said,
(And shiv'ring at the sacred entry stay'd,)
Her color chang'd; her face was not the same,
And hollow groans from her deep spirit came.
Her hair stood up; convulsive rage possess'd
Her trembling limbs, and heav'd her lab'ring breast.
Greater than humankind she seem'd to look,

And with an accent more than mortal spoke.
Her staring eyes with sparkling fury roll;
When all the god came rushing on her soul.
Swiftly she turn'd, and, foaming as she spoke:
"Why this delay?" she cried "the pow'rs invoke!
Thy pray'rs alone can open this abode;
Else vain are my demands, and dumb the god."

She said no more. The trembling Trojans hear,
O'erspread with a damp sweat and holy fear.
The prince himself, with awful dread possess'd,
His vows to great Apollo thus address'd:
"Indulgent god, propitious pow'r to Troy,
Swift to relieve, unwilling to destroy,
Directed by whose hand the Dardan dart
Pierc'd the proud Grecian's only mortal part:
Thus far, by fate's decrees and thy commands,
Thro' ambient seas and thro' devouring sands,
Our exil'd crew has sought th' Ausonian ground;
And now, at length, the flying coast is found.
Thus far the fate of Troy, from place to place,
With fury has pursued her wand'ring race.
Here cease, ye pow'rs, and let your vengeance end:
Troy is no more, and can no more offend.
And thou, O sacred maid, inspir'd to see
Th' event of things in dark futurity;
Give me what Heav'n has promis'd to my fate,
To conquer and command the Latian state;
To fix my wand'ring gods, and find a place
For the long exiles of the Trojan race.
Then shall my grateful hands a temple rear
To the twin gods, with vows and solemn pray'r;
And annual rites, and festivals, and games,
Shall be perform'd to their auspicious names.
Nor shalt thou want thy honors in my land;
For there thy faithful oracles shall stand,
Preserv'd in shrines; and ev'ry sacred lay,
Which, by thy mouth, Apollo shall convey:
All shall be treasur'd by a chosen train
Of holy priests, and ever shall remain.
But O! commit not thy prophetic mind
To flitting leaves, the sport of ev'ry wind,
Lest they disperse in air our empty fate;
Write not, but, what the pow'rs ordain, relate."

Struggling in vain, impatient of her load,
And lab'ring underneath the pond'rous god,
The more she strove to shake him from her breast,
With more and far superior force he press'd;
Commands his entrance, and, without control,
Usurps her organs and inspires her soul.

Now, with a furious blast, the hundred doors
Ope of themselves; a rushing whirlwind roars
Within the cave, and Sibyl's voice restores:
"Escap'd the dangers of the wat'ry reign,
Yet more and greater ills by land remain.
The coast, so long desir'd (nor doubt th' event),
Thy troops shall reach, but, having reach'd, repent.
Wars, horrid wars, I view a field of blood,
And Tiber rolling with a purple flood.
Simois nor Xanthus shall be wanting there:
A new Achilles shall in arms appear,
And he, too, goddess-born. Fierce Juno's hate,
Added to hostile force, shall urge thy fate.
To what strange nations shalt not thou resort,
Driv'n to solicit aid at ev'ry court!
The cause the same which Ilium once oppress'd;
A foreign mistress, and a foreign guest.
But thou, secure of soul, unbent with woes,
The more thy fortune frowns, the more oppose.
The dawnings of thy safety shall be shown
From whence thou least shalt hope, a Grecian town."

Thus, from the dark recess, the Sibyl spoke,
And the resisting air the thunder broke;
The cave rebellow'd, and the temple shook.
Th' ambiguous god, who rul'd her lab'ring breast,
In these mysterious words his mind express'd;
Some truths reveal'd, in terms involv'd the rest.
At length her fury fell, her foaming ceas'd,
And, ebbing in her soul, the god decreas'd.
Then thus the chief: "No terror to my view,
No frightful face of danger can be new.
Inur'd to suffer, and resolv'd to dare,
The Fates, without my pow'r, shall be without my care.
This let me crave, since near your grove the road
To hell lies open, and the dark abode
Which Acheron surrounds, th' innavigable flood;
Conduct me thro' the regions void of light,
And lead me longing to my father's sight.
For him, a thousand dangers I have sought,
And, rushing where the thickest Grecians fought,
Safe on my back the sacred burthen brought.
He, for my sake, the raging ocean tried,
And wrath of Heav'n, my still auspicious guide,
And bore beyond the strength decrepid age supplied.
Oft, since he breath'd his last, in dead of night
His reverend image stood before my sight;
Enjoin'd to seek, below, his holy shade;
Conducted there by your unerring aid.
But you, if pious minds by pray'rs are won,

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88604

Oblige the father, and protect the son.
Yours is the pow'r; nor Proserpine in vain
Has made you priestess of her nightly reign.
If Orpheus, arm'd with his enchanting lyre,
The ruthless king with pity could inspire,
And from the shades below redeem his wife;
If Pollux, off 'ring his alternate life,
Could free his brother, and can daily go
By turns aloft, by turns descend below
Why name I Theseus, or his greater friend,
Who trod the downward path, and upward could ascend?
Not less than theirs from Jove my lineage came;
My mother greater, my descent the same."
So pray'd the Trojan prince, and, while he pray'd,
His hand upon the holy altar laid.

Then thus replied the prophetess divine:
"O goddess-born of great Anchises' line,
The gates of hell are open night and day;
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way:
But to return, and view the cheerful skies,
In this the task and mighty labor lies.
To few great Jupiter imparts this grace,
And those of shining worth and heav'nly race.
Betwixt those regions and our upper light,
Deep forests and impenetrable night
Possess the middle space: th' infernal bounds
Cocytus, with his sable waves, surrounds.
But if so dire a love your soul invades,
As twice below to view the trembling shades;
If you so hard a toil will undertake,
As twice to pass th' innavigable lake;
Receive my counsel. In the neighb'ring grove
There stands a tree; the queen of Stygian Jove
Claims it her own; thick woods and gloomy night
Conceal the happy plant from human sight.
One bough it bears; but (wondrous to behold!)
The ductile rind and leaves of radiant gold:
This from the vulgar branches must be torn,
And to fair Proserpine the present borne,
Ere leave be giv'n to tempt the nether skies.
The first thus rent a second will arise,
And the same metal the same room supplies.
Look round the wood, with lifted eyes, to see
The lurking gold upon the fatal tree:
Then rend it off, as holy rites command;
The willing metal will obey thy hand,
Following with ease, if favor'd by thy fate,
Thou art foredoom'd to view the Stygian state:
If not, no labor can the tree constrain;

And strength of stubborn arms and steel are vain.
Besides, you know not, while you here attend,
Th' unworthy fate of your unhappy friend:
Breathless he lies; and his unburied ghost,
Depriv'd of fun'ral rites, pollutes your host.
Pay first his pious dues; and, for the dead,
Two sable sheep around his hearse be led;
Then, living turfs upon his body lay:
This done, securely take the destin'd way,
To find the regions destitute of day."

She said, and held her peace. Aeneas went
Sad from the cave, and full of discontent,
Unknowing whom the sacred Sibyl meant.
Achates, the companion of his breast,
Goes grieving by his side, with equal cares oppress'd.
Walking, they talk'd, and fruitlessly divin'd
What friend the priestess by those words design'd.
But soon they found an object to deplore:
Misenus lay extended on the shore;
Son of the God of Winds: none so renown'd
The warrior trumpet in the field to sound;
With breathing brass to kindle fierce alarms,
And rouse to dare their fate in honorable arms.
He serv'd great Hector, and was ever near,
Not with his trumpet only, but his spear.
But by Pelides' arms when Hector fell,
He chose Aeneas; and he chose as well.
Swoln with applause, and aiming still at more,
He now provokes the sea gods from the shore;
With envy Triton heard the martial sound,
And the bold champion, for his challenge, drown'd;
Then cast his mangled carcass on the strand:
The gazing crowd around the body stand.
All weep; but most Aeneas mourns his fate,
And hastens to perform the funeral state.
In altar-wise, a stately pile they rear;
The basis broad below, and top advanc'd in air.
An ancient wood, fit for the work design'd,
(The shady covert of the salvage kind,)
The Trojans found: the sounding ax is plied;
Firs, pines, and pitch trees, and the tow'ring pride
Of forest ashes, feel the fatal stroke,
And piercing wedges cleave the stubborn oak.
Huge trunks of trees, fell'd from the steepy crown
Of the bare mountains, roll with ruin down.
Arm'd like the rest the Trojan prince appears,
And by his pious labor urges theirs.

Thus while he wrought, revolving in his mind
The ways to compass what his wish design'd,

He cast his eyes upon the gloomy grove,
And then with vows implor'd the Queen of Love:
"O may thy pow'r, propitious still to me,
Conduct my steps to find the fatal tree,
In this deep forest; since the Sibyl's breath
Foretold, alas! too true, Misenus' death."
Scarce had he said, when, full before his sight,
Two doves, descending from their airy flight,
Secure upon the grassy plain alight.
He knew his mother's birds; and thus he pray'd:
"Be you my guides, with your auspicious aid,
And lead my footsteps, till the branch be found,
Whose glitt'ring shadow gilds the sacred ground.
And thou, great parent, with celestial care,
In this distress be present to my pray'r!"
Thus having said, he stopp'd with watchful sight,
Observing still the motions of their flight,
What course they took, what happy signs they shew.
They fed, and, flutt'ring, by degrees withdrew
Still farther from the place, but still in view:
Hopping and flying, thus they led him on
To the slow lake, whose baleful stench to shun
They wing'd their flight aloft; then, stooping low,
Perch'd on the double tree that bears the golden bough.
Thro' the green leafs the glitt'ring shadows glow;
As, on the sacred oak, the wintry mistletoe,
Where the proud mother views her precious brood,
And happier branches, which she never sow'd.
Such was the glitt'ring; such the ruddy rind,
And dancing leaves, that wanton'd in the wind.
He seiz'd the shining bough with griping hold,
And rent away, with ease, the ling'ring gold;
Then to the Sibyl's palace bore the prize.
Meantime the Trojan troops, with weeping eyes,
To dead Misenus pay his obsequies.
First, from the ground a lofty pile they rear,
Of pitch trees, oaks, and pines, and unctuous fir:
The fabric's front with cypress twigs they strew,
And stick the sides with boughs of baleful yew.
The topmost part his glitt'ring arms adorn;
Warm waters, then, in brazen caldrons borne,
Are pour'd to wash his body, joint by joint,
And fragrant oils the stiffen'd limbs anoint.
With groans and cries Misenus they deplore:
Then on a bier, with purple cover'd o'er,
The breathless body, thus bewail'd, they lay,
And fire the pile, their faces turn'd away
Such reverend rites their fathers us'd to pay.
Pure oil and incense on the fire they throw,
And fat of victims, which his friends bestow.

These gifts the greedy flames to dust devour;
Then on the living coals red wine they pour;
And, last, the relics by themselves dispose,
Which in a brazen urn the priests inclose.
Old Corynaeus compass'd thrice the crew,
And dipp'd an olive branch in holy dew;
Which thrice he sprinkled round, and thrice aloud
Invok'd the dead, and then dismissed the crowd.
But good Aeneas order'd on the shore
A stately tomb, whose top a trumpet bore,
A soldier's fauchion, and a seaman's oar.
Thus was his friend interr'd; and deathless fame
Still to the lofty cape consigns his name.
These rites perform'd, the prince, without delay,
Hastes to the nether world his destin'd way.
Deep was the cave; and, downward as it went
From the wide mouth, a rocky rough descent;
And here th' access a gloomy grove defends,
And there th' unnavigable lake extends,
O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,
No bird presumes to steer his airy flight;
Such deadly stenches from the depths arise,
And steaming sulphur, that infects the skies.
From hence the Grecian bards their legends make,
And give the name Avernus to the lake.
Four sable bullocks, in the yoke untaught,
For sacrifice the pious hero brought.
The priestess pours the wine betwixt their horns;
Then cuts the curling hair; that first oblation burns,
Invoking Hecate hither to repair:
A pow'rful name in hell and upper air.
The sacred priests with ready knives bereave
The beasts of life, and in full bowls receive
The streaming blood: a lamb to Hell and Night
(The sable wool without a streak of white)
Aeneas offers; and, by fate's decree,
A barren heifer, Proserpine, to thee,
With holocausts he Pluto's altar fills;
Sev'n brawny bulls with his own hand he kills;
Then on the broiling entrails oil he pours;
Which, ointed thus, the raging flame devours.
Late the nocturnal sacrifice begun,
Nor ended till the next returning sun.
Then earth began to bellow, trees to dance,
And howling dogs in glimm'ring light advance,
Ere Hecate came. "Far hence be souls profane!"
The Sibyl cried, "and from the grove abstain!
Now, Trojan, take the way thy fates afford;
Assume thy courage, and unsheathe thy sword."

She said, and pass'd along the gloomy space;
The prince pursued her steps with equal pace.

Ye realms, yet unreveal'd to human sight,
Ye gods who rule the regions of the night,
Ye gliding ghosts, permit me to relate
The mystic wonders of your silent state!

Obscure they went thro' dreary shades, that led
Along the waste dominions of the dead.
Thus wander travelers in woods by night,
By the moon's doubtful and malignant light,
When Jove in dusky clouds involves the skies,
And the faint crescent shoots by fits before their eyes.

Just in the gate and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful Cares and sullen Sorrows dwell,
And pale Diseases, and repining Age,
Want, Fear, and Famine's unresisted rage;
Here Toils, and Death, and Death's half-brother, Sleep,
Forms terrible to view, their sentry keep;
With anxious Pleasures of a guilty mind,
Deep Frauds before, and open Force behind;
The Furies' iron beds; and Strife, that shakes
Her hissing tresses and unfolds her snakes.
Full in the midst of this infernal road,
An elm displays her dusky arms abroad:
The God of Sleep there hides his heavy head,
And empty dreams on ev'ry leaf are spread.
Of various forms unnumber'd specters more,
Centaurs, and double shapes, besiege the door.
Before the passage, horrid Hydra stands,
And Briareus with all his hundred hands;
Gorgons, Geryon with his triple frame;
And vain Chimaera vomits empty flame.
The chief unsheath'd his shining steel, prepar'd,
Tho' seiz'd with sudden fear, to force the guard,
Off 'ring his brandish'd weapon at their face;
Had not the Sibyl stopp'd his eager pace,
And told him what those empty phantoms were:
Forms without bodies, and impassive air.
Hence to deep Acheron they take their way,
Whose troubled eddies, thick with ooze and clay,
Are whirl'd aloft, and in Cocytus lost.
There Charon stands, who rules the dreary coast
A sordid god: down from his hoary chin
A length of beard descends, uncomb'd, unclean;
His eyes, like hollow furnaces on fire;
A girdle, foul with grease, binds his obscene attire.
He spreads his canvas; with his pole he steers;
The freights of flitting ghosts in his thin bottom bears.
He look'd in years; yet in his years were seen

A youthful vigor and autumnal green.
An airy crowd came rushing where he stood,
Which fill'd the margin of the fatal flood:
Husbands and wives, boys and unmarried maids,
And mighty heroes' more majestic shades,
And youths, intomb'd before their fathers' eyes,
With hollow groans, and shrieks, and feeble cries.
Thick as the leaves in autumn strow the woods,
Or fowls, by winter forc'd, forsake the floods,
And wing their hasty flight to happier lands;
Such, and so thick, the shiv'ring army stands,
And press for passage with extended hands.
Now these, now those, the surly boatman bore:
The rest he drove to distance from the shore.
The hero, who beheld with wond'ring eyes
The tumult mix'd with shrieks, laments, and cries,
Ask'd of his guide, what the rude concourse meant;
Why to the shore the thronging people bent;
What forms of law among the ghosts were us'd;
Why some were ferried o'er, and some refus'd.

"Son of Anchises, offspring of the gods,"
The Sibyl said, "you see the Stygian floods,
The sacred stream which heav'n's imperial state
Attests in oaths, and fears to violate.
The ghosts rejected are th' unhappy crew
Depriv'd of sepulchers and fun'ral due:
The boatman, Charon; those, the buried host,
He ferries over to the farther coast;
Nor dares his transport vessel cross the waves
With such whose bones are not compos'd in graves.
A hundred years they wander on the shore;
At length, their penance done, are wafted o'er."
The Trojan chief his forward pace repress'd,
Revolving anxious thoughts within his breast,
He saw his friends, who, whelm'd beneath the waves,
Their fun'ral honors claim'd, and ask'd their quiet graves.
The lost Leucaspis in the crowd he knew,
And the brave leader of the Lycian crew,
Whom, on the Tyrrhene seas, the tempests met;
The sailors master'd, and the ship o'erset.

Amidst the spirits, Palinurus press'd,
Yet fresh from life, a new-admitted guest,
Who, while he steering view'd the stars, and bore
His course from Afric to the Latian shore,
Fell headlong down. The Trojan fix'd his view,
And scarcely thro' the gloom the sullen shadow knew.
Then thus the prince: "What envious pow'r, O friend,
Brought your lov'd life to this disastrous end?
For Phoebus, ever true in all he said,

Has in your fate alone my faith betray'd.
The god foretold you should not die, before
You reach'd, secure from seas, th' Italian shore.
Is this th' unerring pow'r?" The ghost replied;
"Nor Phoebus flatter'd, nor his answers lied;
Nor envious gods have sent me to the deep:
But, while the stars and course of heav'n I keep,
My wearied eyes were seiz'd with fatal sleep.
I fell; and, with my weight, the helm constrain'd
Was drawn along, which yet my gripe retain'd.
Now by the winds and raging waves I swear,
Your safety, more than mine, was then my care;
Lest, of the guide bereft, the rudder lost,
Your ship should run against the rocky coast.
Three blust'ring nights, borne by the southern blast,
I floated, and discover'd land at last:
High on a mounting wave my head I bore,
Forcing my strength, and gath'ring to the shore.
Panting, but past the danger, now I seiz'd
The craggy cliffs, and my tir'd members eas'd.
While, cumber'd with my dropping clothes, I lay,
The cruel nation, covetous of prey,
Stain'd with my blood th' unhospitable coast;
And now, by winds and waves, my lifeless limbs are toss'd:
Which O avert, by yon ethereal light,
Which I have lost for this eternal night!
Or, if by dearer ties you may be won,
By your dead sire, and by your living son,
Redeem from this reproach my wand'ring ghost;
Or with your navy seek the Velin coast,
And in a peaceful grave my corpse compose;
Or, if a nearer way your mother shows,
Without whose aid you durst not undertake
This frightful passage o'er the Stygian lake,
Lend to this wretch your hand, and waft him o'er
To the sweet banks of yon forbidden shore."
Scarce had he said, the prophetess began:
"What hopes delude thee, miserable man?
Think'st thou, thus unintomb'd, to cross the floods,
To view the Furies and infernal gods,
And visit, without leave, the dark abodes?
Attend the term of long revolving years;
Fate, and the dooming gods, are deaf to tears.
This comfort of thy dire misfortune take:
The wrath of Heav'n, inflicted for thy sake,
With vengeance shall pursue th' inhuman coast,
Till they propitiate thy offended ghost,
And raise a tomb, with vows and solemn pray'r;
And Palinurus' name the place shall bear."

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88604

This calm'd his cares; sooth'd with his future fame,
And pleas'd to hear his propagated name.

Now nearer to the Stygian lake they draw:
Whom, from the shore, the surly boatman saw;
Observ'd their passage thro' the shady wood,
And mark'd their near approaches to the flood.
Then thus he call'd aloud, inflam'd with wrath:
"Mortal, whate'er, who this forbidden path
In arms presum'st to tread, I charge thee, stand,
And tell thy name, and bus'ness in the land.
Know this, the realm of night the Stygian shore:
My boat conveys no living bodies o'er;
Nor was I pleas'd great Theseus once to bear,
Who forc'd a passage with his pointed spear,
Nor strong Alcides men of mighty fame,
And from th' immortal gods their lineage came.
In fetters one the barking porter tied,
And took him trembling from his sov'reign's side:
Two sought by force to seize his beauteous bride."
To whom the Sibyl thus: "Compose thy mind;
Nor frauds are here contriv'd, nor force design'd.
Still may the dog the wand'ring troops constrain
Of airy ghosts, and vex the guilty train,
And with her grisly lord his lovely queen remain.
The Trojan chief, whose lineage is from Jove,
Much fam'd for arms, and more for filial love,
Is sent to seek his sire in your Elysian grove.
If neither piety, nor Heav'n's command,
Can gain his passage to the Stygian strand,
This fatal present shall prevail at least."
Then shew'd the shining bough, conceal'd within her vest.
No more was needful: for the gloomy god
Stood mute with awe, to see the golden rod;
Admir'd the destin'd off 'ring to his queen
A venerable gift, so rarely seen.
His fury thus appeas'd, he puts to land;
The ghosts forsake their seats at his command:
He clears the deck, receives the mighty freight;
The leaky vessel groans beneath the weight.
Slowly she sails, and scarcely stems the tides;
The pressing water pours within her sides.
His passengers at length are wafted o'er,
Expos'd, in muddy weeds, upon the miry shore.

No sooner landed, in his den they found
The triple porter of the Stygian sound,
Grim Cerberus, who soon began to rear
His crested snakes, and arm'd his bristling hair.
The prudent Sibyl had before prepar'd
A sop, in honey steep'd, to charm the guard;

Which, mix'd with pow'rful drugs, she cast before
His greedy grinning jaws, just op'd to roar.
With three enormous mouths he gapes; and straight,
With hunger press'd, devours the pleasing bait.
Long draughts of sleep his monstrous limbs enslave;
He reels, and, falling, fills the spacious cave.
The keeper charm'd, the chief without delay
Pass'd on, and took th' irremeable way.
Before the gates, the cries of babes new born,
Whom fate had from their tender mothers torn,
Assault his ears: then those, whom form of laws
Condemn'd to die, when traitors judg'd their cause.
Nor want they lots, nor judges to review
The wrongful sentence, and award a new.
Minos, the strict inquisitor, appears;
And lives and crimes, with his assessors, hears.
Round in his urn the blended balls he rolls,
Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.
The next, in place and punishment, are they
Who prodigally throw their souls away;
Fools, who, repining at their wretched state,
And loathing anxious life, suborn'd their fate.
With late repentance now they would retrieve
The bodies they forsook, and wish to live;
Their pains and poverty desire to bear,
To view the light of heav'n, and breathe the vital air:
But fate forbids; the Stygian floods oppose,
And with circling streams the captive souls inclose.

Not far from thence, the Mournful Fields appear
So call'd from lovers that inhabit there.
The souls whom that unhappy flame invades,
In secret solitude and myrtle shades
Make endless moans, and, pining with desire,
Lament too late their unextinguish'd fire.
Here Procris, Eriphyle here he found,
Baring her breast, yet bleeding with the wound
Made by her son. He saw Pasiphae there,
With Phaedra's ghost, a foul incestuous pair.
There Laodamia, with Evadne, moves,
Unhappy both, but loyal in their loves:
Caeneus, a woman once, and once a man,
But ending in the sex she first began.
Not far from these Phoenician Dido stood,
Fresh from her wound, her bosom bath'd in blood;
Whom when the Trojan hero hardly knew,
Obscure in shades, and with a doubtful view,
(Doubtful as he who sees, thro' dusky night,
Or thinks he sees, the moon's uncertain light,)
With tears he first approach'd the sullen shade;

And, as his love inspir'd him, thus he said:
"Unhappy queen! then is the common breath
Of rumor true, in your reported death,
And I, alas! the cause? By Heav'n, I vow,
And all the pow'rs that rule the realms below,
Unwilling I forsook your friendly state,
Commanded by the gods, and forc'd by fate
Those gods, that fate, whose unresisted might
Have sent me to these regions void of light,
Thro' the vast empire of eternal night.
Nor dar'd I to presume, that, press'd with grief,
My flight should urge you to this dire relief.
Stay, stay your steps, and listen to my vows:
'T is the last interview that fate allows!"
In vain he thus attempts her mind to move
With tears, and pray'rs, and late-repenting love.
Disdainfully she look'd; then turning round,
But fix'd her eyes unmov'd upon the ground,
And what he says and swears, regards no more
Than the deaf rocks, when the loud billows roar;
But whirl'd away, to shun his hateful sight,
Hid in the forest and the shades of night;
Then sought Sichaeus thro' the shady grove,
Who answer'd all her cares, and equal'd all her love.

Some pious tears the pitying hero paid,
And follow'd with his eyes the flitting shade,
Then took the forward way, by fate ordain'd,
And, with his guide, the farther fields attain'd,
Where, sever'd from the rest, the warrior souls remain'd.
Tydeus he met, with Meleager's race,
The pride of armies, and the soldiers' grace;
And pale Adrastus with his ghastly face.
Of Trojan chiefs he view'd a num'rous train,
All much lamented, all in battle slain;
Glaucus and Medon, high above the rest,
Antenor's sons, and Ceres' sacred priest.
And proud Idaeus, Priam's charioteer,
Who shakes his empty reins, and aims his airy spear.
The gladsome ghosts, in circling troops, attend
And with unwearied eyes behold their friend;
Delight to hover near, and long to know
What bus'ness brought him to the realms below.
But Argive chiefs, and Agamemnon's train,
When his refulgent arms flash'd thro' the shady plain,
Fled from his well-known face, with wonted fear,
As when his thund'ring sword and pointed spear
Drove headlong to their ships, and glean'd the routed rear.
They rais'd a feeble cry, with trembling notes;
But the weak voice deceiv'd their gasping throats.

Here Priam's son, Deiphobus, he found,
Whose face and limbs were one continued wound:
Dishonest, with lopp'd arms, the youth appears,
Spoil'd of his nose, and shorten'd of his ears.
He scarcely knew him, striving to disown
His blotted form, and blushing to be known;
And therefore first began: "O Teucer's race,
Who durst thy faultless figure thus deface?
What heart could wish, what hand inflict, this dire disgrace?
'Twas fam'd, that in our last and fatal night
Your single prowess long sustain'd the fight,
Till tir'd, not forc'd, a glorious fate you chose,
And fell upon a heap of slaughter'd foes.
But, in remembrance of so brave a deed,
A tomb and fun'ral honors I decreed;
Thrice call'd your manes on the Trojan plains:
The place your armor and your name retains.
Your body too I sought, and, had I found,
Design'd for burial in your native ground."

The ghost replied: "Your piety has paid
All needful rites, to rest my wand'ring shade;
But cruel fate, and my more cruel wife,
To Grecian swords betray'd my sleeping life.
These are the monuments of Helen's love:
The shame I bear below, the marks I bore above.
You know in what deluding joys we pass'd
The night that was by Heav'n decreed our last:
For, when the fatal horse, descending down,
Pregnant with arms, o'erwhelm'd th' unhappy town
She feign'd nocturnal orgies; left my bed,
And, mix'd with Trojan dames, the dances led
Then, waving high her torch, the signal made,
Which rous'd the Grecians from their ambuscade.
With watching overworn, with cares oppress'd,
Unhappy I had laid me down to rest,
And heavy sleep my weary limbs possess'd.
Meantime my worthy wife our arms mislaid,
And from beneath my head my sword convey'd;
The door unlatch'd, and, with repeated calls,
Invites her former lord within my walls.
Thus in her crime her confidence she plac'd,
And with new treasons would redeem the past.
What need I more? Into the room they ran,
And meanly murther'd a defenseless man.
Ulysses, basely born, first led the way.
Avenging pow'rs! with justice if I pray,
That fortune be their own another day!
But answer you; and in your turn relate,
What brought you, living, to the Stygian state:

Driv'n by the winds and errors of the sea,
Or did you Heav'n's superior doom obey?
Or tell what other chance conducts your way,
To view with mortal eyes our dark retreats,
Tumults and torments of th' infernal seats."

While thus in talk the flying hours they pass,
The sun had finish'd more than half his race:
And they, perhaps, in words and tears had spent
The little time of stay which Heav'n had lent;
But thus the Sibyl chides their long delay:
"Night rushes down, and headlong drives the day:
'T is here, in different paths, the way divides;
The right to Pluto's golden palace guides;
The left to that unhappy region tends,
Which to the depth of Tartarus descends;
The seat of night profound, and punish'd fiends."
Then thus Deiphobus: "O sacred maid,
Forbear to chide, and be your will obey'd!
Lo! to the secret shadows I retire,
To pay my penance till my years expire.
Proceed, auspicious prince, with glory crown'd,
And born to better fates than I have found."
He said; and, while he said, his steps he turn'd
To secret shadows, and in silence mourn'd.

The hero, looking on the left, espied
A lofty tow'r, and strong on ev'ry side
With treble walls, which Phlegethon surrounds,
Whose fiery flood the burning empire bounds;
And, press'd betwixt the rocks, the bellowing noise resounds
Wide is the fronting gate, and, rais'd on high
With adamantine columns, threats the sky.
Vain is the force of man, and Heav'n's as vain,
To crush the pillars which the pile sustain.
Sublime on these a tow'r of steel is rear'd;
And dire Tisiphone there keeps the ward,
Girt in her sanguine gown, by night and day,
Observant of the souls that pass the downward way.
From hence are heard the groans of ghosts, the pains
Of sounding lashes and of dragging chains.
The Trojan stood astonish'd at their cries,
And ask'd his guide from whence those yells arise;
And what the crimes, and what the tortures were,
And loud laments that rent the liquid air.

She thus replied: "The chaste and holy race
Are all forbidden this polluted place.
But Hecate, when she gave to rule the woods,
Then led me trembling thro' these dire abodes,
And taught the tortures of th' avenging gods.
These are the realms of unrelenting fate;

And awful Rhadamanthus rules the state.
He hears and judges each committed crime;
Enquires into the manner, place, and time.
The conscious wretch must all his acts reveal,
(Loth to confess, unable to conceal),
From the first moment of his vital breath,
To his last hour of unrepenting death.
Straight, o'er the guilty ghost, the Fury shakes
The sounding whip and brandishes her snakes,
And the pale sinner, with her sisters, takes.
Then, of itself, unfolds th' eternal door;
With dreadful sounds the brazen hinges roar.
You see, before the gate, what stalking ghost
Commands the guard, what sentries keep the post.
More formidable Hydra stands within,
Whose jaws with iron teeth severely grin.
The gaping gulf low to the center lies,
And twice as deep as earth is distant from the skies.
The rivals of the gods, the Titan race,
Here, sing'd with lightning, roll within th' unfathom'd space.
Here lie th' Alaean twins, (I saw them both,)
Enormous bodies, of gigantic growth,
Who dar'd in fight the Thund'rer to defy,
Affect his heav'n, and force him from the sky.
Salmoneus, suff 'ring cruel pains, I found,
For emulating Jove; the rattling sound
Of mimic thunder, and the glitt'ring blaze
Of pointed lightnings, and their forky rays.
Thro' Elis and the Grecian towns he flew;
Th' audacious wretch four fiery coursers drew:
He wav'd a torch aloft, and, madly vain,
Sought godlike worship from a servile train.
Ambitious fool! with horny hoofs to pass
O'er hollow arches of resounding brass,
To rival thunder in its rapid course,
And imitate inimitable force!
But he, the King of Heav'n, obscure on high,
Bar'd his red arm, and, launching from the sky
His writhen bolt, not shaking empty smoke,
Down to the deep abyss the flaming felon strook.
There Tityus was to see, who took his birth
From heav'n, his nursing from the foodful earth.
Here his gigantic limbs, with large embrace,
Infold nine acres of infernal space.
A rav'nous vulture, in his open'd side,
Her crooked beak and cruel talons tried;
Still for the growing liver digg'd his breast;
The growing liver still supplied the feast;
Still are his entrails fruitful to their pains:
Th' immortal hunger lasts, th' immortal food remains.

Ixion and Perithous I could name,
And more Thessalian chiefs of mighty fame.
High o’er their heads a mold’ring rock is plac’d,
That promises a fall, and shakes at ev’ry blast.
They lie below, on golden beds display’d;
And genial feasts with regal pomp are made.
The Queen of Furies by their sides is set,
And snatches from their mouths th’ untasted meat,
Which if they touch, her hissing snakes she rears,
Tossing her torch, and thund’ring in their ears.
Then they, who brothers’ better claim disown,
Expel their parents, and usurp the throne;
Defraud their clients, and, to lucre sold,
Sit brooding on unprofitable gold;
Who dare not give, and ev’n refuse to lend
To their poor kindred, or a wanting friend.
Vast is the throng of these; nor less the train
Of lustful youths, for foul adult’ry slain:
Hosts of deserters, who their honor sold,
And basely broke their faith for bribes of gold.
All these within the dungeon’s depth remain,
Despairing pardon, and expecting pain.
Ask not what pains; nor farther seek to know
Their process, or the forms of law below.
Some roll a weighty stone; some, laid along,
And bound with burning wires, on spokes of wheels are hung
Unhappy Theseus, doom’d for ever there,
Is fix’d by fate on his eternal chair;
And wretched Phlegyas warns the world with cries
(Could warning make the world more just or wise):
‘Learn righteousness, and dread th’ avenging deities.’
To tyrants others have their country sold,
Imposing foreign lords, for foreign gold;
Some have old laws repeal’d, new statutes made,
Not as the people pleas’d, but as they paid;
With incest some their daughters’ bed profan’d:
All dar’d the worst of ills, and, what they dar’d, attain’d.
Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,
And throats of brass, inspir’d with iron lungs,
I could not half those horrid crimes repeat,
Nor half the punishments those crimes have met.
But let us haste our voyage to pursue:
The walls of Pluto’s palace are in view;
The gate, and iron arch above it, stands
On anvils labor’d by the Cyclops’ hands.
Before our farther way the Fates allow,
Here must we fix on high the golden bough.”

She said: and thro’ the gloomy shades they pass’d,
And chose the middle path. Arriv’d at last,

The prince with living water sprinkled o'er
His limbs and body; then approach'd the door,
Possess'd the porch, and on the front above
He fix'd the fatal bough requir'd by Pluto's love.
These holy rites perform'd, they took their way
Where long extended plains of pleasure lay:
The verdant fields with those of heav'n may vie,
With ether vested, and a purple sky;
The blissful seats of happy souls below.
Stars of their own, and their own suns, they know;
Their airy limbs in sports they exercise,
And on the green contend the wrestler's prize.
Some in heroic verse divinely sing;
Others in artful measures led the ring.
The Thracian bard, surrounded by the rest,
There stands conspicuous in his flowing vest;
His flying fingers, and harmonious quill,
Strikes sev'n distinguish'd notes, and sev'n at once they fill.
Here found they Teucer's old heroic race,
Born better times and happier years to grace.
Assaracus and Ilus here enjoy
Perpetual fame, with him who founded Troy.
The chief beheld their chariots from afar,
Their shining arms, and coursers train'd to war:
Their lances fix'd in earth, their steeds around,
Free from their harness, graze the flow'ry ground.
The love of horses which they had, alive,
And care of chariots, after death survive.
Some cheerful souls were feasting on the plain;
Some did the song, and some the choir maintain,
Beneath a laurel shade, where mighty Po
Mounts up to woods above, and hides his head below.
Here patriots live, who, for their country's good,
In fighting fields, were prodigal of blood:
Priests of unblemish'd lives here make abode,
And poets worthy their inspiring god;
And searching wits, of more mechanic parts,
Who grac'd their age with new-invented arts:
Those who to worth their bounty did extend,
And those who knew that bounty to commend.
The heads of these with holy fillets bound,
And all their temples were with garlands crown'd.

To these the Sibyl thus her speech address'd,
And first to him surrounded by the rest
(Tow'ring his height, and ample was his breast):
"Say, happy souls, divine Musaeus, say,
Where lives Anchises, and where lies our way
To find the hero, for whose only sake
We sought the dark abodes, and cross'd the bitter lake?"

To this the sacred poet thus replied:
“In no fix’d place the happy souls reside.
In groves we live, and lie on mossy beds,
By crystal streams, that murmur thro’ the meads:
But pass yon easy hill, and thence descend;
The path conducts you to your journey’s end.”
This said, he led them up the mountain’s brow,
And shews them all the shining fields below.
They wind the hill, and thro’ the blissful meadows go.
But old Anchises, in a flow’ry vale,
Review’d his muster’d race, and took the tale:
Those happy spirits, which, ordain’d by fate,
For future beings and new bodies wait
With studious thought observ’d th’ illustrious throng,
In nature’s order as they pass’d along:
Their names, their fates, their conduct, and their care,
In peaceful senates and successful war.
He, when Aeneas on the plain appears,
Meets him with open arms, and falling tears.
“Welcome,” he said, “the gods’ undoubted race!
O long expected to my dear embrace!
Once more ‘t is giv’n me to behold your face!
The love and pious duty which you pay
Have pass’d the perils of so hard a way.
‘T is true, computing times, I now believ’d
The happy day approach’d; nor are my hopes deceiv’d.
What length of lands, what oceans have you pass’d;
What storms sustain’d, and on what shores been cast?
How have I fear’d your fate! but fear’d it most,
When love assail’d you, on the Libyan coast.”
To this, the filial duty thus replies:
“Your sacred ghost before my sleeping eyes
Appear’d, and often urg’d this painful enterprise.
After long tossing on the Tyrrhene sea,
My navy rides at anchor in the bay.
But reach your hand, O parent shade, nor shun
The dear embraces of your longing son!”
He said; and falling tears his face bedew:
Then thrice around his neck his arms he threw;
And thrice the flitting shadow slipp’d away,
Like winds, or empty dreams that fly the day.

Now, in a secret vale, the Trojan sees
A sep’rate grove, thro’ which a gentle breeze
Plays with a passing breath, and whispers thro’ the trees;
And, just before the confines of the wood,
The gliding Lethe leads her silent flood.
About the boughs an airy nation flew,
Thick as the humming bees, that hunt the golden dew;
In summer’s heat on tops of lilies feed,

And creep within their bells, to suck the balmy seed:
The winged army roams the fields around;
The rivers and the rocks remurmur to the sound.
Aeneas wond'ring stood, then ask'd the cause
Which to the stream the crowding people draws.
Then thus the sire: "The souls that throng the flood
Are those to whom, by fate, are other bodies ow'd:
In Lethe's lake they long oblivion taste,
Of future life secure, forgetful of the past.
Long has my soul desir'd this time and place,
To set before your sight your glorious race,
That this presaging joy may fire your mind
To seek the shores by destiny design'd."
"O father, can it be, that souls sublime
Return to visit our terrestrial clime,
And that the gen'rous mind, releas'd by death,
Can covet lazy limbs and mortal breath?"

Anchises then, in order, thus begun
To clear those wonders to his godlike son:
"Know, first, that heav'n, and earth's compacted frame,
And flowing waters, and the starry flame,
And both the radiant lights, one common soul
Inspires and feeds, and animates the whole.
This active mind, infus'd thro' all the space,
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.
Hence men and beasts the breath of life obtain,
And birds of air, and monsters of the main.
Th' ethereal vigor is in all the same,
And every soul is fill'd with equal flame;
As much as earthy limbs, and gross allay
Of mortal members, subject to decay,
Blunt not the beams of heav'n and edge of day.
From this coarse mixture of terrestrial parts,
Desire and fear by turns possess their hearts,
And grief, and joy; nor can the groveling mind,
In the dark dungeon of the limbs confin'd,
Assert the native skies, or own its heav'nly kind:
Nor death itself can wholly wash their stains;
But long-contracted filth ev'n in the soul remains.
The relics of inveterate vice they wear,
And spots of sin obscene in ev'ry face appear.
For this are various penances enjoin'd;
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind,
Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires.
All have their manes, and those manes bear:
The few, so cleans'd, to these abodes repair,
And breathe, in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.
Then are they happy, when by length of time

The scurf is worn away of each committed crime;
No speck is left of their habitual stains,
But the pure ether of the soul remains.
But, when a thousand rolling years are past,
(So long their punishments and penance last,)
Whole droves of minds are, by the driving god,
Compell'd to drink the deep Lethaean flood,
In large forgetful draughts to steep the cares
Of their past labors, and their irksome years,
That, unrememb'ring of its former pain,
The soul may suffer mortal flesh again."

Thus having said, the father spirit leads
The priestess and his son thro' swarms of shades,
And takes a rising ground, from thence to see
The long procession of his progeny.
"Survey," pursued the sire, "this airy throng,
As, offer'd to thy view, they pass along.
These are th' Italian names, which fate will join
With ours, and graff upon the Trojan line.
Observe the youth who first appears in sight,
And holds the nearest station to the light,
Already seems to snuff the vital air,
And leans just forward, on a shining spear:
Silvius is he, thy last-begotten race,
But first in order sent, to fill thy place;
An Alban name, but mix'd with Dardan blood,
Born in the covert of a shady wood:
Him fair Lavinia, thy surviving wife,
Shall breed in groves, to lead a solitary life.
In Alba he shall fix his royal seat,
And, born a king, a race of kings beget.
Then Procas, honor of the Trojan name,
Capys, and Numitor, of endless fame.
A second Silvius after these appears;
Silvius Aeneas, for thy name he bears;
For arms and justice equally renown'd,
Who, late restor'd, in Alba shall be crown'd.
How great they look! how vig'rously they wield
Their weighty lances, and sustain the shield!
But they, who crown'd with oaken wreaths appear,
Shall Gabian walls and strong Fidena rear;
Nomentum, Bola, with Pometia, found;
And raise Collatian tow'rs on rocky ground.
All these shall then be towns of mighty fame,
Tho' now they lie obscure, and lands without a name.
See Romulus the great, born to restore
The crown that once his injur'd grandsire wore.
This prince a priestess of your blood shall bear,
And like his sire in arms he shall appear.

Two rising crests, his royal head adorn;
Born from a god, himself to godhead born:
His sire already signs him for the skies,
And marks the seat amidst the deities.
Auspicious chief! thy race, in times to come,
Shall spread the conquests of imperial Rome
Rome, whose ascending tow'rs shall heav'n invade,
Involving earth and ocean in her shade;
High as the Mother of the Gods in place,
And proud, like her, of an immortal race.
Then, when in pomp she makes the Phrygian round,
With golden turrets on her temples crown'd;
A hundred gods her sweeping train supply;
Her offspring all, and all command the sky.

"Now fix your sight, and stand intent, to see
Your Roman race, and Julian progeny.
The mighty Caesar waits his vital hour,
Impatient for the world, and grasps his promis'd pow'r.
But next behold the youth of form divine,
Ceasar himself, exalted in his line;
Augustus, promis'd oft, and long foretold,
Sent to the realm that Saturn rul'd of old;
Born to restore a better age of gold.
Afric and India shall his pow'r obey;
He shall extend his propagated sway
Beyond the solar year, without the starry way,
Where Atlas turns the rolling heav'ns around,
And his broad shoulders with their lights are crown'd.
At his foreseen approach, already quake
The Caspian kingdoms and Maeotian lake:
Their seers behold the tempest from afar,
And threat'ning oracles denounce the war.
Nile hears him knocking at his sev'nfold gates,
And seeks his hidden spring, and fears his nephew's fates.
Nor Hercules more lands or labors knew,
Not tho' the brazen-footed hind he slew,
Freed Erymanthus from the foaming boar,
And dipp'd his arrows in Lernaean gore;
Nor Bacchus, turning from his Indian war,
By tigers drawn triumphant in his car,
From Nisus' top descending on the plains,
With curling vines around his purple reins.
And doubt we yet thro' dangers to pursue
The paths of honor, and a crown in view?
But what's the man, who from afar appears?
His head with olive crown'd, his hand a censer bears,
His hoary beard and holy vestments bring
His lost idea back: I know the Roman king.
He shall to peaceful Rome new laws ordain,

Call’d from his mean abode a scepter to sustain.
Him Tullus next in dignity succeeds,
An active prince, and prone to martial deeds.
He shall his troops for fighting fields prepare,
Disus’d to toils, and triumphs of the war.
By dint of sword his crown he shall increase,
And scour his armor from the rust of peace.
Whom Ancus follows, with a fawning air,
But vain within, and proudly popular.
Next view the Tarquin kings, th’ avenging sword
Of Brutus, justly drawn, and Rome restor’d.
He first renews the rods and ax severe,
And gives the consuls royal robes to wear.
His sons, who seek the tyrant to sustain,
And long for arbitrary lords again,
With ignominy scourg’d, in open sight,
He dooms to death deserv’d, asserting public right.
Unhappy man, to break the pious laws
Of nature, pleading in his children’s cause!
Howeer the doubtful fact is understood,
‘T is love of honor, and his country’s good:
The consul, not the father, sheds the blood.
Behold Torquatus the same track pursue;
And, next, the two devoted Decii view:
The Drusian line, Camillus loaded home
With standards well redeem’d, and foreign foes o’ercome
The pair you see in equal armor shine,
Now, friends below, in close embraces join;
But, when they leave the shady realms of night,
And, cloth’d in bodies, breathe your upper light,
With mortal hate each other shall pursue:
What wars, what wounds, what slaughter shall ensue!
From Alpine heights the father first descends;
His daughter’s husband in the plain attends:
His daughter’s husband arms his eastern friends.
Embrace again, my sons, be foes no more;
Nor stain your country with her children’s gore!
And thou, the first, lay down thy lawless claim,
Thou, of my blood, who bearist the Julian name!
Another comes, who shall in triumph ride,
And to the Capitol his chariot guide,
From conquer’d Corinth, rich with Grecian spoils.
And yet another, fam’d for warlike toils,
On Argos shall impose the Roman laws,
And on the Greeks revenge the Trojan cause;
Shall drag in chains their Achillean race;
Shall vindicate his ancestors’ disgrace,
And Pallas, for her violated place.
Great Cato there, for gravity renown’d,
And conqu’ring Cossus goes with laurels crown’d.

Who can omit the Gracchi? who declare
The Scipios' worth, those thunderbolts of war,
The double bane of Carthage? Who can see
Without esteem for virtuous poverty,
Severe Fabricius, or can cease t' admire
The plowman consul in his coarse attire?
Tir'd as I am, my praise the Fabii claim;
And thou, great hero, greatest of thy name,
Ordain'd in war to save the sinking state,
And, by delays, to put a stop to fate!
Let others better mold the running mass
Of metals, and inform the breathing brass,
And soften into flesh a marble face;
Plead better at the bar; describe the skies,
And when the stars descend, and when they rise.
But, Rome, 't is thine alone, with awful sway,
To rule mankind, and make the world obey,
Disposing peace and war by thy own majestic way;
To tame the proud, the fetter'd slave to free:
These are imperial arts, and worthy thee."

He paus'd; and, while with wond'ring eyes they view'd
The passing spirits, thus his speech renew'd:
"See great Marcellus! how, untir'd in toils,
He moves with manly grace, how rich with regal spoils!
He, when his country, threaten'd with alarms,
Requires his courage and his conqu'ring arms,
Shall more than once the Punic bands affright;
Shall kill the Gaulish king in single fight;
Then to the Capitol in triumph move,
And the third spoils shall grace Feretrian Jove."
Aeneas here beheld, of form divine,
A godlike youth in glitt'ring armor shine,
With great Marcellus keeping equal pace;
But gloomy were his eyes, dejected was his face.
He saw, and, wond'ring, ask'd his airy guide,
What and of whence was he, who press'd the hero's side:
"His son, or one of his illustrious name?
How like the former, and almost the same!
Observe the crowds that compass him around;
All gaze, and all admire, and raise a shouting sound:
But hov'ring mists around his brows are spread,
And night, with sable shades, involves his head."
"Seek not to know," the ghost replied with tears,
"The sorrows of thy sons in future years.
This youth (the blissful vision of a day)
Shall just be shown on earth, and snatch'd away.
The gods too high had rais'd the Roman state,
Were but their gifts as permanent as great.
What groans of men shall fill the Martian field!

How fierce a blaze his flaming pile shall yield!
What fun'ral pomp shall floating Tiber see,
When, rising from his bed, he views the sad solemnity!
No youth shall equal hopes of glory give,
No youth afford so great a cause to grieve;
The Trojan honor, and the Roman boast,
Admir'd when living, and ador'd when lost!
Mirror of ancient faith in early youth!
Undaunted worth, inviolable truth!
No foe, unpunish'd, in the fighting field
Shall dare thee, foot to foot, with sword and shield;
Much less in arms oppose thy matchless force,
When thy sharp spurs shall urge thy foaming horse.
Ah! couldst thou break thro' fate's severe decree,
A new Marcellus shall arise in thee!
Full canisters of fragrant lilies bring,
Mix'd with the purple roses of the spring;
Let me with fun'ral flow'rs his body strow;
This gift which parents to their children owe,
This unavailing gift, at least, I may bestow!"
Thus having said, he led the hero round
The confines of the blest Elysian ground;
Which when Anchises to his son had shown,
And fir'd his mind to mount the promis'd throne,
He tells the future wars, ordain'd by fate;
The strength and customs of the Latian state;
The prince, and people; and forearms his care
With rules, to push his fortune, or to bear.

Two gates the silent house of Sleep adorn;
Of polish'd ivory this, that of transparent horn:
True visions thro' transparent horn arise;
Thro' polish'd ivory pass deluding lies.
Of various things discoursing as he pass'd,
Anchises hither bends his steps at last.
Then, thro' the gate of iv'ry, he dismiss'd
His valiant offspring and divining guest.
Straight to the ships Aeneas his way,
Embark'd his men, and skimm'd along the sea,
Still coasting, till he gain'd Cajeta's bay.
At length on oozy ground his galleys moor;
Their heads are turn'd to sea, their sterns to shore.

Book VII

And thou, O matron of immortal fame,
Here dying, to the shore hast left thy name;
Cajeta still the place is call'd from thee,
The nurse of great Aeneas' infancy.
Here rest thy bones in rich Hesperia's plains;
Thy name ('t is all a ghost can have) remains.

Now, when the prince her fun'ral rites had paid,
He plow'd the Tyrrhene seas with sails display'd.
From land a gentle breeze arose by night,
Serenely shone the stars, the moon was bright,
And the sea trembled with her silver light.
Now near the shelves of Circe's shores they run,
(Circe the rich, the daughter of the Sun,)
A dang'rous coast: the goddess wastes her days
In joyous songs; the rocks resound her lays:
In spinning, or the loom, she spends the night,
And cedar brands supply her father's light.
From hence were heard, rebellowing to the main,
The roars of lions that refuse the chain,
The grunts of bristled boars, and groans of bears,
And herds of howling wolves that stun the sailors' ears.
These from their caverns, at the close of night,
Fill the sad isle with horror and affright.
Darkling they mourn their fate, whom Circe's pow'r,
(That watch'd the moon and planetary hour,)
With words and wicked herbs from humankind
Had alter'd, and in brutal shapes confin'd.
Which monsters lest the Trojans' pious host
Should bear, or touch upon th' inchanted coast,
Propitious Neptune steer'd their course by night
With rising gales that sped their happy flight.
Supplied with these, they skim the sounding shore,
And hear the swelling surges vainly roar.
Now, when the rosy morn began to rise,
And wav'd her saffron streamer thro' the skies;
When Thetis blush'd in purple not her own,
And from her face the breathing winds were blown,
A sudden silence sate upon the sea,
And sweeping oars, with struggling, urge their way.
The Trojan, from the main, beheld a wood,
Which thick with shades and a brown horror stood:
Betwixt the trees the Tiber took his course,
With whirlpools dimpled; and with downward force,
That drove the sand along, he took his way,
And roll'd his yellow billows to the sea.
About him, and above, and round the wood,
The birds that haunt the borders of his flood,
That bath'd within, or basked upon his side,
To tuneful songs their narrow throats applied.
The captain gives command; the joyful train
Glide thro' the gloomy shade, and leave the main.

Now, Erato, thy poet's mind inspire,
And fill his soul with thy celestial fire!
Relate what Latium was; her ancient kings;
Declare the past and state of things,

When first the Trojan fleet Ausonia sought,
And how the rivals lov'd, and how they fought.
These are my theme, and how the war began,
And how concluded by the godlike man:
For I shall sing of battles, blood, and rage,
Which princes and their people did engage;
And haughty souls, that, mov'd with mutual hate,
In fighting fields pursued and found their fate;
That rous'd the Tyrrhene realm with loud alarms,
And peaceful Italy involv'd in arms.
A larger scene of action is display'd;
And, rising hence, a greater work is weigh'd.

Latinus, old and mild, had long possess'd
The Latin scepter, and his people blest:
His father Faunus; a Laurentian dame
His mother; fair Marica was her name.
But Faunus came from Picus: Picus drew
His birth from Saturn, if records be true.
Thus King Latinus, in the third degree,
Had Saturn author of his family.
But this old peaceful prince, as Heav'n decreed,
Was blest with no male issue to succeed:
His sons in blooming youth were snatch'd by fate;
One only daughter heir'd the royal state.
Fir'd with her love, and with ambition led,
The neighb'ring princes court her nuptial bed.
Among the crowd, but far above the rest,
Young Turnus to the beauteous maid address'd.
Turnus, for high descent and graceful mien,
Was first, and favor'd by the Latian queen;
With him she strove to join Lavinia's hand,
But dire portents the purpos'd match withstand.

Deep in the palace, of long growth, there stood
A laurel's trunk, a venerable wood;
Where rites divine were paid; whose holy hair
Was kept and cut with superstitious care.
This plant Latinus, when his town he wall'd,
Then found, and from the tree Laurentum call'd;
And last, in honor of his new abode,
He vow'd the laurel to the laurel's god.
It happen'd once (a boding prodigy!)
A swarm of bees, that cut the liquid sky,
(Unknown from whence they took their airy flight,)
Upon the topmost branch in clouds alight;
There with their clasping feet together clung,
And a long cluster from the laurel hung.
An ancient augur prophesied from hence:
"Behold on Latian shores a foreign prince!
From the same parts of heav'n his navy stands,

To the same parts on earth; his army lands;
The town he conquers, and the tow'r commands."

Yet more, when fair Lavinia fed the fire
Before the gods, and stood beside her sire,
(Strange to relate!) the flames, involv'd in smoke
Of incense, from the sacred altar broke,
Caught her dishevel'd hair and rich attire;
Her crown and jewels crackled in the fire:
From thence the fuming trail began to spread
And lambent glories danc'd about her head.
This new portent the seer with wonder views,
Then pausing, thus his prophecy renews:
"The nymph, who scatters flaming fires around,
Shall shine with honor, shall herself be crown'd;
But, caus'd by her irrevocable fate,
War shall the country waste, and change the state."

Latinus, frighted with this dire ostent,
For counsel to his father Faunus went,
And sought the shades renown'd for prophecy
Which near Albunea's sulph'rous fountain lie.
To these the Latian and the Sabine land
Fly, when distress'd, and thence relief demand.
The priest on skins of off 'rings takes his ease,
And nightly visions in his slumber sees;
A swarm of thin aerial shapes appears,
And, flutt'ring round his temples, deafs his ears:
These he consults, the future fates to know,
From pow'rs above, and from the fiends below.
Here, for the gods' advice, Latinus flies,
Off 'ring a hundred sheep for sacrifice:
Their woolly fleeces, as the rites requir'd,
He laid beneath him, and to rest retir'd.
No sooner were his eyes in slumber bound,
When, from above, a more than mortal sound
Invades his ears; and thus the vision spoke:
"Seek not, my seed, in Latian bands to yoke
Our fair Lavinia, nor the gods provoke.
A foreign son upon thy shore descends,
Whose martial fame from pole to pole extends.
His race, in arms and arts of peace renown'd,
Not Latium shall contain, nor Europe bound:
'T is theirs whate'er the sun surveys around."
These answers, in the silent night receiv'd,
The king himself divulg'd, the land believ'd:
The fame thro' all the neighb'ring nations flew,
When now the Trojan navy was in view.

Beneath a shady tree, the hero spread
His table on the turf, with cakes of bread;
And, with his chiefs, on forest fruits he fed.

They sate; and, (not without the god's command,)
Their homely fare dispatch'd, the hungry band
Invade their trenchers next, and soon devour,
To mend the scanty meal, their cakes of flour.
Ascanius this observ'd, and smiling said:
"See, we devour the plates on which we fed."
The speech had omen, that the Trojan race
Should find repose, and this the time and place.
Aeneas took the word, and thus replies,
Confessing fate with wonder in his eyes:
"All hail, O earth! all hail, my household gods!
Behold the destin'd place of your abodes!
For thus Anchises prophesied of old,
And this our fatal place of rest foretold:
'When, on a foreign shore, instead of meat,
By famine forc'd, your trenchers you shall eat,
Then ease your weary Trojans will attend,
And the long labors of your voyage end.
Remember on that happy coast to build,
And with a trench inclose the fruitful field.'
This was that famine, this the fatal place
Which ends the wand'ring of our exil'd race.
Then, on to-morrow's dawn, your care employ,
To search the land, and where the cities lie,
And what the men; but give this day to joy.
Now pour to Jove; and, after Jove is blest,
Call great Anchises to the genial feast:
Crown high the goblets with a cheerful draught;
Enjoy the present hour; adjourn the future thought."

Thus having said, the hero bound his brows
With leafy branches, then perform'd his vows;
Adoring first the genius of the place,
Then Earth, the mother of the heav'nly race,
The nymphs, and native godheads yet unknown,
And Night, and all the stars that gild her sable throne,
And ancient Cybel, and Idaean Jove,
And last his sire below, and mother queen above.
Then heav'n's high monarch thunder'd thrice aloud,
And thrice he shook aloft a golden cloud.
Soon thro' the joyful camp a rumor flew,
The time was come their city to renew.
Then ev'ry brow with cheerful green is crown'd,
The feasts are doubled, and the bowls go round.

When next the rosy morn disclos'd the day,
The scouts to sev'ral parts divide their way,
To learn the natives' names, their towns explore,
The coasts and trendings of the crooked shore:
Here Tiber flows, and here Numicus stands;
Here warlike Latins hold the happy lands.

The pious chief, who sought by peaceful ways
To found his empire, and his town to raise,
A hundred youths from all his train selects,
And to the Latian court their course directs,
(The spacious palace where their prince resides,)
And all their heads with wreaths of olive hides.
They go commission'd to require a peace,
And carry presents to procure access.
Thus while they speed their pace, the prince designs
His new-elected seat, and draws the lines.
The Trojans round the place a rampire cast,
And palisades about the trenches plac'd.

Meantime the train, proceeding on their way,
From far the town and lofty tow'rs survey;
At length approach the walls. Without the gate,
They see the boys and Latian youth debate
The martial prizes on the dusty plain:
Some drive the cars, and some the coursers rein;
Some bend the stubborn bow for victory,
That foreign men of mighty stature came;
Uncouth their habit, and unknown their name.
The king ordains their entrance, and ascends
His regal seat, surrounded by his friends.

The palace built by Picus, vast and proud,
Supported by a hundred pillars stood,
And round incompass'd with a rising wood.
The pile o'erlook'd the town, and drew the sight;
Surpris'd at once with reverence and delight.
There kings receiv'd the marks of sov'reign pow'r;
In state the monarchs march'd; the lictors bore
Their awful axes and the rods before.
Here the tribunal stood, the house of pray'r,
And here the sacred senators repair;
All at large tables, in long order set,
A ram their off 'ring, and a ram their meat.
Above the portal, carv'd in cedar wood,
Plac'd in their ranks, their godlike grandsires stood;
Old Saturn, with his crooked scythe, on high;
And Italus, that led the colony;
And ancient Janus, with his double face,
And bunch of keys, the porter of the place.
There good Sabinus, planter of the vines,
On a short pruning hook his head reclines,
And studiously surveys his gen'rous wines;
Then warlike kings, who for their country fought,
And honorable wounds from battle brought.
Around the posts hung helmets, darts, and spears,
And captive chariots, axes, shields, and bars,
And broken beaks of ships, the trophies of their wars.

Above the rest, as chief of all the band,
Was Picus plac'd, a buckler in his hand;
His other wav'd a long divining wand.
Girt in his Gabin gown the hero sate,
Yet could not with his art avoid his fate:
For Circe long had lov'd the youth in vain,
Till love, refus'd, converted to disdain:
Then, mixing pow'rful herbs, with magic art,
She chang'd his form, who could not change his heart;
Constrain'd him in a bird, and made him fly,
With party-color'd plumes, a chatt'ring pie.

In this high temple, on a chair of state,
The seat of audience, old Latinus sate;
Then gave admission to the Trojan train;
And thus with pleasing accents he began:
"Tell me, ye Trojans, for that name you own,
Nor is your course upon our coasts unknown
Say what you seek, and whither were you bound:
Were you by stress of weather cast aground?
(Such dangers as on seas are often seen,
And oft befall to miserable men,)
Or come, your shipping in our ports to lay,
Spent and disabled in so long a way?
Say what you want: the Latians you shall find
Not forc'd to goodness, but by will inclin'd;
For, since the time of Saturn's holy reign,
His hospitable customs we retain.
I call to mind (but time the tale has worn)
Th' Arunci told, that Dardanus, tho' born
On Latian plains, yet sought the Phrygian shore,
And Samothracia, Samos call'd before.
From Tuscan Coritum he claim'd his birth;
But after, when exempt from mortal earth,
From thence ascended to his kindred skies,
A god, and, as a god, augments their sacrifice,"

He said. Ilioneus made this reply:
"O king, of Faunus' royal family!
Nor wintry winds to Latium forc'd our way,
Nor did the stars our wand'ring course betray.
Willing we sought your shores; and, hither bound,
The port, so long desir'd, at length we found;
From our sweet homes and ancient realms expell'd;
Great as the greatest that the sun beheld.
The god began our line, who rules above;
And, as our race, our king descends from Jove:
And hither are we come, by his command,
To crave admission in your happy land.
How dire a tempest, from Mycenae pour'd,
Our plains, our temples, and our town devour'd;

What was the waste of war, what fierce alarms
Shook Asia's crown with European arms;
Ev'n such have heard, if any such there be,
Whose earth is bounded by the frozen sea;
And such as, born beneath the burning sky
And sultry sun, betwixt the tropics lie.
From that dire deluge, thro' the wat'ry waste,
Such length of years, such various perils past,
At last escap'd, to Latium we repair,
To beg what you without your want may spare:
The common water, and the common air;
Sheds which ourselves will build, and mean abodes,
Fit to receive and serve our banish'd gods.
Nor our admission shall your realm disgrace,
Nor length of time our gratitude efface.
Besides, what endless honor you shall gain,
To save and shelter Troy's unhappy train!
Now, by my sov'reign, and his fate, I swear,
Renown'd for faith in peace, for force in war;
Oft our alliance other lands desir'd,
And, what we seek of you, of us requir'd.
Despite not then, that in our hands we bear
These holy boughs, sue with words of pray'r.
Fate and the gods, by their supreme command,
Have doom'd our ships to seek the Latian land.
To these abodes our fleet Apollo sends;
Here Dardanus was born, and hither tends;
Where Tuscan Tiber rolls with rapid force,
And where Numicus opes his holy source.
Besides, our prince presents, with his request,
Some small remains of what his sire possess'd.
This golden charger, snatch'd from burning Troy,
Anchises did in sacrifice employ;
This royal robe and this tiara wore
Old Priam, and this golden scepter bore
In full assemblies, and in solemn games;
These purple vests were weav'd by Dardan dames."

Thus while he spoke, Latinus roll'd around
His eyes, and fix'd a while upon the ground.
Intent he seem'd, and anxious in his breast;
Not by the scepter mov'd, or kingly vest,
But pond'ring future things of wondrous weight;
Succession, empire, and his daughter's fate.
On these he mus'd within his thoughtful mind,
And then revolv'd what Faunus had divin'd.
This was the foreign prince, by fate decreed
To share his scepter, and Lavinia's bed;
This was the race that sure portents foreshew
To sway the world, and land and sea subdue.

At length he rais'd his cheerful head, and spoke:
"The pow'rs," said he, "the pow'rs we both invoke,
To you, and yours, and mine, propitious be,
And firm our purpose with their augury!
Have what you ask; your presents I receive;
Land, where and when you please, with ample leave;
Partake and use my kingdom as your own;
All shall be yours, while I command the crown:
And, if my wish'd alliance please your king,
Tell him he should not send the peace, but bring.
Then let him not a friend's embraces fear;
The peace is made when I behold him here.
Besides this answer, tell my royal guest,
I add to his commands my own request:
One only daughter heirs my crown and state,
Whom not our oracles, nor Heav'n, nor fate,
Nor frequent prodigies, permit to join
With any native of th' Ausonian line.
A foreign son-in-law shall come from far
(Such is our doom), a chief renown'd in war,
Whose race shall bear aloft the Latian name,
And thro' the conquer'd world diffuse our fame.
Himself to be the man the fates require,
I firmly judge, and, what I judge, desire."

He said, and then on each bestow'd a steed.
Three hundred horses, in high stables fed,
Stood ready, shining all, and smoothly dress'd:
Of these he chose the fairest and the best,
To mount the Trojan troop. At his command
The steeds caparison'd with purple stand,
With golden trappings, glorious to behold,
And champ betwixt their teeth the foaming gold.
Then to his absent guest the king decreed
A pair of coursers born of heav'nly breed,
Who from their nostrils breath'd ethereal fire;
Whom Circe stole from her celestial sire,
By substituting mares produc'd on earth,
Whose wombs conceiv'd a more than mortal birth.
These draw the chariot which Latinus sends,
And the rich present to the prince commends.
Sublime on stately steeds the Trojans borne,
To their expecting lord with peace return.

But jealous Juno, from Pachynus' height,
As she from Argos took her airy flight,
Beheld with envious eyes this hateful sight.
She saw the Trojan and his joyful train
Descend upon the shore, desert the main,
Design a town, and, with unhop'd success,
Th' embassadors return with promis'd peace.

Then, pierc'd with pain, she shook her haughty head,
Sigh'd from her inward soul, and thus she said:
"O hated offspring of my Phrygian foes!
O fates of Troy, which Juno's fates oppose!
Could they not fall unpitied on the plain,
But slain revive, and, taken, scape again?
When execrable Troy in ashes lay,
Thro' fires and swords and seas they forc'd their way.
Then vanquish'd Juno must in vain contend,
Her rage disarm'd, her empire at an end.
Breathless and tir'd, is all my fury spent?
Or does my glutted spleen at length relent?
As if 't were little from their town to chase,
I thro' the seas pursued their exil'd race;
Ingag'd the heav'ns, oppos'd the stormy main;
But billows roar'd, and tempests rag'd in vain.
What have my Scyllas and my Syrtes done,
When these they overpass, and those they shun?
On Tiber's shores they land, secure of fate,
Triumphant o'er the storms and Juno's hate.
Mars could in mutual blood the Centaurs bathe,
And Jove himself gave way to Cynthia's wrath,
Who sent the tusky boar to Calydon;
(What great offense had either people done?)
But I, the consort of the Thunderer,
Have wag'd a long and unsuccessful war,
With various arts and arms in vain have toil'd,
And by a mortal man at length am foil'd.
If native pow'r prevail not, shall I doubt
To seek for needful succor from without?
If Jove and Heav'n my just desires deny,
Hell shall the pow'r of Heav'n and Jove supply.
Grant that the Fates have firm'd, by their decree,
The Trojan race to reign in Italy;
At least I can defer the nuptial day,
And with protracted wars the peace delay:
With blood the dear alliance shall be bought,
And both the people near destruction brought;
So shall the son-in-law and father join,
With ruin, war, and waste of either line.
O fatal maid, thy marriage is endow'd
With Phrygian, Latian, and Rutulian blood!
Bellona leads thee to thy lover's hand;
Another queen brings forth another brand,
A second Paris, diff 'ring but in name,
Shall fire his country with a second flame."

Thus having said, she sinks beneath the ground,
With furious haste, and shoots the Stygian sound,
To rouse Alecto from th' infernal seat

Of her dire sisters, and their dark retreat.
This Fury, fit for her intent, she chose;
One who delights in wars and human woes.
Ev'n Pluto hates his own misshapen race;
Her sister Furies fly her hideous face;
So frightful are the forms the monster takes,
So fierce the hissings of her speckled snakes.
Her Juno finds, and thus inflames her spite:
"O virgin daughter of eternal Night,
Give me this once thy labor, to sustain
My right, and execute my just disdain.
Let not the Trojans, with a feign'd pretense
Of proffer'd peace, delude the Latian prince.
Expel from Italy that odious name,
And let not Juno suffer in her fame.
'T is thine to ruin realms, o'erturn a state,
Betwixt the dearest friends to raise debate,
And kindle kindred blood to mutual hate.
Thy hand o'er towns the fun'ral torch displays,
And forms a thousand ills ten thousand ways.
Now shake, out thy fruitful breast, the seeds
Of envy, discord, and of cruel deeds:
Confound the peace establish'd, and prepare
Their souls to hatred, and their hands to war."

Smear'd as she was with black Gorgonian blood,
The Fury sprang above the Stygian flood;
And on her wicker wings, sublime thro' night,
She to the Latian palace took her flight:
There sought the queen's apartment, stood before
The peaceful threshold, and besieg'd the door.
Restless Amata lay, her swelling breast
Fir'd with disdain for Turnus dispossess'd,
And the new nuptials of the Trojan guest.
From her black bloody locks the Fury shakes
Her darling plague, the fav'rite of her snakes;
With her full force she threw the poisonous dart,
And fix'd it deep within Amata's heart,
That, thus envenom'd, she might kindle rage,
And sacrifice to strife her house husband's age.
Unseen, unfelt, the fiery serpent skims
Betwixt her linen and her naked limbs;
His baleful breath inspiring, as he glides,
Now like a chain around her neck he rides,
Now like a fillet to her head repairs,
And with his circling volumes folds her hairs.
At first the silent venom slid with ease,
And seiz'd her cooler senses by degrees;
Then, ere th' infected mass was fir'd too far,
In plaintive accents she began the war,

And thus bespoke her husband: “Shall,” she said,
“A wand’ring prince enjoy Lavinia’s bed?
If nature plead not in a parent’s heart,
Pity my tears, and pity her desert.
I know, my dearest lord, the time will come,
You in vain, reverse your cruel doom;
The faithless pirate soon will set to sea,
And bear the royal virgin far away!
A guest like him, a Trojan guest before,
In shew of friendship sought the Spartan shore,
And ravish’d Helen from her husband bore.
Think on a king’s inviolable word;
And think on Turnus, her once plighted lord:
To this false foreigner you give your throne,
And wrong a friend, a kinsman, and a son.
Resume your ancient care; and, if the god
Your sire, and you, resolve on foreign blood,
Know all are foreign, in a larger sense,
Not born your subjects, or deriv’d from hence.
Then, if the line of Turnus you retrace,
He springs from Inachus of Argive race.”

But when she saw her reasons idly spent,
And could not move him from his fix’d intent,
She flew to rage; for now the snake possess’d
Her vital parts, and poison’d all her breast;
She raves, she runs with a distracted pace,
And fills with horrid howls the public place.
And, as young striplings whip the top for sport,
On the smooth pavement of an empty court;
The wooden engine flies and whirls about,
Admir’d, with clamors, of the beardless rout;
They lash aloud; each other they provoke,
And lend their little souls at ev’ry stroke:
Thus fares the queen; and thus her fury blows
Amidst the crowd, and kindles as she goes.
Nor yet content, she strains her malice more,
And adds new ills to those contriv’d before:
She flies the town, and, mixing with a throng
Of madding matrons, bears the bride along,
Wand’ring thro’ woods and wilds, and devious ways,
And with these arts the Trojan match delays.
She feign’d the rites of Bacchus; cried aloud,
And to the buxom god the virgin vow’d.
“Evoe! O Bacchus!” thus began the song;
And “Evoe!” answer’d all the female throng.
“O virgin! worthy thee alone!” she cried;
“O worthy thee alone!” the crew replied.
“For thee she feeds her hair, she leads thy dance,
And with thy winding ivy wreathes her lance.”

Like fury seiz’d the rest; the progress known,
All seek the mountains, and forsake the town:
All, clad in skins of beasts, the jav’lin bear,
Give to the wanton winds their flowing hair,
And shrieks and shoutings rend the suff ’ring air.
The queen herself, inspir’d with rage divine,
Shook high above her head a flaming pine;
Then roll’d her haggard eyes around the throng,
And sung, in Turnus’ name, the nuptial song:
“Io, ye Latian dames! if any here
Hold your unhappy queen, Amata, dear;
If there be here,” she said, “who dare maintain
My right, nor think the name of mother vain;
Unbind your fillets, loose your flowing hair,
And orgies and nocturnal rites prepare.”

Amata’s breast the Fury thus invades,
And fires with rage, amid the sylvan shades;
Then, when she found her venom spread so far,
The royal house embroil’d in civil war,
Rais’d on her dusky wings, she cleaves the skies,
And seeks the palace where young Turnus lies.
His town, as fame reports, was built of old
By Danae, pregnant with almighty gold,
Who fled her father’s rage, and, with a train
Of following Argives, thro’ the stormy main,
Driv’n by the southern blasts, was fated here to reign.
‘T was Ardua once; now Ardea’s name it bears;
Once a fair city, now consum’d with years.
Here, in his lofty palace, Turnus lay,
Betwixt the confines of the night and day,
Secure in sleep. The Fury laid aside
Her looks and limbs, and with new methods tried
The foulness of th’ infernal form to hide.
Propp’d on a staff, she takes a trembling mien:
Her face is furrow’d, and her front obscene;
Deep-dinted wrinkles on her cheek she draws;
Sunk are her eyes, and toothless are her jaws;
Her hoary hair with holy fillets bound,
Her temples with an olive wreath are crown’d.
Old Chalybe, who kept the sacred fane
Of Juno, now she seem’d, and thus began,
Appearing in a dream, to rouse the careless man:
“Shall Turnus then such endless toil sustain
In fighting fields, and conquer towns in vain?
Win, for a Trojan head to wear the prize,
Usurp thy crown, enjoy thy victories?
The bride and scepter which thy blood has bought,
The king transfers; and foreign heirs are sought.
Go now, deluded man, and seek again

New toils, new dangers, on the dusty plain.
Repel the Tuscan foes; their city seize;
Protect the Latians in luxurious ease.
This dream all-pow'rful Juno sends; I bear
Her mighty mandates, and her words you hear.
Haste; arm your Ardeans; issue to the plain;
With fate to friend, assault the Trojan train:
Their thoughtless chiefs, their painted ships, that lie
In Tiber's mouth, with fire and sword destroy.
The Latian king, unless he shall submit,
Own his old promise, and his new forget
Let him, in arms, the pow'r of Turnus prove,
And learn to fear whom he disdains to love.
For such is Heav'n's command." The youthful prince
With scorn replied, and made this bold defense:
"You tell me, mother, what I knew before:
The Phrygian fleet is landed on the shore.
I neither fear nor will provoke the war;
My fate is Juno's most peculiar care.
But time has made you dote, and vainly tell
Of arms imagin'd in your lonely cell.
Go; be the temple and the gods your care;
Permit to men the thought of peace and war."

These haughty words Alecto's rage provoke,
And frighted Turnus trembled as she spoke.
Her eyes grow stiffen'd, and with sulphur burn;
Her hideous looks and hellish form return;
Her curling snakes with hissings fill the place,
And open all the furies of her face:
Then, darting fire from her malignant eyes,
She cast him backward as he strove to rise,
And, ling'ring, sought to frame some new replies.
High on her head she rears two twisted snakes,
Her chains she rattles, and her whip she shakes;
And, churning bloody foam, thus loudly speaks:
"Behold whom time has made to dote, and tell
Of arms imagin'd in her lonely cell!
Behold the Fates' infernal minister!
War, death, destruction, in my hand I bear."

Thus having said, her smold'ring torch, impress'd
With her full force, she plung'd into his breast.
Aghast he wak'd; and, starting from his bed,
Cold sweat, in clammy drops, his limbs o'erspread.
"Arms! arms!" he cries: "my sword and shield prepare!"
He breathes defiance, blood, and mortal war.
So, when with crackling flames a caldron fries,
The bubbling waters from the bottom rise:
Above the brims they force their fiery way;
Black vapors climb aloft, and cloud the day.

The peace polluted thus, a chosen band
He first commissions to the Latian land,
In threat'ning embassy; then rais'd the rest,
To meet in arms th' intruding Trojan guest,
To force the foes from the Lavinian shore,
And Italy's indanger'd peace restore.
Himself alone an equal match he boasts,
To fight the Phrygian and Ausonian hosts.
The gods invok'd, the Rutuli prepare
Their arms, and warn each other to the war.
His beauty these, and those his blooming age,
The rest his house and his own fame ingage.

While Turnus urges thus his enterprise,
The Stygian Fury to the Trojans flies;
New frauds invents, and takes a steepy stand,
Which overlooks the vale with wide command;
Where fair Ascanius and his youthful train,
With horns and hounds, a hunting match ordain,
And pitch their toils around the shady plain.
The Fury fires the pack; they snuff, they vent,
And feed their hungry nostrils with the scent.
'Twas of a well-grown stag, whose antlers rise
High o'er his front; his beams invade the skies.
From this light cause th' infernal maid prepares
The country churls to mischief, hate, and wars.

The stately beast the two Tyrrhidae bred,
Snatch'd from his dams, and the tame youngling fed.
Their father Tyrrheus did his fodder bring,
Tyrrheus, chief ranger to the Latian king:
Their sister Silvia cherish'd with her care
The little wanton, and did wreaths prepare
To hang his budding horns, with ribbons tied
His tender neck, and comb'd his silken hide,
And bathed his body. Patient of command
In time he grew, and, growing us'd to hand,
He waited at his master's board for food;
Then sought his salvage kindred in the wood,
Where grazing all the day, at night he came
To his known lodgings, and his country dame.

This household beast, that us'd the woodland grounds,
Was view'd at first by the young hero's hounds,
As down the stream he swam, to seek retreat
In the cool waters, and to quench his heat.
Ascanius young, and eager of his game,
Soon bent his bow, uncertain in his aim;
But the dire fiend the fatal arrow guides,
Which pierc'd his bowels thro' his panting sides.
The bleeding creature issues from the floods,
Possess'd with fear, and seeks his known abodes,

His old familiar hearth and household gods.
He falls; he fills the house with heavy groans,
Implores their pity, and his pain bemoans.
Young Silvia beats her breast, and cries aloud
For succor from the clownish neighborhood:
The churls assemble; for the fiend, who lay
In the close woody covert, urg'd their way.
One with a brand yet burning from the flame,
Arm'd with a knotty club another came:
Whate'er they catch or find, without their care,
Their fury makes an instrument of war.
Tyrrheus, the foster father of the beast,
Then clench'd a hatchet in his horny fist,
But held his hand from the descending stroke,
And left his wedge within the cloven oak,
To whet their courage and their rage provoke.
And now the goddess, exercis'd in ill,
Who watch'd an hour to work her impious will,
Ascends the roof, and to her crooked horn,
Such as was then by Latian shepherds borne,
Adds all her breath: the rocks and woods around,
And mountains, tremble at th' infernal sound.
The sacred lake of Trivia from afar,
The Veline fountains, and sulphureous Nar,
Shake at the baleful blast, the signal of the war.
Young mothers wildly stare, with fear possess'd,
And strain their helpless infants to their breast.

The clowns, a boist'rous, rude, ungovern'd crew,
With furious haste to the loud summons flew.
The pow'rs of Troy, then issuing on the plain,
With fresh recruits their youthful chief sustain:
Not theirs a raw and unexperienc'd train,
But a firm body of embattled men.
At first, while fortune favor'd neither side,
The fight with clubs and burning brands was tried;
But now, both parties reinforc'd, the fields
Are bright with flaming swords and brazen shields.
A shining harvest either host displays,
And shoots against the sun with equal rays.
Thus, when a black-brow'd gust begins to rise,
White foam at first on the curl'd ocean fries;
Then roars the main, the billows mount the skies;
Till, by the fury of the storm full blown,
The muddy bottom o'er the clouds is thrown.
First Almon falls, old Tyrrheus' eldest care,
Pierc'd with an arrow from the distant war:
Fix'd in his throat the flying weapon stood,
And stopp'd his breath, and drank his vital blood
Huge heaps of slain around the body rise:

Among the rest, the rich Galesus lies;
A good old man, while peace he preach'd in vain,
Amidst the madness of th' unruly train:
Five herds, five bleating flocks, his pastures fill'd;
His lands a hundred yoke of oxen till'd.

Thus, while in equal scales their fortune stood
The Fury bath'd them in each other's blood;
Then, having fix'd the fight, exulting flies,
And bears fulfill'd her promise to the skies.
To Juno thus she speaks: "Behold! It is done,
The blood already drawn, the war begun;
The discord is complete; nor can they cease
The dire debate, nor you command the peace.
Now, since the Latian and the Trojan brood
Have tasted vengeance and the sweets of blood;
Speak, and my pow'r shall add this office more:
The neighb'ring nations of th' Ausonian shore
Shall hear the dreadful rumor, from afar,
Of arm'd invasion, and embrace the war."
Then Juno thus: "The grateful work is done,
The seeds of discord sow'd, the war begun;
Frauds, fears, and fury have possess'd the state,
And fix'd the causes of a lasting hate.
A bloody Hymen shall th' alliance join
Betwixt the Trojan and Ausonian line:
But thou with speed to night and hell repair;
For not the gods, nor angry Jove, will bear
Thy lawless wand'ring walks in upper air.
Leave what remains to me." Saturnia said:
The sullen fiend her sounding wings display'd,
Unwilling left the light, and sought the nether shade.
In midst of Italy, well known to fame,
There lies a lake (Amsanctus is the name)
Below the lofty mounts: on either side
Thick forests the forbidden entrance hide.
Full in the center of the sacred wood
An arm arises of the Stygian flood,
Which, breaking from beneath with bellowing sound,
Whirls the black waves and rattling stones around.
Here Pluto pants for breath from out his cell,
And opens wide the grinning jaws of hell.
To this infernal lake the Fury flies;
Here hides her hated head, and frees the lab'ring skies.

Saturnian Juno now, with double care,
Attends the fatal process of the war.
The clowns, return'd, from battle bear the slain,
Implore the gods, and to their king complain.
The corps of Almon and the rest are shown;
Shrieks, clamors, murmurs, fill the frighted town.

Ambitious Turnus in the press appears,
And, aggravating crimes, augments their fears;
Proclaims his private injuries aloud,
A solemn promise made, and disavow'd;
A foreign son is sought, and a mix'd mungril brood.
Then they, whose mothers, frantic with their fear,
In woods and wilds the flags of Bacchus bear,
And lead his dances with dishevel'd hair,
Increase the clamor, and the war demand,
(Such was Amata's interest in the land,)
Against the public sanctions of the peace,
Against all omens of their ill success.
With fates averse, the rout in arms resort,
To force their monarch, and insult the court.
But, like a rock unmov'd, a rock that braves
The raging tempest and the rising waves
Propp'd on himself he stands; his solid sides
Wash off the seaweeds, and the sounding tides
So stood the pious prince, unmov'd, and long
Sustain'd the madness of the noisy throng.
But, when he found that Juno's pow'r prevail'd,
And all the methods of cool counsel fail'd,
He calls the gods to witness their offense,
Disclaims the war, asserts his innocence.
"Hurried by fate," he cries, "and borne before
A furious wind, we have the faithful shore.
O more than madmen! you yourselves shall bear
The guilt of blood and sacrilegious war:
Thou, Turnus, shalt atone it by thy fate,
And pray to Heav'n for peace, but pray too late.
For me, my stormy voyage at an end,
I to the port of death securely tend.
The fun'ral pomp which to your kings you pay,
Is all I want, and all you take away."
He said no more, but, in his walls confin'd,
Shut out the woes which he too well divin'd
Nor with the rising storm would vainly strive,
But left the helm, and let the vessel drive.
A solemn custom was observ'd of old,
Which Latium held, and now the Romans hold,
Their standard when in fighting fields they rear
Against the fierce Hyrcanians, or declare
The Scythian, Indian, or Arabian war;
Or from the boasting Parthians would regain
Their eagles, lost in Carrhae's bloody plain.
Two gates of steel (the name of Mars they bear,
And still are worship'd with religious fear)
Before his temple stand: the dire abode,
And the fear'd issues of the furious god,
Are fenc'd with brazen bolts; without the gates,

The wary guardian Janus doubly waits.
Then, when the sacred senate votes the wars,
The Roman consul their decree declares,
And in his robes the sounding gates unbars.
The youth in military shouts arise,
And the loud trumpets break the yielding skies.
These rites, of old by sov'reign princes us'd,
Were the king's office; but the king refus'd,
Deaf to their cries, nor would the gates unbar
Of sacred peace, or loose th' imprison'd war;
But hid his head, and, safe from loud alarms,
Abhorr'd the wicked ministry of arms.
Then heav'n's imperious queen shot down from high:
At her approach the brazen hinges fly;
The gates are forc'd, and ev'ry falling bar;
And, like a tempest, issues out the war.

The peaceful cities of th' Ausonian shore,
Lull'd in their ease, and undisturb'd before,
Are all on fire; and some, with studious care,
Their restiff steeds in sandy plains prepare;
Some their soft limbs in painful marches try,
And war is all their wish, and arms the gen'ral cry.
Part scour the rusty shields with seam; and part
New grind the blunted ax, and point the dart:
With joy they view the waving ensigns fly,
And hear the trumpet's clangor pierce the sky.
Five cities forge their arms: th' Atinian pow'rs,
Antemnae, Tibur with her lofty tow'rs,
Ardea the proud, the Crustumerian town:
All these of old were places of renown.
Some hammer helmets for the fighting field;
Some twine young sallows to support the shield;
The croslet some, and some the cuishes mold,
With silver plated, and with ductile gold.
The rustic honors of the scythe and share
Give place to swords and plumes, the pride of war.
Old fauchions are new temper'd in the fires;
The sounding trumpet ev'ry soul inspires.
The word is giv'n; with eager speed they lace
The shining headpiece, and the shield embrace.
The neighing steeds are to the chariot tied;
The trusty weapon sits on ev'ry side.

And now the mighty labor is begun
Ye Muses, open all your Helicon.
Sing you the chiefs that sway'd th' Ausonian land,
Their arms, and armies under their command;
What warriors in our ancient clime were bred;
What soldiers follow'd, and what heroes led.
For well you know, and can record alone,

What fame to future times conveys but darkly down.
Mezentius first appear'd upon the plain:
Scorn sate upon his brows, and sour disdain,
Defying earth and heav'n. Etruria lost,
He brings to Turnus' aid his baffled host.
The charming Lausus, full of youthful fire,
Rode in the rank, and next his sullen sire;
To Turnus only second in the grace
Of manly mien, and features of the face.
A skilful horseman, and a huntsman bred,
With fates averse a thousand men he led:
His sire unworthy of so brave a son;
Himself well worthy of a happier throne.

Next Aventinus drives his chariot round
The Latian plains, with palms and laurels crown'd.
Proud of his steeds, he smokes along the field;
His father's hydra fills his ample shield:
A hundred serpents hiss about the brims;
The son of Hercules he justly seems
By his broad shoulders and gigantic limbs;
Of heav'nly part, and part of earthly blood,
A mortal woman mixing with a god.
For strong Alcides, after he had slain
The triple Geryon, drove from conquer'd Spain
His captive herds; and, thence in triumph led,
On Tuscan Tiber's flow'ry banks they fed.
Then on Mount Aventine the son of Jove
The priestess Rhea found, and forc'd to love.
For arms, his men long piles and jav'lins bore;
And poles with pointed steel their foes in battle gore.
Like Hercules himself his son appears,
In salvage pomp; a lion's hide he wears;
About his shoulders hangs the shaggy skin;
The teeth and gaping jaws severely grin.
Thus, like the god his father, homely dress'd,
He strides into the hall, a horrid guest.

Then two twin brothers from fair Tibur came,
(Which from their brother Tiburs took the name,)
Fierce Coras and Catillus, void of fear:
Arm'd Argive horse they led, and in the front appear.
Like cloud-born Centaurs, from the mountain's height
With rapid course descending to the fight;
They rush along; the rattling woods give way;
The branches bend before their sweepy sway.

Nor was Praeneste's founder wanting there,
Whom fame reports the son of Mulciber:
Found in the fire, and foster'd in the plains,
A shepherd and a king at once he reigns,
And leads to Turnus' aid his country swains.

His own Praeneste sends a chosen band,
With those who plow Saturnia's Gabine land;
Besides the succor which cold Anien yields,
The rocks of Hernicus, and dewy fields,
Anagnia fat, and Father Amasene
A num'rous rout, but all of naked men:
Nor arms they wear, nor swords and bucklers wield,
Nor drive the chariot thro' the dusty field,
But whirl from leathern slings huge balls of lead,
And spoils of yellow wolves adorn their head;
The left foot naked, when they march to fight,
But in a bull's raw hide they sheathe the right.
Messapus next, (great Neptune was his sire,)
Secure of steel, and fated from the fire,
In pomp appears, and with his ardor warms
A heartless train, unexercis'd in arms:
The just Faliscans he to battle brings,
And those who live where Lake Ciminia springs;
And where Feronia's grove and temple stands,
Who till Fescennian or Flavinian lands.
All these in order march, and marching sing
The warlike actions of their sea-born king;
Like a long team of snowy swans on high,
Which clap their wings, and cleave the liquid sky,
When, homeward from their wat'ry pastures borne,
They sing, and Asia's lakes their notes return.
Not one who heard their music from afar,
Would think these troops an army train'd to war,
But flocks of fowl, that, when the tempests roar,
With their hoarse gabbling seek the silent shore.

Then Clausus came, who led a num'rous band
Of troops embodied from the Sabine land,
And, in himself alone, an army brought.
'T was he, the noble Claudian race begot,
The Claudian race, ordain'd, in times to come,
To share the greatness of imperial Rome.
He led the Cures forth, of old renown,
Mutuscans from their olive-bearing town,
And all th' Eretian pow'rs; besides a band
That follow'd from Velinum's dewy land,
And Amiternian troops, of mighty fame,
And mountaineers, that from Severus came,
And from the craggy cliffs of Tetrica,
And those where yellow Tiber takes his way,
And where Himella's wanton waters play.
Casperia sends her arms, with those that lie
By Fabaris, and fruitful Foruli:
The warlike aids of Horta next appear,
And the cold Nursians come to close the rear,

Mix’d with the natives born of Latine blood,
Whom Allia washes with her fatal flood.
Not thicker billows beat the Libyan main,
When pale Orion sets in wintry rain;
Nor thicker harvests on rich Hermus rise,
Or Lycian fields, when Phoebus burns the skies,
Than stand these troops: their bucklers ring around;
Their trampling turns the turf, and shakes the solid ground.

High in his chariot then Halesus came,
A foe by birth to Troy’s unhappy name:
From Agamemnon born to Turnus’ aid
A thousand men the youthful hero led,
Who till the Massic soil, for wine renown’d,
And fierce Auruncans from their hilly ground,
And those who live by Sidicinian shores,
And where with shoaly fords Vulturnus roars,
Cales’ and Osca’s old inhabitants,
And rough Saticulans, inur’d to wants:
Light demi-lances from afar they throw,
Fasten’d with leathern thongs, to gall the foe.
Short crooked swords in closer fight they wear;
And on their warding arm light bucklers bear.

Nor Oebalus, shalt thou be left unsung,
From nymph Semethis and old Telon sprung,
Who then in Teleboan Capri reign’d;
But that short isle th’ ambitious youth disdain’d,
And o’er Campania stretch’d his ample sway,
Where swelling Sarnus seeks the Tyrrhene sea;
O’er Batulum, and where Abella sees,
From her high tow’rs, the harvest of her trees.
And these (as was the Teuton use of old)
Wield brazen swords, and brazen bucklers hold;
Sling weighty stones, when from afar they fight;
Their casques are cork, a covering thick and light.

Next these in rank, the warlike Ufens went,
And led the mountain troops that Nursia sent.
The rude Equicolae his rule obey’d;
Hunting their sport, and plund’ring was their trade.
In arms they plow’d, to battle still prepar’d:
Their soil was barren, and their hearts were hard.

Umbro the priest the proud Marrubians led,
By King Archippus sent to Turnus’ aid,
And peaceful olives crown’d his hoary head.
His wand and holy words, the viper’s rage,
And venom’d wounds of serpents could assuage.
He, when he pleas’d with powerful juice to steep
Their temples, shut their eyes in pleasing sleep.
But vain were Marsian herbs, and magic art,

To cure the wound giv'n by the Dardan dart:
Yet his untimely fate th' Angitian woods
In sighs remurmur'd to the Fucine floods.

The son of fam'd Hippolytus was there,
Fam'd as his sire, and, as his mother, fair;
Whom in Egerian groves Aricia bore,
And nurs'd his youth along the marshy shore,
Where great Diana's peaceful altars flame,
In fruitful fields; and Virbius was his name.
Hippolytus, as old records have said,
Was by his stepdam sought to share her bed;
But, when no female arts his mind could move,
She turn'd to furious hate her impious love.
Torn by wild horses on the sandy shore,
Another's crimes th' unhappy hunter bore,
Glutting his father's eyes with guiltless gore.
But chaste Diana, who his death deplor'd,
With Aesculapian herbs his life restor'd.
Then Jove, who saw from high, with just disdain,
The dead inspir'd with vital breath again,
Struck to the center, with his flaming dart,
Th' unhappy founder of the godlike art.
But Trivia kept in secret shades alone
Her care, Hippolytus, to fate unknown;
And call'd him Virbius in th' Egerian grove,
Where then he liv'd obscure, but safe from Jove.
For this, from Trivia's temple and her wood
Are coursers driv'n, who shed their master's blood,
Affrighted by the monsters of the flood.
His son, the second Virbius, yet retain'd
His father's art, and warrior steeds he rein'd.

Amid the troops, and like the leading god,
High o'er the rest in arms the graceful Turnus rode:
A triple of plumes his crest adorn'd,
On which with belching flames Chimaera burn'd:
The more the kindled combat rises high'r,
The more with fury burns the blazing fire.
Fair Io grac'd his shield; but Io now
With horns exalted stands, and seems to low
A noble charge! Her keeper by her side,
To watch her walks, his hundred eyes applied;
And on the brims her sire, the wat'ry god,
Roll'd from a silver urn his crystal flood.
A cloud of foot succeeds, and fills the fields
With swords, and pointed spears, and clatt'ring shields;
Of Argives, and of old Sicanian bands,
And those who plow the rich Rutulian lands;
Auruncan youth, and those Sacrana yields,
And the proud Labicans, with painted shields,

And those who near Numician streams reside,
And those whom Tiber's holy forests hide,
Or Circe's hills from the main land divide;
Where Ufens glides along the lowly lands,
Or the black water of Pomptina stands.

Last, from the Volscians fair Camilla came,
And led her warlike troops, a warrior dame;
Unbred to spinning, in the loom unskill'd,
She chose the nobler Pallas of the field.
Mix'd with the first, the fierce virago fought,
Sustain'd the toils of arms, the danger sought,
Outstripp'd the winds in speed upon the plain,
Flew o'er the fields, nor hurt the bearded grain:
She swept the seas, and, as she skimm'd along,
Her flying feet unbath'd on billows hung.
Men, boys, and women, stupid with surprise,
Where'er she passes, fix their wond'ring eyes:
Longing they look, and, gaping at the sight,
Devour her o'er and o'er with vast delight;
Her purple habit sits with such a grace
On her smooth shoulders, and so suits her face;
Her head with ringlets of her hair is crown'd,
And in a golden caul the curls are bound.
She shakes her myrtle jav'lin; and, behind,
Her Lycian quiver dances in the wind.

Book VIII

When Turnus had assembled all his pow'rs,
His standard planted on Laurentum's tow'rs;
When now the sprightly trumpet, from afar,
Had giv'n the signal of approaching war,
Had rous'd the neighing steeds to scour the fields,
While the fierce riders clatter'd on their shields;
Trembling with rage, the Latian youth prepare
To join th' allies, and headlong rush to war.
Fierce Ufens, and Messapus, led the crowd,
With bold Mezentius, who blasphem'd aloud.
These thro' the country took their wasteful course,
The fields to forage, and to gather force.
Then Venulus to Diomede they send,
To beg his aid Ausonia to defend,
Declare the common danger, and inform
The Grecian leader of the growing storm:
Aeneas, landed on the Latian coast,
With banish'd gods, and with a baffled host,
Yet now aspir'd to conquest of the state,
And claim'd a title from the gods and fate;
What num'rous nations in his quarrel came,
And how they spread his formidable name.

What he design’d, what mischief might arise,
If fortune favor’d his first enterprise,
Was left for him to weigh, whose equal fears,
And common interest, was involv’d in theirs.

While Turnus and th’ allies thus urge the war,
The Trojan, floating in a flood of care,
Beholds the tempest which his foes prepare.
This way and that he turns his anxious mind;
Thinks, and rejects the counsels he design’d;
Explores himself in vain, in ev’ry part,
And gives no rest to his distracted heart.
So, when the sun by day, or moon by night,
Strike on the polish’d brass their trembling light,
The glitt’ring species here and there divide,
And cast their dubious beams from side to side;
Now on the walls, now on the pavement play,
And to the ceiling flash the glaring day.

‘T was night; and weary nature lull’d asleep
The birds of air, and fishes of the deep,
And beasts, and mortal men. The Trojan chief
Was laid on Tiber’s banks, oppress’d with grief,
And found in silent slumber late relief.
Then, thro’ the shadows of the poplar wood,
Arose the father of the Roman flood;
An azure robe was o’er his body spread,
A wreath of shady reeds adorn’d his head:
Thus, manifest to sight, the god appear’d,
And with these pleasing words his sorrow cheer’d:
“Undoubted offspring of ethereal race,
O long expected in this promis’d place!
Who thro’ the foes hast borne thy banish’d gods,
Restor’d them to their hearths, and old abodes;
This is thy happy home, the clime where fate
Ordains thee to restore the Trojan state.
Fear not! The war shall end in lasting peace,
And all the rage of haughty Juno cease.
And that this nightly vision may not seem
Th’ effect of fancy, or an idle dream,
A sow beneath an oak shall lie along,
All white herself, and white her thirty young.
When thirty rolling years have run their race,
Thy son Ascanius, on this empty space,
Shall build a royal town, of lasting fame,
Which from this omen shall receive the name.
Time shall approve the truth. For what remains,
And how with sure success to crown thy pains,
With patience next attend. A banish’d band,
Driv’n with Evander from th’ Arcadian land,
Have planted here, and plac’d on high their walls;

Their town the founder Pallanteum calls,
Deriv'd from Pallas, his great-grandsire's name:
But the fierce Latians old possession claim,
With war infesting the new colony.
These make thy friends, and on their aid rely.
To thy free passage I submit my streams.
Wake, son of Venus, from thy pleasing dreams;
And, when the setting stars are lost in day,
To Juno's pow'r thy just devotion pay;
With sacrifice the wrathful queen appease:
Her pride at length shall fall, her fury cease.
When thou return'st victorious from the war,
Perform thy vows to me with grateful care.
The god am I, whose yellow water flows
Around these fields, and fattens as it goes:
Tiber my name; among the rolling floods
Renown'd on earth, esteem'd among the gods.
This is my certain seat. In times to come,
My waves shall wash the walls of mighty Rome."

He said, and plung'd below. While yet he spoke,
His dream Aeneas and his sleep forsook.
He rose, and looking up, beheld the skies
With purple blushing, and the day arise.
Then water in his hollow palm he took
From Tiber's flood, and thus the pow'rs bespoke:
"Laurentian nymphs, by whom the streams are fed,
And Father Tiber, in thy sacred bed
Receive Aeneas, and from danger keep.
Whatever fount, whatever holy deep,
Conceals thy wat'ry stores; where'er they rise,
And, bubbling from below, salute the skies;
Thou, king of horned floods, whose plenteous urn
Suffices fatness to the fruitful corn,
For this thy kind compassion of our woes,
Shalt share my morning song and ev'ning vows.
But, O be present to thy people's aid,
And firm the gracious promise thou hast made!"
Thus having said, two galleys from his stores,
With care he chooses, mans, and fits with oars.
Now on the shore the fatal swine is found.
Wondrous to tell! She lay along the ground:
Her well-fed offspring at her udders hung;
She white herself, and white her thirty young.
Aeneas takes the mother and her brood,
And all on Juno's altar are bestow'd.

The foll'wing night, and the succeeding day,
Propitious Tiber smooth'd his wat'ry way:
He roll'd his river back, and pois'd he stood,
A gentle swelling, and a peaceful flood.

The Trojans mount their ships; they put from shore,
Borne on the waves, and scarcely dip an oar.
Shouts from the land give omen to their course,
And the pitch'd vessels glide with easy force.
The woods and waters wonder at the gleam
Of shields, and painted ships that stem the stream.
One summer's night and one whole day they pass
Betwixt the greenwood shades, and cut the liquid glass.
The fiery sun had finish'd half his race,
Look'd back, and doubted in the middle space,
When they from far beheld the rising tow'rs,
The tops of sheds, and shepherds' lowly bow'rs,
Thin as they stood, which, then of homely clay,
Now rise in marble, from the Roman sway.
These cots (Evander's kingdom, mean and poor)
The Trojan saw, and turn'd his ships to shore.
'T was on a solemn day: th' Arcadian states,
The king and prince, without the city gates,
Then paid their off 'rings in a sacred grove
To Hercules, the warrior son of Jove.
Thick clouds of rolling smoke involve the skies,
And fat of entrails on his altar fries.

But, when they saw the ships that stemm'd the flood,
And glitter'd thro' the covert of the wood,
They rose with fear, and left th' unfinish'd feast,
Till dauntless Pallas reassur'd the rest
To pay the rites. Himself without delay
A jav'lin seiz'd, and singly took his way;
Then gain'd a rising ground, and call'd from far:
"Resolve me, strangers, whence, and what you are;
Your bus'ness here; and bring you peace or war?"
High on the stern Aeneas his stand,
And held a branch of olive in his hand,
While thus he spoke: "The Phrygians' arms you see,
Expell'd from Troy, provok'd in Italy
By Latian foes, with war unjustly made;
At first affianc'd, and at last betray'd.
This message bear: The Trojans and their chief
Bring holy peace, and beg the king's relief."
Struck with so great a name, and all on fire,
The youth replies: "Whatever you require,
Your fame exacts. Upon our shores descend.
A welcome guest, and, what you wish, a friend."
He said, and, downward hasting to the strand,
Embrac'd the stranger prince, and join'd his hand.

Conducted to the grove, Aeneas broke
The silence first, and thus the king bespoke:
"Best of the Greeks, to whom, by fate's command,
I bear these peaceful branches in my hand,

Undaunted I approach you, tho' I know
Your birth is Grecian, and your land my foe;
From Atreus tho' your ancient lineage came,
And both the brother kings your kindred claim;
Yet, my self-conscious worth, your high renown,
Your virtue, thro' the neighb'ring nations blown,
Our fathers' mingled blood, Apollo's voice,
Have led me hither, less by need than choice.
Our founder Dardanus, as fame has sung,
And Greeks acknowledge, from Electra sprung:
Electra from the loins of Atlas came;
Atlas, whose head sustains the starry frame.
Your sire is Mercury, whom long before
On cold Cyllene's top fair Maia bore.
Maia the fair, on fame if we rely,
Was Atlas' daughter, who sustains the sky.
Thus from one common source our streams divide;
Ours is the Trojan, yours th' Arcadian side.
Rais'd by these hopes, I sent no news before,
Nor ask'd your leave, nor did your faith implore;
But come, without a pledge, my own ambassador.
The same Rutulians, who with arms pursue
The Trojan race, are equal foes to you.
Our host expell'd, what farther force can stay
The victor troops from universal sway?
Then will they stretch their pow'r athwart the land,
And either sea from side to side command.
Receive our offer'd faith, and give us thine;
Ours is a gen'rous and experience'd line:
We want not hearts nor bodies for the war;
In council cautious, and in fields we dare."

He said; and while spoke, with piercing eyes
Evander view'd the man with vast surprise,
Pleas'd with his action, ravish'd with his face:
Then answer'd briefly, with a royal grace:
"O valiant leader of the Trojan line,
In whom the features of thy father shine,
How I recall Anchises! how I see
When Priam to his sister's court design'd
A welcome visit, with a friendly stay,
And thro' th' Arcadian kingdom took his way.
Then, past a boy, the callow down began
To shade my chin, and call me first a man.
I saw the shining train with vast delight,
And Priam's goodly person pleas'd my sight:
But great Anchises, far above the rest,
With awful wonder fir'd my youthful breast.
I long'd to join in friendship's holy bands
Our mutual hearts, and plight our mutual hands.

I first accosted him: I sued, I sought,
And, with a loving force, to Pheneus brought.
He gave me, when at length constrain'd to go,
A Lycian quiver and a Gnossian bow,
A vest embroider'd, glorious to behold,
And two rich bridles, with their bits of gold,
Which my son's coursers in obedience hold.
The league you ask, I offer, as your right;
And, when to-morrow's sun reveals the light,
With swift supplies you shall be sent away.
Now celebrate with us this solemn day,
Whose holy rites admit no long delay.
Honor our annual feast; and take your seat,
With friendly welcome, at a homely treat."
Thus having said, the bowls (remov'd for fear)
The youths replac'd, and soon restor'd the cheer.
On sods of turf he set the soldiers round:
A maple throne, rais'd higher from the ground,
Receiv'd the Trojan chief; and, o'er the bed,
A lion's shaggy hide for ornament they spread.
The loaves were serv'd in canisters; the wine
In bowls; the priest renew'd the rites divine:
Broil'd entrails are their food, and beef 's continued chine.

But when the rage of hunger was repress'd,
Thus spoke Evander to his royal guest:
"These rites, these altars, and this feast, O king,
From no vain fears or superstition spring,
Or blind devotion, or from blinder chance,
Or heady zeal, or brutal ignorance;
But, sav'd from danger, with a grateful sense,
The labors of a god we recompense.
See, from afar, yon rock that mates the sky,
About whose feet such heaps of rubbish lie;
Such indigested ruin; bleak and bare,
How desart now it stands, expos'd in air!
'T was once a robber's den, inclos'd around
With living stone, and deep beneath the ground.
The monster Cacus, more than half a beast,
This hold, impervious to the sun, possess'd.
The pavement ever foul with human gore;
Heads, and their mangled members, hung the door.
Vulcan this plague begot; and, like his sire,
Black clouds he belch'd, and flakes of livid fire.
Time, long expected, eas'd us of our load,
And brought the needful presence of a god.
Th' avenging force of Hercules, from Spain,
Arriv'd in triumph, from Geryon slain:
Thrice liv'd the giant, and thrice liv'd in vain.
His prize, the lowing herds, Alcides drove

Near Tiber's bank, to graze the shady grove.
Allur'd with hope of plunder, and intent
By force to rob, by fraud to circumvent,
The brutal Cacus, as by chance they stray'd,
Four oxen thence, and four fair kine convey'd;
And, lest the printed footsteps might be seen,
He dragg'd 'em backwards to his rocky den.
The tracks averse a lying notice gave,
And led the searcher backward from the cave.

"Meantime the herdsman hero shifts his place,
To find fresh pasture and untrodden grass.
The beasts, who miss'd their mates, fill'd all around
With bellowings, and the rocks restor'd the sound.
One heifer, who had heard her love complain,
Roar'd from the cave, and made the project vain.
Alcides found the fraud; with rage he shook,
And toss'd about his head his knotted oak.
Swift as the winds, or Scythian arrows' flight,
He clomb, with eager haste, th' aerial height.
Then first we saw the monster mend his pace;
Fear his eyes, and paleness in his face,
Confess'd the god's approach. Trembling he springs,
As terror had increas'd his feet with wings;
Nor stay'd for stairs; but down the depth he threw
His body, on his back the door he drew
(The door, a rib of living rock; with pains
His father hew'd it out, and bound with iron chains):
He broke the heavy links, the mountain clos'd,
And bars and levers to his foe oppos'd.
The wretch had hardly made his dungeon fast;
The fierce avenger came with bounding haste;
Survey'd the mouth of the forbidden hold,
And here and there his raging eyes he roll'd.
He gnash'd his teeth; and thrice he compass'd round
With winged speed the circuit of the ground.
Thrice at the cavern's mouth he pull'd in vain,
And, panting, thrice desisted from his pain.
A pointed flinty rock, all bare and black,
Grew gibbous from behind the mountain's back;
Owls, ravens, all ill omens of the night,
Here built their nests, and hither wing'd their flight.
The leaning head hung threat'ning o'er the flood,
And nodded to the left. The hero stood
Adverse, with planted feet, and, from the right,
Tugg'd at the solid stone with all his might.
Thus heav'd, the fix'd foundations of the rock
Gave way; heav'n echo'd at the rattling shock.
Tumbling, it chok'd the flood: on either side
The banks leap backward, and the streams divide;

The sky shrunk upward with unusual dread,
And trembling Tiber div'd beneath his bed.
The court of Cacus stands reveal'd to sight;
The cavern glares with new-admitted light.
So the pent vapors, with a rumbling sound,
Heave from below, and rend the hollow ground;
A sounding flaw succeeds; and, from on high,
The gods with hate beheld the nether sky:
The ghosts repine at violated night,
And curse th' invading sun, and sicken at the sight.
The graceless monster, caught in open day,
Inclos'd, and in despair to fly away,
Howls horrible from underneath, and fills
His hollow palace with unmanly yells.
The hero stands above, and from afar
Plies him with darts, and stones, and distant war.
He, from his nostrils huge mouth, expires
Black clouds of smoke, amidst his father's fires,
Gath'ring, with each repeated blast, the night,
To make uncertain aim, and erring sight.
The wrathful god then plunges from above,
And, where in thickest waves the sparkles drove,
There lights; and wades thro' fumes, and gropes his way,
Half sing'd, half stifled, till he grasps his prey.
The monster, spewing fruitless flames, he found;
He squeez'd his throat; he writh'd his neck around,
And in a knot his crippled members bound;
Then from their sockets tore his burning eyes:
Roll'd on a heap, the breathless robber lies.
The doors, unbarr'd, receive the rushing day,
And thoro' lights disclose the ravish'd prey.
The bulls, redeem'd, breathe open air again.
Next, by the feet, they drag him from his den.
The wond'ring neighborhood, with glad surprise,
Behold his shagged breast, his giant size,
His mouth that flames no more, and his extinguish'd eyes.
From that auspicious day, with rites divine,
We worship at the hero's holy shrine.
Potitius first ordain'd these annual vows:
As priests, were added the Pinarian house,
Who rais'd this altar in the sacred shade,
Where honors, ever due, for ever shall be paid.
For these deserts, and this high virtue shown,
Ye warlike youths, your heads with garlands crown:
Fill high the goblets with a sparkling flood,
And with deep draughts invoke our common god."

This said, a double wreath Evander twin'd,
And poplars black and white his temples bind.
Then brims his ample bowl. With like design

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88604

The rest invoke the gods, with sprinkled wine.
Meantime the sun descended from the skies,
And the bright evening star began to rise.
And now the priests, Potitius at their head,
In skins of beasts involv'd, the long procession led;
Held high the flaming tapers in their hands,
As custom had prescrib'd their holy bands;
Then with a second course the tables load,
And with full chargers offer to the god.
The Salii sing, and cense his altars round
With Saban smoke, their heads with poplar bound
One choir of old, another of the young,
To dance, and bear the burthen of the song.
The lay records the labors, and the praise,
And all th' immortal acts of Hercules:
First, how the mighty babe, when swath'd in bands,
The serpents strangled with his infant hands;
Then, as in years and matchless force he grew,
Th' Oechalian walls, and Trojan, overthrew.
Besides, a thousand hazards they relate,
Procur'd by Juno's and Eurystheus' hate:
"Thy hands, unconquer'd hero, could subdue
The cloud-born Centaurs, and the monster crew:
Nor thy resistless arm the bull withstood,
Nor he, the roaring terror of the wood.
The triple porter of the Stygian seat,
With lolling tongue, lay fawning at thy feet,
And, seiz'd with fear, forgot his mangled meat.
Th' infernal waters trembled at thy sight;
Thee, god, no face of danger could affright;
Not huge Typhoeus, nor th' unnumber'd snake,
Increas'd with hissing heads, in Lerna's lake.
Hail, Jove's undoubted son! an added grace
To heav'n and the great author of thy race!
Receive the grateful off 'rings which we pay,
And smile propitious on thy solemn day!"
In numbers thus they sung; above the rest,
The den and death of Cacus crown the feast.
The woods to hollow vales convey the sound,
The vales to hills, and hills the notes rebound.
The rites perform'd, the cheerful train retire.

Betwixt young Pallas and his aged sire,
The Trojan pass'd, the city to survey,
And pleasing talk beguil'd the tedious way.
The stranger cast around his curious eyes,
New objects viewing still, with new surprise;
With greedy joy enquires of various things,
And acts and monuments of ancient kings.
Then thus the founder of the Roman tow'rs:

“These woods were first the seat of sylvan pow’rs,
Of Nymphs and Fauns, and salvage men, who took
Their birth from trunks of trees and stubborn oak.
Nor laws they knew, nor manners, nor the care
Of lab’ring oxen, or the shining share,
Nor arts of gain, nor what they gain’d to spare.
Their exercise the chase; the running flood
Supplied their thirst, the trees supplied their food.
Then Saturn came, who fled the pow’r of Jove,
Robb’d of his realms, and banish’d from above.
The men, dispers’d on hills, to towns he brought,
And laws ordain’d, and civil customs taught,
And Latium call’d the land where safe he lay
From his unduteous son, and his usurping sway.
With his mild empire, peace and plenty came;
And hence the golden times deriv’d their name.
A more degenerate and discolor’d age
Succeeded this, with avarice and rage.
Th’ Ausonians then, and bold Sicanians came;
And Saturn’s empire often chang’d the name.
Then kings, gigantic Tybris, and the rest,
With arbitrary sway the land oppress’d:
For Tiber’s flood was Albula before,
Till, from the tyrant’s fate, his name it bore.
I last arriv’d, driv’n from my native home
By fortune’s pow’r, and fate’s resistless doom.
Long toss’d on seas, I sought this happy land,
Warn’d by my mother nymph, and call’d by Heav’n’s command.”

Thus, walking on, he spoke, and shew’d the gate,
Since call’d Carmental by the Roman state;
Where stood an altar, sacred to the name
Of old Carmenta, the prophetic dame,
Who to her son foretold th’ Aenean race,
Sublime in fame, and Rome’s imperial place:
Then shews the forest, which, in after times,
Fierce Romulus for perpetrated crimes
A sacred refuge made; with this, the shrine
Where Pan below the rock had rites divine:
Then tells of Argus’ death, his murder’d guest,
Whose grave and tomb his innocence attest.
Thence, to the steep Tarpeian rock he leads;
Now roof ’d with gold, then thatch’d with homely reeds.
A reverent fear (such superstition reigns
Among the rude) ev’n then possess’d the swains.
Some god, they knew what god, they could not tell
Did there amidst the sacred horror dwell.
Th’ Arcadians thought him Jove; and said they saw
The mighty Thund’rer with majestic awe,
Who took his shield, and dealt his bolts around,

And scatter'd tempests on the teeming ground.
Then saw two heaps of ruins, (once they stood
Two stately towns, on either side the flood,)
Saturnia's and Janicula's remains;
And either place the founder's name retains.
Discoursing thus together, they resort
Where poor Evander kept his country court.
They view'd the ground of Rome's litigious hall;
(Once oxen low'd, where now the lawyers bawl;)
Then, stooping, thro' the narrow gate they press'd,
When thus the king bespoke his Trojan guest:
"Mean as it is, this palace, and this door,
Receiv'd Alcides, then a conqueror.
Dare to be poor; accept our homely food,
Which feasted him, and emulate a god."
Then underneath a lowly roof he led
The weary prince, and laid him on a bed;
The stuffing leaves, with hides of bears o'erspread.
Now Night had shed her silver dews around,
And with her sable wings embrac'd the ground,
When love's fair goddess, anxious for her son,
(New tumults rising, and new wars begun,)
Couch'd with her husband in his golden bed,
With these alluring words invokes his aid;
And, that her pleasing speech his mind may move,
Inspires each accent with the charms of love:
"While cruel fate conspir'd with Grecian pow'rs,
To level with the ground the Trojan tow'rs,
I ask'd not aid th' unhappy to restore,
Nor did the succor of thy skill implore;
Nor urg'd the labors of my lord in vain,
A sinking empire longer to sustain,
Tho' much I ow'd to Priam's house, and more
The dangers of Aeneas did deplore.
But now, by Jove's command, and fate's decree,
His race is doom'd to reign in Italy:
With humble suit I beg thy needful art,
O still propitious pow'r, that rules my heart!
A mother kneels a suppliant for her son.
By Thetis and Aurora thou wert won
To forge impenetrable shields, and grace
With fated arms a less illustrious race.
Behold, what haughty nations are combin'd
Against the relics of the Phrygian kind,
With fire and sword my people to destroy,
And conquer Venus twice, in conqu'ring Troy."
She said; and straight her arms, of snowy hue,
About her unresolving husband threw.
Her soft embraces soon infuse desire;
His bones and marrow sudden warmth inspire;

And all the godhead feels the wonted fire.
Not half so swift the rattling thunder flies,
Or forky lightnings flash along the skies.
The goddess, proud of her successful wiles,
And conscious of her form, in secret smiles.

Then thus the pow'r, obnoxious to her charms,
Panting, and half dissolving in her arms:
"Why seek you reasons for a cause so just,
Or your own beauties or my love distrust?
Long since, had you requir'd my helpful hand,
Th' artificer and art you might command,
To labor arms for Troy: nor Jove, nor fate,
Confin'd their empire to so short a date.
And, if you now desire new wars to wage,
My skill I promise, and my pains engage.
Whatever melting metals can conspire,
Or breathing bellows, or the forming fire,
Is freely yours: your anxious fears remove,
And think no task is difficult to love."
Trembling he spoke; and, eager of her charms,
He snatch'd the willing goddess to his arms;
Till in her lap infus'd, he lay possess'd
Of full desire, and sunk to pleasing rest.
Now when the Night her middle race had rode,
And his first slumber had refresh'd the god
The time when early housewives leave the bed;
When living embers on the hearth they spread,
Supply the lamp, and call the maids to rise
With yawning mouths, and with half-open'd eyes,
They ply the distaff by the winking light,
And to their daily labor add the night:
Thus frugally they earn their children's bread,
And uncorrupted keep the nuptial bed
Not less concern'd, nor at a later hour,
Rose from his downy couch the forging pow'r.

Sacred to Vulcan's name, an isle there lay,
Betwixt Sicilia's coasts and Lipare,
Rais'd high on smoking rocks; and, deep below,
In hollow caves the fires of Aetna glow.
The Cyclops here their heavy hammers deal;
Loud strokes, and hissings of tormented steel,
Are heard around; the boiling waters roar,
And smoky flames thro' fuming tunnels soar.
Hether the Father of the Fire, by night,
Thro' the brown air precipitates his flight.
On their eternal anvils here he found
The brethren beating, and the blows go round.
A load of pointless thunder now there lies
Before their hands, to ripen for the skies:

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88604

These darts, for angry Jove, they daily cast;
Consum'd on mortals with prodigious waste.
Three rays of writhen rain, of fire three more,
Of winged southern winds and cloudy store
As many parts, the dreadful mixture frame;
And fears are added, and avenging flame.
Inferior ministers, for Mars, repair
His broken axletrees and blunted war,
And send him forth again with furbish'd arms,
To wake the lazy war with trumpets' loud alarms.
The rest refresh the scaly snakes that fold
The shield of Pallas, and renew their gold.
Full on the crest the Gorgon's head they place,
With eyes that roll in death, and with distorted face.

"My sons," said Vulcan, "set your tasks aside;
Your strength and master-skill must now be tried.
Arms for a hero forge; arms that require
Your force, your speed, and all your forming fire."
He said. They set their former work aside,
And their new toils with eager haste divide.
A flood of molten silver, brass, and gold,
And deadly steel, in the large furnace roll'd;
Of this, their artful hands a shield prepare,
Alone sufficient to sustain the war.
Sev'n orbs within a spacious round they close:
One stirs the fire, and one the bellows blows.
The hissing steel is in the smithy drown'd;
The grot with beaten anvils groans around.
By turns their arms advance, in equal time;
By turns their hands descend, and hammers chime.
They turn the glowing mass with crooked tongs;
The fiery work proceeds, with rustic songs.

While, at the Lemnian god's command, they urge
Their labors thus, and ply th' Aeolian forge,
The cheerful morn salutes Evander's eyes,
And songs of chirping birds invite to rise.
He leaves his lowly bed: his buskins meet
Above his ankles; sandals sheathe his feet:
He sets his trusty sword upon his side,
And o'er his shoulder throws a panther's hide.
Two menial dogs before their master press'd.
Thus clad, and guarded thus, he seeks his kingly guest.
Mindful of promis'd aid, he mends his pace,
But meets Aeneas in the middle space.
Young Pallas did his father's steps attend,
And true Achates waited on his friend.
They join their hands; a secret seat they choose;
Th' Arcadian first their former talk renews:
"Undaunted prince, I never can believe

The Trojan empire lost, while you survive.
Command th' assistance of a faithful friend;
But feeble are the succors I can send.
Our narrow kingdom here the Tiber bounds;
That other side the Latian state surrounds,
Insults our walls, and wastes our fruitful grounds.
But mighty nations I prepare, to join
Their arms with yours, and aid your just design.
You come, as by your better genius sent,
And fortune seems to favor your intent.
Not far from hence there stands a hilly town,
Of ancient building, and of high renown,
Torn from the Tuscans by the Lydian race,
Who gave the name of Caere to the place,
Once Agyllina call'd. It flourish'd long,
In pride of wealth and warlike people strong,
Till curs'd Mezentius, in a fatal hour,
Assum'd the crown, with arbitrary pow'r.
What words can paint those execrable times,
The subjects' suff 'rings, and the tyrant's crimes!
That blood, those murthers, O ye gods, replace
On his own head, and on his impious race!
The living and the dead at his command
Were coupled, face to face, and hand to hand,
Till, chok'd with stench, in loath'd embraces tied,
The ling'ring wretches pin'd away and died.
Thus plung'd in ills, and meditating more
The people's patience, tir'd, no longer bore
The raging monster; but with arms beset
His house, and vengeance and destruction threat.
They fire his palace: while the flame ascends,
They force his guards, and execute his friends.
He cleaves the crowd, and, favor'd by the night,
To Turnus' friendly court directs his flight.
By just revenge the Tuscans set on fire,
With arms, their king to punishment require:
Their num'rous troops, now muster'd on the strand,
My counsel shall submit to your command.
Their navy swarms upon the coasts; they cry
To hoist their anchors, but the gods deny.
An ancient augur, skill'd in future fate,
With these foreboding words restrains their hate:
'Ye brave in arms, ye Lydian blood, the flow'r

Of Tuscan youth, and choice of all their pow'r,
Whom just revenge against Mezentius arms,
To seek your tyrant's death by lawful arms;
Know this: no native of our land may lead
This pow'rful people; seek a foreign head.'
Aw'd with these words, in camps they still abide,

And wait with longing looks their promis'd guide.
Tarchon, the Tuscan chief, to me has sent
Their crown, and ev'ry regal ornament:
The people join their own with his desire;
And all my conduct, as their king, require.
But the chill blood that creeps within my veins,
And age, and listless limbs unfit for pains,
And a soul conscious of its own decay,
Have forc'd me to refuse imperial sway.
My Pallas were more fit to mount the throne,
And should, but he's a Sabine mother's son,
And half a native; but, in you, combine
A manly vigor, and a foreign line.
Where Fate and smiling Fortune shew the way,
Pursue the ready path to sov'reign sway.
The staff of my declining days, my son,
Shall make your good or ill success his own;
In fighting fields from you shall learn to dare,
And serve the hard apprenticeship of war;
Your matchless courage and your conduct view,
And early shall begin t' admire and copy you.
Besides, two hundred horse he shall command;
Tho' few, a warlike and well-chosen band.
These in my name are listed; and my son
As many more has added in his own."

Scarce had he said; Achates and his guest,
With downcast eyes, their silent grief express'd;
Who, short of succors, and in deep despair,
Shook at the dismal prospect of the war.
But his bright mother, from a breaking cloud,
To cheer her issue, thunder'd thrice aloud;
Thrice forky lightning flash'd along the sky,
And Tyrrhene trumpets thrice were heard on high.
Then, gazing up, repeated peals they hear;
And, in a heav'n serene, refulgent arms appear:
Redd'ning the skies, and glitt'ring all around,
The temper'd metals clash, and yield a silver sound.
The rest stood trembling, struck with awe divine;
Aeneas only, conscious to the sign,
Presag'd th' event, and joyful view'd, above,
Th' accomplish'd promise of the Queen of Love.
Then, to th' Arcadian king: "This prodigy
(Dismiss your fear) belongs alone to me.
Heav'n calls me to the war: th' expected sign
Is giv'n of promis'd aid, and arms divine.
My goddess mother, whose indulgent care
Foresaw the dangers of the growing war,
This omen gave, when bright Vulcanian arms,
Fated from force of steel by Stygian charms,

Suspended, shone on high: she then foreshow'd
Approaching fights, and fields to float in blood.
Turnus shall dearly pay for faith forsworn;
And corps, and swords, and shields, on Tiber borne,
Shall choke his flood: now sound the loud alarms;
And, Latian troops, prepare your perjur'd arms."

He said, and, rising from his homely throne,
The solemn rites of Hercules begun,
And on his altars wak'd the sleeping fires;
Then cheerful to his household gods retires;
There offers chosen sheep. Th' Arcadian king
And Trojan youth the same oblations bring.
Next, of his men and ships he makes review;
Draws out the best and ablest of the crew.
Down with the falling stream the refuse run,
To raise with joyful news his drooping son.
Steeds are prepar'd to mount the Trojan band,
Who wait their leader to the Tyrrhene land.
A sprightly courser, fairer than the rest,
The king himself presents his royal guest:
A lion's hide his back and limbs infold,
Precious with studded work, and paws of gold.
Fame thro' the little city spreads aloud
Th' intended march, amid the fearful crowd:
The matrons beat their breasts, dissolve in tears,
And double their devotion in their fears.
The war at hand appears with more affright,
And rises ev'ry moment to the sight.

Then old Evander, with a close embrace,
Strain'd his departing friend; and tears o'erflow his face.
"Would Heav'n," said he, "my strength and youth recall,
Such as I was beneath Praeneste's wall;
Then when I made the foremost foes retire,
And set whole heaps of conquer'd shields on fire;
When Herilus in single fight I slew,
Whom with three lives Feronia did endue;
And thrice I sent him to the Stygian shore,
Till the last ebbing soul return'd no more
Such if I stood renew'd, not these alarms,
Nor death, should rend me from my Pallas' arms;
Nor proud Mezentius, thus unpunish'd, boast
His rapes and murthers on the Tuscan coast.
Ye gods, and mighty Jove, in pity bring
Relief, and hear a father and a king!
If fate and you reserve these eyes, to see
My son return with peace and victory;
If the lov'd boy shall bless his father's sight;
If we shall meet again with more delight;
Then draw my life in length; let me sustain,

In hopes of his embrace, the worst of pain.
But if your hard decrees which, O! I dread
Have doom'd to death his undeserving head;
This, O this very moment, let me die!
While hopes and fears in equal balance lie;
While, yet possess'd of all his youthful charms,
I strain him close within these aged arms;
Before that fatal news my soul shall wound!"
He said, and, swooning, sunk upon the ground.
His servants bore him off, and softly laid
His languish'd limbs upon his homely bed.

The horsemen march; the gates are open'd wide;
Aeneas at their head, Achates by his side.
Next these, the Trojan leaders rode along;
Last follows in the rear th' Arcadian throng.
Young Pallas shone conspicuous o'er the rest;
Gilded his arms, embroider'd was his vest.
So, from the seas, exerts his radiant head
The star by whom the lights of heav'n are led;
Shakes from his rosy locks the pearly dews,
Dispels the darkness, and the day renews.
The trembling wives the walls and turrets crowd,
And follow, with their eyes, the dusty cloud,
Which winds disperse by fits, and shew from far
The blaze of arms, and shields, and shining war.
The troops, drawn up in beautiful array,
O'er heathy plains pursue the ready way.
Repeated peals of shouts are heard around;
The neighing coursers answer to the sound,
And shake with horny hoofs the solid ground.

A greenwood shade, for long religion known,
Stands by the streams that wash the Tuscan town,
Incompass'd round with gloomy hills above,
Which add a holy horror to the grove.
The first inhabitants of Grecian blood,
That sacred forest to Silvanus vow'd,
The guardian of their flocks and fields; and pay
Their due devotions on his annual day.
Not far from hence, along the river's side,
In tents secure, the Tuscan troops abide,
By Tarchon led. Now, from a rising ground,
Aeneas cast his wond'ring eyes around,
And all the Tyrrhene army had in sight,
Stretch'd on the spacious plain from left to right.
Thether his warlike train the Trojan led,
Refresh'd his men, and wearied horses fed.

Meantime the mother goddess, crown'd with charms,
Breaks thro' the clouds, and brings the fated arms.
Within a winding vale she finds her son,

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88604

On the cool river's banks, retir'd alone.
She shews her heav'nly form without disguise,
And gives herself to his desiring eyes.
"Behold," she said, "perform'd in ev'ry part,
My promise made, and Vulcan's labor'd art.
Now seek, secure, the Latian enemy,
And haughty Turnus to the field defy."
She said; and, having first her son embrac'd,
The radiant arms beneath an oak she plac'd,
Proud of the gift, he roll'd his greedy sight
Around the work, and gaz'd with vast delight.
He lifts, he turns, he poises, and admires
The crested helm, that vomits radiant fires:
His hands the fatal sword and corslet hold,
One keen with temper'd steel, one stiff with gold:
Both ample, flaming both, and beamy bright;
So shines a cloud, when edg'd with adverse light.
He shakes the pointed spear, and longs to try
The plated cuishes on his manly thigh;
But most admires the shield's mysterious mold,
And Roman triumphs rising on the gold:
For these, emboss'd, the heav'nly smith had wrought
(Not in the rolls of future fate untaught)
The wars in order, and the race divine
Of warriors issuing from the Julian line.
The cave of Mars was dress'd with mossy greens:
There, by the wolf, were laid the martial twins.
Intrepid on her swelling dugs they hung;
The foster dam loll'd out her fawning tongue:
They suck'd secure, while, bending back her head,
She lick'd their tender limbs, and form'd them as they fed.
Not far from thence new Rome appears, with games
Projected for the rape of Sabine dames.
The pit resounds with shrieks; a war succeeds,
For breach of public faith, and unexampled deeds.
Here for revenge the Sabine troops contend;
The Romans there with arms the prey defend.
Wearied with tedious war, at length they cease;
And both the kings and kingdoms plight the peace.
The friendly chiefs before Jove's altar stand,
Both arm'd, with each a charger in his hand:
A fatted sow for sacrifice is led,
With imprecations on the perjur'd head.
Near this, the traitor Metius, stretch'd between
Four fiery steeds, is dragg'd along the green,
By Tullus' doom: the brambles drink his blood,
And his torn limbs are left the vulture's food.
There, Porsena to Rome proud Tarquin brings,
And would by force restore the banish'd kings.
One tyrant for his fellow-tyrant fights;

The Roman youth assert their native rights.
Before the town the Tuscan army lies,
To win by famine, or by fraud surprise.
Their king, half-threat'ning, half-disdaining stood,
While Cocles broke the bridge, and stemm'd the flood.
The captive maids there tempt the raging tide,
Scap'd from their chains, with Cloelia for their guide.
High on a rock heroic Manlius stood,
To guard the temple, and the temple's god.
Then Rome was poor; and there you might behold
The palace thatch'd with straw, now roof 'd with gold.
The silver goose before the shining gate
There flew, and, by her cackle, sav'd the state.
She told the Gauls' approach; th' approaching Gauls,
Obscure in night, ascend, and seize the walls.
The gold dissembled well their yellow hair,
And golden chains on their white necks they wear.
Gold are their vests; long Alpine spears they wield,
And their left arm sustains a length of shield.
Hard by, the leaping Salian priests advance;
And naked thro' the streets the mad Luperci dance,
In caps of wool; the targets dropp'd from heav'n.
Here modest matrons, in soft litters driv'n,
To pay their vows in solemn pomp appear,
And odorous gums in their chaste hands they bear.
Far hence remov'd, the Stygian seats are seen;
Pains of the damn'd, and punish'd Catiline
Hung on a rock the traitor; and, around,
The Furies hissing from the nether ground.
Apart from these, the happy souls he draws,
And Cato's holy ghost dispensing laws.

Betwixt the quarters flows a golden sea;
But foaming surges there in silver play.
The dancing dolphins with their tails divide
The glitt'ring waves, and cut the precious tide.
Amid the main, two mighty fleets engage
Their brazen beaks, oppos'd with equal rage.
Actium surveys the well-disputed prize;
Leucate's wat'ry plain with foamy billows fries.
Young Caesar, on the stern, in armor bright,
Here leads the Romans and their gods to fight:
His beamy temples shoot their flames afar,
And o'er his head is hung the Julian star.
Agrippa seconds him, with prosp'rous gales,
And, with propitious gods, his foes assails:
A naval crown, that binds his manly brows,
The happy fortune of the fight foreshows.
Rang'd on the line oppos'd, Antonius brings
Barbarian aids, and troops of Eastern kings;

Th’ Arabians near, and Bactrians from afar,
Of tongues discordant, and a mingled war:
And, rich in gaudy robes, amidst the strife,
His ill fate follows him th’ Egyptian wife.
Moving they fight; with oars and forky prows
The froth is gather’d, and the water glows.
It seems, as if the Cyclades again
Were rooted up, and justled in the main;
Or floating mountains floating mountains meet;
Such is the fierce encounter of the fleet.
Fireballs are thrown, and pointed jav’lins fly;
The fields of Neptune take a purple dye.
The queen herself, amidst the loud alarms,
With cymbals toss’d her fainting soldiers warms
Fool as she was! who had not yet divin’d
Her cruel fate, nor saw the snakes behind.
Her country gods, the monsters of the sky,
Great Neptune, Pallas, and Love’s Queen defy:
The dog Anubis barks, but barks in vain,
Nor longer dares oppose th’ ethereal train.
Mars in the middle of the shining shield
Is grav’d, and strides along the liquid field.
The Dirae souse from heav’n with swift descent;
And Discord, dyed in blood, with garments rent,
Divides the prease: her steps Bellona treads,
And shakes her iron rod above their heads.
This seen, Apollo, from his Actian height,
Pours down his arrows; at whose winged flight
The trembling Indians and Egyptians yield,
And soft Sabaeans quit the wat’ry field.
The fatal mistress hoists her silken sails,
And, shrinking from the fight, invokes the gales.
Aghast she looks, and heaves her breast for breath,
Panting, and pale with fear of future death.
The god had figur’d her as driv’n along
By winds and waves, and scudding thro’ the throng.
Just opposite, sad Nilus opens wide
His arms and ample bosom to the tide,
And spreads his mantle o’er the winding coast,
In which he wraps his queen, and hides the flying host.
The victor to the gods his thanks express’d,
And Rome, triumphant, with his presence bless’d.
Three hundred temples in the town he plac’d;
With spoils and altars ev’ry temple grac’d.
Three shining nights, and three succeeding days,
The fields resound with shouts, the streets with praise,
The domes with songs, the theaters with plays.
All altars flame: before each altar lies,
Drench’d in his gore, the destin’d sacrifice.
Great Caesar sits sublime upon his throne,

Before Apollo's porch of Parian stone;
Accepts the presents vow'd for victory,
And hangs the monumental crowns on high.
Vast crowds of vanquish'd nations march along,
Various in arms, in habit, and in tongue.
Here, Mulciber assigns the proper place
For Carians, and th' ungirt Numidian race;
Then ranks the Thracians in the second row,
With Scythians, expert in the dart and bow.
And here the tam'd Euphrates humbly glides,
And there the Rhine submits her swelling tides,
And proud Araxes, whom no bridge could bind;
The Danes' unconquer'd offspring march behind,
And Morini, the last of humankind.

These figures, on the shield divinely wrought,
By Vulcan labor'd, and by Venus brought,
With joy and wonder fill the hero's thought.
Unknown the names, he yet admires the grace,
And bears aloft the fame and fortune of his race.

Book IX

While these affairs in distant places pass'd,
The various Iris Juno sends with haste,
To find bold Turnus, who, with anxious thought,
The secret shade of his great grandsire sought.
Retir'd alone she found the daring man,
And op'd her rosy lips, and thus began:
"What none of all the gods could grant thy vows,
That, Turnus, this auspicious day bestows.
Aeneas, gone to seek th' Arcadian prince,
Has left the Trojan camp without defense;
And, short of succors there, employs his pains
In parts remote to raise the Tuscan swains.
Now snatch an hour that favors thy designs;
Unite thy forces, and attack their lines."
This said, on equal wings she pois'd her weight,
And form'd a radiant rainbow in her flight.

The Daunian hero lifts his hands and eyes,
And thus invokes the goddess as she flies:
"Iris, the grace of heav'n, what pow'r divine
Has sent thee down, thro' dusky clouds to shine?
See, they divide; immortal day appears,
And glitt'ring planets dancing in their spheres!
With joy, these happy omens I obey,
And follow to the war the god that leads the way."
Thus having said, as by the brook he stood,
He scoop'd the water from the crystal flood;
Then with his hands the drops to heav'n he throws,
And loads the pow'rs above with offer'd vows.

Now march the bold confed'rates thro' the plain,
Well hors'd, well clad; a rich and shining train.
Messapus leads the van; and, in the rear,
The sons of Tyrrheus in bright arms appear.
In the main battle, with his flaming crest,
The mighty Turnus tow'rs above the rest.
Silent they move, majestically slow,
Like ebbing Nile, or Ganges in his flow.
The Trojans view the dusty cloud from far,
And the dark menace of the distant war.
Caicus from the rampire saw it rise,
Black'ning the fields, and thick'ning thro' the skies.
Then to his fellows thus aloud he calls:
"What rolling clouds, my friends, approach the walls?
Arm! arm! and man the works! prepare your spears
And pointed darts! the Latian host appears."

Thus warn'd, they shut their gates; with shouts ascend
The bulwarks, and, secure, their foes attend:
For their wise gen'ral, with foreseeing care,
Had charg'd them not to tempt the doubtful war,
Nor, tho' provok'd, in open fields advance,
But close within their lines attend their chance.
Unwilling, yet they keep the strict command,
And sourly wait in arms the hostile band.
The fiery Turnus flew before the rest:
A piebald steed of Thracian strain he press'd;
His helm of massy gold, and crimson was his crest.
With twenty horse to second his designs,
An unexpected foe, he fac'd the lines.
"Is there," he said, "in arms, who bravely dare
His leader's honor and his danger share?"
Then spurring on, his brandish'd dart he threw,
In sign of war: applauding shouts ensue.

Amaz'd to find a dastard race, that run
Behind the rampires and the battle shun,
He rides around the camp, with rolling eyes,
And stops at ev'ry post, and ev'ry passage tries.
So roams the nightly wolf about the fold:
Wet with descending show'rs, and stiff with cold,
He howls for hunger, and he grins for pain,
(His gnashing teeth are exercis'd in vain,)
And, impotent of anger, finds no way
In his distended paws to grasp the prey.
The mothers listen; but the bleating lambs
Securely swig the dug, beneath the dams.
Thus ranges eager Turnus o'er the plain.
Sharp with desire, and furious with disdain;
Surveys each passage with a piercing sight,
To force his foes in equal field to fight.

Thus while he gazes round, at length he spies,
Where, fenc'd with strong redoubts, their navy lies,
Close underneath the walls; the washing tide
Secures from all approach this weaker side.
He takes the wish'd occasion, fills his hand
With ready fires, and shakes a flaming brand.
Urg'd by his presence, ev'ry soul is warm'd,
And ev'ry hand with kindled firs is arm'd.
From the fir'd pines the scatt'ring sparkles fly;
Fat vapors, mix'd with flames, involve the sky.
What pow'r, O Muses, could avert the flame
Which threaten'd, in the fleet, the Trojan name?
Tell: for the fact, thro' length of time obscure,
Is hard to faith; yet shall the fame endure.

'T is said that, when the chief prepar'd his flight,
And fell'd his timber from Mount Ida's height,
The grandam goddess then approach'd her son,
And with a mother's majesty begun:
"Grant me," she said, "the sole request I bring,
Since conquer'd heav'n has own'd you for its king.
On Ida's brows, for ages past, there stood,
With firs and maples fill'd, a shady wood;
And on the summit rose a sacred grove,
Where I was worship'd with religious love.
Those woods, that holy grove, my long delight,
I gave the Trojan prince, to speed his flight.
Now, fill'd with fear, on their behalf I come;
Let neither winds o'erset, nor waves intomb
The floating forests of the sacred pine;
But let it be their safety to be mine."
Then thus replied her awful son, who rolls
The radiant stars, and heav'n and earth controls:
"How dare you, mother, endless date demand
For vessels molded by a mortal hand?
What then is fate? Shall bold Aeneas ride,
Of safety certain, on th' uncertain tide?
Yet, what I can, I grant; when, wafted o'er,
The chief is landed on the Latian shore,
Whatever ships escape the raging storms,
At my command shall change their fading forms
To nymphs divine, and plow the wat'ry way,
Like Dotis and the daughters of the sea."
To seal his sacred vow, by Styx he swore,
The lake of liquid pitch, the dreary shore,
And Phlegethon's innavigable flood,
And the black regions of his brother god.
He said; and shook the skies with his imperial nod.

And now at length the number'd hours were come,
Prefix'd by fate's irrevocable doom,

When the great Mother of the Gods was free
To save her ships, and finish Jove's decree.
First, from the quarter of the morn, there sprung
A light that sign'd the heav'ns, and shot along;
Then from a cloud, fring'd round with golden fires,
Were timbrels heard, and Berecynthian choirs;
And, last, a voice, with more than mortal sounds,
Both hosts, in arms oppos'd, with equal horror wounds:
"O Trojan race, your needless aid forbear,
And know, my ships are my peculiar care.
With greater ease the bold Rutulian may,
With hissing brands, attempt to burn the sea,
Than singe my sacred pines. But you, my charge,
Loos'd from your crooked anchors, launch at large,
Exalted each a nymph: forsake the sand,
And swim the seas, at Cybele's command."
No sooner had the goddess ceas'd to speak,
When, lo! th' obedient ships their haulsers break;
And, strange to tell, like dolphins, in the main
They plunge their prows, and dive, and spring again:
As many beauteous maids the billows sweep,
As rode before tall vessels on the deep.

The foes, surpris'd with wonder, stood aghast;
Messapus curb'd his fiery courser's haste;
Old Tiber roar'd, and, raising up his head,
Call'd back his waters to their oozy bed.
Turnus alone, undaunted, bore the shock,
And with these words his trembling troops bespoke:
"These monsters for the Trojans' fate are meant,
And are by Jove for black presages sent.
He takes the cowards' last relief away;
For fly they cannot, and, constrain'd to stay,
Must yield unfought, a base inglorious prey.
The liquid half of all the globe is lost;
Heav'n shuts the seas, and we secure the coast.
Theirs is no more than that small spot of ground
Which myriads of our martial men surround.
Their fates I fear not, or vain oracles.
'T was giv'n to Venus they should cross the seas,
And land secure upon the Latian plains:
Their promis'd hour is pass'd, and mine remains.
'T is in the fate of Turnus to destroy,
With sword and fire, the faithless race of Troy.
Shall such affronts as these alone inflame
The Grecian brothers, and the Grecian name?
My cause and theirs is one; a fatal strife,
And final ruin, for a ravish'd wife.
Was 't not enough, that, punish'd for the crime,
They fell; but will they fall a second time?

One would have thought they paid enough before,
To curse the costly sex, and durst offend no more.
Can they securely trust their feeble wall,
A slight partition, a thin interval,
Betwixt their fate and them; when Troy, tho' built
By hands divine, yet perish'd by their guilt?
Lend me, for once, my friends, your valiant hands,
To force from out their lines these dastard bands.
Less than a thousand ships will end this war,
Nor Vulcan needs his fated arms prepare.
Let all the Tuscans, all th' Arcadians, join!
Nor these, nor those, shall frustrate my design.
Let them not fear the treasons of the night,
The robb'd Palladium, the pretended flight:
Our onset shall be made in open light.
No wooden engine shall their town betray;
Fires they shall have around, but fires by day.
No Grecian babes before their camp appear,
Whom Hector's arms detain'd to the tenth tardy year.
Now, since the sun is rolling to the west,
Give we the silent night to needful rest:
Refresh your bodies, and your arms prepare;
The morn shall end the small remains of war."

The post of honor to Messapus falls,
To keep the nightly guard, to watch the walls,
To pitch the fires at distances around,
And close the Trojans in their scanty ground.
Twice seven Rutulian captains ready stand,
And twice seven hundred horse these chiefs command;
All clad in shining arms the works invest,
Each with a radiant helm and waving crest.
Stretch'd at their length, they press the grassy ground;
They laugh, they sing, (the jolly bowls go round,)
With lights and cheerful fires renew the day,
And pass the wakeful night in feasts and play.

The Trojans, from above, their foes beheld,
And with arm'd legions all the rampires fill'd.
Seiz'd with affright, their gates they first explore;
Join works to works with bridges, tow'r to tow'r:
Thus all things needful for defense abound.
Mnestheus and brave Seresthus walk the round,
Commission'd by their absent prince to share
The common danger, and divide the care.
The soldiers draw their lots, and, as they fall,
By turns relieve each other on the wall.

Nigh where the foes their utmost guards advance,
To watch the gate was warlike Nisus' chance.
His father Hyrtacus of noble blood;
His mother was a huntress of the wood,

And sent him to the wars. Well could he bear
His lance in fight, and dart the flying spear,
But better skill'd unerring shafts to send.
Beside him stood Euryalus, his friend:
Euryalus, than whom the Trojan host
No fairer face, or sweeter air, could boast
Scarce had the down to shade his cheeks begun.
One was their care, and their delight was one:
One common hazard in the war they shar'd,
And now were both by choice upon the guard.

Then Nisus thus: "Or do the gods inspire
This warmth, or make we gods of our desire?
A gen'rous ardor boils within my breast,
Eager of action, enemy to rest:
This urges me to fight, and fires my mind
To leave a memorable name behind.
Thou see'st the foe secure; how faintly shine
Their scatter'd fires! the most, in sleep supine
Along the ground, an easy conquest lie:
The wakeful few the fuming flagon ply;
All hush'd around. Now hear what I revolve
A thought unripe and scarcely yet resolve.
Our absent prince both camp and council mourn;
By message both would hasten his return:
If they confer what I demand on thee,
(For fame is recompense enough for me,)
Methinks, beneath yon hill, I have espied
A way that safely will my passage guide."

Euryalus stood list'ning while he spoke,
With love of praise and noble envy struck;
Then to his ardent friend expos'd his mind:
"All this, alone, and leaving me behind!
Am I unworthy, Nisus, to be join'd?
Thinkist thou I can my share of glory yield,
Or send thee unassisted to the field?
Not so my father taught my childhood arms;
Born in a siege, and bred among alarms!
Nor is my youth unworthy of my friend,
Nor of the heav'n-born hero I attend.
The thing call'd life, with ease I can disclaim,
And think it over-sold to purchase fame."

Then Nisus thus: "Alas! thy tender years
Would minister new matter to my fears.
So may the gods, who view this friendly strife,
Restore me to thy lov'd embrace with life,
Condemn'd to pay my vows, (as sure I trust,)
This thy request is cruel and unjust.
But if some chance as many chances are,
And doubtful hazards, in the deeds of war

If one should reach my head, there let it fall,
And spare thy life; I would not perish all.
Thy bloomy youth deserves a longer date:
Live thou to mourn thy love's unhappy fate;
To bear my mangled body from the foe,
Or buy it back, and fun'ral rites bestow.
Or, if hard fortune shall those dues deny,
Thou canst at least an empty tomb supply.
O let not me the widow's tears renew!
Nor let a mother's curse my name pursue:
Thy pious parent, who, for love of thee,
Forsook the coasts of friendly Sicily,
Her age committing to the seas and wind,
When ev'ry weary matron stay'd behind."
To this, Euryalus: "You plead in vain,
And but protract the cause you cannot gain.
No more delays, but haste!" With that, he wakes
The nodding watch; each to his office takes.
The guard reliev'd, the gen'rous couple went
To find the council at the royal tent.

All creatures else forgot their daily care,
And sleep, the common gift of nature, share;
Except the Trojan peers, who wakeful sate
In nightly council for th' indanger'd state.
They vote a message to their absent chief,
Shew their distress, and beg a swift relief.
Amid the camp a silent seat they chose,
Remote from clamor, and secure from foes.
On their left arms their ample shields they bear,
The right reclin'd upon the bending spear.
Now Nisus and his friend approach the guard,
And beg admission, eager to be heard:
Th' affair important, not to be deferr'd.
Ascanius bids 'em be conducted in,
Ord'ring the more experience'd to begin.
Then Nisus thus: "Ye fathers, lend your ears;
Nor judge our bold attempt beyond our years.
The foe, securely drench'd in sleep and wine,
Neglect their watch; the fires but thinly shine;
And where the smoke in cloudy vapors flies,
Cov'ring the plain, and curling to the skies,
Betwixt two paths, which at the gate divide,
Close by the sea, a passage we have spied,
Which will our way to great Aeneas guide.
Expect each hour to see him safe again,
Loaded with spoils of foes in battle slain.
Snatch we the lucky minute while we may;
Nor can we be mistaken in the way;
For, hunting in the vale, we both have seen

The rising turrets, and the stream between,
And know the winding course, with ev'ry ford."

He ceas'd; and old Alethes took the word:
"Our country gods, in whom our trust we place,
Will yet from ruin save the Trojan race,
While we behold such dauntless worth appear
In dawning youth, and souls so void of fear."
Then into tears of joy the father broke;
Each in his longing arms by turns he took;
Panted and paus'd; and thus again he spoke:
"Ye brave young men, what equal gifts can we,
In recompense of such desert, decree?
The greatest, sure, and best you can receive,
The gods and your own conscious worth will give.
The rest our grateful gen'ral will bestow,
And young Ascanius till his manhood owe."

"And I, whose welfare in my father lies,"
Ascanius adds, "by the great deities,
By my dear country, by my household gods,
By hoary Vesta's rites and dark abodes,
Adjure you both, (on you my fortune stands;
That and my faith I plight into your hands,)
Make me but happy in his safe return,
Whose wanted presence I can only mourn;
Your common gift shall two large goblets be
Of silver, wrought with curious imagery,
And high emboss'd, which, when old Priam reign'd,
My conqu'ring sire at sack'd Arisba gain'd;
And more, two tripods cast in antic mold,
With two great talents of the finest gold;
Beside a costly bowl, ingrav'd with art,
Which Dido gave, when first she gave her heart.
But, if in conquer'd Italy we reign,
When spoils by lot the victor shall obtain
Thou saw'st the courser by proud Turnus press'd:
That, Nisus, and his arms, and nodding crest,
And shield, from chance exempt, shall be thy share:
Twelve lab'ring slaves, twelve handmaids young and fair
All clad in rich attire, and train'd with care;
And, last, a Latian field with fruitful plains,
And a large portion of the king's domains.
But thou, whose years are more to mine allied
No fate my vow'd affection shall divide
From thee, heroic youth! Be wholly mine;
Take full possession; all my soul is thine.
One faith, one fame, one fate, shall both attend;
My life's companion, and my bosom friend:
My peace shall be committed to thy care,
And to thy conduct my concerns in war."

Then thus the young Euryalus replied:
“Whatever fortune, good or bad, betide,
The same shall be my age, as now my youth;
No time shall find me wanting to my truth.
This only from your goodness let me gain
(And, this ungranted, all rewards are vain)
Of Priam’s royal race my mother came
And sure the best that ever bore the name
Whom neither Troy nor Sicily could hold
From me departing, but, o’erspent and old,
My fate she follow’d. Ignorant of this
Whatever danger, neither parting kiss,
Nor pious blessing taken, her I leave,
And in this only act of all my life deceive.
By this right hand and conscious Night I swear,
My soul so sad a farewell could not bear.
Be you her comfort; fill my vacant place
(Permit me to presume so great a grace)
Support her age, forsaken and distress’d.
That hope alone will fortify my breast
Against the worst of fortunes, and of fears.”
He said. The mov’d assistants melt in tears.

Then thus Ascanius, wonderstruck to see
That image of his filial piety:
“So great beginnings, in so green an age,
Exact the faith which I again ingage.
Thy mother all the dues shall justly claim,
Creusa had, and only want the name.
Whate’er event thy bold attempt shall have,
‘T is merit to have borne a son so brave.
Now by my head, a sacred oath, I swear,
(My father us’d it,) what, returning here
Crown’d with success, I for thyself prepare,
That, if thou fail, shall thy lov’d mother share.”

He said, and weeping, while he spoke the word,
From his broad belt he drew a shining sword,
Magnificent with gold. Lycaon made,
And in an ivory scabbard sheath’d the blade.
This was his gift. Great Mnestheus gave his friend
A lion’s hide, his body to defend;
And good Alethes furnish’d him, beside,
With his own trusty helm, of temper tried.

Thus arm’d they went. The noble Trojans wait
Their issuing forth, and follow to the gate
With prayers and vows. Above the rest appears
Ascanius, manly far beyond his years,
And messages committed to their care,
Which all in winds were lost, and flitting air.

The trenches first they pass'd; then took their way
Where their proud foes in pitch'd pavilions lay;
To many fatal, ere themselves were slain.
They found the careless host dispers'd upon the plain,
Who, gorg'd, and drunk with wine, supinely snore.
Unharness'd chariots stand along the shore:
Amidst the wheels and reins, the goblet by,
A medley of debauch and war, they lie.
Observing Nisus shew'd his friend the sight:
"Behold a conquest gain'd without a fight.
Occasion offers, and I stand prepar'd;
There lies our way; be thou upon the guard,
And look around, while I securely go,
And hew a passage thro' the sleeping foe."
Softly he spoke; then striding took his way,
With his drawn sword, where haughty Rhamnes lay;
His head rais'd high on tapestry beneath,
And heaving from his breast, he drew his breath;
A king and prophet, by King Turnus lov'd:
But fate by prescience cannot be remov'd.
Him and his sleeping slaves he slew; then spies
Where Remus, with his rich retinue, lies.
His armor-bearer first, and next he kills
His charioteer, intrench'd betwixt the wheels
And his lov'd horses; last invades their lord;
Full on his neck he drives the fatal sword:
The gasping head flies off; a purple flood
Flows from the trunk, that welters in the blood,
Which, by the spurning heels dispers'd around,
The bed besprinkles and bedews the ground.
Lamus the bold, and Lamyrus the strong,
He slew, and then Serranus fair and young.
From dice and wine the youth retir'd to rest,
And puff 'd the fumy god from out his breast:
Ev'n then he dreamt of drink and lucky play
More lucky, had it lasted till the day.
The famish'd lion thus, with hunger bold,
O'erleaps the fences of the nightly fold,
And tears the peaceful flocks: with silent awe
Trembling they lie, and pant beneath his paw.

Nor with less rage Euryalus employs
The wrathful sword, or fewer foes destroys;
But on th' ignoble crowd his fury flew;
He Fadus, Hebesus, and Rhoetus slew.
Oppress'd with heavy sleep the former fell,
But Rhoetus wakeful, and observing all:
Behind a spacious jar he slink'd for fear;
The fatal iron found and reach'd him there;
For, as he rose, it pierc'd his naked side,

And, reeking, thence return'd in crimson dyed.
The wound pours out a stream of wine and blood;
The purple soul comes floating in the flood.

Now, where Messapus quarter'd, they arrive.
The fires were fainting there, and just alive;
The warrior-horses, tied in order, fed.
Nisus observ'd the discipline, and said:
"Our eager thirst of blood may both betray;
And see the scatter'd streaks of dawning day,
Foe to nocturnal thefts. No more, my friend;
Here let our glutted execution end.
A lane thro' slaughter'd bodies we have made."
The bold Euryalus, tho' loth, obey'd.
Of arms, and arras, and of plate, they find
A precious load; but these they leave behind.
Yet, fond of gaudy spoils, the boy would stay
To make the rich caparison his prey,
Which on the steed of conquer'd Rhamnes lay.
Nor did his eyes less longingly behold
The girdle-belt, with nails of burnish'd gold.
This present Caedicus the rich bestow'd
On Remulus, when friendship first they vow'd,
And, absent, join'd in hospitable ties:
He, dying, to his heir bequeath'd the prize;
Till, by the conqu'ring Ardean troops oppress'd,
He fell; and they the glorious gift possess'd.
These glitt'ring spoils (now made the victor's gain)
He to his body suits, but suits in vain:
Messapus' helm he finds among the rest,
And laces on, and wears the waving crest.
Proud of their conquest, prouder of their prey,
They leave the camp, and take the ready way.

But far they had not pass'd, before they spied
Three hundred horse, with Volscens for their guide.
The queen a legion to King Turnus sent;
But the swift horse the slower foot prevent,
And now, advancing, sought the leader's tent.
They saw the pair; for, thro' the doubtful shade,
His shining helm Euryalus betray'd,
On which the moon with full reflection play'd.
"'T is not for naught," cried Volscens from the crowd,
"These men go there;" then rais'd his voice aloud:
"Stand! stand! why thus in arms? And whither bent?
From whence, to whom, and on what errand sent?"
Silent they scud away, and haste their flight
To neighb'ring woods, and trust themselves to night.
The speedy horse all passages belay,
And spur their smoking steeds to cross their way,
And watch each entrance of the winding wood.

Black was the forest: thick with beech it stood,
Horrid with fern, and intricate with thorn;
Few paths of human feet, or tracks of beasts, were worn.
The darkness of the shades, his heavy prey,
And fear, misled the younger from his way.
But Nisus hit the turns with happier haste,
And, thoughtless of his friend, the forest pass'd,
And Alban plains, from Alba's name so call'd,
Where King Latinus then his oxen stall'd;
Till, turning at the length, he stood his ground,
And miss'd his friend, and cast his eyes around:
"Ah wretch!" he cried, "where have I left behind
Th' unhappy youth? where shall I hope to find?
Or what way take?" Again he ventures back,
And treads the mazes of his former track.
He winds the wood, and, list'ning, hears the noise
Of tramping coursers, and the riders' voice.
The sound approach'd; and suddenly he view'd
The foes inclosing, and his friend pursued,
Forelaid and taken, while he strove in vain
The shelter of the friendly shades to gain.
What should he next attempt? what arms employ,
What fruitless force, to free the captive boy?
Or desperate should he rush and lose his life,
With odds oppress'd, in such unequal strife?

Resolv'd at length, his pointed spear he shook;
And, casting on the moon a mournful look:
"Guardian of groves, and goddess of the night,
Fair queen," he said, "direct my dart aright.
If e'er my pious father, for my sake,
Did grateful off 'rings on thy altars make,
Or I increas'd them with my sylvan toils,
And hung thy holy roofs with savage spoils,
Give me to scatter these." Then from his ear
He pois'd, and aim'd, and launch'd the trembling spear.
The deadly weapon, hissing from the grove,
Impetuous on the back of Sulmo drove;
Pierc'd his thin armor, drank his vital blood,
And in his body left the broken wood.
He staggers round; his eyeballs roll in death,
And with short sobs he gasps away his breath.
All stand amaz'd a second jav'lin flies
With equal strength, and quivers thro' the skies.
This thro' thy temples, Tagus, forc'd the way,
And in the brainpan warmly buried lay.
Fierce Volscens foams with rage, and, gazing round,
Descried not him who gave the fatal wound,
Nor knew to fix revenge: "But thou," he cries,
"Shalt pay for both," and at the pris'ner flies

With his drawn sword. Then, struck with deep despair,
That cruel sight the lover could not bear;
But from his covert rush'd in open view,
And sent his voice before him as he flew:
"Me! me!" he cried "turn all your swords alone
On me the fact confess'd, the fault my own.
He neither could nor durst, the guiltless youth:
Ye moon and stars, bear witness to the truth!
His only crime (if friendship can offend)
Is too much love to his unhappy friend."
Too late he speaks: the sword, which fury guides,
Driv'n with full force, had pierc'd his tender sides.
Down fell the beauteous youth: the yawning wound
Gush'd out a purple stream, and stain'd the ground.
His snowy neck reclines upon his breast,
Like a fair flow'r by the keen share oppress'd;
Like a white poppy sinking on the plain,
Whose heavy head is overcharg'd with rain.
Despair, and rage, and vengeance justly vow'd,
Drove Nisus headlong on the hostile crowd.
Volscens he seeks; on him alone he bends:
Borne back and bor'd by his surrounding friends,
Onward he press'd, and kept him still in sight;
Then whirl'd aloft his sword with all his might:
Th' unerring steel descended while he spoke,
Piered his wide mouth, and thro' his weazon broke.
Dying, he slew; and, stagg'ring on the plain,
With swimming eyes he sought his lover slain;
Then quiet on his bleeding bosom fell,
Content, in death, to be reveng'd so well.

O happy friends! for, if my verse can give
Immortal life, your fame shall ever live,
Fix'd as the Capitol's foundation lies,
And spread, where'er the Roman eagle flies!

The conqu'ring party first divide the prey,
Then their slain leader to the camp convey.
With wonder, as they went, the troops were fill'd,
To see such numbers whom so few had kill'd. Serranus,
Rhamnes, and the rest, they found:
Vast crowds the dying and the dead surround;
And the yet reeking blood o'erflows the ground.
All knew the helmet which Messapus lost,
But mourn'd a purchase that so dear had cost.
Now rose the ruddy morn from Tithon's bed,
And with the dawn of day the skies o'erspread;
Nor long the sun his daily course withheld,
But added colors to the world reveal'd:
When early Turnus, wak'ning with the light,
All clad in armor, calls his troops to fight.

His martial men with fierce harangue he fir'd,
And his own ardor in their souls inspir'd.
This done to give new terror to his foes,
The heads of Nisus and his friend he shows,
Rais'd high on pointed spears a ghastly sight:
Loud peals of shouts ensue, and barbarous delight.

Meantime the Trojans run, where danger calls;
They line their trenches, and they man their walls.
In front extended to the left they stood;
Safe was the right, surrounded by the flood.
But, casting from their tow'rs a frightful view,
They saw the faces, which too well they knew,
Tho' then disguis'd in death, and smear'd all o'er
With filth obscene, and dropping putrid gore.
Soon hasty fame thro' the sad city bears
The mournful message to the mother's ears.
An icy cold benumbs her limbs; she shakes;
Her cheeks the blood, her hand the web forsakes.
She runs the rampires round amidst the war,
Nor fears the flying darts; she rends her hair,
And fills with loud laments the liquid air.
"Thus, then, my lov'd Euryalus appears!
Thus looks the prop my declining years!
Was't on this face my famish'd eyes I fed?
Ah! how unlike the living is the dead!
And could'st thou leave me, cruel, thus alone?
Not one kind kiss from a departing son!
No look, no last adieu before he went,
In an ill-boding hour to slaughter sent!
Cold on the ground, and pressing foreign clay,
To Latian dogs and fowls he lies a prey!
Nor was I near to close his dying eyes,
To wash his wounds, to weep his obsequies,
To call about his corpse his crying friends,
Or spread the mantle (made for other ends)
On his dear body, which I wove with care,
Nor did my daily pains or nightly labor spare.
Where shall I find his corpse? what earth sustains
His trunk dismember'd, and his cold remains?
For this, alas! I left my needful ease,
Expos'd my life to winds and winter seas!
If any pity touch Rutulian hearts,
Here empty all your quivers, all your darts;
Or, if they fail, thou, Jove, conclude my woe,
And send me thunderstruck to shades below!"
Her shrieks and clamors pierce the Trojans' ears,
Unman their courage, and augment their fears;
Nor young Ascanius could the sight sustain,
Nor old Ilioneus his tears restrain,

But Actor and Idaeus jointly sent,
To bear the madding mother to her tent.

And now the trumpets terribly, from far,
With rattling clangor, rouse the sleepy war.
The soldiers' shouts succeed the brazen sounds;
And heav'n, from pole to pole, the noise rebounds.
The Volscians bear their shields upon their head,
And, rushing forward, form a moving shed.
These fill the ditch; those pull the bulwarks down:
Some raise the ladders; others scale the town.
But, where void spaces on the walls appear,
Or thin defense, they pour their forces there.
With poles and missive weapons, from afar,
The Trojans keep aloof the rising war.
Taught, by their ten years' siege, defensive fight,
They roll down ribs of rocks, an unresisted weight,
To break the penthouse with the pond'rous blow,
Which yet the patient Volscians undergo:
But could not bear th' unequal combat long;
For, where the Trojans find the thickest throng,
The ruin falls: their shatter'd shields give way,
And their crush'd heads become an easy prey.
They shrink for fear, abated of their rage,
Nor longer dare in a blind fight engage;
Contented now to gall them from below
With darts and slings, and with the distant bow.

Elsewhere Mezentius, terrible to view,
A blazing pine within the trenches threw.
But brave Messapus, Neptune's warlike son,
Broke down the palisades, the trenches won,
And loud for ladders calls, to scale the town.

Calliope, begin! Ye sacred Nine,
Inspire your poet in his high design,
To sing what slaughter manly Turnus made,
What souls he sent below the Stygian shade,
What fame the soldiers with their captain share,
And the vast circuit of the fatal war;
For you in singing martial facts excel;
You best remember, and alone can tell.

There stood a tow'r, amazing to the sight,
Built up of beams, and of stupendous height:
Art, and the nature of the place, conspir'd
To furnish all the strength that war requir'd.
To level this, the bold Italians join;
The wary Trojans obviate their design;
With weighty stones o'erwhelm their troops below,
Shoot thro' the loopholes, and sharp jav'lins throw.
Turnus, the chief, toss'd from his thund'ring hand

Against the wooden walls, a flaming brand:
It stuck, the fiery plague; the winds were high;
The planks were season'd, and the timber dry.
Contagion caught the posts; it spread along,
Scorch'd, and to distance drove the scatter'd throng.
The Trojans fled; the fire pursued amain,
Still gath'ring fast upon the trembling train;
Till, crowding to the corners of the wall,
Down the defense and the defenders fall.
The mighty flaw makes heav'n itself resound:
The dead and dying Trojans strew the ground.
The tow'r, that follow'd on the fallen crew,
Whelm'd o'er their heads, and buried whom it slew:
Some stuck upon the darts themselves had sent;
All the same equal ruin underwent.

Young Lycus and Helenor only scape;
Sav'd how, they know not from the steepy leap.
Helenor, elder of the two: by birth,
On one side royal, one a son of earth,
Whom to the Lydian king Licymnia bare,
And sent her boasted bastard to the war
(A privilege which none but freemen share).
Slight were his arms, a sword and silver shield:
No marks of honor charg'd its empty field.
Light as he fell, so light the youth arose,
And rising, found himself amidst his foes;
Nor flight was left, nor hopes to force his way.
Embolden'd by despair, he stood at bay;
And like a stag, whom all the troop surrounds
Of eager huntsmen and invading hounds
Resolv'd on death, he dissipates his fears,
And bounds aloft against the pointed spears:
So dares the youth, secure of death; and throws
His dying body on his thickest foes.
But Lycus, swifter of his feet by far,
Runs, doubles, winds and turns, amidst the war;
Springs to the walls, and leaves his foes behind,
And snatches at the beam he first can find;
Looks up, and leaps aloft at all the stretch,
In hopes the helping hand of some kind friend to reach.
But Turnus follow'd hard his hunted prey
(His spear had almost reach'd him in the way,
Short of his reins, and scarce a span behind)
"Fool!" said the chief, "tho' fleeter than the wind,
Couldst thou presume to scape, when I pursue?"
He said, and downward by the feet he drew
The trembling dastard; at the tug he falls;
Vast ruins come along, rent from the smoking walls.
Thus on some silver swan, or tim'rous hare,

Jove's bird comes sousing down from upper air;
Her crooked talons truss the fearful prey:
Then out of sight she soars, and wings her way.
So seizes the grim wolf the tender lamb,
In vain lamented by the bleating dam.

Then rushing onward with a barb'rous cry,
The troops of Turnus to the combat fly.
The ditch with fagots fill'd, the daring foe
Toss'd firebrands to the steepy turrets throw.
Ilioneus, as bold Lucetius came
To force the gate, and feed the kindling flame,
Roll'd down the fragment of a rock so right,
It crush'd him double underneath the weight.
Two more young Liger and Asylas slew:
To bend the bow young Liger better knew;
Asylas best the pointed jav'lin threw.
Brave Caeneus laid Ortygius on the plain;
The victor Caeneus was by Turnus slain.
By the same hand, Clonius and Itys fall,
Sagar, and Ida, standing on the wall.
From Capys' arms his fate Privernus found:
Hurt by Themilla first-but slight the wound
His shield thrown by, to mitigate the smart,
He clapp'd his hand upon the wounded part:
The second shaft came swift and unespied,
And pierc'd his hand, and nail'd it to his side,
Transfix'd his breathing lungs and beating heart:
The soul came issuing out, and hiss'd against the dart.

The son of Arcens shone amid the rest,
In glitt'ring armor and a purple vest,
(Fair was his face, his eyes inspiring love,)
Bred by his father in the Martian grove,
Where the fat altars of Palicus flame,
And send in arms to purchase early fame.
Him when he spied from far, the Tuscan king
Laid by the lance, and took him to the sling,
Thrice whirl'd the thong around his head, and threw:
The heated lead half melted as it flew;
It pierc'd his hollow temples and his brain;
The youth came tumbling down, and spurn'd the plain.

Then young Ascanius, who, before this day,
Was wont in woods to shoot the savage prey,
First bent in martial strife the twanging bow,
And exercis'd against a human foe
With this bereft Numanus of his life,
Who Turnus' younger sister took to wife.
Proud of his realm, and of his royal bride,
Vaunting before his troops, and lengthen'd with a stride,
In these insulting terms the Trojans he defied:

“Twice-conquer’d cowards, now your shame is shown
Coop’d up a second time within your town!
Who dare not issue forth in open field,
But hold your walls before you for a shield.
Thus threat you war? thus our alliance force?
What gods, what madness, hether steer’d your course?
You shall not find the sons of Atreus here,
Nor need the frauds of sly Ulysses fear.
Strong from the cradle, of a sturdy brood,
We bear our newborn infants to the flood;
There bath’d amid the stream, our boys we hold,
With winter harden’d, and inur’d to cold.
They wake before the day to range the wood,
Kill ere they eat, nor taste unconquer’d food.
No sports, but what belong to war, they know:
To break the stubborn colt, to bend the bow.
Our youth, of labor patient, earn their bread;
Hardly they work, with frugal diet fed.
From plows and harrows sent to seek renown,
They fight in fields, and storm the shaken town.
No part of life from toils of war is free,
No change in age, or diff ’rence in degree.
We plow and till in arms; our oxen feel,
Instead of goads, the spur and pointed steel;
Th’ inverted lance makes furrows in the plain.
Ev’n time, that changes all, yet changes us in vain:
The body, not the mind; nor can control
Th’ immortal vigor, or abate the soul.
Our helms defend the young, disguise the gray:
We live by plunder, and delight in prey.
Your vests embroider’d with rich purple shine;
In sloth you glory, and in dances join.
Your vests have sweeping sleeves; with female pride
Your turbants underneath your chins are tied.
Go, Phrygians, to your Dindymus again!
Go, less than women, in the shapes of men!
Go, mix’d with eunuchs, in the Mother’s rites,
Where with unequal sound the flute invites;
Sing, dance, and howl, by turns, in Ida’s shade:
Resign the war to men, who know the martial trade!”

This foul reproach Ascanius could not hear
With patience, or a vow’d revenge forbear.
At the full stretch of both his hands he drew,
And almost join’d the horns of the tough yew.
But, first, before the throne of Jove he stood,
And thus with lifted hands invok’d the god:
“My first attempt, great Jupiter, succeed!
An annual off ’ring in thy grove shall bleed;
A snow-white steer, before thy altar led,

Who, like his mother, bears aloft his head,
Butts with his threat'ning brows, and bellowing stands,
And dares the fight, and spurns the yellow sands."

Jove bow'd the heav'ns, and lent a gracious ear,
And thunder'd on the left, amidst the clear.
Sounded at once the bow; and swiftly flies
The feather'd death, and hisses thro' the skies.
The steel thro' both his temples forc'd the way:
Extended on the ground, Numanus lay.
"Go now, vain boaster, and true valor scorn!
The Phrygians, twice subdued, yet make this third return."
Ascanius said no more. The Trojans shake
The heav'ns with shouting, and new vigor take.

Apollo then bestrode a golden cloud,
To view the feats of arms, and fighting crowd;
And thus the beardless victor he bespoke aloud:
"Advance, illustrious youth, increase in fame,
And wide from east to west extend thy name;
Offspring of gods thyself; and Rome shall owe
To thee a race of demigods below.
This is the way to heav'n: the pow'rs divine
From this beginning date the Julian line.
To thee, to them, and their victorious heirs,
The conquer'd war is due, and the vast world is theirs.
Troy is too narrow for thy name." He said,
And plunging downward shot his radiant head;
Dispell'd the breathing air, that broke his flight:
Shorn of his beams, a man to mortal sight.
Old Butes' form he took, Anchises' squire,
Now left, to rule Ascanius, by his sire:
His wrinkled visage, and his hoary hairs,
His mien, his habit, and his arms, he wears,
And thus salutes the boy, too forward for his years:
"Suffice it thee, thy father's worthy son,
The warlike prize thou hast already won.
The god of archers gives thy youth a part
Of his own praise, nor envies equal art.
Now tempt the war no more." He said, and flew
Obscure in air, and vanish'd from their view.
The Trojans, by his arms, their patron know,
And hear the twanging of his heav'nly bow.
Then duteous force they use, and Phoebus' name,
To keep from fight the youth too fond of fame.
Undaunted, they themselves no danger shun;
From wall to wall the shouts and clamors run.
They bend their bows; they whirl their slings around;
Heaps of spent arrows fall, and strew the ground;
And helms, and shields, and rattling arms resound.
The combat thickens, like the storm that flies

From westward, when the show'ry Kids arise;
Or patt'ring hail comes pouring on the main,
When Jupiter descends in harden'd rain,
Or bellowing clouds burst with a stormy sound,
And with an armed winter strew the ground.

Pand'rus and Bitias, thunderbolts of war,
Whom Hiera to bold Alcanor bare
On Ida's top, two youths of height and size
Like firs that on their mother mountain rise,
Presuming on their force, the gates unbar,
And of their own accord invite the war.
With fates averse, against their king's command,
Arm'd, on the right and on the left they stand,
And flank the passage: shining steel they wear,
And waving crests above their heads appear.
Thus two tall oaks, that Padus' banks adorn,
Lift up to heav'n their leafy heads unshorn,
And, overpress'd with nature's heavy load,
Dance to the whistling winds, and at each other nod.
In flows a tide of Latians, when they see
The gate set open, and the passage free;
Bold Quercens, with rash Tmarus, rushing on,
Equicolus, that in bright armor shone,
And Haemon first; but soon repuls'd they fly,
Or in the well-defended pass they die.
These with success are fir'd, and those with rage,
And each on equal terms at length ingage.
Drawn from their lines, and issuing on the plain,
The Trojans hand to hand the fight maintain.
Fierce Turnus in another quarter fought,
When suddenly th' unhop'd-for news was brought,
The foes had left the fastness of their place,
Prevail'd in fight, and had his men in chase.
He quits th' attack, and, to prevent their fate,
Runs where the giant brothers guard the gate.
The first he met, Antiphates the brave,
But base-begotten on a Theban slave,
Sarpedon's son, he slew: the deadly dart
Found passage thro' his breast, and pierc'd his heart.
Fix'd in the wound th' Italian cornel stood,
Warm'd in his lungs, and in his vital blood.
Aphidnus next, and Erymanthus dies,
And Meropes, and the gigantic size
Of Bitias, threat'ning with his ardent eyes.
Not by the feeble dart he fell oppress'd
(A dart were lost within that roomy breast),
But from a knotted lance, large, heavy, strong,
Which roar'd like thunder as it whirl'd along:
Not two bull hides th' impetuous force withhold,

Nor coat of double mail, with scales of gold.
Down sunk the monster bulk and press'd the ground;
His arms and clatt'ring shield on the vast body sound,
Not with less ruin than the Bajan mole,
Rais'd on the seas, the surges to control
At once comes tumbling down the rocky wall;
Prone to the deep, the stones disjointed fall
Of the vast pile; the scatter'd ocean flies;
Black sands, discolor'd froth, and mingled mud arise:
The frighted billows roll, and seek the shores;
Then trembles Prochyta, then Ischia roars:
Typhoeus, thrown beneath, by Jove's command,
Astonish'd at the flaw that shakes the land,
Soon shifts his weary side, and, scarce awake,
With wonder feels the weight press lighter on his back.

The warrior god the Latian troops inspir'd,
New strung their sinews, and their courage fir'd,
But chills the Trojan hearts with cold affright:
Then black despair precipitates their flight.

When Pandarus beheld his brother kill'd,
The town with fear and wild confusion fill'd,
He turns the hinges of the heavy gate
With both his hands, and adds his shoulders to the weight
Some happier friends within the walls inclos'd;
The rest shut out, to certain death expos'd:
Fool as he was, and frantic in his care,
T' admit young Turnus, and include the war!
He thrust amid the crowd, securely bold,

Like a fierce tiger pent amid the fold.
Too late his blazing buckler they descry,
And sparkling fires that shot from either eye,
His mighty members, and his ample breast,
His rattling armor, and his crimson crest.



Image 4.2: Mural in Pompeii | This mural depicts a famous scene from the Fall of Troy as Ajax the Lesser drags Cassandra from Athena's temple.

Author: User "Ken and Nyetta"
Source: Flickr
License: CC BY-NC 2.0

Far from that hated face the Trojans fly,
All but the fool who sought his destiny.
Mad Pandarus steps forth, with vengeance vow'd
For Bitias' death, and threatens thus aloud:
"These are not Ardea's walls, nor this the town
Amata proffers with Lavinia's crown:
'T is hostile earth you tread. Of hope bereft,
No means of safe return by flight are left."
To whom, with count'nance calm, and soul sedate,
Thus Turnus: "Then begin, and try thy fate:
My message to the ghost of Priam bear;
Tell him a new Achilles sent thee there."

A lance of tough ground ash the Trojan threw,
Rough in the rind, and knotted as it grew:
With his full force he whirl'd it first around;
But the soft yielding air receiv'd the wound:
Imperial Juno turn'd the course before,
And fix'd the wand'ring weapon in the door.

"But hope not thou," said Turnus, "when I strike,
To shun thy fate: our force is not alike,
Nor thy steel temper'd by the Lemnian god."
Then rising, on his utmost stretch he stood,
And aim'd from high: the full descending blow
Cleaves the broad front and beardless cheeks in two.
Down sinks the giant with a thund'ring sound:
His pond'rous limbs oppress the trembling ground;

Blood, brains, and foam gush from the gaping wound:
Scalp, face, and shoulders the keen steel divides,
And the shar'd visage hangs on equal sides.
The Trojans fly from their approaching fate;
And, had the victor then secur'd the gate,
And to his troops without unclos'd the bars,
One lucky day had ended all his wars.
But boiling youth, and blind desire of blood,
Push'd on his fury, to pursue the crowd.
Hamstring'd behind, unhappy Gyges died;
Then Phalaris is added to his side.
The pointed jav'lins from the dead he drew,
And their friends' arms against their fellows threw.
Strong Halys stands in vain; weak Phlegys flies;
Saturnia, still at hand, new force and fire supplies.
Then Halius, Prytanis, Alcander fall
Ingag'd against the foes who scal'd the wall:
But, whom they fear'd without, they found within.
At last, tho' late, by Lynceus he was seen.
He calls new succors, and assaults the prince:
But weak his force, and vain is their defense.
Turn'd to the right, his sword the hero drew,
And at one blow the bold aggressor slew.
He joints the neck; and, with a stroke so strong,
The helm flies off, and bears the head along.
Next him, the huntsman Amycus he kill'd,
In darts invenom'd and in poison skill'd.
Then Clytius fell beneath his fatal spear,
And Creteus, whom the Muses held so dear:
He fought with courage, and he sung the fight;
Arms were his bus'ness, verses his delight.

The Trojan chiefs behold, with rage and grief,
Their slaughter'd friends, and hasten their relief.
Bold Mnestheus rallies first the broken train,
Whom brave Seresthus and his troop sustain.
To save the living, and revenge the dead,
Against one warrior's arms all Troy they led.
"O, void of sense and courage!" Mnestheus cried,
"Where can you hope your coward heads to hide?
Ah! where beyond these rampires can you run?
One man, and in your camp inclos'd, you shun!
Shall then a single sword such slaughter boast,
And pass unpunish'd from a num'rous host?
Forsaking honor, and renouncing fame,
Your gods, your country, and your king you shame!"
This just reproach their virtue does excite:
They stand, they join, they thicken to the fight.

Now Turnus doubts, and yet disdains to yield,
But with slow paces measures back the field,

And inches to the walls, where Tiber's tide,
Washing the camp, defends the weaker side.
The more he loses, they advance the more,
And tread in ev'ry step he trod before.
They shout: they bear him back; and, whom by might
They cannot conquer, they oppress with weight.

As, compass'd with a wood of spears around,
The lordly lion still maintains his ground;
Grins horrible, retires, and turns again;
Threats his distended paws, and shakes his mane;
He loses while in vain he presses on,
Nor will his courage let him dare to run:
So Turnus fares, and, unresolved of flight,
Moves tardy back, and just recedes from fight.
Yet twice, inrag'd, the combat he renews,
Twice breaks, and twice his broken foes pursues.
But now they swarm, and, with fresh troops supplied,
Come rolling on, and rush from ev'ry side:
Nor Juno, who sustain'd his arms before,
Dares with new strength suffice th' exhausted store;
For Jove, with sour commands, sent Iris down,
To force th' invader from the frighted town.

With labor spent, no longer can he wield
The heavy fanchion, or sustain the shield,
O'erwhelm'd with darts, which from afar they fling:
The weapons round his hollow temples ring;
His golden helm gives way, with stony blows
Batter'd, and flat, and beaten to his brows.
His crest is rash'd away; his ample shield
Is falsified, and round with jav'lins fill'd.

The foe, now faint, the Trojans overwhelm;
And Mnestheus lays hard load upon his helm.
Sick sweat succeeds; he drops at ev'ry pore;
With driving dust his cheeks are pasted o'er;
Shorter and shorter ev'ry gasp he takes;
And vain efforts and hurtless blows he makes.
Plung'd in the flood, and made the waters fly.
The yellow god the welcome burthen bore,
And wip'd the sweat, and wash'd away the gore;
Then gently wafts him to the farther coast,
And sends him safe to cheer his anxious host.

Book X

The gates of heav'n unfold: Jove summons all
The gods to council in the common hall.
Sublimely seated, he surveys from far
The fields, the camp, the fortune of the war,
And all th' inferior world. From first to last,
The sov'reign senate in degrees are plac'd.

Then thus th' almighty sire began: "Ye gods,
Natives or denizens of blest abodes,
From whence these murmurs, and this change of mind,
This backward fate from what was first design'd?
Why this protracted war, when my commands
Pronounc'd a peace, and gave the Latian lands?
What fear or hope on either part divides
Our heav'ns, and arms our powers on diff 'rent sides?
A lawful time of war at length will come,
(Nor need your haste anticipate the doom),
When Carthage shall contend the world with Rome,
Shall force the rigid rocks and Alpine chains,
And, like a flood, come pouring on the plains.
Then is your time for faction and debate,
For partial favor, and permitted hate.
Let now your immature dissension cease;
Sit quiet, and compose your souls to peace."

Thus Jupiter in few unfolds the charge;
But lovely Venus thus replies at large:
"O pow'r immense, eternal energy,
(For to what else protection can we fly?)
Seest thou the proud Rutulians, how they dare
In fields, unpunish'd, and insult my care?
How lofty Turnus vaunts amidst his train,
In shining arms, triumphant on the plain?

Ev'n in their lines and trenches they contend,
And scarce their walls the Trojan troops defend:
The town is fill'd with slaughter, and o'erfloats,
With a red deluge, their increasing moats.
Aeneas, ignorant, and far from thence,
Has left a camp expos'd, without defense.
This endless outrage shall they still sustain?
Shall Troy renew'd be forc'd and fir'd again?
A second siege my banish'd issue fears,
And a new Diomede in arms appears.
One more audacious mortal will be found;
And I, thy daughter, wait another wound.
Yet, if with fates averse, without thy leave,
The Latian lands my progeny receive,
Bear they the pains of violated law,
And thy protection from their aid withdraw.
But, if the gods their sure success foretell;
If those of heav'n consent with those of hell,
To promise Italy; who dare debate
The pow'r of Jove, or fix another fate?
What should I tell of tempests on the main,
Of Aeolus usurping Neptune's reign?
Of Iris sent, with Bacchanalian heat

T’ inspire the matrons, and destroy the fleet?
Now Juno to the Stygian sky descends,
Solicits hell for aid, and arms the fiends.
That new example wanted yet above:
An act that well became the wife of Jove!
Alecto, rais’d by her, with rage inflames
The peaceful bosoms of the Latian dames.
Imperial sway no more exalts my mind;
(Such hopes I had indeed, while Heav’n was kind;)
Now let my happier foes possess my place,
Whom Jove prefers before the Trojan race;
And conquer they, whom you with conquest grace.
Since you can spare, from all your wide command,
No spot of earth, no hospitable land,
Which may my wand’ring fugitives receive;
(Since haughty Juno will not give you leave;)
Then, father, (if I still may use that name,)
By ruin’d Troy, yet smoking from the flame,
I beg you, let Ascanius, by my care,
Be freed from danger, and dismiss’d the war:
Inglorious let him live, without a crown.
The father may be cast on coasts unknown,
Struggling with fate; but let me save the son.
Mine is Cythera, mine the Cyprian tow’rs:
In those recesses, and those sacred bow’rs,
Obscurely let him rest; his right resign
To promis’d empire, and his Julian line.
Then Carthage may th’ Ausonian towns destroy,
Nor fear the race of a rejected boy.
What profits it my son to scape the fire,
Arm’d with his gods, and loaded with his sire;
To pass the perils of the seas and wind;
Evade the Greeks, and leave the war behind;
To reach th’ Italian shores; if, after all,
Our second Pergamus is doom’d to fall?
Much better had he curb’d his high desires,
And hover’d o’er his ill-extinguish’d fires.
To Simois’ banks the fugitives restore,
And give them back to war, and all the woes before.”

Deep indignation swell’d Saturnia’s heart:
“And must I own,” she said, “my secret smart
What with more decence were in silence kept,
And, but for this unjust reproach, had slept?
Did god or man your fav’rite son advise,
With war unhop’d the Latians to surprise?
By fate, you boast, and by the gods’ decree,
He left his native land for Italy!
Confess the truth; by mad Cassandra, more
Than Heav’n inspir’d, he sought a foreign shore!

Did I persuade to trust his second Troy
To the raw conduct of a beardless boy,
With walls unfinish’d, which himself forsakes,
And thro’ the waves a wand’ring voyage takes?
When have I urg’d him meanly to demand
The Tuscan aid, and arm a quiet land?
Did I or Iris give this mad advice,
Or made the fool himself the fatal choice?
You think it hard, the Latians should destroy
With swords your Trojans, and with fires your
Troy! Hard and unjust indeed, for men to draw
Their native air, nor take a foreign law!
That Turnus is permitted still to live,
To whom his birth a god and goddess give!
But yet is just and lawful for your line
To drive their fields, and force with fraud to join;
Realms, not your own, among your clans divide,
And from the bridegroom tear the promis’d bride;
Petition, while you public arms prepare;
Pretend a peace, and yet provoke a war!
‘T was giv’n to you, your darling son to shroud,
To draw the dastard from the fighting crowd,
And, for a man, obtend an empty cloud.
From flaming fleets you turn’d the fire away,
And chang’d the ships to daughters of the sea.
But is my crime the Queen of Heav’n offends,
If she presume to save her suff ’ring friends!
Your son, not knowing what his foes decree,
You say, is absent: absent let him be.
Yours is Cythera, yours the Cyprian tow’rs,
The soft recesses, and the sacred bow’rs.
Why do you then these needless arms prepare,
And thus provoke a people prone to war?
Did I with fire the Trojan town deface,
Or hinder from return your exil’d race?
Was I the cause of mischief, or the man
Whose lawless lust the fatal war began?
Think on whose faith th’ adult’rous youth relied;
Who promis’d, who procur’d, the Spartan bride?
When all th’ united states of Greece combin’d,
To purge the world of the perfidious kind,
Then was your time to fear the Trojan fate:
Your quarrels and complaints are now too late.”

Thus Juno. Murmurs rise, with mix’d applause,
Just as they favor or dislike the cause.
So winds, when yet unfledg’d in woods they lie,
In whispers first their tender voices try,
Then issue on the main with bellowing rage,
And storms to trembling mariners presage.

Then thus to both replied th' imperial god,
Who shakes heav'n's axles with his awful nod.
(When he begins, the silent senate stand
With rev'rence, list'ning to the dread command:
The clouds dispel; the winds their breath restrain;
And the hush'd waves lie flatted on the main.)
"Celestials, your attentive ears incline!
Since," said the god, "the Trojans must not join
In wish'd alliance with the Latian line;
Since endless jarrings and immortal hate
Tend but to discompose our happy state;
The war henceforward be resign'd to fate:
Each to his proper fortune stand or fall;
Equal and unconcern'd I look on all.
Rutulians, Trojans, are the same to me;
And both shall draw the lots their fates decree.
Let these assault, if Fortune be their friend;
And, if she favors those, let those defend:
The Fates will find their way." The Thund'rer said,
And shook the sacred honors of his head,
Attesting Styx, th' inviolable flood,
And the black regions of his brother god.
Trembled the poles of heav'n, and earth confess'd the nod.
This end the sessions had: the senate rise,
And to his palace wait their sov'reign thro' the skies.

Meantime, intent upon their siege, the foes
Within their walls the Trojan host inclose:
They wound, they kill, they watch at ev'ry gate;
Renew the fires, and urge their happy fate.

Th' Aeneans wish in vain their wanted chief,
Hopeless of flight, more hopeless of relief.
Thin on the tow'rs they stand; and ev'n those few
A feeble, fainting, and dejected crew.
Yet in the face of danger some there stood:
The two bold brothers of Sarpedon's blood,
Asius and Acmon; both th' Assaraci;
Young Haemon, and tho' young, resolv'd to die.
With these were Clarus and Thymoetes join'd;
Tibris and Castor, both of Lycian kind.
From Acmon's hands a rolling stone there came,
So large, it half deserv'd a mountain's name:
Strong-sinew'd was the youth, and big of bone;
His brother Mnestheus could not more have done,
Or the great father of th' intrepid son.
Some firebrands throw, some flights of arrows send;
And some with darts, and some with stones defend.

Amid the press appears the beauteous boy,
The care of Venus, and the hope of Troy.
His lovely face unarm'd, his head was bare;

In ringlets o’er his shoulders hung his hair.
His forehead circled with a diadem;
Distinguish’d from the crowd, he shines a gem,
Enchas’d in gold, or polish’d iv’ry set,
Amidst the meaner foil of sable jet.
Nor Ismarus was wanting to the war,
Directing pointed arrows from afar,
And death with poison arm’d in Lydia born,
Where plenteous harvests the fat fields adorn;
Where proud Pactolus floats the fruitful lands,
And leaves a rich manure of golden sands.
There Capys, author of the Capuan name,
And there was Mnestheus too, increas’d in fame,
Since Turnus from the camp he cast with shame.

Thus mortal war was wag’d on either side.
Meantime the hero cuts the nightly tide:
For, anxious, from Evander when he went,
He sought the Tyrrhene camp, and Tarchon’s tent;
Expos’d the cause of coming to the chief;
His name and country told, and ask’d relief;
Propos’d the terms; his own small strength declar’d;
What vengeance proud Mezentius had prepar’d:
What Turnus, bold and violent, design’d;
Then shew’d the slipp’ry state of humankind,
And fickle fortune; warn’d him to beware,
And to his wholesome counsel added pray’r.
Tarchon, without delay, the treaty signs,
And to the Trojan troops the Tuscan joins.

They soon set sail; nor now the fates withstand;
Their forces trusted with a foreign hand.
Aeneas leads; upon his stern appear
Two lions carv’d, which rising Ida bear
Ida, to wand’ring Trojans ever dear.
Under their grateful shade Aeneas sate,
Revolving war’s events, and various fate.
His left young Pallas kept, fix’d to his side,
And oft of winds enquir’d, and of the tide;
Oft of the stars, and of their wat’ry way;
And what he suffer’d both by land and sea.

Now, sacred sisters, open all your spring!
The Tuscan leaders, and their army sing,
Which follow’d great Aeneas to the war:
Their arms, their numbers, and their names declare.

A thousand youths brave Massicus obey,
Borne in the Tiger thro’ the foaming sea;
From Asium brought, and Cosa, by his care:
For arms, light quivers, bows and shafts, they bear.
Fierce Abas next: his men bright armor wore;

Six hundred Populonia sent along,
All skill'd in martial exercise, and strong.
Three hundred more for battle Ilva joins,
An isle renown'd for steel, and unexhausted mines.
Asylas on his prow the third appears,
Who heav'n interprets, and the wand'ring stars;
From offer'd entrails prodigies expounds,
And peals of thunder, with presaging sounds.
A thousand spears in warlike order stand,
Sent by the Pisans under his command.

Fair Astur follows in the wat'ry field,
Proud of his manag'd horse and painted shield.
Gravisca, noisome from the neighb'ring fen,
And his own Caere, sent three hundred men;
With those which Minio's fields and Pyrgi gave,
All bred in arms, unanimous, and brave.

Thou, Muse, the name of Cinyras renew,
And brave Cupavo follow'd but by few;
Whose helm confess'd the lineage of the man,
And bore, with wings display'd, a silver swan.
Love was the fault of his fam'd ancestry,
Whose forms and fortunes in his ensigns fly.
For Cycnus lov'd unhappy Phaeton,
And sung his loss in poplar groves, alone,
Beneath the sister shades, to soothe his grief.
Heav'n heard his song, and hasten'd his relief,
And chang'd to snowy plumes his hoary hair,
And wing'd his flight, to chant aloft in air.
His son Cupavo brush'd the briny flood:

Upon his stern a brawny Centaur stood,
Who heav'd a rock, and, threat'ning still to throw,
With lifted hands alarm'd the seas below:
They seem'd to fear the formidable sight,
And roll'd their billows on, to speed his flight.

Ocnus was next, who led his native train
Of hardy warriors thro' the wat'ry plain:
The son of Manto by the Tuscan stream,
From whence the Mantuan town derives the name
An ancient city, but of mix'd descent:
Three sev'ral tribes compose the government;
Four towns are under each; but all obey
The Mantuan laws, and own the Tuscan sway.

Hate to Mezentius arm'd five hundred more,
Whom Mincius from his sire Benacus bore:
Mincius, with wreaths of reeds his forehead cover'd o'er.
These grave Auletes leads: a hundred sweep
With stretching oars at once the glassy deep.
Him and his martial train the Triton bears;

High on his poop the sea-green god appears:
Frowning he seems his crooked shell to sound,
And at the blast the billows dance around.
A hairy man above the waist he shows;
A porpoise tail beneath his belly grows;
And ends a fish: his breast the waves divides,
And froth and foam augment the murm'ring tides.

Full thirty ships transport the chosen train
For Troy's relief, and scour the briny main.

Now was the world forsaken by the sun,
And Phoebe half her nightly race had run.
The careful chief, who never clos'd his eyes,
Himself the rudder holds, the sails supplies.
A choir of Nereids meet him on the flood,
Once his own galleys, hewn from Ida's wood;
But now, as many nymphs, the sea they sweep,
As rode, before, tall vessels on the deep.
They know him from afar; and in a ring
Inclose the ship that bore the Trojan king.
Cymodoce, whose voice excell'd the rest,
Above the waves advanc'd her snowy breast;
Her right hand stops the stern; her left divides
The curling ocean, and corrects the tides.
She spoke for all the choir, and thus began
With pleasing words to warn th' unknowing man:
"Sleeps our lov'd lord? O goddess-born, awake!
Spread ev'ry sail, pursue your wat'ry track,
And haste your course. Your navy once were we,
From Ida's height descending to the sea;
Till Turnus, as at anchor fix'd we stood,
Presum'd to violate our holy wood.
Then, loos'd from shore, we fled his fires profane
(Unwillingly we broke our master's chain),
And since have sought you thro' the Tuscan main.
The mighty Mother chang'd our forms to these,
And gave us life immortal in the seas.
But young Ascanius, in his camp distress'd,
By your insulting foes is hardly press'd.
Th' Arcadian horsemen, and Etrurian host,
Advance in order on the Latian coast:
To cut their way the Daunian chief designs,
Before their troops can reach the Trojan lines.
Thou, when the rosy morn restores the light,
First arm thy soldiers for th' ensuing fight:
Thyself the fated sword of Vulcan wield,
And bear aloft th' impenetrable shield.
To-morrow's sun, unless my skill be vain,
Shall see huge heaps of foes in battle slain."
Parting, she spoke; and with immortal force

Push'd on the vessel in her wat'ry course;
For well she knew the way. Impell'd behind,
The ship flew forward, and outstripp'd the wind.
The rest make up. Unknowing of the cause,
The chief admires their speed, and happy omens draws.

Then thus he pray'd, and fix'd on heav'n his eyes:
"Hear thou, great Mother of the deities.
With turrets crown'd! (on Ida's holy hill
Fierce tigers, rein'd and curb'd, obey thy will.)
Firm thy own omens; lead us on to fight;
And let thy Phrygians conquer in thy right."

He said no more. And now renewing day
Had chas'd the shadows of the night away.
He charg'd the soldiers, with preventing care,
Their flags to follow, and their arms prepare;
Warn'd of th' ensuing fight, and bade 'em hope the war.
Now, his lofty poop, he view'd below
His camp incompass'd, and th' inclosing foe.
His blazing shield, imbrac'd, he held on high;
The camp receive the sign, and with loud shouts reply.
Hope arms their courage: from their tow'rs they throw
Their darts with double force, and drive the foe.
Thus, at the signal giv'n, the cranes arise
Before the stormy south, and blacken all the skies.

King Turnus wonder'd at the fight renew'd,
Till, looking back, the Trojan fleet he view'd,
The seas with swelling canvas cover'd o'er,
And the swift ships descending on the shore.
The Latians saw from far, with dazzled eyes,
The radiant crest that seem'd in flames to rise,
And dart diffusive fires around the field,
And the keen glitt'ring of the golden shield.
Thus threat'ning comets, when by night they rise,
Shoot sanguine streams, and sadden all the skies:
So Sirius, flashing forth sinister lights,
Pale humankind with plagues and with dry famine fright:
Yet Turnus with undaunted mind is bent
To man the shores, and hinder their descent,
And thus awakes the courage of his friends:
"What you so long have wish'd, kind Fortune sends;
In ardent arms to meet th' invading foe:
You find, and find him at advantage now.
Yours is the day: you need but only dare;
Your swords will make you masters of the war.
Your sires, your sons, your houses, and your lands,
And dearest wifes, are all within your hands.
Be mindful of the race from whence you came,
And emulate in arms your fathers' fame.
Now take the time, while stagg'ring yet they stand

With feet unfirm, and prepossess the strand:
Fortune befriends the bold." Nor more he said,
But balanc'd whom to leave, and whom to lead;
Then these elects, the landing to prevent;
And those he leaves, to keep the city pent.

Meantime the Trojan sends his troops ashore:
Some are by boats expos'd, by bridges more.
With lab'ring oars they bear along the strand,
Where the tide languishes, and leap aland.
Tarchon observes the coast with careful eyes,
And, where no ford he finds, no water fries,
Nor billows with unequal murmurs roar,
But smoothly slide along, and swell the shore,
That course he steer'd, and thus he gave command:
"Here ply your oars, and at all hazard land:
Force on the vessel, that her keel may wound
This hated soil, and furrow hostile ground.
Let me securely land I ask no more;
Then sink my ships, or shatter on the shore."

This fiery speech inflames his fearful friends:
They tug at ev'ry oar, and ev'ry stretcher bends;
They run their ships aground; the vessels knock,
(Thus forc'd ashore,) and tremble with the shock.
Tarchon's alone was lost, that stranded stood,
Stuck on a bank, and beaten by the flood:
She breaks her back; the loosen'd sides give way,
And plunge the Tuscan soldiers in the sea.
Their broken oars and floating planks withstand
Their passage, while they labor to the land,
And ebbing tides bear back upon th' uncertain sand.
Now Turnus leads his troops without delay,
Advancing to the margin of the sea.
The trumpets sound: Aeneas first assail'd
The clowns new-rais'd and raw, and soon prevail'd.
Great Theron fell, an omen of the fight;
Great Theron, large of limbs, of giant height.
He first in open field defied the prince:
But armor scal'd with gold was no defense
Against the fated sword, which open'd wide
His plated shield, and pierc'd his naked side.
Next, Lichas fell, who, not like others born,

Was from his wretched mother ripp'd and torn;
Sacred, O Phoebus, from his birth to thee;
For his beginning life from biting steel was free.
Not far from him was Gyas laid along,
Of monstrous bulk; with Cisseus fierce and strong:
Vain bulk and strength! for, when the chief assail'd,
Nor valor nor Herculean arms avail'd,
Nor their fam'd father, wont in war to go

With great Alcides, while he toil'd below.
The noisy Pharos next receiv'd his death:
Aeneas writh'd his dart, and stopp'd his bawling breath.
Then wretched Cydon had receiv'd his doom,
Who courted Clytius in his beardless bloom,
And sought with lust obscene polluted joys:
The Trojan sword had curd his love of boys,
Had not his sev'n bold brethren stopp'd the course
Of the fierce champions, with united force.
Sev'n darts were thrown at once; and some rebound
From his bright shield, some on his helmet sound:
The rest had reach'd him; but his mother's care
Prevented those, and turn'd aside in air.

The prince then call'd Achates, to supply
The spears that knew the way to victory
"Those fatal weapons, which, inur'd to blood,
In Grecian bodies under Ilium stood:
Not one of those my hand shall toss in vain
Against our foes, on this contended plain."
He said; then seiz'd a mighty spear, and threw;
Which, wing'd with fate, thro' Maeon's buckler flew,
Pierc'd all the brazen plates, and reach'd his heart:
He stagger'd with intolerable smart.
Alcanor saw; and reach'd, but reach'd in vain,
His helping hand, his brother to sustain.
A second spear, which kept the former course,
From the same hand, and sent with equal force,
His right arm pierc'd, and holding on, bereft
His use of both, and pinion'd down his left.
Then Numitor from his dead brother drew
Th' ill-omen'd spear, and at the Trojan threw:
Preventing fate directs the lance awry,
Which, glancing, only mark'd Achates' thigh.

In pride of youth the Sabine Clausus came,
And, from afar, at Dryops took his aim.
The spear flew hissing thro' the middle space,
And pierc'd his throat, directed at his face;
It stopp'd at once the passage of his wind,
And the free soul to flitting air resign'd:
His forehead was the first that struck the ground;
Lifeblood and life rush'd mingled thro' the wound.
He slew three brothers of the Borean race,
And three, whom Ismarus, their native place,
Had sent to war, but all the sons of Thrace.
Halesus, next, the bold Aurunci leads:
The son of Neptune to his aid succeeds,
Conspicuous on his horse. On either hand,
These fight to keep, and those to win, the land.
With mutual blood th' Ausonian soil is dyed,

While on its borders each their claim decide.
As wintry winds, contending in the sky,
With equal force of lungs their titles try:
They rage, they roar; the doubtful rack of heav'n
Stands without motion, and the tide undriv'n:
Each bent to conquer, neither side to yield,
They long suspend the fortune of the field.
Both armies thus perform what courage can;
Foot set to foot, and mingled man to man.

But, in another part, th' Arcadian horse
With ill success ingage the Latin force:
For, where th' impetuous torrent, rushing down,
Huge craggy stones and rooted trees had thrown,
They left their coursers, and, unus'd to fight
On foot, were scatter'd in a shameful flight.
Pallas, who with disdain and grief had view'd
His foes pursuing, and his friends pursued,
Us'd threat'nings mix'd with pray'rs, his last resource,
With these to move their minds, with those to fire their force
"Which way, companions? whether would you run?
By you yourselves, and mighty battles won,
By my great sire, by his establish'd name,
And early promise of my future fame;
By my youth, emulous of equal right
To share his honors shun ignoble flight!
Trust not your feet: your hands must hew way
Thro' yon black body, and that thick array:
'T is thro' that forward path that we must come;
There lies our way, and that our passage home.
Nor pow'rs above, nor destinies below
Oppress our arms: with equal strength we go,
With mortal hands to meet a mortal foe.
See on what foot we stand: a scanty shore,
The sea behind, our enemies before;
No passage left, unless we swim the main;
Or, forcing these, the Trojan trenches gain."
This said, he strode with eager haste along,
And bore amidst the thickest of the throng.
Lagus, the first he met, with fate to foe,
Had heav'd a stone of mighty weight, to throw:
Stooping, the spear descended on his chine,
Just where the bone distinguished either loin:
It stuck so fast, so deeply buried lay,
That scarce the victor forc'd the steel away.
Hisbon came on: but, while he mov'd too slow
To wish'd revenge, the prince prevents his blow;
For, warding his at once, at once he press'd,
And plung'd the fatal weapon in his breast.
Then lewd Anchemolus he laid in dust,

Who stain'd his stepdam's bed with impious lust.
And, after him, the Daucian twins were slain,
Laris and Thymbrus, on the Latian plain;
So wondrous like in feature, shape, and size,
As caus'd an error in their parents' eyes
Grateful mistake! but soon the sword decides
The nice distinction, and their fate divides:
For Thymbrus' head was lopp'd; and Laris' hand,
Dismember'd, sought its owner on the strand:
The trembling fingers yet the fauchion strain,
And threaten still th' intended stroke in vain.

Now, to renew the charge, th' Arcadians came:
Sight of such acts, and sense of honest shame,
And grief, with anger mix'd, their minds inflame.
Then, with a casual blow was Rhoeteus slain,
Who chanc'd, as Pallas threw, to cross the plain:
The flying spear was after Ilus sent;
But Rhoeteus happen'd on a death unmeant:
From Teuthras and from Tyres while he fled,
The lance, athwart his body, laid him dead:
Roll'd from his chariot with a mortal wound,
;And intercepted fate, he spurn'd the ground.
As when, in summer, welcome winds arise,
The watchful shepherd to the forest flies,
And fires the midmost plants; contagion spreads,
And catching flames infect the neighb'ring heads;
Around the forest flies the furious blast,
And all the leafy nation sinks at last,
And Vulcan rides in triumph o'er the waste;
The pastor, pleas'd with his dire victory,
Beholds the satiate flames in sheets ascend the sky:
So Pallas' troops their scatter'd strength unite,
And, pouring on their foes, their prince delight.

Halesus came, fierce with desire of blood;
But first collected in his arms he stood:
Advancing then, he plied the spear so well,
Ladon, Demodocus, and Pheres fell.
Around his head he toss'd his glitt'ring brand,
And from Strymonius hew'd his better hand,
Held up to guard his throat; then hurl'd a stone
At Thoas' ample front, and pierc'd the bone:
It struck beneath the space of either eye;
And blood, and mingled brains, together fly.
Deep skill'd in future fates, Halesus' sire
Did with the youth to lonely groves retire:
But, when the father's mortal race was run,
Dire destiny laid hold upon the son,
And haul'd him to the war, to find, beneath
Th' Evandrian spear, a memorable death.

Pallas th' encounter seeks, but, ere he throws,
To Tuscan Tiber thus address'd his vows:
"O sacred stream, direct my flying dart,
And give to pass the proud Halesus' heart!
His arms and spoils thy holy oak shall bear."
Pleas'd with the bribe, the god receiv'd his pray'r:
For, while his shield protects a friend distress'd,
The dart came driving on, and pierc'd his breast.

But Lausus, no small portion of the war,
Permits not panic fear to reign too far,
Caus'd by the death of so renown'd a knight;
But by his own example cheers the fight.
Fierce Abas first he slew; Abas, the stay
Of Trojan hopes, and hindrance of the day.
The Phrygian troops escap'd the Greeks in vain:
They, and their mix'd allies, now load the plain.
To the rude shock of war both armies came;
Their leaders equal, and their strength the same.
The rear so press'd the front, they could not wield
Their angry weapons, to dispute the field.
Here Pallas urges on, and Lausus there:
Of equal youth and beauty both appear,
But both by fate forbid to breathe their native air.
Their congress in the field great Jove withstands:
Both doom'd to fall, but fall by greater hands.

Meantime Juturna warns the Daunian chief
Of Lausus' danger, urging swift relief.
With his driv'n chariot he divides the crowd,
And, making to his friends, thus calls aloud:
"Let none presume his needless aid to join;
Retire, and clear the field; the fight is mine:
To this right hand is Pallas only due;
O were his father here, my just revenge to view!"
From the forbidden space his men retir'd.
Pallas their awe, and his stern words, admir'd;
Survey'd him o'er and o'er with wond'ring sight,
Struck with his haughty mien, and tow'ring height.
Then to the king: "Your empty vaunts forbear;
Success I hope, and fate I cannot fear;
Alive or dead, I shall deserve a name;
Jove is impartial, and to both the same."
He said, and to the void advanc'd his pace:
Pale horror sate on each Arcadian face.
Then Turnus, from his chariot leaping light,
Address'd himself on foot to single fight.
And, as a lion when he spies from far
A bull that seems to meditate the war,
Bending his neck, and spurning back the sand
Runs roaring downward from his hilly stand:

Imagine eager Turnus not more slow,
To rush from high on his unequal foe.

Young Pallas, when he saw the chief advance
Within due distance of his flying lance,
Prepares to charge him first, resolv'd to try
If fortune would his want of force supply;
And thus to Heav'n and Hercules address'd:
"Alcides, once on earth Evander's guest,
His son adjures you by those holy rites,
That hospitable board, those genial nights;
Assist my great attempt to gain this prize,
And let proud Turnus view, with dying eyes,
His ravish'd spoils." 'T was heard, the vain request;
Alcides mourn'd, and stifled sighs within his breast.
Then Jove, to soothe his sorrow, thus began:
"Short bounds of life are set to mortal man.
'T is virtue's work alone to stretch the narrow span.
So many sons of gods, in bloody fight,
Around the walls of Troy, have lost the light:
My own Sarpedon fell beneath his foe;
Nor I, his mighty sire, could ward the blow.
Ev'n Turnus shortly shall resign his breath,
And stands already on the verge of death."
This said, the god permits the fatal fight,
But from the Latian fields averts his sight.

Now with full force his spear young Pallas threw,
And, having thrown, his shining fauchion drew
The steel just graz'd along the shoulder joint,
And mark'd it slightly with the glancing point,
Fierce Turnus first to nearer distance drew,
And pois'd his pointed spear, before he threw:
Then, as the winged weapon whizz'd along,
"See now," said he, "whose arm is better strung."
The spear kept on the fatal course, unstay'd
By plates of ir'n, which o'er the shield were laid:
Thro' folded brass and tough bull hides it pass'd,
His corslet pierc'd, and reach'd his heart at last.
In vain the youth tugs at the broken wood;
The soul comes issuing with the vital blood:
He falls; his arms upon his body sound;
And with his bloody teeth he bites the ground.

Turnus bestrode the corpse: "Arcadians, hear,"
Said he; "my message to your master bear:
Such as the sire deserv'd, the son I send;
It costs him dear to be the Phrygians' friend.
The lifeless body, tell him, I bestow,
Unask'd, to rest his wand'ring ghost below."
He said, and trampled down with all the force
Of his left foot, and spurn'd the wretched corse;

Then snatch'd the shining belt, with gold inlaid;
The belt Eurytion's artful hands had made,
Where fifty fatal brides, express'd to sight,
All in the compass of one mournful night,
Depriv'd their bridegrooms of returning light.

In an ill hour insulting Turnus tore
Those golden spoils, and in a worse he wore.
O mortals, blind in fate, who never know
To bear high fortune, or endure the low!
The time shall come, when Turnus, but in vain,
Shall wish untouch'd the trophies of the slain;
Shall wish the fatal belt were far away,
And curse the dire remembrance of the day.

The sad Arcadians, from th' unhappy field,
Bear back the breathless body on a shield.
O grace and grief of war! at once restor'd,
With praises, to thy sire, at once deplor'd!
One day first sent thee to the fighting field,
Beheld whole heaps of foes in battle kill'd;
One day beheld thee dead, and borne upon thy shield.

This dismal news, not from uncertain fame,
But sad spectators, to the hero came:
His friends upon the brink of ruin stand,
Unless reliev'd by his victorious hand.
He whirls his sword around, without delay,
And hews thro' adverse foes an ample way,
To find fierce Turnus, of his conquest proud:
Evander, Pallas, all that friendship ow'd
To large deserts, are present to his eyes;
His plighted hand, and hospitable ties.

Four sons of Sulmo, four whom Ufens bred,
He took in fight, and living victims led,
To please the ghost of Pallas, and expire,
In sacrifice, before his fun'ral fire.
At Magus next he threw: he stoop'd below
The flying spear, and shunn'd the promis'd blow;
Then, creeping, clasp'd the hero's knees, and pray'd:
"By young Iulus, by thy father's shade,
O spare my life, and send me back to see
My longing sire, and tender progeny!
A lofty house I have, and wealth untold,
In silver ingots, and in bars of gold:
All these, and sums besides, which see no day,
The ransom of this one poor life shall pay.
If I survive, will Troy the less prevail?
A single soul's too light to turn the scale."
He said. The hero sternly thus replied:
"Thy bars and ingots, and the sums beside,

Leave for thy children's lot. Thy Turnus broke
All rules of war by one relentless stroke,
When Pallas fell: so deems, nor deems alone
My father's shadow, but my living son."
Thus having said, of kind remorse bereft,
He seiz'd his helm, and dragg'd him with his left;
Then with his right hand, while his neck he wreath'd,
Up to the hilts his shining fauchion sheath'd.

Apollo's priest, Emonides, was near;
His holy fillets on his front appear;
Glitt'ring in arms, he shone amidst the crowd;
Much of his god, more of his purple, proud.
Him the fierce Trojan follow'd thro' the field:
The holy coward fell; and, forc'd to yield,
The prince stood o'er the priest, and, at one blow,
Sent him an off 'ring to the shades below.
His arms Seresthus on his shoulders bears,
Design'd a trophy to the God of Wars.

Vulcanian Caeculus renews the fight,
And Umbro, born upon the mountains' height.
The champion cheers his troops t' encounter those,
And seeks revenge himself on other foes.
At Anxur's shield he drove; and, at the blow,
Both shield and arm to ground together go.
Anxur had boasted much of magic charms,
And thought he wore impenetrable arms,
So made by mutter'd spells; and, from the spheres,
Had life secur'd, in vain, for length of years.
Then Tarquitus the field in triumph trod;
A nymph his mother, his sire a god.
Exulting in bright arms, he braves the prince:
With his protended lance he makes defense;
Bears back his feeble foe; then, pressing on,
Arrests his better hand, and drags him down;
Stands o'er the prostrate wretch, and, as he lay,
Vain tales inventing, and prepar'd to pray,
Mows off his head: the trunk a moment stood,
Then sunk, and roll'd along the sand in blood.
The vengeful victor thus upbraids the slain: "
Lie there, proud man, unpitied, on the plain;
Lie there, inglorious, and without a tomb,
Far from thy mother and thy native home,
Exposed to savage beasts, and birds of prey,
Or thrown for food to monsters of the sea."

On Lycas and Antaeus next he ran,
Two chiefs of Turnus, and who led his van.
They fled for fear; with these, he chas'd along
Camers the yellow-lock'd, and Numa strong;
Both great in arms, and both were fair and young.

Camers was son to Volscens lately slain,
In wealth surpassing all the Latian train,
And in Amycla fix'd his silent easy reign.
And, as Aegaeon, when with heav'n he strove,
Stood opposite in arms to mighty Jove;
Mov'd all his hundred hands, provok'd the war,
Defied the forky lightning from afar;
At fifty mouths his flaming breath expires,
And flash for flash returns, and fires for fires;
In his right hand as many swords he wields,
And takes the thunder on as many shields:
With strength like his, the Trojan hero stood;
And soon the fields with falling corps were strow'd,
When once his fauchion found the taste of blood.
With fury scarce to be conceiv'd, he flew
Against Niphaeus, whom four coursers drew.
They, when they see the fiery chief advance,
And pushing at their chests his pointed lance,
Wheel'd with so swift a motion, mad with fear,
They threw their master headlong from the chair.
They stare, they start, nor stop their course, before
They bear the bounding chariot to the shore.

Now Lucagus and Liger scour the plains,
With two white steeds; but Liger holds the reins,
And Lucagus the lofty seat maintains:
Bold brethren both. The former wav'd in air
His flaming sword: Aeneas couch'd his spear,
Unus'd to threats, and more unus'd to fear.
Then Liger thus: "Thy confidence is vain
To scape from hence, as from the Trojan plain:
Nor these the steeds which Diomede bestrode,
Nor this the chariot where Achilles rode;
Nor Venus' veil is here, near Neptune's shield;
Thy fatal hour is come, and this the field."
Thus Liger vainly vaunts: the Trojan peer
Return'd his answer with his flying spear.
As Lucagus, to lash his horses, bends,
Prone to the wheels, and his left foot protends,
Prepar'd for fight; the fatal dart arrives,
And thro' the borders of his buckler drives;
Pass'd thro' and pierc'd his groin: the deadly wound,
Cast from his chariot, roll'd him on the ground.
Whom thus the chief upbraids with scornful spite:
"Blame not the slowness of your steeds in flight;
Vain shadows did not force their swift retreat;
But you yourself forsake your empty seat."
He said, and seiz'd at once the loosen'd rein;
For Liger lay already on the plain,
By the same shock: then, stretching out his hands,

The recreant thus his wretched life demands:
“Now, by thyself, O more than mortal man!
By her and him from whom thy breath began,
Who form’d thee thus divine, I beg thee, spare
This forfeit life, and hear thy suppliant’s pray’r.”
Thus much he spoke, and more he would have said;
But the stern hero turn’d aside his head,
And cut him short: “I hear another man;
You talk’d not thus before the fight began.
Now take your turn; and, as a brother should,
Attend your brother to the Stygian flood.”
Then thro’ his breast his fatal sword he sent,
And the soul issued at the gaping vent.

As storms the skies, and torrents tear the ground,
Thus rag’d the prince, and scatter’d deaths around.
At length Ascanius and the Trojan train
Broke from the camp, so long besieg’d in vain.

Meantime the King of Gods and Mortal Man
Held conference with his queen, and thus began:
“My sister goddess, and well-pleasing wife,
Still think you Venus’ aid supports the strife
Sustains her Trojans or themselves, alone,
With inborn valor force their fortune on?
How fierce in fight, with courage undecay’d!
Judge if such warriors want immortal aid.”
To whom the goddess with the charming eyes,
Soft in her tone, submissively replies:
“Why, O my sov’reign lord, whose frown I fear,
And cannot, unconcern’d, your anger bear;
Why urge you thus my grief? when, if I still
(As once I was) were mistress of your will,
From your almighty pow’r your pleasing wife
Might gain the grace of length’ning Turnus’ life,
Securely snatch him from the fatal fight,
And give him to his aged father’s sight.
Now let him perish, since you hold it good,
And glut the Trojans with his pious blood.
Yet from our lineage he derives his name,
And, in the fourth degree, from god Pilumnus came;
Yet he devoutly pays you rites divine,
And offers daily incense at your shrine.”

Then shortly thus the sov’reign god replied:
“Since in my pow’r and goodness you confide,
If for a little space, a lengthen’d span,
You beg reprieve for this expiring man,
I grant you leave to take your Turnus hence
From instant fate, and can so far dispense.
But, if some secret meaning lies beneath,
To save the short-liv’d youth from destin’d death,

Or if a farther thought you entertain,
To change the fates; you feed your hopes in vain."
To whom the goddess thus, with weeping eyes:
"And what if that request, your tongue denies,
Your heart should grant; and not a short reprieve,
But length of certain life, to Turnus give?
Now speedy death attends the guiltless youth,
If my presaging soul divines with truth;
Which, O! I wish, might err thro' causeless fears,
And you (for you have pow'r) prolong his years!"

Thus having said, involv'd in clouds, she flies,
And drives a storm before her thro' the skies.
Swift she descends, alighting on the plain,
Where the fierce foes a dubious fight maintain.
Of air condens'd a specter soon she made;
And, what Aeneas was, such seem'd the shade.
Adorn'd with Dardan arms, the phantom bore
His head aloft; a plumy crest he wore;
This hand appear'd a shining sword to wield,
And that sustain'd an imitated shield.
With manly mien he stalk'd along the ground,
Nor wanted voice belied, nor vaunting sound.
(Thus haunting ghosts appear to waking sight,
Or dreadful visions in our dreams by night.)
The specter seems the Daunian chief to dare,
And flourishes his empty sword in air.
At this, advancing, Turnus hurl'd his spear:
The phantom wheel'd, and seem'd to fly for fear.
Deluded Turnus thought the Trojan fled,
And with vain hopes his haughty fancy fed.
"Whether, O coward?" (thus he calls aloud,
Nor found he spoke to wind, and chas'd a cloud,)
"Why thus forsake your bride! Receive from me
The fated land you sought so long by sea."
He said, and, brandishing at once his blade,
With eager pace pursued the flying shade.
By chance a ship was fasten'd to the shore,
Which from old Clusium King Osinius bore:
The plank was ready laid for safe ascent;
For shelter there the trembling shadow bent,
And skipp't and skulk'd, and under hatches went.
Exulting Turnus, with regardless haste,
Ascends the plank, and to the galley pass'd.
Scarce had he reach'd the prow: Saturnia's hand
The haulsers cuts, and shoots the ship from land.
With wind in poop, the vessel plows the sea,
And measures back with speed her former way.
Meantime Aeneas seeks his absent foe,
And sends his slaughter'd troops to shades below.

The guileful phantom now forsook the shroud,
And flew sublime, and vanish'd in a cloud.
Too late young Turnus the delusion found,
Far on the sea, still making from the ground.
Then, thankless for a life redeem'd by shame,
With sense of honor stung, and forfeit fame,
Fearful besides of what in fight had pass'd,
His hands and haggard eyes to heav'n he cast;
"O Jove!" he cried, "for what offense have
Deserv'd to bear this endless infamy?
Whence am I forc'd, and whether am I borne?
How, and with what reproach, shall I return?
Shall ever I behold the Latian plain,
Or see Laurentum's lofty tow'rs again?
What will they say of their deserting chief
The war was mine: I fly from their relief;
I led to slaughter, and in slaughter leave;
And ev'n from hence their dying groans receive.
Here, overmatch'd in fight, in heaps they lie;
There, scatter'd o'er the fields, ignobly fly.
Gape wide, O earth, and draw me down alive!
Or, O ye pitying winds, a wretch relieve!
On sands or shelves the splitting vessel drive;
Or set me shipwrack'd on some desart shore,
Where no Rutulian eyes may see me more,
Unknown to friends, or foes, or conscious Fame,
Lest she should follow, and my flight proclaim."

Thus Turnus rav'd, and various fates revolv'd:
The choice was doubtful, but the death resolv'd.
And now the sword, and now the sea took place,
That to revenge, and this to purge disgrace.
Sometimes he thought to swim the stormy main,
By stretch of arms the distant shore to gain.
Thrice he the sword assay'd, and thrice the flood;
But Juno, mov'd with pity, both withstood.
And thrice repress'd his rage; strong gales supplied,
And push'd the vessel o'er the swelling tide.
At length she lands him on his native shores,
And to his father's longing arms restores.

Meantime, by Jove's impulse, Mezentius arm'd,
Succeeding Turnus, with his ardor warm'd
His fainting friends, reproach'd their shameful flight,
Repell'd the victors, and renew'd the fight.
Against their king the Tuscan troops conspire;
Such is their hate, and such their fierce desire
Of wish'd revenge: on him, and him alone,
All hands employ'd, and all their darts are thrown.
He, like a solid rock by seas inclos'd,
To raging winds and roaring waves oppos'd,

From his proud summit looking down, disdains
Their empty menace, and unmov'd remains.

Beneath his feet fell haughty Hebrus dead,
Then Latagus, and Palmus as he fled.
At Latagus a weighty stone he flung:
His face was flatted, and his helmet rung.
But Palmus from behind receives his wound;
Hamstring'd he falls, and grovels on the ground:
His crest and armor, from his body torn,
Thy shoulders, Lausus, and thy head adorn.
Evas and Mimas, both of Troy, he slew.
Mimas his birth from fair Theano drew,
Born on that fatal night, when, big with fire,
The queen produc'd young Paris to his sire:
But Paris in the Phrygian fields was slain,
Unthinking Mimas on the Latian plain.

And, as a savage boar, on mountains bred,
With forest mast and fatt'ning marshes fed,
When once he sees himself in toils inclos'd,
By huntsmen and their eager hounds oppos'd
He whets his tusks, and turns, and dares the war;
Th' invaders dart their jav'lins from afar:
All keep aloof, and safely shout around;
But none presumes to give a nearer wound:
He frets and froths, erects his bristled hide,
And shakes a grove of lances from his side:
Not otherwise the troops, with hate inspir'd,
And just revenge against the tyrant fir'd,
Their darts with clamor at a distance drive,
And only keep the languish'd war alive.

From Coritus came Acron to the fight,
Who left his spouse betroth'd, and unconsummate night.
Mezentius sees him thro' the squadrons ride,
Proud of the purple favors of his bride.
Then, as a hungry lion, who beholds
A gamesome goat, who frisks about the folds,
Or beamy stag, that grazes on the plain
He runs, he roars, he shakes his rising mane,
He grins, and opens wide his greedy jaws;
The prey lies panting underneath his paws:
He fills his famish'd maw; his mouth runs o'er
With unchew'd morsels, while he churns the gore:
So proud Mezentius rushes on his foes,
And first unhappy Acron overthrows:
Stretch'd at his length, he spurns the swarthy ground;
The lance, besmear'd with blood, lies broken in the wound.
Then with disdain the haughty victor view'd
Orodes flying, nor the wretch pursued,
Nor thought the dastard's back deserv'd a wound,

But, running, gain'd th' advantage of the ground:
Then turning short, he met him face to face,
To give his victor the better grace.
Orodes falls, in equal fight oppress'd:
Mezentius fix'd his foot upon his breast,
And rested lance; and thus aloud he cries:
"Lo! here the champion of my rebels lies!"
The fields around with Io Paean! ring;
And peals of shouts applaud the conqu'ring king.
At this the vanquish'd, with his dying breath,
Thus faintly spoke, and prophesied in death:
"Nor thou, proud man, unpunish'd shalt remain:
Like death attends thee on this fatal plain."
Then, sourly smiling, thus the king replied:
"For what belongs to me, let Jove provide;
But die thou first, whatever chance ensue."
He said, and from the wound the weapon drew.
A hov'ring mist came swimming o'er his sight,
And seal'd his eyes in everlasting night.

By Caedicus, Alcathous was slain;
Sacrator laid Hydaspes on the plain;
Orses the strong to greater strength must yield;
He, with Parthenius, were by Rapo kill'd.
Then brave Messapus Ericetes slew,
Who from Lycaon's blood his lineage drew.
But from his headstrong horse his fate he found,
Who threw his master, as he made a bound:
The chief, alighting, stuck him to the ground;
Then Clonius, hand to hand, on foot assails:
The Trojan sinks, and Neptune's son prevails.
Agis the Lycian, stepping forth with pride,
To single fight the boldest foe defied;
Whom Tuscan Valerus by force o'ercame,
And not belied his mighty father's fame.
Salius to death the great Antronius sent:
But the same fate the victor underwent,
Slain by Nealces' hand, well-skill'd to throw
The flying dart, and draw the far-deceiving bow.

Thus equal deaths are dealt with equal chance;
By turns they quit their ground, by turns advance:
Victors and vanquish'd, in the various field,
Nor wholly overcome, nor wholly yield.
The gods from heav'n survey the fatal strife,
And mourn the miseries of human life.
Above the rest, two goddesses appear
Concern'd for each: here Venus, Juno there.
Amidst the crowd, infernal Ate shakes
Her scourge aloft, and crest of hissing snakes.

Once more the proud Mezentius, with disdain,
Brandish'd his spear, and rush'd into the plain,
Where tow'ring in the midmost rank she stood,
Like tall Orion stalking o'er the flood.
(When with his brawny breast he cuts the waves,
His shoulders scarce the topmost billow laves),
Or like a mountain ash, whose roots are spread,
Deep fix'd in earth; in clouds he hides his head.

The Trojan prince beheld him from afar,
And dauntless undertook the doubtful war.
Collected in his strength, and like a rock,
Pois'd on his base, Mezentius stood the shock.
He stood, and, measuring first with careful eyes
The space his spear could reach, aloud he cries:
"My strong right hand, and sword, assist my stroke!
(Those only gods Mezentius will invoke.)
His armor, from the Trojan pirate torn,
By my triumphant Lausus shall be worn."
He said; and with his utmost force he threw
The massy spear, which, hissing as it flew,
Reach'd the celestial shield, that stopp'd the course;
But, glancing thence, the yet unbroken force
Took a new bent obliquely, and betwixt
The side and bowels fam'd Anthores fix'd.
Anthores had from Argos travel'd far,
Alcides' friend, and brother of the war;
Till, tir'd with toils, fair Italy he chose,
And in Evander's palace sought repose.
Now, falling by another's wound, his eyes
He cast to heav'n, on Argos thinks, and dies.

The pious Trojan then his jav'lin sent;
The shield gave way; thro' treble plates it went
Of solid brass, of linen trebly roll'd,
And three bull hides which round the buckler fold.
All these it pass'd, resistless in the course,
Transpierc'd his thigh, and spent its dying force.
The gaping wound gush'd out a crimson flood.
The Trojan, glad with sight of hostile blood,
His faunchion drew, to closer fight address'd,
And with new force his fainting foe oppress'd.

His father's peril Lausus view'd with grief;
He sigh'd, he wept, he ran to his relief.
And here, heroic youth, 't is here I must
To thy immortal memory be just,
And sing an act so noble and so new,
Posterity will scarce believe 't is true.
Pain'd with his wound, and useless for the fight,
The father sought to save himself by flight:
Incumber'd, slow he dragg'd the spear along,

0 Which pierc'd his thigh, and in his buckler hung.
The pious youth, resolv'd on death, below
The lifted sword springs forth to face the foe;
Protects his parent, and prevents the blow.
Shouts of applause ran ringing thro' the field,
To see the son the vanquish'd father shield.
All, fir'd with gen'rous indignation, strive,
And with a storm of darts to distance drive
The Trojan chief, who, held at bay from far,
On his Vulcanian orb sustain'd the war.

As, when thick hail comes rattling in the wind,
The plowman, passenger, and lab'ring hind
For shelter to the neighb'ring covert fly,
Or hous'd, or safe in hollow caverns lie;
But, that o'erblown, when heav'n above 'em smiles,
Return to travel, and renew their toils:
Aeneas thus, o'erwhelmed on ev'ry side,
The storm of darts, undaunted, did abide;
And thus to Lausus loud with friendly threat'ning cried:
"Why wilt thou rush to certain death, and rage
In rash attempts, beyond thy tender age,
Betray'd by pious love?" Nor, thus forborne,
The youth desists, but with insulting scorn
Provokes the ling'ring prince, whose patience, tir'd,
Gave place; and all his breast with fury fir'd.
For now the Fates prepar'd their sharpen'd shears;
And lifted high the flaming sword appears,
Which, full descending with a frightful sway,
Thro' shield and corslet forc'd th' impetuous way,
And buried deep in his fair bosom lay.
The purple streams thro' the thin armor strove,
And drench'd th' imbroider'd coat his mother wove;
And life at length forsook his heaving heart,
Loth from so sweet a mansion to depart.

But when, with blood and paleness all o'erspread,
The pious prince beheld young Lausus dead,
He griev'd; he wept; the sight an image brought
Of his own filial love, a sadly pleasing thought:
Then stretch'd his hand to hold him up, and said:
"Poor hapless youth! what praises can be paid
To love so great, to such transcendent store
Of early worth, and sure presage of more?
Accept whate'er Aeneas can afford;
Untouch'd thy arms, untaken be thy sword;
And all that pleas'd thee living, still remain
Inviolate, and sacred to the slain.
Thy body on thy parents I bestow,
To rest thy soul, at least, if shadows know,
Or have a sense of human things below.

There to thy fellow ghosts with glory tell:
‘‘T was by the great Aeneas hand I fell.’”
With this, his distant friends he beckons near,
Provokes their duty, and prevents their fear:
Himself assists to lift him from the ground,
With clotted locks, and blood that well’d from out the wound.

Meantime, his father, now no father, stood,
And wash’d his wounds by Tiber’s yellow flood:
Oppress’d with anguish, panting, and o’erspent,
His fainting limbs against an oak he leant.
A bough his brazen helmet did sustain;
His heavier arms lay scatter’d on the plain:
A chosen train of youth around him stand;
His drooping head was rested on his hand:
His grisly beard his pensive bosom sought;
And all on Lausus ran his restless thought.
Careful, concern’d his danger to prevent,
He much enquir’d, and many a message sent
To warn him from the field alas! in vain!
Behold, his mournful followers bear him slain!
O’er his broad shield still gush’d the yawning wound,
And drew a bloody trail along the ground.
Far off he heard their cries, far off divin’d
The dire event, with a foreboding mind.
With dust he sprinkled first his hoary head;
Then both his lifted hands to heav’n he spread;
Last, the dear corpse embracing, thus he said:
“What joys, alas! could this frail being give,
That I have been so covetous to live?
To see my son, and such a son, resign
His life, a ransom for preserving mine!
And am I then preserv’d, and art thou lost?
How much too dear has that redemption cost!
‘T is now my bitter banishment I feel:
This is a wound too deep for time to heal.
My guilt thy growing virtues did defame;
My blackness blotted thy unblemish’d name.
Chas’d from a throne, abandon’d, and exil’d
For foul misdeeds, were punishments too mild:
I ow’d my people these, and, from their hate,
With less resentment could have borne my fate.
And yet I live, and yet sustain the sight
Of hated men, and of more hated light:
But will not long.” With that he rais’d from ground
His fainting limbs, that stagger’d with his wound;
Yet, with a mind resolv’d, and unappall’d
With pains or perils, for his courser call’d
Well-mouth’d, well-manag’d, whom himself did dress

With daily care, and mounted with success;
His aid in arms, his ornament in peace.

Soothing his courage with a gentle stroke,
The steed seem'd sensible, while thus he spoke:
"O Rhoebus, we have liv'd too long for me
If life and long were terms that could agree!
This day thou either shalt bring back the head
And bloody trophies of the Trojan dead;
This day thou either shalt revenge my woe,
For murther'd Lausus, on his cruel foe;
Or, if inexorable fate deny
Our conquest, with thy conquer'd master die:
For, after such a lord, I rest secure,
Thou wilt no foreign reins, or Trojan load endure."
He said; and straight th' officious courser kneels,
To take his wonted weight. His hands he fills
With pointed jav'lins; on his head he lac'd
His glitt'ring helm, which terribly was grac'd
With waving horsehair, nodding from afar;
Then spurr'd his thund'ring steed amidst the war.
Love, anguish, wrath, and grief, to madness wrought,
Despair, and secret shame, and conscious thought
Of inborn worth, his lab'ring soul oppress'd,
Roll'd in his eyes, and rag'd within his breast.
Then loud he call'd Aeneas thrice by name:
The loud repeated voice to glad Aeneas came.
"Great Jove," he said, "and the far-shooting god,
Inspire thy mind to make thy challenge good!"
He spoke no more; but hasten'd, void of fear,
And threaten'd with his long protended spear.

To whom Mezentius thus: "Thy vaunts are vain.
My Lausus lies extended on the plain:
He's lost! thy conquest is already won;
The wretched sire is murther'd in the son.
Nor fate I fear, but all the gods defy.
Forbear thy threats: my bus'ness is to die;
But first receive this parting legacy."
He said; and straight a whirling dart he sent;
Another after, and another went.
Round in a spacious ring he rides the field,
And vainly plies th' impenetrable shield.
Thrice rode he round; and thrice Aeneas wheel'd,
Turn'd as he turn'd: the golden orb withstood
The strokes, and bore about an iron wood.
Impatient of delay, and weary grown,
Still to defend, and to defend alone,
To wrench the darts which in his buckler light,
Urg'd and o'er-labor'd in unequal fight;
At length resolv'd, he throws with all his force

Full at the temples of the warrior horse.
Just where the stroke was aim'd, th' unerring spear
Made way, and stood transfix'd thro' either ear.
Seiz'd with unwonted pain, surpris'd with fright,
The wounded steed curvets, and, rais'd upright,
Lights on his feet before; his hoofs behind
Spring up in air aloft, and lash the wind.
Down comes the rider headlong from his height:
His horse came after with unwieldy weight,
And, flound'ring forward, pitching on his head,
His lord's incumber'd shoulder overlaid.

From either host, the mingled shouts and cries
Of Trojans and Rutulians rend the skies.
Aeneas, hast'ning, wav'd his fatal sword
High o'er his head, with this reproachful word:
"Now; where are now thy vaunts, the fierce disdain
Of proud Mezentius, and the lofty strain?"

Struggling, and wildly staring on the skies,
With scarce recover'd sight he thus replies:
"Why these insulting words, this waste of breath,
To souls undaunted, and secure of death?
'T is no dishonor for the brave to die,
Nor came I here with hope victory;
Nor ask I life, nor fought with that design:
As I had us'd my fortune, use thou thine.
My dying son contracted no such band;
The gift is hateful from his murd'rer's hand.
For this, this only favor let me sue,
If pity can to conquer'd foes be due:
Refuse it not; but let my body have
The last retreat of humankind, a grave.
Too well I know th' insulting people's hate;
Protect me from their vengeance after fate:
This refuge for my poor remains provide,
And lay my much-lov'd Lausus by my side."
He said, and to the sword his throat applied.
The crimson stream distain'd his arms around,
And the disdainful soul came rushing thro' the wound.

Book XI

Scarce had the rosy Morning rais'd her head
Above the waves, and left her wat'ry bed;
The pious chief, whom double cares attend
For his unburied soldiers and his friend,
Yet first to Heav'n perform'd a victor's vows:
He bar'd an ancient oak of all her boughs;
Then on a rising ground the trunk he plac'd,
Which with the spoils of his dead foe he grac'd.
The coat of arms by proud Mezentius worn,

Now on a naked snag in triumph borne,
Was hung on high, and glitter'd from afar,
A trophy sacred to the God of War.
Above his arms, fix'd on the leafless wood,
Appear'd his plumy crest, besmear'd with blood:
His brazen buckler on the left was seen;
Truncheons of shiver'd lances hung between;
And on the right was placed his corslet, bor'd;
And to the neck was tied his unavailing sword.

A crowd of chiefs inclose the godlike man,
Who thus, conspicuous in the midst, began:
"Our toils, my friends, are crown'd with sure success;
The greater part perform'd, achieve the less.
Now follow cheerful to the trembling town;
Press but an entrance, and presume it won.
Fear is no more, for fierce Mezentius lies,
As the first fruits of war, a sacrifice.
Turnus shall fall extended on the plain,
And, in this omen, is already slain.
Prepar'd in arms, pursue your happy chance;
That none unwarn'd may plead his ignorance,
And I, at Heav'n's appointed hour, may find
Your warlike ensigns waving in the wind.
Meantime the rites and fun'ral pomps prepare,
Due to your dead companions of the war:
The last respect the living can bestow,
To shield their shadows from contempt below.
That conquer'd earth be theirs, for which they fought,
And which for us with their own blood they bought;
But first the corpse of our unhappy friend
To the sad city of Evander send,
Who, not inglorious, in his age's bloom,
Was hurried hence by too severe a doom."

Thus, weeping while he spoke, he took his way,
Where, new in death, lamented Pallas lay.
Acoetes watch'd the corpse; whose youth deserv'd
The father's trust; and now the son he serv'd
With equal faith, but less auspicious care.
Th' attendants of the slain his sorrow share.
A troop of Trojans mix'd with these appear,
And mourning matrons with dishevel'd hair.
Soon as the prince appears, they raise a cry;
All beat their breasts, and echoes rend the sky.
They rear his drooping forehead from the ground;
But, when Aeneas view'd the grisly wound
Which Pallas in his manly bosom bore,
And the fair flesh distain'd with purple gore;
First, melting into tears, the pious man
Deplor'd so sad a sight, then thus began:

“Unhappy youth! when Fortune gave the rest
Of my full wishes, she refus’d the best!
She came; but brought not thee along, to bless
My longing eyes, and share in my success:
She grudg’d thy safe return, the triumphs due
To prosp’rous valor, in the public view.
Not thus I promis’d, when thy father lent
Thy needless succor with a sad consent;
Embrac’d me, parting for th’ Etrurian land,
And sent me to possess a large command.
He warn’d, and from his own experience told,
Our foes were warlike, disciplin’d, and bold.
And now perhaps, in hopes of thy return,
Rich odors on his loaded altars burn,
While we, with vain officious pomp, prepare
To send him back his portion of the war,
A bloody breathless body, which can owe
No farther debt, but to the pow’rs below.
The wretched father, ere his race is run,
Shall view the fun’ral honors of his son.
These are my triumphs of the Latian war,
Fruits of my plighted faith and boasted care!
And yet, unhappy sire, thou shalt not see
A son whose death disgrac’d his ancestry;
Thou shalt not blush, old man, however griev’d:
Thy Pallas no dishonest wound receiv’d.
He died no death to make thee wish, too late,
Thou hadst not liv’d to see his shameful fate:
But what a champion has th’ Ausonian coast,
And what a friend hast thou, Ascanius, lost!”

Thus having mourn’d, he gave the word around,
To raise the breathless body from the ground;
And chose a thousand horse, the flow’r of all
His warlike troops, to wait the funeral,
To bear him back and share Evander’s grief:
A well-becoming, but a weak relief.
Of oaken twigs they twist an easy bier,
Then on their shoulders the sad burden rear.
The body on this rural hearse is borne:
Strew’d leaves and funeral greens the bier adorn.
All pale he lies, and looks a lovely flow’r,
New cropp’d by virgin hands, to dress the bow’r:
Unfaded yet, but yet unfed below,
No more to mother earth or the green stern shall owe.
Then two fair vests, of wondrous work and cost,
Of purple woven, and with gold emboss’d,
For ornament the Trojan hero brought,
Which with her hands Sidonian Dido wrought.
One vest array’d the corpse; and one they spread

O’er his clos’d eyes, and wrapp’d around his head,
That, when the yellow hair in flame should fall,
The catching fire might burn the golden caul.
Besides, the spoils of foes in battle slain,
When he descended on the Latian plain;
Arms, trappings, horses, by the hearse are led
In long array th’ achievements of the dead.
Then, pinion’d with their hands behind, appear
Th’ unhappy captives, marching in the rear,
Appointed off ’rings in the victor’s name,
To sprinkle with their blood the fun’ral flame.
Inferior trophies by the chiefs are borne;
Gauntlets and helms their loaded hands adorn;
And fair inscriptions fix’d, and titles read
Of Latian leaders conquer’d by the dead.

Acoetes on his pupil’s corpse attends,
With feeble steps, supported by his friends.
Pausing at ev’ry pace, in sorrow drown’d,
Betwixt their arms he sinks upon the ground;
Where grov’ling while he lies in deep despair,
He beats his breast, and rends his hoary hair.
The champion’s chariot next is seen to roll,
Besmear’d with hostile blood, and honorably foul.
To close the pomp, Aethon, the steed of state,
Is led, the fun’rals of his lord to wait.
Stripp’d of his trappings, with a sullen pace
He walks; and the big tears run rolling down his face.
The lance of Pallas, and the crimson crest,
Are borne behind: the victor seiz’d the rest.
The march begins: the trumpets hoarsely sound;
The pikes and lances trail along the ground.
Thus while the Trojan and Arcadian horse
To Pallantean tow’rs direct their course,
In long procession rank’d, the pious chief
Stopp’d in the rear, and gave a vent to grief:
“The public care,” he said, “which war attends,
Diverts our present woes, at least suspends.
Peace with the manes of great Pallas dwell!
Hail, holy relics! and a last farewell!”
He said no more, but, inly thro’ he mourn’d,
Restrained his tears, and to the camp return’d.

Now suppliants, from Laurentum sent, demand
A truce, with olive branches in their hand;
Obtest his clemency, and from the plain
Beg leave to draw the bodies of their slain.
They plead, that none those common rites deny
To conquer’d foes that in fair battle die.
All cause of hate was ended in their death;
Nor could he war with bodies void of breath.

A king, they hop'd, would hear a king's request,
Whose son he once was call'd, and once his guest.
Their suit, which was too just to be denied,
The hero grants, and farther thus replied:
"O Latian princes, how severe a fate
In causeless quarrels has involv'd your state,
And arm'd against an unoffending man,
Who sought your friendship ere the war began!
You beg a truce, which I would gladly give,
Not only for the slain, but those who live.
I came not hither but by Heav'n's command,
And sent by fate to share the Latian land.
Nor wage I wars unjust: your king denied
My proffer'd friendship, and my promis'd bride;
Left me for Turnus. Turnus then should try
His cause in arms, to conquer or to die.
My right and his are in dispute: the slain
Fell without fault, our quarrel to maintain.
In equal arms let us alone contend;
And let him vanquish, whom his fates befriend.
This is the way (so tell him) to possess
The royal virgin, and restore the peace.
Bear this message back, with ample leave,
That your slain friends may fun'ral rites receive."

Thus having said th' embassadors, amaz'd,
Stood mute a while, and on each other gaz'd.
Drances, their chief, who harbor'd in his breast
Long hate to Turnus, as his foe profess'd,
Broke silence first, and to the godlike man,
With graceful action bowing, thus began:
"Auspicious prince, in arms a mighty name,
But yet whose actions far transcend your fame;
Would I your justice or your force express,
Thought can but equal; and all words are less.
Your answer we shall thankfully relate,
And favors granted to the Latian state.
If wish'd success our labor shall attend,
Think peace concluded, and the king your friend:
Let Turnus leave the realm to your command,
And seek alliance in some other land:
Build you the city which your fates assign;
We shall be proud in the great work to join."

Thus Drances; and his words so well persuade
The rest impower'd, that soon a truce is made.
Twelve days the term allow'd: and, during those,
Latians and Trojans, now no longer foes,
Mix'd in the woods, for fun'ral piles prepare
To fell the timber, and forget the war.
Loud axes thro' the groaning groves resound;

Oak, mountain ash, and poplar spread the ground;
First fall from high; and some the trunks receive
In loaden wains; with wedges some they cleave.

And now the fatal news by Fame is blown
Thro' the short circuit of th' Arcadian town,
Of Pallas slain by Fame, which just before
His triumphs on distended pinions bore.
Rushing from out the gate, the people stand,
Each with a fun'ral flambeau in his hand.
Wildly they stare, distracted with amaze:
The fields are lighten'd with a fiery blaze,
That cast a sullen splendor on their friends,
The marching troop which their dead prince attends.
Both parties meet: they raise a doleful cry;
The matrons from the walls with shrieks reply,
And their mix'd mourning rends the vaulted sky.
The town is fill'd with tumult and with tears,
Till the loud clamors reach Evander's ears:
Forgetful of his state, he runs along,
With a disorder'd pace, and cleaves the throng;
Falls on the corpse; and groaning there he lies,
With silent grief, that speaks but at his eyes.
Short sighs and sobs succeed; till sorrow breaks
A passage, and at once he weeps and speaks:

"O Pallas! thou hast fail'd thy plighted word,
To fight with caution, not to tempt the sword!
I warn'd thee, but in vain; for well I knew
What perils youthful ardor would pursue,
That boiling blood would carry thee too far,
Young as thou wert in dangers, raw to war!
O curst essay of arms, disastrous doom,
Prelude of bloody fields, and fights to come!
Hard elements of unauspicious war,
Vain vows to Heav'n, and unavailing care!
Thrice happy thou, dear partner of my bed,
Whose holy soul the stroke of Fortune fled,
Praescious of ills, and leaving me behind,
To drink the dregs of life by fate assign'd!
Beyond the goal of nature I have gone:
My Pallas late set out, but reach'd too soon.
If, for my league against th' Ausonian state,
Amidst their weapons I had found my fate,
(Deserv'd from them,) then I had been return'd
A breathless victor, and my son had mourn'd.
Yet will I not my Trojan friend upbraid,
Nor grudge th' alliance I so gladly made.
'T was not his fault, my Pallas fell so young,
But my own crime, for having liv'd too long.
Yet, since the gods had destin'd him to die,

At least he led the way to victory:
First for his friends he won the fatal shore,
And sent whole herds of slaughter'd foes before;
A death too great, too glorious to deplore.
Nor will I add new honors to thy grave,
Content with those the Trojan hero gave:
That funeral pomp thy Phrygian friends design'd,
In which the Tuscan chiefs and army join'd.
Great spoils and trophies, gain'd by thee, they bear:
Then let thy own achievements be thy share.
Even thou, O Turnus, hadst a trophy stood,
Whose mighty trunk had better grac'd the wood,
If Pallas had arriv'd, with equal length
Of years, to match thy bulk with equal strength.
But why, unhappy man, dost thou detain
These troops, to view the tears thou shedd'st in vain?
Go, friends, this message to your lord relate:
Tell him, that, if I bear my bitter fate,
And, after Pallas' death, live ling'ring on,
'T is to behold his vengeance for my son.
I stay for Turnus, whose devoted head
Is owing to the living and the dead.
My son and I expect it from his hand;
'T is all that he can give, or we demand.
Joy is no more; but I would gladly go,
To greet my Pallas with such news below."

The morn had now dispell'd the shades of night,
Restoring toils, when she restor'd the light.
The Trojan king and Tuscan chief command
To raise the piles along the winding strand.
Their friends convey the dead fun'ral fires;
Black smold'ring smoke from the green wood expires;
The light of heav'n is chok'd, and the new day retires.
Then thrice around the kindled piles they go
(For ancient custom had ordain'd it so)
Thrice horse and foot about the fires are led;
And thrice, with loud laments, they hail the dead.
Tears, trickling down their breasts, bedew the ground,
And drums and trumpets mix their mournful sound.
Amid the blaze, their pious brethren throw
The spoils, in battle taken from the foe:
Helms, bits emboss'd, and swords of shining steel;
One casts a target, one a chariot wheel;
Some to their fellows their own arms restore:
The fauchions which in luckless fight they bore,
Their bucklers pierc'd, their darts bestow'd in vain,
And shiver'd lances gather'd from the plain.
Whole herds of offer'd bulls, about the fire,
And bristled boars, and woolly sheep expire.

Around the piles a careful troop attends,
To watch the wasting flames, and weep their burning friends;
Ling'ring along the shore, till dewy night
New decks the face of heav'n with starry light.

The conquer'd Latians, with like pious care,
Piles without number for their dead prepare.
Part in the places where they fell are laid;
And part are to the neighb'ring fields convey'd.
The corps of kings, and captains of renown,
Borne off in state, are buried in the town;
The rest, unhonor'd, and without a name,
Are cast a common heap to feed the flame.
Trojans and Latians vie with like desires
To make the field of battle shine with fires,
And the promiscuous blaze to heav'n aspires.

Now had the morning thrice renew'd the light,
And thrice dispell'd the shadows of the night,
When those who round the wasted fires remain,
Perform the last sad office to the slain.
They rake the yet warm ashes from below;
These, and the bones unburn'd, in earth bestow;
These relics with their country rites they grace,
And raise a mount of turf to mark the place.

But, in the palace of the king, appears
A scene more solemn, and a pomp of tears.
Maids, matrons, widows, mix their common moans;
Orphans their sires, and sires lament their sons.
All in that universal sorrow share,
And curse the cause of this unhappy war:
A broken league, a bride unjustly sought,
A crown usurp'd, which with their blood is bought!
These are the crimes with which they load the name
Of Turnus, and on him alone exclaim:
"Let him who lords it o'er th' Ausonian land
Engage the Trojan hero hand to hand:
His is the gain; our lot is but to serve;
'T is just, the sway he seeks, he should deserve."
This Drances aggravates; and adds, with spite:
"His foe expects, and dares him to the fight."
Nor Turnus wants a party, to support
His cause and credit in the Latian court.
His former acts secure his present fame,
And the queen shades him with her mighty name.

While thus their factious minds with fury burn,
The legates from th' Aetolian prince return:
Sad news they bring, that, after all the cost
And care employ'd, their embassy is lost;
That Diomedes refus'd his aid in war,

Unmov'd with presents, and as deaf to pray'r.
Some new alliance must elsewhere be sought,
Or peace with Troy on hard conditions bought.

Latinus, sunk in sorrow, finds too late,
A foreign son is pointed out by fate;
And, till Aeneas shall Lavinia wed,
The wrath of Heav'n is hov'ring o'er his head.
The gods, he saw, espous'd the juster side,
When late their titles in the field were tried:
Witness the fresh laments, and fun'ral tears undried.
Thus, full of anxious thought, he summons all
The Latian senate to the council hall.
The princes come, commanded by their head,
And crowd the paths that to the palace lead.
Supreme in pow'r, and reverenc'd for his years,
He takes the throne, and in the midst appears.
Majestically sad, he sits in state,
And bids his envoys their success relate.

When Venulus began, the murmuring sound
Was hush'd, and sacred silence reign'd around.
"We have," said he, "perform'd your high command,
And pass'd with peril a long tract of land:
We reach'd the place desir'd; with wonder fill'd,
The Grecian tents and rising tow'rs beheld.
Great Diomede has compass'd round with walls
The city, which Argyripa he calls,
From his own Argos nam'd. We touch'd, with joy,
The royal hand that raz'd unhappy Troy.
When introduc'd, our presents first we bring,
Then crave an instant audience from the king.
His leave obtain'd, our native soil we name,
And tell th' important cause for which we came.
Attentively he heard us, while we spoke;
Then, with soft accents, and a pleasing look,
Made this return: 'Ausonian race, of old
Renown'd for peace, and for an age of gold,
What madness has your alter'd minds possess'd,
To change for war hereditary rest,
Solicit arms unknown, and tempt the sword,
A needless ill your ancestors abhorr'd?
We for myself I speak, and all the name
Of Grecians, who to Troy's destruction came,
Omitting those who were in battle slain,
Or borne by rolling Simois to the main
Not one but suffer'd, and too dearly bought
The prize of honor which in arms he sought;
Some doom'd to death, and some in exile driv'n.
Outcasts, abandon'd by the care of Heav'n;
So worn, so wretched, so despis'd a crew,

As ev’n old Priam might with pity view.
Witness the vessels by Minerva toss’d
In storms; the vengeful Capharean coast;
Th’ Euboean rocks! the prince, whose brother led
Our armies to revenge his injur’d bed,
In Egypt lost! Ulysses with his men
Have seen Charybdis and the Cyclops’ den.
Why should I name Idomeneus, in vain
Restor’d to scepters, and expell’d again?
Or young Achilles, by his rival slain?
Ev’n he, the King of Men, the foremost name
Of all the Greeks, and most renown’d by fame,
The proud revenger of another’s wife,
Yet by his own adult’ress lost his life;
Fell at his threshold; and the spoils of Troy
The foul polluters of his bed enjoy.
The gods have envied me the sweets of life,
My much lov’d country, and my more lov’d wife:
Banish’d from both, I mourn; while in the sky,
Transform’d to birds, my lost companions fly:
Hov’ring about the coasts, they make their moan,
And cuff the cliffs with pinions not their own.
What squalid specters, in the dead of night,
Break my short sleep, and skim before my sight!
I might have promis’d to myself those harms,
Mad as I was, when I, with mortal arms,
Presum’d against immortal pow’rs to move,
And violate with wounds the Queen of Love.
Such arms this hand shall never more employ;
No hate remains with me to ruin’d Troy.
I war not with its dust; nor am I glad
To think of past events, or good or bad.
Your presents I return: whate’er you bring
To buy my friendship, send the Trojan king.
We met in fight; I know him, to my cost:
With what a whirling force his lance he toss’d!
Heav’ns! what a spring was in his arm, to throw!
How high he held his shield, and rose at ev’ry blow!
Had Troy produc’d two more his match in might,
They would have chang’d the fortune of the fight:
Th’ invasion of the Greeks had been return’d,
Our empire wasted, and our cities burn’d.
The long defense the Trojan people made,
The war protracted, and the siege delay’d,
Were due to Hector’s and this hero’s hand:
Both brave alike, and equal in command;
Aeneas, not inferior in the field,
In pious reverence to the gods excell’d.
Make peace, ye Latians, and avoid with care
Th’ impending dangers of a fatal war.’

He said no more; but, with this cold excuse,
Refus'd th' alliance, and advis'd a truce."

Thus Venulus concluded his report.
A jarring murmur fill'd the factious court:
As, when a torrent rolls with rapid force,
And dashes o'er the stones that stop the course,
The flood, constrain'd within a scanty space,
Roars horrible along th' uneasy race;
White foam in gath'ring eddies floats around;
The rocky shores rebellow to the sound.

The murmur ceas'd: then from his lofty throne
The king invok'd the gods, and thus begun:
"I wish, ye Latins, what we now debate
Had been resolv'd before it was too late.
Much better had it been for you and me,
Unforc'd by this our last necessity,
To have been earlier wise, than now to call
A council, when the foe surrounds the wall.
O citizens, we wage unequal war,
With men not only Heav'n's peculiar care,
But Heav'n's own race; unconquer'd in the field,
Or, conquer'd, yet unknowing how to yield.
What hopes you had in Diomedes, lay down:
Our hopes must center on ourselves alone.
Yet those how feeble, and, indeed, how vain,
You see too well; nor need my words explain.
Vanquish'd without resource; laid flat by fate;
Factions within, a foe without the gate!
Not but I grant that all perform'd their parts
With manly force, and with undaunted hearts:
With our united strength the war we wag'd;
With equal numbers, equal arms, engag'd.
You see th' event. Now hear what I propose,
To save our friends, and satisfy our foes.
A tract of land the Latins have possess'd
Along the Tiber, stretching to the west,
Which now Rutulians and Auruncans till,
And their mix'd cattle graze the fruitful hill.
Those mountains fill'd with firs, that lower land,
If you consent, the Trojan shall command,
Call'd into part of what is ours; and there,
On terms agreed, the common country share.
There let'em build and settle, if they please;
Unless they choose once more to cross the seas,
In search of seats remote from Italy,
And from unwelcome inmates set us free.
Then twice ten galleys let us build with speed,
Or twice as many more, if more they need.
Materials are at hand; a well-grown wood

Runs equal with the margin of the flood:
Let them the number and the form assign;
The care and cost of all the stores be mine.
To treat the peace, a hundred senators
Shall be commission'd hence with ample pow'rs,
With olive the presents they shall bear,
A purple robe, a royal iv'ry chair,
And all the marks of sway that Latian monarchs wear,
And sums of gold. Among yourselves debate
This great affair, and save the sinking state."

Then Drances took the word, who grudg'd, long since,
The rising glories of the Daunian prince.
Factious and rich, bold at the council board,
But cautious in the field, he shunn'd the sword;
A close caballer, and tongue-valiant lord.
Noble his mother was, and near the throne;
But, what his father's parentage, unknown.
He rose, and took th' advantage of the times,
To load young Turnus with invidious crimes.
"Such truths, O king," said he, "your words contain,
As strike the sense, and all replies are vain;
Nor are your loyal subjects now to seek
What common needs require, but fear to speak.
Let him give leave of speech, that haughty man,
Whose pride this unauspicious war began;
For whose ambition (let me dare to say,
Fear set apart, tho' death is in my way)
The plains of Latium run with blood around.
So many valiant heroes bite the ground;
Dejected grief in ev'ry face appears;
A town in mourning, and a land in tears;
While he, th' undoubted author of our harms,
The man who menaces the gods with arms,
Yet, after all his boasts, forsook the fight,
And sought his safety in ignoble flight.
Now, best of kings, since you propose to send
Such bounteous presents to your Trojan friend;
Add yet a greater at our joint request,
One which he values more than all the rest:
Give him the fair Lavinia for his bride;
With that alliance let the league be tied,
And for the bleeding land a lasting peace provide.
Let insolence no longer awe the throne;
But, with a father's right, bestow your own.
For this maligner of the general good,
If still we fear his force, he must be woo'd;
His haughty godhead we with pray'rs implore,
Your scepter to release, and our just rights restore.
O cursed cause of all our ills, must we

Wage wars unjust, and fall in fight, for thee!
What right hast thou to rule the Latian state,
And send us out to meet our certain fate?
'T is a destructive war: from Turnus' hand
Our peace and public safety we demand.
Let the fair bride to the brave chief remain;
If not, the peace, without the pledge, is vain.
Turnus, I know you think me not your friend,
Nor will I much with your belief contend:
I beg your greatness not to give the law
In others' realms, but, beaten, to withdraw.
Pity your own, or pity our estate;
Nor twist our fortunes with your sinking fate.
Your interest is, the war should never cease;
But we have felt enough to wish the peace:
A land exhausted to the last remains,
Depopulated towns, and driven plains.
Yet, if desire of fame, and thirst of pow'r,
A beauteous princess, with a crown in dow'r,
So fire your mind, in arms assert your right,
And meet your foe, who dares you to the fight.
Mankind, it seems, is made for you alone;
We, but the slaves who mount you to the throne:
A base ignoble crowd, without a name,
Unwept, unworthy, of the fun'ral flame,
By duty bound to forfeit each his life,
That Turnus may possess a royal wife.
Permit not, mighty man, so mean a crew
Should share such triumphs, and detain from you
The post of honor, your undoubted due.
Rather alone your matchless force employ,
To merit what alone you must enjoy."

These words, so full of malice mix'd with art,
Inflam'd with rage the youthful hero's heart.
Then, groaning from the bottom of his breast,
He heav'd for wind, and thus his wrath express'd:
"You, Drances, never want a stream of words,
Then, when the public need requires our swords.
First in the council hall to steer the state,
And ever foremost in a tongue-debate,
While our strong walls secure us from the foe,
Ere yet with blood our ditches overflow:
But let the potent orator declaim,
And with the brand of coward blot my name;
Free leave is giv'n him, when his fatal hand
Has cover'd with more corps the sanguine strand,
And high as mine his tow'ring trophies stand.
If any doubt remains, who dares the most,
Let us decide it at the Trojan's cost,

And issue both abreast, where honor calls
Foes are not far to seek without the walls
Unless his noisy tongue can only fight,
And feet were giv'n him but to speed his flight.
I beaten from the field? I forc'd away?
Who, but so known a dastard, dares to say?
Had he but ev'n beheld the fight, his eyes
Had witness'd for me what his tongue denies:
What heaps of Trojans by this hand were slain,
And how the bloody Tiber swell'd the main.
All saw, but he, th' Arcadian troops retire
In scatter'd squadrons, and their prince expire.
The giant brothers, in their camp, have found,
I was not forc'd with ease to quit my ground.
Not such the Trojans tried me, when, inclos'd,
I singly their united arms oppos'd:
First forc'd an entrance thro' their thick array;
Then, glutted with their slaughter, freed my way.
'T is a destructive war? So let it be,
But to the Phrygian pirate, and to thee!
Meantime proceed to fill the people's ears
With false reports, their minds with panic fears:
Extol the strength of a twice-conquer'd race;
Our foes encourage, and our friends debase.
Believe thy fables, and the Trojan town
Triumphant stands; the Grecians are o'erthrown;
Suppliant at Hector's feet Achilles lies,
And Diomede from fierce Aeneas flies.
Say rapid Aufidus with awful dread
Runs backward from the sea, and hides his head,
When the great Trojan on his bank appears;
For that's as true as thy dissembled fears
Of my revenge. Dismiss that vanity:
Thou, Drances, art below a death from me.
Let that vile soul in that vile body rest;
The lodging is well worthy of the guest.

"Now, royal father, to the present state
Of our affairs, and of this high debate:
If in your arms thus early you diffide,
And think your fortune is already tried;
If one defeat has brought us down so low,
As never more in fields to meet the foe;
Then I conclude for peace: 't is time to treat,
And lie like vassals at the victor's feet.
But, O! if any ancient blood remains,
One drop of all our fathers', in our veins,
That man would I prefer before the rest,
Who dar'd his death with an undaunted breast;
Who comely fell, by no dishonest wound,

To shun that sight, and, dying, gnaw'd the ground.
But, if we still have fresh recruits in store,
If our confederates can afford us more;
If the contended field we bravely fought,
And not a bloodless victory was bought;
Their losses equal'd ours; and, for their slain,
With equal fires they fill'd the shining plain;
Why thus, unforc'd, should we so tamely yield,
And, ere the trumpet sounds, resign the field?
Good unexpected, evils unforeseen,
Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene:
Some, rais'd aloft, come tumbling down amain;
Then fall so hard, they bound and rise again.
If Diomede refuse his aid to lend,
The great Messapus yet remains our friend:
Tolumnius, who foretells events, is ours;
Th' Italian chiefs and princes join their pow'rs:
Nor least in number, nor in name the last,
Your own brave subjects have your cause embrac'd
Above the rest, the Volscian Amazon
Contains an army in herself alone,
And heads a squadron, terrible to sight,
With glitt'ring shields, in brazen armor bright.
Yet, if the foe a single fight demand,
And I alone the public peace withstand;
If you consent, he shall not be refus'd,
Nor find a hand to victory unus'd.
This new Achilles, let him take the field,
With fated armor, and Vulcanian shield!
For you, my royal father, and my fame,
I, Turnus, not the least of all my name,
Devote my soul. He calls me hand to hand,
And I alone will answer his demand.
Drances shall rest secure, and neither share
The danger, nor divide the prize of war."

While they debate, nor these nor those will yield,
Aeneas draws his forces to the field,
And moves his camp. The scouts with flying speed
Return, and thro' the frighted city spread
Th' unpleasing news, the Trojans are descried,
In battle marching by the river side,
And bending to the town. They take th' alarm:
Some tremble, some are bold; all in confusion arm.
Th' impetuous youth press forward to the field;
They clash the sword, and clatter on the shield:
The fearful matrons raise a screaming cry;
Old feeble men with fainter groans reply;
A jarring sound results, and mingles in the sky,

Like that of swans remurm'ring to the floods,
Or birds of diff 'ring kinds in hollow woods.

Turnus th' occasion takes, and cries aloud:
"Talk on, ye quaint haranguers of the crowd:
Declaim in praise of peace, when danger calls,
And the fierce foes in arms approach the walls."
He said, and, turning short, with speedy pace,
Casts back a scornful glance, and quits the place:
"Thou, Volusus, the Volscian troops command
To mount; and lead thyself our Ardean band.
Messapus and Catillus, post your force
Along the fields, to charge the Trojan horse.
Some guard the passes, others man the wall;
Drawn up in arms, the rest attend my call."

They swarm from ev'ry quarter of the town,
And with disorder'd haste the rampires crown.
Good old Latinus, when he saw, too late,
The gath'ring storm just breaking on the state,
Dismiss'd the council till a fitter time,
And own'd his easy temper as his crime,
Who, forc'd against his reason, had complied
To break the treaty for the promis'd bride.

Some help to sink new trenches; others aid
To ram the stones, or raise the palisade.
Hoarse trumpets sound th' alarm; around the walls
Runs a distracted crew, whom their last labor calls.
A sad procession in the streets is seen,
Of matrons, that attend the mother queen:
High in her chair she sits, and, at her side,
With downcast eyes, appears the fatal bride.
They mount the cliff, where Pallas' temple stands;
Pray'rs in their mouths, and presents in their hands,
With censers first they fume the sacred shrine,
Then in this common supplication join:
"O patroness of arms, unspotted maid,
Propitious hear, and lend thy Latins aid!
Break short the pirate's lance; pronounce his fate,
And lay the Phrygian low before the gate."

Now Turnus arms for fight. His back and breast
Well-temper'd steel and scaly brass invest:
The cuishes which his brawny thighs infold
Are mingled metal damask'd o'er with gold.
His faithful fauchion sits upon his side;
Nor casque, nor crest, his manly features hide:
But, bare to view, amid surrounding friends,
With godlike grace, he from the tow'r descends.
Exulting in his strength, he seems to dare
His absent rival, and to promise war.

Freed from his keepers, thus, with broken reins,
The wanton courser prances o'er the plains,
Or in the pride of youth o'erleaps the mounds,
And snuffs the females in forbidden grounds.
Or seeks his wat'ring in the well-known flood,
To quench his thirst, and cool his fiery blood:
He swims luxuriant in the liquid plain,
And o'er his shoulder flows his waving mane:
He neighs, he snorts, he bears his head on high;
Before his ample chest the frothy waters fly.

Soon as the prince appears without the gate,
The Volscians, with their virgin leader, wait
His last commands. Then, with a graceful mien,
Lights from her lofty steed the warrior queen:
Her squadron imitates, and each descends;
Whose common suit Camilla thus commends:
"If sense of honor, if a soul secure
Of inborn worth, that can all tests endure,
Can promise aught, or on itself rely
Greatly to dare, to conquer or to die;
Then, I alone, sustain'd by these, will meet
The Tyrrhene troops, and promise their defeat.
Ours be the danger, ours the sole renown:
You, gen'ral, stay behind, and guard the town."
Turnus a while stood mute, with glad surprise,
And on the fierce virago fix'd his eyes;
Then thus return'd: "O grace of Italy,
With what becoming thanks can I reply?
Not only words lie lab'ring in my breast,
But thought itself is by thy praise oppress'd.
Yet rob me not of all; but let me join
My toils, my hazard, and my fame, with thine.
The Trojan, not in stratagem unskill'd,
Sends his light horse before to scour the field:
Himself, thro' steep ascents and thorny brakes,
A larger compass to the city takes.
This news my scouts confirm, and I prepare
To foil his cunning, and his force to dare;
With chosen foot his passage to forelay,
And place an ambush in the winding way.
Thou, with thy Volscians, face the Tuscan horse;
The brave Messapus shall thy troops inforce
With those of Tibur, and the Latian band,
Subjected all to thy supreme command."
This said, he warns Messapus to the war,
Then ev'ry chief exhorts with equal care.
All thus encourag'd, his own troops he joins,
And hastes to prosecute his deep designs.

Inclos'd with hills, a winding valley lies,
By nature form'd for fraud, and fitted for surprise.
A narrow track, by human steps untrode,
Leads, thro' perplexing thorns, to this obscure abode.
High o'er the vale a steepy mountain stands,
Whence the surveying sight the nether ground commands.
The top is level, an offensive seat
Of war; and from the war a safe retreat:
For, on the right and left, is room to press
The foes at hand, or from afar distress;
To drive 'em headlong downward, and to pour
On their descending backs a stony show'r.
Thither young Turnus took the well-known way,
Possess'd the pass, and in blind ambush lay.

Meantime Latonian Phoebe, from the skies,
Beheld th' approaching war with hateful eyes,
And call'd the light-foot Opis to her aid,
Her most belov'd and ever-trusty maid;
Then with a sigh began: "Camilla goes
To meet her death amidst her fatal foes:
The nymphs I lov'd of all my mortal train,
Invested with Diana's arms, in vain.
Nor is my kindness for the virgin new:
'T was born with her; and with her years it grew.
Her father Metabus, when forc'd away
From old Privernum, for tyrannic sway,
Snatch'd up, and sav'd from his prevailing foes,
This tender babe, companion of his woes.
Casmilla was her mother; but he drown'd
One hissing letter in a softer sound,
And call'd Camilla. Thro' the woods he flies;
Wrapp'd in his robe the royal infant lies.
His foes in sight, he mends his weary pace;
With shout and clamors they pursue the chase.
The banks of Amasene at length he gains:

The raging flood his farther flight restrains,
Rais'd o'er the borders with unusual rains.
Prepar'd to plunge into the stream, he fears,
Not for himself, but for the charge he bears.
Anxious, he stops a while, and thinks in haste;
Then, desp'rate in distress, resolves at last.
A knotty lance of well-boil'd oak he bore;
The middle part with cork he cover'd o'er:
He clos'd the child within the hollow space;
With twigs of bending osier bound the case;
Then pois'd the spear, heavy with human weight,
And thus invok'd my favor for the freight:
'Accept, great goddess of the woods,' he said,
'Sent by her sire, this dedicated maid!

Thro' air she flies a suppliant to thy shrine;
And the first weapons that she knows, are thine.' 12155
He said; and with full force the spear he threw:
Above the sounding waves Camilla flew.
Then, press'd by foes, he stemm'd the stormy tide,
And gain'd, by stress of arms, the farther side.
His fasten'd spear he pull'd from out the ground, 12160
And, victor of his vows, his infant nymph unbound;
Nor, after that, in towns which walls inclose,
Would trust his hunted life amidst his foes;
But, rough, in open air he chose to lie;
Earth was his couch, his cov'ring was the sky. 12165
On hills unshorn, or in a desart den,
He shunn'd the dire society of men.
A shepherd's solitary life he led;
His daughter with the milk of mares he fed.
The dugs of bears, and ev'ry salvage beast, 12170
He drew, and thro' her lips the liquor press'd.
The little Amazon could scarcely go:
He loads her with a quiver and a bow;
And, that she might her stagg'ring steps command,
He with a slender jav'lin fills her hand. 12175
Her flowing hair no golden fillet bound;
Nor swept her trailing robe the dusty ground.
Instead of these, a tiger's hide o'erspread
Her back and shoulders, fasten'd to her head.
The flying dart she first attempts to fling, 12180
And round her tender temples toss'd the sling;
Then, as her strength with years increas'd, began
To pierce aloft in air the soaring swan,
And from the clouds to fetch the heron and the crane.
The Tuscan matrons with each other vied, 12185
To bless their rival sons with such a bride;
But she disdains their love, to share with me
The sylvan shades and vow'd virginity.
And, O! I wish, contented with my cares
Of salvage spoils, she had not sought the wars! 12190
Then had she been of my celestial train,
And shunn'd the fate that dooms her to be slain.
But since, opposing Heav'n's decree, she goes
To find her death among forbidden foes,
Haste with these arms, and take thy steepy flight. 12195
Where, with the gods, averse, the Latins fight.
This bow to thee, this quiver I bequeath,
This chosen arrow, to revenge her death:
By whate'er hand Camilla shall be slain,
Or of the Trojan or Italian train, 12200
Let him not pass unpunish'd from the plain.
Then, in a hollow cloud, myself will aid
To bear the breathless body of my maid:

Unspoil’d shall be her arms, and unprofan’d
Her holy limbs with any human hand,
And in a marble tomb laid in her native land.”

She said. The faithful nymph descends from high
With rapid flight, and cuts the sounding sky:
Black clouds and stormy winds around her body fly.

By this, the Trojan and the Tuscan horse,
Drawn up in squadrons, with united force,
Approach the walls: the sprightly coursers bound,
Press forward on their bits, and shift their ground.
Shields, arms, and spears flash horribly from far;
And the fields glitter with a waving war.
Oppos’d to these, come on with furious force
Messapus, Coras, and the Latian horse;
These in the body plac’d, on either hand
Sustain’d and clos’d by fair Camilla’s band.
Advancing in a line, they couch their spears;
And less and less the middle space appears.
Thick smoke obscures the field; and scarce are seen
The neighing coursers, and the shouting men.
In distance of their darts they stop their course;
Then man to man they rush, and horse to horse.
The face of heav’n their flying jav’lins hide,
And deaths unseen are dealt on either side.
Tyrrhenus, and Aconteus, void of fear,
By mettled coursers borne in full career,
Meet first oppos’d; and, with a mighty shock,
Their horses’ heads against each other knock.
Far from his steed is fierce Aconteus cast,
As with an engine’s force, or lightning’s blast:
He rolls along in blood, and breathes his last.
The Latin squadrons take a sudden fright,
And sling their shields behind, to save their backs in flight
Spurring at speed to their own walls they drew;
Close in the rear the Tuscan troops pursue,
And urge their flight: Asylas leads the chase;
Till, seiz’d, with shame, they wheel about and face,
Receive their foes, and raise a threat’ning cry.
The Tuscans take their turn to fear and fly.
So swelling surges, with a thund’ring roar,
Driv’n on each other’s backs, insult the shore,
Bound o’er the rocks, incroach upon the land,
And far upon the beach eject the sand;
Then backward, with a swing, they take their way,
Repuls’d from upper ground, and seek their mother sea;
With equal hurry quit th’ invaded shore,
And swallow back the sand and stones they spew’d before.

Twice were the Tuscans masters of the field,
Twice by the Latins, in their turn, repell’d.

Asham'd at length, to the third charge they ran;
Both hosts resolv'd, and mingled man to man.
Now dying groans are heard; the fields are strow'd
With falling bodies, and are drunk with blood.
Arms, horses, men, on heaps together lie:
Confus'd the fight, and more confus'd the cry.
Orsilochus, who durst not press too near
Strong Remulus, at distance drove his spear,
And stuck the steel beneath his horse's ear.
The fiery steed, impatient of the wound,
Curvets, and, springing upward with a bound,
His helpless lord cast backward on the ground.
Catillus pierc'd Iolas first; then drew
His reeking lance, and at Herminius threw,
The mighty champion of the Tuscan crew.
His neck and throat unarm'd, his head was bare,
But shaded with a length of yellow hair:
Secure, he fought, expos'd on ev'ry part,
A spacious mark for swords, and for the flying dart.
Across the shoulders came the feather'd wound;
Transfix'd he fell, and doubled to the ground.
The sands with streaming blood are sanguine dyed,
And death with honor sought on either side.

Resistless thro' the war Camilla rode,
In danger unappall'd, and pleas'd with blood.
One side was bare for her exerted breast;
One shoulder with her painted quiver press'd.
Now from afar her fatal jav'lins play;
Now with her ax's edge she hews her way:
Diana's arms upon her shoulder sound;
And when, too closely press'd, she quits the ground,
From her bent bow she sends a backward wound.
Her maids, in martial pomp, on either side,
Larina, Tulla, fierce Tarpeia, ride:
Italians all; in peace, their queen's delight;
In war, the bold companions of the fight.
So march'd the Tracian Amazons of old,
When Thermodon with bloody billows roll'd:
Such troops as these in shining arms were seen,
When Theseus met in fight their maiden queen:
Such to the field Penthisilea led,
From the fierce virgin when the Grecians fled;
With such, return'd triumphant from the war,
Her maids with cries attend the lofty car;
They clash with manly force their moony shields;
With female shouts resound the Phrygian fields.

Who foremost, and who last, heroic maid,
On the cold earth were by thy courage laid?
Thy spear, of mountain ash, Eumenius first,

With fury driv'n, from side to side transpierc'd:
A purple stream came spouting from the wound;
Bath'd in his blood he lies, and bites the ground.
Liris and Pegasus at once she slew:
The former, as the slacken'd reins he drew
Of his faint steed; the latter, as he stretch'd
His arm to prop his friend, the jav'lin reach'd.
By the same weapon, sent from the same hand,
Both fall together, and both spurn the sand.
Amastrus next is added to the slain:
The rest in rout she follows o'er the plain:
Tereus, Harpalycus, Demophoon,
And Chromis, at full speed her fury shun.
Of all her deadly darts, not one she lost;
Each was attended with a Trojan ghost.
Young Ornithus bestrode a hunter steed,
Swift for the chase, and of Apulian breed.
Him from afar she spied, in arms unknown:
O'er his broad back an ox's hide was thrown;
His helm a wolf, whose gaping jaws were spread
A cov'ring for his cheeks, and grinn'd around his head,
He clench'd within his hand an iron prong,
And tower'd above the rest, conspicuous in the throng.
Him soon she singled from the flying train,
And slew with ease; then thus insults the slain:
"Vain hunter, didst thou think thro' woods to chase
The savage herd, a vile and trembling race?
Here cease thy vaunts, and own my victory:
A woman warrior was too strong for thee.
Yet, if the ghosts demand the conqu'ror's name,
Confessing great Camilla, save thy shame."
Then Butes and Orsilochus she slew,
The bulkiest bodies of the Trojan crew;
But Butes breast to breast: the spear descends
Above the gorget, where his helmet ends,
And o'er the shield which his left side defends.
Orsilochus and she their courses ply:
He seems to follow, and she seems to fly;
But in a narrower ring she makes the race;
And then he flies, and she pursues the chase.
Gath'ring at length on her deluded foe,
She swings her ax, and rises to the blow
Full on the helm behind, with such a sway
The weapon falls, the riven steel gives way:
He groans, he roars, he sues in vain for grace;
Brains, mingled with his blood, besmear his face.

Astonish'd Aunus just arrives by chance,
To see his fall; nor farther dares advance;
But, fixing on the horrid maid his eye,

He stares, and shakes, and finds it vain to fly;
Yet, like a true Ligurian, born to cheat,
(At least while fortune favor'd his deceit,)
Cries out aloud: "What courage have you shown,
Who trust your courser's strength, and not your own?
Forego the vantage of your horse, alight,
And then on equal terms begin the fight:
It shall be seen, weak woman, what you can,
When, foot to foot, you combat with a man,"
He said. She glows with anger and disdain,
Dismounts with speed to dare him on the plain,
And leaves her horse at large among her train;
With her drawn sword defies him to the field,
And, marching, lifts aloft her maiden shield.
The youth, who thought his cunning did succeed,
Reins round his horse, and urges all his speed;
Adds the remembrance of the spur, and hides
The goring rowels in his bleeding sides.
"Vain fool, and coward!" cries the lofty maid,
"Caught in the train which thou thyself hast laid!
On others practice thy Ligurian arts;
Thin stratagems and tricks of little hearts
Are lost on me: nor shalt thou safe retire,
With vaunting lies, to thy fallacious sire."
At this, so fast her flying feet she sped,
That soon she strain'd beyond his horse's head:
Then turning short, at once she seiz'd the rein,
And laid the boaster grov'ling on the plain.
Not with more ease the falcon, from above,
Trusses in middle air the trembling dove,
Then plumes the prey, in her strong pounces bound:
The feathers, foul with blood, come tumbling to the ground.

Now mighty Jove, from his superior height,
With his broad eye surveys th' unequal fight.
He fires the breast of Tarchon with disdain,
And sends him to redeem th' abandon'd plain.
Betwixt the broken ranks the Tuscan rides,
And these encourages, and those he chides;
Recalls each leader, by his name, from flight;
Renews their ardor, and restores the fight.
"What panic fear has seiz'd your souls?
O shame, O brand perpetual of th' Etrurian name!
Cowards incurable, a woman's hand
Drives, breaks, and scatters your ignoble band!
Now cast away the sword, and quit the shield!
What use of weapons which you dare not wield?
Not thus you fly your female foes by night,
Nor shun the feast, when the full bowls invite;
When to fat off 'rings the glad augur calls,

And the shrill hornpipe sounds to bacchanals.
These are your studied cares, your lewd delight:
Swift to debauch, but slow to manly fight.”
Thus having said, he spurs amid the foes,
Not managing the life he meant to lose.
The first he found he seiz’d with headlong haste,
In his strong gripe, and clasp’d around the waist;
‘T was Venulus, whom from his horse he tore,
And, laid athwart his own, in triumph bore.
Loud shouts ensue; the Latins turn their eyes,
And view th’ unusual sight with vast surprise.
The fiery Tarchon, flying o’er the plains,
Press’d in his arms the pond’rous prey sustains;
Then, with his shorten’d spear, explores around
His jointed arms, to fix a deadly wound.
Nor less the captive struggles for his life:
He writhes his body to prolong the strife,
And, fencing for his naked throat, exerts
His utmost vigor, and the point averts.
So stoops the yellow eagle from on high,
And bears a speckled serpent thro’ the sky,
Fast’ning his crooked talons on the prey:
The pris’ner hisses thro’ the liquid way;
Resists the royal hawk; and, tho’ oppress’d,
She fights in volumes, and erects her crest:
Turn’d to her foe, she stiffens ev’ry scale,
And shoots her forky tongue, and whisks her threat’ning tail.
Against the victor, all defense is weak:
Th’ imperial bird still plies her with his beak;
He tears her bowels, and her breast he gores;
Then claps his pinions, and securely soars.
Thus, thro’ the midst of circling enemies,
Strong Tarchon snatch’d and bore away his prize.
The Tyrrhene troops, that shrunk before, now press
The Latins, and presume the like success.

Then Aruns, doom’d to death, his arts assay’d,
To murther, unespied, the Volscian maid:
This way and that his winding course he bends,
And, whereso’er she turns, her steps attends.
When she retires victorious from the chase,
He wheels about with care, and shifts his place;
When, rushing on, she seeks her foes flight,
He keeps aloof, but keeps her still in sight:
He threats, and trembles, trying ev’ry way,
Unseen to kill, and safely to betray.
Chloreus, the priest of Cybele, from far,
Glitt’ring in Phrygian arms amidst the war,
Was by the virgin view’d. The steed he press’d
Was proud with trappings, and his brawny chest

With scales of gilded brass was cover'd o'er;
A robe of Tyrian dye the rider wore.
With deadly wounds he gall'd the distant foe;
Gnossian his shafts, and Lycian was his bow:
A golden helm his front and head surrounds
A gilded quiver from his shoulder sounds.
Gold, weav'd with linen, on his thighs he wore,
With flowers of needlework distinguish'd o'er,
With golden buckles bound, and gather'd up before.
Him the fierce maid beheld with ardent eyes,
Fond and ambitious of so rich a prize,
Or that the temple might his trophies hold,
Or else to shine herself in Trojan gold.
Blind in her haste, she chases him alone.
And seeks his life, regardless of her own.

This lucky moment the sly traitor chose:
Then, starting from his ambush, up he rose,
And threw, but first to Heav'n address'd his vows:
"O patron of Socrates' high abodes,
Phoebus, the ruling pow'r among the gods,
Whom first we serve, whole woods of unctuous pine
Are fell'd for thee, and to thy glory shine;
By thee protected with our naked soles,
Thro' flames unsing'd we march, and tread the kindled coals
Give me, propitious pow'r, to wash away
The stains of this dishonorable day:
Nor spoils, nor triumph, from the fact I claim,
But with my future actions trust my fame.
Let me, by stealth, this female plague o'ercome,
And from the field return inglorious home."
Apollo heard, and, granting half his pray'r,
Shuffled in winds the rest, and toss'd in empty air.
He gives the death desir'd; his safe return
By southern tempests to the seas is borne.

Now, when the jav'lin whizz'd along the skies,
Both armies on Camilla turn'd their eyes,
Directed by the sound. Of either host,
Th' unhappy virgin, tho' concern'd the most,
Was only deaf; so greedy was she bent
On golden spoils, and on her prey intent;
Till in her pap the winged weapon stood
Infix'd, and deeply drunk the purple blood.
Her sad attendants hasten to sustain
Their dying lady, drooping on the plain.
Far from their sight the trembling Aruns flies,
With beating heart, and fear confus'd with joys;
Nor dares he farther to pursue his blow,
Or ev'n to bear the sight of his expiring foe.
As, when the wolf has torn a bullock's hide

At unawares, or ranch'd a shepherd's side,
Conscious of his audacious deed, he flies,
And claps his quiv'ring tail between his thighs:
So, speeding once, the wretch no more attends,
But, spurring forward, herds among his friends.

She wrench'd the jav'lin with her dying hands,
But wedg'd within her breast the weapon stands;
The wood she draws, the steely point remains;
She staggers in her seat with agonizing pains:
(A gath'ring mist o'erclouds her cheerful eyes,
And from her cheeks the rosy color flies:)
Then turns to her, whom of her female train
She trusted most, and thus she speaks with pain:
"Acca, 't is past! he swims before my sight,
Inexorable Death; and claims his right.
Bear my last words to Turnus; fly with speed,
And bid him timely to my charge succeed,
Repel the Trojans, and the town relieve:
Farewell! and in this kiss my parting breath receive."
She said, and, sliding, sunk upon the plain:
Dying, her open'd hand forsakes the rein;
Short, and more short, she pants; by slow degrees
Her mind the passage from her body frees.
She drops her sword; she nods her plumy crest,
Her drooping head declining on her breast:
In the last sigh her struggling soul expires,
And, murm'ring with disdain, to Stygian sounds retires.

A shout, that struck the golden stars, ensued;
Despair and rage the languish'd fight renew'd.
The Trojan troops and Tuscans, in a line,
Advance to charge; the mix'd Arcadians join.

But Cynthia's maid, high seated, from afar
Surveys the field, and fortune of the war,
Unmov'd a while, till, prostrate on the plain,
Welt'ring in blood, she sees Camilla slain,
And, round her corpse, of friends and foes a fighting train.
Then, from the bottom of her breast, she drew
A mournful sigh, and these sad words ensue:
"Too dear a fine, ah much lamented maid,
For warring with the Trojans, thou hast paid!
Nor aught avail'd, in this unhappy strife,
Diana's sacred arms, to save thy life.
Yet unreveng'd thy goddess will not leave
Her vot'ry's death, nor; with vain sorrow grieve.
Branded the wretch, and be his name abhorr'd;
But after ages shall thy praise record.
Th' inglorious coward soon shall press the plain:
Thus vows thy queen, and thus the Fates ordain."

High o’er the field there stood a hilly mound,
Sacred the place, and spread with oaks around,
Where, in a marble tomb, Dercennus lay,
A king that once in Latium bore the sway.
The beauteous Opis thither bent her flight,
To mark the traitor Aruns from the height.
Him in refulgent arms she soon espied,
Swoln with success; and loudly thus she cried:
“Thy backward steps, vain boaster, are too late;
Turn like a man, at length, and meet thy fate.
Charg’d with my message, to Camilla go,
And say I sent thee to the shades below,
An honor undeserv’d from Cynthia’s bow.”

She said, and from her quiver chose with speed
The winged shaft, predestin’d for the deed;
Then to the stubborn yew her strength applied,
Till the far distant horns approach’d on either side.
The bowstring touch’d her breast, so strong she drew;
Whizzing in air the fatal arrow flew.
At once the twanging bow and sounding dart
The traitor heard, and felt the point within his heart.
Him, beating with his heels in pangs of death,
His flying friends to foreign fields bequeath.
The conqu’ring damsel, with expanded wings,
The welcome message to her mistress brings.

Their leader lost, the Volscians quit the field,
And, unsustain’d, the chiefs of Turnus yield.
The frighted soldiers, when their captains fly,
More on their speed than on their strength rely.
Confus’d in flight, they bear each other down,
And spur their horses headlong to the town.
Driv’n by their foes, and to their fears resign’d,
Not once they turn, but take their wounds behind.
These drop the shield, and those the lance forego,
Or on their shoulders bear the slacken’d bow.
The hoofs of horses, with a rattling sound,
Beat short and thick, and shake the rotten ground.
Black clouds of dust come rolling in the sky,
And o’er the darken’d walls and rampires fly.
The trembling matrons, from their lofty stands,
Rend heav’n with female shrieks, and wring their hands.
All pressing on, pursuers and pursued,
Are crush’d in crowds, a mingled multitude.
Some happy few escape: the throng too late
Rush on for entrance, till they choke the gate.
Ev’n in the sight of home, the wretched sire
Looks on, and sees his helpless son expire.
Then, in a fright, the folding gates they close,
But leave their friends excluded with their foes.

The vanquish'd cry; the victors loudly shout;
'T is terror all within, and slaughter all without.
Blind in their fear, they bounce against the wall,
Or, to the moats pursued, precipitate their fall.

The Latian virgins, valiant with despair,
Arm'd on the tow'rs, the common danger share:
So much of zeal their country's cause inspir'd;
So much Camilla's great example fir'd.
Poles, sharpen'd in the flames, from high they throw,
With imitated darts, to gall the foe.
Their lives for godlike freedom they bequeath,
And crowd each other to be first in death.
Meantime to Turnus, ambush'd in the shade,
With heavy tidings came th' unhappy maid:
"The Volscians overthrown, Camilla kill'd;
The foes, entirely masters of the field,
Like a resistless flood, come rolling on:
The cry goes off the plain, and thickens to the town."

Inflam'd with rage, (for so the Furies fire
The Daunian's breast, and so the Fates require,)
He leaves the hilly pass, the woods in vain
Possess'd, and downward issues on the plain.
Scarce was he gone, when to the straits, now freed
From secret foes, the Trojan troops succeed.
Thro' the black forest and the ferny brake,
Unknowingly secure, their way they take;
From the rough mountains to the plain descend,
And there, in order drawn, their line extend.
Both armies now in open fields are seen;
Nor far the distance of the space between.
Both to the city bend. Aeneas sees,
Thro' smoking fields, his hast'ning enemies;
And Turnus views the Trojans in array,
And hears th' approaching horses proudly neigh.
Soon had their hosts in bloody battle join'd;
But westward to the sea the sun declin'd.
Intrench'd before the town both armies lie,
While Night with sable wings involves the sky.

Book XII

When Turnus saw the Latins leave the field,
Their armies broken, and their courage quell'd,
Himself become the mark of public spite,
His honor question'd for the promis'd fight;
The more he was with vulgar hate oppress'd,
The more his fury boil'd within his breast:
He rous'd his vigor for the last debate,
And rais'd his haughty soul to meet his fate.

As, when the swains the Libyan lion chase,
He makes a sour retreat, nor mends his pace;
But, if the pointed jav'lin pierce his side,
The lordly beast returns with double pride:
He wrenches out the steel, he roars for pain;
His sides he lashes, and erects his mane:
So Turnus fares; his eyeballs flash with fire,
Thro' his wide nostrils clouds of smoke expire.

Trembling with rage, around the court he ran,
At length approach'd the king, and thus began:
"No more excuses or delays: I stand
In arms prepar'd to combat, hand to hand,
This base deserter of his native land.
The Trojan, by his word, is bound to take
The same conditions which himself did make.
Renew the truce; the solemn rites prepare,
And to my single virtue trust the war.
The Latians unconcern'd shall see the fight;
This arm unaided shall assert your right:
Then, if my prostrate body press the plain,
To him the crown and beauteous bride remain."

To whom the king sedately thus replied:
"Brave youth, the more your valor has been tried,
The more becomes it us, with due respect,
To weigh the chance of war, which you neglect.
You want not wealth, or a successive throne,
Or cities which your arms have made your own:
My towns and treasures are at your command,
And stor'd with blooming beauties is my land;
Laurentum more than one Lavinia sees,
Unmarried, fair, of noble families.
Now let me speak, and you with patience hear,
Things which perhaps may grate a lover's ear,
But sound advice, proceeding from a heart
Sincerely yours, and free from fraudful art.
The gods, by signs, have manifestly shown,
No prince Italian born should heir my throne:
Oft have our augurs, in prediction skill'd,
And oft our priests, foreign son reveal'd.
Yet, won by worth that cannot be withstood,
Brib'd by my kindness to my kindred blood,
Urg'd by my wife, who would not be denied,
I promis'd my Lavinia for your bride:
Her from her plighted lord by force I took;
All ties of treaties, and of honor, broke:
On your account I wag'd an impious war
With what success, 't is needless to declare;
I and my subjects feel, and you have had your share.
Twice vanquish'd while in bloody fields we strive,

Scarce in our walls we keep our hopes alive:
The rolling flood runs warm with human gore;
The bones of Latians blanch the neighb'ring shore.
Why put I not an end to this debate,
Still unresolv'd, and still a slave to fate?
If Turnus' death a lasting peace can give,
Why should I not procure it whilst you live?
Should I to doubtful arms your youth betray,
What would my kinsmen the Rutulians say?
And, should you fall in fight, (which Heav'n defend!)
How curse the cause which hasten'd to his end
The daughter's lover and the father's friend?
Weigh in your mind the various chance of war;
Pity your parent's age, and ease his care."

Such balmy words he pour'd, but all in vain:
The proffer'd med'cine but provok'd the pain.
The wrathful youth, disdaining the relief,
With intermitting sobs thus vents his grief:
"The care, O best of fathers, which you take
For my concerns, at my desire forsake.
Permit me not to languish out my days,
But make the best exchange of life for praise.
This arm, this lance, can well dispute the prize;
And the blood follows, where the weapon flies.
His goddess mother is not near, to shroud
The flying coward with an empty cloud."

But now the queen, who fear'd for Turnus' life,
And loath'd the hard conditions of the strife,
Held him by force; and, dying in his death,
In these sad accents gave her sorrow breath:
"O Turnus, I adjure thee by these tears,
And whate'er price Amata's honor bears
Within thy breast, since thou art all my hope,
My sickly mind's repose, my sinking age's prop;
Since on the safety of thy life alone
Depends Latinus, and the Latian throne:
Refuse me not this one, this only pray'r,
To waive the combat, and pursue the war.
Whatever chance attends this fatal strife,
Think it includes, in thine, Amata's life.
I cannot live a slave, or see my throne
Usurp'd by strangers or a Trojan son."
At this, a flood of tears Lavinia shed;
A crimson blush her beauteous face o'erspread,
Varying her cheeks by turns with white and red.
The driving colors, never at a stay,
Run here and there, and flush, and fade away.
Delightful change! Thus Indian iv'ry shows,

Which with the bord'ring paint of purple glows;
Or lilies damask'd by the neighb'ring rose.

The lover gaz'd, and, burning with desire,
The more he look'd, the more he fed the fire:
Revenge, and jealous rage, and secret spite,
Roll in his breast, and rouse him to the fight.
Then fixing on the queen his ardent eyes,
Firm to his first intent, he thus replies:
"O mother, do not by your tears prepare
Such boding omens, and prejudge the war.
Resolv'd on fight, I am no longer free
To shun my death, if Heav'n my death decree."
Then turning to the herald, thus pursues:
"Go, greet the Trojan with ungrateful news;
Denounce from me, that, when to-morrow's light
Shall gild the heav'ns, he need not urge the fight;
The Trojan and Rutulian troops no more
Shall dye, with mutual blood, the Latian shore:
Our single swords the quarrel shall decide,
And to the victor be the beauteous bride."

He said, and striding on, with speedy pace,
He sought his coursers of the Thracian race.
At his approach they toss their heads on high,
And, proudly neighing, promise victory.
The sires of these Orythia sent from far,
To grace Pilumnus, when he went to war.
The drifts of Thracian snows were scarce so white,
Nor northern winds in fleetness match'd their flight.
Officious grooms stand ready by his side;
And some with combs their flowing manes divide,
And others stroke their chests and gently soothe their pride.

He sheath'd his limbs in arms; a temper'd mass
Of golden metal those, and mountain brass.
Then to his head his glitt'ring helm he tied,
And girt his faithful fauchion to his side.
In his Aetnaean forge, the God of Fire
That fauchion labor'd for the hero's sire;
Immortal keenness on the blade bestow'd,
And plung'd it hissing in the Stygian flood.
Propp'd on a pillar, which the ceiling bore,
Was plac'd the lance Auruncan Actor wore;
Which with such force he brandish'd in his hand,
The tough ash trembled like an osier wand:
Then cried: "O pond'rous spoil of Actor slain,
And never yet by Turnus toss'd in vain,
Fail not this day thy wonted force; but go,
Sent by this hand, to pierce the Trojan foe!
Give me to tear his corslet from his breast,
And from that eunuch head to rend the crest;

Dragg’d in the dust, his frizzled hair to soil,
Hot from the vexing ir’n, and smear’d with fragrant oil!”

Thus while he raves, from his wide nostrils flies
A fiery steam, and sparkles from his eyes.
So fares the bull in his lov’d female’s sight:
Proudly he bellows, and preludes the fight;
He tries his goring horns against a tree,
And meditates his absent enemy;
He pushes at the winds; he digs the strand
With his black hoofs, and spurns the yellow sand.

Nor less the Trojan, in his Lemnian arms,
To future fight his manly courage warms:
He whets his fury, and with joy prepares
To terminate at once the ling’ring wars;
To cheer his chiefs and tender son, relates
What Heav’n had promis’d, and expounds the fates.
Then to the Latian king he sends, to cease
The rage of arms, and ratify the peace.

The morn ensuing, from the mountain’s height,
Had scarcely spread the skies with rosy light;
Th’ ethereal coursers, bounding from the sea,
From out their flaming nostrils breath’d the day;
When now the Trojan and Rutulian guard,
In friendly labor join’d, the list prepar’d.
Beneath the walls they measure out the space;
Then sacred altars rear, on sods of grass,
Where, with religious their common gods they place.
In purest white the priests their heads attire;
And living waters bear, and holy fire;
And, o’er their linen hoods and shaded hair,
Long twisted wreaths of sacred veryain wear.

In order issuing from the town appears
The Latin legion, arm’d with pointed spears;
And from the fields, advancing on a line,
The Trojan and the Tuscan forces join:
Their various arms afford a pleasing sight;
A peaceful train they seem, in peace prepar’d for fight.
Betwixt the ranks the proud commanders ride,
Glitt’ring with gold, and vests in purple dyed;
Here Mnestheus, author of the Memmian line,
And there Messapus, born of seed divine.
The sign is giv’n; and, round the listed space,
Each man in order fills his proper place.
Reclining on their ample shields, they stand,
And fix their pointed lances in the sand.
Now, studious of the sight, a num’rous throng
Of either sex promiscuous, old and young,
Swarm the town: by those who rest behind,

The gates and walls and houses' tops are lin'd.
Meantime the Queen of Heav'n beheld the sight,
With eyes unpleas'd, from Mount Albano's height
(Since call'd Albano by succeeding fame,
But then an empty hill, without a name).
She thence survey'd the field, the Trojan pow'rs,
The Latian squadrons, and Laurentine tow'rs.
Then thus the goddess of the skies bespoke,
With sighs and tears, the goddess of the lake,
King Turnus' sister, once a lovely maid,
Ere to the lust of lawless Jove betray'd:
Compress'd by force, but, by the grateful god,
Now made the Nais of the neighb'ring flood.
"O nymph, the pride of living lakes," said she,
"O most renown'd, and most belov'd by me,
Long hast thou known, nor need I to record,
The wanton sallies of my wand'ring lord.
Of ev'ry Latian fair whom Jove misled
To mount by stealth my violated bed,
To thee alone I grudg'd not his embrace,
But gave a part of heav'n, and an unenvied place.
Now learn from me thy near approaching grief,
Nor think my wishes want to thy relief.
While fortune favor'd, nor Heav'n's King denied
To lend my succor to the Latian side,
I sav'd thy brother, and the sinking state:
But now he struggles with unequal fate,
And goes, with gods averse, o'ermatch'd in might,
To meet inevitable death in fight;
Nor must I break the truce, nor can sustain the sight.
Thou, if thou dar'st thy present aid supply;
It well becomes a sister's care to try."

At this the lovely nymph, with grief oppress'd,
Thrice tore her hair, and beat her comely breast.
To whom Saturnia thus: "Thy tears are late:
Haste, snatch him, if he can be snatch'd from fate:
New tumults kindle; violate the truce:
Who knows what changeful fortune may produce?
'T is not a crime t' attempt what I decree;
Or, if it were, discharge the crime on me."
She said, and, sailing on the winged wind,
Left the sad nymph suspended in her mind.

And now pomp the peaceful kings appear:
Four steeds the chariot of Latinus bear;
Twelve golden beams around his temples play,
To mark his lineage from the God of Day.
Two snowy coursers Turnus' chariot yoke,
And in his hand two massy spears he shook:
Then issued from the camp, in arms divine,

Aeneas, author of the Roman line;
And by his side Ascanius took his place,
The second hope of Rome's immortal race.
Adorn'd in white, a rev'rend priest appears,
And off 'rings to the flaming altars bears;
A porket, and a lamb that never suffer'd shears.
Then to the rising sun he turns his eyes,
And strews the beasts, design'd for sacrifice,
With salt and meal: with like officious care
He marks their foreheads, and he clips their hair.
Betwixt their horns the purple wine he sheds;
With the same gen'rous juice the flame he feeds.

Aeneas then unsheath'd his shining sword,
And thus with pious pray'rs the gods ador'd:
"All-seeing sun, and thou, Ausonian soil,
For which I have sustain'd so long a toil,
Thou, King of Heav'n, and thou, the Queen of Air,
Propitious now, and reconcil'd by pray'r;
Thou, God of War, whose unresisted sway
The labors and events of arms obey;
Ye living fountains, and ye running floods,
All pow'rs of ocean, all ethereal gods,
Hear, and bear record: if I fall in field,
Or, recreant in the fight, to Turnus yield,
My Trojans shall encrease Evander's town;
Ascanius shall renounce th' Ausonian crown:
All claims, all questions of debate, shall cease;
Nor he, nor they, with force infringe the peace.
But, if my juster arms prevail in fight,
(As sure they shall, if I divine aright,)
My Trojans shall not o'er th' Italians reign:
Both equal, both unconquer'd shall remain,
Join'd in their laws, their lands, and their abodes;
I ask but altars for my weary gods.
The care of those religious rites be mine;
The crown to King Latinus I resign:
His be the sov'reign sway. Nor will I share
His pow'r in peace, or his command in war.
For me, my friends another town shall frame,
And bless the rising tow'rs with fair Lavinia's name."

Thus he. Then, with erected eyes and hands,
The Latian king before his altar stands.
"By the same heav'n," said he, "and earth, and main,
And all the pow'rs that all the three contain;
By hell below, and by that upper god
Whose thunder signs the peace, who seals it with his nod;
So let Latona's double offspring hear,
And double-fronted Janus, what I swear:
I touch the sacred altars, touch the flames,

And all those pow'rs attest, and all their names;
Whatever chance befall on either side,
No term of time this union shall divide:
No force, no fortune, shall my vows unbind,
Or shake the steadfast tenor of my mind;
Not tho' the circling seas should break their bound,
O'erflow the shores, or sap the solid ground;
Not tho' the lamps of heav'n their spheres forsake,
Hurl'd down, and hissing in the nether lake:
Ev'n as this royal scepter" (for he bore
A scepter in his hand) "shall never more
Shoot out in branches, or renew the birth:
An orphan now, cut from the mother earth
By the keen ax, dishonor'd of its hair,
And cas'd in brass, for Latian kings to bear."
When thus in public view the peace was tied
With solemn vows, and sworn on either side,
All dues perform'd which holy rites require;
The victim beasts are slain before the fire,
The trembling entrails from their bodies torn,
And to the fatten'd flames in chargers borne.

Already the Rutulians deem their man
O'ermatch'd in arms, before the fight began.
First rising fears are whisper'd thro' the crowd;
Then, gath'ring sound, they murmur more aloud.
Now, side to side, they measure with their eyes
The champions' bulk, their sinews, and their size:
The nearer they approach, the more is known
Th' apparent disadvantage of their own.
Turnus himself appears in public sight
Conscious of fate, desponding of the fight.
Slowly he moves, and at his altar stands
With eyes dejected, and with trembling hands;
And, while he mutters undistinguish'd pray'rs,
A livid deadness in his cheeks appears.

With anxious pleasure when Juturna view'd
Th' increasing fright of the mad multitude,
When their short sighs and thick'ning sobs she heard,
And found their ready minds for change prepar'd;
Dissembling her immortal form, she took
Camertus' mien, his habit, and his look;
A chief of ancient blood; in arms well known
Was his great sire, and he his greater son.
His shape assum'd, amid the ranks she ran,
And humoring their first motions, thus began:
"For shame, Rutulians, can you bear the sight
Of one expos'd for all, in single fight?
Can we, before the face of heav'n, confess
Our courage colder, or our numbers less?

View all the Trojan host, th' Arcadian band,
And Tuscan army; count 'em as they stand:
Undaunted to the battle if we go,
Scarce ev'ry second man will share a foe.
Turnus, 't is true, in this unequal strife,
Shall lose, with honor, his devoted life,
Or change it rather for immortal fame,
Succeeding to the gods, from whence he came:
But you, a servile and inglorious band,
For foreign lords shall sow your native land,
Those fruitful fields your fighting fathers gain'd,
Which have so long their lazy sons sustain'd."
With words like these, she carried her design:
A rising murmur runs along the line.
Then ev'n the city troops, and Latians, tir'd
With tedious war, seem with new souls inspir'd:
Their champion's fate with pity they lament,
And of the league, so lately sworn, repent.

Nor fails the goddess to foment the rage
With lying wonders, and a false presage;
But adds a sign, which, present to their eyes,
Inspires new courage, and a glad surprise.
For, sudden, in the fiery tracts above,
Appears in pomp th' imperial bird of Jove:
A plump of fowl he spies, that swim the lakes,
And o'er their heads his sounding pinions shakes;
Then, stooping on the fairest of the train,
In his strong talons truss'd a silver swan.
Th' Italians wonder at th' unusual sight;
But, while he lags, and labors in his flight,
Behold, the dastard fowl return anew,
And with united force the foe pursue:
Clam'rous around the royal hawk they fly,
And, thick'ning in a cloud, o'ershade the sky.
They cuff, they scratch, they cross his airy course;
Nor can th' incumber'd bird sustain their force;
But vex'd, not vanquish'd, drops the pond'rous prey,
And, lighten'd of his burthen, wings his way.

Th' Ausonian bands with shouts salute the sight,
Eager of action, and demand the fight.
Then King Tolumnius, vers'd in augurs' arts,
Cries out, and thus his boasted skill imparts:
"At length 't is granted, what I long desir'd!
This, this is what my frequent vows requir'd.
Ye gods, I take your omen, and obey.
Advance, my friends, and charge! I lead the way.
These are the foreign foes, whose impious band,
Like that rapacious bird, infest our land:
But soon, like him, they shall be forc'd to sea

By strength united, and forego the prey.
Your timely succor to your country bring,
Haste to the rescue, and redeem your king."

He said; and, pressing onward thro' the crew,
Pois'd in his lifted arm, his lance he threw.
The winged weapon, whistling in the wind,
Came driving on, nor miss'd the mark design'd.
At once the cornel rattled in the skies;
At once tumultuous shouts and clamors rise.
Nine brothers in a goodly band there stood,
Born of Arcadian mix'd with Tuscan blood,
Gylippus' sons: the fatal jav'lin flew,
Aim'd at the midmost of the friendly crew.
A passage thro' the jointed arms it found,
Just where the belt was to the body bound,
And struck the gentle youth extended on the ground.
Then, fir'd with pious rage, the gen'rous train
Run madly forward to revenge the slain.
And some with eager haste their jav'lins throw;
And some with sword in hand assault the foe.

The wish'd insult the Latine troops embrace,
And meet their ardor in the middle space.
The Trojans, Tuscans, and Arcadian line,
With equal courage obviate their design.
Peace leaves the violated fields, and hate
Both armies urges to their mutual fate.
With impious haste their altars are o'erturn'd,
The sacrifice half-broil'd, and half-unburn'd.
Thick storms of steel from either army fly,
And clouds of clashing darts obscure the sky;
Brands from the fire are missive weapons made,
With chargers, bowls, and all the priestly trade.
Latinus, frighted, hastens from the fray,
And bears his unregarded gods away.
These on their horses vault; those yoke the car;
The rest, with swords on high, run headlong to the war.

Messapus, eager to confound the peace,
Spurr'd his hot courser thro' the fighting prease,
At King Aulestes, by his purple known
A Tuscan prince, and by his regal crown;
And, with a shock encount'ring, bore him down.
Backward he fell; and, as his fate design'd,
The ruins of an altar were behind:
There, pitching on his shoulders and his head,
Amid the scatt'ring fires he lay supinely spread.
The beamy spear, descending from above,
His cuirass pierc'd, and thro' his body drove.
Then, with a scornful smile, the victor cries:
"The gods have found a fitter sacrifice."

Greedy of spoils, th' Italians strip the dead
Of his rich armor, and uncrown his head.

Priest Corynaeus, arm'd his better hand,
From his own altar, with a blazing brand;
And, as Ebusus with a thund'ring pace
Advanc'd to battle, dash'd it on his face:
His bristly beard shines out with sudden fires;
The crackling crop a noisome scent expires.
Following the blow, he seiz'd his curling crown
With his left hand; his other cast him down.
The prostrate body with his knees he press'd,
And plung'd his holy poniard in his breast.

While Podalirius, with his sword, pursued
The shepherd Alsus thro' the flying crowd,
Swiftly he turns, and aims a deadly blow
Full on the front of his unwary foe.
The broad ax enters with a crashing sound,
And cleaves the chin with one continued wound;
Warm blood, and mingled brains, besmear his arms around
An iron sleep his stupid eyes oppress'd,
And seal'd their heavy lids in endless rest.

But good Aeneas rush'd amid the bands;
Bare was his head, and naked were his hands,
In sign of truce: then thus he cries aloud:
"What sudden rage, what new desire of blood,
Inflames your alter'd minds? O Trojans, cease
From impious arms, nor violate the peace!
By human sanctions, and by laws divine,
The terms are all agreed; the war is mine.
Dismiss your fears, and let the fight ensue;
This hand alone shall right the gods and you:
Our injur'd altars, and their broken vow,
To this avenging sword the faithless Turnus owe."

Thus while he spoke, unmindful of defense,
A winged arrow struck the pious prince.
But, whether from some human hand it came,
Or hostile god, is left unknown by fame:
No human hand or hostile god was found,
To boast the triumph of so base a wound.

When Turnus saw the Trojan quit the plain,
His chiefs dismay'd, his troops a fainting train,
Th' unhop'd event his heighten'd soul inspires:
At once his arms and coursers he requires;
Then, with a leap, his lofty chariot gains,
And with a ready hand assumes the reins.
He drives impetuous, and, where'er he goes,
He leaves behind a lane of slaughter'd foes.
These his lance reaches; over those he rolls

His rapid car, and crushes out their souls:
In vain the vanquish'd fly; the victor sends
The dead men's weapons at their living friends.
Thus, on the banks of Hebrus' freezing flood,
The God of Battles, in his angry mood,
Clashing his sword against his brazen shield,
Let loose the reins, and scours along the field:
Before the wind his fiery coursers fly;
Groans the sad earth, resounds the rattling sky.
Wrath, Terror, Treason, Tumult, and Despair
(Dire faces, and deform'd) surround the car;
Friends of the god, and followers of the war.
With fury not unlike, nor less disdain,
Exulting Turnus flies along the plain:
His smoking horses, at their utmost speed,
He lashes on, and urges o'er the dead.
Their fetlocks run with blood; and, when they bound,
The gore and gath'ring dust are dash'd around.
Thamyris and Pholus, masters of the war,
He kill'd at hand, but Sthenelus afar:
From far the sons of Imbracus he slew,
Glaucus and Lades, of the Lycian crew;
Both taught to fight on foot, in battle join'd,
Or mount the courser that outstrips the wind.

Meantime Eumedes, vaunting in the field,
New fir'd the Trojans, and their foes repell'd.
This son of Dolon bore his grandsire's name,
But emulated more his father's fame;
His guileful father, sent a nightly spy,
The Grecian camp and order to descry:
Hard enterprise! and well he might require
Achilles' car and horses, for his hire:
But, met upon the scout, th' Aetolian prince
In death bestow'd a juster recompense.
Fierce Turnus view'd the Trojan from afar,
And launch'd his jav'lin from his lofty car;
Then lightly leaping down, pursued the blow,
And, pressing with his foot his prostrate foe,
Wrench'd from his feeble hold the shining sword,
And plung'd it in the bosom of its lord.
"Possess," said he, "the fruit of all thy pains,
And measure, at thy length, our Latian plains.
Thus are my foes rewarded by my hand;
Thus may they build their town, and thus enjoy the land!"

Then Dares, Butes, Sybaris he slew,
Whom o'er his neck his flound'ring courser threw.
As when loud Boreas, with his blust'ring train,
Stoops from above, incumbent on the main;
Where'er he flies, he drives the rack before,

And rolls the billows on th' Aegaean shore:
So, where resistless Turnus takes his course,
The scatter'd squadrons bend before his force;
His crest of horses' hair is blown behind
By adverse air, and rustles in the wind.

This haughty Phegeus saw with high disdain,
And, as the chariot roll'd along the plain,
Light from the ground he leapt, and seiz'd the rein.
Thus hung in air, he still retain'd his hold,
The coursers frighted, and their course controll'd.
The lance of Turnus reach'd him as he hung,
And pierc'd his plated arms, but pass'd along,
And only raz'd the skin. He turn'd, and held
Against his threat'ning foe his ample shield;
Then call'd for aid: but, while he cried in vain,
The chariot bore him backward on the plain.
He lies revers'd; the victor king descends,
And strikes so justly where his helmet ends,
He lops the head. The Latian fields are drunk
With streams that issue from the bleeding trunk.

While he triumphs, and while the Trojans yield,
The wounded prince is forc'd to leave the field:
Strong Mnestheus, and Achates often tried,
And young Ascanius, weeping by his side,
Conduct him to his tent. Scarce can he rear
His limbs from earth, supported on his spear.
Resolv'd in mind, regardless of the smart,
He tugs with both his hands, and breaks the dart.
The steel remains. No readier way he found
To draw the weapon, than t' inlarge the wound.
Eager of fight, impatient of delay,
He begs; and his unwilling friends obey.

Iapis was at hand to prove his art,
Whose blooming youth so fir'd Apollo's heart,
That, for his love, he proffer'd to bestow
His tuneful harp and his unerring bow.
The pious youth, more studious how to save
His aged sire, now sinking to the grave,
Preferr'd the pow'r of plants, and silent praise
Of healing arts, before Phoebean bays.

Propp'd on his lance the pensive hero stood,
And heard and saw, unmov'd, the mourning crowd.
The fam'd physician tucks his robes around
With ready hands, and hastens to the wound.
With gentle touches he performs his part,
This way and that, soliciting the dart,
And exercises all his heav'nly art.
All soft'ning simples, known of sov'reign use,

He presses out, and pours their noble juice.
These first infus'd, to lenify the pain,
He tugs with pincers, but he tugs in vain.
Then to the patron of his art he pray'd:
The patron of his art refus'd his aid.

Meantime the war approaches to the tents;
Th' alarm grows hotter, and the noise augments:
The driving dust proclaims the danger near;
And first their friends, and then their foes appear:
Their friends retreat; their foes pursue the rear.
The camp is fill'd with terror and affright:
The hissing shafts within the trench alight;
An undistinguish'd noise ascends the sky,
The shouts of those who kill, and groans of those who die.

But now the goddess mother, mov'd with grief,
And pierc'd with pity, hastens her relief.
A branch of healing dittany she brought,
Which in the Cretan fields with care she sought:
Rough is the stern, which woolly leafs surround;
The leafs with flow'rs, the flow'rs with purple crown'd,
Well known to wounded goats; a sure relief
To draw the pointed steel, and ease the grief.
This Venus brings, in clouds involv'd, and brews
Th' extracted liquor with ambrosian dews,
And odorous panacee. Unseen she stands,
Temp'ring the mixture with her heav'nly hands,
And pours it in a bowl, already crown'd
With juice of med'c'nal herbs prepar'd to bathe the wound.
The leech, unknowing of superior art
Which aids the cure, with this foments the part;
And in a moment ceas'd the raging smart.
Stanch'd is the blood, and in the bottom stands:
The steel, but scarcely touch'd with tender hands,
Moves up, and follows of its own accord,
And health and vigor are at once restor'd.
Iapis first perceiv'd the closing wound,
And first the footsteps of a god he found.
"Arms! arms!" he cries; "the sword and shield prepare,
And send the willing chief, renew'd, to war.
This is no mortal work, no cure of mine,
Nor art's effect, but done by hands divine.
Some god our general to the battle sends;
Some god preserves his life for greater ends."
The hero arms in haste; his hands infold
His thighs with cuishes of refulgent gold:
Inflam'd to fight, and rushing to the field,
That hand sustaining the celestial shield,
This gripes the lance, and with such vigor shakes,
That to the rest the beamy weapon quakes.

Then with a close embrace he strain'd his son,
And, kissing thro' his helmet, thus begun:
"My son, from my example learn the war,
In camps to suffer, and in fields to dare;
But happier chance than mine attend thy care!
This day my hand thy tender age shall shield,
And crown with honors of the conquer'd field:
Thou, when thy riper years shall send thee forth
To toils of war, be mindful of my worth;
Assert thy birthright, and in arms be known,
For Hector's nephew, and Aeneas' son."
He said; and, striding, issued on the plain.
Anteus and Mnestheus, and a num'rous train,
Attend his steps; the rest their weapons take,
And, crowding to the field, the camp forsake.
A cloud of blinding dust is rais'd around,
Labors beneath their feet the trembling ground.

Now Turnus, posted on a hill, from far
Beheld the progress of the moving war:
With him the Latins view'd the cover'd plains,
And the chill blood ran backward in their veins.
Juturna saw th' advancing troops appear,
And heard the hostile sound, and fled for fear.
Aeneas leads; and draws a sweeping train,
Clos'd in their ranks, and pouring on the plain.
As when a whirlwind, rushing to the shore
From the mid ocean, drives the waves before;
The painful hind with heavy heart foresees
The flatted fields, and slaughter of the trees;
With like impetuous rage the prince appears
Before his doubled front, nor less destruction bears.
And now both armies shock in open field;
Osiris is by strong Thymbraeus kill'd.
Archetius, Ufens, Epulon, are slain
(All fam'd in arms, and of the Latian train)
By Gyas', Mnestheus', and Achates' hand.
The fatal augur falls, by whose command
The truce was broken, and whose lance, embrued
With Trojan blood, th' unhappy fight renew'd.
Loud shouts and clamors rend the liquid sky,
And o'er the field the frighted Latins fly.
The prince disdains the dastards to pursue,
Nor moves to meet in arms the fighting few;
Turnus alone, amid the dusky plain,
He seeks, and to the combat calls in vain.
Juturna heard, and, seiz'd with mortal fear,
Forc'd from the beam her brother's charioteer;
Assumes his shape, his armor, and his mien,
And, like Metiscus, in his seat is seen.

As the black swallow near the palace plies;
O’er empty courts, and under arches, flies;
Now hawks aloft, now skims along the flood,
To furnish her loquacious nest with food:
So drives the rapid goddess o’er the plains;
The smoking horses run with loosen’d reins.
She steers a various course among the foes;
Now here, now there, her conqu’ring brother shows;
Now with a straight, now with a wheeling flight,
She turns, and bends, but shuns the single fight.
Aeneas, fir’d with fury, breaks the crowd,
And seeks his foe, and calls by name aloud:
He runs within a narrower ring, and tries
To stop the chariot; but the chariot flies.
If he but gain a glimpse, Juturna fears,
And far away the Daunian hero bears.

What should he do! Nor arts nor arms avail;
And various cares in vain his mind assail.
The great Messapus, thund’ring thro’ the field,
In his left hand two pointed jav’lins held:
Encount’ring on the prince, one dart he drew,
And with unerring aim and utmost vigor threw.
Aeneas saw it come, and, stooping low
Beneath his buckler, shunn’d the threat’ning blow.
The weapon hiss’d above his head, and tore
The waving plume which on his helm he wore.
Forced by this hostile act, and fir’d with spite,
That flying Turnus still declin’d the fight,
The Prince, whose piety had long repell’d
His inborn ardor, now invades the field;
Invokes the pow’rs of violated peace,
Their rites and injur’d altars to redress;
Then, to his rage abandoning the rein,
With blood and slaughter’d bodies fills the plain.

What god can tell, what numbers can display,
The various labors of that fatal day;
What chiefs and champions fell on either side,
In combat slain, or by what deaths they died;
Whom Turnus, whom the Trojan hero kill’d;
Who shar’d the fame and fortune of the field!
Jove, could’st thou view, and not avert thy sight,
Two jarring nations join’d in cruel fight,
Whom leagues of lasting love so shortly shall unite!

Aeneas first Rutulian Sucro found,
Whose valor made the Trojans quit their ground;
Betwixt his ribs the jav’lin drove so just,
It reach’d his heart, nor needs a second thrust.
Now Turnus, at two blows, two brethren slew;
First from his horse fierce Amycus he threw:

Then, leaping on the ground, on foot assail'd
Diores, and in equal fight prevail'd.
Their lifeless trunks he leaves upon the place;
Their heads, distilling gore, his chariot grace.
Three cold on earth the Trojan hero threw,
Whom without respite at one charge he slew:
Cethegus, Tanais, Tagus, fell oppress'd,
And sad Onythes, added to the rest,
Of Theban blood, whom Peridia bore.

Turnus two brothers from the Lycian shore,
And from Apollo's fane to battle sent,
O'erthrew; nor Phoebus could their fate prevent.
Peaceful Menoetes after these he kill'd,
Who long had shunn'd the dangers of the field:
On Lerna's lake a silent life he led,
And with his nets and angle earn'd his bread;
Nor pompous cares, nor palaces, he knew,
But wisely from th' infectious world withdrew:
Poor was his house; his father's painful hand
Discharg'd his rent, and plow'd another's land.

As flames among the lofty woods are thrown
On diff 'rent sides, and both by winds are blown;
The laurels crackle in the sputt'ring fire;
The frighted sylvans from their shades retire:
Or as two neighb'ring torrents fall from high;
Rapid they run; the foamy waters fry;
They roll to sea with unresisted force,
And down the rocks precipitate their course:
Not with less rage the rival heroes take
Their diff 'rent ways, nor less destruction make.
With spears afar, with swords at hand, they strike;
And zeal of slaughter fires their souls alike.
Like them, their dauntless men maintain the field;
And hearts are pierc'd, unknowing how to yield:
They blow for blow return, and wound for wound;
And heaps of bodies raise the level ground.

Murranus, boasting of his blood, that springs
From a long royal race of Latian kings,
Is by the Trojan from his chariot thrown,
Crush'd with the weight of an unwieldy stone:
Betwixt the wheels he fell; the wheels, that bore
His living load, his dying body tore.
His starting steeds, to shun the glitt'ring sword,
Paw down his trampled limbs, forgetful of their lord.

Fierce Hyllus threaten'd high, and, face to face,
Affronted Turnus in the middle space:
The prince encounter'd him in full career,
And at his temples aim'd the deadly spear;

So fatally the flying weapon sped,
That thro' his helm it pierc'd his head.
Nor, Cisseus, couldst thou scape from Turnus' hand,
In vain the strongest of th' Arcadian band:
Nor to Cupentus could his gods afford
Availing aid against th' Aenean sword,
Which to his naked heart pursued the course;
Nor could his plated shield sustain the force.
Iolas fell, whom not the Grecian pow'rs,
Nor great subverter of the Trojan tow'rs,
Were doom'd to kill, while Heav'n prolong'd his date;
But who can pass the bounds, prefix'd by fate?
In high Lyrnessus, and in Troy, he held
Two palaces, and was from each expell'd:
Of all the mighty man, the last remains
A little spot of foreign earth contains.

And now both hosts their broken troops unite
In equal ranks, and mix in mortal fight.
Seresthus and undaunted Mnestheus join
The Trojan, Tuscan, and Arcadian line:
Sea-born Messapus, with Atinas, heads
The Latin squadrons, and to battle leads.
They strike, they push, they throng the scanty space,
Resolv'd on death, impatient of disgrace;
And, where one falls, another fills his place.

The Cyprian goddess now inspires her son
To leave th' unfinish'd fight, and storm the town:
For, while he rolls his eyes around the plain
In quest of Turnus, whom he seeks in vain,
He views th' unguarded city from afar,
In careless quiet, and secure of war.
Occasion offers, and excites his mind
To dare beyond the task he first design'd.
Resolv'd, he calls his chiefs; they leave the fight:
Attended thus, he takes a neighb'ring height;
The crowding troops about their gen'ral stand,
All under arms, and wait his high command.
Then thus the lofty prince: "Hear and obey,
Ye Trojan bands, without the least delay
Jove is with us; and what I have decreed
Requires our utmost vigor, and our speed.
Your instant arms against the town prepare,
The source of mischief, and the seat of war.
This day the Latian tow'rs, that mate the sky,
Shall level with the plain in ashes lie:
The people shall be slaves, unless in time
They kneel for pardon, and repent their crime.
Twice have our foes been vanquish'd on the plain:
Then shall I wait till Turnus will be slain?

Your force against the perjur'd city bend.
There it began, and there the war shall end.
The peace profan'd our rightful arms requires;
Cleanse the polluted place with purging fires."

He finish'd; and, one soul inspiring all,
Form'd in a wedge, the foot approach the wall.
Without the town, an unprovided train
Of gaping, gazing citizens are slain.
Some firebrands, others scaling ladders bear,
And those they toss aloft, and these they rear:
The flames now launch'd, the feather'd arrows fly,
And clouds of missive arms obscure the sky.
Advancing to the front, the hero stands,
And, stretching out to heav'n his pious hands,
Attests the gods, asserts his innocence,
Upbraids with breach of faith th' Ausonian prince;
Declares the royal honor doubly stain'd,
And twice the rites of holy peace profan'd.

Dissenting clamors in the town arise;
Each will be heard, and all at once advise.
One part for peace, and one for war contends;
Some would exclude their foes, and some admit their friends.
The helpless king is hurried in the throng,
And, whate'er tide prevails, is borne along.
Thus, when the swain, within a hollow rock,
Invades the bees with suffocating smoke,
They run around, or labor on their wings,
Disus'd to flight, and shoot their sleepy stings;
To shun the bitter fumes in vain they try;
Black vapors, issuing from the vent, involve the sky.

But fate and envious fortune now prepare
To plunge the Latins in the last despair.
The queen, who saw the foes invade the town,
And brands on tops of burning houses thrown,
Cast round her eyes, distracted with her fear
No troops of Turnus in the field appear.
Once more she stares abroad, but still in vain,
And then concludes the royal youth is slain.
Mad with her anguish, impotent to bear
The mighty grief, she loathes the vital air.
She calls herself the cause of all this ill,
And owns the dire effects of her ungovern'd will;
She raves against the gods; she beats her breast;
She tears with both her hands her purple vest:
Then round a beam a running noose she tied,
And, fasten'd by the neck, obscenely died.

Soon as the fatal news by Fame was blown,
And to her dames and to her daughter known,

The sad Lavinia rends her yellow hair
And rosy cheeks; the rest her sorrow share:
With shrieks the palace rings, and madness of despair.
The spreading rumor fills the public place:
Confusion, fear, distraction, and disgrace,
And silent shame, are seen in ev'ry face.
Latinus tears his garments as he goes,
Both for his public and his private woes;
With filth his venerable beard besmears,
And sordid dust deforms his silver hairs.
And much he blames the softness of his mind,
Obnoxious to the charms of womankind,
And soon seduc'd to change what he so well design'd;
To break the solemn league so long desir'd,
Nor finish what his fates, and those of Troy, requir'd.

Now Turnus rolls aloof o'er empty plains,
And here and there some straggling foes he gleans.
His flying coursers please him less and less,
Asham'd of easy fight and cheap success.
Thus half-contented, anxious in his mind,
The distant cries come driving in the wind,
Shouts from the walls, but shouts in murmurs drown'd;
A jarring mixture, and a boding sound.
"Alas!" said he, "what mean these dismal cries?
What doleful clamors from the town arise?"
Confus'd, he stops, and backward pulls the reins.
She who the driver's office now sustains, Replies:
"Neglect, my lord, these new alarms;
Here fight, and urge the fortune of your arms:
There want not others to defend the wall.
If by your rival's hand th' Italians fall,
So shall your fatal sword his friends oppress,
In honor equal, equal in success."

To this, the prince: "O sister for I knew
The peace infring'd proceeded first from you;
I knew you, when you mingled first in fight;
And now in vain you would deceive my sight
Why, goddess, this unprofitable care?
Who sent you down from heav'n, involv'd in air,
Your share of mortal sorrows to sustain,
And see your brother bleeding on the plain?
For to what pow'r can Turnus have recourse,
Or how resist his fate's prevailing force?
These eyes beheld Murranus bite the ground:
Mighty the man, and mighty was the wound.
I heard my dearest friend, with dying breath,
My name invoking to revenge his death.
Brave Ufens fell with honor on the place,
To shun the shameful sight of my disgrace.

On earth supine, a manly corpse he lies;
His vest and armor are the victor's prize.
Then, shall I see Laurentum in a flame,
Which only wanted, to complete my shame?
How will the Latins hoot their champion's flight!
How Drances will insult and point them to the sight!
Is death so hard to bear? Ye gods below,
(Since those above so small compassion show,)
Receive a soul unsullied yet with shame,
Which not belies my great forefather's name!"

He said; and while he spoke, with flying speed
Came Sages urging on his foamy steed:
Fix'd on his wounded face a shaft he bore,
And, seeking Turnus, sent his voice before:
"Turnus, on you, on you alone, depends
Our last relief: compassionate your friends!
Like lightning, fierce Aeneas, rolling on,
With arms invests, with flames invades the town:
The brands are toss'd on high; the winds conspire
To drive along the deluge of the fire.
All eyes are fix'd on you: your foes rejoice;
Ev'n the king staggers, and suspends his choice;
Doubts to deliver or defend the town,
Whom to reject, or whom to call his son.
The queen, on whom your utmost hopes were plac'd,
Herself suborning death, has breath'd her last.
'T is true, Messapus, fearless of his fate,
With fierce Atinas' aid, defends the gate:
On ev'ry side surrounded by the foe,
The more they kill, the greater numbers grow;
An iron harvest mounts, and still remains to mow.
You, far aloof from your forsaken bands,
Your rolling chariot drive o'er empty sands.

Stupid he sate, his eyes on earth declin'd,
And various cares revolving in his mind:
Rage, boiling from the bottom of his breast,
And sorrow mix'd with shame, his soul oppress'd;
And conscious worth lay lab'ring in his thought,
And love by jealousy to madness wrought.
By slow degrees his reason drove away
The mists of passion, and resum'd her sway.
Then, rising on his car, he turn'd his look,
And saw the town involv'd in fire and smoke.
A wooden tow'r with flames already blaz'd,
Which his own hands on beams and rafters rais'd;
And bridges laid above to join the space,
And wheels below to roll from place to place.
"Sister, the Fates have vanquish'd: let us go
The way which Heav'n and my hard fortune show.

The fight is fix'd; nor shall the branded name
Of a base coward blot your brother's fame.
Death is my choice; but suffer me to try
My force, and vent my rage before I die."
He said; and, leaping down without delay,
Thro' crowds of scatter'd foes he freed his way.
Striding he pass'd, impetuous as the wind,
And left the grieving goddess far behind.
As when a fragment, from a mountain torn
By raging tempests, or by torrents borne,
Or sapp'd by time, or loosen'd from the roots
Prone thro' the void the rocky ruin shoots,
Rolling from crag to crag, from steep to steep;
Down sink, at once, the shepherds and their sheep:
Involv'd alike, they rush to nether ground;
Stunn'd with the shock they fall, and stunn'd from earth rebound:
So Turnus, hasting headlong to the town,
Should'ring and shoving, bore the squadrons down.
Still pressing onward, to the walls he drew,
Where shafts, and spears, and darts promiscuous flew,
And sanguine streams the slipp'ry ground embrue.
First stretching out his arm, in sign of peace,
He cries aloud, to make the combat cease:
"Rutulians, hold; and Latin troops, retire!
The fight is mine; and me the gods require.
'T is just that I should vindicate alone
The broken truce, or for the breach atone.
This day shall free from wars th' Ausonian state,
Or finish my misfortunes in my fate."

Both armies from their bloody work desist,
And, bearing backward, form a spacious list.
The Trojan hero, who receiv'd from fame
The welcome sound, and heard the champion's name,
Soon leaves the taken works and mounted walls,
Greedy of war where greater glory calls.
He springs to fight, exulting in his force
His jointed armor rattles in the course.
Like Eryx, or like Athos, great he shows,
Or Father Apennine, when, white with snows,
His head divine obscure in clouds he hides,
And shakes the sounding forest on his sides.
The nations, overaw'd, surcease the fight;
Immovable their bodies, fix'd their sight.
Ev'n death stands still; nor from above they throw
Their darts, nor drive their batt'ring-rams below.
In silent order either army stands,
And drop their swords, unknowing, from their hands.
Th' Ausonian king beholds, with wond'ring sight,
Two mighty champions match'd in single fight,

Born under climes remote, and brought by fate,
With swords to try their titles to the state.

Now, in clos'd field, each other from afar
They view; and, rushing on, begin the war.
They launch their spears; then hand to hand they meet;
The trembling soil resounds beneath their feet:
Their bucklers clash; thick blows descend from high,
And flakes of fire from their hard helmets fly.
Courage conspires with chance, and both ingage
With equal fortune yet, and mutual rage.
As when two bulls for their fair female fight
In Sila's shades, or on Taburnus' height;
With horns adverse they meet; the keeper flies;
Mute stands the herd; the heifers roll their eyes,
And wait th' event; which victor they shall bear,
And who shall be the lord, to rule the lusty year:
With rage of love the jealous rivals burn,
And push for push, and wound for wound return;
Their dewlaps gor'd, their sides are lav'd in blood;
Loud cries and roaring sounds rebellow thro' the wood:
Such was the combat in the listed ground;
So clash their swords, and so their shields resound.

Jove sets the beam; in either scale he lays
The champions' fate, and each exactly weighs.
On this side, life and lucky chance ascends;
Loaded with death, that other scale descends.
Rais'd on the stretch, young Turnus aims a blow
Full on the helm of his unguarded foe:
Shrill shouts and clamors ring on either side,
As hopes and fears their panting hearts divide.
But all in pieces flies the traitor sword,
And, in the middle stroke, deserts his lord.
Now is but death, or flight; disarm'd he flies,
When in his hand an unknown hilt he spies.
Fame says that Turnus, when his steeds he join'd,
Hurrying to war, disorder'd in his mind,
Snatch'd the first weapon which his haste could find.
'T was not the fated sword his father bore,
But that his charioteer Metiscus wore.
This, while the Trojans fled, the toughness held;
But, vain against the great Vulcanian shield,
The mortal-temper'd steel deceiv'd his hand:
The shiver'd fragments shone amid the sand.

Surpris'd with fear, he fled along the field,
And now forthright, and now in orbits wheel'd;
For here the Trojan troops the list surround,
And there the pass is clos'd with pools and marshy ground.
Aeneas hastens, tho' with heavier pace
His wound, so newly knit, retards the chase,

And oft his trembling knees their aid refuse
Yet, pressing foot by foot, his foe pursues.

Thus, when a fearful stag is clos'd around
With crimson toils, or in a river found,
High on the bank the deep-mouth'd hound appears,
Still opening, following still, where'er he steers;
The persecuted creature, to and fro,
Turns here and there, to scape his Umbrian foe:
Steep is th' ascent, and, if he gains the land,
The purple death is pitch'd along the strand.
His eager foe, determin'd to the chase,
Stretch'd at his length, gains ground at ev'ry pace;
Now to his beamy head he makes his way,
And now he holds, or thinks he holds, his prey:
Just at the pinch, the stag springs out with fear;
He bites the wind, and fills his sounding jaws with air:
The rocks, the lakes, the meadows ring with cries;
The mortal tumult mounts, and thunders in the skies.
Thus flies the Daunian prince, and, flying, blames
His tardy troops, and, calling by their names,
Demands his trusty sword. The Trojan threats
The realm with ruin, and their ancient seats
To lay in ashes, if they dare supply
With arms or aid his vanquish'd enemy:
Thus menacing, he still pursues the course,
With vigor, tho' diminish'd of his force.
Ten times already round the listed place
One chief had fled, and t' other giv'n the chase:
No trivial prize is play'd; for on the life
Or death of Turnus now depends the strife.

Within the space, an olive tree had stood,
A sacred shade, a venerable wood,
For vows to Faunus paid, the Latins' guardian god.
Here hung the vests, and tablets were ingrav'd,
Of sinking mariners from shipwrack sav'd.
With heedless hands the Trojans fell'd the tree,
To make the ground inclos'd for combat free.
Deep in the root, whether by fate, or chance,
Or erring haste, the Trojan drove his lance;
Then stoop'd, and tugg'd with force immense, to free
Th' incumber'd spear from the tenacious tree;
That, whom his fainting limbs pursued in vain,
His flying weapon might from far attain.

Confus'd with fear, bereft of human aid,
Then Turnus to the gods, and first to Faunus pray'd:
"O Faunus, pity! and thou Mother Earth,
Where I thy foster son receiv'd my birth,
Hold fast the steel! If my religious hand
Your plant has honor'd, which your foes profan'd,

Propitious hear my pious pray'r!" He said,
Nor with successless vows invok'd their aid.
Th' incumbent hero wrench'd, and pull'd, and strain'd;
But still the stubborn earth the steel detain'd.
Juturna took her time; and, while in vain
He strove, assum'd Meticus' form again,
And, in that imitated shape, restor'd
To the despairing prince his Daunian sword.
The Queen of Love, who, with disdain and grief,
Saw the bold nymph afford this prompt relief,
T' assert her offspring with a greater deed,
From the tough root the ling'ring weapon freed.

Once more erect, the rival chiefs advance:
One trusts the sword, and one the pointed lance;
And both resolv'd alike to try their fatal chance.

Meantime imperial Jove to Juno spoke,
Who from a shining cloud beheld the shock:
"What new arrest, O Queen of Heav'n, is sent
To stop the Fates now lab'ring in th' event?
What farther hopes are left thee to pursue?
Divine Aeneas, (and thou know'st it too,)
Foredoom'd, to these celestial seats are due.
What more attempts for Turnus can be made,
That thus thou ling'rest in this lonely shade?
Is it becoming of the due respect
And awful honor of a god elect,
A wound unworthy of our state to feel,
Patient of human hands and earthly steel?
Or seems it just, the sister should restore
A second sword, when one was lost before,
And arm a conquer'd wretch against his conqueror?
For what, without thy knowledge and avow,
Nay more, thy dictate, durst Juturna do?
At last, in deference to my love, forbear
To lodge within thy soul this anxious care;
Reclin'd upon my breast, thy grief unload:
Who should relieve the goddess, but the god?
Now all things to their utmost issue tend,
Push'd by the Fates to their appointed
While leave was giv'n thee, and a lawful hour

For vengeance, wrath, and unresisted pow'r,
Toss'd on the seas, thou couldst thy foes distress,
And, driv'n ashore, with hostile arms oppress;
Deform the royal house; and, from the side
Of the just bridegroom, tear the plighted bride:
Now cease at my command." The Thund'rer said;
And, with dejected eyes, this answer Juno made:
"Because your dread decree too well I knew,
From Turnus and from earth unwilling I withdrew.

Else should you not behold me here, alone,
Involv'd in empty clouds, my friends bemoan,
But, girt with vengeful flames, in open sight
Engag'd against my foes in mortal fight.
'T is true, Juturna mingled in the strife
By my command, to save her brother's life
At least to try; but, by the Stygian lake,
(The most religious oath the gods can take,)
With this restriction, not to bend the bow,
Or toss the spear, or trembling dart to throw.
And now, resign'd to your superior might,
And tir'd with fruitless toils, I loathe the fight.
This let me beg (and this no fates withstand)
Both for myself and for your father's land,
That, when the nuptial bed shall bind the peace,
(Which I, since you ordain, consent to bless,)
The laws of either nation be the same;
But let the Latins still retain their name,
Speak the same language which they spoke before,
Wear the same habits which their grandsires wore.
Call them not Trojans: perish the renown
And name of Troy, with that detested town.
Latium be Latium still; let Alba reign
And Rome's immortal majesty remain."

Then thus the founder of mankind replies
(Unruffled was his front, serene his eyes)
"Can Saturn's issue, and heav'n's other heir,
Such endless anger in her bosom bear?
Be mistress, and your full desires obtain;
But quench the choler you foment in vain.
From ancient blood th' Ausonian people sprung,
Shall keep their name, their habit, and their tongue.
The Trojans to their customs shall be tied:
I will, myself, their common rites provide;
The natives shall command, the foreigners subside.
All shall be Latium; Troy without a name;
And her lost sons forget from whence they came.
From blood so mix'd, a pious race shall flow,
Equal to gods, excelling all below.
No nation more respect to you shall pay,
Or greater off 'rings on your altars lay."
Juno consents, well pleas'd that her desires
Had found success, and from the cloud retires.

The peace thus made, the Thund'rer next
prepares To force the wat'ry goddess from the wars.
Deep in the dismal regions void of light,
Three daughters at a birth were born to Night:
These their brown mother, brooding on her care,
Indued with windy wings to flit in air,

With serpents girt alike, and crown'd with hissing hair.
In heav'n the Dirae call'd, and still at hand,
Before the throne of angry Jove they stand,
His ministers of wrath, and ready still
The minds of mortal men with fears to fill,
Whene'er the moody sire, to wreak his hate
On realms or towns deserving of their fate,
Hurls down diseases, death and deadly care,
And terrifies the guilty world with war.
One sister plague if these from heav'n he sent,
To fright Juturna with a dire portent.
The pest comes whirling down: by far more slow
Springs the swift arrow from the Parthian bow,
Or Cydon yew, when, traversing the skies,
And drench'd in pois'nous juice, the sure destruction flies.
With such a sudden and unseen a flight
Shot thro' the clouds the daughter of the night.
Soon as the field inclos'd she had in view,
And from afar her destin'd quarry knew,
Contracted, to the boding bird she turns,
Which haunts the ruin'd piles and hallow'd urns,
And beats about the tombs with nightly wings,
Where songs obscene on sepulchers she sings.
Thus lessen'd in her form, with frightful cries
The Fury round unhappy Turnus flies,
Flaps on his shield, and flutters o'er his eyes.

A lazy chillness crept along his blood;
Chok'd was his voice; his hair with horror stood.
Juturna from afar beheld her fly,
And knew th' ill omen, by her screaming cry
And stridor of her wings. Amaz'd with fear,
Her beauteous breast she beat, and rent her flowing hair.

"Ah me!" she cries, "in this unequal strife
What can thy sister more to save thy life?
Weak as I am, can I, alas! contend
In arms with that inexorable fiend?
Now, now, I quit the field! forbear to fright
My tender soul, ye baleful birds of night;
The lashing of your wings I know too well,
The sounding flight, and fun'ral screams of hell!
These are the gifts you bring from haughty Jove,
The worthy recompense of ravish'd love!
Did he for this exempt my life from fate?
O hard conditions of immortal state,
Tho' born to death, not privileg'd to die,
But forc'd to bear impos'd eternity!
Take back your envious bribes, and let me go
Companion to my brother's ghost below!
The joys are vanish'd: nothing now remains,

Of life immortal, but immortal pains.
What earth will open her devouring womb,
To rest a weary goddess in the tomb!”
She drew a length of sighs; nor more she said,
But in her azure mantle wrapp’d her head,
Then plung’d into her stream, with deep despair,
And her last sobs came bubbling up in air.

Now stern Aeneas his weighty spear
Against his foe, and thus upbraids his fear:
“What farther subterfuge can Turnus find?
What empty hopes are harbor’d in his mind?
‘T is not thy swiftness can secure thy flight;
Not with their feet, but hands, the valiant fight.
Vary thy shape in thousand forms, and dare
What skill and courage can attempt in war;
Wish for the wings of winds, to mount the sky;
Or hid, within the hollow earth to lie!”
The champion shook his head, and made this short reply:
“No threats of thine my manly mind can move;
‘T is hostile heav’n I dread, and partial Jove.”
He said no more, but, with a sigh, repress’d
The mighty sorrow in his swelling breast.

Then, as he roll’d his troubled eyes around,
An antique stone he saw, the common bound
Of neighb’ring fields, and barrier of the ground;
So vast, that twelve strong men of modern days
Th’ enormous weight from earth could hardly raise.
He heav’d it at a lift, and, pois’d on high,
Ran stagg’ring on against his enemy,
But so disorder’d, that he scarcely knew
His way, or what unwieldly weight he threw.
His knocking knees are bent beneath the load,
And shiv’ring cold congeals his vital blood.
The stone drops from his arms, and, falling short
For want of vigor, mocks his vain effort.
And as, when heavy sleep has clos’d the sight,
The sickly fancy labors in the night;
We seem to run; and, destitute of force,
Our sinking limbs forsake us in the course:
In vain we heave for breath; in vain we cry;
The nerves, unbrac’d, their usual strength deny;
And on the tongue the falt’ring accents die:
So Turnus far’d; whatever means he tried,
All force of arms and points of art employ’d,
The Fury flew athwart, and made th’ endeavor void.

A thousand various thoughts his soul confound;
He star’d about, nor aid nor issue found;
His own men stop the pass, and his own walls surround.
Once more he pauses, and looks out again,

And seeks the goddess charioteer in vain.
Trembling he views the thund'ring chief advance,
And brandishing aloft the deadly lance:
Amaz'd he cow'rs beneath his conqu'ring foe,
Forgets to ward, and waits the coming blow.
Astonish'd while he stands, and fix'd with fear,
Aim'd at his shield he sees th' impending spear.

The hero measur'd first, with narrow view,
The destin'd mark; and, rising as he threw,
With its full swing the fatal weapon flew.
Not with less rage the rattling thunder falls,
Or stones from batt'ring-engines break the walls:
Swift as a whirlwind, from an arm so strong,
The lance drove on, and bore the death along.
Naught could his sev'nfold shield the prince avail,
Nor aught, beneath his arms, the coat of mail:
It pierc'd thro' all, and with a grisly wound
Transfix'd his thigh, and doubled him to ground.
With groans the Latins rend the vaulted sky:
Woods, hills, and valleys, to the voice reply.

Now low on earth the lofty chief is laid,
With eyes cast upward, and with arms display'd,
And, recreant, thus to the proud victor pray'd:
"I know my death deserv'd, nor hope to live:
Use what the gods and thy good fortune give.
Yet think, O think, if mercy may be shown
Thou hadst a father once, and hast a son
Pity my sire, now sinking to the grave;
And for Anchises' sake old Daunus save!
Or, if thy vow'd revenge pursue my death,
Give to my friends my body void of breath!
The Latian chiefs have seen me beg my life;
Thine is the conquest, thine the royal wife:
Against a yielded man, 't is mean ignoble strife."

In deep suspense the Trojan seem'd to stand,
And, just prepar'd to strike, repress'd his hand.
He roll'd his eyes, and ev'ry moment felt
His manly soul with more compassion melt;
When, casting down a casual glance, he spied
The golden belt that glitter'd on his side,
The fatal spoils which haughty Turnus tore
From dying Pallas, and in triumph wore.
Then, rous'd anew to wrath, he loudly cries
(Flames, while he spoke, came flashing from his eyes)
"Traitor, dost thou, dost thou to grace pretend,
Clad, as thou art, in trophies of my friend?
To his sad soul a grateful off 'ring go!
'T is Pallas, Pallas gives this deadly blow."
He rais'd his arm aloft, and, at the word,

Deep in his bosom drove the shining sword.
The streaming blood distain'd his arms around,
And the disdainful soul came rushing thro' the wound.



Image 4.3: Deification of Caesar | Woodcut by Virgil Solis depicting Julius Caesar rising to godhood.

Author: Paul Barlow
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

This page titled 5.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **4.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.)** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.)

Published 8 C.E.

Rome

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a collection of many Greek and Roman myths, is written by a master poet of the ancient world. From the creation of the world to the apotheosis of Julius Caesar, Ovid traces the course of mythological history, putting together a narrative based on previous written and oral sources. In the *Aeneid* of Virgil, Ovid's older contemporary epic poet, the gods were portrayed as guiding history toward an end goal (the creation of Rome) with foresight and planning. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid demonstrates how the traditional stories reveal that there is very little planning in the actions of the gods, who often are motivated by lust or pride. His irreverent view of the world, combined with his previous (sometimes risqué) love poetry, probably led to his exile by Emperor Augustus in the same year that his *Metamorphoses* was published. In the Middle Ages, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was widely translated, although often with "moralized" notes alongside the text that imposed allegorical interpretations on the stories. For most subsequent authors, the *Metamorphoses* became the source book on Greek and Roman mythology.

Written by Laura J. Getty

Metamorphoses

Ovid, Translated by Brookes More

Book 1

Invocatio. Invocation

My soul is wrought to sing of forms transformed to bodies new and strange! Immortal Gods inspire my heart, for ye have changed yourselves and all things you have changed! Oh lead my song in smooth and measured strains, from olden days when earth began to this completed time!

The Creation. Mundi origo.

Before the ocean and the earth appeared before the skies had overspread them all the face of Nature in a vast expanse was naught but Chaos uniformly waste. It was a rude and undeveloped mass, that nothing made except a ponderous weight; and all discordant elements confused, were there congested in a shapeless heap.

As yet the sun afforded earth no light, nor did the moon renew her crescent horns; the earth was not suspended in the air exactly balanced by her heavy weight. Not far along the margin of the shores had Amphitrite stretched her lengthened arms, for all the land was mixed with sea and air. The land was soft, the sea unfit to sail, the atmosphere opaque, to naught was given a proper form, in everything was strife, and all was mingled in a seething mass with hot the cold parts strove, and wet with dry and soft with hard, and weight with empty void.

But God, or kindly Nature, ended strife he cut the land from skies, the sea from land, the heavens ethereal from material air; and when were all evolved from that dark mass he bound the fractious parts in tranquil peace. The fiery element of convex heaven leaped from the mass devoid of dragging weight, and chose the summit arch to which the air as next in quality was next in place. The earth more dense attracted grosser parts and moved by gravity sank underneath; and last of all the wide surrounding waves in deeper channels rolled around the globe.

And when this God which one is yet unknown had carved asunder that discordant mass, had thus reduced it to its elements, that every part should equally combine, when time began He rounded out the earth and moulded it to form a mighty globe. Then poured He forth the deeps and gave command that they should billow in the rapid winds, that they should compass every shore of earth. he also added fountains, pools and lakes, and bound with shelving banks the slanting streams, which partly are absorbed and partly join the boundless ocean. Thus received amid the wide expanse of uncontrolled waves, they beat the shores instead of crooked banks.

At His command the boundless plains extend, the valleys are depressed, the woods are clothed in green, the stony mountains rise. And as the heavens are intersected on the right by two broad zones, by two that cut the left, and by a fifth consumed with ardent heat, with such a number did the careful God mark off the compassed weight, and thus the earth received as many climes. Such

heat consumes the middle zone that none may dwell therein; and two extremes are covered with deep snow; and two are placed betwixt the hot and cold, which mixed together give a temperate clime; and over all the atmosphere suspends with weight proportioned to the fiery sky, exactly as the weight of earth compares with weight of water.

And He ordered mist to gather in the air and spread the clouds. He fixed the thunders that disturb our souls, and brought the lightning on destructive winds that also waft the cold. Nor did the great Artificer permit these mighty winds to blow unbounded in the pathless skies, but each discordant brother fixed in space, although His power can scarce restrain their rage to rend the universe. At His command to far Aurora, Eurus took his way, to Nabath, Persia, and that mountain range first gilded by the dawn; and Zephyr's flight was towards the evening star and peaceful shores, warm with the setting sun; and Boreas invaded Scythia and the northern snows; and Auster wafted to the distant south where clouds and rain encompass his abode. and over these He fixed the liquid sky, devoid of weight and free from earthly dross.

And scarcely had He separated these and fixed their certain bounds, when all the stars, which long were pressed and hidden in the mass, began to gleam out from the plains of heaven, and traversed, with the Gods, bright ether fields: and lest some part might be bereft of life the gleaming waves were filled with twinkling fish; the earth was covered with wild animals; the agitated air was filled with birds.

But one more perfect and more sanctified, a being capable of lofty thought, intelligent to rule, was wanting still man was created! Did the Unknown God designing then a better world make man of seed divine? or did Prometheus take the new soil of earth (that still contained some godly element of Heaven's Life) and use it to create the race of man; first mingling it with water of new streams; so that his new creation, upright man, was made in image of commanding Gods? On earth the brute creation bends its gaze, but man was given a lofty countenance and was commanded to behold the skies; and with an upright face may view the stars: and so it was that shapeless clay put on the form of man till then unknown to earth.



Image 4.4: Ovidius Metamorphosis | This frontispiece shows a bust of Ovid surrounded by three angelic figures.

Author: User "Thuresson"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Quattuor aetates. Gigantes. The Four Ages

First was the Golden Age. Then rectitude spontaneous in the heart prevailed, and faith. Avengers were not seen, for laws unframed were all unknown and needless. Punishment and fear of penalties existed not. No harsh decrees were fixed on brazen plates. No suppliant multitude the countenance of Justice feared, averting, for they dwelt without a judge in peace. Descended not the steeps, shorn from its height, the lofty pine, cleaving the trackless waves of alien shores, nor distant realms were known to wandering men. The towns were not entrenched for time of war; they had no brazen trumpets, straight, nor horns of curving brass, nor helmets, shields nor swords. There was no thought of martial pomp secure a happy multitude enjoyed repose.

Then of her own accord the earth produced a store of every fruit. The harrow touched her not, nor did the plowshare wound her fields. And man content with given food, and none compelling, gathered arbute fruits and wild strawberries on the mountain sides, and ripe blackberries clinging to the bush, and corners and sweet acorns on the ground, down fallen from the spreading tree of Jove. Eternal Spring! Soft breathing zephyrs soothed and warmly cherished buds and blooms, produced without a seed. The valleys though unplowed gave many fruits; the fields though not renewed white glistened with the heavy bearded wheat: rivers flowed milk and nectar, and the trees, the very oak trees, then gave honey of themselves.

When Saturn had been banished into night and all the world was ruled by Jove supreme, the Silver Age, though not so good as gold but still surpassing yellow brass, prevailed.

Jove first reduced to years the Primal Spring, by him divided into periods four, unequal, summer, autumn, winter, spring. then glowed with tawny heat the parched air, or pendent icicles in winter froze and man stopped crouching in crude caverns, while he

built his homes of tree rods, bark entwined. Then were the cereals planted in long rows, and bullocks groaned beneath the heavy yoke.

The third Age followed, called The Age of Bronze, when cruel people were inclined to arms but not to impious crimes. And last of all the ruthless and hard Age of Iron prevailed, from which malignant vein great evil sprung; and modesty and faith and truth took flight, and in their stead deceits and snares and frauds and violence and wicked love of gain, succeeded. Then the sailor spread his sails to winds unknown, and keels that long had stood on lofty mountains pierced uncharted waves. Surveyors anxious marked with metes and bounds the lands, created free as light and air: nor need the rich ground furnish only crops, and give due nourishment by right required, they penetrated to the bowels of earth and dug up wealth, bad cause of all our ills, rich ores which long ago the earth had hid and deep removed to gloomy Stygian caves: and soon destructive iron and harmful gold were brought to light; and War, which uses both, came forth and shook with sanguinary grip his clashing arms. Rapacity broke forth the guest was not protected from his host, the father in law from his own son in law; even brothers seldom could abide in peace. The husband threatened to destroy his wife, and she her husband: horrid step dames mixed the deadly henbane: eager sons inquired their fathers, ages. Piety was slain: and last of all the virgin deity, Astraea vanished from the blood-stained earth.

Giants

And lest ethereal heights should long remain less troubled than the earth, the throne of Heaven was threatened by the Giants; and they piled mountain on mountain to the lofty stars. But Jove, omnipotent, shot thunderbolts through Mount Olympus, and he overturned from Ossa huge, enormous Pelion. And while these dreadful bodies lay overwhelmed in their tremendous bulk, (so fame reports) the Earth was reeking with the copious blood of her gigantic sons; and thus replete with moisture she infused the steaming gore with life renewed. So that a monument of such ferocious stock should be retained, she made that offspring in the shape of man; but this new race alike despised the Gods, and by the greed of savage slaughter proved a sanguinary birth.

Lycaon. Lycaon Changed to a Wolf

When, from his throne supreme, the Son of Saturn viewed their deeds, he deeply groaned: and calling to his mind the loathsome feast Lycaon had prepared, a recent deed not common to report, his soul conceived great anger worthy Jove and he convened a council. No delay detained the chosen Gods.

When skies are clear a path is well defined on high, which men, because so white, have named the Milky Way.

It makes a passage for the deities and leads to mansions of the Thunder God, to Jove’s imperial home. On either side of its wide way the noble Gods are seen, inferior Gods in other parts abide, but there the potent and renowned of Heaven have fixed their homes. It is a glorious place, our most audacious verse might designate the “Palace of High Heaven.” When the Gods were seated, therefore, in its marble halls the King of all above the throng sat high, and leaning on his ivory scepter, thrice, and once again he shook his awful locks, wherewith he moved the earth, and seas and stars, and thus indignantly began to speak; “The time when serpent footed giants strove to fix their hundred arms on captive Heaven, not more than this event could cause alarm for my dominion of the universe. Although it was a savage enemy, yet warred we with a single source derived of one. Now must I utterly destroy this mortal race wherever Nereus roars around the world. Yea, by the Infernal Streams that glide through Stygian groves beneath the world, I swear it. Every method has been tried. The knife must cut immedicable wounds, lest maladies infect untainted parts. “Beneath my sway
are demi gods and fauns, nymphs, rustic deities, sylvans of the hills, satyrs; all these, unworthy Heaven’s abodes, we should at least permit to dwell on earth which we to them bequeathed. What think ye, Gods, is safety theirs when I, your sovereign lord, the Thunder-bolt Controller, am ensnared by fierce Lycaon?” Ardent in their wrath, the astonished Gods demand revenge overtake this miscreant; he who dared commit such crimes. ‘Twas even thus when raged that impious band to blot the Roman name in sacred blood of Caesar, sudden apprehensive fears of ruin absolute astonished man, and all the world convulsed. Nor is the love thy people bear to thee, Augustus, less than these displayed to Jupiter whose voice and gesture all the murmuring host restrained: and as indignant clamour ceased, suppressed by regnant majesty, Jove once again broke the deep silence with imperial words; “Dismiss your cares; he paid the penalty however all the crime and punishment now learn from this: An infamous report of this unholy age had reached my ears, and wishing it were false, I sloped my course from high Olympus, and although a God disguised in human form I viewed the world. It would delay us to recount the crimes unnumbered, for reports were less than truth. “I traversed Maenalus where fearful dens abound, over Lycaeus, wintry slopes of pine tree groves, across Cyllene steep; and as the twilight warned of night’s approach, I stopped in that Arcadian tyrant’s realms and entered his inhospitable home: and when I showed his

people that a God had come, the lowly prayed and worshiped me, but this Lycaon mocked their pious vows and scoffing said; ‘A fair experiment will prove the truth if this be god or man.’ and he prepared to slay me in the night, to end my slumbers in the sleep of death. So made he merry with his impious proof; but not content with this he cut the throat of a Molossian hostage sent to him, and partly softened his still quivering limbs in boiling water, partly roasted them on fires that burned beneath. And when this flesh was served to me on tables, I destroyed his dwelling and his worthless Household Gods, with thunder bolts avenging. Terror struck he took to flight, and on the silent plains is howling in his vain attempts to speak; he raves and rages and his greedy jaws, desiring their accustomed slaughter, turn against the sheep still eager for their blood. His vesture separates in shaggy hair, his arms are changed to legs; and as a wolf he has the same grey locks, the same hard face, the same bright eyes, the same ferocious look.

The Deluge

“Thus fell one house, but not one house alone deserved to perish; over all the earth ferocious deeds prevail, all men conspire in evil. Let them therefore feel the weight of dreadful penalties so justly earned, for such hath my unchanging will ordained.”

with exclamations some approved the words of Jove and added fuel to his wrath, while others gave assent: but all deplored and questioned the estate of earth deprived of mortals. Who could offer frankincense upon the altars? Would he suffer earth to be despoiled by hungry beasts of prey? Such idle questions of the state of man the King of Gods forbade, but granted soon to people earth with race miraculous, unlike the first.

Diluvium. Deucalion et Pyrrha.

And now his thunder bolts would Jove wide scatter, but he feared the flames, unnumbered, sacred ether might ignite and burn the axle of the universe: and he remembered in the scroll of fate, there is a time appointed when the sea and earth and Heavens shall melt, and fire destroy the universe of mighty labour wrought. Such weapons by the skill of Cyclops forged, for different punishment he laid aside for straightway he preferred to overwhelm the mortal race beneath deep waves and storms from every raining sky. And instantly he shut the Northwind in Aeolian caves, and every other wind that might dispel the gathering clouds. He bade the Southwind blow: the Southwind flies abroad with dripping wings, concealing in the gloom his awful face: the drenching rain descends from his wet beard and hoary locks; dark clouds are on his brows and from his wings and garments drip the dews: his great hands press the overhanging clouds; loudly the thunders roll; the torrents pour; Iris, the messenger of Juno, clad in many coloured raiment, upward draws the steaming moisture to renew the clouds.

The standing grain is beaten to the ground, the rustic’s crops are scattered in the mire, and he bewails the long year’s fruitless toil.

The wrath of Jove was not content with powers that emanate from Heaven; he brought to aid his azure brother, lord of flowing waves, who called upon the Rivers and the Streams: and when they entered his impearled abode, Neptune, their ancient ruler, thus began; “A long appeal is needless; pour ye forth in rage of power; open up your fountains; rush over obstacles; let every stream pour forth in boundless floods.” Thus he commands, and none dissenting all the River Gods return, and opening up their fountains roll tumultuous to the deep unfruitful sea.

And Neptune with his trident smote the Earth, which trembling with unwonted throes heaved up the sources of her waters bare; and through her open plains the rapid rivers rushed resistless, onward bearing the waving grain, the budding groves, the houses, sheep and men, and holy temples, and their sacred urns. The mansions that remained, resisting vast and total ruin, deepening waves concealed and whelmed their tottering turrets in the flood and whirling gulf. And now one vast expanse, the land and sea were mingled in the waste of endless waves a sea without a shore.

One desperate man seized on the nearest hill; another sitting in his curved boat, plied the long oar where he was wont to plow; another sailed above his grain, above his hidden dwelling; and another hooked a fish that sported in a leafy elm. Perchance an anchor dropped in verdant fields, or curving keels were pushed through tangled vines; and where the gracile goat enjoyed the green, unsightly seals reposed. Beneath the waves were wondering Nereids, viewing cities, groves and houses. Dolphins darting mid the trees, meshed in the twisted branches, beat against the shaken oak trees. There the sheep, affrayed, swim with the frightened wolf, the surging waves float tigers and lions: availeth naught his lightning shock the wild boar, nor avails the stag’s fleet footed speed. The wandering bird, seeking umbrageous groves and hidden vales, with wearied pinion droops into the sea. The waves increasing surge above the hills, and rising waters dash on mountain tops. Myriads by the waves are swept away, and those the waters spare, for lack of food, starvation slowly overcomes at last.

A fruitful land and fair but now submerged beneath a wilderness of rising waves, ‘Twixt Oeta and Aonia, Phocis lies, where through the clouds Parnassus’ summits twain point upward to the stars, unmeasured height, save which the rolling billows covered all: there in a small and fragile boat, arrived, Deucalion and the consort of his couch, prepared to worship the Corycian Nymphs, the mountain deities, and Themis kind, who in that age revealed in oracles the voice of fate. As he no other lived so good and just, as she no other feared the Gods.

When Jupiter beheld the globe in ruin covered, swept with wasting waves, and when he saw one man of myriads left, one helpless woman left of myriads lone, both innocent and worshiping the Gods, he scattered all the clouds; he blew away the great storms by the cold northwind.

Once more the earth appeared to heaven and the skies appeared to earth. The fury of the main abated, for the Ocean ruler laid his trident down and pacified the waves, and called on azure Triton. Triton arose above the waving seas, his shoulders mailed in purple shells. He bade the Triton blow, blow in his sounding shell, the wandering streams and rivers to recall with signal known: a hollow wreathed trumpet, tapering wide and slender stemmed, the Triton took amain and wound the pearly shell at midmost sea. Betwixt the rising and the setting suns the wildered notes resounded shore to shore, and as it touched his lips, wet with the brine beneath his dripping beard, sounded retreat: and all the waters of the land and sea obeyed. Their fountains heard and ceased to flow; their waves subsided; hidden hills uprose; emerged the shores of ocean; channels filled with flowing streams; the soil appeared; the land increased its surface as the waves decreased: and after length of days the trees put forth, with ooze on bending boughs, their naked tops.

And all the wasted globe was now restored, but as he viewed the vast and silent world Deucalion wept and thus to Pyrrha spoke; “O sister! wife! alone of woman left! My kindred in descent and origin! Dearest companion of my marriage bed, doubly endeared by deepening dangers borne, of all the dawn and eve behold of earth, but you and I are left for the deep sea has kept the rest! And what prevents the tide from overwhelming us? Remaining clouds affright us. How could you endure your fears if you alone were rescued by this fate, and who would then console your bitter grief? Oh be assured, if you were buried in the waves, that I would follow you and be with you! Oh would that by my father’s art I might restore the people, and inspire this clay to take the form of man. Alas, the Gods decreed and only we are living!”, Thus Deucalion’s plaint to Pyrrha; and they wept.

And after he had spoken, they resolved to ask the aid of sacred oracles, and so they hastened to Cephissian waves which rolled a turbid flood in channels known. Thence when their robes and brows were sprinkled well, they turned their footsteps to the goddess’ fane: its gables were befouled with reeking moss and on its altars every fire was cold. But when the twain had reached the temple steps they fell upon the earth, inspired with awe, and kissed the cold stone with their trembling lips, and said; “If righteous prayers appease the Gods, and if the wrath of high celestial powers may thus be turned, declare, O Themis! whence and what the art may raise humanity? O gentle goddess help the dying world!”

Moved by their supplications, she replied; “Depart from me and veil your brows; ungird your robes, and cast behind you as you go, the bones of your great mother.” Long they stood in dumb amazement: Pyrrha, first of voice, refused the mandate and with trembling lips implored the goddess to forgive she feared to violate her mother’s bones and vex her sacred spirit. Often pondered they the words involved in such obscurity, repeating oft: and thus Deucalion to Epimetheus’ daughter uttered speech of soothing import; “ Oracles are just and urge not evil deeds, or naught avails the skill of thought. Our mother is the Earth, and I may judge the stones of earth are bones that we should cast behind us as we go.”

And although Pyrrha by his words was moved she hesitated to comply; and both amazed doubted the purpose of the oracle, but deemed no harm to come of trial. They, descending from the temple, veiled their heads and loosed their robes and threw some stones behind them. It is much beyond belief, were not receding ages witness, hard and rigid stones assumed a softer form, enlarging as their brittle nature changed to milder substance, till the shape
of man appeared, imperfect, faintly outlined first, as marble statue chiseled in the rough. The soft moist parts were changed to softer flesh, the hard and brittle substance into bones, the veins retained their ancient name. And now the Gods supreme ordained that every stone Deucalion threw should take the form of man, and those by Pyrrha cast should woman’s form assume: so are we hardy to endure and prove by toil and deeds from what we sprung.

Python. The Pythian Games

And after this the Earth spontaneous produced the world of animals, when all remaining moistures of the mirey fens fermented in the sun, and fruitful seeds in soils nutritious grew to shapes ordained. So when the seven streamed Nile from oozy fields returneth

duly to her ancient bed, the sun's ethereal rays impregn the slime, that haply as the peasants turn the soil they find strange animals unknown before: some in the moment of their birth, and some deprived of limbs, imperfect; often part alive and part of slime inanimate are fashioned in one body. Heat combined with moisture so conceives and life results from these two things. For though the flames may be the foes of water, everything that lives begins in humid vapour, and it seems discordant concord is the means of life.

When Earth, spread over with diluvian ooze, felt heat ethereal from the glowing sun, unnumbered species to the light she gave, and gave to being many an ancient form, or monster new created. Unwilling she created thus enormous Python. Thou unheard of serpent spread so far athwart the side of a vast mountain, didst fill with fear the race of new created man. The God that bears the bow (a weapon used till then only to hunt the deer and agile goat) destroyed the monster with a myriad darts, and almost emptied all his quiver, till envenomed gore oozed forth from livid wounds.

Lest in a dark oblivion time should hide the fame of this achievement, sacred sports he instituted, from the Python called "The Pythian Games." In these the happy youth who proved victorious in the chariot race, running and boxing, with an honoured crown of oak leaves was enwreathed. The laurel then was not created, wherefore Phoebus, bright and godlike, beauteous with his flowing hair, was wont to wreathe his brows with various leaves.

Daphne. Daphne and Phoebus

Daphne, the daughter of a River God was first beloved by Phoebus, the great God of glorious light. 'Twas not a cause of chance but out of Cupid's vengeful spite that she was fated to torment the lord of light. For Phoebus, proud of Python's death, beheld that impish god of Love upon a time when he was bending his diminished bow, and voicing his contempt in anger said; "What, wanton boy, are mighty arms to thee, great weapons suited to the needs of war? The bow is only for the use of those large deities of heaven whose strength may deal wounds, mortal, to the savage beasts of prey; and who courageous overcome their foes. it is a proper weapon to the use of such as slew with arrows Python, huge, whose pestilential carcase vast extent covered. Content thee with the flames thy torch enkindles (fires too subtle for my thought) and leave to me the glory that is mine."



Image 4.5: Apollo and Daphne | This oil painting by Antonio del Pollaiuolo shows the god Apollo pursuing the naiad Daphne.

Author: Antonio del Pollaiolo
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

To him, undaunted, Venus, son replied; "O Phoebus, thou canst conquer all the world with thy strong bow and arrows, but with this small arrow I shall pierce thy vaunting breast! And by the measure that thy might exceeds the broken powers of thy defeated foes, so is thy glory less than mine." No more he said, but with his wings expanded thence flew lightly to Parnassus, lofty peak. There, from his quiver he plucked arrows twain, most curiously wrought of different art; one love exciting, one repelling love. The dart of love was glittering, gold and sharp, the other had a blunted tip of lead; and with that dull lead dart he shot the Nymph, but with the keen point of the golden dart he pierced the bone and marrow of the God.

Immediately the one with love was filled, the other, scouting at the thought of love, rejoiced in the deep shadow of the woods, and as the virgin Phoebe (who denies the joys of love and loves the joys of chase) a maiden's fillet bound her flowing hair, and her pure mind denied the love of man. Beloved and wooed she wandered silent paths, for never could her modesty endure the glance of man or listen to his love.

Her grieving father spoke to her, "Alas, my daughter, I have wished a son in law, and now you owe a grandchild to the joy of my old age." But Daphne only hung her head to hide her shame. The nuptial torch seemed criminal to her. She even clung, caressing, with her arms around his neck, and pled, "My dearest father let me live a virgin always, for remember Jove did grant it to Diana at her birth."

But though her father promised her desire, her loveliness prevailed against their will; for, Phoebus when he saw her waxed distraught, and filled with wonder his sick fancy raised delusive hopes, and his own oracles deceived

him. As the stubble in the field flares up, or as the stacked wheat is consumed by flames, enkindled from a spark or torch the chance pedestrian may neglect at dawn; so was the bosom of the god consumed, and so desire flamed in his stricken heart.

He saw her bright hair waving on her neck; “How beautiful if properly arranged! ” He saw her eyes like stars of sparkling fire, her lips for kissing sweetest, and her hands and fingers and her arms; her shoulders white as ivory; and whatever was not seen more beautiful must be.

Swift as the wind from his pursuing feet the virgin fled, and neither stopped nor heeded as he called; “O Nymph! O Daphne! I entreat thee stay, it is no enemy that follows thee why, so the lamb leaps from the raging wolf, and from the lion runs the timid faun, and from the eagle flies the trembling dove, all hasten from their natural enemy but I alone pursue for my dear love. Alas, if thou shouldst fall and mar thy face, or tear upon the bramble thy soft thighs, or should I prove unwilling cause of pain! “The wilderness is rough and dangerous, and I beseech thee be more careful I will follow slowly. Ask of whom thou wilt, and thou shalt learn that I am not a churl I am no mountain dweller of rude caves, nor clown compelled to watch the sheep and goats; and neither canst thou know from whom thy feet fly fearful, or thou wouldst not leave me thus. “The Delphic Land, the Pataraean Realm, Claros and Tenedos revere my name, and my immortal sire is Jupiter. The present, past and future are through me in sacred oracles revealed to man, and from my harp the harmonies of sound are borrowed by their bards to praise the Gods. My bow is certain, but a flaming shaft surpassing mine has pierced my heart untouched before. The art of medicine is my invention, and the power of herbs; but though the world declare my useful works there is no herb to medicate my wound, and all the arts that save have failed their lord.,”

But even as he made his plaint, the Nymph with timid footsteps fled from his approach, and left him to his murmurs and his pain.

Lovely the virgin seemed as the soft wind exposed her limbs, and as the zephyrs fond fluttered amid her garments, and the breeze fanned lightly in her flowing hair. She seemed most lovely to his fancy in her flight; and mad with love he followed in her steps, and silent hastened his increasing speed.

As when the greyhound sees the frightened hare flit over the plain: With eager nose outstretched, impetuous, he rushes on his prey, and gains upon her till he treads her feet, and almost fastens in her side his fangs;

but she, whilst dreading that her end is near, is suddenly delivered from her fright; so was it with the god and virgin: one with hope pursued, the other fled in fear; and he who followed, borne on wings of love, permitted her no rest and gained on her, until his warm breath mingled in her hair.

Her strength spent, pale and faint, with pleading eyes she gazed upon her father’s waves and prayed, “Help me my father, if thy flowing streams have virtue! Cover me, O mother Earth! Destroy the beauty that has injured me, or change the body that destroys my life.”

Before her prayer was ended, torpor seized on all her body, and a thin bark closed around her gentle bosom, and her hair became as moving leaves; her arms were changed to waving branches, and her active feet as clinging roots were fastened to the ground her face was hidden with encircling leaves.

Phoebus admired and loved the graceful tree, (For still, though changed, her slender form remained) and with his right hand lingering on the trunk he felt her bosom throbbing in the bark. He clung to trunk and branch as though to twine. His form with hers, and fondly kissed the wood that shrank from every kiss.

And thus the God; “Although thou canst not be my bride, thou shalt be called my chosen tree, and thy green leaves, O Laurel! shall forever crown my brows, be wreathed around my quiver and my lyre; the Roman heroes shall be crowned with thee, as long processions climb the Capitol and chanting throngs proclaim their victories; and as
a faithful warden thou shalt guard the civic crown of oak leaves fixed between thy branches, and before Augustan gates. And as my youthful head is never shorn, so, also, shalt thou ever bear thy leaves unchanging to thy glory.,”

Here the God, Phoebus Apollo, ended his lament, and unto him the Laurel bent her boughs, so lately fashioned; and it seemed to him her graceful nod gave answer to his love.

Io. Argus. Syrinx. Io and Jupiter

There is a grove in Thessaly, enclosed on every side with crags, precipitous, on which a forest grows and this is called the Vale of Tempe through this valley flows the River Peneus, white with foaming waves, that issue from the foot of Pindus, whence with

sudden fall up gather steamy clouds that sprinkle mist upon the circling trees, and far away with mighty roar resound. It is the abode, the solitary home, that mighty River loves, where deep in gloom of rocky cavern, he resides and rules the flowing waters and the water nymphs abiding there. All rivers of that land now hasten thither, doubtful to console or flatter Daphne's parent: poplar crowned Sperchios, swift Enipeus and the wild Amphrysos, old Apidanus and Aeas, with all their kindred streams that wandering maze and wearied seek the ocean. Inachus alone is absent, hidden in his cave obscure, deepening his waters with his tears most wretchedly bewailing, for he deems his daughter Io lost. If she may live or roam a spirit in the nether shades he dares not even guess but dreads for Jove not long before had seen her while returning from her father's stream, and said; "O virgin, worthy of immortal Jove, although some happy mortal's chosen bride, behold these shades of overhanging trees, and seek their cool recesses while the sun is glowing in the height of middle skies " and as he spoke he pointed out the groves "But should the dens of wild beasts frighten you, with safety you may enter the deep woods, conducted by a God not with a God of small repute, but in the care of him who holds the heavenly scepter in his hand and fulminates the trackless thunder bolts. forsake me not! " For while he spoke she fled, and swiftly left behind the pasture fields of Lerna, and Lyrcea's arbours, where the trees are planted thickly. But the God called forth a heavy shadow which involved the wide extended earth, and stopped her flight and ravished in that cloud her chastity.

Meanwhile, the goddess Juno gazing down on earth's expanse, with wonder saw the clouds as dark as night enfold those middle fields while day was bright above. She was convinced the clouds were none composed of river mist nor raised from marshy fens. Suspicious now, from oft detected amours of her spouse, she glanced around to find her absent lord, and quite convinced that he was far from heaven, she thus exclaimed; "This cloud deceives my mind, or Jove has wronged me." From the dome of heaven she glided down and stood upon the earth, and bade the clouds recede. But Jove had known the coming of his queen. He had transformed the lovely Io, so that she appeared a milk white heifer formed so beautiful and fair that envious Juno gazed on her. She queried: "Whose? what herd? what pasture fields?" As if she guessed no knowledge of the truth. And Jupiter, false hearted, said the cow was earth begotten, for he feared his queen might make inquiry of the owner's name. Juno implored the heifer as a gift. what then was left the Father of the Gods? 'Twould be a cruel thing to sacrifice his own beloved to a rival's wrath. Although refusal must imply his guilt the shame and love of her almost prevailed; but if a present of such little worth were now denied the sharer of his couch, the partner of his birth, 'twould prove indeed the earth born heifer other than she seemed and so he gave his mistress up to her.

Juno regardful of Jove's cunning art, lest he might change her to her human form, gave the unhappy heifer to the charge of Argus, Aristorides, whose head was circled with a hundred glowing eyes; of which but two did slumber in their turn whilst all the others kept on watch and guard.

Whichever way he stood his gaze was fixed on Io even if he turned away his watchful eyes on Io still remained. He let her feed by day; but when the sun was under the deep world he shut her up, and tied a rope around her tender neck.

She fed upon green leaves and bitter herbs and on the cold ground slept too often bare, she could not rest upon a cushioned couch. She drank the troubled waters. Hoping aid she tried to stretch imploring arms to Argus, but all in vain for now no arms remained; the sound of bellowing was all she heard, and she was frightened with her proper voice.

Where former days she loved to roam and sport, she wandered by the banks of Inachus: there imaged in the stream she saw her horns and, startled, turned and fled. And Inachus and all her sister Naiads knew her not, although she followed them, they knew her not, although she suffered them to touch her sides and praise her.

When the ancient Inachus gathered sweet herbs and offered them to her, she licked his hands, kissing her father's palms, nor could she more restrain her falling tears. If only words as well as tears would flow, she might implore his aid and tell her name and all her sad misfortune; but, instead, she traced in dust the letters of her name with cloven hoof; and thus her sad estate was known. "Ah wretched me! " her father cried; and as he clung around her horns and neck repeated while she groaned, "Ah wretched me! Art thou my daughter sought in every clime? When lost I could not grieve for thee as now that thou art found; thy sighs instead of words heave up from thy deep breast, thy longings give me answer. I prepared the nuptial torch and bridal chamber, in my ignorance, since my first hope was for a son in law; and then I dreamed of children from the match: but now the herd may furnish thee a mate, and all thy issue of the herd must be. Oh that a righteous death would end my grief! it is a dreadful thing to be a God! Behold the lethal gate of death is shut against me, and my growing grief must last throughout eternity."

While thus he moaned came starry Argus there, and Io bore from her lamenting father. Thence he led his charge to other pastures; and removed from her, upon a lofty mountain sat, whence he could always watch her, undisturbed.

The sovereign god no longer could endure to witness Io's woes. He called his son, whom Maia brightest of the Pleiades brought forth, and bade him slay the star eyed guard, argus. He seized his sleep compelling wand and fastened waving wings on his swift feet, and deftly fixed his brimmed hat on his head: lo, Mercury, the favoured son of Jove, descending to the earth from heaven's plains, put off his cap and wings, though still retained his wand with which he drove through pathless wilds some stray she goats, and as a shepherd fared, piping on oaten reeds melodious tunes.

Argus, delighted with the charming sound of this new art began; "Whoever thou art, sit with me on this stone beneath the trees in cooling shade, whilst browse the tended flock abundant herbs; for thou canst see the shade is fit for shepherds." Wherefore, Mercury sat down beside the keeper and conversed of various things passing the laggard hours. then soothly piped he on the joined reeds to lull those ever watchful eyes asleep; but Argus strove his languor to subdue, and though some drowsy eyes might slumber, still were some that vigil kept. Again he spoke, (for the pipes were yet a recent art) "I pray thee tell what chance discovered these."

To him the God, " A famous Naiad dwelt among the Hamadryads, on the cold Arcadian summit Nonacris, whose name was Syrinx. Often she escaped the Gods, that wandered in the groves of sylvan shades, and often fled from Satyrs that pursued. Vowing virginity, in all pursuits she strove to emulate Diana's ways: and as that graceful goddess wears her robe, so Syrinx girded hers that one might well believe Diana there. Even though her bow were made of horn, Diana's wrought of gold, vet might she well deceive. "Now chanced it Pan. Whose head was girt with prickly pines, espied the Nymph returning from the Lycian Hill, and these words uttered he: " But Mercury refrained from further speech, and Pan's appeal remains untold. If he had told it all, the tale of Syrinx would have followed thus: but she despised the prayers of Pan, and fled through pathless wilds until she had arrived the placid Ladon's sandy stream, whose waves prevented her escape. There she implored her sister Nymphs to change her form: and Pan, believing he had caught her, held instead some marsh reeds for the body of the Nymph; and while he sighed the moving winds began to utter plaintive music in the reeds, so sweet and voice like that poor Pan exclaimed; "Forever this discovery shall remain a sweet communion binding thee to me." and this explains why reeds of different length, when joined together by cementing wax, derive the name of Syrinx from the maid.

Such words the bright god Mercury would say; but now perceiving Argus' eyes were dimmed in languorous doze, he hushed his voice and touched the drooping eyelids with his magic wand, compelling slumber. Then without delay he struck the sleeper with his crescent sword, where neck and head unite, and hurled his head, blood dripping, down the rocks and rugged cliff.

Low lies Argus: dark is the light of all his hundred eyes, his many orbed lights extinguished in the universal gloom that night surrounds; but Saturn's daughter spread their glister on the feathers of her bird, emblazoning its tail with starry gems.

Juno made haste, inflamed with towering rage, to vent her wrath on Io; and she raised in thought and vision of the Grecian girl a dreadful Fury. Stings invisible, and pitiless, she planted in her breast, and drove her wandering throughout the globe.

The utmost limit of her laboured way, O Nile, thou didst remain. Which, having reached, and placed her tired knees on that river's edge, she laid her there, and as she raised her neck looked upward to the stars, and groaned and wept and mournfully bellowed: trying thus to plead, by all the means she had, that Jupiter might end her miseries. Repentant Jove embraced his consort, and entreated her to end the punishment: "Fear not," he said, "For she shall trouble thee no more." He spoke, and called on bitter Styx to hear his oath.

And now imperial Juno, pacified, permitted Io to resume her form, at once the hair fell from her snowy sides; the horns absorbed, her dilate orbs decreased; the opening of her jaws contracted; hands appeared and shoulders; and each transformed hoof became five nails. And every mark or form that gave the semblance of a heifer changed, except her fair white skin; and the glad Nymph was raised erect and stood upon her feet. But long the very thought of speech, that she might bellow as a heifer, filled her mind with terror, till the words so long forgot for some sufficient cause were tried once more.

Phaethon.

And since that time, the linen wearing throng of Egypt have adored her as a God; for they believe the seed of Jove prevailed; and when her time was due she bore to him a son called Epaphus; who also dwells in temples with his mother in that land.

Now Phaethon, whose father was the Sun, was equal to his rival, Epaphus, in mind and years; and he was glad to boast of wonders, nor would yield to Epaphus for pride of Phoebus, his reputed sire. Unable to endure it, Io's son thus mocked him; "Poor, demented fellow, what will you not credit if your mother speaks, you are so puffed up with the fond conceit of your imagined sire, the Lord of Day."

shame crimsoned in his cheeks, but Phaethon withholding rage, reported all the taunts of Epaphus to Clymene his mother: "'Twill grieve you, mother, I, the bold and free, was silent; and it shames me to report this dark reproach remains unchallenged. Oh, if I am born of race divine, give proof of that illustrious descent and claim my right to Heaven." Around his mother's neck he drew his arms, and by the head of Merops, and by his own, and by the nuptial torch of his beloved sisters, he implored for some true token of his origin.

Or moved by Phaethon's importuned words, or by the grievous charge, who might declare? She raised her arms to Heaven, and gazing full upon the broad sun said; "I swear to you by yonder orb, so radiant and bright, which both beholds and hears us while we speak, that you are his begotten son. You are the child of that great light which sways the world: and if I have not spoken what is true, let not mine eyes behold his countenance, and let this fatal moment be the last that I shall look upon the light of day! Nor will it weary you, my son, to reach your father's dwelling; for the very place where he appears at dawn is near our land. Go, if it please you, and the very truth learn from your father." Instantly sprang forth exultant Phaethon. Overjoyed with words so welcome, he imagined he could leap and touch the skies. And so he passed his land of Ethiopia, and the Indies, hot beneath the tawny sun, and there he turned his footsteps to his father's Land of Dawn.

Book 2

Section 7. Europa.

So from the land of Pallas went the God, his great revenge accomplished on the head of impious Aglauros; and he soared on waving wings into the opened skies: and there his father called him to his side, and said, with words to hide his passion; Son, thou faithful minister of my commands. let naught delay thee swiftly take the way, accustomed, to the land of Sidon (which adores thy mother's star upon the left) when there, drive over to the sounding shore that royal herd, which far away is fed on mountain grass. He spoke, and instantly the herd was driven from the mountain side; then headed for the shore, as Jove desired, to where the great king's daughter often went in play, attended by the maids of Tyre. Can love abide the majesty of kings? Love cannot always dwell upon a throne.

Europa and Jupiter: The House of Cadmus

Jove laid aside his glorious dignity, for he assumed the semblance of a bull and mingled with the bullocks in the groves, his colour white as virgin snow, untrod, unmelted by the watery Southern Wind.

His neck was thick with muscles, dewlaps hung between his shoulders; and his polished horns, so small and beautifully set, appeared the artifice of man; fashioned as fair and more transparent than a lucent gem. His forehead was not lowered for attack, nor was there fury in his open eyes; the love of peace was in his countenance.

When she beheld his beauty and mild eyes, the daughter of Agenor was amazed; but, daring not to touch him, stood apart until her virgin fears were quieted; then, near him, fragrant flowers in her hand she offered, tempting, to his gentle mouth: and then the loving god in his great joy kissed her sweet hands, and could not wait her will.

Jove then began to frisk upon the grass, or laid his snow-white side on the smooth sand, yellow and golden. As her courage grew he gave his breast one moment for caress, or bent his head for garlands newly made, wreathed for his polished horns.

The royal maid, unwitting what she did, at length sat down upon the bull's broad back. Then by degrees the god moved from the land and from the shore, and placed his feet, that seemed but shining hoofs, in shallow water by the sandy merge; and not a moment resting bore her thence, across the surface of the Middle Sea, while she affrighted gazed upon the shore so fast receding. And she held his horn with her right hand, and, steadied by the left, held on his ample back and in the breeze her waving garments fluttered as they went.

Book 4

Section 2

Pyramus et Thisbe. Pyramus and Thisbe

When Pyramus and Thisbe, who were known the one most handsome of all youthful men, the other loveliest of all eastern girls, lived in adjoining houses, near the walls that Queen Semiramis had built of brick around her famous city, they grew fond, and loved each other meeting often there and as the days went by their love increased.

They wished to join in marriage, but that joy their fathers had forbidden them to hope; and yet the passion that with equal strength inflamed their minds no parents could forbid. No relatives had guessed their secret love, for all their converse was by nods and signs; and as a smoldering fire may gather heat, the more ‘tis smothered, so their love increased.

Now, it so happened, a partition built between their houses, many years ago, was made defective with a little chink; a small defect observed by none, although for ages there; but what is hid from love? Our lovers found the secret opening, and used its passage to convey the sounds of gentle, murmured words, whose tuneful note passed oft in safety through that hidden way.

There, many a time, they stood on either side, thisbe on one and Pyramus the other, and when their warm breath touched from lip to lip, their sighs were such as this: “Thou envious wall why art thou standing in the way of those who die for love? What harm could happen thee shouldst thou permit us to enjoy our love? But if we ask too much, let us persuade that thou wilt open while we kiss but once: for, we are not ungrateful; unto thee we own our debt; here thou hast left a way that breathed words may enter loving ears.,” so vainly whispered they, and when the night began to darken they exchanged farewells; made presence that they kissed a fond farewell vain kisses that to love might none avail.

When dawn removed the glimmering lamps of night, and the bright sun had dried the dewy grass again they met where they had told their love; and now complaining of their hapless fate, in murmurs gentle, they at last resolved, away to slip upon the quiet night, elude their parents, and, as soon as free, quit the great builded city and their homes.

Fearful to wander in the pathless fields, they chose a trysting place, the tomb of Ninus, where safely they might hide unseen, beneath the shadow of a tall mulberry tree, covered with snow-white fruit, close by a spring.

All is arranged according to their hopes: and now the daylight, seeming slowly moved, sinks in the deep waves, and the tardy night arises from the spot where day declines.

Quickly, the clever Thisbe having first deceived her parents, opened the closed door. She flitted in the silent night away; and, having veiled her face, reached the great tomb, and sat beneath the tree; love made her bold. There, as she waited, a great lioness approached the nearby spring to quench her thirst: her frothing jaws incarnadined with blood of slaughtered oxen. As the moon was bright, Thisbe could see her, and affrighted fled with trembling footstep to a gloomy cave; and as she ran she slipped and dropped her veil, which fluttered to the ground. She did not dare to save it. Wherefore, when the savage beast had taken a great draft and slaked her thirst, and thence had turned to seek her forest lair, she found it on her way, and full of rage, tore it and stained it with her bloody jaws: but Thisbe, fortunate, escaped unseen.

Now Pyramus had not gone out so soon as Thisbe to the tryst; and, when he saw the certain traces of that savage beast, imprinted in the yielding dust, his face went white with fear; but when he found the veil covered with blood, he cried; “Alas, one night has caused the ruin of two lovers! Thou wert most deserving of completed days, but as for me, my heart is guilty! I destroyed thee! O my love! I bade thee come out in the dark night to a lonely haunt, and failed to go before. Oh! whatever lurks beneath this rock, though ravenous lion, tear my guilty flesh, and with most cruel jaws devour my cursed entrails! What? Not so; it is a craven’s part to wish for death!”

So he stopped briefly; and took up the veil; went straightway to the shadow of the tree; and as his tears bedewed the well-known veil, he kissed it oft and sighing said, “Kisses and tears are thine, receive my blood as well.”

And he imbrued the steel, girt at his side, deep in his bowels; and plucked it from the wound, a-faint with death. As he fell back to earth, his spurting blood shot upward in the air; so, when decay has rift a leaden pipe a hissing jet of water spurts on high.

By that dark tide the berries on the tree assumed a deeper tint, for as the roots soaked up the blood the pendent mulberries were dyed a purple tint.

Thisbe returned, though trembling still with fright, for now she thought her lover must await her at the tree, and she should haste before he feared for her. Longing to tell him of her great escape she sadly looked for him with faithful eyes; but when she saw the spot and the changed tree, she doubted could they be the same, for so the colour of the hanging fruit deceived.

While doubt dismayed her, on the ground she saw the wounded body covered with its blood; she started backward, and her face grew pale and ashen; and she shuddered like the sea, which trembles when its face is lightly skimmed by the chill breezes; and she paused a space; but when she knew it was the one she loved, she struck her tender breast and tore her hair. Then wreathing in her arms his loved form, she bathed the wound with tears, mingling her grief in his unquenched blood; and as she kissed his death-cold

features wailed; “Ah Pyramus, what cruel fate has taken thy life away? Pyramus! Pyramus! awake! awake! It is thy dearest Thisbe calls thee! Lift thy drooping head! Alas,” At Thisbe’s name he raised his eyes, though languorous in death, and darkness gathered round him as he gazed.

And then she saw her veil; and near it lay his ivory sheath but not the trusty sword and once again she wailed; “Thy own right hand, and thy great passion have destroyed thee! And I? my hand shall be as bold as thine my love shall nerve me to the fatal deed thee, I will follow to eternity though I be censured for the wretched cause, so surely I shall share thy wretched fate: alas, whom death could me alone bereave, thou shalt not from my love be reft by death! And, O ye wretched parents, mine and his, let our misfortunes and our pleadings melt your hearts, that ye no more deny to those whom constant love and lasting death unite entomb us in a single sepulchre.

“And, O thou tree of many-branching boughs, spreading dark shadows on the corpse of one, destined to cover twain, take thou our fate upon thy head; mourn our untimely deaths; let thy fruit darken for a memory, an emblem of our blood.” No more she said; and having fixed the point below her breast, she fell on the keen sword, still warm with his red blood.

But though her death was out of Nature’s law her prayer was answered, for it moved the Gods and moved their parents. Now the Gods have changed the ripened fruit which darkens on the branch: and from the funeral pile their parents sealed their gathered ashes in a single urn.

Book 7

Section 1. Iason et Medea. Jason and Medea

Over the storm-tossed waves, the Argonauts had sailed in Argo, their long ship to where King Phineus, needy in his old age, reigned deprived of sight and feeble. When the sons of Boreas had landed on the shore, and seen the Harpies snatching from the king his nourishment, befouling it with beaks obscene, they drove those human-vultures thence.

And having suffered hardships and great toils, after the day they rescued the sad king from the vile Harpies, those twin valiant youths, Zetes and Calais came with their chief, the mighty Jason, where the Phasis flows.

From the green margin of that river, all the crew of Argonauts, by Jason led, went to the king Aeetes and required the Golden Fleece, that he received from Phryxus. When they had bargained with him, full of wiles he offered to restore the Golden Fleece only to those who might to him return, victorious from hard labors of great risk.

Medea, the king’s daughter, near his throne, saw Jason, leader of the Argonauts, as he was pressing to secure a prize and loved at sight with a consuming flame.

Although she struggled to suppress her love, unable to restrain herself, she said, “In vain I’ve striven to subdue my heart: some god it must be, which I cannot tell, is working to destroy my hapless life; or else it is the burning flame of love that in me rages. If it is not love, why do the mandates of my father seem too harsh? They surely are too harsh. Why do I fear that he may perish whom I have seen only once? What is the secret cause that I am agitated by such fears? It is no other than the god of Love.

“Thrust from your virgin breast such burning flames and overcome their hot unhappiness if I could do so, I should be myself: but some deluding power is holding me helpless against my will. Desire persuades me one way, but my reason still persuades another way. I see a better course and I approve, but follow its defeat.

“O royal maiden, why are you consumed with love for this strange man, and why are you so willing to be carried by the nuptial ties so far from your own country, where, indeed, are many brave men worthy of your love?

“Whether for life or death his numbered hours are in the mercy of the living Gods, and that he may not suffer risk of death, too well foreseen, now let my prayers prevail righteously uttered of a generous heart without the stress of love. What wicked thing has Jason done? His handsome person, youth, and noble ways, would move a heart of stone.

“Have I a heart of flint, or was I born a tigress to deny him timely aid? Unless I interpose, he will be slain by the hot breath of brazen-footed bulls, or will be slaughtered by the warriors, sprung miraculous from earth, or will be given to satisfy the ravenous appetite of a huge dragon.

“Let my gloating eyes be satiate with his dying agonies! Let me incite the fury of these bulls! Stir to their bloodlust mad-born sons of Earth! Rouse up the never-sleeping dragon’s rage! “Avert it Gods!

“But why should I cry out upon the Gods to save him from such wrong, when, by my actions and my power, myself may shield him from all evils?

“Such a course would wreck the kingdom of my father and by me the wily stranger would escape from him; and spreading to the wind his ready sails he would forget and leave me to my fate. Oh, if he should forget my sacrifice, and so prefer those who neglected him, let him then perish in his treachery.

“But these are idle thoughts: his countenance, reveals innate nobility and grace, that should dispel all fear of treachery, and guarantee his ever-faithful heart. The Gods will witness our united souls, and he shall pledge his faith. Secure of it my fear will be removed. Be ready, then and make a virtue of necessity: your Jason owes himself to you; and he must join you in true wedlock. Then you shall be celebrated through the land of Greece, by throngs of women, for the man you saved.

“Shall I then sail away, and so forsake my sister, brother, father, Gods, and land that gave me birth? My father is indeed a stern man, and my native land is all too barbarous; my brother is a child, my sister’s goodwill is good help for me; and heaven’s supreme god is within my breast.

“I shall not so be leaving valued hopes, but will be going surely to great things. And I should gain applause from all the world, as having saved the threatened Argonauts, most noble of the Greeks; and in their land, which certainly is better than my own, become the bride of Jason, for whose love I should not hesitate to give the world and in whose love the living Gods rejoice so greatly; for his sake they would bestow their favors on my head, and make the stars my habitation.

“Should I hesitate because the wreck-strewn mountains bar the way, and clash together in the Euxine waves; or fear Charybdis, fatal to large ships, that sucks the deep sea in its whirling gulf and spouts far upward, with alternate force, or Scylla, circled with infuriate hounds howling in rage from deep Sicilian waves?

“Safe in the shielding arms of him I love, on Jason’s bosom leaning, I shall be borne safely over wide and hostile seas; and in his dear embrace forget my fears or if for anything I suffer dread, it will be only for the one I love.

“Alas, Medea, this vain argument has only furnished plausible excuse for criminal desires, and desecrates the marriage rite. It is a wicked thing to think upon. Before it is too late forget your passion and deny this guilt.”

And after she had said these words, her eyes were opened to the prize of modesty, chaste virtue, and a pure affection: and Cupid, vanquished, turned away and fled.

Then, to an ancient altar of the goddess named Hecate, Perse’s daughter took her way in the deep shadows of a forest. She was strong of purpose now, and all the flames of vanquished passion had died down; but when she saw the son of Aeson, dying flames leaped up again. Her cheeks grew red, then all her face went pale again; as a small spark when hid beneath the ashes, if fed by a breath of wind grows and regains its strength, as it is fanned to life; so now her love that had been smoldering, and which you would have thought was almost dead, when she had see again his manly youth, blazed up once more.

For on that day his graceful person seemed as glorious as a God; and as she gazed, and fixed her eyes upon his countenance, her frenzy so prevailed, she was convinced that he was not a mortal. And her eyes were fascinated; and she could not turn away from him. But when he spoke to her, and promised marriage, grasping her right hand: she answered, as her eyes suffused with tears; “I see what I will do, and ignorance of truth will not be my undoing now, but love itself. By my assistance you shall be preserved; but when preserved fulfill your promise.”

He swore that she could trust in him. Then by the goddess of the triple form, Diana, Trivia, or Luna called, and by her sacred groves and fanes, he vowed, and by the hallowed Sun that sees all things, and by his own adventures, and his life, on these the youthful Jason took his oath. With this she was assured and quickly gave to him the magic herbs: he learnt their use and full of joy withdrew into his house.

Now when the dawn had dimmed the glittering stars, the people hastened to the sacred field of Mars, and on the hills expectant stood. Arrayed in purple, and in majesty distinguished by his ivory sceptre, sat the king, surrounded by a multitude. Below them on the visioned Field of Mars, huge brazen-footed bulls were breathing forth from adamantine nostrils living flames, blasting the verdant herbage in their path!

As forges glowing with hot flames resound, or as much quick-lime, burnt in earthen kilns, crackles and hisses as if mad with rage, sprinkled with water, liberating heat; so their hot throats and triple-heated sides, resounding told of pent-up fires within.

The son of Aeson went to meet them. As he came to meet them the fierce animals turned on him faces terrible, and sharp horns tipped with iron, and they pawed the dusty earth with cloven feet, and filled the place with fiery bellowings. The Minyans were stark with fear; he went up to the bulls not feeling their hot breath at all, so great the power of his charmed drugs; and while he was stroking their down-hanging dewlaps with a fearless hand, he placed the yoke down on their necks and made them draw the heavy plow, and cut through fields that never felt the steel before. The Colchians were amazed and silent; but the loud shouting of the Minyans increased their hero's courage. Taking then the serpent's teeth out of a brazen helmet he sowed them broadcast in the new-plowed field.

The moist earth softened these seeds that were steeped in virulent poison and the teeth swelled up and took new forms. And just as in its mother an infant gradually assumes the form of man, and is perfected through all parts within, and does not come forth to the light till fully formed; so, when the forms of men had been completed in the womb of earth made pregnant, they rose up from it, and what is yet more wonderful, each one clashed weapons that had been brought forth with him.

When his companions saw the warriors turn as if with one accord, to hurl their spears, sharp-pointed, at the head of Jason, fear unnerved the boldest and their courage failed. So, too, the maid whose sorcery had saved him from much danger, when she saw the youth encompassed by those raging enemies, and he alone against so many struck with sudden panic, she turned ashen white, her bloodless cheeks were blanched; and chilled with fear she wilted to the ground; and lest the herbs, so lately given him, might fail his need she added incantations and invoked mysterious arts. While she protected him

He seized upon a heavy stone, and hurled it in the midst of his new enemies distracted by this cast, and murderous, they turned from him, and clashing their new arms, those earth-born brothers fought among themselves till all were slaughtered in blood-thirsty strife.

Gladly the Greeks acclaimed him conqueror, and pressed around him for the first embrace. Then, too, Medea, barbarous Colchian maid, although her modesty restrained her heart, eagerly longed to fold him in her arms, but careful of her good name, held aloof, rejoicing in deep, silent love; and she acknowledged to the Gods her mighty gift of incantations.

But the dragon, still alert, magnificent and terrible with gorgeous crest and triple tongue, and fangs barbed as a javelin, guards the Golden Fleece: and Jason can obtain that quest only if slumber may seal up the monster's eyes.

Jason, successful, sprinkled on his crest Lethean juices of a magic herb, and then recited thrice the words which bring deep slumber, potent words which would becalm the storm-tossed ocean, and would stop the flow of the most rapid rivers of our earth: and slowly slumber sealed the dragon's eyes.

While that great monster slept, the hero took the Golden Fleece; and proudly sailed away bearing his treasure and the willing maid, (whose aid had saved him) to his native port Iolcus victorious with the Argonauts.

Section 2. Aeson. Rejuvenation of Aeson

Now when the valiant Argonauts returned to Thessaly, their happy relatives, fathers and mothers, praised the living Gods; and with their hallowed gifts enhanced the flames with precious incense; and they offered Jove a sacred bullock, rich with gilded horns.

But Jason's father, Aeson, came not down rejoicing to behold his son, for now worn out with many years, he waited death. And Jason to Medea grieving said:

"Dearest, to whom my life and love are due, although your kindness has been great to me, and you have granted more than I should ask, yet one thing more I beg of you; if your enchantments can accomplish my desire, take from my life some years that I should live and add them to my father's ending days." And as he spoke he could not check his tears.

Medea, moved by his affection, thought how much less she had grieved for her loved sire: and she replied: "A wicked thing you ask! Can I be capable of using you in such a manner as to take your life and give it to another? Ask not me a thing so dreadful! May the Gods forbid! I will endeavor to perform for you a task much greater. By the powers of Night I will most certainly return to him the lost years of your father, but must not deprive you of your own. Oh grant the power, great goddess of the triple form, that I may fail not to accomplish this great deed!"

Three nights were wanting for the moon to join her circling horns and form a perfect orb. When these were passed, the rounded light shone full and bright upon the earth. Through the still night alone, Medea stole forth from the house with feet bare, and in

flowing garment clothed her long hair unadorned and not confined. Deep slumber has relaxed the world, and all that's living, animals and birds and men, and even the hedges and the breathing leaves are still and motionless the laden air.

Only the stars are twinkling, and to them she looks and beckons with imploring hands. Now thrice around she paces, and three times besprinkles her long hair with water dipt from crystal streams, which having done she kneels a moment on the cold, bare ground, and screaming three times calls upon the Night,

"O faithful Night, regard my mysteries! O golden-lighted Stars! O softly-moving Moon genial, your fire succeeds the heated day! O Hecate! grave three-faced queen of these charms of enchanters and enchanters, arts! O fruitful Earth, giver of potent herbs! O gentle Breezes and destructive Winds! You Mountains, Rivers, Lakes and sacred Groves, and every dreaded god of silent Night! Attend upon me!

"When my power commands, the rivers turn from their accustomed ways and roll far backward to their secret springs! I speak and the wild, troubled sea is calm, and I command the waters to arise! The clouds I scatter and I bring the clouds; I smooth the winds and ruffle up their rage; I weave my spells and I recite my charms; I pluck the fangs of serpents, and I move the living rocks and twist the rooted oaks; I blast the forests. Mountains at my word tremble and quake; and from her granite tombs the liberated ghosts arise as Earth astonished groans! From your appointed ways, O wonder-working Moon, I draw you down against the magic-making sound of gongs and brazen vessels of Temesa's ore; I cast my spells and veil the jeweled rays of Phoebus' wain, and quench Aurora's fires.

"At my command you tamed the flaming bulls which long disdained to bend beneath the yoke, until they pressed their necks against the plows; and, subject to my will, you raised up war till the strong company of dragon-birth were slaughtered as they fought amongst themselves; and, last, you lulled asleep the warden's eyes guards of the Golden Fleece till then awake and sleeping never so, deceiving him, you sent the treasure to the Grecian cities!

"Witness my need of super-natured herbs, elixirs potent to renew the years of age, giving the bloom of youth. You shall not fail to grant me this; for not in vain the stars are flashing confirmation; not in vain the flying dragons, harnessed by their necks, from skies descending bring my chariot down."

A chariot, sent from heaven, came to her and soon as she had stroked the dragons' necks, and shaken in her hands the guiding reins as soon as she had mounted, she was borne quickly above, through unresisting air. And, sailing over Thessaly, she saw the vale of Tempe, where the level soil is widely covered with a crumbling chalk she turned her dragons towards new regions there: and she observed the herbs by Ossa born, the weeds on lofty Pelion, Othrys, Pindus and vast Olympus and from here she plucked the needed roots, or there, the blossoms clipped all with a moon-curved sickle made of brass many the wild weeds by Apidanus, as well as blue Amphrysus' banks, she chose, and not escaped Enipeus from her search; Peneian stretches and Spercheian banks all yielded what she chose: and Boebe's shore where sway the rushes; and she plucked up grass, a secret grass, from fair Euboean fields life-giving virtues in their waving blades, as yet unknown for transformation wrought on Glaucus.

All those fields she visited, with ceaseless diligence in quest of charms, nine days and nine nights sought strong herbs, and the swift dragons with their active wings, failed not to guide the chariot where she willed until they reached her home. The dragons then had not been even touched by anything, except the odor of surrounding herbs, and yet they sloughed their skins, the growth of years.

She would not cross the threshold of her home nor pass its gates; but, standing in the field, alone beneath the canopy of Heaven, she shunned all contact with her husband, while she built up from the ever-living turf two altars, one of which upon the right to Hecate was given, but the one upon the left was sacred then to you, O Hebe, goddess of eternal youth!

Festooning woodland boughs and sweet vervain adorned these altars, near by which she dug as many trenches. Then, when all was done, she slaughtered a black ram, and sprinkled with blood the thirsty trenches; after which she poured from rich carchesian goblets generous wine and warm milk, grateful to propitious Gods the Deities of earth on whom she called entreating, as she did so, Pluto, lord of ghostly shades, and ravished Proserpine, that they should not, in undue haste, deprive her patient's aged limbs of life.

When certain she compelled the God's regard, assured her incantations and long prayers were both approved and heard, she bade her people bring out the body of her father-in-law old Aeson's worn out body and when she had buried him in a deep slumber by her spells, as if he were a dead man, she then stretched him out upon a bed of herbs.

She ordered Jason and his servants thence, and warned them not to spy upon her rites, with eyes profane. As soon as they retired, Medea, with disheveled hair and wild abandon, as a Bacchanalian, paced times three around the blazing altars, while she dipped her

torches, splintered at the top, into the trenches, dark: with blood, and lit the dipt ends in the sacred altar flames. Times three she purified the ancient man with flames, and thrice with water, and three times with sulphur, as the boiling mixture seethed and bubbled in the brazen cauldron near.

And into this, acerbic juices, roots, and flowers and seeds from vales Hemonian and mixed elixirs, into which she cast stones of strange virtue from the Orient, and sifted sands of ebbing ocean's tide; white hoar-frost, gathered when the moon was full, the nauseating flesh and luckless wings of the uncanny screech-owl, and the entrails from a mysterious animal that changed from wolf to man, from man to wolf again; the scaly sloughing of a water-snake, the medic liver of a long-lived stag, and the hard beak and head of an old crow which was alive nine centuries before; these, and a thousand nameless things the foreign sorceress prepared and mixed, and blended all together with a branch of peaceful olive, old and dry with years. And while she stirred the withered olive branch in the hot mixture, it began to change from brown to green; and presently put forth new leaves, and soon was heavy with a wealth of luscious olives. As the ever-rising fire threw bubbling froth beyond the cauldron's rim, the ground was covered with fresh verdure flowers and all luxuriant grasses, and green plants.

Medea, when she saw this wonder took her unsheathed knife and cut the old man's throat; then, letting all his old blood out of him she filled his ancient veins with rich elixir. As he received it through his lips or wound, his beard and hair no longer white with age, turned quickly to their natural vigor, dark and lustrous; and his wasted form renewed, appeared in all the vigor of bright youth, no longer lean and sallow, for new blood coursed in his well-filled veins. Astonished, when released from his deep sleep, and strong in youth, his memory assured him, such he was years four times ten before that day!

Bacchus, from his celestial vantage saw this marvel, and convinced his nurses might then all regain their former vigor, he pled with Medea to restore their youth. The Colchian woman granted his request.

Section 3. Pelias. Medea and Pelias

But so her malice might be satisfied Medea feigned she had a quarrel with her husband, and for safety she had fled to Pelias. There, since the king himself was heavy with old age, his daughters gave her generous reception. And these girls the shrewd Medea in a short time won, by her false show of friendliness; and while among the most remarkable of her achievements she was telling how she had rejuvenated Aeson, and she dwelt particularly, on that strange event, these daughters were induced to hope that by some skill like this their father might regain his lost youth also. And they begged of her this boon, persuading her to name the price; no matter if it was large. She did not reply at once and seemed to hesitate, and so she held their fond minds in a deep suspense by her feigned meditation. When she had at length declared she would restore his youth, she said to them: "That you may have strong confidence in this my promised boon, the oldest leader of your flock of sheep shall be changed to a lamb again by my prized drugs."

Straightway a wooly ram, worn out with length of untold years was brought, his great horns curved around his hollow temples. After she had cut his scrawny throat with her sharp knife Thessalian, barely staining it with his thin blood, Medea plunged his carcass in a bronze-made kettle, throwing in it at the same time juices of great potency. These made his body shrink and burnt away his two horns, and with horns his years. And now thin bleating was heard from within the pot; and even while they wondered at the sound, a lamb jumped out and frisking, ran away to find some udder with its needed milk.

Amazed the daughters looked on and, now that these promises had been performed, they urged more eagerly their first request. Three times Phoebus unyoked his steeds after their plunge in Ebro's stream, and on the fourth night stars shown brilliant on the dark foil of the sky, and then the treacherous daughter of Aeetes set some clear water over a hot fire and put in it herbs of no potency. And now a death-like sleep held the king down, his body all relaxed, and with the king his guards, a sleep which incantations with the potency of magic words had given.

The sad king's daughters, as they had been bid, were in his room, and with Medea stood around his bed. "Why do you hesitate," Medea said. "You laggards, come and draw your swords; let out his old blood that I may refill his empty veins again with young blood. In your hands your father's life and youth are resting. You, his daughters, must have love for him, and if the hopes you have are not all vain, come, do your duty by your father; drive out old age at the point of your good weapons; and let out his blood enfeebled cure him with the stroke of iron."

Spurred on by these words, as each one of them was filial she became the leader in the most unfilial act, and that she might not be most wicked did the wicked deed. Not one could bear to see her own blows, so they turned their eyes away; and every face averted

so, they blindly struck him with their cruel hands. The old man streaming with his blood, still raised himself on elbow, and half mangled tried to get up from his bed; with all those swords around him, he stretched out his pale arms and he cried: “What will you do, my daughters? What has armed you to the death of your loved father?” Their wrong courage left them, and their hands fell. When he would have said still more, Medea cut his throat and plunged his mangled body into boiling water.

Section 4. Medeae fuga.

Only because her winged dragons sailed swiftly with her up to the lofty sky, escaped Medea punishment for this unheard of crime.

Her chariot sailed above embowered Pelion long the lofty home of Chiron over Othrys, and the vale made famous where Cerambus met his fate. Cerambus, by the aid of nymphs, from there was wafted through the air on wings, when earth was covered by the overwhelming sea and so escaped Deucalion’s flood, uncrowned.

She passed by Pittane upon the left, with its huge serpent-image of hard stone, and also passed the grove called Ida’s, where the stolen bull was changed by Bacchus’ power into a hunted stag in that same vale Paris lies buried in the sand; and over fields where Mera warning harked, Medea flew; over the city of Eurypylus upon the Isle of Cos, whose women wore the horns of cattle when from there had gone the herd of Hercules; and over Rhodes beloved
of Phoebus, where Telchinian tribes dwelt, whose bad eyes corrupting power shot forth; Jove, utterly despising, thrust them deep beneath his brother’s waves; over the walls of old Carthaea, where Alcidamas had seen with wonder a tame dove arise from his own daughter’s body.

And she saw the lakes of Hyrie in Teumesia’s Vale, by swans frequented There to satisfy his love for Cycnus, Phyllius gave two living vultures: shell for him subdued a lion, and delivered it to him; and mastered a great bull, at his command; but when the wearied Phyllius refused to render to his friend the valued bull. Indignant, the youth said, “You shall regret your hasty words;” which having said, he leaped from a high precipice, as if to death; but gliding through the air, on snow-white wings, was changed into a swan Dissolved in tears, his mother Hyrie knew not he was saved; and weeping, formed the lake that bears her name.

And over Pleuron, where on trembling wings escaped the mother Combe from her sons, Medea flew; and over the far isle Calauria, sacred to Latona. She beheld the conscious fields whose lawful king, together with his queen were changed to birds.

Upon her right Cyllene could be seen; there Menephon, degraded as a beast, outraged his mother. In the distance, she beheld Cephisius, who lamented long his hapless grandson, by Apollo changed into a bloated sea-calf. And she saw the house where king Eumelus mourned the death of his aspiring son. Borne on the wings of her enchanted dragons, she arrived at Corinth, whose inhabitants, ‘tis said, from many mushrooms, watered by the rain sprang into being.

There she spent some years. But after the new wife had been burnt by the Colchian witchcraft and two seas had seen the king’s own palace all aflame, then, savagely she drew her sword, and bathed it in the blood of her own infant sons; by which atrocious act she was revenged; and she, a wife and mother, fled the sword of her own husband, Jason.

Medea amd Aegeus

On the wings of her enchanted Titan Dragons borne, she made escape, securely, nor delayed until she entered the defended walls of great Minerva’s city, at the hour when aged Periphas transformed by Jove, together with his queen, on eagle wings flew over its encircling walls: with whom the guilty Halcyone, skimming seas safely escaped, upon her balanced wings.

And after these events, Medea went to Aegeus, king of Athens, where she found protection from her enemies for all this evil done. With added wickedness Aegeus, after that, united her to him in marriage.

Book 8

Section 2. Labyrinthus. Ariadnes corona. Minos and the Minotaur

King Minos, when he reached the land of Crete and left his ships, remembered he had made a vow to Jupiter, and offered up a hundred bulls. The splendid spoils of war adorned his palace. Now the infamous reproach of Crete had grown, till it exposed the double-natured shame. So, Minos, moved to cover his disgrace, resolved to hide the monster in a prison, and he built with intricate design, by Daedalus contrived, an architect of wonderful ability, and famous. This he planned of mazey wanderings that deceived the eyes, and labyrinthic passages involved. So sports the clear Maeander, in the fields of Phrygia winding doubtful; back and forth it meets itself, until the wandering stream fatigued, impedes its wearied waters’ flow; from source to sea, from sea to source

involved. So Daedalus contrived innumerous paths, and windings vague, so intricate that he, the architect, hardly could retrace his steps. In this the Minotaur was long concealed, and there devoured Athenian victims sent three seasons, nine years each, till Theseus, son of Aegeus, slew him and retraced his way, finding the path by Ariadne's thread. Without delay the victor fled from Crete, together with the loving maid, and sailed for Dia Isle of Naxos, where he left the maid forlorn, abandoned. Her, in time, lamenting and deserted, Bacchus found and for his love immortalized her name. He set in the dark heavens the bright crown that rested on her brows. Through the soft air it whirled, while all the sparkling jewels changed to flashing fires, assuming in the sky between the Serpent-holder and the Kneeler the well-known shape of Ariadne's Crown.

This page titled 5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **4.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.)** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

5.3: Book- Metamorphoses, 3.511–733 (Ovid)

5.3.1: 1. Introduction

5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times
5.3.1.2: Ovid's Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic
5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum
5.3.1.4: Ovid's Theban Narrative
5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus
5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture

5.3.2: 2. Text

5.3.2.1: 3.511–18
5.3.2.2: 3.519–26
5.3.2.3: 3.527–37
5.3.2.4: 3.538–50
5.3.2.5: 3.551–61
5.3.2.6: 3.562–71
5.3.2.7: 3.572–81
5.3.2.8: 3.582–91
5.3.2.9: 3.592–99
5.3.2.10: 3.600–10
5.3.2.11: 3.611–20
5.3.2.12: 3.621–33
5.3.2.13: 3.634–43
5.3.2.14: 3.644–55
5.3.2.15: 3.656–65
5.3.2.16: 3.666–75
5.3.2.17: 3.676–86
5.3.2.18: 3.687–95
5.3.2.19: 3.696–707
5.3.2.20: 3.708–18
5.3.2.21: 3.719–28
5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33

5.3.3: 3. Commentary

5.3.3.1: 511–26 Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus
5.3.3.2: 527–71 Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus

Thumbnail: The Roman poet Ovid from an engraving. (Public Domain; Auréola via Wikipedia)

5.3: Book- Metamorphoses, 3.511–733 (Ovid) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

SECTION OVERVIEW

5.3.1: 1. Introduction

5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times

5.3.1.2: Ovid’s Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic

5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum

5.3.1.4: Ovid’s Theban Narrative

5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus

5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture

5.3.1: 1. Introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times

Ovid, or (to give him his full Roman name) Publius Ovidius Naso, was born in 43 BCE to a prominent equestrian family in Sulmo (modern Sulmona), a small town about 140 km east of Rome. He died in banishment, a resident of Tomi on the Black Sea, in 17 CE. Ovid was one of the most prolific authors of his day, as well as one of the most controversial.[1] He had always been constitutionally unable to write anything in prose — or so he claims in his autobiography (composed, of course, in verse). Whatever flowed from his pen was in metre, even after his father had told him to put an end to such nonsense:

saepe pater dixit 'studium quid inutile temptas?
Maeonides[2] nullas ipse reliquit opes'.
motus eram dictis, totoque Helicone[3] relicto
scribere temptabam verba soluta modis.
sponte sua carmen numeros veniebat ad aptos,
et quod temptabam dicere versus erat.
(*Trist*. 4.10.21–26)

My father often said, 'Why try a useless
Vocation? Even Homer left no wealth'.
So I obeyed, all Helicon abandoned,
And tried to write in prose that did not scan.
But poetry in metre came unbidden,
And what I tried to write in verses ran.
(tr. Melville)

Students of Latin may well be familiar with Naso senior's banausic attitude: classics graduates, some wrongly assume, have similarly dismal career prospects. But eventually Ovid would shrug off paternal disapproval in pursuit of his passion. After

dutifully filling certain minor offices, he chose not to go on to the quaestorship, thereby definitively renouncing all ambition for a senatorial career. In his case, the outcome was an *oeuvre* for the ages. For quick orientation, here is a time-line with the basics:[4]

Time-line	Historical Events	Ovid's Biography	Literary History
50s BCE			Catullus, Lucretius
44	Julius Caesar murdered		
43	Cicero murdered	Ovid born	
30s			[Gallus *Amores* 1–4 (lost)], Horace *Epodes*
35			Virgil *Eclogues* Horace *Satires* 1
31	Battle of Actium		
29			Virgil *Georgics*
27	Octavian becomes 'Augustus'		
Early 20s			Livy 1–10
20s			Propertius 1–3, Tibullus 1, Horace *Odes* 1–3, *Epistles* 1
19			Virgil *Aeneid*, Tibullus 1–2
18	*Leges Iuliae* (initial Augustan marriage legislation)		
17	Secular Games; Augustus adopts Gaius and Lucius		Horace *Carmen Saeculare*
16			Propertius 4
10s–0s		*Amores* 1–3, *Heroides*, *Medicamina faciei femineae*, *Medea* (a lost tragedy)	Horace *Ars Poetica*, *Epistles* 2, *Odes* 4
2 BCE		*Ars Amatoria* 1–2	
1 CE	Birth of Jesus		
2		*Ars Amatoria* 3 and *Remedia Amoris*	
4	Augustus adopts Tiberius		
8	Scandal at court; Augustus relegates Ovid to Tomi on the Black Sea	Finished just before the relegation (?): *Metamorphoses* 1–15, *Fasti* 1–6	
8-17		*Tristia* 1–5, *Epistulae ex Ponto* 1–4, *Ibis*, *Double Heroides*	
14	Augustus dies; Tiberius accedes		
10s			Manilius *Astronomica*

17 (?)		Ovid dies	Livy dies

Ovid was born when the Republic, the oligarchic system of government that had ruled Rome for centuries, was in its death throes. He was a teenager at the time of the Battle of Actium, the final showdown between Mark Antony and Octavian that saw the latter emerge victorious, become the first *princeps*, and eventually take the honorific title 'Augustus' by which he is better known to posterity. Unlike other major poets of the so-called 'Augustan Age' — Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus — Ovid never experienced a fully functional form of republican government, the *libera res publica* in whose cause figures like Cato and even Cicero ultimately died. There is another important difference between Ovid and most of the other major Augustan poets: he did not have a 'patronfriend', such as Maecenas (a close adviser of the *princeps* who, in the 30s, 'befriended' Virgil, Horace and Propertius) or Messalla, the amateur poet and power-politician to whom Tibullus dedicates his poetry. Ovid came from a prominent family and was financially self-sufficient: this left him free — or so he must have thought — to let rip his insouciant imagination.

A consummate urbanite, Ovid enjoyed himself and was an immensely popular figure in the fashionable society of Augustan Rome. He was more than happy to endorse the myth that the founding hero Aeneas and thus the city itself had Venus in their DNA (just spell Roma backwards!). For him Rome was first and foremost the city of Love and Sex and his (early) verse reads like an ancient version of 'Sex and the City'.

Eventually, though, Ovid ran afoul of the regime. In 8 CE, when he was fifty years old, Ovid was implicated in a lurid court scandal that also involved Augustus' niece Julia and was relegated by the emperor to Tomi, a town on the Black Sea (the sea-port Constanța in present-day Romania).[5] The reasons, so Ovid himself tells us, were a 'poem and a mistake' ('*carmen et error*', *Trist*. 2.207). He goes on to identify the poem as the *Ars Amatoria* — which had, however, been published a full ten years earlier — but declines to elaborate on the 'mistake', on the grounds that it would be too painful for Augustus. He maintained this reticent pose for the rest of his life, so what the *error* was is now anybody's guess (and many have been made). In any event, despite Ovid's pleas the hoped-for recall never came, even after the death of Augustus, and he was forced to pine away the rest of his life far from his beloved Rome. He characterizes Tomi as a primitive and dreary town, located in the middle of nowhere, even though archaeological evidence suggests that it was a pleasant seaside resort. And while his poetry continued to flow, it did so in a very different vein from the light-hearted exuberance that characterizes his earlier 'Roman' output; the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* explore the potential of the elegiac distich (a verse-form consisting of a six-foot hexameter and a five-foot pentameter in alternation: the metre of mourning as well as love) to articulate grief. But on his career trajectory from *eros* to exile, Ovid made forays into non-elegiac genres: tragedy (his lost play *Medea*) and, of course, epic. In the following section we will explore Ovid's playful encoding, in a range of texts, of his longstanding epic ambition and its final realization in the *Metamorphoses*.

---

1 Introductions to Ovid abound. See e.g. Mack (1988), Holzberg (2002), Fantham (2004), Volk (2010), Liveley (2011). There are also three recent 'companions' to Ovid, i.e. collections of papers designed to enhance our understanding and appreciation of the poet and his works. See Hardie (2002b) (by far the best and most affordable), Weiden Boyd (2000) and Knox (2009).

2 *Maeonides* means 'a native of Maeonia', a region in Asia Minor, from which Homer was in antiquity believed to have hailed: hence *Maeonides* = Homer.

3 Mount Helicon in Boeotia is said to be the place where the Muses do dwell; hence *toto Helicone relicto* = 'all Helicon abandoned' = 'having abandoned the writing of poetry'.

4 A good way to get a sense of his life and career is to read his highly spun autobiography Trist. 4.10, which begins with a charming couplet addressed to you: *Ille ego qui fuerim, tenerorum lusor amorum, | quem legis, ut noris, accipe posteritas …* ('That you may know who I was, I that playful poet of tender love whom you read, hear my words, you of times to come …')

5 Technically speaking, Ovid suffered the punishment of *relegatio* ('deportation') rather than the more severe penalty of *exilium* ('exile') — the poet himself stresses the distinction at *Trist*. 2.137. This meant that Ovid retained citizenship and many of the rights that went with it, and his property was not confiscated. His (third) wife Fabia did not accompany him to Tomi, but seems to have remained faithful to him.

5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.1.2: Ovid's Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic

When the first edition of the *Metamorphoses* hit the shelves in the bookshops of Rome, Ovid had already made a name for himself in the literary circles of the city.[6] His official debut, the *Amores* ('Love Affairs') lured his tickled readers into a freewheeling world of elegiac love, slaphappy hedonism, and (more or less) adept adultery.[7] His subsequent *Heroides* ('Letters written by Heroines to their absent HeroLovers') were also designed to appeal to connoisseurs of elegiac poetry, who could here share vicariously in stirring emotional turmoil with abandoned women of history and myth: Ovid, well attuned to female plight, provided the traditional heroes' other (better?) halves with a literary forum for voicing feelings of loss and deprivation and expressing resentment for the epic way of life. Of more practical application for the Roman lady of the world were his verses on toiletry, the *Medicamina Faciei* ('Ointments of the Face, or, How to Apply Make-up'). Once Ovid had discovered his talent for didactic exposition, he blithely continued in that vein. In perusing the urbane and sophisticated lessons on love which the self-proclaimed *erotodidaskalos* ('teacher of love') presented in his *Ars Amatoria* ('A — Z of Love') his male (and female) audience could hone their own amatory skills, while at the same time experiencing true 'jouissance' (the French term for orgasmic bliss, for the sophisticates among you) in the act of reading a work, which is, as one critic put it, 'a poem about poetry, and sex, and poetry as sex'.[8]

After these extensive sessions in poetic philandering, Ovid's ancient readers, by then all hopeless and desperate *eros*-addicts, surely welcomed the thoughtful antidote he offers in the form of the therapeutic *Remedia Amoris* ('Cures for Love'), a poem written with the expressed purpose of freeing the wretched lover from the baneful shackles of Cupid. To cut a long story short: by the time the *Metamorphoses* were published, Ovid's devotees had had ample opportunity to revel in the variety of his literary output about the workings of Eros, and each time, the so-called elegiac distich provided the metrical form. Publius Ovidius Naso had become, apart from a brief flirtation with the genre of tragedy (the lost *Medea*, written in Latin iambic trimeters), a virtual synonym for the composition of erotic-elegiac verse. But picking up and un-scrolling any one of the fifteen books that contained the *Metamorphoses*, a reader familiar with Ovid's literary career is in for a shock. Here are the first four lines of the work, which make up its proem:

> In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
> corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illa)
> adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.
> (*Met*. 1.1–4)

> My mind compels me to sing of shapes changed into new bodies: gods,
> on my endeavours (for you have changed them too) breathe your
> inspiration, and from the very beginning of the world to my own times
> bring down this continuous song.

A mere glance at the layout (no indentations in alternate lines!) suffices to confirm that Ovid has definitively changed poetic metiers (as the 'change' of verse between *formas* and *corpora* makes a 'new' syntactical role for the opening phrase *In nova*).[9] In his newest work the foreshortened pentameters, which until now had been a defining characteristic of his poetry, have disappeared. Instead, row upon steady row of sturdy and well-proportioned hexameters confront the incredulous reader. Ovid, the celebrated master of the distich, the notorious *tenerorum lusor amorum* ('the playboy of light-hearted love-poetry' as he calls himself), the unrivalled champion of erotic-elegiac poetry, has produced a work written in 'heroic verse' — as the epic metre is portentously called.

But once the initial shock has worn off, readers familiar with Ovid's earlier output are bound to experience a sense of *déjà vu* (as the French say of what they have seen before). Ovid, while devoting his previous career to versifying things erotic, had always shown an inclination towards epic poetry. Already in the introductory elegy to the first book of the *Amores*, the neophyte announced that he was writing elegies merely by default. His true ambition lay elsewhere; he had actually meant to write an epic:

> Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam
>
> edere, materia conveniente modis.

par erat inferior versus — risisse Cupido

dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.

(*Am*. 1.1.1–4)

About arms and violent wars I was getting ready to compose in the weighty hexameter. The material matched the metrical form: the second verse was of equal length to the first — but Cupid (they say) smiled and snatched away one of the feet.[10]

As can be gathered from pointed allusions to the *Aeneid* (which begins *Arma virumque cano*: 'I sing of arms and the man') at the opening, the poem Ovid set out to write before Cupid intervened would have been no routine piece of work, but rather an epic of such martial grandeur as to challenge Virgil's masterpiece. Ovid's choice of the hexameter for the *Metamorphoses* signals that he has finally realized his long-standing ambition to compose an epic. But already the witty features of the proem (starting with its minuscule length: four meagre lines for a work of fifteen books!) indicate that his embrace of the genre is to be distinctly doubleedged. And, indeed, his take on epic is as unconventional as his efforts in elegiac and didactic poetry had been. Just as the *Amores* spoofed the more serious output of his elegiac predecessors Propertius and Tibullus and his string of didactic works (the *Ars Amatoria*, the *Remedia Amoris*, the *Medicamina Faciei*) spoofed more serious ventures in the genre such as Virgil's *Georgics* (a poem on farming), so the *Metamorphoses* has mischievous fun with, while at the same time also outperforming, the Greco-Roman epic tradition from Homer to Virgil. It is arguably the most unusual epic to have come down to us from antiquity — as well as one of the most influential.

---

6 The following is adapted from Gildenhard and Zissos (2000b).

7 You can read the first book of the *Amores* on-line in another OBP edition. See http://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/348

8 Sharrock (1994) vii.

9 Initially, the reader might be inclined to take the first four words (*In nova fert animus*: 'my mind carries me on to new things', with the adjective *nova* used as a noun) as a self-standing syntactic unit; only after reaching the opening of line 2 do we realise that *nova* in fact modifies *corpora* and the phrase goes with the participle *mutatas* ('forms changed into new bodies').

10 By removing one of the feet from the second verse, Cupid in effect changed the genre of the poem Ovid was composing from epic (in which all verses are hexametric — i.e. contain six feet) to elegy (in which every second verse contains five feet).

5.3.1.2: Ovid's Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum

In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid parades a truly dazzling array of mythological and (as the epic progresses) historical matter before his audience. Aristotelian principles of narrative unity and 'classical' plotting have clearly fallen by the wayside. In breathtaking succession, the fast-paced narrative takes his readers from the initial creation myths to the gardens of Pomona, from the wilful intrusion of *Amor* into his epic narrative in the Apollo and Daphne episode to the illstarred marriage feast of Pirithous and Hippodame (ending in an all out brawl, mass-slaughter, and a 'Romeo and Juliet' scene between two centaurs), from the Argonauts' voyage to Colchis to Orpheus' underworld descent (to win back his beloved Eurydice from the realms of the dead), from the charming rustic couple Philemon and Baucis to the philosopher Pythagoras expounding on nature and history, from the creative destruction of Greek cultural centres such as Thebes in the early books to the rise of Rome and the apotheosis of the Caesars at the end. As Ovid proceeds through this remarkable assortment of material, the reader traverses the entire cosmos, from the top of Mount Olympus where Jupiter presides over the council of the gods to the pits of Tartarus where the dreadful Furies hold sway, from far East where, at dawn, Sol mounts his fiery chariot to far West where his son Phaethon, struck by Jupiter's thunderbolt, plunges headlong into the Eridanus river. Within the capacious geographical boundaries of his fictional world, Ovid's narrative focus switches rapidly from the divine elegiac lover Apollo to the resolute virgin Diana, from the blasphemer Lycaon to the boar slaying Meleager, from the polymorphic sexual exploits of *Pater Omnipotens* to the counterattacks of his vengeful wife Juno. At one point the poet flaunts blameless Philomela's severed tongue waggling disconcertingly on the ground, at another he recounts the dismemberment of the Thessalian tyrant Pelias at the hands of his devoted daughters. On a first encounter the centrifugal diversity of the narrative material which Ovid presents in his *carmen perpetuum* ('continuous song') is bound to have a disorienting, even unsettling effect on the reader. How is anyone to come to critical terms with the astonishing variety of narrative configurations that Ovid displays in this ever-shifting poetic kaleidoscope?[11]

3a. Genre Matters

The hexametric form, the cosmic scope and the sheer scale of the *Metamorphoses* all attest to its epic affiliations. As just discussed, the poem's opening verses seem to affirm that Ovid realized his longstanding aspiration to match himself against Virgil in the most lofty of poetic genres. But as soon as one scratches the surface, myriad difficulties emerge. Even if we choose to assign the

Metamorphoses to the category of epic poetry, idiosyncrasies abound. A tabular comparison with other well-known instances of the genre brings out a few of its fundamental oddities:

Author	**Title**	**Length**	**Protagonist**
Homer	*Iliad*	24 Books	Vr Acthial nde Vsar
Homer	*Odyssey*	24 Books	Fetu Crdny/s Csievu is l Var
Apollonius R	*Argonautica*	4 Books	Jr a s o e l a n d A d

hodius		venture
Ennius	*Annals*	15/18 Books	Men Ronnd at nheoibrl deese ds
Virgil	*Aeneid*	12 Books	Arns Aaen de ta hse Man
Ovid	*Metamorphoses*	15 Books	Transfo?rnation

The tally of fifteen books, while deviating from the 'multiple-of-fouror-six' principle canonized by Homer, Apollonius Rhodius, and Virgil, at least has a precedent in Ennius' *Annals*.[12] But Ovid's main theme and his choice of protagonist are decidedly peculiar (as will be discussed in the following sections). And then there is the playfulness of the narrative, its pervasive reflexivity, and its often arch or insouciant tone — elements largely absent from earlier instantiations of the genre. 'The *Metamorphoses* is perhaps Ovid's most innovative work, an epic on a majestic scale that refuses to take epic seriously'.[13] Indeed, the heated and ultimately inconclusive debate that has flared up around the question of whether the *Metamorphoses* is an epic, an eroticization of epic, a parody of epic, a conglomeration of genres granted equal rights, an epic *sui generis* or simply a poem *sui generis* might seem to indicate that Ovid has achieved a total breakdown of generic conventions, voiding the validity of generic analysis altogether. Karl Galinsky once cautioned that 'it would be misguided to pin the label of any genre on the *Metamorphoses*'.[14] But does Ovid, in this poem, really dance outside genre altogether? Recent scholarship on the *Metamorphoses* suggests that the answer is 'no'. Stephen Hinds articulates the issue at stake very well; in reconsidering the classic distinction between Ovidian epic and elegy, he remarks that

> … in the opening lines [of the *Metamorphoses*], the epic criterion is immediately established as relevant, even if only as a point of reference for generic conflict … Boundaries are crossed and recrossed as in no poem before. Elements characteristic of elegy, bucolic, didactic, tragedy, comedy and oratory mingle with elements variously characteristic of the grand epic tradition and with each other … However, wherever its shifts may take it, the metre, bulk and scope of the poem ensures that the question implied in that opening paradox will never be completely eclipsed: namely in what sense is the *Metamorphoses* an epic?[15]

In other words, denying the *Metamorphoses* the status of epic (or at least epic aspiration) means depriving the text of one of its most intriguing constitutive tensions. Ovid needs the seriousness, the ideology and the reputation of epic as medium for his frivolous poetics, as the ultimate sublime for his exercise in generic deconstruction and as the conceptual matrix for the savvy of his metageneric artistry (i.e. artistry that selfconsciously, if often implicitly, reflects on generic matters). Within this epic undertaking, most other genres find their place as well — not least in the set text where elements of epic, oratory, hymnic poetry, tragedy, and bucolic all register (and intermingle).

Scholars are again divided on how best to handle the multiplicity of generic voices that Ovid has included in the *Metamorphoses*. Are we perhaps dealing with 'epic pastiche'? One critic answers in the affirmative: 'For my purposes … the long poem in hexameters is a pastiche epic whose formal qualities are shaped by an invented genre that is at once *ad hoc* and *sui generis*, one with no real ancestors but with many and various offspring'.[16] But another objects that 'it is a mistake often made to identify one section of the *Metamorphoses* as "elegiac", another as "epic", another as "comic", another as "tragic", as if Ovid put together a pastiche of genres. Actually, elements of all these genres, and others as well, are as likely as not to appear together in any given story'.[17] Arguably a more promising way to think critically about the generic presences in Ovid's poem is to see the genres *in dialogue* with one another in ways that are mutually *enriching*. [18] All genres have their own distinctive emphasis and outlook, and to have several of them at work at the same time challenges us, the readers, to negotiate sudden changes in register and perspective, keeping us on our toes.

3b. A Collection of Metamorphic Tales

Its hexametric form aside, the most striking formal feature of the *Metamorphoses* is that, as its title announces, it strings together a vast number of more or less distinct tales, each of which features a metamorphosis — that is, a magical or supernatural transformation of some kind. In composing a poem of this type, Ovid was working within a tradition of metamorphic literature that had blossomed a few centuries earlier in Hellenistic culture. In terms of his apparent generic aspirations, Ovid's main theme (and hence his title) is unequivocally — and shockingly — unorthodox: before him, 'transformative change' was a subject principally cultivated in Hellenistic catalogue poetry, which is about as un-epic in scope and conception as literature can get.[19]

Nicander's *Heteroeumena* ('Changed Ones'), datable to the 2nd century BCE, is the earliest work dedicated to metamorphosis for which we have reliable attestations. The surviving fragments are scant, but valuable testimony is preserved in a prose compendium

written by Antoninus Liberalis. The *Heteroeumena* was a poem in four or five books, written in dactylic hexameters, which narrated episodes of metamorphosis from disparate myths and legends, brought together in a single collection. An overarching concern was evidently to link tales of metamorphosis to the origin of local landmarks, religious rites or other cultural practices: Nicander's stories were thus predominantly aetiological in orientation, very much like Callimachus' *Aetia*. At the close of the Hellenistic period, Greek metamorphosis poetry evidently found its way to Rome, along with its authors. So, for example, Parthenius, the Greek tutor to Virgil, who came to Rome in 65 BCE, composed a *Metamorphoses* in elegiacs, about which we unfortunately know next to nothing.

Considered against this literary backdrop, Ovid's initial announcement in the *Metamorphoses* that this would be a poem about 'forms changed into different bodies' (*in nova … mutatas formas | corpora*, 1.1–2) might well have suggested to a contemporary reader that Ovid was inscribing himself within a tradition of metamorphosis poetry *tout court* — setting himself up, that is, as the Roman exemplar of the sub-genre of Hellenistic metamorphosis catalogue poetry represented by such works as Nicander's *Heteroeumena*. But Ovid's epic was vastly more ambitious in conception, and proved to be no less revolutionary in design. Nicander's *Heteroeumena* and other 'collective' metamorphosis poems from the Hellenistic period are characterized by a discontinuous narrative structure: each included tale constitutes a discrete entry, sufficient unto itself, so that the individual stories do not add up to an organic whole. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* marks a radical departure from these predecessors: while each individual tale sports the qualities we associate with the refined and sophisticated, as well as small-scale and discontinuous, that Callimachus and other Hellenistic poets valued and cultivated, the whole is much more than the sum of its parts.

What distinguishes the *Metamorphoses* from these precursors is that it is chronologically and thematically continuous. In strictly formal terms, it is this chronological framework that constitutes Ovid's innovation within the tradition of ancient catalogue poetry. He marshals into a continuous epic narrative a vast assortment of tales of transformation, beginning with the creation of the cosmos and ending in his own times. Every 'episode' within this narrative thus needs to satisfy two conditions: (i) it must follow on from the preceding episode in some kind of temporal succession; (ii) it must contain a metamorphosis. The second condition is sometimes met by resort to ingenious devices. The set text is a case in point: the story of Pentheus, as inherited from Euripides and others, did not contain an 'orthodox' instance of metamorphosis, i.e. of a human being transforming into flora, fauna, or an inanimate object (though of course it does feature the changeling god Bacchus in human disguise and hallucinating maenads who look at Pentheus only to see a wild animal). To make good this deficiency, Ovid includes an inset narrative told by the character Acoetes, who delivers, as a cautionary tale for Pentheus, a long-winded account of how Bacchus once transformed a group of wicked Etruscan pirates into dolphins. Now some readers, particularly those coming to Ovid from the earlier tradition of metamorphic catalogue poetry, might regard this as 'cheating'; others, however, might appreciate the ingenuity with which Ovid explores the limits and possibilities of metamorphosis, combining orthodox instances of transformative change with related phenomena, such as divine allophanies ('appearances in disguise') or hallucinations ('transformations in the eyes of a beholder, based on misperception of reality that is nevertheless frightfully real in its consequences'). What is at any rate remarkable is that such 'tricks' as Acoetes' inset narrative are comparatively rare: on the whole, the *Metamorphoses* meets the daunting, seemingly impossible, challenge of fashioning, in the traditional epic manner, an 'unbroken song' (*perpetuum … carmen*, 1.4) from disparate tales of transformation.

3c. A Universal History

Ovid's epic is a work of breathtaking ambition: it gives us nothing less than a comprehensive vision of the world — both in terms of nature and culture (and how they interlock). The *Metamorphoses* opens with a cosmogony and offers a cosmology: built into the poem is an explanation (highly idiosyncratic, to be sure) of how our physical universe works, with special emphasis on its various metamorphic qualities and possibilities. And it is set up as a universal history that traces time from the moment of creation to the Augustan age — or, indeed, beyond. In his proem Ovid promises a poem of cosmic scale, ranging from the very beginning of the universe (*prima ab origine mundi*) down to his own times (*ad mea tempora*).[20] He embarks upon an epic narrative that begins with the creation of the cosmos and ends with the apotheosis of Julius Caesar. The poet's teleological commitment to a notional 'present' (the Augustan age in which the epic was composed) *qua* narrative terminus is subtly reinforced by frequent appeals to the contemporary reader's observational experience. The result is a cumulatively compelling sequence that postures, more or less convincingly, as a chronicle of the cosmos in all its pertinent facets.

Taken in its totality, Ovid's epic elevates the phenomenon of metamorphosis from its prior status as a mythographic curiosity to an indispensable mechanism of cosmic history, a fundamental causal element in the evolution of the universe and the story of humanity: the *Metamorphoses* offers not a mere concatenation of marvellous transformations, but a poetic vision of the world conceived of as fundamentally and pervasively metamorphic.

The claim that the *Metamorphoses* amounts to a universal history may well sound counterintuitive, and for two reasons in particular. First, chronology sometimes seems to go awry — not least through the heavy use of embedded narrative — so that the audience is bound to have difficulty keeping track of the trajectory that proceeds from elemental chaos at the outset to the Rome of Augustus at the end. But upon inspection, it turns out that Ovid has sprinkled important clues into his narrative that keep the final destination of his narrative in the minds of (attentive) readers.[21] The second puzzle raised by the historical orientation of Ovid's epic concerns its principal subject matter: instances of transformative change that are clearly fictional. Ovid himself concedes as much. In one of his earlier love elegies, *Amores* 3.12, he laments the fact that, owing to the success of his poetry, his girlfriend Corinna has become the toast of Rome's would-be Don Giovannis. Displeased with the prospect of romantic competition, he admonishes would-be rivals to read his love elegies with the same incredulity they routinely bring to bear on mythic *fabulae* — and proceeds to belabour the point in what almost amounts to a blueprint of the *Metamorphoses* (*Am*. 3.12.19–44). Ovid's catalogue of unbelievable tales includes Scylla, Medusa, Perseus and Pegasus, gigantomachy, Circe's magical transformation of Odysseus' companions, Cerberus, Phaethon, Tantalus, the transformations of Niobe and Callisto, Procne, Philomela, and Itys, the self-transformations of Jupiter prior to raping Leda, Danaë, and Europa, Proteus, and the Spartoi that rose from the teeth of the dragon slain by Cadmus at the future site of Thebes. The catalogue culminates in the punchline that just as no one really believes in the historical authenticity of such tales, so too readers should be disinclined to take anything he says about Corinna at face value:[22]

> Exit in inmensum fecunda licentia vatum,
>
> obligat historica nec sua verba fide.
>
> et mea debuerat falso laudata videri
>
> femina; credulitas nunc mihi vestra nocet.
>
> (*Am*. 3.12.41–43)
>
> The creative licence of the poets knows no limits, and does not constrain
> its words with historical faithfulness. My girl ought to have seemed
> falsely praised; I am undone by your credulity.

The same attitude towards tales of transformative change informs his retrospect on the *Metamorphoses* at *Trist*. 2.63–64, where Ovid adduces the implausibility of the stories contained within his epic: *Inspice maius opus, quod adhuc sine fine tenetur*, | *in non credendos corpora uersa modos* ('Look at the greater work, which is as of yet unfinished, bodies transformed in ways not to be believed'). As one scholar has observed, 'a critic could hardly wish for a more explicit denial of the reality of the myth-world of the *Metamorphoses*'.[23]

In light of how Ovid presents the theme of metamorphosis elsewhere (including moments of auto-exegesis, where he tells his own story), it comes as no surprise that 'the *Metamorphoses*' challenges to our belief in its fictions are relentless, for Ovid continually confronts us with such reminders of his work's fictional status'.[24] But this feature of his text is merely the result of his decision to write *fiction as history*. Put differently, what is so striking about his project is not that Ovid is writing self-conscious fiction. Rather, it is his paradoxical insistence that his fictions are historical facts. From the start, Ovid draws attention to, and confronts, the issue of credibility. A representative instance comes from his account of how Deucalion and Pyrrha replenish the earth's human population after its near extermination in the flood by throwing stones over their shoulders:

> saxa (quis hoc credat, nisi sit pro teste vetustas?)
>
> ponere duritiem coepere …
>
> (*Met*. 1.400–01)
>
> The stones (who would believe this if the age of the tale did not function
> as witness?) began to lose their hardness …

In his parenthetical remark Ovid turns *vetustas* ('old age') into a criterion for veritas ('truth'), slyly counting on, while at the same time subverting, the Roman investment in tradition, as seen most strikingly in the importance afforded to *exempla* and *mores maiorum* (that is, 'instances of exemplary conduct and ancestral customs'). His cheeky challenge to see fictions as facts (and the ensuing question of belief) accompanies Ovid's characters (and his readers) throughout the poem, including the set text, where

Pentheus refuses to believe the cautionary tale of Bacchus' transformation of the Tyrrhenian pirates into dolphins — with fatal consequences.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that some of the narrative material is historical. The reader must remain ever alert to the programmatic opening declaration that the *Metamorphoses* will proceed chronologically from the birth of the universe to the poet's own times (Met. 1.3–4, cited and discussed above). Ovid is, in other words, combining myth and history, with the latter coming to the fore in the final books, which document the rise of Rome. The end of the *Metamorphoses* celebrates the ascendancy of Rome to world-empire: *terra sub Augusto est* ('the world lies under Augustus', 15.860) observes Ovid laconically of the comprehensive sway of Roman rule in his own day (15.876–77). This is presented as a culminating moment in world history.

The combination of myth and history was, of course, hardly new. The Hebrew Bible, to name just one precedent, began in the mythological realm with Genesis, proceeded to the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, the deluge, and so on before moving on to more overtly historical material. And whereas this was long considered (and in some quarters still is considered) a historical document throughout, Ovid, as we have seen, is more willing to probe the implausibility of the traditional mythological tales that he has placed side-by-side with historical material. But readers of the *Metamorphoses* should be wary of placing too much stock in the dichotomy of myth and history. From an ideological perspective, the real issue is less the truth-value of specific events narrated in the epic, than the way they make sense of — and shape perceptions of — the world. The subtle anticipations of Roman geopolitical domination in Ovid's early books are scarcely less significant for being embedded in Greek mythology. A case in point arises in the opening book, where Jupiter summons all the gods in assembly in reaction to perceived human depravity, as epitomized in the barbarous conduct of Lycaon. Here, it would appear, Ovid puts on display his generic *bona fides*: any ancient epic worthy of the name could hardly omit a *concilium deorum*. From Homer onwards an assembly of the gods had been an almost compulsory ingredient of the genre.[25] But for all the seeming conventionality of his set-up, Ovid provides a decidedly eccentric rendition of the type-scene. The oddities begin with a striking account of the summoned divinities hastening along the Milky Way to the royal abode of Jupiter:

> Est via sublimis, caelo manifesta sereno;
>
> lactea nomen habet, candore notabilis ipso.
>
> hac iter est superis ad magni tecta Tonantis
>
> regalemque domum: dextra laevaque deorum
>
> atria nobilium valvis celebrantur apertis.
>
> plebs habitat diversa loca: hac parte potentes
>
> caelicolae clarique suos posuere penates;
>
> hic locus est, quem, si verbis audacia detur,
>
> haud timeam magni dixisse Palatia caeli.
>
> (*Met*. 1.168–76)
>
> There is a highway, easily seen when the sky is clear. It is called the Milky Way, famed for its shining whiteness. By this way the gods come to the halls and royal dwelling of the mighty Thunderer. On either side the palaces of the gods of higher rank are thronged with guests through folding-doors flung wide. The lesser gods dwell apart from these. In this neighbourhood the illustrious and mighty heaven-dwellers have placed their household gods. This is the place which, if I made bold to say it, I would not fear to call the Palatine of high heaven.

In these lines, Ovid describes a celestial Rome. Jupiter's abode, the palace of the great ruler, is situated on a heavenly Palatine; the Milky Way is like the *Sacer Clivus* which led from the *Via Sacra* to the Palatine Hill in Rome, where of course Augustus lived. As with the Romans, the gods are divided into nobles and plebeians; the former have magnificent and well-situated abodes, complete with *atria* teeming with *clientes*; the latter must make do with more humble and obscure quarters. More strikingly, celestial

patricians and plebs alike have their *penates* (household gods).[26] And the analogies don't end there. The assembly that meets in Jupiter's palace follows procedures that are recognizably those of the Roman Senate.[27] Indeed, 'the correspondence with Augustan Rome is particularly close at this point, since we know that Augustus held Senate meetings in the library attached to his temple of Apollo on the Palatine, which was itself intricately linked with his residence'.[28]

The comical audacity of this sequence has elicited reams of commentary. Since Homer, the traditional epic practice was to model divine existence on human analogy, but to attribute household gods (*penates*) to the Olympian gods themselves is humorously to extend and expose the convention.[29] At the same time, though, Ovid achieves a more profound effect, for the episode hints at a kind of politico-historical telos: the Olympian political structures and those of contemporary Rome are in homology. For all the humorous touches — and we certainly do not wish to deny them — Ovid has inscribed Augustan Rome into the heavens. Since Jupiter's rule is to be eternal, there is an implication, by association, of a corresponding political-historical closure in human affairs. From the very beginning, then, the disconcerting thematic implications of potentially endless metamorphosis — which Pythagoras will assert as axiomatic for geopolitical affairs — are being countered or 'contained' with respect to *Roma aeterna*. Heaven has stabilized — the final challenges to the Jovian cosmos, those of giants and their like, are now 'in the books' — and will suffer no further political upheavals of significance. An equivalent state of affairs is subsequently to be achieved on the terrestrial level. The human realm will, over the course of Ovid's narrative, evolve into the Jovian paradigm — which is already, by the comic solipsism just discussed, the Roman paradigm. The majestic declaration in the final book *terra sub Augusto est* (15.860) neatly signals that the *princeps* has achieved the Jovian analogy; this is the language of divine power, which is to say, the earth being 'beneath' Augustus makes both his power and figurative vantage point god-like.[30]

In writing a universal history, its eccentric narrative voice and hexametric form notwithstanding, Ovid is performing a peculiarly Roman operation. For some scholars, indeed, history first became universal in Roman times; on this view it was the creation of the Roman Empire that allowed history to become 'global' in a geographical sense.[31] This version of history adopted more or less consciously an ethnocentric or 'Romanocentric' perspective that freely incorporated mythical elements in explaining Roman supremacy in terms of both surpassing virtus (making the Romans superior imperialists) and surpassing *pietas* (guaranteeing them the privileged support of the gods).

Together, the record of supernatural powers and transformed human beings that the *Metamorphoses* chronicles adds up to a unique combination of 'natural' and 'universal' history, in which cosmos and culture evolve together and eventually (in the form of a Roman civilization that has acquired global reach under Augustus) coincide.

3d. Anthropological Epic

To use the theme of metamorphosis as the basis for a universal history did not just strain, it shattered prevailing generic norms. From Homer to Virgil, the stuff of epic was war and adventure, heroes and their deeds; in Ovid, it is — a fictitious phenomenon.[32] A related curiosity arises over the question of protagonist. In the other epics of our tabular comparison (see above, §3a), it is a simple matter to identify the main character or characters.[33] That is decidedly not the case in the *Metamorphoses*: Ovid's frequently un-heroic personnel changes from one episode to the next, to the point that some scholars have suggested that the hero of the poem is the poet himself — the master-narrator who holds (and thinks) everything together and, in so doing, performs a deed worthy of immortality.[34] There is, to be sure, much to be gained from focusing on the 'composition myth' in this way, but it does not rule out pinpointing a protagonist on the level of plot as well. As Ernst Schmidt has argued, a plausible candidate for this designation is 'the human being'.[35]

There are some difficulties with this suggestion (one might well ask: what about the gods?); but all in all the thesis that humanity *as such* takes centre-stage in the *Metamorphoses* is attractive and compelling. At its core, the poem offers a sustained meditation on what it is to be human within a broader cosmic setting shaped by supernatural agents and explores the potential of our species for good and for evil. These concerns (one could label them 'anthropological') are set up by the various forms of anthropogenesis ('accounts of the origins of humanity') in the early episodes, which trace our beginnings to such diverse material as earth and a divine spark, stones cast by mortal hands, and the blood of slain giants. From an ethical point of view, the outcomes are as diverse as the material: Ovid explores a wide gamut of possibilities, covering the full range from quasi-divine and ethically impeccable human beings (witness the blissful rectitude of the golden age at 1.83–112) to bestial and blasphemous (the version of our species that descended from the blood of giants, described at 1.156–62). In the Deucalion and Pyrrha story (a 'pagan' variant on the tale of Noah's ark), Ovid makes the aetiological connection between the kind of material from which humanity is manufactured and our

respective qualities explicit: originating from stones, 'we are hence a hard race, experienced in toil, and so giving testimony to the source of our birth' (*inde genus durum sumus experiensque laborum | et documenta damus, qua simus origine nati*, 1.414–15). As the reader proceeds through the poem, encounters with such atrocious human beings as Tereus or such admirable individuals as Baucis and Philemon serve as vivid reminders that accursed and salvific elements are equally part of our DNA. A 'rhetoric of origins' also plays an important role in the set text: Pentheus tries to rally the citizens of Thebes against Bacchus and his entourage by reminding them of their descent from the teeth of the dragon of Mars (3.543–45) — a belated anthropogenesis on a local scale that re-enacts the opening theme at a later stage of cosmic history.

In line with both Ovid's elegiac past and his 'anthropological' interest in humanity, the Metamorphoses is chock-full of sex and gender issues — though readers will have to venture beyond the set text to discover this: the chosen episode is relatively free from erotic entanglements. In fact, Ovid has in many ways 'de-eroticized' earlier versions of the Pentheus-myth, such as the one we find in Euripides' *Bacchae*, which features cross-dressing, prurient interest in orgiastic sexuality, and voyeurism. But browse around a bit before or after the set text and you'll see that Ovid never departs for long from erotic subject matter. You'll find that, as discussed below (§5b-i), the sober figure of the blind seer Tiresias who introduces the Pentheus-episode first features in the poem as a divinely certified 'sexpert' on male and female orgasms. More generally, sex and gender are such pervasive preoccupations that one scholar has plausibly characterized the *Metamorphoses* as a 'hymn to Venus'.[36]

3e. A Reader's Digest of Greek and Latin Literature

In the process of laying out a vast body of mythic tales, both well known and recondite, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* produces something like a 'reader's digest' of Greek and Latin literature. Whichever authors came before him — Homer, Euripides, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, Theocritus, Ennius, Lucretius, Catullus, Virgil, you name them — he worked their texts into his own, often with a hilarious spin or a polemic edge. In Ovid, the literary heritage of Greece and Rome begins to swing. His poetics — his peculiar way of writing poetry — is as transformative as his choice of subject matter. In the *Metamorphoses*, one intertextual joke chases the next as Ovid puts his predecessors into place — turning them into inferior forerunners or footnotes to his own epic mischief. To appreciate this dimension of his poem requires knowledge of the earlier literature that Ovid engages with. In the set text, Ovid's partners in dialogue include, but are by no means limited to, Homer, the author of the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, Euripides, pseudo-Theocritus, Pacuvius (a 2nd-century BCE Roman tragic playwright whose work survives only in scant fragments), and Virgil. Even this partial enumeration, consisting as it does of authors and texts that have come down to us more or less intact as well as those that have all but vanished, points to an occupational hazard for anyone interested in literary dialogue: so much ancient literature that Ovid and his readers would have known intimately is lost to us. Literary critics (including the present writers: see below, §5a) will inevitably tend to stress the intertextual relationships between texts that have best survived the accidents of transmission (in our case: the *Odyssey*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, the pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll* 26, and Virgil's *Aeneid*). So it is worth recalling that, as far as, say, tragic plays about Bacchus and Pentheus are concerned, Ovid would have had at his disposal not only Euripides' *Bacchae*, but a number of other scripts that are lost to us or have only survived in bits and pieces, notably Pacuvius' *Pentheus*. This does not invalidate the exercise of comparing Euripides and Ovid — far from it. Even if it is salutary to bear in mind that we are almost certainly seeing only part of the full network of intertextual relationships, we should take solace from the fact that, as John Henderson points out, 'plenty of ancient Roman readers were in the same boat as us: Ovid catered for all levels, from newcomers to classical studies to impossibly learned old-stagers. And the main point remains, that, just as verse form always brings change to a tale, so too a myth can never be told in anything but a new version — stories forever mutate'.

The 'reader's digest' effect of the *Metamorphoses* works in tandem with its cosmic scope, totalizing chronology and encyclopaedic ambition to endow it with a unique sense of comprehensiveness. More fundamentally still, Ovid's epic codified and preserved for evermore one of antiquity's earliest and most important ways of making sense of the universe: myth. As a result, it has become one of the most influential classics of all time: instances of reception are legion, as countless works of art that engage with the mythic heritage of antiquity found their ultimate inspiration in Ovid's poetry. The *Metamorphoses* has been called 'the Bible of artists and painters' and 'one of the cornerstones of Western culture'.[37] It is virtually impossible to walk into any museum of note without encountering artworks that rehearse Ovidian themes; and his influence on authors, not least those of the first rank — from Dante to Petrarch, from Shakespeare to Milton — is equally pervasive.[38] 'Bible' and 'cornerstone', though, with their implications of ponderous gravity and paradigmatic authority, are rather odd metaphors to apply to Ovid's epic: they capture its importance through the ages, but unwittingly invert why the *Metamorphoses* has continued to resonate with so many creative geniuses (as well as the

average reader). After all, Ovid's intense exploration of erotic experience in all its polymorphous diversity and his vigorous celebration of transformative fluidity (or, indeed, eternal flux) in both nature and culture make of the poem a veritable counter-Bible, offering a decidedly unorthodox vision of the universe and its inhabitants.

It is a fundamental principle of narration, as John Henderson reminds us, that 'a tale tells on its teller — all these stories came into Ovid's mind-and-repertoire, and these are his versions, so "about" Ovid'. And (he adds) 'tales mean to have designs on those on the receiving-end, and now that includes us, and that means you. There are many reasons why the *Metamorphoses* (plural) keep bulldozing their way through world culture, but this (singular) is what counts the most. As Horace put it: *de te fabula narratur*'.[39]

---

11 On varietas ('variety') in Latin literature more generally see now Fitzgerald (2016).

12 *Annals*, as the name suggests (from *annus* = year), are year-by-year chronicles. Ennius (c. 239–c. 169 BCE) wrote his epic history of Rome towards the end of his life

13 Mack (1988) 27.

14 Galinsky (1975) 41.

15 Hinds (1987) 121.

16 Johnson (1996) 9.

17 Tissol (1996) 151–52.

18 For generic dialogue see Farrell (1992); for 'generic enrichment' Harrison (2007).

19 Gildenhard and Zissos (2013) 49–51.

20 Or, by a pun on *tempora*, to Ovid's 'temples' (i.e. to his cranium).

21 More on this matter below; for detailed discussion see Gildenhard and Zissos (2004).

22 Any mention of *Amores* 3.12, as John Henderson reminds us, has also to invoke the Liar's Paradox at work here: the person whose only true claim is that he is lying is — lying. 'So whatever else Ovid "challenges" us to read, it is all tainted with mendacity. There is *no* true instruction for the reader coming from this author: I'd be lying, wouldn't I, if I said that we're on our own, with "myth", fictions that (like histories) tell truths by lying (esp. by telling [hi]stories)'.

23 Little (1970) 347.

24 Feeney (1991) 229 with reference to earlier scholarship in n. 152.

25 Lee (1953) on *Met*. 1.167ff., citing Hom. *Il*. 8.1ff., 20.1 ff.; *Od*. 1.26ff., 5.1ff; Enn. *Ann*. 51–55 Sk; *Aen*. 10.1ff. One could add Lucilius, who, in his *Satires*, also featured a *concilium deorum* ('Council of the Gods'), at which an individual called Lupus (Latin for 'wolf' — a distant intertextual relative of Ovid's Lycaon, surely) was put on trial. Ovid here follows the example of Homer's *Odyssey* and Ennius' *Annales* in placing his *concilium deorum* at the beginning of his narrative.

26 Lee (1953) on *Met*. 1.167ff.

27 Ginsberg (1989) 228.

28 Feeney (1991) 199, citing Suet. *Aug*. 29.3 and the discussion of Thompson (1981).

29 The notion of *penates* makes a suggestive appearance in the set text as well: see Comm. on 538–40.

30 Which is not, of course, to deny the rich ironies inherent in Ovid's parallelism between Jupiter and Augustus: see e.g. Johnson (1970), 146. John Henderson offers some characteristically trenchant observations here: 'The ugly indiscriminate speciescide perpetrated by the Almighty is … just the first modelling of the exercise of autocratic power in Ovid's poem: the set text will picture one young monarch among the horde populating mythland attempting to play the tough guy. In the Julio-Claudian Rome of the Caesars, myths were becoming (a way to get) real, all over again'.

31 Ingelbert (2014) 256.

32 That Ovid chose to write, for the most part, fiction did not prevent him from presenting his fictions as facts: see the previous section on 'universal history'.

33 Ennius' *Annals* features several main characters, and a case could be made for Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* featuring a collective protagonist, i.e. the Argonauts as a group.

34 For this approach to the poem, see Solodow (1988) 37–55, also discussed at Comm. on 568–69.

35 Schmidt (1991).

36 Barchiesi (1999).

37 Brown (1999) 1.

38 For specific examples in the set text, see Comm. on 568–71 (Shakespeare) and 664–65 (Seneca); 670–72 (Marlowe).

39 For the cautionary tale of how some classical students took the Euripidean Bacchus all too close to heart, see Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*.

5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.1.4: Ovid's Theban Narrative

While some themes can be encountered virtually anywhere in the *Metamorphoses*, others cluster in certain parts and generate a distinctive narrative ethos. The first two books, for instance, have attracted the label 'Divine Comedy': they feature various sexual adventures of the Olympian gods — mostly rapes of mortal women. All cry out for a feminist critique, even if — or, better, because — the narrative tone remains fairly light throughout. With the beginning of Book 3, Ovid's literary universe takes on a darker complexion. The first protagonist of the book is the Phoenician prince Cadmus, whose appearance is a carryover from the concluding rape/abduction tale of the previous book. At the behest of his father Agenor, Cadmus attempts to track down his sister Europa, whom Jupiter had carried off at the end of Book 2 — a veritable mission impossible. Unsuccessful in his search and forbidden by his father to return home empty-handed, Cadmus heads into voluntary exile. His wanderings bring him to Boeotia where he founds Thebes, a city in which tragic and ultimately hellish energies are unleashed.[40]

Considered from the perspective of the ancient literary tradition, it is hardly coincidental that Ovid's epic takes a 'tragic' turn as it turns to Theban myth. For in Attic drama, as Froma Zeitlin has demonstrated in a seminal essay, 'Thebes consistently supplies the radical tragic terrain where there can be no escape from the tragic in the resolution of conflict or in the institutional provision of a civic future beyond the world of the play'.[41] The city indeed epitomizes what Greek tragedy is all about. Judging from the surviving scripts of Athenian playwrights, daily life in ancient Thebes featured incessant civil strife, repeated autochthonous disaster, miscellaneous forms of sexual perversion (rape, sodomy, incest), and even the occasional human dismemberment (*sparagmos*) — in short, the entire range of transgressions that upset the normal order of things. To quote Zeitlin again: 'Thebes, we might say, is the quintessential "other scene", as Oedipus is the paradigm of tragic man and Dionysus is the god of the theatre. There Athens acts out questions crucial to the polis, the self, the family, and society, but there they are displaced upon a city that is imagined as the mirror opposite of Athens'.[42] Ovid's version of Thebes fully lives up to the anticipation of calamity evoked by the city's longstanding tragic associations. As the fates of Cadmus and Harmonia, Actaeon, Semele, Narcissus, Pentheus, and Ino and Athamas show, the myths that Ovid here incorporates into his epic world have lost none of the sinister and fateful character that they had acquired on the tragic stage. These *dramatis personae* embark once more on a literary destiny within a tragic dystopia that inexorably leads them to their doom.

There is, indeed, a striking coherence to *Met*. 3.1–4.603, the narrative stretch that begins with Cadmus' exile and ends with his and his wife Harmonia's transformation into snakes (stories concerning the city's founder and his offspring are in *italics*):

3.1–137 *Foundation: Cadmus, his companions, the dragon of Mars, the Spartoi*

3.138–252 *Actaeon, son of Autonoe*

3.253–315 *Semele (birth of Bacchus)*

3.316–38 Teiresias (and his sex-changes)

3.339–510 Echo and Narcissus

3.511–733 *Pentheus, son of Agave* (including the inset tale of *Bacchus* and the Tyrrhenian sailors)

4.1–415 The daughters of Minyas and *Bacchus*

4.55–388 Tales of the Minyeides:

- 4.55–166 Pyramus and Thisbe
- 4.169–270 The Love Affairs of the Sun
- 4.276–388 Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

4.416–562 *Ino and Athamas with Learchus and Melicertes*

4.563–603 *Cadmus & Harmonia: exile and transformation into snakes*

Met. 3.1–4.603 has been termed Ovid's *Thebaid*, insofar as it is the city of Thebes (and its environs) that provides a unifying thematic and topographical focus. Even when the narrative veers off — as in the case of Tiresias, Echo and Narcissus, and the daughters of Minyas (the 'Minyeides') — Thebes remains an important point of reference. So, for example, the Minyeides, who reside in the near-by city of Orchomenos, while in many ways forming a self-contained narrative unit within Ovid's *Thebaid*, are

unable to escape the tragic forces that emanate from Thebes. Not unlike Pentheus, they fall victim to the powers of Bacchus, whom they unwisely choose to disregard.

Clearly, then, *Thebaid* is an appropriate label for Met. 3.1–4.603; no less appropriate, though, would be *Cadmeid* (‘an epic poem about Cadmus and his offspring’), inasmuch as Ovid chronicles the fates of Cadmus and Harmonia, along with their four daughters and five grandsons:

Cadmus and Harmonia

Daughters	Autonoe	Semele	Agave	Ino
Grandsons	Actaeon	Bacchus (father: Jupiter)	Pentheus (father: Echion)	Learchus and Melicertes (father: Athamas)

Twice Cadmus himself comes into focus: his heroics get the Theban narrative going at the beginning of Book 3; and his despairing exit from the city together with his wife and the transformation of the couple into snakes brings this particular narrative unit to a close. This ‘frame’ is worth a more detailed look since it defines the thematic terms for the episodes it encloses, including the set text.

The opening sequence treats events up to the foundation of the city: Cadmus’ arrival in Boeotia, the slaughter of his companions by the dragon of Mars, Cadmus’ revenge-killing of the beast, his sowing of its teeth at the behest of a divine voice, the rise of the Spartoi and their mutual slaughter, which leaves only a handful of survivors — Thebes’ citizen population.[43] Ovid skips over the actual foundation (and the wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia), restricting himself to what amounts to a tragic prologue for the subsequent narrative:

> Iam stabant Thebae, poteras iam, Cadme, videri
> exilio felix: soceri tibi Marsque Venusque
> contigerant; huc adde genus de coniuge tanta,
> tot natos natasque et, pignora cara, nepotes,
> hos quoque iam iuvenes; sed scilicet ultima semper
> exspectanda dies hominis, dicique beatus
> ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet.
> Prima nepos inter tot res tibi, Cadme, secundas
> causa fuit luctus …
> (*Met*. 3.131–39)
>
> And now Thebes stood; now you could seem, Cadmus, a happy man even in exile. Mars and Venus had become your parents-in-law; add to this children of so distinguished a wife, so many sons and daughters and, pledges of your love, grandchildren, these too now at the brink of manhood. But of course man’s last day must ever be awaited and no-one ought to be called happy before his death and funeral rites. Among such favourable circumstances, Cadmus, the first cause of grief was one of your grandsons …

After recounting the wretched fates of Cadmus’ children and grandchildren, Ovid returns to the royal couple: his Theban history ends with Cadmus and Harmonia heading off into self-imposed exile and eventually transforming into snakes (*Met*. 4.563–603). Cadmus himself prays for this metamorphosis as he recalls how it all began, thus bringing the narrative full circle:

> Nescit Agenorides natam parvumque nepotem
> aequoris esse deos; luctu serieque malorum
> victus et ostentis, quae plurima viderat, exit
> conditor urbe sua, tamquam fortuna locorum,
> non sua se premeret, longisque erroribus actus
> contigit Illyricos profuga cum coniuge fines.

iamque malis annisque graves dum prima retractant
fata domus releguntque suos sermone labores,
'num sacer ille mea traiectus cuspide serpens'
Cadmus ait 'fuerat, tum cum Sidone profectus
vipereos sparsi per humum, nova semina, dentes?
quem si cura deum tam certa vindicat ira,
ipse precor serpens in longam porrigar alvum'.
dixit, et ut serpens in longam tenditur alvum.
(*Met*. 4.563–76)

Cadmus was unaware that his daughter (Ino) and little grandson (Melicertes) had been changed to gods of the sea. Overcome with grief and the sequence of calamities and because of the many portents he had seen, the founding father left his city, as if the fortune of the site rather than his own were oppressing him. Driven on through long wanderings, at last the exile and his wife reached the borders of Illyria. At that point, heavy with woes and years, while they went over the early calamities of their house and their own troubles in conversation, Cadmus said: 'Was that a sacred serpent which my spear transfixed back when, recently departed from Sidon, I scattered his teeth, a novel type of seed, on to the earth? If the care of the gods is avenging him with such unerring wrath, I pray that I, too be stretched into snaky form as a serpent'. And as he spoke he was stretched into a snaky form as a serpent …

A nexus of verbal correspondences correlates the beginning and end of Ovid's *Cadmeid*. At 3.131–42, Cadmus' apparent good fortune is quantified via his abundant progeny: he might seem enviable, the poet portentously observes, in view of his numerous daughters (*natas*), sons (*natos*), and grandchildren (*nepotes*). This initial plurality contrasts sharply with the singulars of the phrase *natam parvumque nepotem* at 4.563. The words refer to Cadmus' daughter Ino and grandson Melicertes, the only members of his family not yet visited by catastrophe — though Cadmus believes himself to have just witnessed their hellish destruction as well. For him they are the final link in the long chain of misfortunes which began with the gruesome demise of Actaeon (*prima … causa fuit luctus*, 3.138–39), continued through Book 3 (including Pentheus) and came to its bitter end with the lethal madness of Ino and her husband, recounted at 4.481–542. It is precisely this long sequence of dreadful calamities (*luctu serieque malorum*, 4.564) which drives Cadmus from the city that he himself founded (*exit | conditor urbe sua*, 4.565–66).

We thus start and end with Cadmus in exile; but the two exiles could hardly be more different. At the beginning of Book 3 Cadmus is in his prime, about to perform the deeds which brought him heroic renown, i.e. the killing of the dragon of Mars and the founding of Thebes. In Book 4, by contrast, we encounter a man broken down by age and suffering who is desperately trying to come to terms with the series of misfortunes that has plagued his family. Ovid underscores the bleak transformation of Cadmus from the active protagonist of Book 3 into the despairing and gloomy figure we meet in Book 4 through pointed verbal play. Most strikingly, in assuming the shape of his erstwhile victim Cadmus fulfils the prophecy uttered immediately after his triumphant slaying of Mars' serpent:

Dum spatium victor victi considerat hostis,
vox subito audita est; neque erat cognoscere promptum,
unde, sed audita est: 'quid, Agenore nate, peremptum
serpentem spectas? et tu spectabere serpens'.
(*Met*. 3.95–98)

While the victor surveys the size of his vanquished foe, suddenly a voice is heard; it was impossible to recognize from where, but it was heard: 'Why, son of Agenor, do you gaze upon the serpent you killed? You too will be gazed upon as serpent'.

Through its startling prediction, the unattributed voice implicitly proclaims the dreadful law that in a tragic universe each source of good fortune contains the seeds of its own undoing. Like the serpent in this early scene, at 4.565 Cadmus is described as defeated (*victus*). In the later passage, moreover, Cadmus has, through bitter experience, come to understand the typically Theban proximity

of victory and disaster at which Ovid already signalled, both overtly through the prophecy of Cadmus' ultimate transformation into the very shape of his conquered enemy, and more subtly through the collocation of *victor* and *victi* at 3.95. Cadmus' final realization that he killed a sacred beast closes down Ovid's Theban narrative by returning it to the point at which it all began. In a traumatic reversal, the very objects that once promised a prosperous future for Thebes, the teeth of the dragon — compare 3.103 *vipereos dentes, populi incrementa futuri* with 4.571–73, where Cadmus ponders the possibility that the *vipereos dentes* he used come from a sacred beast — in hindsight turn out to bear within them the burden of a curse that was bound to blight developments from the outset. Cadmus' wish to be transformed into a serpent arises from the painful realization that only a metamorphic 'return' to the origin of his city will put an end to his agony: it is a culminating illustration of the fact that Thebes is ever unable to differentiate itself from its troubled beginnings.[44]

In the course of the narrative arch that Ovid traces in his Theban history, we thus get a tragic conflation of human and beast and an equally tragic inversion of *victor* ('conqueror') and *victus* ('conquered') as Cadmus rises from a condition of exile to become king of his own city, and progenitor of a prosperous family, before being reduced again to his original status as a childless outcast. Yet the transformation of Cadmus into a snake might also elicit the cleansing laughter of a Satyr play after a day of tragic performances.[45] In this respect also it might be seen as a fitting Ovidian conclusion to the Theban saga. As Cadmus' wish to assume the shape of a dragon is incrementally realized, his horrified wife bemoans his vanishing human features and, more importantly, the unbearable zoomorphic divide that now sunders the couple (*Met*. 4.576–94). No sooner said than remedied: she promptly undergoes the same metamorphosis and joins her husband on the ground. While at the end of Euripides' *Bacchae*, the prophetic anticipation of Cadmus' transformation into a dragon sets up new horrors since he is to lead a foreign army against the Greeks (*Bacch*. 1330–43), Ovid's snakified Cadmus and Harmonia are truly peaceful creatures (cf. 4.602–03). In the *Metamorphoses* at least, the tragic energy of Thebes is spent.[46]

---

40 See Comm. on 513–14 for a fuller account of these preliminaries.

41 Zeitlin (1990) 131.

42 Zeitlin (1990) 144.

43 For details of these developments, see Comm. on 513–14.

44 See again Zeitlin (1990) passim.

45 See Bömer (1976), 183 for the possibility that Ovid constructed the scene with actual Satyr plays in mind.

46 Cadmus' grandson Bacchus, however, provides the jumping-off point for the next mythic nucleus, centred on Perseus (4.604–10); and neither Bacchus nor 'Cadmean' Thebes will ever wholly recede from the background: they are on the map, permanent stock, and Ovid revisits Theban myths elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*, notably in Book 6 (with the tale of Niobe and her sons and daughters), Book 9 (the Hercules saga) and in Book 13 with the daughter of Anius and the Theban cup that travels on to Rome. As John Henderson puts it, 'on the overarching grand scale, the *Metamorphoses* diagrams the formulaic triangulation of (tragically self-obliterating) Thebes vs. (tragically re-generating) Troy vs. (redemptively renaissant and selfperpetuating) ROME'.

5.3.1.4: Ovid's Theban Narrative is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus

It will be clear from our discussion so far that the Pentheus episode lies at the heart of Ovid's Theban narrative in a number of important respects. The setting for this episode is the city of Thebes, which, as we have seen, was founded by Cadmus, after his search for his abducted sister Europa proved fruitless.[47] Cadmus is now an old man, and has abdicated the throne of his city in favour of his grandson Pentheus. Early in the reign of the young king, a new religious cult sweeps in from the East, that of the god Bacchus (Greek Dionysus), son of the god Jupiter and the Theban princess Semele (their explosive affair and Bacchus' unusual birth were described earlier in Book 3, at 253–315). While nearly all Thebans welcome the new cult, Pentheus is obstinate in his scepticism and resistance, an attitude that leads to his doom.

5a. Sources and Intertexts

The story of Pentheus and Bacchus was well established long before Ovid's day. The myth was a popular subject with writers and artists alike, and is famously the subject of the *Bacchae*, a tragedy by the 5th-century BCE Athenian playwright Euripides. This tragedy was, as far as we can tell, Ovid's most important source and model.[48]

Euripides begins his play with Bacchus' arrival at Thebes and a detailed exposition of his world, carefully elaborated in the prologue (1–63, spoken by the god himself) and the chorus upon their entry onto the stage (64–169, sung by Lydian women). The enthusiastic celebration of the Maenads in particular introduces the entire range of imagery and motifs commonly associated with Bacchic frenzy, highlighting notions of excess and boundary transgression.[49] In the subsequent scenes, Euripides proceeds to delineate the character of Pentheus, who flatly denies Bacchus' divinity and rejects his worship, and so resents all the more the enthusiastic reception of the god and his cult by the Theban populace. Euripides places particular emphasis on the Theban king's obsession with the sexual license he associates with the worship of Bacchus.[50] The story continues with Pentheus giving orders to his henchmen to capture Bacchus, who is presently brought on stage (*Bacch*. 432–42). In the initial interview Bacchus conceals his true identity, claiming merely to be one of the followers of the new deity, and he remains incognito until his final epiphany. His exchanges with Pentheus culminate in the key scene in which the god convinces Pentheus to cross-dress as a woman so he can spy on the Maenads on Mount Cithaeron — a grave offense given that their rites were both secret and an exclusively female matter. This leads to the grim denouement, in which Bacchus distorts the perception of Pentheus' mother Agave and her sisters, as well as the other Maenads, so that they misrecognize the disguised king as a wild beast which, in accordance with Bacchic rites, they proceed to tear limb from limb with their bare hands. Euripides' gruesome and haunting account of Pentheus' dismemberment comes in the form of a messenger's speech:

> 'Then were a thousand hands laid on the fir tree [sc. in which Pentheus was perched], and from the ground they tore it up, while he from his seat aloft came tumbling to the ground with lamentations long and loud; for well he knew his hour was come. His mother first, a priestess for the occasion, began the bloody deed and fell upon him; whereon he tore the snood from his hair, that hapless Agave might recognize and spare him, crying as he touched her cheek, "O mother! it is I, your own son Pentheus, the child you bore in Echion's halls; have pity on me, mother dear! oh! do not for any sin of mine slay your own son". But she, the while, with foaming mouth and wildly rolling eyes, bereft of reason as she was, heeded him not; for the god possessed her. And she caught his left hand in her grip, and planting her foot upon her victim's trunk she tore the shoulder from its socket, not of her own strength, but the god made it an easy task to her hands; and Ino set to work upon the other side, rending the flesh with Autonoe and all the eager host of Bacchanals; and one united cry arose, the victim's groans while yet he breathed, and their triumphant shouts. One would make an arm her prey, another a foot with the sandal on it; and his ribs were stripped of flesh by their rending nails; and each one with blood-dabbled hands was tossing Pentheus' limbs about. Scattered lies his corpse, part beneath the rugged rocks, and part amid the deep dark woods, no easy task to find; but his mother has made his poor head her own, and fixing it upon the point of a thyrsus, as if it were a mountain lion's, she bears it through the midst of Cithaeron, having left her sisters with the Maenads at their rites. And she is entering these walls exulting in her hunting fraught with woe, acclaiming Bacchus her fellow-hunter who had helped her to triumph in a chase, where her only prize was tears'. (Eur. *Bacch*. 1109–47)

This is the ‘classic’ account of Pentheus’ demise, but here as elsewhere, Ovid is in literary dialogue with multiple predecessors. In certain respects his version of the horrific event bears closer resemblance to that of a poem included (probably wrongly) in the Theocritean corpus as *Idyll* 26. This deals with the initiation of a young boy into the mysteries of Dionysus, with the father giving the following account of Pentheus’ death and dismemberment:

> [1] Ino, Autonoe and white-cheeked Agave, themselves three in number, led three groups of worshippers to the mountain. Some of them cut wild greenery from the densely growing oak trees, living ivy and asphodel that grows above ground, and made up twelve altars in a pure meadow, three to Semele and nine to Dionysus. Taking from their box the sacred objects made with care, they laid them reverently on the altars of freshly gathered foliage, just as Dionysus himself had taught them, and just as he preferred.
>
> [10] Pentheus observed everything from a high rock, hidden in a mastic bush, a plant that grew in those parts. Autonoe, the first to see him, gave a dreadful yell and with a sudden movement kicked over the sacred objects of frenzied Bacchus, which the profane may not see. She became frenzied herself, and at once the others too became frenzied. Pentheus fled in terror and they pursued him, hitching up their robes into their belts, knee-high. Pentheus spoke: ‘What do you want, women?’ Autonoe spoke: ‘You will know soon enough, and before we tell you’. The mother gave a roar like a lioness with cubs as she carried off her son’s head; Ino tore off his great shoulder, shoulder-blade and all, by setting her foot on his stomach; and Autonoe set to work in the same way. The other women butchered what was left and returned to Thebes all smeared with blood, bearing back from the mountain not Pentheus (Πενθῆα), but lamentation (πένθημα).
>
> [27] This is no concern of mine, nor should anyone else care about an enemy of Dionysus, even if he suffered a worse fate than this, even if he were nine years old, or just embarking on his teeth. May I myself act piously, and may my actions please the pious. The eagle gained honour in this way from Zeus who bears the aegis. It is to children of the pious, not to those of the impious, that good things come.
>
> [35] Farewell to mighty Dionysus, for whom on snowy Dracanus mighty Zeus opened up his own great thigh and placed him inside. Farewell, too, to beautiful Semele and her sisters, daughters of Cadmus, much admired by women of that time, who carried out this deed impelled by Dionysus, so that they are not to be blamed. Let no one criticize the actions of the gods. ([Theoc.] *Id*. 26)

All three texts share the same basic plot; but there are noteworthy variations on the level of detail. In Euripides and Ovid, for instance, Pentheus spies upon the maenads from a tree; in the Theocritean Idyll, by contrast, he is poised on a prominent rock. And whereas in Euripides Agave initiates the slaughter, in the *Idyll* and Ovid it is Agave’s sister (and Pentheus’ aunt) Autonoe. If Ovid conforms closely to Euripides’ tragedy in narrative outline, then, there are clearly departures that look to other texts or versions.

Ovid’s most striking innovation *vis-à-vis* Euripides has to do with the captive arrested by Pentheus’ henchmen. This figure has a precedent in the *Bacchae*, but he is never explicitly identified as Bacchus-in-disguise, as he is in the earlier text. Indeed, he gives his name as Acoetes and provides a comparatively detailed autobiography that begins by describing his rise from the lowly profession of fisherman to that of helmsman (more on this in the following section). More crucially still, in explaining how he became a follower of the god, he tells the tale of how a group of wicked Tyrrhenian sailors, his erstwhile shipmates, were transformed into dolphins by Bacchus. This inset tale conveniently supplies the episode with the requisite metamorphosis (which was lacking in the narrative Ovid inherited from Euripides). It also constitutes a radical — and, it should be added, ingenious — departure from the tragic model.

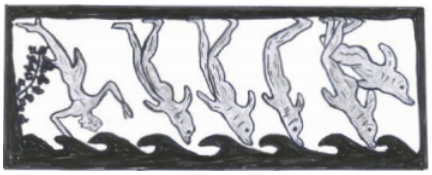


Figure 5.3.1.5.1: The Tyrrhenian Pirates change into dolphins (drawing after a black-figure vase, 6th/5th century BCE, Museum of Art, Toledo).

The inset narrative is, in essence, an extended version of a *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*.[51] More specifically, it is a rendition of the longest of three hymns honouring Dionysus in a collection of some thirty such compositions, all anonymous, known as the *Homeric Hymns*. These Greek hexametric hymns vary in length from a handful of verses to several hundred lines. Each celebrates an individual deity. The collection's titular epithet *Homeric* is misleading, as the Hymns do not share authorship with the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* (nor, for that matter, with each other in most cases, for they are not the work of a single hand).[52] Here is the *Hymn* in question:

> [1] I will tell of Dionysus, the son of glorious Semele, how he appeared on a jutting headland by the shore of the fruitless sea, seeming like a stripling in the first flush of manhood: his rich, dark hair was waving about him, and on his strong shoulders he wore a purple robe. Presently there came swiftly over the sparkling sea Etruscan pirates on a welldecked ship — a miserable doom led them on. When they saw him they made signs to one another and sprang out quickly, and seizing him straightway, put him on board their ship exultingly; for they thought him the son of heaven-nurtured kings. They sought to bound him with rude bonds, but these would not hold him, and the ropes fell far away from his hands and feet: and he sat with a smile in his dark eyes.
>
> [15] Then the helmsman understood all and cried out at once to his fellows and said: 'Madmen! What god is this whom you have taken and bind, strong that he is? Not even the well-built ship can carry him. Surely this is either Zeus or Apollo who has the silver bow, or Poseidon, for he looks not like mortal men but like the gods who dwell on Olympus. Come, then, let us set him free upon the dark shore at once; do not lay hands on him, lest he grow angry and stir up dangerous winds and heavy squalls'.
>
> [25] So said he, but the master chided him with taunting words: 'Madman, mark the wind and help hoist sail on the ship: catch all the sheets. As for this fellow we men will see to him; I reckon he is bound for Egypt or for Cyprus or to the Hyperboreans or further still. But in the end he will speak out and tell us his friends and all his wealth and his brothers, now that providence has thrown him in our way'.
>
> [32] When he had said this, he had mast and sail hoisted on the ship, and the wind filled the sail and the crew hauled taut the sheets on either side. But soon strange things were seen among them. First of all, sweet, fragrant wine ran streaming throughout all the black ship and a heavenly smell arose, so that all the seamen were seized with amazement. And all at once a vine spread out both ways along the top of the sail with many clusters hanging down from it, and a dark ivy-plant twined about the mast, blossoming with flowers, and with rich berries growing on it; and all the thole pins were covered with garlands. When the pirates saw all this, then at last they bade the helmsman to put the ship to land. But the god changed into a dreadful lion there on the ship, on the bow, and roared loudly: amidships also he showed his wonders and created a shaggy bear which stood up ravening, while on the forepeak was the lion glaring fiercely with scowling brows. And so the sailors fled to the stern and crowded terrified about the right-minded helmsman, until suddenly the lion sprang upon the master and seized him; and when the sailors saw it they leapt out overboard one and all into the bright sea, escaping from a miserable fate, and were changed into dolphins. But on the helmsman Dionysus had mercy and held him back and made him altogether happy, saying to him: 'Take courage, good mariner; you have found favour with my heart. I am loud-crying Dionysus whom Cadmus' daughter Semele bore from union with Zeus'.
>
> [58] Hail, child of fair-faced Semele! He who forgets you can in no wise order sweet song. (*Hymn. Hom*. 7)

Bringing the narrative matter of the *Hymn* in contact with Euripides' tragic plot is an inventive touch, and not just from the point of view of Ovid's metamorphic programme, as the tale told by Acoetes serves in addition as a cautionary tale for Pentheus.[53]



Figure 5.3.1.5.2: 'Vine Ship' with dolphins (drawing based on Attic black-figure *kylix* attributed to Exekias, c. 540–35 BCE, Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich).

5b. The Personnel of the Set Text

The set text abounds with colourful characters, many of whom make only fleeting appearances. There is the heterogeneous crowd of Thebans who, having fallen under the spell of Bacchus, rush to perform his rites (3.529–30): men (*viri*), married women (*matres*), unmarried women (*nurus*), common people (*vulgus*), aristocrats (*proceres*). There are Pentheus' relatives who vainly attempt to bring him to his senses, chief among them his grandfather Cadmus (*avus*) and his maternal uncle Athamas (3.564–65). There are the henchmen whom Pentheus sends out to capture Bacchus and who return, blood-spattered, with someone identifying himself as Acoetes (3.572–76). Within Acoetes' inset narrative, we encounter a gang of wicked shipmates, many of whom are named (and some briefly delineated) with mock scrupulousness: Opheltes, Dictys, Libys, Melanthus, Alcimedon, Epopeus, Lycabas, Proreus, Aethalion, and Medon.[54] In the grim denouement on Mount Cithaeron, Pentheus' mother Agave and her sisters Autonoë and Ino, together with a miscellaneous crowd (*turba*) of fellow-maenads, lay violent hands on him. Ovid also reports in the episode's concluding verses that all the women of Thebes (designated *Ismenides*, after a local river) flock to Bacchus' altars to venerate his godhead (3.733–34). We may also add the old (*senes*) and young men (*iuvenes*) of Thebes whom Pentheus tries to rally against Bacchus (3.3.538–42), as well as a fleeting reference to the Bacchus-defiant Acrisius, king of Argos (3.559–60). Amidst this kaleidoscopic assortment of *dramatis personae*, four principal figures stand out: Tiresias, Pentheus, Bacchus, and Acoetes. Or perhaps we should say three, since the last two may in fact be one and the same figure.

(i) Tiresias

The prophet Tiresias is a quintessential Theban character found in numerous texts in both Greek and Latin literature. Thebes is his ancestral home: Tiresias' paternal grandfather, so tradition has it, was one of the five surviving Spartoi who comprised Cadmus' first citizen cohort, though Ovid, in line with his cursory treatment of the foundation sequence, omits details of his genealogy. He makes his earliest literary appearance in *Odyssey* 11, as the seer whom Odysseus seeks out in the Underworld in order to receive advice on his homecoming. But many of Tiresias' most memorable appearances are in Attic drama, where his special insight into the workings of the universe ensured him a stellar career. In four surviving scripts — Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*, and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and *Bacchae* — he unerringly predicts the tragic doom of his royal interlocutors (and perhaps even helps to move events along, since his predictions are typically met with suspicion, denial, or even wrath). If Homeric epic and Attic tragedy foreground his privileged access to divine knowledge late in life (or even after death), other texts put the emphasis elsewhere, not least to explain how Tiresias acquired the gift of foresight in the first place. Here another aspect of his mythical CV comes to the fore: his unusual proclivity for sex changes. Tradition has it that the perambulating Tiresias once struck copulating snakes with his staff, whereupon he mysteriously morphed from male to female — only to return to his original sex when he did likewise several years later. Given his 'ambisextrous' past, one can see why Jupiter and Juno turned to him as uniquely qualified to settle their ambrosia-induced quarrel over which of the two sexes derives more pleasure from the act of love-making. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Jupiter insisted on women's greater sexual gratification, whereas Juno no less adamantly asserted the contrary. Upon being summoned, Tiresias adjudicated the dispute in Jupiter's favour, and was promptly struck blind by the infuriated Juno. Forbidden by cosmic law to undo the punishment inflicted by his wife, the well-pleased Jupiter granted Tiresias the gift of prophecy in recompense. Our earliest witness for this tale is pseudo-Hesiodic *Melampodia*, a fragmentary epic poem probably dating to the 6th century BCE.[55]

Ovid draws on this tradition and the more sober tragic antecedents in fleshing out Tiresias' biography in the *Metamorphoses*, thereby making of him 'an emblematic figure of both divine wisdom and sexual ambiguity'.[56] Tiresias initially floats into the

narrative in his role as 'sexpert'. When first encountering him midway through Book 3, we get the tale of copulating snakes, sex changes, and erotic expertise, with the ensuing loss of sight and gain of fore-sight (*Met*. 3.316–38). Shortly thereafter, Tiresias proves his surpassing vatic ability by correctly, if riddlingly, foretelling the fate of Narcissus (an ingenious stand-in for Thebes' most famous son, Oedipus, who does not appear *in propria persona* in Ovid's Theban History).[57] The seer warns Narcissus' mother Liriope that the beautiful boy will only reach old age 'if he does not come to know himself' (*si se non noverit*, 3.348). Ovid frames the episode of Narcissus — who does come to know himself — with two references (one proleptic, one retrospective) to Tiresias' unquestioned and welldeserved renown throughout Greece.[58] This quasi-universal acceptance of Tiresias as a prophetic authority serves as cue for the Pentheusepisode: the Theban king is the odd-man-out, whose ill-considered mockery of Tiresias sets the stage for his tragic downfall (*Met*. 3.511–25). Tiresias' vatic prognostications concerning Narcissus thus serve as pivot towards more 'weighty' narrative roles. In the Pentheus-episode, he appears in the guise of omniscient seer who confronts the reigning tyrant of Thebes — a scenario familiar from Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. This is, however, a noteworthy departure from Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which, remarkably, the legendary seer utters no prophecies, but merely offers Pentheus advice, all the while acknowledging the scant hope that the young king will heed it (*Bacch*. 309–27). In this respect, then, by insisting on Tiresias' prophetic role — note the seer's explicit use of the verb *auguror* at 3.519 — Ovid 'corrects' the idiosyncratic choice of his primary model, and uses Tiresias' vatic utterances as a unifying motif in the elaboration of his Theban History.

Overall, then, in the *Metamorphoses*, as elsewhere, Tiresias presides over dramas of blindness (literal and mental) and insight, (royal) power and (divinely privileged) knowledge, concealing and revealing, riddling speech and hidden meanings (not least in contexts of sexual deviance).

(ii) Pentheus

Like Tiresias, Pentheus is descended from the Spartoi: he is the son of Agave, one of the four daughters of Cadmus and Harmonia, by Echion, one of the five survivors of the Sown-men's fratricidal slaughter, whose name means 'serpent' in ancient Greek.[59] 'Pentheus', too, is a speaking name, being connected etymologically to the Greek word πένθος ('grief, distress'), and so meaning something like 'man of sorrows'.[60] Given his gruesome demise, immortalized by Euripides in the *Bacchae*, the name can be considered an index of his destiny. To get a purchase on the figure of Pentheus in the *Metamorphoses*, it is useful to set Ovid's characterization of the young Theban king against his delineation in the Bacchae.[61]

As already noted, Euripides places special emphasis on Pentheus' obsession with the sexual license he associates with the worship of Bacchus. From his first reaction to the exodus of Theban women, who quit their homes for the mountains in order to take part in Bacchic rites, to his later rather puerile desire illicitly to catch a glimpse of these same rites, the issues of sexual transgression and the concomitant violation of household stability dominate Pentheus' imagination.[62] In the *Metamorphoses* Pentheus' character is delineated rather differently. As in the *Bacchae*, the Theban king deeply resents Bacchus' takeover of his city; but Ovid's Pentheus conceives of the god's advent in martial terms, tantamount to a military assault upon his city, which he, as king, is called upon to repel. He is dismayed by the inability of the citizenry to stand up to what he regards as a feeble and unworthy foe. The very idea that a group of revellers known for orgiastic noise, magical tricks, female ululations, alcoholic excess, and sexual license can overpower the population of a city descended from a dragon of Mars offends his martial pride (3.531–37). In his vain exhortation to his fellow Thebans he goes so far as to adduce the dragon of Mars, which his grandfather Cadmus slew, as a paragon of virtue that bravely gave its life in defence of its lair, fighting valiantly against overwhelming odds (3.543–46). Imagery of the battlefield dominates both Pentheus' rhetoric and Ovid's presentation of Pentheus to us in the narrative. So, for example, the response of Pentheus to the caterwauling of the Maenads on Mount Cithaeron is likened to that of a warhorse hearing the trumpeter of an army giving the signal to fight (3.701–07).

The shift away from the Euripidean preoccupation with sexual license (as well as Pentheus' own subliminal erotic desires) is achieved in part through intertextual engagement with Ovid's great Roman epic predecessor, Virgil.[63] The Ovidian Pentheus enriches his rallying cry to the citizens of Thebes with allusions to the *Aeneid*:

> vosne, senes, mirer, qui longa per aequora vecti
> hac Tyron, hac profugos posuistis sede penates,
> nunc sinitis sine Marte capi?
> (*Met*. 3.538–40)

> ‘Should I wonder about you, old men, who, having crossed boundless seas, re-founded Tyre in this place, re-established your exiled household gods in this place, that you now allow yourselves to be captured without armed resistance?’

The obvious parallels to the Aeneas-story are all the more striking for being in overt contradiction with the earlier narrative, where it was reported that Cadmus’ Phoenician companions were slain to a man by the dragon prior to the foundation of Thebes. But Pentheus here fashions Cadmus himself as an Aeneas *avant la lettre*, a leader of an exiled people, *profugi* from the East, who traversed the sea to settle his people and their *penates* in a new homeland. The Romanizing touches continue with the characterization of Thebans as a *proles Mavortia* (3.531).[64] Somewhat later in his speech, Pentheus again uses language reminiscent of the *Aeneid* in chastising his derelict citizen body, deploring what he sees as its unconditional surrender to Bacchus, derisively styled as an unarmed and utterly unwarlike boy:

> at nunc a puero Thebae capientur inermi,
> quem neque bella iuvant nec tela nec usus equorum,
> sed madidus murra crinis mollesque coronae
> purpuraque et pictis intextum vestibus aurum.
> (*Met*. 3.553–56)

> ‘But now an unarmed boy will conquer Thebes, whom neither weapons, wars nor horses delight, but hair drenched in myrrh, soft garlands, purple and gold woven into embroidered robes’.

Pentheus’ language here recalls that of the pugnacious African king Iarbas, who in a prayer to Jupiter denounces Aeneas when the latter has forgotten his epic calling and degenerated, together with Dido, into the world of illicit love (*Aen*. 4.215–18).

Ovid follows Euripides in having Pentheus issue orders for Bacchus’ arrest, and in both texts his henchmen return with one of the god’s followers instead (*Bacch*. 432–42; *Met*. 3.564–76) — though in the Greek drama this is in fact the god in disguise, and, as discussed below, the same may hold in the *Metamorphoses*. In the *Bacchae*, Pentheus’ interrogation of the prisoner leads to the latter convincing him to don female attire in order illicitly to witness the proceedings on Mount Cithaeron. This scene, with its emphasis on theatrical cross-dressing and gender-bending is crucial and emblematic for Euripides.[65] It is thus significant that Ovid omits it from his account as not pertinent to his delineation of Pentheus. Instead, after the lengthy inset narrative of the prisoner Acoetes, the narrative focus returns to Pentheus, now more bellicose than ever. The defining emotion is wrath (*ira*). Without further ado, he storms to his doom. Ovid’s Pentheus, then, unlike his Euripidean counterpart, never succumbs to the temptation of genderbending or any other ‘Bacchic’ impulses. Rather, the emphasis on the king’s martial disposition coupled with allusions to the *Aeneid* serve to recast the Euripidean tragedy in a more Roman and a more epic key.[66]

Why does Pentheus resist Bacchus so vehemently? As ruler of Thebes, he identifies himself with his city; he is convinced that he is acting in the interest of the civic community (as the lone representative of law and order), entertains feelings of moral and intellectual superiority, and is beholden to the pursuit of power and honour. Although, as we have seen, Ovid chose not to develop some of Pentheus’ ‘Euripidean’ character traits, he retains other qualities, in particular those that speak to a somewhat tyrannical disposition, so that E. R. Dodds’ assessment of the Pentheus of the *Bacchae* holds true for his counterpart in the *Metamorphoses*: the Theban king exhibits an ‘absence of self-control, … willingness to believe the worst on hearsay evidence … or on none whatsoever, … brutality towards the helpless …; and a stupid reliance on physical force as a means of settling spiritual problems’.[67] In a detailed study of Euripides’ Pentheus, Bernd Seidensticker characterizes the Theban king not just as a tyrant, but an ‘authoritarian personality’.[68] A number of the traits adduced by Seidensticker recur in Ovid’s Pentheus, and contribute to his undoing in the confrontation with Bacchus:[69]

(a) Ethnocentrism, i.e. the belief in the superiority of one’s own nation or community, which coincides with fear of ‘the other’ and the irrational belief that contact with the foreign contaminates the self or the society one lives in. In both Euripides and Ovid, this is a key theme, as Pentheus endeavours to repulse Bacchus and his cult as something alien, Eastern, and corrosive of the norms and values he holds dear.[70] He exhibits a xenophobia that manifests itself in the chauvinistic rejection of the non-Greek as inferior and decadent.

(*b) Aggressiveness bordering on brutality to protect the self against others, i.e. ethnocentrism coupled with a tendency towards violence.* While Euripides’ Pentheus takes a ‘camp’ turn into cross-dressing, Ovid’s figure remains a robust, masculine, independent

individual who sticks to his views and escalates violence when met with resistance.[71]

(c) Belief that men are superior to women, who are conceived of as passive and as tied to traditional roles of wife and mother. In Euripides, female (sexual) license is a major concern for Pentheus, and whereas Ovid plays down the importance of gender, his Pentheus too is beholden to a narrow set of martial and masculine values.[72]

(d) Conventionalism, conformity, commitment to conservative values, which often goes along with thinking in prejudices and stereotypes, the tendency to generalize, the use of clichés, and a limited degree of creativity and flexibility. In both Euripides' play and Ovid's epic, Pentheus is committed to preserving the status quo and unable to adjust to new situations.[73] He does not listen to his advisers and the warnings of his kin and proves incapable of viewing the world from another perspective. Confronted with the arrival of a new god, he mounts a stubborn resistance that includes the rhetorical denigration of his perceived adversary via a familiar set of prejudices about Easterners.

All in all, then, Pentheus is particularly lacking in the flexible intelligence that enables a person to respond in a healthy and balanced manner to the kind of divinity that is Bacchus — polymorphous, subversive of norms, destructive of boundaries, challenging the conventional order of things, and defying orthodoxy — in particular in the realm of gender-relations. Instead of pursuing a path of accommodation, Pentheus fatally opts for confrontation; instead of embracing his divine kin (Bacchus, after all, is his cousin — Semele and Agave are sisters), he chooses blanket rejection, turning himself into a blasphemous *theomachos* ('someone who assaults the gods') — and ultimately a victim of divine wrath.

(iii) Bacchus

Bacchus/Dionysus, god of wine, mystic ecstasy and theatre, is one of the oldest Greek divinities to leave a trace in our literary record: his name (*di-wo-nu-so*) features on linear-B tablets from Pylos and Crete, datable to c. 1250 BCE.[74] Homer, too, knows of Dionysus, mentioning his female entourage (*Il*. 6.133), and alluding to his birth (*Il*. 14.325). Hesiod, in his *Theogony* (940–42), likewise recounts the birth of Dionysus, highlighting that a mortal woman gave birth to an immortal child. This is one of many remarkable aspects of the god: product of the sexual union of Jupiter with the Theban princess Semele, his foetus is in fact brought to term in his father's thigh after his mother dies in pregnancy.[75] Following a period of infancy, the god wanders the earth seeking recognition of his divinity. Unlike other Olympian deities, he encounters human defiance, deriving in large part from scepticism as to his godhood. Given his parentage, this is not altogether surprising: as the offspring of a mortal mother and a divine father, he might well have been expected to belong to the class of semi-divine 'heroes'.[76] There are many individuals with similar parentage who fall short of divine status, even though they may receive worship after death in the form of hero-cult.

With respect to the broader mythological background, modern philology has shown that Greek mythology is at least to some degree inherited from a set of stories that were originally common to all IndoEuropean cultures. The name of the supreme Olympian deity, the sky god and father 'Zeus' has cognates in other Indo-European languages.[77] Many of the other divinities worshipped by the Greeks seem to have been imported from other cultures. Those of importance tended to be placed in some kind of familial relation to the sky father Zeus/Jupiter. The last major such addition to the pantheon was the god Dionysus/ Bacchus, who became one of many of Zeus' children born outside of the supreme god's marriage with Hera/Juno. A good deal of Greek mythology tells of the struggles of Zeus' progeny born, as it were, out of wedlock to gain recognition and assert their rights and status on either the divine or the human level; the story of Bacchus and Pentheus is a cautionary tale dealing with the latter.

Bacchus is then, despite the antiquity of his cult, a belated addition to the pantheon, a notorious latecomer, or 'new arrival' from the East. Ovid calls him *advena*, and the attributes *novus* ('new') and *ignotus* ('unknown') are programmatic.[78]

One of the unusual aspects of Bacchus' cult is that he had predominantly female attendants and devotees ('maenads') to perform his rites, contrary to the overarching principle that women were restricted to the active worship of female deities. His physical representation is also noteworthy for its variation: early artistic depictions of Dionysus/ Bacchus show him as a fully developed man, complete with beard, but already by the 5th century BCE it had become the norm for writers, painters and sculptors to depict him as a more boyish figure, beardless, and with a softer, almost feminine, physique — which is how he is described in Ovid's Pentheus episode.[79] That this trend continued beyond antiquity can be seen in, for example, Michelangelo's sculpture 'Bacchus' (fig. 3) and the painting of the same name (fig. 4) by Caravaggio.



Figure **5.3.1.5.3**: 'Bacchus' by Michelangelo (1496–97). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...Florenz-04.jpg



Figure **5.3.1.5.4**: 'Bacchus' by Caravaggio (1593–94). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...vaggio_007.jpg

The god's proverbial androgyny and his entourage of maenads defy entrenched gender stereotypes and were thus bound to occasion anxiety in a patriarchal world. As such, writers and artists found Bacchus to be an ideal figure for the interrogation of notions of masculinity and related cultural norms. It has already been noted that Euripides makes fear of female sexual license, perceived as a threat to the patriarchal order of the city-state, one of the primary motivations for Pentheus' resistance to the new cult. As we have seen, this aspect is toned down in the *Metamorphoses*, but it is not altogether effaced. Thus, even in Ovid's version there are glimmers of the cult's utopian appeal arising from the collapse of the distinctions that define the socio-political order.[80] In the worship of Bacchus the indiscriminate mixing of categories means that age, gender, socio-economic class, and legal status become irrelevant. Ovid highlights this principle at the very beginning of the Pentheus episode:

> Liber adest, festisque fremunt ululatibus agri:
> turba ruit, mixtaeque viris matresque nurusque
> vulgusque proceresque ignota ad sacra feruntur.
> (*Met*. 3.528–30)

Ovid recalls this joyful beginning at the grisly end when Agave summons her maddened sisters: 'o *geminae' clamavit 'adeste sorores!'* (3.713) and shortly thereafter lets rip with ritual shrieking (*ululavit Agave*, 3.725). The indiscriminate crowd that initially rushed to worship Bacchus has become a band of Maenads rushing upon Pentheus: *ruit omnis in unum | turba furens* (3.715–16). Pentheus is singled out here, just as at the outset, when he was the lone individual (*ex omnibus unus*, 3.513) who refused to believe Tiresias' prophecy about Bacchus. Such emphatic ring composition highlights the inherent duality of Bacchus' nature, which combines carefree revelling with baneful doom, and once more exemplifies the 'conversion of Dionysiac celebration into madness, death, and destruction'[81] that is repeatedly fated to occur at Thebes. In his train, Bacchus brings hallucination and paranoia — surreal dissolution of identity, collapsing and re-doubling roles at will — and the story of Pentheus is a classic and exemplary case. The set text acts out one of the starkest instances in literature of consciousness made prey to delirium unknowingly beside itself.

Bacchus' overt narrative presence is much reduced in the Ovidian episode *vis-à-vis* the Euripidean model. Ovid offers a brief notice of the god's arrival at Thebes, simply declaring that the god has come (*Liber adest*, 3.528) and received a warm welcome as a new divinity that reaches across boundaries of class and gender (cf. 3.528–30). But we do not get the god himself as a speaking character — at least not at the outset. Indeed, a suggestive feature of the set text is that Bacchus, arguably the episode's most important character, has no explicit narrative presence. Acoetes' embedded narrative is the only place in the entire episode where

the god appears in person. Bacchus nevertheless looms over narrative events as an 'absent presence'. Given this curious state of affairs, Acoetes' account of the god's transformation of Etruscan pirates into dolphins takes on added significance. As we have seen, the embedded narrative is based on the account in the longest *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*.

(iv) Acoetes

The internal narrator Acoetes is the last major character of the set text. In the Ho*meric Hymn to Dionysus*, the helmsman, the one member of the crew not transformed into a dolphin, remains anonymous and devoid of background. Ovid's internal narrator, the figure captured by Pentheus' henchmen, claims to be this helmsman; he goes on to identify himself as a certain Acoetes from Lydia (3.582–83), an acolyte of the god (*accessi sacris Baccheaque sacra frequento*, 3.691). He provides a fairly detailed autobiography, culminating in the narrative of the *Hymn*. He claims to be of very humble origins, with a father so poor that he bequeathed to his son nothing beyond the art of fishing. Not wishing to win his livelihood in this humble manner, Acoetes learns the helmsman's art and plies his trade on the sea until his encounter with Bacchus, which leads to him joining the god's entourage. The encounter takes place when, *en route* to Delos, the ship puts in on the island of Chios. There, members of Acoetes' crew kidnap a beautiful young boy who, according to Acoetes, turned out to be Bacchus (*tum denique Bacchus* | (*Bacchus enim fuerat*) …, 3.629–30). As in the *Hymn*, Acoetes is the lone member of his ship's crew to recognize the divinity of the captive and, having been spared the metamorphic fate of his comrades, proceeds to join Bacchus' entourage. The question arises: is Acoetes really who he claims to be? There is much to suggest otherwise.

The first point to observe is that, as noted in the previous section, Pentheus' capture of Acoetes in Ovid has a precedent in Euripides' play, where the stranger who is brought before Pentheus is undoubtedly Dionysus himself, though disguised as one of his followers. Euripides prepares this scene in which the god of the theatre dons a mask (as it were) from the outset.[82] To ensure that the audience is able to follow along, the god broadcasts his subterfuge in the prologue speech:

> μορφὴν δ᾽ ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησίαν
> πάρειμι …
> (Eur. *Bacch*. 4–5)
>
> And having taken a mortal form instead of a god's, I am here …

Towards the end of the same monologue, the deity reiterates the point, to make quite sure that everyone in his audience has grasped what he is up to:

> ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ εἶδος θνητὸν ἀλλάξας ἔχω
> μορφήν τ᾽ ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν.
> (Eur. *Bacch*. 53–54)
>
> On which account I have changed my form to a mortal one and altered my shape into that of a man.

When later on in the play Pentheus' henchmen bring the anonymous stranger on stage (*Bacch*. 434–519), even the least attentive audience member will have been able to identify the stranger as Dionysus.

In a poignant exchange later in the tragedy, Pentheus asks the stranger, who claims to have seen Dionysus, of what nature he was (477). The disguised god's response, 'whatever person he wished' (ὁποῖος ἤθελ᾽, Eur. *Bacch*. 478), archly evokes his own protean nature. If Euripides' god is explicitly a master of disguise and deception, Ovid's would appear to be so by implication — and with the effect, by a characteristic stroke of metapoetic ingenuity, projected beyond the narrative frame. In the Greek tragedy the riddle of Bacchus' identity remains confined to characters *within* the play (in particular, of course, Pentheus) and does *not* concern the audience, for whom, as we have just seen, Euripides clarifies the situation before the action begins. In the *Metamorphoses*, by contrast, the god remains an enigmatic and elusive figure for *us*, the readers.[83] Ovid provides nothing equivalent to the prologue scene in Euripides that would give the game away, but rather tantalizes us with the possibility that Bacchus does appear in the narrative in disguised form. This possibility is raised when Pentheus' henchmen, having been ordered to arrest Bacchus, return instead with a captured stranger who, as we have just seen, identifies himself as Acoetes. But the fact that Acoetes has the same narrative function as the disguised Euripidean god strongly suggests, by intertextual parallelism, that Acoetes is indeed Bacchus.[84] Further support for this view can be found in his statement of Lydian origins (3.582–83) and the miraculous circumstances of his liberation (3.699–700). But while this identification seems *probable* for various reasons, the fact remains that Acoetes is never

explicitly equated with the god anywhere in the text. Indeed, apart from the narrator's general pronouncement that Bacchus has reached Thebes (*Liber adest*, 3.528), the only moment in which we encounter the god in person in the entire episode occurs during the *inset* narrative about the Tyrrhenian sailors told by Acoetes. Paradoxically, if we accept that Acoetes is indeed the god in disguise, then the veracity of his inset narrative — which again features a deceptive and dissembling Bacchus — would be thrown into doubt, inasmuch as it would then be nothing more than the autobiography of a mortal persona assumed by the deity.

The plot thickens further if we take into account a piece of information preserved in Servius' ancient commentary on the *Aeneid*. The crucial titbit concerns a Virgilian simile featuring Pentheus as 'vehicle':

> … Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus
> et solem geminum et duplicis se ostendere Thebas …
> (*Aen*. 4.469–70)
>
> … even as raving Pentheus sees the bands of the Furies, and a double sun and twofold Thebes rise to view …

In his annotation to this simile, Servius reports that Virgil derived this image from the (now lost) tragedy *Pentheus* by the early Roman playwright Pacuvius, arguably modelled on Euripides' *Bacchae*. The commentator goes on to mention that in Pacuvius' play the name of the stranger who was brought on stage by the henchmen happened to be Acoetes:[85]

> Pentheum autem furuisse traditur secundum Pacuvii tragoediam. de quo fabula talis est: Pentheus, Echionis et Agaves filius, Thebanorum rex, cum indignaretur ex matertera sua Semele genitum Liberum patrem coli tamquam deum, ut primum comperit eum in Cithaerone monte esse, misit satellites, qui eum (i.e. Bacchum) vinctum ad se perducerent. qui cum ipsum non invenissent, unum ex comitibus eius Acoeten captum ad Pentheum perduxerunt. is, cum de eo graviorem poenam constitueret, iussit eum interim claudi vinctum; cumque sponte sua et carceris fores apertae essent et vincula Acoeti excidissent, miratus Pentheus, spectaturus sacra Liberi patris Cithaerona petit … (Serv. on *Aen*. 4.469)
>
> Pentheus' madness is drawn from a tragedy by Pacuvius. The plot of which is as follows: Pentheus, son of Echion and Agave, king of Thebes, resented that Father Liber, born from his aunt Semele, was worshipped as a god; as soon as he heard that Liber was on Mount Cithaeron, he sent servants to bring Liber bound to him. When they did not find Liber himself, they captured Acoetes, one of his comrades, and brought him to Pentheus. While Pentheus pondered a worse punishment for him, he ordered him to be locked away in the meantime, bound as he was, when out of their own accord the doors of the prison flew open and the bonds fell off Acoetes. Pentheus was astonished and set out for Mount Cithaeron to spy on the rites of Father Liber …

This annotation, while not solving the riddle of Acoetes' identity in the *Metamorphoses* account, offers some interesting insights into the metaliterary game of hide-and-seek being played here. In essence, Ovid endows his Acoetes with a triple intertextual identity, insofar as he recalls three literary figures at once: (i) the helmsman of the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* (who, in the hymn, remains anonymous); (ii) the disguised god Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae* (who operates in human guise but doesn't assume a pseudonym); and (iii) the homonymous character from Pacuvius' tragedy *Pentheus* (since the play has survived only in pitiful fragments, it is impossible for us to know whether Acoetes in Pacuvius was Bacchus in disguise).

Faced with this intertextual jigsaw puzzle, some scholars consider the solution to be obvious: 'Ovid does not identify Acoetes with the god, but clearly expects his readers to do so'.[86] Others feel that Ovid has constructed his text in such a way that an unequivocal resolution of the riddle remains deliberately beyond our reach:

> The narrative parallels to Euripides' play strongly suggest that we take Acoetes to be the god in disguise, but he is never identified as such directly. There are hints in this direction, but by leaving out an epiphany and keeping his god firmly offstage, Ovid ensures that we recognize Bacchus only when he appears as what he is not, as a character who recedes ever further back into the realm of miraculous narrative.[87]

Taking Acoetes to be Bacchus results in some delicious ironies, while offering degrees of metaliterary enrichment. To begin with, as Acoetes, Bacchus would perform an ingenious generic encroachment by incorporating into the central part of his own tragedy (Euripides' *Bacchae*) the very *Hymn* in which his transformative powers are celebrated — a shift in emphasis very much in line with the thematic outlook of the Metamorphoses, i.e. the text in which he is currently operating. While the author of the *Hymn to Dionysus* disposed of the transformation of the crew into dolphins in two and a half words (δελφῖνες δ᾽ ἐγένοντο, 'they became dolphins' *Hymn. Hom.* 7.53), Acoetes gives one of the most striking descriptions of transformation in Ovid's entire epic (3.671–82).

Concerning the hymn narrative, Philip Hardie well observes that 'as a god whose identity is founded on doubling, Bacchus has the space within himself to address a successful hymn to himself … ("Acoetes" speaks)'.[88] If Bacchus hymns himself, as it were, then several places in the hymnic narrative, in which he refers to himself, sparkle with Dionysiac wit. For example, 'Acoetes' reports that the first time he set eyes on the drunken Bacchus he immediately recognized his (own) divine essence:

> ille mero somnoque gravis titubare videtur
> vixque sequi; specto cultum faciemque gradumque:
> nil ibi, quod credi posset mortale, videbam.
> (*Met.* 3.608–10)

Somewhat later, 'Acoetes' sounds another arch note in professing the veracity of his account:[89]

> per tibi nunc ipsum (nec enim praesentior illo
> est deus) adiuro, tam me tibi vera referre
> quam veri maiora fide …
> (*Met.* 3.658–60)

If Acoetes is indeed Bacchus, then there is an amusing double-entendre in his parenthetical remark that 'no god is closer than he' (*nec enim praesentior illo | est deus*), appended to an appeal to his own godhead for the veracity of his tale. At the same time, the duplicitous nature of Acoetes-as-Bacchus gives the overall utterance a rather ominous force. Within Ovid's Pentheus episode, the story of the Tyrrhenian sailors functions anyway as a speech-genre the Greeks called *ainos* (the English 'enigma' and 'enigmatic' derive from it), i.e. 'an allusive tale containing an ulterior purpose'.[90] The understanding or misunderstanding of the *ainigma* ('riddle') in the *ainos* ('riddling tale') can serve as a kind of ethical litmus test, dividing people into 'better' and 'worse' categories. By not understanding the message implicit in the embedded narrative, namely that Bacchus is a god who demands recognition and respect, Pentheus proves that he belongs among the latter. It is undoubtedly significant that he never considers the possibility that there may be more to the stranger than meets the eye, thus committing an offense with fatal consequences in classical literature, from Homer to tragedy and beyond.[91]

While the hymnic material displaces the tragic from the narrative center of the episode, Ovid, by creating an intertextual 'mask' with metapoetic significance for Bacchus, nevertheless manages to rehearse crucial preoccupations of the Euripidean play. The god's status as author figure who coordinates the generic terms of his narrative existence closely resembles the 'metadramatic' powers Vernant ascribes to the god in Euripides' *Bacchae*: 'It is as if, throughout the spectacle, even as he appears on stage beside the other characters in the play, Dionysus was also operating at another level, behind the scene, putting the plot together and directing it towards its *denouement*'.[92]

The ambiguities of identity surrounding Acoetes-Bacchus are also emblematic of Bacchus' presence in Ovid's Theban History more generally:

> Bacchus' presence is problematic: it is not always easy to tell when he is present, or in what shape or form, and a suspicion arises that he has been present in Thebes from the beginning. We know already of his earlier intermittent presence in the city, at first in Semele's womb before the embryo was snatched up to heaven to gestate in Jupiter's thigh, and then again briefly as the nursling of Ino, before being whisked off to India for the rest of his infancy (310–15). But as the god of drama, he has been present from the first act of the Theban story, the birth of the Sown Men, compared in a simile as they rise from the earth to the figures appearing on a theatre curtain as it is raised (3.111–14). Like the famous simile at *Aeneid* 4.469–73

comparing Dido in her frenzy to mythological characters on stage, Ovid's simile alerts us to a generic switch within a hexameter epic into a dramatic mode.[93]

By not featuring Bacchus (explicitly) as a protagonist in the Pentheusepisode, Ovid captures something important about the god: 'Dionysus wants to be seen to be a god, to be manifest to mortals as a god, to make himself known, to reveal himself, to be known, recognized, understood … But Dionysus reveals himself by concealing himself, makes himself manifest by hiding himself from the eyes of all those who believe only in what they see'.[94] In Ovid's narrative, Bacchus' presence is thus pervasive yet elusive: he (as it were) invites *you* to spot and capture the god in his text! And this is not a challenge to be undertaken lightly — or in the ham-fisted fashion of a Pentheus.

---

47 See Comm. on 513–14 for a fuller account of these preliminaries.

48 It needs to be borne in mind, though, that, as discussed earlier (§3a), the vicissitudes of textual survival do not allow absolute certainty on this point. Many other ancient tragedians, both Greek and Roman, wrote plays about the confrontation of Pentheus and Bacchus; but only Euripides' has survived in full.

49 See Otto (1933) on Dionysiac religion in general and Segal (1982) on Euripides' *Bacchae*.

50 Cf. Seidensticker (1972) 42.

51 Other versions or references to the tale include Apollod. 3.5.3; Prop. 3.17.25; Sen. *Oed*. 449.

52 The titular epithet arose from a misattribution by the Greek historian Thucydides (3.104), which has remained immune to correction through the ages.

53 John Henderson offers a valuable observation here: 'Setting a hymn in a narrative context, which is precisely lacking in the "prayerbook" Homeric Hymn collection, dramatizes the nature of hymns as motivated "in the moment" vehicles for rhetorical intervention. The same goes for all tales, not least mutant myths *about* mythmaking and mutation'.

54 For discussion of this group, see Comm. on 605–07.

55 Hesiod's poem has not survived, but Apollod. 3.6.7 offers a summary of the tale (with attributions). Another tradition explains his loss of eyesight as the result of seeing the goddess Athena naked at her bath; infuriated, she struck him blind, but then felt remorse and granted him the gift of prophecy in recompense.

56 Michalopoulos (2012) 236, arguing earlier in the same work (p. 229) for an interrelation between Tiresias' sexual oscillations and his predictive powers: 'since prophetic knowledge stands on the verge between "here" and "there", between the human and the divine, we might argue as well that the seer's bisexuality becomes an emblem, or better, constitutes a metaphor for Tiresias' prophetic transcendence'. On the other hand, John Henderson cautions that 'even referring to Tiresias' "bisexuality" is already to fall into the trap set by the riddle of gendering sex!

57 For Narcissus as a substitute for Oedipus see Gildenhard and Zissos (2000a).

58 *Met*. 3.339–40; 3.511–12, i.e. the opening two lines of the set text. 'Typically, however, Ovid's Tiresias is first to tell Narcissus' tale, and to let our bard make Echo try to "get it together" with Narcissus in one impossible dis-joint tale of love scorned and twisted (see 386–87). New fame, then, for the old seer'. (John Henderson)

59 See Comm. on 513–14.

60 See Eur. *Bacch*. 367 with Dodds (1960) *ad loc*. Note also the etymological figure on 'Pentheus' (Πενθῆα) and 'lamentation' (πένθημα) at [Theoc.] *Id*. 26.26 (the poem is quoted in full above, §5a): πένθημα καὶ οὐ Πενθῆα φέροισαι.

61 That Pentheus has come to the throne at a very young age is evident in Ovid's as in Euripides' account: see Comm. on 540–42.

62 Cf. e.g. *Bacch*. 233–38, 260–62, 352–54, 453–59, 487, 957–58.

63 The lives of Virgil (70–19 BCE) and Ovid (43 BCE–17 CE) overlap, but only during the latter's youth. In any event, Virgil's *Aeneid* became an instant 'classic' and is treated as such in the *Metamorphoses* — that is to say, it is frequently the focus of Ovid's intertextual engagement.

64 A point emphasized by Hardie (1990) 229. Ovid similarly characterizes Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, as *Martia proles* at *Fast*. 3.59.

65 Cf. Zeitlin (1990) 74–75.

66 At the same time, as John Henderson points out, 'Ovid's merging of Thebes and Troy threatens the "triangulation" formula for ROME (see above, n. 46) — while picking up on the way Virgil has merged his "Thebes" (tragic Carthage) with Troy to-be-reborn-as-ROME'.

67 Dodds (1960) xliii and ad 214.

68 Seidensticker (1972) 57.

69 The following is based on Seidensticker (1972) 57–61.

70 See e.g. 3.555–56 with Comm.

71 Pentheus' lack of self-control is apparent throughout the episode, and in particular at 3.566–67 (with following simile), 578–79, 692–95, 704–07. For Euripides' treatment, see e.g. *Bacch*. 214 with Dodds (1960) *ad loc*

72 See Comm. on 531–63, 532–37 and 536–67.

73 See Comm. on 520.

74 *Der Neue Pauly* III (1997) 651–52 (Schlesier).

75 Ovid provides a decidedly salacious version of this birth story earlier in Book 3 at 253–315.

76 There was, in fact, a tradition that presented Dionysus/Bacchus as a vigorous demigod who won a place in heaven through military conquest and the bestowal of benefits upon humankind (e.g. Cic. *Leg*. 2.19, Virg. *Aen*. 6.804–05; Hor. *Carm*. 3.3.13–15, Val. Fl. 1.566–67). A legendary cycle (gradually assimilated to the career of Alexander the Great) featuring eastern expeditions and, above all, conquests in India, rose to prominence in the Hellenistic period and passed into popular art, as well as the iconography of various Hellenistic kings and Roman generals: see further Zissos (2008) 325.

77 Compare 'Zeus pater' and 'Jupiter', whom the Romans also called 'Diespiter' and understood as 'Dies pater', i.e. 'father of the day' or 'sky father'.

78 Cf. Pentheus' sneering reference to τὸν νεωστὶ δαίμονα | Διόνυσον ['the new god Dionysus'] at Eur. *Bacch*. 219–20; on the god's newness and strangeness, see also Comm. on 520.

79 See Comm. on 607 *virginea … forma*.

80 This utopian appeal works in tandem with various Golden Age motifs, such as life without toil, that were associated with the god.

81 Zeitlin (1993) 158

82 Acting a part is of course appropriate to the god's identity as divine patron of the theatre. Cf. Cole (2007) 234: 'Dionysus is a god who plays many roles, and he can change his appearance at will. As god of the theatre, he is associated with the process of transition actors undergo when taking on a new role, because the actor puts on a new identity with each new mask'.

83 The point is made by Feldherr (1997) 29: 'the audience of this narrative … faces the same challenge as the characters within it'.

84 Note that in Euripides' play Bacchus/Dionysus states that he hails from Lydia both in his own form (*Bacch*. 38–39) and when disguised (*Bacch*. 464): see further Comm. on 582–83.

85 The issues surrounding this *testimonium* are complex (some scholars have even suggested that Servius Auctus draws on Ovid for his summary of Pacuvius' play!); Schierl (2006) 418–22 offers a survey of the secondary literature on Pacuvius' *Pentheus* (*vel Bacchae*).

86 Kenney (1986) 394.

87 Feldherr (2010) 187.

88 Hardie (2002a) 170.

89 Cf. Eur. *Bacch*. 500 (Dionysus speaking about himself): καὶ νῦν ἃ πάσχω πλησίον παρὼν ὁρᾷ ('Even now he is near and sees what I am experiencing').

90 Verdenius (1962) 389, cited by Nagy (1979) 237 in his discussion of the term.

91 Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 68: 'Both in the Homeric epics and in the Homeric Hymns, failure to recognize a disguised god often brings mortals to disaster, and this disaster is frequently accompanied by a display of divine anger, as in the case of the sailors in the *Hymn to Dionysus* or of Metaneira in the *Hymn to Demeter*'.

92 Vernant (1988) 381–82.

93 Hardie (2002a) 166–67.

94 Vernant (1988) 391.

5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture

The story of Pentheus and Bacchus comes out of Greek myth and is situated in a Greek milieu. But we have already seen (above, §3a) that Ovid's treatment of these tales is often refracted through Roman cultural experience. In the case of the set text, one such influence, which does not register explicitly in the narrative but is judged to be of some importance by commentators, is a senatorial intervention against the cult of Bacchus in 186 BCE (i.e. nearly two centuries before Ovid composed the *Metamorphoses*), as well as its repercussions in literary texts — dramatic plays initially (tragedies and comedies that have unfortunately only survived in fragments) and then also in Livy's monumental history of Rome, which Ovid would have known. The distinction between the (religious) politics of 2nd century BCE Rome, specifically the measures taken against followers of the Bacchic cult in 186 BCE and the literary account of Livy, written in the Augustan period, is, of course, important to keep in mind.

Mid-Republican Rome experienced something quite similar to Ovid's Thebes: the arrival of a cult of Bacchus, which merged with Italy's cult of Liber, most likely sometime towards the end of the 3rd century BCE.[95] Not much is known about the so-called Bacchanalia: as with all mystery religions, the doings of the worshippers have remained mysterious. But it is clear that, after an initial period of toleration, which allowed the rites to spread throughout Italy, the Roman senate concluded that certain boundaries of law and order had been breached by cult members and issued a decree against the Bacchic associations responsible for organizing the worship. A copy of this decree has survived, and offers precious insight into the affair.[96] To begin with, it is clear that the senatorial intervention was not directed against Bacchus as a foreign divinity. Rather, the senate seems to have been 'acting in particular against the behaviour of cult members in relation to each other, and not in relation to the god: Rome wished, therefore, to preclude the possibility that cults could serve as vehicles for achieving local solidarity'.[97] The prohibitions of the decree suggest that the target was less the religious practice as such than the possibility of political fraternization afforded by a cult community.[98] Indeed, 'the decree makes no effort to ban the worship of Bacchus entirely, only to specify the conditions of worship'.[99] What Roman officials seem to have feared was the possibility that, unless brought under senatorial control, the cult might serve as a vehicle for anti-Roman political associations and activities. Arguably, the shift from Euripides' emphasis on illicit sex to Ovid's focus on power politics (mirrored in the way their respective figures of Pentheus react to the arrival of Bacchus) reflects this concern.

The account of the historian Livy is also extant (Liv. 39.8–19), offering the modern reader a vivid and salacious chronicle of the affair, in which sex, intrigue, and xenophobia register insistently. It is, in fact, shot through with Augustan anachronisms; whether consciously or not, Livy has inflected his treatment with contemporary concerns (such as Augustus' moral legislation). The idiom in which he describes the activities of those involved in the worship of Bacchus has interesting parallels with Pentheus' characterization of Bacchants and their rites in Ovid's account. The theme of sexual license registers with particular emphasis:

> When wine had inflamed their minds, and night and the mingling of males with females and young with old, had destroyed all sense of modesty, every variety of debauchery began to be practiced, since each one had to hand the form of pleasure to which his nature was most inclined. (Liv. 39.8)

Later in the account, Livy has one of the consuls inveigh against the veneration of 'those gods who would drive our minds, enthralled by vile and alien rites (*pravis et externis religionibus*), to every crime and every lust' (39.15). The denigration continues with accusations of trickery and fraud (cf. Pentheus' imputation of *magicae fraudes* at Met. 3.534), political conspiracy and even ritual murder (followed by the sacrilegious disposal of the victims' bodies). Livy's rhetoric against this 'evil' finds an analogy in Pentheus' outrage against Bacchus and his followers in Ovid; both conceive of the cult's propagation in terms of territorial encroachment, though Pentheus' metaphor of choice is military conquest, whereas Livy's is a spreading pestilence: 'the destructive force of this wickedness spread from Etruria to Rome like a contagion' (*huius mali labes ex Etruria Romam veluti contagione morbi penetravit*, Liv. 39.9).

---

95 For the native Italian deity Liber, see also Comm. on 520.

96 The *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* ('senatorial decree concerning the Bacchanalia'), CIL 12.581.

97 Ando (2007) 437.

98 The pertinent section of the senatorial decree stipulates: 'None of them shall seek to have money in common. No one shall seek to appoint either man or woman as master or acting master, or seek henceforth to exchange mutual oaths, vows, pledges or promises, nor shall anyone seek to create mutual guarantees. No one shall seek to perform rites in secret, nor shall

anyone seek to perform rites in public or private or outside the city, unless he has approached the urban *praetor* and is given permission with a senatorial decree … No one shall seek to perform rites when more than five men and women are gathered together, nor shall more than two men or more than three women seek to be present there, except by permission of the urban *praetor* and the senate …' (trans. Beard, North and Price).

99 Orlin (2010) 64.

5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

SECTION OVERVIEW

5.3.2: 2. Text

5.3.2.1: 3.511–18

5.3.2.2: 3.519–26

5.3.2.3: 3.527–37

5.3.2.4: 3.538–50

5.3.2.5: 3.551–61

5.3.2.6: 3.562–71

5.3.2.7: 3.572–81

5.3.2.8: 3.582–91

5.3.2.9: 3.592–99

5.3.2.10: 3.600–10

5.3.2.11: 3.611–20

5.3.2.12: 3.621–33

5.3.2.13: 3.634–43

5.3.2.14: 3.644–55

5.3.2.15: 3.656–65

5.3.2.16: 3.666–75

5.3.2.17: 3.676–86

5.3.2.18: 3.687–95

5.3.2.19: 3.696–707

5.3.2.20: 3.708–18

5.3.2.21: 3.719–28

5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33

5.3.2: 2. Text is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.1: 3.511–18

cognita res meritam vati per Achaidas urbes
attulerat famam, nomenque erat auguris ingens;
spernit Echionides tamen hunc ex omnibus unus
contemptor superum Pentheus praesagaque ridet
verba senis tenebrasque et cladem lucis ademptae
obicit. ille movens albentia tempora canis
‘quam felix esses, si tu quoque luminis huius
orbus’ ait ‘fieres, ne Bacchica sacra videres!

Study Questions

- What is the *res* mentioned in 511?
- What noun does the adjective *meritam* (511) agree with? What is name for this kind of separation of attribute and noun? What is the effect of its use here?
- Parse *vati*.
- Parse *attulerat*.
- What is the subject of *spernit* (513)?
- Identify the respective accusative object(s) of *spernit* (513), *ridet* (514), and *obicit* (516).
- Parse *superum*.
- What does the *-que* after *praesaga* (514) link? The *-que* after *tenebras* (515)? The *et* in 515?
- Parse *senis*.
- Parse *canis* — how does it fit into the sentence?
- What type of conditional clause does *si* (517) introduce? What is its protasis?
- Parse *fieres*.
- How does Ovid bring the theme of ‘blindness and insight’ into play here?

Stylistic Appreciation

Analyze the rhetorical design of *spernit Echionides tamen hunc ex omnibus unus | contemptor superum Pentheus praesagaque ridet | verba senis tenebrasque et cladem lucis ademptae | obicit* (513–16), paying attention not least to Ovid’s placement of words in the nominative, accusative objects, and verbs.

Discussion Points

How does Ovid characterize Pentheus and Tiresias here? What type of power do these figures represent, respectively? Can you think of similar conflicts elsewhere in classical (and contemporary) literature and culture?

cognosco, -oscere, -ovi, -itum	to get to know in the perfect often = to know
vates/ vatis, -is, m./f	prophet, seer; poet
Achais, -idos, f. adj	Greek
augur, -uris, m	prophet, seer; augur
Echionides	(patronymic) ‘son of Echion’
praesagus, -a, -um	portending, ominous
superi, -orum (or *superum*)	those who dwell above; gods
adimo, -imere, -emi, -emptum	to remove by physical force, take away
obicio, -icere, -ieci, -iectum	to throw in the way/ in one’s teeth
albeo, -ere	to be white (with), appear white
tempus, -oris, n.	the side of the forehead, temple (a less common sense of the Latin word for ‘time’)
cani, -orum, m. pl. [= *cani capilli*]	grey hairs (not to be confused with *canis, -is*, m./f., ‘dog’)
orbus, -a, -um	deprived (of), bereaved, orphaned

5.3.2.1: 3.511–18 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.2: 3.519–26

namque dies aderit, quam non procul auguror esse,
qua novus huc veniat, proles Semeleia, Liber,
quem nisi templorum fueris dignatus honore,
mille lacer spargere locis et sanguine silvas
foedabis matremque tuam matrisque sorores.
eveniet! neque enim dignabere numen honore,
meque sub his tenebris nimium vidisse quereris'.
talia dicentem proturbat Echione natus.

Study Questions

- Explain the syntax of *quam non procul auguror esse* (519).
- How does *Semeleia* (520) scan — and why?
- Why type of condition does *nisi* (521) introduce?
- On what noun does the genitive *templorum* (521) depend?
- What word does *mille* (522) modify?
- How does *lacer* fit into the syntax of the sentence?
- Parse *spargere* (522).
- What does the *-que* after *matrem* (523) link? And what the *-que* after *matris* (523)?
- Parse and scan *eveniet* (524)
- Parse *dignabere* (524).
- What does the *-que* after *me* (525) link?
- Explain the syntax of *me* (525).
- Parse *dicentem*.
- What kind of ablative is *Echione* (526)?

Stylistic Appreciation

Discuss Ovid's use of tense (present; future; future perfect) and repetition (e.g. *fueris dignatus* ~ *dignabere*) in this segment. How does it enhance the authority of Tiresias?

Discussion Points

Tiresias here announces that what soon will go down in the text is the epic equivalent of a modern splatter-movie: horror is in store, as well as the graphic portrayal of gore and violence (see esp. 522–23: *mille lacer spargere locis et sanguine silvas* | *foedabis matremque tuam matrisque sorores*). Do you *really* want to read on? And if so, why?

auguro, -are, -avi, -atum or (as here) as deponent: *auguror, -ari, -atus*	to foretell by augury, predict, prophesy
procul (adv.)	some way off, (far) away
proles, -is, f.	offspring
digno, -are, -avi, -atum or (as here) as deponent: *dignor, -ari, -atus*	to consider worthy
lacer, -era, -um	mutilated, mangled; torn, rent
spargo, -gere, -si, -sum	to scatter, sprinkle, strew, disperse
foedo, -are, -avi, -atum	to make filthy/unclean, soil, stain, befoul
numen, -inis, n.	divine power, divinity
proturbo, -are, -avi, -atum	to drive forth, push out of the way

5.3.2.2: 3.519–26 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.3: 3.527–37

dicta fides sequitur, responsaque vatis aguntur.
Liber adest, festisque fremunt ululatibus agri:
turba ruit, mixtaeque viris matresque nurusque
vulgusque proceresque ignota ad sacra feruntur.
‘Quis furor, anguigenae, proles Mavortia, vestras
attonuit mentes?’ Pentheus ait; ‘aerane tantum
aere repulsa valent et adunco tibia cornu
et magicae fraudes, ut, quos non bellicus ensis,
non tuba terruerit, non strictis agmina telis,
femineae voces et mota insania vino
obscenique greges et inania tympana vincant?

Study Questions

- Parse *dicta*.
- Who is Liber?
- What is the subject of *fremunt* (528)? What is the effect of its placement in the sentence?
- Sort out what each of the five *-que* in 529–30 (*festisque*, *mixtaeque*, *matresque*, *nurusque*, *vulgusque*, *proceresque*) links. Which one is technically speaking superfluous? Why does Ovid use it nevertheless?
- What is the case of *anguigenae* and *proles* Mavortia (531)?
- Identify the three subjects of *valent* (the main verb of the sentence) (533).
- What type of clause does *ut* (534) introduce?
- What is the antecedent of the relative pronoun *quos*?
- Identify the three subjects of *terruerit* (the verb of the relative clause introduced by *quos*) (535).
- Identify the four subjects of *vincant* (the verb of the ut-clause) (537).

Stylistic Appreciation

- How does Ovid bring out stylistically the Dionysiac spirit that has gripped the inhabitants of Thebes in 527–30? (Include consideration of the use of the connective *-que*.)
- Analyze the overall design of Pentheus’ rhetorical question *aerane … vincant*? (532–37).

Discussion Points

- Why is Pentheus so upset about the behaviour of his subjects? To what does he object specifically?
- Discuss the role of gender in Pentheus’ rhetoric.

- What ‘character type’ does Pentheus conform to? Can you think of contemporary public figures who exhibit similar traits?

Liber, -eri, m.	Bacchus
festus, -a, -um	festive, merry
(cf. *dies festus*	a holiday observed in honour of a god)
fremo, -ere, -ui, -itum	to rumble, roar, hum, buzz
ululatus, -us, m.	drawn-out cries, howling, yelling
ruo, -ere, -i	to rush
misceo, -ere, -ui, mixtum	to mix, blend, mingle, confound
nurus, -us, f.	daughter-in-law
(here: in poetry, usually in plural)	young (married) woman
proceres, -um, m. pl.	the leading men of a country
anguigena, -ae, m. [*anguis* + *genus*]	offspring of a serpent or dragon
Mavortius, -a, -um	of or belonging to Mars, warlike
attono, -are, -ui, -itum	to strike with lightening, drive crazy
aes, aeris, n	copper, bronze, brass (musical) instrument made thereof
tantum (adverbial use of the acc. of *tantus*)	to such an extent/ degree
repello, -ere, reppuli, repulsum	to drive back, repel, repulse
aduncus, -a, -um	hooked, curved
tibia, -ae, f.	pipe
(cf. *tibia curva*	a pipe with a curved end, associated with Eastern religious rites)
cornu, -us, n	horn
fraus, -dis, f.	mischief, crime, deceit, trickery
ensis, -is, m.	sword
stringo, -ngere, -nxi, -ctum	to bind fast, secure; draw tight; scratch (here) to bare, unsheathe
insania, -ae, f	madness, frenzy, folly
obscenus, -a, -um	disgusting, filthy, loathsome, lewd
grex, -egis m.	flock, herd, band, troop
inanis, -is, -e	empty, hollow
tympanum, -i, n.	percussive instrument, drum

5.3.2.3: 3.527–37 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.4: 3.538–50

vosne, senes, mirer, qui longa per aequora vecti
hac Tyron, hac profugos posuistis sede penates,
nunc sinitis sine Marte capi? vosne, acrior aetas,
o iuvenes, propiorque meae, quos arma tenere,
non thyrsos, galeaque tegi, non fronde decebat?
este, precor, memores, qua sitis stirpe creati,
illiusque animos, qui multos perdidit unus,
sumite serpentis! pro fontibus ille lacuque
interiit: at vos pro fama vincite vestra!
ille dedit leto fortes: vos pellite molles
et patrium retinete decus! si fata vetabant
stare diu Thebas, utinam tormenta virique
moenia diruerent, ferrumque ignisque sonarent!

Study Questions

- What case is *senes* (538)?
- Identify and explain the mood of *mirer* (538).
- What noun do the demonstrative adjectives *hac — hac* (539) modify?
- What construction does *sinitis* (540) introduce and what part of it has been omitted (and needs to be supplied mentally)?
- Explain the case of *meae*. What noun has to be supplied mentally after *meae*?
- What is the antecedent of *quos* (541)? Why is *quos* in the accusative?
- Parse *este* (543).
- Identify and explain the mood of *sitis … creati* (543).
- What noun does *illius* (544) modify?
- What does the *-que* after *illius* (544) link?
- On what noun does the genitive *serpentis* (545) depend?
- What does the *-que* after *lacu* (545) link?
- Parse *vos* (546).
- What kind of conditional sequence does *si* (548) introduce? (Note: the combination imperfect indicative (*vetabant*) in the protasis + imperfect subjunctive (*diruerent*, *sonarent*) in the apodosis does not easily match onto any type you will find in grammars.)

- Explain the form of *Thebas* (549).

veho, -here, -xi, -ctum here passive in middle sense	to convey, carry to travel, sail, ride
Tyros, i, f	Tyre (a city on the Phoenician coast)
profugus, -a, -um	fugitive, exiled
penates, -ium, m. pl.	tutelary divinities of the household
acer, acris, acre	sharp, fierce, vigorous, energetic
thyrsus, -i, m.	a wand crowned with ivy used in the worship of Bacchus
galea, -ae, f.	a soldier's helmet
frons, frondis, f.	foliage, leafy boughs, garlands
memor, -oris (adjective)	mindful
fons, -ntis, m.	spring, well, fountain
lacus, -us, m	lake, pond, pool
intereo, -ire, -ii, -itum	to die, perish
decus, -oris, n.	high esteem, honour, glory
patrius, -a, -um	of/belonging to a father, ancestral, native
Thebae, -arum, f. pl.	Thebes
tormentum, -i, n.	rope, catapult; torture, agony
diruo, -ere, -i, -tum	to demolish, wreck

Stylistic Appreciation

Analyze the rhetorical techniques Pentheus uses in his appeal to the Thebans. Are they effective?

Discussion Points

- What other epic famously features exiles who sailed across the sea with their tutelary household divinities? Are the parallels significant?
- What do you make of the fact that Pentheus upholds the murderous dragon of Mars who killed off most of the companions of his grandfather Cadmus upon his arrival at the future site of Thebes (see *Met.* 3.1–49) as a positive role-model?

5.3.2.4: 3.538–50 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.5: 3.551–61

essemus miseri sine crimine, sorsque querenda,
non celanda foret, lacrimaeque pudore carerent;
at nunc a puero Thebae capientur inermi,
quem neque bella iuvant nec tela nec usus equorum,
sed madidus murra crinis mollesque coronae
purpuraque et pictis intextum vestibus aurum,
quem quidem ego actutum (modo vos absistite) cogam
adsumptumque patrem commentaque sacra fateri.
an satis Acrisio est animi, contemnere vanum
numen et Argolicas venienti claudere portas:
Penthea terrebit cum totis advena Thebis?

Study Questions

- Identify and explain the tense and mood of *essemus*, *querenda* + *celanda foret*, and *carerent* (551–52)
- What kind of ablative is *pudore* (552)?
- What is the subject of *capientur* (553)?
- Identify the seven (!) subjects (three negatives, four positives) that go with *iuvant* (554–56).
- Explain the grammar and discuss the meaning and design of *pictis intextum vestibus aurum* (556).
- Explain how the infinitive *fateri* (558) fits into the sentence. What kind of construction does it introduce?
- What kind of genitive is *animi* (559)? On what word does it depend?
- Parse *venienti*. How does it fit into the sentence?
- Parse *Penthea* (561).

Stylistic Appreciation

- What formal devices does Pentheus use to reinforce his mockery of Bacchus?
- Looking back over the speech, analyze its overall design with particular attention to Pentheus' (changing) interaction with his audience.

Discussion Points

- In his portrayal of Bacchus, Pentheus uses several stereotypes to characterize him as strange and foreign — a technique called 'othering' (to make someone look different from oneself). What are these stereotypes? Do they still have currency in contemporary culture? If so, where?

- Bacchus demands infraction and suspension of the norms and expectations that bind (a) society. Tabulate these as Pentheus' speech captures them.

sors, -tis, f	lot, fortune, destiny
queror, -ri, -stus	to regret, complain, protest
celo, -are, -avi, -atum	to conceal from view, hide
pudor, -oris, m.	feeling of shame; dishonour
inermis, -is, -e	unarmed, lacking military power
murra, -ae, f.	myrrh
crinis, -is, m.	hair
purpura, -ae, f	shellfish yielding purple dye; purple dye; purple-dyed cloth
pingo, -ere, pinxi, pictum	to adorn with colour, paint, embroider
intexo, -ere, -ui, -tum	to weave into, embroider on
actutum (adverb)	forthwith, immediately
assumo, -ere, -psi, -ptum	to insert, add; choose for oneself, adopt here: to lay claim to (wrongly)
comminiscor, -inisci, -entus	to think up, contrive, invent, fabricate
advena, ae, m./f.	new arrival, foreigner, stranger

5.3.2.5: 3.551–61 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.6: 3.562–71

ite citi' (famulis hoc imperat), 'ite ducemque
attrahite huc vinctum! iussis mora segnis abesto!'
hunc avus, hunc Athamas, hunc cetera turba suorum
corripiunt dictis frustraque inhibere laborant.
acrior admonitu est inritaturque retenta
et crescit rabies moderaminaque ipsa nocebant:
sic ego torrentem, qua nil obstabat eunti,
lenius et modico strepitu decurrere vidi;
at quacumque trabes obstructaque saxa tenebant,
spumeus et fervens et ab obice saevior ibat.

Study Questions

- Parse *ite* (562). What is the rhetorical effect of its repetition (*ite — ite*)?
- What is the rhetorical effect of the parenthesis *famulis hoc imperat*?
- Parse *vinctum* (563).
- What noun does the adjective *segnis* (563) modify?
- Parse *abesto* (563).
- Ponder Ovid's use of tense in 564–67: *corripiunt — laborant — est —inritatur — crescit — nocebant*.
- What noun do the attributes *acrior* and *retenta* (566) modify? What is the rhetorical effect of this kind of placement?
- Parse *eunti* (568). What noun does it modify?
- Parse *lenius* (569).
- What is the subject of *ibat* (571)?

Stylistic Appreciation

- What is the technical term for the repetition of *hunc* (564)? What is its rhetorical effect here?
- Discuss Ovid's use of the simile in lines 568–71: how do the components of the simile match up to the surrounding narrative? How does Ovid draw on nature to illustrate an emotional condition?
- Who makes the claim of autopsy (*ego … vidi*) and what effect does this have?

Discussion Points

Does the phenomenon Ovid here describes, i.e. that attempts at diffusing Pentheus' anger actually worsen his condition, ring psychologically true? Why would that be the case? Can you think of other literary figures (or real-life persons) who manifest similar tendencies?

famulus, -i, m	servant, attendant
attraho, -here, -xi, -ctum	to draw with force, drag in
vincio, -cire, vinxi, vinctum	to tie up, bind
[cf. *vinco, -ere, vici, victum*	to win, conquer]
mora, -ae, f	delay
segnis, -is, -e	slothful, inactive, sluggish
avus, -i, m.	grandfather
corripio, -ipere, -ipui, -eptum	to seize, grasp to censure, rebuke, find fault with
inrito, -are, -avi, -atum	to move to anger, provoke, annoy
retineo, -ere, -ui, retentum	to hold fast, detain; delay, check
moderamen, -inis, n.	control
torrens, -ntis, m.	rushing stream, torrent
strepitus, -us, m	noise, clamour, uproar, din, turmoil
trabs, -bis, f.	tree-trunk, beam
obstruo, -xi, -ctum	to build before or against; to impede, obstruct, barricade
saxa obstructa	stones placed in the way
obex, -icis, m./f.	bar, bolt; barrier, obstacle

5.3.2.6: 3.562–71 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.7: 3.572–81

ecce cruentati redeunt et, Bacchus ubi esset,
quaerenti domino Bacchum vidisse negarunt;
‘hunc’ dixere ‘tamen comitem famulumque sacrorum
cepimus’ et tradunt manibus post terga ligatis
sacra dei quendam Tyrrhena gente secutum.
adspicit hunc Pentheus oculis, quos ira tremendos
fecerat, et quamquam poenae vix tempora differt,
‘o periture tuaque aliis documenta dature
morte’, ait, ‘ede tuum nomen nomenque parentum
et patriam, morisque novi cur sacra frequentes!’

Study Questions

- Identify and explain the tense and mood of *esset* (572).
- Parse *quaerenti* (573).
- Parse *negarunt* (573). What construction does it introduce?
- Parse *dixere* (574).
- What is the accusative object of *tradunt* (575)? And what is the accusative object of the participle *secutum* (576)?
- What construction is *manibus post terga legatis*?
- What kind of ablative is *Tyrrhena gente* (576)?
- What does the *et* between *fecerat* and *quamquam* link (578)?
- Parse *periture* and *dature* (579).
- Scan lines 579–80. What noun does the attribute *tua* modify?
- Parse *parentum* (580).
- What does the *-que* after *moris* link?
- Identify and explain the mood of *frequentes* (581).

Stylistic Appreciation

Discuss the dramatic force of the geminations *Bacchus* (573) ~ *Bacchum* (574) and *tuum nomen nomenque parentum* (580), and of the polyptoton *sacrorum* (574), *sacra dei* (576), *sacra* (581).

Discussion Points

Comment on how Ovid handles the theme of sight in these lines. You may wish to focus on lexical items to do with seeing (*ecce*, *vidisse*, *adspicit*, *oculis*) and words that evoke graphic images (*cruentati*, *tremendos*). Who sees what?

ecce (interjection)	See! Behold! Look! Lo and behold!
cruento, -are, -avi, -atus	to stain with blood; to pollute with blood-guiltiness
comes, -itis, m. (f.)	companion
ligo, -are, -avi, -atum	to fasten, bind, attach
quidam, quaedam, quiddam	a certain (unspecified) person, someone
Tyrrhenus, -a, -um	Tuscan, Etruscan
gens, -tis, f.	race, nation, people; a (Roman) clan
tremendus, -a, -um	such as to cause dread, awe-inspiring
differo, -rre, distuli, dilatum	to scatter; to postpone, defer, put off
documentum, -i, n.	an example (serving as a precedent, warning, instruction)
edo, -ere, -idi, -itum	to emit; bring forth; utter; declare to make known in words, disclose, tell
mos, moris, m	established practice, custom
frequento, -are, -avi, -atum	to populate, make crowded to visit or attend (a person) constantly to celebrate, observe

5.3.2.7: 3.572–81 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.8: 3.582–91

ille metu vacuus ‘nomen mihi’ dixit ‘Acoetes,
patria Maeonia est, humili de plebe parentes.
non mihi quae duri colerent pater arva iuvenci,
lanigerosve greges, non ulla armenta reliquit;
pauper et ipse fuit linoque solebat et hamis
decipere et calamo salientis ducere pisces.
ars illi sua census erat; cum traderet artem,
‘accipe, quas habeo, studii successor et heres’,
dixit ‘opes’, moriensque mihi nihil ille reliquit
praeter aquas: unum hoc possum appellare paternum.

Study Questions

- What kind of ablative is *metu* (582)?
- Lines 584–85 jumble a main clause and a relative clause: rewrite in standard prose order.
- What is the antecedent of the relative pronoun *quae* (584)?
- Identify the subject and the object of *colerent* (584)
- What is the mood of colerent (584) and why?
- Identify the subject and the (three) accusative objects of *reliquit* (585).
- What is the direct object of *decipere* (587)?
- Parse *salientis* (587). What noun does it agree with?
- What kind of dative is *illi* (588)?
- What is the accusative object of *accipe* and the antecedent of *quas* (589)?

Stylistic Appreciation

Discuss the devices by which Acoetes manages to take nine lines to say ‘my parents were poor and I inherited nothing’. Can you detect touches of irony, more specifically formulations reminiscent of elevated epic style that are here used to express the unremarkable and the everyday?

Discussion Points

- What do you make of the presence of words such as *plebs* (583) and *census* (588) that evoke the political culture of republican and early imperial Rome?

- What might make you wonder if this sounds like Bacchus, god and metonymy of wine, talking?

Maeonia, -ae, f	Lydia Etruria (because the Etruscans were said to be descended from the Lydians)
humilis, -is, -e	low, base, humble, obscure, poor
plebs, -bis, f	the common people, lower class
iuvencus, -i, m	a young bullock
laniger, -gera, -gerum	wool-bearing, fleecy
grex, gregis, m.	flock, herd; troop, band
armentum, -i, n.	cattle for ploughing
pauper, paupera, pauperum	poor
linum, -i, n.	thread, rope, cable; net
hamus, -i, m.	hook
decipio, -ere, -cepi, -ceptum	to catch, ensnare, entrap, beguile
calamus, -i, m.	reed; object made thereof, such as: fishing-rod
salio, -ire, salui	to leap, spring, bound
piscis, -is, m.	fish
census, -us, m.	a registering and rating of Roman citizens or property *hence*: wealth, riches, property
trado, -ere, tradidi, traditum	to hand over, transmit, betray, surrender
heres, heredis	heir, heiress
ops, opis, f.	power, might; property, wealth; help
appello, -are, -avi, -atum	to drive toward, accost to address, speak to, call upon *to call, term, entitle, declare
paternus, -a, -um	belonging to a father, paternal

5.3.2.8: 3.582–91 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.9: 3.592–99

mox ego, ne scopulis haererem semper in isdem,
addidici regimen dextra moderante carinae
flectere et Oleniae sidus pluviale Capellae
Taygetenque Hyadasque oculis Arctonque notavi
ventorumque domos et portus puppibus aptos.
forte petens Delon Chiae telluris ad oras
applicor et dextris adducor litora remis
doque levis saltus udaeque inmittor harenae:

Study Questions

- What type of subordinate clause does *ne* (592) introduce?
- What is the force of *ad-* in *addidici* (593)?
- What kind of construction is *dextra moderante* (593)?
- On what noun does the genitive *carinae* (593) depend?
- What is the accusative object of *flectere* (594)?
- Identify the six accusative objects of *notavi* (595).
- Scan line 599 — how does the scanning help in figuring out grammar and meaning?
- Identify and explain the voice of *applicor* (598), *adducor* (598) and *immittor* (599).

Stylistic Appreciation

Acoetes continues to take long to say little. Discuss the techniques by which he beefs up ‘I learned to be a helmsman and happened to land on Chios’.

Discussion Points

Can you identify the stars and constellations Ovid mentions here on a starchart? Why has he chosen those and not others? Do they add up to a coherent picture?

scopulus, -i, m.	rock, cliff, crag
haereo, -ere, haesi, haesum	to hang, stick, cleave, cling, sit fast
addisco, -scere, -dici (here + inf.)	to learn in addition, learn further
moderor, -ari, -atus	to moderate, temper; guide, govern
regimen, -inis, n.	here: 'steering-oar'
Olenius, -a, -um [= Gk Ôlenios]	Olenian, poetic for Achaian
pluvialis, -is, -e	rainy
capella, -ae, f.	she-goat; star in the constellation Auriga
Taygete, -es, f.	a daughter of Atlas and Pleione one of the Pleiades
Hyades, -um, f.	the Hyades (a group of seven stars) daughters of Atlas, sisters of the Pleiades
Arctos, -i, f.	Great and Lesser Bear, North Pole
puppis, -is, f.	stern; ship
forte (adverb; from *fors*)	perchance
Chius, -a, -um	of the island Chios, Chian
applico, -are, -avi, -atum (*ad*) here middle/passive:	to bring into contact, put in (at) (of persons): to land (at)
adduco, -cere, -xi, -ctum here middle/passive:	to lead or bring (of persons): to sail (a ship) to
levis, -is, -e	light (with short -e-) [contrast *lêvis* = smooth]
saltus, -us, m	a jump, leap
udus, -a, -um	wet, moist, damp, humid
immitto, -ittere, -isi, -issum middle/passive (+ dat.):	to cause to go, send to throw oneself, leap (on or into)

5.3.2.9: 3.592–99 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.10: 3.600–10

nox ibi consumpta est; aurora rubescere primo
coeperat: exsurgo laticesque inferre recentis
admoneo monstroque viam, quae ducat ad undas;
ipse quid aura mihi tumulo promittat ab alto
prospicio comitesque voco repetoque carinam.
“adsumus en” inquit sociorum primus Opheltes,
utque putat, praedam deserto nactus in agro,
virginea puerum ducit per litora forma.
ille mero somnoque gravis titubare videtur
vixque sequi; specto cultum faciemque gradumque:
nil ibi, quod credi posset mortale, videbam.

Study Questions

- Identify and explain the mood of *ducat* (602).
- Identify and explain the mood of *promittat* (603).
- What kind of clause does *ut* (606) introduce? (Consider the mood of *putat*.)
- What does the *-que* after *ut* (606) link?
- What kind of ablative is *virginea … forma*?
- What kind of ablatives are *mero* and *somno*?
- Parse *credi* (610).
- Identify and explain the mood of *posset* (610).

Stylistic Appreciation

- Analyze the rhetorical design of 601 (*exsurgo*...) — 604 (...*carinam*), paying particular attention to symmetry and order.
- Analyze the design of 607 and the gender-issues it raises.

Discussion Points

- Why does Opheltes believe that a beautiful, intoxicated young boy they chanced upon in an empty field makes for a suitable victim of kidnapping? What kind of character/ society does his reaction evoke?

- How does Acoetes identify Bacchus?

consumo, -ere, -sumpsi, -sumptum	to take up, consume; *of time*: to spend, pass
rubesco, -ere, rubui	to grow red, turn red, redden
exsurgo, -ere, surrexi	to rise up, get up
latex, -icis, m.	liquid, fluid, water
recens, -entis	fresh, young, recent
promitto, -ere, -misi, -missum	to send/ put forth to forebode, foretell, predict to promise, hold out, cause to expect
prospicio, -ere, -exi, -ectum	to look forward/ into the distance to look out, exercise foresight, discern
en (interjection)	lo! behold! see! see there!
nanciscor, -i, nactus/ nanctus	to get, obtain; meet with, stumble on
virgineus, -a, -um	maidenly, virginal
merum, -i, n.	pure, unmixed wine
titubo, -are, -avi, -atum	to stagger, totter, reel
cultus, -us, m.	care, cultivation, refinement, style style of dress, external appearance, garb
gradus, -us, m.	step, pace

5.3.2.10: 3.600–10 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.11: 3.611–20

et sensi et dixi sociis: “quod numen in isto
corpore sit, dubito; sed corpore numen in isto est!
quisquis es, o faveas nostrisque laboribus adsis;
his quoque des veniam!” “pro nobis mitte precari!”
Dictys ait, quo non alius conscendere summas
ocior antemnas prensoque rudente relabi.
hoc Libys, hoc flavus, prorae tutela, Melanthus,
hoc probat Alcimedon et, qui requiemque modumque
voce dabat remis, animorum hortator, Epopeus,
hoc omnes alii: praedae tam caeca cupido est.

Study Questions

- Explain why *sit* (612) is in the subjunctive.
- Explain why *faveas*, *adsis* (613), and *des* (614) are in the subjunctive.
- Parse *mitte* (614).
- What kind of ablative is the relative pronoun *quo* (615)?
- What is the verb of the relative clause introduced by *quo* (615–16)?
- How do the infinitives *conscendere* (615) and *relabi* (616) fit into the syntax of the sentence?
- What kind of construction is *prenso rudente* (616)?
- What does the *-que* after *prenso* (616) link?
- Explain the syntax of *prorae tutela* (617) and *animorum hortator* (619).
- Identify the five subjects (and four accusative objects) of *probat* (618).
- What is the antecedent of *qui* (618)?
- What type of genitive is *praedae* (620)?

dubito, -are, -avi, -atum	to be uncertain, be in doubt, waver
faveo, -ere, favi, fautum	to be favourable, be well disposed
venia, -ae, f.	indulgence, kindness; permission; forbearance, pardon, forgiveness
conscendere, -ere, -i, -nsum	to mount, ascend; to embark
antemna, -ae, f.	a sail yard
prendo, -ere, -di, -sum	to lay hold of, grasp, snatch, seize
rudens, -entis, m.	rope, line, cord
relabor, -bi, -lapsus	to slide or glide back; slide down
flavus, -a, -um	golden-yellow, blond
prora, -ae, f.	forepart of a ship, prow
tutela, -ae, f.	charge, care, safeguard; guardianship keeper, warder, guardian
remus, -i, m	oar

Stylistic Appreciation

- What is the term for the stylistic device that Ovid uses in 611–12 *quod numen in isto corpore sit, dubito; sed corpore numen in isto est*! What is its effect here?
- What is the technical term for, and the rhetorical effect of, the fourfold repetition of *hoc* in 617–20?
- How does Ovid generate interest in the catalogue of the members of the crew?
- Why is *flavus … Melanthus* (617) funny?
- What kind of figure is *prorae tutela* (617)?
- How does Ovid use style to reinforce the contrast between Acoetes and his crew?

Discussion Points

Discuss the psychology/ motivation behind the positions of Acoetes and the rest of crew. Consider the social dynamics that unfold here, with one lone voice taking a principled if seemingly hopeless stance against the rest. Where else in ancient and modern literature do we find this situation?

5.3.2.11: 3.611–20 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.12: 3.621–33

“non tamen hanc sacro violari pondere pinum
perpetiar” dixi; “pars hic mihi maxima iuris”
inque aditu obsisto: furit audacissimus omni
de numero Lycabas, qui Tusca pulsus ab urbe
exilium dira poenam pro caede luebat;
is mihi, dum resto, iuvenali guttura pugno
rupit et excussum misisset in aequora, si non
haesissem, quamvis amens, in fune retentus.
inpia turba probat factum; tum denique Bacchus
(Bacchus enim fuerat), veluti clamore solutus
sit sopor aque mero redeant in pectora sensus,
“quid facitis? quis clamor?” ait “qua, dicite, nautae,
huc ope perveni? quo me deferre paratis?”

Study Questions

- What noun does the demonstrative adjective *hanc* (621) modify?
- Parse *perpetiar* (622).
- What is the verb in the clause *pars hic mihi maxima iuris* (622)?
- Identify and explain the case of *mihi* (622).
- What kind of genitive is *iuris* (622)? On what noun does it depend?
- What kind of ablative is *iuvenali … pugno* (626)?
- What kind of condition does *si non* (627) introduce? What is the apodosis?
- What is the main verb of the sentence that starts with *tum denique Bacchus* (629)?
- What kind of ablative is *clamore* (630)?
- What does the *-que* after the preposition *a* (631) link?
- What noun does the interrogative adjective *qua* (632) modify?

Stylistic Appreciation

- Discuss how the Latin re-enacts the way Bacchus gradually emerges out of his drunken stupor.
- Is there a point to the *s*-alliteration *solutus* | *sit sopor … sensus*?

Discussion Points

Why do things turn violent?

pinus, -us (and *-i*), f.	pine, pine-tree; anything made of pine-wood; ship
perpetior, -ti, -ssus	to suffer to the full; tolerate, put up with
aditus, -us, m	approach, entry, entrance
obsisto, -ere, -stiti, -stitum	to set oneself before; to oppose, resist
pello, -ere, -pepuli, pulsus	to strike; here: to drive into exile, banish
Tuscus, -a, -um	of Etruria or its inhabitants, Etruscan
luo, -ere, lui	to pay a debt or penalty
luere poenam/ poenas	to suffer/ undergo as punishment
resto, -are, restiti	to stop behind; to withstand, resist, oppose
iuvenalis, -is, -e	youthful
guttur, -uris, n.	gullet, throat
pugnus, -i, m.	fist
rumpo, -ere, rupi, ruptum	to break, burst, tear, rend, rupture
excutio, -tere, -ssi, -ssum	to shake off, throw
funis, -is, m.	rope, cord
quamvis	(*adv*.) ever so much, exceedingly; (*conj*.) although, albeit
retineo, -ere, -ui, -tentum	to hold/ keep back, not let go, hold fast
solvo, -ere, solvi, solutum	to free, set free, release
sopor, -oris, m.	sleep; drowsiness
defero, -ferre, -tuli, -latum	to bear or bring away; impeach, accuse

5.3.2.12: 3.621–33 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.13: 3.634–43

“pone metum” Proreus, “et quos contingere portus
ede velis!” dixit; “terra sistere petita”.
“Naxon” ait Liber “cursus advertite vestros!
illa mihi domus est, vobis erit hospita tellus”.
per mare fallaces perque omnia numina iurant
sic fore meque iubent pictae dare vela carinae.
dextera Naxos erat: dextra mihi lintea danti
“quid facis, o demens? quis te furor”, inquit “Acoete”,
pro se quisque, “tenet? laevam pete!” maxima nutu
pars mihi significat, pars quid velit ore susurro.

Study Questions

- Parse *pone* (634) and *ede* (635).
- What does the *et* in line 634 link?
- What kind of subordinate clause does *quos* introduce? What noun does it modify? What are the subject and the verb of the subordinate clause?
- Parse *velis* (635).
- Scan line 635 and parse *terra* and *sistere*.
- What kind of accusative is *Naxon*?
- What kinds of dative are *mihi* and *vobis* (637)?
- What kind of clause does *iurant* (638) introduce?
- Parse *fore* (639).
- What kind of clause does *iubent* (639) introduce?
- Parse *danti* (640).
- What case is *demens* (641) in?
- Why is *velit* (643) in the subjunctive?

contingo, -ere, -tigi, -tactum	to touch, take hold of, seize to reach, come to, arrive at, meet with
hospes, -itis, m./ *hospita, -ae*, f.	host; guest used adjectively: hospitable
fallax, -acis	deceitful, deceptive
pingo, -ere, pinxi, pictum	to adorn with colour, paint, embroider
linteum, -i, n.	linen cloth; sail
nutus, -us, m.	a nod
significo, -are, -avi, -atum	to show (by signs), point out, intimate
os, oris, n.	mouth
susurrus, -a, -um	muttering, whispering

Stylistic Appreciation

This is a highly ‘dramatic’ sequence, with a lot of direct speech (including imperatives and vocatives) along with whispering and accompanying gestures and movements. One way to appreciate the theatrical quality is to reconceive the passage as a script with stage directions:

Proreus (fallaciter): ‘pone metum et ede quos portus contingere velis! terra petita sistere’.

Liber: ‘Cursus vestros Naxon advertite! illa mihi domus est, tellus vobis hospita erit’.

Omnes (fallaciter): ‘per mare et per omnia numina sic fore iuramus. Acoete, vela da ventis!’

Pro se quisque (*pars nutu, pars ore susurro*): ‘quid facis, o demens? quis te furor, Acoete, tenet? laevam pete!’

Discussion Points

The action that unfolds here resembles a farce, mime, or comedy — that is, dramatic genres of slapstick-entertainment value that are far less elevated than epic or tragedy. Why do you think Ovid lets rip like this in terms of his generic registers?

5.3.2.13: 3.634–43 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.14: 3.644–55

obstipui “capiat”que “aliquis moderamina!” dixi
meque ministerio scelerisque artisque removi.
increpor a cunctis, totumque inmurmurat agmen;
e quibus Aethalion “te scilicet omnis in uno
nostra salus posita est!” ait et subit ipse meumque
explet opus Naxoque petit diversa relicta.
tum deus inludens, tamquam modo denique fraudem
senserit, e puppi pontum prospectat adunca
et flenti similis “non haec mihi litora, nautae,
promisistis” ait, “non haec mihi terra rogata est!
quo merui poenam facto? quae gloria vestra est,
si puerum iuvenes, si multi fallitis unum?”

Study Questions

- What does the *que* after *capiat* (644) link? What the *-que* after *me* (645)?
- Parse *te* (647).
- What is the rhetorical force of *scilicet* (647)?
- What kind of construction is *Naxo … relicta* (649)?
- What is the main verb of the sentence that begins with *tum deus* (650)?
- Parse *senserit* (651) and explain the mood.
- What does the *et* at the beginning of line 652 link?
- What noun does the attribute *adunca* (651) modify?
- Parse *flenti* (652).
- What kinds (plural!) of dative are *mihi* in 652 and *mihi* in 653?
- What noun does the interrogative adjective *quo* modify (654)? What case is it in?

Stylistic Appreciation

Discuss the rhetorical devices Bacchus uses to express his outrage at the crew’s treachery, with particular attention to the design of 655.

Discussion Points

Can you think of other moments in literature (or other media, such as cinema) in which an all-powerful character initially 'plays possum' or feigns naïveté when set upon by a gang of toughs, only to emerge victoriously? What makes this scenario so attractive?

obstipesco, -ere, obstipui	to be stupefied; be amazed; struck dumb
moderamen, -inis, n.	means of managing; rudder, helm
ministerium, -ii, n.	office, function, service; administration
increpo, -are, increpui, increpitum	to make a noise; to upbraid loudly, chide
immurmuro, -are, -avi, -atum	to murmur in, at, or against
agmen, -inis, n.	multitude (in motion), group, band, army
scilicet (adverb)	it is evident, clear, plain, manifest of course, naturally, undoubtedly *ironically*: of course, doubtless, forsooth
subeo, -ire, -ii, -itum	to come or go under; to take the place of
expleo, -ere, -evi, -etum	to fill up; to complete, finish
diversus, -a, -um	different, opposite, contrary, conflicting
inludo, -ere, -si, -sum	to mock, ridicule; to play at
tamquam	as if
fraus, fraudis, f.	deceit, fraud, deception; offence, crime
puppis, -is, f.	the hinder part of the ship, stern
pontus, -i, m.	the sea
aduncus, -a, -um	hooked; curved
fleo, -ere, flevi, fletum	to weep, cry, shed tears
similis, -e (with gen. or, as here, dat.)	like, resembling, similar
mereo, -ere, -ui, -itum	to deserve, merit, be entitled to; earn
fallo, -ere, fefelli, falsum	to deceive, trick, dupe, cheat

5.3.2.14: 3.644–55 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.15: 3.656–65

iamdudum flebam: lacrimas manus inpia nostras
ridet et inpellit properantibus aequora remis.
per tibi nunc ipsum (nec enim praesentior illo
est deus) adiuro, tam me tibi vera referre
quam veri maiora fide: stetit aequore puppis
haud aliter quam si siccum navale teneret.
illi admirantes remorum in verbere perstant
velaque deducunt geminaque ope currere temptant:
inpediunt hederae remos nexuque recurvo
serpunt et gravidis distinguunt vela corymbis.

Study Questions

- Explain the tense of *flebam*.
- What kind of construction is *properantibus … remis* (657)?
- What word does the preposition *per* (658) govern?
- What kind of ablative is *illo* (658)?
- What is the subject accusative, what the infinitive of the indirect statement introduced by *adiuro* (659)?
- What are the two accusative objects of *referre* (659)?
- What kind of ablative is *fide* (660)?
- Explain the mood of *teneret* (661).
- On what noun does the genitive *remorum* (662) depend?
- What is the subject of *inpediunt* (664), *serpunt* (665) and *distinguunt* (665)?

Stylistic Appreciation

- Analyze the rhetorical design of lines 662–65, with special attention to stylistic symmetries.
- Scan line 662 and explore possible links between metre and sense.

Discussion Points

What are the rhetorical strategies Acoetes employs to render the incredible truthful? Compare them to those found in other texts (such as the Bible) that are invested in portraying divine interventions in human life that defy empirical plausibility as historical facts.

iamdudum	long since, a long time ago
fleo, -ere, flevi, fletum	to weep, cry, shed tears; bewail, lament
propero, -are, -avi, -atum	to hasten, quicken; make haste
adiuro, -are, -avi, -atum	to swear to, confirm by oath
verum, -i, n.	what is true or real; the truth, reality, fact
fides, -ei, f.	faith, confidence, credence, belief trustworthiness, faithfulness, credibility
siccus, -a, -um	dry
navale, -is, n.	dock, dockyard
verber, -eris, n.	lash, whip, scourge, rod; stroke, blow
persto, -are, -stiti	to stand firm, continue; persist
deduco, -ere, -xi, -ctum	to lead, fetch, bring down
geminus, -a, -um	born at the same time, twin-born paired, double, both, two
impedio, -ire, -ivi, -itum	to entangle, ensnare, shackle, hamper to hold fast, detain, obstruct
hedera, -ae, f	ivy
recurvus, -a, -um	bent back on itself, bent round
serpo, -ere, -si	to crawl [cf. *serpens, -ntis*: snake]
gravidus, -a, -um	pregnant; laden, filled, full
distinguo, -guere, -xi, -ctum	to divide off, mark out; embellish, adorn
corymbus, -i, m.	a cluster of ivy-berries

5.3.2.15: 3.656–65 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.16: 3.666–75

ipse racemiferis frontem circumdatus uvis
pampineis agitat velatam frondibus hastam;
quem circa tigres simulacraque inania lyncum
pictarumque iacent fera corpora pantherarum.
exsiluere viri, sive hoc insania fecit
sive timor, primusque Medon nigrescere coepit
corpore et expresso spinae curvamine flecti.
incipit huic Lycabas “in quae miracula” dixit
“verteris?” et lati rictus et panda loquenti
naris erat, squamamque cutis durata trahebat.

Study Questions

- What kind of accusative is *frontem* (666)?
- What noun does *racemiferis* modify?
- Identify the accusative object of *agitat* (667).
- Scan line 669: what is unusual about its metrical design?
- Parse *exsiluere* (670).
- What does the et after *corpore* (672) link?
- What kind of construction is *expresso … curvamine* (672)?
- Parse *verter*is (674).
- What is the verb of the clause starting with *lati rictus* (674)?
- Parse *loquenti* (674).
- What does the *-que* after *squamam* (675) link?

Stylistic Appreciation

How does Ovid render Bacchus’ epiphany graphic and effective? (Be sure to include comments on its impact on the audience in the text.) How does he manage to visualize the phenomenon of transformation?

Discussion Points

This block of text brings together gods, humans, and beasts (including the transformation of humans into beasts). Discuss how ancient (and modern) cultures configure these three ‘life-forms’ and their interrelation.

racemifer, -era, -erum	bearing clusters [of grapes]
uva, -ae, f.	grape
pampineus, -a, -um	full of tendrils or vine-leaves
velo, -are, -avi, -atum	to cover (up), wrap, envelop, veil
hasta, -ae, f.	lance, spear
circa (adverb)	around, round about, all around
simulacrum, -i, n.	likeness, image, form, figure
inanis, -is, -e	empty, void; lifeless, dead
lynx, lyncis, f.	a lynx
panthera, -ae, f.	a panther
exsilio, -ire, -ui	to spring out, bound forth, leap up
nigresco, -ere, -grui	to become black, grow dark
exprimo, -ere, -pressi, -pressum	to press or squeeze out, force out
curvamen, -inis, n.	curvature; curved form; arc
verto, -ere, -ti, -sum	to turn; to change, alter, transform; to translate; to overturn, overthrow
latus, -a, -um	broad, wide, extended
rictus, -us, m	the mouth wide-open; gaping jaws
pandus, -a, -um	bent, crooked, curved
naris, -is, f.	nose
squama, -ae, f.	a scale
cutis, -is, f.	skin

5.3.2.16: 3.666–75 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.17: 3.676–86

at Libys obstantis dum vult obvertere remos,
in spatium resilire manus breve vidit et illas
iam non posse manus, iam pinnas posse vocari.
alter ad intortos cupiens dare bracchia funes
bracchia non habuit truncoque repandus in undas
corpore desiluit: falcata novissima cauda est,
qualia dividuae sinuantur cornua lunae.
undique dant saltus multaque adspergine rorant
emerguntque iterum redeuntque sub aequora rursus
inque chori ludunt speciem lascivaque iactant
corpora et acceptum patulis mare naribus efflant.

Study Questions

- Parse and scan *obstantis* (676). What noun does it modify? How does metre reinforce meaning?
- Parse *manus* (677) and explain its syntactical function in the sentence.
- What noun does the attribute *breve* (677) agree with?
- What construction does *vidit* (677) introduce?
- What noun does the attribute *dividuae* (682) modify?
- Parse *saltus* (683).
- On what noun does the genitive *chori* (685) depend?

Stylistic Appreciation

- Discuss the ways in which Ovid represents the disappearance of human anatomy — and the appearance of dolphinesque features.
- How do lines 683–86 enact the frolicking of dolphins in the sea?

Discussion Points

Has the transformation into dolphins also altered the character of the sailors?

obverto, -ere, -ti, -sum	to turn towards/ against; direct towards
resilio, -ire, -ui (-ii)	to jump back, rebound, shrink
penna, ae f. / *pinna, ae* f.	feather, wing; fin
intorqueo, -ere, -torsi, -tortum	to twist, turn round; brandish, hurl
intortus, -a, -um	twisted (made by twisting) involved, entwined
bracchium, -ii, n.	arm, forearm (from hand to elbow)
funis, -is, m.	rope
truncus, -a, -um	maimed, mutilated, disfigured
repandus, -a, -um	bent backwards, turned up
falcatus, -a, -um [from *falx*: sickle]	armed with scythes; sickle-shaped, curved
cauda, -ae, f.	tail
dividuus, -a, -um	divided, separated; with *luna*: half-moon
sinuo, -are, -avi, -atum	to bend, wind, curve
roro, -are, -avi, -atum [*ros* + o]	(intr.) to shed moisture, to drizzle
aspergo, -ginis f.	action of sprinkling; what is sprinkled *here*: spraying
rursus (adverb)	back again, again
chorus, -i, m.	dance; chorus
species, -ei, f.	sight, appearance
in speciem	so as to give an appearance/ impression
lascivus, -a, -um	playful, frisky, frolicsome; mischievous
patulus, -a, -um	wide-open, gaping
accipio, -ere, accepi, acceptum	to take, receive
efflo, -are, -avi, -atum	to blow out, breathe out

5.3.2.17: 3.676–86 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.18: 3.687–95

de modo viginti (tot enim ratis illa ferebat)
restabam solus: pavidum gelidoque trementem
corpore vixque meo firmat deus “excute” dicens
“corde metum Dianque tene!” delatus in illam
accessi sacris Baccheaque sacra frequento’.
‘Praebuimus longis’ Pentheus ‘ambagibus aures’,
inquit ‘ut ira mora vires absumere posset.
praecipitem, famuli, rapite hunc cruciataque diris
corpora tormentis Stygiae demittite nocti!’

Study Questions

- What is the accusative object of *ferebat* (687)?
- What kind of ablative is *corde* (690)?
- What words does the *-que* after *Diam* link?
- Parse *tene* (690).
- Scan line 691. Why does the *-e-* in *Bacchea* scan long?
- Scan line 693. What case is *ira*, what case *mora*?
- What case is *famuli* (694)?
- What does the *-que* after *cruciata* link?

Stylistic Appreciation

How does Ovid bring out Pentheus’ pent-up anger?

Discussion Points

Does Pentheus have a point when he calls Acoetes' story 'a long-winded runaround' (cf. *longis … ambagibus*)?

viginti (numeral adjective, indeclinable)	twenty
modo (adverb)	only, merely; of time just passed: a moment ago
ratis, -is, f.	a wooden vessel, raft, boat
tremo, -ere, -ui	to shake, quake, quiver, tremble
firmo, -are, -avi, -atum	to strengthen, fortify, support, encourage
excutio, -ere, -cussi, -cussum	to shake out or off; remove, banish
cor, cordis, n	heart
Dia, -ae, f.	an old name for the island of Naxos
defero, -ferre, -tuli, -latum	to bear, carry, bring; transfer, deliver
accedo, -ere, -essi, -cessum	to go/ come near, approach; enter upon
Baccheus, -a, -um	of Bacchus, Bacchic
praebeo, -ere, -ui, -itum	to hold forth, reach out; give, furnish
ambages, -is, f.	a going around, roundabout way circumlocution, evasion, riddle
auris, -is, f.	ear [not to be confused with *aura, -ae*, f. = breeze]
absumo, -ere, -psi, -ptum	to use up, consume, exhaust
praeceps, -ipitis	headlong, impetuous
crucio, -are, -avi, -atum	to put to the rack, torture, torment
dirus, -a, -um	fearful, awful; ill-omened, ominous
Stygius, -a, -um	Stygian, hellish, infernal
demitto, -ittere, -isi, -issum	to let fall, make descend, send down

5.3.2.18: 3.687–95 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.19: 3.696–707

protinus abstractus solidis Tyrrhenus Acoetes
clauditur in tectis; et dum crudelia iussae
instrumenta necis ferrumque ignesque parantur,
sponte sua patuisse fores lapsasque lacertis
sponte sua fama est nullo solvente catenas.
perstat Echionides, nec iam iubet ire, sed ipse
vadit ubi electus facienda ad sacra Cithaeron
cantibus et clara bacchantum voce sonabat.
ut fremit acer equus, cum bellicus aere canoro
signa dedit tubicen pugnaeque adsumit amorem,
Penthea sic ictus longis ululatibus aether
movit, et audito clamore recanduit ira.

Study Questions

- What noun does the attribute *solidis* (696) modify? How does the word order enact meaning?
- Parse *iussae* (697). What noun does it agree with?
- What type of ablative is *lacertis* (699)?
- What does the *-que* after *lapsas* (699) link?
- Identify the two subject accusatives and the two infinitives of the indirect statement introduced by *fama est* (700).
- What construction is *nullo solvente* (700)?
- Parse *bacchantum* (703).
- What noun does the attribute *bellicus* (704) modify?
- What kind of genitive is *pugnae* (705)?
- Parse *ictus* (706). What noun does it agree with?
- What type of ablative is *longis ululatibus* (706)?
- What kind of construction is *audito clamore* (707)?

Stylistic Appreciation

- How does Ovid generate a sense of marvel at the liberation of Acoetes?
- Discuss the illustrative value of the simile in lines 704–05.

Discussion Points

Profile Pentheus' state of mind. Why does he remain unimpressed by the miraculous liberation of Acoetes? What makes him rush to his doom on Mount Cithaeron?

protinus	right on, straightaway, immediately
abstraho, -here, -xi, -ctum	to drag away, remove forcibly
sponte sua	of itself, spontaneously
foris, -is, mainly in plural: *fores, -um*, f.	door, gate
labor, -bi, -psus	to move, glide; to slip, fall
lacertus, -i, m.	upper arm (from shoulder to elbow)
catena, -ae, f.	fetter, shackle, chain
persto, -are, -stiti	to stand firmly, remain steadfast, persist
vado, -ere	to go, walk, rush
Cithairon/ Cithaeron, -onis, m.	Cithaeron (mountain in Boeotia)
eligo, -igere, -egi, -ectum	to select, choose, pick out
bacchor, -ari, -atus	to celebrate the rites of Bacchus, to act like a Bacchante, rave, rage
fremo, -ere, -ui, -itum	to roar, resound, growl, grumble
canorus, -a, -um	melodious, euphonious
tubicen, -cinis, m.	a trumpeter
icio, -ere, -i, -tum	to strike, smite
recandesco, -ere, -dui	to grow white/ hot (again), glow

5.3.2.19: 3.696–707 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.20: 3.708–18

monte fere medio est, cingentibus ultima silvis,
purus ab arboribus, spectabilis undique, campus:
hic oculis illum cernentem sacra profanis
prima videt, prima est insano concita cursu,
prima suum misso violavit Penthea thyrso
mater et ‘o geminae’ clamavit ‘adeste sorores!
ille aper, in nostris errat qui maximus agris,
ille mihi feriendus aper’. ruit omnis in unum
turba furens; cunctae coeunt trepidumque sequuntur,
iam trepidum, iam verba minus violenta loquentem,
iam se damnantem, iam se peccasse fatentem.

Study Questions

- What is the subject of the sentence starting *monte fere medio est*... (708–09)?
- What kind of construction is *cingentibus ultima silvis* (708)? How does *ultima* fit in?
- What is the subject of the sentence starting *hic oculis*... (710–13)?
- What kind of construction does *videt* (711) govern?
- What kind of construction is *misso … thyrso* (712)?
- What type of dative is *mihi* (715)?
- What construction does *fatentem* introduce (718)?

Stylistic Appreciation

How does Ovid rhetorically embellish the final show down between Pentheus and his mother (as well as the rest of the Maenads)?

Discussion Points

Discuss the drama of sight that plays itself out in these lines: who sees whom seeing what from where? Should the transformative visions induced by madness and hallucination count as types of metamorphosis?

mons, -ntis, m.	mountain
cingo, -ere, -xi, -nctum	to circle, surround, encompass
purus, -a, -um	clean, free, clear; undefiled, unstained
spectabilis, -is, -e	that may be seen; visible
undique (adverb)	from all parts, on all sides
hîc (adverb of place)	in this place, here
concieo, -ciere, -civi, -citum	to urge, bring or assemble together to move violently, shake, stir up, rouse
thyrsus, -i, m.	Bacchic staff, thyrsus
geminus, -a, -um	born at the same time, twin-born paired, double, both, *two
aper, -pri, m.	boar
ferio, -ire	to knock, strike; to slay, kill
pecco, -are, -avi, -atum	to transgress, commit a fault, offend
fateor, -eri, fassus	to confess, own, grant

5.3.2.20: 3.708–18 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.21: 3.719–28

saucius ille tamen ‘fer opem, matertera’ dixit
‘Autonoe! moveant animos Actaeonis umbrae!’
illa, quis Actaeon, nescit dextramque precantis
abstulit, Inoo lacerata est altera raptu.
non habet infelix quae matri bracchia tendat,
trunca sed ostendens dereptis vulnera membris
‘adspice, mater!’ ait. visis ululavit Agave
collaque iactavit movitque per aera crinem
avulsumque caput digitis conplexa cruentis
clamat: ‘io comites, opus hoc victoria nostra est!’

Study Questions

- Parse *fer* (719).
- Explain the tense and mood of *moveant* (720). What is its subject?
- What verb needs to be supplied with *quis Actaeon* (721)?
- Parse *precantis* (721).
- What noun does the adjective *Inoo* (722) modify?
- What noun has to be supplied mentally after *altera* (722)?
- What is the accusative object of *habet* and antecedent of *quae* (723)?
- What noun does *trunca* (724) modify?
- What construction is *dereptis … membris* (724)?
- What kind of ablative is *visis*?

Stylistic Appreciation

Compare Ovid’s techniques in describing the dismemberment of Pentheus with those used in contemporary splatter-movies.

Discussion Points

What are the ethics of depicting extreme forms of violence? Is there an aesthetics of the gruesome? Is Ovid's description of Pentheus' dismemberment entertaining — or even witty? Or rather grotesque and revolting?

saucius, -a, -um	wounded, hurt, injured
matertera, ae, f.	aunt (a mother's sister)
Actaeon, -onis, m	Actaeon
umbra, -ae, f.	shade, shadow; shade, ghost
aufero, auferre, abstuli, ablatum	to take off, carry off, remove, snatch off
Inous, -a, -um	of or belonging to Ino
lacero, -are, -avi, -atum	to tear to pieces, mangle, rend, mutilate
raptus, -us, m.	a carrying off by force; violent rending
truncus, -a, -um	maimed, mutilated, mangled, disfigured
deripio, -ere, -ripui, -reptum	to tear off, tear away, remove violently
visum, i, n. (ppp of *video*)	something seen, sight, appearance, vision
collum, -i, n.	neck
iacto, -are, -avi, -atum	to throw, scatter; to toss, shake
avello, -ere, -velli, -vulsum	to pull off/ away, to rend off, tear away
digitus, -i, m.	finger
cruentus, -a, -um	stained with blood, bloody
complector, complecti, complexus	to entwine; to clasp, embrace

5.3.2.21: 3.719–28 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33

non citius frondes autumni frigore tactas
iamque male haerentes alta rapit arbore ventus,
quam sunt membra viri manibus direpta nefandis.
talibus exemplis monitae nova sacra frequentant
turaque dant sanctasque colunt Ismenides aras.

Study Questions

- Parse citius (729).
- What are the subject and the verb of the sentence starting with non citius... (729–30)?
- What kind of ablative is alta … arbore (730)?
- What kind of ablative is manibus … nefandis (731)?
- What is the subject of the sentence starting with talibus exemplis... (732–33)?

Stylistic Appreciation

Assess the explanatory value and the appropriateness of the simile Ovid uses to illustrate Pentheus' dismemberment.

Discussion Points

Why does Ovid turn the doom of Pentheus into an *exemplum* that stimulates religious worship — despite the fact that he stated earlier that the Theban king was the only one in Thebes who refused to honour Bacchus with cultic veneration? (Note that Ovid specifies the Theban *women* as the ones taught Bacchus' lesson.) What do you make of a religion/ divinity who practises this sort of didacticism? Are there hints in the text that Ovid disapproves of Pentheus' punishment?

autumnus, *-i*, m.	autumn
frigor, *-oris*, m.	cold
tango, *-ere*, *tetigi*, *tactum*	to touch, take hold of
diripio, *-ere*, *-pui*, *direptum*	to tear asunder/ in pieces, lay waste
moneo, *-ere*, *-ui*, *monitum*	to remind; to admonish, advice, warn; to instruct, teach
tus, *turis*, n.	incense, frankincense
Ismenis, *-idis*, f.	a Theban woman [from *Ismenus*, a river of Boeotia near Thebes]

5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.3: 3. Commentary

The setting for this episode is the Greek city of Thebes, founded by Cadmus (513–14 n.). Cadmus is by now an old man, and has abdicated the throne of his city in favour of his grandson Pentheus. Early in the reign of the young king, a wild new religious cult sweeps in from the East, that of the god Bacchus, son of the supreme god Jupiter and the Theban princess Semele. While all other Thebans welcome the new cult, Pentheus proves to be sceptical and resistant, an attitude that leads to his doom. (For further discussion of setting and mythological background, see Intro. §4). The set text can be divided into the following sections: (i) Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus (511–26); (ii) Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus (527–71); (iii) The Captive Acoetes and His Tale (572–691); (iv) Pentheus' Gruesome Demise (692–733).

5.3.3: 3. Commentary is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.3.1: 511–26 Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus

This brief but complex section includes: (i) transition from the previous story, the tale of Narcissus, whose fate the seer Tiresias unerringly foretold; (ii) introduction of the next character destined for doom on Thebes' killing fields: the young king Pentheus, the only one left to scorn Tiresias; (iii) Tiresias' anticipation of events to come: the clash between Pentheus and Bacchus (in essence also an encapsulation of Euripides' tragedy *Bacchae*).

The narrative speeds along here: Tiresias' prediction of Bacchus' arrival and its fulfilment come in quick succession. This initial briskness stands in contrast to the elements of 'slow-mo' that Ovid will soon introduce (and which make up the lion's share of the set text): the speeches of Pentheus and of Acoetes. In Euripides' *Bacchae*, the verbal clash between Pentheus and Tiresias does not occur until some way into the drama.

511–12 cognita … ingens. These two lines form the pivot from the tale of Narcissus (just concluded) to the story of Pentheus (about to start). Ovid opts for straightforward syntax: we get two main verbs, *attulerat* and *erat*, linked by the *-que* attached to *nomen*. The design, revolving around the synonyms *famam* ~ *nomen* and *vati* ~ *auguris* (on which more below), is intricate: *meritam … famam ‹› nomen … ingens* form a *chiasmus; and *vati attulerat ‹› erat auguris* are also arranged chiastically.

A regular Latin idiom is the use of the perfect passive participle to modify a (concrete) noun where English would have, in place of the participle, an abstract noun and the preposition 'of'. Examples include *post transactam fabulam* ('after the play having been performed' = 'after the performance of the play', Plaut. *Cas*. 84), and *nuntiata clades* ('the disaster having been reported' = 'the news of the disaster', Liv. 10.4). In similar fashion here the qualification of the noun ***res*** by ***cognita*** (perf. pass. part. of *cognoscere*, 'get to know' or, in the perfect, simply 'know') yields the sense 'knowledge of the matter'.

The 'matter' referred to is the story of Narcissus and, more specifically, the fulfilment of Tiresias' prophecy concerning the boy's fate. As such it harks back to the beginning of that episode: *enixa est utero pulcherrima pleno | infantem nymphe, iam tunc qui posset amari, | Narcissumque vocat. de quo consultus, an esset | tempora maturae visurus longa senectae, | fatidicus vates 'si se non noverit' inquit. | vana diu visa est vox auguris: exitus illam | resque probat letique genus novitasque furoris.* ('The beautiful nymph [sc. Liriope, mother of Narcissus] brought forth from her full womb an infant loveable even then [sc. at its birth] and named him Narcissus. When consulted about him, as to whether he would live a long time and see a ripe old age, the fate-speaking prophet [sc. Tiresias] replied: "If he shall not know himself". For a long time the prophet's utterance seemed an empty one, but the boy's demise proved it true — the event, the manner of his death, the strangeness of his passion', 3.344–50). Ovid's linking of the two episodes in this manner raises an interesting question: 'Will knowing *about* (Tiresias knowing about) Narcissus help anyone else (know themselves)? We read on (but will it help … *anyone*?)'. (John Henderson).

meritam … famam (notice the 'framing' arrangement) is the direct object of *attulerat*; the indirect object is ***vati***, a 3rd declension noun, referring to Tiresias. A *vates* was originally a divinely inspired prophet (the meaning to the fore here); but the word also came to be used in the Augustan period as the designation of choice for poets (as opposed to the Greek loanword *poeta*), thereby enhancing the intrinsic metapoetic potential of prophet figures in epic narrative.

John Henderson points to an interesting twist here: 'with *famam* Ovid uses this bridge between narrative layers and segments to sound the grand theme that epic poetry confers renown (see Hardie 2012) — usually, upon characters, who make a name for themselves simply by being named in their epic, but here (by surprise: Echo and Narcissus have been headlining, but they just leave backing *vox* and flower, disembodying into white leaves) instead upon the role of the teller in the story he foretold, and as well upon his role as stand-in mouthpiece for the bard Ovid. By implication, scorning Pentheus is scorning not just Bacchus but the power of epic, and blindly slighting the shape-shifting … Ovid. And reading (this) epic is to enter the laboratory of storytelling'.

The poetic adjective *Achais -idos* (f.), meaning 'Greek', is a Greek loan word (Ἀχαιΐς -ΐδος). It is found in Greek poetry from Homeric epic (*Il*. 1.254 etc.) onwards, but does not occur in extant Latin literature before Ovid (who has it again at *Met*. 5.306 and 15.293). *Achais* imparts a more elevated — and more epic — tone than would a more conventional adjective (such as *Graecus, -a, -um*). 'Achaia' (the Latin spelling, or *version*, through linguistic metamorphosis) was strictly speaking a region of the Peloponnese, but such synecdochical usage (one region of Greece stands for the whole) is widespread in epic poetry. In Ovid's day, moreover, 'Achaia' had currency as the name of the Roman province that encompassed all of southern Greece (including the entire Peloponnese and regions immediately to the north of the Gulf of Corinth; the remaining areas comprised the province 'Macedonia'). Such play on linguistic and geopolitical registers occurs throughout the poem and feeds into Ovid's trans-cultural

and imperialist poetics: overall, the *Metamorphoses* traces the transition of history and empire from Greece to Rome, with Rome (and its empire) hyperbolically conceived as tantamount to the world (see Intro. §3c). Here the geographical specification simultaneously enhances and delimits Tiresias' fame: it knew no bounds … among the cities of *Greece*. The phrase ***per Achaidas urbes*** should probably be taken **apo koinou* with (i) *cognita res*, (ii) *famam … attulerat*, and (iii) *nomen erat … ingens*. It also harks back to the opening of the Narcissus episode: *Ille [sc. Tiresias] per Aonias fama celeberrimus urbes | inreprehensa dabat populo responsa petenti* ['He, renowned throughout the cities of Boeotia, gave faultless prophecies to those seeking them', 3.339–40]. Put differently, Tiresias' fame grows as Ovid's narrative unfolds: whereas it was limited to Boeotia at the beginning of the Narcissus episode, at the beginning of the Pentheus episode it has reached all of Greece.

nomen has the pregnant sense of 'famous name', 'renown', 'celebrity'; ***ingens*** makes clear that Tiresias has become the Ovidian equivalent of a Hollywood A-lister thanks to his unerring soothsaying. The genitive ***auguris***, which depends on *nomen*, is used loosely as a synonym for *vates* in the previous verse. In republican and early-imperial Rome, an augur was a special type of religious functionary. Unlike the *vates* who relied on divine inspiration, an augur divined divine will (and especially their plans for the future) from signs observed in nature, often the flight- and eating-patterns of birds. But poets often used such terms more or less interchangeably in the general sense of 'soothsayer' (L-S s.v. *augur* ii), as here. Technically speaking, *vates* is the more appropriate label: the blind Tiresias could hardly base his predictions on the inspection of *empirical* signs; his access to the divine sphere — and hence inspired knowledge of the future, a prerogative of the gods — operates via a *metaphysical* connection. But with *augur* Ovid, in addition to introducing variety into his religious nomenclature, invokes a specific priesthood of Roman civic religion. By such subtle effects, Rome's presence is felt throughout the *Metamorphoses*, even though the city itself will not materialize until Book 14.

513–16 spernit … obicit. The new story starts rancorously, with the verbs *spernit*, *ridet* and *obicit* sounding a derisive note. The shared subject of these verbs needs to be assembled from bits and pieces littered across lines 513–14: *Echionides*, (ex *omnibus*) *unus*, *contemptor superum*, and *Pentheus*. Our understanding of the syntax evolves as we read along. The patronymic *Echionides* ('son of Echion') could be a viable subject and seems to suffice until we reach *ex omnibus unus*, at which point it becomes preferable to take *Echionides* as standing in apposition ('a single individual, the son of Echion …'). Two more appositional expressions follow in the subsequent line: the general attribution *contemptor superum* and the proper name *Pentheus*. Ovid thus introduces his new protagonist, the young king of Thebes, through a complex sequence of designations: we first get his lineage (he is the son of Echion), then learn that he stands apart from everyone concerning Tiresias (*ex omnibus unus*) and that he is a blasphemer (*contemptor superum*); and finally we get the actual name (*Pentheus*). Reshuffled, we get: 'A single individual, Pentheus, the son of Echion, a blasphemer of the gods, still holds him in contempt …' This build-up has an ominous effect, not merely introducing Pentheus as the principal character (the next to stamp his name on epic, to star in Ovid), but also adumbrating his downfall (the flipside of the *fama* factory; but infamy's still a form of fame). Those who challenge the gods tend to meet a sticky end in the *Metamorphoses* (513–14 n.); the 'piecemeal' fashion in which Ovid introduces Pentheus here may subtly anticipate his physical disintegration at the end, where he gets torn limb from limb.

Note the placement of the verbs within a *tricolon arrangement: *spernit* comes at the beginning of line and clause; *ridet* comes at the end of line and in the middle of its clause; *obicit* comes at the beginning of the line and the end of the clause — and is further set off by enjambment and the abrupt *diaeresis after the first foot. The effect is to maintain focus upon Pentheus' actions with deliberate variation. It should be noted that Narcissus too 'scorned' (Echo: 393 *spreta*) — but Pentheus ups the ante, to make a complete hatchet job of it, and of himself.

513–14 spernit … Pentheus. The conjunction ***tamen*** gives the preceding two lines a concessive force ('Even though the story of Narcissus … Pentheus nevertheless …'). ***Echionides*** is a patronymic, which identifies an individual by a male ancestor (often his father). The patronymic is characteristic of ancient epic language, both Greek and Latin (which borrowed it from Greek). It is found from the very first line of Western literature (Hom. *Il.* 1.1 'Sing, Muse, of the wrath of *Peleus' son* [Πηληϊάδεω] Achilles …') onwards. Here the patronymic identifies Pentheus as son of Echion, one of the surviving Spartoi (Σπαρτοί, the 'Sown-men'); his mother was Agave, one of the four daughters of Cadmus and Harmonia (see Intro. §4). The reference to Echion points back to the beginning of Book 3, where Ovid tells the story of the foundation of Thebes. Cadmus had been ordered by his father Agenor, king of Phoenicia, to search for his sister Europa (who had been abducted by Jupiter in the form of a bull). Since finding Europa proved impossible, and Agenor had forbidden his son to return without her, Cadmus was in effect forced into exile. He thus resolved to found a new city, and at length arrived at the location in Boeotia where the Delphic oracle had indicated he should do

so. Thereupon he sent his comrades to fetch water, only to have them slaughtered by the dragon who dwelt in the nearby spring. Cadmus took his revenge by slaying the beast and was thereupon instructed by an anonymous voice from the sky to sow its teeth into the ground. The Spartoi soon rose from the earth in great number, but promptly began to slay each other through bloody fratricide, until only five remained. Cadmus went on to found Thebes with these five survivors, of whom Echion alone is mentioned by name (3.126 *quorum fuit unus Echion* — 'one of them was Echion'). With these balancing references to Echion, Ovid imparts a sense of continuity and cohesion, while affirming the importance of lineage and Thebes' (partial) autochthonous origins for his Theban narrative. At the same time, such references keep in view the peculiar 'Theban condition' — its inhabitants' seemingly genetic predisposition to familial strife, which repeatedly brings the city to disaster. Pentheus will make much of the city's serpentine ancestry in his upcoming speech. Indeed, 'Echion' derives from *echis* (ἔχις), the Greek term for 'viper', so Pentheus is quite literally 'serpent spawn' or, taking more liberties, 'viper-king' — which goes some way to explaining his bizarre praise of the serpent of Mars later on in the tale (543–48).

In ***ex omnibus unus*** the preposition is used partitively: out of all those who heard of Tiresias' correct prediction of Narcissus' fate only a single individual (still) holds him in contempt. Speaking more broadly, the play of 'one versus many' (and related motifs) recurs throughout the episode: 544 (Pentheus on the dragon of Mars) … *qui multos perdidit unus* …; 564–65 (Pentheus' family trying to dissuade him from fighting Bacchus) *hunc avus, hunc Athamas, hunc cetera turba suorum | corripiunt dictis frustraque inhibere laborant*; 617–20 (Acoetes shouted down by his crew) *hoc [probant] omnes alii* …; 646 (Acoetes being beset by his crew) *increpor a cunctis* …; 647–48 (Aethalion mocking Acoetes after his refusal to stay at the helm) '*te scilicet omnis in uno | nostra salus posita est*'; 654–55 (Bacchus in disguise pleading with the sailors) *quae gloria vestra est, | si puerum iuvenes, si multi fallitis unum?*; 687–88 (Acoetes being the sole member of the crew not turned into a dolphin) *de modo viginti … | solus restabam* …; 715–16 (the throng of Bacchants attacking Pentheus) *ruit omnis in unum | turba furens* … The respective merits of the stances of individual and crowd fluctuate over the course of the narrative. At the outset, the individual (Pentheus) is misguided — both in scorning Tiresias and in refusing to permit the worship of Bacchus. In Acoetes' tale, the opposite case arises: the ship's crew is manifestly criminal and sacrilegious (an *impia turba*, 629) in its showdown with Acoetes, who alone manifests religious scruples. The final scene involves a more ambiguous situation: Pentheus, facing imminent dismemberment, at last sees the error of his ways — but too late: the divinely deranged crowd tears him into pieces, though with 'blasphemous hands' (*manibus … nefandis*, 731). John Henderson adds that 'Ovid, in typical fashion, will show just how wooden his build-up for Pentheus is when he nevertheless adds (i) further unbelievers (batty Theban *women*, 4.1–4), and then (ii) the "sole" surviving Cadmeid to reject Bacchus' godhood (Acrisius of Argos, 4.607–10), which kick-starts the next saga via the breathtakingly *fake* "bridge", as Acrisius doesn't believe in Perseus' claim to be son of Jupiter *either*…! (see 559–61 n.)'.

The form ***superum*** is syncopated gen. pl. of *superi*, 'the gods above'; it is an objective genitive, dependent on ***contemptor***. The expression calls to mind the description of Mezentius as *contemptor divum* at *Aen*. 7.648, and further reminiscences of this Virgilian figure occur later in the set text (582–83, 623–25 nn.). Speaking more broadly, mortals defying gods is a prominent theme in the early books of the *Metamorphoses*, where an entire human race with blasphemous proclivities comes into being from the blood of giants slain while hubristically attacking the seat of the gods on Mount Olympus (*Met*. 1.157–62). The first representative of this particular race treated in the narrative is the vicious tyrant Lycaon, who tests Jupiter's divinity by serving him a meal of human flesh and then attempting to murder him; it is this conduct that convinces Jupiter to eradicate the entire race of human beings (save the pious couple Deucalion and Pyrrha) in a flood of biblical proportions. It is, moreover, hardly coincidental that the giants, the human race fashioned by the Earth out of their blood, and Pentheus (via his descent from Echion) are all autochthonous, i.e. 'born from the earth': they are genetically predisposed (as it were) to challenge the *superi* ('gods above'). Indeed, in the choral ode at Eur. *Bacch*. 538–44, Echion is actually said to be one of the giants who opposed the gods and Pentheus, his son, quite literally 'born from a dragon'. In any event, *contemptores superum* almost invariably come to a bad end, so the phrase imparts a sense of foreboding: Pentheus' fate, it is safe to assume, won't be a happy one. The fact that Pentheus is a king — and as such acts as a privileged representative of Theban society towards the divine sphere — exacerbates his transgression, while creating a civic crisis (see Additional Information after 531–63 n.); but on the whole, Ovid follows Euripides in presenting Pentheus' tale as a personal and familial tragedy rather than one of Theban society at large.

514–15 praesagaque … senis. The *-que* after *praesaga* links *spernit* and *ridet*. ***senis*** (gen. sing. of *senex*, 'old man') focalises Tiresias *both* as Pentheus mis-sees him as an 'old woffler doom-monger' *and* as we are to recognize him, as 'wizened voice of authority' (see 516–18 n.). Yes, it's the old old story, of tradition — don't fight it! ***praesaga … verba*** speaks both to his prophecy regarding Narcissus and to his prophetic powers more generally (on which see Intro. §5b-i).

515–16 tenebrasque … obicit. The *-que* after *tenebras* links *ridet* and *obicit*, the *et* links *tenebras* and *cladem*. Notice that *tenebras* and *cladem lucis ademptae* are virtually synonymous, both referring (in poetic language) to Tiresias' blindness, and so producing a 'theme-and-variation' effect (cf. 646 with n.), which adds emphasis. We also have a mild instance of **hysteron proteron* insofar as *tenebras* indicates the condition or effect, whereas *cladem lucis ademptae* refers to the moment of deprivation or cause. The circumstances of the blinding were recounted at 3.316–38 (see Intro. §5b-i; the key lines are also cited below). ***lucis ademptae*** is genitive of apposition (AG §343d) with ***cladem***: *lucis* speaks to vision (OLD s.v. 8), *ademptae* (perf. pass. part. of *adimo*) to its loss. ***obicit***, here in the sense of 'to cite (before an opponent as a ground for condemnation)' (OLD s.v. 10), presupposes an indirect object in the dative such as *ei*, which is easily supplied, and implies that Tiresias is in the physical presence of Pentheus. This is indeed the case, as the following makes clear, but constitutes a rather sudden and unmediated narrative turn.

516–18 ille … videres. The main clause of this segment outside the direct speech consists of *ille* (subject) and *ait* (verb), with *movens* being a circumstantial participle agreeing with *ille* and governing the accusative object *albentia tempora* (Tiresias is shaking his head indignantly as he speaks). ***albentia*** is present participle of *albeo*, modifying *tempora*, to which it stands in predicative position: 'the temples white with …' rather than 'the white temples'. This distinction is important, as otherwise you'll be hard put to fit in ***canis***, an instrumental ablative governed by *albentia*; it comes from *cani*, *-orum* (m. pl.), strictly meaning 'grey hair', but here used metonymically in the sense 'old age'. Tiresias' visible signs of old age call to mind the reverence due to the elderly (in ancient as in modern thought), thereby underscoring Pentheus' rude conduct. The seer ingeniously reacts to Pentheus' contempt by reversing the terms of the latter's mockery. As with his foretelling of Narcissus' fate (see 511–12 n.), so here Tiresias utters a *prima facie* counterintuitive statement that reconceives an apparent misfortune (the loss of sight) as a blessing. The sense is that Pentheus would be better off if he too were blind because his decision to spy on the Bacchic rites will prove fatal. In broader thematic terms, Ovid subtly announces here another (fatal) case of illicit gazing, reprising the motif from the tale of Actaeon earlier in Book 3. Naturally the whole passage re-echoes with Narcissus' brand of dysopia too — and his failure to *listen*.

Both ***esses*** and ***fieres*** are 2nd pers. sing. imperfect subjunctives (from *sum* and *fio*, respectively), forming a riddling present counterfactual condition (AG §517). We first get the apodosis (the exclamatory *quam felix esses*), then the protasis (*si … fieres*). Why Pentheus would be exceedingly fortunate (*quam felix*) if he, too, were blind is explained above.

The adjective ***orbus*** can take either an ablative or a genitive, as here with ***luminis huius***, to indicate the thing of which one is deprived or bereft (cf. AG §349a). In post-classical Latin *orbus* by itself (i.e. without the genitive attribute *luminis* vel sim.) came to mean 'blind': see OLD s.v. 6, with reference to Apul. *Met*. 5.9, where *Fortuna* is called *orba et saeva et iniqua* ('blind, savage, and unjust'). *lumen* signifies 'eyesight' here; it has the same sense in the prelude at 3.336–38 *at pater omnipotens … pro lumine adempto | scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore* ('But the all-powerful father granted [Tiresias] knowledge of things to come in compensation for his loss of sight and lessened [Juno's] punishment by this honour'). In essence, we have an exchange of one type of vision ('eye-sight') for another ('fore-sight'), which explains Tiresias' use of the demonstrative pronoun *huius*. He may have lost one particular type of *lumen* (the use of his eyes), but he has gained another kind in recompense, i.e. mental il-*lumin*-ation/ understanding. See?

Tiresias completes the counterfactual condition with a negative result clause, ***ne Bacchica sacra videres***. The adjective *Bacchicus* is one of several name-based adjectives derived from *Bacchus*; others include *Baccheus*, *Bacchius*, and *Bacheius*. The form *Bacchicus* is found only three times before Ovid in extant Latin, with the first two occurrences coming from fragments of early tragedies (Naevius' *Lycurgus* and Ennius' *Athamas*). Though a small sample size, this suggests that Ovid may have employed it here as having tragic affiliations. *Bacchica sacra* refers to rites performed by (usually frenzied and/ or inebriated) worshippers in honour of Bacchus; the particular allusion here is to the trieterica orgia, nocturnal rites held by the Thebans every third year on Mount Cithaeron. The adjective *sacer* ('consecrated to a deity', 'divine') and the associated noun *sacra* ('religious rites') are key terms that recur throughout the set text: 530 *ignota ad sacra*; 558 (Pentheus speaking) *commenta … sacra*; 574 *famulum … sacrorum*; 580–81 (Pentheus addressing Acoetes) *ede … | morisque novi cur sacra frequentes*; 621–22 (Acoetes with reference to Bacchus) *non tamen hanc sacro violari pondere pinum | perpetiar*; 690–91 (the end of Acoetes' tale) *delatus in illam | accessi sacris Baccheaque sacra frequento*; 702 *electus facienda ad sacra Cithaeron*; 710–11 *hic oculis illum cernentem sacra profanis | prima videt …*; 732–33 *talibus exemplis monitae nova sacra frequentant | turaque dant sanctasque colunt Ismenides aras*. The emphasis is on the recognition of the new rites as authentic, on recognizing a divinity in human guise, and on joining up when Bacchus comes along.

Additional Information: Feldherr (1997, 47) points out that the theme of sacrifice pervades Book 3 and links the story of Pentheus with the foundation of the city at the book's opening: 'Images of sacrifice feature in the book's first and last episodes and so provide a thematic frame uniting the death of Pentheus with the foundation of Thebes. After the miraculous cow has led the followers of Cadmus to the site of Thebes, the first act of the settlers is to prepare a sacrifice. It is while collecting water for libations that the colonists encounter the dragon who kills them … At the book's conclusion not only can the dismemberment of Pentheus be compared to a Bacchic *sparagmos*, but the poem's final couplet treats his death as a warning to convince the women of Thebes "to attend the new *sacra*, to give incense, and to cultivate the sacred altars". In both cases the sacrifice unites its participants as members of a new community whose existence the rites themselves confirm. Thus the initial sacrifice can be clearly connected with the rituals of founding the city of Thebes itself, while the final lines make clear that it is as members of the Theban state (*Ismenides*) that the women will participate in Bacchic rites'. Feldherr goes on to link this concern with sacrifice in Ovid's Theban history to the theories of the French cultural historian René Girard, who sees as the primary purpose of sacrifice not so much, or not only, communication with the gods, as the regulation of cyclical violence arising within any community as a result of competition. Naturally, any variety of human, and therefore corrupted, sacrifice must *also* taint the foundation it may bless — with tragedy (Zeitlin 1965).

519–23 namque … sorores. Tiresias anticipates the arrival of Bacchus in 519–20 and then goes on to spell out with a conditional sequence what will happen to Pentheus if he fails to honour the new god. The two parts of the sentence are loosely linked by the connecting relative *quem* (= *et eum*) at the beginning of line 521. The main verb of the first half is *aderit*; the main verbs of the second half are *spargere* and *foedabis*.

519. The archetype of *namque dies aderit* is the famous Homeric expression ἔσσεται ἦμαρ ὅτ' ἄν … ('the day shall come when …', Hom. Il. 4.164). ***namque*** ('for indeed', 'for truly') is 'an emphatic confirmative particle, a strengthened *nam*, closely resembling that particle in its uses, but introducing the reason or explanation with more assurance' (L-S s.v.). The antecedent of the relative pronoun ***quam*** is ***dies***, whose gender can be either masculine or feminine: when used of a fixed or appointed day, as here, it is feminine (AG §97a). In terms of syntax, *quam* functions both as the accusative object of *auguror* and as the subject accusative of the indirect statement introduced by *auguror* (the infinitive being *esse*). The verb ***auguror*** is a deponent version of the more usual *auguro*, with no difference in sense. The adverb *procul* is the predicate of *quam*: '… which, I foretell, is not far off'.

520 qua … Liber. The antecedent of ***qua*** (an ablative of time) is again *dies*. Tiresias' use of the subjunctive ***veniat*** could be a modest touch reflecting the seer's religious scruples (i.e. he opts for a potential subjunctive rather than future indicative), but that would be hard to square with the forcefulness of the preceding *namque dies aderit*. It may rather be that the present subjunctive (which in any case carries an intrinsic future force) was regular to express a solid future assumption in a temporal clause determining an antecedent, as here: cf. Liv. 8.7.7 *dum dies ista venit qua … exercitus moveatis* ('until that day comes on which you move the army'). Some scholars have argued for the existence of a 'prospective' or 'anticipatory' subjunctive in Latin (as in Greek), though the small number of examples adduced, and the fact that they are restricted to subordinate clauses, leaves the matter uncertain.

The god Bacchus (Greek Dionysus) is variously referred to in Latin epic: ***Liber*** is one of his several poetic designations. Originally an Italian fertility god, Liber (the name signifies 'free') came to be associated with Bacchus despite the apparent lack of any original association with wine (see Bömer on Ov. Fast. 3.512). ***novus*** can mean 'new', but also 'strange' (OLD s.v. 2). With respect to the former sense, Liber/ Bacchus is the most recent addition to the divine pantheon (see Intro. §5b-iii), as well as 'the big new thing' in Book 3. With respect to the latter sense, he is a god with an unusual pedigree: while partially of Theban origin — a little earlier in the poem Ovid recounts his sensational double birth arising from the union of Jupiter and Cadmus' daughter Semele (3.310– 15; see Intro. §5b-iii) — he returns to his native city from the East as a 'newcomer'. The themes of unfamiliarity, newness, and arrival from foreign parts recur throughout the episode, as Bacchus establishes his new cult against the resistance of his cousin Pentheus (the son of Cadmus' daughter Agave): 530 *ignota … sacra*; 558 *commentaque sacra*; 561 *advena*; 581 *moris … novi … sacra*; 732 *nova sacra*. Speaking more broadly, the adjective *novus* is a keynote of the whole poem, which begins with *in nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas* | *corpora* ('my mind carries me to tell of forms changed into new bodies, 1.1–2); newness is of

course intrinsic to metamorphosis, and there is a strong hint of literary novelty in this declaration as well. In Roman culture more generally, though, 'newness' was often seen as threatening venerated tradition, so that the connotations of *novus* were decidedly ambivalent. *res novae* meant 'revolution', and this is precisely what Ovid's Pentheus fears (as indeed does Euripides' Pentheus, who speaks of νεοχμὰ … κακά [literally 'new evils', often translated 'revolution'] at *Bacch*. 216).

The name-based adjective *Semeleius, -a, -um* is derived from *Semele* (Σεμέλη), the mother of Bacchus. The use of a name-based adjective in agreement with its noun rather than noun + genitive, which we would expect in prose, is typical of epic language; the usage with *proles* is formulaic: earlier in the poem, Ovid has *Clymeneia proles* (of Phaethon, son of Clymene, 2.19) and *proles Stheneleia* (of Cycnus, son of Sthenelus, 2.367); later in the set text we will see *proles Mavortia* (of the Spartoi, 3.531). Note that *Semeleia* scans ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ ⏑, with the third 'e' long as representing the long Greek vowel 'êta' (η).

521–23 quem … sorores. The relative pronoun ***quem*** (referring back to *Liber*, the last word of the previous line) is a 'connecting relative' (equivalent to *et eum*; cf. AG §303) and accusative object of the verb of the *nisi*-clause, i.e. *fueris dignatus*. Tiresias here uses a 'future more vivid' conditional sequence (AG §516.1), with future perfect in the protasis (*fueris dignatus*) and future in the apodosis: *spargêre* (= *spargêris*, i.e. 2nd pers. sing. fut. indic. pass.: 'you will be scattered') and *foedabis*.

The protasis of the condition, i.e. the *nisi*-clause, is less complicated than it might seem at first glance. Its verb is the future perfect periphrastic ***fueris dignatus***, from the deponent *dignor*. (The regular form for the future perfect as given in grammars would be *dignatus eris*, i.e. perf. pass. part. + a future form of *sum*; alternatively, Latin writers could use the future *perfect* form of *sum*, as Ovid does here). *dignor*, a transitive verb, is constructed with its own object in the accusative and an objective ablative (connected with the adjective *dignus* that the verb implies): 'to deem *x* (acc.) worthy of *y* (abl.)'. ***templorum*** is a genitive of definition with ***honore***: 'the honour of temples' is concrete advice; Tiresias is suggesting the building of such to honour Bacchus.

The indeclinable ***mille*** modifies ***locis*** (ablative of place). ***lacer***, which prefigures 722: *lacerata est* [sc. *manus*], stands in predicative position to the subject of the sentence (i.e. you): 'torn to pieces, you will be scattered …' Several stylistic touches turn this into a particularly macabre visualization of Pentheus' gruesome end. The *hyperbaton *mille … locis* underscores the shocking hyperbole of *mille*, which anticipates the 'vehicle' of the simile used by Ovid to cap the account of Pentheus being ripped to pieces: a tree shedding its leaves in autumn (729–31). As Keith (2002, 267) points out, the sound of the Latin *spargere* recalls the Greek technical term for ritual dismemberment of the Bacchic kind, i.e. *sparagmos*. Listen. Can you already hear the serpent spawn (513–14 n.) being torn to bits and sprayed across *mille locis s-anguine s-ilvas*?

Gore (***sanguine***) is a recurrent motif of the Pentheus episode. In fact, the set text is among the most 'gore-nographic' portions of the *Metamorphoses*, offering the ancient epic equivalent of a Hollywood splatter-film. The verb ***foedabis*** ('you shall defile/ pollute'), made conspicuous by enjambment, contributes to the effect: it rhetorically turns the victim of dismemberment into the perpetrator of a religious offence, a prospect that Tiresias seems to dwell on with a measure of spondaic foreboding (*foedabis* scans — — —). After ***silvas***, we get two more alarming accusative objects of *foedabis*: his mother Agave (***matrem***) and maternal aunts Autonoe and Ino (***matris sorores***), who, as the unwitting perpetrators of his dismemberment, will be splattered with their *proles'* blood; his grim death will thus not only befoul the natural world, it will also pollute — both metaphorically and literally — kinship relations. The recurrence of the same word in different cases (here *mater*, which occurs first in the accusative, *matrem*, then the genitive, *matris*) is called *polyptoton. Here it underscores the primal horror of Pentheus' fate: he is going to be torn apart by relatives normally associated with love, tenderness and nurturing: his mother and maternal aunts.

Note that, in addition to polyptoton, *matrem* and *matris sorores* are linked by correlating *-que … -que*. This correlating usage (in which the first *-que* is, strictly speaking, redundant) is a mannerism of elevated epic language that is not found in normal prose usage. It is generally used to connect a pair of words or expressions that are parallel in form and/or sense, often terms designating family relations, as here. The device goes back to Ennius, who probably introduced *-que … -que* in imitation of Homeric τε … τε. It is metrically convenient, since the particle *-que* scans short (AG §604a.1), and so is particularly frequent at the close of the verse. Further occurrences of correlating *-que … -que* in the set text can be found at 529, 550, 558, 609, 618, 645.

524. Tiresias' solemn one-word declaration ***eveniet*** ('It shall come to pass!') is abrupt and unequivocal, dispensing with the conditionality of his earlier formulation. Metre underscores the dramatic exclamation: *eveniet* scans as a choriamb (— ⏑ ⏑ —), and is marked off by a sharp trithemimeral *caesura, which pause enables the force of the utterance fully to sink in. *eveniet* is followed by additional future indicatives (*dignabere, quereris*) that reinforce the sense of certainty.

Hard on the heels of *spargere* (522), we have another alternative 2nd pers. sing. fut. indic. pass. form in ***dignabere*** (i.e. equivalent to *dignaberis*). The word ***numen*** is etymologically connected to *nuto* (‘nod’), and speaks to divine will (so, for example Cicero speaks of *numen et vim deorum*, ‘the will and power of the gods’, *Nat. D.* 2.95). Over time, however, it came to be used as a virtual synonym of *deus* (‘god’), and that is the sense of the term here, as again at 560.

525. The verb ***quereris*** (2nd pers. sing. fut. indic. pass. of the deponent *queror*, ‘to lament’) governs an indirect statement with ***me*** as subject accusative and ***vidisse*** as infinitive. With ***sub his tenebris*** (‘in this darkness’, referring to blindness), Tiresias picks up (echoes) the idiom of Pentheus’ taunt in 515–16 (*tenebrasque et cladem lucis ademptae* | *obicit*): the deictic adjective *his* is an explicit gesture back to it. The ability to see (*vidisse*) that Tiresias mentions here is his prophetic vision: he ominously declares that Pentheus will lament that he, the seer, has seen ‘only too well’ (*nimium*, literally ‘excessively, too much’).

526 talia … natus. The subject of the clause is Pentheus, designated ***Echione natus***, a poeticism combining the past participle of *nascor* and an ablative of origin without a preposition (AG §403a): ‘born of (i.e. son of) Echion’. It is equivalent to the patronymic *Echionides* used earlier (513 with n.). The two references to Pentheus by way of his father’s name (and hence his chthonic origins as a descendant of the serpent of Mars) provide a fitting frame for the opening encounter between the prophet and the king.

The present tense of the circumstantial participle ***dicentem***, which modifies an implied *eum* (sc. Tiresias), indicates that the action of the participle and the main verb ***proturbat*** are contemporaneous. Put differently, Pentheus rudely pushes Tiresias away while he is still speaking, thereby supplementing the verbal taunts of 514–16 with physical abuse.

> Additional Information: Ovid uses the verb *proturbat* only twice in the entire poem, here and at 3.80 with reference to the dragon of Mars (*obstantis proturbat pectore silvas*, ‘he sweeps down with his breast the trees in his path’). This is part of a broader strategy of using lexical and thematic reminiscences, along with other effects, subtly to remind the reader of Pentheus’ serpentine lineage. You might look for sibilant hissing in his diction (e.g. 543–45 with n.); an inclination towards meteoric anger (cf. 3.72 where *solitas … iras* identifies anger as a hallmark of the dragon’s mental disposition); fearful, flashing eyes that express that anger (577–78 with n.). More subtly, Ovid unleashes a pair of similes in which the serpent and Pentheus are likened to rivers (568–71 n.).

5.3.3.1: 511–26 Tiresias’ Warning to Pentheus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.3.3.2: 527–71 Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus

527–30 dicta … feruntur. After the opening confrontation between Pentheus and Tiresias, designed to set the scene, these four transitional verses are all action. The syntax is paratactic throughout, with barely a whiff of subordination: *sequitur, aguntur, adest, fremunt, ruit, feruntur* — all are (indicative) verbs of main clauses; the whiff is the participle *mixtae*. Ovid manages to generate a sense of the spirit of the Bacchic revelry he is depicting by such touches as the polysyndetic profusion of *-que* and the matching choriambic openings of 528 (*Liber adest*) and 529 (*turba ruit*).

527. The initial *dicta fides sequitur* is a variation on *verba fides sequitur* at *Fast*. 1.359. In both cases ***fides*** means 'proof, confirmation' (OLD s.v. 4a). ***dicta*** is n. pl. acc. of the perf. pass. part. of *dicere*: 'the things that have been said', or 'the pronouncement' (the English noun 'dictum' has the same derivation). Note the playful word order: from a formal point of view, *fides* does what Ovid says it does: it 'follows' *dicta* in the verse. Derived from the perfect participle of *respondere* ('answer'), the noun *responsum* can, as here, have the technical sense of 'an answer given by an oracle or soothsayer' (OLD s.v. 2a). Allow yourself a little leeway in translating ***aguntur***: 'actually happen' or even 'come true'.

As at 511, the diction echoes the beginning of the Narcissus episode: *Ille [sc. Tiresias] per Aonias fama celeberrimus urbes | inreprehensa dabat populo responsa petenti; | prima fide vocisque ratae temptamina sumpsit | caerula Liriope* ('he, of stellar renown through all the Boeotian towns, gave unerring responses to the people who sought them; the first to put his trustworthiness and truthful utterance to the test was the river-nymph Liriope', 3.339–42). Tiresias, then, has an impressive 'track record' in prophecy. Ovid is telling you, he should be listened to.

How much time has elapsed from Pentheus thrusting away of the prophesying Tiresias in 526 and the realization of the latter's prophecy as announced in the following verse? Not much, judging from the present tense of *sequitur* and *aguntur*. Likewise, the emphatic *Liber adest* in 528 suggests the arrival of Bacchus is almost instantaneous, as sudden as an epiphany. The 'prologue' has come to an end; hey presto! The action starts.

528. The compact declaration ***Liber adest*** scans as a choriamb (— ⏑ ⏑ —), thus corresponding metrically to and recalling (as well, of course, as beginning to fulfil) the pithy opening of 524 *eveniet*! For *Liber*, designating Bacchus, see 520 n.

The *-que* displaced onto *festis* links the verbs *adest* and *fremunt*. ***festis*** speaks to the festive, even joyful, atmosphere of the proceedings at this point. Onomatopoeic ***ululatibus*** is used here of ritual howling: when on earth, the god Bacchus was said to be accompanied by bands of women called Maenads (Greek μαινάδες or 'raving ones') who danced riotously and emitted frenzied cries (*ululatus*) in his honour. Add to this the clashing of cymbals and the beating of drums (532–34 n.), and it is safe to say that the region is abuzz with the arrival of Bacchus and his raucous entourage. The *alliteration *festis… fremunt* (continued by *feruntur* in 530) nicely reinforces this impression. As Weber (2002, 329) points out, the 'verb *fremere* is something of a *vox propria* for the Bacchic roar; [it] is probably cognate with Greek βρέμειν and, hence, with Dionysus' epithet *Bromius*'. Note that ***agri*** is meant 'locally' here, i.e. the land in the vicinity of Thebes (as opposed to the city itself), but also more broadly the countryside as the characteristic location of Bacchic revelry and the scene for the showdown smithereens.

529 turba ruit. The Theban population rushes out of the city *en masse*, to welcome the new deity and join in the riotous cult activity. Note that the mood-setting verse opening is again choriambic (— ⏑⏑ —), rhythmically echoing the start of the previous line and reinforcing the relationship of cause (*Liber adest*) and effect (*turba ruit*). John Henderson adds: 'Ovid adapts the epic hexameter to mood-set "release inhibitions" — and join (have us one and all join in with) the Bacchic choir (530). Pentheus is to become a text for worshippers to hymn the power of their awesome god for ever after, amen'.

529–30 mixtaeque … feruntur. The *-que* after *mixtae* links *ruit* and *feruntur*. Ovid creates something of a polysyndetic onslaught here, with the following two instances of correlating *-que … -que* linking, in the first instance, ***matres*** and ***nurus*** ('mothers and young married women' or, more specifically, 'mothers and daughters-in-law' being a poetic combination, tantamount to specifying 'women') and, in the second, ***vulgus*** and ***proceres***. The keynote of the sentence is ***mixtae***: under the influence of Bacchus social distinctions collapse. Ovid first focuses on gender (*viris, matres, nurus*), then on socio-economic status (*vulgus, proceres*). Note that the *-que* after *vulgus* scans long by position before the two consonants of the following word.

The life- and culture-changing arrival of the new god inaugurates a hitherto unknown cult, whence the ***ignota … sacra*** to which the Thebans flock (in this sense, *ignota* harks back to 520 and Bacchus/ Liber's attribute *novus*). Passive forms of *fero* frequently have the 'middle' sense 'carry oneself on' (i.e. 'proceed'), as here with ***feruntur***; but there is often a hint of an external as well as

internal impetus. Hence, in contrast to the active *ruit* of the previous line, the passive form suggests that the revellers are carried along in their ecstasy, i.e. have shed part of their rational agency. This is a subtle reminder that Bacchus, like few other divinities, will infiltrate the mind and induce altered states of consciousness — a quasi-metamorphic point that bears on the grim conclusion of the episode.

531–63
Pentheus' Speech

Pentheus attempts to stem the Bacchic 'invasion' of his city — or, rather, the mass exodus of the Theban citizenry to the countryside to partake in the new rites. He launches into a passionate speech that rings the changes on various rhetorical registers. It falls into five parts: (i) Three rhetorical questions, addressed to the citizens of Thebes (531–32 *Quis furor, anguigenae … attonuit mentes*?; 532–37 *aerane tantum … tympana vincant*?; 538–42 *vosne, senes, mirer … vosne, acrior aetas …*?); (ii) Promotion of the dragon of Mars as *exemplum*, interspersed with imperatives (543 *este, precor, memores*; 545 *sumite*; 546 *vincite*; 547–48 *pellite … et … retinete*); (iii) A series of conditions, (counterfactual) wishes, (self-)exhortations, and normative statements (548 *si … vetabant*; 549–50 *utinam … diruerent … sonarent*; 551–52 *essemus … querenda, non celanda foret, … carerent*); (iv) Anticipation of the events to come in the indicative, with reference to Bacchus and himself, with a parenthetical imperative dismissing his audience (553 *a puero Thebae capientur inermi …*; 557 *quem … ego …* (*modo vos absistite*) *cogam*); (v) A final rhetorical question, which Pentheus addresses to himself, in the 3rd person, above all (561 *Penthea terrebit cum totis advena Thebis*?).

Within the literary universe of the *Metamorphoses* the speech clearly fails to achieve its objective. The parenthetical imperative in 557 (*modo vos absistite*) all but admits defeat, as Pentheus has started to realize that he will be in this fight more or less on his own. The speech, then, indirectly chronicles Pentheus' growing isolation from the rest of the citizen body and his desperate and delusional identification with Thebes, culminating in the final Caesarian gesture of speaking of himself in the 3rd person. Not only does Pentheus fail to win over his internal audience, but members of the latter actually endeavour to dissuade him from his intended course of action (as indicated at 564–65). The speech is thus not directly pertinent to the action; Ovid uses it rather to elucidate aspects of Pentheus' character. The literary inspiration for the speech comes from the opening of Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which Pentheus, likewise without success, rebukes Cadmus (accompanied by Tiresias) as he leaves the city to join in the Bacchic rites (everyone else has evidently already left): 'I see … my own grandfather — what a ridiculous sight! — playing the Bacchant, complete with wand! Sir, I am embarrassed by the very sight of you — you old fool. Shake off that ivy! Rid your hands of the thyrsus, grandfather!' (Eur. *Bacch*. 248–54).

Ovid's Pentheus addresses a much larger group: the male citizens of Thebes. The exclusion of women from this expanded group is noteworthy, for two reasons. As Ovid has just pointed out, the followers of Bacchus flooding out of the city are an indiscriminate mixture of all age groups and of both genders, across class boundaries (529–30); if anything, the spotlight is on the women. And in Euripides' *Bacchae*, though the women have already left the city, Pentheus singles out the female population of his city for special attention (215–32, 260–63). As McNamara (2010, 180) notes, the switch in focus contributes to Ovid's re-characterization of Pentheus and introduces a whiff of tragic irony: 'Pentheus' disregard of the female members of his audience parallels his argument … which urges the men to reject femininity in favour of masculinity. He dismisses women at his peril, of course; it is at their hands that he will meet his death (3.708–31)'.

> Additional Information: To understand the extent of the civic crisis created by Pentheus' rift with his fellow Thebans, we must bear in mind that the human world described by Ovid at this point (and found in ancient myth more broadly) consisted of independent city-states, such as Thebes, whose members were bound by shared laws and religious practices. Individual religious activity and differentiated belief were less significant than they are today: it was primarily collectively, as a socio-political unit, that members of city-states interacted with the divine sphere, with leading figures often 'performing' the interaction through collective ritual acts. Hence a major rift between a ruler and the broader citizen body in this domain would constitute a grievous problem — none more grave.

531–32 Quis … mentes? As an interrogative ***quis*** is usually substantival, but is sometimes found as a m. adjective, as here and again at 632 (*quis clamor*?). So *quis* modifies *furor* (on which more below), the subject of the sentence (cf. 3.641). The verb

attonuit is present perfect ('has thunderstruck' your minds) rather than simple past ('did thunderstrike'): the inhabitants are in the thrall of Bacchic possession while Pentheus attempts to reason with them. ***quis furor*** is a question that, as Hardie (1990, 225) points out, Pentheus 'might with more propriety address to himself' (cf. 577–78 with n.). The dramatic query has an epic antecedent at Virg. *Aen*. 5.670, where the young prince Ascanius addresses the flipped-out Trojan women who are trying to set fire to their own fleet with *quis furor iste novus?* ('What strange madness is this?').

References to madness or insanity recur throughout the Pentheus episode, as here with *furor* (again at 641). Other signifiers belonging to the semantic field of madness include *amens* (628), *demens* (641), *furor/ furens* (623, 716), and *insania/ insanus* (536, 670, 711). The various attributions, however, show that madness is in the eyes of the beholder: the terms are applied indiscriminately by Pentheus to describe the conduct of the Maenads (as here), and by the narrator to describe Pentheus. The same is true of the inset tale that follows: the crew accuses Acoetes of madness (641–42), Acoetes the crew. This split reality poses a challenge for readers: we have to make up our own minds as to which of these attributions to accept. Ovid uses additional means to suggest that a given individual is out of his or her mind. In Pentheus' case, he highlights the fact that the Theban king is in thrall to violent emotions, in particular anger (*ira*: 577, 693, 707; *rabies*: 567). In terms of genre, *furor* originally belongs to the world of tragedy — there is no equivalent to the 'constitutional insanity' so characteristic of the tragic stage in the Homeric epics (though Homeric heroes are of course emotionally incontinent, especially when their honour is at stake, and do 'lose it' at times). From 5th-century Athenian tragedy, the phenomenon or theme of 'madness' migrated into epic, not least *Aeneid* 4, which features the tragedy of Dido deranged.

The two vocatives belong to lofty epic diction: ***anguigenae*** is a compound adjective (a composite of *anguis*, 'snake' and *-gena*, 'born from') and ***proles Mavortia*** a poetic formula (520 n.). Taken together they make for a highly evocative address to the citizenry, and one that recalls its legendary origins. The compound *anguigenae* refers back to the dragon of Mars that dwelled at the site of the future city, and speaks to the birth of the Thebans from the serpent's teeth (513–14 n.); an equally appropriate compound is *terrigenae*, 'earth-born' (a composite of *terra*, 'earth' and *-gena*, 'born from'), which Ovid uses at 3.118, when he recounts the birth of the Spartoi. As for *proles Mavortia*, it should probably be taken as roughly synonymous with *anguigenae* ('the offspring of [the dragon of] Mars'), particularly as earlier accounts have Mars sire the dragon: Ovid would then be alluding to such traditions in the manner of a *doctus poeta* ('learned poet'). An alternative might be to understand a reference to the fact that Cadmus, the founder of Thebes, married Harmonia, the daughter of Mars and Venus (*Met*. 3.132–33). For a Roman reader, such references to 'Martian' lineage would call to mind other founding figures who descended from Mars (and, not unlike the Spartoi, also perpetrated fratricide in the course of laying the foundation of a new city): the twins Romulus and Remus, with the former founding Rome after slaying the latter. According to hoary legend, their sire was Mars, who impregnated the Vestal Virgin Ilia. If it is hard to repress Roman analogies here, it will soon become well-nigh impossible (538–40 n.).

532–37 aerane … vincant? Pentheus here launches into a long rhetorical question to rally his Thebans. The main verb is *valent*, which takes three subjects: *aera* (in the participial phrase *aere repulsa*), *tibia* (with the further specification *adunco … cornu*), and *fraudes* (qualified by the adjective *magicae*). Then follows a consecutive *ut*-clause (set up by *tantum*). Its main verb is *vincant*; it takes four subjects: *voces* (qualified by the adjective *femineae*), *insania* (which comes with the participle phrase *mota … vino*), *greges* (qualified by the adjective *obsceni*), and *tympana* (qualified by the adjective *inania*). The accusative object of *vincant* is an implied *vos*, which functions as the antecedent of the relative pronoun *quos*. The verb of the relative clause is *terruerit*; it takes three subjects: *ensis* (qualified by the adjective *bellicus*), *tuba*, and *agmina* (with the further specification *strictis … telis*).

For Pentheus, the situation is tantamount to an invasion, and his language sets conventional terminology of warfare, in which he reckons his Thebans to excel, against the perverse and effeminate (from his point of view) Bacchic incursion:

	Regular warfare	**Bacchants**
Weaponry	*bellicus ensis,* *strictis … telis*	*magicae fraudes,* *insania*
Musical instruments	*tuba*	*aera*, *tibia*, *tympana*, *femineae voces*
Military formation	*agmina*	*obsceni greges*

Pentheus insists that the martial vigour of his compatriots (expressed with the resounding triple *anaphora of *non* in 534–35) ought to dispatch the effeminate and unwarlike Bacchic ‘invaders’. By his obsessive military logic, *ensis* and *tela* ought easily to rout *magicae fraudes* and *insania*, the *tuba* should easily drown out the cacophonous racket produced by Bacchic instruments (on which more below) and female shrieking, and a properly drawn-up army (*agmina*) ought to make short shrift of a disorganized effeminate hord (*obsceni greges*).

532–34 aerane … ut. The adverb ***tantum*** goes with ***valent*** and sets up the ***ut***-clause: ‘Are x, y, and z so powerful that …’

The formulation ***aerane … aere repulsa*** is very similar to Lucr. 2.636 *pulsarent aeribus aera* (‘they clashed bronze upon bronze’), which may have been Ovid’s inspiration (if this isn’t Ennius’ epic resounding through both of them). Here, as often, *aes* (‘copper or bronze’) is used by metonymy for ‘a musical instrument made of bronze’ (cf. 586 *calamus*, 621 *pinus* with nn.). Since *aera* is nom. pl. and *aere* abl. sing., we have ‘bronze (instruments) struck by bronze (instruments)’. The instruments in question (fig. 5) are cymbals, which were used in the worship of Bacchus, along with the Phrygian flute (*tibia*, also mentioned here) and kettledrum (*tympanum*, mentioned at 537). The participle *repulsa* (‘beaten back’) neatly captures the action of the cymbals clashing. The *polyptoton, the enjambment, and the ‘echo’ in *ae-re re-pulsa* help to join in the rhythmic beat of the percussion.

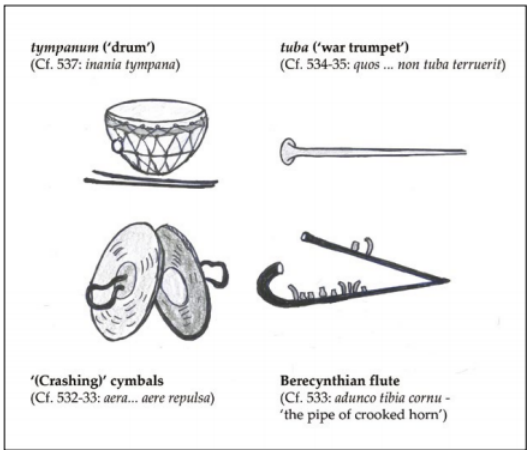


Figure **5.3.3.2.1**: Musical instruments.

The musical instrument indicated by ***aduncо tibia cornu*** is the so-called Phrygian (or Berecynthian) flute, used in the cult of Bacchus/ Dionysus as well as that of the goddess Cybele. *aduncо … cornu* is ablative of description, a frequent construction in Ovid (we see it again at 607): the *tibia* was a straight wind instrument that ended in an upwards-bending horn (which magnified the sound produced).

Literally rendered, ***magicae fraudes*** would yield ‘magical frauds’, but since *fraudes* cancels out the claim to supernatural power implied by *magicae*, a better rendering might be ‘charlatanry’. Pentheus regards any pretension to efficacious magic on the part of Bacchus as fraudulent — hardly surprising given his conviction that the latter is an impostor. The charge recalls a passage in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, where Pentheus comments scornfully on reports that a ‘wizard conjurer’ (γόης ἐπωιδὸς, 234) has arrived from Lydia. The Greek formulation is slightly more ambiguous since it leaves open the possibility that the alleged wizardry is genuine — an ambiguity reinforced by the equivocal focalization (the people whose report Pentheus is reporting most likely believe in the supernatural powers of the stranger, whereas Pentheus clearly does not). Charlatanry was no doubt a common charge levelled against various mystery cults in historical times (as Livy’s account of followers of Bacchus in early 2nd century BCE Italy illustrates: see Intro. §6). The sense of secrecy and, of course, mystery with which these cults shrouded their rites naturally suggested the idea of magic to outside observers.

534–35 quos … telis. In the middle of the long rhetorical question we get, buried in a relative clause, an evocation of the martial spirit of the Thebans, the overpowering of which by Bacchus is the immediate cause of Pentheus’ dismay. Ovid plays with the assonance of *t* (*tuba — terruerit — strictis — telis*), to recreate the sound of the *tuba*. This device is in the tradition of Ennius’ *Annals*, where it was used to more extravagant effect: *at tuba terribili sonitu taratantara dixit* (‘and the trumpet in terrible tones blared “taratantara”’, *Ann.* 140 Sk); *Africa terribili tremit horrida terra tumultu* (‘Africa, a rough land, trembled with a terrible tumult’, *Ann.* 310 Sk).

Note the progression from equipment (***ensis***) to the signal to attack (***tuba***) to the actual onslaught of the enemy in rank and file (***agmina***) with weapons drawn (***strictis … telis***). Pentheus here seems to refer to an occasion in which the Thebans faced an enemy army in regular battle without fear. It is difficult to match this occasion with any event in Thebes' very young history: ancient myth records no such encounter, and Cadmus' battle with the dragon or the civil war among the Spartoi (the military scenarios that defined the foundation of the city) do not fit the bill. ***terruerit*** is perfect subjunctive, an instance of 'subjunctive by attraction' arising from the fact that the relative clause containing *terruerit* is dependent on the subjunctive *vincant* in 537. Relative clauses that depend upon subjunctives and constitute an integral part of the thought will themselves take the subjunctive (AG §593).

536–37 femineae … vincant? Despite the fact that Pentheus blames Bacchus for upsetting the strict separation of male and female, the dominant group participating in Bacchic rites are women. As he makes clear later in his speech (esp. 553–56), Pentheus regards Bacchus as deficient in masculinity: the emphatic use of ***femineae*** calls into question the virility of any man in his entourage.

We might translate ***mota insania vino*** as 'wine-induced madness'. The participle *mota* has the sense 'occasioned' or 'excited' (*OLD* s.v. *moveo*, 16). Bacchus, god of the vine, was of course well known for inducing states of inebriation and ecstasy in his worshippers; Pentheus acknowledges the phenomenon, but deprives it of any religious significance by characterizing it as what we might now term 'substance abuse'. In his view, Bacchus' followers are intoxicated miscreants who conceal their sozzled antics under a veneer of ritual piety.

Pentheus' contempt is clearly expressed in ***obsceni… greges***: the word grex, like English 'herd' is often disparaging when used of human beings. The original sense of *obscenus* seems to have been 'ill omened' (so Ovid has *obscena puppis* at *Her*. 5.119, of the ship that conveyed Helen to Troy), whence it came to mean 'detestable, repulsive', and eventually something like 'obscene' in the modern sense. Sexual license and like transgressions were widely attributed to Bacchic cult practice (see e.g. Eur. *Bacch*. 215–23; Liv. 39.8.7 *stupra promiscua*, 'widespread adultery' with Intro. §6).

The tympanum is a kettledrum (fig. 5), basically a hollow circular frame with parchment stretched over it, held in one hand and struck with the other. The mention of this instrument, for which inanis ('hollow') is clearly an appropriate epithet (but perhaps a double entendre), completes the list of musical instruments associated with the cult (532–33 n.). As McNamara (2010, 179) observes, Pentheus 'begins and ends his list with the actual musical paraphernalia of Bacchic worship (*aera … tibia … tympana*), while he places the more abstract Bacchic associations (*fraudes … femineae voces … insania … obscenique greges*) between these. He thus "buries" his less tangible concerns within the brackets of these "real" items. For these concerns (magic, insanity, obscenity, femininity) are the standard accusations levelled at Dionysiac/ Bacchic rites by those who often represent more traditional authoritative religion'.

The force of ***vincant*** is — for the reader at any rate — metaphoric. The reference in context must be to religious conversion vel sim., but here and elsewhere the use of military language and martial imagery exemplifies Pentheus' martial obsession. Rather more subtly, it could also involve mythographic play with an older version of the tale, predating Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which Pentheus responds to the arrival of Dionysus by leading an army into the mountains, only to be defeated in battle by a troop of Maenads.

538–42 vosne … decebat? The main verb is ***mirer***, a deliberative subjunctive ('should I not wonder at … ?') taking a matched pair of accusative objects in *anaphora: *vosne* (538) and *vosne* (540). The interrogative particles *-ne … -ne* are attached to the words Pentheus wishes to emphasize: the two occurrences of *vos*. Taken literally, Pentheus is pondering which of the two age groups he should marvel at; but, as the alternatives are clearly not mutually exclusive, it is best to understand an implicit adverb such as *magis*: 'should I be [more] bewildered at *you* … or at *you*?' Note that each *vos* is followed by a vocative (*senes; acrior aetas, o iuvenes, propriorque meae*) and a relative clause (*qui … posuistis, sinitis …; quos … decebat*).

538–40 vosne … capi? The first group Pentheus singles out from the citizen body is that of the older men who arrived with Cadmus from Tyre (Ovid may have had his eye on Pentheus' address to Cadmus and Tiresias at Eur. *Bacch*. 248–54: see 531–63 n.). This group cannot have been very large — in fact, it comes as something of a surprise that, excepting Cadmus, it exists at all. At the opening of Book 3, Ovid gave the impression that all of Cadmus' companions were killed (3.46–59), before he went on to found an entirely autochthonous community by means of the dragon's teeth. For the same reason, they are difficult to include among the *anguigenae* or a *proles Mavortia* that Pentheus addresses at the outset of his speech. These inconsistencies begin to make sense if we see them as a deliberate attempt on *Ovid's* part to align the founding of Thebes with the founding of Rome, which also has a discrepant 'double origin': arrivals from elsewhere (Aeneas and his fellow Trojan refugees) and a founding hero

descending from Mars (Romulus). Reminiscences of the Aeneid reinforce the parallel: (i) *longa per aequora vecti*: thematically *Aen*. 1.3 *multum ille et terris iactatus et alto*; lexically 1.375–76 *diversa per aequora vectos*, 1.379 (cited below); (ii) *profugos … penates: Aen*. 1.2 *fato profugus*; 1.68 (cited below); 1.378–79 *sum pius Aeneas, raptos qui ex hoste penates | classe veho mecum*; 3.86–88; *penatibus et magnis dis*; (iii) *Tyron … posuistis*: the notion of *translatio imperii*.

The verses are rhetorically wrought: there is the emotional gemination *hac … hac* (both modifying *sede*), further reinforced by *hyperbaton; the powerful *alliteration *profugos posuistis … penates*; along with some subsidiary alliterative touches (*vosne … vecti; sinitis sine*).

The participial phrase ***longa per aequora vecti*** is a variant on Cat. 101.1 *multa per aequora vectus*. The past participle *vecti* agrees with *qui*; Cadmus' original companions, initially forming a search party, had sailed with him from Phoenicia (513–14 n.); but as just noted, none of these should still be alive at this point.

With *hac Tyron, hac profugos posuistis sede penates*, Ovid evokes in particular Virgil's description of Aeneas at *Aen*. 1.68 *Ilium in Italiam portans victosque penates* ('bringing Ilium and his defeated household gods to Italy'), where *Ilium* is an alternate name for his native Troy. Tyre (Latin *Tyrus*; *Tyron* is the accusative form) was a city of Phoenicia, the original homeland of Cadmus and his followers. Pentheus' meaning is that they have in this location founded a 'new Tyre' (i.e. Thebes). The ***penates*** were, properly speaking, the guardian deities of a Roman household, closely associated with Vesta, goddess of the hearth, and worshipped in the home; there was a corresponding cult of public *penates* as well. Note that ***profugos*** (much like *victos* in Aen. 1.68) is a transferred epithet: it is not the *penates* who were exiled (or defeated) but their human wards. All in all, Pentheus' statement is decidedly odd: not only are *penates* a Roman rather than Greek religious notion, but there would have been little reason for Cadmus and his followers to bring their *penates* (in the form of statues, which stood in the *penetralia*, or central point of a Roman home) with them because they originally left Phoenicia to search for Europa, not to found a new homeland (for the 'backstory' to this episode, see Intro. §5). Ovid has clearly worked against the grain, then, to have his mythical founding of Thebes evoke that of Rome. Speaking more broadly, it is worth noting that elements of Roman culture show up in the strangest places in the *Metamorphoses*: early in Book 1, for example, Ovid rather audaciously ascribes *penates* or household gods to the domiciles of the Olympian gods (1.173–74) — one of his strategies for insinuating the Roman telos of his poem in the early stages of his narrative (see Intro. §3d, and, for Ovid's 'triangulation' of Thebes-Troy-Rome, Intro. §5 n. 46).

The (accusative) subjects of ***capi*** are *Tyron* and *penates*. Pentheus laments not merely the fact of capitulation, but that it comes ***sine Marte*** — without a violent struggle. Here, as often, *Mars* stands by metonymy for 'war', 'battle'. This particular form of metonymy, in which a god stands for an activity or item with which he or she is associated (e.g. *Bacchus* = 'wine'; *Ceres* = 'bread') is also known as *denominatio*.

540–42 vosne … decebat? The main verb continues to be *mirer* (538). Pentheus now turns to the younger generation of Theban men, and ratchets up the rhetorical effects. In poetry the interjection ***o*** (again in the set text at 579, 613, 641 and 713) inserted before a vocative — as here with *iuvenes* — creates a loftier form of address than the vocative by itself. The term *iuvenis* is a rather vague indicator of age, and one to which the English expression 'young man' does not exactly correspond. Roman thought generally divided a man's life into four stages (ranges are approximate): *infantia* (0–2 years), *pueritia* (3–16), *iuventus* (17–45), *senectus* (46 +). Hence ***iuvenes*** can be thought of as designating men of fighting age. Both *acrior* and *proprior* (which takes a dative) contrast the younger men with the elderly; the former term (here in the comparative form) means something akin to '(more) warlike'. As ***acrior aetas*** stands in apposition to *vos* and *o iuvenes*, it must be abstract-for-concrete, a figure whereby a quality is abstracted from the concrete form in which it exists (similarly 617 *tutela* with n.). In English this can be rendered with the genitive: 'young men of a more warlike age'. With ***meae*** supply *aetati* (a form of *ellipse common in Latin and English). With this fleeting personal aside, Pentheus bears out that he has come to the throne at a young age, but Ovid provides no further indications of his age (beyond what can be surmised from the mention that his grandfather Cadmus is still alive, and the fact that his mother and aunts are still sufficiently vigorous to tear him limb from limb with their bare hands). Euripides seems to make him a young man of about 20, or perhaps a bit less (see *Bacch*. 974, 1185–87, 1254).

The relative pronoun ***quos*** (whose antecedent is *iuvenes*) functions both as accusative object of ***decebat*** and subject accusative of the indirect statement introduced by it (with *tenere* and *tegi* as infinitives; they are linked by the *-que* after *galea* and by alliteration). This construction can be retained in English translation: 'whom it used to befit to …' (note the reproachful force of the imperfect tense: 'it *used* to befit …'). The indirect statement combines parallelism with variation: we get two antitheses along the

pattern: alternative 1 (*arma* + *galea*) — verb (*tenere* + *tegi*) — negation (*non* + *non*) — alternative 2 (*thyrsos* + *fronde*). But the first is active (*tenere*) with accusative objects (*arma*, *thyrsos*), the second passive (*tegi*) with instrumental ablatives (*galea*, *fronde*).

A *thyrsus* (fig. 6) is a wand twined with ivy and/ or vine branches (both plants were sacred to Bacchus) carried by the god, as well as by his followers during the god's rites. It was one of the most recognizable accoutrements of Bacchus and his cult. Along with carrying the *thyrsus*, the god and his worshippers would crown their heads (whence ***tegi***, a pres. pass. infinitive) with wreaths of ivy leaves, or a combination of vine and ivy leaves (whence ***fronde***, a 'collective' singular) during the god's rites. Bacchus himself is later described as 'wreathed with clustering grapes' (666–67 with n.).



Figure **5.3.3.2.2**: A *thyrsus* ('A staff tipped by a pine cone').

543–48 este … decus. Pentheus continues to address the younger generation(s)—those, who, like himself, are descendants of the dragon's teeth. He begins with an elaborate reminder of their serpentine ancestry (543–45); the overall design of the verses is chiastic: (a) imperative (*este … memores*) + (b) relative clause (*qua … creati*) ‹› (b) relative clause (*qui … unus*) + (a) imperative (*sumite*). Then he draws two contrasts to underscore the triviality of dealing with Bacchus by comparison with the high stakes faced by the serpent and the heroic feats required of it:

	Serpent	**Thebans**
Contrast 1	*pro fontibus ille lacuque interiit*	*at vos pro fama vincite vestra*
Contrast 2	*ille dedit leto fortes*	*vos pellite molles et patrium retinete decus*

Again *alliteration (in particular of 's': *sitis*, *stirpe*, *sumite*, *serpentis* — reinforced by the endings in the same letter of *memores*, *illius*, *animos*, *multos*, *unus*, *serpentis*) generates formal coherence. McNamara (2010, 181) detects in the highly sibilant diction an evocation of the heroic serpent. Pentheus holds up the primordial monster as a civic role model for the Thebans to emulate. The appreciation of the monster that on its own (*unus*) slaughtered many (*multos*) companions of Cadmus illustrates Pentheus' mindset: he values martial prowess and merciless butchery wherever and however they manifest themselves. Why does he not praise Cadmus? The killer of the serpent is still alive — indeed, he is present (564–65 n.). See Hardie (1990, 225 and 229–30) discussing the comparison with Rome, James (1991, 87–89), Feldherr (1997, 50).

543. The plea ***precor*** is 'parenthetical' and so does not affect the syntax of the clause, which is a command (*este* is 2nd pers. pl. pres. imperative of *sum*): 'Be mindful!' Note the interlaced word order of the indirect question (more regular would be *qua stirpe creati sitis*). The compound verb form ***sitis … creati*** is in the subjunctive (2nd pers. pl. perf. pass.) because of the indirect question, which is introduced by the interrogative adjective *qua*, modifying *stirpe*, an ablative of origin. Phaethon uses a like formulation at 1.760 *si modo sum caelesti stirpe creatus* ('if I am indeed born of heavenly stock …').

544–45 illiusque … serpentis! The *-que* after *illius* links the imperatives *este* and *sumite*. *illius* modifies *serpentis* in a striking instance of *hyperbaton: the 'framing' genitive encloses the noun on which it depends (i.e. *animos*, the object of the clause), the relative clause for which it is the antecedent, and the main verb (*sumite*).

Variations on the theme of one against many (*multos perdidit unus*) recur throughout the set text, starting with Pentheus opposing the Bacchus-worship of the citizens of Thebes (513 *ex omnibus unus* with n.). Here the contrast between *multos* and *unus* subtly prepares the isolated position Pentheus finds himself in at the end of his speech.

545–48 pro fontibus … decus! After appealing to the Theban citizens' serpentine genealogy, Pentheus develops an elegant *antithesis, reinforced by *anaphora, contrasting the heroics of the dragon (*ille … ille*, also picking up *illius … serpentis*) with the lesser feats he asks of the Theban men (*at vos … vos*). The *-que* after *lacu* links *fontibus* and *lacu*. For lower stakes (*pro fontibus … lacuque* vs. *pro fama vestra*), the dragon undertook a more daunting task: he killed brave men (*ille dedit leto fortes*), whereas the Thebans merely have to drive away weaklings (*vos pellite molles*). Moreover, the dragon perished in defence of his realm (*interiit*),

whereas the Thebans can expect to emerge victorious (*vincite*) and unscathed. Pentheus ends the sentence with an appeal to ancestral honour: *patrium retinete decus*. This is, as it were, Pentheus' variation on Horace's well-known line *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* ('sweet and honourable it is to die for one's country', *Carm.* 3.2.13): the ancestral dragon died in defence of his realm, a point made emphatic by enjambment of the crucial verb interiit and the trithemimeral *caesura that follows it.

The declaration ***ille dedit leto fortes*** has an elevated, epic ring arising partly from the use of *letum*, an archaic and poetic synonym for *mors* ('death'), and partly from the periphrastic formulation itself ('gave over to death' rather than simply 'killed'). With *fortes* supply *viros* (referring to Cadmus' companions): this is the direct object of *dedit*; *leto* is the indirect object. The account of the serpent's slaughter of Cadmus' companions was narrated earlier at 3.46–49.

Like *fortes*, ***molles*** is used substantively: 'weaklings' or 'softies'; Pentheus will apply the adjective to the cult again at 555. Speaking more generally, *mollitia*, a hallmark of Bacchic revellers and associated with Eastern culture more broadly, was a quality that Greeks, and the Romans after them, regarded with suspicion: see further 555–56 n. Pentheus' language is, in effect, attempting to appeal to a kind of ethnic boundary. For ***patrium … decus***, see 591–92 n.

548–51 si fata … sonarent. Pentheus here utters a somewhat unusual conditional statement, featuring an imperfect indicative in the protasis (*si fata vetabant stare diu Thebas*), followed by a counterfactual wish for the present (*utinam* + imperf. subjunct.: *diruerent*, *sonarent*) as the apodosis. The imperfect indicative *vetabant* almost seems to endow Pentheus with tragic foreknowledge of Thebes' fated destruction (cf. *Met.* 15.429 *Oedipodioniae quid sunt, nisi nomina, Thebae?* 'What is the Thebes of Oedipus now except a name?'), and, in entertaining the possibility that Thebes might be doomed, he momentarily adopts a more reflective stance. This is a striking moment in Ovid's text, but it must be remembered that Pentheus himself is merely engaging in an extravagant metaphor that equates the spread of Bacchic cult in Thebes with the city's physical eradication by warfare. The latter scenario is, in Pentheus' view, clearly more wholesome and honourable, and hence more desirable, than falling under the sway of Bacchus and his worshippers.

The acc. + infin. combination ***stare diu Thebas*** is governed by ***vetabant***. Note that, like 'Athens' (*Athenae*), 'Thebes' is a plural noun in Latin (*Thebae*) as in Greek (Θῆβαι), and so always has plural forms. The *-que* after *viri* connects the two subjects (*tormenta* and *viri*) of ***diruerent***, the *-que* after *ferrum* connects the two verbs of the *utinam*-clause, i.e. *diruerent* and *sonarent*, and the *-que* after *ignis* connects the two subjects (*ferrum* and *ignis*) of *sonarent*. Overall, the picture is one of martial activity and clamour. ***tormenta*** are siege-engines; the choice of ***viri*** (here in the sense of 'soldiers') is loaded: Pentheus implies a contrast with the effeminate followers of Bacchus, whom he considers *semiviri* ('half-men') at best; *ferrum* and *ignis* seem to form a *zeugma with ***sonarent*** — only the clash of iron on iron generates a martial soundtrack, unless *ignis* refers to the collapse of buildings set on fire.

551–52 essemus … carerent. This is, in effect, the compound apodosis of a present contrary-to-fact condition, whose protasis is unstated but implied from what precedes: *si viri moenia diruerent* ('if *men* were tearing down our walls …') etc. As noted above, Pentheus would be less perturbed if Thebes were being sacked and razed to the ground by an invading army. The sense of ***sine crimine*** is *sine culpa*, i.e. if the city were duly sacked by superior forces, the Thebans would be wretched, but free from the imputation of cowardice for shamefully submitting to an unworthy adversary (a *puer inermis*, 'an unarmed boy', as Pentheus goes on to say in 553).

Pentheus here evokes a thematic nexus typical of tragic discourse: 'modes of guilt/ transgression' + 'an emotional state of wretchedness'. Ovid explores variants thereof throughout his Theban history. Thus he introduces the tale of Actaeon (Pentheus' cousin), who accidentally stumbled upon the goddess Diana at her bath, only to be turned into a stag by the enraged divinity and torn apart by his own hounds, as follows: *at bene si quaeras, Fortunae crimen in illo, | non scelus invenies; quod enim scelus error habebat?* ('But if you seek the truth, you will find in this a fault of Fortune, not a crime; for what crime was there in a misstep?', 3.141–42).

The passive periphrastic ***sorsque querenda, non celanda foret*** elaborates on what preceded: a military defeat, since honourable, would not have to be hushed up in shame (a notion spelled out explicitly in the subsequent clause), it could be bewailed openly. *foret* is an alternate form of *esset*, so imperfect subjunctive (as befits a present contrary-tofact condition). ***lacrimae*** are the tears to be shed over the downfall of the city: they could pour forth without any sense of shame. ***pudore*** is an ablative of separation with ***carerent***.

553–58 at nunc … fateri. The subject and verb of the main clause are *Thebae capientur*, with *a puero … inermi* an ablative of agent. *puero* is the antecedent of the two relative clauses that follow: (i) *quem … aurum*, with *iuvant* as verb and two antithetical sequences of nouns as subjects: first the things Bacchus does not like (*bella, tela, usus equorum*); then those he does (*madidus … crinis, molles coronae, purpura, intextum … aurum*). Pentheus dwells on the latter, devoting two lines to Bacchus' 'likes' (some of which he pads out with graphic attributes) and only one to his 'dislikes'; (ii) *quem … fateri*, with *cogam* as verb, *quem* as accusative object, and *fateri* as complementary infinitive. It is probably best to understand *adsumptum* (with *patrem*) and *commenta* (with *sacra*) as predicative, with *esse* as the infinitive to be supplied. (Alternatively *fateri* could be seen as introducing an indirect statement, with *patrem* and *sacra* as subject accusatives and *adsumptum* (sc. *esse*) and *commenta* (sc. *esse*) as infinitives.)

553. After the contrary-to-fact flight of fancy, ***at nunc*** ('but as it is') marks Pentheus' return to present reality. For *Thebae* (nom. pl.), see 548– 51 n. The verb ***capientur*** is 3rd pers. pl. *fut.* indic. pass. Note the iconic word order, with noun (*puero*) and attribute (*inermi*) 'enclosing' the city as if putting it under siege. The phrase conveys a twofold indignity: not only is Bacchus a mere boy (***puero***), he is also unarmed (***inermi***), a fact underscored by the hyperbaton, the double verbal paradoxes in the juxtaposed *puero — Thebae* and *capientur — inermi*, and the position of the attribute at the end of the line. For Bacchus' youthfulness and boyish appearance, see Intro. §5b-iii.

554 quem … equorum. Bacchus' lack of bellicosity — which Pentheus here expresses with a scathing *tricolon — was a conventional attribute: cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 416 ὁ δαίμων … φιλεῖ δ᾽ ὀλβοδότειραν Εἰρήναν, κουροτρόφον θεάν ('The god [sc. Dionysus/ Bacchus] … loves Peace, giver of riches, goddess who nourishes youths').

555–56 sed madidus … aurum. The combination *madidus murra crinis* is quasi-formulaic: Ovid has *madidos murra … capillos* (of Athis) at 5.53. Here ***crinis*** is a so-called 'collective singular'. ***murra*** (myrrh) is a fragrant gum resin obtained from trees found predominantly in Arabia, used in unguents to produce a kind of scented hair oil (nicely conveyed here by the 'dripping' *m*-alliteration). Its use by men was unproblematic on festive occasions (see Gibson 2003, 280–81 on *Ars* 3.443–44); but habitual use was a sign of effeminacy, which the Romans associated with the Near East, in particular the regions of Phrygia (where Troy was situated) and Lydia. In the *Aeneid*, the titular hero is regarded as an effeminate dandy by both the African Iarbas and the Italian Turnus, with the latter speaking derisively of Aeneas' hair 'curled with heated iron and drenched in myrrh' (*crinis | vibratos calido ferro murraque madentis*, *Aen.* 12.99–100). In the Western cultural imaginary, 'effeminacy' and 'eastern' often go together in what Edward Said has labelled the discourse of 'Orientalism' (the nexus of preconceptions and prejudices that Western authors and thinkers have tended to project onto Eastern cultures).

mollesque coronae speaks to the crowns of ivy (or ivy and vine) leaves worn by Bacchus and his followers (for which see 540–42 n.). Pentheus scathingly attributes the same quality of *mollitia* ('softness') to the leafy crowns that he earlier attributed to those who wear them (547 with n.). For a Roman reader the epithet molles might have been particularly striking, as the Romans awarded a range of *coronae* for exceptional military service, including the *corona civica* (made of oakleaves) awarded for saving the life of a fellow-citizen and killing an enemy in the process, and the *corona triumphalis* (a small golden crown in the shape of a laurel wreath with dangling ribbons) that emperors awarded in imperial times to victorious generals (in lieu of a full-blown triumph).

The ***purpura*** was a shellfish that yielded a purple dye, and the word came to be used both of the purple dye itself, and, as here, of purple-dyed cloth. The dye was expensive to make, and the colour purple therefore came to signify wealth and power, often in extravagant quantities. Kings and emperors used it; and, like myrrh, it carried connotations of Eastern decadence. The sense of ***pictis intextum vestibus aurum*** is 'gold (i.e golden thread) woven into embroidered/ painted garments'. Note that *pictis … vestibus* is dat. pl. The assertion of Henderson (1979, 98) that *pictis* (perf. pass. part. of *pingo*, 'adorn with colours, paint, embroider') is 'proleptic' in sense is certainly correct if *pictis* is understood as speaking to embroidery (and so anticipating the result of *intextum … aurum*), but less clearly so otherwise, since the gold thread could merely be adding further colour to already dyed garments.

An alert Roman reader might have caught in verse 556 a veiled reference to the so-called *toga picta*, a garment dyed entirely in purple and embroidered with gold, which was worn (so legend has it) by the original kings of Rome and also by triumphant generals and high magistrates on special occasions (including the emperor in imperial times). See Liv. 10.7.9 and 30.15.11–12 for generals wearing the *toga picta* during their triumph and Liv. 28.4.11, 30.15.11, and 31.11.12 for kings clad in purple. From the (anachronistic) perspective of Ovid's contemporary readers, then, allusion to such a garment would subtly — and ironically — reinforce Pentheus' framing of the advent of Bacchus in terms of military conquest and enhance the status of Thebes as a failed prefiguration of Rome.

557–58 quem … fateri. The archaic adverb ***actutum*** (‘forthwith, immediately, without delay’) is frequently found in comedy and the fragments of Republican tragedy, but is very rare in epic, found only once in Virgil’s *Aeneid* (9.255), and only here in the *Metamorphoses*. As Currie (1981, 2717) observes, ‘Ovid’s handling of the Pentheus story owes something to Pacuvius … and the use of *actutum* … in the context of Pentheus and his misfortunes is possibly meant as a hint of *color tragicus*, perhaps recalling for the alert and informed reader Pacuvius, and maybe even an actual line or phrase from the dramatist’s treatment of this particular myth’. The alacrity Pentheus has in mind is neatly evoked by means of two elisions: *quid(em) eg(o) actutum*. This metrical peculiarity may also have specific generic evocations: as Henderson (1979, 98) points out, ‘nowhere else does Ovid construct an initial dactyl of three words which before elision amount to five syllables. The scansion smacks not of epic, but of dramatic poetry’. In short, there is a reasonable chance that Ovid here echoes a now lost Roman drama, such as Pacuvius’ *Pentheus*.

The relative pronoun ***quem*** again takes *puero … inermi* (553), i.e. Bacchus, as its antecedent. The imperative clause ***modo vos absistite*** in parenthesis is more vivid than a subordinate conditional clause implied by *modo* (~ *dum modo absistatis*: ‘only provided that/ so long as …’: see OLD s.v. *modo* 3c). It is probably best to take ***adsumptum*** (from *assumo*, ‘lay false claim to’) and ***commenta*** (from *comminiscor*, ‘contrive, fabricate’) as predicative (see 553–58 n.). Pentheus dismisses Bacchus’ claim to Jovian paternity as false (as he does more expansively at Eur. *Bacch*. 242–45, identifying Semele, Bacchus’ mother, as the source of the ‘falsehood’) and the rites devised for his followers a religious sham, and intends to use force to compel a confession (***cogam … fateri***). Such ruinous scepticism regarding the authenticity of the new god recurs in the following book, where one of the daughters of Minyas makes the same charge in similar language: ‘*dum cessant aliae commentaque sacra frequentant …*’ (‘While other women shun work and participate in the fraudulent rites …’, *Met*. 4.37).

559–61 an satis … Thebis? Here ***an*** introduces a direct question and expresses indignation: ‘Can it really be that …?’ The question falls into two adversative parts, which are (yet again) juxtaposed asyndetically: *satis … portas* (with *est* as verb and *contemnere* and *claudere* as epexegetic infinitives, as explained below), *Penthea … Thebis* (with *advena* as subject and *terrebit* as verb).

Acrisius is a mythical king of Argos, father of Danaë and grandfather of Perseus (whose adventures are narrated in Book 4). According to legend he was initially, like Pentheus, resistant to Bacchus’ advent, shutting his gates and refusing to admit the god or his worship. In the transition from the Theban narrative to the Perseus episode Ovid offers what amounts to a gloss on Pentheus’ mention of Acrisius here, describing the latter as *qui moenibus arceat urbis | Argolicae contraque deum ferat arma genusque | non putet esse Iovis* (‘who forbade the entrance of the god [sc. Bacchus] within the walls of his city, Argos, who violently opposed the god, and did not admit that he was born of Jupiter’, 4.608–10). In having Pentheus adduce the case of Argos, Ovid unusually denies to Thebes the status of first Greek city visited on his return from Asia. This is in direct contradiction to the prologue of Euripides’ *Bacchae*, spoken by Dionysus himself, where the god identifies his mother-city Thebes as his first port of call in Greece (ἐς τήνδε πρώτην ἦλθον Ἑλλήνων πόλιν, ‘this is the first city of Greece I have come to’, *Bacch*. 20). Another version, reported at Apollod. 3.5.2, has Acrisius’ twin brother Proetus behind the Argive resistance to and sacrilegious exclusion of Bacchus — but again this happens right *after*, rather than (as here in Ovid) before, events in Thebes.

The subject of the first clause is ***satis*** (here used as a noun), with ***animi*** a partitive genitive dependent on it: one way to translate would be ‘sufficient courage’; ***Acrisio*** is dative of possession. ***contemnere*** and ***claudere*** are so-called ‘epexegetic’ infinitives (i.e. infinitives that ‘explain’ what Acrisius’ courage, according to Pentheus, consisted in), linked by alliteration and position in the verse. It should be noted that contemnere is the verb-equivalent to the noun *contemptor*, used earlier of Pentheus (514 with n.). For ***vanum numen*** we would say ‘*false* god’ (*OLD* s.v. *vanus* 3, though our passage is listed s.v. 2, ‘containing no real significance or force’, ‘empty’, ‘hollow’, ‘illusory’); for *numen* see 524 n. The participle ***venienti*** is dative (of disadvantage) with *claudere portas*; it refers to Bacchus and agrees with an implied *ei*.

Note that ***Penthea*** is acc. sing., the appropriate form for a *Greek* 3rd declension noun, as again at 706 and 712; like other Roman poets, Ovid regularly retains the Greek declension for Greek names and loanwords (again at 595 *Taygeten*, *Hyadas*, *Arcton*; 636 *Naxon*). Pentheus’ scathing rhetorical question is made more forceful by reference to himself in the 3rd person, a device of emphasis: Penthea is more compelling here than *me*. The expression ***cum totis … Thebis*** is an alternative, and more striking, way of saying *et [totas] Thebas*. If the overall expression fleetingly constellates a vision of unity — of the king and his city as one — the verb ***terrebit*** attributes this imagined unity to shared fear, which Pentheus dubiously imputes to his fellow Thebans, who have in fact been swept away by genuine religious enthusiasm (527–30). ***advena*** picks up etymologically (~ *ad-venio*) on *venienti* in the previous line. Pentheus’ use of the term (‘visitor from abroad’, ‘newcomer’, ‘stranger’) may have been inspired by Euripides,

where Pentheus refers to Dionysus/ Bacchus as ξένος (*Bacch*. 233 etc.), which has much the same sense. The scathing anonymity of *advena* stands in sharp contrast to the respectful cult name *Liber* used earlier by Tiresias and Ovid as narrator (519–20, 528).

562–63 ite … vinctum. Pentheus orders his servants to put 'the leader' (***ducem***) of the commotion in chains (***vinctum*** is perf. pass. part. of *vincio*, 'bind'). The same figure issues much the same command at Eur. *Bacch*. 352–55 οἳ δ᾽ ἀνὰ πόλιν στείχοντες ἐξιχνεύσατε τὸν θηλύμορφον | ξένον … κἄνπερ λάβητε, δέσμιον πορεύσατε δεῦρ᾽ αὐτόν ('Go through the town and track down the woman-like stranger … and once he is caught, bind him and bring him here …'). As with *advena* in the previous sentence, *ducem* is used scathingly here, suggesting a mortal rabble-rouser rather than a divinity. By avoiding the god's names and cult titles, Pentheus implicitly rejects Bacchus' claim to divinity.

The parenthetical aside ***famulis hoc imperat*** ('he gives this order to his attendants') on the part of the poet reads almost like a stage direction (and perhaps enhances the dramatic-tragic qualities of the episode). The adjective ***citi*** (nom. m. pl. of *citus*, 'fast') is used here in lieu of an adverb (*cite*, *celeriter*). The ***-que*** after *ducem* connects the imperatives ***ite*** (second occurrence) and ***attrahite***.

Wills (1996, 101), in a discussion of the iteration of *ite* in sacral contexts, points to a possible irony in Pentheus employing ritual language (if it be such) in ordering an assault on a divinity. He also points out that Ovid has here reassigned to Pentheus words uttered by the Euripidean chorus at *Bacch*. 83–87 ἴτε βάκχαι, ἴτε βάκχαι, | Βρόμιον παῖδα θεὸν θεοῦ | Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι | Φρυγίων ἐξ ὀρέων Ἑλλάδος εἰς εὐ- | ρυχόρους ἀγυιάς, τὸν Βρόμιον ('Go, bacchants, go bacchants, bring the roaring son of a god, Dionysus, from the Phrygian mountains to the streets of Greece, broad for dancing! Bring Bromios!'). All told, then, Wills sees Pentheus inadvertently slipping into a religious register, while ventriloquizing the god's female worshippers (Euripides' chorus consisted of Asian bacchants). The boundary Pentheus erects between himself and the 'other' he seeks to annihilate seems already to be dissolving.

563 iussis … abesto. In Latin the future imperative is normally used when there is a distinct reference to future time (AG §449); here, however, the future imperative ***abesto*** (of *absum*, 'be absent') merely imparts a heightened authoritative tone. This supplementary command brings out Pentheus' irritation and impatience, and perhaps hints at reluctance on the part of the *famuli*.

564–65. The two verses are elegantly constructed. In the first we have a *tricolon abundans of nominative subjects structured around the triple *anaphora of the pronoun ***hunc*** (= Pentheus) as recurring accusative object. This tricolon is arranged climactically in terms of length, but anti-climactically in terms of familial authority, as we move from grandfather (***avus*** = Cadmus) to the maternal uncle (Athamas is the husband of Agave's sister Ino) to an unspecified assortment of relatives (***turba suorum***). Line 565 is dominated by the two finite verbs that enclose it, and which operate on the subjects and objects of the preceding verse. The use of the present tense adds vividness and imparts a sense of urgency.

The sense of ***corripiunt*** is 'rebuke' (OLD s.v. 6), a common poetic usage, also found in prose; the ablative ***dictis*** clarifies the discursive application of the verb (cf. Suet. *Aug*. 53 *correptus voce magistri*), but is not strictly necessary: Ovid has *Acmona corripimus* at Met. 14.497. The verb ***laborant*** is construed with the infinitive (*inhibere*).

In terms of familial attempts at dissuasion, Ovid has here 'upped the ante' vis-à-vis Euripides, who records only the efforts of Cadmus from among Pentheus' relatives to overcome the young king's opposition to Dionysus/ Bacchus (*Bacch*. 329–41). The elaboration of kinship terms and names in 564 calls to mind the genealogical structure of Ovid's Theban History (see Intro. §4): Cadmus stands at the beginning and the end; the destruction of Ino and Athamas concludes the series of fatalities that hit his daughters and grandchildren. Note, finally, the subtle proleptic force of *turba suorum*: it is precisely a crowd of (female) relatives turned maenads — a *turba furens* (716) — that will tear Pentheus apart at the conclusion of the episode.

566–67. A rather unusual sequence, in which three verbs in the present (*est*, *inritatur*, *crescit*) are followed by an imperfect (*nocebant*) that sums up the series. The subject of *est*, *inritatur*, and *crescit* is *rabies*, which is modified by the attribute *acrior* and the past participle *retenta*. The *-que* after *inritatur* links *est* and *inritatur*, the *-que* after *moderamina* links *crescit* and *nocebant* (which takes *moderamina ipsa* as subject).

admonitu is ablative of cause with ***acrior est***: the very attempts to restrain Pentheus fuel his anger: as often, Ovid proves himself a keen student of human nature. The *alliteration *acrior admonitu* underscores the thematic nexus stylistically. ***retenta*** is perf. pass. part. of *retineo*, modifying *rabies*. Just like the ablative *admonitu*, the participle has causal force, operating on both ***inritatur*** and ***crescit rabies***: the efforts to make Pentheus see reason only worsen his condition: 'his fury, *because* it has been detained, is roused

and grows'. After *admonitu* and *retenta*, ***moderaminaque ipsa nocebant*** constitutes Ovid's third and culminating articulation of the consequences of trying to constrain Pentheus.

568–71 sic ego … ibat. Ovid now proceeds to illustrate the psychological phenomenon by way of a simile drawn from the observation of nature. Comparing the irascible king to a river creates another subtle connection (526 n.) with the ancestral dragon, which was earlier likened to a river swollen with rain (3.79–80 *inpete nunc vasto ceu concitus imbribus amnis* | *fertur*: 'now he moves on with huge rush like a river in flood'). The present simile features two scenarios, introduced by, respectively, *qua* and *quacumque*: (i) the river is unobstructed and flows freely; (ii) the river is obstructed and becomes fiercer as a result. The second scenario corresponds to the case of Pentheus, with his relatives' attempt at dissuasion corresponding to the obstruction. The two halves of the simile are balanced across the adversative particle *at*, which functions as pivot. Each half reflects, with variation, the elements of its counterpart (*qua nil obstabat eunti ~ quacumque trabes obstructaque saxa tenebant; qua ~ quacumque; nil ~ trabes obstructaque saxa; obstabat ~ tenebant; eunti ~ [implied object of tenebant]; lenius et modico strepitu ~ spumeus et fervens et ab obice saevior; lenius ~ saevior; modico strepitu ~ spumeus et fervens; decurrere ~ ibat*). Note also that *obstabat* is also taken up by *ab obice*, and *ibat* harks back to *eunti*.

> Additional Information: Shakespeare evidently felt great admiration for Ovid's river simile, for he offers a beautiful, if less symmetrical, reworking of it in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, put in the mouth of Julia: 'The current that with gentle murmur glides, | Thou know'st being stopped impatiently doth rage; | But when his fair course is not hindered, | He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones, | Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge | He overtaketh in his pilgrimage | And so by many winding nooks he strays | With willing sport to the wild ocean' (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* ii. vii. 25–34).

568–69 sic … vidi. Here ***ego*** is, technically speaking, superfluous and so emphatic: Ovid injects the authorial 'personal voice' into his narrative at an unusual moment (on which more below). ***vidi*** (in final position) introduces an indirect statement, with ***torrentem*** as subject accusative and ***decurrere*** as infinitive. Note that *torrens*, which functions here as a substantive, can mean 'a rushing stream' or 'torrent' or, as here, 'the current (of a river)'; it is a graphic image that well captures Pentheus' youthful rashness and lack of emotional self-control, an effect reinforced by *strepitu*. ***qua*** here means 'where'; the subject of the relative clause is ***nil***. With ***eunti*** (pres. act. dat. part. of *eo*, and indirect object of *obstabat*), supply *torrenti*.

The intrusion of the narrator in the first person (*ego … vidi*) is highly unusual for the epic genre, which tends to avoid the authorial 'personal voice', outside of invocations, or apostrophes. In the *Metamorphoses*, however, such authorial intrusions, which take various forms, are relatively frequent, and some critics have seen them as imparting a sense of unity to the disparate narrative content of the poem. For Solodow (1988, 37) it is Ovid's distinctive narrative voice that 'we learn to recognize as we read the poem; we feel him present everywhere mediating the transmission of the stories, we rely on him as a kind of guide through the vast confusion of the world' (see also Solodow 1988, 55 for discussion of the present passage). This approach yields valuable insights, but it is misguided to see these scattered authorial intrusions as the chief — or in Solodow's insistent formulation the *only* — unifying feature of the poem (see further Intro. §3d).

Looking beyond narrative epic, parallels for the present authorial intrusion can be found in Virgil's didactic poem, the Georgics, in the first book of which, for instance, the narrator remarks that he has often seen a clash of winds at harvest time (*saepe ego … omnia ventorum concurrere proelia vidi*, G. 1.316–18).

570–71 at … ibat. Ovid is describing a dam constructed from timber and stone: ***obstructa*** (perf. pass. part. of *obstruo*, 'build in the way of, obstruct') modifies ***saxa***, but bears on ***trabes*** as well by implication (the *-que* attached to the participle connects the two nouns). Classical Latin poetry, and epic in particular, frequently employs simplex verb forms that had been replaced by compounds in general usage, as here with ***tenebant*** (we would expect *retinebant*); later in the set text we have *ducere* for *educere* (587), *mittere* for *omittere* (614), *ponere* for *deponere* (634). With *tenebant* supply an accusative object, such as *torrentem*. In the *tricolon ***spumeus et fervens et … saevior*** all adjectives are used adverbially to qualify ***ibat***, and all are deftly chosen to enhance the analogy between the natural and the psychological that underpins the simile. ***ab obice*** could be an ablative of cause (equivalent to *propter obicem*) or, perhaps less likely, an ablative of source (i.e. the preposition speaking to an origin or starting point).

5.3.3.2: 527–71 Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.4: Prelude

When Dante walks through Limbo in the *Inferno*, he talks to a group that he identifies as the five greatest poets in history: Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Lucan. While Dante, as an Italian, obviously stacks the deck in favor of Roman poets, his list highlights the importance of the two selections in this chapter: Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While Horace and Lucan are no longer quite as famous as the others, literary critics today recognize the influence and quality of Virgil and Ovid's works.

Although they were (roughly) contemporaries, the older Virgil had grown up in a world split by civil wars: first Julius Caesar against Pompey the Great, and later Mark Antony (and Cleopatra) against Julius Caesar's nephew Octavian, who would take the name Augustus Caesar when he became the first Roman Emperor. Ovid was born after the civil wars were over. As a result, Virgil was an advocate for stability in his poetry, while Ovid took a much freer approach in his works.

Virgil reshapes the story of Aeneas to demonstrate what he (and Augustus) saw as the perfect Roman values. Aeneas, however, is not simply a reflection of Virgil's time period; the *Aeneid* attempts to use literature to shape real life by showing a model hero worthy of inspiring imitation. To a certain extent, Virgil succeeds, at least in future generations. Ovid is more of a reflection of Virgil's actual time period. Ovid's witty sophistication and humorous excesses in his early love poetry provide us with a more decadent picture of Rome. Both poets turn to epic poetry later in life, but for opposite reasons: one to create order out of chaos, and one to question (in all seriousness) whether that order is artificial.

Augustus Caesar's reaction to each poet epitomizes the difference between them. Virgil was directed by Augustus to write the *Aeneid*, which rewrites history to explain how Rome was pre-ordained by the gods to be an empire. Virgil's depiction of the fall of Troy includes Roman fighting techniques and religious beliefs (such as the *lares*, or household gods) that would have been foreign to Homer's Greeks and Trojans. Since the *Aeneid* includes the deification of Augustus (foretold in *Aeneid* 6), it is a splendid piece of propaganda for a man who only called himself the son of the deified (Julius Caesar), rather than a god. When Virgil was dying, he asked that the nearly complete manuscript be burnt; Augustus ordered the manuscript to be finished and published. Conversely, Ovid's work challenged the very notion that the people around him were anything but human. Ovid's works included a book of letters by the women who are abandoned by the so-called heroes of mythology (the *Heroides*), a scandalous book of love poetry (the *Amores*), and a manual on how to pick up women (the *Ars Amatoria*). In particular, the *Ars Amatoria* was so popular that he wrote a section on how women could pick up men (hardly an example of early feminism, but unusual for the time). Ovid's view of power was skeptical, at best, since the *Metamorphoses* catalogues the bad behavior of the gods that led us to the present state of affairs. In *Metamorphoses* 15, Ovid explains why the gods allowed Julius Caesar to be killed, followed by a prayer that Augustus should have more time on earth before the gods take him too: not exactly the emphasis that Augustus might have preferred. Exiled by Augustus for his scandalous poetry, Ovid was never allowed to return to Rome.

Although Roman culture had appropriated Greek literature and religion, changing the names of characters and gods but continuing their stories, there were significant differences in Roman religious practices. Worship of the most important gods was directed by the *flamines maiores* (the "major priests") of the three principle cults (to Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus), while the *flamines minores* (or "minor priests") directed the worship of the rest of the gods. The Romans had quite a few gods that had no equivalent among the Greek gods, and their identities sometimes altered over time. In certain cases, earlier Roman gods were absorbed into another god's identity or replaced entirely. For example, the Greek goddess Artemis was, over time, equated with the Roman goddess Diana, who also came to be identified with the Greek goddess Hecate, whose rough equivalent was the Roman goddess Trivia. All four figures eventually were identified as one goddess, who had multiple aspects to her power, and who was worshipped by multiple names. Apollo, however, had no equivalent match among the Roman gods, so he remained Apollo. The following comparison of Greek and Roman gods is particularly useful for anyone who has read Homer's works.

Roman Name	Greek Name	Roman Name	Greek Name
Jupiter/Jove	Zeus	Mars	Ares
Juno	hera	Vulcan	Hephaestus
Minerva	Athena (or Pallas Athena)	Bacchus	Dionysus
Apollo	Apollo	Proserpina	Persephone
Venus	Aphrodite	Ceres	Demeter
Diana	Artemis	Pan	Pan
Mercury	Hermes	Cupid	Eros
Neptune	Poseidon	(Ulysses)	(Odysseus)
Pluto	Hades		

As you read, consider the following questions:

- How does each epic portray the gods? How do humans feel about the gods in each work?
- How is the view of “Fate” different in these works from the earlier Greek texts? In particular, what can the gods do in Roman literature that they cannot do in Greek literature?
- What is human nature like in each of the stories? Are there any similarities?
- What view of authority does each epic seem to recommend? Why?
- What is the definition of a hero in each work? How do we know, based on the evidence in the texts?
- Is there a unified view of “duty” in these works? Why or why not?

Written by Laura J. Getty

5.4: Prelude is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: China and Japan

The dates of the selections in this chapter range from approximately the 500s B.C.E. to approximately the 200s B.C.E., which is mostly the Warring States Period in Chinese history (476-221 B.C.E.). During this time period, the different regions of China (each with a separate ruler and tradition) fought to maintain independence and defend their borders. In 221 B.C.E., the Qin/Chin ruler finished the process of unifying China by the sword, becoming the first Emperor. These texts, therefore, predate the unification of China, and some of the advice offered (in particular in the works of Confucius) are meant to be seen in the context of multiple kingdoms; Confucius suggests leaving a kingdom and going elsewhere if the leadership is corrupt, which was no longer possible post-unification.

The works in this chapter are foundational texts to later Chinese literature, politics, and philosophy. The *Analects* of Confucius, with its focus on ethical and moral issues, provides the reader with a guide to proper behavior (according to Confucius). The *Shi king* (*The Book of Songs/The Book of Odes/The Classic of Poetry*) may have been edited by Confucius, according to some sources, and the poems themselves offer a glimpse into the expectations of that society. Daoism, the other influential perspective at that time, is found in the *Zhuangzi* (both a book and the possible name of the author), which offers a challenge to the Confucian way of thinking. Finally, Sun Tzu's *Art of War* remains an influential text to this day, found as it is on the reading lists of military academies everywhere.

Students who are not familiar with Chinese literature and culture often have the same first problem: how to pronounce the names. Chinese is a complex language, so the answer is not straightforward. In Chinese, words must be pronounced using the proper tone. For example, the word "ma" can be pronounced four different ways, and in each case it is a different word.

- First tone: Rising tone (start low and go up the scale, like a rising accent mark)
- Second tone: Falling tone (start high and drop lower, like a falling accent mark)
- Third tone: Falling and Rising tone (begin high, drop low, and rise again, so that the sound is "U" shaped)
- Fourth tone: Steady and High tone (high pitched, steady sound)

Since each syllable of the word has a tone, and most translations do not mark which tone to use, there can be no way for students to know how to pronounce the word (except by taking a class in Chinese). Even then, students would have to choose between a class on Mandarin (spoken in the north) and Cantonese (spoken in the south), since they are too different to be taught as the same language. In addition to several major dialects of Chinese, there are numerous sub-dialects: some unintelligible to each other.

An additional challenge for students looking for research on these texts is that the same word can be spelled differently, depending on the pinyin system used. Pinyin is the way that Chinese characters are converted into letters, so that the sound of the character is approximated. For example, the Chinese character for "person" looks like a type of wishbone, but it is converted to "ren" in pinyin.

There are two major systems of pinyin (and some minor), and each one uses a different format to approximate sounds; both systems can be found online and in anthologies. The medieval Chinese poet Li Bo can be spelled Li Po or Li Bai, depending on the system used. In fact, the western name for "China" results from a series of translations, beginning with the pinyin "Chin" (more commonly translated as "Qin" these days) to describe the dynasty that unified the country in 221 B.C.E.; in other words, "China" is the land of the Chin/Qin.

As you read, consider the following questions:

- What do Confucius and Sun Tzu expect from leaders? What is the proper behavior toward subordinates, and how do you know?
- How do Confucian ideals contrast with Daoist ideals? What seems to be the reason for the difference?
- What kind of behavior does society expect from its people, particularly in the *Shi king* (Book of Songs)? How do we know, based on the text?
- What is the definition of heroism in these works, based on the texts themselves?
- How would a Confucian hero be different from other ancient world heroes in other chapters, and why?

Written by Laura J. Getty

6.1: The Analects-Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.)
6.2: The Art of War
6.3: The Book of Songs
6.4: The Mother of Mencius
6.5: The Zhuangzi - Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 B.C.E.)

Thumbnail: Terracotta Mid-rank officer of the Terracotta Army in Xi'an. Image used with permission (David Castor).

This page titled 6: China and Japan is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

6.1: The Analects-Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.)

Compiled ca. 200 B.C.E.

China

Confucius (or "Kongzi" in Chinese) was deeply concerned about the problem of social chaos and explored ways to achieve social order. Inspired by the early rulers of the Zhou Dynasty (ca. 1045-256 B.C.E.), whom he considered exemplary, Confucius developed his philosophy about government, morality, ethics, social roles, and the importance of rituals. As a teacher, Confucius had a great number of disciples during his time. The *Analects*, translated as "Collected Conversations," were complied by later Confucian scholars, reaching their complete form around the second century B.C.E. The *Analects* are perhaps the most well-known text in Confucianism, belonging to the so-called "Four Books" of this tradition. Confucianism, which is known as *Ruxue* (Doctrine of the Sages) in China, forms a large part of the basis of many East Asian cultures.

Written by Kyounghye Kwon



Image 2.1: The Teaching Confucius | Portrait of Confucius, one of the world's most famous philosophers and the creator of Confucianism.

Author: User "Louis le Grand~commonswiki"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

The Analects

Confucius, Translated James Legge

1

The Master "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?

"Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?

"Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?"

The philosopher Yu said, "They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion.

"The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission, are they not the root of all benevolent actions?"

The Master said, "Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue."

The philosopher Tsang said, "I daily examine myself on three points: whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; whether I may have not mastered and practiced the instructions of my teacher."

The Master said, "To rule a country of a thousand chariots, there must be reverent attention to business, and sincerity; economy in expenditure, and love for men; and the employment of the people at the proper seasons."

The Master said, "A youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after the performance of these things, he should employ them in polite studies."

Tsze-hsia said, "If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere: although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has.

The Master said, "If the scholar be not grave, he will not call forth any veneration, and his learning will not be solid. "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles.

"Have no friends not equal to yourself.

"When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them."

The philosopher Tsang said, “Let there be a careful attention to perform the funeral rites to parents, and let them be followed when long gone with the ceremonies of sacrifice; then the virtue of the people will resume its proper excellence.”

Tsze-ch’in asked Tsze-kung saying, “When our master comes to any country, he does not fail to learn all about its government. Does he ask his information? or is it given to him?”

Tsze-kung said, “Our master is benign, upright, courteous, temperate, and complaisant and thus he gets his information. The master’s mode of asking information, is it not different from that of other men?”

The Master said, “While a man’s father is alive, look at the bent of his will; when his father is dead, look at his conduct. If for three years he does not alter from the way of his father, he may be called filial.”

The philosopher Yu said, “In practicing the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized. In the ways prescribed by the ancient kings, this is the excellent quality, and in things small and great we follow them.

“Yet it is not to be observed in all cases. If one, knowing how such ease should be prized, manifests it, without regulating it by the rules of propriety, this likewise is not to be done.”

The philosopher Yu said, “When agreements are made according to what is right, what is spoken can be made good. When respect is shown according to what is proper, one keeps far from shame and disgrace. When the parties upon whom a man leans are proper persons to be intimate with, he can make them his guides and masters.”

The Master said, “He who aims to be a man of complete virtue in his food does not seek to gratify his appetite, nor in his dwelling place does he seek the appliances of ease; he is earnest in what he is doing, and careful in his speech; he frequents the company of men of principle that he may be rectified: such a person may be said indeed to love to learn.”

Tsze-kung said, “What do you pronounce concerning the poor man who yet does not flatter, and the rich man who is not proud?” The Master replied, “They will do; but they are not equal to him, who, though poor, is yet cheerful, and to him, who, though rich, loves the rules of propriety.”

Tsze-kung replied, “It is said in the Book of Poetry, ‘As you cut and then file, as you carve and then polish.’ The meaning is the same, I apprehend, as that which you have just expressed.”

The Master said, “With one like Ts’ze, I can begin to talk about the odes. I told him one point, and he knew its proper sequence.”

The Master said, “I will not be afflicted at men’s not knowing me; I will be afflicted that I do not know men.”

2

The Master said, “He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it.”

The Master said, “In the Book of Poetry are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence ‘Having no depraved thoughts.’”

The Master said, “If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame.

“If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good.”

The Master said, “At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. “At thirty, I stood firm.

“At forty, I had no doubts.

“At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven.

“At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth.

“At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.”

Mang I asked what filial piety was. The Master said, “It is not being disobedient.”

Soon after, as Fan Ch'ih was driving him, the Master told him, saying, "Mang-sun asked me what filial piety was, and I answered him, 'not being disobedient.'"

Fan Ch'ih said, "What did you mean?" The Master replied, "That parents, when alive, be served according to propriety; that, when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety."

Mang Wu asked what filial piety was. The Master said, "Parents are anxious lest their children should be sick."

Tsze-yu asked what filial piety was. The Master said, "The filial piety nowadays means the support of one's parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support; without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?"

Tsze-hsia asked what filial piety was. The Master said, "The difficulty is with the countenance. If, when their elders have any troublesome affairs, the young take the toil of them, and if, when the young have wine and food, they set them before their elders, is THIS to be considered filial piety?"

The Master said, "I have talked with Hui for a whole day, and he has not made any objection to anything I said; as if he were stupid. He has retired, and I have examined his conduct when away from me, and found him able to illustrate my teachings. Hui! He is not stupid."

The Master said, "See what a man does.

"Mark his motives.

"Examine in what things he rests.

"How can a man conceal his character? How can a man conceal his character?"

The Master said, "If a man keeps cherishing his old knowledge, so as continually to be acquiring new, he may be a teacher of others."

The Master said, "The accomplished scholar is not a utensil."

Tsze-kung asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said, "He acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his actions."

The Master said, "The superior man is catholic and not partisan. The mean man is partisan and not catholic." The Master said, "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous."

The Master said, "The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed!"

The Master said, "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; this is knowledge."

Tsze-chang was learning with a view to official emolument.

The Master said, "Hear much and put aside the points of which you stand in doubt, while you speak cautiously at the same time of the others: then you will afford few occasions for blame. See much and put aside the things which seem perilous, while you are cautious at the same time in carrying the others into practice: then you will have few occasions for repentance. When one gives few occasions for blame in his words, and few occasions for repentance in his conduct, he is in the way to get emolument."

The Duke Ai asked, saying, "What should be done in order to secure the submission of the people?" Confucius replied, "Advance the upright and set aside the crooked, then the people will submit. Advance the crooked and set aside the upright, then the people will not submit."

Chi K'ang asked how to cause the people to reverence their ruler, to be faithful to him, and to go on to nerve themselves to virtue. The Master said, "Let him preside over them with gravity; then they will reverence him. Let him be final and kind to all; then they will be faithful to him. Let him advance the good and teach the incompetent; then they will eagerly seek to be virtuous."

Some one addressed Confucius, saying, "Sir, why are you not engaged in the government?"

The Master said, "What does the Shu-ching say of filial piety? 'You are final, you discharge your brotherly duties. These qualities are displayed in government.' This then also constitutes the exercise of government. Why must there be THAT making one be in

the government?”

The Master said, “I do not know how a man without truthfulness is to get on. How can a large carriage be made to go without the crossbar for yoking the oxen to, or a small carriage without the arrangement for yoking the horses?”

Tsze-chang asked whether the affairs of ten ages after could be known.

Confucius said, “The Yin dynasty followed the regulations of the Hsia: wherein it took from or added to them may be known. The Chau dynasty has followed the regulations of Yin: wherein it took from or added to them may be known. Some other may follow the Chau, but though it should be at the distance of a hundred ages, its affairs may be known.”

The Master said, “For a man to sacrifice to a spirit which does not belong to him is flattery. “To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage.”

3

Confucius said of the head of the Chi family, who had eight rows of pantomimes in his area, “If he can bear to do this, what may he not bear to do?”

The three families used the Yungode, while the vessels were being removed, at the conclusion of the sacrifice.

The Master said, “‘Assisting are the princes; the son of heaven looks profound and grave’; what application can these words have in the hall of the three families?”

The Master said, “If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?”

Lin Fang asked what was the first thing to be attended to in ceremonies.

The Master said, “A great question indeed!

“In festive ceremonies, it is better to be sparing than extravagant. In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep sorrow than in minute attention to observances.”

The Master said, “The rude tribes of the east and north have their princes, and are not like the States of our great land which are without them.”

The chief of the Chi family was about to sacrifice to the T’ai mountain. The Master said to Zan Yu, “Can you not save him from this?” He answered, “I cannot.” Confucius said, “Alas! will you say that the T’ai mountain is not so discerning as Lin Fang?”

The Master said, “The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery? But he bows complaisantly to his competitors; thus he ascends the hall, descends, and exacts the forfeit of drinking. In his contention, he is still the Chun-tsze.”

Tsze-hsia asked, saying, “What is the meaning of the passage ‘The pretty dimples of her artful smile! The well defined black and white of her eye! The plain ground for the colors?’”

The Master said, “The business of laying on the colors follows the preparation of the plain ground.”

“Ceremonies then are a subsequent thing?” The Master said, “It is Shang who can bring out my meaning. Now I can begin to talk about the odes with him.”

The Master said, “I could describe the ceremonies of the Hsia dynasty, but Chi cannot sufficiently attest my words. I could describe the ceremonies of the Yin dynasty, but Sung cannot sufficiently attest my words. They cannot do so because of the insufficiency of their records and wise men. If those were sufficient, I could adduce them in support of my words.”

The Master said, “At the great sacrifice, after the pouring out of the libation, I have no wish to look on.”

Some one asked the meaning of the great sacrifice. The Master said, “I do not know. He who knew its meaning would find it as easy to govern the kingdom as to look on this” pointing to his palm.

He sacrificed to the dead, as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits, as if the spirits were present.

The Master said, “I consider my not being present at the sacrifice, as if I did not sacrifice.”

Wang-sun Chia asked, saying, “What is the meaning of the saying, ‘It is better to pay court to the furnace then to the southwest corner?’”

The Master said, “Not so. He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray.”

The Master said, “Chau had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations! I follow Chau.”

The Master, when he entered the grand temple, asked about everything. Some one said, “Who say that the son of the man of Tsau knows the rules of propriety! He has entered the grand temple and asks about everything.” The Master heard the remark, and said, “This is a rule of propriety.”

The Master said, “In archery it is not going through the leather which is the principal thing; because people’s strength is not equal. This was the old way.”

Tsze-kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month.

The Master said, “Ts’ze, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony.”

The Master said, “The full observance of the rules of propriety in serving one’s prince is accounted by people to be flattery.”

The Duke Ting asked how a prince should employ his ministers, and how ministers should serve their prince. Confucius replied, “A prince should employ his minister according to according to the rules of propriety; ministers should serve their prince with faithfulness.”

The Master said, “The Kwan Tsu is expressive of enjoyment without being licentious, and of grief without being hurtfully excessive.”

The Duke Ai asked Tsai Wo about the altars of the spirits of the land. Tsai Wo replied, “The Hsia sovereign planted the pine tree about them; the men of the Yin planted the cypress; and the men of the Chau planted the chestnut tree, meaning thereby to cause the people to be in awe.”

When the Master heard it, he said, “Things that are done, it is needless to speak about; things that have had their course, it is needless to remonstrate about; things that are past, it is needless to blame.”

The Master said, “Small indeed was the capacity of Kwan Chung!”

Some one said, “Was Kwan Chung parsimonious?” “Kwan,” was the reply, “had the San Kwei, and his officers performed no double duties; how can he be considered parsimonious?”

“Then, did Kwan Chung know the rules of propriety?” The Master said, “The princes of States have a screen intercepting the view at their gates. Kwan had likewise a screen at his gate. The princes of States on any friendly meeting between two of them, had a stand on which to place their inverted cups. Kwan had also such a stand. If Kwan knew the rules of propriety, who does not know them?”

The Master instructing the grand music master of Lu said, “How to play music may be known. At the commencement of the piece, all the parts should sound together. As it proceeds, they should be in harmony while severally distinct and flowing without break, and thus on to the conclusion.”

The border warden at Yi requested to be introduced to the Master, saying, “When men of superior virtue have come to this, I have never been denied the privilege of seeing them.” The followers of the sage introduced him, and when he came out from the interview, he said, “My friends, why are you distressed by your master’s loss of office? The kingdom has long been without the principles of truth and right; Heaven is going to use your master as a bell with its wooden tongue.”

The Master said of the Shao that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the Wu that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good.

The Master said, “High station filled without indulgent generosity; ceremonies performed without reverence; mourning conducted without sorrow; wherewith should I contemplate such ways?”

4

The Master said, “It is virtuous manners which constitute the excellence of a neighborhood. If a man in selecting a residence do not fix on one where such prevail, how can he be wise?”

The Master said, “Those who are without virtue cannot abide long either in a condition of poverty and hardship, or in a condition of enjoyment. The virtuous rest in virtue; the wise desire virtue.”

The Master said, “It is only the truly virtuous man, who can love, or who can hate, others.”

The Master said, “If the will be set on virtue, there will be no practice of wickedness.”

The Master said, “Riches and honors are what men desire. If they cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be held. Poverty and meanness are what men dislike. If they cannot be avoided in the proper way, they should not be avoided.

“If a superior man abandon virtue, how can he fulfill the requirements of that name?

“The superior man does not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue. In moments of haste, he cleaves to it. In seasons of danger, he cleaves to it.”

The Master said, “I have not seen a person who loved virtue, or one who hated what was not virtuous. He who loved virtue, would esteem nothing above it. He who hated what is not virtuous, would practice virtue in such a way that he would not allow anything that is not virtuous to approach his person.

“Is any one able for one day to apply his strength to virtue? I have not seen the case in which his strength would be insufficient.

“Should there possibly be any such case, I have not seen it.”

The Master said, “The faults of men are characteristic of the class to which they belong. By observing a man’s faults, it may be known that he is virtuous.”

The Master said, “If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening hear regret.”

The Master said, “A scholar, whose mind is set on truth, and who is ashamed of bad clothes and bad food, is not fit to be discoursed with.”

The Master said, “The superior man, in the world, does not set his mind either for anything, or against anything; what is right he will follow.”

The Master said, “The superior man thinks of virtue; the small man thinks of comfort. The superior man thinks of the sanctions of law; the small man thinks of favors which he may receive.”

The Master said: “He who acts with a constant view to his own advantage will be much murmured against.”

The Master said, “If a prince is able to govern his kingdom with the complaisance proper to the rules of propriety, what difficulty will he have? If he cannot govern it with that complaisance, what has he to do with the rules of propriety?”

The Master said, “A man should say, I am not concerned that I have no place, I am concerned how I may fit myself for one. I am not concerned that I am not known, I seek to be worthy to be known.”

The Master said, “Shan, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.” The disciple Tsang replied, “Yes.”

The Master went out, and the other disciples asked, saying, “What do his words mean?” Tsang said, “The doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others, this and nothing more.”

The Master said, “The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain.”

The Master said, “When we see men of worth, we should think of equaling them; when we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves.”

The Master said, “In serving his parents, a son may remonstrate with them, but gently; when he sees that they do not incline to follow his advice, he shows an increased degree of reverence, but does not abandon his purpose; and should they punish him, he does not allow himself to murmur.”

The Master said, “While his parents are alive, the son may not go abroad to a distance. If he does go abroad, he must have a fixed place to which he goes.”

The Master said, “If the son for three years does not alter from the way of his father, he may be called filial.”

The Master said, “The years of parents may by no means not be kept in the memory, as an occasion at once for joy and for fear.”

The Master said, “The reason why the ancients did not readily give utterance to their words, was that they feared lest their actions should not come up to them.”

The Master said, “The cautious seldom err.”

The Master said, “The superior man wishes to be slow in his speech and earnest in his conduct.”

The Master said, “Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.”

Tsze-yu said, “In serving a prince, frequent remonstrances lead to disgrace. Between friends, frequent reproofs make the friendship distant.”

5

The Master said of Kung-ye Ch’ang that he might be wived; although he was put in bonds, he had not been guilty of any crime. Accordingly, he gave him his own daughter to wife.

Of Nan Yung he said that if the country were well governed he would not be out of office, and if it were in governed, he would escape punishment and disgrace. He gave him the daughter of his own elder brother to wife.

The Master said of Tsze-chien, “Of superior virtue indeed is such a man! If there were not virtuous men in Lu, how could this man have acquired this character?”

Tsze-kung asked, “What do you say of me, Ts’ze!” The Master said, “You are a utensil.” “What utensil?” “A gemmed sacrificial utensil.”

Some one said, “Yung is truly virtuous, but he is not ready with his tongue.”

The Master said, “What is the good of being ready with the tongue? They who encounter men with smartness of speech for the most part procure themselves hatred. I know not whether he be truly virtuous, but why should he show readiness of the tongue?”

The Master was wishing Ch’i-tiao K’ai to enter an official employment. He replied, “I am not yet able to rest in the assurance of this.” The Master was pleased.

The Master said, “My doctrines make no way. I will get upon a raft, and float about on the sea. He that will accompany me will be Yu, I dare say.” Tsze-lu hearing this was glad, upon which the Master said, “Yu is fonder of daring than I am. He does not exercise his judgment upon matters.”

Mang Wu asked about Tsze-lu, whether he was perfectly virtuous. The Master said, “I do not know.”

He asked again, when the Master replied, “In a kingdom of a thousand chariots, Yu might be employed to manage the military levies, but I do not know whether he be perfectly virtuous.”

“And what do you say of Ch’iu?” The Master replied, “In a city of a thousand families, or a clan of a hundred chariots, Ch’iu might be employed as governor, but I do not know whether he is perfectly virtuous.”

“What do you say of Ch’ih?” The Master replied, “With his sash girt and standing in a court, Ch’ih might be employed to converse with the visitors and guests, but I do not know whether he is perfectly virtuous.”

The Master said to Tsze-kung, “Which do you consider superior, yourself or Hui?”

Tsze-kung replied, “How dare I compare myself with Hui? Hui hears one point and knows all about a subject; I hear one point, and know a second.”

The Master said, “You are not equal to him. I grant you, you are not equal to him.”

Tsai Yu being asleep during the daytime, the Master said, “Rotten wood cannot be carved; a wall of dirty earth will not receive the trowel. This Yu, what is the use of my reproving him?”

The Master said, “At first, my way with men was to hear their words, and give them credit for their conduct. Now my way is to hear their words, and look at their conduct. It is from Yu that I have learned to make this change.”

The Master said, “I have not seen a firm and unbending man.” Some one replied, “There is Shan Ch’ang.” “Ch’ang,” said the Master, “is under the influence of his passions; how can he be pronounced firm and unbending?”

Tsze-kung said, “What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.” The Master said, “Ts’ze, you have not attained to that.”

Tsze-kung said, “The Master’s personal displays of his principles and ordinary descriptions of them may be heard. His discourses about man’s nature, and the way of Heaven, cannot be heard.”

When Tsze-lu heard anything, if he had not yet succeeded in carrying it into practice, he was only afraid lest he should hear something else.

Tsze-kung asked, saying, “On what ground did Kung-wan get that title of Wan?”

The Master said, “He was of an active nature and yet fond of learning, and he was not ashamed to ask and learn of his inferiors! On these grounds he has been styled Wan.”

The Master said of Tsze-ch’an that he had four of the characteristics of a superior man in his conduct of himself, he was humble; in serving his superior, he was respectful; in nourishing the people, he was kind; in ordering the people, he was just.”

The Master said, “Yen P’ing knew well how to maintain friendly intercourse. The acquaintance might be long, but he showed the same respect as at first.”

The Master said, “Tsang Wan kept a large tortoise in a house, on the capitals of the pillars of which he had hills made, and with representations of duckweed on the small pillars above the beams supporting the rafters. Of what sort was his wisdom?”

Tsze-chang asked, saying, “The minister Tsze-wan thrice took office, and manifested no joy in his countenance. Thrice he retired from office, and manifested no displeasure. He made it a point to inform the new minister of the way in which he had conducted the government; what do you say of him?” The Master replied. “He was loyal.” “Was he perfectly virtuous?” “I do not know. How can he be pronounced perfectly virtuous?”

Tsze-chang proceeded, “When the officer Ch’ui killed the prince of Ch’i, Ch’an Wan, though he was the owner of forty horses, abandoned them and left the country. Coming to another state, he said, ‘They are here like our great officer, Ch’ui,’ and left it. He came to a second state, and with the same observation left it also; what do you say of him?” The Master replied, “He was pure.” “Was he perfectly virtuous?” “I do not know. How can he be pronounced perfectly virtuous?”

Chi Wan thought thrice, and then acted. When the Master was informed of it, he said, “Twice may do.”

The Master said, “When good order prevailed in his country, Ning Wu acted the part of a wise man. When his country was in disorder, he acted the part of a stupid man. Others may equal his wisdom, but they cannot equal his stupidity.”

When the Master was in Ch’an, he said, “Let me return! Let me return! The little children of my school are ambitious and too hasty. They are accomplished and complete so far, but they do not know how to restrict and shape themselves.”

The Master said, “Po-i and Shu-ch’i did not keep the former wickednesses of men in mind, and hence the resentments directed towards them were few.”

The Master said, “Who says of Weishang Kao that he is upright? One begged some vinegar of him, and he begged it of a neighbor and gave it to the man.”

The Master said, “Fine words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect; Tso Ch’iu-ming was ashamed of them. I also am ashamed of them. To conceal resentment against a person, and appear friendly with him; Tso Ch’iu-ming was ashamed of such conduct. I also am ashamed of it.”

Yen Yuan and Chi Lu being by his side, the Master said to them, “Come, let each of you tell his wishes.”

Tsze-lu said, “I should like, having chariots and horses, and light fur clothes, to share them with my friends, and though they should spoil them, I would not be displeased.”

Yen Yuan said, “I should like not to boast of my excellence, nor to make a display of my meritorious deeds.”

Tsze-lu then said, “I should like, sir, to hear your wishes.” The Master said, “They are, in regard to the aged, to give them rest; in regard to friends, to show them sincerity; in regard to the young, to treat them tenderly.”

The Master said, “It is all over. I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse him-

self.”The Master said, “In a hamlet of ten families, there may be found one honorable and sincere as I am, but not so fond of learning.”

6

The Master said, “There is Yung! He might occupy the place of a prince.”

Chung-kung asked about Tsze-sang Po-tsze. The Master said, “He may pass. He does not mind small matters.” Chung-kung said, “If a man cherish in himself a reverential feeling of the necessity of attention to business, though he may be easy in small matters in his government of the people, that may be allowed. But if he cherish in himself that easy feeling, and also carry it out in his practice, is not such an easymode of procedure excessive?”

The Master said, “Yung’s words are right.”

The Duke Ai asked which of the disciples loved to learn.

Confucius replied to him, “There was Yen Hui; he loved to learn. He did not transfer his anger; he did not repeat a fault. Unfortunately, his appointed time was short and he died; and now there is not such another. I have not yet heard of any one who loves to learn as he did.”

Tsze-hwa being employed on a mission to Ch’i, the disciple Zan requested grain for his mother. The Master said, “Give her a fu.” Yen requested more. “Give her a yi,” said the Master. Yen gave her five ping.

The Master said, “When Ch’ih was proceeding to Ch’i, he had fat horses to his carriage, and wore light furs. I have heard that a superior man helps the distressed, but does not add to the wealth of the rich.”

Yuan Sze being made governor of his town by the Master, he gave him nine hundred measures of grain, but Sze declined them.

The Master said, “Do not decline them. May you not give them away in the neighborhoods, hamlets, towns, and villages?”

The Master, speaking of Chung-kung, said, “If the calf of a brindled cow be red and homed, although men may not wish to use it, would the spirits of the mountains and rivers put it aside?”

The Master said, “Such was Hui that for three months there would be nothing in his mind contrary to perfect virtue. The others may attain to this on some days or in some months, but nothing more.”

Chi K’ang asked about Chung-yu, whether he was fit to be employed as an officer of government. The Master said, “Yu is a man of decision; what difficulty would he find in being an officer of government?” K’ang asked, “Is Ts’ze fit to be employed as an officer of government?” and was answered, “Ts’ze is a man of intelligence; what difficulty would he find in being an officer of government?” And to the same question about Ch’iu the Master gave the same reply, saying, “Ch’iu is a man of various ability.”

The chief of the Chi family sent to ask Min Tsze-ch’ien to be governor of Pi. Min Tszech’ien said, “Decline the offer for me politely. If any one come again to me with a second invitation, I shall be obliged to go and live on the banks of the Wan.”

Po-niu being ill, the Master went to ask for him. He took hold of his hand through the window, and said, “It is killing him. It is the appointment of Heaven, alas! That such a man should have such a sickness! That such a man should have such a sickness!”

The Master said, “Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected by it. Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui!”

Yen Ch’iu said, “It is not that I do not delight in your doctrines, but my strength is insufficient.” The Master said, “Those whose strength is insufficient give over in the middle of the way but now you limit yourself.”

The Master said to Tsze-hsia, “Do you be a scholar after the style of the superior man, and not after that of the mean man.”

Tsze-yu being governor of Wu-ch’ang, the Master said to him, “Have you got good men there?” He answered, “There is Tan-t’ai Miehming, who never in walking takes a short cut, and never comes to my office, excepting on public business.”

The Master said, “Mang Chih-fan does not boast of his merit. Being in the rear on an occasion of flight, when they were about to enter the gate, he whipped up his horse, saying, “It is not that I dare to be last. My horse would not advance.”

The Master said, “Without the specious speech of the litanist T’o and the beauty of the prince Chao of Sung, it is difficult to escape in the present age.”

The Master said, “Who can go out but by the door? How is it that men will not walk according to these ways?”

The Master said, “Where the solid qualities are in excess of accomplishments, we have rusticity; where the accomplishments are in excess of the solid qualities, we have the manners of a clerk. When the accomplishments and solid qualities are equally blended, we then have the man of virtue.”

The Master said, “Man is born for uprightness. If a man lose his uprightness, and yet live, his escape from death is the effect of mere good fortune.”

The Master said, “They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it.”

The Master said, “To those whose talents are above mediocrity, the highest subjects may be announced. To those who are below mediocrity, the highest subjects may not be announced.”

Fan Ch’ih asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, “To give one’s self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.” He asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “The man of virtue makes the difficulty to be overcome his first business, and success only a subsequent consideration; this may be called perfect virtue.”

The Master said, “The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills. The wise are active; the virtuous are tranquil. The wise are joyful; the virtuous are long-lived.”

The Master said, “Ch’i, by one change, would come to the State of Lu. Lu, by one change, would come to a State where true principles predominated.”

The Master said, “A cornered vessel without corners a strange cornered vessel! A strange cornered vessel!”

Tsai Wo asked, saying, “A benevolent man, though it be told him, ‘There is a man in the well” will go in after him, I suppose.” Confucius said, “Why should he do so?” A superior man may be made to go to the well, but he cannot be made to go down into it. He may be imposed upon, but he cannot be fooled.”

The Master said, “The superior man, extensively studying all learning, and keeping himself under the restraint of the rules of propriety, may thus likewise not overstep what is right.”

The Master having visited Nan-tsze, Tsze-lu was displeased, on which the Master swore, saying, “Wherein I have done improperly, may Heaven reject me, may Heaven reject me!”

The Master said, “Perfect is the virtue which is according to the Constant Mean! Rare for a long time has been its practice among the people.”

Tsze-kung said, “Suppose the case of a man extensively conferring benefits on the people, and able to assist all, what would you say of him? Might he be called perfectly virtuous?” The Master said, “Why speak only of virtue in connection with him? Must he not have the qualities of a sage? Even Yao and Shun were still solicitous about this.

“Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.

“To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves; this may be called the art of virtue.”

7

The Master said, “A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P’ang.”

The Master said, “The silent treasuring up of knowledge; learning without satiety; and instructing others without being wearied: which one of these things belongs to me?”

The Master said, “The leaving virtue without proper cultivation; the not thoroughly discussing what is learned; not being able to move towards righteousness of which a knowledge is gained; and not being able to change what is not good: these are the things which occasion me solicitude.”

When the Master was unoccupied with business, his manner was easy, and he looked pleased.

The Master said, “Extreme is my decay. For a long time, I have not dreamed, as I was wont to do, that I saw the duke of Chau.”

The Master said, “Let the will be set on the path of duty.

“Let every attainment in what is good be firmly grasped.

“Let perfect virtue be accorded with.

“Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the polite arts.”

The Master said, “From the man bringing his bundle of dried flesh for my teaching upwards, I have never refused instruction to any one.”

The Master said, “I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out any one who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to any one, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.”

When the Master was eating by the side of a mourner, he never ate to the full.

He did not sing on the same day in which he had been weeping.

The Master said to Yen Yuan, “When called to office, to undertake its duties; when not so called, to he retired; it is only I and you who have attained to this.”

Tsze-lu said, “If you had the conduct of the armies of a great state, whom would you have to act with you?”

The Master said, “I would not have him to act with me, who will unarmed attack a tiger, or cross a river without a boat, dying without any regret. My associate must be the man who proceeds to action full of solicitude, who is fond of adjusting his plans, and then carries them into execution.”

The Master said, “If the search for riches is sure to be successful, though I should become a groom with whip in hand to get them, I will do so. As the search may not be successful, I will follow after that which I love.”

The things in reference to which the Master exercised the greatest caution were fasting, war, and sickness.

When the Master was in Ch’i, he heard the Shao, and for three months did not know the taste of flesh. “I did not think’” he said, “that music could have been made so excellent as this.”

Yen Yu said, “Is our Master for the ruler of Wei?” Tsze-kung said, “Oh! I will ask him.”

He went in accordingly, and said, “What sort of men were Po-i and Shu-ch’i?” “They were ancient worthies,” said the Master. “Did they have any repinings because of their course?” The Master again replied, “They sought to act virtuously, and they did so; what was there for them to repine about?” On this, Tsze-kung went out and said, “Our Master is not for him.”

The Master said, “With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow; I have still joy in the midst of these things. Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness, are to me as a floating cloud.”

The Master said, “If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the Yi, and then I might come to be without great faults.”

The Master’s frequent themes of discourse were the Odes, the History, and the maintenance of the Rules of Propriety. On all these he frequently discoursed.

The Duke of Sheh asked Tsze-lu about Confucius, and Tsze-lu did not answer him.

The Master said, “Why did you not say to him, He is simply a man, who in his eager pursuit of knowledge forgets his food, who in the joy of its attainment forgets his sorrows, and who does not perceive that old age is coming on?”The Master said, “I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there.”

The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings.

The Master said, “When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them.”

The Master said, “Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. Hwan T’ui what can he do to me?”

The Master said, “Do you think, my disciples, that I have any concealments? I conceal nothing from you. There is nothing which I do that is not shown to you, my disciples; that is my way.”

There were four things which the Master taught, letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness.

The Master said, “A sage it is not mine to see; could I see a man of real talent and virtue, that would satisfy me.” The Master said, “A good man it is not mine to see; could I see a man possessed of constancy, that would satisfy me.

“Having not and yet affecting to have, empty and yet affecting to be full, straitened and yet affecting to be at ease: it is difficult with such characteristics to have constancy.”

The Master angled, but did not use a net. He shot, but not at birds perching.

The Master said, “There may be those who act without knowing why. I do not do so. Hearing much and selecting what is good and following it; seeing much and keeping it in memory: this is the second style of knowledge.”

It was difficult to talk profitably and reputably with the people of Hu-hsiang, and a lad of that place having had an interview with the Master, the disciples doubted.

The Master said, “I admit people’s approach to me without committing myself as to what they may do when they have retired. Why must one be so severe? If a man purify himself to wait upon me, I receive him so purified, without guaranteeing his past conduct.”

The Master said, “Is virtue a thing remote? I wish to be virtuous, and lo! virtue is at hand.”

The minister of crime of Ch’an asked whether the duke Chao knew propriety, and Confucius said, “He knew propriety.”

Confucius having retired, the minister bowed to Wu-ma Ch’i to come forward, and said, “I have heard that the superior man is not a partisan. May the superior man be a partisan also? The prince married a daughter of the house of WU, of the same surname with himself, and called her, ‘The elder Tsze of Wu.’ If the prince knew propriety, who does not know it?”

Wu-ma Ch’i reported these remarks, and the Master said, “I am fortunate! If I have any errors, people are sure to know them.”

When the Master was in company with a person who was singing, if he sang well, he would make him repeat the song, while he accompanied it with his own voice.

The Master said, “In letters I am perhaps equal to other men, but the character of the superior man, carrying out in his conduct what he professes, is what I have not yet attained to.”

The Master said, “The sage and the man of perfect virtue; how dare I rank myself with them? It may simply be said of me, that I strive to become such without satiety, and teach others without weariness.” Kung-hsi Hwa said, “This is just what we, the disciples, cannot imitate you in.”

The Master being very sick, Tsze-lu asked leave to pray for him. He said, “May such a thing be done?” Tszelu replied, “It may. In the Eulogies it is said, ‘Prayer has been made for thee to the spirits of the upper and lower worlds.’” The Master said, “My praying has been for a long time.”

The Master said, “Extravagance leads to insubordination, and parsimony to meanness. It is better to be mean than to be insubordinate.”

The Master said, “The superior man is satisfied and composed; the mean man is always full of distress.”

The Master was mild, and yet dignified; majestic, and yet not fierce; respectful, and yet easy.

8

The Master said, “T’ai-po may be said to have reached the highest point of virtuous action. Thrice he declined the kingdom, and the people in ignorance of his motives could not express their approbation of his conduct.”

The Master said, “Respectfulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes laborious bustle; carefulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes timidity; boldness, without the rules of propriety, becomes insubordination; straightforwardness, without the rules of propriety, becomes rudeness.

“When those who are in high stations perform well all their duties to their relations, the people are aroused to virtue. When old friends are not neglected by them, the people are preserved from meanness.”

The philosopher Tsang being ill, he cared to him the disciples of his school, and said, “Uncover my feet, uncover my hands. It is said in the Book of Poetry, ‘We should be apprehensive and cautious, as if on the brink of a deep gulf, as if treading on thin ice, I and so have I been. Now and hereafter, I know my escape from all injury to my person. O ye, my little children.”

The philosopher Tsang being ill, Meng Chang went to ask how he was.

Tsang said to him, “When a bird is about to die, its notes are mournful; when a man is about to die, his words are good.

“There are three principles of conduct which the man of high rank should consider specially important: that in his deportment and manner he keep from violence and heedlessness; that in regulating his countenance he keep near to sincerity; and that in his words and tones he keep far from lowness and impropriety. As to such matters as attending to the sacrificial vessels, there are the proper officers for them.”

The philosopher Tsang said, “Gifted with ability, and yet putting questions to those who were not so; possessed of much, and yet putting questions to those possessed of little; having, as though he had not; full, and yet counting himself as empty; offended against, and yet entering into no altercation; formerly I had a friend who pursued this style of conduct.”

The philosopher Tsang said, “Suppose that there is an individual who can be entrusted with the charge of a young orphan prince, and can be commissioned with authority over a state of a hundred li, and whom no emergency however great can drive from his principles: is such a man a superior man? He is a superior man indeed.”

The philosopher Tsang said, “The officer may not be without breadth of mind and vigorous endurance. His burden is heavy and his course is long.

“Perfect virtue is the burden which he considers it is his to sustain; is it not heavy? Only with death does his course stop; is it not long?

The Master said, “It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused. “It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. “It is from Music that the finish is received.”

it.” The Master said, “The people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be made to understand

The Master said, “The man who is fond of daring and is dissatisfied with poverty, will proceed to insubordination. So will the man who is not virtuous, when you carry your dislike of him to an extreme.”

The Master said, “Though a man have abilities as admirable as those of the Duke of Chau, yet if he be proud and niggardly, those other things are really not worth being looked at.”

The Master said, “It is not easy to find a man who has learned for three years without coming to be good.”

The Master said, “With sincere faith he unites the love of learning; holding firm to death, he is perfecting the excellence of his course.

“Such an one will not enter a tottering state, nor dwell in a disorganized one. When right principles of government prevail in the kingdom, he will show himself; when they are prostrated, he will keep concealed.

“When a country is well governed, poverty and a mean condition are things to be ashamed of. When a country is ill governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of.”

The Master said, “He who is not in any particular office has nothing to do with plans for the administration of its duties.”

The Master said, “When the music master Chih first entered on his office, the finish of the Kwan Tsu was magnificent; how it filled the ears!”

The Master said, “Ardent and yet not upright, stupid and yet not attentive; simple and yet not sincere: such persons I do not understand.”

The Master said, “Learn as if you could not reach your object, and were always fearing also lest you should lose it.”

The Master said, “How majestic was the manner in which Shun and Yu held possession of the empire, as if it were nothing to them!

The Master said, “Great indeed was Yao as a sovereign! How majestic was he! It is only Heaven that is grand, and only Yao corresponded to it. How vast was his virtue! The people could find no name for it.

“How majestic was he in the works which he accomplished! How glorious in the elegant regulations which he instituted!”

Shun had five ministers, and the empire was well governed.

King Wu said, “I have ten able ministers.”

Confucius said, “Is not the saying that talents are difficult to find, true? Only when the dynasties of T’ang and Yu met, were they more abundant than in this of Chau, yet there was a woman among them. The able ministers were no more than nine men.

“King Wan possessed two of the three parts of the empire, and with those he served the dynasty of Yin. The virtue of the house of Chau may be said to have reached the highest point indeed.”

The Master said, “I can find no flaw in the character of Yu. He used himself coarse food and drink, but displayed the utmost filial piety towards the spirits. His ordinary garments were poor, but he displayed the utmost elegance in his sacrificial cap and apron. He lived in a low, mean house, but expended all his strength on the ditches and water channels. I can find nothing like a flaw in Yu.”

9

The subjects of which the Master seldom spoke were profitableness, and also the appointments of Heaven, and perfect virtue.

A man of the village of Ta-hsiang said, “Great indeed is the philosopher K’ung! His learning is extensive, and yet he does not render his name famous by any particular thing.”

The Master heard the observation, and said to his disciples, “What shall I practice? Shall I practice charioteering, or shall I practice archery? I will practice charioteering.”

The Master said, “The linen cap is that prescribed by the rules of ceremony, but now a silk one is worn. It is economical, and I follow the common practice.

“The rules of ceremony prescribe the bowing below the hall, but now the practice is to bow only after ascending it. That is arrogant. I continue to bow below the hall, though I oppose the common practice.”

There were four things from which the Master was entirely free. He had no foregone conclusions, no arbitrary predeterminations, no obstinacy, and no egoism.

The Master was put in fear in K’wang.

He said, “After the death of King Wan, was not the cause of truth lodged here in me?

“If Heaven had wished to let this cause of truth perish, then I, a future mortal! should not have got such a relation to that cause. While Heaven does not let the cause of truth perish, what can the people of K’wang do to me?” A high officer asked Tsze-kung, saying, “May we not say that your Master is a sage? How various is his ability!” Tsze-kung said, “Certainly Heaven has endowed him unlimitedly. He is about a sage. And, moreover, his ability is various.”

The Master heard of the conversation and said, “Does the high officer know me? When I was young, my condition was low, and I acquired my ability in many things, but they were mean matters. Must the superior man have such variety of ability? He does not need variety of ability. Lao said, “The Master said, ‘Having no official employment, I acquired many arts.’”

The Master said, “Am I indeed possessed of knowledge? I am not knowing. But if a mean person, who appears quite empty like, ask anything of me, I set it forth from one end to the other, and exhaust it.”

The Master said, “The Fang bird does not come; the river sends forth no map: it is all over with me!”

When the Master saw a person in a mourning dress, or any one with the cap and upper and lower garments of full dress, or a blind person, on observing them approaching, though they were younger than himself, he would rise up, and if he had to pass by them, he would do so hastily.

Yen Yuan, in admiration of the Master’s doctrines, sighed and said, “I looked up to them, and they seemed to become more high; I tried to penetrate them, and they seemed to become more firm; I looked at them before me, and suddenly they seemed to be behind.

“The Master, by orderly method, skillfully leads men on. He enlarged my mind with learning, and taught me the restraints of propriety.

“When I wish to give over the study of his doctrines, I cannot do so, and having exerted all my ability, there seems something to stand right up before me; but though I wish to follow and lay hold of it, I really find no way to do so.”

The Master being very ill, Tsze-lu wished the disciples to act as ministers to him.

During a remission of his illness, he said, “Long has the conduct of Yu been deceitful! By pretending to have ministers when I have them not, whom should I impose upon? Should I impose upon Heaven?

“Moreover, than that I should die in the hands of ministers, is it not better that I should die in the hands of you, my disciples? And though I may not get a great burial, shall I die upon the road?”

Tsze-kung said, “There is a beautiful gem here. Should I lay it up in a case and keep it? or should I seek for a good price and sell it?” The Master said, “Sell it! Sell it! But I would wait for one to offer the price.”

The Master was wishing to go and live among the nine wild tribes of the east.
Some one said, “They are rude. How can you do such a thing?” The Master said, “If a superior man dwelt among them, what rudeness would there be?”

The Master said, “I returned from Wei to Lu, and then the music was reformed, and the pieces in the Royal songs and Praise songs all found their proper places.”

The Master said, “Abroad, to serve the high ministers and nobles; at home, to serve one’s father and elder brothers; in all duties to the dead, not to dare not to exert one’s self; and not to be overcome of wine: which one of these things do I attain to?”

The Master standing by a stream, said, “It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!”

The Master said, “I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty.”

The Master said, “The prosecution of learning may be compared to what may happen in raising a mound. If there want but one basket of earth to complete the work, and I stop, the stopping is my own work. It may be compared to throwing down the earth on the level ground. Though but one basketful is thrown at a time, the advancing with it my own going forward.”

The Master said, “Never flagging when I set forth anything to him; ah! that is Hui.” The Master said of Yen Yuan, “Alas! I saw his constant advance. I never saw him stop in his progress.”

The Master said, “There are cases in which the blade springs, but the plant does not go on to flower! There are cases where it flowers but fruit is not subsequently produced!”

The Master said, “A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do we know that his future will not be equal to our present? If he reach the age of forty or fifty, and has not made himself heard of, then indeed he will not be worth being regarded with respect.”

The Master said, “Can men refuse to assent to the words of strict admonition? But it is reforming the conduct because of them which is valuable. Can men refuse to be pleased with words of gentle advice? But it is unfolding their aim which is valuable. If a man be pleased with these words, but does not unfold their aim, and assents to those, but does not reform his conduct, I can really do nothing with him.”

The Master said, “Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles. Have no friends not equal to yourself. When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”

The Master said, “The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him.”

The Master said, “Dressed himself in a tattered robe quilted with hemp, yet standing by the side of men dressed in furs, and not ashamed; ah! it is Yu who is equal to this!

“He dislikes none, he covets nothing; what can he do but what is good!”

Tsze-lu kept continually repeating these words of the ode, when the Master said, “Those things are by no means sufficient to constitute perfect excellence.”

The Master said, “When the year becomes cold, then we know how the pine and the cypress are the last to lose their leaves.”

The Master said, “The wise are free from perplexities; the virtuous from anxiety; and the bold from fear.”

The Master said, “There are some with whom we may study in common, but we shall find them unable to go along with us to principles. Perhaps we may go on with them to principles, but we shall find them unable to get established in those along with us. Or if we may get so established along with them, we shall find them unable to weigh occurring events along with us.”

“How the flowers of the aspen-plum flutter and turn! Do I not think of you? But your house is distant.” The Master said, “It is the want of thought about it. How is it distant?”

10

Confucius, in his village, looked simple and sincere, and as if he were not able to speak.

When he was in the prince’s ancestral temple, or in the court, he spoke minutely on every point, but cautiously. When he was waiting at court, in speaking with the great officers of the lower grade, he spoke freely, but in a straightforward manner; in speaking with those of the higher grade, he did so blandly, but precisely.

When the ruler was present, his manner displayed respectful uneasiness; it was grave, but self-possessed. When the prince called him to employ him in the reception of a visitor, his countenance appeared to change, and his legs to move forward with difficulty.

He inclined himself to the other officers among whom he stood, moving his left or right arm, as their position required, but keeping the skirts of his robe before and behind evenly adjusted.

He hastened forward, with his arms like the wings of a bird.

When the guest had retired, he would report to the prince, “The visitor is not turning round any more.”

When he entered the palace gate, he seemed to bend his body, as if it were not sufficient to admit him.

When he was standing, he did not occupy the middle of the gateway; when he passed in or out, he did not tread upon the threshold.

When he was passing the vacant place of the prince, his countenance appeared to change, and his legs to bend under him, and his words came as if he hardly had breath to utter them.

He ascended the reception hall, holding up his robe with both his hands, and his body bent; holding in his breath also, as if he dared not breathe.

When he came out from the audience, as soon as he had descended one step, he began to relax his countenance,

and had a satisfied look. When he had got the bottom of the steps, he advanced rapidly to his place, with his arms like wings, and on occupying it, his manner still showed respectful uneasiness.

When he was carrying the scepter of his ruler, he seemed to bend his body, as if he were not able to bear its weight. He did not hold it higher than the position of the hands in making a bow, nor lower than their position in giving anything to another. His countenance seemed to change, and look apprehensive, and he dragged his feet along as if they were held by something to the ground.

In presenting the presents with which he was charged, he wore a placid appearance.

At his private audience, he looked highly pleased.

The superior man did not use a deep purple, or a puce color, in the ornaments of his dress.

Even in his undress, he did not wear anything of a red or reddish color.

In warm weather, he had a single garment either of coarse or fine texture, but he wore it displayed over an inner garment.

Over lamb's fur he wore a garment of black; over fawn's fur one of white; and over fox's fur one of yellow.

The fur robe of his undress was long, with the right sleeve short.

He required his sleeping dress to be half as long again as his body.

When staying at home, he used thick furs of the fox or the badger.

When he put off mourning, he wore all the appendages of the girdle.

His undergarment, except when it was required to be of the curtain shape, was made of silk cut narrow above and wide below.

He did not wear lamb's fur or a black cap on a visit of condolence.

On the first day of the month he put on his court robes, and presented himself at court.

When fasting, he thought it necessary to have his clothes brightly clean and made of linen cloth.

When fasting, he thought it necessary to change his food, and also to change the place where he commonly sat in the apartment.

He did not dislike to have his rice finely cleaned, nor to have his mince meat cut quite small.

He did not eat rice which had been injured by heat or damp and turned sour, nor fish or flesh which was gone.

He did not eat what was discolored, or what was of a bad flavor, nor anything which was ill-cooked, or was not in season.

He did not eat meat which was not cut properly, nor what was served without its proper sauce.

Though there might be a large quantity of meat, he would not allow what he took to exceed the due proportion for the rice. It was only in wine that he laid down no limit for himself, but he did not allow himself to be confused by it.

He did not partake of wine and dried meat bought in the market.

He was never without ginger when he ate. He did not eat much.

When he had been assisting at the prince's sacrifice, he did not keep the flesh which he received overnight. The flesh of his family sacrifice he did not keep over three days. If kept over three days, people could not eat it.

When eating, he did not converse. When in bed, he did not speak.

Although his food might be coarse rice and vegetable soup, he would offer a little of it in sacrifice with a grave, respectful air.

If his mat was not straight, he did not sit on it.

When the villagers were drinking together, upon those who carried staffs going out, he also went out immediately after.

When the villagers were going through their ceremonies to drive away pestilential influences, he put on his court robes and stood on the eastern steps.

When he was sending complimentary inquiries to any one in another state, he bowed twice as he escorted the messenger away.

Chi K'ang having sent him a present of physic, he bowed and received it, saying, "I do not know it. I dare not taste it."

The stable being burned down, when he was at court, on his return he said, "Has any man been hurt?" He did not ask about the horses.

When the he would adjust his mat, first taste it, and then give it away to others. When the prince sent him a gift of undressed meat, he would have it cooked, and offer it to the spirits of his ancestors. When the prince sent him a gift of a living animal, he would keep it alive.

When he was in attendance on the prince and joining in the entertainment, the prince only sacrificed. He first tasted everything.

When he was ill and the prince came to visit him, he had his head to the east, made his court robes be spread over him, and drew his girdle across them.

When the prince's order called him, without waiting for his carriage to be yoked, he went at once. When he entered the ancestral temple of the state, he asked about everything.

When any of his friends died, if he had no relations offices, he would say, “I will bury him.” When a friend sent him a present, though it might be a carriage and horses, he did not bow.

The only present for which he bowed was that of the flesh of sacrifice.

In bed, he did not lie like a corpse. At home, he did not put on any formal deportment.

When he saw any one in a mourning dress, though it might be an acquaintance, he would change countenance;

when he saw any one wearing the cap of full dress, or a blind person, though he might be in his undress, he would salute him in a ceremonious manner.

To any person in mourning he bowed forward to the crossbar of his carriage; he bowed in the same way to any one bearing the tables of population.

When he was at an entertainment where there was an abundance of provisions set before him, he would change countenance and rise up.

On a sudden clap of thunder, or a violent wind, he would change countenance.

When he was about to mount his carriage, he would stand straight, holding the cord.

When he was in the carriage, he did not turn his head quite round, he did not talk hastily, he did not point with his hands.

Seeing the countenance, it instantly rises. It flies round, and by and by settles.

The Master said, “There is the hen-pheasant on the hill bridge. At its season! At its season!” Tsze-lu made a motion to it. Thrice it smelt him and then rose.

11

The Master said, “The men of former times in the matters of ceremonies and music were rustics, it is said, while the men of these latter times, in ceremonies and music, are accomplished gentlemen.

“If I have occasion to use those things, I follow the men of former times.”

The Master said, “Of those who were with me in Ch’an and Ts’ai, there are none to be found to enter my door.” Distinguished for their virtuous principles and practice, there were Yen Yuan, Min Tsze-ch’ien, Zan Po-niu, and Chung-kung; for their ability in speech, Tsai Wo and Tsze-kung; for their administrative talents, Zan Yu and Chi Lu; for their literary acquirements, Tsze-yu and Tsze-hsia.

The Master said, “Hui gives me no assistance. There is nothing that I say in which he does not delight.”

The Master said, “Filial indeed is Min Tsze-ch’ien! Other people say nothing of him different from the report of his parents and brothers.”

Nan Yung was frequently repeating the lines about a white scepter stone. Confucius gave him the daughter of his elder brother to wife.

Chi K’ang asked which of the disciples loved to learn. Confucius replied to him, “There was Yen Hui; he loved to learn. Unfortunately his appointed time was short, and he died. Now there is no one who loves to learn, as he did.”When Yen Yuan died, Yen Lu begged the carriage of the Master to sell and get an outer shell for his son’s coffin. The Master said, “Every one calls his son his son, whether he has talents or has not talents. There was Li; when he died, he had a coffin but no outer shell. I would not walk on foot to get a shell for him, because, having followed in the rear of the great officers, it was not proper that I should walk on foot.”

When Yen Yuan died, the Master said, “Alas! Heaven is destroying me! Heaven is destroying me!”

When Yen Yuan died, the Master bewailed him exceedingly, and the disciples who were with him said, “Master, your grief is excessive!”

“Is it excessive?” said he. “If I am not to mourn bitterly for this man, for whom should I mourn?” so.” When Yen Yuan died, the disciples wished to give him a great funeral, and the Master said, “You may not do

The disciples did bury him in great style.

The Master said, “Hui behaved towards me as his father. I have not been able to treat him as my son. The fault is not mine; it belongs to you, O disciples.”

Chi Lu asked about serving the spirits of the dead. The Master said, “While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?” Chi Lu added, “I venture to ask about death?” He was answered, “While you do not know life, how can you know about death?”

The disciple Min was standing by his side, looking bland and precise; Tsze-lu, looking bold and soldierly; Zan Yu and Tsze-kung, with a free and straightforward manner. The Master was pleased.

He said, “Yu, there! he will not die a natural death.”

Some parties in Lu were going to take down and rebuild the Long Treasury.

Min Tsze-ch’ien said, “Suppose it were to be repaired after its old style; why must it be altered and made anew?”

The Master said, “This man seldom speaks; when he does, he is sure to hit the point.”

The Master said, “What has the lute of Yu to do in my door?”

The other disciples began not to respect Tszelu. The Master said, “Yu has ascended to the hall, though he has not yet passed into the inner apartments.”

Tsze-kung asked which of the two, Shih or Shang, was the superior. The Master said, “Shih goes beyond the due mean, and Shang does not come up to it.”

“Then,” said Tsze-kung, “the superiority is with Shih, I suppose.”

The Master said, “To go beyond is as wrong as to fall short.”

The head of the Chi family was richer than the duke of Chau had been, and yet Ch’iu collected his imposts for him, and increased his wealth.

The Master said, “He is no disciple of mine. My little children, beat the drum and assail him.”

Ch’ai is simple. Shan is dull. Shih is specious. Yu is coarse.

The Master said, “There is Hui! He has nearly attained to perfect virtue. He is often in want.

“Ts’ze does not acquiesce in the appointments of Heaven, and his goods are increased by him. Yet his judgments are often correct.”

Tsze-chang asked what were the characteristics of the good man. The Master said, “He does not tread in the footsteps of others, but moreover, he does not enter the chamber of the sage.”

The Master said, “If, because a man’s discourse appears solid and sincere, we allow him to be a good man, is he really a superior man? or is his gravity only in appearance?”

Tsze-lu asked whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard. The Master said, “There are your father and elder brothers to be consulted; why should you act on that principle of immediately carrying into practice what you hear?” Zan Yu asked the same, whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard, and the Master answered, “Immediately carry into practice what you hear.” Kung-hsi Hwa said, “Yu asked whether he should carry immediately into practice what he heard, and you said, ‘There are your father and elder brothers to be consulted.’ Ch’iu asked whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard, and you said, ‘Carry it immediately into practice.’ I, Ch’ih, am perplexed, and venture to ask you for an explanation.” The Master said, “Ch’iu is retiring and slow; therefore I urged him forward. Yu has more than his own share of energy; therefore I kept him back.”

The Master was put in fear in K’wang and Yen Yuan fell behind. The Master, on his rejoining him, said, “I thought you had died.” Hui replied, “While you were alive, how should I presume to die?”

Chi Tsze-zan asked whether Chung Yu and Zan Ch’iu could be called great ministers.

The Master said, “I thought you would ask about some extraordinary individuals, and you only ask about Yu and Ch’iu!

“What is called a great minister, is one who serves his prince according to what is right, and when he finds he cannot do so, retires.

“Now, as to Yu and Ch’iu, they may be called ordinary ministers.”

Tsze-zan said, “Then they will always follow their chief; win they?”

The Master said, “In an act of parricide or regicide, they would not follow him.”

Tsze-lu got Tsze-kao appointed governor of Pi.

The Master said, “You are injuring a man’s son.”

Tsze-lu said, “There are, there, common people and officers; there are the altars of the spirits of the land and grain. Why must one read books before he can be considered to have learned?”

The Master said, “It is on this account that I hate your glib-tongued people.”

Tsze-lu, Tsang Hsi, Zan Yu, and Kunghsi Hwa were sitting by the Master.

He said to them, “Though I am a day or so older than you, do not think of that.

“From day to day you are saying, ‘We are not known.’ If some ruler were to know you, what would you like to do?”Tsze-lu hastily and lightly replied, “Suppose the case of a state of ten thousand chariots; let it be straitened between other large cities; let it be suffering from invading armies; and to this let there be added a famine in corn and in all vegetables: if I were intrusted with the government of it, in three years’ time I could make the people to be bold, and to recognize the rules of righteous conduct.” The Master smiled at him.

Turning to Yen Yu, he said, “Ch’iu, what are your wishes?” Ch’iu replied, “Suppose a state of sixty or seventy li square, or one of fifty or sixty, and let me have the government of it; in three years’ time, I could make plenty to abound among the people. As to teaching them the principles of propriety, and music, I must wait for the rise of a superior man to do that.”

“What are your wishes, Ch’ih,” said the Master next to Kung-hsi Hwa. Ch’ih replied, “I do not say that my ability extends to these things, but I should wish to learn them. At the services of the ancestral temple, and at the audiences of the princes with the sovereign, I should like, dressed in the dark square-made robe and the black linen cap, to act as a small assistant.”

Last of all, the Master asked Tsang Hsi, “Tien, what are your wishes?” Tien, pausing as he was playing on his lute, while it was yet twanging, laid the instrument aside, and “My wishes,” he said, “are different from the cherished purposes of these three gentlemen.” “What harm is there in that?” said the Master; “do you also, as well as they, speak out your wishes.” Tien then said, “In this, the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the I, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.” The Master heaved a sigh and said, “I give my approval to Tien.”

The three others having gone out, Tsang Hsi remained behind, and said, “What do you think of the words of these three friends?” The Master replied, “They simply told each one his wishes.”

Hsi pursued, “Master, why did you smile at Yu?”

He was answered, “The management of a state demands the rules of propriety. His words were not humble; therefore I smiled at him.”

Hsi again said, “But was it not a state which Ch’iu proposed for himself?” The reply was, “Yes; did you ever see a territory of sixty or seventy li or one of fifty or sixty, which was not a state?”

Once more, Hsi inquired, “And was it not a state which Ch’ih proposed for himself?” The Master again replied, “Yes; who but princes have to do with ancestral temples, and with audiences but the sovereign? If Ch’ih were to be a small assistant in these services, who could be a great one?

12

Yen Yuan asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, an under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?”

Yen Yuan said, “I beg to ask the steps of that process.” The Master replied, “Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety.” Yen Yuan then said, “Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practice this lesson.”

Chung-kung asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “It is, when you go abroad, to behave to every one as if you were receiving a great guest; to employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself; to have no murmuring against you in the country, and none in the family.” Chung-kung said, “Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practice this lesson.”

Sze-ma Niu asked about perfect virtue.

The Master said, “The man of perfect virtue is cautious and slow in his speech.” “Cautious and slow in his speech!” said Niu; ”is this what is meant by perfect virtue?” The Master said, “When a man feels the difficulty of doing, can he be other than cautious and slow in speaking?”

Sze-ma Niu asked about the superior man. The Master said, “The superior man has neither anxiety nor fear.” “Being without anxiety or fear!” said Nui;”does this constitute what we call the superior man?”

The Master said, “When internal examination discovers nothing wrong, what is there to be anxious about, what is there to fear?”

Sze-ma Niu, full of anxiety, said, “Other men all have their brothers, I only have not.”

Tsze-hsia said to him, “There is the following saying which I have heard ‘Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honors depend upon Heaven.’

“Let the superior man never fail reverentially to order his own conduct, and let him be respectful to others and observant of propriety: then all within the four seas will be his brothers. What has the superior man to do with being distressed because he has no brothers?”

Tsze-chang asked what constituted intelligence. The Master said, “He with whom neither slander that gradually soaks into the mind, nor statements that startle like a wound in the flesh, are successful may be called intelligent indeed. Yea, he with whom neither soaking slander, nor startling statements, are successful, may be called farseeing.”

Tsze-kung asked about government. The Master said, “The requisites of government are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler.”

Tsze-kung said, “If it cannot be helped, and one of these must be dispensed with, which of the three should be foregone first?” “The military equipment,” said the Master.

Tsze-kung again asked, “If it cannot be helped, and one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be foregone?” The Master answered, “Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of an men; but if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state.”

Chi Tsze-ch’ang said, “In a superior man it is only the substantial qualities which are wanted; why should we seek for ornamental accomplishments?”

Tsze-kung said, “Alas! Your words, sir, show you to be a superior man, but four horses cannot overtake the tongue. Ornament is as substance; substance is as ornament. The hide of a tiger or a leopard stripped of its hair, is like the hide of a dog or a goat stripped of its hair.”

The Duke Ai inquired of Yu Zo, saying, “The year is one of scarcity, and the returns for expenditure are not sufficient; what is to be done?”

Yu Zo replied to him, “Why not simply tithe the people?”

“With two tenths, said the duke, “I find it not enough; how could I do with that system of one tenth?”

Yu Zo answered, “If the people have plenty, their prince will not be left to want alone. If the people are in want, their prince cannot enjoy plenty alone.”

Tsze-chang having asked how virtue was to be exalted, and delusions to be discovered, the Master said, “Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles, and be moving continually to what is right, this is the way to exalt one’s virtue.

“You love a man and wish him to live; you hate him and wish him to die. Having wished him to live, you also wish him to die. This is a case of delusion. ‘It may not be on account of her being rich, yet you come to make a difference.’”

The Duke Ching, of Ch’i, asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, “There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son.”

“Good!” said the duke; “if, indeed, the prince be not prince, the not minister, the father not father, and the son not son, although I have my revenue, can I enjoy it?”

The Master said, “Ah! it is Yu, who could with half a word settle litigations!”
Tsze-lu never slept over a promise.

The Master said, “In hearing litigations, I am like any other body. What is necessary, however, is to cause the people to have no litigations.”

Tsze-chang asked about government. The Master said, “The art of governing is to keep its affairs before the mind without weariness, and to practice them with undeviating consistency.”

The Master said, “By extensively studying all learning, and keeping himself under the restraint of the rules of propriety, one may thus likewise not err from what is right.”

The Master said, “The superior man seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of men, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities. The mean man does the opposite of this.”

Chi K’ang asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, “To govern means to rectify. If you lead on the people with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?”

Chi K’ang, distressed about the number of thieves in the state, inquired of Confucius how to do away with them. Confucius said, “If you, sir, were not covetous, although you should reward them to do it, they would not steal.”

Chi K’ang asked Confucius about government, saying, “What do you say to killing the unprincipled for the good of the principled?” Confucius replied, “Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it.”

Tsze-chang asked, “What must the officer be, who may be said to be distinguished?”

The Master said, “What is it you call being distinguished?”

Tsze-chang replied, “It is to be heard of through the state, to be heard of throughout his clan.” The Master said, “That is notoriety, not distinction.

“Now the man of distinction is solid and straightforward, and loves righteousness. He examines people’s words, and looks at their countenances. He is anxious to humble himself to others. Such a man will be distinguished in the country; he will be distinguished in his clan.

“As to the man of notoriety, he assumes the appearance of virtue, but his actions are opposed to it, and he rests in this character without any doubts about himself. Such a man will be heard of in the country; he will be heard of in the clan.”

Fan Ch’ih rambling with the Master under the trees about the rain altars, said, “I venture to ask how to exalt virtue, to correct cherished evil, and to discover delusions.”

The Master said, “Truly a good question!

“If doing what is to be done be made the first business, and success a secondary consideration: is not this the way to exalt virtue? To assail one’s own wickedness and not assail that of others; is not this the way to correct cherished evil? For a morning’s anger to disregard one’s own life, and involve that of his parents; is not this a case of delusion?”

Fan Ch’ih asked about benevolence. The Master said, “It is to love all men.” He asked about knowledge. The Master said, “It is to know all men.”

Fan Ch’ih did not immediately understand these answers.

The Master said, “Employ the upright and put aside all the crooked; in this way the crooked can be made to be upright.”

Fan Ch’ih retired, and, seeing Tsze-hsia, he said to him, “A Little while ago, I had an interview with our Master, and asked him about knowledge. He said, ‘Employ the upright, and put aside all the crooked; in this way, the crooked will be made to be upright.’ What did he mean?”

Tsze-hsia said, “Truly rich is his saying!

“Shun, being in possession of the kingdom, selected from among all the people, and employed Kai-yao-on which all who were devoid of virtue disappeared. T’ang, being in possession of the kingdom, selected from among all the people, and employed I Yin- and an who were devoid of virtue disappeared.”

Tsze-kung asked about friendship. The Master said, “Faithfully admonish your friend, and skillfully lead him on. If you find him impracticable, stop. Do not disgrace yourself.”

The philosopher Tsang said, “The superior man on grounds of culture meets with his friends, and by friendship helps his virtue.”

13

Tsze-lu asked about government. The Master said, “Go before the people with your example, and be laborious in their affairs.”

He requested further instruction, and was answered, “Be not weary in these things.”

Chung-kung, being chief minister to the head of the Chi family, asked about government. The Master said, “Employ first the services of your various officers, pardon small faults, and raise to office men of virtue and talents.”

Chung-kung said, “How shall I know the men of virtue and talent, so that I may raise them to office?” He was answered, “Raise to office those whom you know. As to those whom you do not know, will others neglect them?”

Tsze-lu said, “The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?”

The Master replied, “What is necessary is to rectify names.”

“So! indeed!” said Tsze-lu. “You are wide of the mark! Why must there be such rectification?”

The Master said, “How uncultivated you are, Yu! A superior man, in regard to what he does not know, shows a cautious reserve.

“If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success.

“When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music do not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot.

“Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect.”

Fan Ch’ih requested to be taught husbandry. The Master said, “I am not so good for that as an old husbandman.” He requested also to be taught gardening, and was answered, “I am not so good for that as an old gardener.”

Fan Ch’ih having gone out, the Master said, “A small man, indeed, is Fan Hsu! If a superior man love propriety, the people will not dare not to be reverent. If he love righteousness, the people will not dare not to submit to his example. If he love good faith, the people will not dare not to be sincere. Now, when these things obtain, the people from all quarters will come to him, bearing their children on their backs; what need has he of a knowledge of husbandry?”

The Master said, “Though a man may be able to recite the three hundred odes, yet if, when intrusted with a governmental charge, he knows not how to act, or if, when sent to any quarter on a mission, he cannot give his replies unassisted, notwithstanding the extent of his learning, of what practical use is it?”

The Master said, “When a prince’s personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders, but they will not be followed.”

The Master said, “The governments of Lu and Wei are brothers.”

The Master said of Ching, a scion of the ducal family of Wei, that he knew the economy of a family well. When he began to have means, he said, “Ha! here is a collection !” When they were a little increased, he said, “Ha! this is complete!” When he had become rich, he said, “Ha! this is admirable!”

When the Master went to Weil Zan Yu acted as driver of his carriage.

The Master observed, “How numerous are the people!”

Yu said, “Since they are thus numerous, what more shall be done for them?” “Enrich them, was the reply. “And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?” The Master said, “Teach them.”

The Master said, “If there were any of the princes who would employ me, in the course of twelve months, I should have done something considerable. In three years, the government would be perfected.”

The Master said, “‘If good men were to govern a country in succession for a hundred years, they would be able to transform the violently bad, and dispense with capital punishments.’ True indeed is this saying!”

The Master said, “If a truly royal ruler were to arise, it would stir require a generation, and then virtue would prevail.”

The Master said, “If a minister make his own conduct correct, what difficulty will he have in assisting in government? If he cannot rectify himself, what has he to do with rectifying others?”

The disciple Zan returning from the court, the Master said to him, “How are you so late?” He replied, “We had government business.” The Master said, “It must have been family affairs. If there had been government business, though I am not now in office, I should have been consulted about it.”

The Duke Ting asked whether there was a single sentence which could make a country prosperous. Confucius replied, “Such an effect cannot be expected from one sentence.

“There is a saying, however, which people have ‘To be a prince is difficult; to be a minister is not easy.’

“If a ruler knows this, the difficulty of being a prince, may there not be expected from this one sentence the prosperity of his country?”

The duke then said, “Is there a single sentence which can ruin a country?” Confucius replied, “Such an effect as that cannot be expected from one sentence. There is, however, the saying which people have ‘I have no pleasure in being a prince, but only in that no one can offer any opposition to what I say!’

“If a ruler’s words be good, is it not also good that no one oppose them? But if they are not good, and no one opposes them, may there not be expected from this one sentence the ruin of his country?”

The Duke of Sheh asked about government.

The Master said, “Good government obtains when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far off are attracted.”

Tsze-hsia! being governor of Chu-fu, asked about government. The Master said, “Do not be desirous to have things done quickly; do not look at small advantages. Desire to have things done quickly prevents their being done thoroughly. Looking at small advantages prevents great affairs from being accomplished.”

The Duke of Sheh informed Confucius, saying, “Among us here there are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact.”

Confucius said, “Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this.”

Fan Ch’ih asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “It is, in retirement, to be sedately grave; in the management of business, to be reverently attentive; in intercourse with others, to be strictly sincere. Though a man go among rude, uncultivated tribes, these qualities may not be neglected.”

Tsze-kung asked, saying, “What qualities must a man possess to entitle him to be called an officer? The Master said, “He who in his conduct of himself maintains a sense of shame, and when sent to any quarter will not disgrace his prince’s commission, deserves to be called an officer.”

Tsze-kung pursued, “I venture to ask who may be placed in the next lower rank?” And he was told, “He whom the circle of his relatives pronounce to be filial, whom his fellow villagers and neighbors pronounce to be fraternal.”

Again the disciple asked, “I venture to ask about the class still next in order.” The Master said, “They are determined to be sincere in what they say, and to carry out what they do. They are obstinate little men. Yet perhaps they may make the next class.”

Tsze-kung finally inquired, “Of what sort are those of the present day, who engage in government?” The Master said “Pooh! they are so many pecks and hampers, not worth being taken into account.”

The Master said, “Since I cannot get men pursuing the due medium, to whom I might communicate my instructions, I must find the ardent and the cautiously-decided. The ardent will advance and lay hold of truth; the cautiously-decided will keep themselves from what is wrong.”

The Master said, “The people of the south have a saying ‘A man without constancy cannot be either a wizard or a doctor.’ Good!

“Inconstant in his virtue, he will be visited with disgrace.”

The Master said, “This arises simply from not attending to the prognostication.”

The Master said, “The superior man is affable, but not adulatory; the mean man is adulatory, but not affable.” Tsze-kung asked, saying, “What do you say of a man who is loved by all the people of his neighborhood?” The Master replied, “We may not for that accord our approval of him.” “And what do you say of him who is hated by all the people of his neighborhood?” The Master said, “We may not for that conclude that he is bad. It is better than either of these cases that the good in the neighborhood love him, and the bad hate him.”

The Master said, “The superior man is easy to serve and difficult to please. If you try to please him in any way which is not accordant with right, he will not be pleased. But in his employment of men, he uses them according to their capacity. The mean man is difficult to serve, and easy to please. If you try to please him, though it be in a way which is not accordant with right, he may be pleased. But in his employment of men, he wishes them to be equal to everything.”

The Master said, “The superior man has a dignified ease without pride. The mean man has pride without a dignified ease.”

The Master said, “The firm, the enduring, the simple, and the modest are near to virtue.”

Tsze-lu asked, saying, “What qualities must a man possess to entitle him to be called a scholar?” The Master said, “He must be thus, earnest, urgent, and bland: among his friends, earnest and urgent; among his brethren, bland.”

The Master said, “Let a good man teach the people seven years, and they may then likewise be employed in war.”The Master said, “To lead an uninstructed people to war, is to throw them away.”

14

Hsien asked what was shameful. The Master said, “When good government prevails in a state, to be thinking only of salary; and, when bad government prevails, to be thinking, in the same way, only of salary; this is shameful.”

“When the love of superiority, boasting, resentments, and covetousness are repressed, this may be deemed perfect virtue.”

The Master said, “This may be regarded as the achievement of what is difficult. But I do not know that it is to be deemed perfect virtue.”

The Master said, “The scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar.”

The Master said, “When good government prevails in a state, language may be lofty and bold, and actions the same. When bad government prevails, the actions may be lofty and bold, but the language may be with some reserve.”

The Master said, “The virtuous will be sure to speak correctly, but those whose speech is good may not always be virtuous. Men of principle are sure to be bold, but those who are bold may not always be men of principle.”

Nan-kung Kwo, submitting an inquiry to Confucius, said, “I was skillful at archery, and Ao could move a boat along upon the land, but neither of them died a natural death. Yu and Chi personally wrought at the toils of husbandry, and they became possessors of the kingdom.” The Master made no reply; but when Nan-kung Kwo went out, he said, “A superior man indeed is this! An esteemer of virtue indeed is this!”

The Master said, “Superior men, and yet not always virtuous, there have been, alas! But there never has been a mean man, and, at the same time, virtuous.”

The Master said, “Can there be love which does not lead to strictness with its object? Can there be loyalty which does not lead to the instruction of its object?”

The Master said, “In preparing the governmental notifications, P’i Shan first made the rough draft; Shi-shu examined and discussed its contents; Tsze-yu, the manager of foreign intercourse, then polished the style; and, finally, Tsze-ch’an of Tung-li gave it the proper elegance and finish.”

Some one asked about Tsze-ch’an. The Master said, “He was a kind man.”

He asked about Tsze-hsi. The Master said, “That man! That man!”

He asked about Kwan Chung. “For him,” said the Master, “the city of Pien, with three hundred families, was taken from the chief of the Po family, who did not utter a murmuring word, though, to the end of his life, he had only coarse rice to eat.”

The Master said, “To be poor without murmuring is difficult. To be rich without being proud is easy.”

The Master said, “Mang Kung-ch’o is more than fit to be chief officer in the families of Chao and Wei, but he is not fit to be great officer to either of the states Tang or Hsieh.”

Tsze-lu asked what constituted a COMPLETE man. The Master said, “Suppose a man with the knowledge of Tsang Wu-chung, the freedom from covetousness of Kung-ch’o, the bravery of Chwang of Pien, and the varied talents of Zan Ch’iu; add to these the accomplishments of the rules of propriety and music; such a one might be reckoned a COMPLETE man.”

He then added, “But what is the necessity for a complete man of the present day to have all these things? The man, who in the view of gain, thinks of righteousness; who in the view of danger is prepared to give up his life; and who does not forget an old agreement however far back it extends: such a man may be reckoned a COMPLETE man.”

The Master asked Kung-ming Chia about Kung-shu Wan, saying, “Is it true that your master speaks not, laughs not, and takes not?”

Kung-ming Chia replied, “This has arisen from the reporters going beyond the truth. My master speaks when it is the time to speak, and so men do not get tired of his speaking. He laughs when there is occasion to be joyful, and so men do not get tired of his laughing. He takes when it is consistent with righteousness to do so, and so men do not get tired of his taking.” The Master said, “So! But is it so with him?”

The Master said, “Tsang Wu-chung, keeping possession of Fang, asked of the duke of Lu to appoint a successor to him in his family. Although it may be said that he was not using force with his sovereign, I believe he was.”

The Master said, “The duke Wan of Tsin was crafty and not upright. The duke Hwan of Ch’i was upright and not crafty.”

Tsze-lu said, “The Duke Hwan caused his brother Chiu to be killed, when Shao Hu died, with his master, but Kwan Chung did not die. May not I say that he was wanting in virtue?”

The Master said, “The Duke Hwan assembled all the princes together, and that not with weapons of war and chariots: it was all through the influence of Kwan Chung. Whose beneficence was like his? Whose beneficence was like his?”

Tsze-kung said, “Kwan Chung, I apprehend was wanting in virtue. When the Duke Hwan caused his brother Chiu to be killed, Kwan Chung was not able to die with him. Moreover, he became prime minister to Hwan.”

The Master said, “Kwan Chung acted as prime minister to the Duke Hwan made him leader of all the princes, and united and rectified the whole kingdom. Down to the present day, the people enjoy the gifts which he conferred. But for Kwan Chung, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoning on the left side.

“Will you require from him the small fidelity of common men and common women, who would commit suicide in a stream or ditch, no one knowing anything about them?”

The great officer, Hsien, who had been family minister to Kung-shu Wan, ascended to the prince’s court in company with Wan.

The Master, having heard of it, said, “He deserved to be considered WAN (the accomplished).”

The Master was speaking about the unprincipled course of the duke Ling of Weil when Ch'i K'ang said, "Since he is of such a character, how is it he does not lose his state?"

Confucius said, "The Chung-shu Yu has the superintendence of his guests and of strangers; the litanist, T'o, has the management of his ancestral temple; and Wang-sun Chia has the direction of the army and forces: with such officers as these, how should he lose his state?"

The Master said, "He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good."

Chan Ch'ang murdered the Duke Chien of Ch'i.

Confucius bathed, went to court and informed the Duke Ai, saying, "Chan Hang has slain his sovereign. I beg that you will undertake to punish him."

The duke said, "Inform the chiefs of the three families of it."

Confucius retired, and said, "Following in the rear of the great officers, I did not dare not to represent such a matter, and my prince says, "Inform the chiefs of the three families of it."

He went to the chiefs, and informed them, but they would not act. Confucius then said, "Following in the rear of the great officers, I did not dare not to represent such a matter."

Tsze-lu asked how a ruler should be served. The Master said, "Do not impose on him, and, moreover, withstand him to his face."

The Master said, "The progress of the superior man is upwards; the progress of the mean man is downwards." The Master said, "In ancient times, men learned with a view to their own improvement. Nowadays, men learn with a view to the approbation of others."

Chu Po-yu sent a messenger with friendly inquiries to Confucius.

Confucius sat with him, and questioned him. "What," said he! "is your master engaged in?" The messenger replied, "My master is anxious to make his faults few, but he has not yet succeeded." He then went out, and the Master said, "A messenger indeed! A messenger indeed!"

The Master said, "He who is not in any particular office has nothing to do with plans for the administration of its duties."

The philosopher Tsang said, "The superior man, in his thoughts, does not go out of his place."

The Master said, "The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions."

The Master said, "The way of the superior man is threefold, but I am not equal to it. Virtuous, he is free from anxieties; wise, he is free from perplexities; bold, he is free from fear.

Tsze-kung said, "Master, that is what you yourself say."

Tsze-kung was in the habit of comparing men together. The Master said, "Tsze must have reached a high pitch of excellence! Now, I have not leisure for this."

The Master said, "I will not be concerned at men's not knowing me; I will be concerned at my own want of ability."

The Master said, "He who does not anticipate attempts to deceive him, nor think beforehand of his not being believed, and yet apprehends these things readily when they occur; is he not a man of superior worth?" Wei-shang Mau said to Confucius, "Ch'iu, how is it that you keep roosting about? Is it not that you are an insinuating talker?

Confucius said, "I do not dare to play the part of such a talker, but I hate obstinacy."

The Master said, "A horse is called a ch'i, not because of its strength, but because of its other good qualities." Some one said, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The Master said, "With what then will you recompense kindness?"

"Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."

The Master said, "Alas! there is no one that knows me."

Tsze-kung said, "What do you mean by thus saying that no one knows you?" The Master replied, "I do not murmur against Heaven. I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, and my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven; that knows me!"

The Kung-po Liao, having slandered Tsze-lu to Chi-sun, Tsze-fu Ching-po informed Confucius of it, saying, “Our master is certainly being led astray by the Kung-po Liao, but I have still power enough left to cut Liao off, and expose his corpse in the market and in the court.”

The Master said, “If my principles are to advance, it is so ordered. If they are to fall to the ground, it is so ordered. What can the Kung-po Liao do where such ordering is concerned?”

The Master said, “Some men of worth retire from the world. Some retire from particular states. Some retire because of disrespectful looks. Some retire because of contradictory language.”

The Master said, “Those who have done this are seven men.”

Tsze-lu happening to pass the night in Shih-man, the gatekeeper said to him, “Whom do you come from?” Tsze-lu said, “From Mr. K’ung.” “It is he, is it not?” said the other, “who knows the impracticable nature of the times and yet will be doing in them.”

The Master was playing, one day, on a musical stone in Weil when a man carrying a straw basket passed door of the house where Confucius was, and said, “His heart is full who so beats the musical stone.”

A little while after, he added, “How contemptible is the one-ideaed obstinacy those sounds display! When one is taken no notice of, he has simply at once to give over his wish for public employment. ‘Deep water must be crossed with the clothes on; shallow water may be crossed with the clothes held up.’”

The Master said, “How determined is he in his purpose! But this is not difficult!”

Tsze-chang said, “What is meant when the Shu says that Kao-tsung, while observing the usual imperial mourning, was for three years without speaking?”

The Master said, “Why must Kao-tsung be referred to as an example of this? The ancients all did so. When the

sovereign died, the officers all attended to their several duties, taking instructions from the prime minister for three years.”

The Master said, “When rulers love to observe the rules of propriety, the people respond readily to the calls on them for service.”

Tsze-lu asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said, “The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness.” “And is this all?” said Tsze-lu. “He cultivates himself so as to give rest to others,” was the reply. “And is this all?” again asked Tsze-lu. The Master said, “He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people. He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people: even Yao and Shun were still solicitous about this.”

Yuan Zang was squatting on his heels, and so waited the approach of the Master, who said to him, “In youth not humble as befits a junior; in manhood, doing nothing worthy of being handed down; and living on to old age: this is to be a pest.” With this he hit him on the shank with his staff.

A youth of the village of Ch’ueh was employed by Confucius to carry the messages between him and his visitors. Some one asked about him, saying, “I suppose he has made great progress.”

The Master said, “I observe that he is fond of occupying the seat of a full-grown man; I observe that he walks shoulder to shoulder with his elders. He is not one who is seeking to make progress in learning. He wishes quickly to become a man.”

15

The Duke Ling of Wei asked Confucius about tactics. Confucius replied, “I have heard all about sacrificial vessels, but I have not learned military matters.” On this, he took his departure the next day.

When he was in Chan, their provisions were exhausted, and his followers became so in that they were unable to rise.

Tsze-lu, with evident dissatisfaction, said, “Has the superior man likewise to endure in this way?” The Master said, “The superior man may indeed have to endure want, but the mean man, when he is in want, gives way to unbridled license.”

The Master said, “Ts’ze, you think, I suppose, that I am one who learns many things and keeps them in memory?”

Tsze-kung replied, “Yes, but perhaps it is not so?”

“No,” was the answer; “I seek a unity all pervading.”

The Master said, “Yu I those who know virtue are few.”

The Master said, “May not Shun be instanced as having governed efficiently without exertion? What did he do?

He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat.”

Tsze-chang asked how a man should conduct himself, so as to be everywhere appreciated.

The Master said, “Let his words be sincere and truthful and his actions honorable and careful; such conduct may be practiced among the rude tribes of the South or the North. If his words be not sincere and truthful and his actions not honorable and carefull will he, with such conduct, be appreciated, even in his neighborhood?

“When he is standing, let him see those two things, as it were, fronting him. When he is in a carriage, let him see them attached to the yoke. Then may he subsequently carry them into practice.”

Tsze-chang wrote these counsels on the end of his sash.

The Master said, “Truly straightforward was the historiographer Yu. When good government prevailed in his state, he was like an arrow. When bad government prevailed, he was like an arrow. A superior man indeed is Chu Po-yu! When good government prevails in his state, he is to be found in office. When bad government prevails, he can roll his principles up, and keep them in his breast.”

The Master said, “When a man may be spoken with, not to speak to him is to err in reference to the man. When a man may not be spoken with, to speak to him is to err in reference to our words. The wise err neither in regard to their man nor to their words.”

The Master said, “The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete.”

Tsze-kung asked about the practice of virtue. The Master said, “The mechanic, who wishes to do his work well, must first sharpen his tools. When you are living in any state, take service with the most worthy among its great officers, and make friends of the most virtuous among its scholars.”

Yen Yuan asked how the government of a country should be administered. The Master said, “Follow the seasons of Hsia.

“Ride in the state carriage of Yin.

“Wear the ceremonial cap of Chau.

“Let the music be the Shao with its pantomimes. Banish the songs of Chang, and keep far from specious talkers. The songs of Chang are licentious; specious talkers are dangerous.”

The Master said, “If a man take no thought about what is distant, he will find sorrow near at hand.”

The Master said, “It is all over! I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty.”

The Master said, “Was not Tsang Wan like one who had stolen his situation? He knew the virtue and the talents of Hui of Liu-hsia, and yet did not procure that he should stand with him in court.”

The Master said, “He who requires much from himself and little from others, will keep himself from being the object of resentment.”

The Master said, “When a man is not in the habit of saying ‘What shall I think of this? What shall I think of this?’ I can indeed do nothing with him!”

The Master said, “When a number of people are together, for a whole day, without their conversation turning on righteousness, and when they are fond of carrying out the suggestions of a small shrewdness; theirs is indeed a hard case.”

The Master said, “The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety. He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This is indeed a superior man.”

The Master said, “The superior man is distressed by his want of ability. He is not distressed by men’s not knowing him.”

The Master said, “The superior man dislikes the thought of his name not being mentioned after his death.” The Master said, “What the superior man seeks, is in himself. What the mean man seeks, is in others.”

The Master said, “The superior man is dignified, but does not wrangle. He is sociable, but not a partisan.”

The Master said, “The superior man does not promote a man simply on account of his words, nor does he put aside good words because of the man.”

Tsze-kung asked, saying, “Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one’s life?” The Master said, “Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”

The Master said, “In my dealings with men, whose evil do I blame, whose goodness do I praise, beyond what is proper? If I do sometimes exceed in praise, there must be ground for it in my examination of the individual. “This people supplied the ground why the three dynasties pursued the path of straightforwardness.”

The Master said, “Even in my early days, a historiographer would leave a blank in his text, and he who had a horse would lend him to another to ride. Now, alas! there are no such things.”

The Master said, “Specious words confound virtue. Want of forbearance in small matters confounds great plans.”

The Master said, “When the multitude hate a man, it is necessary to examine into the case. When the multitude like a man, it is necessary to examine into the case.”

The Master said, “A man can enlarge the principles which he follows; those principles do not enlarge the man.” The Master said, “To have faults and not to reform them, this, indeed, should be pronounced having faults.” The Master said, “I have been the whole day without eating, and the whole night without sleeping: occupied with thinking. It was of no use. better plan is to learn.”

The Master said, “The object of the superior man is truth. Food is not his object. There is plowing; even in that there is sometimes want. So with learning; emolument may be found in it. The superior man is anxious lest he should not get truth; he is not anxious lest poverty should come upon him.”

The Master said, “When a man’s knowledge is sufficient to attain, and his virtue is not sufficient to enable him to hold, whatever he may have gained, he will lose again.

“When his knowledge is sufficient to attain, and he has virtue enough to hold fast, if he cannot govern with dignity, the people will not respect him.

“When his knowledge is sufficient to attain, and he has virtue enough to hold fast; when he governs also with dignity, yet if he try to move the people contrary to the rules of propriety: full excellence is not reached.”

The Master said, “The superior man cannot be known in little matters; but he may be intrusted with great concerns. The small man may not be intrusted with great concerns, but he may be known in little matters.”

The Master said, “Virtue is more to man than either water or fire. I have seen men die from treading on water and fire, but I have never seen a man die from treading the course of virtue.”

The Master said, “Let every man consider virtue as what devolves on himself. He may not yield the performance of it even to his teacher.”

The Master said, “The superior man is correctly firm, and not firm merely.”

The Master said, “A minister, in serving his prince, reverently discharges his duties, and makes his emolument a secondary consideration.”

The Master said, “In teaching there should be no distinction of classes.”

The Master said, “Those whose courses are different cannot lay plans for one another.”

The Master said, “In language it is simply required that it convey the meaning.”

The music master, Mien, having called upon him, when they came to the steps, the Master said, “Here are the steps.” When they came to the mat for the guest to sit upon, he said, “Here is the mat.” When all were seated, the Master informed him, saying, “So and so is here; so and so is here.”

The music master, Mien, having gone out, Tsze-chang asked, saying. “Is it the rule to tell those things to the music master?”

The Master said, “Yes. This is certainly the rule for those who lead the blind.”

16

The head of the Chi family was going to attack Chwan-yu.

Zan Yu and Chi-lu had an interview with Confucius, and said, “Our chief, Chil is going to commence operations against Chwan-yu.”

Confucius said, “Ch’iu, is it not you who are in fault here?

“Now, in regard to Chwan-yu, long ago, a former king appointed its ruler to preside over the sacrifices to the eastern Mang; moreover, it is in the midst of the territory of our state; and its ruler is a minister in direct connection with the sovereign: What has your chief to do with attacking it?”

Zan Yu said, “Our master wishes the thing; neither of us two ministers wishes it.”

Confucius said, “Ch’iu, there are the words of Chau Zan, ‘When he can put forth his ability, he takes his place in the ranks of office; when he finds himself unable to do so, he retires from it. How can he be used as a guide to a blind man, who does not support him when tottering, nor raise him up when fallen?’

“And further, you speak wrongly. When a tiger or rhinoceros escapes from his cage; when a tortoise or piece of jade is injured in its repository: whose is the fault?”

Zan Yu said, “But at present, Chwan-yu is strong and near to Pi; if our chief do not now take it, it will hereafter be a sorrow to his descendants.”

Confucius said. “Ch’iu, the superior man hates those declining to say ‘I want such and such a thing,’ and framing explanations for their conduct.

“I have heard that rulers of states and chiefs of families are not troubled lest their people should be few, but are troubled lest they should not keep their several places; that they are not troubled with fears of poverty, but are troubled with fears of a want of contented repose among the people in their several places. For when the people keep their several places, there will be no poverty; when harmony prevails, there will be no scarcity of people; and when there is such a contented repose, there will be no rebellious upsettings.

“So it is. Therefore, if remoter people are not submissive, all the influences of civil culture and virtue are to be cultivated to attract them to be so; and when they have been so attracted, they must be made contented and tranquil.

“Now, here are you, Yu and Ch’iu, assisting your chief. Remoter people are not submissive, and, with your help, he cannot attract them to him. In his own territory there are divisions and downfalls, leavings and separations, and, with your help, he cannot preserve it.

“And yet he is planning these hostile movements within the state. I am afraid that the sorrow of the Chi-sun family will not be on account of Chwan-yu, but will be found within the screen of their own court.”

Confucius said, “When good government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the son of Heaven. When bad government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the princes. When these things proceed from the princes, as a rule, the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in ten generations. When they proceed from the great officers of the princes, as a rule, the case will be few in which they do not lose their power in five generations. When the subsidiary ministers of the great officers hold in their grasp the orders of the state, as a rule the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in three generations.

“When right principles prevail in the kingdom, government will not be in the hands of the great officers. “When right principles prevail in the kingdom, there will be no discussions among the common people.” Confucius said, “The revenue of the state has left the ducal house now for five generations. The government has been in the hands of the great officers for four generations. On this account, the descendants of the three Hwan are much reduced.”

Confucius said, “There are three friendships which are advantageous, and three which are injurious. Friendship with the uplight; friendship with the sincere; and friendship with the man of much observation: these are advantageous. Friendship with the man of specious airs; friendship with the insinuatingly soft; and friendship with the glib-tongued: these are injurious.”

Confucius said, “There are three things men find enjoyment in which are advantageous, and three things they find enjoyment in which are injurious. To find enjoyment in the discriminating study of ceremonies and music; to find enjoyment in speaking of the goodness of others; to find enjoyment in having many worthy friends: these are advantageous. To find enjoyment in extravagant pleasures; to find enjoyment in idleness and sauntering; to find enjoyment in the pleasures of feasting: these are injurious.”

Confucius said, “There are three errors to which they who stand in the presence of a man of virtue and station are liable. They may speak when it does not come to them to speak; this is called rashness. They may not speak when it comes to them to speak; this is called concealment. They may speak without looking at the countenance of their superior; this is called blindness.”

Confucius said, “There are three things which the superior man guards against. In youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust. When he is strong and the physical powers are full of vigor, he guards against quarrelsomeness. When he is old, and the animal powers are decayed, he guards against covetousness.”

Confucius said, “There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of sages.

“The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven, and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of sages.”

Confucius said, “Those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so readily get possession of knowledge, are the next. Those who are dull and stupid, and yet compass the learning, are another class next to these. As to those who are dull and stupid and yet do not learn; they are the lowest of the people.”

Confucius said, “The superior man has nine things which are subjects with him of thoughtful consideration.

In regard to the use of his eyes, he is anxious to see clearly. In regard to the use of his ears, he is anxious to hear distinctly. In regard to his countenance, he is anxious that it should be benign. In regard to his demeanor, he is anxious that it should be respectful. In regard to his speech, he is anxious that it should be sincere. In regard to his doing
of business, he is anxious that it should be reverently careful. In regard to what he doubts about, he is anxious to question others. When he is angry, he thinks of the difficulties his anger may involve him in. When he sees gain to be got, he thinks of righteousness.”

Confucius said, “Contemplating good, and pursuing it, as if they could not reach it; contemplating evil! and shrinking from it, as they would from thrusting the hand into boiling water: I have seen such men, as I have heard such words.

“Living in retirement to study their aims, and practicing righteousness to carry out their principles: I have heard these words, but I have not seen such men.”

The Duke Ching of Ch’i had a thousand teams, each of four horses, but on the day of his death, the people did not praise him for a single virtue. Po-i and Shu-ch’i died of hunger at the foot of the Shau-yang mountains, and the people, down to the present time, praise them.

“Is not that saying illustrated by this?”

Ch’an K’ang asked Po-yu, saying, “Have you heard any lessons from your father different from what we have all heard?”

Po-yu replied, “No. He was standing alone once, when I passed below the hall with hasty steps, and said to me, ‘Have you learned the Odes?’ On my replying ‘Not yet,’ he added, If you do not learn the Odes, you will not be fit to converse with.’ I retired and studied the Odes.

“Another day, he was in the same way standing alone, when I passed by below the hall with hasty steps, and said to me, ‘Have you learned the rules of Propriety?’ On my replying ‘Not yet,’ he added, ‘If you do not learn the rules of Propriety, your character cannot be established.’ I then retired, and learned the rules of Propriety.

“I have heard only these two things from him.”

Ch’ang K’ang retired, and, quite delighted, said, “I asked one thing, and I have got three things. I have heard about the Odes. I have heard about the rules of Propriety. I have also heard that the superior man maintains a distant reserve towards his son.”

The wife of the prince of a state is called by him Fu Zan. She calls herself Hsiao T’ung. The people of the state call her Chun Fu Zan, and, to the people of other states, they call her K’wa Hsiao Chun. The people of other states also call her Chun Fu Zan.

17

Yang Ho wished to see Confucius, but Confucius would not go to see him. On this, he sent a present of a pig to Confucius, who, having chosen a time when Ho was not at home went to pay his respects for the gift. He met him, however, on the way.

Ho said to Confucius, “Come, let me speak with you.” He then asked, “Can he be called benevolent who keeps his jewel in his bosom, and leaves his country to confusion?” Confucius replied, “No.” “Can he be called wise, who is anxious to be engaged in public employment, and yet is constantly losing the opportunity of being so?” Confucius again said, “No.” “The days and months are passing away; the years do not wait for us.” Confucius said, “Right; I will go into office.”

The Master said, “By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.”

The Master said, “There are only the wise of the highest class, and the stupid of the lowest class, who cannot be changed.”

The Master, having come to Wu-ch’ang, heard there the sound of stringed instruments and singing.

Well pleased and smiling, he said, “Why use an ox knife to kill a fowl?”

Tsze-yu replied, “Formerly, Master, I heard you say, ‘When the man of high station is well instructed, he loves men; when the man of low station is well instructed, he is easily ruled.’”

The Master said, “My disciples, Yen’s words are right. What I said was only in sport.”

Kung-shan Fu-zao, when he was holding Pi, and in an attitude of rebellion, invited the Master to visit him, who was rather inclined to go.

Tsze-lu was displeased. and said, “Indeed, you cannot go! Why must you think of going to see Kung-shan?”

The Master said, “Can it be without some reason that he has invited ME? If any one employ me, may I not make an eastern Chau?”

Tsze-chang asked Confucius about perfect virtue. Confucius said, “To be able to practice five things everywhere under heaven constitutes perfect virtue.” He begged to ask what they were, and was told, “Gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. If you are grave, you will not be treated with disrespect. If you are generous, you will win all. If you are sincere, people will repose trust in you. If you are earnest, you will accomplish much. If you are kind, this will enable you to employ the services of others.

Pi Hsi inviting him to visit him, the Master was inclined to go.

Tsze-lu said, “Master, formerly I have heard you say, ‘When a man in his own person is guilty of doing evil, a superior man will not associate with him.’ Pi Hsi is in rebellion, holding possession of Chung-mau; if you go to him, what shall be said?”

The Master said, “Yes, I did use these words. But is it not said, that, if a thing be really hard, it may be ground without being made thin? Is it not said, that, if a thing be really white, it may be steeped in a dark fluid without being made black?

“Am I a bitter gourd? How can I be hung up out of the way of being eaten?”

The Master said, “Yu, have you heard the six words to which are attached six becloudings?” Yu replied, “I have not.”“Sit down, and I will tell them to you.

“There is the love of being benevolent without the love of learning; the beclouding here leads to a foolish simplicity. There is the love of knowing without the love of learning; the beclouding here leads to dissipation of mind. There is the love of being sincere without the love of learning; the beclouding here leads to an injurious disregard of consequences. There is the love of straightforwardness without the love of learning; the beclouding here leads to rudeness. There is the love of boldness without the love of learning; the beclouding here leads to insubordination. There is the love of firmness without the love of learning; the beclouding here leads to extravagant conduct.”

The Master said, “My children, why do you not study the Book of Poetry? “The Odes serve to stimulate the mind.

“They may be used for purposes of self-contemplation.

“They teach the art of sociability.

“They show how to regulate feelings of resentment.

“From them you learn the more immediate duty of serving one’s father, and the remoter one of serving one’s prince.

“From them we become largely acquainted with the names of birds, beasts, and plants.”

The Master said to Po-yu, “Do you give yourself to the Chau-nan and the Shao-nan. The man who has not studied the Chau-nan and the Shao-nan is like one who stands with his face right against a wall. Is he not so?” The Master said, “‘It is according to the rules of propriety,’ they say. ‘It is according to the rules of propriety,’ they say. Are gems and silk all that is meant by propriety? ‘It is music,’ they say. ‘It is music,’ they say. Are hers and drums all that is meant by music?”

The Master said, “He who puts on an appearance of stern firmness, while inwardly he is weak, is like one of the small, mean people; yea, is he not like the thief who breaks through, or climbs over, a wall?”

The Master said, “Your good, careful people of the villages are the thieves of virtue.”

The Master said, To tell, as we go along, what we have heard on the way, is to cast away our virtue.”

The Master said, “There are those mean creatures! How impossible it is along with them to serve one’s prince! “While they have not got their aims, their anxiety is how to get them. When they have got them, their anxiety is lest they should lose them.

“When they are anxious lest such things should be lost, there is nothing to which they will not proceed.” The Master said, “Anciently, men had three failings, which now perhaps are not to be found.

“The high-mindedness of antiquity showed itself in a disregard of small things; the high-mindedness of the present day shows itself in wild license. The stern dignity of antiquity showed itself in grave reserve; the stern dignity of the present day shows itself in quarrelsome perverseness. The stupidity of antiquity showed itself in straightforwardness; the stupidity of the present day shows itself in sheer deceit.”

The Master said, “Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with virtue.”

The Master said, “I hate the manner in which purple takes away the luster of vermilion. I hate the way in which the songs of Chang confound the music of the Ya. I hate those who with their sharp mouths overthrow kingdoms and families.”

The Master said, “I would prefer not speaking.”

Tsze-kung said, “If you, Master, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to record?”

The Master said, “Does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced, but does Heaven say anything?”

Zu Pei wished to see Confucius, but Confucius declined, on the ground of being sick, to see him. When the bearer of this message went out at the door, the Master took his lute and sang to it, in order that Pei might hear him. Tsai Wo asked about the three years’ mourning for parents, saying that one year was long enough.

“If the superior man,” said he, “abstains for three years from the observances of propriety, those observances will be quite lost. If for three years he abstains from music, music will be ruined. Within a year the old grain is exhausted, and the new grain has sprung up, and, in procuring fire by friction, we go through all the changes of wood for that purpose. After a complete year, the mourning may stop.”

The Master said, “If you were, after a year, to eat good rice, and wear embroidered clothes, would you feel at ease?” “I should,” replied Wo.

The Master said, “If you can feel at ease, do it. But a superior man, during the whole period of mourning, does not enjoy pleasant food which he may eat, nor derive pleasure from music which he may hear. He also does not feel at ease, if he is comfortably lodged. Therefore he does not do what you propose. But now you feel at ease and may do it.”

Tsai Wo then went out, and the Master said, “This shows Yu’s want of virtue. It is not till a child is three years old that it is allowed to leave the arms of its parents. And the three years’ mourning is universally observed throughout the empire. Did Yu enjoy the three years’ love of his parents?”

The Master said, “Hard is it to deal with who will stuff himself with food the whole day, without applying his mind to anything good! Are there not gamesters and chess players? To be one of these would still be better than doing nothing at all.”

Tsze-lu said, “Does the superior man esteem valor?” The Master said, “The superior man holds righteousness to be of highest importance. A man in a superior situation, having valor without righteousness, will be guilty of insubordination; one of the lower

people having valor without righteousness, will commit robbery."

Tsze-kung said, "Has the superior man his hatreds also?" The Master said, "He has his hatreds. He hates those who proclaim the evil of others. He hates the man who, being in a low station, slanders his superiors. He hates those who have valor merely, and are unobservant of propriety. He hates those who are forward and determined, and, at the same time, of contracted understanding."

The Master then inquired, "Ts'ze, have you also your hatreds?" Tsze-kung replied, "I hate those who pry out matters, and ascribe the knowledge to their wisdom. I hate those who are only not modest, and think that they are valorous. I hate those who make known secrets, and think that they are straightforward."

The Master said, "Of all people, girls and servants are the most difficult to behave to. If you are familiar with them, they lose their humility. If you maintain a reserve towards them, they are discontented."

The Master said, "When a man at forty is the object of dislike, he will always continue what he is."

18

The Viscount of Wei withdrew from the court. The Viscount of Chi became a slave to Chau. Pi-kan remonstrated with him and died.

Confucius said, "The Yin dynasty possessed these three men of virtue."

Hui of Liu-hsia, being chief criminal judge, was thrice dismissed from his office. Some one said to him, "Is it

not yet time for you, sir, to leave this?" He replied, "Serving men in an upright way, where shall I go to, and not experience such a thrice-repeated dismissal? If I choose to serve men in a crooked way, what necessity is there for me to leave the country of my parents?"

The duke Ching of Ch'i, with reference to the manner in which he should treat Confucius, said, "I cannot treat him as I would the chief of the Chi family. I will treat him in a manner between that accorded to the chief of the Chil and that given to the chief of the Mang family." He also said, "I am old; I cannot use his doctrines." Confucius took his departure.

The people of Ch'i sent to Lu a present of female musicians, which Chi Hwan received, and for three days no court was held. Confucius took his departure.

The madman of Ch'u, Chieh-yu, passed by Confucius, singing and saying, "O FANG! O FANG! How is your virtue degenerated! As to the past, reproof is useless; but the future may still be provided against. Give up your vain pursuit. Give up your vain pursuit. Peril awaits those who now engage in affairs of government."

Confucius alighted and wished to converse with him, but Chieh-yu hastened away, so that he could not talk with him.

Ch'ang-tsu and Chieh-ni were at work in the field together, when Confucius passed by them, and sent Tsze-lu to inquire for the ford.

Ch'ang-tsu said, "Who is he that holds the reins in the carriage there?" Tsze-lu told him, "It is K'ung Ch'iu.', "Is it not K'ung of Lu?" asked he. "Yes," was the reply, to which the other rejoined, "He knows the ford."

Tsze-lu then inquired of Chieh-ni, who said to him, "Who are you, sir?" He answered, "I am Chung Yu." "Are you not the disciple of K'ung Ch'iu of Lu?" asked the other. "I am," replied he, and then Chieh-ni said to him, "Disorder, like a swelling flood, spreads over the whole empire, and who is he that will change its state for you? Rather than follow one who merely withdraws from this one and that one, had you not better follow those who have withdrawn from the world altogether?" With this he fell to covering up the seed, and proceeded with his work, without stopping.

Tsze-lu went and reported their remarks, when the Master observed with a sigh, "It is impossible to associate with birds and beasts, as if they were the same with us. If I associate not with these people, with mankind, with whom shall I associate? If right principles prevailed through the empire, there would be no use for me to change its state."

Tsze-lu, following the Master, happened to fall behind, when he met an old man, carrying across his shoulder on a staff a basket for weeds. Tsze-lu said to him, "Have you seen my master, sir?" The old man replied, "Your four limbs are unaccustomed to toil; you cannot distinguish the five kinds of grain: who is your master?" With this, he planted his staff in the ground, and proceeded to weed.

Tsze-lu joined his hands across his breast, and stood before him.

The old man kept Tsze-lu to pass the night in his house, killed a fowl, prepared millet, and feasted him. He also introduced to him his two sons.

Next day, Tsze-lu went on his way, and reported his adventure. The Master said, “He is a recluse,” and sent Tszelu back to see him again, but when he got to the place, the old man was gone.

Tsze-lu then said to the family, “Not to take office is not righteous. If the relations between old and young may not be neglected, how is it that he sets aside the duties that should be observed between sovereign and minister? Wishing to maintain his personal purity, he allows that great relation to come to confusion. A superior man takes office, and performs the righteous duties belonging to it. As to the failure of right principles to make progress, he is aware of that.”

The men who have retired to privacy from the world have been Po-i, Shu-ch’i, Yuchung, I-yi, Chu-chang, Hui of Liu-hsia, and Shao-lien.

The Master said, “Refusing to surrender their wills, or to submit to any taint in their persons; such, I think, were Po-i and Shu-ch’i.

“It may be said of Hui of Liu-hsia! and of Shaolien, that they surrendered their wills, and submitted to taint in their persons, but their words corresponded with reason, and their actions were such as men are anxious to see. This is all that is to be remarked in them.

“It may be said of Yu-chung and I-yi, that, while they hid themselves in their seclusion, they gave a license to their words; but in their persons, they succeeded in preserving their purity, and, in their retirement, they acted according to the exigency of the times.

“I am different from all these. I have no course for which I am predetermined, and no course against which I am predetermined.”

The grand music master, Chih, went to Ch’i.

Kan, the master of the band at the second meal, went to Ch’u. Liao, the band master at the third meal, went to Ts’ai. Chueh, the band master at the fourth meal, went to Ch’in.

Fang-shu, the drum master, withdrew to the north of the river.

Wu, the master of the hand drum, withdrew to the Han.

Yang, the assistant music master, and Hsiang, master of the musical stone, withdrew to an island in the sea.

The duke of Chau addressed his son, the duke of Lu, saying, “The virtuous prince does not neglect his relations.

He does not cause the great ministers to repine at his not employing them. Without some great cause, he does not dismiss from their offices the members of old families. He does not seek in one man talents for every employment.”

To Chau belonged the eight officers, Po-ta, Po-kwo, Chung-tu, Chung-hwu, Shu-ya, Shuhsia, Chi-sui, and Chi-kwa.

19

Tsze-chang said, “The scholar, trained for public duty, seeing threatening danger, is prepared to sacrifice his life. When the opportunity of gain is presented to him, he thinks of righteousness. In sacrificing, his thoughts are reverential. In mourning, his thoughts are about the grief which he should feel. Such a man commands our approbation indeed.

Tsze-chang said, “When a man holds fast to virtue, but without seeking to enlarge it, and believes in right principles, but without firm sincerity, what account can be made of his existence or non-existence?”

The disciples of Tsze-hsia asked Tsze-chang about the principles that should characterize mutual intercourse. Tsze-chang asked, “What does Tsze-hsia say on the subject?” They replied, “Tsze-hsia says: ‘Associate with those who can advantage you. Put away from you those who cannot do so.’” Tsze-chang observed, “This is different from what I have learned. The superior man honors the talented and virtuous, and bears with all. He praises the good, and pities the incompetent. Am I possessed of great talents and virtue? who is there among men whom I will not bear with? Am I devoid of talents and virtue? men will put me away from them. What have we to do with the putting away of others?”

Tsze-hsia said, “Even in inferior studies and employments there is something worth being looked at; but if it be attempted to carry them out to what is remote, there is a danger of their proving inapplicable. Therefore, the superior man does not practice them.”

Tsze-hsia said, “He, who from day to day recognizes what he has not yet, and from month to month does not forget what he has attained to, may be said indeed to love to learn.”

Tsze-hsia said, “There are learning extensively, and having a firm and sincere aim; inquiring with earnestness, and reflecting with self-application: virtue is in such a course.”

Tsze-hsia said, “Mechanics have their shops to dwell in, in order to accomplish their works. The superior man learns, in order to reach to the utmost of his principles.”

Tsze-hsia said, “The mean man is sure to gloss his faults.”

Tsze-hsia said, “The superior man undergoes three changes. Looked at from a distance, he appears stern; when approached, he is mild; when he is heard to speak, his language is firm and decided.”

Tsze-hsia said, “The superior man, having obtained their confidence, may then impose labors on his people. If he have not gained their confidence, they will think that he is oppressing them. Having obtained the confidence of his prince, one may then remonstrate with him. If he have not gained his confidence, the prince will think that he is vilifying him.”

Tsze-hsia said, “When a person does not transgress the boundary line in the great virtues, he may pass and repass it in the small virtues.”

Tsze-yu said, “The disciples and followers of Tsze-hsia, in sprinkling and sweeping the ground, in answering and replying, in advancing and receding, are sufficiently accomplished. But these are only the branches of learning, and they are left ignorant of what is essential. How can they be acknowledged as sufficiently taught?”

Tsze-hsia heard of the remark and said, “Alas! Yen Yu is wrong. According to the way of the superior man in teaching, what departments are there which he considers of prime importance, and delivers? what are there which he considers of secondary importance, and allows himself to be idle about? But as in the case of plants, which are assorted according to their classes, so he deals with his disciples. How can the way of a superior man be such as to make fools of any of them? Is it not the sage alone, who can unite in one the beginning and the consummation of learning?”

Tsze-hsia said, “The officer, having discharged all his duties, should devote his leisure to learning. The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an officer.”

Tsze-hsia said, “Mourning, having been carried to the utmost degree of grief, should stop with that.”

Tsze-hsia said, “My friend Chang can do things which are hard to be done, but yet he is not perfectly virtuous.” The philosopher Tsang said, “How imposing is the manner of Chang! It is difficult along with him to practice virtue.”

The philosopher Tsang said, “I heard this from our Master: ‘Men may not have shown what is in them to the full extent, and yet they will be found to do so, on the occasion of mourning for their parents.”

The philosopher Tsang said, “I have heard this from our Master: ‘The filial piety of Mang Chwang, in other matters, was what other men are competent to, but, as seen in his not changing the ministers of his father, nor his father’s mode of government, it is difficult to be attained to.’”

The chief of the Mang family having appointed Yang Fu to be chief criminal judge, the latter consulted the philosopher Tsang. Tsang said, “The rulers have failed in their duties, and the people consequently have been disorganized for a long time. When you have found out the truth of any accusation, be grieved for and pity them, and do not feel joy at your own ability.”

Tsze-kung said, “Chau’s wickedness was not so great as that name implies. Therefore, the superior man hates to dwell in a low-lying situation, where all the evil of the world will flow in upon him.”

Tsze-kung said, “The faults of the superior man are like the eclipses of the sun and moon. He has his faults, and all men see them; he changes again, and all men look up to him.”

Kung-sun Ch’ao of Wei asked Tszekung, saying. “From whom did Chung-ni get his learning?”

Tsze-kung replied, “The doctrines of Wan and Wu have not yet fallen to the ground. They are to be found among men. Men of talents and virtue remember the greater principles of them, and others, not possessing such talents and virtue, remember the

smaller. Thus, all possess the doctrines of Wan and Wu. Where could our Master go that he should not have an opportunity of learning them? And yet what necessity was there for his having a regular master?"

Shu-sun Wu-shu observed to the great officers in the court, saying, "Tsze-kung is superior to Chung-ni."

Tsze-fu Ching-po reported the observation to Tsze-kung, who said, "Let me use the comparison of a house and its encompassing wall. My wall only reaches to the shoulders. One may peep over it, and see whatever is valuable in the apartments.

"The wall of my Master is several fathoms high. If one do not find the door and enter by it, he cannot see the ancestral temple with its beauties, nor all the officers in their rich array.

"But I may assume that they are few who find the door. Was not the observation of the chief only what might have been expected?"

Shu-sun Wu-shu having spoken revilingly of Chung-ni, Tsze-kung said, "It is of no use doing so. Chung-ni cannot be reviled. The talents and virtue of other men are hillocks and mounds which may be stepped over. Chung-ni is the sun or moon, which it is not possible to step over. Although a man may wish to cut himself off from the sage, what harm can he do to the sun or moon? He only shows that he does not know his own capacity.

Ch'an Tsze-ch' in, addressing Tsze-kung, said, "You are too modest. How can Chung-ni be said to be superior to you?"

Tsze-kung said to him, "For one word a man is often deemed to be wise, and for one word he is often deemed to be foolish. We ought to be careful indeed in what we say.

"Our Master cannot be attained to, just in the same way as the heavens cannot be gone up by the steps of a stair.

"Were our Master in the position of the ruler of a state or the chief of a family, we should find verified the description which has been given of a sage's rule: he would plant the people, and forthwith they would be established; he would lead them on, and forthwith they would follow him; he would make them happy, and forthwith multitudes would resort to his dominions; he would stimulate them, and forthwith they would be harmonious. While he lived, he would be glorious. When he died, he would be bitterly lamented. How is it possible for him to be attained to?"

20

Yao said, "Oh! you, Shun, the Heaven-determined order of succession now rests in your person. Sincerely hold fast the due Mean. If there shall be distress and want within the four seas, the Heavenly revenue will come to a perpetual end."

Shun also used the same language in giving charge to Yu.

T'ang said, "I the child Li, presume to use a dark-colored victim, and presume to announce to Thee, O most great and sovereign God, that the sinner I dare not pardon, and thy ministers, O God, I do not keep in obscurity. The examination of them is by thy mind, O God. If, in my person, I commit offenses, they are not to be attributed to you, the people of the myriad regions. If you in the myriad regions commit offenses, these offenses must rest on my person."

Chau conferred great gifts, and the good were enriched.

"Although he has his near relatives, they are not equal to my virtuous men. The people are throwing blame upon me, the One man."

He carefully attended to the weights and measures, examined the body of the laws, restored the discarded officers, and the good government of the kingdom took its course.

He revived states that had been extinguished, restored families whose line of succession had been broken, and called to office those who had retired into obscurity, so that throughout the kingdom the hearts of the people turned towards him.

What he attached chief importance to were the food of the people, the duties of mourning, and sacrifices.

By his generosity, he won all. By his sincerity, he made the people repose trust in him. By his earnest activity, his achievements were great. By his justice, all were delighted.

Tsze-chang asked Confucius, saying, "In what way should a person in authority act in order that he may conduct government properly?" The Master replied, "Let him honor the five excellent, and banish away the four bad, things; then may he conduct government properly." Tsze-chang said, "What are meant by the five excellent things?" The Master said, "When the person in

authority is beneficent without great expenditure; when he lays tasks on the people without their repining; when he pursues what he desires without being covetous; when he maintains a dignified ease without being proud; when he is majestic without being fierce."

Tsze-chang said, "What is meant by being beneficent without great expenditure?" The Master replied, "When the person in authority makes more beneficial to the people the things from which they naturally derive benefit; is not this being beneficent without great expenditure? When he chooses the labors which are proper, and makes them labor on them, who will repine? When his desires are set on benevolent government, and he secures it, who will accuse him of covetousness? Whether he has to do with many people or few, or with things great or small, he does not dare to indicate any disrespect; is not this to maintain a dignified ease without any pride? He adjusts his clothes and cap, and throws a dignity into his looks, so that, thus dignified, he is looked at with awe; is not this to be majestic without being fierce?"

Tsze-chang then asked, "What are meant by the four bad things?" The Master said, "To put the people to death without having instructed them; this is called cruelty. To require from them, suddenly, the full tale of work, without having given them warning; this is called oppression. To issue orders as if without urgency, at first, and, when the time comes, to insist on them with severity; this is called injury. And, generally, in the giving pay or rewards to men, to do it in a stingy way; this is called acting the part of a mere official."

The Master said, "Without recognizing the ordinances of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man. "Without an acquaintance with the rules of Propriety, it is impossible for the character to be established. "Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know men."

This page titled 6.1: The Analects-Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **2.1: The Analects-Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.)** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

6.2: The Art of War

Sun Tzu, Translated by Lionel Giles

Probably 6th century B.C.E.

China

Sun Tzu's *Art of War* is still studied in military academies around the world, including the US military academies (USMA, USNA, and USAFA), and it is taught in business schools and law schools as a manual on how to get ahead of the competition. While scholars argue about when Sun Tzu lived (or whether he was using an older text, or even whether someone named Sun Tzu existed), the impact that the work has had is undeniable. The work is both a military treatise and a philosophical argument about the nature of humanity. Unlike previous strategists, "Sun-Tzu had no patience with the protracted games generals seemed to enjoy playing with each other. Once hostilities had erupted, one's priority was to defeat the enemy, not indulge oneself in chivalry which could only prolong the conflict and cost more lives." (Mark)

In Confucian thinking, everyone has an assigned place in society, with strict expectations for behavior that could potentially limit creative/unusual responses. Sun Tzu's approach to warfare is Daoist in nature, rather than Confucian "by adapting oneself to one's situation, rather than rigidly holding fast to how one thinks things *should* be, one is able to recognize the fluidity of conditions and act upon them decisively." (Mark)

It is therefore Sun Tzu's skill as a Daoist philosopher that guides the work and provides the reader with an insightful view of human nature.

Written by Laura J. Getty

Sun Tzu on the Art of war

Introduction

Ssu-ma Ch'ien gives the following biography of Sun Tzu:

Sun Tzu Wu was a native of the Ch'i State. His ART OF WAR brought him to the notice of Ho Lu, King of Wu.

Ho Lu said to him: "I have carefully perused your 13 chapters. May I submit your theory of managing soldiers to a slight test?"

Sun Tzu replied: "You may."

Ho Lu asked: "May the test be applied to women?"

The answer was again in the affirmative, so arrangements were made to bring 180 ladies out of the Palace. Sun Tzu divided them into two companies, and placed one of the

King's favorite concubines at the head of each. He then bade them all take spears in their hands, and addressed them thus: "I presume you know the difference between front and back, right hand and left hand?"

The girls replied: "Yes."

Sun Tzu went on: "When I say 'Eyes front,' you must look straight ahead. When I say 'Left turn,' you must face towards your left hand. When I say 'Right turn,' you must face towards your right hand. When I say 'About turn,' you must face right round towards your back."

Again the girls assented. The words of command having been thus explained, he set up the halberds and battle-axes in order to begin the drill. Then, to the sound of drums, he gave the order "Right turn." But the girls only burst out laughing. Sun Tzu said: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the general is to blame."

So he started drilling them again, and this time gave the order "Left turn," whereupon the girls once more burst into fits of laughter. Sun Tzu: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, the general is to blame. But if his orders ARE clear, and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of their officers."

So saying, he ordered the leaders of the two companies to be beheaded. Now the king of Wu was watching the scene from the top of a raised pavilion; and when he saw that his favorite concubines were about to be executed, he was greatly alarmed and hurriedly



Image 2.2: Bamboo Book-Binding | A copy of The Art of War in Chinese bamboo binding.

Author: User "vlasta2"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY 2.0

sent down the following message: "We are now quite satisfied as to our general's ability to handle troops. If We are bereft of these two concubines, our meat and drink will lose their savor. It is our wish that they shall not be beheaded."

Sun Tzu replied: "Having once received His Majesty's commission to be the general of his forces, there are certain commands of His Majesty which, acting in that capacity, I am unable to accept."

Accordingly, he had the two leaders beheaded, and straightway installed the pair next in order as leaders in their place. When this had been done, the drum was sounded for the drill once more; and the girls went through all the evolutions, turning to the right or to the left, marching ahead or wheeling back, kneeling or standing, with perfect accuracy and precision, not venturing to utter a sound. Then Sun Tzu sent a messenger to the King saying: "Your soldiers, Sire, are now properly drilled and disciplined, and ready for your majesty's inspection. They can be put to any use that their sovereign may desire; bid them go through fire and water, and they will not disobey."

But the King replied: "Let our general cease drilling and return to camp. As for us, We have no wish to come down and inspect the troops."

Thereupon Sun Tzu said: "The King is only fond of words, and cannot translate them into deeds."

After that, Ho Lu saw that Sun Tzu was one who knew how to handle an army, and finally appointed him general. In the west, he defeated the Ch'u State and forced his way into Ying, the capital; to the north he put fear into the States of Ch'i and Chin, and spread his fame abroad amongst the feudal princes. And Sun Tzu shared in the might of the King.

I. Laying Plans

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.
2. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.
3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.
4. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and Discipline.

5, 6. The MORAL LAW causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.

7. HEAVEN signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.
8. EARTH comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.
9. The COMMANDER stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage, and strictness.
10. By METHOD AND DISCIPLINE are to be understood the marshaling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.
11. These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.
12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:
13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law? (2) Which of the two generals has most ability? (3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth? (4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced? (5) Which army is

stronger? (6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained? (7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

14. By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.
15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it, will conquer: let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it, will suffer defeat: let such a one be dismissed!
16. While heading the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.
17. According as circumstances are favorable, one should modify one's plans.
18. All warfare is based on deception.
19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.
20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.
21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.
22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.
23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them.
24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.
25. These military devices, leading to victory, must not be divulged beforehand.
26. Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.

II. Waging War

1. Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, where there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots, and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers with provisions enough to carry them a thousand LI the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint, and sums spent on chariots and armor, will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Such is the cost of raising an army of 100,000 men.
2. When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength.
3. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain.
4. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue.
5. Thus, though we have heard of stupid haste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.
6. There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.
7. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.
8. The skillful soldier does not raise a second levy, neither are his supply-wagons loaded more than twice.
9. Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy. Thus the army will have food enough for its needs.
10. Poverty of the State exchequer causes an army to be maintained by contributions from a distance. Contributing to maintain an army at a distance causes the people to be impoverished.
11. On the other hand, the proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause the people's substance to be drained away.
12. When their substance is drained away, the peasantry will be afflicted by heavy exactions.

13, 14. With this loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and three-tenths of their income will be dissipated; while government expenses for broken chariots, worn-out horses, breast-plates and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantles, draught-oxen and heavy wagons, will amount to four-tenths of its total revenue.

15. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single PICUL of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own store.
16. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

17. Therefore in chariot fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who took the first. Our own flags should be substituted for those of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.
18. This is called, using the conquered foe to augment one's own strength.
19. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.
20. Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril.

III. Attack by Stratagem

1. Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.
2. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.
3. Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.
4. The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided. The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months; and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more.
5. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants, with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege.
6. Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field.
7. With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete. This is the method of attacking by stratagem.
8. It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him; if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.
9. If equally matched, we can offer battle; if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy; if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him.
10. Hence, though an obstinate fight may be made by a small force, in the end it must be captured by the larger force.
11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points, the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.
12. There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army:
13. (1) By commanding the army to advance or to retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey. This is called hobbling the army.
14. (2) By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army. This causes restlessness in the soldier's minds.
15. (3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination, through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances. This shakes the confidence of the soldiers.
16. But when the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from the other feudal princes. This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away.
17. Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory: (1) He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight. (2) He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces. (3) He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks. (4) He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared. (5) He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.
18. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

IV. Tactical Dispositions

1. Sun Tzu said: The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.
2. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.
3. Thus the good fighter is able to secure himself against defeat, but cannot make certain of defeating the enemy.
4. Hence the saying: One may KNOW how to conquer without being able to DO it.
5. Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.
6. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength.
7. The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth; he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven. Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete.
8. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.
9. Neither is it the acme of excellence if you fight and conquer and the whole Empire says, “Well done!”
10. To lift an autumn hair is no sign of great strength; to see the sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.
11. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease.
12. Hence his victories bring him neither reputation for wisdom nor credit for courage.
13. He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated.
14. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.
15. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.
16. The consummate leader cultivates the moral law and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.
17. In respect of military method, we have, firstly, Measurement; secondly, Estimation of quantity; thirdly, Calculation; fourthly, Balancing of chances; fifthly, Victory.
18. Measurement owes its existence to Earth; Estimation of quantity to Measurement; Calculation to Estimation of quantity; Balancing of chances to Calculation; and Victory to Balancing of chances.
19. A victorious army opposed to a routed one, is as a pound’s weight placed in the scale against a single grain.
20. The onrush of a conquering force is like the bursting of pent-up waters into a chasm a thousand fathoms deep.

VI. Weak Points and Strong

1. Sun Tzu said: Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.
2. Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy’s will to be imposed on him.
3. By holding out advantages to him, he can cause the enemy to approach of his own accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can make it impossible for the enemy to draw near.
4. If the enemy is taking his ease, he can harass him; if well supplied with food, he can starve him out; if quietly encamped, he can force him to move.
5. Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.
6. An army may march great distances without distress, if it marches through country where the enemy is not.
7. You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you only attack places which are undefended. You can ensure the safety of your defense if you only hold positions that cannot be attacked.
8. Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.
9. O divine art of subtlety and secrecy! through you we learn to be invisible, through you inaudible; and hence we can hold the enemy’s fate in our hands.

10. You may advance and be absolutely irresistible, if you make for the enemy's weak points; you may retire and be safe from pursuit if your movements are more rapid than those of the enemy.
11. If we wish to fight, the enemy can be forced to an engagement even though he be sheltered behind a high rampart and a deep ditch. All we need do is attack some other place that he will be obliged to relieve.
12. If we do not wish to fight, we can prevent the enemy from engaging us even though the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground. All we need do is to throw something odd and unaccountable in his way.
13. By discovering the enemy's dispositions and remaining invisible ourselves, we can keep our forces concentrated, while the enemy's must be divided.
14. We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few.
15. And if we are able thus to attack an inferior force with a superior one, our opponents will be in dire straits.
16. The spot where we intend to fight must not be made known; for then the enemy will have to prepare against a possible attack at several different points; and his forces being thus distributed in many directions, the numbers we shall have to face at any given point will be proportionately few.
17. for should the enemy strengthen his van, he will weaken his rear; should he strengthen his rear, he will weaken his van; should he strengthen his left, he will weaken his right; should he strengthen his right, he will weaken his left. if he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak.
18. Numerical weakness comes from having to prepare against possible attacks; numerical strength, from compelling our adversary to make these preparations against us.
19. Knowing the place and the time of the coming battle, we may concentrate from the greatest distances in order to fight.
20. But if neither time nor place be known, then the left wing will be impotent to succor the right, the right equally impotent to succor the left, the van unable to relieve the rear, or the rear to support the van. how much more so if the furthest portions of the army are anything under a hundred Li apart, and even the nearest are separated by several Li!
21. Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing in the matter of victory. i say then that victory can be achieved.
22. Though the enemy be stronger in numbers, we may prevent him from fighting. Scheme so as to discover his plans and the likelihood of their success.
23. Rouse him, and learn the principle of his activity or inactivity. force him to reveal himself, so as to find out his vulnerable spots.
24. Carefully compare the opposing army with your own, so that you may know where strength is superabundant and where it is deficient.
25. In making tactical dispositions, the highest pitch you can attain is to conceal them; conceal your dispositions, and you will be safe from the prying of the subtlest spies, from the machinations of the wisest brains.
26. How victory may be produced for them out of the enemy's own tactics that is what the multitude cannot comprehend.
27. All men can see the tactics whereby i conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.
28. Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.
29. Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards.
30. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.
31. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.
32. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.
33. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain.
34. The five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, earth) are not always equally predominant; the four seasons make way for each other in turn. there are short days and long; the moon has its periods of waning and waxing.

This page titled 6.2: The Art of War is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **2.2: The Art of War** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

6.3: The Book of Songs

Existed before Confucius (born around 551 B.C.E.)

China

The Book of Songs (the *Shi king*, also translated as *The Classic of Poetry* and *The Book of Odes*) is a collection of poems written by various anonymous authors over several centuries. Traditionally, Confucius has been credited as the editor of the collection, and it was part of the canon of Confucian works that scholars were expected to study. Scholars debate how much influence Confucius may have had on them; one theory is that he took a much larger work (possibly several thousand poems) and chose just over three hundred to form the standard version that exists today. Poetry collections in China were meant to represent the voice of the people (male and female, all social classes). The poems capture moments in time, speaking to the reader about the problems and joys of individuals who were not necessarily the rulers or heroes of other stories.

Written by Laura J. Getty

The Shi King, the old “poetry Classic” of the Chinese

[The Book of Songs]

Translated by William Jennings

BOOK II.: THE ODES OF SHÂU AND THE SOUTH.

The Wedding-Journey of a Princess

The magpie has a nest;
The dove yet takes possession.
Lo! the young bride departs,
In many-wheeled procession.
The magpie has a nest;
The dove yet there will quarter.
Lo! the young bride departs;
And countless cars escort her.
The magpie has a nest;
The dove will fill it (quickly).
Lo! the young bride departs,
With chariots mustered thickly.

A Reverent Helpmate

There gathers she the fragrant herb
Along the islets, by the pools,
To mingle with the votive gifts
Of him that o’er the princedom rules.
There gathers she the fragrant herb
Amid the mountain streams again,
To mingle with the votive gifts
Her prince will offer in the fane.
With head-gear all erect and high
Ere dawn the temple she attends;
With head-gear all uncared for now
Back to her place her way she wends.

A Long-Absent Husband

Now the crickets chirp and grind;
And the hoppers spring and fly.
But my lord not yet I find;
Ay, and sore at heart am I.

O to see him once again!
O to meet him once again!
Stilled were then the swelling sigh.
Climbed I yonder up South Hill,
Plucked sweet brackens as I went.
But my lord I saw not still;
Loud was yet my heart's lament.
O to see him once again!
O to meet him once again!
So my heart were well content.
Climbed I yonder up South Hill,
Now to pluck the royal fern.
Yet my lord I saw not still;
Still my heart must pine and yearn.
O to see him once again!
O to meet him once again!
So my heart's-ease might return.

The Young Wife's Zealous Care in the Worship of her Husband's Ancestors

She goes to gather water-wort,
Beside the streams south of the hills;
She goes to gather water-grass
Along the swollen roadside rills;
Goes now to store her gathered herbs
In basket round, in basket square;
Goes now to seethe and simmer them
In tripod and in cauldron there;
Pours out libations of them all
Beneath the light within the Hall.
And who is she so occupied?
Who, but (our lord's) young pious bride?

In Memory of a Worthy Chieftain

O pear-tree, with thy leafy shade!
Ne'er be thou cut, ne'er be thou laid;
Once under thee Shâu's chieftain stayed.
O pear-tree, with thy leafy crest,
Ne'er may they cut thee, ne'er molest;
Shâu's chief beneath thee once found rest.
O pear-tree, with thy leafy shroud,
Ne'er be those branches cut, nor bowed,
That shelter to Shâu's chief allowed.

The Resisted Suitor

All soaking was the path with dew.
And was it not scarce daybreak, too?
I say: the path was drenched with dew.
Who says the sparrow has no horn?
How bores it then into my dwelling?
Who says of thee, thou art forlorn?
Why then this forcing and compelling?
But force, compel me, do thy will:
Husband and wife we are not still.
Who says of rats, they have no teeth?
How do they bore then through my wall?
Who says of thee, thou art forlorn?
Why force me then into this brawl?
But force me, sue me, even so,
With thee I do not mean to go!

Dignity and Economy of King Wăn's Councillors

Clad in lambskin or in sheepskin,
Five white silken seams that show,
To their meal from court retiring,
With what dignity they go!
Bare of wool, the lamb or sheepskin
Five white sutures may reveal,
Still with dignity retire they
From their Master to their meal.
Though the skins, now rent in patches,
Five white silken seams require,
Still with dignity the wearers
To their meal from Court retire.

The Lonely Wife

Hearken! there is thunder
On South Hill's lofty crest.
Hence why must he wander,
Nor dare a moment rest?
True-hearted husband, fain, oh fain
Were I to see thee home again.
Hearken! now the thunder
Rolls lower on South Hill.
Hence why must he wander,
Nor ever dare be still?
True-hearted husband, fain, oh fain
Were I to have thee home again.
Hearken! now the thunder
Is down upon the plain.
Hence why must he wander,
Nor dare awhile remain?
True-hearted husband, fain, oh fain
Were I to find thee home again.

Fears Of Mature Maidenhood

Though shaken be the damson-tree,
Left on it yet are seven, O.
Ye gentlemen who care for me,
Take chance while chance is given, O.
Though shaken be the damson-tree,
Yet three are still remaining, O.
Ye gentlemen who care for me,
Now, now; the time is waning, O.
Ah, shaken is the damson-tree,
And all are in the basket, O.
Ye gentlemen who care for me,
Your question would ye ask it, O!

Contented Concubines

Starlets dim are yonder peeping,
In the East are five, and three.
Softly, where our lord is (sleeping),
Soon or late by night go we.
Some have high, some low degree.
Starlets dim are yonder peeping,
Pleiades, Orion's band.
Softly nightly go we creeping,
Quilt and coverlet in hand.
Some take high, some lower stand.

Jealousy Overcome

The Kiang has arms that wayward wind.
Our lady erst as bride
Our help declined,
Our help declined;
Anon she was of other mind.
The Kiang has banks within its bed.
Our lady erst as bride
Our presence fled,
Our presence fled;
Anon a calmer life she led.
The Kiang has creeks that leave it long.
Our lady erst as bride
Spurned all our throng,
Spurned all our throng;
Her sneering now is turned to song.

The Cunning Hunter

In the wild there lies a dead gazelle,
With the reed-grass round it wrapt;
And a maid who loveth springtide well
By a winsome youth is trapped.
In the wood thick undergrowth is found,
In the wild the dead gazelle,

With the reed-grass round its body bound;
And the maid she looketh well.
“Ah! gently, not so fast, good sir;
My kerchief, prithee, do not stir;
Nor rouse the barking of my cur.”

A Royal Wedding

What radiant bloom is there!
Blossoms of cherry wild.
What care attends the equipage
Of her, the royal child!
What radiance! Like the bloom
Of peach and plum in one!
Granddaughter of the Just King she,
He a true noble’s son.
How was the bait then laid?
’Twas trimmed with silken twine.
He the true noble’s son (thus caught)
Her of the Just King’s line!

The Tsow Yu

Out there where the reeds grow rank and tall,
One round he shoots, five wild boars fall.
Hail the Tsow Yu!
And there where the grass is waving high,
One round he shoots, five wild hogs die.
Hail the Tsow Yu!

Note. Although this is one of the shortest and apparently most trivial of the Odes in the Book of Poetry, it is credited by the Chinese editors with as much meaning as the largest. It is regarded, like so many more, as illustrating the extent of the reformation brought about by King Wăn. Not only was the kingdom better ruled, society better regulated, and individuals more self-disciplined and improved in manners, but the reformation affected all things: vegetation flourished, game became most abundant, hunting was attended to at the right seasons, and the benign influence of the King was everywhere felt by the people. The poet thinks it is sufficient to dwell upon these last characteristics. Probably the lines were written after some royal hunt.

BOOK III.: THE ODES OF P‘EI.

P‘ei was one of three principalities which King Wu created after he overthrew the dynasty of Shang. It was in the north; and the two others were Yung in the south, and Wei in the west. P‘ei and Yung were, after a short time, absorbed in Wei, which had a long history. We have, in Books III., IV. and V. titles taken from all three; but evidently the division is only artificial: the three Books might all have been included properly under the title Wei, since it is that State with which all are connected.

Derelict

The cedar boat is drifting,
On currents never still.
Sleepless I lie, vexed inly,
As with some unknown ill.
’Tis not that wine is wanting,
Or leave to roam at will.
My heart is no mere mirror
That cannot comprehend.
Brothers I have, but may not

On brothers e’en depend.
Tush! when I go complaining
’Tis only to offend.
No stone this heart of mine is,
That may be turned and rolled;
No mat this heart of mine is,
To fold or to unfold.
Steadfast and strict my life is;
Nought ’gainst it can be told.
Yet here I sit in sorrow,
Scorned by a rabble crew.
My troubles have been many,
My insults not a few.
Calmly I think then, starting,
I beat my breast anew.
O moon, why now the brighter?
O sun, why now dost wane?
My heart wears grief as garments
Inured to soil and stain.
Calmly I think then, starting,
Would fly but all in vain.

Supplanted

Green now my robe!
Green, lined with yellow.
Ah! when shall Grief
Be not my fellow!
Green is the robe;
Yellow the skirt!
Ah! when shall Grief
Nevermore hurt!
Green is the silk;
Ruled so by you.
Guide me, ye ancients!
Harm lest I do.
Lawn, fine or coarse,
Chills in the wind.
Guide me, ye ancients!
Save me my mind.

Friends In Distress

O the swallows onward flying,
Wings aslant, irregular!
O the lady homeward hieing;
O’er the wilds escort her far.
Gaze I till I gaze in vain,
And my tears are like the rain.
O the swallows onward flying,
Soaring upward, darting low!
O the lady homeward hieing;

Far then let her escort go.
Gaze I till I gaze in vain;
Long I stand and weep amain.
O the swallows onward flying,
High and low, with twittering mouth!
O the lady homeward hieing;
Far escort her to the South.
Gaze I till I gaze in vain,
And my heart scarce bears the pain.
Lady Chung on love relying,
And of feelings true and deep,
Ever sweet and much-complying,
Strict, yet, self-respect to keep
Thoughtful of the dead she:
Bright example to poor me!

Clouds Gathering

O sun, O moon, ye downwards turn
To earth your glorious gaze.
But ah! that men there be like this,
Forsaking ancient ways!
Where can be peace?
Alas, *his* glance
From *me* for ever strays!
O sun, O moon, this earth below
Hath you as crown above.
But ah, that men there be like this,
That give not love for love!
Where can be peace? Alas that he
Should so responseless prove!
O sun, O moon, that morn and eve
Rise in yon Eastern sky.
Alas that men there be like this,
Whose deeds fair words belie.
Where can be peace?
Ah, better now If *memory* could but die!
O sun, O moon, that morn and eve
Rise yonder in the East.
O parents mine! your charge of me
Hath not for ever ceased.
Where can be peace? For to my love
Responds he not the least.

The Storm

Long, long the stormwind blew, and wild.
He turned to look at me: he smiled;
But mockery was there, and scorn.
Ah, how my very heart was torn!
Long, long it blew, with dust for rain.
“Be kind, and come to me again.”

He came not, neither went his way;
And long in pensive thought I lay.
On still it blew, with storm-clouds black;
Scarce light there was, so dense the pack.
Wakeful I lay, nor closed mine eyes;
And anxious thought brought fitful sighs.
Black and more black yet grew the gloom;
Then came loud thunder, boom on boom.
Awake I lay, all sleep was fled,
And anxious thought my fever fed.

The Soldier Sighs For Wife And Home

When the beating of drums was heard around,
How we sprang to our weapons with leap and bound!
But the fields must have some, and the walls of Ts‘o;
We alone to the South must a-marching go.
So we followed our leader Sun Tse-Chung,
And a peace there was made with Ch‘in and Sung.
But of homeward march is no sign as yet,
And our hearts are heavy, and pine and fret.
Ah! here we are lingering; here we stay;
And our steeds go wandering far astray;
And quest of them all must needs be made
Away in the depths of the woodland shade.
But, though far to be severed in death or life,
We are bound by the pledge each gave to his wife;
And we vowed, as we stood then hand in hand,
By each other in life’s last years to stand.
Alas! now wide is the gulf between!
And life to us now is a blank, I ween.
And, alas, for the plighted troth so vain!
Untrue to our words we must aye remain.

The Discontented Mother

From the South the gladdening breezes blow
On the heart of that bush of thorn;
And the inmost leaves in it gaily grow.
But the mother with care is worn.
From the South the gladdening breezes blow
On the twigs of that thorny tree.
And the mother is wise and good, but oh!
Bad and worthless men are we.
From the spring ’neath the walls of Tsun there runs
A cool and refreshing rill.
But the mother, though hers be seven sons,
Unrelieved here toils on still.
And the golden bright-eyed orioles
Wake their tuneful melodie.
But the mother’s heart no son consoles,
Though we seven around her be.

Separation

The male pheasant has taken his flight,
Yet leisurely moved he his wings!
Ah, to thee, my beloved, thyself
What sorrow this severance brings!
The male pheasant has taken his flight;
From below, from aloft, yet he cried.
Ah, true was my lord; and my heart
With its burden of sorrow is tried.
As I gaze at the sun and the moon,
Free rein to my thoughts I allow.
O the way, so they tell me, is long:
Tell me, how can be come to me now?
Wot ye not, then, ye gentlemen all,
Of his virtue and rectitude?
From all envy and enmity free,
What deed doth he other than good?

Untimely Unions

“The leaves of the gourd are yet sour to the taste,
And the way through the ford is deep” (quoth she).
“Deep be it, our garments we’ll raise to the waist,
Or shallow, then up to the knee” (quoth he).
“But the ford is full, and the waters rise.
Hark! a pheasant there, in alarm she cries.”
“Nay, the ford when full would no axle wet;
And the pheasant but cackles to fetch her mate.”
“More sweet were the wildgoose’ cries to hear,
When the earliest streaks of the dawn appear;
And that is how men should seek their brides,
(In the early spring) ere the ice divides.
The ferryman beckons and points to his boat:
Let others cross over, I shall not.
The others may cross, but I say nay.
For a (true) companion here I stay.”

Lament Of A Discarded Wife

When East winds blow unceasingly,
They bring but gloominess and rain.
Strive, strive to live unitedly,
And every angry thought restrain.
Some plants we gather for their leaves,
But leave the roots untouched beneath;
So, while unsullied was my name,
I should have lived with you till death.
With slow, slow step I took the road,
My inmost heart rebelling sore.
You came not far with me indeed,
You only saw me to the door.
Who calls the lettuce bitter fare?

The cress is not a whit more sweet.
Ay, feast there with your new-found bride,
Well-pleased, as when fond brothers meet.
The Wei, made turbid by the King,
Grows limpid by the islets there.
There, feasting with your new-found bride,
For me no longer now you care.
Yet leave to me my fishing-dam;
My wicker-nets remove them not.
My person spurned, some vacant hour
May bring compassion for my lot.
Where ran the river full and deep,
With raft or boat I paddled o'er;
And, where it flowed in shallower stream,
I dived or swam from shore to shore.
And what we had, or what we lost,
For that I strained my every nerve;
When other folks had loss, I'd crawl
Upon my knees, if aught 'twould serve.
And you can show me no kind care,
Nay, treated like a foe am I!
My virtue stood but in your way,
Like traders' goods that none will buy.
Once it was feared we could not live;
In your reverses then I shared;
And now, when fortune smiles on you,
To very poison I'm compared.
I have laid by a goodly store,
For winter's use it was to be;
Feast on there with your new-found bride,
I was for use in poverty!
Rude fits of anger you have shown,
Now left me to be sorely tried.
Ah, you forget those days gone by,
When you came nestling to my side!

A Prince And His Officers In Trouble

Fallen so low, so low!
Wherefore not homeward go?
And we, how could we for our chief refuse
Exposure to the nightly dews?
Fallen so low, so low!
Wherefore not homeward go?
And did we not our chief himself require,
How lived we here in mud and mire?

Li Finds No Help In Wei

How have the creepers on the crested slope
Crept with their tendrils far and wide!
And O, ye foster-fathers of our land,

How have our days here multiplied!
Why is there never movement made?
Comes surely some expected aid.
Why is this long, protracted pause?
’Tis surely not without a cause.
With foxfurs worn and frayed, without our cars,
Came we not Eastward here to you?
O ye, the foster-fathers of our land,
Will ye have nought with us to do?
A shattered remnant, last of all our host,
But waifs and vagabonds are we!
And ye, the foster-fathers of our land,
Smile on, but deaf ye seem to be!

Buffoonery At Court

Calm and cool, see him advance!
Now for posturing and dance,
While the sun’s in middle sky,
There in front of platform high!
See him, corpulent and tall,
Capering in that ducal hall!
Tiger-like in strength of limb,
Reins like ribbons were to him!
Left hand now the flute assumes,
Right hand grasps the pheasant’s plumes;
Red, as though with rouge, the face.
“Give him liquor!” cries His Grace.
There are hazels on the hill,
There is fungus in the fen.
Say to whom my thoughts then flee.
To those fine West-country men.
Those are admirable men!
The West-country men for me!

Homesick

Fain are those waters to be free,
Leaving their spring to join the K‘i.
So yearns my heart for thee, dear Wei;
No day but there in thought I fly.
Here are my cousins, kind are they:
O, before these my plans I’ll lay.
On leaving home I lodged in Tsi.
And drank the god-speed cup in Ni.
Maids, when their wedding trip they take,
Parents and brothers all forsake.
Yet let me go my aunts to greet;
Let me my elder sisters meet.
And, leaving here, I’d lodge in Kan,
Then drink the god-speed cup in Yen.
Oil me then well my axles, O!

Back in my carriage let me go.
Soon should I be in Wei; but oh!
Were I not *wrong* in acting so?
Ah! For that land of fertile streams
Long do I sigh in waking dreams.
So when I think of Siu and Ts‘o,
Full is my heart, to overflow.
Drove I but forth to wander there,
Then were unbosomed all my care.

Official Hardships

Out by the northern gate I go my way,
Bearing a load of sorrow and of care;
Vulgarly poor am I, and sore bestead,
And of my hardships all are unaware.
Ah, so indeed!
Yet Heaven hath so decreed;
What therefore can I say?
On me devolves the business of the king,
On me official burdens fast encroach;
On me, at home, arriving from abroad,
My household all conspire to heap reproach
Ah, so indeed!
Yet Heaven hath so decreed;
What therefore can I say?
All urgent is the business of the king;
Official cares press on me more and more.
And when at home, arriving from abroad,
My household one and all thrust at me sore.
Ah, so indeed,
Yet Heaven hath so decreed;
What therefore can I say?

Emigrants

Cold north winds are blowing,
Heavy falls the snow.
Friend, thy hand, if thou art friendly!
Forth together let us go.
Long, too long, we loiter here:
Times are too severe.
How the north wind whistles,
Driving snow and sleet!
Friend, thy hand, if thou art friendly!
Let us, thou and I, retreat.
Long, too long, we loiter here:
Times are too severe.
Nothing red, but foxes!
Nothing black, but crows!
Friend, thy hand, if thou art friendly!
Come with me my waggon goes.

Long, too long, we loiter here:
Times are too severe.

Irregular Love-Making

A modest maiden, passing fair to see,
Waits at the corner of the wall for me.
I love her, yet I have no interview:
I scratch my head I know not what to do.
The modest maid how winsome was she then,
The day she gave me her vermilion pen!
Vermilion pen was never yet so bright,
The maid's own loveliness is my delight.
Now from the pasture lands she sends a shoot
Of couchgrass fair; and rare it is, to boot.
Yet thou, my plant (when beauties I compare),
Art but the fair one's gift, and not the Fair!

The New Tower

Past the New Tower, so spick and span,
The Ho majestic rolled.
There she who sought a gallant mate
Found one deformed and old.
'Neath the New Tower's high battlements
The Ho ran smooth and still.
She sought a gallant mate, and lo!
A shapeless imbecile!
The net was ready for a fish,
A goose there came instead.
And she who sought a gallant mate,
Must with this hunchback wed.

The Two Sons

Two youths there were, each took his boat,
That floated, mirrored in the stream;
And O the fear for those two youths,
And O the anxiety extreme!
Two youths they were, each took his boat,
And floated on the stream away;
And O the fear for those two youths;
If harmed, yet innocent were they.

This page titled 6.3: The Book of Songs is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **2.3: The Book of Songs** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

6.4: The Mother of Mencius

Circulated from Mencius's lifetime on (ca. 371-289 B.C.E.)

China

Mencius (ca. 371–289 B.C.E) is an early Chinese philosopher who contributed to the development of Confucianism, and he is regarded as the "second sage" in this tradition. He wrote the *Mencius*, a Confucian text, which was published as one of the "Four Books" of Confucianism in 1190 C.E. by Zhu Xi, a Neo-Confucian philosopher. The *Mencius* contains Mencius's sayings, the writings about his life, and his philosophical statements about human nature and government. Mencius emphasized the rulers' obligations to look after the welfare of the common people. Mencius believed that humans are basically good with the "seeds" of virtue. The selected text here is a famous legend about Mencius's mother from James Legge's 1895 translation. It sheds light on the educational devotion of Mencius's mother (e.g., her moving three times for his education), her Confucian beliefs, and her influence on Mencius.

Written by Kyounghye Kwon

The Mother of Mencius

Translated by William Jennings

Chapter II: Mencius and His opinions

Section I: Life of Mencius

1. The materials for a Memoir of Mencius are very scanty. The birth and principal incidents of Confucius' life are duly chronicled in the various annotated editions of the Ch'un Ts'ew, and in Sze-ma Ts'ëen. Paucity and uncertainty of materials.

   It is not so in the case of Mencius. Ts'ëen's account of him is contained in half a dozen columns which are without
   a single date. That in the "Cyclopædia of Surnames" only covers half a page. Chaou K'e is more particular in regard to the early years of his subject, but he is equally indefinite. Our chief informants are K'ung Foo, and Lëw Heang in his "Record of Note-worthy Women," but what we find in them has more the character of legend than history.

   It is not till we come to the pages of Mencius himself that we are treading on any certain ground. They give the principal incidents of his public life, extending over about twenty-four years. We learn from them that in the course of that time he was in such and such places, and gave expression to such and such opinions; but where he went first and where he went last, it is next to impossible to determine. I have carefully examined three attempts, made by competent scholars of the present dynasty, to construct a Harmony that shall reconcile the statements of the "Seven Books" with the current chronologies of the time, and do not see my way to adopt entirely the conclusions of any one of them. The value of the Books lies in the record which they furnish of Mencius' sentiments, and the lessons which these supply for the regulation of individual conduct and national policy. It is of little importance that we should be able to lay them down in the strict order of time.



Image 2.3: Mencius | Chinese philosopher and interpreter of Confucianism.

Author: User "PhidiasNL"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

   With Mencius' withdrawal from public life, all traces of him disappear. All that is said of him is that he spent his latter years along with his disciples in the preparation and publication of his Works.

   From this paragraph it will be seen that there is not much to be said in this section. I shall relate, first, what is reported of the early years and training of our philosopher, and then look at him as he comes before us in his own pages, in the full maturity of his character and powers.

2. Mencius is the latinized form of Măng-tsze, “The philosopher Măng.” His surname, birth-place; parents; the year of his birth, bc 371.

   His surname thus connects him with the Măng or Măng-sun family, one of the three great Houses of Loo, whose usurpations were such an offence to Confucius in his day. Their power was broken in the time of duke Gae (bc 493 467), and they thenceforth dwindle into comparative insignificance. Some branches remained in obscurity in Loo, and others went forth to the neighbouring States.

   The branch from which Mencius sprang found a home in the small adjacent principality of Tsow, which in former times had been made known by the name of Choo. It was absorbed by Loo, and afterwards by Ts‘oo, and its name is still retained in one of the districts of the department of Yen-chow in Shan-tung. Confucius was a native of a district of Loo having the same name, which many contend was also the birth-place of Mencius, making him a native of Loo and not of the State of Tsow. To my mind the evidence is decidedly against such a view.

   Mencius’ name was K‘o. His designation does not appear in his Works, nor is any given to him by Sze-ma Ts‘ëen or Chaou K‘e. The latter says that he did not know how he had been styled; but the legends tell that he was called Tsze-keu, and Tsze-yu. The same authorities if we can call them such say that his father’s name was Keih, and that he was styled Kung-e. They say also that his mother’s maiden surname was Chang. Nothing is related of the former but that he died when his son was quite young, but the latter must have a paragraph to herself. “The mother of Mencius” is famous in China, and held up to the present time as a model of what a mother should be.

   The year of Mencius’ birth was probably the 4th of the emperor Lëeh, bc 371. He lived to the age of 84, dying in in the year bc 288, the 26th of the emperor Nan, with whom terminated the long sovereignty of the Chow dynasty. The first twenty-three years of his life thus synchronized with the last twenty-three of Plato’s. Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Demosthenes, and other great men of the West, were also his contemporaries. When we place Mencius among them, he can look them in the face. He does not need to hide a diminished head.

3. It was his misfortune, according to Chaou K‘e, “to lose his father at an early period; but in his youthful years he enjoyed the lessons of his kind mother, who thrice changed her residence on his account.”

   Mencius’ mother.

   At first they lived near a cemetery, and Mencius amused himself with acting the various scenes which he witnessed at the tombs. “This,” said the lady, “is no place for my son;” and she removed to a house in the market-place. But the change was no improvement. The boy took to playing the part of a salesman, vaunting his wares, and chaffering with customers. His mother sought a new house, and found one at last close by a public school. There her child’s attention was taken with the various exercises of politeness which the scholars were taught, and he endeavoured to imitate them. The mother was satisfied. “This,” she said, “is the proper place for my son.”

   Han Ying relates another story of this period. Near their house was a pig-butcher’s. One day Mencius asked his mother what they were killing the pigs for, and was told that it was to feed him. Her conscience immediately reproved her for the answer. She said to herself, “While I was carrying this boy in my womb, I would not sit down if the mat was not placed square, and I ate no meat which was not cut properly; so I taught him when he was yet unborn. And now when his intelligence is opening, I am deceiving him; this is to teach him untruthfulness!” With this she went and bought a piece of pork in order to make good her words.

   As Mencius grew up, he was sent to school. When he returned home one day, his mother looked up from the web which she was weaving, and asked him how far he had got on. He answered her with an air of indifference that he was doing well enough, on which she took a knife and cut the thread of her shuttle. The idler was alarmed, and asked what she meant, when she gave him a long lecture, showing that she had done what he was doing, that her cutting her thread was like his neglecting his learning. The admonition, it is said, had its proper effect; the lecture did not need to be repeated.

   There are two other narratives in which Chang-she figures, and though they belong to a later part of Mencius’ life, it may be as well to embrace them in the present paragraph.

   His wife was squatting down one day in her own room, when Mencius went in. He was so much offended at finding her in that position, that he told his mother, and expressed his intention to put her away, because of “her want of propriety.” “It is you who

have no propriety," said his mother, "and not your wife. Do not 'the Rules of Propriety' say, 'When you are about to ascend a hall, raise your voice; when you enter a door, keep your eyes low?' The reason of the rules is that people may not be taken unprepared; but you entered the door of your private apartment without raising your voice, and so caused your wife to be caught squatting on the ground. The impropriety is with you and not with her." On this Mencius fell to reproving himself, and did not dare to put away his wife.

One day, when he was living with his mother in Ts'e, she was struck with the sorrowfulness of his aspect, as he stood leaning against a pillar, and asked him the cause of it. He replied, "I have heard that the superior man occupies the place for which he is adapted, accepting no reward to which he does not feel entitled, and not covetous of honour and emolument. Now my doctrines are not practised in Ts'e: I wish to leave it, but I think of your old age, and am anxious." His mother said, "It does not belong to a woman to determine anything of herself, but she is subject to the rule of the three obediences. When young, she has to obey her parents; when married, she has to obey her husband; when a widow, she has to obey her son. You are a man in your full maturity, and I am old. Do you act as your conviction of righteousness tells you you ought to do, and I will act according to the rule which belongs to me. Why should you be anxious about me?"

Such are the accounts which I have found of the mother of Mencius. Possibly some of them are inventions, but they are devoutly believed by the people of China; and it must be to their profit. We may well believe that she was a woman of very superior character, and that her son's subsequent distinction was in a great degree owing to her influence and training.

This page titled 6.4: The Mother of Mencius is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **2.4: The Mother of Mencius** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

6.5: The Zhuangzi - Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 B.C.E.)

Compiled ca. the fourth century C.E.

China

The *Zhuangzi*, also known as *Nanhua zhenjing* (“The Pure Classic of Nanhua”), is regarded as a primary source for Daoism, along with *Daodejing* (a.k.a. the *Laozi*) and the *Liezi*. Out of thirty-three chapters, the first seven chapters, called the “inner books,” are attributed to Zhuangzi, whereas the other chapters, called the “outer books,” are credited to the later followers of Zhuangzi. The current arrangement of the book is credited to Guo Xiang in the 4th century C.E.

In contrast to Confucianism, Zhuangzi believed that a truly virtuous man is free from socio-political bounds and obligations, personal attachments, and tradition. Scholars still find the *Zhuangzi*, written in reflective, serious, and sometimes playful ways, puzzling, but it certainly engages the ideas of relativity, paradox, and uncertainty. The most famous of the *Zhuangzi* is the part about Zhuangzi dreaming of being a butterfly, which is located at the end of the second chapter. Because the transcription of Chinese sounds into a Roman alphabet can vary, Zhuangzi has been spelled in various ways, such as Chuang Tzu, Chuang-tsze, Chuang Chou, Zhuangzi, Zhuang Tze, Zhuang Zhou, Chuang Tsu, Chouang-Dsi, Chuang Tse, and Chuangtze.

Written by Kyounghye Kwon

The Adjustment of Controversies

Chuang Tzu, Translated by James Legge

1

Nan-Guo Zi-Qi was seated, leaning forward on his stool. He was looking up to heaven and breathed gently, seeming to be in a trance, and to have lost all consciousness of any companion. (His disciple), Yan Cheng Zi-You, who was in attendance and standing before him, said, “What is this? Can the body be made to become thus like a withered tree, and the mind to become like slaked lime? His appearance as he leans forward on the stool today is such as I never saw him have before in the same position.” Zi-Qi said, “Yan, you do well to ask such a question, I had just now lost myself; but how should you understand it? You may have heard the notes of Man, but have not heard those of Earth; you may have heard the notes of Earth, but have not heard those of Heaven.”

Zi-You said, “I venture to ask from you a description of all these.” The reply was, “When the breath of the Great Mass (of nature) comes strongly, it is called Wind. Sometimes it does not come so; but when it does, then from a myriad apertures there issues its excited noise; have you not heard it in a prolonged gale? Take the projecting bluff of a mountain forest in the great trees, a hundred spans round, the apertures and cavities are like the nostrils, or the mouth, or the ears; now square, now round like a cup or a mortar; here like a wet footprint, and there like a large puddle. (The sounds issuing from them are like) those of fretted water, of the arrowy whizz, of the stern command, of the inhaling of the breath, of the shout, of the gruff note, of the deep wail, of the sad and piping note.

The first notes are slight, and those that follow deeper, but in harmony with them. Gentle winds produce a small response; violent winds a great one. When the fierce gusts have passed away, all the apertures are empty (and still) have you not seen this in the bending and quivering of the branches and leaves?”

Zi-You said, “The notes of Earth then are simply those which come from its myriad apertures; and the notes of Man may just be compared to those which (are brought from the tubes of) bamboo allow me to ask about the notes of Heaven.” Zi-Qi replied, “Blowing the myriad differences, making them stop [proceed] of themselves, sealing their self-selecting who is it that stirs it all up?”

2

Great knowledge is wide and comprehensive; small knowledge is partial and restricted. Great speech is exact and complete; small speech is (merely) so much talk. When we sleep, the soul communicates with (what is external to us); when we awake, the body is set free. Our intercourse with others then leads to various activity, and daily there is the striving of mind with mind. There are hesitancies; deep difficulties; reservations; small apprehensions causing restless distress, and great apprehensions producing endless fears. Where their utterances are like arrows from a bow, we have those who feel it their charge to pronounce what is right

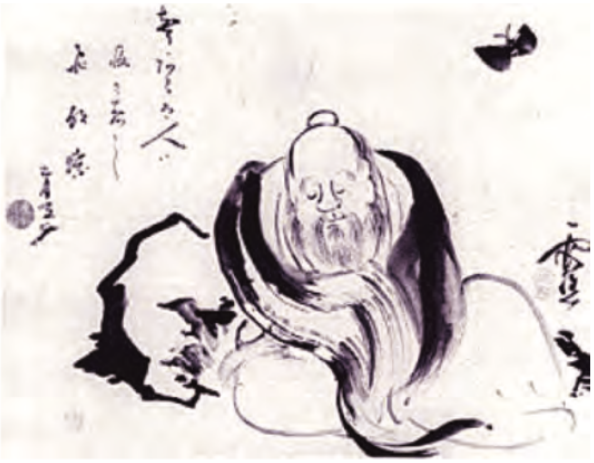


Image 2.4: Zhuangzi Butterfly Dream | Zhuangzi illustrates his idea of "transformation of things" with his butterfly dream.

Author: Unknown
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

and what is wrong; where they are given out like the conditions of a covenant, we have those who maintain their views, determined to overcome. (The weakness of their arguments), like the decay (of things) in autumn and winter, shows the failing (of the minds of some) from day to day; or it is like their water which, once voided, cannot be gathered up again. Then their ideas seem as if fast bound with cords, showing that the mind is become like an old and dry moat, and that it is nigh to death, and cannot be restored to vigour and brightness. Joy and anger, sadness and pleasure, anticipation and regret, fickleness and fixedness, vehemence and indolence, eagerness and tardiness; (all these moods), like music from an empty tube, or mushrooms from the warm moisture, day and night succeed to one another and come before us, and we do not know whence they sprout. Let us stop! Let us stop! Can we expect to find out suddenly how they are produced?

3

If there were not (the views of) another, I should not have mine; if there were not I (with my views), his would be uncalled for: this is nearly a true statement of the case, but we do not know what it is that makes it be so. It might seem as if there would be a true Governor concerned in it, but we do not find any trace (of his presence and acting). That such an One could act so I believe; but we do not see His form. He has affections, but He has no form. Given the body, with its hundred parts, its nine openings, and its six viscera, all complete in their places, which do I love the most? Do you love them all equally? or do you love some more than others? Is it not the case that they all perform the part of your servants and waiting women? All of them being such, are they not incompetent to rule one another? or do they take it in turns to be now ruler and now servants? There must be a true Ruler (among them) whether by searching you can find out His character or not, there is neither advantage nor hurt, so far as the truth of His operation is concerned. When once we have received the bodily form complete, its parts do not fail to perform their functions till the end comes. In conflict with things or in harmony with them, they pursue their course to the end, with the speed of a galloping horse which cannot be stopped is it not sad? To be constantly toiling all one's lifetime, without seeing the fruit of one's labour, and to be weary and worn out with his labour, without knowing where he is going to is it not a deplorable case? Men may say, "But it is not death;" yet of what advantage is this? When the body is decomposed, the mind will be the same along with it must not the case be pronounced very deplorable? Is the life of man indeed enveloped in such darkness? Is it I alone to whom it appears so? And does it not appear to be so to other men?

4

If we were to follow the judgments of the predetermined mind, who would be left alone and without a teacher? Not only would it be so with those who know the sequences (of knowledge and feeling) and make their own selection among them, but it would be so as well with the stupid and unthinking. For one who has not this determined mind, to have his affirmations and negations is like the case described in the saying, "He went to Yue to-day, and arrived at it yesterday." It would be making what was not a fact to be a fact. But even the spirit-like Yu could not have known how to do this, and how should one like me be able to do it? But speech is not like the blowing (of the wind); the speaker has (a meaning in) his words. If, however, what he says, be indeterminate (as from a mind not made up), does he then really speak or not? He thinks that his words are different from the chirpings of fledgelings; but is there any distinction between them or not? But how can the Dao be so obscured, that there should be "a True" and "a False" in it? How can speech be so obscured that there should be "the Right" and "the Wrong" about them? Where shall the Dao go to that it will not be found? Where shall speech be found that it will be inappropriate? Dao becomes obscured through the small comprehension (of the mind), and speech comes to be obscure through the vain-gloriousness (of the speaker). So it is that we have the contentions between the Literati and the Mohists, the one side affirming what the other denies, and vice versa. If we would decide on their several affirmations and denials, no plan is like bringing the (proper) light (of the mind) to bear on them.

5

There is no thing that is not “that”, and there is no thing that is not “this”. If I look at something from “that”, I do not see it; only if I look at it from knowing do I know it. Hence it is said, “That view comes from this; and this view is a consequence of that:” which is the theory that that view and this (the opposite views) produce each the other. Although it be so, there is affirmed now life and now death; now death and now life; now the admissibility of a thing and now its inadmissibility; now its inadmissibility and now its admissibility. (The disputants) now affirm and now deny; now deny and now affirm. Therefore the sagely man does not pursue this method, but views things in the light of (his) Heaven (-ly nature), and hence forms his judgment of what is right. This view is the same as that, and that view is the same as this. But that view involves both a right and a wrong; and this view involves also a right and a wrong are there indeed the two views, that and this? Or are there not the two views, that and this? They have not found their point of correspondency which is called the pivot of the Dao. As soon as one finds this pivot, he stands in the centre of the ring (of thought), where he can respond without end to the changing views; without end to those affirming, and without end to those denying. Therefore I said, “There is nothing like the proper light (of the mind).”

6

By means of a finger (of my own) to illustrate that the finger (of another) is not a finger is not so good a plan as to illustrate that it is not so by means of what is (acknowledged to be) not a finger; and by means of (what I call) a horse to illustrate that (what another calls) a horse is not so, is not so good a plan as to illustrate that it is not a horse, by means of what is (acknowledged to be) not a horse. (All things in) heaven and earth may be (dealt with as) a finger; (each of) their myriads may be (dealt with as) a horse.

Does a thing seem so to me? (I say that) it is so. Does it seem not so to me? (I say that) it is not so. A path is formed by (constant) treading on the ground. A thing is called by its name through the (constant) application of the name to it. How is it so? It is so because it is so. How is it not so? It is not so, because it is not so. Everything has its inherent character and its proper capability. There is nothing which has not these. Therefore, this being so, if we take a stalk of grain and a (large) pillar, a loathsome (leper) and (a beauty like) Xi Shi, things large and things insecure, things crafty and things strange; they may in the light of the Dao all be reduced to the same category (of opinion about them).

It was separation that led to completion; from completion ensued dissolution. But all things, without regard to their completion and dissolution, may again be comprehended in their unity it is only the far reaching in thought who know how to comprehend them in this unity. This being so, let us give up our devotion to our own views, and occupy ourselves with the ordinary views. These ordinary views are grounded on the use of things. (The study of that) use leads to the comprehensive judgment, and that judgment secures the success (of the inquiry). That success gained, we are near (to the object of our search), and there we stop. When we stop, and yet we do not know how it is so, we have what is called the Dao. When we toil our spirits and intelligence, obstinately determined (to establish our own view), and do not know the agreement (which underlies it and the views of others), we have what is called “In the morning three.” What is meant by that “In the morning three?” A keeper of monkeys, in giving them out their acorns, (once) said, “In the morning I will give you three (measures) and in the evening four.” This made them all angry, and he said, “Very well. In the morning I will give you four and in the evening three.” The monkeys were all pleased. His two proposals were substantially the same, but the result of the one was to make the creatures angry, and of the other to make them pleased an illustration of the point I am insisting on. Therefore the sagely man brings together a dispute in its affirmations and denials, and rests in the equal fashioning of Heaven. Both sides of the question are admissible.

7

Among the men of old their knowledge reached the extreme point. What was that extreme point? Some held that at first there was not anything. This is the extreme point, the utmost point to which nothing can be added. A second class held that there was something, but without any responsive recognition of it (on the part of men). A third class held that there was such recognition, but there had not begun to be any expression of different opinions about it. It was through the definite expression of different opinions about it that there ensued injury to (the doctrine of) the Dao. It was this injury to the (doctrine of the) Dao which led to the formation of (partial) preferences. Was it indeed after such preferences were formed that the injury came? or did the injury precede the rise of such preferences? If the injury arose after their formation, Zhao’s method of playing on the lute was natural. If the injury arose before their formation, there would have been no such playing on the lute as Zhao’s. Zhao Wen’s playing on the lute, Shi Kuang’s indicating time with his staff, and Huizi’s (giving his views), while leaning against a dryandra tree (were all extraordinary). The knowledge of the three men (in their several arts) was nearly perfect, and therefore they practised them to the

end of their lives. They loved them because they were different from those of others. They loved them and wished to make them known to others. But as they could not be made clear, though they tried to make them so, they ended with the obscure (discussions) about “the hard” and “the white.” And their sons, moreover, with all the threads of their fathers’ compositions, yet to the end of their lives accomplished nothing. If they, proceeding in this way, could be said to have succeeded, then am I also successful; if they cannot be pronounced successful, neither I nor any other can succeed. Therefore the scintillations of light from the midst of confusion and perplexity are indeed valued by the sagely man; but not to use one’s own views and to take his position on the ordinary views is what is called using the (proper) light.

8

But here now are some other sayings I do not know whether they are of the same character as those which I have already given, or of a different character. Whether they be of the same character or not when looked at along with them, they have a character of their own, which cannot be distinguished from the others. But though this be the case, let me try to explain myself. There was a beginning. There was a beginning before that beginning. There was a beginning previous to that beginning before there was the beginning. There was existence; there had been no existence. There was no existence before the beginning of that no existence. There was no existence previous to the no existence before there was the beginning of the no existence. If suddenly there was nonexistence, we do not know whether it was really anything existing, or really not existing. Now I have said what I have said, but I do not know whether what I have said be really anything to the point or not.

9

Under heaven there is nothing greater than the tip of an autumn down, and the Tai mountain is small. There is no one more long-lived than a child which dies prematurely, and Peng Zu did not live out his time. Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one. Since they are one, can there be speech about them? But since they are spoken of as one, must there not be room for speech? One and Speech are two; two and one are three. Going on from this (in our enumeration), the most skilful reckoner cannot reach (the end of the necessary numbers), and how much less can ordinary people do so! Therefore from non-existence we proceed to existence till we arrive at three; proceeding from existence to existence, to how many should we reach? Let us abjure such procedure, and simply rest here.

10

The Dao at first met with no responsive recognition. Speech at first had no constant forms of expression. Because of this there came the demarcations (of different views). Let me describe those demarcations: they are the Left and the Right; the Relations and their Obligations; Classifications and their Distinctions; Emulations and Contentions. These are what are called “the Eight Qualities.” Outside the limits of the world of men, the sage occupies his thoughts, but does not discuss about anything; inside those limits he occupies his thoughts, but does not pass any judgments. In the Chun Qiu, which embraces the history of the former kings, the sage indicates his judgments, but does not argue (in vindication of them). Thus it is that he separates his characters from one another without appearing to do so, and argues without the form of argument. How does he do so? The sage cherishes his views in his own breast, while men generally state theirs argumentatively, to show them to others. Hence we have the saying, “Disputation is a proof of not seeing clearly.”

The Great Dao does not admit of being praised. The Great Argument does not require words. Great Benevolence is not (officiously) benevolent. Great Disinterestedness does not vaunt its humility. Great Courage is not seen in stubborn bravery. The Dao that is displayed is not the Dao. Words that are argumentative do not reach the point. Benevolence that is constantly exercised does not accomplish its object. Disinterestedness that vaunts its purity is not genuine. Courage that is most stubborn is ineffectual. These five seem to be round (and complete), but they tend to become square (and immovable). Therefore the knowledge that stops at what it does not know is the greatest. Who knows the argument that needs no words, and the Way that is not to be trodden? He who is able to know this has what is called “The Heavenly Treasure-house.” He may pour into it without its being filled; he may pour from it without its being exhausted; and all the while he does not know whence (the supply) comes. This is what is called “The Store of Light.” Therefore of old Yao asked Shun, saying, “I wish to smite (the rulers of) Zong, Kuai, and Xu-Ao. Even when standing in my court, I cannot get them out of my mind. How is it so?” Shun replied, “Those three rulers live (in their little states) as if they were among the mugwort and other brushwood how is it that you cannot get them out of your mind? Formerly, ten suns came out together, and all things were illuminated by them; how much should (your) virtue exceed (all) suns!”

11

Nie Que asked Wang Ni, saying, “Do you know, Sir, what all creatures agree in approving and affirming?” “How should I know it?” was the reply. “Do you know what it is that you do not know?” asked the other again, and he got the same reply. He asked a third time, “Then are all creatures thus without knowledge?” and Wang Ni answered
as before, (adding however), “Notwithstanding, I will try and explain my meaning. How do you know that when I say ‘I know it,’ I really (am showing that) I do not know it, and that when I say ‘I do not know it,’ I really am showing that I do know it.” And let me ask you some questions: “If a man sleep in a damp place, he will have a pain in his loins, and half his body will be as if it were dead; but will it be so with an eel? If he be living in a tree, he will be frightened and all in a tremble; but will it be so with a monkey? And does any one of the three know his right place? Men eat animals that have been fed on grain and grass; deer feed on the thick-set grass; centipedes enjoy small snakes; owls and crows delight in mice; but does any one of the four know the right taste? The dog-headed monkey finds its mate in the female gibbon; the elk and the axis deer cohabit; and the eel enjoys itself with other fishes. Mao Qiang and Li Ji were accounted by men to be most beautiful, but when fishes saw them, they dived deep in the water from them; when birds, they flew from them aloft; and when deer saw them, they separated and fled away. But did any of these four know which in the world is the right female attraction? As I look at the matter, the first principles of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of approval and disapproval are inextricably mixed and confused together how is it possible that I should know how to discriminate among them?” Nie Que said (further), “Since you, Sir, do not know what is advantageous and what is hurtful, is the Perfect man also in the same way without the knowledge of them?” Wang Ni replied, “The Perfect man is spirit-like. Great lakes might be boiling about him, and he would not feel their heat; the He and the Han might be frozen up, and he would not feel the cold; the hurrying thunderbolts might split the mountains, and the wind shake the ocean, without being able to make him afraid. Being such, he mounts on the clouds of the air, rides on the sun and moon, and rambles at ease beyond the four seas. Neither death nor life makes any change in him, and how much less should the considerations of advantage and injury do so!”

12

Qu Quezi asked Chang Wuzi, saying, “I heard the Master (speaking of such language as the following): ‘The sagely man does not occupy himself with worldly affairs. He does not put himself in the way of what is profitable, nor try to avoid what is hurtful; he has no pleasure in seeking (for anything from any one); he does not care to be found in (any established) Way; he speaks without speaking; he does not speak when he speaks; thus finding his enjoyment outside the dust and dirt (of the world).’ The Master considered all this to be a shoreless flow of mere words, and I consider it to describe the course of the Mysterious Way What do you, Sir, think of it?” Chang Wuzi replied, “The hearing of such words would have perplexed even Huang Di, and how should Qiu be competent to understand them? And you, moreover, are too hasty in forming your estimate (of their meaning). You see the egg, and (immediately) look out for the cock (that is to be hatched from it); you see the bow, and (immediately) look out for the dove (that is to be brought down by it) being roasted. I will try to explain the thing to you in a rough way; do you in the same way listen to me. How could any one stand by the side of the sun and moon, and hold under his arm all space and all time? (Such language only means that the sagely man) keeps his mouth shut, and puts aside questions that are uncertain and dark; making his inferior capacities unite with him in honouring (the One Lord). Men in general bustle about and toil; the sagely man seems stupid and to know nothing. He blends ten thousand years together in the one (conception of time); the myriad things all pursue their spontaneous course, and they are all before him as doing so. How do I know that the love of life is not a delusion? and that the dislike of death is not like a young person’s losing his way, and not knowing that he is (really) going home? Li Ji was a daughter of the border Warden of Ai. When (the ruler of) the state of Jin first got possession of her, she wept till the tears wetted all the front of her dress. But when she came to the place of the king, shared with him his luxurious couch, and ate his grain-and-grass-fed meat, then she regretted that she had wept. How do I know that the dead do not repent of their former craving for life? Those who dream of (the pleasures of) drinking may in the morning wail and weep; those who dream of wailing and weeping may in the morning be going out to hunt. When they were dreaming they did not know it was a dream; in their dream they may even have tried to interpret it; but when they awoke they knew that it was a dream. And there is the great awaking, after which we shall know that this life was a great dream. All the while, the stupid think they are awake, and with nice discrimination insist on their knowledge; now playing the part of rulers, and now of grooms. Bigoted was that Qiu! He and you are both dreaming. I who say that you are dreaming am dreaming myself. These words seem very strange; but if after ten thousand ages we once meet with a great sage who knows how to explain them, it will be as if we met him (unexpectedly) some morning or evening.

“Since you made me enter into this discussion with you, if you have got the better of me and not I of you, are you indeed right, and I indeed wrong? If I have got the better of you and not you of me, am I indeed right and you indeed wrong? Is the one of us right and the other wrong? are we both right or both wrong? Since we cannot come to a mutual and common understanding, men will certainly continue in darkness on the subject. Whom shall I employ to adjudicate in the matter? If I employ one who agrees with you, how can he, agreeing with you, do so correctly? If I employ one who agrees with me, how can he, agreeing with me, do so correctly? If I employ one who disagrees with you and I, how can he, disagreeing with you and I, do so correctly? If I employ one who agrees with you and I, how can he, agreeing with you and I, do so correctly? In this way I and you and those others would all not be able to come to a mutual understanding; and shall we then wait for that (great sage)? (We need not do so.) To wait on others to learn how conflicting opinions are changed is simply like not so waiting at all. The harmonising of them is to be found in the invisible operation of Heaven, and by following this on into the unlimited past. It is by this method that we can complete our years (without our minds being disturbed). What is meant by harmonising (conflicting opinions) in the invisible operation of Heaven? There is the affirmation and the denial of it; and there is the assertion of an opinion and the rejection of it. If the affirmation be according to the reality of the fact, it is certainly different from the denial of it there can be no dispute about that. If the assertion of an opinion be correct, it is certainly different from its rejection neither can there be any dispute about that. Let us forget the lapse of time; let us forget the conflict of opinions. Let us make our appeal to the Infinite, and take up our position there.”

13

The Penumbra asked the Shadow, saying, “Formerly you were walking on, and now you have stopped; formerly you were sitting, and now you have risen up how is it that you are so without stability?” The Shadow replied, “I wait for the movements of something else to do what I do, and that something else on which I wait waits further on another to do as it does. My waiting, is it for the scales of a snake, or the wings of a cicada? How should I know why I do one thing, or do not do another?”

14

“Formerly, I, Zhuang Zhou, dreamt that I was a butterfly, a butterfly flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Zhou. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again, the veritable Zhou. I did not know whether it had formerly been Zhou dreaming that he was a butterfly, or it was now a butterfly dreaming that it was Zhou. But between Zhou and a butterfly there must be a difference. This is a case of what is called the Transformation of Things.”

This page titled 6.5: The Zhuangzi - Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 B.C.E.) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **2.5: The Zhuangzi - Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 B.C.E.)** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: India

The works in this chapter were written down starting around the 4th century B.C.E., but the three stories date back to much earlier in the oral tradition. All three works remain influential and ubiquitous in Indian society to this day: common knowledge that everyone knows, at least in some part. Rather than offering a list of values and beliefs, the stories demonstrate them in action: how to approach complicated moral issues, and what to do when life seems unfair. The answer is not always easy, and sometimes the choice is between two options that are not ideal. The best choice is often the most difficult one, and the expectations of society for these characters can seem overwhelming. The intervention of the gods in these cases becomes absolutely necessary. The *Bhagavad-Gita* is the most directly religious work, containing as it does the teaching of the god Vishnu through his avatar Krishna, but the other two texts include direct participation of gods (and their avatars) in the stories. Therefore, some basic information about Hinduism is necessary for a clear understanding of the texts:

The one god is Brahman, who both binds the universe together and transcends it. The consciousness of Brah- man is divided into three parts, which worshippers address individually:

- Brahma, the Creator
- Vishnu, the Preserver
- Shiva, the Destroyer

Each of them is represented by hundreds of minor Hindu gods, who represent aspects of these three and can function separately while still remaining part of the whole (and all of them are part of Brahman). Gods also can send down avatars—pieces of their consciousness that are born, live, and die as humans—to intervene when neces- sary.

In all three works, a belief in samsara—the cycle of reincarnation—drives the characters' behavior. An individ- ual can move up or down the hierarchy in society based on their karma (the sum of their good and bad deeds), but only in their next reincarnation. For each person, the concept of dharma (doing what one is supposed to do, right behavior, Law) is slightly different: A warrior who takes an oath (no matter how crazy an oath it is) must fulfill his oath, because keeping one's word is part of a warrior's honor. Not fulfilling an oath is adharma (described as Unlaw in the texts). A farmer, however, should behave like a good farmer, rather than a warrior, and good farmers do not take crazy oaths or act in ways that could damage their ability to plant and harvest a crop. Farmers also should not try to become warriors. Social mobility, therefore, is not only discouraged, but irreligious in that context. This idea drives the caste system, forcing people to remain in their caste or face being made an Untouchable.

Each character is born into a caste, or Varna, which determines what they can and cannot do, and each Varna is broken down into numerous Jats, or communities:

- Brahmins, the priests and scholars, are the highest Varna.
- Kshatriyas, the rulers and the military, are the next level.
- Vaishyas are the farmers, landlords, and merchants.
- Sudras are peasants, servants, and workers in non-polluting jobs.

The Dalit, or Untouchables, are workers in what are considered polluting jobs. In some places, even contact with the shadow of an Untouchable was considered polluting. In some parts of India (mostly rural districts), the caste system continues, despite government attempts to stop it.

Characters need to be the best they can be (following their individual dharma) in the Varna and Jat into which they were born in order to move up the hierarchy in their next reincarnation. They are expected not only to work in their Jat, but to marry within it. Certain problems in *The Mahabharata* are a direct result of characters who do not stay in their Jat (or even their Varna), and the story warns us that trouble, and even disaster, will follow.

As you read, consider the following questions:

- What is this society's definition of an epic hero? How do we know, based on examples from the stories themselves?
- How do the characters view the gods, and how do the gods treat humans?

- What do we learn about what this society considers proper or improper behavior, again based on the text itself? Who is punished or rewarded, and why?
- Is family love or romantic love more important in the text, and why?

Written by Laura J. Getty

7.1: The Bhagavad Gita
7.2: The Mahabharata
7.3: The Râmâyana

Thumbnail: The Rajarani Temple is an 11th-century Hindu temple located in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha, India. Image used with permission (CC BY-SA 3.0; Lnm8910 via Wikipedia).

This page titled 7: India is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

7.1: The Bhagavad Gita

Added to *The Mahabharata* between 400 B.C.E. and 400 C.E.

India

The Bhagavad Gita records the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna right before the epic battle of Kurukshetra. Although it is a part of *The Mahabharata*, it often is taught separately for its insights into Hindu beliefs. Krishna is the eighth human avatar of the god Vishnu, who sends down an avatar every time that the world requires such serious divine intervention that the good side could not win without his help. In this instance, the warrior Arjuna finds himself in a difficult position; to fight a war against evil, he must fight members of his own family, which would normally be a sin. Krishna must teach Arjuna how to know what to do when faced with conflicting duties. Some of the tension of the work comes from the setting; Krishna and Arjuna are literally between the two armies as they talk, while both sides wait for Arjuna to blow his horn, which will start the battle. The *Bhagavad Gita* stands as one of the great moral documents in world literature, influencing people as diverse as Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Gandhi.

Written by Laura J. Getty

The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by Ramananda Prasad

Chapter 1

Arjuna's Dilemma

The war of Mahabharata has begun after all negotiations by Lord Krishna and others to avoid it failed. The blind King (Dhritarashtra) was never very sure about the victory of his sons (Kauravas) in spite of their superior army. Sage Vyasa, the author of Mahabharata, wanted to give the blind King the boon of eyesight so that the King could see the horrors of the war for which he was primarily responsible. But the King refused the offer. He did not want to see the horrors of the war; but preferred to get the war report through his charioteer, Sanjaya. Sage Vyasa granted the power of clairvoyance to Sanjaya. With this power Sanjaya could see, hear, and recall the events of the past, present, and the future. He was able to give an instant replay of the eyewitness war report to the blind King sitting in the palace.

Bhishma, the mightiest man and the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava's army, is disabled by Arjuna and is lying on deathbed in the battleground on the tenth day of the eighteen day war. Upon hearing this bad news from Sanjaya, the blind King looses all hopes for victory of his sons. Now the King wants to know the details of the war from the beginning, including how the mightiest man, and the commander-in-chief of his superior army who had a boon of dying at his own will was defeated in the battlefield. The teaching of the Gita begins with the inquiry of the blind King, after Sanjaya described how Bhishma was defeated, as follows:

The King inquired: Sanjaya, please now tell me, in details, what did my people (the Kauravas) and the Pandavas do in the battlefield before the war started?

Sanjaya said: O King, After seeing the battle formation of the Pandava's army, your son approached his guru and spoke these words:

O Master, behold this mighty army of the Pandavas, arranged in battle formation by your other talented disciple! There are many great warriors, valiant men, heroes, and mighty archers.

Introduction Of The Army Commanders

Also there are many heroes on my side who have risked their lives for me. I shall name few distinguished commanders of my army for your information. He named all the officers of his army, and said: They are armed with various weapons, and are skilled in warfare.

Our army is invincible, while their army is easy to conquer. Therefore all of you, occupying your respective positions, protect our commander-in-chief.

War Starts With The Blowing Of Conch Shells

The mighty commander-in-chief and the eldest man of the dynasty, roared as a lion and blew his conch loudly, bringing joy to your son.

Soon after that; conches, kettledrums, cymbals, drums, and trumpets were sounded together. The commotion was tremendous.

After that, Lord Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a grand chariot yoked with white horses, blew their celestial conches.

Krishna blew His conch first, and then Arjuna and all other commanders of various divisions of the army of Pandavas blew their respective conches. The tumultuous uproar, resounding through the earth and sky, tore the hearts of your sons.

Arjuna Wants To Inspect The Army Against Whom He Is About To Fight

Seeing your sons standing, and the war about to begin with the hurling of weapons; Arjuna, whose banner bore the emblem of Lord Hanumana, took up his bow and spoke these words to Lord Krishna: O Lord, please stop my chariot between the two armies until I behold those who stand here eager for the battle and with whom I must engage in this act of war.

I wish to see those who are willing to serve and appease the evil-minded Kauravas by assembling here to fight the battle.

Sanjaya said: O King; Lord Krishna, as requested by Arjuna, placed the best of all the chariots in the midst of the two armies facing Arjuna's grandfather, his guru and all other Kings; and said to Arjuna: Behold these assembled soldiers!

Arjuna saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and other comrades in the army.

Arjuna's Dilemma

After seeing fathers-in-law, companions, and all his kinsmen standing in the ranks of the two armies, Arjuna was overcome with great compassion and sorrowfully spoke these words: O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen standing with a desire to fight, my limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry. My body quivers and my hairs stand on end.

The bow slips from my hand, and my skin intensely burns. My head turns, I am unable to stand steady, and O Krishna, I see bad omens. I see no use of killing my kinsmen in battle.

I desire neither victory, nor pleasure nor kingdom, O Krishna. What is the use of the kingdom, or enjoyment, or even life, O Krishna? Because all those for whom we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures are standing here for the battle, giving up their lives.

I do not wish to kill my teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives who are about to kill us, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, let alone for this earthly kingdom, O Krishna.

O Lord Krishna, what pleasure shall we find in killing our cousin brothers? Upon killing these felons we shall incur sin only.

Therefore, we should not kill our cousin brothers. How can we be happy after killing our relatives, O Krishna?

Though they are blinded by greed, and do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being treacherous to friends. Why should not we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family, think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna?

Arjuna Describes the Evils of War

Eternal family traditions and codes of moral conduct are destroyed with the destruction of the family. And immorality prevails in the family due to the destruction of family traditions.

And when immorality prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupted; when women are corrupted, unwanted progeny is born.

This brings the family and the slayers of the family to hell, because the spirits of their ancestors are degraded when deprived of ceremonial offerings of love and respect by the unwanted progeny.

The everlasting qualities of social order and family traditions of those who destroy their family are ruined by the sinful act of illegitimacy.

We have been told, O Krishna, that people whose family traditions are destroyed necessarily dwell in hell for a long time.

Alas! We are ready to commit a great sin by striving to slay our relatives because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom.

It would be far better for me if my cousin brothers kill me with their weapons in battle while I am unarmed and unresisting.

When Going Gets Tough, Even Tough Ones Can Get Deluded

Sanjaya said: Having said this in the battlefield and casting aside his bow and arrow, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow.

Chapter 2

Transcendental Knowledge

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna spoke these words to Arjuna whose eyes were tearful and downcast, and who was overwhelmed with compassion and despair.

Lord Krishna said: How has the dejection come to you at this juncture? This is not fit for a person of noble mind and deeds. It is disgraceful, and it does not lead one to heaven, O Arjuna.

Do not become a coward, O Arjuna, because it does not befit you. Shake off this trivial weakness of your heart and get up for the battle, O Arjuna.

Arjuna Continues His Reasoning Against The War

Arjuna said: How shall I strike my grandfather, my guru, and all other relatives, who are worthy of my respect, with arrows in battle, O Krishna?

It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble personalities, because by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures stained with their blood.

We do not know which alternative to fight or to quit is better for us. Further, we do not know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us. We should not even wish to live after killing our cousin brothers, who are standing in front of us.

My senses are overcome by the weakness of pity, and my mind is confused about duty (Dharma). Please tell me what is better for me. I am Your disciple, and I take refuge in You.

I do not perceive that gaining an unrivaled and prosperous kingdom on this earth, or even lordship over all the celestial controllers will remove the sorrow that is drying up my senses.

Sanjaya said: O King, after speaking like this to Lord Krishna, the mighty Arjuna said to Krishna: I shall not fight, and became silent.

O King, Lord Krishna, as if smiling, spoke these words to the distressed Arjuna in the midst of the two armies.

The Teachings Of The Gita Begin With The True Knowledge Of Spirit And The Physical Body

Lord Krishna said: you grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet speak words of wisdom. The wise grieves neither for the living nor for the dead.

There was never a time when these monarchs, you, or I did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future.

Just as the soul acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life; similarly, the soul acquires another body after death. This should not delude the wise.

The contacts of the senses with the sense objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, and pain and pleasure. They are transitory and impermanent. Therefore, one should learn to endure them.

Because a calm person who is not afflicted by these sense objects, and is steady in pain and pleasure becomes fit for salvation.

The Spirit Is Eternal, Body Is Transitory

The invisible Spirit (Atma, Atman) is eternal, and the visible physical body, is transitory. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of truth.

The Spirit by whom this entire universe is pervaded is indestructible. No one can destroy the imperishable Spirit.

The physical bodies of the eternal, immutable, and incomprehensible Spirit are perishable. Therefore fight, O Arjuna.

The one who thinks that the Spirit is a slayer, and the one who thinks the Spirit is slain, both are ignorant. Because the Spirit neither slays nor is slain.

The Spirit is neither born nor does it die at any time. It does not come into being, or cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Spirit is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

O Arjuna, how can a person who knows that the Spirit is indestructible, eternal, unborn, and immutable, kill anyone or causes anyone to be killed?

Death And Transmigration Of Soul

Just as a person puts on new garments after discarding the old ones; similarly, the living entity or the individual soul acquires new bodies after casting away the old bodies.

Weapons do not cut this Spirit, fire does not burn it, water does not make it wet, and the wind does not make it dry. The Spirit cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried. It is eternal, all pervading, unchanging, immovable, and primeval.

The Spirit is said to be unexplainable, incomprehensible, and unchanging. Knowing the Spirit as such you should not grieve.

Even if you think that the physical body takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this. Because death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable.

All beings are unmanifest, or invisible to our physical eyes before birth and after death. They manifest between the birth and the death only. what is there to grieve about?

The Indestructible Spirit Transcends Mind And Speech

Some look upon this Spirit as a wonder, another describes it as wonderful, and others hear of it as a wonder. Even after hearing about it very few people know what the Spirit is.

O Arjuna, the Spirit that dwells in the body of all beings is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn for anybody.

Lord Krishna Reminds Arjuna Of His Duty As A Warrior

Considering also your duty as a warrior you should not waver like this. Because there is nothing more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war.

Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for an unsought war that is like an open door to heaven.

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. People will talk about your disgrace forever. To the honored, dishonor is worse than death.

The great warriors will think that you have retreated from the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly esteemed you will lose respect for you.

Your enemies will speak many unmentionable words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful to you than this?

You will go to heaven if killed on the line of duty, or you will enjoy the kingdom on the earth if victorious.

Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna.

Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way you will not incur sin.

Importance Of Karma-Yoga, The Selfless Service

The science of transcendental knowledge has been imparted to you, O Arjuna. Now listen to the science of selfless service (Seva), endowed with which you will free yourself from all Karmic bondage, or sin.

No effort is ever lost in selfless service, and there is no adverse effect. Even a little practice of the discipline of selfless service protects one from the great fear of repeated birth and death.

A selfless worker has resolute determination for God-realization, but the desires of the one who works to enjoy the fruits of work are endless.

The Vedas Deal With Both Material And Spiritual Aspects Of Life

The misguided ones who delight in the melodious chanting of the Veda without understanding the real purpose of the Vedas think, O Arjuna, as if there is nothing else in the Vedas except the rituals for the sole purpose of obtaining heavenly enjoyment.

They are dominated by material desires, and consider the attainment of heaven as the highest goal of life. They engage in specific rites for the sake of prosperity and enjoyment. Rebirth is the result of their action.

The resolute determination of Self-realization is not formed in the minds of those who are attached to pleasure and power, and whose judgment is obscured by ritualistic activities.

A portion of the Vedas deals with three modes goodness, passion, and ignorance of material Nature. Become free from pairs of opposites, be ever balanced and unconcerned with the thoughts of acquisition and preservation. Rise above these three modes, and be Self-conscious, O Arjuna.

To a Self-realized person the Vedas are as useful as a small reservoir of water when the water of a huge lake becomes available.

Theory And Practice Of Karma-Yoga

you have control over doing your respective duty only, but no control or claim over the results. The fruits of work should not be your motive, and you should never be inactive.

Do your duty to the best of your ability, o Arjuna, with your mind attached to the Lord, abandoning worry and selfish attachment to the results, and remaining calm in both success and failure. The selfless service is a yogic practice that brings peace and equanimity of mind.

Work done with selfish motives is inferior by far to the selfless service. Therefore be a selfless worker, O Arjuna. Those who work only to enjoy the fruits of their labor are verily unhappy, because one has no control over the results.

A Karma-yogi or the selfless person becomes free from both vice and virtue in this life itself. Therefore, strive for selfless service. working to the best of one's abilities without becoming selfishly attached to the fruits of work is called Karma-yoga or Seva.

Karma-yogis are freed from the bondage of rebirth due to renouncing the selfish attachment to the fruits of all work, and attain blissful divine state of salvation or Nirvana.

When your intellect will completely pierce the veil of confusion, then you will become indifferent to what has been heard and what is to be heard from the scriptures.

When your intellect, that is confused by the conflicting opinions and the ritualistic doctrine of the Vedas, shall stay steady and firm on concentration of the Supreme Being, then you shall attain union with the Supreme in trance.

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what are the marks of an enlightened person whose intellect is steady? What does a person of steady intellect think and talk about? How does such a person behave with others, and live in this world?

Marks Of A Self-Realized Person

Lord Krishna said: When one is completely free from all desires of the mind and is satisfied with the Supreme Being by the joy of Supreme Being, then one is called an enlightened person, O Arjuna.

A person whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow, who does not crave pleasures, and who is completely free from attachment, fear, and anger, is called an enlightened sage of steady intellect.

The mind and intellect of a person become steady who is not attached to anything, who is neither elated by getting desired results, nor perturbed by undesired results.

When one can completely withdraw the senses from the sense objects as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into the shell for protection from calamity, then the intellect of such a person is considered steady.

The desire for sensual pleasures fades away if one abstains from sense enjoyment, but the craving for sense enjoyment remains in a very subtle form. This subtle craving also completely disappears from the one who knows the Supreme Being.

Dangers Of Unrestrained Senses

Restless senses, o Arjuna, forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection.

One should fix one's mind on God with loving contemplation after bringing the senses under control. one's intellect becomes steady when one's senses are under complete control.

One develops attachment to sense objects by thinking about sense objects. Desire for sense objects comes from attachment to sense objects, and anger comes from unfulfilled desires.

Delusion or wild idea arises from anger. The mind is bewildered by delusion. Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered. One falls down from the right path when reasoning is destroyed.

Attainment Of Peace And Happiness Through Sense Control And Knowledge

A disciplined person, enjoying sense objects with senses that are under control and free from attachments and aversions, attains tranquillity.

All sorrows are destroyed upon attainment of tranquillity. The intellect of such a tranquil person soon becomes completely steady and united with the Supreme.

There is neither Self-knowledge, nor Self-perception to those who are not united with the Supreme. Without Self-perception there is no peace, and without peace there can be no happiness.

Because the mind, when controlled by the roving senses, steals away the intellect as a storm takes away a boat on the sea from its destination the spiritual shore of peace and happiness.

Therefore, O Arjuna, one's intellect becomes steady whose senses are completely withdrawn from the sense objects.

A yogi, the person of self-restraint, remains wakeful when it is night for all others. It is night for the yogi who sees when all others are wakeful.

one attains peace, within whose mind all desires dissipate without creating any mental disturbance, as river waters enter the full ocean without creating any disturbance. one who desires material objects is never peaceful.

One who abandons all desires, and becomes free from longing and the feeling of 'I' and 'my', attains peace.

O Arjuna, this is the superconscious state of mind. Attaining this state, one is no longer deluded. Gaining this state, even at the end of one's life, a person becomes one with the Absolute.

This page titled 7.1: The Bhagavad Gita is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **3.1: The Bhagavad Gita** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

7.2: The Mahabharata

Written down between 400 B.C.E. and 400 C.E.

India



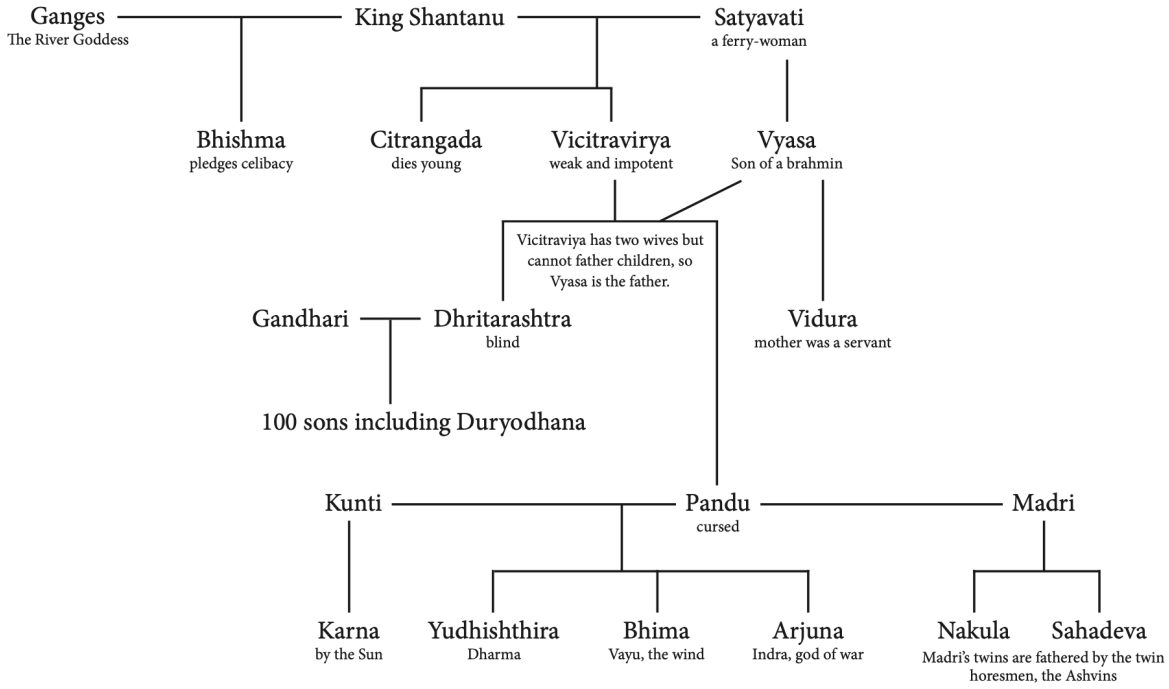
Image 3.1: Wood Carving of a Scene from the Mahabharata | The carving depicts Krishna and Arjuna fighting in the battle of Kurukshetra.

Author: User "thaths"
Source: Flickr
License: CC BY-NC 2.0

The Mahabharata is the national epic of India, and it encapsulates ideas about morality, law, family relationships, class structure (in the form of the caste system), and reincarnation. The basic conflict is between two sets of cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, who both have a legitimate claim to the throne. The story is told through a series of narrators, starting with Vyasa (a character in the story) and continuing down through time to a bard speaking to a descendant of the winning side. Ultimately, the side that follows dharma (and follows the words of the god Vishnu in his human avatar of Krishna) will win. Dharma, which is both a concept and the name of the god who embodies it, is a difficult concept to translate: It includes morality, law, and doing what is correct for your caste level, which can change based on your situation. The epic warns the audience not to transgress caste boundaries; good behavior will be rewarded through reincarnation into a higher caste level. Although the caste system was officially abolished in India in 1949, it remains a pervasive social force. The characters also have a continuing presence in present-day society, with references to them in everything from comic Books and movies to casual conversations.

The Genealogy of the Main Characters in the Mahabharata:

Note: Certain letters are dropped sometimes in writing (a form of abbreviation), with "h" being the most common casualty. Therefore, both "Shiva" and "Siva" are found in various texts, although the correct pronunciation regardless is to say the "h."



Other characters:

- Drona: the tutor of the princes
- Drupada: the enemy of Drona, father of both Draupadi (wife of all five Pandavas) and Dhrishtadyumna, who is meant to kill Drona
- Krishna: the seventh avatar of Vishnu, who is related to Kunti in his human incarnation and reveals the Bhavagad-Gita.

Key ideas:

The first thing to realize about the people in the epic is that most of them are related to each other, whether by blood, marriage, or adoption. The major conflict is between two sets of cousins the **pandavas** (sons of Pandu) and the **Kauravas** (sons of Dhritarashtra) who want to inherit the throne. Technically, both sets of cousins are **Kurus**, but the **Kauravas** are referred to as Kurus more often in the story. Although they both have legitimate claims, the Pandavas are considered the nobler of the cousins. The genealogy is complicated, but the basic idea is straightforward: the cousins will fight until one side wins. Since the Kauravas are (mostly) evil, there are religious reasons for the Pandavas to win, as well, which is why Krishna (an incarnation of Vishnu, one of the three main Hindu gods) sides with the Pandavas.

Laws:

The concept of law plays an important role in the epic. In religious terms, **Dharma** is both the name of one of the Hindu gods and a concept that means a range of things, including justice, right action, and doing what you must do regardless of the circumstances. The characters in the story speak about either following dharma (Law) or committing an Unlaw (the opposite of dharma), which can put the soul in jeopardy. Obeying your parents and even your elder siblings is part of the law.

Other laws involve family rights. Since the status of a woman in a family depended on her ability to bear children, a wife whose husband was unable to give her children had the right to demand that one of his brothers be the father of her children. When one of the kings in the epic (Vicitravirya) is unable to father children, his wives insist that either his half-brother (Bhisma) or his step-brother (Vyasa) give them children. Vyasa, the king's brother by marriage only, becomes the father of the king's sons, Dhritarashtra and Pandu.

Blood ties, therefore, are less important in the epic than how society chooses to recognize you. By law, children from a previous marriage (or born illegitimately) become the legal children of the man that their mother marries. If a husband accepts a child as his own, even if the father of the child is another man, society recognizes that child as his. When Pandu is unable to have children (for unusual reasons), he asks his wife to say a prayer she knows that will call down various Hindu gods to father his children, and she shares the prayer with his second wife. The sons of Pandu are not his actual blood sons, but rather are accepted as his sons by law.

Sons of Pandu:

- Yudhishthira is the eldest. He is the son of Kunti (the first wife) and Dharma, god of justice.
- Bhima is the son of Kunti and Vayu, god of the wind (considered the strongest natural force).
- Arjuna is the son of Kunti and Indra, god of war.
- Nakula and Sahadeva are twins. Their mother is Madri (the second wife), and their fathers are
- The Asvins (pronounced Ashvins), twin horsemen gods.

They are related to Krishna through Kunti, who is his aunt, and all five brothers are married to the same woman, Draupadi (sometimes referred to as Krishnã), through a mistake in the law.

Written by Laura Getty



Image 3.2: The Battle of Kurukshetra | Armies standing in a circular formation ready to attack in the Battle of Kurukshetra.

Author: User "Yadupati"
Source: Flickr
License: CC BY-NC-SA

The Mahabharata A Synopsis of the Great Epic of India

Larry A. Brown

[The full text of the Mahabharata is eight times the length of the Odyssey and the Iliad combined, so a summary covering the basic story provided by Dr. Larry Avis Brown is included here, in order to better understand the Mahabharata holistically. Visit http://larryavisbrown.homestead.com/...mahabsynop.htm for further information and discussion of the Mahabharata, and exploration of Dr. Brown's works]

Pronunciation guide of the main characters:

Vyasa [Vee-YA-sha]: narrator of the story and father of Pandu and Dhritarashtra

BHISH-ma: half-uncle by marriage of Pandu and Dhritarashtra

Dhri-ta-RASH-tra: blind king, father of Duryodhana and the Kauravas

GAN-dhari: wife of Dhritarashtra

KUN-ti: wife of Pandu and mother to the five Pandavas and Karna

Yu-DHISH-thira: leader of the Pandavas, rightful heir to the throne

BHI-ma: strongest of the Pandava brothers

AR-juna: mightiest of warriors

NA-kula and Saha-DE-va: Pandava twins

DRAU-pa-di: wife to the five Pandavas

Du-ry-ODH-ana: leader of the Kauravas

Duh-SA-sa-na: brother to Duryodhana

KRISH-na: supporter of the Pandavas and avatar of Vishnu

DRO-na: teacher of the Pandavas and Kauravas

KAR-na: warrior, secret son of Kunti, ally of the Kauravas

Note: quotations throughout are from English versions by C. V. Narasimhan (CN), Krishna Dharma (KD) or the dramatization by Jean-Claude Carriere (available on DVD). Portions of the following summary have been adapted from David Williams, Peter Brook and the Mahabharata: Critical Perspectives, 1991.

PART ONE: THE GAME OF DICE

In the first two books of the *Mahabharata*, we learn the background of the Bharatas (also called the Kurus) leading up to the conflict between the five sons of Pandu and their cousins the Kauravas. This story is told by the sage Vyasa, whose name came to mean the "compiler." (Actually, the author of the epic is unknown, probably many authors over centuries.) Vyasa's mother is Satyavati, whose name means truth, so he is the "son of truth." In telling his story to a descendant of the Pandavas, Vyasa says, "If you listen carefully, at the end you'll be someone else." (play) Vyasa appears infrequently throughout the story, giving advice and also fathering Pandu and Dhritarashtra.

Ancestors of the Pandavas and Kauravas

Santanu, king of Hastinapura, was married to the beautiful Ganga, who was the river goddess in disguise. She agreed to marry him as long as he never questioned her actions. Over the years they had seven sons, but Ganga threw each one into the river. Santanu was distressed but he kept his promise. Finally, when their eighth son was born, Santanu asked his wife who she really was and why she had done this. Ganga revealed herself and told that her children had once been celestial beings, but were cursed to become human. She had ended their "punishment" quickly by drowning them immediately at birth. But since Santanu had questioned her actions, she left him, along with his last son Devarata.

Devarata is better known by his later name Bhishma. He receives this name, which means "of terrible resolve," after vowing never to marry or have children. His father wanted to marry again (Satyavati, mother of Vyasa), but the conditions of the marriage were that the second wife would be the mother of a king someday. Honoring his father's wishes, Bhishma makes his vow, guaranteeing that neither he nor a son of his will challenge the claim to the throne.

Years later, one of Bhishma's half-brothers dies in battle, and the other becomes old enough to marry. On behalf of his half-brother, Bhishma abducts three sisters and fights off all their suitors. On returning home, he learns that one of the sisters, Amba, had already chosen a suitor. Bhishma allows her to leave, but her betrothed does not want her any more. Now abandoned, she returns to Bhishma and demands that he marry her. Ever faithful to his vow, Bhishma refuses. Amba then vows that one day she will kill him, even though the gods have granted Bhishma the power to choose the day of his death, because of his vow.

The importance and power of vows are evident throughout the epic. Once stated, a vow becomes the truth and must be fulfilled, no matter what else may happen. When his father and both his half-brothers die prematurely without children, Bhishma refuses to marry his step-brother's widows (Amba's sisters). He will not relinquish his vow, even though his celibacy makes no difference anymore.

The young princesses must be given children, but who can father them? There are no other men in the family besides Bhishma, and he has renounced women. So Satyavati, the king's second wife, asks her first-born son, Vyasa the poet, to give children to the two princesses. He goes to them, but the princesses dislike him, for as an ascetic who has taken a vow of poverty, he is filthy and smells. He explains to them that they will each bear a son: however, the first will be born blind because the first princess closed her eyes when seeing him, and the second will be paleskinned because the second princess became pale at his touch. The blind son is called Dhritarashtra, the pale one is Pandu. Vyasa has a third son Vidura by a handmaiden.

As his brother is blind and unfit for the throne, Pandu becomes the new king of Hastinapura. One day while hunting in the forest, Pandu shoots a gazelle in the act of mating. The gazelle was actually a brahmin priest in disguise, who curses him saying that should Pandu make love to either of his two wives (Kunti and Madri), he will die instantly. Knowing he can never have children, Pandu resigns the throne, and goes to live with his wives in the mountains. Kunti, his first wife, informs him that she possesses a magic power. By reciting a secret formula, she can invoke a god at will and have a child by him. The mantra's power is put to the test, and three sons are born to her: Yudhishthira, the first-born, truthful and virtuous, son of the god Dharma; Bhima, the strongest of men, son of Vayu, god of the wind; and Arjuna, an irresistible warrior, son of Indra. Madri, Pandu's second wife, makes use of

this power too. She gives birth to twin sons, Nakula and Sahadeva. Thanks to his two wives, Pandu now has five sons directly descended from the gods, the Pandavas, the heroes of the epic.

Years later, Pandu one day surrenders to his passion for Madri. Fearing for his life, Madri tries to push him away but her struggles only inflame his desire more. Once they make love, Pandu falls dead, fulfilling the curse, and Madri, devoted to him always, joins him on the funeral pyre.

Meanwhile, Dhritarashtra has become king, despite his blindness. He weds Gandhari in an arranged marriage. When she learns of her husband's infirmity, she decides to cover her eyes with a blindfold which she will never remove, to join him in his world of darkness. Then, after an abnormally long pregnancy of two years, she gives birth to a ball of flesh. Vyasa tells her to split up the ball into 100 parts and put them in jars of ghee (Indian butter); in this way she becomes the mother of one hundred sons, the Kauravas.

The first born is called Duryodhana. Sinister omens of violence greet his arrival into the world: jackals howl, strong winds blow, fires rage through the city. Dhritarashtra worries about what all this means. Vidura tells him that his first son brings hate and destruction into the world. He will one day destroy their race. Vidura urges the king to get rid of the child, but Dhritarashtra ignores his advice.

Dhritarashtra is a weak ruler. He allows physical blindness to become a refusal to face reality and unwillingness to confront hard decisions, being easily led by Duryodhana in later years. He continually blames fate, excusing his own inaction: "Irrevocable were all the things that have happened. Who could have stopped them? What then can I do? Destiny is surely all-powerful" (KD 69). But one of Dhritarashtra's advisors tells him: "O king, surely a man who meets with calamity as a result of his own acts should not blame the gods, destiny, or others. Each of us receives the just results of our actions" (KD 538).

Growing Rivalry Between the Pandavas and The Kauravas

Bhishma, now an old man, takes the responsibility of raising the two sets of cousins. They fight constantly, and even try to kill each other. One day a teacher and master of arms, Drona, appears and offers his services to train the boys. He has a secret mission: to avenge an insult made by a former friend. When young, Drona was close to Drupada, but years later, when Drona went to see his childhood companion, now a great king, he was scorned by Drupada because "only equals can be friends." As payment for his training, Drona asks the Pandavas to avenge him. Being mighty warriors, they conquer Drupada's kingdom, and hand it over to Drona. He promptly gives his former friend half his kingdom back, saying "now we are equals."

- For revenge, Drupada has children by sorcery, born out of flames: son Dhrishtadyumna is fated to kill Drona; an oracle says daughter Draupadi will "bring destruction on an unrighteous ruler;" a third child Sikhandi is Amba reborn.
- Later in the war, Drona and Bhishma will fight on the side of the Kauravas not so much out of loyalty but because their mortal enemies (Dhrishtadyumna and Sikhandi) fight with the Pandavas.

Drona recognizes Arjuna's superiority as a master of arms, especially the bow, and favors him with special training. In a contest of skill, he tells each of the Pandavas to strike a target, the eye of a wooden bird in a tree. He asks each one in turn, "O prince, tell me what you see." One by one they respond, "I see my teacher, my brothers, the tree and the bird." Drona tells them, "Then you will not hit the mark." Arjuna, however, says he sees only the bird, and in fact, only the eye of the bird. Thus, focused on his target alone, he strikes with total accuracy. Drona rewards Arjuna by giving him a supreme weapon, the Brahmasira, only to be used against celestial beings, or else it will destroy the world.

Drona stages a tournament to display all the Pandavas' skills, but a stranger appears who challenges Arjuna and equals him in archery. This is Karna, who the reader learns is Kunti's first son by Surya the sun god, whom she bore before she married Pandu and abandoned in a basket on the river (like Moses). Thus Karna is the older brother of the Pandavas. However, Karna does not know his real mother, being raised by a chariot driver. The Pandavas mock his lowly social status and will not fight with someone who is not of royal birth, but their cousin Duryodhana sees the chance to make an ally. Ignoring the strict rules of caste, he says, "Birth is obscure and men are like rivers whose origins are often unknown" (play). Duryodhana gives Karna a small kingdom, and Karna swears eternal friendship to the Kauravas.

- Karna's lowly caste (social status) will haunt him throughout the epic; later at a contest for the hand of Draupadi, she rejects him outright because he is from a servant family. For a person who desires to be measured by his accomplishments, living under this shadow is unbearable.

- As the child of the sun, Karna was born with golden armor over his skin. Later, the god Indra tricks Karna into giving this divine protection away.
- After Karna was born, Kunti remained a virgin

The Pandavas narrowly escape a plot by Duryodhana to burn them in a house made of highly flammable materials. For months afterward, they live in hiding in the forest. One night as Bhima keeps watch while the others sleep, there appears a rakshasa named Hidimbi (a man-eating ogre, one type of demon). Assuming the form of a beautiful woman, she falls madly in love with Bhima, who fights and kills her venomous brother. Bhima and the magical creature then have a powerful demon child called Ghatotkatcha; he swears to come to the aid of his father whenever necessary.

Arjuna Wins the Hand of Draupadi

The Pandavas attend the *swayamvara* of Draupadi, a ceremony where she will pick her husband from a number of suitors. Arjuna wins the archery contest easily and Draupadi chooses him. When Arjuna announces to his mother that he has won the "prize," Kunti tells him to share with his brothers, before seeing Draupadi. Like an irrevocable vow, her statement, even by mistake, can't be undone, so all five brothers marry Draupadi, the daughter of Drupada.

This unusual marriage fulfills karma, for in her former life, Draupadi had prayed to the god Shiva for a husband five times, and thus is rewarded for her devotion in this life.

In the *Mahabharata* Shiva is not the "destroyer" of the later Puranas, but has more to do with blessings of fertility: he also granted Gandhari her 100 sons.

The brothers agree to respect the privacy of each other when with Draupadi, but one day Arjuna enters the tent to retrieve his weapons and finds Yudhishthira and Draupadi in bed together. Even though Yudhishthira forgives him, Arjuna insists on keeping the vow. As penance, Arjuna goes into exile for a year; while away he marries three other wives, one Krishna's sister, mostly for political alliances.

As tension mounts between the cousins, Krishna makes his appearance. It is said he may be an incarnation of the god Vishnu, the preserver, come down to save the earth from chaos. The appearance of Krishna introduces a major theme in the epic: dharma (cosmic order) menaced by chaos, so Krishna must step in, indicating that this is not just a family rivalry, but a conflict with universal consequences.

- In the medieval Puranas, the story developed that Vishnu had appeared on earth nine times in the past as an avatar or incarnation, in order to set the world back on the right path, and would appear again at the end of the age.
- Krishna's deification in the *Mahabharata* may be based on later interpolations into the text, as there is considerable tension in the epic between the depiction of the divine Krishna and the human prince who acts as counselor to the Pandavas, gives devious advice, and eventually dies.

On Krishna's advice the Pandavas present themselves to the blind king. To make peace, Dhritarashtra offers them half the kingdom, but in a region which was nothing but jungle and desert. Yudhishthira accepts his offer in the hope of averting a war.

Meanwhile, Arjuna and Krishna agree to assist a hungry brahmin, who reveals himself to be Agni, god of fire. He wants to consume a nearby forest which is protected by Indra's rain. Agni rewards Krishna with his discus and Arjuna with Varuna's bow Gandiva along with an inexhaustible supply of arrows. With these he is able to create a canopy of arrows to keep the rain from putting out Agni's fire. Even Indra cannot defeat Arjuna, because Krishna is with him (an indication of Vishnu's superiority over Indra by this time). Maya (not god of illusion but an asura or demon who escaped the fires) out of gratitude builds the great hall of Indraprastha.

Living in their new territory of Indraprastha, Yudhishthira turns poor land into a wealthy kingdom, and declares himself King of Kings. Duryodhana is jealous and humiliated on his visit to the magnificent palace, where he mistakes a glass floor for a pool, then later falls into a pool thinking it is glass. Draupadi and Bhima laugh at him. He returns home bent on devising their destruction.

The Dice Game and the Humiliation of Draupadi

Duryodhana follows the advice of his uncle, the cunning Shakuni, an infamous dice player, and invites Yudhishthira to a game, knowing full well that gambling is his cousin's one weakness. Yudhishthira accepts.

- Duryodhana is not an original thinker, always relying on other's ideas. His uncle gave him the idea for the arson and the dice game. (Later during the war Duryodhana suggests capturing Yudhishthira and playing another game, which Drona calls stupid.)
- Duryodhana always threatens to commit suicide when things don't go his way (almost comical): "Excessive self-centeredness leads to unrealistic demands and unreasonable expectations from life" (Chaitanya 67).
- Kunti: "Duryodhana is a blind man's son, living blindly." (play)

Both Dhritarashtra and Yudhishthira ignore Vidura's warning to avoid the game, leaving the results to "supreme and unavoidable" fate. Krishna warns Bhishma not to interfere with the dice game: "If your race must be destroyed to save dharma, would you allow it?" (play) Told by his father that a warrior's *dharma* is to fight honorably, not to win at all costs, Duryodhana says, "The way of the warrior is fixed on victory, whether there's *dharma* or *adharma* on his way."

Carried away by the intoxication of the game, Yudhishthira wagers and loses all that he possesses: his lands, his kingdom, his brothers, even himself, and eventually Draupadi, who is dragged before the company by her hair, a special insult since a married woman's hair was sacred.

She challenges the Kauravas with a question: how can someone who has lost himself wager someone else in a game, but no one can answer her. Even Bhishma is confounded: "The ways of dharma are subtle." When even the wise Bhishma cannot resolve the question, she says, "I think time is out of joint. The ancient eternal dharma is lost among the Kauravas." Instead, they insult her, displaying her during the time of her period. Karna, still stinging from his rejection at the *swayamvara*, calls her a harlot who services five men. Duryodhana seeks to entice her by uncovering his thigh (obscene in that culture). Enraged at this treatment of his wife, Bhima vows that he will one day drink Duhsasana's blood and break Duryodhana's thigh.

Draupadi is about to be stripped naked when she invokes Krishna, who comes to her rescue and creates an endless supply of cloth around her. She swears that one day she will be avenged. There will be a great war, a war without mercy. At her curse a jackal howls. Frightened, Dhritarashtra apologizes to her and gives her husbands' back everything they lost, but Draupadi asks nothing for herself, saying, "Greed devours all beings and is *dharma's* [righteousness] ruin. I refuse greed." (CN 55)

Seeing his advantage given away, Duryodhana insists on one more throw of the dice. Yudhishthira agrees to a final game, but once again, he loses. The Pandavas and Draupadi are condemned to spend twelve years in exile in the forest, and a thirteenth year in an unknown place, disguised so that no one may recognize them. If anyone does, then they must spend another twelve years in exile.

PART TWO: EXILE

Books 3-5 tell of the twelve years of living in the forest, preceding the great war. The Pandavas are not alone in the wilderness but are followed by many loyal brahmins and servants. The gods give them an inexhaustible plate of food to feed all of them.

Throughout the epic, the importance of brahmins, the priestly caste, is emphasized. Yudhishthira wants to regain his kingdom so that he can provide for 10,000 brahmins. One must never refuse a brahmin anything

The Importance of Dharma

Draupadi and Bhima reproach Yudhishthira for his inaction and resigned passivity. Since it is obvious that Shakuni cheated at dice, wouldn't it be better to stand up and fight? Yudhishthira flatly refuses. He will keep his word: he resolves to follow his dharma. Dharma (variously translated as social duty, righteousness, or universal order) is the moral obligation which each human being should recognize and follow. Failure to do so could endanger the course of the cosmos as a whole.

Draupadi cannot understand why they are suffering so, if they are the righteous ones. If everything happens by the will of god, then why do the good suffer? It seems only the powerful escape harm, not the righteous. Yudhishthira corrects her: "None should ever perform virtue with a desire to gain its fruits. Such a sinful trader of virtue will never reap the results. ... Do not doubt virtue because you do not see its results. Without doubt, the fruits of virtue will be manifest in time, as will the fruits of sin. The fruits of true virtue are eternal and indestructible" (KD 245-6).

Preparations for war

Arjuna then leaves, aiming for the highest mountains to look for the celestial weapons they will need during the war. He meets the god Shiva who gives him powerful weapons. Arjuna then spends five years with his father the divine Indra learning to use the weapons fighting demons.

Meanwhile Karna decides he too must acquire a celestial weapon, so for many months he serves a powerful brahmin, Parasurama, who hates warriors. As a reward, he bestows upon Karna, whom he takes to be a servant, a formula for the supreme weapon. But Karna reveals himself to be a warrior by an excess of bravery, as he does not cry out when a worm bores a hole into his thigh. Parasurama curses him so he will forget the secret formula at the moment he wishes for the weapon, and that will be the moment of his death.

- In the Medieval Puranas, Parasurama becomes one of the avatars of Vishnu, but there is no indication of that aspect in the epic.

Karna later meets Indra (Arjuna's divine father) in the disguise of a brahmin. Having sworn never to refuse a brahmin's request, he agrees to surrender his divine covering of golden armor given him at birth. He tears off the armor from his skin, bleeding, and trades it for another mighty weapon, which will kill any being but can only be used once.

During their exile, the Pandavas rescue Duryodhana who is captured during battle, to his great humiliation. Honor bids him swear to repay Arjuna one day. (During the war, Arjuna asks Duryodhana to surrender five arrows of Bhishma's meant to kill the Pandavas, and he does so, to keep his vow.) Duryodhana is so depressed after his rescue that he intends to kill himself. The Danavas (a family of demons) need him as their champion (he was born at their request) and appear before him. The demons promise they will possess his armies during the coming war, which will continue to give him false hope.

One day, four of the Pandavas are killed by drinking the water from a poisonous lake. However Yudhishthira brings his brothers back to life by correctly answering the questions which Dharma, disguised as a crane, puts to him.

The Thirteenth Year

According to the conditions of the game of dice, the thirteenth year which the Pandavas are to spend in disguise has now arrived. Yudhishthira (who presents himself as a poor brahmin), his brothers and Draupadi (who pass for wandering servants) all find refuge at the court of King Virata. Kicaka, a general in Virata's court becomes infatuated with Draupadi. He goes to great lengths to possess her, even threatening her life. Draupadi implores the mighty Bhima to help her; dressed in woman's clothes, he goes in her stead to a secret rendezvous, and pulverizes the over-amorous general into a bloody mass of flesh.

Meanwhile Duryodhana has launched an attack on Virata's kingdom. The king entrusts his troops to his young son who needs a chariot driver. Draupadi, who seeks war with the Kauravas at all costs, points out Arjuna as the world's best charioteer, despite the fact that he has disguised himself as a eunuch. Arjuna cannot refuse to fight and is decisively victorious, one man against countless armies.

War draws even closer. Duryodhana refuses to give his cousins back their kingdom because he claims they came out of hiding before the appointed time. He tries to win Krishna's support, as does Arjuna. Krishna offers Arjuna first choice: either he can have all of Krishna's armies, or he can have Krishna alone. Arjuna chooses Krishna, allowing Duryodhana to have the armies. When Arjuna asks him to drive his chariot, Krishna accepts.

In the Kaurava court, the blind king also senses the imminence of war. He asks the elderly Bhishma, an unparalleled warrior, to take the supreme command. His duty to the family outweighs his feelings toward the Pandavas, and he reluctantly accepts, but on one condition: that Karna does not fight. Although displeased, Karna bitterly agrees to fight only after Bhishma's death.

Dhritarashtra sends an envoy to Yudhishthira and begs not to fight since he loves righteousness. It would be better to live without his kingdom than risk the lives of so many. Yudhishthira responds that each caste has its own duty, and his is to be a warrior/king, not a brahmin/beggar. However, even he has reservations: "War is evil in any form. To the dead, victory and defeat are the same" (CN 101).

Krishna arrives as an emissary in a final attempt to safeguard peace. He speaks to Duryodhana who does not listen to him, but orders his guards to seize him. Krishna reveals his divine form: "Krishna laughed and as he did, his body suddenly flashed like lightning. He began to grow in size and various gods issued from him. Brahma sprang from his forehead and Shiva from his chest" (KD 492). Krishna allows even the blind Dhritarashtra to see his glory. Finally, he speaks to Karna, going so far as to reveal that he is the brother of those with whom he intends to fight. But Karna feels abandoned by his mother in his very first hours of life; furthermore he senses the end of this world. He will fight alongside the Kauravas, even though he can already foresee their defeat and his own death.

Duryodhana will not listen to warnings. He convinces himself that since the gods had not blessed the Pandavas thus far, they would not protect them during the war. “I can sacrifice my life, my wealth, my kingdom, my everything, but I can never live in peace with the Pandavas. I will not surrender to them even as much land as can be pierced by the point of a needle” (KD 453). He makes excuses for his nature: “I am whatever the gods have made me” (KD 482).

PART THREE: THE WAR

Books 5-10 recount the 18-day war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas.

The Kauravas have eleven divisions to stand against the seven of the Pandavas. The two armies are described as two oceans, crashing against each other. Briefly it’s described as a “beautiful sight” (CN 125-6). Kunti tells the narrator Vyasa (in play): “You find too much beauty in men’s death. Blood decorates your poem, and the cries of the dying are your music.”

Bad omens appear prior to battle as thousands of carrion birds gather “crying in glee” (KD 539). Karna prophesies that his side will lose, that this is nothing but “a great sacrifice of arms” with Krishna as high priest.

Both sides agree to abide by certain rules of war: no fighting humans with celestial weapons, no fighting at night, do not strike someone who’s retreating or unarmed, or on the back or legs. All these rules will eventually be broken.

The Bhagavad Gita (“The Lord’s Song”)

Just as the battle is about to start, Arjuna falters at the sight of his relatives and teachers, now his sworn enemies. He breaks down and refuses to fight.

How can any good come from killing one’s own relatives? What value is victory if all our friends and loved ones are killed? ... We will be overcome by sin if we slay such aggressors. Our proper duty is surely to forgive them. Even if they have lost sight of *dharma* due to greed, we ourselves should not forget *dharma* in the same way. (KD 544-5)

Arjuna fears that acting out his own dharma as warrior will conflict with universal dharma: how can killing family members be good, and not disrupt the social order? Herein lies an unresolved conflict in Hinduism between universal dharma and svadharma (an individual’s duty according to caste and station in life). A warrior must kill to fulfill his duty, whereas a brahmin must avoid harming any living creature. Even demons have their own castes and svadharma, which may run counter to human morality. One person’s dharma may be another’s sin. This doctrine distinguishes Hindu thought from religions such as Judeo-Christianity and Islam which teach universal or absolute moral codes.

His charioteer Krishna addresses him as they pause in the no-man’s land between the two armies. This passage is the celebrated *Bhagavad Gita*, the guide to firm and resolute action.

- Unlike many epic heroes, at this point Arjuna thinks before he acts. Arjuna hesitates before such killing, wanting to retreat from life and responsibility (tension between dharma and moksha), but Krishna tells him as a warrior it’s his dharma to fight. The real conflict today is with the self on the “battlefield of the soul.
- Don’t worry about death, which is only one small step in the great and endless cycle of life. One neither kills or is killed. The soul merely casts off old bodies and enters new ones, just as a person changes garments. Death is only illusion (maya).
- How does a warrior perform his duty without doing wrong, polluting himself with the blood of his enemies? The secret is detachment: do your duty without concern for the personal consequences. “Victory and defeat, pleasure and pain are all the same. Act, but don’t reflect on the fruits of the act. Forget desire, seek detachment.” (play)
- We must always do what is right without desiring success or fearing defeat. “Work without desire for the results, and thus without entangling yourself in karmic reactions” (KD 550). Krishna tells Arjuna that good deeds will not get one to heaven if the desire for heaven is the sole motivation for good deeds. Desire is responsible for rebirth; if any desire remains when we die, we must return to another life.
- Likewise, Yudhishthira told Draupadi during the exile that he performs *dharma* not for reward but because it is what a good person does; after the battle he has a similar crisis when he temporarily refuses to rule, despairing at all the carnage he has caused.
- “Actions performed under the direct guidance of the Supreme Lord or His representative are called *akarma.* This type of activity produces neither good nor bad reactions. Just as a soldier may kill under the command of his superior officer and not be held responsible for murder, though if he kills on his own accord he is liable for punishment, similarly, a Krishna-conscious person acts under the Lord’s direction and not for his own sake” (*BG* as it is: online).

- “Such a person takes no delight in sensual pleasures. He is ever satisfied within himself. No miseries can disturb him, nor any kind of material happiness. He is without attachment, fear and anger, and remains always aloof to the dualities of the world. ... His mind is fixed upon the Supreme and he is always peaceful” (KD 551).
- There are two paths to liberation: renunciation (*moksha*) and performing one’s duty without desire. Since no one can truly renounce all action in life (this is a pretense of asceticism), it is better to work without attachment (KD 551). Some scholars think that the *Bhagavad Gita* was composed to combat a religious challenge from Jainism and Buddhism which arose in the sixth century BC, both teaching salvation through renouncing the world, the former by asceticism, the latter by monastic life (Kinsley 31).
- Krishna explains that the knowledge he imparts is ancient, just as he told it millions of years ago. Arjuna asks, “How can I accept this? It appears that you were born in this world only recently.” Krishna explains, birth too is an illusion, as men are born countless times. But in Krishna’s case, he comes into every age: “Whenever righteousness (*dharma*) becomes lax, O Arjuna, and injustice (*adharma*) arises, then I send myself forth to protect the good and bring evildoers to destruction. For the secure establishment of dharma, I come into being age after age. ... I was born to destroy the destroyers.”
- Krishna then reveals his divine, universal nature to Arjuna in a magnificent vision of a multitude of gods, stretching out to infinity. Resolved now to perform his duty to his lord, Arjuna leads his troops into battle.

On a hill overlooking the battlefield, Dhritarashtra hears the words of Krishna through his aid Sanjaya, who has been granted the ability to see and hear everything that happens in the battle, to relate these things to the blind king. Dhritarashtra shudders when he hears of Krishna’s theophany, fearing that nothing can stop the Pandavas with such a powerful being on their side. But he takes some comfort in knowing that Krishna cannot accomplish everything he wants, as he failed to arrange a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Before the battle, Yudhishthira goes to both his teachers, Bhishma and Drona: “O invincible one, I bow to you. We will fight with you. Please grant us your permission and give us your blessing.” For this sign of respect, both men pray for the Pandavas’ victory, even though they must out of loyalty fight on the side of the Kauravas.

The Battle Begins

Bhishma compares the invincible Arjuna to “the Destroyer himself at the end of the Yuga.” (CN 126) In one confrontation, Arjuna splits Bhishma’s bow with four arrows, and Bhishma praises him: “O son of Pandu, well done! I am pleased with you for this wonderful feat. Now fight your hardest with me” (KD 581). However, he is unable to overcome Bhishma. After nine days of fighting, the Pandavas visit Bhishma by night; they tell him that, unless he is killed in the war, the carnage will carry on until the end of the world.

When asked how he can be defeated, he advises them to place Sikhandi in the front line, from where he will be able to fire freely at Bhishma. Sikhandi is actually a woman, Amba whom Bhishma had refused to marry and who vowed to be his death. Amba practiced asceticism, standing on one toe in the snow for twelve years to learn the secret of Bhishma’s death. Amba threw herself into the fire and was reborn from flames as Drupada’s second daughter, later changing sex with a demon to become a man

The next day, confronted by Sikhandi, Bhishma refuses to fight a woman, and he abandons his weapons. Against the rules of war, the Pandavas strike the unarmed warrior with thousands of arrows. There is no space on his body thicker than two fingers that is not pierced. He falls from his chariot, and lies fully supported by the arrows, with no part of his body touching the earth. Bhishma does not actually die until much later, at his choosing. He remains lying on a bed of arrows until the end of the battle.

Drona takes command

Drona positions the armies in a formation known only to him, the iron disc of war, which nobody knows how to break open, apart from Arjuna. If only Arjuna can be diverted away from the central battle, Drona promises victory. Arjuna has a fifteen-year old son, Abhimanyu, who, by listening to his father while still in his mother’s womb, has learned to force an entry into Drona’s battle formation. As Arjuna is called to a diversionary battle far away, Yudhishthira entrusts Abhimanyu with the task of opening a breach in the disc. Abhimanyu succeeds, but when Bhima and Yudhishthira try to follow him into the opening, they are stopped by Jayadratha, a brother-in-law to the Kauravas, and the breach closes behind the young Abhimanyu. In spite of his bravery, he is killed.

- Earlier during the time of exile, Jayadratha had tried to kidnap Draupadi, thus another reason for the Pandavas to hate him.

At this point Arjuna returns to the camp. Inflamed with rage and grief at the sight of his son's body, he vows to kill Jayadratha before sunset on the following day. He solemnly swears to throw himself into the sacrificial fire, should he fail. Even Krishna is alarmed by this terrible oath. On the next day, Jayadratha is heavily guarded, and Arjuna is unable to reach him. Krishna causes a momentary eclipse of the sun, convincing the enemy that, since night has come, Arjuna must have killed himself because he hasn't kept his vow. Rejoicing, they lay down their arms, leaving Jayadratha vulnerable to Arjuna's arrow.

Jayadratha's father had pronounced a curse on anyone who killed his son, saying that whoever caused his son's head to fall to the ground would die. Using magical mantras, Arjuna causes his arrow not only to sever Jayadratha's head, but to carry it miles away to fall into his father's lap. Being in prayer, he doesn't realize what's happened; he stands up and the head falls, thus he dies from his own curse.

The following day, Karna hurls himself into the battle. Kunti tries to persuade him to join the Pandavas, but Karna is inflexible. However, he does promise Kunti that he will only kill Arjuna, for one of them must die. In this way, she will still have five sons after the war.

Karna possesses a magic lance, the gift of Indra, which will kill any living being but can be used only once. He keeps it in reserve for Arjuna. To dispose of this lance, Krishna calls upon Ghatotkatcha, son of Bhima and the *rakshasa*. During the night, he fights an epic battle against Karna, who can destroy the demon only by resorting to his magic lance. Ghatotkatcha is killed, but Krishna dances for joy. With his lance now expended, Karna is vulnerable and Arjuna can kill him.

Drona continues to challenge the Pandava armies, slaying thousands. But the Pandavas know his weakness: the love of his only son Ashvatthama. Bhima slays an elephant, also called Ashvatthama, then deceitfully tells Drona of the death of his son. Suspecting a lie, Drona asks Yudhishthira for the truth: is his son dead or not? Drona will lay down his arms the day an honest man lies. Krishna tells Yudhishthira: "Under such circumstances, falsehood is preferable to truth. By telling a lie to save a life, one is not touched by sin" (CN 157). Yudhishthira speaks a half-lie, "Ashvatthama – (and muttering under his breath) the elephant – is dead." Before his lie, Yudhishthira's chariot rode four inches off the ground, but now it sinks back to earth. Drona lays down his arms. Drupada's son Dhrishtadyumna cuts off Drona's head, having sworn to avenge his father's humiliation.

Meanwhile Bhima sees Duhsasana coming towards him. Bhima had sworn to drink the blood of this avowed enemy for what he had done to Draupadi. Bhima knocks Duhsasana to the ground with his mace and rips open his chest. He drinks his blood, saying that it tastes better than his mother's milk. Bhima, who kills many Rakshasa (and has a son by one), often acts like the man-eating ogres himself the bloody deaths of Kicaka and Duhsasana, both to avenge Draupadi; Bhima is her most passionate defender. Bhima kills most of the 100 Kauravas, who were demons incarnate.

The Death of Karna

Duryodhana asks Karna to avenge his brother Duhsasana, and he finally meets Arjuna in the decisive confrontation.

Arjuna and Karna both have celestial weapons (for example, one shoots arrows of fire to be quenched by arrows of water). Karna has an arrow possessed by a Naga (serpent) spirit who holds a grudge against Arjuna (his family had died in the forest consumed by Agni). When Karna shoots at Arjuna, his charioteer warns him that his aim is too high, but he refuses to listen, and hits Arjuna's coronet only. When the spirit-possessed arrow returns to him and says try again, this time he will not miss, Karna won't admit failure by shooting the same arrow twice, even if he could kill 100 Arjunas.

As the fight continues, the earth opens up and seizes Karna's chariot wheel, in fulfillment of a curse. In desperation, Karna tries to invoke his ultimate weapon, but the magic words escape him. He remembers Parasurama's words: "When you life depends on your most powerful weapon, you will not be able to summon it." In his last moments, Karna questions his beliefs: "Knowers of *dharma* have always said, '*Dharma* protects those devoted to *dharma*.' But since my wheel sank today, I think *dharma* does not always protect" (CN 165).

As he struggles to release his chariot, he cries out to Arjuna: "Do not strike an unarmed man. Wait until I can extract my wheel. You are a virtuous warrior. Remember the codes of war." But Krishna taunts him: "Men in distress always call on virtue, forgetting their own evil deeds. Where was your virtue, O Karna, when Draupadi was brought weeping in the Kuru assembly? Where was it when Yudhishthira was robbed of his kingdom?" (KD 780) Karna's head sinks to his chest, and he remains silent, while continuing to struggle with the chariot wheel. Krishna commands Arjuna to shoot, and Karna dies. A bright light rises out of Karna's body and enters the sun.

- Stubborn but loyal, Karna could have been king, as eldest of the Pandavas, but he remained with the Kauravas. He always fights fair, and keeps his promise to Kunti not to kill any brothers but Arjuna. Their rivalry echoes the mythic conflict between their divine fathers Indra and Surya.

The Death of Duryodhana

Over the eighteen-day war, Duryodhana has seen his generals and their armies fall to the Pandavas, but to the very end he refuses to surrender. He hides in the waters of a lake, which he has solidified over him by magic. Ever the gambler, Yudhishthira tells Duryodhana that he can fight any brother he chooses, and if he wins, the kingdom will be his again. It says something of Duryodhana that he fights with Bhima rather than one of the weaker brothers. In a close battle between equals, Bhima wins only by treacherously striking Duryodhana on the legs, forbidden in the rules of war. Gandhari had put a protective spell over Duryodhana's body, but because he wore a loin cloth for modesty before his mother, his thighs were not protected.

Duryodhana accuses Krishna of taking sides unfairly and encouraging Bhima's treachery. Krishna responds: "Deceit in battle is acceptable against a deceitful foe. Even Indra used deceit to overcome the mighty asuras Virochana and Vritra." An onlooker remarks, "Bhima has sacrificed *dharma* for the sake of material gain. This can never lead to success and happiness." Krishna replies that Bhima was merely keeping his earlier vow, a sacred duty: "There is no unrighteousness in Bhima. He has carried out his promise and requited the debt he owed his enemy. Know that the terrible age of Kali is at hand, marked by fierce acts and the loss of *dharma*" (KD 811-13).

Duryodhana responds bravely: "I am now dying a glorious death. That end which is always sought by virtuous warriors is mine. Who is as fortunate as me? With all my brothers I will ascend to heaven, while you Pandavas will remain here, torn by grief and continuing to suffer" (KD 816).

As Duryodhana lies dying, Ashvatthama, Drona's son, tells him how he sneaked into the camp of the victorious Pandavas at night to perpetrate a hideous massacre, killing the remaining warriors and all the children while asleep, leaving the Pandavas without any heirs. Rather than welcoming the news, Duryodhana dies disheartened that the race of the Kurus appears to have no future.

Thus all those on both sides die in the war, except the five Pandavas. When Yudhishthira learns of the massacre, he mourns: "We the conquerors have been conquered."

When the Pandavas seek revenge, Ashvatthama launches the most fearsome celestial weapon in his arsenal. Arjuna counters with his own weapon, which Drona taught both of them; it was only to be used against divine beings, or else it could destroy the world. Ashvatthama deflects his into the wombs of the remaining Pandava women, making them sterile, but Krishna promises that Arjuna will nonetheless have descendants. As punishment, Ashvatthama is cursed to wander the earth in exile for 3000 years.

The Aftermath

Yudhishthira has a vision of the age to come: "I see the coming of another age, where barbaric kings rule over a vicious, broken world; where puny, fearful, hard men live tiny lives, white hair at sixteen, copulating with animals, their women perfect whores, making love with greedy mouths. The cows dry, trees stunted, no more flowers, no more purity; ambition, corruption, the age of Kali, the black time" (play).

Bhima asks, why has he come this far only to quit, like a man climbing a honey tree but refusing to taste it, or a man in bed with a woman but refusing to make love? Draupadi questions his manhood, as only eunuchs seek tranquility and avoid violence. Arjuna says refusing to rule will only cause more disorder and create for him great amount of bad karma to face in next life of lowly birth. We should accept our role depending on where we are in life: a father has obligation to his family while they are young, likewise a king must first rule, then in the last years of life he may abandon the world, but to do so earlier would be an act of selfishness.

In his dying speech, pierced by many arrows, Bhishma tells Yudhishthira that in the fourth age (our present age), "*dharma* becomes *adharma* and *adharma*, *dharma*." Somewhat paradoxically, he continues, "If one fights against trickery, one should oppose him with trickery. But if one fights lawfully, one should check him with *dharma* ... One should conquer evil with good. Death by dharma is better than victory by evil deeds."

Bhishma's dying advice to Yudhishthira lasts fifty days and covers two of the longest books in the epic (12-13); some of the topics:

- "There is no duty higher than Truth," but five falsehoods are not sinful: lying in jest, lying to a woman, lying at wedding, lying to save a teacher, lying to save one's life.

- The foremost duty of kings is to revere Brahmins.
- “No creature is more sinful than woman; women are the root of all evil; she is poison, she is a snake, she is fire,” but at the same time, “Righteousness of men depends on women. All pleasures and enjoyments depend on women.”
- Cows constitute the stairs that lead to heaven; cows are goddesses able to grant every wish; nothing in the world superior; one should never go to bed or rise in the morning without reciting the names of cows.” Cows provide cleansing from sin. “There is nothing unattainable for one who is devoted to cows” (this goes on for about fifty pages).
- 1000 names of Vishnu (twenty-six pages)
- Shortly after, Arjuna tells Krishna that he has forgotten his teaching (contained in the *Bhagavad Gita*), so for thirty-six chapters this advice is repeated.

Now that all her sons are dead, Gandhari’s eyes are so charged with grief that, by looking under her blindfold, her emotion sears the flesh of Yudhishthira’s foot. She curses Krishna, whom she holds responsible for all of the tragedy that has befallen them: the Pandava kingdom will fall in thirty-six years. Even Krishna will die; he shall be killed by a passing stranger. Krishna calmly accepts this curse, then tells her that a light has been saved, even if she cannot see it. Yudhishthira agrees to reign.

Dhritarashtra has one son by another wife who survives the war. Yuyutsu chose to fight on the side of the Pandavas, deciding to follow dharma rather than loyalty to his family. After the war, out of gratitude Yudhishthira makes Yuyutsu king of his old territory Indraprastha.

Thirty-six years pass, and Yudhishthira arrives at the entrance to paradise, carrying a dog in his arms. His brothers and Draupadi, who left the earth with him, have fallen from the mountains into the abyss along the way. A gatekeeper tells him to abandon the dog if he wants to enter paradise. He refuses to leave a creature so faithful, and is permitted to enter, for this was a test, the dog was the god Dharma in disguise. In paradise, further surprises await him. His enemies are there, smiling and contented. His brothers and Draupadi, on the other hand, seem to be in a place of suffering and torment. Why? Yudhishthira decides to stay with his loved ones in hell, rather than enjoy the delights of heaven with his enemies. This too was a test, the “final illusion.” They are all permitted to enter paradise.

- In Hindu thought, neither heaven (svarga) or hell are eternal, but only intervals between rebirths. Everyone must first spend some time in hell (or a hell, as there are many) to pay for the sins of the most recent life. Yudhishthira had to experience hell for only a moment, because of his lie to Drona. Heaven is obtained by good deeds, but only for a limited time until the accumulated merit runs out.
- According to one tradition, there are six planes of existence (*lokas*) above earth and seven lokas (hells) below. However, no action can occur in these other worlds, so that a person’s karma doesn’t change until he returns to earth.
- “Actions performed in accordance with scriptural injunctions ... lead the performer to the heavenly planets for prolonged sensual enjoyment. However, when a person’s pious credits are exhausted, he must return to Earth, just as a person returns from a holiday and resumes his work.” (“BG as it is: Online”)

[Due to the length of the Mahabharata, the summary included above, followed by selections from the work, provide for a more in-depth look at the text.]

The Mahabharata of Krishna

Dwaipayana Vyas, Translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli

Book 2: The Dice Game

Section LVIII

Vaisampayana said, ”The sons of Pritha with Yudhishthira at their head, having entered that assembly house, approached all the kings that were present there. And worshipping all those that deserved to be worshipped, and saluting others as each deserved according to age, they seated themselves on seats that were clean and furnished with costly carpets. After they had taken their seats, as also all the kings, Sakuni the son of Suvala addressed Yudhishthira and said, ‘O king, the assembly is full. All had been waiting for thee. Let, therefore, the dice be cast and the rules of play be fixed, O Yudhishthira.’

‘Yudhishthira replied, ‘Deceitful gambling is sinful. There is no Kshatriya prowess in it. There is certainly no morality in it. Why, then, O king, dost thou praise gambling so? The wise applaud not the pride that gamesters feel in deceitful play. O Sakuni,

vanquish us, not like a wretch, by deceitful means.'

Sakuni said, 'That high-souled player who knoweth the secrets of winning and losing, who is skilled in baffling the deceitful arts of his confrere, who is united in all the diverse operations of which gambling consisteth, truly knoweth the play, and he suffereth all in course of it. O son of Pritha, it is the staking at dice, which may be lost or won that may injure us. And it is for that reason that gambling is regarded as a fault. Let us, therefore, O king, begin the play. Fear not. Let the stakes be fixed. Delay not!'

"Yudhishthira said, 'That best of Munis, Devala, the son of Asita, who always instructeth us about all those acts that may lead to heaven, hell, or the other regions, hath said, that it is sinful to play deceitfully with a gamester. To obtain victory in battle without cunning or stratagem is the best sport. Gambling, however, as a sport, is not so. Those that are respectable never use the language of the Mlechchas, nor do they adopt deceitfulness in their behaviour. War carried on without crookedness and cunning, this is the act of men that are honest. Do not, O Sakuni, playing desperately, win of us that wealth with which according to our abilities, we strive to learn how to benefit the Brahmanas. Even enemies should not be vanquished by desperate stakes in deceitful play. I do not desire either happiness or wealth by means of cunning. The conduct of one that is a gamester, even if it be without deceitfulness, should not be applauded.'

"Sakuni said, 'O Yudhishthira, it is from a desire of winning, which is not a very honest motive, that one highborn person approacheth another (in a contest of race superiority). So also it is from a desire of defeating, which is not a very honest motive, that one learned person approacheth another (in a contest of learning). Such motives, however, are scarcely regarded as really dishonest. So also, O Yudhishthira, a person skilled at dice approacheth one that is not so skilled from a desire of vanquishing him. One also who is conversant with the truths of science approacheth another that is not from desire of victory, which is scarcely an honest motive. But (as I have already said) such a motive is not really dishonest. And, O Yudhishthira, so also one that is skilled in weapons approacheth one that is not so skilled; the strong approacheth the weak. This is the practice in every contest. The motive is victory, O Yudhishthira. If, therefore, thou, in approaching me, regardest me to be actuated by motives that are dishonest, if thou art under any fear, desist then from play.'

"Yudhishthira said, 'Summoned, I do not withdraw. This is my established vow. And, O king, Fate is all powerful. We all are under the control of Destiny. With whom in this assembly am I to play? Who is there that can stake equally with me? Let the play begin.'

"Duryodhana said, 'O monarch, I shall supply jewels and gems and every kind of wealth. And it is for me that this Sakuni, my uncle, will play.'

"Yudhishthira said, 'Gambling for one's sake by the agency of another seemeth to me to be contrary to rule. Thou also, O learned one, will admit this. If, however, thou art still bent on it, let the play begin.'"

Section LIX

Vaisampayana said, "When the play commenced, all those kings with Dhritarashtra at their head took their seats in that assembly. And, O Bharata, Bhishma and Drona and Kripa and the high-souled Vidura with cheerless hearts sat behind. And those kings with leonine necks and endued with great energy took their seats separately and in pairs upon many elevated seats of beautiful make and colour. And, O king, that mansion looked resplendent with those assembled kings like heaven itself with a conclave of the celestials of great good fortune. And they were all conversant with the Vedas and brave and of resplendent countenances. And, O great king, the friendly match at dice then commenced.

Yudhishthira said, "O king, this excellent wealth of pearls of great value, procured from the ocean by churning it (of old), so beautiful and decked with pure gold, this, O king, is my stake. What is thy counter stake, O great king,--the wealth with which thou wishest to play with me?"

"Duryodhana said, 'I have many jewels and much wealth. But I am not vain of them. Win thou this stake.'

Vaisampayana continued, "Then Sakuni, well-skilled at dice, took up the dice and (casting them) said unto Yudhishthira, 'Lo, I have won!'"

Section LX

Yudhishthira said, "Thou hast won this stake of me by unfair means. But be not so proud, O Sakuni. Let us play staking thousands upon thousands. I have many beautiful jars each full of a thousand Nishkas in my treasury, inexhaustible gold, and much silver and other minerals. This, O king, is the wealth with which I will stake with thee!'"

Vaisampayana continued, ”Thus addressed, Sakuni said unto the chief of the perpetuators of the Kuru race, the eldest of the sons of Pandu, king Yudhishthira, of glory incapable of sustaining any diminution. ‘Lo, I have won!’”

Yudhishthira said, ’This my sacred and victorious and royal car which gladdeneth the heart and hath carried us hither, which is equal unto a thousand cars, which is of symmetrical proportions and covered with tiger-skin, and furnished with excellent wheels and flag-staffs which is handsome, and decked with strings of little bells, whose clatter is even like the roar of the clouds or of the ocean, and which is drawn by eight noble steeds known all over the kingdom and which are white as the moon-beam and from whose hoofs no terrestrial creature can escape--this, O king, is my wealth with which I will stake with thee!’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing these words, Sakuni ready with the dice, and adopting unfair means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo, I have won!’

“Yudhishthira said, ’I have a hundred thousand serving-girls, all young, and decked with golden bracelets on their wrists and upper arms, and with nishkas round their necks and other ornaments, adorned with costly garlands and attired in rich robes, daubed with the sandal paste, wearing jewels and gold, and well-skilled in the four and sixty elegant arts, especially versed in dancing and singing, and who wait upon and serve at my command the celestials, the Snataka Brahmanas, and kings. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee!’”

Vaisampayana continued, ’Hearing these words, Sakuni ready with the dice, adopting unfair means, said unto Yudhishthira. ‘Lo, I have won!’

Yudhishthira said, ”I have thousands of serving-men, skilled in waiting upon guests, always attired in silken robes, endued with wisdom and intelligence, their senses under control though young, and decked with ear-rings, and who serve all guests night and day with plates and dishes in hand. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee!’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing these words, Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting unfair means said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo, I have won!’

“Yudhishthira said, ’I have, O son of Suvala, one thousand musty elephants with golden girdles, decked with ornaments, with the mark of the lotus on their temples and necks and other parts, adorned with golden garlands, with fine white tusks long and thick as plough-shafts, worthy of carrying kings on their backs, capable of bearing every kind of noise on the field of battle, with huge bodies, capable of battering down the walls of hostile towns, of the colour of new-formed clouds, and each possessing eight she-elephants. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee.’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Unto Yudhishthira who had said so, Sakuni, the son of Suvala, laughingly said, ‘Lo, I have won it!’

Yudhishthira said, ’I have as many cars as elephants, all furnished with golden poles and flag-staffs and welltrained horses and warriors that fight wonderfully and each of whom receiveth a thousand coins as his monthly pay whether he fighteth or not. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee!’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”When these words had been spoken, the wretch Sakuni, pledged to enmity, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo, I have won it.’

Yudhishthira said. ’The steeds of the Tittiri, Kalmasha, and Gandharva breeds, decked with ornaments, which Chitraratha having been vanquished in battle and subdued cheerfully gave unto Arjuna, the wielder of the Gandiva. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee.” Vaisampayana continued, “Hearing this, Sakuni, ready at dice, adopting unfair means, said unto Yudhishthira: ‘Lo, I have won!’

Yudhishthira said, ’I have ten thousand cars and vehicles unto which are yoked draught animals of the foremost breed. And I have also sixty thousand warriors picked from each order by thousands, who are all brave and endued with prowess like heroes, who drink milk and eat good rice, and all of whom have broad chests. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee.’

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing this, Sakuni ready at dice, adopting unfair means said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo, I have won!’

Yudhishthira said, ’I have four hundred Nidis (jewels of great value) encased in sheets of copper and iron. Each one of them is equal to five draunikas of the costliest and purest leaf gold of the Jatarupa kind. With this wealth, O king, I will stake with thee.’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing this, Sakuni ready at dice, adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo, I have won it!’”

Section LXI

Vaisampayana said, ”During the course of this gambling, certain to bring about utter ruin (on Yudhishthira), Vidura, that dispeller of all doubts, (addressing Dhritarashtra) said, ‘O great king, O thou of the Bharata race, attend to what I say, although my words may not be agreeable to thee, like medicine to one that is ill and about to breathe his last. When this Duryodhana of sinful mind had, immediately after his birth, cried discordantly like a jackal, it was well known that he had been ordained to bring about the destruction of the Bharata race. Know, O king, that he will be the cause of death of ye all. A jackal is living in thy house, O king, in the form of Duryodhana. Thou knowest it not in consequence of thy folly. Listen now to the words of the Poet (Sukra) which I will quote. They that collect honey (in mountains), having received what they seek, do not notice that they are about to fall. Ascending dangerous heights, abstracted in the pursuit of what they seek, they fall down and meet with destruction. This Duryodhana also, maddened with the play at dice, like the collector of honey, abstracted in what he seeketh, marketh not the consequences. Making enemies of these great warriors, he beholdeth not the fall that is before him. It is known to thee, O thou of great wisdom, that amongst the Bhojas, they abandoned, for the good of the citizens a son that was unworthy of their race. The Andhakas, the Yadavas, and the Bhojas uniting together, abandoned Kansa. And afterwards, when at the command of the whole tribe, the same Kansa had been slain by Krishna that slayer of foes, all the men of the tribe became exceedingly happy for a hundred years. So at thy command, let Arjuna slay this Suyodhana. And in consequence of the slaying of this wretch, let the Kurus be glad and pass their days in happiness. In exchange of a crow, O great king, buy these peacocks--the Pandavas; and in exchange of a jackal, buy these tigers. For the sake of a family a member may be sacrificed; for the sake of a village a family may be sacrificed, for the sake of a province a village may be sacrificed and for the sake of one’s own soul the whole earth may be sacrificed. Even this was what the omniscient Kavya himself, acquainted with the thoughts of every creature, and a source of terror unto all foes, said unto the great Asuras to induce them to abandon Jambha at the moment of his birth. It is said that a certain king, having caused a number of wild birds that vomited gold to take up their quarters in his own house, afterwards killed them from temptation. O slayer of foes, blinded by temptation and the desire of enjoyment, for the sake of gold, the king destroyed at the same time both his present and future gains. Therefore, O king, prosecute not the Pandavas from desire of profit, even like the king in story. For then, blinded by folly thou wilt have to repent afterwards, even like the person that killed the birds. Like a flower-seller that plucketh (many flowers) in the garden from trees that he cherisheth with affection from day to day, continue, O Bharata, to pluck flowers day by day from the Pandavas. Do not scorch them to their roots like a fire-producing breeze that reduceth everything to black charcoal. Go not, O king, unto the region of Yama, with thy sons and troops, for who is there that is capable of fighting with the sons of Pritha, together? Not to speak of others, is the chief of the celestials at the head of the celestials themselves, capable of doing so?”

Section LXII

“Vidura said, ”Gambling is the root of dissensions. It bringeth about disunion. Its consequences are frightful. Yet having recourse to this, Dhritarashtra’s son Duryodhana createth for himself fierce enmity. The descendants
of Pratipa and Santanu, with their fierce troops and their allies the Vahlikas, will, for the sins of Duryodhana meet with destruction. Duryodhana, in consequence of this intoxication, forcibly driveth away luck and prosperity from his kingdom, even like an infuriate bull breaking his own horns himself. That brave and learned person who disregarding his own foresight, followeth, O king, (the bent of) another man’s heart, sinketh in terrible affliction even like one that goeth into the sea in a boat guided by a child. Duryodhana is gambling with the son of Pandu, and thou art in raptures that he is winning. And it is such success that begeteth war, which endeth in the destruction of men. This fascination (of gambling) that thou has well-devised only leadeth to dire results. Thus hast thou simply brought on by these counsels great affliction to thy heart. And this thy quarrel with Yudhishthira, who is so closely related to thee, even if thou hadst not foreseen it, is still approved by thee. Listen, ye sons of Santanu, ye descendants of Pratipa, who are now in this assembly of the Kauravas, to these words of wisdom. Enter ye not into the terrible fire that hath blazed forth following the wretch. When Ajatasatru, the son of Pandu, intoxicated with dice, giveth way to his wrath, and Vrikodara and Arjuna and the twins (do the same), who, in that hour of confusion, will prove your refuge? O great king, thou art thyself a mine of wealth. Thou canst earn (by other means) as much wealth as thou seekest to earn by gambling. What dost thou gain by winning from the Pandavas their vast wealth? Win the Pandavas themselves, who will be to thee more than all the wealth they have. We all know the skill of Suvala in play. This hill-king knoweth many nefarious methods in gambling. Let Sakuni return whence he came. War not, O Bharata, with the sons of Pandu!’

Section LXIII

Duryodhana said, 'O Kshatta, thou art always boasting of the fame of our enemies, deprecating the sons of Dhritarashtra. We know, O Vidura, of whom thou art really fond. Thou always disregardest us as children, That man standeth confest, who wisheth for success unto those that are near to him and defeat unto those that are not his favourites. His praise and blame are applied accordingly. Thy tongue and mind betray thy heart. But the hostility thou showeth in speech is even greater than what is in thy heart. Thou hast been cherished by us like a serpent on our lap. Like a cat thou wishest evil unto him that cherisheth thee. The wise have said that there is no sin graver than that of injuring one's master. How is it, O Kshatta, that thou dost not fear this sin? Having vanquished our enemies we have obtained great advantages. Use not harsh words in respect of us. Thou art always willing to make peace with the foes. And it is for this reason that thou hatest us always. A man becometh a foe by speaking words that are unpardonable. Then again in praising the enemy, the secrets of one's own party should not be divulged. (Thou however, transgressest this rule). Therefore, O thou parasite, why dost thou obstruct us so? Thou sayest whatever thou wishest. Insult us not. We know thy mind. Go and learn sitting at the feet of the old. Keen up the reputation that thou hast won. Meddle not with the affairs of other men. Do not imagine that thou art our chief. Tell us not harsh words always, O Vidura. We do not ask thee what is for our good. Cease, irritate not those that have already borne too much at thy hands. There is only one Controller, no second. He controlleth even the child that is in the mother's womb. I am controlled by Him. Like water that always floweth in a downward course, I am acting precisely in the way in which He is directing me. He that breaketh his head against a stone-wall, and he that feedeth a serpent, are guided in those acts of theirs by their own intellect. (Therefore, in this matter I am guided by my own intelligence). He becometh a foe who seeketh to control others by force. When advice, however, is offered in a friendly spirit, the learned bear with it. He again that hath set fire to such a highly inflammable object as camphor, beholdeth not its ashes. If he runneth immediately to extinguish it. One should not give shelter to another who is the friend of his foes, or to another who is ever jealous of his protector or to another who is evil-minded. Therefore, O Vidura, go whither-so-ever thou pleasest. A wife that is unchaste, however well-treated, forsaketh her husband yet.'

"Vidura addressing Dhritarashtra, said, 'O monarch, tell us (impartially) like a witness what thou thinkest of the conduct of those who abandon their serving-men thus for giving instruction to them. The hearts of kings are, indeed, very fickle. Granting protection at first, they strike with clubs at last. O prince (Duryodhana), thou regardest thyself as mature in intellect, and, O thou of bad heart, thou regardest me as a child. But consider that he is a child who having first accepted one for a friend, subsequently findeth fault with him. An evil-hearted man can never be brought to the path of rectitude, like an unchaste wife in the house of a well-born person. Assuredly, instruction is not agreeable to this bull of the Bharata race like a husband of sixty years to a damsel that is young. After this, O king, if thou wishest to hear words that are agreeable to thee, in respect of all acts good or bad, ask thou women and idiots and cripples or persons of that description. A sinful man speaking words that are agreeable may be had in this world. But a speaker of words that are disagreeable though sound as regimen, or a hearer of the same, is very rare. He indeed, is a king's true ally who disregarding what is agreeable or disagreeable to his master beareth himself virtuously and uttereth what may be disagreeable but necessary as regimen. O great king, drink thou that which the honest drink and the dishonest shun, even humility, which is like a medicine that is bitter, pungent, burning, unintoxicating, disagreeable, and revolting. And drinking it, O king, regain thou thy sobriety. I always wish Dhritarashtra and his sons affluence and fame. Happen what may unto thee, here I bow to thee (and take my leave). Let the Brahmanas wish me well. O son of Kuru, this is the lesson I carefully inculcate, that the wise should never enrage such as adders as have venom in their very glances!"

Section LXIV

"Sakuni said, 'Thou hast, O Yudhishthira, lost much wealth of the Pandavas. If thou hast still anything that thou hast not yet lost to us, O son of Kunti, tell us what it is!"

"Yudhishthira said,--O son of Suvala, I know that I have untold wealth. But why is it, O Sakuni, that thou askest me of my wealth? Let tens of thousands and millions and millions and tens of millions and hundreds of millions and tens of billions and hundreds of billions and trillions and tens of trillions and hundreds of trillions and tens of quadrillions and hundreds of quadrillions and even more wealth be staked by thee. I have as much. With that wealth, O king, I will play with thee."

Vaisampayana said, "Hearing this, Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting unfair means, said unto Yudhishthira, 'Lo, I have won!'

'Yudhishthira said, 'I have, O son of Suvala, immeasurable kine and horses and milch cows with calves and goats and sheep in the country extending from the Parnasa to the eastern bank of the Sindu. With this wealth, O king, I will play with thee.

Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting unfair means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo, I have won!’

Yudhishthira said, ’I have my city, the country, land, the wealth of all dwelling therein except of the Brahmanas, and all those persons themselves except Brahmanas still remaining to me. With this wealth, O king, I will play with thee.’

Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this, Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo! I have won.’

“Yudhishthira said,--These princes here, O king, who look resplendent in their ornaments and their ear-rings and Nishkas and all the royal ornaments on their persons are now my wealth. With this wealth, O king, I play with thee.

Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this, Sakuni, ready with his dice, adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo! I have won them.’

“Yudhishthira said, ’This Nakula here, of mighty arms and leonine neck, of red eyes and endued with youth, is now my one stake. Know that he is my wealth.’ Sakuni said, ’O king Yudhishthira, prince Nakula is dear to thee. He is already under our subjection. With whom (as stake) wilt thou now play?”

Vaisampayana said, ”Saying this, Sakuni cast those dice, and said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo! He hath been won by us.’

Yudhishthira said, ”This Sahadeva administereth justice. He hath also acquired a reputation for learning in this world. However undeserving he may be to be staked in play, with him as stake I will play, with such a dear object as it, indeed, he were not so!”

Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this, Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo! I have won.’

“Sakuni continued, ’O king, the sons of Madri, dear unto thee, have both been won by me. It would seem, however, that Bhimasena and Dhananjaya are regarded very much by thee.’

“Yudhishthira said, ’Wretch! thou actest sinfully in thus seeking to create disunion amongst us who are all of one heart, disregarding morality.’

“Sakuni said, ’One that is intoxicated falleth into a pit (hell) and stayeth there deprived of the power of motion. Thou art, O king, senior to us in age, and possessed of the highest accomplishments. O bull of the Bharata race, I (beg my pardon and) bow to thee. Thou knowest, O Yudhishthira, that gamesters, while excited with play, utter such ravings that they never indulge in the like of them in their waking moments nor even in dream.’

“Yudhishthira said,--He that taketh us like a boat to the other shore of the sea of battle, he that is ever victorious over foes, the prince who is endued with great activity, he who is the one hero in this world, (is here). With that Falguna as stake, however, undeserving of being made so, I will now play with thee.’”

Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this, Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo! I have won.’

“Sakuni continued, ’This foremost of all wielders of the bow, this son of Pandu capable of using both his hands with equal activity hath now been won by me. O play now with the wealth that is still left unto thee, even with Bhima thy dear brother, as thy stake, O son of Pandu.

“Yudhishthira said, ’O king, however, undeserving he may be of being made a stake, I will now play with thee by staking Bhimasena, that prince who is our leader, who is the foremost in fight,--even like the wielder of the thunder-bolt--the one enemy of the Danavas,--the high-souled one with leonine neck and arched eye-brows and eyes looking askance, who is incapable of putting up with an insult, who hath no equal in might in the world, who is the foremost of all wielders of the mace, and who grindeth all foes,’” “Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this, Sakuni, ready with the dice adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira. ‘Lo! I have won.’

Sakuni continued,--Thou hast, O son of Kunti, lost much wealth, horses and elephants and thy brothers as well.

Say, if thou hast anything which thou hast not lost.’

Yudhishthira, said--’I alone, the eldest of all my brothers and dear unto them, am still unwon. Won by thee, I will do what he that is won will have to do.’”

Vaisampayana said, ”Hearing this Sakuni, ready with the dice, adopting foul means, said unto Yudhishthira, ‘Lo! I have won.’

‘Sakuni continued, ’Thou hast permitted thyself to be won. This is very sinful. There is wealth still left to thee, O king. Therefore, thy having lost thyself is certainly sinful.’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Having said this, Sakuni, well-skilled at dice, spoke unto all the brave kings present there of his having won, one after another, all the Pandavas. The son of Suvala then, addressing Yudhishthira said, ’O king, there is still one stake dear to thee that is still unwon. Stake thou Krishna, the princess of Panchala. By her, win thyself back.’

“Yudhishthira said, ’With Draupadi as stake, who is neither short nor tall, neither spare nor corpulent, and who is possessed of blue curly locks, I will now play with thee. Possessed of eyes like the leaves of the autumn lotus, and fragrant also as the autumn lotus, equal in beauty unto her (Lakshmi) who delighteth in autumn lotuses, and unto Sree herself in symmetry and every grace she is such a woman as a man may desire for wife in respect of softness of heart, and wealth of beauty and of virtues. Possessed of every accomplishment and compassionate and sweet-speeched, she is such a woman as a man may desire for wife in respect of her fitness for the acquisition of virtue and pleasure and wealth. Retiring to bed last and waking up first, she looketh after all down to the cowherds and the shepherds. Her face too, when covered with sweat, looketh as the lotus or the jasmine. Of slender waist like that of the wasp, of long flowing locks, of red lips, and body without down, is the princess of Panchala. O king, making the slender-waisted Draupadi, who is even such as my stake, I will play with thee, O son of Suvala.’”

Vaisampayana continued, ’When the intelligent king Yudhishthira the just has spoken thus, ’Fie!’ ‘Fie!’ were the words that were uttered by all the aged persons that were in the assembly. And the whole conclave was agitated, and the kings who were present there all gave way to grief. And Bhishma and Drona and Kripa were covered with perspiration. And Vidura holding his head between his hands sat like one that had lost his reason. He sat with face downwards giving way to his reflections and sighing like a snake. But Dhritarashtra glad, at heart, asked repeatedly, ‘Hath the stake been won?’ ‘Hath the stake been won?’ and could not conceal his emotions. Karna with Dussassana and others laughed aloud, while tears began to flow from the eyes of all other present in the assembly. And the son of Suvala, proud of success and flurried with excitement and repeating. Thou hast one stake, dear to thee, etc. said, ’Lo! I have won’ and took up the dice that had been cast.”

Section LXV

Duryodhana said, ’Come, Kshatta, bring hither Draupadi the dear and loved wife of the Pandavas. Let her sweep the chambers, force her thereto, and let the unfortunate one stay where our serving-women are.’

“Vidura said, ’Dost thou not know, O wretch, that by uttering such harsh words thou art tying thyself with cords? Dost thou not understand that thou art hanging on the edge of a precipice? Dost thou not know that being a deer thou provokest so many tigers to rage? Snakes of deadly venom, provoked to ire, are on thy head! Wretch, do not further provoke them lest thou goest to the region of Yama. In my judgement, slavery does not attach to Krishna, in as much as she was staked by the King after he had lost himself and ceased to be his own master. Like the bamboo that beareth fruit only when it is about to die, the son of Dhritarashtra winneth this treasure at play. Intoxicated, he perceiveth nor in these his last moments that dice bring about enmity and frightful terrors. No man should utter harsh speeches and pierce the hearts of the others. No man should subjugate his enemies by dice and such other foul means. No one should utter such words as are disapproved by the Vedas and lead to hell and annoy others. Some one uttereth from his lips words that are harsh. Stung by them another burneth day and night. These words pierce the very heart of another. The learned, therefore, should never utter them, pointing them at others. A goat had once swallowed a hook, and when it was pierced with it, the hunter placing the head of the animal on the ground tore its throat frightfully in drawing it out. Therefore, O Duryodhana, swallow not the wealth of the Pandavas. Make them not thy enemies. The sons of Pritha never use words such as these. It is only low men that are like dogs who use harsh words towards all classes of people, viz., those that have retired to the woods, those leading domestic lives, those employed in ascetic devotions and those that are of great learning. Alas! the son of Dhritarashtra knoweth not that dishonesty is one of the frightful doors of hell. Alas! many of the Kurus with Dussasana amongst them have followed him in the path of dishonesty in the matter of this play at dice. Even gourds may sink and stones may float, and boats also may always sink in water, still this foolish king, the son of Dhritarashtra, listeneth not to my words that are even as regimen unto him. Without doubt, he will be the cause of the destruction of the Kurus. When the words of wisdom spoken by friends and which are even as fit regimen are not listened to, but on the other hand temptation is on the increase, a frightful and universal destruction is sure to overtake all the Kurus.”

Section LXVI

Vaisampayana said, ”Intoxicated with pride, the son of Dhritarashtra spake, ’Fie on Kshatta! and casting his eyes upon the Pratikamin in attendance, commanded him, in the midst of all those reverend seniors, saying, ’Go Pratikamin, and bring thou

Draupadi hither. Thou hast no fear from the sons of Pandu. It is Vidura alone that raveth in fear. Besides, he never wisheth our prosperity!'"

Vaisampayana continued, "Thus commanded, the Pratikamin, who was of the Suta caste, hearing the words of the king, proceeded with haste, and entering the abode of the Pandavas, like a dog in a lion's den, approached the queen of the sons of Pandu. And he said, 'Yudhishthira having been intoxicated with dice, Duryodhana, O Draupadi, hath won thee. Come now, therefore, to the abode of Dhritarashtra. I will take thee, O Yajnaseni, and put thee in some menial work.'

Draupadi said, 'Why, O Pratikamin, dost thou say so? What prince is there who playeth staking his wife? The king was certainly intoxicated with dice. Else, could he not find any other object to stake?'

"The Pratikamin said, 'When he had nothing else to stake, it was then that Ajatasatru, the son of Pandu, staked thee. The king had first staked his brothers, then himself, and then thee, O princess.'

"Draupadi said, 'O son of the Suta race, go, and ask that gambler present in the assembly, whom he hath lost first, himself, or me. Ascertaining this, come hither, and then take me with thee, O son of the Suta race.'

Vaisampayana continued, "The messenger coming back to the assembly told all present the words of Draupadi. And he spoke unto Yudhishthira sitting in the midst of the kings, these words,--Draupadi hath asked thee, Whose lord wert thou at the time thou lost me in play? Didst thou lose thyself first or me? Yudhishthira, however sat there like one demented and deprived of reason and gave no answer good or ill to the Suta. "Duryodhana then said, 'Let the princess of Panchala come hither and put her question. Let every one hear in this assembly the words that pass between her and Yudhishthira.'

Vaisampayana continued, "The messenger, obedient to the command of Duryodhana, going once again to the palace, himself much distressed, said unto Draupadi, 'O princess, they that are in the assembly are summoning thee. It seemeth that the end of the Kauravas is at hand. When Duryodhana, O princess, is for taking thee before the assembly, this weak-brained king will no longer be able to protect his prosperity.'

"Draupadi said, 'The great ordainer of the world hath, indeed, ordained so. Happiness and misery pay their court to both the wise and unwise. Morality, however, it hath been said, is the one highest object in the world. If cherished, that will certainly dispense blessings to us. Let not that morality now abandon the Kauravas. Going back to those that are present in that assembly, repeat these my words consonant with morality. I am ready to do what those elderly and virtuous persons conversant with morality will definitely tell me.

Vaisampayana continued, "The Suta, hearing these words of Yajnaseni, came back to the assembly and repeated the words of Draupadi. But all sat with faces downwards, uttering not a word, knowing the eagerness and resolution of Dhritarashtra's son.

"Yudhishthira, however, O bull of the Bharata race, hearing of Duryodhana's intentions, sent a trusted messenger unto Draupadi, directing that although she was attired in one piece of cloth with her navel itself exposed, in consequence of her season having come, she should come before her father-in-law weeping bitterly. And that intelligent messenger, O king, having gone to Draupadi's abode with speed, informed her of the intentions of Yudhishthira. The illustrious Pandavas, meanwhile, distressed and sorrowful, and bound by promise, could not settle what they should do. And casting his eyes upon them, king Duryodhana, glad at heart, addressed the Suta and said, 'O Pratikamin, bring her hither. Let the Kauravas answer her question before her face. The Suta, then, obedient to his commands, but terrified at the (possible) wrath of the daughter of Drupada, disregarding his reputation for intelligence, once again said to those that were in the assembly,--what shall I say unto Krishna?'

"Duryodhana, hearing this, said, 'O Dussasana, this son of my Suta, of little intelligence, feareth Vrikodara. Therefore, go thou thyself and forcibly bring hither the daughter of Yajnasena, Our enemies at present are dependent on our will. What can they do thee?' Hearing the command of his brother, prince Dussasana rose with bloodred eyes, and entering the abode of those great warriors, spake these words unto the princess, 'Come, come, O Krishna, princess of Panchala, thou hast been won by us. And O thou of eyes large as lotus leaves, come now and accept the Kurus for thy lords. Thou hast been won virtuously, come to the assembly.' At these words, Draupadi, rising up in great affliction, rubbed her pale face with her hands, and distressed she ran to the place where the ladies of Dhritarashtra's household were. At this, Dussasana roaring in anger, ran after her and seized the queen by her locks, so long and blue and wavy. Alas! those locks that had been sprinkled with water sanctified with mantras in the great Rajasuya sacrifice, were now forcibly seized by the son of Dhritarashtra disregarding the prowess of the Pandavas. And Dussasana dragging Krishna of long long locks unto the presence of the assembly--as if she were helpless though having powerful protectors--

and pulling at her, made her tremble like the banana plant in a storm. And dragged by him, with body bent, she faintly cried--'Wretch! it ill behoveth thee to take me before the assembly. My season hath come, and I am now clad in one piece of attire. But Dussasana dragging Draupadi forcibly by her black locks while she was praying piteously unto Krishna and Vishnu who were Narayana and Nara (on earth), said unto her--'Whether thy season hath come or not, whether thou art attired in one piece of cloth or entirely naked, when thou hast been won at dice and made our slave, thou art to live amongst our serving-women as thou pleasest."

Vaisampayana continued, "With hair dishevelled and half her attire loosened, all the while dragged by Dussasana, the modest Krishna consumed with anger, faintly said--"In this assembly are persons conversant with all the branches of learning devoted to the performance of sacrifices and other rites, and all equal unto Indra, persons some of whom are really my superiors and others who deserve to be respected as such. I can not stay before them in this state. O wretch! O thou of cruel deeds, drag me not so. Uncover me not so. The princes (my lords) will not pardon thee, even if thou hast the gods themselves with Indra as thy allies. The illustrious son of Dharma is now bound by the obligations of morality. Morality, however, is subtle. Those only that are possessed of great clearness of vision can ascertain it. In speech even I am unwilling to admit an atom of fault in my lord forgetting his virtues. Thou draggest me who am in my season before these Kuru heroes. This is truly an unworthy act. But no one here rebuketh thee. Assuredly, all these are of the same mind with thee. O fie! Truly hath the virtue of the Bharata gone! Truly also hath the usage of those acquainted with the Kshatriya practice disappeared! Else these Kurus in this assembly would never have looked silently on this act that transgresseth the limits of their practices. Oh! both Drona and Bhishma have lost their energy, and so also hath the high-souled Kshatta, and so also this king. Else, why do these foremost of the Kuru elders look silently on this great crime?"

Vaisampayana continued, "Thus did Krishna of slender waist cry in distress in that assembly. And casting a glance upon her enraged lords--the Pandavas--who were filled with terrible wrath, she inflamed them further with that glance of hers. And they were not so distressed at having been robbed of their kingdom, of their wealth, of their costliest gems, as with that glance of Krishna moved by modesty and anger. And Dussasana, beholding Krishna looking at her helpless lords, dragging her still more forcibly, and addressed her, 'Slave, Slave' and laughed aloud. And at those words Karna became very glad and approved of them by laughing aloud. And Sakuni, the son of Suvala, the Gandhara king, similarly applauded Dussasana. And amongst all those that were in the assembly except these three and Duryodhana, every one was filled with sorrow at beholding Krishna thus dragged in sight of that assembly. And beholding it all, Bhishma said, 'O blessed one, morality is subtle. I therefore am unable to duly decide this point that thou hast put, beholding that on the one hand one that hath no wealth cannot stake the wealth belonging to others, while on the other hand wives are always under the orders and at the disposal of their lords. Yudhishthira can abandon the whole world full of wealth, but he will never sacrifice morality. The son of Pandu hath said--'I am won.' Therefore, I am unable to decide this matter. Sakuni hath not his equal among men at dice-play. The son of Kunti still voluntarily staked with him. The illustrious Yudhishthira doth not himself regard that Sakuni hath played with him deceitfully. Therefore, I can not decide this point."

"Draupadi said, "The king was summoned to this assembly and though possessing no skill at dice, he was made to play with skilful, wicked, deceitful and desperate gamblers. How can he be said then to have staked voluntarily? The chief of the Pandavas was deprived of his senses by wretches of deceitful conduct and unholy instincts, acting together, and then vanquished. He could not understand their tricks, but he hath now done so. Here, in this assembly, there are Kurus who are the lords of both their sons and their daughters-in-law! Let all of them, reflecting well upon my words, duly decide the point that I have put.

Vaisampayana continued, 'Unto Krishna who was thus weeping and crying piteously, looking at times upon her helpless lord, Dussasana spake many disagreeable and harsh words. And beholding her who was then in her season thus dragged, and her upper garments loosened, beholding her in that condition which she little deserved, Vrikodara afflicted beyond endurance, his eyes fixed upon Yudhishthira, gave way to wrath."

Section LXVII

"Bhima said, 'O Yudhishthira, gamblers have in their houses many women of loose character. They do not yet stake those women having kindness for them even. Whatever wealth and other excellent articles the king of Kasi gave, whatever, gems, animals, wealth, coats of mail and weapons that other kings of the earth gave, our kingdom, thyself and ourselves, have all been won by the foes. At all this my wrath was not excited for thou art our lord. This, however, I regard as a highly improper act--this act of staking Draupadi. This innocent girl deserveth not this treatment. Having obtained the Pandavas as her lords, it is for thee alone that she is being thus persecuted by the low, despicable, cruel, and mean-minded Kauravas. It is for her sake, O king, that my anger falleth on thee. I shall burn those hands of thine. Sahadeva, bring some fire."

‘Arjuna hearing this, said, ’Thou hast never, O Bhimasena, before this uttered such words as these. Assuredly thy high morality hath been destroyed by these cruel foes. Thou shouldst not fulfil the wishes of the enemy. Practise thou the highest morality. Whom doth it behave to transgress his virtuous eldest brother? The king was summoned by the foe, and remembering the usage of the Kshatriyas, he played at dice against his will. That is certainly conducive to our great fame.

‘Bhima said, ’If I had not known, O Dhananjaya, that the king had acted according to Kshatriya usage, then I would have, taking his hands together by sheer force, burnt them in a blazing fire.”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Beholding the Pandavas thus distressed and the princess of Panchala also thus afflicted, Vikarna the son of Dhritarashtra said--’Ye kings, answer ye the question that hath been asked by Yajnaseni. If we do not judge a matter referred to us, all of us will assuredly have to go to hell without delay. How is that Bhishma and Dhritarashtra, both of whom are the oldest of the Kurus, as also the high-souled Vidura, do not say anything! The son of Bharadwaja who is the preceptor of us, as also Kripa, is here. Why do not these best of regenerate ones answer the question? Let also those other kings assembled here from all directions answer according to their judgment this question, leaving aside all motives of gain and anger. Ye kings, answer ye the question that hath been asked by this blessed daughter of king Drupada, and declare after reflection on which side each of ye is.’ Thus did Vikarna repeatedly appeal to those that were in that assembly. But those kings answered him not one word, good or ill. And Vikarna having repeatedly appealed to all the kings began to rub his hands and sigh like a snake. And at last the prince said--’Ye kings of the earth, ye Kauravas, whether ye answer this question or not, I will say what I regard as just and proper. Ye foremost of men, it hath been said that hunting, drinking, gambling, and too much enjoyment of women, are the four vices of kings. The man, that is addicted to these, liveth forsaking virtue. And people do not regard the acts done by a person who is thus improperly engaged, as of any authority. This son of Pandu, while deeply engaged in one of these vicious acts, urged thereto by deceitful gamblers, made Draupadi a stake. The innocent Draupadi is, besides, the common wife of all the sons of Pandu. And the king, having first lost himself offered her as a stake. And Suvala himself desirous of a stake, indeed prevailed upon the king to stake this Krishna. Reflecting upon all these circumstances, I regard Draupadi as not won.”

“Hearing these words, a loud uproar rose from among those present in that assembly. And they all applauded Vikarna and censured the son of Suvala. And at that sound, the son of Radha, deprived of his senses by anger, waving his well-shaped arms, said these words, ’O Vikarna, many opposite and inconsistent conditions are noticeable in this assembly. Like fire produced from a faggot, consuming the faggot itself, this thy ire will consume thee. These personages here, though urged by Krishna, have not uttered a word. They all regard the daughter of Drupada to have been properly won. Thou alone, O son of Dhritarashtra in consequence of thy immature years, art bursting with wrath, for though but a boy thou speakest in the assembly as if thou wert old. O younger brother of Duryodhana, thou dost not know what morality truly is, for thou sayest like a fool that this Krishna who hath been (justly) won as not won at all. O son of Dhritarashtra, how dost thou regard Krishna as not won, when the eldest of the Pandavas before this assembly staked all his possessions? O bull of the Bharata race, Draupadi is included in all the possessions (of Yudhishthira). Therefore, why regardest thou Krishna who hath been justly won as not won? Draupadi had been mentioned (by Suvala) and approved of as a stake by the Pandavas. For what reason then dost thou yet regard her as not won? Or, if thou thinkest that bringing her hither attired in a single piece of cloth, is an action of impropriety, listen to certain excellent reasons I will give. O son of the Kuru race, the gods have ordained only one husband for one woman. This Draupadi, however, hath many husbands. Therefore, certain it is that she is an unchaste woman. To bring her, therefore, into this assembly attired though she be in one piece of cloth--even to uncover her is not at all an act that may cause surprise. Whatever wealth the Pandavas had--she herself and these Pandavas themselves,--have all been justly won by the son of Suvala. O Dussasana, this Vikarna speaking words of (apparent) wisdom is but a boy. Take off the robes of the Pandavas as also the attire of Draupadi. Hearing these words the Pandavas, O Bharata, took of their upper garments and throwing them down sat in that assembly. Then Dussasana, O king, forcibly seizing Draupadi’s attire before the eyes of all, began to drag it off her person.”

Vaisampayana continued, ”When the attire of Draupadi was being thus dragged, the thought of Hari, (And she herself cried aloud, saying), ‘O Govinda, O thou who dwellest in Dwaraka, O Krishna, O thou who art fond of cow-herdesses (of Vrindavana). O Kesava, seest thou not that the Kauravas are humiliating me. O Lord, O husband of Lakshmi, O Lord of Vraja (Vrindavana), O destroyer of all afflictions, O Janarddana, rescue me who am sinking in the Kaurava Ocean. O Krishna, O Krishna, O thou great yogin, thou soul of the universe, Thou creator of all things, O Govinda, save me who am distressed,--who am losing my senses in the midst of the Kurus.’ Thus did that afflicted lady resplendent still in her beauty, O king covering her face cried aloud, thinking of Krishna, of Hari, of the lord of the three worlds. Hearing the words of Draupadi, Krishna was deeply moved. And leaving his seat,

the benevolent one from compassion, arrived there on foot. And while Yajnaseni was crying aloud to Krishna, also called Vishnu and Hari and Nara for protection, the illustrious Dharma, remaining unseen, covered her with excellent clothes of many hues. And, O monarch as the attire of Draupadi was being dragged, after one was taken off, another of the same kind, appeared covering her. And thus did it continue till many clothes were seen. And, O exalted on, owing to the protection of Dharma, hundreds upon hundreds of robes of many hues came off Draupadi's person. And there arose then a deep uproar of many many voices. And the kings present in that assembly beholding that most extraordinary of all sights in the world, began to applaud Draupadi and censure the son of Dhritarashtra. And Bhima then, squeezing his hands, with lips quivering in rage, swore in the midst of all those kings a terrible oath in a loud voice.

"And Bhima said,--Hear these words of mine, ye Kshatriyas of the world. Words such as these were never before uttered by other men, nor will anybody in the future ever utter them. Ye lords of earth, if having spoken these words I do not accomplish them hereafter, let me not obtain the region of my deceased ancestors. Tearing open in battle, by sheer force, the breast of this wretch, this wicked-minded scoundrel of the Bharata race, if I do not drink his life-blood, let me not obtain the region of my ancestors."

Vaisampayana continued, "Hearing these terrible words of Bhima that made the down of the auditors to stand on end, everybody present there applauded him and censured the son of Dhritarashtra. And when a mass of clothes had been gathered in that assembly, all dragged from the person of Draupadi, Dussasana, tired and ashamed, sat down. And beholding the sons of Kunti in that state, the persons--those gods among men--that were in that assembly all uttered the word 'Fie!'(on the son of Dhritarashtra). And the united voices of all became so loud that they made the down of anybody who heard them stand on end. And all the honest men that were in that assembly began to say, 'Alas! the Kauravas answer not the question that hath been put to them by Draupadi. And all censuring Dhritarashtra together, made a loud clamour. Then Vidura, that master of the science of morality, waving his hands and silencing every one, spake these words; 'Ye that are in this assembly, Draupadi having put her question is weeping helplessly. Ye are not answering her. Virtue and morality are being persecuted by such conduct. An afflicted person approacheth an assembly of good men, like one that is being consumed by fire. They that are in the assembly quench that fire and cool him by means of truth and morality. The afflicted person asketh the assembly about his rights, as sanctioned by morality. They that are in the assembly should, unmoved by interest and anger, answer the question. Ye kings, Vikarna hath answered the question, according to his own knowledge and judgment. Ye should also answer it as ye think proper. Knowing the rules of morality, and having attended an assembly, he that doth not answer a query that is put, incurreth half the demerit that attacheth to a lie. He, on the other hand, who, knowing the rules of morality and having joined an assembly answereth falsely, assuredly incurreth the sin of a lie. The learned quote as an example in this connection the old history of Prahlada and the son of Angirasa.

"There was of old a chief of the Daityas of the name Prahlada. He had a son named Virochana. And Virochana, for the sake of obtaining a bride, quarrelled with Sudhanwan, the son of Angiras. It hath been heard by us that they mutually wagered their lives, saying--I am superior,--I am superior,--for the sake of obtaining a bride. And after they had thus quarrelled with each other, they both made Prahlada the arbitrator to decide between them. And they asked him, saying;--Who amongst us is superior (to the other)? Answer this question. Speak not falsely. Frightened at this quarrel, Prahlada cast his eyes upon Sudhanwan. And Sudhanwan in rage, burning like unto the mace of Yama, told him,--If thou answerest falsely, or dost not answer at all thy head will then be split into a hundred pieces by the wielder of the thunderbolt with that bolt of his.--Thus addressed by Sudhanwan, the Daitya, trembling like a leaf of the fig tree, went to Kasyapa of great energy, for taking counsel with him. And Prahlada said, 'Thou art, O illustrious and exalted one, fully conversant with the rules of morality that should guide both the gods and the Asuras and the Brahmanas as well. Here, however, is a situation of great difficulty in respect of duty. Tell me, I ask thee, what regions are obtainable by them who upon being asked a question, answer it not, or answer it falsely. Kasyapa thus asked answered. 'He that knoweth, but answereth not a question from temptation, anger or fear, casteth upon himself a thousand nooses of Varuna. And the person who, cited as a witness with respect to any matter of ocular or auricular knowledge, speaketh carelessly, casteth a thousand nooses of Varuna upon his own person. On the completion of one full year, one such noose is loosened. Therefore, he that knoweth, should speak the truth without concealment. If virtue, pierced by sin, repaireth to an assembly (for aid), it is the duty of every body in the assembly to take off the dart, otherwise they themselves would be pierced with it. In an assembly where a truly censurable act is not rebuked, half the demerit of that act attacheth to the head of that assembly, a fourth to the person acting censurably and a fourth unto those others that are there. In that assembly, on the other hand, when he that deserveth censure is rebuked, the head of the assembly becometh freed from all sins, and the other members also incur none. It is only the perpetrator himself of the act that becometh responsible for it. O Prahlada, they who answer falsely those that ask them about morality destroy the meritorious acts of their seven upper and seven lower generations. The grief of one who hath lost all his wealth, of one who hath lost a son, of one who

is in debt, of one who is separated from his companions, of a woman who hath lost her husband, of one that hath lost his all in consequence of the king's demand, of a woman who is sterile, of one who hath been devoured by a tiger (during his last struggles in the tiger's claws), of one who is a co-wife, and of one who hath been deprived of his property by false witnesses, have been said by the gods to be uniform in degree. These different sorts of grief are his who speaketh false. A person becometh a witness in consequence of his having seen, heard, and understood a thing. Therefore, a witness should always tell the truth. A truth-telling witness never loseth his religious merits and earthly possessions also.' Hearing these words of Kasyapa, Prahlada told his son, "Sudhanwan is superior to thee, as indeed, (his father) Angiras is superior to me. The mother also of Sudhanwan is superior to thy mother. Therefore, O Virochana, this Sudhanwan is now the lord of the life." At these words of Prahlada, Sudhanwan said, "Since unmoved by affection for thy child, thou hast adhered to virtue, I command, let this son of thine live for a hundred years."

"Vidura continued,--Let all the persons, therefore, present in this assembly hearing these high truths of morality, reflect upon what should be the answer to the question asked by Draupadi".

Vaisampayana continued, "The kings that were there hearing these words of Vidura, answered not a word, yet Karna alone spoke unto Dussasana, telling him. Take away this serving-woman Krishna into the inner apartments. And thereupon Dussasana began to drag before all the spectators the helpless and modest Draupadi, trembling and crying piteously unto the Pandavas her lords."

Section LXVIII

Draupadi said, 'Wait a little, thou worst of men, thou wicked-minded Dussasana. I have an act to perform--a high duty that hath not been performed by me yet. Dragged forcibly by this wretch's strong arms, I was deprived of my senses. I salute these reverend seniors in this assembly of the Kurus. That I could not do this before cannot be my fault.'"

Vaisampayana said, "Dragged with greater force than before, the afflicted and helpless Draupadi, undeserving of such treatment, falling down upon the ground, thus wept in that assembly of the Kurus,

"'Alas, only once before, on the occasion of the Swayamvara, I was beheld by the assembled kings in the amphitheatre, and never even once beheld afterwards. I am to-day brought before this assembly. She whom even the winds and the sun had seen never before in her palace is to-day before this assembly and exposed to the gaze of the crowd. Alas, she whom the sons of Pandu could not, while in her palace, suffer to be touched even by the wind, is to-day suffered by the Pandavas to be seized and dragged by this wretch. Alas, these Kauravas also suffer their daughter-in-law, so unworthy of such treatment, to be thus afflicted before them. It seemeth that the times are out of joint. What can be more distressing to me, than that though high-born and chaste, I should yet be compelled to enter this public court? Where is that virtue for which these kings were noted? It hath been heard that the kings of ancient days never brought their wedded wives into the public court. Alas, that eternal usage hath disappeared from among the Kauravas. Else, how is it that the chaste wife of the Pandavas, the sister of Prishata's son, the friend of Vasudeva, is brought before this assembly? Ye Kauravas, I am the wedded wife of king Yudhishthira the just, hailing from the same dynasty to which the King belonged. Tell me now if I am a serving-maid or otherwise. I will cheerfully accept your answer. This mean wretch, this destroyer of the name of the Kurus, is afflicting me hard. Ye Kauravas, I cannot bear it any longer. Ye kings, I desire ye to answer whether ye regard me as won or unwon. I will accept your verdict whatever it be.'

"Hearing these words, Bhishma answered, I have already said, O blessed one that the course of morality is subtle. Even the illustrious wise in this world fail to understand it always. What in this world a strong man calls morality is regarded as such by others, however otherwise it may really be; but what a weak man calls morality is scarcely regarded as such even if it be the highest morality. From the importance of the issue involved, from its intricacy and subtlety, I am unable to answer with certitude the question thou hast asked. However, it is certain that as all the Kurus have become the slaves of covetousness and folly, the destruction of this our race will happen on no distant date. O blessed one, the family into which thou hast been admitted as a daughter-in-law, is such that those who are born in it, however much they might be afflicted by calamities, never deviate from the paths of virtue and morality. O Princess of Panchala, this conduct of thine also, viz. that though sunk in distress, thou still easiest thy eyes on virtue and morality, is assuredly worthy of thee. These persons, Drona and others, of mature years and conversant with morality, sit heads downwards like men that are dead, with bodies from which life hath departed. It seemeth to me, however, that Yudhishthira is an authority on this question. It behoveth him to declare whether thou art won or not won."

Section LXIX

Vaisampayana said, ”The kings present in that assembly, from tear of Duryodhana, uttered not a word, good or ill, although they beheld Draupadi crying piteously in affliction like a female osprey, and repeatedly appealing to them. And the son of Dhritarashtra beholding those kings and sons and grand sons of kings all remaining silent, smiled a little, and addressing the daughter of the king of Panchala, said,--O Yajnaseni, the question thou hast put dependeth on thy husbands--on Bhima of mighty strength, on Arjuna, on Nakula, on Sahadeva. Let them answer thy question. O Panchali, let them for thy sake declare in the midst of these respectable men that Yudhishthira is not their lord, let them thereby make king Yudhishthira the just a liar. Thou shalt then be freed from the condition of slavery. Let the illustrious son of Dharma, always adhering to virtue, who is even like Indra, himself declare whether he is not thy lord. At his words, accept thou the Pandavas or ourselves without delay. Indeed, all the Kauravas present in this assembly are floating in the ocean of thy distress. Endued with magnanimity, they are unable to answer thy question, looking at thy unfortunate husbands.’” Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing these words the Kuru king, all who were present in the assembly loudly applauded them. And shouting approvingly, they made signs unto one another by motions of their eyes and lips. And amongst some that were there, sounds of distress such as ‘O! and ‘Alas!” were heard. And at these words of Duryodhana, so delightful (to his partisans), the Kauravas present in that assembly became exceedingly glad. And the kings, with faces turned sideways, looked upon Yudhishthira conversant with the rules of morality, curious to hear what he would say. And every one present in that assembly became curious to hear what Arjuna, the son of Pandu never defeated in battle, and what Bhimasena, and what the twins also would say. And when that busy hum of many voices became still, Bhimasena, waving his strong and well-formed arms smeared with sandalpaste spake these words, ’If this high-souled king Yudhishthira the just, who is our eldest brother, had not been our lord, we would never have forgiven the Kuru race (for all this). He is the lord of all our religious and ascetic merits, the lord of even our lives. If he regardeth himself as won, we too have all been won. If this were not so, who is there amongst creatures touching the earth with their feet and mortal, that would escape from me with his life after having touched those locks of the princess of Panchala? Behold these mighty, well-formed arms of mine, even like maces of iron. Having once come within them, even he of a hundred sacrifices is incapable of effecting an escape. Bound by the ties of virtue and the reverence that is due to our eldest brother, and repeatedly urged by Arjuna to remain silent, I am not doing anything terrible. If however, I am once commanded by king Yudhishthira the just, I would slay these wretched sons of Dhritarashtra, making slaps do the work of swords, like a lion slaying a number of little animals.”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Unto Bhima who had spoken these words Bhishma and Drona and Vidura said, ‘Forbear, O Bhima. Everything is possible with thee.’”

Section LXX

“Karna said, ’Of all the persons in the assembly, three, viz., Bhishma, Vidura, and the preceptor of the Kurus (Drona) appear to be independent; for they always speak of their master as wicked, always censure him, and never wish for his prosperity. O excellent one, the slave, the son, and the wife are always dependent. They cannot earn wealth, for whatever they earn belongeth to their master. Thou art the wife of a slave incapable of possessing anything on his own account. Repair now to the inner apartments of king Dhritarashtra and serve the king’s relatives. We direct that that is now thy proper business. And, O princess, all the sons of Dhritarashtra and not the sons of Pritha are now thy masters. O handsome one, select thou another husband now,--one who will not make thee a slave by gambling. It is well-known that women, especially that are slaves, are not censurable if they proceed with freedom in electing husbands. Therefore let it be done by thee. Nakula hath been won, as also Bhimasena, and Yudhishthira also, and Sahadeva, and Arjuna. And, O Yajnaseni, thou art now a slave. Thy husbands that are slaves cannot continue to be thy lords any longer. Alas, doth not the son of Pritha regards life, prowess and manhood as of no use that he offereth this daughter of Drupada, the king of Panchala, in the presence of all this assembly, as a stake at dice?’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing these words, the wrathful Bhima breathed hard, a very picture of woe. Obedient to the king and bound by the tie of virtue and duty, burning everything with his eyes inflamed by anger, he said, ’O king, I cannot be angry at these words of this son of a Suta, for we have truly entered the state of servitude. But O king, could our enemies have said so unto me, it thou hadst not played staking this princess?’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing these words of Bhimasena king Duryodhana addressed Yudhishthira who was silent and deprived of his senses, saying, ’O king, both Bhima and Arjuna, and the twins also, are under thy sway. Answer thou the question (that hath been asked by Draupadi). Say, whether thou regardest Krishna as unwon.’ And having spoken thus unto the son of Kunti, Duryodhana. desirous of encouraging the son of Radha and insulting Bhima, quickly uncovered his left thigh that was like unto the

stem of a plantain tree or the trunk of an elephant and which was graced with every auspicious sign and endued with the strength of thunder, and showed it to Draupadi in her very sight. And beholding this, Bhimasena expanding his red eyes, said unto Duryodhana in the midst of all those kings and as if piercing them (with his dart-like words), 'Let not Vrikodara attain to the regions, obtained by his ancestors, if he doth not break that thigh of thine in the great conflict. And sparkles of fire began to be emitted from every organ of sense of Bhima filled with wrath, like those that come out of every crack and orifice in the body of a blazing tree.

Vidura then, addressing everybody, said, 'Ye kings of Pratipa's race, behold the great danger that ariseth from Bhimasena. Know ye for certain that this great calamity that threatens to overtake the Bharatas hath been sent by Destiny itself. The sons of Dhritarashtra have, indeed, gambled disregarding every proper consideration. They are even now disputing in this assembly about a lady (of the royal household). The prosperity of our kingdom is at an end. Alas, the Kauravas are even now engaged in sinful consultations. Ye Kauravas, take to your heart this high precept that I declare. If virtue is persecuted, the whole assembly becometh polluted. If Yudhishthira had staked her before he was himself won, he would certainly have been regarded as her master. If, however a person staketh anything at a time when he himself is incapable of holding any wealth, to win it is very like obtaining wealth in a dream. Listening to the words of the king of Gandhara, fall ye not off from this undoubted truth.'

"Duryodhana, hearing Vidura thus speak, said, 'I am willing to abide by the words of Bhima, of Arjuna and of the twins. Let them say that Yudhishthira is not their master. Yajnaseni will then be freed from her state of bondage."

"Arjuna at this, said, "This illustrious son of Kunti, king Yudhishthira the just, was certainly our master before he began to play. But having lost himself, let all the Kauravas judge whose master he could be after that." Vaisampayana continued, "Just then, a jackal began to cry loudly in the homa-chamber of king Dhritarashtra's palace. And, O king, unto the jackal that howled so, the asses began to bray responsively. And terrible birds also, from all sides, began to answer with their cries. And Vidura conversant with everything and the daughter of Suvala, both understood the meaning of those terrible sounds. And Bhishma and Drona and the learned Gautama loudly cried,--Swashti! Swashti! 1 Then Gandhari and the learned Vidura beholding that frightful omen, represented everything, in great affliction, unto the king. And the king (Dhritarashtra) thereupon said,

'Thou wicked-minded Duryodhana, thou wretch, destruction hath all ready overtaken thee when thou insultest in language such as this the wife of these bulls among the Kurus, especially their wedded wife Draupadi. And having spoken those words, the wise Dhritarashtra endued with knowledge, reflecting with the aid of his wisdom and desirous of saving his relatives and friends from destruction, began to console Krishna, the princess of Panchala, and addressing her, the monarch said, 'Ask of me any boon, O princess of Panchala, that thou desirest, Chaste and devoted to virtue, thou art the first of all my daughters-in-law.

"Draupadi said, 'O bull of the Bharata race, if thou will grant me a boon, I ask the handsome Yudhishthira, obedient to every duty, be freed from slavery. Let not unthinking children call my child Prativindhya endued with great energy of mind as the son of a slave. Having been a prince, so superior to all men, and nurtured by kings it is not proper that he should be called the child of a slave.

"Dhritarashtra said unto her, 'O auspicious one, let it be as thou sayest. O excellent one, ask thou another boon, for I will give it. My heart inclineth to give thee a second boon. Thou dost not deserve only one boon.

"Draupadi said, 'I ask, O king, that Bhimasena and Dhananjaya and the twins also, with their cars and bows, freed from bondage, regain their liberty.'

'Dhritarashtra said, 'O blessed daughter, let it be as thou desirest. Ask thou a third boon, for thou hast not been sufficiently honoured with two boons. Virtuous in thy behaviour, thou art the foremost of all my daughters-inlaw.

Draupadi said, 'O best of kings, O illustrious one, covetousness always bringeth about loss of virtue. I do not deserve a third boon. Therefore I dare not ask any. O king of kings, it hath been said that a Vaisya may ask one boon; a Kshatriya lady, two boons; a Kshatriya male, three, and a Brahmana, a hundred. O king, these my husbands freed from the wretched state of bondage, will be able to achieve prosperity by their own virtuous acts!'"

Section LXXI

"Karna said, 'We have never heard of such an act (as this one of Draupadi), performed by any of the women noted in this world for their beauty. When the sons of both Pandu and Dhritarashtra were excited with wrath, this Draupadi became unto the sons of Pandu as their salvation. Indeed the princess of Panchala, becoming as a boat unto the sons of Pandu who were sinking in a boatless ocean of distress, hath brought them in safety to the shore.'"

Vaisampayana continued, ”Hearing these words of Karna in the midst of the Kurus,--viz., that the sons of Pandu were saved by their wife,--the angry Bhimasena in great affliction said (unto Arjuna), ’O Dhananjaya, it hath been said by Devala three lights reside in every person, viz., offspring, acts and learning, for from these three hath sprung creation. When life becometh extinct and the body becometh impure and is cast off by relatives, these three become of service to every person. But the light that is in us hath been dimmed by this act of insult to our wife. How, O Arjuna, can a son born from this insulted wife of ours prove serviceable to us? “Arjuna replied, ’Superior persons, O Bharata, never prate about the harsh words that may or may not be uttered by inferior men. Persons that have earned respect for themselves, even if they are able to retaliate, remember not the acts of hostility done by their enemies, but, on the other hand, treasure up only their good deeds.’

‘Bhima said, ’Shall I, O king, slay, without loss of time all these foes assembled together, even here, or shall I destroy them, O Bharata, by the roots, outside this palace? Or, what need is there of words or of command? I shall slay all these even now, and rule thou the whole earth, O king, without a rival. And saying this, Bhima with his younger brothers, like a lion in the midst of a herd of inferior animals, repeatedly cast his angry glances around. But Arjuna, however, of white deeds, with appealing looks began to pacify his elder brother. And the mighty-armed hero endued with great prowess began to burn with the fire of his wrath. And, O king, this fire began to issue out
of Vrikodara’s ears and other senses with smoke and sparks and flames. And his face became terrible to behold in consequence of his furrowed brows like those of Yama himself at the time of the universal destruction. Then Yudhishthira forbade the mighty hero, embracing him with his arms and telling him ‘Be not so. Stay in silence and peace.’ And having pacified the mighty-armed one with eyes red in wrath, the king approached his uncle Dhritarashtra, with hands joined in entreaty.”

Section LXXII

“Yudhishthira said, ’O king, thou art our master. Command us as to what we shall do. O Bharata, we desire to remain always in obedience to thee.

“Dhritarashtra replied. ’O Ajatasatru, blest be thou. Go thou in peace and safety. Commanded by me, go, rule thy own kingdom with thy wealth. And, O child, take to heart this command of an old man, this wholesome advice that I give, and which is even a nutritive regimen. O Yudhishthira, O child, thou knowest the subtle path of morality. Possessed of great wisdom, thou art also humble, and thou waitest also upon the old. Where there is intelligence, there is forbearance. Therefore, O Bharata, follow thou counsels of peace. The axe falleth upon wood, not upon stone. (Thou art open to advice, not Duryodhana). They are the best of men that remember not the acts of hostility of their foes; that behold only the merits, not the faults, of their enemies; and that never enter into hostilities themselves. They that are good remember only the good deeds of their foes and not the hostile acts their foes might have done unto them. The good, besides, do good unto others without expectation of any good, in return. O Yudhishthira, it is only the worst of men that utter harsh words in quarrelling; while they that are indifferent reply to such when spoken by others. But they that are good and wise never think of or recapitulate such harsh words, little caring whether these may or may not have been uttered by their foes. They that are good, having regard to the state of their own feelings, can understand the feelings of others, and therefore remember only the good deeds and not the acts of hostility of their foes. Thou hast acted even as good men of prepossessing countenance do, who transgress not the limits of virtue, wealth, pleasure and salvation. O child, remember not the harsh words of Duryodhana. Look at thy mother Gandhari and myself also, if thou desirest to remember only what is good. O Bharata, look at me, who am thy father unto you and am old and blind, and still alive. It was for seeing our friends and examining also the strength and weakness of my children, that I had, from motives of policy, suffered this match at dice
to proceed. O king those amongst the Kurus that have thee for their ruler, and the intelligent Vidura conversant with every branch of learning for their counsellor, have, indeed, nothing to grieve for. In thee is virtue, in Arjuna is patience, in Bhimasena is prowess, and the twins, those foremost of men, is pure reverence for superiors. Blest be thou, O Ajatasatru. Return to Khandavaprastha, and let there be brotherly love between thee and thy cousins. Let thy heart also be ever fixed on virtue.’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”That foremost of the Bharatas--king Yudhishthira the just--then, thus addressed by his uncle, having gone through every ceremony of politeness, set out with his brothers for Khandavaprastha. And accompanied by Draupadi and ascending their cars which were all of the hue of the clouds, with cheerful hearts they all set out for that best of cities called Indraprastha.”

Section LXXIII

Janamejaya said, ”How did the sons of Dhritarashtra feel, when they came to know that the Pandavas had, with Dhritarashtra’s leave, left Hastinapore with all their wealth and jewels?”

Vaisampayana said, ”O king, learning that the Pandavas had been commanded by the wise Dhritarashtra to return to their capital, Dussasana went without loss of time unto his brother. And, O bull of the Bharata race, having arrived before Duryodhana with his counsellor, the prince, afflicted with grief, began to say, ’Ye mighty warriors, that which we had won after so much trouble, the old man (our father) hath thrown away. Know ye that he hath made over the whole of that wealth to the foes. At these words, Duryodhana and Karna and Sakuni, the son of Suvala, all of whom were guided by vanity, united together, and desirous of counteracting the sons of Pandu, approaching in haste saw privately the wise king Dhritarashtra--the son of Vichitravirya and spake unto him these pleasing and artful words. Duryodhana said,

‘Hast thou not heard, O king, what the learned Vrihaspati the preceptor of the celestials, said in course of counselling Sakra about mortals and politics? Even these, O slayer of foes, were the words of Vrihaspati, ‘Those enemies that always do wrong by stratagem or force, should be slain by every means.’ If, therefore, with the wealth of the Pandavas, we gratify the kings of the earth and then fight with the sons of Pandu, what reverses can overtake us? When one hath placed on the neck and back of venomous snakes full of wrath for encompassing his destruction, is it possible for him to take them off? Equipped with weapon and seated on their cars, the angry sons of Pandu like wrathful and venomous snakes will assuredly annihilate us, O father. Even now Arjuna proceedeth, encased in mail and furnished with his couple of quivers, frequently taking up the Gandiva and breathing hard and casting angry glances around. It hath (also) been heard by us that Vrikodara, hastily ordering his car to be made ready and riding on it, is proceeding along, frequently whirling his heavy mace. Nakula also is going along, with the sword in his grasp and the semi-circular shield in his hand. And Sahadeva and the king (Yudhishthira) have made signs clearly testifying to their intentions. Having ascended their cars that are full of all kinds of arms, they are whipping their horses (for going to Khandava soon) and assembling their forces. Persecuted thus by us they are incapable of forgiving us those injuries. Who is there among them that will forgive that insult to Draupadi? Blest be thou. We will again gamble with the son of Pandu for sending them to exile. O bull among men, we are competent to bring them thus under our sway. Dressed in skins, either we or they defeated at dice, shall repair to the woods for twelve years. The thirteenth year shall have to be spent in some inhabited country unrecognised; and, if recognised, an exile for another twelve years shall be the consequence. Either we or they shall live so. Let the play begin, casting the dice, let the sons of Pandu once more play. O bull of the Bharata race, O king, even this is our highest duty. This Sakuni knoweth well the whole science of dice. Even if they succeed in observing this vow for thirteen years, we shall be in the meantime firmly rooted in the kingdom and making alliances, assemble a vast invincible host and keep them content, so that we shall, O king, defeat the sons of Pandu if they reappear. Let this plan recommend itself to thee, O slayer of foes.

“Dhritarashtra said,--Bring back the Pandavas then, indeed, even if they have gone a great way. Let them come at once again to cast dice.”

Vaisampayana continued, ”Then Drona, Somadatta and Valhika, Gautama, Vidura, the son of Drona, and the mighty son of Dhritarashtra by his Vaisya wife, Bhurisravas, and Bhishma, and that mighty warrior Vikarna,--all said, ‘Let not the play commence. Let there be peace. But Dhritarashtra, partial to his sons, disregarding the counsels of all his wise friends and relatives, summoned the sons of Pandu.”

Section LXXIV

Vaisampayana said, ’O monarch, it was then that the virtuous Gandhari, afflicted with grief on account of her affection for her sons, addressed king Dhritarashtra and said, “When Duryodhana was born, Vidura of great intelligence had said, ‘It is well to send this disgrace of the race to the other world. He cried repeatedly and dissonantly like a jackal. It is certain he will prove the destruction of our race. Take this to heart, O king of the Kurus. O Bharata, sink not, for thy own fault, into an ocean of calamity. O lord, accord not thy approbation to the counsels of the wicked ones of immature years. Be not thou the cause of the terrible destruction of this race. Who is there that will break an embankment which hath been completed, or re-kindle a conflagration which hath been extinguished? O bull of the Bharata race, who is there that will provoke the peaceful sons of Pritha? Thou rememberest, O Ajamida, everything, but still I will call thy attention to this. The scriptures can never control the wicked-minded for good or evil. And, O king, a person of immature understanding will never act as one of mature years. Let thy sons follow thee as their leader. Let them not be separated from thee for ever (by losing their lives). Therefore, at my word, O king, abandon this wretch of our race.

Thou couldst not, O king, from parental affection, do it before. Know that the time hath come for the destruction of race through him. Err not, O king. Let thy mind, guided by counsels of peace, virtue, and true policy, be what it naturally is. That prosperity which is acquired by the aid of wicked acts, is soon destroyed; while that which is won by mild means taketh root and descendeth from generation to generation."

"The king, thus addressed by Gandhari who pointed out to him in such language the path of virtue, replied unto her, saying, 'If the destruction of our race is come, let it take place freely. I am ill able to prevent it. Let it be as they (these my sons) desire. Let the Pandavas return. And let my sons again gamble with the sons of Pandu."

Section LXXV

Vaisampayana said, 'The royal messenger, agreeably to the commands of the intelligent king Dhritarashtra, coming upon Yudhishthira, the son of Pritha who had by that time gone a great way, addressed the monarch and said, 'Even these are the words of thy father-like uncle, O Bharata, spoken unto thee, 'The assembly is ready. O son of Pandu, O king Yudhisthira, come and cast the dice.'

Yudhishthira said, 'Creatures obtain fruits good and ill according to the dispensation of the Ordainer of the creation. Those fruits are inevitable whether I play or not. This is a summons to dice; it is, besides the command of the old king. Although I know that it will prove destructive to me, yet I cannot refuse.'

Vaisampayana continued, "Although (a living) animal made of gold was an impossibility, yet Rama suffered himself to be tempted by a (golden) deer. Indeed, the minds of men over whom calamities hang, became deranged and out of order. Yudhishthira, therefore, having said these words, retraced his steps along with his brothers. And knowing full well the deception practised by Sakuni, the son of Pritha came back to sit at dice with him again. These mighty warriors again entered that assembly, afflicting the hearts of all their friends. And compelled by Fate they once more sat down at ease for gambling for the destruction of themselves."

"Sakuni then said, 'The old king hath given ye back all your wealth. That is well. But, O bull of the Bharata race, listen to me, there is a stake of great value. Either defeated by ye at dice, dressed in deer skins we shall enter the great forest and live there for twelve years passing the whole of the thirteenth year in some inhabited region, unrecognised, and if recognised return to an exile of another twelve years; or vanquished by us, dressed in deer skins ye shall, with Krishna, live for twelve years in the woods passing the whole of the thirteenth year unrecognised, in some inhabited region. If recognised, an exile of another twelve years is to be the consequence. On the expiry of the thirteenth year, each is to have his kingdom surrendered by the other. O Yudhishthira, with this resolution, play with us, O Bharata, casting the dice.' "At these words, they that were in that assembly, raising up their arms said in great anxiety of mind, and from the strength of their feelings these words, 'Alas, fie on the friends of Duryodhana that they do not apprise him of his great danger. Whether he, O bull among the Bharatas, (Dhritarashtra) understandeth or not, of his own sense, it is thy duty to tell him plainly."

"Vaisampayana continued,--King Yudhishthira, even hearing these various remarks, from shame and a sense of virtue again sat at dice. And though possessed of great intelligence and fully knowing the consequences, he again began to play, as if knowing that the destruction of the Kurus was at hand.

"And Yudhishthira said, 'How can, O Sakuni, a king like me, always observant of the uses of his own order, refuse, when summoned to dice? Therefore I play with thee."

"Sakuni answered, 'We have many kine and horses, and milch cows, and an infinite number of goats and sheep; and elephants and treasures and gold and slaves both male and female. All these were staked by us before but now let this be our one stake, viz., exile into the woods,--being defeated either ye or we will dwell in the woods (for twelve years) and the thirteenth year, unrecognised, in some inhabited place. Ye bulls among men, with this determination, will we play."

"O Bharata, this proposal about a stay in the woods was uttered but once. The son of Pritha, however, accepted it and Sakuni took up the dice. And casting them he said unto Yudhishthira, 'Lo, I have won."

Section LXXVI

Vaisampayana said, "Then the vanquished sons of Pritha prepared for their exile into the woods. And they, one after another, in due order, casting off their royal robes, attired themselves in deer-skins. And Dussasana, beholding those chastisers of foes, dressed in deer-skins and deprived of their kingdom and ready to go into exile, exclaimed 'The absolute sovereignty of the illustrious king

Duryodhana hath commenced. The sons of Pandu have been vanquished, and plunged into great affliction. Now have we attained the goal either by broad or narrow paths. For today becoming superior to our foes in point of prosperity as also of duration of rule have we become praiseworthy of men. The sons of Pritha have all been plunged by us into everlasting hell. They have been deprived of happiness and kingdom for ever and ever. They who, proud of their wealth, laughed in derision at the son of Dhritarashtra, will now have to go into the woods, defeated and deprived by us of all their wealth. Let them now put off their variegated coats of mail, their resplendent robes of celestial make, and let them all attire themselves in deer-skins according to the stake they had accepted of the son of Suvala. They who always used to boast that they had no equals in all the world, will now know and regard themselves in this their calamity as grains of sesame without the kernel. Although in this dress of theirs the Pandavas seem like unto wise and powerful persons installed in a sacrifice, yet they look like persons not entitled to perform sacrifices, wearing such a guise. The wise Yajnasena of the Somake race, having bestowed his daughter--the princess of Panchala--on the sons of Pandu, acted most unfortunately for the husbands of Yajnaseni--these sons of Pritha are as eunuchs. And O Yajnaseni, what joy will
be thine upon beholding in the woods these thy husbands dressed in skins and thread-bare rags, deprived of their wealth and possessions. Elect thou a husband, whomsoever thou likest, from among all these present here. These Kurus assembled here, are all forbearing and self-controlled, and possessed of great wealth. Elect thou one amongst these as thy lord, so that these great calamity may not drag thee to wretchedness. ‘The sons of Pandu now are even like grains of sesame without the kernel, or like show-animals encased in skins, or like grains of rice without the kernel. Why shouldst thou then longer wait upon the fallen sons of Pandu? Vain is the labour used upon pressing the sesame grain devoid of the kernel!’

“Thus did Dussasana, the son of Dhritarashtra, utter in the hearing of the Pandavas, harsh words of the most cruel import. And hearing them, the unforbearing Bhima, in wrath suddenly approaching that prince like a Himalayan lion upon a jackal, loudly and chastisingly rebuked him in these words,--Wicked-minded villain, ravest thou so in words that are uttered alone by the sinful? Boastest thou thus in the midst of the kings, advanced as thou art by the skill of the king of Gandhara. As thou piercest our hearts hear with these thy arrowy words, so shall I pierce thy heart in battle, recalling all this to thy mind. And they also who from anger or covetousness are walking behind thee as thy protectors,--them also shall I send to the abode of Yama with their descendants and relatives.”

Vaisampayana continued,--Unto Bhima dressed in deer-skins and uttering these words of wrath without doing any thing, for he could not deviate from the path of virtue, Dussasana abandoning all sense of shame, dancing around the Kurus, loudly said, ‘O cow! O cow!’

Bhima at this once more said,--Wretch darest thou, O Dussasana, use harsh words as these? Whom doth it behove to boast, thus having won wealth by foul means? I tell thee that if Vrikodara, the son of Pritha, drinketh not thy life-blood, piercing open thy breast in battle, let him not attain to regions of blessedness, I tell thee truly that by slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra in battle, before the very eyes of all the warriors, I shall pacify this wrath of mine soon enough.’”

Vaisampayana continued, ”And as the Pandavas were going away from the assembly, the wicked king Duryodhana from excess of joy mimiced by his own steps the playful leonine trade of Bhima. Then Vrikodara, half turning towards the king said, Think not ye fool that by this thou gainest any ascendency over me slay thee shall I soon with all thy followers, and answer thee, recalling all this to thy mind. And beholding this insult offered to him, the mighty and proud Bhima, suppressing his rising rage and following the steps of Yudhishthira, also spake these words while going out of the Kaurava court, ‘I will slay Duryodhana, and Dhananjaya will slay Karna, and Sahadeva will slay Sakuni that gambler with dice. I also repeat in this assembly these proud words which the gods will assuredly make good, if ever we engage in battle with the Kurus, I will slay this wretched Duryodhana in battle with my mace, and prostrating him on the ground I will place my foot on his head. And as regards this (other) wicked person--Dussasana who is audacious in speech, I will drink his blood like a lion.

“And Arjuna said,--O Bhima, the resolutions of superior men are not known in words only. On the fourteenth year from this day, they shall see what happeneth.

“And Bhima again said, ’The earth shall drink the blood of Duryodhana, and Karna, and the wicked Sakuni, and Dussasana that maketh the fourth.’

“And Arjuna said, ’O Bhima, I will, as thou directest, slay in battle this Karna so malicious and jealous and harsh-speeched and vain. For doing what is agreeable to Bhima, Arjuna voweth that he will slay in battle with his arrows this Karna with all his

followers. And I will send unto the regions of Yama also all those other kings that will from foolishness fight against me. The mountains of Himavat might be removed from where they are, the maker
of the day lose his brightness, the moon his coldness, but this vow of mine will ever be cherished. And all this shall assuredly happen if on the fourteenth year from this, Duryodhana doth not, with proper respect, return us our kingdom.'"

Vaisampayana continued, "After Arjuna had said this, Sahadeva the handsome son of Madri, endued with great energy, desirous of slaying Sakuni, waving his mighty arms and sighing like snake, exclaimed, with eyes red with anger--'Thou disgrace of the Gandhara kings, those whom thou thinkest as defeated are not really so. Those are even sharp-pointed arrows from whose wounds thou hast run the risk in battle. I shall certainly accomplish all which Bhima hath said adverting to thee with all thy followers. If therefore thou hast anything to do, do it before that day cometh. I shall assuredly slay thee in battle with all thy followers soon enough, it thou, O son of Suvala, stayest in the light pursuant to the Kshatriya usage.'

"'Then, O monarch hearing these words of Sahadeva, Nakula the handsomest of men spake these words, 'I shall certainly send unto the abode of Yama all those wicked sons of Dhritarashtra, who desirous of death and impelled by Fate, and moved also by the wish of doing what is agreeable to Duryodhana, have used harsh and insulting speeches towards this daughter o Yajnasena at the gambling match. Soon enough shall I, at the command of Yudhishthira and remembering the wrongs to Draupadi, make the earth destitute of the sons of Dhritarashtra.'

Vaisampayana continued, "And those tigers among men, all endued with long arms, having thus pledged themselves to virtuous promises approached king Dhritarashtra."

Section LXXVII

Yudhishthira said, 'I bid farewell unto all the Bharatas, unto my old grand-sire (Bhishma), king Somadatta, the great king Vahlika, Drona, Kripa, all the other kings, Aswathaman, Vidura, Dhritarashtra, all the sons of Dhritarashtra, Yayutsu, Sanjaya, and all the courtiers, I bid fare well, all of ye and returning again I shall see you."

Vaisampayana continued, "Overcome with shame none of those that were present there, could tell Yudhishthira anything. Within their hearts, however, they prayed for the welfare of that intelligent prince.

Vidura then said,--The reverend Pritha is a princess by birth. It behoveth her not to go into the woods. Delicate and old and ever known to happiness the blessed one will live, respected by me, in my abode. Known this, ye sons of Pandu. And let safety be always yours.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'The Pandavas thereupon said,--O sinless one, let it be as thou sayest. Thou art our uncle, and, therefore like as our father. We also are all obedient to thee. Thou art, O learned one, our most respected superior. We should always obey what thou choosest to command. And, O high-souled one, order thou whatever else there is that remaineth to be done.

"Vidura replied, 'O Yudhishthira, O bull of the Bharata race, know this to be my opinion, that one that is vanquished by sinful means need not be pained by such defeat. Thou knowest every rule of morality; Dhananjaya is ever victorious in battle; Bhimasena is the slayer of foes; Nakula is the gatherer of wealth; Sahadeva hath administrative talents, Dhaumya is the foremost of all conversant with the vedas; and the well-behaved Draupadi is conversant with virtue and economy. Ye are attached to one another and feel delight at one another's sight and enemies can not separate you from one another, and ye are contented. Therefore, who is there that will not envy ye? O Bharata, this patient abstraction from the possession of the world will be of great benefit to thee. No foe, even if he were equal to sakra himself, will be able to stand it. Formerly thou wert instructed on the mountains of Himavat by Meru Savarni; in the town of Varanavata by Krishna Dwaipayana; on the cliff of Bhrigu by Rama; and on the banks of the Dhrishadwati by Sambhu himself. Thou hast also listened to the instruction of the great Rishi Asita on the hills of Anjana; and thou becamest a disciple of Bhrigu on the banks of the Kalmashi. Narada and this thy priest Dhaumya will now become thy instructors. In the matter of the next world, abandon not these excellent lessons thou hast obtained from the Rishis. O son of Pandu. thou surpassest in intelligence even Pururavas, the son of Ila; in strength, all other monarchs, and in virtue, even the Rishis. Therefore, resolve thou earnestly to win victory, which belongeth to Indra; to control thy wrath, which belongeth to Yama; to give in charity, which belongeth to Kuvera; and to control all passions, which belongeth to Varuna. And, O Bharata, obtain thou the power of gladdening from the moon, the power of sustaining all from water; forbearance from the earth; energy from the entire solar disc; strength from the winds, and affluence from the other elements. Welfare and immunity from ailment be thine; I hope to see thee return. And, O Yudhishthira, act properly and duly in all seasons,--in those of distress--in those of difficulty,--indeed, in respect of

everything, O son of Kunti, with our leave go hence. O Bharata, blessing be thine. No one can say that ye have done anything sinful before. We hope to see thee, therefore, return in safety and crowned with success."

Vaisampayana continued, "Thus addressed by Vidura, Yudhishthira the son of Pandu, of prowess incapable of being baffled, saying, 'So be it,' bowing low unto Bhishma and Drona, went away."

Book 6: Battle of Kurukshetra: Bhishma

Section CXVI

Dhritarashtra said, "How, O Sanjaya, did Santanu's son Bhishma of mighty energy fight on the tenth day of battle, with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas? How also did the Kurus resist the Pandavas in battle? Describe to me the great battle fought by Bhishma, that ornament of battle."

Sanjaya said, "I will presently describe to thee, O Bharata, how the Kauravas fought with the Pandavas, and how that battle took place. Day after day many mighty car-warriors of thy army, excited with wrath, were despatched to the other world by the diadem-decked (Arjuna) with his great weapons. The ever-victorious Kuru warrior Bhishma also, agreeably to his vow, always caused a great carnage among the Partha army. O chastiser of foes, beholding Bhishma, fighting at the head of the Kurus, and Arjuna also fighting at the head of the Panchalas, we could not say truly on which side the victory would declare itself. On the tenth day of battle, when Bhishma and Arjuna encountered each other, awful was the carnage that took place. On that day, O scorcher of foes, Santanu's son, Bhishma, conversant with high and mighty weapons, repeatedly slew thousands upon thousands of warriors. Many, O Bharata, whose names and families were not known, but who, endued with great bravery, were unretreating from battle, were on that day slain by Bhishma. Scorching the Pandava army for ten days, Bhishma of virtuous soul, gave up all desire of protecting his life. Wishing his own slaughter presently at the head of his troops,--No more shall I slay large numbers of foremost of warriors.--thought thy mighty-armed sire Devavrata. And seeing Yudhishthira near him, O king, he addressed him, saying, 'O Yudhishthira, O thou of great wisdom, O thou that art acquainted with every branch of learning, listen to these righteous and heaven-leading words, O sire, that I say. O Bharata, I no longer desire to protect, O sire, this body of mine. I have passed much time in slaying large numbers of men in battle. If thou wishest to do what is agreeable to me, strive to slay me, placing Partha with the Panchalas and the Srinjayas at thy van'. Ascertaining this to be his intention, king Yudhishthira of true sight proceeded to battle with the Srinjayas (for his support). Then Dhrishtadyumna, O king, and Pandu's son Yudhishthira, having heard those words of Bhishma urged their array on. And Yudhishthira said, 'Advance! Fight! Vanquish Bhishma in battle. Ye all will be protected by that conqueror of foes, viz., Jishnu of unbaffled aim. And this great bowman, this generalissimo (of our forces), viz., the son of Prishata, as also Bhima, will assuredly protect you. Ye Srinjayas, entertain no fear today of Bhishma in battle. Without doubt, we will vanquish Bhishma today, placing Sikhandin in our van'. Having, on the tenth day of battle, made such a vow, the Pandavas, resolved to (conquer or) go to heaven, advanced, blinded by rage, with Sikhandin and Dhananjaya the son of Pandu to the fore. And they made the most vigorous efforts for the overthrow of Bhishma. Then diverse kings, of great might, urged by thy son, and accompanied by Drona and his son and a large force, and the mighty Dussasana at the head of all his uterine brothers, proceeded towards Bhishma staying in the midst of that battle. Then those brave warriors of thy army, placing Bhishma of high vows in their van, battled with the Parthas headed by Sikhandin. Supported by the Chedis and the Panchalas, the ape-bannered Arjuna, placing Sikhandin ahead, proceeded towards Bhishma, the son of Santanu. And the grandson of Sini battled with Drona's son, and Dhrishtaketu with the descendant of Puru, and Yudhamanyu with thy son Duryodhana at the head of his followers. And Virata, at the head of his forces, encountered Jayadratha supported by his own troops. And Vardhakshatra's heir, O chastiser of foes, encountered thy son Chitrasena armed with excellent bow and arrows. 1 And Yudhishthira proceeded against the mighty bowman Salya at the head of his troops. And Bhimasena, well-protected, proceeded against the elephant-division (of the Kaurava army). And Dhrishtadyumna, the prince of Panchala, excited with fury and accompanied by his brothers, proceeded against Drona, that foremost of all wielders of weapons, invincible, and irresistible. That chastiser of foes, viz., prince Vrihadvala, bearing on his standard the device of the lion, proceeded against Subhadra's son whose standard bore the device of the Karnikara flower. Thy sons, accompanied by many kings, proceeded against Sikhandin and Dhananjaya the son of Pritha, from desire of slaughtering both of them. When the combatants of both armies rushed against each other with awful prowess, the earth shook (under their tread). Beholding Santanu's son in battle, the divisions of thy army and of the foe, O Bharata, became mingled with one another. Tremendous was the din, O Bharata, that arose there of those warriors burning with rage and rushing against each other. And it was heard on all sides, O king. With the blare of conchs and the leonine shouts of the soldiers, the uproar became awful. The splendour, equal to that of either the Sun or the Moon, of bracelets and diadems of all the heroic kings, became dimmed. And the dust that rose looked like a cloud, the flash of bright weapons

constituting its lightning. And the twang of bows, the whiz of arrows, the blare of conchs, the loud beat of drums, and the rattle of cars, of both the armies, constituted the fierce roar of those clouds. And the welkin, over the field of battle, in consequence of the bearded darts, the javelins, the swords and showers of arrows of both armies, was darkened. And car-warriors, and horsemen felled horsemen, in that dreadful battle. And elephants killed elephants, and foot-soldiers slew foot-soldiers. And the battle that took place there for Bhishma's sake, between the Kurus and the Pandavas, O tiger among men, was fierce in the extreme, like that between two hawks for a piece of flesh. Engaged in battle, that encounter between those combatants desirous of slaughtering and vanquishing one another, was extremely dreadful."

Section CXVII

Sanjaya said, "Abhimanyu, O king, displaying his prowess for the sake of Bhishma, fought with thy son who was supported by a large force. Then Duryodhana, excited with wrath, struck Abhimanyu in the chest with rune straight arrows, and once more with three. Then in that battle, Arjuna's son, inflamed with wrath, hurled at Duryodhana's car a terrible dart resembling the rod of Death himself. Thy son, however, that mighty car-warrior, O king, with a broad-headed arrow of great sharpness, cut off in twain that dart of terrible force coursing towards him with great speed. Beholding that dart of his drop down on the earth, Arjuna's wrathful son pierced Duryodhana with three shafts in his arms and chest. And once more, O Chief of the Bharatas, that mighty car-warrior of Bharata's race struck the Kuru king with ten fierce shafts in the centre of his chest. And the battle, O Bharata, that took place between those two heroes, viz., Subhadra's son, and that bull of Kuru's race, the former fighting for compassing Bhishma's death and the latter for Arjuna's defeat, was fierce and interesting to behold, and gratifying to the senses, and was applauded by all the kings. That bull among Brahmanas and chastiser of foes, viz., the son of Drona, excited with wrath in that battle, forcibly struck Satyaki in the chest with fierce arrow. The grandson of Sini also, that hero of immeasurable soul, struck the preceptor's son in every vital limbs with nine shafts winged with the feathers of the Kanka bird. Aswatthaman then, in that battle, struck Satyaki (in return) with nine shafts, and once more, quickly, with thirty, in his arms and chest. Then that great bowman Of the Satwata race, possessed of great fame, deeply pierced by Drona's son, pierced the latter (in return) with arrows. The mighty car-warrior Paurava, covering Dhrishtaketu in that battle with his shafts, mangled that great bowman exceedingly. The mighty car-warrior Dhrishtaketu, endued with great strength, quickly pierced the former with thirty arrows. Then the mighty car-warrior Paurava cut off Dhrishtaketu's bow, and uttering a loud shout, pierced him with whetted shafts. Dhrishtaketu then taking up another bow, pierced Paurava, O king, with three and seventy shafts of great sharpness. Those two great bowmen and mighty car-warriors, both of gigantic stature, pierced each other with showers of arrows. Each succeeded in cutting off the other's bow, and each slew the other's steeds. And both of them, thus deprived of their cars, then encountered each other in a battle with swords. And each took up a beautiful shield made of bull's hide and docked with a hundred moons and graced with a hundred stars. And each of them also took up a polished sword of brilliant lustre. And thus equipt, they rushed, O king at each other, like two lions in the deep forest, both seeking the companionship of the same lioness in her season. They wheeled in beautiful circles, advanced and retreated, and displayed other movements, seeking to strike each other. Then Paurava, excited with wrath, addressed Dhrishtaketu, saying--Wait, Wait,--and struck him on the frontal bone with that large scimitar of his. The king of the Chedis also, in that battle, struck Paurava, that bull among men, on his shoulder-joint, with his large scimitar of sharp edge. Those two repressors of foes thus encountering each other in dreadful battle and thus striking each other, O king, both fell down on the field. Then thy son Jayatsena, taking Paurava up on his car, removed him from the field of battle on that vehicle. And as regards Dhrishtaketu, the valiant and heroic Sahadeva, the son of Madri, possessed of great prowess, bore him away from the field.

"Chitrasena, having pierced Susarman with many arrows made wholly of iron, once more pierced him with sixty arrows and once more with nine. Susarman, however, excited with wrath in battle, pierced thy son, O king, with hundreds of arrows. Chitrasena then, O monarch, excited with rage, pierced his adversary with thirty straight shafts. Susarman, however, pierced Chitrasena again in return.

"In that battle for the destruction of Bhishma, Subhadra's son, enhancing his fame and honour, fought with prince Vrihadvala, putting forth his prowess for aiding (his sire) Partha and then proceeded towards Bhishma's front. The ruler of the Kosalas, having pierced the son of Arjuna with five shafts made of iron, once more pierced him with twenty straight shafts. Then the son of Subhadra pierced the ruler of Kosalas with eight shafts made wholly of iron. He succeeded not, however, in making the ruler of the Kosalas to tremble, and, therefore, he once more pierced him with many arrows. And Phalguni's son then cut off Vrihadvala's bow, and struck him again with thirty arrows winged with feathers of the Kanka bird. Prince Vrihadvala then, taking up another bow, angrily pierced the son of Phalguni in that battle with many arrows. Verily, O scorcher of foes, the battle, for Bhishma's sake, that

took place between them, both excited with rage and both conversant with every mode of fight, was like the encounter of Vali and Vasava in days of old on the occasion of the battle between the gods and the Asuras.

“Bhimasena, fighting against the elephant-division, looked highly resplendent like Sakra armed with the thunder after splitting large mountains. 1 Indeed, elephants, huge as hills, slaughtered by Bhimasena in battle, fell down in numbers on the field, filling the earth with their shrieks. Resembling massive heaps of antimony, and of mountain-like proportions, those elephants with frontal globes split open, lying prostrate on the earth, seemed like mountains strewn over the earth’s surface. The mighty bowman Yudhishthira, protected by a large force, afflicted the ruler of the Madras, encountering him in that dreadful battle. The ruler of the Madras, in return, displaying

his prowess for the sake of Bhishma, afflicted the son of Dharma, that mighty car-warrior, in battle. The king of Sindhus, having pierced Virata with nine straight arrows of keen points, once more struck him with thirty. Virata, however, O king, that commander of a large division, struck Jayadratha in the centre of his chest with thirty shafts of keen points. The ruler of the Matsyas and the ruler of the Sindhus, both armed with beautiful bows and beautiful scimitars, both decked with handsome coats of mail and weapons and standards, and both of beautiful forms looked resplendent in that battle.

“Drona, encountering Dhrishtadyumna the prince of the Panchalas in dreadful battle, fought fiercely with his straight shafts. Then Drona, O king, having cut off the large bow of Prishata’s son, pierced him deeply with fifty arrows. Then that slayer of hostile heroes, viz., the son of Prishata, taking up another bow, sped at Drona who was contending with him, many arrows. The mighty car-warrior Drona however, cut off all those arrows, striking them with his own. And then Drona sped at Drupada’s son five fierce shafts. Then that slayer of hostile heroes, viz., the son of Prishata, excited with rage, hurled at Drona in that battle a mace resembling the rod of Death himself. Drona however, with fifty arrows checked that mace decked with gold as it coursed impetuously towards him. Thereupon that mace, cut into fragments, O king, by those shafts shot from Drona’s bow, fell down on the earth. Then that scorcher of foes, viz., the son of Prishata, beholding his mace baffled, hurled at Drona an excellent dart made wholly of iron. Drona, however, O Bharata, cut that dart with nine shafts in that battle and then afflicted that great bowman, viz., the son of Prishata. Thus took place, O king, that fierce and awful battle between Drona and the son of Prishata, for the sake of Bhishma.

“Arjuna, getting at the son of Ganga, afflicted him with many arrows of keen points, and rushed at him like an infuriate elephant in the forest upon another. King Bhagadatta, however, of great prowess then rushed at Arjuna, and checked his course in battle with showers of arrows. Arjuna then, in that dreadful battle, pierced Bhagadatta’s elephant coming towards him, with many polished arrows of iron, that were all bright as silver and furnished with keen points. The son of Kunti, meanwhile, O king, urged Sikhandin, saying,--Proceed, proceed, towards Bhishma, and slay him!--Then, O elder brother of Pandu, the ruler of Pragjyotishas, abandoning that son of Pandu, quickly proceeded, O king, against the car of Drupada. Then Arjuna, O monarch, speedily proceeded towards Bhishma, placing Sikhandin ahead. And then there took place a fierce battle, for all the brave combatants of thy army rushed with great vigour against Arjuna, uttering loud shouts. And all this seemed extremely wonderful. Like the wind dispersing in the summer masses of clouds in the welkin, Arjuna dispersed, O king, all those diverse divisions of thy sons. Sikhandin, however, without any anxiety, coming up at the grandsire of the Bharatas, quickly pierced him with great many arrows. As regards Bhishma, his car was then his fire-chamber. His bow was the flame of that fire. And swords I and darts and maces constituted the fuel of that fire. And the showers of arrows he shot were the blazing sparks of that fire with which he was then consuming Kshatriyas in that battle. As a raging conflagration with constant supply of fuel, wandereth amid masses of dry grass when aided by the wind, so did Bhishma blaze up with his flames, scattering his celestial weapons. And the Kuru hero slew the Somakas that followed Partha in that battle. Indeed that mighty car-warrior checked also the other forces of Arjuna, by means of his straight and whetted shafts furnished with wings of gold. Filling in that dreadful battle all the points of the compass, cardinal and subsidiary, with his leonine shouts, Bhishma felled many car-warriors, O king, (from their cars) and many steeds along with their riders. And he caused large bodies of cars to look like forests of palmyras shorn of their leafy heads. That foremost of all wielders of weapons, in that battle, deprived cars and steeds and elephants, of their riders. Hearing the twang of his bow and the slap of his palms, both resembling the roll of the thunder, the troops, O king, trembled all over the field. The shafts, O chief of men, of thy sire were never bootless as they fell. Indeed, shot from Bhishma’s bow they never fell only touching the bodies of the foe (but pierced them through in every case). We saw crowds

of cars, O king, deprived of riders, but unto which were yoked fleet steeds, dragged on all sides with the speed of the wind. Full fourteen thousand great car-warriors of noble parentage, prepared to lay down their lives, unretreating and brave, and possessed of

standards decked with gold, belonging to the Chedis, the Kasis, and the Karushas, approaching Bhishma, that hero who resembled the Destroyer himself with wide-open mouth, were despatched to the other world, with their steeds, cars and elephants. There was not, O king, a single great car-warrior among the Somakas, who, having approached Bhishma in that battle, returned with life from that engagement. Beholding Bhishma's prowess, people regarded all those warriors (who approached him) as already despatched to the abode of the king of the Dead. Indeed, no car-warrior ventured to approach Bhishma in battle, except the heroic Arjuna having white steeds (yoked unto his car) and owning Krishna for his charioteer, and Sikhandin, the prince of Panchala, of immeasurable energy."

Section CXVIII

Sanjaya said,--Sikhandin, O bull among men, approaching Bhishma in battle, struck him in the centre of the chest with ten broad-headed arrows The son of Ganga, however, O Bharata, only looked at Sikhandin with wrath and as if consuming the Panchala prince with that look. Remembering his femininity, O king, Bhishma, in the very sight of all, struck him not. Sikhandin, however, understood it not. Then Arjuna, O monarch, addressed Sikhandin, saying, 'Rush quickly and slay the grandsire. What needst thou say, O hero? Slay the mighty car-warrior Bhishma. I do not see any other warrior in Yudhishthira's army who is competent to fight with Bhishma in battle, save thee, O tiger among men. I say this truly.' Thus addressed by Partha, Sikhandin, O bull of Bharata's race, quickly covered the grandsire with diverse kinds of weapons. Disregarding those shafts, thy sire Devavrata began, with his shafts, to check the angry Arjuna only in that battle. And that mighty car-warrior, O sire, began also to despatch, with his shafts of keen points, the whole army of the Pandavas to the other world. The Pandavas also, O king, after the same manner, supported by their vast host, began to overwhelm Bhishma like the clouds covering the maker of day. O bull of Bharata's race, surrounded on all sides, that Bharata hero consumed many brave warriors in that battle like a raging conflagration in the forest (consuming numberless trees). The prowess that we then beheld there of thy son (Dussasana) was wonderful, inasmuch as he battled with Partha and protected the grandsire at the same time. With that feat of thy son Dussasana, that illustrious bowman, all the people there were highly gratified. Alone he battled with all the Pandavas having Arjuna amongst them; and he fought with such vigour that the Pandavas were unable to resist him. Many car-warriors were in that battle deprived of their cars by Dussasana. And many mighty bowmen on horseback and many mighty-warriors, elephants, pierced with Dussasana's keen shafts, fell down on the earth. And many elephants, afflicted with his shafts, ran away in all directions. As a fire fiercely blazeth forth with bright flames when fed with fuel, so did thy son blaze forth, consuming the Pandava host. And no car-warrior, O Bharata, of the Pandava host ventured to vanquish or even proceed against that warrior of gigantic proportions, save Indra's son (Arjuna) owning white steeds and having Krishna for his charioteer. Then Arjuna also called Vijaya, vanquishing Dussasana in battle, O king, in the very sight of all the troops, proceeded against Bhishma. Though vanquished, thy son, however, relying upon the might of Bhishma's arms, repeatedly comforted his own side and battled with the Pandavas with great fierceness. Arjuna, O king, fighting with his foes in that battle, looked exceedingly resplendent. 1 Then Sikhandin, in that battle, O king, pierced the grandsire with many arrows whose touch resembled that of the bolts of heaven and which were as fatal as the poison of the snake. These arrows, however, O monarch, caused thy sire little pain, for the son of Ganga received them laughingly. Indeed, as a person afflicted with heat cheerfully receives torrents of rain, even so did the son of Ganga received those arrows of Sikhandin. And the Kshatriyas there, O king, beheld Bhishma in that great battle as a being of fierce visage who was incessantly consuming the troops of the high-souled Pandavas.

"Then thy son (Duryodhana), addressing all his warriors, said unto them, 'Rush ye against Phalguni from all sides. Bhishma, acquainted with the duties of a commander, will protect you'. Thus addressed, the Kaurava troops casting off all fear, fought with the Pandavas. (And once more, Duryodhana said unto them). 'With his tall standard bearing the device of the golden palmyra, Bhishma stayeth, protecting the honour and the armour of all the Dhartarashtra warriors. The very gods, striving vigorously, cannot vanquish the illustrious and mighty Bhishma. What need be said, therefore, of the Parthas who are mortals? Therefore, ye warriors, fly not away from the field, getting Phalguni for a foe. I myself, striving vigorously, will today fight with the Pandavas.. uniting with all of you, ye lords of earth, exerting yourselves actively.' Hearing these words, O monarch, of thy son with bow in hand, many mighty combatants, excited with rage, belonging to the Videhas, the Kalingas, and the diverse tribes of the Daserkas, fell upon Phalguni. And many combatants also, belonging to the Nishadas, the Sauviras, the Valhikas, the Daradas, the Westerners, the Northerners, the Malavas, the Abhighatas, the Surasenas, the Sivis, the Vasatis, the Salwas, the Sakas, the Trigartas, the Amvashthas, and the Kekayas, similarly fell upon Partha, like flights of insects upon a fire. The mighty Dhananjaya, otherwise called Vibhatsu, then, O monarch, calling to mind diverse celestial weapons and aiming them at those great car-warriors at the heads of their respective divisions, 1 quickly consumed them all, by means of those weapons of great force, like fire consuming a

flight of insects. And while that firm bowman was (by means of his celestial weapons) creating thousands upon thousands of arrows, his Gandiva looked highly resplendent in the welkin. Then those Kshatriyas, O monarch, afflicted with those arrows with their tall standards torn and overthrown, could not even together, approach the ape-bannered (Partha). Car-warriors fell down with their standards, and horsemen with their horses, and elephant-riders with their elephants, attacked by Kiritin with his shafts. And the earth was soon covered all on all sides with the retreating troops of those kings, routed in consequence of the shafts shot from Arjuna's arms. Partha then, O monarch, having routed the Kaurava army, sped many arrows at Dussasana. Those arrows with iron heads, piercing thy son Dussasana through, all entered the earth like snakes through ant-hills. Arjuna then slew Dussasana's steeds and then felled his charioteer. And the lord Arjuna, with twenty shafts, deprived Vivingsati of his car, and struck him five straight shafts. And piercing Kripa and Vikarna and Salya with many arrows made wholly of iron, Kunti's son owning white steeds deprived all of them of their cars. Thus deprived of their cars and vanquished in battle by Savyasachin, Kripa and Salya, O sire, and Dussasana, and Vikarna and Vivingsati, all fled away. Having vanquished those mighty car-warriors, O chief of the Bharatas, in the forenoon, Partha blazed up in that battle like a smokeless conflagration. Scattering his shafts all around like the Sun shedding rays of light, Partha felled many other kings, O monarch. Making those mighty car-warriors turn their backs upon the field by means of his arrowy showers, Arjuna caused a large river of bloody current to flow in that battle between the hosts of the Kurus and the Pandavas, O Bharata. Large numbers of elephants and steeds and car-warriors were slain by car-warriors. And many were the car-warriors slain by elephants, and many also were the steeds slain by foot-soldiers. And the bodies of many elephant-riders and horsemen and car-warriors, cut off in the middle, as also their heads, fell down on every part of the field. And the field of battle, O king, was strewn with (slain) princes,--mighty car-warriors,--falling or fallen, decked with ear-rings and bracelets. And it was also strewn with the bodies of many warriors cut off by car-wheels, or trodden down by elephants. And foot-soldiers ran away, and horsemen also with their horses. And many elephants and car-warriors fell down on all sides. And many cars, with wheels and yokes and standards broken, lay scattered all about on the field. And the field of battle, dyed with the gore of large numbers of elephants, steeds, and car-warriors, looked beautiful like a red cloud, in the autumnal sky. Dogs, and crows, and vultures, and wolves, and jackals, and many other frightful beasts and birds, set up loud howls, at the sight of the food that lay before them. Diverse kinds of winds blew along all directions. And Rakshasas and evil spirits were seen there, uttering loud roars. And strings, embroidered with gold, and costly banners, were seen to wave, moved by the wind. And thousands of umbrellas and great cars with standards attached to them, were seen lying scattered about on the field. Then Bhishma, O king, invoking a celestial weapon, rushed at the son of Kunti, in the very sight of all the bowmen. Thereupon Sikhandin, clad in mail, rushed at Bhishma who was dashing towards Arjuna. At this, Bhishma withdrew that weapon resembling fire (in effulgence and energy). Meanwhile Kunti's son owning white steeds slaughtered thy troops, confounding the grandsire."

Section CXIX

Sanjaya said, "When the combatants of both armies, strong in number, were thus disposed in battle array, all those unretreating heroes, O Bharata, set their heart upon the region of Brahma. 1 In course of the general engagement that followed, the same class of combatants did not fight with the same class of combatants. Car-warriors fought not with car-warriors, or foot-soldiers with foot-soldiers, or horsemen with horsemen, or elephant-warriors with elephant-warriors. On the other hand, O monarch, the combatants fought with one another like mad men. Great and dreadful was the calamity that overtook both the armies. In that fierce slaughter when elephants and men spread themselves on the field, all distinctions between them ceased, for they fought indiscriminately.

"Then Salya and Kripa, and Chitrasena, O Bharata, and Dussasana, and Vikarna, those heroes mounted on their bright cars, caused the Pandava host to tremble. Slaughtered in battle by those high-souled warriors, the Pandava army began to reel in diverse ways, O king, like a boat on the waters tossed by the wind. As the wintry cold cuts kine to the quick, so did Bhishma cut the sons of Pandu to the quick. As regards thy army also, many elephants, looking like newly-risen clouds, were felled by the illustrious Partha. And many foremost of warriors too were seen to be crushed by that hero. And struck with arrows and long shafts in thousands, many huge elephants fell down, uttering frightful shrieks of pain. And the field of battle looked beautiful, strewn with the bodies, still decked with ornaments of high-souled warriors deprived of life and with heads still decked with ear-rings. And in that battle, O king, which was destructive of great heroes, when Bhishma and Dhananjaya the son of Pandu put forth their prowess, thy sons, O monarch, beholding the grandsire exert himself vigorously, approached him, with all their troops placed ahead. Desirous of laying down their lives in battle and making heaven itself their goal, they approached the Pandavas in that battle, which was fraught with great carnage. The brave Pandavas also, O king, bearing in mind the many injuries of diverse kinds inflicted upon

them before by thee and thy son, O monarch, and casting off all fear, and eager to win the highest heavens, cheerfully fought with thy son and the other warriors of thy army.

"Then the generalissimo of the Pandava army, viz., the mighty car-warrior Dhrishtadyumna, addressing his soldiers, said, 'Ye Somakas, accompanied by the Srinjayas, rush ye at Ganga's son.' Hearing those words of their commander the Somakas and the Srinjayas, though afflicted with showers of arrows, rushed at the son of Ganga. Thus attacked, O king, thy sire Bhishma, influenced by wrath, began to fight with the Srinjayas. In days of old, O sire, the intelligent Rama had imparted to Bhishma of glorious achievements that instruction in weapons which was so destructive of hostile ranks. Relying on that instruction and causing a great havoc among the troops of the foe, that slayer of hostile heroes, viz., the old Kuru grandsire Bhishma, day after day, slew ten thousand warriors of the Ratha. On the tenth day, however, O bull of Bharata's race, Bhishma, single-handed, slew ten thousand elephants. And then he slew seven great car-warriors among the Matsyas and the Panchalas. In addition to all this, in that dreadful battle five thousand foot-soldiers, and one thousand tuskers, and ten thousand steeds, were also slain by thy sire, O king, through skill acquired by education. Then having thinned the ranks of all the kings, he slew Satanika, the dear brother of Virata. And the valiant Bhishma, having slain Satanika in battle, felled, O king, full one thousand Kshatriyas with his broad-headed shafts. Besides these, all the Kshatriyas of the Pandava army who followed Dhananjaya, as soon as they approached Bhishma, had to go to Yama's abode. Covering the Pandava host from every side with showers of arrows, Bhishma stayed in battle at the head of the Kaurava army. Achieving the most glorious feats on the tenth day, as he stayed between the two armies, bow in hand, none of the kings, O monarch, could even look at him, for he then resembled the hot mid-day Sun in the summer sky. As Sakra scorched the Daitya host in battle, even so, O Bharata, did Bhishma scorch the Pandava host. Beholding him thus put forth his prowess, the slayer of Madhu, viz., the son of Devaki, cheerfully addressing Dhananjaya, said, 'There, Bhishma, the son of Santanu, stayeth between the two armies. Slaying him by putting forth thy might, thou mayst win victory. There, at that spot, whence he breaketh our ranks, check him, putting forth thy strength. O lord, none else, save thee, ventureth to bear the arrows of Bhishma. Thus urged, the ape-bannered Arjuna at that moment made Bhishma with his car, steeds, and standard, invisible by means of his arrows. That bull, however, among the foremost of Kurus, by means of his own arrowy showers, pierced those showers of shafts shot by the son of Pandu. Then the king of the Panchalas the valiant Dhrishtaketu, Bhimasena the son of Pandu, Dhrishtadyumna of Prishata's race, the twins (Nakula and Sahadeva), Chekitana, and the five Kaikaya brothers, and the mighty-armed Satyaki and Subhadra's son, and Ghatotkacha, and the (five) sons of Draupadi, and Sikhandin, and the valiant Kuntibhoja, and Susarman, and Virata, these and many other powerful warriors of the Pandava army, afflicted by the shafts of Bhishma, seemed to sink in an ocean of grief, Phalguni, however, rescued them all. Then Sikhandin, taking up a mighty weapon and protected by Kiritin, rushed impetuously towards Bhishma alone. The unvanquished Vibhatsu then, knowing what should be done after what, slew all those that followed Bhishma, and then himself rushed at him. And Satyaki, and Chekitana, and Dhristadyumna of Prishata's race, and Virata, and Drupada, and the twin sons of Madri by Pandu, all protected by that firm bowman (viz., Arjuna) rushed against Bhishma alone in that battle. And Abhimanyu, and the five sons of Draupadi also, with mighty weapons upraised, rushed against Bhishma in battle. All those firm bowmen, unretreating from battle, pierced Bhishma in diverse parts of his body with well-aimed shafts. Disregarding all those shafts, large in number, shot by those foremost of princes belonging to the Pandava host, Bhishma of undepressed soul penetrated into the Pandava ranks. And the grandsire baffled all those arrows, as if sporting the while. Frequently looking at Sikhandin the prince of the Panchalas with a laugh, he aimed not a single arrow at him, recollecting his femininity. On the other hand, he slew seven great car-warriors belonging to Drupada's division. Then confused cries of woe soon arose amongst the Matsyas, the Panchalas, and the Chedis, who were together rushing at that single hero. With large numbers of foot-soldiers and steeds and cars, and with showers of arrows, O scorcher of foes, they overwhelmed that single warrior, viz., Bhishma the son of Bhagirathi, that scorcher of foes, like the clouds overwhelming the maker of day. Then in that battle between him and them, which resembled the battle between the gods and the Asuras in days of old, the diadem-decked (Arjuna), placing Sikhandin before him, pierced Bhishma (repeatedly).'

Section CXX

Sanjaya said, "Thus all the Pandavas, placing Sikhandin before them pierced Bhishma in that battle repeatedly surrounding him on all sides. And all the Srinjayas, uniting together, struck him with dreadful Sataghnis, and spiked maces, and battle-axes, and mallets, and short thick clubs, and bearded darts, and other missiles, and arrows furnished with golden wing, and darts and lances and kampanas; and with long shafts, and arrows furnished with heads shaped like the calf-tooth, and rockets. Thus afflicted by many, his coat of mail was pierced everywhere. But though pierced in every vital part, Bhishma felt no pain. On the other hand, he

then seemed to his enemies to resemble in appearance the (all-destructive) fire that rises at the end of Yuga. His bow and arrows constituted the blazing flames (of that fire). The flight of his weapons constituted its (friendly) breeze. The rattle of his car-wheels constituted its heat and mighty weapons constituted its splendour. His beautiful bow formed its fierce tongue, and the bodies of heroic warriors, its profuse fuel. And Bhishma was seen to roll through the midst of crowds of cars belonging to those kings, or to come out (of the press) at times, or course once more through their midst. Then, disregarding the king of the Panchalas and Dhrishtaketu, he penetrated, O monarch, into the midst of the Pandava army. He then pierced the six Pandava warriors, viz., Satyaki, and Bhima, and Dhananjaya the son of Pandu, and Drupada, and Virata, and Dhrishtadyumna of Prishata's race, with many excellent arrows of great sharpness and dreadful whizz and exceeding impetuosity, and capable of piercing through every kind of armour. Those mighty car-warriors, however, checking those keen shafts, afflicted Bhishma with great force, each of them striking him with ten shafts. Those mighty shafts, whetted on stone and furnished with golden wings, which the great car-warrior Sikhandin shot, quickly penetrated into Bhishma's body. Then the diadem-decked (Arjuna), excited with wrath, and placing Sikhandin ahead rushed at Bhishma and cut off the latter's bow. Thereupon mighty car-warriors, seven in number, viz., Drona and Kritavarman, and Jayadratha the ruler of the Sindhus, and Bhurisravas, and Sala, and Salya, and Bhagadatta could not brook that act of Arjuna. Inflamed with rage, they rushed at him. Indeed, those mighty car-warriors, invoking into existence celestial weapons, fell with great wrath upon that son of Pandu, and covered him with their arrows. And as they rushed towards Phalguni's car, the noise made by them was heard to resemble that made by the ocean itself when it swelleth in rage at the end of the Yuga, Kill, Bring up (our forces), Take, Pierce, Cut off, this was the furious uproar heard about Phalguni's car. Hearing that furious uproar, the mighty car-warriors of the Pandava army rushed forward, O bull of Bharata's race, for protecting Arjuna. They were Satyaki, and Bhimasena, and Dhrishtadyumna of Prishata's race, and both Virata and Drupada, and the Rakshasa Ghatotkacha, and the wrathful Abhimanyu. These seven, inflamed with rage, and armed with excellent bows, rushed with great speed. And the battle that took place between these and the Kaurava warriors was fierce, making the hair stand on end, and resembling O chief of the Bharatas, the battle of the gods with the Danavas. Sikhandin, however, that foremost of car-warriors, protected in the battle by the diadem-decked (Arjuna), pierced Bhishma, in that encounter, with ten shafts after the latter's bow had been cut off. And he struck Bhishma's charioteer with other shafts, and cut off the latter's standard with one shaft. Then the son of Ganga took up another bow that was tougher. That even was cut off by Phalguni with three sharp shafts. Indeed, that chastiser of foes, viz., Arjuna, who was capable of drawing the bow with even his left hand, excited with rage, one after another, cut off all the bows that Bhishma took up. Then Bhishma, whose bows were thus cut off, excited with rage, and licking the corners of his mouth, took up a dart that was capable of riving a hill. In rage he hurled it at Phalguni's car. Beholding its course towards him like the blazing bolt of heaven, the delighter of the Pandavas fixed five sharp broad-headed arrows (on his bow-string). And with those five arrows, O chief of the Bharatas, the angry Arjuna cut off into five fragments that dart hurled from Bhishma's arms. Thus cut off by the angry Arjuna, that dart then fell down like a flash of lightning separated from a mass of clouds. Beholding his dart cut off, Bhishma became filled with rage. That hero, that subjugator of hostile cities, then began to reflect. And he said unto himself, 'With only a single bow I could slay all the Pandavas, if the mighty Vishnu himself had not been their protector. For two reasons, however, I will not fight with the Pandavas, viz., their unslayableness, and the femininity of Sikhandin. Formerly, when my sire wedded Kali, he pleased (with me) gave me two boons, viz., that I should be incapable of being slain in battle, and that my death should depend on my own choice. I should, however, now wish my own death, this being the proper hour.' Ascertaining this to be the resolve of Bhishma of immeasurable energy, the Rishis and the Vasus stationed in the firmament, said, 'That which hath been resolved by thee is approved by us also, O son! Act according to thy resolution, O king. Withdraw thy heart from battle.' On the conclusion, of those words, fragrant and auspicious breeze charged with particles of water, began to blow along a natural direction. 1 And celestial cymbals of loud sounds began to beat. And a flowery shower fell upon Bhishma, O sire. The words spoken by the Rishis and the Vasus, however, O king, were not heard by any one save Bhishma himself. I also heard them, through the power conferred on me by the Muni. Great was the grief, O monarch, that filled the hearts of the celestials at the thought of Bhishma, that favourite of all the worlds, falling down from his car. Having listened to these words of the celestials, Santanu's son Bhishma of great ascetic merit rushed out at Vibhatsu, even though he was then being pierced with sharp arrows capable of penetrating through every armour. Then Sikhandin, O king, excited with rage, struck the grandsire of the Bharatas in the chest with nine sharp arrows. The Kuru grandsire Bhishma, however, though struck by him in battle, thus, trembled not, O monarch, but remained unmoved like a mountain during an earthquake. Then Vibhatsu, drawing his bow Gandiva with a laugh, pierced the son of Ganga with five and twenty arrows. And once more, Dhananjaya, with great speed and excited with wrath struck him in every vital part with hundreds of arrows. Thus pierced by others, also with thousands of arrows, the mighty car-warrior Bhishma pierced those others in return with great speed. And as regards the arrows shot by those warriors, Bhishma, possessed of prowess in battle that was incapable of

being baffled, equally checked them all with his own straight arrows. Those arrows, however, endued with wings of gold and whetted on stone, which the mighty car-warrior Sikhandin shot in that battle, scarcely caused Bhishma any pain. Then the diadem-decked (Arjuna), excited with rage and placing Sikhandin to the fore, approached Bhishma (nearer) and once more cut off his bow. And then piercing Bhishma with ten arrows, he cut off the latter's standard with one. And striking Bhishma's chariot with ten arrows, Arjuna caused him to tremble. The son of Ganga then took up another bow that was stronger.



Image 3.3: Fight with Ghatotkacha | This folio from the Mahabharata depicts Ghatotkacha fighting other mythical figures from the story.

Author: User "Fæ"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Within, however, the twinkling of an eye, as soon, in fact, as it was taken up, Arjuna cut that bow also into three fragments with three broad-headed shafts. And thus the son of Pandu cut off in that battle even all the bows of Bhishma. After that, Bhishma the son of Santanu, no longer desired to battle with Arjuna. The latter, however, then pierced him with five and twenty arrows. That great bowman, thus pierced greatly, then addressed Dussasana, and skid, 'Behold, Partha, that great car-warrior of the Pandavas, excited with wrath in battle, pierceth me alone with many thousands of arrows. He is incapable of being vanquished in battle by the wielder of the thunder-bolt himself. As regards myself also, O hero, the very gods, Danavas and Rakshasas united together, are incapable of vanquishing me. What I shall say then of mighty car-warriors among men?' While Bhishma was thus speaking to Dussasana, Phalguni with sharp shafts, and placing Sikhandin to the fore, pierced Bhishma in that battle. Then Bhishma, deeply and excessively pierced by the wielder of Gandiva with keen-pointed shafts, once more addressed Dussasana with a smile and said, 'These arrows coursing towards me in one continuous line, whose touch resembleth that of heaven's bolt, have been shot by Arjuna. These are not Sikhandin's. Cutting me to the quick, piercing through even my hard coat of mail, and striking me with the force of mushalas, these arrows are not Sikhandin's. Of touch as hard as that of the Brahmana's rod (of chastisement), 1 and of impetus unbearable as that of the thunder-bolt, these arrows are afflicting my vital forces. These are not Sikhandin's. Of the touch of maces and spiked bludgeons, those arrows are destroying my vital forces like messengers of Death commissioned (by the grim king himself). These are not Sikhandin's. Like angry snakes of virulent poison, projecting their tongues out, these are penetrating into my vitals. These are not Sikhandin's--these that cut me to the quick like the cold of winter cutting kine to the quick. Save the heroic wielder of Gandiva, viz., the ape-bannered Jishnu, even all other kings united together cannot cause me pain. Saying these words, Bhishma, the valiant son of Santanu, as if for the object of consuming the Pandavas, hurled a dart at Partha. Partha, however, caused that dart to drop down, cutting it into three fragments with three shafts, in the very sight, O Bharata, of all the Kuru heroes of thy army. Desirous of obtaining either death or victory, the son of Ganga then took up a sword and a shield decked with gold. Before, however, he could come down from his car, Arjuna cut off by means of his arrows, that shield into a hundred fragments. And that feat of his seemed exceedingly wonderful. Then the king Yudhishthira urged his own troops, saying, 'Rush ye at Ganga's son. Do not entertain the slightest fear'. Then, armed with bearded darts, and lances, and arrows, from all sides, with axes, and excellent scimitars, and long shafts of great sharpness, with calf-toothed arrows, and broad-headed shafts, they all rushed at that single warrior. Then arose from among the Pandava host a loud shout. Then thy sons also, O king, desirous of Bhishma's victory, surrounded him and uttered leonine shouts. Fierce was the battle fought there between thy troops and those of the enemy on that the tenth day, O king, when Bhishma and Arjuna met together. Like unto the vortex that occurs at the spot where the Ganga meets the Ocean, for a short while a vortex occurred there where the troops of both armies met and struck one another down. And the Earth, wet with gore, assumed a fierce form. And the even and the uneven spots on her surface could no longer be distinguished. Although Bhishma was pierced in all his vital limbs, yet on that the tenth day he stayed (calmly) in battle, having slain ten thousand warriors. Then that great bowman, Partha, stationed at the head of his troops, broke the centre of the Kuru army. Ourselves then, afraid of Kunti's son Dhananjaya having white steeds attached to his car, and afflicted by him with polished weapons, fled away from the battle. The Sauviras, the Kitavas, the Easterners, the Westerners, the Northerners, the Malavas, the Abhishahas, the Surasenas, the Sivis, the Vasatis, the Salwas, the Sayas, the Trigartas, the Amvashthas, and the Kaikeyas. 1--these and many other illustrious warriors,--afflicted with arrows and pained by their wounds, abandoned Bhishma in that battle while he was fighting with the

diadem-decked (Arjuna). Then a great many warriors, surrounding that single warrior on all sides, defeated the Kurus (that protected him) and covered him with shower of arrows. Throw down, Seize, Fight, Cut into pieces,--this was the furious uproar, O king, heard in the vicinity of Bhishma's car. Having slain in that battle, O monarch, (his foes) by hundreds and thousands, there was not in Bhishma's body space of even two fingers' breadth that was not pierced with arrows. Thus was thy sire mangled with arrows of keen points by Phalguni in that battle. And then he fell down from his car with his head to the east, a little before sunset, in the very sight of thy sons. And while Bhishma fell, loud cries of alas and oh, O Bharata, were heard in the welkin uttered by the celestials and the kings of the earth. And beholding the high-souled grandsire falling down (from his car), the hearts of all of us fell with him. That foremost of all bowmen, that mighty-armed hero, fell down, like an uprooted standard of Indra, making the earth tremble the while. 2 Pierced all over with arrows, his body touched not the ground. At that moment, O bull of Bharata's race, a divine nature took possession of that great bowman lying on a bed of arrows. The clouds poured a (cool) shower (over him) and the Earth trembled. While falling he had marked that the Sun was then in the southern solstice. That hero, therefore, permitted not his senses to depart, thinking of that (inauspicious) season (of death). And all around in the welkin he heard celestial voices saying, 'Why, Oh why, should Ganga's son, that foremost of all warriors of weapons, yield up his life during the southern declension?' Hearing these words, the son of Ganga answered, 'I am alive!' Although fallen upon the earth, the Kuru grandsire Bhishma, expectant of the northern declension, suffered not his life to depart. Ascertaining that to be his resolve, Ganga, the daughter of Himavat, sent unto him the great Rishis in swanlike form. Then those Rishis in the forms of swans inhabiting the Manasa lake, quickly rose up, and came together, for obtaining a sight of the Kuru grandsire Bhishma, to that spot where that foremost of men was lying on his bed of arrows. Then those Rishis in swanlike forms, coming to Bhishma, beheld that perpetuator of Kuru's race lying on his bed of arrows. Beholding that high-souled son of Ganga, that chief of the Bharatas, they walked round him, and the Sun being then in the southern solstice, they said, addressing one another, these words, 'Being a high-souled person, why should Bhishma pass out (of the world) during the southern declension?' Having said these words, those swans went away, proceeding towards the southern direction. Endued with great intelligence, Bhishma, O Bharata. beholding them, reflected for a moment. And the son of Santanu then said unto them. 'I will never pass out (of the world) as long as the Sun is in the southern solstice. Even this is my resolve. I will proceed to my own ancient abode when the Sun reacheth the northern solstice. Ye swans, I tell you this truly. Expectant of the northern declension I will hold my life. Since I have the fullest control over the yielding up of my life, I will, therefore, hold life, expectant of death during the northern declension. The boon that was granted to me by my illustrious sire, to the effect that my death would depend on my own wish O, let that boon become true. I will hold my life, since I have control in the matter of laying it down.' Having said these words to those swans, he continued to lie down on his bed of arrows.

"When that crest of the Kuru race, viz., Bhishma of great energy, fell down, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas uttered leonine shouts. When the grandsire of the Bharatas who was endued with great might was overthrown, thy son, O bull of Bharata's race, knew not what to do. And all the Kurus were entirely deprived of their senses. And the Kurus headed by Kripa, and Duryodhana, sighed and wept. And from grief they remained for a long while deprived of their senses. And they remained perfectly still, O monarch, without setting their hearts on battle. As if seized by thighs, they stood motionless, without proceeding against the Pandavas. When Santanu's son Bhishma of mighty energy, who was (regarded as) unslayable, was slain, all of us thought that the destruction of the Kuru king was at hand. 1 Vanquished by Savyasachin, with our foremost heroes slain, and ourselves mangled with sharp arrows, we knew not what to do. And the heroic Pandavas possessed of massive arms that looked like spiked maces, having obtained the victory and won a highly blessed state in the other world, 1 all blew their great conches. And the Somakas and the Panchalas all rejoiced, O king. Then when thousands of trumpets were blown, the mighty Bhimasena slapped his arm-pits and uttered loud shouts. When the all-powerful son of Ganga was slain, the heroic warriors of both armies, laying down their weapons, began to reflect thoughtfully. And some uttered loud shrieks and some fled away, and some were deprived of their senses. And some censured the practices of the Kshatriya order and some applauded Bhishma. And the Rishis and the Pitris all applauded Bhishma of high vows. And the deceased ancestors of the Bharatas also praised Bhishma. Meanwhile the valiant and intelligent Bhishma, the son of Santanu, having recourse to that Yoga which is taught in the great Upanishads and engaged in mental prayers, remained quiet, expectant of his hour."

Book 7: Battle of Kurukshetra: Drona

Section CXCI

"Sanjaya said, 'Then Drona caused a great carnage among the Panchalas, like the slaughter caused by Sakra himself in rage amongst the Danavas in the days of yore. The great car-warriors of the Pandava army, endued with might and energy, though

slaughtered, O king, by Drona's weapons, were not yet afraid of Drona in that battle. Indeed, O monarch, those mighty car-warriors, viz., the Panchalas and the Srinjayas, all rushed against Drona himself, for fighting with him. Loud and fierce were the yells they uttered as they rushed towards Drona for encompassing him on all sides and were slaughtered by him with shafts and darts. Beholding the slaughter of the Panchalas in that battle by the illustrious Drona, and seeing his, weapons overwhelm all sides, fear entered the hearts of the Pandavas. Beholding that dreadful carnage of steeds and human beings in that battle, the Pandavas, O monarch, became hopeless of victory. (They began to say unto each other) 'Is it not evident that Drona, that warrior conversant with the mightiest of weapons, will consume us all like a raging conflagration consuming a heap of straw in the season of spring? There is none competent to even look at him in battle. Conversant with the ways of morality, Arjuna (who alone is a match for him) will not fight with him.' Beholding the sons of Kunti afflicted with the shafts of Drona and inspired with fear, Kesava, endued with great intelligence and, devoted to their welfare, addressed Arjuna and said, 'This foremost of all bowmen is incapable of being ever vanquished by force in battle, by the very gods with Vasava at their head. When, however, he lays aside his weapons, he becomes capable of being slain on the field even by human beings. Casting aside virtue, ye sons of Pandu, adopt now some contrivance for gaining the victory, so that Drona of the golden car may not slay us all in battle. Upon the full of (his son) Aswatthaman he will cease to fight, I think. Let sonic man, therefore, tell him that Aswatthaman, hath been slain in battle.' This advice, however, O kin was not approved by Kunti's son, Dhananjaya. Others approved of it. But Yudhishthira accepted it with great difficulty. Then the mighty-armed Bhima, O king, slew with a mace a foe-crushing, terrible and huge elephant named Aswatthaman, of his own army, belonging to Indravarman, the chief of the Malavas. Approaching Drona then in that battle with some bashfulness Bhimasena began to exclaim aloud, 'Aswatthaman hath been slain.' That elephant named Aswatthaman having been thus slain, Bhima spoke of Aswatthaman's slaughter. Keeping the true fact within his mind, he said what was untrue, Hearing those highly disagreeable words of Bhima and reflecting upon them, Drona's limbs seemed to dissolve like sands in water. Recollecting however, the prowess of his son, he soon came to regard that intelligence as false. Hearing, therefore, of his slaughter, Drona did not become unmanned. Indeed, soon recovering his senses, he became comforted, remembering that his son was incapable of being resisted by foes. Rushing towards the son of Prishata and desirous of slaying that hero who had been ordained as his slayer, he covered him with a thousand keen shafts, equipped with kanka feathers. Then twenty thousand Panchala car-warriors of great energy covered him, while he was thus careering in battle, with their shafts. Completely shrouded with those shafts, we could not any longer see that great car-warrior who then resembled, O monarch, the sun, covered with clouds in the season of rains. Filled with wrath and desirous of compassing the destruction of those brave Panchalas, that mighty car-warrior, that scorcher of foes, viz., Drona, dispelling all those shafts of the Panchalas, then invoked into existence the Brahma weapon. At that time, Drona looked resplendent like a smokeless, blazing fire. Once more filled with rage the valiant son of Bharadwaja slaughtering all the Somakas, seemed to be invested with great splendour. In that dreadful battle, he felled the heads of the Panchalas and cut off their massive arms, looking like spiked maces and decked with golden ornaments. Indeed, those Kshatriyas, slaughtered in battle by Bharadwaja's son fell down on the earth and lay scattered like trees uprooted by the tempest. In consequence of fallen elephants and steeds, O Bharata, the earth, miry with flesh and blood, became impassable. Having slain twenty thousand Panchala car-warriors, Drona, in that battle, shone resplendent like a smokeless, blazing fire. Once more filled with rage, the valiant son of Bharadwaja cut off, with a broad-headed arrow, the head of Vasudana from his trunk. Once more slaying five hundred Matsyas, and six thousand elephants, he slew ten thousand steeds. Beholding Drona stationed on the field for the extermination of the Kshatriya race, the Rishis Viswamitra, and Jamadagni, and Bharadwaja, and Gautama, and Vasishtha, and Kasyapa, and Atri, and the Srikatas, the Prisnis, Garga, the Valkhilyas, the Marichis, the descendants of Bhrigu and Angiras, and diverse other sages of subtle forms quickly came thither, with the Bearer of sacrificial libations at their head, and, desirous of taking Drona unto the region of Brahman, addressed Drona, that ornament of battle, and said, 'Thou art fighting unrighteously. The hour of thy death is come. Laying aside thy weapons in battle, O Drona, behold us stationed here. After this, it behoveth thee not to perpetrate such exceedingly cruel deeds. Thou art versed in the Vedas and their branches. Thou art devoted to the duties enjoined by truth, especially, thou art a Brahmana. Such acts do not become thee. Lay aside thy weapons. Drive away the film of error that shrouds thee. Adhere now to the eternal path. The period for which thou art to dwell in the world of men is now full. Thou hast, with the Brahma weapon, burnt men on earth that are unacquainted with weapons. This act that thou hast perpetrated, O regenerate one, is not righteous. Lay aside thy weapons in battle without delay, O Drona, do not wait longer on earth. Do not, O regenerate one, perpetrate such a sinful act.' Hearing these words of their as also those spoken by Bhimasena, and beholding Dhrishtadyumna before him, Drona became exceedingly cheerless in battle. Burning with grief and exceedingly afflicted, he enquired of Kunti's son Yudhishthira as to whether his son (Aswatthaman) had been slain or not. Drona firmly believed that Yudhishthira would never speak an untruth even for the sake of the sovereignty of

the three worlds. For this reason, that bull among Brahmanas asked Yudhishthira and not any body else. He had hoped for truth from Yudhishthira from the latter's infancy.

"Meanwhile, O monarch, Govinda, knowing that Drona, that foremost of warriors, was capable of sweeping all the Pandavas off the face of the earth, became much distressed. Addressing Yudhishthira he said, 'If Drona fighteth, filled with rage, for even half-a-day, I tell thee truly, thy army will then be annihilated. Save us, then, from Drona. under such circumstances, falsehood is better than truth. By telling an untruth for saving a life, one is not touched by sin. There is no sin in untruth spoken unto women, or in marriages, or for saving king, or for rescuing a Brahmana.' 1 While Govinda and Yudhishthira were thus talking with each other, Bhimasena (addressing the king) said, 'As soon, O monarch, as I heard of the means by which the high-souled Drona might be slain, putting forth my prowess in battle, I immediately slew a mighty elephant, like unto the elephant of Sakra himself, belonging to Indravarman, the chief of the Malavas, who was standing within thy army. I then went to Drona and told him, 'Aswatthaman has been slain, O Brahmana! Cease, then, to fight. Verily, O bull among men, the preceptor did not believe in the truth of words. Desirous of victory as thou art, accept the advice of Govinda. Tell Drona, O King, that the son of Saradwat's daughter is no more. Told by thee, that bull among Brahmanas will never fight. Thou, O ruler of men, art reputed to be truthful in the three worlds.' Hearing those words of Bhima and induced by the counsels of Krishna, and owing also to the inevitability of destiny, O monarch, Yudhishthira made up his mind to say what he desired. Fearing to utter an untruth, but earnestly desirous of victory, Yudhishthira distinctly said that Aswatthaman was dead, adding indistinctly the world elephant (after the name), Before this, Yudhishthira's car had stayed at a height of four fingers' breadth from the surface of the earth; after, however, he had said that untruth, his (vehicle and) animals touched the earth. Hearing those words from Yudhishthira, the mighty car-warrior Drona, afflicted with grief, for the (supposed) death of his son, yielded to the influence of despair. By the words, again, of the Rishis, he regarded himself a great offender against the high-souled Pandavas. Hearing now about the death of his son, he became perfectly cheerless and filled with anxiety; upon beholding Dhrishtadyumna, O king, that chastiser of foes could not fight as before.'"

Section CXCII

"Sanjaya said, 'Beholding Drona filled with great anxiety and almost deprived of his senses by grief, Dhrishtadyumna, the son of the Panchala king, rushed at him. That hero had, for the destruction of Drona, been obtained by Drupada, that ruler of men, at a great sacrifice, from the Bearer of sacrificial libations. Desirous of slaying Drona, he now took up a victory-giving and formidable bow whose twang resembled the roll of the clouds, whose string was possessed of great strength, and which was irrefragable and celestial. And he fixed on it a fierce arrow, resembling a snake of virulent poison and possessed of the splendour of fire. That arrow, resembling a fire of fierce flame, while within the circle of his bow, looked like the autumnal sun of great splendour within a radiant circle. Beholding that blazing bow bent with force by Prishata's son, the troops regarded that to be the last hour (of the world). Seeing that arrow aimed at him, the valiant son of Bharadwaja thought that the last hour of his body had come. The preceptor prepared with care to baffle that shaft. The weapons, however, of that high-souled one, O monarch, no longer appeared at his bidding. 1 His weapons had not been exhausted although he had shot them ceaselessly for four days and one night. On the expiry, however, of the third part of that of the fifth day, his arrows became exhausted. Seeing the exhaustion of his arrows and afflicted with grief on account of his son's death, and in consequence also of the unwillingness of the celestial weapons to appear at his bidding, he desired to lay aside his weapons, as requested by the words of the Rishis also. Though filled with great energy, he could not however, fight as before. Then taking up another celestial bow that Angiras had given him, and certain arrows that resembled a Brahmana's curse, he continued to fight with Dhrishtadyumna. He covered the Panchala prince with a thick shower of arrows, and filled with rage, mangled his angry antagonist. With his own keen shafts he cut off in a hundred fragments those of the prince as also the latter's standard and bow. He then his antagonist's driver. Then Dhrishtadyumna, smiling, took up another bow, and pierced Drona with a keen shaft in the centre of the chest. Deeply pierced therewith and losing his self-possession in that encounter, that mighty bowman, then, with a sharp and broad-headed arrow, once more cut off Dhrishtadyumna's bow. Indeed, the invincible Drona then cut off all the weapons, O king, and all the bows that his antagonist had, with the exception only of his mace and sword. Filled with rage, he then pierced the angry Dhrishtadyumna, O chastiser of foes, nine keen arrows, capable of taking the life of every foe. Then the mighty car-warrior Dhrishtadyumna, of immeasurable soul, invoking into existence the Brahma weapon, caused the steeds of his own car to be mingled with those of his foes. Endued with the speed of the wind, those steeds that were red and of the hue of pigeons, O bull of Bharata's race, thus mingled together, looked exceedingly beautiful. Indeed, O king, those steeds thus mingled together on the field of battle, looked beautiful like roaring clouds in the season of rains, charged with lightning. Then that twice-born one of immeasurable soul cut off the shaft-joints, the wheeljoints, and (other) car-joints of

Dhrishtadyumna. Deprived of his bow, and made carless and steedless and driverless, the heroic Dhrishtadyumna, fallen into great distress, grasped a mace. Filled with rage, the mighty car-warrior, Drona, of unbaffled prowess, by means of a number of keen shafts, cut off that mace, while it was on the point of being hurled at him. Beholding his mace cut off by Drona with arrows, that tiger among men, (viz., the Panchala prince), took up a spotless sword and a bright shield decked with a hundred moons. Without doubt, under those circumstances, the Panchala prince determined to make an end of that foremost of preceptors, that high-souled warrior. Sometimes, sheltering himself in his car-box and sometimes riding on his car-shafts, the prince moved about, uplifting his swords and whirling his bright shield. The mighty car-warrior Dhrishtadyumna, desirous of achieving, from folly, a difficult feat, hoped to pierce the chest of Bharadwaja's son in that battle. Sometimes, he stayed upon the yoke, and sometimes under the haunches of Drona's red steeds. These movements of his were highly applauded by all the troops. Indeed, while he stayed amid the trappings of the yoke or behind those red steeds, Drona found no opportunity to strike him. All this seemed exceedingly wonderful. The movements of both Drona and Prishata's son in that battle resembled the fight of hawk careering through the welkin for a piece of meat. Then Drona, by means of a dart pierced the white steeds of his antagonist, one after another, not striking, however, the red ones amongst them (that belonged to himself) 1. Deprived of life, those steeds of Dhrishtadyumna fell down upon the earth. Thereupon, the red steeds of Drona himself, O king, where freed from the entanglements of Dhrishtadyumna's car. Beholding his steeds slain by that foremost of Brahmanas, Prishata's sons, that mighty car-warrior, that foremost of fighters, could not brook it. Though deprived of his car, still that foremost of all swordsmen, armed with his sword, sprang towards Drona, O monarch, like Vinata's son (Garuda) making a swoop at a snake. The form, O king, of Dhrishtadyumna at that time, when he sought to slay the son of Bharadwaja, resembled the form of Vishnu himself in days of yore when at the point of slaying Hiranyakasipu. He performed diverse evolutions, in fact. O Kauravya, the son of Prishata, careering in that battle, exhibited the well-known one and twenty different kinds of motion. Armed with the sword, and shield in hand, Prishata's son wheeled about and whirled his sword on high, and made side thrusts, and rushed forward, and ran sideways, and leapt high, and assailed the flanks of his antagonists and receded backwards, and closed with his foes, and pressed them hard. Having practised them well, he also showed the evolutions called Bharata, Kausika Satwata, as he careened in that battle for compassing the destruction of Drona, Beholding those beautiful evolutions of Dhrishtadyumna, as he careered on the field, sword and shield in hand, all the warriors, as also the celestials assembled there, were filled with wonder. The regenerate Drona then, shooting a thousand arrows in the thick of fight, cut off the sword of Dhrishtadyumna as also his shield, decked with a hundred moons. Those arrows that Drona shot, while fighting from such a near point, were of the length of a span. Such arrows are used only in close fight. None else have arrows of that kind, except Kripa, and Partha, and Aswatthaman and Karna, Pradyumna and Yuyudhana; Abhimanyu also had such arrows. Then the preceptor, desirous of slaying his disciple who was unto him even as his own son, fixed on his bow-string a shaft endued with great impetuosity. That shaft, however, Satyaki cut off by means of ten arrows, in the very sight of thy son as also of the high-souled Karna, as thus rescued Dhrishtadyumna who was on the point of succumbing to Drona. Then Kesava and Dhananjaya beheld Satyaki of prowess incapable of being baffled, who, O Bharata, was thus careering in the car-tracks (of the Kuru warriors) and within the range of the shafts of Drona and Karna and Kripa. Saying. 'Excellent, Excellent!' both of them loudly applauded Satyaki of unfading glory, who was thus destroying the celestial weapons of all those warriors. Then Kesava and Dhananjaya rushed towards the Kurus. Addressing Krishna, Dhananjaya said, 'Behold, O Kesava, that perpetuator of Madhu's race, viz., Satyaki of true prowess, sporting before the preceptor and those mighty car-warriors and gladdening me and the twins and Bhima and king Yudhishthira. With skill acquired by practice and without insolence, behold that enhancer of the fame of the Vrishnis, viz., Satyaki, careering in battle, sporting the while with those mighty car-warriors. All these troops, as also the Siddhas (in the welkin), beholding him invincible in battle, are filled with wonder, and applauding him, saying, 'Excellent, Excellent!' Indeed, O king, the warriors of both armies all applauded the Satwata hero, for his feats.'"

Section CXCIII

"Sanjaya said, 'Beholding those feats of the Satwata hero, Duryodhana and others, filled with rage, quickly encompassed the grandson of Sini on all sides. Kripa and Karna, of also thy sorts, O sire, in that battle, quickly approaching the grandson of Sini, began to strike him with keen arrows. Then king Yudhishthira, and the two other Pandavas, viz., the two sons of Madri and Bhimasena of great might surrounded Satyaki (for protecting him). Karna, and the mighty car-warrior Kripa, and Duryodhana and others, all resisted Satyaki, pouring showers of arrows on him. The grand son of Sini, however, contending with all those car-warriors, baffled, O monarch, that terrible downpour of arrows, so suddenly created by his foes. Indeed, in that dreadful battle, Satyaki, by means of his own celestial weapons, duly resisted all those celestial weapons aimed at him by those illustrious warriors. The field of battle became full of many cruel sights upon that encounter of those royal combatants, resembling that scene of yore

when Rudra, filled with rage, had destroyed all creatures. Human arms and heads and bows, O Bharata, and umbrellas displaced (from cars), and yak-tails, were seen lying in heaps on the field of battle. The earth became quickly strewn with broken wheels and cars, and massive arms lopped off from trunks, and brave horsemen deprived of life. And, O foremost one among the Kurus, large number of warriors, mangled with falling arrows, were seen in that great battle to roll and writhe on the ground in agony of the last spasms of death. During the progress of that terrible battle, resembling the encounter in days of old between the celestials and the Asuras, king Yudhishthira the just, addressing his warriors, said, Putting forth all your vigour, rush, ye great car-warriors, against the Pot-born! Yonder the heroic son of Prishata is engaged with Drona! He is endeavouring to the utmost of his might, to slay the son of Bharadwaja. Judging from the aspect he is presenting in this great battle, it is evident that filled with rage, he will today overthrow Drona. Uniting together, all of you fight with the Pot-born.' Thus ordered by Yudhishthira, the mighty car-warriors of the Srinjayas all rushed with great vigour to slay the son of Bharadwaja. That mighty car-warrior, viz., Bharadwaja's son, quickly rushed against those advancing warriors, knowing for certain that he would die. When Drona, of sure aim, thus proceeded, the earth trembled violently. Fierce winds began to blow, inspiring the (hostile) ranks with fear. Large meteors fell, seemingly issuing out of the sun, blazing fiercely as they fell and foreboding great terrors. The weapons of Drona, O sire, seemed to blaze forth. Cars seemed to produce loud rattles, and steeds to shed tears. The mighty car-warrior, Drona, seemed to be divested of his energy, His left eye and left hand began to twitch. Beholding Prishata's son, again, before him, and bearing in mind the words of the Rishis about his leaving the world for heaven, he became cheerless. He then desired to give up life by fighting fairly. Encompassed on all sides by the troops of Drupada's son, Drona began to career in battle, consuming large numbers of Kshatriyas. That grinder of foes, having slain four and twenty thousand Kshatriyas, then despatched to Yama's abode ten times ten thousand, by means of his shafts of keen points. Exerting himself with care, he seemed to stand in that battle like a smokeless fire. For the extermination of the Kshatriya race, he then had recourse to the Brahma weapon. Then the mighty Bhima, beholding the illustrious and irresistible prince of the Panchalas carless and weaponless, quickly proceeded towards him. Beholding him striking at Drona from a near point, that grinder of foes took up Dhrishtadyumna on his own car and said unto him, 'Save thee there is no other man that can venture to fight with the preceptor. Be quick to slay him. The burden of his slaughter rests upon thee.' Thus addressed by Bhima, the mighty-armed Dhrishtadyumna speedily took up a strong, a new and a superb bow capable of bearing a great strain. Filled with rage, and shooting his arrows in that battle at the irresistible Drona, Dhrishtadyumna covered the preceptor, desirous of withstanding him. Those two ornaments of battle then, both foremost of fighters and both filled with rage, invoked into existence the Brahma and diverse other celestial weapons. Indeed, O king, Dhrishtadyumna covered Drona with many mighty weapons in that encounter. Destroying all the weapons of Bharadwaja's son, the Panchala prince, that warrior of unfading glory, began to slay the Vasatis, the Sivis, the Valhikas and the Kurus, that is, them, who protected Drona in that battle. Indeed, O king, shooting showers of arrows on all sides, Dhrishtadyumna at that time looked resplendent like the sun himself shedding his thousands of rays. Drona, however, once more cut off the prince's bow and pierced the vitals of the prince himself with many arrows. Thus pierced, the prince felt great pain. Then Bhima, of great wrath, holding the car of Drona, O monarch, slowly said these words unto him: If wretches amongst Brahmanas, discontented with the avocations of their own order, but well-versed in arms, did not fight, the Kshatriya order then would not have been thus exterminated. Abstention from injury to all creatures hath been said to be the highest of all virtues. The Brahmana is the root of that virtue. As regards thyself, again, thou art the foremost of all persons acquainted with Brahma. Slaying all those Mlecchas and other warriors, who, however, are all engaged in the proper avocations of their order, moved thereto by ignorance and folly, O Brahmana, and by the desire of wealth for benefiting sons and wives; indeed, for the sake of an only son, why dost thou not feel ashamed? He for whom thou hast taken up weapons, and for whom thou livest, he, deprived of life, lieth today on the field of battle, unknown to thee and behind thy back. King Yudhishthira the just hath told thee this. It behoveth thee not to doubt this fact.' Thus addressed by Bhima, Drona laid aside his bow. Desirous of laying aside all his weapons also, Bharadwaja's son of virtuous soul said aloud, 'O Karna, Karna, O great bowman, O Kripa, O Duryodhana, I tell you repeatedly, exert yourselves carefully in battle. Let no injury happen to you from the Pandayas. As regards myself, I lay aside my weapons.' Saying these words, he began loudly to take the name of Aswatthaman. Laying aside his weapons then in that battle, and sitting down on the terrace of his car, he devoted himself to Yoga and assured all creatures, dispelling their fears. Beholding that opportunity, Dhrishtadyumna mustered all his energy. Laying down on the car his formidable bow, with arrow fixed on the bow-string, he took up a sword, and jumping down from his vehicle, rushed quickly against Drona. All creatures, human beings and others, uttered exclamation of woe, beholding Drona thus brought under Dhrishtadyumna's power. Loud cries of Oh and Alas were uttered, as also those of Oh and Fie. As regards Drona himself, abandoning his weapons, he was then in a supremely tranquil state. Having said those words he had devoted himself to Yoga. Endued with great effulgence and possessed of high ascetic merit, he had fixed his heart on that Supreme and Ancient Being, viz., Vishnu. Bending his face slightly down, and heaving his breast forward,

and closing his eyes, and resting ort the quality of goodness, and disposing his heart to contemplation, and thinking on the monosyllable Om, representing. Brahma, and remembering the puissant, supreme, and indestructible God of gods, the radiant Drona or high ascetic merit, the preceptor (of the Kurus and the Pandavas) repaired to heaven that is so difficult of being attained even by the pious. Indeed, when Drona thus proceeded to heaven it seemed to us that there were then two suns in the firmament. The whole welkin was ablaze and seemed to be one vast expanse of equal light when the sun-like Bharadwaja, of solar effulgence, disappeared. Confused sounds of joy were heard, uttered by the delighted celestials. When Drona thus repaired to the region of Brahman, Dhrishtadyumna stood, unconscious of it all, beside him. Only we five amongst men beheld the high-souled Drona rapt in Yoga proceed to the highest region of blessed- ness. These five were myself, Dhananjaya, the son of Pritha, and Drona's son, Aswatthaman, and Vasudeva of Vrish- ni's race, and king Yudhishthira the just, the son of Pandu. Nobody else, O king, could see that glory of the wise Drona, devoted to Yoga, while passing out of the world. In fact, all human beings were unconscious of the fact that the preceptor attained to the supreme region of Brahman, a region mysterious to the very gods, and one that is the highest of all. Indeed, none of them could see the preceptor, that chastiser of foes, proceed to the region of Brahman, devoted to Yoga in the company of the foremost of Rishis, his body mangled with arrows and bathed in blood, after he had laid aside his weapons. As regards Prishata's son, though everybody cried fie on him, yet casting his eyes on the lifeless Drona's head, he began to drag it. With his sword, then, he lopped off from his foe's trunk that head,--his foe remained speechless the while. Having slain Bharadwaja's son. Dhrishtadyumna was filled with great joy, and uttered leonine shouts, whirling his sword. Of a dark complexion, with white locks hanging down to his ears, that old man of five and eighty years of age, used, for thy sake only, to career on the field of battle with the activity of a youth of sixteen. The mighty-armed Dhananjaya, the son of Kunti, (before Drona's head was cut off) had said, 'O son of Drupada, bring the preceptor alive, do not slay him. He should not be slain.' Even thus all the troops also had cried out. Arjuna, in particular, melted with pity, had cried out repeatedly. Disregarding, however, the cries of Arjuna as also these of all the kings, Dhrishtadyumna stew Drona, that bull among men, on the terrace of his car. Covered with Drona's blood, Dhrishtadyumna then Jumped from the car down upon the ground. Looking red like the sun, he then seemed to be exceedingly fierce. Thy troops beheld Drona slain even thus in that battle. Then Dhrishtadyumna. that great bowman, O king, threw down that large head of Bharadwaja's son before the warriors of thy army. Thy soldiers, O monarch, beholding the head of Bharadwaja's son, set their hearts on flight and ran away in all directions. Mean- while Drona, ascending the skies, entered the stellar path. Through the grace of the Rishis Krishna (Dwaipayana), the son of Satyavati, I witnessed, O king, the (true circumstances about the) death of Drona. I beheld that illustrious one proceeding, after he had ascended the sky, like a smokeless brand of blazing splendour. Upon the fall of Drona, the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas, all became cheerless and ran away with great speed. The army then broke up. Many had been slain, and many wounded by means of keen shafts. Thy warriors (in particular), upon the fall of Drona, seemed to be deprived of life. Having sustained a defeat, and being inspired with fear about the future, the Kurus regarded themselves deprived of both the worlds. Indeed, they lost all self-control. 1 Searching for the body of Bharadwaja's, son, O monarch, on the field covered with thousands of headless trunks, the kings could not find it. The Pandavas, having gained the victory and great prospects of renown in the future, began to make loud sounds with their arrows and conchs and uttered loud leonine roars. Then Bhimasena, O king, and Dhrishtadyumna, the son of Prishata, were seen in the midst of the (Pandava) host to embrace each other. Addressing the son of Prishata, that scorcher of foes, viz., Bhima said, 'I will again embrace thee, O son of Prishata, as one crowned with victory, when that wretch of a Suta's son shall be slain in battle, as also that other wretch, viz., Duryodhana.' Having said these words, Bhimasena, the son of Pandu, filled with transports of joy, caused the earth to tremble with slaps on his armpits. Terrified by that sound, thy troops ran away from battle, forgetting the duties of the Kshatriyas and setting their hearts on flight. The Pandavas, having become victors, became very glad, O monarch, and they felt great happiness, derived from the destruction of their foes in battle.'"

Book 8: Battle of Kurukshetra: Karna

Section XC

"Sanjaya said, 'Flying away in consequence of the falling of Arjuna's arrows, the broken divisions of the Kau- ravas, staying at a distance, continued to gaze at Arjuna's weapon swelling with energy and careering around with the effulgence of lightning. Then Karna, with showers of terrible shafts, baffled that weapon of Arjuna while it was still careering in the welkin and which Arjuna had shot with great vigour in that fierce encounter for the destruc- tion of his foe. Indeed, that weapon (of Partha) which, swelling with energy, had been consuming the Kurus, the Suta's son now crushed with his shafts winged with gold. Bending then his own loud-sounding bow of irrefragable string, Karna shot showers of shafts. The Suta's son destroyed that burning weapon of Arjuna

with his own foe-kill- ing weapon of great power which he had obtained from Rama, and which resembled (in efficacy) an Atharvan rite. And he pierced Partha also with numerous keen shafts. The encounter then, O king, that took place between Arjuna and the son of Adhiratha, became a very dreadful one. They continued to strike each other with arrows like two fierce elephants striking each other with their tusks. All the points of the compass then became shrouded with weapons and the very sun became invisible. Indeed, Karna and Partha, with their arrowy downpours, made the welkin one vast expanse of arrows without any space between. All the Kauravas and the Somakas then beheld a wide-spread arrowy net. In that dense darkness caused by arrows, they were unable to see anything else. Those two foremost of men, both accomplished in weapons, as they incessantly aimed and shot innumerable arrows, O king, displayed diverse kinds of beautiful manoeuvres. While they were thus contending with each other in battle, sometimes the Suta's son prevailed over his rival and sometimes the diadem-decked Partha prevailed over his, in prowess and weapons and lightness of hands. Beholding that terrible and awful passage-at-arms between those two heroes each of whom was desirous of availing himself of the other's lapses, all the other warriors on the field of battle became filled with wonder. The beings in the welkin, O king, applauded Karna and Arjuna. Indeed, many of them at a time, filled with joy, cheerfully shouted, sometimes saying, "Excellent, O Karna!" and sometimes saying, "Excellent, O Arjuna!" During the progress of that fierce encounter, while the earth was being pressed deep with the weight of cars and the tread of steeds and elephants, the snake Aswasena, who was hostile to Arjuna, was passing his time in the nether region. Freed from the conflagration at Khandava, O king, he had, from anger, penetrated through the earth (for going to the subterranean region). That brave snake, recollecting the death of his mother and the enmity he on that account harboured against Arjuna, now rose from the lower region. Endued with the power of ascending the skies, he soared up with great speed upon beholding that fight between Karna and Arjuna. Think- ing that that was the time for gratifying his animosity towards, as he thought, the wicked-souled Partha, he quickly entered into Karna's quiver, O king, in the form of an arrow. At that time a net of arrows was seen, shedding its bright arrows around. Karna and Partha made the welkin one dense mass of arrows by means of their arrowy downpours. Beholding that wide-spread expanse of arrows, all the Kauravas and the Somakas became filled with fear. In that thick and awful darkness caused by arrows they were unable to see anything else. Then those two tigers among men, those two foremost of all bowmen in the world, those two heroes, fatigued with their exertions in battle, looked at each other. Both of them were then fanned with excellent and waving fans made of young (palm) leaves and sprinkled with fragrant sandal-water by many Apsaras staying in the welkin. And Sakra and Surya, using their hands, gently brushed the faces of those two heroes. When at last Karna found that he could not prevail over Partha and was exceedingly scorched with the shafts of the former, that hero, his limbs very much mangled, set his heart upon that shaft of his which lay singly within a quiver. The Suta's son then fixed on his bow-string that foe-killing, exceedingly keen, snake-mouthed, blazing, and fierce shaft, which had been polished according to rule, and which he had long kept for the sake of Partha's destruction. Stretching his bow-string to his ear, Karna fixed that shaft of fierce energy and blazing splendour, that ever-worshipped weapon which lay within a golden quiver amid sandal dust, and aimed it at Partha. Indeed, he aimed that blazing arrow, born in Airavata's race, for cutting off Phalguna's head in battle. All the points of the compass and the welkin became ablaze and terrible meteors, and thunderbolts fell. When that snake of the form of an arrow was fixed on the bow-string, the Regents of the world, including Sakra, set up loud wails. The Suta's son did not know that the snake Aswasena had entered his arrow by the aid of his Yoga powers. Beholding Vaikartana aim that arrow, the high-souled ruler of the Madras, addressing Karna, said, "This arrow, O Karna, will not succeed in striking off Arjuna's head. Searching carefully, fix another arrow that may succeed in striking off thy enemy's head." Endued with great activity, the Suta's son, with eyes burning in wrath, then said unto the ruler of the Madras, "O Shalya, Karna never aimeth an arrow twice. Persons like us never become crooked warriors." Having said these words, Karna, with great care, let off that shaft which he had worshipped for many long years. Bent upon winning the victory, O king, he quickly said unto his rival, "Thou art slain, O Phalguna!" Sped from Karna's arms, that shaft of awful whizz, resembling fire or the sun in splendour, as it left the bow-string, blazed up in the welkin and seemed to divide it by a line such as is visible on the crown of a woman dividing her tresses. Beholding that shaft blazing in the welkin, the slayer of Kamsa, Madhava, with great speed and the greatest ease, pressed down with his feet that excellent car, causing it to sink about a cubit deep. At this, the steeds, white as the rays of the moon and decked in trappings of gold, bending their knees, laid themselves down on the ground. Indeed, seeing that snake (in the form of an arrow) aimed by Karna, Madhava, that foremost of all persons endued with might, put forth his strength and thus pressed down with his feet that car into the earth, whereat the steeds, (as already said) bending down their knees, laid themselves down upon the earth when the car itself had sank into it. Then loud sounds arose in the welkin in applause of Vasudeva. Many celestial voices were heard, and celestial flowers were showered upon Krishna, and leonine shouts also were uttered. When the car had thus been pressed down into the earth through the exertions of the slayer of Madhu, the excellent ornament of Arjuna's head, celebrated throughout the earth, the welkin, heaven, and the waters, the Suta's son swept off from the crown of his rival, with that arrow, in consequence

of the very nature of that snaky weapon and the great care and wrath with which it had been shot. That diadem, endued with the splendour of the sun or the moon or fire or a planet, and adorned with gold and pearls and gems and diamonds, had with great care been made by the puissant Self-born himself for Purandara. Costly as its appearance indicated, it was inspiring terror in the hearts of foes, contributing to the happiness of him that wore it, and shedding a fragrance, that ornament had been given by the chief of the celestials himself with a cheerful heart unto Partha while the latter had proceeded to slaughter the foes of the gods. That diadem was incapable of being crushed by Rudra and the Lord of waters and Kuvera with Pinaka and noose and thunderbolt and the very foremost of shafts. It could not be endured by even the foremost ones among the gods. Vrisha, however, now broke it forcibly with his snake-inspired shaft. Endued with great activity, that wicked-natured snake of fierce form and false vows, falling upon that diadem-decked with gold and gems, swept it away from Arjuna's head. That snake, O king, forcibly tore it away from Partha's head, quickly reducing into fragments that well-made ornament set over with many a gem and blazing with beauty, like the thunderbolt riving a mountain summit decked with lofty and beautiful trees graced with flowers. Crushed by that excellent weapon, possessed of splendour, and blazing with the fire of (the snake's) poison, that beautiful and much-liked diadem of Partha fell down on the earth like the blazing disc of the Sun from the Asta hills. Indeed, that snake forcibly swept away from Arjuna's head that diadem adorned with many gems, like the thunder of Indra felling a beautiful moun- tain summit adorned with lofty trees bearing budding leaves and flowers. And the earth, welkin, heaven, and the waters, when agitated by a tempest, roar aloud, O Bharata, even such was the roar that arose in all the worlds at that time. Hearing that tremendous noise, people, notwithstanding their efforts to be calm, became extremely agitated and reeled as they stood. Reft of diadem, the dark complexioned and youthful Partha looked beautiful like a blue mountain of lofty summit. Binding then his locks with a white cloth, Arjuna stood perfectly unmoved. With that white gear on his head, he looked like the Udaya hill illumined with the rays of the sun. Thus that she-snake (whom Arjuna had killed at Khandava) of excellent mouth, through her son in the form of an arrow, sped by Surya's son, beholding Arjuna of exceeding energy and might standing with his head at a level with the reins of the steeds, took away his diadem only, that well-made ornament (formerly) owned by Aditi's son and endued with the effulgence of Surya himself. But Arjuna also (as will appear in the sequel) did not return from that battle without causing the snake to succumb to the power of Yama. Sped from Karna's arms, that costly shaft resembling fire or the sun in effulgence, viz., that mighty snake who from before had become the deadly foe of Arjuna, thus crushing the latter's diadem, went away. Having burnt the gold-decked diadem of Arjuna displayed on his head, he desired to come to Arjuna once more with great speed. Asked, however, by Karna (who saw him but knew him not), he said these words, "Thou hadst sped me, O Karna, without having seen me. It was for this that I could not strike off Arjuna's head. Do thou quickly shoot me once again, after seeing me well. I shall then slay thy foe and mine too." Thus addressed in that battle by him, the Suta's son said, "Who are you possessed of such fierce form?" The snake an- swered, saying, "Know me as one that has been wronged by Partha. My enmity towards him is due to his having slain my mother. If the wielder of the thunderbolt himself were to protect Partha, the latter would still have to go to the domains of the king of the pitris. Do not disregard me. Do my bidding. I will slay thy foe. Shoot me without delay." Hearing those words, Karna said, "Karna, O snake, never desires to have victory in battle today by relying on another's might. Even if I have to slay a hundred Arjunas, I will not, O snake, still shoot the same shaft twice." Once more addressing him in the midst of battle, that best of men, viz., Surya's son, Karna, said, "Aided by the nature of my other snaky weapons, and by resolute effort and wrath, I shall slay Partha. Be thou happy and go elsewhere." Thus addressed, in battle, by Karna, that prince of snakes, unable from rage to bear those words, himself proceeded, O king, for the slaughter of Partha, having assumed the form of an arrow. Of fierce form, the desire he ardently cherished was the destruction of his enemy. Then Krishna, addressing Partha in that encounter, said into him, "Slay that great snake inimical to thee." Thus addressed by the slayer of Madhu, the wielder of Gandiva, that bowman who was always fierce unto foes, enquired of him, saying, "Who is that snake that advanceth of his own accord against me, as if, indeed he advanceth right against the mouth of Garuda?" Krishna replied, "Whilst thou, armed with bow, wert engaged at Khandava in gratifying the god Agni, this snake was then in the sky, his body ensconced within his mother's. Thinking that it was only a single snake that was so staying in the sky, thou killedest the mother. Remembering that act of hostility done by thee, he cometh towards thee today for thy destruction. O resister of foes, behold him coming like a blazing meteor, falling from the firmament!'"

"Sanjaya continued, 'Then Jishnu, turning his face in rage, cut off, with six keen shafts, that snake in the welkin as the latter was coursing in a slanting direction. His body thus cut off, he fell down on the earth. After that snake had been cut off by Arjuna, the lord Keshava himself, O king, of massive arms, that foremost of beings, raised up with his arms that car from the earth. At that time, Karna, glancing obliquely at Dhananjaya, pierced that foremost of persons, viz., Krishna, with ten shafts whetted on stone and equipped with peacock feathers. Then Dhananjaya, piercing Karna with a dozen well-shot and keen arrows equipped with heads

like the boar's ear, sped a cloth-yard shaft endued with the energy of a snake of virulent poison and shot from his bow-string stretched to his ear. That foremost of shafts, well shot by Arjuna, penetrated through Karna's armour, and as if suspending his life breaths, drank his blood and entered the earth, its wings also having been drenched with gore. Endued with great activity, Vrisha, enraged at the stroke of the shaft, like a snake beaten with stick, shot many mighty shafts, like snakes of virulent poison vomiting venom. And he pierced Janardana with a dozen shafts and Arjuna with nine and ninety. And once more piercing the son of Pandu with a terrible shaft, Karna laughed and uttered a loud roar. The son of Pandu, however, could not endure his enemy's joy. Acquainted with all the vital parts of the human body, Partha, possessed of prowess like that of Indra, pierced those vital limbs with hundreds of arrows even as Indra had struck Vala with great energy. Then Arjuna sped ninety arrows, each resembling the rod of Death at Karna. Deeply pierced with those shafts, Karna trembled like a mountain riven with thunder. The head-gear of Karna, adorned with costly gems and precious diamonds and pure gold, as also his earrings, cut off by Dhananjaya with his winged arrows, fell down on the earth. The costly and bright armour also of the Suta's son that had been forged with great care by many foremost of artists working for a long time, the son of Pandu cut off within a moment in many fragments. After thus divesting him of his armour, Partha then, in rage, pierced Karna with four whetted shafts of great energy. Struck forcibly by his foe, Karna suffered great pain like a diseased person afflicted by bile, phlegm, wind, and fever. Once more Arjuna, with great speed, mangled Karna, piercing his very vitals, with numerous excellent shafts, of great keenness, and sped from his circling bow with much force and speed and care. Deeply struck by Partha with those diverse arrows of keen points and fierce energy, Karna (covered with blood) looked resplendent like a moun- tain of red chalk with streams of red water running adown its breast. Once more Arjuna pierced Karna in the centre of the chest with many straight-coursing and strong shafts made entirely of iron and equipped with wings of gold and each resembling the fiery rod of the Destroyer, like the son of Agni piercing the Krauncha mountains. Then the Suta's son, casting aside his bow that resembled the very bow of Sakra, as also his quiver, felt great pain, and stood inactive, stupefied, and reeling, his grasp loosened and himself in great anguish. The virtuous Arjuna, observant of the duty of manliness, wished not to slay his enemy while fallen into such distress. The younger brother of Indra then, with great excitement, addressed him, saying, "Why, O son of Pandu, dost thou become so forgetful? They that are truly wise never spare their foes, however weak, even for a moment. He that is learned earneth both merit and fame by slaying foes fallen into distress. Lose no time in precipitately crushing Karna who is always inimical to thee and who is the first of heroes. The Suta's son, when able, will once more advance against thee as before. Slay him, therefore, like Indra slaying the Asura Namuci." Saying, "So be it, O Krishna!" and worshipping Janardana, Arjuna, that foremost of all persons in Kuru's race once more quickly pierced Karna with many excellent arrows like the ruler of heaven, piercing the Asura, Samvara. The diadem-decked Partha, O Bharata, covered Karna and his car and steeds with many calf-toothed arrows, and putting forth all his vigour he shrouded all the points of the compass with shafts equipped with wings of gold. Pierced with those arrows equipped with heads like the calf 's tooth, Adhiratha's son of broad chest looked resplendent like an Asoka or Palasa or Salmali decked with its flowery load or a mountain overgrown with a forest of sandal trees. Indeed, with those numerous arrows sticking to his body, Karna, O monarch, in that battle, looked resplendent like the prince of mountains with its top and glens overgrown with trees or decked with flowering Karnikaras. Karna also shooting repeated showers of arrows, looked, with those arrows constituting his rays, like the sun coursing towards the Asta hills, with disc bright with crimson rays. Shafts, however, of keen points, sped from Arjuna's arms, encountering in the welkin the blazing arrows, resembling mighty snakes, sped from the arms of Adhiratha's son, destroyed them all. Recovering his coolness, and shooting many shafts that resembled angry snakes, Karna then pierced Partha with ten shafts and Krishna with half a dozen, each of which looked like an angry snake. Then Dhananjaya desired to shoot a mighty and terrible arrow, made wholly of iron, resembling the poison of snake or fire in energy, and whose whizz resembling the peal of Indra's thunder, and which was inspired with the force of a high (celestial) weapon. At that time, when the hour of Karna's death had come, Kala, approaching invisibly, and alluding to the Brahmana's curse, and desirous of inform- ing Karna that his death was near, told him, "The Earth is devouring thy wheel!" Indeed, O foremost of men, when the hour of Karna's death came, the high brahmastra that the illustrious Bhargava had imparted unto him, escaped from his memory. And the earth also began to devour the left wheel of his car. Then in consequence of the curse of that foremost of Brahmanas, Karna's car began to reel, having sunk deep into the earth and having been transfixed at that spot like a sacred tree with its load of flowers standing upon an elevated platform. When his car began to reel from the curse of the Brahmana, and when the high weapon he had obtained from Rama no longer shone in him through inward light, and when his terrible snake-mouthed shaft also had been cut off by Partha, Karna became filled with melancholy. Unable to endure all those calamities, he waved his arms and began to rail at righteousness saying, "They that are conversant with righteousness always say that righteousness protects those that are righteous. As regards ourselves, we always endeavour, to the best of our ability and knowledge to practise righteousness. That righteousness, however, is destroying us now instead of protecting us that are devoted to it. I, therefore, think that righteousness

does not always protect its worshippers." While saying these words, he became exceedingly agitated by the strokes of Arjuna's arrows. His steeds and his driver also were displaced from their usual position. His very vitals having been struck, he became indifferent as to what he did, and repeatedly railed at righteousness in that battle. He then pierced Krishna in the arm with three terrible arrows, and Partha, too, with seven. Then Arjuna sped seven and ten terrible arrows, perfectly straight and of fierce impetuosity, resembling fire in splendour and like unto Indra's thunder in force. Endued with awful impetuosity, those arrows pierced Karna and passing out of his body fell upon the surface of the earth. Trembling at the shock, Karna then displayed his activity to the utmost of his power. Steadying himself by a powerful effort he invoked the brahmastra. Beholding the brahmastra, Arjuna invoked the Aindra weapon with proper mantras. Inspiring gandiva, its string, and his shafts also, with mantras, that scorcher of foes poured showers like Purandara pouring rain in torrents. Those arrows endued with great energy and power, issuing out of Partha's car, were seen to be displayed in the vicinity of Karna's vehicle. The mighty car-warrior Karna baffled all those shafts displayed in his front. Seeing that weapon thus destroyed, the Vrishni hero, addressing Arjuna, said, "Shoot high weapons, O Partha! The son of Radha baffles thy shafts." With proper mantras, Arjuna then fixed the brahmastra on his string, and shrouding all the points of the compass with arrows, Partha struck Karna (with many) arrows. Then Karna, with a number of whetted shafts endued with great energy, cut off the string of Arjuna's bow. Similarly he cut off the second string, and then the third, and then the fourth, and then the fifth. The sixth also was cut off by Vrisha, and then the seventh, then the eighth, then the ninth, then the tenth, and then at last the eleventh. Capable of shooting hundreds upon hundreds of arrows, Karna knew not that Partha had a hundred strings to his bow. Tying another string to his bow and shooting many arrows, the son of Pandu covered Karna with shafts that resembled snakes of blazing mouths. So quickly did Arjuna replace each broken string that Karna could not mark when it was broken and when replaced. The feat seemed to him to be exceedingly wonderful. The son of Radha baffled with his own weapons those of Savyasaci. Displaying also his own prowess, he seemed to get the better of Dhananjaya at that time. Then Krishna, beholding Arjuna afflicted with the weapons of Karna, said these words unto Partha: "Approaching Karna, strike him with superior weapons." Then Dhananjaya, filled with rage, inspiring with mantras another celestial weapons that looked like fire and that resembled the poison of the snake and that was as hard as the essence of adamant, and uniting the Raudra weapon with it, became desirous of shooting it at his foe. At that time, O king, the earth swallowed up one of wheels of Karna's car. Quickly alighting then from his vehicle, he seized his sunken wheel with his two arms and endeavoured to lift it up with a great effort. Drawn up with force by Karna, the earth, which had swallowed up his wheel, rose up to a height of four fingers' breadth, with her seven islands and her hills and waters and forests. Seeing his wheel swallowed, the son of Radha shed tears from wrath, and beholding Arjuna, filled with rage he said these words, "O Partha, O Partha, wait for a moment, that is, till I lift this sunken wheel. Beholding, O Partha, the left wheel of my car swal- lowed through accident by the earth, abandon (instead of cherishing) this purpose (of striking and slaying me) that is capable of being harboured by only a coward. Brave warriors that are observant of the practices of the righteous, never shoot their weapons at persons with dishevelled hair, or at those that have turned their faces from battle, or at a Brahmana, or at him who joins his palms, or at him who yields himself up or beggeth for quarter or at one who has put up his weapon, or at one whose arrows are exhausted, or at one whose armour is displaced, or at one whose weapon has fallen off or been broken! Thou art the bravest of men in the world. Thou art also of righteous be- haviour, O son of Pandu! Thou art well-acquainted with the rules of battle. For these reasons, excuse me for a moment, that is, till I extricate my wheel, O Dhananjaya, from the earth. Thyself staying on thy car and myself standing weak and languid on the earth, it behoveth thee not to slay me now. Neither Vasudeva, nor thou, O son of Pandu, inspirest me with the slightest fear. Thou art born in the Kshatriya order. Thou art the perpetuator of a high race. Recollecting the teachings of righteousness, excuse me for a moment, O son of Pandu!"'"

Section XCI

"Sanjaya said, 'Then Vasudeva, stationed on the car, addressed Karna, saying, "By good luck it is, O son of Radha, that thou rememberest virtue! It is generally seen that they that are mean, when they sink into distress, rail at Provi- dence but never at their own misdeeds. Thyself and Suyodhana and Duhshasana and Shakuni, the son of Subala, had caused Draupadi, clad in a single piece of raiment, to be brought into the midst of the assembly. On that occasion, O Karna, this virtue of thine did not manifest itself. When at the assembly Shakuni, an adept in dice, vanquished Kunti's son Yudhishthira who was unacquainted with it, whither had this virtue of thine gone? When the Kuru king (Duryo- dhana), acting under thy counsels, treated Bhimasena in that way with the aid of snakes and poisoned food, whither had this virtue of thine then gone? When the period of exile into the woods was over as also the thirteenth year, thou didst not make over to the Pandavas their kingdom. Whither had this virtue of thine then gone? Thou didst set fire to the house of lac at Varanavata for burning to death the sleeping Pandavas. Whither then, O son of Radha, had this virtue of thine gone? Thou laughedest at Krishna while she stood in the midst of the assembly, scantily dressed be- cause in her

season and obedient to Duhshasana's will, whither, then, O Karna, had this virtue of thine gone? When from the apartment reserved for the females innocent Krishna was dragged, thou didst not interfere. Whither, O son of Radha, had this virtue of thine gone? Thyself addressing the princess Draupadi, that lady whose tread is as digni- fied as that of the elephant, in these words, viz., 'The Pandavas, O Krishna, are lost. They have sunk into eternal hell. Do thou choose another husband!' thou lookedest on the scene with delight. Whither then, O Karna, had this virtue of thine gone? Covetous of kingdom and relying on the ruler of the Gandharvas, thou summonedest the Pandavas (to a match of dice). Whither then had this virtue of thine gone? When many mighty car-warriors, encompassing the boy Abhimanyu in battle, slew him, whither had this virtue of thine then gone? If this virtue that thou now invokest was nowhere on those occasions, what is the use then of parching thy palate now, by uttering that word? Thou art now for the practice of virtue, O Suta, but thou shalt not escape with life. Like Nala who was defeated by Pushkara with the aid of dice but who regained his kingdom by prowess, the Pandavas, who are free from cupidity, will recover their kingdom by the prowess of their arms, aided with all their friends. Having slain in battle their powerful foes, they, with the Somakas, will recover their kingdom. The Dhartarashtras will meet with destruction at the hands of those lions among men (viz., the sons of Pandu), that are always protected by virtue!'"

"Sanjaya continued, 'Thus addressed, O Bharata, by Vasudeva, Karna hung down his head in shame and gave no answer. With lips quivering in rage, he raised his bow, O Bharata, and, being endued with great energy and prowess, he continued to fight with Partha. Then Vasudeva, addressing Phalguna, that bull among men, said, "O thou of great might, piercing Karna with a celestial weapon, throw him down." Thus addressed by the holy one, Arjuna became filled with rage. Indeed, remembering the incidents alluded to by Krishna, Dhananjaya blazed up with fury. Then, O king, blazing flames of fire seemed to emanate from all the pores of the angry Partha's body. The sight seemed to be exceedingly wonderful. Beholding it, Karna, invoking the brahmastra, showered his shafts upon Dhananjaya, and once more made an effort to extricate his car. Partha also, by the aid of the brahmastra, poured arrowy downpours upon Karna. Baffling with his own weapon the weapon of his foe, the son of Pandu continued to strike him. The son of Kunti then, aiming at Karna sped another favourite weapon of his that was inspired with the energy of Agni. Sped by Arjuna, that weapon blazed up with its own energy. Karna, however, quenched that confla- gration with the Varuna weapon. The Suta's son also, by the clouds he created, caused all the points of the compass to be shrouded with a darkness such as may be seen on a rainy day. The son of Pandu, endued with great energy, fearlessly dispelled those clouds by means of the Vayavya weapon in the very sight of Karna. The Suta's son then, for slaying the son of Pandu, took up a terrible arrow blazing like fire. When that adored shaft was fixed on the bow- string, the earth, O king, trembled with her mountains and waters and forests. Violent winds began to blow, bearing hard pebbles. All the points of the compass became enveloped with dust. Wails of grief, O Bharata, arose among the gods in the welkin. Beholding that shaft aimed by the Suta's son, O sire, the Pandavas, with cheerless hearts, gave themselves up to great sorrow. That shaft of keen point and endued with the effulgence of Sakra's thunder, sped from Karna's arms, fell upon Dhananjaya's chest and penetrated it like a mighty snake penetrating an ant-hill. That grinder of foes, viz., the high-souled Vibhatsu, thus deeply pierced in that encounter, began to reel. His grasp became loosened, at which his bow Gandiva dropped from his hand. He trembled like the prince of mountains in an earthquake. Availing himself of that opportunity, the mighty car-warrior Vrisha, desirous of extricating his car-wheel that had been swallowed up by the earth, jumped down from his vehicle. Seizing the wheel with his two arms he endeavoured to drag it up, but though possessed of great strength, he failed in his efforts, as destiny would have it. Meanwhile the diadem-decked and high-souled Arjuna, recovering his senses, took up a shaft, fatal as the rod of Death, and called anjalika. Then Vasudeva, addressing Partha, said, "Cut off with thy arrow the head of this enemy of thine, viz., Vrisha, before he succeeds in getting upon his car." Applauding those words of the lord Va- sudeva, and while the wheel of his enemy was still sunk, the mighty car-warrior Arjuna took up a razor-headed arrow of blazing effulgence and struck the standard (of Karna) bearing the elephant's rope and bright as the spotless sun. That standard bearing the device of the costly elephant's rope, was adorned with gold and pearls and gems and diamonds, and forged with care by foremost of artists excelling in knowledge, and possessed of great beauty, and variegated with pure gold. That standard always used to fill thy troops with high courage and the enemy with fear. Its form commanded applause. Celebrated over the whole world, it resembled the sun in splendour. Indeed, its effulgence was like that of fire or the sun or the moon. The diadem-decked Arjuna, with that razor-headed shaft, exceedingly sharp, equipped with wings of gold, possessed of the splendour of fire when fed with libations of clarified butter, and blazing with beauty, cut off that standard of Adhiratha's son, that great car-warrior. With that standard, as it fell, the fame, pride, hope of victory, and everything dear, as also the hearts of the Kurus, fell, and loud wails of "Oh!" and "Alas!" arose (from the Kuru army). Beholding that standard cut off and thrown down by that hero of Kuru's race possessed of great lightness of hand, thy troops, O Bharata, were no longer hopeful of Karna's victory. Hastening then for Karna's destruction, Partha took out from his quiver an excellent Anjalika

weapon that resembled the thunder of Indra or the rod of fire and that was possessed of the effulgence of the thousand-rayed Sun. Capable of penetrating the very vitals, besmeared with blood and flesh, resembling fire or the sun, made of costly materials, destructive of men, steeds, and elephants, of straight course and fierce impetuosity, it measured three cubits and six feet. Endued with the force of the thousand-eyed Indra's thunder, irresistible as Rakshasas in the night, resembling Pinaka or Narayana's discus, it was exceedingly terrible and destructive of all living creatures. Partha cheerfully took up that great weapon, in the shape of an arrow, which could not be resisted by the very gods, that high-souled being which was always adored by the son of Pandu, and which was capable of vanquishing the very gods and the Asuras. Beholding that shaft grasped by Partha in that battle, the entire universe shook with its mobile and immobile creatures. Indeed, seeing that weapon raised (for being sped) in that dreadful battle, the Rishis loudly cried out, "Peace be to the universe!" The wielder of Gandiva then fixed on his bow that unrivalled arrow, uniting it with a high and mighty weapon. Drawing his bow Gandiva, he quickly said, "Let this shaft of mine be like a mighty weapon capable of quickly destroying the body and heart of my enemy, if I have ever practised ascetic austerities, gratified my superiors, and listened to the counsels of well-wishers. Let this shaft, worshipped by me and possessed of great sharpness, slay my enemy Karna by that Truth." Having said these words Dhananjaya let off that terrible shaft for the destruction of Karna, that arrow fierce and efficacious as a rite prescribed in the Atharvan of Angiras, blazing with effulgence, and incapable of being endured by Death himself in battle. And the diadem-decked Partha, desirous of slaying Karna, with great cheerfulness, said, "Let this shaft conduce to my victory. Shot by me, let this arrow possessed of the splendour of fire or the sun take Karna to the presence of Yama." Saying these words, Arjuna, decked with diadem and garlands, cherishing feelings of hostility towards Karna and desirous of slaying him, cheerfully struck his foe with that foremost of shafts which was possessed of the splendour of the sun or the moon and capable of bestowing victory. Thus sped by that mighty warrior, that shaft endued with the energy of the sun caused all the points of the compass to blaze up with light. With that weapon Arjuna struck off his enemy's head like Indra striking off the head of Vritra with his thunder. Indeed, O king, with that excellent Anjalika weapon inspired with mantras into a mighty weapon, the son of Indra cut off the head of Vaikartana in the afternoon. Thus cut off with that Anja- lika, the trunk of Karna fell down on the earth. The head also of that commander of the (Kaurava) army, endued with splendour equal to that of the risen sun and resembling the meridian sun of autumn, fell down on the earth like the sun of bloody disc dropped down from the Asta hills. Indeed, that head abandoned with great unwillingness the body, exceedingly beautiful and always nursed in luxury, of Karna of noble deeds, like an owner abandoning with great unwillingness his commodious mansion filled with great wealth. Cut off with Arjuna's arrow, and deprived of life, the tall trunk of Karna endued with great splendour, with blood issuing from every wound, fell down like the thunder-riven summit of a mountain of red chalk with crimson streams running down its sides after a shower. Then from that body of the fallen Karna a light passing through the welkin penetrated the sun. This wonderful sight, O king, was beheld by the human warriors after the fall of Karna. Then the Pandavas, beholding Karna slain by Phalgu- na, loudly blew their conchs. Similarly, Krishna and Dhananjaya also, filled with delight, and losing no time, blew their conchs. The Somakas beholding Karna slain and lying on the field, were filled with joy and uttered loud shouts with the other troops (of the Pandava army). In great delight they blew their trumpets and waved their arms and garments. All the warriors, O king, approaching Partha, began to applaud him joyfully. Others, possessed of might, danced, embracing each other, and uttering loud shouts, said, "By good luck, Karna hath been stretched on the earth and mangled with arrows." Indeed, the severed head of Karna looked beautiful like a mountain summit loosened by a tempest, or a quenched fire after the sacrifice is over, or the image of the sun after it has reached the Asta hills. The Karna-sun, with arrows for its rays, after having scorched the hostile army, was at last caused to be set by the mighty Arjuna-time. As the Sun, while proceeding towards the Asta hills, retires taking away with him all his rays, even so that shaft (of Arjuna) passed out, taking with it Karna's life breaths. The death hour of the Suta's son, O sire, was the afternoon of that day. Cut off with the Anjalika weapon in that battle, the head of Karna fell down along with his body. Indeed, that arrow of Arjuna, in the very sight of the Kaurava troops, quickly took away the head and the body of Karna. Beholding the heroic Karna thrown down stretched on the earth, pierced with arrows and bathed in blood, the king of the Madras, went away on that car deprived of its standard. After the fall of Karna, the Kauravas, deeply pierced with shafts in that battle, and afflicted with fear, fled away from the field, frequently casting their eyes on that lofty standard of Arjuna that blazed with splendour. The beautiful head, graced with a face that resembled a lotus of a 1,000 petals, of Karna whose feats were like those of the thousand-eyed Indra, fell down on the earth like the thou- sand-rayed sun as he looks at the close of day.'"

Book 17: End of Reign

Section I

Om! Having bowed down unto Narayana, and to Nara, the foremost of men, as also to the goddess Sarasvati, should the word "Jaya" be uttered.

Janamejaya said: "Having heard of that encounter with iron bolts between the heroes of the Vrishni and the Andhaka races, and having been informed also of Krishna's ascension to Heaven, what did the Pandavas do?"

Vaishampayana said: "Having heard the particulars of the great slaughter of the Vrishnis, the Kaurava king set his heart on leaving the world. He addressed Arjuna, saying, 'O thou of great intelligence, it is Time that cooks every creature (in his cauldron). I think that what has happened is due to the cords of Time (with which he binds us all). It behoveth thee also to see it.'

"Thus addressed by his brother, the son of Kunti only repeated the word 'Time, Time!' and fully endorsed the view of his eldest brother gifted with great intelligence. Ascertaining the resolution of Arjuna, Bhimasena and the twins fully endorsed the words that Arjuna had said. Resolved to retire from the world for earning merit, they brought Yuyutsu before them. Yudhishthira made over the kingdom to the son of his uncle by his Vaisya wife. Installing Parikshit also on their throne, as king, the eldest brother of the Pandavas, filled with sorrow, addressed Subhadra, saying, 'This son of thy son will be the king of the Kurus. The survivor of the Yadus, Vajra, has been made a king. Parikshit will rule in Hastinapura, while the Yadava prince, Vajra, will rule in Shakraprastha. He should be protected by thee. Never set thy heart on unrighteousness.'

"Having said these words, king Yudhishthira the just, along with his brothers, promptly offered oblations of water unto Vasudeva of great intelligence, as also unto his old maternal uncle and Rama and others. He then duly performed the Sraddhas of all those deceased kinsmen of his. The king, in honour of Hari and naming him repeat- edly, fed the Island-born Vyasa, and Narada, and Markandeya possessed of wealth of penances, and Yajnavalkya of Bharadwaja's race, with many delicious viands. In honour of Krishna, he also gave away many jewels and gems, and robes and clothes, and villages, and horses and cars, and female slaves by hundreds and thousands unto foremost of Brahmanas. Summoning the citizens. Kripa was installed as the preceptor and Parikshit was made over to him as his disciple, O chief of Bharata's race.

"Then Yudhishthira once more summoned all his subjects. The royal sage informed them of his intentions. The citizens and the inhabitants of the provinces, hearing the king's words, became filled with anxiety and disapproved of them. 'This should never be done,' said they unto the king. The monarch, well versed with the changes brought about by time, did not listen to their counsels. Possessed of righteous soul, he persuaded the people to sanction his views. He then set his heart on leaving the world. His brothers also formed the same resolution. Then Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, the king of the Kurus, casting off his ornaments, wore barks of trees. Bhima and Arjuna and the twins, and Draupadi also of great fame, similarly clad themselves in bark of trees, O king. Having caused the pre- liminary rites of religion, O chief of Bharata's race, which were to bless them in the accomplishment of their design, those foremost of men cast off their sacred fires into the water. The ladies, beholding the princes in that guise, wept aloud. They seemed to look as they had looked in days before, when with Draupadi forming the sixth in number they set out from the capital after their defeat at dice. The brothers, however, were all very cheerful at the prospect of retirement. Ascertaining the intentions of Yudhishthira and seeing the destruction of the Vrishnis, no other course of action could please them then.

"The five brothers, with Draupadi forming the sixth, and a dog forming the seventh, set out on their journey. Indeed, even thus did king Yudhishthira depart, himself the head of a party of seven, from the city named after the elephant. The citizen and the ladies of the royal household followed them for some distance. None of them, how- ever, could venture to address the king for persuading him to give up his intention. The denizens of the city then returned; Kripa and others stood around Yuyutsu as their centre. Ulupi, the daughter of the Naga chief, O thou of Kunti's race, entered the waters of Ganga. The princess Chitrangada set out for the capital of Manipura. The other ladies who were the grandmothers of Parikshit centered around him. Meanwhile the high-souled Pandavas, O thou of Kuru's race, and Draupadi of great fame, having observed the preliminary fast, set out with their faces towards the east. Setting themselves on Yoga, those high-souled ones, resolved to observe the religion of Renunciation, traversed through various countries and reached diverse rivers and seas. Yudhishthira, proceeded first. Behind him was Bhima; next walked Arjuna; after him were the twins in the order of their birth; behind them all, O foremost one of Bharata's race, proceeded Draupadi, that first of women, possessed of great beauty, of dark complexion, and endued with eyes resembling lotus petals. While the Pandavas set out for the forest, a dog followed them.

"Proceeding on, those heroes reached the sea of red waters. Dhananjaya had not cast off his celestial bow Gan- diva, nor his couple of inexhaustible quivers, actuated, O king, by the cupidity that attaches one to things of great value. The Pandavas there beheld the

deity of fire standing before them like a hill. Closing their way, the god stood there in his embodied form. The deity of seven flames then addressed the Pandavas, saying, ‘Ye heroic sons of Pan- du, know me for the deity of fire. O mighty-armed Yudhishthira, O Bhimasena that art a scorcher of foes, O Arjuna, and ye twins of great courage, listen to what I say! Ye foremost ones of Kuru’s race, I am the god of fire. The forest of Khandava was burnt by me, through the puissance of Arjuna and of Narayana himself. Let your brother Phalguna proceed to the woods after casting off Gandiva, that high weapon. He has no longer any need of it. That precious discus, which was with the high-souled Krishna, has disappeared (from the world). When the time again comes, it will come back into his hands. This foremost of bows, Gandiva, was procured by me from Varuna for the use of Partha. Let it be made over to Varuna himself.’

“At this, all the brothers urged Dhananjaya to do what the deity said. He then threw into the waters (of the sea) both the bow and the couple of inexhaustible quivers. After this, O chief of Bharata’s race, the god of the fire disap- peared then and there. The heroic sons of Pandu next proceeded with their faces turned towards the south. Then, by the northern coast of the salt sea, those princes of Bharata’s race proceeded to the south-west. Turning next towards the west, they beheld the city of Dwaraka covered by the ocean. Turning next to the north, those foremost ones proceeded on. Observant of Yoga, they were desirous of making a round of the whole Earth.”

Section II

Vaishampayana said: “Those princes of restrained souls and devoted to Yoga, proceeding to the north, beheld Himavat, that very large mountain. Crossing the Himavat, they beheld a vast desert of sand. They then saw the mighty mountain Meru, the foremost of all high-peaked mountains. As those mighty ones were proceeding quickly, all rapt in Yoga, Yajnaseni, falling of from Yoga, dropped down on the Earth. Beholding her fallen down, Bhimasena of great strength addressed king Yudhishthira the just, saying, ‘O scorcher of foes, this princess never did any sinful act. Tell us what the cause is for which Krishna has fallen down on the Earth!’

“Yudhishthira said: ‘O best of men, though we were all equal unto her she had great partiality for Dhananjaya. She obtains the fruit of that conduct today, O best of men.’”

Vaishampayana continued: “Having said this, that foremost one of Bharata’s race proceeded on. Of righteous soul, that foremost of men, endued with great intelligence, went on, with mind intent on itself. Then Sahadeva of great learning fell down on the Earth. Beholding him drop down, Bhima addressed the king, saying, ‘He who with great humility used to serve us all, alas, why is that son of Madravati fallen down on the Earth?’

“Yudhishthira said, ‘He never thought anybody his equal in wisdom. It is for that fault that this prince has fallen down.’

Vaishampayana continued: “Having said this, the king proceeded, leaving Sahadeva there. Indeed, Kunti’s son Yudhishthira went on, with his brothers and with the dog. Beholding both Krishna and the Pandava Sahadeva fallen down, the brave Nakula, whose love for kinsmen was very great, fell down himself. Upon the falling down of the heroic Nakula of great personal beauty, Bhima once more addressed the king, saying, ‘This brother of ours who was endued with righteousness without incompleteness, and who always obeyed our behests, this Nakula who was unrivalled for beauty, has fallen down.’

“Thus addressed by Bhimasena, Yudhishthira, said, with respect to Nakula, these words: ‘He was of righteous soul and the foremost of all persons endued with intelligence. He, however, thought that there was nobody that equalled him in beauty of person. Indeed, he regarded himself as superior to all in that respect. It is for this that Nakula has fallen down. Know this, O Vrikodara. What has been ordained for a person, O hero, must have to be endured by him.’

“Beholding Nakula and the others fall down, Pandu’s son Arjuna of white steeds, that slayer of hostile heroes, fell down in great grief of heart. When that foremost of men, who was endued with the energy of Shakra, had fallen down, indeed, when that invincible hero was on the point of death, Bhima said unto the king, ‘I do not recollect any untruth uttered by this high-souled one. Indeed, not even in jest did he say anything false. What then is that for whose evil consequence this one has fallen down on the Earth?’

“Yudhishthira said, ‘Arjuna had said that he would consume all our foes in a single day. Proud of his heroism, he did not, however, accomplish what he had said. Hence has he fallen down. This Phalguna disregarded all wield- ers of bows. One desirous of prosperity should never indulge in such sentiments.’”

Vaishampayana continued: “Having said so, the king proceeded on. Then Bhima fell down. Having fallen down, Bhima addressed king Yudhishthira the just, saying, ‘O king, behold, I who am thy darling have fallen down. For what reason have I dropped down? Tell me if thou knowest it.’

“Yudhishthira said, ‘Thou wert a great eater, and thou didst use to boast of thy strength. Thou never didst at- tend, O Bhima, to the wants of others while eating. It is for that, O Bhima, that thou hast fallen down.’

“Having said these words, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira proceeded on, without looking back. He had only one companion, the dog of which I have repeatedly spoken to thee, that followed him now.

Section III

Vaishampayana said: “Then Shakra, causing the firmament and the Earth to be filled by a loud sound, came to the son of Pritha on a car and asked him to ascend it. Beholding his brothers fallen on the Earth, king Yudhishthi- ra the just said unto that deity of a 1,000 eyes these words: ‘My brothers have all dropped down here. They must go with me. Without them by me I do not wish to go to Heaven, O lord of all the deities. The delicate princess (Draupadi) deserving of every comfort, O Purandara, should go with us. It behoveth thee to permit this.’

“Shakra said, ‘Thou shalt behold thy brothers in Heaven. They have reached it before thee. Indeed, thou shalt see all of them there, with Krishna. Do not yield to grief, O chief of the Bharatas. Having cast off their human bod- ies they have gone there, O chief of Bharata’s race. As regards thee, it is ordained that thou shalt go thither in this very body of thine.’

“Yudhishthira said, ‘This dog, O lord of the Past and the Present, is exceedingly devoted to me. He should go with me. My heart is full of compassion for him.’

“Shakra said, ‘Immortality and a condition equal to mine, O king, prosperity extending in all directions, and high success, and all the felicities of Heaven, thou hast won today. Do thou cast off this dog. In this there will be no cruelty.’

“Yudhishthira said, ‘O thou of a 1,000 eyes. O thou that art of righteous behaviour, it is exceedingly difficult for one that is of righteous behaviour to perpetrate an act that is unrighteous. I do not desire that union with prosperity for which I shall have to cast off one that is devoted to me.’

“Indra said, ‘There is no place in Heaven for persons with dogs. Besides, the (deities called) Krodhavasas take away all the merits of such persons. Reflecting on this, act, O king Yudhishthira the just. Do thou abandon this dog. There is no cruelty in this.’

“Yudhishthira said, ‘It has been said that the abandonment of one that is devoted is infinitely sinful. It is equal to the sin that one incurs by slaying a Brahmana. Hence, O great Indra, I shall not abandon this dog today from desire of my happiness. Even this is my vow steadily pursued, that I never give up a person that is terrified, nor one that is devoted to me, nor one that seeks my protection, saying that he is destitute, nor one that is afflicted, nor one that has come to me, nor one that is weak in protecting oneself, nor one that is solicitous of life. I shall never give up such a one till my own life is at an end.’

“Indra said, ‘Whatever gifts, or sacrifices spread out, or libations poured on the sacred fire, are seen by a dog, are taken away by the Krodhavasas. Do thou, therefore, abandon this dog. By abandoning this dog thou wilt attain to the region of the deities. Having abandoned thy brothers and Krishna, thou hast, O hero, acquired a region of felicity by thy own deeds. Why art thou so stupefied? Thou hast renounced everything. Why then dost thou not renounce this dog?’ “Yudhishthira said, ‘This is well known in all the worlds that there is neither friendship nor en- mity with those that are dead. When my brothers and Krishna died, I was unable to revive them. Hence it was that I abandoned them. I did not, however, abandon them as long as they were alive. To frighten one that has sought protection, the slaying of a woman, the theft of what belongs to a Brahmana, and injuring a friend, each of these four, O Shakra, is I think equal to the abandonment of one that is devoted.’”

Vaishampayana continued: “Hearing these words of king Yudhishthira the just, (the dog became transformed into) the deity of Righteousness, who, well pleased, said these words unto him in a sweet voice fraught with praise. “Dharma said: ‘Thou art well born, O king of kings, and possessed of the intelligence and the good conduct of Pandu. Thou hast compassion for all creatures, O Bharata, of which this is a bright example. Formerly, O son, thou wert once examined by me in the woods of Dwaita, where thy brothers of great prowess met with (an appearance of) death. Disregarding both thy brothers Bhima and Arjuna, thou didst wish for the revival of Nakula from thy desire of doing good to thy (step-) mother. On the present occasion, thinking the dog to be devoted to thee, thou hast renounced the very car of the celestials instead of renouncing him. Hence. O king, there is no one in Heaven that

is equal to thee. Hence, O Bharata, regions of inexhaustible felicity are thine. Thou hast won them, O chief of the Bharatas, and thine is a celestial and high goal.'"

Vaishampayana continued: "Then Dharma, and Shakra, and the Maruts, and the Ashvinis, and other deities, and the celestial Rishis, causing Yudhishthira to ascend on a car, proceeded to Heaven. Those beings crowned with success and capable of going everywhere at will, rode their respective cars. King Yudhishthira, that perpetuator of Kuru's race, riding on that car, ascended quickly, causing the entire welkin to blaze with his effulgence. Then Nara- da, that foremost of all speakers, endued with penances, and conversant with all the worlds, from amidst that con- course of deities, said these words: 'All those royal sages that are here have their achievements transcended by those of Yudhishthira. Covering all the worlds by his fame and splendour and by his wealth of conduct, he has attained to Heaven in his own (human) body. None else than the son of Pandu has been heard to achieve this.'

"Hearing these words of Narada, the righteous-souled king, saluting the deities and all the royal sages there present, said, 'Happy or miserable, whatever the region be that is now my brothers', I desire to proceed to. I do not wish to go anywhere else.'

"Hearing this speech of the king, the chief of the deities, Purandara, said these words fraught with noble sense: 'Do thou live in this place, O king of kings, which thou hast won by thy meritorious deeds. Why dost thou still cherish human affections? Thou hast attained to great success, the like of which no other man has ever been able to attain. Thy brothers, O delighter of the Kurus, have succeeded in winning regions of felicity. Human affections still touch thee. This is Heaven. Behold these celestial Rishis and Siddhas who have attained to the region of the gods.'

"Gifted with great intelligence, Yudhishthira answered the chief of the deities once more, saying, 'O conqueror of Daityas, I venture not to dwell anywhere separated from them. I desire to go there, where my brothers have gone. I wish to go there where that foremost of women, Draupadi, of ample proportions and darkish complexion and endued with great intelligence and righteous of conduct, has gone.'"

The end of Mahaprasthanika-parva

Book 18: The Last Illusions

Section I

Om! Having bowed down into Narayana, and to Nara, the foremost of men, as also to the goddess Sarasvati, should the word "Jaya" be uttered.

Janamejaya said, "Having attained to Heaven, what regions were respectively attained by my grandsires of old, viz., the Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra? I desire to hear this. I think that thou art conversant with every- thing, having been taught by the great Rishi Vyasa of wonderful feats.

Vaishampayana said, "Listen now to what thy grandsires, Yudhishthira and others, did after having attained to Heaven, that place of the deities. Arrived at Heaven, king Yudhishthira the just, beheld Duryodhana endued with prosperity and seated on an excellent seat. He blazed with effulgence like the sun and wore all those signs of glory which belong to heroes. And he was in the company of many deities of blazing effulgence and of Sadhyas of righ- teous deeds. Yudhishthira, beholding Duryodhana and his prosperity, became suddenly filled with rage and turned back from the sight.

"He loudly addressed his companions, saying, 'I do not desire to share regions of felicity with Duryodhana who was stained by cupidity and possessed of little foresight. It was for him that friends, and kinsmen, over the whole Earth were slaughtered by us whom he had afflicted greatly in the deep forest. It was for him that the virtuous prin- cess of Pancala, Draupadi of faultless features, our wife, was dragged into the midst of the assembly before all our seniors. Ye gods, I have no desire to even behold Suyodhana. I wish to go there where my brothers are.'

"Narada, smiling, told him, 'It should not be so, O king of kings. While residing in Heaven, all enmities cease. O mighty-armed Yudhishthira, do not say so about king Duryodhana. Hear my words. Here is king Duryodhana. He is worshipped with the gods by those righteous men and those foremost of kings who are now denizens of Heaven. By causing his body to be poured as a libation on the fire of battle, he has obtained the end that consists in attain- ment of the region for heroes. You and your brothers, who were veritable gods on Earth, were always persecuted by this one. Yet through his observance of Kshatriya practices he has attained to this region. This lord of Earth was not terrified in a situation fraught with terror.

"'O son, thou shouldst not bear in mind the woes inflicted on thee on account of the match at dice. It behoveth thee not to remember the afflictions of Draupadi. It behoveth thee not to remember the other woes which were yours in consequence of the acts of your kinsmen, the woes, viz., that were due to battle or to other situations. Do thou meet Duryodhana now according to the ordinances of polite intercourse. This is Heaven, O lord of men. There can be no enmities here.'

"Though thus addressed by Narada, the Kuru king Yudhishthira, endued with great intelligence, enquired about his brothers and said, 'If these eternal regions reserved for heroes be Duryodhana's, that unrighteous and sinful wight, that man who was the destroyer of friends and of the whole world, that man for whose sake the entire Earth was devastated with all her horses and elephants and human beings, that wight for whose sake we were burnt with wrath in thinking of how best we might remedy our wrongs, I desire to see what regions have been attained by those high-souled heroes, my brothers of high vows, steady achievers of promises, truthful in speech, and distin- guished for courage. The high-souled Karna, the son of Kunti, incapable of being baffled in battle, Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki, the sons of Dhrishtadyumna and those other Kshatriyas who met with death in the observance of Ksha- triya practices, where are those lords of Earth, O Brahmana? I do not see them here, O Narada. I desire to see, O Narada, Virata and Drupada and the other great Kshatriyas headed by Dhrishtaketu, as also Shikhandi, the Pancala prince, the sons of Draupadi, and Abhimanyu, irresistible in battle.'

Section II

"Yudhishthira said, 'Ye deities, I do not see here Radha's son of immeasurable prowess, as also my high-souled brothers, and Yudhamanyu and Uttamaujas, those great car-warriors that poured their bodies (as libations) on the fire of battle, those kings and princes that met with death for my sake in battle. Where are those great car-warriors that possessed the prowess of tigers? Have those foremost of men acquired this region? If those great car-warriors have obtained these regions, then only do you know, ye gods, that I shall reside here with those high-souled ones. If this auspicious and eternal region has not been acquired by those kings, then know, ye gods, that without those brothers and kinsmen of mine, I shall not live here. At the time of performing the water rites (after the battle), I heard my mother say, 'Do thou offer oblations of water unto Karna.' Since hearing those words of my mother, I am burning with grief. I grieve also incessantly at this, ye gods, that when I marked the resemblance between the feet of my mother and those of Karna of immeasurable soul, I did not immediately place myself under orders of that afflicter of hostile ranks. Ourselves joined with Karna, Shakra himself would have been unable to vanquish in battle. Wherever may that child of Surya be, I desire to see him. Alas, his relationship with us being unknown, I caused him to be slain by Arjuna. Bhima also of terrible prowess and dearer to me than my life-breaths, Arjuna too, resembling Indra himself, the twins also that resembled the Destroyer himself in prowess, I desire to behold. I wish to see the princess of Pancala, whose conduct was always righteous. I wish not to stay here. I tell you the truth. Ye foremost ones among the deities, what is Heaven to me if I am dissociated from my brothers? That is Heaven where those brothers of mine are. This, in my opinion, is not Heaven.'

"The gods said, 'If thou longest to be there, go then, O son, without delay. At the command of the chief of the deities, we are ready to do what is agreeable to thee.'

Vaishampayana continued: Having said so, the gods then ordered the celestial messenger, O scorcher of foes, saying, 'Do thou show unto Yudhishthira his friends and kinsmen.' Then the royal son of Kunti and the celestial messenger proceeded together, O foremost of kings, to that place where those chiefs of men (whom Yudhishthi- ra had wished to see) were. The celestial messenger proceeded first, the king followed him behind. The path was inauspicious and difficult and trodden by men of sinful deeds. It was enveloped in thick darkness, and covered with hair and moss forming its grassy vesture. Polluted with the stench of sinners, and miry with flesh and blood, it abounded with gadflies and stinging bees and gnats and was endangered by the inroads of grisly bears. Rotting corpses lay here and there. Overspread with bones and hair, it was noisome with worms and insects. It was skirted all along with a blazing fire. It was infested by crows and other birds and vultures, all having beaks of iron, as also by evil spirits with long mouths pointed like needles. And it abounded with inaccessible fastnesses like the Vindhya mountains. Human corpses were scattered over it, smeared with fat and blood, with arms and thighs cut off, or with entrails torn out and legs severed.

"Along that path so disagreeable with the stench of corpses and awful with other incidents, the righteous-souled king proceeded, filled with diverse thoughts. He beheld a river full of boiling water and, therefore, difficult to cross, as also a forest of trees whose leaves were sharp swords and razors. There were plains full of fine white sand exceed- ingly heated, and rocks and stones made of iron. There were many jars of iron all around, with boiling oil in them. Many a Kuta-salmalika was there, with sharp thorns and, therefore, exceedingly painful to the touch. The son of Kunti beheld also the tortures inflicted upon sinful men.

“Beholding that inauspicious region abounding with every sort of foulness, Yudhishthira asked the celestial messenger, saying, ‘How far shall we proceed along a path like this? It behoveth thee to tell me where those brothers of mine are. I desire also to know what region is this of the gods?’

“Hearing these words of king Yudhishthira the just, the celestial messenger stopped in his course and replied, saying, ‘Thus far is your way. The denizens of Heaven commanded me that having come thus far, I am to stop. If thou art tired, O king of kings, thou mayst return with me.’

“Yudhishthira, however, was exceedingly disconsolate and stupefied by the foul odour. Resolved to return, O Bharata, he retraced his steps. Afflicted by sorrow and grief, the righteous-souled monarch turned back. Just at that moment he heard piteous lamentations all around, ‘O son of Dharma, O royal sage, O thou of sacred origin, O son of Pandu, do thou stay a moment for favouring us. At thy approach, O invincible one, a delightful breeze hath be- gun to blow, bearing the sweet scent of thy person. Great hath been our relief at this. O foremost of kings, beholding thee, O first of men, great hath been our happiness. O son of Pritha, let that happiness last longer through thy stay here, for a few moments more. Do thou remain here, O Bharata, for even a short while. As long as thou art here, O thou of Kuru’s race, torments cease to afflict us.’ These and many similar words, uttered in piteous voices by persons in pain, the king heard in that region, wafted to his ears from every side.

“Hearing those words of beings in woe, Yudhishthira of compassionate heart exclaimed aloud, ‘Alas, how pain- ful!’ And the king stood still. The speeches of those woe-begone and afflicted persons seemed to the son of Pandu to be uttered in voices that he had heard before although he could not recognise them on that occasion.

“Unable to recognise voices, Dharma’s son, Yudhishthira, enquired, saying, ‘Who are you? Why also do you stay here?’

“Thus addressed, they answered him from all sides, saying, ‘I am Karna!’ ‘I am Bhimasena!’ ‘I am Arjuna!’ ‘I am Nakula!’ ‘I am Sahadeva!’ ‘I am Dhrishtadyumna!’ ‘I am Draupadi!’ ‘We are the sons of Draupadi!’ Even thus, O king, did those voices speak.

“Hearing those exclamations, O king, uttered in voices of pain suitable to that place, the royal Yudhishthira asked himself ‘What perverse destiny is this? What are those sinful acts which were committed by those high- souled beings, Karna and the sons of Draupadi, and the slender-waisted princess of Pancala, so that their residence has been assigned in this region of foetid smell and great woe? I am not aware of any transgression that can be attributed to these persons of righteous deeds. What is that act by doing which Dhritarashtra’s son, king Suyodha- na, with all his sinful followers, has become invested with such prosperity? Endued with prosperity like that of the great Indra himself, he is highly adored. What is that act through the consequence of which these (high-souled ones) have fallen into Hell? All of them were conversant with every duty, were heroes, were devoted to truth and the Vedas; were observant of Kshatriya practices; were righteous in their acts; were performers of sacrifices; and givers of large presents unto brahmanas. Am I asleep or awake? Am I conscious or unconscious? Or, is all this a mental delusion due to disorders of the brain?’

“Overwhelmed by sorrow and grief, and with his senses agitated by anxiety, king Yudhishthira indulged in such reflections for a long time. The royal son of Dharma then gave way to great wrath. Indeed, Yudhishthira then cen- sured the gods, as also Dharma himself. Afflicted by the very foul odour, he addressed the celestial messenger, say- ing, ‘Return to the presence of those whose messenger thou art. Tell them that I shall not go back to where they are, but shall stay even here, since, in consequence of my companionship, these afflicted brothers of mine have become comforted.’ Thus addressed by the intelligent son of Pandu, the celestial messenger returned to the place where the chief of the deities was, viz., he of a hundred sacrifices. He represented unto him the acts of Yudhishthira. Indeed, O ruler of men, he informed Indra of all that Dharma’s son had said!

Section III

Vaishampayana said, “King Yudhishthira the just, the son of Pritha, had not stayed there for more than a mo- ment when, O thou of Kuru’s race, all the gods with Indra at their head came to that spot. The deity of Righteous- ness in his embodied form also came to that place where the Kuru king was, for seeing that monarch. Upon the advent of those deities of resplendent bodies and sanctified and noble deeds, the darkness that had overwhelmed that region immediately disappeared. The torments undergone by beings of sinful deeds were no longer seen. The river Vaitarani, the thorny Salmali, the iron jars, and the boulders of rock, so terrible to behold, also vanished from sight. The diverse repulsive corpses also, which the Kuru king had seen, disappeared at the same time. Then a breeze, delicious and fraught with pleasant perfumes, perfectly pure and delightfully cool, O Bharata, began to blow on that spot in consequence of the presence of the gods. The Maruts, with Indra, the Vasus with the twin Ashvinis, the Sadhyas, the Rudras,

the Adityas, and the other denizens of Heaven, as also the Siddhas and the great Rishis, all came there where Dharma's royal son of great energy was.

"Then Shakra, the lord of the deities, endued with blazing prosperity, addressed Yudhishthira and comforting him, said, 'O Yudhishthira of mighty arms, come, come, O chief of men. These illusions have ended, O puissant one. Success has been attained by thee, O mighty-armed one, and eternal regions (of felicity) have become thine. Thou shouldst not yield to wrath. Listen to these words of mine. Hell, O son, should without doubt be beheld by every king. Of both good and bad there is abundance, O chief of men. He who enjoys first the fruits of his good acts must afterwards endure Hell. He, on the other hand, who first endures Hell, must afterwards enjoy Heaven. He whose sinful acts are many enjoys Heaven first. It is for this, O king, that desirous of doing thee good, I caused thee to be sent for having a view of Hell. Thou hadst, by a pretence, deceived Drona in the matter of his son. Thou hast, in consequence thereof, been shown Hell by an act of deception. After the manner of thyself, Bhima and Arjuna, and Draupadi, have all been shown the place of sinners by an act of deception. Come, O chief of men, all of them have been cleansed of their sins. All those kings who had aided thee and who have been slain in battle, have all attained to Heaven. Come and behold them, O foremost one of Bharata's race.

"'Karna, the mighty bowman, that foremost of all wielders of weapons for whom thou art grieving, has also at- tained to high success. Behold, O puissant one, that foremost of men, viz., the son of Surya. He is in that place which is his own, O mighty-armed one. Kill this grief of thine, O chief of men. Behold thy brothers and others, those kings, that is, who had espoused thy side. They have all attained to their respective places (of felicity). Let the fever of thy heart be dispelled. Having endured a little misery first, from this time, O son of Kuru's race, do thou sport with me in happiness, divested of grief and all thy ailments dispelled. O mighty-armed one, do thou now enjoy, O king, the rewards of all thy deeds of righteousness of those regions which thou hast acquired thyself by thy penances and of all thy gifts. Let deities and Gandharvas, and celestial Apsaras, decked in pure robes and excellent ornaments, wait upon and serve thee for thy happiness. Do thou, O mighty-armed one, enjoy now those regions (of felicity) which have become thine through the Rajasuya sacrifice performed by thee and whose felicities have been enhanced by the sacrificial scimitar employed by thee. Let the high fruits of thy penances be enjoyed by thee. Thy regions, O Yud- hishthira, are above, those of kings. They are equal to those of Hariscandra, O son of Pritha. Come, and sport there in bliss. There where the royal sage Mandhatri is, there where king Bhagiratha is, there where Dushmanta's son Bharata is, there wilt thou sport in bliss. Here is the celestial river, sacred and sanctifying the three worlds. It is called Heaven- ly Ganga. Plunging into it, thou wilt go to thy own regions. Having bathed in this stream, thou wilt be divested of thy human nature. Indeed, thy grief dispelled, thy ailments conquered, thou wilt be freed from all enmities.'

"While, O Kuru king, the chief of the gods was saying so unto Yudhishthira, the deity of Righteousness, in his em- bodied form, then addressed his own son and said, 'O king, I am greatly pleased, O thou of great wisdom, with thee, O son, by thy devotion to me, by thy truthfulness of speech, and forgiveness, and self-restraint. This, indeed, is the third test, O king, to which I put thee. Thou art incapable, O son of Pritha, of being swerved from thy nature or reason. Be- fore this, I had examined thee in the Dwaita woods by my questions, when thou hadst come to that lake for recovering a couple of fire sticks. Thou stoodst it well. Assuming the shape of a dog, I examined thee once more, O son, when thy brothers with Draupadi had fallen down. This has been thy third test; thou hast expressed thy wish to stay at Hell for the sake of thy brothers. Thou hast become cleansed, O highly blessed one. Purified of sin, be thou happy.

O son of Pritha, thy brothers, O king, were not such as to deserve Hell. All this has been an illusion created by the chief of the gods. Without doubt, all kings, O son, must once behold Hell. Hence hast thou for a little while been subjected to this great affliction. O king, neither Arjuna, nor Bhima, nor any of those foremost of men, viz., the twins, nor Karna, ever truthful in speech and possessed of great courage, could be deserving of Hell for a long time. The princess Krishna too, O Yudhishthira, could not be deserving of that place of sinners. Come, come, O foremost one of the Bharatas, behold Ganga who spreads her current over the three worlds.'

"Thus addressed, that royal sage, viz., thy grandsire, proceeded with Dharma and all the other gods. Having bathed in the celestial river Ganga, sacred and sanctifying and ever adored by the Rishis, he cast off his human body. Assuming then a celestial form, king Yudhishthira the just, in consequence of that bath, became divested of all his enmities and grief. Surrounded by the deities, the Kuru king Yudhishthira then proceeded from that spot. He was accompanied by Dharma, and the great Rishis uttered his praises. Indeed, he reached that place where those foremost of men, those heroes, viz., the Pandavas and the Dhartarashtras, freed from (human) wrath, were enjoying each his respective status.

Section IV

Vaishampayana said, “King Yudhishthira, thus praised by the gods, the Maruts and the Rishis, proceeded to that place where those foremost ones of Kuru’s race were. He beheld Govinda endued with his Brahma-form. It resembled that form of his which had been seen before and which, therefore, helped the recognition. Blazing forth in that form of his, he was adorned with celestial weapons, such as the terrible discus and others in their respective embodied forms. He was being adored by the heroic Phalguna, who also was endued with a blazing effulgence. The son of Kunti beheld the slayer of Madhu also in his own form. Those two foremost of Beings, adored by all the gods, beholding Yudhishthira, received him with proper honours.

“In another place, the delighter of the Kurus beheld Karna, that foremost one among all wielders of weapons, resembling a dozen Suryas in splendour. In another part he beheld Bhimasena of great puissance, sitting in the midst of the Maruts, and endued with a blazing form. He was sitting by the side of the God of Wind in his embod- ied form. Indeed, he was then in a celestial form endued with great beauty, and had attained to the highest success. In place belonging to the Ashvinis, the delighter of the Kurus beheld Nakula and Sahadeva, each blazing with his own effulgence.

“He also beheld the princess of Pancala, decked in garlands of lotuses. Having attained to Heaven, she was sitting there, endued with a form possessed of solar splendour. King Yudhishthira suddenly wished to question her. Then the illustrious Indra, the chief of the gods, spoke to him, ‘This one is Sree herself. It was for your sake that she took birth, as the daughter of Drupada, among human beings, issuing not from any mother’s womb, O Yudhishthira, endued with agreeable perfume and capable of delighting the whole world. For your pleasure, she was created by the wielder of the trident. She was born in the race of Drupada and was enjoyed by you all. These five highly blessed Gandharvas endued with the effulgence of fire, and possessed of great energy, were, O king, the sons of Draupadi and yourself.

“Behold Dhritarashtra, the king of the Gandharvas, possessed of great wisdom. Know that this one was the eldest brother of thy sire. This one is thy eldest brother, the son of Kunti, endued with effulgence of fire. The son of Surya, thy eldest brother, the foremost of men, even this one was known as the son of Radha. He moves in the com- pany of Surya. Behold this foremost of Beings. Among the tribes of the Saddhyas, the gods, the Viswedevas, and the Maruts, behold, O king of kings, the mighty car-warriors of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, viz., those heroes having Satyaki for their first, and those mighty ones among the Bhojas. Behold the son of Subhadra, invincible in battle, now staying with Soma. Even he is the mighty bowman Abhimanyu, now endued with the gentle effulgence of the great luminary of the night. Here is the mighty bowman Pandu, now united with Kunti and Madri. Thy sire frequently comes to me on his excellent car. Behold the royal Bhishma, the son of Santanu, now in the midst of the Vasus. Know that this one by the side of Brihaspati is thy preceptor Drona. These and other kings, O son of Pandu, who had warred on thy side now walk with the Gandharvas or Yakshas or other sacred beings. Some have attained to the status of Guhyakas, O king. Having cast off their bodies, they have conquered Heaven by the merit they had acquired through word, thought and deed.’

Section V

Janamejaya said, “Bhishma and Drona, those two high-souled persons, king Dhritarashtra, and Virata and Drupada, and Sankha and Uttara. Dhrishtaketu and Jayatsena and king Satyajit, the sons of Duryodhana, and Shakuni the son of Subala, Karna’s sons of great prowess, king Jayadratha, Ghatotkaca and others whom thou hast not mentioned, the other heroic kings of blazing forms tell me for what period they remained in Heaven. O fore- most of regenerate persons, was theirs an eternal place in Heaven? What was the end attained to by those foremost of men when their acts came to an end? I desire to hear this, O foremost of regenerate persons, and therefore have I asked thee. Through thy blazing penances thou seest all things.

Sauti said: Thus questioned, that regenerate Rishi, receiving the permission of the high-souled Vyasa, set him- self to answer the question of the king.

Vaishampayana said, “Every one, O king of men, is not capable of returning to his own nature at the end of his deeds. Whether this is so or not, is, indeed a good question asked by thee. Hear, O king, this which is a mystery of the gods, O chief of Bharata’s race. It was explained (to us) by Vyasa of mighty energy, celestial vision and great prowess, that ancient ascetic, O Kauravya, who is the son of Parasara and who always observes high vows, who is of immeasurable understanding, who is omniscient, and who, therefore knows the end attached to all acts.

“Bhishma of mighty energy and great effulgence attained to the status of the Vasus. Eight Vasus, O chief of Bharata’s race, are now seen. Drona entered into Brihaspati, that foremost one of Angirasa’s descendants. Hridika’s son Kritavarma entered the Maruts.

Pradyumna entered Sanatkumara whence he had issued. Dhritarashtra ob- tained the regions, so difficult of acquisition, that belong to the Lord of treasures. The famous Gandhari obtained the same regions with her husband Dhritarashtra. With his two wives, Pandu proceeded to the abode of the great Indra. Both Virata and Drupada, the king Dhrishtaketu, as also Nishatha, Akrura, Samva, Bhanukampa, and Vidu- ratha, and Bhurishrava and Sala and king Bhuri, and Kansa, and Ugrasena, and Vasudeva, and Uttara, that foremost of men, with his brother Sankha all these foremost of persons entered the deities. Soma's son of great prowess, named Varchas of mighty energy, became Abhimanyu, the son of Phalguna, that lion among men. Having fought, agreeably to Kshatriya practices, with bravery such as none else had ever been able to show, that mighty-armed and righteous-souled being entered Soma. Slain on the field of battle, O foremost of men, Karna entered Surya. Shakuni obtained absorption into Dwapara, and Dhrishtadyumna into the deity of fire. The sons of Dhritarashtra were all Rakshasas of fierce might. Sanctified by death caused by weapons, those high-souled beings of prosperity all suc- ceeded in attaining to Heaven. Both Kshattri and king Yudhishthira entered into the god of Righteousness. The holy and illustrious Ananta (who had taken birth as Balarama) proceeded to the region below the Earth. Through the command of the Grandsire, he, aided by his Yoga power, supported the Earth. Vasudeva was a portion of that eter- nal god of gods called Narayana. Accordingly, he entered into Narayana. 16,000 women had been married to Va- sudeva as his wives. When the time came, O Janamejaya, they, plunged into the Sarasvati. Casting off their (human) bodies there, they re-ascended to Heaven. Transformed into Apsaras, they approached the presence of Vasudeva. Those heroic and mighty car-warriors, Ghatotkaca and others, who were slain in the great battle, attained to the status, some of gods and some of Yakshas. Those that had fought on the side of Duryodhana are said to have been Rakshasas. Gradually, O king, they have all attained to excellent regions of felicity. Those foremost of men have pro- ceeded, some to the abode of Indra, some to that of Kuvera of great intelligence, and some to that of Varuna. I have now told thee, O thou of great splendour, everything about the acts, O Bharata, of both the Kurus and the Pandavas.

Sauti said: Hearing this, ye foremost of regenerate ones, at the intervals of sacrificial rites, king Janamejaya became filled with wonder. The sacrificial priests then finished the rites that remained to be gone through. Astika, having rescued the snakes (from fiery death), became filled with joy. King Janamejaya then gratified all the Brah- manas with copious presents. Thus worshipped by the king, they returned to their respective abodes. Having dis- missed those learned Brahmanas, king Janamejaya came back from Takshasila to the city named after the elephant.

I have now told everything that Vaishampayana narrated, at the command of Vyasa, unto the king at his snake sacrifice. Called a history, it is sacred, sanctifying and excellent. It has been composed by the ascetic Krishna, O Brahmana, of truthful speech. He is omniscient, conversant with all ordinances, possessed of a knowledge of all duties, endued with piety, capable of perceiving what is beyond the ken of the senses, pure, having a soul cleansed by penances, possessed of the six high attributes, and devoted to Sankhya Yoga. He has composed this, beholding everything with a celestial eye that has been cleansed (strengthened) by varied lore. He has done this, desiring to spread the fame, throughout the world, of the high-souled Pandavas, as also of other Kshatriyas possessed of abun- dant wealth of energy.

That learned man who recites this history of sacred days in the midst of a listening auditory becomes cleansed of every sin, conquers Heaven, and attains to the status of Brahma. Of that man who listens with rapt attention to the recitation of the whole of this Veda composed by (the Island-born) Krishna, a million sins, numbering such grave ones as Brahmanicide and the rest, are washed off. The Pitris of that man who recites even a small portion of this history at a Sraddha, obtain inexhaustible food and drink. The sins that one commits during the day by one's senses or the mind are all washed off before evening by reciting a portion of the Mahabharata. Whatever sins a Brahmana may commit at night in the midst of women are all washed off before dawn by reciting a portion of the Mahabharata.

The high race of the Bharatas is its topic. Hence it is called Bharata. And because of its grave import, as also of the Bharatas being its topic, it is called Mahabharata. He who is versed in interpretations of this great treatise, becomes cleansed of every sin. Such a man lives in righteousness, wealth, and pleasure, and attains to Emancipation also, O chief of Bharata's race.

That which occurs here occurs elsewhere. That which does not occur here occurs nowhere else. This history is known by the name of Jaya. It should be heard by every one desirous of Emancipation. It should be read by Brahmanas, by kings, and by women quick with children. He that desires Heaven attains to Heaven; and he that desires victory attains to victory. The woman quick with child gets either a son or a daughter highly blessed. The puissant Island-born Krishna, who will not have to come back, and who is Emancipation incarnate, made an abstract of the Bharata, moved by the desire of aiding the cause of righteousness. He made another compilation consisting of sixty lakhs of verses. Thir- ty lakhs of these were placed in the region of the deities. In the region

of the Pitris fifteen lakhs, it should be known, are current; while in that of the Yakshas fourteen lakhs are in vogue. One lakh is current among human beings.

Narada recited the Mahabharata to the gods; Asita-Devala to the Pitris; Suka to the Rakshasas and the Yak- shas; and Vaishampayana to human beings. This history is sacred, and of high import, and regarded as equal to the Vedas. That man, O Saunaka, who hears this history, placing a Brahmana before him, acquires both fame and the fruition of all his wishes. He who, with fervid devotion, listens to a recitation of the Mahabharata, attains (hereaf- ter) to high success in consequence of the merit that becomes his through understanding even a very small portion thereof. All the sins of that man who recites or listens to this history with devotion are washed off.

In former times, the great Rishi Vyasa, having composed this treatise, caused his son Suka to read it with him, along with these four Verses. Thousands of mothers and fathers, and hundreds of sons and wives arise in the world and depart from it. Others will (arise and) similarly depart. There are thousands of occasions for joy and hundreds of occasions for fear. These affect only him that is ignorant but never him that is wise. With uplifted arms I am crying aloud but nobody hears me. From Righteousness is Wealth as also Pleasure. Why should not Righ- teousness, therefore, be courted? For the sake neither of pleasure, nor of fear, nor of cupidity should any one cast off Righteousness. Indeed, for the sake of even life one should not cast off Righteousness. Righteousness is eternal. Pleasure and Pain are not eternal. Jiva is eternal. The cause, however, of Jiva's being invested with a body is not so.

That man who, waking up at dawn, reads this Savittri of the Bharata, acquires all the rewards attached to a rec- itation of this history and ultimately attains to the highest Brahma. As the sacred Ocean, as the Himavat mountain, are both regarded as mines of precious gems, even so is this Bharata (regarded as a mine of precious gems). The man of learning, by reciting to others this Veda or Agama composed by (the Island-born) Krishna, earns wealth. There is no doubt in this that he who, with rapt attention, recites this history called Bharata, attains to high success. What need has that man of a sprinkling of the waters of Pushkara who attentively listens to this Bharata, while it is recited to him? It represents the nectar that fell from the lips of the Island-born. It is immeasurable, sacred, sancti- fying, sin-cleansing, and auspicious.

This page titled 7.2: The Mahabharata is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **3.2: The Mahabharata** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

7.3: The Râmâyana

Attributed to Valmiki

Written version composed in the fourth century B.C.E.

India

The Ramayana is the story of Rama, who is the seventh avatar of the god Vishnu. In times of trouble, Vishnu sends down a human avatar to defeat evil; the avatar, therefore, is the embodiment (literally) of divine intervention. Rama has the opportunity to fight evil when his wife, Sita, is kidnapped by the demon Ravana. Sita is the avatar of the goddess Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu, and her human incarnation is identified as the daughter of the earth goddess, since she was found in a plowed field by King Janaka (her name means "furrow"). When Rama and his brothers rescue Sita, they have the help of one of the most popular figures in Indian mythology: the monkey god Hanuman, who is the eleventh avatar of Shiva, and whose monkey incarnation is the son of the wind god Vayu. The action that follows is in keeping with the divine nature and power of the characters.

Written by Laura J. Getty

[The full text of the Ramayana is roughly 24,000 couplets, so a summary is included here, followed by selections from the work for a more in-depth look at the text.]

The Story of The Râmâyana

Valmiki, Translated by Kate Milner Rabb

Brahma, creator of the universe, though all powerful, could not revoke a promise once made. For this reason, Ravana, the demon god of Ceylon, stood on his head in the midst of five fires for ten thousand years, and at the end of that time boldly demanded of Brahma as a reward that he should not be slain by gods, demons, or genii. He also requested the gift of nine other heads and eighteen additional arms and hands.

These having been granted, he began by the aid of his evil spirits, the Rakshasas, to lay waste the earth and to do violence to the good, especially to the priests.

At the time when Ravana's outrages were spreading terror throughout the land, and Brahma, looking down from his throne, shuddered to see the monster he had gifted with such fell power, there reigned in Ayodhya, now the city of Oude, a good and wise raja, Dasaratha, who had reigned over the splendid city for nine thousand years without once growing weary. He had but one grief, that he was childless, and at the opening of the story he was preparing to make the great sacrifice, Asva-medha, to propitiate the gods, that they might give him a son.

The gods, well pleased, bore his request to Brahma in person, and incidentally preferred a request that he provide some means of destroying the monster Ravana that was working such woe among their priests, and disturbing their sacrifices.



Image 3.4: Cloth Printed with Human Figures from The Râmâyana Epic | This fabric artwork shows various characters from the Râmâyana engaged in battle with one another.

Author: User "Tropenmuseum"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Brahma granted the first request, and, cudgeling his brains for a device to destroy Ravana, bethought himself that while he had promised that neither gods, genii, nor demons should slay him, he had said nothing of man. He accordingly led the appealing gods to Vishnu, who proclaimed that the monster should be slain by men and monkeys, and that he would himself be re-incarnated as the eldest son of Dasaratha and in this form compass the death of Ravana.

In course of time, as a reward for his performance of the great sacrifice, four sons were born to Dasaratha, Rama by Kausalya, his oldest wife, Bharata, whose mother was Kaikeyi, and twin sons, Lakshmana and Satrughna, whose mother was Sumitra.

Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, destined to destroy Ravana, grew daily in grace, beauty, and strength. When he was but sixteen years old, having been sent for by a sage to destroy the demons who were disturbing the forest hermits in their

religious rites, he departed unattended, save by his brother Lakshmana and a guide, into the pathless forests, where he successfully overcame the terrible Rakshasa, Tarika, and conveyed her body to the grateful sage.

While he was journeying through the forests, destroying countless Rakshasas, he chanced to pass near the kingdom of Mithila and heard that its king, Janaka, had offered his peerless daughter, Sita, in marriage to the man who could bend the mighty bow of Siva the destroyer, which, since its owner's death, had been kept at Janaka's court.

Rama at once determined to accomplish the feat, which had been essayed in vain by so many suitors. When he presented himself at court Janaka was at once won by his youth and beauty; and when the mighty bow, resting upon an eight-wheeled car, was drawn in by five thousand men, and Rama without apparent effort bent it until it broke, he gladly gave him his beautiful daughter, and after the splendid wedding ceremonies were over, loaded the happy pair with presents to carry back to Ayodhya.

When Dasaratha, who had attended the marriage of his son at Mithila, returned home, he began to feel weary of reigning, and bethought himself of the ancient Hindu custom of making the eldest son and heir apparent a Yuva-Raja, that is appointing him assistant king. Rama deserved this honor, and would, moreover, be of great assistance to him.

His happy people received the announcement of his intention with delight; the priests approved of it as well, and the whole city was in the midst of the most splendid preparations for the ceremony, when it occurred to Dasaratha that all he lacked was the congratulations of his youngest and favorite wife, Kaikeyi, on this great event. The well-watered streets and the garlanded houses had already aroused the suspicions of Kaikeyi, suspicions speedily confirmed by the report of her maid. Angered and jealous because the son of Kausalya and not her darling Bharata, at that time absent from the city, was to be made Yuva-Raja, she fled to the "Chamber of Sorrows," and was there found by the old Raja.

Though Kaikeyi was his youngest and most beautiful wife, her tears, threats, and entreaties would have been of no avail had she not recalled that, months before, the old Raja, in gratitude for her devoted nursing during his illness, had granted her two promises. She now demanded the fulfilment of these before she would consent to smile upon him, and the consent won, she required him, first, to appoint Bharata Yuva-Raja; and, second, to exile Rama for fourteen years to the terrible forest of Dandaka.

The promise of a Hindu, once given, cannot be revoked. In spite of the grief of the old Raja, of Kausalya, his old wife, and of all the people, who were at the point of revolt at the sudden disgrace of their favorite prince, the terrible news was announced to Rama, and he declared himself ready to go, to save his father from dishonor.

He purposed to go alone, but Sita would not suffer herself to be thus deserted. Life without him, she pleaded, was worse than death; and so eloquent was her grief at the thought of parting that she was at last permitted to don the rough garment of bark provided by the malicious Kaikeyi.

The people of Ayodhya, determined to share the fate of their favorites, accompanied them from the city, their tears laying the dust raised by Rama's chariot wheels. But when sleep overcame them, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana escaped from them, dismissed their charioteer, and, crossing the Ganges, made their way to the mountain of Citra-kuta, where they took up their abode.

No more beautiful place could be imagined. Flowers of every kind, delicious fruits, and on every side the most pleasing prospects, together with perfect love, made their hermitage a paradise on earth. Here the exiles led an idyllic existence until sought out by Bharata, who, learning from his mother on his return home the ruin she had wrought in the Raj, had indignantly spurned her, and hastened to Dandaka. The old Raja had died from grief soon after the departure of the exiles, and Bharata now demanded that Rama should return to Ayodhya and become Raja, as was his right, as eldest son.

When Rama refused to do this until the end of his fourteen years of exile, Bharata vowed that for fourteen years he would wear the garb of a devotee and live outside the city, committing the management of the Raj to a pair of golden sandals which he took from Rama's feet. All the affairs of state would be transacted under the authority of the sandals, and Bharata, while ruling the Raj, would pay homage to them.

Soon after the departure of Bharata the exiles were warned to depart from their home on Citra-kuta and seek a safer hermitage, for terrible rakshasas filled this part of the forest. They accordingly sought the abode of Atri the hermit, whose wife Anasuya was so pleased with Sita's piety and devotion to her husband that she bestowed upon her the crown of immortal youth and beauty. They soon found a new abode in the forest of Pancarati, on the banks of the river Godavari, where Lakshmana erected a spacious bamboo house.

Their happiness in this elysian spot was destined to be short-lived. Near them dwelt a horrible rakshasa, Surpanakha by name, who fell in love with Rama. When she found that he did not admire the beautiful form she assumed to win him, and that both he and Lakshmana laughed at her advances, she attempted to destroy Sita, only to receive in the attempt a disfiguring wound from the watchful Lakshmana. Desiring revenge for her disfigured countenance and her scorned love, she hastened to the court of her brother Ravana, in Ceylon, and in order to induce him to avenge her wrongs, dwelt upon the charms of the beautiful wife of Rama.

Some days after, Sita espied a golden fawn, flecked with silver, among the trees near their home. Its shining body, its jewel-like horns, so captivated her fancy that she implored Rama, if possible, to take it alive for her; if not, at least to bring her its skin for a couch. As Rama departed, he warned Lakshmana not to leave Sita for one moment; he would surely return, since no weapon could harm him. In the depths of the forest the fawn fell by his arrow, crying as it fell, “O Sita! O Lakshmana!” in Rama’s very tones.

When Sita heard the cry she reproached Lakshmana for not going to his brother’s aid, until he left her to escape her bitter words. He had no sooner disappeared in the direction of the cry than a hermit appeared and asked her to minister unto his wants.

Sita carried him food, bathed his feet, and conversed with him until, able no longer to conceal his admiration for her, he revealed himself in his true form as the demon god of Ceylon.

When she indignantly repulsed him he seized her, and mounting his chariot drove rapidly towards Ceylon.

When Rama and Lakshmana returned home, soon after, they found the house empty. As they searched through the forest for traces of her they found a giant vulture dying from wounds received while endeavoring to rescue the shrieking Sita. Going farther, they encountered the monkey king Sugriva and his chiefs, among whom Sita had dropped from the chariot her scarf and ornaments.

Sugriva had been deposed from his kingdom by his brother Bali, who had also taken his wife from him. Rama agreed to conquer Bali if Sugriva would assist in the search for Sita; and, the agreement made, they at once marched upon Kishkindha, together slew Bali, and gained possession of the wealthy city and the queen Tara. They were now ready to search for the lost Sita.

In his quest through every land, Hanuman, the monkey general, learned from the king of the vultures that she had been carried to Ceylon. He immediately set out for the coast with his army, only to find a bridgeless ocean stretching between them and the island. Commanding his soldiers to remain where they were, Hanuman expanded his body to enormous proportions, leaped the vast expanse of water, and alighted upon a mountain, from which he could look down upon Lanka, the capital city of Ceylon. Perceiving the city to be closely guarded, he assumed the form of a cat, and thus, unsuspected, crept through the barriers and examined the city. He found the demon god in his apartments, surrounded by beautiful women, but Sita was not among them. Continuing his search, he at last discovered her, her beauty dimmed by grief, seated under a tree in a beautiful asoka grove, guarded by hideous rakshasas with the faces of buffaloes, dogs, and swine.

Assuming the form of a tiny monkey, Hanuman crept down the tree, and giving her the ring of Rama, took one from her. He offered to carry her away with him, but Sita declared that Rama must himself come to her rescue. While they were talking together, the demon god appeared, and, after fruitless wooing, announced that if Sita did not yield herself to him in two months he would have her guards “mince her limbs with steel” for his morning repast.

In his rage, Hanuman destroyed a mango grove and was captured by the demon’s guards, who were ordered to set his tail on fire. As soon as this was done, Hanuman made himself so small that he slipped from his bonds, and, jumping upon the roofs, spread a conflagration through the city of Lanka.

He leaped back to the mainland, conveyed the news of Sita’s captivity to Rama and Sugriva, and was soon engaged in active preparations for the campaign.

As long as the ocean was unbridged it was impossible for any one save Hanuman to cross it. In his anger at being so thwarted, Rama turned his weapons against it, until from the terrified waves rose the god of the ocean, who promised him that if Nala built a bridge, the waves should support the materials as firmly as though it were built on land.

Terror reigned in Lanka at the news of the approach of Rama. Vibishana, Ravana’s brother, deserted to Rama, because of the demon’s rage when he advised him to make peace with Rama. Fiercely fought battles ensued, in which even the gods took part, Vishnu and Indra taking sides with Rama, and the evil spirits fighting with Ravana.

After the war had been carried on for some time, with varying results, it was decided to determine it by single combat between Ravana and Rama. Then even the gods were terrified at the fierceness of the conflict. At each shot Rama’s mighty bow cut off a

head of the demon, which at once grew back, and the hero was in despair until he remembered the all-powerful arrow given him by Brahma.

As the demon fell by this weapon, flowers rained from heaven upon the happy victor, and his ears were ravished with celestial music.

Touched by the grief of Ravana's widows, Rama ordered his foe a splendid funeral, and then sought the conquered city.

Sita was led forth, beaming with happiness at finding herself re-united to her husband; but her happiness was destined to be of short duration. Rama received her with coldness and with downcast eyes, saying that she could no longer be his wife, after having dwelt in the zenana of the demon. Sita assured him of her innocence; but on his continuing to revile her, she ordered her funeral pyre to be built, since she would rather die by fire than live despised by Rama. The sympathy of all the bystanders was with Sita, but Rama saw her enter the flames without a tremor. Soon Agni, the god of fire, appeared, bearing the uninjured Sita in his arms. Her innocence thus publicly proved by the trial by fire, she was welcomed by Rama, whose treatment she tenderly forgave.

The conquest made, the demon destroyed, and Sita restored, Rama returned in triumph to Ayodhya, and assumed the government. The city was prosperous, the people were happy, and for a time all went well. It was not long, however, before whispers concerning Sita's long abode in Ceylon spread abroad, and some one whispered to Rama that a famine in the country was due to the guilt of Sita, who had suffered the caresses of the demon while in captivity in Ceylon. Forgetful of the trial by fire, forgetful of Sita's devotion to him through weal and woe, the ungrateful Rama immediately ordered her to the forest in which they had spent together the happy years of their exile.

Without a murmur the unhappy Sita, alone and unbefriended, dragged herself to the forest, and, torn with grief of body and spirit, found the hermitage of Valmiki, where she gave birth to twin sons, Lava and Kuça. Here she reared them, with the assistance of the hermit, who was their teacher, and under whose care they grew to manhood, handsome and strong.

It chanced about the time the youths were twenty years old, that Rama, who had grown peevish and disagreeable with age, began to think the gods were angered with him because he had killed Ravana, who was the son of a Brahman. Determined to propitiate them by means of the great sacrifice, he caused a horse to be turned loose in the forest. When his men went to retake it, at the end of the year, it was caught by two strong and beautiful youths who resisted all efforts to capture them. In his rage Rama went to the forest in person, only to learn that the youths were his twin sons, Lava and Kuça. Struck with remorse, Rama recalled the sufferings of his wife Sita, and on learning that she was at the hermitage of Valmiki, ordered her to come to him, that he might take her to him again, having first caused her to endure the trial by fire to prove her innocence to all his court.

Sita had had time to recover from the love of her youth, and the prospect of life with Rama, without the *couleur de rose* of youthful love, was not altogether pleasant. At first, she even refused to see him; but finally, moved by the appeals of Valmiki and his wife, she clad herself in her richest robes, and, young and beautiful as when first won by Rama, she stood before him. Not deigning to look in his face, she appealed to the earth. If she had never loved any man but Rama, if her truth and purity were known to the earth, let it open its bosom and take her to it. While the armies stood trembling with horror, the earth opened, a gorgeous throne appeared, and the goddess of earth, seated upon it, took Sita beside her and conveyed her to the realms of eternal happiness, leaving the too late repentant Rama to wear out his remaining years in shame and penitence.

[The first selection covers Rama's sudden exile, with the reactions of those around him.]

Book II

Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith

Canto XVII. Ráma's Approach.

As Ráma, rendering blithe and gay
His loving friends, pursued his way,
He saw on either hand a press
Of mingled people numberless.
The royal street he traversed, where 5
Incense of aloe filled the air,
Where rose high palaces, that vied

With paly clouds, on either side;
With flowers of myriad colours graced.
And food for every varied taste,
Bright as the glowing path o'erhead
Which feet of Gods celestial tread,
Loud benedictions, sweet to hear,
From countless voices soothed his ear.
While he to each gave due salute
His place and dignity to suit:
"Be thou," the joyful people cried,
"Be thou our guardian, lord and guide.
Throned and anointed king to-day,
Thy feet set forth upon the way
Wherein, each honoured as a God,
Thy fathers and forefathers trod.
Thy sire and his have graced the throne,
And loving care to us have shown:
Thus blest shall we and ours remain,
Yea still more blest in Ráma's reign.
No more of dainty fare we need,
And but one cherished object heed,
That we may see our prince today
Invested with imperial sway."

Such were the words and pleasant speech
That Ráma heard, unmoved, from each
Of the dear friends around him spread,
As onward through the street he sped,
For none could turn his eye or thought
From the dear form his glances sought,
With fruitless ardour forward cast
Even when Raghu's son had past.
And he who saw not Ráma nigh,
Nor caught a look from Ráma's eye,
A mark for scorn and general blame,
Reproached himself in bitter shame.
For to each class his equal mind
With sympathy and love inclined
Most fully of the princely four,
So greatest love to him they bore.



Image 3.5: Jor Bangla Temple (Ramayana Motifs) | This temple wall in India shows numerous scenes from the Râmâyana.

Author: User "Jonoikobangali"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

His circling course the hero bent
Round shrine and altar, reverent,
Round homes of Gods, where cross-roads met,
Where many a sacred tree was set.
Near to his father's house he drew
Like Indra's beautiful to view,
And with the light his glory gave
Within the royal palace drave.
Through three broad courts, where bowmen kept
Their watch and ward, his coursers swept,
Then through the two remaining went
On foot the prince preëminent.
Through all the courts the hero passed,
And gained the ladies' bower at last;
Then through the door alone withdrew,
And left without his retinue.
When thus the monarch's noble boy
Had gone his sire to meet,
The multitude, elate with joy,
Stood watching in the street,
And his return with eager eyes
Expected at the gates,
As for his darling moon to rise
The King of Rivers waits.

Canto XVIII. The Sentence.

With hopeless eye and pallid mien
There sat the monarch with the queen.
His father's feet with reverence due
He clasped, and touched Kaikeyí's too.
The king, with eyes still brimming o'er,
Cried Ráma! and could do no more.
His voice was choked, his eye was dim,
He could not speak or look on him.

Then sudden fear made Ráma shake
As though his foot had roused a snake,
Soon as his eyes had seen the change
So mournful, terrible, and strange.
For there his reason well-nigh fled,
Sighing, with soul disquieted,
To torturing pangs a prey,
Dismayed, despairing, and distraught,
In a fierce whirl of wildering thought
The hapless monarch lay,
Like Ocean wave-engarlanded
Storm-driven from his tranquil bed,
The Sun-God in eclipse,
Or like a holy seer, heart-stirred
With anguish, when a lying word
Has passed his heedless lips.
The sight of his dear father, pained
With woe and misery unexplained
Filled Ráma with unrest,
As Ocean's pulses rise and swell
When the great moon he loves so well
Shines full upon his breast.
So grieving for his father's sake,
To his own heart the hero spake:
"Why will the king my sire to-day
No kindly word of greeting say?
At other times, though wroth he be,
His eyes grow calm that look on me.
Then why does anguish wring his brow
To see his well-beloved now?"
Sick and perplexed, distraught with woe,
To Queen Kaikeyí bowing low,
His eyes grow calm that look on me.
Then why does anguish wring his brow
To see his well-beloved now?"
Sick and perplexed, distraught with woe,
To Queen Kaikeyí bowing low,
His pardon for my heedless sin.
Why is the sire I ever find
Filled with all love to-day unkind?
With eyes cast down and pallid cheek
This day alone he will not speak.
Or lies he prostrate neath the blow
Of fierce disease or sudden woe?
For all our bliss is dashed with pain,
And joy unmixt is hard to gain.
Does stroke of evil fortune smite
Dear Bharat, charming to the sight,
Or on the brave Śatrughna fall,
Or consorts, for he loves them all?

Against his words when I rebel,
Or fail to please the monarch well,
When deeds of mine his soul offend,
That hour I pray my life may end.
How should a man to him who gave
His being and his life behave?
The sire to whom he owes his birth
Should be his deity on earth.
Hast thou, by pride and folly moved,
With bitter taunt the king reproved?
Has scorn of thine or cruel jest
To passion stirred his gentle breast?
Speak truly, Queen, that I may know
What cause has changed the monarch so."

Thus by the high-souled prince addressed,
Of Raghu's sons the chief and best,
She cast all ruth and shame aside,
And bold with greedy words replied:
"Not wrath, O Ráma, stirs the king,
Nor misery stabs with sudden sting;
One thought that fills his soul has he,
But dares not speak for fear of thee.
Thou art so dear, his lips refrain
From words that might his darling pain.
But thou, as duty bids, must still
The promise of thy sire fulfil.
He who to me in days gone by
Vouchsafed a boon with honours high,
Dares now, a king, his word regret,
And caitiff-like disowns the debt.
The lord of men his promise gave
To grant the boon that I might crave,
And now a bridge would idly throw
When the dried stream has ceased to flow.
His faith the monarch must not break
In wrath, or e'en for thy dear sake.
From faith, as well the righteous know,
Our virtue and our merits flow.
Now, be they good or be they ill,
Do thou thy father's words fulfil:
Swear that his promise shall not fail,
And I will tell thee all the tale.
Yes, Ráma, when I hear that thou
Hast bound thee by thy father's vow,
Then, not till then, my lips shall speak,
Nor will he tell what boon I seek."
He heard, and with a troubled breast
This answer to the queen addressed:
"Ah me, dear lady, canst thou deem

That words like these thy lips beseem?
I, at the bidding of my sire,
Would cast my body to the fire,
A deadly draught of poison drink,
Or in the waves of ocean sink:
If he command, it shall be done,
My father and my king in one.
Then speak and let me know the thing
So longed for by my lord the king.
It shall be done: let this suffice;
Ráma ne'er makes a promise twice."

He ended. To the princely youth
Who loved the right and spoke the truth,
Cruel, abominable came
The answer of the ruthless dame:
"When Gods and Titans fought of yore,
Transfixed with darts and bathed in gore
Two boons to me thy father gave
For the dear life 'twas mine to save.
Of him I claim the ancient debt,
That Bharat on the throne be set,
And thou, O Ráma, go this day
To Daṇḍak forest far away.
Now, Ráma, if thou wilt maintain
Thy father's faith without a stain,
And thine own truth and honour clear,
Then, best of men, my bidding hear.
Do thou thy father's word obey,
Nor from the pledge he gave me stray.
Thy life in Daṇḍak forest spend
Till nine long years and five shall end.
Upon my Bharat's princely head
Let consecrating drops be shed,
With all the royal pomp for thee
Made ready by the king's decree.
Seek Daṇḍak forest and resign
Rites that would make the empire thine,
For twice seven years of exile wear
The coat of bark and matted hair.
Then in thy stead let Bharat reign
Lord of his royal sire's domain,
Rich in the fairest gems that shine,
Cars, elephants, and steeds, and kine.
The monarch mourns thy altered fate
And vails his brow compassionate:
Bowed down by bitter grief he lies
And dares not lift to thine his eyes.
Obey his word: be firm and brave,
And with great truth the monarch save."

While thus with cruel words she spoke,
No grief the noble youth betrayed;
But forth the father's anguish broke,
At his dear Ráma's lot dismayed.

Canto XIX. Ráma's Promise

Calm and unmoved by threatened woe
The noble conqueror of the foe
Answered the cruel words she spoke,
Nor quailed beneath the murderous stroke:
"Yea, for my father's promise sake
I to the wood my way will take,
And dwell a lonely exile there
In hermit dress with matted hair.
One thing alone I fain would learn,
Why is the king this day so stern?
Why is the scourge of foes so cold,
Nor gives me greeting as of old?
Now let not anger flush thy cheek:
Before thy face the truth I speak,
In hermit's coat with matted hair
To the wild wood will I repair.
How can I fail his will to do,
Friend, master, grateful sovereign too?
One only pang consumes my breast:
That his own lips have not expressed
His will, nor made his longing known
That Bharat should ascend the throne.
To Bharat I would yield my wife,
My realm and wealth, mine own dear life,
Unasked I fain would yield them all:
More gladly at my father's call,
More gladly when the gift may free
His honour and bring joy to thee.
Thus, lady, his sad heart release
From the sore shame, and give him peace.
But tell me, O, I pray thee, why
The lord of men, with downcast eye,
Lies prostrate thus, and one by one
Down his pale cheek the tear-drops run.
Let couriers to thy father speed
On horses of the swiftest breed,
And, by the mandate of the king,
Thy Bharat to his presence bring.
My father's words I will not stay
To question, but this very day
To Daṇḍak's pathless wild will fare,
For twice seven years an exile there."

When Ráma thus had made reply
Kaikeyí's heart with joy beat high.
She, trusting to the pledge she held,
The youth's departure thus impelled: "'Tis well.
Be messengers despatched
On coursers ne'er for fleetness matched,
To seek my father's home and lead
My Bharat back with all their speed.
And, Ráma, as I ween that thou
Wilt scarce endure to linger now,
So surely it were wise and good
This hour to journey to the wood.
And if, with shame cast down and weak,
No word to thee the king can speak,
Forgive, and from thy mind dismiss
A trifle in an hour like this.
But till thy feet in rapid haste
Have left the city for the waste,
And to the distant forest fled,
He will not bathe nor call for bread."

"Woe! woe!" from the sad monarch burst,
In surging floods of grief immersed;
Then swooning, with his wits astray,
Upon the gold-wrought couch he lay,
And Ráma raised the aged king:
But the stern queen, unpitying,
Checked not her needless words, nor spared
The hero for all speed prepared,
But urged him with her bitter tongue,
Like a good horse with lashes stung,
She spoke her shameful speech. Serene
He heard the fury of the queen,
And to her words so vile and dread
Gently, unmoved in mind, he said:
"I would not in this world remain
A grovelling thrall to paltry gain,
But duty's path would fain pursue,
True as the saints themselves are true.
From death itself I would not fly
My father's wish to gratify,
What deed soe'er his loving son
May do to please him, think it done.
Amid all duties, Queen, I count
This duty first and paramount,
That sons, obedient, aye fulfil
Their honoured fathers' word and will.
Without his word, if thou decree,
Forth to the forest will I flee,
And there shall fourteen years be spent

Mid lonely wilds in banishment.
Methinks thou couldst not hope to find
One spark of virtue in my mind,
If thou, whose wish is still my lord,
Hast for this grace the king implored.
This day I go, but, ere we part,
Must cheer my Sítá's tender heart,
To my dear mother bid farewell;
Then to the woods, a while to dwell.
With thee, O Queen, the care must rest
That Bharat hear his sire's behest,
And guard the land with righteous sway,
For such the law that lives for aye."

In speechless woe the father heard,
Wept with loud cries, but spoke no word.
Then Ráma touched his senseless feet,
And hers, for honour most unmeet;
Round both his circling steps he bent,
Then from the bower the hero went.
Soon as he reached the gate he found
His dear companions gathered round.
Behind him came Sumitrá's child
With weeping eyes so sad and wild.
Then saw he all that rich array
Of vases for the glorious day.
Round them with reverent stops he paced,
Nor vailed his eye, nor moved in haste.
The loss of empire could not dim
The glory that encompassed him.
So will the Lord of Cooling Rays
On whom the world delights to gaze,
Through the great love of all retain
Sweet splendour in the time of wane.
Now to the exile's lot resigned
He left the rule of earth behind:
As though all worldly cares he spurned
No trouble was in him discerned.
The chouries that for kings are used,
And white umbrella, he refused,
Dismissed his chariot and his men,
And every friend and citizen.
He ruled his senses, nor betrayed
The grief that on his bosom weighed,
And thus his mother's mansion sought
To tell the mournful news he brought.
Nor could the gay-clad people there
Who flocked round Ráma true and fair,
One sign of altered fortune trace
Upon the splendid hero's face.

Nor had the chieftain, mighty-armed,
Lost the bright look all hearts that charmed,
As e'en from autumn moons is thrown
A splendour which is all their own.
With his sweet voice the hero spoke
Saluting all the gathered folk,
Then righteous-souled and great in fame
Close to his mother's house he came.
Lakshmaṇ the brave, his brother's peer
In princely virtues, followed near,
Sore troubled, but resolved to show
No token of his secret woe.
Thus to the palace Ráma went
Where all were gay with hope and joy;
But well he knew the dire event
That hope would mar, that bliss destroy.
So to his grief he would not yield
Lest the sad change their hearts might rend,
And, the dread tiding unrevealed,
Spared from the blow each faithful friend.

Canto XXVI. Alone With Sítá

So Ráma, to his purpose true,
To Queen Kauśalyá bade adieu,
Received the benison she gave,
And to the path of duty clave.
As through the crowded street he passed,
A radiance on the way he cast,
And each fair grace, by all approved,
The bosoms of the people moved.
Now of the woeful change no word
The fair Videhan bride had heard;
The thought of that imperial rite
Still filled her bosom with delight.
With grateful heart and joyful thought
The Gods in worship she had sought,
And, well in royal duties learned,
Sat longing till her lord returned,
Not all unmarked by grief and shame
Within his sumptuous home he came,
And hurried through the happy crowd
With eye dejected, gloomy-browed.
Up Sítá sprang, and every limb
Trembled with fear at sight of him.
She marked that cheek where anguish fed,
Those senses care-disquieted.
For, when he looked on her, no more
Could his heart hide the load it bore,
Nor could the pious chief control
The paleness o'er his cheek that stole.

His altered cheer, his brow bedewed
With clammy drops, his grief she viewed,
And cried, consumed with fires of woe,
“What, O my lord, has changed thee so?
Vrihaspati looks down benign,
And the moon rests in Pushya’s sign,
As Bráhmans sage this day declare:
Then whence, my lord, this grief and care?
Why does no canopy, like foam
For its white beauty, shade thee home,
Its hundred ribs spread wide to throw
Splendour on thy fair head below?
Where are the royal fans, to grace
The lotus beauty of thy face,
Fair as the moon or wild-swan’s wing,
And waving round the new-made king?
Why do no sweet-toned bards rejoice
To hail thee with triumphant voice?
No tuneful heralds love to raise
Loud music in their monarch’s praise?
Why do no Bráhmans, Scripture-read,
Pour curds and honey on thy head,
Anointed, as the laws ordain,
With holy rites, supreme to reign?
Where are the chiefs of every guild?
Where are the myriads should have filled
The streets, and followed home their king
With merry noise and triumphing?
Why does no gold-wrought chariot lead
With four brave horses, best for speed?
No elephant precede the crowd
Like a huge hill or thunder cloud,
Marked from his birth for happy fate,
Whom signs auspicious decorate?
Why does no henchman, young and fair,
Precede thee, and delight to bear
Entrusted to his reverent hold
The burthen of thy throne of gold?
Why, if the consecrating rite
Be ready, why this mournful plight?
Why do I see this sudden change,
This altered mien so sad and strange?”

To her, as thus she weeping cried,
Raghu’s illustrious son replied:
“Sítá, my honoured sire’s decree
Commands me to the woods to flee.
O high-born lady, nobly bred
In the good paths thy footsteps tread,
Hear, Janak’s daughter, while I tell

The story as it all befell.
Of old my father true and brave
Two boons to Queen Kaikeyí gave. 80
Through these the preparations made
For me to-day by her are stayed,
For he is bound to disallow
This promise by that earlier vow.
In Daṇḍak forest wild and vast 85
Must fourteen years by me be passed.
My father's will makes Bharat heir,
The kingdom and the throne to share.
Now, ere the lonely wild I seek,
I come once more with thee to speak. 90
In Bharat's presence, O my dame,
Ne'er speak with pride of Ráma's name:
Another's eulogy to hear
Is hateful to a monarch's ear.
Thou must with love his rule obey 95
To whom my father yields the sway.
With love and sweet observance learn
His grace, and more the king's, to earn.
Now, that my father may not break
The words of promise that he spake, 100
To the drear wood my steps are bent:
Be firm, good Sítá, and content.
Through all that time, my blameless spouse,
Keep well thy fasts and holy vows.
Rise from thy bed at break of day, 105
And to the Gods due worship pay.
With meek and lowly love revere
The lord of men, my father dear,
And reverence to Kauśalyá show,
My mother, worn with eld and woe: 110
By duty's law, O best of dames,
High worship from thy love she claims,
Nor to the other queens refuse
Observance, rendering each her dues:
By love and fond attention shown 115
They are my mothers like mine own.
Let Bharat and Śatrughna bear
In thy sweet love a special share:
Dear as my life, O let them be
Like brother and like son to thee. 120
In every word and deed refrain
From aught that Bharat's soul may pain:
He is Ayodhyá's king and mine,
The head and lord of all our line.
For those who serve and love them much 125
With weariless endeavour, touch
And win the gracious hearts of kings.

While wrath from disobedience springs.
Great monarchs from their presence send
Their lawful sons who still offend,
And welcome to the vacant place
Good children of an alien race.
Then, best of women, rest thou here,
And Bharat's will with love revere.
Obedient to thy king remain,
And still thy vows of truth maintain.
To the wide wood my steps I bend:
Make thou thy dwelling here;
See that thy conduct ne'er offend,
And keep my words, my dear."

Canto XXVII. Sítá's Speech

His sweetly-speaking bride, who best
Deserved her lord, he thus addressed.
Then tender love bade passion wake,
And thus the fair Videhan spake:
"What words are these that thou hast said?
Contempt of me the thought has bred.
O best of heroes, I dismiss
With bitter scorn a speech like this:
Unworthy of a warrior's fame
It taints a monarch's son with shame,
Ne'er to be heard from those who know
The science of the sword and bow.
My lord, the mother, sire, and son
Receive their lots by merit won;
The brother and the daughter find
The portions to their deeds assigned.
The wife alone, whate'er await,
Must share on earth her husband's fate.
So now the king's command which sends
Thee to the wild, to me extends.
The wife can find no refuge, none,
In father, mother, self, or son:
Both here, and when they vanish hence,
Her husband is her sole defence.
If, Raghu's son, thy steps are led
Where Daṇḍak's pathless wilds are spread,
My foot before thine own shall pass
Through tangled thorn and matted grass.
Dismiss thine anger and thy doubt:
Like refuse water cast them out,
And lead me, O my hero, hence
I know not sin with confidence.
Whate'er his lot, 'tis far more sweet
To follow still a husband's feet
Than in rich palaces to lie,

Or roam at pleasure through the sky.
My mother and my sire have taught
What duty bids, and trained each thought,
Nor have I now mine ear to turn
The duties of a wife to learn.
I'll seek with thee the woodland dell
And pathless wild where no men dwell,
Where tribes of silvan creatures roam,
And many a tiger makes his home.
My life shall pass as pleasant there
As in my father's palace fair.
The worlds shall wake no care in me;
My only care be truth to thee.
There while thy wish I still obey,
True to my vows with thee I'll stray,
And there shall blissful hours be spent
In woods with honey redolent.
In forest shades thy mighty arm
Would keep a stranger's life from harm,
And how shall Sítá think of fear
When thou, O glorious lord, art near?
Heir of high bliss, my choice is made,
Nor can I from my will be stayed.
Doubt not; the earth will yield me roots,
These will I eat, and woodland fruits;
And as with thee I wander there
I will not bring thee grief or care.
I long, when thou, wise lord, art nigh,
All fearless, with delighted eye
To gaze upon the rocky hill,
The lake, the fountain, and the rill;
To sport with thee, my limbs to cool,
In some pure lily-covered pool,
While the white swan's and mallard's wings
Are plashing in the water-springs.
So would a thousand seasons flee
Like one sweet day, if spent with thee.
Without my lord I would not prize
A home with Gods above the skies:
Without my lord, my life to bless,
Where could be heaven or happiness?
Forbid me not: with thee I go
The tangled wood to tread.
There will I live with thee, as though
This roof were o'er my head.
My will for thine shall be resigned;
Thy feet my steps shall guide.
Thou, only thou, art in my mind:
I heed not all beside.
Thy heart shall ne'er by me be grieved;

Do not my prayer deny:
Take me, dear lord; of thee bereaved
Thy Sítá swears to die."
These words the duteous lady spake,
Nor would he yet consent
His faithful wife with him to take
To share his banishment.
He soothed her with his gentle speech;
To change her will he strove;
And much he said the woes to teach
Of those in wilds who rove.

Canto XXVIII. The Dangers Of The Wood

Thus Sítá spake, and he who knew
His duty, to its orders true,
Was still reluctant as the woes
Of forest life before him rose.
He sought to soothe her grief, to dry
The torrent from each brimming eye,
And then, her firm resolve to shake,
These words the pious hero spake:
"O daughter of a noble line,
Whose steps from virtue ne'er decline,
Remain, thy duties here pursue,
As my fond heart would have thee do.
Now hear me, Sítá, fair and weak,
And do the words that I shall speak.
Attend and hear while I explain
Each danger in the wood, each pain.
Thy lips have spoken: I condemn
The foolish words that fell from them.
This senseless plan, this wish of thine
To live a forest life, resign.
The names of trouble and distress
Suit well the tangled wilderness.
In the wild wood no joy I know,
A forest life is nought but woe.
The lion in his mountain cave
Answers the torrents as they rave,
And forth his voice of terror throws:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
There mighty monsters fearless play,
And in their maddened onset slay
The hapless wretch who near them goes:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
'Tis hard to ford each treacherous flood,
So thick with crocodiles and mud,
Where the wild elephants repose:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
Or far from streams the wanderer strays

Through thorns and creeper-tangled ways,
While round him many a wild-cock crows:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
On the cold ground upon a heap
Of gathered leaves condemned to sleep,
Toil-wearied, will his eyelids close:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
Long days and nights must he content
His soul with scanty aliment,
What fruit the wind from branches blows:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
O Sítá, while his strength may last,
The ascetic in the wood must fast,
Coil on his head his matted hair,
And bark must be his only wear.
To Gods and spirits day by day
The ordered worship he must pay,
And honour with respectful care
Each wandering guest who meets him there.
The bathing rites he ne'er must shun
At dawn, at noon, at set of sun,
Obedient to the law he knows:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
To grace the altar must be brought
The gift of flowers his hands have sought
The debt each pious hermit owes:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
The devotee must be content
To live, severely abstinent,
On what the chance of fortune shows:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
Hunger afflicts him evermore:
The nights are black, the wild winds roar;
And there are dangers worse than those:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
There creeping things in every form
Infest the earth, the serpents swarm,
And each proud eye with fury glows:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
The snakes that by the rives hide
In sinuous course like rivers glide,
And line the path with deadly foes:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
Scorpions, and grasshoppers, and flies
Disturb the wanderer as he lies,
And wake him from his troubled doze:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.
Trees, thorny bushes, intertwined,
Their branched ends together bind,
And dense with grass the thicket grows:

The wood, my dear, is full of woes,
With many ills the flesh is tried,
When these and countless fears beside
Vex those who in the wood remain:
The wilds are naught but grief and pain.
Hope, anger must be cast aside,
To penance every thought applied:
No fear must be of things to fear:
Hence is the wood for ever drear.
Enough, my love: thy purpose quit:
For forest life thou art not fit.
As thus I think on all, I see
The wild wood is no place for thee.”

Canto XXIX. Sítá’s Appeal

Thus Ráma spake. Her lord’s address
The lady heard with deep distress,
And, as the tear bedimmed her eye,
In soft low accents made reply:
“The perils of the wood, and all
The woes thou countest to appal,
Led by my love I deem not pain;
Each woe a charm, each loss a gain.
Tiger, and elephant, and deer,
Bull, lion, buffalo, in fear,
Soon as thy matchless form they see,
With every silvan beast will flee.
With thee, O Ráma, I must go:
My sire’s command ordains it so.
Bereft of thee, my lonely heart
Must break, and life and I must part.
While thou, O mighty lord, art nigh,
Not even He who rules the sky,
Though He is strongest of the strong,
With all his might can do me wrong.
Nor can a lonely woman left
By her dear husband live bereft.
In my great love, my lord, I ween,
The truth of this thou mayst have seen.
In my sire’s palace long ago
I heard the chief of those who know,
The truth-declaring Bráhmans, tell
My fortune, in the wood to dwell.
I heard their promise who divine
The future by each mark and sign,
And from that hour have longed to lead
The forest life their lips decreed.
Now, mighty Ráma, I must share
Thy father’s doom which sends thee there;
In this I will not be denied,

But follow, love, where thou shalt guide.
O husband, I will go with thee,
Obedient to that high decree.
Now let the Bráhmans' words be true,
For this the time they had in view.
I know full well the wood has woes;
But they disturb the lives of those
Who in the forest dwell, nor hold
Their rebel senses well controlled.
In my sire's halls, ere I was wed,
I heard a dame who begged her bread
Before my mother's face relate
What griefs a forest life await.
And many a time in sport I prayed
To seek with thee the greenwood shade,
For O, my heart on this is set,
To follow thee, dear anchoret.
May blessings on thy life attend:
I long with thee my steps to bend,
For with such hero as thou art
This pilgrimage enchants my heart.
Still close, my lord, to thy dear side
My spirit will be purified:
Love from all sin my soul will free:
My husband is a God to me.
So, love, with thee shall I have bliss
And share the life that follows this.
I heard a Bráhman, dear to fame,
This ancient Scripture text proclaim:
"The woman whom on earth below
Her parents on a man bestow,
And lawfully their hands unite
With water and each holy rite,
She in this world shall be his wife,
His also in the after life."
Then tell me, O beloved, why
Thou wilt this earnest prayer deny,
Nor take me with thee to the wood,
Thine own dear wife so true and good.
But if thou wilt not take me there
Thus grieving in my wild despair,
To fire or water I will fly,
Or to the poisoned draught, and die."

Nor could she yet her lord persuade
To take her to the lonely shade.
The answer of the strong-armed chief
Smote the Videhan's soul with grief,
And from her eyes the torrents came
bathing the bosom of the dame.

Canto XXX. The Triumph Of Love

The daughter of Videha's king,
While Ráma strove to soothe the sting
Of her deep anguish, thus began
Once more in furtherance of her plan:
And with her spirit sorely tried
By fear and anger, love and pride,
With keenly taunting words addressed
Her hero of the stately breast:
"Why did the king my sire, who reigns
O'er fair Videha's wide domains,
Hail Ráma son with joy unwise,
A woman in a man's disguise?
Now falsely would the people say,
By idle fancies led astray,
That Ráma's own are power and might,
As glorious as the Lord of Light.
Why sinkest thou in such dismay?
What fears upon thy spirit weigh,
That thou, O Ráma, fain wouldst flee
From her who thinks of naught but thee?
To thy dear will am I resigned
In heart and body, soul and mind,
As Sávitrí gave all to one,
Satyaván, Dyumatsena's son.
Not e'en in fancy can I brook
To any guard save thee to look:
Let meaner wives their houses shame,
To go with thee is all my claim.
Like some low actor, deemst thou fit
Thy wife to others to commit
Thine own, espoused in maiden youth,
Thy wife so long, unblamed for truth?
Do thou, my lord, his will obey
For whom thou losest royal sway,
To whom thou wouldst thy wife confide
Not me, but thee, his wish may guide.
Thou must not here thy wife forsake,
And to the wood thy journey make,
Whether stern penance, grief, and care,
Or rule or heaven await thee there.
Nor shall fatigue my limbs distress
When wandering in the wilderness:
Each path which near to thee I tread
Shall seem a soft luxurious bed.
The reeds, the bushes where I pass,
The thorny trees, the tangled grass
Shall feel, if only thou be near,
Soft to my touch as skins of deer.

When the rude wind in fury blows,
And scattered dust upon me throws,
That dust, beloved lord, to me
Shall as the precious sandal be.
And what shall be more blest than I,
When gazing on the wood I lie
In some green glade upon a bed
With sacred grass beneath us spread?
The root, the leaf, the fruit which thou
Shalt give me from the earth or bough,
Scanty or plentiful, to eat,
Shall taste to me as Amrit sweet.
As there I live on flowers and roots
And every season's kindly fruits,
I will not for my mother grieve,
My sire, my home, or all I leave.
My presence, love, shall never add
One pain to make the heart more sad;
I will not cause thee grief or care,
Nor be a burden hard to bear.
With thee is heaven, where'er the spot;
Each place is hell where thou art not.
Then go with me, O Ráma; this
Is all my hope and all my bliss.
If thou wilt leave thy wife who still
Entreats thee with undaunted will,
This very day shall poison close
The life that spurns the rule of foes.
How, after, can my soul sustain
The bitter life of endless pain,
When thy dear face, my lord, I miss?
No, death is better far than this.
Not for an hour could I endure
The deadly grief that knows not cure,
Far less a woe I could not shun
For ten long years, and three, and one."
While fires of woe consumed her, such
Her sad appeal, lamenting much;
Then with a wild cry, anguish-wrung,
About her husband's neck she clung.
Like some she-elephant who bleeds
Struck by the hunter's venomed reeds,
So in her quivering heart she felt
The many wounds his speeches dealt.
Then, as the spark from wood is gained,
Down rolled the tear so long restrained:
The crystal moisture, sprung from woe,
From her sweet eyes began to flow,
As runs the water from a pair
Of lotuses divinely fair.

And Sítá's face with long dark eyes,
Pure as the moon of autumn skies,
Faded with weeping, as the buds
Of lotuses when sink the floods.
Around his wife his arms he strained,
Who senseless from her woe remained,
And with sweet words, that bade her wake
To life again, the hero spake:
"I would not with thy woe, my Queen,
Buy heaven and all its blissful sheen.
Void of all fear am I as He,
The self-existent God, can be.
I knew not all thy heart till now,
Dear lady of the lovely brow,
So wished not thee in woods to dwell;
Yet there mine arm can guard thee well.
Now surely thou, dear love, wast made
To dwell with me in green wood shade.
And, as a high saint's tender mind
Clings to its love for all mankind,
So I to thee will ever cling,
Sweet daughter of Videha's king.
The good, of old, O soft of frame,
Honoured this duty's sovereign claim,
And I its guidance will not shun,
True as light's Queen is to the Sun.
I cannot, pride of Janak's line,
This journey to the wood decline:
My sire's behest, the oath he sware,
The claims of truth, all lead me there.
One duty, dear the same for aye,
Is sire and mother to obey:
Should I their orders once transgress
My very life were weariness.
If glad obedience be denied
To father, mother, holy guide,
What rites, what service can be done
That stern Fate's favour may be won?
These three the triple world comprise,
O darling of the lovely eyes.
Earth has no holy thing like these
Whom with all love men seek to please.
Not truth, or gift, or bended knee,
Not honour, worship, lordly fee,
Storms heaven and wins a blessing thence
Like sonly love and reverence.
Heaven, riches, grain, and varied lore,
With sons and many a blessing more,
All these are made their own with ease
By those their elders' souls who please.

The mighty-souled, who ne’er forget,
Devoted sons, their filial debt,
Win worlds where Gods and minstrels are,
And Brahmá’s sphere more glorious far.
Now as the orders of my sire,
Who keeps the way of truth, require,
So will I do, for such the way
Of duty that endures for aye:
To take thee, love, to Daṇḍak’s wild
My heart at length is reconciled,
For thee such earnest thoughts impel
To follow, and with me to dwell.
O faultless form from feet to brows,
Come with me, as my will allows,
And duty there with me pursue,
Trembler, whose bright eyes thrill me through.
In all thy days, come good come ill,
Preserve unchanged such noble will,
And thou, dear love, wilt ever be
The glory of thy house and me.
Now, beauteous-armed, begin the tasks
The woodland life of hermits asks.
For me the joys of heaven above
Have charms no more without thee, love.
And now, dear Sítá, be not slow:
Food on good mendicants bestow,
And for the holy Bráhmans bring
Thy treasures and each precious thing.
Thy best attire and gems collect,
The jewels which thy beauty decked,
And every ornament and toy
Prepared for hours of sport and joy:
The beds, the cars wherein I ride,
Among our followers, next, divide.”

She conscious that her lord approved
Her going, with great rapture moved,
Hastened within, without delay,
Prepared to give their wealth away.

Canto XXXI. Lakshman’s Prayer

When Lakshmaṇ, who had joined them there,
Had heard the converse of the pair,
His mien was changed, his eyes o’erflowed,
His breast no more could bear its load.
The son of Raghu, sore distressed,
His brother’s feet with fervour pressed,
While thus to Sítá he complained,
And him by lofty vows enchained:
“If thou wilt make the woods thy home,

Where elephant and roebuck roam,
I too this day will take my bow
And in the path before thee go.
Our way will lie through forest ground
Where countless birds and beasts are found,
I heed not homes of Gods on high,
I heed not life that cannot die,
Nor would I wish, with thee away,
O'er the three worlds to stretch my sway."

Thus Lakshmaṇ spake, with earnest prayer
His brother's woodland life to share.
As Ráma still his prayer denied
With soothing words, again he cried:
"When leave at first thou didst accord,
Why dost thou stay me now, my lord?
Thou art my refuge: O, be kind,

Leave me not, dear my lord, behind.
Thou canst not, brother, if thou choose
That I still live, my wish refuse."

The glorious chief his speech renewed
To faithful Lakshmaṇ as he sued,
And on the eyes of Ráma gazed
Longing to lead, with hands upraised:
"Thou art a hero just and dear,
Whose steps to virtue's path adhere,
Loved as my life till life shall end,
My faithful brother and my friend.
If to the woods thou take thy way
With Sítá and with me to-day,
Who for Kauśalyá will provide,
And guard the good Sumitrá's side?
The lord of earth, of mighty power,
Who sends good things in plenteous shower,
As Indra pours the grateful rain,
A captive lies in passion's chain.
The power imperial for her son
Has Aśvapati's daughter won,
And she, proud queen, will little heed
Her miserable rivals' need.
So Bharat, ruler of the land,
By Queen Kaikeyí's side will stand,
Nor of those two will ever think,
While grieving in despair they sink.
Now, Lakshmaṇ, as thy love decrees,
Or else the monarch's heart to please,
Follow this counsel and protect
My honoured mother from neglect.
So thou, while not to me alone
Thy great affection will be shown,

To highest duty wilt adhere
By serving those thou shouldst revere.
Now, son of Raghu, for my sake
Obey this one request I make,
Or, of her darling son bereft,
Kauśalyá has no comfort left."
The faithful Lakshmaṇ, thus addressed
In gentle words which love expressed,
To him in lore of language learned,
His answer, eloquent, returned:

"Nay, through thy might each queen will share
Attentive Bharat's love and care,
Should Bharat, raised as king to sway
This noblest realm, his trust betray,
Nor for their safety well provide,
Seduced by ill-suggesting pride,
Doubt not my vengeful hand shall kill
The cruel wretch who counsels ill
Kill him and all who lend him aid,
And the three worlds in league arrayed.
And good Kauśalyá well can fee
A thousand champions like to me.
A thousand hamlets rich in grain
The station of that queen maintain.
She may, and my dear mother too,
Live on the ample revenue.
Then let me follow thee: herein:
Is naught that may resemble sin.
So shall I in my wish succeed,
And aid, perhaps, my brother's need.
My bow and quiver well supplied
With arrows hanging at my side,
My hands shall spade and basket bear,
And for thy feet the way prepare.
I'll bring thee roots and berries sweet.
And woodland fare which hermits eat.
Thou shall with thy Videhan spouse
Recline upon the mountain's brows;
Be mine the toil, be mine to keep
Watch o'er thee waking or asleep."

Filled by his speech with joy and pride,
Ráma to Lakshmaṇ thus replied:
"Go then, my brother, bid adieu
To all thy friends and retinue.
And those two bows of fearful might,
Celestial, which, at that famed rite,
Lord Varuṇ gave to Janak, king
Of fair Vedeha with thee bring,
With heavenly coats of sword-proof mail,

Quivers, whose arrows never fail,
And golden-hilted swords so keen,
The rivals of the sun in sheen. 110
Tended with care these arms are all
Preserved in my preceptor's hall.
With speed, O Lakshmaṇ, go, produce,
And bring them hither for our use."
So on a woodland life intent, 115
To see his faithful friends he went,
And brought the heavenly arms which lay
By Ráma's teacher stored away.
And Raghu's son to Ráma showed
Those wondrous arms which gleamed and glowed, 120
Well kept, adorned with many a wreath
Of flowers on case, and hilt, and sheath.
The prudent Ráma at the sight
Addressed his brother with delight:
"Well art thou come, my brother dear, 125
For much I longed to see thee here.
For with thine aid, before I go,
I would my gold and wealth bestow
Upon the Bráhmans sage, who school
Their lives by stern devotion's rule. 130
And for all those who ever dwell
Within my house and serve me well,
Devoted servants, true and good,
Will I provide a livelihood.
Quick, go and summon to this place 135
The good Vaśishṭha's son,
Suyajṅa, of the Bráhman race
The first and holiest one.
To all the Bráhmans wise and good
Will I due reverence pay, 140
Then to the solitary wood
With thee will take my way."
[The next selection covers the kidnapping of Sita.]

Book III: Canto XLII. Márícha Transformed

Márícha thus in wild unrest
With bitter words the king addressed.
Then to his giant lord in dread,
"Arise, and let us go," he said.
"Ah, I have met that mighty lord 5
Armed with his shafts and bow and sword,
And if again that bow he bend
Our lives that very hour will end.
For none that warrior can provoke
And think to fly his deadly stroke. 10
Like Yáma with his staff is he,
And his dread hand will slaughter thee.

What can I more? My words can find
No passage to thy stubborn mind.
I go, great King, thy task to share,
And may success attend thee there.”

With that reply and bold consent
The giant king was well content.
He strained Márícha to his breast
And thus with joyful words addressed:
“There spoke a hero dauntless still,
Obedient to his master’s will,
Márícha’s proper self once more:
Some other took thy shape before.
Come, mount my jewelled car that flies.
Will-governed, through the yielding skies.
These asses, goblin-faced, shall bear
Us quickly through the fields of air.
Attract the lady with thy shape,
Then through the wood, at will, escape.
And I, when she has no defence,
Will seize the dame and bear her thence.”

Again Márícha made reply,
Consent and will to signify.
With rapid speed the giants two
From the calm hermit dwelling flew,
Borne in that wondrous chariot, meet
For some great God’s celestial seat.
They from their airy path looked down
On many a wood and many a town,
On lake and river, brook and rill,
City and realm and towering hill.
Soon he whom giant hosts obeyed,
Márícha by his side, surveyed
The dark expanse of Daṇḍak wood
Where Ráma’s hermit cottage stood.
They left the flying car, whereon
The wealth of gold and jewels shone,
And thus the giant king addressed
Márícha as his hand he pressed:

“Márícha, look! before our eyes
Round Ráma’s home the plantains rise.
His hermitage is now in view:
Quick to the work we came to do!”

Thus Rávaṇ spoke, Márícha heard
Obedient to his master’s word,
Threw off his giant shape and near
The cottage strayed a beauteous deer.
With magic power, by rapid change,
His borrowed form was fair and strange.

A sapphire tipped each horn with light;
His face was black relieved with white.
The turkis and the ruby shed
A glory from his ears and head.
His arching neck was proudly raised,
And lazulites beneath it blazed.
With roseate bloom his flanks were dyed,
And lotus tints adorned his hide.
His shape was fair, compact, and slight;
His hoofs were carven lazulite.
His tail with every changing glow
Displayed the hues of Indra's bow.
With glossy skin so strangely flecked,
With tints of every gem bedecked.
A light o'er Ráma's home he sent,
And through the wood, where'er he went.
The giant clad in that strange dress
That took the soul with loveliness,
To charm the fair Videhan's eyes
With mingled wealth of mineral dyes,
Moved onward, cropping in his way,
The grass and grain and tender spray.
His coat with drops of silver bright,
A form to gaze on with delight,
He raised his fair neck as he went
To browse on bud and filament.
Now in the Cassia grove he strayed,
Now by the cot in plantains' shade.
Slowly and slowly on he came
To catch the glances of the dame,
And the tall deer of splendid hue
Shone full at length in Sítá's view.
He roamed where'er his fancy chose
Where Ráma's leafy cottage rose.
Now near, now far, in careless ease,
He came and went among the trees.
Now with light feet he turned to fly,
Now, reassured, again drew nigh:
Now gambolled close with leap and bound,
Now lay upon the grassy ground:
Now sought the door, devoid of fear,
And mingled with the troop of deer;
Led them a little way, and thence
Again returned with confidence.
Now flying far, now turning back
Emboldened on his former track,
Seeking to win the lady's glance
He wandered through the green expanse.
Then thronging round, the woodland deer
Gazed on his form with wondering fear;

A while they followed where he led,
Then snuffed the tainted gale and fled.
The giant, though he longed to slay
The startled quarry, spared the prey,
And mindful of the shape he wore
To veil his nature, still forbore.
Then Sítá of the glorious eye,
Returning from her task drew nigh;
For she had sought the wood to bring
Each loveliest flower of early spring.
Now would the bright-eyed lady choose
Some gorgeous bud with blending hues,
Now plucked the mango's spray, and now
The bloom from an Aśoka bough.
She with her beauteous form, unmeet
For woodland life and lone retreat,
That wondrous dappled deer beheld
Gemmed with rich pearls, unparalleled,
His silver hair the lady saw,
His radiant teeth and lips and jaw,
And gazed with rapture as her eyes
Expanded in their glad surprise.
And when the false deer's glances fell
On her whom Ráma loved so well,
He wandered here and there, and cast
A luminous beauty as he passed;
And Janak's child with strange delight
Kept gazing on the unwonted sight.

Canto XLIII. The Wondrous Deer

She stooped, her hands with flowers to fill,
But gazed upon the marvel still:
Gazed on its back and sparkling side
Where silver hues with golden vied.
Joyous was she of faultless mould,
With glossy skin like polished gold.
And loudly to her husband cried
And bow-armed Lakshmaṇ by his side:
Again, again she called in glee:
"O come this glorious creature see;
Quick, quick, my lord, this deer to view.
And bring thy brother Lakshmaṇ too."
As through the wood her clear tones rang,
Swift to her side the brothers sprang.
With eager eyes the grove they scanned,
And saw the deer before them stand.
But doubt was strong in Lakshmaṇ's breast,
Who thus his thought and fear expressed:

“Stay, for the wondrous deer we see
The fiend Márícha’s self may be.
Ere now have kings who sought this place
To take their pastime in the chase,
Met from his wicked art defeat,
And fallen slain by like deceit.
He wears, well trained in magic guile,
The figure of a deer a while,
Bright as the very sun, or place
Where dwell the gay Gandharva race.
No deer, O Ráma, e’er was seen
Thus decked with gold and jewels’ sheen.
‘Tis magic, for the world has ne’er,
Lord of the world, shown aught so fair.”

But Sítá of the lovely smile,
A captive to the giant’s wile,
Turned Lakshmaṇ’s prudent speech aside
And thus with eager words replied:
“My honoured lord, this deer I see
With beauty rare enraptures me.
Go, chief of mighty arm, and bring
For my delight this precious thing.
Fair creatures of the woodland roam
Untroubled near our hermit home.
The forest cow and stag are there,
The fawn, the monkey, and the bear,
Where spotted deer delight to play,
And strong and beauteous Kinnars stray.
But never, as they wandered by,
Has such a beauty charmed mine eye
As this with limbs so fair and slight,
So gentle, beautiful and bright.
O see, how fair it is to view
With jewels of each varied hue:
Bright as the rising moon it glows,
Lighting the wood where’er it goes.
Ah me, what form and grace are there!
Its limbs how fine, its hues how fair!
Transcending all that words express,
It takes my soul with loveliness.

O, if thou would, to please me, strive
To take the beauteous thing alive,
How thou wouldst gaze with wondering eyes
Delighted on the lovely prize!
And when our woodland life is o’er,
And we enjoy our realm once more,
The wondrous animal will grace
The chambers of my dwelling-place,
And a dear treasure will it be

To Bharat and the queens and me,
And all with rapture and amaze
Upon its heavenly form will gaze.
But if the beauteous deer, pursued,
Thine arts to take it still elude,
Strike it, O chieftain, and the skin
Will be a treasure, laid within.
O, how I long my time to pass
Sitting upon the tender grass,
With that soft fell beneath me spread
Bright with its hair of golden thread!
This strong desire, this eager will,
Befits a gentle lady ill:
But when I first beheld, its look
My breast with fascination took.
See, golden hair its flank adorns,
And sapphires tip its branching horns.
Resplendent as the lunar way,
Or the first blush of opening day,
With graceful form and radiant hue
It charmed thy heart, O chieftain, too."

He heard her speech with willing ear,
He looked again upon the deer.
Its lovely shape his breast beguiled
Moved by the prayer of Janak's child,
And yielding for her pleasure's sake,
To Lakshmaṇ Ráma turned and spake:

"Mark, Lakshmaṇ, mark how Sítá's breast
With eager longing is possessed.
To-day this deer of wondrous breed
Must for his passing beauty bleed,
Brighter than e'er in Nandan strayed,
Or Chaitraratha's heavenly shade.
How should the groves of earth possess
Such all-surpassing loveliness!
The hair lies smooth and bright and fine,
Or waves upon each curving line,
And drops of living gold bedeck
The beauty of his side and neck.
O look, his crimson tongue between
His teeth like flaming fire is seen,
Flashing, whene'er his lips he parts,
As from a cloud the lightning darts.
O see his sunlike forehead shine
With emerald tints and almandine,
While pearly light and roseate glow
Of shells adorn his neck below.

No eye on such a deer can rest
But soft enchantment takes the breast:

No man so fair a thing behold
Ablaze with light of radiant gold,
Celestial, bright with jewels' sheen,
Nor marvel when his eyes have seen.
A king equipped with bow and shaft
Delights in gentle forest craft,
And as in boundless woods he strays
The quarry for the venison slays.
There as he wanders with his train
A store of wealth he oft may gain.
He claims by right the precious ore,
He claims the jewels' sparkling store.
Such gains are dearer in his eyes
Than wealth that in his chamber lies,
The dearest things his spirit knows,
Dear as the bliss which Śukra chose.
But oft the rich expected gain
Which heedless men pursue in vain,
The sage, who prudent counsels know,
Explain and in a moment show.
This best of deer, this gem of all,
To yield his precious spoils must fall,
And tender Sítá by my side
Shall sit upon the golden hide.
Ne'er could I find so rich a coat
On spotted deer or sheep or goat.
No buck or antelope has such,
So bright to view, so soft to touch.
This radiant deer and one on high
That moves in glory through the sky,
Alike in heavenly beauty are,
One on the earth and one a star.
But, brother, if thy fears be true,
And this bright creature that we view
Be fierce Márícha in disguise,
Then by this hand he surely dies.
For that dire fiend who spurns control
With bloody hand and cruel soul,
Has roamed this forest and dismayed
The holiest saints who haunt the shade.
Great archers, sprung of royal race,
Pursuing in the wood the chase,
Have fallen by his wicked art,
And now my shaft shall strike his heart.
Vatápi, by his magic power
Made heedless saints his flesh devour,
Then, from within their frames he rent
Forth bursting from imprisonment.
But once his art in senseless pride
Upon the mightiest saint he tried,

Agastya's self, and caused him taste
The baited meal before him placed.
Vátápi, when the rite was o'er,
Would take the giant form he wore,
But Saint Agastya knew his wile
And checked the giant with smile.
"Vátápi, thou with cruel spite
Hast conquered many an anchorite
The noblest of the Bráhman caste,
And now thy ruin comes at last."
Now if my power he thus defies,
This giant, like Vátápi dies,
Daring to scorn a man like me,
A self subduing devotee.
Yea, as Agastya slew the foe,
My hand shall lay Márícha low
Clad in thine arms thy bow in hand,
To guard the Maithil lady stand,
With watchful eye and thoughtful breast
Keeping each word of my behest
I go, and hunting through the brake
This wondrous deer will bring or take.
Yea surely I will bring the spoil
Returning from my hunter's toil
See, Lakshmaṇ how my consort's eyes
Are longing for the lovely prize.
This day it falls, that I may win
The treasure of so fair a skin.
Do thou and Sítá watch with care
Lest danger seize you unaware.
Swift from my bow one shaft will fly;
The stricken deer will fall and die
Then quickly will I strip the game
And bring the trophy to my dame.
Jaṭáyus, guardian good and wise,
Our old and faithful friend,
The best and strongest bird that flies,
His willing aid will lend
The Maithil lady well protect,
For every chance provide,
And in thy tender care suspect
A foe on every side."

Canto XLIV. Márícha's Death

Thus having warned his brother bold
He grasped his sword with haft of gold,
And bow with triple flexure bent,
His own delight and ornament;
Then bound two quivers to his side,
And hurried forth with eager stride.

Soon as the antlered monarch saw
The lord of monarchs near him draw,
A while with trembling heart he fled,
Then turned and showed his stately head.
With sword and bow the chief pursued
Where'er the fleeing deer he viewed
Sending from dell and lone recess
The splendour of his loveliness.
Now full in view the creature stood
Now vanished in the depth of wood;
Now running with a languid flight,
Now like a meteor lost to sight.
With trembling limbs away he sped;
Then like the moon with clouds o'erspread
Gleamed for a moment bright between
The trees, and was again unseen.
Thus in the magic deer's disguise
Márícha lured him to the prize,
And seen a while, then lost to view,
Far from his cot the hero drew.
Still by the flying game deceived
The hunter's heart was wroth and grieved,
And wearied with the fruitless chase
He stayed him in a shady place.
Again the rover of the night
Enraged the chieftain, full in sight,
Slow moving in the coppice near,
Surrounded by the woodland deer.
Again the hunter sought the game
That seemed a while to court his aim:
But seized again with sudden dread,
Beyond his sight the creature fled.
Again the hero left the shade,
Again the deer before him strayed.
With surer hope and stronger will
The hunter longed his prey to kill.
Then as his soul impatient grew,
An arrow from his side he drew,
Resplendent at the sunbeam's glow,
The crusher of the smitten foe.
With skillful heed the mighty lord
Fixed well shaft and strained the cord.
Upon the deer his eyes he bent,
And like a fiery serpent went
The arrow Brahma's self had framed,
Alive with sparks that hissed and flamed,
Like Indra's flashing levin, true
To the false deer the missile flew
Cleaving his flesh that wonderous dart
Stood quivering in Márícha's heart.

Scarce from the ground one foot he sprang,
Then stricken fell with deadly pang.
Half lifeless, as he pressed the ground,
He gave a roar of awful sound
And ere the wounded giant died
He threw his borrowed form aside
Remembering still his lord's behest
He pondered in his heart how best
Sítá might send her guard away,
And Rávaṇ seize the helpless prey.
The monster knew the time was nigh,
And called aloud with eager cry,
"Ho, Sítá, Lakshmaṇ" and the tone
He borrowed was like Ráma's own.
So by that matchless arrow cleft,
The deer's bright form Márícha left,
Resumed his giant shape and size
And closed in death his languid eyes.
When Ráma saw his awful foe
Gasp, smeared with blood, in deadly throe,
His anxious thoughts to Sítá sped,
And the wise words that Lakshmaṇ said,
That this was false Márícha's art,
Returned again upon his heart.
He knew the foe he triumphed o'er
The name of great Márícha bore.
"The fiend," he pondered, 'ere he died,
"Ho, Lakshmaṇ! ho, my Sítá!" cried
Ah, if that cry has reached her ear,
How dire must be my darling's fear!
And Lakshmaṇ of the mighty arm,
What thinks he in his wild alarm?
As thus he thought in sad surmise,
Each startled hair began to rise,
And when he saw the giant slain
And thought upon that cry again,
His spirit sank and terror pressed
Full sorely on the hero's breast.
Another deer he chased and struck,
He bore away the the fallen buck,
To Janasthán then turned his face
And hastened to his dwelling place.

Canto XLV. Lakshman's Departure

But Sítá hearing as she thought,
Her husband's cry with anguish fraught,
Called to her guardian, "Lakshmaṇ, run
And in the wood seek Raghu's son.
Scarce can my heart retain its throne,
Scarce can my life be called mine own,

As all my powers and senses fail
At that long, loud and bitter wail.
Haste to the wood with all thy speed
And save thy brother in his need.
Go, save him in the distant glade
Where loud he calls, for timely aid.
He falls beneath some giant foe
A bull whom lions overthrow."

Deaf to her prayer, no step he stirred
Obedient to his mother's word,
Then Janak's child, with ire inflamed,
In words of bitter scorn exclaimed exclaimed

"Sumitrá's son, a friend in show,
Thou art in truth thy brother's foe,
Who canst at such any hour deny
Thy succour and neglect his cry.
Yes, Lakshmaṇ, smit with love of me
Thy brother's death thou fain wouldst see.
This guilty love thy heart has swayed
And makes thy feet so loth to aid.
Thou hast no love for Ráma, no:
Thy joy is vice, thy thoughts are low
Hence thus unmoved thou yet canst stay
While my dear lord is far away.
If aught of ill my lord betide
Who led thee here, thy chief and guide,
Ah, what will be my hapless fate
Left in the wild wood desolate!"

Thus spoke the lady sad with fear,
With many a sigh and many a tear,
Still trembling like a captured doe:
And Lakshmaṇ spoke to calm her woe:

"Videhan Queen, be sure of this,
And at the thought thy fear dismiss,
Thy husband's mightier power defies
All Gods and angels of the skies,
Gandharvas, and the sons of light,
Serpents, and rovers of the night.
I tell thee, of the sons of earth,
Of Gods who boast celestial birth,
Of beasts and birds and giant hosts,
Of demigods, Gandharvas, ghosts,
Of awful fiends, O thou most fair,
There lives not one whose heart would dare
To meet thy Ráma in the fight,
Like Indra's self unmatched in might.
Such idle words thou must not say
Thy Ráma lives whom none may slay.

I will not, cannot leave thee here
In the wild wood till he be near.
The mightiest strength can ne'er withstand
His eager force, his vigorous hand.
No, not the triple world allied
With all the immortal Gods beside.
Dismiss thy fear, again take heart,
Let all thy doubt and woe depart.
Thy lord, be sure, will soon be here
And bring thee back that best of deer.
Not his, not his that mournful cry,
Nor haply came it from the sky.
Some giant's art was busy there
And framed a castle based on air.
A precious pledge art thou, consigned
To me by him of noblest mind,
Nor can I fairest dame, forsake
The pledge which Ráma bade me take.
Upon our heads, O Queen, we drew
The giants' hate when Ráma slew
Their chieftain Khara, and the shade
Of Janasthán in ruin laid.
Through all this mighty wood they rove
With varied cries from grove to grove
On rapine bent they wander here:
But O, dismiss thy causeless fear."
Bright flashed her eye as Lakshmaṇ spoke
And forth her words of fury broke
Upon her truthful guardian, flung
With bitter taunts that pierced and stung:
"Shame on such false compassion, base
Defiler of thy glorious race!
'Twere joyous sight I ween to thee
My lord in direst strait to see.
Thou knowest Ráma sore bested,
Or word like this thou ne'er hadst said.
No marvel if we find such sin
In rivals false to kith and kin.
Wretches like thee of evil kind,
Concealing crime with crafty mind.
Thou, wretch, thine aid wilt still deny,
And leave my lord alone to die.
Has love of me unnerved thy hand,
Or Bharat's art this ruin planned?
But be the treachery his or thine,
In vain, in vain the base design.
For how shall I, the chosen bride
Of dark-hued Ráma, lotus-eyed,
The queen who once called Ráma mine,
To love of other men decline?

Believe me, Lakshmaṇ, Ráma's wife
Before thine eyes will quit this life,
And not a moment will she stay
If her dear lord have passed away."

The lady's bitter speech, that stirred
Each hair upon his frame, he heard.
With lifted hands together laid,
His calm reply he gently made:

"No words have I to answer now:
My deity, O Queen, art thou.
But 'tis no marvel, dame, to find
Such lack of sense in womankind.
Throughout this world, O Maithil dame,
Weak women's hearts are still the same.
Inconstant, urged by envious spite,
They sever friends and hate the right.
I cannot brook, Videhan Queen,
Thy words intolerably keen.
Mine ears thy fierce reproaches pain
As boiling water seethes the brain.
And now to bear me witness all
The dwellers in the wood I call,
That, when with words of truth I plead,
This harsh reply is all my meed.
Ah, woe is thee! Ah, grief, that still
Eager to do my brother's will,
Mourning thy woman's nature, I
Must see thee doubt my truth and die.
I fly to Ráma's side, and Oh,
May bliss attend thee while I go!
May all attendant wood-gods screen
Thy head from harm, O large-eyed Queen!
And though dire omens meet my sight
And fill my soul with wild affright,
May I return in peace and see
The son of Raghu safe with thee!"

The child of Janak heard him speak,
And the hot tear-drops down her cheek,
Increasing to a torrent, ran,
As thus once more the dame began:
"O Lakshmaṇ, if I widowed be
Godávarí's flood shall cover me,
Or I will die by cord, or leap,
Life weary, from yon rocky steep;
Or deadly poison will I drink,
Or 'neath the kindled flames will sink,
But never, reft of Ráma, can
Consent to touch a meaner man."

The Maithil dame with many sighs,
And torrents pouring from her eyes,
The faithful Lakshmaṇ thus addressed,
And smote her hands upon her breast.
Sumitrá's son, o'erwhelmed by fears,

Looked on the large-eyed queen:
He saw that flood of burning tears,
He saw that piteous mien.
He yearned sweet comfort to afford,
He strove to soothe her pain;
But to the brother of her lord
She spoke no word again.
His reverent hands once more he raised,
His head he slightly bent,
Upon her face he sadly gazed,
And then toward Ráma went.

Canto XLVI. The Guest

The angry Lakshmaṇ scarce could brook
Her bitter words, her furious look.
With dark forebodings in his breast
To Ráma's side he quickly pressed.

Then ten necked Rávaṇ saw the time
Propitious for his purposed crime.
A mendicant in guise he came
And stood before the Maithil dame.
His garb was red, with tufted hair
And sandalled feet a shade he bare,
And from the fiend's left shoulder slung
A staff and water-vessel hung.
Near to the lovely dame he drew,
While both the chiefs were far from view,
As darkness takes the evening air
When neither sun nor moon is there.
He bent his eye upon the dame,
A princess fair, of spotless fame:
So might some baleful planet be
Near Moon-forsaken Rohiṇí.
As the fierce tyrant nearer drew,
The trees in Janasthán that grew
Waved not a leaf for fear and woe,
And the hushed wind forbore to blow.
Godávarí's waters as they fled,
Saw his fierce eye-balls flashing red,
And from each swiftly-gliding wave
A melancholy murmur gave.
Then Rávaṇ, when his eager eye
Beheld the longed-for moment nigh,
In mendicant's apparel dressed

Near to the Maithil lady pressed.
In holy guise, a fiend abhorred,
He found her mourning for her lord.
Thus threatening draws Śaniśchar nigh
To Chitrá in the evening sky;
Thus the deep well by grass concealed
Yawns treacherous in the verdant field.
He stood and looked upon the dame
Of Ráma, queen of spotless fame
With her bright teeth and each fair limb
Like the full moon she seemed to him,
Sitting within her leafy cot,
Weeping for woe that left her not.
Thus, while with joy his pulses beat,
He saw her in her lone retreat,
Eyed like the lotus, fair to view
In silken robes of amber hue.
Pierced to the core by Káma's dart
He murmured texts with lying art,
And questioned with a soft address
The lady in her loneliness.
The fiend essayed with gentle speech
The heart of that fair dame to reach,
Pride of the worlds, like
Beauty's Queen
Without her darling lotus seen:

"O thou whose silken robes enfold
A form more fair than finest gold,
With lotus garland on thy head,
Like a sweet spring with bloom o'erspread,
Who art thou, fair one, what thy name,
Beauty, or Honour, Fortune, Fame,
Spirit, or nymph, or Queen of love
Descended from thy home above?
Bright as the dazzling jasmine shine
Thy small square teeth in level line.
Like two black stars aglow with light
Thine eyes are large and pure and bright.
Thy charms of smile and teeth and hair
And winning eyes, O thou most fair,
Steal all my spirit, as the flow
Of rivers mines the bank below.
How bright, how fine each flowing tress!
How firm those orbs beneath thy dress!
That dainty waist with ease were spanned,
Sweet lady, by a lover's hand.
Mine eyes, O beauty, ne'er have seen
Goddess or nymph so fair of mien,
Or bright Gandharva's heavenly dame,

Or woman of so perfect frame.
In youth's soft prime thy years are few,
And earth has naught so fair to view.
I marvel one like thee in face
Should make the woods her dwelling-place.
Leave, lady, leave this lone retreat
In forest wilds for thee unmeet,
Where giants fierce and strong assume
All shapes and wander in the gloom.
These dainty feet were formed to tread
Some palace floor with carpets spread,
Or wander in trim gardens where
Each opening bud perfumes the air.
The richest robe thy form should deck,
The rarest gems adorn thy neck,
The sweetest wreath should bind thy hair,
The noblest lord thy bed should share.
Art thou akin, O fair of form,
To Rudras, or the Gods of storm,
Or to the glorious Vasus? How
Can less than these be bright as thou?
But never nymph or heavenly maid
Or Goddess haunts this gloomy shade.
Here giants roam, a savage race;
What led thee to so dire a place?
Here monkeys leap from tree to tree,
And bears and tigers wander free;
Here ravening lions prowl, and fell
Hyenas in the thickets yell,
And elephants infuriate roam,
Mighty and fierce, their woodland home.
Dost thou not dread, so soft and fair,
Tiger and lion, wolf and bear?
Hast thou, O beauteous dame, no fear
In the wild wood so lone and drear?
Whose and who art thou? whence and why
Sweet lady, with no guardian nigh,
Dost thou this awful forest tread
By giant bands inhabited?"

The praise the high-souled Rávaṇ spoke
No doubt within her bosom woke.
His saintly look and Bráhman guise
Deceived the lady's trusting eyes.
With due attention on the guest
Her hospitable rites she pressed.
She bade the stranger to a seat,
And gave him water for his feet.
The bowl and water-pot he bare,
And garb which wandering Bráhmans wear

Forbade a doubt to rise.
Won by his holy look she deemed
The stranger even as he seemed
To her deluded eyes.
Intent on hospitable care,
She brought her best of woodland fare,
And showed her guest a seat.
She bade the saintly stranger lave
His feet in water which she gave,
And sit and rest and eat.
He kept his eager glances bent
On her so kindly eloquent,
Wife of the noblest king;
And longed in heart to steal her thence,
Preparing by the dire offence,
Death on his head to bring.
The lady watched with anxious face
For Ráma coming from the chase
With Lakshmaṇ by his side:
But nothing met her wandering glance
Save the wild forest's green expanse
Extending far and wide.

Canto XLVII. Rávan's Wooing

As, clad in mendicant's disguise,
He questioned thus his destined prize,
She to the seeming saintly man
The story of her life began.
"My guest is he," she thought, "and I,
To 'scape his curse, must needs reply:"
"Child of a noble sire I spring
From Janak, fair Videha's king.
May every good be thine! my name
Is Sítá, Ráma's cherished dame.
Twelve winters with my lord I spent
Most happily with sweet content
In the rich home of Raghu's line,
And every earthly joy was mine.
Twelve pleasant years flew by, and then
His peers advised the king of men,
Ráma, my lord, to consecrate
Joint ruler of his ancient state.
But when the rites were scarce begun,
To consecrate Ikshváku's son,
The queen Kaikeyí, honoured dame,
Sought of her lord an ancient claim.
Her plea of former service pressed,
And made him grant her new request,
To banish Ráma to the wild
And consecrate instead her child.

This double prayer on him, the best
And truest king, she strongly pressed:
“Mine eyes in sleep I will not close,
Nor eat, nor drink, nor take repose.
This very day my death shall bring
If Ráma be anointed king.”
As thus she spake in envious ire,
The aged king, my husband’s sire,
Besought with fitting words; but she
Was cold and deaf to every plea.
As yet my days are few; eighteen
The years of life that I have seen;
And Ráma, best of all alive,
Has passed of years a score and five
Ráma the great and gentle, through
All region famed as pure and true,
Large-eyed and mighty-armed and tall,
With tender heart that cares for all.
But Daśaratha, led astray
By woman’s wile and passion’s sway,
By his strong love of her impelled,
The consecrating rites withheld.
When, hopeful of the promised grace,
My Ráma sought his father’s face,
The queen Kaikeyí, ill at ease,
Spoke to my lord brief words like these:
“Hear, son of Raghu, hear from me
The words thy father says to thee:
“I yield this day to Bharat’s hand,
Free from all foes, this ancient land.
Fly from this home no longer thine,
And dwell in woods five years and nine.
Live in the forest and maintain
Mine honour pure from falsehood’s stain.’ ”
Then Ráma spoke, untouched by dread:
“Yea, it shall be as thou hast said.”
And answered, faithful to his vows,
Obeying Daśaratha’s spouse:
“The offered realm I would not take,
But still keep true the words he spake.”
Thus, gentle Bráhman, Ráma still
Clung to his vow with firmest will.
And valiant Lakshmaṇ, dear to fame,
His brother by a younger dame,
Bold victor in the deadly fray,
Would follow Ráma on his way.
On sternest vows his heart was set,
And he, a youthful anchoret,
Bound up in twisted coil his hair
And took the garb which hermits wear;

Then with his bow to guard us, he
Went forth with Ráma and with me.
By Queen Kaikeyí's art bereft
The kingdom and our home we left,
And bound by stern religious vows
We sought this shade of forest boughs.
Now, best of Bráhmans, here we tread
These pathless regions dark and dread.
But come, refresh thy soul, and rest
Here for a while an honoured guest,
For he, my lord, will soon be here
With fresh supply of woodland cheer,
Large store of venison of the buck,
Or some great boar his hand has struck.
Meanwhile, O stranger, grant my prayer:
Thy name, thy race, thy birth declare,
And why with no companion thou
Roamest in Daṇḍak forest now."

Thus questioned Sítá, Ráma's dame.
Then fierce the stranger's answer came:
"Lord of the giant legions, he
From whom celestial armies flee,
The dread of hell and earth and sky,
Rávaṇ the Rákshas king am I.
Now when thy gold-like form I view
Arrayed in silks of amber hue,
My love, O thou of perfect mould,
For all my dames is dead and cold.
A thousand fairest women, torn
From many a land my home adorn.
But come, loveliest lady, be
The queen of every dame and me.
My city Lanká, glorious town,
Looks from a mountain's forehead down
Where ocean with his flash and foam
Beats madly on mine island home.
With me, O Sítá, shalt thou rove
Delighted through each shady grove,
Nor shall thy happy breast retain
Fond memory of this life of pain.
In gay attire, a glittering band,
Five thousand maids shall round thee stand,
And serve thee at thy beck and sign,
If thou, fair Sítá, wilt be mine."
Then forth her noble passion broke
As thus in turn the lady spoke:
"Me, me the wife of Ráma, him
The lion lord with lion's limb,
Strong as the sea, firm as the rock,

Like Indra in the battle shock.
The lord of each auspicious sign,
The glory of his princely line,
Like some fair Bodh tree strong and tall,
The noblest and the best of all,
Ráma, the heir of happy fate
Who keeps his word inviolate,
Lord of the lion gait, possessed
Of mighty arm and ample chest,
Ráma the lion-warrior, him
Whose moon bright face no fear can dim,
Ráma, his bridled passions' lord,
The darling whom his sire adored,
Me, me the true and loving dame
Of Ráma, prince of deathless fame
Me wouldst thou vainly woo and press?
A jackal woo a lioness!
Steal from the sun his glory! such
Thy hope Lord Ráma's wife to touch.
Ha! Thou hast seen the trees of gold,
The sign which dying eyes behold,
Thus seeking, weary of thy life,
To win the love of Ráma's wife.
Fool! wilt thou dare to rend away
The famished lion's bleeding prey,
Or from the threatening jaws to take
The fang of some envenomed snake?
What, wouldst thou shake with puny hand
Mount Mandar, towering o'er the land,
Put poison to thy lips and think
The deadly cup a harmless drink?
With pointed needle touch thine eye,
A razor to thy tongue apply,
Who wouldst pollute with impious touch
The wife whom Ráma loves so much?
Be round thy neck a millstone tied,
And swim the sea from side to side;
Or raising both thy hands on high
Pluck sun and moon from yonder sky;
Or let the kindled flame be pressed,
Wrapt in thy garment, to thy breast;
More wild the thought that seeks to win
Ráma's dear wife who knows not sin.
The fool who thinks with idle aim
To gain the love of Ráma's dame,
With dark and desperate footing makes
His way o'er points of iron stakes.
As Ocean to a bubbling spring,
The lion to a fox, the king
Of all the birds that ply the wing

To an ignoble crow
As gold to lead of little price,
As to the drainings of the rice
The drink they quaff in Paradise,
The Amrit's heavenly flow,
As sandal dust with perfume sweet
Is to the mire that soils our feet,
A tiger to a cat,
As the white swan is to the owl,
The peacock to the waterfowl,
An eagle to a bat,
Such is my lord compared with thee;
And when with bow and arrows he,
Mighty as Indra's self shall see
His foeman, armed to slay,
Thou, death-doomed like the fly that sips
The oil that on the altar drips,
Shalt cast the morsel from thy lips
And lose thy half-won prey."
Thus in high scorn the lady flung
The biting arrows of her tongue
In bitter words that pierced and stung
The rover of the night.
She ceased. Her gentle cheek grew pale,
Her loosened limbs began to fail,
And like a plantain in the gale
She trembled with affright.
He terrible as Death stood nigh,
And watched with fierce exulting eye
The fear that shook her frame.
To terrify the lady more,
He counted all his triumphs o'er,
Proclaimed the titles that he bore,
His pedigree and name.

Canto XLVIII. Rávan's Speech

With knitted brow and furious eye
The stranger made his fierce reply:
"In me O fairest dame, behold
The brother of the King of Gold.
The Lord of Ten Necks my title, named
Rávaṇ, for might and valour famed.
Gods and Gandharva hosts I scare;
Snakes, spirits, birds that roam the air
Fly from my coming, wild with fear,
Trembling like men when Death is near.
Vaiśravaṇ once, my brother, wrought
To ire, encountered me and fought,
But yielding to superior might
Fled from his home in sore affright.

Lord of the man-drawn chariot, still
He dwells on famed Kailása's hill.
I made the vanquished king resign
The glorious car which now is mine,
Pushpak, the far-renowned, that flies
Will-guided through the buxom skies.
Celestial hosts by Indra led
Flee from my face disquieted,
And where my dreaded feet appear
The wind is hushed or breathless is fear.
Where'er I stand, where'er I go
The troubled waters cease to flow,
Each spell-bound wave is mute and still
And the fierce sun himself is chill.
Beyond the sea my Lanká stands
Filled with fierce forms and giant bands,
A glorious city fair to see
As Indra's Amarávatí.
A towering height of solid wall,
Flashing afar, surrounds it all,
Its golden courts enchant the sight,
And gates aglow with lazulite.
Steeds, elephants, and cars are there,
And drums' loud music fills the air,
Fair trees in lovely gardens grow
Whose boughs with varied fruitage glow.
Thou, beauteous Queen, with me shalt dwell
In halls that suit a princess well,
Thy former fellows shall forget
Nor think of women with regret,
No earthly joy thy soul shall miss,
And take its fill of heavenly bliss.
Of mortal Ráma think no more,
Whose terms of days will soon be o'er.
King Daśaratha looked in scorn
On Ráma though the eldest born,
Sent to the woods the weakling fool,
And set his darling son to rule.
What, O thou large-eyed dame, hast thou
To do with fallen Ráma now,
From home and kingdom forced to fly,
A wretched hermit soon to die?
Accept thy lover, nor refuse
The giant king who fondly woos.
O listen, nor reject in scorn
A heart by Káma's arrows torn.
If thou refuse to hear my prayer,
Of grief and coming woe beware;
For the sad fate will fall on thee
Which came on hapless Urvaśí,

When with her foot she chanced to touch
Purúravas, and sorrowed much.
My little finger raised in fight
Were more than match for Ráma's might.
O fairest, blithe and happy be
With him whom fortune sends to thee."

Such were the words the giant said,
And Sítá's angry eyes were red.
She answered in that lonely place
The monarch of the giant race:

"Art thou the brother of the Lord
Of Gold by all the world adored,
And sprung of that illustrious seed
Wouldst now attempt this evil deed?
I tell thee, impious Monarch, all
The giants by thy sin will fall,
Whose reckless lord and king thou art,
With foolish mind and lawless heart.
Yea, one may hope to steal the wife
Of Indra and escape with life.
But he who Ráma's dame would tear
From his loved side must needs despair.
Yea, one may steal fair Śachí, dame
Of Him who shoots the thunder flame,
May live successful in his aim
And length of day may see;
But hope, O giant King, in vain,
Though cups of Amrit thou may drain,
To shun the penalty and pain
Of wronging one like me."

Canto XLIX. The Rape Of Sítá

The Rákshas monarch, thus addressed,
His hands a while together pressed,
And straight before her startled eyes
Stood monstrous in his giant size.
Then to the lady, with the lore
Of eloquence, he spoke once more:
"Thou scarce," he cried, "hast heard aright
The glories of my power and might.
I borne sublime in air can stand
And with these arms upheave the land,
Drink the deep flood of Ocean dry
And Death with conquering force defy,
Pierce the great sun with furious dart
And to her depths cleave earth apart.
See, thou whom love and beauty blind,
I wear each form as wills my mind."

As thus he spake in burning ire
His glowing eyes were red with fire.
His gentle garb aside was thrown
And all his native shape was shown.
Terrific, monstrous, wild, and dread
As the dark God who rules the dead,
His fiery eyes in fury rolled,
His limbs were decked with glittering gold.
Like some dark cloud the monster showed,
And his fierce breast with fury glowed.
The ten-faced rover of the night,
With twenty arms exposed to sight,
His saintly guise aside had laid
And all his giant height displayed.
Attired in robes of crimson dye
He stood and watched with angry eye
The lady in her bright array
Resplendent as the dawn of day
When from the east the sunbeams break,
And to the dark-haired lady spake:
“If thou would call that lord thine own
Whose fame in every world is known,
Look kindly on my love, and be
Bride of a consort meet for thee.
With me let blissful years be spent,
For ne’er thy choice shalt thou repent.
No deed of mine shall e’er displease
My darling as she lives at ease.
Thy love for mortal man resign,
And to a worthier lord incline.
Ah foolish lady, seeming wise
In thine own weak and partial eyes,
By what fair graces art thou held
To Ráma from his realm expelled?
Misfortunes all his life attend,
And his brief days are near their end.
Unworthy prince, infirm of mind!
A woman spoke and he resigned
His home and kingdom and withdrew
From troops of friends and retinue.
And sought this forest dark and dread
By savage beasts inhabited.”

Thus Rávaṇ urged the lady meet
For love, whose words were soft and sweet.
Near and more near the giant pressed
As love’s hot fire inflamed his breast.
The leader of the giant crew
His arm around the lady threw:
Thus Budha with ill-omened might

Steals Rohiṇí's delicious light.
One hand her glorious tresses grasped,
One with its ruthless pressure clasped
The body of his lovely prize,
The Maithil dame with lotus eyes.
The silvan Gods in wild alarm
Marked his huge teeth and ponderous arm,
And from that Death-like presence fled,
Of mountain size and towering head.
Then seen was Rávaṇ's magic car
Aglow with gold which blazed afar,
The mighty car which asses drew
Thundering as it onward flew.
He spared not harsh rebuke to chide
The lady as she moaned and cried,
Then with his arm about her waist
His captive in the car he placed.
In vain he threatened: long and shrill
Rang out her lamentation still,
O Ráma! which no fear could stay:
But her dear lord was far away.
Then rose the fiend, and toward the skies
Bore his poor helpless struggling prize:
Hurrying through the air above
The dame who loathed his proffered love.
So might a soaring eagle bear
A serpent's consort through the air.
As on he bore her through the sky
She shrieked aloud her bitter cry.
As when some wretch's lips complain
In agony of maddening pain;
"O Lakshmaṇ, thou whose joy is still
To do thine elder brother's will,
This fiend, who all disguises wears,
From Ráma's side his darling tears.
Thou who couldst leave bliss, fortune, all,
Yea life itself at duty's call,
Dost thou not see this outrage done
To hapless me, O Raghu's son?
'Tis thine, O victor of the foe,
To bring the haughtiest spirit low,
How canst thou such an outrage see
And let the guilty fiend go free?
Ah, seldom in a moment's time
Comes bitter fruit of sin and crime,
But in the day of harvest pain
Comes like the ripening of the grain.
So thou whom fate and folly lead
To ruin for this guilty deed,
Shalt die by Ráma's arm ere long

A dreadful death for hideous wrong.
Ah, too successful in their ends
Are Queen Kaikeyí and her friends,
When virtuous Ráma, dear to fame,
Is mourning for his ravished dame.
Ah me, ah me! a long farewell
To lawn and glade and forest dell
In Janasthán's wild region, where
The Cassia trees are bright and fair
With all your tongues to Ráma say
That Rávaṇ bears his wife away.
Farewell, a long farewell to thee,
O pleasant stream Godávarí,
Whose rippling waves are ever stirred
By many a glad wild water-bird!
All ye to Ráma's ear relate
The giant's deed and Sítá's fate.
O all ye Gods who love this ground
Where trees of every leaf abound,
Tell Ráma I am stolen hence,
I pray you all with reverence.
On all the living things beside
That these dark boughs and coverts hide,
Ye flocks of birds, ye troops of deer,
I call on you my prayer to hear.
All ye to Ráma's ear proclaim
That Rávaṇ tears away his dame
With forceful arms, his darling wife,
Dearer to Ráma than his life.
O, if he knew I dwelt in hell,
My mighty lord, I know full well,
Would bring me, conqueror, back to-day,
Though Yáma's self reclaimed his prey."

Thus from the air the lady sent
With piteous voice her last lament,
And as she wept she chanced to see
The vulture on a lofty tree.
As Rávaṇ bore her swiftly by,
On the dear bird she bent her eye,
And with a voice which woe made faint
Renewed to him her wild complaint:

"O see, the king who rules the race
Of giants, cruel, fierce and base,
Rávaṇ the spoiler bears me hence
The helpless prey of violence.
This fiend who roves in midnight shade
By thee, dear bird, can ne'er be stayed,
For he is armed and fierce and strong
Triumphant in the power to wrong.

For thee remains one only task,
To do, kind friend, the thing I ask.
To Ráma's ear by thee be borne
How Sítá from her home is torn,
And to the valiant Lakshmaṇ tell
The giant's deed and what befell."

Canto L. Jatáyus

The vulture from his slumber woke
And heard the words which Sítá spoke
He raised his eye and looked on her,
Looked on her giant ravisher.
That noblest bird with pointed beak,
Majestic as a mountain peak,
High on the tree addressed the king
Of giants, wisely counselling:
"O Ten-necked lord, I firmly hold
To faith and laws ordained of old,
And thou, my brother, shouldst refrain
From guilty deeds that shame and stain.
The vulture king supreme in air,
Jaṭáyus is the name I bear.
Thy captive, known by Sítá's name,
Is the dear consort and the dame
Of Ráma, Daśaratha's heir
Who makes the good of all his care.
Lord of the world in might he vies
With the great Gods of seas and skies.
The law he boasts to keep allows
No king to touch another's spouse,
And, more than all, a prince's dame
High honour and respect may claim.
Back to the earth thy way incline,
Nor think of one who is not thine.
Heroic souls should hold it shame
To stoop to deeds which others blame,
And all respect by them is shown
To dames of others as their own.
Not every case of bliss and gain
The Scripture's holy texts explain,
And subjects, when that light is dim,
Look to their prince and follow him.
The king is bliss and profit, he
Is store of treasures fair to see,
And all the people's fortunes spring,
Their joy and misery, from the king.
If, lord of giant race, thy mind
Be fickle, false, to sin inclined,
How wilt thou kingly place retain?
High thrones in heaven no sinners gain.

The soul which gentle passions sway
Ne'er throws its nobler part away,
Nor will the mansion of the base
Long be the good man's dwelling-place.
Prince Ráma, chief of high renown,
Has wronged thee not in field or town.
Ne'er has he sinned against thee: how
Canst thou resolve to harm him now?
If moved by Śúrpaṇakhá's prayer
The giant Khara sought him there,
And fighting fell with baffled aim,
His and not Ráma's is the blame.
Say, mighty lord of giants, say
What fault on Ráma canst thou lay?
What has the world's great master done
That thou should steal his precious one?
Quick, quick the Maithil dame release;
Let Ráma's consort go in peace,
Lest scorched by his terrific eye
Beneath his wrath thou fall and die
Like Vritra when Lord Indra threw
The lightning flame that smote and slew.
Ah fool, with blinded eyes to take
Home to thy heart a venomed snake!
Ah foolish eyes, too blind to see
That Death's dire coils entangle thee!
The prudent man his strength will spare,
Nor lift a load too great to bear.
Content is he with wholesome food
Which gives him life and strength renewed,
But who would dare the guilty deed
That brings no fame or glorious meed,
Where merit there is none to win
And vengeance soon o'ertakes the sin?
My course of life, Pulastya's son,
For sixty thousand years has run.
Lord of my kind I still maintain
Mine old hereditary reign.
I, worn by years, am older far
Than thou, young lord of bow and car,
In coat of glittering mail encased
And armed with arrows at thy waist,
But not unchallenged shalt thou go,
Or steal the dame without a blow.
Thou canst not, King, before mine eyes
Bear off unchecked thy lovely prize,
Safe as the truth of Scripture bent
By no close logic's argument.
Stay if thy courage let thee, stay
And meet me in the battle fray,

And thou shalt stain the earth with gore
Falling as Khara fell before.
Soon Ráma, clothed in bark, shall smite
Thee, his proud foe, in deadly fight,
Ráma, from whom have oft times fled
The Daitya hosts discomfited.
No power have I to kill or slay:
The princely youths are far away,
But soon shalt thou with fearful eye
Struck down beneath their arrows lie.
But while I yet have life and sense,
Thou shalt not, tyrant, carry hence
Fair Sítá, Ramá's honoured queen,
With lotus eyes and lovely mien.
Whate'er the pain, whate'er the cost,
Though in the struggle life be lost,
The will of Raghu's noblest son
And Daśaratha must be done.
Stay for a while, O Rávaṇ, stay,
One hour thy flying car delay,
And from that glorious chariot thou
Shalt fall like fruit from shaken bough,
For I to thee, while yet I live,
The welcome of a foe will give." 115

Canto LI. The Combat.

Rávaṇ's red eyes in fury rolled:
Bright with his armlets' flashing gold,
In high disdain, by passion stirred
He rushed against the sovereign bird.
With clash and din and furious blows
Of murderous battle met the foes:
Thus urged by winds two clouds on high
Meet warring in the stormy sky.
Then fierce the dreadful combat raged
As fiend and bird in war engaged,
As if two winged mountains sped
To dire encounter overhead.
Keen pointed arrows thick and fast,
In never ceasing fury cast,
Rained hurtling on the vulture king
And smote him on the breast and wing.
But still that noblest bird sustained
The cloud of shafts which Rávaṇ rained,
And with strong beak and talons bent
The body of his foeman rent.
Then wild with rage the ten-necked king
Laid ten swift arrows on his string,
Dread as the staff of Death were they,
So terrible and keen to slay.

Straight to his ear the string he drew,
Straight to the mark the arrows flew,
And pierced by every iron head
The vulture's mangled body bled.
One glance upon the car he bent
Where Sítá wept with shrill lament,
Then heedless of his wounds and pain
Rushed at the giant king again.
Then the brave vulture with the stroke
Of his resistless talons broke
The giant's shafts and bow whereon
The fairest pearls and jewels shone.
The monster paused, by rage unmanned:
A second bow soon armed his hand,
Whence pointed arrows swift and true
In hundreds, yea in thousands, flew.
The monarch of the vultures, plied
With ceaseless darts on every side,
Showed like a bird that turns to rest
Close covered by the branch-built nest.
He shook his pinions to repel
The storm of arrows as it fell;
Then with his talons snapped in two
The mighty bow which Rávaṇ drew.
Next with terrific wing he smote
So fiercely on the giant's coat,
The harness, glittering with the glow
Of fire, gave way beneath the blow.
With storm of murderous strokes he beat
The harnessed asses strong and fleet,
Each with a goblin's monstrous face
And plates of gold his neck to grace.
Then on the car he turned his ire,
The will-moved car that shone like fire,
And broke the glorious chariot, broke
The golden steps and pole and yoke.
The chouris and the silken shade
Like the full moon to view displayed,
Together with the guards who held
Those emblems, to the ground he felled.
The royal vulture hovered o'er
The driver's head, and pierced and tore
With his strong beak and dreaded claws
His mangled brow and cheek and jaws.
With broken car and sundered bow,
His charioteer and team laid low,
One arm about the lady wound,
Sprang the fierce giant to the ground.
Spectators of the combat, all
The spirits viewed the monster's fall:

Lauding the vulture every one
Cried with glad voice,
Well done! well done!
But weak with length of days, at last
The vulture's strength was failing fast.
The fiend again assayed to bear
The lady through the fields of air.
But when the vulture saw him rise
Triumphant with his trembling prize,
Bearing the sword that still was left
When other arms were lost or cleft,
Once more, impatient of repose,
Swift from the earth her champion rose,
Hung in the way the fiend would take,
And thus addressing Rávaṇ spake:
"Thou, King of giants, rash and blind,
Wilt be the ruin of thy kind,
Stealing the wife of Ráma, him
With lightning scars on chest and limb.
A mighty host obeys his will
And troops of slaves his palace fill;
His lords of state are wise and true,
Kinsmen has he and retinue.
As thirsty travellers drain the cup,
Thou drinkest deadly poison up.
The rash and careless fool who heeds
No coming fruit of guilty deeds,
A few short years of life shall see,
And perish doomed to death like thee.
Say whither wilt thou fly to loose
Thy neck from Death's entangling noose,
Caught like the fish that finds too late
The hook beneath the treacherous bait?
Never, O King of this be sure
Will Raghu's fiery sons endure,
Terrific in their vengeful rage,
This insult to their hermitage.
Thy guilty hands this day have done
A deed which all reprove and shun,
Unworthly of a noble chief,
The pillage loved by coward thief.
Stay, if thy heart allow thee, stay
And meet me in the deadly fray.
Soon shall thou stain the earth with gore,
And fall as Khara fell before.
The fruits of former deeds o'erpower
The sinner in his dying hour:
And such a fate on thee, O King,
Thy tyranny and madness bring.
Not e'en the Self-existent Lord,

Who reigns by all the worlds adored,
Would dare attempt a guilty deed
Which the dire fruits of crime succeed."

Thus brave Jaṭáyus, best of birds,
Addressed the fiend with moving words,
Then ready for the swift attack
Swooped down upon the giant's back.
Down to the bone the talons went;
With many a wound the flesh was rent:
Such blows infuriate drivers deal
Their elephants with pointed steel.
Fixed in his back the strong beak lay,
The talons stripped the flesh away.
He fought with claws and beak and wing,
And tore the long hair of the king.
Still as the royal vulture beat
The giant with his wings and feet,
Swelled the fiend's lips, his body shook
With furious rage too great to brook.
About the Maithil dame he cast
One huge left arm and held her fast.
In furious rage to frenzy fanned
He struck the vulture with his hand.
Jatáyus mocked the vain assay,
And rent his ten left arms away.
Down dropped the severed limbs: anew
Ten others from his body grew:
Thus bright with pearly radiance glide
Dread serpents from the hillock side,
Again in wrath the giant pressed
The lady closer to his breast,
And foot and fist sent blow on blow
In ceaseless fury at the foe.
So fierce and dire the battle, waged
Between those mighty champions, raged:
Here was the lord of giants, there
The noblest of the birds of air.
Thus, as his love of Ráma taught,
The faithful vulture strove and fought.
But Rávaṇ seized his sword and smote
His wings and side and feet and throat.
At mangled side and wing he bled;
He fell, and life was almost fled.
The lady saw her champion lie,
His plumes distained with gory dye,
And hastened to the vulture's side
Grieving as though a kinsman died.
The lord of Lanká's island viewed
The vulture as he lay:

Whose back like some dark cloud was hued,
His breast a paly grey,
Like ashes, when by none renewed,
The flame has died away.
The lady saw with mournful eye,
Her champion press the plain,
The royal bird, her true ally
Whom Rávaṇ's might had slain.
Her soft arms locked in strict embrace
Around his neck she kept,
And lovely with her moon-bright face
Bent o'er her friend and wept.

Canto LII. Rávan's Flight

Fair as the lord of silvery rays
Whom every star in heaven obeys,
The Maithil dame her plaint renewed
O'er him by Rávaṇ's might subdued:
"Dreams, omens, auguries foreshow
Our coming lot of weal and woe:
But thou, my Ráma, couldst not see
The grievous blow which falls on thee.
The birds and deer desert the brakes
And show the path my captor takes,
And thus e'en now this royal bird
Flew to mine aid by pity stirred.
Slain for my sake in death he lies,
The broad-winged rover of the skies.
O Ráma, haste, thine aid I crave:
O Lakshmaṇ, why delay to save?
Brave sons of old Ikshváku, hear
And rescue in this hour of fear."

Her flowery wreath was torn and rent,
Crushed was each sparkling ornament.
She with weak arms and trembling knees
Clung like a creeper to the trees,
And like some poor deserted thing
With wild shrieks made the forest ring.
But swift the giant reached her side,
As loud on Ráma's name she cried.
Fierce as grim Death one hand he laid
Upon her tresses' lovely braid.
"That touch, thou impious King, shall be
The ruin of thy race and thee."
The universal world in awe
That outrage on the lady saw,
All nature shook convulsed with dread,
And darkness o'er the land was spread.
The Lord of Day grew dark and chill,

And every breath of air was still.
The Eternal Father of the sky
Beheld the crime with heavenly eye,
And spake with solemn voice,
“The deed, The deed is done, of old decreed.”
Sad were the saints within the grove,
But triumph with their sorrow strove.
They wept to see the Maithil dame
Endure the outrage, scorn, and shame:
They joyed because his life should pay
The penalty incurred that day.
Then Rávaṇ raised her up, and bare
His captive through the fields of air,
Calling with accents loud and shrill
On Ráma and on Lakshmaṇ still.
With sparkling gems on arm and breast,
In silk of paly amber dressed,
High in the air the Maithil dame
Gleamed like the lightning’s flashing flame.
The giant, as the breezes blew
Upon her robes of amber hue,
And round him twined that gay attire,
Showed like a mountain girt with fire.
The lady, fairest of the fair,
Had wreathed a garland round her hair;
Its lotus petals bright and sweet
Rained down about the giant’s feet.
Her vesture, bright as burning gold,
Gave to the wind each glittering fold,
Fair as a gilded cloud that gleams
Touched by the Day-God’s tempered beams.
Yet struggling in the fiend’s embrace,
The lady with her sweet pure face,
Far from her lord, no longer wore
The light of joy that shone before.
Like some sad lily by the side
Of waters which the sun has dried;
Like the pale moon uprising through
An autumn cloud of darkest hue,
So was her perfect face between
The arms of giant Rávaṇ seen:
Fair with the charm of braided tress
And forehead’s finished loveliness;
Fair with the ivory teeth that shed
White lustre through the lips’ fine red,
Fair as the lotus when the bud
Is rising from the parent flood.
With faultless lip and nose and eye,
Dear as the moon that floods the sky
With gentle light, of perfect mould,

She seemed a thing of burnished gold,
Though on her cheek the traces lay
Of tears her hand had brushed away.
But as the moon-beams swiftly fade
Ere the great Day-God shines displayed,
So in that form of perfect grace
Still trembling in the fiend's embrace,
From her beloved Ráma reft,
No light of pride or joy was left.
The lady with her golden hue
O'er the swart fiend a lustre threw,
As when embroidered girths enfold
An elephant with gleams of gold.
Fair as the lily's bending stem,
Her arms adorned with many a gem,
A lustre to the fiend she lent
Gleaming from every ornament,
As when the cloud-shot flashes light
The shadows of a mountain height.
Whene'er the breezes earthward bore
The tinkling of the zone she wore,
He seemed a cloud of darkness hue
Sending forth murmurs as it flew.
As on her way the dame was sped
From her sweet neck fair flowers were shed,
The swift wind caught the flowery rain
And poured it o'er the fiend again.
The wind-stirred blossoms, sweet to smell,
On the dark brows of Rávaṇ fell,
Like lunar constellations set
On Meru for a coronet.
From her small foot an anklet fair
With jewels slipped, and through the air,
Like a bright circlet of the flame
Of thunder, to the valley came.
The Maithil lady, fair to see
As the young leaflet of a tree
Clad in the tender hues of spring,
Flashed glory on the giant king,
As when a gold-embroidered zone
Around an elephant is thrown.
While, bearing far the lady, through
The realms of sky the giant flew,
She like a gleaming meteor cast
A glory round her as she passed.
Then from each limb in swift descent
Dropped many a sparkling ornament:
On earth they rested dim and pale
Like fallen stars when virtues fail.
Around her neck a garland lay

Bright as the Star-God's silvery ray:
It fell and flashed like Gangá sent
From heaven above the firmament.
The birds of every wing had flocked
To stately trees by breezes rocked:
These bowed their wind-swept heads and said:
"My lady sweet, be comforted."
With faded blooms each brook within
Whose waters moved no gleamy fin,
Stole sadly through the forest dell
Mourning the dame it loved so well.
From every woodland region near
Came lions, tigers, birds, and deer,
And followed, each with furious look,
The way her flying shadow took.
For Sítá's loss each lofty hill
Whose tears were waterfall, and rill,
Lifting on high each arm-like steep,
Seemed in the general woe to weep.
When the great sun, the lord of day,
Saw Rávaṇ tear the dame away,
His glorious light began to fail
And all his disk grew cold and pale.
"If Rávaṇ from the forest flies
With Ráma's Sítá as his prize,
Justice and truth have vanished hence,
Honour and right and innocence."
Thus rose the cry of wild despair
From spirits as they gathered there.
In trembling troops in open lawns
Wept, wild with woe, the startled fawns,
And a strange terror changed the eyes
They lifted to the distant skies.
On silvan Gods who love the dell
A sudden fear and trembling fell,
As in the deepest woe they viewed
The lady by the fiend subdued.
Still in loud shrieks was heard afar
That voice whose sweetness naught could mar,
While eager looks of fear and woe
She bent upon the earth below.
The lady of each winning wile
With pearly teeth and lovely smile,
Seized by the lord of Lanká's isle,
Looked down for friends in vain.
She saw no friend to aid her, none,
Not Ráma nor the younger son
Of Daśaratha, and undone
She swooned with fear and pain.

Canto LIII. Sítá's Threats

Soon as the Maithil lady knew
That high through air the giant flew,
Distressed with grief and sore afraid
Her troubled spirit sank dismayed.
Then, as anew the waters welled
From those red eyes which sorrow swelled,
Forth in keen words her passion broke,
And to the fierce-eyed fiend she spoke:
"Canst thou attempt a deed so base,
Untroubled by the deep disgrace,
To steal me from my home and fly,
When friend or guardian none was nigh?
Thy craven soul that longed to steal,
Fearing the blows that warriors deal,
Upon a magic deer relied
To lure my husband from my side,
Friend of his sire, the vulture king
Lies low on earth with mangled wing,
Who gave his aged life for me
And died for her he sought to free.
Ah, glorious strength indeed is thine,
Thou meanest of thy giant line,
Whose courage dared to tell thy name
And conquer in the fight a dame.
Does the vile deed that thou hast done
Cause thee no shame, thou wicked one
A woman from her home to rend
When none was near his aid to lend?
Through all the worlds, O giant King,
The tidings of this deed will ring,
This deed in law and honour's spite
By one who claims a hero's might.
Shame on thy boasted valour, shame!
Thy prowess is an empty name.
Shame, giant, on this cursed deed
For which thy race is doomed to bleed!
Thou fliest swifter than the gale,
For what can strength like thine avail?
Stay for one hour, O Rávaṇ, stay;
Thou shalt not flee with life away.
Soon as the royal chieftains' sight
Falls on the thief who roams by night,
Thou wilt not, tyrant, live one hour
Though backed by all thy legions' power.
Ne'er can thy puny strength sustain
The tempest of their arrowy rain:
Have e'er the trembling birds withstood
The wild flames raging in the wood?

Hear me, O Rávaṇ, let me go,
And save thy soul from coming woe.
Or if thou wilt not set me free,
Wroth for this insult done to me.
With his brave brother's aid my lord
Against thy life will raise his sword.
A guilty hope inflames thy breast
His wife from Ráma's home to wrest.
Ah fool, the hope thou hast is vain;
Thy dreams of bliss shall end in pain.
If torn from all I love by thee
My godlike lord no more I see,
Soon will I die and end my woes,
Nor live the captive of my foes.
Ah fool, with blinded eyes to choose
The evil and the good refuse!
So the sick wretch with stubborn will
Turns fondly to the cates that kill,
And madly draws his lips away
From medicine that would check decay.
About thy neck securely wound
The deadly coil of Fate is bound,
And thou, O Rávaṇ, dost not fear
Although the hour of death is near.
With death-doomed sight thine eyes behold
The gleaming of the trees of gold,
See dread Vaitaraṇi, the flood
That rolls a stream of foamy blood,
See the dark wood by all abhorred
Its every leaf a threatening sword.
The tangled thickets thou shall tread
Where thorns with iron points are spread.
For never can thy days be long,
Base plotter of this shame and wrong
To Ráma of the lofty soul:
He dies who drinks the poisoned bowl.
The coils of death around thee lie:
They hold thee and thou canst not fly.
Ah whither, tyrant, wouldst thou run
The vengeance of my lord to shun?
By his unaided arm alone
Were twice seven thousand fiends o'erthrown:
Yes, in the twinkling of an eye
He forced thy mightiest fiends to die.
And shall that lord of lion heart,
Skilled in the bow and spear and dart,
Spare thee, O fiend, in battle strife,
The robber of his darling wife?"

These were her words, and more beside,
By wrath and bitter hate supplied.
Then by her woe and fear o'erthrown
She wept again and made her moan.
As long she wept in grief and dread,
Scarce conscious of the words she said,
The wicked giant onward fled
And bore her through the air.
As firm he held the Maithil dame,
Still wildly struggling, o'er her frame
With grief and bitter misery came
The trembling of despair.

Canto LIV. Lanká

He bore her on in rapid flight,
And not a friend appeared in sight.
But on a hill that o'er the wood
Raised its high top five monkeys stood.
From her fair neck her scarf she drew,
And down the glittering vesture flew.
With earring, necklet, chain, and gem,
Descending in the midst of them:
"For these," she thought, "my path may show,
And tell my lord the way I go."
Nor did the fiend, in wild alarm,
Mark when she drew from neck and arm
And foot the gems and gold, and sent
To earth each gleaming ornament.
The monkeys raised their tawny eyes
That closed not in their first surprise,
And saw the dark-eyed lady, where
She shrieked above them in the air.
High o'er their heads the giant passed
Holding the weeping lady fast.
O'er Pampa's flashing flood he sped
And on to Lanká's city fled.
He bore away in senseless joy
The prize that should his life destroy,
Like the rash fool who hugs beneath
His robe a snake with venomed teeth.
Swift as an arrow from a bow,
Speeding o'er lands that lay below,
Sublime in air his course he took
O'er wood and rock and lake and brook.
He passed at length the sounding sea
Where monstrous creatures wander free,
Seat of Lord Varuṇ's ancient reign,
Controller of the eternal main.
The angry waves were raised and tossed
As Rávaṇ with the lady crossed,

And fish and snake in wild unrest
Showed flashing fin and gleaming crest.
Then from the blessed troops who dwell
In air celestial voices fell:
“O ten-necked King,” they cried, “attend:
This guilty deed will bring thine end.”

Then Rávaṇ speeding like the storm,
Bearing his death in human form,
The struggling Sítá, lighted down
In royal Lanká’s glorious town;
A city bright and rich, that showed
Well-ordered street and noble road;
Arranged with just division, fair
With multitudes in court and square.
Thus, all his journey done, he passed
Within his royal home at last.
There in a queenly bower he placed
The black-eyed dame with dainty waist:
Thus in her chamber Máyá laid
The lovely Máyá, demon maid.
Then Rávaṇ gave command to all
The dread she-fiends who filled the hall:
“This captive lady watch and guard
From sight of man and woman barred.
But all the fair one asks beside
Be with unsparing hand supplied:
As though ‘twere I that asked, withhold
No pearls or dress or gems or gold.
And she among you that shall dare
Of purpose or through want of care
One word to vex her soul to say,
Throws her unvalued life away.”

Thus spake the monarch of their race
To those she-fiends who thronged the place,
And pondering on the course to take
Went from the chamber as he spake.
He saw eight giants, strong and dread,
On flesh of bleeding victims fed,
Proud in the boon which Brahmá gave,
And trusting in its power to save.
He thus the mighty chiefs addressed
Of glorious power and strength possessed:
“Arm, warriors, with the spear and bow;
With all your speed from Lanká go,
For Janasthán, our own no more,
Is now defiled with giants’ gore;
The seat of Khara’s royal state
Is left unto us desolate.
In your brave hearts and might confide,

And cast ignoble fear aside.
Go, in that desert region dwell
Where the fierce giants fought and fell.
A glorious host that region held,
For power and might unparalleled,
By Dúshaṇ and brave Khara led,
All, slain by Ráma's arrows, bled.
Hence boundless wrath that spurns control
Reigns paramount within my soul,
And naught but Ráma's death can sate
The fury of my vengeful hate.
I will not close my slumbering eyes
Till by this hand my foeman dies.
And when mine arm has slain the foe
Who laid those giant princes low,
Long will I triumph in the deed,
Like one enriched in utmost need.
Now go; that I this end may gain,
In Janasthán, O chiefs, remain.
Watch Ráma there with keenest eye,
And all his deeds and movements spy.
Go forth, no helping art neglect,
Be brave and prompt and circumspect,
And be your one endeavour still
To aid mine arm this foe to kill.
Oft have I seen your warrior might
Proved in the forehead of the fight,
And sure of strength I know so well
Send you in Janasthán to dwell."
The giants heard with prompt assent
The pleasant words he said,
And each before his master bent
For meet salute, his head.
Then as he bade, without delay,
From Lanká's gate they passed,
And hurried forward on their way
Invisible and fast.

Canto LV. Sítá In Prison

Thus Rávaṇ his commandment gave
To those eight giants strong and brave,
So thinking in his foolish pride
Against all dangers to provide.
Then with his wounded heart aflame
With love he thought upon the dame,
And took with hasty steps the way
To the fair chamber where she lay.
He saw the gentle lady there
Weighed down by woe too great to bear,
Amid the throng of fiends who kept

Their watch around her as she wept:
A pinnace sinking neath the wave
When mighty winds around her rave:
A lonely herd-forsaken deer,
When hungry dogs are pressing near.
Within the bower the giant passed:
Her mournful looks were downward cast.
As there she lay with streaming eyes
The giant bade the lady rise,
And to the shrinking captive showed
The glories of his rich abode,
Where thousand women spent their days
In palaces with gold ablaze;
Where wandered birds of every sort,
And jewels flashed in hall and court.
Where noble pillars charmed the sight
With diamond and lazulite,
And others glorious to behold
With ivory, crystal, silver, gold.
There swelled on high the tambour's sound,
And burnished ore was bright around
He led the mournful lady where
Resplendent gold adorned the stair,
And showed each lattice fair to see
With silver work and ivory:
Showed his bright chambers, line on line,
Adorned with nets of golden twine.
Beyond he showed the Maithil dame
His gardens bright as lightning's flame,
And many a pool and lake he showed
Where blooms of gayest colour glowed.
Through all his home from view to view
The lady sunk in grief he drew.
Then trusting in her heart to wake
Desire of all she saw, he spake:
"Three hundred million giants, all
Obedient to their master's call,
Not counting young and weak and old,
Serve me with spirits fierce and bold.
A thousand culled from all of these
Wait on the lord they long to please.
This glorious power, this pomp and sway,
Dear lady, at thy feet I lay:
Yea, with my life I give the whole,
O dearer than my life and soul.
A thousand beauties fill my hall:
Be thou my wife and rule them all.
O hear my supplication! why
This reasonable prayer deny?
Some pity to thy suitor show,

For love's hot flames within me glow.
This isle a hundred leagues in length,
Encompassed by the ocean's strength,
Would all the Gods and fiends defy
Though led by Him who rules the sky.
No God in heaven, no sage on earth,
No minstrel of celestial birth,
No spirit in the worlds I see
A match in power and might for me.
What wilt thou do with Ráma, him
Whose days are short, whose light is dim,
Expelled from home and royal sway,
Who treads on foot his weary way?
Leave the poor mortal to his fate,
And wed thee with a worthier mate.
My timid love, enjoy with me
The prime of youth before it flee.
Do not one hour the hope retain
To look on Ráma's face again.
For whom would wildest thought beguile
To seek thee in the giants' isle?
Say who is he has power to bind
In toils of net the rushing wind.
Whose is the mighty hand will tame
And hold the glory of the flame?
In all the worlds above, below,
Not one, O fair of form, I know
Who from this isle in fight could rend
The lady whom these arms defend.
Fair Queen, o'er Lanká's island reign,
Sole mistress of the wide domain.
Gods, rovers of the night like me,
And all the world thy slaves will be.
O'er thy fair brows and queenly head
Let consecrating balm be shed,
And sorrow banished from thy breast,
Enjoy my love and take thy rest.
Here never more thy soul shall know
The memory of thy former woe,
And here shall thou enjoy the meed
Deserved by every virtuous deed.
Here garlands glow of flowery twine,
With gorgeous hues and scent divine.
Take gold and gems and rich attire:
Enjoy with me thy heart's desire.
There stand, of chariots far the best,
The car my brother once possessed.
Which, victor in the stricken field,
I forced the Lord of Gold to yield.
'Tis wide and high and nobly wrought,

Bright as the sun and swift as thought.
Therein O Sítá, shalt thou ride
Delighted by thy lover's side.
But sorrow mars with lingering trace
The splendour of thy lotus face.
A cloud of woe is o'er it spread,
And all the light of joy is fled."
The lady, by her woe distressed,
One corner of her raiment pressed
To her sad cheek like moonlight clear,
And wiped away a falling tear.
The rover of the night renewed
His eager pleading as he viewed
The lady stand like one distraught,
Striving to fix her wandering thought:

"Think not, sweet lady, of the shame
Of broken vows, nor fear the blame.
The saints approve with favouring eyes
This union knit with marriage ties.
O beauty, at thy radiant feet
I lay my heads, and thus entreat.
One word of grace, one look I crave:
Have pity on thy prostrate slave.
These idle words I speak are vain,
Wrung forth by love's consuming pain,
And ne'er of Rávaṇ be it said
He wooed a dame with prostrate head."
Thus to the Maithil lady sued
The monarch of the giant brood,
And "She is now mine own," he thought,
In Death's dire coils already caught.

Canto LVI. Sítá's Disdain

His words the Maithil lady heard
Oppressed by woe but undeterred.
Fear of the fiend she cast aside,
And thus in noble scorn replied:
"His word of honour never stained
King Daśaratha nobly reigned,
The bridge of right, the friend of truth.
His eldest son, a noble youth,
Is Ráma, virtue's faithful friend,
Whose glories through the worlds extend.
Long arms and large full eyes has he,
My husband, yea a God to me.
With shoulders like the forest king's,
From old Ikshváku's line he springs.
He with his brother Lakshmaṇ's aid
Will smite thee with the vengeful blade.

Hadst thou but dared before his eyes
To lay thine hand upon the prize,
Thou stretched before his feet hadst lain
In Janasthán like Khara slain.
Thy boasted rovers of the night
With hideous shapes and giant might,
Like serpents when the feathered king
Swoops down with his tremendous wing,
Will find their useless venom fail
When Ráma's mighty arms assail.
The rapid arrows bright with gold,
Shot from the bow he loves to hold,
Will rend thy frame from flank to flank
As Gangá's waves erode the bank.
Though neither God nor fiend have power
To slay thee in the battle hour,
Yet from his hand shall come thy fate,
Struck down before his vengeful hate.
That mighty lord will strike and end
The days of life thou hast to spend.
Thy days are doomed, thy life is sped
Like victims to the pillar led.
Yea, if the glance of Ráma bright
With fury on thy form should light,
Thou scorched this day wouldst fall and die
Like Káma slain by Rudra's eye.
He who from heaven the moon could throw,
Or bid its bright rays cease to glow,
He who could drain the mighty sea
Will set his darling Sítá free.
Fled is thy life, thy glory, fled
Thy strength and power: each sense is dead.
Soon Lanká widowed by thy guilt
Will see the blood of giants spilt.
This wicked deed, O cruel King,
No triumph, no delight will bring.
Thou with outrageous might and scorn
A woman from her lord hast torn.
My glorious husband far away,
Making heroic strength his stay,
Dwells with his brother, void of fear,
In Daṇḍak forest lone and drear.
No more in force of arms confide:
That haughty strength, that power and pride
My hero with his arrowy rain
From all thy bleeding limbs will drain.
When urged by fate's dire mandate, nigh
Comes the fixt hour for men to die.
Caught in Death's toils their eyes are blind,
And folly takes each wandering mind.

So for the outrage thou hast done
The fate is near thou canst not shun,
The fate that on thyself and all
Thy giants and thy town shall fall.
I spurn thee: can the altar dight
With vessels for the sacred rite,
O'er which the priest his prayer has said,
Be sullied by an outcaste's tread?
So me, the consort dear and true
Of him who clings to virtue too,
Thy hated touch shall ne'er defile,
Base tyrant lord of Lanká's isle.
Can the white swan who floats in pride
Through lilies by her consort's side,
Look for one moment, as they pass,
On the poor diver in the grass?
This senseless body waits thy will,
To torture, chain, to wound or kill.
I will not, King of giants, strive
To keep this fleeting soul alive
But never shall they join the name
Of Sítá with reproach and shame."

Thus as her breast with fury burned
Her bitter speech the dame returned.
Such words of rage and scorn, the last
She uttered, at the fiend she cast.
Her taunting speech the giant heard,
And every hair with anger stirred.
Then thus with fury in his eye
He made in threats his fierce reply:
"Hear Maithil lady, hear my speech:
List to my words and ponder each.
If o'er thy head twelve months shall fly
And thou thy love wilt still deny,
My cooks shall mince thy flesh with steel
And serve it for my morning meal."

Thus with terrific threats to her
Spake Rávaṇ, cruel ravener.
Mad with the rage her answer woke
He called the fiendish train and spoke:
"Take her, ye Rákshas dames, who fright
With hideous form and mien the sight,
Who make the flesh of men your food,
And let her pride be soon subdued."
He spoke, and at his word the band
Of fiendish monsters raised each hand
In reverence to the giant king,
And pressed round Sítá in a ring.
Rávaṇ once more with stern behest

To those she-fiends his speech addressed:
Shaking the earth beneath his tread,
He stamped his furious foot and said:
“To the Aśoka garden bear
The dame, and guard her safely there
Until her stubborn pride be bent
By mingled threat and blandishment.
See that ye watch her well, and tame,
Like some she-elephant, the dame.”

They led her to that garden where
The sweetest flowers perfumed the air,
Where bright trees bore each rarest fruit,
And birds, enamoured, ne’er were mute.
Bowed down with terror and distress,
Watched by each cruel giantess,
Like a poor solitary deer
When ravening tigresses are near,
The hapless lady lay distraught
Like some wild thing but newly caught,
And found no solace, no relief
From agonizing fear and grief;
Not for one moment could forget
Each terrifying word and threat,
Or the fierce eyes upon her set
By those who watched around.
She thought of Ráma far away,
She mourned for Lakshmaṇ as she lay
In grief and terror and dismay
Half fainting on the ground.

Canto LVII. Sítá Comforted

Soon as the fiend had set her down
Within his home in Lanká’s town
Triumph and joy filled Indra’s breast,
Whom thus the Eternal Sire addressed:

“This deed will free the worlds from woe
And cause the giants’ overthrow.
The fiend has borne to Lanká’s isle
The lady of the lovely smile,
True consort born to happy fate
With features fair and delicate.
She looks and longs for Ráma’s face,
But sees a crowd of demon race,
And guarded by the giant’s train
Pines for her lord and weeps in vain.
But Lanká founded on a steep
Is girdled by the mighty deep,
And how will Ráma know his fair
And blameless wife is prisoned there?

She on her woe will sadly brood
And pine away in solitude,
And heedless of herself, will cease
To live, despairing of release.
Yes, pondering on her fate, I see
Her gentle life in jeopardy.
Go, Indra, swiftly seek the place,
And look upon her lovely face.
Within the city make thy way:
Let heavenly food her spirit stay."

Thus Brahma spake: and He who slew
The cruel demon Páka, flew
Where Lanká's royal city lay,
And Sleep went with him on his way.
"Sleep," cried the heavenly Monarch, "close
Each giant's eye in deep repose."

Thus Indra spoke, and Sleep fulfilled
With joy his mandate, as he willed,
To aid the plan the Gods proposed,
The demons' eyes in sleep she closed.
Then Śachí's lord, the Thousand-eyed,
To the Aśoka garden hied.
He came and stood where Sítá lay,
And gently thus began to say:
"Lord of the Gods who hold the sky,
Dame of the lovely smile, am I.
Weep no more, lady, weep no more;
Thy days of woe will soon be o'er.
I come, O Janak's child, to be
The helper of thy lord and thee.
He through my grace, with hosts to aid,
This sea-girt land will soon invade.
'Tis by my art that slumbers close
The eyelids of thy giant foes.
Now I, with Sleep, this place have sought,
Videhan lady, and have brought
A gift of heaven's ambrosial food
To stay thee in thy solitude.
Receive it from my hand, and taste,
O lady of the dainty waist:
For countless ages thou shall be
From pangs of thirst and hunger free."

But doubt within her bosom woke
As to the Lord of Gods she spoke:
"How may I know for truth that thou
Whose form I see before me now
Art verily the King adored
By heavenly Gods, and Śachí's lord?
With Raghu's sons I learnt to know

The certain signs which Godhead show.
These marks before mine eyes display
If o'er the Gods thou bear the sway." 70

The heavenly lord of Śachí heard,
And did according to her word.
Above the ground his feet were raised;
With eyelids motionless he gazed.
No dust upon his raiment lay, 75
And his bright wreath was fresh and gay.
Nor was the lady's glad heart slow
The Monarch of the Gods to know,
And while the tears unceasing ran
From her sweet eyes she thus began: 80
"My lord has gained a friend in thee,
And I this day thy presence see
Shown clearly to mine eyes, as
when Ráma and Lakshmaṇ, lords of men,
Beheld it, and their sire the king, 85
And Janak too from whom I spring.
Now I, O Monarch of the Blest,
Will eat this food at thy behest,
Which thou hast brought me, of thy grace,
To aid and strengthen Raghu's race." 90

She spoke, and by his words relieved,
The food from Indra's hand received,
Yet ere she ate the balm he brought,
On Lakshmaṇ and her lord she thought.
"If my brave lord be still alive, 95
If valiant Lakshmaṇ yet survive,
May this my taste of heavenly food
Bring health to them and bliss renewed!"
She ate, and that celestial food
Stayed hunger, thirst, and lassitude, 100
And all her strength restored.
Great joy her hopeful spirit stirred
At the glad tidings newly heard
Of Lakshmaṇ and her lord.
And Indra's heart was joyful too: 105
He bade the Maithil dame adieu,
His saving errand done.
With Sleep beside him parting thence
He sought his heavenly residence
To prosper Raghu's son. 110

[Hanuman, the Vanar chieftain described below, goes to find Sita for Rama, making a huge leap over the waters to the island of Sri Lanka, where she is being held captive.]

Book V. Canto XV. Sítá

Fair as Kailása white with snow
He saw a palace flash and glow,

A crystal pavement gem-inlaid,
And coral steps and colonnade,
And glittering towers that kissed the skies,
Whose dazzling splendour charmed his eyes.
There pallid, with neglected dress,
Watched close by fiend and giantess,
Her sweet face thin with constant flow
Of tears, with fasting and with woe;
Pale as the young moon's crescent when
The first faint light returns to men:
Dim as the flame when clouds of smoke
The latent glory hide and choke;
Like Rohiṇí the queen of stars
Oppressed by the red planet Mars;
From her dear friends and husband torn,
Amid the cruel fiends, forlorn,
Who fierce-eyed watch around her kept,
A tender woman sat and wept.
Her sobs, her sighs, her mournful mien,
Her glorious eyes, proclaimed the queen.
"This, this is she," the Vánar cried,
"Fair as the moon and lotus-eyed,
I saw the giant Rávan bear
A captive through the fields of air.
Such was the beauty of the dame;
Her form, her lips, her eyes the same.
This peerless queen whom I behold
Is Ráma's wife with limbs of gold.
Best of the sons of men is he,
And worthy of her lord is she."

Canto XVI. Hanumán's Lament

Then, all his thoughts on Sítá bent,
The Vánar chieftain made lament:
"The queen to Ráma's soul endeared,
By Lakshmaṇ's pious heart revered,
Lies here, for none may strive with Fate,
A captive, sad and desolate.
The brothers' might full well she knows,
And bravely bears the storm of woes,
As swelling Gangá in the rains
The rush of every flood sustains.
Her lord, for her, fierce Báli slew,
Virádha's monstrous might o'erthrew,
For her the fourteen thousand slain
In Janasthán bedewed the plain.
And if for her Ikshváku's son
Destroyed the world 'twere nobly done.
This, this is she, so far renowned,
Who sprang from out the furrowed ground,

Child of the high-souled king whose sway
The men of Míthilá obey:
The glorious lady wooed and won
By Daśaratha's noblest son;
And now these sad eyes look on her
Mid hostile fiends a prisoner.
From home and every bliss she fled
By wifely love and duty led,
And heedless of a wanderer's woes,
A life in lonely forests chose.
This, this is she so fair of mould.
Whose limbs are bright as burnished gold.
Whose voice was ever soft and mild,
Who sweetly spoke and sweetly smiled.
O, what is Ráma's misery! how
He longs to see his darling now!
Pining for one of her fond looks
As one athirst for water brooks.
Absorbed in woe the lady sees
No Rákshas guard, no blooming trees.
Her eyes are with her thoughts, and they
Are fixed on Ráma far away."

Canto XVII. Sítá's Guard

His pitying eyes with tears bedewed,
The weeping queen again he viewed,
And saw around the prisoner stand
Her demon guard, a fearful band.
Some earless, some with ears that hung
Low as their feet and loosely swung:
Some fierce with single ears and eyes,
Some dwarfish, some of monstrous size:
Some with their dark necks long and thin
With hair upon the knotty skin:
Some with wild locks, some bald and bare,
Some covered o'er with bristly hair:
Some tall and straight, some bowed and bent
With every foul disfigurement:
All black and fierce with eyes of fire,
Ruthless and stern and swift to ire:
Some with the jackal's jaw and nose,
Some faced like boars and buffaloes:
Some with the heads of goats and kine,
Of elephants, and dogs, and swine:
With lions' lips and horses' brows,
They walked with feet of mules and cows:
Swords, maces, clubs, and spears they bore
In hideous hands that reeked with gore,
And, never sated, turned afresh
To bowls of wine and piles of flesh.

Such were the awful guards who stood
Round Sítá in that lovely wood,
While in her lonely sorrow she
Wept sadly neath a spreading tree.
He watched the spouse of Ráma there
Regardless of her tangled hair,
Her jewels stripped from neck and limb,
Decked only with her love of him.

Canto XVIII. Rávan

While from his shelter in the boughs
The Vánar looked on Ráma's spouse
He heard the gathered giants raise
The solemn hymn of prayer and praise.
Priests skilled in rite and ritual, who
The Vedas and their branches knew.
Then, as loud strains of music broke
His sleep, the giant monarch woke.
Swift to his heart the thought returned
Of the fair queen for whom he burned;
Nor could the amorous fiend control
The passion that absorbed his soul.
In all his brightest garb arrayed
He hastened to that lovely shade,
Where glowed each choicest flower and fruit,
And the sweet birds were never mute,
And tall deer bent their heads to drink
On the fair streamlet's grassy brink.
Near that Aśoka grove he drew,
A hundred dames his retinue.
Like Indra with the thousand eyes
Girt with the beauties of the skies.
Some walked beside their lord to hold
The chouries, fans, and lamps of gold.
And others purest water bore
In golden urns, and paced before.
Some carried, piled on golden plates,
Delicious food of dainty cates;
Some wine in massive bowls whereon
The fairest gems resplendent shone.
Some by the monarch's side displayed,
Wrought like a swan, a silken shade:
Another beauty walked behind,
The sceptre to her care assigned.
Around the monarch gleamed the crowd
As lightnings flash about a cloud,
And each made music as she went
With zone and tinkling ornament.
Attended thus in royal state
The monarch reached the garden gate,

While gold and silver torches, fed
With scented oil a soft light shed.
He, while the flame of fierce desire
Burnt in his eyes like kindled fire,
Seemed Love incarnate in his pride,
His bow and arrows laid aside.
His robe, from spot and blemish free
Like Amrit foamy from the sea,
Hung down in many a loosened fold
Inwrought with flowers and bright with gold.
The Vánar from his station viewed,
Amazed, the wondrous multitude,
Where, in the centre of that ring
Of noblest women, stood the king,
As stands the full moon fair to view,
Girt by his starry retinue.

Canto XIX. Sítá's Fear

Then o'er the lady's soul and frame
A sudden fear and trembling came,
When, glowing in his youthful pride,
She saw the monarch by her side.
Silent she sat, her eyes depressed,
Her soft arms folded o'er her breast,
And, all she could, her beauties screened
From the bold gazes of the fiend.
There where the wild she-demons kept
Their watch around, she sighed and wept.
Then, like a severed bough, she lay
Prone on the bare earth in dismay.
The while her thoughts on love's fleet wings
Flew to her lord the best of kings.
She fell upon the ground, and there
Lay struggling with her wild despair,
Sad as a lady born again
To misery and woe and pain,
Now doomed to grief and low estate,
Once noble fair and delicate:
Like faded light of holy lore,
Like Hope when all her dreams are o'er;
Like ruined power and rank debased,
Like majesty of kings disgraced:
Like worship foiled by erring slips,
The moon that labours in eclipse;
A pool with all her lilies dead,
An army when its king has fled:
So sad and helpless wan and worn,
She lay among the fiends forlorn.

Canto XX. Rávan's Wooing

With amorous look and soft address
The fiend began his suit to press:
"Why wouldst thou, lady lotus-eyed,
From my fond glance those beauties hide?
Mine eager suit no more repel:
But love me, for I love thee well.
Dismiss, sweet dame, dismiss thy fear;
No giant and no man is near.
Ours is the right by force to seize
What dames soe'er our fancy please.
But I with rude hands will not touch
A lady whom I love so much.
Fear not, dear queen: no fear is nigh:
Come, on thy lover's love rely,
Some little sign of favor show,
Nor lie enamoured of thy woe.
Those limbs upon that cold earth laid,
Those tresses twined in single braid,
The fast and woe that wear thy frame,
Beseem not thee, O beauteous dame.
For thee the fairest wreaths were meant,
The sandal and the aloe's scent,
Rich ornaments and pearls of price,
And vesture meet for Paradise.
With dainty cates shouldst thou be fed,
And rest upon a sumptuous bed.
And festive joys to thee belong,
The music, and the dance and song.
Rise, pearl of women, rise and deck
With gems and chains thine arms and neck.
Shall not the dame I love be seen
In vesture worthy of a queen?
Methinks when thy sweet form was made
His hand the wise Creator stayed;
For never more did he design
A beauty meet to rival thine.
Come, let us love while yet we may,
For youth will fly and charms decay,
Come cast thy grief and fear aside,
And be my love, my chosen bride.
The gems and jewels that my hand
Has reft from every plundered land,
To thee I give them all this day,
And at thy feet my kingdom lay.
The broad rich earth will I o'errun,
And leave no town unconquered, none;
Then of the whole an offering make
To Janak, dear, for thy sweet sake.

In all the world no power I see
Of God or man can strive with me.
Of old the Gods and Asurs set
In terrible array I met:
Their scattered hosts to earth I beat,
And trod their flags beneath my feet.
Come, taste of bliss and drink thy fill,
And rule the slave who serves thy will.
Think not of wretched Ráma: he
Is less than nothing now to thee.
Stript of his glory, poor, dethroned,
A wanderer by his friends disowned,
On the cold earth he lays his head,
Or is with toil and misery dead.
And if perchance he lingers yet,
His eyes on thee shall ne'er be set.
Could he, that mighty monarch, who
Was named Hiraṇyakaśipu,
Could he who wore the garb of gold
Win Glory back from Indra's hold?
O lady of the lovely smile,
Whose eyes the sternest heart beguile,
In all thy radiant beauty dressed
My heart and soul thou ravishest.
What though thy robe is soiled and worn,
And no bright gems thy limbs adorn,
Thou unadorned art dearer far
Than all my loveliest consorts are.
My royal home is bright and fair;
A thousand beauties meet me there,
But come, my glorious love, and be
The queen of all those dames and me."

Canto XXI. Sítá's Scorn

She thought upon her lord and sighed,
And thus in gentle tones replied:
"Beseems thee not, O King, to woo
A matron, to her husband true.
Thus vainly one might hope by sin
And evil deeds success to win.
Shall I, so highly born, disgrace
My husband's house, my royal race?
Shall I, a true and loyal dame,
Defile my soul with deed of shame?"

Then on the king her back she turned,
And answered thus the prayer she spurned:
"Turn, Rávaṇ, turn thee from thy sin;
Seek virtue's paths and walk therein.
To others dames be honour shown;

Protect them as thou wouldst thine own.
Taught by thyself, from wrong abstain
Which, wrought on thee, thy heart would pain.
Beware: this lawless love of thine
Will ruin thee and all thy line;
And for thy sin, thy sin alone,
Will Lanká perish overthrown.
Dream not that wealth and power can sway
My heart from duty's path to stray.
Linked like the Day-God and his shine,
I am my lord's and he is mine.
Repent thee of thine impious deed;
To Ráma's side his consort lead.
Be wise; the hero's friendship gain,
Nor perish in his fury slain.
Go, ask the God of Death to spare,
Or red bolt flashing through the air,
But look in vain for spell or charm
To stay my Ráma's vengeful arm.
Thou, when the hero bends his bow,
Shalt hear the clang that heralds woe,
Loud as the clash when clouds are rent
And Indra's bolt to earth is sent.
Then shall his furious shafts be sped,
Each like a snake with fiery head,
And in their flight shall hiss and flame
Marked with the mighty archer's name.
Then in the fiery deluge all
Thy giants round their king shall fall."

Canto XXII. Rávan's Threat

Then anger swelled in Rávaṇ's breast,
Who fiercely thus the dame addressed:
"'Tis ever thus: in vain we sue
To woman, and her favour woo.
A lover's humble words impel
Her wayward spirit to rebel.
The love of thee that fills my soul
Still keeps my anger in control,
As charioteers with bit and rein
The swerving of the steed restrain.
The love that rules me bids me spare
Thy forfeit life, O thou most fair.
For this, O Sítá, have I borne
The keen reproach, the bitter scorn,
And the fond love thou boastest yet
For that poor wandering anchoret;
Else had the words which thou hast said
Brought death upon thy guilty head.
Two months, fair dame, I grant thee still

To bend thee to thy lover's will.
If when that respite time is fled
Thou still refuse to share my bed,
My cooks shall mince thy limbs with steel
And serve thee for my morning meal."

The minstrel daughters of the skies
Looked on her woe with pitying eyes,
And sun-bright children of the Gods
Consoled the queen with smiles and nods.
She saw, and with her heart at ease,
Addressed the fiend in words like these;
"Hast thou no friend to love thee, none
In all this isle to bid thee shun
The ruin which thy crime will bring
On thee and thine, O impious King?
Who in all worlds save thee could woo
Me, Ráma's consort pure and true,
As though he tempted with his love
Queen Śachí on her throne above?
How canst thou hope, vile wretch, to fly
The vengeance that e'en now is nigh,
When thou hast dared, untouched by shame,
To press thy suit on Ráma's dame?
Where woods are thick and grass is high
A lion and a hare may lie;
My Ráma is the lion, thou
Art the poor hare beneath the bough.
Thou railest at the lord of men,
But wilt not stand within his ken.
What! is that eye unstricken yet
Whose impious glance on me was set?
Still moves that tongue that would not spare
The wife of Daśaratha's heir?"

Then, hissing like a furious snake,
The fiend again to Sítá spake:
"Deaf to all prayers and threats art thou,
Devoted to thy senseless vow.
No longer respite will I give,
And thou this day shalt cease to live;
For I, as sunlight kills the morn,
Will slay thee for thy scathe and scorn."

The Rákshas guard was summoned: all
The monstrous crew obeyed the call,
And hastened to the king to take
The orders which he fiercely spake:
"See that ye guard her well, and tame,
Like some wild thing, the stubborn dame,

Until her haughty soul be bent
By mingled threat and blandishment.”

The monsters heard: away he strode,
And passed within his queens’ abode. 70

Canto XXIII. The Demons’ Threats

Then round the helpless Sítá drew
With fiery eyes the hideous crew,
And thus assailed her, all and each,
With insult, taunt, and threatening speech:
“What! can it be thou prizest not 5
This happy chance, this glorious lot,
To be the chosen wife of one
So strong and great, Pulastya’s son?
Pulastya thus have sages told
Is mid the Lords of Life enrolled. 10
Lord Brahmá’s mind-born son was he,
Fourth of that glorious company.
Viśravas from Pulastya sprang,
Through all the worlds his glory rang.
And of Viśravas, large-eyed dame! 15
Our king the mighty Rávaṇ came.
His happy consort thou mayst be:
Scorn not the words we say to thee.”

One awful demon, fiery-eyed,
Stood by the Maithil queen and cried: 20
‘Come and be his, if thou art wise,
Who smote the sovereign of the skies,
And made the thirty Gods and three,
O’ercome in furious battle, flee.
Thy lover turns away with scorn 25
From wives whom grace and youth adorn.
Thou art his chosen consort, thou
Shall be his pride and darling now.”

Another, Vikatá by name,
In words like these addressed the dame: 30
“The king whose blows, in fury dealt,
The Nágas and Gandharvas felt,
In battle’s fiercest brunt subdued,
Has stood by thee and humbly wooed.
And wilt thou in thy folly miss 35
The glory of a love like this?
Scared by his eye the sun grows chill,
The wanderer wind is hushed and still.
The rains at his command descend,
And trees with new-blown blossoms bend. 40
His word the hosts of demons fear,
And wilt thou, dame, refuse to hear?

Be counselled; with his will comply,
Or, lady, thou shalt surely die.”

Canto XXIV. Sítá’s Reply

Still with reproaches rough and rude
Those fiends the gentle queen pursued:
“What! can so fair a life displease,
To dwell with him in joyous ease?
Dwell in his bowers a happy queen
In silk and gold and jewels’ sheen?
Still must thy woman fancy cling
To Ráma and reject our king?
Die in thy folly, or forget
That wretched wandering anchoret.
Come, Sítá, in luxurious bowers
Spend with our lord thy happy hours;
The mighty lord who makes his own
The treasures of the worlds o’erthrown.”

Then, as a tear bedewed her eye,
The hapless lady made reply:
“I loathe, with heart and soul detest
The shameful life your words suggest.
Eat, if you will, this mortal frame:
My soul rejects the sin and shame.
A homeless wanderer though he be,
In him my lord, my life I see,
And, till my earthly days be done,
Will cling to great Ikshváku’s son.”

Then with fierce eyes on Sítá set
They cried again with taunt and threat:
Each licking with her fiery tongue
The lip that to her bosom hung,
And menacing the lady’s life
With axe, or spear or murderous knife:
“Hear, Sítá, and our words obey,
Or perish by our hands to-day.
Thy love for Raghu’s son forsake,
And Rávaṇ for thy husband take,
Or we will rend thy limbs apart
And banquet on thy quivering heart.
Now from her body strike the head,
And tell the king the dame is dead.
Then by our lord’s commandment she
A banquet for our band shall be.
Come, let the wine be quickly brought
That frees each heart from saddening thought.
Then to the western gate repair,
And we will dance and revel there.”

[After the great battle, Hanuman goes to Sita to tell her about the victory.]

Book VI. Canto CXV. Sítá's Joy

The Vánar chieftain bowed his head,
Within the walls of Lanká sped,
Leave from the new-made king obtained,
And Sítá's lovely garden gained.
Beneath a tree the queen he found,
Where Rákshas warders watched around.
Her pallid cheek, her tangled hair,
Her raiment showed her deep despair,
Near and more near the envoy came
And gently hailed the weeping dame.
She started up in sweet surprise,
And sudden joy illumed her eyes.
For well the Vánar's voice she knew,
And hope reviving sprang and grew.

"Fair Queen," he said, "our task is done:
The foe is slain and Lanká won.
Triumphant mid triumphant friends
Kind words of greeting Ráma sends.
"Blest for thy sake, O spouse most true,
My deadly foe I met and slew.
Mine eyes are strangers yet to sleep:
I built a bridge athwart the deep
And crossed the sea to Lanká's shore
To keep the mighty oath I swore.
Now, gentle love, thy cares dispel,
And weep no more, for all is well.
Fear not in Rávaṇ's house to stay
For good Vibhishaṇ now bears sway,
For constant truth and friendship known
Regard his palace as thine own."
He greets thee thus thy heart to cheer,
And urged by love will soon be here."

Then flushed with joy the lady's cheek.
Her eyes o'erflowed, her voice was weak;
But struggling with her sobs she broke
Her silence thus, and faintly spoke:
"So fast the flood of rapture came,
My trembling tongue no words could frame.
Ne'er have I heard in days of bliss
A tale that gave such joy as this.
More precious far than gems and gold
The message which thy lips have told."

His reverent hands the Vánar raised
And thus the lady's answer praised:
"Sweet are the words, O Queen, which thou
True to thy lord, hast spoken now,
Better than gems and pearls of price,

Yea, or the throne of Paradise.
But, lady, ere I leave this place,
Grant me, I pray, a single grace.
Permit me, and this vengeful hand
Shall slay thy guards, this Rákshas band,
Whose cruel insult threat and scorn
Thy gentle soul too long has borne."

Thus, stern of mood, Hanúmán cried:
The Maithil lady thus replied:
"Nay, be not wroth with servants: they,
When monarchs bid must needs obey.
And, vassals of their lords, fulfil
Each fancy of their sovereign will.
To mine own sins the blame impute,
For as we sow we reap the fruit.
The tyrant's will these dames obeyed
When their fierce threats my soul dismayed."

She ceased: with admiration moved
The Vánar chief her words approved:
"Thy speech," he cried, "is worthy one
Whom love has linked to Raghu's son.
Now speak, O Queen, that I may know
Thy pleasure, for to him I go."
The Vánar ceased: then Janak's child
Made answer as she sweetly smiled:
"'My first, my only wish can be,
O chief, my loving lord to see."
Again the Vánar envoy spoke,
And with his words new rapture woke:
"Queen, ere this sun shall cease to shine
Thy Ráma's eyes shall look in thine.
Again the lord of Raghu's race
Shall turn to thee his moon-bright face.
His faithful brother shall thou see
And every friend who fought for thee,
And greet once more thy king restored
Like Śachí to her heavenly lord."
To Raghu's son his steps he bent
And told the message that she sent.

Canto CXVI. The Meeting

He looked upon that archer chief
Whose full eye mocked the lotus leaf,
And thus the noble Vánar spake:
"Now meet the queen for whose dear sake
Thy mighty task was first begun,
And now the glorious fruit is won.
O'erwhelmed with woe thy lady lies,
The hot tears streaming from her eyes.

And still the queen must long and pine
Until those eyes be turned to thine.” 10

But Ráma stood in pensive mood,
And gathering tears his eyes bedewed.
His sad looks sought the ground: he sighed
And thus to King Vibhishaṇ cried:
“Let Sítá bathe and tire her head 15
And hither to my sight be led
In raiment sweet with precious scent,
And gay with golden ornament.”

The Rákshas king his palace sought,
And Sítá from her bower was brought. 20
Then Rákshas bearers tall and strong,
Selected from the menial throng,
Through Lanká’s gate the queen, arrayed
In glorious robes and gems, conveyed.
Concealed behind the silken screen, 25
Swift to the plain they bore the queen,
While Vánars, close on every side,
With eager looks the litter eyed.
The warders at Vibhishaṇ’s hest
The onward rushing throng repressed, 30
While like the roar of ocean loud
Rose the wild murmur of the crowd.
The son of Raghu saw and moved
With anger thus the king reproved:
“Why vex with hasty blow and threat 35
The Vánars, and my rights forget?
Repress this zeal, untimely shown:
I count this people as mine own.
A woman’s guard is not her bower,
The lofty wall, the fenced tower: 40
Her conduct is her best defence,
And not a king’s magnificence.
At holy rites, in war and woe,
Her face unveiled a dame may show;
When at the Maiden’s Choice they meet, 45
When marriage troops parade the street.
And she, my queen, who long has lain
In prison racked with care and pain,
May cease a while her face to hide,
For is not Ráma by her side? 50
Lay down the litter: on her feet
Let Sítá come her lord to meet.
And let the hosts of woodland race
Look near upon the lady’s face.”

Then Lakshmaṇ and each Vánar chief 55
Who heard his words were filled with grief.
The lady’s gentle spirit sank,

And from each eye in fear she shrank,
As, her sweet eyelids veiled for shame,
Slowly before her lord she came.
While rapture battled with surprise
She raised to his her wistful eyes.
Then with her doubt and fear she strove,
And from her breast all sorrow drove.
Regardless of the gathering crowd,
Bright as the moon without a cloud,
She bent her eyes, no longer dim,
In joy and trusting love on him.

Canto CXVII. Sítá's Disgrace

He saw her trembling by his side,
And looked upon her face and cried:
"Lady, at length my task is done,
And thou, the prize of war, art won,
This arm my glory has retrieved,
And all that man might do achieved;
The insulting foe in battle slain
And cleared mine honour from its stain.
This day has made my name renowned
And with success my labour crowned.
Lord of myself, the oath I swore
Is binding on my soul no more.
If from my home my queen was reft,
This arm has well avenged the theft,
And in the field has wiped away
The blot that on mine honour lay.
The bridge that spans the foaming flood,
The city red with giants' blood;
The hosts by King Sugríva led
Who wisely counselled, fought and bled;
Vibhishaṇ's love, our guide and stay
All these are crowned with fruit to-day.
But, lady, 'twas not love for thee
That led mine army o'er the sea.
'Twas not for thee our blood was shed,
Or Lanká filled with giant dead.
No fond affection for my wife
Inspired me in the hour of strife.
I battled to avenge the cause
Of honour and insulted laws.

My love is fled, for on thy fame
Lies the dark blot of sin and shame;
And thou art hateful as the light
That flashes on the injured sight.
The world is all before thee: flee:
Go where thou wilt, but not with me.

How should my home receive again
A mistress soiled with deathless stain?
How should I brook the foul disgrace,
Scorned by my friends and all my race? 40
For Rávaṇ bore thee through the sky,
And fixed on thine his evil eye.
About thy waist his arms he threw,
Close to his breast his captive drew,
And kept thee, vassal of his power, 45
An inmate of his ladies' bower."

Canto CXVIII. Sítá's Reply



Image 3.6: Battle Scene in a City | This folio shows great crowds of people running and fighting in an unspecified city from the Râmâyana.

Author: User "Fæ"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Struck down with overwhelming shame
She shrank within her trembling frame.
Each word of Ráma's like a dart
Had pierced the lady to the heart;
And from her sweet eyes unrestrained 5
The torrent of her sorrows, rained.
Her weeping eyes at length she dried,
And thus mid choking sobs replied:
"Canst thou, a high-born prince, dismiss
A high-born dame with speech like this? 10
Such words befit the meanest hind,
Not princely birth and generous mind,
By all my virtuous life I swear
I am not what thy words declare.
If some are faithless, wilt thou find 15
No love and truth in womankind?
Doubt others if thou wilt, but own
The truth which all my life has shown.
If, when the giant seized his prey,
Within his hated arms I lay, 20

And felt the grasp I dreaded, blame
Fate and the robber, not thy dame.
What could a helpless woman do?
My heart was mine and still was true,
Why when Hanúmán sent by thee
Sought Lanká's town across the sea,
Couldst thou not give, O lord of men,
Thy sentence of rejection then?
Then in the presence of the chief
Death, ready death, had brought relief,
Nor had I nursed in woe and pain
This lingering life, alas in vain.
Then hadst thou shunned the fruitless strife
Nor jeopardied thy noble life,
But spared thy friends and bold allies
Their vain and weary enterprise.
Is all forgotten, all? my birth,
Named Janak's child, from fostering earth?
That day of triumph when a maid
My trembling hand in thine I laid?
My meek obedience to thy will,
My faithful love through joy and ill,
That never failed at duty's call
O King, is all forgotten, all?"

To Lakshmaṇ then she turned and spoke
While sobs and sighs her utterance broke:
"Sumitrá's son, a pile prepare,
My refuge in my dark despair.
I will not live to bear this weight
Of shame, forlorn and desolate.
The kindled fire my woes shall end
And be my best and surest friend."

His mournful eyes the hero raised
And wistfully on Ráma gazed,
In whose stern look no ruth was seen,
No mercy for the weeping queen.
No chieftain dared to meet those eyes,
To pray, to question or advise.

The word was passed, the wood was piled
And fain to die stood Janak's child.
She slowly paced around her lord,
The Gods with reverent act adored,
Then raising suppliant hands the dame
Prayed humbly to the Lord of Flame:
"As this fond heart by virtue swayed
From Raghu's son has never strayed,
So, universal witness, Fire
Protect my body on the pyre,

As Raghu's son has idly laid
This charge on Sítá, hear and aid." 70

She ceased: and fearless to the last
Within the flame's wild fury passed.
Then rose a piercing cry from all
Dames, children, men, who saw her fall
Adorned with gems and gay attire 75
Beneath the fury of the fire.

Canto CXIX. Glory To Vishnu

The shrill cry pierced through Ráma's ears
And his sad eyes o'erflowed with tears,
When lo, transported through the sky
A glorious band of Gods was nigh.
Ancestral shades, by men revered, 5
In venerable state appeared,
And he from whom all riches flow,
And Yáma Lord who reigns below:
King Indra, thousand-eyed, and he
Who wields the sceptre of the sea. 10
The God who shows the blazoned bull,
And Brahmá Lord most bountiful
By whose command the worlds were made
All these on radiant cars conveyed,
Brighter than sun-beams, sought the place 15
Where stood the prince of Raghu's race,
And from their glittering seats the best
Of blessed Gods the chief addressed:

"Couldst thou, the Lord of all, couldst thou,
Creator of the worlds, allow 20
Thy queen, thy spouse to brave the fire
And give her body to the pyre?
Dost thou not yet, supremely wise,
Thy heavenly nature recognize?"
They ceased: and Ráma thus began: 25
"I deem myself a mortal man.
Of old Ikshváku's line, I spring
From Daśaratha Kośal's king."
He ceased: and Brahmá's self replied:
"O cast the idle thought aside. 30
Thou art the Lord Náráyaṇ, thou
The God to whom all creatures bow.
Thou art the saviour God who wore
Of old the semblance of a boar;
Thou he whose discus overthrows 35
All present, past and future foes;
Thou Brahmá, That whose days extend
Without beginning, growth or end;
The God, who, bears the bow of horn,

Whom four majestic arms adorn;
Thou art the God who rules the sense
And sways with gentle influence;
Thou all-pervading Vishṇu Lord
Who wears the ever-conquering sword;
Thou art the Guide who leads aright,
Thou Krishṇa of unequalled might.
Thy hand, O Lord, the hills and plains,
And earth with all her life sustains;
Thou wilt appear in serpent form
When sinks the earth in fire and storm.
Queen Sítá of the lovely brows
Is Lakshmí thy celestial spouse.
To free the worlds from Rávaṇ thou
Wouldst take the form thou wearest now.
Rejoice: the mighty task is done:
Rejoice, thou great and glorious one.
The tyrant, slain, thy labours end:
Triumphant now to heaven ascend.
High bliss awaits the devotee
Who clings in loving faith to thee,
Who celebrates with solemn praise
The Lord of ne'er beginning days.
On earth below, in heaven above
Great joy shall crown his faith and love.
And he who loves the tale divine
Which tells each glorious deed of thine
Through life's fair course shall never know
The fierce assault of pain and woe."

Canto CXX. Sítá Restored

Thus spoke the Self-existent Sire:
Then swiftly from the blazing pyre
The circling flames were backward rolled,
And, raising in his gentle hold
Alive unharmed the Maithil dame,
The Lord of Fire embodied came.
Fair as the morning was her sheen,
And gold and gems adorned the queen.
Her form in crimson robes arrayed,
Her hair was bound in glossy braid.
Her wreath was fresh and sweet of scent,
Undimmed was every ornament.
Then, standing close to Ráma's side,
The universal witness cried:
"From every blot and blemish free
Thy faithful queen returns to thee.
In word or deed, in look or mind
Her heart from thee has ne'er declined.
By force the giant bore away

From thy lone cot his helpless prey; 20
And in his bowers securely kept
She still has longed for thee and wept.
With soft temptation, bribe and threat,
He bade the dame her love forget:
But, nobly faithful to her lord, 25
Her soul the giant's suit abhorred.
Receive, O King, thy queen again,
Pure, ever pure from spot and stain."

Still stood the king in thoughtful mood
And tears of joy his eyes bedewed. 30
Then to the best of Gods the best
Of warrior chiefs his mind expressed:

"'Twas meet that mid the thousands here
The searching fire my queen should clear;
For long within the giant's bower 35
She dwelt the vassal of his power.
For else had many a slanderous tongue
Reproaches on mine honour flung,
And scorned the king who, love-impelled,
His consort from the proof withheld. 40
No doubt had I, but surely knew
That Janak's child was pure and true,
That, come what might, in good and ill
Her faithful heart was with me still.
I knew that Rávaṇ could not wrong 45
My queen whom virtue made so strong.
I knew his heart would sink and fail,
Nor dare her honour to assail,
As Ocean, when he raves and roars,
Fears to o'erleap his bounding shores. 50
Now to the worlds her truth is shown,
And Sítá is again mine own.
Thus proved before unnumbered eyes,
On her pure fame no shadow lies.
As heroes to their glory cleave, 55
Mine own dear spouse I ne'er will leave."
He ceased: and clasped in fond embrace
On his dear breast she hid her face.

This page titled 7.3: The Râmâyana is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon (University of North Georgia Press) .

- **3.3: The Râmâyana** by Laura Getty & Kyounghye Kwon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Ancient Egypt

8.1: Ancient Egyptian Mythology

8: Ancient Egypt is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Ancient Egyptian Mythology

Definition

by Joshua J. Mark published on 17 January 2013 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

Egyptian mythology was the belief structure and underlying form of ancient Egyptian culture from at least c. 4000 BCE (as evidenced by burial practices and tomb paintings) to 30 BCE with the death of Cleopatra VII, the last ruler of the Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt. Every aspect of life in ancient Egypt was informed by the stories which related the creation of the world and the sustaining of that world by the gods.

Egyptian religion influenced other cultures through transmission via trade and became especially widespread after the opening of the Silk Road in 130 BCE as the Egyptian port city of Alexandria was an important commercial center. The significance of Egyptian mythology to other cultures was in its development of the concept of an eternal life after death, benevolent deities, and reincarnation. Both Pythagoras and Plato of Greece were said to have been influenced by Egyptian beliefs in reincarnation and Roman religious culture borrowed as extensively from Egypt as it did from other civilizations.

Human existence was understood by the Egyptians as only a small segment of an eternal journey presided over and orchestrated by supernatural forces in the forms of the many deities which comprised the Egyptian pantheon. According to the historian Bunson,

Heh, called Huh in some eras, was one of the original gods of the Ogdoad [the eight deities worshipped during the Old Kingdom, 2575-2134 BCE] at Hermopolis and represented eternity – the goal and destiny of all human life in Egyptian religious beliefs, a stage of existence in which mortals could attain everlasting bliss. (86)

One's earthly life was not, however, simply a prologue to something greater but was a part of the entire journey. The Egyptian concept of an afterlife was a mirror-world of one's life on earth (specifically, one's life in Egypt) and one needed to live that life well if one hoped to enjoy the rest of one's eternal journey.

The Creation of the World

Osiris showed himself a thoughtful & judicious god & was given rule of the world by Atum who then went off to attend to his own affairs.

To the Egyptians, the journey began with the creation of the world and the universe out of darkness and swirling chaos. Once there was nothing but endless dark water without form or purpose. Existing within this void was Heka (god of magic) who awaited the moment of creation. Out of this watery silence (Nu) rose the primordial hill, known as the *ben-ben*, upon which stood the great god Atum (or, in some versions of the myth, Ptah). Atum looked upon the nothingness and recognized his aloneness and so, through the agency of magic, he mated with his own shadow to give birth to two children, Shu (god of air, whom Atum spat out) and Tefnut (goddess of moisture, whom Atum vomited out). Shu gave to the early world the principles of life while Tefnut contributed the principles of order.

Leaving their father on the *ben-ben*, they set out to establish the world. In time, Atum became concerned because his children were gone so long and so removed his eye and sent it in search of them. While his eye was gone, Atum sat alone on the hill in the midst of chaos and contemplated eternity. Shu and Tefnut returned with the eye of Atum (later associated with the Udjat eye, the Eye of Ra, or the All-Seeing Eye) and their father, grateful for their safe return, shed tears of joy. These tears, dropping onto the dark, fertile earth of the *ben-ben*, gave birth to men and women.

These early creatures had nowhere to live, however, and so Shu and Tefnut mated and gave birth to Geb (the earth) and Nut (the sky). Geb and Nut, though brother and sister, fell deeply in love and were inseparable. Atum found their behavior unacceptable and pushed Nut away from Geb, high up into the heavens. The two lovers were forever able to see each other but were no longer able to touch. Nut was already pregnant by Geb, however, and eventually gave birth to Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, and Horus – the five Egyptian gods most often recognized as the earliest or, at least, the most familiar representations of older god-figures. Osiris showed himself a thoughtful and judicious god and was given rule of the world by Atum who then went off to attend to his own affairs.

Osiris & Set

Osiris administrated the world efficiently, co-ruling with his sister-wife Isis, and decided where the trees would best grow and the water flow most sweetly. He created the land of Egypt in perfection with the Nile River providing for the needs of the people.

In all things, he acted in accordance with the principle of *ma'at* (harmony) and honored his father and siblings by keeping all things in harmonious balance. His brother Set became envious of the creation, however, and also of Osiris' power and glory. He had his brother's exact measurements taken in secret and then ordered an elaborate chest created precisely to those specifications. When the chest was completed, Set threw a great banquet to which he invited Osiris and seventy-two others. At the end of the party, he offered the great chest as a gift to the one who could best fit inside it. Osiris, of course, fit perfectly and, once he was inside the coffin, Set slammed the lid on tight and threw it into the Nile River. He then told everyone that Osiris was dead and assumed the rule of the world.

Isis refused to believe that her husband was dead and went searching for him, finally finding the coffin inside a tree at Byblos. The people of the land were glad to help her retrieve the coffin from the tree and, for this, Isis blessed them (as they later became the principal exporters of papyrus in Egypt, it is thought this detail was added by a scribe to honor the city which was so important to the writer's trade). She brought the body back to Egypt and set about gathering the herbs and making the potions which would bring Osiris back to life; leaving her sister Nephthys to guard over the place where she had hidden the body.

Osiris was brought back to life by Isis but, because he was incomplete, he descended to the underworld to become the righteous judge & ruler of the land of the dead.

During this time, Set began to worry that Isis might locate Osiris' body and find a way to bring him back to life, as she was very powerful and knowledgeable in these matters. Upon finding her gone, he asked Nephthys where she was and, when the goddess answered, he knew she was lying. He was able to get from her where Osiris' body was hidden and went there, tearing the coffin open, and cutting the body into forty-two pieces (though some sources claim only fourteen). He then flung the fragments of Osiris all over the land of Egypt so that Isis would never be able to find them and, this accomplished, returned to his palace to rule.

When Isis returned and found the coffin destroyed and the body gone, she fell to her knees in despair and wept. Nephthys, feeling guilty for having betrayed her secret, told Isis what had happened and offered to help her find the parts of Osiris. The two sisters then began searching the land for Osiris' parts. Wherever they found a body part, they would bury it on the spot and build a shrine to protect it from Set. In this way, the forty-two provinces of Egypt were established by the two goddesses.

They finally assembled all of the body except for the penis, which had been eaten by a fish. Isis then created a replacement part for the phallus and mated with her husband, becoming pregnant with her son Horus. Osiris had been brought back to life successfully by Isis but, because he was incomplete, could not rule the world as he had before. He instead descended to the underworld to become the righteous judge and ruler of the land of the dead.

Horus (sometimes known as Horus the Younger to differentiate from Horus the brother of Osiris) was raised in secret to protect him from Set and, having grown to manhood, challenged his uncle for the rule of his father's former kingdom. The battle raged for eighty years until Horus defeated Set and banished him from Egypt to dwell in the arid deserts (though there are many variants of this story and, in some, Horus and Set agree to divide the kingdom and, in others, Set is destroyed). Horus then ruled with his mother Isis and aunt Nephthys as his counselors and harmony was again restored to the land.

The Importance of *Ma'at*

Although there are many different versions of this myth, the one element which remains standard in all of them is the concept of harmony which is disrupted and must be restored. The principle of *ma'at* was at the heart of all of Egyptian mythology and every myth, in some form or another relies upon this value to inform it. The historian Jill Kamil writes: “Storytelling played an important part in the lives of the ancient Egyptians. The deeds of the gods and kings were not written in early times and only found their way through oral tradition into the literature of a later date” (Nardo, 52). It is interesting to note that, no matter what era the tales were first composed in, the principle of harmonious balance, of *ma'at*, is at the heart of them all.

The repulsing of Apep [Apophis], the evil dragon-like creature that lurked on the horizon, was [a] popular tale. Each evening, at sunset, it tried to stop the passage of the setting sun through the underworld. If the sky was clear, it indicated an easy passage; a blood-red sunset showed a desperate battle between the forces of good and evil; but the sun was the victor and there was always a new dawn. [The Egyptians] told tales of how the vegetation that died with the harvest was reborn when the grain sprouted, just as the sun-god 'died' each evening and was reborn the next morning (Nardo, 53-54).

Everything in the universe was thought to be maintained in a constant balance without a terminus and, as human beings were a part of that universe, they too participated in this eternal balance. *Ma'at* was made possible by the underlying force which existed before creation and made all aspects of life possible: *heka*. *Heka* was the magical power which enabled the gods to perform their duties and sustained all life and was personified in the god Heka who also allowed for the soul to pass from earthly existence to the afterlife.

When the soul left the body at death, it was thought to appear in the Hall of Truth to stand before Osiris for judgment. The heart of the deceased was weighed on a golden scale against the white feather of Ma'at. If the heart was found to be lighter than the feather, the soul was allowed to move on to the Field of Reeds, the place of purification and eternal bliss. If the heart was heavier than the feather, it was dropped on to the floor where it was eaten by the monster Ammut (the gobbler) and the soul would then cease to exist.

Although there existed a concept of the underworld, there was no 'hell' as understood by modern-day monotheistic religions. As Bunson writes, “The Egyptians feared eternal darkness and unconsciousness in the afterlife because both conditions belied the orderly transmission of light and movement evident in the universe” (86). Existence, being a part of the universal journey which began with Atum and the Ben-Ben, was the natural state of a soul and the thought of being eternally separated from that journey, of non-existence, was more terrifying to an ancient Egyptian than any underworld of torment could ever be; even in a land of eternal pain, one still existed.

A concept of an underworld similar to the Christian hell did develop in Egypt but was by no means universally accepted. Bunson writes, “Eternity was the common destination of each man, woman, and child in Egypt. Such a belief infused the vision of the people…and gave them a certain exuberance for life unmatched anywhere in the ancient world” (87). The mythology of the ancient Egyptians reflected that joy in living and inspired the great temples and monuments which are such a part of Egypt's legacy today. The enduring admiration for Egyptian mythology and the culture it informed is a testimony to the power of the life-affirming message inherent in these ancient tales.

Bibliography

- Bunson, M. *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt.* Gramercy Books, London, 1991.
- Ikram, S. *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt.* Longman, 2003.
- Nardo, D. *Living in Ancient Egypt.* Thompson/Gale, 2004.
- Pinch, G. *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt.* Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Wallis Budge, E.A. *Egyptian Religion.* Cosimo Classics, 2005.
- Wilkinson, R. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt.* Thames & Hudson, 2003.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

8.1: Ancient Egyptian Mythology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Africa (excluding Egypt)

9.1: Nok Culture of Ancient Africa
9.2: Mali Empire

9: Africa (excluding Egypt) is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Nok Culture

Definition

by Mark Cartwright published on 27 March 2019 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

The Nok culture, named after the settlement of the same name, flourished in southern West Africa (modern Nigeria) during the Iron Age from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE. Famous for the distinctive terracotta sculptures of human heads and figures, Nok was the first known culture in West Africa to produce such art and perhaps the first sub-Saharan culture to perfect iron-smelting technology.

Iron Age Culture

Located east of the Niger River and north of the Benue River in what is today northern and central Nigeria, the Nok culture is named after the town where the first artefacts were discovered. These were mostly fragmentary sculptures, buried under some 8 metres (26 ft) of sand and earth, which were tossed up during local mining operations for tin in the first half of the 20th century CE. The Nok culture prospered thanks to iron-smelting technology which permitted the manufacture of iron tools. Nok culture provides the earliest example of iron-smelting technology in sub-Saharan Africa which may have come from Carthage to the north or, perhaps more likely given the formidable barrier of the Sahara desert, from Nubia in the east. It may even have been an indigenous invention but, unfortunately, there is very little evidence to support any of the three theories above the other two. Wherever the ideas came from, it permitted Nok to jump straight from the Stone Age to the Iron Age and skip the Bronze Age stage that is typical of developments elsewhere.

Excavations at Taruga revealed the oldest known Nok culture settlement, inhabited between the 4th & 2nd century BCE.

The remains of perhaps 13 iron-smelting furnaces were discovered at Taruga alone (55 km southeast of Abuja). Durable iron tools such as hoes, hand-axes and cleavers were put to good use to boost agricultural efficiency. Nok farmers were able to grow cereals like sorghum and such vegetables as pumpkins (which were represented in terracotta). Excavations at Taruga revealed the oldest known Nok culture settlement, inhabited between the 4th and 2nd century BCE according to radiocarbon data off charcoal found within the iron furnaces. Despite the arrival of iron technology, stone tools were still used, particularly larger tools, a fact which suggests that metal was always a rare commodity. Nok housing consisted of wattle and daub huts, which do not survive well, but many were built on a foundation consisting of a ring of stones, and these do survive *in situ*. Archaeology continues in the 21st century CE in the region and is pushing back the time period of the Nok culture, perhaps as early as 900 BCE.

The Nok culture spread through central Nigeria, perhaps covering an area as large as 78,000 square kilometres (30,000 square miles) or approximately the area of Portugal. There are, however, regional differences in both the types of tools and pottery made at various Nok sites. Finds of iron arrow- and spearheads would suggest, too, that life was not always peaceful amongst the Nok and with their rival tribes. The reason for the Nok Culture's decline around 200 CE is not known but is evidenced by a sharp drop in pottery production. The usual culprits may have been overexploitation of natural resources, a period of adverse climate change, civil wars, the arrival of rival kingdoms or a combination of all four.

Nok Sculpture & Pottery

The Nok culture produced sculptures of human heads and figures of humans and animals in terracotta, the earliest such sculpture produced in sub-Saharan Africa. Near life-size terracotta heads were often part of a fuller figure but this portion has usually been lost. Indeed, most terracottas were damaged upon discovery and had been displaced by water action so that their original context is difficult to determine.

When a hollow terracotta figure is fired in an oven, the gases and water vapour which build up and expand within it can cause a figure to crack or even shatter completely. A solution is to make vent holes in the figure and Nok potters did this but with an artistic flare. The eyes, mouth, nostrils, and earholes were all given natural-looking apertures and so the overall aesthetic effect of the figure was not compromised. In contrast to the larger sculptures, smaller figurines are solid.

Figures were carved to give features and linear decoration, seemingly when the clay had partially hardened but before firing. Many full figures are seated or standing on a base which represents an upside-down pot. A common posture is a seated figure with one arm resting on one raised knee (as in Auguste Rodin's celebrated 'The Thinker' sculpture). A number of figures carry weapons, but most seem to represent participants in rituals as they sometimes wear particular clothing and almost always a great deal of beaded jewellery and pendants not likely to have been worn every day. Male figures typically have a short square beard and curious moustaches which only grow at the corners of the mouth. There are also a number of figures which are neither human nor purely animals but an imaginative mix of the two. For example, there are humans with a bird-like beak, tail, and legs, and the head of an elephant with very human eyes and forehead.

Nok pottery vessels included shallow bowls with flat bottoms which were decorated on the inside with deeply scored lines, although the scoring may have been to permit the bowl to function as a grater. Chemical analysis of the clay from all Nok pottery shows that it came from the same source (as yet unknown) and so suggests that the industry may have been centralised and under royal control.

Legacy

Nok art, and culture in general, may well have influenced later cultures in the Niger River forest areas, notably Igbo-Ukwu (at its zenith in the 9th century CE) and Ife (11-15th century CE). Certainly, the discovery of the fine artworks produced by the Nok culture provided a helpful precedent that convinced any lingering doubters that the works of those later cultures were indeed that of indigenous black Africans. As archaeology makes its slow and methodical additions to our knowledge and extends the time periods of key West African cultures, then perhaps the at-present tentative links between them will be more firmly established.

Bibliography

- Atwood, R. "The Nok of Nigeria." *Archaeology*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (July/August 2011), pp. 34-38.
- Breunig, P. et al. "New Studies on the Nok Culture of Central Nigeria." *Journal of African Archaeology*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2005), pp. 283-290.
- Curtin, P. *African History.* Pearson, 1995.
- Fage, J.D. (ed). *The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. 2.* Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Hrbek, I. (ed). *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. III, Abridged Edition.* University of California Press, 1992.
- McEvedy, C. *The Penguin Atlas of African History.* Penguin Books, 1996.
- Mokhtar, G. (ed). *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. II, Abridged Edition.* University of California Press, 2002.
- Oliver, R. (ed). *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 1.* Cambridge University Press, 2001.

About the Author

Mark Cartwright Mark Cartwright is a history writer based in Italy. His special interests include pottery, architecture, world mythology and discovering the ideas that all civilizations share in common. He holds an MA in Political Philosophy and is the Publishing Director at AHE.

9.1: Nok Culture of Ancient Africa is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Mali Empire

by Mark Cartwright published on 01 March 2019 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

The Mali Empire (1240-1645 CE) of West Africa was founded by Sundiata Keita (r. 1230-1255 CE) following his victory over the kingdom of Sosso (c. 1180-1235 CE). Sundiata's centralised government, diplomacy and well-trained army permitted a massive military expansion which would pave the way for a flourishing of the Mali Empire, making it the largest yet seen in Africa. The reign of Mansa Musa I (1312-1337 CE) saw the empire reach new heights in terms of territory controlled, cultural fluorescence, and the staggering wealth brought through Mali's control of regional trade routes. Acting as a middle-trader between North Africa via the Sahara desert and the Niger River to the south, Mali exploited the traffic in gold, salt, copper, ivory, and slaves that crisscrossed West Africa. Muslim merchants were attracted to all this commercial activity, and they converted Mali rulers who in turn spread Islam via such noted centres of learning as Timbuktu. In contrast to cities like Niani (the capital), Djenne, and Gao, most of the rural Mali population remained farmers who clung to their traditional animist beliefs. The Mali Empire collapsed in the 1460s CE following civil wars, the opening up of trade routes elsewhere, and the rise of the neighbouring Songhai Empire, but it did continue to control a small part of the western empire into the 17th century CE.

West Africa & the Sudan Region

The Sudan region of West Africa where the Mali Empire would develop had been inhabited since the Neolithic period as evidenced by Iron Age tumuli, megaliths, and remains of abandoned villages. The Niger River regularly flooded parts of this dry grassland and savannah, which provided fertile land for agriculture beginning at least 3,500 years ago, an endeavour greatly helped by the region's adequate annual rainfall. Cereals such as red-skinned African rice and millet were grown with success, as were pulses, tuber and root crops, oil and fibre plants, and fruits. Fishing and cattle herding were other important sources of food, while local deposits of copper were exploited and used for trade. Similarly, gold was probably locally mined or panned and then traded, but concrete evidence from this period is lacking.

The Ghana Empire (6th to 13th century CE) was the first major political power in West Africa to create an empire based on military might and the wealth gained from regional trade. Not geographically connected to modern-day Ghana but located to the northwest, the empire was in serious decline by the end of the 12th century CE. Beset by civil wars, rebellions of subjugated chiefdoms, and poor harvests, the empire began to disintegrate with a large part of its territory taken over by the kingdom of Sosso (aka Susu). When the Sosso king Sumanguru (aka Sumaoro Kante, r. from c. 1200 CE), imposed trade restrictions on the Mali region, the native Malinke (Mandingo) tribe rose in rebellion.

Sundiata Keita & Government

Sundiata Keita (aka Sunjaata or Sundjata, r. 1230-1255 CE) was a Malinke prince, whose name means 'lion prince', and he waged war against the kingdom of Sosso from the 1230s CE. Sundiata formed a powerful alliance of other disgruntled chiefs tired of Sumanguru's harsh rule and defeated the Sosso in a decisive battle at Krina (aka Kirina) in 1235 CE. In 1240 CE Sundiata captured the old Ghana capital. Forming a centralised government of tribal leaders and a number of influential Arab merchants, this assembly (*gbara*) declared Sundiata the supreme monarch and gave him such honorary titles as *Mari Diata* (Lord Lion). The name Sundiata gave to his empire, Africa's largest up to that point, was Mali, meaning 'the place where the king lives'. It was also decreed that all future kings would be selected from

the Keita clan, although the title was not necessarily given to the eldest son of a ruler, which sometimes led to fierce disputes among candidates.

The *Mansa*, or king, would be assisted by an assembly of elders and local chiefs throughout the Mali Empire's history, with audiences held in the royal palace or under a large tree. The king was also the supreme source of justice, but he did make use of legal advisors. In addition, the king was helped by a number of key ministers such as the chief of the army and master of the granaries (later treasury), as well as other officials like the master of ceremonies and leader of the royal orchestra. Nevertheless, the *Mansa* acted as a supreme monarch and monopolised key trade goods, for example, only he was permitted to possess gold nuggets, traders had to make do with gold dust. The king had certain mystical qualities attributed to him, and all slaves were exclusively loyal to him. No person had the right to be in the king's presence when he ate, for example, and all visitors before him had to be barefoot and bow down and pour dust over their heads. Such was this cult of leadership and the extreme centralisation of government in a single figure that the fortunes of the empire rose and fell depending on the talents or lack of them possessed by a particular king.

These problems of governance were yet to come, though, and Sundiata would continue to expand his territory to include the old kingdoms of Ghana, Walata, Tadmekka, and Songhai. Niani, now no longer in existence but probably located on a plain near the all-year-round navigable Sankarani River, was selected as the empire's capital. It was protected by mountains and was close to the two key sources of trade goods: forests and waterways.

Tribute was acquired from conquered chiefdoms, although many local chiefs were permitted to continue to rule their own people but with a Mali-appointed governor to assist them, often backed by a garrison. Additional guarantees of loyalty included taking royal hostages and keeping them at the capital. This federation prospered, developing over the next century into one of Africa's richest ever empires whose wealth would astound both Europe and Arabia. Further, and perhaps more important for the ordinary people of Mali, foreign visitors noted the high degree of justice they saw, the safety with which one could travel from place to place, and the abundance of food in all villages.

Trade & Timbuktu

Like its political predecessors, the Mali Empire prospered thanks to trade and its prime location, situated between the rain forests of southern West Africa and the powerful Muslim caliphates of North Africa. The Niger River provided ready access to Africa's interior and Atlantic coast, while the Berber-controlled camel caravans that crossed the Sahara desert ensured valuable commodities came from the north. The Mali rulers had a triple income: they taxed the passage of trade goods, bought goods and sold them on at much higher prices, and had access to their own valuable natural resources. Significantly, the Mali Empire controlled the rich gold-bearing regions of Galam, Bambuk, and Bure. One of the main trade exchanges was gold dust for salt from the Sahara. Gold was in particular demand from European powers like Castille in Spain and Venice and Genoa in Italy, where coinage was now being minted in the precious metal.

Timbuktu, founded c. 1100 CE by the nomadic Tuaregs, was a semi-independent trade port which had the double advantage of being on the Niger River bend and the starting point for the trans-Saharan caravans. The city would be monopolised and then taken over by the Mali kings who made it into one of the most important and most cosmopolitan trade centres in Africa. Through Timbuktu there passed such lucrative goods as ivory, textiles, horses (important for military use), glassware, weapons, sugar, kola nuts (a mild stimulant), cereals (e.g. sorghum and millet), spices, stone beads, craft products, and slaves. Goods were bartered for or paid using an agreed upon commodity such as copper or gold ingots, set quantities of salt or ivory, or even cowry shells (which came from Persia).

Mansa Musa I

After a string of seemingly lacklustre rulers, the Mali Empire enjoyed its second golden era during the reign of Mansa Musa I in the first half of the 13th century CE. With an army numbering around 100,000 men, including an armoured cavalry corps of 10,000 horses, and with the talented general Saran Mandian, Mansa Musa was able to maintain and extend Mali's empire, doubling its territory. He controlled lands up to the Gambia and lower Senegal in the west; in the north, tribes were subdued along the whole length of the Western Sahara border region; in the east, control spread up to Gao on the Niger River and, to the south, the Bure region and the forests of what became known as the Gold Coast came under Mali oversight. The Mali Empire thus came to include many different religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups.

To govern these diverse peoples, Mansa Musa divided his empire into provinces with each one ruled by a governor (*farba*) appointed personally by him and responsible for local taxes, justice, and settling tribal disputes. The administration was further improved with greater records kept and sent to the centralised government offices at Niani. With more tribute from more conquered chiefs, more trade routes under Mali control, and even more natural resources to exploit, Mansa Musa and the Mali elite became immensely rich. When the Mali king visited Cairo in 1324 CE, he spent or simply gave away so much gold that the price of bullion crashed by 20%. Such riches set off a never-ending round of rumours that Mali was a kingdom paved with gold. In Spain c. 1375 CE, a mapmaker was inspired to create Europe's first detailed map of West Africa, part of the *Catalan Atlas*. The map has Mansa Musa wearing an impressive gold crown and triumphantly brandishing a huge lump of gold in his hand. European explorers would spend the next five centuries trying to locate the source of this gold and the fabled trading city of Timbuktu.

Spread of Islam

Islam spread through parts of West Africa via the Arab merchants who traded there. Noted Muslim travellers and chroniclers like Ibn Battuta (1304 - c. 1369 CE) and Ibn Khaldin (1332-1406 CE) recorded that even Mali's first ruler Sundiata converted to Islam. However, the Malinke oral tradition, which was kept up over the generations by specialised bards (*griots*), presents a different story. Although recognising Islam was present in Mali long before Sundiata's reign, the oral tradition maintains that the first ruler of the Mali Empire did not reject the indigenous animist religion. We do know that Sundiata's son, Mansa Uli (aka Mansa Wali or Yerelenku), went on a pilgrimage to Mecca in the 1260s or 1270s CE, and this would be a continuing trend amongst many of Mali's rulers.

Islam in West Africa really took off, though, from the reign of Mansa Musa I. He famously went to Mecca and, impressed with what he saw on his travels, Mansa Musa brought back home Muslim architects, scholars, and books. Mosques were built such as Timbuktu's 'Great mosque' (aka Djinguereber or Jingereber), and Koranic schools and universities were established which quickly gained an international reputation. Studies were actually much wider than religion and included history, geography, astronomy, and medicine. Great libraries were built up with tens of thousands of books and manuscripts, many of which survive today.

As more people were converted, so more Muslim clerics were attracted from abroad and the religion was spread further across West Africa. Many native converts studied in such places as Fez, Morocco, and became great scholars, missionaries, and even saints, and so Islam came to be seen no longer as a foreign religion but a black African one. Despite the spread of Islam, it is also true that ancient indigenous animist beliefs continued to be practised, especially in rural communities, as noted by travellers like Ibn Battuta who visited Mali c. 1352 CE. In addition, Islamic studies were conducted in Arabic not native languages, and this further impeded its popularity outside the educated clerical class of towns and cities. Even the Islam that did take hold in Mali was a particular variation of that practised in the Arab world, perhaps because Mali rulers could not afford to completely dismiss the indigenous religious practices and beliefs that the majority of their people clung on to.

Mali Architecture

The buildings of the Mali Empire, some of which like the Sankore mosque in Timbuktu still stand, are one of the most recognisable features of the region and have become international symbols of Africa's rich pre-colonial history. Mali architects had a distinct disadvantage because of the rarity of stone in the region, and for this reason, buildings were typically constructed using beaten earth (*banco*) reinforced with wood which often sticks out in beams from the exterior surfaces. Despite the limited materials, the mosques, in particular, are still imposing multi-storied structures with towers, huge wooden doors, and tiered minarets. Other large buildings included warehouses (*fondacs*) which were used to store goods before they were transported elsewhere and which had up to 40 apartments for merchants to live in. Other examples of the Mali baked-mud buildings which impress today, although many are early 20th-century CE reconstructions, include the huge mosques at Mopti and Djenne.

On a smaller scale, excavations at Niani have revealed the remains of houses and their stone foundations, confirming later sources that the richer members of society built stone houses. Arab chroniclers describe another type of domestic building, which was constructed using beaten earth bricks and with ceilings made of wooden beams and reeds, the whole formed into a conical roof. Flooring was made using earth mixed with sand.

Mali Art & Culture

We have already noted that the Malinke had a rich tradition of recounting legends and community histories orally by specialised story-tellers know as *griots*. These stories, passed down from generation to generation (and continuing today), were often accompanied by music. During the Mali Empire, there were even songs reserved for certain people who alone had the right to have them sung in their honour, this was especially so for renowned warriors and hunters. Music was also an important part of religious festivals when masked dancers performed.

Pottery and sculpture were produced, as they had been at noted centres like Djenne since the 9th century CE. Sculptures are generally up to 50 cm tall and made of solid pottery but sometimes with a reinforcing iron rod interior. Wood and brass were other popular materials for sculpture and, to a lesser degree, stone. Decoration is typically incised, painted, or achieved by adding three-dimensional pieces. Subjects include human figures, especially bearded warriors riding a horse but also many kneeling or crouching figures with upturned faces. Figures are often realistic portrayals of ordinary people, sometimes showing symptoms of tropical diseases. Although it is rare for artworks of this period to come with a certain provenance obtained from professionally excavated sites, the sculptures are so numerous that it seems likely many were used as everyday decorative objects as well as for ritual or burial purposes.

Decline

The Mali Empire was in decline by the 15th century CE. The ill-defined rules for royal succession often led to civil wars as brothers and uncles fought each other for the throne. Then, as trade routes opened up elsewhere, several rival kingdoms developed to the west, notably the Songhai. European ships, especially those belonging to the Portuguese, were now regularly sailing down the west coast of Africa and so the Saharan caravans faced stiff competition as the most efficient means to transport goods from West Africa to the Mediterranean. There were attacks on Mali by the Tuareg in 1433 CE and by the Mossi people, who at that time controlled the lands south of the Niger River. Around 1468 CE, King Sunni Ali of the Songhai Empire (r. 1464-1492 CE) conquered the rump of the Mali Empire which was now reduced to controlling a small western pocket of its once great territory. What remained of the Mali Empire would be absorbed into the Moroccan Empire in the mid-17th century CE.

Bibliography

- Curtin, P. *African History.* Pearson, 1995.

- de Villiers, M. *Timbuktu.* Walker Books, 2007.
- Desmond Clark, J. (ed). *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 1.* Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Fage, J.D. (ed). *The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. 2.* Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Garlake, P. *Early Art and Architecture of Africa.* Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Hrbek, I. (ed). *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. III, Abridged Edition.* University of California Press, 1992.
- Ki-Zerbo, J. (ed). *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. IV, Abridged Edition.* University of California Press, 1998.
- McEvedy, C. *The Penguin Atlas of African History.* Penguin Books, 1996.
- Oliver, R. (ed). *The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. 3.* Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Oliver, R.A. *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Africa.* Cambridge University Press, 1981.

About the Author

Mark Cartwright Mark Cartwright is a history writer based in Italy. His special interests include pottery, architecture, world mythology and discovering the ideas that all civilizations share in common. He holds an MA in Political Philosophy and is the Publishing Director at AHE.

9.2: Mali Empire is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Icelandic/Norse

10.1: Norse Mythology

10.1.1: Edda- Definition

10.2: Edda- Definition

10.3: Prose Edda

10: Icelandic/Norse is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Norse Mythology

Definition

by Emma Groeneveld published on 02 November 2017 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

Norse mythology refers to the Scandinavian mythological framework that was upheld during and around the time of the Viking Age (c. 790- c. 1100 CE). Complete with a creation myth that has the first gods slaying a giant and turning his body parts into the world, various realms spread out beneath the World Tree Yggdrasil, and the eventual destruction of the known world in the Ragnarök, the Nordic mythological world is both complex and comprehensive. Its polytheistic pantheon, headed by the one-eyed Odin, contains a great number of different gods and goddesses who were venerated in customs integrated into the ancient Scandinavians' daily lives.

Main sources

Peeling back the layers of history in order to form a properly detailed and accurate picture of the myths, beliefs, and customs as they actually were in the Viking Age is no mean feat, especially for an overwhelmingly oral society, as Scandinavia mostly was at the time. As such, we only have the "tips of the narrative icebergs" (Schjødt, 219) when it comes to the Norse gods.

On the one hand, we do have some genuine pre-Christian sources that preserve elements of Scandinavian mythology; most importantly *Eddic* poetry (poetry from the *Poetic Edda* compiled in c. 1270 CE, but probably dating back to the pre-Christian era before the 10th century) and *skaldic* poetry (Viking Age, pre-Christian poetry mainly heard at courts by kings and their retinues), preserved in later Icelandic manuscripts. The *Codex Regius* found in the *Poetic Edda* contains an anonymous collection of older Eddic poems, including ten about gods and nineteen about heroes, and although some of these tell complete myths, most of them assume – unfortunately for us – that their audience was familiar with the mythical context. The same goes for skaldic poetry; with knowledge of the myths taken for granted, for us, using these sources to create a full picture of Norse mythology is a bit like filling in a rather difficult Sudoku puzzle.

The integrated nature of Norse mythology in the Vikings' daily lives is betrayed by the word *síður*, meaning 'custom' – their closest concept to religion.

On the other hand, later medieval sources, such as Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda* (c. 1220 CE) and Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* composed a few decades earlier, reworked the changeable, enigmatic, but slightly tangled early Viking sources into much more structured accounts. Snorri's work is the main reason we have an inkling of Norse mythology and myths as a whole, but should also be read critically, as he wrote from a Christian context. However, the older Eddic and skaldic poems clearly do more justice to the dynamic and integrated role mythology actually played in Viking Age societies.

Norse mythology in Viking society

The integrated nature of the Norse mythological framework in daily life is betrayed by the word *síður*, meaning 'custom' – the closest concept the Old Norse language had to religion. Of course, what it was exactly the Vikings believed with regard to all these different Norse gods and the world they lived in is hard to pin down. However, archaeological evidence helps hint at personal devotion to specific gods people felt connected to, with accompanying customs and rituals being a standard part of everyday life. The sources also give the impression that the Norse gods had their own distinct personalities more so than set-in-stone domains.

In a broader sense, gods were also venerated and called upon by the whole community. Sites of potential cultic activity, for instance, may be identified by the appearance of the name of a god in place names, like in the case of Fröslunda ("the grove dedicated to the god Freyr"). Certain hotspots are hinted at by the sources, too. According to Adam of Bremen (who wrote his account - based on hearsay - c. 1070 CE) there was a great temple at Uppsala in Sweden which housed images of Thor, Odin, and Freyr, who were sacrificed to in times of famine or disease, war, or when weddings popped up, respectively. He relays how every nine years people got together there to let their long Viking tresses down during a great festival in which humans, horses and dogs were sacrificed, their bodies hanging from trees in the sacred grove. Although the archaeological record does not support the existence of an actual temple, the remains of other buildings, among which a large hall, dating to between the 3rd and 10th centuries, have been found.

There were, thus, various aspects to Norse mythology's place in Viking societies. As Anne-Sofie Gräslund words it, "Old Norse religion should not be regarded as a static phenomenon but as a dynamic religion that changed gradually over time and doubtless had many local variations" (56). Ancient Scandinavia was a world in which belief in divine powers abounded, and all of these had their own attributes and functions.

The Norse worldview only gradually changed with the emerging influence of Christianity, which becomes apparent by the second half of the 11th century CE. Even then, because Vikings were polytheistic, they simply added Christ to their already rather lengthy list of gods, and different customs and beliefs were used side by side for a good while.

Mythological worldview

The Norse worldview as we can best distill from the various sources boils down to the following general idea. There were four phases: the process in which the world - and everything in it - was created; a dynamic phase in which time is started; the destruction of the world in the Ragnarök; and the arising of a new world from the sea.

According to Snorri, before anything else existed there were the opposing realms of icy Niflheim and fiery Muspelheim (which other sources simply call Muspell). Although seemingly safely separated by the empty void Ginnungagap, the cold and heat expanded to meet after all, resulting in Muspelheim's fire melting the ice, from which two assumingly dripping wet figures emerged: the (proto-)giant Ymir and the cow Audhumla. By licking the ice Audhumla uncovered Búri, forefather of the gods, whose son Borr teamed up with giant-daughter Bestla to sire the first gods, Odin, Vili, and Vé. These three then took advantage of Ymir's convenient size by killing him and using his remains to create the world; the earth from his flesh, the sky from his skull, mountains from his bones and the sea from his blood. The first human couple, Ask and Embla, were fashioned out of two trees or pieces of wood.

With humans popping up, a new phase begins; time has started, and all the gods and other creatures and their respective realms are off doing their own thing up until the Ragnarök. The World Tree Yggdrasil, the axis of time and space, stands in the gods' home realm of Asgard while its roots encompass all the other realms, including Midgard, where the humans reside, and the giants' abode Jotunheim. A dragon of death called Nidhogg chomps on said roots, all while the three fates (known as Norns) spin the fates of human lives at the tree's base. As the Prose Edda tells it:

Ash Yggdrasill | suffers anguish,

More than men know of:

The stag bites above; | on the side it rotteth,

And Nídhöggr gnaws from below.

(Gylfaginning 16).

As if a giant tree were not enough, the surrounding sea is inhabited by the Midgard Serpent (also known as *Jörmungandr*), a monster who twists and coils itself around the world.

Eventually, these fairly peachy worldly conditions snowball into chaos and culminate in the Ragnarök, the 'final destiny of the gods', for which our main source is the 10th-century CE *Völuspá* saga. It starts with a terrible winter. The earth sinks into the sea, the wolf Fenrir (often referred to as the Fenris-wolf) breaks loose and devours the sun, and, as the icing on the already crumbling cake, mighty Yggdrasil shakes and the bridge Bifröst – the express-way between Asgard and Midgard – collapses. Understandably rattled, the gods hold an emergency council to prepare for battle against the powers of the Underworld, who are closing in. The Prose Edda heralds that:

Brothers shall strive | and slaughter each other;

Own sisters' children | shall sin together;

Ill days among men, | many a whoredom:

An axe-age, a sword-age, | shields shall be cloven;

A wind-age, a wolf-age, | ere the world totters.

(Gylfaginning 51).

Odin fights Fenrir but falls, after which the god Vidarr avenges him, while Thor destroys the Midgard Serpent but succumbs to its poison. The gods and their foes die left, right, and centre, until the giant Surtr goes pyromaniac and kindles the world-fire that destroys everything.

Luckily, phoenix-style, the destruction is not the end. Following a cyclical concept of the world, a new world rises – not from the ashes, but from the sea. Only a handful of gods are still standing, but the new world will have a new generation of gods as well as humankind, to live happily ever after.

Æsir & Vanir

The gods themselves are boxed into two families. Firstly, there is the bigger *Æsir* family mostly connected with war and government, which was in practice also used as an umbrella term for the main gods in general. It includes notables such as Odin, Thor, Loki, Baldr, Hodr, Heimdall, and Týr.

Secondly, the smaller *Vanir* family contains fertility gods such as Njord, Freyr, and Freyja. Despite them all living in Asgard, they do not always see eye-to-eye - which, admittedly, is difficult considering Odin only has one eye, to begin with. In fact, they clash to the point of war (the 'Vanir wars'; or 'Æsir-Vanir Wars') but exchange hostages after making peace and fuse their families through marriage.

The contrast between the Æsir and the Vanir has been argued to stem from oppositions in Viking society, as the Vanir, with their focus on fertility, good harvests, and the climate, were popular in farming communities, while the Æsir were seen to advise kings, lords, and their warriors in matters of war and governance. As such, the peace made at the end of the Vanir wars might reflect the idea that society could only function through the combined powers of both social classes.

Finally, besides these two divine classes, there were also female deities known as *Dísir*, popular in private worship, *Álfar* (elves), *Jǫtnar* (giants), and *Dvergar* (dwarfs); enough to keep everyone busy, for sure. Norse mythology offers a very rich world to get lost in.

Bibliography

- Brink, S. & N. Price (eds.). *The Viking World*. Routledge, 2012.
- Clunies Ross, M. "The Creation of Old Norse Mythology." *The Viking World*, edited by S. Brink & N. Price. Routledge, 2012, 231-234.

- GrÃ¤slund, A. "Religion, Art, and Runes." *Vikings. The North Atlantic Saga*, edited by W. W. Fitzhugh & E. I. Ward. Smithsonian Books, Washington, 2000, 55-69.
- HultgÃ¥rd, A. "The Religion of the Vikings." *The Viking World*, edited by S. Brink & N. Price. Routledge, 2012, 212-218.
- Jackson Crawford - Norse Myth: 5 MisconceptionsAccessed 19 Mar 2020.
- Meulengracht SÃ¸rensen, P. "Religions Old and New." *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, edited by P. Sawyer. Oxford University Press, 2001, 202-224.
- SchjÃ¸dt, J. P. "The Old Norse Gods." *The Viking World*, edited by S. Brink & N. Price. Routledge, 2012, 219-221.
- Simek, R. (translated by A. Hall). *Dictionary of Northern Mythology.* D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 2008
- The Prose Edda Accessed 1 Nov 2017.

About the Author

Emma Groeneveld Emma Groeneveld has studied History & Ancient History. During her Master's she focused on Herodotus as well as the juicy politics of ancient courts, but more recently she has been immersing herself in everything prehistoric. She both writes and edits for AHE.

10.1: Norse Mythology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Edda

Definition

by Kimberly Lin published on 21 March 2017 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

Edda is a term used to describe two Icelandic manuscripts that were copied down and compiled in the 13th century CE. Together they are the main sources of Norse mythology and skaldic poetry that relate the religion, cosmogony, and history of Scandinavians and Proto-Germanic tribes. The *Prose* or *Younger Edda* dates to circa 1220 CE and was compiled by Snorri Sturluson, an Icelandic poet and historian. The *Poetic* or *Elder Edda* was written down circa 1270 CE by an unknown author.

Etymology of 'Edda'

Snorri Sturluson's work was the first of the two manuscripts to be called *Edda*, however, scholars are uncertain how this exactly came about. Snorri himself did not name it. The term, 'Edda', was later ascribed to Snorri's work by a different author in a manuscript from the early 14th century CE, the *Codex Upsaliensis*, which contained a copy of Snorri's *Edda* within it. Gudbrand Vigfusson, in *The Poetry of the Old Northern Tongue*, quotes the *Codex Upsaliensis* as saying, “This Book is called Edda, which Snorri Sturlason put together according to the order set down here: First, concerning the Æsir and Gylfi.” The first use of the word 'Edda', that has thus far been located, was in a poem called the *Lay of Righ* (*Háttatal*), which was authored by Snorri. In this poem, the word 'Edda' is used as a title for “great-grandmother.” Multiple theories exist, but one suggests that the term may have become associated with Snorri's manuscript because, like a great-grandmother, it carries a breadth of ancient knowledge and wisdom. Another theory that is more widely accepted by scholars today proposes that 'Edda' is closely associated with the word *Oddi*, which is the Icelandic town where Snorri grew up.

The Prose Edda

Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* was later called the *Prose Edda*, due to his addition of prose explanations of the difficult alliterative verse and symbolism. It appears that Snorri designed the manuscript as a textbook on skaldic poetry. However, it has been most highly prized for the songs and poems that record an incredible array of mythology, heroes, and battles. His verse was reflective of older styles of court poetry and was esteemed as a high standard for other poets. It was a standard perhaps unattainable by future generations of poets, as it was considered by many as overly cryptic and difficult.

The Prose Edda is highly prized for its songs & poems that record an incredible array of mythology, heroes, & battles.

Snorri's *Edda* was later nicknamed the 'Younger Edda' because much of it derives from older sources. What those sources were is a matter of speculation. Some researchers believe Snorri based it largely on folkloric oral traditions that he may have heard, while others think he used an elder written *Edda*. However, experts agree that he did add many of his own details. As a result, he gives readers a more elaborate version of Norse mythology that at times reveals his Christian influence.

Contents of the Prose Edda

- **Prologue:** Snorri reveals his Christian influence by giving an account of the Biblical version of creation with the stories of Adam and Eve, the Great Flood and Noah's Ark.
- **Gylfaginning: Here Begins the Beguiling of Gylfi** - Perhaps truest to ancient sources, this book is a mythological story in the form of Odinic poems that explain the origin of the Norse cosmos and the chaos that will ensue.

- **Skáldskaparmál: The Poesy of Skalds** - This text continues with mythological stories of the Norse gods but weaves educational explanations on skaldic poetry into the narrative.
- **Háttatal: The Enumeration of Metres** - Includes three distinct songs that celebrate King Hákon and Skúli Bárdsson, the powerful father-in-law of the king. Snorri added comments and definitions between stanzas to ease the reader's difficulty of interpretation.

Poetry From the Prose Edda

The following excerpt from the first book in the *Prose Edda*, 'Gylfaginning', connects the *Poetic* and *Prose Edda* together. In it, Snorri references the 3rd stanza of *Völuspá*, the most famous poem of the *Poetic Edda* that details the mythological creation and destruction of the Norse cosmos. This story in the *Prose Edda* is about King Gylfi of Scandinavia who travels to investigate the wise and cunning leaders of the east. The king pretends to be an old man, Gangleri, who asks many questions of the leaders.

Gangleri said: 'What was the beginning, or how began it, or what was before it?' Hárr answered: 'As is told in Völuspá

Erst was the age | when nothing was:

Nor sand nor sea, | nor chilling stream-waves;

Earth was not found, | nor Ether-Heaven,—

A Yawning Gap, | but grass was none.

(Gylfaginning: Chapter IV)

An Elder Edda Surfaces

In 1643 CE, a highly respected Icelandic collector of numerous works on Norse literature, Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson, obtained a copy of an older manuscript. No scholar knows where it came from or if it originally had a name, however, it was evident that the newly discovered compendium and Snorri's *Edda* had some common origins. Although the bishop attributed this manuscript to the priest and author, Saemundur Sigfússon (1056-1153 CE), and called it *Saemundur's Edda*, today, scholars agree that this was incorrect. The author/compiler is still unknown. However, Bishop Brynjólfur believed the manuscript to be the *Elder Edda*. Completely written in verse, the *Elder Edda* later became known as the *Poetic Edda* to distinguish it from Snorri's prose counterpart.

In 1662 CE, Bishop Brynjólfur gifted many of his important literary collections to the King of Denmark, Frederick III, to place in the new Royal Library. The *Poetic Edda* was among those gifts. It became known as the *Codex Regius* ('King's or Royal Book') and remained safeguarded in Denmark until it was returned to Iceland in 1971 CE.

The *Codex Regius* is a cherished artefact containing ancient myths and stories of heroes that cannot be found elsewhere. Older copies of the *Codex Regius* and its sources that may have once existed were lost or destroyed. It currently contains 90 pages, but 16 of those went missing sometime after it went to Denmark. The *Poetic Edda* took a bit of an evolutionary divergence from the *Codex Regius* as other poems were added to the *Poetic Edda* over the years. Today, many people refer to the oldest King's Book as the *Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda* to distinguish it from a different volume of *Codex Regius*, which contains a copy of Snorri's *Edda* and dates to the first half of the 14th century CE. The contents of any modern *Poetic Edda* vary and depend on the author.

Contents of the Poetic Edda (Codex Regius)

Mythological Poems:

- Völuspá - The Seeress's Prophecy

- Hávamál - Sayings of the High One
- Vafþrúðnismál - The Ballad of Vafthrúdnir
- Grímnismál - The Lay of Grímnir
- Skírnismál - The Lay of Skírnir
- Hárbarðsljóð - The Lay of Hárbard
- Hymiskviða - The Lay of Hymir
- Lokasenna - Loki's Wrangling
- Þrymskviða - The Lay of Thrym
- Völundarkviða - The Lay of Völund
- Alvíssmál - The Lay of Alvís

Heroic Poems:

Three lays of Helgi

- Helgakviða Hundingsbana I or Völsungakviða
- Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar
- Helgakviða Hundingsbana II or Völsungakviða in forna
- Frá dauða Sinfjötla - A short prose text
- Grípisspá - Grípir's Prophecy, The Prophecy of Grípir
- Reginsmál - The Lay of Regin
- Fáfnismál - The Lay of Fáfnir
- Sigrdrífumál - The Lay of Sigrdrífa
- Brot af Sigurðarkviðu - Fragment of a Sigurd Lay
- Guðrúnarkviða I - The First Lay of Gudrún
- Sigurðarkviða hin skamma - The Short Lay of Sigurd
- Helreið Brynhildar - Brynhild's Ride to Hel
- Dráp Niflunga - The Slaying of The Niflungs
- Guðrúnarkviða II - The Second Lay of Gudrún
- Guðrúnarkviða III - The Third Lay of Gudrún
- Oddrúnargrátr - Oddrún's Lament
- Atlakviða - The Lay of Atli
- Atlamál hin groenlenzku - The Greenlandic Poem of Atli
- The Jörmunrekkr Lays
- Guðrúnarhvöt - Gudrún's Lament
- Hamðismál - The Lay of Hamdir

Poems Added That Are Not in the Codex Regius

- Baldrs draumar - Baldr's Dreams
- Gróttasöngr - The Song of Grotti
- Rígsþula - The Lay of Ríg
- Hyndluljóð - The Lay of Hyndla
- Völuspá - Short Prophecy of the Seeress
- Svipdagsmál - The Lay of Svipdag
- Grógaldr - Gróa's Spell
- Fjölsvinnsmál - The Lay of Fjölsvid
- Hrafnagaldr Óðins - Odins's Raven Song

Poetry from the Poetic Edda

One of the most important mythological poems is *Hávamál*, in which Odin explains how he acquired the runes by sacrificing himself to himself on the Yggdrasil tree. As translated by Olive Bray, stanzas 137 and 138 explain:

I trow I hung on that windy Tree
nine whole days and nights,
stabbed with a spear, offered to Odin,
myself to mine own self given,
high on that Tree of which none hath heard
from what roots it rises to heaven.

None refreshed me ever with food or drink,
I peered right down in the deep;
crying aloud I lifted the Runes
then back I fell from thence.

Preservation of Germanic History

It was by good fortune that the *Codex Regius* of the *Poetic Edda* was preserved. Widespread destruction of pagan manuscripts occurred in the 18th century CE across Europe. Additionally, in 1728 CE the Great Fire in Copenhagen tragically burned at least one-third of the city including over 35,000 volumes of books and a large collection of historical documents at the University of Copenhagen library.

Today, the *Eddas* are a key to the ancient world of Germanic history. More than just a vast source of mythology, the *Eddas* reveal the intimate relationships between humans, gods, and nature, and the deep reverence that was built upon these beliefs. This is especially significant in light of a resurgence of Icelandic Pagan religion. Additionally, the extensive usage of the *Eddas* across the world as resources for Norse studies testifies to their scholastic relevance. Both the *Prose* and *Elder Eddas* are national treasures that have captured history within their poetic pages and are a testament to the tenacity of the Icelanders to remember and preserve their precious heritage.

Bibliography

- Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell. *Corpus Poeticum Boreale[Volumes 1 & 2]*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1883, XVII-XXXIII.

- Philip Pulsiano Kirstin Wolf. *Medieval Scandinavia An Encyclopedia.* Garland Publishing, 1993, 100-103.
- Terry Gunnell. "Eddic Poetry." *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, edited by Rory McTurk. BLACKWELL PUBLISHERS, 2005, 82-100.

About the Author

Kimberly Lin Kimberly Lin is the administrator of historicmysteries.com, and her passion is sharing what she learns about our enigmatic past. She lives within the Campi Flegrei supervolcano in Italy, from where she will continue to dive into the ancient world.

10.1.1: Edda- Definition is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

Edda

Definition

by Kimberly Lin published on 21 March 2017 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

Edda is a term used to describe two Icelandic manuscripts that were copied down and compiled in the 13th century CE. Together they are the main sources of Norse mythology and skaldic poetry that relate the religion, cosmogony, and history of Scandinavians and Proto-Germanic tribes. The *Prose* or *Younger Edda* dates to circa 1220 CE and was compiled by Snorri Sturluson, an Icelandic poet and historian. The *Poetic* or *Elder Edda* was written down circa 1270 CE by an unknown author.

Etymology of 'Edda'

Snorri Sturluson's work was the first of the two manuscripts to be called *Edda*, however, scholars are uncertain how this exactly came about. Snorri himself did not name it. The term, 'Edda', was later ascribed to Snorri's work by a different author in a manuscript from the early 14th century CE, the *Codex Upsaliensis*, which contained a copy of Snorri's *Edda* within it. Gudbrand Vigfusson, in *The Poetry of the Old Northern Tongue*, quotes the *Codex Upsaliensis* as saying, “This Book is called Edda, which Snorri Sturlason put together according to the order set down here: First, concerning the Æsir and Gylfi.” The first use of the word 'Edda', that has thus far been located, was in a poem called the *Lay of Righ* (*Háttatal*), which was authored by Snorri. In this poem, the word 'Edda' is used as a title for “great-grandmother.” Multiple theories exist, but one suggests that the term may have become associated with Snorri's manuscript because, like a great-grandmother, it carries a breadth of ancient knowledge and wisdom. Another theory that is more widely accepted by scholars today proposes that 'Edda' is closely associated with the word *Oddi*, which is the Icelandic town where Snorri grew up.

The Prose Edda

Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* was later called the *Prose Edda*, due to his addition of prose explanations of the difficult alliterative verse and symbolism. It appears that Snorri designed the manuscript as a textbook on skaldic poetry. However, it has been most highly prized for the songs and poems that record an incredible array of mythology, heroes, and battles. His verse was reflective of older styles of court poetry and was esteemed as a high standard for other poets. It was a standard perhaps unattainable by future generations of poets, as it was considered by many as overly cryptic and difficult.

The Prose Edda is highly prized for its songs & poems that record an incredible array of mythology, heroes, & battles.

Snorri's *Edda* was later nicknamed the 'Younger Edda' because much of it derives from older sources. What those sources were is a matter of speculation. Some researchers believe Snorri based it largely on folkloric oral traditions that he may have heard, while others think he used an elder written *Edda*. However, experts agree that he did add many of his own details. As a result, he gives readers a more elaborate version of Norse mythology that at times reveals his Christian influence.

Contents of the Prose Edda

- **Prologue:** Snorri reveals his Christian influence by giving an account of the Biblical version of creation with the stories of Adam and Eve, the Great Flood and Noah's Ark.
- **Gylfaginning: Here Begins the Beguiling of Gylfi** - Perhaps truest to ancient sources, this book is a mythological story in the form of Odinic poems that explain the origin of the Norse cosmos and the chaos that will ensue.

- **Skáldskaparmál: The Poesy of Skalds** - This text continues with mythological stories of the Norse gods but weaves educational explanations on skaldic poetry into the narrative.
- **Háttatal: The Enumeration of Metres** - Includes three distinct songs that celebrate King Hákon and Skúli Bárdsson, the powerful father-in-law of the king. Snorri added comments and definitions between stanzas to ease the reader's difficulty of interpretation.

Poetry From the Prose Edda

The following excerpt from the first book in the *Prose Edda*, 'Gylfaginning', connects the *Poetic* and *Prose Edda* together. In it, Snorri references the 3rd stanza of *Völuspá*, the most famous poem of the *Poetic Edda* that details the mythological creation and destruction of the Norse cosmos. This story in the *Prose Edda* is about King Gylfi of Scandinavia who travels to investigate the wise and cunning leaders of the east. The king pretends to be an old man, Gangleri, who asks many questions of the leaders.

Gangleri said: 'What was the beginning, or how began it, or what was before it?' Hárr answered: 'As is told in Völuspá

Erst was the age | when nothing was:

Nor sand nor sea, | nor chilling stream-waves;

Earth was not found, | nor Ether-Heaven,—

A Yawning Gap, | but grass was none.

(Gylfaginning: Chapter IV)

An Elder Edda Surfaces

In 1643 CE, a highly respected Icelandic collector of numerous works on Norse literature, Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson, obtained a copy of an older manuscript. No scholar knows where it came from or if it originally had a name, however, it was evident that the newly discovered compendium and Snorri's *Edda* had some common origins. Although the bishop attributed this manuscript to the priest and author, Saemundur Sigfússon (1056-1153 CE), and called it *Saemundur's Edda*, today, scholars agree that this was incorrect. The author/compiler is still unknown. However, Bishop Brynjólfur believed the manuscript to be the *Elder Edda*. Completely written in verse, the *Elder Edda* later became known as the *Poetic Edda* to distinguish it from Snorri's prose counterpart.

In 1662 CE, Bishop Brynjólfur gifted many of his important literary collections to the King of Denmark, Frederick III, to place in the new Royal Library. The *Poetic Edda* was among those gifts. It became known as the *Codex Regius* ('King's or Royal Book') and remained safeguarded in Denmark until it was returned to Iceland in 1971 CE.

The *Codex Regius* is a cherished artefact containing ancient myths and stories of heroes that cannot be found elsewhere. Older copies of the *Codex Regius* and its sources that may have once existed were lost or destroyed. It currently contains 90 pages, but 16 of those went missing sometime after it went to Denmark. The *Poetic Edda* took a bit of an evolutionary divergence from the *Codex Regius* as other poems were added to the *Poetic Edda* over the years. Today, many people refer to the oldest King's Book as the *Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda* to distinguish it from a different volume of *Codex Regius*, which contains a copy of Snorri's *Edda* and dates to the first half of the 14th century CE. The contents of any modern *Poetic Edda* vary and depend on the author.

Contents of the Poetic Edda (Codex Regius)

Mythological Poems:

- Völuspá - The Seeress's Prophecy

- Hávamál - Sayings of the High One
- Vafþrúðnismál - The Ballad of Vafthrúdnir
- Grímnismál - The Lay of Grímnir
- Skírnismál - The Lay of Skírnir
- Hárbarðsljóð - The Lay of Hárbard
- Hymiskviða - The Lay of Hymir
- Lokasenna - Loki's Wrangling
- Þrymskviða - The Lay of Thrym
- Völundarkviða - The Lay of Völund
- Alvíssmál - The Lay of Alvís

Heroic Poems:

Three lays of Helgi

- Helgakviða Hundingsbana I or Völsungakviða
- Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar
- Helgakviða Hundingsbana II or Völsungakviða in forna
- Frá dauða Sinfjötla - A short prose text
- Grípisspá - Grípir's Prophecy, The Prophecy of Grípir
- Reginsmál - The Lay of Regin
- Fáfnismál - The Lay of Fáfnir
- Sigrdrífumál - The Lay of Sigrdrífa
- Brot af Sigurðarkviðu - Fragment of a Sigurd Lay
- Guðrúnarkviða I - The First Lay of Gudrún
- Sigurðarkviða hin skamma - The Short Lay of Sigurd
- Helreið Brynhildar - Brynhild's Ride to Hel
- Dráp Niflunga - The Slaying of The Niflungs
- Guðrúnarkviða II - The Second Lay of Gudrún
- Guðrúnarkviða III - The Third Lay of Gudrún
- Oddrúnargrátr - Oddrún's Lament
- Atlakviða - The Lay of Atli
- Atlamál hin groenlenzku - The Greenlandic Poem of Atli
- The Jörmunrekkr Lays
- Guðrúnarhvöt - Gudrún's Lament
- Hamðismál - The Lay of Hamdir

Poems Added That Are Not in the Codex Regius

- Baldrs draumar - Baldr's Dreams
- Gróttasöngr - The Song of Grotti
- Rígsþula - The Lay of Ríg
- Hyndluljóð - The Lay of Hyndla
- Völuspá - Short Prophecy of the Seeress
- Svipdagsmál - The Lay of Svipdag
- Grógaldr - Gróa's Spell
- Fjölsvinnsmál - The Lay of Fjölsvid
- Hrafnagaldr Óðins - Odins's Raven Song

Poetry from the Poetic Edda

One of the most important mythological poems is *Hávamál*, in which Odin explains how he acquired the runes by sacrificing himself to himself on the Yggdrasil tree. As translated by Olive Bray, stanzas 137 and 138 explain:

I trow I hung on that windy Tree
nine whole days and nights,
stabbed with a spear, offered to Odin,
myself to mine own self given,
high on that Tree of which none hath heard
from what roots it rises to heaven.

None refreshed me ever with food or drink,
I peered right down in the deep;
crying aloud I lifted the Runes
then back I fell from thence.

Preservation of Germanic History

It was by good fortune that the *Codex Regius* of the *Poetic Edda* was preserved. Widespread destruction of pagan manuscripts occurred in the 18th century CE across Europe. Additionally, in 1728 CE the Great Fire in Copenhagen tragically burned at least one-third of the city including over 35,000 volumes of books and a large collection of historical documents at the University of Copenhagen library.

Today, the *Eddas* are a key to the ancient world of Germanic history. More than just a vast source of mythology, the *Eddas* reveal the intimate relationships between humans, gods, and nature, and the deep reverence that was built upon these beliefs. This is especially significant in light of a resurgence of Icelandic Pagan religion. Additionally, the extensive usage of the *Eddas* across the world as resources for Norse studies testifies to their scholastic relevance. Both the *Prose* and *Elder Eddas* are national treasures that have captured history within their poetic pages and are a testament to the tenacity of the Icelanders to remember and preserve their precious heritage.

Bibliography

- Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell. *Corpus Poeticum Boreale[Volumes 1 & 2]*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1883, XVII-XXXIII.

- Philip Pulsiano Kirstin Wolf. *Medieval Scandinavia An Encyclopedia.* Garland Publishing, 1993, 100-103.
- Terry Gunnell. "Eddic Poetry." *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, edited by Rory McTurk. BLACKWELL PUBLISHERS, 2005, 82-100.

About the Author

Kimberly Lin Kimberly Lin is the administrator of historicmysteries.com, and her passion is sharing what she learns about our enigmatic past. She lives within the Campi Flegrei supervolcano in Italy, from where she will continue to dive into the ancient world.

10.2: Edda- Definition is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

10.3: Prose Edda

Prose Edda (incomplete)

Snorri Sturluson *translated by* *Rasmus Björn Anderson*

Source: Wikimedia Commons (CC-BY-SA)

Known also as the **Younger Edda** or **Snorri's Edda** is an Icelandic manual of poetics which contains many stories from Norse mythology. Its purpose was to enable Icelandic poets and readers to understand the subtleties of alliterative verse, and to grasp the meaning behind the many kennings that were used in skaldic poetry.

The work was written by the Icelandic scholar and historian Snorri Sturluson around 1220. Seven manuscripts, dating from around 1300 to around 1600, have independent textual value.

1. A man by name Æger, or Hler, who dwelt on the island of Hler's Isle, was well skilled in the black art. He made a journey to Asgard. But the asas knew of his coming and gave him a friendly reception; but they also made use of many sorts of delusions. In the evening, when the feast began, Odin had swords brought into the hall, and they were so bright that it glistened from them so that there was no need of any other light while they sat drinking. Then went the asas to their feast, and the twelve asas who were appointed judges seated themselves in their high-seats. These are their names: Thor, Njord, Frey, Tyr, Heimdal, Brage, Vidar, Vale, Uller, Honer, Forsete, Loke. The asynjes (goddesses) also were with them: Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Idun, Gerd, Sigyn, Fulla, Nanna. Æger thought all that he saw looked very grand. The panels of the walls were all covered with beautiful shields. The mead was very strong, and they drank deep. Next to Æger sat Brage, and they talked much together over their drink. Brage spoke to Æger of many things that had happened to the asas.

2. Brage began his tale by telling how three asas, Odin, Loke and Honer, went on a journey over the mountains and heaths, where they could get nothing to eat. But when they came down into a valley they saw a herd of cattle. From this herd they took an ox and went to work to boil it. When they deemed that it must be boiled enough they uncovered the broth, but it was not yet done. After a little while they lifted the cover off again, but it was not yet boiled. They talked among themselves about how this could happen. Then they heard a voice in the oak above them, and he who sat there said that he was the cause that the broth did not get boiled. They looked up and saw an eagle, and it was not a small one. Then said the eagle: If you will give me my fill of the ox, then the broth will be boiled. They agreed to this. So he flew down from the tree, seated himself beside the boiling broth, and immediately snatched up first the two thighs of the ox and then both the shoulders. This made Loke wroth: he grasped a large pole, raised it with all his might and dashed it at the body of the eagle. The eagle shook himself after the blow and flew up. One end of the pole fastened itself to the body of the eagle, and the other end stuck to Loke's hands. The eagle flew just high enough so that Loke's feet dragged over stones and rocks and trees, and it seemed to him that his arms would be torn from his shoulder-blades. He calls and prays the eagle most earnestly for peace, but the latter declares that Loke shall never get free unless he will pledge himself to bring Idun and her apples out of Asgard. When Loke had promised this, he was set free and went to his companions again; and no more is related of this journey, except that they returned home. But at the time agreed upon, Loke coaxed Idun out of Asgard into a forest, saying that he had found apples that she would think very nice, and he requested her to take with her her own apples in order to compare them. Then came the giant Thjasse in the guise of an eagle, seized Idun and flew away with her to his home in Thrymheim. The asas were ill at ease on account of the disappearance of Idun,---they became gray-haired and old. They met in council and asked each other who last had seen Idun. The last that had been seen of her was that she had gone out of Asgard in company with Loke. Then Loke was seized and brought into the council, and he was threatened with death or torture. But he became frightened, and promised to bring Idun back from Jotunheim if Freyja would lend him the falcon-guise that she had. He got the falcon-guise, flew north into Jotunheim, and came one day to the giant Thjasse. The giant had rowed out to sea, and Idun was at home alone. Loke turned her into the likeness of a nut, held her in his claws and flew with all his might. But when Thjasse returned home and missed Idun, he took on his eagle-guise, flew after Loke, gaining on the latter with his eagle wings. When the asas saw the falcon coming flying with the nut, and how the eagle flew, they went to the walls of Asgard and brought with them bundles of

plane-shavings. When the falcon flew within the burg, he let himself drop down beside the burg-wall. Then the asas kindled a fire in the shavings; and the eagle, being unable to stop himself when he missed the falcon, caught fire in his feathers, so that he could not fly any farther. The asas were on hand and slew the giant Thjasse within the gates of Asgard, and that slaughter is most famous.

Skade, the daughter of the giant Thjasse, donned her helmet, and byrnie, and all her war-gear, and betook herself to Asgard to avenge her father's death. The asas offered her ransom and atonement; and it was agreed to, in the first place, that she should choose herself a husband among the asas, but she was to make her choice by the feet, which was all she was to see of their persons. She saw one man's feet that were wonderfully beautiful, and exclaimed: This one I choose! On Balder there are few blemishes. But it was Njord, from Noatun. In the second place, it was stipulated that the asas were to do what she did not deem them capable of, and that was to make her laugh. Then Loke tied one end of a string fast to the beard of a goat and the other around his own body, and one pulled this way and the other that, and both of them shrieked out loud. Then Loke let himself fall on Skade's knees, and this made her laugh. It is said that Odin did even more than was asked, in that he took Thjasse's eyes and cast them up into heaven, and made two stars of them. Then said Æger: This Thjasse seems to me to have been considerable of a man; of what kin was he? Brage answered: His father's name was Olvalde, and if I told you of him, you would deem it very remarkable. He was very rich in gold, and when he died and his sons were to divide their heritage, they had this way of measuring the gold, that each should take his mouthful of gold, and they should all take the same number of mouthfuls. One of them was Thjasse, another Ide, and the third Gang. But we now have it as a saw among us, that we call gold the mouth-number of these giants. In runes and songs we wrap the gold up by calling it the measure, or word, or tale, of these giants. Then said Æger: It seems to me that it will be well hidden in the runes.

3. And again said Æger: Whence originated the art that is called skaldship? Made answer Brage: The beginning of this was, that the gods had a war with the people that are called vans. They agreed to hold a meeting for the purpose of making peace, and settled their dispute in this wise, that they both went to a jar and spit into it. But at parting the gods, being unwilling to let this mark of peace perish, shaped it into a man whose name was Kvaser, and who was so wise that no one could ask him any question that he could not answer. He traveled much about in the world to teach men wisdom. Once he came to the home of the dwarfs Fjalar and Galar. They called him aside, saying they wished to speak with him alone, slew him and let his blood run into two jars called Son and Bodn, and into a kettle called Odrarer. They mixed honey with the blood, and thus was produced such mead that whoever drinks from it becomes a skald and sage. The dwarfs told the asas that Kvaser had choked in his wisdom, because no one was so wise that he could ask him enough about learning.

4. Then the dwarfs invited to themselves the giant whose name is Gilling, and his wife; and when he came they asked him to row out to sea with them. When they had gotten a short distance from shore, the dwarfs rowed onto a blind rock and capsized the boat. Gilling, who was unable to swim, was drowned, but the dwarfs righted the boat again and rowed ashore. When they told of this mishap to his wife she took it much to heart, and began to cry aloud. The Fjalar asked her whether it would not lighten her sorrow if she could look out upon the sea where her husband had perished, and she said it would. He then said to his brother Galar that he should go up over the doorway, and as she passed out he should let a mill-stone drop onto her head, for he said he was tired of her bawling. Galar did so. When the giant Suttung, the son of Gilling, found this out he came and seized the dwarfs, took them out to sea and left them on a rocky island, which was flooded at high tide. They prayed Suttung to spare their lives, and offered him in atonement for their father's blood the precious mead, which he accepted. Suttung brought the mead home with him, and hid it in a place called Hnitbjorg. He set his daughter Gunlad to guard it. For these reasons we call songship Kvasir's blood; the drink of the dwarfs; the dwarfs' fill; some kind of liquor of Odrarer, or Bodn or Son; the ship of the dwarfs (because this mead ransomed their lives from the rocky isle); the mead of Suttung, or the liquor of Hnitbjorg.

5. Then remarked Æger: It seems dark to me to call songship by these names; but how came the asas by Suttung's mead? Answered Brage: The saga about this is, that Odin set out from home and came to a place where nine thralls were mowing hay. He asked them whether they would like to have him whet their scythes. To this they said yes. Then he took a whet-stone from his belt and whetted the scythes. They thought their scythes were much improved, and asked whether the whet-stone was for sale. He answered that he who would buy it must pay a fair price for it. All said they were willing to give the sum demanded, and each wanted Odin to sell it to him. But he threw the whet-stone up in the air, and when all wished to catch it they scrambled about it in such a manner that each brought his scythe onto the other's neck. Odin sought lodgings for the night at the house of the giant Bauge, who was a brother of Suttung. Bauge complained of what had happened to his household, saying that his nine thralls had slain each other, and that he did not know where he should get other workmen. Odin called himself Bolverk. He offered to undertake the work of the nine men for

Bauge, but asked in payment therefore a drink of Suttung's mead. Bauge answered that he had no control over the mead, saying that Suttung was bound to keep that for himself alone. But he agreed to go with Bolverk and try whether they could get the mead. During the summer Bolverk did the work of the nine men for Bauge, but when winter came he asked for his pay. Then they both went to Suttung. Bauge explained to Suttung his bargain with Bolverk, but Suttung stoutly refused to give even a drop of the mead. Bolverk then proposed to Bauge that they should try whether they could not get at the mead by the aid of some trick, and Bauge agreed to this. Then Bolverk drew forth the auger which is called Rate, and requested Bauge to bore a hole through the rock, if the auger was sharp enough. He did so. Then said Bauge that there was a hole through the rock; but Bolverk blowed into the hole that the auger had made, and the chips flew back into his face. Thus he saw that Bauge intended to deceive him, and commanded him to bore through. Bauge bored again, and when Bolverk blew a second time the chips flew inward. Now Bolverk changed himself into the likeness of a serpent and crept into the auger-hole. Bauge thrust after him with the auger, but missed him. Bolverk went to where Gunlad was, and shared her couch for three nights. She then promised to give him three draughts from the mead. With the first draught he emptied Odrarer, in the second Bodn, and in the third Son, and thus he had all the mead. Then he took on the guise of an eagle, and flew off as fast as he could. When Suttung saw the flight of the eagle, he also took on the shape of an eagle and flew after him. When the asas saw Odin coming, they set their jars out in the yard. When Odin reached Asgard, he spewed the mead up into the jars. He was, however, so near being caught by Suttung, that he sent some of the mead after him backward, and as no care was taken of this, anybody that wished might have it. This we call the share of poetasters. But Suttung's mead Odin gave to the asas and to those men who are able to make verses. Hence we call songship Odin's prey, Odin's find, Odin's drink, Odin's gift, and the drink of the asas.

6. Then said Æger: In how many ways to you vary the poetical expressions, or how many kinds of poetry are there? Answered Brage: There are two kinds, and all poetry falls into one or the other of these classes. Æger asks: Which two? Brage answers: Diction and meter. What diction is used in poetry? There are three sorts of poetic diction. Which? One is to name everything by its own name; another is to name it with a pronoun, but the third sort of diction is called kenning (a poetical periphrasis or descriptive name); and this sort is so managed that when we name Odin, or Thor or Tyr, or any other of the asas or elves, we add to their name a reference to some other asa, or we make mention of some of his works. Then the appellation belongs to him who corresponds to the whole phrase, and not to him who was actually named. Thus we speak of Odin as Sigtyr, Hangatyr or Farmatyr, and such names we call simple appellatives. In the same manner he is called Reidartyr.

Thor and Hrungner

Brage told Æger that Thor had gone eastward to crush trolls. Odin rode on his horse Sleipner to Jotunheim, and came to the giant whose name is Hrungner. Then asked Hrungner what man that was who with a golden helmet rode both through the air and over the sea, and added that he had a remarkably good horse. Odin said that he would wager his head that so good a horse could not be found in Jotunheim. Hrungner admitted that it was indeed an excellent horse, but he had one, called Goldfax, that could take much longer paces; and in his wrath he immediately sprang upon his horse and galloped after Odin, intending to pay him for his insolence. Odin rode so fast that he was a good distance ahead, but Hrungner had worked himself into such a giant rage that, before he was aware of it, he had come within the gates of Asgard. When he came to the hall door, the asas invited him to drink with them. He entered the hall and requested a drink. They then took the bowls that Thor was accustomed to drink from, and Hrungner emptied them all. When he became drunk, he gave the freest vent to his loud boastings. He said he was going to take Valhal and move it to Jotunheim, demolish Asgard and kill all the gods except Freyja and Sif, whom he was going to take home with him. When Freyja went forward to refill the bowls for him, he boasted that he was going to drink up all the ale of the asas. But when the asas grew weary of his arrogance, they named Thor's name. At once Thor was in the hall, swung his hammer in the air, and, being exceedingly wroth, asked who was to blame that dog-wise giants were permitted to drink there, who had given Hrungner permission to be in Valhall, and why Freyja should pour ale for him as she did in the feasts of the asas. Then answered Hrungner, looking with anything but friendly eyes at Thor, and said that Odin had invited him to drink, and that he was there under his protection. Thor replied that he should come to rue that invitation before he came out. Hrungner again answered that it would be but little credit to Asa-Thor to kill him, unarmed as he was. It would be a greater proof of his valor if he dared fight a duel with him at the boundaries of his territory, at Grjottungard. It was very foolish of me, he said, that I left my shield and my flint-stone at home; had I my weapons here, you and I would try a holmgang (duel on a rocky island); but as this is not the case, I declare you a coward if you kill me unarmed. Thor was by no means the man to refuse to fight a duel when he was challenged, an honor which

never had been shown him before. Then Hrungner went his way, and hastened with all his might back to Jotunheim. His journey became famous among the giants, and the proposed meeting with Thor was much talked of. They regarded it very important who should gain the victory, and they feared the worst from Thor if Hrungner should be defeated, for he was the strongest among them. Thereupon the giants made at Grjottungard a man of clay, who was nine rasts tall and three rasts broad under the arms, but being unable to find a heart large enough to be suitable for him, they took the heart from a mare, but even this fluttered and trembled when Thor came. Hrungner had, as is well known, a heart of stone, sharp and three-sided; just as the rune has since been risted that is called Hrungner's heart. Even his head was of stone. His shield was of stone, and was broad and thick, and he was holding this shield before him as he stood at Grjottungard waiting for Thor. His weapon was a flint-stone, which he swung over his shoulders, and altogether he presented a most formidable aspect. On one side of him stood the giant of clay, who was named Mokkerkalfe. He was so exceedingly terrified, that it is said that he wet himself when he saw Thor. Thor proceeded to the duel, and Thjalfe was with him. Thjalfe ran forward to where Hrungner was standing, and said to him: You stand illy guarded giant; you hold the shield before you, but Thor has seen you; he goes down into the earth and will attack you from below. Then Hrungner thrust the shield under his feet and stood on it, but the flint-stone he seized with both his hands. The next that he saw were flashes of lightning, and he heard loud crashings; and then he saw Thor in his asa-might advancing with impetuous speed, swinging his hammer and hurling it from afar at Hrungner. Hrungner seized the flint-stone with both his hands and threw it against the hammer. They met in the air, and the flint-stone broke. One part fell to the earth, and from it have come the flint-mountains; the other part hit Thor's head with such force that he fell forward to the ground. But the hammer Mjolner hit Hrungner right in the head, and crushed his skull in small pieces. He himself fell forward over Thor, so that his foot lay upon Thor's neck. Meanwhile Thjalfe attacked Mokkerkalfe, who fell with but little honor. Then Thjalfe went to Thor and was to take Hrungner's foot off from him, but he had not the strength to do it. When the asas learned that Thor had fallen, they all came to take the giant's foot off, but none of them was able to move it. Then came Magne, the son of Thor and Jarnsaxa. He was only three nights of age. He threw Hrungner's foot off Thor, and said: It was a great mishap, father, that I came so late. I think I could have slain this giant with my fist, had I met him. Then Thor arose, greeted his son lovingly, saying that he would become great and powerful; and, added he, I will give you the horse Goldfax, that belonged to Hrungner. Odin said that Thor did wrong in giving so fine a horse to the son of a giantess, instead of to his father. Thor went home to Thrudvang, but the flint-stone still stuck fast in his head. Then came the vala whose name is Groa, the wife of Orvandel the Bold. She sang her magic songs over Thor until the flint-stone became loose. But when Thor perceived this, and was just expecting that the flint-stone would disappear, he desired to reward Groa for her healing, and make her heart glad. So he related to her how he had waded from the north over the Elivogs rivers, and had borne in a basket on his back Orvandel from Jotunheim; and in evidence of this he told her how that one toe of his had protruded from the basket and had frozen, wherefore Thor had broken it off and cast it up into the sky, and made of it the star which is called Orvandel's toe. Finally he added that it would not be long before Orvandel would come home. But Groa became so glad that she forgot her magic songs, and so the flint-stone became no looser than it was, and it sticks fast in Thor's head yet. For this reason it is forbidden to throw a flint-stone across the floor, for then the stone in Thor's head is moved.

Thor's Journey To Geirrod's

Then said Æger: Much of a man, it seems to me, was that Hrungner. Has Thor accomplished any other great deeds in his intercourse with trolls (giants)? Then answered Brage: It is worth giving a full account of how Thor made a journey to Geirrodsgard. He had with him neither the hammer Mjolner, nor his belt of strength, Megingjard, nor his steel gloves; and that was Loke's fault,---he was with him. For it happened to Loke, when he once flew out to amuse himself in Frigg's falcon-guise, that he saw a large hall. He sat down and looked in through the window, but Geirrod discovered him, and ordered the bird to be caught and brought to him. The servant had hard work to climb up the wall of the hall, so high was it. It amused Loke that it gave the servant so much trouble to get at him, and he thought it would be time enough to fly away when he had gotten over the worst. When the latter now caught at him, Loke spread his wings and spurned with his feet, but these were fast, and so Loke was caught and brought to the giant. When the latter saw his eyes he suspected that it was a man. He put questions to him and bade him answer, but Loke refused to speak. Then Geirrod locked him down in a chest, and starved him for three months; and when Geirrod finally took him up again, and asked him to speak, Loke confessed who he was, and to save his life he swore an oath to Geirrod that he would get Thor to come to Geirrodsgard without his hammer or his belt of strength.

On his way Thor visited the giantess whose name is Grid. She was the mother of Vidar the Silent. She told Thor the truth concerning Geirrod, that he was a dog-wise and dangerous giant; and she lent him her own belt of strength and steel gloves, and her staff, which is called Gridarvol. Then went Thor to the river which is called Vimer, and which is the largest of all rivers. He buckled

on the belt of strength and stemmed the wild torrent with Gridarvol, but Loke held himself fast in Megingjard. When Thor had come into the middle of the stream, the river waxed so greatly that the waves dashed over his shoulders. The quoth Thor:

Wax not Vimer,

Since I intend to wade

To the gards of giants.

Know, if you wax,

Then waxes my asa-might

As high as the heavens.

Then Thor looked up and saw in a cleft Gjalp, the daughter of Geirrod, standing on both sides of the stream, and causing its growth. Then took he up out of the river a huge stone and threw at her, saying: At its source the stream must be stemmed. (13) He was not wont to miss his mark. At the same time he reached the river bank and got hold of a shrub, and so he got out of the river. Hence comes the adage that a shrub saved Thor. (14) When Thor came to Geirrod, he and his companion were shown to the guest-room, where lodgings were given them, but there was but one seat, and on that Thor sat down. Then he became aware that the seat was raised under him toward the roof. He put the Gridarvol against the rafters, and pressed himself down against the seat. Then was heard a great crash, which was followed by a loud screaming. Under the seat were Geirrod's daughters, Gjalp and Greip, and he had broken the backs of both of them. Then quoth Thor:

Once I employed

My asa-might

In the gards of the giants.

When Gjalp and Greip,

Geirrod's daughters,

Wanted to lift me to heaven.

Then Geirrod had Thor invited into the hall to the games. Large fires burned along the whole length of the hall. When Thor came into the hall, and stood opposite Geirrod, the latter seized with a pair of tongs a red-hot iron wedge and threw it at Thor. But he caught it with his steel gloves, and lifted it up in the air. Geirrod sprang behind an iron post to guard himself. But Thor threw the wedge with so great force that it struck through the post, through Geirrod, through the wall, and then went out and into the ground.

Loke's Wager With the Dwarves

Why is gold called Sif's hair? Loke Laufey's son had once craftily cut all the hair off Sif; but when Thor found it out he seized Loke, and would have broken every bone in him, had he not pledged himself with an oath to get the swarthy elves to make for Sif a hair of gold that should grow like other hair. Then went Loke to the dwarfs that are called Ivald's sons, and they made the hair and Skidbladner, and the spear that Odin owned and is called Gungner. Thereupon Loke wagered his head with the dwarf, who hight Brok, that his brother Sindre would not be able to make three other treasures equally as good as these were. But when they came to the smithy, Sindre laid a pig-skin in the furnace and requested Brok to blow the bellows, and not to stop blowing before he (Sindre) had taken out of the furnace what he had put into it. As soon, however, as Sindre had gone out of the smithy and Brok was blowing, a fly lighted on his hand and stung him; but he kept on blowing as before until the smith had taken the work out of the furnace. That was now a boar, and its bristles were of gold. Thereupon he laid gold in the furnace, and requested Brok to blow, and not to stop plying the bellows before he came back. He went out; but then came the fly and lighted on his neck and stung him still worse; but he continued to work the bellows until the smith took out of the furnace the gold ring called Draupner. Then Sindre placed iron in the furnace, and requested Brok to work the bellows, adding that otherwise all would be worthless. Now the fly lighted between his eyes and stung his eye-lids, and as the blood ran down into his eyes so that he could not see, he let go of the bellows just for a moment and drove the fly away with his hands. Then the smith came back and said that all that lay in the furnace came near being entirely spoiled. Thereupon he took a hammer out of the furnace. All these treasures he then placed in the hands of his brother Brok, and bade him go with Loke to Asgard to fetch the wager. When Loke and Brok brought forth the treasures, the gods seated themselves upon their doom-steads. It was agreed to abide by the decision which should be pronounced by Odin, Thor and Frey.

Loke gave to Odin the spear Gungner, to Thor, the hair, which Sif was to have, and to Frey, Skidbladner; and he described the qualities of all these treasures, stating that the spear never would miss its mark, that the hair would grow as soon as it was placed on Sif's head, and that Skidbladner would always have a fair wind as soon as the sails were hoisted, no matter where its owner desired to go; besides, the ship could be folded together like a napkin and be carried in his pocket if he desired. Then Brok produced his treasures. He gave to Odin the ring, saying that every ninth night eight other rings as heavy as it would drop from it; to Frey he gave the boar, stating that it would run through the air and over seas, by night or by day, faster than any horse; and never could it become so dark in the night, or in the worlds of darkness, but that it would be light where this boar was present, so bright shone his bristles. Then he gave to Thor the hammer, and said that he might strike with it as hard as he pleased; no matter what was before him, the hammer would take no scathe, and wherever he might throw it he would never lose it; it would never fly so far that it did not return to his hand; and if he desired, it would become so small that he might conceal it in his bosom; but it had one fault, which was, that the handle was rather short. The decision of the gods was, that the hammer was the best of all these treasures and the greatest protection against the frost-giants, and they declared that the dwarf had fairly won the wager. Then Loke offered to ransom his head. The dwarf answered saying there was no hope for him on that score. Take me, then! said Loke; but when the dwarf was to seize him Loke was far away, for he had the shoes with which he could run through the air and over the sea. Then the dwarf requested Thor to seize him, and he did so. Now the dwarf wanted to cut the head off Loke, but Loke said that the head was his, but not the neck. Then the dwarf took thread and a knife and wanted to pierce holes in Loke's lips, so as to sew his mouth together, but the knife would not cut. Then said he, it would be better if he had his brother's awl, and as soon as he named it the awl was there and it pierced Loke's lips. Now Brok sewed Loke's mouth together, and broke off the thread at the end of the sewing. The thread with which the mouth of Loke was sewed together is called Vartare (a strap).

The Niflungs and Gjukungs

The following is the reason why gold is called otter-ransom: It is related that three asas went abroad to learn to know the whole world, Odin, Honer and Loke. They came to a river, and walked along the river-bank to a force, and near the force was an otter. The otter had caught a salmon in the force, and sat eating it with his eyes closed. Loke picked up a stone, threw it at the otter and hit him in the head. Loke bragged of his chase, for he had secured an otter and a salmon with one throw. They took the salmon and the otter with them, and came to a byre, where they entered. But the name of the bonde who lived there was Hreidmar. He was a mighty man, and thoroughly skilled in the black art. The asas asked for night-lodgings, stating that they had plenty of food, and showed the bonde their game. But when Hreidmar saw the otter he called his sons, Fafner and Regin, and said that Otter, their brother, was slain, and also told who had done it. Then the father and the sons attacked the asas, seized them and bound them, and then said, in reference to the otter, that he was Hreidmar's son. The asas offered, as a ransom for their lives, as much money as Hreidmar himself might demand, and this was agreed to, and confirmed with an oath. Then the otter was flayed. Hreidmar took the otter-belg and said to them they should fill the belg with red gold, and then cover it with the same metal, and when this was done they should be set free. Thereupon Odin sent Loke to the home of the swarthy elves, and he came to the dwarf whose name is Andvare, and who lived as a fish, in the water. Loke caught him in his hands, and demanded of him, as a ransom for his life, all the gold that he had in his rock. And when they entered the rock, the dwarf produced all the gold that he owned, and that was a very large amount. Then the dwarf concealed in his hand a small gold ring. Loke saw this, and requested him to hand forth the ring. The dwarf begged him not to take the ring away from him, for with this ring he could increase his wealth again if he kept it. Loke said the dwarf should not keep as much as a penny, took the ring from him and went out. But the dwarf said that the ring should be the bane of every one who possessed it. Loke replied that he was glad of this, and said that all should be fulfilled according to his prophecy: he would take care to bring the curse to the ears of him who was to receive it. He went to Hreidmar and showed Odin the gold; but when the latter saw the ring, it seemed to him a fair one, and he took it and put it aside, giving Hreidmar the rest of the gold. They filled the otter-belg as full as it would hold, and raised it up when it was full. Then came Odin, and was to cover the belg with gold; and when this was done, he requested Hreidmar to come and see whether the belg was sufficiently covered. But Hreidmar looked at it, examined it closely, and saw a mouth hair, and demanded that it should be covered, too, otherwise the agreement would be broken. Then Odin brought forth the ring and covered with it the mouth-hair, saying that now they had paid the otter-ransom. But when Odin had taken his spear, and Loke his shoes, so that they had nothing more to fear, Loke said that the curse that Andvare had pronounced should be fulfilled, and that the ring and the gold should be the bane of its possessor; and this curse was afterward fulfilled. This explains why gold is called the otter-ransom, or forced payment of the asas, or strife-metal.

What more is there to be told of this gold? Hreidmar accepted the gold as a ransom for his son, but Fafner and Regin demanded their share of it as a ransom for their brother. Hreidmar was, however, unwilling to give them as much as a penny of it. Then the

brothers made an agreement to kill their father for the sake of the gold. When this was done, Regin demanded that Fafner should give him one half of it. Fafner answered that there was but little hope that he would share the gold with his brother, since he had himself slain his father to obtain it; and he commanded Regin to get him gone, for else the same thing would happen to him as had happened to Hreidmar. Fafner had taken the sword hight Hrotte, and the helmet which had belonged to his father, and the latter he had placed on his head. This was called the Æger's helmet, and it was a terror to all living to behold it. Regin had the sword called Refil. With it he fled. But Fafner went to Gnita-heath (the glittering heath), where he made himself a bed, took on him the likeness of a serpent (dragon), and lay brooding over the gold.

Regin then went to Thjode, to king Hjalprek, and became his smith. There he undertook the fostering of Sigurd (Sigfrid), the son of Sigmund, the son of Volsung and the son of Hjordis, the daughter of Eylime. Sigurd was the mightiest of all the kings of hosts, in respect to both family and power and mind. Regin explained to him where Fafner was lying on the gold, and egged him on to try to get possession thereof. Then Regin made the sword which is hight Gram (wrath), and which was so sharp that when Sigurd held it in the flowing stream it cut asunder a tuft of wool which the current carried down against the sword's edge. In the next place, Sigurd cut with his sword Regin's anvil in twain. Thereupon Sigurd and Regin repaired to Gnita-heath. Here Sigurd dug a ditch in Fafner's path and sat down in it; so when Fafner crept to the water and came directly over this ditch, Sigurd pierced him with the sword, and this thrust caused his death. Then Regin came and declared that Sigurd had slain his brother, and demanded of him as a ransom that he should cut out Fafner's heart and roast it on the fire; but Regin kneeled down, drank Fafner's blood, and laid himself down to sleep. While Sigurd was roasting the heart, and thought that it must be done, he touched it with his finger to see how tender it was; but the fat oozed out of the heart and onto his finger and burnt it, so that he thrust his finger into his mouth. The heart-blood came in contact with his tongue, which made him comprehend the speech of birds, and he understood what the eagles said that were sitting in the trees. One of the birds said:

There sits Sigurd,

Stained with blood.

On the fire is roasting

Fafner's heart.

Wise seemed to me

The ring-destroyer,

If he the shining

Heart would eat.

Another eagle sang:

There lies Regin,

Contemplating

How to deceive the man

Who trusts him;

Thinks in his wrath

Of false accusations.

The evil smith plots

Revenge 'gainst the brother.

Then Sigurd went to Regin and slew him, and thereupon he mounted his horse hight Grane, and rode until he came to Fafner's bed, took out all the gold, packed it in two bags and laid it on Grane's back, then got on himself and rode away. Now is told the saga according to which gold is called Fafner's bed or lair, the metal of Gnita-heath, or Grane's burden.

Then Sigurd rode on until he found a house on the mountain. In it slept a woman clad in helmet and coat-of-mail. He drew his sword and cut the coat-of-mail off from her. Then she awaked and called herself Hild. Her name was Brynhild, and she was a valkyrie. Thence Sigurd rode on and came to the king whose name was Gjuke. His wife was called Grimhild, and their children

were Gunnar, Hogne, Gudrun, Gudny; Gothorm was Gjuke's step-son. Here Sigurd remained a long time. Then he got the hand of Gudrun, Gjuke's daughter, and Gunnar and Hogne entered into a sworn brotherhood with Sigurd. Afterward Sigurd and the sons of Gjuke went to Atle, Budle's son, to ask for his sister, Brynhild, for Gunnar's wife. She sat on Hindfell, and her hall was surrounded by the bickering flame called the Vafurloge, and she had made a solemn promise not to wed any other man that him who dared to ride through the bickering flame. Then Sigurd and the Gjukungs (they are also called Niflungs) rode upon the mountain, and there Gunnar was to ride through the Vafurloge. He had the horse that was called Gote, but his horse did not dare to run into the flame. So Sigurd and Gunnar changed form and weapons, for Grane would not take a step under any other man than Sigurd. Then Sigurd mounted Grane and rode through the bickering flame. That same evening he held a wedding with Brynhild; but when they went to bed he drew his sword Gram from the sheath and placed it between them. In the morning when he had arisen, and had donned his clothes, he gave to Brynhild, as a bridal gift, the gold ring that Loke had taken from Andvare, and he received another ring as a memento from her. Then Sigurd mounted his horse and rode to his companions. He and Gunnar exchanged forms again and went back to Gjuke with Brynhild. Sigurd had two children with Gudrun. Their names were Sigmund and Swanhild.

Once it happened that Brynhild and Gudrun went to the water to wash their hair. When they came to the river Brynhild waded from the river bank into the stream, and said that she could not bear to have that water in her hair that ran from Gudrun's hair, for she had a more high-minded husband. Then Gudrun followed her into the stream, and said that she was entitled to was her hair farther up the stream than Brynhild, for the reason that she had the husband who was bolder than Gunnar, or any other man in the world; for it was he who slew Fafner and Regin, and inherited the wealth of both. Then answered Brynhild: A greater deed it was that Gunnar rode through the Vafurloge, which Sigurd did not dare to do. Then laughed Gudrun and said: Do you think it was Gunnar who rode through the bickering flame? Then I think you shared the bed with him who gave me this gold ring. The gold ring which you have on your finger, and which you received as a bridal-gift, is called Andvaranaut (Andvare's Gift), and I do not think Gunnar got it on Gnita-heath. Then Brynhild became silent and went home. Thereupon she egged Gunnar and Hogne to kill Sigurd; but being sworn brothers of Sigurd, they egged Guthorm, their brother, to slay Sigurd. Guthorm pierced him with his sword while he was sleeping; but as soon as Sigurd was wounded he threw his sword, Gram, after Guthorm, so that it cut him in twain through the middle. There Sigurd fell, and his son, three winters old, by name Sigmund, whom they also killed. Then Brynhild pierced herself with the sword and was cremated with Sigurd. But Gunnar and Hogne inherited Fafner's gold and the Gift of Andvare, and now ruled the lands.

King Atle, Budle's son, Brynhild's brother, then got in marriage Gudrun, who had been Sigurd's wife, and they had children. King Atle invited Gunnar and Hogne to visit him, and they accepted his invitation. But before they started on their journey they concealed Fafner's hoard in the Rhine, and that gold has never since been found. King Atle had gathered together an army and fought a battle with Gunnar and Hogne, and they were captured. Atle had the heart cut out of Hogne alive. This was his death. Gunnar he threw into a den of snakes, but a harp was secretly brought to him, and he played the harp with his toes (for his hands were fettered), so that all the snakes fell asleep excepting the adder, which rushed at him and bit him in the breast, and then thrust its head into the wound and clung to his liver until he died. Gunnar and Hogne are called Niflungs (Niblungs) and Gjukungs. Hence gold is called the Niflung treasure or inheritance. A little later Gudrun slew her two sons and made from their skulls goblets trimmed with gold, and thereupon the funeral ceremonies took place. At the feast, Gudrun poured for King Atle in these goblets mead that was mixed with the blood of the youths. Their hearts she roasted and gave to the king to eat. When this was done she told him all about it, with many unkind words. There was no lack of strong mead, so that the most of the people sitting there fell asleep. On that night she went to the king when he had fallen asleep, and had with her her son Hogne. They slew him, and thus he ended his life. Then they set fire to the hall, and with it all the people who were in it were burned. Then she went to the sea and sprang into the water to drown herself; but she was carried across the fjord, and came to the land which belonged to King Jonaker. When he saw her he took her home and made her his wife. They had three children, whose names were Sorle, Hamder and Erp. They all had hair as black as ravens, like Gunnar and Hogne and the other Niflungs.

There was fostered Swanhild, the daughter of Sigurd, and she was the fairest of all women. That Jormunrek, the rich, found out. He sent his son, Randver, to ask for her hand for him; and when he came to Jonaker, Swanhild was delivered to him, so that he might bring her to King Jormunrek. Then said Bikke that it would be more fitting that Randver should marry Swanhild, he being young and she too, but Jormunrek being old. This plan pleased the two young people well. Soon afterward Bikke informed the king of it, and so King Jormunrek seized his son and had him brought to the gallows. Then Randver took his hawk, plucked the feathers off him, and requested that it should be sent to his father, whereupon he was hanged. But when King Jormunrek saw the hawk, it came to his mind that as the hawk was flightless and featherless, so his kingdom was without preservation; for he was old and sonless. Then King Jormunrek riding out of the woods from the chase with his courtiers, while Queen Swanhild sat dressing her hair, had

the courtiers ride onto her, and she was trampled to death beneath the feet of the horses. When Gudrun heard of this, she begged her sons to avenge Swanhild. While they were busking themselves for the journey, she brought them byrnies and helmets, so strong that iron could not scathe them. She laid the plan for them, that when they came to King Jormunrek, they should attack him in the night whilst he was sleeping. Sorle and Hamder should cut off his hands and feet, and Erp his head. On the way they asked what assistance they were to get from him, when they came to King Jormunrek. He answered them that he would give them such assistance as the hand gives the foot. They said that the feet got no support from the hands whatsoever. They were angry at their mother, because she had forced them to undertake this journey with harsh words, and hence they were going to do that which would displease her most. So they killed Erp, for she loved him the most. A little later, while Sorle was walking, he slipped with one foot, and in falling supported himself with his hands. Then said he: Now the hands helped the foot; better it now if Erp were living. When they came to Jormunrek, the king, in the night, while he was sleeping, they cut of both his hands and feet. Then he awakened, called his men and bade them arise. Said Hamder then: The head would now have been off had Erp lived. The courtiers got up, attacked them, but could not overcome them with weapons. Then Jormunrek cried to them that they should stone them to death. This was done, Sorle and Hamder fell, and thus perished the last descendants of Gjuke.

After King Sigurd lived a daughter hight Aslaug, who was fostered at Heimer's in Hlymdaler. From her mighty races are descended. It is said that Sigmund, the son of Volsung, was so powerful, that he drank venom and received no harm therefrom. But Sinfjotle, his son, and Sigurd, were so hard-skinned that no venom coming onto them could harm them. Therefore the skald Brage has sung as follows:

When the tortuous serpent,

Full of the drink of the Volsungs,

Hung in coils

On the bait of the giant-slayer.

Upon these sagas very many skalds have made lays, and from them they have taken various themes. Brage the Old made the following song about the fall of Sorle and Hamder in the drapa, which he composed about Ragnar Lodbrok:

Jormunrek once,

In an evil dream, waked

In that sword-contest

Against the blood-stained kings.

A clashing of arms was heard

In the house of Randver's father,

When the raven-blue brothers of Erp

The insult avenged.

Sword-dew flowed

Off the bed on the floor.

Bloody hands and feet of the king

One saw cut off.

On his head fell Jormunrek,

Frothing in blood.

On the shield

This is painted.

The king saw

Men so stand

That a ring they made

'Round his house.

Sorle and Hamder

Were both at once,

With slippery stones,

Struck to the ground.

King Jormunrek

Ordered Gjuke's descendants

Violently to be stoned

When they came to take the life

Of Swanhild's husband.

All sought to pay

Jonaker's sons

With blows and wounds.

This fall of men

And sagas many

On the fair shield I see.

Ragnar gave me the shield.

Menja and Fenja

Why is gold called Frode's meal? The saga giving rise to this is the following: Odin had a son by name Skjold, from whom the Skjoldungs are descended. He had his throne and ruled in the lands that are now called Denmark, but were then called Gotland. Skjold had a son by name Fridleif, who ruled the lands after him. Fridleif's son was Frode. He took the kingdom after his father, at the time when the Emperor Augustus established peace in all the earth and Christ was born. But Frode being the mightiest king in the northlands, this peace was attributed to him by all who spake the Danish tongue, and the Norsemen called it the peace of Frode. No man injured the other, even though he might meet, loose or in chains, his father's or brother's bane. There was no thief or robber, so that a gold ring would be a long time on Jalanger's heath. King Frode sent messengers to Svithjod, to the king whose name was Fjolner, and brought there two maid-servants, whose names were Fenja and Menja. They were large and strong. About this time were found in Denmark two mill-stones, so large that no one had the strength to turn them. But the nature belonged to these mill-stones that they ground whatever was demanded of them by the miller. The name of this mill was Grotte. But the man to whom King Frode gave the mill was called Hengekjapt. King Frode had the maid-servants led to the mill, and requested them to grind for him gold and peace, and Frode's hapiness. Then he gave them no longer time to rest or sleep than while the cuckoo was silent or while they sang a song. It is said that they sang the song called the Grottesong, and before they ended it they ground out a host against Frode; so that on the same night there came the sea-king, whose name was Mysing, and slew Frode and took a large amount of booty. Therewith the Frode-peace ended. Mysing took with him Grotte, and also Fenja and Menja, and bade them grind salt, and in the middle of the night they asked Mysing whether he did not have salt enough. He bade them grind more. They ground only a short time longer before the ship sank. But in the ocean arose a whirlpool (Maelstrom, mill-stream) in the place where the sea runs into the mill-eye. Thus the sea became salt.

Rolf Krake

A king in Denmark hight Rolf Krake, and was the most famous of all kings of olden times; moreover, he was more mild, brave and condescending than all other men. A proof of his condescension, which is very often spoken of in olden stories, was the following: There was a poor little fellow by name Vog. He once came into King Rolf's hall while the king was yet a young man, and of rather delicate growth. Then Vog went before him and looked up at him. Then said the king: What do you mean to say, my fellow, by

looking so at me? Answered Vog: When I was at home I heard people say that King Rolf, at Hleidra, was the greatest man in the northlands, but now sits here in the high-seat a little crow (krake), and it they call their king. Then made answer the king: You, my fellow, have given me a name, and I shall henceforth be called Rolf Krake, but it is customary that a gift accompanies the name. Seeing that you have no gift that you can give me with the name, or that would be suitable to me, then he who has must give to the other. Then he took a gold ring off his hand and gave it to the churl. Then said Vog: You give as the best king of all, and therefore I now pledge myself to become the bane of him who becomes your bane. Said the king, laughing: A small thing makes Vog happy.

Another example is told of Rolf Krake's bravery. In Upsala reigned a king by name Adils, whose wife was Yrsa, Rolf Krake's mother. He was engaged in a war with Norway's king, Ale. They fought a battle on the ice of the lake called Wenern. King Adils sent a message to Rolf Krake, his stepson, asking him to come and help him, and promised to furnish pay for his whole army during the campaign. Furthermore King Rolf himself should have any three treasures that he might choose in Sweden. But Rolf Krake could not go to his assistance, on account of the war which he was then waging against the Saxons. Still he sent twelve berserks to King Adils. Among them were Bodvar Bjarke, Hjalte the Valiant, Hvitserk the Keen, Vot, Vidsete, and the brothers Svipday and Beigud. In that war fell King Ale and a large part of his army. Then King Adils took from the dead King Ale the helmet called Hildesvin, and his horse called Rafn. Then the berserks each demanded three pounds of gold in pay for their service, and also asked for the treasures which they had chosen for Rolf Krake, and which they now desired to bring to him. These were the helmet Hildegolt; the byrnie Finnsleif, which no steel could scathe; and the gold ring called Sviagris, which had belonged to Adils' forefathers. But the king refused to surrender any of these treasures, nor did he give the berserks any pay. The berserks then returned home, and were much dissatisfied. They reported all to King Rolf, who straightway busked himself to fare against Upsala; and when he came with his ships into the river Fyre, he rode against Upsala, and with him his twelve berserks, all peaceless. Yrsa, his mother, received him and took him to his lodgings, but not to the king's hall. Large fires were kindled for them, and ale was brought them to drink. Then came King Adils' men in and bore fuel onto the fireplace, and made a fire so great that it burnt the clothes of Rolf and his berserks, saying: Is it true that neither fire nor steel will put Rolf Krake and his berserks to flight? Then Rolf Krake and all his men sprang up, and he said:

Let us increase the blaze

In Adils' chambers.

He took his shield and cast it into the fire, and sprang over the fire while the shield was burning, and cried:

From the fire flees not he

who over it leaps.

The same did also his men, one after the other, and then they took those who had put fuel on the fire and cast them into it. Now Yrsa came and handed Rolf Krake a deer's horn full of gold, and with it she gave him the ring Sviagris, and requested them to ride straightway to their army. They sprang upon their horses and rode away over the Fyrisvold. Then they saw that King Adils was riding after them with his whole army, all armed, and was going to slay them. Rolf Krake took gold out of the horn with his right hand, and scattered it over the whole way. But when the Swedes saw it they leaped out of their saddles, and each one took as much as he could. King Adils bade them ride, and he himself rode on with all his might. The name of his horse was Slungner, the fastest of all horses. When Rolf Krake saw that King Adils was riding near him, he took the ring Sviagris and threw it to him, asking him to take it as a gift. King Adils rode to the ring, picked it up with the end of his spear, and let it slide down to his hand. Then Rolf Krake turned round and saw that the other was stooping. Said he: Like a swine I have now bended the foremost of all Swedes. Thus they parted. Hence gold is called the seed of Krake or of Fyrisvold.

Hogne and Hild

A king by name Hogne had a daughter by name Hild. Her a king, by name Hedin, son of Hjarrande, made a prisoner of war, while King Hogne had fared to the trysting of the kings. But when he learned that there had been harrying in his kingdom, and that his daughter had been taken away, he rode with his army in search of Hedin, and learned that he had sailed northward along the coast. When King Hogne came to Norway, he found out that Hedin had sailed westward into the sea. Then Hogne sailed after him to the Orkneys. And when he came to the island called Ha, then Hedin was there before him with his host. Then Hild went to meet her father, and offered him as a reconciliation from Hedin a necklace; but if he was not willing to accept this, she said that Hedin was prepared for a battle, and Hogne might expect no clemency from him. Hogne answered his daughter harshly. When she returned to

Hedin, she told him that Hogne would not be reconciled, and bade him busk himself for the battle. And so both parties did; they landed on the island and marshaled their hosts. Then Hedin called to Hogne, his father-in-law, offering him a reconciliation and much gold as a ransom. Hogne answered: Too late do you offer to make peace with me, for now I have drawn the sword Dainsleif, which was smithied by the dwarfs, and must be the death of a man whenever it is drawn; its blows never miss the mark, and the wounds made by it never heal. Said Hedin: You boast the sword, but not the victory. That I call a good sword that is always faithful to its master. Then they began the battle which is called the Hjadninga-vig (the slaying of the Hedinians); they fought the whole day, and in the evening the kings fared back to their ships. But in the night Hild went to the battlefield, and waked up with sorcery all the dead that had fallen. The next day the kings went to the battlefield and fought, and so did also they who had fallen the day before. Thus the battle continued from day to day; and all they who fell, and all the swords that lay on the field of battle, and all the shields, became stone. But as soon as day dawned all the dead arose again and fought, and all the weapons became new again, and in songs it is said that the Hjadnings will so continue until Ragnarok.



This work is **incomplete**. *If you'd like to help expand it, see the help pages and the style guide, or leave a comment on this work's talk page.*

10.3: Prose Edda is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Americas (North, Meso-, South)

11.1: Maya Civilization

11.2: Popol Vuh - Ancient Maya Story of Creation

11.3: Aztec Civilization

11: Americas (North, Meso-, South) is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

11.1: Maya Civilization

Maya Civilization

by Joshua J. Mark published on 06 July 2012 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

The Maya are an indigenous people of Mexico and Central America who have continuously inhabited the lands comprising modern-day Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco, and Chiapas in Mexico and southward through Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras. The designation *Maya* comes from the ancient Yucatan city of Mayapan, the last capital of a Mayan Kingdom in the Post-Classic Period. The Maya people refer to themselves by ethnicity and language bonds such as *Quiche* in the south or *Yucatec* in the north (though there are many others). The `Mysterious Maya' have intrigued the world since their `discovery' in the 1840's by John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood but, in reality, much of the culture is not that mysterious when understood. Contrary to popular imagination, the Maya did not vanish and the descendants of the people who built the great cities of Chichen Itza, Bonampak, Uxmal and Altun Ha still exist on the same lands their ancestors did and continue to practice, sometimes in a modified form, the same rituals which would be recognized by a native of the land one thousand years ago.

MAYA Origins

The history of Mesoamerica is usually divided into specific periods which, taken together, reveal the development of culture in the region and, for the purposes of this definition, the emergence and cultivation of the Maya Civilization.

The Archaic Period: 7000-2000 BCE – During this time a hunter-gatherer culture began to cultivate crops such as maize, beans and other vegetables and the domestication of animals (most notably dogs and turkeys) and plants became widely practiced. The first villages of the region were established during this period which included sacred spots and temples dedicated to various gods. The villages excavated thus far are dated from 2000-1500 BCE.

The Olmec Period: 1500-200 BCE – This era is also known as the Pre-Classic or Formative Period when the Olmecs, the oldest culture in Mesoamerica, thrived. The Olmecs settled along the Gulf of Mexico and began building great cities of stone and brick. The famous Olmec heads strongly suggest highly sophisticated skill in sculpture and the first indications of Shamanic religious practices date from this period. The enormous size and scope of Olmec ruins gave birth to the idea that the land was once populated by giants. Though no one knows where the Olmecs came from, nor what happened to them, they lay the foundation for all the future civilizations in Mesoamerica.

The Zapotec Period: 600 BCE-800 CE – In the region surrounding modern-day Oaxaca, the cultural center now known as Monte Alban was founded which became the capital of the Zapotec kingdom. The Zapotecs were clearly influenced by (or, perhaps, related to) the Olmecs and, through them, some of the most important cultural elements of the region were disseminated such as writing, mathematics, astronomy and the development of the calendar; all of which the Maya would refine.

The Teotihuacan Period: 200-900 CE – During this era the great city of Teotihuacan grew from a small village to a metropolis of enormous size and influence. Early on, Teotihuacan was a rival of another city called Cuicuilco but, when that community was destroyed by a volcano c. 100 CE, Teotihuacan became dominant in the region. Archaeological evidence suggests that Teotihuacan was an important religious center which was devoted to the worship of a Great Mother Goddess and her consort the Plumed Serpent. The Plumed Serpent god Kukulkan (also known as Gucamatz) was the most popular deity among the Maya. Like many of the cities which now lie in ruin throughout the southern Americas, Teotihuacan was abandoned sometime around 900 CE.

The El Tajin Period: 250-900 CE – This period is also known as the Classic Period in Mesoamerican and Mayan history.

The El Tajin Period: 250-900 CE – This period is also known as the Classic Period in Mesoamerican and Mayan history. The name `El Tajin' refers to the great city complex on the Gulf of Mexico which has been recognized as one of the most important sites in Mesoamerica. During this time the great urban centers rose across the land and the Maya numbered in the millions. The very important ball game which came to be known as Poc-a-Toc was developed and more ball courts have been found in and around the city of El Tajin than anywhere else in the region. Who, precisely, the people were who inhabited El Tajin remains unknown as there were over fifty different ethnic groups represented in the city and dominance has been ascribed to both the Maya and the Totonac.

The Classic Maya Period: 250-950 CE – This is the era which saw the consolidation of power in the great cities of the Yucatec Maya such as Chichen Itza and Uxmal. Direct cultural influences may be seen, in some sites, from the Olmecs and the Zapotecs and the cultural values of Teotihuacan and El Tajin but, in others, a wholly new culture seems to have emerged (such as at Chichen Itza where, though there is ample evidence of cultural borrowing, there is a significantly different style to the art and architecture). This period was the height of the Maya civilization in which they perfected mathematics, astronomy, architecture and the visual arts and also refined and perfected the calendar. The oldest date recorded in this era is on Stele 29 in the city of Tikal (292 CE) and the latest is from an inscription on the Stele at the site of Tonina (909 CE). The city-states of the Mayan civilization stretched from Piste in the north all the way down to modern-day Honduras.

The Post-Classic Period: 950-1524 CE – At this time the great cities of the Maya were abandoned. Thus far, no explanation for the mass exodus from the cities to outlying rural areas has been determined but climate change and over population have been strongly suggested among other possibilities. The Toltecs, a new tribe in the region, took over the vacant urban centers and re-populated them. At this time, Tula and Chichen-Itza became dominant cities in the region. The widely popular conception that the Maya were driven from their cities by the Spanish Conquest is erroneous as the cities were already vacant by the time of the Spanish invasion (in fact, the Spanish conquerors had no idea the natives they found in the region were responsible for the enormous complexes of the cities). The Quiche Maya were defeated at the Battle of Utatlan in 1524 CE and this date traditionally marks the end of the Maya Civilization.

MAYA Culture

The height of the Maya Civilization in the Classic Period produced the incredible cultural advances for which they are well known. The Maya believed deeply in the cyclical nature of life – nothing was ever `born' and nothing ever `died' – and this belief inspired their view of the gods and the cosmos. Their cosmological views, in turn, encouraged their imaginative efforts in architecture, mathematics, and astronomy. Beneath the earth was the dark realm of Xibalba (pronounced `shee-Bal-ba' and translated as `place of fear') from whence grew the great Tree of Life which came up through the earth and towered into the heavens, through thirteen levels, to reach the paradise of Tamoanchan (`place of the misty sky') where beautiful flowers bloomed. In Mayan belief, however, one did not die and go to a `heaven' or a `hell' but, rather, embarked on a journey toward Tamoanchan. This journey began in the dark and treacherous underworld of Xibalba where the Xibalbans who lived there were more apt to trick and destroy a soul than help one.

If one could navigate through Xibalba, however, one could then find the way to ascend through the nine levels of the underworld, and the thirteen levels of the higher world, to paradise. The only ways in which a soul could by-pass Xibalba and travel instantly to Tamoanchan were through death in childbirth, as a sacrificial victim, in warfare, on the ball court, or by suicide (the Maya had a special goddess of suicide named Ixtab who was depicted as the rotting corpse of a woman hanging by a noose in the heavens). Once one reached Tamoanchan there was eternal happiness but, it must be noted, this paradise was not thought to actually exist in the sky but on the earth. After ascending through the thirteen levels, one did not live in the air but, rather, on a mystical mountain back on the planet. It was because of this cyclical view that the Maya did not believe there was anything wrong with human sacrifice. Those people who were offered to the gods did not `die' but simply moved on. This cosmological belief influenced every aspect of the Mayan civilization and rituals were performed regularly in caves, evoking the darkness of Xibalba, and on hills or high temples which symbolized the heights of Tamoanchan.

The great pyramids which characterize so many Mayan sites are replicas of the great mountain of the gods known as the Witzob. The cyclical nature of human existence is mirrored in the famous Maya calendar. The depictions of the many gods and goddesses all go toward their function in helping one through the cycles of life or hindering. The great religious book of the Quiche Maya, the Popol-Vuh, tells precisely this story of the cyclical nature of life through the tale of the Hero Twins Hunahpu and Xbalanque and their victory over the forces of chaos and darkness symbolized by the Lords of Xibalba. The game the twins are famous for playing, Poc-a-Toc, serves the same purpose.

Poc-a-Toc was the most popular game among the Maya and was far more than `just a game' as it symbolized the human struggle and reflected the way the Maya viewed existence. Two opposing teams of seven men each would face each other on a ball court and try to score a small rubber ball through a vertical hoop affixed to a wall (sometimes as high as twenty feet in the air, sometimes higher) while defending their own goal. What makes the game even more impressive is that a player could not use the hands or the feet, only the hips, shoulders, head and knees. The Spanish bishop Diego de Landa wrote that watching the Maya play Poc-a-Toc was like watching lightning strikes, they moved so quickly. It has long been believed that the losing team (or the captain of the

losing team) would be killed at the end of the match but recent advances in deciphering the Mayan glyphs, together with archaeological evidence, suggests it may have been the winning team or the winning captain who was given the honor of a quick death and instant passage to paradise. The game is thought to have been symbolic, not only of the victory of the hero twins over darkness, but of the cyclical nature of life. The Mayanists Schele and Matthews claim, "Many modern myths have grown up about the ballgame. The most popular says that the Maya sacrificed the winners so as to give a perfect gift to the gods. There is no evidence for this interpretation in any of the ancient or historical sources" (210). This is not quite correct, however, as glyphs at many ball courts, Chichen Itza to name only one, could be interpreted as showing the winning team or captain being sacrificed and modern Mayan daykeepers at both Altun Ha in Belize and Chichen Itza in the Yucatan point to the hope of escape from the darkness of Xibalba as the reason for the winners being executed. Whichever team was chosen to die, and under what circumstances (since teams could not have been continually sacrificed as there is evidence of `star' teams) the ball game was deeply meaningful to the Maya as more than just a spectator sport. More information on the particulars of the game, and the life of the ancient Maya in general, comes to light as more heiroglyphics are discovered and interpreted.

MAYAN Hieroglyphics

The modern day difficulty in deciphering the Mayan hieroglyphics stems from the actions of the same man who, inadvertently, preserved so much of what we know of the Maya Civilization: Bishop Diego de Landa. Appointed to the Yucatan following the Spanish conquest of the north, Landa arrived in 1549 CE and instantly set himself to the task of routing out heathenism from among the Mayan converts to Christianity. The concept of a god who dies and comes back to life was very familiar to the Maya from their own deity The Maize God and they seem to have accepted the story of Jesus Christ and his resurrection easily. Even so, Landa believed that there was a subversive faction growing among the Maya which was seducing them `back to idolatry' and, having failed to crush this perceived rebellion through the avenues of prayer and admonition, chose another more direct method.

On 12 July 1562 CE, at the church at Mani, Landa burned over forty Mayan Codices (books) and over 20,000 images and stele. In his own words, “We found many books with these letters, and because they contained nothing that was free from superstition and the devil's trickery, we burnt them, which the Indians greatly lamented.” Landa went further, however, and resorted to torture to extricate the secrets of the subversives among the natives and bring them back to what he saw as the true path of the church. His methods were condemned by the other priests and he was called back to Spain to explain his actions. Part of his defense was his 1566 CE work *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan* which has preserved much of the culture Landa tried to destroy and has proved to be a valuable asset in understanding ancient Maya culture, religion, and language.

Only three books of the Maya escaped the conflagration at Mani: *The Madrid Codex*, *The Dresden Codex*, and *The Paris Codex* (so named for the cities where they were found many years after they were brought back from the Yucatan) which have provided scholars with a great deal of information on the beliefs of the Maya and, especially, on their calendar. The codices were created by scribes who made careful observations in astronomy (the *Dresden Codex* alone devotes six pages to accurately calculating the rising and positions of Venus) and their interpretations of the planets and the seasons exhibit a precision unmatched by other ancient civilizations. So important were their stories and books to the Maya that the *Legend of Zamna* and the *Hennequen Plant* describes the great goddess telling the prophet Zamna:

I want you to choose a group of families from my kingdom, and three of the wisest Chilames, to carry the writings which tell the story of our people, and write what will happen in the future. You will reach a place that I will indicate to you and you will found a city. Under its main temple you will guard the writings and the future writings.

The city of Izamal was founded, according to this legend, by Zamna (associated with the deity Itzamna) of the Itzas who placed the sacred writings under the central temple. Izamal became known as the most important pilgrimage site in the Classical Period besides Chichen Itza. Shamans (known as Daykeepers) would interpret the particular energy of the day or month for the people by consulting with the gods presiding over the various months of the Maya calendar.

MAYA Calendar

There are two calendars at work simultaneously in the Maya system: the Haab, or civil calendar of 365 days in an 18 month period of 20 days each, and the Tzolkin, or sacred calendar, of 260 days divided into three groups of months of 20 days. The Haab and the Tzolkin work together, like gears interlocking in a machine, to create what is known as the Calendar Round but cannot account for dates farther in the future than 52 days. For longer calculations, the Maya devised what is known as the Long Count Calendar and

is this which has attracted so much international attention in recent years regarding the end of the world on 21 December 2012 CE. As the long count calendar begins 11 August 3114 BCE, it goes into its next cycle (known as a Baktun) on 21 December 2012 CE.

There is nothing in the extant writings of the Maya to suggest any kind of cataclysm accompanies this transition. On 10 May 2012 CE it was reported that Boston University archaeologist William Saturno and Boston University student Maxwell Chamberlain, excavating at the Maya site of Xultun in Guatemala, discovered a 6x6 foot room dating to 800 CE which seems conclusively to have been a calendar workshop for Mayan scribes. The paintings and inscriptions on the walls of the room show the Maya calendar extending well beyond the year 2012 CE and that future Baktuns were understood to already be underway in the great cyclic dance of time. According to David Stuart, an expert on Maya hieroglyphs at the University of Texas at Austin, "Baktun 14 was going to be coming, and Baktun 15 and Baktun 16. ... The Maya calendar is going to keep going, and keep going for billions, trillions, octillions of years into the future."

The months of the years of the Mayan calendars were governed over each by a specific god and, as these gods were eternal, they assured the continuance of the energy of their particular month. As all of life was considered one eternal cycle, the western concept of an `end of the world', so popular in Christian ideology, would have been a completely foreign concept to a Maya scribe.

MAYA Today

In the modern age the Maya still farm the same lands and travel the same rivers as their ancestors did from the north in the Yucatan down to Honduras. The claim that the Maya somehow vanished, simply because their cities were found abandoned, is not only inaccurate but insulting to the over six million Maya who carry on the traditions of their ancestors. Though the region was Christianized in the 16th century CE conquest and inquisition, the old ways are still observed in a hybrid between European Catholicism and Mayan mysticism. The Daykeeper of a village still interprets the energy of a day and rituals are still performed in caves and on hills. On the island of Cozumel shrines to the Virgin Mary and the goddess Ixchel are interchangeable and, often, one and the same. A great deal has been learned about the Maya since the days when Stephens and Catherwood explored and documented the ancient ruins but, for the Maya living today, nothing of importance has ever been forgotten and the cycle of life continues on.

Bibliography

- Demarest, A. *Ancient Maya.* Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Gibson, C. *The Hidden Life of the Ancient Maya.* Metro Books, 2012.
- Lloyd Stephens, J. *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan, Vols. I and II.* Cosimo Classics, 2008.
- Maya calendar workshop documents time beyond 2012 - Cosmic LogAccessed 1 Dec 2016.
- Phillips, C. *The Mythology of the Aztec and Maya.* Anness, 2006.
- Stuart, G.E. Gene S.; Stuart. *Lost Kingdoms of the Maya.* National Geographic Society, W, 1993.
- Yucatan Before and After the Conquest IndexAccessed 1 Dec 2016.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

11.1: Maya Civilization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

11.2: Popol Vuh - Ancient Maya Story of Creation

Popol Vuh

by Joshua J. Mark published on 21 March 2014 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

The Popol Vuh is the story of creation according to the Quiche Maya of the region known today as Guatemala. Translated as `The Council Book', The Book of the People' or, literally, `The Book of the Mat', the work has been referred to as "The Mayan Bible" although this comparison is imprecise. The Popol Vuh is not regarded by the Maya as `the word of God' nor as sacred scripture but rather as an account of "the ancient word" and the understanding the Quiche had of cosmology and creation before the coming of Christianity. The Quiche referred to the book as an *Ilb'al* - an instrument of sight - and it was known as "The Book of the Mat" because of the woven mats the people would sit on to hear the work recited at the council house. One such building, at Copan, features stone lintels `woven' to look like such matting.

In the beginning of Book I the unknown author states:

This is the beginning of the ancient word, here in this place called Quiche. Here we shall inscribe, we shall implant the Ancient Word, the potential and source for everything done in the citadel of Quiche, in the nation of Quiche people...We shall write about this now amid the preaching of God, in Christendom now. We shall bring it out because there is no longer a place to see it, a Council Book, a place to see "The Light That Came from Beside the Sea", the account of "Our Place in the Shadows", a place to see "The Dawn of Life", as it is called (63).

Regarding these phrases describing the Popol Vuh, the Mayanist Dennis Tedlock writes:

Because they obtained the book (or some section of it) on a pilgrimage that took them down from the highlands to the Atlantic shore, they called it "The Light That Came from Beside the Sea", because the book told of events that happened before the first true dawn, and of a time when their ancestors hid themselves and the stones that contained the spirit familiars of their gods in forests, they also called it "Our Place in the Shadows." And because it told of the rise of the morning star and the sun and moon and foretold the rise and radiant splendor of the Quiche lords, they called it "The Dawn of Life" (21).

The work recounts the creation of the world, the exploits of the hero twins Hunahpu and Xbalanque in the underworld and their triumph over the Lords of Death, the creation of humans, and the early history of Quiche migration and settlement up until the Spanish Conquest in the 16th century CE. The Spanish Bishop Diego de Landa burned as many of the books of the Yucatan Maya as he could find on 12 July 1562 CE at the city of Mani but, as he had no jurisdiction in the southern region of the Quiche, the Popol Vuh was spared. Still, it seems from the work itself that the continued practice of the indigenous religion was suppressed in the land of the Quiche as it was elsewhere and the anonymous author of the work felt the need to set down the myths of his people before they were lost.

Origin & History

The Popol Vuh was probably written c. 1554-1558 CE at a time when it had become abundantly clear that the ancient beliefs and practices of the Maya would no longer be tolerated by their Christian conquerors. Dennis Tedlock determines this date based upon textual evidence toward the end of the work in which the author details migrations, genealogies, and settlements. It came to the attention of a Spanish priest early in the 18th century CE. Tedlock writes:

Between 1701 and 1703, a friar named Francisco Ximenez happened to get a look at this manuscript while he was serving as the parish priest. He made the only surviving copy of the Quiche text of the Popol Vuh and added a Spanish translation. His work remained in the possession of the Dominican order until after the Guatemalan independence, but when liberal reforms forced the closing of all monasteries in 1830, it was acquired by the library of the University of San Carlos in Guatemala City. Carl Scherzer, an Austrian physician, happened to see it there in 1854, and Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, a French priest, had the same good fortune a few months later. In 1857 Scherzer published Ximenez' Spanish translation under the patronage of the Hapsburgs in Vienna, members of the same royal lineage that had ruled Spain at the time of the conquest of the Quiche kingdom, and in 1861 Brasseur published the Quiche text and a French translation in Paris. The manuscript itself, which Brasseur spirited out of Guatemala, eventually found its way back across the Atlantic from Paris, coming to rest in the Newberry Library in 1911 (27).

The manuscript, which presently is divided into four books, originally had no divisions and was a seamless narrative recorded from oral tradition. The work itself, however, mentions an "original book and ancient writing" which suggests that the author of the Popol Vuh was working from some earlier written source. The author also states that this earlier work is in the possession of one who "has a hidden identity" indicating that the religious works of the Maya needed to be hidden from the Christians who would destroy them; as de Landa did at Mani in 1562 CE. De Landa records burning over forty books and writes, "We found a large number of books and, as they contained nothing in them which were not superstitions and lies of the devil, we burned them all, which [the Maya] regretted to an amazing degree and which caused them much affliction" (Christenson, 11). The Maya had trusted de Landa and voluntarily showed him their books; an honor not accorded to every Christian missionary. He burned over forty Mayan works and thousands of statues and paintings in a single night. Only four works of the Yucatan Maya survive in the present day (the Dresden, Madrid, and Paris Codices, so-named for the cities they were brought to, and the Chilam Balam) and only one of the Quiche: the Popol Vuh.

The Structure of the Popol Vuh

The work is divided into a brief preamble and four books. The preamble states the intention of the author in writing the work, sets the time period as post-conquest, and makes the point that the original work "takes a long performance and account to complete the lighting of all the sky-earth" (63). This has suggested to some scholars that the original work was much longer than the present Popol Vuh but, to others, it simply means that one should take one's time in hearing the work in order to appreciate the story. The extant manuscript does not seem to contain any gaps in the narrative but, since there is no record of the earlier work - and no evidence outside of the one line in the preamble alluding to it and another at the end - there is no way of knowing what the author of the work may have left out or whether he left out anything at all. The Mayanist Allen J. Christenson, who translated the work, considers it complete and the last remaining pre-Columbian Maya work of the Quiche people.

Christenson cites the 16th century Spanish missionary Bartholome de las Casas, one of the minority of sympathetic priests who lamented the destruction of the Mayan books. Las Casas saw a number of Mayan works in Quiche in 1540 CE. Christenson writes:

He wrote that they contained the history of the people's origins and religious beliefs, written with `figures and characters by which they could signify everything they desired; and that these great books are of such astuteness and subtle technique that we could say our writing does not offer much of an advantage.' Las Casas was particularly impressed by the fact that the Maya could write `everything they desired.' The Maya were, in fact, the only people in the New World who had a writing system at the time of the Spanish Conquest which had this capability (23).

All of these books which, at the time of Las Casas, were carefully hidden from the Christian missionaries and their fires, are presumed to have been eventually found by them and destroyed. If any do still exist, they have not yet come to light.

Originally the work was a single, long poem. It was only divided into separate books once it was translated into European languages. The intention of the original author seems to have been to preserve the experience of hearing the poem recited and, through the magic of the storyteller's art, to live the events personally as the tale unfolded. This practice is in keeping with oral traditions in other cultures such as those of ancient Greece and Mesopotamia, among others. Christenson notes:

The Popol Vuh is written in progressive tense, suggesting the narrator sees it before him as he writes. This is consistent with the way stories are told in contemporary Quiche households. The storyteller invites the listener to imagine the setting of his tale, and nearly always tells the story as if it were happening right then, even if it happened in the distant or mythic past (12).

The four books tell the story of the creation of life, the attempts of the gods at making human beings, the triumph over death of the celestial hero twins, the success of the gods in creating humans, and the genealogies of the people of Quiche. Robert J. Sharer of the University of Pennsylvania writes: "The world of the ancient Maya was governed by a cosmological order that transcended our distinction between the natural and supernatural realms. All things, animate or inanimate, were imbued with an unseen power" (Stuart, 47) and the Popol Vuh fully articulates this vision.

Book I

The first book begins:

This is the Account, here it is: Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, ripples, it still sighs, still hums, and it is empty under the sky...There is not yet one person, one animal, bird, fish, crab, tree, rock, hollow, canyon, meadow, forest. Only the sky alone is there; the face of the earth is not clear. Only the sea alone is pooled under all the sky- there is nothing whatever gathered together.

Out of this silent nothingness the gods created the world and all living things except humans. The animals could not speak or praise their gods, however, and so the gods declared, "we must make a provider and nurturer. How else can we be invoked and remembered on the face of the earth?" They try to create human beings but fail because the creatures "have no heart" and do not remember their makers. They try again, this time making people out of wood, but this also fails and the creatures are destroyed by a great flood. Those not destroyed by the deluge are set upon by their dogs, by their cooking pots and tortilla grinders, by all of the things of the earth they have misused and mistreated. The gods, in the end, are left alone to glorify themselves; this leads to the ascent of the deity Seven Macaw who thinks of himself too highly.

Book II

As the second book opens, two celestial boys named Hunahpu and Xbalanque (the Hero Twins) plot the destruction of Seven Macaw and his two sons Zipacna and Cabracan. There are still no humans on the earth and the boys are upset that Seven Macaw should lord himself over all with no one to challenge him or point out his flaws. It seems that, without human beings to give the gods particular value, any god can claim any value he pleases. Seven Macaw refuses to acknowledge the other gods or their works and so, through a series of tricks and clever ruses, the Hero Twins kill him and his sons, thus restoring order and balance to the world.

Book III

The third book chronicles the adventures of the father and uncle of the Hero Twins, Hun-Hunahpu and Vucub Hunahpu, who were the sons of Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, the first diviners who tried to create humans. They are, therefore, linked to creation and divination. Tricked by the Lords of Death into accepting an invitation to a ball game in Xibalba, the two are murdered and Huh-Hunahpu's head is placed in a Calabash tree in the underworld. The virgin princess Xquiq, (also known as Blood Moon Goddess), is attracted by the head, even though she has been told to stay away from it. She draws close to the tree and the head spits into her hand, thus impregnating her. She must then leave the underworld and go to the upper realm of the earth to live with her new mother-in-law Xumucane. Because of the tragedy which befell her sons, Xumucane distrusts Xquiq and sets her a number of tasks to prove herself. When the twins are born, she also mistrusts them and they too must show they are worthy. Xumucane hides the ball gear of her sons because she does not want her grandsons to know what happened to their father and uncle and try to avenge them. The twins do find the gear, however, and challenge the Lords of Death to a re-match. After numerous adventures in the underworld in which they trick the Lords of Xibalba repeatedly, the Hero Twins destroy them and ascend the World Tree into the sky where they become the sun and the moon.

Book IV

In Book IV human beings are successfully created out of maize. At first, the gods make four men who:

...were good people, handsome, with looks of the male kind. Thoughts came into existence and they gazed; their vision came all at once. Perfectly they saw, perfectly they knew everything under the sky, around in the sky, on the earth, everything was seen without any obstruction...As they looked, their knowledge became intense. Their sight passed through trees, through rocks, through lakes, through seas, through mountains, through plains.

This troubles the gods who understand that humans should not have the same gifts as their creators. They confer among themselves, saying, "Aren't they merely `works' and `designs' in their very names? Yet they'll become as great as gods unless they procreate, proliferate at the sowing, the dawning, unless they increase. Let it be this way: now we'll take them apart just a little." The gods introduce mortality to humanity and:

...changed the nature of their works, their designs, it was enough that the eyes be marred. They were blinded as the face of a mirror is breathed upon. Their vision flickered. Now it was only from close up that they could see what was there with any clarity. And such was the loss of the means of understanding, along with the means of knowing everything.

The gods then provide the men with wives and "right away they were happy at heart again, because of their wives" and they forget that once they knew everything and were like the gods. The men and women content themselves with having children and planting crops and appreciating the gifts the gods have given them. The book concludes with the story of the migration of the Quiche and their genealogy. Included in this section is the introduction of the god Gucumatz, the plumed servant, known to the Maya of the Yucatan as Kukulkan and to the Aztec as Quetzalcoatl. Book IV ends with the lines:

This is enough about the being of Quiche, given that there is no longer a place to see it. There is the original book and ancient writing owned by the lords, now lost, but even so, everything has been completed here concerning Quiche, which is now named Santa Cruz.

Bibliography

- Stuart, G. S. *Lost Kingdoms of the Maya.* National Geographic Society, 1993.
- Tedlock, D. *Popol Vuh.* Touchstone, 1996.
- The Popol Vuh translated by Allen J. Christenson, 2002.pdfAccessed 1 Dec 2016.

About the Author

Joshua J. Mark A freelance writer and former part-time Professor of Philosophy at Marist College, New York, Joshua J. Mark has lived in Greece and Germany and traveled through Egypt. He has taught history, writing, literature, and philosophy at the college level.

11.2: Popol Vuh - Ancient Maya Story of Creation is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

11.3: Aztec Civilization

Aztec Civilization

by Mark Cartwright published on 26 February 2014 for the Ancient History Encyclopedia (CC BY-NC-SA)

The Aztec Empire flourished between c. 1345 and 1521 CE and, at its greatest extent, covered most of northern Mesoamerica. Aztec warriors were able to dominate their neighbouring states and permit rulers such as Motecuhzoma II to impose Aztec ideals and religion across Mexico. Highly accomplished in agriculture and trade, the last of the great Mesoamerican civilizations was also noted for its art and architecture which ranks amongst the finest ever produced on the continent.

The Aztec state is actually the most well-documented Mesoamerican civilization with sources including archaeology, native books (codices) and lengthy and detailed accounts from their Spanish conquerors - both by military men and Christian clergy. These latter sources may not always be reliable but the picture we have of the Aztecs, their institutions, religious practices, Aztec warfare and daily life is a rich one and it continues to be constantly expanded with details being added through the endeavours of 21st-century CE archaeologists and scholars.

Historical Overview

Sometime around 1100 CE the city-states or *altepetl* which were spread over central Mexico began to compete with each other for local resources and regional dominance. Each state had its own ruler or *tlatoani* who led a council of nobles but these small urban centres surrounded by farmland soon sought to expand their wealth and influence so that by c. 1400 CE several small empires had formed in the Valley of Mexico. Dominant amongst these were Texcoco, capital of the Acholhua region, and Azcapotzalco, capital of the Tepenec. These two empires came face to face in 1428 CE with the Tepanec War. The Azcapotzalco forces were defeated by an alliance of Texcoco, Tenochtitlan (the capital of the Mexica) and several other smaller cities. Following victory, a Triple Alliance was formed between Texcoco, Tenochtitlan and a rebel Tepanec city, Tlacopan. A campaign of territorial expansion began where the spoils of war - usually in the form of tributes from the conquered - were shared between these three great cities. Over time Tenochtitlan came to dominate the Alliance, its ruler became the supreme ruler - the *huey tlatoque* ('high king') - and the city established itself as the capital of the Aztec empire.

The empire continued to expand from 1430 CE and the Aztec military - bolstered by conscription of all adult males, men supplied from allied and conquered states, and such elite groups as the Eagle and Jaguar warriors - swept aside their rivals. Aztec warriors wore padded cotton armour, carried a wooden or reed shield covered in hide, and wielded weapons such as a super sharp obsidian sword-club (*macuahuitl*), a spear or dart thrower (*atlatl*), and bow and arrows. Elite warriors also wore spectacular feathered and animal skin costumes and headdresses to signify their rank. Battles were concentrated in or around major cities and when these fell the victors claimed the whole surrounding territory. Regular tributes were extracted and captives were taken back to Tenochtitlan for ritual sacrifice. In this way, the Aztec empire came to cover most of northern Mexico, an area of some 135,000 square kilometres.

The empire was kept together through the appointment of officials from the Aztec heartland, inter-marriages, gift-giving, invitations to important ceremonies, the building of monuments and artworks which promoted Aztec imperial ideology, and most importantly of all, the ever-present threat of military intervention. Some states were integrated more than others whilst those on the extremities of the empire became useful buffer zones against more hostile neighbours, notably the Tarascan civilization.

Tenochtitlan

The Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan on the western shore of Lake Texcoco flourished so that the city could boast at least 200,000 inhabitants by the early 16th century CE, making it the largest city in the Pre-Columbian Americas. These inhabitants were divided into several social strata. At the top were local rulers (*teteuhctin*), then came nobles (*pipiltin*), commoners (*macehualtin*), serfs (*mayeque*), and finally slaves (*tlacohtin*). The strata seem to have been relatively fixed but there is some evidence of movement between them, especially in the lower classes.

Not only the political and religious capital, Tenochtitlán was also a huge trading centre with goods flowing in and out such as gold, greenstone, turquoise, cotton, cacao beans, tobacco, pottery, tools, weapons, foodstuffs (tortillas, chile sauces, maize, beans, and

even insects, for example) and slaves. The Spanish invaders were hugely impressed by the city's splendour and magnificent architecture and artwork, especially the Templo Mayor pyramid and massive stone sculptures. Dominating the city was the huge Sacred Precinct with its temples and monumental ball court. Tenochtitlan's water management was also impressive with large canals crisscrossing the city which was itself surrounded by *chinampas* - raised and flooded fields - which greatly increased the agricultural capacity of the Aztecs. There were also anti-flood dykes, artificial reservoirs for fresh water, and wonderful flower gardens dotted around the city.

The whole city was designed to inspire awe in the people, especially visiting nobles who, entertained with lavish ceremonies, could see that the Mexica Aztecs truly were:

Masters of the world, their empire so wide and abundant that they had conquered all the nations and that all were their vassals. The guests, seeing such wealth and opulence and such authority and power, were filled with terror. (Diego Durán, the Spanish friar, quoted in Nichols, 451)

Religion

Mythology and religion, as with most ancient cultures, were closely intertwined for the Aztecs. The very founding of Tenochtitlán was based on the belief that peoples from the mythical land of plenty Aztlán (literally 'Land of White Herons' and origin of the Aztec name) in the far northwest had first settled in the Valley of Mexico. They had been shown the way by their god Huitzilopochtli who had sent an eagle sitting on a cactus to indicate exactly where these migrants should build their new home. The god also gave these people their name, the Mexica, who along with other ethnic groups, who similarly spoke Nahuatl, collectively made up the peoples now generally known as the Aztecs.

The Aztec pantheon included a mix of older Mesoamerican gods and specifically Mexica deities. The two principal gods worshipped were Huitzilopochtli (the war and sun god) and Tlaloc (the rain god) and both had a temple on top of the Templo Mayor pyramid at the heart of Tenochtitlan. Other important gods were Quetzalcoatl (the feathered serpent god common to many Mesoamerican cultures), Tezcatlipoca (supreme god at Texcoco), Xipe Totec (god of Spring and agriculture), Xiuhtecuhtli (god of fire), Xochipilli (god of summertime and flowers), Ometeotl (the creator god), Mictlantecuhtli (god of the dead) and Coatlicue (the earth-mother goddess).

This sometimes bewildering array of gods presided over every aspect of the human condition. The timing of ceremonies in honour of these deities was dictated by a variety of calendars. There was the 260-day Aztec calendar which was divided into 20 weeks, each of 13 days which carried names such as Crocodile and Wind. There was also a Solar calendar consisting of 18 months, each of 20 days. The 584 day period covering the rise of Venus was also important and there was a 52-year cycle of the sun to be considered. The movement of planets and stars were carefully observed (albeit not as accurately, though, as the Maya had done) and they provided the motive for the specific timing of many religious rites and agricultural practices.

The sun, not surprisingly, had great significance for the Aztecs. They believed that the world went through a series of cosmic ages, each had its own sun but finally each world was destroyed and replaced by another until the fifth and final age was reached - the present day for the Aztecs. This cosmic progression was wonderfully represented in the famous Sun Stone but also crops up in many other places too.

The gods were honoured with festivals, banquets, music, dancing, decoration of statues, burning of incense, the ritual burial of precious goods, penances such as blood-letting, and animal sacrifices. Humans, both adults and less often children, were also frequently sacrificed to metaphorically 'feed' the gods and keep them happy lest they become angry and make life difficult for humans by sending storms, droughts etc. or even just to keep the sun appearing every day. Victims were usually taken from the losing side in wars. Indeed, the so-called 'Flowery Wars' were specifically undertaken to collect sacrificial victims. The most prestigious offerings were those warriors who had shown great bravery in battle. The sacrifice itself could take three main forms: the heart was removed, the victim was decapitated, or the victim was made to fight in a hopelessly one-sided contest against elite warriors. There were also impersonators who dressed in the regalia of a specific god and at the climax of the ceremony were themselves sacrificed.

Architecture & Art

The Aztecs were themselves appreciative of fine art and they collected pieces from across their empire to be brought back to Tenochtitlan and often ceremonially buried. Aztec art was nothing if not eclectic and ranged from miniature engraved precious

objects to massive stone temples. Monumental sculptures were a particular favourite and could be fearsome monstrosities such as the colossal Coatlicue statue or be very life-like such as the famous sculpture of a seated Xochipilli.

Organised in guilds and attached to the main palaces, artisans could specialise in metalwork, wood carving or stone sculpture, with materials used such as amethyst, rock crystal, gold, silver, and exotic feathers. Perhaps some of the most striking art objects are those which employed turquoise mosaic such as the famous mask of Xuihtecuhtli. Common forms of pottery vessels include anthropomorphic vases in bright colours and of special note was the finely made and highly prized Cholula ware from Cholollan.

Aztec art depicted all manner of subjects but especially popular were animals, plants and gods, particularly those related to fertility and agriculture. Art could also be used as propaganda to spread the imperial dominance of Tenochtitlan. Examples such as the Sun Stone, Stone of Tizoc, and Throne of Motecuhzoma II all portray Aztec ideology and seek to closely correlate political rulers to cosmic events and even the gods themselves. Even architecture could achieve this aim, for example, the Templo Mayor pyramid sought to replicate the sacred snake mountain of Aztec mythology, Coatepec, and temples and statues bearing Aztec symbols were set up across the empire.

Collapse

The Aztec empire, which controlled some 11,000,000 people, had always had to deal with minor rebellions - typically, when new rulers took power at Tenochtitlan - but these had always been swiftly crushed. The tide began to turn, though, when the Aztecs were heavily defeated by the Tlaxcala and Huexotzingo in 1515 CE. With the arrival of the Spanish, some of these rebel states would again seize the opportunity to gain their independence. When the conquistadors finally did arrive from the Old World sailing their floating palaces and led by Hernán Cortés, their initial relations with the leader of the Aztecs, Motecuhzoma II, were friendly and valuable gifts were exchanged. Things turned sour, though, when a small group of Spanish soldiers were killed at Tenochtitlan while Cortés was away at Veracruz. The Aztec warriors, unhappy at Motecuhzoma's passivity, overthrew him and set Cuitlahuac as the new *tlatoani*. This incident was just what Cortés needed and he returned to the city to relieve the besieged remaining Spanish but was forced to withdraw on 30 June 1520 CE in what became known as the *Noche Triste*. Gathering local allies Cortés returned ten months later and in 1521 CE he laid siege to the city. Lacking food and ravaged by disease, the Aztecs, now led by Cuauhtemoc, finally collapsed on the fateful day of 13 August 1521 CE. Tenochtitlan was sacked and its monuments destroyed. From the ashes rose the new capital of the colony of New Spain and the long line of Mesoamerican civilizations which had stretched right back to the Olmec came to a dramatic and brutal end.

About the Author

Mark Cartwright Mark Cartwright is a history writer based in Italy. His special interests include pottery, architecture, world mythology and discovering the ideas that all civilizations share in common. He holds an MA in Political Philosophy and is the Publishing Director at AHE.

11.3: Aztec Civilization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Australia, New Zealand, and Polynesia

12.1: Ancient Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia

12: Australia, New Zealand, and Polynesia is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

12.1: Ancient Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia

12.1: Ancient Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: SmartHistory

13.1: Prehistoric

13.1.1: Paleolithic

13.1.2: Neolithic

13.2: Ancient Mediterranean

13.2.1: Palmyra

13.2.2: Ancient Near East

13.2.3: Ancient Egypt

13.2.4: Ancient Aegean

13.2.5: Ancient Greece

13.2.6: Nabataean

13.2.7: Etruscan

13.2.8: Ancient Rome I

13.2.9: Ancient Rome II

13.2.10: Ancient Rome III

13.3: The Islamic World

13.3.1: A beginner's guide

13.3.2: Early period

13.3.3: Medieval period

13.3.4: Later period

13.4: Africa

13.4.1: A beginner's guide

13.4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa

13.4.3: West Africa

13.4.4: Central Africa

13.4.5: North Africa

13.4.6: Southern Africa

13.5: Asia

13.5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia

13.5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism

13.5.3: China

13.5.4: Japan

13.5.5: Korea

13.5.6: Afghanistan

13.5.7: South Asia (I)

13.5.8: South Asia (II)

13.5.9: Southeast Asia

13.5.10: The Himalayas

13.6: Medieval Europe + Byzantine

13.6.1: A beginner's guide

13.6.2: Christianity and art
13.6.3: Judaism and art
13.6.4: Books in Medieval Europe
13.6.5: Early Christian
13.6.6: Byzantine
13.6.7: Early Medieval
13.6.8: Carolingian
13.6.9: Ottonian
13.6.10: Viking Age
13.6.11: Romanesque
13.6.12: Gothic
13.6.13: The Crusades
13.7: Europe 1300 - 1800
13.7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance
13.7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic
13.7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400–1800
13.7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I)
13.7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II)
13.7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I)
13.7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II)
13.7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance
13.7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism
13.7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance
13.7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation
13.7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I)
13.7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II)
13.7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo
13.7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism
13.7.16: Britain in the 18th century
13.8: Europe 1800 - 1900
13.8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction
13.8.2: Romanticism
13.8.3: Early photography
13.8.4: Victorian art
13.8.5: Realism
13.8.6: Second Empire
13.8.7: Impressionism
13.8.8: Post-Impressionism
13.8.9: Sculpture
13.8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau
13.8.11: Peredvizhniki
13.9: Oceania
13.9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people
13.9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages?

13: SmartHistory is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.1: Prehistoric

Prehistoric art

Mankind has been making art for at least 100,000 years.

- c. 2000 B.C.E.

13.1.1: Paleolithic

13.1.2: Neolithic

Thumbnail: Lascaux animal painting. (Public Domain;Prof saxx).

13.1: Prehistoric is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.1.1: Paleolithic

Paleolithic art

Humans make art. We do this for many reasons and with whatever technologies are available to us. But what can we really know about their creators and what the images originally meant?

- c. 10,000 B.C.E.

Paleolithic art, an introduction

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.1.1.1**: Replica of the painting from the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave in southern France (Anthropos museum, Brno)

The oldest art: ornamentation

Humans make art. We do this for many reasons and with whatever technologies are available to us. Extremely old, non-representational ornamentation has been found across Africa. The oldest firmly-dated example is a collection of 82,000 year old Nassarius snail shells found in Morocco that are pierced and covered with red ochre. Wear patterns suggest that they may have been strung beads. Nassarius shell beads found in Israel may be more than 100,000 years old and in the Blombos cave in South Africa, pierced shells and small pieces of ochre (red Haematite) etched with simple geometric patterns have been found in a 75,000-year-old layer of sediment.

The oldest representational art

The oldest known representational imagery comes from the Aurignacian culture of the Upper Paleolithic period (Paleolithic means old stone age). Archaeological discoveries across a broad swath of Europe (especially Southern France, Northern Spain, and Swabia, in Germany) include over two hundred caves with spectacular Aurignacian paintings, drawings and sculpture that are among the earliest undisputed examples of representational image-making. The oldest of these is a 2.4-inch tall female figure carved out of mammoth ivory that was found in six fragments in the Hohle Fels cave near Schelklingen in southern Germany. It dates to 35,000 B.C.E.

The caves

The caves at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc, Lascaux, Pech Merle, and Altamira contain the best known examples of pre-historic painting and drawing. Here are remarkably evocative renderings of animals and some humans that employ a complex mix of naturalism and

abstraction. Archaeologists that study Paleolithic era humans, believe that the paintings discovered in 1994, in the cave at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc in the Ardéche valley in France, are more than 30,000 years old. The images found at Lascaux and Altamira are more recent, dating to approximately 15,000 B.C.E. The paintings at Pech Merle date to both 25,000 and 15,000 B.C.E.

Questions

What can we really know about the creators of these paintings and what the images originally meant? These are questions that are difficult enough when we study art made only 500 years ago. It is much more perilous to assert meaning for the art of people who shared our anatomy but had not yet developed the cultures or linguistic structures that shaped who we have become. Do the tools of art history even apply? Here is evidence of a visual language that collapses the more than 1,000 generations that separate us, but we must be cautious. This is especially so if we want to understand the people that made this art as a way to understand ourselves. The desire to speculate based on what we see and the physical evidence of the caves is wildly seductive.

Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc

The cave at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc is over 1,000 feet in length with two large chambers. Carbon samples date the charcoal used to depict the two head-to-head Rhinoceroses (see the image above, bottom right) to between 30,340 and 32,410 years before 1995 when the samples were taken. The cave's drawings depict other large animals including horses, mammoths, musk ox, ibex, reindeer, aurochs, megaceros deer, panther, and owl (scholars note that these animals were not then a normal part of people's diet). Photographs show that the drawing shown above is very carefully rendered but may be misleading. We see a group of horses, rhinos and bison and we see them as a group, overlapping and skewed in scale. But the photograph distorts the way these animal figures would have been originally seen. The bright electric lights used by the photographer create a broad flat scope of vision; how different to see each animal emerge from the dark under the flickering light cast by a flame.

A word of caution

In a 2009 presentation at University of California San Diego, Dr. Randell White, Professor of Anthropology at New York University, suggested that the overlapping horses pictured above might represent the same horse over time, running, eating, sleeping, etc. Perhaps these are far more sophisticated representations than we have imagined. There is another drawing at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc that cautions us against ready assumptions. It has been interpreted as depicting the thighs and genitals of a woman but there is also a drawing of a bison and a lion, and the images are nearly intertwined. In addition to the drawings, the cave is littered with the skulls and bones of cave bear and the track of a wolf. There is also a footprint thought to have been made by an eight-year-old boy.

Additional resources:

The cave of Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc

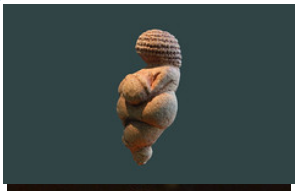
A carved female figurine dating to at least 35,000 years ago recovered from caves in the Hohle Fels region of Germany (video)

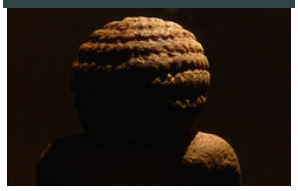
Lascaux: a visit to the cave

Lascaux on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













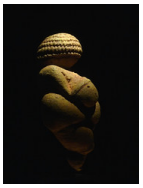














Figure **13.1.1.2**: More Smarthistory images…

Our earliest technology?

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Our earliest technology?



Figure **13.1.1.3**: Handaxe, lower paleolithic, about 1.8 million years old, hard green volcanic lava (phonolite), 23.8 x 10 cm, found at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania, Africa © The Trustees of the British Museum

Made nearly two million years ago, stone tools such as this are the first known technological invention.

This chopping tool and others like it are the oldest objects in the British Museum. It comes from an early human campsite in the bottom layer of deposits in Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania. Potassium-argon dating indicates that this bed is between 1.6 and 2.2 million years old from top to bottom. This and other tools are dated to about 1.8 million years.

Using another hard stone as a hammer, the maker has knocked flakes off both sides of a basalt (volcanic lava) pebble so that they intersect to form a sharp edge. This could be used to chop branches from trees, cut meat from large animals or smash bones for marrow fat—an essential part of the early human diet. The flakes could also have been used as small knives for light duty tasks.

Deliberate shaping

To some people this artifact might appear crude; how can we even be certain that it is humanly made and not just bashed in rock falls or by trampling animals? A close look reveals that the edge is formed by a deliberate sequence of skillfully placed blows of more or less uniform force. Many objects of the same type, made in the same way, occur in groups called assemblages which are occasionally associated with early human remains. By contrast, natural forces strike randomly and with variable force; no pattern, purpose or uniformity can be seen in the modifications they cause.

Chopping tools and flakes from the earliest African sites were referred to as*Oldowan* by the archaeologist Louis Leakey. He found this example on his first expedition to Olduvai in 1931, when he was sponsored by the British Museum.

Handaxes were still in use there some 500,000 years ago by which time their manufacture and use had spread throughout Africa, south Asia, the Middle East and Europe where they were still being made 40,000 years ago. They have even been found as far east as Korea in recent excavations. No other cultural artifact is known to have been made for such a long time across such a huge geographical range.

Handaxes are always made from stone and were held in the hand during use. Many have this characteristic teardrop or pear shape which might have been inspired by the outline of the human hand.

The beginnings of an artistic sense?

Although handaxes were used for a variety of everyday tasks including all aspects of skinning and butchering an animal or working other materials such as wood, this example is much bigger than the usual useful size of such hand held tools. Despite its symmetry and regular edges it appears difficult to use easily. As language began to develop along with tool making, was this handaxe made to suggest ideas? Does the care and craftsmanship with which it was made indicate the beginnings of the artistic sense unique to humans?

Suggested readings:

The British Museum

L.S.B. Leakey, *Olduvai Gorge* (Cambridge, University Press, 1951).

K.D. Schick and N. Schick, *Making silent stones speak. Human Evolution and the Dawn of Technology* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Lion Man

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The cave lion was the fiercest animal of the ice age, and this mammoth ivory carving combines human with lion.



Video 13.1.1.1: Video from the British Museum

Apollo 11 Cave Stones

by NATHALIE HAGER

All evidence points to Africa as the origin of our species … is Africa also the birthplace of art?

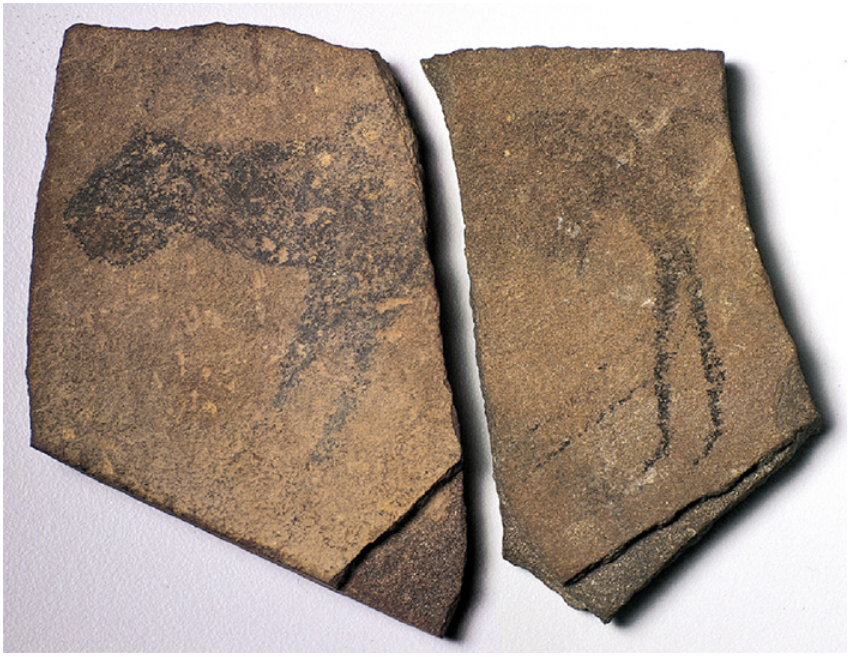


Figure 13.1.1.4: Apollo 11 Cave Stones, Namibia, quartzite, c. 25,500–25,300 B.C.E. Image courtesy of State Museum of Namibia.

A significant discovery

Approximately 25,000 years ago, in a rock shelter in the Huns Mountains of Namibia on the southwest coast of Africa (today part of the Ai-Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park), an animal was drawn in charcoal on a hand-sized slab of stone. The stone was left behind, over time becoming buried on the floor of the cave by layers of sediment and debris until 1969 when a team led by German archaeologist W.E. Wendt excavated the rock shelter and found the first fragment (above, left). Wendt named the cave “Apollo 11” upon hearing on his shortwave radio of NASA’s successful space mission to the moon. It was more than three years later however, after a subsequent excavation, when Wendt discovered the matching fragment (above, right), that archaeologists and art historians began to understand the significance of the find.



Figure **13.1.1.5**:Location of the Huns Mountains of Namibia, © Map Data Google

Indirect dating techniques

In total seven stone fragments of brown-grey quartzite, some of them depicting traces of animal figures drawn in charcoal, ocher, and white, were found buried in a concentrated area of the cave floor less than two meters square. While it is not possible to learn the actual date of the fragments, it is possible to estimate when the rocks were buried by radiocarbon dating the archaeological layer in which they were found. Archaeologists estimate that the cave stones were buried between 25,500 and 25,300 years ago during the Middle Stone Age period in southern Africa making them, at the time of their discovery, the oldest dated art known on the African continent and among the earliest evidence of human artistic expression worldwide. What was the Middle Stone Age?

While more recent discoveries of much older human artistic endeavors have corrected our understanding (consider the 2008 discovery of a 100,000-year-old paint workshop in the Blombos Cave on the southern coast of Africa), the stones remain the oldest examples of figurative art from the African continent. Their discovery contributes to our conception of early humanity's creative attempts, before the invention of formal writing, to express their thoughts about the world around them.

The origins of art?

Genetic and fossil evidence tells us that Homo sapiens (anatomically modern humans who evolved from an earlier species of hominids) developed on the continent of Africa more than 100,000 years ago and spread throughout the world. But what we do not know—what we have only been able to assume—is that art too began in Africa. Is Africa, where humanity originated, home to the world's oldest art? If so, can we say that art began in Africa?



Figure **13.1.1.6**: View across Fish River Canyon toward the Huns Mountains, /Ai-/Ais – Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, southern Namibia (photo: **Thomas Schooch**, CC-BY-SA-3.00)

The Apollo 11 rock shelter overlooks a dry gorge, sitting twenty meters above what was once a river that ran along the valley floor. The cave entrance is wide, about twenty-eight meters across, and the cave itself is deep: eleven meters from front to back. While today a person can stand upright only in the front section of the cave, during the Middle Stone Age, as well as in the periods before and after, the rock shelter was an active site of ongoing human settlement.

Inside the cave, above and below the layer where the Apollo 11 cave stones were found, archaeologists unearthed a sequence of cultural layers representing over 100,000 years of human occupation. In these layers stone artifacts, typical of the Middle Stone Age period—such as blades, pointed flakes, and scraper—were found in raw materials not native to the region, signaling stone tool technology transported over long distances. Among the remnants of hearths, ostrich eggshell fragments bearing traces of red color were also found—either remnants of ornamental painting or evidence that the eggshells were used as containers for pigment.



Figure **13.1.1.7**: Excavation site of the Apollo 11 stones (photo: **Jutta Vogel Stiftung)**

On the cave walls, belonging to the Later Stone Age period, rock paintings were discovered depicting white and red zigzags, two handprints, three geometric images, and traces of color. And on the banks of the riverbed just upstream from the cave, engravings of a variety of animals, some with zigzag lines leading upwards, were found and dated to less than 2000 years ago.

The Apollo 11 Cave Stones

But the most well-known of the rock shelter's finds, and the most enigmatic, remain the Apollo 11 cave stones (image above). On the cleavage face of what was once a complete slab, an unidentified animal form was drawn resembling a feline in appearance but with human hind legs that were probably added later. Barely visible on the head of the animal are two slightly-curved horns likely belonging to an Oryx, a large grazing antelope; on the animal's underbelly, possibly the sexual organ of a bovid. What is a bovid?

Perhaps we have some kind of supernatural creature—a therianthrope, part human and part animal? If so, this may suggest a complex system of shamanistic belief. Taken together with the later rock paintings and the engravings, Apollo 11 becomes more than just a cave offering shelter from the elements. It becomes a site of ritual significance used by many over thousands of years.

The global origins of art

In the Middle Stone Age period in southern Africa prehistoric man was a hunter-gatherer, moving from place to place in search of food and shelter. But this modern human also drew an animal form with charcoal—a form as much imagined as it was observed. This is what makes the Apollo 11 cave stones find so interesting: the stones offer evidence that Homo sapiens in the Middle Stone Age—us, some 25,000 years ago—were not only anatomically modern, but behaviorally modern as well. That is to say, these early humans possessed the new and unique capacity for modern symbolic thought, "the human capacity," long before what was previously understood.

The cave stones are what archaeologists term *art mobilier* —small-scale prehistoric art that is moveable. But mobile art, and rock art generally, is not unique to Africa. Rock art is a global phenomenon that can be found across the World—in Europe, Asia, Australia, and North and South America. While we cannot know for certain what these early humans intended by the things that they made, by focusing on art as the product of humanity's creativity and imagination we can begin to explore where, and hypothesize why, art began.

Additional resources:

Introduction to Prehistoric Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Apollo 11 and Wonderwerk Cave Stones on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Rock Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"Africa: Continent of Origins," lecture was delivered by Dr. Ian Tattersall at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on the occasion of the symposium "Genesis: Exploration of Origins" on March 7, 2003.

"Homo Sapiens," from Becoming Human

British Museum – Rock Art and the Origins of Art in Africa

Namibia from the TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art

Bradshaw Foundation – Africa Rock Art Archive

John Masson, "Apollo 11 Cave in Southwest Namibia: Some Observations on the Site and its Rock Art," *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 61, no. 183 (2006), pp. 76-89.

Ralf Vogelsang, "The Rock-Shelter "Apollo 11" – Evidence of Early Modern Humans in South-Western Namibia," in *Heritage and Cultures in Modern Namibia – In-depth Views of the Country*, edited by Cornelia Limpricht and Megan Biesele (Göttingen, Windhoek-Namibia: Klaus Hess Publishers, 2008), pp. 183-196.

W. E. Wendt, "'Art Mobilier' from the Apollo 11 Cave, South West Africa: Africa's Oldest Dated Works of Art," *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* vol. 31, no. 121/122 (1976), pp. 5-11.

Venus of Willendorf

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT

The name of this prehistoric sculpture refers to a Roman goddess—but what did she originally represent?



Video 13.1.1.2: *Venus of Willendorf*, c. 24,000-22,000 B.C.E., limestone, 11.1 cm high (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna)



Figure 13.1.1.8: Venus of Willendorf, c. 24,000-22,000 B.C.E., limestone, 11.1 cm high (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Can a 25,000-year-old object be a work of art?

The artifact known as the *Venus of Willendorf* dates to between 24,000-22,000 B.C.E., making it one of the oldest and most famous surviving works of art. But what does it mean to be a work of art?

The Oxford English Dictionary, perhaps the authority on the English language, defines the word “art” as

> ***the application of skill to the arts of imitation and design, painting, engraving, sculpture, architecture; the cultivation of these in its principles, practice, and results; the skillful production of the beautiful in visible forms.***

Some of the words and phrases that stand out within this definition include “application of skill,” “imitation,” and “beautiful.” By this definition, the concept of “art” involves the use of skill to create an object that contains some appreciation of aesthetics. The object is not only made, it is made with an attempt of creating something that contains elements of beauty.

In contrast, the same Oxford English Dictionary defines the word “artifact” as, “anything made by human art and workmanship; an artificial product. In Archaeol[ogy] applied to the rude products of aboriginal workmanship as distinguished from natural remains.” Again, some key words and phrases are important: “anything made by human art,” and “rude products.” Clearly, an artifact is any object created by humankind regardless of the “skill” of its creator or the absence of “beauty.”

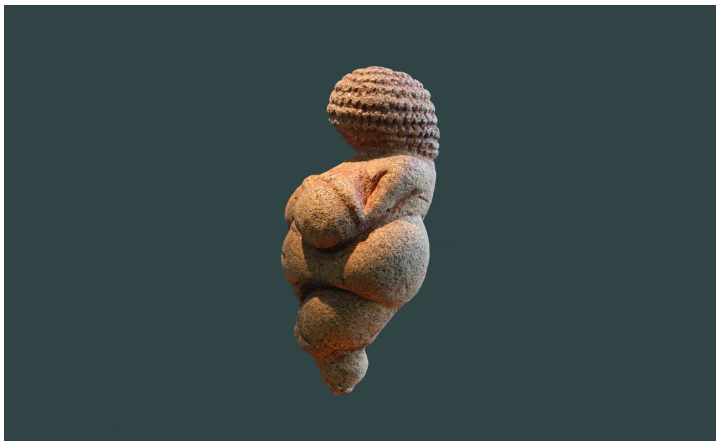


Figure **13.1.1.9**: Venus of Willendorf, c. 24,000-22,000 B.C.E., limestone 11.1 cm high (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Artifact, then, is anything created by humankind, and art is a particular kind of artifact, a group of objects under the broad umbrella of artifact, in which beauty has been achieved through the application of skills. Think of the average plastic spoon: a uniform white color, mass produced, and unremarkable in just about every way. While it serves a function—say, for example, to stir your hot chocolate—the person who designed it likely did so without any real dedication or commitment to making this utilitarian object beautiful. You have likely never lovingly gazed at a plastic spoon and remarked, “Wow! Now that’s a beautiful spoon!” This is in contrast to a silver spoon you might purchase at Tiffany & Co. While their spoon could just as well stir cream into your morning coffee, it was skillfully designed by a person who attempted to make it aesthetically pleasing; note the elegant bend of the handle, the gentle luster of the metal, the graceful slope of the bowl.

These terms are important to bear in mind when analyzing prehistoric art. While it is unlikely people from the Upper Paleolithic period cared to conceptualize what it meant to make art or to be an artist, it cannot be denied that the objects they created were made with skill, were often made as a way of imitating the world around them, and were made with a particular care to create something beautiful. They likely represent, for the Paleolithic peoples who created them, objects made with great competence and with a particular interest in aesthetics.

Explain Upper Paleolithic

Caves and pockets

Two main types of Upper Paleolithic art have survived. The first we can classify as permanently located works found on the walls within caves. Mostly unknown prior to the final decades of the nineteenth century, many such sites have now been discovered throughout much of southern Europe and have provided historians and archaeologists new insights into humankind millennia prior to the creation of writing. The subjects of these works vary: we may observe a variety of geometric motifs, many types of flora and fauna, and the occasional human figure. They also fluctuate in size; ranging from several inches to large-scale compositions that span many feet in length.

The second category of Paleolithic art may be called portable since these works are generally of a small-scale—a logical size given the nomadic nature of Paleolithic peoples. Despite their often diminutive size, the creation of these portable objects signifies a remarkable allocation of time and effort. As such, these figurines were significant enough to take along during the nomadic wanderings of their Paleolithic creators.



Figure **13.1.1.10**: Venus of Willendorf, c. 24,000-22,000 B.C.E., limestone 11.1 cm high (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The *Venus of Willendorf* is a perfect example of this. Josef Szombathy, an Austro-Hungarian archaeologist, discovered this work in 1908 outside the small Austrian village of Willendorf. Although generally projected in art history classrooms to be several feet tall, this limestone figurine is petite in size. She measures just under 4½" high, and could fit comfortably in the palm of your hand. This small scale was very deliberate and allowed whoever carved (or, perhaps owned) this figurine to carry it during their nearly daily nomadic travels in search of food.

Naming and dating

Clearly, the Paleolithic sculptor who made this small figurine would never have named it the *Venus of Willendorf*. Venus was the name of the Roman goddess of love and ideal beauty. When discovered outside the Austrian village of Willendorf, scholars mistakenly assumed that this figure was likewise a goddess of love and beauty. There is absolutely no evidence though that the *Venus of Willendorf* shared a function similar to its classically inspired namesake. However incorrect the name may be, it has endured, and tells us more about those who found her than those who made her.

Dating too can be a problem, especially since Prehistoric art, by definition, has no written record. In fact, the definition of the word prehistoric is that written language did not yet exist, so the creator of the *Venus of Willendorf* could not have incised "Bob made this in the year 24,000 B.C.E." on the back. In addition, stone artifacts present a special problem since we are interested in the date that the stone was carved, not the date of the material itself. Despite these hurdles, art historians and archaeologist attempt to establish dates for prehistoric finds through two processes. The first is called relative dating and the second involves an examination of the stratification of an object's discovery.

Relative dating is an easily understood process that involves stylistically comparing an object whose date is uncertain to other objects whose dates have been firmly established. By correctly fitting the unknown object into this stylistic chronology, scholars can find a very general chronological date for an object. A simple example can illustrate this method. The first Chevrolet Corvette was sold during the 1953 model year, and this particular car has gone through numerous iterations up to its most recent version. If presented with pictures of the Corvette's development from every five years to establish the stylistic development from its earliest model to the most recent (for example, images from the 1953, 1958, 1963, and all the way to the current model), you would have a general idea of the changes the car underwent over time. If then given a picture of a Corvette from an unknown year, you could, on the basis of stylistic analysis, generally place it within the visual chronology of this car with some accuracy. The Corvette is a convenient example, but the same exercise could be applied to iPods, Coca-Cola bottles, suits, or any other object that changes over time.

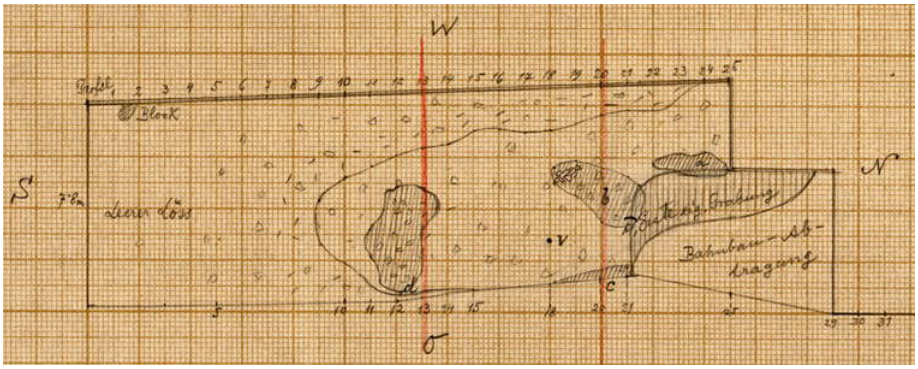


Figure 13.1.1.11: Plan of the excavation at Willendorf I in 1908 with the position of the figurine.

The second way scholars date the *Venus of Willendorf* is through an analysis of where it was found. Generally, the deeper an object is recovered from the earth, the longer that object has been buried. Imagine a penny jar that has had coins added to it for hundreds of years. It is a good bet that the coins at the bottom of that jar are the oldest whereas those at the top are the newest. The same applies to Paleolithic objects. Because of the depth at which these objects are found, we can infer that they are very old indeed.

What did it mean?

In the absence of writing, art historians rely on the objects themselves to learn about ancient peoples. The form of the *Venus of Willendorf*—that is, what it looks like—may very well inform what it originally meant. The most conspicuous elements of her anatomy are those that deal with the process of reproduction and child rearing. The artist took particular care to emphasize her breasts, which some scholars suggest indicates that she is able to nurse a child. The artist also brought deliberate attention to her pubic region. Traces of a pigment—red ochre—can still be seen on parts of the figurine.



Figure 13.1.1.12: Detail, Venus of Willendorf, c. 24,000-22,000 B.C.E., limestone 11.1 cm high (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In contrast, the sculptor placed scant attention on the non-reproductive parts of her body. This is particularly noticeable in the figure's limbs, where there is little emphasis placed on musculature or anatomical accuracy. We may infer from the small size of her feet that she was not meant to be free standing, and was either meant to be carried or placed lying down. The artist carved the figure's upper arms along her upper torso, and her lower arms are only barely visible resting upon the top of her breasts. As enigmatic as the lack of attention to her limbs is, the absence of attention to the face is even more striking. No eyes, nose, ears, or mouth remain visible. Instead, our attention is drawn to seven horizontal bands that wrap in concentric circles from the crown of her head. Some scholars have suggested her head is obscured by a knit cap pulled downward, others suggest that these forms may represent braided or beaded hair and that her face, perhaps once painted, is angled downward.

If the face was purposefully obscured, the Paleolithic sculptor may have created, not a portrait of a particular person, but rather a representation of the reproductive and child rearing aspects of a woman. In combination with the emphasis on the breasts and pubic area, it seems likely that the *Venus of Willendorf* had a function that related to fertility.

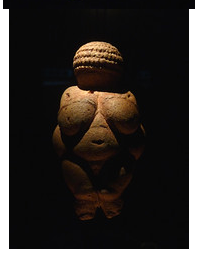
Without doubt, we can learn much more from the *Venus of Willendorf* than its diminutive size might at first suggest. We learn about relative dating and stratification. We learn that these nomadic people living almost 25,000 years ago cared about making objects

beautiful. And we can learn that these Paleolithic people had an awareness of the importance of the women.

The *Venus of Willendorf* is only one example dozens of paleolithic figures we believe may have been associated with fertility. Nevertheless, it retains a place of prominence within the history of human art.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









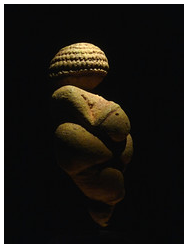








Figure **13.1.1.13**: More Smarthistory images…

Hall of Bulls, Lascaux

by MARY BETH LOONEY

We are as likely to communicate using easily interpretable pictures as we are text. Portable handheld devices enable us to tell others via social media what we are doing and thinking. Approximately 15,000 years ago, we also communicated in pictures — but with no written language.



Figure **13.1.1.14**: Map showing the location of three well-known prehistoric cave painting sites in France and Spain, © Google

The cave of Lascaux, France is one of almost 350 similar sites that are known to exist — most are isolated to a region of southern France and northern Spain. Both Neanderthals (named after the site in which their bones were first discovered — the Neander Valley in Germany) and Modern Humans (early Homo Sapiens Sapiens) coexisted in this region 30,000 years ago. Life was short and very difficult; resources were scarce and the climate was very cold.

Location, location, location!

Approximately 15,000 years later in the valley of Vèzére, in southwestern France, modern humans lived and witnessed the migratory patterns of a vast range of wildlife. They discovered a cave in a tall hill overlooking the valley. Inside, an unknown number of these people drew and painted images that, once discovered in 1940, have excited the imaginations of both researchers and the general public.

After struggling through small openings and narrow passages to access the larger rooms beyond, prehistoric people discovered that the cave wall surfaces functioned as the perfect, blank “canvas” upon which to draw and paint. White calcite, roofed by nonporous rock, provides a uniquely dry place to feature art. To paint, these early artists used charcoal and ocher (a kind of pigmented, earthen material, that is soft and can be mixed with liquids, and comes in a range of colors like brown, red, yellow, and white). We find images of horses, deer, bison, elk, a few lions, a rhinoceros, and a bear — almost as an encyclopedia of the area’s large prehistoric wildlife. Among these images are abstract marks — dots and lines in a variety of configurations. In one image, a humanoid figure plays a mysterious role.

How did they do it?

The animals are rendered in what has come to be called “twisted perspective,” in which their bodies are depicted in profile while we see the horns from a more frontal viewpoint. The images are sometimes entirely linear—line drawn to define the animal’s contour. In many other cases, the animals are described in solid and blended colors blown by mouth onto the wall. In other portions of the Lascaux cave, artists carved lines into the soft calcite surface. Some of these are infilled with color—others are not.

The cave spaces range widely in size and ease of access. The famous Hall of Bulls (below) is large enough to hold some fifty people. Other “rooms” and “halls” are extraordinarily narrow and tall.

Archaeologists have found hundreds of stone tools. They have also identified holes in some walls that may have supported tree-limb scaffolding that would have elevated an artist high enough to reach the upper surfaces. Fossilized pollen has been found; these grains were inadvertently brought into the cave by early visitors and are helping scientists understand the world outside.



Figure **13.1.1.15**: Left wall of the Hall of Bulls, Lascaux II (replica of the original cave, which is closed to the public), original cave: c. 16,000-14,000 B.C.E., 11 feet 6 inches long

Given the large scale of many of the animal images, we can presume that the artists worked deliberately—carefully plotting out a particular form before completing outlines and adding color. Some researchers believe that "master" artists enlisted the help of assistants who mixed pigments and held animal fat lamps to illuminate the space. Alternatively, in the case of the "rooms" containing mostly engraved and overlapping forms, it seems that the pure process of drawing and repetitive re-drawing held serious (perhaps ritual) significance for the makers.

Why did they do it?

Many scholars have speculated about why prehistoric people painted and engraved the walls at Lascaux and other caves like it. Perhaps the most famous theory was put forth by a priest named Henri Breuil. Breuil spent considerable time in many of the caves, meticulously recording the images in drawings when the paintings were too challenging to photograph. Relying primarily on a field of study known as ethnography, Breuil believed that the images played a role in "hunting magic." The theory suggests that the prehistoric people who used the cave may have believed that a way to overpower their prey involved creating images of it during rituals designed to ensure a successful hunt. This seems plausible when we remember that survival was entirely dependent on successful foraging and hunting, though it is also important to remember how little we actually know about these people.

Another theory suggests that the images communicate narratives (stories). While a number of the depictions can be seen to do this, one particular image in Lascaux more directly supports this theory. A bison, drawn in strong, black lines, bristles with energy, as the fur on the back of its neck stands up and the head is radically turned to face us (below).



Figure **13.1.1.16**: Disemboweled bison and bird-headed human figure? Cave at Lascaux, c. 16,000-14,000 B.C.E.

A form drawn under the bison's abdomen is interpreted as internal organs, spilling out from a wound. A more crudely drawn form positioned below and to the left of the bison may represent a humanoid figure with the head of a bird. Nearby, a thin line is topped with another bird and there is also an arrow with barbs. Further below and to the far left the partial outline of a rhinoceros can be identified.

Interpreters of this image tend to agree that some sort of interaction has taken place among these animals and the bird-headed human figure—in which the bison has sustained injury either from a weapon or from the horn of the rhinoceros. Why the person in the image has the rudimentary head of a bird, and why a bird form sits atop a stick very close to him is a mystery. Some suggest that the person is a shaman—a kind of priest or healer with powers involving the ability to communicate with spirits of other worlds. Regardless, this riveting image appears to depict action and reaction, although many aspects of it are difficult to piece together.

Preservation for future study

The Caves of Lascaux are the most famous of all of the known caves in the region. In fact, their popularity has permanently endangered them. From 1940 to 1963, the numbers of visitors and their impact on the delicately balanced environment of the cave —which supported the preservation of the cave images for so long—necessitated the cave's closure to the public. A replica called Lascaux II was created about 200 yards away from the site. The original Lascaux cave is now a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Lascaux will require constant vigilance and upkeep to preserve it for future generations.

Many mysteries continue to surround Lascaux, but there is one certainty. The very human need to communicate in the form of pictures—for whatever purpose—has persisted since our earliest beginnings.

Additional resources:

Official site and virtual tour of the cave at Lascaux

Video from UNESCO

Lascaux on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Gregory Curtis, *The Cave Painters: Probing the Mysteries of the World's First Artists* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

13.1.1: Paleolithic is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **1.1: Paleolithic** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.1.2: Neolithic

Neolithic art

The way we live today, settled in homes, close to other people in towns and cities, protected by laws, eating food grown on farms, and with leisure time to learn, explore and invent is all a result of the Neolithic revolution—the development of the technology needed to plant and harvest crops and to domesticate animals.

c. 10,0000 B.C.E. - 2000 B.C.E.

The Neolithic revolution

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

A settled life

When people think of the Neolithic era, they often think of Stonehenge, the iconic image of this early time. Dating to approximately 3000 B.C.E. and set on Salisbury Plain in England, it is a structure larger and more complex than anything built before it in Europe. Stonehenge is an example of the cultural advances brought about by the Neolithic revolution—the most important development in human history. The way we live today, settled in homes, close to other people in towns and cities, protected by laws, eating food grown on farms, and with leisure time to learn, explore and invent is all a result of the Neolithic revolution, which occurred approximately 11,500-5,000 years ago. The revolution which led to our way of life was the development of the technology needed to plant and harvest crops and to domesticate animals.

Before the Neolithic revolution, it's likely you would have lived with your extended family as a nomad, never staying anywhere for more than a few months, always living in temporary shelters, always searching for food and never owning anything you couldn't easily pack in a pocket or a sack. The change to the Neolithic way of life was huge and led to many of the pleasures (lots of food, friends and a comfortable home) that we still enjoy today.



Figure **13.1.2.1**: Stonehenge, c. 3,000 B.C.E., Salisbury Plain, England

Neolithic art

The massive changes in the way people lived also changed the types of art they made. Neolithic sculpture became bigger, in part, because people didn't have to carry it around anymore; pottery became more widespread and was used to store food harvested from farms. Alcohol was first produced during this period and architecture, as well as its interior and exterior decoration, first appears. In short, people settled down and began to live in one place, year after year.

It seems very unlikely that Stonehenge could have been made by earlier, Paleolithic, nomads. It would have been a waste to invest so much time and energy building a monument in a place to which they might never return or might only return infrequently. After all, the effort to build it was extraordinary. Stonehenge is approximately 320 feet in circumference and the stones which compose the outer ring weigh as much as 50 tons; the small stones, weighing as much as 6 tons, were quarried from as far away as 450 miles. The use or meaning of Stonehenge is not clear, but the design, planning and execution could have only been carried out by a culture in which authority was unquestioned. Here is a culture that was able to rally hundreds of people to perform very hard work for extended periods of time. This is another characteristic of the Neolithic era.



Figure **13.1.2.2**: Skulls with plaster and shell from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, 6,000-7,000 B.C.E., found at the Yiftah'el archaeological site in the Lower Galilee, Israel

Plastered skulls

The Neolithic period is also important because it is when we first find good evidence for religious practice, a perpetual inspiration for the fine arts. Perhaps most fascinating are the plaster skulls found around the area of the Levant, at six sites, including Jericho. At this time in the Neolithic, c. 7000-6,000 B.C.E., people were often buried under the floors of homes, and in some cases their skulls were removed and covered with plaster in order to create very life-like faces, complete with shells inset for eyes and paint to imitate hair and mustaches.

The traditional interpretation of these the skulls has been that they offered a means of preserving and worshiping male ancestors. However, recent research has shown that among the sixty-one plastered skulls that have been found, there is a generous number that come from the bodies of women and children. Perhaps the skulls are not so much religious objects but rather powerful images made to aid in mourning lost loved ones.

Neolithic peoples didn't have written language, so we may never know what their creators intended. (The earliest example of writing develops in Sumer in Mesopotamia in the late 4th millennium B.C.E. However, there are scholars that believe that earlier proto-writing developed during the Neolithic period).

Additional resources:

Stonehenge (English Heritage site)

Who built Stonehenge? (English Heritage video)

Stonehenge: Clues to the past (English Heritage video)

Creating an Ancestor: The Jericho Skull at the British Museum

History of Stonehenge (BBC)

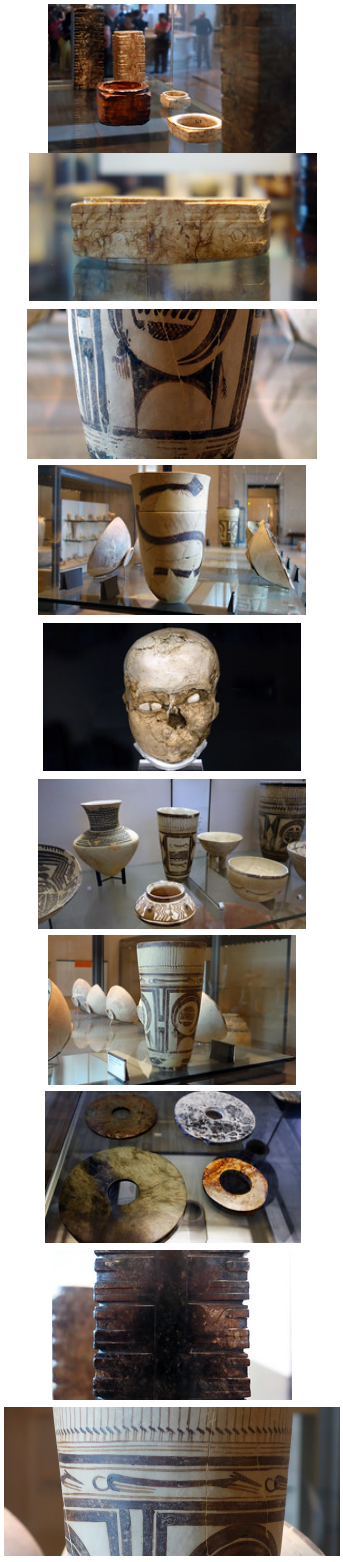


Figure **13.1.2.3**: More Smarthistory images…

Jericho

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

A natural oasis

The site of Jericho, just north of the Dead Sea and due west of the Jordan River, is one of the oldest continuously lived-in cities in the world. The reason for this may be found in its Arabic name, Ārīḥā, which means fragrant; Jericho is a natural oasis in the desert where countless fresh water springs can be found. This resource, which drew its first visitors between 10,000 and 9000 B.C.E., still has descendants that live there today.



Figure **13.1.2.4**: Tell es-sultan, Jerico archaeological site from the air (photo: **Fullo88**, public domain)

Biblical reference

The site of Jericho is best known for its identity in the Bible and this has drawn pilgrims and explorers to it as early as the 4th century C.E.; serious archaeological exploration didn't begin until the latter half of the 19th century. What continues to draw archaeologists to Jericho today is the hope of finding some evidence of the warrior Joshua, who led the Israelites to an unlikely victory against the Canaanites ("the walls of the city fell when Joshua and his men marched around them blowing horns" Joshua 6:1-27). Although unequivocal evidence of Joshua himself has yet to be found, what has been uncovered are some 12,000 years of human activity.

The most spectacular finds at Jericho, however, do not date to the time of Joshua, roughly the Bronze Age (3300-1200 B.C.E.), but rather to the earliest part of the Neolithic era, before even the technology to make pottery had been discovered.



Figure **13.1.2.5**: Looking down at the tower at Jericho (photo: **Reinhard Dietrich**, public domain)

Old walls

The site of Jericho rises above the wide plain of the Jordan Valley, its height the result of layer upon layer of human habitation, a formation called a Tell. The earliest visitors to the site who left remains (stone tools) came in the Mesolithic period (around 9000 B.C.E.) but the first settlement at the site, around the Ein as-Sultan spring, dates to the early Neolithic era, and these people, who built homes, grew plants, and kept animals, were among the earliest to do such anywhere in the world. Specifically, in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A levels at Jericho (8500-7000 B.C.E.) archaeologists found remains of a very large settlement of circular homes made with mud brick and topped with domed roofs.

As the name of this era implies, these early people at Jericho had not yet figured out how to make pottery, but they made vessels out of stone, wove cloth and for tools were trading for a particularly useful kind of stone, obsidian, from as far away as Çiftlik, in eastern Turkey. The settlement grew quickly and, for reasons unknown, the inhabitants soon constructed a substantial stone wall and exterior ditch around their town, complete with a

stone tower almost eight meters high, set against the inner side of the wall. Theories as to the function of this wall range from military defense to keeping out animal predators to even combating the natural rising of the level of the ground surrounding the settlement. However, regardless of its original use, here we have the first version of the walls Joshua so ably conquered some six thousand years later.

Plastered human skulls

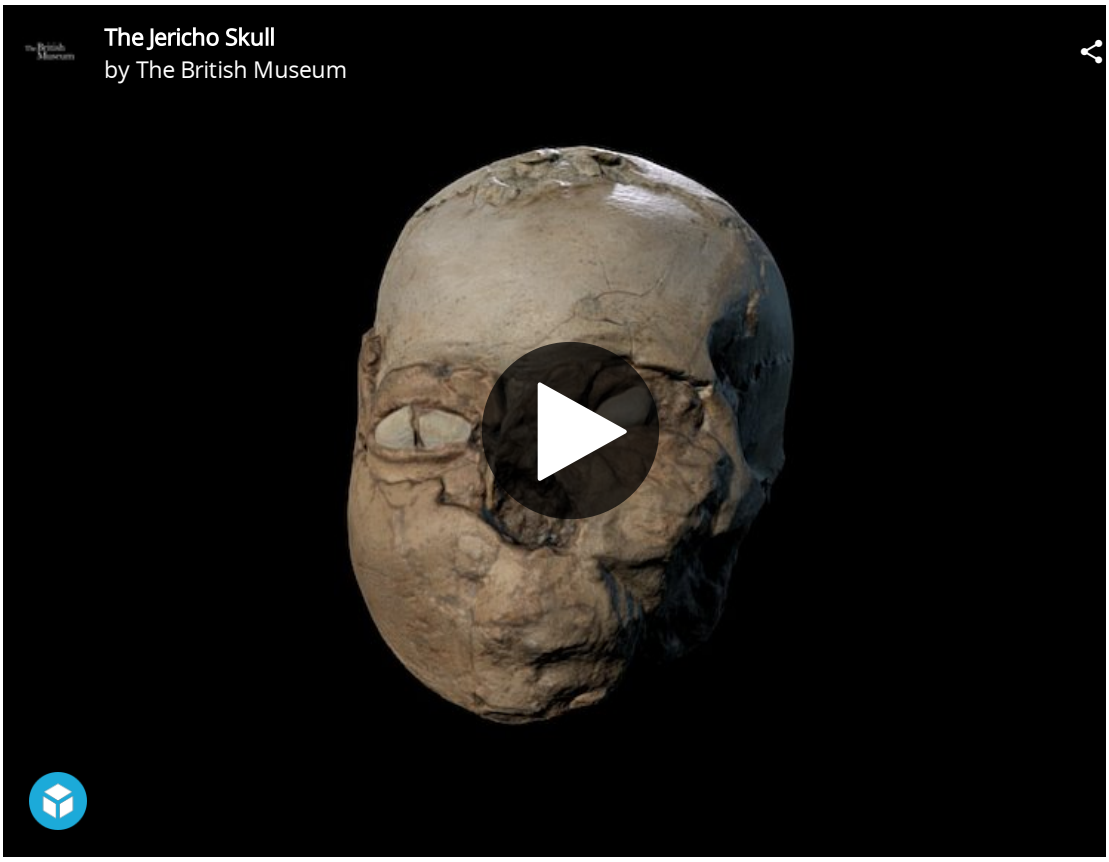
The Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period is followed by the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (7000-5200 BCE), which was different from its predecessor in important ways. Houses in this era were uniformly rectangular and constructed with a new kind of rectangular mud bricks which were decorated with herringbone thumb impressions, and always laid lengthwise in thick mud mortar. This mortar, like a plaster, was also used to create a smooth surface on the interior walls, extending down across the floors as well. In this period there is some strong evidence for cult or religious belief at Jericho. Archaeologists discovered one uniquely large building dating to the period with unique series of plastered interior pits and basins as well as domed adjoining structures and it is thought this was for ceremonial use.



Figure 13.1.2.6: Plastered human skull with shell eyes from Jericho, Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, c. 7200 B.C.E. (The British Museum)

Other possible evidence of cult practice was discovered in several homes of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic town, in the form of plastered human skulls which were molded over to resemble living heads. Shells were used for eyes and traces of paint revealed that skin and hair were also included in the representations. The largest group found together were nine examples, buried in the fill below the plastered floor of one house.

Jericho isn't the only site at which plastered skulls have been found in Pre-Pottery Neolithic B levels; they have also been found at Tell Ramad, Beisamoun, Kfar Hahoresh, 'Ain Ghazal and Nahal Hemar. Among the some sixty-two skulls discovered among these sites, we know that older and younger men as well as women and children are represented, which poses interesting questions as to their meaning. Were they focal points in ancestor worship, as was originally thought, or did they function as images by which deceased family members could be remembered? As we are without any written record of the belief system practiced in the Neolithic period in the area, we will never know.



The Jericho Skull by **The British Museum** on **Sketchfab**

Additional resources:

Creating an ancestor: the Jericho Skull (from The British Museum)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.1.2.7**: More Smarthistory images…

The Jericho Skull

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Is the plaster face on this skull modeled after a real person? Is it one of the world's oldest portraits?

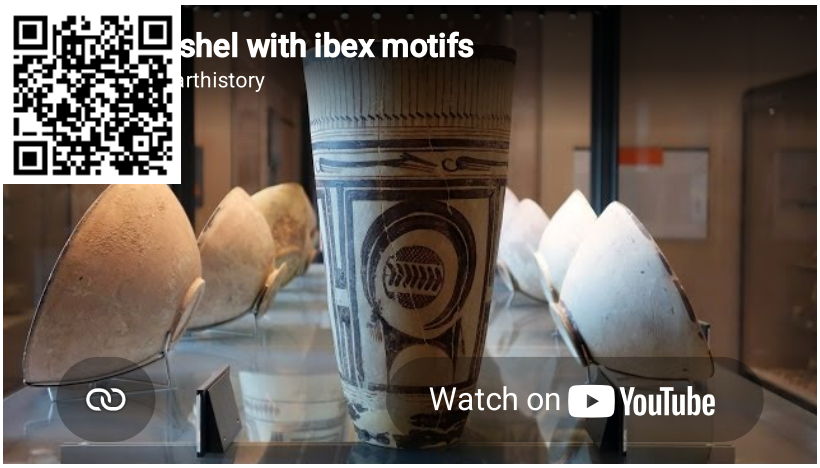


Video 13.1.2.1: Video from the British Museum

Bushel with ibex motifs

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

This beautiful pot was created over 5,000 years ago, and its decoration echoes its shape.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



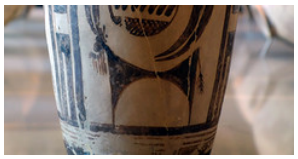












Figure 13.1.2.8: More Smarthistory images…

Çatalhöyük

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

The city of Çatalhöyük points to one of man's most important transformations, from nomad to settled farmer.



Figure 13.1.2.9: Çatalhöyük after the first excavations by James Mellaart and his team (photo: **Omar hoftun**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

Çatalhöyük or Çatal Höyük (pronounced "cha-tal hay OOK") is not the oldest site of the Neolithic era or the largest, but it is extremely important to the beginning of art. Located near the modern city of Konya in south central Turkey, it was inhabited 9000 years ago by up to 8000 people who lived together in a large town. Çatalhöyük, across its history, witnesses the transition from exclusively hunting and gathering subsistence to increasing skill in plant and animal domestication. We might see Çatalhöyük as a site whose history is about one of man's most important transformations: from nomad to settler. It is also a site at which we see art, both painting and sculpture, appear to play a newly important role in the lives of settled people.



Figure 13.1.2.10: Relief map of Turkey noting the location of Çatalhöyük (map: **Uwe Dedering**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

Çatalhöyük had no streets or foot paths; the houses were built right up against each other and the people who lived in them traveled over the town's rooftops and entered their homes through holes in the roofs, climbing down a ladder. Communal ovens were built above the homes of Çatalhöyük

and we can assume group activities were performed in this elevated space as well.



Figure 13.1.2.11: From left: A hearth, oven, and ladder cut in Building 56, South Area, Çatalhöyük (photo: 20060617_jpq_004, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Like at Jericho, the deceased were placed under the floors or platforms in houses and sometimes the skulls were removed and plastered to resemble live faces. The burials at Çatalhöyük show no significant variations, either based on wealth or gender; the only bodies which were treated differently, decorated with beads and covered with ochre, were those of children. The excavator of Çatalhöyük believes that this special concern for youths at the site may be a reflection of the society becoming more sedentary and required larger numbers of children because of increased labor, exchange and inheritance needs.



Figure 13.1.2.12: South Excavation Area, Çatalhöyük (photo: Çatalhöyük, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Art is everywhere among the remains of Çatalhöyük, geometric designs as well as representations of animals and people. Repeated lozenges and zigzags dance across smooth plaster walls, people are sculpted in clay, pairs of leopards are formed in relief facing one another at the sides of rooms, hunting parties are painted baiting a wild bull. The volume and variety of art at Çatalhöyük is immense and must be understood as a vital, functional part of the everyday lives of its ancient inhabitants.

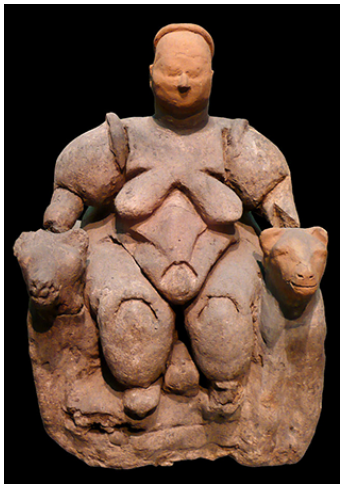


Figure 13.1.2.13: Seated Woman of Çatalhöyük (head is a restoration), The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara, Turkey (photo: **Nevit Dilmen**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Many figurines have been found at the site, the most famous of which illustrates a large woman seated on or between two large felines. The figurines, which illustrate both humans and animals, are made from a variety of materials but the largest proportion are quite small and made of barely fired clay. These casual figurines are found most frequently in garbage pits, but also in oven walls, house walls, floors and left in abandoned structures. The figurines often show evidence of having been poked, scratched or broken, and it is generally believed that they functioned as wish tokens or to ward off bad spirits.

Nearly every house excavated at Çatalhöyük was found to contain decorations on its walls and platforms, most often in the main room of the house. Moreover, this work was constantly being renewed; the plaster of the main room of a house seems to have been redone as frequently as every month or season. Both geometric and figural images were popular in two-dimensional wall painting and the excavator of the site believes that geometric wall painting was particularly associated with adjacent buried youths.



Figure 13.1.2.14: Neolithic Wall Painting in Building 80, Çatalhöyük (photo: **Çatalhöyük**, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Figural paintings show the animal world alone, such as, for instance, two cranes facing each other standing behind a fox, or in interaction with people, such as a vulture pecking at a human corpse or hunting scenes. Wall reliefs are found at Çatalhöyük with some frequency, most often representing animals, such as pairs of animals facing each other and human-like creatures. These latter reliefs, alternatively thought to be bears, goddesses or regular humans, are always represented splayed, with their heads, hands and feet removed, presumably at the time the house was abandoned.



Figure 13.1.2.15: Bull bucrania, corner installation in Building 77, Çatalhöyük (photo: Çatalhöyük, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The most remarkable art found at Çatalhöyük, however, are the installations of animal remains and among these the most striking are the bull bucrania. In many houses the main room was decorated with several plastered skulls of bulls set into the walls (most common on East or West walls) or platforms, the pointed horns thrust out into the communal space. Often the bucrania would be painted ochre red. In addition to these, the remains of other animals' skulls, teeth, beaks, tusks or horns were set into the walls and platforms, plastered and painted. It would appear that the ancient residents of Çatalhöyük were only interested in taking the pointy parts of the animals back to their homes!

How can we possibly understand this practice of interior decoration with the remains of animals? A clue might be in the types of creatures found and represented. Most of the animals represented in the art of Çatalhöyük were not domesticated; wild animals dominate the art at the site. Interestingly, examination of bone refuse shows that the majority of the meat which was consumed was of wild animals, especially bulls. The excavator believes this selection in art and cuisine had to do with the contemporary era of increased domestication of animals and what is being celebrated are the animals which are part of the memory of the recent cultural past, when hunting was much more important for survival.

Additional resources

Çatalhöyük Research Project

Çatalhöyük UNESCO World Heritage site

Stonehenge

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Recognized worldwide, Stonehenge seems an impossible task: how, and why, did prehistoric people build it?



Figure 13.1.2.16: Stonehenge, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, c. 2550-1600 B.C.E., circle 97 feet in diameter, trilithons: 24 feet high (photo: **Maedin Tureaud,** CC BY-SA 3.0)

Stonehenge, on Salisbury plain in England, is one of the most recognizable monuments of the Neolithic world and one of the most popular, with over one million visitors a year. People come to see Stonehenge because it is so impossibly big and so impossibly old; some are searching for a connection with a prehistoric past; some come to witness the workings of a massive astrological observatory. The people living in the fourth millennium B.C.E. who began work on Stonehenge were contemporary with the first dynasties of Ancient Egypt, and their efforts predate the building of the Pyramids. What they created has endured millennia and still intrigues us today.

Phase one



Figure **13.1.2.17**: Aerial view, 2014, Stonehenge, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, c. 2550-1600 B.C.E., circle 97 feet in diameter, trilithons: 24 feet high (photo: **timeyres**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

In fact, what we see today is the result of at least three phases of construction, although there is still a lot of controversy among archaeologists about exactly how and when these phases occurred. It is generally agreed that the first phase of construction at Stonehenge occurred around 3100 B.C.E., when a great circular ditch about six feet deep was dug with a bank of dirt within it about 360 feet in diameter, with a large entrance to the northeast and a smaller one to the south. This circular ditch and bank together is called a henge. Within the henge were dug 56 pits, each slightly more than three feet in diameter, called Aubrey holes, after John Aubrey, the 17th century English archaeologist who first found them. These holes, it is thought, were either originally filled with upright bluestones or upright wooden beams. If it was bluestones which filled the Aubrey holes, it involved quite a bit of effort as each weighed between 2 and 4 tons and were mined from the Preseli Hills, about 250 miles away in Wales.

Phase two

The second phase of work at Stonehenge occurred approximately 100-200 years later and involved the setting up of upright wooden posts (possibly of a roofed structure) in the center of the henge, as well as more upright posts near the northeast and southern entrances. Surprisingly, it is also during this second phase at Stonehenge that it was used for burial. At least 25 of the Aubrey holes were emptied and reused to hold cremation burials and another 30 cremation burial pits were dug into the ditch of the henge and in the eastern portion within the henge enclosure.

Phase three

The third phase of construction at Stonehenge happened approximately 400-500 years later and likely lasted a long time. In this phase the remaining blue stones or wooden beams which had been placed in the Aubrey holes were pulled and a circle 108 feet in diameter of 30 huge and very hard sarsen stones were erected within the henge; these were quarried from nearby Marlborough Downs. These upright sarsen stones were capped with 30 lintel stones.



Figure **13.1.2.18**: Interior of the sarsen circle and bluestones in the foreground, Stonehenge, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, c. 2550-1600 B.C.E., circle 97 feet in diameter, trilithons 24 feet high

Each standing stone was around 13 feet high, almost seven feet wide and weighed around 25 tons. This ring of stones enclosed five sarsen trilithons (a trilithon is a pair of upright stones with a lintel stone spanning their tops) set up in a horseshoe shape 45 feet across. These huge stones, ten uprights and five lintels, weigh up to 50 tons each. Bluestones, either reinstalled or freshly quarried, were erected in a circle, half in the outer sarsen circle and half within the sarsen horseshoe. At the end of the phase there is some rearrangement of the bluestones as well as the construction of a long processional avenue, consisting of parallel banks with exterior ditches approximately 34 meters across, leading from the northeast entrance to Stonehenge, dipping to the south and eventually to the banks of the Avon river.



Figure 13.1.2.19: Stonehenge, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, c. 2550-1600 B.C.E., circle 97 feet in diameter, trilithons: 24 feet high (photo: Stonehenge Stone Circle, CC BY 2.0)

All three phases of the construction of Stonehenge pose fascinating questions. The first phase of work required precise planning and a massive amount of labor. Who planned the henge and who organized whom to work together in its construction? Unfortunately, remains of Neolithic villages, which would provide information about who built Stonehenge, are few, possibly because so many lie underneath later Bronze Age, Roman, Medieval and modern cities. The few villages that have been explored show simple farming hamlets with very little evidence of widely differing social status. If there were leaders or a social class who convinced or forced people to work together to build the first phase of Stonehenge, we haven't found them. It also probably means the first phase of Stonehenge's construction was an egalitarian endeavor, highly unusual for the ancient world.

Who were the people buried at Stonehenge during its second phase? Recent analysis of these bones has revealed that nearly all the burials were of adult males, aged 25-40 years, in good health and with little sign of hard labor or disease. No doubt, to be interred at Stonehenge was a mark of elite status and these remains may well be those of some of the first political leaders of Great Britain, an island with a ruling tradition extending all the way to the House of Windsor. They also show us that in this era, some means of social distinction must have been desirable.

Conclusions

The work achieved in the long third phase of Stonehenge's construction, however, is the one which is most remarkable and enduring. Like the first phase of Stonehenge, except on a much larger scale, the third phase involved tremendous planning and organization of labor. But, it also entailed an entirely new level of technical sophistication, specifically in the working of very hard stone. For instance, the horizontal lintel stones which topped the exterior ring of sarsen stones were fitted to them using a tongue and groove joint and then fitted to each other using a mortise and tenon joint, methods used in modern woodworking.

Each of the upright sarsens were dressed differently on each side, with the inward facing side more smoothly finished than the outer. Moreover, the stones of the outer ring of sarsens were subtly modified to accommodate the way the human eye observes the massive stones against the bright shades of the Salisbury plain: upright stones were gently widened toward the top which makes their mass constant when viewed from the ground.

The lintel stones also curve slightly to echo the circular outer henge. The stones in the horseshoe of trilithons are arranged by size; the smallest pair of trilithons are around 20 feet tall, the next pair a little higher and the largest, single trilithon in the south west corner would have been 24 feet tall. This effect creates a kind of pull inward to the monument, and dramatizes the outward Northeast facing of the horseshoe. Although there are many theories, it is still not known how or why these subtle refinements were made to Stonehenge, but their existence is sure proof of a sophisticated society with organized leadership and a lot of free time.

A solar and lunar calendar?

Of course the most famous aspect of Stonehenge is its relationship with the solar and lunar calendar. This idea was first proposed by scholars in the 18th century, who noted that the sunrise of the midsummer solstice is exactly framed by the end of the horseshoe of trilithons at the interior of the monument, and exactly opposite that point, at the center of the bend of the horseshoe, at the midwinter sunset, the sun is also aligned. These dates, the longest and shortest days of the year, are the turning point of the two great seasonal episodes of the annual calendar. Since this discovery, several other theories about astrological observation have been offered but few stand up to scrutiny together with the physical details of the monument.



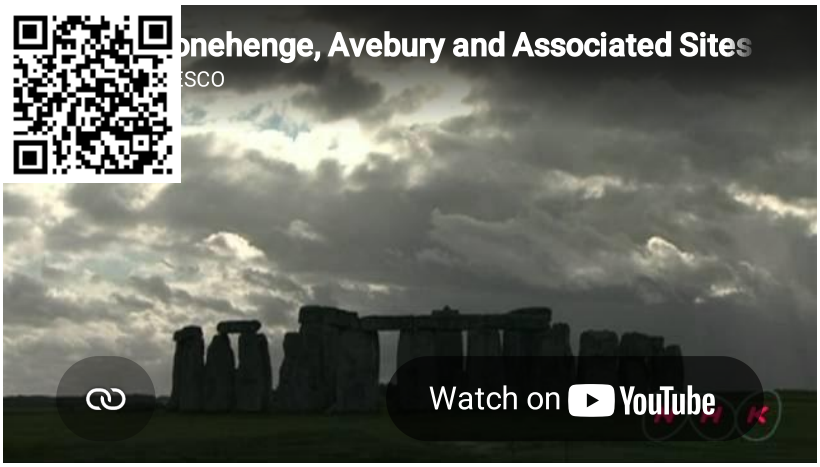
Video 13.1.2.3



Video 13.1.2.4



Video 13.1.2.5



Video 13.1.2.6: Video from UNESCO TV / © NHK Nippon Hoso Kyokai

Additional resources:

Discover Stonehenge from English Heritage

Virtual tour of Stonehenge, Google Cultural Institute

Who built Stonehenge (video from English Heritage)

Stone working (video from English Heritage)

Stonehenge: bluestones (video from English Heritage)

Stonehenge Clues to the Past (video from English Heritage)

Stonehenge (video from UNESCO)

Stonehenge (description from UNESCO)

Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites

by UNESCO

In the south of England, circles of huge stones rose from the plains.



Video 13.1.2.7: Video from UNESCO TV / © NHK Nippon Hoso Kyokai

Stonehenge and Avebury, in Wiltshire, are among the most famous groups of megaliths in the world. The two sanctuaries consist of circles of menhirs arranged in a pattern whose astronomical significance is still being explored. These holy places and the nearby Neolithic sites are an incomparable testimony to prehistoric times. Learn more on the **UNESCO World Heritage List** website.

Nuragic architecture at Su Nuraxi Barumini, Sardinia

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

The Nuragic civilization of the island of Sardinia presents a mystery—what were their huge stone towers?



Figure **13.1.2.20**

Sardinia

The island of Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterranean Sea and was home to ancient cultures. To its north lies Corsica, to its east the Italian peninsula, to its south Tunisia, and to the west the Balearic Islands. Sardinia was a key stopping point for sailors and traders for millennia and has a deep and ancient cultural heritage. The characteristic and indigenous Nuragic civilization of Sardinia stretches from the Bronze Age (c. 18th century B.C.E.) to the Roman period. This civilization derives its name from a characteristic form of monumental, stone-built tower structures known as nuraghe—some 7,000 of these enigmatic structures still dot the Sardinian landscape.

First settlers

During the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, the first human settlers of Sardinia arrived, most likely from various parts of the Mediterranean basin and Europe. The Ozieri (also known as San Michele) culture is the first identifiable settled culture in Sardinia, dating c. 3200 to 2800 B.C.E. The Ozieri people are known for village-size communities and their material culture includes “mother goddess” figurines that are common in the Mediterranean and Near East. Perhaps due to migrants arriving from the western Mediterranean, some similarities may be observed between artifacts in Sardinia and those of the Balearic islands. The altar site of Monte d’Accoddi is one such example, with its earliest phases dating c. 4,000-3,650 B.C.E. (below).



Figure **13.1.2.21**: Altar site of Monte d’Accoddi (photo: **Gianf84**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

By c. 2,000 B.C.E., peoples of the Beaker culture had arrived in Sardinia, in turn producing the Bonnanaro culture (c. 1800-1600 B.C.E.), a protohistoric culture of Sardinia. This culture group represents the first stage of the so-called Nuragic civilization. The Bonnanaro culture was

responsible for architectural innovations, notably the so-called “Giants’ grave,” a type of megalithic, covered gallery tomb (below).

Nuraghi



Figure 13.1.2.22: Arzachena, giant tomb Coddu Vecchiu (photo: **Royonx**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The development of the nuraghe (nuraghi in the plural—the monumental structures that Nuragic civilization takes its name from) in Bronze Age Sardinia is both an important and interesting architectural phenomenon. A nuraghe is a megalithic stone structure that usually takes the form of a truncated conical tower. The interior profile of the built tower is usually beehive-shaped, while the exterior resembles the more familiar image of a Medieval tower. The construction is dry stone (no bonding material is used). Different degrees of stoneworking are used in the structures—ranging from packed rubble to cut and dressed (shaped) stones. About 7,000 nuraghi are still evident in Sardinia, but scholars estimate that 10,000 or more originally existed. The central tower can be surrounded by an outlying wall and can sometimes be accompanied by an attendant settlement. The tower itself could stand up to 30 meters in height.



Figure 13.1.2.23: Reconstruction of Nuraghe Fenu by Gerolamo Exana (**public domain**)

While nuragic architecture is well understood, the function of the nuraghe itself is a matter of continuing scholarly debate. Complicating this debate is the fact that very few of the island’s extant nuraghe have been scientifically excavated and studied. Some theories hold that the nuraghi were defensive structures, others that they represented cultural status symbols. Many nuraghi show evidence of continued use and re-use after the Bronze Age, mostly during the Punic and Roman phases of the island’s history.



Figure **13.1.2.24**: Su Naraxi di Barumini (photo: **Franchesco Ghiani**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The site of Su Nuraxi di Barumini (Barumini is the name of the region in south-central Sardinia) is one of the most thoroughly studied of Sardinia's nuraghi. The oldest part of Su Nuraxi is a central tower that stands approximately 18.6 meters high and was built from basalt between the seventeenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.E. In later phases four ancillary towers connected by a curtain wall (an outer, non-structural wall) were built surrounding the central tower. This outlying wall created a central courtyard that included a well. In the Iron Age, a curtain wall with seven lobes (heptalobate) was added to the complex.



Figure **13.1.2.25**: Nuraghe in Su Naraxi di Barumini (photo: **Royonx**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Later in the Bronze Age—the so-called "Final" Bronze Age (c. twelfth to ninth centuries B.C.E) a village of approximately 200 huts grew up outside of the outer wall of the nuragic complex. Some of these huts showed evidence of ritual activity, and a bronze model of a nuraghe was also found. The village continued in use during the Iron Age (ninth through seventh centuries B.C.E.), again with evidence of ritual activity as well as some evidence for organization of the settlement. The complex experienced widespread destruction at the end of the Iron Age. In later Punic and Roman phases, parts of the site were reused, and there is evidence for sporadic occupation continuing to the seventh century C.E.

The site was excavated by archaeologist Giovanni Lilliu (1914-2012) who concluded that the site had a defensive nature, a fairly traditional interpretation. The site was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997.

The Nuragic civilization, and the nuraghi themselves, remain somewhat enigmatic, but it is clear that this architectural tradition is deeply rooted in the Mediterranean. By way of material culture evidence it is possible to trace the influences of Sardinian culture to the Italian mainland where Etruscan and Italic people seem to draw inspiration from Sardinian traditions of metalworking and architecture, among others.

Additional resources:

Su Nuraxi di Barumini (UNESCO)

Photographs of Su Nuraxi

Su Nuraxi di Barumini

Sardegna Cultura—Barumini, Complesso di Su Nuraxi

Enrico Atzeni and Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli, *Ichnussa: la Sardegna dalle origini all'età classica* (Milan: Libri Scheiwiller, 1981).

Miriam S. Balmuth, "The Nuraghi Towers of Sardinia," *Archaeology*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (March/April 1981), pp. 35-43.

Emma Blake, "Sardinia's Nuraghi: Four Millennia of Becoming," *World Archaeology*, vol. 30, no. 1, The Past in the Past: The Reuse of Ancient Monuments (Jun., 1998), pp. 59-71.

Emma Blake, "Constructing a Nuragic Locale: The Spatial Relationship between Tombs and Towers in Bronze Age Sardinia," *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (April 2001), pp. 145-161.

Emma Blake, *Social Networks and Regional Identity in Bronze Age Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

W. G. Cavanagh, R. R. Laxton, S. Bafico, and G. Rossi, "An Investigation into the Construction of Sardinian Nuraghi," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, Vol. 55 (1987), pp. 1-74.

Stephen L. Dyson and Robert J. Rowland. Shepherds, *Sailors, and Conquerors: Archeology and History in Sardinia from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, 2007).

R. Ross Holloway, "Nuragic Tower Models and Ancestral Memory," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, vol. 46 (2001), pp. 1-9

Giovanni Lilliu, "Il nuraghe di Barumini e la stratigrafia nuragica," *Studi Sardi* 12-13.1 (1955) pp. 137-469.

Giovanni Lilliu, *La civiltà dei sardi: dal neolitico all'età dei nuraghi* (Turin: ERI, 1963).

Giovanni Lilliu and Raimondo Zucca, Su Nuraxi di Barumini (Sassari: Carlo Delfino, 2001).

Anthropomorphic stele

by NATHALIE HAGER

This stone marker depicts an abstracted human. How should we interpret one of the Arabia's earliest artifacts?



Figure **13.1.2.26**: Anthropomorphic stele, El-Maakir-Qaryat al-kaafa near Ha'il, Saudi Arabia, 4th millennium BCE (4000-3000 BCE), sandstone, 92 x 21 cm (National Museum, Riyadh) (photo: **Explicit** CC BY-SA 4.0)

An anthropomorphic stele from Ha'il

This stele is tall, measuring approximately three feet high. But it is not just vertical height that makes this free-standing stone sculpture appear human, or anthropomorphic.

While both sides are sculpted, emphasis is on the front, particularly the face, chest, and waist: a trapezoidal head rests directly on squared shoulders with the outline of a face framing two closely-spaced eyes and a flattened nose; on the robed figure's torso a necklace hangs with two cords diagonally crossing the body with an awl (a small pointed tool) attached; and at the waist, a double-bladed dagger hangs from a wide belt that continues around to the back. The sculpture is simple, even abstract, but clearly represents a human figure. What is a stele?

Found in a small village near Ha'il in northwest Saudi Arabia, this anthropomorphic (human-like) stele was one of three discovered in the region. The trio join a corpus of more than sixty low-relief sculptures in human form dating to the fourth millennium B.C.E. and discovered across the Arabian Peninsula in the last four decades. Despite the vast territory in which they were found (some 2,300 kilometers, stretching from Jordan in the north to Yemen in the south) these stelae (the plural of stele or in Latin, stela) share certain features and characteristics. How can this be?



Figure **13.1.2.27**: Map of the Arabian Peninsula

Arabia's prehistory

While today Saudi Arabia is known for its desert sands and oil reserves, in prehistoric times the environment and landscape were dramatically different—more fertile and lush, and readily accessible to humans: early stone petroglyphs depict **people hunting ostriches**, a flightless bird that hasn't been able to survive in the region for thousands of years. What is a petroglyph?

It was during the Neolithic period, from the sixth to the fourth millennium B.C.E. when the Arabian Peninsula was more like a savannah than a desert, that small groups of hunter-gatherers gradually shifted their economy from predation to production by domesticating such herd animals as sheep, goats, and cattle, and settling in oases and mountainous regions linked to one another by caravan trails. Due to changing climactic conditions these settlement sites were often only temporary—occupied seasonally but repeatedly, and probably for centuries—yet it was this constant need for movement that stimulated communication between regions and interaction among its societies. But more than just people moved along Arabia's caravan trails: ideas and objects travelled too.

Figural representation in pre-Islamic Arabia

On a rock wall at Tabuk, close to the Jordan-Saudi Arabia border, two human silhouettes dating to the late Neolithic period show the same cord, awl, and double-bladed dagger as the Ha'il stele. In Riqseh, in southern Jordan, a broken stele has been found with a similar awl and dagger. While in Southern Arabia stelae are considerably smaller than in the north (some reach only 40 centimeters high), examples from Rawk in Yemen display the same characteristic lack of detail as the Ha'il stele. This evidence of stylistic influence, coupled with the presence of exogenous materials (materials that originated elsewhere), confirm that during the Neolithic period objects were circulated and exchanged across wide swathes of territory.



Figure 13.1.2.28: Three anthropomorphic stelae dating to the 4th millennium B.C.E. found in northwest Saudi Arabia, near Ha'il and in Tayma (photo: © Haupt & Binder)

What is just as interesting as this common visual repertoire is the shared anthropomorphism: each stele represents an upright male figure carved in stone—remarkable, for it is figural representation in a land thought for so long to have none. Indeed, for many, the history of the Arabian Peninsula began with the rise of Islam in the seventh century C.E. when artistic expression was focused on the written word and human form was largely absent. But what the Ha'il stele reveals—what the full corpus of anthropomorphic stelae show us—is the existence of a pre-Islamic Arabia in which the human figure dominates.

Arabia: an open peninsula at the crossroads of trade

Archaeology is a relatively new field of study on the Arabian Peninsula: surprisingly, it is only within the last forty years or so that scientists have been able to shed light on Saudi Arabia's early material culture to recognize a historical and cultural past largely ignored and previously believed to hold no importance at all.

Before Arabia traded in incense, before Islam (when Muslims traveled in pilgrimage to Mecca), during the Neolithic period early caravan trails expanded into an intra-regional network that eventually spread externally into contact between Eastern Arabia and Mesopotamia. It was this early contact that positioned the Peninsula, in the Bronze Age and through Antiquity, as the center of an active and interconnected Ancient World—a commercial and cultural crossroads bridging East and West—linking trade and pilgrimage routes that reached from India and China, to the Mediterranean and Egypt, Yemen and East Africa to Syria, Iran and Mesopotamia.

Interpreting the Ha'il stele

Despite apparent visual similarities it would be a serious error to assume that the meanings and symbols of each stele were everywhere the same—each region, village, and tribe is believed to differ in custom and to have developed strong local traditions. To avoid the risk of assigning generalized meanings to distinct anthropomorphic stelae excavated across the Arabian Peninsula, scholars have increasingly focused on local culture in their analysis of material history. In other words, they have looked beyond what appears to be a common style to conduct a fine-grained analysis of each stone's unique context of local social and ritual practices. With this in mind, how are we to interpret the Ha'il stele, one of the Arabian Peninsula's earliest known artifacts?

Archaeologists believe that the Ha'il stele was probably associated with religious or burial practices, and was likely used as a grave marker in an open-air sanctuary. While we do not know who produced the stele (just imagine a specialist stone carver working among mobile pastoral herders), we continue to be intrigued by the quality of the carving and its minimalist, yet expressive, representation of the human figure.

Postscript: the global phenomenon of the stele

While carved or inscribed stone stelae were used primarily as grave markers, they were also used for dedication, commemoration, and demarcation. Stele is the term used most often in the Mediterranean World, yet similar objects called by other names and dating to most periods have been found throughout the world including the Ancient Near East, Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, China, Islamic lands, and Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and South America.

Some Smarthistory examples:

Victory Stele of Naram-Sim, Akkadian (2254-2218 B.C.E.)

Law code of Hammurabi, Babylonian (1792-1750 B.C.E.)

Grave Stele of Hegeso, Classical (c. 410 B.C.E.)

Stele of Buddha Maitreya, Tang Dynasty (618-907)

Additional resources:

"Stela" – Britannica Encyclopedia Online

The Arabian Rock Heritage Project

'Roads of Arabia' exhibition at the Louvre – *New York Times*

Covington, Richard. "Roads of Arabia," *Aramco World*—includes map of pilgrimage and trade routes

Rémy Crassard and Phlipp Drechsler, "Towards New Paradigms: Multiple Pathways for the Arabian Neolithic." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 24 (2013), pp. 3-8.

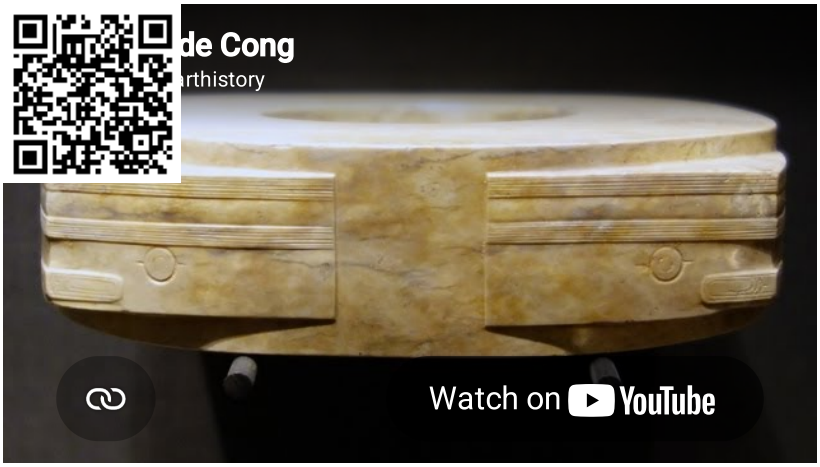
Ute Franke, "Early Stelae in Stone," *Roads of Arabia: The Archaeological Treasures of Saudi Arabia*, edited by Ute Franke and Joachim Gierlichs (Tubingen: Wasmuth Verlag, 2011), pp. 68-71.

Tara Steimer-Herbert, "Three Funerary Stelae from the 4th Millennium BC," in *Roads of Arabia: Archeology and History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* , edited by Ibrahim Al-Ghabban, Béatrice André-Salvini, Françoise Demange, Carine Juvin, and Marianne Cotty (Paris: Somogy Art Publishers: 2010), 166-169.

Jade Cong

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Found in large numbers in burials, these Chinese carvings constitutes an enormous effort by skilled craftsman.



Video 13.1.2.8: Jade Cong, c. 2500 B.C.E., Liangzhu culture, Neolithic period, China (The British Museum). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure 13.1.2.29: Jade Cong, c. 2500 B.C.E., Liangzhu culture, 3.4 x 12.7 cm, China © 2003 Private Collection © Trustees of the British Museum

Ancient China includes the Neolithic period (10,000 -2,000 B.C.E.), the Shang dynasty (c. 1500-1050 B.C.E.) and the Zhou dynasty (1050-221 B.C.E.). Each age was distinct, but common to each period were grand burials for the elite from which a wealth of objects have been excavated.

The Neolithic Period, defined as the age before the use of metal, witnessed a transition from a nomadic existence to one of settled farming. People made different pottery and stone tools in their regional communities. Stone workers employed jade to make prestigious, beautifully polished versions of utilitarian stone tools, such as axes, and also to make implements with possible ceremonial or protective functions. The status of jade continues throughout Chinese history. Pottery also reached a high level with the introduction of the potter's wheel.

Neolithic Liangzhu culture

A group of Neolithic peoples grouped today as the Liangzhu culture lived in the Jiangsu province of China during the third millennium B.C.E. Their jades, ceramics and stone tools were highly sophisticated.

Cong

They used two distinct types of ritual jade objects: a disc, later known as a bi, and a tube, later known as a cong. The main types of cong have a square outer section around a circular inner part, and a circular hole, though jades of a bracelet shape also display some of the characteristics of cong. They clearly had great significance, but despite the many theories the meaning and purpose of bi and cong remain a mystery. They were buried in large numbers: one tomb alone had 25 bi and 33 cong. Spectacular examples have been found at all the major archaeological sites.



Figure **13.1.2.30**: Jade Cong, c. 2500 B.C.E., 49 cm high, China © Private Collection © Trustees of the British Museum

The principal decoration on cong of the Liangzhu period was the face pattern, which may refer to spirits or deities. On the square-sectioned pieces, like the examples here, the face pattern is placed across the corners, whereas on the bracelet form it appears in square panels. These faces are derived from a combination of a man-like figure and a mysterious beast.

Cong are among the most impressive yet most enigmatic of all ancient Chinese jade artifacts. Their function and meaning are completely unknown. Although they were made at many stages of the Neolithic and early historic period, the origin of the cong in the Neolithic cultures of south-east China has only been recognized in the last thirty years.

Cong were extremely difficult and time-consuming to produce. As jade cannot be split like other stones, it must be worked with a hard abrasive sand. This one is exceptionally long and may have been particularly important in its time.



Figure 13.1.2.31: Jade disc, or bi, Liangzhu culture, c. 2500 B.C.E., 18 cm in diameter © Private Collection, © Trustees of the British Museum

Bi

Stone rings were being made by the peoples of eastern China as early as the fifth millennium B.C.E. Jade discs have been found carefully laid on the bodies of the dead in tombs of the Hongshan culture (about 3800-2700 B.C.E.), a practice which was continued by later Neolithic cultures. Large and heavy jade discs such as this example, appear to have been an innovation of the Liangzhu culture (about 3000-2000 B.C.E.), although they are not found in all major Liangzhu tombs. The term bi is applied to wide discs with proportionately small central holes.

The most finely carved discs or bi of the best stone (like the example above) were placed in prominent positions, often near the stomach and the chest of the deceased. Other bi were aligned with the body. Where large numbers of discs are found, usually in small piles, they tend to be rather coarse, made of stone of inferior quality that has been worked in a cursory way.

We do not know what the true significance of these discs was, but they must have had an important ritual function as part of the burial. This is an exceptionally fine example, because the two faces are very highly polished.

Suggested readings:

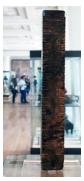
J. Rawson, *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995, reprinted 2002).

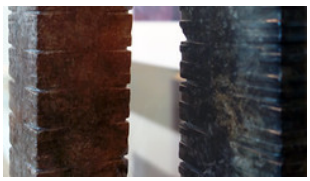
J. Rawson (ed.), *The British Museum book of Chinese Art* (London, The British Museum Press, 1992).

© Trustees of the British Museum







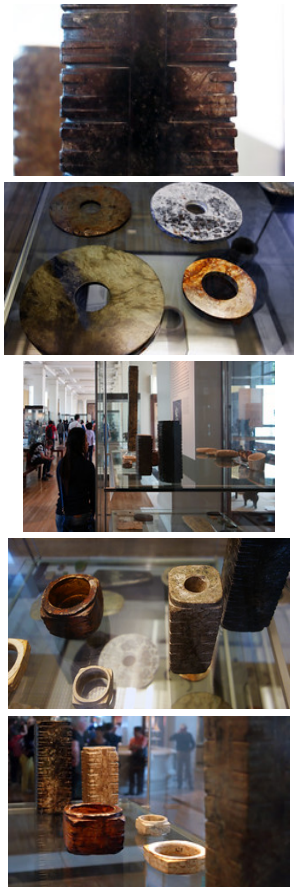



Figure 13.1.2.32: More Smarthistory images…

Working jade

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM

Video 13.1.2.9: Video from the Asian Art Museum

Running Horned Woman, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria

by NATHALIE HAGER

In an ancient North African "rock city," modern explorers wetted a wall with water—revealing this graceful image.



Figure **13.1.2.33**: *Running Horned Woman*, 6,000-4,000 B.C.E., pigment on rock, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria

"Discovery"

Between 1933 and 1940, camel corps officer Lieutenant Brenans of the French Foreign Legion completed a series of small sketches and hand written notes detailing his discovery of dozens of rock art sites deep within the canyons of the Tassili n'Ajjer. Tassili n'Ajjer is a difficult to access plateau in the Algerian section of the Sahara Desert near the borders of Libya and Niger in northern Africa (see map below). Brenans donated hundreds of his sketches to the Bardo Museum in Algiers, alerting the scientific community to one of the richest rock art concentrations on Earth and prompting site visits that included fellow Frenchman and archaeologist Henri Lhote.

Lhote recognized the importance of the region and returned again and again, most notably in 1956 with a team of copyists for a 16 month expedition to map and study the rock art of the Tassili. Two years later Lhote published *A la découverte des fresques du Tassili*. The book became an instant best-seller, and today is one of the most popular texts on archaeological discovery.



Figure **13.1.2.34**: Sand and rocks, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria (photo: **Akli Salah**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Lhote made African rock art famous by bringing some of the estimated 15,000 human figure and animal paintings and engravings found on the rock walls of the Tassili's many gorges and shelters to the wider public. Yet contrary to the impression left by the title of his book, neither Lhote nor his team could lay claim to having discovered Central Saharan rock art: long before Lhote, and even before Brenans, in the late nineteenth century a number of travelers from Germany, Switzerland, and France had noted the existence of "strange" and "important" rock sculptures in Ghat, Tadrart Acacus, and Upper Tassili. But it was the Tuareg—the indigenous peoples of the region, many of whom served as guides to these early European explorers—who long knew of the paintings and engravings covering the rock faces of the Tassili.



Figure 13.1.2.35: Tassili n'Ajjer is a Tamahaq name meaning "plateau" of the Ajjer people (the Kel Ajjer is group of tribes whose traditional territory was here). Much of the 1,500-2,100 meter high plateau is protected by an 80,000 square kilometer National Park.

The "Horned Goddess"

Lhote published not only reproductions of the paintings and engravings he found on the rock walls of the Tassili, but also his observations. In one excerpt he reported that with a can of water and a sponge in hand he set out to investigate a "curious figure" spotted by a member of his team in an isolated rock shelter located within a compact group of mountains known as the Aouanrhet massif, the highest of all the "rock cities" on the Tassili. Lhote swabbed the wall with water to reveal a figure he called the "Horned Goddess":

> ***On the damp rock surface stood out the gracious silhouette of a woman running. One of her legs, slightly flexed, just touched the ground, while the other was raised in the air as high as it would normally go. From the knees, the belt and the widely outstretched arms fell fine fringes. From either side of the head and above two horns that spread out horizontally was an extensive dotted area resembling a cloud of grain falling from a wheat field. Although the whole assemblage was skillfully and carefully composed there was something free and easy about it…***



Figure 13.1.2.36: Visible in this reproduction of the original rock painting are two groupings in red ochre of small human figures superimposed onto the horned goddess

The *Running Horned Woman*, the title by which the painting is commonly known today, was found in a massif so secluded and so difficult to access that Lhote's team concluded that the collection of shelters was likely a sanctuary and the female figure—"the most beautiful, the most finished and the most original"—a goddess:

> ***Perhaps we have here the figure of a priestess of some agricultural religion or the picture of a goddess of such a cult who foreshadow—or is derived from—the goddess Isis, to whom, in Egypt, was attributed the discovery of agriculture.***

Lhote's suggestion that the painting's source was Egyptian was influenced by a recently published hypothesis by his mentor, the French anthropologist Henri Breuil, the then undisputed authority on prehistoric rock art who was renowned for his work on Paleolithic cave art in Europe. In an essay titled, "The White Lady of Brandberg, South-West Africa, Her Companions and Her Guards," Breuil famously claimed that a painting discovered in a small rock shelter in Namibia showed influences of Classical antiquity and was not African in origin, but possibly the work of Phoenician travellers from the Mediterranean. Lhote, equally convinced of outside influence, linked the Tassili painting's provenance with Breuil's ideas and revised the title to the 'White Lady' of Aouanrhet:

> ***In other paintings found a few days later in the same massif we were able to discern, from some characteristic features, an indication of Egyptian influence. Some features are, no doubt, not very marked in our 'White Lady'; still, all the same, some details as the curve of the breasts, led us to think that the picture may have been executed at a time when Egyptian traditions were beginning to be felt in the Tassili.***

Foreign influence?

Time and scholarship would reveal that the assignment of Egyptian influence on the *Running Horned Woman* was erroneous, and Lhote the victim of a hoax: French members of his team made "copies" of Egyptionized figures, passing them off as faithful reproductions of authentic Tassili rock wall paintings. These fakes were accepted by Lhote (if indeed he knew nothing of the forgeries), and falsely sustained his belief in the possibility of foreign influence on Central Saharan rock art. Breuil's theories were likewise discredited: the myth of the "White Lady" was rejected by every archaeologist of repute, and his promotion of foreign influence viewed as racist.



Figure **13.1.2.37**: Tassili National Park (photo: **magharebia**, CC BY 2.0)

Yet Breuil and Lhote were not alone in finding it hard to believe that ancient Africans discovered how to make art on their own, or to have developed artistic sensibilities. Until quite recently many Europeans maintained that art "spread" or was "taken" into Africa, and, aiming to prove this thesis, anointed many works with Classical sounding names and sought out similarities with early rock art in Europe. Although such vestiges of colonial thinking are today facing a reckoning, cases such as the "White Lady" (both of Namibia and of Tassili) remind us of the perils of imposing cultural values from the outside.

Chronology

While we have yet to learn how, and in what places, the practice of rock art began, no firm evidence has been found to show that African rock art—some ten million images across the continent—was anything other than a spontaneous initiative by early Africans. Scholars have estimated the earliest art to date to 12,000 or more years ago, yet despite the use of both direct and indirect dating techniques very few firm dates exist ("direct dating" uses measurable physical and chemical analysis, such as radiocarbon dating, while "indirect dating" primarily uses associations from the archaeological context). In the north, where rock art tends to be quite diverse, research has focused on providing detailed descriptions of the art and placing works in chronological sequence based on style and content. This ordering approach results in useful classification and dating systems, dividing the Tassili paintings and engravings into periods of concurrent and overlapping traditions (the *Running Horned Woman* is estimated to date to approximately 6,000 to 4,000 B.C.E.—placing it within the "Round Head Period"), but offers little in the way of interpretation of the painting itself.



Figure 13.1.2.38: Running Horned Woman (detail) (photo: FJ Expeditions)

Advancing an interpretation of the *Running Horned Woman*

Who was the *Running Horned Woman*? Was she indeed a goddess, and her rock shelter some sort of sanctuary? What does the image mean? And why did the artist make it? For so long the search for meaning in rock art was considered inappropriate and unachievable—only recently have scholars endeavored to move beyond the mere description of images and styles, and, using a variety of interdisciplinary methods, make serious attempts to interpret the rock art of the Central Sahara.

Lhote recounted that the *Running Horned Woman* was found on an isolated rock whose base was hollowed out into a number of small shelters that could not have been used as dwellings. This remote location, coupled with an image of marked pictorial quality—depicting a female with two horns on her head, dots on her body probably representing scarification, and wearing such attributes of the dance as armlets and garters—suggested to him that the site, and the subject of the painting, fell outside of the everyday. More recent scholarship has supported Lhote's belief in the painting's symbolic, rather than literal, representation. As Jitka Soukopova has noted, "Hunter- gatherers were unlikely to wear horns (or other accessories on the head) and to make paintings on their whole bodies in their ordinary life."[1] Rather, this female horned figure, her body adorned and decorated, found in one of the highest massifs in the Tassili—a region is believed to hold special status due to its elevation and unique topology—suggests ritual, rite, or ceremony. Rather, this female horned figure, her body adorned and decorated, found in one of the highest massifs in the Tassili—a region is believed to hold special status due to its elevation and unique topology—suggests ritual, rite, or ceremony.



Figure 13.1.2.39: Archers, Tassili n'Ajjer (photo: Patrick Gruban, CC BY-SA 2.0)

But there is further work to be done to advance an interpretation of the *Running Horned Woman*. Increasingly scholars have studied rock shelter sites as a whole, rather than isolating individual depictions, and the shelter's location relative to the overall landscape and nearby water courses, in order to learn the significance of various "rock cities" in both image making and image viewing.

Archaeological data from decorated pottery, which is a dated artistic tradition, is key in suggesting that the concept of art was firmly established in the Central Sahara at the time of Tassili rock art production. Comparative studies with other rock art complexes, specifically the search for similarities in fundamental concepts in African religious beliefs, might yield the most fruitful approaches to interpretation. In other words, just as

southern African rock studies have **benefitted from tracing the beliefs and practices of the San people**, so too may a study of Tuareg ethnography shed light on the ancient rock art sites of the Tassili.

Afterword: the threatened rock art of the Central Sahara

Tassili's rock walls were commonly sponged with water in order to enhance the reproduction of its images, either in trace, sketch, or photograph. This washing of the rock face has had a devastating effect on the art, upsetting the physical, chemical, and biological balance of the images and their rock supports. Many of the region's subsequent visitors—tourists, collectors, photographers, and the next generation of researchers—all captivated by Lhote's "discovery"—have continued the practice of moistening the paintings in order to reveal them. Today scholars report paintings that are severely faded while some have simply disappeared. In addition, others have suffered from irreversible damage caused by outright vandalism: art looted or stolen as souvenirs. In order to protect this valuable center of African rock art heritage, Tassili N'Ajjer was declared a National Park in 1972. It was classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1982 and a Biosphere Reserve in 1986.

[1] Jitka Soukopova, "The Earliest Rock Paintings of the Central Sahara: Approaching Interpretation," *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2011), p. 199.

Additional resources

African Rock Art: TassilinAjjer – Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Tassili n'Ajjer – African World Heritage Sites

Tassili n'Ajjer, UNESCO

TARA – Trust for African Rock Art: Algeria and TARA Interactive Rock Art Map

David Coulson and Alec Campbell, *African Rock Art: Paintings and Engravings on Stone* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001).

David Coulson and Alec Campbell, "Rock Art of the Tassili n Ajjer, Algeria." *Adoranten*, no. 1 (2010), p. 115.

Jeremy H. Keenan, "The Lesser Gods of the Sahara." *Public Archaeology* 2, no. 3 (2002), pp. 131-50.

Jean Dominque Lajoux, *The Rock Paintings of Tassili*, translated by G. D. Liversage (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963).

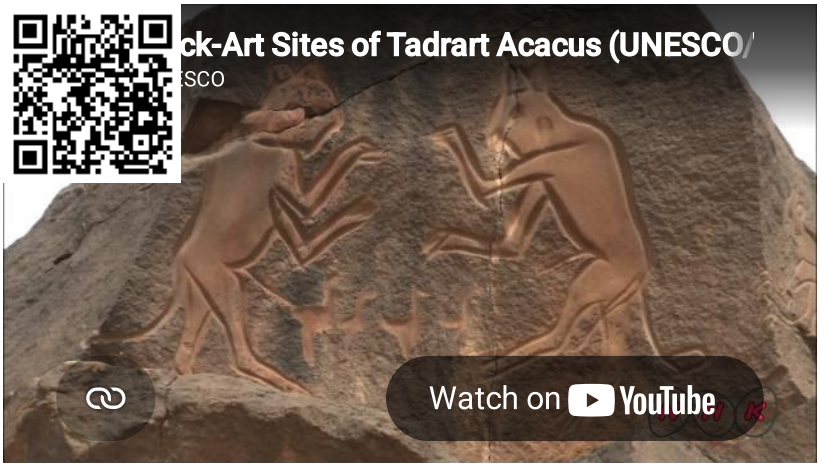
Henri Lhote, *The Search for the Tassili Frescoes*, translated by Alan H. Brodrick (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1959).

Jitka Soukopova, "The Earliest Rock Paintings of the Central Sahara: Approaching Interpretation," *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2011), pp. 193-216.

Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus (Libya)

by UNESCO

Images on rocks in the Sahara provide a glimpse into the development of humans in this now barren land.



Video **13.1.2.10**: On the borders of Tassili N'Ajjer in Algeria, also a World Heritage site, this rocky massif has thousands of cave paintings in very different styles, dating from 12,000 B.C. to A.D. 100. They reflect marked changes in the fauna and flora, and also the different ways of life of the populations that succeeded one another in this region of the Sahara. Video from UNESCO

Backstory

The rock art sites of Tadrart Acacus have survived for 14,000 years in the desert of southern Libya, but they are now under serious threat. **Since 2009**, vandalism has been a continuous problem: graffiti has been spray-painted across the surface of many of the paintings, and people have carved

their initials into the rocks. But despite **UNESCO's** and other organizations' calls for the government to intervene with restoration and security measures, efforts to protect this precious ancient site have been gravely hampered by armed conflict and political chaos.

Libya experienced a political revolution in 2011 with the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi, and since then the country has been in a state of civil war. **Savino di Lernia**, an archaeologist at Sapienza University of Rome who has worked extensively in the Tadrart Acacus mountains, explains how dangerous the area—formerly a tourist destination—has become:

> ***Today, the site is inaccessible: no commercial flight connects Tripoli and Ghat, a nearby town (a weekly military aircraft brings food, essential goods and first-aid equipment). The tarred road between Ghat and Ubari is broken up, and clashes between the Tebu and Tuareg tribes increasingly affect the area….Being a Saharan archaeologist today is a difficult job. Researchers fear being kidnapped or even killed.***

Yahya Saleh, a local tour guide, mourns the fact that local hunters now regularly scrawl their names across the art: "People do not know the value of this. There are supposed to be people to protect these areas…because if this issue persists, then they will be gone within two years."

The ongoing vandalism of the Tadrart Acacus sites is only one of the many overwhelming difficulties Libya faces with regard to cultural heritage protection. As **di Lernia notes**,

> ***Perhaps the greatest threat to Libya's diverse heritage is the trafficking of archaeological materials, for profit or to fund radical groups….No one has been able to fully assess the situation in Libya. Going to work among the black smoke of grenades, the men and women of the Libyan Department of Antiquities are doing their best. But museums are closed and the little activity left in the field is limited to the north.***

Until the fighting in Libya stops and archaeologists can again effectively cooperate with the government and international organizations to restore and protect sites like the rock art at Tadrart Acacus, Libya's rich trove of monuments and artifacts will continue to be endangered.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

Another UNESCO video, on rock art in Tassili n'Ajjer

UNESCO webpage for Tadrart Acacus

UNESCO report on the state of conservation at Tadrart Acacus

Ulf Leassig, "Vandals destroy prehistoric rock art in Libya's lawless Sahara," *Reuters*, June 3, 2014

Savino di Lernia, "Cultural heritage: Save Libyan archaeology," *Nature*, January 28, 2015

Report on Tadrart Acacus rock art from the AP Archive, January, 2018

Rock Art in the Green Sahara (Neolithic)

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Rock art is one of the best records of the life of past peoples who lived across the Sahara.



Video **13.1.2.11**: Video from The British Museum

The Sahara is the world's largest hot desert, spanning the entire northern part of Africa. Yet it hasn't always been dry — archaeological and geological research shows that it has undergone major climatic changes over thousands of years. Rock art often depicts extraordinary images of life, landscape and animals that show a time when the Sahara was much greener and wetter than it is now.

This film is in collaborative partnership with the Leverhulme Trust-funded project: "Peopling the Green Sahara. A multi-proxy approach to reconstructing the ecological and demographic history of the Saharan Holocene", Paul Breeze, Nick Drake and Katie Manning, Department of Geography, King's College London Modelling and mapping of the Green Sahara ©Kings College London Images ©Trust for African Rock Art (TARA)/David Coulson & ©Kings College London

---

13.1.2: Neolithic is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **1.2: Neolithic** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.2: Ancient Mediterranean

The Great Pyramids at Giza, the Parthenon in Athens, the Colosseum in Rome, and more.

c. 5000 B.C.E. - 400 C.E.

13.2.1: Palmyra

13.2.2: Ancient Near East

13.2.3: Ancient Egypt

13.2.4: Ancient Aegean

13.2.5: Ancient Greece

13.2.6: Nabataean

13.2.7: Etruscan

13.2.8: Ancient Rome I

13.2.9: Ancient Rome II

13.2.10: Ancient Rome III

Thumbnail: Statue of Julius Caesar, Via dei Fori Imperiali, Rome. (CC BY-SA 4.0; Leomudde via Wikipedia)

13.2: Ancient Mediterranean is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.2.1: Palmyra

Palmyra

Described as a noble city, this oasis was renowned for its rich soil and pleasant streams. Ancient Palmyra was an important stop for caravans traversing the Syrian Desert.

c. 1800 B.C.E. - 272 C.E.

Palmyra: the modern destruction of an ancient city

by DR. SALAM AL KUNTAR and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Terrorists overran Palmyra twice despite international cries for protection, sowing irreversible destruction.



Jasmine Keane
Aug 5, 2020, 2:09 PM

Cite this page as: Dr. Salam Al Kuntar and Dr. Steven Zucker, "Palmyra: the modern destruction of an ancient city," in *Smarthistory*, January 5, 2018, accessed August 5, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/palmyra-destruction-2/**.

Temple of Bel, Palmyra

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Drawing from Greco-Roman and Eastern architecture, this temple was one of history's great architectural achievements.



Figure **13.2.1.1**: Temple of Bel in 2005 – Palmyra, first and second centuries C.E. (photo: **ian.plumb**, CC BY 2.0)



Figure **13.2.1.2**: Location of Palmyra within Syria

A noble city

Described as a noble city situated in a vast expanse of sand and renowned for its rich soil and pleasant streams, the ancient city of Palmyra was a stopping point for caravans traversing the Syrian Desert (Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 5.88.1). There is evidence that the site has been settled by people since the early second millennium B.C.E.

Known from ancient literary records—including Assyrian texts and the Hebrew Bible—Palmyra today is known as a unique and resplendent ruined city that preserves remarkable examples of monumental, hybrid architecture that blends the canon of Graeco-Roman architecture with Near Eastern elements.

Brief history

Palmyra, originally known as Tadmor, became a prosperous city under the Seleucid kings and was eventually annexed to the Roman empire after 64 B.C.E. Under Tiberius (emperor from 14-37 C.E.) the city was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria and assumed the name Palmyra. The city received the patronage of several Roman emperors and experienced great prosperity. The city suffered under the rise of the Sassanid dynasty of Persia. After the brief, revolutionary rise of queen Zenobia, the city was sacked by the Roman emperor Aurelian in 272 C.E.

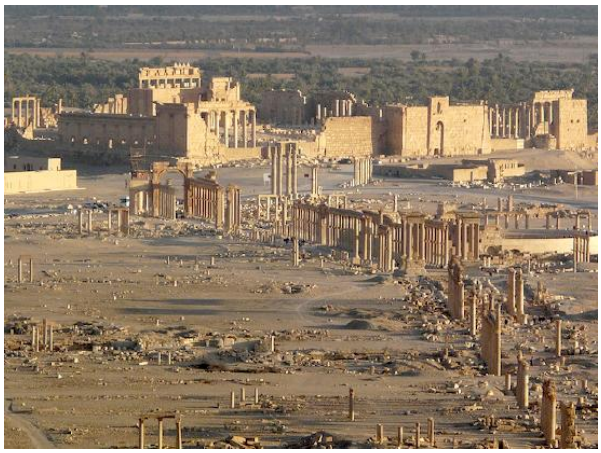


Figure **13.2.1.3**: View of Palmyra ruins from the Qala'at Shirukh hill in 2010 (photo: **Varun Shiv Kapur**, CC BY 2.0)

A hybrid architecture

The monumental architectural remains of the city attest to its great prosperity during its heyday. Among the many surviving monuments of Palmyra is the remarkable temple of the Semitic god Bel or Baal (top of page). A discussion of its architectural features demonstrates both the plurality of artistic and architectural styles in the ancient Mediterranean, and the numerous cultures that frequently overlapped and inter-mixed there. Although an inscription attests to the temple's dedication in 32 C.E., its completion was gradual with major architectural elements added over the course of the first and second centuries.

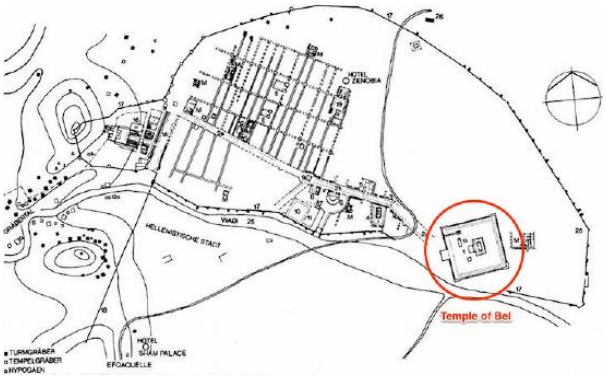


Figure **13.2.1.4**: Plan of the site of Palmyra



Figure **13.2.1.5**: Columns in the inner court of the temple of Bel in 2005 (photo: **ian.plumb**, CC BY 2.0)

The organization of the temple's ground plan derive from the traditions of eastern ritual architecture, including independent shrines for distinct divinities and, notably, the bent-axis approach to the cult (i.e. the architecture requires the celebrant to enter the temple and turn 90 degrees in order to view the offering table and cult area). The architectural elements employed in the temple's elevation however, derive from the Graeco-Roman canon, including the use of the Corinthian order as well as various architectural elements of that adorn the frieze course and roofline. In its outward appearance, the temple seems to derive from the canon of Hellenistic Greek architecture.

The temple itself sits within a bounded, architectural precinct measuring approximately 205 meters per side. This precinct, surrounded by a portico (a colonnaded entryway), encloses the temple of Bel as well as other cult buildings. The temple itself has a very deep foundation that supports a stepped platform. At the level of the stylobate (the platform atop the steps) the area measures 55 x 30 meters and the cella (the inner chamber of the temple that held the cult statue), stands over 14 meters in height and measures 39.45 x 13.86 meters.

The cella is designed according to the Near Eastern tradition of the bent-axis approach and incorporates two separate shrines (*thalamoi*). A ramp and central stair, with an off-center doorway, grants access to the cella. The columnar arrangement is pseduoperipteral (free-standing columns at the porch with engaged columns on the sides and back) and includes an arrangement of 8 x 15 (height = 15.81 meters) fluted, Corinthian columns. The cella also has exterior Ionic half-columns at each of its ends. Merlons (crenellations) crowded the roof and the ceilings were coffered. From masons' marks and graffiti found on the site, it seems that there were craftspeople of various background, including Greeks and Romans alongside the Palmyrenes.



Figure 13.2.1.6: Palmyra's divine triad: Baalshamin, with the Moon god Aglibol on his right and the Sun-god Yarhibol at left, discovered at Bir Wereb, near Palmyra, 60 cm high (Louvre, Paris) (photo: Emmanuel PIERRE, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The temple is dedicated to a divine triad, Bel along with the moon god Aglibol and the sun god Yarhibol. This divine triad is innovative, with the secondary gods playing the role of Bel's attendants.



Figure 13.2.1.7: Carved stone ceiling, cella, Sanctuary of Bel, Palmyra, Syria (photo: John Winder, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Graeco-Roman + Near Eastern

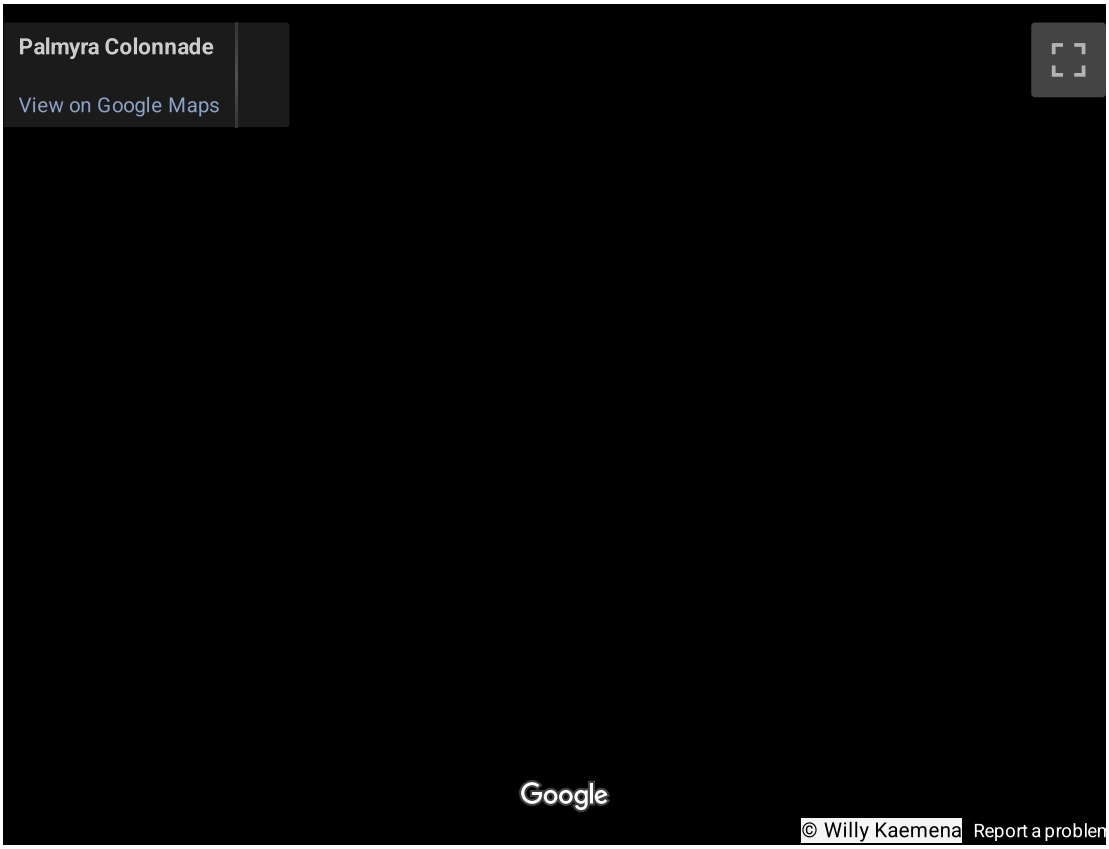


Figure 13.2.1.8: Front view of triumphal (or monumental) arch at Palmyra, Syria (photo: Erik Hermans, CC BY 2.0)

The Temple of Bel is one of the great architectural achievements of the Mediterranean world during the early first millennium. As an architectural product it draws on rich, canonical forms derived from both the Graeco-Roman and Near Eastern spheres and its technical aesthetics are of the first order. Along with temples such as that of Heliopolitan Zeus at Baalbek, the Palmyrene temple demonstrates the massive civic investment in monumental architecture.

Clearly Palmyra was prosperous, allowing its elites to invest heavily in elaborate architecture—all the same this civic investment was also central to the Mediterranean concept of urbanism where presentation architecture helped to define and advance the status of the city itself. The hybridity of the Temple of Bel further demonstrates that ancient Palmyra was a multi-cultural community and that while the cult and its function adhered to Semitic practice, the execution of the temple in the Graeco-Roman style spoke the architectural lingua franca of the expansive Roman empire.

***Note:** The current political situation in Syria has resulted in the destruction numerous archaeological sites at Palmyra including the Temple of Bel.



Additional resources:

Palmyra, UNESCO video

Palmyra on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Trade Routes between Europe and Asia during Antiquity on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Trade and Commercial Activity in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Middle East on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Palmyra photo album on Flickr from the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

The Divine Triad at the Louvre

Palmyra, UNESCO World Heritage Site

Pleiades Project: Palmyra, Tadmora or Hadrianopolis (Palmyra)

N. J. Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire* (London: Routledge, 2002).

K. Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004).

Trevor Bryce, *Ancient Syria: a Three Thousand Year History* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

P. Collart and J. Vicari, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre: Topographie et architecture*, 2 vols (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome,1969).

Malcolm A. R. Colledge and Pascale Linant de Bellefonds, “Palmyra” *Grove Art Online*

L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World)* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

H. J. W. Drijvers, *The Religion of Palmyra* (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

Hugh Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1996).

C. F. Gates, *Ancient Cities: the Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2011).

M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien: étude d’épigraphie et de topographie historique* (Warsaw: Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1973).

P. Gros, *L’architecture romaine: du début du iiie siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire*, (Paris: Picard, 1996).

Nigel Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

H. Seyrig, R. Amy and E. Will, *Le Temple de Bel à Palmyre*, 2 vols (Paris: Geuthner, 1975).

A. M. Smith, II, *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

J. Starcky and M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1985).

J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1981).

T. Wiegand et al., *Palmyra: Ergebnisse der Expeditionen von 1902 und 1917* (Berlin: H. Keller, 1932).

E. Will, *Les Palmyréniens: la Venise des sables: Ier siècle avant-IIIème siècle après J.-C.* (Paris: A. Colin, 1992).

Palmyrene Funerary Portraiture

by STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

At the crossroads of East and West, the caravan city of Palmyra was a melting pot of culture.



Figure **13.2.1.9**: Tower tombs, Palmyra, Syria (photo: **Bernard Gagnon**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The search for identity is an unending one. As we peer across big lenses of time, such as those that separate us from the ancient Mediterranean world, one of the questions that occurs again and again is “who were these people?” In the case of Palmyra, a prosperous caravan city located in the Syrian Desert, a remarkable assemblage of funerary portraiture grants us a glimpse at the self-styled identity of a number of the city’s former occupants.



Figure 13.2.1.10: Tower tombs, Palmyra, Syria (photo: James Gordon, CC BY 2.0)

Among the tomb types from Roman Syria are the curious “tower tombs” of Palmyra, which find no comparison in Roman architecture from the western empire (above and left). They were the main tomb typology from the final quarter of the first century until the middle of the second century C.E., at which point the underground hypogeum became the preferred tomb type. A hypogeum is a subterranean tomb, most often excavated directly from the bedrock, thus creating an underground chamber or chambers for burials.



Figure 13.2.1.11: Elahbel Tower Tomb, Palmyra, Syria (photo: isawnyu, CC BY 2.0

The tower tombs tend to occupy high ground and were likely built for kinship groupings. These tall, slender structures enclose tiers of niches or loculi in which human remains would be deposited. Each loculus would then be sealed with a stone slab, often carved with a relief portrait of the descendent. An exceptionally fine (and early) example is the Tower Tomb of Iamblichus (dated to 83 C.E. on the basis of epigraphic evidence—evidence from inscriptions). Another is the well preserved Tomb of Elahbel (above) with its elaborately coffered ceilings (below).



Figure 13.2.1.12: Coffered ceiling, Elahbel Tower Tomb, Palmyra, Syria (photo: Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The tomb also includes a small balcony (below).



Figure **13.2.1.13**: Balcony, Elahbel Tower Tomb, Palmyra, Syria (photo: Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.2.1.14**: Interior of a tower tomb, Palmyra, Syria (photo: **Odilia**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

Individual portraiture

The individual loculus relief sculptures present a rich range of iconographic information about the people of Palmyra. These individualized reliefs are formatted as portrait reliefs and depict their subjects intimately, often with symbols of their status and social position.



Figure **13.2.1.15**: Left: Palmyrene Funerary Relief Bust of a Priest, c. 50-150 C.E., limestone, 63 x 52.5 cm / Right: Palmyrene Funerary Bust of Tamma, c. 50-150 C.E., limestone, 50 cm high © Trustees of the British Museum

The portrait of a priest dating c. 50-150 C.E. (above left) provides a good example of this practice. The priest holds ritual vessels (a bowl and a jug) and wears the traditional polos hat—a high, cylindrical hat worn by both men and women and derived from the divine crowns of the goddesses of the ancient Near East and Anatolia. A fragmentary female figure stands behind the priest's right shoulder. The funerary bust of Tamma, c. 50-150 C.E. (above right) demonstrates similar traits. Tamma is richly dressed, perhaps indicating worldly wealth, and holds a

spindle and distaff, perhaps indicating that she produced fabric in her household. The inscription identifies her as “Tamma, daughter of Shamshi geram, son of Malku, son of Nashum.”



Figure **13.2.1.16**: Palmyrene funerary relief of Viria Phoebe and Gaius Vurus, c. 50-150 C.E., limestone, 47.5 x 52 x 25 cm © Trustees of the British Museum

The bust portrait of a couple (above) shows a pair of decedents. This portrait carries a Greek inscription, which differs from the typical Aramaic inscriptions. The text identifies the two individuals as Viria Phoebe and Gaius Virius Alcimus. This pair have the same clan name, a possible indication they are the former slaves of a brother and sister. Alcimus holds a book-roll, while the woman holds the spindle and distaff (both implements associated with cloth production). These objects may be meant to evoke their respective roles.

Group reliefs

A third century C.E. funerary relief from Palmyra now in the British Museum (below) depicts a funeral banquet. Elite tombs of this period demonstrate a mixture of Roman and Near Eastern motifs. In this particular relief that depicts a funeral banquet, the reclining male is attended by a seated female; perhaps the pair are meant to be husband and wife. The idea of the funeral banquet is a Roman motif adopted by local craftsmen. The male—presumably the deceased—reclines on a couch while holding an open vessel. He is depicted at a slightly larger scale than the attendant female. His costume is of Parthian origin, a sort of pant-suit. The Parthian empire, c. 247 B.C.E.-224 C.E. was a major political power of ancient Iran located on the eastern margin of the Roman empire. Reliefs such as this one would be arranged in groups of three in communal tombs, thereby giving the tomb chamber the resemblance of a Roman-style dining room (triclinium) in which a real banquet would have taken place.



Figure **13.2.1.17**: Limestone relief showing a funerary banquet, Palmyra, Syria, c. 200-273 C.E., 40.6 x 43.1 x 19 cm © Trustees of the British Museum

The funerary reliefs from Palmyra form a profoundly evocative body of evidence. The individualized treatment of the sculptures themselves still serves to convey important elements about the identities of these individuals. We can glean information about wealth, social status, role in the community, familial relationships—all of which help to enrich our reconstruction of ancient Palmyrene society. The reliefs also demonstrate the degree to which Palmyra existed in a multicultural and multilingual landscape, one in which the traits, trends, styles, and languages of the Graeco-Roman world and the Near Eastern world not only overlapped but intertwined, producing new, unique cultural objects. This is an important realization, one that helps remind us of the degree to which the ancient world was diverse and varied and that a

great deal of the material culture of the ancient world resulted from shared cultural influence and hybridization. The tombs of Palmyra embody and evoke this climate of cultural diversity as they still stand as monuments to Palmyrene identity.

Additional resources

W. Ball, *Rome in the East: the Transformation of an Empire* (London: Routledge, 2001).

M.A.R. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (London: Westview Press, 1976).

Michael Danti, "Palmyrene Funerary Sculptures at Penn," *Expedition* 43.3 (November 2001).

Palmyrene Funerary Sculptures at Penn

M. K. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity in the Funerary Art of Palmyra" *American Journal of Archaeology* 114.4 (October 2010) pp. 631-61. DOI: 10.3764/aja.114.4.631

Andreas J. Kropp, *Images and Monuments of Near Eastern Dynasts, 100 BC – AD 100* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Lady Marti, Funerary Portrait of a Woman, Palmyra, c. AD 170-190, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

Funerary Portrait of a Priest from Palmyra, Walters Art Museum

The Wisconsin Palmyrene Aramaic Inscription Project

Palmyra Portrait Project, AARHUS University

Portrait bust, Penn Museum

Portrait of a deceased woman, Liebieghaus, Frankfurt

Temple of Baalshamin, Palmyra

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

A hybrid of eastern and western design, this temple showcased the cultural diversity and great wealth of Palmyra.



Figure 13.2.1.18: Temple of Baalshamin, 1st century C.E. (Palmyra—in modern Syria) (photo: **Verity Cridland**, CC BY 2.0)

Hybrid in design

The Temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra was a first century C.E. sanctuary dedicated to one of the key gods of the city.* As with other Palmyrene architecture, the sanctuary of Baalshamin demonstrated hybridity of design—incorporating both Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman elements.

The cult

The temple's cult is dedicated to Baalshamin or Ba'al Šamem, a northwest Semitic divinity. The name Baalshamin is applied to various divinities at different periods in time, but most often to Hadad, also known simply as Ba'al. Along with Bel, Baalshamin was one of the two main divinities of pre-Islamic Palmyra in Syria and was a sky god. The relief plaque below depicts a votive dedication by a worshipper—Baalshamin and Bel along with Yarhibol (the lord of spring with a solar nimbus) and Aglibol (a lunar divinity).



Figure 13.2.1.19: Limestone bas-relief dedicated by Ba'alay to Bel, Baalshamin, Yarhibol, and Aglibol. Limestone, dated January 121 CE., from Palmyra (Museum of Fine Arts, Lyon) (photo: **Owen Cook**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The architecture

The temple of Baalshamin was a prostyle (having free standing columns on the façade only), tetrastyle (four columns across the façade) temple of the Corinthian order with a deep porch (visible in the photo below). What is the Corinthian Order?

The temple was set within a colonnaded precinct (a colonnade is a row of columns). The temple building dated to c. 130 C.E. and represents an addition to a sanctuary that already existed by 17 C.E.



Figure 13.2.1.20: View of the porch with free-standing columns, and a pilaster visible on the flank, Temple of Baalshamin, 1st century C.E. (Palmyra—in modern Syria) (photo: **Juan Llanos**, CC BY-ND 2.0), CC BY 2.0)

The temple itself is conventional in its external design, meaning it conforms to what one would expect from a Classical Graeco-Roman structure. The four freestanding columns across the façade are complemented by engaged pilasters at the sides and back. What is a pilaster?



Figure 13.2.1.21: Temple of Baalshamin, 1st century C.E. (Palmyra—in modern Syria) (photo: Paul Kidd, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0), CC BY 2.0)

The colonnaded precinct experienced several phases of development during the first century C.E. (prior to the addition of the current temple). By the time of the temple's construction, the colonnade had become a so-called Rhodian peristyle—meaning one flank was taller than the other three. The complex continued to develop across the course of the second century.

The temple itself adopts a Near Eastern motif of including a window in each of the cella's flanks, a trait that is not Graeco-Roman but that finds comparison in contemporary temples in Lebanon. These windows reflect the belief that the divinity dwelled in the temple.

Context

The Temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra is a rough contemporary of the Temple of Bacchus in Baalbek **(now in Lebanon)**. Although dissimilar in scale (the Temple of Bacchus is a monumental building), both show the contemporary propensity in Roman provincial architecture of using forecourts to frame sanctuaries, as well as showing the widespread use of the Corinthian order. This is one of a number of sanctuaries in the city that demonstrates the great wealth of the Palmyrenes. Palmyra and much of the Roman Near East was rich in cultural diversity, a diversity expressed in many ways, including by means of art and architecture.

***Note:** The Temple of Baalshamin was destroyed in 2015.

Additional resources:

Palmyra Temple Was Destroyed by ISIS, U.N. Confirms—*New York Times*
Palmyra's Baalshamin temple 'blown up by IS'—BBC News

Images taken from Robert Wood's *The Ruins of Palmyra, London, 1753

Plan of the site

UNESCO World Heritage List: Site of Palmyra

Palmyra, UNESCO (video)

Palmyra on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Trade Routes between Europe and Asia during Antiquity on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Palmyra photo album on Flickr from the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

Paul Collart, "Reconstruction Du Thalamos Du Temple De Baalshamîn a Palmyre," *Revue Archéologique, Nouvelle Série*, Fasc. 2 (1970), pp. 323-327.

Klaus Schnädelbach, Topographia Palmyrena (*Documents d'archéologie syrienne*; 18) (Damascus, 2010).

A. M. Smith, II, *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

J. Starcky and M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1985).

J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1981).

13.2.1: Palmyra is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.1: Palmyra** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.2: Ancient Near East

Ancient Near East

c. 3500 - 400 B.C.E.

Mesopotamia, the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (in modern day Iraq), is often referred to as the Cradle of Civilization because it is one of the first places where complex urban centers grew.

Sumerian

The region of southern Mesopotamia is known as Sumer, and it is in Sumer that we find some of the oldest known cities, including Ur and Uruk.

c. 4000 - 2339 B.C.E.

Sumer, an introduction

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Sumer was home to some of the oldest known cities, supported by a focus on agriculture.

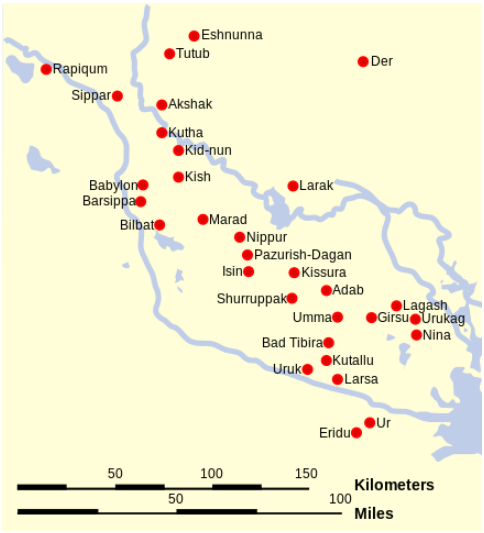


Figure 13.2.2.1: Cities of ancient Sumer, photo (CC BY 3.0)

The region of southern Mesopotamia is known as Sumer, and it is in Sumer that we find some of the oldest known cities, including Ur and Uruk.

Uruk

Prehistory ends with Uruk, where we find some of the earliest written records. This large city-state (and it environs) was largely dedicated to agriculture and eventually dominated southern Mesopotamia. Uruk perfected Mesopotamian irrigation and administration systems.

An agricultural theocracy

Within the city of Uruk, there was a large temple complex dedicated to Innana, the patron goddess of the city. The City-State's agricultural production would be "given" to her and stored at her temple. Harvested crops would then be processed (grain ground into flour, barley fermented into beer) and given back to the citizens of Uruk in equal share at regular intervals.

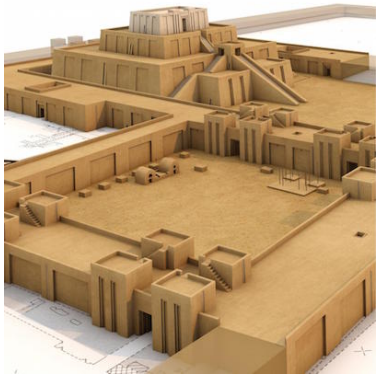


Figure **13.2.2.2**: Reconstruction of the ziggurat at Uruk dedicated to the goddess Inanna (created by Artefacts/DAI, copyright DAI, CC-BY-NC-ND)

The head of the temple administration, the chief priest of Innana, also served as political leader, making Uruk the first known theocracy. We know many details about this theocratic administration because the Sumerians left numerous documents in the form of tablets written in cuneiform script.

It is almost impossible to imagine a time before writing. However, you might be disappointed to learn that writing was not invented to record stories, poetry, or prayers to a god. The first fully developed written script, cuneiform, was invented to account for something unglamorous, but very important—surplus commodities: bushels of barley, head of cattle, and jars of oil!

The origin of written language (c. 3200 B.C.E.) was born out of economic necessity and was a tool of the theocratic (priestly) ruling elite who needed to keep track of the agricultural wealth of the city-states. The last known document written in the cuneiform script dates to the first century C.E. Only the hieroglyphic script of the Ancient Egyptians lasted longer.



Figure **13.2.2.3**: Cuneiform tablet still in its clay case: legal case from Niqmepuh, King of Iamhad (Aleppo), 1720 B.C.E., 3.94 x 2″ (British Museum)

A reed and clay tablet

A single reed, cleanly cut from the banks of the Euphrates or Tigris river, when pressed cut-edge down into a soft clay tablet, will make a wedge shape. The arrangement of multiple wedge shapes (as few as two and as many as ten) created cuneiform characters. Characters could be written either horizontally or vertically, although a horizontal arrangement was more widely used.

Very few cuneiform signs have only one meaning; most have as many as four. Cuneiform signs could represent a whole word or an idea or a number. Most frequently though, they represented a syllable. A cuneiform syllable could be a vowel alone, a consonant plus a vowel, a vowel plus a consonant and even a consonant plus a vowel plus a consonant. There isn’t a sound that a human mouth can make that this script can’t record.

Probably because of this extraordinary flexibility, the range of languages that were written with cuneiform across history of the Ancient Near East is vast and includes Sumerian, Akkadian, Amorite, Hurrian, Urartian, Hittite, Luwian, Palaic, Hatian and

Elamite.

Additional resources

Short video from Artefacts about the reconstruction of the Ziggurat

Cylinder seals on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Origins of Writing on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

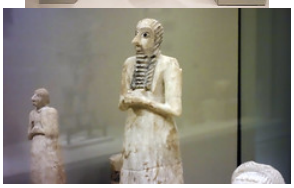







Figure **13.2.2.4**: More Smarthistory images…

White Temple and ziggurat, Uruk

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

A gleaming temple built atop a mud-brick platform, it towered above the flat plain of Uruk.



Figure **13.2.2.5**: Archaeological site at Uruk (modern Warka) in Iraq (photo: SAC Andy Holmes (RAF)/MOD, Open Government Licence v1.0)

Visible from a great distance

Uruk (modern Warka in Iraq)—where city life began more than five thousand years ago and where the first writing emerged—was clearly one of the most important places in southern Mesopotamia. Within Uruk, the greatest monument was the Anu Ziggurat on which the White Temple was built. Dating to the late 4th millennium B.C.E. (the Late Uruk Period, or Uruk III) and dedicated to the sky god Anu, this temple would have towered well above (approximately 40 feet) the flat plain of Uruk, and been visible from a great distance—even over the defensive walls of the city.

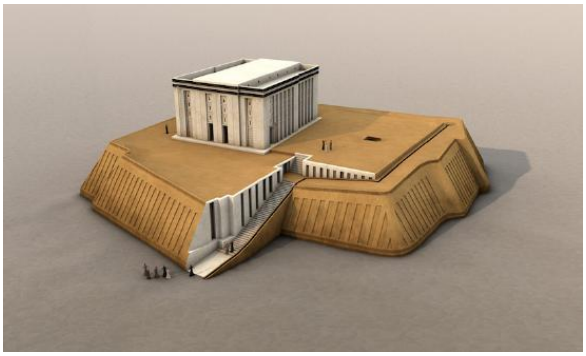


Figure **13.2.2.6**: Digital reconstruction of the White Temple and ziggurat, Uruk (modern Warka), c. 3517-3358 B.C.E. © **artefacts-berlin.de**; scientific material: German Archaeological Institute

Ziggurats

A ziggurat is a built raised platform with four sloping sides—like a chopped-off pyramid. Ziggurats are made of mud-bricks—the building material of choice in the Near East, as stone is rare. Ziggurats were not only a visual focal point of the city, they were a symbolic one, as well—they were at the heart of the theocratic political system (a theocracy is a type of government where a god is recognized as the ruler, and the state officials operate on the god's behalf). So, seeing the ziggurat towering above the city, one made a visual connection to the god or goddess honored there, but also recognized that deity's political authority.



Figure **13.2.2.7**: Remains of the Anu Ziggurat, Uruk (modern Warka), c. 3517-3358 B.C.E. (photo: **Geoff Emberling**, by permission)

Excavators of the White Temple estimate that it would have taken 1500 laborers working on average ten hours per day for about five years to build the last major revetment (stone facing) of its massive underlying terrace (the open areas surrounding the White Temple at the top of the ziggurat). Although religious belief may have inspired participation in such a project, no doubt some sort of force (*corvée* labor—unpaid labor coerced by the state/slavery) was involved as well.

The sides of the ziggurat were very broad and sloping but broken up by recessed stripes or bands from top to bottom (see digital reconstruction, above), which would have made a stunning pattern in morning or afternoon sunlight. The only way up to the top of the ziggurat was via a steep stairway that led to a ramp that wrapped around the north end of the Ziggurat and brought one to the temple entrance. The flat top of the ziggurat was coated with bitumen (asphalt—a tar or pitch-like material similar to what is used for road paving) and overlaid with brick, for a firm and waterproof foundation for the White temple. The temple gets its name for the fact that it was entirely white washed inside and out, which would have given it a dazzling brightness in strong sunlight.



Figure **13.2.2.8**: Digital reconstruction of the two-story version of the White Temple, Uruk (modern Warka), c, 3517-3358 B.C.E. © **artefacts-berlin.de**; scientific material: German Archaeological Institute

The White Temple

The White temple was rectangular, measuring 17.5 x 22.3 meters and, at its corners, oriented to the cardinal points. It is a typical Uruk “high temple (*Hochtempel*)” type with a tri-partite plan: a long rectangular central hall with rooms on either side (plan). The White Temple had three entrances, none of which faced the ziggurat ramp directly. Visitors would have needed to walk around the temple, appreciating its bright façade and the powerful view, and likely gained access to the interior in a “bent axis” approach (where one would have to turn 90 degrees to face the altar), a typical arrangement for Ancient Near Eastern temples.

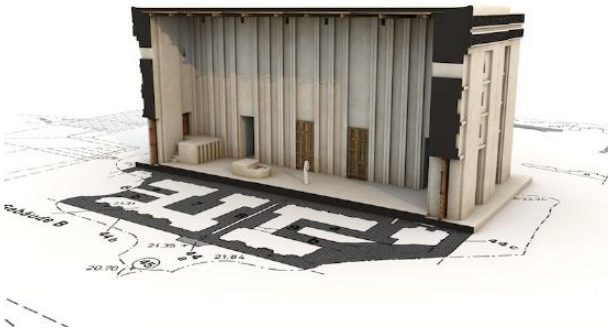


Figure 13.2.2.9: Section through the central hall of the "White Temple," digital reconstruction of the interior of the two-story version White Temple, Uruk (modern Warka), c, 3517-3358 B.C.E. © artefacts-berlin.de; scientific material: German Archaeological Institute

The north west and east corner chambers of the building contained staircases (unfinished in the case of the one at the north end). Chambers in the middle of the northeast room suite appear to have been equipped with wooden shelves in the walls and displayed cavities for setting in pivot stones which might imply a solid door was fitted in these spaces. The north end of the central hall had a podium accessible by means of a small staircase and an altar with a fire-stained surface. Very few objects were found inside the White Temple, although what has been found is very interesting. Archaeologists uncovered some 19 tablets of gypsum on the floor of the temple—all of which had cylinder seal impressions and reflected temple accounting. Also, archaeologists uncovered a foundation deposit of the bones of a leopard and a lion in the eastern corner of the Temple (foundation deposits, ritually buried objects and bones, are not uncommon in ancient architecture).



Figure 13.2.2.10: Interior view of the two-story version of the "White Temple," Digital reconstruction of the White Temple, Uruk (modern Warka), c, 3517-3358 B.C.E. © artefacts-berlin.de; scientific material: German Archaeological Institute

To the north of the White Temple there was a broad flat terrace, at the center of which archaeologists found a huge pit with traces of fire (2.2 x 2.7m) and a loop cut from a massive boulder. Most interestingly, a system of shallow bitumen-coated conduits were discovered. These ran from the southeast and southwest of the terrace edges and entered the temple through the southeast and southwest doors. Archaeologists conjecture that liquids would have flowed from the terrace to collect in a pit in the center hall of the temple.

Additional resources:

Uruk: 5000 year old mega-city (exhibition at the Pergamon Museum, Berlin)

The White Temple and Ziggurat on Art through Time

The White Temple from Artefacts, Berlin

U.S. Department of Defense, Cultural Property Training Resource on Uruk (Modern Warka)

Archaeological reconstructions

by SEBASTIAN HAGENEUER

Reconstructions of ancient sites or finds can help us to understand the distant past. For non-academics, reconstructions offer a glimpse into that past, a kind of visual accumulation of scientific research communicated by means of images, models or even virtual reality. We see reconstructions in films, museums and magazines to illustrate the stories behind the historical or archaeological facts. For archaeologists like me however, reconstructions are also an important tool to answer unsolved questions and even raise new ones. One field where this is particularly true is the reconstruction of ancient architecture.

Early reconstructions

Since at least medieval times, artists created visual reconstructions drawn from the accounts of travelers or the Bible. Examples of this include the site of Stonehenge or the Tower of Babylon. Since the beginning of archaeology as a science in the mid-19th century, scientific reconstructions based on actual data were made. Of course, the earlier visualizations were more conjectural than later ones, due to the lack of comparable data at that time (for example, the image below).



Figure **13.2.2.11**: Reconstruction drawing of Nimrud, the site of an ancient Assyrian palace, by James Fergusson for Sir Henry Layard, published in 1853. The columns depicted here were never found. The reconstruction is clearly influenced by what was known at that time of Greco-Roman architecture and by John Martin's Fall of Nineveh (1829)

The three building blocks of reconstructions

Since the end of the 19th century, reconstruction drawings evolved to be less conjectural and increasingly based on actual archaeological data as these became available due to increased excavations. Today we can not only look at reconstructions, we can experience them—whether as life-sized physical models or as immersive virtual simulations. But how do we create them? What are they made of? Every reconstruction is basically composed of three building blocks: Primary Sources, Secondary Sources, and Guesswork.

The first step toward a good visualization is to become aware of the archaeological data, the excavated remains—simply everything that has survived. This data is referred to as the Primary Sources—this is the part of the reconstruction we are most certain about. Sometimes we have a lot that survives and sometimes we only have the basic layout of a ground plan (below).



Figure **13.2.2.12**: Remains of Building C in Uruk. Only a couple of mud-brick rows have survived to offer a basic ground plan. The building dates into the 4th millennium B.C.E. © German Archaeological Institute, Oriental Institute, W 10767, all rights reserved.

Even when the Primary Sources are utilized, we often have to fill the gaps with Secondary Sources. These sources are composed of architectural parallels, ancient depictions and descriptions, or ethno-archaeological data. So, for example in the case of the Building C in Uruk (above), we know through Primary Sources, that this building was made of mud-bricks (at least the first two rows). We then have to look at other buildings of that time to find out how they were built. In the example above, the layout of the ground-plan shows us that this building was tripartite—a layout well known from this and other sites. We also look at contemporary architecture to understand how mud-brick architecture functions and to find out what certain architectural details might mean. Unfortunately, we don't have any depictions or textual evidence that can help us with this example. Parallels from later times however show us that the unusual niches in the rooms suggest an important function.

After utilising all the primary and secondary sources, we still need to fill in the gaps. The third part of every reconstruction is simple Guesswork. We obviously need to limit that part as much as we can, but there is always some guesswork involved—no matter how much we research our building. For example, it is rather difficult to decide how high Building C was over 5000 years ago. We therefore have to make an educated guess based, for example, on the estimated length and inclination of staircases within the building. If we are lucky, we can use some primary or secondary sources for that too, but even then, in the end we need to make a subjective decision.

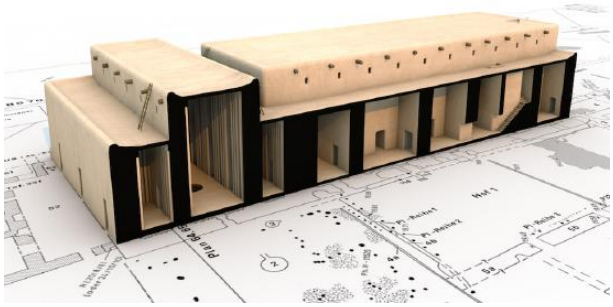


Figure **13.2.2.13**: Technical reconstruction of Building C in Uruk. The southwestern part of the building is artificially cut open so we can see the inside (for example, the staircase). © artefacts-berlin.de; Material: German Archaeological Institute

Reconstructions as a scholarly tool

Besides creating these reconstructions to display them in exhibitions, architectural models can also aid archaeological investigations. If we construct ancient architecture using the computer, we not only need to decide every aspect of that particular building, but also the relation to adjoining architecture. Sometimes, the process of reconstructing several buildings and thinking about their interdependence can reveal interesting connections, for example the complicated matter of water disposal off a roof.

These are only random examples, but clearly, the process of architectural reconstruction is a complex one. We, as the creators, need to make sure that the observer understands the problems and uncertainties of a particular reconstruction. It is essential that the viewer understands that these images are not 100% factual. As the archaeologist Simon James has put it: "Every reconstruction is wrong. The only real question is, how wrong is it?"

Additional resources:

ARTEFACTS: Scientific & Archaeological Reconstruction

Nicholas Stanley-Price, The Reconstruction of Ruins: Principles and Practice (2009)

Warka Vase

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

One of the most precious artifacts from Sumer, the Warka Vase was looted and almost lost forever.



Figure **13.2.2.14**: *Warka (Uruk) Vase*, Uruk, Late Uruk period, c. 3500-3000 B.C.E., 105 cm high (National Museum of Iraq)

Picturing the ruler

So many important innovations and inventions emerged in the Ancient Near East during the Uruk period (c. 4000 to 3000 B.C.E. and named after the Sumerian city of Uruk). One of these was the use of art to illustrate the role of the ruler and his place in society. The *Warka Vase*, c. 3000 B.C.E., was discovered at Uruk (Warka is the modern name, Uruk the ancient name), and is probably the most famous example of this innovation. In its decoration we find an example of the cosmology of ancient Mesopotamia.



Figure **13.2.2.15**: Ancient Near Eastern sites (with the borders of modern countries and modern capitals)

The vase, made of alabaster and standing over three feet high (just about a meter) and weighing some 600 pounds (about 270 kg), was discovered in 1934 by German excavators working at Uruk in a ritual deposit (a burial undertaken as part of a ritual) in the temple of Inanna, the goddess of love, fertility, and war and the main patron of the city of Uruk. It was one of a pair of vases found in the Inanna temple complex (but the only one on which the image was still legible) together with other valuable objects.

Given the significant size of the Warka Vase, where it was found, the precious material from which it is carved and the complexity of its relief decoration, it was clearly of monumental importance, something to be admired and valued. Though known since its excavation as the Warka "Vase," that term does little to express the sacredness of this object for the people who lived in Uruk five thousand years ago.



Figure **13.2.2.16**: Bottom bands (detail), *Warka (Uruk) Vase*, Uruk, Late Uruk period, c. 3500-3000 B.C.E. (National Museum of Iraq), photo: **Hirmer Verlag**

The relief carvings on the exterior of the vase run around its circumference in four parallel bands (or registers, as art historians like to call them) and develop in complexity from the bottom to the top.

Beginning at the bottom, we see a pair of wavy lines from which grow neatly alternating plants that appear to be grain (probably barley) and reeds, the two most important agricultural harvests of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southern Mesopotamia. There is a satisfying rhythm to this alternation, and one that is echoed in the rhythm of the rams and ewes (male and female sheep) that alternate in the band above this. The sheep march to the right in tight formation, as if being herded—the method of tending this important livestock in the agrarian economy of the Uruk period.

The band above the sheep is a blank and might have featured painted decoration that has since faded away. Above this blank band, a group of nine identical men march to the left. Each holds a vessel in front of his face, and which appear to contain the products of the Mesopotamian agricultural system: fruits, grains, wine, and mead. The men are all naked and muscular and, like the sheep beneath them, are closely and evenly grouped, creating a sense of rhythmic activity. Nude figures in Ancient Near Eastern art are meant to be understood as humble and low status, so we can assume that these men are servants or slaves (the band above, displays the slave owners).



Figure **13.2.2.17**: Drawing, top register, *Warka (Uruk) Vase* (reconstructing some missing areas), by Jo Wood, after M. Roaf, from *Leaving No Stones Unturned: Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in Honor of Donald P. Hansen* (Eisenbrauns, 2001), p. 17.

The top band of the vase is the largest, most complex, and least straightforward. It has suffered some damage but enough remains that the scene can be read. The center of the scene appears to depict a man and a woman who face each other. A smaller naked male stands between them holding a container of what looks like agricultural produce which he offers to the woman. The woman, identified as such by her robe and long hair, at one point had an elaborate crown on her head (this piece was broken off and repaired in antiquity).

Behind her are two reed bundles, symbols of the goddess Inanna, whom, it is assumed, the woman represents. The man she faces is nearly entirely broken off, and we are left with only the bottom of his long garment. However, men with similar robes are often found in contemporary seal stone engraving and based upon these, we can reconstruct him as a king with a long skirt, a beard and a

head band. The tassels of his skirt are held by another smaller scaled man behind him, a steward or attendant to the king, who wears a short skirt.



Figure **13.2.2.18**: Top band (detail), *Warka (Uruk) Vase*, Uruk, Late Uruk period, c. 3500-3000 B.C.E. (National Museum of Iraq), photo: **Hirmer Verlag**

The rest of the scene is found behind the reed bundles at the back of Inanna. There we find two horned and bearded rams (one directly behind the other, so the fact that there are two can only be seen by looking at the hooves) carrying platforms on their backs on which statues stand. The statue on the left carries the cuneiform sign for EN, the Sumerian word for chief priest. The statue on the right stands before yet another Inanna reed bundle. Behind the rams is an array of tribute gifts including two large vases which look quite a lot like the *Warka Vase* itself.

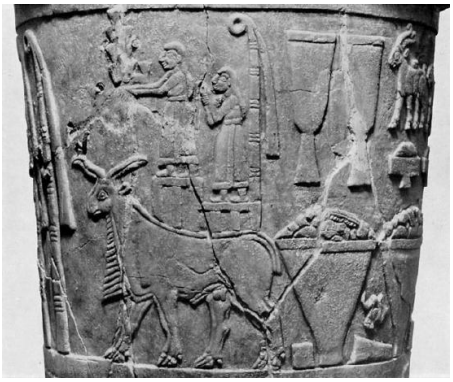


Figure **13.2.2.19**: Top band (detail), Relief-carved alabaster vessel called the Uruk Vase, Uruk, Late Uruk period, c. 3500-3000 B.C.E. (National Museum of Iraq), photo: **Hirmer Verlag**

What could this busy scene mean? The simplest way to interpret it is that a king (presumably of Uruk) is celebrating Inanna, the city's most important divine patron. A more detailed reading of the scene suggests a sacred marriage between the king, acting as the chief priest of the temple, and the goddess—each represented in person as well as in statues. Their union would guarantee for Uruk the agricultural abundance we see depicted behind the rams. The worship of Inanna by the king of Uruk dominates the decoration of the vase. The top illustrates how the cultic duties of the Mesopotamian king as chief priest of the goddess, put him in a position to be responsible for and proprietor of, the agricultural wealth of the city state.

Backstory

The *Warka Vase*, one of the most important objects in the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad, was stolen in April 2003 with thousands of other priceless ancient artifacts when the museum was looted in the immediate aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The *Warka Vase* was returned in June of that same year after an amnesty program was created to encourage the return of looted items. *The Guardian* reported that "The United States army ignored warnings from its own civilian advisers that could have stopped the looting of priceless artifacts in Baghdad…."



Figure 13.2.2.20: Broken-off foot of vase, tossed over, National Museum of Iraq, May 2003, photo: **Joanne Farchakh**

Even before the invasion, looting was a growing problem, due to economic uncertainty and widespread unemployment in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. According to Dr. Neil Brodie, Senior Research Fellow on the Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa project at the University of Oxford, "In the aftermath of that war…as the country descended into chaos, between 1991 and 1994 eleven regional museums were broken into and approximately 3,000 artifacts and 484 manuscripts were stolen…." The vast majority of these have not been returned. And, as Dr. Brodie notes, the most important question may be why no concerted international action was taken to block the sale of objects looted from archaeological sites and cultural institutions during wartime.

Read more about endangered cultural heritage in the Near East in Smarthistory's ARCHES (At Risk Cultural Heritage Education Series) section.

Additional resources:

Neil Brodie, "The market background to the April 2003 plunder of the Iraq National Museum," in P. Stone and J. Farchakh Bajjaly (eds), *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 41-54 (available online here).

Neil Brodie, "Iraq 1990–2004 and the London antiquities market," in N. Brodie, M. Kersel, C. Luke and K.W. Tubb (eds), *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and the Antiquities Trade* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), pp. 206–26 (available online here).

Neil Brodie, "Focus on Iraq: Spoils of War," *Archaeology* (from the Archaeological Institute of America), vol. 56, no. 4 (July/August 2003) (available online here).

On looting in Iraq from SAFE (Saving Antiquities for Everyone)

Documentation on this object in "Lost Treasures from Iraq" from the Oriental Institute in Chicago

Lauren Sandler, "The Thieves of Baghdad," *The Atlantic*, November 2004

On looting in Iraq from The Antiquities Coalition

Uruk: The First City on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Standing Male Worshipper (Tell Asmar)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS

One of a group buried in a temple almost 5,000 years ago, this statue's job was to worship Abu—forever.


anding Male Worshipper from Tell
arthistory
Watch on YouTube

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.2.2.21**: More Smarthistory images…

Perforated Relief of Ur-Nanshe

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

More than 4,000 years ago, Ur-Nanshe, the chief priest and king, displayed his piety and power by building a temple.



Figure **13.2.2.22**: *Perforated relief of Ur-Nanshe*, king of Lagash, limestone, Early Third Dynasty (2550–2500 B.C.E.), found in Telloh or Tello (ancient city of Girsu). 15-¼ x 18-¼ inches / 39 x 46.5 cm (Musée du Louvre) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Archaeologists believe that the years 2800-2350 B.C.E. in Mesopotamia saw both increased population and a drier climate. This would have increased competition between city-states which would have vied for arable land.

As conflicts increased, the military leadership of temple administrators became more important. Art of this period emphasizes a new combination of piety and raw power in the representation of its leaders. In fact, the representation of human figures becomes more common and more detailed in this era.

This votive plaque, which would have been hung on the wall of a shrine through its central hole, illustrates the chief priest and king of Lagash, Ur-Nanshe, helping to build and then commemorate the opening of a temple of Ningirsu, the patron god of his city. The plaque was excavated at the Girsu. There is some evidence that Girsu was then the capital of the city-state of Lagash.



Figure **13.2.2.23**: Detail, *Perforated relief of Ur-Nanshe*, king of Lagash, limestone, Early Third Dynasty (2550–2500 B.C.E.), found in Telloh or Tello (ancient city of Girsu). 15-¼ x 18-¼ inches / 39 x 46.5 cm (Musée du Louvre) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The top portion of the plaque depicts Ur-Nanshe helping to bring mud bricks to the building site accompanied by his wife and sons. The bottom shows Ur-Nanshe seated at a banquet, enjoying a drink, again accompanied by his sons. In both, he wears the traditional tufted woolen skirt called the kaunakes and shows off his broad muscular chest and arms.

Additional resources

This sculpture at the Louvre

Early Dynastic Sculpture 2900-1350 B.C.E. at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.2.24: More Smarthistory images…

Cylinder seals

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Signed with a cylinder seal

Cuneiform was used for official accounting, governmental and theological pronouncements and a wide range of correspondence. Nearly all of these documents required a formal “signature,” the impression of a cylinder seal.

A cylinder seal is a small pierced object, like a long round bead, carved in reverse (intaglio) and hung on strings of fiber or leather. These often beautiful objects were ubiquitous in the Ancient Near East and remain a unique record of individuals from this era. Each seal was owned by one person and was used and held by them in particularly intimate ways, such as strung on a necklace or bracelet.

When a signature was required, the seal was taken out and rolled on the pliable clay document, leaving behind the positive impression of the reverse images carved into it. However, some seals were valued not for the impression they made, but instead, for the magic they were thought to possess or for their beauty.



Figure **13.2.2.25**: Cylinder Seal (with modern impression), royal worshipper before a god on a throne with bull's legs; human-headed bulls below, c. 1820-1730 B.C.E. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The first use of cylinder seals in the Ancient Near East dates to earlier than the invention of cuneiform, to the Late Neolithic period (7600–6000 B.C.E.) in Syria. However, what is most remarkable about cylinder seals is their scale and the beauty of the semi-precious stones from which they were carved. The images and inscriptions on these stones can be measured in millimeters and feature incredible detail.

The stones from which the cylinder seals were carved include agate, chalcedony, lapis lazuli, steatite, limestone, marble, quartz, serpentine, hematite and jasper; for the most distinguished there were seals of gold and silver. To study Ancient Near Eastern cylinder seals is to enter a uniquely beautiful, personal and detailed miniature universe of the remote past, but one which was directly connected to a vast array of individual actions, both mundane and momentous.



Figure **13.2.2.26**: Cylinder Seal with Kneeling Nude Heroes, c. 2220-2159 B.C.E., Akkadian (Metropolitan Museum of Art) Cylinder Seal (with modern impression), showing Kneeling Nude Heroes, c. 2220-2159 B.C.E., Akkadian (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Why cylinder seals are interesting

Art historians are particularly interested in cylinder seals for at least two reasons. First, it is believed that the images carved on seals accurately reflect the pervading artistic styles of the day and the particular region of their use. In other words, each seal is a small time capsule of what sorts of motifs and styles were popular during the lifetime of the owner. These seals, which survive in great numbers, offer important information to understand the developing artistic styles of the Ancient Near East.

The second reason why art historians are interested in cylinder seals is because of the iconography (the study of the content of a work of art). Each character, gesture and decorative element can be "read" and reflected back on the owner of the seal, revealing his or her social rank and even sometimes the name of the owner. Although the same iconography found on seals can be found on carved stelae, terra cotta plaques, wall reliefs and paintings, its most complete compendium exists on the thousands of seals which have survived from antiquity.

Standard of Ur

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Intentionally buried as part of an elaborate ritual, this ornate object tells us so much, but also too little.


e updated video link below for ren
arthistory
Watch on YouTube

The city of Ur

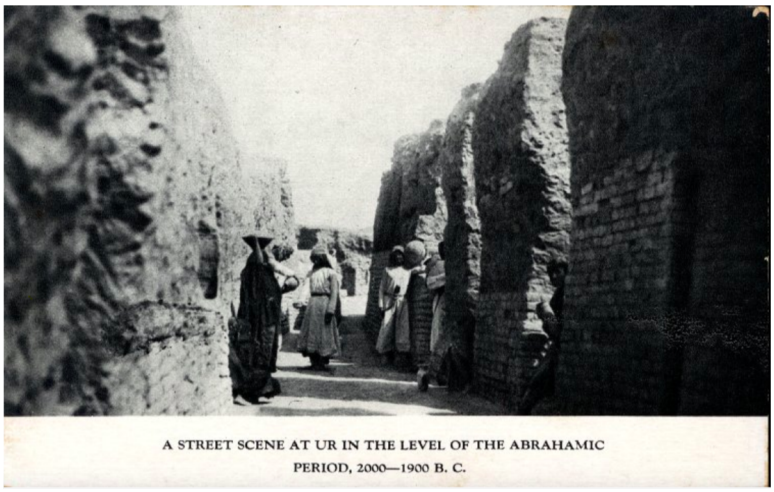


Figure **13.2.2.27**: Postcard; printed; photograph showing archaeological excavations at Ur, with Arab workmen standing for scale in the excavated street of an early second millennium B.C.E. residential quarter © Trustees of the British Museum

Known today as Tell el-Muqayyar, the "Mound of Pitch," the site was occupied from around 5000 B.C.E. to 300 B.C.E. Although Ur is famous as the home of the Old Testament patriarch Abraham (Genesis 11:29-32), there is no actual proof that Tell el-Muqayyar was identical with "Ur of the Chaldees." In antiquity the city was known as Urim.

The main excavations at Ur were undertaken from 1922-34 by a joint expedition of The British Museum and the University Museum, Pennsylvania, led by Leonard Woolley. At the center of the settlement were mud brick temples dating back to the fourth millennium B.C.E. At the edge of the sacred area a cemetery grew up which included burials known today as the Royal Graves. An area of ordinary people's houses was excavated in which a number of street corners have small shrines. But the largest surviving religious buildings, dedicated to the moon god Nanna, also include one of the best preserved ziggurats, and were founded in the period 2100-1800 B.C.E. For some of this time Ur was the capital of an empire stretching across southern Mesopotamia. Rulers of the later Kassite and Neo-Babylonian empires continued to build and rebuild at Ur. Changes in both the flow of the River Euphrates (now some ten miles to the east) and trade routes led to the eventual abandonment of the site.

The royal graves of Ur

Close to temple buildings at the center of the city of Ur, sat a rubbish dump built up over centuries. Unable to use the area for building, the people of Ur started to bury their dead there. The cemetery was used between about 2600-2000 B.C.E. and hundreds of burials were made in pits. Many of these contained very rich materials.



Figure **13.2.2.28**: *Cylinder seal of Pu-abi*, c. 2600 B.C.E., lapis lazuli, 4.9 x 2.6 cm, from Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

In one area of the cemetery a group of sixteen graves was dated to the mid-third millennium. These large, shaft graves were distinct from the surrounding burials and consisted of a tomb, made of stone, rubble and bricks, built at the bottom of a pit. The layout of the tombs varied, some occupied the entire floor of the pit and had multiple chambers. The most complete tomb discovered belonged to a lady identified as Pu-abi from the name carved on a cylinder seal found with the burial.

The majority of graves had been robbed in antiquity but where evidence survived the main burial was surrounded by many human bodies. One grave had up to seventy-four such sacrificial victims. It is evident that elaborate ceremonies took place as the pits were filled in that included more human burials and offerings of food and objects. The excavator, Leonard Woolley thought the graves belonged to kings and queens. Another suggestion is that they belonged to the high priestesses of Ur.

The *Standard of Ur*



Figure **13.2.2.29**: Peace (detail), *The Standard of Ur*, 2600-2400 B.C.E., shell, red limestone, lapis lazuli, and bitumen (original wood no longer exists), 21.59 x 49.53 x 12 cm, Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

This object was found in one of the largest graves in the Royal Cemetery at Ur, lying in the corner of a chamber above the right shoulder of a man. Its original function is not yet understood.

Leonard Woolley, the excavator at Ur, imagined that it was carried on a pole as a standard, hence its common name. Another theory suggests that it formed the soundbox of a musical instrument.

When found, the original wooden frame for the mosaic of shell, red limestone and lapis lazuli had decayed, and the two main panels had been crushed together by the weight of the soil. The bitumen acting as glue had disintegrated and the end panels were broken. As a result, the present restoration is only a best guess as to how it originally appeared.



Figure **13.2.2.30**: War (detail), *The Standard of Ur*, 2600-2400 B.C.E., shell, red limestone, lapis lazuli, and bitumen (original wood no longer exists), 21.59 x 49.53 x 12 cm, Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

The main panels are known as “War” and “Peace.” “War” shows one of the earliest representations of a Sumerian army. Chariots, each pulled by four donkeys, trample enemies; infantry with cloaks carry spears; enemy soldiers are killed with axes, others are paraded naked and presented to the king who holds a spear.

The “Peace” panel depicts animals, fish and other goods brought in procession to a banquet. Seated figures, wearing woolen fleeces or fringed skirts, drink to the accompaniment of a musician playing a lyre. Banquet scenes such as this are common on cylinder seals of the period, such as on the seal of the “Queen” Pu-abi, also in the British Museum (see image above).

Queen’s Lyre

Leonard Woolley discovered several lyres in the graves in the Royal Cemetery at Ur. This was one of two that he found in the grave of “Queen” Pu-abi. Along with the lyre, which stood against the pit wall, were the bodies of ten women with fine jewelry,

presumed to be sacrificial victims, and numerous stone and metal vessels. One woman lay right against the lyre and, according to Woolley, the bones of her hands were placed where the strings would have been.



Figure 13.2.2.31: *Queen's Lyre* (reconstruction), 2600 B.C.E., wooden parts, pegs and string are modern; lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone mosaic decoration, set in bitumen and the head (but not the horns) of the bull are ancient; the bull's head in front of the sound box is covered with gold; the eyes are lapis lazuli and shell and the hair and beard are lapis lazuli; panel on front depicts lion-headed eagle between gazelles, bulls with plants on hills, a bull-man between leopards and a lion attacking a bull; edges of the sound-box are decorated with inlay bands; eleven gold-headed pegs for the strings, 112.5 x 73 x 7 cm (body), Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

The wooden parts of the lyre had decayed in the soil, but Woolley poured plaster of Paris into the depression left by the vanished wood and so preserved the decoration in place. The front panels are made of lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone originally set in bitumen. The gold mask of the bull decorating the front of the sounding box had been crushed and had to be restored. While the horns are modern, the beard, hair and eyes are original and made of lapis lazuli.

This musical instrument was originally reconstructed as part of a unique "harp-lyre," together with a harp from the burial, now also in The British Museum. Later research showed that this was a mistake. A new reconstruction, based on excavation photographs, was made in 1971-72.

Suggested readings:

J. Aruz, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (New York, 2003).

D. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (London, 1995).

H. Crawford, *Sumer and Sumerians* (Cambridge, 2004).

N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London, 1994).

M. Roaf, *Cultural atlas of Mesopotamia* (New York, 1990).

C.L. Woolley and P.R.S. Moorey, *Ur of the Chaldees, revised edition* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1982).

N. Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilization* (Cambridge, 2005).

R. Zettler, and L. Horne, (eds.) *Treasures from the Royal Tomb at Ur* (Philadelphia, 1998).

Related objects in the collection of the British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88673













Figure 13.2.2.32: More Smarthistory images…

Standard of Ur and other objects from the Royal Graves

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

At the center of Ur, a rubbish dump grew over the centuries—it evolved into a cemetery for the elite.

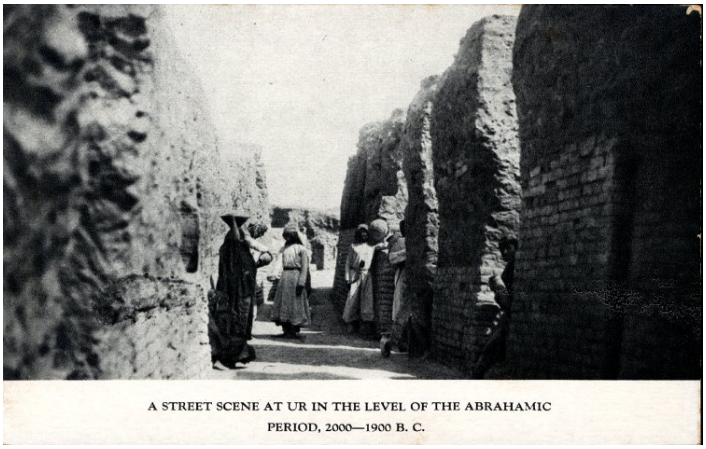


Figure **13.2.2.33**: Postcard; printed; photograph showing archaeological excavations at Ur, with Arab workmen standing for scale in the excavated street of an early second millennium B.C.E. residential quarter © Trustees of the British Museum

The city of Ur

Known today as Tell el-Muqayyar, the "Mound of Pitch," the site was occupied from around 5000 B.C.E. to 300 B.C.E. Although Ur is famous as the home of the Old Testament patriarch Abraham (Genesis 11:29-32), there is no actual proof that Tell el-Muqayyar was identical with "Ur of the Chaldees." In antiquity the city was known as Urim.

The main excavations at Ur were undertaken from 1922-34 by a joint expedition of The British Museum and the University Museum, Pennsylvania, led by Leonard Woolley. At the center of the settlement were mud brick temples dating back to the fourth millennium B.C.E. At the edge of the sacred area a cemetery grew up which included burials known today as the Royal Graves. An area of ordinary people's houses was excavated in which a number of street corners have small shrines. But the largest surviving religious buildings, dedicated to the moon god Nanna, also include one of the best preserved ziggurats, and were founded in the period 2100-1800 B.C.E. For some of this time Ur was the capital of an empire stretching across southern Mesopotamia. Rulers of the later Kassite and Neo-Babylonian empires continued to build and rebuild at Ur. Changes in both the flow of the River Euphrates (now some ten miles to the east) and trade routes led to the eventual abandonment of the site.

The royal graves of Ur

Close to temple buildings at the center of the city of Ur, sat a rubbish dump built up over centuries. Unable to use the area for building, the people of Ur started to bury their dead there. The cemetery was used between about 2600-2000 B.C.E. and hundreds of burials were made in pits. Many of these contained very rich materials.



Figure **13.2.2.34**: *Cylinder seal of Pu-abi*, c. 2600 B.C.E., lapis lazuli, 4.9 x 2.6 cm, from Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

In one area of the cemetery a group of sixteen graves was dated to the mid-third millennium. These large, shaft graves were distinct from the surrounding burials and consisted of a tomb, made of stone, rubble and bricks, built at the bottom of a pit. The layout of the tombs varied, some occupied the entire floor of the pit and had multiple chambers. The most complete tomb discovered belonged to a lady identified as Pu-abi from the name carved on a cylinder seal found with the burial.

The majority of graves had been robbed in antiquity but where evidence survived the main burial was surrounded by many human bodies. One grave had up to seventy-four such sacrificial victims. It is evident that elaborate ceremonies took place as the pits were

filled in that included more human burials and offerings of food and objects. The excavator, Leonard Woolley thought the graves belonged to kings and queens. Another suggestion is that they belonged to the high priestesses of Ur.

The *Standard of Ur*



Figure **13.2.2.35**: Peace (detail), *The Standard of Ur*, 2600-2400 B.C.E., shell, red limestone, lapis lazuli, and bitumen (original wood no longer exists), 21.59 x 49.53 x 12 cm, Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

This object was found in one of the largest graves in the Royal Cemetery at Ur, lying in the corner of a chamber above the right shoulder of a man. Its original function is not yet understood.

Leonard Woolley, the excavator at Ur, imagined that it was carried on a pole as a standard, hence its common name. Another theory suggests that it formed the soundbox of a musical instrument.

When found, the original wooden frame for the mosaic of shell, red limestone and lapis lazuli had decayed, and the two main panels had been crushed together by the weight of the soil. The bitumen acting as glue had disintegrated and the end panels were broken. As a result, the present restoration is only a best guess as to how it originally appeared.



Figure **13.2.2.36**: War (detail), *The Standard of Ur*, 2600-2400 B.C.E., shell, red limestone, lapis lazuli, and bitumen (original wood no longer exists), 21.59 x 49.53 x 12 cm, Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

The main panels are known as “War” and “Peace.” “War” shows one of the earliest representations of a Sumerian army. Chariots, each pulled by four donkeys, trample enemies; infantry with cloaks carry spears; enemy soldiers are killed with axes, others are paraded naked and presented to the king who holds a spear.

The “Peace” panel depicts animals, fish and other goods brought in procession to a banquet. Seated figures, wearing woolen fleeces or fringed skirts, drink to the accompaniment of a musician playing a lyre. Banquet scenes such as this are common on cylinder seals of the period, such as on the seal of the “Queen” Pu-abi, also in the British Museum (see image above).

Queen’s Lyre

Leonard Woolley discovered several lyres in the graves in the Royal Cemetery at Ur. This was one of two that he found in the grave of “Queen” Pu-abi. Along with the lyre, which stood against the pit wall, were the bodies of ten women with fine jewelry, presumed to be sacrificial victims, and numerous stone and metal vessels. One woman lay right against the lyre and, according to Woolley, the bones of her hands were placed where the strings would have been.



Figure 13.2.2.37: *Queen's Lyre* (reconstruction), 2600 B.C.E., wooden parts, pegs and string are modern; lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone mosaic decoration, set in bitumen and the head (but not the horns) of the bull are ancient; the bull's head in front of the sound box is covered with gold; the eyes are lapis lazuli and shell and the hair and beard are lapis lazuli; panel on front depicts lion-headed eagle between gazelles, bulls with plants on hills, a bull-man between leopards and a lion attacking a bull; edges of the sound-box are decorated with inlay bands; eleven gold-headed pegs for the strings, 112.5 x 73 x 7 cm (body), Ur © Trustees of the British Museum

The wooden parts of the lyre had decayed in the soil, but Woolley poured plaster of Paris into the depression left by the vanished wood and so preserved the decoration in place. The front panels are made of lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone originally set in bitumen. The gold mask of the bull decorating the front of the sounding box had been crushed and had to be restored. While the horns are modern, the beard, hair and eyes are original and made of lapis lazuli.

This musical instrument was originally reconstructed as part of a unique "harp-lyre," together with a harp from the burial, now also in The British Museum. Later research showed that this was a mistake. A new reconstruction, based on excavation photographs, was made in 1971-72.

Suggested readings:

J. Aruz, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (New York, 2003).

D. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (London, 1995).

H. Crawford, *Sumer and Sumerians* (Cambridge, 2004).

N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London, 1994).

M. Roaf, *Cultural atlas of Mesopotamia* (New York, 1990).

C.L. Woolley and P.R.S. Moorey, *Ur of the Chaldees, revised edition* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1982).

N. Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilization* (Cambridge, 2005).

R. Zettler, and L. Horne, (eds.) *Treasures from the Royal Tomb at Ur* (Philadelphia, 1998).

Related objects in the collection of the British Museum
© Trustees of the British Museum

Akkadian

The Akkadian Empire was begun by Sargon, a man from a lowly family who rose to power and founded the royal city of Akkad (Akkad has not yet been located, though one theory puts it under modern Baghdad).

c. 2334 - 2193 B.C.E.

Akkad, an introduction

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Founded by the famed Sargon the Great, Akkad was a powerful military empire.

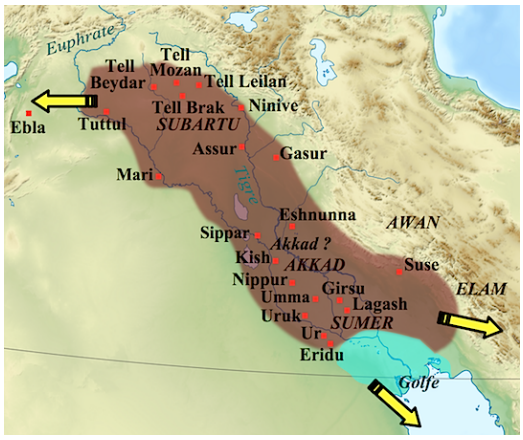


Figure 13.2.2.38: Map showing the approximate extension of the Akkad empire during the reign of Narâm-Sîn, yellow arrows indicate the directions in which military campaigns were conducted, photo (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Akkad

Competition between Akkad in the north and Ur in the south created two centralized regional powers at the end of the third millennium (c. 2334–2193 B.C.E.).

This centralization was military in nature and the art of this period generally became more martial. The Akkadian Empire was begun by Sargon, a man from a lowly family who rose to power and founded the royal city of Akkad (Akkad has not yet been located, though one theory puts it under modern Baghdad).

Head of an Akkadian Ruler



Figure 13.2.2.39: Head of Akkadian Ruler, 2250-2200 B.C.E. (Iraqi Museum, Baghdad – looted?)

This image of an unidentified Akkadian ruler (some say it is Sargon, but no one knows) is one of the most beautiful and terrifying images in all of Ancient Near Eastern art. The life-sized bronze head shows in sharp geometric clarity, locks of hair, curled lips and a wrinkled brow. Perhaps more awesome than the powerful and somber face of this ruler is the violent attack that mutilated it in antiquity.

Ur

The kingdom of Akkad ends with internal strife and invasion by the Gutians from the Zagros mountains to the northeast. The Gutians were ousted in turn and the city of Ur, south of Uruk, became dominant. King Ur-Nammu established the third dynasty of Ur, also referred to as the Ur III period.

Victory Stele of Naram-Sin

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS

Naram-Sin leads his victorious army up a mountain, as vanquished Lullubi people fall before him.



This monument depicts the Akkadian victory over the Lullubi Mountain people. In the 12th century B.C.E., a thousand years after it was originally made, the Elamite king, Shutruk-Nahhunte, attacked Babylon and, according to his later inscription, the stele was taken to Susa in what is now Iran. A stele is a vertical stone monument or marker often inscribed with text or relief carving.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:














Figure **13.2.2.40**: **More Smarthistory images…**

Cylinder seal with a modern impression

by The Metropolitan Museum of Art

See an ancient cylinder seal used 4000 years after it was made, and learn about its dynastic symbolism.



Video **13.2.2.4**: Cylinder seal and modern impression: nude bearded hero wrestling with a water buffalo; bull-man wrestling with lion, c. 2250–2150 B.C.E., Akkadian, Serpentine, 1.42″ / 3.61 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Neo-Sumerian/Ur III

Seated Gudea holding temple plan

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS



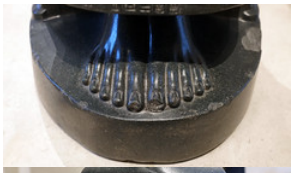
Video **13.2.2.5**: Seated Gudea holding Temple Plan, known as “Architect with Plan,” c. 2100 B.C.E. (Neo-Sumerian/Ur III period), from Girsu (modern Telloh, Iraq), diorite, 93 x 41 x 61 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Additional resources

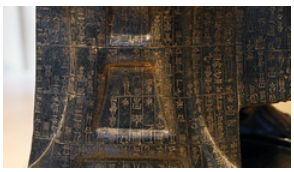
This sculpture at the Louvre

Translations of Gudea cylinders A and B

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88673





Figure **13.2.2.41**: More Smarthistory images…

Ziggurat of Ur

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

The great Ziggurat of Ur has been reconstructed twice, in antiquity and in the 1980s—what's left of the original?



Figure **13.2.2.42**: Ziggurat of Ur, c. 2100 B.C.E. mud brick and baked brick, Tell el-Mukayyar, Iraq (largely reconstructed)

The Great Ziggurat

The ziggurat is the most distinctive architectural invention of the Ancient Near East. Like an ancient Egyptian pyramid, an ancient Near Eastern ziggurat has four sides and rises up to the realm of the gods. However, unlike Egyptian pyramids, the exterior of Ziggurats were not smooth but tiered to accommodate the work which took place at the structure as well as the administrative oversight and religious rituals essential to Ancient Near Eastern cities. Ziggurats are found scattered around what is today Iraq and Iran, and stand as an imposing testament to the power and skill of the ancient culture that produced them.

One of the largest and best-preserved ziggurats of Mesopotamia is the great Ziggurat at Ur. Small excavations occurred at the site around the turn of the twentieth century, and in the 1920s Sir Leonard Woolley, in a joint project with the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia and the British Museum in London, revealed the monument in its entirety.



Figure **13.2.2.43**: Woolley photo of the Ziggurat of Ur with workers, Ziggurat of Ur, c. 2100 B.C.E., Woolley excavation workers (Tell el-Mukayyar, Iraq)

What Woolley found was a massive rectangular pyramidal structure, oriented to true North, 210 by 150 feet, constructed with three levels of terraces, standing originally between 70 and 100 feet high. Three monumental staircases led up to a gate at the first terrace level. Next, a single staircase rose to a second terrace which supported a platform on which a temple and the final and highest terrace stood. The core of the ziggurat is made of mud brick covered with baked bricks laid with bitumen, a naturally occurring tar. Each of the baked bricks measured about 11.5 x 11.5 x 2.75 inches and weighed as much as 33 pounds. The lower portion of the ziggurat, which supported the first terrace, would have used some 720,000 baked bricks. The resources needed to build the Ziggurat at Ur are staggering.

Moon goddess Nanna

The Ziggurat at Ur and the temple on its top were built around 2100 B.C.E. by the king Ur-Nammu of the Third Dynasty of Ur for the moon goddess Nanna, the divine patron of the city state. The structure would have been the highest point in the city by far and, like the spire of a medieval cathedral, would have been visible for miles around, a focal point for travelers and the pious alike. As the Ziggurat supported the temple of the patron god of the city of Ur, it is likely that it was the place where the citizens of Ur would

bring agricultural surplus and where they would go to receive their regular food allotments. In antiquity, to visit the ziggurat at Ur was to seek both spiritual and physical nourishment.



Figure **13.2.2.44**: Ziggurat at Ali Air Base Iraq, 2005 Ziggurat of Ur, partly restored, c. 2100 B.C.E. mudbrick and baked brick Tell el-Mukayyar, Iraq

Clearly the most important part of the ziggurat at Ur was the Nanna temple at its top, but this, unfortunately, has not survived. Some blue glazed bricks have been found which archaeologists suspect might have been part of the temple decoration. The lower parts of the ziggurat, which do survive, include amazing details of engineering and design. For instance, because the unbaked mud brick core of the temple would, according to the season, be alternatively more or less damp, the architects included holes through the baked exterior layer of the temple allowing water to evaporate from its core. Additionally, drains were built into the ziggurat's terraces to carry away the winter rains.

Hussein's assumption



Figure **13.2.2.45**: US soldiers decend the Ziggurat of Ur, Tell el-Mukayyar, Iraq (public domain)

The Ziggurat at Ur has been restored twice. The first restoration was in antiquity. The last Neo-Babylonian king, Nabodinus, apparently replaced the two upper terraces of the structure in the 6th century B.C.E. Some 2400 years later in the 1980s, Saddam Hussein restored the façade of the massive lower foundation of the ziggurat, including the three monumental staircases leading up to the gate at the first terrace. Since this most recent restoration, however, the Ziggurat at Ur has experienced some damage. During the recent war led by American and coalition forces, Saddam Hussein parked his MiG fighter jets next to the Ziggurat, believing that the bombers would spare them for fear of destroying the ancient site. Hussein's assumptions proved only partially true as the ziggurat sustained some damage from American and coalition bombardment.

Babylonian

The city of Babylon on the River Euphrates in southern Iraq first came to prominence as the royal city of King Hammurabi, and then again during the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

c. 1850 B.C.E. - 539 B.C.E.

Babylonia, an introduction

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

On the River Euphrates

The city of Babylon on the River Euphrates in southern Iraq is mentioned in documents of the late third millennium B.C.E. and first came to prominence as the royal city of King Hammurabi (about 1790-1750 B.C.E.). He established control over many other kingdoms stretching from the Persian Gulf to Syria. The British Museum holds one of the iconic artworks of this period, the so-called “Queen of the Night.”

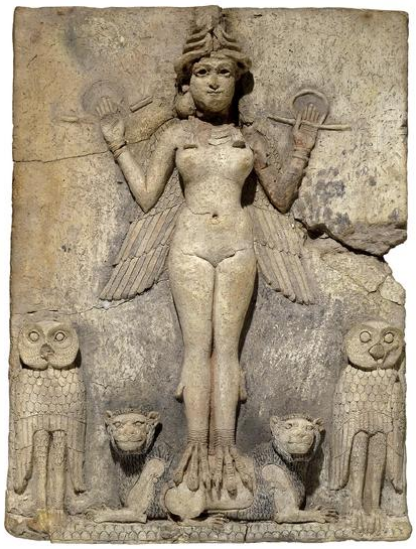


Figure **13.2.2.46**: *The “Queen of the Night” Relief*, 1800-1750 B.C.E., Old Babylonian, baked straw-tempered clay, 49 x 37 x 4.8 cm © Trustees of the British Museum

From around 1500 B.C.E. a dynasty of Kassite kings took control in Babylon and unified southern Iraq into the kingdom of Babylonia. The Babylonian cities were the centers of great scribal learning and produced writings on divination, astrology, medicine and mathematics. The Kassite kings corresponded with the Egyptian Pharaohs as revealed by cuneiform letters found at Amarna in Egypt, now in the British Museum.

Babylonia had an uneasy relationship with its northern neighbor Assyria and opposed its military expansion. In 689 B.C.E. Babylon was sacked by the Assyrians but as the city was highly regarded it was restored to its former status soon after. Other Babylonian cities also flourished; scribes in the city of Sippar probably produced the famous “Map of the World” (see image below).

Babylonian kings

After 612 B.C.E. the Babylonian kings Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II were able to claim much of the Assyrian empire and rebuilt Babylon on a grand scale. Nebuchadnezzar II rebuilt Babylon in the sixth century B.C.E. and it became the largest ancient settlement in Mesopotamia. There were two sets of fortified walls and massive palaces and religious buildings, including the central ziggurat tower. Nebuchadnezzar is also credited with the construction of the famous “Hanging Gardens.” However, the last Babylonian king Nabonidus (555-539 B.C.E.) was defeated by Cyrus II of Persia and the country was incorporated into the vast Achaemenid Persian Empire.



Figure **13.2.2.47**: *Map of the World*, Babylonian, c. 700-500 B.C.E., clay, 12.2 x 8.2 cm, probably from Sippar, southern Iraq © Trustees of the British Museum

Babylon remained an important center until the third century B.C.E., when Seleucia-on-the-Tigris was founded about ninety kilometers to the north-east. Under Antiochus I (281-261 B.C.E.) the new settlement became the official Royal City and the civilian population was ordered to move there. Nonetheless a village existed on the old city site until the eleventh century AD. Babylon was excavated by Robert Koldewey between 1899 and 1917 on behalf of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft. Since 1958 the Iraq Directorate-General of Antiquities has carried out further investigations. Unfortunately, the earlier levels are inaccessible beneath the high water table. Since 2003, our attention has been drawn to new threats to the archaeology of Mesopotamia, modern day Iraq.

For two thousand years the myth of Babylon has haunted the European imagination. The Tower of Babel and the Hanging Gardens, Belshazzar's Feast and the Fall of Babylon have inspired artists, writers, poets, philosophers and film makers.

Visiting Babylon

by Dr. Beth Harris, Lisa Ackerman and World Monuments Fund

Even today with international tourism waning in the face of military threats, Iraqis regularly visit this famous site.



Video **13.2.2.6**: This video was produced in cooperation with the World Monuments Fund.

Additional resources:

New York Times article on how the World Monuments Fund and CyArk are using laser technology to digitally preserve monuments in the Near East (December 29, 2015)

The Babylonian mind

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

What do the 60-minute clock and the zodiac have in common? The answer lies in ancient Babylon.



Video **13.2.2.7**: Video from The British Museum.

Law Code Stele of King Hammurabi

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Law is at the heart of modern civilization, and is often based on principles listed here nearly 4,000 years ago.



A stele is a vertical stone monument or marker often inscribed with text or with relief carving.

Figure 13.2.2.48: Babylonia at the time of Hammurabi

Hammurabi of the city state of Babylon conquered much of northern and western Mesopotamia and by 1776 B.C.E., he is the most far-reaching leader of Mesopotamian history, describing himself as “the king who made the four quarters of the earth obedient.” Documents show Hammurabi was a classic micro-manager, concerned with all aspects of his rule, and this is seen in his famous legal code, which survives in partial copies on this stele in the Louvre and on clay tablets (a stele is a vertical stone monument or marker often inscribed with text or with relief carving). We can also view this as a monument presenting Hammurabi as an exemplary king of justice.

What is interesting about the representation of Hammurabi on the legal code stele is that he is seen as receiving the laws from the god Shamash, who is seated, complete with thunderbolts coming from his shoulders. The emphasis here is Hammurabi’s role as pious theocrat, and that the laws themselves come from the god.

Additional resources:

Feature from the Louvre on the Stele

This work at the Louvre

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

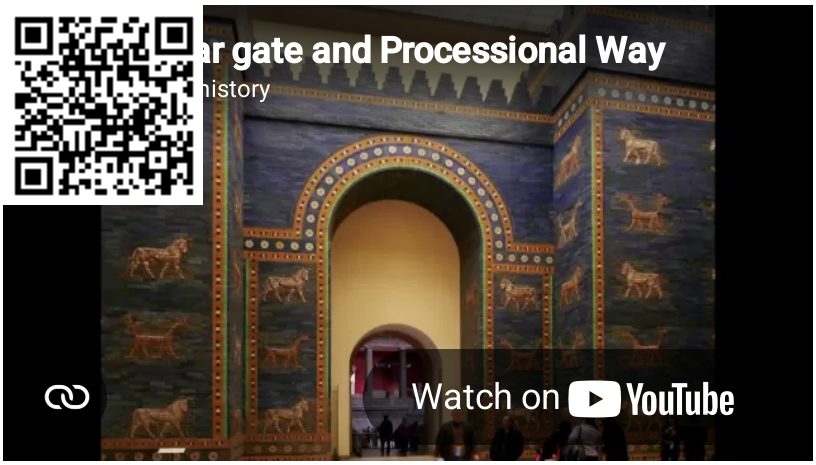


Figure **13.2.2.49**: More Smarthistory images…

The Ishtar Gate and Neo-Babylonian art and architecture

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

“I, Nebuchadnezzar … magnificently adorned them with luxurious splendor for all mankind to behold in awe.”



Video 13.2.2.9: Reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way, Babylon, c. 575 B.C.E., glazed mud brick (Pergamon Museum, Berlin)

The chronology of Mesopotamia is complicated. Scholars refer to places (Sumer, for example) and peoples (the Babylonians), but also empires (Babylonia) and unfortunately for students of the Ancient Near East these organizing principles do not always agree. The result is that we might, for example, speak of the very ancient Babylonians starting in the 1800s B.C.E. and then also the Neo-Babylonians more than a thousand years later. What came in between you ask? Well, quite a lot, but mostly the Kassites and the Assyrians.

The Assyrian Empire which had dominated the Near East came to an end at around 600 B.C.E. due to a number of factors including military pressure by the Medes (a pastoral mountain people, again from the Zagros mountain range), the Babylonians, and possibly also civil war.

A Neo-Babylonian dynasty

The Babylonians rose to power in the late 7th century and were heirs to the urban traditions which had long existed in southern Mesopotamia. They eventually ruled an empire as dominant in the Near East as that held by the Assyrians before them.



Figure 13.2.2.50: Map of the Neo-Babylonian Empire

This period is called Neo-Babylonian (or new Babylonia) because Babylon had also risen to power earlier and became an independent city-state, most famously during the reign of King Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.E.).

In the art of the Neo-Babylonian Empire we see an effort to invoke the styles and iconography of the 3rd millennium rulers of Babylonia. In fact, one Neo-Babylonian king, Nabonidus, found a statue of Sargon of Akkad, set it in a temple and provided it with

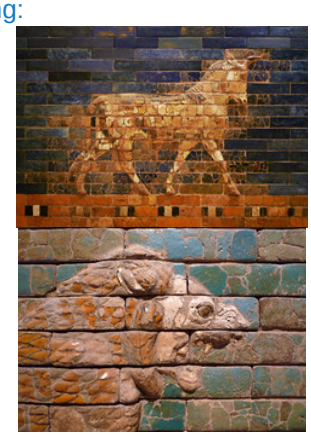
regular offerings.

Architecture

The Neo-Babylonians are most famous for their architecture, notably at their capital city, Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar (604-561 B.C.E.) largely rebuilt this ancient city including its walls and seven gates. It is also during this era that Nebuchadnezzar purportedly built the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon” for his wife because she missed the gardens of her homeland in Media (modern day Iran). Though mentioned by ancient Greek and Roman writers, the “Hanging Gardens” may, in fact, be legendary.

The Ishtar Gate (today in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin) was the most elaborate of the inner city gates constructed in Babylon in antiquity. The whole gate was covered in lapis lazuli glazed bricks which would have rendered the façade with a jewel-like shine. Alternating rows of lion and cattle march in a relief procession across the gleaming blue surface of the gate.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88673

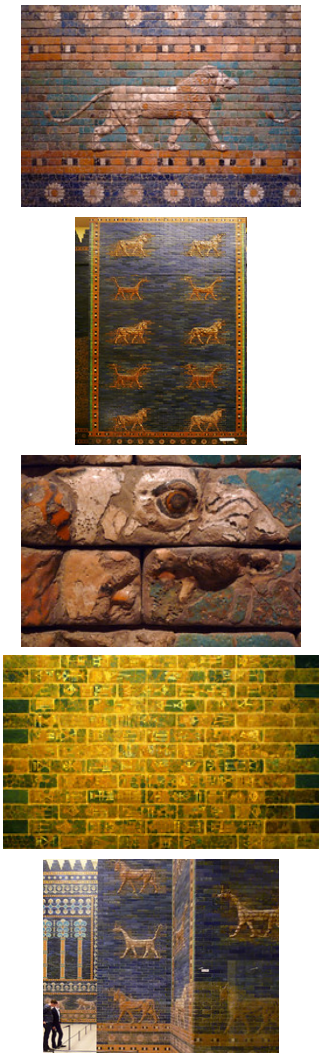


Figure 13.2.2.51: More Smarthistory images…

Towers of Babel

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Artists have depicted the Tower of Babel throughout the ages, a symbol of the extraordinary—but it did exist.



Video 13.2.2.10: Video from The British Museum.

Kassite art: Unfinished Kudurru

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

The Kassites controlled Babylonia for 400 years—now all that remains are these carved boundary stones.



Figure 13.2.2.52: Top level: Mesopotamian Gods in symbolic form, second level: animals and deities playing musical instruments (detail), "Unfinished" Kudurru, Kassite period, attributed to the reign of Melishipak, 1186–1172 B.C.E., found in Susa, where it had been taken as war booty in the 12th c. B.C.E. (Louvre) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Artistic exchange

During the 2nd millennium, the region of Mesopotamia, with Assyria in the north and Babylonia in the south, together with Egypt and the Hittite lands in what is now modern Turkey, grew strong and exercised surprisingly harmonious political relations.



Figure 13.2.2.53: Map of Kassite Babylonia (photo: **MapMaster**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

For art, this meant an easy exchange of ideas and techniques, and surviving texts reflect the development of "guilds" of craftsmen, such as jewelers, scribes and architects.

Babylonia at this time was held by the Kassites, originally from the Zagros mountains to the north, who sought to imitate Mesopotamian styles of art. Kudurru (boundary markers) are the only significant remains of the Kassites, many of which show Kassite gods and activities translated into the visual style of Mesopotamia.

Combining cultures

This Kudurru, considered unfinished because it lacks an inscription, would have marked the boundary of a plot of land, and probably would have listed the owner and even the person to whom the land was leased.



Figure **13.2.2.54**: “Unfinished” Kudurru, Kassite period, attributed to the reign of Melishipak, 1186–1172 B.C.E., found in Susa, where it had been taken as war booty in the 12th century B.C.E. (Louvre) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Although an object made and intended for Kassite use, it bears Babylonian style and imagery, especially the multiple strips or registers of characters and the stately procession of gods and lions.alt



Figure **13.2.2.55**: Animals and deities playing musical instruments (detail), “Unfinished” Kudurru, Kassite period, attributed to the reign of Melishipak, 1186–1172 B.C.E., found in Susa, where it had been taken as war booty in the 12th century B.C.E. (Louvre) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Kassites eventually succumbed to the general collapse of Mesopotamia around 1200 B.C.E. This regional collapse affected states as far away as mainland Greece, and as great as Egypt. This is a period characterized by famine, widespread political instability, roving mercenaries and, most likely, plague. It is often referred to as the first Dark Ages.

Additional resources:

This work at the Louvre

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













Figure 13.2.2.56: More Smarthistory images…

Assyrian

The Assyrian empire dominated Mesopotamia and all of the Near East for the first half of the first millennium.

1365 - 609 B.C.E.

Assyria, an introduction

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Led by aggressive warrior kings, Assyria dominated the fertile crescent for half a millennia, amassing vast wealth.



Figure 13.2.2.57: Map of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its expansions.

A military culture

The Assyrian empire dominated Mesopotamia and all of the Near East for the first half of the first millennium B.C.E., led by a series of highly ambitious and aggressive warrior kings. Assyrian society was entirely military, with men obliged to fight in the army at any time. State offices were also under the purview of the military.



Figure 13.2.2.58: Ashurbanipal slitting the throat of a lion from his chariot (detail), Ashurbanipal Hunting Lions, gypsum hall relief from the North Palace, Ninevah, c. 645-635 B.C.E., excavated by H. Rassam beginning in 1853 (British Museum) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Indeed, the culture of the Assyrians was brutal, the army seldom marching on the battlefield but rather terrorizing opponents into submission who, once conquered, were tortured, raped, beheaded, and flayed with their corpses publicly displayed. The Assyrians torched enemies' houses, salted their fields, and cut down their orchards.

Luxurious palaces

As a result of these fierce and successful military campaigns, the Assyrians acquired massive resources from all over the Near East which made the Assyrian kings very rich. The palaces were on an entirely new scale of size and glamour; one contemporary text describes the inauguration of the palace of Kalhu, built by Assurnasirpal II (who reigned in the early 9th century), to which almost 70,000 people were invited to banquet.



Figure 13.2.2.59: Lion pierced with arrows (detail), Lion Hunts of Ashurbanipal (ruled 669-630 B.C.E.), c. 645 B.C.E., gypsum,Neo-Assyrian, hall reliefs from Palace at Ninevah across the Tigris from present day Mosul, Iraq (British Museum) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Some of this wealth was spent on the construction of several gigantic and luxurious palaces spread throughout the region. The interior public reception rooms of Assyrian palaces were lined with large scale carved limestone reliefs which offer beautiful and terrifying images of the power and wealth of the Assyrian kings and some of the most beautiful and captivating images in all of ancient Near Eastern art.



Video 13.2.2.11: This silent video reconstructs the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud (near modern Mosul in northern Iraq) as it would have appeared during his reign in the ninth century B.C.E. The video moves from the outer courtyards of the palace into the throne room and beyond into more private spaces, perhaps used for rituals.(Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). **According to news sources, this important archaeological site was destroyed with bulldozers in March 2015 by the militants who occupy large portions of Syria and Iraq.**

Feats of bravery



Figure 13.2.2.60: Ashurbanipal taking aim at a lion (detail), Lion Hunts of Ashurbanipal (ruled 669-630 B.C.E.), c. 645 B.C.E., gypsum,Neo-Assyrian, hall reliefs from Palace at Ninevah across the Tigris from present day Mosul, Iraq (British Museum)

Like all Assyrian kings, Ashurbanipal decorated the public walls of his palace with images of himself performing great feats of bravery, strength and skill. Among these he included a lion hunt in which we see him coolly taking aim at a lion in front of his charging chariot, while his assistants fend off another lion attacking at the rear.

The destruction of Susa

One of the accomplishments Ashurbanipal was most proud of was the total destruction of the city of Susa.



Figure **13.2.2.61**: Sacking of Susa by Ashurbanipal, North Palace, Nineveh, 647 B.C.E.

In this relief, we see Ashurbanipal's troops destroying the walls of Susa with picks and hammers while fire rages within the walls of the city.

Military victories & exploits



Figure **13.2.2.62**: Wall relief from Nimrud, the sieging of a city, likely in Mesopotamia, c. 728 B.C.E. (British Museum)

In the Central Palace at Nimrud, the Neo-Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III illustrates his military victories and exploits, including the siege of a city in great detail.

In this scene we see one soldier holding a large screen to protect two archers who are taking aim. The topography includes three different trees and a roaring river, most likely setting the scene in and around the Tigris or Euphrates rivers.

Assyrian Sculpture

by The British Museum and Arathi.Menon

Leveraging their enormous wealth, the Assyrians built great temples and palaces full of art, all paid for by conquest.



Figure **13.2.2.63**: *Protective Spirit Relief* from the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II, 883-859 B.C.E., Neo-Assyrian, alabaster, 224 x 127 x 12 cm (extant), Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), northern Iraq © Trustees of the British Museum. One of a pair which guarded an entrance into the private apartments of Ashurnasirpal II. The figure of a man with wings may be the supernatural creature called an apkallu in cuneiform texts. He wears a tasselled kilt and a fringed and embroidered robe. His curled moustache, long hair and beard are typical of figures of this date. Across the body runs Ashurnasirpal's "Standard Inscription," which records some of the king's titles.

Although Assyrian civilization, centred in the fertile Tigris valley of northern Iraq, can be traced back to at least the third millennium B.C.E., some of its most spectacular remains date to the first millennium B.C.E. when Assyria dominated the Middle East.

Ashurnasirpal II

The Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.E.) established Nimrud as his capital. Many of the principal rooms and courtyards of his palace were decorated with gypsum slabs carved in relief with images of the king as high priest and as victorious hunter and warrior. Many of these are displayed in the British Museum.



Figure **13.2.2.64**: *Statue of Ashurnasirpal II*, Neo-Assyrian, 883-859 B.C.E., from Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), northern Iraq, magnesite, 113 x 32 x 15 cm (The British Museum) This rare example of an Assyrian statue in the round was placed in the Temple of Ishtar Sharrat-niphi to remind the goddess Ishtar of the king's piety. Ashurnasirpal holds a sickle in his right hand, of a kind which gods are sometimes depicted using to fight monsters. The mace in his left hand shows his authority as vice-regent of the supreme god Ashur. The carved cuneiform inscription across his chest proclaims the king's titles and genealogy, and mentions his expedition westward to the Mediterranean Sea.

Ashurnasirpal II, whose name (Ashur-nasir-apli) means, “the god Ashur is the protector of the heir,” came to the Assyrian throne in 883 B.C.E. He was one of a line of energetic kings whose campaigns brought Assyria great wealth and established it as one of the Near East’s major powers.

Ashurnasirpal mounted at least fourteen military campaigns, many of which were to the north and east of Assyria. Local rulers sent the king rich presents and resources flowed into the country. This wealth was use to undertake impressive building campaigns in a new capital city created at Kalhu (modern Nimrud). Here, a citadel mound was constructed and crowned with temples and the so-called North-West Palace. Military successes led to further campaigns, this time to the west, and close links were established with states in the northern Levant. Fortresses were established on the rivers Tigris and Euphrates and staffed with garrisons.

By the time Ashurnasirpal died in 859 B.C.E., Assyria had recovered much of the territory that it had lost around 1100 B.C.E. as a result of the economic and political problems at the end of the Middle Assyrian period.

Relief panels



Figure **13.2.2.65**: *The Siege and Capture of the City of Lachish* in 701 B.C.E., panel 8-9, South-West Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh, northern Iraq, Neo-Assyrian, c. 700-681 B.C.E., alabaster, 182.880 x 193.040 cm (The British Museum) Part of a series which decorated the walls of a room in the palace of King Sennacherib (reigned 704-681 B.C.E.). The Assyrian soldiers continue the attack on Lachish. They carry away a throne, a chariot and other goods from the palace of the governor of the city. In front and below them some of the people of Lachish, carrying what goods they can salvage, move through a rocky landscape studded with vines, fig and perhaps olive trees. Sennacherib records that as a result of the whole campaign he deported 200,150 people. This was standard Assyrian policy, and was adopted by the Babylonians, the next ruling empire.

Later kings continued to embellish Nimrud, including Ashurnasirpal II’s son, Shalmaneser III who erected the Black Obelisk depicting the presentation of tribute from Israel.



Figure **13.2.2.66**: *The Dying Lion*, panel from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, c. 645 B.C.E., Neo-Assyrian, alabaster, 16.5 x 30 cm, Nineveh, northern Iraq © Trustees of the British Museum. Part of a series of wall panels that showed a royal hunt. Struck by one of the king’s arrows, blood gushes from the lion’s mouth. There was a very long tradition of royal lion hunts in Mesopotamia, with similar scenes known from the late fourth millennium B.C.E.

During the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Assyrian kings conquered the region from the Persian Gulf to the borders of Egypt. The most ambitious building of this period was the palace of king Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.E.) at Nineveh. The reliefs from Nineveh in the British Museum include a depiction of the siege and capture of Lachish in Judah.

The finest carvings, however, are the famous lion hunt reliefs from the North Palace at Nineveh belonging to Ashurbanipal (668-631 B.C.E.). The scenes were originally picked out with paint, which occasionally survives, and work like modern comic books, starting the story at one end and following it along the walls to the conclusion.

The Assyrians used a form of gypsum for the reliefs and carved it using iron and copper tools. The stone is easily eroded when exposed to wind and rain and when it was used outside, the reliefs are presumed to have been protected by varnish or paint. It is possible that this form of decoration was adopted by Assyrian kings following their campaigns to the west, where stone reliefs were used in Neo-Hittite cities like Carchemish. The Assyrian reliefs were part of a wider decorative scheme which also included wall paintings and glazed bricks.

The reliefs were first used extensively by king Ashurnasirpal II (about 883-859 B.CE..) at Kalhu (Nimrud). This tradition was maintained in the royal buildings in the later capital cities of Khorsabad and Nineveh.

Lamassu from the citadel of Sargon II

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS

Winged, human-headed bulls served as guardians of the city and its palace—walking by, they almost seem to move.



These sculptures were excavated by P.-E. Botta in 1843-44.

Backstory

The lamassu in museums today (including the Louvre, shown in our video, as well the British Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad, and others) came from various ancient Assyrian sites located in modern-day Iraq. They were moved to their current institutional homes by archaeologists who excavated these sites in the mid-19th century. However, many ancient Assyrian cities and palaces—and their gates, with intact lamassu figures and other sculptures—remain as important archaeological sites in their original locations in Iraq.

In 2015, a chilling video circulated online, showed people associated with ISIS destroying ancient artifacts in both the museum in Mosul, Iraq and at the nearby ancient archaeological site of ancient Nineveh. Their targets included the lamassu figures that stood at one of the many ceremonial gates to this important ancient Assyrian city. Scholars believe that this particular gate, which dates to the reign of Sennacherib around 700 B.C.E., was built to honor the god Nergal, an Assyrian god of war and plague who ruled over the underworld. Islamic State representatives claimed that these statues were “idols” that needed to be destroyed. The video features footage of men using jackhammers, drills, and sledgehammers to demolish the lamassu.

The Nergal gate is only one of many artifacts and sites that have been demolished or destroyed by ISIS over the past decade. Despite the existence of other examples in museums around the world, the permanent loss of these objects is a permanent loss to global cultural heritage and to the study of ancient Assyrian art and architecture.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

"Historians Pore Over ISIS Video of Smashed Statues for Clues to What's Been Lost," *The New York Times*, February 26, 2015.

"ISIS Destroys Mosul Museum Collection and Ancient Assyrian Statues," *Hyperallergic*, February 26, 2015.

"Isis fighters destroy ancient artefacts at Mosul museum," *The Guardian*, February 26, 2015.

"ISIS has turned the destruction of ancient artifacts into entertainment," *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 2015.

P. G. Finch, "The Winged Bulls at the Nergal Gate of Nineveh," *Iraq*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring, 1948), pp. 9-18 (read for free online via JSTOR)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

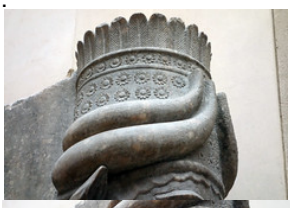





















Figure 13.2.2.67: More Smarthistory images…

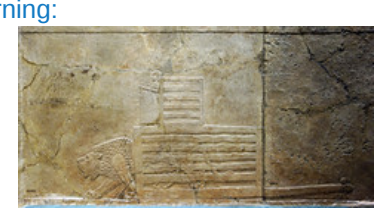
Ashurbanipal Hunting Lions

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS

Only the king was permitted to kill lions—and doing so signified his power and ability to keep nature at bay.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88673



Figure **13.2.2.68**: More Smarthistory images…

The palace decoration of Ashurbanipal

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.2.2.14**

Ashurbanipal wasn't just an Assyrian king, he was a propaganda king. The layout, decorations and even the landscaping of his palaces were all made to point to one major fact – he was more powerful than you.

Assyria vs Elam: The battle of Til Tuba

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Reading Assyrian art isn't easy — but it's always worth it.



Video 13.2.2.15

The battle of Til Tuba reliefs are among some of the great masterpieces of ancient Assyrian art. The movement and details are truly stunning. That said, the scenes actually being depicted are anything but easy on the eye.

Join curator Gareth Brereton as he walks you through the reliefs that once decorated the last great king of Assyria's royal palace.

Persian

Famous for their monumental architecture, Persian kings established numerous centers in their vast empire such as Susa and Persepolis (today, in Iran).

6th century B.C.E.

Ancient Persia, an introduction

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

The heart of ancient Persia is in what is now southwest Iran, in the region called the Fars. In the second half of the 6th century B.C.E., the Persians (also called the Achaemenids) created an enormous empire reaching from the Indus Valley to Northern Greece and from Central Asia to Egypt.

A tolerant empire

Although the surviving literary sources on the Persian empire were written by ancient Greeks who were the sworn enemies of the Persians and highly contemptuous of them, the Persians were in fact quite tolerant and ruled a multi-ethnic empire. Persia was the first empire known to have acknowledged the different faiths, languages and political organizations of its subjects.



Figure **13.2.2.69**: The Persian Empire, 490 B.C.E.

This tolerance for the cultures under Persian control carried over into administration. In the lands which they conquered, the Persians continued to use indigenous languages and administrative structures. For example, the Persians accepted hieroglyphic script written on papyrus in Egypt and traditional Babylonian record keeping in cuneiform in Mesopotamia. The Persians must have been very proud of this new approach to empire as can be seen in the representation of the many different peoples in the reliefs from Persepolis, a city founded by Darius the Great in the 6th century B.C.E.



Figure **13.2.2.70**: Gate of all Nations, Persepolis (photo: **youngrobv**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Apadana

Persepolis included a massive columned hall used for receptions by the Kings, called the Apadana. This hall contained 72 columns and two monumental stairways.



Figure **13.2.2.71**: Assyrians with Rams, Apadana, Persepolis (**photo**: CC BY-SA 3.0)

The walls of the spaces and stairs leading up to the reception hall were carved with hundreds of figures, several of which illustrated subject peoples of various ethnicities, bringing tribute to the Persian king.



Figure **13.2.2.72**: View of the eastern stairway and columns of the Apadana (Audience Hall) at Persepolis, Iran, 5th century B.C.E. (The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

Conquered by Alexander the Great

The Persian Empire was, famously, conquered by Alexander the Great. Alexander no doubt was impressed by the Persian system of absorbing and retaining local language and traditions as he imitated this system himself in the vast lands he won in battle. Indeed, Alexander made a point of burying the last Persian emperor, Darius III, in a lavish and respectful way in the royal tombs near Persepolis. This enabled Alexander to claim title to the Persian throne and legitimize his control over the greatest empire of the Ancient Near East.

Additional resources:

Persepolis from the air (video from The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

The Apadana from the University of Chicago

Persepolis from the University of Chicago

The Achaemenid Persian Empire on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art Museum

Persepolis (video from Unesco)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.2.73: More Smarthistory images…

The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video 13.2.2.16: The Cyrus Cylinder, after 539 B.C.E., fired clay, 21.9 cm long (video from the British Museum)

The Cyrus Cylinder is one of the most famous objects to have survived from the ancient world. It was inscribed in Babylonian cuneiform on the orders of Persian King Cyrus the Great (559-530 B.C.E.) after he captured Babylon in 539 B.C.E. It was found in Babylon in modern Iraq in 1879 during a British Museum excavation.

Cyrus claims to have achieved this with the aid of Marduk, the god of Babylon. He then describes measures of relief he brought to the inhabitants of the city, and tells how he returned a number of images of gods, which Nabonidus had collected in Babylon, to their proper temples throughout Mesopotamia and western Iran. At the same time he arranged for the restoration of these temples, and organized the return to their homelands of a number of people who had been held in Babylonia by the Babylonian kings.

Although the Jews are not mentioned in this document, their return to Palestine following their deportation by Nebuchadnezzar II, was part of this policy.

The cylinder is often referred to as the first bill of human rights as it appears to encourage freedom of worship throughout the Persian Empire and to allow deported people to return to their homelands, but it in fact reflects a long tradition in Mesopotamia where, from as early as the third millennium B.C.E., kings began their reigns with declarations of reforms.

Capital of a column from the audience hall of the palace of Darius I, Susa

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS

This massive capital is very different from those of Greece, and suggests the frightening power of the Persian Empire.



Video **13.2.2.17**: Capital of a column from the audience hall of the palace of Darius I, Susa, c. 510 B.C.E., Achaemenid, Tell of the Apadana, Susa, Iran (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:























Figure **13.2.2.74**: More Smarthistory images…

Persepolis: The Audience Hall of Darius and Xerxes

by Dr. Jeffery A. Becker

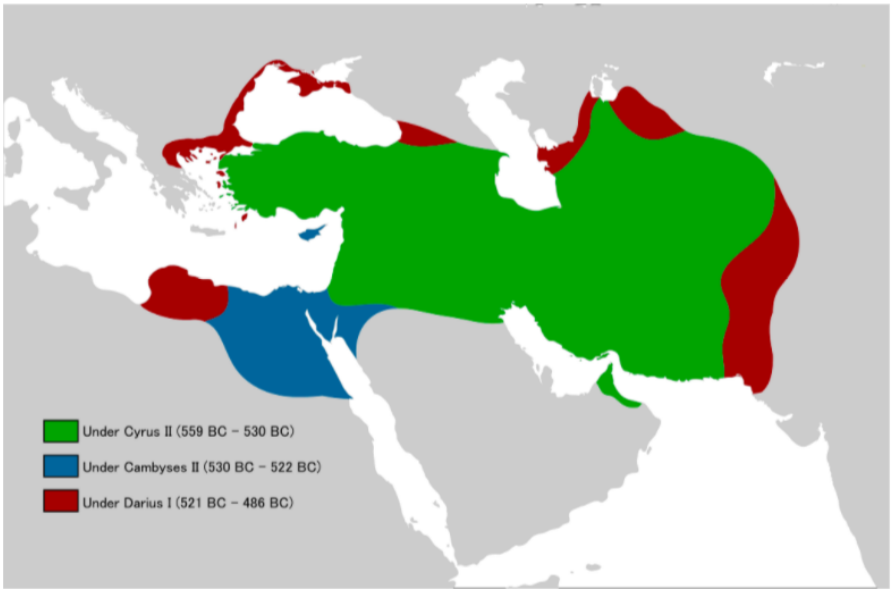


Figure **13.2.2.75**: Growth of the Achaemenid Empire under different kings (**source**)

By the early fifth century B.C.E. the Achaemenid (Persian) Empire ruled an estimated 44% of the human population of planet Earth. Through regional administrators the Persian kings controlled a vast territory which they constantly sought to expand. Famous for monumental architecture, Persian kings established numerous monumental centers, among those is Persepolis (today, in Iran). The great audience hall of the Persian kings Darius and Xerxes presents a visual microcosm of the Achaemenid empire—making clear, through sculptural decoration, that the Persian king ruled over all of the subjugated ambassadors and vassals (who are shown bringing tribute in an endless eternal procession).



Figure 13.2.2.76: Kylix depicting a Greek hoplite slaying a Persian inside, by the Triptolemos painter, 5th century B.C.E. (National Museums of Scotland)

Overview of the Achaemenid Empire

The Achaemenid Empire (First Persian Empire) was an imperial state of Western Asia founded by Cyrus the Great and flourishing from c. 550-330 B.C.E. The empire's territory was vast, stretching from the Balkan peninsula in the west to the Indus River valley in the east. The Achaemenid Empire is notable for its strong, centralized bureaucracy that had, at its head, a king and relied upon regional satraps (regional governors).

A number of formerly independent states were made subject to the Persian Empire. These states covered a vast territory from central Asia and Afghanistan in the east to Asia Minor, Egypt, Libya, and Macedonia in the west. The Persians famously attempted to expand their empire further to include mainland Greece but they were ultimately defeated in this attempt. The Persian kings are noted for their penchant for monumental art and architecture. In creating monumental centers, including Persepolis, the Persian kings employed art and architecture to craft messages that helped to reinforce their claims to power and depict, iconographically, Persian rule.

Overview of Persepolis

Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Persian empire (c. 550-330 B.C.E.), lies some 60 km northeast of Shiraz, Iran. The earliest archaeological remains of the city date to c. 515 B.C.E. Persepolis, a Greek toponym meaning "city of the Persians", was known to the Persians as Pārsa and was an important city of the ancient world, renowned for its monumental art and architecture. The site was excavated by German archaeologists Ernst Herzfeld, Friedrich Krefter, and Erich Schmidt between 1931 and 1939. Its remains are striking even today, leading UNESCO to register the site as a World Heritage Site in 1979.

Persepolis was intentionally founded in the Marvdašt Plain during the later part of the sixth century B.C.E. It was marked as a special site by Darius the Great (reigned 522-486 B.C.E.) in 518 B.C.E. when he indicated the location of a "Royal Hill" that would serve as a ceremonial center and citadel for the city. This was an action on Darius' part that was similar to the earlier king Cyrus the Great who had founded the city of Pasargadae. Darius the Great directed a massive building program at Persepolis that would continue under his successors Xerxes (r. 486-466 B.C.E.) and Artaxerxes I (r. 466-424 B.C.E.). Persepolis would remain an important site until it was sacked, looted, and burned under Alexander the Great of Macedon in 330 B.C.E.

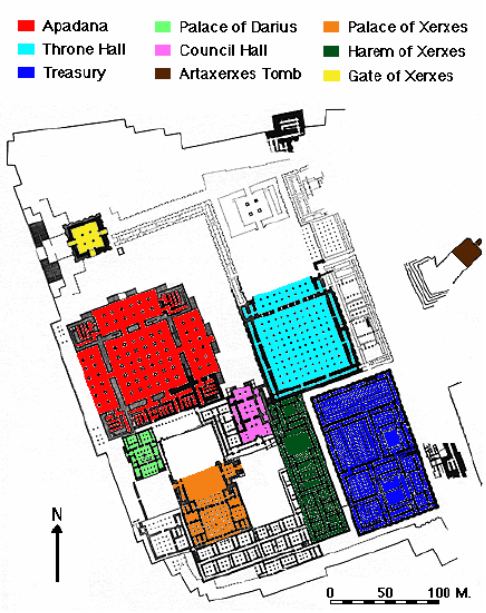


Figure **13.2.2.77**: Plan of Persepolis (**source**)

Darius' program at Persepolis including the building of a massive terraced platform covering 125,000 square meters of the promontory. This platform supported four groups of structures: residential quarters, a treasury, ceremonial palaces, and fortifications. Scholars continue to debate the purpose and nature of the site. Primary sources indicate that Darius saw himself building an important stronghold. Some scholars suggest that the site has a sacred connection to the god Mithra (Mehr), as well as links to the Nowruz, the Persian New Year's festival. More general readings see Persepolis as an important administrative and economic center of the Persian empire.

Apādana



Figure **13.2.2.78**: Bull Capital from Persepolis, Apādana, Persepolis (Fars, Iran), c. 520-465 B.C.E. (National Museum of Iran) (photo: **s1ingshot**)

The Apādana palace is a large ceremonial building, likely an audience hall with an associated portico. The audience hall itself is hypostyle in its plan, meaning that the roof of the structure is supported by columns. Apādana is the Persian term equivalent to the Greek hypostyle (Ancient Greek: ὑπόστυλος hypóstȳlos). The footprint of the Apādana is c. 1,000 square meters; originally 72 columns, each standing to a height of 24 meters, supported the roof (only 14 columns remain standing today). The column capitals assumed the form of either twin-headed bulls (above), eagles or lions, all animals represented royal authority and kingship.



Figure **13.2.2.79**: Apādana, Persepolis (Fars, Iran), c. 520-465 B.C.E. (photo: **Alan Cordova**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The king of the Achaemenid Persian empire is presumed to have received guests and tribute in this soaring, imposing space. To that end a sculptural program decorates monumental stairways on the north and east. The theme of that program is one that pays tribute to the Persian king himself as it depicts representatives of 23 subject nations bearing gifts to the king.

The Apādana stairs and sculptural program

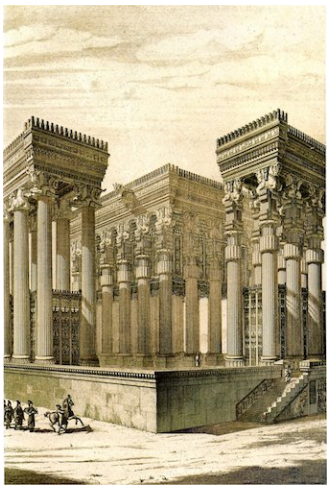


Figure **13.2.2.80**: 19th century reconstruction of the Apādana, Persepolis (Fars, Iran) by Charles Chipiez

The monumental stairways that approach the Apādana from the north and the east were adorned with registers of relief sculpture that depicted representatives of the twenty-three subject nations of the Persian empire bringing valuable gifts as tribute to the king. The sculptures form a processional scene, leading some scholars to conclude that the reliefs capture the scene of actual, annual tribute processions—perhaps on the occasion of the Persian New Year–that took place at Persepolis. The relief program of the northern stairway was perhaps completed c. 500-490 B.C.E. The two sets of stairway reliefs mirror and complement each other. Each program has a central scene of the enthroned king flanked by his attendants and guards.



Figure 13.2.2.81: East stairway, Apādana, Persepolis (Fars, Iran), c. 520-465 B.C.E.

Noblemen wearing elite outfits and military apparel are also present. The representatives of the twenty-three nations, each led by an attendant, bring tribute while dressed in costumes suggestive of their land of origin. Margaret Root interprets the central scenes of the enthroned king as the focal point of the overall composition, perhaps even reflecting events that took place within the Apādana itself.



Figure 13.2.2.82: An Armenian tribute bearer carrying a metal vessel with Homa (griffin) handles, relief from the eastern stairs of the Apādana in Persepolis (Fars, Iran), c. 520-465 B.C.E. (photo: **Aryamahasattva**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The relief program of the Apādana serves to reinforce and underscore the power of the Persian king and the breadth of his dominion. The motif of subjugated peoples contributing their wealth to the empire's central authority serves to visually cement this political dominance. These processional scenes may have exerted influence beyond the Persian sphere, as some scholars have discussed the possibility that Persian relief sculpture from Persepolis may have influenced Athenian sculptors of the fifth century B.C.E. who were tasked with creating the Ionic frieze of the **Parthenon** in Athens. In any case, the Apādana, both as a building and as an ideological tableau, make clear and strong statements about the authority of the Persian king and present a visually unified idea of the immense Achaemenid empire.

Additional resources:

UNESCO video on Persepolis

Persepolis on Livius.org

Persepolis relief in the British Museum

Persepolis from the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

John Boardman, *Persia and the West: an archaeological investigation of the genesis of Achaemenid art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000).

John Curtis, Nigel Tallis, and Béatrice André-Salvini, *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2005).

John Curtis, *The world of Achaemenid Persia: history, art and society in Iran and the ancient Near East: proceedings of a conference at the British Museum*, 29th September-1st October 2005 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

R. Schmitt and D. Stronach, "Apadana," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, II/2, pp. 145-48

A. Shapur Shahbazi, "Persepolis," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2010

Wolfram Kleiss, "Zur Entwicklung der achaemenidischen Palastarchitektur," *AMI* 14 (1981) pp. 199-211.

Margaret Cool Root, "The king and kingship in Achaemenid art: essays on the creation of an iconography of empire" (*Acta Iranica*; 19) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979).

Margaret Cool Root, "The Parthenon Frieze and the Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis: Reassessing a Programmatic Relationship," *American Journal of Archaeology* 89.1 (1985) pp. 103–122.

Erich Friedrich Schmidt, *Persepolis* 3 v. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953-1970).

R. Schmitt, "Achaemenid Dynasty," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/4, pp. 414-426

A. S. Shahbazi, "The Persepolis "Treasury Reliefs' Once More," *AMI* 9 (1976) pp. 151-56.

Robert E. Mortimer Wheeler, *Flames over Persepolis: Turning Point in History* (London, 1968).

13.2.2: Ancient Near East is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.2: Ancient Near East** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.3: Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted more than 3000 years, showing an incredible continuity.

c. 5000 - 30 B.C.E.

Beginner's guide: Ancient Egypt

Egypt's impact on later cultures was immense.

c. 5000 - 30 B.C.E.

While today we marvel at the glittering treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun, the sublime reliefs in New Kingdom tombs, and the serene beauty of Old Kingdom statuary, it is important to remember that the majority of these works were never intended to be seen.

Ancient Egypt, an introduction

by DR. AMY CALVERT



Figure **13.2.3.1**: Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, Old Kingdom, c. 2675-2625 B.C.E. Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

Egypt's impact on later cultures was immense. You could say that Egypt provided the building blocks for Greek and Roman culture, and, through them, influenced all of the Western tradition. Today, Egyptian imagery, concepts, and perspectives are found everywhere; you will find them in architectural forms, on money, and in our day to day lives. Many cosmetic surgeons, for example, use the silhouette of Queen Nefertiti (whose name means "the beautiful one has come") in their advertisements.

Longevity

Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted for more than 3000 years and showed an incredible amount of continuity. That is more than 15 times the age of the United States, and consider how often our culture shifts; less than 10 years ago, there was no Facebook, Twitter, or Youtube.

While today we consider the Greco-Roman period to be in the distant past, it should be noted that Cleopatra VII's reign (which ended in 30 B.C.E.) is closer to our own time than it was to that of the construction of the pyramids of Giza. It took humans nearly 4000 years to build something–anything–taller than the Great Pyramids. Contrast that span to the modern era; we get excited when a record lasts longer than a decade.

Consistency and stability

Egypt's stability is in stark contrast to the Ancient Near East of the same period, which endured an overlapping series of cultures and upheavals with amazing regularity. The earliest royal monuments, such as the Narmer Palette carved around 3100 B.C.E., display identical royal costumes and poses as those seen on later rulers, even Ptolemaic kings on their temples 3000 years later.



Figure **13.2.3.2**: Palette of Narmer, c. 3000-2920 B.C.E. (left) and Ramses III smiting at Medinet Habu (1160 B.C.E.) (right)

A vast amount of Egyptian imagery, especially royal imagery that was governed by decorum (a sense of what was 'appropriate'), remained stupefyingly consistent throughout its history. This is why, especially to the untrained eye, their art appears extremely static—and in terms of symbols, gestures, and the way the body is rendered, it was. It was intentional. The Egyptians were aware of their consistency, which they viewed as stability, divine balance, and clear evidence of the correctness of their culture.

This consistency was closely related to a fundamental belief that depictions had an impact beyond the image itself—tomb scenes of the deceased receiving food, or temple scenes of the king performing perfect rituals for the gods—were functionally causing those things to occur in the divine realm. If the image of the bread loaf was omitted from the deceased's table, they had no bread in the Afterlife; if the king was depicted with the incorrect ritual implement, the ritual was incorrect and this could have dire consequences. This belief led to an active resistance to change in codified depictions.

The earliest recorded tourist graffiti on the planet came from a visitor from the time of Ramses II who left their appreciative mark at the already 1300-year-old site of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara, the earliest of the massive royal stone monuments. They were understandably impressed by the works of their ancestors and endeavored to continue that ancient legacy.

Geography

Egypt is a land of duality and cycles, both in topography and culture. The geography is almost entirely rugged, barren desert, except for an explosion of green that straddles either side of the Nile as it flows the length of the country. The river emerges from far to the south, deep in Africa, and empties into the Mediterranean sea in the north after spreading from a single channel into a fan-shaped system, known as a delta, at its northernmost section.

The influence of this river on Egyptian culture and development cannot be overstated—without its presence, the civilization would have been entirely different. The Nile provided not only a constant source of life-giving water, but created the fertile lands that fed the growth of this unique (and uniquely resilient) culture.



Figure **13.2.3.3**: View from the high peak of the Theban hills showing the sharp delineation between the lush Valley and the barren desert. Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

Each year, fed by melting snows in the far-off headlands, the river overflowed its banks in an annual flood that covered the ground with a rich, black silt and produced incredibly fertile fields. The Egyptians referred to this as Kemet, the "black lands," and contrasted this dense, dark soil against the Deshret, the "red lands" of the sterile desert; the line between these zones was (and in most cases still is) a literal line. The visual effect is stark, appearing almost artificial in its precision.

Time – cyclical and linear

The annual inundation of the Nile was also a reliable, and measurable, cycle that helped form their concept of the passage of time. In fact, the calendar we use today is derived from one developed by the ancient Egyptians. They divided the year into 3 seasons: akhet "inundation," peret "growing/emergence." and shemw "harvest." Each season was, in turn, divided into four 30-day months. Although this annual cycle,

paired with the daily solar cycle that is so evident in the desert, led to a powerful drive to see the universe in cyclical time, this idea existed simultaneously with the reality of linear time.

These two concepts—the cyclical and the linear—came to be associated with two of their primary deities: Osiris, the eternal lord of the dead, and Re, the sun god who was reborn with each dawn.

Early development: The Predynastic period

The civilization of Egypt obviously did not spring fully formed from the Nile mud; although the massive pyramids at Giza may appear to the uninitiated to have appeared out of nowhere, they were founded on thousands of years of cultural and technological development and experimentation. “Dynastic” Egypt—sometimes referred to as “Pharaonic” (after “pharaoh,” the Greek title of the Egyptian kings derived from the Egyptian title *per aA*, “Great House”) which was the time when the country was largely unified under a single ruler, begins around 3100 B.C.E.

The period before this, lasting from about 5000 B.C.E. until unification, is referred to as Predynastic by modern scholars. Prior to this were thriving Paleolithic and Neolithic groups, stretching back hundreds of thousands of years, descended from northward migrating *homo erectus* who settled along the Nile Valley. During the Predynastic period, ceramics, figurines, mace heads, and other artifacts such as slate palettes used for grinding pigments, begin to appear, as does imagery that will become iconic during the Pharaonic era—we can see the first hints of what is to come.

Dynasties

It is important to recognize that the dynastic divisions modern scholars use were not used by the ancients themselves. These divisions were created in the first Western-style history of Egypt, written by an Egyptian priest named Manetho in the 3rd century B.C.E. Each of the 33 dynasties included a series of rulers usually related by kinship or the location of their seat of power. Egyptian history is also divided into larger chunks, known as “kingdoms” and “periods,” to distinguish times of strength and unity from those of change, foreign rule, or disunity.

Period	Dates
Old Kingdom (the ‘pyramid age’)	c. 2649 – 2150 B.C.E.
First Intermediate Period	c. 2150 – 2030 B.C.E.
Middle Kingdom	c. 2030 – 1640 B.C.E.
Second Intermediate Period (Northern Delta region ruled by Asiatics)	c. 1640 – 1540 B.C.E.
New Kingdom	c. 1550 – 1070 B.C.E.
Third Intermediate Period	c. 1070 – 713 B.C.E.
Late Period (a series from foreign dynasties, including Nubian, Libyan and Persian rulers)	c. 712 – 332 B.C.E.
Ptolemaic Period (ruled by Greco-Romans)	c. 332-30 B.C.E.

Figure **13.2.3.4**

The Egyptians themselves referred to their history in relation to the ruler of the time. Years were generally recorded as the regnal dates (from the Latin regnum, meaning kingdom or rule) of the ruling king, so that with each new reign, the numbers began anew. Later kings recorded the names of their predecessors in vast “king-lists” on the walls of their temples and depicted themselves offering to the rulers who came before them—one of the best known examples is in the temple of Seti I at Abydos.

These lists were often condensed, with some rulers (such as the contentious and disruptive Akhenaten) and even entire dynasties omitted from the record; they are not truly history, rather they are a form of ancestor worship, a celebration of the consistency of kingship of which the current ruler was a part.

The pharaoh—not just a king

Kings in Egypt were complex intermediaries that straddled the terrestrial and divine realms. They were, obviously, living humans, but upon accession to the throne, they also embodied the eternal office of kingship itself. The ka, or spirit, of kingship was often depicted as a separate entity standing behind the human ruler. This divine aspect of the office of kingship was what gave authority to the human ruler. The living king was associated with the god Horus, the powerful, virile falcon-headed god who was believed to bestow the throne to the first human king.

Horus’s immensely important father, Osiris, was the lord of the underworld. One of the original divine rulers of Egypt, this deity embodied the promise of regeneration. Cruelly murdered by his brother Seth, the god of the chaotic desert, Osiris was revived through the potent magic of his wife Isis. Through her knowledge and skill, Osiris was able to sire the miraculous Horus, who avenged his father and threw his criminal uncle off the throne to take his rightful place.

Osiris became ruler of the realm of the dead, the eternal source of regeneration in the Afterlife. Deceased kings were identified with this god, creating a cycle where the dead king fused with the divine king of the dead and his successor “defeated” death to take his place on the throne as Horus.

Additional resources:

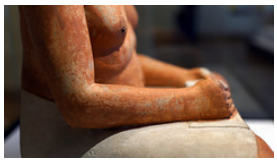
For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

An introduction to ancient Egypt from the British Museum

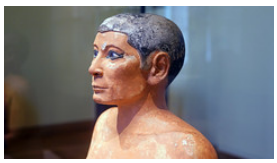
Egyptian art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

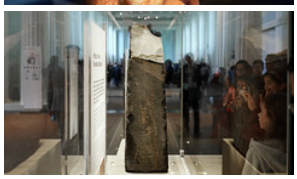
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











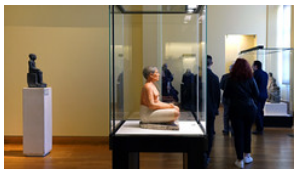






Figure 13.2.3.5: More Smarthistory images…

Ancient Egyptian art

by DR. AMY CALVERT

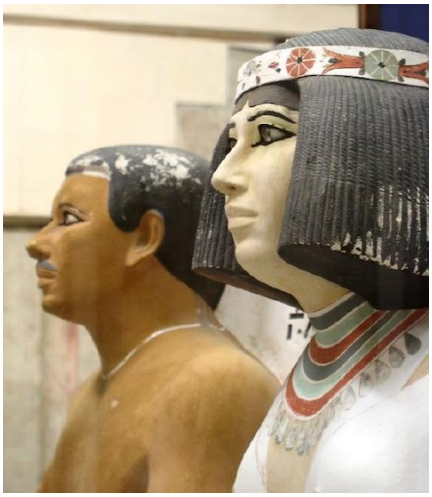


Figure 13.2.3.6: Beautifully preserved life-size painted limestone funerary sculptures of Prince Rahotep and his wife Nofret. Note the lifelike eyes of inlaid rock crystal (Old Kingdom). Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

Appreciating and understanding ancient Egyptian art

Ancient Egyptian art must be viewed from the standpoint of the ancient Egyptians to understand it. The somewhat static, usually formal, strangely abstract, and often blocky nature of much Egyptian imagery has, at times, led to unfavorable comparisons with later, and much more 'naturalistic,' Greek or Renaissance art. However, the art of the Egyptians served a vastly different purpose than that of these later cultures.

Art not meant to be seen

While today we marvel at the glittering treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun, the sublime reliefs in New Kingdom tombs, and the serene beauty of Old Kingdom statuary, it is imperative to remember that the majority of these works were never intended to be seen—that was simply not their purpose.



Figure **13.2.3.7**: Painted sunk relief of the king being embraced by a goddess. Tomb of Amenherkhepshef (QV 55) (New Kingdom) Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

The function of Egyptian art

These images, whether statues or relief, were designed to benefit a divine or deceased recipient. Statuary provided a place for the recipient to manifest and receive the benefit of ritual action. Most statues show a formal frontality, meaning they are arranged straight ahead, because they were designed to face the ritual being performed before them. Many statues were also originally placed in recessed niches or other architectural settings—contexts that would make frontality their expected and natural mode.

Statuary, whether divine, royal, or elite, provided a kind of conduit for the spirit (or ka) of that being to interact with the terrestrial realm. Divine cult statues (few of which survive) were the subject of daily rituals of clothing, anointing, and perfuming with incense and were carried in processions for special festivals so that the people could "see" them (they were almost all entirely shrouded from view, but their 'presence' was felt).

Royal and elite statuary served as intermediaries between the people and the gods. Family chapels with the statuary of a deceased forefather could serve as a sort of 'family temple.' There were festivals in honor of the dead, where the family would come and eat in the chapel, offering food for the Afterlife, flowers (symbols of rebirth), and incense (the scent of which was considered divine). Preserved letters let us know that the deceased was actively petitioned for their assistance, both in this world and the next.

What we see in museums

Generally, the works we see on display in museums were products of royal or elite workshops; these pieces fit best with our modern aesthetic and ideas of beauty. Most museum basements, however, are packed with hundreds (even thousands!) of other objects made for people of lower status—small statuary, amulets, coffins, and stelae (similar to modern tombstones) that are completely recognizable, but rarely displayed. These pieces generally show less quality in the workmanship; being oddly proportioned or poorly executed; they are less often considered 'art' in the modern sense. However, these objects served the exact same function of providing benefit to their owners (and to the same degree of effectiveness), as those made for the elite.



Figure 13.2.3.8: Hard stone group statue of Ramses II with Osiris, Isis, and Horus in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (New Kingdom). Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

Modes of representation for three-dimensional art

Three-dimensional representations, while being quite formal, also aimed to reproduce the real-world—statuary of gods, royalty, and the elite was designed to convey an idealized version of that individual. Some aspects of 'naturalism' were dictated by the material. Stone statuary, for example, was quite closed—with arms held close to the sides, limited positions, a strong back pillar that provided support, and with the fill spaces left between limbs.



Figure 13.2.3.9: Painted wooden model of the deceased overseeing the counting of cattle in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Middle Kingdom). Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

Wood and metal statuary, in contrast, was more expressive—arms could be extended and hold separate objects, spaces between the limbs were opened to create a more realistic appearance, and more positions were possible. Stone, wood, and metal statuary of elite figures, however, all served the same functions and retained the same type of formalization and frontality. Only statuettes of lower status people displayed a wide range of possible actions, and these pieces were focused on the actions, which benefited the elite owner, not the people involved.

Modes of representation for two-dimensional art

Two-dimensional art represented the world quite differently. Egyptian artists embraced the two-dimensional surface and attempted to provide the most representative aspects of each element in the scenes rather than attempting to create vistas that replicated the real world.

Each object or element in a scene was rendered from its most recognizable angle and these were then grouped together to create the whole. This is why images of people show their face, waist, and limbs in profile, but eye and shoulders frontally. These scenes are complex composite images that provide complete information about the various elements, rather than ones designed from a single viewpoint, which would not be as comprehensive in the data they conveyed.

Registers



Figure 13.2.3.10: Chaotic fighting scene on a painted box from the tomb of Tutankhamen in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (New Kingdom). Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

Scenes were ordered in parallel lines, known as registers. These registers separate the scene as well as provide ground lines for the figures. Scenes without registers are unusual and were generally only used to specifically evoke chaos; battle and hunting scenes will often show the prey or foreign armies without groundlines. Registers were also used to convey information about the scenes—the higher up in the scene, the higher the status; overlapping figures imply that the ones underneath are further away, as are those elements that are higher within the register.

Hierarchy of scale

Difference in scale was the most commonly used method for conveying hierarchy—the larger the scale of the figures, the more important they were. Kings were often shown at the same scale as deities, but both are shown larger than the elite and far larger than the average Egyptian.

Text and image

Text accompanied almost all images. In statuary, identifying text will appear on the back pillar or base, and relief usually has captions or longer texts that complete and elaborate on the scenes. Hieroglyphs were often rendered as tiny works of art in themselves, even though these small pictures do not always stand for what they depict; many are instead phonetic sounds. Some, however, are logographic, meaning they stand for an object or concept.



Figure 13.2.3.11: Highly detailed raised relief hieroglyphs on the White Chapel of Senusret I at Karnak (Middle Kingdom). Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert

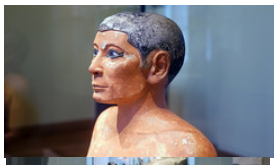
The lines blur between text and image in many cases. For instance, the name of a figure in the text on a statue will regularly omit the determinative (an unspoken sign at the end of a word that aids identification–for example, verbs of motion are followed by a pair of walking legs, names of men end with the image of a man, names of gods with the image of a seated god, etc.) at the end of the name. In these instances, the representation itself serves this function.

Additional resources:

Collection Tour of Egyptian Art: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Giza Archives

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

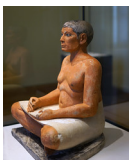




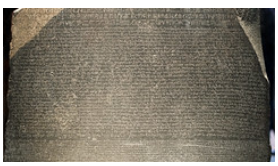


















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88674



Figure 13.2.3.12: More Smarthistory images…

Materials and techniques in ancient Egyptian art

by DR. AMY CALVERT

A wide variety

Egyptian artists used a wide array of materials, both local and imported, from very early in their history. For instance, already in the Predynastic period we find figurines carved from lapis lazuli—a lustrous blue stone that originates in what is now Afghanistan and indicates the early presence of robust trade routes.



Figure 13.2.3.13: Group of stones collected in Egypt showing the range of colors and textures available to the ancient artists.

Stone

There were numerous native stones used for statuary, including the ubiquitous soft limestone of the desert cliffs that line most of the Nile valley, as well as sandstone, calcite, and schist.

Harder stones include quartzite, diorite, granite, and basalt. Carving on softer stones was done using copper chisels and stone tools; hard stone required tools of yet harder stone, copper alloys, and the use of abrasive sand to shape them. Polishing was achieved with a smooth rubbing stone and abrasive sands with a fine grit.



Figure **13.2.3.14**: Menkaure (Mycerinus) and Khamerernebty(?), graywacke, c. 2490-2472 B.C.E. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Painted statuary

Most statuary was painted; even stones selected for the symbolism of their color were often painted. For instance, the exemplary statues of Menkaure (left), builder of the smallest of the three major pyramids at Giza, were executed in dark schist (also called graywacke). This smooth black stone is connected with Osiris, resurrected god of the dead who was often shown with black or green skin referring to the fertile silt and lush vegetation of the Nile valley.

These images preserve traces of red paint on the king's skin indicating that, when completed and placed in his memorial temple near his pyramid, they would have appeared lifelike in coloration. With time, the paint would have flaked away, revealing the black stone underneath and explicitly linking the deceased king with the Lord of the Underworld.

Wood



Figure **13.2.3.15**: Ceremonial gilded wooden shield from the tomb of Tutakhamun. Egyptian Museum, Cairo (New Kingdom) (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Egyptian artists also used a variety of woods in their work, including the native acacia, tamarisk, and sycamore fig as well as fir, cedar, and other conifers imported from Syria. Artisans excelled at puzzling together small, irregular pieces of wood and pegged them into place to create statuary, coffins, boxes, and furniture.

Metals

They also executed pieces in various metals, including copper, copper alloys (such as bronze), gold, and silver. Cult statues of gods were made in gold and silver—materials identified by myth as their skin and bones—and were often quite small. Very few metal statues survive because they were often melted down and the material reused, although preserved examples from the Old and Middle Kingdoms demonstrate that they were skilled not only in sheet metal forming, but also practiced complex casting.

Jewelry work was quite sophisticated even in the Old Kingdom, as demonstrated by some highly creative pieces depicted in tomb scenes. A cache of royal jewelry from the tombs of Middle Kingdom princesses displays extremely high levels of skill in terms of design as well as precisely cut stone inlays, repoussé, and cloisonné.

Many objects, especially small amulets and inlays, were made from a manufactured material known as Egyptian faience. This quartz-based medium could be easily shaped, molded, and mass produced. The glaze coating could be almost any color, depending on the minerals used in the composition, although turquoise blue is the most common.



Figure **13.2.3.16**: Tutankhamun's lunar pectoral in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (New Kingdom) (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Relief sculpture

Relief was usually carved before being painted. The two primary classes of relief are raised relief (where the figures stand up out from the surface) and sunk relief (where the figures are cut into and below the surface). The surface would be smoothed with a layer of plaster and then painted. If the surface was not carved before painting, several layers of mud plaster would be applied to create a flat plane.



Figure **13.2.3.17**: Painted raised relief in the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (New Kingdom)

The drawing surface would be delineated using gridded guidelines, snapped onto the wall using string coated in red pigment dust (very much like chalk lines used by modern carpenters). This grid helped the artists properly proportion the figures and lay out the scenes. Scene elements were drafted out using red paint, corrections noted in black paint, and then the painting was executed one color at a time. Even on carved relief, many elements in a scene would be executed only in paint and not cut into the surface.

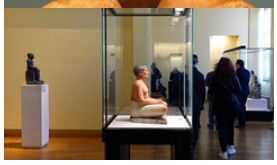


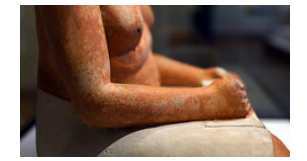
Figure **13.2.3.18**: Iron oxide nodules, source of a range of red pigments, Thebes

Pigments

Most pigments in Egypt were derived from local minerals. White was often made from gypsum, black from carbon, reds and yellows from iron oxides, blue and green from azurite and malachite, and bright yellow (representing gold) from orpiment. These minerals were ground and then mixed with a plant or animal based glue to make a medium able to attach to the walls. They could be applied as a single plane, but were also layered to create subtle effects and additional colors, such as pink or gray. More information on the materials used to make pigments, as well as a discussion of the symbolism of various colors may be found in the article “Aspects of Color in Ancient Egypt” at Egyptological.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

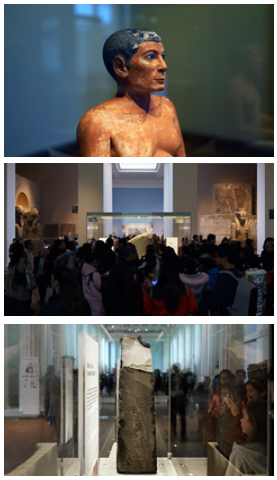







https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88674



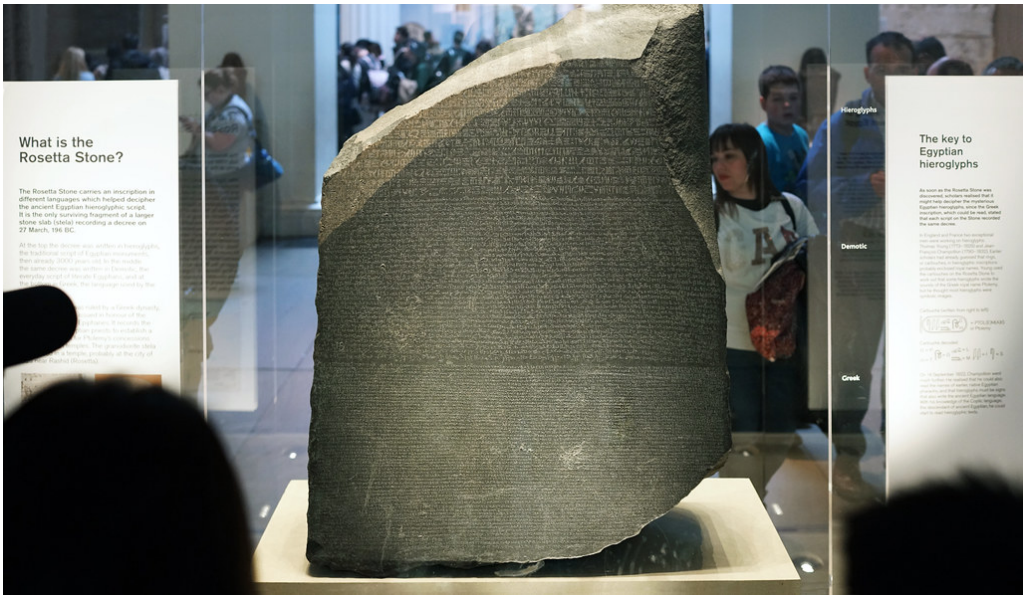


Figure 13.2.3.19: More Smarthistory images…

The mummification process

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

To prepare a body for the afterlife, ancient Egyptians removed organs, dried the body, wrapped it, and more.



Video 13.2.3.1: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Predynastic and Old Kingdom

“Dynastic” Egypt—sometimes referred to as “Pharaonic”—was the time when the country was largely unified under a single ruler, starting around 3100 B.C.E. The period before this, lasting from about 5000 B.C.E. until unification, is referred to as Predynastic by modern scholars.

c. 5000 - 2150 B.C.E.

Palette of King Narmer

by DR. AMY CALVERT



Figure **13.2.3.20**: Palette of King Narmer, from Hierakonpolis, Egypt, Predynastic, c. 3000-2920 B.C.E., slate, 2′ 1″ high (Egyptian Museum, Cairo)

Vitally important, but difficult to interpret

Some artifacts are of such vital importance to our understanding of ancient cultures that they are truly unique and utterly irreplaceable. The gold mask of Tutankhamun was allowed to leave Egypt for display overseas; the *Narmer Palette*, on the other hand, is so valuable that it has never been permitted to leave the country.

Discovered among a group of sacred implements ritually buried in a deposit within an early temple of the falcon god Horus at the site of Hierakonpolis (the capital of Egypt during the pre-dynastic period), this large ceremonial object is one of the most important artifacts from the dawn of Egyptian civilization. The beautifully carved palette, 63.5 cm (more than 2 feet) in height and made of smooth grayish-green siltstone, is decorated on both faces with detailed low relief. These scenes show a king, identified by name as Narmer, and a series of ambiguous scenes that have been difficult to interpret and have resulted in a number of theories regarding their meaning.

The high quality of the workmanship, its original function as a ritual object dedicated to a god, and the complexity of the imagery clearly indicate that this was a significant object, but a satisfactory interpretation of the scenes has been elusive.

What was the palette used for?

The object itself is a monumental version of a type of daily use item commonly found in the Predynastic period—palettes were generally flat, minimally decorated stone objects used for grinding and mixing minerals for cosmetics. Dark eyeliner was an essential aspect of life in the sun-drenched region; like the dark streaks placed under the eyes of modern athletes, black cosmetic around the eyes served to reduce glare. Basic cosmetic palettes were among the typical grave goods found during this early era.

In addition to these simple, purely functional, palettes however, there were also a number of larger, far more elaborate palettes created in this period. These objects still served the function of being a ground for grinding and mixing cosmetics, but they were also carefully carved with relief sculpture. Many of the earlier palettes display animals —some real, some fantastic—while later examples, like the Narmer palette, focus on human actions. Research suggests that these decorated palettes were used in temple ceremonies, perhaps to grind or mix makeup to be ritually applied to the image of the god. Later temple ritual included elaborate daily ceremonies involving the anointing and dressing of divine images; these palettes likely indicate an early incarnation of this process.

A ceremonial object, ritually buried

The *Palette of Narmer* was discovered in 1898 by James Quibell and Frederick Green. It was found with a collection of other objects that had been used for ceremonial purposes and then ritually buried within the temple at Hierakonpolis.

Temple caches of this type are not uncommon. There was a great deal of focus on ritual and votive objects (offerings to the God) in temples. Every ruler, elite individual, and anyone else who could afford it, donated items to the temple to show their piety and increase their connection to the deity. After a period of time, the temple would be full of these objects and space would need to be cleared for new votive donations. However, since they had been dedicated to a temple and sanctified, the old items that needed to be cleared out could not simply be thrown away or sold. Instead, the general practice was to bury them in a pit under the temple floor. Often, these caches include objects from a range of dates and a mix of types, from royal statuary to furniture.

The “Main Deposit” at Hierakonpolis, where the Narmer Palette was discovered, contained many hundreds of objects, including a number of large relief-covered ceremonial mace-heads, ivory statuettes, carved knife handles, figurines of scorpions and other animals, stone vessels, and a second elaborately decorated palette (now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford) known as the *Two Dogs Palette*.



Figure **13.2.3.21**: Two Dogs Palette, Hierakonpolis, Egypt c.3100 B.C.E. (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)

Conventions that remain the same for thousands of years

There are several reasons the *Narmer Palette* is considered to be of such importance. First, it is one of very few such palettes discovered in a controlled excavation. Second, there are a number of formal and iconographic characteristics appearing on the Narmer palette that remain conventional in Egyptian two-dimensional art for the following three millennia. These include the way the figures are represented, the scenes being organized in regular horizontal zones known as registers, and the use of hierarchical scale to indicate relative importance of the individuals. In addition, much of the regalia worn by the king, such as the crowns, kilts, royal beard, and bull tail, as well as other visual elements, such as the pose Narmer takes on one of the faces where he grasps an enemy by the hair and prepares to smash his skull with a mace, continue to be utilized from this time all the way through the Roman era.

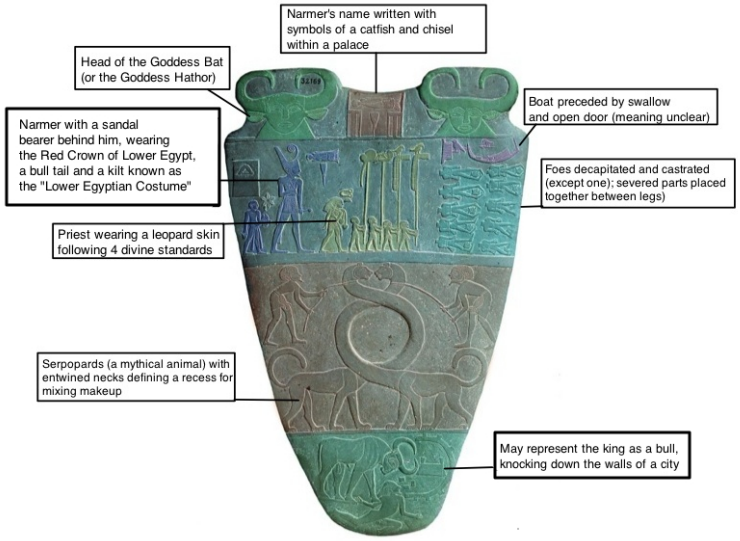


Figure **13.2.3.22**

What we see on the palette

The king is represented twice in human form, once on each face, followed by his sandal-bearer. He may also be represented as a powerful bull, destroying a walled city with his massive horns, in a mode that again becomes conventional—pharaoh is regularly referred to as "Strong Bull."

In addition to the primary scenes, the palette includes a pair of fantastic creatures, known as serpopards—leopards with long, snaky necks—who are collared and controlled by a pair of attendants. Their necks entwine and define the recess where the makeup preparation took place. The lowest register on both sides include images of dead foes, while both uppermost registers display hybrid human-bull heads and the name of the king. The frontal bull heads are likely connected to a sky goddess known as Bat and are related to heaven and the horizon. The name of the king, written hieroglyphically as a catfish and a chisel, is contained within a squared element that represents a palace facade.

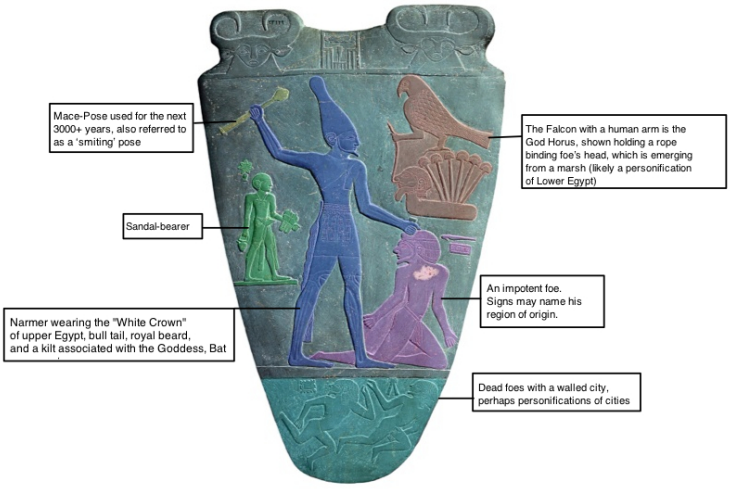


Figure **13.2.3.23**

Possible interpretation: unification of Upper and Lower Egypt

As mentioned above, there have been a number of theories related to the scenes carved on this palette. Some have interpreted the battle scenes as a historical narrative record of the initial unification of Egypt under one ruler, supported by the general timing (as this is the period of the unification) and the fact that Narmer sports the crown connected to Upper Egypt on one face of the palette and the crown of Lower Egypt on the other—this is the first preserved example where both crowns are used by the same ruler. Other theories suggest that, rather than an actual historical representation, these scenes were purely ceremonial and related to the concept of unification in general.



Figure **13.2.3.24**: Detail, Palette of King Narmer, from Hierakonpolis, Egypt, Predynastic, c. 3000-2920 B.C.E., slate, 2′ 1″ high (Egyptian Museum, Cairo)

Another interpretation: the sun and the king

More recent research on the decorative program has connected the imagery to the careful balance of order and chaos (known as ma'at and isfet) that was a fundamental element of the Egyptian idea of the cosmos. It may also be related to the daily journey of the sun god that becomes a central aspect in the Egyptian religion in the subsequent centuries.



Figure **13.2.3.25**: Detail, Palette of King Narmer, from Hierakonpolis, Egypt, Predynastic, c. 3000-2920 B.C.E., slate, 2′ 1″ high (Egyptian Museum, Cairo)

The scene, showing Narmer wearing the Lower Egyptian Red Crown* (with its distinctive curl), depicts him processing towards the decapitated bodies of his foes. The two rows of prone bodies are placed below an image of a high-prowed boat preparing to pass through an open gate. This may be an early reference to the journey of the sun god in his boat. In later texts, the Red Crown is connected with bloody battles fought by the sun god just before the rosy-fingered dawn on his daily journey and this scene may well be related to this. It is interesting to note that the foes are shown as not only executed, but rendered completely impotent—their castrated penises have been placed atop their severed heads.

On the other face, Narmer wears the Upper Egyptian White Crown* (which looks rather like a bowling pin) as he grasps an inert foe by the hair and prepares to crush his skull. The White Crown is related to the dazzling brilliance of the full midday sun at its zenith as well as the luminous nocturnal light of the stars and moon. By wearing both crowns, Narmer may not only be ceremonially expressing his dominance over the unified Egypt, but also the early importance of the solar cycle and the king's role in this daily process.

This fascinating object is an incredible example of early Egyptian art. The imagery preserved on this palette provides a peek ahead to the richness of both the visual aspects and religious concepts that develop in the ensuing periods. It is a vitally important artifact of extreme significance for our understanding of the development of Egyptian culture on multiple levels.

*The Red Crown of Lower Egypt and the White Crown of Upper Egypt were the earliest crowns worn by the king and are closely connected with the unification of the country that sparks full-blown Egyptian civilization. The earliest representation of them worn by the same ruler is on the *Narmer Palette*, signifying that the king was ruling over both areas of the country. Soon after the unification, the fifth ruler of the First Dynasty is shown wearing the two crowns simultaneously, combined into one. This crown, often referred to as the Double Crown, remains a primary crown worn by pharaoh throughout Egyptian history. The separate Red and White crowns, however, continue to be worn as well and retain their geographic connections. There are a number of Egyptian words used for these crowns (nine for the White and 11 for the Red), but the most common—deshret and hedjet—refer to the colors red and white, respectively. It is from these identifying terms that we take their modern name. Early texts make it clear that these crowns were believed to be imbued with divine power and were personified as goddesses.

Additional resources:

Decorative Palettes of the 4th millenium

Hierakonpolis website

Publication on the excavation

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

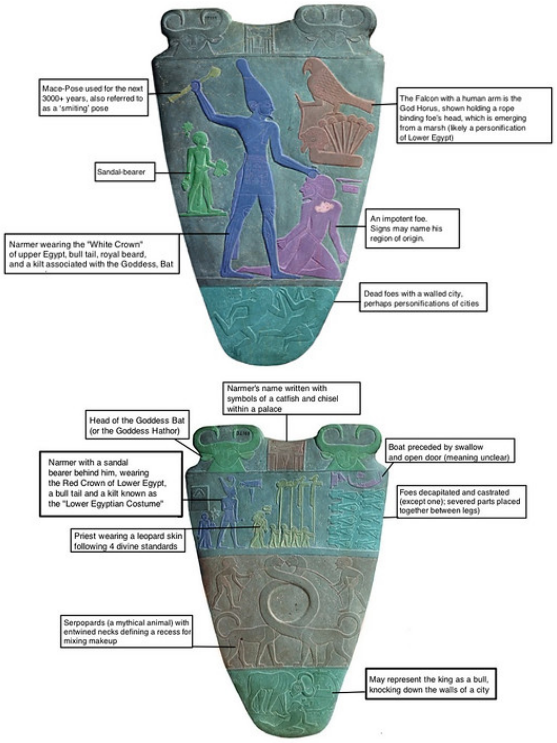


Figure 13.2.3.26: More Smarthistory images…

The Great Pyramids of Giza

by DR. AMY CALVERT



Figure 13.2.3.27: Pyramid of Khafre (Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world

The last remaining of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, the great pyramids of Giza are perhaps the most famous and discussed structures in history. These massive monuments were unsurpassed in height for thousands of years after their construction and continue to amaze and enthrall us with their overwhelming mass and seemingly impossible perfection. Their exacting orientation and mind-boggling construction has elicited many theories about their origins, including unsupported suggestions that they had extra-terrestrial impetus. However, by examining the several hundred years prior to their emergence on the Giza plateau, it becomes clear that these incredible structures were the result of many experiments, some more successful than others, and represent an apogee in the development of the royal mortuary complex.

Three pyramids, three rulers

The three primary pyramids on the Giza plateau were built over the span of three generations by the rulers Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure. Each pyramid was part of a royal mortuary complex that also included a temple at its base and a long stone causeway (some nearly 1 kilometer in length) leading east from the plateau to a valley temple on the edge of the floodplain.

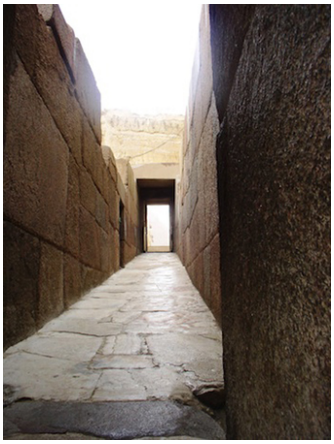


Figure **13.2.3.28**: View up the causeway from Khafre's valley temple towards his pyramid (Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Other (smaller) pyramids, and small tombs

In addition to these major structures, several smaller pyramids belonging to queens are arranged as satellites. A major cemetery of smaller tombs, known as mastabas (Arabic for 'bench' in reference to their shape—flat-roofed, rectangular, with sloping sides), fills the area to the east and west of the pyramid of Khufu and were constructed in a grid-like pattern for prominent members of the court. Being buried near the pharaoh was a great honor and helped ensure a prized place in the afterlife.

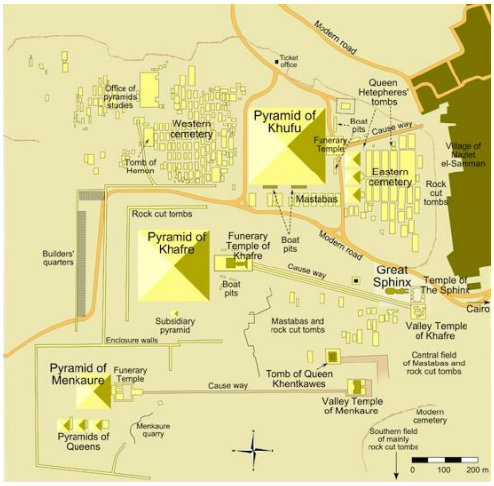


Figure **13.2.3.29**: Giza Pyramid Complex

A reference to the sun

The shape of the pyramid was a solar reference, perhaps intended as a solidified version of the rays of the sun. Texts talk about the sun's rays as a ramp the pharaoh mounts to climb to the sky—the earliest pyramids, such as the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara—were actually designed as a staircase. The pyramid was also clearly connected to the sacred ben-ben stone, an icon of the primeval mound that was considered the place of initial creation. The pyramid was considered a place of regeneration for the deceased ruler.

Construction

Many questions remain about the construction of these massive monuments, and theories abound as to the actual methods used. The workforce needed to build these structures is also still much discussed. Discovery of a town for workers to the south of the plateau has offered some answers. It is likely that there was a permanent group of skilled craftsmen and builders who were supplemented by seasonal crews of approximately 2,000 conscripted peasants. These crews were divided into gangs of 200 men, with each group further divided into teams of 20. Experiments indicate that these groups of 20 men could haul the 2.5 ton blocks from quarry to pyramid in about 20 minutes,

their path eased by a lubricated surface of wet silt. An estimated 340 stones could be moved daily from quarry to construction site, particularly when one considers that many of the blocks (such as those in the upper courses) were considerably smaller.



Figure 13.2.3.30: View up the side of Khufu's pyramid showing scale of the core blocks (Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Backstory

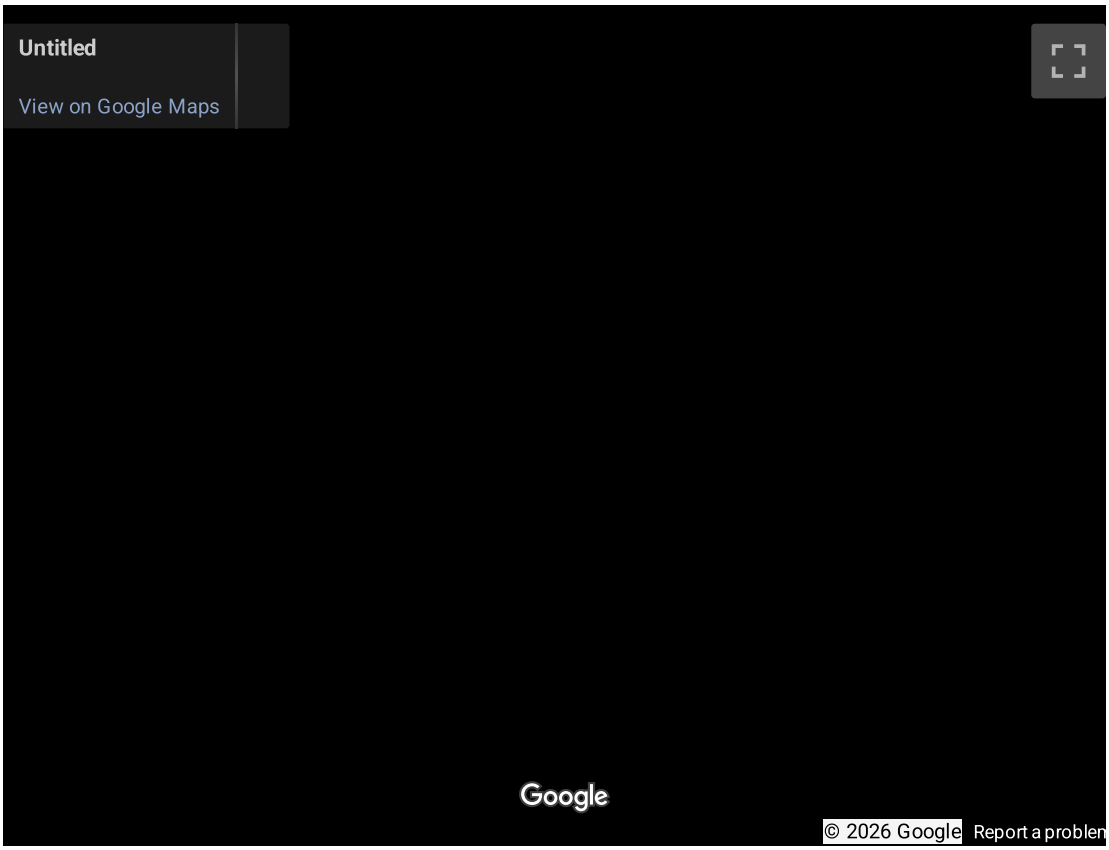
We are used to seeing the pyramids at Giza in alluring photographs, where they appear as massive and remote monuments rising up from an open, barren desert. Visitors might be surprised to find, then, that there is a golf course and resort only a few hundred feet from the Great Pyramid, and that the burgeoning suburbs of Giza (part of the greater metropolitan area of Cairo) have expanded right up to the foot of the Sphinx. This urban encroachment and the problems that come with it—such as pollution, waste, illegal activities, and auto traffic—are now the biggest threats to these invaluable examples of global cultural heritage.

The pyramids were inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979, and since 1990, the organization has sponsored over a dozen missions to evaluate their status. It has supported the restoration of the Sphinx, as well as measures to curb the impact of tourism and manage the growth of the neighboring village. Still, threats to the site continue: air pollution from waste incineration **contributes to the degradation of the stones**, and the massive illegal quarrying of sand on the neighboring plateau has created holes large enough to be seen on Google Earth. Egypt's 2011 uprisings and their chaotic political and economic aftermath also negatively impacted tourism, one of the country's most important industries, and the number of visitors is only now **beginning to rise once more**.

UNESCO has continually monitored these issues, but its biggest task with regard to Giza has been to advocate for the **rerouting of a highway** that was originally slated to cut through the desert between the pyramids and the necropolis of Saqqara to the south. The government eventually agreed to build the highway north of the pyramids. However, as the Cairo metropolitan area (the largest in Africa, with a population of over 20 million) continues to expand, planners are now proposing a multilane tunnel to be constructed underneath the Giza Plateau. UNESCO and ICOMOS **are calling** for in-depth studies of the project's potential impact, as well as an overall site management plan for the Giza pyramids that would include ways to halt the continued impact of illegal dumping and quarrying.

As massive as they are, the pyramids at Giza are not immutable. With the rapid growth of Cairo, they will need sufficient attention and protection if they are to remain intact as key touchstones of ancient history.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee



Additional resources

Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

UNESCO webpage for Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur

Giza 3D

Giza archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Building the Great Pyramid, BBC

Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, Thames and Hudson, 2008.

Pyramid of Khufu

by DR. AMY CALVERT



Figure **13.2.3.31**: Pyramid of Khufu, c. 2551-2528 B.C.E. (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Size

The Great Pyramid, the largest of the three, was built by the pharaoh Khufu and rises to a height of 146 meters (481 feet) with a base length of more than 230 meters (750 feet) per side. The greatest difference in length among the four sides is a mere 4.4 cm (1 ¾ inches) and the base is level within 2.1 cm (less than an inch), an astonishing engineering accomplishment.

Construction: inner core stones, and outer casing stones

The pyramid contains an estimated 2,300,000 blocks, some of which are upwards of 50 tons. Like the pyramids built by his predecessor Snefru and those that followed on the Giza plateau, Khufu's pyramid is constructed of inner, roughly hewn, locally quarried core stones, which is all we see today, and angled, outer casing blocks laid in even horizontal courses with spaces filled with gypsum plaster.

The fine outer casing stones, which have long since been removed, were laid with great precision. These blocks of white Tura limestone would have given the pyramid a smooth surface and been quite bright and reflective. At the very top of the pyramid would have sat a capstone, known as a pyramidion, that may have been gilt. This dazzling point, shining in the intense sunlight, would have been visible for a great distance.



Figure **13.2.3.32**: Detail of core blocks of Khufu's pyramid, c. 2551-2528 B.C.E. (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Interior

The interior chambers and passageways of Khufu's pyramid are unique and include a number of enigmatic features. There is an unfinished subterranean chamber whose function is mysterious as well as a number of so-called 'air shafts' that radiate out from the upper chambers.

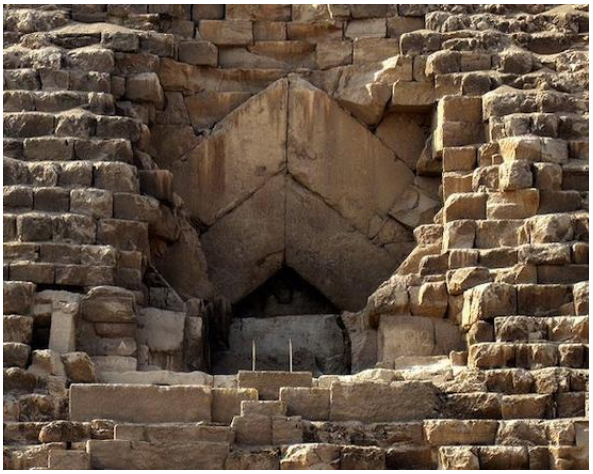


Figure **13.2.3.33**: Entrance, Pyramid of Khufu, c. 2551-2528 B.C.E. (photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY 3.0)

These have recently been explored using small robots, but a series of blocking stones have obscured the passages. When entering the pyramid, one has to crawl up a cramped ascending chamber that opens suddenly into a stunning Grand Gallery. This corbelled passage soars

to a height of 8.74 m (26 feet) and leads up to the King's Chamber, which is constructed entirely from red granite brought from the southern quarries at Aswan.

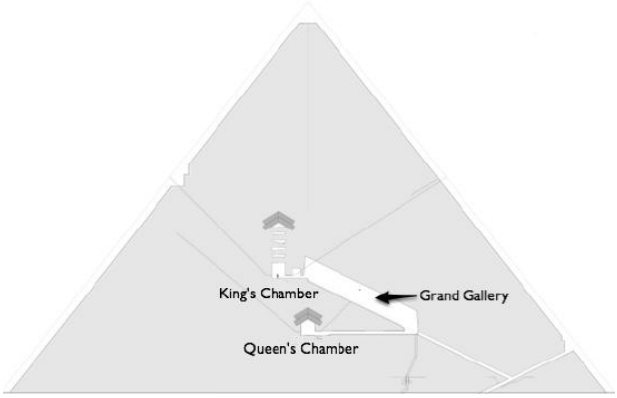


Figure 13.2.3.34: Diagram of the interior of the Pyramid of Khufu

Above the King's Chamber are five stress-relieving chambers of massive granite blocks topped with immense cantilevered blocks forming a pent roof to distribute the weight of the mountain of masonry above it. The king's sarcophagus, also carved from red granite, sits empty at the exact central axis of the pyramid. This burial chamber was sealed with a series of massive granite blocks and the entrance to the shaft filled with limestone in an effort to obscure the opening.

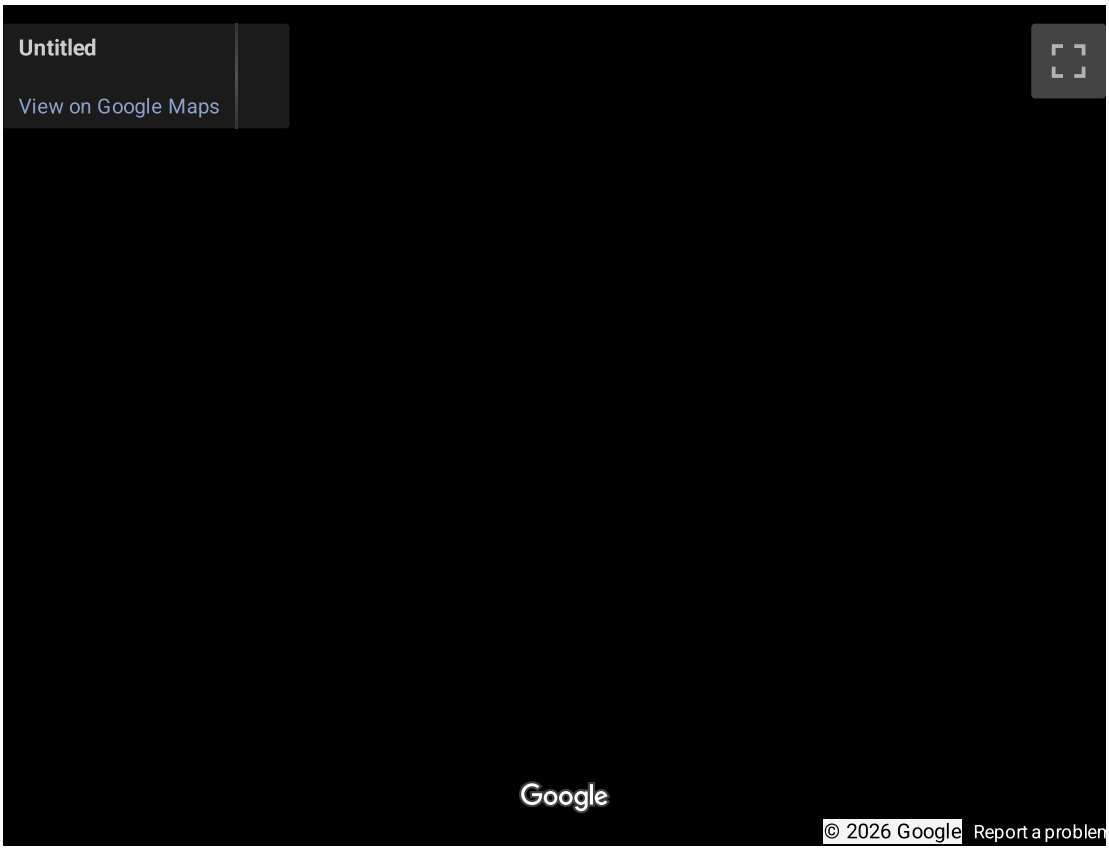
Boats for the afterlife

Khufu's mortuary complex also included seven large boat pits. Five of these are located to the east of the pyramid and were a sort of model; these brick-lined boat shaped elements were probably intended for use in the afterlife to transport the king to stellar destinations. Boat burials and models of this type had a long history in royal mortuary contexts—a fleet of 14 such pits, containing actual boats averaging 18-19 meters (60 feet) in length encased inside, were discovered at a Dynasty 1 mortuary enclosure in Abydos, the cemetery of Egypt's earliest kings. Often, however, as with Khufu, the pits were simply boat shaped models rather than containing actual boats.



Figure 13.2.3.35: Reconstructed funerary boat of Khufu (Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

In addition to these model boat pits, however, on the south side of the pyramid Khufu had two massive, rectangular stone lined pits that contained completely disassembled boats. One of these has been removed and reconstructed in a special museum on the south side of the pyramid. This cedar boat measures 43.3 meters (142 feet) in length and was constructed of 1,224 separate pieces stitched together with ropes. These boats appear to have been used for the funerary procession and as ritual objects connected to the last earthly voyage of the king, and were then dismantled and interred.



Additional resources:

Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids (*Thames and Hudson, 2008).

David O'Connor, Abydos: *Egypt's First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris* (Thames and Hudson, 2011).

Pyramid of Khafre and the Great Sphinx

by DR. AMY CALVERT



Figure **13.2.3.34**: Pyramid of Khafre, c. 2520-2494 (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

Size and appearance

The second great pyramid of Giza, that was built by Khufu's second son Khafre, has a section of outer casing that still survives at the very top (and which would have entirely covered all three of the great pyramids at Giza). Although this monument appears larger than that of his

father, it is actually slightly smaller but was constructed 10 m (33 feet) higher on the plateau.

Interior

The interior is much simpler than that of Khufu's pyramid, with a single burial chamber, one small subsidiary chamber, and two passageways. The mortuary temple at the pyramid base was more complex than that of Khufu and was filled with statuary of the king–over 52 life-size or larger images originally filled the structure.

Valley temple

Khafre's valley temple, located at the east end of the causeway leading from the pyramid base, is beautifully preserved. It was constructed of megalithic blocks sheathed with granite and floors of polished white calcite. Statue bases indicate that an additional 24 images of the pharaoh were originally located in this temple.



Figure **13.2.3.35**: Pillars in Valley Temple of Khafre (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

The Great Sphinx

Right next to the causeway leading from Khafre's valley temple to the mortuary temple sits the first truly colossal sculpture in Egyptian history: the Great Sphinx. This close association indicates that this massive depiction of a recumbent lion with the head of a king was carved for Khafre.



Figure **13.2.3.36**: The Great Sphinx (photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

The Sphinx is carved from the bedrock of the Giza plateau, and it appears that the core blocks used to construct the king's valley temple were quarried from the layers of stone that run along the upper sides of this massive image.

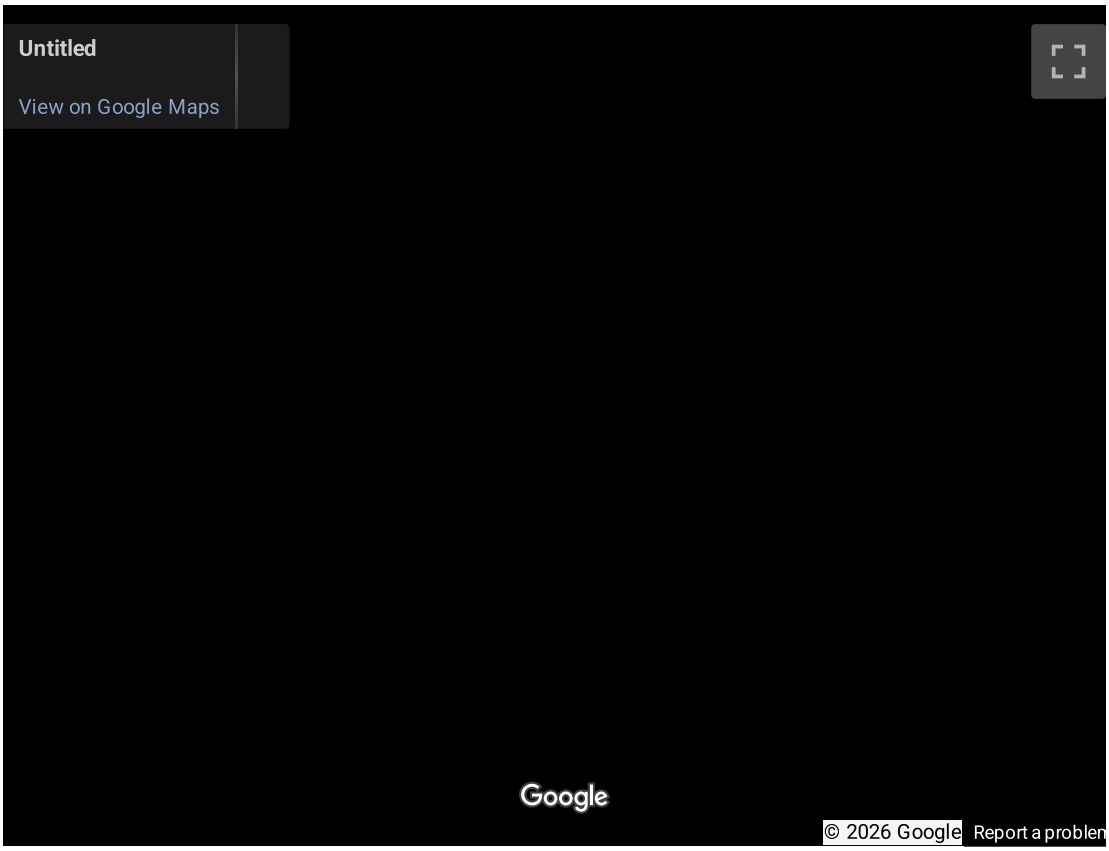


Figure **13.2.3.37**: Khafre, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Khafre

The lion was a royal symbol as well as being connected with the sun as a symbol of the horizon; the fusion of this powerful animal with the head of the pharaoh was an icon that survived and was often used throughout Egyptian history. The king's head is on a smaller scale than the body. This appears to have been due to a defect in the stone; a weakness recognized by the sculptors who compensated by elongating the body.

Directly in front of the Sphinx is a separate temple dedicated to the worship of its cult, but very little is known about it since there are no Old Kingdom texts that refer to the Sphinx or its temple. The temple is similar to Khafre's mortuary temple and has granite pillars forming a colonnade around a central courtyard. However, it is unique in that it has two sanctuaries—one on the east and one on the west—likely connected to the rising and setting sun.



Additional resources:

The Giza Plateau Mapping Project (GPMP)

Pyramid of Menkaure

by DR. AMY CALVERT



Figure **13.2.3.38**: Pyramid of Menkaure (Photo: Dr. Amy Calvert)

The third of the major pyramids at Giza belongs to Mekaure. This is the smallest of the three, rising to a height of 65 meters (213 feet), but the complex preserved some of the most stunning examples of sculpture to survive from all of Egyptian history.

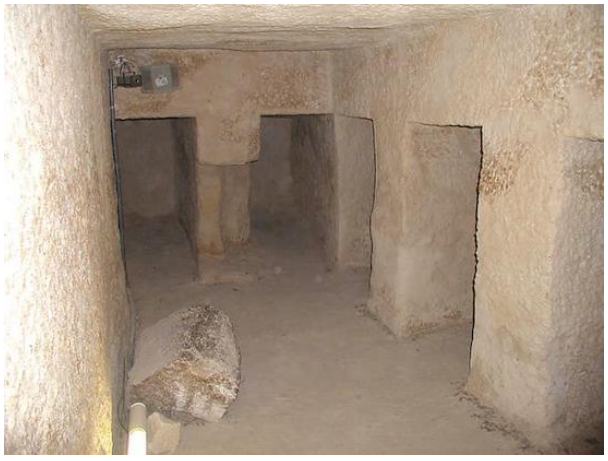


Figure **13.2.3.39**: Pyramid of Menkaure, chamber with niches

Mekaure's pyramid chambers are more complex than those of Khafre and include a chamber carved with decorative panels and another chamber with six large niches. The burial chamber is lined with massive granite blocks.

His black stone sarcophagus, also carved with niched panels, was discovered inside, but was lost at sea as it was being transported to England.

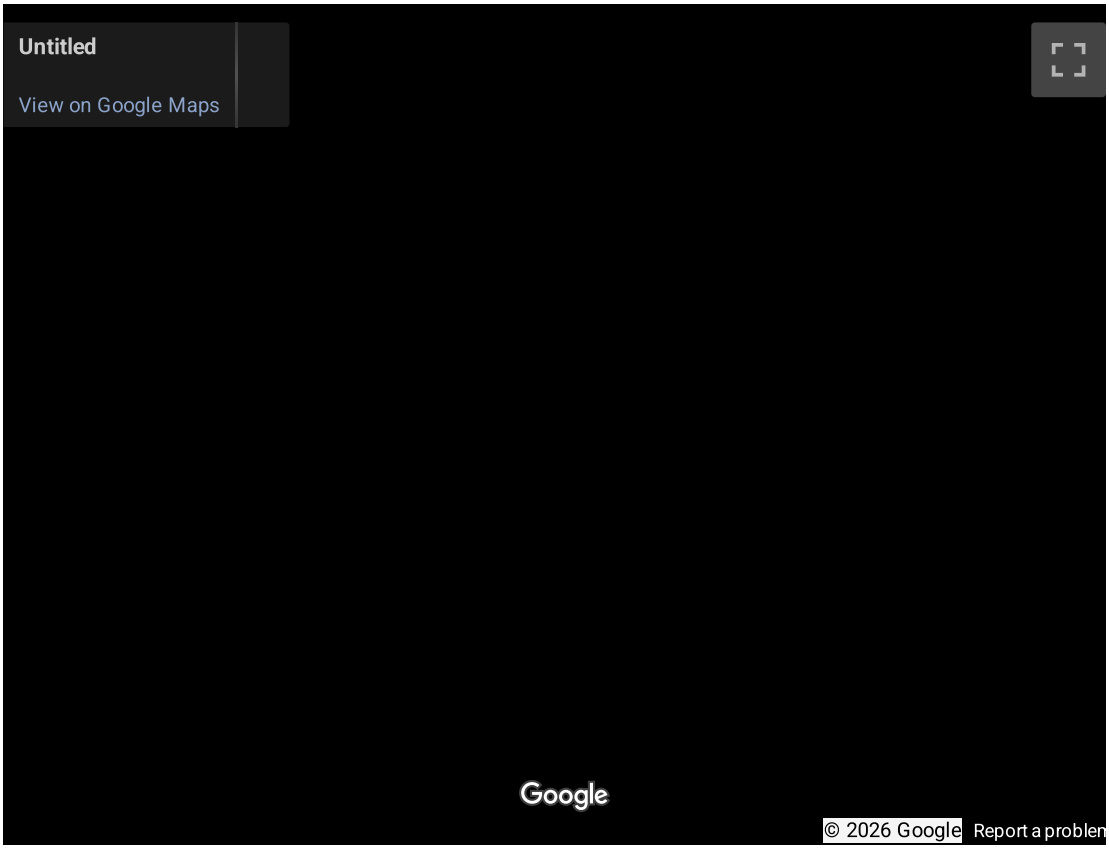


Figure **13.2.3.40**: King Menkaure (Mycerinus) and queen, 2490-2472 B.C.E., Greywacke, overall: 142.2 x 57.1 x 55.2 cm, 676.8 kg / 56 x 22 1/2 x 21 3/4 inches, 1492.1 pounds (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Within Menkaure's mortuary and valley temples, neither of which were completed before his death, excavation revealed a series of statues of the king.

The stunning diad of the king with his primary queen, Khamerernebty II (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), as well as a number of triads showing the king being embraced by various deities, were discovered in the valley temple and were originally set up surrounding the open court.

This temple was still an active place of cult late in the Old Kingdom and was almost entirely rebuilt at the end of the 6th dynasty after it was heavily damaged by a flood.



King Menkaure (Mycerinus) and queen

by DR. AMY CALVERT

Serene ethereal beauty, raw royal power, and evidence of artistic virtuosity have rarely been simultaneously captured as well as in this breathtaking, nearly life-size statue of the pharaoh Menkaure and a queen. Smooth as silk, the meticulously finished surface of the dark stone captures the physical ideals of the time and creates a sense of eternity and immortality even today.

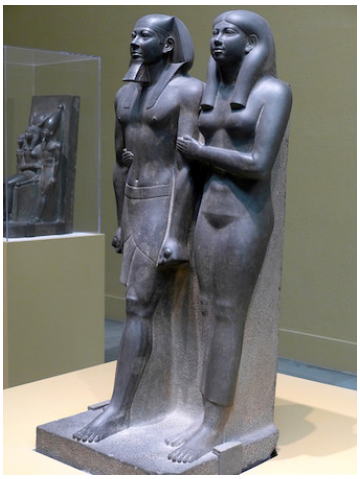


Figure **13.2.3.41**: King Menkaure (Mycerinus) and queen, 2490–2472 B.C.E., greywacke, 142.2 x 57.1 x 55.2 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), photo: **tutincommon** (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Undoubtedly, the most iconic structures from Ancient Egypt are the massive and enigmatic Great Pyramids that stand on a natural stone shelf, now known as the Giza plateau, on the south-western edge of modern Cairo. The three primary pyramids at Giza were constructed during the height of a period known as the Old Kingdom and served as burial places, memorials, and places of worship for a series of deceased rulers–the largest belonging to King Khufu, the middle to his son Khafre, and the smallest of the three to his son Menkaure.



Figure **13.2.3.42**: Giza plateau, photo: **kairoinfo4u** (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Pyramids are not stand-alone structures. Those at Giza formed only a part of a much larger complex that included a temple at the base of the pyramid itself, long causeways and corridors, small subsidiary pyramids, and a second temple (known as a valley temple) some distance from the pyramid. These Valley Temples were used to perpetuate the cult of the deceased king and were active places of worship for hundreds of years (sometimes much longer) after the king's death. Images of the king were placed in these temples to serve as a focus for worship—several such images have been found in these contexts, including the magnificent seated statue of Khafre, now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.



Figure 13.2.3.42: Head and torso (detail), Khafre enthroned, from Giza, Egypt, c. 2520-2494 B.C.E., diorite. 5’ 6 inches high (Egyptian Museum, Cairo)

On January 10, 1910, excavators under the direction of George Reisner, head of the joint Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Expedition to Egypt, uncovered an astonishing collection of statuary in the Valley Temple connected to the Pyramid of Menkaure. Menkaure’s pyramid had been explored in the 1830s (using dynamite, no less). His carved granite sarcophagus was removed (and subsequently lost at sea), and while the Pyramid Temple at the base was in only mediocre condition; the Valley Temple, was—happily—basically ignored.



Figure 13.2.3.43: George Reisner and Georg Steindorff at Harvard Camp, looking east toward Khufu and Khafre pyramids, 1935, photo by Albert Morton Lythgoe (**Giza archives**)

Reisner had been excavating on the Giza plateau for several years at this point; his team had already explored the elite cemetery to the west of the Great Pyramid of Khufu before turning their attention to the Menkaure complex, most particularly the barely-touched Valley Temple.



Figure **13.2.3.44**: Four greywacke triads, Menkaure valley temple, S magazines, corridor III 4, photo: 1908 (The Giza Archives). **View** one of the triads in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In the southwest corner of the structure, the team discovered a magnificent cache of statuary carved in a smooth-grained dark stone called greywacke or schist. There were a number of triad statues—each showing 3 figures—the king, the fundamentally important goddess Hathor, and the personification of a nome (a geographic designation, similar to the modern idea of a region, district, or county). Hathor was worshiped in the pyramid temple complexes along with the supreme sun god Re and the god Horus, who was represented by the living king. The goddess's name is actually 'Hwt-hor', which means "The House of Horus," and she was connected to the wife of the living king and the mother of the future king. Hathor was also a fierce protector who guarded her father Re; as an "Eye of Re" (the title assigned to a group of dangerous goddesses), she could embody the intense heat of the sun and use that blazing fire to destroy his enemies.



Figure **13.2.3.45**: Menkaure flanked by Hathor (left) and nome goddess (Egyptian Museum, Cairo)

There were 4 complete triads, one incomplete, and at least one other in a fragmentary condition. The precise meaning of these triads is uncertain. Reisner believed that there was one for each ancient Egyptian nome, meaning there would have originally been more than thirty of them. More recent scholarship, however, suggests that there were originally 8 triads, each connected with a major site associated with the cult of Hathor. Hathor's prominence in the triads (she actually takes the central position in one of the sculptures) and her singular importance to kingship lends weight to this theory.

In addition to the triads, Reisner's team also revealed the extraordinary dyad statue of Menkaure and a queen that is breathtakingly singular.



Figure 13.2.3.46: Heads and torsos (detail), King Menkaure (Mycerinus) and queen, 2490–2472 B.C.E., greywacke, 142.2 x 57.1 x 55.2 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), photo: 1910 (The Giza Archives)

The two figures stand side-by-side on a simple, squared base and are supported by a shared back pillar. They both face to the front, although Menkaure's head is noticeably turned to his right—this image was likely originally positioned within an architectural niche, making it appear as though they were emerging from the structure. The broad-shouldered, youthful body of the king is covered only with a traditional short pleated kilt, known as a shendjet, and his head sports the primary pharaonic insignia of the iconic striped nemes headdress (so well known from the mask of Tutankhamun) and an artificial royal beard. In his clenched fists, held straight down at his sides, Menkaure grasps ritual cloth rolls. His body is straight, strong, and eternally youthful with no signs of age. His facial features are remarkably individualized with prominent eyes, a fleshy nose, rounded cheeks, and full mouth with protruding lower lip.



Figure 13.2.3.47: Heads (detail), King Menkaure (Mycerinus) and queen, 2490–2472 B.C.E., greywacke, 142.2 x 57.1 x 55.2 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), photo: 1910 (The Giza Archives)

Menkaure's queen provides the perfect female counterpart to his youthful masculine virility. Sensuously modeled with a beautifully proportioned body emphasized by a clinging garment, she articulates ideal mature feminine beauty. There is a sense of the individual in both faces. Neither Menkaure nor his queen are depicted in the purely idealized manner that was the norm for royal images. Instead, through the overlay of royal formality we see the depiction of a living person filling the role of pharaoh and the personal features of a particular individual in the representation of his queen.

Menkaure and his queen stride forward with their left feet—this is entirely expected for the king, as males in Egyptian sculpture almost always do so, but it is unusual for the female since they are generally depicted with feet together. They both look beyond the present and into timeless eternity, their otherworldly visage displaying no human emotion whatsoever.

The dyad was never finished—the area around the lower legs has not received a final polish, and there is no inscription. However, despite this incomplete state, the image was erected in the temple and was brightly painted—there are traces of red around the king's ears and mouth and yellow on the queen's face. The presence of paint atop the smooth, dark greywacke on a statue of the deceased king that was originally erected in his memorial temple courtyard brings an interesting suggestion—that the paint may have been intended to wear away through exposure and, over time, reveal the immortal, black-fleshed
"Osiris" Menkaure (for more information on the symbolic associations of Egyptian materials, see **Introduction to Egyptian Art—Materials**).

Unusual for a pharaoh's image, the king has no protective cobra (known as a *uraeus*) perched on his brow. This notable absence has led to the suggestion that both the king's nemes and the queen's wig were originally covered in precious metal and that the cobra would have been part of that addition.

Based on comparison with other images, there is no doubt that this sculpture shows Menkaure, but the identity of the queen is a different matter. She is clearly a royal female. She stands at nearly equal height with the king and, of the two of them, she is the one who is entirely frontal. In fact, it may be that this dyad is focused on the queen as its central figure rather than Menkaure. The prominence of the royal female—at equal height and frontal—in addition to the protective gesture she extends has suggested that, rather than one of Mekaure's wives, this is actually his queen-mother. The function of the sculpture in any case was to ensure rebirth for the king in the Afterlife.

Additional resources:

This sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

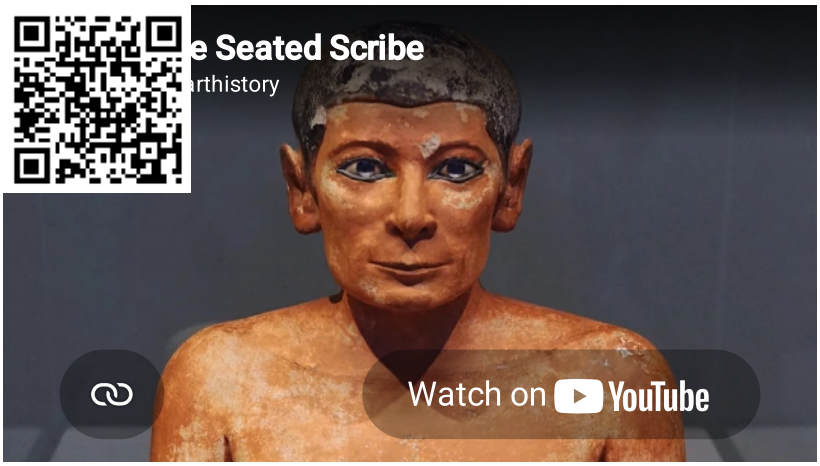
Educator resource from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Menkaure Pyramid Complex from the Giza Archives

The Seated Scribe

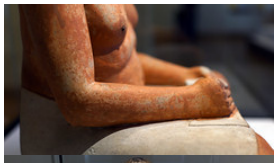
by DR. BETH HARRIS *and* DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

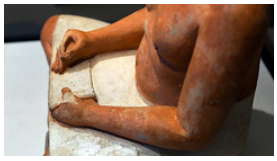
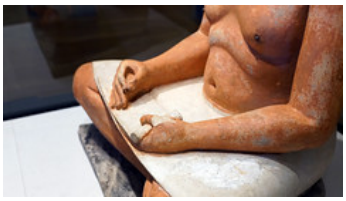
Seated cross-legged, with rolls of belly fat, this painted statue differs from the ideal statues of pharaohs.



Video 13.2.3.2: *Seated Scribe*, c. 2500 B.C.E., c. 4th Dynasty, Old Kingdom, painted limestone with rock crystal, magnesite, and copper/arsenic inlay for the eyes and wood for the nipples, found in Saqqara

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





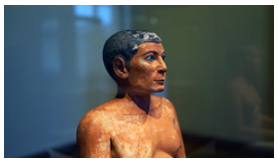





Figure 13.2.3.48: More Smarthistory images…

Middle and New Kingdom

New Kingdom pharaohs controlled vast wealth. Thebes was the religious center of the period, and Pharaohs built mortuary temples here and were buried in huge rock-cut tombs.

c. 2030 - 1070 B.C.E.

Temple of Amun-Re and the Hypostyle Hall, Karnak

by DR. ELIZABETH CUMMINS



Figure 13.2.3.49: View of sphinxes, the first pylon, and the central east-west aisle of Temple of Amon-Re, Karnak in Luxor, Egypt (photo: **Mark Fox**, CC: BY-NC 2.0)

The massive temple complex of Karnak was the principal religious center of the god Amun-Re in Thebes during the New Kingdom (which lasted from 1550 until 1070 B.C.E.). The complex remains one of the largest religious complexes in the world. However, Karnak was not just one temple dedicated to one god—it held not only the main precinct to the god Amun-Re—but also the precincts of the gods Mut and Montu. Compared to other temple compounds that survive from ancient Egypt, Karnak is in a poor state of preservation but it still gives scholars a wealth of information about Egyptian religion and art. About the New Kingdom, Amun-Re, Mut, and Montu

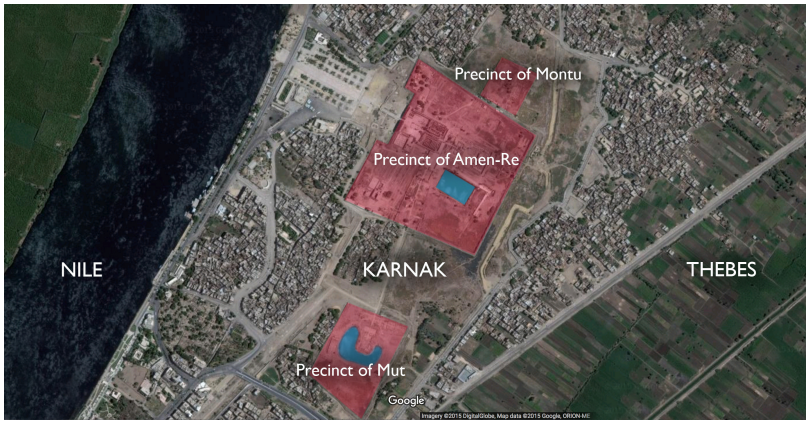


Figure **13.2.3.50**: Google Earth view of Karnak

"The Most Select of Places"

The site was first developed during the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 B.C.E.) and was initially modest in scale but as new importance was placed on the city of Thebes, subsequent pharaohs began to place their own mark on Karnak. The main precinct alone would eventually have as many as twenty temples and chapels.[1] Karnak was known in ancient times as "The Most Select of Places" (*Ipet-isut*) and was not only the location of the cult image of Amun and a place for the god to dwell on earth but also a working estate for the priestly community who lived on site. Additional buildings included a sacred lake, kitchens, and workshops for the production of religious accoutrements.

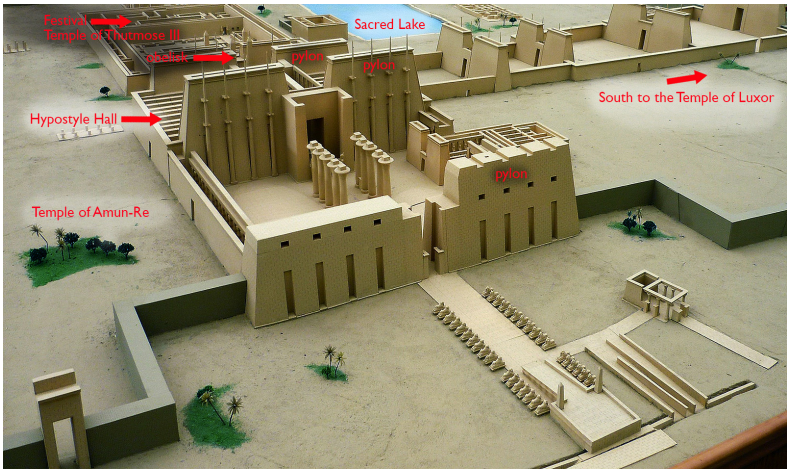


Figure **13.2.3.51**: Model of the Precinct of Amon-Re, Karnak (photo: **Rémih**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

The main temple of Amun-Re had two axes—one that went north/south and the other that extended east/west. The southern axis continued towards the temple of Luxor and was connected by an avenue of ram-headed sphinxes.

While the sanctuary was plundered for stone in ancient times, there are still a number of unique architectural features within this vast complex. For example, the tallest obelisk in Egypt stood at Karnak and was dedicated by the female pharaoh Hatshepsut who ruled Egypt during the New Kingdom. Made of one piece of red granite, it originally had a matching obelisk that was removed by the Roman emperor Constantine and re-erected in Rome. Another unusual feature was the Festival Temple of Thutmose III, which had columns that represented tent poles, a feature this pharaoh was no doubt familiar with from his many war campaigns. What is an obelisk?



Figure **13.2.3.52**: "Tent pole" columns, Festival Temple of Thutmose III, c. 1470-25 B.C.E., sandstone, mud brick, paint, Karnak, at Luxor, Egypt (photo: Dennis Jarvis, CC: BY-SA 2.0)

Hypostyle hall

One of the greatest architectural marvels of Karnak is the hypostyle hall built during the Ramesside period (a hypostyle hall is a space with a roof supported by columns). The hall has 134 massive sandstone columns with the center twelve columns standing at 69 feet. Like most of the temple decoration, the hall would have been brightly painted and some of this paint still exists on the upper portions of the columns and ceiling today. With the center of the hall taller than the spaces on either side, the Egyptians allowed for clerestory lighting (a section of wall that allowed light and air into the otherwise dark space below). In fact, the earliest evidence for clerestory lighting comes from Egypt. Not many ancient Egyptians would have had access to this hall, since the further one went into the temple, the more restricted access became. Explain Rameesside and Clerestory



Figure **13.2.3.53**: Hypostyle Hall, c. 1250 B.C.E. (hall), 18th and 19th Dynasties, New Kingdom, sandstone and mud brick, Karnak, at Luxor, Egypt (photo: **Blalonde**, public domain)

Temple as cosmos

Conceptually, temples in Egypt were connected to the idea of *zep tepi*, or “the first time,” the beginnings of the creation of the world. The temple was a reflection of this time, when the mound of creation emerged from the primeval waters. The pylons, or gateways in the temple represent the horizon, and as one moves further into the temple, the floor rises until it reaches the sanctuary of the god, giving the impression of a rising mound, like that during creation. The temple roof represented the sky and was often decorated with stars and birds. The columns were designed with lotus, papyrus, and palm plants in order to reflect the marsh-like environment of creation. The outer areas of Karnak, which was located near the Nile River, would flood during the annual inundation—an intentional effect by the ancient designers no doubt, in order to enhance the temple’s symbolism.[2]

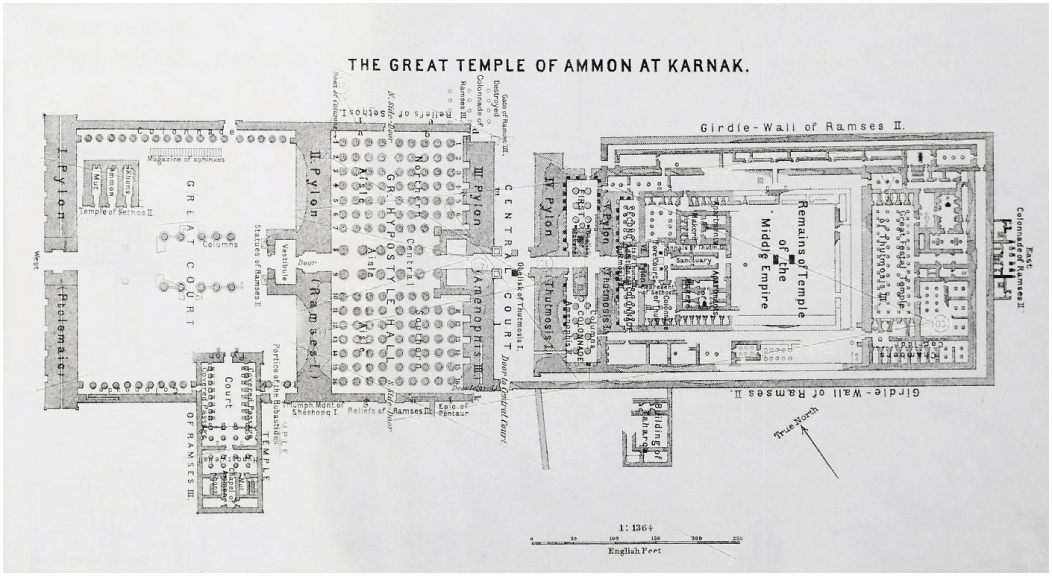
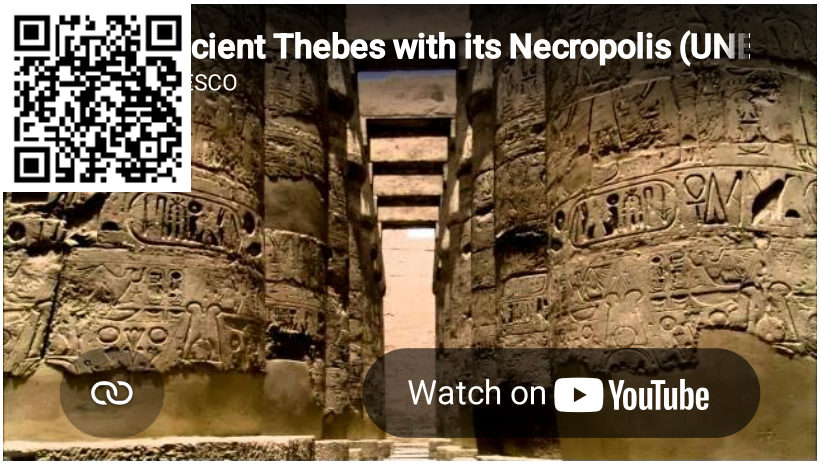


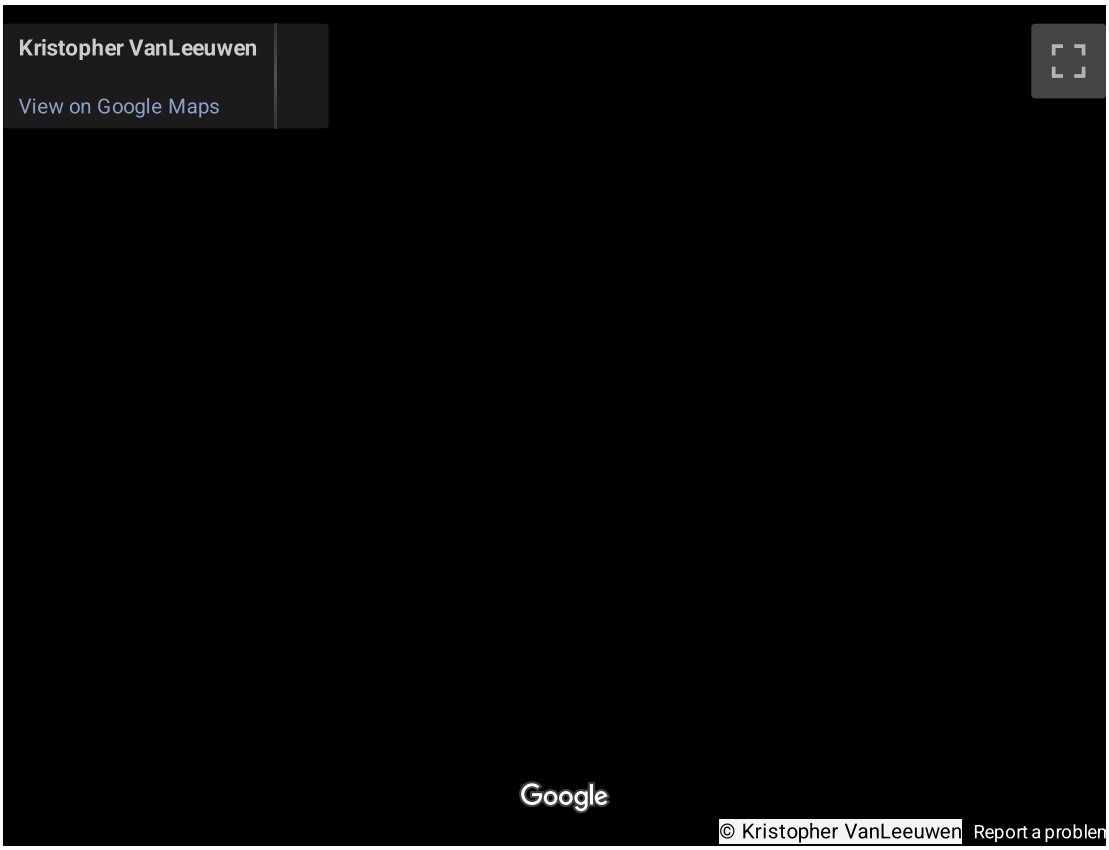
Figure **13.2.3.54**: Plan of the Temple of Amon-Re, Karnak

[1]R. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 154.

[2]R. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 77.



Video **13.2.3.3**: Video from UNESCO/TBS



Additional resources:

A digital resource from UCLA that provides an overview of the types of buildings and building phases of Karnak

The Karnak Great Hypostyle Project

Slide show detailing the excavation of the Mut Precinct at Karnak

Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis

by UNESCO *and* TBS

From temples on the east bank of the Nile to the Valley of the Kings, Thebes was a wonder of Egyptian Civilization.

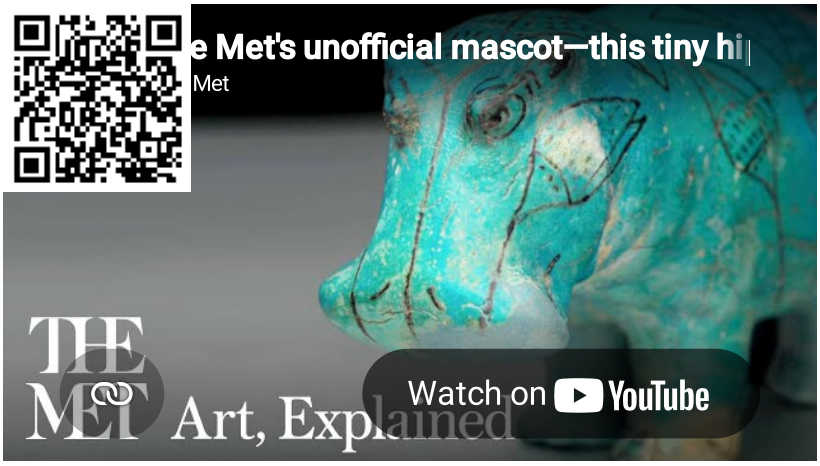


Video **13.2.3.4**: Video from UNESCO/TBS

Thebes, the city of the god Amon, was the capital of Egypt during the period of the Middle and New Kingdoms. With the temples and palaces at Karnak and Luxor, and the necropolises of the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, Thebes is a striking testimony to Egyptian civilization at its height.

Standing Hippopotamus

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.2.3.5**: *Standing Hippopotamus*, ca. 1961–1878 B.C.E., Egypt, Middle Kingdom, faience, 7 7/8″ x 2 15/16″ x 4 7/16″ / 20 cm x 7.5 cm x 11.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**.

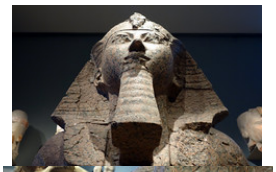
Mortuary Temple and Large Kneeling Statue of Hatshepsut

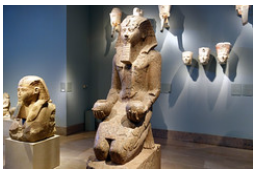
by DR. BETH HARRIS *and* DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

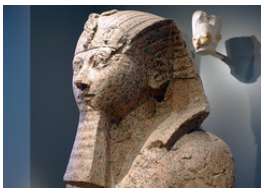


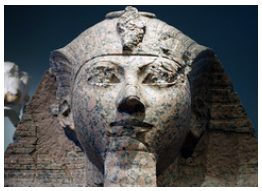

Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut
View on Google Maps
Google
© Giorgi Chkhitunidze (გიორგი ჩხიტუნიძე)
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







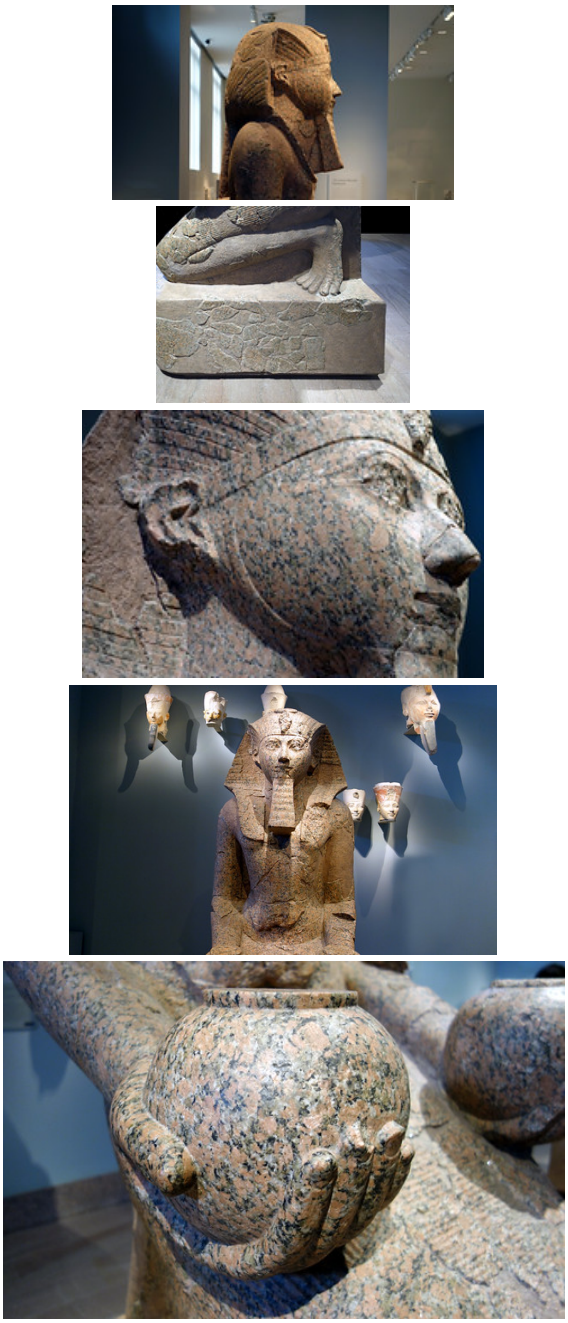



Figure **13.2.3.55**: More Smarthistory images…

The tomb-chapel of Nebamun

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure 13.2.3.56: Geese (detail), from the *Presentation of the Geese*, Tomb chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., paint on plaster, whole fragment: 71 x 115.5 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

The British Museum contains 11 fragments of wall painting, which are some of the most famous images of Egyptian art. The fragments come from the now lost tomb-chapel of Nebamun, an ancient Egyptian scribe or the "scribe and grain accountant in the granary of divine offerings," in the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Nebamun died c. 1350 B.C.E., a generation or so before Tutankhamun. His name is damaged but he was almost certainly called Nebamun.

"Antiquity's equivalent to Michelangelo"

The tomb-paintings were discovered by the local agent Henry Salt in Thebes and acquired by the Museum in the 1820s. The location of the tomb from which they came is still not known with any certainty, but it is thought to be in the northern part of the necropolis in the area known as Dra Abu el-Naga. Stylistically, the magnificent wall paintings can be dated to either the final years of the reign of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 B.C.E.) or the early years of his successor. The fragments were constantly on display until the late 1990s. Since then, the fragile wall-paintings have been meticulously conserved, securing their condition for at least the next fifty years.

The project has provided numerous new insights into the superb technique of the painters. Their exuberant compositions, astonishing depictions of animal life and unparalleled handling of textures have caused one art historian to call them "antiquity's equivalent to Michelangelo." New research and scholarship have enabled new connections to be made between the fragments, allowing scholars to gain a better understanding of their original locations in the tomb. They will now be re-displayed together for the first time in a setting designed to recreate their original aesthetic impact and to evoke their original position in a small intimate chapel.



Figure 13.2.3.57: The four musicians and singers with their song written above them (detail), *Banquet Scene*, Tomb Chapel of Nebanum, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 88 x 119 x 22 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

The paintings show scenes of daily life and include images of banquets, agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting and scenes of offerings. The quality of the drawing and composition is outstanding, and the superbly detailed treatment of the animals makes these some of the finest paintings to survive from ancient Egypt.

A place of commemoration

Nebamun's tomb-chapel was a place for people to come and commemorate Nebamun and his wife after his death with prayers and offerings. Nebamun himself was buried somewhere beneath the floor of the innermost room of the tomb-chapel in a hidden burial chamber.The beautiful paintings, which decorated the wall, not only showed how Nebamun wanted his life to be remembered but what he wanted in his life after death.

Building a tomb-chapel was expensive and would have only been done by the wealthy. The majority of ancient Egyptians would have been buried in cemeteries.

How the tomb-chapel was built and used

Nebamun's tomb-chapel was cut into the desert hills opposite the city of Thebes (modern Luxor and Karnak). Workmen would have cut the tomb out of the rock using flint tools and copper-alloy chisels. The walls and ceilings of the tomb were then covered in a layer of mud plaster, followed by a layer of white plaster. This provided a smooth surface for painting.

The tomb-chapel was painted by a team of artists. They first sketched out the designs and figures before painting the final pattern. Sometimes the sketches can still be seen, showing how the artists changed their minds. The artists used black, white, red, yellow, blue and green paints.

The tomb-chapel probably contained three sections: an outer chamber, an inner chamber and an underground burial chamber, which was sealed once Nebamun and his wife had been buried. Outside the tomb-chapel a courtyard was cut into the hillside. The walls of the chapel facade were decorated with rows of pottery cones stamped with the names and titles of the owner.

Suggested readings:

M. Hooper, *The Tomb of Nebamun* (London, British Museum Press, 2007).

R. Parkinson, *The painted Tomb-chapel of Nebamun* (London, British Museum Press, 2008).

A. Middleton and K. Uprichard, (eds.), *The Nebamun Wall Paintings: Conservation, Scientific Analysis and Display at the British Museum* (London, Archetype, 2008).

Explore the tomb-chapel of Nebamun in a 3D interactive animation at The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Paintings from the Tomb-chapel of Nebamun

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The fragments from the wall painting in the tomb-chapel of Nebamun are keenly observed vignettes of Nebamun and his family enjoying both work and play. Some concern the provision of the funerary cult that was celebrated in the tomb-chapel, some show scenes of Nebamun's life as an elite official, and others show him and his family enjoying life for all eternity, as in the famous scene of the family hunting in the marshes. Together they decorated the small tomb-chapel with vibrant and engaging images of an elite lifestyle that Nebamun hoped would continue in the afterlife.

Hunting in the marshes



Figure **13.2.3.58**: *Nebamun fowling in the marshes*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 83 x 98 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

Nebamun is shown hunting birds from a small boat in the marshes of the Nile with his wife Hatshepsut and their young daughter. Such scenes had already been traditional parts of tomb-chapel decoration for hundreds of years and show the dead tomb-owner "enjoying himself and seeing beauty," as the hieroglyphic caption here says.

This is more than a simple image of recreation. Fertile marshes were seen as a place of rebirth and eroticism. Hunting animals could represent Nebamun's triumph over the forces of nature as he was reborn. The huge striding figure of Nebamun dominates the scene, forever happy and forever young, surrounded by the rich and varied life of the marsh.

There was originally another half of the scene which showed Nebamun spearing fish. This half of the wall is lost, apart from two old photographs of small fragments of Nebamun and his young son. The painters have captured the scaly and shiny quality of the fish.

A tawny cat catches birds among the papyrus stems. Cats were family pets, but in artistic depictions like this they could also represent the Sun-god hunting the enemies of light and order. His unusual gilded eye hints at the religious meanings of this scene.



Figure **13.2.3.59**: Cat catching birds in the papyrus clump (detail), from the *Fowling in the Marshes*, 18th Dynasty, Tomb of Nebamun, from the tomb of Nebanum, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, Thebes © The Trustees of the British Museum

The artists have filled every space with lively details. The marsh is full of lotus flowers and Plain Tiger butterflies. They are freely and delicately painted, suggesting the pattern and texture of their wings.

Nebamun's Garden



Figure **13.2.3.60**: *Nebamun's garden*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c.1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 64 cm high, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

Nebamun's garden in the afterlife is not unlike the earthly gardens of wealthy Egyptians. The pool is full of birds and fish, and surrounded by borders of flowers and shady rows of trees. The fruit trees include sycamore-figs, date-palms and dom-palms—the dates are shown with different degrees of ripeness.

On the right side of the pool a goddess leans out of a tree and offers fruit and drinks to Nebamun (now lost). The artists accidentally painted her skin red at first but then repainted it yellow, the correct color for a goddess' skin. On the left, a sycamore-fig tree speaks and greets Nebamun as the owner of the garden; its words are recorded in the hieroglyphs.



Figure **13.2.3.61**: Pool (detail) Nebamun's garden, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c.1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 64 cm high, Thebes, Egypt© Trustees of the British Museum

Here the pool is shown from above, with three rows of trees arranged around its edges. The waves of the pool were painted with a darker blue pigment; much of this has been lost, like the green on the trees and bushes.

Surveying the fields



Figure **13.2.3.62**: Surveying the fields for Nebamun, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 106.7 x 45.8 cm, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

Nebamun was the accountant in charge of grain at the great Temple of Amun at Karnak. This scene from his tomb-chapel shows officials inspecting fields. A farmer checks the boundary marker of the field.

Nearby, two chariots for the party of officials wait under the shade of a sycamore-fig tree. Other smaller fragments from this wall are now in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, Germany and show the grain being harvested and processed.

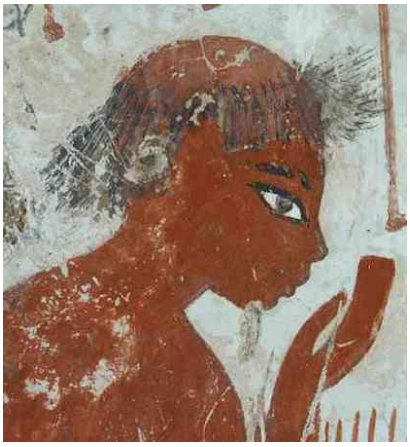


Figure **13.2.3.63**: Old man assessing crops (detail), *Surveying the fields for Nebamun*, Tomb-chapel of Nebanum, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 106.7 x 45.8 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

The old farmer is shown balding, badly shaven, poorly dressed, and with a protruding navel. He is taking an oath saying: "As the Great God who is in the sky endures, the boundary-stone is exact!"

"The Chief of the Measurers of the Granary," (mostly lost) holds a rope decorated with the head of Amun's sacred ram for measuring the god's fields. After Nebamun died, the rope's head was hacked out, but later, perhaps in Tutankhamun's reign, someone clumsily restored it

with mud-plaster and redrew it.

Nebamun's cattle



Figure **13.2.3.64**: *Nebamun's cattle*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 58.5 x 10.5 cm, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

This fragment is part of a wall showing Nebamun inspecting flocks of geese and herds of cattle. Hieroglyphs describe the scene and record what the farmers say as they squabble in the queue. The alternating colors and patterns of cattle create a superb sense of animal movement.



Figure **13.2.3.65**: Cattle (detail), *Nebamun's cattle*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 58.5 x 10.5 cm, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

The herdsman is telling the farmer in front of him in the queue:

Come on! Get away! Don't speak in the presence of the praised one! He detests people talking …. Pass on in quiet and in order … He knows all affairs, does the scribe and counter of grain of [Amun], Neb[amun].

The name of the god Amun has been hacked out in this caption where it appears in Nebamun's name and title. Shortly after Nebamun died, King Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.E.) had Amun's name erased from monuments as part of his religious reforms.

Nebamun's geese



Figure **13.2.3.66**: *Nebamun's geese*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 71 x 115.5 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

This scene is part of a wall showing Nebamun inspecting flocks of geese and herds of cattle. He watches as farmers drive the animals towards him; his scribes (secretaries) write down the number of animals for his records. Hieroglyphs describe the scene and record what the farmers say as they squabble in the queue.



Figure 13.2.3.67: Geese (detail), *Nebamun's Geese*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 71 x 115.5 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum



Figure 13.2.3.68: Scribe (detail), *Nebamun's geese*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 71 x 115.5 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

This scribe holds a palette (pen-box) under his arm and presents a roll of papyrus to Nebamun. He is well dressed and has small rolls of fat on his stomach, indicating his superior position in life. Beside him are chests for his records and a bag containing his writing equipment.

Farmers bow down and make gestures of respect towards Nebamun. The man behind them holds a stick and tells them: "Sit down and don't speak!" The farmers' geese are painted as a huge and lively gaggle, some pecking the ground and some flapping their wings.

A feast for Nebamun (top half)



Figure 13.2.3.69: *A feast for Nebamun*, the top half of a scene from the Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, 88 x 119 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

An entire wall of the tomb-chapel showed a feast in honor of Nebamun. Naked serving-girls and servants wait on his friends and relatives. Married guests sit in pairs on fine chairs, while the young women turn and talk to each other. This erotic scene of relaxation and wealth is something for Nebamun to enjoy for all eternity. The richly-dressed guests are entertained by dancers and musicians, who sit on the ground playing and clapping. The words of their song in honor of Nebamun are written above them:

The earth-god has caused
his beauty to grow in every body…
the channels are filled with water anew,
and the land is flooded with love of him.

Some of the musicians look out of the paintings, showing their faces frontally. This is very unusual in Egyptian art, and gives a sense of liveliness to these lower-class women, who are less formally drawn than the wealthy guests. The young dancers are sinuously drawn and are naked apart from their jewelry.



Figure **13.2.3.70**: Musicians and dancers (detail), *A feast for Nebamun*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 88 x 119 cm, Thebes © Trustees of the British Museum

A rack of large wine jars is decorated with grapes, vines and garlands of flowers. Many of the guests also wear garlands and smell lotus flowers. All the guests wear elaborate linen clothes. The artists have painted the cloth as if it were transparent, to show that it is very fine. These elegant sensual dresses fall in loose folds around the guests' bodies.

Men and women's skins are painted in different colors: the men are tanned and the women are paler. In one place the artists altered the drawing of these wooden stools and corrected their first sketch with white paint.

Servant's bringing offerings



Figure **13.2.3.71**: *Servants bringing offerings*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

A procession of simply-dressed servants bring offerings of food to Nebamun, including sheaves of grain and animals from the desert. Tomb-chapels were built so that people could come and make offerings in memory of the dead, and this a common scene on their walls. The border at the bottom shows that this scene was the lowest one on this wall.

One servant holds two desert hares by their ears. The animals have wonderfully textured fur and long whiskers. The superb draughtsmanship and composition make this standard scene very fresh and lively.



Figure **13.2.3.72**: Estate worker bringing a hare from the fields (detail),*Servants bringing offerings*, Tomb-chapel of Nebamun, c. 1350 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, paint on plaster, whole fragment: 41 cm, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

The artists have even varied the servants' simple clothes. The folds of each kilt are different. With one of these kilts, the artist changed his mind and painted a different set of folds over his first version, which is visible through the white paint.

Suggested readings:

M. Hooper, *The Tomb of Nebamun* (London, British Museum Press, 2007).

R. Parkinson, *The painted Tomb-chapel of Nebamun* (London, British Museum Press, 2008).

A. Middleton and K. Uprichard, (eds.), *The Nebamun Wall Paintings: Conservation, Scientific Analysis and Display at the British Museum* (London, Archetype, 2008).

Explore the tomb-chapel of Nebamun in a 3D interactive animation at The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

A bottle and a toy: Objects from daily life

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The wall paintings from Nebamun's tomb-chapel depict an idealized vision of daily ancient Egyptian life. Much less is known about the lives of the majority of society. The study of human remains in poor cemeteries is often the only way to learn about the short lives of most ancient Egyptians. Many of the objects that remain belonged to the wealthy and survived only because they were buried in tombs. They provide a glimpse of these elite people's lavish lifestyles.

Glass bottle in the form of a fish



Figure **13.2.3.73**: *Glass bottle in the form of a fish*, c. 1390-1336 B.C.E., 18th Dynasty, glass, 14.5 cm, el-Amarna, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

Glass vessels seem to have been primarily functional rather than ritual objects; their main use was as containers for cosmetics or precious oils. However, in this case the fish design might hint at some further meaning, complementing its beauty as an elite personal item.

The fish represented is a Nile tilapia fish, which hatches and shelters her young in her mouth. The emergence of live offspring from the tilapia's mouth caused it to be used as a symbol of rebirth and regeneration; it was frequently worn as an amulet.

This is the most complete and spectacular example of several surviving fish-shaped glass vessels made around this period. It was found under the floor in a house at Tell el-Amarna, where it may have been buried by its owner.

Glass vessels from the New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.E.) are highly colorful objects, and glass was often used as a more versatile and less expensive substitute for semiprecious stones. This fish was made by trailing molten glass over a core made of a clay mixture. Next, colored rods of glass were wrapped around the body and dragged with a tool to create a fish-scale pattern. The body was then smoothed, the eyes and fins added and the core scraped out.

Wooden toy cat



Figure 13.2.3.74: *Wooden toy cat*, c. 1550-1070 B.C.E., 5.3 x 11.7 x 3 cm, Thebes, © Trustees of the British Museum. Rock crystal inlays are used for the eyes, and the teeth are of bronze. The lower jaw can be moved, using a string (modern) which runs through a hole which runs through from the top of the head.

Cats may have been kept as pets as early as the fourth millennium B.C.E. Two wild species of cat lived in Egypt: the jungle cat and the African wild cat. By the late first millennium B.C.E. cats were bred on an industrial scale for use in the cult of the cat goddess Bastet.

From the Twelfth Dynasty, cats are shown in tomb decoration, seated beneath the chair of the deceased, or accompanying him on a hunt in the marshes. There is a fine example of the latter type of scene in the tomb of Nebamun, showing a ginger cat catching birds in its mouth and with all four paws at the same time. Such hunting scenes may also represent the struggle between civilized humans and the forces of chaos, shown as wild fowl.

The cat had a similar role on the divine plane. In the funerary text called the Litany of Re, the sun god appears as a cat and battles the snake Apep. This serpent, a manifestation of the forces of chaos, attacked the solar boat as it passed through the night sky. The god overcame Apep by cutting him in two with a knife, allowing the sun to continue its journey to be reborn at dawn.

Additional resources:

R.M. and J.J. Janssen, *Growing up in Ancient Egypt* (London, The Rubicon Press, 1990).

M. Stead, *Egyptian life* (London, The British Museum Press, 1986).

I. Shaw and P. Nicholson (eds.), *British Museum dictionary of Ancient Egypt* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

A.P. Kozloff and B.M. Bryan, *Egypts dazzling sun: Amenhotep III and History World* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1992)

E.R. Russmann, *Eternal Egypt: masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum* (University of California Press, 2001).

J.D. Cooney, *Catalogue of Egyptian antiqu-3* (London, The British Museum Press, 1976).

S. Quirke and A.J. Spencer, *The British Museum Book of Ancient Egypt* (London, The British Museum Press, 1992).

Learn more about Egyptian objects on the British Museum website

© Trustees of the British Museum

House Altar depicting Akhenaten, Nefertiti and Three of their Daughters

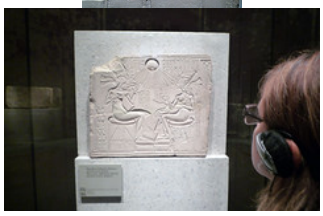
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.2.3.7: House Altar depicting Akhenaten, Nefertiti and Three of their Daughters, limestone, New Kingdom, Amarna period, 18th dynasty, c.1350 BCE (Ägyptisches Museum/Neues Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88674



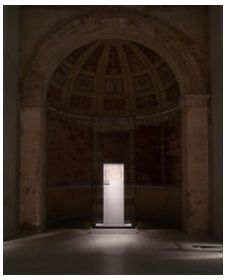


Figure 13.2.3.75: More Smarthistory images…

Portrait Head of Queen Tiye

by DR. BETH HARRIS *and* DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

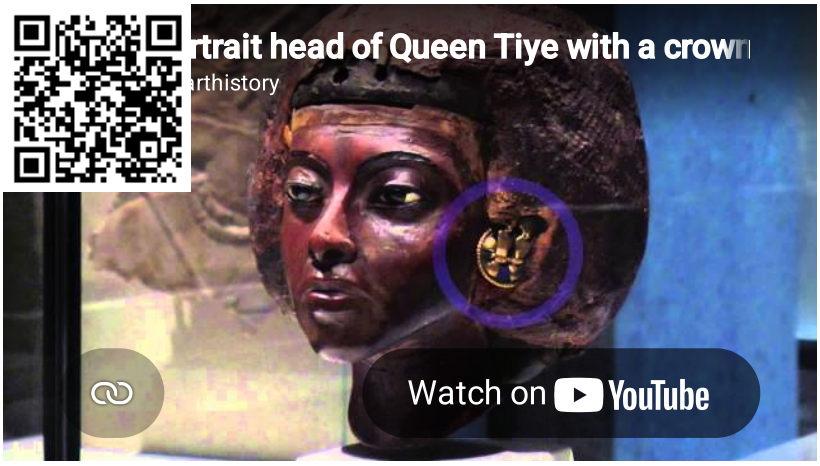


Figure 13.2.3.8: *Portrait Head of Queen Tiye with a Crown of Two Feathers*, c. 1355 B.C.E., Amarna Period, Dynasty 18, New Kingdom, Egypt, yew wood, lapis lazuli, silver, gold, faience, 22.5 cm high (Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection at the Neues Museum, Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

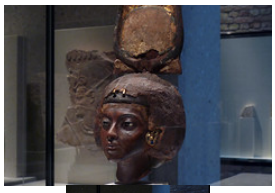












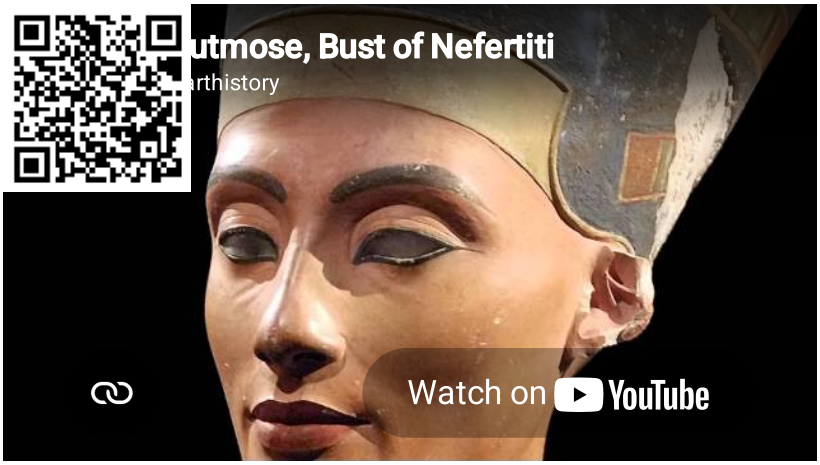


Figure 13.2.3.76: More Smarthistory images…

Thutmose, *Model Bust of Queen Nefertiti*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER *and* DR. BETH HARRIS

Found in an artist's studio, this stunning bust exemplifies a change in style, and may have been an early prototype.



Video 13.2.3.9: Thutmose, Model Bust of Queen Nefertiti, c. 1340 BCE, limestone and plaster, New Kingdom, 18th dynasty, Amarna Period (Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection/Neues Museum, Berlin)

Backstory

In 2009, the refurbished Neues Museum in Berlin celebrated its reopening, with the bust of Nefertiti prominently displayed as one of its main attractions. The celebration coincided with one of the Egyptian government's repeated pleas for the official return of the bust to Egypt. The museum has staunchly refused to give up the sculpture, asserting that the bust was acquired legally by the German archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt in 1912. Borchardt had excavated it along with several other objects from the studio of the ancient Egyptian sculptor Thutmose, and had brought his finds to Germany as part of an agreement with the Egyptian Antiquities Service. While there is no proof that Borchardt's dealings were explicitly illegal, as early as 1925, the Egyptian government began to take issue with Germany's possession of valuable antiquities. They began imposing sanctions, and the bust has been the source of tension between the two nations ever since.

This controversy relates to a general growing public awareness about the provenance—and politics—of antiquities held in European and American museums. In 2016, Nora al-Badri and Jan Nikolai Nelles, two artists from Germany, made a bold statement about these issues by staging an event they called "NefertitiHack." They secretly mapped the sculpture using a consumer-grade 3-D scanning device, and then released the data openly under a Creative Commons license. The artists' intention was "to inspire a critical reassessment of today's conditions and to overcome the colonial notion of possession in Germany," according to their website.

Many groups have advocated for using digitally-produced replicas either as stand-ins for objects that are returned to their places of origin, or vice versa—as ways of offering highly accurate replicas in place of the originals. The sharing of data between institutions and groups who lay claim to objects has also been suggested as a way to ease tensions over restitution. Nelles and al-Badri's project is a critical statement about the growing questions around repatriation and public access to objects via 3-D models and other data, as the Neues Museum does not allow photography or publicly share its own 3-D model of the bust.

Nora al-Badri, one of the artists behind NefertitiHack, stated:

> **"The head of Nefertiti represents all the other millions of stolen and looted artifacts all over the world currently happening, for example, in Syria, Iraq, and in Egypt…Archaeological artifacts as a cultural memory originate for the most part from the Global South; however, a vast number of important objects can be found in Western museums and private collections. We should face the fact that the colonial structures continue to exist today and still produce their inherent symbolic struggles."**

Over a century after it was excavated, the bust of Nefertiti remains a flashpoint for institutions and the public, driving us to consider the ways in which objects and their data are acquired, displayed, and shared.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

Image of Nefertiti, photo: Philip Pikart (CC BY-SA 3.0)

NefertitiHack website

Artists' video of the scanning process in the Neues Museum

"Swiping a Priceless Antiquity … With a Scanner and a 3-D Printer," *The New York Times*, March 1, 2016

"Artists Covertly Scan Bust of Nefertiti and Release the Data for Free Online," *Hyperallergic*, February 19, 2016

"Re-Examining Nefertiti's Likeness and Life," *ABC News*, December 8, 2012

"German foundation refuses to return Nefertiti bust," *Reuters*, January 24, 2011

"A 3,500-Year-Old Queen Causes a Rift Between Germany and Egypt," *The New York Times*, October 18, 2009

Tutankhamun's tomb (innermost coffin and death mask)

by DR. ELIZABETH CUMMINS



Figure **13.2.3.77**: Harry Burton, Howard Carter with Innermost Coffin of Tutankhamun, 1922 (Tutankhamun Archive, Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

Nearly lost to history

Tutankhamun was only the age of nine when he became king of Egypt during the 18th dynasty of the New Kingdom (c. 1332–1323 B.C.E.). His story would have been lost to history if it were not for the discovery of his tomb in 1922 by the archaeologist Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings. His nearly intact tomb held a wealth of objects that give us unique insights into this period of ancient Egyptian history.

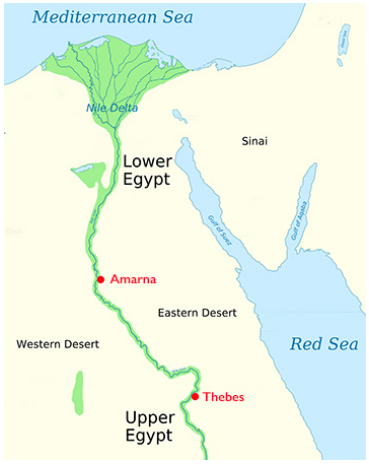


Figure **13.2.3.78**: Map of Ancient Egypt (modified) (original image: **Jeff Dahl**)

Tutankhamun ruled after the Amarna age, when the pharaoh Akhenaten, Tutankhamun's probable father, turned the religious attention of the kingdom to the worship of the god Aten, the sun disc. Akhenaten moved his capital city to the site of Akhetaten (also known as Amarna), in

Middle Egypt—far from the previous pharaoh's capital. After Akhenaton's death and the rule of a short-lived pharaoh, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamen shifted the focus of the country's worship back to the god Amun and returned the religious center back to Thebes.

Tutankhamun married his half-sister, Ankhesenamun, but they did not produce an heir. This left the line of succession unclear. Tutankhamun died at the young age of eighteen, leading many scholars to speculate on the manner of his death—chariot accident, murder by blow to the head, and even a hippopotamus attack! The answer is still unclear. Tutankhamun's much-older advisor (and possible step-grandfather), Ay, married the widowed Ankhesenamun and became pharaoh.

The tomb



Figure **13.2.3.79**: Valley of the Kings, Egypt (photo: **Troels Myrup**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

During the early twentieth century, Howard Carter, a British Egyptologist, excavated for many years in the Valley of the Kings—a royal burial ground located on the west bank of the ancient city of Thebes. He was running out of money to support his archaeological digs when he asked for funding for one more season from his financial backer, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon. Lord Carnarvon granted him one more year—and what a year it was!



Figure **13.2.3.80**: Lord Carnarvon with Carter during his initial visit to the tomb, 1922 (photo: Keystone Press Agency Ltd., 1922)

At the beginning of November 1922, Carter came upon the first of twelve steps of the entrance that led to the tomb of Tutankhamun. He quickly recovered the steps and sent a telegram to Carnarvon in England so they could open the tomb together. Carnarvon departed for Egypt immediately and on November 26, 1922, they made a hole in the entrance of the antechamber in order to look in. Carter states:

At first I could see nothing, the hot air escaping from the chamber causing the candle flame to flicker, but presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the lights, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold –everywhere the glint of gold.[1]

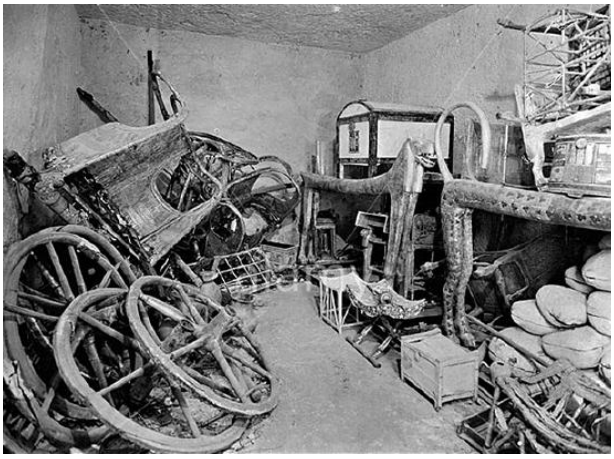


Figure 13.2.3.81: Harry Burton, View of tomb interior, 1922 (Tutankhamun Archive, Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

The task of cataloging the finds was an immense undertaking for the team. Carter spent a decade systematically recording the finds and having them photographed.

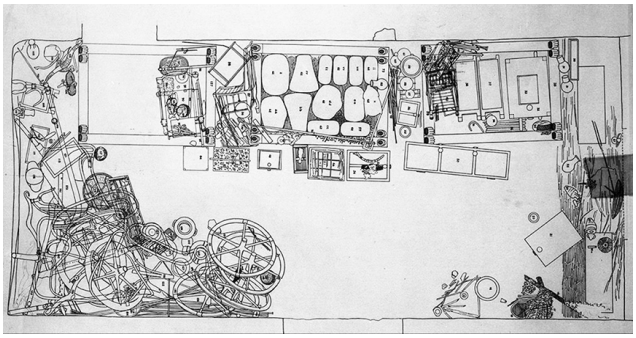


Figure 13.2.3.82: Howard Carter, Drawing of Tutankhamun's tomb (Tutankhamun Archive, Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

The innermost coffin

Tutankhamun's sarcophagus (a box-like stone container) held not one but three coffins in which to hold the body of the king. The outer two coffins were crafted in wood and covered in gold along with many semiprecious stones, such as lapis lazuli and turquoise. The inner coffin, however, was made of solid gold. When Howard Carter first came upon this coffin, it was not the shiny golden image we see in the Egyptian museum today (below). In his excavation notes, Carter states, it was "covered with a thick black pitch-like layer which extended from the hands down to the ankles (top image). This was obviously an anointing liquid which had been poured over the coffin during the burial ceremony and in great quantity (some two buckets full)."[2]

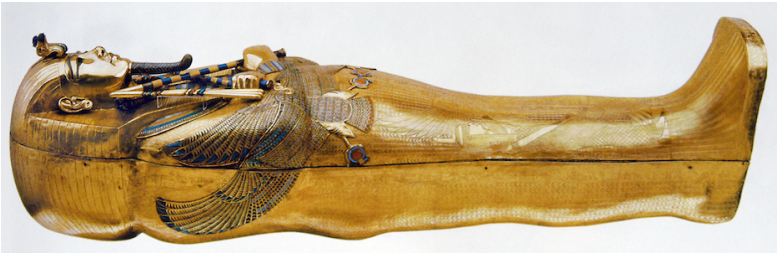


Figure 13.2.3.83: Tutankhamun's tomb, innermost coffin, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, c. 1323 B.C.E., gold with inlay of enamel and semiprecious stones (Egyptian Museum, Cairo)

The image of the pharaoh is that of a god. The gods were thought to have skin of gold, bones of silver, and hair of lapis lazuli—so the king is shown here in his divine form in the afterlife. He holds the crook and flail, symbols of the king's right to rule. The goddesses Nekhbet (vulture) and Wadjet (cobra), inlaid with semiprecious stones, stretch their wings across his torso. Beneath these goddesses are two more—Isis and Nephthys—etched into the gold lid.



Figure **13.2.3.84**: Egyptian crook and flail (image: Jeff Dahl)

The death mask of Tutankhamun



Figure **13.2.3.85**: Death Mask from innermost coffin, Tutankhamun's tomb, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, c. 1323 B.C.E., gold with inlay of enamel and semiprecious stones (Egyptian Museum, Cairo) (photo: Bjørn Christian Tørrissen, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The death mask (above) is considered one of the masterpieces of Egyptian art. It originally rested directly on the shoulders of the mummy inside the innermost gold coffin. It is constructed of two sheets of gold that were hammered together and weighs 22.5 pounds (10.23 kg). Tutankhamen is depicted wearing the striped nemes headdress (the striped head-cloth typically worn by pharaohs in ancient Egypt) with the goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet depicted again protecting his brow. He also wears a false beard that further connects him to the image of a god as with the inner coffin. He wears a broad collar, which ends in terminals shaped as falcon heads. The back of the mask is covered with Spell 151b from the Book of the Dead, which the Egyptians used as a road map for the afterlife. This particular spell protects the various limbs of Tutankhamun as he moves into the underworld.

[1]Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-amen* (New York City: Cooper Square Publishers. 1933), (vol. 1) pp.95-96.

[2]N. Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), pp. 108-109.

Additional resources:

The Griffin Institute's digital archive of the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb—includes all of Carter's handwritten notes, plans, and photographs

Theban Mapping Project

Tutankhamun's Funeral on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Howard Carter and Arthur C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen, I-III* (London: Cassell and Company) 1923-1933.

Carl Nicholas Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun: The King, The Tomb, The Royal Treasure* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990).

Head of Tutankhamun

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

At only 6 years old, Tutankhamun is crowned pharaoh by the god Amun-Ra.



Video **13.2.3.10**: *Head of Tutankhamun*, c. 1336–1327 B.C.E., New Kingdom, Amarna Period, indurated limestone, 6 3/4″ x 6 5/16″ x 9 5/16″ / 17.2 cm x 16 cm x 23.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). **Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.**

Hunefer's Judgement in the presence of Osiris

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.2.3.11**: Hunefer's Judgement in the presence of Osiris, Book of the Dead of Hunefer, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom, c. 1275 B.C.E., papyrus, Thebes, Egypt (British Museum). Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Erratum: near the end of the video we say that Nephthys and Anubis are siblings; this is not correct.

Hunefer: An ancient Egyptian official

Hunefer and his wife Nasha lived during the Nineteenth Dynasty, in around 1310 B.C.E.. He was a "Royal Scribe" and "Scribe of Divine Offerings." He was also "Overseer of Royal Cattle," and the steward of King Sety I. These titles indicate that he held prominent administrative offices and would have been close to the king. The location of his tomb is not known, but he may have been buried at Memphis.

Hunefer's high status is reflected in the fine quality of his Book of the Dead, which was specially produced for him. This, and a Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure, inside which the papyrus was found, are the only objects which can be ascribed to Hunefer. The papyrus of Hunefer is characterized by its good state of preservation and the large, and clear vignettes (illustrations) are beautifully drawn and painted. The vignette illustrating the "Opening of the Mouth" ritual is one of the most famous pieces of papyrus in The British Museum collection, and gives a great deal of information about this part of the funeral.

Page from the *Book of the Dead* of Hunefer

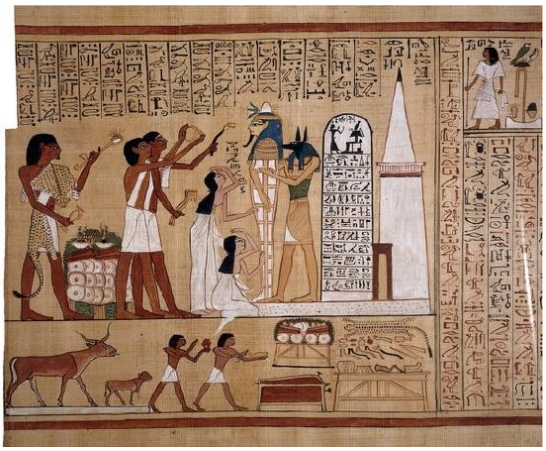


Figure **13.2.3.86**: *Page from the Book of the Dead of Hunefer*, c. 1275 B.C.E., 45.7 x 83.4 cm (frame), Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

The centerpiece of the upper scene is the mummy of Hunefer, shown supported by the god Anubis (or a priest wearing a jackal mask). Hunefer's wife and daughter mourn, and three priests perform rituals. The two priests with white sashes are carrying out the Opening of the Mouth ritual. The white building at the right is a representation of the tomb, complete with portal doorway and small pyramid. Both these features can be seen in real tombs of this date from Thebes. To the left of the tomb is a picture of the stela which would have stood to one side of the tomb entrance. Following the normal conventions of Egyptian art, it is shown much larger than normal size, in order that its content (the deceased worshipping Osiris, together with a standard offering formula) is absolutely legible.

At the right of the lower scene is a table bearing the various implements needed for the Opening of the Mouth ritual. At the left is shown a ritual, where the foreleg of a calf, cut off while the animal is alive, is offered. The animal was then sacrificed. The calf is shown together with its mother, who might be interpreted as showing signs of distress.

Page from the *Book of the Dead* of Ani



Figure **13.2.3.87**: *Page from the Book of the Dead of Ani*, c. 1275 B.C.E., 19th Dynasty, 44.5 x 30.7 cm, Thebes, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

The scene reads from left to right. To the left, Anubis brings Hunefer into the judgement area. Anubis is also shown supervizing the judgement scales. Hunefer's heart, represented as a pot, is being weighed against a feather, the symbol of Maat, the established order of things, in this context meaning 'what is right'. The ancient Egyptians believed that the heart was the seat of the emotions, the intellect and the character, and thus represented the good or bad aspects of a person's life. If the heart did not balance with the feather, then the dead person was condemned to non-existence, and consumption by the ferocious "devourer," the strange beast shown here which is part-crocodile, part-lion, and part-hippopotamus.

However, as a papyrus devoted to ensuring Hunefer's continued existence in the Afterlife is not likely to depict this outcome, he is shown to the right, brought into the presence of Osiris by his son Horus, having become "true of voice" or "justified." This was a standard epithet applied to dead individuals in their texts. Osiris is shown seated under a canopy, with his sisters Isis and Nephthys. At the top, Hunefer is shown adoring a row of deities who supervise the judgement.

Suggested readings:

R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (revised ed. C. A. R. Andrews) (London, The British Museum Press, 1985).

R.B. Parkinson and S. Quirke, *Papyrus* (Egyptian Bookshelf) (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

S. Quirke and A.J. Spencer, *The British Museum book of ancient Egypt* (London, The British Museum Press, 1992).

This work at The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

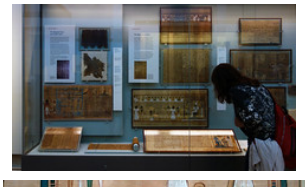
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88674



Figure 13.2.3.88: More Smarthistory images…

Ptolemaic

After the death of Alexander the Great's heirs, his conquests were divided among his generals. The Ptolemaic dynasty begins in 305 B.C.E., when one of Alexander's generals became Ptolemy I of Egypt.

332 - 30 B.C.E.

Egyptian mummy portraits

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

A portrait shows what an individual would have looked like. Ancient Egyptians did not make much use of portraits; inscriptions containing the name and titles of an individual were used for identification purposes instead. Portraits were, however, important in Roman art. They were placed in tombs as a memorial of family members.

This type of portrait appeared in Egypt in the first century C.E., and remained popular for around 200 years. Egyptian mummy portraits were placed on the outside of the cartonnage coffin over the head of the individual or were carefully wrapped into the mummy bandages. They were painted on a wooden board at a roughly lifelike scale. It is possible to date some mummies on the basis of the hairstyles, jewelry and clothes worn in the portrait, and to identify members of a family by their physical similarities.

Mummy portrait of a man

Most mummy portraits that have survived have unfortunately become separated from the mummies to which they were attached. Because of this we rarely know the identities of the subjects.



Figure 13.2.3.89: *Mummy portrait of a man*, c. 100-120 C.E., 40.1 x 21.5 cm, Hawara, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

The subject of this portrait, painted in encaustic on limewood, appears to be a man in his fifties or sixties of strikingly Roman appearance. He is dressed in a tunic with a violet stripe, or clavus, and a thick folded mantle. The hair is brushed forward and cropped in the style of court portraits of the Trajanic period (98-117 C.E.). Pink has been used to highlight his nose and lips, and dark brown to indicate shading and the contours of the face. The portrait gives the impression of age, authority and austerity. These characteristics were very important in Rome, and are here represented in a very Roman manner.

The accuracy of these portraits has often been questioned. Techniques employed by doctors to plan delicate facial surgery have been used to compare the actual appearance of several mummies with their portraits. These techniques have helped prove that the portrait did indeed show the person as they appeared during life. Of course, there was still some element of artistic license; for example, the mummy of Artimedorus appeared to be much more heavily built than he seemed in his portrait.

Mummy portrait of a woman



Figure 13.2.3.90: *Mummy portrait of a woman*, c. 55-70 C.E., 41.6 x 21.5 cm, Hawara, Egypt, © Trustees of the British Museum

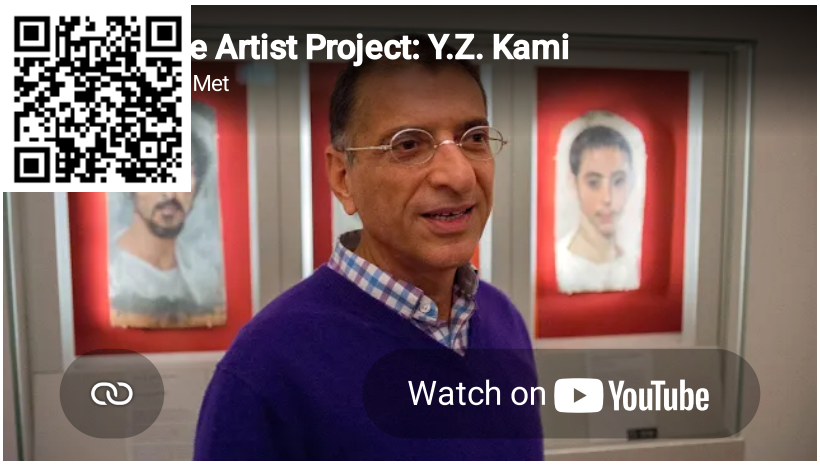
Additional resources:

S. Walker and M. Bierbrier, *Ancient faces: Mummy portrait of a man* (London, The British Museum Press, 1997).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Faiyum mummy portraits

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.2.3.12**: Y.Z. Kami on Egyptian Mummy Portraits, “Always in front of a human face you have an emotional reaction. Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**.

Additional resources:

Portrait of the Boy Eutyches at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Roman Egypt on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Art of the Roman Provinces, 1–500 A.D. on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Decoding the Rosetta Stone

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.2.3.13**: A conversation with Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker in front of the Rosetta Stone, Egypt, Ptolemaic Period, 196 B.C.E., granodiorite, 112.3 x 28.4 x 75.7 cm (The British Museum)

Multilingualism along the Nile

by LUIGI PRADA



Figure 13.2.3.91: This bilingual papyrus containing magical spells and recipes dates from the early third century A.D. and is written in both Greek and Demotic. In some passages, the Greek text is also transliterated into Demotic, and vice versa. **London Magical Papyrus**, A.D. 200–225, Romano-Egyptian. Papyrus and ink, 9 7/16 × 33 5/8 in. The British Museum, EA10070,2. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Featured in the exhibition *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World*

When we think of the language of ancient Egypt, the first thing that springs to mind is hieroglyphs carved on temple and tomb walls, the expression of a monolithic and unchangeable culture. Yet this could not be further from the truth. The civilization of ancient Egypt was much more dynamic and open to innovation than we normally give it credit for, and so was its linguistic complexity. Ancient Egyptian has one of the longest histories of written attestation of all world languages. First recorded around 3200 B.C., it gradually disappeared in the Middle Ages under the pressure of Arabic—a language that is not linguistically related to ancient Egyptian and is today Egypt's national language.

When we think of the changes that occurred in the English language between the time of Shakespeare and today, over a period of just four centuries, it is easy to imagine what dramatic transformations ancient Egyptian underwent over its own history, spanning four millennia.

About the Ancient Egyptian language

Scholars divide the ancient Egyptian language into five historical phases:

- **Old Egyptian**—attested in the third millennium B.C.
- **Middle Egyptian**—originating in the first half of the second millennium B.C., it later remained in use as the classical phase of the Egyptian language for most official, ritual, and literary texts
- **Late Egyptian**—in use in the second half of the second millennium and the first half of the first millennium B.C.
- **Demotic**—attested from the seventh century B.C. to fifth century A.D.
- **Coptic**—documented from approximately the second century A.D. to the tenth century A.D., though it still remains in use as the liturgical language of the Egyptian Coptic Church

Ancient Egyptian could also be written in a variety of different scripts, which include:

- **Hieroglyphs**—mostly used to write Old and Middle Egyptian texts



Figure 13.2.3.92: Hieroglyphs. Detail from the Temple of Seti I, Abydos, Egypt. Photo courtesy of and © Luigi Prada

- **Hieratic**—a cursive script typically written on portable media such as papyrus and used for Old, Middle, and Late Egyptian alike



Figure 13.2.3.93: Hieratic. London Medical Papyrus (detail), about 1300 B.C., Egyptian. Papyrus and ink, 7 7/8 × 45 1/2 in. The British Museum, EA10059,1. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Featured in the exhibition *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World*

- **Demotic**—an even more cursive script used for writing Demotic (the same term being used for both the language phase and the script)

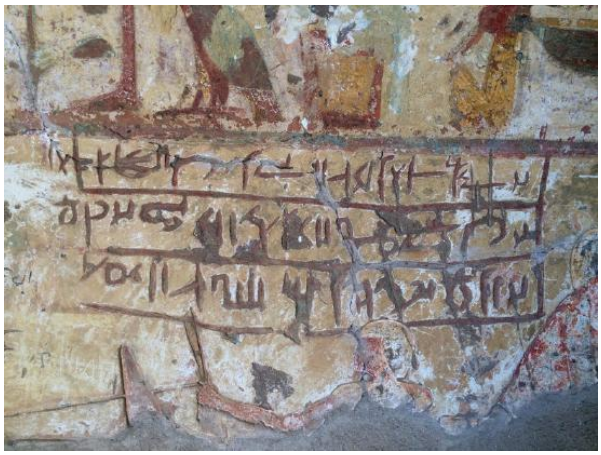


Figure 13.2.3.94: Demotic. Detail of script in the Tomb of Reneny in Elkab, Egypt. Photo courtesy of and © Luigi Prada

- **Coptic**—the Greek alphabet with the addition of a few letters for noting sounds that are specific to Egyptian (employed for Coptic—again, using the same word for both the language and the writing)

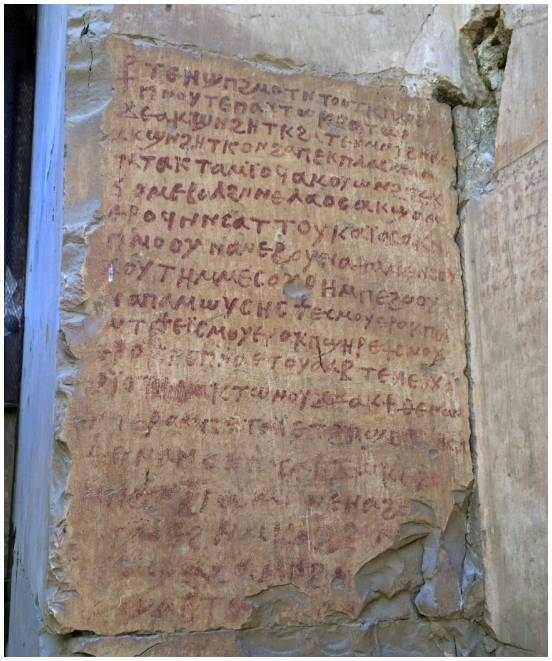


Figure 13.2.3.95: Coptic. Graffito in the Temple of Sethi I in Abydos, Egypt. Photo courtesy of and © Luigi Prada

This all makes for a rather complex linguistic landscape, especially when we consider that, in the latter phases of ancient Egyptian history, several of the aforementioned language phases and scripts were in use at the same time. Nor was Egypt unaccustomed to foreign languages. In the exhibition **Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World**, the visitor had the opportunity to observe a number of written artifacts illustrating the outcome of language contact between Egypt and peoples from the Aegean and Roman world.

Intellectual and linguistic exchange

The so-called **London Medical Papyrus** is a manuscript dating from Egypt's Eighteenth Dynasty, about 1400 to 1300 B.C. It contains a collection of remedies—consisting of both medical recipes and magical spells—for the treatment of various conditions, including swelling, skin diseases, eye ailments, bleeding, and burns. The text is written in hieratic (script) and composed in Middle Egyptian (language) but, remarkably, a number of healing spells in the section concerned with dermatology are not in Egyptian. As the papyrus itself points out, they are in fact in *djed en khastyw*, that is, "foreign language," here transliterated in hieratic. One of the foreign languages used in this section of the text is that of *Keftw*, the ancient Egyptian name for the island of Crete.



Figure **13.2.3.96**: **London Medical Papyrus**, about 1300 B.C., Egyptian. Papyrus and ink, 7 7/8 × 45 1/2 in. The British Museum, EA10059,1. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Featured in the exhibition Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World

Throughout human history, societies ancient and modern have been fascinated with the culture of faraway lands—often perceived as a "secret knowledge." The ancient Egyptians were no exception, and it is thus not surprising that they should have chosen a foreign language as a special linguistic vehicle for magical incantations. The presence of Cretan, the language of the Minoan civilization, in this papyrus shows that the links between pharaonic Egypt and the Aegean area in pre-Hellenic times went much further than trade or the visual arts would suggest (as witnessed in the Minoan-style frescoes of Avaris, in the Egyptian Delta), and that they also included intellectual and linguistic exchanges.

Moving eight centuries forward, to Egypt's Late Period and its Twenty-sixth Dynasty (664–525 B.C.), the presence of an increasing number of people from the Aegean world in Egypt, and especially in its Delta and in the area of the ancient capital of Memphis, was then a fait accompli. Arriving mainly for commercial and military reasons (many served as mercenaries in the Egyptian army), these communities included both Greek and non-Hellenic peoples, such as the Carians, from southwest modern-day Turkey.

The funerary stela here pictured records the burial of a Carian woman named Píabrm, pictured in the bottom register, lying on a funerary bed. Yet the making of her stela, and especially the reliefs in the other registers, reveals how these Carian immigrants adapted themselves to the customs and beliefs of their new country while also retaining their own traditions and language.



Figure **13.2.3.97**: Funerary Stela with a Carian Inscription, 500s B.C., Egyptian. Limestone, 24 3/4 × 12 1/4 × 4 in. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum, donated by Egypt Exploration Society, 1971. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Featured in the exhibition Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World

The top and middle registers sport deities from the Egyptian pantheon such as Osiris, Thoth, and the Apis Bull (a sacred bull worshipped in Saqqara, the same site where this stela was unearthed), while the scene at the bottom is remarkably un-Egyptian, showing the deceased Píabrm on a Grecian-style bier and the people around her performing Carian ceremonies. Note the second mourner from the left, who is lifting a knife to her forehead—a Carian mourning ritual of self-harm attested also in other sources.

When it comes to language, the stela is wholly Carian: the text carved on it, recording the name and other information about the deceased, is not written in Egyptian hieroglyphs—as one would perhaps expect on a funerary stela from Egypt showing Egyptian deities—but in the deceased's original language and writing, the Carian alphabet.

A multicultural Egypt

It was finally with the conquest of the country by Alexander the Great in the year 332 B.C. and with the subsequent Ptolemaic Period (ending with the Roman conquest in 30 B.C.) that Egypt became a proper multicultural and multilingual country at all levels of society and in virtually all corners of the country. A new line of rulers took over the throne of Egypt—the Ptolemies—and, as these rulers originated from Greece, Greek became one of Egypt's official languages, alongside Egypt's old indigenous languages and scripts.

No better artefact on display in the exhibition at the Getty could exemplify this than the **stela of Kallimachos**. This granite stela was originally set up in the temple of Amun at Karnak in the year 39 B.C. during the reign of the last Ptolemaic ruler, queen Cleopatra VII. It contains a decree issued by the local priests to honor a general named Kallimachos, who is praised in the text as a powerful local benefactor.



Figure **13.2.3.98**: Decree in Honor of Kallimachos, 332–30 B.C., Ptolemaic. Granite, 44 7/8 × 25 11/16 × 11 13/16 in. Torino, Museo Egizio. © Museo Egizio. Featured in the exhibition *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World*

Already at first sight, one notices some irregularities in this stela: this is due to the fact that the priests of Karnak were clearly working on a budget and had to reuse an earlier monument from the Pharaonic Period. Most of its original hieroglyphic text and scene were erased. Only the images of the winged sun-disc and of the two gods (Amun-Re and Montu) with related hieroglyphic captions were preserved in the center. The Ptolemaic sculptors then added two new images to the sides, those of the ruler Cleopatra and of her heir Caesarion (her son by Julius Caesar), along with the hieroglyphic captions identifying them.

The lower two thirds of the stela were covered with the decree itself written in "both Greek and native letters," as the stela itself proclaims—that is, presented bilingually, in both Demotic and Greek, so as to cater to both possible audiences. Hieroglyphs (to write Middle Egyptian), Demotic, and Greek are all present side-by-side on this one monument, reflecting on stone the composite identity and the cultural traditions of Hellenistic Egypt.

Hieroglyphs exported to Rome

Egypt was not the only laboratory for such interactions and experimentations in the multilingual world of the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. Artifacts inscribed in Egyptian also made their way to the four corners of the Roman Empire, and none are more remarkable than Egyptian obelisks. The obelisk of Benevento is paradigmatic in this respect. It was erected in the year 88 or 89 A.D. in the southern Italian city of Benevento to celebrate the Emperor Domitian and the Egyptian goddess Isis, whose local temple it decorated, along with a twin obelisk. Even more remarkable than the obelisk *per se* are the inscriptions on its four sides, which must have been commissioned to a member of the Egyptian priesthood well-versed in the ancient language (Middle Egyptian) and script (hieroglyphs) of his native culture.



Figure **13.2.3.99**: Detail of the Benevento obelisk showing the text "Isis the great, lady of Benevento" inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs. Obelisk (detail, pre-conservation view), A.D. 88/89, Roman. Granite, 351.5 cm high. Collection: Benevento, Museo del Sannio, inv. 1916. Featured in the exhibition *Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World*

Despite its traditional and archaic form and language, the obelisk is still fully relevant to the place and time in which it was erected. The royal cartouches, which traditionally surround the pharaoh's name, bear the name of Domitian transliterated into hieroglyphs. And even the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis is connected with the Italian city where the obelisk stood, as she is celebrated in the hieroglyphic text as "Isis the great, lady of Benevento."

A city of which the ancient Egyptians would never have heard thus received a rendering of its name in the most sacred and ancient language and script of ancient Egypt. This would have probably bemused the Latin-speaking inhabitants of Benevento themselves, had they been able to read the inscription—perhaps not much unlike the experience of modern residents of New York, when they see the name of their city rendered into Latin, in scholarly publications or Roman Catholic Church texts, as *Novum Eboracum*.

This essay first appeared in the **Getty Iris**.

The Rosetta Stone

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.2.3.100**: *The Rosetta Stone*, 196 B.C.E., Ptolemaic Period, 112.3 x 75.7 x 28.4 cm, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum. The Rosetta Stone was discovered in Egypt, at Fort St Julien in el-Rashid, known as Rosetta.

The key to translating hieroglyphics

The Rosetta Stone is one of the most important objects in the British Museum as it holds the key to understanding Egyptian hieroglyphs—a script made up of small pictures that was used originally in ancient Egypt for religious texts. Hieroglyphic writing died out in Egypt in the fourth century C.E.. Over time the knowledge of how to read hieroglyphs was lost, until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 and its subsequent decipherment.

The Stone is a tablet of black rock called granodiorite. It is part of a larger inscribed stone that would have stood some 2 meters high. The top part of the stone has broken off at an angle—in line with a band of pink granite whose crystalline structure glints a little in the light. The back of the Rosetta stone is rough, where it has been hewn into shape, but the front face is smooth and crammed with text, inscribed in three different scripts. These form three distinct bands of writing.

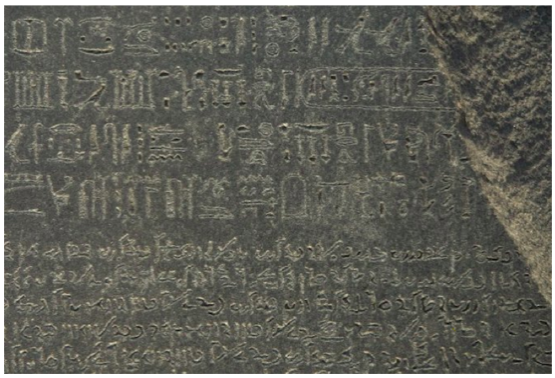


Figure **13.2.3.101**: *The Rosetta Stone*, 196 B.C.E., Ptolemaic Period, 112.3 x 75.7 x 28.4 cm, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum. Part of grey and pink granodiorite stela bearing priestly decree concerning Ptolemy V in three blocks of text: Hieroglyphic (14 lines), Demotic (32 lines) and Greek (53 lines).

Three translations of the same decree

The inscriptions are three translations of the same decree, passed by a council of priests, that affirms the royal cult of the thirteen-year-old Ptolemy V on the first anniversary of his coronation. The decree is inscribed on the stone three times, in hieroglyphic (suitable for a priestly decree), demotic (the native script used for daily purposes), and Greek (the language of the administration). The importance of this to Egyptology is immense. In the early years of the nineteenth century, scholars were able to use the Greek inscription on this stone as the key to deciphering the others.

Opposition to the Ptolemies

In previous years the family of the Ptolemies had lost control of certain parts of the country. It had taken their armies some time to put down opposition in the Delta, and parts of southern Upper Egypt, particularly Thebes, were not yet back under the government's control.

Before the Ptolemaic era (that is before about 332 B.C.E.), decrees in hieroglyphs such as this were usually set up by the king. It shows how much things had changed from Pharaonic times that the priests, the only people who had kept the knowledge of writing hieroglyphs, were

now issuing such decrees. The list of good deeds done by the king for the temples hints at the way in which the support of the priests was ensured.

The end of hieroglyphics

Soon after the end of the fourth century C.E., when hieroglyphs had gone out of use, the knowledge of how to read and write them disappeared. In the early years of the nineteenth century, some 1400 years later, scholars were able to use the Greek inscription on this stone as the key to decipher them.

The discovery

Thomas Young, an English physicist, was the first to show that some of the hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone wrote the sounds of a royal name, that of Ptolemy. The French scholar Jean-François Champollion then realized that hieroglyphs recorded the sound of the Egyptian language and laid the foundations of our knowledge of ancient Egyptian language and culture.

Soldiers in Napoleon's army discovered the Rosetta Stone in 1799 while digging the foundations of an addition to a fort near the town of el-Rashid (Rosetta). On Napoleon's defeat, the stone became the property of the British under the terms of the Treaty of Alexandria (1801) along with other antiquities that the French had found.

The Rosetta Stone has been exhibited in the British Museum since 1802, with only one break. Towards the end of the First World War, in 1917, when the Museum was concerned about heavy bombing in London, they moved it to safety along with other, portable, 'important' objects. The Rosetta Stone spent the next two years in a station on the Postal Tube Railway 50 feet below the ground at Holborn.

Analyzing the Rosetta Stone

When the Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1799, the carved characters that covered its surface were quickly copied. Printer's ink was applied to the Stone and white paper was laid over it. When the paper was removed, it revealed an exact copy of the text—but in reverse. Since then, many copies or "facsimiles" have been made using a variety of materials. Inevitably, the surface of the Stone accumulated many layers of material left over from these activities, despite attempts to remove any residue. Once on display, the grease from many thousands of human hands eager to touch the Stone added to the problem.

An opportunity for investigation and cleaning the Rosetta Stone arose when this famous object was made the centerpiece of the *Cracking Codes* exhibition at The British Museum in 1999. When work commenced to remove all but the original, ancient material, the stone was black with white lettering. As treatment progressed, the different substances uncovered were analyzed. Grease from human handling, a coating of carnauba wax from the early 1800s and printer's ink from 1799 were cleaned away using cotton wool swabs and liniment of soap, white spirit, acetone and purified water. Finally, white paint in the text, applied in 1981, which had been left in place until now as a protective coating, was removed with cotton swabs and purified water. A small square at the bottom left corner of the face of the Stone was left untouched to show the darkened wax and the white infill.

The Stone has a dark grey-pinkish tone with a pink streak running through it. Today you can see traces of a reddish brown in the text. This material was analyzed and found to be a clear mineral known as hydroxyapatite; the color may be due to iron traces. The mineral may have been applied deliberately, but there is no proof of this. This substance is not known by experts to have been used as a pigment, nor to have been used as a base for painting (a ground) in ancient Egypt.

Translation of the demotic text

[Year 9, Xandikos day 4], which is equivalent to the Egyptian month, second month of Peret, day 18, of the King "The Youth who has appeared as King in the place of his Father," the Lord of the Uraei "Whose might is great, who has established Egypt, causing it to prosper, whose heart is beneficial before the gods…"

Read the rest of the Rosetta Stone translation here

Additional resources:

The Rosetta Stone from the BBC's History of the World

Everything you ever wanted to Know about the Rosetta Stone (The British Museum)

A.K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs: 332 BC–AD 642; From Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996).

C.A.R. Andrews, *The Rosetta Stone* (London, The British Museum Press, 1982).

C.A.R. Andrews and S. Quirke, *The Rosetta Stone: facsimile drawing* (London, The British Museum Press, 1988).

D.J. Thompson, “Literacy and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt,” *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 67–83.

D.J. Thompson, The Ptolemies and Egypt in Andrew Erkine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), pp. 105–20.

G.A. Hölbl, *History of the Ptolemaic Empire* (London, Routledge, 2000).

R. Parkinson, *The Rosetta Stone* (London, British Museum Press, 2005).

R. Parkinson, *Cracking codes: the Rosetta Stone and decipherment* (London, The British Museum Press, 1999).

R.S. Simpson, *Demotic grammar in the Ptolemaic Sacerdotal Decrees* (Oxford, Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1996).

© Trustees of the British Museum

13.2.3: Ancient Egypt is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.3: Ancient Egypt** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.4: Ancient Aegean

Ancient Aegean

The art of the Cycladic islands, the Minoans (on Crete), and the Mycenaeans (on the Greek mainland).

3200 - 1050 B.C.E.

Cycladic

The Cyclades is a group of about thirty small islands in the Aegean Sea.

3200 - 1050 B.C.E.

Male Harp Player from Keros

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Modern artists fell in the love with these abstract 5000 year old sculptures—but what was their real meaning?



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

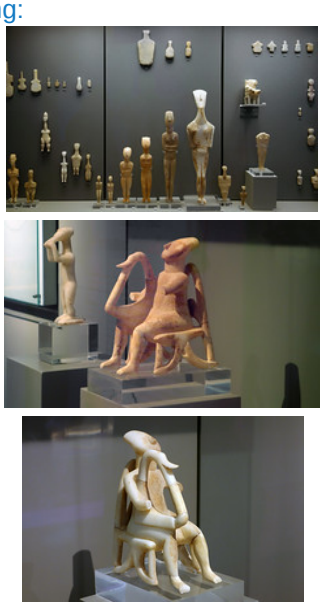
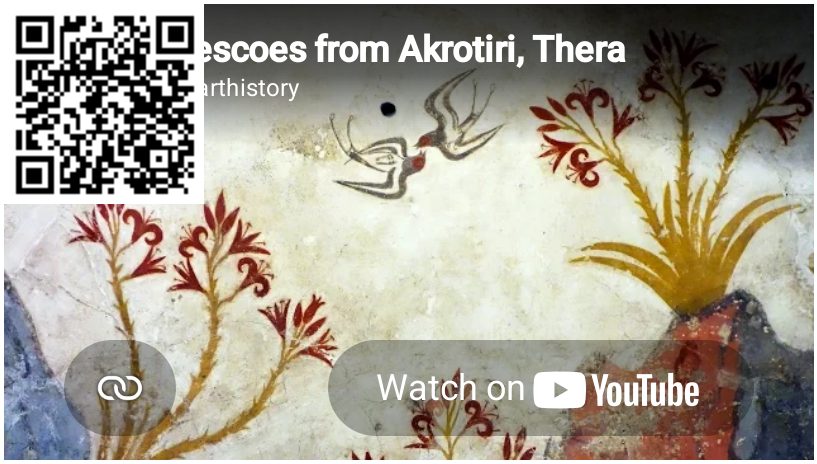


Figure **13.2.4.1**: More Smarthistory images…

Akrotiri, Thera

by STEVEN ZUCKER and BETH HARRIS

Hidden under volcanic ash for millennia, the beautiful frescoes in the houses of Akrotiri were recently unearthed.

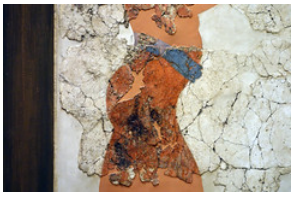
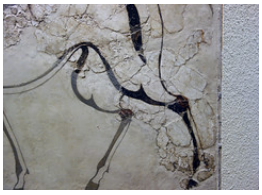
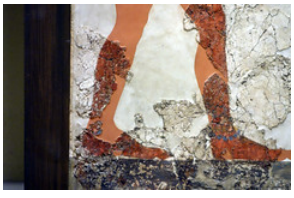


Video **13.2.4.2**: Frescoes from Akrotiri, on the Cycladic island Thera (Santorini), Greece, 16th century B.C.E., Aegean Bronze Age (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88675



Figure \PageIndexx2: More Smarthistory images

Minoan

Minoan culture is characterized by the building of remarkable palaces (really administrative centers) decorated with colorful frescoes.

c. 3000 – c. 1100 B.C.E.

Minoan art

The remarkable and influential bronze-age culture on the island of Crete is called "Minoan" after the mythic King Minos.

The Palace at Knossos (Crete)

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.3**: The archaeological site at Knossos, with restored rooms in the background, Crete (photo: Jebulon, public domain)

Restoration versus conservation

What happens to an archaeological site after the archaeologist's work is completed? Should the site (or parts of it) be restored to what we believe (based on evidence) it once looked like? Or should the site be protected through conservation and left as is? A visit to an unrestored archaeological site can be uninspiring—even the most lavish ancient sites can appear to be piles of unorganized stones framed by broken columns and other fragments. And while modern conservation principles insist on the reversibility of any treatment (in case better treatments are discovered in the future), in the past, conservators didn't have the resources or science that is available today.

Knossos

The archaeological site of Knossos (on the island of Crete) —traditionally called a palace—is the second most popular tourist attraction in all of Greece (after the Acropolis in Athens), hosting hundreds of thousands of tourists a year. But its primary attraction is not so much the authentic Bronze Age remains (which are more than three thousand years old) but rather the extensive early 20th century restorations installed by the site's excavator, Sir Arthur Evans, in the early twentieth century.



Figure **13.2.4.4**: Sir Arthur Evans, 1911

Archaeological restorations offer important information about the history of a site and Knossos doesn't disappoint—one can see the earliest throne room in Europe, walk through the monumental Northern entrance to the palace, marvel at colorful wall paintings and enjoy the elegance of a queen's apartments. All these spaces, however, are the result of extensive, contentious and, in some cases, damaging restoration. Knossos asks us to consider how we can preserve an archaeological site, while at the same time providing a valuable, educational experience for visitors that nonetheless remains true to the remains.

Considering Evans' reconstructions

The Evans restoration at Knossos are important for several reasons:

1. If Evans hadn't worked to preserve and restore so much of Knossos beginning in 1901, it would have undoubtedly been largely lost.
2. The restoration of the site undertaken by Evans, with its elegantly painted Throne Room (below) makes very real our historical understanding, originally revealed by Homer, of the power and prestige of the kings of Crete.
3. The beautiful, although sometimes inaccurate, restorations of architecture and wall paintings by Evans evoke the elegance and skill of Minoan architects and painters.

These are the undeniable benefits of Evans's restorations and among the aspects of a visit to Knossos that everyone values. It is the smooth corniced walls, bright paintings, and whole passages stepped with balustrades at Knossos that the post cards, camera snaps, and human memory preserve, and that has translated into important support for the site—intellectually, politically, and financially.



Figure **13.2.4.5**: Throne Room, Knossos (photo: **Olaf Bausch**, CC BY 3.0)

At the same time, the Evans restorations are problematic. In some cases, what is restored does not accurately reflect what was found. Instead, a grander, and more complete, experience is presented. For example, when you visit Knossos, because of the way it is reconstructed, it is very easy to believe that all that was ever found there was a Late Bronze Age palace.

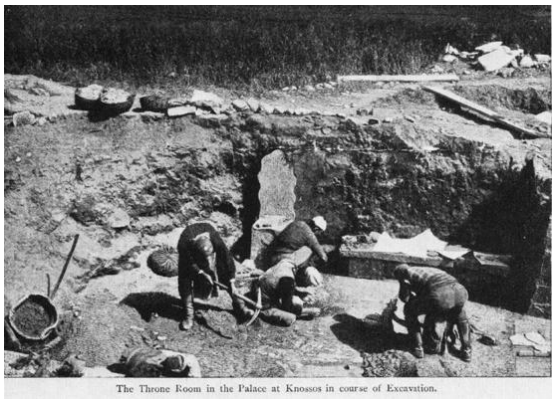


Figure **13.2.4.6**: Throne Room excavations at Knossos, from the title page of a brochure appealing for support issued by the Cretan Exploration Fund (1900)

Evans's restoration of the Throne Room (and much else at the site) privileges the Late Bronze Age period of its history. The typical visitor likely won't grasp that the Throne Room dates to the *latest* phase of Knossos—the end of the 2nd millennium B.C.E., though the site was occupied nearly continuously from the Neolithic to the Roman era (from the 8th millennium B.C.E. to at least the 5th century C.E.).

The power of Evans's interpretation and reconstruction of the site as purely Minoan—the product of the indigenous culture of that island—is very much still with us despite the fact that much has changed about how art historians and archaeologists understand the different periods of construction at Knossos. Today, much of its final plan and form, which Evans reconstructed (including the Throne Room and most of the frescos), are understood as being of Mycenaean construction (not Minoan). Although this information is noted in texts mounted at the site, it is too often overlooked by visitors.



Figure **13.2.4.7**: Contemporary view of Knossos looking southwest from the Monumental North Entrance (photo: **Theofanis Ampatzidis**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

What is archaeological restoration?

When archaeological remains are revealed through excavation, they are often delicate and cannot survive long unprotected. Some archaeologists backfill their trenches (refill the excavated holes with the material that was removed) to help preserve remains. In other instances, architecture, graves, or the impressions left from ephemeral building materials (such as wood) are sometimes left exposed, and when this happens some sort of conservation should occur. By definition, any sort of conservation is restoration when the modern materials are layered on the ancient and made to look harmonious in form, color and/or texture. As a result, restorations are sometimes nearly indistinguishable from authentic materials, and this is where things get tricky—such as the situation at Knossos.

Before making an archaeological restoration, three essential issues must be examined:

1. **What specific point in a site or monument's history will be the subject of the restoration?** Many (most!) archaeological sites reflect a long occupation or use, and within that timeframe things change, are repaired, or rebuilt. What era of the site will be privileged by the restoration—and in turn, which eras of the site's history will become harder to see and understand?
2. **How will future changes in the interpretation and knowledge about a site or monument be accommodated by restorations?** Archaeological interpretations of sites evolve all the time, often through new discoveries elsewhere. Restorations, in order to remain accurate, need to take into account potential new scholarship that can change the history or meaning of a site or monument.
3. **Lastly and most importantly, restorations must be non-destructive and reversible**. The first role of restoration is conservation. Therefore, the original remains must be entirely safe and not harmed in any way by restoration methods and materials. The reversibility of restorations not only has to do with the accommodation of changes in interpretation made above, but also with the need to leave the way open for less invasive, more gentle restoration methods in the future.

Restoration at Knossos

Aside from some gaps (for instance, during the First World War) Evans excavated at the site of Knossos each year from 1900 to 1930. Restoration of the architectural finds began almost immediately and can be divided into three phases, each characterized by the architect Evans hired to do the work. These three men, Theodore Fyfe, Christian Doll, and Piet De Jong, each had very different restoration philosophies.

Phase 1: Theodore Fyfe

From 1901 to 1904, a young architect by the name of Theodore Fyfe was charged with the restorations at Knossos. It is likely that Evans hired him because the winter of 1900/01 had damaged the newly exposed Throne Room—the most important space excavated during that first season at the site.

Fyfe's work at Knossos can be characterized by two things. First of all, he was devoted to the concept of minimal intervention. Second, when intervention was necessary, he made great efforts to use materials authentic to the Bronze Age structure (wood, limestone, rubble masonry) and even to use Bronze Age construction techniques, which he was able to glean from his onsite work. Clearly Fyfe was highly concerned about the truthfulness of his interventions and reconstructions; the only exception to this was his construction of modern-style pitched roofs to protect the Throne Room and the Shrine of the Double Axes.

Phase 2: Christian Doll

The second phase of restoration work at Knossos dates from 1905 to 1910, and was directed by Christian Doll. The first conservation work to which Doll had to attend to in 1905 was that of Fyfe's. Essentially, Fyfe's zeal to use authentic materials resulted in failure: he neglected in many cases to treat timbers before their use and he tended to use softwoods rather than hardwoods (all of which lead to rot). Also, rain was a destructive force in the winters, especially when it ran through newly exposed parts of the site. Doll's first and most important project was to stabilize and reconstruct the Grand Staircase to its original four story height. This was an extremely difficult job as the exact nature of the ancient design eluded both him and Fyfe, so a certain amount of improvisation was needed. And, because the weight of the structure was so great, Doll used iron girders (imported from England at great expense) covered in cement to make them look like ancient wooden beams.

Doll's approach to conservation was still anchored in preserving the excavated remains. However, Doll was no fan of the authentic materials used by Fyfe, as he saw how they had failed to preserve the many areas where they had been employed. Instead, Doll constructed structural systems based on techniques used in London at the time. Moreover, he employed contemporary architectural materials, such as the iron girders mentioned above, as well as concrete (the first use of this material at Knossos).



Figure **13.2.4.8**: Piet de Jong, reconstruction of the "Dolphin Fresco," Queen's Megaron, Knossos (public domain)

The third phase of conservation work was executed over a longer period of time, from 1922 to 1952, by Piet De Jong. The vast majority of what Knossos looks like today, with large passages of reconstructed walls and rooms, is his work.

Three main elements characterize De Jong's work at Knossos. The most prominent was his use of iron reinforced concrete. In the twelve years between Doll's and De Jong's work, the use of reinforced concrete had grown in popularity because of its speedy construction, its relative cheapness, and its ability to be molded into nearly any shape. It was also thought to be nearly indestructible.

Another essential characteristic of De Jong's work at Knossos was his use of reinforced concrete to construct parts of the palace beyond what had been found—some passages were based on archaeological evidence, some were not (the bases of these reconstructions came from Evans himself).

De Jong often did not merely end walls at the height of their discovery but would either finish them off with a flat roof and cornice, often decorated with double white horns (what some contemporary wall paintings of Bronze Age houses looked like), or would leave the top edge of walls with irregular stones, evoking a picturesque, antique view. When a complete vision of ancient Knossos could not be reconstituted, a romantic one was built instead.



Figure **13.2.4.9**: South Propylaeum, Knossos (photo: **Stegop**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The reconstruction of the interior decoration of the throne room was executed during this period and similarly exhibits a combination of the truthful reflection of archaeological remains and Evans's creativity.

Lastly, an important characteristic of De Jong's restorations was the placement of reproductions of wall paintings around his newly built spaces. Some paintings were placed very close to their findspots and therefore aimed at a more authentic reconstruction, while other paintings were reconstructed at some distance from where they had been discovered.

The question remains: why did Evans encourage De Jong's radical approach to conservation, especially after two more conservative predecessors? Several reasons are at play, no doubt. The first, and possibly the most important, is the condition of Knossos after almost eight years of abandonment during the First World War. Aside from the wild overgrowth of weeds, there was much weather-related and other damage. However, the parts of the site that had been roofed (such as the Throne Room and the Shrine of the Double Axes) and sections that were more intact (such as the Grand Staircase), were in excellent shape and this no doubt convinced Evans of the importance of aggressive conservation work. Second, the iron-reinforced concrete which De Jong proposed to use was inexpensive and could be employed quickly. Third, Evans, in a masterful anticipation of the desires of future tourism, aimed to make a site that would vividly conjure the culture he had discovered, as much evocative and picturesque as historically accurate.

Conservation at Knossos after Evans

It is only fair to reflect upon the restorations of Knossos within their historical framework. The aims, methods, and materials used in restoration at the site over a period of some sixty years changed, reflecting a long list of crises, constraints, theories, and desires. Perhaps most significant, however, was Evans's overriding conviction that the conservation of Knossos was an obligation born out of its great antiquity and unique importance. He knew this from his own Edwardian education, British colonial outlook, and his twenty-four year directorship of the Ashmolean Museum at the University of Oxford. Evans was keenly aware of how intimately connected the teaching of Knossos's history was with how it was presented on site. He made Knossos into a museum and a showcase for the newly discovered Aegean Bronze Age chapter of ancient history and the earliest example of cultural tourism, today a mainstay of public historical education—not to mention local economies. Evans did it first at Knossos.

Conservation at Knossos has continued since De Jong's work, although with new challenges. The most recent conservation work on the site has been focused largely on repairing Evans's reconstructions. Despite a belief that reinforced concrete would last indefinitely, it has proven to be susceptible to the wet Cretan winters, crumbling and allowing for rust on the interior ironwork. In other areas the reinforced concrete proved to be structurally unsound.



Figure **13.2.4.10**: Visitors to Knossos, 2016, photo: **Neil Howard**, CC BY-NC 2.0

In addition, the steady increase of tourist traffic since the 1950s has meant growing stress on both the original architecture of Knossos as well as its reconstructions. Sustained foot fall, increasing weight load as well as touching and sitting, is increasingly destructive. To combat this, the Greek Archaeological Service, under the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports, has closed off large sections of Knossos and generally restricted circulation on the site. In the 1990s it conducted extensive conservation of both ancient and modern structures as well as building new corrugated plastic roofing. At present the Service is working on a visitor management plan for the site and the Greek government has applied to UNESCO for World Heritage Status for Knossos as well as four other Minoan palatial sites which would afford much needed support for ongoing conservation efforts.

In addition, the steady increase of tourist traffic since the 1950s has meant growing stress on both the original architecture of Knossos as well as its reconstructions. Sustained foot fall, increasing weight load as well as touching and sitting, is increasingly destructive. To combat this, the Greek Archaeological Service, under the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports, has closed off large sections of Knossos and generally restricted circulation on the site. In the 1990s it conducted extensive conservation of both ancient and modern structures as well as building new corrugated plastic roofing. At present the Service is working on a visitor management plan for the site and the Greek government has applied to UNESCO for World Heritage Status for Knossos as well as four other Minoan palatial sites which would afford much needed support for ongoing conservation efforts.

Additional resources:

Knossos at UNESCO

Minoan Crete from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Helbrunn Timeline of Art History

Arthur Evans archive (Oxford University)

Kamares Ware Jug

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.11**: Kamares wares in the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion (photo: **Bernard Gagnon**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Look closely at the jug on the top shelf at the far left in the photograph above. Can you almost see a bird looking up to the sky?

The pottery we see in this photograph is called Kamares Ware, and it was the first fine, mass-produced and widely-traded pottery produced on Minoan Crete, dating to the Middle Minoan era (1900-1700 B.C.E.). It was Sir Arthur Evans, the archaeologist who first uncovered the Minoan palace at Knossos, who divided Minoan chronology into different periods and it was Evans who was also responsible for using the name "Minoan" to refer to the Bronze Age culture of Crete (after the legendary King Minos). Minoan culture flourished between c. 2600 and c. 1600 B.C.E. The Kamares cave, discovered in 1864, is the location of a Minoan archaeological site on Crete, and some of the best examples of Middle Minoan pottery have been found there—hence the name Kamares ware.



Figure **13.2.4.12**: Sir Arthur Evans

Kamares ware is characterized by light-on-dark abstract and floral patterns and elegant shapes. The crafting of these shapes was executed on a fast-spinning potter's wheel, a new invention during the Middle Minoan era, and its painted decoration is particularly labor intensive, requiring a dark background color, usually black, on which white and sometimes red and orange colors were added. This was a departure from earlier Early Minoan pottery which merely added dark abstract designs to the buff background color of the clay. Perhaps the most remarkable type of Kamares ware is referred to as eggshell ware, named for the extreme thinness of the vessel walls. The overall effect of Kamares ware is not just a pretty pot but an object which is a wonder to behold—at once inventive, delicate, and full of movement and charm.



Figure **13.2.4.13**: Map of Crete showing the location of Phaistos



Figure **13.2.4.14**: Kamares ware jug from Phaistos, c. 2000-1900 B.C.E., 27 cm (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Wolfgang Sauber**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

This Kamares ware jug is a classic example of the type. It was found at the Minoan palace of Phaistos, which is in south central Crete. Phaistos and its sister palace Knossos to the north were the two main manufacturing centers for Kamares-ware pottery in the middle Bronze Age.

The vessel is painted with a black background and most of the abstract decoration is painted in either white or red. The belly of the jug, its broadest circumference, is where the main action of the design takes place: two abstract shapes, an “S” shaped double spiral and a striped oval shape alternate like beads on a string. Each is connected to the other by a white line which seems to expand and contract with the pull of the double spiral. The oval shapes are grounded in the composition with white triangles, under which is a succession of smaller triangles angled to the left. A red stripe separates the neck of the jug from its body and the spout and handle are striped.

At first glance, the shape of the jug is simple but when you begin to understand the painting, you realize that it is a zoomorphic shape, meant to imitate an animal, in this case, a bird with its beak in the air and a striped plume emerging from the top of its head (the handle). With this, the jug has a dual reading: it can be seen as a bulbous sphere with alternating swirling spheres, or a proud bird, looking up to the sky and contemplating flight.

Probably the most important thing about Kamares ware is how it helps us map the trading relationships of the Minoans with the Mediterranean at large. Kamares ware pottery has been found in Egypt, the Levant, the Cycladic islands, mainland Greece, and southern Italy. In this, it is the first true marker of Bronze Age Crete’s economic reach.

Additional resources:

Minoan Crete on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Gisela Walberg, “The Role and Individuality of Kamares Ware” in *Aegean Archaeology*, vol. 5 (2001), pp. 9-18.

Snake Goddess

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.15**: Snake Goddess from the palace at Knossos, c. 1600 B.C.E., faience, 29.5 cm high (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

An enticing mystery

It has been said that the image of the Snake Goddess, discovered by Sir Arthur Evans at **Knossos** on Crete, is one of the most frequently reproduced sculptures from antiquity. Whether or not this is true, it is certainly the case that she is a powerful and evocative image. What she meant to the Minoans who made her, however, is not very well understood.

The “Temple Repositories”

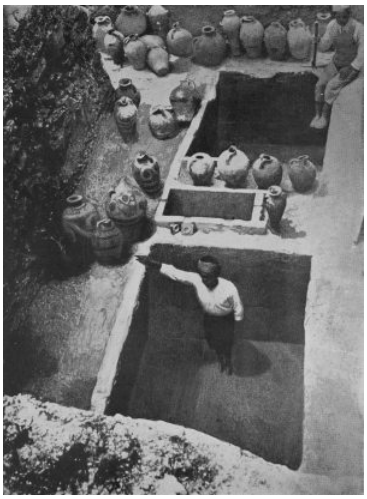


Figure **13.2.4.16**: Excavation of the temple repositories, from Sir Arthur Evans, *The Neolithic and Early and Middle Minoan Ages* (London: Macmillan, 1921), p. 465 (**Universitäts-Bibliothek Heidelberg**)

Evans found the sculpture of the Snake Goddess in a secondary exploration of the complex he called a “palace” at Knossos. After digging out the entire western wing, he decided to check under the paving stones. Most covered nothing but earth, but just south of the Throne Room, he discovered two stone-lined pits containing a wide variety of precious things, mostly broken: scraps of gold, ivory, faience (the largest deposit of faience on Crete), stone inlay, unworked horn, ceramic vessels, seal stones, sealings, shells, the vertebrae of large fish, and the broken pieces of at least three figurines, of which the Snake Goddess was one.



Figure **13.2.4.17**: The Snake Goddess prior to restoration by Evans, from Angelo Mosso, The Palaces of Crete and Their Builders (London: Unwin, 1907), p. 137 (**University of Toronto Libraries**)

Because of the fragmentary nature of these valuable objects, Evans assumed what he had found were damaged pieces that had been cleaned out from a temple. He named the pits the “Temple Repositories” and immediately set upon the reconstruction of as much as he could, with special interest in the figurines, which he assumed were of goddesses.

The hat and the cat

The Snake Goddess, as originally excavated, lacked a head and half of her left arm. The complete right arm held a short wavy striped stick, which Evans interpreted as a snake. This was, in some measure, to match the other nearly complete figurine found in the Temple Repositories, which clearly had snakes slithering up both of her arms. The restoration of the Snake Goddess was done by the Danish artist Halvor Bagge together with Evans. Their contribution to the figurine was the creation of a matching arm and stripy snake, the head of the goddess, and the placement of the hat and cat (separate faience pieces found in the Temple Repositories) on her head.



Figure **13.2.4.18**: Two Snake Goddesses from the palace of Knossos, c. 1600 B.C.E., faience, 34.2 cm and 29.5 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Jill_Ion**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In her restored state, the Snake Goddess is 29.5 cm (about 11.5 inches) high, a youthful woman wearing a full skirt made of seven flounced layers of multicolored cloth. This is likely not a representation of striped cloth, but rather flounces made from multiple colorful bands of cloth, the weaving of which was a Minoan specialty. Over the skirt she wears a front and back apron decorated with a geometric diamond design. The top of the skirt and apron has a wide, vertically-striped band that wraps tightly around the figure’s waist. On top, she wears a short-sleeved, striped shirt tied with an elaborate knot at the waist, with a low-cut front that exposes her large, bare breasts. The Snake Goddess’s head, restored by Bagge and Evans, stares straight forward, topped by the spherical object that Bagge and Evans believed would make a good crown, and, finally, a small sitting cat. Her long black hair hangs down her back and curls down around her breasts.



Figure 13.2.4.19: Snake Goddess from the palace at Knossos, c. 1600 B.C.E., majolica, 29.5 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Really a goddess?

The Snake Goddess is a provocative image, but its restoration and interpretation are problematic. The crown and cat have no parallel in any image of a Bronze Age woman, so these should be discounted. The interpretation of this figure as a goddess is also difficult, since there is no evidence of what a Minoan goddess might have looked like. Many images of elite Minoan women, perhaps priestesses, look very much like this figurine. If it is the action of snake-wrangling that makes her a goddess, this is also a problem. The image of a woman taming one or more snakes is entirely unique to the Temple Repositories. Therefore, If she is a snake goddess, she is not a particularly popular one.

Certainly, Evans was interested in finding a goddess at Knossos. Even before he excavated at the site, he had argued that there was a great mother goddess who was worshiped in the pre-Classical Greek world. With the Snake Goddess, Evans found—or fashioned—what he had anticipated. Its authenticity and meaning, however, leave many questions today.

Additional resources:

This work at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion

Bull's Head Rhyton

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure 13.2.4.20: Bull's head rhyton from the palace at Knossos, c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, jasper, and mother-of-pearl, 26 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Ritual vessels

Images of bulls are among the most important in Minoan art and as many as eleven bull's head rhyta come from the site of Knossos.

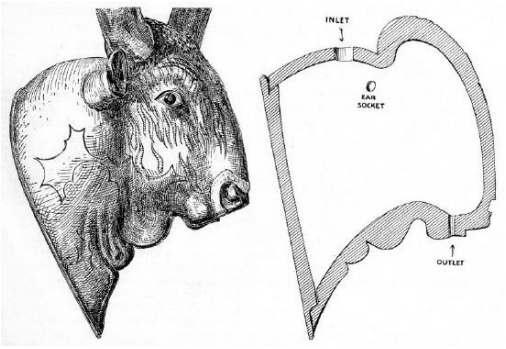


Figure **13.2.4.21**: Profile and section of the bull's head rhyton from the palace at Knossos, from Sir Arthur Evans, *Town-Houses in Knossos of the New Era and Restored West Palace Section, with Its State Approach* (London: Macmillan, 1928), p. 529 (**Universitäts-Bibliothek Heidelberg**)

A rhyton is a ritual vessel used for pouring liquids, with a hole at the top and the bottom. This rhyton was found in a structure called the Little Palace (it is called a "palace" because of its size and elite architectural elements, not because there was a throne in it), about 200 meters northwest of the palace at Knossos. The rhyton dates to the original Neopalatial period (1600-1450 B.C.E.), when the building was constructed, and was likely purposefully broken before it was discarded. It is heavily damaged—the left side of the bull's head and left ear, as well as its golden horns, were restored by Sir Arthur Evans.

This bull's head rhyton was carved from a single block of black steatite and is 26 cm (about 10 inches) in height, as restored. It is hollow, as a rhyton must be, with the hole at the top behind the bull's horns and the hole at the bottom at its muzzle. The back of the rhyton is flat so that it could be laid down on a surface.



Figure **13.2.4.22**: Bull's head rhyton from the palace at Knossos, c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, jasper, and mother-of-pearl, 26 cm high (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Both realistic and stylized

The carving of the bull's head is remarkable for its combination of vivid realism and stylization. For instance, the eyes of the bull were made of inlaid rock crystal lenses, painted on their flat back with a black iris and red pupil, surrounded in white. The rim of the eye was inlaid with red jasper, giving the bull a wild, frightening, bloodshot look.



Figure **13.2.4.23**: Bull's head rhyton from the palace at Knossos (detail), c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, jasper, and mother-of-pearl, 26 cm high (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Camille Gévaudan**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The bull is shaggy, with naturalistic locks hanging down its face, carved with very shallow incisions in the soft stone and filled with ground white stone (perhaps gypsum) for contrast against the black steatite. Also very realistically carved are the rolls of skin at the neck of the bull. However, other parts of the representation of the bull are rather stylized. For instance, the hair whorl at the center of the bull's forehead looks more like a spiral than a swirled tuft of hair, and this is topped by a patch of stylized fur with curls arranged in rows. Lastly, the patch of white hair around the snout of the bull, rendered with shell inlay, looks graphic in its straight borders.



Figure **13.2.4.24**: Bull's head rhyton from the palace at Knossos, c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, jasper, and mother-of-pearl, 26 cm high (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Treasured gifts

Bull's head rhyta such as this one were some of the most valued treasures of Minoan Crete. Images of them appear in 18th dynasty Egyptian wall paintings, where they are shown as pharaonic gifts from visiting Cretans. Many examples of rhyta have been archaeologically recovered; some twenty-three of them have been found at archaeological sites on Crete and the Greek mainland. What is remarkable is that all have been found purposefully destroyed. This has led archaeologists to believe that after the utility of a bull's head rhyton had expired, it was ritually destroyed.



Figure **13.2.4.25**: Example of a bull's head rhyton in Egyptian wall painting (visible lower center). "Gifts from the Keftiu (Minoans)," from the Tomb of Rekhmire, Thebes, 18th dynasty, c. 1479–1425 B.C.E., drawing by Nina de Garis Davies, tempera on paper, 45 x 65 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Additional resources:

This work at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion

Beth Ann Judas, "Keftiu and Griffins: An Exploration of the Liminal in the Egyptian Worldview," in *Current Research in Egyptology 2014* (Oxbow, 2015)

Harvester Vase

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.26**: Harvester Vase from Hagia Triada, c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, diameter 4.5 inches (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**)

Small but powerful

Found at Hagia Triada, an elite site associated with Minoan palaces and dating to the Neopalatial period, (1600-1450 B.C.E.) the Harvester Vase displays a detailed and fascinating scene of men marching and singing in what appears to be a harvest celebration. Although it is not a grand artistic monument, this small vessel (about 4.5 inches in diameter), communicates a grace and vitality typical of Aegean Bronze Age art.

Imitating an eggshell



Figure **13.2.4.27**: Ostrich egg rhyton from the tholos tomb at Dendra, Greece, Mycenaean, 15th-14th c. B.C.E., ostrich egg, silver, gold, and copper (National Archaeological Museum, Athens, photo: **Schuppi**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Harvester Vase is actually not a vase but rather a rhyton, a ritual vessel use for pouring liquids. It has a hole at the top and would have had a hole at the bottom before it was damaged. It is made of black steatite and is shaped to look like a similar vessel made of an even more valuable material: an ostrich egg shell. Ostrich egg rhyta were some of the most luxurious and exotic ritual goods in the Aegean Bronze Age. This type of object was made by drilling holes at either end of an ostrich egg (imported from Egypt), drawing out the contents, and affixing a decorative rim on the top and at the bottom. However, what the Harvester Vase lacks in imported luxury, it makes up for in sheer sculptural power.



Figure **13.2.4.28**: Harvester Vase from Hagia Triada (detail), c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, diameter 4.5 inches (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

A rhythmic procession



Figure **13.2.4.29**: Harvester Vase from Hagia Triada (detail), c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, diameter 4.5 inches (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The miniature scene, carved in relief, illustrates some twenty-seven men in a procession. Most of these men are depicted in pairs, legs stepping high and right arms bent at the elbow, hands held close to the chest, and wearing identical costumes: loincloths, flat caps, carrying bags or pads on the left thigh, and on the left shoulder, a pole with a short curved blade and a three pronged fork. These men are all young, slim, and muscular, with angular faces turned up to the sky. Their paired, lock-step procession evokes

marching or rhythmic movement. There is one exception to this rhythm: near the back of the group, one man turns to look behind him, perhaps because, it would appear, another has fallen just at his back.



Figure **13.2.4.30**: Harvester Vase from Hagia Triada (detail), c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, diameter 4.5 inches (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

This marching group is led by an apparently older man, wearing long shaggy hair and a fringed robe with a scallop pattern (above). He carries a long staff, crooked at the bottom and tapering at the top. In the middle of the group of men behind him is another single figure, a man who looks perhaps not as young and lean as those in the group, who is shaking a sistrum (a musical instrument used in religious rituals). These were common in ancient Egypt as well as in ancient Greece and Rome; examples have been found on Bronze Age Crete as well. This man appears to be shouting or singing with his mouth wide open and he is followed close behind by a rank of four men who also have wide open mouths and wear cloaks around their shoulders.



Figure **13.2.4.31**: Harvester Vase from Hagia Triada (detail), c. 1550-1500 B.C.E., black steatite, diameter 4.5 inches (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Reaping or sowing?

As the name of this vessel indicates, it is generally thought that its decoration refers to harvesting, the key evidence being the long implement each of the younger men is carrying over his shoulder. What is not clear is exactly what the implement is. If it is a winnowing fork, these men are harvesting, collecting mature cereal crops; they will use the fork to separate the grain from its husk. If the implement is a hoe, festooned with branches, then the men are off to plant seeds—perhaps to be found in each of the men's bags. Which it is—harvesting or planting—we may never know, but what is clear is the masculine, communal, and celebratory nature of the activity depicted on this beautiful vessel.

Octopus vase

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.32**: Octopus vase from Palaikastro, c. 1500 B.C.E., 27 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Wolfgang Sauber**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Ceramics for the wealthy

One of the most important aspects of Minoan culture was its ceramics. Pottery today may not seem particularly interesting or important, but in the second millennium B.C.E., it was a high art form and its manufacture was often closely associated with centers of power. Much like the production of porcelain for European royal houses in the 18th century, the production of pottery on Crete tells us about elite tastes, how the powerful met and shared meals, and with whom they traded.



Figure **13.2.4.33**: The ruins at Palaikastro (photo: **Panegyrics of Granovetter**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

This vase, found at Palaikastro, a wealthy site on the far eastern coast of Crete, is the perfect example of elite Minoan ceramic manufacture. It is 27 cm (about 10.5 inches) high, wheel-made, hand-painted, and meant to hold a valuable liquid—perhaps oil of some kind. Its shape is somewhat unusual, constructed by slipping together, while still leather hard (clay that is not quite dry), two shallow plates which had been made on a fast spinning potter's wheel and with highly refined clay. The circular bases of these shallow plates are still visible in the center of both sides of the flask. A spout and stirrup-style handles (which would allow the user to carefully control the flow of the liquid out of the container) were added by hand, as well as a base, to facilitate the standing upright of the vessel.

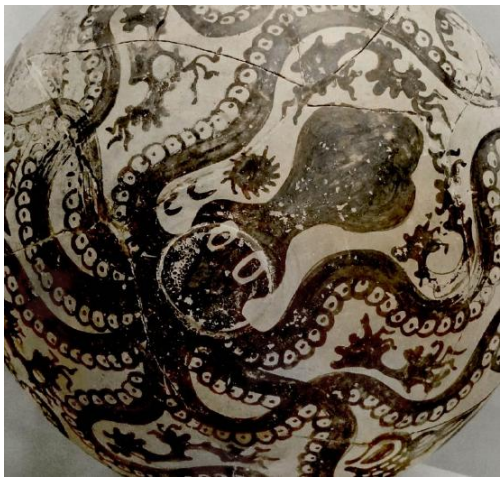


Figure **13.2.4.34**: Octopus vase from Palaikastro (detail), c. 1500 B.C.E., 27 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY 3.0)

Lastly, the Marine Style decoration would have been added. Using dark slip on the surface of the clay, the Minoan painter of this vessel filled the center with a charming octopus, swimming diagonally, with tentacles extended out to the full perimeter of the flask and wide eyes that stare out at the viewer with an almost cartoon-like friendliness. Around this creature's limbs we find sea urchins, coral, and triton shells; no empty space is left unfilled, lending a sense of writhing energy to the overall composition.



Figure **13.2.4.35**: Mycenaean imitation of Minoan Marine ware, 15th century B.C.E. Tomb 2, Argive Prosymna

Marine-Style pottery, of which this vessel is a prime example, is regarded as the pinnacle of Minoan palatial pottery production, specifically of the LM I period (around 1400 B.C.E.). Those who believe "hands" (that is, specific artists) can be identified in the painting of Bronze Age pottery have identified this vessel as the work of the Marine Style Master, who worked at the site of Palaikastro. The era of Marine Style pottery coincided with a period during which the Minoans' trade networks spanned widely across the Mediterranean, from Crete to Cyprus, the Levant, mainland Greece, and Egypt. Some have connected this seafaring skill to the popularity of Marine Style pottery. The style was imitated by potters on the Greek mainland as well as the islands of Melos, and Aegina, but none could match the charm and grace of the Minoan inventors of the style.



Figure **13.2.4.36**

Statuette of a Male Figure (The Palaikastro Kouros)

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

One of the most spectacular recent finds from Crete is this statuette of a youthful male figure made of gold, ivory, serpentine, and rock crystal. It is one of only a small handful of Minoan sculptures in the round, and the largest ever found. Although it is not complete, much of it is in excellent shape and its naturalistic style is striking. It is often called the Palaikastro Kouros, as it is similar to the later **Archaic Greek statues** of idealized youthful elite males.



Figure (The Palaikastro Kouros), 1480 – 1425 B.C.E., serpentine, hippopotamus ivory, and gold, 54 x 18.5 cm (**Archaeological Museum of Sitia**, photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY 3.0)

The figure was found in the excavations at the town of Palaikastro, a large archaeological site on the East coast of Crete known for, among other things, the creation of especially fine **Marine Style** pottery which was traded all over the island as well as throughout the Mediterranean. The statue was discovered smashed into hundreds of pieces, spread over two areas 10 meters apart, the result of the looting and burning during the town's destruction at the end of the LM Ib period (1450 B.C.E.).

After painstaking efforts, the figurine was reconstructed to show an athletic young man standing with one foot slightly before the other, knees locked, both arms bent, hands in fists held up to the chest. The figure's head is turned very slightly to the left, with hair cropped short except for one lock running down the middle of the scalp from front to back.



Figure (The Palaikastro Kouros) (detail), 1480 – 1425 B.C.E., serpentine, hippopotamus ivory, and gold, 54 x 18.5 cm (**Archaeological Museum of Sitia**, photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY 3.0)

The figurine was constructed of eight separate pieces of hippopotamus ivory and was fitted together using wooden dowels. The hair was carved from a piece of serpentine stone and the eyes were inlaid with rock crystal. Sadly, the face of the figure as well as his middle section is lost; much of the surviving ivory was burned black, although still in remarkably good condition. There is evidence that the figurine was partially covered in hammered gold: specifically, the feet and part of the lower leg, the lower arms (possibly in the form of bracelets), as well as the lost middle section, likely to look like a loincloth.

Although it is hard to guess where this piece would have originally been viewed, it is clear that it was inserted into a base, which would have allowed it to stand up straight. Careful analysis has shown that the base itself was as opulent as the figurine, made from a combination of Egyptian blue and gold.



Figure (The Palaikastro Kouros), 1480 – 1425 B.C.E., serpentine, hippopotamus ivory, and gold, 54 x 18.5 cm (**Archaeological Museum of Sitia**, photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY 3.0)

The attention to naturalistic human anatomy in the statue is extraordinary. The smooth shape and musculature of the chest, legs, and arms is highly accurate. In the feet and hands, the details of veining and even the cuticles of the fingers and toes are breathtaking to behold. However, this singular anatomical detail is not, in fact, accurate. For instance, the veins on the foot do not reflect real human vascular systems. Similarly, the thumbs of each hand are rendered too long, and curl over the knuckles of the remaining fingers too far. This uneven realism is actually a hallmark of Minoan art.

Whom does this statue represent? There is no way to know exactly. Surely it was an important figure, given the precious materials and refined skill used to create it. The archaeologists who excavated the statue at Palaikastro believe that it represents the Bronze Age forerunner of the later Classical youthful male god of the underworld, come to herald the beginning of the harvest in the fall: Diktaian Zeus.

What does this extraordinary statue tell us about the Minoans? At least two things. First of all, it tells us about a special relationship with Egypt. The two most valuable materials that make up the statue are hippopotamus ivory and gold, and both of these materials came from Egypt. Moreover, the stance of the figure (one foot in front of the other with locked knees) imitates the classic stance of **Egyptian statuary**. Lastly, art historians believe that the figurine employs a variant of an early Egyptian proportional canon. Therefore, much of how this figurine was conceived and produced is owed to Egypt. We might view this as evidence of a close trading relationship and likely some sort of cultural affinity as well.

The second thing the Palaikastro Kouros can tell us about the Minoans is that they were the first to create chryselephantine statuary. Chryselephantine statuary is best known from the Classical Greek era, the most famous examples being the statues of Athena and Zeus at Athens and Olympia, respectively, both created by **Phidias** in the 5th century B.C.E. Early examples on a much smaller scale have been found at Delphi, but this figurine from Palaikastro is the earliest known example of this important sculptural type.

Additional resources:

This work at the Archaeological Museum of Sitia

Mark Moak, “The Palaikastro Kouros,” in *British School at Athens Studies*, vol. 6 (2000), pp. 65-83.

Hagia Triada sarcophagus

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.40**: The Hagia Triada sarcophagus at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion (photo: **C messier**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A coffin for royalty?

Many images of Minoan rituals are fragmentary and therefore difficult to interpret. There are very few complete, narrative-style representations of religious topics, and the Hagia Triada (also sometimes spelled “Agia Triada”) is the best among them. This sarcophagus was found in 1903 by the Italian archaeologist Roberto Paribeni in Tomb 4 of the hilltop cemetery north of the site of Hagia Triada, a large and wealthy ancient Minoan settlement in south central Crete. Tomb 4 was a family tomb containing the sarcophagus, constructed of limestone, and another large ceramic coffin. The tomb was disturbed in antiquity, but some small burial goods were left behind by the looters: a carved stone bowl, a triton shell, and a fragment of a female terracotta figurine. These remaining grave goods and the elaborate nature of the Hagia Triada sarcophagus has led to the identification of Tomb 4 as that of royalty.



Figure **13.2.4.41**: Hagia Triada sarcophagus, c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco, 1.375 x .45 x .985 m (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

A story in fresco

The Hagia Triada sarcophagus is the only Minoan sarcophagus known to be entirely painted. It was created using fresco, like contemporaneous wall painting, and illustrates a complex narrative scene, apparently of burial and sacrifice. The object itself is substantial, measuring 1.375 meters (about 4.5 feet) long, .45 meters (about 1.5 feet) wide and .985 meters (about 3 feet) high.



Figure **13.2.4.42**: Hagia Triada sarcophagus (detail), c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Zde**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

One of the long sides is the most complete and shows a funeral procession of offering bearers and a libation ceremony that features seven figures—two women and five men. From the far left, we see a female in profile facing left, dressed in an elaborate hide skirt and open short-sleeved shirt, holding a vessel in both hands while pouring the contents into a larger vessel which is resting on a stone platform between two poles. The poles are set on richly-veined stone bases and are topped with double axes surmounted by birds. Behind the woman pouring is another woman, and behind her, a man. The second woman, who is elaborately robed and wears a crown of lilies, carries on her shoulders a pole that supports two vessels identical to the one being used for pouring by the first female. The man behind her plays a lyre and is also elaborately robed.



Figure **13.2.4.43**: Hagia Triada sarcophagus (detail), c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Olaf Tausch**, CC BY 3.0)

The next three people from the left are young men, each bare-chested and wearing a hide skirt. The first two hold bovine statues, one spotted brown, one black; the third man holds a model of a boat. These three men are in composite profile, with shoulders frontal but legs and head in profile, a common Egyptian painting convention. They are also set against a blue background, which is different from the rest of the scene on this side of the sarcophagus. Another man faces these three. He has no feet and looks posed like a sculpture, and it is thought this represents the deceased person. He wears a long hide robe with gold trim.

Between the three men and the deceased is a set of three steps, perhaps an altar, which has some damage at the top. There is a tree above the altar, and it is possible (based on other images of similar altars) that it is supposed to be growing out from the altar itself. Behind the deceased is another structure, elaborately painted with running spirals and inlaid with veined stone. This is thought to be the tomb of the deceased.



Figure **13.2.4.44**: Hagia Triada sarcophagus, c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco, 1.375 x .45 x .985 m (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Offerings and altars

On the opposite side of the sarcophagus, there are another seven figures—six female and one male. Beginning again from the left, we are met with a large patch of damage which only leaves the legs and feet of two pairs of women, all with elaborate long robes, moving to the right.



Figure 13.2.4.45: Hagia Triada sarcophagus (detail), c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: Olaf Tausch, CC BY 3.0)

A fifth female figure, fully visible, leads them, also well-dressed and wearing a lily crown. She is in full profile, with yellow hair, her arms stretched down towards to the ground. She and the four women behind her are all set in a bright yellow background. Moving to the left, the background color changes to white and against this is a male double-flute player wearing a short blue robe and long curls. He stands behind an offering table on which lies a trussed bull on its side, facing the viewer. Red streaks of blood can be seen coming from the bull's neck and pouring into a vessel that sits at the foot of the table. Beneath the table are two small goats, possibly awaiting a similar fate.

To the right of this large altar the background color changes to blue; a woman stands before another low altar wearing a hide skirt. This altar is decorated with a red and white running spiral design and on top sits a shallow grey bowl, possibly silver, above which floats in the field a painted beaked pitcher and a two-handled bowl with what appears to be round fruit—possibly all offerings. To the right of this altar is another pole, this one set in a red and white checked base, with a double axe and bird at the top. Lastly, in the field is an architectural structure, also with red and white running spirals and four pairs of horns on top and from which grows a great green tree.

No surface left undecorated



Figure 13.2.4.46: Hagia Triada sarcophagus, c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion)

One of the short sides of the Hagia Triada sarcophagus has two scenes situated one on top of the other, while the opposite short side has only one scene. On the side with two scenes, the top one is almost entirely lost from damage but enough remains to indicate a procession of men in short pointed kilts of richly woven textiles. Beneath this scene is a horse-drawn chariot with an ox-hide carriage in which two women ride, both dressed in elaborate robes and one holding a whip.



Figure **13.2.4.47**: Hagia Triada sarcophagus (detail), c. 1400 B.C.E., limestone and fresco (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Wolfgang Sauber**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

On the other short side there is a griffin–drawn chariot with another pair of women riding in an ox-hide carriage also richly dressed and wearing pointed hats. The griffins are multicolored and spread their wings, as if in flight; above them flies a bird in profile, moving in the opposite direction.

Surrounding all five of these scenes on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus are framing elements: rows of rosettes, bands of colors to imitate richly veined stone, running spirals with central rosettes, and colorful striped bands. It is colorfully painted from top to bottom.

Simple story, complex questions

In some ways what we see on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus is simple to understand: women and men in elite dress are busy making sacrifices and preparing the deceased for burial before his tomb. However, looking more deeply, many questions remain. How is it to be read? Is there a prescribed order to the images? What does the change in background color mean? Who exactly are these people—are they all priestesses and priests? Are they mythological characters? Who was the deceased? Was this a special sort of burial, or did everybody get this treatment? These are questions that have yet to be answered with confidence.

Additional resources:

This work at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion

Bull-leaping fresco from the palace of Knossos

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.48**: Bull-leaping fresco from the east wing of the palace of Knossos (reconstructed), c. 1400 B.C.E., fresco, 78 cm high (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**, photo: **Jebulon**, CC0)

Taking the bull by the horns

Bull sports—including leaping over them, fighting them, running from them, or riding them—have been practiced all around the globe for millennia. Perhaps the best-loved ancient illustration of this, called the bull-leaping or Toreador fresco, comes from the

site of Knossos on the island of Crete. The wall painting, as it is now reconstructed, shows three people leaping over a bull: one person at its front, another over its back, and a third at its rear.

The image is a composite of at least seven panels, each .78 meters (about 2.5 feet) high. Fragments of this extensive wall painting were found very badly damaged in the fill above the walls in the Court of the Stone Spout, on the east side of the Central Court at Knossos. The fact that the paintings were found in fill indicates that this wall painting was destroyed as part of a renovation. The pottery which was found together with the fragments gives us its date, likely LM II (around 1400 B.C.E.).

Reconstructed but still incomplete

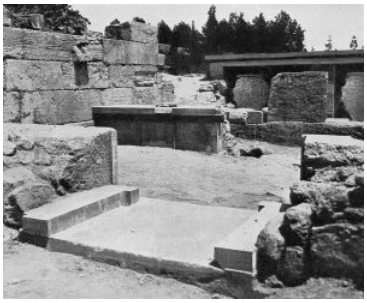


Figure 13.2.4.49: The Court of the Stone Spout, where the pieces of the fresco were found, from Sir Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos* (London, 1930), p. 270 (Universitäts-Bibliothek Heidelberg)

When Sir Arthur Evans, the first archaeologist to work at Knossos, found the fragments, he recognized them as illustrating an early example of bull sports, and he was eager to create a complete image that he could share with the world. He hired a well-known archaeological restorer, Émile Gilliéron, to create the image we know today from the largest bits of the seven panels. Unfortunately, it is impossible to reconstruct all of the original panels and to get a sense of the painting at all, we are left with Gilliéron's reconstruction.



Figure 13.2.4.50: Bull-leaping fresco from the east wing of the palace of Knossos (reconstructed), c. 1400 B.C.E., fresco, 78 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: Andy Montgomery, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Visual gymnastics

What we see is a freeze-frame of a very fast moving scene. The central image of the fresco as reconstructed is a bull charging with such force that its front and back legs are in midair. In front of the bull is a person grasping its horns, seemingly about to vault over it. The next person is in mid-vault, upside down, over the back of the bull, and the final person is facing the rear of the animal, arms out, apparently just having dismounted—"sticking the landing," as they say in gymnastics.



Figure **13.2.4.51**: Bull-leaping fresco (detail) from the east wing of the palace of Knossos (reconstructed), c. 1400 B.C.E., fresco, 78 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The people on either side of the bull, as reconstructed, bear markers of both male and female gender: they are painted white, which indicates a female figure according to ancient Egyptian gender-color conventions, which we know the Minoans also used. But both characters wear merely a loincloth, which is male dress. The hairstyle (curls at the top with locks falling down the back) is not uncommon in representations of both youthful males and females. Many interpretations of this gender crossing are possible, but there is little evidence to support one over another, unfortunately. At the very least, we can say that the representation of gender in the Late Aegean Bronze Age was fluid.



Figure **13.2.4.52**: Bull-leaping fresco (detail) from the east wing of the palace of Knossos (reconstructed), c. 1400 B.C.E., fresco, 78 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The person at the center of the action, vaulting over the bull's back, is painted brown, which indicates male gender according to ancient Egyptian gender-color conventions, and this makes sense considering his loincloth. It is interesting to note that the muscles of all three of the bull leapers, at their thighs and chests, have been very delicately articulated, accentuating their athletic build.



Figure **13.2.4.53**: Bull-leaping fresco (detail) from the east wing of the palace of Knossos (reconstructed), c. 1400 B.C.E., fresco, 78 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The background of the scene is blue, white, or yellow monochrome, and indicate no architectural context for the activity. Moreover, the seven panels and Gilliéron's composite reconstruction all show a border of painted richly variegated stones overlapping in patches. So, it seems we are meant to see these scenes as abstracted action within frames, not part of a wider visual field or narrative.

A rite of passage?

The most interesting question about the bull leaping paintings from Knossos is what they might mean. We cannot understand the whole bull-leaping cycle in detail as it is so fragmentary, but we know that it covered a lot of wall space and a considerable amount of resources must have been expended to create it.



Figure **13.2.4.54**: Bull-leaping fresco (detail) from the east wing of the palace of Knossos (reconstructed), c. 1400 B.C.E., fresco, 78 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, photo: **Jebulon**, CC0)

As mentioned above, many cultures across space and time have engaged in bull sports, and they all have a few things in common. First, these sports are life-threatening. To race, dance with, leap over, or kill a bull might very well get you killed. Second, these activities are usually performed before a crowd: they are a civic event, publicly presented and recorded in memory. Third, those who participate in these bull activities are often youths at an age when they are passing from childhood into adulthood and the achievement of the bull sport contributes to that passage. Anthropologists refer this sort of activity as a "rite of passage," which, when witnessed by one's community, establishes the participant as an adult.

Therefore, we might surmise that the bull leaping scenes from Knossos refer to such a rite of passage ceremony. Many have identified the Central Court (Theatral area) just beyond the west façade of the palace at Knossos as locations where bull-leaping ceremonies might have taken place. We may never know the exact meaning of these paintings, but they continue to resonate with us today—not only because of their beauty and dynamism, but because they represent an activity that is still an important part of many cultures around the world.

Additional resources:

This work at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion

Bulls and Bull-leaping in the Minoan World

Minoan woman or goddess from the palace of Knossos (“La Parisienne”)

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **13.2.4.55**: Woman or goddess (“La Parisienne”) from the Camp-Stool fresco, c.1350 B.C.E., western wing of the palace at Knossos, buon fresco, 20 cm high (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion)

“Parisian” from ancient Crete

This image of a young woman with a bright dress and curly hair is among the best known images in Minoan art. It is also one of the few representations of Minoan people rendered in color and detail, and it is a beautiful example of Minoan wall painting. Shortly after it was first discovered by Sir Arthur Evans at **Knossos**, it was seen by Edmond Pottier, a famous art historian of Greek pottery, who likened her charming look to the contemporary women of Paris. She has been known as “La Parisienne” ever since.

The sacred knot



Figure **13.2.4.56**: Woman or goddess (“La Parisienne”) from the Camp-Stool fresco, c.1350 B.C.E., western wing of the palace at Knossos, buon fresco, 20 cm high (**Archaeological Museum of Heraklion**)

Only La Parisienne’s head and upper body are preserved. Her hair is black and curly, with one curl springing down onto her forehead and others cascading down her neck and upper back. Her skin is white, which is in imitation of the ancient Egyptian color convention (women painted white, men brown), and her large, darkly outlined eye also reminds us of Egyptian style, but her bright red lips are unique. She wears an elaborately woven blue and red striped dress, with a blue banded edge attached with red flecked loops. Tied to the back of the dress is a “sacred knot,” as Evans first called it. This is a loop of long cloth tied with another loop at the nape of the neck, leaving a length of the cloth trailing down the back.

This is one of only two representations of a woman actually wearing a sacred knot, although the knots themselves are found on seals, painted on pottery, in other frescos, and rendered in ivory or faience. This knot is thought to designate the wearer as a holy person, so this Minoan woman may be a priestess.



Figure 13.2.4.57: The western wing of the palace at Knossos (photo: tedbassman, CC BY 2.0)

Found in fragments

The wall painting of which La Parisienne is a part was discovered heavily damaged and fallen from an upper story in the western wing of Knossos. It was painted in buon fresco (on wet plaster) as most Minoan wall paintings were, and given its archaeological context is likely one of the last painted works of the palace, dating to LM III (around 1350 B.C.E.). Specifically, this fragment was part of a two tiered scene that is about a half-meter (about 1.5 feet) wide, called the Camp Stool fresco (shown below as a reconstruction). Featured on both the top and bottom panels are pairs of men and women in profile sitting and standing and holding up elegant vessels. La Parisienne comes from one of the female pairs.

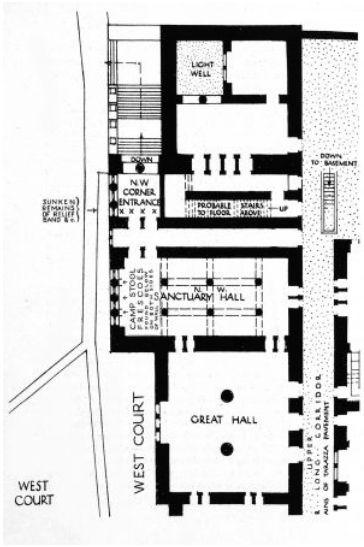


Figure 13.2.4.58: Sir Arthur J. Evans. Upper plan, northwest palace area, Knossos, from *The Palace of Minos* (London, 1935), p. 380 (Universitäts-Bibliothek Heidelberg)

It has been suggested that the part of the palace of Knossos from which this painted scene fell was used for ceremonies and feasting; if this is true, subject matter depicting toasts being made would fit in nicely. Whatever her original meaning, La Parisienne is an enduring testament to the skill of Minoan fresco painters.



Figure **13.2.4.59**: The Camp Stool fresco (reconstruction), c. 1350 B.C.E., from west wing of the palace of Knossos (Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, Crete)

Additional resources:

This object at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion

Sir Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos* (London, 1935)

Mycenaean art

Mycenaean culture flourished on the Greek mainland in the Late Bronze Age. The name comes from the site of Mycenae, where the culture was first recognized after the 1876 excavations by Heinrich Schliemann.

c. 1600 - 1100 B.C.E.

The “Palace” and Grave Circle A

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Seeking the mythic cities of Homer, Heinrich Schliemann identified Mycenae in the 19th century.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















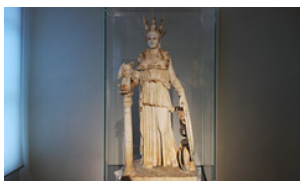












Figure 13.2.4.60: More Smarthistory images…

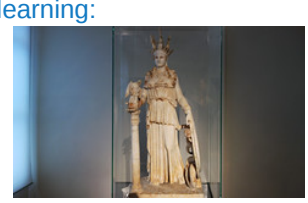
Mask of Agamemnon

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



“I have gazed into the face of Agamemnon,” boasted the man who discovered it—but is it really the Homeric hero?

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

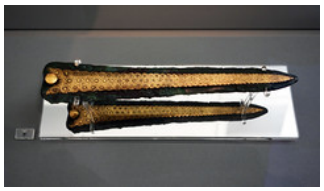


















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88675







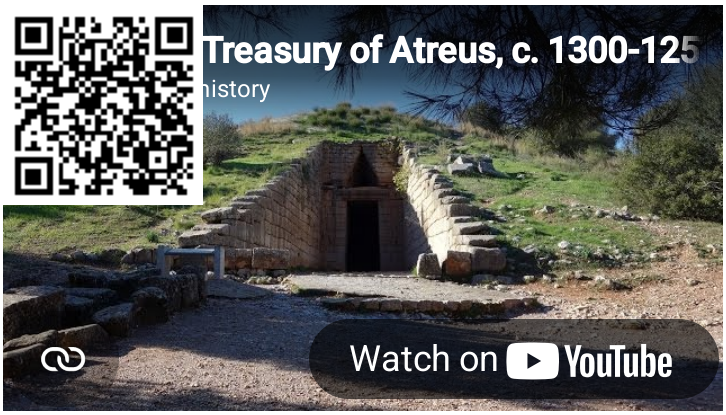


Figure 13.2.4.61: More Smarthistory images…

The Treasury of Atreus

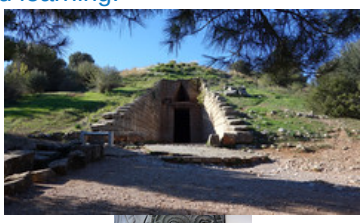
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Below the great citadel of Mycenae, a passage into a hillside leads to a massive beehive-shaped tomb.




"Treasury of Atreus" or "Tomb of Agamemnon"
View on Google Maps
Google
© Mathieu Capronnier
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



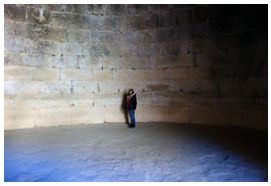














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88675

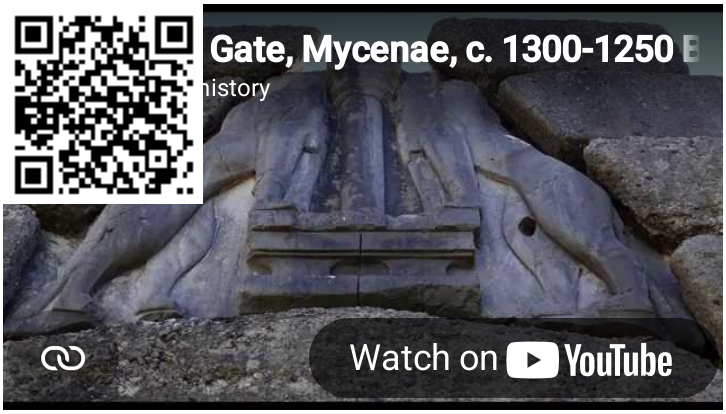


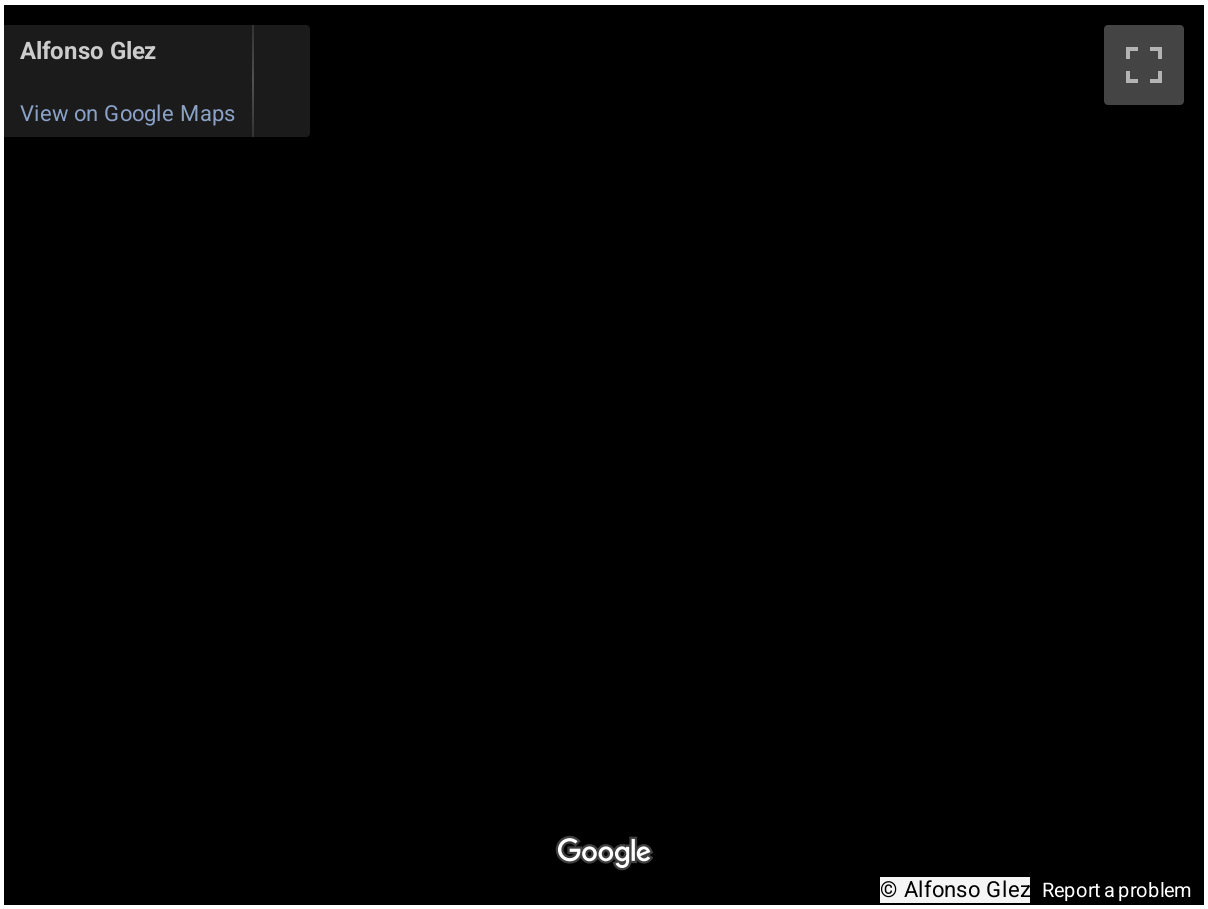
Figure **13.2.4.62**: More Smarthistory images…

Lion Gate

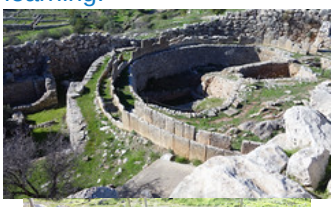
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Approaching Mycenae was awe inspiring: a massive hill, walls of enormous stones, and the fearsome Lion Gate.




Alfonso Glez
View on Google Maps
Google
© Alfonso Glez
Report a problem

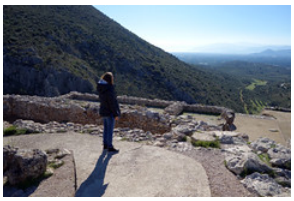
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88675



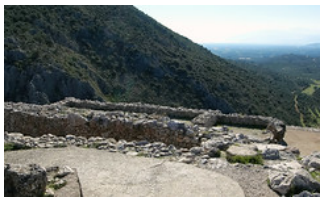





Figure 13.2.4.64: More Smarthistory images…

13.2.4: Ancient Aegean is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.4: Ancient Aegean** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.5: Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece

Ancient Greek art, with its love of the human body, is perhaps the most influential art ever made.

c. 900 - 146 B.C.E.

A beginner's guide: Ancient Greece

The Greeks were united by a shared language, religion, and culture.

c. 700 - 146 B.C.E.

By around 500 B.C.E. "rule by the people," or democracy, emerged in the city of Athens. Following the defeat of the Persian Empire, Greece (and Athens in particular) entered a golden age of art, literature, and philosophy.

Ancient Greece, an introduction

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.2.5.1**: *Achilles killing the Amazon Queen Penthesilea*, 540-530 B.C.E., black-figured amphora (wine-jar), signed by Exekias as potter and attributed to him as painter, 46 cm tall, Athens, Greece © Trustees of the British Museum. Penthesilea brought her Amazon warriors to help the Trojans defend their city, but was killed in combat with Achilles, the greatest of the Greek warriors.

The ancient Greeks lived in many lands around the Mediterranean Sea, from Turkey to the south of France. They had close contacts with other peoples such as the Egyptians, Syrians and Persians.The Greeks lived in separate city-states, but shared the same language and religious beliefs.

Bronze Age Greece



Figure **13.2.5.2**

During the Bronze Age (around 3200 – 1100 B.C.E.), a number of cultures flourished on the islands of the Cyclades, in Crete and on the Greek mainland. They were mainly farmers, but trade across the sea, particularly in raw materials such as obsidian (volcanic glass) and metals, was growing.

Mycenaean culture flourished on the Greek mainland in the Late Bronze Age, from about 1600 to 1100 B.C.E. The name comes from the site of Mycenae, where the culture was first recognized after the excavations in 1876 of Heinrich Schliemann.



Figure 13.2.5.3: *Pottery stemmed bowl decorated with a procession of riders in chariots*, Mycenaean, about 1400-1300 B.C.E., 42 cm high, Cyprus, Greece © Trustees of the British Museum. The upper zone of the vase is painted with a frieze of chariots, pulled by elongated horses, in which ride a charioteer and a passenger. Such chariot processions on vases may well have been inspired by contemporary fresco-paintings which decorated the walls of Mycenaean palaces.

The Mycenaean period of the later Greek Bronze Age was viewed by the Greeks as the "age of heroes" and perhaps provides the historical background to many of the stories told in later Greek mythology, including Homer's epics. Objects and artworks from this time are found throughout mainland Greece and the Greek islands. Distinctive Mycenaean pottery was distributed widely across the eastern Mediterranean. These show the beginnings of Greek mythology being used to decorate works of art. They come from about the same time that the epics of Homer were reaching the form in which we inherit them, as the earliest Greek literature.

The collapse of Mycenaean civilization around 1100 B.C.E. brought about a period of isolation known as the Dark Age. But by around 800 B.C.E. the revival had begun as trade with the wider world increased, arts, crafts and writing re-emerged and city-states (*poleis*) developed.

Archaic period

Two of the most distinctive forms of free-standing sculpture to emerge during the Archaic period of Greek art (about 600-480 B.C.E.) were statues of youths (*kouroi*) and maidens (*korai*).

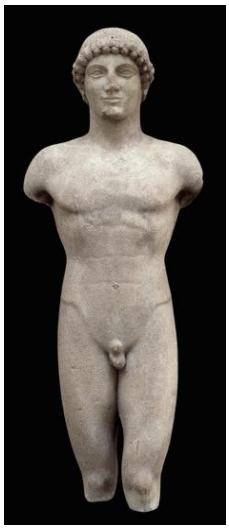


Figure 13.2.5.4: *The Strangford Apollo*, c. 500-490 B.C.E., 101 cm high, perhaps from Cyclades, Aegean Sea © Trustees of the British Museum

Kouros (the singular form) is a term used to describe a type of statue of a male figure produced in marble during the Archaic period of Greek art. Such statues can be colossal (that is larger than life) or less than life size. They all have a conventional pose, where the head and body can be divided equally by a central line, and the legs are parted with the weight placed equally front and back. The male figures, usually in the form of naked young men, acted both as grave markers and as votive offerings, the latter perhaps intended to be representations of the dedicator. The female figures served similar functions, but differed from their male counterparts in that they were elaborately draped.

The mouth is invariably fixed in a smile, which is probably a symbolic expression of the *arete* ("excellence") of the person represented. It used to be thought that all kouroi were representations of the god Apollo. However, although some may be representations of gods or heroes, many were simply grave markers. The *kouros* was not intended as a realistic portrait of the deceased, but an idealized representation of values and virtues to which the dead laid claim: youthful beauty, athleticism, and aristocratic bearing, among others.

Classical period

By around 500 B.C.E. “rule by the people,” or democracy, had emerged in the city of Athens. Following the defeat of a Persian invasion in 480-479 B.C.E., mainland Greece and Athens in particular entered into a golden age. In drama and philosophy, literature, art and architecture, Athens was second to none. The city’s empire stretched from the western Mediterranean to the Black Sea, creating enormous wealth. This paid for one of the biggest public building projects ever seen in Greece, which included the Parthenon.

Ancient Greece also played a vital role in the early history of coinage. As well as making some of the world’s earliest coins, the ancient Greeks were the first to use them extensively in trade.

Hellenistic period



Figure **13.2.5.5**: *Marble portrait of Alexander the Great*, Hellenistic Greek, 2nd-1st century B.C.E.,37cm high, Alexandria, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

Following the death of Alexander and the division of his empire, the Hellenistic period (323-31 B.C.E.) saw Greek power and culture extended across the Middle East and as far as the Indus Valley. When Rome absorbed the Greek world into its vast empire, Greek ideas, art and culture greatly influenced the Romans.

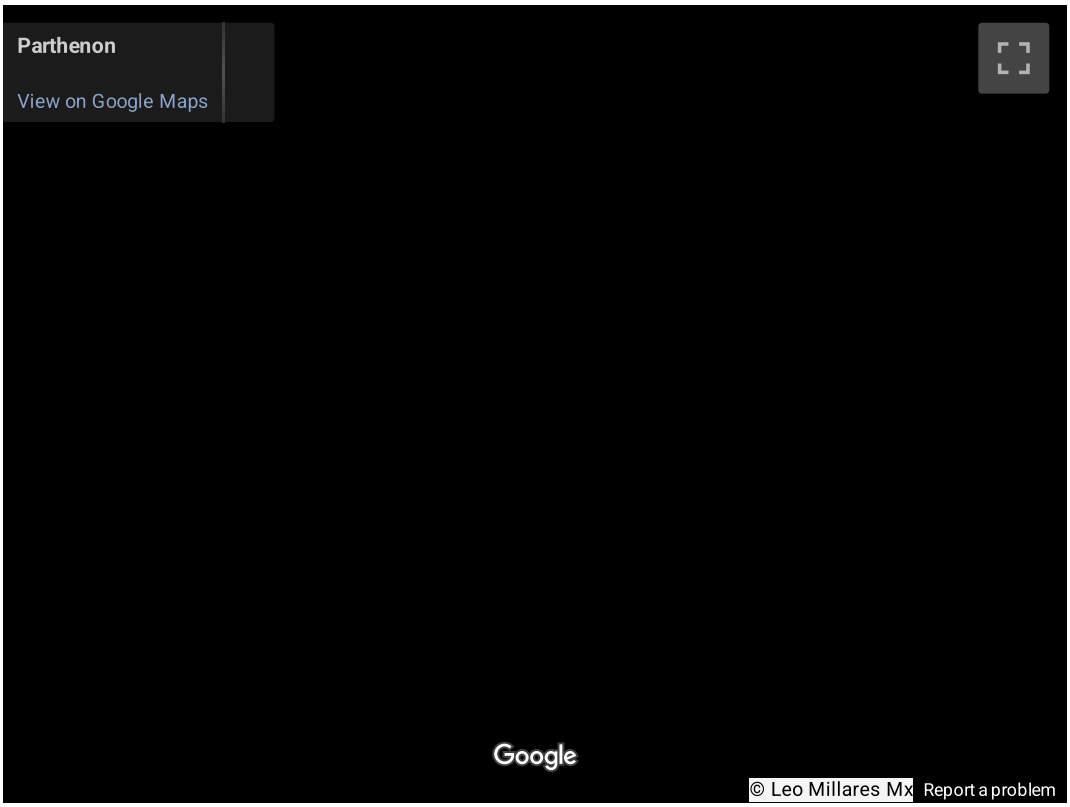
Alexander was always shown clean-shaven, which was an innovation: all previous portraits of Greek statesmen or rulers had beards. This royal fashion lasted for almost five hundred years and almost all of the Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors until Hadrian were portrayed beardless.

The British Museum collection includes objects from across the entire Greek world, ranging in date from the beginning of pre-history to early Christianity in the Byzantine era.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Introduction to ancient Greek art

by DR. RENEE M. GONDEK



A shared language, religion, and culture

Ancient Greece can feel strangely familiar. From the exploits of Achilles and Odysseus, to the treatises of Aristotle, from the exacting measurements of the **Parthenon** (image above) to the rhythmic chaos of the ***Laocoön*** (image below), ancient Greek culture has shaped our world. Thanks largely to notable archaeological sites, well-known literary sources, and the impact of Hollywood (*Clash of the Titans*, for example), this civilization is embedded in our collective consciousness—prompting visions of epic battles, erudite philosophers, gleaming white temples, and limbless nudes (we now know the sculptures—even the ones that decorated temples like the Parthenon—were brightly painted, and, of course, the fact that the figures are often missing limbs is the result of the ravages of time).



Figure **13.2.5.6**: Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and his Sons*, early first century C.E., marble, 7'10-1/2" high (Vatican Museums)

Dispersed around the Mediterranean and divided into self-governing units called *poleis* or city-states, the ancient Greeks were united by a shared language, religion, and culture. Strengthening these bonds further were the so-called **"Panhellenic" sanctuaries** and festivals that embraced "all Greeks" and encouraged interaction, competition, and exchange (for example the Olympics, which were held at the Panhellenic sanctuary at Olympia). Although popular modern understanding of the ancient Greek world is based on the classical art of fifth century B.C.E. Athens, it is important to recognize that Greek civilization was vast and did not develop overnight.



Figure **13.2.5.7**

The Dark Ages (c. 1100 – c. 800 B.C.E.) to the Orientalizing Period (c. 700 – 600 B.C.E.)

Following the collapse of the **Mycenaean citadels** of the late Bronze Age, the Greek mainland was traditionally thought to enter a "Dark Age" that lasted from c. 1100 until c. 800 B.C.E. Not only did the complex socio-cultural system of the Mycenaeans disappear, but also its numerous achievements (i.e., metalworking, large-scale construction, writing). The discovery and continuous excavation of a site known as **Lefkandi**, however, drastically alters this impression. Located just north of Athens, Lefkandi has yielded an immense apsidal structure (almost fifty meters long), a massive network of graves, and two heroic burials replete with gold objects and valuable horse sacrifices. One of the most interesting artifacts, ritually buried in two separate graves, is a centaur figurine (see photos below). At fourteen inches high, the terracotta creature is composed of a equine (horse) torso made on a potter's wheel and hand-formed human limbs and features. Alluding to mythology and perhaps a particular story, this centaur embodies the cultural richness of this period.



Figure **13.2.5.8**: Centaur, c. 900 B.C.E. (Proto-Geometric period), terracotta, 14 inches high, the head was found in tomb 1 and the body was found in tomb 3 in the cemetery of Toumba, Lefkandi, Greece (detail of head photo: **Dan Diffendale** CC BY-NC-SA 2)

Similar in its adoption of narrative elements is a vase-painting likely from Thebes dating to c. 730 B.C.E. (see image below). Fully ensconced in the Geometric Period (c. 800-700 B.C.E.), the imagery on the vase reflects other eighth-century artifacts, such as the ***Dipylon Amphora***, with its geometric patterning and silhouetted human forms. Though simplistic, the overall scene on this vase seems to record a story. A man and woman stand beside a ship outfitted with tiers of rowers. Grasping at the stern and lifting one leg into the hull, the man turns back towards the female and takes her by the wrist. Is the couple Theseus and Ariadne? Is this an abduction? Perhaps Paris and Helen? Or, is the man bidding farewell to the woman and embarking on a journey as had Odysseus and Penelope? The answer is unattainable.



Figure **13.2.5.9**: Late Geometric Attic spouted krater (vessel for mixing water and wine), possibly from Thebes, c. 730 B.C.E., 30.5 cm high (The British Museum, London), photo: **Egisto Sani** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

In the Orientalizing Period (700-600 B.C.E.), alongside **Near Eastern motifs and animal processions**, craftsmen produced more nuanced figural forms and intelligible illustrations. For example, terracotta painted plaques from the Temple of Apollo at Thermon (c. 625 B.C.E.) are some of the earliest evidence for architectural decoration in Iron Age Greece. Once ornamenting the surface of this Doric temple (most likely as metopes), the extant panels have preserved various imagery (watch **this video** to learn about the Doric order). On one plaque (see image below), a male youth strides towards the right and carries a significant attribute under his right arm—the severed head of the Gorgon Medusa (her face is visible between the right hand and right hip of the striding figure). Not only is the painter successful here in relaying a particular story, but also the figure of Perseus shows great advancement from the previous century. The limbs are fleshy, the facial features are recognizable, and the hat and winged boots appropriately equip the hero for fast travel.



Figure **13.2.5.10**: Fragment showing Perseus with the head of Medusa likely from a metope from the Temple of Apollo at Thermon, c. 630 B.C.E., painted terracotta, 87.8 cm high (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

The Archaic Period (c. 600-480/479 B.C.E.)

While Greek artisans continued to develop their individual crafts, storytelling ability, and more realistic portrayals of human figures throughout the Archaic Period, the city of Athens witnessed the rise and fall of tyrants and the introduction of democracy by the statesman Kleisthenes in the years 508 and 507 B.C.E.

Visually, the period is known for large-scale marble kouros (male youth) and kore (female youth) sculptures (see below). Showing the influence of ancient Egyptian sculpture (like **this example** of the Pharaoh Menkaure and his wife in the MFA, Boston), the kouros stands rigidly with both arms extended at the side and one leg advanced. Frequently employed as grave markers, these sculptural types displayed unabashed nudity, highlighting their complicated hairstyles and abstracted musculature (below left). The kore, on the other hand, was never nude. Not only was her form draped in layers of fabric, but she was also ornamented with jewelry and adorned with a crown. Though some have been discovered in funerary contexts, like *Phrasiklea* (below right), a vast majority were found on the Acropolis in Athens (for the Acropolis korai, click **here**). Ritualistically buried following desecration of this sanctuary by the Persians in 480 and 479 B.C.E., dozens of korai were unearthed alongside other dedicatory artifacts. While the identities of these figures have been hotly debated in recent times, most agree that they were originally intended as votive offerings to the goddess Athena.



Figure **13.2.5.11**: Left: *Anavysos (Kroisos) Kouros*, c. 530 B.C.E., marble, 6′ 4″ (National Archaeological Museum, Athens), photo: Steven Zucker
Right: Aristion of Paros, *Phrasikleia Kore*, c. 550 – 540 B.C.E. Parian marble with traces of pigment, 211 cm high (National Archaeological Museum, Athens), photo: **Asaf Braverman** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The Classical Period (480/479-323 B.C.E.)

Though experimentation in realistic movement began before the end of the Archaic Period, it was not until the Classical Period that two- and three-dimensional forms achieved proportions and postures that were naturalistic. The "Early Classical Period" (480/479 – 450 B.C.E., also known as the "Severe Style") was a period of transition when some sculptural work displayed archaizing holdovers. As can be seen in the ***Kritios Boy***, c. 480 B.C.E., the "Severe Style" features realistic anatomy, serious expressions, pouty lips, and thick eyelids. For painters, the development of perspective and multiple ground lines enriched compositions, as can be seen on the **Niobid Painter's vase** in the Louvre (image below).



Figure **13.2.5.12**: Niobid Painter, Niobid Krater, Attic red-figure calyx-krater, c. 460-50 B.C.E., 54 x 56 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

During the "High Classical Period" (450-400 B.C.E.), there was great artistic success: from the innovative structures on the **Acropolis** to Polykleitos' visual and cerebral manifestation of idealization in his sculpture of a young man holding a spear, the ***Doryphoros* or "Canon"** (image below). Concurrently, however, Athens, Sparta, and their mutual allies were embroiled in the Peloponnesian War, a bitter conflict that lasted for several decades and ended in 404 B.C.E. Despite continued military activity throughout the "Late Classical Period" (400-323 B.C.E.), artistic production and development continued apace. In addition to a new figural aesthetic in the fourth century known for its longer torsos and limbs, and smaller heads (for example, the ***Apoxyomenos***), the first female nude was produced. Known as the *Aphrodite of Knidos*, c. 350 B.C.E., the sculpture pivots at the shoulders and hips into an S-Curve and stands with her right hand over her genitals in a *pudica* (or modest Venus) pose (see a Roman copy in the Capitoline Museum in Rome **here**). Exhibited in a circular temple and visible from all sides, the ***Aphrodite of Knidos*** became one of the most celebrated sculptures in all of antiquity.



Figure **13.2.5.13**: Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear-Bearer)* or The Canon, c. 450-40 B.C.E., ancient Roman marble copy found in Pompeii of the lost bronze original, 211 cm (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli)

The Hellenistic Period and Beyond (323 B.C.E. – 31 B.C.E.)

Following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E., the Greeks and their influence stretched as far east as modern India. While some pieces intentionally mimicked the Classical style of the previous period such as Eutychides' ***Tyche of Antioche*** (Louvre), other artists were more interested in capturing motion and emotion. For example, on the **Great Altar of Zeus from Pergamon** (below) expressions of agony and a confused mass of limbs convey a newfound interest in drama.



Figure **13.2.5.14**: Athena defeats Alkyoneus (detail), The Pergamon Altar, c. 200-150 B.C.E. (Hellenistic Period), 35.64 x 33.4 meters, marble (Pergamon Museum, Berlin)

Architecturally, the scale of structures vastly increased, as can be seen with the **Temple of Apollo at Didyma**, and some complexes even terraced their surrounding landscape in order to create spectacular vistas as can be seem at the **Sanctuary of Asklepios on Kos**. Upon the defeat of Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E., the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt and, simultaneously, the Hellenistic Period came to a close. With the Roman admiration of and predilection for Greek art and culture, however, Classical aesthetics and teachings continued to endure from antiquity to the modern era.

Additional resources:

The Art of classical Greece from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Greek Art in the Archaic Period on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Art of the Hellenistic Age and the Hellenistic Tradition on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Richard T. Neer, *Greek Art and Archaeology: A New History, c. 2500-c. 150 B.C.E.* (Thames and Hudson, 2011)

Robin Osborne, *Archaic and Classical Greek Art* (Oxford University Press, 1988)

John G. Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology* (Pearson, 2011)

J.J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 1972)

Nigel Jonathan Spivey, *Greek Art* (Phaeton Press, 1997)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











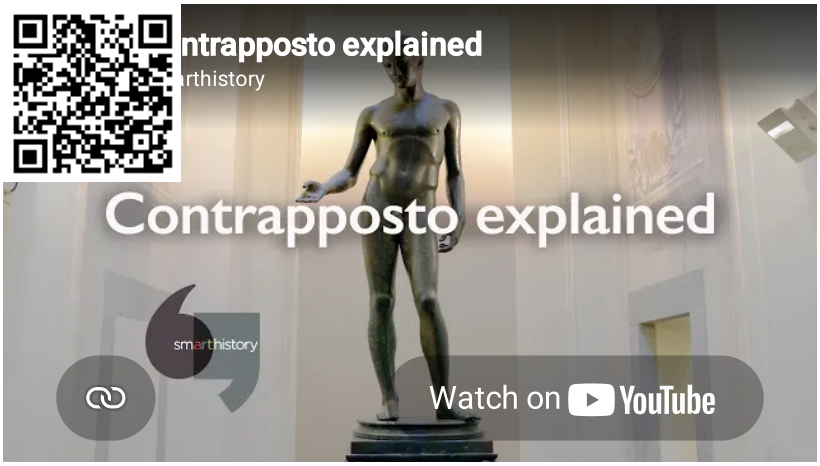


Figure **13.2.5.15**

Contrapposto explained

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The ancient Greeks mastered the naturalistic representation of the human body, and the Renaissance revived it.

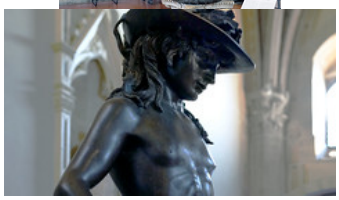


Video **13.2.5.1**: A discussion about contrapposto while looking at “Idolino” from Pesaro, (Roman), c. 30 B.C.E., bronze, 158 cm (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze), speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

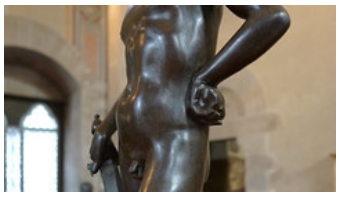
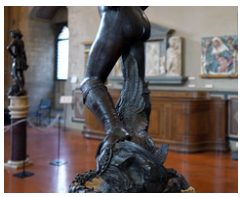
Although these particular objects may not have been known in the Renaissance, the ideas and form of contrapposto were revived in the Italian Renaissance.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





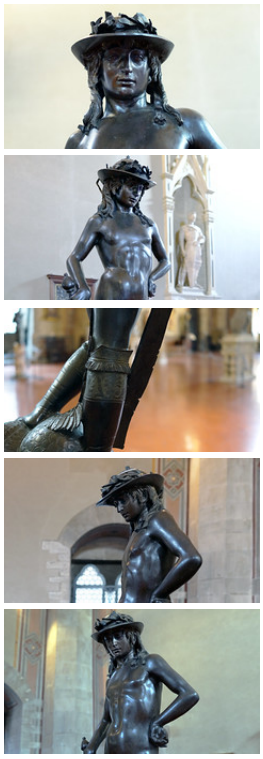


Figure **13.2.5.16**: More Smarthistory images…

Introduction to ancient Greek architecture

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

For most of us, architecture is easy to take for granted. It's everywhere in our daily lives—sometimes elegant, other times shabby, but generally ubiquitous. How often do we stop to examine and contemplate its form and style? Stopping for that contemplation offers not only the opportunity to understand one's daily surroundings, but also to appreciate the connection that exists between architectural forms in our own time and those from the past. Architectural tradition and design has the ability to link disparate cultures together over time and space—and this is certainly true of the legacy of architectural forms created by the ancient Greeks.



Figure **13.2.5.17**: The Erechtheion, 421-405 B.C.E. (Classical Greek), Acropolis, Athens (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Where and when

Greek architecture refers to the architecture of the Greek-speaking peoples who inhabited the Greek mainland and the Peloponnese, the islands of the Aegean Sea, the Greek colonies in Ionia (coastal Asia Minor), and Magna Graecia (Greek colonies in Italy and Sicily).

Greek architecture stretches from c. 900 B.C.E. to the first century C.E. (with the earliest extant stone architecture dating to the seventh century B.C.E.).

Greek architecture influenced Roman architecture and architects in profound ways, such that Roman Imperial architecture adopts and incorporates many Greek elements into its own practice.

An overview of basic building typologies demonstrates the range and diversity of Greek architecture.



Figure **13.2.5.18**: "Hera II," c. 460 B.C.E., 24.26 x 59.98 m, Greek, Doric temple from the classical period likely dedicated to Hera, Paestum (Latin) previously Poseidonia (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Temple

The most recognizably "Greek" structure is the temple (even though the architecture of Greek temples is actually quite diverse). The Greeks referred to temples with the term ὁ ναός (*ho naós*) meaning "dwelling," temple derives from the Latin term, *templum*. The earliest shrines were built to honor divinities and were made from materials such as a wood and mud brick—materials that typically don't survive very long. The basic form of the *naos* (the interior room that held the cult statue of the God or Gods) emerges as early as the tenth century B.C.E. as a simple, rectangular room with projecting walls (*antae*) that created a shallow porch. This basic form remained unchanged in its concept for centuries. In the eighth century B.C.E. Greek architecture begins to make the move from ephemeral materials (wood, mud brick, thatch) to permanent materials (namely, stone).

During the Archaic period the tenets of the Doric order of architecture in the Greek mainland became firmly established, leading to a wave of monumental temple building during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. Greek city-states invested substantial resources in temple building—as they competed with each other not just in strategic and economic terms, but also in their architecture. For example, Athens devoted enormous resources to the construction of the acropolis in the 5th century B.C.E.—in part so that Athenians could be confident that the temples built to honor their gods surpassed anything that their rival states could offer.

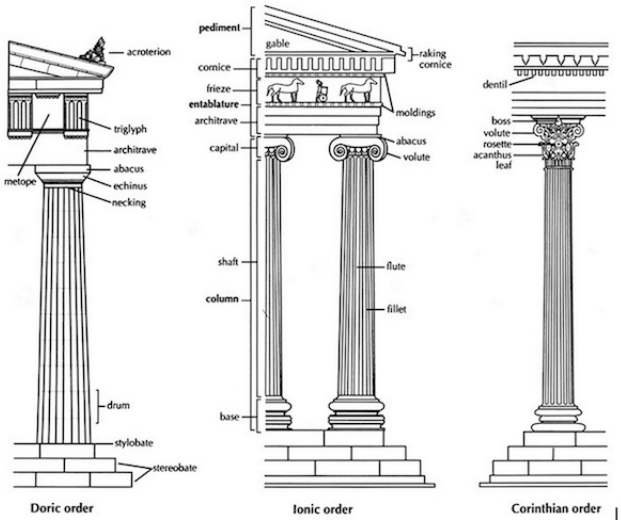


Figure **13.2.5.19**: Greek architectural orders

The multi-phase architectural development of sanctuaries such as that of Hera on the island of Samos demonstrate not only the change that occurred in construction techniques over time but also how the Greeks re-used sacred spaces—with the later phases built directly atop the preceding ones. Perhaps the fullest, and most famous, expression of Classical Greek temple architecture is the Periclean Parthenon of Athens—a Doric order structure, the Parthenon represents the maturity of the Greek classical form.



Figure 13.2.5.20: Iktinos and Kallikrates, The Parthenon, Athens, 447 – 432 B.C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Greek temples are often categorized in terms of their ground plan and the way in which the columns are arranged. A prostyle temple is a temple that has columns only at the front, while an amphiprostyle temple has columns at the front and the rear. Temples with a peripteral arrangement (from the Greek πτερον (*pteron*) meaning "wing) have a single line of columns arranged all around the exterior of the temple building. Dipteral temples simply have a double row of columns surrounding the building. One of the more unusual plans is the tholos, a temple with a circular ground plan; famous examples are attested at the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi and the sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidauros.



Figure 13.2.5.21: Tholos temple, sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, 4th century B.C.E., Delphi (Greece) Greece (photo: kufoleto, CC BY 3.0)

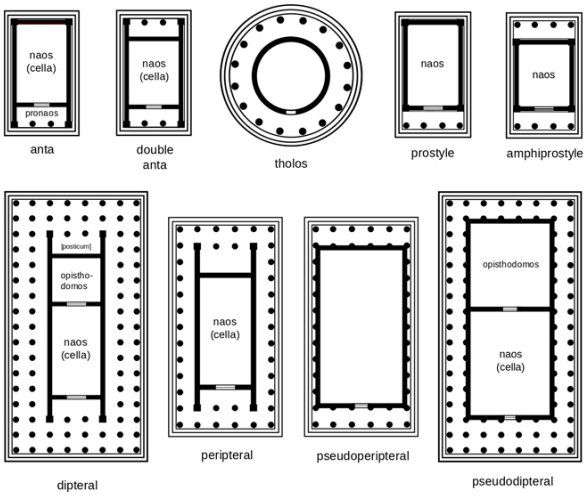


Figure 13.2.5.22: Greek temple plans (**source**)

Stoa

Stoa (στοά) is a Greek architectural term that describes a covered walkway or colonnade that was usually designed for public use. Early examples, often employing the Doric order, were usually composed of a single level, although later examples (Hellenistic and Roman) came to be two-story

freestanding structures. These later examples allowed interior space for shops or other rooms and often incorporated the Ionic order for interior colonnades.

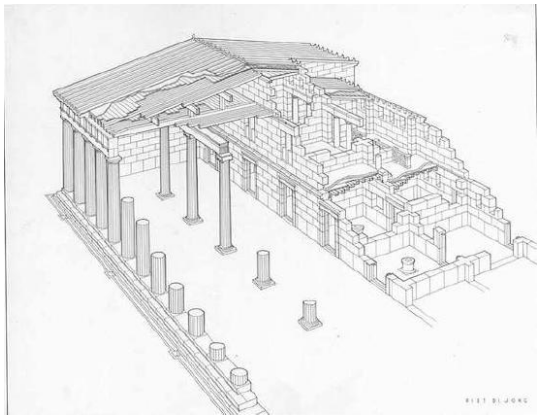


Figure 13.2.5.23: P. De Jong, Restored Perspective of the South Stoa, Corinth (photo: American School of Classical Studies, Digital Collections)

Greek city planners came to prefer the stoa as a device for framing the agora (public market place) of a city or town. The South Stoa constructed as part of the sanctuary of Hera on the island of Samos (c. 700-550 B.C.E.) numbers among the earliest examples of the stoa in Greek architecture. Many cities, particularly Athens and Corinth, came to have elaborate and famous stoas. In Athens the famous Stoa Poikile ("Painted Stoa"), c. fifth century B.C.E., housed paintings of famous Greek military exploits including the battle of Marathon, while the Stoa Basileios ("Royal Stoa"), c. fifth century B.C.E., was the seat of a chief civic official (*archon basileios*).



Figure 13.2.5.24: 20th century reconstruction of the Stoa of Attalos in the Athenian Agora (original c. 159-138 B.C.E.) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Later, through the patronage of the kings of Pergamon, the Athenian agora was augmented by the famed Stoa of Attalos (c. 159-138 B.C.E.) which was recently rebuilt according to the ancient specifications and now houses the archaeological museum for the Athenian Agora itself (see image above). At Corinth the stoa persisted as an architectural type well into the Roman period; the South Stoa there (above), c. 150 C.E., shows the continued utility of this building design for framing civic space. From the Hellenistic period onwards the stoa also lent its name to a philosophical school, as Zeno of Citium (c. 334-262 B.C.E.) originally taught his Stoic philosophy in the Stoa Poikile of Athens.

Theater



Figure 13.2.5.25: Theater at the Sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus, c. 350 – 300 B.C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Greek theater was a large, open-air structure used for dramatic performance. Theaters often took advantage of hillsides and naturally sloping terrain and, in general, utilized the panoramic landscape as the backdrop to the stage itself. The Greek theater is composed of the seating area (theatron), a circular space for the chorus to perform (orchestra), and the stage (*skene*). Tiered seats in the theatron provided space for spectators. Two side aisles (*parados*, pl. *paradoi*) provided access to the orchestra. The Greek theater inspired the Roman version of the theater directly, although the Romans introduced some modifications to the concept of theater architecture. In many cases the Romans converted pre-existing Greek theaters to conform to their own architectural ideals, as is evident in the Theater of Dionysos on the slopes of the Athenian Acropolis. Since theatrical performances were often linked to sacred festivals, it is not uncommon to find theaters associated directly with sanctuaries.

Bouleuterion



Figure **13.2.5.26**: Bouleuterion, Priène (Turkey), c. 200 B.C.E. (photo: **Jacqueline Poggi**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Bouleuterion (βουλευτήριον) was an important civic building in a Greek city, as it was the meeting place of the boule (citizen council) of the city. These select representatives assembled to handle public affairs and represent the citizenry of the polis (in ancient Athens the boule was comprised of 500 members). The bouleuterion generally was a covered, rectilinear building with stepped seating surrounding a central speaker's well in which an altar was placed. The city of Priène has a particularly well-preserved example of this civic structure as does the city of Miletus.

House

Greek houses of the Archaic and Classical periods were relatively simple in design. Houses usually were centered on a courtyard that would have been the scene for various ritual activities; the courtyard also provided natural light for the often small houses. The ground floor rooms would have included kitchen and storage rooms, perhaps an animal pen and a latrine; the chief room was the *andron*—site of the male-dominated drinking party (*symposion*). The quarters for women and children (*gynaikeion*) could be located on the second level (if present) and were, in any case, segregated from the mens' area. It was not uncommon for houses to be attached to workshops or shops. The houses excavated in the southwest part of the Athenian Agora had walls of mud brick that rested on stone socles and tiled roofs, with floors of beaten clay.

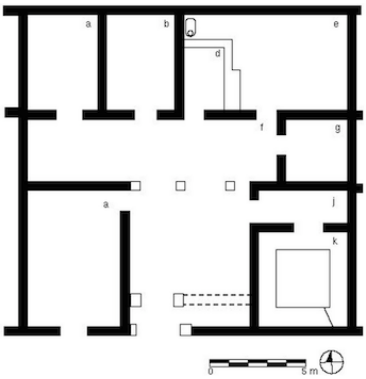


Figure **13.2.5.27**: Plan, Olynthus (Greece), House A vii 4, built after 432, before 348 B.C.E., from Olynthus, vol. 8 pl. 99, 100 and fig. 5, kitchen complex c, d, and e; andron (k) (photo: Perseus Digital Library)

The city of Olynthus in Chalcidice, Greece, destroyed by military action in 348 B.C.E., preserves many well-appointed courtyard houses arranged within the Hippodamian grid-plan of the city. House A vii 4 had a large cobbled courtyard that was used for domestic industry. While some rooms were fairly plain, with earthen floors, the *andron* was the most well-appointed room of the house.

Fortifications



Figure 13.2.5.28: Fortifications and gate, Palairos (Greece)

The Mycenaean fortifications of Bronze Age Greece (c. 1300 B.C.E.) are particularly well known—the megalithic architecture (also referred to as Cyclopean because of the use of enormous stones) represents a trend in Bronze Age architecture. While these massive Bronze Age walls are difficult to best, first millennium B.C.E. Greece also shows evidence for stone built fortification walls. In Attika (the territory of Athens), a series of Classical and Hellenistic walls built in ashlar masonry (squared masonry blocks) have been studied as a potential system of border defenses. At Palairos in Epirus (Greece) the massive fortifications enclose a high citadel that occupies imposing terrain.

Stadium, gymnasium, and palaestra

The Greek stadium (derived from *stadion*, a Greek measurement equivalent to c. 578 feet or 176 meters) was the location of foot races held as part of sacred games; these structures are often found in the context of sanctuaries, as in the case of the Panhellenic sanctuaries at Olympia and Epidauros. Long and narrow, with a horseshoe shape, the stadium occupied reasonably flat terrain.

The gymnasium (from the Greek term *gymnós* meaning “naked”) was a training center for athletes who participated in public games. This facility tended to include areas for both training and storage. The palaestra (παλαίστρα) was an exercise facility originally connected with the training of wrestlers. These complexes were generally rectilinear in plan, with a colonnade framing a central, open space.

Altar



Figure 13.2.5.29: Altar of Hieron II, 3rd century B.C.E. (Syracuse, Sicily, Italy)

Since blood sacrifice was a key component of Greek ritual practice, an altar was essential for these purposes. While altars did not necessarily need to be architecturalized, they could be and, in some cases, they assumed a monumental scale. The third century B.C.E. Altar of Hieron II at Syracuse, Sicily, provides one such example. At c. 196 meters in length and c. 11 m in height the massive altar was reported to be capable of hosting the simultaneous sacrifice of 450 bulls (Diodorus Siculus *History* 11.72.2).



Figure 13.2.5.30: *Model of the Pergamon Altar (Altar of Zeus)*, c. 200-150 B.C.E. (Pergamon Museum, Berlin) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Another spectacular altar is the Altar of Zeus from Pergamon, built during the first half of the second century B.C.E. The altar itself is screened by a monumental enclosure decorated with sculpture; the monument measures c. 35.64 by 33.4 meters. The altar is best known for its program of relief sculpture that depict a gigantomachy (battle between the Olympian gods and the giants) that is presented as an allegory for the military conquests of

the kings of Pergamon. Despite its monumental scale and lavish decoration, the Pergamon altar preserves the basic and necessary features of the Greek altar: it is frontal and approached by stairs and is open to the air—to allow not only for the blood sacrifice itself but also for the burning of the thigh bones and fat as an offering to the gods.

Fountain house

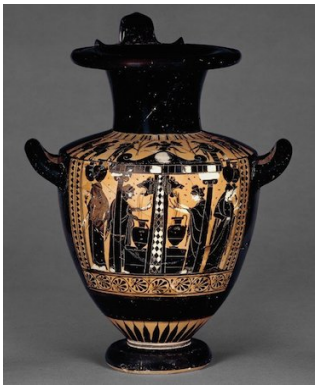


Figure **13.2.5.31**: *Black-figured water-jar (hydria*) with a scene at a fountain-house, Greek, about 520-500 B.C.E., 50.8 cm high, © The Trustees of the British Museum

The fountain house is a public building that provides access to clean drinking water and at which water jars and containers could be filled. The Southeast Fountain house in the Athenian Agora (c. 530 B.C.E.) provides an example of this tendency to position fountain houses and their dependable supply of clean drinking water close to civic spaces like the agora. Gathering water was seen as a woman's task and, as such, it offered the often isolated women a chance to socialize with others while collecting water. Fountain house scenes are common on ceramic water jars (*hydriai*), as is the case for a Black-figured hydria (c. 525-500 B.C.E.) found in an Etruscan tomb in Vulci that is now in the British Museum

Legacy

The architecture of ancient Greece influenced ancient Roman architecture, and became the architectural vernacular employed in the expansive Hellenistic world created in the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great. Greek architectural forms became implanted so deeply in the Roman architectural mindset that they endured throughout antiquity, only to then be re-discovered in the Renaissance and especially from the mid-eighteenth century onwards as a feature of the Neo-Classical movement. This durable legacy helps to explain why the ancient Greek architectural orders and the tenets of Greek design are still so prevalent—and visible—in our post-modern world.

Additional resources:

Athenian Agora Excavations

J. M. Camp, The Athenian Agora: a short guide to the excavations (American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

Architecture in Ancient Greece on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

B. A. Ault and L. Nevett, *Ancient Greek Houses and Households: Chronological, Regional, and Social Diversity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

N. Cahill, *Household and City Organization at Olynthus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

J. J. Coulton, *The Architectural Development of the Greek Stoa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

J. J. Coulton, *Ancient Greek Architects at Work: Problems of Structure and Design* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).

W. B. Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Greece: an Account of its Historic Development* 3rd ed. (London: Batsford, 1950).

Marie-Christine Hellmann, *L'architecture Grecque* 3 vol. (Paris: Picard, 2002-2010).

M. Korres, *Stones of the Parthenon* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000).

A. W. Lawrence, *Greek Architecture* 5th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

C. G. Malacrino, *Constructing the Ancient World: Architectural Techniques of the Greeks and Romans* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010).

A. Mazarakis Ainian, *From Rulers' Dwellings to Temples: Architecture, Religion and Society in early Iron Age Greece (1100-700 B.C.)* (Jonsered: P. Åströms förlag, 1997).

L. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

J. Ober, *Fortress Attica: Defense of the Athenian Land Frontier, 404-322 B.C.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985).

D. S. Robertson, *Greek and Roman Architecture* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

J. N. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

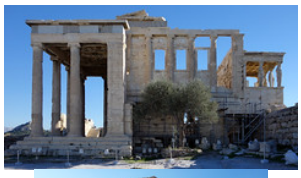
F. E. Winter, *Greek Fortifications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).

F. E. Winter, *Studies in Hellenistic Architecture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

W. Wrede, *Attische Mauern* (Athens: Deutsches archäologisches Institut, 1933).

R. E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





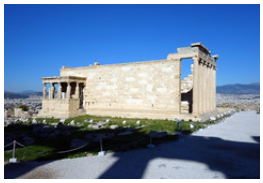









Figure 13.2.5.32: More Smarthistory images…

Greek architectural orders

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Identify the classical orders—the architectural styles developed by the Greeks and Romans used to this day.



Video 13.2.5.2

An architectural order describes a style of building. In classical architecture each order is readily identifiable by means of its proportions and profiles, as well as by various aesthetic details. The style of column employed serves as a useful index of the style itself, so identifying the order of the column will then, in turn, situate the order employed in the structure as a whole. The classical orders—described by the labels Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian—do not merely serve as descriptors for the remains of ancient buildings, but as an index to the architectural and aesthetic development of Greek architecture itself.

The Doric order

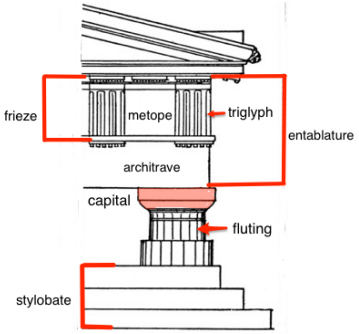


Figure 13.2.5.33: Doric order

The Doric order is the earliest of the three Classical orders of architecture and represents an important moment in Mediterranean architecture when monumental construction made the transition from impermanent materials (i.e. wood) to permanent materials, namely stone. The Doric order is characterized by a plain, unadorned column capital and a column that rests directly on the stylobate of the temple without a base. The Doric entablature includes a frieze composed of trigylphs (vertical plaques with three divisions) and metopes (square spaces for either painted or sculpted decoration). The columns are fluted and are of sturdy, if not stocky, proportions.



Figure 13.2.5.34: Iktinos and Kallikrates, The Parthenon, 447 – 432 B.C.E., Athens

The Doric order emerged on the Greek mainland during the course of the late seventh century B.C.E. and remained the predominant order for Greek temple construction through the early fifth century B.C.E., although notable buildings of the Classical period—especially the canonical Parthenon in Athens—still employ it. By 575 B.C.E the order may be properly identified, with some of the earliest surviving elements being the metope plaques from the Temple of Apollo at Thermon. Other early, but fragmentary, examples include the sanctuary of Hera at Argos, votive capitals from the island of Aegina, as well as early Doric capitals that were a part of the Temple of Athena Pronaia at Delphi in central Greece. The Doric order finds perhaps its fullest expression in the Parthenon (c. 447-432 B.C.E.) at Athens designed by Iktinos and Kallikrates.

The Ionic order



Figure 13.2.5.35: Ionic capital, north porch of the Erechtheion, 421-407 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

As its names suggests, the Ionic Order originated in Ionia, a coastal region of central Anatolia (today Turkey) where a number of ancient Greek settlements were located. Volutes (scroll-like ornaments) characterize the Ionic capital and a base supports the column, unlike the Doric order. The Ionic order developed in Ionia during the mid-sixth century B.C.E. and had been transmitted to mainland Greece by the fifth century B.C.E. Among the earliest examples of the Ionic capital is the inscribed votive column from Naxos, dating to the end of the seventh century B.C.E.

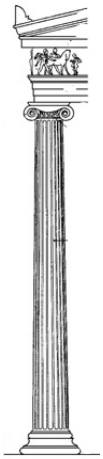


Figure 13.2.5.36: Ionic order

The monumental temple dedicated to Hera on the island of Samos, built by the architect Rhoikos
c. 570-560 B.C.E., was the first of the great Ionic buildings, although it was destroyed by earthquake in short order. The sixth century B.C.E. Temple

of Artemis at Ephesus, a wonder of the ancient world, was also an Ionic design. In Athens the Ionic order influences some elements of the Parthenon (447-432 B.C.E.), notably the Ionic frieze that encircles the cella of the temple. Ionic columns are also employed in the interior of the monumental gateway to the Acropolis known as the Propylaia (c. 437-432 B.C.E.). The Ionic was promoted to an exterior order in the construction of the Erechtheion (c. 421-405 B.C.E.) on the Athenian Acropolis (image below).



Figure **13.2.5.37**: North porch of the Erechtheion, 421-407 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

The Ionic order is notable for its graceful proportions, giving a more slender and elegant profile than the Doric order. The ancient Roman architect Vitruvius compared the Doric module to a sturdy, male body, while the Ionic was possessed of more graceful, feminine proportions. The Ionic order incorporates a running frieze of continuous sculptural relief, as opposed to the Doric frieze composed of triglyphs and metopes.

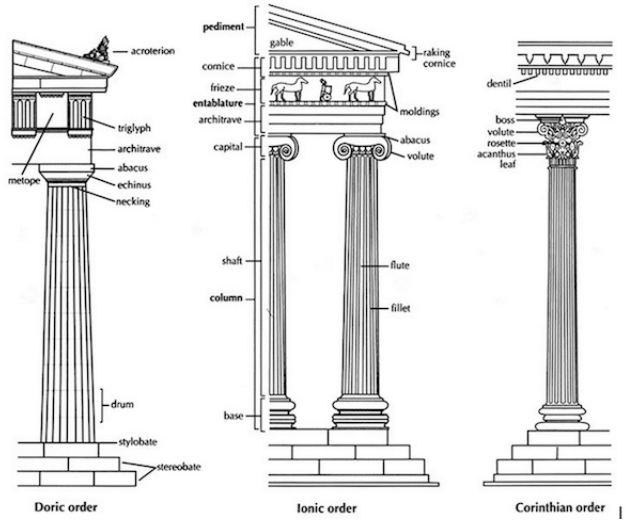


Figure **13.2.5.38**: The Greek orders

The Corinthian order



Figure **13.2.5.39**: Corinthian capital

The Corinthian order is both the latest and the most elaborate of the Classical orders of architecture. The order was employed in both Greek and Roman architecture, with minor variations, and gave rise, in turn, to the Composite order. As the name suggests, the origins of the order were connected in antiquity with the Greek city-state of Corinth where, according to the architectural writer Vitruvius, the sculptor Callimachus drew a set of acanthus leaves surrounding a votive basket (Vitr. 4.1.9-10). In archaeological terms the earliest known Corinthian capital comes from the Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae and dates to c. 427 B.C.E.



Figure **13.2.5.40**: Acanthus leaf

The defining element of the Corinthian order is its elaborate, carved capital, which incorporates even more vegetal elements than the Ionic order does. The stylized, carved leaves of an acanthus plant grow around the capital, generally terminating just below the abacus. The Romans favored the Corinthian order, perhaps due to its slender properties. The order is employed in numerous notable Roman architectural monuments, including the Temple of Mars Ultor and the Pantheon in Rome, and the Maison Carrée in Nîmes.

Legacy of the Greek architectural canon

The canonical Greek architectural orders have exerted influence on architects and their imaginations for thousands of years. While Greek architecture played a key role in inspiring the Romans, its legacy also stretches far beyond antiquity. When James “Athenian” Stuart and Nicholas Revett visited Greece during the period from 1748 to 1755 and subsequently published *The Antiquities of Athens and Other Monuments of Greece* (1762) in London, the Neoclassical revolution was underway. Captivated by Stuart and Revett’s measured drawings and engravings, Europe suddenly demanded Greek forms. Architects the likes of Robert Adam drove the Neoclassical movement, creating buildings like Kedleston Hall, an English country house in Kedleston, Derbyshire. Neoclassicism even jumped the Atlantic Ocean to North America, spreading the rich heritage of Classical architecture even further—and making the Greek architectural orders not only extremely influential, but eternal.

Additional resources:

B. A. Barletta, *The Origins of the Greek Architectural Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

H. Berve, G. Gruben and M. Hirmer, *Greek temples, theatres, and shrine*s (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1963).

F. A. Cooper, *The Temple of Apollo Bassitas* 4 vol. (Princeton N.J.: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1992-1996).

J. J. Coulton, *Ancient Greek Architects at Work: Problems of Structure and Design* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).

W. B. Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Greece: an Account of its Historic Development* 3rd ed. (London: Batsford, 1950).

W. B. Dinsmoor, *The Propylaia to the Athenian Akropolis, 1: The predecessors* (Princeton NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1980).

P. Gros, *Vitruve et la tradition des traités d’architecture: fabrica et ratiocinatio: recueil d’études* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2006).

G. Gruben, “Naxos und Delos. Studien zur archaischen Architektur der Kykladen.” *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 112 (1997): 261–416.

Marie-Christine Hellmann, *L’architecture Grecque* 3 vol. (Paris: Picard, 2002-2010).

A. Hoffmann, E.-L. Schwander, W. Hoepfner, and G. Brands (eds), *Bautechnik der Antike: internationales Kolloquium in Berlin vom 15.-17. Februar 1990* (Diskussionen zur archäologischen Bauforschung; 5), (Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1991).

M. Korres, *From Pentelicon to the Parthenon: The Ancient Quarries and the Story of a Half-Worked Column Capital of the First Marble Parthenon* (Athens: Melissa Publishing House, 1995).

M. Korres, *Stones of the Parthenon* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000).

A. W. Lawrence, *Greek Architecture* 5th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

D. S. Robertson, *Greek and Roman Architecture* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

J. Rykwert, *The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

E.-L. Schwandner and G. Gruben, *Säule und Gebälk: zu Struktur und Wandlungsprozess griechisch-römischer Architektur: Bauforschungskolloquium in Berlin vom 16. bis 18. Juni 1994* (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1996).

M. Wilson Jones, “Designing the Roman Corinthian Order,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, vol. 2, 1989, pp. 35-69.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





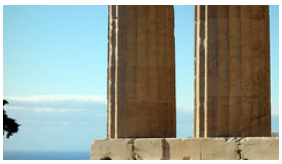









Figure 13.2.5.41: More Smarthistory images…

Black Figures in Classical Greek Art

by DR. SARAH DERBEW



Figure 13.2.5.42: Pitcher (*Oinochoe*) in the Form of the Head of an African, about 510 B.C.E., attributed to Class B bis: Class of Louvre H 62. Terracotta, 8 7/16 inches high (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, 83.AE.229. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

In ancient Greece, men often escaped their daily grind to socialize at a symposium, or formalized drinking party. In the symposium, revelers indulged in numerous leisure activities centered around the consumption of wine. Among the variety of ceramic vessels that were used, pitchers of many shapes and sizes enabled wine pourers to fill the drinkers' cups. [1]One example is this oinochoe (a type of wine jug) now on display in the new Athenian vases gallery at the Getty Villa.

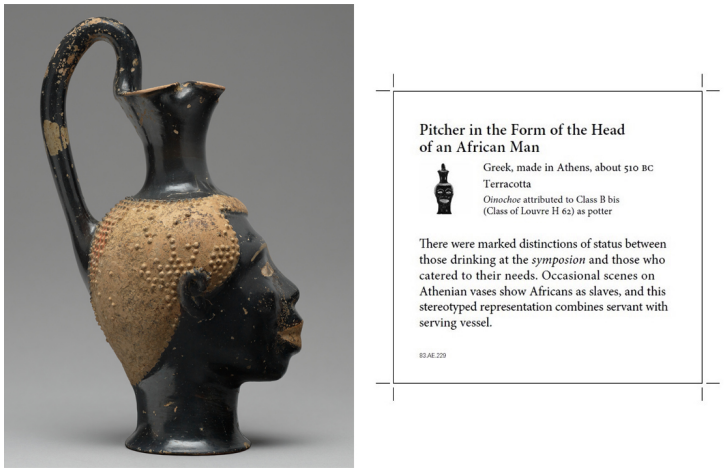


Figure **13.2.5.43**: Pitcher (*Oinochoe*) in the Form of the Head of an African, with the label that accompanies it in Athenian Vases (Gallery 103) at the **Getty Villa**

This head-shaped wine pitcher invites numerous questions. The first is, quite simply, how to describe it. How can curators responsibly and comprehensively create a label for this pitcher? Is this face best characterized as "black," "African," or "black-glazed"?

The term "black" is unsuitable, because it transports our modern color politics into antiquity; the Trans-Atlantic slave trade has permanently mangled any attempt to use this color objectively.

The geographical marker "African" initially seems like a sound alternative. Unlike the historical weight of "black," using the name of a continent seems to sidestep the retrojection of slavery's violent history. It also presents a utopian description that unites fifty-four countries and millions of people into a collective entity. To use the word "African" for this pitcher, however, is to irresponsibly project contemporary concerns onto the past. The notion of "Africa" was vague at the time of production of this vessel, around 500 B.C.E.; the Greek term for the region, "Libya," referred generally to the northern and northeast regions of the continent. "Aithiopian" was another popular term used to describe people with black skin; the etymology of Aithiopia highlights this relationship: *aithō* (I blaze) + *ops* (face).

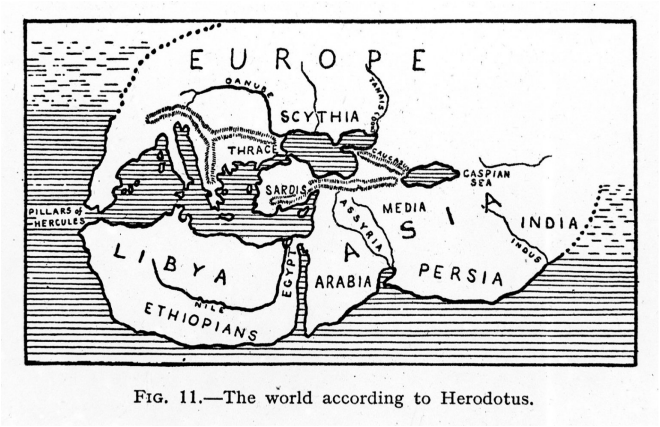


FIG. 11.—The world according to Herodotus.

Figure **13.2.5.44**: Map of the World According to Herodotus, Wellcome Collection (CC BY 4.0)

What about our third option to describe this vessel, "black-glazed"? This term softens modern racial thinking by enabling a focus on material composition; the description recognizes color but does not subscribe to any color-based hierarchy. Although it is naïve to imagine that the black-glazed face, paired with full lips and a broad nose, does not evoke comparison with real people, I would argue that "black-glazed" is preferable because it extends beyond its modern politicized counterpart, "Black."[2] The hyphen emphasizes its artificial status; the label reflects artistic license rather than historical prejudices.

Now let us contextualize the description of this pitcher. The Getty Villa's label tells us that "occasional scenes on Athenian vases show Africans as slaves, and this stereotyped representation combines servant and serving vessel." Art historian François Lissarrague also interprets the black-glazed faces on other drinking cups and pitchers as servants in the symposium. [3]



Figure **13.2.5.45**: High-Handled Drinking Cup (*Kantharos*) in the Form of Two Heads, about 510–480 B.C.E., the London Class. Terracotta, 7 9/16 inches high (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund)

Some literary evidence supports this claim; one of the character sketches in the late fourth century B.C.E. Theophrastus' *Characters* describes a black person as an exotic servant for a petty man.\(^{[4]}\) But other ancient Greek texts contradict this characterization; Homeric epics describe black people as semi-divine creatures whose country was a relaxing oasis for the gods.[5] Furthermore, visual references on ancient Greek vases depict black people in numerous roles: political allies, musicians, religious worshippers, soldiers, and servants. [6]



Figure **13.2.5.46**: Attic White-ground *Alabastron*; Unknown; Athens, Greece; about 480 B.C.; terracotta; 14.5 cm (**J. Paul Getty Museum**)

It is dangerous to fold selective history into the discussion without any reflective comments about the speculative work at play here. Although it is plausible that *some* black people were slaves in the fifth century B.C.E., there is no sure sign that this was the case in all situations.

The need for careful treatment of black people in ancient Greek art extends beyond this pitcher. On the cover of Roman historian Benjamin Isaac's 2004 book *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, a troubling scene encourages anachronistic interpretations.

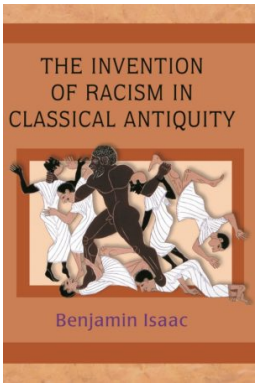


Figure **13.2.5.47**: Cover of Benjamin Isaac's *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton University Press, 2004

Here, we are confronted with a depiction of a violent encounter between a man and six other men. The person in the middle of the scene looms large and distinct; his upright pose and stark nakedness stand in sharp contrast to the clothed people in contorted positions around him. There are other visual clues that suggest his dominance. All of the men who come into contact with him either writhe under his feet or are firmly in his grasp. They are no match for his strength; he plows through them without hesitation.

Perhaps in collaboration with Isaac, Princeton University Press (the publishers of this book) chose this image as a cover for an important contribution to the discussion of racism in antiquity. This artistic rendition is based on a modern illustration of a sixth-century B.C.E. black-figure *hydria* (water jar). [7]

This impressive vase can be seen at the Getty Center in the exhibition **Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World**. It depicts Herakles as he resists Egyptians' attempts to sacrifice him under the orders of the Egyptian king Bousiris. According to ancient Greek mythology, Bousiris received a prophecy that stipulated the sacrifice of a foreigner in order to stop a drought that was destroying his city. When Herakles entered Egypt, Bousiris tried to slaughter him, but the Greek hero fought back and eventually escaped.



Figure **13.2.5.48**: Water Jar with Herakles and Bousiris, about 510 B.C.E., Greek. Clay, 17 15/16 inches high × 15 11/16 inches diameter (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

Although the visual similarities between the cover and the water vessel above are striking, the ancient image allows for a more sophisticated approach to skin color than the book cover's partial rendering of the scene. On the vase, black skin is capacious and flexible; it is not limited to those near Herakles. The crouching Egyptian priest on the left of the altar, as well as the Egyptian with raised hands to the right of the altar, have black skin. The black lines framing the scene and the black patterned designs on opposite sides of the scene also destabilize any quick interpretation of this color in antiquity. Skin color is only one element of this scene; the main theme appears to be the inverted violence that has occurred. The fear of the nine men is palpable; one has even climbed on top of the altar meant for Herakles. To add a final twist, Herakles' skin tone on this jar is dark red. [8] Herakles' blackness, as it appears today, is due to the worn state of the jar's surface.



Figure 13.2.5.49: Water Jar with Herakles and Bousiris, detail, about 510 B.C.E., Greek. Clay, 17 15/16 inches high × 15 11/16 inches diameter (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Antikensammlung. © 'KHM-Museumsverband')

There are numerous examples of this sacrificial scene on ancient Greek pottery. Another depiction portrays Herakles as a figure whose skin color does *not* differ from those around him.

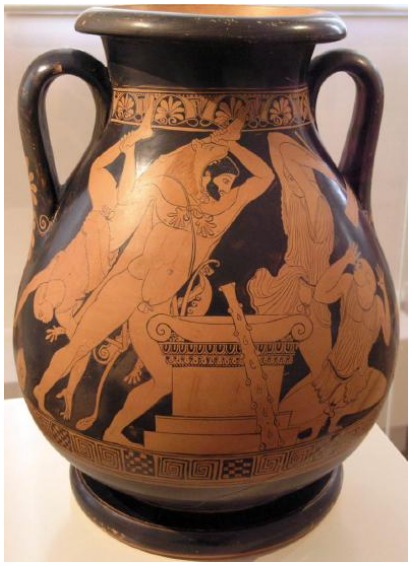


Figure 13.2.5.50: Pan Painter, *Pelike* with Herakles and Bousiris, about 470 B.C.E., terracotta (National Archaeological Museum, Athens, photo: Marsyas, CC BY-SA 2.5)

On this fifth-century B.C.E.greece storage jar, Herakles (on the left of the altar) again uses his sheer strength to punish the Egyptians. But there is a different awareness of color dynamics at play on this jar. Rather than a depiction of Herakles with black skin, blackness dominates the background of this vessel. Herakles' black hair and black beard set him apart from the bald and clean-shaven Egyptians. This does not mean, however, that his chromatic appearance is particularly important in this scene. Instead, blackness literally fades into the background. It offers a visual palette for a powerful scene rather than a reflection of color-based power dynamics. Herakles' lion-skin cloak and club are more helpful indicators of his identity. [9] In addition, the physiognomy of Herakles marks him as distinct from the Egyptians; his long nose and thin lips stand in contrast to their broad noses and full lips.

Altogether, it is undeniable that the image on Isaac's cover reproduces an ancient representation of Herakles. But the cover art is also eerily reminiscent of contemporary discourse about Blackness. In particular, it suggests a dangerous connection between violence and the (modern) Black male body. This cover misleads anyone interested in ancient discussions of black skin because the contents of this book do not adequately address this topic. This omission encourages viewers and readers to assume that this image is an accurate representation of black people in Greek antiquity. Barring the caption on the back of the book, the image is presented without any context; people who judge books by their covers will jump to inaccurate conclusions. The permanently violent coding of black skin color is incorrect and irresponsible; there are no historical roots tracing this presumed innate threat.

In sum, museum and academic scholars are key players in the fight for contextualized and equitable perspectives of black people in antiquity; they curate exhibits and write books that greatly influence vast audiences. Preconceived notions of Black people are seared into our country's collective consciousness; without an overhaul of the "black=slaves in perpetuity" trope, damaging stereotypes become ossified as facts for future generations. This brief examination has revealed ancient Greek art to be an expansive landscape. Ancient Greece's visual heritage included representations of black people that nimbly provoked and cut across hierarchies. Objects like the sixth-century B.C.E. head-shaped pitcher and water jar discussed

above were not part of any chromatic hierarchy because such categories had yet to be codified. Instead, they existed within their own historical and artistic context.

This essay first appeared in ***the Iris*** (CC BY 4.0)

Notes:

1. Various types of head-shaped vessels were produced around this time; see this example in the form of a woman's head in the Getty Villa collection.
2. I use "Black" to refer to the contemporary, socially constructed group of people, and "black" to designate people who are described as having black skin in ancient Greek literature and art.
3. François Lissarrague, "Athenian Image of the Foreigner," translated by Antonia Nevill. In Thomas Harrison, ed., *Greeks and Barbarians* (Routledge Press, 2002): 108–9.
4. Theophrastus, 21.4.2.
5. *Iliad* 1.423, *Odyssey*, 1.22-23.
6. For more examples, see Frank Snowden Jr. "Aithiopes," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, Volume I: Aara-Aphlad (Artemis Publishers, 1981): 415-18.
7. For a clearer rendition of the colors on this jar, see Perseus Digital Library.
8. Jaap M. Hemelrijk, *Caeretan Hydriae* (Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1984): 52-54.
9. Herakles killed and skinned a lion during the first of his Twelve Labors (feats he completed to atone for his madness-induced murder of his family).

Additional resources:

The danger of importing colorblindness and the dream of "White Europe" into antiquity

Insightful blog posts about the diversity of the ancient world by Classicist Rebecca Futo Kennedy

Podcast about race and racism in the fields of Classics and Medieval Studies

Pharos' progressive approach to Classics via the dismantling of racist manipulations of the discipline

Getty Museum's instructional video about ancient pottery-making

David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds., *The Image of the Black in Western Art: From the Pharaohs to the Fall of the Roman Empire* (Volume I) (Harvard University Press, 2010).

Rebecca Futo Kennedy, C. Sydnor Roy, and Max L. Goldman, trans., *Race and Ethnicity in the Classical World: An Anthology of Primary Sources in Translation* (Hackett Publishing, 2013). Selected passages (pp. 111–202) focus on northern and eastern Africa.

Denise McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

James H. Dee, "Black Odysseus, White Caesar: When Did 'White People' Become 'White'?," *The Classical Journal* 99 (2, 2003/4): 157-67.

Olympic games

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Every fourth year between 776 B.C.E. and 395 C.E., the Olympic Games, held in honor of the god Zeus, the supreme god of Greek mythology, attracted people from across Greece. Crowds watched sports such as running, discus-throwing and the long-jump.

Olympia



Figure **13.2.5.51**

The sporting events at Olympia were the oldest and most important of the four national Greek athletic festivals. The games were held on an official basis every four years from 776 B.C.E., but they probably originated much earlier. Greek myth credited the hero Herakles with devising the running races at Olympia to celebrate the completion of one of his twelve labors.

Olympia was the most important sanctuary of the god Zeus, and the Games were held in his honor. Sacrifices and gifts were offered, and athletes took oaths to obey the rules before a statue of Zeus. The games were announced by heralds traveling to all the major Greek cities around the Mediterranean, and hostilities were banned during the period around the Games to safeguard those traveling to and from Olympia.

The games at Olympia continued with minor interruptions into early Christian times and were the inspiration for the modern Olympic Games, first staged in Athens in 1896.

Equestrian Events

Chariot racing was the most popular spectator sport in ancient times. Up to 40 chariots could compete in a race and crashes were common.

In ancient Greece only the wealthy could afford to maintain a chariot and horses. Chariots had been used to carry warriors into battle, and chariot races, along with other sports events, were originally held at the funeral games of heroes, as described in Homer's Iliad.

Wealthy citizens and Greek statesmen were anxious to win such a prestigious event. They sometimes drove their own chariot, but usually employed a charioteer. The races took place in an arena called the *hippodrome*. The most dangerous place was at the turning post, where chariot wheels could lock together and there were many crashes.



Figure **13.2.5.52**: Charioteer and horses (detail), *Panathenaic amphora*, c. 410-400 B.C.E., 67.5 x 38 cm, Attica © Trustees of the British Museum. This vase belongs to a distinctive type given as a prize to the winner of the chariot race in the ancient games held at Athens during the yearly festival known as the Panathenaia that honoured Athena, the city's patron deity. The vase would have been one of 140, each containing 40 liters of olive oil, given to the winner.

The painter of this vase has been highly successful in creating the illusion of speed as the chariot careers along. A *quadriga* chariot drawn by four horses is shown, the hair and tunic of the charioteer are blown back, and the manes and tails of the horses fly in the rush of air. The chariot is coming up to a post which may represent the turn or the finish of the race. Both moments would be climaxes.

After the dangers and excitement of the chariot race came the horse- racing. This was hazardous because the track was already churned up, and the jockeys rode without stirrups or saddles, which were not yet invented. The winning horse and its owner were given an enthusiastic reception, and riderless horses that came first past the post were also honored.

Combat Sports



Figure **13.2.5.53**: *Panathenaic prize amphora of a chariot race*, 490-80 B.C.E., red-figured cup, attributed to the Foundry Painter, Attica, Greece © Trustees of the British Museum

A big attraction at all the Greek games were the “heavy” events—wrestling, boxing, and the pankration, a type of all-in wrestling. Specialists in the sports could win large sums of money all over the Greek world, once they had proved themselves at Olympia.



Figure **13.2.5.54**: Exterior side A (detail), *Panathenaic prize amphora of a chariot race*, 490-80 B.C.E., red-figured cup, attributed to the Foundry Painter, Attica, Greece © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The *pankration* was a mixture of boxing and wrestling, where almost any tactic was permitted. Only biting and going for an opponent’s eyes were illegal. On the cup above, on the left is a pair of boxers in a bout. In the center is a pair of pancratiasts down on the ground. Above them hangs a discus in a bag. In the center, one pankratiast tries to gouge his opponent’s eye. A bearded trainer steps forward, his forked stick raised over his head to stop the fouls and the fight.

Boxing was considered the most violent sport. There were no separate rounds in a match and the contestants fought until one of them gave in. In ancient Greece thin strips of leather were bound around the boxers’ fists to protect their hands. Boxing gloves were eventually developed, and in the Roman period they were weighted with lead or iron to inflict greater damage.



Figure **13.2.5.55**: A pair of boxers in a bout, exterior side A (detail), *Panathenaic prize amphora of a chariot race*, 490-80 B.C.E., red-figured cup, attributed to the Foundry Painter, Attica, Greece © Trustees of the British Museum.

The boxer on the left has his left arm bent up in front, his right arm back, and there is a dilute line on his cheek. His opponent, facing to the left, is seen in three-quarter back view, his left arm out in front, his right drawn back for a blow. His cheek is heavily marked with relief lines, under the eye and along the cheekbone, to denote swelling.

Wrestling was a sport of great skill which used many of the throws still seen today. It also featured as part of the pentathlon (“pente” means five in Greek while “athlos” means contest, so the ancient pentathlon included five events: discus, javelin, long jump, running and wrestling).

Running



Figure **13.2.5.56**: *Fikellura style amphora with a running man*, 6th century B.C.E., Greek, , made in Miletos, Asia Minor from Rhodes © Trustees of the British Museum

The most ancient and prestigious event at Olympia was the running race along the length of the stadium, a distance of 600 Olympic feet (192.28 meters). The Olympiad (the four-year period up to the next Games) was named after the winner, and dates were recorded by reference to the list of victors. Besides this equivalent of our “two-hundred meter” event, there was a race along two lengths of the track, and a long-distance race of twenty or twenty-four lengths. There was no “marathon,” this was the invention of Baron de Coubertin who revived the Olympic Games in 1896. In all these races the runners made a standing start, from a row of stone slabs set in the track that had grooves cut in them to provide a grip for the toes.

Here, a runner is painted in silhouette, with the few inner markings reserved in the natural colour of the clay. His pose, with arms and legs fully extended and chest thrust out, suggests that he is running at full speed. Most sixth-century vase painters would have surrounded this isolated figure with ornamental friezes or panels, but this artist wisely resisted the temptation.

Jumping

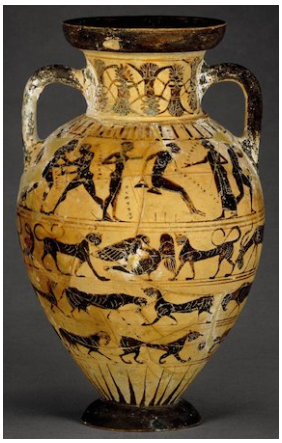


Figure **13.2.5.57**: *Black-figured “Tyrrhenian” amphora showing athletes and a combat scene*, 540 B.C.E., Greek, but made for the Etruscan market, 42.15 cm, found near Rome © Trustees of the British Museum

This vase has one of the best surviving depictions of the long-jump event at the ancient Olympic Games. There was only the long jump, not the high jump, in Greek athletics. You can see that the athlete in the picture is holding heavy lead or stone jumping weights called halteres. These were swung to increase the length of the jump. You can also see three pegs in the ground which mark the previous jumps.

The athlete is shown on the shoulder of the vase, and is captured in mid-jump, while to the right a trainer urges him on. Beneath the jumper are pegs, which may record his previous jumps or those of other athletes.

In the ancient long jump athletes carried weights that were swung forward on take-off and back just before landing. It’s often said that the weights increased the length of the jump, but it is more likely that they were there for use as a deliberate handicap. Most ancient sport developed as a means of training for warfare, and this exercise would simulate a jump carrying kit. Skill in this sport would be useful for crossing a stream or ravine.

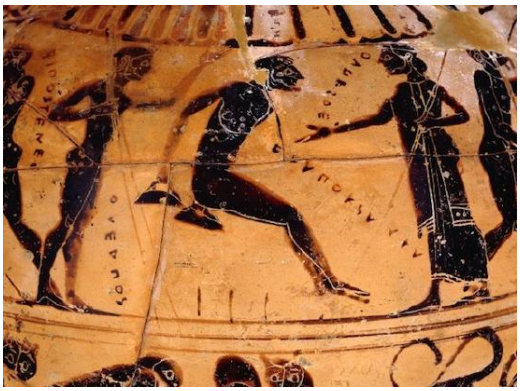


Figure **13.2.5.58**: Athlete jumping (detail), *Black-figured “Tyrrhenian” amphora showing athletes and a combat scene*, 540 B.C.E.,Greek, but made for the Etruscan market, 42.15 cm, found near Rome © Trustees of the British Museum.

The vase has other scenes related to ancient sporting events, including a discus thrower. To the jumper’s left there is an athlete holding what are possibly javelins and two wrestlers are also shown.

Pentathlon

The pentathlon was made up of five events (discus, jumping, javelin, running and wrestling) which all took place in one afternoon. Running and wrestling also existed as separate events.



Figure **13.2.5.59**: *Discus-thrower (The Townley Discobolus)*, Roman copy of a bronze original of the 5th century B.C.E., attributed to Myron, from Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, Italy © Trustees of the British Museum

There are differences between the ancient and the modern contests. Greek discus-throwers did not spin round on the spot: they rarely managed throws of more than 30 meters, less than half the modern Olympic record.

In the ancient long-jump, contestants used jumping-weights. These where swung forward on take-off then backward just before landing, to add thrust and gain extra length. Some kind of multiple jump may have been involved.

Javelin-throwing was similar to today's event, except that a thong was attached to the javelin shaft to add spin and secure a steadier flight.

The head on this figure of a discus thrower has been wrongly restored, and should be turned to look towards the discus. The popularity of the sculpture in antiquity was no doubt due to its representation of the athletic ideal. Discus-throwing was the first element in the pentathlon, and while pentathletes were in some ways considered inferior to those athletes who excelled at a particular sport, their physical appearance was much admired.

The Olympic victors

Valuable prizes could be won in athletic contests all over the Greek world, but victory at Olympia brought the greatest prestige. Winning contestants were allowed to put up statues of themselves inside the sanctuary of Zeus to commemorate their victory; many bases for these statues survive. Statues of athletes and statesmen were a prominent feature of Greek cities and sanctuaries. If they won three times they could set up specially commissioned portrait statues which could cost up to ten times the average yearly wage.



Figure **13.2.5.60**: *Sealstone with the goddess Nike crowning an athlete*, 4th century B.C.E., 2.3 x 1.6 cm, Temple of Artemis, Ephesus © Trustees of the British Museum.

Athletes tied a woolen band around their forehead, and sometimes around their arms and legs, as sign of victory. Winners at Olympia received crowns of wild olive, just as Herakles was said to have done when he had run the first races at Olympia with his brothers.

This small engraved sealstone, perhaps originally from a finger ring, shows the winged goddess Nike placing a crown of leaves on the head of a winning athlete. In Greek mythology, the goddess Nike was a messenger of the gods and, more generally, the personification of victory. She was also closely associated with Zeus, god of the Olympic Games, and is often shown in flight, bearing a wreath or a victory ribbon, to crown victorious athletes. The athlete holds a small branch, also symbolic of victory. Whether this sealstone belonged to an athlete or simply a sports enthusiast we shall probably never know.

Statues of Nike featured prominently at Olympia in connection with both sporting and military victories. The victors wreaths associated with Nike were usually made of foliage that could be dried and kept for a long time to preserve the memory of a victory. At Olympia they were made of twigs of olive, sacred to Zeus. Winning athletes were showered with flowers and leaves. This mark of celebration is called phyllobolia and is echoed today in the throwing of confetti and "ticker tape."



Figure **13.2.5.61**: *Marble figure of a victorious athlete (Daidoumenos)*, Roman version of a Greek bronze original, c. 440–430 B.C.E., 183 cm, found at Vaison, France © Trustees of the British Museum

Known as the *Daidoumenos* (ribbon wearer) this statue shows a triumphant athlete tying a ribbon round his head immediately after a victory. At ancient Greek sports festivals it was the custom to give ribbons to winning athletes. Later, at the awards' ceremony, the athlete received a wreath of leaves such as olive, laurel or wild celery leaves, depending on the festival. The identity of the athlete and the event he won are not known. He may represent athletic victories in general.

Victor statues were intended to immortalize successful athletes. Sculptors favored bronze for athletic statues, perhaps because it better represented tanned, oiled skin, but many were carved from marble. They were set on bases inscribed with a dedication to a god, the athlete's name, father's name, home town and contest.

Archaeology at Olympia

Over the centuries the river Alpheios, to the south of the sanctuary, folded and swept away the hippodrome, and the river Kladeios to the west destroyed part of the gymnasium. Following earthquakes and storms, a layer of silt was deposited over the entire site. Olympia lay unnoticed until modern times when an Englishman, Richard Chandler, rediscovered it in 1766.

The German government sponsored full-scale excavations from 1875. The excellent local museum displays many of the remarkable finds, and the German Archaeological Institute in liaison with the Greek Archaeological Service continues to investigate the site to the present day.

Suggested readings:

J. Boardman, *Early Greek vase painting* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1998).

J. Swaddling, *The ancient Olympic Games*, 3rd edition (London, The British Museum Press, 2004)

Richard Woff, *The Ancient Greek Olympics* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

The sealstone with the goddess Nike crowning an athlete at The British Museum

Panathenaic prize amphora of a chariot race at The British Museum

The Townley Discobolus at The British Museum

Black-figured "Tyrrhenian" amphora at The British Museum

Fikellura style amphora with a running man at The British Museum

Marble figure of a victorious athlete (Daidoumenos)

© Trustees of the British Museum

Pottery

Ancient Greek pots represent some of the only ancient Greek painting to survive.

c. 900 - 146 B.C.E.

Greek Vase-Painting, an introduction

by DR. RENEE M. GONDEK



Figure **13.2.5.62**: Niobid Painter, *Niobid Krater*, Attic red-figure calyx-krater, c. 460-450 B.C.E., 54 x 56 cm (Musée du Louvre)

Useful for scholars

Pottery is virtually indestructible. Though it may break into smaller pieces (called sherds), these would have to be manually ground into dust in order to be removed from the archaeological record. As such, there is an abundance of material for study, and this is exceptionally useful for modern scholars. In addition to being an excellent tool for dating, pottery enables researchers to locate ancient sites, reconstruct the nature of a site, and point to evidence of trade between groups of people. Moreover, individual pots and their painted decoration can be studied in detail to answer questions about religion, daily life, and society.

Shapes and Themes



Figure **13.2.5.63**: Diagram of Greek pot shapes (**British Museum**)

Made of terracotta (fired clay), ancient Greek pots and cups, or “vases” as they are normally called, were fashioned into a variety of shapes and sizes (see above), and very often a vessel’s form correlates with its intended function. For example, the *krater* was used to mix water and wine during a Greek *symposion* (an all-male drinking party). It allows an individual to pour liquids into its wide opening, stir the contents in its deep bowl, and easily access the mixture with a separate ladle or small jug. Or, the vase known as a *hydria* was used for collecting, carrying, and pouring water. It features a bulbous body, a pinched spout, and three handles (two at the sides for holding and one stretched along the back for tilting and pouring).

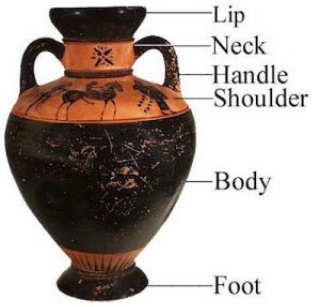


Figure **13.2.5.64**

Made of terracotta (fired clay), ancient Greek pots and cups, or “vases” as they are normally called, were fashioned into a variety of shapes and sizes (see above), and very often a vessel’s form correlates with its intended function. For example, the *krater* was used to mix water and wine during a Greek *symposion* (an all-male drinking party). It allows an individual to pour liquids into its wide opening, stir the contents in its deep bowl, and

easily access the mixture with a separate ladle or small jug. Or, the vase known as a *hydria* was used for collecting, carrying, and pouring water. It features a bulbous body, a pinched spout, and three handles (two at the sides for holding and one stretched along the back for tilting and pouring).

In order to discuss the different zones of vessels, specialists have adopted terms that relate to the parts of the body. The opening of the pot is called the mouth; the stem is referred to as the neck; the slope from the neck to the body is called the shoulder; and the base is known as the foot).

On the exterior, Greek vases exhibit painted compositions that often reflect the style of a certain period. For example, the vessels created during the Geometric Period (c. 900-700 B.C.E.) feature geometric patterns, as seen on the famous **Dipylon amphora** (below), while those decorated in the Orientalizing Period (c. 700-600 B.C.E.) display animal processions and Near Eastern motifs, as is visible **on this early Corinthian amphora** (The British Museum).

Later, during the Archaic and Classical Periods (c. 600-323 B.C.E.), vase-paintings primarily display human and mythological activities. These figural scenes can vary widely, from daily life events (e.g., fetching water at the fountain house) to heroic deeds and Homeric tales (e.g., Theseus and the bull, Odysseus and the Sirens), from the world of the gods (e.g., Zeus abducting Ganymede) to theatrical performances and athletic competitions (for example, the Oresteia, chariot racing). While it is important to stress that such painted scenes should not be thought of as photographs that document reality, they can still aid in reconstructing the lives and beliefs of the ancient Greeks.



Figure **13.2.5.65**: Dipylon Amphora, c. 750 B.C.E., ceramic, 160 cm (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

Techniques, Painters and Inscriptions

To produce the characteristic red and black colors found on vases, Greek craftsmen used liquid clay as paint (termed “slip”) and perfected a complicated three-stage firing process. Not only did the pots have to be stacked in the kiln in a specific manner, but the conditions inside had to be precise. First, the temperature was stoked to about 800° centigrade and vents allowed for an oxidizing environment. At this point, the entire vase turned red in color. Next, by sealing the vents and increasing temperature to around 900-950° centigrade, everything turned black and the areas painted with the slip vitrified (transformed into a glassy substance). Finally, in the last stage, the vents were reopened and oxidizing conditions returned inside the kiln. At this point, the unpainted zones of the vessel became red again while the vitrified slip (the painted areas) retained a glossy black hue. Through the introduction and removal of oxygen in the kiln and, simultaneously, the increase and decrease in temperature, the slip transformed into a glossy black color.

Briefly, ancient Greek vases display several painting techniques, and these are often period specific. During the Geometric and Orientalizing periods (900-600 B.C.E.), painters employed compasses to trace perfect circles and used silhouette and outline methods to delineate shapes and figures (below).



Figure **13.2.5.66**: Frieze with mourning figures (detail), *Dipylon Amphora*, c. 750 B.C.E., ceramic, 160 cm (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

Around 625-600 B.C.E., Athens adopted the black-figure technique (i.e., dark-colored figures on a light background with incised detail). Originating in Corinth almost a century earlier, black-figure uses the silhouette manner in conjunction with added color and incision. Incision involves the removal of slip with a sharp instrument, and perhaps its most masterful application can be found on an **amphora by Exekias** (below). Often described as Achilles and Ajax playing a game, the seated warriors lean towards the center of the scene and are clothed in garments that feature intricate incised patterning. In addition to displaying more realistically defined figures, black-figure painters took care to differentiate gender with color: women were painted with added white, men remained black.



Figure **13.2.5.67**: Exekias (potter and painter), Attic black-figure amphora (detail showing Ajax and Achilles playing a game), c. 540-530 B.C.E., 61.1 cm high, found Vulci (Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican City)

The red-figure technique was invented in Athens around 525-520 B.C.E. and is the inverse of black-figure (below). Here light-colored figures are set against a dark background. Using added color and a brush to paint in details, red-figure painters watered down or thickened the slip in order to create different effects.

Watered down slip or “dilute glaze” has the appearance of a wash and was used for hair, fur, and anatomy, as exemplified by the sketchy coat of the hare and the youth’s musculature on the interior of this cup by Gorgos (below). When thickened, the slip was used to form so-called “relief lines” or lines raised prominently from the surface, and these were often employed to outline forms. Surprisingly similar to red-figure is the white-ground technique.



Figure 13.2.5.68: Gorgos, Attic Red-figure Kylix (interior), c. 500 B.C.E. (Agora Museum, Athens)

Though visually quite different with its polychrome figures on a white-washed background, white-ground requires the craftsman to paint in the details of forms just like red-figure, rather than incise them (see the Kylix below).

Alongside figures and objects, one can sometimes find inscriptions. These identify mythological figures, beautiful men or women contemporaneous with the painter ("kalos" / "kale" inscriptions), and even the painter or potter himself ("egrapsen" / "epoiesen"). Inscriptions, however, are not always helpful. Mimicking the appearance of meaningful text, "nonsense inscriptions" deceive the illiterate viewer by arranging the Greek letters in an incoherent fashion.



Figure 13.2.5.69: Attributed to the Villa Giulia Painter, Attic white ground kylix (drinking cup), c. 470 B.C.E., terra-cotta, red figure, white ground, 6.2 x 16.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Vases and Reception

The overall attractive quality of Greek vases, their relatively small size, and—at one point in time—their easily obtainable nature, led them to be highly coveted collector's items during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since the later part of the nineteenth century, however, the study of vases became a scholarly pursuit and their decoration was the obsession of connoisseurs gifted with the ability to recognize and attribute the hands of individual painters.

The most well-known vase connoisseur of the twentieth century, a researcher concerned with attribution, typology, and chronology, was Sir John Davidson Beazley. Interested in Athenian black-, red-figure, and white-ground techniques, Beazley did not favor beautifully painted specimens; he was impartial and studied pieces of varying quality with equal attention. From his tedious and exhaustive examinations, he compiled well-over 1000 painters and groups, and he attributed over 30,000 vases. Although some researchers since Beazley's death continue to attribute and examine the style of specific painters or groups, vase scholars today also question the technical production of vessels, their archaeological contexts, their local and foreign distribution, and their iconography.

Additional resources:

Beazley Archive at the University of Oxford

Athenian Vase Painting: Black- and Red-Figure Techniques on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Scenes of Everyday Life in Ancient Greece on the The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ancient Greek vase production and the black-figure technique

by ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

From heroes and gods to everyday life, ancient Greek pottery depicted a variety of subjects.



Video **13.2.5.3**: Used for the storage and shipment of grains, wine, and other goods, as well as in the all-male Greek drinking party, known as the symposium, ancient Greek vases were decorated with a variety of subjects ranging from scenes of everyday life to the tales of heroes and gods. The two most popular techniques of vase decoration were the black-figure technique, so-named because the figures were painted black, and the red-figure technique, in which the figures were left the red color of the clay. The black-figure technique developed around 700 B.C. and remained the most popular Greek pottery style until about 530 B.C., when the red-figure technique was developed, eventually surpassing it in popularity. This video illustrates the techniques used in the making and decorating of a black-figure amphora (storage jar) in the Art Institute of Chicago's collection.. Video from the **Art Institute of Chicago**

Making Greek vases

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

How did ancient Greek potters make and decorate their pottery?



Video **13.2.5.4**: In ancient Greece, the phrase "to make pottery" meant to work hard. This video from the J. Paul Getty Museum reveals how the typical Athenian potter prepared clay, threw vases, oversaw firing, and added decoration or employed vase-painters. Video from the **J. Paul Getty Museum**.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

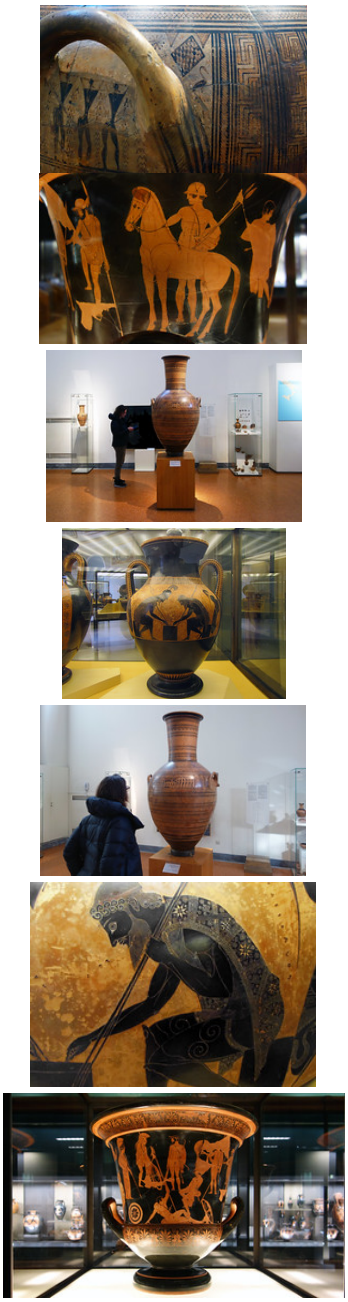
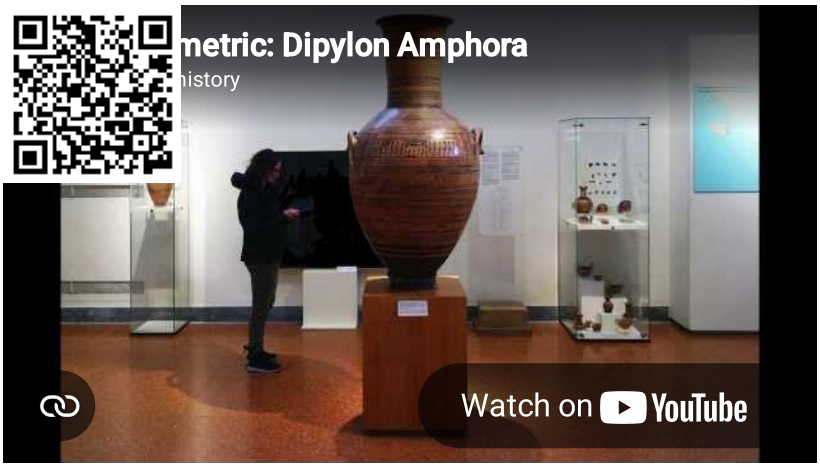


Figure 13.2.5.70: More Smarthistory images…

Dipylon Amphora

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

As tall as a person, this pot is covered with geometric patterns and early figural representations.


metric: Dipylon Amphora
history
Watch on YouTube

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













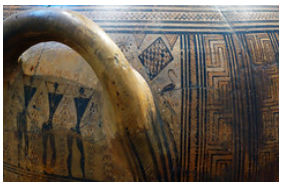










Figure 13.2.5.71: More Smarthistory images…

<

Terracotta Krater

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

This pot stood above a grave, and the female mourners depicted on it tear out their hair in grief.



Jasmine Keane
Jul 30, 2020, 9:01 AM

Cite this page as: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker, "Terracotta Krater," in *Smarthistory*, April 6, 2017, accessed July 30, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/met-krater/**.

Eleusis Amphora

by STEVEN ZUCKER and BETH HARRIS

This ancient pot depicts not one, but two myths: Perseus slaying Medusa and Odysseus blinding the cyclops.

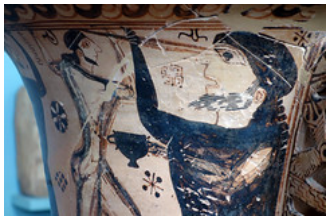


https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

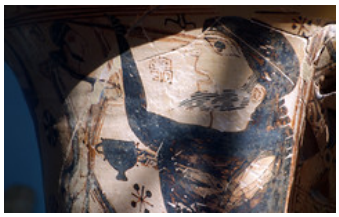
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676







Figure **13.2.5.72**: More Smarthistory images

Sophilos: a new direction in Greek pottery

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM




Figure **13.2.5.73**: Left: *Pedestaled krater*, c. 800-770 B.C.E., 55.5 cm high, Greek, Geometric period, Rhodes. Right: *Jug with a griffin-head spout*, c. 675-650 B.C.E., 41.5 cm, Greek, orientalizing period both: © Trustees of the British Museum

Following the collapse of Mycenaean palace society and a period of relative poverty and isolation, Greece experienced a cultural and political renaissance. From the eighth century B.C.E. onwards, renewed contact with the Near East, Anatolia, Phoenicia, Egypt, and other peoples around the Mediterranean had a profound impact on Greek culture.

The linear Geometric style of pottery (image above, left) gave way to “orientalizing” motifs, such as animals and florals (image above, right). Homer composed his epic poems and a new political unit, the city-state (polis), emerged.



Figure **13.2.5.74**: Sophilos (painter), *Black-figured bowl (dinos) and stand*, c. 580 B.C.E., 71 cm high, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

Greek pottery: a new direction

The figure scene that occupies the highest register in the bowl above shows the new direction in which Athenian vase painting was moving. It shows gods, goddesses, nymphs and others processing to the house of the hero Peleus to celebrate his wedding to the beautiful sea-nymph Thetis.

The sea-nymph Thetis was loved by both Zeus, king of the gods, and Poseidon, god of the sea. However, their ardor was cooled when they learned that Thetis’ son was destined to be greater than his father.



Figure **13.2.5.75**: Peleus greeting his guests (detail), Sophilos (painter), *Black-figured bowl (dinos) and stand*, c. 580 B.C.E., 71 cm high, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

The gods decided that Thetis should be made to marry a mortal in order that her son, however powerful, should present no threat to the gods. They chose Peleus and to reconcile Thetis to this inferior alliance, they gave the couple a magnificent wedding, illustrated on this vase. Peleus stands to the right, before the doors of his house to greet his guests, who arrive either on foot or by chariot.



Figure **13.2.5.76**: Dionysos and others arrive at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (detail), Sophilos (painter), *Black-figured bowl (dinos) and stand*, c. 580 B.C.E., 71 cm high, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

Among the first is the wine god Dionysos, who carries a vine branch laden with grapes (above, third figure from the right), symbolizing the wine that will be drunk at the wedding feast, perhaps mixed in a bowl of this shape. The centaur Cheiron, part man and part horse, also appears; he later

became the tutor of the son of Peleus and Thetis, the mighty Achilles. Thetis is decorously concealed within. The names of the guests are written neatly alongside.



Figure **13.2.5.77**: Thetis's grandfather, the fish-tailed sea-god Okeanos, arriving at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (detail), Sophilos (painter), *Black-figured bowl (dinos) and stand*, c. 580 B.C.E., 71 cm high, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

The first chariot in the procession carries Zeus and Hera, the second Poseidon and Amphitrite, the third Hermes and Apollo and the fourth Ares and Aphrodite. Between the chariots walk groups of Fates, Graces and Muses, one of whom plays the pipes. Athena and Artemis ride in the last chariot, and are followed by Thetis' grandfather, the fish-tailed sea-god Okeanos, his wife Tethys, and Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth. Hephaistos brings up the rear, seated side-saddle on a mule.

Between the columns of the house, Sophilos has signed the vase "Sophilos painted me." Sophilos is the first Greek vase painter whose name we know.

Conservation



Figure **13.2.5.78**: Sophilos (painter), *Black-figured bowl (dinos) and stand*, c. 580 B.C.E., 71 cm high, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

When this black-figured vase was acquired by The British Museum in 1971, it was in a restored condition with only a few areas of loss. It has since come to the Museum's Conservation Department three times. On the first visit, a conservator repositioned fragments with the artist's signature, Sophilos, so that it was easier to read. A few years later the Museum acquired five fragments which had originally belonged to the vase. Conservators removed areas of gap-fill to allow these fragments to be reunited. Neither job was simple. The old restoration was hard and difficult to remove.

Conservators were able to reassess the old restoration when the vase was examined during gallery refurbishment in 1983. The old adhesive and gap-fills were identified as a polyester resin, which had hardened and become brittle; there were cracks in the stand which may have been a direct result. Today, this type of resin is not considered appropriate for use on ceramic artifacts. It was decided that the vase would benefit from dismantling and reassembly using more stable and reversible conservation materials. Taking down the old joins and fills and manually cleaning away the polyester resin from fragments was a long process. The fragments were reassembled using a reversible adhesive and areas of loss were gap-filled using plaster of Paris and painted.

Suggested readings:

L. Burn, *The British Museum book of Greek and Roman Art* (London, The British Museum Press, 1991).

D. Williams, "Sophilos in the British Museum" in Greek Vases in the J.Paul Getty Museum (Malibu, 1983).

D. Williams, *Greek vases* (London, The British Museum Press, 1999).

Additional images

Sophilos, Black-figured bowl and stand at The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Exekias, Attic black figure amphora with Ajax and Achilles playing a game

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

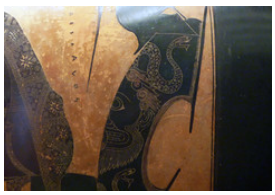
Achilles and Ajax, heroes of the Trojan War, break from battle to play a friendly game that hints at a tragic future.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





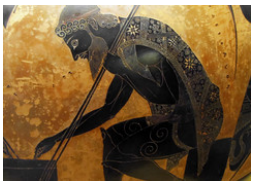












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676



Figure 13.2.5.79: More Smarthistory images…

Exekias, Attic black figure amphora with Ajax and Achilles playing a game

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

This cup depicts the god of wine Dionysos escaping pirates by hiding and turning them into dolphins.

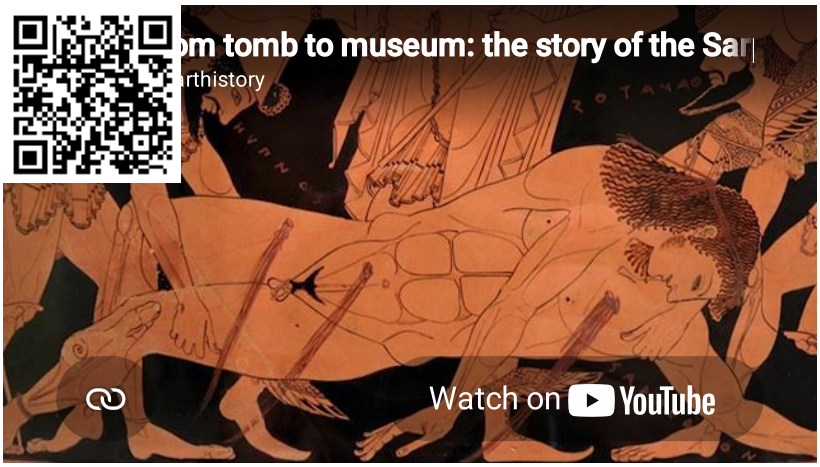


Video 13.2.5.9: Exekias, *Dionysos Kylix*, c. 530 B.C.E. (Antikensammlungen, Munich)

Euphronios, *Sarpedon Krater*

by DR. ERIN THOMPSON and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Gods carry away the dead on a pot looted from a tomb, trafficked out of Italy, bought by the Met, and finally returned.



Video 13.2.5.10: Euphronios, Sarpedon Krater, (signed by Euxitheos as potter and Euphronios as painter), c. 515 B.C.E., red-figure terracotta, 55.1 cm diameter (National Museum Cerite, Cerveteri, Italy)

Additional resources:

The Euphronios Krater on Trafficking Culture

Black- and red-figure painting techniques on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Euthymides, *Three Revelers*

by KATARZYNA MINOLLARI

Competition

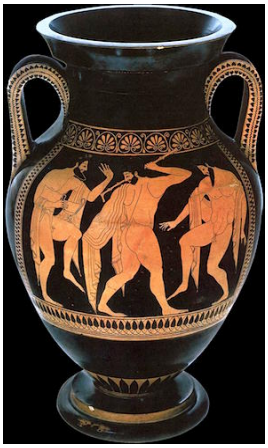


Figure 13.2.5.80: Euthymides, *Three Revelers* (Athenian red-figure amphora), c. 510 B.C.E., 24 inches high (Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich)

"As never Ephronios [could do]" wrote painter Euthymides after painting his new amphora (an amphora is a type of Greek vase in this shape). Euthymides had a clear sense of achievement and was indeed proud of his work, boastfully challenging his friend and rival—Euphronios. He would see Euphronios often, as well as other painters in the Kerameikos—the potter's quarter in Athens. They would be curious to see one another's new work, sometimes with appreciation, sometimes with a bit of jealousy. In the evenings they often had a good time together at a symposium (a kind of ancient Greek male drinking party). They would drink wine mixed with water, become garrulous, loud and—if drinking went on for too long—they might even start singing and even dancing. Perhaps what is depicted on this amphora is a scene similar to those Euthymides witnessed at one of these long parties. Euphronios indeed was a master potter and painter, and Euthymides knew that and had a full appreciation for his work. He thought however, that his figures seemed much more lively, caught in a split of a moment, in a dancing movement.

The beginnings of red-figure painting

Euthymides worked mainly between 515 and 500 B.C.E., in a time when artists were exploring the possibilities of red-figure technique, invented in Athens around 530 B.C.E. Both Euthymides and Euphronios belonged to a kind of camaraderie of artists, often dubbed the "Pioneer Group" by art historians—referring to their innovative efforts in the new technique. In the red-figure technique, an artist sketches figures on the red clay of a freshly fashioned vessel, then covers all the background with a slip (a liquid clay), which turns black after final firing. Details, like elements of anatomy, folds of drapery, etc., can be freely added with a thin brush; the slip can be darker, sometimes more diluted, brownish, adding even more variety. In the black-figure technique which was used previously, an artist had to fill the figures with slip, and then incise the details with a sharp

burin, which was much more difficult to handle. At the time of the “Pioneers,” there is a general trend in Greek art to observe the reality and represent human body more realistically, leaving the more stiff archaic models behind.



Figure 13.2.5.81: Hector receiving the helmet from Hecube (detail), Euthymides, *Three Revelers* (Athenian red-figure amphora), c. 510 B.C.E., 24 inches high (Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich)

Hector departs for war

Coming back again to the “Three Revelers” vase—on one side of his amphora the artist decided to decorate with a mythological scene—a solemn moment of Hector departing for the Trojan war, receiving the helmet from his mother Hecube (above).



Figure 13.2.5.82: Drinking and dancing (detail), Euthymides, *Three Revelers* (Athenian red-figure amphora), c. 510 B.C.E., 24 inches high (Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich) (photo: Richard Mortel, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

On the other side of the vase, which is probably better known, the artist gave way to his keen sense of observation, giving us a glimpse into everyday life. Three rather tipsy men dance around, enjoying their moment during a long symposium. The one on the left still keeps in his hand a kantharos—a wine cup with long handles. Euthymides made an effort to show them neither completely frontally, nor completely in profile, but rather in three quarters view, using foreshortening to convey a vivid, realistic image. The poses are very diversified, the man in the center is represented in a twisted view. The artist brought his keen sense of observation to describing human anatomy and movement. Greek vase painters often give us clear insight into everyday life—allowing us to understand daily habits, details of clothing and customs. Of course, these painted vases cannot be treated as documents, since we would not expect men to be naked at a symposium. However, appreciation for the human body and nudity was a usual part of ancient Greek culture, and it provided a way for the artist to showcase his ability.



Fiugre 13.2.5.83: Euthymides, *Three Revelers* (Athenian red-figure amphora), c. 510 B.C.E., 24 inches high (Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich) (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The vase displays balance and harmony of proportions, with its elegant and graceful shape, and carefully planned pictorial decoration. The main scenes on both sides of the amphora are complemented by a delicate ornament. Despite the beauty of the vase, the potters and painters in ancient Greece did not have the status an artist has in our modern society. Their work was looked upon as a physical labor, not as an activity inspired by the muses. In fact, there was no muse of painting. The decorated vases were produced in large amounts to answer the growing demand of the markets, both in Greece, as well as abroad (especially in Etruria, and in Greek colonies). The Euthymides vase was in fact found in an Etruscan tomb at Vulci in Italy. Many Greek vases survived untouched because the Etruscans buried their deceased in large underground tombs with many everyday objects.

Most of the vases were simply everyday items, although a big, beautifully painted amphora like the one discussed here was also a luxury item, testifying to its owner's good taste and social standing. Despite their status as craftsmen, the artists around the time of Euthymides had a sense of personal value and achievement, hence the inscription "As never Euphronious [could do]". Because of the inscription "Euthymides egraphsen" ("Euthymides painted me") we are sure that he was the painter—and today we definitely think of him as an artist.

Additional resources:

Athenian Vase Painting: Black- and Red-Figure Techniques

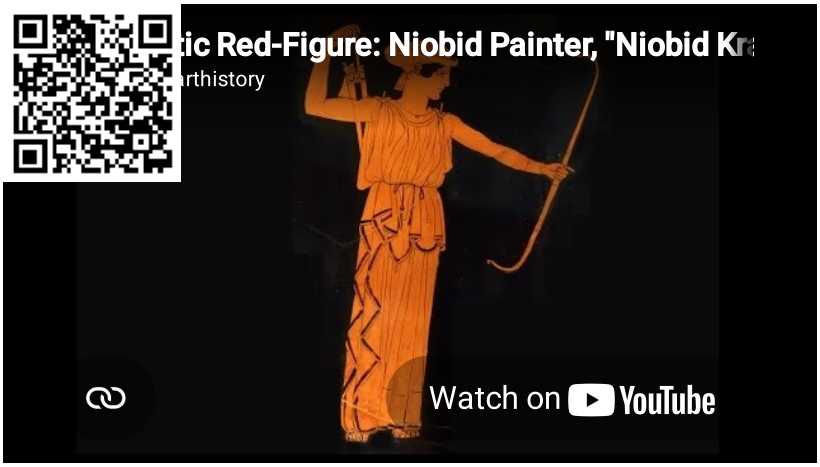
This Amphora in the Beazley Archive

J. Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases, The Archaic Period, a Handbook*, 1975.

Niobid Krater

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

The gods Apollo and Artemis exact revenge for their mother, in an early attempt at showing depth in ancient Greek art.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









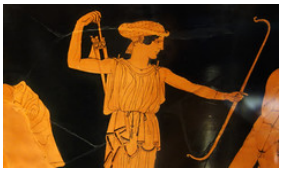





Figure 13.2.5.84: More Smarthistory images…

Daedalic and Archaic

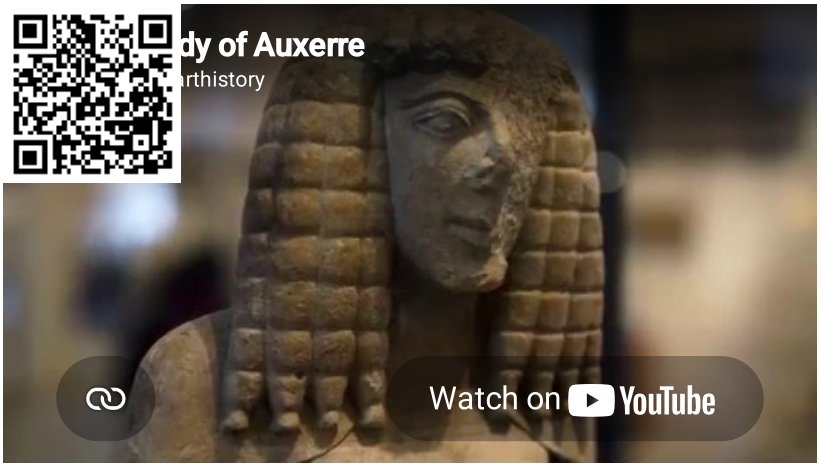
While Greek artisans continued to develop their individual crafts, storytelling ability, and more realistic portrayals of human figures throughout the Archaic Period, the city of Athens witnessed the rise and fall of tyrants and the introduction of democracy.

c. 700 - 480 B.C.E.

Lady of Auxerre

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The Lady of Auxerre stands at the beginning of the history of Greek sculpture, offering a promise of what is to come.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

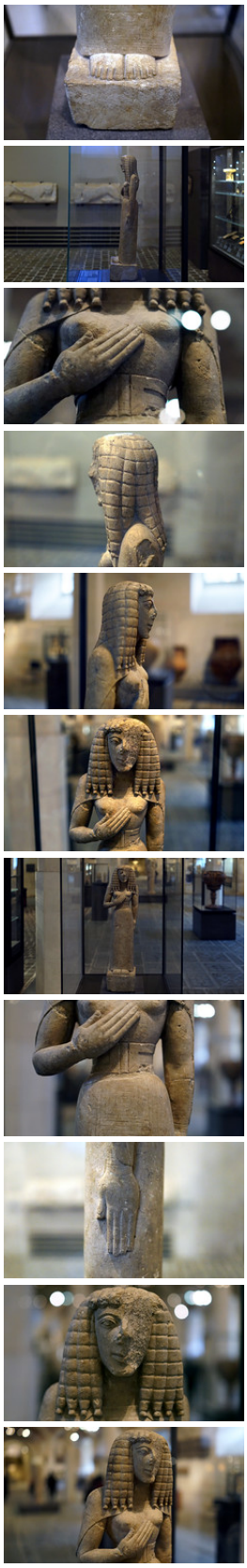
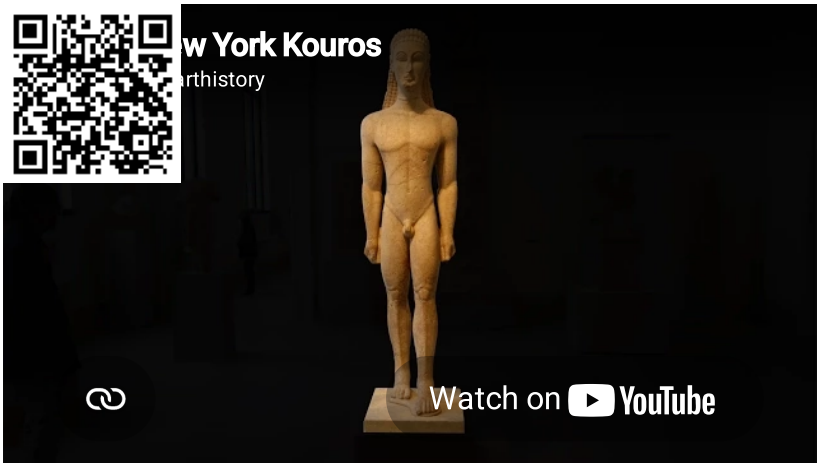


Figure 13.2.5.85: More Smarthistory images…

Marble statue of a kouros (New York Kouros)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

This early Greek depiction of the idealized male form displays power and poise in his nudity and steadfast gaze.



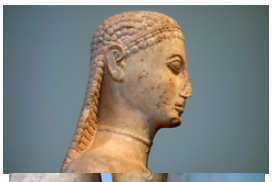
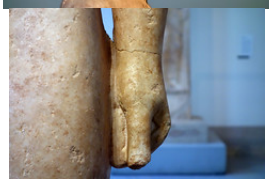
Video 13.2.5.13: *Marble Statue of a kouros (New York Kouros)*, c. 590–580 B.C.E., Attic, archaic period, Naxian marble, 194.6 x 51.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker.

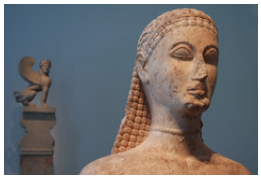


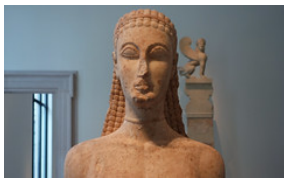
Video 13.2.5.14: *Marble Statue of a kouros (New York Kouros)*, c. 590–580 B.C.E., Attic, archaic period, Naxian marble, 194.6 x 51.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This video features Met curator Joan R. Mertens on self-reliance in *Marble statue of a kouros (youth)*. This kouros is one of the earliest marble statues of a human figure carved in Attica. The rigid stance, with the left leg forward and arms at the side, was derived from Egyptian art. The pose provided a clear, simple formula that was used by Greek sculptors throughout the sixth century B.C.E. In this early figure, geometric, almost abstract forms predominate, and anatomical details are rendered in beautiful analogous patterns. The statue marked the grave of a young Athenian aristocrat.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

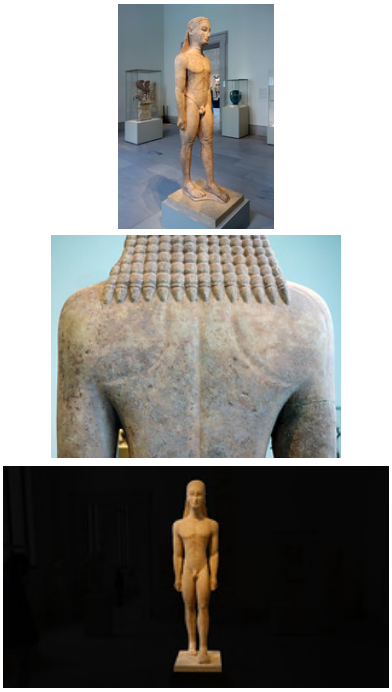


Figure 13.2.5.86: More Smarthistory images…

Anavysos Kouros

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

“Stay and mourn at the monument of dead Kroisos, who raging Ares slew as he fought in the front ranks.”



Video 13.2.5.15: *Anavysos Kouros*, c. 530 B.C.E., marble, 6′ 4″ (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

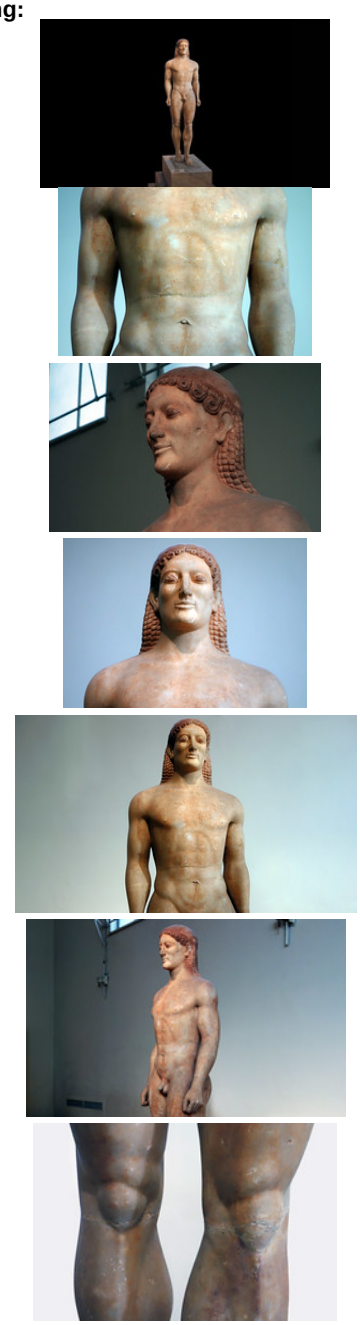


Figure 13.2.5.87: More Smarthistory images…

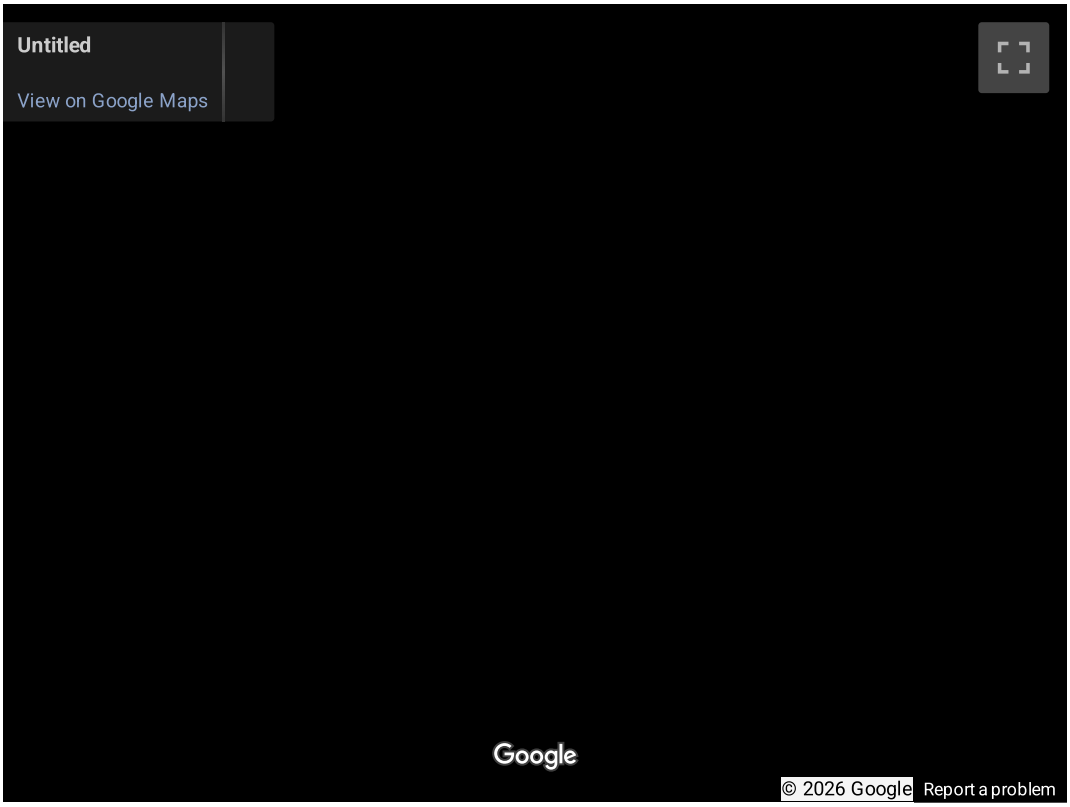
Peplos Kore

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

What's in a name? Discover whether this ancient Greek offering is an idealized young woman or a goddess.



Video 13.2.5.16: *Peplos Kore*, c. 530 B.C.E., from the Acropolis, Athens, Greece (Acropolis Museum, Athens)

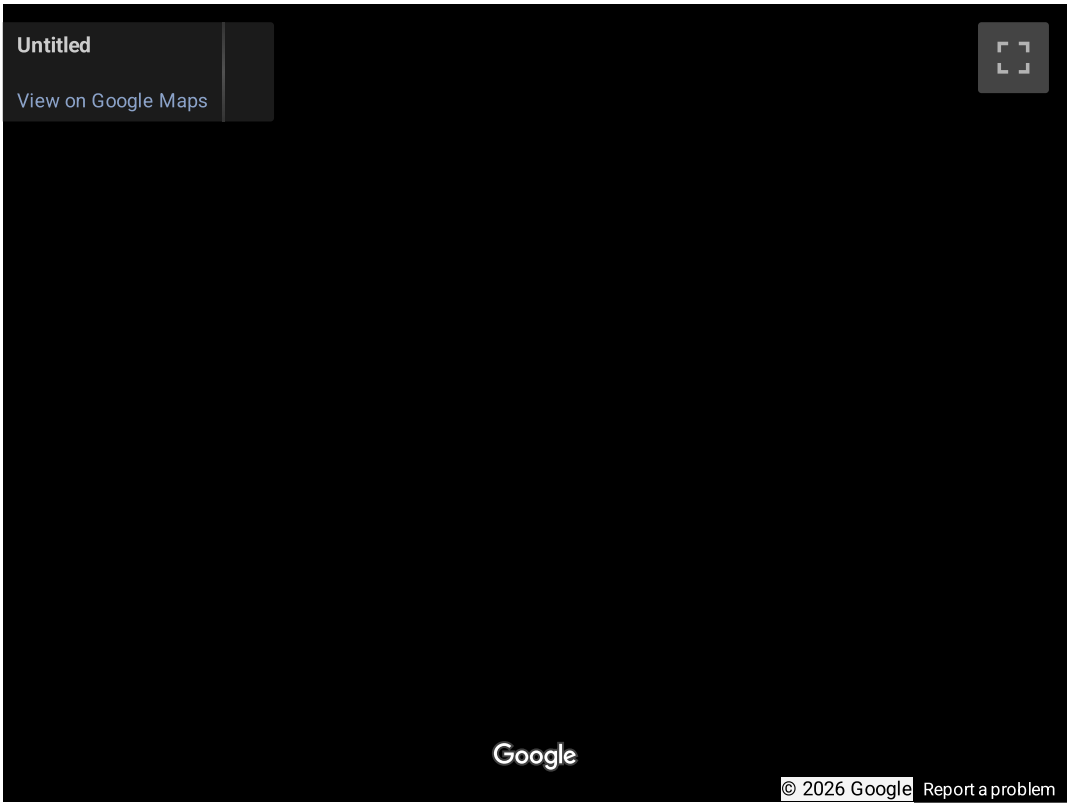


Ancient Greek Temples at Paestum

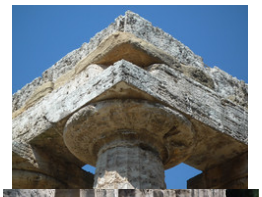
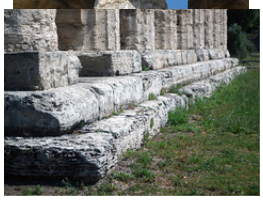
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Explore the development of the Doric order in the temples of the city of Poseidon, the god of the sea.


cient Greek temples at Paestum, Italy
rthistory
Watch on YouTube


Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

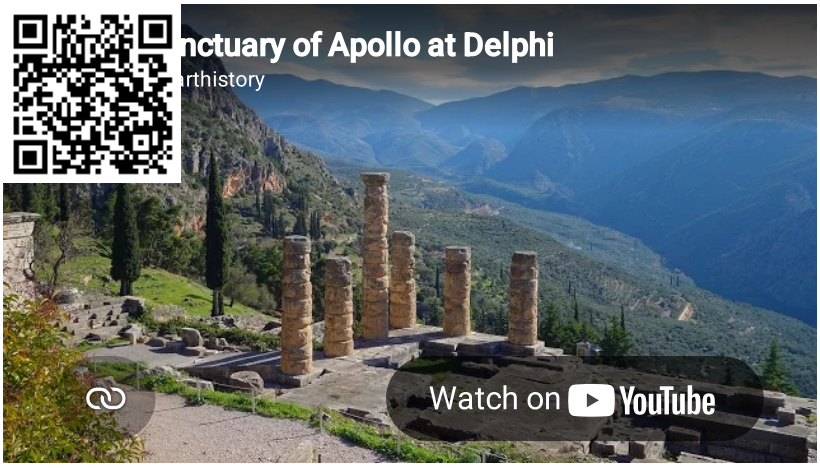


Figure 13.2.5.88: More Smarthistory images…

Sanctuary of Apollo, Delphi

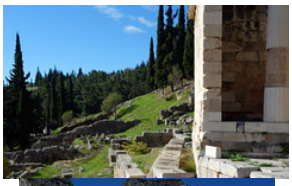
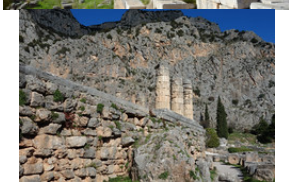
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

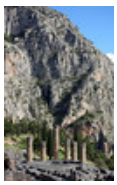
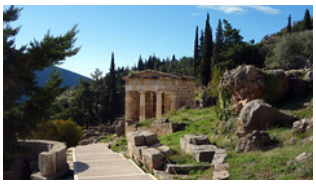
The god Apollo spoke through his priestess at Delphi, and Greek cities competed for his favor with offerings.

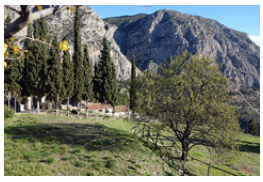


Video 13.2.5.18: Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, Greece

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:


https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

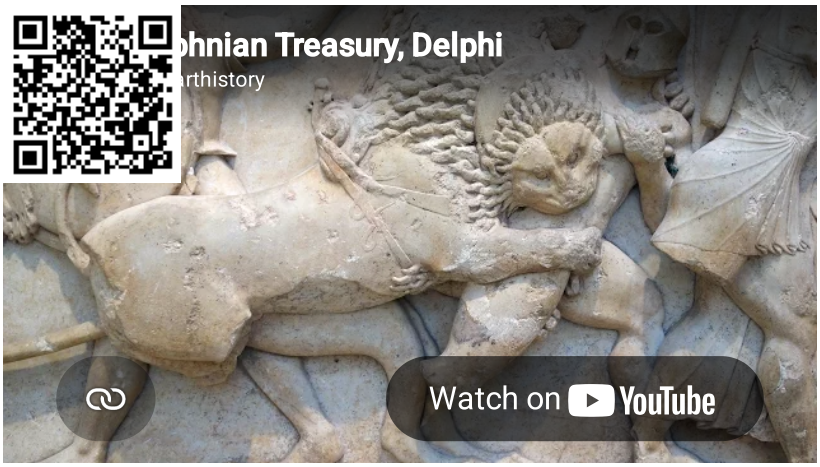


Figure 13.2.5.89: More Smarthistory images…

Siphnian Treasury, Delphi

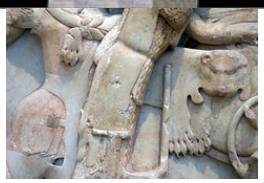
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The island of Siphnos used its great wealth to earn the favor of the gods through art, architecture, and offerings.



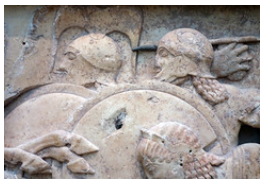
Video 13.2.5.19: Pediment and Frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, c. 530 B.C.E.
For more on pan-Hellenic sanctuaries, watch our video on the **Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi**

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676



Figure **13.2.5.90**: More Smarthistory images…

Early Classical

The Early Classical period combines the austere nobility of the archaic style with an increasing interest in naturalistic movement—often rendered in gleaming bronze.

c. 480 - 448 B.C.E.

East and West Pediments from the Temple of Aphaia, Aegina

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Explore the evolution of ancient Greek sculpture with two groups from the same temple, but that seem ages apart.


st and West Pediments, Temple of Aphai
rthistory
Watch on YouTube

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676



Figure 13.2.5.91: More Smarthistory images…

Kritios Boy

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Following war with the Persians, this highly naturalistic sculpture was buried out of respect.



Video 13.2.5.21: *Kritios Boy*, from the Acropolis, Athens, c. 480 B.C.E., 3′ 10″ high (Acropolis Museum, Athens)

Contrapposto explained

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The ancient Greeks mastered the naturalistic representation of the human body, and the Renaissance revived it.



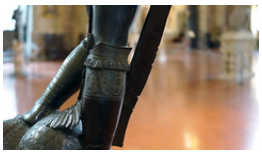
Video 13.2.5.22: A discussion about contrapposto while looking at “Idolino” from Pesaro, (Roman), c. 30 B.C.E., bronze, 158 cm (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze), speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Although these particular objects may not have been known in the Renaissance, the ideas and form of contrapposto were revived in the Italian Renaissance.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















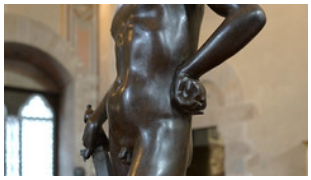




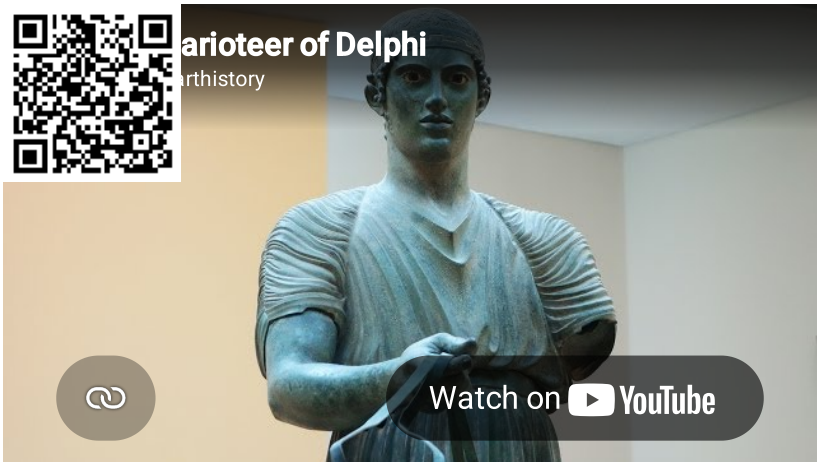


Figure 13.2.5.92: More Smarthistory images…

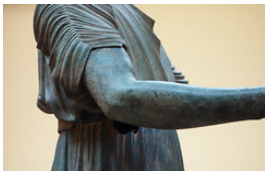
Charioteer of Delphi

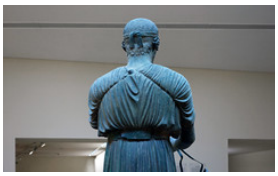
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Take part in the celebration of an athlete's victory—this life-size bronze is a hinge between the Archaic and Classical.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

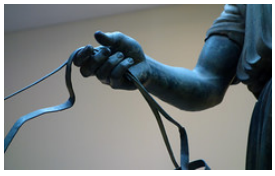
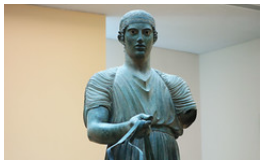
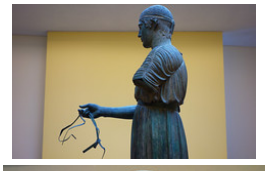
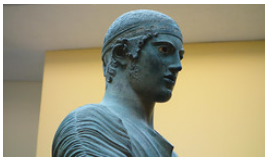









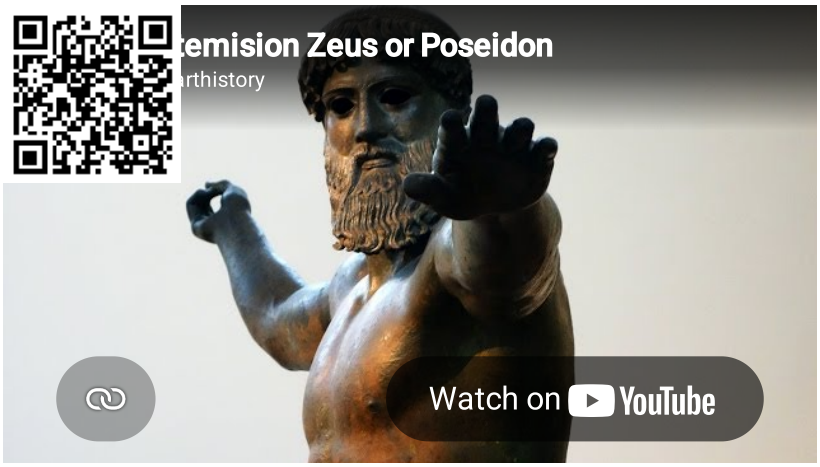


Figure **13.2.5.93**: More Smarthistory images…

Artemision Zeus or Poseidon

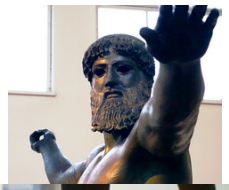
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

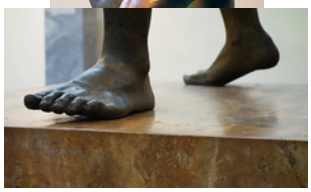
This bronze god sank to the bottom of the sea where he sat for millennia, but who is he and what can he tell us?



Video **13.2.5.24**: Artemision Zeus or Poseidon, c. 460 B.C.E., bronze, 2.09 m high, Early Classical (Severe Style), recovered from a shipwreck off Cape Artemision, Greece in 1928 (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

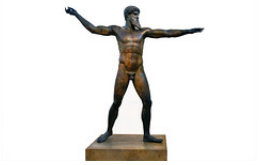
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

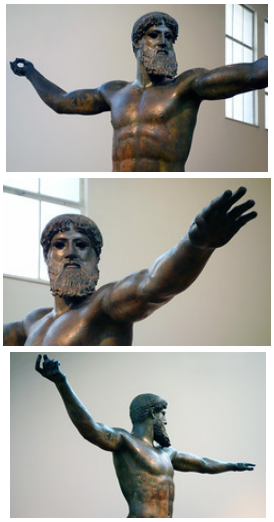


Figure 13.2.5.94: More Smarthistory images…

Riace Warriors

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER



Figure 13.2.5.95: The *Riace Warriors* (also referred to as the *Riace bronzes* or *Bronzi di Riace*) are two life-size Greek bronze statues of naked, bearded warriors. The statues were discovered by Stefano Mariottini in the Mediterranean Sea just off the coast of Riace Marina, Italy, on August 16, 1972. The statues are currently housed in the Museo Nazionale della Magna Grecia in the Italian city of Reggio Calabria. The statues are commonly referred to as "Statue A" and "Statue B" and were originally cast using the lost-wax technique.



Figure 13.2.5.96: The discovery of the statues in 1972

Statue A

Statue A stands 198 centimeters tall and depicts the younger of the two warriors. His body exhibits a strong contrapposto stance, with the head turned to his right. Attached elements have been lost – most likely a shield and a spear; his now-lost helmet atop his head may have been crowned by

a wreath. The warrior is bearded, with applied copper detail for the lips and the nipples. Inset eyes also survive for Statue A. The hair and beard have been worked in an elaborate fashion, with exquisite curls and ringlets.



Figure **13.2.5.97**: Statue A (foreground) and Statue B (background), from the sea off Riace, Italy, c. 460-450 B.C.E. (?), Statue A, 198 cm high, Statue B, 197 cm high (Museo Archaeologico Nazionale Reggio Calabria) (photo: **Robert and Talbot Trudeau**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Statue B

Statue B depicts an older warrior and stands 197 centimeters tall. A now-missing helmet likely was perched atop his head. Like Statue A, Statue B is bearded and in a contrapposto stance, although the feet of Statue B and set more closely together than those of Statue A.

Severe style

The Severe or Early Classical style describes the trends in Greek sculpture between c. 490 and 450 B.C.E. Artistically this stylistic phase represents a transition from the rather austere and static Archaic style of the sixth century B.C.E. to the more idealized Classical style. The Severe style is marked by an increased interest in the use of bronze as a medium as well as an increase in the characterization of the sculpture, among other features.

Interpretation and chronology

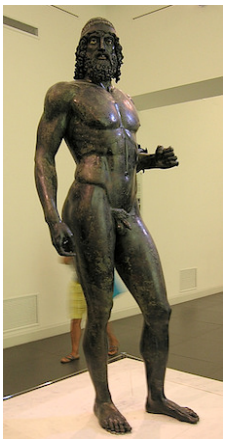


Figure **13.2.5.98**: Statue A, from the sea off Riace, Italy, c. 460-450 B.C.E. (?), 198 cm high (Museo Archaeologico Nazionale Reggio Calabria) (photo: **Luca Galli**, CC BY 2.0)

The chronology of the Riace warriors has been a matter of scholarly contention since their discovery. In essence there are two schools of thought—one holds that the warriors are fifth century B.C.E. originals that were created between 460 and 420 B.C.E., while another holds that the statues were produced later and consciously imitate Early Classical sculpture. Those that support the earlier chronology argue that Statue A is the earlier of the two pieces. Those scholars also make a connection between the warriors and the workshops of famous ancient sculptors. For instance, some scholars suggest that the sculptor Myron crafted Statue A, while Alkamenes created Statue B. Additionally, those who support the earlier chronology point to the Severe Style as a clear indication of an Early Classical date for these two masterpieces.

The art historian B. S. Ridgway presents a dissenting view, contending that the statues should not be assigned to the fifth century B.C.E., arguing instead that they were most likely produced together after 100 B.C.E. Ridgway feels that the statues indicate an interest in Early Classical iconography during the Hellenistic period.

In terms of identifications, there has been speculation that the two statues represent Tydeus (Statue A) and Amphiaraus (Statue B), two warriors from Aeschylus' tragic play, *Seven Against Thebes* (about Polyneices after the fall of his father, King Oedipus), and may have been part of a monumental sculptural composition. A group from Argos described by Pausanias (the Greek traveler and writer) is often cited in connection to this conjecture: "A little farther on is a sanctuary of the Seasons. On coming back from here you see statues of Polyneices, the son of Oedipus, and of all the chieftains who with him were killed in battle at the wall of Thebes…" (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.20.5).

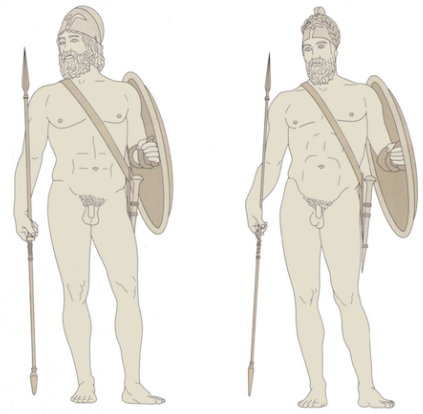


Figure **13.2.5.99**: A conjectural restored view of the two warriors (**source**)

The statues have lead dowels installed in their feet, indicating that they were originally mounted on a base and installed as part of some sculptural group or other. The art historian Carol Mattusch argues that not only were they found together, but that they were originally installed—and perhaps produced—together in antiquity.

Additional resources:

I bronzi di Riace: restauro come conoscenza (Rome: Artemide, 2003).

J. Alsop, "Glorious bronzes of ancient Greece: warriors from a watery grave" *National Geographic* 163.6 (June 1983), pp. 820-827.

A. Busignani and L. Perugi, *The Bronzes of Riace*, trans. J. R. Walker, (Florence: Sansoni, 1981).

C. H. Hallett, "Kopienkritik and the works of Polykleitos," in *Polykleitos: the Doryphoros and Tradition*, ed. by W. G. Moon, pp. 121-160 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

C. C. Mattusch, *Classical bronzes: the art and craft of Greek and Roman statuary* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

C. C. Mattusch, "In Search of the Greek Bronze Original" in *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity (Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, supplementary volumes, vol. 1), edited by E. K. Gazda, pp. 99-115, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

P. B. Pacini, "Florence, Rome and Reggio Calabria: The Riace Bronzes," *The Burlington Magazine*, volume 123, no. 943 (Oct., 1981), pp. 630-633.

B. S. Ridgway, *Fifth Century Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

B. S. Ridgway, "The Riace Bronzes: A Minority Viewpoint," in *Due bronzi da Riace: rinvenimento, restauro, analisi ed ipotesi di interpretazione*, vol. 1, ed. by L. V. Borelli and P. Pelagatti, pp. 313-326. (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1984).

B. S. Ridgway, *Hellenistic Sculpture: the Styles of ca. 100-31 B.C.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

N. J. Spivey, *Understanding Greek sculpture: ancient meanings, modern readings* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

G. B. Triches, *Due bronzi da Riace: rinvenimento, restauro, analisi ed ipotesi di interpretazione* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello Stato, 1984).

Classical

Even though this period is so brief, when you think of ancient Greek art, you likely think of the art produced during this period: the Parthenon, the noble caryatids on the Erechtheion, and the perfect proportions of the Doryphoros.

c. 450 - 400 B.C.E.

Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear-Bearer)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

For the ancient Greeks, the human body was perfect. Explore this example of the mathematical source of ideal beauty.



Roman copies of ancient Greek art

When we study ancient Greek art, so often we are really looking at ancient Roman art, or at least their copies of ancient Greek sculpture (or paintings and architecture for that matter).

Basically, just about every Roman wanted ancient Greek art. For the Romans, Greek culture symbolized a desirable way of life—of leisure, the arts, luxury and learning.

Figure 13.2.5.100: Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear-Bearer) or Canon*, Roman marble copy of a Greek bronze, c. 450-440 B.C.E. (Museo Archaeologico Nazionale, Naples)

The popularity of ancient Greek art for the Romans

Greek art became the rage when Roman generals began conquering Greek cities (beginning in 211 B.C.E.), and returned triumphantly to Rome not with the usual booty of gold and silver coins, but with works of art. This work so impressed the Roman elite that studios were set up to meet the growing demand for copies destined for the villas of wealthy Romans. *The Doryphoros* was one of the most sought after, and most copied, Greek sculptures.

Bronze versus marble

For the most part, the Greeks created their free-standing sculpture in bronze, but because bronze is valuable and can be melted down and reused, sculpture was often recast into weapons. This is why so few ancient Greek bronze originals survive, and why we often have to look at ancient Roman copies in marble (of varying quality) to try to understand what the Greeks achieved.

Why sculptures are often incomplete or reconstructed

To make matter worse, Roman marble sculptures were buried for centuries, and very often we recover only fragments of a sculpture that have to be reassembled. This is the reason you will often see that sculptures in museums include an arm or hand that are modern recreations, or that ancient sculptures are simply displayed incomplete.

The Doryphoros (Spear-Bearer) in the Naples museum (image above) is a Roman copy of a lost Greek original that we think was found, largely intact, in the provincial Roman city of Pompeii.*

The canon

The idea of a canon, a rule for a standard of beauty developed for artists to follow, was not new to the ancient Greeks. The ancient Egyptians also developed a canon. Centuries later, during the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci investigated the ideal proportions of the human body with his *Vitruvian Man*.

Polykleitos's idea of relating beauty to ratio was later summarized by Galen, writing in the second century,

Beauty consists in the proportions, not of the elements, but of the parts, that is to say, of finger to finger, and of all the fingers to the palm and the wrist, and of these to the forearm, and of the forearm to the upper arm, and of all the other parts to each other.

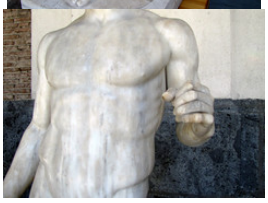
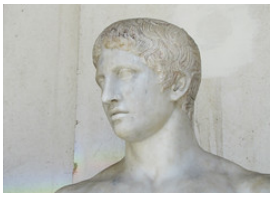
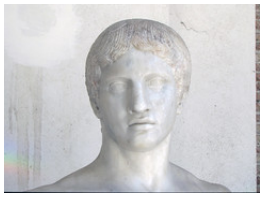
* Recent scholarship suggests that the *Doryphoros* sculpture in the Naples museum may not have been found in a Palestra at Pompeii. See Warren G. Moon, ed., *Polykleitos, The Doryphoros and Tradition*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Additional resources:

Doryphoros on Art Through Time

Doryphoros on ArtsConnectEd

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



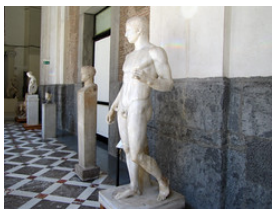




Figure 13.2.5.101: More Smarthistory images…

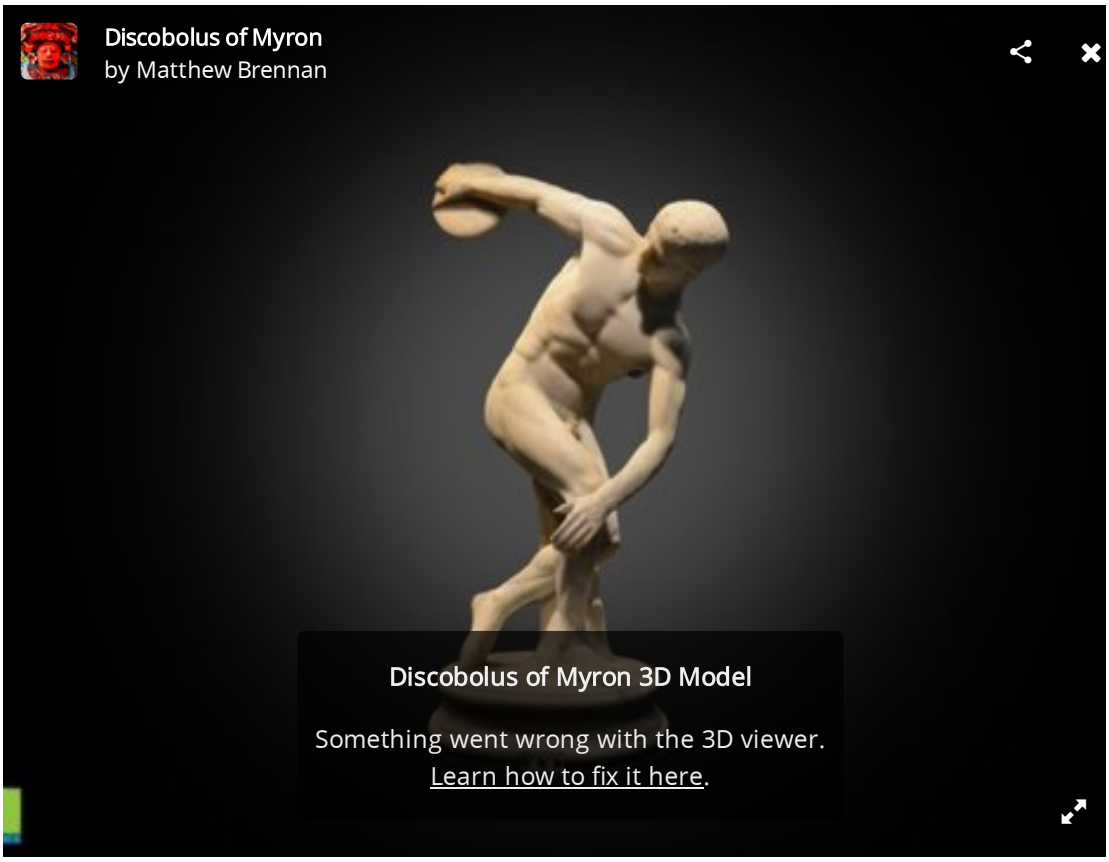
Myron, *Discobolus (Discus Thrower)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Coiled with athletic energy, balance, and the promise of movement, see the potential of an idealized human body.



Video 13.2.5.26: Myron, *Discobolus (Discus Thrower)*, Roman copy of an ancient Greek bronze from c. 450 B.C.E., Classical Period (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme)

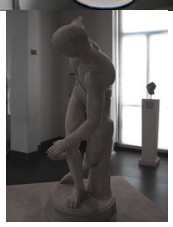


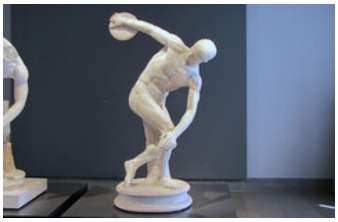
Discobolus of Myron by **Matthew Brennan** on **Sketchfab**

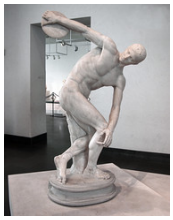
Figure **13.2.5.102**

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

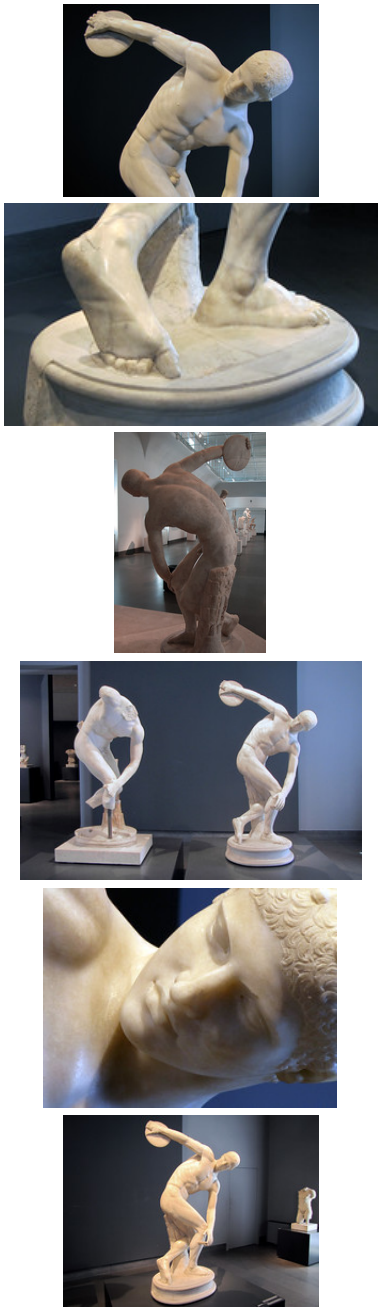
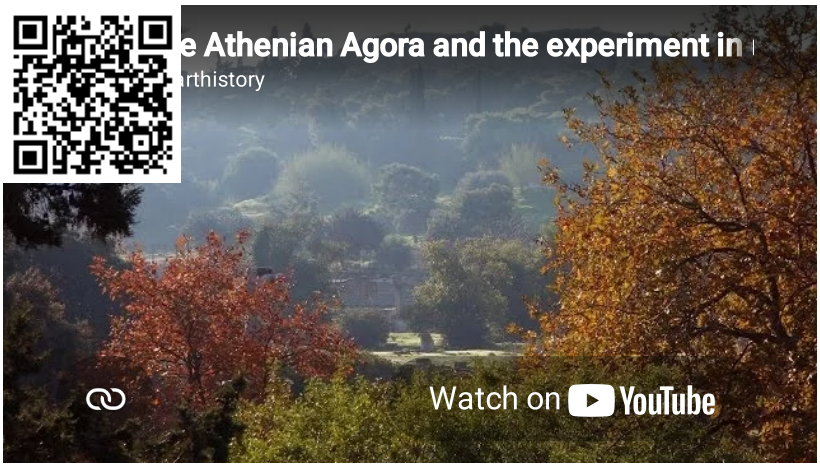


Figure 13.2.5.103: More Smarthistory images…

The Athenian Agora and the experiment in democracy

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

We recognize ancient Greece as the birthplace of democracy, but what did democracy really mean to the Greeks?



Video 13.2.5.27

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.5.104: More Smarthistory images…

The Parthenon, Athens

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Learn about the great temple of Athena, patron of Athens, and the building's troubled history.



Video 13.2.5.28: Iktinos and Kallikrates (sculptural program directed by Phidias), Parthenon, Athens, 447 – 432 B.C.E.. Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker.



Figure **13.2.5.105**: *Iris*, from the west pediment of the Parthenon, c. 438-432 B.C.E., marble, 135 cm high, Athens, Greece © Trustees of the British Museum

Athens and democracy

By around 500 B.C.E. 'rule by the people,' or democracy, had emerged in the city of Athens. Following the defeat of a Persian invasion in 480-479 B.C.E., mainland Greece and Athens in particular entered into a golden age. In drama and philosophy, literature, art and architecture Athens was second to none. The city's empire stretched from the western Mediterranean to the Black Sea, creating enormous wealth. This paid for one of the biggest public building projects ever seen in Greece, which included the Parthenon.

The temple known as the Parthenon was built on the Acropolis of Athens between 447 and 438 B.CE. It was part of a vast building program masterminded by the Athenian statesman Perikles. Inside the temple stood a colossal statue representing Athena, patron goddess of the city. The statue, which no longer exists, was made of gold and ivory and was the work of the celebrated sculptor Pheidias.

Parthenon sculptures

The building itself was decorated with marble sculptures representing scenes from Athenian cult and mythology. There are three categories of architectural sculpture. The frieze (carved in low relief) ran high up around all four sides of the building inside the colonnades. The metopes (carved in high relief) were placed at the same level as the frieze above the architrave surmounting the columns on the outside of the temple. The pediment sculptures (carved in the round) filled the triangular gables at each end.

Although the building was to undergo a number of changes, it remained largely intact until the seventeenth century. The early Christians turned the temple into a church, adding an apse at the east end. It was probably at this time that the sculptures representing the birth of Athena were removed from the centre of the east pediment and many of the metopes were defaced. The Parthenon served as a church until Athens was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth century, when it became a mosque. In 1687, during the Venetian siege of the Acropolis, the defending Turks were using the Parthenon as a store for gunpowder, which was ignited by the Venetian bombardment. The explosion blew out the heart of the building, destroying the roof and parts of the walls and the colonnade.

The Venetians succeeded in capturing the Acropolis, but held it for less than a year. Further damage was done in an attempt to remove sculptures from the west pediment, when the lifting tackle broke and the sculptures fell and were smashed. Many of the sculptures that were destroyed in 1687, are now known only from drawings made in 1674, by an artist probably to be identified as Jacques Carrey.

Marble metope from the Parthenon



Figure **13.2.5.106**: *Marble metope from the Parthenon*, c. 447-438 B.C.E., 172 cm tall, Acropolis, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

The sculpted decoration of the Parthenon included ninety-two metopes showing scenes of mythical battle. Those on the south flank of the temple included a series featuring human Lapiths in mortal combat with Centaurs. The Centaurs were part-man and part-horse, thus having a civil and a savage side to their nature. The Lapiths, a neighboring Greek tribe, made the mistake of giving the Centaurs wine at the marriage feast of their king, Peirithoos. The Centaurs attempted to rape the women, with their leader Eurytion trying to carry off the bride. A general battle ensued, with the Lapiths finally victorious.

Here a young Lapith holds a Centaur from behind with one hand, while preparing to deliver a blow with the other. The composition is perfectly balanced, with the protagonists pulling in opposite directions, around a central space filled by the cascading folds of the Lapith's cloak.

Fragment from the frieze



Figure **13.2.5.107**: *Horsemen from the west frieze of the Parthenon*, c. 438-432 B.C.E., 100cm tall, Acropolis, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

This block was placed near the corner of the west frieze of the Parthenon, where it turned onto the north. The horsemen have been moving at some speed, but are now reining back so as not to appear to ride off the edge of the frieze. The horseman in front twists around to look back at his companion, and raises a hand (now missing) to his head. This gesture, repeated elsewhere in the frieze, is perhaps a signal. Although mounted riders can be seen here, much of the west frieze features horsemen getting ready for the cavalcade proper, shown on the long north and south sides of the temple.

Pediment sculpture



Figures of three goddesses from the east pediment of the Parthenon, c. 438-432 B.C.E., 233 cm long, Acropolis, Athens © Trustees of the British Museum

The east pediment of the Parthenon showed the birth of goddess Athena from the head of her father Zeus. The sculptures that represented the actual scene are lost. Zeus was probably shown seated, while Athena was striding away from him fully grown and armed.

Only some of the figures ranged on either side of the lost central group survive. They include these three goddesses, who were seated to the right of centre. From left to right, their posture varies in order to accommodate the slope of the pediment that originally framed them. They are remarkable for their naturalistic rendering of anatomy blended with a harmonious representation of complex draperies.

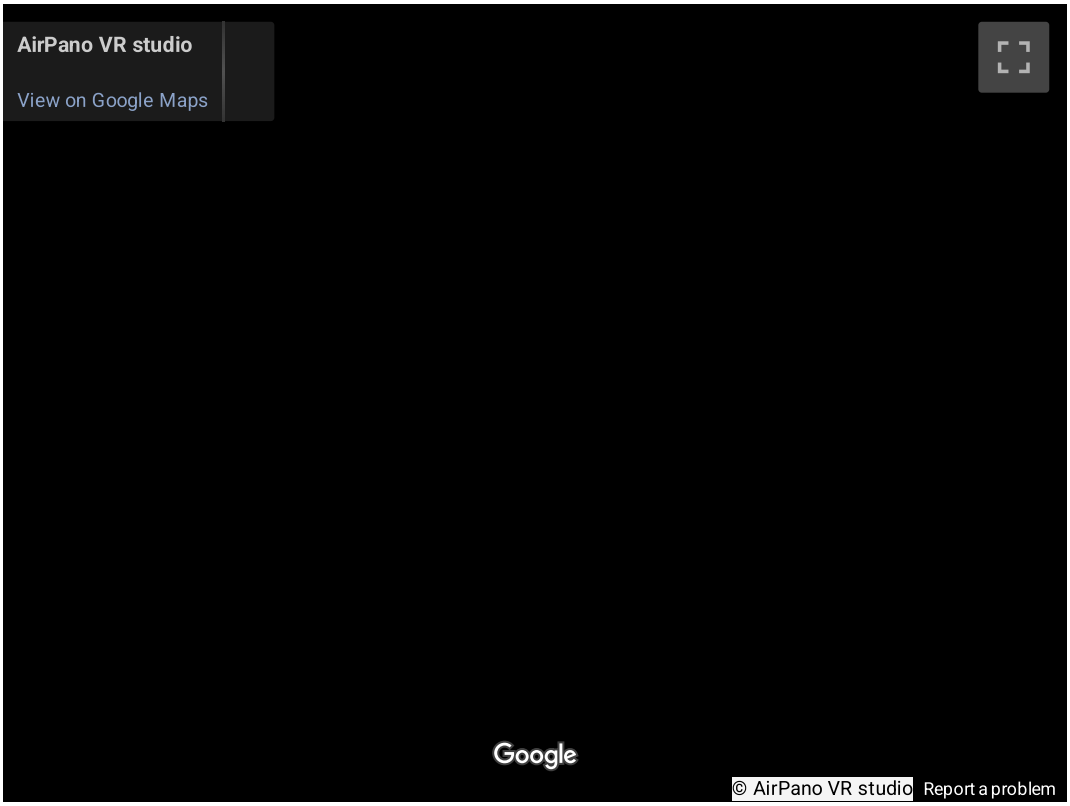
The figure on the left is on the point of rising and tucks her right foot in to lever herself up. To the right another figure cradles a companion reclining luxuriously in her lap. They are perhaps, from left to right, Hestia, goddess of the hearth and home, Dione, and her daughter Aphrodite. However, another suggestion is that the two figures on the right are the personification of the Sea (Thalassa) in the lap of the Earth (Gaia).

Suggested readings:

B.F. Cook, *The Elgin Marbles* (London, The British Museum Press, 1997).

The Parthenon sculptures at The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

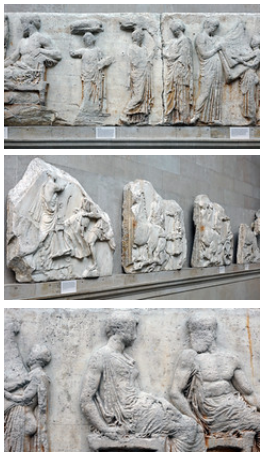
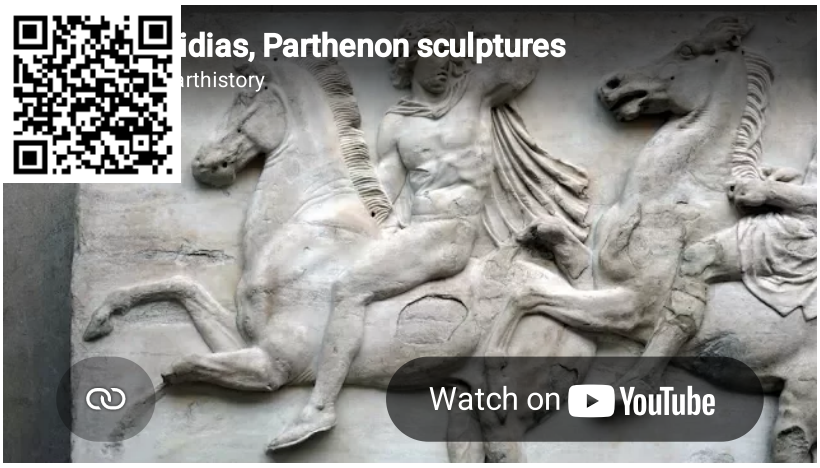


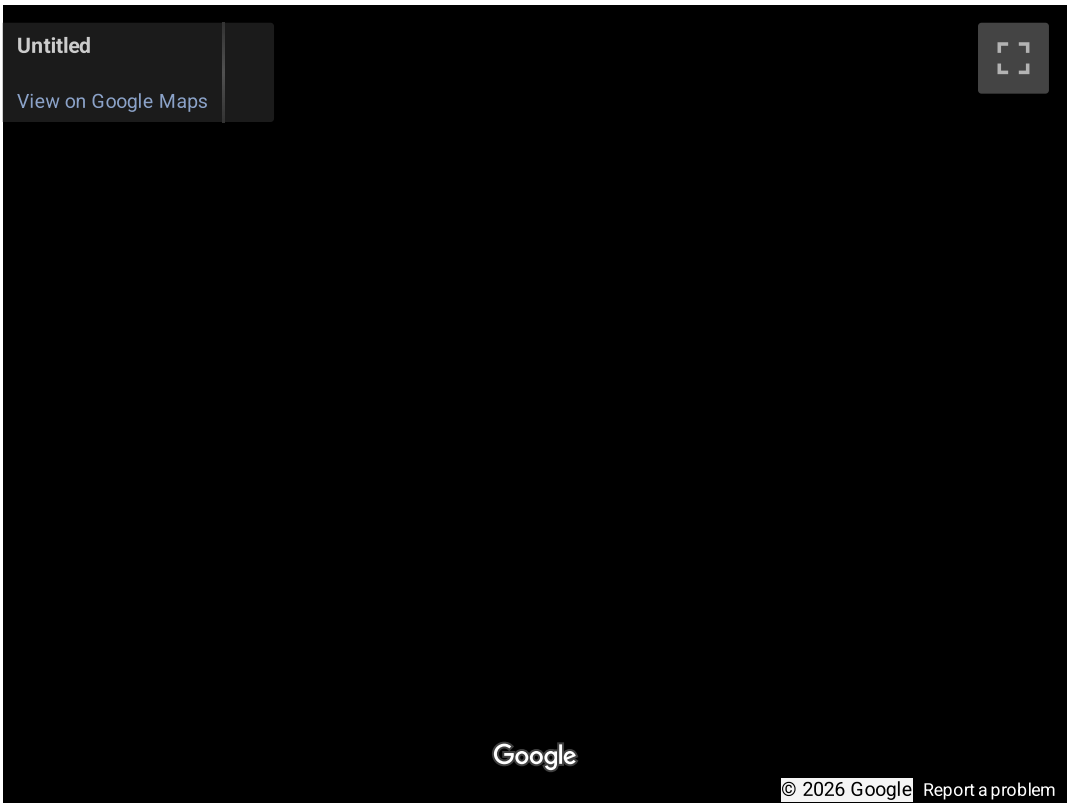
Figure **13.2.5.109**: More Smarthistory images…

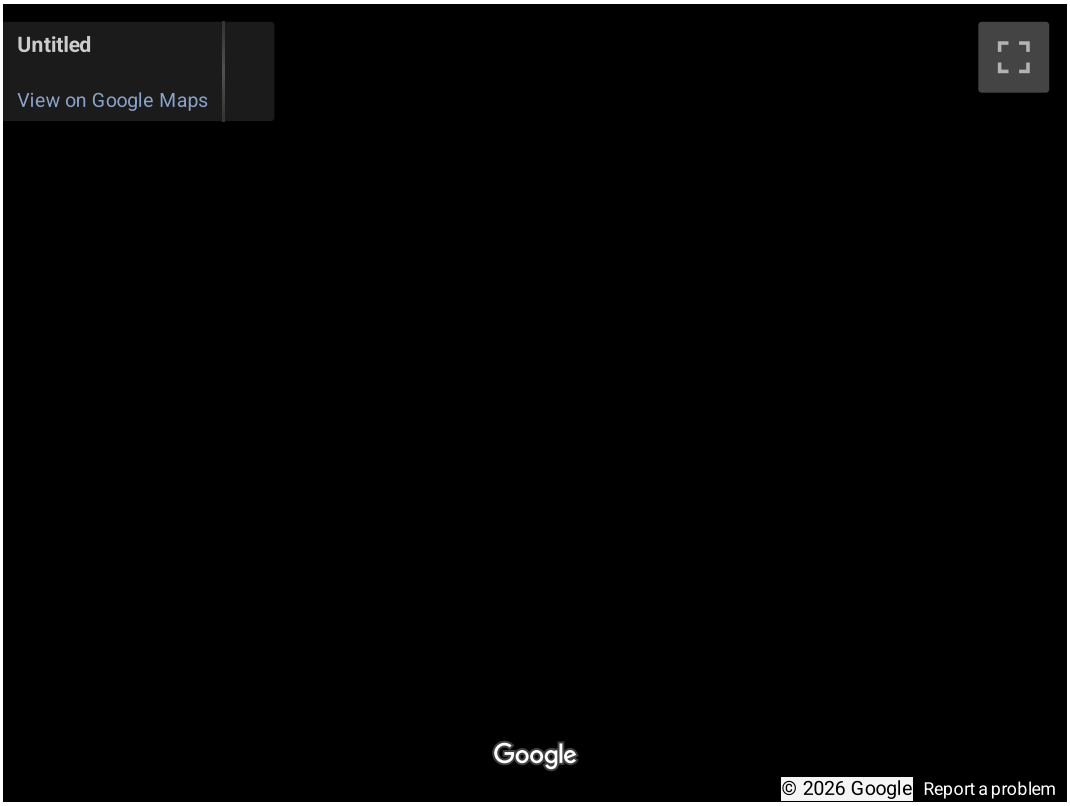
Phidias, Parthenon sculpture (pediments, metopes and frieze)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Discover stunning depictions of gods, heroes, and mythical beasts in the most influential sculptures in history.




Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem


Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





















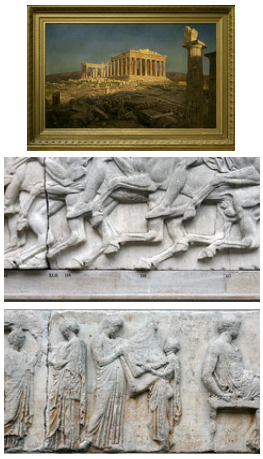


Figure 13.2.5.110: More Smarthistory images…

Who owns the Parthenon sculptures?

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Ancient Greeks made them, Ottomans captured them, Venetians blew them up, and the British took them away.



Additional resources:

How the Parthenon lost its Marbles (National Geographic)

The British Museum on the Parthenon sculptures

The Acropolis Museum

William St Clair, Imperialism, Art & Restitution: The Parthenon and the Elgin Marbles

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

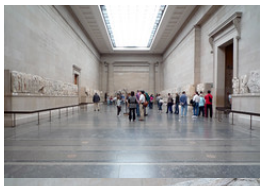












Figure 13.2.5.111: More Smarthistory images…

Egyptian blue on the Parthenon sculptures

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Discover ancient sculptures as they were meant to be seen: in vibrant color.



Video 13.2.5.31: Video from The British Museum.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676



Figure **13.2.5.112**: More Smarthistory images…

Plaque of the Ergastines

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Bits of the Parthenon have been spirited all over the world—in Paris, a fragment shows religious life in Athens.



Video **13.2.5.32**: Phidias (?), *Plaque of the Ergastines*, 445 – 438 B.C.E., Pentelic marble (Attica), 0.96 x 2.07 m, fragment from the frieze on the east side of the Parthenon (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.5.113: More Smarthistory images…

The Erechtheion

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Perched on a cliff high above Athens, this complex temple is very different from its neighbor, the Parthenon.



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









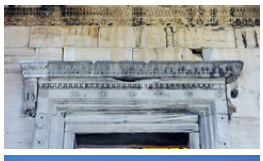





Figure **13.2.5.114**: More Smarthistory images…

Caryatid and Ionic Column from the Erechtheion

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

These graceful female figures replace columns—how did human form and architecture relate in ancient Greece?



The caryatid

The Erechtheion is perhaps the most complex building on the Acropolis. It houses shrines to several different deities, including Athena, Zeus and Poseidon. It is named for the mythic King Erechtheus who judged the contest between Athena and Poseidon for who would be the patron deity of Athens.

This caryatid is one of six elegant female figures who supported the roof of the south porch of the Erechtheion (figures who do the work of columns—carrying a roof—are called caryatids). The figure wears a garment pinned on the shoulders (this is a peplos—a kind of garment worn by women in ancient Greece). The drapery bunches up at the waist and pours over the belt. She stands in contrapposto with her left knee bent and pressing against

the drapery The folds of drapery on other right side resemble the fluting (vertical grooves) on a column. She looks noble and calm despite the fact that she carries the weight of a roof on her head.

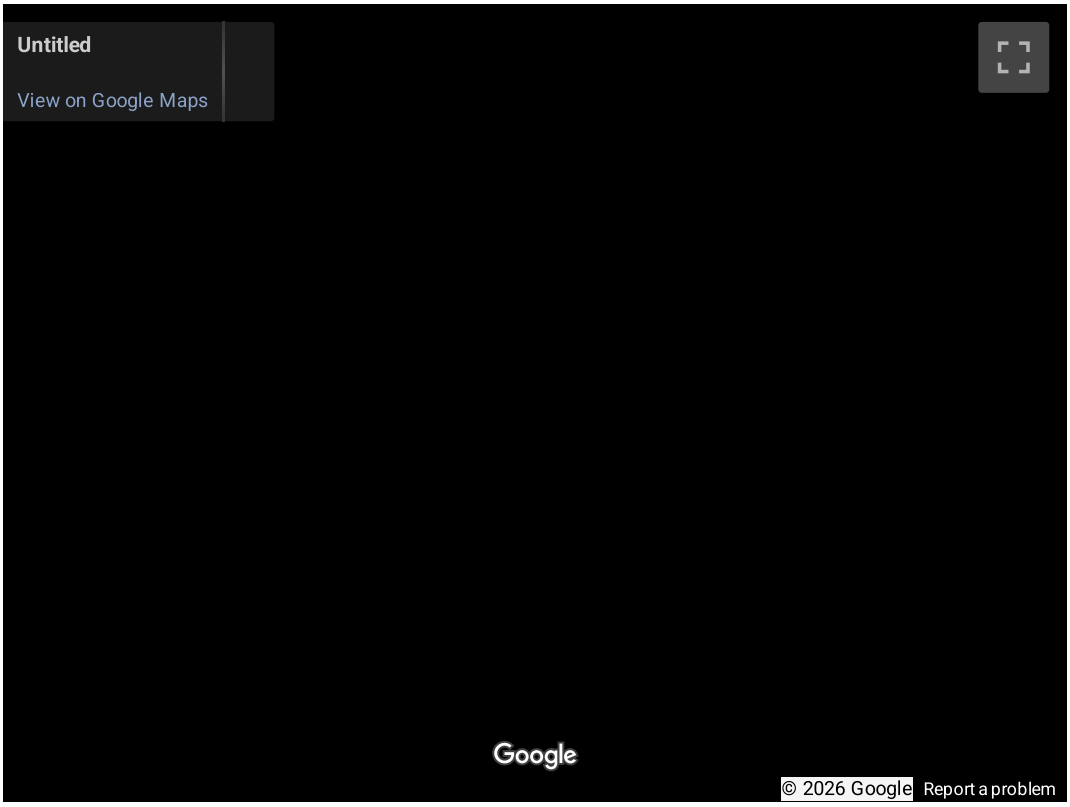
Figure **13.2.5.115**: Ionic Column (North Porch), Erechtheion on the Acropolis, Athens, marble, 421-407 B.C.E., Classical Period (British Museum, London). Mnesicles may have been the architect.

The Erechtheion is a highly decorated and elegant Ionic temple. The scroll forms at the top of the column (the capital) and its tall slender profile indicate that this is the Ionic order. The column is formed of four pieces (known as “drums”) and is fluted (decorated with vertical grooves). Just below the scroll shapes (also called volutes) you see decorative moldings, including one called “egg and dart” (egg shapes alternating with V-shapes), and below that a ring of plant-like shapes—an alternating palmette and lotus pattern.

These decorative patterns also appear on the entablature of the Erechtheion (the entablature is the horizontal area carried by the columns).



Figure **13.2.5.116**: Entablature from the Erechtheion, Acropolis, Athens, marble, 421-407 B.C.E. (British Museum, London)



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

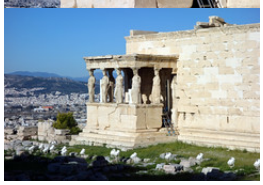












Figure 13.2.5.117: More Smarthistory images…

Temple of Athena Nike on the Athenian Acropolis

by KATARZYNA MINOLLARI



Figure 13.2.5.118: Temple of Athena Nike, 421-05 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

The temple of Athena Nike (Athena as a goddess of victory) is the smallest temple at the Acropolis in Athens, placed at its southwest corner, at the edge of a high cliff (see images above). Its construction was completed in the year 420 B.C.E., during the so called High Classical Period, according

to the design of Kallikrates (the same architect who was responsible for the construction of the **Parthenon**). The temple by Kallikrates replaced an earlier small temple, which got completely destroyed during the Persian wars.

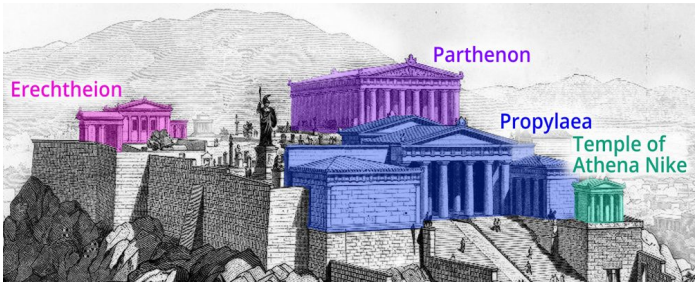


Figure **13.2.5.119**: Reconstruction diagram of the Athenian Acropolis

The spot, highly vulnerable to attack but also well placed for defense, was very appropriate for the worship of the goddess of victory. There is some archaeological evidence, that the location was used for religious rituals already in Mycenaean age (**Mycenaean** was a period of early Greek history, roughly from 1600 to 1100 B.C.E.). Mycenaeans also raised the first defensive bastion on the spot; its fragments are preserved in the temple's basement.



Figure **13.2.5.120**: Temple of Athena Nike, 421-05 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

An Ionic gem

The temple of Athena Nike, built in **Ionic order** of beautiful white Pentelic marble, has columns at the front and back but not on the sides of the cella; this kind of floor plan is called an amphiprostyle. Because of the small size of the structure, there are only four columns on each side. The columns are monolithic, which means that each one of them was made of a single block of stone (instead of horizontal drums, as it is in the case of the Parthenon).



Figure **13.2.5.121**: Temple of Athena Nike, 421-05 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

This small and elegant structure is sometimes called the pearl of the Acropolis, since it was designed and decorated with great care. For example, interestingly, its side columns have volutes both in the front and at the side, in order to create a pleasant view from any viewpoint. The Greeks considered their temples as a kind of monumental sculpture, which was supposed to be viewed from all sides and experienced in connection to its surroundings. The Romans later had a different concept—for them, the frontal view was most important (for example, the Roman **Temple of Portunus**).

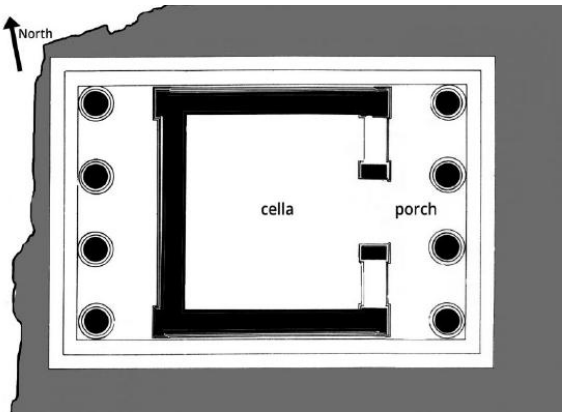


Figure **13.2.5.122**: Amphiprostyle plan of the Temple of Athena Nike

Another interesting detail is that the columns of the temple of Athena Nike are not as slender as those of many other Ionic buildings. Usually the proportions between the width and the height of an Ionic column was 1:9 or even 1:11. Here the proportion is 1:7—and the reason for that choice might have been the intention to create a harmonious whole with other buildings nearby. The temple of Athena Nike stands just next to the Propylaea (below), a heavy, monumental gateway to the Acropolis, built in the Doric order. To visually counteract this massive structure, the architect may have decided to widen the columns, otherwise the building might feel out of place, and too delicate in contrast to the neighboring architectural mass of the Propylaea. We know that the ancient Greeks were very aware of mathematical ratios while constructing architecture or creating statues, feeling that the key to beauty lies in correct proportion.


Figure **13.2.5.123**: Mnesikles, The Propylaea, 437-32 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

Victory

The temple of Athena Nike, as with all Greek temples, was considered a home of the deity, represented in its statue, and was not a place where regular people would enter. The believers would simply perform rituals in front of the temple, where a small altar was placed, and could take a glimpse of the sculpted figure of the goddess through the space between the columns. The privilege of entering the temple was reserved for the priestesses, who held a respected position in Greek society. As the name suggests, the temple housed the statue of Athena Nike, a symbol of victory. It probably had a connection to the victory of the Greeks against the Persians around half a century earlier. Nike usually had wings, but in this case we know that the statue had no wings, hence it was called Athena *Apteros* (without wings). The ancient Greek writer Pausanias later explained that the statue of Athena had no wings, so that she could never leave Athens.


Figure **13.2.5.124**: Temple of Athena Nike, 421-05 B.C.E., marble, Acropolis, Athens

The history of this architectural monument has been quite tumultuous. In the 5th century C.E. the temple was converted into a Christian church, then in the 17th century it was completely dismantled by the Ottoman Turks who needed its material to build fortifications. The temple was later reconstructed after Greece regained independence in 1832. In the 1930s the building was restored again. Very recently, new concerns about the

structure's integrity prompted a new conservation project. First, a team of specialists completely dismantled the temple. Each of its parts was examined and mended, and eventually the entire building was reassembled using the original pieces, with some fill wherever it was needed. These additions can be easily recognized since they are of a lighter color than the original marble.



Figure 13.2.5.125: *Nike Adjusting Her Sandal* (detail), south side of the parapet of the Temple of Athena Nike, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, c. 410 B.C.E., marble, 3′ 6″ high (Acropolis Museum, Athens)

The temple of Athena Nike featured beautiful sculptural decoration, including a typical continuous Ionic **frieze**, which on the eastern side represented a gathering of gods. On the southern wall, the sculptor decided to show a battle between Greeks and Persians, and on the remaining sides, battles between Greeks and other warriors. Sculptures on the pediments, almost entirely lost, most probably depicted the Gigantomachy and Amazonomachy. Best known are reliefs from the outside of the stone parapet that surrounded the temple at the cliff's edge. These represented Nike in different poses and could be admired by people climbing the stairs to the Acropolis. Most famous of these is the ***Nike Adjusting Her Sandal*** (above) which presents the goddess in a simple, everyday gesture, perhaps adjusting her sandal (or maybe taking it off) as she prepares to enter the sacred precinct. Whatever she is doing, the relief is still charming in its elegance and simplicity. Both *Nike Adjusting Her Sandal* and parts of the frieze can be admired today at the Acropolis Museum.

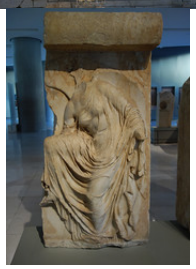
Additional resources:

Greek Gods and Religious Practices on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Acropolis Restoration Service website

Acropolis Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





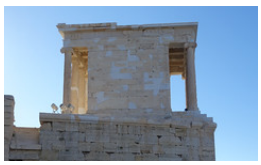



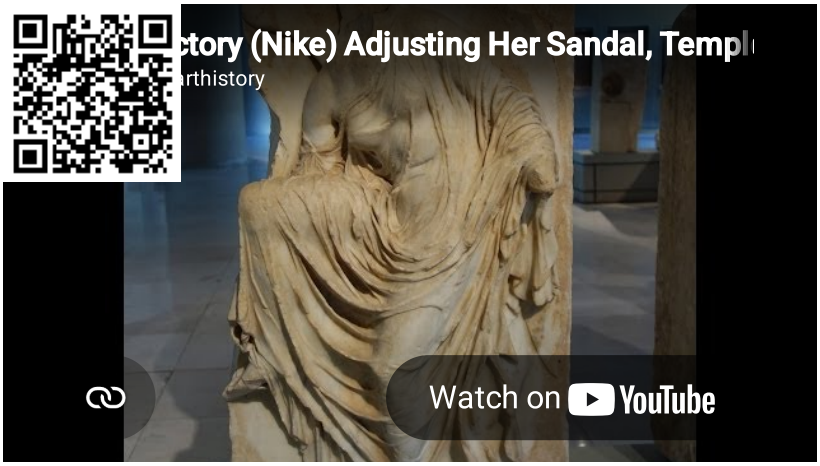


Figure 13.2.5.126: More Smarthistory images…

Nike Adjusting Her Sandal, Temple of Athena Nike, Acropolis, Athens

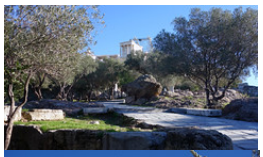
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

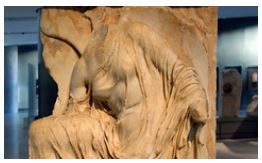
Compare this off-balance image of the goddess of victory to earlier classical sculpture.



Video 13.2.5.35: Nike Adjusting Her Sandal, from the south side of the parapet of the Temple of Athena Nike, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, c. 410 B.C.E., marble, 3′ 6″ high (Acropolis Museum, Athens)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









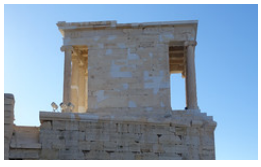


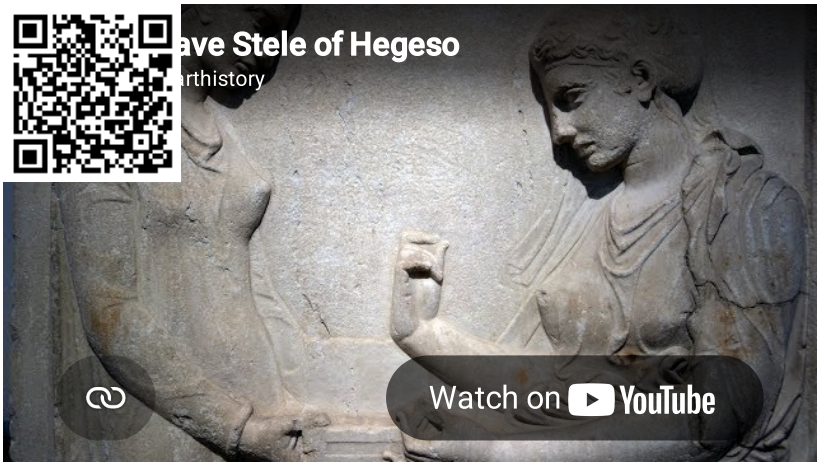



Figure **13.2.5.127**: More Smarthistory images…

Grave stele of Hegeso

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

See the mastery of form developed in the Classical period translated to private art on this solemn gravestone.



Video **13.2.5.36**: *Grave stele of Hegeso*, c. 410 B.C.E., marble and paint, from the Dipylon Cemetary, Athens, 5′ 2″ (National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.5.128: More Smarthistory images…

Late Classical

Fourth-century sculpture is known for its elegant elongation of the human form, and the introduction of the female nude.

c. 400 - 323 B.C.E.

The Antikythera Youth

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



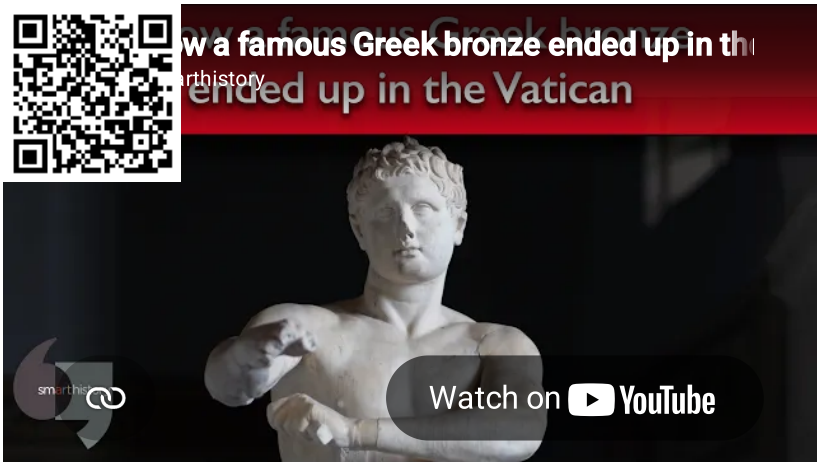
Jasmine Keane
Jul 31, 2020, 9:45 AM

Cite this page as: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker, "The Antikythera Youth," in *Smarthistory*, July 19, 2020, accessed July 31, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/antikythera-youth/**.

Lysippos

How an ancient Greek bronze ended up in the Vatican

by BETH HARRIS, DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.2.5.37**: Lysippos, Apoxyomenos, Roman marble copy after Greek bronze original dating to c. 300 B.C.E. (Vatican Museums, Rome, Italy)

Lysippos, *Apoxyomenos (Scraper)*

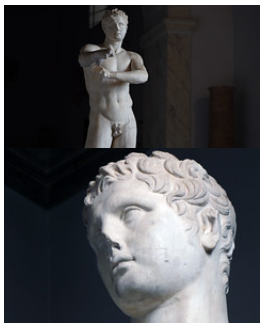
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Ancient Greek athletes cleaned themselves with oil. This sculpture shows one athlete's bathing ritual.



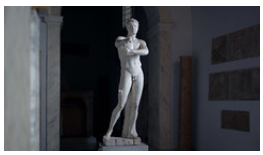
Video **13.2.5.38**: Lysippos, *Apoxyomenos (Scraper)*, Roman copy after a bronze statue from c. 330 B.C.E., 6′ 9″ high (Vatican Museums)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



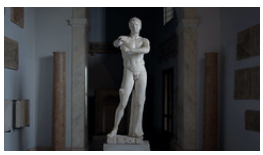


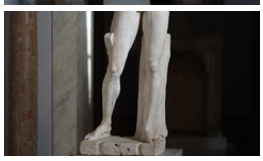














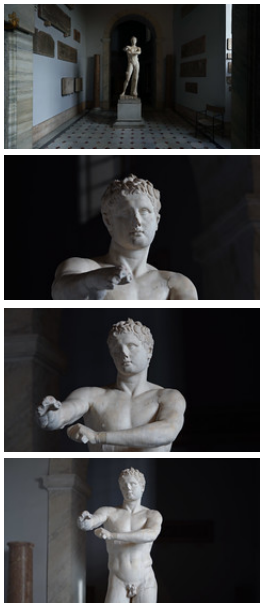


Figure 13.2.5.130: More Smarthistory images…

Lysippos, *Farnese Hercules*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Weary from his labors, Hercules leans on his club, with hints of his heroic trials hidden in plain sight.



Video 13.2.5.39: Lysippos, *Farnese Hercules*, 4th century B.C.E. (later Roman copy by Glycon) (Archaeological Museum, Naples)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.5.131: More Smarthistory images…

Capitoline Venus (copy of the Aphrodite of Knidos)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, emerges from her bath, but what did her nudity mean to the Greeks?



Video 13.2.5.40: *Capitoline Venus*, 2nd century C.E., marble, 193 cm (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (Roman copy of the Aphrodite of Knidos, a 4th century B.C.E. Greek original by Praxiteles) Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

The Alexander Sarcophagus

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Alexander the Great conquered the known world, but who was this monument for and what does it symbolize?



Video 13.2.5.41: *The Alexander Sarcophagus*, c. 312 B.C.E., Pentelic marble and polychromy, found in Sidon, 195 x 318 x 167 cm (İstanbul Archaeological Museums)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



























Figure 13.2.5.132: More Smarthistory images…

Hellenistic

While the classical period focused on idealized figures, Hellenistic artists explored a wider range of subjects — including the wounded and defeated, and the very young and very old. A new interest in drama and engaging the viewer also characterizes this period.

323 - 146 B.C.E.

Barberini Faun

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Part man, part goat, this companion of the god of wine relaxes after a night of drinking.



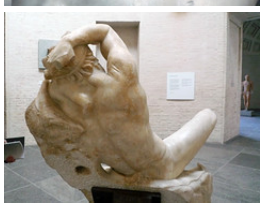
Video **13.2.5.42**: *Barberini Faun*, c. 220 B.C.E., Hellenistic Period (Glyptothek, Munich)

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88676

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





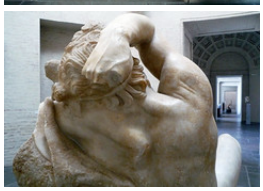


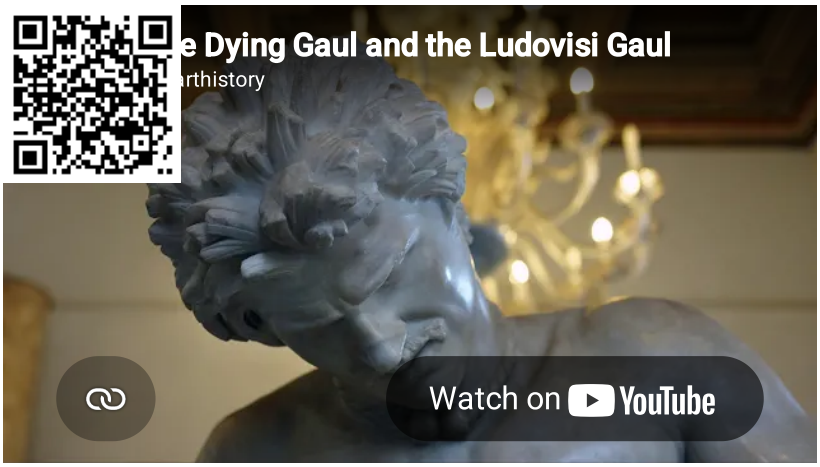



Figure **13.2.5.133**: More Smarthistory images…

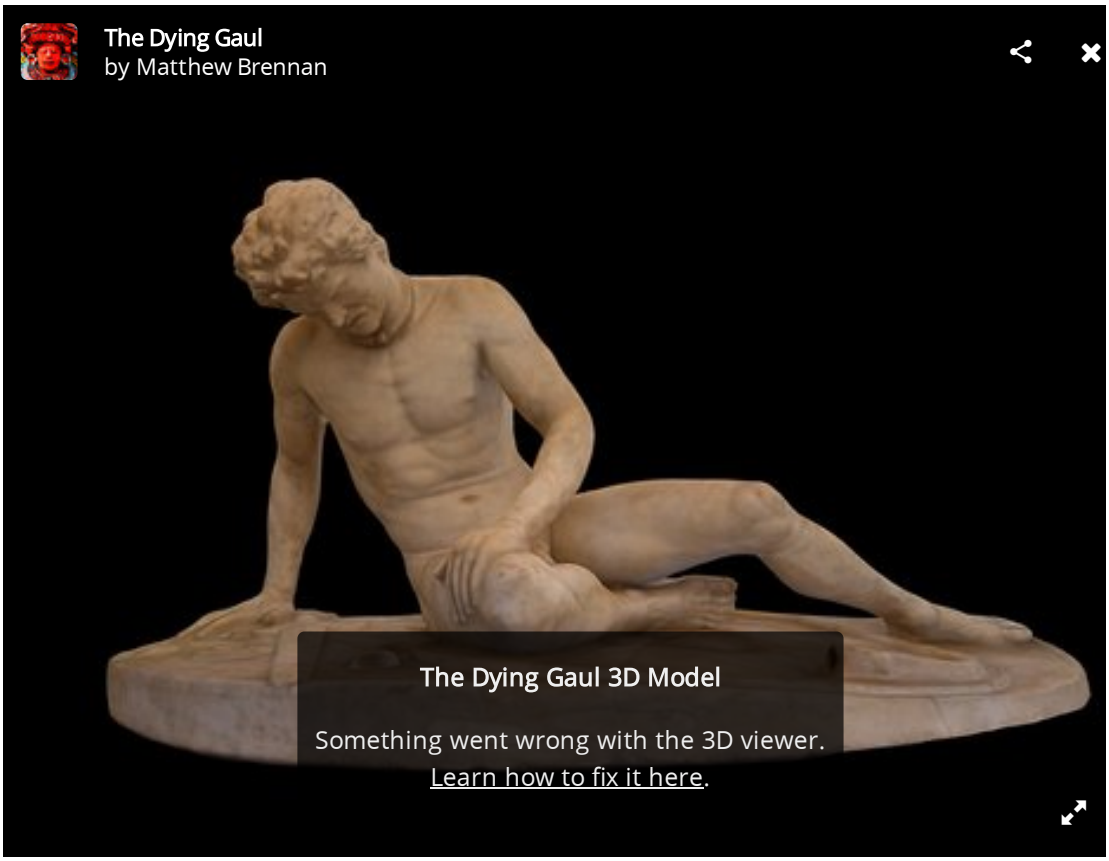
Dying Gaul and *Ludovisi Gaul*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Pain is visible on the face of this dying warrior. Did the ancient Greeks sympathize with their defeated enemies?

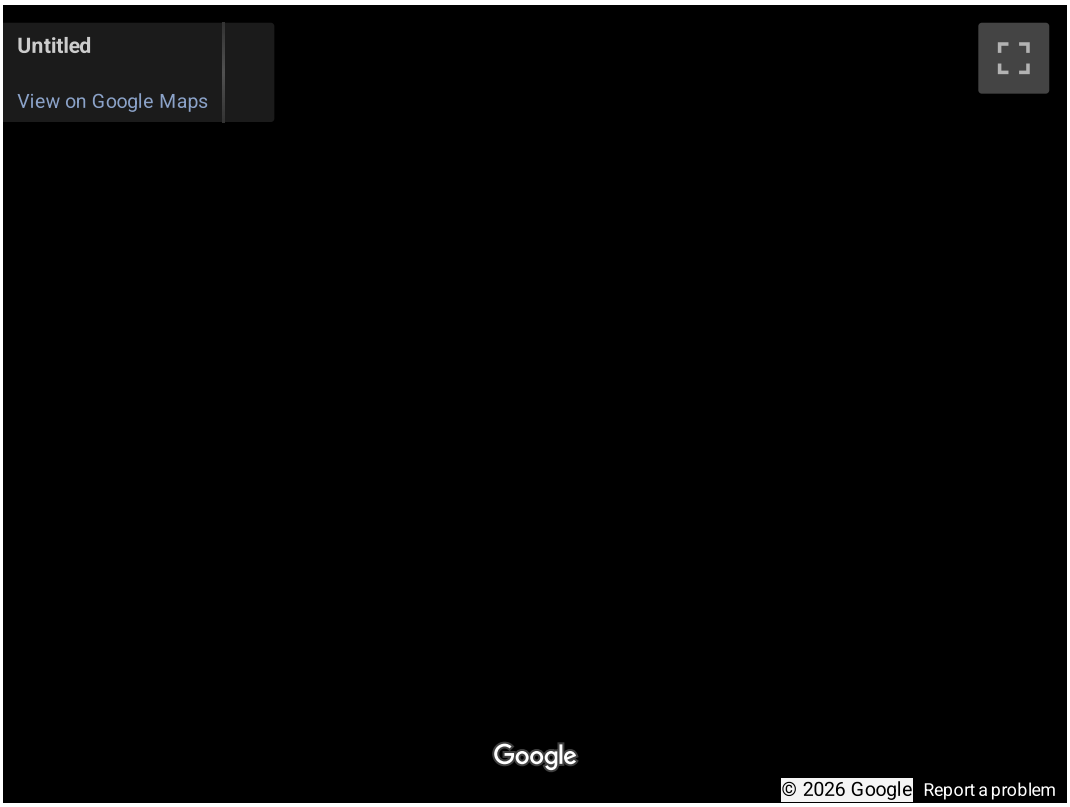


Video 13.2.5.43: *Dying Gaul* and the *Gaul killing himself and his wife (The Ludovisi Gaul)*, both 1st or 2nd century C.E. (Roman copies of Third Century B.C.E. Hellenistic bronzes commemorating Pergamon's victory over the Gauls likely from the Sanctuary of Athena at Pergamon), marble, 93 and 211 cm high (Musei Capitolini and Palazzo Altemps, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome)

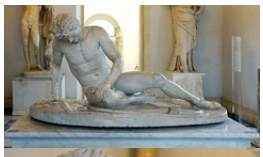
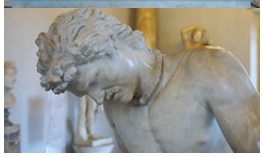


The Dying Gaul by Matthew Brennan on Sketchfab

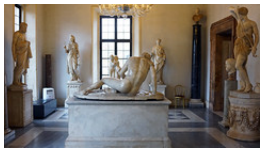
Figure 13.2.5.134

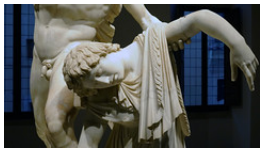

Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



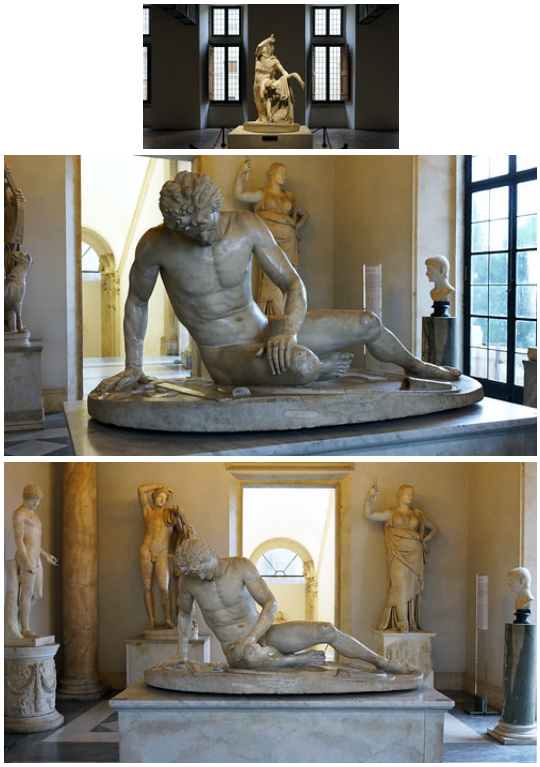



Figure 13.2.5.135: More Smarthistory images…

Bronze statue of Eros sleeping

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Cupid, chubby and quietly sleeping, is a common symbol today … but what did this sculpture mean to ancient Greeks?

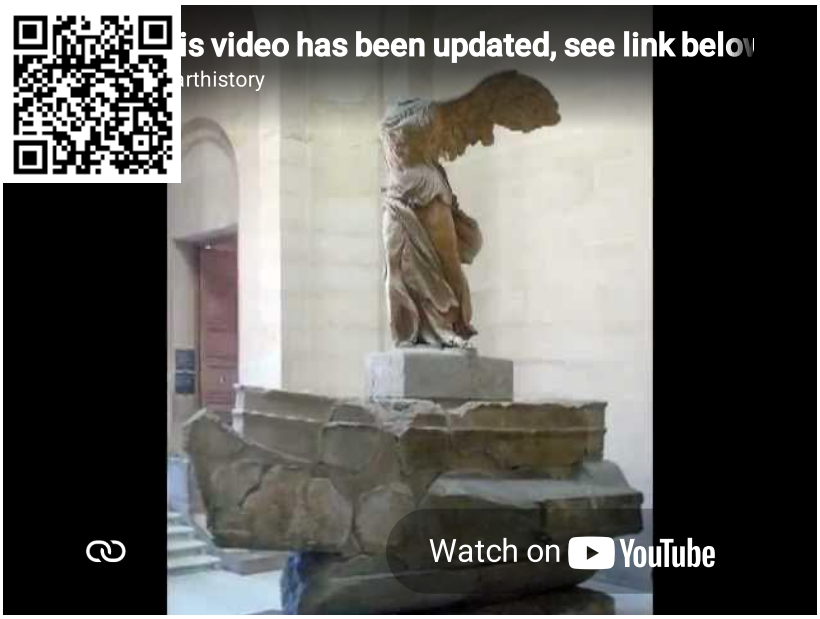


Video 13.2.5.44: Bronze statue of Eros sleeping, 3rd–2nd century B.C.E., bronze, 16 1/2 × 14 × 33 9/16″ / 41.9 × 35.6 × 85.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**.

Nike (Winged Victory) of Samothrace

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

On the island of Samothrace, the wind whipped the clothing of this stone goddess of victory.



Video 13.2.5.45: N*ike (Winged Victory) of Samothrace*, Lartos marble (ship) and Parian marble (figure), c. 190 B.C.E. 3.28 m high, Hellenistic Period (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

The sculpture was unearthed in 1863 after its discovery under the direction of Charles Champoiseau, the French Vice-Consul to Turkey. Please note that the theoretical reconstruction of the Nike as a trumpeter mentioned in the video has been largely abandoned; the monument is now thought to have been part of a fountain possibly commemorating a naval victory.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



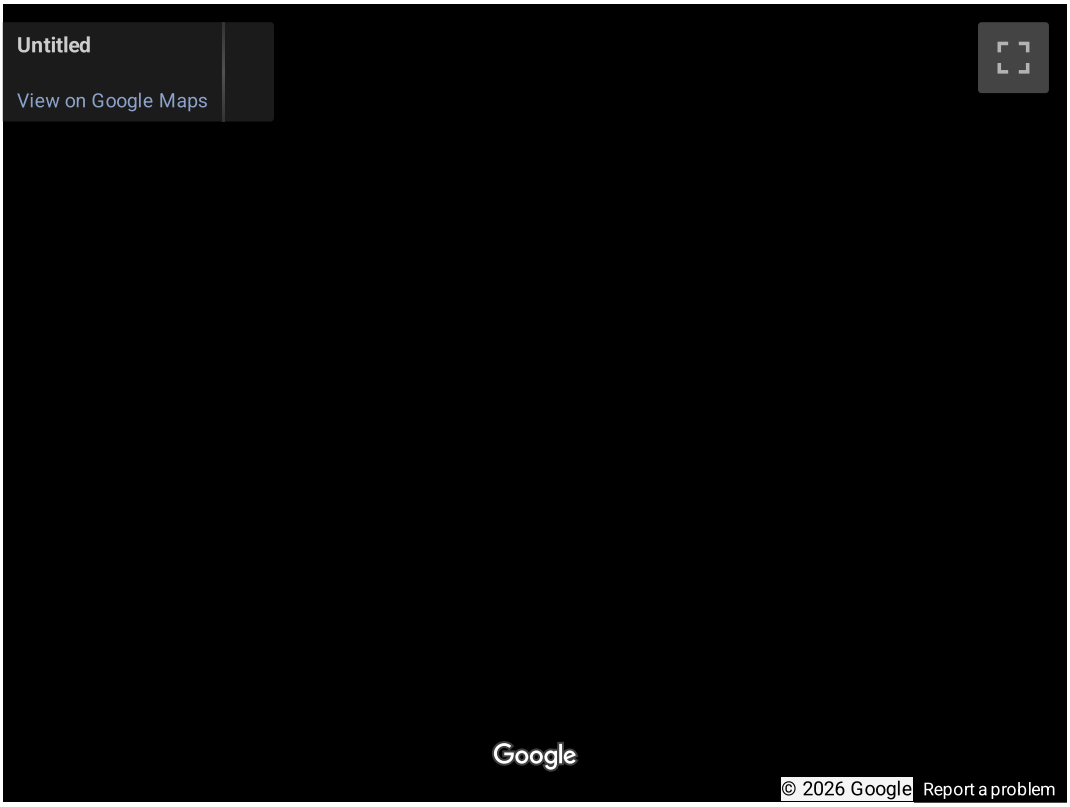
Figure 13.2.5.136: More Smarthistory images…

The Pergamon Altar

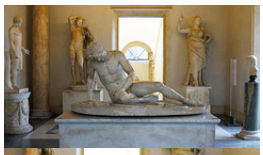
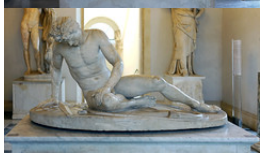
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

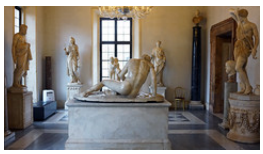
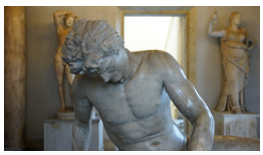
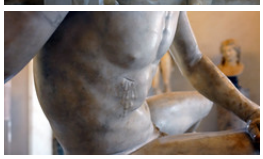
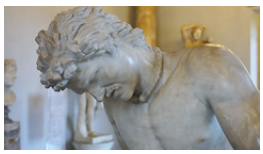
Greek gods battle Giants for supremacy of the universe, so deeply carved that they almost step out into our world.


eat Altar of Zeus and Athena at Pergamo
rthistory
Watch on YouTube


Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

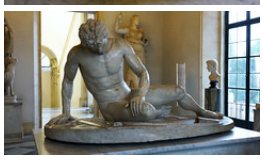
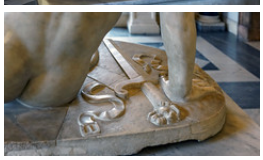
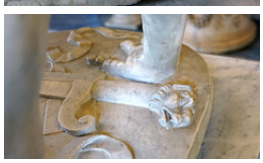






Figure **13.2.5.137**: More Smarthistory images…

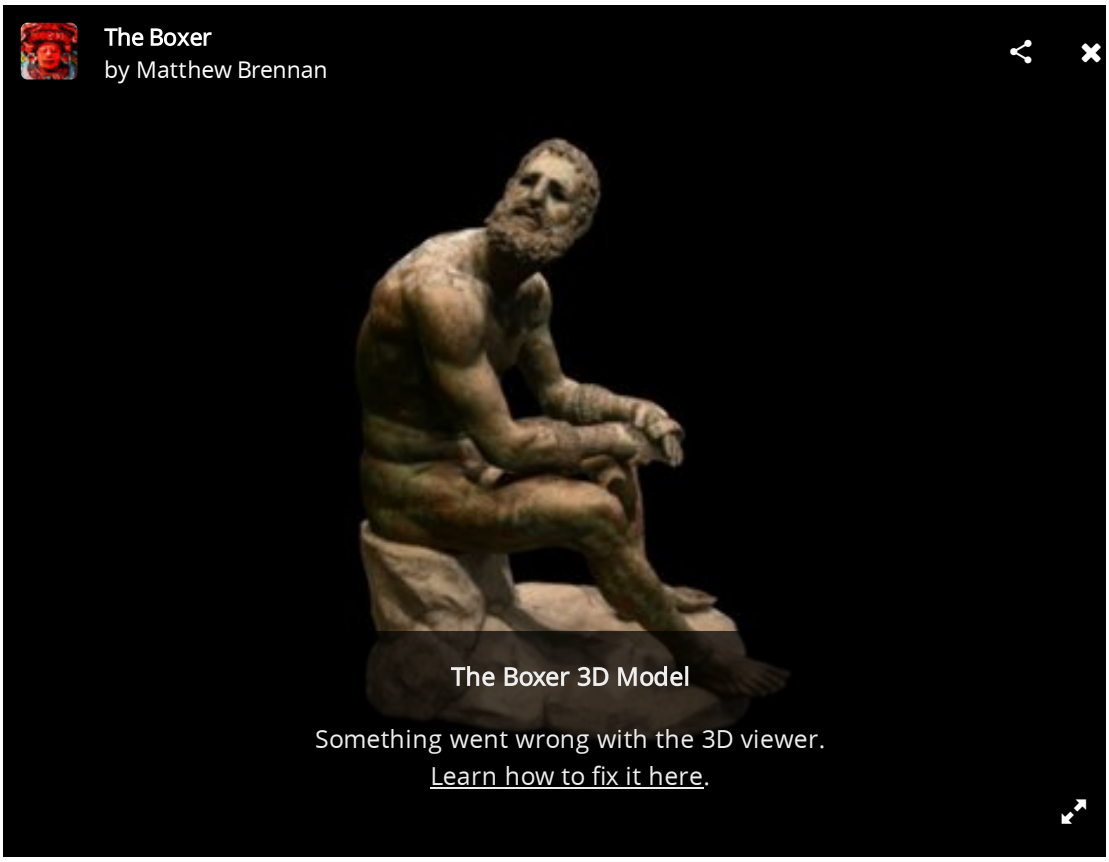
Apollonius, *Boxer at Rest* (or *The Seated Boxer*)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Look closely to see bloody wounds and a lifetime of scars on this defeated athlete.



Video **13.2.5.47**: Apollonius, *Boxer at Rest*, c. 100 B.C.E., bronze, Hellenistic Period (Palazzo Massimo, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome)



The Boxer by **Matthew Brennan** on **Sketchfab**

Figure **13.2.5.138**

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

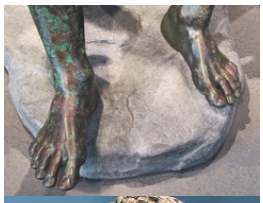












Figure 13.2.5.139: More Smarthistory images…

Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun, Pompeii

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Sources tell us that painting was the Greek's finest art form: is this a hint at what we're missing?



Video 13.2.5.48: *Alexander Mosaic*, c. 100 B.C.E., Roman copy of a lost Greek painting, House of the Faun, Pompeii, c. 315 B.C.E., Hellenistic Period (Archaeological Museum, Naples)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











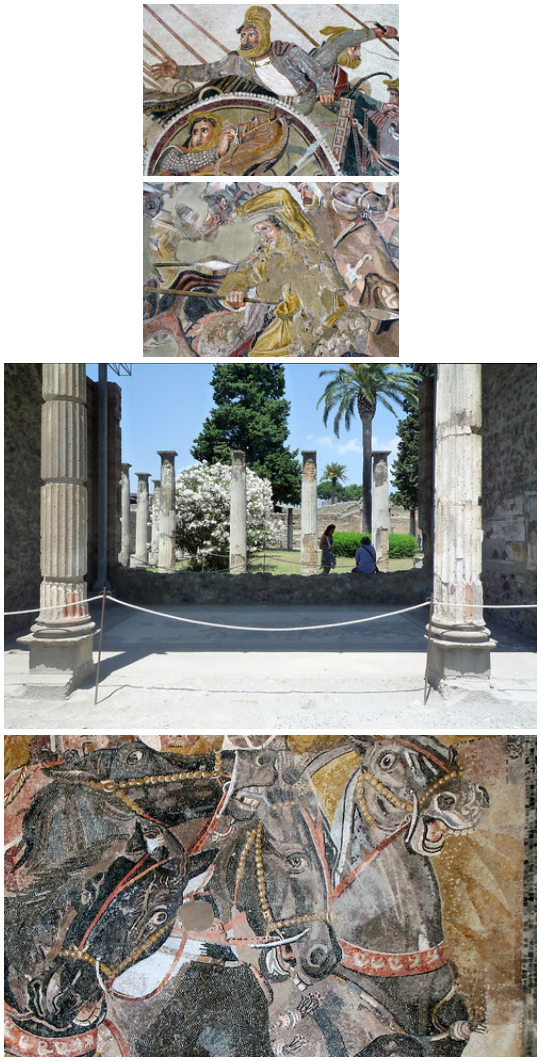



Figure 13.2.5.140: More Smarthistory images…

Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and his Sons*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The writhing agony of the Trojan Laocoon made this Hellenistic masterpiece famous throughout history.



Video 13.2.5.49: Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and his Sons*, early first century C.E., marble, 7’10 1/2″ high (Vatican Museums)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Laocoön

Laocoön





Laocoön

Laocoön



Laocoön

Laocoön

Laocoön

Figure **13.2.5.141**: More Smarthistory images…

13.2.5: Ancient Greece is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.5: Ancient Greece** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.6: Nabataean

Nabataean

Petra was the greatest city of the Nabataeans, a people who occupied the area from Sinai to northern Arabia.

c. 400 B.C.E. - 106 C.E.

Petra: The rose red city of the Nabataeans

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS

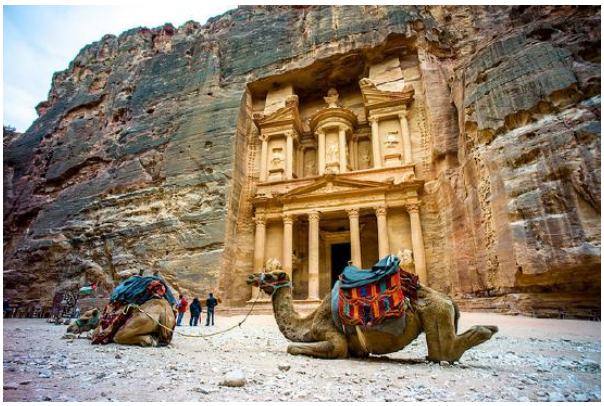


Figure **13.2.6.1**: So-called Treasury (Khazneh), Petra (Jordan), 2nd century C.E. (photo: **Colin Tsoi**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

There is only one true way to experience Petra—the greatest city of the Nabataeans, a people who occupied the area from Sinai and Negev to northern Arabia in the west and as far north as southern Syria. On foot or mounted on a camel, one should leave the modern village of Wadi Musa in modern-day Jordan and enter the Siq, a narrow, curving canyon, that traders, explorers and travelers have been walking down since time immemorial (**here's a short video** of the approach).



Figure **13.2.6.2**: So-called Treasury (Khazneh), through the Siq, Petra (photo: **Colin Tsoi**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Stone carvings, camel caravans and betyls (the famous god blocks) set in niches, appear. But these elaborate carvings are merely a prelude to one's arrival into the heart of Petra, where the Treasury, or Khazneh, a monumental tomb, awaits to impress even the most jaded visitors. The natural, rich hues of Arabian light hit the remarkable façade, giving the Treasury its famed rose-red color.

Petra, the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom

Petra was the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom for most of its history until the Roman Emperor Trajan created the province of Arabia in 106 C.E., annexed the Nabataean kingdom, and moved the capital of this new province to Bosra (also spelt Bostra) in what is today modern southern Syria.



Figure **13.2.6.3**: Nabataean trade routes (CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Hellenistic period

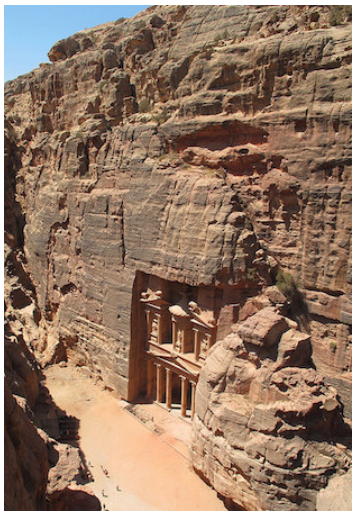
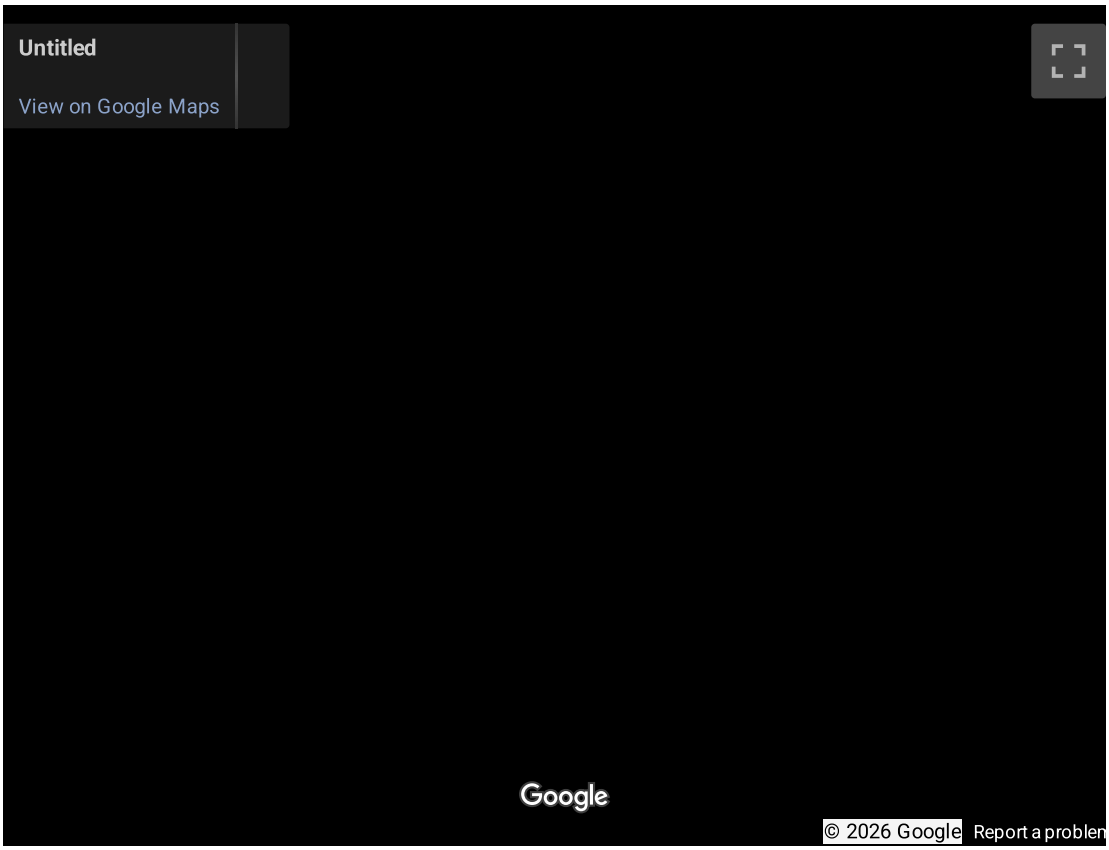


Figure **13.2.6.3**: So-called Treasury (Khazneh), Petra (Jordan), 2nd century C.E. (photo: Kyle Simourd, CC BY 2.0)

The ancient sources inform us that the Nabataeans were great traders, who controlled the luxury trade in incense during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. The Hellenistic period stretches from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. to 31 B.C.E. when the Roman Empire emerged. It can also refer to artistic and cultural similarities in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, Egypt and the Middle East in this era. Petra, the rock-cut city of the Nabataeans, lay at the intersection of these rich trade routes. The great wealth that the Nabataeans amassed allowed them to create the spectacular architecture that so many admire in Petra today.



Additional resources:

Virtual tour of Petra from Google

Petra at the American Museum of Natural History

Resources for educators from the American Museum of Natural History on Petra

Brown University Petra Archaeological project

Petra: The Great Temple Excavation (Brown University)

The Pool-Complex at Petra, University of Pennsylvania

New Pieces of Mada'in Salih's Puzzle

Susan B. Downey, "Museum Review: Petra Rediscovered: An Exhibition on Petra and Nabataean Sanctuaries in Jordan"

The Nabataean Kingdom and Petra on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Petra: urban metropolis

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS

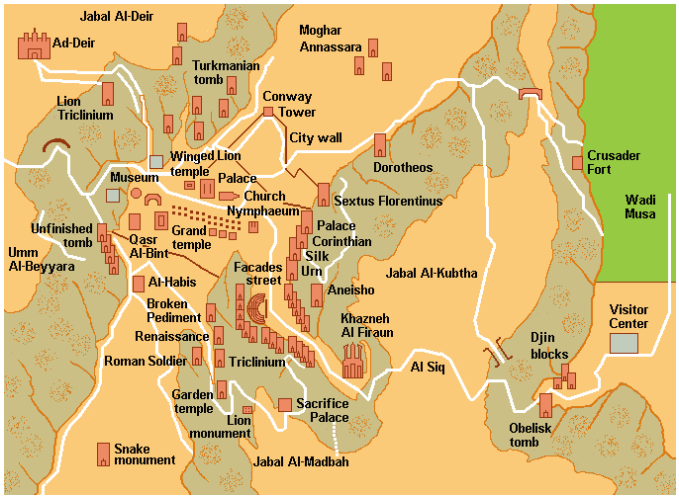


Figure **13.2.6.4**: Map of Petra (**public domain**)

The great tombs and buildings of Petra

Petra was a well-developed city and contained many of the buildings and urban infrastructure that one would expect of a Hellenistic city. Recent archaeological work has radically reshaped our understanding of downtown Petra. Most of Petra's great tombs and buildings were built before the Roman Empire annexed it in 106 C.E.



Figure **13.2.6.5**: Theater, Petra (Jordan) (photo: **Chris Armstrong**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Petra had a large theater, which was probably built during the reign of Aretas IV (9 B.C.E. – 40 C.E.), as well as a monumental colonnaded street. Important buildings graced both sides of the Wadi. On the south side of the street was a nymphaeum (a shrine consecrated to water nymphs, often with a fountain) and a series of monumental spaces, which were once identified as markets. The so-called Lower Market has recently been excavated and shown to be a garden-pool complex. This stood adjacent to so-called Great Temple of Petra. Within the cella, or inner sanctuary room, of the Great Temple, a series of stone seats were discovered; this may suggest that the structure was not a temple, but an audience hall at least for part of its history.

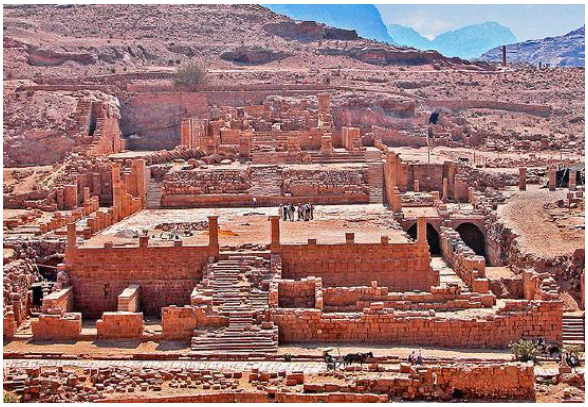


Figure **13.2.6.6**: So-called Great Temple, Petra (Jordan) (photo: **Dennis Jarvis**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Baths were also located in its vicinity. Opposite the so-called Great Temple is the Temple of the Winged Lions, from which a unique god block of a female goddess, was recovered. Column capitals at Petra are truly unique in part for their carvings of winged lions and elephants.



Figure 13.2.6.7: Elephant-headed capital, limestone, Petra. Found in the triple colonnades of the Lower Tenemos (sacred district). The decoration from top to bottom consists of a plain band, egg and dart motif, and the cornice with a plain band with tripartite molding in a double wave. The corner decoration is an elephant head with fan-shaped ears.… Beneath the heads is an acanthus leaf extending downwards…. On the sides and resting on the elephant's forehead is an incurving scroll with floral motifs (from the label "Elephant-headed Capitals" in the Archaeological Museum, Petra) (photo: Guillaume Baviere, CC BY 2.0)

Just to the west, past a gate in a *temenos*, or sacred precinct, was the Qasr el-Bint, the most important temple in the city. It was also probably built under Aretas the IV, but we do not know to which gods the Qasr el-Bint was dedicated. Petra is also filled with more mundane architecture, including domestic residences, as well as the all-important water-catchment and storage systems that allowed life and agriculture to flourish here.



Figure 13.2.6.8: Qasr el-Bint, Petra (Jordan), c. 9 B.C.E. – 40 C.E. (photo: Dennis Jarvis, CC BY-SA 2.0)

One of many Nabataean sites

Petra is often seen in isolation; in fact, it was one of many Nabataean sites; the Nabataean lands stretched from the Sinai and Negev in the west, as far north as Damascus at one point, and as far south as Egra, modern-day Madain Saleh, in Northern Saudi Arabia, which also had numerous rock-cut tombs, amongst others. At Egra an inscription attests to the presence of a Roman Legion at the site, marking the city as the southern most boundary of the Roman Empire in the Antonine Era. Khirbet et-Tannur was a major sanctuary in central Jordan; many of its reliefs are in the Cincinnati Museum of Art today.

The Nabataeans took an active role in their architectural and artistic creations, drawing upon the artistic vocabulary of the Hellenistic world and the ancient Near East. Rather than slavishly copying either one of these traditions, the Nabataeans actively selected and adopted certain elements for their tombs, dining pavilions, and temples to suit their needs and purposes, on both the group and individual level. Indeed, the Treasury and the Monastery could only have been conceived of and executed in Petra.

Additional resources:

Philip C. Hammond, "The Capitals from 'The Temple of the Winged Lions,' Petra," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1977)

Richard B. Freeman, "Nabataean Sculpture in the Cincinnati Art Museum," American Journal of Archaeology (1941)

Petra: rock-cut façades

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS

The rock-cut façades are the iconic monuments of Petra. Of these, the most famous is the so-called Treasury (or Khazneh), which appeared in the film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, as the final resting place of the Holy Grail.



Figure **13.2.6.9**: The so-called Treasury (Khazneh), of Petra (Jordan), 2nd century C.E. (photo: **Richard White**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The prominence of the tombs in the landscape led many early explorers and scholars to see Petra as a large necropolis (cemetery); however, archaeology has shown that Petra was a well-developed metropolis with all of the trappings of a Hellenistic city.



Figure **13.2.6.10**: Tombs at Petra (Jordan) (photo: **Dennis Jarvis**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Tombs

The tomb facades draw upon a rich array of Hellenistic and Near Eastern architecture and, in this sense, their architecture reflects the diverse and different cultures with which the Nabataeans traded, interacted, and even intermarried (King Aretas IV's daughter was married to Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, whose mother was also Nabataean). Many of the tombs contain niches or small chambers for burials, cut into the stone walls. No human remains have ever been found in any of the tombs, and the exact funerary practices of the Nabataeans remain unknown.

The dating of the tombs has proved difficult as there are almost no finds, such as coins and pottery, that enable archaeologists to date these tombs; a few inscriptions allow us to date some of the tombs at Petra, although at Egra, another Nabataean site (in modern Saudi Arabia), there are thirty-one dated tombs. Today scholars believe that the tombs were probably constructed when the Nabataeans were wealthiest between the second century B.C.E. and the early second century C.E. Archaeologists and art historians have identified a number styles for the tomb facades, but they all co-existed and cannot be used date the tombs. The few surviving inscriptions in Nabataean, Greek, and Latin tell us about the people who were buried in the tombs.

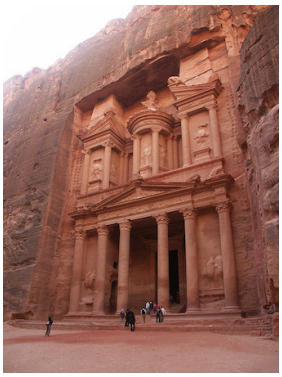


Figure **13.2.6.11**: The Treasury (Khazneh), Petra (Jordan), 2nd century C.E. (photo: **Packwood / Shand**, CC BY 2.0)

The Treasury's façade (24.9 meters wide x 38.77 meters high) most clearly embodies the Hellenistic style and reflects the influence of Alexandria, the greatest city in the Eastern Mediterranean at this time. Its architecture features a broken pediment and central tholos (a circular building) on the upper level; this architectural composition originated in Alexandria. Ornate Corinthian columns are used throughout. Above the broken pediments, the bases of two obelisks appear and stretch upwards into the rock.

The sculptural decoration also underscores a connection to the Hellenistic world. On the upper level, Amazons (bare-breasted) and Victories stand, flanking a central female figure (on the tholos), who is probably Isis-Tyche, a combination of the Egyptian Goddess, Isis, and Tyche, the Greek Goddess of good fortune. The lower level features the Greek twin gods, Castor and Pollux, the Dioscuri, who protected travelers and the dead on their journeys. There are other details from the artistic traditions of the Hellenistic world, including eagles, the symbols of royal Ptolemies, vines, vegetation, kantharoi (vase with large handles), and acroteria (architectural ornaments on a pediment). However, the tomb also features rosettes, a design originally associated with the ancient Near East.



Figure **13.2.6.12**: Relief sculpture and acroteria (detail), The Treasury (Khazneh), Petra (present-day Jordan), 2nd century C.E. (photo: **Richard White**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

There are no inscriptions or ceramic evidence associated with the tomb that allows us to date it. Considering that it was located at the most important entrance to Petra through the Siq, it was probably a tomb for one of the Nabataean Kings. Aretas IV (reigned, 9 B.C.E. – 40 C.E.) is the most likely candidate, because he was the Nabataeans' most successful ruler, and many buildings were erected in Petra during his reign.

The treasury was exceptional for its figurative detail and ornate Hellenistic architectural orders; most tombs did not have figurative sculpture —a legacy of the Nabataean artistic tradition that was largely aniconic, or non-figurative. Many of the smaller tombs were less complex and also drew far less upon the artistic conventions of the Hellenistic world, suggesting that the Nabataeans combined the artistic traditions of the East and West in many different and unique ways.

It is a popular misconception that all of the rock-cut monuments, which number over 3,000, were all tombs. In fact, many of the other rock-cut monuments were living quarters or monumental dining rooms with interior benches. Of these, the Monastery (also known as ed-Deir) is most the famous. Even the large theater, constructed in the first century B.C.E., was cut into the rock of Petra.



Figure 13.2.6.13: So-called Monastery, or ed-Deir, Petra (Jordan) (photo: April Rinne, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Much like the Treasury (discussed above), ed-Deir was not a monastery, but rather behind its façade was a monumental cella (the inner chamber of a temple) with a large area for dining with a cultic podium at the back. While no traces of decoration remain today, the room would have been plastered and painted. The façade again features a broken pediment around a central tholos, but its decoration is more abstract and less figurative than that of the Treasury. The column capitals are typically Nabataean, modeled on the Corinthian order, but abstracted. The façade features a Doric entablature, but rather than having figures in the metopes, roundels with no decoration appear. Thus, while the Monastery deploys many elements of Classical architecture, it does so in a unique way.

Additional resources:

Virtual tour of Petra from Google

The Nabataean Kingdom and Petra

Unesco: Petra

Petra: UNESCO Siq Project

by UNESCO

The Siq, Petra's canyon entrance, is cracking. The cliffs threaten to fall, and scientists race to find a solution.



Video 13.2.6.1: Video from UNESCO Amman

The Siq is one of Petra's most endangered areas, in which natural environmental risks pose a major threat to the cultural heritage and the visitors. Thus, systematic identification and monitoring of its potentially unstable areas is needed. The Jordanian government made a request in 2011 for assistance in this regard, and subsequently a rapid assessment of the Siq was carried out by UNESCO to identify the unstable blocks and map risk zones in the Siq. **Read more here**.

13.2.6: Nabataean is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.6: Nabataean** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88677

13.2.7: Etruscan

Etruscan

A brilliant culture once controlled almost the entire peninsula we now call Italy. This was the Etruscan civilization.

c. 800 - 500 B.C.E.

The Etruscans, an introduction

by DR. LAUREL TAYLOR



Figure **13.2.7.1**: Etruscan civilization, 750-500 B.C.E., **NormanEinstein** – based on a map from *The National Geographic Magazine*, vol.173 No.6 (June 1988) (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Before the small village of Rome became “Rome” with a capital R (to paraphrase D.H. Lawrence), a brilliant civilization once controlled almost the entire peninsula we now call Italy. This was the Etruscan civilization, a vanished culture whose achievements set the stage not only for the development of ancient Roman art and culture but for the Italian Renaissance as well.

Though you may not have heard of them, the Etruscans were the first “superpower” of the Western Mediterranean who, alongside the Greeks, developed the earliest true cities in Europe. They were so successful, in fact, that the most important cities in modern Tuscany (Florence, Pisa, and Siena, to name a few) were first established by the Etruscans and have been continuously inhabited since then.

Yet the labels “mysterious” or “enigmatic” are often attached to the Etruscans since none of their own histories or literature survives. This is particularly ironic as it was the Etruscans who were responsible for teaching the Romans the alphabet and for spreading literacy throughout the Italian peninsula.

The influence on ancient Rome

Etruscan influence on ancient Roman culture was profound. It was from the Etruscans that the Romans inherited many of their own cultural and artistic traditions, from the spectacle of gladiatorial combat, to hydraulic engineering, temple design, and religious ritual, among many other things. In fact, hundreds of years after the Etruscans had been conquered by the Romans and absorbed into their empire, the Romans still maintained an Etruscan priesthood in Rome (which they thought necessary to consult when under attack from invading “barbarians”).

We even derive our very common word “person’” from the Etruscan mythological figure Phersu — the frightful, masked figure you see in this Early Etruscan tomb painting who would engage his victims in a dreadful “game” of blood letting in order to appease the soul of the deceased (the original gladiatorial games, according to the Romans!).



Figure 13.2.7.2: Phersu and his victim, Tomb of the Augurs, late 6th century B.C.E., Tarquinia

Etruscan art and the afterlife

Early on the Etruscans developed a vibrant artistic and architectural culture, one that was often in dialogue with other Mediterranean civilizations. Trading of the many natural mineral resources found in Tuscany, the center of ancient Etruria, caused them to bump up against Greeks, Phoenicians and Egyptians in the Mediterranean. With these other Mediterranean cultures, they exchanged goods, ideas and, often, a shared artistic vocabulary.



Figure 13.2.7.3: Etruscan hut urn (c. 800 B.C.E.), impasto (Vatican Museums)

Unlike with the Greeks, however, the majority of our knowledge about Etruscan art comes largely from their burials. (Since most Etruscan cities are still inhabited, they hide their Etruscan art and architecture under Roman, Medieval and Renaissance layers). Fortunately, though, the Etruscans cared very much about equipping their dead with everything necessary for the afterlife—from lively tomb paintings to sculpture to pottery that they could use in the next world.

From their extensive cemeteries, we can look at the “world of the dead” and begin to understand some about the “world of the living.” During the early phases of Etruscan civilization, they conceived of the afterlife in terms of life as they knew it. When someone died, he or she would be cremated and provided with another ‘home’ for the afterlife.

This type of hut urn (above left), made of an unrefined clay known as impasto, would be used to house the cremated remains of the deceased. Not coincidentally, it shows us in miniature form what a typical Etruscan house would have looked like in Iron Age Etruria (900-750 B.C.E.)—oval with a timber roof and a smoke hole for an internal hearth.

More opulent tombs

Later on, houses for the dead became much more elaborate. During the Orientalizing period (750-575 B.C.E.), when the Etruscans began to trade their natural resources with other Mediterranean cultures and became staggeringly wealthy as a result, their tombs became more and more opulent.

The well-known Regolini-Galassi tomb from the city of Cerveteri shows how this new wealth transformed the modest hut to an extravagant house for the dead. Built for a woman clearly of high rank, the massive stone tomb contains a long corridor with lateral, oval rooms leading to a main chamber.



Figure **13.2.7.4**: Fibula from Regolini Galassi tomb in Cerveteri, gold, mid-seventh century B.C.E. (Vatican Museums)

A stroll through the Etruscan rooms in the Vatican museum where the tomb artifacts are now housed presents a mind-boggling view of the enormous wealth of the period. Found near the woman were objects of various precious materials intended for personal adornment in the afterlife—a gold pectoral, gold bracelets, a gold brooch (or fibula) of outsized proportions, among other objects—as well as silver and bronze vessels and numerous other grave goods and furniture.

A bronze bed



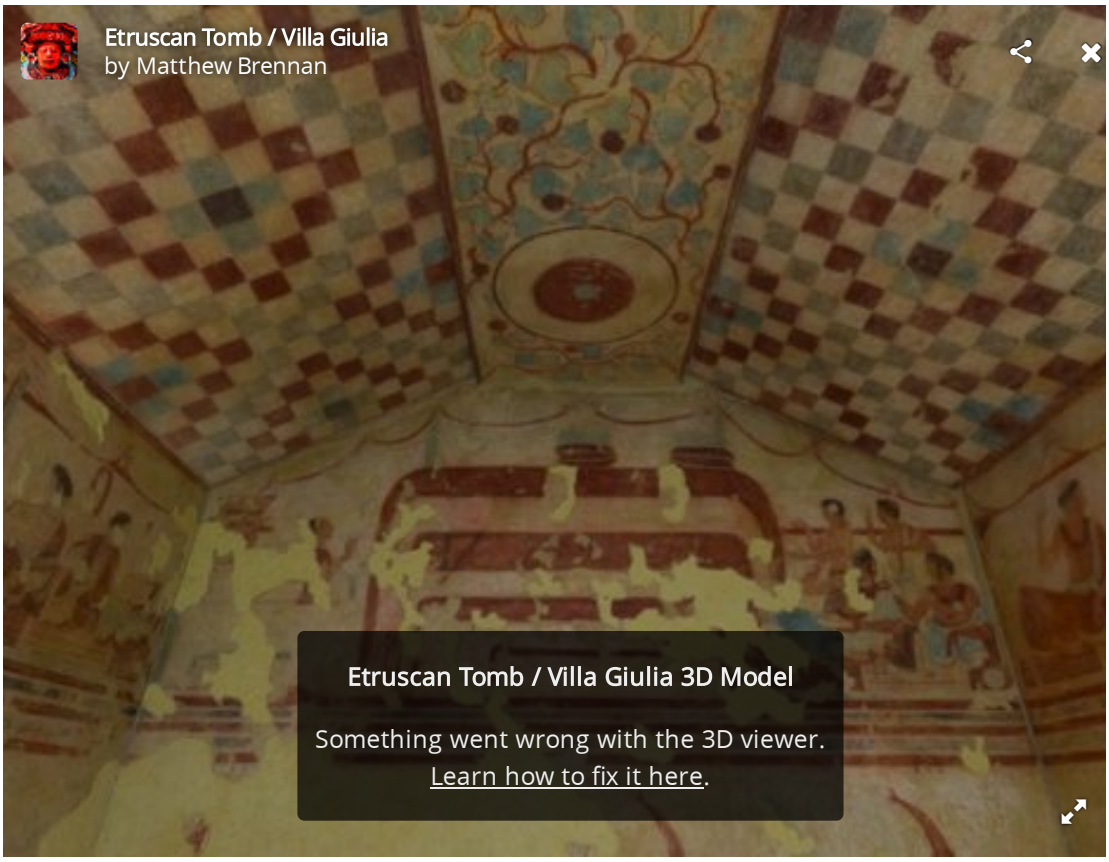
Figure **13.2.7.5**: Bronze bed and carriage, Regolini-Galassi Tomb, (c. 650 B.C.E.), Cerveteri (Vatican Museums)

Of course, this important woman might also need her four-wheeled bronze-sheathed carriage in the afterlife as well as an incense burner, jewelry of amber and ivory, and, touchingly, her bronze bed around which thirty-three figurines, all in various gestures of mourning, were arranged.

Though later periods in Etruscan history are not characterized by such wealth, the Etruscans were, nevertheless, extremely powerful and influential and left a lasting imprint on the city of Rome and other parts of Italy.



Video **13.2.7.1**: Bettini Tomb in Tarquinia and virtual restoration of its frescoes using archive material



Etruscan Tomb / Villa Giulia by **Matthew Brennan** on **Sketchfab**

Additional resources:

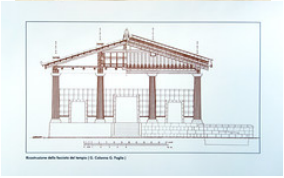
Video: Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia (from UNESCO/NHK)

"Etruscan art" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"In Our Time" podcast on Etruscan Civilization

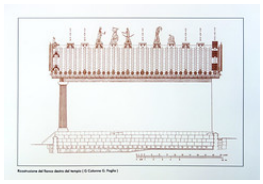
SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88678

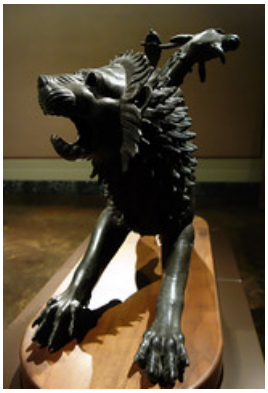






Figure 13.2.7.6: More SmartHistory images…

Bucchero

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER



Figure 13.2.7.7: Terracotta kantharos (vase), 7th century B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, 18.39 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Bucchero, a distinctly black, burnished ceramic ware, is often considered the signature ceramic fabric of the Etruscans, an indigenous, pre-Roman people of the Italian peninsula. The term bucchero derives from the Spanish term *búcaro* (Portuguese: *pucaro*), meaning either a ceramic jar or a

type of aromatic clay. The main period of bucchero production and use stretches from the seventh to the fifth centuries B.C.E. A tableware made mostly for elite consumption, bucchero pottery occupies a key position in our understanding of Etruscan material culture.

Manufacture

Bucchero's distinctive black color results from its manufacturing process. The pottery is fired in a reducing atmosphere, meaning the amount of oxygen in the kiln's firing chamber is restricted, resulting in the dark color. The oxygen-starved atmosphere of the kiln causes the iron oxide in the clay to give up its oxygen molecules, making the pottery darken in color. The fact that pottery was burnished (polished by rubbing) before firing creates the high, almost metallic, sheen. This lustrous, black finish is a hallmark of bucchero pottery. Another hallmark is the fine surface of the pottery, which results from the finely levigated (ground) clay used to make bucchero.



Figure **13.2.7.8**: Terracotta column-krater (bowl for mixing wine and water), c. 560-500 B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, bucchero pesante, 16 1/8 in high, 13 9/16 in diameter (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Bucchero wares may draw their inspiration from metalware vessels, particularly those crafted of silver, that would have been used as elite tablewares. The design of early bucchero ware seems to evoke the lines and crispness of metallic vessels; additionally early decorative patterns that rely on incision and rouletting (roller-stamping) also evoke metalliform design tendencies.

Forerunners of Etruscan bucchero



Figure **13.2.7.9**: Terracotta kyathos (single-handled cup), 7th century B.C.E., Late Villanova, terracotta, buccheroid impasto, 4 9/16 in high without handle, 8 11/16 in with handle, 11 in diameter of mouth **(The Metropolitan Museum of Art)**

Impasto (a rough unrefined clay) ceramics produced by the Villanovan culture (the earliest Iron Age culture of central and northern Italy) were forerunners of Etruscan bucchero forms. Also called buccheroid impasto, they were the product of a kiln environment that allows for a preliminary phase of oxidation but then only a partial reduction, yielding a surface finish that ranges from dark brown to black, but with a section that remains fairly light in color. The kyathos in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (above) provides a good example; the quality of potting is high overall. This impasto ware was thrown on the wheel, has a highly burnished surface, but has a less refined fabric (material) than later examples of true bucchero.

Bucchero types

Archaeologists have discovered bucchero in Etruria and Latium (modern Tuscany and northern Lazio) in central Italy; it is often frequently found in funereal contexts. Bucchero was also exported, in some cases, as examples have been found in southern France, the Aegean, North Africa, and Egypt.



Figure **13.2.7.10**: Terracotta trefoil oinochoe (jug), c. 625-600 B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, bucchero sottile, 11 3/16 in high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The production of bucchero is typically divided into three artistic phases. These are distinguishable on the basis of the quality and thickness of the fabric. The phases are: “thin-walled bucchero” (*bucchero sottile*), produced c. 675 to 626 B.C.E., “transitional,” produced c. 625 to 575 B.C.E., and “heavy bucchero” (*bucchero pesante*), produced from c. 575 to the beginning of the fifth century B.C.E.



Figure **13.2.7.11**: Terracotta kantharos (drinking cup), c. 650-600 B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, bucchero sottile, 12 in high without handles, 10 1/4 in diameter (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The earliest bucchero has been discovered in tombs at Caere (just northwest of Rome). Its extremely thin-walled construction and sharp features echo metallic prototypes. Decoration on the earliest examples is usually in the form of geometric incision, including chevrons and other linear motifs (above). Roller stamp methods would later replace the incision.



Figure 13.2.7.12: Bucchero hydria (water ware jug), c. 550-500 B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, 60.5 cm high © The Trustees of the British Museum

By the sixth century B.C.E., a “heavy” type of the ceramic had replaced the thin-walled bucchero. A hydria (vessel used to carry water) in the British Museum (above) is another example of the “heavy” bucchero of the sixth century B.C.E. This vessel has a series of female appliqué heads as well as other ornamentation. A tendency of the “heavy” type also included the use of mold-made techniques to create relief decoration.



Figure 13.2.7.13: Terracotta vase in the shape of a cockerel, c. 650-600 B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, bucchero, 4 1/16 in high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

A number of surviving bucchero examples carry incised inscriptions. A bucchero vessel currently in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (above) provides an example of an abecedarium (the letters of the alphabet) inscribed on a ceramic vessel. This vase, in the form of a cockerel, dates to the second half of the seventh century B.C.E. has the 26 letters of the Etruscan alphabet inscribed around its belly (below)—the vase combines practicality (it may have been used as an inkwell) with a touch of whimsy. It demonstrates the penchant of Etruscan potters for incision and the plastic modeling of ceramic forms.



Figure 13.2.7.14: Alphabet (detail), Terracotta vase in the shape of a cockerel, c. 650-600 B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta, bucchero, 4 1/16 in high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Interpretation

Bucchero pottery represents a key source of information about the Etruscan civilization. Used by elites at banquets, bucchero demonstrates the tendencies of elite consumption among the Etruscans. The elite display at the banqueting table helped to reinforce social rank and to allow elites to advertise the achievements and status of themselves and their families.

Additional Resources:

Bucchero at the British Museum

Jon M. Berkin, *The Orientalizing Bucchero from the Lower Building at Poggio Civitate (Murlo)* (Boston: Published for the Archaeological Institute of America by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2003).

Mauro Cristofani, *Le tombe da Monte Michele nel Museo archeologico di Firenze* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1969).

Richard DePuma, *Corpus vasorum antiquorum. [United States of America]. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu: Etruscan Impasto and Bucchero* (Corpus vasorum antiquorum., United States of America, fasc. 31: fascim. 6.) (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996).

Richard DePuma, *Etruscan Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013).

Nancy Hirschland-Ramage, "Studies in Early Etruscan Bucchero," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 38 (1970), pp. 1–61.

Philip Perkins, *Etruscan Bucchero in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 2007).

Tom Rasmussen, *Bucchero Pottery from Southern Etruria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

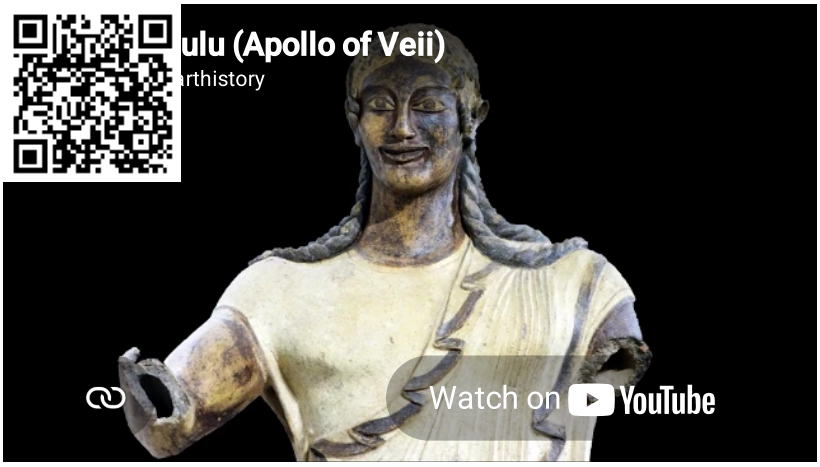
Wim Regter, *Imitation and Creation: Development of Early Bucchero Design at Cerveteri in the Seventh Century B.C.* (Amsterdam: Allard Pierson Museum, 2003).

Margaret Wadsworth, "A Potter's Experience with the Method of Firing Bucchero," *Opuscula Romana* 14 (1983), pp. 65-68.

Temple of Minerva and the sculpture of Apollo (Veii)

by DR. LAUREL TAYLOR

Forget what you know about Greek and Roman architectural orders—Etruscans had their own unique style.



Etruscan temples have largely vanished

Among the early Etruscans, the worship of the Gods and Goddesses did not take place in or around monumental temples as it did in early Greece or in the Ancient Near East, but rather, in nature. Early Etruscans created ritual spaces in groves and enclosures open to the sky with sacred boundaries carefully marked through ritual ceremony.

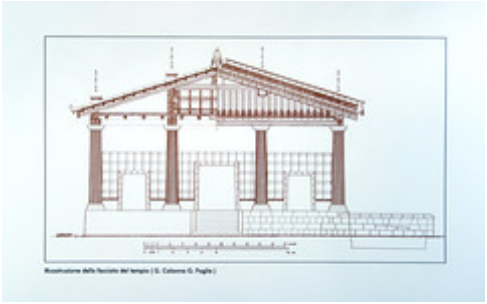


Figure 13.2.7.15: Reconstruction of an Etruscan Temple of the 6th century according to Vitruvius

Around 600 B.C.E., however, the desire to create monumental structures for the gods spread throughout Etruria, most likely as a result of Greek influence. While the desire to create temples for the gods may have been inspired by contact with Greek culture, Etruscan religious architecture was markedly different in material and design. These colorful and ornate structures typically had stone foundations but their wood, mud-brick and

terracotta superstructures suffered far more from exposure to the elements. Greek temples still survive today in parts of Greece and southern Italy since they were constructed of stone and marble but Etruscan temples were built with mostly ephemeral materials and have largely vanished.

How do we know what they looked like?

Despite the comparatively short-lived nature of Etruscan religious structures, Etruscan temple design had a huge impact on Renaissance architecture and one can see echoes of Etruscan, or 'Tuscan,' columns (doric columns with bases) in many buildings of the Renaissance and later in Italy. But if the temples weren't around during the 15th and 16th centuries, how did Renaissance builders know what they looked like and, for that matter, how do we know what they looked like?

Fortunately, an ancient Roman architect by the name of Vitruvius wrote about Etruscan temples in his book *De architectura* in the late first century B.C.E. In his treatise on ancient architecture, Vitruvius described the key elements of Etruscan temples and it was his description that inspired Renaissance architects to return to the roots of Tuscan design and allows archaeologists and art historians today to recreate the appearance of these buildings.

Archaeological evidence for the Temple of Minerva

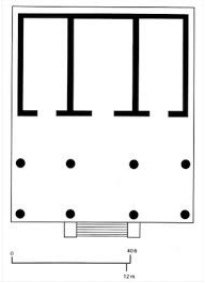


Figure **13.2.7.16**: Typical Etruscan temple plan

The archaeological evidence that does remain from many Etruscan temples largely confirms Vitruvius's description. One of the best explored and known of these is the Portonaccio Temple dedicated to the goddess Minerva (Roman=Minerva/Greek=Athena) at the city of Veii about 18 km north of Rome. The tufa-block foundations of the Portonaccio temple still remain and their nearly square footprint reflects Vitruvius's description of a floor plan with proportions that are 5:6, just a bit deeper than wide.

The temple is also roughly divided into two parts—a deep front porch with widely-spaced Tuscan columns and a back portion divided into three separate rooms. Known as a triple cella, this three room configuration seems to reflect a divine triad associated with the temple, perhaps Menrva as well as Tinia (Jupiter/Zeus) and Uni (Juno/Hera).

In addition to their internal organization and materials, what also made Etruscan temples noticeably distinct from Greek ones was a high podium and frontal entrance. Approaching the Parthenon with its low rising stepped entrance and encircling forest of columns would have been a very different experience from approaching an Etruscan temple high off the ground with a single, defined entrance.

Sculpture

Perhaps most interesting about the Portonaccio temple is the abundant terracotta sculpture that still remains, the volume and quality of which is without parallel in Etruria. In addition to many terracotta architectural elements (masks, antefixes, decorative details), a series of over life-size terracotta sculptures have also been discovered in association with the temple. Originally placed on the ridge of temple roof, these figures seem to be Etruscan assimilations of Greek gods, set up as a tableau to enact some mythic event.

Apollo of Veii



Figure **13.2.7.17**: *Aplu (Apollo of Veii)*, from the roof of the Portonaccio Temple, Veii, Italy, c. 510-500 B.C.E., painted terra-cotta, 5 feet 11inches high (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome)

The most famous and well-preserved of these is the *Aplu (Apollo of Veii)*, a dynamic, striding masterpiece of large scale terracotta sculpture and likely a central figure in the rooftop narrative. His counterpart may have been the less well-preserved figure of Hercle (Hercules) with whom he struggled in an epic contest over the Golden Hind, an enormous deer sacred to Apollo's twin sister Artemis. Other figures discovered with these suggest an audience watching the action. Whatever the myth may have been, it was a completely Etruscan innovation to use sculpture in this way, placed at the peak of the temple roof—creating what must have been an impressive tableau against the backdrop of the sky.



Figure **13.2.7.18**: Detail, Aplu *(Apollo of Veii)*, from the roof of the Portonaccio Temple, Veii, Italy, c. 510-500 B.C.E., painted terra-cotta, 5 feet 11inches high (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome)

An artist by the name of Vulca?

Since Etruscan art is almost entirely anonymous it is impossible to know who may have contributed to such innovative display strategies. We may, however, know the name of the artist associated with the workshop that produced the terracotta sculpture. Centuries after these pieces were created, the Roman writer Pliny recorded that in the late 6th century B.C.E., an Etruscan artist by the name of Vulca was summoned from Veii to Rome to decorate the most important temple there, the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The technical knowledge required to produce terracotta sculpture at such a large scale was considerable and it may just have been the master sculptor Vulca whose skill at the Portonaccio temple earned him not only a prestigious commission in Rome but a place in the history books as well.

Additional Resources:

Etruscan art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

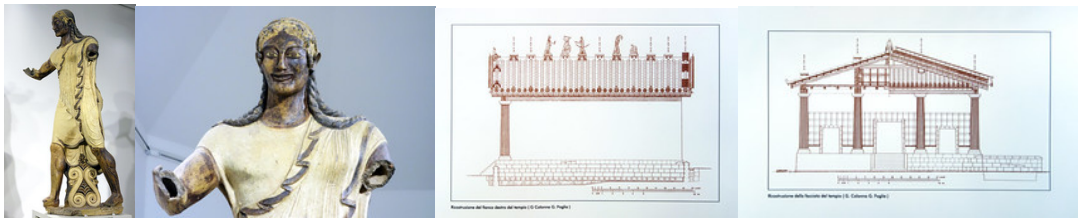


Figure 13.2.7.19: More SmartHistory images…

Apulu (Apollo of Veii)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Confronting Hercules in the middle of his labors, this clay statue of Apollo strides forward.



SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.2.7.20: More SmartHistory images…

Sarcophagus of the Spouses (Louvre)

by DR. LAUREL TAYLOR



Figure **13.2.7.21**: Sarcophagus of the Spouses, Etruscan, c. 520-510 B.C.E., painted terracotta (**Musée du Louvre**), photo: © Louvre, dist. RMN/Philoppe Fuzeau

The freedom enjoyed by Etruscan women

One of the distinguishing features of Etruscan society, and one that caused much shock and horror to their Greek neighbors, was the relative freedom enjoyed by Etruscan women. Unlike women in ancient Greece or Rome, upper class Etruscan women actively participated in public life—attending banquets, riding in carriages and being spectators at (and participants in) public events. Reflections of such freedoms are found throughout Etruscan art; images of women engaged in these activities appear frequently in painting and in sculpture.

The *Sarcophagus of the Spouses* was found in Cerverteri, a town in Italy north of Rome, which is the site of a large Etruscan necropolis (or cemetery), with hundreds of tombs. The sarcophagus vividly evokes both the social visibility of Etruscan women and a type of marital intimacy rarely seen in Greek art from this period.



Figure **13.2.7.21**: Sarcophagus of the Spouses, Etruscan, c. 520-510 B.C.E., painted terracotta (Musée du Louvre)

A funerary banquet?

In the sarcophagus (and another largely identical example at the Villa Giulia in Rome), the two figures recline as equals as they participate in a banquet, possibly a funerary banquet for the dead. In contemporary Greece, the only women attending public banquets, or symposia, were courtesans, not wives! The affectionate gestures and tenderness between the Etruscan man and woman convey a strikingly different attitude about the status of women and their relative equality with their husbands.

Terracotta

Aside from its subject matter, the sarcophagus is also a remarkable example of Etruscan large-scale terracotta sculpture (terracotta is a type of ceramic also called earthenware). At nearly two meters long, the object demonstrates the rather accomplished feat of modeling clay figures at nearly life-size. Artists in the Etruscan cities of Cerveteri and Veii in particular preferred working with highly refined clay for large-scale sculpture as it provided a smooth surface for the application of paint and the inclusion of fine detail.

Handling such large forms, however, was not without complications; evidence of this can be seen in the cut that bisects the sarcophagus. Splitting the piece in two parts would have allowed the artist to more easily manipulate the pieces before and after firing. If you look closely, you can also see a distinct line separating the figures and the lid of the sarcophagus; this was another trick for creating these monumental pieces—modeling the figures separately and then placing them on top of their bed.

Color

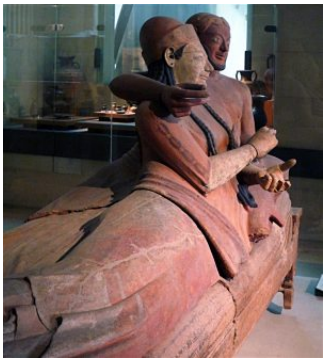


Figure **13.2.7.22**: Detail, Sarcophagus of the Spouses, Etruscan, c. 520-510 B.C.E., painted terracotta (Musée du Louvre)

A really lovely characteristic of this sculpture is the preservation of so much color. In addition to colored garments and pillows, red laced boots, her black tresses and his blond ones, one can easily discern the gender specific skin tones so typical in Etruscan art. The man's ochre flesh signifies his participation in a sun-drenched, external world, while the woman's pale cream skin points to a more interior, domestic one. Gendered color conventions were not exclusive to the Etruscans but have a long pedigree in ancient art. Though their skin and hair color may be different, both figures share similar facial features—archaic smiles (like the ones we see in ancient Greek archaic sculptures), almond shaped eyes, and highly arched eyebrows—all typical of Etruscan art.

What were they holding?

One of the great puzzles of the sarcophagus centers on what the figures were holding. Etruscan art often featured outsized, expressive hands with suggestively curled fingers. Here the arm positions of both figures hint that each must have held small objects, but what? Since the figures are reclining on a banqueting couch, the objects could have been vessels associated with drinking, perhaps wine cups, or representations of food. Another possibility is that they may have held alabastra, small vessels containing oil used for anointing the dead. Or, perhaps, they held all of the above—food, drink and oil, each a necessity for making the journey from this life to the next.

Whatever missing elements, the conviviality of the moment and intimacy of the figures capture the life-affirming quality often seen in Etruscan art of this period, even in the face of death.

Additional resources:

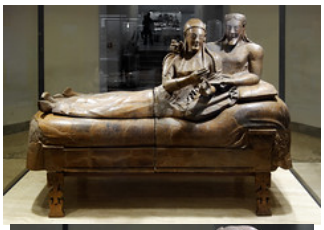
The Sarcophagus in the Louvre

Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia (UNESCO)

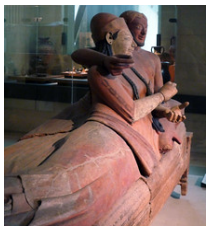
Etruscan Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilrbunn Timeline of Art History

Conservation in Action: Etruscan Sarcophagi

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:













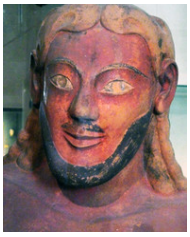




https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88678







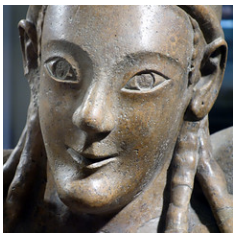


Figure **13.2.7.23**: More SmartHistory images…

Sarcophagus of the Spouses (Rome)

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

The intimacy of this clay sculpture is unprecedented in the ancient world. What can it tell us about Etruscan culture?



Video **13.2.7.4**: *Sarcophagus of the Spouses (or Sarcophagus with Reclining Couple)*, from the Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri, Italy, c. 520 B.C.E., painted terracotta, 3′ 9 1/2″ x 6′ 7″ (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome)



Figure **13.2.7.24**: *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*, c. 520 B.C.E., Etruscan, painted terracotta, 3 feet 9-1/2 inches x 6 feet 7 inches, found in the Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome)

The *Sarcophagus of the Spouses* is an anthropoid (human-shaped), painted terracotta sarcophagus found in the ancient Etruscan city of Caere (now Cerveteri, Italy). The sarcophagus, which would have originally contained cremated human remains, was discovered during the course of archaeological excavations in the Banditaccia necropolis of ancient Caere during the nineteenth century and is now in Rome. The sarcophagus is quite similar to another terracotta sarcophagus from Caere depicting a man and woman that is presently housed in the Louvre Museum in Paris; these two sarcophagi are contemporary to one another and are perhaps the products of the same artistic workshop.



Figure **13.2.7.24**: Upper bodies (detail), *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*, c. 520 B.C.E., Etruscan, painted terracotta, 3 feet 9-1/2 inches x 6 feet 7 inches, found in the Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome)

An archaic couple

The sarcophagus depicts a reclining man and woman on its lid. The pair rests on highly stylized cushions, just as they would have done at an actual banquet. The body of the sarcophagus is styled so as to resemble a kline (dining couch). Both figures have highly stylized hair, in each case plaited with the stylized braids hanging rather stiffly at the sides of the neck. In the female's case the plaits are arranged so as to hang down in front of each shoulder. The female wears a soft cap atop her head; she also wears shoes with pointed toes that are characteristically Etruscan. The male's braids hang neatly at the back, splayed across the upper back and shoulders. The male's beard and the hair atop his head is quite abstracted without any interior detail. Both figures have elongated proportions that are at home in the archaic period in the Mediterranean.



Figure 13.2.7.25: Feet and shoes (detail), *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*, c. 520 B.C.E., Etruscan, painted terracotta, 3 feet 9-1/2 inches x 6 feet 7 inches, found in the Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome)

A banquet

The S*arcophagus of the Spouses* has been interpreted as belonging to a banqueting scene, with the couple reclining together on a single dining couch while eating and drinking. This situates the inspiration for the sarcophagus squarely in the convivial (social) sphere and, as we are often reminded, conviviality was central to Etruscan mortuary rituals. Etruscan funerary art—including painted tombs—often depicts scenes of revelry, perhaps as a reminder of the funeral banquet that would send the deceased off to the afterlife or perhaps to reflect the notion of perpetual conviviality in said afterlife. Whatever the case, banquets provide a great deal of iconographic fodder for Etruscan artists.

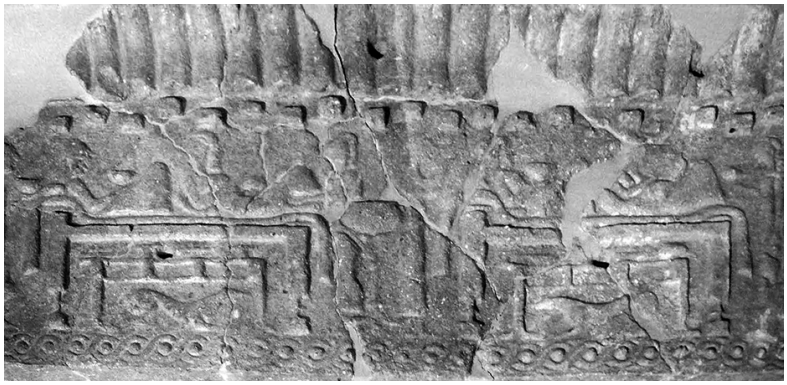


Figure 13.2.7.26: *Banquet Plaque* (detail) from Poggio Civitate, early 6th century B.C.E., Etruscan, terracotta (Antiquarium di Poggio Civitate Museo Archeologico, Murlo, Italy) (photo: **sailko**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In the case of the sarcophagus it is also important to note that at Etruscan banquets, men and women reclined and ate together, a circumstance that was quite different from other Mediterranean cultures, especially the Greeks. We see multiple instances of mixed gender banquets across a wide chronological range, leading us to conclude that this was common practice in Etruria. The terracotta plaque from Poggio Civitate, Murlo (above), for instance, that is roughly contemporary to the sarcophagus of the spouses shows a close iconographic parallel for this custom. This cultural custom generated some resentment—even animus—on the part of Greek and Latin authors in antiquity who saw this Etruscan practice not just as different, but took it as offensive behavior. Women enjoyed a different and more privileged status in Etruscan society than did their Greek and Roman counterparts.

Technical achievement

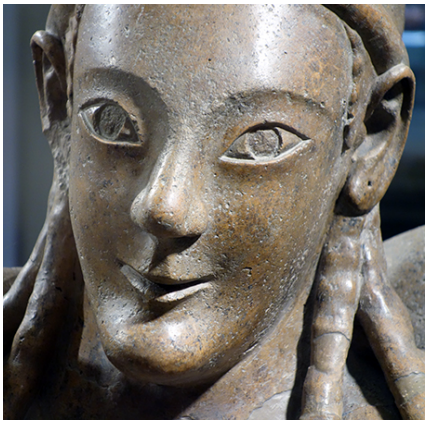


Figure **13.2.7.27**: Female's face (detail), *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*, c. 520 B.C.E., Etruscan, painted terracotta, 3 feet 9-1/2 inches x 6 feet 7 inches, found in the Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome)

The *Sarcophagus of the Spouses* is a masterwork of terracotta sculpture. Painted terracotta sculpture played a key role in the visual culture of archaic Etruria. Terracotta artwork was the standard for decorating the superstructure of Etruscan temples and the coroplastic (terracotta) workshops producing these sculptures often displayed a high level of technical achievement. This is due, in part, to the fact that ready sources of marble were unknown in archaic Italy. Even though contemporary Greeks produced masterworks in marble during the sixth century B.C.E., terracotta statuary such as this sarcophagus itself counts as a masterwork and would have been an elite commission. Contemporary Greek colonists in Italy also produced high level terracotta statuary, as exemplified by the seated statue of Zeus from Poseidonia (later renamed Paestum) that dates c. 530 B.C.E.

Etruscan culture

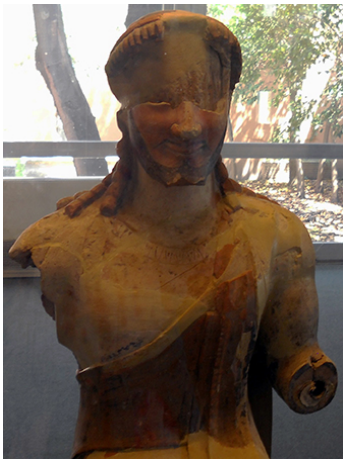


Figure
PageIndex28: *Seated statue of Zeus* from Poseidonia (Paestum) c. 530 B.C.E., terracotta (photo: **Dave & Margie Hill**, CC BY-SA 2.0) (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Paestum)

In the case of the Caeretan sarcophagus, it is an especially challenging commission. Given its size, it would have been fired in multiple pieces. The composition of the reclining figures shows awareness of Mediterranean stylistic norms in that their physiognomy reflects an Ionian influence (Ionia was a region in present-day Turkey, that was a Greek colony)—the rounded, serene faces and the treatment of hairstyles would have fit in with contemporary Greek styles. However, the posing of the figures, the angular joints of the limbs, and their extended fingers and toes reflect local practice in Etruria. In short, the artist and his workshop are aware of global trends while also catering to a local audience. While we cannot identify the original owner of the sarcophagus, it is clear that the person(s) commissioning it would have been a member of the Caeretan elite.



Figure 13.2.7.29: Male's face (detail), *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*, c. 520 B.C.E., Etruscan, painted terracotta, 3 feet 9-1/2 inches x 6 feet 7 inches, found in the Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri (Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome)

The *Sarcophagus of the Spouses* as an object conveys a great deal of information about Etruscan culture and its customs. The convivial theme of the sarcophagus reflects the funeral customs of Etruscan society and the elite nature of the object itself provides important information about the ways in which funerary custom could reinforce the identity and standing of aristocrats among the community of the living.

Additional resources:

L. Bonfante, ed., *Etruscan Life and Afterlife: a Handbook of Etruscan Studies* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986).

M. F. Briguet, *Le sarcophage des époux de Cerveteri du Musée du Louvre*. (Florence: Leo Olschki, 1989).

O. J. Brendel, *Etruscan Art*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

S. Haynes, *Etruscan Civilization: A Cultural History* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Publications, 2000).

E. Macnamara, *Everyday life of the Etruscans* (London: Batsford, 1973).

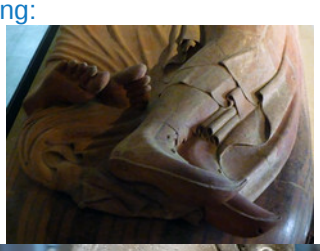
E. Macnamara, *The Etruscans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

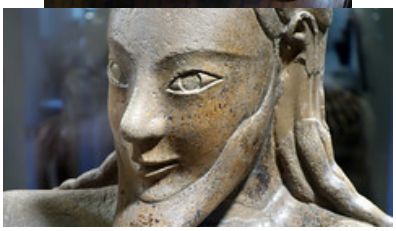
A. S. Tuck, "The Etruscan Seated Banquet: Villanovan Ritual and Etruscan Iconography," *American Journal of Archaeology* 98.4 (1994): 617-628.

J. M. Turfa, ed., *The Etruscan World* (London: Routledge, 2013).

A. Zaccaria Ruggiu, *More regio vivere: il banchetto aristocratico e la casa romana di età arcaica* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2003).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

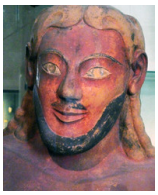
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88678



Figure 13.2.7.30: More SmartHistory images…

Tomb of the Triclinium

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER



Figure 13.2.7.31: Etruscan civilization, 750-500 B.C.E. (image: NormanEinstein, CC BY-SA 3.0) Based on a map from *The National Geographic Magazine* Vol.173 No.6 (June 1988).

Elaborate funerary rituals

Funerary contexts constitute the most abundant archaeological evidence for the Etruscan civilization. The elite members of Etruscan society participated in elaborate funerary rituals that varied and changed according to both geography and time.

The city of Tarquinia (known in antiquity as *Tarquinii* or *Tarch(u)na*), one of the most powerful and prominent Etruscan centers, is known for its painted chamber tombs. The Tomb of the Triclinium belongs to this group and its wall paintings reveal important information about not only Etruscan funeral culture but also about the society of the living.

An advanced Iron Age culture, the Etruscans amassed wealth based on Italy's natural resources (particularly metal and mineral ores) that they exchanged through medium- and long-range trade networks.

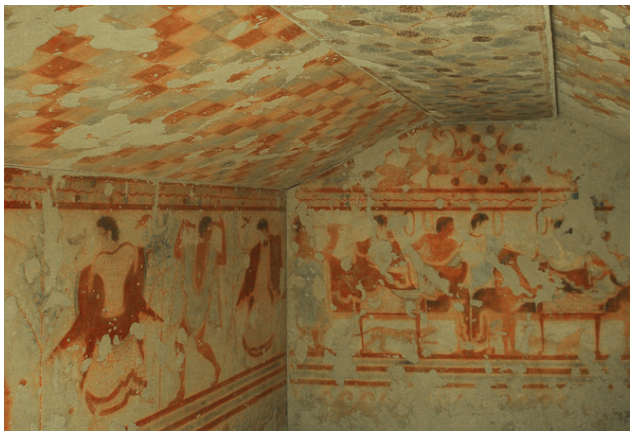


Figure **13.2.7.32**: *Tomb of the Triclinium*, c. 470 B.C.E. (Etruscan chamber tomb, Tarquinia, Italy)

Tomb of the Triclinium

The *Tomb of the Triclinium* (Italian: *Tomba del Triclinio*) is the name given to an Etruscan chamber tomb dating c. 470 B.C.E. and located in the Monterozzi necropolis of Tarquinia, Italy. Chamber tombs are subterranean rock-cut chambers accessed by an approach way (dromos) in many cases. The tombs are intended to contain not only the remains of the deceased but also various grave goods or offerings deposited along with the deceased. The *Tomb of the Triclinium* is composed of a single chamber with wall decorations painted in fresco. Discovered in 1830, the tomb takes its name from the three-couch dining room of the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean, known as the triclinium.

A banquet

The rear wall of the tomb carries the main scene, one of banqueters enjoying a dinner party (above). It is possible to draw stylistic comparisons between this painted scene that includes figures reclining on dining couches (*klinai*) and the contemporary fifth century B.C.E. Attic pottery that the Etruscans imported from Greece. The original fresco is only partially preserved; although it is likely that there were originally three couches, each hosting a pair of reclining diners, one male and one female. Two attendants—one male, one female—attend to the needs of the diners. The diners are dressed in bright and sumptuous robes, befitting their presumed elite status. Beneath the couches we can observe a large cat, as well as a large rooster and another bird.

Music and dancing



Figure **13.2.7.33**: Barbiton player on the left wall (detail), *Tomb of the Triclinium*, c. 470 B.C.E., Etruscan chamber tomb, Tarquinia, Italy

Scenes of dancers occupy the flanking left and right walls. The left wall scene contains four dancers—three female and one male—and a male musician playing the barbiton, an ancient stringed instrument similar to the lyre (left).

Common painterly conventions of gender typing are employed—the skin of females is light in color while male skin is tinted a darker tone of orange-brown. The dancers and musicians, together with the feasting, suggest the overall convivial tone of the Etruscan funeral. In keeping with ancient Mediterranean customs, funerals were often accompanied by games, as famously represented by the funeral games of the Trojan Anchises as described in book 5 of Vergil's epic poem, the *Aeneid*. In the *Tomb of the Triclinium* we may have an allusion to games as the walls flanking the tomb's entrance bear scenes of youths dismounting horses, variously described as being either apobates (participants in an equestrian combat sport) or the Dioscuri (mythological twins).



Figure **13.2.7.34**: Two dancers on the right wall (detail), *Tomb of the Triclinium*, c. 470 B.C.E., Etruscan chamber tomb, Tarquinia, Italy

The tomb's ceiling is painted in a checkered scheme of alternating colors, perhaps meant to evoke the temporary fabric tents that were erected near the tomb for the actual celebration of the funeral banquet.

The actual paintings were removed from the tomb in 1949 and are conserved in the Museo Nazionale in Tarquinia. As their state of preservation has deteriorated, watercolors made at the time of discovery have proven very important for the study of the tomb.

Interpretation

The convivial theme of the *Tomb of the Triclinium* might seem surprising in a funereal context, but it is important to note that the Etruscan funeral rites were not somber but festive, with the aim of sharing a final meal with the deceased as the latter transitioned to the afterlife. This ritual feasting served several purposes in social terms. At its most basic level the funeral banquet marked the transition of the deceased from the world of the living to that of the dead; the banquet that accompanied the burial marked this transition and ritually included the spirit of the deceased, as a portion of the meal, along with the appropriate dishes and utensils for eating and drinking, would then be deposited in the tomb. Another purpose of the funeral meal, games, and other activities was to reinforce the socio-economic position of the deceased person and his/her family: a way to remind the community of the living of the importance and standing of these people and thus tangibly reinforce their position in contemporary society. This would include, where appropriate, visual reminders of socio-political status, including indications of wealth and civic achievements, notably public offices held by the deceased.

Additional resources:

L. Bonfante, ed., *Etruscan Life and Afterlife: a Handbook of Etruscan Studies* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986).

O. J. Brendel, *Etruscan Art*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

P. Duell, "The tomba del Triclinio at Tarquinia." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, volume 6, 1927, pp. 5-68.

S. Haynes, *Etruscan Civilization: A Cultural History* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Publications, 2000).

R. R. Holloway, "Conventions of Etruscan Painting in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing at Tarquinii, " *American Journal of Archaeology*, volume 69, number 4, 1965, pp. 341-7.

A. Naso, *La pittura etrusca: guida breve* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2005).

M. Pallottino, *Etruscan Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1952).

S. Steingräber, *Etruscan painting: catalogue raisonné of Etruscan wall paintings* (New York: Johnson, 1985).

S. Steingräber, S., *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting* (Los Angeles (California: Getty Publications, 2006).

J. M. Turfa, ed. *The Etruscan World* (London: Routledge, 2013).

A. Zaccaria Ruggiu, *More regio vivere: il banchetto aristocratico e la casa romana di età arcaica* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2003)

The François Tomb

by DR. JACLYN NEEL

The François Tomb is chock-full of elaborate frescoes with complicated messages we may never fully understand.



Figure **13.2.7.35**: The archeological site of the ancient Etruscan city of Vulci, Italy (photo: **Robin Iversen Rönnlund**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

When Alessandro François and Adolphe Noël des Vergers entered the so-called François Tomb (named for its discoverer) in 1857, they described a magnificent treasure trove in which ancient Etruscan warriors were sleeping on their funeral couches, surrounded by grave goods, armaments, and brilliant tableaux on painted walls. This exceptional tomb from the Ponte Rotto necropolis in Vulci served as a familial burial monument and was used for several centuries in the Hellenistic period.

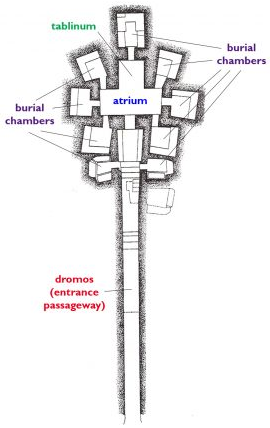


Figure **13.2.7.36**: Plan of the François Tomb, Vulci

The Etruscans believed that the afterlife mirrored their own world, so they provided elaborate “homes” for their dead. The ground plan of the François Tomb is essentially a T shape, with two main chambers (called the *atrium* and *tablinum* after the rooms of typical **Italo-Roman houses**). The main chambers are arranged perpendicularly, with small burial chambers branching out from all sides.

The François Tomb is famous largely because of the frescoes of its main chamber, which can be dated to the fourth century B.C.E. Unlike most Etruscan tomb paintings, the François tomb frescoes seem to include battle scenes — making it a rare, early example of ancient history painting.

Though scholars still have many questions surrounding the exact meanings of these paintings, they reflect important Etruscan ideas about history, and they would have helped reinforce shared narratives about ancestry and the past as family members continually visited the tomb to inter the newly deceased.

Dazzling frescoes

Frescoes fill the walls and ceiling of the tomb. (The original frescoes were removed by a collector in the 19th century, and replaced in the tomb itself by reproductions.) The ceiling is designed to look like the interior of a building with a timber-framed roof structure, while the walls include various figural representations and geometric designs.



Figure **13.2.7.37**: Frieze with Greek key pattern and hunting scene, *atrium* of the François Tomb, Vulci (Villa Albani, Rome)

The *atrium*, which was the first room a visitor would enter, has the most elaborate frescoes. At the upper margin of the wall, there is a small running frieze in two registers: a Greek key pattern on top, with a hunting scene below. Under the hunting scene are larger scenes featuring human figures depicted at nearly life size.



Figure **13.2.7.38**: Portrait of Vel Saties, *atrium* of the François Tomb, Vulci (Villa Albani, Rome)

Although one wall was badly damaged, most of the figures are well-preserved and labeled with text. From this text we know that these figures include a mix of mythological characters (including Sisyphus, Eteocles and Polynices killing each other, and Ajax raping Cassandra) and historical figures, including the founder of the tomb, an Etruscan aristocrat named Vel Saties. This full-length portrait of Vel Saties wearing a *toga picta* has garnered acclaim as the first such portrait in western art.[1] It is likely that the lowest quarter of the wall was obscured by stone benches, although not all of these benches have been preserved.

Scenes from mythology and history

The *tablinum*, or rear room of the tomb, also has benches at the bottom, a fresco representing a running meander at the top, and a scene featuring human figures in between. There are a few differences in the iconography that clearly separate the *atrium* and *tablinum*. First, the *tablinum* does not have a hunting scene below the meander; second, the ceiling patterns are different; and finally, the figural fresco is made up of two narrative scenes, each with labeled characters.



Figure **13.2.7.39**: Achilles sacrificing Trojan prisoners to the shade of Patroclus, *tablinum* of the François Tomb, Vulci (Villa Albani, Rome)

On the left-hand side of the tomb, there is a scene of Achilles sacrificing Trojan prisoners to the shade of Patroclus.

The right-hand side of the tomb shows a battle between two groups of Etruscans. It is this battle scene that has drawn the majority of historical attention. The figures are arranged into a series of dueling pairs on the long wall. Inscriptions identify the men on both sides as Etruscan, but only the

figures who appear to be losing are identified with a specific city. This discrepancy has led scholars to believe that the winners are from Vulci. Because many of the dying men are only partially clothed, this scene has been interpreted as a nocturnal ambush: surprised in their sleep, the defeated figures were apparently not able to fully dress before the fighting started.



Figure **13.2.7.40**: Battle scene, *tablinum* of the François Tomb, Vulci (Villa Albani, Rome)

A link between text and image

Rounding the corner of the fresco is a scene derived from Rome's legendary history. Mastarna (perhaps an alternate name for Servius Tullius, the legendary sixth king of Rome) frees Caelius Vibenna, an Etruscan aristocrat who aided Rome's founder Romulus in his wars against Titus Tatius. Although these two men are portrayed nude (in the manner of mythological figures) there is some evidence that both were considered historical figures.

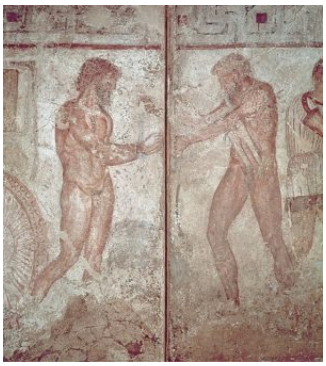


Figure **13.2.7.41**: Mastarna freeing Caelius Vibenna, *tablinum* of the François Tomb, Vulci (Villa Albani, Rome)

These paintings represent an important potential link between ancient visual and textual sources. The Roman emperor Claudius claimed in a speech that Mastarna was the Etruscan name of Rome's sixth king, Servius Tullius, who was a friend of Caelius Vibenna (*ILS* 212). This is very similar to what is portrayed in the frescoes in the François tomb, and so the tomb's iconography seems to provide independent confirmation of Claudius' account.

Many scholars interpret the tomb's iconography as being pro-Etruscan and anti-Roman. Since the Roman state made substantial territorial conquests in Etruria during the fourth century B.C.E., when the tomb was founded, the deployment of the iconography of Caelius Vibenna and Mastarna could have been a symbol of cultural pride among the Etruscans.

Unanswered questions

Despite widespread agreement about the fresco of Mastarna and Caelius Vibenna, questions remain about the meaning of many of the other frescoes in the François tomb.

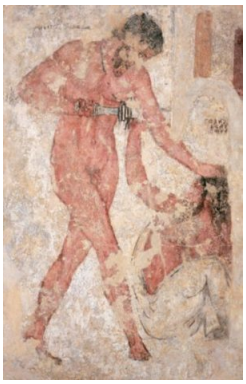


Figure **13.2.7.42**: Camillus slaying Gaius Tarquinius, *atrium* of the Francois Tomb, Vulci (Villa Albani, Rome)

The *atrium* fresco depicts Camillus killing a figure identified as "Gaius Tarquinius of Rome."

While both Camillus and Tarquinius are figures from early Roman history, their presence in the painting is not clearly understood. The name Tarquinius may refer to either of two male Tarquin rulers (or Tarquinii) from early Roman history; however, their first names were not Gaius, but Lucius, and neither of these men was killed by Camillus. Both Tarquinii lived around the time of Mastarna in the 6th century B.C.E., whereas Roman authors believed that Camillus lived about a century later, closer in time to the date of the tomb's construction. To further complicate things, according to Roman tradition, Camillus was famous for defeating Etruscans. His presence in the tomb and his killing of Tarquinius are thus both mysterious.

Scholarly opinion is also divided on the relationship between the Camillus/Tarquinius fresco and the other historical fresco. Many scholars see them as part of the same narrative; others, however, argue that the two must be kept separate. This debate is unlikely to be resolved unless new evidence is discovered.

Mysteries remain

The François Tomb is rightly celebrated for its elaborate decor. Although we cannot fully understand the choices made by the tomb's patron, it seems likely that the frescoes were created to deliver a specific message. This message may have been political (pro-Etruscan/anti-Roman), religious (since most scenes focus on bloodshed), familial (portraying the family history of the owners), or ethical (illustrating moral qualities that were important to the owners). All of these interpretations have been suggested, and it is possible that all of them are correct—that is, that the owner of the tomb had all of these aspects in mind when choosing the iconography. It is the historical fresco, however, that has captured the most interest, as it seems to preserve rare information about Etruscan historical thought.

We may never know the answers to many of these questions, but the François Tomb remains a shining example of Etruscan fresco painting that offers us a glimpse into the tumultuous history of the ancient Mediterranean world.

[1]See Lisa C. Pieraccini, "Etruscan Wall Painting: Insights, Innovations, and Legacy" in Sinclair Bell and Alexandra A. Carpino, *A Companion to the Etruscans* (John Wiley & Sons, 2016), p. 256.

Additional resources:

The François Tomb at the Southern Etrurian Archaeological Heritage website (in Italian)

Image gallery of the frescoes

Vulci Park website with image gallery

B. Andreae, "Die Tomba François. Anspruch und historische Wirklichkeit eines etruskischen Familiengrabes." In B. Andreae, A. Hoffman, C. Weder-Lehman (eds.), *Die Etrusker: Luxus für das Jenseits*. (Munich: Hirmer, 2004), pp. 176-207.

L. Bonfante Warren,"Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970), pp. 49-66.

F. Buranelli and S. Buranelli, *La Tomba François di Vulci*. (Rome: Quasar, 1987).

F. Coarelli, F. "Le pitture della tomba François a Vulci : una proposta di lettura." *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 3 (1983), pp. 43-69.

T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 135-141.

M. Cristofani, "Ricerche sulle pitture della tomba François di Vulci. I fregi decorativi," *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 1 (1967), pp. 189-219.

N. T. de Grummond, *Etruscan Myth, Sacred History, and Legend.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 2006), pp. 175-180, 197-199.

Jean Gagé, "De Tarquinies à Vulci : Les guerres entre Rome et Tarquinies au IVe siècle avant J.-C. et les fresques de la « Tombe François »" *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire publié par l'Ecole française de Rome* 74 (1962), pp. 79-122.

Peter J. Holliday, "Narrative structures in the François tomb," in *Narrative and event in ancient art*, (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 175-197.

A. Hus. *Vulci Étrusque et Étrusco-Romaine*. (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972).

Jaclyn Neel, *Early Rome: Myth and Society* (Wiley, 2017).

Jaclyn Neel, "The Vibennae: Etruscan Heroes and Roman Historiography" *Etruscan Studies* 20.1:1-34.

A. Sgubini Moretti (ed), *Eroi Etruschi e Miti Greci*. (Rome: Soprintendenza per i beni archeologici dell'Etruria meridionale, 2004).

Tomb of the Reliefs

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

All signs point to a party: cushions, drinking equipment, and armor hung on the wall … but a party in a tomb?



Figure **13.2.7.43**: *Tomb of the Reliefs*, late 4th or early 3rd century B.C.E., Necropolis of Banditaccia (Cerveteri), Italy (**photo**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The banquet is over, the dining equipment is stowed, and the warriors sleep on in this Etruscan dining room, yet the evocative signs of a lively scene draw the viewer into the ancient world. These evocations of an Etruscan banquet—from the cushions to the drinking equipment to the armor hung on pegs on the walls—are situated firmly in the funereal sphere, one that is replete with reminders not only of life but also of death. In tomb interiors we find some of our most important and compelling evidence for an understanding of the first millennium B.C.E. world of the Etruscans.



Figure **13.2.7.44**: Entrance (dromos), *Tomb of the Reliefs*, late 4th-early 3rd century B.C.E., Necropolis of Banditaccia (Cerveteri), Italy (**photo**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The *Tomb of the Reliefs* (Italian: *Tomba dei Rilievi*) is a late fourth or early third century B.C.E. rock-cut tomb (*hypogeum*) located in the Banditaccia necropolis of the ancient Etruscan city-state of Caere (now Cerveteri) in Italy (a necropolis is a large, ancient cemetery). The tomb takes its name from a series of painted stucco reliefs that cover the walls and piers of the tomb chamber itself. Unlike some of its neighbors that are covered mounds of earth (tumulus-type tombs), the *Tomb of the Reliefs* is of the rock-cut type and was excavated at a considerable depth in the bedrock, approached by a steep dromos (entranceway). This elite tomb once accommodated several dozen burials and is located, likely not by accident, close to an important tumulus-type tomb from the earlier Orientalizing period.

Inside the tomb

The plan of the tomb is roughly quadrangular. The entire tomb and all of its features have been carved from the bedrock (a type of volcanic mudstone known as tufa). The central block of the room, supported by two piers, is flanked by a series of niches for burials that have been styled to

resemble the dining couches (*klinai*) of the ancient world. Decorative pilasters with volute (scroll-shaped) capitals separate the niches one from the other (see image below).

The tomb's bas relief (low relief) decoration consists of carved bedrock features that have been stuccoed and painted. The decorative schema evokes the interior of an aristocratic house that is prepared to host a banquet or drinking party. The provisions for banqueters include cups and strainers hanging from pegs. The soldiers' armor—shields, helmets, greaves (protective armor for the lower leg)—has been stowed by hanging it from pegs. The pilasters are also decorated, with the items depicted including a range of tools and implements as well as the depiction of a small carnivore, perhaps a weasel.



Figure **13.2.7.45**: Detail of central niche on rear wall, *Tomb of the Reliefs*, late 4th or early 3rd century B.C.E., Necropolis of Banditaccia (Cerveteri), Italy (**photo**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Beneath the central niche of the rear wall we find an allusion to the afterlife. There, under the side table we find, in relief, the hellhound Cerberus and an anguiped (serpents for legs) demon—perhaps the Etruscan god Charun who conducted the souls of the departed to the afterlife? This central niche, equipped with footstool, may have been intended for the male and female heads of the family.

The Matunas family is identified as the owner by way of an inscribed cippus (a small pillar). The inscription reads "Vel Metunas, (son) of Laris, who this tomb built." A locked strongbox included in the relief may be meant to represent the container for storing the records of the family's deeds (*res gestae*).

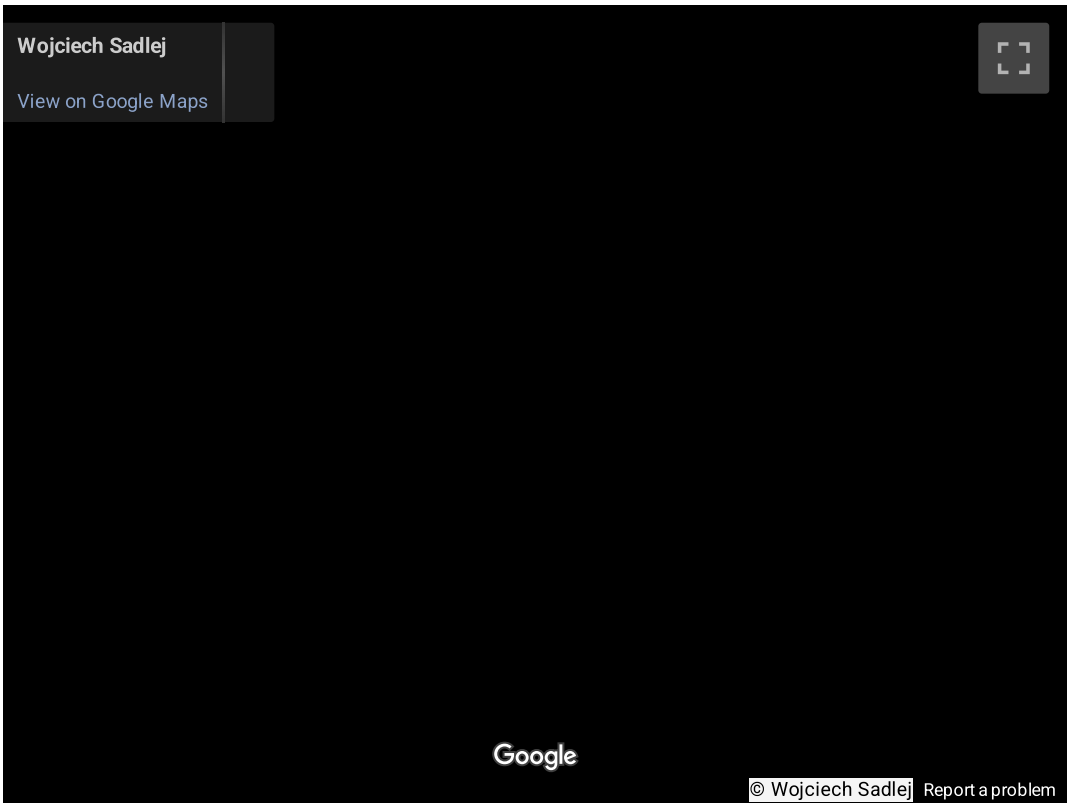


Video **13.2.7.5**: More information about this video and a related panoramic tour **can be found here**.

Interpretation

The *Tomb of the Reliefs* is unusual in the corpus of Etruscan tombs, both for its richness and for its decorative scheme. The Matunas family, among the elite of Caere, make a fairly strong statement, by means of funerary display, about their familial status and accomplishments, even at a time when the cultural autonomy of the Etruscans—and of Caere itself—had already begun to wane. The funeral banquet remains an important and vibrant theme for Etruscan funerary art throughout the course of the Etruscan civilization. This convivial and festive rendering demonstrates to us that the funeral banquet not only sent the deceased off to the afterlife but also reinforced ties and status reminders among the community of the living.

Etruscan tombs at Cerveteri:



Additional resources:

Tomb of the Reliefs (from Archaeological Heritage in Southern Etruria)

Etruscan Tombs from the Toledo Museum of Art

H. Blanck and G. Proietti, *La Tomba dei Rilievi di Cerveteri* (Rome: De Luca, 1986).

O. J. Brendel, *Etruscan Art*. 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995)

M. Cristofani, “Le iscrizioni della tomba dei Rilievi di Cerveteri,” *Studi etruschi* 2 (1966), vol. 34, 221-238.

M. Cristofani, “I leoni funerari della tomba dei rilievi di Cerveteri,” *Archeologia classica* 20 (1968) 321-323.

S. Haynes, *Etruscan Civilization: a Cultural History* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Publications, 2000).

F. Prayon, *Frühetruskische Grab- und Hausarchitektur* (Heidelberg : F.H. Kerle, 1975).

S. Steingräber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Publications, 2006).

J. M. Turfa, ed. *The Etruscan World* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Chimera of Arezzo

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

A vicious mythic beast, the Chimera is a terrifying mix of animals—that even attacks itself.



Figure **13.2.7.46**: *Chimera from Arezzo*, c. 400 B.C.E., bronze, 129 cm in length, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence)

The *Chimera of Arezzo* is one of the best known pieces of Etruscan sculpture to survive from antiquity. Discovered near the Porta San Lorentino of Arezzo, Italy (ancient Arretium) in 1553, the statue was added to the collection of Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany in the sixteenth century and is currently housed in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Florence.



Figure **13.2.7.47**: *Chimera from Arezzo*, c. 400 B.C.E., bronze, 129 cm in length, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence)

When the statue was discovered along with a collection of small bronzes, it was cleaned by Cosimo I and the artist Benvenuto Cellini; it was then displayed as part of the duke's collection in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. Giorgio Vasari (16th century artist, writer, and historian), studied the statue and declared it a bona fide antiquity.

What is a chimera?

The Chimera was a legendary, fire-breathing monster of Greek myth that hailed from Lycia (southwestern Asia Minor). The offspring of Typhon and Echidna, the Chimera ravaged the lands of Lycia until Bellerophon, a hero from Corinth, mounted on the winged horse Pegasus was able to slay it (Hesiod *Theogony* 319-25). Typically the Chimera is a hybrid—often shown with elements from more than one animal incorporated into the whole; most often these include a lion's head, with a goat rising from its back, and a snaky tail.



Figure 13.2.7.48: *Chimera from Arezzo*, c. 400 B.C.E., bronze, 129 cm in length, (photo: E.M. Rosenbery; © Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana-Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Firenze)

The *Chimera of Arezzo* presents a complex composition that seems conceived for viewing in the round. The contortions of the fire-breathing beast, obviously wounded in combat, evoke emotion and interest from the viewer. Its writhing body parts invite contemplation of the movement, pose, and musculature of the figure. While the tail was restored post-discovery, enough of the original composition confirms this dynamism. The lean body also emphasizes the tension in the arched back, the extended claws, and the roaring mouth set amidst the bristling mane.



Figure 13.2.7.49: Detail of back, *Chimera from Arezzo*, c. 400 B.C.E., bronze, 129 cm in length, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence)

The right foreleg (below) bears a dedicatory inscription in the Etruscan language. The inscription reads, “tinścvil” meaning “Offering belonging to Tinia” (*TLE* 663; Bonfante and Bonfante 2002, no. 26 p. 147). This indicates that the statue was a votive object, offered as a gift to the sky god Tinia.



Figure 13.2.7.50: Detail with inscription “tinścvil”, *Chimera from Arezzo*, c. 400 B.C.E., bronze, 129 cm in length, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence)

Interpretation

The *Chimera of Arezzo* is a masterwork of Etruscan bronze working, demonstrating not only a high level of technical proficiency on the part of the artist (or workshop) that produced it but also clearly showing a fine-tuned awareness of the themes of Greek mythology that circulated around the Mediterranean. A. Maggiani discusses the wider Italiote context in which the statue was likely produced—pointing out iconographic comparisons from sites in Magna Graecia such as Metaponto and Kaulonia (Italiote refers to pre-Roman Greek speaking peoples of southern Italy, while Magna Graecia refer to the Greek colonies established in Southern Italy from the 8th century B.C.E. onward).



Figure **13.2.7.51**: Detail with lion's head, *Chimera from Arezzo*, c. 400 B.C.E., bronze, 129 cm in length, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence)

These iconographic trends, indicative of increasing Attic (derived from the area around Athens, Greece) influence, suggests that the *Chimera of Arrezo* was produced by Italiote craftsmen who were influenced by the spread of Attic trends in art in the last years of the fifth century continuing through to the early fourth century B.C.E. The dedication of the statue as a votive offering to Tinia further reminds us of the wealth and sophistication of Etruscan elites who, in this case, could not only afford to commission the statue but could also afford to part with it in what may have been an ostentatious fashion.



The Chimera of Arezzo by **Matthew Brennan** on **Sketchfab**

Additional resources:

G. Bonfante & L. Bonfante, *The Etruscan language: an introduction*, revised edition (Manchester University Press, 2002).

L. Bonfante, "Etruscan Inscriptions and Etruscan Religion." In *The Religion of the Etruscans*, edited by N.T. De Grummond and E. Simon, pp. 9–26 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

W. L. Brown, *The Etruscan Lion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

M. Cristofani, "Per una storia del collezionismo archeologico nella Toscana granducale. I. I grandi bronzi," *Prospettiva*, 1979, vol. 17, pp. 4–15 .

M. Cristofani, *I bronzi degli Etruschi* (Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1985).

M. Cristofani, "Chimereide," *Prospettiva* vol. 61 (1991), pp. 2-5.

A. M. Gáldy, "The Chimera from Arezzo and Renaissance Etruscology," in *Common Ground: Archaeology, Art, Science, and Humanities. Proceedings of the XVIth International Congress of Classical Archaeology*, Boston, August 23–26, 2003, edited by C.C. Mattusch, A.A. Donahue, and A. Brauer, pp. 111–13. (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006).

A. M. Gáldy, *Cosimo I de'Medici as Collector: Antiquities and Archaeology in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

M. Iozzo et al., *The Chimaera of Arezzo* (Florence: Edizioni Polistampa, 2009).

M. Pallottino, "Vasari e la Chimera," *Prospettiva*, vol. 8 (1977), pp. 4–6.

R. Pecchioli, "Indagini radiografiche," in *La Chimera d'Arezzo*, edited by F. Nicosia and M. Diana, pp. 89–93 (Florence: Il Torchio, 1992).

C. M. Stibbe, "Bellerophon and the Chimaira on a Lakonian Cup by the Boreads Painter," in *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, vol. 5, edited by M. True, pp. 5–12 (Occasional Papers on Antiquities, vol. 7) (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1991).

J. M. Turfa, "Votive Offerings in Etruscan Religion," In *The Religion of the Etruscans*, edited by N.T. De Grummond and E. Simon, pp. 90–115 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

Beth Cohen, "Chimera of Arezzo," *The American Journal of Archaeology*, July 2010 (114.3).

"Chimera in Bronzo," from the Ministero per i beni Culturali e Ambientali Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana Sezione Didattica (in Italian)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

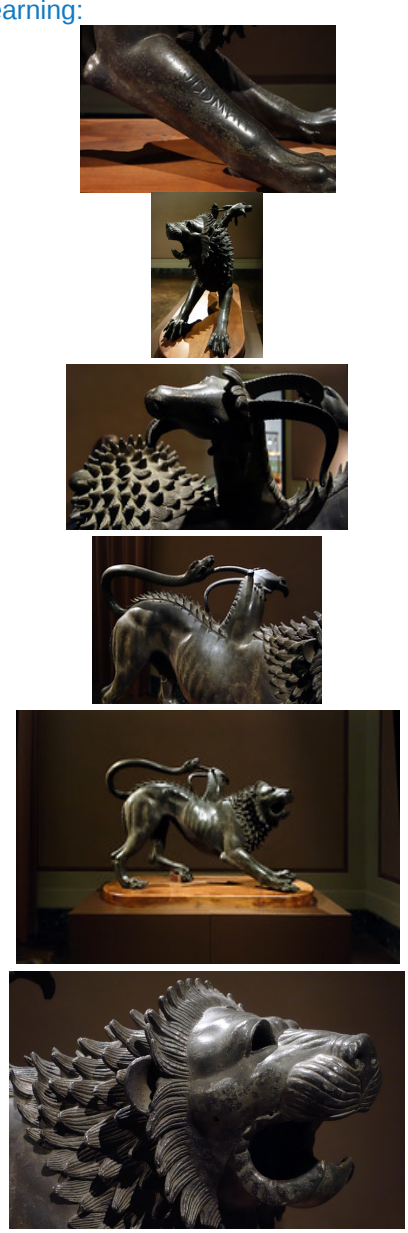


Figure 13.2.7.52: More SmartHistory images…

…

Mars of Todi

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Lightning struck this statue dedicated to the Etruscan god of war, marking it as a particularly sacred object.



Figure **13.2.7.54**: Mars of Todi, late 5th or early 4th century B.C.E., hollow-cast bronze, 141 cm high (Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican Museums)

The religious sanctuaries of ancient Italy were busy and multi-faceted places, playing roles not only in religion and ritual, but also in commerce and connectivity. People visited sanctuaries to participate in ritual, connect with their community, and to commune with the gods. The religions of ancient Italy relied heavily on votive practices—that is the giving of gifts or offerings to the divinities that helped to affirm a pact or agreement between the worshipper and a god or goddess. Votives could be humble objects from everyday life, or they could be purpose-made prestige objects. In all cases, votives are particularly instructive in informing us about ritual practice in the ancient world.

The statue

The so-called *Mars of Todi* is an inscribed Etruscan bronze statue dating to the late fifth or early fourth century B.C.E. It was discovered in 1835 on the slopes of Mount Santo near Todi, Italy (ancient *Tuder*). The hollow-cast bronze statue is the product of an Etruscan workshop but was likely produced for the market in Umbria (a region in central Italy).

The statue measures 141 cm in height, making it nearly life-sized. The Etruscans were adept metalworkers and Orvieto (Etruscan *Velzna*, Roman *Volsinii*) was particularly known for the production of bronze statues. The Romans reportedly removed 2,000 bronzes from Volsinii when they captured it in 265 B.C.E. (Pliny, *Natural History* 34.33). It is possible that the *Mars of Todi* was originally produced there.



Figure **13.2.7.55**: Head (detail), *Mars of Todi*, end of the 5th century B.C.E., hollow-cast bronze, 141 cm high (Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican Museums), photo: **Nick Thompson** (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The warrior is clearly a prestige object, a worthy votive dedication. It is likely that the object was dedicated to Laran, the Etruscan god of war. Dressed in intricately worked plate armor, the figure takes a contrapposto stance and indicates that the Etruscan artist was aware of the formal elements of the Classical style of sculpture. These classicizing elements indicates that the artists of Etruria are not only aware of Mediterranean stylistic conventions but also that they are comfortable enough with these stylistic trends that they can in turn adapt and apply them to local tastes and demand. Likely attached elements—including a patera (a libation bowl) held in the right hand and a spear in the left—have not survived, nor has the helmet that he wore atop his head.

The inscription



Figure 13.2.7.56: Caption (detail), *Mars of Todi*, end of the 5th century B.C.E., hollow-cast bronze, 141 cm high (Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican Museums)

The bronze statue bears an inscription in the Umbrian language that has been written using Etruscan characters. This dedication is inscribed on the skirt that is attached to the breastplate and reads "*Ahal Trutitis dunum dede*" ("Ahal Trutitis gave [this as a] gift"). The dedicant—Ahal Trutitis—has a name that is Celtic in origin, which lends this dedication of an Etruscan object in an Umbrian sanctuary a particularly cosmopolitan element.

Interpretation

The Mars of Todi is a rare object in that many prestige votives of its stature have not survived from antiquity. The careful burial of this object—perhaps after it had been struck by lightning*—accounts for its survival. The composition represents the tradition of libations made by soldiers prior to battle, an opportunity for beseeching the gods for support and success in battle. The dedication of this object is also indicative of the dynamic human landscape of ancient Italy—within that human landscape sanctuaries often served as nodal points where diverse cultures came into contact with one another. This votive statue, then, tells us a great deal not only about ritual practice and iconography, but also about those who frequented sanctuaries in ancient Italy.

*Note on lightning as sacred

In ancient Italic religion lightning was sacred, as it was connected to the chief sky god, called Iuppiter (Jupiter) by the Romans and Tinia by the Etruscans. Thus on occasions when lightning struck the Earth, the spot which—or the object which—the lightning "selected" (*fulgur conditum*) would become even more sacred. Roman ritual doctrine considered these consecrated spots special and thus they were often marked in some way. The Puteal Libonis (also known as Puteal Scribonianum) in the Comitium of the Forum Romanum provides such an example; after a spot in the Comitium had been struck by lightning, it was marked with a puteal (a marble wellhead) (Festus 333). The Romans considered these special shrines, which often had a circular templum (a sacred, inaugurated precinct), as bidentalia (from the Latin noun *bidental*, *bidentalis* "a place struck by lightning") and it was forbidden to tread on them. In the case of the Mars of Todi, the statue was found carefully buried in a stone-lined cist, leading to the conclusion that the statue had been struck by lightning, which caused it to fall from its podium and that it was subsequently ritually buried. The ritual burial of votive objects is a common practice in ancient Mediterranean religions, but the treatment of these bidentalia was special in its own right.

Additional resources:

This sculpture in the Gregorio Etruscan Museum (Vatican Museums)

G. Bonfante and L. Bonfante, *The Etruscan Language: An Introduction*, revised edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 26.

G. J. Bradley, *Ancient Umbria: State, Culture, and Identity in Central Italy from the Iron Age to the Augustan Era: State, Culture, and Identity in Central Italy from the Iron Age to the Augustan Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 92.

O. J. Brendel, *Etruscan Art*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) p. 317.

D. Strong and J.M.C. Toynbee, *Roman Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976, 1988), pp. 32–33.

F. Roncalli, *Il Marte di Todi: bronzistica etrusca ed ispirazione classica* (Rome: Tip. poliglotta Vaticana, 1973).

E. Simon, "Gods in Harmony: The Etruscan Pantheon," in *The Religion of the Etruscans*, ed. by N. T. De Grummond and E. Simon, pp. 45-65 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

J. M. Turfa, *Divining the Etruscan World: the Brontoscopic Calendar and Religious Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.2.7.57**: More SmartHistory images…

Aule Metele (Arringatore)

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

An Etruscan in Roman clothing, this figure is a masterwork—made as Etruscan culture was slipping away.



Figure **13.2.7.58**: Aule Metele (Arringatore), from Cortona, Italy, early 1st century B.C.E., bronze, 67 inches high (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence), (image: **corneliagraco**, CC BY 2.0)

The image, status, and stature of the magistrate in the course of performing the duties of his office commands respect—and no pose is more riveting than that of the orator.

L'Arringatore ("The Orator") is a hollow-cast bronze statue that was recovered from Lake Trasimeno in 1566. The statue is an important example of bronze sculpture in later first millennium B.C.E. Italy and indicates the gradual Romanization of Etruscan art.

The statue

The life-size statue depicts a draped adult male, standing with his right arm outstretched. The figure adopts a frontal pose with a slight contrapposto stance (contrapposto refers to the figure shifting his weight onto his right leg). Based on the inscription on the statue, the figure is identified as Aulus Metellus (or Aule Metele in Etruscan). He is clearly a magistrate and his posture seems to be that of the orator who is in the process of addressing the crowd. He wears a tunic over which is draped a toga—the formal attire of the magistrate. The toga is wrapped around the body, leaving the right arm free. On his feet are the high boots that were commonly worn by Roman senators. His expression and slightly opened mouth make him a compelling figure. The statue was originally erected by the community in honor of Aulus Metellus.

The inscription



Figure **13.2.7.59**: Inscription (detail), *Aule Metele (Arringatore)*, from Cortona, Italy, early 1st century B.C.E., bronze, 67 inches high (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence) (image: **corneliagraco**, CC BY 2.0)

The lower hem of the short toga carries an Etruscan inscription: "*auleśi meteliś ve[luś] vesial clenśi / cen flereś tece sanśl tenine / tu θineś χisvlicś*" which can be interpreted as reading, "To (or from) Auli Meteli, the son of Vel and Vesi, Tenine (?) set up this statue as a votive offering to Sans, by deliberation of the people" (*TLE* 651; *CIE* 4196).

Interpretation

The statue of Aulus Metellus offers us a glimpse of the changing socio-political landscape of the Italian peninsula during the latter first millennium B.C.E.—a period in which sweeping change brought on by the hegemonic fortunes of Rome and its booming population, signalled profound and lasting change for other Italic peoples, including the Etruscans. As Rome's territory expanded during the fifth through first centuries B.C.E., her neighbors were gradually absorbed into the sphere of Roman cultural, economic, and political influence. Some groups, of course, resisted in one way or another, while others gladly "joined up" through political and military treaties and through adopting a Roman lifestyle. This process of acculturation–or Romanization, to use a term that is considered outmoded by some scholars—means that cultural heterogeneity becomes less visible in the archaeological record, replaced instead by a more homogeneous cultural model. These were the fortunes of the Etruscans—as the autonomy of the various Etruscan states eroded, the Etruscans themselves elected to adopt the trappings of a Roman culture that was, in turn, indicative of wider, pan-Mediterranean dynamics. Etruscan art, politics, and even language gradually slipped away.

Thus *L'Arringatore* is one of our latest surviving examples of a sculptural masterwork that still demonstrates the traits of an Etruscan workshop, all the while packaged for an increasingly Roman world. The statue clearly wears the short *toga exigua* (a kind of narrow toga) and senatorial boots that come from the Roman sphere. He is posed as an orator—highlighting his political career as both Etruscan and Roman aristocrats did. His haircut is in keeping with those of Roman aristocrats and his face may betray some evidence of the verism (truthfulness) popular among Roman elites of the late Republic. The statue still carries an inscription in Etruscan, though, and the working of the bronze is in keeping with the tendencies of Etruscan craftsmanship. Surely the historical Aulus Metellus witnessed a world that was changing rapidly and this statue that carries his inscribed name still bears silent witness to the patterns and dynamics of socio-cultural change in the Roman Mediterranean.

Additional resources:

L. Bonfante, *Etruscan Dress* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

G. Bonfante and L. Bonfante, *The Etruscan Language: An Introduction*, revised Edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). p. 183 no. 66.

O. J. Brendel, *Etruscan Art*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

A. Corbeill, "The Republican Body," in *A Companion to the Roman Republic*, edited by N. Rosenstein and R. Morstein-Marx, 439-456. (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2006).

T. Dohrn, *Der Arringatore: Bronzestatue im Museo archeologico von Florenz* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1968).

S. Haynes, *Etruscan Civilization: a Cultural History* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Publications, 2000).

J. M. Turfa, ed., *The Etruscan World* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Florence

Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia (from UNESCO/NHK)

by UNESCO and NIPPON HOSO KYOKAI

Doors to the afterlife, Etruscan tombs were happily decorated. But as war increased, that began to change.



Video 13.2.7.6: Video from UNESCO / Nippon Hoso Kyokai

These two large Etruscan cemeteries reflect different types of burial practices from the 9th to the 1st century BC, and bear witness to the achievements of Etruscan culture. Which over nine centuries developed the earliest urban civilization in the northern Mediterranean. Some of the tombs are monumental, cut in rock and topped by impressive tumuli (burial mounds). Many feature carvings on their walls, others have wall paintings of outstanding quality. The necropolis near Cerveteri, known as Banditaccia, contains thousands of tombs organized in a city-like plan, with streets, small squares and neighbourhoods. The site contains very different types of tombs: trenches cut in rock; tumuli; and some, also carved in rock, in the shape of huts or houses with a wealth of structural details. These provide the only surviving evidence of Etruscan residential architecture. The necropolis of Tarquinia, also known as Monterozzi, contains 6,000 graves cut in the rock. It is famous for its 200 painted tombs, the earliest of which date from the 7th century BC.

13.2.7: Etruscan is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.7: Etruscan** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.8: Ancient Rome I

Ancient Rome

Julius Caesar, the Colosseum, and the birth of Christianity—all roads lead to Rome.

753 B.C.E. - 410 C.E.

Beginner's guide: Ancient Rome

Roman art spans almost 1,000 years and three continents from Europe into Africa and Asia.

753 B.C.E. - 410 C.E.

The mythic founding of the Roman Republic is supposed to have happened in 509 B.C.E. when the last Etruscan king was overthrown. Augustus's rise to power in 27 B.C.E. signaled the end of the Roman Republic and the formation of the Empire. Gods and religions from other parts of the empire made their way to Rome's capital including the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Persian god Mithras, and ultimately—Christianity.

Introduction to ancient Rome

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.2.8.1**: *Cameo with double portrait of the emperor Trajan and his wife Plotina*, c. 105-115 C.E., sardonyx, 5 x 4.3 cm, © Trustees of the British Museum

From a republic to an empire

Legend has it that Rome was founded in 753 B.C.E. by Romulus, its first king. In 509 B.C.E. Rome became a republic ruled by the Senate (wealthy landowners and elders) and the Roman people. During the 450 years of the republic Rome conquered the rest of Italy and then expanded into France, Spain, Turkey, North Africa and Greece.

Rome became very Greek influenced or "Hellenized," and the city was filled with Greek architecture, literature, statues, wall-paintings, mosaics, pottery and glass. But with Greek culture came Greek gold, and generals and senators fought over this new wealth. The Republic collapsed in civil war and the Roman empire began.

In 31 B.C.E. Octavian, the adopted son of Julius Caesar, defeated Cleopatra and Mark Antony at Actium. This brought the last civil war of the republic to an end. Although it was hoped by many that the republic could be restored, it soon became clear that a new political system was forming: the emperor became the focus of the empire and its people. Although, in theory, Augustus (as Octavian became known) was only the first citizen and ruled by consent of the Senate, he was in fact the empire's supreme authority. As emperor he could pass his powers to the heir he decreed and was a king in all but name.

The empire, as it could now be called, enjoyed unparalleled prosperity as the network of cities boomed, and goods, people and ideas moved freely by land and sea. Many of the masterpieces associated with Roman art, such as the mosaics and wall paintings of Pompeii, gold and silver tableware, and glass, including the Portland Vase, were created in this period. The empire ushered in an economic and social revolution that changed the face of the Roman world: service to the empire and the emperor, not just birth and social status, became the key to advancement.

Successive emperors, such as Tiberius and Claudius, expanded Rome's territory. By the time of the emperor Trajan, in the late first century C.E., the Roman empire, with about fifty million inhabitants, encompassed the whole of the Mediterranean, Britain, much of northern and

central Europe and the Near East.



Figure 13.2.8.2: Map of the Roman empire during the reign of the Emperor Trajan

A vast empire

Starting with Augustus in 27 B.C.E., the emperors ruled for five hundred years. They expanded Rome's territory and by about 200 C.E., their vast empire stretched from Syria to Spain and from Britain to Egypt. Networks of roads connected rich and vibrant cities, filled with beautiful public buildings. A shared Greco-Roman culture linked people, goods and ideas.

The imperial system of the Roman Empire depended heavily on the personality and standing of the emperor himself. The reigns of weak or unpopular emperors often ended in bloodshed at Rome and chaos throughout the empire as a whole. In the third century C.E. the very existence of the empire was threatened by a combination of economic crisis, weak and short-lived emperors and usurpers (and the violent civil wars between their rival supporting armies), and massive barbarian penetration into Roman territory.

Relative stability was re-established in the fourth century C.E., through the emperor Diocletian's division of the empire. The empire was divided into eastern and western halves and then into more easily administered units. Although some later emperors such as Constantine ruled the whole empire, the division between east and west became more marked as time passed. Financial pressures, urban decline, underpaid troops and consequently overstretched frontiers – all of these finally caused the collapse of the western empire under waves of barbarian incursions in the early fifth century C.E. The last western emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed in 476 C.E., though the empire in the east, centered on Byzantium (Constantinople), continued until the fifteenth century.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Introduction to ancient Roman art

by DR. JESSICA LEAY AMBLER

With the lands of Greece, Egypt, and beyond, Ancient Rome was a melting pot of cultures.



Figure 13.2.8.3: View of the Roman forum, looking toward the Colosseum (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Roman art: when and where

Roman art is a very broad topic, spanning almost 1,000 years and three continents, from Europe into Africa and Asia. The first Roman art can be dated back to 509 B.C.E., with the legendary founding of the Roman Republic, and lasted until 330 C.E. (or much longer, if you include Byzantine art). Roman art also encompasses a broad spectrum of media including marble, painting, mosaic, gems, silver and bronze work, and terracottas, just to name a few. The city of Rome was a melting pot, and the Romans had no qualms about adapting artistic influences from the other Mediterranean cultures that surrounded and preceded them. For this reason it is common to see Greek, Etruscan and Egyptian influences throughout Roman art. This is not to say that all of Roman art is derivative, though, and one of the challenges for specialists is to define what is "Roman" about Roman art.



Figure **13.2.8.4**: *Doryphoros (Spear Bearer)*, Roman copy after an original by the Greek sculptor Polykleitos from c. 450-440 B.C.E., marble, 6'6" (Archaeological Museum, Naples) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Greek art certainly had a powerful influence on Roman practice; the Roman poet Horace famously said that "Greece, the captive, took her savage victor captive," meaning that Rome (though it conquered Greece) adapted much of Greece's cultural and artistic heritage (as well as importing many of its most famous works). It is also true that many Romans commissioned versions of famous Greek works from earlier centuries; this is why we often have marble versions of lost Greek bronzes such as the *Doryphoros* by Polykleitos.

The Romans did not believe, as we do today, that to have a copy of an artwork was of any less value that to have the original. The copies, however, were more often variations rather than direct copies, and they had small changes made to them. The variations could be made with humor, taking the serious and somber element of Greek art and turning it on its head. So, for example, a famously gruesome Hellenistic sculpture of the satyr Marsyas being flayed was converted in a Roman dining room to a knife handle (currently in the National Archaeological Museum in Perugia). A knife was the very element that would have been used to flay the poor satyr, demonstrating not only the owner's knowledge of Greek mythology and important statuary, but also a dark sense of humor. From the direct reporting of the Greeks to the utilitarian and humorous luxury item of a Roman enthusiast, Marsyas made quite the journey. But the Roman artist was not simply copying. He was also adapting in a conscious and brilliant way. It is precisely this ability to adapt, convert, combine elements and add a touch of humor that makes Roman art Roman.

Republican Rome

The mythic founding of the Roman Republic is supposed to have happened in 509 B.C.E., when the last Etruscan king, Tarquinius Superbus, was overthrown. During the Republican period, the Romans were governed by annually elected magistrates, the two consuls being the most important among them, and the Senate, which was the ruling body of the state. Eventually the system broke down and civil wars ensued between 100 and 42 B.C.E. The wars were finally brought to an end when Octavian (later called Augustus) defeated Mark Antony in the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.

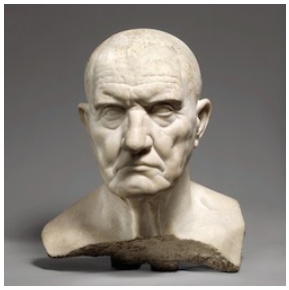


Figure **13.2.8.5**: *Marble bust of a man*, mid 1st century, marble, 14 3/8 inches (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In the Republican period, art was produced in the service of the state, depicting public sacrifices or celebrating victorious military campaigns (like the Monument of Aemilius Paullus at Delphi). Portraiture extolled the communal goals of the Republic; hard work, age, wisdom, being

a community leader and soldier. Patrons chose to have themselves represented with balding heads, large noses, and extra wrinkles, demonstrating that they had spent their lives working for the Republic as model citizens, flaunting their acquired wisdom with each furrow of the brow. We now call this portrait style veristic, referring to the hyper-naturalistic features that emphasize every flaw, creating portraits of individuals with personality and essence.

Imperial Rome

Augustus's rise to power in Rome signaled the end of the Roman Republic and the formation of Imperial rule. Roman art was now put to the service of aggrandizing the ruler and his family. It was also meant to indicate shifts in leadership. The major periods in Imperial Roman art are named after individual rulers or major dynasties, they are:

Julio-Claudian (14-68 C.E.)
Flavian (69-98 C.E.)
Trajanic (98-117 C.E.)
Hadrianic (117-138 C.E.)
Antonine (138-193 C.E.)
Severan (193-235 C.E.)
Soldier Emperor (235-284 C.E.)
Tetrarchic (284-312 C.E.)
Constantinian (307-337 C.E.)

Figure **13.2.8.7**: Relief from the *Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace)*, 9 B.C.E. monument is dedicated, marble (Museo dell'Ara Pacis, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Imperial art often hearkened back to the Classical art of the past. "Classical", or "Classicizing," when used in reference to Roman art refers broadly to the influences of Greek art from the Classical and Hellenistic periods (480-31 B.C.E.). Classicizing elements include the smooth lines, elegant drapery, idealized nude bodies, highly naturalistic forms and balanced proportions that the Greeks had perfected over centuries of practice.

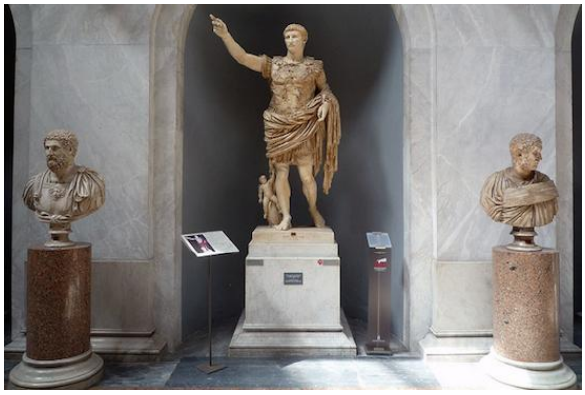


Figure **13.2.8.8**: *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Augustus and the Julio-Claudian dynasty were particularly fond of adapting Classical elements into their art. The *Augustus of Primaporta* was made at the end of Augustus's life, yet he is represented as youthful, idealized and strikingly handsome like a young athlete; all hallmarks of Classical art. The emperor Hadrian was known as a philhellene, or lover of all things Greek. The emperor himself began sporting a Greek "philosopher's beard" in his official portraiture, unheard of before this time. Décor at his rambling Villa at Tivoli included mosaic copies of famous Greek paintings, such as *Battle of the Centaurs and Wild Beasts* by the legendary ancient Greek painter Zeuxis.



Figure 13.2.8.9: *Pair of Centaurs Fighting Cats of Prey* from Hadrian's Villa, mosaic, c. 130 C.E. (Altes Museum, Berlin)

Later Imperial art moved away from earlier Classical influences, and Severan art signals the shift to art of Late Antiquity. The characteristics of Late Antique art include frontality, stiffness of pose and drapery, deeply drilled lines, less naturalism, squat proportions and lack of individualism. Important figures are often slightly larger or are placed above the rest of the crowd to denote importance.



Figure 13.2.8.10: *Chariot procession of Septimus Severus*, relief from the attach of the Arch of Septimus Severus, Leptis Magna, Libya, 203 C.E., marble, 5; 6" high (Castle Museum, Tripoli)

In relief panels from the *Arch of Septimius Severu*s from Lepcis Magna, Septimius Severus and his sons, Caracalla and Geta ride in a chariot, marking them out from an otherwise uniform sea of repeating figures, all wearing the same stylized and flat drapery. There is little variation or individualism in the figures and they are all stiff and carved with deep, full lines. There is an ease to reading the work; Septimius is centrally located, between his sons and slightly taller; all the other figures direct the viewer's eyes to him.



Figure 13.2.8.11: Relief from the Arch of Constantine, 315 C.E., Rome (photo: F. Tronchin, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Constantinian art continued to integrate the elements of Late Antiquity that had been introduced in the Severan period, but they are now developed even further. For example, on the oratio relief panel on the Arch of Constantine, the figures are even more squat, frontally oriented, similar to one another, and there is a clear lack of naturalism. Again, the message is meant to be understood without hesitation: Constantine is in power.

Who made Roman art?

We don't know much about who made Roman art. Artists certainly existed in antiquity but we know very little about them, especially during the Roman period, because of a lack of documentary evidence such as contracts or letters. What evidence we do have, such as Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, pays little attention to contemporary artists and often focuses more on the Greek artists of the past. As a result, scholars do not refer to specific artists but consider them generally, as a largely anonymous group.



Figure 13.2.8.12: *Painted Garden*, removed from the triclinium (dining room) in the Villa of Livia Drusilla, Prima Porta, fresco, 30-20 B.C.E. (Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo, Rome)

What did they make?

Roman art encompasses private art made for Roman homes as well as art in the public sphere. The elite Roman home provided an opportunity for the owner to display his wealth, taste and education to his visitors, dependents, and clients. Since Roman homes were regularly visited and were meant to be viewed, their decoration was of the utmost importance. Wall paintings, mosaics, and sculptural displays were all incorporated seamlessly with small luxury items such as bronze figurines and silver bowls. The subject matter ranged from busts of important ancestors to mythological and historical scenes, still lifes, and landscapes—all to create the idea of an erudite patron steeped in culture.



Figure 13.2.8.13: *Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus: Battle of Romans and Barbarians*, c. 250-260 C.E., preconneus marble, 150 cm high (Palazzo Altemps: Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome).

When Romans died, they left behind imagery that identified them as individuals. Funerary imagery often emphasized unique physical traits or trade, partners or favored deities. Roman funerary art spans several media and all periods and regions. It included portrait busts, wall reliefs set into working-class group tombs (like those at Ostia), and elite decorated tombs (like the Via delle Tombe at Pompeii). In addition, there were painted Faiyum portraits placed on mummies and sarcophagi. Because death touched all levels of society—men and women, emperors, elites, and freedmen—funerary art recorded the diverse experiences of the various peoples who lived in the Roman empire



Figure **13.2.8.14**: Column of Trajan, Carrera marble, completed 113 C.E., Rome, dedicated to Emperor Trajan in honor of his victory over Dacia (now Romania) 101-02 and 105-06 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The public sphere is filled with works commissioned by the emperors such as portraits of the imperial family or bath houses decorated with copies of important Classical statues. There are also commemorative works like the triumphal arches and columns that served a didactic as well as a celebratory function. The arches and columns (like the Arch of Titus or the Column of Trajan), marked victories, depicted war, and described military life. They also revealed foreign lands and enemies of the state. They could also depict an emperor's successes in domestic and foreign policy rather than in war, such as Trajan's Arch in Benevento. Religious art is also included in this category, such as the cult statues placed in Roman temples that stood in for the deities they represented, like Venus or Jupiter. Gods and religions from other parts of the empire also made their way to Rome's capital including the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Persian god Mithras and ultimately Christianity. Each of these religions brought its own unique sets of imagery to inform proper worship and instruct their sect's followers.

It can be difficult to pinpoint just what is Roman about Roman art, but it is the ability to adapt, to take in and to uniquely combine influences over centuries of practice that made Roman art distinct.

Additional resources:

Clarke, John R. *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C-A.D. 315*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Kleiner, Fred S. *A History of Roman Art*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.

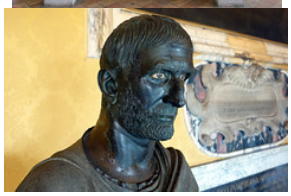
Ramage, Nancy H., and Andrew Ramage. *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine*. Fifth Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2008.

Stewart, Peter. *The Social History of Roman Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Zanker, Paul. *Roman Art*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010.

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

















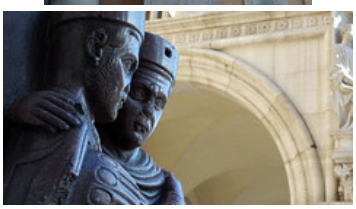




Figure 13.2.8.15: More SmartHistory images…

Ancient Rome

by DR. BERNARD FRISCHER and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Fly over a reconstruction of one of history's greatest cities to experience Rome as the Romans knew it. This reconstruction is based on two decades of research and the input of dozens of specialists.



Video 13.2.8.1:

To learn more about the architecture seen in this video go to:

Arch of Constantine:

> *Arch of Constantine, Rome*

Arch of Titus

The Arch of Titus

Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine

Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine

Roman Forum

Forum Romanum (The Roman Forum)

Imperial Fora

Imperial fora

Forum and column of Trajan

The Forum and Markets of Trajan

Pantheon

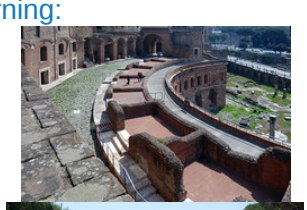
The Pantheon (Rome)

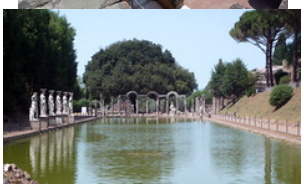
Colosseum

To learn more about Rome Reborn, visit
https://www.romereborn.org/

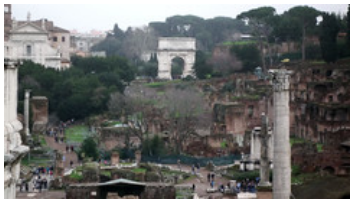
Speakers: Dr. Bernie Frischer and Dr. Steven Zucker
A project between SmartHistory and Rome Reborn – with Dr. Bernard Frischer

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:





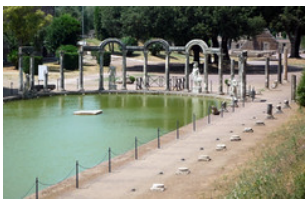


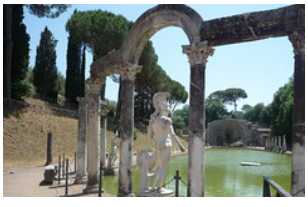












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88679





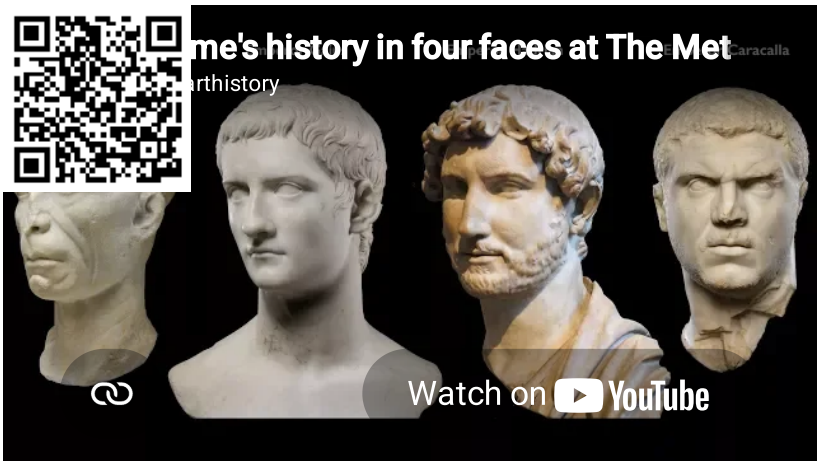


Figure **13.2.8.16**: More SmartHistory images…

Rome's history in four faces at The Met

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Realism, ideal beauty, and military might—explore the evolution of Roman portraits and political imagery.



Additional resources:

Marble portrait of the emperor Caracalla at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Marble portrait bust of the emperor Gaius, known as Caligula at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Roman Portrait Sculpture: The Stylistic Cycle on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Roman Portrait Sculpture: Republican through Constantinian on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Damnatio memoriae—Roman sanctions against memory

by DR. FRANCESCA TRONCHIN

If the Roman government condemned a ruler, his portraits often died with him.



Figure **13.2.8.17**: Detail of Geta (face removed) and Caracalla from the Severan Tondo, c. 200 C.E., tempera on wood, 30.5 cm diameter (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

We know that Roman emperors were often **raised to the status of gods** after their deaths. However, just as many were given the opposite treatment—officially erased from memory.

Condemning memory

Damnatio memoriae is a term we use to describe a Roman phenomenon in which the government condemned the memory of a person who was seen as a tyrant, traitor, or other sort of enemy to the state. The images of such condemned figures would be destroyed, their names erased from inscriptions, and if the doomed person were an emperor or other government official, even his laws could be rescinded. Coins bearing the image of an emperor who had his memory damned would be recalled or cancelled. In some cases, the residence of the condemned could be razed or otherwise destroyed.[1]

This was more than a form of casual, politically-motivated vandalism, carried out by disgruntled individuals, since the condemnation required approval of the Senate and the effects of the official denunciation could be seen far from Rome. There are many examples of *damnatio memoriae* throughout the history of the Roman Republic and Empire. As many as 26 emperors through the reign of **Constantine** had their memories condemned; conversely, about 25 emperors were deified after their deaths. The damning of memory phenomenon,

however, is not unique to the Roman world. Egyptian pharaohs **Hatshepsut** and **Akhenaten** likewise had many of their their images, monuments, and inscriptions destroyed by political opponents or religious purists.[2]

Did it work?



Figure **13.2.8.18**: Portrait of Emperor Caligula, 37-41 C.E., marble, 28 cm high (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, photo: **Dr. Francesca Tronchin**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Instances of *damnatio memoriae* were not always completely successful in wiping out the memory of an individual. Among the emperors who suffered *damnatio memoriae* are some of the best-known figures from Roman history, including **Gaius** (a.k.a. Caligula) and Nero. The notoriety of these men comes to us not only from texts written during their lifetimes and later, but also from images which survived the immediate violence of the *damnatio memoriae* and then centuries of neglect.

For instance, one marble portrait preserves not only the image of Caligula, but also traces of paint, informing us of the existence of this condemned emperor as well as the polychromy of ancient sculpture. In antiquity, these types of images were considered very powerful and closely linked with the identity of the person they represented.



Figure **13.2.8.19**: Two portrait heads of Emperor Caligula, created 37-41 C.E., marble, both detached from the sculpted bodies after his death. Left: 43 x 21.5 x 25 cm (**The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles**); right: 33 x 21 x 23.5 cm (**Yale University Art Gallery**)

Small heads, big reputations

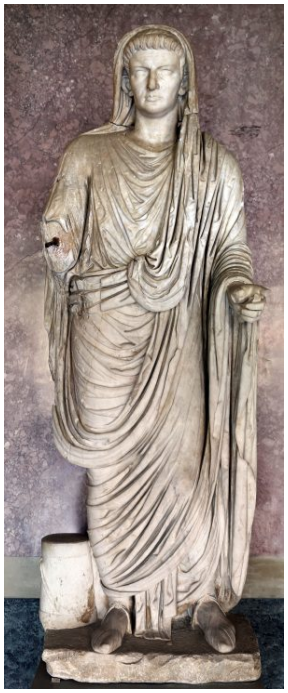


Figure 13.2.8.20: Portrait statue of Caligula, recarved as Claudius, from the Basilica at Velleia, first half of the 1st century C.E., marble, 221 cm high (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma, photo: Sailko, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Caligula was the first emperor to have his images purposefully destroyed after his death. It is impossible to know how many portraits in bronze or other precious metals were melted down, but a number of marble portraits show traces of being re-cut or simply dismantled and disposed of. Workshop procedures for official imperial portraits dictated that many full-length statues in stone were to be created in two pieces. So heads of Caligula, like those now in the Getty Villa and the Yale University Art Gallery (above), could be fairly easily detached from the bodies and tossed aside and a portrait head of the new emperor would swiftly replace the offending one.

A full-length, one-piece statue of a *pontifex maximus* (chief state priest, a title held by the emperor) from Velleia, however, apparently underwent a kind of sculptural recycling. The face of Caligula's successor Claudius appears rather small in comparison to the head and the rest of the body—suggesting to some scholars that it was cut down from a portrait of Caligula.

Cancelleria Reliefs: Nerva replaces Domitian

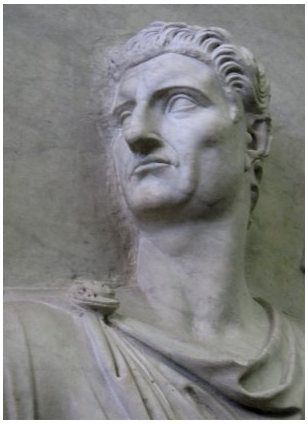


Figure 13.2.8.20: Domitian recut into Nerva, detail of a felief from the Palazzo della Cancelleria, 81-96 C.E., marble (Museo Gregoriano Profano, Vatican Museums, photo: Erin Taylor, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

A similar re-cutting is evident on a set of reliefs found in Rome and now housed in the Vatican Museums (below). The so-called Cancelleria Reliefs show mythological and allegorical figures celebrating members of the Flavian dynasty for their military successes.

In one, Domitian departs from Rome on a military campaign, ushered out of the city by Victoria, Mars, and Minerva, as well as personifications of the Senate and the Roman people. Yet the head atop the stately tunic-clad body of the emperor is not that of Domitian. Instead it is Nerva, who succeeded Domitian after his assassination and subsequent *damnatio memoriae*. As in the Claudius *pontifex*

maximus statue from Velleia, Nerva's face is far too small for the relief and even appears comical when compared to the divinities surrounding him.[3] Apparently the sculpture was recarved.



Figure **13.2.8.21**: Relief from the Palazzo della Cancelleria, 81-96 C.E., marble (Museo Gregoriano Profano, Vatican Museums, photo: **Egisto Sani**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0). Domitian/Nerva can be seen fourth from the left.

Slightly more elegant solutions for *damnatio memoriae* could be executed in metal statuary. The face of a bronze equestrian portrait of Domitian (below) was sawed off and replaced with that of his successor, Nerva. The result is much less jarring than on the Cancelleria relief, as the bronze "mask" was made to the same scale as the rest of the statue and the join is mostly unnoticeable.



Figure **13.2.8.22**: Equestrian statue of Nerva (formerly Domitian), from the Sanctuary of Augustales, Miseno, bronze (Museo Arceologico dei Campi Flegrei, Bacoli, photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Caracalla removes the image of Geta



Figure **13.2.8.23**: Relief showing Septimius Severus and Julia Domna with a caduceus, Arch of the Argentarii, Rome, completed 204 C.E. (photo: Panairjdde, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Perhaps the most striking and widespread examples of *damnatio memoriae* come from the reign of **Caracalla**, a member of the Severan Dynasty who ruled from 211-217 C.E. He was initially co-emperor with his younger brother Geta, but after months of squabbling between the sibling rulers, Caracalla had Geta assassinated. This death was quickly followed by a *damnatio memoriae*, one in which it became a capital offense to even speak the name of the younger co-emperor.

In Rome, Geta's image was eliminated from reliefs on the Arch of the Argentarii. No attempt at an elegant recarving was made as in the Cancelleria Reliefs; in a panel showing Septimius Severus and Julia Domna (the parents of Caracalla and Geta) sacrificing at an altar, a caduceus floats over an empty space where Geta must have stood.[4] Even images of Geta's wife and father-in-law were carved out of the Arch of the Argentarii panels, as they too had suffered a *damnatio memoriae*. The names of all the condemned individuals were erased from the arch and replaced with new inscriptions honoring Caracalla.



Figure **13.2.8.24**: Severan Tondo, c. 200 C.E., tempera on wood, 30.5 cm diameter (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0). This circular painting is exceptional for its materials, state of preservation, and insight into Roman painting beyond frescoes and other murals.

Erasing memory across time and space

A painted panel found in Egypt demonstrates the very long reach of Roman vengeance when enacting a *damnatio memoriae*. The panel shows the Severan family: Julia Domna wears heavy pearl earrings and necklaces; Septimius's hair and beard are tinged with gray; and highlights in the eyes of all the figures add a lifelike quality. Caracalla's boyish face—painted when he was merely heir to the throne—peers out to the viewer's left. Next to him is a circular erasure in the paint where Geta once appeared. This deletion is dramatic when considering the procedures of *damnatio memoriae.* Someone in the province of Egypt, far from the center of the Empire, was charged with erasing the image of a child—a child who grew up to be co-emperor, only to be killed by his own brother. The tyranny of Caracalla and the thoroughness of *damnatio memoriae* meant that practically no image of the emperor's enemies, no matter how small or out-of-date, would escape destruction.

Damnatio memoriae continued in the Roman world through the fourth century C.E., as seen in disfigured portraits of Constantine's rival Maxentius. With Christianity made official in the Roman world, vandalism of imperial portraits continued, but with more of a religious bent than a political one. The fact that Roman portraits were removed, damaged, or destroyed because of dramatic changes in the subjects' reputations is unmistakable evidence that such images are more than just "pictures." A portrait can carry meaning over decades and centuries—whether it is of a Roman emperor, a Communist leader like Joseph Stalin, a dictator like Saddam Hussein, or Confederate generals in the United States.

Notes:

1. Nero's *Domus Aurea* (Golden House) in downtown Rome was eventually filled in and built over by his successors in the Flavian Dynasty, but it was not a systematic destruction. In fact, there is evidence Vespasian lived in the controversial villa before he and his sons turned the land from Nero's private estate back over to the public.
2. Hatshepsut's successor, Thutmose III, ordered her images, cartouches, and monuments destroyed as she was seen as a usurper to his throne. Akhenaten, who brought monotheism briefly to Egypt, suffered a sort of *damnatio memoriae* by those who enthusiastically returned to polytheism after his death.
3. In a *coup de grâce* for the Cancelleria Reliefs, they seem to have never been displayed, instead discarded in a Republican-period cemetery after Nerva died just fifteen months into his reign. The Flavian Dynasty was over and it would have been too challenging to re-recarve the portrait of Nerva into Trajan.

4. It appears that Julia Domna's left arm was carved in the space where Geta's body once was; in the original format, she was probably holding the caduceus.

Additional Resources:

Essay on Roman portrait sculpture from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Sarah Bond, "Erasing the Face of History," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2011

S. Bundrick and E. Varner, *From Caligula to Constantine: Tyranny & Transformation in Roman Portraiture* (Michael C. Carlos Museum, 2001).

Harriet I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace & Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Eric Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (E.J. Brill, 2004).

Roman funeral rituals and social status: The Amiternum tomb and the tomb of the Haterii

by DR. LAUREL TAYLOR

Death, memory, and funerary rituals—monumental tombs lined the streets leading into ancient Roman cities.



Figure **13.2.8.25**: Tombs along the Via Appia, Rome

To say that the ancient Romans thought a lot about funerary ritual and post-mortem commemoration is an understatement. Abundant textual evidence records complex, performative rituals surrounding death and burial in ancient Rome while significant expenditures on visual commemoration—elaborate tombs, funerary portraits—defined Roman mortuary culture.

Cemeteries and tombs lined extra-urban roads throughout the Roman world so that the mere act of exiting or entering a city brought one into immediate and direct contact with the world of the dead. In fact, Roman funerary art was not marginalized within Roman visual culture but was an integral part of it and constitutes one of the largest surviving bodies of evidence of Roman art.

Many conspicuous funerary monuments remain that commemorate the lives of elite Romans but members of other social strata also made sure to leave a lasting legacy and, indeed, funerary art is the only category of art that documents the lives of those outside of the elite. In ancient Rome, great opportunities for economic mobility existed and when people of the lower classes—former slaves (*liberti*) or members of a servile family—made money, they often wanted to commemorate their success by commissioning a tomb or grave marker that documented their rise to wealth. Two examples of surviving funerary monuments illustrate some of the these tendencies while providing a window into Roman funerary culture and art associated with freedmen and women, that is, people who were former slaves.

The Amiternum Tomb



Figure **13.2.8.26**: Funerary procession, Amiternum, c. 50-1 B.C.E. (Museum, Aquila) (photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The first example is a late first century B.C.E. funerary relief from Amiternum (above), located in what is now the Abruzzo region of Italy. One relief depicts a person of some consequence and shows the only existing scene in Roman art of the *pompa* or funerary procession that was famously described by the historian Polybius (*History* 6.53-4). Roman funerals were often elaborate affairs that began in the house and culminated tombside. Upon death, dramatic displays of mourning were performed by household members of the deceased's family. Such mourning rituals included wailing, chest-beating, and sometimes self-mutilation —pulling of the hair and laceration of the cheeks. The deceased's corpse was then washed, anointed, and displayed on a funeral bed in the house before ultimately being transported to the tomb or site of cremation on an elaborate bier in a procession known as the *pompa*.

For elite Romans, the *pompa* was a dynamic performance defined less by solemnity and more by a multi-dimensional performance designed to reflect and reinforce political and social status. These spectacles featured not only the nuclear and extended biological family but also clients, current slaves, former slaves, hired mourners paid to wail and sing dirges, and musicians playing horns, flutes, and trumpets. For elite Roman men specifically, the procession culminated in the Forum with a public eulogy attended by male family members who would wear the ancestor masks depicting deceased male relatives.



Figure **13.2.8.27**: Male figure on funerary couch surrounded by funeral cortège (detial), Funerary procession, Amiternum, c. 50-1 B.C.E. (Museum, Aquila) (photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In the relief from Amiternum, the *pompa* scene shows a male figure, resting on an elaborate funerary couch and transported by eight pallbearers (above). Though dead, the figure appears still very much alive—tilted up on his left side and resting his head on his left hand. On either side of the central scene are all the elements of a funeral cortège. On the right pipe players, with hornblowers and a trumpeter on a floating ground line above. To the immediate right of the deceased are two women, perhaps hired mourners, one grabbing her hair and the other with her hands upraised. Most likely it is the chief mourners—the widow and children—who follow behind, to the left of the deceased.

A partial inscription found near the relief suggests that the tomb was commissioned by a person whose family was formerly of servile origins. Stylistically, the relief exhibits many of the formal characteristics typical of 'freedmen' art, a category of art commissioned by former slaves (or descendants of slaves) and one which largely rejected the Classicizing trappings of elite roman art. Art commissioned by freedmen and women typically exhibits disproportion, hierarchies of scale, collapsing of space or ambiguous spatial relationships, and a gestural use of line. In subject matter, freedmen art is characterized by an acute focus on self-presentation, specifically expressions of social mobility.



Figure **13.2.8.28**: Gladatorial Combat, Amiternum, c. 50-1 B.C.E. (Museum, Aquila) (photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The *pompa* relief was part of an ensemble of reliefs—of which two remain—most likely inset into the fabric of a larger tomb complex that no longer survives. The other relief (above) depicts a scene of gladiatorial combat, an image type occasionally found on funerary monuments

and usually understood as a reference to the public munificence of the deceased. Providing games or spectacles to the public was expected of magistrates and civil servants and such acts would be worthy of biographical commemoration. Though of servile families, freeborn men could and did rise to such offices. Considered together the two reliefs are mutually informing—displaying on the one hand, a spectacle for the public and, on the other, the spectacle of his death. As many ancient authors attest, the number of figures in a funeral procession directly correlated with the perceived importance of the deceased. While the patron of the Amiternum monument was not a member of the elite, patrician class, he certainly wanted to convey his importance by selecting two poignant images to document his biographical legacy—in recording public munificence during life and in expressing status in death.

The Tomb of the Haterii

Another tomb featuring a recognizable funerary ritual is that of the Haterii, built around 100 C.E. Discovered piecemeal in Rome since the late 1800s, the original form and layout of the tomb is unknown but the ambition of its decoration and narrative scope is obvious from the series of reliefs and portrait busts that do remain.



Figure 13.2.8.29: Mausoleum of the Haterii, c. 100 C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Erin Taylor, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Constructed by a family of builders, the tomb simultaneously documents the death of the family matriarch and celebrates the family's source of wealth. Though two busts remain of a male and female, it is the woman who appears multiple times in the visual program of the tomb's reliefs. In the death scene, she appears on a funerary bed in the atrium of the house (above), surrounded by lit torches, a flute player at her feet, and her children beating their chests in mourning. Below the bed are three figures who wear the pileus, a cap of freedom worn by newly liberated slaves. This reference to the matron's liberality and humanity is echoed both here with the figure reading her last will and testament beside her, as well as in another inset in which the deceased is shown making her will.



Figure 13.2.8.30: Mausoleum of the Haterii, c. 100 C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Erin Taylor, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The viewer sees a conflation of time, viewing the deceased both alive and dead. In the relief above, she is shown in a retrospective portrait lounging on a couch with her children playing below. Under this vignette (below), is a grandiose temple-tomb with a portrait of deceased in the pediment and portraits of her children along the sides. In front of the tomb is a treadwheel crane which most scholars think is a reference to the family's construction business.



Figure 13.2.8.31: Mausoleum of the Haterii, c. 100 C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Erin Taylor, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Haterii were likely involved in important building projects during the reign of the Flavian emperors (69-96 C.E.), and another relief from the tomb probably documents some of their major projects in Rome including the Flavian Amphitheater (later known as the Colosseum) and the Arch of Titus.

Whether all of the reliefs originally constituted a narrative sequence or not is debatable but what does get communicated is the considerable expenditure on this tomb and the biographical means by which it was created. Though amassing considerable wealth, the Haterii family was, nonetheless, of servile origin.

Interpretation

Both the Amiternum relief and the Haterii tomb were commissioned by patrons outside of Roman elite society, a factor that had a huge impact on the style and narrative content of the monuments. Funerary art commissioned by the Roman elite almost never referenced commerce or sources of wealth though this was a driving goal for funerary art of the freedmen. Similarly, elite monuments do not document death rituals, though elites certainly observed them. The Amiternum relief and the Haterii tomb, however, rely on a narrative interplay between death ritual and biography. For these patrons, as for many freedmen and women, their final resting places provided an ideal opportunity for documenting ritual observance and, more importantly, for documenting their success in life and commerce.

Additional Resources:

John Bodel, “Death on Display: Looking at Roman Funerals,” in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, edited by Bettina Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon, pp. 259-281 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Diane Favro and Christopher Johanson, “Death in Motion: Funeral Processions in the Roman Forum,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69.1, 2010, pp. 12-37.

Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Valerie M. Hope, *Death in Ancient Rome: A Source Book* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Eleanor W. Leach, “Freedmen and Immortality in the Tomb of the Haterii,” in *The Art of Citizens, Soldiers and Freedmen in the Roman World*, edited by E. D’Ambra and G. Metraux, 1-18. (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006).

J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

Beginner guides to Roman architecture

An introduction to ancient Roman architecture

by DR. JESSICA LEAY AMBLER

Roman architecture was unlike anything that had come before. The Persians, Egyptians, Greeks and Etruscans all had monumental architecture. The grandeur of their buildings, though, was largely external. Buildings were designed to be impressive when viewed from outside because their architects all had to rely on building in a post-and-lintel system, which means that they used two upright posts, like columns, with a horizontal block, known as a lintel, laid flat across the top. A good example is this ancient Greek Temple in Paestum, Italy.



Figure **13.2.8.32**: An example of post and lintel architecture: Hera II, Paestum, c. 460 B.C.E. (Classical period), tufa, 24.26 x 59.98 m

Since lintels are heavy, the interior spaces of buildings could only be limited in size. Much of the interior space had to be devoted to supporting heavy loads.



Figure **13.2.8.33**: Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Interior of the Pantheon*, c. 1734, oil on canvas, 128 x 99 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Roman architecture differed fundamentally from this tradition because of the discovery, experimentation and exploitation of concrete, arches and vaulting (a good example of this is the Pantheon, c. 125 C.E.). Thanks to these innovations, from the first century C.E. Romans were able to create interior spaces that had previously been unheard of. Romans became increasingly concerned with shaping interior space rather than filling it with structural supports. As a result, the inside of Roman buildings were as impressive as their exteriors.

Materials, methods and innovations

Long before concrete made its appearance on the building scene in Rome, the Romans utilized a volcanic stone native to Italy called tufa to construct their buildings. Although tufa never went out of use, travertine began to be utilized in the late 2nd century B.C.E. because it was more durable. Also, its off-white color made it an acceptable substitute for marble.



Figure **13.2.8.34**: Temple of Portunus (formerly known as, Fortuna Virilis), c. 120-80 B.C.E., structure is travertine and tufa, stuccoed to look like Greek marble, Rome

Marble was slow to catch on in Rome during the Republican period since it was seen as an extravagance, but after the reign of Augustus (31 B.C.E. – 14 C.E.), marble became quite fashionable. Augustus had famously claimed in his funerary inscription, known as the *Res Gestae*, that he "found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble" referring to his ambitious building campaigns.

Roman concrete (*opus caementicium*), was developed early in the 2nd c. BCE. The use of mortar as a bonding agent in ashlar masonry wasn't new in the ancient world; mortar was a combination of sand, lime and water in proper proportions. The major contribution the Romans made to the mortar recipe was the introduction of volcanic Italian sand (also known as "pozzolana"). The Roman builders who used pozzolana rather than ordinary sand noticed that their mortar was incredibly strong and durable. It also had the ability to set underwater. Brick and tile were commonly plastered over the concrete since it was not considered very pretty on its own, but concrete's structural possibilities were far more important. The invention of *opus caementicium* initiated the Roman architectural revolution, allowing for builders to be much more creative with their designs. Since concrete takes the shape of the mold or frame it is poured into, buildings began to take on ever more fluid and creative shapes.

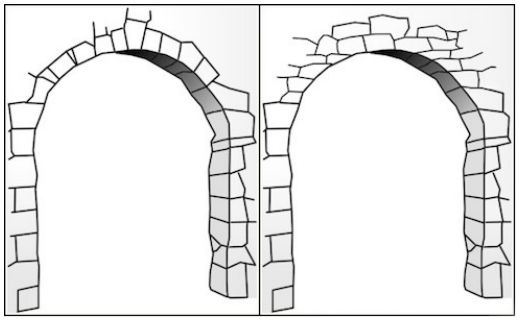


Figure **13.2.8.35**: True arch (left) and corbeled arch (right) (**image**, CC BY-SA 2.5)

The Romans also exploited the opportunities afforded to architects by the innovation of the true arch (as opposed to a corbeled arch where stones are laid so that they move slightly in toward the center as they move higher). A true arch is composed of wedge-shaped blocks (typically of a durable stone), called voussoirs, with a key stone in the center holding them into place. In a true arch, weight is transferred from one voussoir down to the next, from the top of the arch to ground level, creating a sturdy building tool. True arches can span greater distances than a simple post-and-lintel. The use of concrete, combined with the employment of true arches allowed for vaults and domes to be built, creating expansive and breathtaking interior spaces.

Roman architects

We don't know much about Roman architects. Few individual architects are known to us because the dedicatory inscriptions, which appear on finished buildings, usually commemorated the person who commissioned and paid for the structure. We do know that architects came from all walks of life, from freedmen all the way up to the Emperor Hadrian, and they were responsible for all aspects of building on a project. The architect would design the building and act as engineer; he would serve as contractor and supervisor and would attempt to keep the project within budget.

Building types



Figure **13.2.8.36**: Forum, Pompeii, looking toward Mt. Vesuvius (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Roman cities were typically focused on the forum (a large open plaza, surrounded by important buildings), which was the civic, religious and economic heart of the city. It was in the city's forum that major temples (such as a Capitoline temple, dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva) were located, as well as other important shrines. Also useful in the forum plan were the basilica (a law court), and other official meeting

places for the town council, such as a curia building. Quite often the city's meat, fish and vegetable markets sprang up around the bustling forum. Surrounding the forum, lining the city's streets, framing gateways, and marking crossings stood the connective architecture of the city: the porticoes, colonnades, arches and fountains that beautified a Roman city and welcomed weary travelers to town. Pompeii, Italy is an excellent example of a city with a well preserved forum.



Figure **13.2.8.37**: House of Diana, Ostia, late 2nd century C.E. (photo: **Sebastià Giralt**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Romans had a wide range of housing. The wealthy could own a house (*domus*) in the city as well as a country farmhouse (*villa*), while the less fortunate lived in multi-story apartment buildings called *insulae*. The House of Diana in Ostia, Rome's port city, from the late 2nd c. C.E. is a great example of an insula. Even in death, the Romans found the need to construct grand buildings to commemorate and house their remains, like Eurysaces the Baker, whose elaborate tomb still stands near the Porta Maggiore in Rome.



Figure **13.2.8.38**: The tomb of Eurysaces the baker, Rome, c. 50-20 B.C.E. (photo: **Jeremy Cherfas**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Romans built aqueducts throughout their domain and introduced water into the cities they built and occupied, increasing sanitary conditions. A ready supply of water also allowed bath houses to become standard features of Roman cities, from Timgad, Algeria to Bath, England. A healthy Roman lifestyle also included trips to the gymnasium. Quite often, in the Imperial period, grand gymnasium-bath complexes were built and funded by the state, such as the Baths of Caracalla which included running tracks, gardens and libraries.



Figure **13.2.8.39**: Aqueduct (reconstruction). Aqueducts supplied Rome with clean water brought from sources far from the city. In this view, we see an aqueduct carried on piers passing through a built-up neighborhood. Elements of the model © 2008 The Regents of the University of California, © 2011 Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, © 2012 Frischer Consulting. All rights reserved. Image © 2012 Bernard Frischer

Entertainment varied greatly to suit all tastes in Rome, necessitating the erection of many types of structures. There were Greek style theaters for plays as well as smaller, more intimate odeon buildings, like the one in Pompeii, which were specifically designed for musical performances. The Romans also built amphitheaters—elliptical, enclosed spaces such as the Colloseum—which were used for gladiatorial combats or battles between men and animals. The Romans also built a circus in many of their cities. The circuses, such as the one in Lepcis Magna, Libya, were venues for residents to watch chariot racing.



Figure **13.2.8.40**: Arch of Titus (foreground) with the Colloseum in the background (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Romans continued to perfect their bridge building and road laying skills as well, allowing them to cross rivers and gullies and traverse great distances in order to expand their empire and better supervise it. From the bridge in Alcántara, Spain to the paved roads in Petra, Jordan, the Romans moved messages, money and troops efficiently.

Republican period



Figure **13.2.8.41**: Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Capitoline Hill, Rome (reconstruction courtesy **Dr. Bernard Frischer**)

Republican Roman architecture was influenced by the Etruscans who were the early kings of Rome; the Etruscans were in turn influenced by Greek architecture. The Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, begun in the late 6th century B.C.E., bears all the hallmarks of Etruscan architecture. The temple was erected from local tufa on a high podium and what is most characteristic is its frontality. The porch is very deep and the visitor is meant to approach from only one access point, rather than walk all the way around, as was common in Greek temples. Also, the presence of three cellas, or cult rooms, was also unique. The Temple of Jupiter would remain influential in temple design for much of the Republican period.

Drawing on such deep and rich traditions didn't mean that Roman architects were unwilling to try new things. In the late Republican period, architects began to experiment with concrete, testing its capability to see how the material might allow them to build on a grand scale.



Figure **13.2.8.42**: Model of the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, from the archeological museum, Palestrina (**image**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in modern day Palestrina is comprised of two complexes, an upper and a lower one. The upper complex is built into a hillside and terraced, much like a Hellenistic sanctuary, with ramps and stairs leading from the terraces to the small theater and tholos temple at the pinnacle. The entire compound is intricately woven together to manipulate the visitor's experience of sight,

daylight and the approach to the sanctuary itself. No longer dependent on post-and-lintel architecture, the builders utilized concrete to make a vast system of covered ramps, large terraces, shops and barrel vaults.

Imperial period



Figure **13.2.8.43**: Severus and Celer, octagon room, Domus Aurea, Rome, c. 64-68 C.E. (**photo source**)

The Emperor Nero began building his infamous Domus Aurea, or Golden House, after a great fire swept through Rome in 64 C.E. and destroyed much of the downtown area. The destruction allowed Nero to take over valuable real estate for his own building project; a vast new villa. Although the choice was not in the public interest, Nero's desire to live in grand fashion did spur on the architectural revolution in Rome. The architects, Severus and Celer, are known (thanks to the Roman historian Tacitus), and they built a grand palace, complete with courtyards, dining rooms, colonnades and fountains. They also used concrete extensively, including barrel vaults and domes throughout the complex. What makes the Golden House unique in Roman architecture is that Severus and Celer were using concrete in new and exciting ways; rather than utilizing the material for just its structural purposes, the architects began to experiment with concrete in aesthetic modes, for instance, to make expansive domed spaces.



Figure **13.2.8.44**: Apollodorus of Damascus, Markets of Trajan, Rome, c. 106-12 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Nero may have started a new trend for bigger and better concrete architecture, but Roman architects, and the emperors who supported them, took that trend and pushed it to its greatest potential. Vespasian's Colosseum, the Markets of Trajan, the Baths of Caracalla and the Basilica of Maxentius are just a few of the most impressive structures to come out of the architectural revolution in Rome. Roman architecture was not entirely comprised of concrete, however. Some buildings, which were made from marble, hearkened back to the sober, Classical beauty of Greek architecture, like the Forum of Trajan. Concrete structures and marble buildings stood side by side in Rome, demonstrating that the Romans appreciated the architectural history of the Mediterranean just as much as they did their own innovation. Ultimately, Roman architecture is overwhelmingly a success story of experimentation and the desire to achieve something new.

Additional resources:

James C. Anderson Jr., *Roman Architecture and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

Diana Kleiner, *Roman Architecture: A Visual Guide* (Kindle) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

William J. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, vol. I: *An Introductory Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

Frank Sear, *Roman Architecture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

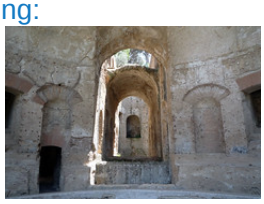




















Figure 13.2.8.45: More SmartHistory images…

Italo-Roman building techniques

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER



Figure 13.2.8.46: Isili, Sardinia: exterior of Nuraghe Is Paras, fifteenth century B.C.E., (photo: **Cristiano Cani**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Building techniques represent an important means through which to study and understand ancient structures. The building technique chosen for a given project can indirectly provide a good deal of information about the building itself, in terms of helping archaeologists and art historians to understand scale, scope, expense, and technique, alongside other, more aesthetic considerations. The building technique can also inform the chronology of the structure and can indicate, in some cases, other economic factors based on the building materials employed. The masonry techniques discussed here cover a broad chronological range from the second millennium B.C.E. to Late Antiquity.

Megalithic techniques

From the second millennium B.C.E. onwards techniques of megalithic architecture were used in Italy and on the island of Sardinia. As the name suggests, such techniques involved the use of large unworked (or roughly worked) stones to create walls and structures. Such walls tend to be built in a dry stone technique, meaning that no bonding agents are used to join stones, rather the tight fit and gravity itself are relied upon to hold the stones in place. Such techniques are frequently referred to under the general heading of “Cyclopean masonry”, indicative of the great bulk of the stones used.



Figure 13.2.8.48: Isili, Sardinia: Interior of Nuraghe Is Paras, fifteenth century B.C.E., (photo: Cristiano Cani, CC BY-SA 3.0)

On Sardinia, distinctive tower structures known as *nuraghe* built during the second and first millennia B.C.E. utilized megalithic techniques, including the construction of corbel vaults. In peninsular Italy, the distinctive style of polygonal masonry emerged by the second half of the first millennium B.C.E. Often used to construct defensive walls, retaining walls, and terraces, this type of megalithic architecture assumed a distinctive polygonal pattern.



Figure 13.2.8.49: Amelia, Italy: detail of polygonal masonry wall of the ancient city of Ameria (photo: **Ameroe**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Ashlar masonry (*opus quadratum*)

Ashlar or cuboidal masonry (cut, squared stones), referred to as *opus quadratum* by the Romans, represents an important advance in building technology. In Italy, the widespread use of **ashlar masonry** occurs from the sixth century B.C.E. onward. At Rome, this adoption corresponded to a marked increase in monumental construction projects during the late archaic period. Initially, Romans made use of a locally available tufo type known as *cappellaccio*. While a prestige material, its overall low quality led to the Romans being eager for other sources of superior tufo — a new source of tufo became available once Rome sacked the Etruscan city of Veii in 396 B.C.E.

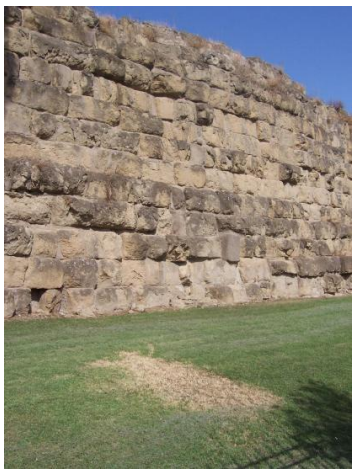


Figure 13.2.8.50: Rome, Italy: Segment of the so-called "Servian walls" in Piazza dei Cinquecento, fourth century B.C.E. (photo: **Salvatore Falco**, CC SA 1.0)

Ashlar masonry, in general, is used primarily where underlying bedrock is softer and more easily shaped, such as the tufo plateaus on which the city of Rome and many of her Etruscan neighbors sit. Ashlar masonry is phased in for use in monumental construction projects. Notable examples in the city of Rome include the so-called "Servian walls" surrounding the city of Rome and the late sixth century B.C.E. podium of

the Temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus. Although ashlar techniques would never completely disappear, the emergence of Roman concrete (*opus caementicium*) during the second century B.C.E. came to offer greater flexibility and strength than ashlar masonry could.



Figure 13.2.8.51: Rome, Italy: podium of the Temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, late sixth century B.C.E. (photo: **Torquatus**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Opus caementicium ("cement work")

"Roman concrete" describes a category of building technology that involves the use of concrete. Concrete is defined as a heavy, durable building material made from a mixture of sand, lime, water, and inclusions (*caementa*) such as stone, gravel or terracotta. It can either be spread or poured into molds or frames; it forms a stone-like mass upon hardening. In chronological terms, the ancient Roman usage of concrete stretches from sometime in the second century B.C.E. to Late Antiquity (and beyond). Within that chronological span, the technology of concrete changed and developed over time so that we may observe differences that relate to both function and aesthetics.

The basic concept of Roman concrete walling is to create a concrete core that is then faced with stone or brick and perhaps faced even further with stucco, paint, or polished stone veneers. Roman concrete is strong, practical, and functional — it is, on its own, rarely deemed aesthetically beautiful but its versatility and load-bearing potential facilitated the construction of many of the most famous buildings of Roman antiquity. The trio of the Domus Aurea of Nero, the **Flavian Amphitheater**, and the **Pantheon** could never have been realized without the innovative use of concrete building technology.



Figure 13.2.8.52: Italy, Rome, Via Appia Antica, tomb. The remains show the internal core of the building, made in Roman concrete (*opus caementicium*). Photo: **MM**, CC0

Roman concrete is famously strong and durable — even in archaeological contexts concrete is remarkable for its longevity. While the Romans did not invent concrete per se, they improved their own version of concrete by means of additions to its formula. Volcanic sand known as *pozzolana* (or "pit sand") was favored by Roman builders for mixing concrete. When *pozzolana*, which contains high quantities of both aluminum oxide (sometimes called alumina) and silica, was added to mortar, the water-resistant properties of the mortar increased. This hydraulic concrete was then ideal for use in building piers, breakwaters, and bridge pylons, among other structures.

Typology

The Roman architectural writer Vitruvius (first century B.C.E.) provides a thorough summary of building techniques in his 10-book treatise *De architectura* ("On architecture"). In most cases, modern scholars continue to employ the Latin terminology used by Vitruvius. In these typological categories, the Latin term *opus* means "work or technique".



Figure 13.2.8.53: Terracina, Italy: *Opus incertum* used in the podium of the temple of Iuppiter Anxur (photo: **Xavier121**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Opus incertum ("irregular work") is an early concrete technique that emerged during the earlier second century B.C.E. and continued in use until the middle of the first century B.C.E., gradually abandoned in favor of *opus reticulatum*. *Opus incertum* may be identified on the basis of its use of randomly placed, fist-sized chunks of tufo or stone that are placed into a core of *opus caementicium*.



Figure 13.2.8.54: An example of *opus reticulatum* (photo: **Pouwerkerk**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Opus reticulatum ("reticulate work") is a technique that employs diamond-shaped pieces of tufo known as *cubilia* that are placed within a core of concrete. The resulting pattern of the flat ends of these blocks form the net-shaped pattern that lends its name to the technique. *Opus reticulatum* became popular during the early first century B.C.E. It would eventually be superseded by *opus latericium*.



Figure 13.2.8.55: Ostia Antica: example of *opus latericium* (photo: **Camelia.boban**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Opus latericium ("brickwork") describes a masonry technique that employs courses of laid bricks that are used to face a wall core of *opus caementicium*. This is a predominant technique during the Roman Imperial period. The bricks, in turn, would often be coated with stucco or another form of wall revetment.



Figure **13.2.8.56**: Ostia Antica: example of *opus mixtum* (photo: **Camelia.boban**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Opus mixtum ("mixed work") is a technique that combines *opus reticulatum* with *opus latericium*. The latter is usually found at the margins of the wall. It is a technique most common during the Hadrianic period in the mid-second century C.E.



Figure **13.2.8.57**: Ostia Antica: example of *opus vittatum* (photo: **Camelia.boban**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Opus vittatum or *opus listatum* is a later Roman concrete technique that is adopted in the early fourth century C.E. This technique alternated horizontal courses of tufo with alternating courses of bricks. This technique is particularly evident in building projects of Constantine I.

Additional resources:

Jean Pierre Adam, *Roman building: materials and techniques* (trans. Anthony Matthews) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Larry F. Ball, *The Domus Aurea and the Roman architectural revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Marion E. Blake, *Ancient Roman Construction in Italy from the Prehistoric Period to Augustus*. (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1947).

Marion E. Blake, *Construction in Italy from Tiberius through the Flavians*. (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1959).

C. J. Brandon et al., *Building for eternity: the history and technology of Roman concrete engineering in the sea* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014).

Pierre Gros, *L'architecture romaine: du début du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire. 1, Les monuments publics* (Paris: Picard, 1996).

Cairoli Fulvio Giuliani, *L'edilizia nell'antichità* (Rome: NIS, 1990).

Lynne Lancaster, *Concrete vaulted construction in imperial Rome: innovations in context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Lynne Lancaster, *Innovative vaulting in the architecture of the Roman Empire: 1st to 4th centuries CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Giuseppe Lugli, *La tecnica edilizia romana con particolare riguardo a Roma e Lazio* 2 v. (Rome: G. Bardi, 1957).

David Macaulay, *City: A Story of Roman Planning and Construction* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974).

William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

William L. MacDonald, *The Pantheon: Design, Meaning and Progeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Carmelo G. Malacrino, *Constructing the Ancient world: architectural techniques of the Greeks and Romans* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010).

Esther Boise van Deman, "Methods of Determining the Date of Roman Concrete Monuments," *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1912), pp. 230-251.

John Bryan Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Roman Domestic architecture: the Domus

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

The domus was more than a residence, it was also a statement of social and political power.



Figure **13.2.8.58**: Peristyle, Casa della Venere in Conchiglia, Pompeii (Photo: **F. Tronchin/Warren**, BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Introduction

Understanding the architecture of the Roman house requires more than simply appreciating the names of the various parts of the structure, as the house itself was an important part of the dynamics of daily life and the socio-economy of the Roman world. The house type referred to as the *domus* (Latin for "house") is taken to mean a structure designed for either a nuclear or extended family and located in a city or town. The *domus* as a general architectural type is long-lived in the Roman world, although some development of the architectural form does occur. While the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum provide the best surviving evidence for *domus* architecture, this typology was widespread in the Roman world.

Layout

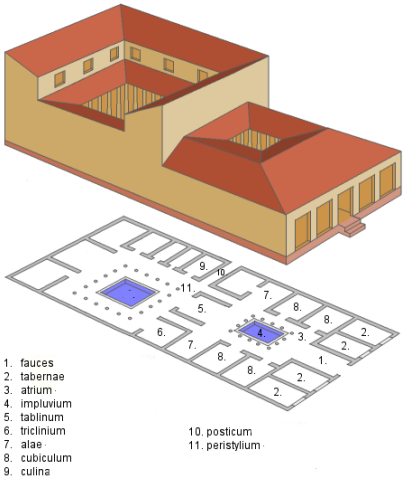


Figure **13.2.8.59**: Plan of a typical Roman domus (house) (**source**)

While there is not a "standard" domus, it is possible to discuss the primary features of a generic example, keeping in mind that variation is present in every manifest example of this type of building. The ancient architectural writer Vitruvius provides a wealth of information on the

potential configurations of *domus* architecture, in particular the main room of the *domus* that was known as the atrium (no. 3 in the diagram above).

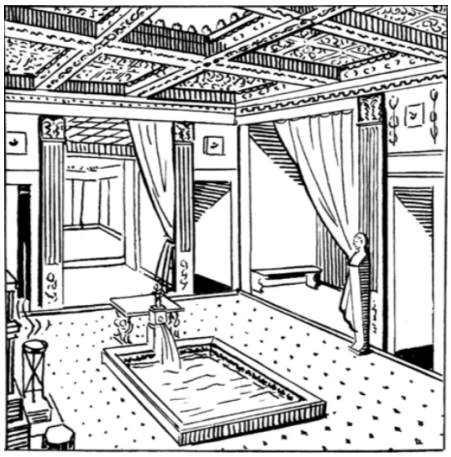


Figure **13.2.8.60**: Illustration of an atrium

In the classic layout of the Roman *domus*, the atrium served as the focus of the entire house plan. As the main room in the public part of the house (*pars urbana*), the atrium was the center of the house's social and political life. The male head-of-household (*paterfamilias*) would receive his clients on business days in the atrium, in which case it functioned as a sort of waiting room for business appointments. Those clients would enter the atrium from the *fauces* (no. 1 in the diagram above), a narrow entry passageway that communicated with the street. That doorway would be watched, in wealthier houses, by a doorman (*ianitor*). Given that the atrium was a room where invited guests and clients would wait and spend time, it was also the room on which the house owner would lavish attention and funds in order to make sure the room was well appointed with decorations. The corner of the room might sport the household shrine (*lararium*) and the funeral masks of the family's dead ancestors might be kept in small cabinets in the atrium. Communicating with the atrium might be bed chambers (*cubicula*—no. 8 in the diagram above), side rooms or wings (*alae*—no. 7 in the diagram above), and the office of the *paterfamilias*, known as the *tablinum* (no. 5 in the diagram above). The *tablinum*, often at the rear of the atrium, is usually a square chamber that would have been furnished with the paraphernalia of the *paterfamilias* and his business interests. This could include a writing table as well as examples of strong boxes as are evident in some contexts in Pompeii.

Types of atria

The arrangement of the atrium could take a number of possible configurations, as detailed by Vitruvius (*De architectura* 6.3). Among these typologies were the Tuscan atrium (*atrium Tuscanicum*), the tetrastyle atrium (*atrium tetrastylum*), and the Corinthian atrium (*atrium Corinthium*). The Tuscan form had no columns, which required that rafters carry the weight of the ceiling. Both the Tetrastyle and the Corinthian types had columns at the center; Corinthian atria generally had more columns that were also taller.

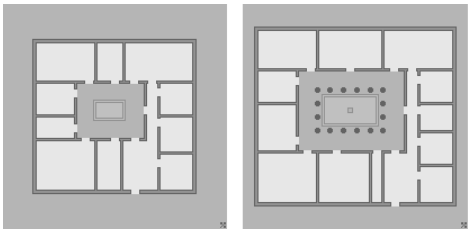


Figure **13.2.8.61**: Plans, **Tuscan atrium, left** (both CC BY-SA 3.0) and **Corinthian atrium, right**

All three of these typologies sported a central aperture in the roof (*compluvium*) and a corresponding pool (*impluvium*—no. 4 in the diagram above) set in the floor. The *compluvium* allowed light, fresh air, and rain to enter the atrium; the *impluvium* was necessary to capture any rainwater and channel it to an underground cistern. The water could then be used for household purposes.



Figure **13.2.8.62**: Impluvium in atrium, looking through the tablinum toward the peristyle, House of Menander, Pompeii before 79 C.E. (photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Beyond the *atrium* and *tablinum* lay the more private part (*pars rustica*) of the house that was often centered around an open-air courtyard known as the peristyle (no. 11 in the diagram above). The *pars rustica* would generally be off limits to business clients and served as the focus of the family life of the house. The central portion of the peristyle would be open to the sky and could be the site of a decorative garden, fountains, artwork, or a functional kitchen garden (or a combination of these elements). The size and arrangement of the peristyle varies quite a bit depending on the size of the house itself.

Communicating with the peristyle would be functional rooms like the kitchen (*culina*—no. 9 in the diagram above), bedrooms (*cubicula*—no. 8 in the diagram above), slave quarters, latrines and baths in some cases, and the all important dining room (*triclinium*—no. 6 in the diagram above). The triclinium would be the room used for elaborate dinner parties to which guests would be invited. The dinner party involved much more than drinking and eating, however, as entertainment, discussion, and philosophical dialogues were frequently on the menu for the evening. Those invited to the dinner party would be the close friends, family, and associates of the *paterfamilias*. The *triclinium* would often be elaborately decorated with wall paintings and portable artworks. The guests at the dinner party were arranged according to a specific formula that gave privileged places to those of higher rank.

Chronology and development

No architectural form is ever static, and the *domus* is no exception to this rule. Architectural forms develop and change over time, adapting and reacting to changing needs, customs, and functions. The chronology of *domus* architecture is contentious, especially the discussion about the origins and early influences of the form.



Figure **13.2.8.63**: The outer Peristyle Garden of the Getty Villa Roman gardens (photo: **Dave & Margie Hill / Kleerup**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Many ancient Mediterranean houses show the same propensity as the Roman atrium house—a penchant for a plan that focuses on a central courtyard. The Romans may have drawn architectural inspiration from the Etruscans, as well as from the Greeks. In truth it is unlikely that there was a single stream of influence, rather Roman architecture responds to streams of influence that pervade the Mediterranean.

By the second and first centuries B.C.E., the domus had become fairly well established and it is to this period that most of the houses known from Pompeii and Herculaneum date. During the Republic the social networking system that we refer to as the "patron-client relationship" was not only active, but essential to Roman politics and business. This organizational scheme changed as Rome's political system developed.

With the advent of imperial rule by the late first century B.C.E., the emperor became the universal patron, and clientage of the Republican variety relied less heavily on its old traditions. House plans may have changed in response to these social changes. One clear element is a de-emphasis of the atrium as the key room of the house. Examples such as the multi-phase House of Cupid and Psyche at Ostia (2nd-4th centuries C.E.) demonstrate that the atrium eventually gives way to larger and more prominent dining rooms and to courtyards equipped with elaborate fountains.

Additional resources:

Roman Housing on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Jean-Pierre Adam, *Roman Building: Materials and Techniques*, trans. Anthony Mathews (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Penelope M. Allison, "The Relationship between Wall-decoration and Room-type in Pompeian Houses: A Case Study of the Casa della Caccia Antica," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 5 (1992), pp. 235-49.

Penelope M. Allison, *Pompeian Households. An Analysis of the Material Culture* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004). (online companion)

Bettina Bergmann, "The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii," *The Art Bulletin* 76.2 (1994) 225-256.

C. F. M. Bruun, "Missing Houses: Some Neglected domus and Other Abodes in Rome," *Arctos* 32 (1998), pp. 87-108.

John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 250: ritual, space, and decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

A. E. Cooley and M.G.L. Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: a sourcebook*, second ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).

Peter Connolly, *Pompeii* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Kate Cooper, "Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman Domus," *Past & Present* 197 (2007), pp. 3-33.

Eugene Dwyer, "The Pompeian Atrium House in Theory and Practice," in E.K. Gazda, ed., *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), pp. 25-48.

Carol Mattusch, *Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2008.)

August Mau, *Pompeii: its life and art* (Washington D.C.: McGrath, 1973).

D. Mazzoleni, U. Pappalardo, and L. Romano, *Domus: Wall Painting in the Roman House* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Museum, 2005).

Alexander G. McKay, *Houses, Villas, and Palaces in the Roman World* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press,1975).

G.P.R. Métraux, "Ancient Housing: Oikos and Domus in Greece and Rome," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58 (1999), pp. 392-405.

Salvatore Nappo, *Pompeii: a guide to the ancient city* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1998).

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The development of the Campanian house," in J.J. Dobbins and P.W. Foss, eds., *The World of Pompeii* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) 279-91.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Rethinking the Roman Atrium House," in R. Laurence and A. Wallace-Hadrill, eds., *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond* (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997).

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Structure of the Roman House," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 56 (1988), pp. 43–97.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Herculaneum: Past and Future* (London : Frances Lincoln Limited, 2011).

Timothy Peter Wiseman, "Conspicui postes tectaque digna deo: The Public Image of Aristocratic Houses in the Late Republic and Early Empire," in *L'Urbs: Espace urbain et histoire (1er siècle av. J.C.-IIIe siècle ap. J.C.)* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1987) 393-413.

Paul Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life*, trans. D. L. Schneider (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

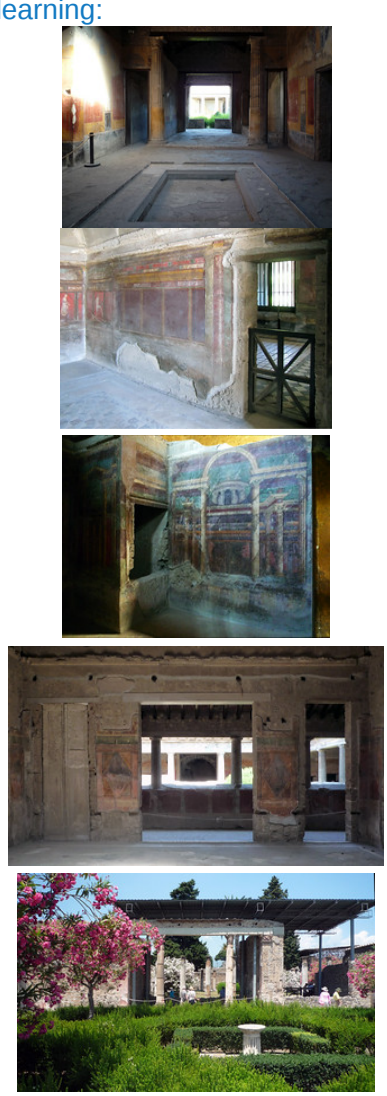


Figure **13.2.8.64**: More SmartHistory images…

Roman domestic architecture: the villa

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

To escape the heat and pressures of the city, the wealthiest Roman families retreated to their country homes.



Figure **13.2.8.65**: Giovanni Riveruzzi, *View of the Casino and the park of Villa Paolina from the side of Porta Pia*, 1828, watercolor on paper (Museo Napoleonico). This villa belonged to Paolina Bonaparte, sister of Napoleon, though it dates back to the 17th century.

Familiar but enigmatic

The villa, on its face, seems to be the simplest of Roman domestic buildings to understand—after all, we continue to use the Latin term "villa" to conjure up a luxurious retreat in the country or at the seashore.

We find evidence of the ancient Roman villa in both archaeological remains and in ancient texts. Taken together this would seem to suggest a fairly uniform and monolithic body of architecture, while the reality is, in fact, something quite different. In some ways the Roman villa is a conundrum. This is especially true in the earlier phases of the type's development, where questions of origins and influence remain hotly debated. As a building type, the villa manages to simultaneously seem instantly understandable and completely enigmatic.

History

The earliest examples of buildings grouped into this category, sometimes referred to by the term *villa rustica* (country villa), are mostly humble farmhouses in Italy. These rural structures tend to be associated with agriculture or viticulture (grapes) on a small scale. The villa form—and the term itself—then comes to be appropriated and applied to a whole range of structures that persist across both the Republican and Imperial periods, continuing into Late Antiquity. One thing that all villas tend to have in common is their extra-urban setting—the villa is not an urban structure, but rather a rural one. Thus we most often find them in rural, suburban or coastal settings most often. In ideological terms, the country (*rus*) provided relief from the hectic pressures of the city (*urbs*), and thus the villa became associated (and remains associated) with rural getaways.

According to Pliny the Elder, the *villa urbana* was located within easy distance of the city, while the *villa rustica* was a permanent country estate staffed with slaves and a supervisor (*vilicus*). The *villa rustica* is connected with agricultural production and the villa complex can contain facilities and equipment for processing agricultural produce, notably processing grapes to make wine and processing olives to produce olive oil. Even opulent villas often had a *pars rustica*, the working or productive part of the building. Latin authors like Cato the Elder and Varro even made and observed strict recommendations, based in agrarian ideology, as to how these rustic villas should be built, appointed, and managed.

Building typology

It is difficult to identify a single, uniform typology for Roman villas, just as it is difficult to do so for the Roman house (*domus*). In general terms the ideal villa is internally divided into two zones: the urbane zone for enjoying life (*pars urbana*) and the productive area (*pars rustica*). As with *domus* architecture, villas often focus internally around courtyards and atrium spaces. Elite villas tend to be sprawling affairs, with many rooms for entertainment and dining, in addition to specialized facilities including heated baths (*balnea*).

Republican villas

Villas built in Italy during the period stretching from the fifth to the second centuries B.C.E. can be divided into several groupings, based on their building typology. One typology with the smallest number of known examples is an opulent villa that draws its influence from the tradition of palatial aristocratic compounds of the Archaic period in central Italy, such as the complex at Poggio Civitate (Murlo) and the "palace" at Acquarossa (near Viterbo). These aristocratic compounds might have inspired Roman Republican aristocrats to build similar

aristocratic mansions for their extended families as a demonstration of their social and economic clout. Other Republican period “villas” tend to be small and connected with agricultural production on a small scale. Traditionally they are associated with an open-air, yet enclosed, courtyard that serves as a focal point.

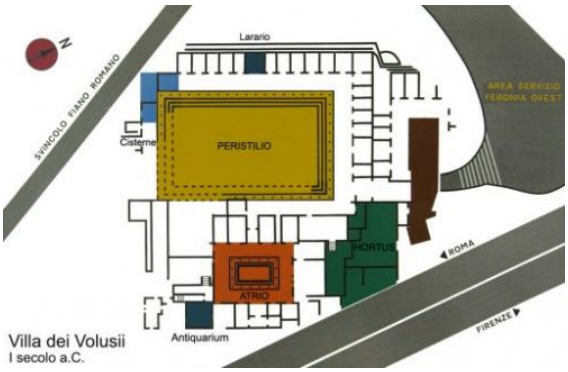


Figure 13.2.8.66: Plan of the Villa of the Volusii Saturnini, middle of the first century (source)

The mid-first century B.C.E. villa of the Volusii Saturnini at Lucus Feroniae (left) provides a good example of an opulent villa built by Late Republican new money. It also demonstrates the pattern that many elite villas would follow during the Imperial period in becoming ever more opulent. In the plan, we see a large peristyle (a garden surrounded by columns) and smaller atrium (an open courtyard) and dozens of rooms off each.

Ancient writers the likes of Cato the Elder (a Roman senator who was born in the late 3rd century B.C.E.), Varro (a scholar and writer from the first century C.E.), and Columella (who wrote about agriculture in the first century C.E.) theorized that villa architecture evolved over time, with the so-called “Columellan” villa being the most elaborate and sophisticated. While scholars do not accept this evolutionary schema any longer, it is interesting that these ancient authors were focused on villas and their culture and that they appreciated change over time. While the archaeological remains do not bear out or prove this theory of architectural development, the awareness of the villa and its role in Roman ideology is an important concept on its own.

Imperial villas

From the Imperial period, we are fortunate to have evidence for a wide range of villa architecture distributed across the Roman empire. In the provinces of the Roman Empire, the adoption of classic villa architecture seems to serve as a mark of adopting a Roman lifestyle—with elites keen to demonstrate their urbanity by living in villas. An example of such an adoption is the so-called Fishbourne Roman palace at Chichester in the south of England which was likely the seat of the Roman client-king Cogidubnus.

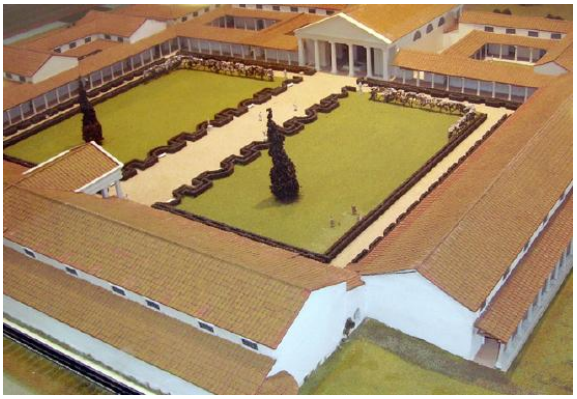


Figure 13.2.8.67: Model of the Palace, Fishbourne Roman Palace Museum

A number of villas destroyed by the 79 C.E. eruption of Mount Vesuvius demonstrate key features of the opulent villa. At Boscoreale the Late Republican villa of Publius Fannius Synistor (c. 50-40 B.C.E.) is well known for its elaborate **Second Style** wall paintings (below).



Figure 13.2.8.68: Frescos in the Cubiculum (bedroom) from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, c. 50-40 B.C.E. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

At Oplontis (modern Torre Annunziata, Italy), the so-called Villa A (sometimes referred to as Villa Poppaea) demonstrates the seaside villa (*villa maritima*). This is a grand pleasure villa, with many well-appointed rooms for leisure and reception.



Figure 13.2.8.69: Villa Oplantis, first century C.E. with later remodeling (source, CC BY-SA 2.0)

In the periphery of Rome itself we find a number of villas connected with the Imperial house. These are mostly villas of the *villa urbana* category—including examples such as the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta that belonged to Livia, the wife of the emperor Augustus. The Prima Porta villa—a private Imperial retreat—is famous for its garden-themed dining room and the portrait statue of **Augustus of Prima Porta**.



Figure 13.2.8.70: Painted Garden, Villa of Livia, detail with oak in center, Prima Porta, fresco, 30-20 B.C.E. (Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo, Rome)

Other emperors would build their own suburban villas as well. Worthy of note in this category is the **Villa of Hadrian** at Tivoli located to the east of Rome. A series of later elite villas (mostly south of Rome) such as the Villa of Maxentius on the Via Appia and the Villa of the Quintilii show us that the villa continued to be not only a statement of status into the later Roman period, but also maintained its role as a retreat from the crowded confusion of the city.

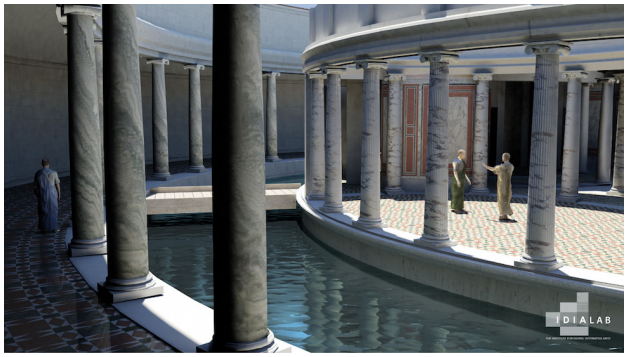


Figure **13.2.8.71**: Reconstruction, Maritime Theater, Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, 2nd century C.E., photo: **The Digital Hadrian's Villa Project, Institute for Digital Intermedia Arts**, Ball State University, Dr. Bernard Frischer and John Fillwalk

Late Roman

In Late Antiquity the Roman villa continued to develop. The so-called Villa Romana del Casale just outside of Piazza Armerina, Sicily, was built in the early fourth century C.E. and boasts one of the most complex programs of Roman mosaics preserved from the ancient world.

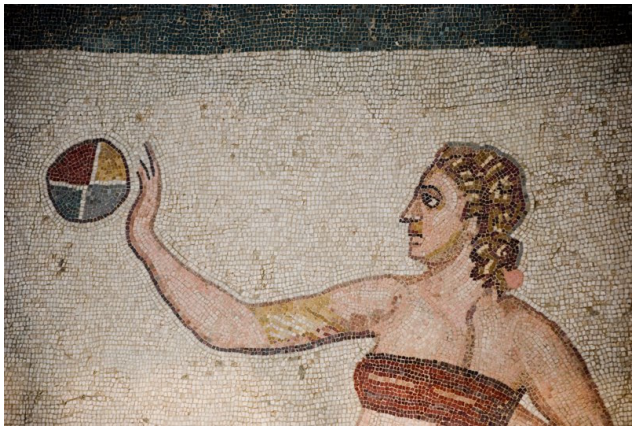


Figure **13.2.8.72**: Mosaic from the "Chamber of the Ten Maidens," Villa Romana del Casale, Sicily, 3rd-4th century C.E.

The Villa Casale was likely the center of a large agricultural estate (*latifundium*) and its opulent decorations strongly suggest the elite status of its owners. The villa has three sectors that focus on a central peristyle. It seems that the complex was built as a simultaneous project. Its mosaic decorations are rich and complex, with themes that range from natural and geometric scenes, to genre scenes, to hunting scenes, as well as scenes extracted from Graeco-Roman mythology. Villas like the Villa Casale dominated the rural landscape and its economy, engaging in various productive activities from farming to mining.

Roman rural villas remained prominent features in post-Roman landscapes, in some cases becoming centers of monastic life and in others becoming the centers of emergent villages during the Medieval period.

Additional resources:

The Oplontis Project

Digital Hadrian's Villa

UNESCO: Villa Romana del Casale (includes video)

The idea and Invention of the Villa on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Jeffrey A. Becker and Nicola Terrenato. eds. *Roman Republican Villas: Architecture, Context, and Ideology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

Bettina Bergmann, “Art and nature in the villa at Oplontis,” in T. A. McGinn ed., *Pompeian brothels, Pompeii’s ancient history, mirrors and mysteries, art and nature at Oplontis, & the Herculaneum “Basilica”* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 47) (Portsmouth RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2002), pp. 87-120.

Andrea Carandini, Andreina Ricci, and Mariette De Vos, Filosofiana, *The villa of Piazza Armerina: the image of a Roman aristocrat at the time of Constantine* (Palermo : S.F. Flaccovio, 1982).

Jesper Carlsen, *Vilici and Roman Estate Managers Until AD 284*, Part 284 (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1995).

John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 250: ritual, space, and decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)

M. Aylwin Cotton, *The late Republican villa at Posto Francolise* (London: The British School at Rome, 1979).

M. Aylwin Cotton and Guy P. R. Métraux, *The San Rocco villa at Francolise* (London: The British School at Rome, 1985).

Pierre de la Ruffinière Du Prey, *The Villas of Pliny from Antiquity to Posterity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Stephen L. Dyson, *The Roman Countryside* (Duckworth Debates in Archaeology) (London: Duckworth, 2003).

Riccardo Francovich and Richard Hodges, *Villa to Village: The Transformation of the Roman Countryside* (Duckworth Debates in Archaeology) (London: Duckworth, 2003).

Wilhelmina Jashemski and E. B. MacDougall, *Ancient Roman Gardens* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University, 1981).

Vincent Jolivet ed., *Suburbium II: il suburbio di Roma dalla fine dell’età monarchica alla nascita del sistema delle ville* (V-II secolo a.C.) (Rome: École française de Rome, 2009).

Xavier Lafon, *Villa Maritima: recherches sur les villas littorales de l’Italie romaine: IIIe siècle av. J.C.-IIIe siècle ap. J.-C* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2001).

Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, eds., *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and beyond* (Portsmouth RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997).

Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Eleanor W. Leach, *The rhetoric of space: literary and artistic representations of landscape in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Eleanor W. Leach, *The social life of painting in Ancient Rome and on the bay of the Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

William L. MacDonald and John Pinto, *Hadrian’s Villa and its Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Annalisa Marzano, *Roman Villas in Central Italy: a Social and Economic History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007).

Alexander M. McKay, Houses, *Villas and Palaces in the Roman World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975).

Lisa C. Nevett, *Domestic space in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

John Percival, *The Roman Villa: an historical introduction* 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

Jane Clark Reeder, *The Villa of Livia Ad Gallinas Albas. A Study in the Augustan Villa and Garden* (Providence RI: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, 2001).

Lucia Romizzi, *Ville d’otium dell’Italia antica: (II sec. a.C. – I sec. d.C.)* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2001).

J. T. Smith, *Roman Villas: a Study in Social Structure* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Walter M. Widrig, Marshall J. Becker, and Joann Freed, “Loc. Tor Bella Monaca: excavations on the ancient via Gabina; second preliminary report,” *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* 37 (1983) pp. 141-182.

Walter M. Widrig, *The Via Gabina villas: sites 10, 11, and 13* (Houston: Rice University, 2009). Online companion

Roger John Anthony Wilson, *Piazza Armerina* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 1983).

Roman domestic architecture: the insula

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

The Romans are famous for soaring monuments, but perhaps they should be better known for their high-rise apartments.



Figure 13.2.8.73: Ostia Antica, regione I, via dei Balconi (public domain)

In the Latin language, *insula* (plural *insulae*) means “island” and the term has been connected to the high-rise apartment dwellings of the Roman world, presumably since they rose like islands from the built landscape of the city. The insulae of ancient Roman cities provided housing for the bulk of the urban populace. The plebs—defined as ordinary people of lower- or middle-class status—tended to inhabit *insulae*. During the heyday of the mercantile city of Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber river (less than 20 miles from Rome), a building boom produced many such insulae, making Ostia a city of high-rise apartments, a phenomenon of urban building that would not manifest itself again until the Industrial Revolution.



Figure 13.2.8.74: Reconstruction, Insula of Diane (CC BY-SA 3.0) (**source**)

History

In relating the history of the year 191 B.C.E., the historian Livy remarks that two tame oxen had climbed the stairs of a multi-story building, ending up on the tiled roof (Livy 36.37). While this may seem a passing comment, it reminds us that even in the second century B.C.E Rome was a vertical city in the sense that buildings with multiple levels were already being built. Strabo (5.3.7), commenting on Rome in the time of Augustus, mentions the building boom there and the need to regulate construction, including the height of buildings. The architectural writer Vitruvius (*De architectura* 2.8.17) expresses a fairly optimistic view of the *insulae*, observing that advances in construction technology that facilitated the construction of these outstanding dwellings. Other ancient authors, including Seneca and Diodorus, were less positive about *insulae*, seeing them as noisy and squalid.

There is some debate among scholars about how, precisely, we should understand and define the term *insula*. A fourth century C.E. source, known as the *Regionary Catalog*, states that in the city of Rome there were 44,850 *insulae* and 1781 *domus* in 315 C.E. Glenn Storey observes that if these figures represent individual buildings, fourth century C.E. Rome had over 45,000 independent structures. Understanding the meaning of the term *insula*, then, has obvious implications for understanding the population and organization of the ancient city of Rome. Scholars have debated how we should interpret the term. James Packer posits that *insula* connotes a high-rise building that could occupy an entire block or be a portion of a larger structure.



Figure 13.2.8.75: Insula dei Dipinti (Ostia) reconstruction (I. Gismondi)

In this reconstruction, the larger building must have been subdivided into smaller units. These are the *medianum* and *cenaculum*, terms for subdivisions of the apartment building. Their specific meaning remains somewhat troublesome, but surviving records do indicate that apartment buildings were subdivided for legal reasons, as well as for assessing rent. James Packer estimates the median area of a Roman apartment at 239 square meters.

Typology

The apartment block differs significantly from the townhouse (*domus*). The *domus* is essentially a dwelling for a single, extended family unit, while the apartment block contains multiple units. The top-to-bottom arrangement of the Roman apartment block was the inverse of what is true in the twenty-first century: in the Roman world the best apartments were located at ground level, while the lower quality (and more squalid) units were to be found on the upper floors of the structure. There is a good deal of variation in terms of the organization of the structures themselves. Frequently the entire structure centers on an open courtyard which also serves as a light well for the lower floors. The spaces fronting on the street itself were often used for mercantile functions.

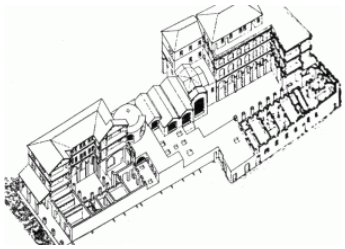


Figure 13.2.8.76: Reconstruction drawing by Italo Gismondi. From left to right: *Caseggiato del Serapide* (House of Serapides), *Terme dei Sette Sapienti* (Baths of the Seven Sages), Cas. degli Aurighi (House of the Charioteers) (**source**)

The port city of Ostia provides the best evidence for the Roman apartment block. Ostia had been founded as a Roman colony during the third century B.C.E. Its location at the mouth of the Tiber river was important for both mercantile and strategic reasons. During the second century C.E. its economy and population was booming, as was the population of the city of Rome. As a result the city witnesses an intense spate of building activity, including the construction of numerous *insulae*.

The Caseggiato del Serapide shows an example of a block with shops at the ground level, while staircases lead to apartments on upper floors. The courtyard contained a cult room with a stuccoed relief of the god Serapis.

The so-called Garden Houses (*Case a Giardino*) provide an example of second and third century C.E. luxury apartments that were later converted to commercial use. This structure originally stood to four floors (height of c. 17.70 metres or 60 Roman feet according to Stevens) and had 16 units on the ground floor. The central architectural feature is the garden courtyard at the center of the structure to which the apartments communicated.



Figure **13.2.8.77**: Ostia: Plan of Regio III – Insula IX – Case a Giardino (Garden Houses) (**source**)

The original walk-ups

The apartment block demonstrates the pragmatism and innovation of Roman architects who capitalized on their technical proficiency with concrete (*opus caementicium*). Cities like Rome and Ostia are unusual in the ancient world—their large and concentrated populations required solutions like the apartment block. These structures, despite Vitruvian enthusiasm, were not without their dangers and drawbacks. Since fire was a frequent danger in the ancient city, the high-rise apartment was particularly risky—especially for those dwelling on upper floors. The living conditions in some cases may have been less than ideal as well. The *insula* as an architectural type demonstrates the variety of Roman architecture and provides another set of important data about Roman domestic building.

Additional resources:

Ostia: Harbour City of Ancient Rome

Roman Housing on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Guido Calza, *Scavi di Ostia, 1: Topografia Generale* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1953).

Rina Cervi, "Evoluzione architettonica delle cosidette Case a Giardino ad Ostia" in L. Quilici and S. Quilici-Gigli (eds.), *Città e monumenti nell'Italia antica*, (*Atlante tematico di topografia antica* 7), (Rome: "L"Erma" di Bretschneider, 1988) pp. 141-156.

Filippo Coarelli, *Rome and environs: an archaeological guide*, trans. J. J. Clauss and D. P. Harmon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Alfred Frazer, "Modes of European Courtyard Design before the Medieval Cloister," *Gesta*, vol. 12, no. 1/2 (1973), pp. 1-12.

Bruce W. Frier, *Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1980).

Bruce W. Frier, "The Rental Market in Early Imperial Rome," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 67 (1977), pp. 27-37.

G. Hermansen, "The Medianum and the Roman Apartment," *Phoenix*, vol. 24, no. 4 (Winter, 1970), pp. 342-347.

Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

James E. Packer, "Housing and Population in Imperial Ostia and Rome," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 57, no. 1/2 (1967), pp. 80-95.

James E. Packer, *The Insulae of Imperial Ostia* (*Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, vol. 31) (Rome: The American Academy in Rome, 1971).

Carlo Pavolini, *Ostia* (Bari: Laterza, 2006).

John Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

Saskia Stevens, "Reconstructing the Garden Houses at Ostia. Exploring Water Supply and Building Height," *BABesch* 80 (2005), pp. 113-123.

Glenn R. Storey, “Regionaries-Type Insulae 2: Architectural/Residential Units at Rome,” *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 106, no. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 411-434.

Glenn R. Storey, “The Meaning of “Insula” in Roman Residential Terminology,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, vol. 49 (2004), pp. 47-84.

Carol Martin Watts and Donald J. Watts, “Geometrical Ordering of the Garden Houses at Ostia,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 46, no. 3 (Sep., 1987), pp. 265-276.

Forum Romanum (The Roman Forum)

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER



Video **13.2.8.3**

The heart of ancient Rome, the Forum Romanum was the monumental center of religious, political, and social life.



Figure **13.2.8.78**: View of the Forum from the slope of the Capitoline to the Palatine Hill (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In his play *Curculio*, the Latin playwright Plautus offers perhaps one of the most comprehensive and insightful descriptions of the Forum Romanum ever written (ll. **466-482**). In his summary, Plautus gives the reader the sense that one could find just about every sort of person in the forum—from criminals and hustlers to politicians and prostitutes. His summary reminds us that in the city of Rome the Forum Romanum was the key political, ritual, and civic center. Located in a valley separating the Capitoline and Palatine Hills, the Forum developed from the earliest times and remained in use after the city’s eventual decline; during that span of time the forum witnessed the growth and eventual contraction of the city and her empire. The archaeological remains of the Forum Romanum itself continue to provide important insights into the phases and processes associated with urbanism and monumentality in ancient Rome.

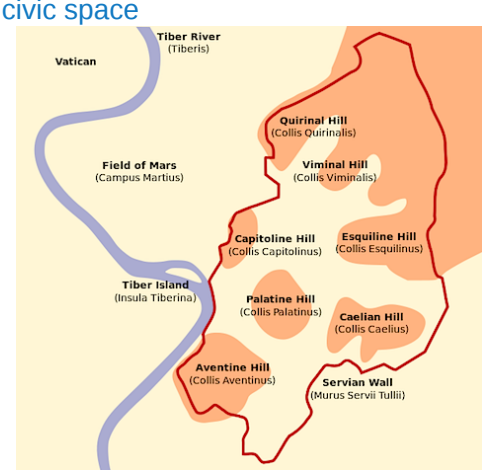


Figure **13.2.8.79**: Seven Hills of Rome (**image**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Situated astride the Tiber river, the site of Rome is noted for its low hills that are separated by deeply cut valleys. The hilltops became the focus of settlement beginning in the Early Iron Age; the development of the settlement continued during the first millennium B.C.E., with the traditional Roman account holding that the city herself was founded in 753 B.C.E. (Livy 1.6)

The traditional foundation narrative holds that one of the first acts of Romulus, the city's eponymous founder, was to establish a fortification wall around the Palatine Hill, the site of his new settlement. The Capitoline Hill, opposite the Palatine, emerged as the city's citadel (*arx*) and site of the poliadic cult of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, among others (poliadic: the chief civic cult of an ancient city, derived from the Greek word "polis").

Iron Age populations had used the marshy valley separating the Palatine and Capitoline hills as a necropolis (a large ancient cemetery), but the burgeoning settlement of archaic Rome had need of communal space and the valley was repurposed from a necropolis to a usable space. This required several transformations, both of human activity and the natural environment. Burial activity had to be transferred elsewhere; for this reason the main necropolis site shifted to the far side of the Esquiline Hill.



Figure **13.2.8.80**: View of the Forum Romanum toward the Palatine Hill (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Addressing the problems of seasonal rains and flooding proved more challenging—the valley required a landfill project as well as the construction of a drainage canal to manage standing water. Since the Tiber river tended to leave its banks regularly, the valley was prone to significant flooding, as a low saddle of land known as the Velabrum connects the forum valley to the riverine zone. As coring studies conducted by Albert J. Ammerman have shown, a deliberate landfill project deposited fill in the forum valley in order to create usable, dry levels during the sixth century B.C.E. Twentieth century excavators, including Giacomo Boni and Einar Gjerstad, revealed important remains of Iron Age burials that pre-dated the establishment of the forum valley as a civic space; in particular the necropolis in the area known as the *Sepulcretum* along the Sacra Via ("Sacred Way," the main sacred processional road of the city) has been extensively studied and published. The investigations of the burials themselves, and the patterns they followed, have allowed archaeologists to understand not only funeral customs but also social dynamics during Rome's proto-urban phases.



Figure 13.2.8.81: A view of the Via Sacra, with the Artium Vestae in the foreground

This major investment in the creation of civic space and the organization of labor also provides important information about the socio-economic structure of early Rome (Livy 1.59.9). The drainage canal eventually came to have a vaulted covering and was known as the *Cloaca Maxima* or "Great Drain." One of the clear outcomes of these civic investments was the creation of a usable space that came to be a civic focus for activities in many spheres, especially political and sacred functions.

Temples and sacred buildings

From the Early Republican period the forum space saw the construction of key temples. One of the most prominent early temples is the Temple of Saturn (often considered the earliest of the temples in the Forum Romanum), the first iteration of which dates c. 498 B.C.E. The temple was dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture, and housed the state treasury. The temple was rebuilt in 42 B.C.E. and again after 283 C.E. Another early Republican temple is the Temple of the Castors (a.k.a. Temple of Castor and Pollux) that was completed in 484 B.C.E. and was dedicated to the Gemini who had aided the Romans at the Battle of Lake Regillus in 496 B.C.E. The temple had several construction phases. The Sacra Via passed along the forum square en route to the Capitoline Hill and the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. This sacred route was used for certain state-level ceremonies, especially the celebration of the victory ritual known as the Roman triumph.



Figure 13.2.8.82: Temple of Vesta, rebuilt many times, most recently in the 1930s (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Two other early, sacred buildings are important to note. These are the Regia or "king's house" and the Temple of Vesta, both located on the downward slope of the Palatine Hill near the point where it reaches the edge of the Forum Romanum proper. Both of these sacred buildings are quite ancient and had many building phases, making it difficult to refine the chronology of the earliest phases. The Regia served as a ceremonial home for the king—later passing into the ownership of the pontifex maximus (principal state-level priesthood) once the kings had been expelled—and consisted of an irregularly planned suite of rooms surrounding a courtyard. The sixth century B.C.E. phase was decorated with painted plaques of architectural terracotta, clearly indicating both elite function and investment. Across the way was the Temple of Vesta, focused on the maternal elements of the archaic state as well as safeguarding the cult of Vesta and the sacred, eternal hearth

flame of the Roman people. Both the Regia and the Temple of Vesta developed from crude structures in earlier phases to stone-built architecture in later phases. The Severan family carried out the final significant restoration of the Temple of Vesta in 191 C.E.

Meeting spaces

Important meeting spaces for political bodies emerged at the northwest side of the forum, namely a pair of complexes known as the Curia and Comitium. The Curia served as the council house for the Roman Senate, although the Senate could convene in any inaugurated space (i.e. a space ritually demarcated by Roman priests). The Curia emerged perhaps in the seventh century B.C.E., although little is known about its earliest phases. The surviving Curia is an imperial rebuilding of the Late Republican phase known as the Curia Julia, since Julius Caesar was its architectural patron. The Comitium was a tiered space that lay in front of the Curia that served as an open-air meeting space for public assemblies. Little of the Comitium remains today but it was a key architectural complex for political and sacred events during the time of the Roman Republic.



Figure **13.2.8.83**: Curia Julia (Senate House)

From Republic to Empire

During the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. the Forum Romanum certainly continued to develop, but material remains of large-scale architecture have proven elusive and thus our understanding of the space during those centuries is less clear than in other periods. One middle Republican development is the continued elaboration of the Rostra, the platform from which orators would speak to those assembled in the forum square. This monument would continue to develop over time and took its name from the prows (*rostra*) of defeated enemy warships that were mounted on its façade.

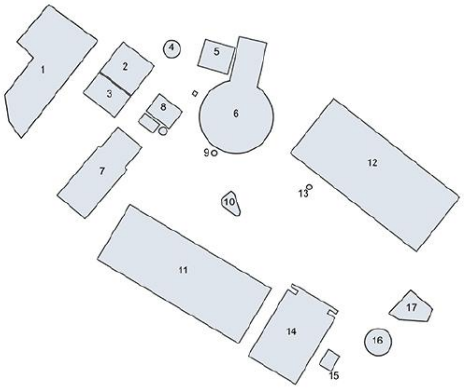


Figure **13.2.8.84**: The Forum Romanum in the Late Republican period: 1) Tabularium; 2)Temple of Concord; 3) Basilica Opimia; 4)Tullianum; 5) Basilica Porcia; 6) Curia and Comitium; 7) Temple of Saturn; 8) Senaculum; 9) Volcanal; 10) Lacus Curtius; 11) Basilica Sempronia; 12) Basilica Fulvia; 13) Shrine of Venus Cloacina; 14) Temple of the Castors; 15)Fountain of Juturna; 16) Temple of Vesta; 17) Regia (**Source image**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The later second and first centuries B.C.E., the Late Republican period, witnessed many changes in the city and in the Forum Romanum. The successes of Rome and her growing empire during the second and first centuries B.C.E. led to a great deal of monumental construction in the city, including in the Forum Romanum itself. It was during this Late Republican phase that Rome became a metropolitan center, equipped with the monumental architecture that could compete with—if not eclipse—that of the foreign powers Rome had tamed during the Punic Wars and those against the Hellenistic kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean. In particular the Romans established a tradition of constructing monuments commemorating famous men who had achieved great success in military and public careers. The first of these was the *Columna Rostrata* that marked the naval victory of Caius Duilius at the naval battle of Mylae in 260 B.C.E. The Roman interest in

monumental, commemorative monuments, now referred to as triumphal arches, would soon follow. The first of these, the Fabian arch (*fornix Fabianus*), was dedicated on the Sacra Via toward the eastern end of the Forum Romanum in 121 B.C.E., commemorating the military victories (and family) of Quintus Fabius Allobrogicus (Cicero **pro Planc. 17**). While the Fabian monument is no longer extant, its construction established a tradition (and a traditional form) for official commemorative and honorific monuments in the context of Roman public art.

The Basilica

The second century B.C.E. saw the creation and introduction of a unique Roman building type, the basilica. The basilica was a columnar hall that often had a multi-purpose use—from law courts to commerce to entertainments. Roman planners came to prefer them for lining the long sides of open squares, in a way not dissimilar from the Greek stoa. The sources claim that the Basilica Porcia (c. 184 B.C.E.) was the first basilica built at Rome, although no trace of it remains. The Basilica Porcia served as an office for the tribunes of the plebs. Other, more elaborate basilicae were soon to be built, including the famous Basilica Aemilia, first built in 179 B.C.E., and remodeled from c. 55 to 34 B.C.E. as the Basilica Paulli. Restored again after a fire in 14 B.C.E., the famous basilica was deemed by Pliny the Elder to be one of the three most beautiful monuments in Rome (Plin. *HN* **36.102.5**)



Figure **13.2.8.85**: Western end of the Roman Forum, c. 300 C.E. In the foreground is the Rostra Augusti. In the background are (left to right) the Temple of Saturn, the Temple of Vespasian, and the Temple of Concordia. Elements of the model © 2008 The Regents of the University of California, © 2011 Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, © 2012 Frischer Consulting. All rights reserved. Image © 2012 Bernard Frischer

Imperial period

The advent of the principate of Augustus (27 B.C.E. – 14 C.E.) brought about additions and renovations to the Forum Romanum. With the deification of Julius Caesar, Augustus' adoptive father, a temple dedicated to Caesar's cult (*templum divi Iulii*) was constructed on the edge of the forum square (15 in the diagram below).

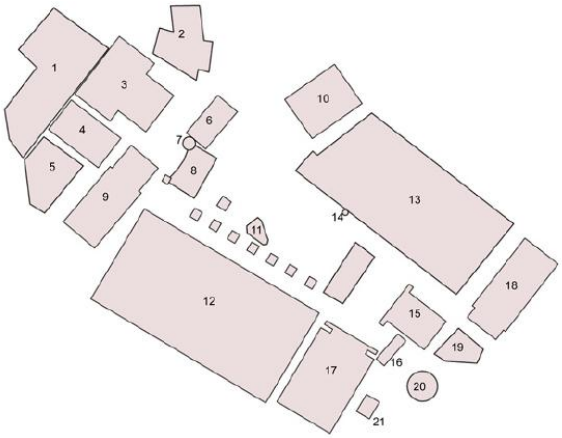


Figure **13.2.8.86**: The Forum Romanum in the Imperial period: 1)Tabularium; 2) Tullianum; 3) Temple of Concord; 4) Temple of Vespasian; 5) Portico Dii Consentes; 6) Arch of Septimius Severus; 7) Umbilicus Urbis; 8) Rostra; 9) Temple of Saturn; 10) Curia Julia; 11) Lacus Curtius; 12) Basilica Julia; 13) Basilica Aemilia; 14) Shrine of Venus Cloacina; 15) Temple of Divus Julius; 16) Arch of Augustus; 17) Temple of the Castors; 18) Temple of Ant0ninus and Faustina; 19) Regia; 20) Temple of Vesta; 21) Fountain of Juturna (**source image**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Augustus restored existing buildings, completed incomplete projects, and added commemorative projects to celebrate his own accomplishments and those of his family members. In this latter group, the Arch of Augustus (#16 above) and the Porticus of Caius and

Lucius are notable. The former was a triumphal arch celebrating significant military and diplomatic accomplishments of the emperor, while the latter honored the emperor's grandsons.

Augustus also followed Julius Caesar in creating yet another new forum space beyond the Forum Romanum that was named the Forum of Augustus. (dedicated in 2 B.C.E.). These new Imperial Fora in some cases provided additional space and, in turn, shifted attention away from the Forum Romanum.

During the Imperial period the Forum Romanum itself saw only sporadic new construction, although the maintenance of the existing structures would have provided a pressing and ongoing obligation. Just beyond the limit of the forum proper the second century C.E. temple of Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina was constructed in 141 C.E. (and then modified in 161 C.E. following the emperor's death).



Figure **13.2.8.87**: Arch of Septimius Severus, 203 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Coming to power at the end of the second century C.E., the Severan family erected a triple-bay triumphal arch commemorating the victories of emperor Septimius Severus (reigned 193-211 C.E.) at the northwestern corner of the forum square. The third century C.E. saw rebuilding of structures and monuments that had been damaged by fire, including the rebuilding of the Curia Julia by the emperor Diocletian in the late third century C.E. following a fire in 283 C.E.

Decline



Figure **13.2.8.88**: View of the Roman Forum (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Declining imperial fortunes led inevitably to urban decay at Rome. After the Severan and Tetrarchic building programs of the third century C.E. and Constantinian investment in the early fourth century C.E., the forum and its environs began to decline and decay. Constantine I officially relocated the administrative center of the Roman world to Constantinople in 330 C.E. and Theodosius I suppressed all "pagan" religions and ordered temples shut permanently in 394 C.E. These changes, coupled with population decline, spelled the gradual demise of spaces like the Forum Romanum. Roman monuments were cannibalized for building materials and open, unused spaces were re-purposed—sometimes as ad hoc dwellings and other times for the deposition of rubbish and fill. Thus the forum slowly yielded its sacro-civic functions to more mundane concerns like pasturage—in fact it eventually came to be known as the "Campo Vaccino" (cow field).

The beauty of the ruins

The monument that is considered to be the final ancient structure erected in the Forum Romanum is a re-purposed monumental column set in place by the emperor Phocas in August of 608 C.E. The anonymous Einsiedeln itinerary, written in the eighth century C.E., mentions a general state of decay in the forum. A major earthquake in 847 C.E. wreaked considerable damage on remaining Roman monuments in the forum and in its environs. During the Middle Ages ancient structures provided reusable buildings materials, as well as reusable foundations, for Medieval structures.

The ruins themselves provided endless inspiration for artists, including painters the likes of Canaletto who became interested in the romanticism of the ruins of the ancient city as well as for cartographers and engravers the likes of G. B. Piranesi and G. Vasi, among others, who created views of the ruins themselves and restored plans of the ancient city.



Figure **13.2.8.88**: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, "Veduta di Campo Vaccino," *Views of Rome*, plate 82, 18 x 27.75 inches, etching, 1772

Interpretation

The Forum Romanum, despite being a relatively small space, was central to the function and identity of the city of Rome (and the wider Roman empire). The Forum Romanum played a key role in creating a communal focal point, one toward which various members of a diverse socio-economic community could gravitate. In that centralized space community rituals that served a larger purpose of group unity could be performed and observed and elites could reinforce social hierarchy through the display of monumental art and architecture. These devices that could create and continually reinforce not only a sense of community belonging but also the existing social hierarchy were of vital importance in archaic states. Even as the Forum Romanum changed over time, it remained an important space. After a series of emperors chose to build new forum complexes (the Imperial Fora) adjacent to the Forum Romanum, it retained its symbolic importance, especially considering that, as a people, ancient Romans were incredibly loyal to ancestral practices and traditions.



Figure **13.2.8.89**: Recent excavation at the northeast corner of the Palatine Hill (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Rediscovery and excavation

Many of the monuments of the Forum Romanum, along with ancient occupation levels, gradually disappeared from view. Systematic exploration and study began under archaeologist Carlo Fea who started to clear the area near the Arch of Septimius Severus in 1803. Study continued during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with prominent scholars including Rodolfo Lanciani, Giacomo Boni, Einar Gjerstad, and Andrea Carandini, among others, leading major campaigns. Study and excavation—as well as the hugely important obligation

of preservation—continue in the Forum Romanum today. The bulk of the forum is accessible to visitors who have the opportunity to experience one of the great documents of urban archaeology.

Additional resources:

A. J. Ammerman, “On the Origins of the Forum Romanum,” *American Journal of Archaeology* vol. 94, no. 4, 1990, pp. 627-45.

A. J. Ammerman, “The Comitium in Rome from the Beginning.” *American Journal of Archaeology,* vol. 100, no. 1, 1996. pp. 121-36.

P. Carafa, *Il comizio di Roma dalle origini all’età di Augusto* (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1998).

A. Carandini and P. Carafa, eds., *Atlante di Roma antica: biografia e ritratti della città*, 2 v. (Milan: Electa, 2012).

A. Claridge, *Rome: an Archaeological Guide* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

F. Coarelli, *Il foro romano*, 2 v. (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1983-1992).

F. Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: an Archaeological Guide*, trans. James J. Clauss and Daniel P. Harmon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

E. Gjerstad, *Early Rome*, 7 v. (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1953-1973).

C. Hülsen and J. B. Carter, *The Roman forum: its history and its monuments*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Stechert, 1906).

R. Krautheimer, *Rome, profile of a city, 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian capitals: topography and politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

G. Lugli, *Fontes ad topographiam veteris urbis Romae pertinentes. Colligendos atque edendos curavit Iosephus Lugli*, 8 v. (Rome: Università di Roma, Istituto di topografia antica, 1952-1965).

G. Lugli, *The Roman Forum and Palatine* (Rome: Bardi, 1961).

S. B. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

L. Richardson, jr., *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

J. Sewell, *The formation of Roman urbanism, 338-200 B.C.: between contemporary foreign influence and Roman tradition* (*Journal of Roman archaeology Supplementary series*; 79), (Portsmouth RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2010).

J. E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

E. M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, 6 v. (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1993-2000).

D. Watkin, *The Roman Forum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

A. Ziółkowski, *Sacra Via: twenty years after* (*Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, Supplement; 3), (Warsaw: Fundacja im. Rafała Taubenschlag, 2004).

Digital Roman Forum (UCLA)

Digital Augustan Rome

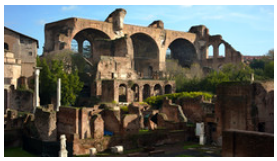
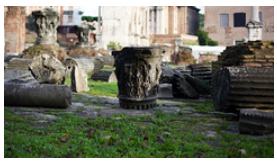
Rome Reborn

Roman Forum and Palatine Hill

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:










https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88679



Figure 13.2.8.90: More SmartHistory images…

Imperial fora

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

These awe-inspiring public complexes were built to reinforce the imperial family's political message.



Figure 13.2.8.91: View of the Forum of Trajan, c. 112 C.E.. Later medieval walls can be seen amidst the grass on the left; the upright columns of the Basilica Ulpia can be seen on the right in front of the larger Column of Trajan (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

For centuries, the Roman Forum (*Forum Romanum*) was the civic, juridical, and social heart of the ancient city of Rome, a place where civic buildings, sacred buildings, and monuments were to be both found and admired. Beginning in the first century B.C.E., a new series of public spaces, also dubbed as *fora* (*fora* being the plural form of the Latin noun *forum*) began to be created. These *fora* (called Imperial *fora* since they were built by Roman emperors during the Roman imperial period) would eventually number five in all and were important public spaces that relied upon the visual potential of monumental art and architecture to reinforce ideological messages.

Topography and chronology

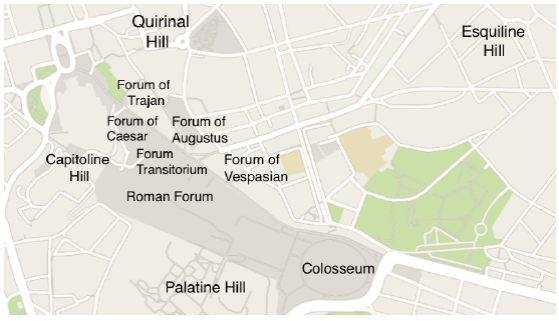


Figure 13.2.8.92

The Imperial *fora* are located in an area bounded on the southwest by the Capitoline Hill, on the northeast by the Quirinal Hill, and extending toward the Esquiline Hill to the east. The *fora* were initially built between c. 54 B.C.E. and 113 C.E., with continuing additions, restorations, and modifications through late antiquity. In the middle ages the *fora* were spaces re-used for building materials, housing, industry, and burials. Gradually these spaces faded from view, buried beneath the medieval and modern city of Rome. A massive campaign of excavation in the twentieth century on the orders of the Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini returned large areas of the *fora* to view. Ongoing archaeological investigation continues to reveal additional elements of the *fora* and to provide additional data that allow for their contextualization.

Forum of Julius Caesar

The Forum of Julius Caesar (also known as the *Forum Iulium* or *Forum Caesaris*) was the first of the imperial *fora* complexes to be built. Pompey the Great, a political rival of Caesar, had dedicated a monumental theater and portico complex in the Campus Martius in 55 B.C.E. and this perhaps spurred Caesar's ambition to construct a new forum complex.

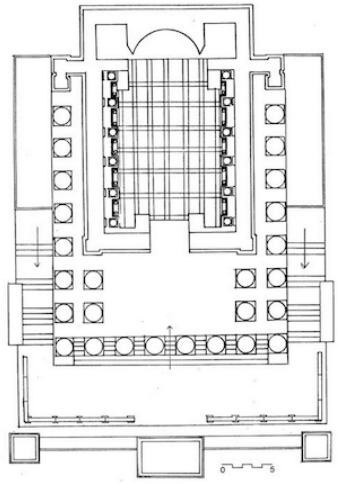


Figure **13.2.8.93**: Temple of Venus Genetrix (plan), Forum of Caesar

Caesar's project required the acquisition of land at the flank of the Capitoline Hill and he was aided in this early on by political allies, including Cicero, with the initial land purchased at a cost of sixty million sesterces (Cic. *ad Att*. 4.16.9). Additional landacquisition may have ballooned the total cost to one hundred million sesterces (Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 26; Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 36.103). The construction of Caesar's forum resulted in significant reorganization of the northwest corner of the Forum Romanum.



Figure **13.2.8.93**: Cupids, frieze-architrave, Temple of Venus Genetrix, Forum of Julius Caesar, 113 C.E., marble (Mercati di Traiano Museo dei Fori Imperiali)

The Forum of Caesar takes the form of a rectangle measuring 160 by 75 m. The centerpiece of the complex was the Temple of Venus Genetrix, dedicated to the goddess that Caesar celebrated as his distant ancestor. The octastyle (eight columns across the façade) temple was made of solid marble and sat atop a high podium. The long sides of the forum square, flanking the temple, housed two storeys of rooms that may have served political and/or mercantile functions. The complex was dedicated during the festivities surrounding Caesar's triumph in September of 46 B.C.E.

Forum of Augustus

The Forum of Augustus (known as the *Forum Augustum* or *Forum Augusti*) followed the Forum of Caesar as the second of the imperial *fora*. At the Battle of Philippi in 42 B.C.E., Augustus vowed a temple to Mars in exchange for help in avenging the slain Caesar (Suet. *Aug*. 29.2), but the temple and forum complex would not be dedicated until 2 B.C.E. (*Res Gestae* 21). The Forum of Augustus provided additional room for the meeting of law courts and was built on land acquired by Augustus.



Figure 13.2.8.94: Model of the Temple of Mars Ultor between twin porticoes, Forum Augusti (Mercati di Traiano Museo dei Fori Imperiali, Rome)The temple at the center of the Forum Augusti was sacred to Mars Ultor ("Mars the Avenger"), and was surrounded by a portico that defined the forum space and played a key role in the visual narrative of the public art program installed in the forum. As Augustus had emerged as the sole leader of the Roman state, it was important for him to create and display messages of continuity and stability.



Figure 13.2.8.95: View of the ruins of the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augusti, c. 2 B.C.E.; the stairs to the temple platform are visible (left) and the paving stones of one portico can be seen at the lower right (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The visual program in the Forum of Augustus is complex. The architectural sculpture adorning the Temple of Mars Ultor inserts Augustus into the Julian family (*gens Iulia*) by portraying Augustus in the context of divinities (Mars, Venus, and Cupid) and the deified mortal—Julius Caesar (*divus Iulius*). Flanking the temple in the exedrae (the semicircular, recessed areas behind the colonnades to the left and right of the temple) of the porticoes were sculptural groups depicting both Romulus and Aeneas, thus connecting Augustus to Rome's two legendary founders (Ovid *Fasti* 5.549-570).

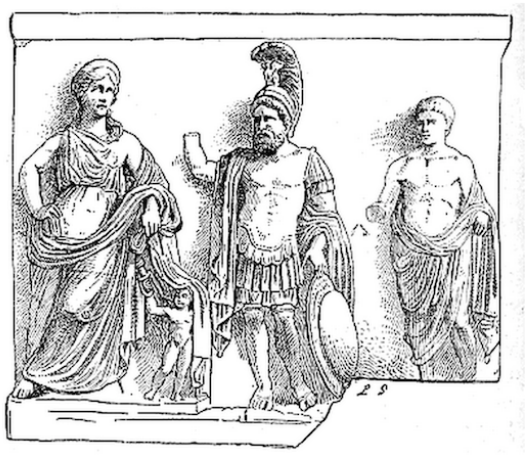


Figure 13.2.8.96: This drawing shows an ancient sculpture now in Tunis that may be a depiction of the actual pedimental group from Mars Ultor (possible identifications left to right: Venus, Cupid, Mars, and Divus Iulius)

To complete the narrative cycle, statues of famous Romans of the Republican period adorned the attic of the porticoes. These famous men (*summi viri*) were portrayed alongside small, inscribed plaques (*tituli*) bearing their political and military accomplishments. In this way, Augustus portrayed himself as the ideal man to lead the Roman state; he was connected to Rome's divine origins and he represented continuity with its republican tradition. This powerful visual narrative represents an important early use of public art to transmit ideological messages in the western world.



Figure 13.2.8.97: View of the capitals of the Temple of Mars Ultor, Forum Augusti, c. 2 B.C.E.

Subsequent emperors continued to elaborate upon the Forum of Augustus. The emperor Tiberius added two arches in 19 C.E. meant to honor the German victories of Drusus and Germanicus (Tacitus *Annales* 2.64; *CIL* 6.911) and the emperor Hadrian restored the forum complex in the second century. Pliny the Elder deemed the Forum of Augustus one of three most beautiful monuments in the city of Rome (Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 36.102.5).

Templum Pacis / Forum of Vespasian

The next imperial forum to be built was commissioned by the emperor Vespasian following the suppression of the Great Jewish Revolt that lasted from 66 to 73 C.E. Vespasian came to power following civil chaos in 69 C.E. and, together with his eldest son, Titus, suppressed the revolt and sacked the city of Jerusalem. During the summer of 71 C.E. Vespasian and Titus jointly celebrated a lavish triumph at Rome—an ancient ritual celebrating significant military victories. One of the key tenets of Vespasian's new administration was the restoration of the city, including the construction of new buildings and monuments. He dedicated a forum complex that housed a temple dedicated to Peace (*Pax*) in 71 C.E., completing it by 75 C.E. (Flavius Josephus *Jewish War* 7.5.7). This innovative complex was deemed one of Rome's most beautiful monuments by Pliny the Elder and housed not only significant spoils from Jerusalem but also masterworks of Greek art that had previously been hoarded by the emperor Nero.

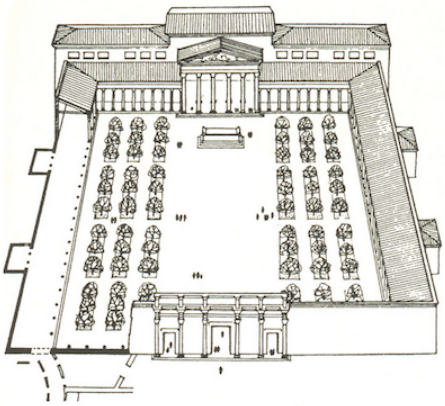


Figure 13.2.8.98: Restored plan, Temple of Peace

The Temple of Peace (*Templum Pacis*) stands out among the imperial *fora* for its innovative architectural design. Rather than featuring a central temple seated atop a prominent podium, the Templum Pacis complex consists of a square portico (dimensions 110 x 135 m) with the temple itself set within the eastern side of the portico, flanked by ancillary rooms. This left the square itself open for the installation of decorative water features and plantings which are seen both archaeologically and on fragments of the Severan marble plan of the city of Rome (*forma urbis Romae*) that was mounted in the forum complex in the third century C.E. The fragments of the Severan plan provide valuable information about the design of this architectural complex and has led scholars to speculate that the inspiration for its design may have been the great market (*macellum magnum*) of the city that had likely been destroyed in the Great Fire of Rome in 64 C.E. It is especially significant to note that this is a public space and that Vespasian's generosity granted the populace of Rome access not only to a beautiful, monumental square, but also to art and the spoils of military victory (including spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem).

Forum Transitorium



Figure 13.2.8.99: Columns and relief sculpture, Forum Transitorium (Forum of Nerva), c. 97 C.E.

The Forum Transitorium, also referred to as the Forum of Nerva, was begun by Domitian, the younger son of Vespasian. Incomplete at the time of Domitian's assassination in 96 C.E., the complex was completed by Nerva in 97 C.E. This is a narrow forum complex that abuts both the Forum of Augustus and the Templum Pacis and is constrained by these pre-existing structures (dimensions: 131 x 45 meters); as well as the Argiletum, a street that ran the length of the forum. The Forum Transitorium's temple was sacred to Minerva, who had been a patron divinity of Domitian, and the architectural sculpture that decorated the porticoes featured imagery connected to Minerva and scenes from the private lives of women.

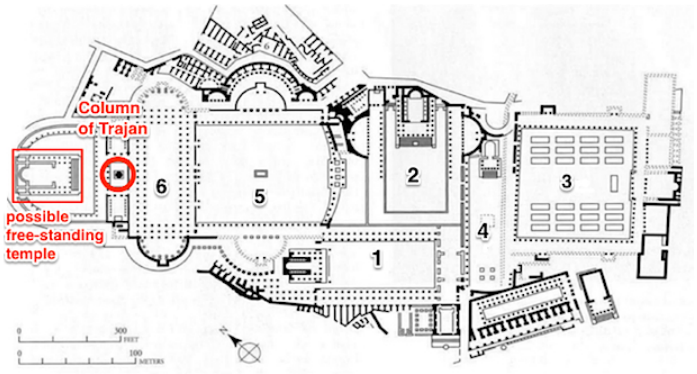


Figure 13.2.8.100: Plan of the Imperial fora showing a freestanding Temple of the Deified Trajan at the western end of the Forum of Trajan. 1) Forum of Caesar; 2) Forum of Augustus; 3) Templum Pacis; 4) Forum Transitorium; 5) Forum of Trajan; 6) Basilica Ulpia (part of Trajan's Forum)

The Forum of Trajan (*Forum Traiani*), the final imperial forum, was both the largest and the most lavish. Inaugurated in 112 C.E., the architectural complex relied upon imposing architectural and sculptural features to glorify the accomplishments and principate of the emperor Trajan. The elaborate forum complex has a vast footprint, measuring 200 x 120 meters. The open square of the forum is flanked by porticoes that contain exedrae and point viewer attention toward the main structure, the massive Basilica Ulpia. The architect Apollodorus of Damascus was responsible for the innovative design. On the western side of the basilica was another courtyard, flanked by two libraries (one Greek and one Latin), that contained a monumental honorific column, known today as the Column of Trajan.



Figure 13.2.8.101: View of the Forum of Trajan, c. 112 C.E., the Column of Trajan can be seen behind the columns of the Basilica Ulpia (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Column of Trajan, inaugurated in 113 C.E., is a main feature of the Forum of Trajan and is, in its own right, a masterwork of Roman art. The column carries an helical frieze of historical relief that provides a pictorial narrative of the events of Trajan's wars in Dacia (101–102 and 105–106 C.E.), culminating with the death of the enemy commander, Decebalus. The column stands 38 meters tall and its frieze wraps around the column shaft 23 times, with a total length of roughly 190 meters. Carved in bas relief, the exquisite frieze carefully narrates Trajan's campaigns and its level of detail is simply astounding.



Figure 13.2.8.102: Column of Trajan, Carrara marble, completed 113 C.E., Rome; dedicated to Emperor Trajan (Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus in honor of his victories over Dacia (now Romania) 101-02 and 105-06 C.E.

The column's frieze may draw inspiration from earlier Roman triumphal art, the tradition of which was inclined to depict scenes from the foreign campaigns and, in so doing, glorify the accomplishments of the commander and his soldiers. Throughout the Forum of Trajan the theme of military victory, and its celebration, permeate the monumental decorative programs.



Figure 13.2.8.103: Pontoon bridge with Roman soldiers (detail), Column of Trajan, Carrara marble, completed 113 C.E., Rome (photo: **ElissaSCA** © All rights reserved, by permission)

When Trajan died in 117 C.E., sources tell us that the Roman Senate allowed a special dispensation whereby Trajan's cremated remains could be deposited in the base of the column and that a temple to his cult (*Templum Divi Traiani et Plotinae*) was added to the forum complex between 125 and 138 C.E. (*Historia Augusta – Hadrian* 19.9). An ongoing point of scholarly contention is the position and appearance of this plan. Traditional reconstructions favor a free-standing temple at the western end of the forum, while more recent reconstructions instead favor a shrine positioned against the western exedra of the Forum of Augustus. Ongoing archaeological fieldwork may yet shed light on this contentious topographical debate.

Interpretation

The Imperial *fora* represent important architectural landscapes in the city of Rome. They demonstrate the efficacy of public art and architecture with respect to creating collective identity and communicating clear messages that both disseminate and reinforce ideology. The strength and accomplishments of the Roman state, not to mention its stability, are key themes in any such program of message making. We should also not underestimate the psychological effect of these grandiose, soaring, bedecked complexes, based around massive open plazas, on the minds and experiences of city dwellers (many of whom lived in crowded squalor). The Imperial *fora* demonstrate that within the mechanisms of Roman urbanism, civic architecture occupies a crucial role. We are reminded of this efficacy by an ancient example that is perhaps no different from the reaction of a modern visitor to the city of Rome. The emperor Constantius II, visiting Rome in the mid-fourth century C.E., was amazed by the Forum of Trajan, something he considered "a construction unique under the heavens" (Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.15).

Additional resources:

J. Anderson, *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora* (Collection Latomus; 182) (Brussels: Latomus, 1984).

S. Baiani et al., *Crypta Balbi-Fori imperiali: archeologia urbana a Roma e interventi di restauro nell'anno del Grande Giubileo* (Rome: Kappa, 2000).

A. Carandini and P. Carafa, eds., *Atlante di Roma antica: biografia e ritratti della città* 2 v. (Milan: Electa, 2012).

A. Claridge, *Rome: an Archaeological Guide* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

F. Coarelli et al., T*he Column of Trajan* (Rome: Colombo, 2000).

R. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: a Study of Flavian Rome* (Collection Latomus; 231) (Brussels: Latomus, 1996).

J. Geiger, *The first hall of fame: a study of the statues in the Forum Augustum* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008).

E. La Rocca, *I Fori Imperiali* (Rome: ENEL, 1995).

T. J. Luce, "Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum." in *Between Republic and Empire*, ed. by K. Raaflaub, K. and M. Toher, pp. 123-38 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

R. Meneghini, "Templum Divi Traiani," *Bullettino Della Commissione Archeologica Comunale Di Roma* 97 (1996) pp. 47-55.

R. Meneghini and R. S. Valenzani, *Scavi dei Fori imperiali: il Foro di Augusto: l'area centrale* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2010).

J. E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: a Study of the Monuments* 2 v. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

J. E. Packer, "Trajan's Forum Again: The Column and the Temple in the Master Plan Attributed to Apollodorus (?)," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 7:274-6.

S. B. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

L. Richardson, Jr., *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

R. Ulrich, "Julius Caesar and the Creation of the Forum Iulium," *American Journal of Archaeology* 97.1:49-80.

L. Ungaro, *Il Museo dei Fori Imperiali nei mercati di Traiano* (Milan: Electa, 2007).

Mercati di Traiano Museo dei Fori Imperiali (Markets of Trajan and the Imperial Fora Museum)

Fori Imperiali (Sovrintendenza Capitolina)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.2.8.104:** More SmartHistory images…

Roman art, archaeology and museums

Digging through time

by DR. DARIUS ARYA and DR. BETH HARRIS

Dirt and detritus have built up in Rome over the centuries—the city now sits well above ancient street level.



Video **13.2.8.4**

Seizure of Looted Antiquities Illuminates What Museums Want Hidden

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE

Over 20,000 precious art objects were seized in a raid at dawn — what can this tell us about beauty, theft, and the museum?

On July 4, 2018, Europol and the Italian Carabinieri's Division for the Protection of Cultural Heritage announced the culmination of "Operation Demetra." This criminal investigation, tracking a network of Sicilian archaeological looters and international traffickers, resulted in dawn raids on 40 houses in 4 countries and the arrest or detention of 23 people, and the seizure of some 20,000 plundered objects worth an estimated €40 million (approximately $46.6 million).

Art, photography, and unspoken messages



Figure **13.2.8.105**: One of the looted works seized in Operation Demetra, probably a 1st century CE portrait of a member of the Roman imperial family, the Julio-Claudians (photo: **Europol**)

The Europol press release was accompanied by an uncaptioned photograph of a beautiful, naturalistic marble portrait head, presumably one of the works seized in the raids. The portrait depicts a young, beardless man wearing a veil over the back of his head. The figure has a protruding, dimpled chin, and very small ears, but there are few signs of individualization here.

On the basis of its similarity to other works, the portrait can be plausibly identified as a young man of the Roman imperial family from the early 1st century C.E. The sculptor was skilful at capturing in stone the appearance of soft, youthful skin as it stretches over cheekbones and puckers out at the corner of the mouth The nose and left cheek are damaged, but otherwise, the piece seems to be in extraordinarily fine condition. It would be a centerpiece in the ancient gallery of any museum in the world today.

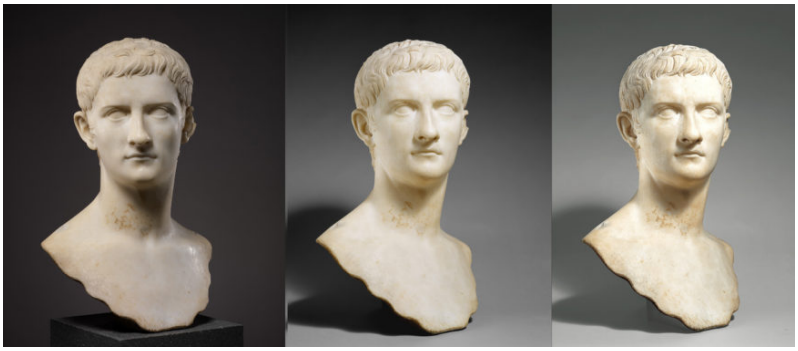


Figure 13.2.8.106: Three museum photographs of a portrait of Caligula, said to have been found near Marino, Lago Albano. Purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1914 from Alfredo Barsanti, Rome (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The head has much in common with other Roman imperial portraits, but the Europol photograph is unique. The depiction is not at all how we've become accustomed to seeing ancient sculpture presented. Museum and art market photography usually features pieces like this against a seamless muslin backdrop. The backdrop can be black or gray or, for a little spice, it can fade from black to gray or from dark gray to light. The neutral color, the absence of a horizon line and of any representational detail other than the single object itself, work together to situate the piece in an other-worldly realm, one far removed from any actual specific, physical location. The non-space of these official photographs complements the museum rhetoric of universality. This rhetoric is grounded in a philosophy of art that goes back to Immanuel Kant.

Museums and contexts



Figure 13.2.8.107: Bronze statue identified as Marcus Aurelius, likely one of a large number of bronzes that were looted from an archaeological site in southern Turkey called Bubon in the 1960s and sold to American collectors and museums in subsequent decades (Cleveland Museum of Art)

Implicitly in their architecture and explicitly in their labels, art museums frame their holdings as manifestations of creativity, genius, truth, and beauty — ostensibly universal and timeless human values. This makes the objects' installation in a museum, often far removed from the particular culture and setting for which they were created and where they may still hold very different meanings, seem unproblematic and even natural.

Sometimes the rhetoric of universality takes on a more literal and pragmatic meaning, as when self-proclaimed "universal museums" claim the right to own — and retain — objects from every corner of the globe, regardless of the dubious circumstances by which they may have acquired them. The two concepts of universality are, of course, mutually reinforcing; and the gray vacuum photographs of record are part and parcel of this ideological apparatus.



Figure 13.2.8.108: Portrait of Drusus purchased by the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2012. It was sold with provenance documents indicating an ownership history going back to the 19th century. These documents turned out to be false; the piece had in fact been stolen from a small museum near Naples in 1944. It was returned to Italy in 2017 (photo: Daderot, CC0)

The Europol press release photo is the antithesis of the gray vacuum images. It is teeming with details that anchor the ancient portrait in a very particular and very mundane realm. The most startling of these details are the two slippers partially visible along the lower edge on either side of the head. These must be the slippered feet of the photographer himself, as he stood over the marble head and aimed his camera at the floor.

The head is lying on what looks like a nice Persian carpet, but our photographer was apparently untroubled by the disarray surrounding it: a pen, whose metal clip catches the light in the image's upper left corner; two pieces of battered wooden furniture; what appears to be an ornate but broken gilded plaster picture frame; and a blue crocheted blanket. It would not have taken much to push all this detritus out of the frame of the photograph, but our cameraman did not bother. He also apparently couldn't be bothered, before snapping the picture, to turn off his TV, the blue glow of which illuminates the portrait's proper right side.

These details not only root the image in a specific earthly setting; they also introduce a concept art world insiders usually take pains to hide from the general public: the inevitably messy *human agency* behind the removal and relocation of artworks or cultural objects from their original context to their end destination in a gallery display. Europol didn't release any information about the photograph itself, and it is possible that it was taken by one of the investigators. The slippered feet, however, suggest a different actor, someone in possession of the looted head in his own home.

Erasing stories, erasing the past

We know from other cases of looted antiquities that middlemen often photographed their wares after receiving them from the *tombaroli* (grave-robbers) who dug them out of the ground. The photographs were used to shop the pieces around to potential buyers. Perhaps this photograph was meant to serve as the basis for negotiations over price between the middleman and the dealer whose role in this network was to smuggle the pieces out of Italy to Munich, where, the investigators claim, they were supplied with false provenance papers and sold at auction. No doubt this laundering entailed new photography as well.



Figure 13.2.8.109: Members of the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897, with some of their loot (British Museum)

The Europol photograph is a stark reminder that many of those polished marble masterpieces on their spotlit museum pedestals were once merely raw goods on the floor of a crook's cluttered living room. The alchemy is usually carefully hidden from view; museums do everything they can to keep our attention away from the men behind the curtain.

In its power to reveal more profound truths about museum objects, the Europol photograph recalls the famous image of those manspreading colonialists, the members of the British Punitive Expedition, seated atop their loot at Benin in 1897. That is the "before" image to be paired with the loot's "after" images, both in photographs of record and in the beautiful modernist grid in the new Sainsbury African Galleries of the British Museum.

The fact that these "before" photographs still have the power to shock years, and even decades, after debates about "decolonizing the museum" have become widespread, and the looting of antiquities is widely recognized as a scourge, reveals how thoroughly we've been conditioned by museum rhetoric of beauty and universality. The truth is that the route to the gallery is often ugly, built on crime, brute force, and lies. When we catch a glimpse of that reality, we must not look away.



Figure 13.2.8.110: Gallery devoted to the material from Benin, in the Sainsbury wing of the British Museum (photo: **Shadowgate**, CC BY 2.0)

This essay first appeared in **Hyperallergic** (used by permission).

Additional resources:

Peter Watson and Cecilia Todeschini. *The Medici Conspiracy: The Illicit Journey of Looted Antiquities – from Italy's Tomb Raiders to the World's Greatest Museums (*New York: PublicAffairs, 2007).

Europol's post about Operation Demetra

Read more about Operation Demetra at Artnet

More information about Operation Demetra from ARCA

Read about a campaign to return looted Benin bronzes to Nigeria at Artnet

Looting, collecting, and exhibiting: the Bubon bronzes

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Where do the objects in museums come from? Explore the tension between collectors and the preservation of knowledge.



Video 13.2.8.6: Bronze statue of a nude male figure, Greek or Roman, Hellenistic or Imperial, c. 200 B.C.E. – c. 200 C.E. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Dr. Elizabeth Marlowe and Dr. Steven Zucker ARCHES: At Risk Cultural Heritage Education Series

Additional resources:

Bubon on Chasing Aphrodite

Bubon on Looting Matters

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

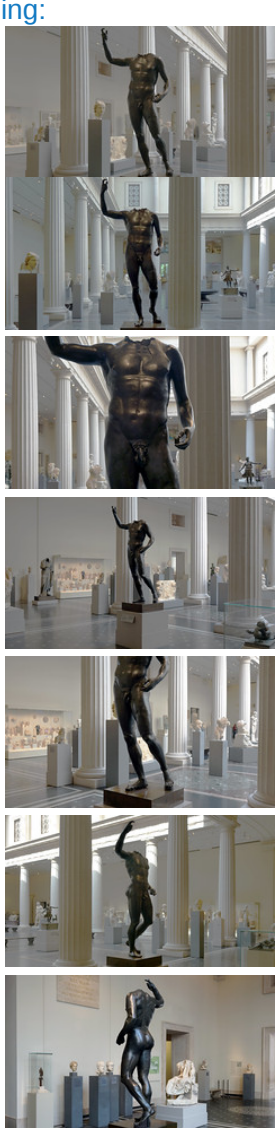


Figure 13.2.8.111: More SmartHistory images…

Pompeii

Pompeii, an introduction

by DR. FRANCESCA TRONCHIN

Pompeii, once called the “City of the Dead,” gives a marvelous sense of day-to-day Roman life.



Figure **13.2.8.112**: Forum, looking toward Mount Vesuvius, Pompeii

Preserved under volcanic ash



Figure **13.2.8.113**

Pompeii may be famous today, with millions of tourists visiting each year, but in the ancient world It was simply a market and trading town specializing in a fish-based condiment (called *garum*); other sites on the Bay of Naples were far better known as sumptuous vacation spots.

Pompeii was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (a volcano near the Bay of Naples) in 79 C.E. making the town one of the best-preserved examples of a Roman city, and tourists today marvel at the sensation of walking through a real ancient city.

While the volcano took thousands of lives and made the region uninhabitable for centuries, the layers of volcanic ash preserved Pompeii in a manner unparalleled at other ancient Roman sites. Not only have the magnificent temples and villas of the town been preserved, but also one-room workshops, graves of lower-class citizens, and modest take-out restaurants frequented by the hoi polloi. Organic materials like food, clothing, and wood are more often preserved in nearby Herculaneum, because of the differences in volcanic materials covering the two towns. And so, Pompeii, this “city of death” in fact tells us more about daily life in first-century Italy than even the city of Rome itself.



Figure **13.2.8.114**: Storefront oven and pots, Pompeii, before 79 C.E.

Not always Roman

Pompeii, however, was not always a Roman town. By the mid-sixth century B.C.E. both Etruscans and Greeks had settled in this area, yet their specific contributions to the founding of Pompeii as a city are currently poorly understood since archaeological exploration of the earliest phases of the town have been scarce. The **Doric** Temple in Pompeii's Triangular **Forum**, nevertheless, suggests a stronger Greek than Etruscan presence.



Figure **13.2.8.115**: Remains of the Doric temple in the Triangular Forum, Pompeii (photo: **Dave & Margie Hill / Kleerup**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The 5th and 4th centuries B.C.E. at Pompeii were a time of dominance by the Samnites—an indigenous people of south-central Italy who spoke the Oscan language. Their settlement occupied what is now the south-west corner of Pompeii, a site strategically placed at the mouth of the Sarno River near the Bay of Naples. By the middle of the 4th century, the melting-pot of cultures in this region had reached a boiling point, with Greek, Samnite, and Roman residents coming into conflict.

Over the course of the 3rd century B.C.E., Pompeii was one of many Italian towns that came to be dominated by the Romans. This power shift put Pompeii on a path to prosperity and many large, new, public buildings were constructed in the late 3rd century and into the 2nd. This was the time at which the Forum acquired its general footprint and large high-status houses replaced simpler ones.



Figure **13.2.8.116**: View of atrium (with a marble-lined *impluvium or* recessed basin to catch rainwater) opens to a large peristyle beyond in the ornate House of Menander, Pompeii, before 79 C.E.

Pompeii becomes Roman

The years 91-88 B.C.E. were dramatic ones for Pompeii, as it took part in a rebellion against Rome (the Social Wars). Having lost this battle of allied cities against the capital, the Roman general Sulla re-founded the city as a proper Roman colony and settled his army veterans in

Pompeii. The existing inhabitants of Pompeii must have resented this move, but when new public buildings, including the Amphitheater, were constructed to meet the needs and desires of the new residents, this resentment may have eased. Later, the period of the early Roman Empire (c. 27 B.C.E.-69 C.E.) was a prosperous one for Pompeii; large, luxurious homes as well as imported goods from around the Mediterranean show up at this time.



Figure **13.2.8.117**: Amphitheater, Pompeii with a view at upper left to the modern city, and upper right to the ancient city.

The City Plan and its Major Features

The vast majority of the buildings visible at Pompeii today are from the Roman period, but some earlier features remain. The nucleus of the city in the 6th century B.C.E. was situated on a plateau overlooking the Sarno River at the southwest corner of what became the final "version" of Pompeii, and was organized around sanctuaries dedicated to Apollo and Minerva (or possibly Hercules). This early city had walls and a roughly grid-shaped street plan.

As Pompeii grew in size and population, the city walls were expanded, with gates at the ends of major roads. Slowly, the largely agricultural land inside the walls was built over with homes, places of production, markets, and other urban amenities. The east-west streets (known today by their modern names via della Fortuna, via di Nola, via dell'Abbondanza) and north-south ones (via Stabiana, via di Mercurio) formed the basis for the creation of *insulae* (city blocks), most of which are generally rectangular and contained a mix of domestic, commercial, and industrial buildings.

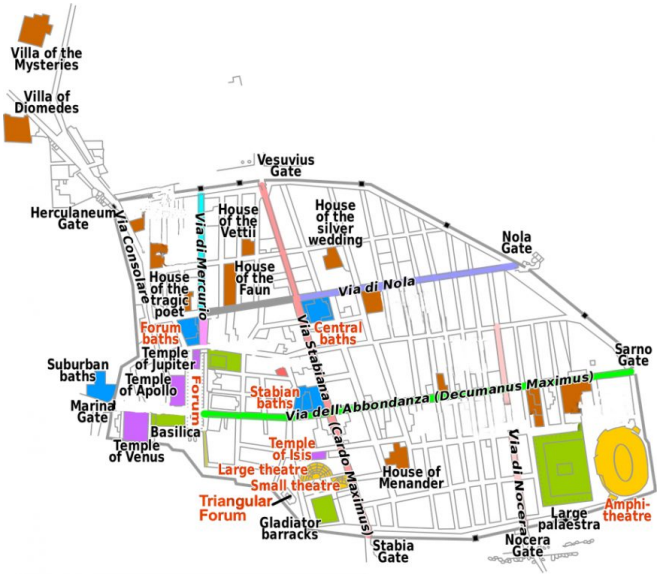


Figure **13.2.8.118**

The Forum, "theater district," amphitheater, and baths

Ancient Roman cities were almost never zoned or planned for specific activities. There are two main areas of Pompeii, however, that were loosely organized around a general function. The Forum, at the southwest corner of the city, was the site of various services and structures, and could be considered a sort of "downtown" for Pompeii.

Additionally, a kind of “entertainment district” in the south-central section of Pompeii included two theaters—one open-air, the other smaller and roofed. In these theaters, one could see plays, hear musical performances, and perhaps hold civic or social gatherings. These entertainments differ drastically from those enjoyed in the amphitheater at Pompeii.



Figure 13.2.8.119: Pompeii Amphitheater with a Brawl between Pompeians and Nucerini, fresco in the IV Pompeian style (59-79 C.E.), was discovered in the peristilium (colonnade with garden) of the House of Actius Anicetus in 1869.

Built more than 150 years before the Colosseum in Rome, Pompeii’s facility is the first known Roman amphitheater, where gladiators fought one another or hunted wild animals as a spectacle. It is estimated that between 10,000-15,000 people could be accommodated in Pompeii’s amphitheater. A fresco from a house at Pompeii illustrates in a shorthand way the *spectacula* (seating area) and *arena* (playing surface) as well as the *velarium* (sun shade) of the amphitheater.

As in Rome, Pompeii also had public establishments for bathing. At least five public baths (and scores of private ones within homes) provided not simply a place to get clean, but also opportunities for social interaction and exercise. Communal bathing was a custom for middle- and upper-class Romans; men especially would spend their afternoons in the baths, enjoying heated pools, steam rooms, cold plunge tubs, massages, ball games, and so forth, in the company of their peers and surrounded by beautiful decoration in mosaic, stucco, and sculpture.



Figure 13.2.8.120: Painted stucco decoration, Stabian Baths, Pompeii (photo: Matt Brisher, CC BY 2.0)

Both the Stabian and the Forum Baths were initially constructed with public funds, indicating the extent to which such establishments were considered essential for Pompeii’s residents. Surviving inscriptions, however, indicate that a wealthy citizen could contribute financing for an addition to (or renovation of) the baths, as in the case of a large marble fountain in the *caldarium* (hot-water room) of the Forum Baths.

An aqueduct fed both private and public baths, although many residents of Pompeii relied on rainwater or abundant wells in the city to supply their water. The high state of preservation at Pompeii provides a view of the city’s water supply, from the aqueduct, through a distribution center at the high northern part of the town, through water towers and public fountains, and into private homes by way of terracotta and lead pipes. The most luxurious homes in Pompeii had fountains decorated with mosaics, sea shells, sculpture, and even frescoes.

The Forum

The religious, political, and commercial center of any Roman city was its forum. A kind of town center existed in the earliest phases of Pompeii at its southwest corner, but the forum only received monumental form and decoration in the 2nd century B.C.E. At that time, the Temple of Jupiter (eventually the Capitolium), Macellum (market), and Basilica (law court) were constructed and the open piazza of the forum was paved with stone. Statues of illustrious Pompeians, civic benefactors, and the imperial family stood under the forum colonnades and in the open areas of the piazza as well as in two buildings dedicated to the worship of divinized emperors—the Imperial Cult Building and the Sanctuary of Augustus (these statues are now entirely lost, save for their bases).



Figure 13.2.8.121: Aerial view of the Forum, Pompeii (photo: ElfQrin, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Religious Life at Pompeii

The forum provided ample opportunity for the citizens of Pompeii to worship their various gods as well as divinized members of the imperial family. Temples to Apollo and Venus stood just outside the forum proper and represent both early (6th century B.C.E.) and later (post-80 B.C.E.) historical building periods, respectively. Smaller temples throughout Pompeii honored Jupiter, Asclepius, and Minerva (in the Greek temple in the Triangular Forum). Even more modest shrines stood at important crossroads and inside the atria of private homes. These *lararia*, dedicated to somewhat mysterious guardian deities called Lares, were decorated with paintings and received small votive offerings.



Figure 13.2.8.122: Temple of Isis, 2nd century B.C.E., Pompeii (photo: Carole Raddato, CC BY-SA 2.0)

A small, yet impressive temple to the Egyptian goddess Isis stands just to the north of the Large Theater. The cult of Isis had been introduced to Italy as early as the 2nd century B.C.E. and was apparently very popular at Pompeii, as indicated by the sumptuous painted stucco decoration of the precinct walls, Fourth Style wall paintings, a marble statue of Isis herself (now in the Naples Archaeological Museum), and abundant finds of votive offerings, some of which were imported from Egypt.

Death and Burial

Because of the circumstances of its destruction, Pompeii often encourages macabre interest in those who perished in the city during the 79 C.E. eruption of Vesuvius. Yet for centuries, citizens of Pompeii had been solemnly commemorating their dead with sometimes elaborate tombs and costly grave goods. Longstanding traditions among ancient Mediterranean cultures generally prohibited burials within a city's walls and Pompeii followed that tradition. The roads leading from the various city gates are lined on both sides with tombs—some were for individual burials while others were designed for multiple occupancy (usually of the lower classes or freed slaves). The most prestigious burials can be recognized both by their forms and by their location just outside a city gate, where they could be seen by as many passers-by as possible.



Figure **13.2.8.123**: Tomb of the Flavii, Pompeii (photo: **Gary Willis**, CC BY-SA 2.0). The tomb resembled an apartment house and had 14 identical niches, only 9 were used at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius.

There was no standard shape for Roman tombs and Pompeiian funerary monuments could be decorated with statues of the deceased, pseudo-autobiographical relief sculpture, wall paintings, and even functional features like benches. Multiple-occupancy "house tombs," popular in the last century of Pompeii's existence, contained the cremated remains of various members of a single family or social group. These lower-cost tombs had brief inscriptions about the deceased persons and small niches held the stone, ceramic, or glass ash urns.

An open-air museum

At the time of the destruction of the city, an estimated 15,000 people lived in Pompeii. As many as 2,000 died in the ash and toxic gases of Vesuvius' eruption in 79 C.E. The city today is an open-air museum dedicated to the experience of walking through an ancient Roman town. And while the houses and wall paintings from the last phase of Pompeii are what attracts the most visitors, the city's complex social and building history, as well as the urban infrastructure, are worth noting as well.



Video **13.2.8.7**: Reconstruction of the house of Caecilius Iucundus from Lund University

Additional Resources:

Ancient Graffiti Project

Pompeii Bibliography and Mapping Project

The rediscovery of Pompeii and the other cities of Vesuvius

by DR. FRANCESCA TRONCHIN



Figure 13.2.8.124: Forum of Pompeii, looking toward Mount Vesuvius (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E. destroyed and largely buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum and other sites in southern Italy under ash and rock. The rediscovery of these sites in the modern era is as fascinating as the cities themselves and provides a window onto the history of both art history and archaeology.



Figure 13.2.8.125

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E. destroyed and largely buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum and other sites in southern Italy under ash and rock. The rediscovery of these sites in the modern era is as fascinating as the cities themselves and provides a window onto the history of both art history and archaeology.

Pompeii today

Today the site of Pompeii is open to tourists from all over the world. Major projects in survey, excavation, and preservation are supervised by Italian and American universities as well as ones from Britain, Sweden, and Japan. Currently, the major concern at Pompeii is conservation—officials must deal with the intersection of increased tourism, the deterioration of buildings to a sometimes dangerous state, and shrinking funding for archaeological and art historical monuments. The 250-year-long story of the unearthing of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the other sites destroyed by Vesuvius in 79 C.E. has always been one of shifting priorities and methodologies, yet always in recognition of the special status of this archaeological zone.

Hidden for centuries?

The popular understanding of the immediate aftermath of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius is that Pompeii, Herculaneum, and sites like Oplontis and Stabiae, lay buried under ash and volcanic material—completely sealed off from human intervention, undisturbed and hidden for centuries. Archaeological and geological evidence, however, indicates that there were rescue operations soon after the eruption (see, for example, the tunnels dug through the House of the Menander) and that some parts of these cities remained visible for some time (the forum

colonnade at Pompeii was not completely covered). Throughout the Middle Ages, Pompeii was entirely deserted, yet locals referred to the area as *La Cività* ("the settlement"), perhaps informed by folk memory of the city's existence.



Figure **13.2.8.126**: Sebastian Pether, *The Eruption of Vesuvius*, 1825, oil on wood panel (The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art). Vesuvius erupted again in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Though Pether travelled to Italy to paint the volcano, here he depicted the one eyewitness account of the eruption in 79 C.E. by Pliny the Younger.

Excavations begin

While Renaissance scholars must have been aware of Pompeii and its destruction through various ancient written sources, the first "archaeologist" in the area was apparently unimpressed with his discoveries. From 1594-1600, the architect Domenico Fontana worked on new constructions in the area and accidentally excavated a number of wall paintings, inscriptions, and architectural blocks while digging a canal. No one undertook follow-up explorations for nearly a century and a half, despite the general interest in antiquity and rudimentary archaeology at the time.



Figure **13.2.8.127**: This bronze was probably the most celebrated sculpture discovered at Herculaneum and Pompeii in the eighteenth century. It was excavated in 1759 at the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum and kept in the royal palace at Portici. *Seated Mercury* (also known as *Hermes at Rest*), Roman copy of an ancient Greek bronze, 105 cm (Museo Nazionale, Naples, photo: **Marie-Lan Nguyen**, CC BY 2.5)

The eighteenth century saw the first large-scale excavations in this region, motivated by the desire to collect works of ancient art as much as by a scientific curiosity about the past. Further incidental discoveries in the early decades of the 1700s prompted Charles VII, King of Spain, Naples, and Sicily, to commission a survey of the area of Herculaneum.

Official excavation began in October 1738, under the supervision of Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre, a military engineer who tunneled through the practically petrified volcanic material with dynamite to find remains of Herculaneum more than 20 meters under the surface. This dangerous work (tunnel collapse and toxic gases were a constant threat), yielded wall paintings, life-size sculpture in both bronze and marble, and papyrus scrolls from the Villa of the Papyri. Many of these recovered works went to decorate the palace of the king. Archaeology was still in its infancy as a practical field of study at this time, and was often more about "treasure-hunting" than careful research or documentation.

A Swiss engineer, Karl Jakob Weber, took over the excavation of Herculaneum from de Alcubierre in 1750 and brought more cautious methods to the site. Weber's practices of recording the findspots of important objects in three dimensions and making detailed plans of architectural remains laid the foundations for the indispensable procedures of modern archaeology. De Alcubierre shifted his focus to

Pompeii, which had just been (re)discovered in 1748. Among the early excavations there were the amphitheater and an inscription confirming the town's name: REI PUBLICAE POMPEIANORUM. With finds from Herculaneum and Pompeii increasing exponentially, King Charles inaugurated a Royal Academy in Naples in 1755, dedicated to mapping the sites and publishing significant discoveries.

The new fields of archaeology and art history and the building of a royal collection



Figure **13.2.8.128**: Anton Raphael Mengs, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann*, c. 1777, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 49.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The field of art history was emerging concurrently with these early excavations and naturally sites like Pompeii and Herculaneum were of great interest to the man who coined the term "history of art"—the German scholar Johann Joachim Winckelmann. His reports on the finds from this area fanned the flames of European fervor for classical antiquity (ancient Greece and Rome), and Grand Tour travelers from Britain and elsewhere beat a path to Pompeii and Herculaneum in the late 18th century.

Although Winckelmann was most concerned with categorizing Greek and Roman sculpture, he was also keenly interested in the new field of archaeology: he knew enough of this science to criticize the secrecy and aggressive methods of de Alcubierre, an action that got Winckelmann effectively banned from Pompeii.

It was actually King Charles's desire (and that of his successor Ferdinand) for beautiful artifacts that closed much of the excavations off to outside scholars, with most of the important finds going directly into the private royal collection. The king also enacted laws forbidding the export of antiquities from the Kingdom of Naples. Even the publication of the monumental *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte (The antiquities of Herculaneum displayed*, 1757-92*)* was tightly controlled and the illustrated volumes were only selectively presented to other European monarchs by the king himself.

Preservation and access

With the arrival of Francesco la Vega as director of excavations in Pompeii in 1780, the conservation of buildings and artifacts became a priority. Francesco, and his brother Pietro after him, removed valuable artifacts to the new Naples Museum, where they joined other pieces from the royal collection. Francesco la Vega also embraced Weber's concerns for recording three-dimensional contexts, and it was under his leadership that the Triangular Forum, the Temple of Isis, and the theater district were uncovered. However, like many archaeologists at Pompeii, la Vega struggled with a significant conflict: a desire to preserve the rare ancient wall paintings in situ while maintaining the site as a singular opportunity for visiting an ancient Roman city whose walls and roofs still stood. Paintings and buildings were left open to both treasure-hungry visitors and the elements, resulting in both natural and man-made deterioration at Pompeii.



Figure 13.2.8.129: Temple of Isis, Pompeii (photo: Amphipolis, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Perhaps no archaeologist had such a significant influence on the exploration of Pompeii as Giuseppe Fiorelli. He was superintendent of Pompeii for twelve years (1863-1875) during a supremely patriotic moment after the unification of Italy in 1860 when the country's archaeological heritage was a tremendous source of pride. Fiorelli did not meet his goal of uncovering the entire city—only about one third of the Pompeii was excavated—but he accomplished other important tasks and brought new techniques to the site.

Opening the site to visitors and the first entrance fee

Fiorelli systematically organized the site by dividing it into nine regions and providing a system of "addresses" for insulae (city blocks) and doorways. In a dramatic shift from the restrictive 18th-century approach to tourism in Pompeii, Fiorelli opened the site up to visitors from all over the world—and he also introduced the first entrance fee. His exhaustive reports on the excavations kept scholars apprised of developments on the site.

Fiorelli is best known for his use of plaster casting techniques which permitted a kind of preservation of otherwise ephemeral archaeological finds like wood and human remains. By pouring plaster into voids in the ash left by decomposed organic material, Fiorelli's casts gave form to things like wooden doors, window frames, furniture, and of course the victims of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. The casts of human remains—including adults and children, not to mention a pet dog—remind visitors to this day that the great gift of Pompeii's archaeology came at tremendous cost (as many as 2,000 people lost their lives).



Figure 13.2.8.130: Plaster cast of a body, Forum storage, Pompeii (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Archaeological investigation continues—as an international project

In the late 19th century, exploration of Pompeii and Herculaneum became a more international project. The British diplomat Sir William Hamilton had already published studies of volcanic activity and painted pottery from the region in the late 18th century. German scholars of the 1800s studied inscriptions (Theodor Mommsen), outlined the city plan (Heinrich Nissen), and created typologies of wall painting (Wolfgang Helbig). August Mau's thorough categorization of the Four Styles of Pompeian frescoes, published in 1882, remains the basis for

wall painting studies today. The late 19th century also saw the excavation and restoration of two of Pompeii's most spectacular houses—the House of the Vettii and the House of the Silver Wedding.



Figure 13.2.8.131: House of the Vettii, Pompeii, Italy, Imperial Roman, c. second century B.C.E., rebuilt 62-79 C.E., cut stone and fresco (photo: Peter Stewart, CC BY-NC 2.0)

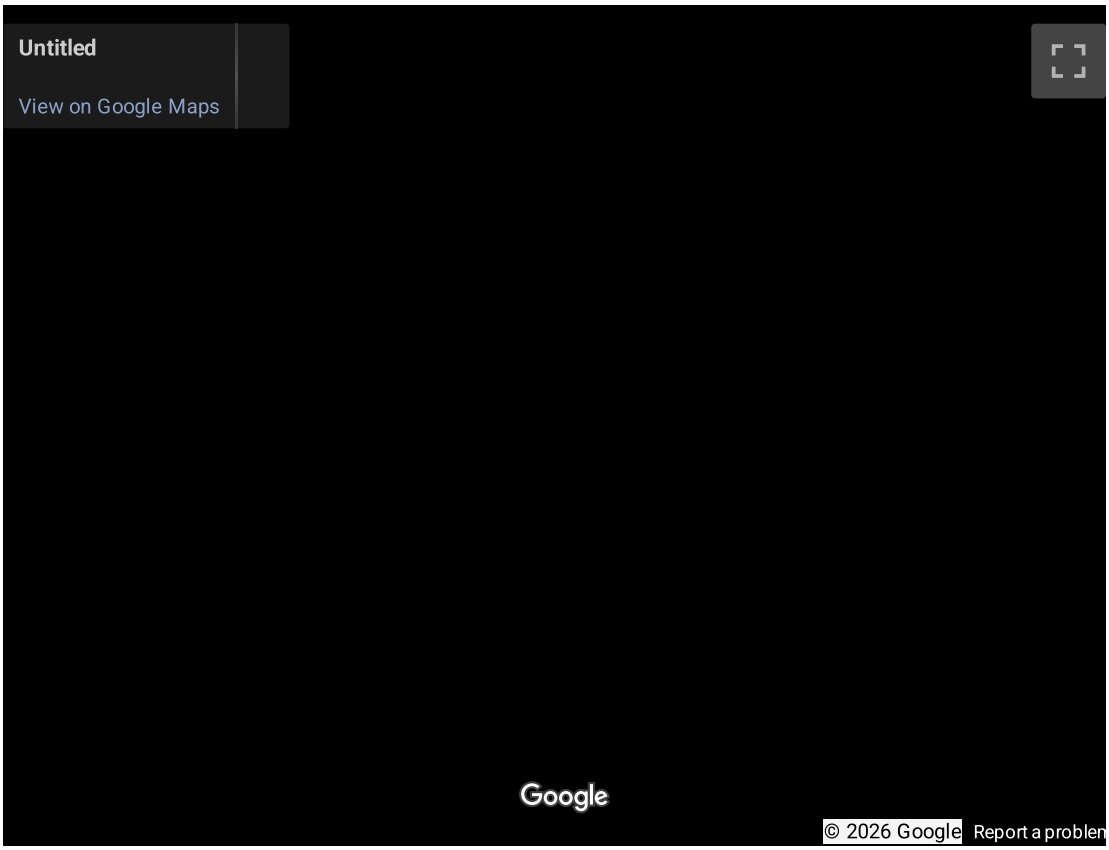
Pompeii in the 20th century: interruptions to archaeological work and bombing

The 20th century continued to be a very productive time at Pompeii for Italian archaeologists, even though work was interrupted by world events. Vittorio Spinazzola (director, 1911-1923) opened a massive excavation campaign along the Via dell'Abbondanza. His work not only uncovered important residences like the House of Octavius Quartio, but also contributed to our understanding of upper floors of Pompeian buildings. Spinazzola's work was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I and he was forced to step down from his position by Italy's Fascist government. Amedeo Maiuri was the director of excavations from 1923-1962 and oversaw the discovery of the Villa of Mysteries and the House of the Menander.

Although work was stopped again at Pompeii during the Second World War, Maiuri succeeded in broadening the excavations to the extent seen today: about two-thirds to three-quarters of the city's final phase has been uncovered. Maiuri was also concerned with pre-Roman Pompeii, opening excavations below the most recent layer; he also undertook extensive restoration and conservation work.

A terrible moment for Pompeii occurred in 1943 when the Allies dropped more than 150 bombs on the site, believing Germans were hiding soldiers and munitions among the ruins. At least one bomb fell on the on-site museum, destroying some of the more interesting artifacts discovered by that time.

Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts of the many archaeologists and researchers who have worked to uncover the remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum over the last three centuries, today we can again walk the streets of these fascinating ancient Roman towns.



Additional resources:

The eruption story from The British Museum

Dr. Damian Robinson, “The Elite House and Commercial Life along the Via dell’Abbondanza”

Dr. John J. Dobbins, “Public Space and via dell’Abbondanza”

Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata (UNESCO)

Roman domestic architecture – the insula

Roman wall painting styles

Wall Painting

Paintings from antiquity rarely survive, but thanks to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and the preservation of Pompeii and Herculaneum, we can see what the Romans saw.

c. 200 B.C.E. - 79 C.E.

Roman wall painting styles

by DR. JESSICA LEAY AMBLER

Mount Vesuvius buried Pompeii two millennia ago—creating a time capsule of the evolution of Roman painting.



Figure 13.2.8.132: Example of a Fourth Style painting, before 79 C.E., fresco, Pompeii

Why Pompeii?

Paintings from antiquity rarely survive—paint, after all, is a much less durable medium than stone or bronze sculpture. But it is thanks to the ancient Roman city of Pompeii that we can trace the history of Roman wall painting. The entire city was buried in volcanic ash in 79 C.E. when the volcano at Mount Vesuvius erupted, thus preserving the rich colors in the paintings in the houses and monuments there for thousands of years until their rediscovery. These paintings represent an uninterrupted sequence of two centuries of evidence. And it is thanks to August Mau, a nineteenth-century German scholar, that we have a classification of four styles of Pompeian wall painting.



Figure 13.2.8.133: View of Mount Vesuvius from Pompeii

The four styles that Mau observed in Pompeii were not unique to the city and can be observed elsewhere, like Rome and even in the provinces, but Pompeii and the surrounding cities buried by Vesuvius contain the largest continuous source of evidence for the period. The Roman wall paintings in Pompeii that Mau categorized were true frescoes (or buon fresco), meaning that pigment was applied to wet plaster, fixing the pigment to the wall. Despite this durable technique, painting is still a fragile medium and, once exposed to light and air, can fade significantly, so the paintings discovered in Pompeii were a rare find indeed.



Figure 13.2.8.134: Example of First Style painting, House of Sallust, Pompeii, built 2nd century, B.C.E.

In the paintings that survived in Pompeii, Mau saw four distinct styles. The first two were popular in the Republican period (which ended in 27 B.C.E.) and grew out of Greek artistic trends (Rome had recently conquered Greece). The second two styles became fashionable in the Imperial period. His chronological description of stylistic progression has since been challenged by scholars, but they generally confirm the logic of Mau's approach, with some refinements and theoretical additions. Beyond tracking how the styles evolved out of one another, Mau's categorizations focused on how the artist divided up the wall and used paint, color, image and form—either to embrace or counteract—the flat surface of the wall.



Figure 13.2.8.135: Example of First Style painting, House of the Faun, Pompeii, built 2nd century, B.C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

First Pompeian Style

Mau called the First Style the "Incrustation Style" and believed that its origins lay in the Hellenistic period—in the 3rd century B.C.E. in Alexandria. The First Style is characterized by colorful, patchwork walls of brightly painted faux-marble. Each rectangle of painted "marble" was connected by stucco moldings that added a three-dimensional effect. In temples and other official buildings, the Romans used costly imported marbles in a variety of colors to decorate the walls.



Figure **13.2.8.136**: Detail of faux marble, Villa of the Mysteries, before 79 C.E., fresco, just outside the walls of Pompeii on the Road to Herculaneum (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Ordinary Romans could not afford such expense, so they decorated their homes with painted imitations of the luxurious yellow, purple and pink marbles. Painters became so skilled at imitating certain marbles that the large, rectangular slabs were rendered on the wall marbled and veined, just like real pieces of stone. Great examples of the First Pompeian Style can be found in the House of the Faun and the House of Sallust, both of which can still be visited in Pompeii.

Second Pompeian style

The Second style, which Mau called the "Architectural Style," was first seen in Pompeii around 80 B.C.E. (although it developed earlier in Rome) and was in vogue until the end of the first century B.C.E. The Second Pompeian Style developed out of the First Style and incorporated elements of the First, such as faux marble blocks along the base of walls.



Figure **13.2.8.137**: Example of Second Style painting, cubiculum (bedroom), Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, 50–40 B.C.E., fresco 265.4 x 334 x 583.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

While the First Style embraced the flatness of the wall, the Second Style attempted to trick the viewer into believing that they were looking through a window by painting illusionistic images. As Mau's name for the Second Style implies, architectural elements drive the paintings, creating fantastic images filled with columns, buildings and stoas.



Figure 13.2.8.138: Example of Second Style painting, cubiculum (bedroom), Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, 50–40 B.C.E., fresco (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In one of the most famous examples of the Second Style, P. Fannius Synistor's bedroom (now reconstructed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art), the artist utilizes multiple vanishing points. This technique shifts the perspective throughout the room, from balconies to fountains and along colonnades into the far distance, but the visitor's eye moves continuously throughout the room, barely able to register that he or she has remained contained within a small room.



Figure 13.2.8.139: Example of Second Style painting, view of the Dionysiac frieze, Villa of the Mysteries, before 79 C.E., fresco, 15 x 22 feet, just outside the walls of Pompeii on the Road to Herculaneum (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Dionysian paintings from Pompeii's Villa of the Mysteries are also included in the Second Style because of their illusionistic aspects. The figures are examples of megalographia, a Greek term referring to life-size paintings. The fact that the figures are the same size as viewers entering the room, as well as the way the painted figures sit in front of the columns dividing the space, are meant to suggest that the action taking place is surrounding the viewer.

Third Pompeian Style

The Third Style, or Mau's "Ornate Style," came about in the early 1st century C.E. and was popular until about 50 C.E. The Third Style embraced the flat surface of the wall through the use of broad, monochromatic planes of color, such as black or dark red, punctuated by minute, intricate details.



Figure **13.2.8.140**: Example of Third Style painting, panel with candelabrum, Villa Agrippa Postumus, Boscotrecase, last decade of the 1st century B.C.E. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Third Style was still architectural but rather than implementing plausible architectural elements that viewers would see in their everyday world (and that would function in an engineering sense), the Third Style incorporated fantastic and stylized columns and pediments that could only exist in the imagined space of a painted wall. The Roman architect Vitruvius was certainly not a fan of Third Style painting, and he criticized the paintings for representing monstrosities rather than real things, "for instance, reeds are put in the place of columns, fluted appendages with curly leaves and volutes, instead of pediments, candelabra supporting representations of shrines, and on top of their pediments numerous tender stalks and volutes growing up from the roots and having human figures senselessly seated upon them…" (Vitr.De arch.VII.5.3) The center of walls often feature very small vignettes, such as sacro-idyllic landscapes, which are bucolic scenes of the countryside featuring livestock, shepherds, temples, shrines and rolling hills.



Figure **13.2.8.141**: Example of Third Style painting, panel with candelabrum (detail with Egyptian motif), Villa Agrippa Postumus, Boscotrecase, last decade of the 1st century B.C.E. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Third Style also saw the introduction of Egyptian themes and imagery, including scenes of the Nile as well as Egyptian deities and motifs.

Fourth Pompeian Style

The Fourth Style, what Mau calls the "Intricate Style," became popular in the mid-first century C.E. and is seen in Pompeii until the city's destruction in 79 C.E. It can be best described as a combination of the three styles that came before. Faux marble blocks along the base of the walls, as in the First Style, frame the naturalistic architectural scenes from the Second Style, which in turn combine with the large flat planes of color and slender architectural details from the Third Style. The Fourth Style also incorporates central panel pictures, although on a much larger scale than in the third style and with a much wider range of themes, incorporating mythological, genre, landscape and still life images. In describing what we now call the Fourth Style, Pliny the Elder said that it was developed by a rather eccentric, albeit talented, painter named Famulus who decorated Nero's famous Golden Palace. (Pl.NH XXXV.120) Some of the best examples of Fourth Style painting come from the House of the Vettii which can also be visited in Pompeii today.



Figure **13.2.8.142**: Example of Fourth Style painting, Ixion Room, House of the Vetii, Pompeii, 1st century C.E.

Post-Pompeian painting: What happens next?

August Mau takes us as far as Pompeii and the paintings found there, but what about Roman painting after 79 C.E.? The Romans did continue to paint their homes and monumental architecture, but there isn't a Fifth or Sixth Style, and later Roman painting has been called a pastiche of what came before, simply combining elements of earlier styles. The Christian catacombs provide an excellent record of painting in Late Antiquity, combining Roman techniques and Christian subject matter in unique ways.

Additional Resources:

Roman Painting on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Joanne Berry, *The Complete Pompeii* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013).

John R Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

Roger Ling. *Roman Painting* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

August Mau. *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*. Translated by Francis W. Kelsey. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1902). (Available on Kindle)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.2.8.143**: More SmartHistory images…

Painted Garden, Villa of Livia

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Step into a stunning painted garden that gives insight into the flora and fauna of ancient Rome.



The plant species depicted include: umbrella pine, oak, red fir, quince, pomegranate, myrtle, oleander, date palm, strawberry, laurel, viburnum, holm oak, boxwood, cypress, ivy, acanthus, rose, poppy, chrysanthemum, chamomile, fern, violet, and iris.

Additional resources:

Roman Painting on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Linda Farrar, *Ancient Roman Gardens* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1998).

Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Donatella Mazzoleni and Umberto Pappalardo, *Domus: Wall Painting in the Roman House* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2005).

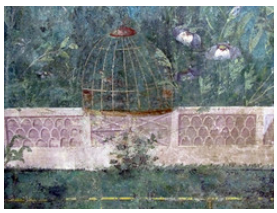
Umberto Pappalardo, *The Splendor of Roman Wall Painting* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2009).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88679



Figure 13.2.8.144: More SmartHistory images…

Still Life with Peaches

by DR. LEA CLINE

Hospitality was key in ancient Rome, and this wall painting shows the gifts that guests may have received.



Figure 13.2.8.145: *Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar* (left), *Still Life with a Silver Tray with Prunes, Dried figs, Dates and Glass of Wine* (center), and *Still Life with Branch of Peaches*, Fourth Style wall painting from Herculaneum, Italy, c. 62-69 C.E., fresco, 14 x 13 1/2 inches (**Archaeological Museum, Naples**)

Hostess gifts

When I was growing up, my (proper, Southern) mother always insisted that I bring a hostess gift to my friend's parents when I spent the night at their house. A typical teenager, I thought she was annoyingly old fashioned. This painting, *Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar*, proves that she was old fashioned…really old fashioned. It turns out that the practice of presenting hostess gifts dates back to the ancient

Greeks; in antiquity, though, it was the host—not the guest—who presented the gifts. This small fresco is an example of how the Romans played the hostess game and how this generosity was captured by ancient Roman artists.

House of the Stags, Herculaneum

Archaeologists discovered *Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar* in the House of the Stags in Herculaneum, once a wealthy, seaside town on the Bay of Naples just a few miles north of Pompeii. Like Pompeii, Herculaneum was destroyed by the eruption of nearby Mt. Vesuvius on August 24, 79 C.E. The House of the Stags, named after two sculptures of stags (or male deer) found in its peristyle garden, was among the fanciest houses in town, oriented to take full advantage of Herculaneum's panoramic sea view. Archaeologists believe that the house was owned by the wealthy merchant Q. Granius Verus since his stamp was discovered on a loaf of bread, amazingly preserved by the volcanic ash, unearthed in the house. (Stamping bread was a common practice because Roman houses, unlike most modern houses, did not have private ovens. Ovens were dangerous and hot so most Romans took their bread out for baking after preparing the dough at home. You stamped your loaf so it would not get mixed up in the ovens or claimed by someone else.)



Figure **13.2.8.146**: House of the Stags, Herculanum (photo: **Cornell University**)

We cannot be sure whether the family of the Granii were the original builders of the house (likely during the reign of the emperor Claudius, from 41-54 C.E.) but they seem likely to have undertaken a major renovation not long before Mt. Vesuvius erupted. In the years immediately preceding the destruction of Herculaneum, all 25 rooms in the House of the Stags were repaired and redecorated in the newest style of painting—the Fourth Style; only the old atrium, with its historic frescoes, remained untouched as a sign of the house's historic importance. So, although the house survives today only as a ruin, when the Granii family woke up on that fateful morning in 79 C.E., they would have experienced a home resplendent with freshly painted walls and colorful mosaic floors, terrace fountains filling the spaces with the sound of trickling water, and gardens filling the house with wafts of sweet fragrance carried in by the sea air. It is too bad the day did not end as nicely.

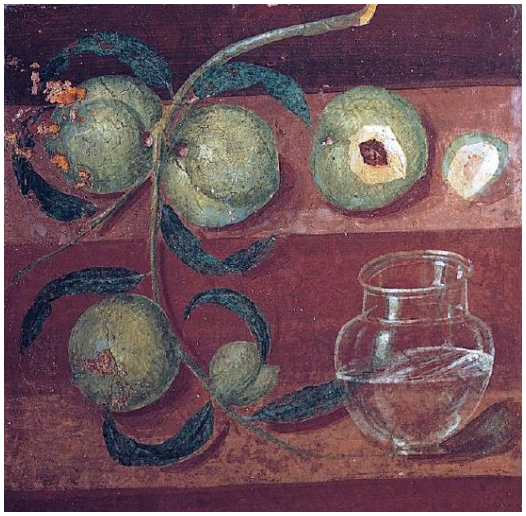


Figure **13.2.8.147**: *Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar*, detail of a Fourth Style wall painting from Herculaneum, Italy, c. 62-69 C.E., fresco, 14 x 13 1/2 inches (**Archaeological Museum, Naples**)

Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar was one small part of this house's decorative scheme, not meant to be seen in isolation. It was part of a series of at least ten roughly-square still-life compositions, painted together in a row, sharing decorative borders. This series of paintings presents a variety of fruits, crustaceans, fish, fowl, meats, vegetables, and drinking vessels set against a neutral brown background, sometimes with a step, shelf or wall niche on which the artist arranged the display.

Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar features five unripe peaches (one only barely formed), their branch cascading off a shelf, and a glass jar of water in the foreground. One of the peaches has been pulled from the branch and bitten open, revealing a reddish pit and white flesh that contrast sharply against its yellow-green skin. The glass jar shows the artist's ability to register two types of transparency at once: the clear glass vessel and the clear liquid that it contains. While the patron may have wanted the glass, among the most expensive luxuries in Roman Italy, included as a display of their wealth, the artist turned it into an opportunity to demonstrate his skill at depicting these visually complex attributes in perspective.

Xenia (hospitality)

Still Life with Peaches and Water Jar, like the small scenes that accompanied it, belongs to a category of still life paintings known as *xenia*, drawing on the Greek word for "guest-friendship" or hospitality. *Xenia* (hospitality) was shown to guests who were far from home by accommodating them and by presenting them with the means to be comfortable (a bed, food, a bath, etc.). This was not just a matter of being polite, but was considered a religious obligation for the Greeks—an idea preserved in both Homeric epic and mythology. The Greeks believed that Zeus Xenios, Zeus's role as protector of guests, wandered in disguise with travelers, testing the capacity of hosts to be generous and tolerant. Although the devotion with which the Greeks pursued the quality of *xenia* was not matched by the Romans, the Romans nevertheless took pride in their ability to provide hospitality to guests, especially those whose social favor they wanted to earn (those who were more wealthy and socially important). *Xenia*, for the Romans, was more about the display of hospitality for appearance's sake than it was a religious devotion.



Figure **13.2.8.148**: *Still Life with Hen* (left), *Still Life with Two Cuttlefish, a Silver Jug, Bird, Shells, Snails and Lobster* (center), and *Still-life with a Hare and Grapes* (right), Fourth Style wall painting from Herculaneum, Italy, c. 62-69 C.E., fresco, 14 x 13 1/2 inches (**Archaeological Museum, Naples**)

The small *xenia* paintings at the House of the Stags are not unusual; many rich houses, especially houses and villas located along the coast where visitors from Rome might want to travel to escape the summer heat (or political turmoil), were outfitted with special guest quarters. *Xenia* paintings are frequently found in these rooms, announcing to these guests that they would be lavished with the finest foods and service wear while in the house. The ancient Roman architect Vitruvius suggested that the *xenia* include, in particular, "poultry, eggs, vegetables, and other country produce" as a way to highlight the experience of getting out of the city and into the countryside (*de Architectura* VI.7.4). The *xenia* at the House of the Stags, as Vitruvius might have liked, present fruits and fish (known as area specialties) along with the standard fare.



Figure **13.2.8.149**: *Still-Life with Chicken and Hare* (left), *Still Life with Partridge, Pomegranate and Apple* (second from let), *Still Life with Thrushes and Mushrooms* (third from left), *Still-Life with Partridges and Eels* (far right), Fourth Style wall painting from Herculaneum, Italy, c. 62-69 C.E., fresco, 14 x 13 1/2 inches (**Archaeological Museum, Naples**)

Xenia paintings or mosaics also appear in more public areas of houses where clients (people who depend on the homeowner's business) and less-wealthy visitors might see them. In these cases, the *xenia* spoke to the wealth of the family, and the level of generosity that they could afford to show to those lucky enough to be invited (even if the viewers did not belong to that chosen group). I suspect that my mother had a different idea when sending me with hostess gifts: more an apology for whatever trouble I might get in than a display of wealth and social importance. Still, her insistence that I present myself with hostess gift in hand demonstrates that showing our best and accommodating guests with grace has never gone out of style.

Additional resources:

Roman Painting on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Joanne Berry, *The Complete Pompeii* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013).

Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Donatella Mazzoleni and Umberto Pappalardo, *Domus: Wall Painting in the Roman House* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2005).

Umberto Pappalardo, *The Splendor of Roman Wall Painting* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2009).

Pompeii: House of the Vettii

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Buried by a volcanic eruption two thousand years ago, this Roman house was the epitome of wealth and style.



Figure **13.2.8.150**: View of the Forum with Mount Vesuvius in the distance, Pompeii (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The ancient city may be quiet now, its life ended by a fantastic cataclysm nearly two thousand years ago, but the remains of houses, decorations, and the objects of daily life whisper to us about the lives of the ancient people who inhabited Pompeii before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Domestic spaces, in particular, offer a rich resource for examining ancient lives that, in some cases, ended abruptly. Pompeii was thriving up until the moment of its destruction and in studying its life interrupted, we arrive at important insights about what it was like to live in the Roman Mediterranean.



Figure **13.2.8.151**: Fourth style wall paintings (from a room off the peristyle), House of the Vettii, Pompeii (photo: **Lady Erin**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Overview

The House of the Vettii or Casa dei Vettii (VI xv,1) is a Roman townhouse (*domus*) located within the ruined ancient city of Pompeii, Italy. A volcanic eruption destroyed Pompeii in the year 79 C.E., thus preserving extraordinary archaeological remains of the Roman town as it was at the time of its cataclysmic destruction. Those remains constitute a nearly unparalleled resource for the study of the Roman world.

Domus architecture

Beginning with the Renaissance interest in all things classical, architectural historians and archaeologists have been debating the form and function of ancient Roman houses for several hundred years. The interest in the domestic architectural form was fueled further by the re-discovery, in the middle of the eighteenth century, of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other sites destroyed by Vesuvius.



Figure **13.2.8.152**: Street view, House of the Vettii, Pompeii (photo: **Mark L. Brack**, 1995, posted by Penn State University, CC BY-NC 2.0)

A house is, of course, a dwelling—but it is also a stage on which the rituals of daily life and social hierarchy would be performed. During the time of the Roman republic (fifth through first centuries B.C.E.), ranking aristocratic families (patricians) used domestic display as a way to reinforce social position and as a way to advance their own fortunes, as well as those of their dependents and clients (*clientes*), within the community. Since Republican society operated on the basis of this patron-client relationship, the *domus* played a key part in the reinforcement of social hierarchy as the patron (*patronus*) would receive his clients (*clientes*) in the atrium of his *domus* each business day. While visiting with the patron, each client would get an eyeful of the patron's household wealth, thus applying implicit pressure on the patron to ensure that his house was tasteful and fashionable.

The patron-client system revolved around asymmetrical social relationships whereby lower ranking clients were bound to their patrons by the qualities of trust (*fides*) and dutifulness (*pietas*). Governed by ancestral custom (*mos maiorum*), clients would seek support and favors from the patron; in turn the patron provided protection, support, and benefaction, collectively known as *patrocinium*. This system had changed somewhat by the time of the brothers Vettii and it is unclear to what extent the patron-client system factored in their lives or in their own domestic sphere.

In his treatise on Roman architecture, the first century B.C.E. author Vitruvius outlines the key elements, proportions, and aesthetics of the Roman house, creating what has been treated as a canonical recommendation for domestic architecture of the period. The Vitruvian canon (or standard) proposes a range of plans, suggesting strongly that the organization of interior space was important in Roman architectural theory (***De Architectura* 6.3.3-6**). Although the plan of the Roman *domus* does reflect the canonical aspects described by Vitruvius, we also see enormous variation with modifications and remodeling undertaken over time.

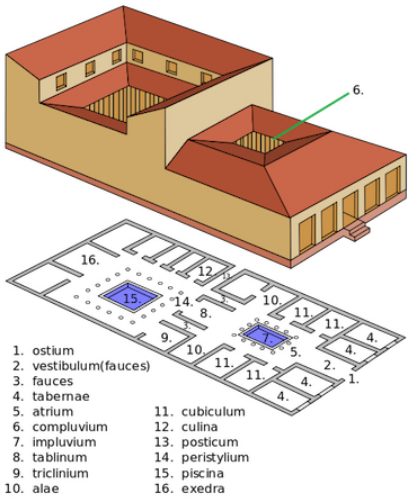


Figure 13.2.8.153: Standard plan of an ancient Roman Domus

The standard house (*domus*) plan has several key architectural elements. Generally entered from the street via a narrow doorway (*fauces*), the large centralized reception hall (*atrium*) is flanked by wings (*alae*) and often bounded by bedrooms (*cubicula*). The office of the head of household (*paterfamilias*), known as the tablinum, links the public part of the house (*pars urbana*) to the private part of the house (*pars rustica*). This latter area often focuses on an open, colonnaded courtyard (peristylium) and serves as the center of family life, with the kitchen (*culina*), dining room(s) (*triclinium* or *oecus*), and often a small garden (*hortus*). Many houses also had a second level that may have contained additional sleeping spaces and perhaps storage.

Excavation and identification

The House of the Vettii was excavated between late 1894 and early 1896. The artifacts that were recovered allowed for the identification of the house's putative owners, Aulus Vettius Conviva and his brother, Aulus Vettius Restitutus. Both men have been identified as former slaves or freedmen (liberti). The Vettii had risen to some prominence; Conviva was an augustalis—the top civic office for which a freedman would be eligible. In the construction and decoration of their house the brothers display a mind-set not uncommon among the newly-rich. Two strongboxes (arca – essentially lockable boxes for storing valuables)—concrete signs of wealth—were placed prominently in the large atrium so that visitors would be sure to notice them.



Figure 13.2.8.154: Plan of Pompeii, with location of the House of the Vettii

The strongboxes, paired with a painting of the god Priapus in the vestibule, serve to underscore the wealth of the brothers Vettii. This painting, which shows Priapus weighing his own phallus against a bag of money, may represent the socio-economic ambitions of the Vettii and perhaps indicates that those ambitions were different from those of high-ranking citizen families. This is interesting when we consider that achieving the status of *augustalis* likely indicates that Conviva made a large donation to a public works project in Pompeii.

The plan of the house

The House of the Vettii covers an area of approximately 1,100 square meters. The construction of the house and its decorations belong to the final period of Pompeii's occupation and therefore provides important evidence of the aesthetics of the city on the eve of its destruction.



Figure **13.2.8.155**: View through atrium to the peristyle (photo: **Peter Stewart**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

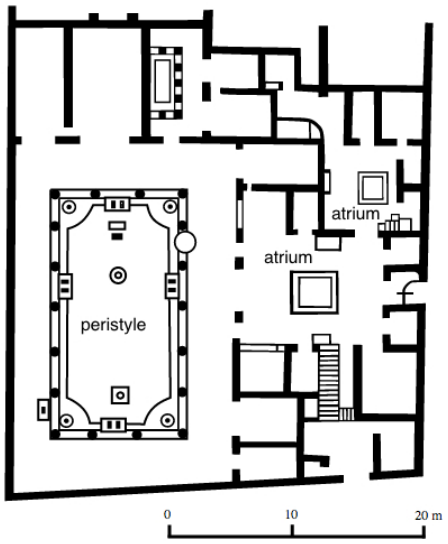


Figure **13.2.8.156**: Plan, House of the Vettii, Late Republican-Early Imperial domus, destroyed 79 C.E.

The house was built atop the remains of an earlier house that survives, in part, in the form of the wings (*alae*) and a doorway. The plan of the House of the Vettii has two large central halls (*atria*) and, significantly, lacks an office space (*tablinum*). Entry to the house was gained from the east by way of a vestibule that granted admission to the larger atrium. The stone-lined basin for collecting rainwater (*impluvium*) lies at the center of the atrium. This larger atrium communicates directly with the peristyle (an open courtyard surrounded by fluted Doric columns) by means of a set of folding doors. The smaller atrium was the focus of the service portion of the house, while the peristyle and its well-appointed rooms was meant for entertainment and dining.



Figure **13.2.8.157**: Frescoes in the atrium, House of the Vettii, Pompeii (photo: **Irene Norman**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The decorative schema of the House of the Vettii provides important evidence for trends in domestic decoration in the final years of Pompeii's occupation. Since Pompeii suffered a major earthquake in 62 C.E. that caused significant destruction, the chronology of the wall paintings and other decorations in the House of the Vettii has been a topic of debate since the house's discovery.

Most art historians point to the house's decorative schema as being representative of a key transitional phase, between the Third and Fourth styles of Pompeian wall painting. Some scholars consider it among the finest examples of the Fourth Style at Pompeii. Paul Zanker sees the Fourth Style wall paintings as being imitations of higher art forms, reckoning that the chosen pictures aim to turn the rooms into picture galleries (*pinacothecae*).

The atrium is richly decorated, as are the rooms opening onto the peristyle. Two of these were in the course of being painted at the time of destruction, while the other three are richly appointed with Fourth Style wall painting. The largest of these, a dining room, is decorated in panels of red and black with an exceptionally fine motif of erotes or putti (mythological winged gods associated with love) engaged in various occupations (image below). The central panel pictures that were likely set into the walls do not survive. Overall the scheme of wall painting in the house of the Vettii suggests an attempt at forward-looking interior decoration on the part of the owners.



Figure **13.2.8.158**: detail of Fourth Style wall painting in the Triclinium, House of the Vettii, Pompeii (photo: **Lady Erin**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Overall the evidence furnished by the House of the Vettii offers key insights into domestic architecture and interior decoration in the last days of the city of Pompeii. The house itself is architecturally significant not only because of its size but also because of the indications it gives of important changes that were underway in the design of Roman houses during the third quarter of the first century C.E.

Additional Resources:

Roman Painting on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Archer, W. C. 1990. “The paintings in the alae of the Casa dei Vettii and the definition of the Fourth Pompeian style.” *American Journal of Archaeology* 94.1:95-123.

Bergmann, B. 1994. “The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii.” *The Art Bulletin* 76.2:225-256.

Clarke, J. R. 1991. *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 250: ritual, space, and decoration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ling, R. 1991. *Roman Painting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richardson, Jr. L. 1988. *Pompeii: An Architectural History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Sewell, J. 2010. The formation of Roman urbanism, 338-200 B.C.: between contemporary foreign influence and Roman tradition. (*Journal of Roman archaeology Supplementary series;* 79). Portsmouth RI: *Journal of Roman Archaeology*.

Sogliano, A. 1898. “La Casa dei Vetti in Pompei.” *Monumenti Antichi* 8:234-387.

Trevelyan, R. 1976. *The Shadow of Vesuvius: Pompeii AD 79*. London: The Folio Society.

Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1988. “The Social Structure of the Roman House.” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 56:43–97.

Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1996. *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zanker, P. 1998. *Pompeii: Public and Private Life*. Trans. D. L. Schneider. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88679



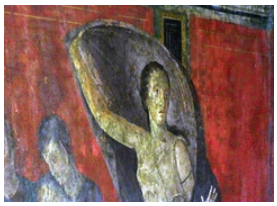





Figure 13.2.8.159: More SmartHistory images…

Dionysiac frieze, Villa of Mysteries, Pompeii

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Standing outside of the state religion, mystery cults are an intriguing puzzle. Does art hold the answer?



Video 13.2.8.9: *Dionysian Cult Cycle (?)*, Villa of Mysteries, before 79 C.E., fresco, Pompeii

Additional resources:

Roman Painting on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Joanne Berry, *The Complete Pompeii* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013).

Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Donatella Mazzoleni and Umberto Pappalardo, *Domus: Wall Painting in the Roman House* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2005).

Umberto Pappalardo, *The Splendor of Roman Wall Painting* (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2009).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

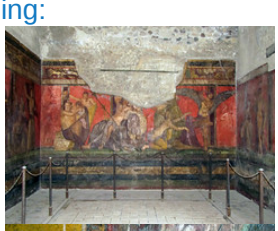
















Figure 13.2.8.160: More SmartHistory images…

13.2.8: Ancient Rome I is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.8: Ancient Rome I** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.9: Ancient Rome II

Roman Republic

Between the period of Kings and Emperors, there was the Roman Republic, whose most important political institution was the Senate.

c. 509 - 27 B.C.E.

Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Rome

by DR. ANDREW FINDLEY

This three-in-one temple to “Jupiter Best and Greatest,” Juno, and Minerva was central in ancient Roman religion.



Figure **13.2.9.1**: Reconstruction (courtesy Dr. Bernard Frischer, Rome Reborn), Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus) Rome, Italy, sixth century B.C.E. through fifth century C.E.

A temple on a hill

Like the Etruscans and Greeks before them, the Romans are known for having constructed monumental temples in highly visible locations. Situated atop the Capitoline Hill in the heart of the ancient city of Rome, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus represented this tradition well (today the site is occupied by a **piazza designed by the Renaissance artist Michelangelo**, see photo below). Unfortunately, neglect, spoliation, and eventual site adaptation means that very little of the Temple of Jupiter remains for us to study. Despite its absence, however, the lasting impact of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus can be observed in the many Roman temples that emulated it, making it perhaps the most important of all Roman temples in terms of its cultural influence and design. (**Watch this video** to see where the Temple stood in the ancient city.)



Figure **13.2.9.2**: Looking up to the Capitoline Hill from the street below (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Current State and Original Appearance(s)

Remains of the temple include portions of the tuff foundation and podium (see photo below), as well as some marble and terracotta architectural elements. Most of the structural remains can be viewed *in situ* (in their original setting) on the grounds of the Palazzo Caffarelli (today part of the Capitoline Museums), and surviving fragments are located within the Capitoline Museums.



Figure **13.2.9.3**: Podium remnant from the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Capitoline Museums, Rome, begun 6th century B.C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Based on the surviving portions of the archaic foundation, the podium for the temple likely measured approximately 50m x 60m. Those dimensions are somewhat speculative, however, as there is no scholarly consensus on the precise measurements. The current best guess is that the temple was quite similar in plan to that of late-archaic Etruscan temples like the **Temple of Minerva at Veii** (also called the Portonaccio temple)—a high podium (platform) with a single frontal staircase leading to a three-column deep *pronaos* (porch) fronted by a hexastyle (six columns across) arrangement of columns. One of the defining features of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was its three-part (tripartite) interior with three adjacent *cellae* (rooms) for the three major deities honored within (Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva).

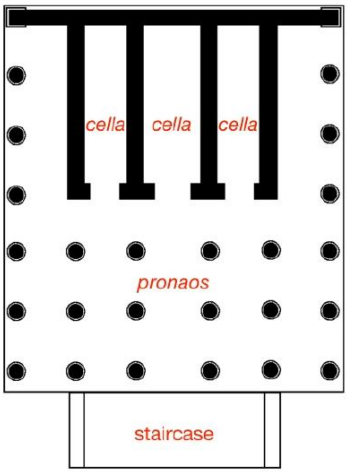


Figure **13.2.9.4**: Plan of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus) Rome, Italy; sixth century B.C.E. through fifth century C.E.

The earliest phase of the temple featured terracotta elements, including *acroteria* (sculptures on the roofline) and a large terracotta statue of Jupiter driving a *quadriga* (four-horse chariot). Inside the temple was another image of Jupiter—the cult statue reportedly sculpted by the famed archaic sculptor Vulca of Veii. This statue was painted red and served as the basis for the tradition of painting the faces of Roman generals during officially sanctioned triumphs.

In contrast with the modest terracotta (baked clay) that was used to adorn the earliest versions of the temple, several Roman sources note that the later reconstructions made during the period of the Roman empire featured much more extravagant materials. Ancient authors, including Plutarch, Cassius Dio, Suetonius, and Ammianus described the temple as outstanding in its quality and appearance, with a superstructure of Pentelic marble, gilded roof tiles, gold-plated doors, and elaborate pedimental relief sculpture.

History and Dedication

Although primarily dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the temple also included spaces for the worship of Juno and Minerva. Together, the three deities comprised what is known as the Capitoline Triad—a divine group significant to the Roman state religion. Jupiter, the Roman equivalent of Zeus, was the most significant of these deities. This is supported by the specific aspect of his worship noted in the full title of the cult—Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, Latin for "Jupiter, Best and Greatest."

An important date for Rome

The temple was reportedly completed around 509 B.C.E.—the date itself is significant as it marks the purported year during which the Romans overthrew the monarchy (which was **Etruscan**, not Roman) and established a republican system of government. Thus, not only was the temple located in a prominent geographical location, it was also a lasting reminder of the moment when the Romans asserted their independence. This historical proximity of the founding of the Republic with the construction of the Temple of Jupiter may have also helped to lend support to its central role in Roman religion and to architectural design practice.



Figure **13.2.9.5**: Italo Gismondi, scale model showing the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill in Rome during the time of Constantine (early 4th century), abutting the Roman Forum (below, right) and Imperial Fora (to the right) (Plastico di Roma Imperiale. Particolare con il Campidoglio e l'Arce sormontata dal Tempio di Giunone Moneta), 1933-1955, gesso (Capitoline Museums, Rome)

Destroyed and rebuilt

The building itself was destroyed and rebuilt several times in the Republican and Imperial periods, and benefitted from several restorations along the way. First destroyed in 83 B.C.E. during the civil wars of Sulla, the temple was rededicated and rebuilt during the 60s B.C.E. Augustus claimed to have restored the temple, most likely as part of his enormous building program that began during his rise to power in the first century B.C.E. The temple was again destroyed in 69 C.E., during the tumultuous "year of the four emperors." Although rebuilt by the emperor Vespasian in the 70s C.E., the temple once more burned during a fire in 80 C.E. The emperor Domitian enacted the final major reconstruction of the temple during his reign, between 81 and 96 C.E.. The fact the temple was never neglected for very long is a testament to its perceived importance.

After the first century C.E., the temple seems to have retained its structural integrity until the emperor Theodosius eliminated public funds for the upkeep of pagan temples in 392 C.E. (Christianity had become the official state religion of the Roman Empire). Following this, the temple was spoliated several times in the Late Antique and Medieval eras. Eventually a grand residence, the Palazzo Caffarelli, was built on the site in the sixteenth century C.E.



Figure 13.2.9.6: Relief with Marco Aurelius sacrificing to Jupiter (Pietas Augusti), from the decoration of a triumphal arch, 177-180 C.E. (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: Carole Raddato, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Public Function

The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was more than simply a standard religious building. From its earliest phases, the temple also seems to have been a repository for objects of ritual, cultural, and political significance. For example, the Sibylline Oracles (books containing the prophecy of the Sibyls) were kept at the site, as were some spoils of war, like the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal's shield. In addition, the temple served as the end point for triumphs, a meeting place for the senate, a location for combined religious and political pageantry, an archive for public records, and a physical symbol of Rome's supremacy and divine agency.

Sacrifice Panel of the Lost Arch of Marcus Aurelius



Figure 13.2.9.7: Temple of Jupiter (detail), Relief with Marco Aurelius sacrificing to Jupiter (Pietas Augusti), from the decoration of a triumphal arch, 177-180 C.E. (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: Carole Raddato, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Perhaps the best depiction of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus can be seen on the *Sacrifice Panel* from a now lost arch of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (above and detail, left). In this relief, Marcus Aurelius is shown in his role as Pontifex Maximus (chief priest) offering a sacrifice to Jupiter amidst a crowd of attendants. A temple with three doors, presumably the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, is portrayed in the background.

In this rendering, the temple is tetrastyle (four columns across the front—likely a truncated artistic representation due to the size of the panel) and of the **Corinthian order**. The pediment features Jupiter enthroned in the center while flanked by other deities; an intricately sculpted

raking (sloping) cornice, surmounted at the apex by a *quadriga* (four-horse chariot), frames the scene.

Lasting Influence

Although the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was built in an Etruscan style and involved Etruscan craftsmen, it nevertheless serves as the origin point for the development of Roman temple-building tradition, which often incorporated local elements into a more broadly Roman template.



Figure **13.2.9.8**: Temple of Portunus (formerly known as Fortuna Virilis), c. 120-80 B.C.E., travertine, tufa, and stucco, Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In terms of architectural history, the lasting significance of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus can be best recognized by its influence on Roman temple building from the last two centuries B.C.E up until the third century C.E. Imperial temples across the empire—including the **Temple of Portunus** at Rome (see photo above)—the **Maison Carrée** in France, and the many *Capitolia* (Temples dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva) of Roman colonies established in north Africa demonstrate an obvious visual connection to the Capitoline temple with a shared frontality, deep front porch, and rich sculptural adornment (some characteristics of which are shared by the **Temple of Baalshamin** at Palmyra). Yet, the influence of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus can also be seen in the overall Roman approach to designing architecture—monumental scale, urban setting, lavish decoration, and imposing elevation. Together, these elements are hallmarks of Roman temples and suggest that the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was an origin point for what would become a commonly understood architectural mark of Roman sovereignty over the Mediterranean world.

Additional resources:

The Temple of Capitoline Jupiter (Capitoline Museums)

Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities/Rome Reborn)

Stefano De Angeli, “Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, Aedes, Templum (Fasi Tardo-Repubblicane e di età Imperiale” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, volume 3, edited by Eva Margareta Steinby (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1995), pp. 148-153.

Ellen Perry, “The Same, But Different: The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus through Time,” in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, edited by Bonna Wescoat and Robert Ousterhout (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 175-200.

Samuel Ball Platner, “Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus” in *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, edited by Samuel Ball Platner and Thomas Ashby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 297-302.

Frank Sear, *Roman Architecture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Anna Mura Sommella, “Le recenti scoperte sul Campidoglio e la fondazione del tempio di Giove Capitolino.” *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana* 70 (2000), pp. 57-80.

John Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples: The Republic to the Middle Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Gianluca Tagliamonte, “Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, Aedes, Templum (Fino All’ A. 83 a.C.)” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, volume 3, edited by Eva Margareta Steinby (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1995), pp. 144-148.

J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Temple of Portunus, Rome

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

This small temple is a rare surviving example from the Roman Republic. It is both innovative and traditional.



Video 13.2.9.1: Temple of Portunus (formerly known as, Fortuna Virilis), travertine, tufa, and stucco, c. 120-80 B.C.E., Rome.

The Temple of Portunus is a well preserved late second or early first century B.C.E. rectangular temple in Rome, Italy. Its dedication to the God Portunus—a divinity associated with livestock, keys, and harbors—is fitting given the building's topographical position near the ancient river harbor of the city of Rome.



Figure 13.2.9.9: Temple of Portunus (formerly known as Fortuna Virilis), travertine, tufa, and stucco, c. 120-80 B.C.E., Rome

The city of Rome during its Republican phase was characterized, in part, by monumental architectural dedications made by leading, elite citizens, often in connection with key political or military accomplishments. Temples were a particularly popular choice in this category given their visibility and their utility for public events both sacred and secular.



Figure 13.2.9.10: Temple of Portunus (formerly known as Fortuna Virilis), travertine, tufa, and stucco, c. 120-80 B.C.E., Rome

The Temple of Portunus is located adjacent to a circular temple of the Corinthian order, now attributed to Herakles Victor. The assignation of the Temple of Portunus has been debated by scholars, with some referring to the temple as belonging to Fortuna Virilis (an aspect of the God Fortuna). This is now a minority view. The festival in honor of Portunus (the Portunalia) was celebrated on 17 August.



Figure 13.2.9.11: Temple attributed to Herakles Victor, Forum Boarium, Rome, late 2nd century B.C.E.

The Temple's plan and construction

The temple has a rectangular footprint, measuring roughly 10.5 x 19 meters (36 x 62 Roman feet). Its plan may be referred to as pseudoperipteral, instead of a having a free-standing colonnade, or row of columns, on all four sides, the temple instead only has free-standing columns on its facade with engaged columns on its flanks and rear.

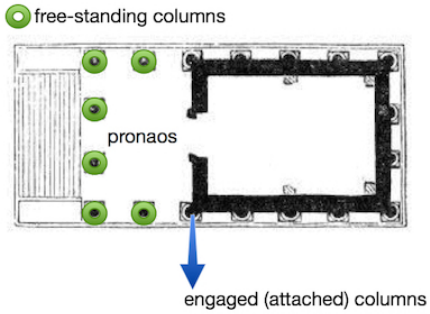


Figure 13.2.9.12: Plan, Temple of Portunus (Rome, c. 120-80 B.C.E.)

The pronoas (porch) of the temple supports an Ionic colonnade measuring four columns across by two columns deep, with the columns carved from travertine. The Ionic order can be most easily seen in the scroll-shaped capitals.There are five engaged columns on each side, and four across the back.

Overall the building has a composite structure, with both travertine and tufa being used for the superstructure (tufa is a type of stone consisting of consolidated volcanic ash, and travertine is a form of limestone). A stucco coating would have been applied to the tufa, giving it an appearance closer to that of the travertine.



Figure **13.2.9.13**: Engaged columns, Temple of Portunus (formerly known as Fortuna Virilis), travertine, tufa, and stucco, c. 120-80 B.C.E., Rome

The temple's design incorporates elements from several architectural traditions. From the Italic tradition it takes its high podium (one ascends stairs to enter the pronaos), and strong frontality. From Hellenistic architecture comes the Ionic order columns, the engaged pilasters and columns. The use of permanent building materials, stone (as opposed to the Italic custom of superstructures in wood, terracotta, and mudbrick), also reflects changing practices. The temple itself represents the changing realities and shifting cultural landscape of the Mediterranean world at the close of the first millennium B.C.E.

The temple of Portunus resides on the Forum Boarium, a public space that was the site of the primary harbor of Rome. While the temple of Portunus is a bit smaller than other temples in the Forum Boarium and the adjacent Forum Holitorium, it fits into a general typology of Late Republican temple building.



Figure **13.2.9.14**: Temple of the Sibyl, Tivoli, c. 150-125 B.C.E. (photo: **LPLT**)

The temple of Portunus finds perhaps its closest contemporary parallel in the Temple of the Sibyl at Tibur (modern Tivoli) which dates c. 150-125 B.C.E. The temple type embodied by the Temple of Portunus may also be found in Iulio-Claudian temple buildings such as the Maison Carrée at Nîmes in southern France.

Preservation and current state



Figure **13.2.9.15**: Andrea Palladio, Temple of Fortuna Virilis, engraving from *The Four Books of Architecture*, London, Isaac Ware, 1738

The Temple of Portunus is obviously in an excellent state of preservation. In 872 C.E. the ancient temple was re-dedicated as a Christian shrine sacred to Santa Maria Egyziaca (Saint Mary of Egypt), leading to the preservation of the structure. The architecture has inspired many artists and architects over the centuries, including Andrea Palladio who studied the structure in the sixteenth century.

Neo-Classical architects were inspired by the form of the Temple of Portunus and it led to the construction of the Temple of Harmony, a folly in Somerset, England, dating to 1767 (below).

The Temple of Portunus is important not only for its well preserved architecture and the inspiration that architecture has fostered, but also as a reminder of what the built landscape of Rome was once like – dotted with temples large and small that became foci of a great deal of activity in the life of the city. Those temples that survive are reminders of that vibrancy as well as of the architectural traditions of the Romans themselves.



Figure **13.2.9.16**: The Temple of Harmony, 1767, Halswell House, Somserset, England

Backstory

The Temple of Portunus was put on the **World Monuments Watch list** in 2006. Overseen by the World Monuments Fund, this list highlights "cultural heritage sites around the world that are at risk from the forces of nature or the impact of social, political, and economic change," providing them with "an opportunity to attract visibility, raise public awareness, foster local engagement in their protection, leverage new resources for conservation, advance innovation, and demonstrate effective solutions."

Together with the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma and grants from private funders, the World Monuments Fund sponsored a restoration of the Temple of Portunus beginning in 2000. The temple had been partially restored and conservation measures put in place in the 1920s, but the activities undertaken in the last two decades utilized the latest technologies to complete a full restoration of the interior and exterior of the building. This included the cleaning and conservation of the frescoes, replacement of the roof (incorporating ancient roof tiles), anti-seismic measures, and the cleaning and restoration of the pediment, columns, and exterior walls. The newly-restored temple opened to the public in 2014.

The Temple of Portunus is one of the best-preserved examples of Roman Republican architecture, and efforts like those of the World Monuments Fund are ensuring that it continues to survive intact.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

World Monuments Fund: Temple of Portunus

F. Coarelli, Il Foro Boario dalle origini alla fine della repubblica (Rome: Ed. Quasar, 1988).

R. Delbrueck, Hellenistische bauten in Latium (Strassburg, K.J. Trübner, 1907-12).

E. Fiechter, “Der Ionische Tempel am Ponte Rotto in Rom,” Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung 21 (1906), pp. 220-79.

J. W. Stamper, The Architecture of Roman Temples: The Republic to the Middle Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

A. Ziółkowski, The temples of Mid-Republican Rome and their historical and topographical context (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1992).

Temple of Portunus, Soprintendenza Speciale per il Colosseo, il Museo Nazionale Romano e l’Area Archeologica di Roma

Video with photos of the restoration from the World Monuments Fund

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:







Figure 13.2.9.17: More SmartHistory images…

Maison Carrée

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

This well-preserved building in modern-day France is a textbook example of a Vitruvian temple.



Figure 13.2.9.18: Maison Carrée, c. 4-7 C.E., *Colonia Nemausus* (modern Nîmes, France)

The so-called Maison Carrée or "square house" is an ancient Roman temple located in Nîmes in southern France. Nîmes was founded as a Roman colony (*Colonia Nemausus*) during the first century B.C.E. The Maison Carrée is an extremely well preserved ancient Roman building and represents a nearly textbook example of a Roman temple as described by the architectural writer Vitruvius.

Design and Plan

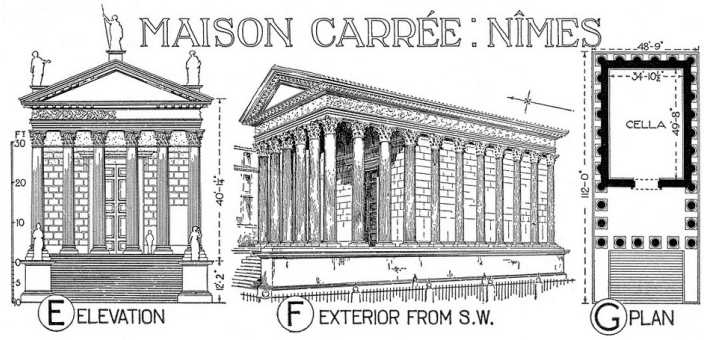


Figure 13.2.9.19: Plan and elevation of the Maison Carrée, c. 4-7 C.E. (photo: Penn State University Library, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The frontal temple is a classic example of the Tuscan style temple as described by Vitruvius (who wrote *On Architecture* in the first century B.C.E.). This means that the building has a single cella (cult room), a deep porch, a frontal, axial orientation, and sits atop a high podium. The podium of the Maison Carrée rises to a height of 2.85 meters; the footprint of the temple measures 26.42 by 13.54 meters at the base.

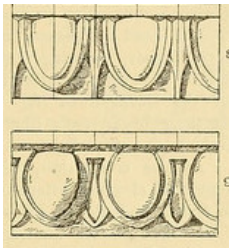


Figure 13.2.9.20: Example egg-and-dart motif (source)

The building is executed in the **Corinthian order** (easily identified by the acanthus leaf motifs on the capital) and is hexastyle in its plan (meaning it has six columns across the façade); twenty engaged columns line the flanks, yielding a pseudoperipteral arrangement (the front columns are free-standing but the columns on the sides and back are engaged, that is, attached to the wall).

The temple has a very deep *pronaos* (porch). The superstructure is decorated with egg-and-dart motifs, with the architrave divided into three zones. The deep porch which puts an emphasis on the temple front and the pseudoperipteral arrangement clearly differentiate this from an ancient Greek temple.



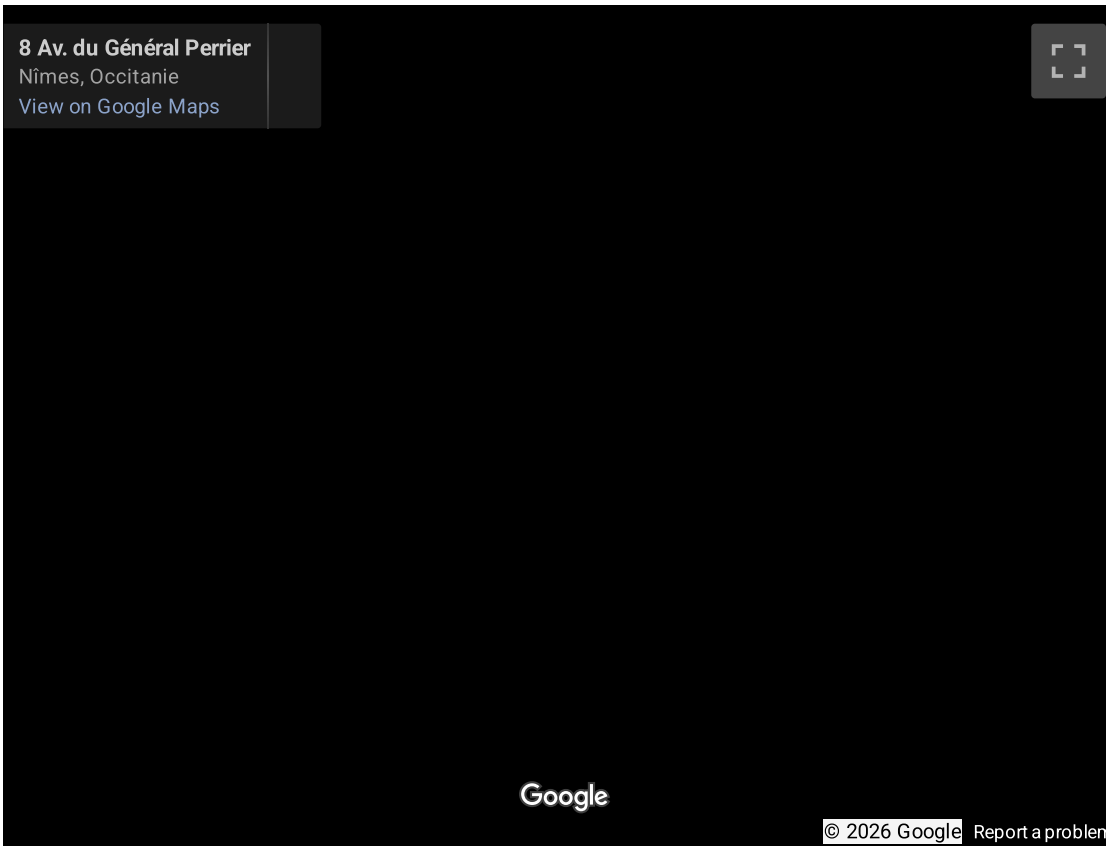
Figure **13.2.9.21**

The temple once carried a dedicatory inscription that was removed in the Middle Ages. Following the reconstruction of the inscription in 1758, scholars believe that the dedication of the building honored Augustus' grandsons and intended heirs, Caius and Lucius Caesar. The dedicatory inscription read, in translation, "To Gaius Caesar, son of Augustus, Consul; to Lucius Caesar, son of Augustus, Consul designate; to the princes of youth" (*CIL* XII, 3156). While not especially common within Italy during the time of the Iulio-Claudians, the worship of the emperor and the imperial family was more commonplace in the provinces of the Roman empire.

The late first century B.C.E. Temple of Augustus and Livia in located in Vienne, France (an ancient settlement of the Allobroges that received a Roman colony) is very similar in plan to the Maison Carrée. This temple was originally dedicated to Augustus alone, but in 41 C.E. the emperor Claudius re-dedicated the building to include Livia, his grandmother (and the wife of Augustus). Taken together these temples show us not only well preserved examples of early Imperial architecture but they also show the degree to which local elites would invest in monumental construction in order to celebrate the emperor and his family members. Just as honorific temples at Rome were sponsored by elites, construction in the provinces also often relied on elite members of the community to fill the role of artistic patron.



Figure **13.2.9.22**: Temple of Augustus and Livia, Vienne, France, late first century B.C.E. (photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)



Additional resources:

La Maison Carrée

Robert Amy, "L'inscription de la maison carrée de Nîmes", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 114.4 (1970) pp. 670-686.

Robert Amy and Pierre Gros, *La Maison Carrée de Nîmes* (Supplementa à "Gallia"; 38) (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1979).

James C. Anderson, jr. "Anachronism in the Roman Architecture of Gaul: the Date of the Maison Carrée at Nîmes," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 60 (2001) pp. 68-79

James C. Anderson, jr., *Roman Architecture in Provence* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Jean-Charles Balty, *Études sur la Maison Carrée de Nimes*. (Bruxelles-Berchem, Latomus, revue d'études latines, 1960).

Pierre Gros, "L'*augusteum* de Nîmes", *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise* 17.1 (1984) pp. 123-134.

Pierre Gros, *L'architecture romaine : du début du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire. 1, Les monuments publics* (Paris: Picard, 2001).

John Bryan Ward-Perkins, "From Republic to Empire: Reflections on the Early Provincial Architecture of the Roman West", *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 60 (1970), pp. 1-19.

Capitoline She-wolf

by DR. JACLYN NEEL

Rome's eternal symbol?

If one could choose any animal to become one's mother, how many people would choose a wolf? Wolves are not known to be the gentlest of animals, and in the ancient world, when many people made their living as shepherds, wolves could pose a significant threat. But for reasons we do not understand, the Romans chose a wolf as their symbol. According to Roman mythology, the city's twin founders Romulus and Remus were abandoned on the banks of the Tiber River when they were infants. A she-wolf saved their lives by letting them suckle. The

image of this miracle quickly became a symbol of the city of Rome, appearing on coinage in the third century B.C.E. and continuing to appear on public monuments from trash-cans to lampposts in the city even to this day. But the most famous image of the she-wolf and twins may not be ancient at all—at least not entirely.



Figure **13.2.9.23**: Coin (didramma) from the "Romano-campana" series, Herakles and the wolf suckling the twins, 265 B.C.E., silver coin (Capitoline Museum, Rome)

Description

The *Capitoline She-wolf* (Italian: *Lupa capitolina*) takes its name from its location—the statue is housed in the Capitoline Museums in Rome. The She-wolf statue is a fully worked bronze composition that is intended for 360 degree viewing. In other words the viewer can get an equally good view from all directions: there is no "correct" point of view. The She-wolf is depicted standing in a stationary pose. The body is out of proportion, because its neck is much too long for its face and flanks. The incised details of the neck show thick, s-curled fur which ends with unnatural beads around the face and behind the forelegs. The wolf's body is leaner in front than in the rear: its ribs are visible, as are the muscles of its forelegs, while in the back the musculature is less detailed, suggesting less tone. Its head curves in towards its tail; the ears curve back. The children themselves have a more dynamic posture: one sits with his feet splaying to either side, while the other kneels beside him. Both face upwards. They, too, are lean, with no trace of baby fat.



Figure **13.2.9.24**: *Capitoline Wolf*, 5th century B.C.E. or medieval, bronze, 75 cm (Capitoline Museums, Rome)

Hollow-cast bronze: How was it made?

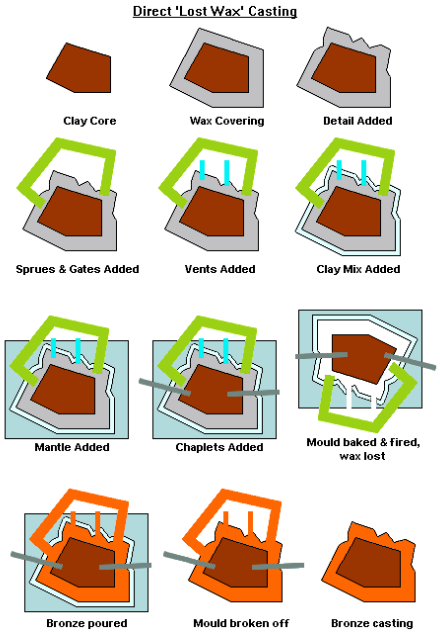


Figure **13.2.9.25**: Diagram of direct lost-wax casting

The *She-wolf* is a hollow-cast bronze statue that is just under life-sized. Hollow casting is one of the many ways that metal sculptures were made in the ancient world. It was the typical method for large-scale bronze statues.

In antiquity, hollow casting (also known as “lost-wax casting”) could be a lengthy procedure. A large sculpture was made in many smaller pieces, and these were joined as the last step of the process. A sculptor first made a model of the statue in a less-valuable medium, such as clay. He then coated the model with a second model, which was made in multiple pieces so it could be removed. Once removed, the second model was coated in wax and another layer of clay. The second and third models were then attached to each other and fired, leaving a hollow space as the wax melted. Molten metal was poured in to replace the wax, and the molds were (at last) removed only when the metal had cooled and set. In the case of large statues, the pieces were soldered together and polished as a final step.

But although the *She-wolf* is hollow-cast, it is not made of multiple pieces. This has raised significant questions about whether the wolf is ancient at all.

Questions of chronology

While it was known for some time that the twins are Renaissance additions to the sculpture, it was not until 2006 that the chronology of the *She-wolf* itself was challenged. Long believed to date to fifth century B.C.E. Etruria (Etruscan culture), the *She-wolf’s* date is now debated. If ancient, the original sculpture probably would not have depicted Rome’s she-wolf. We do know that Romans engaged in regional trade that led them to acquire art objects from surrounding areas, including Etruria (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 35.45).



Figure **13.2.9.26**: Capitoline Wolf, 5th century B.C.E. or medival, bronze, 75 cm, (Capitoline Museum, Rome)

But new laboratory analysis suggests that the *She-wolf*is not ancient and was made in the Middle Ages, specifically the twelfth century C.E. Questions about the authenticity of the *She-wolf* were first raised when the statue was restored in the late 1990s. At that time, conservators realized that the casting technique used to make it is not the same as the hollow casting technique used on other large-scale bronze sculptures. Instead of using multiple molds, as described above, the *She-wolf* is made as a single piece. Proponents of this view argue that the wolf is more similar stylistically to medieval bronzes. Proponents of the Etruscan date claim that the few surviving Etruscan large-scale bronze statues are stylistically similar to the *She-wolf.*

The claim that the *She-wolf* is medieval has generated a lot of controversy in Italy and among scholars of ancient Rome. Several respected researchers have publicly disputed the new findings and maintain the *She-wolf's* Etruscan provenance. Physical and chemical testing on the bronze has been inconclusive about the date. The Capitoline Museums admit both possibilities in the object's description.



Figure **13.2.9.27**: *Lupa of Fiesole*, 4th-2nd centuries B.C.E., bronze sculpture (Museo Civico, Fiesole) (photo: **Sailko**)

Conclusion

Although the debate continues with regard to the date of the *Capitoline She-wolf*, either interpretation offers interesting points for analysis. The only definitive testimony suggests that materials used in casting the wolf came from both Sardinia and Rome. If the work is from the fifth century B.C.E., we can use that evidence to analyze trade patterns in Italy. Remembering that the wolf was originally cast without the twins—no matter what date we assign to the wolf sculpture—we can try to imagine the original significance of the statue.

On the other hand, if the wolf is medieval, what was its original function? We should not think that a medieval wolf is any less valuable just because it is more recent in its date of manufacture. In fact, a pastiche *Capitoline She-wolf* might be an even better symbol of Rome: a Renaissance addition to a medieval statue that recreates the ancient symbol of the eternal city.

Additional resources:

This work at the Capitoline Museums

View this work in the Capitoline Museum gallery

Etruscan bronzes on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Greek and Roman bronze-casting technique on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Medieval casting technique, including a video, from the Victoria and Albert Museum

M. R. Alföldi, E. Formigli, and J. Fried, *Die römische Wölfin: ein antikes Monument stürzt von seinem Sockel = The Lupa Romana: an antique monument falls from her pedestal* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011).

G. Bartoloni and A. M. Carruba, *La lupa capitolina: nuove prospettive di studio : incontro-dibattito in occasione della pubblicazione del volume di Anna Maria Carruba, La lupa capitolina: un bronzo medievale* Sapienza, Università di Roma, Roma 28 febbraio 2008 (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2008).

Andrea Carandini and R. Cappelli, *Roma: Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città* (Milan: Electa, 2000).

A. M. Carruba and L. De Masi, *La Lupa capitolina: un bronzo medievale* (Rome: De Luca, 2006).

C. Dulière, *Lupa romana: Recherches d'Iconographie et Essai d'Interprétation* (Rome: Institut historique belge de Rome, 1979).

A. W. J. Holleman, "The Ogulnii Monument at Rome," *Mnemosyne* 40.3/4 (1987), pp. 427-429.

Dale Kinney, "Book Review: The Lupa Romana: An Antique Monument Falls from Her Pedestal," *Speculum* 88.4 (2013), pp. 1063-65

A. La Regina, "La lupa del Campidoglio è medieval: la prova è nel test al carbonio," *La Repubblica* July 9, 2008

Françoise-Hélène Massa-Pairault, "Romulus et Remus: réexamen du miroir de l'Antiquarium Communal = Romulus and Remus: a re-examination of the mirror from the Antiquarium Communale," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Antiquité*, 123.2 (2011) pp. 505-525

C. Mazzoni, *She-Wolf: The Story of a Roman Icon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:









Figure **13.2.9.28**: More SmartHistory images…

Capitoline Brutus

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Once identified as the founder of the Roman Republic, debate over this figure's true identity rages on.



Video **13.2.9.2**: *Capitoline Brutus*, 4th-3rd century B.C.E. bronze, 69 cm (Capitoline Museums, Rome)

Backstory

We know that the Capitoline Brutus was found somewhere in Rome during the sixteenth century, but there is no recorded findspot for this sculpture. In 1564 it was officially bequeathed to the city of Rome by Cardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi, an Italian scholar and collector who owned a large trove of ancient artifacts, but there is no known evidence of its original provenance.

In the sixteenth century, at the time of Pio da Carpi's bequest, this sculpture was already known among antiquarians as Lucius Junius Brutus (who founded the Roman Republic in the 6th century B.C.E.), and this belief continued through the centuries. The bust eventually became a touchstone of revolutionary sentiment: after Napoleon's invasion of northern Italy in the late 1790s, he staged a triumphal procession across Paris that conspicuously displayed his "art loot" from the campaign. "Rome is no more in Rome. It is now in Paris," was the chorus of a song that accompanied the march. For Napoleon, the cultural and political meanings associated with ancient Roman art—and particularly the Capitoline Brutus—were key to shoring up his image as the leader of the new capital of Europe. According to art historian Patricia Mainardi, the Brutus was "carried at the end of the march and ceremonially placed on a pedestal before the Altar of the Fatherland," with a plaque stating "Rome was first governed by kings: / Junius Brutus gave it liberty and the Republic."

The sculpture was returned to Rome in 1814-15, after Napoleon's defeat, but its interpretation as the portrait of Brutus lived on. As they did with the **Portrait Bust of a Flavian Woman**, art historians throughout the nineteenth century debated the identity of the sitter based on its resemblance to other portraits, such as those found on coins. (These objects selected for comparison are called "comparanda.") However, without a sure archeological findspot, we have no way of knowing who this sculpture actually represents. The mystery of the Capitoline Brutus demonstrates how myths about particular objects can grow into stories that become larger than the objects themselves—but these stories are not necessarily grounded in archeological facts.

There is still a need not only a need for proper archeological excavation and documentation of ancient objects, but also for properly-documented objects to be prioritized within the canon of the history of visual culture. Though the Capitoline Brutus is aesthetically pleasing and in good condition, the most we can do is guess about its original history. Other objects—**ones with recorded findspots**—can help us learn much more about the cultures and artists that produced them, even if they may be less overtly enticing to the eyes.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

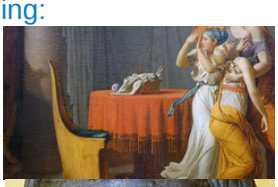
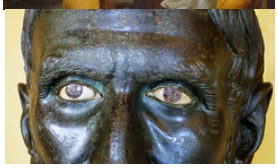
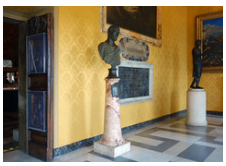
Additional resources:

This work at the Capitoline Museums

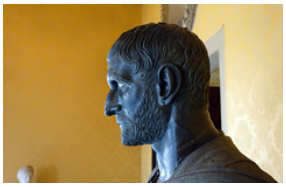
Peter Holliday, "Capitoline Brutus," in *An Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*, ed. Nancy Thomson de Grummond (New York: Routledge, 1997), n.p.

Patricia Mainardi, "Assuring the Empire of the Future: The 1798 Fête de la Liberté," *Art Journal* vol. 48, no. 2 (Summer 1989), pages 155-163.

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:





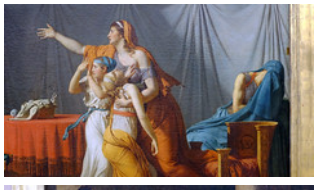





Figure 13.2.9.29: More SmartHistory images…

Tomb of the Scipios and the sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Even in death, great Roman families were concerned with reinforcing and projecting their status.



Figure 13.2.9.30: Plaster cast of the Tomb of Scipio Barbata in-situ, early 3rd century B.C.E. (original, Vatican Museums) (photo: Caterina A., by permission)

Image and status

The latter days of the Roman Republican period witnessed socio-economic upheaval, and a long-established social order found itself threatened by newcomers who were wealthy but lacking in illustrious social pedigrees. Roman aristocrats in the patrician class (those threatened by this socio-economic upheaval) linked their ancestors to the founders of the Roman state, and projected an image of themselves as aged and wise as a measure of their experience and acumen (see **Head of a Roman Patrician**).

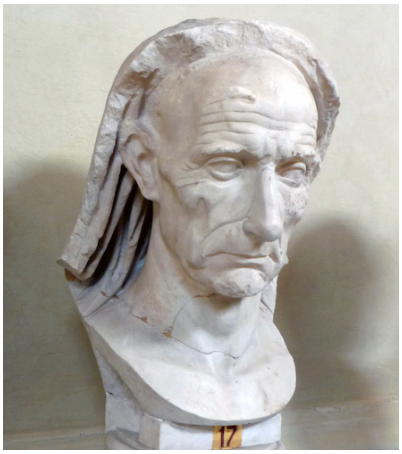


Figure **13.2.9.31**: Veristic male portrait (similar to Head of a Roman Patrician), early 1st Century B.C.E., marble, life size (Vatican Museums, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Since image and status are frequently linked, these aristocrats had long relied on display as part of cultivating their status. Whether this was the display of the images of illustrious family members in the atrium of their houses (so-called *imagines*), or the constructions of tombs or other patronage projects, material culture mattered in maintaining status. The Late Republican period (the late 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.E.) witnessed several significant examples of this attempt to maintain status in a changing world.

The family of the Cornelii Scipiones

The Cornelii Scipiones were among the most famous Romans of all. Their ancestors had won many victories—including those of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus (who died c. 280 B.C.E.) and Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (who died c. 183 B.C.E.), the victor in the Second Punic War. The family tomb of the Cornelii Scipiones, located along the Via Appia leading south from the city of Rome, was first rediscovered in 1614. Its remains constitute one of the most important examples of Late Republican funerary culture at Rome and demonstrate how an illustrious family worked to maintain its image in a changing world.

The Tomb

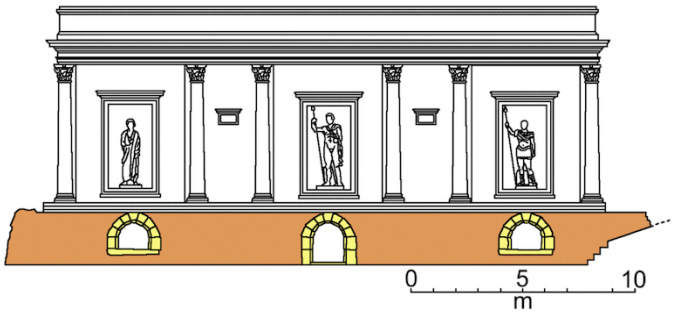


Figure **13.2.9.32**: Possible reconstruction of the Scipio's tomb on the via Appia, Rome, third century B.C.E. – first century C.E.

The Tomb of the Scipios is a subterranean, rock-cut tomb (*hypogeum*) composed of irregular chambers and connecting corridors that provide niches for burials (see plan and interior view below).



Figure **13.2.9.33**: Plan of the Tomb of the Scipios in Rome. 1) the old entrance; 2) a "calcinara," mediaeval lime kiln; 3) the main entrance; 4) entrance to the new room. The letters from A to I are the sarcophagi or loculi with inscriptions. The tomb is now empty except for facsimiles; the remains were discarded or reinterred, while the sarcophagi fragments ultimately went to the Vatican (based on a plan by Filippo Coarelli, Coarelli, *Il Sepolcro degli Scipioni a Roma. Itinerari d'arte e di cultura* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1988).

The tomb was begun in the early years of the third century B.C.E. and continued in use until the first century C.E. The family's patriarch, Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, who served as consul in 298 B.C.E. is the most prominent occupant of the tomb. Barbatus was buried in a monumental stone sarcophagus with a Latin inscription (see below). Other family members occupy other parts of the tomb, in many cases with inscriptions identifying the individuals and charting their public careers.

As the tomb faced an important roadway, it came to have an elaborate façade in its later phases. This façade likely dates to c. 150 B.C.E. or later when the family renovated and expanded the tomb. In addition to the architectural elements of the façade, **a fresco depicting a processional scene**—perhaps of famous members of the Cornelii Scipiones—adorned the tomb.

The Sarcophagus of Barbatus

Scipio Barbatus was deposited in an elaborately carved sarcophagus (today the original is in the Vatican Museums—image below, and a plaster cast is in situ—**image here**). The façade of the sarcophagus is decorated with a Doric frieze and volute scrolls adorn the lid (**watch a video about the classical orders**). It included an elaborate Latin epitaph that was modified in antiquity, with some earlier text being erased. The Scipios were always keen to maintain family ties and support their ancestry at any cost. The extant text of the Barbatus epitaph records civic career achievements (Barbatus served as consul, censor, and aedile) and military achievements. In the latter category Barbatus was famous in Rome's third century B.C.E. wars with the Samnites; the epitaph tells the reader that he captured Taurasia and Cisauna in Samnium, in addition to subduing the region of Lucania (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* VI, 1285).



Figure **13.2.9.34**: Sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus, early 3rd century B.C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

Conclusion

The Tomb of the Scipios is an important monument that demonstrates Roman methods of using images to reinforce and project status. The competition to maintain social rank and position was fierce, and latter day members of the Cornelian family (*gens Cornelia*) were indeed trading on the names and reputations of their more famous ancestors as they themselves struggled for traction in the tumultuous period at the end of the Roman Republic.

Below is a Google photosphere, showing a Late Republican *columbarium* (for storage of funerary urns), adjacent to the Tomb of the Scipios that was used for cremation burials and, together with the elite Tomb of the Scipios, was located within a large necropolis located along the Via Appia exiting the city of Rome from the south:



Additional resources:

Roman Funerary Rituals (SmartHistory essay)

Filippo Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni a Roma* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1988).

Filippo Coarelli, *Rome and environs: an archaeological guide*, trans. J. J. Clauss and D. Harmon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Janos Fedak, *Monumental tombs of the Hellenistic age: a study of selected tombs from the pre-classical to the early imperial era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Harriet Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

Peter J. Holliday, *The origins of Roman historical commemoration in the visual arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Housing the Dead: the tomb as house in Roman Italy", in L. Brink and D. A. Green (eds.) *Commemorating the Dead. Texts and Artifacts in Context* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter) 39-77.

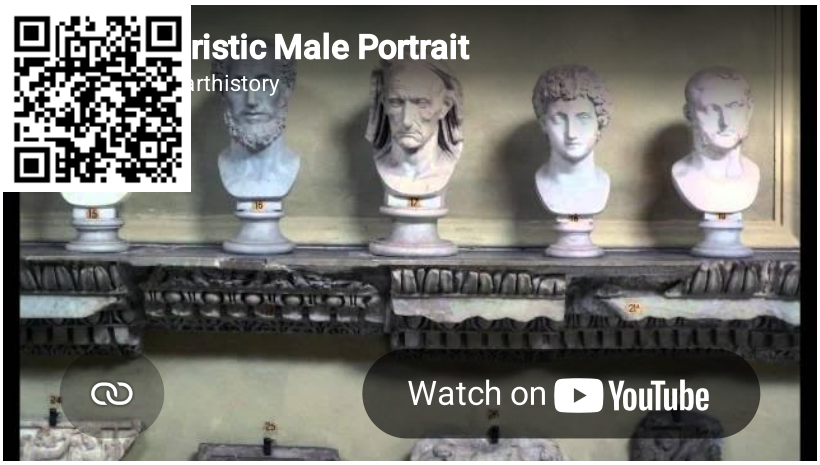
Platner and Ashby (1929) SEP. SCIPIONUM

Sepolcro degli Scipioni (Italian)

Veristic male portrait

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

With age comes experience, and sculptors in the Roman Republic highlighted seniority—warts and all.



Video **13.2.9.3**: Veristic male portrait (similar to *Head of a Roman Patrician*), early 1st Century B.C.E., marble, life size (Vatican Museums, Rome)

Additional resources:

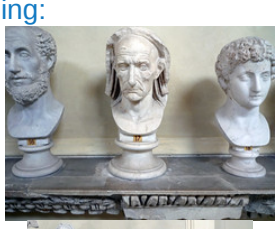
Roman Portrait Sculpture: The Stylistic Cycle on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

D. Jackson, “Verism and the Ancestral Portrait,” *Greece & Rome* 34.1 (1987):32-47.

D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

G. M. A. Richter, “The Origin of Verism in Roman Portraits,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 45.1-2 (1955):39-46.

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

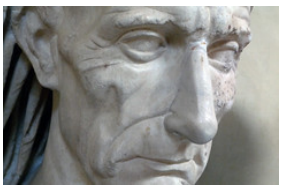




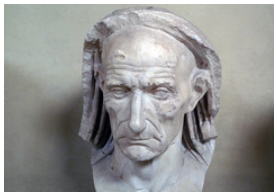














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88680





Figure 13.2.9.35: More SmartHistory images…

Head of a Roman Patrician

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

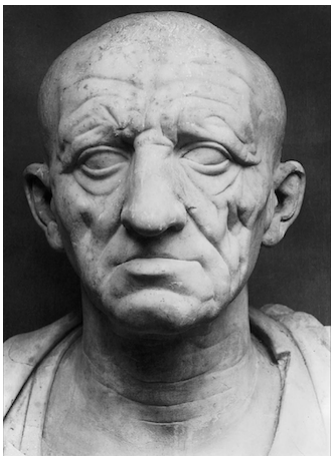


Figure 13.2.9.36: *Head of a Roman Patrician from Otricoli*, c. 75-50 BCE, marble (Palazzo Torlonia, Rome)

Seemingly wrinkled and toothless, with sagging jowls, the face of a Roman aristocrat stares at us across the ages. In the aesthetic parlance of the Late Roman Republic, the physical traits of this portrait image are meant to convey seriousness of mind (*gravitas*) and the virtue (*virtus*) of a public career by demonstrating the way in which the subject literally wears the marks of his endeavors. While this representational strategy might seem unusual in the post-modern world, in the waning days of the Roman Republic it was an effective means of competing in an ever more complex socio-political arena.

The portrait

This portrait head, now housed in the Palazzo Torlonia in Rome, Italy, comes from Otricoli (ancient Ocriculum) and dates to the middle of the first century B.C.E. The name of the individual depicted is now unknown, but the portrait is a powerful representation of a male aristocrat with a hooked nose and strong cheekbones. The figure is frontal without any hint of dynamism or emotion—this sets the portrait apart from some of its near contemporaries. The portrait head is characterized by deep wrinkles, a furrowed brow, and generally an appearance of sagging, sunken skin—all indicative of the veristic style of Roman portraiture.

Verism

Verism can be defined as a sort of hyperrealism in sculpture where the naturally occurring features of the subject are exaggerated, often to the point of absurdity. In the case of Roman Republican portraiture, middle age males adopt veristic tendencies in their portraiture to such an extent that they appear to be extremely aged and care worn. This stylistic tendency is influenced both by the tradition of ancestral *imagines* as well as a deep-seated respect for family, tradition, and ancestry. The *imagines* were essentially death masks of notable ancestors that were kept and displayed by the family. In the case of aristocratic families these wax masks were used at subsequent funerals so that an actor might

portray the deceased ancestors in a sort of familial parade (Polybius *History* 6.53.54). The ancestor cult, in turn, influenced a deep connection to family. For Late Republican politicians without any famous ancestors (a group famously known as 'new men' or 'homines novi') the need was even more acute—and verism rode to the rescue. The adoption of such an austere and wizened visage was a tactic to lend familial gravitas to families who had none—and thus (hopefully) increase the chances of the aristocrat's success in both politics and business. This jockeying for position very much characterized the scene at Rome in the waning days of the Roman Republic and the Otricoli head is a reminder that one's public image played a major role in what was a turbulent time in Roman history.

Additional Resources:

Roman Portrait Sculpture: The Stylistic Cycle on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

K. Cokayne, *Experiencing Old Age in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 2003).

H. I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in the Roman Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

E. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

D. Jackson, "Verism and the Ancestral Portrait," *Greece & Rome* 34.1 (1987):32-47.

D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

M. Papini, *Antichi volti della Repubblica: la ritrattistica in Italia centrale tra IV e II secolo a.C.* 2 v. (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2004).

G. M. A. Richter, "The Origin of Verism in Roman Portraits," *Journal of Roman Studies* 45.1-2 (1955):39-46.

J. Tanner, "Portraits, Power, and Patronage in the Late Roman Republic," *Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000), pp. 18-50.

"Portrait bust of a man [Roman]" in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Early Empire

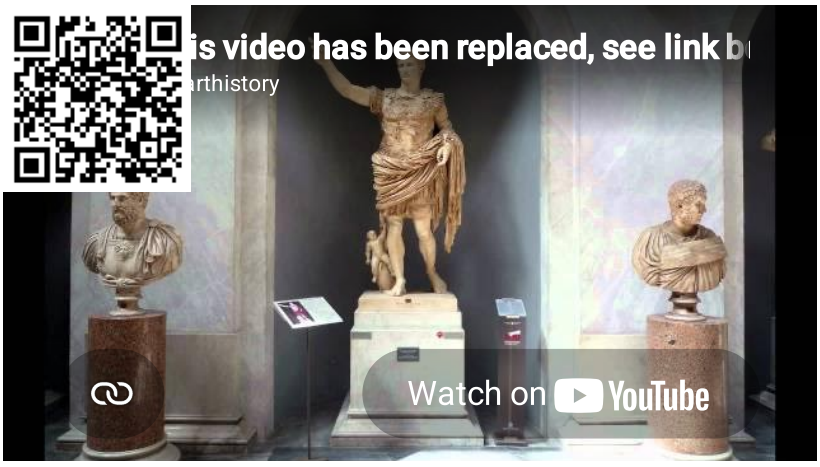
With Augustus, the Roman Empire begins, and so does a 200-year period of peace and stability known as the Pax Romana.

27 B.C.E. - 117 C.E.

Augustus of Primaporta

by JULIA FISCHER

Nothing was more important to a Roman emperor than his image.



Video **13.2.9.4**: *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E. (Vatican Museums)

Augustus and the power of images

Today, politicians think very carefully about how they will be photographed. Think about all the campaign commercials and print ads we are bombarded with every election season. These images tell us a lot about the candidate, including what they stand for and what agendas they are promoting. Similarly, Roman art was closely intertwined with politics and propaganda. This is especially true with portraits of Augustus, the first emperor of the Roman Empire; Augustus invoked the power of imagery to communicate his ideology.



Figure **13.2.9.37**: *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E., marble, 2.03 meters high (Vatican Museums)

Augustus of Primaporta

One of Augustus' most famous portraits is the so-called *Augustus of Primaporta* of 20 B.C.E. (the sculpture gets its name from the town in Italy where it was found in 1863). At first glance this statue might appear to simply resemble a portrait of Augustus as an orator and general, but this sculpture also communicates a good deal about the emperor's power and ideology. In fact, in this portrait Augustus shows himself as a great military victor and a staunch supporter of Roman religion. The statue also foretells the 200 year period of peace that Augustus initiated, called the Pax Romana.



Figure **13.2.9.38**: Detail, *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E., marble, 2.03 meters high (Vatican Museums)

Recalling the Golden Age of ancient Greece

In this marble freestanding sculpture, Augustus stands in a contrapposto pose (a relaxed pose where one leg bears weight). The emperor wears military regalia and his right arm is outstretched, demonstrating that the emperor is addressing his troops. We immediately sense the emperor's power as the leader of the army and a military conqueror.



Figure **13.2.9.39**: *Doryphoros (Spear Bearer)*, Roman copy after an original by the Greek sculptor Polykleitos from c. 450-440 B.C.E., marble, 6'6″ (Archaeological Museum, Naples)

Delving further into the composition of the Primaporta statue, a distinct resemblance to Polykleitos' *Doryphoros*, a Classical Greek sculpture of the fifth century B.C.E., is apparent. Both have a similar contrapposto stance and both are idealized. That is to say that both Augustus and the Spear-Bearer are portrayed as youthful and flawless individuals: they are perfect. The Romans often modeled their art on Greek predecessors. This is significant because Augustus is essentially depicting himself with the perfect body of a Greek athlete: he is youthful and virile, despite the fact that he was middle-aged at the time of the sculpture's commissioning. Furthermore, by modeling the *Primaporta* statue on such an iconic Greek sculpture created during the height of Athens' influence and power, Augustus connects himself to the Golden Age of that previous civilization.

The cupid and dolphin

So far the message of the *Augustus of Primaporta* is clear: he is an excellent orator and military victor with the youthful and perfect body of a Greek athlete. Is that all there is to this sculpture? Definitely not! The sculpture contains even more symbolism. First, at Augustus' right leg is cupid figure riding a dolphin.



Figure **13.2.9.40**: Detail, *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E., marble, 2.03 meters high (Vatican Museums)

The dolphin became a symbol of Augustus' great naval victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, a conquest that made Augustus the sole ruler of the Empire. The cupid astride the dolphin sends another message too: that Augustus is descended from the gods. Cupid is the son of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Julius Caesar, the adoptive father of Augustus, claimed to be descended from Venus and therefore Augustus also shared this connection to the gods.



Figure \Pagendex41: Detail of breastplate, *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E., marble, 2.03 meters high (Vatican Museums)

The breastplate

Finally, Augustus is wearing a cuirass, or breastplate, that is covered with figures that communicate additional propagandistic messages. Scholars debate over the identification over each of these figures, but the basic meaning is clear: Augustus has the gods on his side, he is an international military victor, and he is the bringer of the Pax Romana, a peace that encompasses all the lands of the Roman Empire.

In the central zone of the cuirass are two figures, a Roman and a Parthian. On the right, the enemy Parthian returns military standards. This is a direct reference to an international diplomatic victory of Augustus in 20 B.C.E., when these standards were finally returned to Rome after a previous battle.



Figure **13.2.9.42**: Detail of figures on breastplate, *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E., marble, 2.03 meters high (Vatican Museums)

Surrounding this central zone are gods and personifications. At the top are Sol and Caelus, the sun and sky gods respectively. On the sides of the breastplate are female personifications of countries conquered by Augustus. These gods and personifications refer to the Pax Romana. The message is that the sun is going to shine on all regions of the Roman Empire, bringing peace and prosperity to all citizens. And of course, Augustus is the one who is responsible for this abundance throughout the Empire.

Beneath the female personifications are Apollo and Diana, two major deities in the Roman pantheon; clearly Augustus is favored by these important deities and their appearance here demonstrates that the emperor supports traditional Roman religion. At the very bottom of the cuirass is Tellus, the earth goddess, who cradles two babies and holds a cornucopia. Tellus is an additional allusion to the Pax Romana as she is a symbol of fertility with her healthy babies and overflowing horn of plenty.

Not simply a portrait

The Augustus of Primaporta is one of the ways that the ancients used art for propagandistic purposes. Overall, this statue is not simply a portrait of the emperor, it expresses Augustus' connection to the past, his role as a military victor, his connection to the gods, and his role as the bringer of the Roman Peace.

Additional resources:

View this work at the Vatican Museums

D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

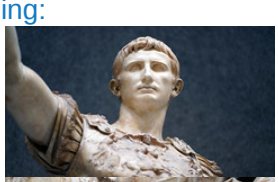
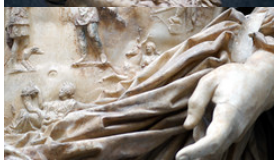
Paolo Liverani, *The Augustus of Prima Porta: Report on the Polychromy* (2011) on The Digital Sculpture Project

John Pollini, *From Republic to Empire: Rhetoric, Religion, and Power in the Visual Culture of Ancient Rome* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* on Perseus Digital Library

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:









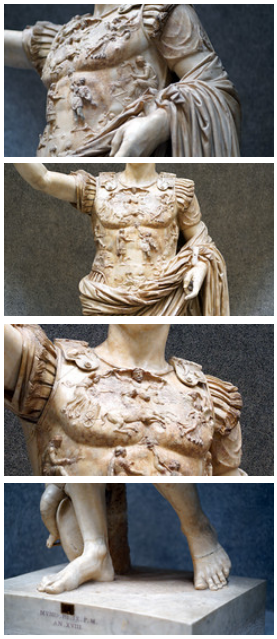
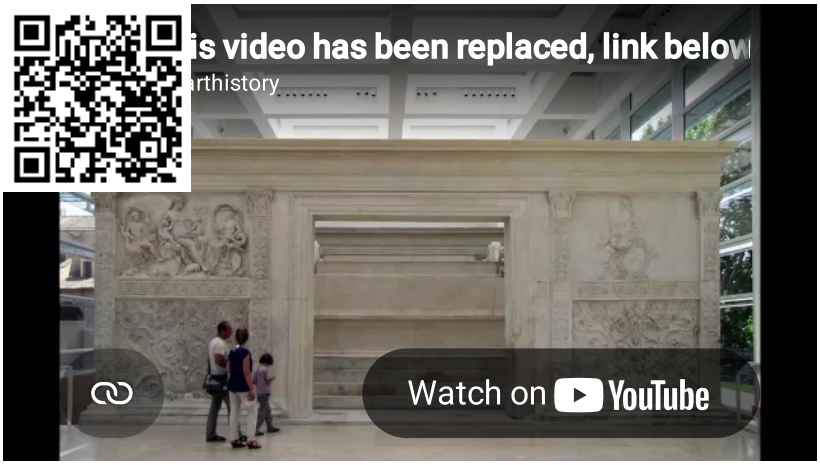


Figure 13.2.9.43: More SmartHistory images…

Ara Pacis

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Augustus is said to have found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble—this altar symbolizes his golden age.



Video 13.2.9.5: Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace), 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome, Italy)



Figure **13.2.9.44**: Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace), 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome, Italy) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Roman state religion in microcosm

The festivities of the Roman state religion were steeped in tradition and ritual symbolism. Sacred offerings to the gods, consultations with priests and diviners, ritual formulae, communal feasting—were all practices aimed at fostering and maintaining social cohesion and communicating authority. It could perhaps be argued that the Ara Pacis Augustae—the Altar of Augustan Peace—represents in luxurious, stately microcosm the practices of the Roman state religion in a way that is simultaneously elegant and pragmatic.

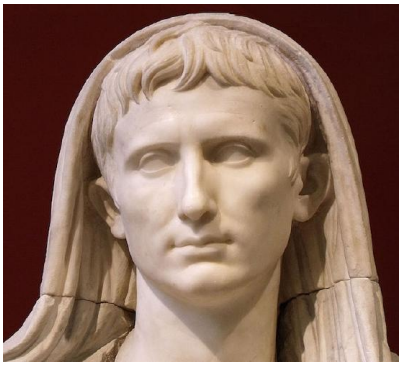


Figure **13.2.9.45**: Portrait of Augustus as Pontifex Maximus from the Via Labicana, after 12 B.C.E. (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Rome)

Vowed on July 4, 13 B.C.E., and dedicated on January 30, 9 B.C.E., the monument stood proudly in the Campus Martius in Rome (a level area between several of Rome's hills and the Tiber River). It was adjacent to architectural complexes that cultivated and proudly displayed messages about the power, legitimacy, and suitability of their patron—the emperor Augustus. Now excavated, restored, and reassembled in a sleek modern pavilion designed by architect Richard Meier (2006), the Ara Pacis continues to inspire and challenge us as we think about ancient Rome.

Augustus himself discusses the Ara Pacis in his epigraphical memoir, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* ("Deeds of the Divine Augustus") that was promulgated upon his death in 14 C.E. Augustus states "When I returned to Rome from Spain and Gaul, having successfully accomplished deeds in those provinces … the senate voted to consecrate the altar of August Peace in the Campus Martius … on which it ordered the magistrates and priests and Vestal virgins to offer annual sacrifices" (Aug. *RG* 12).

An open-air altar for sacrifice

The Ara Pacis is, at its simplest, an open-air altar for blood sacrifice associated with the Roman state religion. The ritual slaughtering and offering of animals in Roman religion was routine, and such rites usually took place outdoors. The placement of the Ara Pacis in the Campus Martius (Field of Mars) along the Via Lata (now the Via del Corso) situated it close to other key Augustan monuments, notably the Horologium Augusti (a giant sundial) and the Mausoleum of Augustus.

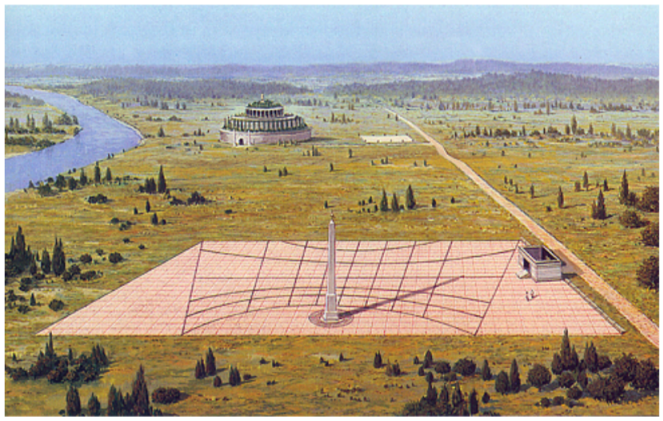


Figure **13.2.9.46**: Illustration showing the likely original placement of the Ara Pacis Augustae (far right) in proximity to the Horologium Augusti (sundial) and the Mausoleum of Augustus in the background. (**source**)

The significance of the topographical placement would have been quite evident to ancient Romans. This complex of Augustan monuments made a clear statement about Augustus' physical transformation of Rome's urban landscape. The dedication to a rather abstract notion of peace (*pax*) is significant in that Augustus advertises the fact that he has restored peace to the Roman state after a long period of internal and external turmoil.

The altar (*ara*) itself sits within a monumental stone screen that has been elaborated with bas relief (low relief) sculpture, with the panels combining to form a programmatic mytho-historical narrative about Augustus and his administration, as well as about Rome's deep roots. The altar enclosure is roughly square while the altar itself sits atop a raised podium that is accessible via a narrow stairway.

The Outer screen—processional scenes



Figure **13.2.9.47**: Processional scene (south side), Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Processional scenes occupy the north and south flanks of the altar screen. The solemn figures, all properly clad for a rite of the state religion, proceed in the direction of the altar itself, ready to participate in the ritual. The figures all advance toward the west. The occasion depicted would seem to be a celebration of the peace (*Pax*) that Augustus had restored to the Roman empire. In addition four main groups of people are evident in the processions: (1) the lictors (the official bodyguards of magistrates), (2) priests from the major *collegia* of Rome, (3) members of the Imperial household, including women and children, and (4) attendants. There has been a good deal of scholarly discussion focused on two of three non-Roman children who are depicted.



Figure 13.2.9.48: A member of the Priestly college (association) of Septemviri epulones, carries an incense box, processional scene (north side), Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The north processional frieze, made up of priests and members of the Imperial household, is comprised of 46 figures. The priestly colleges (religious associations) represented include the *Septemviri epulones* ("seven men for sacrificial banquets"—they arranged public feasts connected to sacred holidays), whose members here carry an incense box (image above), and the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* ("fifteen men to perform sacred actions"— their main duty was to guard and consult the Sibylline books (oracular texts) at the request of the Senate). Members of the imperial family, including Octavia Minor, follow behind.



Figure 13.2.9.49: Augustus (far left) and members of the imperial household, Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (source)

A good deal of modern restoration has been undertaken on the north wall, with many heads heavily restored or replaced. The south wall of the exterior screen depicts Augustus and his immediate family. The identification of the individual figures has been the source of a great deal of scholarly debate. Depicted here are Augustus (damaged, he appears at the far left in the image above) and Marcus Agrippa (friend, son-in-law, and lieutenant to Augustus, he appears, hooded, image below), along with other members of the imperial house. All of those present are dressed in ceremonial garb appropriate for the state sacrifice. The presence of state priests known as flamens (*flamines*) further indicate the solemnity of the occasion.



Figure **13.2.9.50**: Processional scene (south side) with Agrippa (hooded), Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A running, vegetal frieze runs parallel to the processional friezes on the lower register. This vegetal frieze emphasizes the fertility and abundance of the lands, a clear benefit of living in a time of peace.

Mythological panels

Accompanying the processional friezes are four mythological panels that adorn the altar screen on its shorter sides. Each of these panels depicts a distinct scene:

- a scene of a bearded male making sacrifice (below)
- a scene of seated female goddess amid the fertility of Italy (also below)
- a fragmentary scene with **Romulus and Remus in the Lupercal grotto** (where these two mythic founders of Rome were suckled by a she-wolf)
- and a fragmentary panel showing **Roma** (the personification of Rome) as a seated goddess.



Figure **13.2.9.51**: Sacrifice Panel, Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Since the early twentieth century, the mainstream interpretation of the sacrifice panel (above) has been that the scene depicts the Trojan hero Aeneas arriving in Italy and making a sacrifice to Juno. A recent re-interpretation offered by Paul Rehak argues instead that the bearded man is not Aeneas, but Numa Pompilius, Rome's second king. In Rehak's theory, Numa, renowned as a peaceful ruler and the founder of Roman religion, provides a counterbalance to the warlike Romulus on the opposite panel.

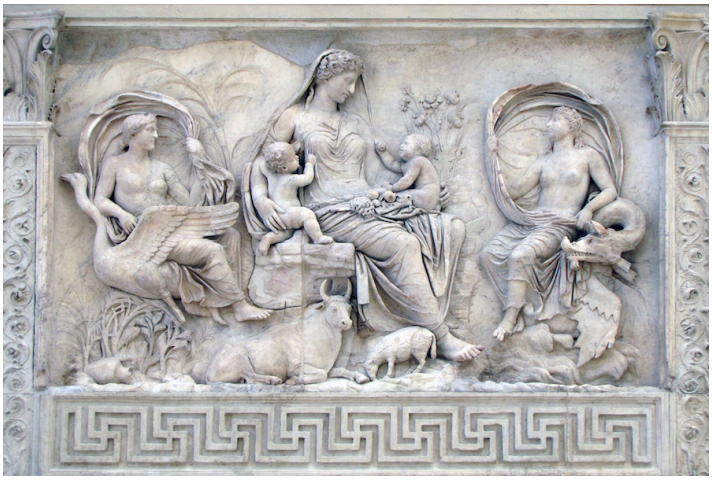


Figure 13.2.9.52: Tellus (or Pax) Panel, Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The better preserved panel of the east wall depicts a seated female figure (above) who has been variously interpreted as Tellus (the Earth), Italia (Italy), Pax (Peace), as well as Venus. The panel depicts a scene of human fertility and natural abundance. Two babies sit on the lap of the seated female, tugging at her drapery. Surrounding the central female is the natural abundance of the lands and flanking her are the personifications of the land and sea breezes. In all, whether the goddess is taken as Tellus or Pax, the theme stressed is the harmony and abundance of Italy, a theme central to Augustus' message of a restored peaceful state for the Roman people—the Pax Romana.

The Altar

The altar itself (below) sits within the sculpted precinct wall. It is framed by sculpted architectural mouldings with crouching gryphons surmounted by volutes flanking the altar. The altar was the functional portion of the monument, the place where blood sacrifice and/or burnt offerings would be presented to the gods.



Figure 13.2.9.53: View to the altar, Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) 9 B.C.E. (Ara Pacis Museum, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Implications and interpretation

The implications of the Ara Pacis are far reaching. Originally located along the Via Lata (now Rome's Via del Corso), the altar is part of a monumental architectural makeover of Rome's Campus Martius carried out by Augustus and his family. Initially the makeover had a dynastic tone, with the Mausoleum of Augustus near the river. The dedication of the Horologium (sundial) of Augustus and the Ara Pacis, the Augustan makeover served as a potent, visual reminder of Augustus' success to the people of Rome. The choice to celebrate peace and the attendant prosperity in some ways breaks with the tradition of explicitly triumphal monuments that advertise success in war and victories won on the battlefield. By championing peace—at least in the guise of public monuments—Augustus promoted a powerful and effective campaign of political message making.

Rediscovery

The first fragments of the Ara Pacis emerged in 1568 beneath Rome's Palazzo Chigi near the basilica of San Lorenzo in Lucina. These initial fragments came to be dispersed among various museums, including the Villa Medici, the Vatican Museums, the Louvre, and the Uffizi. It was not until 1859 that further fragments of the Ara Pacis emerged. The German art historian Friedrich von Duhn of the University of Heidelberg is credited with the discovery that the fragments corresponded to the altar mentioned in Augustus' *Res Gestae*. Although von Duhn reached this conclusion by 1881, excavations were not resumed until 1903, at which time the total number of recovered fragments reached 53, after which the excavation was again halted due to difficult conditions. Work at the site began again in February 1937 when advanced technology was used to freeze approximately 70 cubic meters of soil to allow for the extraction of the remaining fragments. This excavation was mandated by the order of the Italian government of Benito Mussolini and his planned jubilee in 1938 that was designed to commemorate the 2,000th anniversary of Augustus' birth.

Mussolini and Augustus



Figure **13.2.9.54**: Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo, Ara Pacis Pavillion, 1938 (photo: **Indeciso42** CC BY-SA 4.0)

The revival of the glory of ancient Rome was central to the propaganda of the Fascist regime in Italy during the 1930s. Benito Mussolini himself cultivated a connection with the personage of Augustus and claimed his actions were aimed at furthering the continuity of the Roman Empire. Art, architecture, and iconography played a key role in this propagandistic "revival". Following the 1937 retrieval of additional fragments of the altar, Mussolini directed architect Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo to construct an enclosure for the restored altar adjacent to the ruins of the Mausoleum of Augustus near the Tiber river, creating a key complex for Fascist propaganda. Newly built Fascist palaces, bearing Fascist propaganda, flank the space dubbed "Piazza Augusto Imperatore" ("Plaza of the emperor Augustus"). The famous *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* ("Deeds of the Divine Augustus") was re-created on the wall of the altar's pavilion. The concomitant effect was meant to lead the viewer to associate Mussolini's accomplishments with those of Augustus himself.

The Ara Pacis and Richard Meier



Figure **13.2.9.55**: Richard Meier and Partners, Ara Pacis Museum, Rome, 2006

The firm of architect Richard Meier was engaged to design and execute a new and improved pavilion to house the Ara Pacis and to integrate the altar with a planned pedestrian area surrounding the adjacent Mausoleum of Augustus.

Between 1995 and the dedication of te new pavilion in 2006 Meier crafted the modernist pavilion that capitalizes on glass curtain walls granting visitors views of the Tiber river and the mausoleum while they perambulate in the museum space focused on the altar itself. The Meier pavilion has not been well-received, with some critics immediately panning it and some Italian politicians declaring that it should be dismantled. The museum has also been the victim of targeted vandalism.

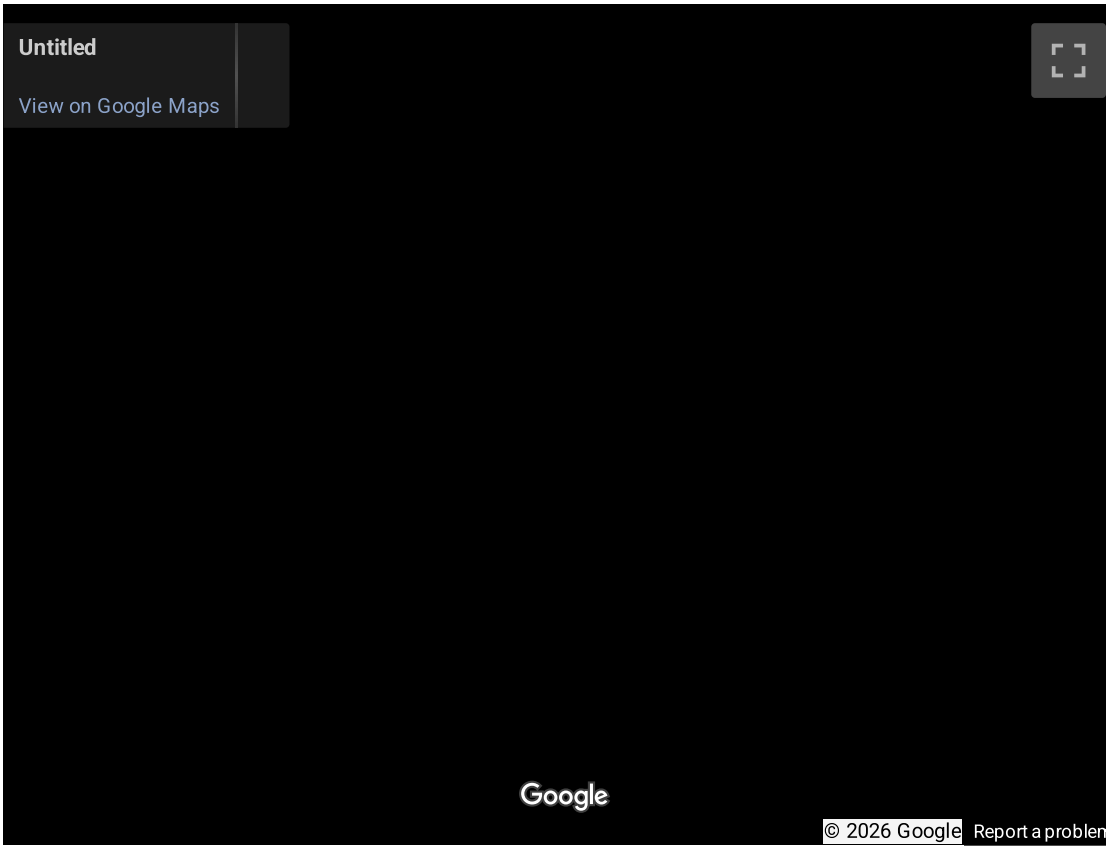
Enduring monumentality

The Ara Pacis Augustae continues to engage us and to incite controversy. As a monument that is the product of a carefully constructed ideological program, it is highly charged with socio-cultural energy that speaks to us about the ordering of the Roman world and its society —the very Roman universe.

Augustus had a strong interest in reshaping the Roman world (with him as the sole leader), but had to be cautious about how radical those changes seemed to the Roman populace. While he defeated enemies, both foreign and domestic, he was concerned about being perceived as too authoritarian–he did not wish to labeled as a king (*rex*) for fear that this would be too much for the Roman people to accept. So the Augustan scheme involved a declaration that Rome's republican government had been "restored" by Augustus and he styled himself as the leading citizen of the republic (*princeps*). These political and ideological motives then influence and guide the creation of his program of monumental art and architecture. These monumental forms, of which the Ara Pacis is a prime example, served to both create and reinforce these Augustan messages.

The story of the Ara Pacis become even more complicated since it is an artifact that then was placed in the service of ideas in the modern age. This results in its identity being impossibly, a mixture of Classicism and Fascism and modernism—all difficult to interpret in a postmodern reality. It is important t

o remember that the sculptural reliefs were created in the first place to be easily readable, so that the viewer could understand the messages of Augustus and his circle without the need to read elaborate texts. Augustus pioneered the use of such ideological messages that relied on clear iconography to get their message across. A great deal was at stake for Augustus and it seems, by virtue of history, that the political choices he made proved prudent. The messages of the Pax Romana, of a restored state, and of Augustus as a leading republican citizen, are all part of an effective and carefully constructed veneer. What was the Pax Romana?



Additional resources:

Ara Pacis Museum

Ara Pacis Augustae (Reed College)

Roma Sparita Photo Archive (Italian)

Ara Pacis Museum / Richard Meier & Partners Architects

David Castriota, *The Ara Pacis Augustae and the Imagery of Abundance in Later Greek and Early Roman Imperial Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Diane A. Conlin, *The Artists of the Ara Pacis: the Process of Hellenization in Roman Relief Sculpture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

Nancy de Grummond, "Pax Augusta and the Horae on the Ara Pacis Augustae," *American Journal of Archaeology* 94.4 (1990) pp. 663–677.

Karl Galinksy, *Augustan Culture: an Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Karl Galinksy ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Peter Heslin, "Augustus, Domitian and the So-called Horologium Augusti," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 97 (2007), pp. 1-20.

P. J. Holliday, "Time, History, and Ritual on the Ara Pacis Augustae," *The Art Bulletin* 72.4 (December 1990), pp. 542–557.

Paul Jacobs and Diane Conlin, *Campus Martius: the Field of Mars in the Life of Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Diana E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Gerhard M. Koeppel, "The Grand Pictorial Tradition of Roman Historical Representation during the Early Empire," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.12.1 (1982), pp. 507-535.

Gerhard M. Koeppel, "The Role of Pictorial Models in the Creation of the Historical Relief during the Age of Augustus," in *The Age of Augustus*, edited by R. Winkes (Providence, R.I.: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, Brown University; Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium: Institut Supérieur d'Archéologie de d'Histoire de l'Art, Collège Érasme, 1985), pp. 89-106.

Paul Rehak, "Aeneas or Numa? Rethinking the Meaning of the Ara Pacis Augustae," *The Art Bulletin* 83.2 (Jun., 2001), pp. 190-208.

Paul Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos. Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius*, edited by John G. Younger. (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

Alan Riding, "Richard Meier's New Home for the Ara Pacis, a Roman Treasure, Opens," *The New York Times* April 24, 2006.

John Seabrook, "Roman Renovation," *The New Yorker*, May 2, 2005 pp. 56-65.

J. Sieveking, "Zur Ara Pacis," *Jahresheft des Österreichischen Archeologischen Institut* 10 (1907).

Catherine Slessor, "Roman Remains," *Architectural Review*, 219.1307 (2006), pp. 18-19.

M. J. Strazzulla, "War and Peace: Housing the Ara Pacis in the Eternal City," ***American Journal of Archaeology*** 113.2 (2009) pp. 1-10.

Stefan Weinstock, "Pax and the 'Ara Pacis'," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 50.1-2 (1960) pp. 44–58.

Rolf Winkes ed., *The age of Augustus: interdisciplinary conference held at Brown University*, April 30-May 2, 1982 (Providence, R.I.: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, Brown University; Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium: Institut Supérieur d'Archéologie de d'Histoire de l'Art, Collège Érasme, 1985).

Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. D. Schneider (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88680



Figure 13.2.9.56: More SmartHistory images…

Gemma Augustea

by JULIA FISCHER

Upper register, Dioskourides, *Gemma Augustea*, 9 – 12 C.E., 19 x 23 cm, double-layered sardonyx with gold, gold-plated silver (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)



Figure 13.2.9.58: Dioskourides, *Gemma Augustea*, 9 – 12 C.E., 19 x 23 cm, double-layered sardonyx with gold, gold-plated silver (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

When you think of Roman art, the Colosseum and the ruins of the Roman Forum immediately spring to mind. You may also think of all the public sculpture that decorated ancient Rome, such as the portrait of *Augustus from Primaporta* (left) or the Ara Pacis Augustae. These public works of art functioned as political propaganda and advertised to all Romans the accomplishments of the emperor. In public art Augustus wanted to promote that he was a military victor, that he brought peace to the Roman Empire, and that he was connected to the gods.



Figure 13.2.9.59: Head (detail), *Augustus of Primaporta*, 1st century C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Private art

But the emperor also commissioned small private works of art such as gems, and cameos. Unlike art in the public sphere, private art would not have been seen by a large audience. Instead, only a select few would have been granted access. If you were lucky enough to be invited to a dinner party at the emperor's palace, he might display his gem collection or show off his large imperial cameos. However, despite the fact that private art would not have been seen by the majority of Roman citizens, the messages contained within these works would have functioned in much the same way as their public counterparts. So if you were at that dinner party with Augustus and he showed you a large cameo, that cameo would have advertised the emperor's military victories, his role as the bringer of peace, and his connection to the gods.



Figure 13.2.9.60: *Gemma Claudia*, 49 C.E., 120 x 152 cm without setting, five-layered onyx and 18th century gold band (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); Emperor Claudius (left), his fourth wife, Agrippina the Younger behind him, her parents are opposite, Germanicus, brother of the emperor, and behind him his wife, Agrippina the Elder

Cameos were a popular medium in the private art of the Roman Empire. While cameos first appeared in the Hellenistic period, they became most fashionable under the Romans. Typically cameos were made of a brown stone that had bands or layers of white throughout, such as sardonyx. This layered stone was then carved in such a way that the figures stood out in white relief while the background remained the dark part of the stone. Most cameos were small and functioned as pendants or rings. But there are a few examples of much larger cameos that were specifically commissioned by the emperor and members of his imperial circle, the most famous example is the *Gemma Augustea*.

Gemma Augustea

The *Gemma Augustea* is divided into two registers that are crammed with figures and iconography. The upper register contains three historical figures and a host of deities and personifications. Our eyes immediately gravitate towards the center of the upper register and the two large enthroned figures, Roma (the personification of the city of Rome) and the emperor Augustus.

Roma is surrounded by military paraphernalia while Augustus holds a scepter, a symbol of his right to rule and his role as the leader of the Roman Empire. At his feet is an eagle, a symbol of the god Jupiter and so we quickly realize that Augustus has close ties to the gods. Augustus is depicted as a heroic semi-nude, a convention usually reserved for deities. Augustus is not only stating that he has connections to gods, he is stating that he is also god-like.



Figure **13.2.9.61**: Roma and Augustus (detail), Dioskourides, *Gemma Augustea*, 9 – 12 C.E., 19 x 23 cm, double-layered sardonyx with gold, gold-plated silver (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

Two other historical figures accompany Augustus in the upper register. At the far left is Tiberius, who will eventually succeed Augustus on the throne. To the right of Tiberius, standing in front of a chariot, is the young Germanicus, another member of Augustus' family and a potential heir to the throne. Clearly the *Gemma Augustea* is making Augustus' dynastic message clear: he hopes that Tiberius or Germanicus will succeed him after he dies.



Figure **13.2.9.62**: Tiberius and Germanicus (detail), Dioskourides, *Gemma Augustea*, 9 – 12 C.E., 19 x 23 cm, double-layered sardonyx with gold, gold-plated silver (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

Interspersed amongst the three historical figures of the upper register are deities and personifications. Directly behind Tiberius is winged Victory. Behind Augustus is Oikoumene, the personification of the civilized world, who places a corona civica (civic crown) on the emperor's head. In the Roman Empire, it was a great honor to be awarded the civic crown as it was only given to someone who had saved Roman citizens from an enemy (and Augustus had certainly done just that by rescuing Romans from civil war). Oceanus, the personification of the oceans, sits on the far right. Finally, Tellus Italiae, the mother earth goddess and personification of Italy, sits with her two chubby children and holds a cornucopia.

Pax Romana

What does the top register mean, with its grouping of mortals, deities, and personifications? In short, everything praises Augustus. The emperor expresses his domination throughout the Roman Empire and his greatest accomplishment, the pacification of the Roman world, which resulted in fertility and prosperity. Augustus' peace and dominion will spread not only throughout the city of Rome (represented by the goddess Roma), but also to all of Italy (represented by Tellus Italiae) and throughout the entire civilized world (symbolized by Oikoumene). And as to Tiberius and Germanicus, Augustus' potential heirs, either will continue the peace and prosperity established by Augustus.



Figure **13.2.9.63**: Lower register (detail), Dioskourides, *Gemma Augustea*, 9 – 12 C.E., 19 x 23 cm, double-layered sardonyx with gold, gold-plated silver (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

The lower register is significantly smaller than the upper, but it nevertheless has plenty of figures in its two scenes, both of which show captive barbarians and victorious Romans. At the left, Roman soldiers raise a trophy while degraded and humiliated barbarians sit at their feet. At the right is a similar scene, with barbarians being brought into submission by Roman soldiers. While the upper register focuses on peace, the lower register represents the wars that established and maintained peace throughout the Roman Empire.



Figure **13.2.9.64**: Roman soldiers and barbarians detail), Dioskourides, *Gemma Augustea*, 9 – 12 C.E., 19 x 23 cm, double-layered sardonyx with gold, gold-plated silver (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

So even though the *Gemma Augustea* is a work of private art, the cameo nevertheless offers a political message and thus serves a purpose similar to public art. The *Gemma* proclaimed Augustus's greatest accomplishment, the Pax Romana, his military victories, his connections to the gods and his god-like status, and his hopes for dynastic succession.



Figure **13.2.9.65**: Dr. Beth Harris viewing the *Gemma Augustea* (for scale)

Additional resources:

Gemma Augustea in the Google Cultural Institute

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

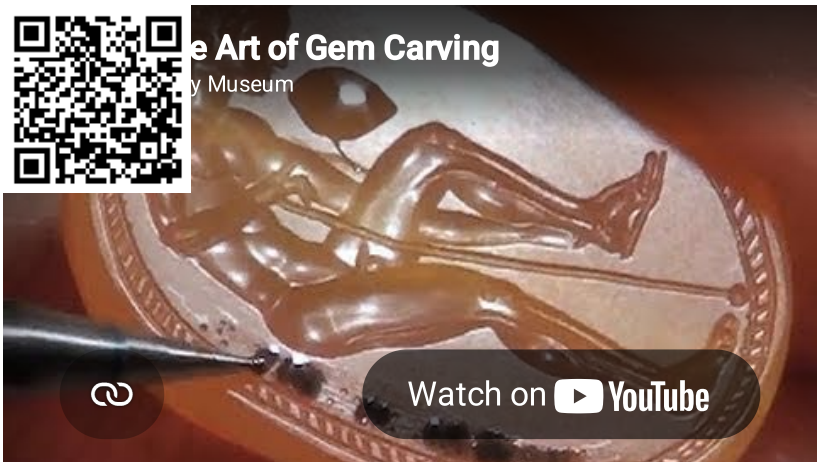


Figure 13.2.9.66: More SmartHistory images…

The art of gem carving

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

Watch a modern artist engrave a precious gemstone using the techniques of the ancients.



Video 13.2.9.6: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.2.9.67**: More SmartHistory images…

Preparations for a Sacrifice

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Animal sacrifice played an important role in ancient Roman religion, but what was involved in the preparation?

An animal sacrifice

The scene depicts a group of four males and a bull preparing for a sacrifice. The bull, bedecked in finery—including its pelta-shaped frontalia—is the intended victim. One attendant (a *tibicen*) provides music by playing the flute (*tibia*), two others hold the bull, and the fourth is perhaps the officiant who will conduct the ceremony. The latter figure, wearing a toga, stands at the viewer's far left, looking toward the sacrificing priests.



Figure **13.2.9.68**: *Preparations for a Sacrifice*, fragment from an architectural relief, c. mid-first century C.E., marble, 172 x 211 cm / 67¾ x 83⅛ inches (Musée du Louvre, Paris) [note: the date for this relief from the Louvre's website—beginning of the second century C.E.—is at odds with the Louvre's publication of its catalog, *Roman Art from the Louvre* (2009) and given the arguments of Koeppel and Torelli, the assignment of a date in the second or third quarter of the first century C.E. is more likely]

Public sacrifices such as the one depicted in this relief played a major role in the Roman state religion. The animal sacrifice itself served multiple functions, chief among them honoring the divinity in question, but also providing a context within which ritual communal feasting could take place after the event. These communal feasts provided valuable nutrition to city dwellers and served to reinforce community ties within the locus of the sanctuary.



Figure **13.2.9.69**: Ox (detail), Preparations for a Sacrifice, fragment from an architectural relief, c. mid-first century C.E., marble, 172 x 211 cm / 67¾ x 83⅛ inches (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

The scene is set against a sculpted background that depicts a **Corinthian temple** (to the left) and a distyle building (to the right) that has two Aeolian capitals flanking a double door; this latter façade is decorated with a laurel garland.

The temple's pediment (see image below) includes depictions of various Roman ritual equipment including the *aspergillum* (for sprinkling sacred water), *simpulum* (a ritual ladle for libations), *lituus* (the curved wand of a religious official known as an augur), and an *apex* (a flamen's hat). Such a background serves not only to situate the main scene but also to add realism and contextualization to these activities as they took place within the city of Rome.

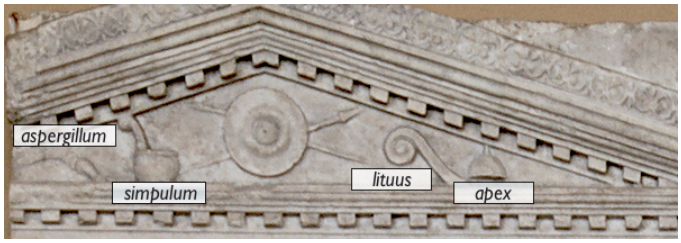


Figure **13.2.9.70**: Pediment (detail), *Preparations for a Sacrifice*, fragment from an architectural relief, c. mid-first century C.E., marble, 172 x 211 cm / 67¾ x 83⅛ inches (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

As we look closely, it's important to keep in mind that the relief has been heavily restored—with art restorers adding elements to replace those that had been lost. Archival records suggest that the restorations were carried out by the sculptor Egidio Moretti in 1635, when the relief was a part of the collection of Asdrubale Mattei. The main restored elements are the heads of the two sacrificial priests, as well as the beard of the togate man. Also restored are the hands and the flute of the musician, the right portion of the bull's frontalia, the bull's muzzle, and the raised arm of the priest nearest to the bull. These restorations must all be considered to be conjectural.

Chronology

This fragmentary historical relief comes from Rome but unfortunately lacks a secure findspot (the relief was in the possession of the Mattei family when it was purchased by the Louvre in 1884). Objects such as this one—which was long ago removed from its archaeological context—are incredibly difficult to date.

Based on comparative stylistic analysis, the relief has been dated by some scholars to the beginning of Hadrian's reign (117-138 C.E.), based upon its supposed similarity to the so-called **adventus relief** of Hadrian (now in the Capitoline Museums). If this reading is correct, the setting for the relief is the forecourt of the Temple of Concord (a temple in the Roman Forum), although this assignment is based on an undocumented impression that the relief's findspot was in or near the Forum of Trajan. This is an important reminder that stylistic dating is subjective and often inaccurate.



Figure **13.2.9.71**: *Ara Pietatis*, cast of the Della Valle-Medici slab, detail with scene of sacrifice before the temple of Mars Ultor, 43 C.E., marble, 3 feet, 9 inches high (original in the Villa Medici, Rome)

An alternative and more compelling argument promoted by G. Koeppel called for an earlier dating of the relief. Koeppel argued that the most apt stylistic comparison is a fragment of a relief from the *Ara Pietatis Augustae* (the *Altar of Augustuan Piety*, a Julio-Claudian monument from Rome's Campus Martius, image above), which would place the date of the Louvre relief either at the close of Claudius' reign (41-54 C.E.) or at the beginning of Nero's reign (54-68 C.E.). Koeppel based his argument on a comparison of the architectural background visible in both reliefs, as well as on the stylization of the bull's head in both reliefs.



Figure 13.2.9.72: Architecture (detail), *Preparations for a Sacrifice*, fragment from an architectural relief, c. mid-first century C.E., marble, 172 x 211 cm / 67¾ x 83⅛ inches (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Mario Torelli posits that the buildings in the background of the Louvre relief should be identified as the house of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus (the father of the emperor Nero), at right, and, at left, Aedes Penatium, a temple once located on the Velia in Rome.

Context: historical art

It is clear that the creation of historical art forms—meaning those that aim to encapsulate and document actual events in a permanent medium—stands out as a key achievement within the vast corpus of Roman art. As a medium, historical relief sculpture defines public art of the Roman imperial period. These reliefs, most often carefully composed and well executed, capture the Roman interest in detailed depictions of actual events that had transpired. One clear outcome of creating such a corpus of sculpture is the creation (and reinforcement) of communal memories that served not only to remind the human participants and witnesses of things that they had seen but also to serve as a cohesive agent, binding together the constituent members to the body of the community.

The celebratory element of reliefs of this type remind viewers of communal rituals (in which some of them may well have participated) that occurred in the city of Rome on a regular basis, manifesting an interchange between state ritual and the urban populace. These reliefs also serve a didactic function, capturing snapshots, of a sort, to reflect the traditions, customs, and iconography of the Roman culture. In their hyper-detailed nature they are not only beautiful artifacts to behold today, but they also encode important documentary evidence that aids in our understanding of details large and small related to the Roman civilization.

Additional resources:

This work at the Louvre

Greek, Etruscan and Roman antiquities at the Louvre

D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

G. M. Koeppel, “The Grand Pictorial Tradition of Roman Historical Representation during the Early Empire,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.12.1 (1982), pp. 507-535.

G. M. Koeppel, “Official State Reliefs of the City of Rome in the Imperial Age: a Bibliography,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.12.1 (1982), pp. 477-506.

G. M. Koeppel, “Die historichen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit I: Stadtrömische Denkmäler unbekannter Bauzugehörigkeit aus augusteischer und julisch-claudischer Zeit,” *Bonner Jahrbücher* 183 (1983), pp. 61-144.

G. M. Koeppel, “The Role of Pictorial Models in the Creation of the Historical Relief during the Age of Augustus,” in *The Age of Augustus*, edited by R. Winkes (Providence RI: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, Brown University, 1985), pp. 89-106.

D. Roger and C. Giroire, *Roman Art from the Louvre* (Hudson Hills Press, 2009).

I. S. Ryberg, *Rites of the State Religion in Roman Art* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1955).

M. Torelli, *Typology and Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs* (Thomas Spencer Jerome Lectures) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982).

Portrait of Vespasian

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.2.9.73**: *Head from a marble statue of Vespasian*, 70-80 C.E., marble, 45 cm high, from Carthage, northern Africa © Trustees of the British Museum

In ancient Rome, official portraits were an extremely important way for emperors to reach out to their subjects, and their public image was defined by them. As hundreds of surviving imperial statues show, there were only three ways in which the emperor could officially be represented: in the battle dress of a general; in a toga, the Roman state civilian costume; or nude, likened to a god. These styles powerfully and effectively evoked the emperor's role as commander-in-chief, magistrate or priest, and finally as the ultimate embodiment of divine providence.

Portrait of the emperor: A soldier and a wit

This naturalistic portrait of the emperor Vespasian (reigned 69-79 C.E.) clearly shows the lined complexion of this battle-hardened emperor, and also the curious 'strained expression' which the Roman writer Suetonius said he had at all times. The loss of the nose is characteristic of the damage often suffered by ancient statues, either through deliberate mutilation or through falling or being toppled from their base.



Figure **13.2.9.74**: *Relief depicting a triumphal procession into Rome with loot from the temple in Jerusalem*, c. 81 C.E., panel in the passageway, Arch of Titus, marble, 6'-7" high, Via Sacra, Rome

Vespasian was born in the Roman town of Reate (Rieti), about forty miles (sixty-five kilometers) north-west of Rome in the Sabine Hills. Vespasian distinguished himself in military campaigns in Britain and later became a trusted aide of the emperor Nero. Together with one of his sons, Titus, Vespasian conquered Judaea in 75 C.E. and celebrated with a magnificent triumphal procession through Rome. Part of the event, in particular the displaying of the seven-branched candlestick or "Menorah" from the Temple at Jerusalem, is shown on the Arch of Titus, in Rome (above). The proceeds from the conquest of Judaea provided funds for the building of the Colosseum and other famous buildings in Rome.

Vespasian was known for his wit as well as his military skills. When, during one of his attempts to boost the treasury, Vespasian raised a tax on public urinals. Titus complained that this was below imperial dignity. Vespasian is said to have held out a handful of coins from the new tax and said "Now, do these smell any different?" Even on his death bed Vespasian's wit did not desert him. He was perhaps parodying the idea of the deification of emperors, when he said "Oh dear, I think I'm becoming a god."

Roman portrait sculptures

Portrait sculptures are one of the great legacies of Roman art. Busts and statues portraying men, women and children from most ranks of society were set up in houses, tombs and public buildings throughout the Roman Empire. Sculptures of emperors and magistrates were often thought to embody personal authority, whereas many of the portraits representing private citizens were intended as memorials to the dead.

Suggested readings:

S. Walker, *Greek and Roman portraits* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

S. Walker, *Roman art* (London, 1991).

B. Levick, *Vespasian* (Routledge, 1999).

This work at The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

The Colosseum

by DR. BERNARD FRISCHER and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.2.9.7**: Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater, or Amphitheatrum Flavium), c. 70-80 C.E., Rome, an ARCHES video

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



















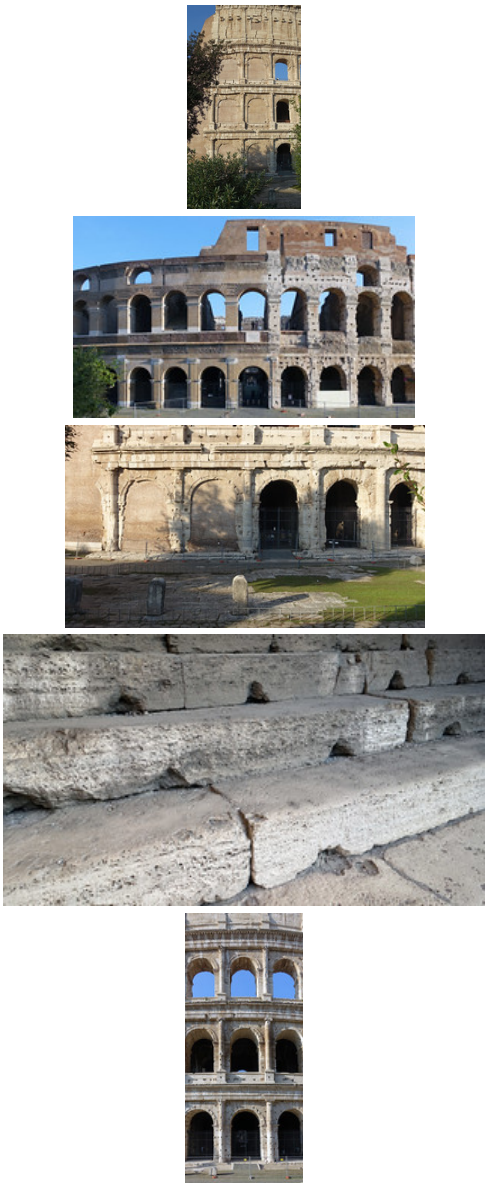


Figure 13.2.9.75: More SmartHistory images…

The Arch of Titus

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

At the end of a Roman triumph, the defeated general was murdered. The victim was marched under this triumphal arch.



Video **13.2.9.8**: Relief panel with *The Spoils of Jerusalem Being Brought into Rome*, Arch of Titus, Rome, after 81 C.E., marble, 7'10" high

The Roman triumph

The Roman triumph was an ancient martial tradition—a parade so riotous that its symbolic culmination involved catapulting the victorious general (*triumphator*) to quasi-divine status for a single, heady day. The Romans marked his status by staining his face red using the mineral pigment cinnabar (Jupiter's countenance was said to have the same ruddy hue).

The Romans traced the traditions of the triumph back to their own beginnings. Rome's legendary founder, Romulus, was the first to celebrate the rite when he defeated and killed Acron, the king of Caenina.

Victory in Judea



Figure **13.2.9.76**: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Triumph of Titus: AD 71, The Flavians*, 1835 oil on panel, 44.3 x 29 cm (The Walters Art Museum); "The artist shows Titus returning to Rome in triumph following his capture of Jerusalem….His father, Emperor Vespasian…leads the procession. Titus comes next, holding the hand of his daughter, Julia, who turns to address her father's younger brother and successor, Domitian…Alma-Tadema depicted these events by drawing on classical sources…and on the latest 19th-century scholarship regarding everyday life in Rome." (**source**)

In the summer of 71 C.E. the Roman emperor Vespasian and Titus, his eldest son, had quelled a dangerous revolt in the Roman province of Judea and returned to Rome to celebrate this major accomplishment. Not only that, but the Flavian dynasty (Vespasian and his two sons Titus and Domitian) had succeeded in winning the throne during the year 69 C.E.—a time of bloody civil turmoil known as the "Year of the Four Emperors."



Figure 13.2.9.77: Judaea Capta Sesterti (Roman coin) with portrait of Titus (left) and a personification of Judea, captured (right) (photo: copyright © David Hendin, used by permission)

A great deal was at stake for Vespasian and Titus, both relative political newcomers from a family line (Flavius) that was not particularly illustrious. The honor of the triumph was accorded to them jointly, and the spectacle (as described by Flavius Josephus in his text known as *The Jewish War*) rivaled anything that Rome had ever seen before: spoils, prisoners, pictorial narratives in abundance. All this was meant to awe the spectators and to transport the viewers to the battlefields of the war in the east. But the ritual of the triumph, its parade—even the semi-divine status accorded the *triumphator*—was ephemeral. For this reason, the later construction of permanent monuments (like the Arch of Titus) served to make an impact on the urban landscape (and the collective memory of city dwellers) that lasted far longer than the events of the day itself.



Figure 13.2.9.78: Arch of Titus and the Colosseum, Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The tradition of triumphal monuments connects the Flavians to the traditions of the Roman Republic. Early monuments included columns—for instance the rostrate column (*columna rostrata)* of Caius Duilius (c. 260 B.C.E.)—and the early triumphal arch prototype known as the fornix Fabianus erected in the Forum Romanum by Q. Fabius Allobrogicus in 121 B.C.E. The emperor Augustus continued the use of the triumphal arch, even though he restructured the institution of the triumph itself. Since the Flavians were relative newcomers to the Roman power structure, they needed as much legitimization as they could find, and thus participating in the time-honored traditions of the triumph and its stock monuments made a good deal of sense.

Topography and the triumph



Figure **13.2.9.79**: View across the Roman Forum (Forum Romanum) to the Arch of Titus (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Arch of Titus is located in Summa Sacra Via, the highest point of the Sacra Via, Rome's "Sacred Way" that served as its main processional street. Furthemore, the Arch of Titus commands a key point along the triumphal route (*via Triumphalis*)—one that visually links the valley of the Flavian amphitheater (known to us as the **Colosseum**) to the valley of the **Forum Romanum** and the Capitoline Hill beyond. Many triumphal parades had passed along this route for many centuries, thus the choice to place a permanent triumphal monument astride the route was not accidental but, rather, deliberately evocative of the fact that the triumph as a ritual both created and reinforced collective memory for Romans. This arch, built as an honorific monument, honored Titus posthumously and was a project executed by his younger brother and imperial successor, Domitian (emperor, 81-96 C.E.). Another arch dedicated to Titus, triumphal in its nature, was located in the valley of the Circus Maximus—but this arch only survives in the form of scattered sculptural fragments and a Medieval transcription of its dedicatory inscription. Recent archaeological excavations (2015) in the Circus Maximus have revealed previously unknown remains of this "lost" arch, including elements of its foundations.

The attic inscription

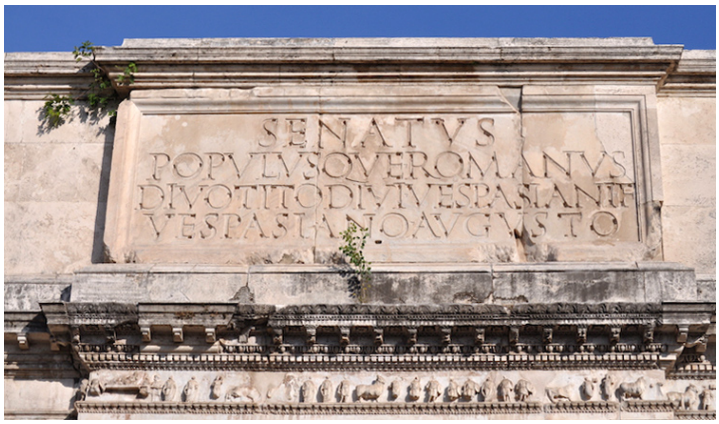


Figure **13.2.9.80**: Attic inscription, Arch of Titus, after 81 C.E., Rome (photo: Dr. Steven Fine, used by permission)

The surviving ancient attic inscription (above) records the dedication of the monument to Titus. Given that Titus is identified as having been deified (*divus*), we learn that the monument's completion can only have occurred after Titus' death in September of 81 C.E.

The text of the attic inscription reads:

SENATVS
POPVLVSQVE·ROMANVS
DIVO·TITO·DIVI·VESPASIANI·F(ILIO)
VESPASIANO·AVGVSTO (CIL 6.945)

The Senate and the Roman people (dedicate this) to the deified Titus Vespasian Augustus, son of the deified Vespasian

The inscription makes the dedication a public one—undertaken on the part of the Senate and the Roman People (*Senatus Populusque Romanus*), and reminds viewers of Titus' link to his likewise deified father, Vespasian, who had died in 79 C.E. This dedication is an example of shrewd power politics on the part of the Emperor Domitian—he had been too young to take part in the military glory enjoyed by

his father and brother. Perhaps he sought to bask in the generally favorable public opinion they enjoyed as he himself made the transition to power.

Relief sculpture



Figure **13.2.9.81**: View of the vault of the arch's passageway, with a relief of the apotheosis of Titus (photo: Dr. Steven Fine, used by permission)

Two panel reliefs flank the single passageway of the arch, and a third adorns the vault (the vault relief is above). The subject matter of the flanking reliefs draws upon the 71 C.E. triumph of Vespasian and Titus, depicting key triumphal episodes following the fall of Jerusalem. In one scene (below) Romans carry spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem, including a Menorah, sacred trumpets and the showbread table. Recent studies have shown these items were painted with yellow ochre.



Figure **13.2.9.82**: Relief panel showing The Spoils of Jerusalem being brought into Rome, Arch of Titus, Rome, after 81 C.E., marble, 7 feet,10 inches high (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The triumph panel opposite depicts Titus in a triumphal four-horse chariot (*quadriga*) followed closely by the goddess of Victory (*Victoria*), preceded by official attendants known as lictors, and accompanied by symbolic representations (*genii*) of the Senate, the Roman people, and Virtus (manly virtue) (below).



Figure **13.2.9.83**: Relief panel showing Titus in a triumphal four-horse chariot, Arch of Titus, Rome, after 81 C.E., marble, 7 feet,10 inches high (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Since the triumphal parade would have passed through the very spot on which the arch was constructed, these images serve as powerful evocations of collective memories shared and held by the Roman people. The depiction in the reliefs echoes the riotous parade described by Flavius Josephus. The program of Flavian architecture largely transformed the physical landscape of Rome; this program was replete with visual cues and reminders of Flavian success, all of which stemmed from and centered around the great triumph at the culmination of the Jewish War.

Restoration and current state



Figure **13.2.9.84**: Canaletto, *The Arch of Titus in Rome*, 1742-44, oil on canvas, 38 x 28 cm (Galleria dell'Accademia Carrara, Bergamo)

During the eleventh century the arch was incorporated into a fortress built by the Frangipani family in Rome, resulting in damage to the panel reliefs that is still visible today. In 1821, during the pontificate of Pope Pius VII, Giuseppe Valadier undertook a major restoration of the surviving structure. In order to identify those portions that had been restored, Valadier employed travertine as opposed to the original marble. The western side of the attic received a new inscription at the time of this restoration. Canaletto's famous painting of the arch grants a view of the monument's condition prior to Valadier's restoration.

Influence

The Arch of Titus has long provided a source of artistic inspiration. Leon Battista Alberti was inspired by its form as he designed the facade of the basilica of Sant'Andrea in Mantua, Italy, after 1472. The Arch of Titus has inspired many modern commemorative arches, notably the Arc de Triomphe in Paris (1806), Stanford White's Arch in Washington Square Park in New York City (1892), the United States National Memorial Arch in Valley Forge National Historical Park designed by Paul Philippe Cret (1917), and Edward Lutyens' India Gate in New Delhi (1921).



Figure 13.2.9.85: Paul Philippe Cret, The National Memorial Arch In Valley Forge Park in Pennsylvania, erected 1917

Additional resources:

The Arch of Titus Digital Restoration Project

Rome Reborn: Arch of Titus

The Flavian Dynasty (69–96) on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History)

Coloring in the the troubled history of a renowned Roman arch

Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2009).

A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik, *Flavian Rome: culture, image, text* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003).

F. Coarelli, *Divus Vespasianus. Il Bimillenario dei Flavi* (Milan: Electa, 2009)

R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: a Study of Flavian Rome* (Latomus, 1996).

J. C. Edmondson, S. Mason, and J. B. Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

R. Ross Holloway, "Some Remarks on the Arch of Titus," *L'antiquité classique* 56 (1987) pp. 183-191.

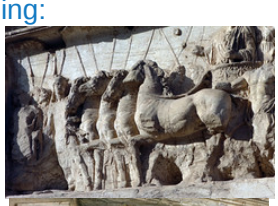
M. Pfanner, *Der Titusbogen* (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1983).

L. Roman, "Martial and the City of Rome." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 100 (2010) pp. 1-30.

H. S. Versnel, *Triumphus: an inquiry into the origin, development and meaning of the Roman triumph* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970).

L. Yarden, *The spoils of Jerusalem on the Arch of Titus: a re-investigation* (Stockholm : Svenska Institutet i Rom; Göteborg : Distributor, P. Åströms, 1991).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88680



Figure **13.2.9.86**: More SmartHistory images…

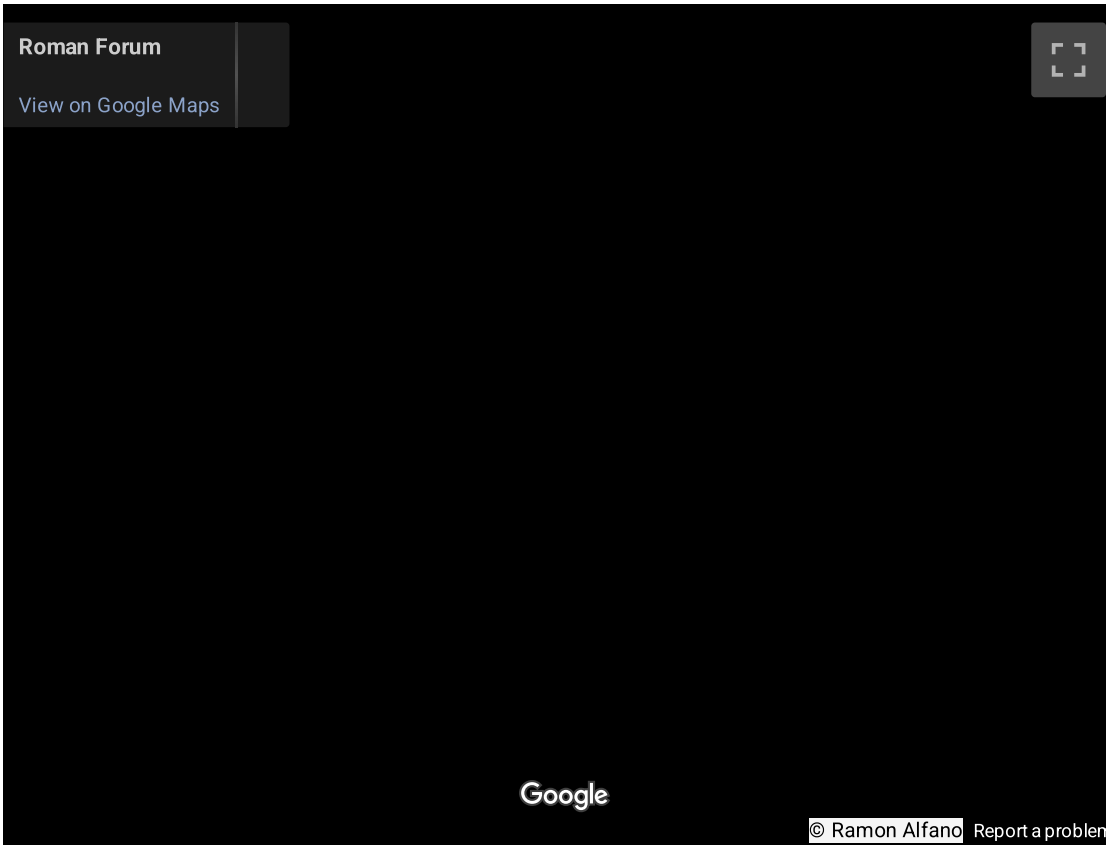
The Spoils of Jerusalem, Arch of Titus

by DR. STEVEN FINE and DR. BETH HARRIS

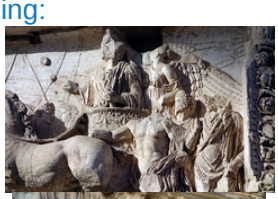
The emperor Titus sacked the temple in Jerusalem and looted its most holy treasures.



Video 13.2.9.8: Relief panel with *The Spoils of Jerusalem Being Brought into Rome*, Arch of Titus, Rome, after 81 C.E., marble, 7’10” high



SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88680

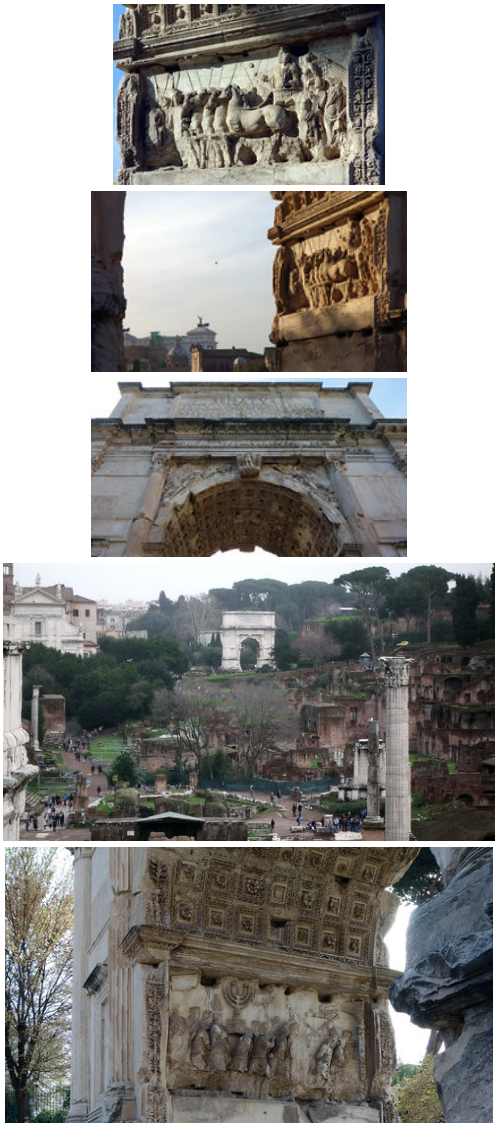


Figure 13.2.9.87: More SmartHistory images…

Silver shekel of the Second Jewish Revolt

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

This silver coin shows how, in an act of defiance against Roman rule, the Jewish population in the province of Judaea over-struck portraits of the Emperor Hadrian with their own symbols.



Figure 13.2.9.88: *Silver shekel of the Second Jewish Revolt*, struck over a denarius of the Emperor Hadrian, c. 133-135 C.E., from Judaea, Palestine © Trustees of the British Museum

Rebellion against Rome

Jerusalem had been destroyed by Roman forces in 70 C.E. and the Roman authorities prevented the Jews from rebuilding their temple, which was the focal point of their religious and cultural identity. Moreover, Hadrian decided to re-found Jerusalem as a Roman colony named Aelia Capitolina

This and other measures, such as banning circumcision, prompted the Jews to rise against Rome under their charismatic leader Simon Bar Kokhba, an assumed name, meaning “Son of the Star” (a reference to his divine claim to leadership). The Roman forces were taken by surprise and suffered heavy casualties.

The rebels established their own rule in the territory they held and Bar Kokhba took the title “Prince of Israel” (nsy’ Ysr’l). As well as over-striking Roman coins like this one, they minted their own with highly symbolic and deeply emotive motifs referring to the destroyed Temple of Jerusalem and the rituals associated with it. A new era of “Redemption” or “Freedom of Israel” was declared. Documents dated “Years One to Four” survive and cover the period from March/April 132 C.E. to the time when the Romans re-established control in the autumn of 135 C.E.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Portrait Bust of a Flavian Woman (Fonseca Bust)

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE, DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Is this delicate female portrait what we think? Take part in a discussion of a masterpiece we know little about.

Part 1:



Video **13.2.9.9**: *Portrait Bust of a Flavian Woman (Fonseca Bust)*, from Rome, early 2nd century C.E., marble, 63 cm (Capitoline Museums), Part 1 of 2Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Part 2:



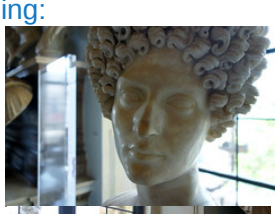
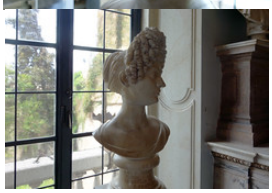
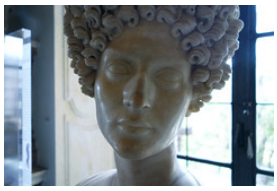
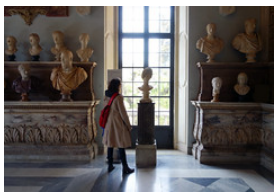
Video 13.2.9.10: *Portrait Bust of a Flavian Woman (Fonseca bust)*, early 2nd century C.E., marble, 63 inches high (Capitoline Museum, Rome), part 2 of 2

Speakers: Dr. Elizabeth Marlowe and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

Elizabeth Marlowe, *Shaky Ground: Context, Connoisseurship and the History of Roman Art* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

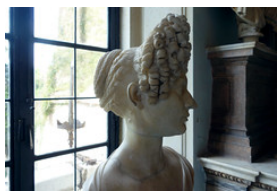
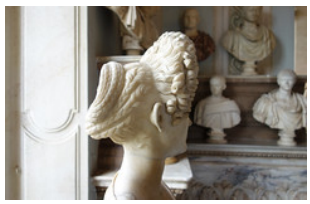
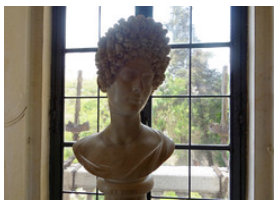







Figure 13.2.9.89: More SmartHistory images…

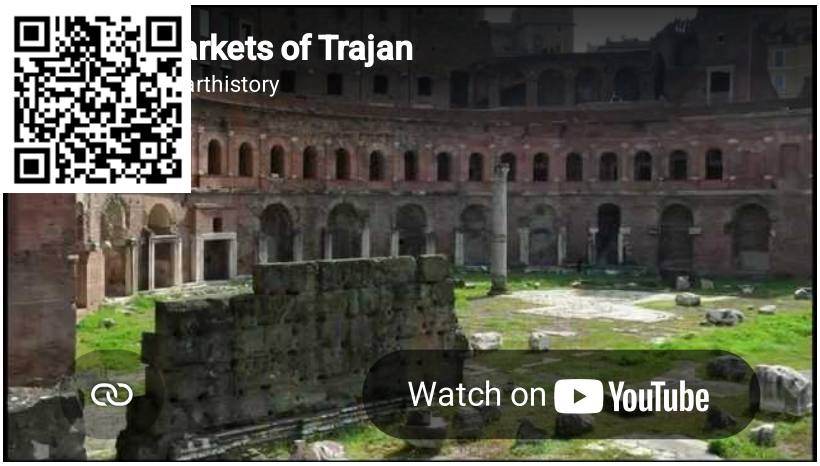
The Forum and Markets of Trajan

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Trajan tasked his architect with moving an entire hill to make room for this extravagant public space.



Video 13.2.9.11: Apollodorus of Damascus, The Forum of Trajan, dedicated 112 C.E., Rome



Video 13.2.9.12: Apollodorus of Damascus, The Markets of Trajan, 112 C.E., Rome

An emperor worth celebrating

Marcus Ulpius Traianus, now commonly referred to as Trajan, reigned as Rome's emperor from 98 until 117 C.E. A military man, Trajan was born of mixed stock—part Italic, part Hispanic—into the *gens Ulpia* (the Ulpian family) in the Roman province of Hispania Baetica (modern Spain) and enjoyed a career that catapulted him to the heights of popularity, earning him an enduring reputation as a "good emperor."



Figrue 13.2.9.90: Marble bust of Trajan, c. 108-117 C.E., 68.5 cm high (The British Museum) (photo: Chris Stroup, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Trajan was the first in a line of adoptive emperors that concluded with Marcus Aurelius. These emperors were chosen for the "job" based not on bloodlines, but on their suitability for rule; most of them were raised with this role in mind from their youth. This period is often regarded

as the height of the Roman empire's prosperity and stability. The ancient Romans were so fond of Trajan that they officially bestowed upon him the epithetical title *optimus princeps* or "the best first-citizen." It is safe to say that the Romans felt Trajan was well worth celebrating—and celebrate him they did. A massive architectural complex—referred to as the Forum of Trajan (Latin: *Forum Traiani* or, less commonly, *Forum Ulpium*) was devoted to Trajan's career and, in particular, his great military successes in his wars against Dacia (now Romania).

Unique under the heavens

The Forum of Trajan was the final, and largest, of Rome's complex of so-called "Imperial fora"—dubbed by at least one ancient writer as "a construction unique under the heavens" (Amm. Marc. 16.10.15). *Fora* is the Latin plural of *forum*—meaning a public, urban square for civic and ritual business. A series of **Imperial fora**, beginning with Iulius Caesar, had been built adjacent to the earlier **Roman Forum** by a series of emperors. The Forum of Trajan was inaugurated in 112 C.E., although construction may not have been complete, and was designed by the famed architect Apollodorus of Damascus.



Figrue **13.2.9.91**: View from the Markets of Trajan of the remains of the eastern exedra and the eastern portico of the main square of the Forum of Trajan, looking toward the Basilica Ulpia (in the upper left) (**photo**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Forum of Trajan is elegant—it is rife with signs of top-level architecture and decoration. All of the structures, save the two libraries (which were built of brick), were built of stone. There is a great deal of exotic, imported marble and many statues, including gilded examples. The forum was composed of a main square (measuring c. 200 x 120 meters) that was flanked by porticoes (an extended, roofed colonnade), as well as by exedrae (semicircular, recessed spaces) on the eastern (above) and western sides.

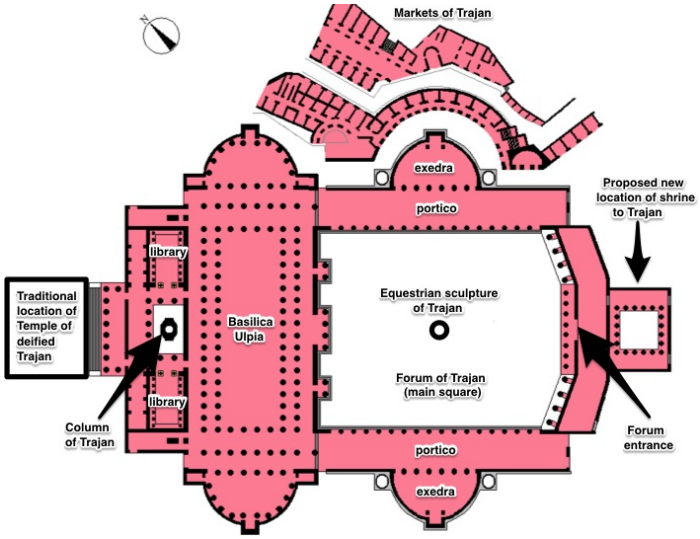


Figure **13.2.9.92**: Plan of the Forum of Trajan. Note that the traditional site of the temple of the deified Trajan is shown, but is replaced by a shrine located at the southern side of the forum's main square (following R. Meneghini) (**image**: CC BY-SA 3.0, annotated by SmartHistory)

A contested element of the reconstruction of the forum complex is a temple dedicated to the deified Trajan (the deceased emperor had been declared a god). Traditional reconstructions place this temple behind the column, although a recent reconstruction favored by Dr. Roberto

Meneghini does not agree with this conjecture, instead preferring to place a shrine to the deified Trajan at the southern end of the forum abutting the retaining wall of the neighboring Forum of Augustus. Scholars continue to debate the nature and position of this temple.

The main structure at the center of the forum complex is the massive Basilica Ulpia, and beside that stood two libraries that flanked the Column of Trajan, an honorific monument bearing an elaborate program of sculpted relief.



Figure **13.2.9.93**: Remains of the Basilica Ulpia (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Paved in white marble: The forum square (*Area Fori*)

The main square of the forum was once a vast space, screened by architecture on all sides and paved in white marble. Several rows of trees, and perhaps rows of statues, ran parallel to the porticoes. Entry to the forum square was from the south, by way of a triumphal arch surmounted by a statue of Trajan riding in a triumphal chariot. Although the arch itself is no longer extant, it is depicted on a coin issued c. 112-115 C.E. (below).



Figure **13.2.9.94**: Gold coin (aureus) struck at Rome c. 112-115 C.E. (19 mm, 7.13 g, 7h). The legend reads “IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P COS VI P P (“To the emperor Trajan Augustus Germanicus Dacicus, Pontifex Maximus, [holder of] tribunician power, in his sixth consulship, father of his country.” The coins depicts a laureate Trajan (draped, and cuirassed bust right) seen from behind on the observe side. On the reverse the Arcus Traiani of the Forum of Trajan is seen. This is presented as a hexastyle building facade, crowned by a frontal chariot drawn by six horses. Three figures stand to the left and right, while four statues occupy niches in the arches below. The reverse legend reads “FORVM TRAIAN[A]” (**image**)

The forum square (116 x 95 meters) has an overriding martial theme, reminding viewers and visitors that the forum was constructed from the proceeds (*manubiae*) of Trajan’s successful military campaigns against the Dacians (101–102, 105–106 C.E.). The porticoes were decorated with statuary and military standards (official emblems of the legions), as described by the ancient author Aulus Gellius: “All along the roof of the colonnades of the forum of Trajan gilded statues of horses and representations of military standards are placed, and underneath is written *Ex manubiis* [from the spoils of war] …” (*Attic Nights* 13.25.1).

The decorative program also included statues of captured Dacian prisoners (left) and, it seems, statues of notable Roman statesmen and generals that were set in the intercolumnar spaces of the porticoes.



Figure **13.2.9.95**: Captured Dacian, 106-112 (Vatican Museum) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

At the center of the Forum square stood a bronze equestrian statue of Trajan, the *Equus Traiani*. While the statue itself does not survive, the occasion of a visit to Rome by Constantius II (in 357 C.E.) preserves a mention of the famous equestrian: "So he [Constantius II] abandoned all hope of attempting anything like it, and declared that he would and could imitate simply Trajan's horse, which stands in the middle of the court with the emperor on its back." (Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.15) We also see the equestrian statue depicted on a silver denarius struck at Rome c. 112-114/5 C.E. (below).



Figure **13.2.9.96**: Silver coin, Denarius (19mm, 3.35 g, 7h), struck 112-114/115 C.E IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P COS VI P P, laureate bust right, drapery on far shoulder S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI, equestrian statue of Trajan facing left, holding spear and sword (or small Victory) (**image**)

The massive Basilica Ulpia

As an architectural type, the basilica is uniquely Roman and served various civic and juridical purposes. The habit of planners from the first century B.C.E. onwards had been to prefer to use the basilica as a framing device, so as to have it communicate with the flanks of a forum square. We see this in many cases, although with some variation. In the case of the Forum of Trajan the massive and monumental Basilica Ulpia is constructed at the northern edge of the open courtyard. It thus serves to bisect the complex, with the portico-lined courtyard lying to its east and the libraries and the Column of Trajan to its west.



Figure 13.2.9.97: Remains of the Basilica Ulpia in the foreground, and the Column of Trajan in the middle ground (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The basilica is massive—its overall length is some 169 meters and the interior nave is 25 meters wide. It is apsidal at both ends, with a raised central floor, and the main hall has a double surround of columns (96 in total) that were probably of white or yellow marble, in the Corinthian order. The basilica was also famous in antiquity for its gilded bronze roof tiles, as commented on by Pausanias, who remarked that the building was "worth seeing not only for its general beauty but especially for its roof made of bronze" (*Description of Greece* 5.12.6).



Figure 13.2.9.98: Artist's view of exterior elevation (J. Gaudet, 1867)

The Markets of Trajan (dedicated c. 110 C.E.)



Figure 13.2.9.99: Apollodorus of Damascus, The Markets of Trajan, 112 C.E. the Militia Tower is visible in the center, rising above the markets (photo: Vašek Vinklát, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Adjacent to the Forum of Trajan is a separate architectural complex attributed to Trajan that is commonly referred to as the Markets of Trajan. This multi-level commercial complex was built against the flank of the Quirinal Hill which had to be excavated for the purpose. The complex of the markets takes its planning cue from the eastern hemicycle of the Forum of Trajan. The ruins of the markets today preserve 170 rooms and the complex covers a space of approximately 110 by 150 meters; its walls stood to 35 meters above the level of the pavement of the Forum of Trajan. The original extension is hard to ascertain, based in part upon subsequent re-use and construction in the Medieval period (and later). The archaeologist Corrado Ricci (1858-1934) cleared the ruins in the twentieth century, but the markets themselves have received comparatively less attention than the adjacent forum.



Figure **13.2.9.100**: Apollodorus of Damascus, The Markets of Trajan, 112 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)The function of the markets was mercantile—indeed the markets may have been designed to relocate shops (*tabernae*) and offices that were displaced by the Trajanic building project. The ground floor offices (at the forum level) were likely occupied by cashiers of the imperial treasury (*arcarii caesariani*), while upper level rooms may been leased out or used by imperial officials associated with the grain dole (*annona*).



Figure **13.2.9.101**: Apollodorus of Damascus, The Markets of Trajan (Market Hall), 112 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The great, vaulted market hall (above) is an ambitious and brilliant design—just as with the rest of the complex, reflecting the skills of the designer / architect who executed the project. The medieval Militia Tower (*Torre delle Milizie*) (12th century) and the now-demolished convent of Santa Caterina a Magnanapoli utilized portions of the structure of the market's buildings.

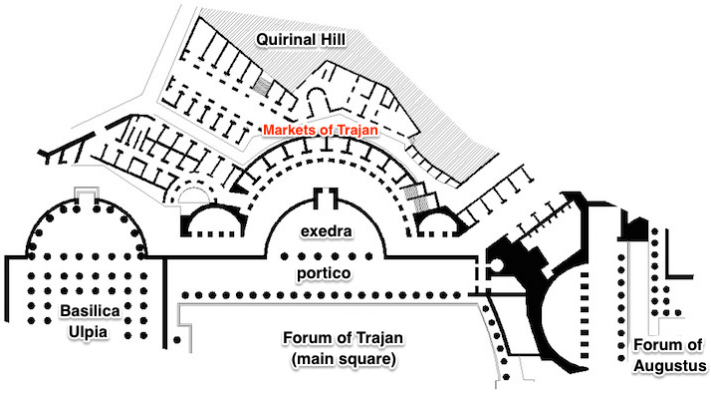


Figure **13.2.9.102**: Plan of the Markets of Trajan (in relation to the Forum of Trajan)

The architect – Apollodorus of Damascus

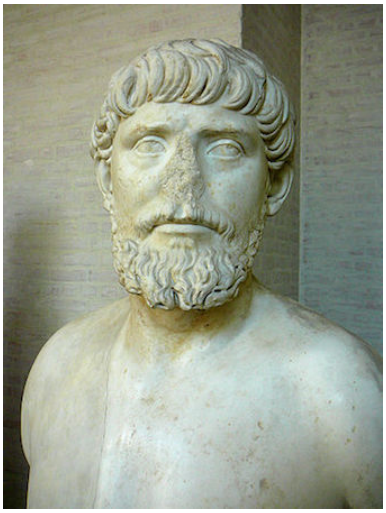


Figure **13.2.9.103**: Portrait considered to be that of Apollodorus of Damascus (Munich Glyptothek) (photo: **Gun Powder Ma**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Apollodorus of Damascus was a military engineer and architect who was active during the first quarter of the second century C.E. He accompanied the emperor Trajan on his campaigns in Dacia and is famous for building a bridge across the Danube river that was both described by ancient authors and depicted in art. The relief from the Column of Trajan depicts the bridge in the background (see below). Built c. 105 C.E., the segmental arch bridge was the first across the lower Danube and allowed Roman soldiers to cross the river easily. Apollodorus, who is described as "the master-builder of the whole work" is credited with the project (Procopius, *Buildings*, 4.6.11-14; tr. H.B. Dewing). Upon return from the Dacian Wars, Apollodorus is thought to have been the architect behind the project that produced the Forum and Column of Trajan, as well as the adjacent markets. A textual tradition is preserved by Cassius Dio that has Apollodorus running afoul of (and being executed by) Hadrian, Trajan's successor, although it is unclear whether credence should be given to this story (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 69.4; tr. Cary).



Figure **13.2.9.104**: Relief from the Column of Trajan, Carrara marble, completed 113 C.E., showing the bridge in the background and in the foreground Trajan is shown sacrificing by the Danube river

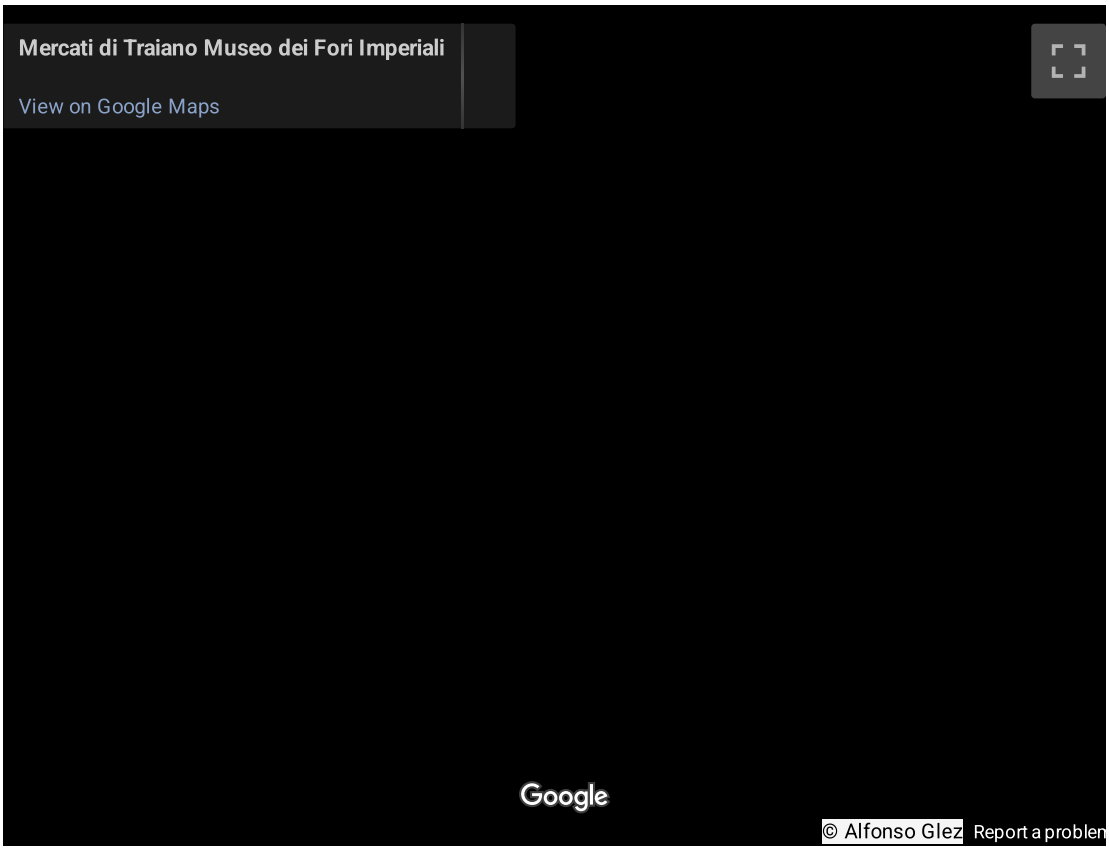
Significance of the "construction unique under the heavens"

The Forum of Trajan earned a great deal of praise in antiquity—and it has been the focus of scholarly study perhaps since 1536 when Pope Paul III ordered the first clearing of the area around the base of the Column of Trajan. Paul III would then protect the column itself in 1546 by appointing a caretaker to look after it. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw various artists and architects produce renderings and plans of the forum and its monuments. Among the most famous of these are those of Dosio (c. 1569) and Etiénne Du Pérac (1575). In terms of public architecture in Imperial Rome, the Forum of Trajan complex is a crowning achievement in its vast monumentality. The execution of its sophisticated and elegant design surpassed all of its predecessors in the complex of forum spaces in the city. The value of vast public spaces in the city of Rome cannot be underestimated. For the average city dwellers accustomed to narrow, dim, crowded streets the soaring, the gleaming open space of the forum, bounded by elaborate architecture and sculpture, would have had a powerful psychological effect. The fact that the monuments glorified a revered leader also served to create and reinforce important ideological messages among the Romans. Overall the role of public architecture in the Roman city, and the Roman consciousness, is an important reminder of the ways in which Romans used built space to establish and perpetuate messages about identity and ideology.



Figure **13.2.9.105**: *Vestigi delle antichita di Roma, Tiuoli, Pozzuolo et altri luochi*, 1606 (Ægidio Sadeler engravings of reduced copies of Du Pérac's *Vestigi dell'antichità di Roma*) (Getty Research Institute)

The enduring ruins, in this case cleared initially by the excavations sponsored by the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini, stand as strong, and stark, reminders of these Roman realities. Modern viewers still extract and reinforce ideas about identity based on looking at and visiting the ruins. Even with these ruins we still come away with an idea about Trajan's greatness and his martial accomplishments. We might, then, judge the architectural program to be a great success—so successful that a great many of our own public monuments still operate on the basis of conventions established in antiquity.



Additional resources:

Forum of Trajan, Rome Reborn (Dr. Bernard Frischer)

Il Museo dei Fori Imperiali

I Mercati di Traiano

J. C. Anderson, *Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora* (Brussels: Latomus, 1984).

R. Chenault, "Statues of Senators in the Forum of Trajan and the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 102 (2012), pp. 103-132.

P. Gros, *L'architecture romaine du début du 3e siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire 1. Les monuments publics* (Paris: Picard, 1996).

L. Lancaster, "Building Trajan's Markets," *American Journal of Archaeology* 102.2 (Apr., 1998), pp. 283-308.

L. Lancaster, "Building Trajan's Markets 2: The Construction Process," *American Journal of Archaeology* 104.4 (Oct., 2000), pp. 755-785.

R. Leone, et al. *Fori imperiali: demolizione e scavi: fotografie, 1924-1940* (Milan: Electa, 2007).

W. L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire* 2 vols. (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1982-1986).

R. Meneghini, L. Messa, and L. Ungaro, *Il foro di Traiano* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1990).

R. Meneghini, *Il Foro e i Mercati di Traiano: Roma* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1995).

J. E. Packer, K. L. Sarring, and R. M. Sheldon, "A New Excavation in Trajan's Forum," *American Journal of Archaeology* 87.2 (Apr., 1983), pp. 165-172.

J. E. Packer, "The West Library in the Forum of Trajan: The Architectural Problems and Some Solutions," *In Eius virtutis studiosi : classical and postclassical studies in memory of Frank Edward Brown (1908-1988) (Studies in the History of Art, Vol. 43, Symposium Papers XXII)*, edited by A. R. Scott and R. T. Scott, 420-444. (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1993).

J. E. Packer, "Trajan's Forum again: the Column and the Temple of Trajan in the master plan attributed to Apollodorus(?)," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 7 (January 1994) pp 163-182.

J. E. Packer, "Report from Rome: The Imperial Fora, a Retrospective,"*American Journal of Archaeology* 101.2 (April 1997), pp. 307-330.

J. E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: a study of the monuments*. 2 v. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

J. E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: a study of the monuments in brief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

J. E. Packer and J. Burge, "Templum Divi Traiani Parthici et Plotinae: a debate with R. Meneghini," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* (January 2003) pp. 103-136.

Platner, S. B. and T. Ashby. 1929. "Forum Traiani." In A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome (Oxford: Clarendon Press) (**Perseus Project**)

L. Ungaro et al. *The Museum of the Imperial Forums in Trajan's market* (Milan: Electa, 2007).

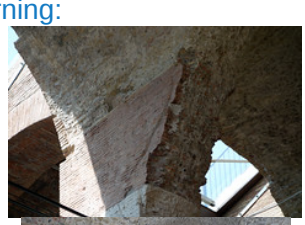
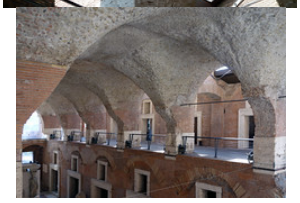
P. H. von Blanckenhagen, "The Imperial Fora," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 13.4 (Dec., 1954), pp. 21-26.

A. Uggeri, *Della Basilica Vlpia nel Foro traiano: istoria e ristaurazione agli amanti delle antichita romane* (Rome, 1830) (viewable online via **Arachne**)

M. Waelkens, "From a Phrygian Quarry: The Provenance of the Statues of the Dacian Prisoners in Trajan's Forum at Rome," *American Journal of Archaeology* 89.4 (Oct., 1985) pp. 641-653.

G. Wightman, "The Imperial Fora of Rome: Some Design Considerations," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56.1 (March 1997) pp. 64-88.

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:







https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88680



Figure 13.2.9.106: More SmartHistory images…

Column of Trajan

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Trajan expanded the Roman Empire to its greatest extent, celebrating his victories with this monumental column.



Video 13.2.9.13: Column of Trajan, Carrara marble, completed 113 C.E., Rome. Dedicated to Emperor Trajan (Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus b. 53 , d. 117 C.E.) in honor of his victory over Dacia (now Romania) 101-02 and 105-06 C.E.



Figure 13.2.9.107: Column of Trajan (as seen through the ruins of the Basilica Ulpia in the Forum of Trajan), Carrara marble, completed 113 C.E., Rome, dedicated to Emperor Trajan (Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus b. 53 , d. 117 C.E.) in honor of his victory over Dacia (now Romania) 101-02 and 105-06 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Triumph

The Triumph was a riotous military ritual celebrated by the Romans over the course of centuries—whenever their commander had won a spectacular victory. On the appointed day (or days) the city would be overflowing with crowds, pageantry, spoils, prisoners, depictions and souvenirs of foreign lands—but then, just as quickly as it began, the glorious tumult was over. The spectacles and the echoes of glory entrusted to the memory of those who had witnessed the event. Was the parade and its giant city-wide party enough to commemorate the glorious deeds of Rome's armies? Or should a more permanent form of commemoration be adopted? Being pragmatists, the Romans enlisted both means of commemoration—the ephemeral and the permanent. The Column of Trajan (dedicated in May of 113 C.E.) might be the crowning example of the inborn need to commemorate—in more permanent form—historical deeds that dominates the psyche of Roman art and artists.

Returning from Dacia triumphant—100 days of celebrations

The emperor Trajan, who reigned from 98 – 117 C.E., fought a series of campaigns known as the Dacian Wars. Dacia (modern Romania), was seen as a troublesome neighbor by the Romans and the Dacians were seen to pose a threat to the province of Moesia, along the Danube frontier. In addition Dacia was rich in natural resources (including gold), that were attractive to the Romans. The first campaign saw Trajan defeat the Dacian leader Decebalus in 101 C.E., after which the Dacians sought terms from the Romans. Renewed Dacian hostilities brought

about the second Dacian War that concluded in 106 C.E. Trajan's victory was a substantial one—he declared over 100 days of official celebrations and the Romans exploited Dacia's natural wealth, while incorporating Dacia as an imperial province.



Figure 13.2.9.108: Denarius (Roman coin), obverse: Trajan in profile; reverse: Dacian seated right on pile of arms, his hands bound behind him, silver, c. 103-11 (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, **CM.BU.240-R**)

After the first Dacian war Trajan earned the honorary epithet "Dacicus Maximus" (greatest Dacian) and a victory monument known as the *Tropaeum Traiani* (Trophy of Trajan) was built at *Civitas Tropaensium* (modern Adamclisi, Romania). Coins issued during Trajan's reign (as in the image above) depicted the defeated Dacia.

Iconography and themes

The iconographic scheme of the column illustrates Trajan's wars in Dacia. The lower half of the column corresponds to the first Dacian War (c. 101-102 C.E.), while the top half depicts the second Dacian War (c. 105-106 C.E.). The first narrative event shows Roman soldiers marching off to Dacia, while the final sequence of events portrays the suicide of the enemy leader, Decebalus, and the mopping up of Dacian prisoners by the Romans.



Figure 13.2.9.109: The crossing of the Roman Army over the Danube River in the first Dacian War (the large figure is a personification of the Danube) (detail), Column of Trajan, dedicated 113 C.E., Rome (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The execution of the frieze is meticulous and the level of detail achieved is astonishing. While the column does not carry applied paint now, many scholars believe the frieze was initially painted. The sculptors took great care to provide settings for the scenes, including natural backgrounds, and mixed perspectival views to offer the maximum level of detail. Sometimes multiple perspectives are evident within a single scene. The overall, unifying theme is that of the Roman military campaigns in Dacia, but the details reveal additional, more subtle narrative threads.

One of the clear themes is the triumph of civilization (represented by the Romans) over its antithesis, the barbarian state (represented here by the Dacians). The Romans are orderly and uniform, the Dacians less so. The Romans are clean shaven, the Dacians are shaggy. The Romans avoid leggings, the Dacians wear leggings (like all good barbarians did—at least those depicted by the Romans).



Figure 13.2.9.110: “Scene from the second Dacian War, the Dacians plan a new offensive and attack a Roman Fort and engage with Roman troops. Many Dacians, however, fall in the wake of a strong Roman counteroffensive,” (detail), Column of Trajan, dedicated 113 C.E., Rome (source for image and caption: **Trajan’s Column Website**, Professor Roger B. Ulrich, Dartmouth College)

Combat scenes are frequent in the frieze. The detailed rendering provides a nearly unparalleled visual resource for studying the iconography of the Roman military, as well as for studying the actual equipment, weapons, and tactics. There is clear ethnic typing as well, as the Roman soldiers cannot be confused for Dacian soldiers, and vice versa.



Figure 13.2.9.111: The Emperor (fourth from the lower right) oversees construction (detail), Column of Trajan, dedicated 113 C.E., (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The viewer also sees the Roman army doing other chores while not fighting. One notable activity is building. In numerous scenes the soldiers may be seen building and fortifying camps. All of the Roman edifices depicted are solid, regular, and well designed—in stark contrast to the humble buildings of the Dacian world. Roman propaganda at work.



Figure **13.2.9.112**: Trajan and his fleet depart for Second Dacian War—Trajan can be seen at the far left (detail), Column of Trajan, dedicated 113 C.E., detail, Column of Trajan, dedicated 113 C.E. (photo: **Peter Reed**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The emperor Trajan figures prominently in the frieze. Each time he appears, his position is commanding and the iconographic focus on his person is made clear. We see Trajan in various scenarios, including addressing his troops (*ad locutio*) and performing sacrifices. The fact that the figures in the scenes are focused on the figure of the emperor helps to draw the viewer's attention to him.

The base of the column eventually served as a tomb for Trajan's ashes. He died while returning from foreign campaigns in 117 C.E. and was granted this unusual honor, in keeping with the estimation of the Roman people who deemed him *optimus princeps* or "the best first citizen".

Specifications of the Column and construction

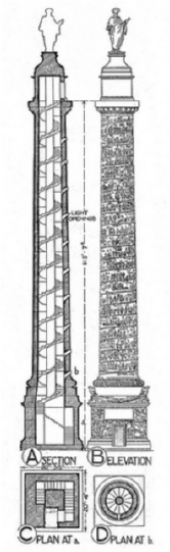


Figure **13.2.9.113**: Column at Trajan, dedicated 113 C.E., plan, elevation, and section

The column itself is made from fine-grained Luna marble and stands to a height of 38.4 meters (c. 98 feet) atop a tall pedestal. The shaft of the column is composed of 19 drums of marble measuring c. 3.7 meters (11 feet) in diameter, weighing a total of c. 1,110 tons. The topmost drum weighs some 53 tons. A spiral staircase of 185 steps leads to the viewing platform atop the column. The helical sculptural frieze measures 190 meters in length (c. 625 feet) and wraps around the column 23 times. A total of 2,662 figures appear in the 155 scenes of the frieze, with Trajan himself featured in 58 scenes.

The construction of the Column of Trajan was a complex exercise of architectural design and engineering. As reconstructed by Lynne Lancaster, the execution of the column itself was an immense engineering challenge that required complex lifting devices and, no doubt, careful planning to execute successfully. Materials had to be acquired and transported to Rome, some across long distances. With the appropriate technology in place, the adept Roman architects could carry out the project. The successful completion of the column demonstrates the complex tasks that Roman architects could successfully complete.

Significance and influence

The Column of Trajan may be contextualized in a long line of Roman victory monuments, some of which honored specific military victories and thus may be termed “triumphal monuments” and others that generally honor a public career and are thus “honorific monuments”. Among the earliest examples of such permanent monuments at Rome is the rostrate column (*column rostrata*) that was erected in honor of a naval victory celebrated by Caius Duilius after the battle of Mylae in 260 B.C.E. (this column does not survive). During the Republican period, a rich tradition of celebratory monuments developed, best known through the *fornices* (honorific arches) and triumphal arches. This tradition was continued in the imperial period, with both triumphal and honorific arches being erected at Rome and in the the provinces.



Figure 13.2.9.114: Gold aureus showing Trajan’s Column, Roman, early 2nd century C.E. (The British Museum)

The idea of the honorific column was carried forward by other victorious leaders—both in the ancient and modern eras. In the Roman world immediate, derivative monuments that draw inspiration from the Column of Trajan include the Column of Marcus Aurelius (c. 193 C.E.) in Rome’s Piazza Colonna, as well as monuments like the now-lost Column of Arcadius (c. 401 C.E.) and the Column of Justinian at Constantinople (c. 543 C.E.). The idea of the narrative frieze applied to the Column of Trajan proved influential in these other instances.



Figure 13.2.9.115: Aegidius Sadeler, view of the column of Trajan, shown with its pedestal dug out from the earth, surrounded by buildings at the base of the Quirinal Hill, Rome, from the series “Ruins of the antiquity of Rome, Tivoli, Pozzuoli, and other places,” 1606, etching and engraving, plate 31 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Honorific or triumphal columns inspired by that of Trajan were also created in honor of more recent victories. The column honoring Admiral Horatio Nelson in London’s Trafalgar Square (c. 1843) draws on the Roman tradition that included the Column of Trajan along with earlier, Republican monuments like the columna rostrata of Caius Duilius. The column dedicated to Napoleon I erected in the Place Vendôme in Paris (c. 1810) and the Washington Monument of Baltimore, Maryland (1829) both were directly inspired by the Column of Trajan.

Additional Resources:

Trajan’s Column in Rome, from Prof. R. Ulrich, Dartmouth College

Stoa.org – Column of Trajan

National Geographic Society – Column of Trajan

Wikimedia Commons – Cichorius Plates

M. Beckmann, "The "Columnae Coc(h)lides" of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius," *Phoenix* 56.3/4 (Autumn – Winter, 2002) pp. 348-357.

F. Coarelli et al., *The Column of Trajan* (Rome: German Archaeological Institute, 2000).

A. Curry, "A War Diary Soars Over Rome," *National Geographic* (2015)

G. A. T. Davies, "Topography and the Trajan Column." *Journal of Roman Studies* 10 (1920), pp. 1-28.

G. A. T. Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," *Journal of Roman Studies* 7 (1917), pp. 74-97.

P. Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," *American Journal of Archaeology* 101.1 (1997), pp. 41-65.

M. Henig, ed., *Architecture and Architectural Sculpture in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology : Distributed by Oxbow Books, 1990).

T. Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art*, translated by A. Snodgrass and Annemarie Künzl-Snodgrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

N. Kampen, "Looking at Gender: The Column of Trajan and Roman Historical Relief," in Domna Stanton and Abigail Stewart, eds. *Feminisms in the Academy* (Ann Arbor 1995), pp. 46-73.

G. M. Koeppel, "Official State Reliefs of the City of Rome in the Imperial Age. A Bibliography," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II,12,1 (1982), pp. 477-506.

G. M. Koeppel, "Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit VIII, Der Fries der Trajanssäule in Rom, Teil 1: Der Erste Dakische Krieg, Szenen I-LXXVIII," *Bonner Jahrbücher* (1991) 191, pp. 135-197.

G. M. Koeppel, "Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit IX, Der Fries der Trajanssäule in Rom, Teil 2: Der Zweite Dakische Krieg, Szenen LXXXIX-CLV," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 192 (1992), pp. 61-121.

G. M. Koeppel, "The Column of Trajan: Narrative Technique and the Image of the Emperor," in *Sage and emperor: Plutarch, Greek intellectuals, and Roman power in the time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.)*, edited by Philip A. Stadter and Luc Van der Stockt (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), pp. 245-258.

Lynne Lancaster, "Building Trajan's Column," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 103.3 (Jul., 1999) pp. 419-439.

E. La Rocca, "Templum Traiani et columna cochlis," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Römische Abteilung* 111 (2004), pp. 193-238.

F. Lepper and S. Frere, *Trajan's Column: A New Edition of the Cichorius Plates* (Gloucester U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1988).

S. Maffei, 1995. "Forum Traiani: Columna," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, vol. 2, edited by E.M. Steinby (Rome: Quasar, 1995), pp. 356-9.

C. G. Malacrino, "Immagini e narrazioni. La Colonna Traiana e le sue scene di cantiere," in *Storia e narrazione. Retorica, memoria, immagini* edited by G. Guidarelli and C.G. Malacrino (Milan: B. Mondadori, 2005), pp. 101-34.

A. Mau, "Die Inschrift der Trajanssäule," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, Römische Abteilung 22 (1907), pp. 187-97. [accessible via Google Books].

J. E. Packer, "Trajan's Forum again: the Column and the Temple of Trajan in the master plan attributed at Apollodorus (?)," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 7 (1994), pp. 163-82.

I. A. Richmond and M. Hassall, *Trajan's Army on Trajan's Column* (London : British School at Rome, 1982).

L. Rossi and J.M.C. Toynbee, *Trajan's Column and the Dacian Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

E. Togo Salmon, "Trajan's Conquest of Dacia," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 67 (1936), pp. 83-105.

S. Settis et al., *La Colonna Traiana* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1988).

H. Stuart-Jones, "The Historical Interpretation of the Reliefs of Trajan's Column," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 5 (1910), pp. 433-59.

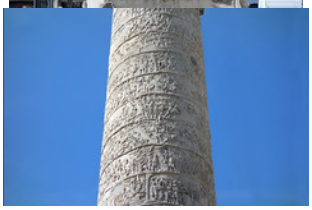
E. Wolfram Thill, "Civilization under Construction: Depictions of Architecture on the Column of Trajan," *American Journal of Archaeology* 114.1 (Jan., 2010), pp. 27-43.

M. Wilson Jones, “One Hundred Feet and a Spiral Stair: Designing Trajan’s Column,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 6 (1993) 23-38.

M. Wilson Jones, “Trajan’s Column,” chapter 8 in *Principles of Roman Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) pp. 161-176.

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88680









Figure 13.2.9.116: More SmartHistory images…

13.2.9: Ancient Rome II is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.9: Ancient Rome II** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.2.10: Ancient Rome III

Middle Empire

By the time of the emperor Trajan, the Roman empire encompassed the whole of the Mediterranean, Britain, much of northern and central Europe and the Near East.

117 - 235 C.E.

The Pantheon (Rome)

by DR. PAUL A. RANOGAJEC

The Pantheon has one of the most perfect interior spaces ever constructed—and it's been copied ever since.



Video **13.2.10.1**: The Pantheon, Rome, c. 125

The eighth wonder of the ancient world

The Pantheon in Rome is a true architectural wonder. Described as the "sphinx of the Campus Martius"—referring to enigmas presented by its appearance and history, and to the location in Rome where it was built—to visit it today is to be almost transported back to the Roman Empire itself. The Roman Pantheon probably doesn't make popular shortlists of the world's architectural icons, but it should: it is one of the most imitated buildings in history. For a good example, look at **the library Thomas Jefferson designed** for the University of Virginia.



Figure **13.2.10.1**: The Pantheon, Rome, c. 125

While the Pantheon's importance is undeniable, there is a lot that is unknown. With new evidence and fresh interpretations coming to light in recent years, questions once thought settled have been reopened. Most textbooks and websites confidently date the building to the Emperor Hadrian's reign and describe its purpose as a temple to all the gods (from the Greek, pan = all, theos = gods), but some scholars now argue that these details are wrong and that our knowledge of other aspects of the building's origin, construction, and meaning is less certain than we had thought.

Whose Pantheon?—the problem of the inscription

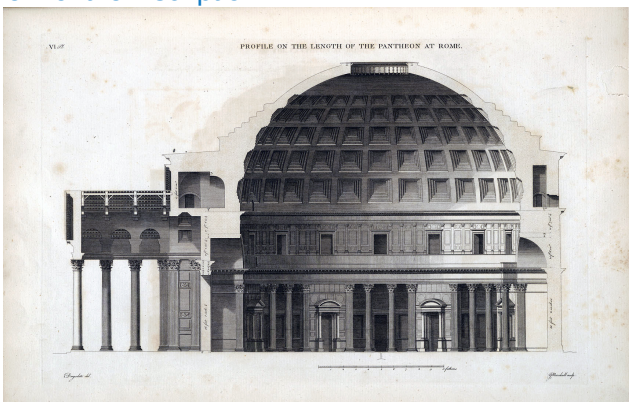


Figure 13.2.10.2: Pantheon Elevation

Archaeologists and art historians value inscriptions on ancient monuments because these can provide information about patronage, dating, and purpose that is otherwise difficult to come by. In the case of the Pantheon, however, the inscription on the frieze—in raised bronze letters (modern replacements)—easily deceives, as it did for many centuries. It identifies, in abbreviated Latin, the Roman general and consul (the highest elected official of the Roman Republic) Marcus Agrippa (who lived in the first century B.C.E.) as the patron: "M[arcus] Agrippa L[ucii] F[ilius] Co[n]s[ul] Tertium Fecit" ("Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, thrice Consul, built this"). The inscription was taken at face value until 1892, when a well-documented interpretation of stamped bricks found in and around the building showed that the Pantheon standing today was a rebuilding of an earlier structure, and that it was a product of Emperor Hadrian's (who ruled from 117-138 C.E.) patronage, built between about 118 and 128. Thus, Agrippa could not have been the patron of the present building. Why, then, is his name so prominent?

The conventional understanding of the Pantheon

A traditional rectangular temple, first built by Agrippa

The conventional understanding of the Pantheon's genesis, which held from 1892 until very recently, goes something like this. Agrippa built the original Pantheon in honor of his and Augustus' military victory at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.—one of the defining moments in the establishment of the Roman Empire (Augustus would go on to become the first Emperor of Rome). It was thought that Agrippa's Pantheon had been small and conventional: a Greek-style temple, rectangular in plan. Written sources suggest the building was damaged by fire around 80 C.E. and restored to some unknown extent under the orders of Emperor Domitian (who ruled 81-96 C.E.).



Figure 13.2.10.3: The Pantheon, Rome, c. 125 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

When the building was more substantially damaged by fire again in 110 C.E., the Emperor Trajan decided to rebuild it, but only partial groundwork was carried out before his death. Trajan's successor, Hadrian—a great patron of architecture and revered as one of the most effective Roman emperors—conceived and possibly even designed the new building with the help of dedicated architects. It was to be a triumphant display of his will and beneficence. He was thought to have abandoned the idea of simply reconstructing Agrippa's temple, deciding instead to create a much larger and more impressive structure. And, in an act of pious humility meant to put him in the favor of the gods and to honor his illustrious predecessors, Hadrian installed the false inscription attributing the new building to the long-dead Agrippa.

New evidence—Agrippa's temple was not rectangular at all

Today, we know that many parts of this story are either unlikely or demonstrably false. It is now clear from archaeological studies that Agrippa's original building was not a small rectangular temple, but contained the distinctive hallmarks of the current building: a portico with tall columns and pediment and a rotunda (circular hall) behind it, in similar dimensions to the current building.

And the temple may be Trajan's (not Hadrian's)

More startling, a reconsideration of the evidence of the bricks used in the building's construction—some of which were stamped with identifying marks that can be used to establish the date of manufacture—shows that almost all of them date from the 110s, during the time of Trajan. Instead of the great triumph of Hadrianic design, the Pantheon should more rightly be seen as the final architectural glory of the Emperor Trajan's reign: substantially designed and rebuilt beginning around 114, with some preparatory work on the building site perhaps starting right after the fire of 110, and finished under Hadrian sometime between 125 and 128.



Figure 13.2.10.4: Giovanni Paolo Panini, Interior of the Pantheon, Rome. c. 1734, oil on canvas, 128 x 99 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Lise Hetland, the archaeologist who first made this argument in 2007 (building on an earlier attribution to Trajan by Wolf-Dieter Heilmeyer), writes that the long-standing effort to make the physical evidence fit a dating entirely within Hadrian's time shows "the illogicality of the sometimes almost surgically clear-cut presentation of Roman buildings according to the sequence of emperors." The case of the Pantheon confirms a general art-historical lesson: style categories and historical periodizations (in other words, our understanding of the style of architecture during a particular emperor's reign) should be seen as conveniences—subordinate to the priority of evidence.

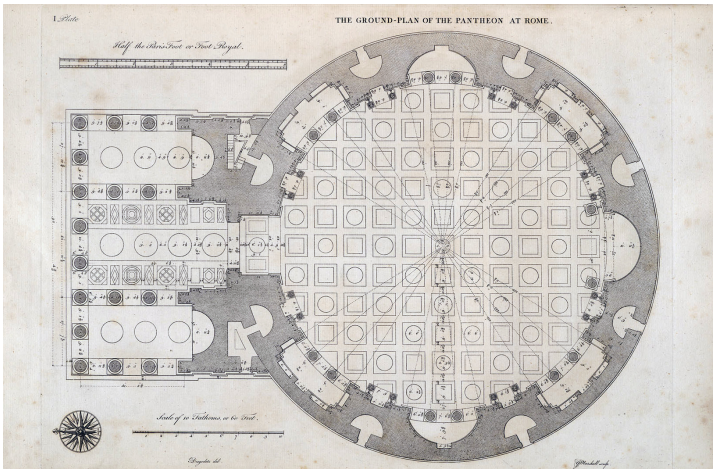


Figure 13.2.10.5: Pantheon Plan

What was it—a temple? A dynastic sanctuary?

It is now an open question whether the building was ever a temple to all the gods, as its traditional name has long suggested to interpreters. Pantheon, or *Pantheum* in Latin, was more of a nickname than a formal title. One of the major written sources about the building's origin is the *Roman History* by Cassius Dio, a late second- to early third-century historian who was twice Roman consul. His account, written a century after the Pantheon was completed, must be taken skeptically. However, he provides important evidence about the building's purpose. He wrote,

He [Agrippa] completed the building called the Pantheon. It has this name, perhaps because it received among the images which decorated it the statues of many gods, including Mars and Venus; but my own opinion of the name is that, because of its vaulted roof, it resembles the heavens. Agrippa, for his part, wished to place a statue of Augustus there also and to bestow upon him the honor of having the structure named after him; but when Augustus wouldn't accept either honor, he [Agrippa] placed in the temple itself a statue of the former [Julius] Caesar and in the ante-room statues of Augustus and himself. This was done not out of any rivalry or ambition on Agrippa's part to make himself equal to Augustus, but from his hearty loyalty to him and his constant zeal for the public good.

A number of scholars have now suggested that the original Pantheon was not a temple in the usual sense of a god's dwelling place. Instead, it may have been intended as a dynastic sanctuary, part of a ruler cult emerging around Augustus, with the original dedication being to Julius Caesar, the progenitor of the family line of Augustus and Agrippa and a revered ancestor who had been the first Roman deified by the Senate. Adding to the plausibility of this view is the fact that the site had sacred associations—tradition stating that it was the location of the apotheosis, or raising up to the heavens, of Romulus, Rome's mythic founder. Even more, the Pantheon was also aligned on axis, across a long stretch of open fields called the Campus Martius, with Augustus' mausoleum, completed just a few years before the Pantheon. Agrippa's building, then, was redolent with suggestions of the alliance of the gods and the rulers of Rome during a time when new religious ideas about ruler cults were taking shape.



Figure 13.2.10.6: Reconstruction by the Institute for Digital Media Arts Lab at Ball State University, interior of the Pantheon, Rome, c. 125 C.E. (Project Director: John Filwalk, Project Advisors: Dr. Robert Hannah and Dr. Bernard Frischer)

The dome and the divine authority of the emperors

By the fourth century C.E., when the historian Ammianus Marcellinus mentioned the Pantheon in his history of imperial Rome, statues of the Roman emperors occupied the rotunda's niches. In Agrippa's Pantheon these spaces had been filled by statues of the gods. We also know that Hadrian held court in the Pantheon. Whatever its original purposes, the Pantheon by the time of Trajan and Hadrian was primarily associated with the power of the emperors and their divine authority.



Figure **13.2.10.7**: Pantheon dome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The symbolism of the great dome adds weight to this interpretation. The dome's coffers (inset panels) are divided into 28 sections, equaling the number of large columns below. 28 is a "perfect number," a whole number whose summed factors equal it (thus, 1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14 = 28). Only four perfect numbers were known in antiquity (6, 28, 496, and 8128) and they were sometimes held—for instance, by Pythagoras and his followers—to have mystical, religious meaning in connection with the cosmos. Additionally, the oculus (open window) at the top of the dome was the interior's only source of direct light. The sunbeam streaming through the oculus traced an ever-changing daily path across the wall and floor of the rotunda. Perhaps, then, the sunbeam marked solar and lunar events, or simply time. The idea fits nicely with Dio's understanding of the dome as the canopy of the heavens and, by extension, of the rotunda itself as a microcosm of the Roman world beneath the starry heavens, with the emperor presiding over it all, ensuring the right order of the world.

How was it designed and built?



Figure **13.2.10.8**: The Pantheon, Rome, c. 125 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Pantheon's basic design is simple and powerful. A portico with free-standing columns is attached to a domed rotunda. In between, to help transition between the rectilinear portico and the round rotunda is an element generally described in English as the intermediate block. This piece is itself interesting for the fact that visible on its face above the portico's pediment is another shallow pediment. This may be evidence that the portico was intended to be taller than it is (50 Roman feet instead of the actual 40 feet). Perhaps the taller columns, presumably ordered from a quarry in Egypt, never made it to the building site (for reasons unknown), necessitating the substitution of smaller columns, thus reducing the height of the portico.



Figure 13.2.10.8: Pantheon, Rome, c. 125 C.E. (photo: Darren Puttock, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Pantheon's great interior spectacle—its enormous scale, the geometric clarity of the circle-in-square pavement pattern and the dome's half-sphere, and the moving disc of light—is all the more breathtaking for the way one moves from the bustling square (piazza, in Italian) outside into the grandeur inside.

One approaches the Pantheon through the portico with its tall, monolithic Corinthian columns of Egyptian granite. Originally, the approach would have been framed and directed by the long walls of a courtyard or forecourt in front of the building, and a set of stairs, now submerged under the piazza, leading up to the portico. Walking beneath the giant columns, the outside light starts to dim. As you pass through the enormous portal with its bronze doors, you enter the rotunda, where your eyes are swept up toward the oculus.



Figure 13.2.10.9: Reconstruction by the Institute for Digital Media Arts Lab at Ball State University, exterior of the Pantheon, Rome, c. 125 C.E. (Project Director: John Filwalk, Project Advisors: Dr. Robert Hannah and Dr. Bernard Frischer)

The structure itself is an important example of advanced Roman engineering. Its walls are made from brick-faced concrete—an innovation widely used in Rome's major buildings and infrastructure, such as aqueducts—and are lightened with relieving arches and vaults built into the wall mass. The concrete easily allowed for spaces to be carved out of the wall's thickness—for instance, the alcoves around the rotunda's perimeter and the large apse directly across from the entrance (where Hadrian would have sat to hold court). Further, the concrete of the dome is graded into six layers with a mixture of scoria, a low-density, lightweight volcanic rock, at the top. From top to bottom, the structure of the Pantheon was fine-tuned to be structurally efficient and to allow flexibility of design.

Who designed the Pantheon?



Figure **13.2.10.10**: Pantheon, Rome, c. 125 C.E. (photo: **Peter**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

We do not know who designed the Pantheon, but Apollodorus of Damascus, Trajan's favorite builder, is a likely candidate—or, perhaps, someone closely associated with Apollodorus. He had designed Trajan's Forum and at least two other major projects in Rome, probably making him the person in the capital city with the deepest knowledge about complex architecture and engineering in the 110s. On that basis, and with some stylistic and design similarities between the Pantheon and his known projects, Apollodorus' authorship of the building is a significant possibility.

When it was believed that Hadrian had fully overseen the Pantheon's design, doubt was cast on the possibility of Apollodorus' role because, according to Dio, Hadrian had banished and then executed the architect for having spoken ill of the emperor's talents. Many historians now doubt Dio's account. Although the evidence is circumstantial, a number of obstacles to Apollodorus' authorship have been removed by the recent developments in our understanding of the Pantheon's genesis. In the end, however, we cannot say for certain who designed the Pantheon.

Why Has It Survived?

We know very little about what happened to the Pantheon between the time of Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century and the early seventh century—a period when the city of Rome's importance faded and the Roman Empire disintegrated. This was presumably the time when much of the Pantheon's surroundings—the forecourt and all adjacent buildings—fell into serious disrepair and were demolished and replaced. How and why the Pantheon emerged from those difficult centuries is hard to say. The *Liber Pontificalis*—a medieval manuscript containing not-always-reliable biographies of the popes—tells us that in the 7th century Pope Boniface IV "asked the [Byzantine] emperor Phocas for the temple called the Pantheon, and in it he made the church of the ever-virgin Holy Mary and all the martyrs." There is continuing debate about when the Christian consecration of the Pantheon happened; today, the balance of evidence points to May 13, 613. In later centuries, the building was known as Sanctae Mariae Rotundae (Saint Mary of the Rotunda). Whatever the precise date of its consecration, the fact that the Pantheon became a church—specifically, a station church, where the pope would hold special masses during Lent, the period leading up to Easter—meant that it was in continuous use, ensuring its survival.



Figure **13.2.10.11**: Sanctae Mariae Rotundae (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Yet, like other ancient remains in Rome, the Pantheon was for centuries a source of materials for new buildings and other purposes—including the making of cannons and weapons. In addition to the loss of original finishings, sculpture, and all of its bronze elements, many other changes were made to the building from the fourth century to today. Among the most important: the three easternmost columns of the portico were replaced in the seventeenth century after having been damaged and braced by a brick wall centuries earlier; doors and steps leading down into the portico were erected after the grade of the surrounding piazza had risen over time; inside the rotunda, columns made from imperial red porphyry—a rare, expensive stone from Egypt—were replaced with granite versions; and roof tiles and other elements were periodically removed or replaced. Despite all the losses and alterations, and all the unanswered and difficult questions, the Pantheon is an unrivalled artifact of Roman antiquity.

Additional Resources:

Mary T. Boatwright, "Hadrian and the Agrippa Inscription of the Pantheon," in *Hadrian: Art, Politics and Economy*, edited by Thorsten Opper (London: British Museum, 2013), pp. 19-30.

Paul Godfrey and David Hemsoll. "The Pantheon: Temple or Rotunda?" in *Pagan Gods and Shrines of the Roman Empire*, edited by Martin Henig and Anthony King (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1986), pp. 195-209.

Gerd Graßhoff, Michael Heinzelmann, and Markus Wäfler, editors, T*he Pantheon in Rome: Contributions* (Bern: Bern Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science, 2009)

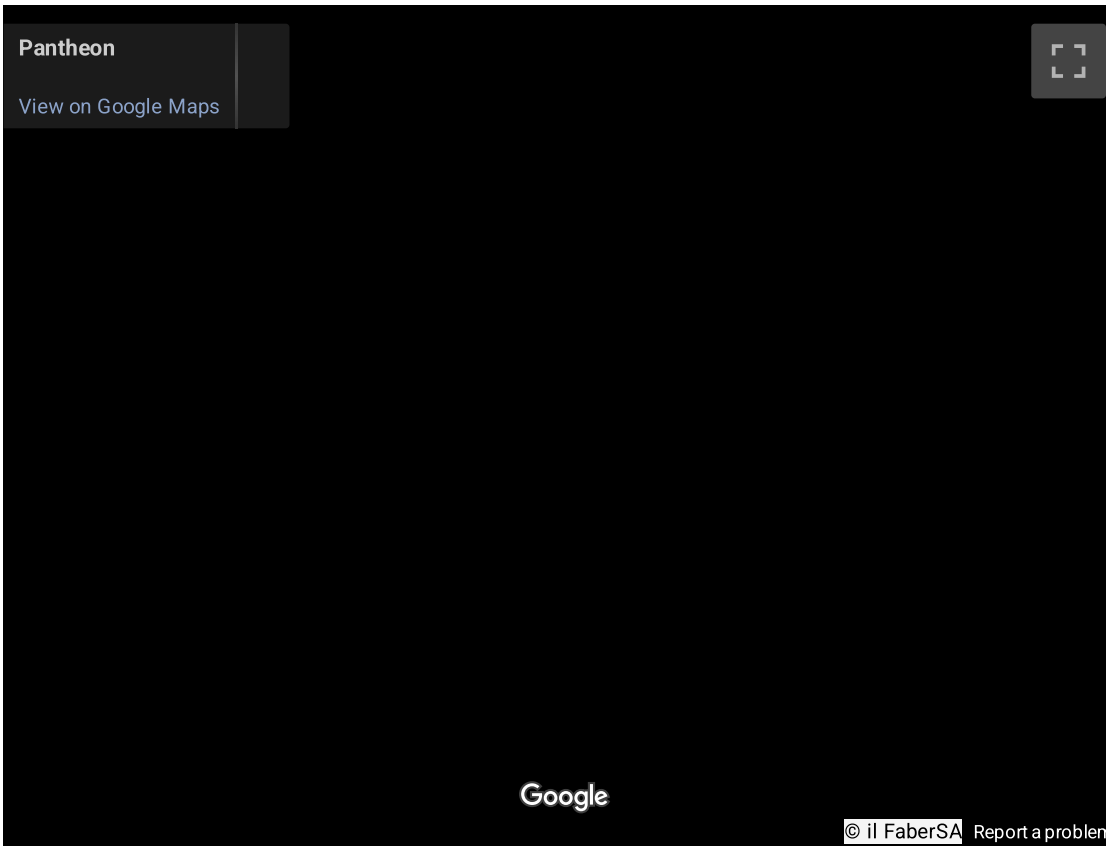
Robert Hannah and Giulio Magli. "The Role of the Sun in the Pantheon's Design and Meaning," *Numen* 58 (2011), pp. 486-513.

Lise M. Hetland, "Dating the Pantheon," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 20 (2007), pp. 95-112.

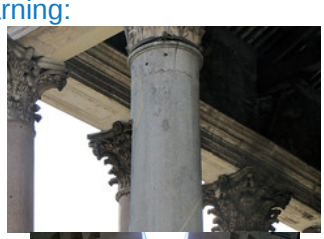
Mark Wilson Jones, *Principles of Roman Architecture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000)

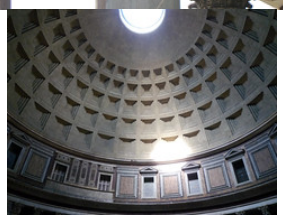
Tod A Marder and Mark Wilson Jones, editors, *The Pantheon from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Gene Waddell, Creating the Pantheon: Design, Materials, and Construction (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2008)


Pantheon
View on Google Maps
Google
© il FaberSA
Report a problem

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88681

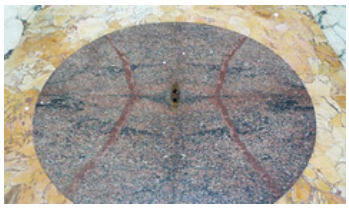






Figure 13.2.10.12: More SmartHistory images…

Bronze head from a statue of the Emperor Hadrian

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.2.10.13**: *Bronze head from a statue of the Emperor Hadrian*, 2nd century C.E., bronze, 43 cm high, Roman Britain © Trustees of the British Museum

Hadrian (reigned 117-138 C.E.), once a tribune (staff officer) in three different legions of the Roman army and commander of a legion in one of Trajan's wars, was often shown in military uniform. He was clearly keen to project the image of an ever-ready soldier, but other conclusions have been drawn from his surviving statues.

Fixing the Empire's borders

When Hadrian inherited the Roman Empire, his predecessor, Trajan's military campaigns had over-stretched it. Rebellions against Roman rule raged in several provinces and the empire was in serious danger. He ruthlessly put down rebellions and strengthened his borders. He built defensive barriers in Germany and Northern Africa.

Rome's first emperor, Augustus (reigned 27 B.C.E.– 14 C.E.), had also suffered severe military setbacks, and took the decision to stop expanding the empire. In Hadrian's early reign Augustus was an important role model. He had a portrait of him on his signet ring and kept a small bronze bust of him among the images of the household gods in his bedroom.

Like Augustus before him, Hadrian began to fix the limits of the territory that Rome could control. He withdrew his army from Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq, where a serious insurgency had broken out, and abandoned the newly conquered provinces of Armenia and Assyria, as well as other parts of the empire.

Hadrian's travels

Hadrian is also famous as the emperor who built the eighty-mile-long wall across Britain, from the Solway Firth to the River Tyne at Wallsend: "to separate the barbarians from the Romans" in the words of his biographer. This head comes from a statue of Hadrian that probably stood in Roman London in a public space such as a forum. It would have been one and a quarter times life-size.

This statue may have been put up to commemorate Hadrian's visit to Britain in 122 C.E.; Hadrian travelled very extensively throughout the Empire, and imperial visits generally gave rise to program of rebuilding and beautification of cities. There are many known marble statues of him, but this example made in bronze is a rare survival.

Born in Rome but of Spanish descent, Hadrian was adopted by the emperor Trajan as his successor. Having served with distinction on the Danube and as governor of Syria, Hadrian never lost his fascination with the empire and its frontiers.

At Tivoli, to the east of Rome, he built an enormous palace, a microcosm of all the different places he had visited. He was an enthusiastic public builder, and perhaps his most celebrated building is the Pantheon, the best preserved Roman building in the world. Hadrian's Wall is a good example of his devotion to Rome's frontiers and the boundaries he established were retained for nearly three hundred years.

A lover of culture

Hadrian was the first Roman emperor to wear a full beard. This has usually been seen as a mark of his devotion to Greece and Greek culture.

Hadrian openly displayed his love of Greek culture. Some of the senate scornfully referred to him as Graeculus ("the Greekling"). Beards had been a marker of Greek identity since classical times, whereas a clean-shaven look was considered more Roman. However, in the decades before Hadrian became emperor, beards had come to be worn by wealthy young Romans and seem to have been particularly prevalent in the military. Furthermore, one literary source, the Historia Augusta, claims that Hadrian wore a beard to hide blemishes on his face.

Hadrian fell seriously ill, perhaps with a form of dropsy (swelling caused by excess fluid), and retired to the seaside resort of Baiae on the bay of Naples, where he died in 138 C.E.

The image of the Roman Emperor



Figure **13.2.10.14**: *Torso of a statue of the emperor Hadrian wearing a cuirass*, c. 130-141 C.E., 137 cm high, from Cyrene, northern Africa © Trustees of the British Museum. In this statue we see Hadrian presented as the commander-in-chief. We know from ancient literary sources that Hadrian was particularly keen to project a strong military image.

The cult of the Emperor combined religious and political elements and was a vital factor in Roman military and civil administration. Deceased rulers were often deified, and though the living Emperor, who was the state's chief priest, was not himself worshipped as a god, his "numen," the spirit of his power and authority, was.

The image of the ruler and information about his achievements was spread primarily through coinage. In addition, statues and busts, in stone and bronze and occasionally even precious metal, were placed in a variety of official and public settings. They varied in size: colossal, life-size and smaller. Such images symbolized the power of the state and the essential unity of the Empire.

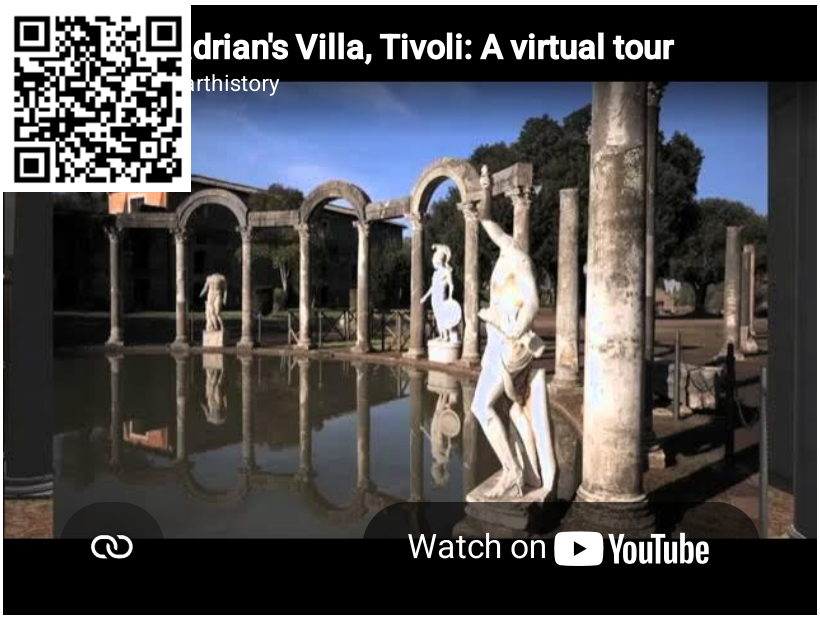
As well as the political importance of representations of the Emperor, his physical appearance and that of his consort and family were familiar to people throughout the Empire. This influenced fashion and such representations can assist the modern archaeologist and art-historian. For example, beards became fashionable after the accession of Hadrian, and the hairstyles of Empresses and other Imperial women may be seen in private portraiture and decorative art, even in remote provinces such as Britain.

© Trustees of the British Museum

A virtual tour of Hadrian's Villa

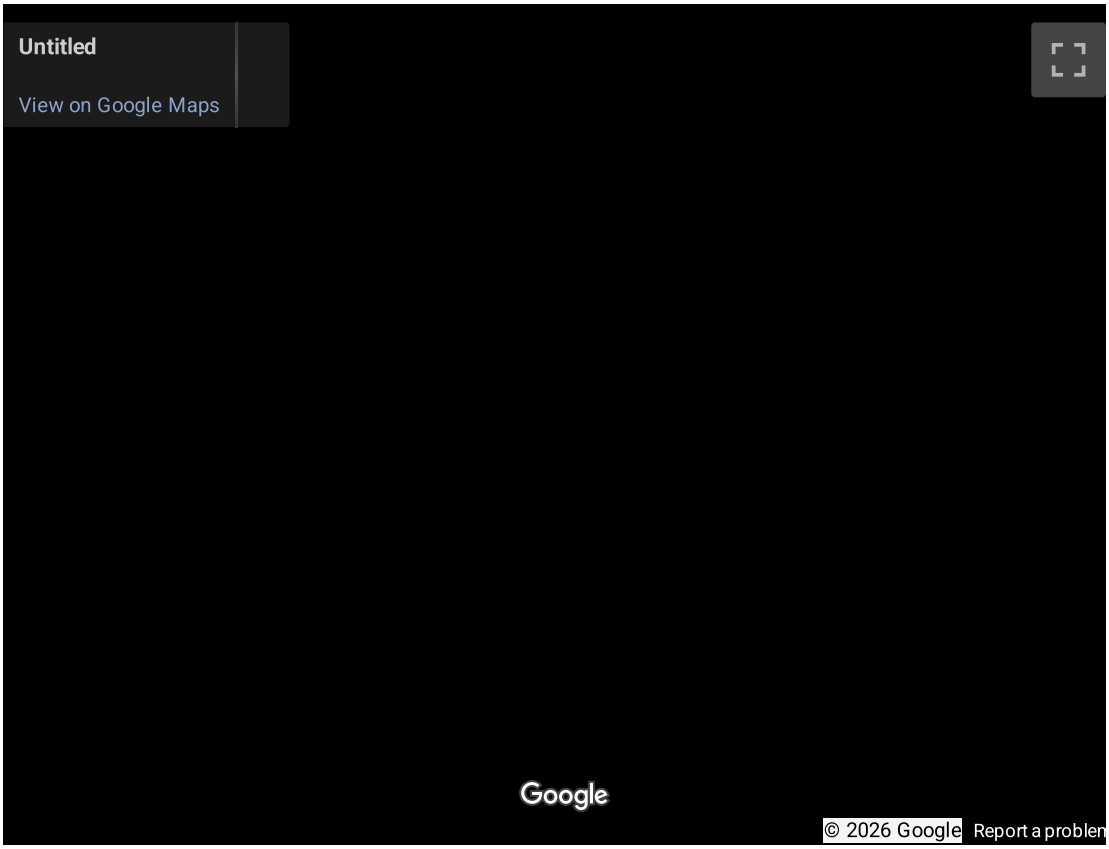
by DR. BERNARD FRISCHER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Explore Hadrian's Villa in 3D and learn about Hadrian from the emperor himself.



Video 13.2.10.2: A virtual tour of Hadrian's Villa using a 3D digital model of the villa created under the direction of Dr. Bernard Frischer.

The ruins of Hadrian's Villa, in the town of Tivoli, near Rome, is spread over an area of approximately 250 acres. Many of the structures were designed by the Emperor Hadrian, who ruled from 117 until his death in 138 C.E. This virtual rendering is based on current archeological research and has been created in consultation with art historians, archaeologists, and museum curators with expertise in this area. Please note that a few features are necessarily assumptions based on the best available evidence.



SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

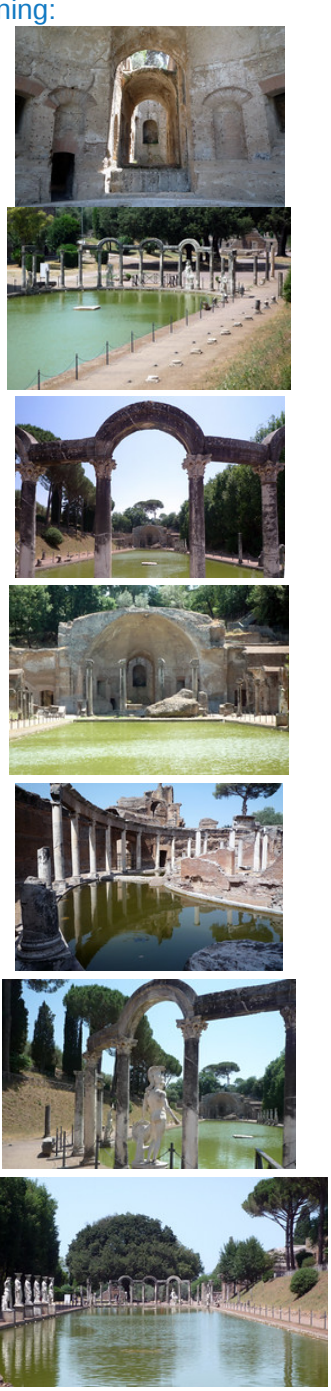


Figure **13.2.10.15**: More SmartHistory images…

Hadrian: The imperial palace, Tivoli

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The Empire in miniature, see how Hadrian's Villa served as a space for both business and pleasure.



Video **13.2.10.3**: Video from The British Museum.

Maritime Theatre at Hadrian's Villa

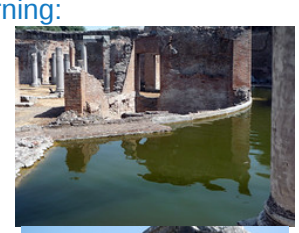
by DR. BERNARD FRISCHER and DR. BETH HARRIS

A lavish Roman house in miniature, explore the innermost sanctum of the emperor Hadrian's villa.



Video **13.2.10.4**: Maritime Theatre at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, Villa begun in 117 C.E

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



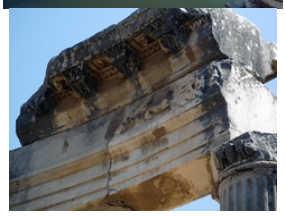
















Figure 13.2.10.16: More SmartHistory images…

Rome's layered history — the Castel Sant'Angelo

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.2.10.5: A conversation with Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris at the Castel Sant'Angelo (Mausoleum of Hadrian), 139 C.E., Rome

Pair of Centaurs Fighting Cats of Prey from Hadrian's Villa

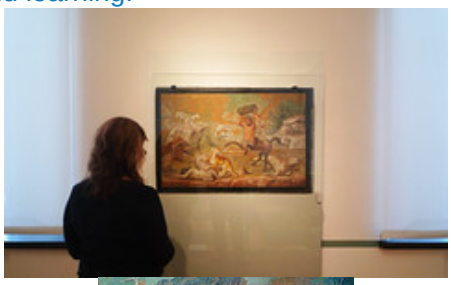
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Discover the drama of this split second in time, as a centaur flights big cats for his life.



Video 13.2.10.6: *Pair of Centaurs Fighting Cats of Prey* from Hadrian's Villa, mosaic, c. 130 C.E. (Altes Museum, Berlin)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:







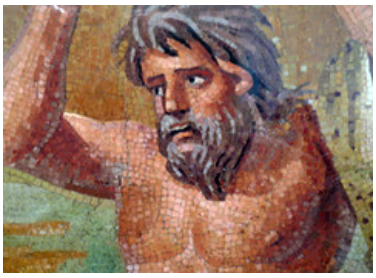








Figure 13.2.10.17: More SmartHistory images…

Hadrian: Building the wall

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

At the remotest point of the Roman Empire, Hadrian erected this fortification—a symbol of control and dominance.



Video 13.2.10.7: Video from The British Museum.

Medea Sarcophagus

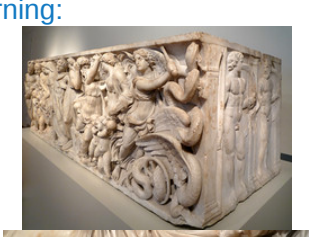
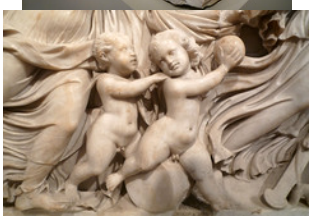
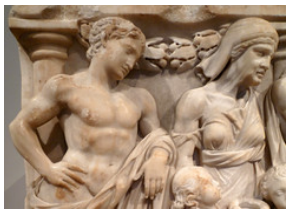
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

One of the great myths of jealousy and revenge is carved into this sarcophagus. But why put this story on a coffin?



Video 13.2.10.8: *Medea Sarcophagus*, 140 – 150 C.E., marble, 65 x 227 cm (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:





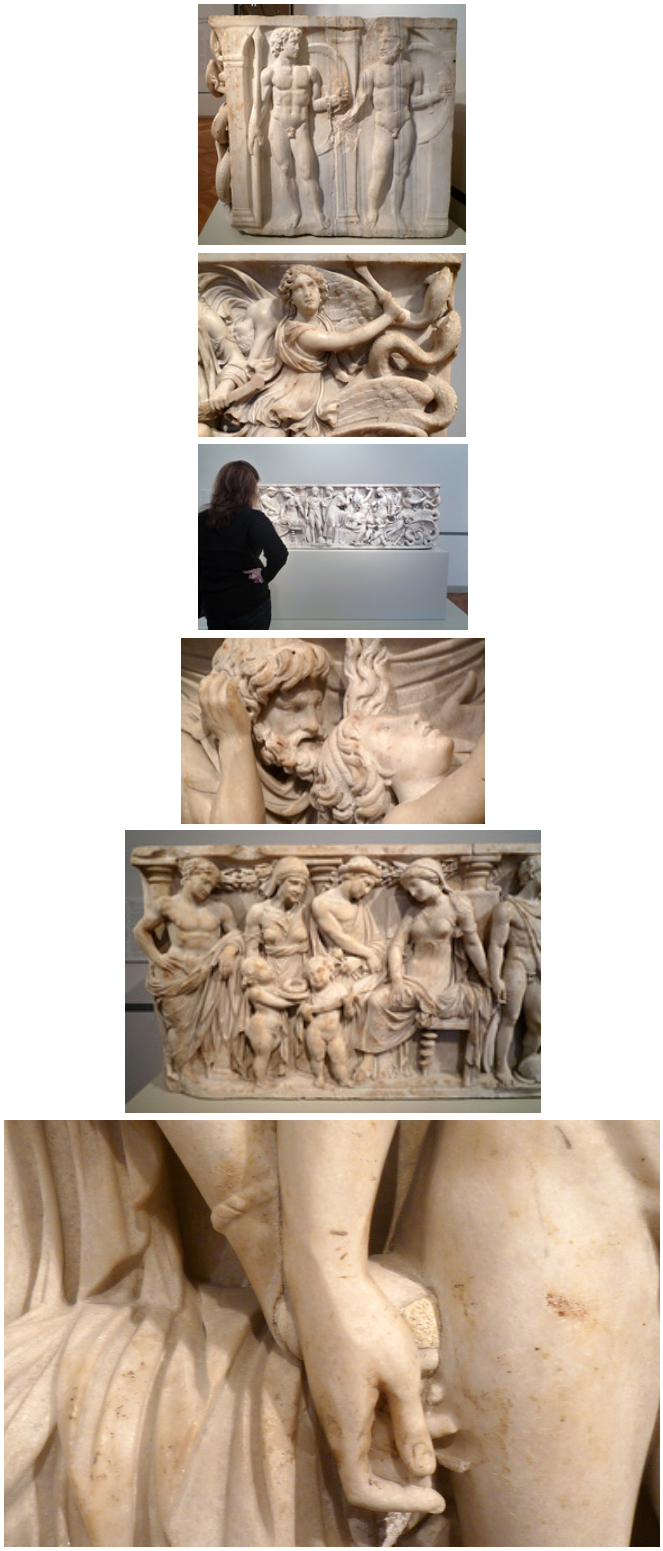



Figure 13.2.10.18: More SmartHistory images…

Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

Due to a fortunate case of mistaken identity, this commanding statue was saved from destruction.



The original location of the sculpture is unknown, though it had been housed in the Lateran Palace since the 8th century until it was placed in the center of the Piazza del Campidoglio by Michelangelo in 1538. The original is now indoors for purposes of conservation. Marcus Aurelius ruled 161-180 C.E.

In ancient Rome equestrian statues of emperors would not have been uncommon sights in the city—late antique sources suggest that at least 22 of these “great horses” (*equi magni*) were to be seen—as they were official devices for honoring the emperor for singular military and civic achievements. The statues themselves were, in turn, copied in other media, including coins, for even wider distribution.



Figure **13.2.10.19**: Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, c. 173-76 C.E. gilded bronze (Capitoline Museums, Rome). The original location of the sculpture is unknown. Beginning in the 8th century, it was located near the Lateran Palace, until it was placed in the center of the Piazza del Campidoglio in 1538 by Michelangelo. The original statue is now indoors for purposes of conservation (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Few examples of these equestrian statues survive from antiquity, however, making the *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* a singular artifact of Roman antiquity, one that has borne quiet witness to the ebb and flow of the city of Rome for nearly 1,900 years. A gilded bronze monument of the 170s C.E. that was originally dedicated to the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, referred to commonly as Marcus Aurelius (reigned 161-180 C.E.), the statue is an important object not only for the study of official Roman portraiture, but also for

the consideration of monumental dedications. Further, the use of the statue in the Medieval, Renaissance, modern, and post-modern city of Rome has important implications for the connectivity that exists between the past and the present.



Figure 13.2.10.20: Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius, c. 173-76 C.E., bronze (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Description

The statue is an over life-size depiction of the emperor elegantly mounted atop his horse while participating in a public ritual or ceremony; the statue stands approximately 4.24 meters tall. A gilded bronze statue, the piece was originally cast using the lost-wax technique, with horse and rider cast in multiple pieces and then soldered together after casting.

The horse

The emperor's horse is a magnificent example of dynamism captured in the sculptural medium. The horse, caught in motion, raises its right foreleg at the knee while planting its left foreleg on the ground, its motion checked by the application of reins, which the emperor originally held in his left hand. The horse's body—in particular its musculature—has been modeled very carefully by the artist, resulting in a powerful rendering. In keeping with the motion of the horse's body, its head turns to its right, with its mouth opened slightly. The horse wears a harness, some elements of which have not survived. The horse is saddled with a Persian-style saddlecloth of several layers, as opposed to a rigid saddle. It should be noted that the horse is an important and expressive element of the overall composition.

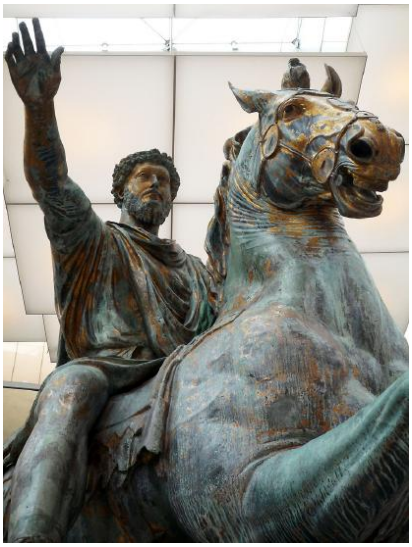


Figure **13.2.10.21**: Horse and rider (detail), Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius, c. 173-76 C.E., bronze (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The horseman sits astride the steed, with his left hand guiding the reins and his right arm raised to shoulder level, the hand outstretched.

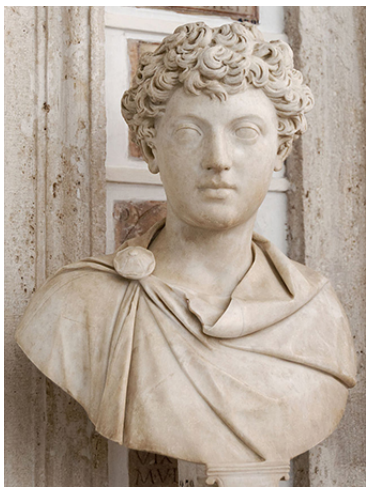


Figure **13.2.10.22**: *Marcus Aurelius*, type I portrait, ca. 140 C.E. (Capitoline Museums, Rome)

There are approximately 110 known portraits of Marcus Aurelius and these have been grouped into four typological groupings. The first two types belong to the emperor's youth, before he assumed the duties of the principate.

In the Roman world it was standard practice to create official portrait types of high-ranking officials, such as emperors that would then circulate in various media, notably sculpture in the round and coin portraits. These portrait types are vital in several respects, especially for determining the chronology of monuments and coins, since the portrait types can usually be placed in a fairly accurate and legible chronological order.

The interpretation of these portraits relies on various key elements, especially the reading of hairstyle and the examination of facial physiognomy. In the case of the equestrian statue, the portrait typology offers the best means of assigning an approximate date to the object since it does not otherwise offer another means of dating. The earliest portrait of Marcus Aurelius dates to c. 140 C.E. and is best represented by the Capitoline Galleria 28 type, where the youth wears a cloak fastened at the shoulder (*paludamentum*); this portrait was widely circulated, with approximately 25 known copies (above).

The second portrait type was made when Marcus was in his late 20s, c. 147 C.E. and shows a still youthful type, although Marcus now has light facial hair (below).



Figure **13.2.10.23**: *Marcus Aurelius*, type II portrait, c. 147 C.E. (Antiquarium of the Palatine)

Marcus Aurelius became emperor in 161 C.E., when he was forty years of age; this was the occasion for the creation of his third and most important portrait type. This mature type shows the emperor fully bearded with a full head of tightly curled, voluminous hair; he retains the characteristic oval-shaped face and heavy eyelids from his earlier portraits. His coiffure forms a distinctive arc over his forehead. This third type is known from approximately 50 copies.



Figure **13.2.10.24**: *Marcus Aurelius*, type IV, 170-180 C.E. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

The emperor's fourth portrait type (above), created between 170 and 180 C.E., retains most of the features of the third type, but shows the emperor slightly more advanced in age with a very full beard that is divided in the center at the chin, showing parallel locks of hair.

The statue of the horseman is carefully composed by the artist and depicts a figure that is simultaneously dynamic and a bit passive and removed, by virtue of his facial expression (see image below). The locks of hair are curly and compact and distributed evenly; the beard is also curly, covering the cheeks and upper lip, and is worn longer at the chin. The pose of the body shows the rider's head turned slightly to his right, in the direction of his outstretched right arm. The left hand originally held the reins (no longer preserved) between the index and middle fingers, with the palm facing upwards. Scholars continue to debate whether he originally held some attached figure or object in the palm of the left hand; possible suggestions have included a scepter, a globe, a statue of victory – but there is no clear indication of any attachment point for such an object. On the left hand the rider does wear the senatorial ring.

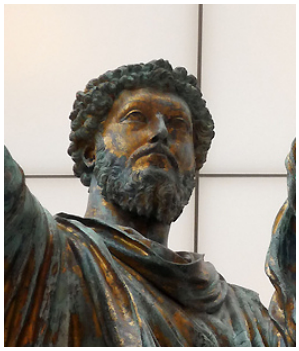


Figure 13.2.10.25: Portrait head (detail), Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius, c. 173-76 C.E., bronze (Capitoline Museums, Rome)

The rider is clad in civic garb, including a short-sleeved tunic that is gathered at the waist by a knotted belt (*cingulum*). Over the tunic the rider wears a cloak (*paludamentum*) that is clasped at the right shoulder. On his feet Marcus Aurelius wears the senatorial boots of the patrician class, known as *calcei patricii*.

Interpretation and chronology

The interpretation and chronology of the equestrian statue must rely on the statue itself, as no ancient literary testimony or other evidence survives to aid in the interpretation. It is obvious that the statue is part of an elaborate public monument, no doubt commissioned to mark an important occasion in the emperor's reign. With that said, however, it must also be noted that scholars continue to debate its precise dating, the occasion for its creation, and its likely original location in the city of Rome.

Starting with the portrait typology it is possible to determine a range of likely dates for the statue's creation. The portrait is clearly an adult type of the emperor, meaning the statue must have been created after 161 C.E., the year of Marcus Aurelius' accession and the creation of his third portrait type. This provides a *terminus post quem* (the limit after which) for the equestrian statue. Art historians have debated whether the portrait head most resembles the Type III or the Type IV portrait. Recent scholarly thinking, based on the work of Klaus Fittschen, holds that the equestrian portrait represents a unique variant of the standard Type III portrait, created as an improvisation by the artist who was commissioned to create the equestrian statue. In the end the precise chronology of the portrait head—and indeed the typology—remains a matter of scholarly debate.



Figure 13.2.10.26: Relief from honorary monument to Marcus Aurelius, 176-180 C.E., marble 350 cm (Capitoline Museums, Rome)

The pose of the horseman is also helpful. The emperor stretches his right hand outward, the palm facing toward the ground; a pose that could be interpreted as the posture of *adlocutio*, indicating that the emperor is about to speak. However, more likely in this case we may read it as the gesture of clemency (*clementia*), offered to a vanquished enemy, or of *restitutio pacis*, the "restoration of peace." Richard Brilliant has noted that since the emperor appears in civic garb as opposed to the general's armor, the overall impression of the statue is one of peace rather than of the immediate post-war celebration of military victory. Some art historians reconstruct a now-missing barbarian on the right side of the horse, as seen in a surviving panel relief sculpture that originally belonged to a now-lost triumphal arch dedicated to Marcus Aurelius (left). We know that Marcus Aurelius celebrated a triumph in 176 C.E. for his victories over German and Sarmatian tribes, leading some to suggest that year as the occasion for the creation of the equestrian monument.

History

The original location of the equestrian monument also remains debated, with some supporting a location on the Caelian Hill near the barracks of the imperial cavalry (equites singulares), while others favor the Campus Martius (a low-lying alluvial plain of the Tiber River) as a possible location. A text known as the *Liber Pontificalis* that dates to the middle of the tenth century C.E. mentions the equestrian monument, referring to it as "*caballus Constantini*" or the "horse of Constantine." According to the text, the urban prefect of Rome was condemned following an uprising against Pope John XII and, as punishment, was hung by the hair from the equestrian monument. At this time the equestrian statue was located in the Lateran quarter of the city of Rome near the Lateran Palace, where it may have been since at least the eighth century C.E. Popular theories at the time held that the bearded emperor was in fact Constantine I, thus sparing the statue from being melted down.

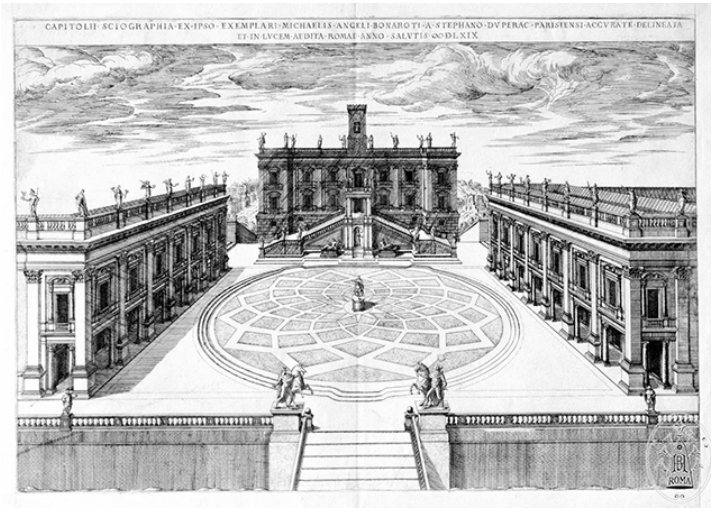


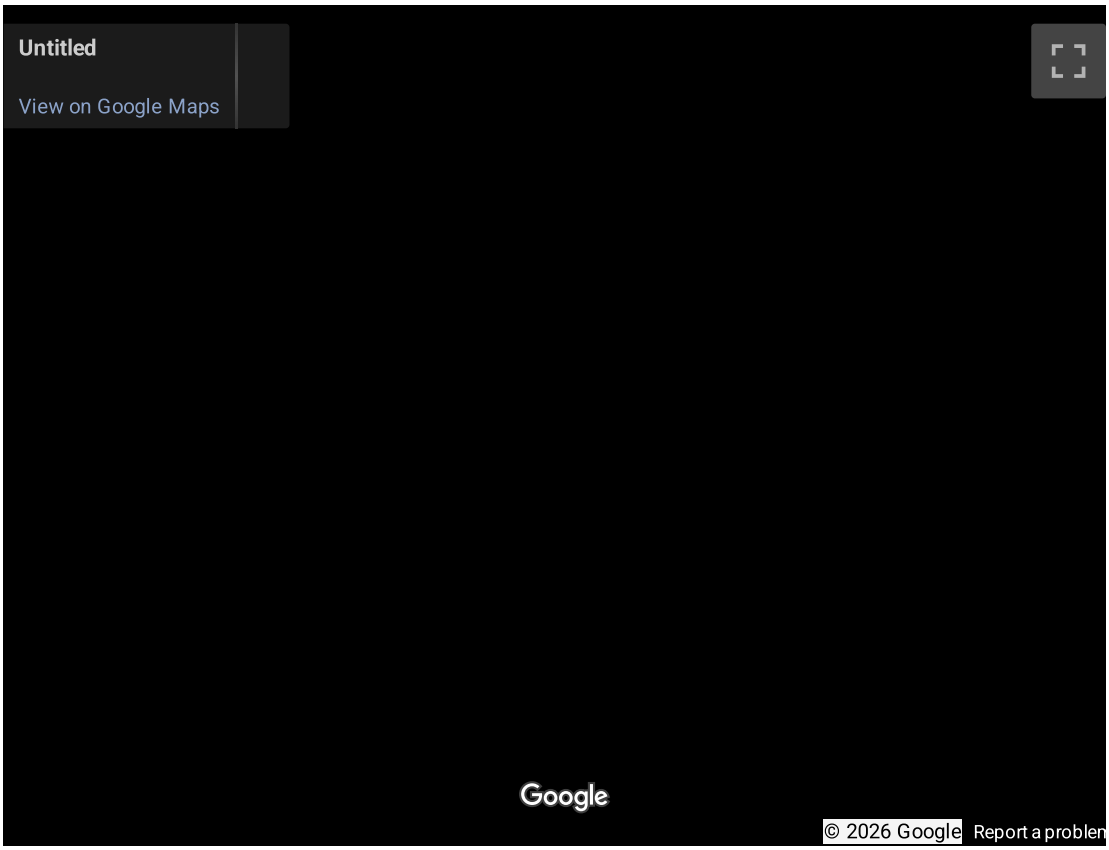
Figure 13.2.10.27: Étienne Dupérac, Michelangelo`s Design for the Campidoglio, 1569, engraving



Figure 13.2.10.28: Reverse of Italian € 0.50 coin

In 1538 the statue was relocated from the Lateran quarter to the Capitoline Hill to become the centerpiece for Michelangelo's new design for the Campidoglio (a piazza, or public square, at the top of the Capitoline hill). The statue was set atop a pedestal at the center of an intricately designed piazza flanked by three palazzi (image above). It became the centerpiece of the main piazza of secular Rome and, as such, an icon of the city, a role that its still retains. The equestrian statue still plays a role as an official symbol of the city of Rome, even being incorporated into the reverse image of the Italian version of the € 0.50 coin (image above). The statue itself remained where Michelangelo positioned it until it was moved indoors in 1981 for conservation reasons; a high-tech copy of the original was placed on the pedestal. The ancient statue is now housed within the Musei Capitolini where it can be visited and viewed today.

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius is an enduring monument, one that links the city's many phases, ancient and modern. It has borne witness to the city's imperial glory, post-imperial decline, its Renaissance resurgence, and even its quotidian experience in the twenty-first century. In so doing it reminds us about the role of public art in creating and reinforcing cultural identity as it relates to specific events and locations. In the ancient world the equestrian statue would have evoked powerful memories from the viewer, not only reinforcing the identity and appearance of the emperor but also calling to mind the key events, achievements, and celebrations of his administration. The statue is, like the city, eternal, as reflected by the Romanesco poet Giuseppe Belli who reflects in his sonnet *Campidojjo* (1830) that the gilded statue is directly linked to the long sweep of Rome's history.



Additional resources:

Capitoline Museums – Marcus Aurelius Exedra

J. Bergemann, *Römische Reiterstatuen: Ehrendenkmäler im öffentlichen Bereich (*Mainz am Rhein: Ph. von Zabern, 1990).

A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: a Biography* (London: Routledge, 2002).

P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the emperor: Roman imperial funerary monuments, from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004)

P. Fehl, "The Placement of the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Middle Ages." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37, 1974, pp. 362-67.

K. Fittschen and P. Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts in den Capitolinischen Museen und den anderen kommunalen Sammlungen der Stadt Rom. 3 v*. (Berlin: P. von Zabern, 1983-2010).

D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

M. Nimmo, *Marco Aurelio, mostra di cantiere: le indagini in corso sul monumento* (Rome: Arti grafiche pedanesi, 1984).

C. P. Presicce, and A. M. Sommella, *The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius in Campidoglio* (Milan: Silvana, 1990).

I. S. Ryberg, "Rites of the state religion in Roman art" *(Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome; 22)* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1955).

I. S. Ryberg, *Panel reliefs of Marcus Aurelius* (New York: Archaeological Institute of America, 1967).

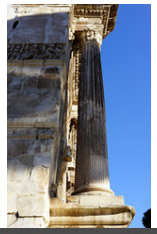
K. Stemmer, ed. Kaiser, *Marc Aurel und Seine Zeit: Das Römische Reich im* Umbruch (Berlin: Abguss-Sammlung Antiker Plastik, 1988).

D. E. Strong, *Roman Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

A. M. Vaccaro, et al., *Marco Aurelio: storia di un monumento e del suo restauro* (Milan: Silvana, 1989).

M. van Ackeren, ed., *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius* (Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88681



Figure **13.2.10.29**: More SmartHistory images…

The importance of the archaeological findspot: The Lullingstone Busts

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

What do we gain when works come from a well-documented excavation?



Video **13.2.10.10**: Lullingstone Busts, 2nd century C.E. Speakers: Dr. Elizabeth Marlowe and Dr. Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

Lullingstone Roman Villa (from English Heritage)

G. W. Meates, The Lullingstone Roman Villa, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. 63 (1950), pp. 1-49.

K. S. Painter, The Lullingstone Wall-Plaster: An Aspect of Christianity in Roman Britain, *The British Museum Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 3/4 (Spring, 1969), pp. 131-150.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88681

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

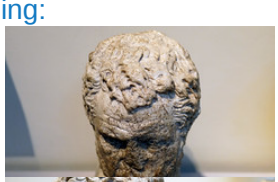














Figure 13.2.10.30: More SmartHistory images...

The Arch of Septimius Severus, portal to ancient Rome

by DR. DARIUS ARYA and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.2.10.11: Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus, 203 C.E., marble above a travertine base, roughly 23 x 25 m, Roman Forum, speakers: Dr. Darius Arya, executive director of the **American Institute for Roman Culture** and Dr. Beth Harris

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

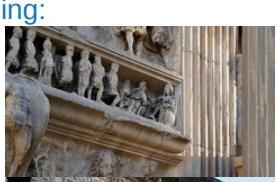














Figure 13.2.10.31: More SmartHistory images…

The Severan Tondo: damnatio memoriae in ancient Rome

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.2.10.12: A conversation with Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris in front of *The Severan Tondo*, c. 200 C.E., 30.5 cm, tempera on wood (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

Additional resources:

More on Damnatio Memoriae

Klaus Forschen, The portraits of Roman emperors and their families," in *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual*, edited by Björn C. Ewald and Carlos F. Noreña (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Eric R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation : Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Brill 2004)

Severan marble plan *(Forma Urbis Romae)*

by DR. JEFFREY A. BECKER

This ancient map served as an administrative tool for one of the largest empires in history.

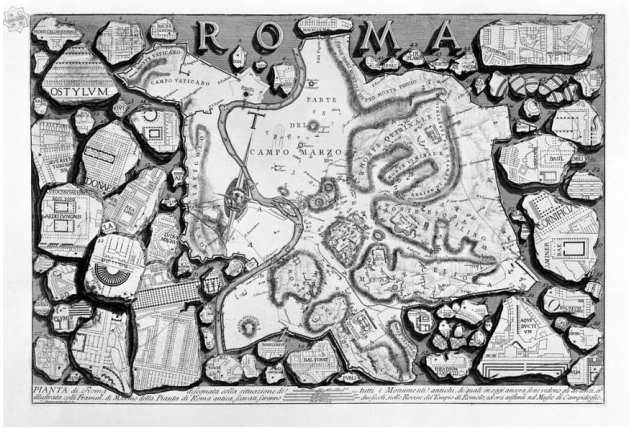


Figure **13.2.10.32**: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Map of ancient Rome and Forma Urbis, from *Le antichità Romane*, 1835-1839.

Imagining ancient Rome

What did the ancient city of Rome look like? What was it like to walk through Rome's streets? Did the ancient city resemble the Rome that we know today? For centuries, this set of questions occupied the attention of artists and scholars, ranging from engravers like Giovanni Battista Piranesi who produced "views" and a map of the ruined state of ancient Rome (above), to mapmakers like **Giambattista Nolli** whose famous map of the city was produced in the time of Pope Benedict XIV (1748), to archaeological plans like the ***Forma Urbis Romae*** produced by Rodolfo Lanciani at the end of the nineteenth century. One thing that Piranesi, Nolli, and Lanciani had in common was an awareness of the fragmentary remains of a much older depiction of the city's layout, the so-called "Severan marble plan" that dates to the third century C.E.



Figure **13.2.10.33**: A fragment of the Severan marble plan showing the Porticus of Octavia (Capitoline Museums) (photo: **Sailko**, CC-BY SA 3.0)

The Severan marble plan of Rome (also known as the *Forma Urbis Romae)* was a carved plan of the city of Rome produced during the first decade of the third century C.E. and mounted on a wall of the Temple of Peace in Rome. Rendered at a scale of approximately 1 to 240, the Severan marble plan was engraved on 150 marble slabs and originally measured approximately 60 by 43 feet (18.1 by 13 meters). The orientation of the map itself would seem at odds with our twenty-first century north-oriented outlook—the Severan marble plan was oriented with south at the top. The plan is a detailed and intricate undertaking, with building layouts shown for the city of Rome—including temples, public buildings, public baths, houses, and the housing blocks (*insulae*) of the city. Interior details such as columns and staircases are also indicated, and some complexes—particularly notable public ones—are labeled.



Figure 13.2.10.34: The wall of the Temple of Peace where the Severan marble plan once hung (photo: Wikimedia Commons)

Only fragments remain

After antiquity, the marble plan disappeared—the metal clamps that affixed it to the wall were likely robbed and the slabs simply collapsed to the ground. The first recorded rediscovery of the Severan marble plan was in 1562 when Giovanni Antonio Dosio excavated fragments near the sixth-century basilica church of Santi Cosma e Damiano. The basilica incorporates former architectural elements of the ancient Temple of Peace that had originally been built by the emperor Vespasian in the 70s C.E. The fragments were passed between multiple sixteenth-century collectors, but there was little interest in examining them closely at that time. But in 1741, the fragments became property of the city of Rome and were subsequently studied and drawn by scholars and artists, including Piranesi, and research continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Additional fragments were discovered in 1999 and others have appeared sporadically since then. In all only approximately 1,186 fragments of the original plan (only about 10-15%) are known to survive.



Figure 13.2.10.35: Conjectural reconstruction of the *Forma Urbis Romae*

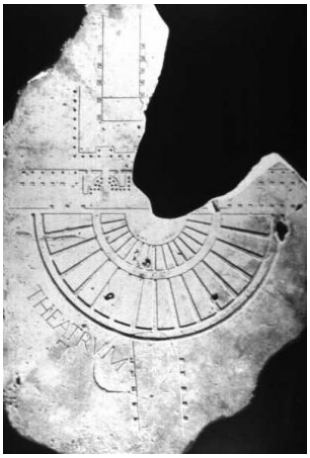


Figure 13.2.10.36: Reconstruction of a part of the *Forma Urbis Romae* showing the theater of Pompey (photo: Ulysses K. Vestal, public domain)

The conjectural restoration of the fragments (above) suggests that the viewer would have been presented with an urban panorama in plan view, complete with miniscule details. What purpose the plan served, however, remains an open question for scholars. It is likely that the official offices for the government of the city of Rome during the imperial period occupied rooms next to the wall where the marble plan was hung, suggesting that it may have had an official, administrative function. Its scale and location, however, call it into question as a practical, useful object. The marble plan may have served a more representative function, placing it in line with painted and carved landscape views—both fantastical and realistic—known from other examples of Roman art.

Whatever its original use, the marble plan provokes and stimulates the imagination of the viewer: those who have studied the fragments have drawn enormous inspiration from this view of the city. The fragments influenced Lanciani's creation of his own archaeological map of Rome (***Forma Urbis Romae,*** 1893-1901), which in turn strongly influenced Italo Gismondi and his team as they designed and built the famous model of Rome (Plastico di Roma antica) first exhibited at Rome in 1937 (now in the **Museo della Civiltà Romana**, Rome). Gismondi's model still strongly influences views of what ancient Rome looked like, revealing a continued interest in the question of how one might imagine the ancient city.

Additional resources:

Gianfilippo Carettoni, Antonio M. Colini, Lucos Cozza, and Guglielmo Gatti, eds. *La pianta marmorea di Roma antica. Forma urbis Romae* (Rome 1960).

Christian Hülsen. "La rappresentazione degli edifizi Palatini nella 'Forma Urbis Romae' dei tempi Severiani." *Dissertazione alla Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 11 (1914) pp. 101-120.

Robert B. Lloyd, "Three Monumental Gardens on the Marble Plan." *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (Jan., 1982), pp. 91-100.

David West Reynolds, *Forma Urbis Romae: The Severan Marble Plan and the Urban Form of Ancient Rome* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1996).

Emilio Rodríguez Almeida, *Forma Urbis Marmorea. Aggiornamento Generale 1980* (Rome 1981).

Emilio Rodríguez-Almeida, "A proposito della Forma marmorea e di altre formae." *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome, Antiquité* 112.1 (2000) pp. 217-230. Online at persee.fr

Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project

R. J. A. Talbert, R. W. Unger, eds., *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008).

Pier Luigi Tucci, "Eight Fragments of the Marble Plan of Rome Shedding New Light on the Transtiberim." *Papers of the British School at Rome* Vol. 72 (2004), pp. 185-202.

Pier Luigi Tucci, "New fragments of ancient plans of Rome." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* vol. 20 (2007), pp. 469-80.

Battle of the Romans and Barbarians (Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus)

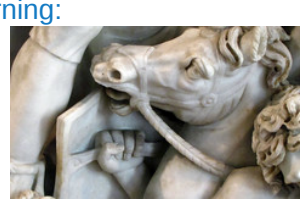
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Romans fight barbarians on this chaotic coffin, which shows signs of a turn in artistic trends.



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88681

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:











Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus, bust of central figure





Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus, oblique view from left







Figure 13.2.10.37: More SmartHistory images…

Late Empire

In the third century C.E. the Ancient Roman Empire was threatened by economic crisis, weak and short-lived emperors and usurpers, and the loss of territory to barbarian invasions.

235 - 410 C.E.

Trebonianus Gallus — emperor or athlete? Rethinking a modern attribution

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE and DR. BETH HARRIS

In the chaos of the 3rd century, can we be sure about the identification of this statue?



Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dr. Elizabeth Marlowe, "Said to be or not said to be: the findspot of the so-called Trebonianus Gallus statue at the Metropolitan Museum in New York," *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 27, issue 2 (July 2015)

Roman Portrait Sculpture: The Stylistic Cycle on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Portraits of the Four Tetrarchs

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Learn how the solid, abstracted forms of these co-emperors reject earlier understanding of the human body.



Video 13.2.10.15: *Portraits of the Four Tetrarchs*, from Constantinople, c. 305, porphyry, 4′ 3″ high (St. Marks, Venice)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

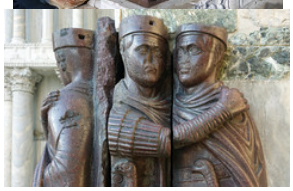












Figure 13.2.10.38: More SmartHistory images…

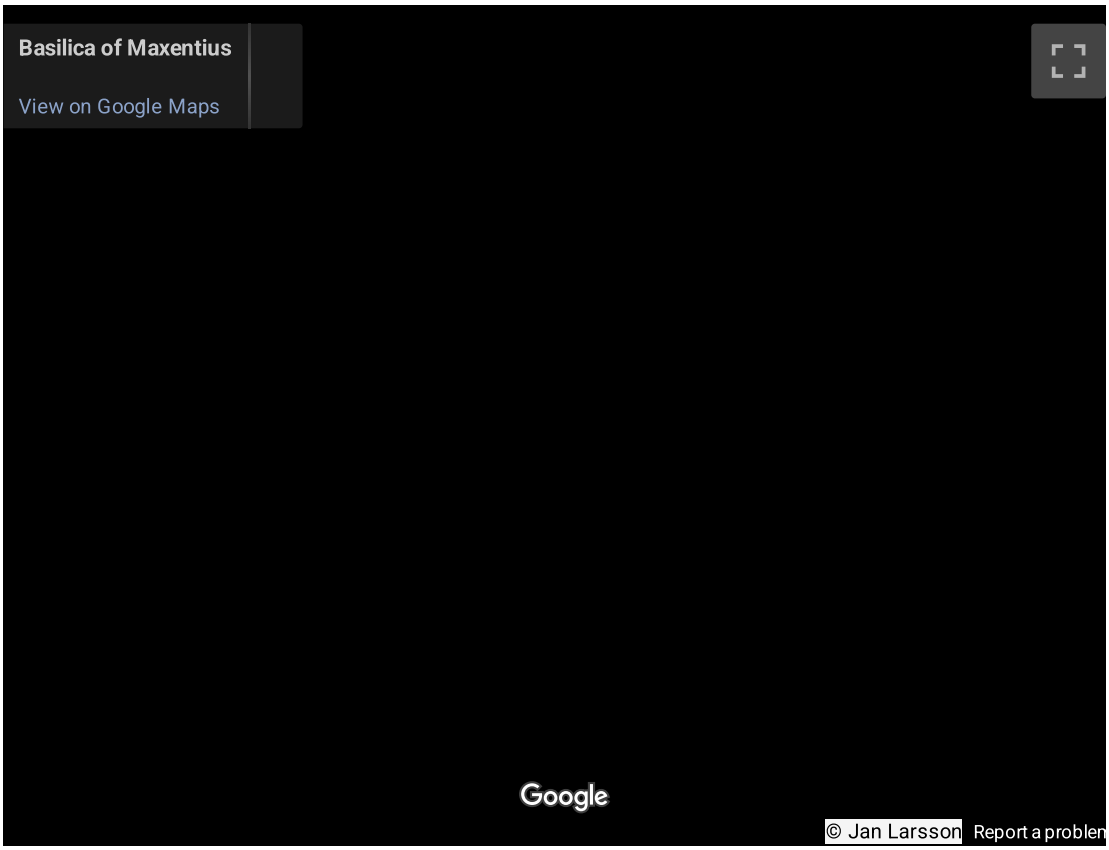
Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine

by DR. DARIUS ARYA and DR. BETH HARRIS

Built using new technologies, this building is overwhelming and unprecedented—displaying Roman imperial power.



Video 13.2.10.16: Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine (Basilica Nova), Roman Forum, c. 306-312


Basilica of Maxentius
View on Google Maps
Google
© Jan Larsson
Report a problem

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:











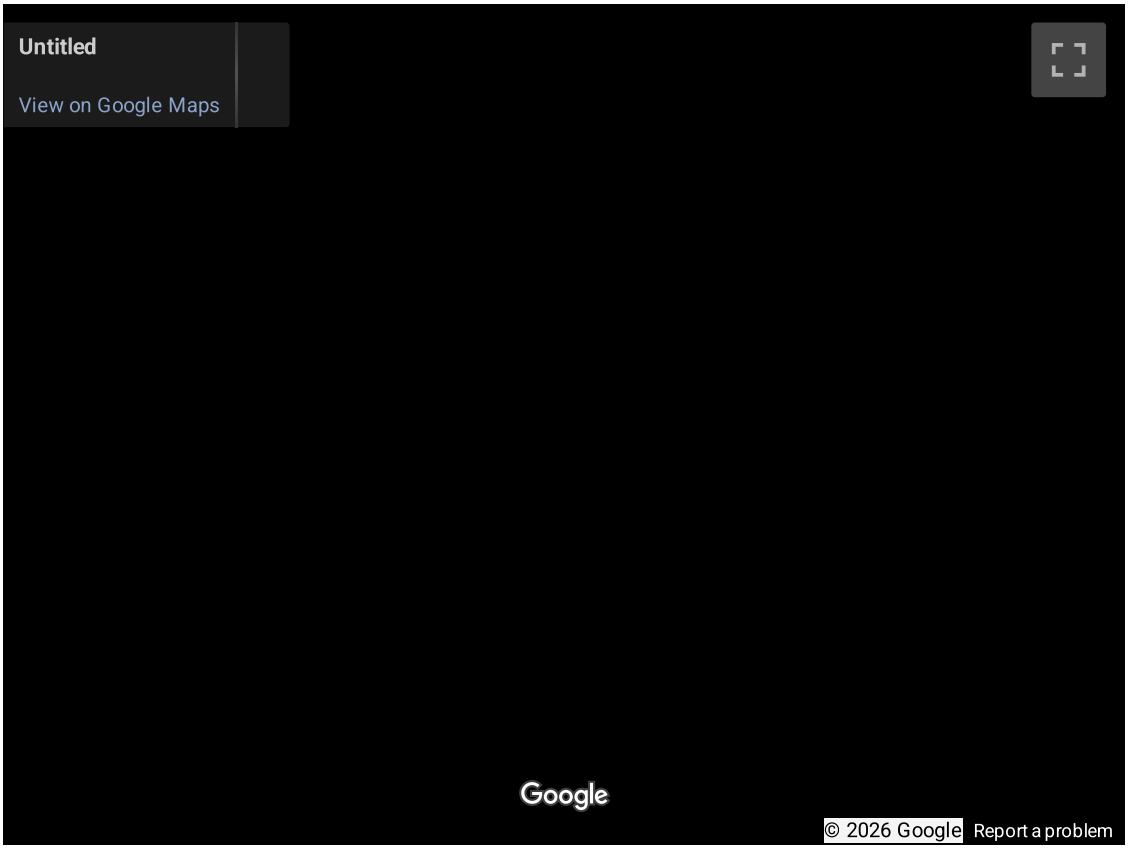

Figure 13.2.10.39: More SmartHistory images…

The Colossus of Constantine

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Does the abstraction of form and faraway look in this colossal portrait hint at the growth of Christianity in Rome?




Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:

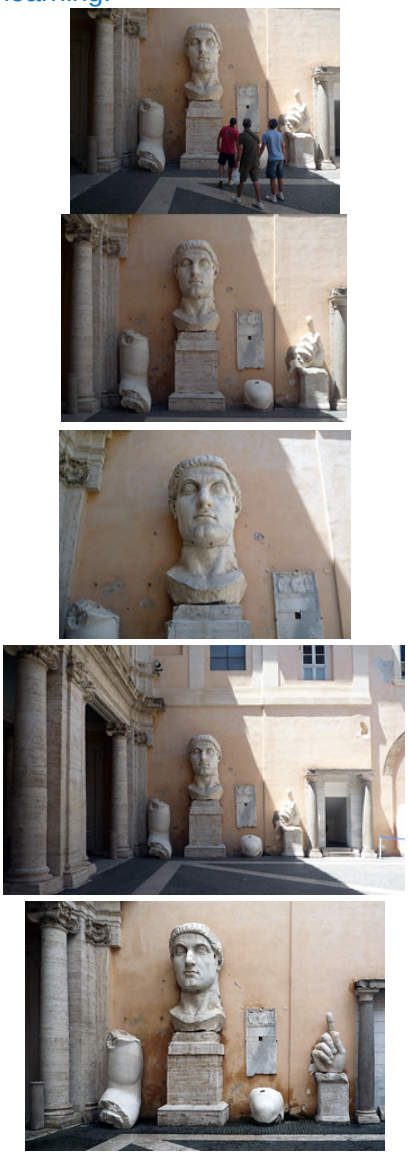


Figure 13.2.10.40: More SmartHistory images…

Arch of Constantine, Rome

by DR. ANDREW FINDLEY

For the first time, a Roman emperor celebrated victory over fellow Romans, and appropriated the art of earlier rulers.



Video 13.2.10.18: Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker. Video produced by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee, Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

The Emperor Constantine, called Constantine the Great, was significant for several reasons. These include his political transformation of the Roman Empire, his support for Christianity, and his founding of Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). Constantine's status as an agent of change also extended into the realms of art and architecture. The Triumphal Arch of Constantine in Rome is not only a superb example of the ideological and stylistic changes Constantine's reign brought to art, but also demonstrates the emperor's careful adherence to traditional forms of Roman Imperial art and architecture.

Location and Appearance



Figure 13.2.10.41: Reconstruction of the location of the Arch of Constantine (lower left) and the sculpture of the Colossus of the Sun (center)—both situated between the Temple of Venus and Roma (far left) and the Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum—right), model © 2008 The Regents of the University of California; image © 2008 The Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia. Courtesy Dr. Bernard Frischer (Rome Reborn 2.0)

The Arch of Constantine is located along the Via Triumphalis in Rome, and it is situated between the Flavian Amphitheater (better known as the Colosseum) and the Temple of Venus and Roma. This location was significant, as the arch was a highly visible example of connective architecture that linked the area of the **Forum Romanum** (Roman Forum) to the major entertainment and public bathing complexes of central Rome.



Figure **13.2.10.42**: Arch of Constantine, 312-315 C.E., and older spolia, marble and porphyry, Rome

The monumental arch stands approximately 20 meters high, 25 meters wide, and 7 meters deep. Three portals punctuate the exceptional width of the arch, each flanked by partially engaged Corinthian columns. The central opening is approximately 12 meters high, above which are identical inscribed marble panels, one on each side, that read:

To the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantinus, the Greatest,
pious, fortunate, the Senate and people of Rome,
by inspiration of divinity and his own great mind
with his righteous arms
on both the tyrant and his faction
in one instant in rightful
battle he avenged the republic,
dedicated this arch as a memorial to his military victory

The end of the Tetrarchy



Figure **13.2.10.43**: Frieze with Constantine's siege of Maxentius's troops at Verona (before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge), Arch of Constantine (south side) , 312-315 C.E. and older spolia, marble and porphyry, Rome

Beginning in the late 3rd century, the Roman Empire was ruled by four co-emperors (two senior emperors and two junior emperors), in an effort to bring political stability after the turbulent 3rd century. But in 312 C.E., Constantine took control over the Western Roman Empire by defeating his co-emperor Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (and soon after became the sole ruler of the empire). The inscription on the arch refers to Maxentius as the tyrant and portrays Constantine as the rightful ruler of the Western Empire. Curiously, the inscription also attributes the victory to Constantine's "great mind" and the inspiration of a singular divinity. The mention of divine inspiration has been interpreted by some scholars as a coded reference to Constantine's developing interest in Christian monotheism.

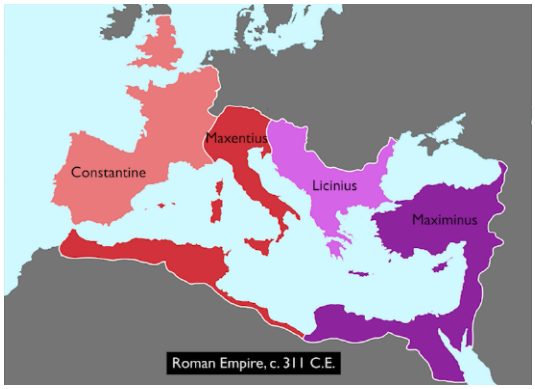


Figure **13.2.10.44**

Sculpture from different eras

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Arch is its eclectic and stylistically varied relief sculptures. Some aspects of the sculpture are quite standard, like the Victoria (or Nike) figures that occupy the spandrels above the central archway or the typical architectural moldings found in most imperial Roman public and religious architecture (below).



Figure **13.2.10.45**: Victoria (Nike) figures (personifications of victory, spandrels, Arch of Constantine (north side), 312-315 C.E. and older spolia, marble and porphyry, Rome

Other sculpted elements, however, show a multiplicity of styles. In fact, most scholars accept that many of the sculptures of the arch were spolia taken from older monuments dating to the 2nd century C.E. Although there is some scholarly disagreement on the origins of the sculptures, their imperial style corresponds to those of the reigns of Trajan (ruled 98-117 C.E.—the figures surmounting the decorative columns), Hadrian (ruled 117-138 C.E.—the middle register roundels), and Marcus Aurelius (ruled 161-180 C.E.—the large panel reliefs on the top registers). Most of the reliefs feature the emperors participating in codified activities that demonstrate the ruler's authority and piety by addressing troops, defeating enemies, distributing largesse, and offering sacrifices.

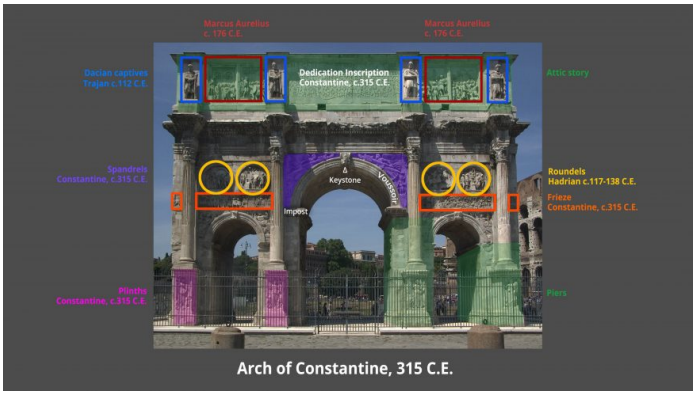


Figure **13.2.10.46**: Diagram of the Arch of Constantine showing architectural features and spolia, 312-315 C.E., Rome (**link to large image**)

Some sculptural elements of the structure also date to Constantine's reign, most notably the frieze which is located immediately above the portals. These relief sculptures are of a drastically different style and narrative content when compared with the spoliated (older, borrowed)

sections (below, left); Constantine's relief sculptures (below, right) feature squat and blocky figures that are more abstract than they are naturalistic.



Figure **13.2.10.47**: Two reliefs from the Arch of Constantine: left: roundel showing Sacrifice to Apollo, era of Hadrian, c. 117-138 C.E.; right: detail, Distribution of Largesse, era of Constantine, 312-315

The Constantinian reliefs also depict historical, rather than general events related to Constantine, including his rise to power and **victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge**. There is also a scene of **Constantine distributing largesse (funds) to the public**—recalling the scenes of emperors from the earlier sculptures.

Clarity of form

Regarding style, the relief figures from Constantine's age still seem like outliers. Yet in comparison to the idealized naturalism of the earlier sculptural elements (for example, in the roundels in the image below), the thick, bold outlines of the Constantinian figures render them remarkably legible to passersby. While the Constantinian figures lack natural aesthetics, their clarity of form ensured that they were informative and communicated Constantine's official (and celebrated) history to viewers of his own time.



Figure **13.2.10.48**: Reliefs from the south side of the Arch of Constantine. Roundels, Aftermath of a lion hunt (left) and Sacrifice to Hercules (right), era of Hadrian, c. 117-138 C.E. and the frieze below, showing the *Distribution of Largesse*, era of Constantine, 312-315 C.E.

Analysis and Meaning

Until relatively recently, art historians viewed the blocky sculptures and use of spolia in the arch as signs of poor craftsmanship, deficient artistry, and economic decline in the late Roman Empire (this reading is now almost wholly rejected by art historians). Even one of the most prolific and influential art historians of the modern age, Bernard Berenson, titled his short book on the arch, *The Arch of Constantine: The Decline of Form*. More recently, however, analysis of the arch has focused on the political and ideological goals of Constantine and the objectives of the artists, which has highlighted new possibilities for the interpretation of the arch.

If, indeed, the spoliated (older) material from the arch can be traced to the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius, then it situates Constantine as one worthy of the same level of reverence as those emperors—all of whom earned deserved levels of acclaim. This was vitally important to Constantine, who had himself essentially bypassed lawful succession and usurped power from others. Moreover, Constantine encouraged major social changes in Rome, such as decriminalizing Christianity. Any religious change was a threat to the ruling and political classes of Rome. By aligning himself with well-regarded emperors of Rome's 2nd-century C.E. golden age, Constantine was signaling that he intended to model his rule after earlier, successful leaders.

Additional resources:

List of rulers of the Roman Empire on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Roman Empire on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Byzantium (ca. 330–1453) on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2009).

Bernard Berenson, *The Arch of Constantine: The Decline of Form* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1954).

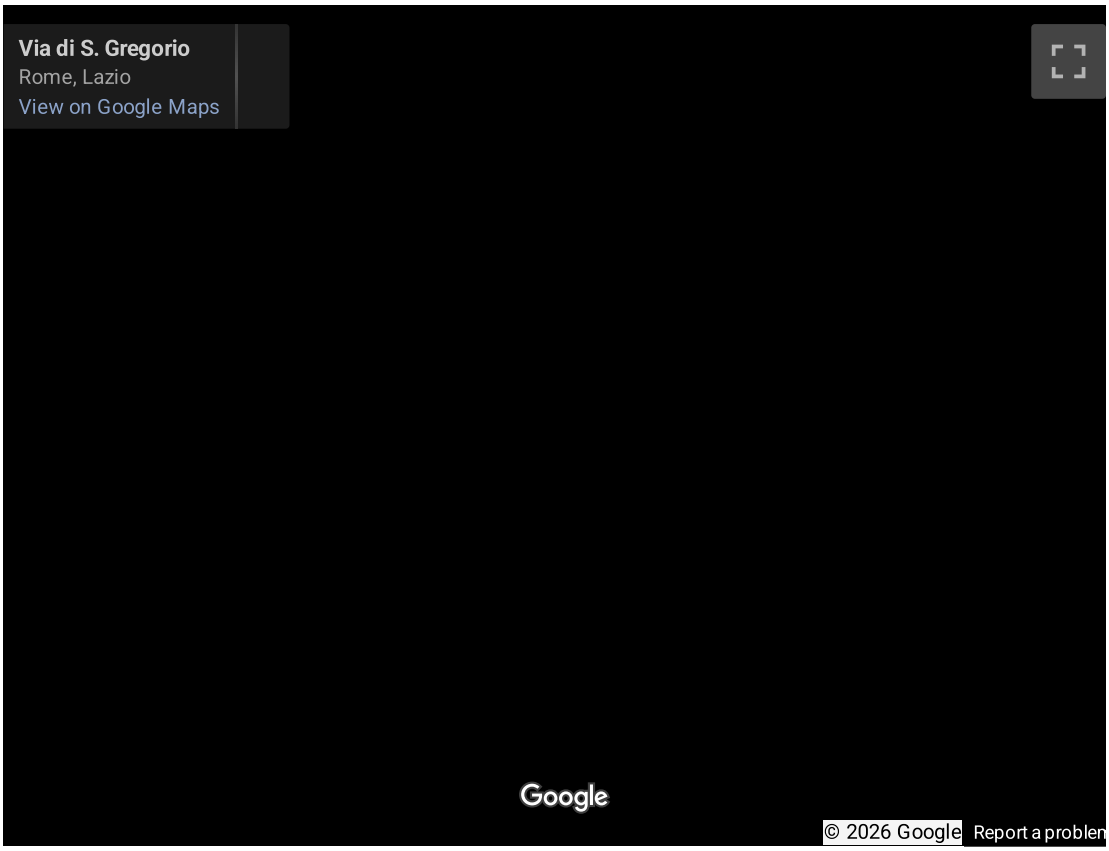
R. Ross Holloway "The Spolia on the Arch of Constantine" *Quaderni Ticinesi Numismatica e Antichità Classiche* 14 (1985), pp. 261-273.

Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art*, 3rd-7th Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

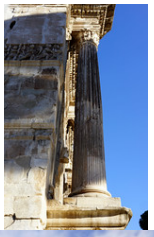
Jaś Elsner, "From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000), pp.149–184.

Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape," *The Art Bulletin* vol. 88 no. 2 (June 2006), pp. 223-242.

Mark Wilson Jones, "Genesis and Mimesis: The Design of the Arch of Constantine in Rome," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 59 (March 2000), pp. 50–77.



SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



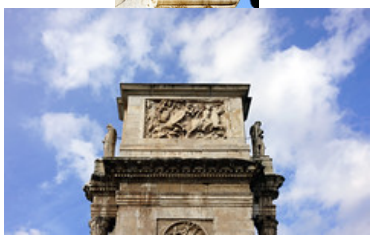
















Figure **13.2.10.49**: More SmartHistory images…

The Symmachi Panel

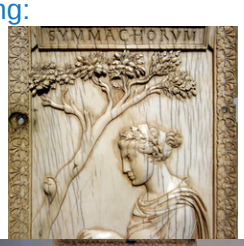
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

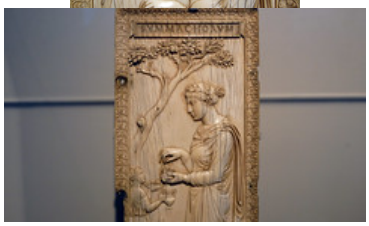
Holding on to pagan traditions in the early Christian era.

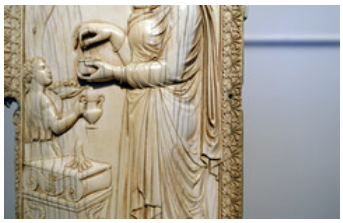


Video 13.2.10.19: *The Symmachi Panel*, c. 400 C.E., ivory, 32 x 13 cm (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

SmartHistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88681

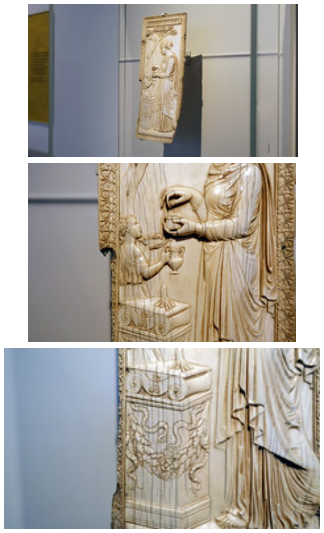


Figure 13.2.10.50: More SmartHistory images…

13.2.10: Ancient Rome III is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.10: Ancient Rome III** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.3: The Islamic World

Arts of the Islamic World

From the Dome of the Rock to the Taj Mahal, the Coronation Mantle, the Ardabil Carpet, and more...

c. 640 - 1924 C.E.

13.3.1: A beginner's guide

13.3.2: Early period

13.3.3: Medieval period

13.3.4: Later period

Thumbnail:The Kaaba in Makkah. Image used wtih permission (GFDLFree Art License;Muhammad Mahdi Karim).

13.3: The Islamic World is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.3.1: A beginner's guide

Introduction to Islam

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS



Figure **13.3.1.1**: Great Mosque at Damascus (Photo: G. Lewis)

Origins and the life of Muhammad the Prophet

Islam, Judaism and Christianity are three of the world's great monotheistic faiths. They share many of the same holy sites, such as Jerusalem, and prophets, such as Abraham. Collectively, scholars refer to these three religions as the Abrahamic faiths, since Abraham and his family played vital roles in the formation of these religions.

Islam was founded by Muhammad (c. 570-632 C.E.), a merchant from the city of Mecca, now in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Mecca was a well-established trading city. The Kaaba (in Mecca) is the focus of pilgrimage for Muslims.

The Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, provides very little detail about Muhammad's life; however, the hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet, which were largely compiled in the centuries following Muhammad's death, provide a larger narrative for the events in his life. Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. in Mecca, and his early life was unremarkable. He married a wealthy widow named Khadija. Around 610 C.E., Muhammad had his first religious experience, where he was instructed to recite by the Angel Gabriel. After a period of introspection and self-doubt, Muhammad accepted his role as God's prophet and began to preach word of the one God, or Allah in Arabic. His first convert was his wife.

Muhammad's divine recitations form the Qur'an; unlike the Bible or Hindu epics, it is organized into verses, known as ayat. During one of his many visions, in 621 C.E., Muhammad was taken on the famous Night Journey by the Angel Gabriel, travelling from Mecca to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem, from where he ascended into heaven. The site of his ascension is believed to be the stone around which the Dome of the Rock was built. Eventually in 622, Muhammad and his followers fled Mecca for the city of Yathrib, which is known as Medina today, where his community was welcomed. This event is known as the hijra, or emigration. 622, the year of the hijra (A.H.), marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar, which is still in use today.

Between 625-630 C.E., there were a series of battles fought between the Meccans and Muhammad and the new Muslim community. Eventually, Muhammad was victorious and reentered Mecca in 630.

One of Muhammad's first actions was to purge the Kaaba of all of its idols (before this, the Kaaba was a major site of pilgrimage for the polytheistic religious traditions of the Arabian Peninsula and contained numerous idols of pagan gods). The Kaaba is believed to have been built by Abraham (or Ibrahim as he is known in Arabic) and his son, Ishmael. The Arabs claim descent from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. The Kaaba then became the most important center for pilgrimage in Islam.

In 632, Muhammad died in Medina. Muslims believe that he was the final in a line of prophets, which included Moses, Abraham, and Jesus.

After Muhammad's death

The century following Muhammad's death was dominated by military conquest and expansion. Muhammad was succeeded by the four "rightly-guided" Caliphs (khalifa or successor in Arabic): Abu Bakr (632-34 C.E.), Umar (634-44 C.E.), Uthman (644-56 C.E.), and Ali (656-661 C.E.). The Qur'an is believed to have been codified during Uthman's reign. The final caliph, Ali, was married to Fatima, Muhammad's daughter and was murdered in 661. The death of Ali is a very important event; his followers, who believed that he should have succeeded Muhammad directly, became known as the Shi'a, meaning the followers of Ali. Today, the Shi'ite community is composed of several different branches, and there are large Shi'a populations in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain. The Sunnis, who do not hold that Ali should have directly succeeded Muhammad, compose the largest branch of Islam; their adherents can be found across North Africa, the Middle East, as well as in Asia and Europe.

During the seventh and early eighth centuries, the Arab armies conquered large swaths of territory in the Middle East, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and Central Asia, despite on-going civil wars in Arabia and the Middle East. Eventually, the Umayyad Dynasty emerged as the rulers, with Abd al-Malik completing the Dome of the Rock, one of the earliest surviving Islamic monuments, in 691/2 C.E. The Umayyads reigned until 749/50 C.E., when they were overthrown, and the Abbasid Dynasty assumed the Caliphate and ruled large sections of the Islamic world. However, with the Abbasid Revolution, no one ruler would ever again control all of the Islamic lands.

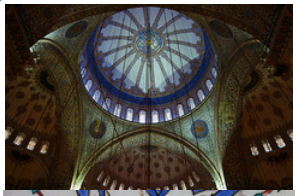
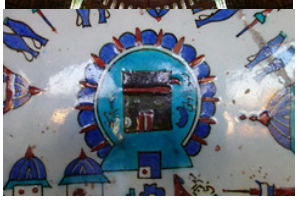
Additional resources:

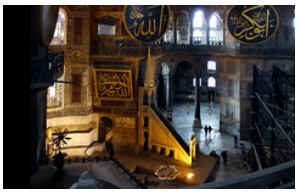
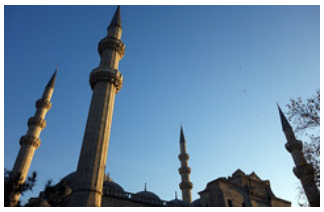
The Birth of Islam on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

World Religions in Art: Islam (from the Minneapolis Museum of Art)

BBC Article on the Sunni and Shi'a

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

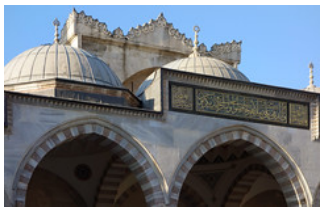



Figure **13.3.1.2**: More Smarthistory images…

About chronological periods in the Islamic world

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS

Studying the art of the Islamic world is challenging, partially because of the large geographic and chronological scope of Islam. Islam has been a major religion and cultural force for over fourteen centuries and continues to be so today. At present the Arts of the Islamic World Section is organized into three chronological periods: Early, Medieval and Late. These chronological divisions are modern creations that help scholars to organize information and works of art to interpret them better. It also helps students to understand how works of art and architecture relate to each other in time and space. There were dynasties and empires that controlled different lands and whose periods of rule stretched across these chronological divisions.



Figure **13.3.1.3**: The Dome of the Rock (Qubbat al-Sakhra), Umayyad, stone masonry, wooden roof, decorated with glazed ceramic tile, mosaics, and gilt aluminum and bronze dome, 691-2, with multiple renovations, patron the Caliph Abd al-Malik, Jerusalem (photo: Orientalist, CC BY 3.0)

Early period (c. 640-900 C.E.)

After Muhammad's death in 634, there were four caliphs later referred to by the Sunni as "rightfully guided," who succeeded Muhammad. However, from 656 there were conflicts over succession, and two civil wars (656-661 and 680-692) broke out within the community of Muslims. Out of these wars emerged the Umayyad Dynasty, whose capital was Damascus in modern-day Syria. Responsible for the first great monuments of Islamic art and architecture, Umayyad rulers built the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Great Mosque of Damascus, and the so-called Desert Palaces in Syro-Palestine . The Umayyads ruled as caliphs until 750 C.E., when they were overthrown by the Abbasids. The Abbasids, like the Umayyads before them, ruled as caliphs over much of the Islamic world until 861. Their capital was at Baghdad, and later they ruled from the palace-city of Samarra in Iraq for parts of the ninth century. After 861, the Abbasids lost control of large parts of their empire through a series of uprisings in which provincial governors asserted their independence. A series of local dynasties, such as the Aghlabids (800-909) and Tulunids (868-905) in North Africa, and the Buyids (945-1055) in Central Asia, emerged and ruled, developing regional artistic styles.

Medieval period (c. 900-1517 C.E.)

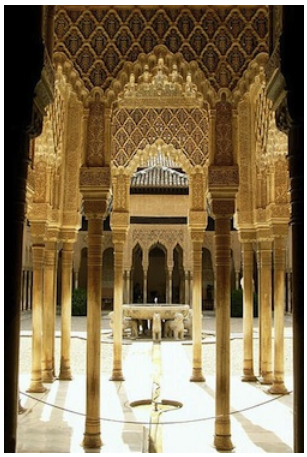


Figure **13.3.1.4**: Court of the Lions, The Alhambra, Sabika hill, Granada, Spain, begun 1238 (Photo: Jim Gordon)

By the tenth century, there was fragmentation and individual dynasties sprang up. These dynasties had varying degrees of control over different parts of the lands where Islam was the dominant or a major religion.

In North Africa and the Near East, certain major dynasties, such as the Fatimids (909-1171), emerged and ruled an area that includes present-day Egypt, Sicily, Algeria, Tunisia, and parts of Syria. It is also at this time that some of the major Turkic dynasties and people from Central Asia came to the forefront of politics and artistic creativity in the Islamic world. The Seljuqs were Central Asian nomads who ruled eastern Islamic lands and eventually controlled Iran, Iraq and much of Anatolia, although this empire was short-lived. The main branch of the Seljuqs, the Great Seljuqs, maintained control over Iran.

It was also the time of the European Christian crusades, which aimed to retake the Holy Land from the Muslims. A series of small Christian Kingdoms emerged in the twelfth century, as did Muslim dynasties, such as the Ayyubids (1179-1260), whose most famous leader, Salah al-Din (r.1169-93), known in Europe as Saladin, ended the Fatimid dynasty. Eventually the slave soldiers, upon whom the Ayyubid dynasty depended for their military protection, overthrew the last Ayyubid sultan in 1249/50. These slaves, known in Arabic as mamluk, literally meaning “owned,” became known as the Mamluks and they controlled Syria and Egypt until 1517.

The Mamluks also had to face one of the greatest threats to their reign early on: The invading Mongols. The Mongols and their great leader, Genghis Khan (c. 1162-1227), are almost always associated with blood-thirsty conquest and destruction, but his legacy included the Yuan dynasty in China (1279-1368), the Chaghatay khanate in Central Asia (c. 1227–1363), the Golden Horde in southern Russia, extending into Europe (ca. 1227–1502), and the Ilkhanid dynasty in Greater Iran (1256–1353). The Pax Mongolica (“Mongolian Peace”) includes a great flowering of the arts.

The Ilkhanids, who ruled over Iran, parts of Iraq and Central Asia, oversaw great artistic development in manuscripts, such as those that recounted the Shahnama (or Book of Kings), the famous Persian epic. They were important patrons of architecture. The Ilkhanid dynasty disintegrated in 1335 and local dynasties came to power in Iraq and Iran.

In 1370, the last great dynasty emerged from Central Asia: the Timurids (c. 1370-1507). They were named for their leader, Timur (also known as Tamerlane), who conquered and controlled all of Central Asia, greater Iran, and Iraq, as well as parts of southern Russia and the Indian subcontinent. The Timurids were outstanding builders of monumental architecture. Herat, in present-day Afghanistan, became the capital and cultural center of the Timurid empire.

While artistic production and architecture flourished in Asia under different Islamic dynasties, it also bloomed in the western Islamic lands. The most famous of these dynasties is probably the Nasrids (1232-1492) of the southern Iberian Peninsula and western North Africa, whose most important artistic achievement is the remarkable Alhambra, a palace-fortress complex in Granada, in present-day Spain.



Figure **13.3.1.5**: Taj Mahal, Agra, India (photo: David Castor)

Later period (c. 1517–1924 C.E.)

This period is the era of the last great Islamic Empires. The Ottoman Empire, which had started as a small Turkic state in Anatolia in the early fourteenth century, emerged in the second half of the fifteenth century as a major military and political force. The Ottomans conquered Constantinople in 1453 and the Mamluk Empire in 1517. They dominated much of Anatolia, the Balkans, the Near East and North Africa until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The Ottomans are famous for their domed architecture and pencil minarets, many of which were built by the great architect, Sinan (1539–1588) for Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66). This period is considered the peak of Ottoman art and culture.

The Safavids, who established Shia Islam as the dominant faith of Iran, ruled from 1501–1722 and were the greatest dynasty to emerge from Iran. Architecture, paintings, manuscripts and carpets all flourished under the Safavids. Shah Abbas (r. 1587–1629)

was the greatest patron of the arts and the Safavid Dynasty's most outstanding ruler. In the eighteenth century, a period of turmoil in Persia, the Qajar dynasty (1779–1924) rose to power and established peace and their rule saw the beginning of modernity in Iran.

The other great dynasty that oversaw a remarkable artistic and architectural output was the Mughals. Founded by Babur, the Mughals (c. 1526–1858) ruled over the largest Islamic state in the Indian subcontinent. While there had been earlier sultanates in what is today northern Indian and Pakistan, the emperors of the Mughal dynasty were patrons of some of the greatest works of Islamic art, such as illuminated manuscripts and painting, and architecture, including the Taj Mahal.

Additional resources:

Islamic art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Arts of the Islamic world

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS



Figure **13.3.1.6**: Taj Mahal, Agra, India (photo: **David Castor**)

What is Islamic Art?

The Dome of the Rock, the Taj Mahal, a Mina'i ware bowl, a silk carpet, a Qur'an; all of these are examples of Islamic Art. But what is Islamic Art?

Islamic Art is a modern concept, created by art historians in the nineteenth century to categorize and study the material first produced under the Islamic peoples that emerged from Arabia in the seventh century.

Today Islamic Art describes all of the arts that were produced in the lands where Islam was the dominant religion or the religion of those who ruled. Unlike the terms Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist art, which refer only to religious art of these faiths, Islamic art is not used merely to describe religious art or architecture, but applies to all art forms produced in the Islamic World.

Thus, Islamic Art refers not only to works created by Muslim artists, artisans, and architects or for Muslim patrons. It encompasses the works created by Muslim artists for a patron of any faith, including Christians, Jews, or Hindus, and the works created by Jews, Christians, and others, living in Islamic lands, for patrons, Muslim and otherwise.

One of the most famous monuments of Islamic Art is the Taj Mahal, a royal mausoleum, located in Agra, India. Hinduism is majority religion in India; however, because Muslim rulers, most famously the Mughals, dominated large areas of modern-day India for centuries, India has a vast range of Islamic art and architecture. The Great Mosque of Xian, China, is one of the oldest and best preserved mosques in China. First constructed in 742 C.E., the mosque's current form dates to the fifteenth century C.E. and follows the plan and architecture of a contemporary Buddhist temple. In fact, much Islamic art and architecture was—and still is—created through a synthesis of local traditions and more global ideas.

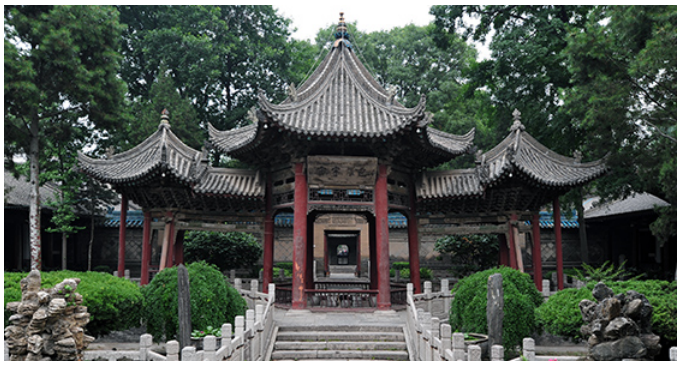


Figure **13.3.1.7**: View of the Great Mosque of Xi'an (photo: **chensiyuan**)

Islamic Art is not a monolithic style or movement; it spans 1,300 years of history and has incredible geographic diversity—Islamic empires and dynasties controlled territory from Spain to western China at various points in history. However, few if any of these various countries or Muslim empires would have referred to their art as Islamic. An artisan in Damascus thought of his work as Syrian or Damascene—not as Islamic.

As a result of thinking about the problems of calling such art Islamic, certain scholars and major museums, like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have decided to omit the term Islamic when they renamed their new galleries of Islamic art. Instead, they are called "Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia," thereby stressing the regional styles and individual cultures. Thus, when using the phrase, Islamic Art, one should know that it is a useful, but artificial, concept.

In some ways, Islamic Art is a bit like referring to the Italian Renaissance. During the Renaissance, there was no unified Italy; it was a land of independent city-states. No one would have thought of one's self as an Italian, or of the art they produced as Italian, rather one conceived of one's self as a Roman, a Florentine, or a Venetian. Each city developed a highly local, remarkable style. At the same time, there are certain underlying themes or similarities that unify the art and architecture of these cities and allow scholars to speak of an Italian Renaissance.

Themes

Similarly, there are themes and types of objects that link the arts of the Islamic World together. Calligraphy is a very important art form in the Islamic World. The Qur'an, written in elegant scripts, represents Allah's (or God's) divine word, which Muhammad received directly from Allah during his visions. Quranic verses, executed in calligraphy, are found on many different forms of art and architecture. Likewise, poetry can be found on everything from ceramic bowls to the walls of houses. Calligraphy's omnipresence underscores the value that is placed on language, specifically Arabic.

Geometric and vegetative motifs are very popular throughout the lands where Islam was once or still is a major religion and cultural force, appearing in the private palaces of buildings such as the Alhambra (in Spain) as well as in the detailed metal work of Safavid Iran. Likewise, certain building types appear throughout the Muslim world: mosques with their minarets, mausolea, gardens, and madrasas (religious schools) are all common. However, their forms vary greatly.



Figure **13.3.1.8**: View of the minarets of the Blue Mosque, Istanbul (photo: Graham Bould)

One of the most common misconceptions about the art of the Islamic World is that it is aniconic; that is, the art does not contain representations of humans or animals. Religious art and architecture, almost from the earliest examples, such as the Dome of the Rock, the Aqsa Mosque (both in Jerusalem), and the Great Mosque of Damascus, built under the Umayyad rulers, did not include

human figures and animals. However, the private residences of sovereigns, such as Qasr ‘Amra or Khirbat Mafjar, were filled with vast figurative paintings, mosaics, and sculpture.



Figure 13.3.1.9: Minarets of Al-Azhar Mosque, Cairo, Egypt (photo: Ahmed Al.Badawy)

The study of the arts of the Islamic World has also lagged behind other fields in Art History. There are several reasons for this. First, many scholars are not familiar with Arabic or Farsi (the dominant language in Iran). Calligraphy, particularly Arabic calligraphy, as noted above, is a major art form and appears on almost all types of architecture and arts. Second, the art forms and objects prized in the Islamic world do not correspond to those traditionally valued by art historians and collectors in the Western world. The so-called decorative arts—carpets, ceramics, metalwork, and books—are types of art that Western scholars have traditionally valued less than painting and sculpture. However, the last fifty years has seen a flourishing of scholarship on the arts of the Islamic World.

Arts of the Islamic World

Here, we have decided to use the phrase “Arts of the Islamic World” to emphasize the art that was created in a world where Islam was a dominant religion or a major cultural force, but was not necessarily religious art. Often when the word “Islamic” is used today, it is used to describe something religious; thus using the phrase, Islamic Art, potentially implies, mistakenly, that all of this art is religious in nature. The phrase, “Arts of the Islamic World,” also acknowledges that not all of the work produced in the “Islamic World” was for Muslims or was created by Muslims.

Note on organization from the contributing editor

We have organized the material in this section into three chronological periods: Early, Medieval and Late. When starting to learn about a new area of art, chronological organization often enables students to grasp the material and its fundamentals before going on to more complex analysis, like comparing building types or styles. Within each of these chronological groups, we have focused on creating geographic groups or groupings to organize the material further. The Islamic World was only unified very briefly in its history under the Umayyads (661-750 CE) and the early Abbasids (750-932 CE). Soon various dynasties or rulers simultaneously commanded sections of territory, many of which had no cultural commonalities, aside from their religion.

We are also planning to upload a series of introductory essays on major types of art and architecture from the Islamic World, including carpets and mosques, in addition to essays and videos about specific works of art and architecture. These are forthcoming.

Arabic, Persian and Turkish are complex languages whose transcription from their respective scripts to English has changed considerably over time. For the sake of ease, we have used the most common forms today, omitting the vocalizations. While we have aimed for consistency, we have also tried to use the simplest forms for those who are new to the arts of the Islamic World.

Additional resources:

Bloom, Jonathan, and Sheila Blair. *Islamic Arts*. London: Phaidon Press, 1997.

The Nature of Islamic Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Archnet, a resource focused on architecture, urbanism, environmental and landscape design, visual culture, and conservation issues related to the Muslim world

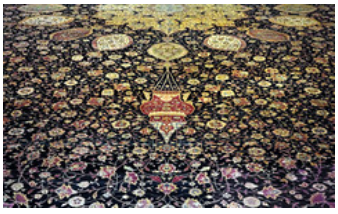
Islamic Art reading list from the Victoria and Albert Museum

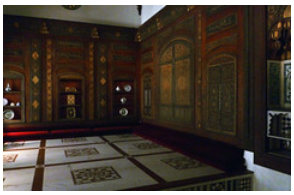
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88683

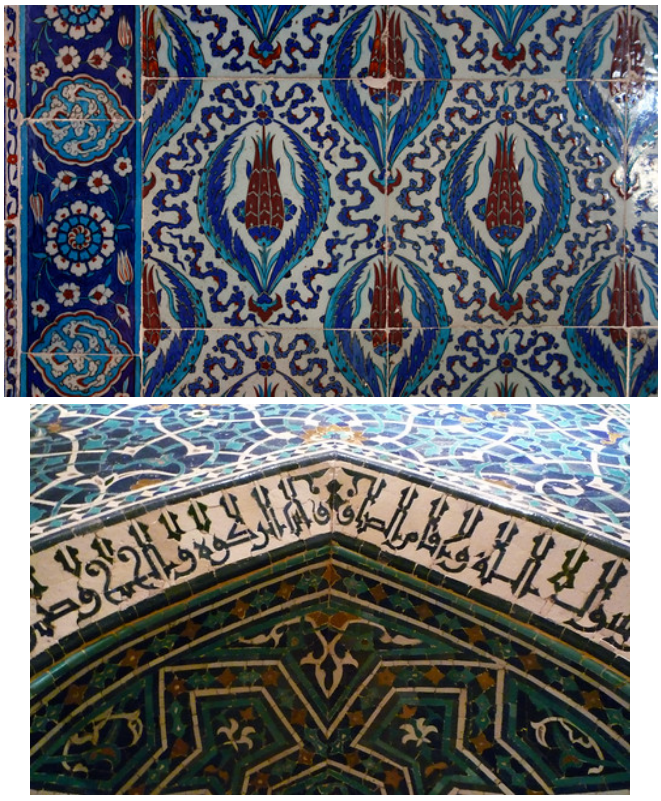


Figure **13.3.1.10**: More Smarthistory images…

The Five Pillars of Islam

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS

Almost as soon as the Arab armies of Islam conquered new lands, they began erecting mosques and palaces, as well as commissioning other works of art as expressions of their faith and culture. Connected to this, many aspects of religious practice in Islam also emerged and were codified. The religious practice of Islam, which literally means to submit to God, is based on tenets that are known as the Five Pillars (arkan), to which all members of the Islamic community (Umma) should adhere.



Figure **13.3.1.11**: Shahada (photo: **mus**)

1. The profession of faith (the shahada)

The profession of Faith (the shahada) is the most fundamental expression of Islamic beliefs. It simply states that “There is no God but God and Muhammad is his prophet.” It underscores the monotheistic nature of Islam. It is an extremely popular phrase in Arabic calligraphy and appears in numerous manuscripts and religious buildings.

2. Daily prayers (salat)

Muslims are expected to pray five times a day. This does not mean that they need to attend a mosque to pray; rather, the salat, or the daily prayer, should be recited five times a day. Muslims can pray anywhere; however, they are meant to pray towards Mecca. The faithful are meant to pray by bowing several times while standing and then kneel and touch the ground or prayer mat with their foreheads, as a symbol of their reverence and submission to Allah. On Friday, many Muslims attend the mosque near mid-day to pray and to listen to a sermon (khutba).

3. Alms-giving (zakat)

The giving of alms is the third pillar. Although not defined in the Qu'ran, Muslims believe that they are meant to share their wealth with those less-fortunate in their community of believers.

4. Fasting during Ramadan (saum)

During the holy month of Ramadan (the ninth month in the Islamic calendar), Muslims are expected to fast from dawn to dusk. While there are exceptions made for the sick, elderly, and pregnant, all are expected to refrain from eating and drinking during day-light hours.

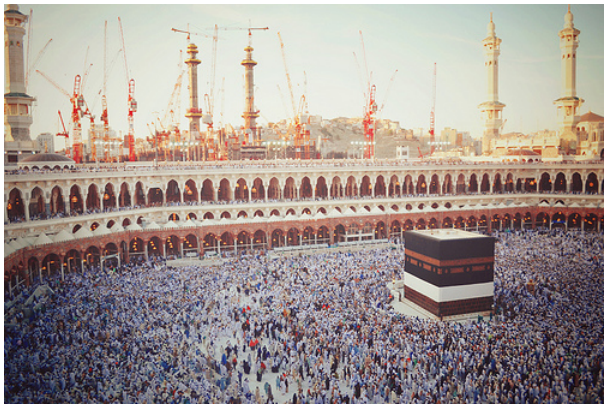


Figure **13.3.1.12**: Photograph of Hajj in 2011 (photo: @ifatma)

5. Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca

All Muslims who are able, are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and the surrounding holy sites at least once in their lives. Pilgrimage focuses on visiting the Kaaba and walking around it seven times. Pilgrimage occurs in the twelfth month of the Islamic Calendar.

Additional resources:

Hajj Stories from the Asian Art Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

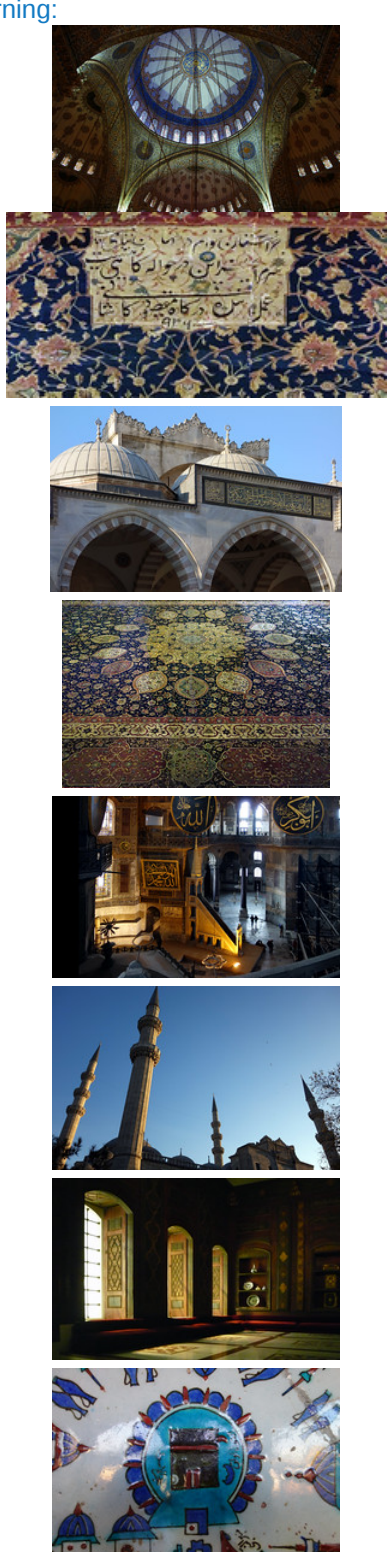


Figure **13.3.1.13**: More Smarthistory images…

Hajj

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.3.1.14**: Muhammad Sadiq Bey, *View of the Sanctuary at Mecca*, c. 1880 (Victoria and Albert Museum, PH.2132-1924). This view is from the east of the holy mosque with the city of Mecca in the background. Muhammad Sadiq Bey (1832-1902), the Egyptian army engineer, surveyor and a pioneer of photography, probably took this photograph from one of the minarets of the holy mosque.

Mecca and the Ka'ba

One of the five pillars of Islam central to Muslim belief, Hajj is the pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must make at least once in their lifetime if they are able; it is the most spiritual event that a Muslim experiences, observing rituals in the most sacred places in the Islamic world. Mecca is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad. The sanctuary there with the Ka'ba is the holiest site in Islam. As such, it is a deeply spiritual destination for Muslims all over the world; it is the heart of Islam.

At the heart of the sanctuary at Mecca lies the Ka'ba, the cube-shaped building that Muslims believe was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. It was in Mecca that the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations in the early 7th century. Therefore the city has long been viewed as a spiritual centre and the heart of Islam. The rituals involved with Hajj have remained unchanged since its beginning, and it continues to be a powerful religious undertaking which draws Muslims together from all over the world, irrespective of nationality or sect.

Even before Islam, Mecca was an important site of pilgrimage for the Arab tribes of north and central Arabia. Although they believed in many deities, they came once a year to worship Allah at Mecca. During this sacred month, violence was forbidden within Mecca, allowing trade to flourish. As a result, Mecca became an important commercial centre. The revelation of Islam to the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) restored the ancient religion of the One God to the Arab people and transformed Mecca into the holiest city in the Islamic world.

The rituals

Hajj involves a series of rituals that take place in and around Mecca over a period of five to six days. The first of these is tawaf in which pilgrims walk around the Ka'ba seven times in an anti-clockwise direction. Muslims believe that the rituals of Hajj have their origin in the time of the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). Muhammad led the Hajj himself in 632, the year of his death. The Hajj now attracts about three million pilgrims every year from across the world.

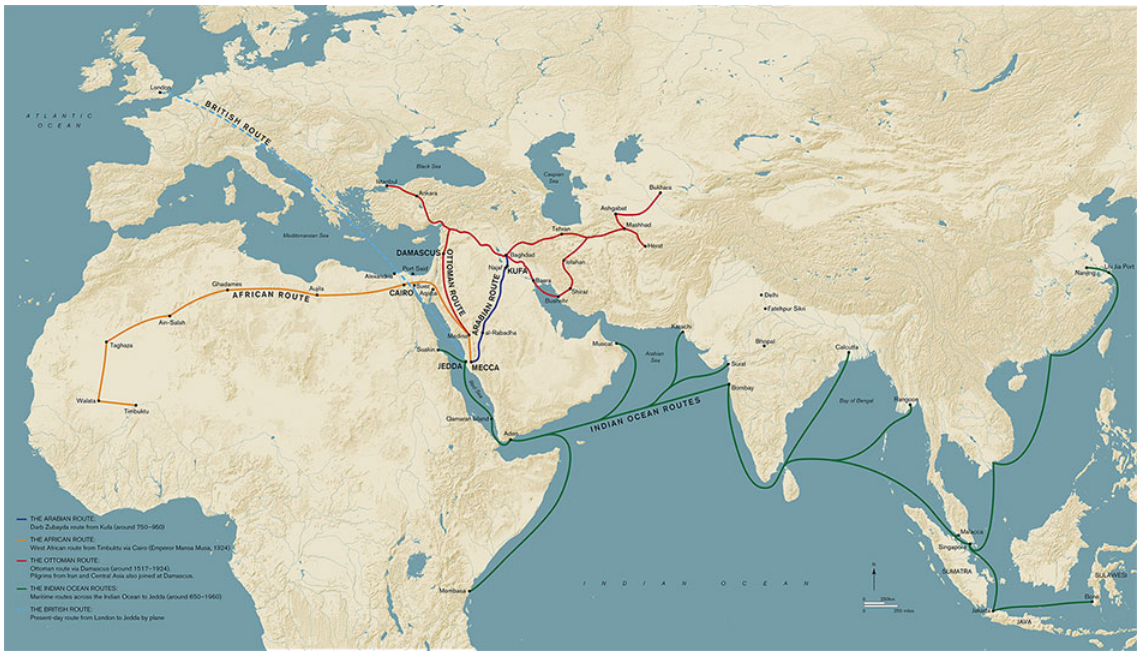


Figure **13.3.1.15**: Map showing major Hajj routes highlighted in the exhibition, Matt Bigg © Trustees of the British Museum

The journey

From the furthest reaches of the Islamic world, pilgrims have made the spiritual journey that is the ambition of a lifetime. As Hajj needs to be performed at a designated time, historically pilgrims moved together in convoys. In the past the journey could be extremely dangerous. Pilgrims often fell ill or were robbed on the way and became destitute. However, pilgrims do not fear dying on Hajj. It is believed that those who die on Hajj will go to heaven with their sins erased. Today, pilgrims can get on an airplane to reach Saudi Arabia, making the journey in contrast with the past quick and less arduous.

The Qur'an states that Hajj should take place "in the specified months," and these are the last three months of the Muslim calendar, known as Miqat Zamani (fixed times). Although the main acts of the Hajj take place in five days during the twelfth month, a pilgrim can start going into consecration (ihram) for Hajj earlier, from the beginning of the tenth month (Shawwal). The Muslim calendar is lunar, which means that the Hajj takes place progressively across all four seasons over time rather than in the full heat of summer every year. On foot, by camel, boat, train or airplane, going on Hajj is a spiritual endeavor that begins at home and culminates in Mecca; in going, arriving, and returning, the pilgrim is mindful of the magnitude of the journey and the reward in this world and the hereafter.

When pilgrims undertake the Hajj journey, they follow in the footsteps of millions before them. Nowadays hundreds of thousands of believers from over 70 nations arrive in Mecca in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by road, sea and air every year, completing a journey faster and in some ways less arduous than it often was in the past. Those traveling overland by camel and on foot congregated at three central points: Kufa (Iraq), Damascus (Syria) and Cairo (Egypt). Pilgrims coming by sea would enter Arabia at the port of Jedda.

© Trustees of the British Museum

The Kaaba

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS

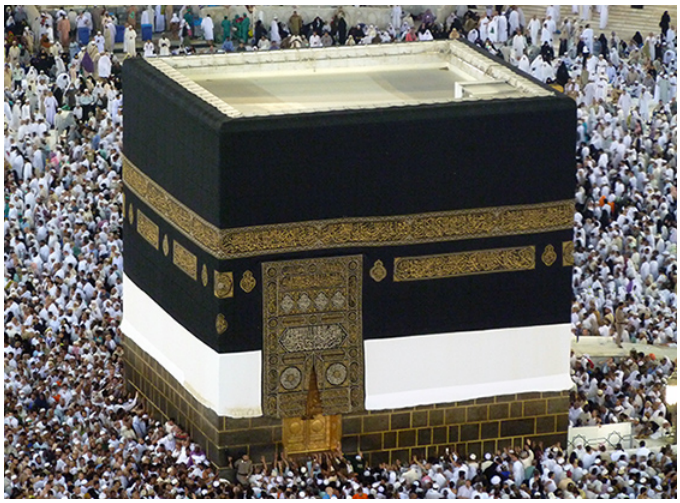


Figure **13.3.1.16**: The Kaaba, granite masonry, covered with silk curtain and calligraphy in gold and silver-wrapped thread, pre-Islamic monument, rededicated by Muhammad in 631-32 C.E., multiple renovations, Mecca, Saudi Arabia (photo: The Kaaba in the Masjid el Haram, 2010 Tab59, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Prayer and pilgrimage

Pilgrimage to a holy site is a core principle of almost all faiths. The Kaaba, meaning cube in Arabic, is a square building, elegantly draped in a silk and cotton veil. Located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, it is the holiest shrine in Islam.

In Islam, Muslims pray five times a day and after 624 C.E., these prayers were directed towards Mecca and the Kaaba rather than Jerusalem; this direction (or qibla in Arabic), is marked in all mosques and enables the faithful to know in what direction they should pray. The Qur'an established the direction of prayer.

All Muslims aspire to undertake the hajj, or the annual pilgrimage, to the Kaaba once in their life if they are able. Prayer five times a day and the hajj are two of the five pillars of Islam, the most fundamental principles of the faith.

Upon arriving in Mecca, pilgrims gather in the courtyard of the Masjid al-Haram around the Kaaba. They then circumambulate (tawaf in Arabic) or walk around the Kaaba, during which they hope to kiss and touch the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad), embedded in the eastern corner of the Kaaba.

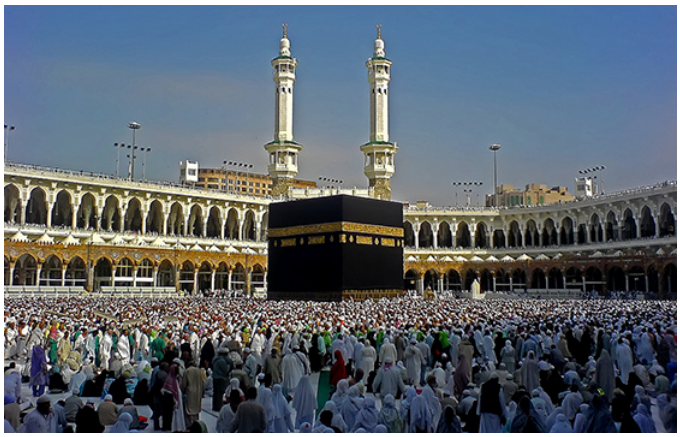


Figure **13.3.1.17**: View of pilgrims performing Tawaf (circumambulating) the Kaaba from the gate of Abdul Aziz (photo: Muhammad Mahdi Karim, GNU version 1.2 only)

The history and form of the Kaaba

The Kaaba was a sanctuary in pre-Islamic times. Muslims believe that Abraham (known as Ibrahim in the Islamic tradition), and his son, Ismail, constructed the Kaaba. Tradition holds that it was originally a simple unroofed rectangular structure. The Quraysh tribe, who ruled Mecca, rebuilt the pre-Islamic Kaaba in c. 608 C.E. with alternating courses of masonry and wood. A door was raised above ground level to protect the shrine from intruders and flood waters.

Muhammad was driven out of Mecca in 620 C.E. to Yathrib, which is now known as Medina. Upon his return to Mecca in 629/30 C.E., the shrine became the focal point for Muslim worship and pilgrimage. The pre-Islamic Kaaba housed the Black Stone and statues of pagan gods. Muhammad reportedly cleansed the Kaaba of idols upon his victorious return to Mecca, returning the shrine to the monotheism of Ibrahim. The Black Stone is believed to have been given to Ibrahim by the angel Gabriel and is revered by Muslims. Muhammad made a final pilgrimage in 632 C.E., the year of his death, and thereby established the rites of pilgrimage.

Modifications

The Kaaba has been modified extensively throughout its history. The area around the Kaaba was expanded in order to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims by the second caliph, ‘Umar (ruled 634-44). The Caliph ‘Uthman (ruled 644-56) built the colonnades around the open plaza where the Kaaba stands and incorporated other important monuments into the sanctuary.

During the civil war between the caliph Abd al-Malik and Ibn Zubayr who controlled Mecca, the Kaaba was set on fire in 683 C.E. Reportedly, the Black Stone broke into three pieces and Ibn Zubayr reassembled it with silver. He rebuilt the Kaaba in wood and stone, following Ibrahim’s original dimensions and also paved the space around the Kaaba. After regaining control of Mecca, Abd al-Malik restored the part of the building that Muhammad is thought to have designed. None of these renovations can be confirmed through study of the building or archaeological evidence; these changes are only outlined in later literary sources.

Reportedly under the Umayyad caliph al-Walid (ruled 705-15), the mosque that encloses the Kaaba was decorated with mosaics like those of the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus. By the seventh century, the Kaaba was covered with kiswa, a black cloth that is replaced annually during the hajj.

Under the early Abbasid Caliphs (750-1250), the mosque around the Kaaba was expanded and modified several times. According to travel writers, such as the Ibn Jubayr, who saw the Kaaba in 1183, it retained the eighth century Abbasid form for several centuries. From 1269-1517, the Mamluks of Egypt controlled the Hijaz, the highlands in western Arabia where Mecca is located. Sultan Qaitbay (ruled 1468-96) built a madrasa (a religious school) against one side of the mosque. Under the Ottoman sultans, Süleyman I (ruled 1520-1566) and Selim II (ruled 1566-74), the complex was heavily renovated. In 1631, the Kaaba and the surrounding mosque were entirely rebuilt after floods had demolished them in the previous year. This mosque, which is what exists today, is composed of a large open space with colonnades on four sides and with seven minarets, the largest number of any mosque in the world. At the center of this large plaza sits the Kaaba, as well as many other holy buildings and monuments.

The last major modifications were carried out in the 1950s by the government of Saudi Arabia to accommodate the increasingly large number of pilgrims who come on the hajj. Today the mosque covers almost forty acres.



Figure **13.3.1.18**: The Kaaba at al-Haram Mosque, 2008 (photo: Al Jazeera English, CC: BY 2.0)

The Kaaba today

Today, the Kaaba is a cubical structure, unlike almost any other religious structure. It is fifteen meters tall and ten and a half meters on each side; its corners roughly align with the cardinal directions. The door of the Kaaba is now made of solid gold; it was added in 1982. The kiswa, a large cloth that covers the Kaaba, which used to be sent from Egypt with the hajj caravan, today is made in Saudi Arabia. Until the advent of modern transportation, all pilgrims undertook the often dangerous hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca in a large caravan across the desert, leaving from Damascus, Cairo, or other major cities in Arabia, Yemen or Iraq.

The numerous changes to the Kaaba and its associated mosque serve as good reminder of how often buildings, even sacred ones, were renovated and remodeled either due to damage or to the changing needs of the community.

Only Muslims may visit the holy cities of Mecca and Medina today.

Additional resources:

Hajj Stories from the Asian Art Museum

Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, “Mecca” in *The Grove encyclopedia of Islamic art and Architecture*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Oxford University Press, 1932/revised and enlarged 1969.

Stories of the modern pilgrimage

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.3.1.1**: Every year, 25,000 British Muslims make the pilgrimage to Mecca. As part of the exhibition, *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam*, the British Museum asked what this journey is like. Video © Trustees of the British Museum.

Additional resources:

More Hajj stories from the Asian Art Museum

The complex geometry of Islamic design

by TED-ED



Video **13.3.1.2**: Video from TED-Ed. Speaker: Eric Broug.

Introduction to mosque architecture

by KENDRA WEISBIN



Figure **13.3.1.19**: Mimar Sinan, courtyard of the Süleymaniye Mosque, İstanbul, 1558

From Indonesia to the United Kingdom, the mosque in its many forms is the quintessential Islamic building. The mosque, masjid in Arabic, is the Muslim gathering place for prayer. Masjid simply means “place of prostration.” Though most of the five daily prayers prescribed in Islam can take place anywhere, all men are required to gather together at the mosque for the Friday noon prayer.

Mosques are also used throughout the week for prayer, study, or simply as a place for rest and reflection. The main mosque of a city, used for the Friday communal prayer, is called a jami masjid, literally meaning “Friday mosque,” but it is also sometimes called a congregational mosque in English. The style, layout, and decoration of a mosque can tell us a lot about Islam in general, but also about the period and region in which the mosque was constructed.

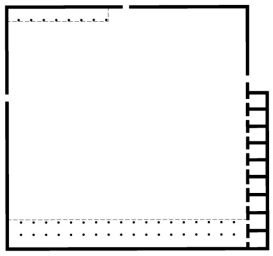


Figure **13.3.1.20**: Diagram reconstruction of the Prophet’s House, Medina, Saudi Arabia

The home of the Prophet Muhammad is considered the first mosque. His house, in Medina in modern-day Saudi Arabia, was a typical 7th-century Arabian style house, with a large courtyard surrounded by long rooms supported by columns. This style of mosque came to be known as a hypostyle mosque, meaning “many columns.” Most mosques built in Arab lands utilized this style for centuries.

Common features

The architecture of a mosque is shaped most strongly by the regional traditions of the time and place where it was built. As a result, style, layout, and decoration can vary greatly. Nevertheless, because of the common function of the mosque as a place of congregational prayer, certain architectural features appear in mosques all over the world.

Sahn (courtyard)

The most fundamental necessity of congregational mosque architecture is that it be able to hold the entire male population of a city or town (women are welcome to attend Friday prayers, but not required to do so). To that end congregational mosques must have a large prayer hall. In many mosques this is adjoined to an open courtyard, called a sahn. Within the courtyard one often finds a fountain, its waters both a welcome respite in hot lands, and important for the ablutions (ritual cleansing) done before prayer.



Figure **13.3.1.21**: Mihrab & minbar, Mosque of Sultan Hassan, Cairo, 1356-63 (photo: Dave Berkowitz, CC BY 2.0)

Mihrab (niche)

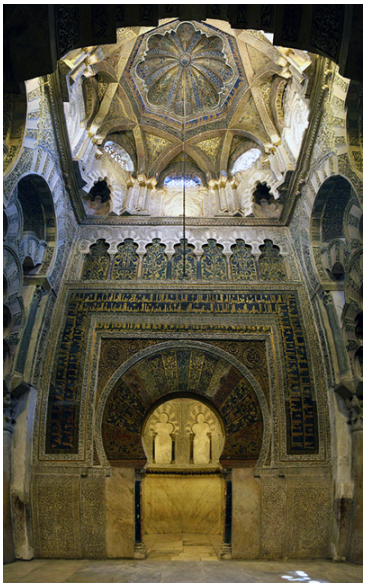


Figure **13.3.1.22**: Mihrab, Great Mosque of Cordoba, c. 786 (photo: **Bongo Vongo**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Another essential element of a mosque's architecture is a mihrab—a niche in the wall that indicates the direction of Mecca, towards which all Muslims pray. Mecca is the city in which the Prophet Muhammad was born, and the home of the most important Islamic site, the Kaaba. The direction of Mecca is called the qibla, and so the wall in which the mihrab is set is called the qibla wall. No matter where a mosque is, its mihrab indicates the direction of Mecca (or as near that direction as science and geography were able to place it). Therefore, a mihrab in India will be to the west, while a one in Egypt will be to the east. A mihrab is usually a relatively shallow niche, as in the example from Egypt, above. In the example from Spain, shown right, the mihrab's niche takes the form of a small room, this is more rare.

Minaret (tower)

One of the most visible aspects of mosque architecture is the minaret, a tower adjacent or attached to a mosque, from which the call to prayer is announced.

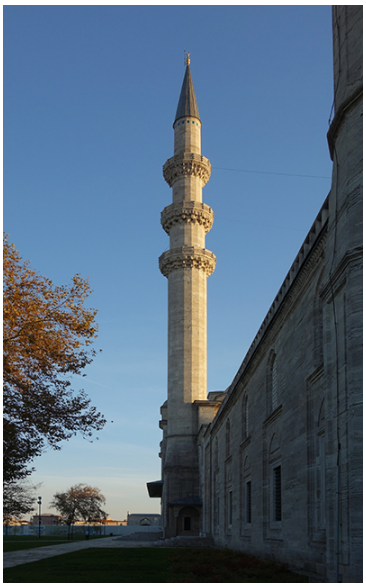


Figure **13.3.1.23**: Mimar Sinan, Minaret, Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul, 1558

Minarets take many different forms—from the famous spiral minaret of Samarra, to the tall, pencil minarets of Ottoman Turkey. Not solely functional in nature, the minaret serves as a powerful visual reminder of the presence of Islam.

Qubba (dome)

Most mosques also feature one or more domes, called qubba in Arabic. While not a ritual requirement like the mihrab, a dome does possess significance within the mosque—as a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven. The interior decoration of a dome often emphasizes this symbolism, using intricate geometric, stellate, or vegetal motifs to create breathtaking patterns meant to awe and inspire. Some mosque types incorporate multiple domes into their architecture (as in the Ottoman Süleymaniye Mosque pictured at the top of the page), while others only feature one. In mosques with only a single dome, it is invariably found surmounting the qibla wall, the holiest section of the mosque. The Great Mosque of Kairouan, in Tunisia (not pictured) has three domes: one atop the minaret, one above the entrance to the prayer hall, and one above the qibla wall.

Because it is the directional focus of prayer, the qibla wall, with its mihrab and minbar, is often the most ornately decorated area of a mosque. The rich decoration of the qibla wall is apparent in this image of the mihrab and minbar of the Mosque of Sultan Hasan in Cairo, Egypt (see image higher on the page).

Furnishings



Figure **13.3.1.24**: Mosque lamp, 14th century, Egypt or Syria, blown glass, enamel, gilding, 31.8 x 23.2 cm (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

There are other decorative elements common to most mosques. For instance, a large calligraphic frieze or a cartouche with a prominent inscription often appears above the mihrab. In most cases the calligraphic inscriptions are quotations from the Qur'an, and often include the date of the building's dedication and the name of the patron. Another important feature of mosque decoration are hanging lamps, also visible in the photograph of the Sultan Hasan mosque. Light is an essential feature for mosques, since the first and last daily prayers occur before the sun rises and after the sun sets. Before electricity, mosques were illuminated with oil lamps. Hundreds of such lamps hung inside a mosque would create a glittering spectacle, with soft light emanating from each, highlighting the calligraphy and other decorations on the lamps' surfaces. Although not a permanent part of a mosque building, lamps, along with other furnishings like carpets, formed a significant—though ephemeral—aspect of mosque architecture.

Mosque patronage

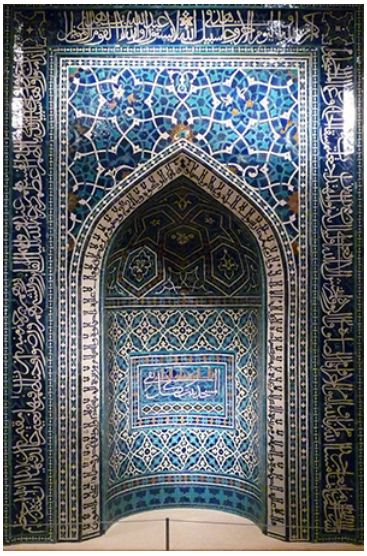


Figure **13.3.1.25**: Mihrab, 1354–55, just after the Ilkhanid period, Madrasa Imami, Isfahan, Iran, polychrome glazed tiles, 343.1 x 288.7 cm (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Most historical mosques are not stand-alone buildings. Many incorporated charitable institutions like soup kitchens, hospitals, and schools. Some mosque patrons also chose to include their own mausoleum as part of their mosque complex. The endowment of charitable institutions is an important aspect of Islamic culture, due in part to the third pillar of Islam, which calls for Muslims to donate a portion of their income to the poor.

The commissioning of a mosque would be seen as a pious act on the part of a ruler or other wealthy patron, and the names of patrons are usually included in the calligraphic decoration of mosques. Such inscriptions also often praise the piety and generosity of the patron. For instance, the mihrab now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, bears the inscription:

And he [the Prophet], blessings and peace be upon him, said: "Whoever builds a mosque for God, even the size of a sand-grouse nest, based on piety, [God will build for him a palace in Paradise]."

The patronage of mosques was not only a charitable act therefore, but also, like architectural patronage in all cultures, an opportunity for self-promotion. The social services attached the mosques of the Ottoman sultans are some of the most extensive of their type. In Ottoman Turkey the complex surrounding a mosque is called a kulliye. The kulliye of the Mosque of Sultan Suleyman, in Istanbul, is a fine example of this phenomenon, comprising a soup kitchen, a hospital, several schools, public baths, and a caravanserai (similar to a hostel for travelers). The complex also includes two mausoleums for Sultan Suleyman and his family members.



Figure **13.3.1.26**: Süleymaniye Kulliyesi (view of kitchens and caravanserai), Istanbul

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







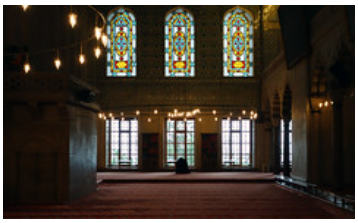






Figure **13.3.1.27**: More Smarthistory images…

Common types of mosque architecture

by KENDRA WEISBIN

Since the 7th century, mosques have been built around the globe. While there are many different types of mosque architecture, three basic forms can be defined.

I. The hypostyle mosque

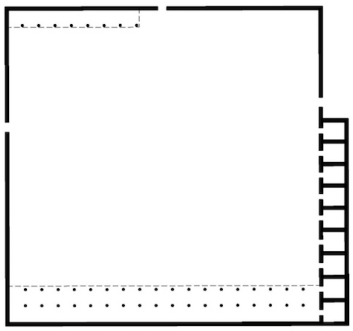


Figure **13.3.1.28**: Diagram reconstruction of the Prophet's House, Medina, Saudi Arabia

It makes sense that the first place of worship for muslims, the house of the Prophet Muhammad, inspired the earliest type of mosque – the hypostyle mosque. This type spread widely throughout Islamic lands.

The Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia, is an archetypal example of the hypostyle mosque. The mosque was built in the ninth century by Ziyadat Allah, the third ruler of the Aghlabid dynasty, an offshoot of the Abbasid Empire. It is a large, rectangular stone mosque with a hypostyle (supported by columns) hall and a large inner sahn (courtyard). The three-tiered minaret is in a style known as the Syrian bell-tower, and may have originally been based on the form of ancient Roman lighthouses. The interior of the mosque features the forest of columns that has come to define the hypostyle type.



Figure **13.3.1.29**: Sahn and minaret, Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia, c. 836-75 (photo: **Andrew Watson**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The mosque was built on a former Byzantine site, and the architects repurposed older materials, such as the columns—a decision that was both practical and a powerful assertion of the Islamic conquest of Byzantine lands. Many early mosques like this one made use of older architectural materials (called spolia), in a similarly symbolic way.



Figure **13.3.1.30**: Ancient capitals (spolia), Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia (photo: **Jaume Ollé**, CC BY 2.5)

On right hand side of mosque's mihrab is the maqsura, a special area reserved for the ruler found in some, but not all, mosques. This mosque's maqsura is the earliest extant example, and its minbar (pulpit) is the earliest dated minbar known to scholars. Both are carved from teak wood that was imported from Southeast Asia. This prized wood was shipped from Thailand to Baghdad where it was carved, then carried on camel back from Iraq to Tunisia, in a remarkable display of medieval global commerce.

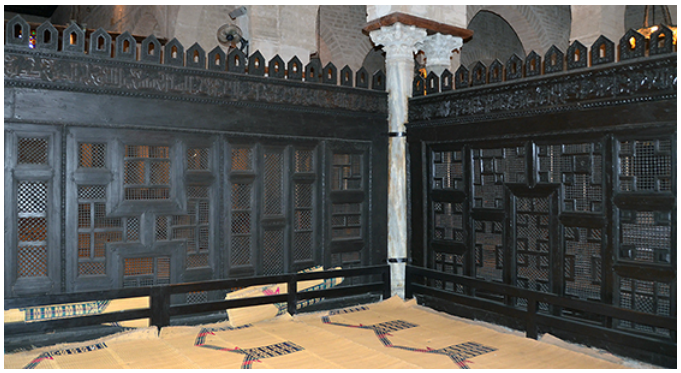


Figure **13.3.1.31**: Maqsura, Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia (photo: **Prof. Richard Mortel**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The hypostyle plan was used widely in Islamic lands prior to the introduction of the four-iwan plan in the twelfth century (see next section). The hypostyle plan's characteristic forest of columns was used in different mosques to great effect. One of the most famous examples is the Great Mosque of Cordoba, which uses bi-color, two-tier arches that emphasize the almost dizzying optical effect of the hypostyle hall.



Figure **13.3.1.32**: Interior of the Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain, 8th-10th centuries (photo: **Timor Espallargas**, CC BY-SA 2.5)

II. The four-iwan mosque

Just as the hypostyle hall defined much of mosque architecture of the early Islamic period; the 11th century shows the emergence of new form: the four-iwan mosque. An iwan is a vaulted space that opens on one side to a courtyard. The iwan developed in pre-Islamic Iran where it was used in monumental and imperial architecture. Strongly associated with Persian architecture, the iwan continued to be used in monumental architecture in the Islamic era.

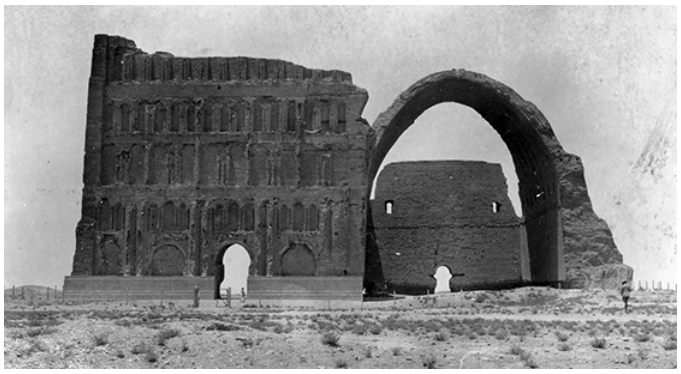


Figure **13.3.1.33**: Iwan, Ctesiphon, Iraq, c. 560 (photo: Edwin Newman Album AL4-B, page 3, San Diego Air and Space Museum Archive

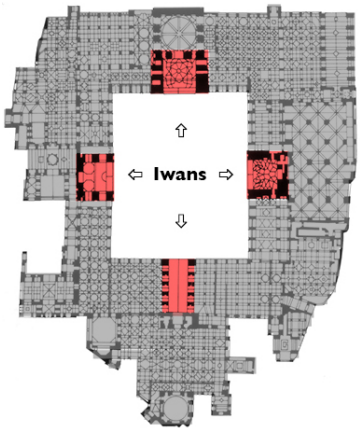


Figure **13.3.1.34**: Plan of the Great Mosque of Isfahan, Iran, showing iwans opening onto the sahn (court)

In 11th century Iran, hypostyle mosques started to be converted into four-iwan mosques, which, as the name indicates, incorporate four iwans in their architectural plan.

The Great Mosque of Isfahan reflects this broader development. The mosque began its life as a hypostyle mosque, but was modified by the Seljuqs of Iran after their conquest of the city of Isfahan in the 11th century.

Like a hypostyle mosque, the layout is arranged around a large open courtyard. However, in the four-iwan mosque, each wall of the courtyard is punctuated with a monumental vaulted hall, the iwan. This mosque type, which became widespread in the 12th

century, has maintained its popularity to the present.



Figure 13.3.1.35: View of three (of four) Iwans, Great Mosque of Isfahan, Iran, 11th – 17th centuries, looking toward the south (qibla) iwan (photo: reibai, CC BY 2.0)

In this type of mosque the qibla iwan, which faces Mecca, is often the largest and most ornately decorated, as at Isfahan's Great Mosque. Here, the mosque's two minarets also flank the lavish qibla iwan. The Safavid rulers refurbished these walls with new tiles in the 16th century.



Figure 13.3.1.36: Iwan, Great Mosque of Isfahan, Iran (photo: reibai, CC BY 2.0)

Though it originated in Iran, the four-iwan plan would become the new plan for mosques all over the Islamic word, used widely from India to Cairo and replacing the hypostyle mosque in many places.

III. The centrally-planned mosque

While the four-iwan plan was used for mosques across the Islamic world, the Ottoman Empire was one of the few places in the central Islamic lands where the four-iwan mosque plan did not dominate. The Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299. However, it did not become a major force until the 15th century, when Mehmed II conquered Constantinople, the capital of the late Roman (Byzantine) Empire since the 4th century. Renamed Istanbul, the city straddles the European and Asian continents, and, having been a Christian capital for over a thousand years, had a wholly different cultural and architectural heritage than Iran. The Ottoman architects were strongly influenced by Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, the greatest of all Byzantine churches and one that features a monumental central dome high over its large nave.



Figure 13.3.1.37: Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus, Hagia Sophia, 537, Istanbul

Many Ottoman mosques in the late 15th and early 16th centuries referenced Hagia Sophia's dome; however, it was not until the masterful work of Mimar Sinan, the greatest Ottoman, if not Islamic, architect, that the domes of Ottoman mosques competed with and arguably surpassed that of Hagia Sophia. Sinan experimented with the central plan in a series of mosques in Istanbul, achieving what he considered his masterpiece in the Mosque of Selim II, in Edirne, Turkey. Built for Selim II, son of Suleyman during the golden age of the Ottoman Empire, it is considered the greatest masterpiece of Ottoman architecture. It represents a culmination of years of experimentation with the centrally-planned Ottoman mosque.



Figure **13.3.1.38**: Mimar Sinan, Dome interior, Selimiye II Mosque in Edirne, Turkey, 1568-74 (photo: **CharlesFred/Charles Roffey**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Sinan himself boasted that his dome was higher and wider than that of the Hagia Sophia, highlighting the sense of competition with the earlier Byzantine building. In the Selim Mosque, Sinan distilled previous ideas about the central plan into a simple and perfect design. The interior octagonal space was made more spacious by 8 massive piers that pushed back into the walls, and a rhythmic harmony was created through apertures of small and large arches framed by joggled voussoirs, filling the large space with light and color.

Mosque architecture around the world



Figure **13.3.1.39**: Minaret, Bahasa Indonesia: Masjid Menara Kudus Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, 1549 (photo: **PL09Puryono**, CC0 1.0)

The three mosque types described above are the most common, and most historically significant, in the Islamic world. Despite their common features, such as mihrabs and minarets, one can see that diverse regional styles account for dramatic differences in the colors, materials, and the overall decoration of mosques. The bright blue and white tiled mihrabs of fourteenth-century Iran are a world apart from the muted colors and stone inlay of an Egyptian mihrab of the same century.

Even more regional differences appear when one looks beyond the central Islamic lands to the architecture of Muslims living in places like China, Africa, and Indonesia, where local materials and regional traditions, sometimes with little influence from the architectural heritage of the central Islamic lands, influenced mosque architecture.

The minaret at Kudus, Indonesia, for instance, reflects the influence of Hindu architecture. The Djingarey Berre Mosque of Timbuktu, in Mali, similarly responds to the pre-Islamic traditions of its own region, utilizing a unique West African style and using earth as the primary building material.



Figure 13.3.1.40: Djingarey Berre Mosque, Timbuktu, Mali, 1327 (photo: MINUSMA/Marco Dormino, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

An early mosque in Xian, China, uses a very clearly Chinese style of architecture (below, left), but also incorporates more typical Islamic elements, like squinches and a distinctly Islamic-style arched mihrab (below, right).



Figure 13.3.1.41: Great Mosque of Xi'an, China, 1392 (photo: chensiyuan, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Contemporary mosque architecture



Figure 13.3.1.42: Mihrab, Great Mosque of Xi'an, China, 1392 (photo: Syed Husain Quadri, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Contemporary mosque architecture often represents a remarkable blending of styles, drawing from diverse architectural traditions to create something recognizably "Islamic," that fulfills all the architectural requirements of a communal mosque and is contemporary in style. In Pakistan, the King Faisal Mosque, 1986 blends contemporary architecture with visual references to traditional forms. The building is strikingly modern, yet plays with the form of the tent structures of Bedouin nomads. This large mosque also incorporates Ottoman-influenced pencil-thin minarets into its modern design.



Figure **13.3.1.43**: Vedat Dalokay, Shah Faisal Masjid, Islamabad, 1986 (photo: **Fraz.khalid1**, CC0 1.0)

Additional resources:

3D views of historically significant mosques

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

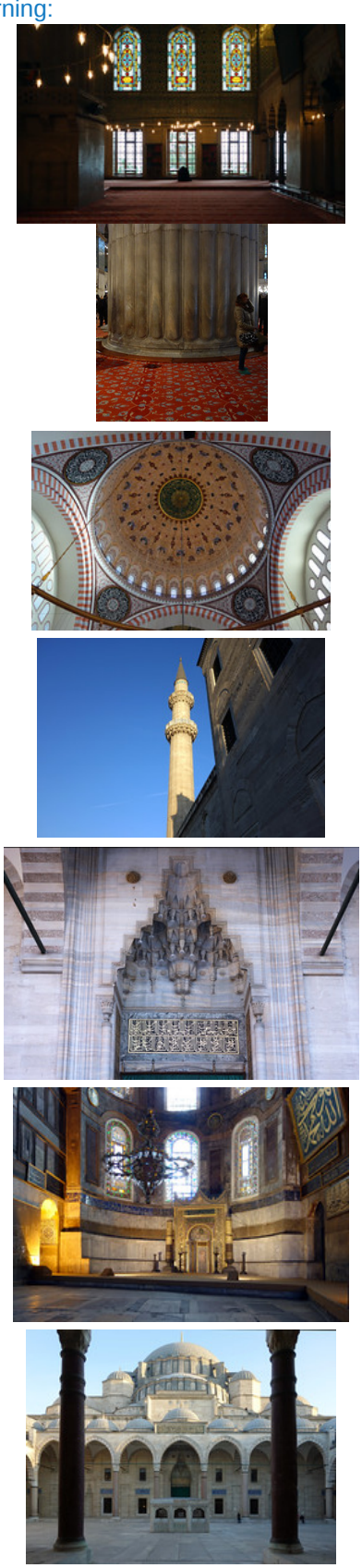


Figure 13.3.1.44: More Smarthistory images…

13.3.1: A beginner's guide is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **3.1: A beginner's guide** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.3.2: Early period

13.3.2: Early period is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.3.3: Medieval period

The Medieval period

This period saw the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the rise of the powerful Timurid empire.

c. 900 - 1517 C.E.

Arts of the Islamic world: The medieval period

by GLENNA BARLOW

For many, the Muslim world in the medieval period (900-1300) means the crusades. While this era was marked, in part, by military struggle, it is also overwhelmingly a period of peaceable exchanges of goods and ideas between West and East. Both the Christian and Islamic civilizations underwent great transformations and internal struggles during these years. In the Islamic world, dynasties fractured and began to develop distinctive styles of art. For the first time, disparate Islamic states existed at the same time. And although the Abbasid caliphate did not fully dissolve until 1258, other dynasties began to form, even before its end.

Fatimid (909-1171)



Figure **13.3.3.1**: The Fatimid Caliphate at its peak, c. 969

In the tenth century, the Fatimid dynasty emerged and posed a threat to the rule of the Abbasids. The Fatimid rulers, part of the Shi'ia faction, took their name from Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, from whom they claimed to be descended. The Sunnis, on the other hand, had previously pledged their alliance to Mu'awiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. At the height of their power, the Fatimids claimed lands from present-day Algeria to Syria. They conquered Egypt in 969 and founded the city of Cairo as their capital.

The Fatimid rulers expanded the power of the caliph and emphasized the importance of palace architecture. Mosques too were commissioned by royalty and every aspect of their decoration was of the highest caliber, from expertly-carved wooden minbars (where the spiritual leader guides prayers inside the mosque) to handcrafted metal lamps.

The wealth of the Fatimid court led to a general bourgeoning of the craft trade even outside of the religious context. Centers near Cairo became well known for ceramics, glass, metal, wood, and especially for lucrative textile production. The style of ornament developed as well, and artisans began to experiment with different forms of abstracted vegetal ornament and human figures.

This period is often called the Islamic renaissance, for its booming trade in decorative objects as well as the high quality of its artwork.

Saljuq (1040-1157/1081-1307)



Figure **13.3.3.2**: The Saljuq Empire in 1092

The Saljuq rulers were of Central Asian Turkic origin. Once they assumed power after 1040, the Seljuqs introduced Islam to places it had not been heretofore. The Seljuqs of Rum (referring to Rome) ruled much of Anatolia, what is now Turkey (between 1040 and 1157), while the Seljuqs of present-day Iran controlled the rest of the empire (from 1081 to 1307).

The Saljuqs of Iran were great supporters of education and the arts and they founded a number of important madrasas (schools) during their brief reign. The congregational mosques they erected began using a four-iwan plan: these incorporate four immense doorways (iwans) in the center of each wall of a courtyard.



Figure **13.3.3.3**: Mihrab (prayer niche), c. 1270, Konya, Turkey, now in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin (photo: Glenna Barlow)

The art of the Anatolian Saljuqs looks quite different, perhaps explaining why it is often labeled as a distinct sultanate. The inhabitants of this newly conquered land in Anatolia included members of various religions (largely Buddhists and Shamen), other heritages, and the Byzantine and Armenian Christian traditions. Saljuq projects often drew from these existing indigenous traditions—just as had been the case with the earliest Islamic buildings. Building materials included stone, brick, and wood, and there existed a widespread representation of animals and figures (some human) that had all but disappeared from architecture elsewhere in Islamic-ruled lands. The craftsmen here made great strides in the area of woodcarving, combining the elaborate scrolling and geometric forms typical of the Arabic aesthetic with wood, a medium indigenous to Turkey (and rarer in the desert climate of the Middle East).

Mamluk (1250-1517)

The name ‘Mamluk’, like many names, was given by later historians. The word itself means ‘owned’ in Arabic. It refers to the Turkic slaves who served as soldiers for the Ayyubid sultanate before revolting and rising to power. The Mamluks ruled over key lands in the Middle East, including Mecca and Medina. Their capital at Cairo became the artistic and economic center of the Islamic world at this time.



Figure **13.3.3.4**: Mosque lamp, Syria, 13th-14th century (Brooklyn Museum)

The period saw a great production of art and architecture, particularly those commissioned by the reigning sultans. Patronizing the arts and creating monumental structures was a way for leaders to display their wealth and make their power visible within the landscape of the city. The Mamluks constructed countless mosques, madrasas and mausolea that were lavishly furnished and decorated. Mamluk decorative objects, particularly glasswork, became renowned throughout the Mediterranean. The empire benefitted from the trade of these goods economically and culturally, as Mamluk craftsmen began to incorporate elements gleaned from contact with other groups. The growing prevalence of trade with China and exposure to Chinese goods, for instance, led to the Mamluk production of blue and white ceramics, an imitation of porcelain typical of the Far East.

The Mamluk sultanate was generally prosperous, in part supported by pilgrims to Mecca and Medina as well as a flourishing textile market, but in 1517 the Mamluk sultanate was overtaken and absorbed into the growing Ottoman empire.

Additional resources:

The Art of the Fatimid Period (909-1171) from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

The Art of the Seljuqs of Iran (ca. 1040-1157)

The Art of the Mamluk Period (1250-1517)

Mosque Lamp from the Brooklyn Museum

The Great Mosque (or Masjid-e Jameh) of Isfahan

by DR. RADHA DALAL



Figure **13.3.3.5**: Courtyard, The Great Mosque or Masjid-e Jameh of Isfahan (photo: **reibai**, CC BY 2.0)

Most cities with sizable Muslim populations possess a primary congregational mosque. Diverse in design and dimensions, they can illustrate the style of the period or geographic region, the choices of the patron, and the expertise of the architect. Congregational mosques are often expanded in conjunction with the growth and needs of the *umma*, or Muslim community; however, it is uncommon for such expansion and modification to continue over a span of a thousand years. The Great Mosque of Isfahan in Iran is unique in this regard and thus enjoys a

special place in the history of Islamic architecture. Its present configuration is the sum of building and decorating activities carried out from the 8th through the 20th centuries. It is an architectural documentary, visually embodying the political exigencies and aesthetic tastes of the great Islamic empires of Persia.



Figure **13.3.3.6**: Street view of the Grand Bazaar of Isfahan with the Great Mosque dome in the distance (photo: **Saif Alnuweiri**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Another distinctive aspect of the mosque is its urban integration. Positioned at the center of the old city, the mosque shares walls with other buildings abutting its perimeter. Due to its immense size and its numerous entrances (all except one inaccessible now), it formed a pedestrian hub, connecting the arterial network of paths crisscrossing the city. Far from being an insular sacred monument, the mosque facilitated public mobility and commercial activity thus transcending its principal function as a place for prayer alone.

The mosque's core structure dates primarily from the 11th century when the Seljuk Turks established Isfahan as their capital. Additions and alterations were made during Il-Khanid, Timurid, Safavid, and Qajar rule. An earlier mosque with a single inner courtyard already existed on the current location. Under the reign of Malik Shah I (ruled 1072-1092) and his immediate successors, the mosque grew to its current four-iwan design. Indeed, the Great Mosque of Isfahan is considered the prototype for future four-iwan mosques (an iwan is a vaulted space that opens on one side to a courtyard).

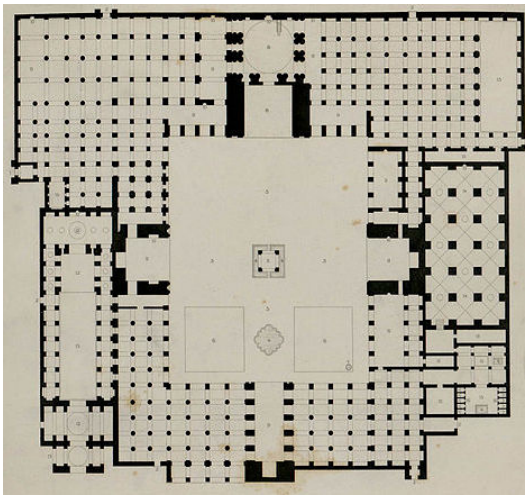


Figure **13.3.3.7**: Plan of the mosque from *Monuments modernes de la Perse mesurés, dessinés et décrits*, éd. Morel, 1867

Linking the four iwans at the center is a large courtyard open to the air, which provides a tranquil space from the hustle and bustle of the city. Brick piers and columns support the roofing system and allow prayer halls to extend away from this central courtyard on each side. Aerial photographs of the building provide an interesting view; the mosque's roof has the appearance of "bubble wrap" formed through the panoply of unusual but charming domes crowning its hypostyle interior.



Figure 13.3.3.8: Great Mosque, Isfahan, imagery ©2014 DigitalGlobe. Map data ©2014 Google

This simplicity of the earth-colored exterior belies the complexity of its internal decor. Dome soffits (undersides) are crafted in varied geometric designs and often include an oculus, a circular opening to the sky. Vaults, sometimes ribbed, offer lighting and ventilation to an otherwise dark space. Creative arrangement of bricks, intricate motifs in stucco, and sumptuous tile-work (later additions) harmonize the interior while simultaneously delighting the viewer at every turn. In this manner, movement within the mosque becomes a journey of discovery and a stroll across time.



Figure 13.3.3.9: View of the south iwan from the prayer hall (photo: Alan Cordova, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Given its sprawling expanse, one can imagine how difficult it would be to locate the correct direction for prayer. The qibla iwan on the southern side of the courtyard solves this conundrum. It is the only one flanked by two cylindrical minarets and also serves as the entrance to one of two large, domed chambers within the mosque. Similar to its three counterparts, this iwan sports colorful tile decoration and muqarnas or traditional Islamic cusped niches. The domed interior was reserved for the use of the ruler and gives access to the main mihrab of the mosque.

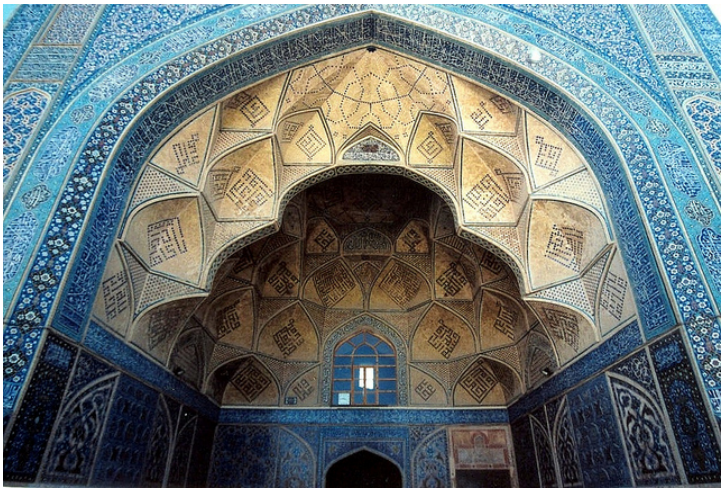


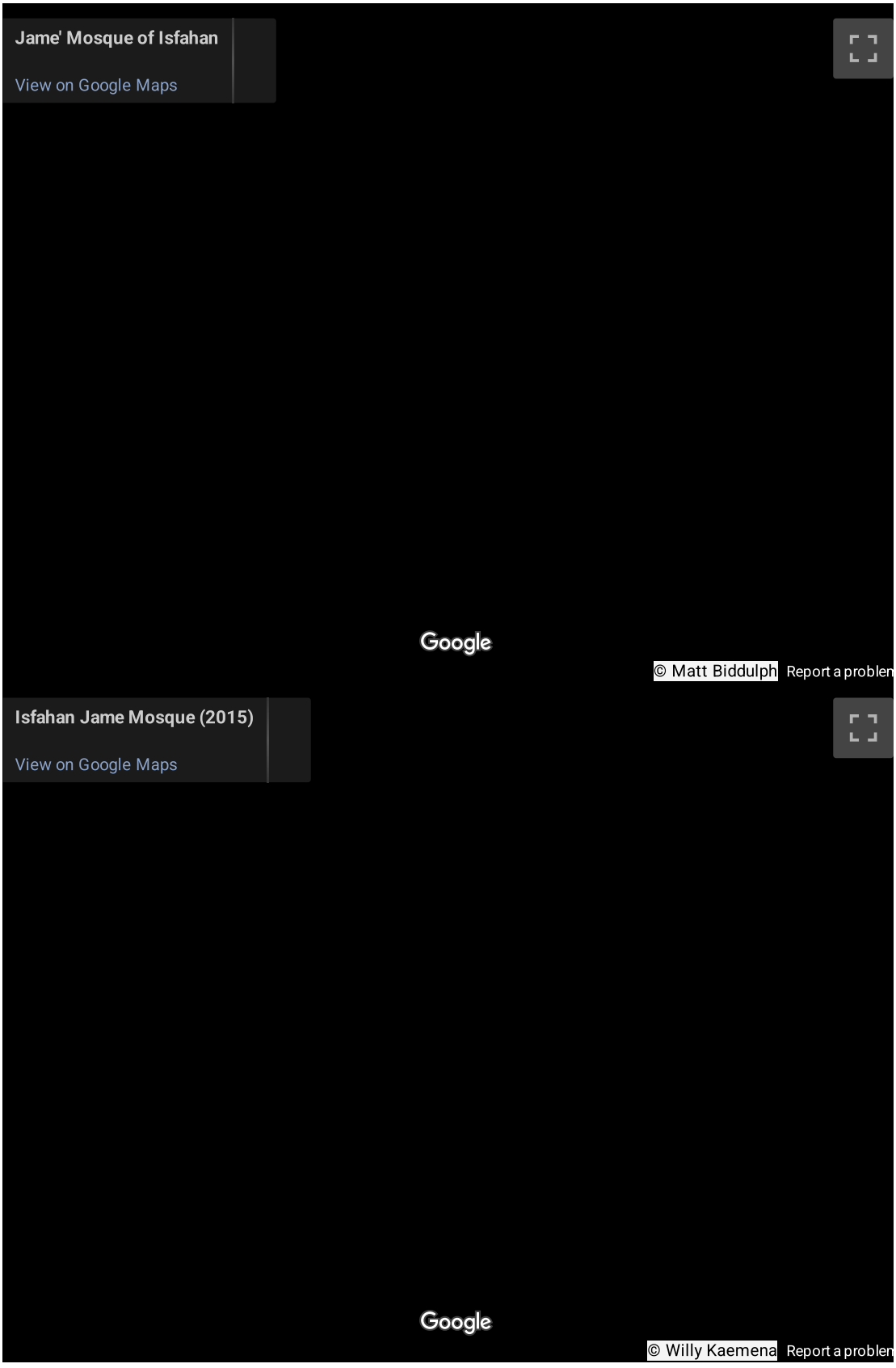
Figure 13.3.3.10: Muqarnas, South Iwan (Photo: Fulvio Spada, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The second domed room lies on a longitudinal axis right across the double-arcaded courtyard. This opposite placement and varied decoration underscores the political enmity between the respective patrons; each dome vies for primacy through its position and architectural articulation. Nizam al-Mulk, vizier to Malik Shah I, commissioned the qibla dome in 1086. But a year later, he fell out of favor with the ruler and Taj al-Mulk, his nemesis, with support from female members of the court, quickly replaced him. The new vizier's dome (below), built in 1088, is smaller but considered a masterpiece of proportions.



Figure 13.3.3.11: Interior decoration of Taj-al-Mulk (north) dome (photo: Matt Werner, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

When Shah Abbas I, a Safavid dynasty ruler, decided to move the capital of his empire from Qazvin to Isfahan in the late 16th century, he crafted a completely new imperial and mercantile center away from the old Seljuk city. While the new square and its adjoining buildings, renowned for their exquisite decorations, renewed Isfahan's prestige among the early modern cities of the world, the significance of the Seljuk mosque and its influence on the population was not forgotten. This link amongst the political, commercial, social, and religious activities is nowhere more emphasized than in the architectural layout of Isfahan's covered bazaar. Its massive brick vaulting and lengthy, sinuous route connects the Safavid center to the city's ancient heart, the Great Mosque of Isfahan.


Jame' Mosque of Isfahan
View on Google Maps
Google
© Matt Biddulph
Report a problem
Isfahan Jame Mosque (2015)
View on Google Maps
Google
© Willy Kaemena
Report a problem

Folio from a Qur'an

by ALEX BREY



Figure **13.3.3.12**: Qu'ran fragment, in Arabic, before 911, vellum, MS M. 712, fols 19v-20r, 23 x 32 cm, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

The Qur'an: From recitation to book

The Qur'an is the sacred text of Islam, consisting of the divine revelation to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic. Over the course of the first century and a half of Islam, the form of the manuscript was adapted to suit the dignity and splendor of this divine revelation. However, the word Qur'an, which means "recitation," suggests that manuscripts were of secondary importance to oral tradition. In fact, the 114 *suras* (or chapters) of the Qur'an were compiled into a textual format, organized from longest to shortest, only after the death of Muhammad, although scholars still debate exactly when this might have occurred.

This two-page spread (or bifolium) of a Qur'an manuscript, which contains the beginning of *Surat Al-'Ankabut* (The Spider), is now in the collection of The Morgan Library and Museum in New York. Other folios that appear to be from the same Qur'an survive in the Chester Beatty Library (Dublin), the Topkapı Palace Museum and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (Istanbul), and the National Museum of Syria (Damascus). One page includes an inscription, which states that ʿAbd al-Munʿim Ibn Aḥmad donated the Qur'an to the Great Mosque of Damascus in 298 A.H. (July, 911 C.E.), although we do not know where or how long before this donation the manuscript was produced.

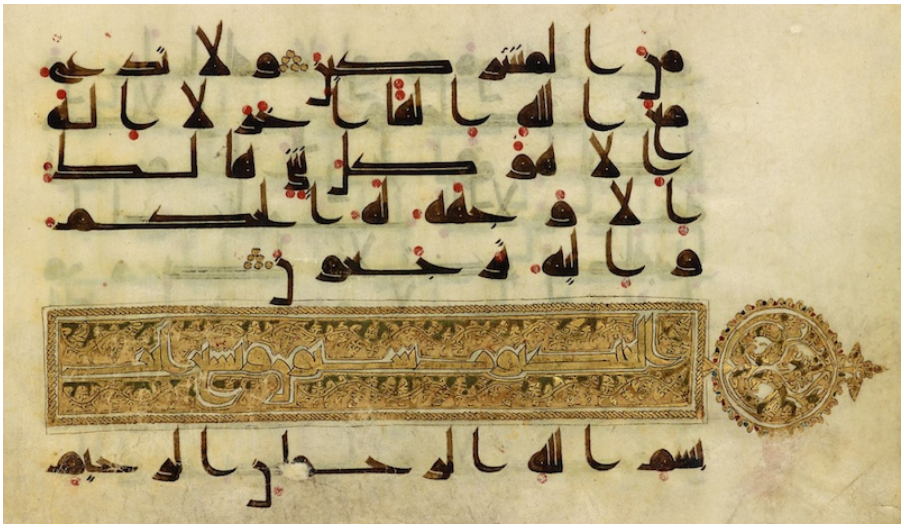


Figure **13.3.3.13**: Qur'an fragment (detail), in Arabic, before 911, vellum, MS M.712, fols. 19v–20r, 23 x 32 cm, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

A roadmap for readers

The main text of the *mushaf* (pronounced muss-hoff), as manuscripts of the Qur'an are known, is written in brown ink. Arabic, the language of the divine word of Islam, is read from right to left. Several consonants share the same basic letterform, and these are usually distinguished from each other by lines or dots placed above or below the letter. Short vowels such as a, u, and i, are not normally written in Arabic, but in order to avoid misreadings of such an important text it quickly became standard to include vowels in the Qur'an. In this manuscript, these short vowels are marked with red circles positioned above, next to, or below the consonants, depending on the vowel.

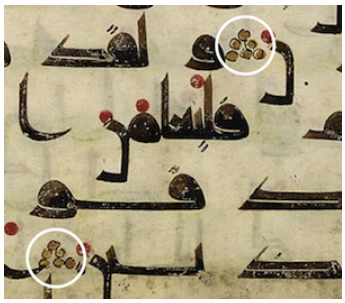


Figure **13.3.3.14**: Sura, Qu'ran fragment (detail), in Arabic, before 911, vellum, MS M.712, fols. 19v–20r, 23 x 32 cm, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

The text of each sura is further divided into verses by triangles made up of 5 gold circles located at the end of each verse (left).

The title of each sura is written in gold ink, and surrounded by a rectangle, filled here with an undulating golden vine (below). Combined with a rounded palmette extending into the margin of the folio, it allows readers to quickly locate the beginning of each sura.

Because figural imagery such as human or animal forms was considered inappropriate for the ornamentation of sacred monuments and objects, artists relied on vegetal and geometric motifs when they decorated mosques and sacred manuscripts. Vines and palmettes like the ones that surround the sura heading here appear alone in sacred contexts, but they also accompanied animal and human forms in the secular decoration of palaces and textiles.



Figure **13.3.3.15**: Sura title, Qur'an fragment (detail), in Arabic, before 911, vellum, MS M.712, fols. 19v–20r, 23 x 32 cm, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

Planning the proportions of the page

The art of producing a *mushaf* began well before a pen was ever dipped into ink. The dimensions of each page were calculated before the parchment was cut, and the text was carefully situated relative to the edges of the pages. Each page of costly parchment (or vellum) in this Qur'an is larger than a standard sheet of printer paper, and contains only nine lines of calligraphy. These materials suggest both the dignity of the sacred text and the wealth of its patron, who was probably a member of the aristocratic elite.

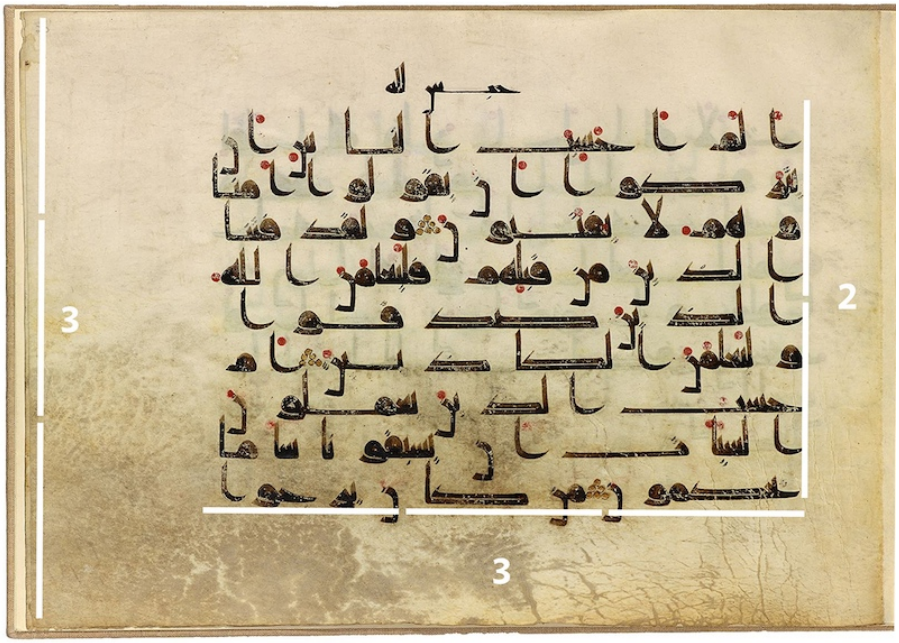


Figure **13.3.3.16**: Diagram of proportions, Single folio, Qur'an fragment, in Arabic, before 911, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

In addition to the high quality and large quantity of materials used, the deliberate geometric planning of the page conveys the importance of the text that it contains. As in many of the *mushafs* produced between 750 and 1000 C.E., the pages of this manuscript are wider than they are tall.

The text-block of this manuscript has a height-to-width ratio of 2:3, and the width of the text-block is approximately equal to the height of the page. The height of each line of text was derived from the first letter of the alphabet, *alif*, which was in turn derived from the width of the nib of the reed pen used by the calligraphers to write the text.



Figure **13.3.3.17**: Interlines, Single folio, Qur'an fragment (detail), in Arabic, before 911, vellum, 23 x 32 cm, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

Each line was further divided into a set number of "interlines," which were used to determine the heights of various parts of individual letters. There is no ruling on the parchment, however, so scribes probably placed each sheet of the semi-transparent parchment on a board marked with horizontal guidelines as they wrote. Memorizing and producing the proportions of each pen stroke, however, must have been part of the training of every scribe.



Figure **13.3.3.17**: Kufic script in folio from a Qur'an, c. 900-950 C.E., gold leaf, silver and ink on parchment with indigo, 28.5 x 37.5 cm, probably made in Tunisia, Qairawan (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

Kufic script and the specialization of scribes

Writing in the tenth century C.E., the Abbasid court secretary Ibn Durustuyah noted that letters of the alphabet were written differently by Qur'anic scribes, professional secretaries, and other copyists. The calligraphic style used by these early scribes of the Qur'an is known today as Kufic. Only two or three of the more than 1300 fragments and manuscripts written in Kufic that survive contain non-Qur'anic content.

Kufic is not so much a single type of handwriting as it is a family of 17 related styles based on common principles, including a preference for strokes of relatively uniform thickness, short straight vertical lines and long horizontal lines, and a straight, horizontal baseline.

Various types of kufic were popular from the seventh century C.E. until the late tenth century C.E. Scribes used a wide reed pen dipped in ink to write. In some letters the angle of the pen was adjusted as the scribe wrote in order to maintain an even thickness throughout the entire letterform, but in others the angle could be held constant in order to produce both very thick and very thin lines. Although letters and even entire words at first appear to consist of a single stroke of the pen, in fact individual letters were often formed using multiple strokes.



Figure **13.3.3.18**: Qur'an fragment (detail), in Arabic, before 911, vellum, 23 x 32 cm, possibly Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

The regularity and precision of the penmanship in the fragment from The Morgan Library reveals the skill of the scribes who produced it. Each of them deliberately imitated a single style in order to produce a unified finished product.

Scribes also had some freedom in composing a page. They could emphasize individual words and balance the widths of lines of different length by elongating certain letters horizontally (a technique known as *mashq*). They could also adjust spacing between words and letters, and even split words between two lines, in order to balance positive and negative space across the page.



Figure **13.3.3.19**: Graphic showing negative space, Qu'ran fragment (detail), in Arabic, before 911, vellum, 23 x 32 cm, possible Iraq (The Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

In this *mushaf*, the spaces between non-connecting characters within a word are as wide as the spaces that separate different words (sometimes even wider!). For readers unfamiliar with the text, it is therefore difficult to figure out which letters should be grouped together to form words. This deliberate obfuscation would have slowed down readers, and it suggests that anyone who read aloud from these manuscripts had probably already memorized the text of the Qur'an and used the lavish manuscript only as a kind of mnemonic device.

Additional resources:

This manuscript at the Morgan Library and Museum

Glossary from the British Museum's Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts

The development and spread of calligraphic scripts from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Scripts in development from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Islamic Manuscripts from the Cambridge Digital Library

Alain George, A Little-Known Collection of Early Qur'anic Fragments at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (video)

Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy (*Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

Alain George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Saqi, 2010).

Alain George, "The Geometry of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* volume 9, no. 1 (2007), pp. 78-110.

Alain George, “Calligraphy, Colour and Light in the Blue Qur’an.” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* volume 11, no. 1 (2009), pp. 75-125.

Estelle Whelan, “Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur’an Manuscripts and Their Milieux, Part I,” *Ars Orientalis* volume 20 (1990), pp. 113-147.

Pyxis of al-Mughira

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS



Figure **13.3.3.20**: Pyxis of al-Mughira, possibly from Madinat al-Zahra, AH 357/ 968 CE, carved ivory with traces of jade, 16cm x 11.8 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A pyxis is a cylindrical box used for cosmetics. Now, imagine a room in a palace where this beautifully carved ivory container is given a central place. The luxurious box sits open. Inside are small silver containers of perfume, also left open so that their sweet-smelling aromas could waft through the room, gently scenting the air. This particular pyxis was a gift to the then-eighteen-year-old al-Mughira, the son of a caliph, perhaps as a coming-of-age present.

Pyxis of al-Mughira

The Pyxis of al-Mughira, now in the Louvre, is among the best surviving examples of the royal ivory carving tradition in Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain). It was probably fashioned in the Madinat al-Zahra workshops and its intricate and exceptional carving set it apart from many other examples; it also contains an inscription and figurative work which are important for understanding the traditions of ivory carving and Islamic art in Al-Andalus.

Carved ivories in Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain)

Al-Andalus, the lands on the Iberian Peninsula (today, Spain), which were controlled by Muslims from 711 to 1492, are home to some of the most remarkable monuments of Islamic art. These include the Great Mosque of Cordoba, constructed by successive Umayyad Caliphs, and the Alhambra Palace, built by the final Islamic dynasty that controlled Al-Andalus, the Nasrids. As stunning and impressive as the architecture of Al-Andalus was, the luxury arts, specifically the exquisite textiles and intricately carved ivory artifacts, produced in in royal workshops, also flourished. One of the best examples of this tradition is the Pyxis of al-Mughira.

Since the twilight years of the Roman Empire, carved ivory objects had been important elements of the artistic canon of the Mediterranean. Ivory was durable, smooth, elegant, and easily carved, making it highly desirable for the creation of diptychs, pyxides (the plural of pyxis), and icons that could serve as single panels or could combined into diptychs or triptychs during the Byzantine Empire. Highly portable, they were often given as gifts. Although ivory carving was practiced in Constantinople, Syria and Egypt, it was a new arrival in Al-Andalus, and there are no examples of ivory carved caskets before the reign of the Umayyad caliph, ‘Abd al-Rahman III (r. 929-61).



Figure **13.3.3.21**: Pyxis of al-Mughira, possibly from Madinat al-Zahra, AH 357/ 968 CE, Carved ivory with traces of jade (Musée du Louvre, Paris) (photo: University Libraries, University of Washington)

The Pyxis of al-Mughira is decorated with four eight-lobed medallions which are surrounded by figures and animals that include falconers, wrestlers, griffons, peacocks, birds, goats and animals to be hunted. Each medallion has princely iconography.

This medallion (left) shows two men collecting eggs from the nests of Falcons, a symbol of Umayyad legitimacy.

Who were they made for?

In Al-Andalus, ivory objects, including pyxides, were bestowed upon members of the royal family, specifically sons, wives and daughters on important or memorable occasions, such as a marriage, birth or coming of age; later they were given as Caliphal gifts to important allies, such as the Berbers, who are the indigenous peoples of North Africa, many of whom converted to Islam and swore their allegiance to the Umayyad Caliphs in Spain.

A surprising number of these royal ivory objects survive in their entirety, and these are spread throughout the museum collections today (see the links below). Typically, these objects were carved out of solid ivory. Many caskets and pyxides held perfumes or cosmetics. While many pyxides were given to women, many were also given to men, including this one, which was given to al-Mughira, the youngest son of the deceased caliph ʻAbd al-Raḥmān III, when he was eighteen years old in the year AH 357/ 968 CE.



Figure **13.3.3.22**: Pyxis of al-Mughira (detail) (photo: University Libraries, University of Washington)

This medallion centers around a lute player flanked by two figures, one of whom holds the braided scepter and flask of the Umayyads, while the other holds a fan. Presumably the man with the spceter and flask symbolizes the Umayyad Caliph, and the figure with the fan, the Abassids.



Figure 13.3.3.23: Pyxis of al-Mughira (detail) (photo: University Libraries, University of Washington)

The decoration

The pyxis was probably cut from the cross-section of an elephant's tusk and it was adorned in highly specific, royal iconography. There are also traces of inlaid jade. Jade and other precious and semi-precious stones were used in the decoration of these boxes.

Remember, Islamic art is not strictly speaking aniconic (aniconic = the absence of human figures). Human and animal figures played a vital part in iconography. We see them here in this pyxis, which some scholars (including those at the Louvre), have interpreted as expressing the political authority and legitimacy of Umayyad Caliphs (as opposed to the Abbasid Caliphs, who ruled in Baghdad).

Another medallion shows lions attacking two bulls. As in Arabic poetry, these lions symbolize the victorious (in this case, perhaps the Umayyads).



Figure 13.3.3.24: Pyxis of al-Mughira (detail) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The final scene shows men on horseback date-picking. The date-palm, found primarily in the Middle East and North Africa, may allude to the lost lands of the East (the lands under Abbasid control). This too was a theme of Umayyad poetry. The use of visual imagery which is also found in the poetry of the era demonstrates that these two art forms were in communication.

An Arabic inscription in the kufic script runs around the base of the lid and reads: "God's blessing, favours, joy, beatitude to al-Mughira son of the Commander of the faithful, may God have mercy upon him, in the year 357."



Figure 13.3.3.25: Pyxis of al-Mughira (detail) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Some inscriptions on other ivory carvings also mention the name of the workshop and craftsman who made these exceptional pieces.

The iconography may have had a further specific message to al-Mughira. After the death of his brother, al-Hakam II, al-Mughira may have been a threat to Hisham II (r. 976-1013) and he was executed (along with his supporters). While al-Mughira met an unfortunate end, the beauty of his pyxis ensured its survival.

Additional resources:

Bloom, Jonathan, and Sheila Blair. 2009. "Ivory." *The Grove encyclopedia of Islamic art and architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 331-6.

Rosser-Owen, Mariam. 2010. *Islamic arts from Spain*. London: V&A Publishing, 26-30.

An ivory pyxis at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

An ivory pyxis at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.3.3.26**: More Smarthistory images…

Dado Panel, Courtyard of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III

by ELIZABETH KURTULIK MERCURI



Figure **13.3.3.27**: Dado Panel from the Courtyard of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III of Ghazni, 1112 C.E., marble, 28 1/8 x 12 13/16 x 3 1/2″ (Brooklyn Museum of Art)

The dado panel from the Courtyard of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III is a fine example of the artistic preferences of the Ghaznavid dynasty, which ruled the Indian subcontinent from 977 to 1186 C.E. A dado panel is a two to three foot lower part of a wall, typically decorated in a variety of media. This dado panel formed part of a larger dado, found within the courtyard of the Palace of Mas'ud III, just south of Kabul, Afghanistan, and it is currently located in the Brooklyn Museum's Arts of the Islamic World collection. Although the panel was not found in-situ, it closely resembles other panels found within the palace's courtyard.



Figure **13.3.3.28**: Kufic script in folio from a Qur'an, c. 900-950 C.E., gold leaf, silver and ink on parchment with indigo, 28.5 x 37.5 cm, probably made in Tunisia, Qairawan (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

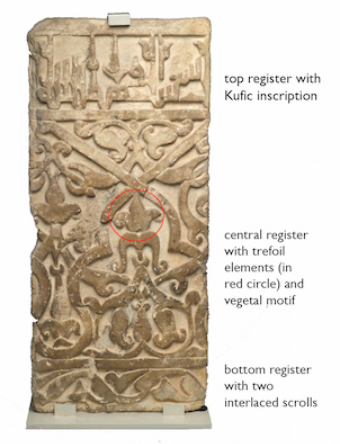


Figure 13.3.3.29: Dado panel with three registers

The panel can be broken up into three registers (below left). The top register contains a Kufic inscription, which would have been part of a continuous inscription that encircled the entire courtyard across the tops of multiple adjacent panels. Kufic script is a style of writing Arabic popular from the seventh century C.E. until the late tenth century C.E., as seen in the page from the Qur'an above. The central register of the dado panel is a large sequence of trefoil (tri-lobed leaf) elements with a vegetal motif, and the bottom register consists of two scrolls interlaced with each other. The panel would have been painted blue and red as well as gilded. It shows signs of wear, with markings and discoloration, most likely from exposure to various elements over time.

Uncovering a palace

The Ghaznavids were of Turkish origin, and they preferred a fusion of Iranian and Arab stylistic influences, along with a strong interest in Persian art and poetry. Their capital, Ghazni lay on an important trade route, resulting in influences from around the region. The Palace of Mas'ud III provides the best evidence for the social, cultural and artistic nature of the Ghaznavid Dynasty. The construction date is unknown but it was completed towards the end of the dynasty. It was built of a combination of baked and unbaked brick with pressed clay. It sits on a quadrangular plan organized around a central courtyard with four iwans.



Figure 13.3.3.30: Minaret constructed near Royal Palace of Mas'ud III of Ghazni, 12th century, Afghanistan (photo: **kabulpublicdiplomacy**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

The two excavations that were carried out between 1957 and 1966 produced a number of finds, including a long dado frieze in the courtyard. About forty-four panels were found in-situ and about four hundred dado fragments were also recovered. It is believed that there were about five hundred panels in all. They are made of marble, which came from a marble quarry found near Ghazni. The Ghaznavids used a large amount of marble throughout the city, during a time where brick and stucco were favored for décor purposes. The influence of the city of Baghdad, which was also built up heavily with marble by the Abbasids possibly explains the popularity of the medium at this time. Ghazni has only recently attracted scholars with the discovery of a great-stylized minaret, also dating to Mas'ud III's reign (above).

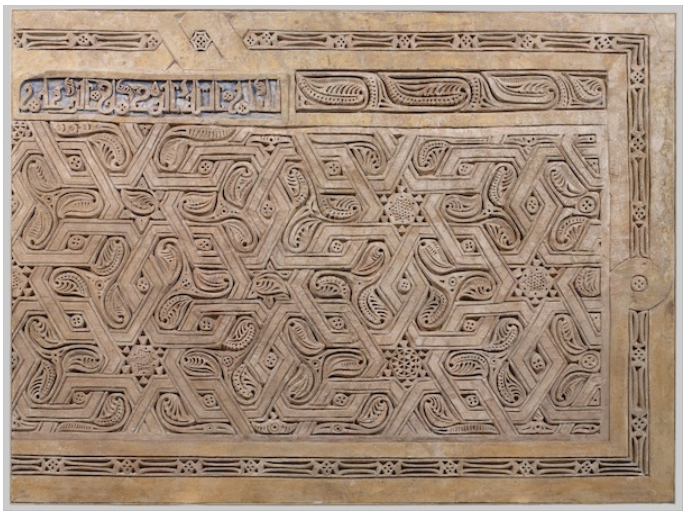


Figure **13.3.3.31**: Dado Panel with inscription in upper left corner, 10th century, Iran, stucco; carved, with some cast plaster elements, 68 5/8 x 92 3/4″ (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Although the Kufic inscription on this panel has not been translated, translations of other sections of the frieze contain a Persian poem that praised the Ghaznavid rulers. There is no author or written text to accompany the work, but scholars believe that the poet was someone associated with court life who probably wrote the poem for this specific purpose. This particular inscription, from the twelfth century, is one of the oldest uses of Persian in place of Arabic. It is likely that the inscription was commissioned in conjunction with the completion of the building, a practice that is also seen in Sicily and Alhambra. In Persia, it was common practice to adorn sacred and secular buildings with inscriptions (see the example from Iran, above).

Part of a larger whole

The dado panel from the Brooklyn Museum is part of a much larger work of art and a representation of the very essence of the Ghaznavid Dynasty. It is evident that the Ghazavids were deviating from the artistic and architectural norms of the time with the construction of the palace dado frieze. Not only did they follow the Abbasids' use of marble for decorative purposes, but they also used Persian within the dado inscription, which was unique at the time. The use of the inscription on the dado as a commemorative display to honor the leaders of the dynasty and mark the construction of the building was also unusual. The use of Persian terms in place of Arab letters might have been a result of their expanding empire, of the dynasty's influential origins, or of an appreciation for Persian literature. The dado panel at the Brooklyn Museum is a rare work of art from a period of creative nonconformity, and it is representative of the Ghaznavids' signature artistic style.

Additional resources:

This work at the Brooklyn Museum of Art

Alessio Bombaci, *The Kufic Inscription in Persian Verses in the Court of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III at Ghazni* (Rome: Insituto Italiano per Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966).

—- "Summary Report on the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan. Introduction to the Excavations at Ghazni," *East and West*, Vol. 10, No. 1 / 2 (March-June 1959), pp. 3-22.

C. E. Bosworth, "The Ghaznavids," *UNESCO History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. IVa, 2014.

Roberta Giunta, "Islamic Ghazni An IsIAO Archaeological Project in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Report (July 2004-June 2005)," *East and West*, Vol. 55, No. 1 / 4 (December 2005), pp. 473-484.

Two Royal Figures (Saljuq period)

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.3.3.1: Two Royal Figures, Iran (Saljuq period), mid 11th – mid 12th c., painted and gilded stucco (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







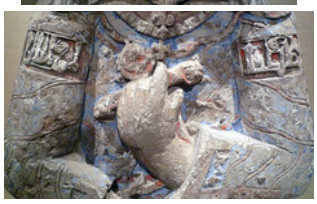





Figure **13.3.3.32:** More Smarthistory images…

Coronation Mantle

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.3.3.2**: Coronation Mantle, 1133/34, fabric from Byzantium or Thebes, samite, silk, gold, pearls, filigree, sapphires, garnets, glass, and cloisonné enamel, 146 x 345 cm (Schatzkammer, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

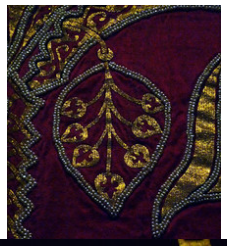
This was likely made for the Norman ruler Roger II in 1133/34 in the royal workshop in Palermo, using fabric from Byzantium or Thebes, Samite, silk, gold, pearls, filigree, sapphires, garnets, glass, and cloisonné enamel. The Kufic script reads:

> ***This mantle was worked in the most magnificent clothing workshop and is connected with the desire and hopes, felicitous days and nights without cease or change, with authority, with honor and felicity, assurances of trust, reverent care, protection, good destiny, freedom from harm, triumph and livelihood in the capital city of Sicily in the year 528 [or 1133/34 in the Gregorian calendar].***

Additional resources:

Eva R. Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian interchange from the tenth to the twelfth century,” *Art History*, vol. 24. no. 1 (February 2001), pp. 17-50.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









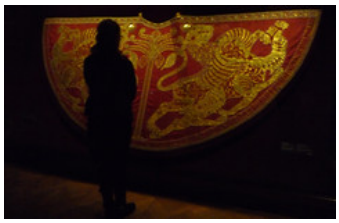








Figure **13.3.3.33**: More Smarthistory images…

The Alhambra

by DR. SHADIEH MIRMOBINY



Figure 13.3.3.34: The Alhambra, Spain (photo: Mirari Erdoiza, CC BY-NC 3.0)

The Alhambra in Granada, Spain, is distinct among Medieval palaces for its sophisticated planning, complex decorative programs, and its many enchanting gardens and fountains. Its intimate spaces are built at a human scale that visitors find elegant and inviting.

The Alhambra, an abbreviation of the Arabic: Qal'at al-Hamra, or red fort, was built by the Nasrid Dynasty (1232-1492)—the last Muslims to rule in Spain. Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Nasr (known as Muhammad I) founded the Nasrid Dynasty and secured this region in 1237. He began construction of his court complex, the Alhambra, on Sabika hill the following year.

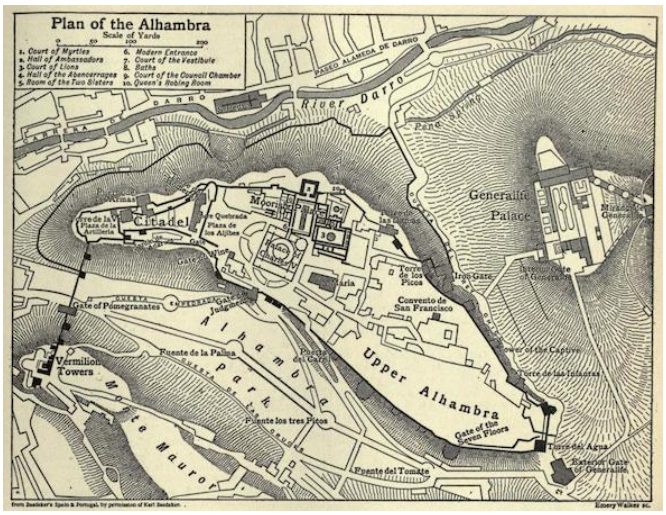


Figure 13.3.3.35: Plan of the Alhambra and Generalife

Plan of the Alhambra and Generalife

1,730 meters (1 mile) of walls and thirty towers of varying size enclose this city within a city. Access was restricted to four main gates. The Alhambra's nearly 26 acres include structures with three distinct purposes, a residence for the ruler and close family, the citadel, Alcazaba—barracks for the elite guard who were responsible for the safety of the complex, and an area called medina (or city), near the Puerta del Vino (Wine Gate), where court officials lived and worked.

The different parts of the complex are connected by paths, gardens and gates but each part of the complex could be blocked in the event of a threat. The exquisitely detailed structures with their highly ornate interior spaces and patios contrast with the plain walls of the fortress exterior.

Three palaces

The Alhambra's most celebrated structures are the three original royal palaces. These are the Comares Palace, the Palace of the Lions, and the Partal Palace, each of which was built during 14th century. A large fourth palace was later begun by the Christian ruler, Carlos V.



Figure 13.3.3.36: Tilework, El Mexuar (photo: MCAD Library, CC BY 2.0)

El Mexuar is an audience chamber near the Comares tower at the northern edge of the complex. It was built by Ismail I as a throne room, but became a reception and meeting hall when the palaces were expanded in the 1330s. The room has complex geometric tile dadoes (lower wall panels distinct from the area above) and carved stucco panels that give it a formality suitable for receiving dignitaries (above).

The Comares Palace



Figure 13.3.3.37: Comares Palace façade (photo: Jeff and Neda Fields, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure 13.3.3.38: Court of the Myrtles (photo: david_totally, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Behind El Mexuar stands the formal and elaborate Comares façade set back from a courtyard and fountain. The façade is built on a raised three-stepped platform that might have served as a kind of outdoor stage for the ruler. The carved stucco façade was once painted in brilliant colors, though only traces remain.

A dark winding passage beyond the Comares façade leads to a covered patio surrounding a large courtyard with a pool, now known as the Court of the Myrtles. This was the focal point of the Comares Palace.

The Alhambra's largest tower, the Comares Tower, contains the Salón de Comares (Hall of the Ambassadors), a throne room built by Yusuf I (1333-1354). This room exhibits the most diverse decorative and architectural arts contained in the Alhambra.

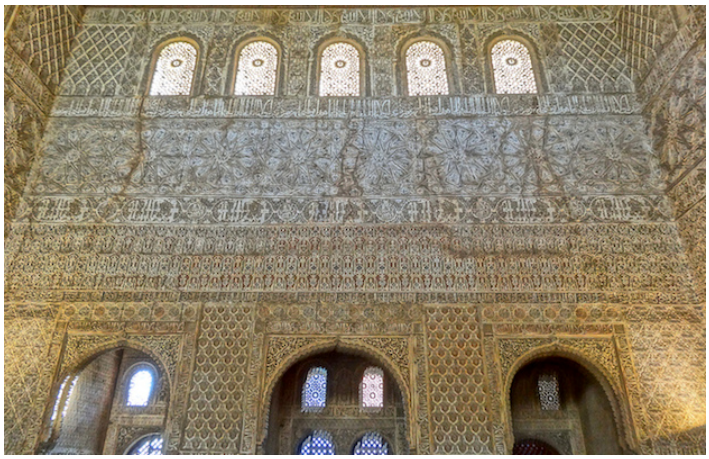


Figure **13.3.3.39**: Hall of the Ambassadors, Alhambra (photo: **Jeff and Neda Fields**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The double arched windows illuminate the room and provide breathtaking views. Additional light is provided by arched grille (lattice) windows set high in the walls. At eye level, the walls are lavishly decorated with tiles laid in intricate geometric patterns. The remaining surfaces are covered with intricately carved stucco motifs organized in bands and panels of curvilinear patterns and calligraphy.

Palace of the Lions

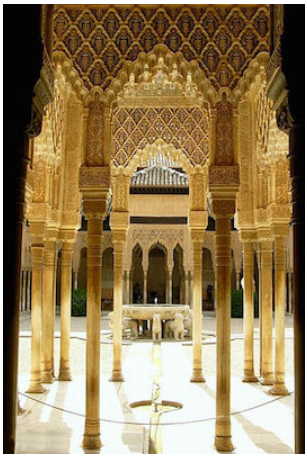


Figure **13.3.3.40**: Court of the Lions, Alhambra (photo: **Jim Gordon**, CC BY 2.0)

The Palacio de los Leones (Palace of the Lions) stands next to the Comares Palace but should be considered an independent building. The two structures were connected after Granada fell to the Christians.

Muhammad V built the Palace of the Lions' most celebrated feature in the 14th century, a fountain with a complex hydraulic system consisting of a marble basin on the backs of twelve carved stone lions situated at the intersection of two water channels that form a cross in the rectilinear courtyard. An arched covered patio encircles the courtyard and displays fine stucco carvings held up by a series of slender columns. Two decorative pavilions protrude into the courtyard on an East–West axis (at the narrow sides of the courtyard), accentuating the royal spaces behind them.



Figure 13.3.3.41: Muqarnas Chamber, Alhambra (photo: **Vaughan Williams**, CC BY 2.0)

To the West, the Sala de los Mocárabes (Muqarnas Chamber), may have functioned as an antechamber and was near the original entrance to the palace. It takes its name from the intricately carved system of brackets called “muqarnas” that hold up the vaulted ceiling.

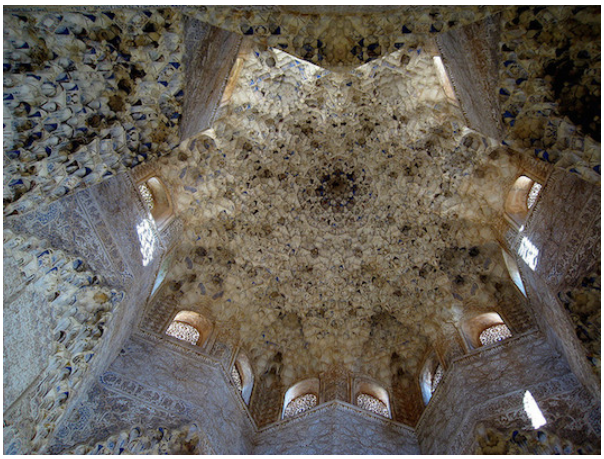


Figure 13.3.3.42: Ceiling, Hall of the Kings, Alhambra (photo: **Guacamoliest**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Across the courtyard, to the East, is the Sala de los Reyes (Hall of the Kings), an elongated space divided into sections using a series of arches leading up to a vaulted muqarnas ceiling; the room has multiple alcoves, some with an unobstructed view of the courtyard, but with no known function.

This room contains paintings on the ceiling representing courtly life. The images were first painted on tanned sheepskins, in the tradition of miniature painting. They use brilliant colors and fine details and are attached to the ceiling rather than painted on it.



Figure 13.3.3.43: Ceiling, Hall of the Ambassadors, Alhambra (photo: **amyhsk**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

There are two other halls in the Palace of the Lions on the northern and southern ends; they are the Sala de las Dos Hermanas (the Hall of the Two Sisters) and the Hall of Abencerrajas (Hall of the Ambassadors). Both were residential apartments with rooms on the second floor. Each also have a large domed room sumptuously decorated with carved and painted stucco in muqarnas forms with elaborate and varying star motifs.

The Partal Palace

The Palacio del Partal (Partal Palace) was built in the early 14th century and is also known as del Pórtico (Portico Palace) because of the portico formed by a five-arched arcade at one end of a large pool. It is one of the oldest palace structures in the Alhambra complex.

Generalife



Figure **13.3.3.44**: Court of the Long Pond, Generalife (photo: **Darren**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Nasrid rulers did not limit themselves to building within the wall of the Alhambra. One of the best preserved Nasrid estates, just beyond the walls, is called Generalife (from the Arabic, Jannat al-arifa). The word jannat means paradise and by association, garden, or a place of cultivation which Generalife has in abundance. Its water channels, fountains and greenery can be understood in relation to passage 2:25 in the Koran, "…gardens, underneath which running waters flow…."

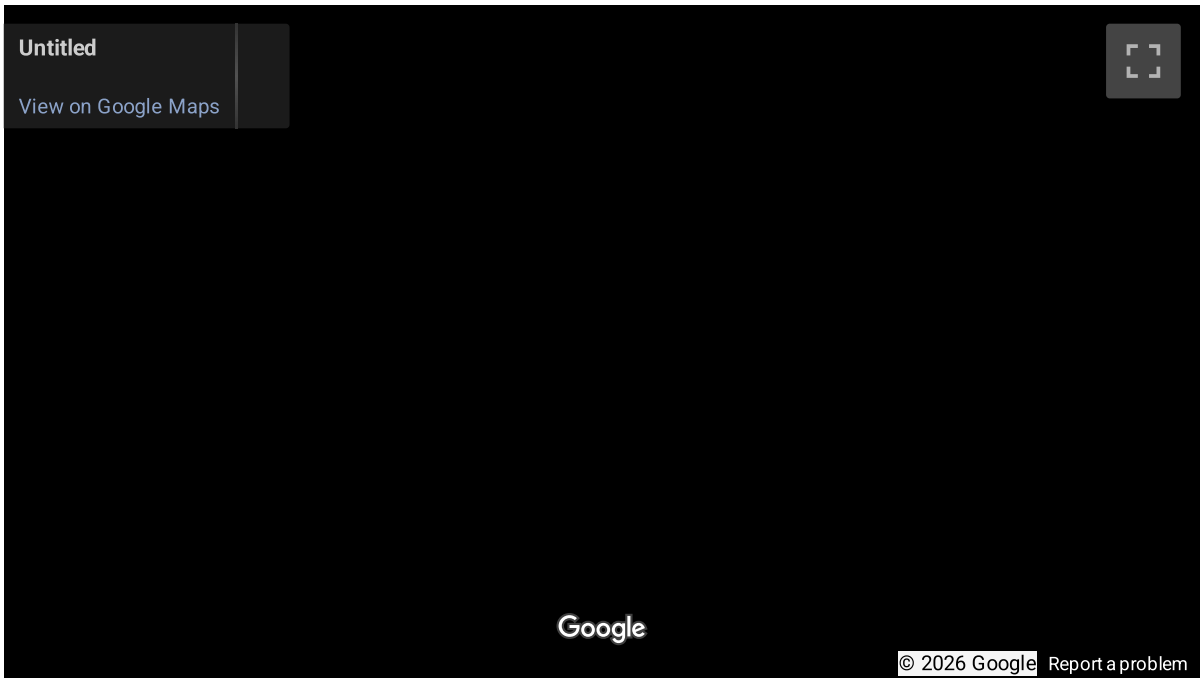
In one of the most spectacular Generalife gardens, a long narrow patio is ornamented with a water channel and two rows of water fountains. Generalife also contains a palace built in the same decorative manner as those within the Alhambra but its elaborate vegetable and ornamental gardens made this lush complex a welcome retreat for the rulers of Granada.

Interior and exterior re-imagined

To be sure, gardens and water fountains, canals, and pools are a recurring theme in construction across the Muslim dominion. Water is both practical and beautiful in architecture and in this respect the Alhambra and Generalife are no exception. But the Nasrid rulers of Granada made water integral. They brought the sound, sight and cooling qualities of water into close proximity, in gardens, courtyards, marble canals, and even directly indoors.

The Alhambra's architecture shares many characteristics with other examples of Islamic architecture, but is singular in the way it complicates the relationship between interior and exterior. Its buildings feature shaded patios and covered walkways that pass from well-lit interior spaces onto shaded courtyards and sun-filled gardens all enlivened by the reflection of water and intricately carved stucco decoration.

More profoundly however, this is a place to reflect. Given the beauty, care and detail found at the Alhambra, it is tempting to imagine that the Nasrids planned to remain here forever; it is ironic then to see throughout the complex in the carved stucco, the words, "…no conqueror, but God" left by those that had once conquered Granada, and would themselves be conquered. It is a testament to the Alhambra that the Catholic monarchs who besieged and ultimately took the city left this complex largely intact.



Additional resources:

Alhambra, Generalife and Albayzín, Granada from UNESCO

Video from UNESCO

A virtual walking tour of the Alhambra

Folio from a *Shahnama*, The Bier of Iskandar (Alexander the Great)

by DR. MASSUMEH FARHAD, FREER GALLERY OF ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.3.3.3**: The Bier of Iskandar (Alexander the Great), folio from the Great Mongol Shahnama (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), c. 1330, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 57.6 x 39.7 cm (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1938.3). Speakers: Dr. Massumeh Farhad, Chief Curator and The Ebrahimi Family Curator of Persian, Arab, and Turkish Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution and Dr. Steven Zucker.

Additional resources:

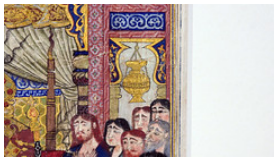
This folio at the Freer Gallery of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88685

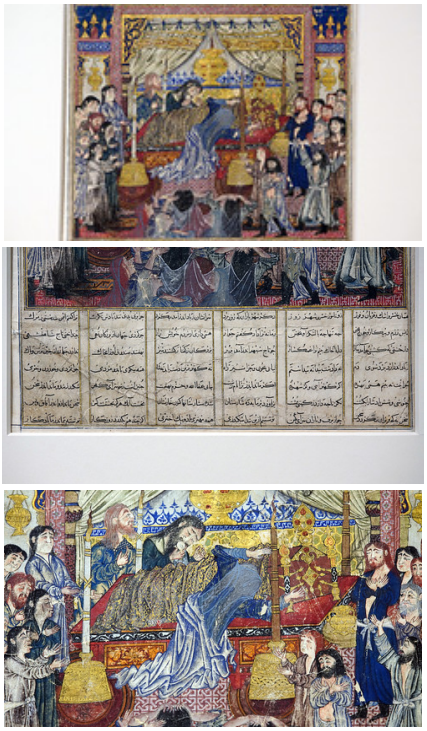


Figure **13.3.3.45**: More Smarthistory images…

Mohammed ibn al-Zain, Basin (*Baptistère de Saint Louis*)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.3.3.4**: Mohammed ibn al-Zain, Basin (*Baptistère de Saint Louis*), c. 1320-40, brass inlaid with silver and gold, 22.2 x 50.2 cm, Egypt or Syria (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





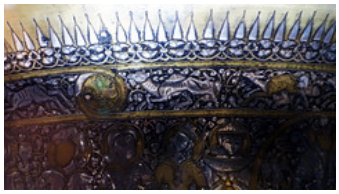








Figure 13.3.3.46: More Smarthistory images…

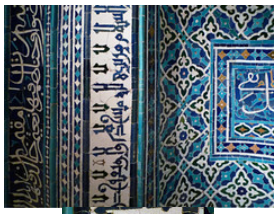
Mihrab from Isfahan (Iran)

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.3.3.5: Mihrab (prayer niche), 1354–55 (A.H. 755), just after the Ilkhanid period, Isfahan, Iran, polychrome glazed tiles, 135-1/16 x 113-11/16 inches (343.1 x 288.7 cm) (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



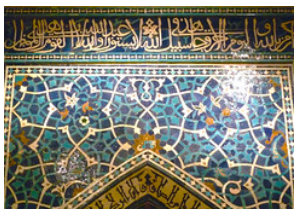














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88685



Figure **13.3.3.47**: More Smarthistory images…

Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf), Ilkhanid dynasty

by JAYNE YANTZ



Figure **13.3.3.48**: Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf), from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**)

> ***As Bahram Gur's men faced the Karg, a monstrous horned wolf that had been terrorizing the countryside, they cried, "Your majesty, this is beyond any man's courage…tell Shangal this can't be done…."***

Bahram Gur Fights the Karg is a book illumination depicting one of the many stories from the *Shahnama*, the Persian *Book of Kings*. Though this particular image was painted in the fourteenth century by artists in the Mongol court in Persia (present-day Iran), the text of the *Shahnama* was composed by a poet named Firdawsi four hundred years earlier, around 1000 C.E. The *Shahnama* incorporates many older stories once told orally, chronicling the history of Persia before the arrival of Islam and celebrating the glories of the Persian past and its ancient heroes. The *Shahnama* is, in fact, still taught in Iranian schools today, and is considered to be Iran's national epic—to know or recite the stories of the *Shahnama* is to express pride in the country's glorious past. The illustration *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg* depicts one such story of the brave deeds of a Persian king, Bahram Gur, who singlehandedly defeated the monstrous Karg (horned wolf). It is much more than just an exciting tale, however; the Mongol artists who created this work were fulfilling their patrons' strong desire to identify with the noble, virtuous, and powerful warrior-kings of ancient Persia.

Who was Bahram Gur and what is a Karg?



Figure 13.3.3.49: Plate with a hunting scene from the tale of Bahram Gur and Azadeh , c. 5th century, Sasanian, silver, mercury gilding, 20.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York**)

Bahram V was a king of the Sasanian empire that ruled Persia from the third to the seventh century, just prior to the arrival of Islam. His nickname, Bahram Gur, refers to a "gur" or onager—a type of wild ass which is one of the world's fastest-running mammals. The word "gur" may also mean "swift." He was known as a great hunter of onagers, a favorite game animal in ancient Iran, and he was renowned for his talents in warfare, chivalry, and romance. On a trip to India, according to the *Shahnama*, the king of India, a ruler named Shangal, recognized Bahram Gur's abilities and sought his help in ridding the Indian countryside of the frightening and fierce Karg.



Figure 13.3.3.50: Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf) (detail), from the *Great Mongol Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**)

Some translations of Firdawsi's work describe the Karg as a rhinoceros, some as a wolf, and some, as we find here in *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg*, as a combination of the two—a ferocious horned wolf. When Bahram Gur and his men found the lair and saw the beast, his men

beseeched, “Your majesty, this is beyond any man’s courage…tell Shangal this can’t be done….” The hero, of course, went forward alone, first using his bow to weaken the Karg with arrows, then using his blade to cut off the Karg’s head to present to Shangal.

The Mongol court and the art of the book

The Sasanian empire fell in the seventh century, and it was not until well after this that the Mongols invaded Persia. They came from the eastern Asian plains, where open grasslands had encouraged a nomadic lifestyle of herding, horsemanship, and fierce warfare. They first became a serious force under the leadership of Genghis Khan in the early thirteenth century, and later, under his grandson Hulagu, the Mongols expanded their reach all the way to the Mediterranean.

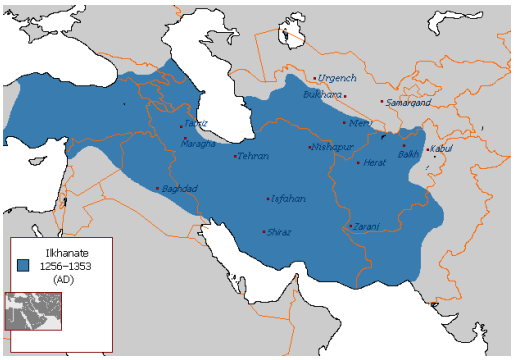


Figure 13.3.3.51: Map of the Ilkhanid state, 1256-1353 (map: Ahmed Hafez)

Settled in Persia, the Mongols fostered the growth of cosmopolitan cities with rich courts and wealthy patrons who encouraged the arts to flourish. The rule of Hulagu’s dynasty, which lasted until 1335, is commonly known as the Ilkhanid period. Book illustration thrived under the Ilkhanids and became a major art form for both religious and secular texts. Since the Mongols began as, and largely remained, nomadic peoples (moving from place to place during the year to satisfy the needs of their herds), artworks tended to be small and portable. Their long nomadic history also meant that the Mongols developed strong oral traditions of storytelling, which gave them an appreciation for narrative art—especially manuscripts with paintings to accompany the stories. Illustrated manuscripts were also prestige items, created in very sumptuous formats suitable for kings, princes, and members of the court.

It was within this environment of lavish artistic book production that the manuscript depicting *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg* was created, probably in a court workshop. The artists who crafted it used silver and gold accents over ink and opaque watercolor. While we do not know the name of the patron, scholars suggest that it may have been the court vizier, a high-ranking official. The full page, or folio, is relatively large for a hand painted book, and because of its size, the manuscript is also referred to as the *Great Mongol Shahnama*. It was most likely a prestige item intended to express the owner’s power and wealth, and it is the most luxurious of all the Ilkhanid painted books that survive. In its original form, scholars believe this complete manuscript probably comprised about 280 folios (pages) with 190 illustrations painted by several different artists, bound into two separate volumes. Today, however, only 57 folios are known to have survived. Like many other manuscripts, the *Great Mongol Shahnama* was taken apart by an early twentieth-century art dealer so that the pages could be sold separately.

The illumination as a stylistic blend



Figure 13.3.3.52: Six Horses, 13th–14th century, China, ink and color on paper, 47.1 x 647.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

This manuscript was likely completed at the Mongol court in Tabriz, a rich and cosmopolitan urban center (in what is today northern Iran). By the time the book was produced, the Mongols had settled into their role as refined rulers with international contacts, and their lands were secure enough to ensure the safe exchange of both goods and ideas throughout the empire. The increased availability of paper, invented in China in the eighth century, also encouraged the diffusion of artistic ideas. Consequently, Ilkhanid art had an international flavor. Landscape elements, for instance, often show influences from China, incorporating motifs seen on imported Chinese scrolls (above) and ceramics. In

Bahram Gur Fights the Karg, the worn and twisted trees, overlapping forms that create spatial recession, rapidly brushed foreground vegetation, and a taste for asymmetry all suggest eastern Asian influences.



Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf) (detail), from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17116" height="808" sizes="(max-width: 600px) 100vw, 600px" src="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...2017/01/bg.png" srcset="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...2017/01/bg.png 598w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...bg-300x404.png 300w" width="600">

Figure **13.3.3.53**: Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf) (detail), from the *Great Mongol Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**)

Local influences are also apparent: Persia had a long artistic tradition of depicting heroes, kings, and hunters riding horses over slain opponents. Bahram Gur is depicted in this tradition. Shown on horseback, he wears kingly garb, with a golden crown, luxurious garment, and an elegant gold and pearl earring visible in his right ear. But he is also clearly a warrior, holding a mace over his shoulder, and with a bow, sword, and arrows covered in a leopard skin hanging from his waist.



Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf), from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17121" height="827" sizes="(max-width: 600px) 100vw, 600px" src="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-full-page.jpg" srcset="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-full-page.jpg 600w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ge-300x414.jpg 300w" width="600">

Figure **13.3.3.54**: Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf), from the *Great Mongol Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**)

The result is a dynamic, energy-filled image with a monumental figure almost bursting out of the frame: Bahram Gur is cut off slightly at the top, trees and landscape details are truncated at the edges, and the horse is captured in mid-motion with one leg raised above the Karg. The Karg's head, very close to the viewer, is centrally placed and dripping blood, while the splayed length of the Karg's battered body pulls the viewer's eye toward the left. The focus returns to the hero, however, because a visual circuit is created around him. Our eyes travel along the horn of the Karg, to the continuous arc of the tree branch, and up to Bahram Gur, whose glance leads our eyes back down across the vegetation and the body of his horse.

The page surrounding *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg* is covered with calligraphy, but we do not know what originally appeared on the page adjoining the painting because the book pages are dispersed today. Calligraphy is the most highly regarded form of Islamic art, and it can be highly stylized, showing off an artist's personal flare and skill. Ideals of beauty in Islamic culture draw on calligraphy's inherent harmony and balance, spacing, proportion and compositional evenness on the page, and these aesthetic values are also visible in the painting style of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*.



Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf), from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17117" height="154" sizes="(max-width: 632px) 100vw, 632px" src="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...alligraphy.png" srcset="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...alligraphy.png 632w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...phy-300x73.png 300w" width="632">

Figure **13.3.3.55**: Calligraphy (detail), *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf)*, from the *Great Mongol Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum)

Old heroes for a new regime

There is a tradition within Islam that strongly discourages the visual representation of human or animal figures. In practice, however, figurative representations can very often be found in secular and private Islamic contexts, such as the Ilkhanid court, where it was acceptable —even desirable—to create splendid figurative artworks for private consumption.

This was true of the *Shahnama*, which was a favorite subject at the Mongol court, eagerly enjoyed by wealthy and sophisticated courtiers. The painters who illustrated the *Shahnama* were drawn to dramatic subjects such as battles or encounters with astonishing beasts such as the Karg. However, images like *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg* were not just meant as illustrations of simple, enjoyable fairy tales, but contained deeper meaning and significance for the Mongol nobility. Here, Bahram Gur symbolizes just rule and civilized society triumphing over chaos and disorder, represented by the Karg. In simple terms, this means good defeating evil, but it also implies that a good and stable social order is based upon kingship, and that warrior-kings like Bahram Gur are moral and courageous models to be emulated by the readers of the book. The *Shahnama* therefore also provided a teaching tool, subtly incorporating moral stories and illustrating desirable behaviors for future kings and nobles.

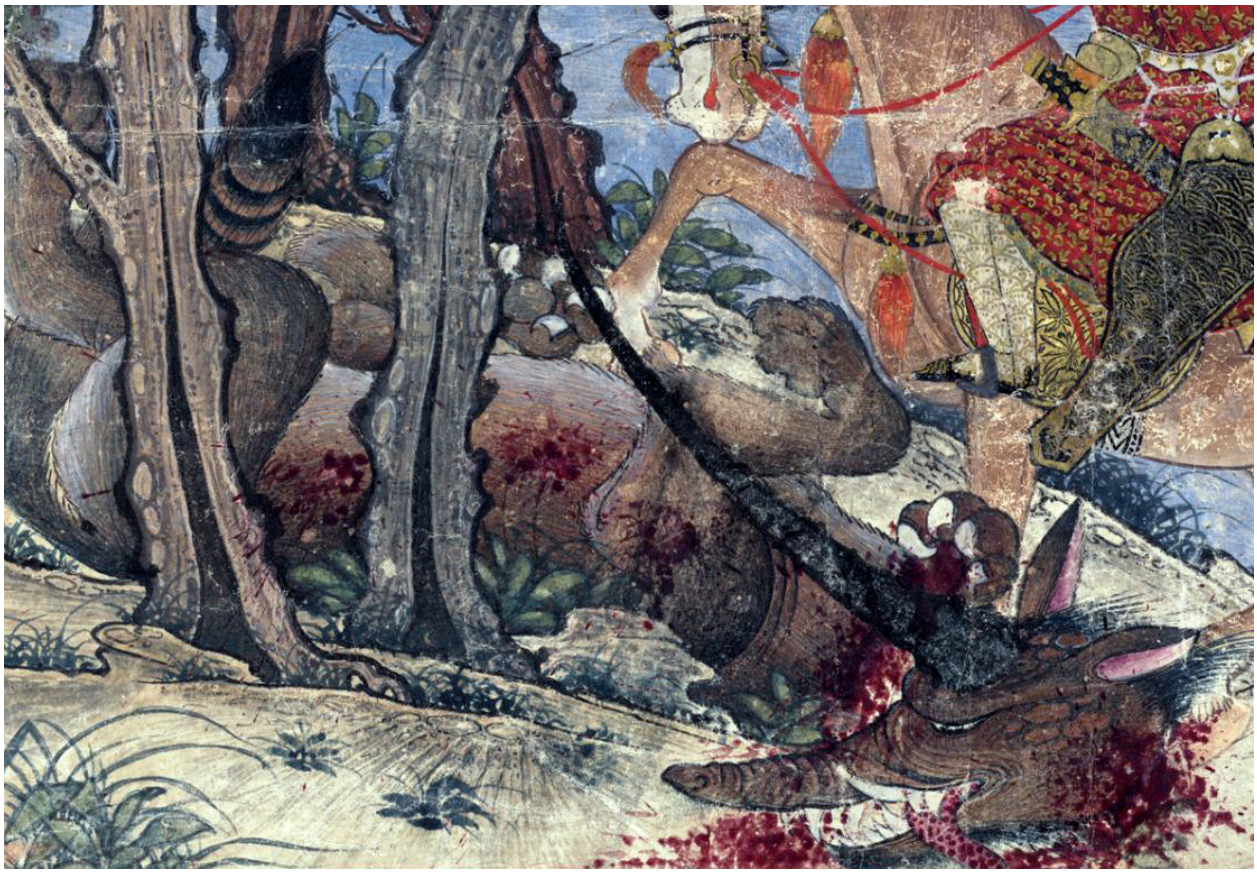


Figure **13.3.3.56**: Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf) (detail), from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330-40, Iran, ink, colors, gold, and silver on paper, folio 41.5 x 30 cm (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**)

Many scholars also believe that the new Mongol rulers in Persia wanted to link themselves to the great heroes and kings of Persia's past, a link which would enhance their authority. The Mongols and the ancient Persians had a shared respect for the manly arts of fighting, hunting, feasting, and courtship, and it is not a coincidence that Bahram Gur rides a horse as he defeats the Karg: the story is Persian, but the hero is shown as a great Mongol horseman.

The *Shahnama* is filled with magical tales of courtly life, including kings and heroes who fight, hunt, and live life to the fullest, as illustrated in the story of *Bahram Gur Fights the Karg*. But the *Shahnama* is also somewhat fatalistic, presenting a hostile world filled with fierce foes like the Karg. The book even ends with the defeat of the Persians by the Arabs. The stories, however, teach about the importance of courage and ethics while traveling through such a threatening world, and they provide guidance for readers confronting questions about death, love, honor and just rule.

Additional Resources

Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf) at the Harvard Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum

"The Art of the Ilkhanid Period (1256–1353)" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"The Art of the Book in the Ilkhanid Period" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"Folios from the Great Mongol Shahnama (Book of Kings)" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam: 1250–1800* (New Haven, CT, 1994).

Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006).

Gene Garthwaite, *The Persians* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

Robert Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture and the Literary World* (New York and Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall & Abrams, 1997).

Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House

by GIOIA STEVENS



Figure 13.3.3.57: "The Combat of Rustam and Ashkabus," Folio from a Shahnama (Book of Kings), c. 1330-40, ink, opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper, 8 x 5 3/16 inches, Iran (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Illustrated books were an especially important art form in Iran from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century. They flourished during a cultural revival that took place under the Ilkhanids, the Mongol dynasty which ruled Mesopotamia and Iran from 1258 to 1336 C.E. The Ilkhanids were the descendants of Genghis Khan's grandson Hülegü who conquered Iran in 1258 C.E. They ruled as foreigners in a conquered land and they employed the power of words and images to support their right to rule. The Ilkhanid court commissioned luxury manuscripts as didactic works of art in which they identified themselves with the kings and heroes of Iranian history, primarily those of the *Shahnama*, or *Book of Kings* (above).

Shahnama or *Book of Kings*

The most popular illustrated text of the period was the *Shahnama* or *Book of Kings* (above), an epic poem written by poet Abu al-Qasim Firdausi in about 1010 C.E. In the *Shahnama*, Firdausi recounts the myths, legends, and early history of Iran. We can interpret the text as a series of adventure stories and romances, but also as a guide to ethics, a chronicle, and a manual for royal conduct.

There are ten surviving illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts datable from approximately 1300 C.E. to 1350 C.E. The scholar Robert Hillenbrand has noted a concentration of illustrated Shahnamas during the first half of the fourteenth century, that may be attributed to the Ilkhanids' desire to adopt this powerful symbol of Iranian kingship for their broader educational or propagandist mission.

Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House



Figure **13.3.3.58**: "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House," Folio from the so-called "Second Small Shahnama," early 14th c., ink, opaque watercolors, gold on paper, 6 5/16 x 5 11/16″, Ilkhanid Dynasty (**Brooklyn Museum of Art**)

"Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House," a folio from the so-called *Second Small Shahnama*, is an illustrated manuscript page in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum (above). The "Small Shahnamas" are a group of three small, dispersed, and undated manuscripts which were created in Iran in the first half of the 14th century. The painting illustrates the *Shahnama* story of the ruler Bahram Gur visiting the home of a peasant in disguise. Bahram Gur overhears the conversation of the peasant and his wife who is milking a cow in the background. The cow refuses to give milk and the woman attributes this to Bahram Gur's tyrannous rule in the country. When Bahram Gur hears this, he resolves to become a just and merciful ruler and the milk immediately begins to flow.



Figure 13.3.3.59: Bahram Gur looking toward peasant and woman on the right (detail), "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House," folio from the so-called "Second Small Shahnama," early 14th c., ink, opaque watercolors, gold on paper, 6 5/16 x 5 11/16″, Ilkhanid Dynasty (Brooklyn Museum of Art)

Women in Ilkhanid Iran

Bahram Gur is resplendent in his gold robe at the center of the painting, but both he and the peasant are looking at the woman in the far right corner. She sits with her back turned as she milks the cow, but she is clearly the focus of attention. The scholar Sheila Blair has argued that the depiction of women in illustrated manuscripts from the Ilkhanid period indicates an upgrade in their status in the society. This painting shows that a woman of low social status can reform a tyrant.

Seljuk painting style



Figure 13.3.3.60: "Buzurgmihr Masters the Game of Chess," Folio from a Shahnama (Book of Kings), c. 1300-30, ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 6 3/8 x 5 1/4″, Iran or Iraq (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

"Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House" is quite similar to another folio, "Buzurgmihr Masters the Game of Chess," from the "First Small Shahnama" in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (above). They are both examples of the continuation of the style developed by Seljuk (Turkic dynasty of Central Asian nomadic origins) artists in Iran during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The influence of the earlier Seljuk style can found here in the use of delicate, subdued tones against a plain gold background. The Ilkhanids may have chosen to adopt the Seljuk painting style as an additional way to integrate Mongol rule into indigenous cultural traditions.



Figure **13.3.3.61**: "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House," Shahnama, 1341 C.E., ink and pigments on light beige paper, 14 3/8 x 12″, Injuid Dynasty, Iran (**Walters Art Museum, Baltimore**)

Shahnama manuscripts were also made in areas which were outside direct Mongol political control. The Injuids began as vassals of the Ilkhanids in southern Iran and later established themselves as the independent rulers of the cities of Shiraz and Fars. Qawam al-Dawlah wa-al-Din Hasan, vizier (a high executive officer) to the Inju governor in Fars province, commissioned a *Shahnama* manuscript in 1341, and its folio of "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House" is now located in The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (above). The Injuids commissioned their own *Shahnama* manuscripts in an effort to establish the legitimacy of their own rule, but they did so in a style which was very different from the Ilkhanids.



Figure **13.3.3.62**: Detail, "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House," *Shahnama*, 1341 C.E., ink and pigments on light beige paper, 14 3/8 x 12″, Injuid Dynasty, Iran (**Walters Museum of Art, Baltimore**)

The art historian Stefano Carboni has described Injuid style as "simple, almost naïve compositions [displaying an] absence of refined detail [in] the rigid postures of figures, the oversize trees and plants, and rapid, imprecise brushstrokes."***** The dissimilarity between the Walters and the Brooklyn "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House" underscore the differences between Injuid and Ilkhanid styles and also illustrates how clearly the role of the ruling court can be seen in artistic production. The Injuids did not seek to continue the earlier Seljuk style as way of legitimizing their rule and instead developed a new style which bears little resemblance to earlier work done under the Ilkhanids.

*Stefano Carboni, “Synthesis: Continuity and Innovation in Ilkhanid Art,” *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni. New York : [New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Distributed by Yale University Press], 2002, p. 217.

Additional Resources:

This work in The Brooklyn Museum

The Art of the Book in the Ilkhanid Period at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sheila Blair, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds. *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Distributed by Yale University Press, 2002).

Marie Lukens Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994).

Arthur George Warner, Edmond Warner, and Firdawsi, *The Shahnama*, English translation (London: Paul, 1905)

Mamluk Qur’an

by MARK GURANACCIA



Figure **13.3.3.63**: Folio from a Qur’an, 14th century, ink on paper, 13 1/5 x 5 1/5″ (The Brooklyn Museum)

The art of calligraphy

Of the many stunning architectural and artistic achievements that have come down to us from the Islamic world, one of the most incredible is the art of calligraphy. Forbidden from illustrating holy texts with images of human figures (images that are common in many Christian religious books), the Islamic world transformed writing itself into an art form. A great many examples have survived to the present day. Additionally, because of the beauty and centrality of calligraphy to Islam, there has been a great deal of scholarship written on the subject and spectacular Qur’ans are proudly displayed in some of the world’s most famous museums. That said, given the quantity of Qur’an manuscripts which have been passed on to us, much of what has survived is not as well studied and documented.

One such example is a double folio (two pages) from a Mamluk Qur’an, currently housed in the Brooklyn Museum of Art (the Mamluks ruled over key areas of the Middle East, including Mecca and Medina between 1250 and 1517). The double folio was likely produced sometime during the 14th century in either Egypt or Syria and contains the end of *sura* (chapter) 32 of the Qur’an known as *as-Sajdah* (the prostration) and the beginning of *sura* 33, *al-‘Ahzab* (The Combined Forces). There are many distinct styles of calligraphy, known as scripts, and this particular Qur’an is written in a script known as *nashki*, which was one of the most popular of the Mamluk period. As an illustration of the abilities of Mamluk calligraphers, it is excellent. It is not the quality of the calligraphy that differentiates this double folio from its better-known peers, but rather the quality of the decoration.



Figure 13.3.3.64: Sultan Baybars' Qur'an, calligraphy by Muhammad ibn al-Wahid, illumination by Muhammad ibn Mubadir and Aydughdi ibn 'Abd Allah al-Badri, Cairo, 1304 (British Library Add. MS. 22406), ff.2v-3



Figure 13.3.3.65: Detail, Sultan Baybars' Qur'an, calligraphy by Muhammad ibn al-Wahid, illumination by Muhammad ibn Mubadir and Aydughdi ibn 'Abd Allah al-Badri, Cairo, 1304 (British Library Add. MS. 22406), ff.2v-3

Take, for instance, the most famous Mamluk Qur'an, that of the high official (and later sultan) Baybars al-Jahangir. This Qur'an, produced between the years 1304 and 1306, exemplifies the extraordinary level of ornament that grace the pages of many Mamluk Qur'ans. The borders of the page are wonderfully detailed with the vegetal patterns known as arabesques which completely enclose the calligraphy. The ends of each *aya* (verse) are marked by small, exquisite golden rosettes and the outside edge of each page contains meticulously detailed medallions, and even within the text box, regularly spaced dots in gold ink fill the blank spaces between the calligraphy.

In comparison with the Qur'an of Baybars, the Brooklyn Museum's double folio is virtually devoid of decoration. A single small medallion, vertically placed, marks the outer edge of each page, and rosettes, which are no match for the virtuosity of the rosettes from the Baybars Qur'an, represent the extent of the decoration. Furthermore, the double folio is written in dark blue or black ink with *sura* headings written in gold. By contrast, the entirety of the Baybars Qur'an is written in gold ink, except for the *sura* headings which are written in a brilliant red ink.



Figure 13.3.3.66: Folio from a Qur'an, 14th century, ink on paper, 13 1/5 x 5 1/5″ (The Brooklyn Museum)

Practical not ceremonial

Not surprisingly, the Baybar's Qur'an garners far more attention and study than does the Brooklyn Museum's double folio. However, in many ways, this obscure double folio is more interesting than the famous Baybars Qur'an. We know a great deal about the history of the Baybars Qur'an. We know when it was written and that it was intended as a waqf (charitable endowment) for his khanqa (a form of monastery or prayer house for Sufis). By way of contrast, we know virtually nothing about the Qur'an from which the Brooklyn Museum's double folio came, and that is a large part of why it is so fascinating. The double folio has an unusual feature. It is written with six lines per page. Generally speaking, Qur'ans throughout the Islamic world are written in odd-numbers of lines per page. We do know, that there is a Syrian tradition of producing Qur'ans with six lines per page. It is possible that the calligrapher, or the patron was Syrian. There is another possibility. The Baybars Qur'an was also written with six lines per page. Perhaps the patron of the Qur'an had seen the Baybars Qur'an and wished to emulate it. We cannot know for certain, and there are enormous range of possibilities to explore.

From the perspective of studying the double folio and others like it (there is a very similar folio in the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian) they hold one additional advantage over the Baybars Qur'an and its ilk. These Qur'ans were almost certainly meant to be used as everyday items. The Baybars Qur'an was, at its core, intended not as a practical object, but rather as a public demonstration of power, wealth and piety. On the other hand, the Qur'an of the double folio could have been commissioned as someone's personal Qur'an or for their child to use as a student at a madrasa (school), or it may have been intended as a gift. Regardless, it was probably something that real people in the 14th century interacted with on a daily basis, not only on formal occasions and that, when combined with the beautiful calligraphy is what makes such objects truly special.

Additional resources:

An introduction to Islamic calligraphy from the Smithsonian

A selection of 13th – 15th century Qur'ans from around the Islamic World from the Freer and Sackler Galleries at the Smithsonian

A brief introduction to the Mamluks

Sultan Baybars' Qur'an

Calligraphic scripts from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2006).

David James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks* (Thames and Hudson Press: New York, 1988).

Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy Illumination* (Interlink Publishing: New York, 1976).

Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture* vol. 1 "Calligraphy" (Oxford University Press: New York, 2009).

Annemarie Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture* (New York University Press: New York, 1984).

13.3.3: Medieval period is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **3.3: Medieval period** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.3.4: Later period

The later period

The Blue Mosque, the Ardabil Carpet, and the Taj Mahal all date to this important period.

c. 1517 - 1924 C.E.

Arts of the Islamic world: The later period

by GLENNA BARLOW

What does the Taj Mahal have to do with the Tamerlane? What do Persian carpets have to do with Turkish tiles? Quite a bit, as it turns out. By the fourteenth century, Islam had spread as far East as India and Islamic rulers had solidified their power by establishing prosperous cities and a robust trade in decorative arts along the all-important Silk Road. This is a complex period with competing and overlapping cultures and empires. Read below for an introduction to the later Islamic dynasties.

Ottoman (1300-1924)

At its earliest stages, the Ottoman state was little more than a group formed as a result of the dissolution of the Anatolian Seljuq sultanate. However, in 1453, the Ottomans captured the great Byzantine capital, Constantinople, and in 1517, they defeated the Mamluks and took control of the most significant state in the Islamic world.



Figure **13.3.4.1**: Mimar Sinan, Süleymaniye Mosque built for the Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver, 1558 (Istanbul)

While the Ottomans ruled for many centuries, the height of the empire's cultural and economic prosperity was achieved during Süleyman the Magnificent's reign (r. 1520-1566), a period often referred to as the Ottoman's 'golden age.' In addition to large-scale architectural projects, the decorative arts flourished, chief among them, ceramics, particularly tiles. Iznik tiles, named for the city in Anatolia where they were produced, developed a trademark style of curling vines and flowers rendered in beautiful shades of blue and turquoise. These designs were informed by the blue and white floral patterns found in Chinese porcelain—similar to earlier Mamluk tiles, and Timurid art to the East. In addition to Iznik, other artistic hubs developed, such as Bursa, known for its silks, and Cairo for its carpets. The capital, Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), became a great center for all matters of cultural importance from manuscript illumination to architecture.



Figure 13.3.4.2: Iznik tiles in Sinan, Rüstem Pasha Mosque, 1561-63 (Istanbul)

The architecture of the period, both sacred and secular, incorporates these decorative arts, from the dazzling blue tiles and monumental calligraphy that adorn the walls of Topkapi Palace (begun 1459) to the carpets that line the floors of the Süleymaniye Mosque (1550-1558). Ottoman mosque architecture itself is marked by the use of domes, widely used earlier in Byzantium, and towering minarets. The Byzantine influence draws primarily from Hagia Sophia, a former church that was **converted into a mosque** (and is now a museum).

Timurid (1369-1502)

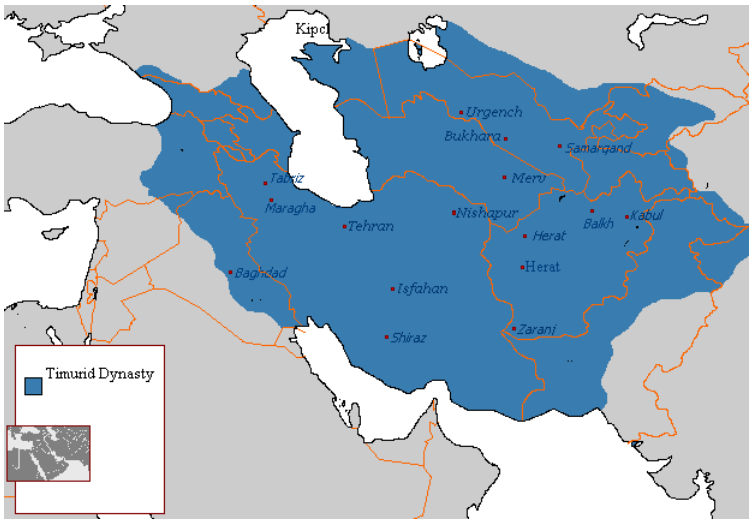


Figure 13.3.4.3: Timurid Dynasty at its greatest extent

This powerful Central Asian dynasty was named for its founder, Tamerlane (ruled 1370-1405), which is derived from Timur the Lame. Despite his rather pathetic epithet, he claimed to be a descendent of Genghis Khan and demonstrated some of his supposed ancestor's ruthlessness in conquering neighboring territories.

After establishing a vast empire, Timur developed a monumental architecture befitting his power, and sought to make Samarkand the "pearl of the world." Because the capital was situated at a major crossroads of the Silk Road (the crucial trade route linking the Middle East, Central Asia, and China), and because Timur had conquered so widely, the Timurids acquired a myriad of artisans and craftspeople from distinct artistic traditions. The resulting style synthesized aesthetic and design principles from as far away as India (then Hindustan) and the lands in between.



Figure 13.3.4.4: Registan, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 15th-17th centuries

The result can be seen in cities filled with buildings created on a lavish scale that exhibited tall, bulbous domes and the finest ceramic tiles. The structures and even the cities themselves are often described foremost by the overwhelming use of blues and golds. While the Timurid dynasty itself was short-lived, its legacy survives not only in the grand architecture that it left behind but in its descendants who went on to play significant roles in the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires.

Safavid (1502-1736)

The Safavids, a group with roots in the Sufic tradition (a mystical branch of Islam), came to power in Persia, modern-day Iran and Azerbaijan. In 1501 the Safavid rulers declared Shi'a Islam as its state religion; and in just ten years the empire came to include all of Iran.

The art of manuscript illumination was highly prized in the Safavid courts, and royal patrons made many large-scale commissions. Perhaps the most notable of these is the *Shahnama* (or 'Book of Kings,' a compilation of stories about earlier rulers of Iran) from the 1520s. While painting in this context did not have the same prominent and longstanding tradition as it does in Western art, the illustrations exhibit masterful workmanship and an incredible attention to detail.



Figure 13.3.4.5: The Ardabil Carpet, Maqsud of Kashan, Persian: Safavid dynasty, silk warps and wefts with wool pile (25 million knots, 340 per sq. inch), 1539-40 C.E., Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan or Kirman, Iran (Victoria & Albert Museum)

Trade in carpets was also important, and even today, people understand the appeal of Persian carpets. These large-scale, high-quality pieces were created as luxurious furnishings for royal courts. The most famous—perhaps of all time—is a pair known as the Ardabil Carpets, created in 1539-1540. The carpets were nearly identical, perfectly symmetrical and enormous. Every inch of space was filled with flowers, scrolling vines, and medallions.

The empire began to struggle financially and militarily until the rule of Shah Abbas (r. 1587-1629). He moved the capital to Isfahan where he built a magnificent new city and established state workshops for textiles, which, along with silk and other goods, were

increasingly exported to Europe. The mosque architecture made use of earlier Persian elements, like the four-iwan plan and building materials of brick and glazed tiles reminiscent of Timurid architecture, with its blues and greens and bulbous domes. Even in such far-removed lands, the connections between these dynasties are evident in the art they created.

Mughal (1526-1858)

Though Islam had been introduced in India centuries before, the Mughals were responsible for some of the greatest works of art produced in the canons of both Indian and Islamic art. The empire established itself when Babur, himself a Timurid prince of Turkish and Central Asian descent, came to Hindustan and defeated the existing Islamic sultanate in Delhi.

Tracing their roots to Central Asia, the Mughals produced art, music and poetry that was highly influenced by Persian and Central Asian aesthetics. This is evident in the style and importance given to miniature paintings, created to illustrate manuscripts. The most grandiose of these was the Akbarnama, created to record the conquests of Akbar, widely regarded as the greatest Mughal emperor. The art and architecture created during his reign demonstrate a synthesis of indigenous Indian temple architecture with structural and design elements derived from Islamic sources farther West. The Mughals developed a unique architectural style which, in the years after Akbar's reign, began to feature scalloped arches and stylized floral designs in white marble. The most famous example is the Taj Mahal, constructed by Shah Jahan from 1632-1653.



Figure **13.3.4.6**: Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: **Mathew Knott**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Mughal dynasty left a lasting mark on the landscape of India, and remained in power until the British completed their conquest of India in the nineteenth century.

Although historians generally agree that the major Islamic dynasties end in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Islamic art and culture have continued to flourish. Muslim artists and Muslim countries are still producing art. Some art historians consider such work as simply modern or contemporary art while others see it within the continuity of Islamic art.

Additional resources:

The Art of the Ottomans before 1600 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

The Art of the Safavids before 1600 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

The Art of the Mughals before 1600 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Introduction to the Mughal Empire from the BBC

Hagia Sophia as a mosque

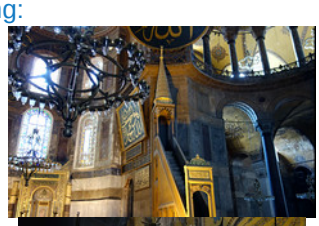
by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

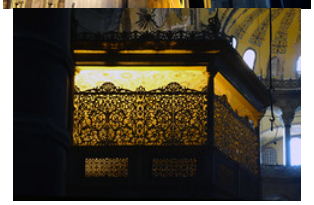


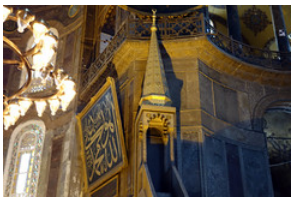
Video 13.3.4.1: Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles (architects), Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532-37

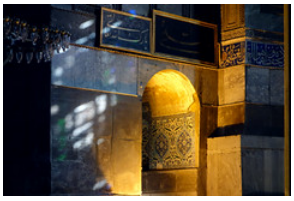
This video focuses on Hagia Sophia after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453.

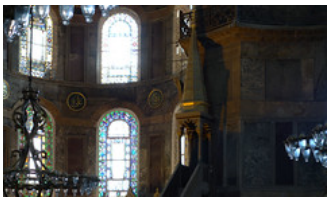
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88686

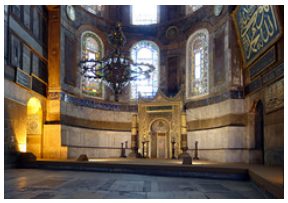
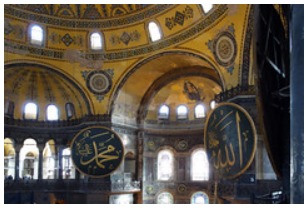







Figure **13.3.4.7**: More Smarthistory images…

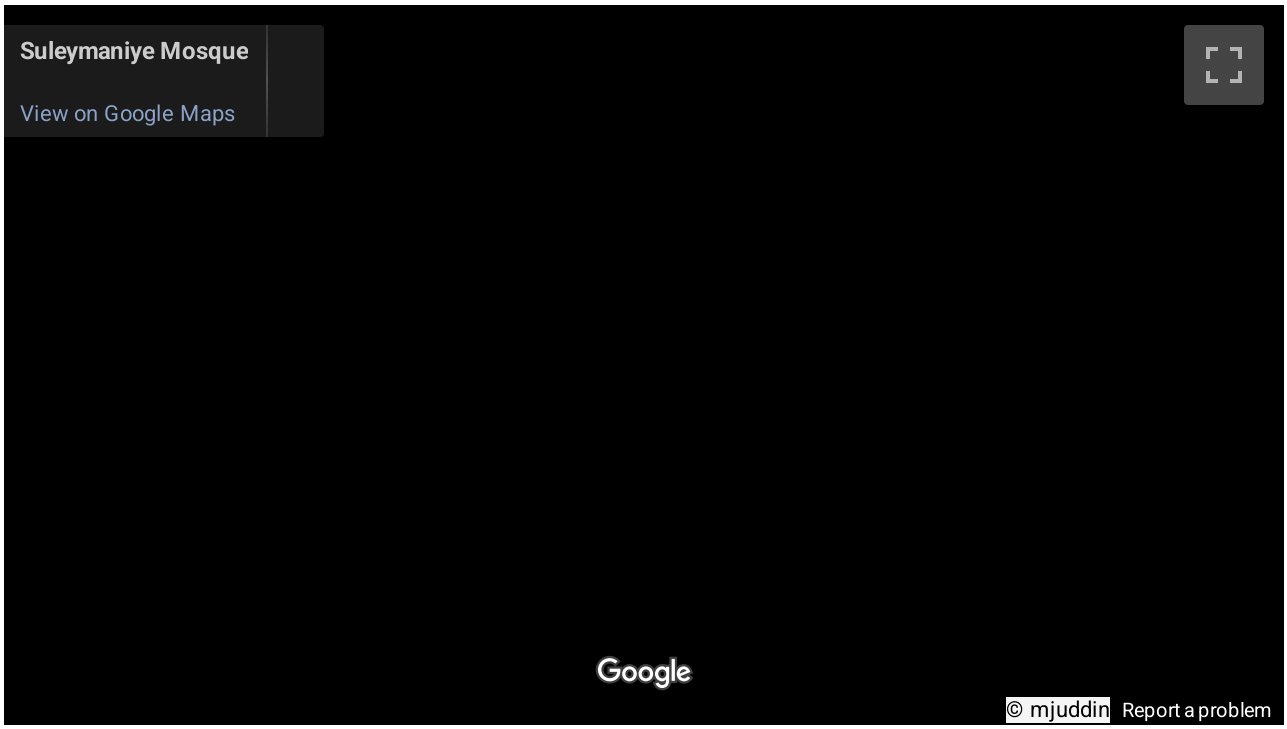
Mimar Sinan

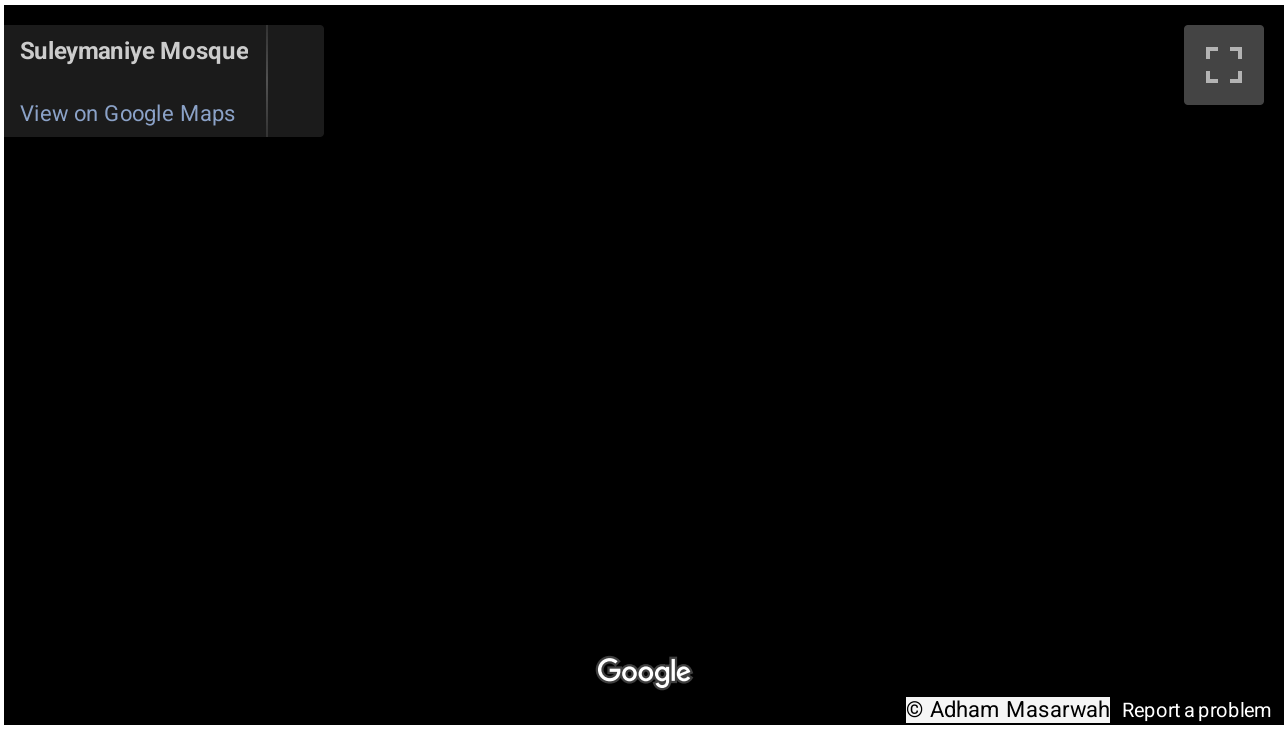
Mimar Sinan, Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.3.4.2**: Mimar Sinan, Süleymaniye Mosque, completed 1558, Istanbul, Turkey



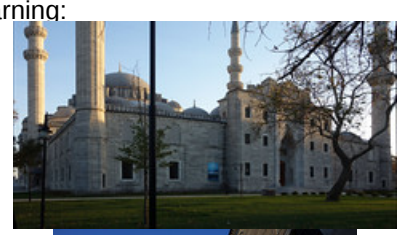


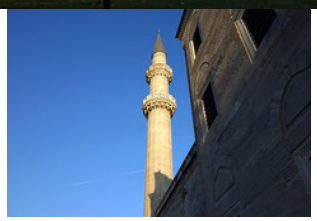
Additional resources:

Virtual walking tour

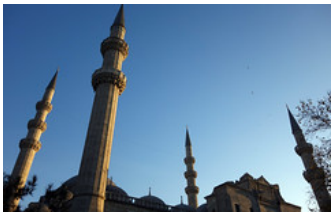
"Tracing Turkey's first Starchitect," *NY Times*

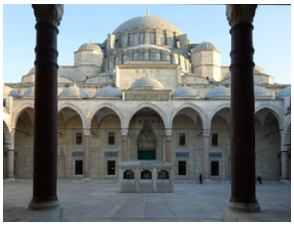
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

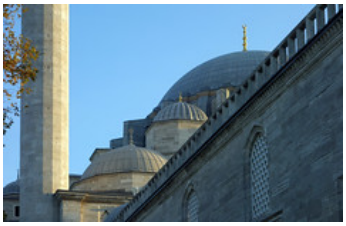
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88686







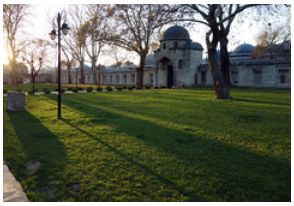






Figure **13.3.4.8:** More Smarthistory images…

Mimar Sinan, Mosque of Selim II, Edirne

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS



Figure **13.3.4.9**: Mimar Sinan, Mosque of Selim II, Edirne, Turkey, 1568–75 (photo: **grcnysll** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Elegant stacked domes, reaching to the heavens, and towering, slender pencil minarets characterize Ottoman mosque architecture. Few mosques, however, are as visually stunning and architecturally significant as the Selimiye Complex in Edirne built by the greatest of all Ottoman architects, if not one of the greatest of architects to ever live: Sinan.

Edirne

Selimiye complex was located in Edirne rather than the capital, Istanbul. It was built by the Sultan Selim II, the son of Süleyman the Magnificent, between 1568 and 1574. Edirne was one of Selim II's favorite cities. He was stationed here as a prince when his father campaigned in Persia in 1548 and he enjoyed hunting on the outskirts of the city.



Figure **13.3.4.10**

Edirne was selected not only because of Selim II's fondness of the city, but also for its historical and geographic significance. Located in the Balkans, within the European lands of the Ottoman Empire, Edirne had been a capital of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century before Istanbul and was effectively the second city of the Empire through the 17th century.



Figure 13.3.4.11: View of the Süleymaniye Mosque complex designed by Sinan, 1550, from the Golden Horn, Istanbul (photo: Matthew & Heather, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Edirne was the first major city that Europeans traveling to the Ottoman Empire reached—so building a large complex here offered the Sultan an opportunity to use architecture to impress the Ottoman Empire's greatness upon visitors. Furthermore because Edirne was not Istanbul, whose Golden Horn and many hills were already home to monumental mosque complexes, it also offered an opportunity to build a mosque that would dominate the city. Built in an area of the city once known as Kavak Meydani, the modern designs of the Selimiye complex overshadowed Edirne's more traditional architecture.

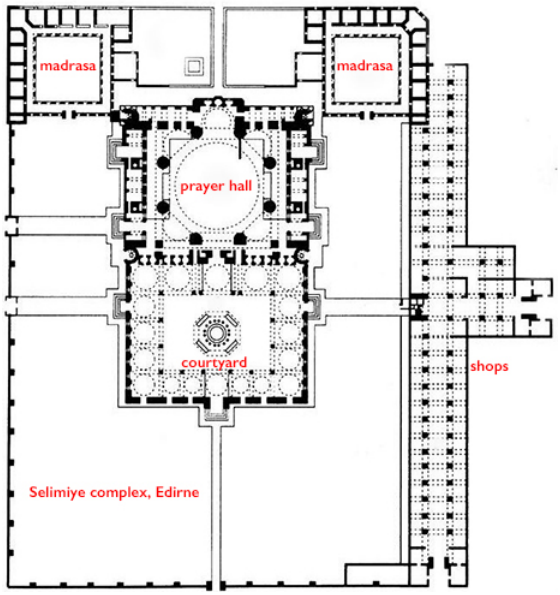


Figure 13.3.4.12

The complex is huge. It measures 190 x 130 meters (or more than the length of two football fields) and is composed of a mosque, two symmetrical square madrasas (one of which served as a college for studying the hadiths, or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), and there was a row of shops (arasta) and a school for learning the recitation of the Quran located to the west and added during the reign of Sultan Murad III, whose rule followed Selim II. It is likely these additions were planned by Sinan.



Figure 13.3.4.13: View of the north façade of the mosque from porticoed courtyard, Mimar Sinan, Mosque of Selim II, Edirne, Turkey, 1568–75 (photo: İhsan Deniz Kılıçoğlu, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The mosque

The mosque's nearly square prayer hall is approached through a porticoed courtyard, making the central block of the complex rectangular. The approach to the north façade of the mosque (above) is dramatic: the aligned gates of the outer precinct wall and forecourt focus the eye upwards toward the dome, which could also been seen from a distance.



Figure 13.3.4.14: Dome, 31.22 m in diameter, 42.25 m high, Mimar Sinan, Mosque of Selim II, Edirne, Turkey, 1568–1575 (photo: Charles Roffey, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The ethereal dome seems weightless as it floats above the prayer hall. All of the architectural features are subordinated to this grand dome. The dome rests on eight muqarnas-corbelled squinches that are in turn supported by eight large piers.



Figure **13.3.4.15**

Muqarnas are the faceted decorative forms that alternately protrude and recess and that are commonly used in Islamic architecture to bridge a point of transition—in this case, the broad base of the dome above and the slender piers below. Note that the muqarnas steps outward it rises, creating a corbelled effect, and allowing for a more open space below. The squinches are the architectural support, decorated by the muqarnas, transition from the dome down to the eight piers.

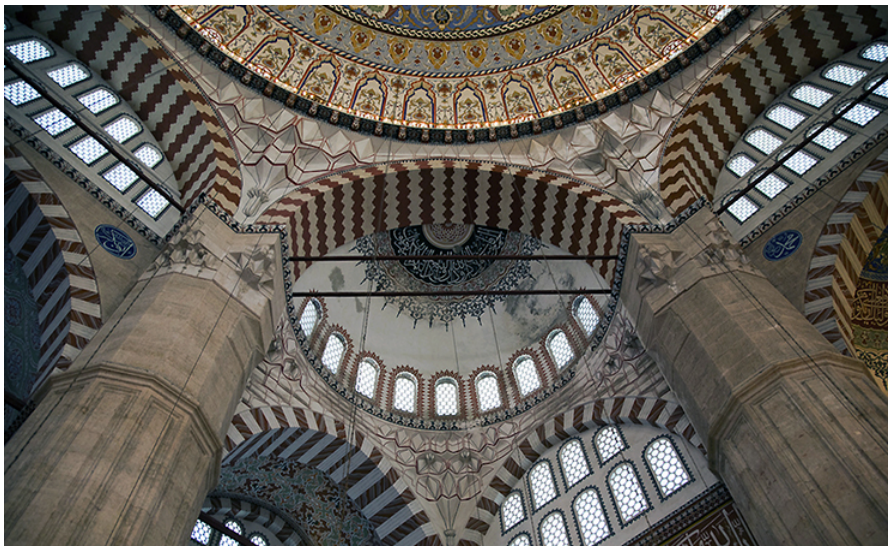


Figure **13.3.4.16**: Mimar Sinan, Mosque of Selim II, Edirne, Turkey, 1568–1575 (photo: **Basak Buyukcelen**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

They allow the round base of the dome to join octagon formed by the piers. A complex system of exterior buttresses support the east and west piers and do most of the work to hold up the massive weight of the dome. These buttresses are artfully hidden among the exterior porticos and galleries. In the interior, galleries fill the spaces in between the walls and the piers. The Qibla wall (the wall that faces Mecca) projects outward further emphasizing the openness the interior space. Sinan completely departed from the screen walls and supporting half-domes he had employed in his earlier design for the Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul.



Figure 13.3.4.17: *Müezzin mahfili*, Mosque of Selim II, Erdine, Turkey (photo: **Janisjr**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The placement of the muzzin's platform (*müezzin mahfili*), under the center of the dome is very unusual. From this platform, the muzzins who lead prayers, chant to the congregation. Gülru Necipoğlu, a leading Ottoman art historian, has compared its placement to that of a church's altar or ambo, a raised stand for biblical readings in a church. She notes that while this innovation disrupts the space below the dome, it reflects Sinan's interest in surpassing Christian architecture. The position of the platform also creates a vertical alignment of square, octagon, and circle, using geometry to refer to the earthly and heavenly spheres.



Figure 13.3.4.18: Iznik tiles in the Selimiye Mosque, Edirne (photo: **Orhan Bilgin "Zargan"** CC BY-SA 3.0)

The original appearance of the interior's decoration was different from what we see today. The interior has been repainted through the centuries and was extensively restored in the 20th century. However, the brilliant, polychrome Iznik tiles, the epitome of Ottoman decoration, and whose motifs include iconography such as saz leaves and Chinese clouds, remain largely untouched since the 16th century.

Influences

The mosque's epigraphic program—its inscriptions, was developed after the devastating defeat that the Ottoman fleet suffered at Lepanto in 1571 against the navies of the Christian Holy League. This loss prevented further Ottoman expansion along the European coast of the Mediterranean. The mosque's inscriptions focus on a central difference between Islam and Christianity—mainly that Allah (God) is indivisible and that the prophet Muhammad is God's human messenger. Certain passages from the Hadiths were included to emphasized Muhammad's position as a messenger both and intercessor.



Figure 13.3.4.19: Façade, Mimar Sinan, Mosque of Selim II, Edirne, Turkey, 1568–1575 (photo: Charles Roffey, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The unified, open plan of the mosque is matched by the artful stacking of volumes on the exterior. Unlike many other earlier Ottoman mosques and the early Byzantine church, Hagia Sophia (then converted to a mosque and now a museum), the exterior is clearly not an artistic afterthought but rather an elegant, architectural shell vital to the overall composition. The placement of the pencil minarets at the four corners of the prayer hall focus attention on the volume of the Dome. Polychrome exterior is composed of stone mixed with brick that compliments the geometric volumes that define the exterior forms of the building.

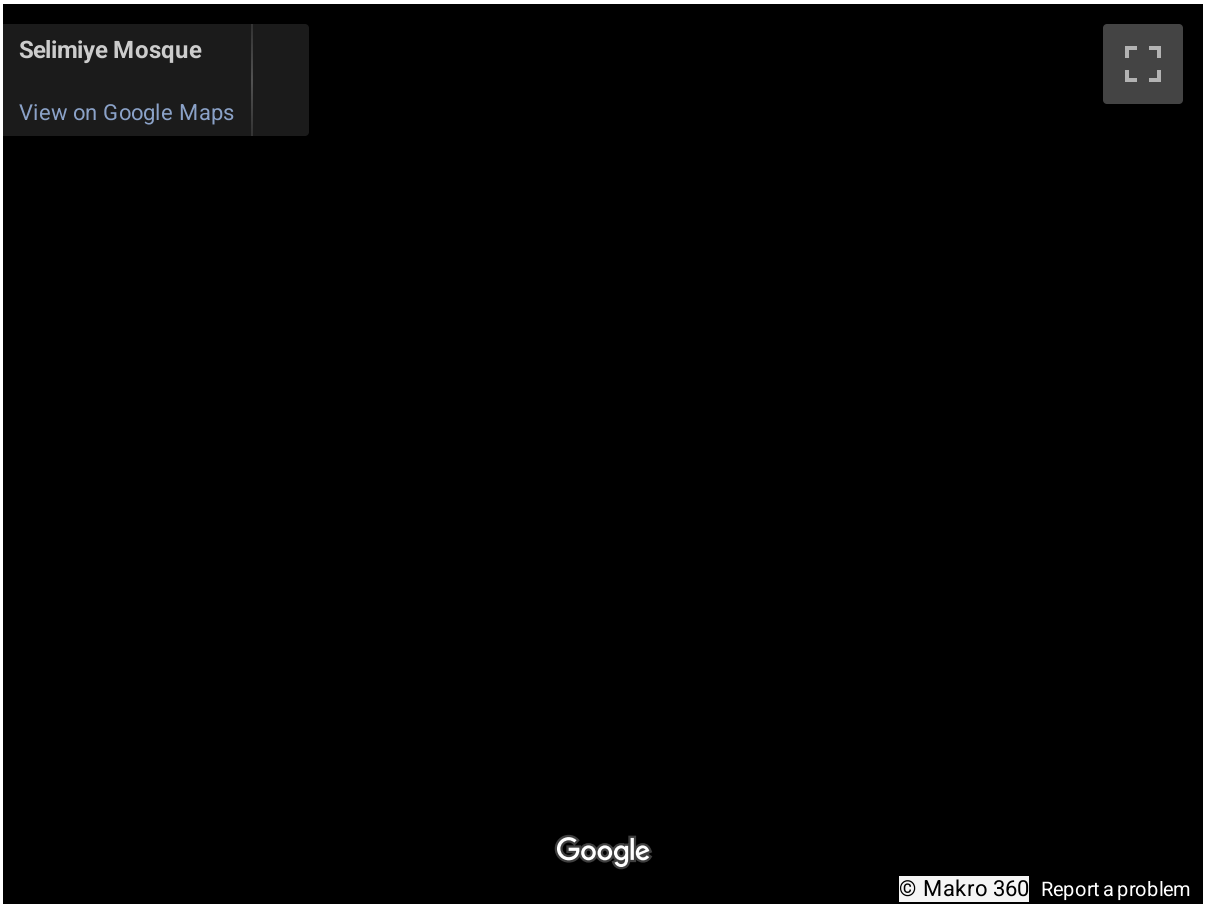


Figure 13.3.4.20: Mausoleum of Il-khan Öljeitü, Soltaniyeh Iran, 1302-12 (photo: **Zenith210**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The dome's octagonal shape was probably influenced by the tomb of Öljeitü in Soltaniyeh, which Sinan had seen while on Süleyman's Baghdad campaign. The tomb had a large octagonal dome of 25 meters, which at one time was surrounded by eight turrets, which we can see echoed at Edirne. Sinan's dome, at just over 31 meters, is larger than Hagia Sophia's. The architect had wanted to disprove claims that no architect could match Hagia Sophia. Selim II funded his project with booty taken from the Ottoman campaign against Cyprus, a Christian island. Sinan sought to build a monument for the Sultan that expressed Islam's triumph. His achievement—building a mosque that surpassed Hagia Sophia—was recognized as soon as the mosque was complete. Evliya Çelebi, a 17th century writer who traveled extensively across the Ottoman Empire, praised the mosque in his ten-volume *Seyahtname*, (or "*Travelogue*").

Mimar Sinan was a product of the Devşirme, a practice of the Ottoman authorities from the fourteenth through early eighteenth century, where young, talented, Christian men were taken from their families to serve in the military or the civil service. Sinan was

one such boy; he served during Süleyman's campaigns, learning engineering and siege warfare before becoming one of history's great architects.



Additional resources:

Art of the Ottomans after 1600

3D tour of the Selimiye Complex

Museum with No Frontiers

Archnet

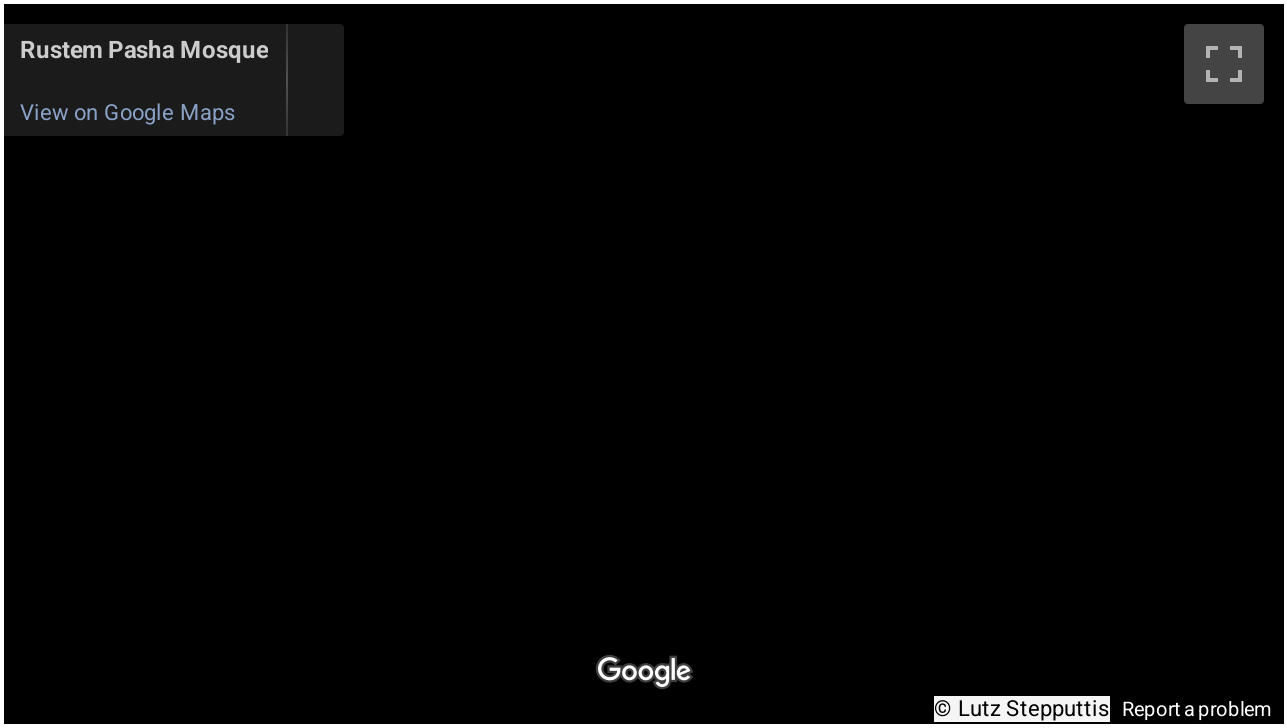
Gülru Necipoğlu, *The age of Sinan: architectural culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

Mimar Sinan, Rüstem Pasha Mosque, Istanbul

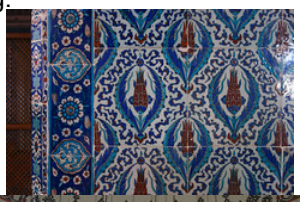
by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. BETH HARRIS

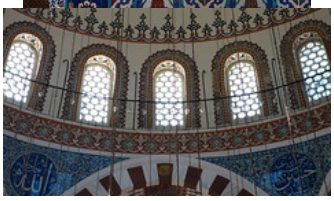


Video 13.3.4.3: Mimar Sinan, Rüstem Pasha Mosque, Istanbul, 1561-63



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

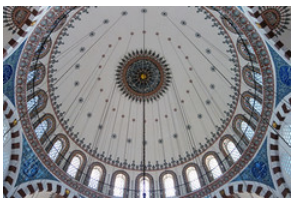




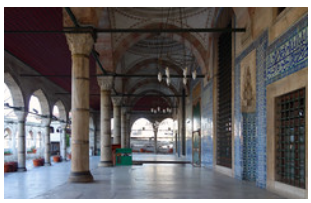




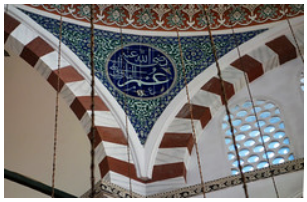








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88686



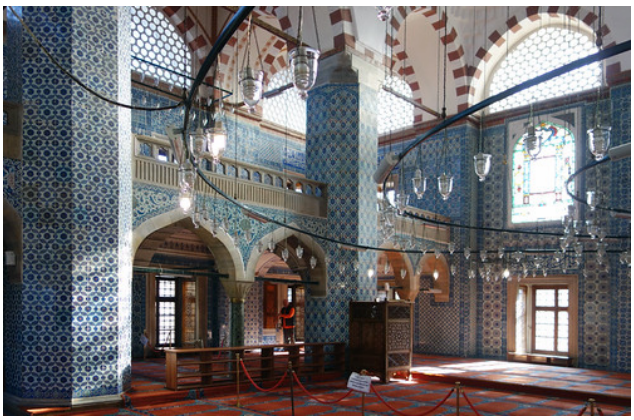


Figure 13.3.4.19: More Smarthistory images…

Tughra (Official Signature) of Sultan Süleiman the Magnificent from Istanbul

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.3.4.4**: *Tughra (Official Signature) of Sultan Süleiman the Magnificent*, ca. 1555–60, ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 25 x 30″ / 63.5 x 76.2 cm) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Raised to a high art form within the Ottoman chancery, the tughra served as the official seal of the sultan. Affixed to every royal edict, this stylized signature is an intricate calligraphic composition comprising the name of the reigning sultan, his father's name, his title, and the phrase "the eternally victorious." Its bold, gestural line contrasts with the delicate swirling vine-scroll illumination used to ornament the seal.

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Camii)

*by **DR. RADHA DALAL***



Figure **13.3.4.20**: Sedefkâr Mehmed Ağa, Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmed Mosque), completed 1617 (photo: **Tim O'Brien/Oberazzi**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A young sultan

Imagine yourself as a young sultan in charge of an empire spanning parts of three continents—Asia, Europe, and Africa—your ancestors brought together through conquests. You are 13 years old and are enthroned in the capital city, Istanbul. You are confronted with the legacy of great rulers before you such as Suleiman the Magnificent and Mehmet the Conqueror. And yet, you are neither a renowned warrior nor an able administrator. How do you leave your mark on the fabric of the city that your forebears coveted and conquered? You commission one of the finest mosques in the heart of the imperial city.

The Sultan Ahmet Mosque, popularly known as the Blue Mosque, was completed in 1617 just prior to the untimely death of its then 27-year old eponymous patron, Sultan Ahmet I. The mosque dominates Istanbul's majestic skyline with its elegant

composition of ascending domes and six slender soaring minarets. Although considered one of the last classical Ottoman structures, the incorporation of new architectural and decorative elements in the mosque's building program and its symbolic placement at the imperial center of the city point to a departure from the classical tradition innovated under the famous 16th-century master architect, Mimar Sinan.



Figure **13.3.4.21**: Hagia Sophia (left) and the Blue Mosque (right) (photo: **Black.Dots.**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A symbolic location

The mosque's site is politically charged. Unlike other Ottoman imperial mosques, which were placed farther away from the city center to encourage urban development and to take advantage of Istanbul's hilly topography, the Sultan Ahmet mosque is nestled in between the Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Hippodrome near the Ottoman royal residence, Topkapı Palace. In fact, the choice of location caused some consternation since it required the demolition of quite a few established palaces owned by Ottoman ministers. But prestige outweighed the enormous cost in coin and real estate. Constructing large mosque complexes for the benefit of the public was part of the imperial tradition denoting a pious and benevolent ruler. Placing the mosque adjacent to the Hagia Sophia also signified the triumph of an Islamic monument over a converted Christian church, a matter of great concern even 150 years after the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul in 1453.

The rivalry between the two monuments is difficult to ignore as you alight from the tram and walk towards them today. Both buildings overwhelm with their massive proportions and their individual claims on the city's history. But the Sultan Ahmet mosque is distinct from the 6th-century church. The mosque features two main sections: a large unified prayer hall crowned by the main dome and an equally spacious courtyard. In contrast to earlier imperial mosques in Istanbul, the monotony of the exterior stone walls is relieved through numerous windows and a blind arcade. Huge elevated and recessed entrances penetrate three sides of its precinct to provide access to the sacred core. The courtyard's inner frame is a domed arcade, which is uniform on all sides except for the prayer hall entrance where the arches expand.

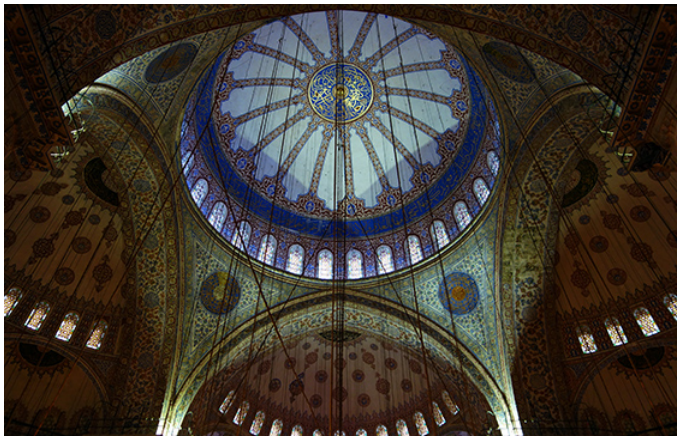


Figure **13.3.4.22**: Dome and pendentives

Inside, the central dome rests on delicate pendentives (triangular segments of a spherical surface) with its weight supported on four massive fluted columns. In order to extend the prayer space beyond the span of the central dome, a series of half-domes cascade outwards from the center to ultimately join the exterior walls of the mosque. Of the six minarets (towers traditionally built for the call to prayer), four are positioned on the corners of the mosque's prayer hall while the other two flank the external corners of the courtyard. Each of these "pencil" minarets has a series of balconies adorning its lean form.

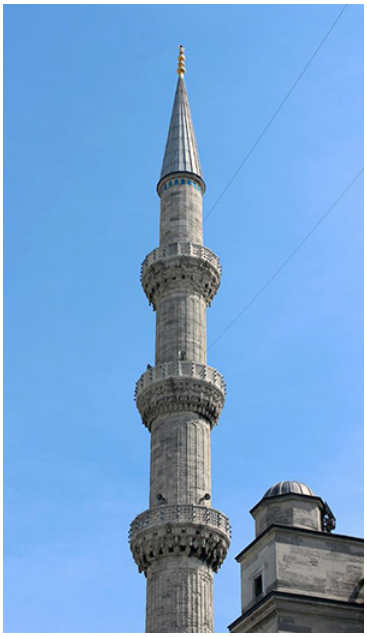


Figure 13.3.4.23: Blue Mosque minaret (photo: Radha Dalal)

Six minarets were unusual even for an imperial mosque—they implied equality with the multi-minareted mosques of Mecca leading to considerable resistance from the local population. The solution? Legend has it that in an attempt at appeasement, a seventh minaret was added to the mosque in Mecca, proving its primacy over any imperial mosque in Istanbul or elsewhere. But evidence to support this claim is thin since some believe the seventh minaret already existed prior to the Blue Mosque's construction while others cite a much later date for the seventh minaret's addition.

The interior

The prayer hall itself is punctuated with several architectural features including the sultan's platform and an arcaded gallery running along the interior walls except on the quibla wall facing Mecca. A carved marble niche set into the center of this wall guides the faithful to the correct direction for prayer. To its right is a tall and thin marble pulpit (mimbar) capped with an ornamental turret.

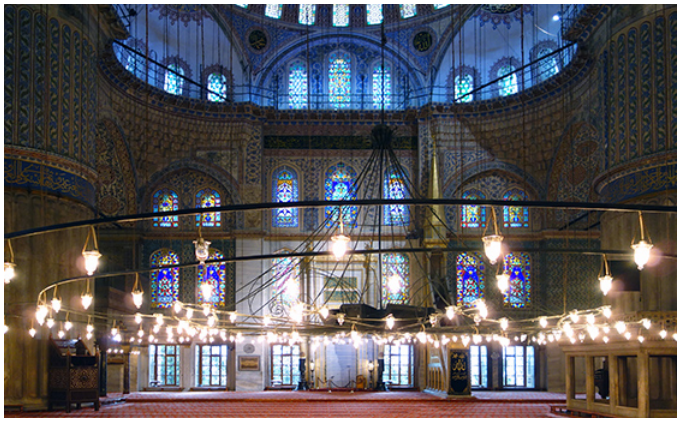


Figure 13.3.4.24: View of the quibla wall with the niche center, the minbar right, and the sultan's platform far right, Blue Mosque; note the massive piers at the far left and right

Tilework and stained glass

Upper sections of the mosque are painted in geometric bands and organic medallions of bright reds and blues, but much of this is not original. Rather, the careful choreography of more than 20,000 Iznik tiles rise from the mid-sections of the mosque and dazzle the visitor with their brilliant blue, green, and turquoise hues, and lend the mosque its popular sobriquet.



Figure **13.3.4.25**: View of Iznik tiles

Traditional motifs on the tiles such as cypress trees, tulips, roses, and fruits evoke visions of a bountiful paradise. Sultan Ahmet requisitioned these specifically for the building. The lavish use of tile decoration on the interior was a first in Imperial Ottoman mosque architecture. The intensity of the tiles is accentuated by the play of natural light from more than 200 windows that pierce the drums of the central dome, each of the half-domes, and the side walls. These windows originally contained Venetian stained glass.

Legacy

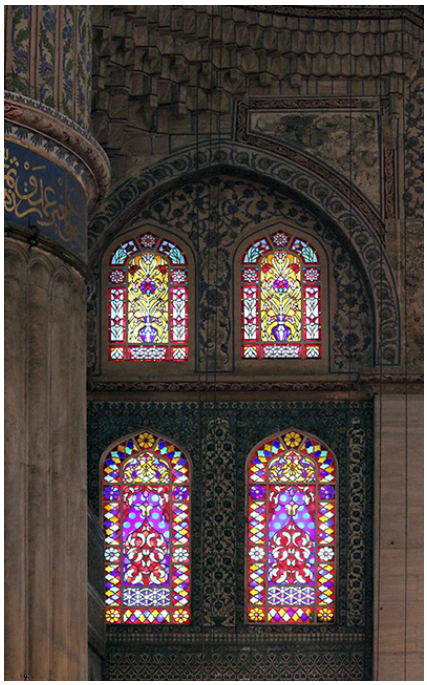
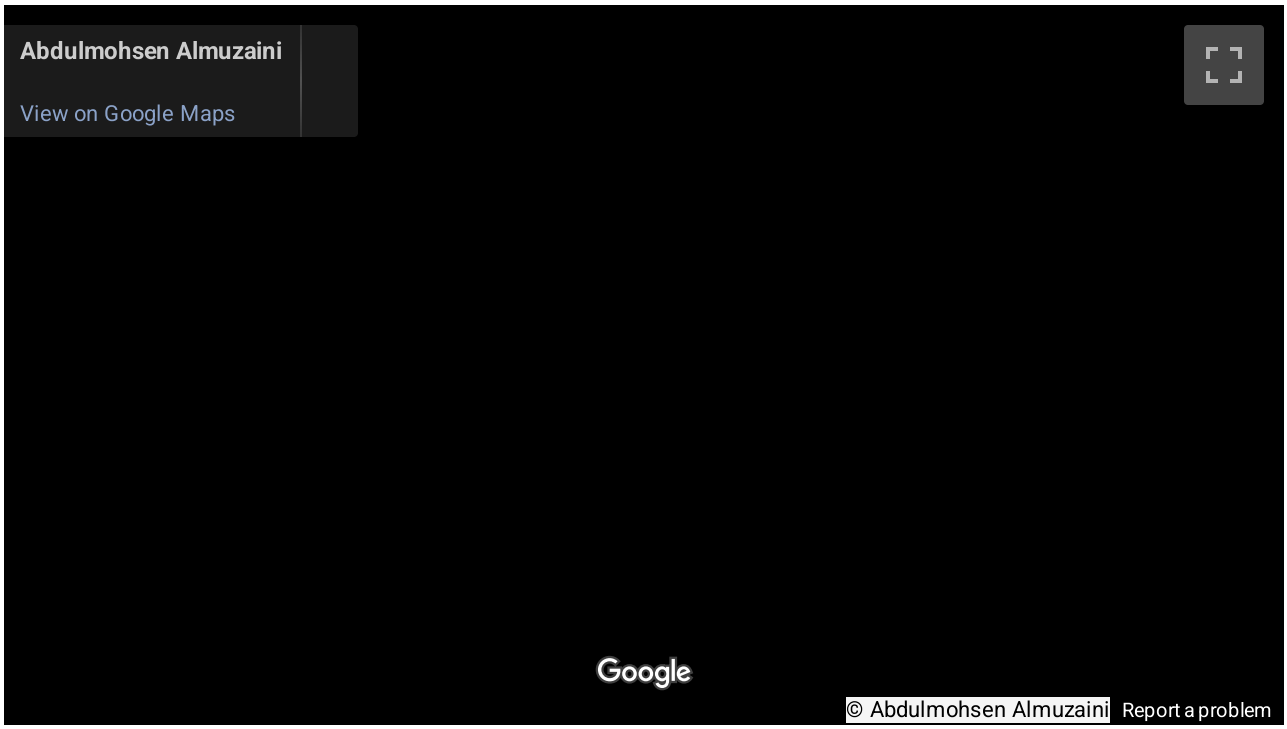


Figure **13.3.4.26**: Stained glass windows, Blue Mosque (photo: Radha Dalal)

The Sultan Ahmet Mosque is particularly remarkable in that it was conceived and built during a time of relative decline. In the past, grand mosques were constructed as markers of prosperity and political strength. Even though Ahmet I showed promise when he first assumed the throne, he is now seen as a weak and incompetent sultan. A few short years into his reign, he conceded autonomy to the Habsburg rulers and freed them from paying tribute. His inability to control and sustain a stable administration inaugurated an era of malaise and contributed to the reversal of Ottoman fortunes. In spite of these troubles, his legacy remains cemented in the breathtaking beauty of the Blue Mosque.



Additional resources:

Sultanahmet Mosque Association

Virtual tour of the mosque

The art of the Ottomans after 1600 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Blue Mosque 3D

Freely, John. *Istanbul: The Imperial City*. London: Viking, 1996.

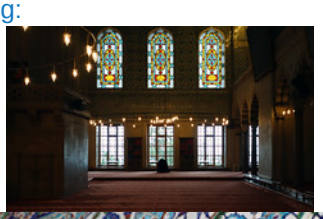
Goodwin, Godfrey. *A History of Ottoman Architecture*. 1971. Reprint, New York: Thames & Hudson, 1987.

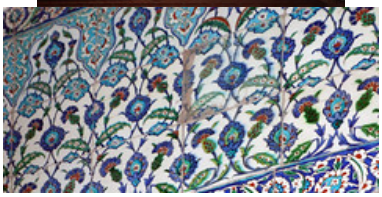
Kafescioğlu, Çiğdem. *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.

Mansel, Philip. *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire*, 1453-1924. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

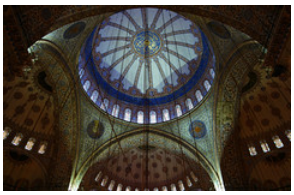
Matthews, Henry. *Mosques of Istanbul*. Istanbul: Scala, 2010.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

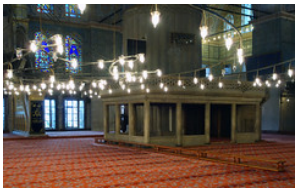
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88686

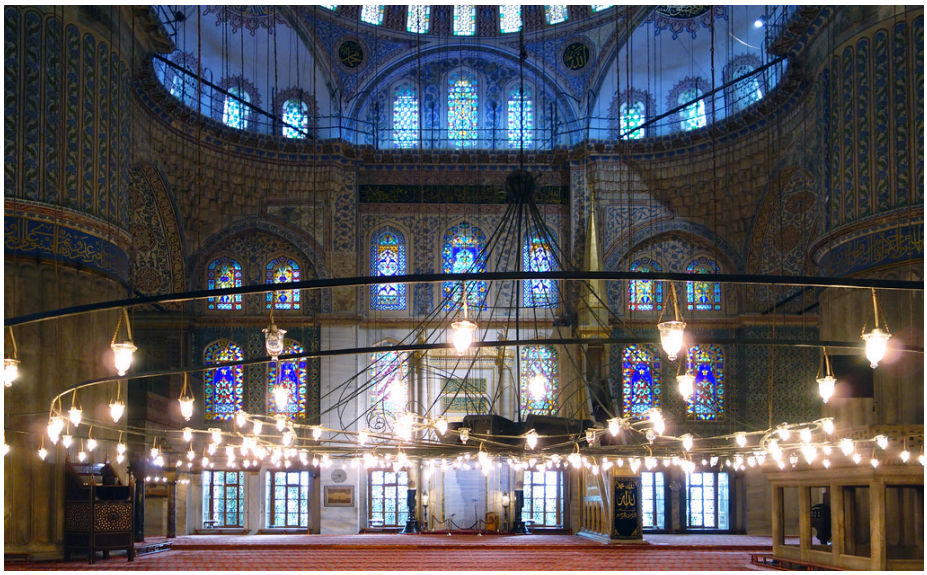


Figure **13.3.4.26**: More Smarthistory images…

Introduction to the court carpets of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires

by KENDRA WEISBIN



Figure **13.3.4.27**: Detail, Medallion Carpet, *The Ardabil Carpet*, Maqsud of Kashan, Persian: Safavid Dynasty, silk warps and wefts with wool pile, 1539-40 C.E., Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan or Kirman, Iran (Victoria & Albert, London)

Carpet weaving in the Islamic world

Carpets are woven works of art that were produced at every level of society in the Islamic world. Women have been weaving for centuries in villages and nomadic encampments all over the Middle East, Anatolia, and Central Asia, each woman passing down her techniques and designs to her daughters. These women created carpets both for sale and for their own personal use, and this tradition continues today.



Figure 13.3.4.28: Carpet (Ottoman) with cintamani motif, c. 1550, Cairo, Egypt, wool, 79 x 48″ (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carpets were also made in the royal courts of the Islamic world. These carpets were not just functional floor coverings, they were ornate works of art that indicated the status and wealth of their owners. Court carpets were used on the floors in reception halls, audience chambers, and at court-supported religious institutions. They were also presented as impressive gifts to other rulers. Manuscript paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries suggest smaller rugs were often layered on top of larger carpets and also show that many carpets were used in outdoor pleasure pavilions and palatial parks.

Rulers had access to expensive materials, such as silk and metal-wrapped threads, and employed the most highly skilled designers and weavers in their empires to create enormous and luxurious carpets. Because of their quality, design, and skilled execution, court carpets are among the finest examples of art from the Islamic world. Court carpets are often very different from the carpets made in commercial workshops or villages. Rather than solely utilizing centuries-old traditional motifs, court carpets often share designs found on a range of media, such as bookbinding and manuscript painting.

Although carpets were made in many royal courts, the Ottoman (1281–1924), the Safavid (1501–1732), and the Mughal (1526–1858) Empires provide some of the richest examples of royally produced carpets.



Figure 13.3.4.29: Cintamani motif detail



Figure 13.3.4.30: Border detail



Figure **13.3.4.31**: Prayer Carpet (Ottoman), 1575-90, likely Istanbul, silk (warp and weft), wool (pile), cotton (pile), 68 x 50″ (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Ottoman Empire originated in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), and was one of the largest and longest lived in the Islamic world. It controlled territories that reached from North Africa to Eastern Europe from 1299 until 1923. Anatolia has a long tradition of carpet weaving, but from the 16th century onward Ottoman court carpets utilized a set of specific designs created by the artists of the Ottoman court workshops, designs that were also used on the court ceramics, paintings, bookbindings, and textiles.

Among the most popular of these was the “saz style,” which is characterized by long sinuous leaves, and stylized flowers (see below). Court artists also developed the “floral style,” where we see more naturalistic depictions of flowers such as tulips, roses, carnations, and hyacinths, among others. The floral and saz styles were sometimes used alone and sometimes used together, along with other motifs like the cintamani pattern (usually a combination of pearl-like circles accompanied by wavy lines sometimes called “tiger stripes”), on a huge variety of objects designed by the court, including ceramics, silks, carpets, and manuscripts.



Figure **13.3.4.32**: Border detail (note the long curving saz style leaves, a pair of white tulips facing downward, and branches of small white hyacinth blossoms



Figure **13.3.4.33**: Floral style detail showing carnations and tulips

Both the saz and floral styles appear on this rare Ottoman court prayer rug. The jagged-edged saz leaves gracefully undulate in the border amongst carnations, tulips, and other flowers. The arch at the center of the carpet identifies this as a prayer rug, and symbolizes both a mihrab (from mosque architecture) and a gateway to paradise. Such rugs were, and are, used by Muslims during the five daily prayers prescribed in Islam. Though one can go to mosque during the prayer times, prayer can take place anywhere so long as there is a clean surface (provided by the rug) and water for ritual cleansing. A luxurious prayer rug like this would have belonged to a very wealthy court patron.

The design of this remarkable carpet, the prototype for later designs, may be based on the slender-columned architecture of Muslim Spain. When Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, many exiles settled in the Ottoman Empire, bringing with them their own visual culture, which, in turn, influenced Ottoman art. This dual-columned design spawned an entire genre of architecturally-inspired prayer rugs across Anatolia.



Figure **13.3.4.34**: Ottoman miniature showing a Safavid dignitary before Ottoman sultan, Sultan Murad III, n.d. (Topkapi Museum, photo: Walter Denny)

One of the most remarkable aspects of Ottoman court carpets is their unusual structure. Unlike all other Turkish carpets, Ottoman court carpets use S-spun wool, which is typical only of carpets woven in Egypt. Scholars attribute this unusual feature to the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517, after which the Ottoman court commissioned carpets from Egyptian workshops and had Egyptian weavers and Egyptian wool sent to Turkey for their own use.

Contemporaneous manuscript illustrations shed light on how carpets were used at the court. Though we must remember that paintings are not photographs, and that artists may have invented much in their scenes, paintings like this can nevertheless tell us about the status of carpets in the court. In this painting, ordered by Sultan Murad III, a Safavid dignitary is presented to the Ottoman sultan against the backdrop of a magnificent red and blue Ushak medallion carpet. The painting shows how carpets were used as decorative and symbolic backdrops to Ottoman court rituals. Not only does the carpet provide a sumptuous setting for the ceremony, it also sends a message to the Safavids (political rivals of the Ottomans) about the wealth of the Ottoman court. We can imagine how such a carpet was used to demonstrate to visitors the power, culture, and artistic accomplishments of the Ottomans.

Safavid court carpets

The Safavids ruled Greater Iran from the early 16th to the 18th century and were avid patrons of the arts. Safavid court carpets are noted for their detailed precision, sumptuous materials, and ornate designs.



Figure 13.3.4.35: Carpet (Safavid), 16th century, Iran, probably Kashan (depicts animals, some invented and of Chinese origin), silk, 94-7/8 x 70″ (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carpets intended for religious settings, like the **Ardabil carpet**, display non-figural decoration such as scrolling vines, flower motifs, calligraphy, and shamsas (sunbursts). Carpets made for secular settings, like the court's palaces and pleasure pavilions, display a wider range of motifs, encompassing the designs found on carpets like the Ardabil, but also sometimes including animals, hunting scenes, human figures, and even angels.

The carpet left is a remarkable example of a secular Safavid court carpet. It was woven entirely of silk, and its bright field is filled with animals—some real, like lions and rams, and others entirely fantastical. The animals, some of which are engaged in intense combat, are set amoungst a lush backdrop of stylized flowers and trees. The popularity of animal and hunting scenes was well established in Iran; hunting was considered a princely pastime in Iran even before the advent of Islam, and continued as a widely used subject in Safavid art.



Figure 13.3.4.36: Detail of animals fighting



Figure 13.3.4.37: Detail, Safavid court carpet with animals and hunting scenes (Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris)



Figure **13.3.4.38**: "Zal Expounds the Mysteries of the Magi," Folio from the *Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp Abu'l Qasim Firdausi*, attributed to Qadimi, c. 1525, Tabriz, Iran, opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper, 18-1/2 x 12-9/16″ (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Large scale carpets were produced by court workshops, often with similar subjects and motifs. The fragment left displays the type of central medallion seen in the Ardabil carpet, but its field and borders are filled with birds, roaming animals, and naturalistic landscape elements. Carpets like this fragment are appropriately called "paradise carpets," reflecting their lush designs and fantastical subjects.

As with Ottoman paintings, Safavid manuscript illustrations provide insight into the use of carpets at court. In this illustration from the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, a ruler is depicted seated atop a small but luxurious carpet in an outdoor pleasure pavilion. Court carpets would be used for outdoor gatherings like this, as well as within the palaces of the Safavid shahs.

Mughal court carpets



Figure **13.3.4.39**: Carpet with bird couples in a landscape, Lahore, c. 1600, cotton, wool, 233 x 158 cm (The Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna)

The Mughals controlled much of the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1858, ruling a largely Hindu population with cultural traditions foreign to their own.

It is likely India had no indigenous carpet weaving tradition prior to the arrival of Muslim conquerors. The Mughals, who traced their lineage to the Mongol dynasties in Iran and Central Asia, soon established weaving workshops at their courts.

The early Mughals employed Persian artisans, and for this reason early Mughal carpets utilize largely Persian designs. Eventually, a uniquely Mughal visual repertoire emerged in the court carpets, as well as in miniature painting and other arts.

This pictorial carpet depicts a variety of bird species in a botanically lush and naturalistic setting. The scene has direct parallels in manuscript illustration, such as the margin illumination from the album page shown above. Detailed depictions of plants and animals appear widely in Mughal art, reflecting the Mughal emperors' interest in the natural world.



Figure **13.3.4.40**: Border detail, *Shah Jahan Album*, c. 1620, India Ink, watercolor, and gold on paper, Mughal, period of Jahangir (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Other Mughal carpets favor an all-over flower and lattice pattern as well as other floral designs. Botanically naturalistic floral designs can be found on a wide range of media from the Mughal court, peaking in popularity during the reign of the Shah Jahan who is best known as the patron of the Taj Mahal mausoleum which incorporates similar floral designs into its architectural decoration.

Additional resources:

Conserving the Emperor's Carpet (video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carol Bier, ed. Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th–19th Centuries (Exhibition catalogue. Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987).

Walter Denny, "Islamic Carpets in European Paintings," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Marika Sardar, "Carpets from the Islamic World, 1600-1800," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jon Thompson, *Oriental Carpets from the Tents, Cottages and Workshops of Asia* (New York: Dutton, 1993).

Daniel Walker, *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997)

Introduction to the court carpets of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires

by KENDRA WEISBIN



Figure **13.3.4.41**: Detail, Medallion Carpet, *The Ardabil Carpet*, Maqsud of Kashan, Persian: Safavid Dynasty, silk warps and wefts with wool pile, 1539-40 C.E., Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan or Kirman, Iran (Victoria & Albert, London)

Carpet weaving in the Islamic world

Carpets are woven works of art that were produced at every level of society in the Islamic world. Women have been weaving for centuries in villages and nomadic encampments all over the Middle East, Anatolia, and Central Asia, each woman passing down her techniques and designs to her daughters. These women created carpets both for sale and for their own personal use, and this tradition continues today.



Figure **13.3.4.42**: Carpet (Ottoman) with cintamani motif, c. 1550, Cairo, Egypt, wool, 79 x 48″ (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carpets were also made in the royal courts of the Islamic world. These carpets were not just functional floor coverings, they were ornate works of art that indicated the status and wealth of their owners. Court carpets were used on the floors in reception halls, audience chambers, and at court-supported religious institutions. They were also presented as impressive gifts to other rulers. Manuscript paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries suggest smaller rugs were often layered on top of larger carpets and also show that many carpets were used in outdoor pleasure pavilions and palatial parks.

Rulers had access to expensive materials, such as silk and metal-wrapped threads, and employed the most highly skilled designers and weavers in their empires to create enormous and luxurious carpets. Because of their quality, design, and skilled execution, court carpets are among the finest examples of art from the Islamic world. Court carpets are often very different from the carpets made in commercial workshops or villages. Rather than solely utilizing centuries-old traditional motifs, court carpets often share designs found on a range of media, such as bookbinding and manuscript painting.

Although carpets were made in many royal courts, the Ottoman (1281–1924), the Safavid (1501–1732), and the Mughal (1526–1858) Empires provide some of the richest examples of royally produced carpets.



Figure **13.3.4.43**: Cintamani motif detail



Figure **13.3.4.44**: Border detail

Ottoman court carpets



Figure **13.3.4.45**: Prayer Carpet (Ottoman), 1575-90, likely Istanbul, silk (warp and weft), wool (pile), cotton (pile), 68 x 50″ (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Ottoman Empire originated in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), and was one of the largest and longest lived in the Islamic world. It controlled territories that reached from North Africa to Eastern Europe from 1299 until 1923. Anatolia has a long tradition of carpet weaving, but from the 16th century onward Ottoman court carpets utilized a set of specific designs created by the artists of the Ottoman court workshops, designs that were also used on the court ceramics, paintings, bookbindings, and textiles.

Among the most popular of these was the “saz style,” which is characterized by long sinuous leaves, and stylized flowers (see below). Court artists also developed the “floral style,” where we see more naturalistic depictions of flowers such as tulips, roses, carnations, and hyacinths, among others. The floral and saz styles were sometimes used alone and sometimes used together, along with other motifs like the cintamani pattern (usually a combination of pearl-like circles accompanied by wavy lines sometimes called “tiger stripes”), on a huge variety of objects designed by the court, including ceramics, silks, carpets, and manuscripts.



Figure **13.3.4.46**: Border detail (note the long curving saz style leaves, a pair of white tulips facing downward, and branches of small white hyacinth blossoms



Figure **13.3.4.47**: Floral style detail showing carnations and tulips

Both the saz and floral styles appear on this rare Ottoman court prayer rug. The jagged-edged saz leaves gracefully undulate in the border amongst carnations, tulips, and other flowers. The arch at the center of the carpet identifies this as a prayer rug, and symbolizes both a mihrab (from mosque architecture) and a gateway to paradise. Such rugs were, and are, used by Muslims during the five daily prayers prescribed in Islam. Though one can go to mosque during the prayer times, prayer can take place anywhere so long as there is a clean surface (provided by the rug) and water for ritual cleansing. A luxurious prayer rug like this would have belonged to a very wealthy court patron.

The design of this remarkable carpet, the prototype for later designs, may be based on the slender-columned architecture of Muslim Spain. When Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, many exiles settled in the Ottoman Empire, bringing with them their own visual culture, which, in turn, influenced Ottoman art. This dual-columned design spawned an entire genre of architecturally-inspired prayer rugs across Anatolia.



Figure **13.3.4.48**: Ottoman miniature showing a Safavid dignitary before Ottoman sultan, Sultan Murad III, n.d. (Topkapi Museum, photo: Walter Denny)

One of the most remarkable aspects of Ottoman court carpets is their unusual structure. Unlike all other Turkish carpets, Ottoman court carpets use S-spun wool, which is typical only of carpets woven in Egypt. Scholars attribute this unusual feature to the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517, after which the Ottoman court commissioned carpets from Egyptian workshops and had Egyptian weavers and Egyptian wool sent to Turkey for their own use.

Contemporaneous manuscript illustrations shed light on how carpets were used at the court. Though we must remember that paintings are not photographs, and that artists may have invented much in their scenes, paintings like this can nevertheless tell us about the status of carpets in the court. In this painting, ordered by Sultan Murad III, a Safavid dignitary is presented to the Ottoman sultan against the backdrop of a magnificent red and blue Ushak medallion carpet. The painting shows how carpets were used as decorative and symbolic backdrops to Ottoman court rituals. Not only does the carpet provide a sumptuous setting for the ceremony, it also sends a message to the Safavids (political rivals of the Ottomans) about the wealth of the Ottoman court. We can imagine how such a carpet was used to demonstrate to visitors the power, culture, and artistic accomplishments of the Ottomans.

Safavid court carpets

The Safavids ruled Greater Iran from the early 16th to the 18th century and were avid patrons of the arts. Safavid court carpets are noted for their detailed precision, sumptuous materials, and ornate designs.



Figure **13.3.4.49**: Carpet (Safavid), 16th century, Iran, probably Kashan (depicts animals, some invented and of Chinese origin), silk, 94-7/8 x 70″ (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carpets intended for religious settings, like the **Ardabil carpet**, display non-figural decoration such as scrolling vines, flower motifs, calligraphy, and shamsas (sunbursts). Carpets made for secular settings, like the court's palaces and pleasure pavilions, display a wider range of motifs, encompassing the designs found on carpets like the Ardabil, but also sometimes including animals, hunting scenes, human figures, and even angels.

The carpet left is a remarkable example of a secular Safavid court carpet. It was woven entirely of silk, and its bright field is filled with animals—some real, like lions and rams, and others entirely fantastical. The animals, some of which are engaged in intense combat, are set amoungst a lush backdrop of stylized flowers and trees. The popularity of animal and hunting scenes was well established in Iran; hunting was considered a princely pastime in Iran even before the advent of Islam, and continued as a widely used subject in Safavid art.



Figure **13.3.4.50**: Detail of animals fighting



Figure **13.3.4.51**: Detail, Safavid court carpet with animals and hunting scenes (Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris)



Figure 13.3.4.52: “Zal Expounds the Mysteries of the Magi,” Folio from the *Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp Abu’l Qasim Firdausi*, attributed to Qadimi, c. 1525, Tabriz, Iran, opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper, 18-1/2 x 12-9/16″ (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Large scale carpets were produced by court workshops, often with similar subjects and motifs. The fragment left displays the type of central medallion seen in the Ardabil carpet, but its field and borders are filled with birds, roaming animals, and naturalistic landscape elements. Carpets like this fragment are appropriately called “paradise carpets,” reflecting their lush designs and fantastical subjects.

As with Ottoman paintings, Safavid manuscript illustrations provide insight into the use of carpets at court. In this illustration from the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, a ruler is depicted seated atop a small but luxurious carpet in an outdoor pleasure pavilion. Court carpets would be used for outdoor gatherings like this, as well as within the palaces of the Safavid shahs.

Mughal court carpets



Figure 13.3.4.53: Carpet with bird couples in a landscape, Lahore, c. 1600, cotton, wool, 233 x 158 cm (The Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna)

The Mughals controlled much of the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1858, ruling a largely Hindu population with cultural traditions foreign to their own.

It is likely India had no indigenous carpet weaving tradition prior to the arrival of Muslim conquerors. The Mughals, who traced their lineage to the Mongol dynasties in Iran and Central Asia, soon established weaving workshops at their courts.

The early Mughals employed Persian artisans, and for this reason early Mughal carpets utilize largely Persian designs. Eventually, a uniquely Mughal visual repertoire emerged in the court carpets, as well as in miniature painting and other arts.

This pictorial carpet depicts a variety of bird species in a botanically lush and naturalistic setting. The scene has direct parallels in manuscript illustration, such as the margin illumination from the album page shown above. Detailed depictions of plants and animals appear widely in Mughal art, reflecting the Mughal emperors' interest in the natural world.



Figure **13.3.4.54**: Border detail, *Shah Jahan Album*, c. 1620, India Ink, watercolor, and gold on paper, Mughal, period of Jahangir (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Other Mughal carpets favor an all-over flower and lattice pattern as well as other floral designs. Botanically naturalistic floral designs can be found on a wide range of media from the Mughal court, peaking in popularity during the reign of the Shah Jahan who is best known as the patron of the Taj Mahal mausoleum which incorporates similar floral designs into its architectural decoration.

Additional resources:

Conserving the Emperor's Carpet (video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carol Bier, ed. Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th–19th Centuries (Exhibition catalogue. Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987).

Walter Denny, "Islamic Carpets in European Paintings," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Marika Sardar, "Carpets from the Islamic World, 1600-1800," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jon Thompson, *Oriental Carpets from the Tents, Cottages and Workshops of Asia* (New York: Dutton, 1993).

Daniel Walker, *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997)

The Ardabil Carpet

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS



Figure **13.3.4.55**: Medallion Carpet, The Ardabil Carpet, Unknown artist (Maqsud Kashani is named on the carpet's inscription), Persian: Safavid Dynasty, silk warps and wefts with wool pile (25 million knots, 340 per sq. inch), 1539-40 C.E., Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan or Kirman, Iran (Victoria and Albert Museum)

Old, beautiful and important

The Ardabil Carpet is exceptional; it is one of the world's oldest Islamic carpets, as well as one of the largest, most beautiful and historically important. It is not only stunning in its own right, but it is bound up with the history of one of the great political dynasties of Iran.



Figure **13.3.4.56**: The Ardabil Carpet at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

About carpets

Carpets are among the most fundamental of Islamic arts. Portable, typically made of silk and wools, carpets were traded and sold across the Islamic lands and beyond its boundaries to Europe and China. Those from Iran were highly prized. Carpets decorated the floors of mosques, shrines and homes, but they could also be hung on walls of houses to preserve warmth in the winter.



Figure **13.3.4.57**: Medallion Carpet, The Ardabil Carpet, Unknown artist (Maqsud Kashani is named on the carpet's inscription), Persian: Safavid Dynasty, silk warps and wefts with wool pile (25 million knots, 340 per sq. inch), 1539-40 C.E., Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan or Kirman, Iran (Victoria and Albert Museum)

Ardabil and a 14th century saint

The carpet takes its name from the town of Ardabil in north-west Iran. Ardabil was the home to the shrine of the Sufi saint, Safi al-Din Ardabili, who died in 1334 (Sufism is Islamic mysticism). He was a Sufi leader who trained his followers in Islamic mystic practices. After his death, his following grew and his descendants became increasingly powerful. In 1501 one of his descendants, Shah Isma'il, seized power, united Iran, and established Shi'a Islam as the official religion. The dynasty he founded is known as the Safavids. Their rule, which lasted until 1722, was one of the most important periods for Islamic art, especially for textiles and for manuscripts.

Made for a shrine

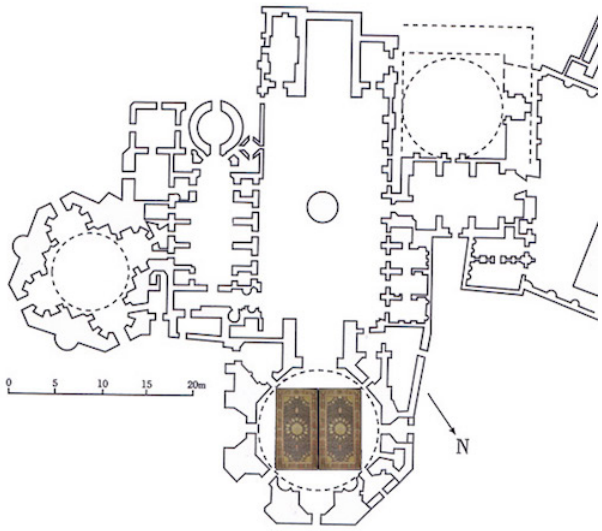


Figure **13.3.4.58**: Plan of the shrine at Ardabil, showing where the carpets were situated (permission, Victoria and Albert Museum)

This carpet was one of a matching pair that was made for the shrine of Safi al-Din Ardabili when it was enlarged in the late 1530s. Today the Ardabil carpet dominates the main Islamic Art Gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, while its twin is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The carpets were located side by side in the shrine.

The pile of the carpet is made from wool, rather than silk because it holds dye better. The knot-count of a carpet still directly impacts the value of carpets today; the more knots per square centimeter, the more detailed and elaborate the patterns can be. The dyes used to color the carpet are natural and include pomegranate rind and indigo. Up to ten weavers could have worked on the carpet at any given time. The Ardabil carpet has 340 knots per square inch (5300 knots per ten centimeters square). Today, a commercial rug averages 80-160 knots per square inch, meaning that the Ardabil carpet was highly detailed. Its high knot count allowed for the inclusion of an intricate design and pattern. It is not known whether the carpet was produced in a royal workshop, but there is evidence for court workshop in the 15th and 16th centuries.



Figure **13.3.4.59**: Detail, Ardabil Carpet

Design and pattern

The rich geometric patterns, vegetative scrolls, floral flourishes, so typical of Islamic art, reach a fever pitch in this remarkable carpet, encouraging the viewer to walk around and around, trying to absorb every detail of design.

That the design of the carpet was not arbitrary or piecemeal, but was well-organized and thoughtful can be seen throughout. Considering the immense size of the carpet—10.51m x 5.34m (34′ 6″ x 17′ 6″)—this is impressive. A central golden medallion dominates the carpet; it is surrounded by a ring of multi-colored, detailed ovals. Lamps appear to hang at either end.



Figure **13.3.4.60**: Detail, Ardabil Carpet

The carpet's border is made up of a frame with a series of cartouches (rectangular-shaped spaces for calligraphy), filled with decoration. The central medallion design is also echoed by the four corner-pieces.



Figure **13.3.4.61**: Detail of lamp, Ardabil Carpet

Art historians have debated the meaning of the two lamps that appear to hang from the medallion. They are of different sizes and some scholars have proposed that this was done to create a perspective effect, meaning that both lamps appear to be the same size when one sat next to the smaller lamp. Yet, there is no evidence for the use of this type of perspective in Iran in the 1530s, nor does this explain why the lamps were included. Perhaps they were included to mimic lamps found in mosques and shrines, helping the viewer to look deeply into the carpet below them and then above them, to the ceiling where similar lamps would have hung, creating visual unity within the shrine.

An inscription

The Ardabil Carpet includes a four-line inscription placed at one end. This short poem is vital for understanding who commissioned the carpet and the date of the carpet.

The first three lines of poetry reads:

> ***Except for thy threshold, there is no refuge for me in all the world.***
> ***Except for this door there is no resting-place for my head.***
> ***The work of the slave of the portal, Maqsud Kashani.***

Maqsud was probably the court official charged with producing the carpets. By referring to himself as a slave, he may be presenting himself as a humble servant. The Persian word for a door can be used to denote a shrine or royal court, so this inscription may imply that the royal court patronized the shrine. The carpets would have probably taken four years to make.

The fourth line of the inscription is also important. It provides the date of the carpet, AH 946. The Muslim calendar begins in the year 620 CE when Muhammad fled from Mecca to Medina; this year is known as the year of the Hijra or flight (in Latin anno hegirae). AH 946 is equivalent to 1539/40 CE (the lunar Muslim calendar does not exactly match the Gregorian Calendar, used in the west).

The design of the Ardabil carpet and its skillful execution is a testament to the great skill of the artisans at work in north-west Iran in the 1530s.



Figure **13.3.4.62**: Detail, Ardabil Carpet

How the carpet came to the V&A

Many great treasures from around the world have legally made their way into the collections of western museums. Many objects were legally purchased by collectors and museums in the 19th and 20th centuries; however, many works of art are still illegally exported and sold. British visitors to the shrine in 1843, noted that at least one carpet was still in situ. Approximately thirty years or so later, an earthquake damaged the shrine, and the carpets were sold off.

Ziegler & Co., a Manchester firm involved in the carpet trade purchased the damaged carpets in Iran and "restored" them in fashion typical of the late nineteenth century. Selections of one carpet were used to repair the other, resulting in a "complete" carpet and one lacking a border. Vincent Robinson and Co, a dealer based in London, put the larger carpet up for sale in 1892 and persuaded the V&A to purchase it for £2000 in March 1893.

The second carpet was secretly sold to an American collector, J.P. Getty, who donated it to the LA County Museum of Art in 1953. Unlike the carpet in the V&A, the carpet in LACMA is incomplete. Throughout the twentieth century, other pieces of the carpets have appeared on the art market for sale.

Additional resources:

This carpet at the V&A

On the conservation of the carpet

The Ardabil Carpet at LACMA

Carpets of the Islamic World at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

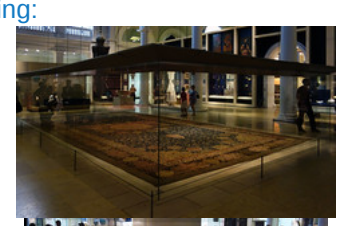
Ellis, Charles Grant. *Oriental Carpets in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.* Philadelphia: (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1988).

Erdmann, Kurt. *Oriental Carpets: An Account of Their History,* translated by Charles Grant Ellis (Fishguard, Wales: Crosby, 1976).

Jon Thompson, *Carpet Magic* (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1983).

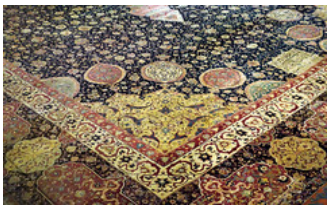
Jon Thompson, *Milestones in the History of Carpets* (Milan: Moshe Tabibnia, 2006).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:










https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88686

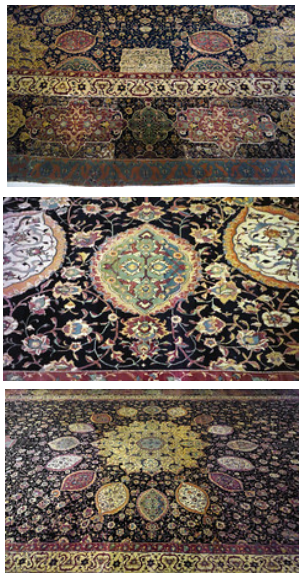


Figure **13.3.4.63**: More Smarthistory images…

The Court of Gayumars

by DR. NANCY DEMERDASH, DR. FILIZ ÇAKIR PHILLIP, CURATOR, AGA KHAN MUSEUM and DR. MICHAEL CHAGNON, CURATOR, AGA KHAN MUSEUM



Video **13.3.4.5**: Sultan Muhammad (attributed), *The Court of Kayumars* (Safavid: Tabiz, Iran), c. 1524–1525, from the Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, c. 1524–35, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 45 x 30 cm (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto) speaker: Dr. Michael Chagnon, Curator, Aga Khan Museum and Dr. Steven Zucker



Video **13.3.4.6**: Sultan Muhammad (attributed), *The Court of Kayumars* (Safavid: Tabiz, Iran), c. 1524–1525, from the Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, c. 1524–35, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 45 x 30 cm (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto) speakers: Dr. Filiz Çakir Phillip, Curator, Aga Khan Museum and Dr. Steven Zucker



Figure **13.3.4.64**: Whole page left, and detail, right: Sultan Muhammad, *The Court of Gayumars*, c.1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

The Shahnama

This sumptuous page, The Court of Gayumars (also spelled Kayumars— see top of page, details below and large image **here**), comes from an illuminated manuscript of the Shahnama (Book of Kings)—an epic poem describing the history of kingship in Persia (what is now Iran). Because of its blending of painting styles from both Tabriz and Herat (see map below), its luminous pigments, fine detail, and complex imagery, this copy of the Shahnama stands out in the history of the artistic production in Central Asia.

The Shahnama was written by Abu al-Qāsim Ferdowsi around the year 1000 and is a masterful example of Persian poetry. The epic chronicles kings and heroes who pre-date the introduction of Islam to Persia as well as the human experiences of love, suffering, and death. The epic has been copied countless times—often with elaborate illustrations (see another example **here**).

Safavid patronage

This particular manuscript of the Shahnama was begun during the first years of the 16th century for the first Safavid dynastic ruler, Shah Ismail I, but was completed under the direction of his son, Shah Tahmasp I in the northern Persian city of Tabriz (see map below). The Safavid dynastic rulers claimed to descend from Sufi shaikhs—mystical leaders from Ardabīl, in northwestern Iran. The name "Safavid" stems from one particular ancestral Sufi, named Shaykh Safi al-Din (literally translated as "purity of the religion"). Over a two-hundred-year span starting in 1501, the Safavids controlled large parts of what is today Iran and Azerbaijan (see map below). The Safavids actively commissioned the building of public architectural complexes such as mosques (image below), and they were patrons of the arts of the book. In fact, manuscript illumination was central to Safavid royal patronage of the arts.



Figure **13.3.4.65**: The Imam Mosque (formerly Masjed-e Shah) was built for a later Safavid ruler during the 17th century, Isfahan, Iran. photo: **Ladsgroup**, GNU Free Documentation License

Depicting figures

It is often assumed that images that include human and animal figures, as seen in the detail below, are forbidden in Islam. Recent scholarship, however, highlights that throughout the history of Islam, there have been periods in which iconoclastic tendencies waxed and waned.[1] That is to say, at specific moments and places, the representation of human or animal figures was tolerated to varying degrees.



Figure **13.3.4.66**: Detail, Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

There is a long figural tradition in Persia—even after the introduction of Islam—that is perhaps most evident in book illustration. It is also important to note that, unlike the neighboring Ottoman Empire to the west who were Sunni and in some ways more orthodox, the Safavids subscribed to the Shi'i sect of Islam.



Figure **13.3.4.67**

Two centers of culture

Although it is widely recognized that the conventions of what is sometimes termed "classical"[2] Persianate painting had become established by the fourteenth century, it is in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I that we see the most dramatic advancements in illumination and the arts of the book more generally.[3] His patronage of this specific art form is in part due to his own painting studies in Herat (in the western region of present-day Afghanistan) and Tabriz (in the northwestern region of present-day Iran), under Bihzad and Sultan Muhammad, respectively.[4] Both cities were major centers for the production of manuscript illuminations. While the entire manuscript of the *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* consists of approximately 759 illustrated folios and 258 miniatures all produced over the span of several years,[5] this particular miniature is attributed to the workshop of Sultan Muhammad, according to Dust Muhammad, an artist and historian from this period.[6] In 1568, this lavish Shahnameh was given as a gift by Shah Tahmasp I to the Ottoman Sultan, Selim II.[7]



Figure 13.3.4.68: *Nasta'liq* (detail), Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

King of the world

There are several interpretive issues to keep in mind when analyzing Persianate paintings. As with many of the workshops of early modern West Asia, producing a page such as the Court of Gayumars often entailed the contributions of many artists. It is also important to remember that a miniature painting from an illuminated manuscript should not be thought of in isolation. The individual pages that we today find in museums, libraries, and private collections must be understood as but one sheet of a larger book—with its own history, conditions of production, and dispersement. To make matters even more complex, the relationship of text to image is rarely straightforward in Persianate manuscripts. Text and image, within these illuminations, do not always mirror each other.[8] Nevertheless, the framed calligraphic *nasta'liq* (hanging)—the Persian text at the top and bottom of the frame (image above) can be roughly translated as follows:

> ***When the sun reached the lamb constellation,[9] when the world became glorious,***
> ***When the sun shined from the lamb constellation to rejuvenate the living beings entirely,***
> ***It was then when Gayumars became the King of the World.***
> ***He first built his residence in the mountains.***
> ***His prosperity and his palace rose from the mountains, and he and his people wore leopard pelts.***
> ***Cultivation began from him, and the garments and food were ample and fresh.[10]***

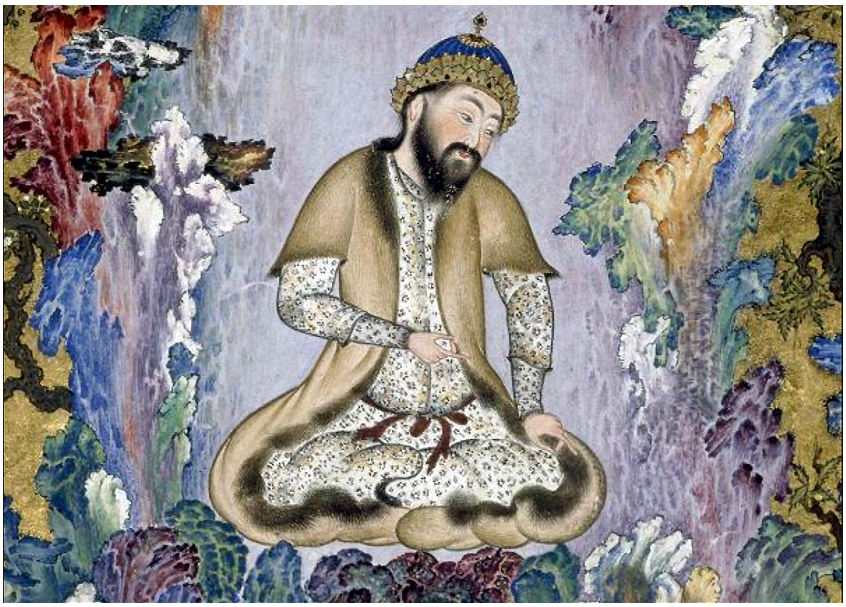


Figure **13.3.4.69**: King Gayumars (detail), Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto).

Dense with detail

In this folio (page), we can see some parallels between the content of the calligraphic text and the painting itself. Seated in a cross-legged position, as if levitating within this richly vegetal and mountainous landscape, King Gayumars rises above his courtiers, who are gathered around at the base of the painting. According to legend, King Gayumars was the first king of Persia, and he ruled at a time when people clothed themselves exclusively in leopard pelts, as both the text and the represented subjects' speckled garments indicate.



Figure **13.3.4.70**: King Gayumars, Siyamak, and Hushang (detail), Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

Perched on cliffs beside the King are his son, Siyamak (left, standing), and grandson Hushang (right, seated).[11] Onlookers can be seen to surreptitiously peer out from the scraggly, blossoming branches onto King Gayumars from the upper left and right. The miniature's spatial composition is organized on a vertical axis with the mountain behind the king in the distance, and the garden

below in the foreground. Nevertheless, there are multiple points of perspective, and perhaps even multiple moments in time—rendering a scene dense with details meant to absorb and enchant the viewer.



Figure 13.3.4.71: Sutra Box with Dragons amid Clouds, c. 1403-24 (Yongle period, Ming dynasty), 14 x 12.7 x 40.6 cm, red lacquer with incised decoration inlaid with gold; damascened brass lock and key (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

One might see stylistic similarities between the swirling blue-gray clouds floating overhead with pictorial representations in Chinese art (image above); this is no coincidence. Persianate artists under the Safavids regularly incorporated visual motifs and techniques derived from Chinese sources.[12] While the intense pigments of the rocky terrain seem to fade into the lush and verdant animal-laden garden below, a gold sky canopies the scene from above. This piece—in all its density color, detail, and sheer exuberance—is a testament to the longstanding cultural reverence for Ferdowsi's epic tale and the unparalleled craftsmanship of both Sultan Muhammad and Shah Tahmasp's workshops.

Notes

1. See Christiane Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting," *Muqarnas* 16 (2009), pp. 229-260; Finbarr B. Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *The Art Bulletin* 84, 4 (December 2002), pp. 641-659; Christiane Gruber, "The Koran Does Not Forbid Images of the Prophet," ***Newsweek*** (January 9, 2015).

2. For a helpful analysis of the historiographic ascription of the term 'classical' to Persian painting and the cultural hierarchy that was established largely by scholar-collectors in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Christiane Gruber, "Questioning the 'Classical' in Persian Painting: Models and Problems of Definition," in the *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (June 2012), pp. 1-25.

3. David J. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 43 (Spring 2003), pp. 12-30.

4. Sheila Canby affirms Stuart Cary Welch's estimate that it took Sultan Muhammad and his workshop three years to complete the Court of Gayumars illustration. Sheila Canby, *The Golden Age of Persian Art, 1501-1722* (New York: Abrams, 2000), p. 51.

5. David J. Roxburgh, "On the Brink of Tragedy: The Court of Gayumars from Shah Tahmasp's Shahnama ('Book of Kings'), Sultan Muhammad," in Christopher Dell, ed., *What Makes a Masterpiece: Artists, Writers and Curators on the World's Greatest Works of Art* (London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2010), pp. 182-185; 182. The text was subsequently possessed by Baron Edmund de Rothschild and then sold to Arthur A. Houghton Jr, who in turn sold pages of the book individually.

6. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting," p. 19. "In the Persianate painting, however, image follows after word in a linear sequence; the text introduces and follows after the image, but it is not actually read when the image is being viewed…In the Persian book the act of seeing is initiated by a process of remembering the narrative just told. Moreover, that text does not prepare the viewer for what will be seen in the painting."

7. This expression denotes the beginning of spring.

8. I am grateful to Dr. Alireza Fatemi for generously providing this translation.

9. Roxburgh, “On the Brink of Tragedy,” p. 182.

Additional resources:

The Court of Gayumars at the Aga Khan Museum

Large image here (click for full-size)

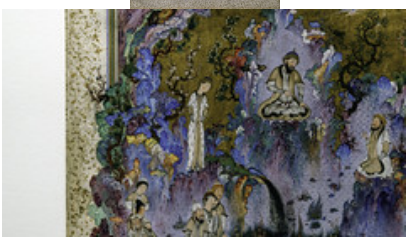
Biography of the poet Abu al-Qāsim Ferdowsi, Encyclopaedia Iranica

The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

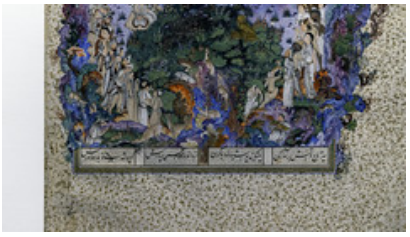
The Art of the Safavids before 1600, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

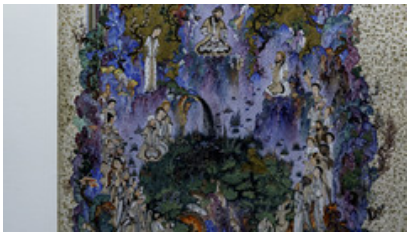
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

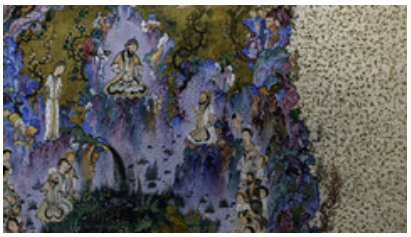


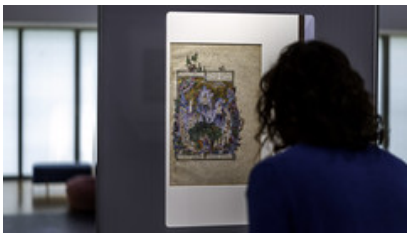












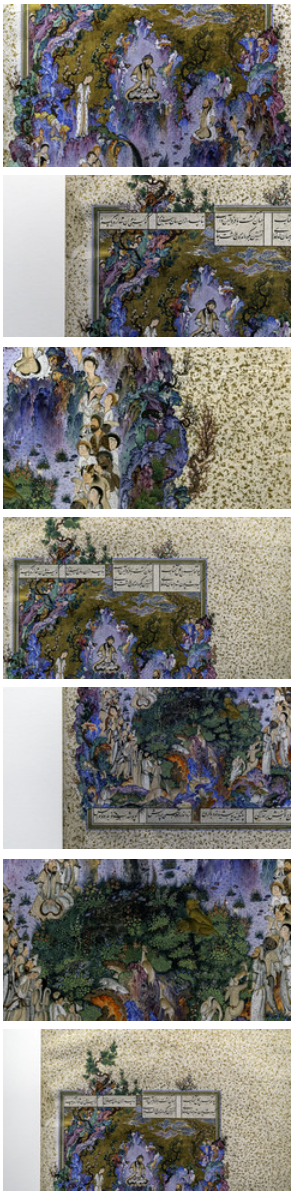


Figure 13.3.4.72: More Smarthistory images…

Illustration from the *Akbarnama*

by KATRINA KLAASMEYER



Figure **13.3.4.73**: "Emperor Akbar on an elephant hunt," Basawan and Chetar, illustrations from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, each page 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

In these small, brilliantly-colored paintings from the *Akbarnama* (*Book of Akbar*), a rampaging elephant crashes over a bridge of boats on the River Jumna, in front of the Agra Fort. He is so out of control that his tusks, trunk, and front leg burst through the edge of the frame (see image below). Several nearby men scramble to get out of the way, clinging to the edges of their boats or leaping into the water for safety. The accompanying right page shows a swirling mass of onlookers, each expressing distress and astonishment at the event unfolding before their eyes.



Figure **13.3.4.74**: “Ran Bagha crossing the River Jumna” (detail), Basawan and Chetar, illustration from the Akbarnama, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

The scene is a royal elephant hunt where the Mughal emperor, Akbar, has mounted Hawa’i—an elephant known for its wild and uncontrollable disposition—to fight the equally fierce elephant Ran Bagha, who leads them on a wild chase across the river. The most prominent onlooker is the Prime Minister Ataga Khan, **who holds his hands in prayer** for a peaceful resolution to this chaotic scene. In the midst of the turmoil, we see Emperor Akbar, upright and unfazed, riding barefoot on the royal elephant—the very embodiment of majestic strength, courage, and faith in divine protection (below). These illustrations encapsulate, both symbolically and literally, the significant achievements of this remarkable man as told in the *Akbarnama*, the book he commissioned as the official chronicle of his reign.



Figure **13.3.4.76**: Basawan and Chetar, “Akbar” (detail) from the Akbarnama, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum, London**)

Akbar the Great

Abū al-Fatḥ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar was the third emperor of a new dynasty, the Mughals, a Muslim empire established in India in the early sixteenth century by Babur, a descendent of Genghis Khan. (The name itself, Mughal, attests to this legacy, as it is the Persian and Arabic word for “Mongol”). Upon Babur’s death in 1530, the new empire was left to his 22-year-old son, Humayun, who quickly lost control of the majority of his domain as sultans fought to regain their land. In 1543 Humayun was forced to flee India and leave his young son Akbar in the care of his family at Kandahar.



Figure **13.3.4.77**: Emperor Humayun, 18th century, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor on paper, 18.3 x 11.1 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

These events could have led to the end of both the fledgling empire and their lives, yet circumstances took a turn that had a profound impact on the destiny of the Mughals, and in particular that of Akbar. The Safavid Shah Tahmasp I welcomed Humayun to his court in Persia (present-day Iran), not as a fugitive, but as an equal, granting him protection and military support. Immersed for two years in the refinement and splendor of the arts and culture there, Humayun was exposed to an opulence and sophistication unlike anything he had ever seen in his father's military encampments. As a result of his stay in Iran, the original language of the Mughals was abandoned in favor of Persian, monumental architectural forms were adopted and refined, and an imperial workshop of painters in the Persian miniature style was founded. Reunited with his son in 1545, Humayun eventually regained control of India before dying suddenly in 1556. When Akbar inherited the Mughal territories at 13 years old, he was surrounded by rivals on all sides: there was no stable government, no art the empire could call its own, and not much hope for a future. However, within less than 50 years, Akbar created all of these things and succeeded in bringing together the diverse peoples and cultures of India to form an unprecedented, cooperative whole. Akbar was instrumental in the formation of a powerful empire that lasted over 200 years.



Figure **13.3.4.78**: "Emperor Akbar chasing Ran Bagha across the River Jumna," Basawan and Chetar, illustration from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

Across many cultures and time periods, a ruler's control over the natural world is a defining symbol of noble power, and Mughal India was no exception. Akbar's regal authority, military prowess, and personal courage are visibly celebrated in this painting through his complete control of an elephant—an animal with a long history in Indian culture as the embodiment of majesty, power, and dignity. Yet this illustration shows us Akbar's great triumphs in more than just the subject matter: the innovations in the work's artistic style are also reflective of the acute intelligence, voracious curiosity, and enthusiastic artistic sponsorship for which Akbar is remembered.

Mughal painting under Akbar the Great

Akbar was a champion of new styles in literature, architecture, music, and painting. Although he was illiterate, at the time of his death in 1605 the imperial library contained 24,000 volumes, and the number of painters in the imperial workshop had expanded greatly. Much like his political policies, which encouraged tolerance, Akbar's court included artists from all regions of India, creating a melting pot of techniques and styles. As a result, Mughal painting under Akbar the Great is known for its unique blend of indigenous Indian, Persian, and Western traditions.

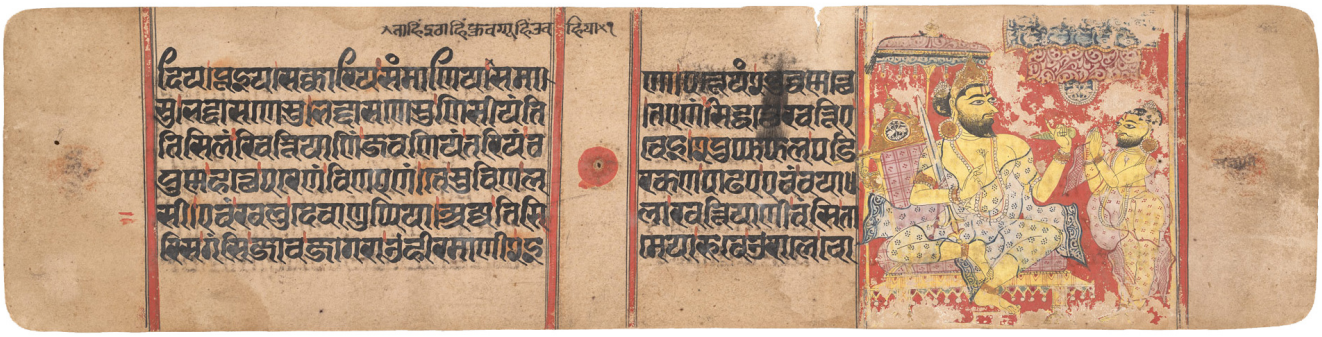


Figure **13.3.4.79**: "King Siddhartha Listens to an Astrologer Forecast the Conception and Birth of His Son, the Jina Mahavira," from a *Kalpasutra* manuscript, late 14th century, India, opaque watercolor on paper, 8.6 x 35.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

This page from a *Kalpasutra* manuscript from the fourteenth century beautifully illustrates the basic qualities of the Indian tradition, with its use of bold primary colors and its horizontal format. The visual emphasis is on the text, which occupies roughly two-thirds of the page. Although the illustration (which shows King Siddhartha speaking to an astrologer who will foretell his son's birth) takes up the smallest portion of the page, the size of the figure is very large in relation to the picture plane, with the king's form filling up the space of the frame.



Figure 13.3.4.80: "The Concourse of the Birds," from Habiballah of Sava, *Mantiq al-tair (Language of the Birds*), c. 1600, Iran, ink, opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper, 25.4 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

In contrast, the Persian tradition (above) preferred a vertical format, with greater emphasis on landscape and decorative elements. In "The Concourse of the Birds," an illustration of a mystical poem made around 1600, the color palette is much more subdued, with a preference for pastel colors like pinks, soft blues, and soft greens. The figures in the painting are relatively small, completely embedded within a scene that is rendered with painstaking detail. The subject matter of this type of manuscript—typically poetry or the pleasures of courtly life—was meant to illustrate the elegance and refinement of the ruler. How could it be possible to blend two such disparate artistic traditions?



Figure 13.3.4.81: “Lovers in a Landscape,” Mir Kalan Khan, 1760-70, India, miniature pasted on an album leaf, 22.2 × 15.2 cm (The David Collection, Copenhagen)

To further complicate matters, Western missionaries made contact with Akbar in the late sixteenth century, bringing with them European artworks and religious texts illustrated with engravings. Akbar and his expansive atelier of painters were intrigued by the illusion of depth achieved through linear perspective, as well as by novel visual attributes such as halos on religious figures. Some scholars have characterized these Western artistic traditions as the ultimate goal to which Akbar and his painters aspired; however, many Islamic artists instead integrated this new visual vocabulary into their own rich traditions. In “Lovers in a Landscape” (above), a miniature made by Mir Kalan Khan in the eighteenth century, the two figures on the left are distinctly Persian in style, with three-quarter views of their faces, slender, swaying bodies, and densely patterned clothing. By contrast, the woman on the right is seen in profile, with hints of Western-style depth and volume such as the gentle folds of drapery. Through the balance of seemingly contradictory styles, the artist has created a scene with two levels of reality: it is as if the female musician on the right, reciting a traditional Persian love story, is singing the fictional couple into physical existence.



Figure **13.3.4.82**: "Ataga Khan and onlookers praying for a peaceful resolution" (detail), Basawan and Chetar, illustration from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

The artists in Akbar's atelier were equally proficient at blending elements from Indian, Persian, and Western traditions, while developing a distinct style of their own. In the illustration of the elephant hunt from the *Akbarnama*, they have retained the vertical format favored in Persian painting, as well as its traditionally intricate patterning of nature, seen in the rhythmic pulsing of the waves. In the right panel, the onlookers express fear and awe through the standardized Persian gesture of lightly pressing a finger to the lips. Yet many other figures are seen with their arms thrown overhead in distress, or with their bodies positioned off-balance, demonstrating the artists' independence in choosing whether or not to utilize standard gestures.

The vibrant hues, on the other hand—especially the deep reds and yellows—call to mind the Indian tradition and its preference for saturated primary colors. The scale of the figures in relation to the picture plane is also much larger than in the Persian style, demonstrating a preference for the Indian tradition's emphasis on the human form. Elements from Western artistic traditions are also present, most notably the indication of depth and distance achieved by rendering the boats and buildings as increasingly small as one looks to the top of the page.

Clearly, these artists enjoyed a remarkable degree of freedom to experiment and develop new artistic amalgams under Akbar's patronage. Akbar's court historian, Abu'l Fazl, noted the intense personal interest taken by Akbar in his workshop, where he personally commissioned specific subjects and conducted regular viewings of new work each week. In the illustrations of the elephant hunt, we can see his preference for depictions of heroic personal feats. From the sharp diagonal placement of the elephants upon their precarious bridge of boats, to the depiction of the thrilling story at its climax, this scene is full of vigor, action and excitement.



Figure **13.3.4.83**: Left: “Hunting a cheetah,” La’l and Kesav Khord, illustration from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 33 x 20 cm (© **Victoria and Albert Museum**, London); Right: “Prison Break,” illustration from a *Hamza Nama* manuscript, 1562-77, Imperial Mughal school (**Brooklyn Museum**)

Other examples of such themes abound in Mughal art, such as a hunting scene from the *Akbarnama* which shows the decisive moment the cheetah tears into its prey (above left), or the scene of a prison break from the *Hamza Nama* manuscript, with blood spurting from the necks of those recently beheaded (above right). Yet the elephant hunt illustration is also more than a dynamic illustration of a charismatic emperor. In it we can see the new, innovative style distinct to Akbar and his court, where the personality of the ruler and a cosmopolitan blend of styles resulted in art that was unmistakably Mughal.

Additional resources:

See the left and right pages of this work at the Victoria and Albert Museum

“The Art of the Mughals before 1600” on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*

by ROSHNA KAPADIA



Figure 13.3.4.84: Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Seizer of the world

When Akbar, the third Emperor of the Mughal dynasty, had no living heir at age 28, he consulted with a Sufi (an Islamic mystic), Shaikh Salim, who assured him a son would come. Soon after, when a male child was born, he was named Salim. Upon his ascent to the throne in 1605, Prince Salim decided to give himself the honorific title of Nur ud-Din ("Light of Faith") and the name Jahangir ("Seizer of the World").

In this miniature painting, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*, flames of gold radiate from the Emperor's head against a background of a larger, darker gold disc. A slim crescent moon hugs most of the disc's border, creating a harmonious fusion between the sun and the moon (thus, day and night), and symbolizing the ruler's emperorship and divine truth.

Jahangir is shown seated on an elevated, stone-studded platform whose circular form mimics the disc above. The Emperor is the biggest of the five human figures painted, and the disc with his halo—a visual manifestation of his title of honor—is the largest object in this painting.



Figure 13.3.4.85: Emperor on a pedestal (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Jahangir favors a holy man over kings

Jahangir faces four bearded men of varying ethnicity, who stand in a receiving-line format on a blue carpet embellished with arabesque flower designs and fanciful beast motifs. Almost on par with the Emperor's level stands the Sufi Shaikh, who accepts the gifted book, a hint of a smile brightening his face. By engaging directly only with the Shaikh, Jahangir is making a statement about his spiritual leanings. Inscriptions in the cartouches on the top and bottom margins of the folio reiterate the fact that the Emperor favors visitation with a holy man over an audience with kings.



Figure 13.3.4.86: From top to bottom, in order of importance, Ottoman Sultan, King James I of England, and the artist Bichitr (detail), *Bichitr, Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Below the Shaikh, and thus, second in the hierarchical order of importance, stands an Ottoman Sultan. The unidentified leader, dressed in gold-embroidered green clothing and a turban tied in a style that distinguishes him as a foreigner, looks in the direction of the throne, his hands joined in respectful supplication.

The third standing figure awaiting a reception with the Emperor has been identified as King James I of England. By his European attire—plumed hat worn at a tilt; pink cloak; fitted shirt with lace ruff; and elaborate jewelry—he appears distinctive. His uniquely frontal posture and direct gaze also make him appear indecorous and perhaps even uneasy.

Last in line is Bichitr, the artist responsible for this miniature, shown wearing an understated yellow jama (robe) tied on his left, which indicates that he is a Hindu in service at the Mughal court—a reminder that artists who created Islamic art were not always Muslim.

This miniature folio was once a part of a muraqqa', or album, which would typically have had alternating folios containing calligraphic text and painting. In all, six such albums are attributed to the rule of Jahangir and his heir, Shah Jahan. But the folios, which vary greatly in subject matter, have now been widely dispersed over collections across three continents.

During Mughal rule artists were singled out for their special talents—some for their detailed work in botanical paintings; others for naturalistic treatment of fauna; while some artists were lauded for their calligraphic skills. In recent scholarship, Bichitr's reputation is strong in formal portraiture, and within this category, his superior rendering of hands.



Figure 13.3.4.87: Shaikh's bare hands and the bejeweled hands of Jahangir (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Jahangir and the Shaikh

Clear to the observer is the stark contrast between Jahangir's gem-studded wrist bracelets and finger rings and the Shaikh's bare hands, the distinction between rich and poor, and the pursuit of material and spiritual endeavors. Less clear is the implied deference to the Emperor by the elderly Shaikh's decision to accept the imperial gift not directly in his hands, but in his shawl (thereby avoiding physical contact with a royal personage, a cultural taboo). A similar principle is at work in the action of the Sultan who presses his palms together in a respectful gesture. By agreeing to adopt the manner of greeting of the foreign country in which he is a guest, the Ottoman leader exhibits both respect and humility.



Figure 13.3.4.88: King James I of England (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

King James

King James' depiction is slightly more complex: Bichitr based his image of the English monarch on a portrait by John de Crtiz, which is believed to have been given to Jahangir by Sir Thomas Roe, the first English Ambassador to the Mughal court (this was a way to cement diplomatic relations and gifted items went both ways, east and west). In Bichitr's miniature, only one of King James's hands can be seen, and it is worth noting that it has been positioned close to—but not touching—the hilt of his weapon. Typically, at this time, portraits of European Kings depicted one hand of the monarch resting on his hip, and the other on his sword. Thus, we can speculate that Bichitr deliberately altered the positioning of the king's hand to avoid an interpretation of a threat to his Emperor.

A self-portrait

Finally, the artist paints himself holding a red-bordered miniature painting as though it were a prized treasure. In this tiny painting-within-a-painting, Bichitr replicates his yellow jama (a man's robe)—perhaps to clarify his identity—and places himself alongside

two horses and an elephant, which may have been imperial gifts. He shows himself bowing in the direction of his Emperor in humble gratitude. To underscore his humility, Bichitr puts his signature on the stool over which the Emperor's feet would have to step in order to take his seat.



Figure 13.3.4.89: Angels at Jahangir's pedestal (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Putti and other (more mysterious) figures

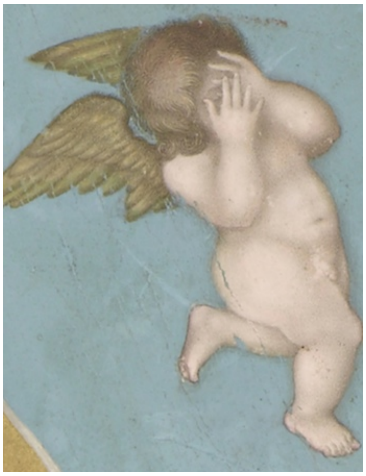


Figure 13.3.4.90: Crying putto (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Beneath Jahangir's seat, crouching angels write (in Persian), "O Shah, May the Span of Your Life be a Thousand Years," at the base of a mighty hourglass that makes up the pedestal of Jahangir's throne. This reading is a clear allusion to the passage of time, but the putti figures (borrowed from European iconography) suspended in mid-air toward the top of the painting provide few clues as to their purpose or meaning.

Facing away from the Emperor, the putto on the left holds a bow with a broken string and a bent arrow, while the one on the right covers his face with his hands. Does he shield his eyes from the Emperor's radiance, as some scholars believe? Or as others suggest, is he crying because time is running out for the Emperor (as represented in the slipping sand in the hourglass)?



Figure **13.3.4.91**: Kneeling figure at base of footstool (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Also cryptic is the many-headed kneeling figure that forms the base of Jahangir's footstool. Questions remain as to who these auxiliary figures are and what they or their actions represent.

Allegorical portraits were a popular painting genre among Jahangir's court painters from 1615. To flatter their Emperor, Jahangir's artists portrayed him in imagined victories over rivals and enemies or painted events reflecting imperial desire. Regardless of whether Jahangir actually met the Shaikh or was visited by a real Ottoman Sultan (King James I certainly did not visit the Mughal court), Bichitr has dutifully indulged his patron's desire to be seen as powerful ruler (in a position of superiority to other kings), but with a spiritual bent. While doing so, the artist has also cleverly taken the opportunity to immortalize himself.

Additional resources:

This work at the Freer|Sackler

Commentary by Stuart Cary Welch on this miniature

High resolution image at the Google Art Project

The Art of the Mughals after 1600 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Another image of Jahangir from the same album at the Freer|Sackler

Crill, Rosemary and Kapil Jariwala, eds. *The Indian Portrait: 1580-1860* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2010).

Guy, John and Jorrit Britschgi, *The Wonder of the Age: Master Painters of India 1100-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011).

Thomas Lawton and Thomas W Lenz, eds. *Beyond the Legacy: Anniversary Acquisition for the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M Sackler Gallery* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998).

Julian Raby, ed. *Ideals of Beauty: Asian and American Art in the Freer and Sackler Galleries* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2010).

Sumathi Ramaswamy, "The Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 49 no. 4 (2007), pp. 751-782.

Seyller, John, "A Mughal Code of Connoisseurship," *Muqarnas*, vol. 17 (2000), pp. 177-202.

Welch, Stuart Cary. *India: Art and Culture 1300-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985).

Wright, Elaine, ed. *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2008).

Spherical Hanging Ornament (Iznik)

by VANESSA TROIANO



Figure **13.3.4.92**: Süleymaniye Mosque (Ottoman), 1558, Istanbul (composite photograph)

Imagine yourself in the vast prayer hall of an Ottoman mosque during the height of its empire in the 16th century. As you bask in the splendor of the sacred space, you notice that suspended above your head are hundreds of glowing oil lamps, and attached to these lamps are lavishly decorated spherical ornaments. What do you make of these ornaments? Do they have a particular meaning or function? What can be discerned from their shape and painted decorations?

Caveat videtor (viewer beware!)

Photographs can be deceiving, a warning you should heed especially when looking at images of the Spherical Hanging Ornament in the Brooklyn Museum. Can you guess how big it is? Or how much it weighs, or what kind of material it is made of? If you stood in front of the object you would realize that it is as large as a basketball, and if you could lift it up, it would weigh about the same. Composed of fritware (a clay-based medium made of quartz), this sphere is extremely fragile, and hence quite precious, since only four others like it exist in the world today.



Figure **13.3.4.93**: *Spherical Hanging Ornament* (upside down), Iznik, Turkey (Ottoman), c. 1575-85 (Brooklyn Museum)



Figure 13.3.4.94: View of lower half, *Spherical Hanging Ornament*, Iznik, Turkey (Ottoman), c. 1575-85 (Brooklyn Museum)



Figure 13.3.4.95: Detail of right side up, *Spherical Hanging Ornament*, Iznik, Turkey (Ottoman), c. 1575-85 (Brooklyn Museum)

The sphere is actually displayed upside-down on the museum pedestal, stabilized by a support in an opening at its top, so that its decorated bottom-half faces upward for easy viewing. The design consists of a whimsical garden scene with five pairs of lively red tulips. The tulips alternate with elaborate palmettes comprised of symmetrical floral motifs, including green lily pads that sprout white lotus flowers. The stems of the tulips originate from the base of the lamp, the center of which holds a metal fixture that fills a small hole. The sphere's red pigment is slightly raised, lending a subtle texture to the ornament, which is also coated in a transparent glaze, giving it an all-over shine.

A brief history of Ottoman ceramics

Ottoman pottery made in nakkashanes (imperial workshops) was strongly influenced by Chinese porcelain, especially floral Ming porcelain. Comprised of petuntse, a rare mineral found mostly in China, porcelain is white and hard—like glass.



Figure **13.3.4.96**: Left: *Scrolling lotus flask*, Ming dynasty, Jingdezhen, China, 1426-1435; Right: *Mosque Lamp*, c. 1510, fritware, Iznik, Turkey; both: © The Trustees of the British Museum

Twelfth-century Persian ceramicists attempted to imitate porcelain, but since they only had access to quartz, they developed fritware instead, which is hard like porcelain, but lacks its glassy quality. By the sixteenth century, most Ottoman pottery centers, such as Iznik, used fritware. Early Iznik frtiware resembles blue and white Chinese porcelain, especially with its designs of intertwining vines and *hatayi* blossoms. The term *hatayi* in Turkish translates to Cathay, which references the Chinese origins of the flowers' style.

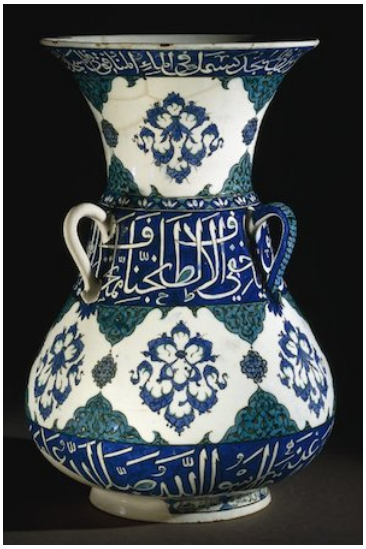


Figure **13.3.4.97**: *Mosque Lamp* made for the renovation of the Dome of the Rock, 1549, polychrome glazed pottery, Iznik, Turkey, 38 cm high © The Trustees of the British Museum

As the Ottoman Empire expanded, the demand for ceramics increased, prompting the development of a more efficient under-glazing technique. Similar to porcelain decoration, underglazing fritware involves painting designs onto a post-fired white-slipped vessel, upon which a transparent glaze made out of a lead flux is then applied. When fired, the vessel acquires a glossy complexion. This technique flourished during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, who undertook a series of large building projects.

By 1550, Ottoman ceramicists developed a turquoise pigment and a chrome-based black color, that was used to draw thin lines, as can be seen in a mosque lamp made for the renovation of the Dome of the Rock (left). This lamp has been linked to a spherical hanging ornament in the Benaki Museum, indicating that the Brooklyn Museum's *Spherical Hanging Ornament* likely hung in a sacred space too.

Within the next decade, a thick, red, iron-rich glaze and an emerald green color made from copper were invented. Such advances allowed artists to create extravagant decorations that were more eye-catching, like those on the Brooklyn sphere.



Figure **13.3.4.98**: Tile with “Saz” leaf design, c. 1545-55, Iznik, Turkey, stone paste, polychrome painted under transparent glaze, 30.2 cm high (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Around 1540 Ottoman artists broke away from Chinese models, led by court artist Shah Qulu, who created a turbulent world of agitated, serrated, featherlike leaves known as the Saz style (left). His most talented pupil, Kara Memi, later developed a more naturalistic representation of flora, creating virtual spring gardens known as the *Quatre fluers* style, as four types of flowers (tulips, carnations, hyacinths, roses) generally, although not always, appear in these designs. *Quatre fluers* became the hallmark of Ottoman art, and it is this style that is seen in the *Spherical Hanging Ornament*.

Unfortunately, by 1600, ceramic production suffered from a generalized decline in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, it seems likely that the *Spherical Hanging Ornament* was produced between 1570 and 1600.

The purpose of a spherical hanging ornament

Aside from giving aesthetic pleasure, the function of the *Spherical Hanging Ornament* is ambiguous. Smaller ornamental spheres are known to have hung with ceramic mosque lamps. A ceramic mosque lamp is technically a misnomer, since its opaque body renders it useless as a light source, and so it would not have functioned as a lamp. It seems more likely then that ceramic spheres and lamps had primarily symbolic purposes.



Figure **13.3.4.99**: *Mosque Sphere*, early 16th century, Iznik, Ottoman, gilt on fritware with underglaze blue decoration, 13 cm high (The Walters Art Museum)

Glass mosque lamps are often understood to represent God’s divine light, as the Koran makes such an analogy in its “Light Verse,” which is often inscribed on mosque lamps. The hadith (inscription) on the Walter’s Museum sphere (above) also quotes the prophet Muhammad, “The world is only one hour, so hasten to prayer before dying and hasten to repent before death,” implying that the sphere represents the orb of heaven, which might have been the purpose of the Brooklyn sphere as well. Within a religious setting, its sumptuous floral decorations would have alluded to the gardens of paradise.

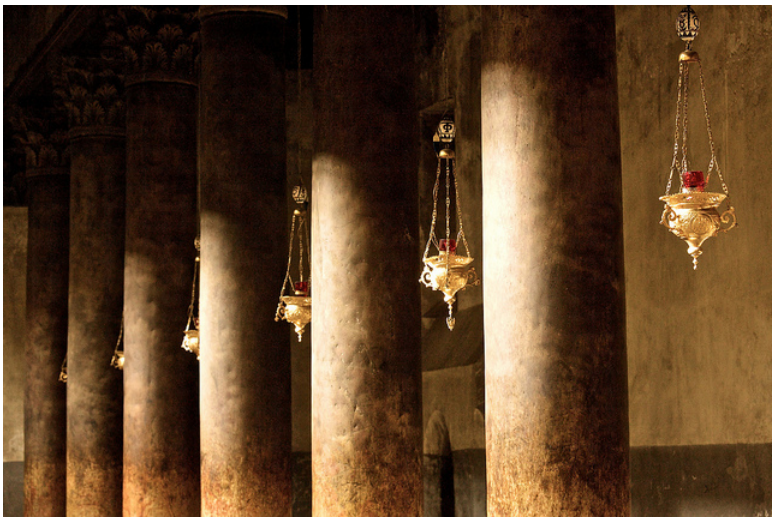


Figure **13.3.4.100**: Lamps, Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem (photo: **_skynet**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Such imagery could also evoke fertility, and in Middle Eastern Christian and Muslim sanctuaries, similar, ableit oval and smaller, hanging ornaments are placed alongside lamps today. Some of these smaller ornaments, which are suspended on the same chains as the lamps, function to keep the chains organized, as without them, the chains could become entangled when servicing the lamps.



Figure **13.3.4.101**: *Spherical Hanging Ornament with Inscriptions*, first half of the 16th century, Ottoman, Iznik, Turkey (Victoria and Albert Museum)



Figure **13.3.4.102**: *Mosque Lamp* from the Suleymaniye Complex, Istabul, Turkey, c. 1557, Ottoman, fritware, polychrome underglaze painted, glazed (Victoria and Albert Museum)

The four other large Ottoman spherical hanging ornaments, which can be found in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, The British Museum and Benaki Museum, are similar to the Brooklyn Museum ornament in that they bear resemblances to the designs of some ceramic mosque lamps. However, it is not known whether such large ornaments were suspended directly above the lamps or alongside them. On the neck of a late 16th century Iznik mosque lamp (left) are four miniature versions of

spherical ornaments, which further suggests a relationship between the spheres and mosque lamps. Present-day photographs of the Sulimaniye mosque (above) also show large, red ornaments hanging from the center of the mosque's chandeliers, so perhaps the Brooklyn ornament was intended to do the same.

Additional resources:

Iznik art in the later Islamic period on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Iznik ewer

by ORTAL BENSKY



Figure **13.3.4.103**: Iznik ewer, 2nd half of the 16th century (Ottoman), fritware, painted in black, cobalt blue, green, red under transparent glaze, 17-7/8 x 15-1/2″ / 45.4 x 39.4 cm (photo: **Brooklyn Museum**, CC BY 3.0)

Iznik ceramics give us a wonderful opportunity to glimpse into both the thriving Iznik ceramic industry and a 16th century Ottoman home. The ewer shown on the left is a type of jug that is shaped like a vase. It was a common utensil used daily for carrying water from the kitchen to the dining area, and for serving family and guests. This particular ewer was made in Iznik, the Ottoman center of ceramic production.

Iznik ware

The town of Iznik was an important production center during the fifteenth, sixteenth and part of the seventeenth centuries that manufactured ceramics for both the court in the capital, Istanbul, and for the open market. The ewer was only one form of ceramic kitchenware that was produced in Iznik workshops. Other products included dishes, bowls, tankards, and bottles.



Figure **13.3.4.104**: Similar Iznik ewer, last quarter of 16th century, fritware, underglaze-painted, 8 1/2 x 5 1/4″ / 21.59 x 13.34 cm (photo: Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

Due to the absence of petuntse (a variety of feldspar rock), used in Chinese porcelain, true porcelain did not come to the Middle East until the modern era. Nevertheless, twelfth-century Islamic potters in Persia were able to produce a strong white clay that in many respects resembled Chinese porcelain. This mixture of potter's clay, ground quartz, and glassy frit, is called fritware. This porcelain substitute, together with the under-glaze painting technique used to decorate the ceramics, was used for centuries. It is not only seen in surviving kitchenware, but also in beautiful tiles covering the interior and exterior of important Ottoman buildings.

Color, iconography, shape

Iznik ceramic production initially used blue-and-white decoration. However, by the second half of the sixteenth century, Iznik pottery saw the gradual addition of new colors as pigments were developed. The Brooklyn ewer is painted in black, cobalt blue, green, and red under a transparent glaze.



Figure **13.3.4.105**: Dragon-handled ewer with inscription, late 15th– first quarter 16th century (present-day Afghanistan, probably Herat), metal, 14.3 x 15.6 x 8.6″ (photo: **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The ewer's round body shape with the narrow neck and the round handle is similar to the shape of metal jugs from the Islamic world of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was also influenced by blue-and-white ceramic pot-bellied jugs produced by Chinese potters of the Ming period (1368-1644). This form became especially popular in Central and Western Asia after the Mongol conquests and under the Timurid and Safavid dynasties.



Figure 13.3.4.106: Tankard with a dragon-shaped handle, 1403-24, Ming Dynasty, blue-and-white porcelain, 14 cm high (photo: © **Trustees of the British Museum**)

Metalsmiths of this period often used bands to separate areas of their vessels—the base from the body and the body from the neck. Similarly, the potter that created the ewer above employed decorative patterns to give an effect of visual separation similar to the metal bands. The simplicity of these bands, as opposed to the more complex motifs found on the metal jug, is repeated in the decorative floral imagery found on the larger surfaces—the body and neck of the ceramic ewer. The patterns that form the "bands" are common in Iznik ewers from the second half of the sixteenth century (see image above, "Similar Iznik Ewer").

The base is decorated with black hatched lines and at the neck there are leaves alternating blue and green. An additional band of black lines separate this surface from the neck of the vessel. A black spiral called "the snail" is repeated just below the mouth of the ewer.



Figure 13.3.4.107: Detail, Iznik ewer, 2nd half of the 16th century (Ottoman), fritware, painted in black, cobalt blue, green, red under transparent glaze, 17-7/8 x 15-1/2″ / 45.4 x 39.4 cm (photo: Brooklyn Museum, CC BY 3.0)



Figure 13.3.4.108: Saz leaf (detail), Iznik ewer, 2nd half of the 16th century (Ottoman), fritware, painted in black, cobalt blue, green, red under transparent glaze, 17-7/8 x 15-1/2 inches / 45.4 x 39.4 cm (photo: Brooklyn Museum, CC BY 3.0)

The body is decorated in the saz style. This style was introduced to the Ottoman court by the sixteenth century Iranian painter, Shah Qulu, who moved to Istanbul at the beginning of the century. He and his followers created the saz style, a name that derives both from the Ottoman term for the marsh reed out of which the artists' pens were crafted and from the enchanted forest of Turkic mythology. Another name for this style, hatayi, recognizes the Chinese origins of many of its elements, such as the lotus flower and the Chinese-style dragon. The saz style was adapted to many different media for the Ottoman court. Tiles with saz style drawings, for example, were used for the restorations to Istanbul's Topkapi Palace after 1574 (see "Tile" image). Note how the long, serrated, saz style leaf on this tile resembles the leaf on the ewer in both shape and color—blue with a narrow red line in the center.



Figure 13.3.4.109: Tile with floral and cloud-band design, c. 1578 (Ottoman, Iznik), stonepaste; polychrome painted under transparent glaze 24.9 x 25.1 x 1.7 cm (photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

One of Shah Qulu's pupils in the nakkashane (royal atelier), the Anatolian Kara Memi, developed another popular style seen on the ewer. Shortly after the middle of the sixteenth century, Kara Memi introduced a set of motifs that is a virtual garden of stylized flowers, but most emblematic are the long, elegant tulips. These flowers constitute one of the most distinctive and familiar aspects of Ottoman style art and we can identify them as well as leaves and additional garden flowers on the body and neck of the ewer.

Adopting the aesthetics of the aristocracy

The fading, bleeding colors on the vessel indicate that it was not made for the royal court though it was produced from fine materials and its drawing imitates the court style. It was most likely made for the merchant class, subjects of the empire who were not aristocracy but were not slaves. The owners of the ewer adopted the aesthetics of the aristocracy and purchased their own ceramics in a style similar to that found in the royal court.

The Ottomans themselves accepted the influence of various cultures in to their art. Their artistic strength comes from adaptation of influences such as Chinese and Iranian, together with local innovations to create what was eventually identified as an Ottoman style.

Additional resources:

Introduction to Iznik and Ottoman Ceramics, Musée du Louvre

The Art of the Ottomans before 1600, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Akar, Azade, *Treasury of Turkish Designs: 670 Motifs from Iznik Pottery*, New York: Dover Publications, 1988

Carswell, John, *Iznik Pottery*, London: British Museum Press, 1998

Denny, Walter B, "Dating Ottoman Turkish Works in the Saz Style," *Muqarnas 1* (1983): 103-122

Nurhan, Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, London: Alexandria Press, 1994

Queiroz Ribeiro, Maria, *Iznik Pottery and Tiles*, Lisbon: Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, 2009

Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs

by FARIS AL AHMAD



Figure **13.3.4.110**: *Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs*, mid-16th century, copper alloy (brass), engraved with repoussé center, 3 3/4 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2″ / 9.5 x 21.6 x 21.6cm (The Brooklyn Museum)

Iranian metal bowls have a variety of shapes, decoration themes, and uses during the Safavid period (1501-1736). The Iranian *Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs* today in the Brooklyn Museum is decorated with unusual themes—a blend of religious, superstitious, and Persian historical motifs. The practice of *fāl* (divination, or seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means) during the Safavid period was facilitated by the use of divine text but it was also influenced by ancient Greek astrology.

Ancient symbols made new

The exterior of the divination bowl is covered with both inscriptions and signs of the zodiac. Some of the zodiac signs are represented with traditional figures, but others are more unusual.



Figure 13.3.4.111: Leo the Lion (detail), *Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs*, mid-16th century, copper alloy (brass), engraved with repoussé center, 3 3/4 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2in. / 9.5 x 21.6 x 21.6cm (The Brooklyn Museum)

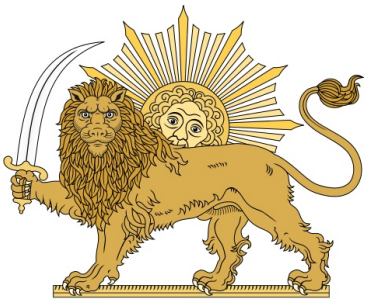


Figure 13.3.4.112: The historical Persian symbol of Širo Xoršid

Leo for example is represented by a lion figure as one might expect, but here with the sun behind it, illustrated as a semi-oval human face in the background. This figure resembles the historical Persian symbol of *Širo Xoršid*, "the Lion and the Sun," which eventually became an national emblem and represents, among other things, the ancient history of Persia.

The Lion and the Sun symbol was represented on Iranian metalwork in earlier centuries. Scholars suggest that the reason for using this symbol on some Iranian metalwork is to illustrate the triumph of the light over darkness. One can also see the *Širo Xoršid* as a combination of this traditional Persian symbol and contemporary Shiite religious inclinations. In other words, the lion could be interpreted in relation to the Shiite tradition of representing Imam 'Ali as a lion since he was historically called *Assaduallah* (The Lion of God) (Imam 'Ali is believed by Shia to be Muhammad's successor in the Caliphate).

Scholars have proposed that zodiac signs were used on Iranian metalwork as early as the second half of the twelfth century and became popular in Islamic art in the thirteenth century. However, some of the images developed by the Greek astronomers were transformed in the Islamic world, bringing them closer to Iranian Shiite culture and theology. For example, there is an association between the twelve zodiac figures and the twelve Shiite Imams. Shiite thought and culture also associates the number twelve with holiness—as there are twelve months of the year and twelve zodiac signs, there are twelve Imams.

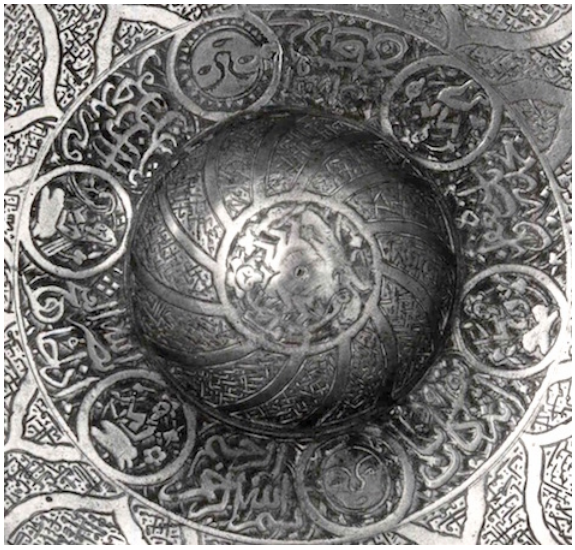


Figure 13.3.4.113: Interior (detail), *Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs*, mid-16th century, copper alloy (brass), engraved with repoussé center, 3 3/4 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2in. / 9.5 x 21.6 x 21.6cm (The Brooklyn Museum)

Around the convex hemispherical boss in the bottom of the interior (above), there are three verses from the Qur'an. These are divided with circular panels that also include zodiac signs. These verses are from *Surat An-NaS* (Chapter 110) of the Qura'n, verses one, two, and three. These Qur'an verses are usually interpreted as God talking to Muhammad, promising him victory over his enemies, the people of Quraish. God is also promising Muhammad that he will conquer Mecca and the city's disbelieving inhabitants will convert to Islam. The content and the revelatory occasion of these verses is a prophecy of victory and glory. Reciting these verses in a prayer or divination practice could be a channel to seeking victory, glory, and a happy life. We might assume that these are the reasons why these verses are inscribed on the bowl (if it was in fact used for divination).

The other two verses from the Qur'an inscribed on the bowl are inside the bottom ring on the exterior. These are verses 87 and 88 from *Surat Al-Ànbyâ* (Chapter 21). However, both of these verses are quoted only partially. The verses are often interpreted as the miraculous story of a believer, *Yūnus* (Jonah), who was saved by God for his true faith. These verses were likely inscribed on the bowl because it was believed that they have supernatural power. It is still widely believed among Muslims (both Sunnis and Shiites), that reciting certain verses or making some *du'aā* (prayer) will help guide you to the right path and help you seek God's support.



Figure 13.3.4.114: Exterior (detail), *Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs*, mid-16th century, copper alloy (brass), engraved with repoussé center, 3-3/4 x 8-1/2 x 8 1/2″ / 9.5 x 21.6 x 21.6cm (The Brooklyn Museum)

Shiite divine text is also present on the bowl. For instance, the most visible inscription, on the neck of the bowl going all around under the rim, is a lavishly done Arabic inscription of the Shiite prayer for Muhammad and the twelve Shiite Imams. The prayer

starts with Muhammad, then Imam ‘Ali and lists all other Imams accordingly.



Figure **13.3.4.115**: Bottom, *Divination Bowl with Inscriptions and Zodiac Signs*, mid-16th century, copper alloy (brass), engraved with repoussé center, 3 3/4 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2″/ 9.5 x 21.6 x 21.6cm (The Brooklyn Museum)

Around the bottom ring, there is another Shiite prayer calling the Imam ‘Ali for help. The inscription reads, “Call upon ‘Ali who causes wonders. All anguish, all sorrow will disappear. Through your state of friendship with God. Oh ‘Ali, Oh ‘Ali, Oh ‘Ali.” This Shiite prayer is inscribed on other Iranian bowls as well. According to the Shiite tradition, such prayers are recited when a person needs help and guidance in achieving a goal, healing an illness or seeking treatment. Additionally, for Shiite Muslims, the twelve Imams have extraordinary abilities so reciting their names in prayers is a blessing.

Scholars have observed that in the Safavid period, when this bowl was made, the practice of *fāl* (divination) was on the rise. It is believed that a number of verses and *suras* (chapters) in the Quran were (and still are) believed to hold special *khawass* (qualities) such as being efficacious in curing illness or in protecting oneself against an enemy. Therefore, the Qur’anic verses that are inscribed on the vessel could be considered some of these Qur’anic text that have special *khawass*. But as we have seen, associating miraculous abilities and holiness with a divine text was not limited to passages from the Qur’an but also included the blessing of the twelve Shiite Imam’s names.

The escalation of divination practice during the Safavid Empire period helps us understand the mix of these different motifs on a single bowl.

Additional resources:

Divination (from the Encyclopaedia Iranica)

Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art

Howayda Al-Harithy, “The Ewer of Ibn Jaldak (623/1226) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: The Inquiry into the Origin of the Mawsili School of Metalwork Revisited,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London)* 64 (2001), pp. 355-368.

James W. Allan, *Islamic metalwork: The Nuhad Es-said collection* (London : Sotheby Publications, 1982).

—— *Metalwork of the Islamic World: The Aron Collection* (London, 1986).

Stefano Carboni, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art* (New York: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997).

Maurice S. Dimand, “Near Eastern Metalwork,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, (1926), pp. 193-199.

John F. Haskins, “Northern Origins of “Sasanian” Metalwork.” *Artibus Asiae* 15 (1952), pp. 241-267.

Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, “Studies in iranian Metalwork,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1969, pp. 2-9.

—— “Safavid Metalwork: A Study in Continuity,” *Iranian Studies* 7 (1974), pp. 543-585.

The Taj Mahal

by ROSHNA KAPADIA



Figure **13.3.4.116**: Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: **Mathew Knott**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Shah Jahan was the fifth ruler of the Mughal dynasty. During his third regnal year, his favorite wife, known as Mumtaz Mahal, died due to complications arising from the birth of their fourteenth child. Deeply saddened, the emperor started planning the construction of a suitable, permanent resting place for his beloved wife almost immediately. The result of his efforts and resources was the creation of what was called the Luminous Tomb in contemporary Mughal texts and is what the world knows today as the Taj Mahal.

In general terms, Sunni Muslims favor a simple burial, under an open sky. But notable domed mausolea for Mughals (as well as for other Central Asian rulers) were built prior to Shah Jahan’s rule, so in this regard, the Taj is not unique. The Taj is, however, exceptional for its monumental scale, stunning gardens, lavish ornamentation, and its overt use of white marble.



Figure **13.3.4.117**: Taj Mahal and Yamuna River (photo: **Louis Vest**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The location



Figure **13.3.4.118**: Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal in Agra, where he took the throne in 1628. First conquered by Muslim invaders in the eleventh century, the city had been transformed into a flourishing area of trade during Shah Jahan's rule. Situated on the banks of the Yamuna River allowed for easy access to water, and Agra soon earned the reputation as a "riverfront garden city," on account of its meticulously planned gardens, lush with flowering bushes and fruit-bearing trees in the sixteenth century.

Paradise on Earth



Figure **13.3.4.119**: Entrance, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53

Entry to the Taj Mahal complex via the forecourt, which in the sixteenth century housed shops, and through a monumental gate of inlaid and highly decorated red sandstone made for a first impression of grand splendor and symmetry: aligned along a long water channel through this gate is the Taj—set majestically on a raised platform on the north end. The rectangular complex runs roughly 1860 feet on the north-south axis, and 1000 feet on the east-west axis.

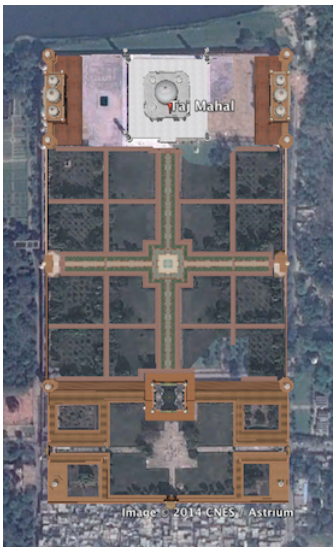


Figure 13.3.4.120: Aerial view from Google Earth, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53

The white-marble mausoleum is flanked on either side by identical buildings in red sandstone. One of these serves as a mosque, and the other, whose exact function is unknown, provides architectural balance.

The marble structure is topped by a bulbous dome and surrounded by four minarets of equal height. While minarets in Islamic architecture are usually associated with mosques—for use by the muezzin who leads the call to prayer—here, they are not functional, but ornamental, once again underscoring the Mughal focus on structural balance and harmony.

The interior floor plan of the Taj exhibits the *hasht bishisht* (eight levels) principle, alluding to the eight levels of paradise. Consisting of eight halls and side rooms connected to the main space in a cross-axial plan—the favored design for Islamic architecture from the mid-fifteenth century—the center of the main chamber holds Mumtaz Mahal's intricately decorated marble cenotaph on a raised platform. The emperor's cenotaph was laid down beside hers after he died three decades later—both are encased in an octagon of exquisitely carved white-marble screens. The coffins bearing their remains lie in the spaces directly beneath the cenotaphs.



Figure 13.3.4.121: Cenotaphs, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: Derek A Young, CC BY-NC 2.0)



Figure 13.3.4.122: Carving and inlaid stone, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: Martin Lambie, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Qur'anic verses inscribed into the walls of the building and designs inlaid with semi-precious stones—coral, onyx, carnelian, amethyst, and lapis lazuli—add to the splendor of the Taj's white exterior. The dominant theme of the carved imagery is floral, showing some recognizable, and other fanciful species of flowers—another link to the theme of paradise

Some of the Taj Mahal's architecture fuses aspects from other Islamic traditions, but other aspects reflect indigenous style elements. In particular, this is evident in the umbrella-shaped ornamental chhatris (dome shaped pavillions) atop the pavilions and minarets.

And whereas most Mughal-era buildings tended to use red stone for exteriors and functional architecture (such as military buildings and forts)—reserving white marble for special inner spaces or for the tombs of holy men, the Taj's entire main structure is constructed of white marble and the auxiliary buildings are composed of red sandstone. This white-and-red color scheme of the built complex may correspond with principles laid down in ancient Hindu texts—in which white stood for purity and the priestly class, and red represented the color of the warrior class.

The gardens

Stretching in front of the Taj Mahal is a monumental char bagh garden. Typically, a char bagh was divided into four main quadrants, with a building (such as a pavilion or tomb) along its central axis. When viewed from the main gateway today, the Taj Mahal appears to deviate from this norm, as it is not centrally placed within the garden, but rather located at the end of a complex that is backed by the river, such as was found in other Mughal-era pleasure gardens.



Figure 13.3.4.123: View from the Mahtab Bagh, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: Steve Evans, CC BY-NC 2.0)

When viewed from the Mahtab Bagh, moonlight gardens, across the river, however, the monument appears to be centrally located in a grander complex than originally thought. This view, only possible when one incorporates the Yamuna River into the complex, speaks to the brilliance of the architect. Moreover, by raising the Taj onto an elevated foundation, the builders ensured that Shah Jahan's funerary complex as well as the tombs of other Mughal nobles along with their attached gardens could be viewed from many angles along the river.

The garden incorporated waterways and fountains. This was a new type of gardening that was introduced to India by Babur, Shah Jahan's great great grandfather in the sixteenth century. Given the passage of time and the intervention of many individuals in the garden since its construction, it is hard to determine the original planting and layout scheme of the garden beds at the Taj.

From the outset, the Taj was conceived of as a building that would be remembered for its magnificence for ages to come, and to that end, the best material and skills were employed. The finest marble came from quarries 250 miles away in Makrarna, Rajasthan. Mir Abd Al-Karim was designated as the lead architect. Abdul Haqq was chosen as the calligrapher, and Ustad Ahmad Lahauri was made the supervisor. Shah Jahan made sure that the principles of Mughal architecture were incorporated into the design throughout the building process.



Figure **13.3.4.124**: Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: **LASZLO ILYES**, CC BY 2.0)

What the Taj Mahal represents

When Mumtaz Mahal died at age 38 in 1631, the emperor is reported to have refused to engage in court festivities, postponed two of his sons' weddings, and allegedly made frequent visits to his wife's temporary resting place (in Burhanpur) during the time it took for the building of the Taj to be completed. Stories like these have led to the Taj Mahal being referred to as an architectural "symbol of love" in popular literature. But there are other theories: one suggests that the Taj is not a funeral monument, and that Shah Jahan might have built a similar structure even if his wife had not died. Based on the metaphoric specificity of Qur'anic and other inscriptions and the emperor's love of thrones, another theory maintains that the Taj Mahal is a symbolic representation of a Divine Throne—the seat of God—on the Day of Judgment. A third view holds that the monument was built to represent a replica of a house of paradise. In the "paradisiacal mansion" theory, the Taj was something of a vanity project, built to glorify Mughal rule and the emperor himself.

If his accession to the throne was smooth, Shah Jahan's departure from it was not. The emperor died not as a ruler, but as a prisoner. Relegated to Agra Fort under house arrest for eight years prior to his death in 1666, Shah Jahan could enjoy only a distant view of the Taj Mahal. But the resplendent marble mausoleum he built "with posterity in mind" endures, more than 350 years after it was constructed, and is believed to be the most recognizable sight in the world today. Laid to rest beside his beloved wife in the Taj Mahal, the man once called Padshah—King of the World—enjoys enduring fame, too, for having commissioned the world's most extravagant and memorable mausoleum.

Backstory

The Taj Mahal is one of the world's great tourist attractions, hosting millions of visitors per year. Though it was designated as **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1983 and is currently overseen by the Archaeological Survey of India, its heavy visitor traffic is just one of the many factors that threaten the integrity of the site.

One of the biggest risk factors for the Taj Mahal is air pollution, which discolors the exterior and, some experts think, causes acid rain that deteriorates the marble. Air pollution is caused by a multitude of factors including industry, vehicle emissions, and the burning of household waste. The government of India designated an area called the Taj Trapezium Zone (named for its trapezoidal shape), a 10,400 square kilometer swath (about 4,000 square miles) of Agra encompassing the Taj Mahal as well as the Agra Fort and the historic Mughal settlement of Fatehpur Sikri. Oil refineries and coal-burning industries have been ordered to regulate their emissions or switch to natural gas within this zone, and most have complied.

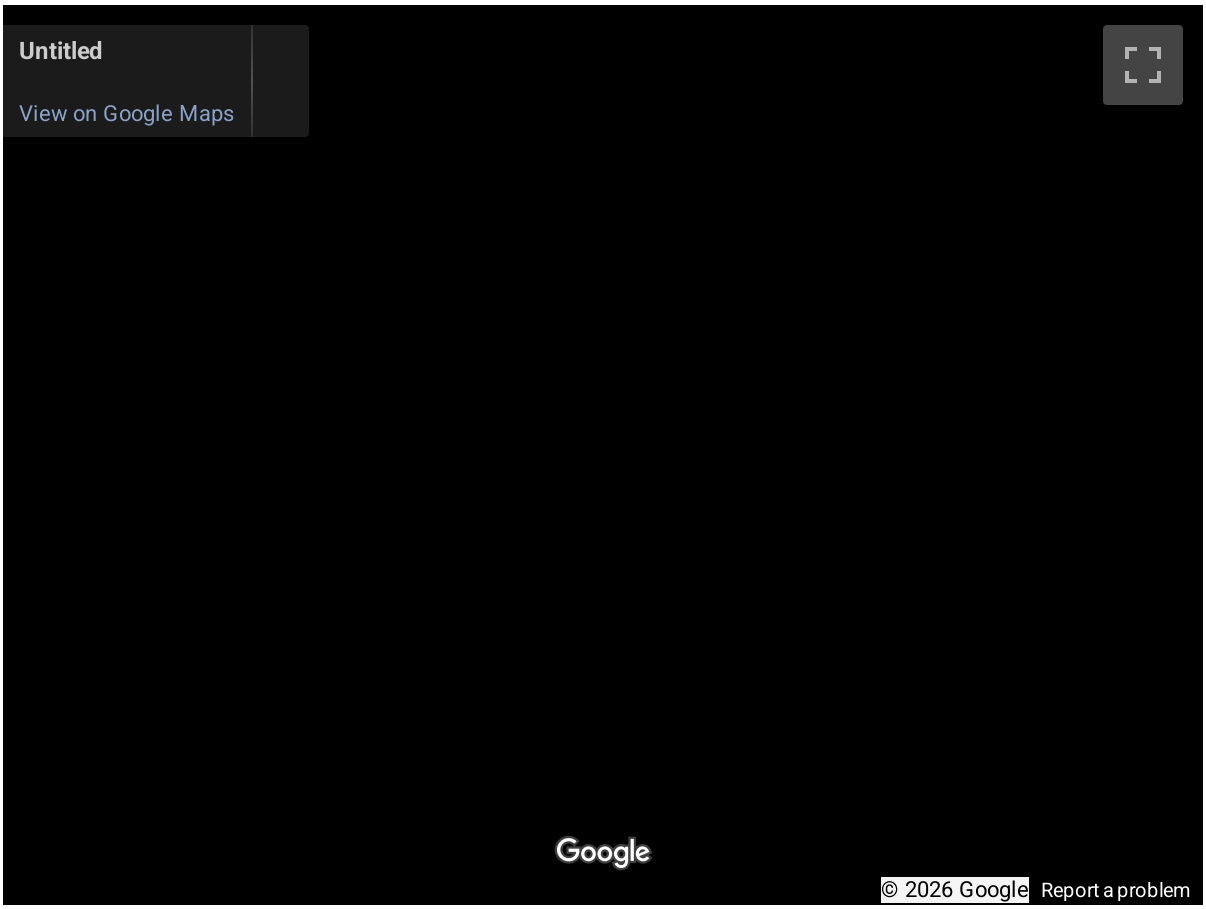
There has also been a ban on auto traffic near the Taj Mahal, air quality monitors have been installed, and the Archaeological Survey of India has proposed a **tourist cap** and increased fees to limit visitor impact.

Another potential risk for the Taj Mahal is the drying up of the Yamuna River, which flows along the rear of the complex. The river has been partially dammed upstream from the Taj Mahal in order to augment municipal water supplies, and some argue that the changes in the soil due to the lower water table may be threatening the structural integrity of the monument. **Various activists and scholars** have claimed to have found cracks in the marble platform, sinking of the structure, and tipping of the minarets, though **UNESCO** asserts that

> ***The physical fabric is in good condition and structural stability, nature of foundation, verticality of the minarets and other constructional aspects of Taj Mahal have been studied and continue to be monitored.***

The Taj Mahal is rightly a top destination for millions of travelers. As global tourism grows and the economic pressures of industry continue to increase, the authorities who oversee the site must strive to implement legal and structural measures to ensure that this irreplaceable monument survives.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee



Additional resources:

The Taj Mahal on the UNESCO website

View from the roof (360) from The Google Art Project

Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor, translated, edited and annotated by Wheeler M. Thackston (Oxford University Press, 1996).

Milo C. Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World: The Padshahnama*, with new Translations by Wheeler Thackston (Thames and Hudson, 1997).

Wayne Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of its Symbolic Meaning," ***Art Bulletin***, vol 61, no 1, March 1979, pp. 7-37.

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (Phaidon, 1997).

Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of its History and Development (1526-1858)* (Neues Publishing Company, 1991).

_____, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agr*a (Thames and Hudson, 2006).

_____, "The Taj Mahal: Architecture, Symbolism and Urban Significance," *Muqarnas*, vol. 22, 2005.

George Michell, George and Amit Pasricha, *Mughal Architecture and Gardens* (Antique Collectors' Club, 2011).

D. Fairchild Ruggles, "A Garden in Landscape," in *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes: Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

Giles Tillotson, *Taj Mahal* (Harvard University Press, 2008).

"How to Save the Taj Mahal?" Smithsonian.com, September 2011

"Is a cap on tourists at the Taj Mahal a sign of things to come?" *The Telegraph*, January 5, 2018

"The Slow Decay of the Taj Mahal," *The Diplomat*, August 1, 2016

Qa'a (The Damascus room)

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

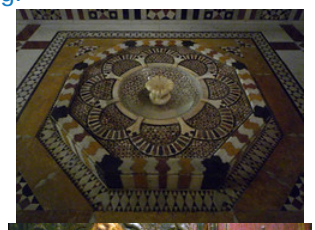


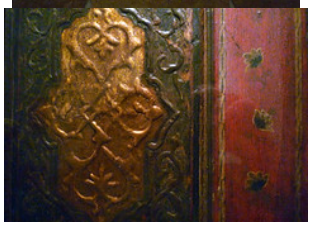
Video **13.3.4.7**: Reception Room (Qa'a), Ottoman period, 1119 a.h. / 1707 C.E., Damascus (Syria), poplar, gesso relief with gold and tin leaf, glazes and paint; cypress, poplar, walnut, black mulberry, mother-of pearl, marble and other stones, stucco with glass, plaster, ceramic tiles, iron, brass, 22′ 1/2″ high x 16′ 8-1/2″ deep x 26′ 4-3/4″ long (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

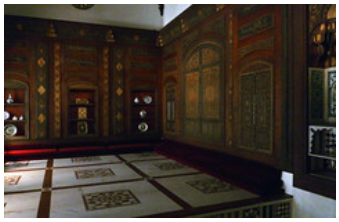


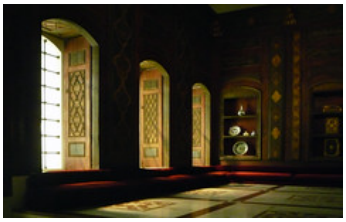
Video **13.3.4.8**: The Damascus Room (1707) served as the reception area within a Syrian home of the Ottoman period. Extensive conservation and historical research were carried out by the Metropolitan Museum in preparation for the opening of the new galleries on November 1, 2011. This video courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

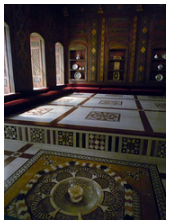
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



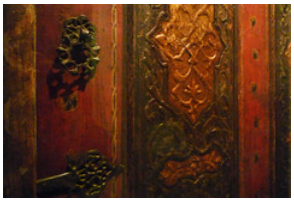


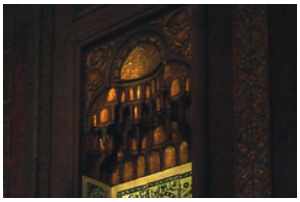












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88686

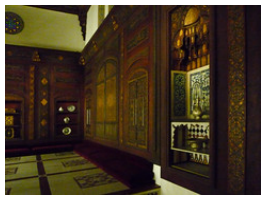
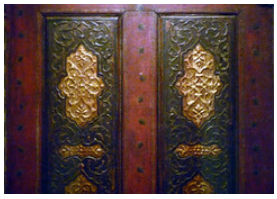
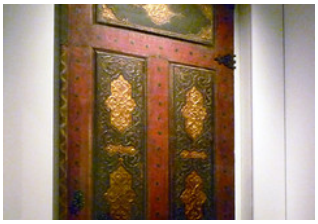
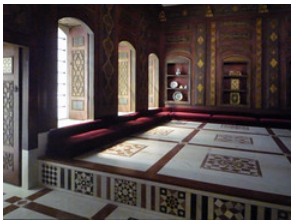
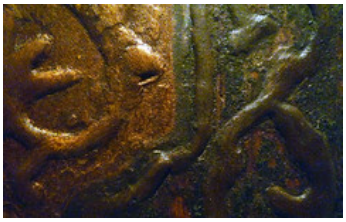






Figure 13.3.4.125: More Smarthistory images…

Khusraw Discovers Shirin Bathing

by CORE Y RICE



Figure 13.3.4.126: *Khusraw Discovers Shirin Bathing*, From Pictorial Cycle of Eight Poetic Subjects, mid 18th century, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 88.9 cm, Shiraz, Iran (Brooklyn Museum)

On the bank of a cool spring in a lush meadow, a beautiful princess swoons at the sight of a young prince who has stumbled upon her bathing. To an eighteenth century audience, the pair would have been immediately recognizable as Shirin and Khusraw, two of the most famous lovers in the history of Persian literature. Although rendered in oils with a palette indebted to the European Renaissance, the canvas immediately betrays its Islamic origin in its carefully rounded top—it was designed to fit into the window-shaped niches common in Persian architecture of the period. Putatively titled *Khusraw Discovers Shirin Bathing*, the work emerges from a cycle of eight paintings that share a similar style and scale, depicting scenes of hunt as well as events drawn from biblical, Qur'anic, and poetic narratives.

For the love of images

The content of the painting derives from Nizami's *Khamsa*, an immensely popular quintet of poems compiled in the thirteenth century. Of the stories recounted, the tale of the love shared between Shirin, a Lebanese princess, and Khusraw, a Sasanian prince, was most celebrated for its romantic appeal and poetic rendering. Nizami's telling of the story emphasizes the power of words and images to inflame the passions of the two lovers. The story is set in motion when Khusraw, aroused by the vivid description of Shirin's beauty by his court painter, Shapur, sends the artist off to lure the princess into his kingdom.



Figure 13.3.4.127: *Shirin Examines the Portrait of Khusraw* (miniature from the manuscript Khamsa by Nizami), 1431, gouache, 23.7 x 13.7 cm, Timurid Dynasty, Iran (Hermitage Museum)

Upon arriving in Lebanon, Shapur baits the princess by planting paintings of Khusraw in her path over the course of three days. At first Shirin's handmaidens destroy Khusraw's image and burn rue (an herb) to break the painting's spell. However, on the third day, Shirin falls in love with the man in the painting and learns of his identity from Shapur. A tremendously popular subject for illustration, Shirin's enchantment by the image of Khusraw underscores the esteemed position held by figural imagery in Persian culture.

Setting the seen

Heart aflutter and with the aid of Shabdiz, her aunt's famously fast horse, Shirin abandons her companions at the next day's hunt and departs for Persia. Meanwhile, because of conspiring adversaries, Khusraw is forced to flee his palace in disguise and sets a course for Armenia to find Shirin.

What follows is Nizami's account of the fated meeting of the lovers depicted in the present painting:

> ***For fourteen days and fourteen nights she [Shirin] traveled. Then she came upon an emerald field in which there gleamed a gentle pool… When she had satisfied herself that she was quite alone, she tethered Shabdiz and prepared to bathe. Beautiful was the whiteness of her skin against the blueness of the water. She loosed her braids and washed her long black hair, and the moon-like reflection of her face was caught in the shallows of the pool (Chelkowski, 25).***

Meanwhile, Khusraw's rapid departure from his palace brings him into the vicinity of the princess.

> ***[H]e ordered his attendants to feed their horses while he rode on alone. Suddenly, he came upon the pool in the emerald field and saw Shirin sitting in the water like a lily. At the sight of her his heart caught fire and burned; he trembled with desire in every limb. Softly he rode toward her and whispered to himself how he would like to have such a beautiful maiden and such a black horse as hers…Suddenly, Shirin looked up. Startled, she gathered her black hair about her like a cloak, emerged from the pool, dressed, and mounted her horse. At the touch of her heel, Shabdiz carried her off into the shadows of the late afternoon (Chelkowski, 26).***

Narrative infidelities

Beyond the inclusion of Khusraw in the vicinity of the bathing Shirin, very little of the painting corresponds to Nizami's telling of the event. Khusraw appears in royal attire, undisguised, while the queen's famous black horse is rendered in silver and brown. While these minor contradictions to the text perpetuate errors common in earlier miniatures, the addition of three extraneous figures complicates a story that hinges upon the intimacy established by the isolation of the characters from their retinue.



Figure 13.3.4.128: Shirin (left) and Khursaw (right) (details), *Khusraw Discovers Shirin Bathing*, From Pictorial Cycle of Eight Poetic Subjects, mid 18th century, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 88.9 cm, Shiraz, Iran (Brooklyn Museum)

Shirin and her attendant appear to notice Khusraw's approach before he sets his sight on the princess. Both women look up toward the prince, guiding the viewer's attention toward his presence in the center of the canvas. Khusraw and his companion appear unaware of the princess and her attendant. Khusraw, gesturing to his face and looking to the sky, appears in a state of distracted reverie. A contrary reading of the painting might interpret the rosy cheeks of Khusraw and his partner as indicating their awareness of the bathing Shirin. Khusraw's gesture transforms into the coy reaction of a voyeur who has been caught looking.

Blending traditions

Persian painting prior to the introduction of European oil on canvas techniques survive primarily as wall murals or as manuscript miniatures. Consequently, the aesthetic appreciation of a painted narrative was either extremely intimate or communally shared. Easel painting, the dominant mode operating in Europe in the 18th century, offered a productive middle ground. Painting on canvas permitted greater flexibility in size and portability while loosening the physical connection of images to textual description.



Figure 13.3.4.129: Shaikh Zada, *Khusrau Catches Sight of Shirin Bathing*, Folio from a Khamsa (Quintet) of Nizami, c. 1524-25, ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, page: 32.1 x 22.2 cm (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The muted palette and chiaroscuro used by the painter of *Khusraw Discovers Shirin Bathing* shows the influence of European conventions. Nevertheless, the absence of perspectival space and subsequent flattening of figures in the painting are indebted to the Persian manuscript tradition. The artist's contact with European art was likely one of technical innovation rather than pictorial convention. Such superficial integration of foreign aesthetics by Persian artists is characteristic of a broader, global blending of regional styles due to increased trade contacts and political conflict during this period. It would not be until the early nineteenth century that Persian painters were sent to Europe to be trained in this mode.

The installation of arch-topped canvases within architectural niches extended the tradition of mural painting on walls of palaces into a broader social sphere. Historical records confirm that earlier mural paintings depicting scenes from Nizami's poetry were supplemented by panels of explanatory text. Such an addition would certainly temper the artistic liberties taken by the painting's creator. The subjects depicted in the cycle from which the present painting comes suggest that the paintings were hung in a room used for entertaining guests either in a home or pavilion. Here, the paintings would serve to stimulate conversation among educated visitors.

Additional resources:

Peter J. Chelkowski's English Translation of Nizami's Khamsa

"Love and Devotion, from Persia and Beyond," from the State Library of Victoria

Persian Perspectives of Europe from the Encyclopædia Iranica

Peter J. Chelkowski, *Mirror of the Invisible World: Tales from the Khamseh of Nizami (*New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976).

Layla S. Diba, "Persian Painting in the Eighteenth Century: Tradition and Transmission." *Muqarnas* vol. 6 (1989), pp. 147-160.

Layla S. Diba and Maryam Ekhtiar (eds)., *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1925* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

13.3.4: Later period is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **3.4: Later period** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.4: Africa

Africa

Africans have contributed to the world’s cultural heritage with works of astonishing innovation.

7000 B.C.E. - present

13.4.1: A beginner's guide

13.4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa

13.4.3: West Africa

13.4.4: Central Africa

13.4.5: North Africa

13.4.6: Southern Africa

13.4: Africa is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.4.1: A beginner's guide

Peoples and cultures

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.1.1**: Google earth view of Africa, © Google

Today, Africa is considered to be the cradle of human ancestry, from which we may all trace our descent. Based on the evidence to date, most scientists concur that humankind evolved and modern humans emerged on the African continent. Recent discoveries of cultural artifacts dating back 70,000 years also suggest that the earliest forms of visual expression may be found in Africa. For many thousands of years, Africans have contributed to the cultural heritage of the world, creating masterful works of astonishing innovation and creativity.

Urban centers

Today, over 680 million people live in Africa. Although some regions remain sparsely inhabited, others are densely populated. The West African nation of Nigeria, for example, has one-fifth of the entire continent's population. About a third of all Africans live in large cities such as Lagos (Nigeria), the continent's most populous city with 13.5 million people. Other major urban centers in contemporary Africa include Cairo (Egypt), Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Dakar (Senegal), and Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Pretoria (South Africa). The majority of Africans, however, live in more rural areas where their lifestyle centers on agricultural activities.



Figure **13.4.1.2**: Africa north of the equator, © Google

Climate

In those parts of the continent that are not heavily urbanized, Africa's geography and climate have especially impacted the development of different artistic traditions. In agricultural communities, seasonal patterns of rainfall and drought affect cultivation and, by extension, their cultural practices. An alternation between rainy and dry seasons is seen throughout much of Africa, in varying degrees. Dry seasons allow opportunities for part-time artisans to create artifacts and for people to organize festivals and other large-scale social events that employ such art forms. Certain areas, such as southwestern Africa and parts of eastern Africa's interior, also had (and continue to have) frequent droughts. This has forced populations to migrate often or adopt a nomadic lifestyle. As a result, their artistic expression has focused on relatively ephemeral and personal traditions such as body ornamentation, rather than larger scale wooden sculpture.



Figure **13.4.1.3**: Africa south of the equator, © Google

Diversity

Throughout the continent, there is found a diversity of societies, languages, and cultures. It is estimated that there are well over 1,000 distinct languages in Africa, making it the most linguistically varied of all the continents. In Nigeria alone, more than 250 different languages are spoken. Important regional languages, spoken over broad geographic areas by people of varied ethnicity,

include Arabic in northern Africa, Swahili in eastern Africa, and Hausa and Mandinka in parts of western Africa. English, French, and Portuguese were introduced during the colonial period and remain in wide usage today.

A note on language

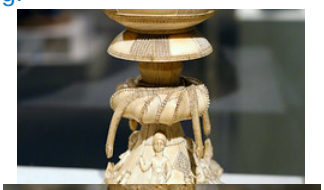
Culturally, Africans define themselves in many different ways: by occupational caste, village, kinship group, regional origin, and nationality. “Peoples” or “cultures” are the preferred terms when referring to ethnic identities; “tribe”—a word sometimes applied to African peoples or societies—is an inappropriate, even inaccurate term, and should be avoided. Based on a concept developed by nineteenth-century Western social theorists, “tribe” was used to describe a group of people sharing a common language, history, geographic region, and sociopolitical organization. In reality, ethnicity and social identity are much more complex, as Africans may identify themselves in multiple ways. For example, an individual may be simultaneously Nigerian, a resident of the Delta State, Ijo (a broad ethnic designation), and Kalabari (an eastern subgroup of the Ijo). Furthermore, the term “tribe” reflects misleading historical and cultural assumptions, as it often implies a kind of cultural backwardness with derogatory associations.

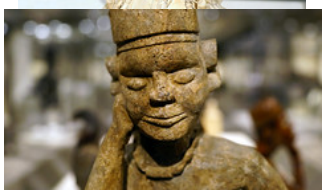
© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





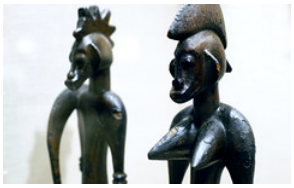














Figure **13.4.1.4**: More Smarthistory images…

Historical overview: to 1600

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE

Humankind's origins and the beginnings of cultural expression may be traced to Africa. Recent discoveries in the southern tip of Africa provide remarkable evidence of the earliest stirrings of human creativity. Ocher plaques with engraved designs, made some 70,000 years ago, represent some of humankind's earliest attempts at visual expression. Although much remains to be learned about Africa's ancient civilizations through further archaeological research, such discoveries suggest tantalizing possibilities for rich insights into human as well as artistic evolution.

Rock paintings depicting domesticated animals provide artistic evidence of the existence of agricultural communities that developed in both the Sahara region and southern Africa by around 7000 B.C.E. As the Sahara began to dry up, sometime before 3000 B.C.E., these farming communities moved away. In the north, this led to the emergence of art-producing civilizations based along the Nile, the world's longest river. **Egypt**, one of the world's earliest nation-states, was unified as a kingdom by 3100 B.C.E.

Further south along the Nile, one of the earliest of the Nubian kingdoms was centered at Kerma in present-day Sudan and dominated trade networks linking central Africa to Egypt for almost one thousand years beginning around 2500 B.C.E.

A corpus of sophisticated terracotta sculptures found over a broad geographic area in present-day Nigeria provides the earliest evidence of a settled community with ironworking technology south of the Sahara. The artistic creations of this culture are referred to as Nok, after the village where the first terracotta was discovered, and date to 500 B.C.E. to 200 C.E., a period of time coinciding with ancient Greek civilization. Although Nok terracottas continue to be unearthed, no organized excavations have been undertaken and little is known about the culture that produced these sculptures.



Figure, terracotta, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta region, Djenné peoples, 25/4 x 29.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Terracotta heads, buried around 500 C.E., have also been found in north eastern South Africa. These important ancient artistic traditions are underrepresented in Western museums today, including the Metropolitan, due to restrictions regarding the export of archaeological materials.



Figure **13.4.1.6**: Detail, *Linguist Staff* (*Okyeame*), 19th-early 20th century, Ghana, Akan peoples, Asante, gold foil, wood, nails, 156.5 x 14.6 x 5.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The first millennium C.E. witnessed the urbanization of a number of societies just south of the Sahara, in the broad stretch of savanna referred to as the **western Sudan**.

The strategic location of the **Inland Niger Delta**, lying in a fertile region between the Bani and Niger rivers, contributed to its emergence as an economic and cultural force in the area. Excavations there at the site of Jenne- jeno ("Old Jenne," also known as **Djenne-jeno**) suggest the presence of an urban center populated as early as 2,000 years ago. The city continued to thrive for many centuries, becoming an important crossroads of a trans-Saharan trading network. Terracotta figures and fragments unearthed in the region reveal the rich sculptural heritage of a sophisticated urban culture (see the *Seated Figure*, above).

By the ninth century, trade across the Sahara had intensified, contributing to the rise of large state societies with diverse cultural traditions along trade routes in the western Sudan as well as introducing Islam into the region. Initially traversed by camel caravans beginning around the fifth century, established trans-Saharan trade routes ensured the lucrative exchange of gold mined in southern West Africa and salt from the Sahara, as well as other goods. **Ghana**, one of the earliest known kingdoms in this region, grew powerful by the eighth century through its monopoly over gold mines until its eventual demise in the twelfth century (see the Linguist Staff, left).

The present-day nation of Ghana takes its name from this ancient empire, although there is no historical or geographic connection.



Figure 13.4.1.7: A view of the Great Mosque of Djenné, designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988 along with the old town of Djenné, in the central region of Mali. (UN Photo/Marco Dormino, taken on March 25, 2015, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In the early thirteenth century, the **kingdom of Mali** ascended under the leadership of Sundiata Keita, who is still revered as a culture hero in the Mande-speaking world. At its height, this Islamic empire, which flourished until the seventeenth century, encompassed an area larger than western Europe and established Africa's first university in Timbuktu. Under the Songhai empire of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one of the largest in Africa, the cities of Timbuktu and Jenne (also known as Djenne) prospered as major centers of Islamic learning (image above).

Beyond the kingdoms of the western Sudan, other centers of cultural and artistic activity emerged elsewhere in western Africa. The art of metalworking flourished as early as the ninth century at a site called Igbo-Ukwu, in what is now southern Nigeria. Hundreds of intricate **copper alloy castings discovered there** provide artistic evidence of a sophisticated and technically accomplished culture.



Figure **13.4.1.8**: *Shrine head*, Yoruba, Nigeria, 12th-14th century, terracotta, 31.1 x 14.6 x 18.4 cm (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**)

Nearby to the west, the ancient site of Ife, considered the cradle of Yoruba civilization, emerged as a major metropolis by the eleventh century. Artists working for the royal court in Ife produced a large and diverse corpus of masterful work, including magnificent bronze and terracotta sculptures renowned for their portrait-like naturalism (image left). The rich artistic traditions of the Yoruba continue to thrive **in the present day**.

The neighboring kingdom of Benin, which traces its origins to Ife, established its present dynasty in the fourteenth century. Over the next 500 years, specialist artisans working for the Benin king created several thousand works, mostly made of luxury materials such as ivory and brass, that offer insights into life at the royal court (image below). Other state societies emerged in the eastern and southern parts of the continent.



Figure 13.4.1.9: *Head of an Oba*, Nigeria, Court of Benin, 16th century, brass, 23.5 x 21.9 c 22.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.4.1.10: Bet Giyorgis Church, Lalibela, Ethiopia, c. 1220 (photo: Henrik Berger Jørgensen, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Aksum empire (also known as Axum), one of the earliest Christian states in Africa, flourished from the first century C.E. into the eleventh century, producing remarkable stone palaces and **enormous granite funerary monoliths**.

Christian faith inspired the artistic creations of later dynasties, including the extraordinary churches of Lalibela hewn from solid rock in the thirteenth century, and the illuminated manuscripts and other liturgical arts of the later Solomonic era.

Notable among the kingdoms that emerged in southern Africa is **Mapungubwe** in present-day Zimbabwe, a stratified society that arose in the eleventh century and grew wealthy through trade with Muslim merchants along the eastern African coast.

Just to the north are the remains of an ancient city known as Great Zimbabwe, considered one of the oldest and largest architectural structures in sub-Saharan Africa. This massive complex of stone buildings, spread over 1,800 acres, was constructed over 300 years beginning in the eleventh century.



Figure **13.4.1.11**: Wall and tower, Great Enclosure, Great Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe, 14th century (photo: **Ross Huggett**, CC BY 2.0)



Figure **13.4.1.12**: *Lidded Saltcellar*, 15th-16th century, Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, ivory, 29.8 x 10.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In the fifteenth century, the age of exploration ushered in a period of sustained engagement between Europe and Africa. The Portuguese, and later the Dutch and English, began trade with cities along the western coast of Africa around 1450. They returned from Africa with favorable accounts of powerful kingdoms as well as examples of African artistry commissioned from local sculptors. These exquisitely carved ivory artifacts, now known as the “Afro-Portuguese” ivories, were brought back from early visits to the continent and became part of the curiosity cabinets of the Renaissance nobles who sponsored exploration and trade.

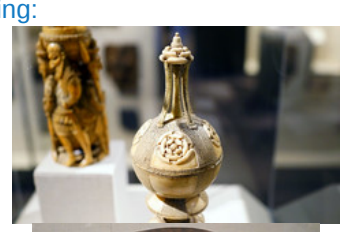
Through trade, African artists were also introduced to new materials, forms, and ideas. Although historically glass and shell beads were made indigenously, trade with Europe in the sixteenth century introduced large quantities of manufactured glass beads that became widely used throughout Africa (see a later example here). European imports of copper and coral made these luxury materials more plentiful, and artists used them in greater quantities (as in the *Head of an Oba*, above). Artifacts of European manufacture, such as canes and chairs, served as prototypes for the development of new prestige items for regional leaders (as in the Linguist’s Staff, above). Along with goods imported from Europe, the travelers also brought with them their systems of belief, including Christianity. In some cases, such as in the central African kingdom of Kongo, Christianity was embraced and its iconography integrated into the artistic repertoire. In other parts of Africa, the foreign traders themselves were sometimes represented in artworks.



Figure **13.4.1.13**: Crucifix, 16th-17th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Angola; Republic of the Congo, Kong Peoples, Kongo Kingdom, solid cast brass, 27.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688







Figure 13.4.1.14: More Smarthistory images…

Additional resources:

Nok Terracottas (500 B.C.–200 A.D.) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Rock Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Rock Art of the Southern Zone on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Rock Art of the Central Zone on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Inland Niger Delta on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Trade and the Spread of Islam in Africa on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Empires of the Western Sudan: Ghana Empire on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Trans-Saharan Gold Trade (Seventh–Fourteenth Centuries) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Igbo-Ukwu on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ife (from ca. Sixth Century)

Ife Terracottas (1000–1400 A.D.)

Origins and Empire: The Benin, Owo, and Ijebu Kingdoms

The Monumental Stelae of Aksum (Third–Fourth Centuries) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ethiopia's Enduring Cultural Heritage on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mapungubwe (ca. 1050–1270) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Great Zimbabwe (Eleventh–Fifteenth Centuries) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Historical overview: from the 1600s to the present

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure: Seated Portuguese Male, 18th century, Nigeria, Court of Benin, Edo peoples, brass, 12.7 x 5.1 x 6 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Western trade with Africa was not limited to material goods such as copper, cloth, and beads. By the sixteenth century, the transatlantic slave trade had already begun, forcibly bringing Africans to the newly discovered Americas. Slavery had existed in Africa (as it did elsewhere in the world) for centuries prior to the sixteenth, and many socially stratified African societies kept slaves for domestic work. The sheer number of slaves traded across the Atlantic, however, was unprecedented, as over 11 million Africans were brought to the Americas and the Caribbean over a period of four centuries. Driven by commercial interests, the slave trade peaked in the eighteenth century with the expansion of American plantation production, and continued until the mid-nineteenth century. While Europeans primarily profited from the slave trade, certain West African kingdoms, like Dahomey, also

grew wealthy and powerful by selling captives of war. By the late eighteenth century, the slave trade began to wane as the abolitionist movement grew. Those who survived the forced migration and the notorious Middle Passage brought their beliefs and cultural practices to the New World.

Within this far-flung diaspora, certain cultures—such as the Yoruba and Igbo of today's Nigeria, and the Kongo from present-day Democratic Republic of Congo—were especially well represented. African slaves brought few, if any, personal items with them, although recent archaeological investigations have yielded early African artifacts, like the beads and shells found at the African burial grounds in New York's lower Manhattan, which date to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The influence of Africans in the Americas is perhaps best seen in diverse forms of cultural expression that have enriched our society tremendously. Architectural elements such as open-front porches and sloped hip-roofs reflect African influence in the Americas. The religious practices of Haitian Vodou have roots in the spiritual beliefs of Dahomean, Yoruba, and Kongo peoples. Some elements of cuisine in the American South, such as gumbo and jambalaya, derive from African food traditions. Certain musical forms, such as jazz and the blues, reflect the convergence of African musical practices and European-based traditions.



Figure **13.4.1.15**: Figurative Harp (Domu), 19th-20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mangbetu, wood, hide, twine, brass ring, 67.3 x 21.6 x 30.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Although the slave trade was banned entirely by the late nineteenth century, European involvement in Africa did not end. Instead, the desire for greater control over Africa's resources resulted in the colonization of the majority of the continent by seven European countries. The Berlin Conference of 1884–85, attended by representatives of fourteen different European powers, resulted in the regulation of European colonization and trade in Africa. Over the next twenty years, the continent was occupied by France, Belgium, Germany, Britain, Spain, Italy, and Portugal. By 1914, the entire continent, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, was colonized by European nations.

The colonial period in Africa brought radical changes, disrupting local political institutions, patterns of trade, and religious and social beliefs. The colonial era also impacted cultural practices in Africa, as artists responded to new forms of patronage and the introduction of new technologies as well as to their changing social and political situations. In some cases, European patronage of local artists resulted in stylistic change (for example the harp, left) or new forms of expression. At the same time, many artistic traditions were characterized as "primitive" by Westerners and discouraged or even banned.

Although African artifacts were brought to Europe as early as the sixteenth century, it was during the colonial period that such works entered Western collections in significant quantities, forming the basis of many museum collections today. African artifacts were collected as personal souvenirs or ethnographic specimens by military officers, colonial administrators, missionaries, scientists, merchants, and other visitors to the continent. In many of these instances of collecting, objects were gathered through voluntary trade.

In one extreme instance, an act of war initiated by Britain against one of its colonies, thousands of royal art objects were removed from the kingdom of Benin following its defeat by a British military expedition in 1897 (image below). European nations with colonies in Africa established ethnographic museums with extensive collections, such as the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium, the Völkerkunde museums in Germany, the British Museum in London, and the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (now housed at the Musée du Quai Branly). In the United States, which had no colonial ties to Africa, the nascent study of ethnography motivated the formation of collections at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Field Museum in Chicago. In 1923, the Brooklyn Museum became the first American museum to present African works as art.



Figure **13.4.1.16**: *Plaque: Equestrian Oba and Attendants*, 1550-1680, Nigeria, Court of Benin, Edo peoples, brass, 49.5 x 41.9 x 11.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Independence movements in Africa began with the liberation of Ghana in 1957 and ended with the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa during the 1990s. The postcolonial period has been challenging, as many countries struggle to regain stability in the aftermath of colonialism. Yet while the media often focuses on political instability, civil unrest, and economic and health crises, these represent only part of the story of Africa today. From its many urban centers to more tradition-based rural villages, Africa is increasingly entering the global marketplace. The proliferation of systems of communication, such as computers and cell phones, throughout Africa has facilitated increased interaction with other parts of the world. As Africa moves into the twenty-first century, hope lies in its natural and human resources and the commitment of many Africans to work toward a stable and prosperous future.



Figure 13.4.1.17: Martin Rakotoarimanana, *Mantle (Lamba Mpanjakas)*, 1998, Madagascar, Antananarivo or Arivonimamo, Imerina village, silk, 274 x 178.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In spite of Africa's political, economic, and environmental challenges, the postcolonial period has been a time of tremendous vigor in the realm of artistic production. Many tradition-based artistic practices continue to thrive or have been revitalized. In Guinea, the revival of D'mba performances in the 1990s, after decades of censorship by the Marxist government, is one example of cultural reinvention. Similarly, in recent years, Merina weavers in the highlands of Madagascar have begun to create brilliantly hued silk cloth known as *akotofahana*, a textile tradition abandoned a century ago.

Photography, introduced on the continent in the late nineteenth century, has become a popular medium, particularly in urban areas. Artists like **Seydou Keïta**, who operated a portrait studio in Bamako, Mali, in the colonial period, set the stage for later generations of photographers who captured the faces of newly independent African countries. It is also important to mention developments in modern and contemporary African art. During the colonial period, art schools were established that provided training, often based on Western models, to local artists. Many schools were initiated by Europeans, such as the Congolese Académie des Arts, established by Pierre Romain-Desfossé in 1944 in Elisabethville, whose program was based on those of art schools in Europe. Less frequently, the teaching of modern art was initiated by indigenous Africans, such as Chief Aina Onabolu, who is credited with introducing modern art in Nigeria beginning in the 1920s. Since the mid-twentieth century, increasing numbers of African artists have engaged local traditions in new ways or embraced a national identity through their visual expression.

Artists in today's Africa are the products of diverse forms of artistic training, work in a variety of mediums, and engage local as well as global audiences with their work. In recent decades, contemporary artists from Africa, both self-taught and academically trained, have begun to receive international recognition. Many artists from Africa study, work, and/or live in Europe and the United States. Kenyan-born Magdalene Odundo, for example, was trained as an artist in schools in Kenya and in England, where she now lives. The **burnished ceramic vessels** she creates, which are purely artistic and not functional, embody her diverse sources, including traditional Nigerian and Kenyan vessels as well as Native American pottery traditions of New Mexico. The work of contemporary African artists like Odundo reveals the complex realities of artistic practice in today's increasingly global society.

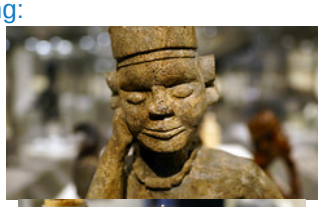
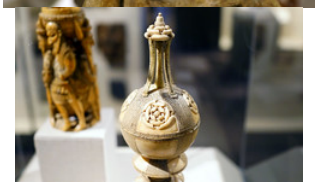
© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

The Transatlantic Slave Trade on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Frederick Lamp, Frederick. "Art of the Baga: A Drama of Cultural Reinvention." *African Arts* 29.4 (1996), pp. 20-33.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





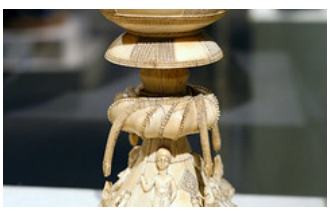









Figure **13.4.1.18**: More Smarthistory images…

Aesthetics

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figures, Côte d'Ivoire, central Côte d'Ivoire, Baule peoples, wood, pigment, beads and iron, 55.4 x 10.2 x 10.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The Role of Visual Expression in Africa

Because many tradition-based African artifacts serve a specific function, Westerners sometimes have not regarded them as art. We need to recognize, however, that the concept of "art for art's sake" is a relatively recent invention of the Western world. Prior to the Renaissance, most art traditions around the world were considered functional as well as aesthetic. The objects African artists create, while useful, also embody aesthetic preferences and may be admired for their form and composition.

Aesthetics



Figures, Côte d'Ivoire, central Côte d'Ivoire, Baule peoples, wood, pigment, beads and iron, 55.4 x 10.2 x 10.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Artists and patrons in many African societies express well-defined aesthetic preferences and value skillful work. Studies of aesthetics in some African societies have led to the identification of certain artistic criteria for evaluating visual arts. Among the Baule in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, a sculpture of the human figure should emphasize a strong muscular body, refined facial features, and elaborate hairstyle and scarification patterns, all of which reflect cultural ideals of civilized beauty (above and detail left). Scholars of aesthetics in Yoruba (Nigeria) visual expression have identified criteria based on both formal elements, such as a smooth surface, symmetrical composition, and a moderate resemblance to the subject, as well as abstract cultural concepts, such as *ase* (inner power or life force) and *iwa* (character or essential nature). Many African societies associate such smooth, finished surfaces with cultivated refinement.

African aesthetics generally have an ethical or religious basis. An artwork considered "beautiful" is often also believed to be "good," in the sense that it exemplifies and upholds moral values. The fact that, in many societies, the words for beautiful and good

are the same suggests a strong correspondence between these two ideas. The ability of an artifact to work effectively, whether that means connecting with the spiritual realm or imparting a lesson to initiates, may also be a standard for determining the “beauty” of an artifact.



Figure 13.4.1.21: Kòmò Helmet Mask (Kòmòkun), 19th–mid-20th century, Guinea or Mali or Burkina Faso or Côte d’Ivoire, West Africa, Komo or Koma Power Association, Wood, bird skull, porcupine quills, horns, cotton, sacrificial materials, 35.2 x 22.1 x 85.6 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

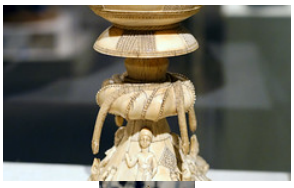
Although in the Western world, aesthetics is often equated with beauty, artists in some African cultures create works that are not intended to be beautiful. Such works are deliberately horrific in order to convey their fearsome powers and thereby elicit a strong reaction in the viewer (above).

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

Ways of recording African History on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







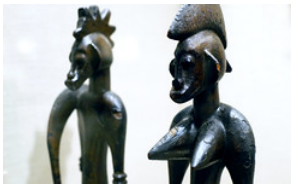






















Figure 13.4.1.22: More Smarthistory images…

The human figure, animals and symbols

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.1.23**: *Plaque: Equestrian Oba and Attendants*, 1550-1680, Nigeria, Court of Benin, Edo peoples, brass, 49.5 x 41.9 x 11.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The human figure

The human figure is the main subject that traditionally has engaged African artists. African figurative sculpture usually departs from natural proportions. There is often a conceptual basis behind artistic conventions such as the simplification and exaggeration of the human features. For example, in many African artworks, the head appears proportionately larger than the body. This formal emphasis has symbolic meaning, as the head is believed to have a special role in guiding one's destiny and success in many African societies. African artists also employ scale for symbolic effect in multifigure compositions, a practice known as hierarchical representation. In these cases, the most important individual is depicted as the largest figure, while those of lesser importance decrease in size exponentially (above).



Figure **13.4.1.24**: Buffalo (*Bocio*), 19th century, Republic of Benin, Fon people, silver, iron, and wood, 30.5 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Animals with special attributes—such as antelopes, snakes, leopards, and crocodiles—are represented in art for symbolic purposes. For example, the nineteenth-century Fon king Guezo is represented by a buffalo, an animal signifying strength and determination, selected as his emblem through *fa* divination (above). Representations of animals consuming other animals (below) may serve as a metaphor for competing spiritual or social forces. Their depiction is meant to encourage other, less destructive means to resolve a difficult social encounter.



Figure **13.4.1.25**: Helmet Mask (*Gelede*), 20th century, Nigeria or Republic of Benin, Yoruba people, Ketu group, wood, 57.2 x 38.7 x 45.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Features of different types of animals may also be combined into new forms that synthesize complex ideas. Among the Bamana, for example, ci wara headdresses are based on the features of various antelope species and may also incorporate those of aardvarks, anteaters, and pangolins, all highly symbolic animals. The resulting synthesis of animal forms evokes the mythic Ci Wara, the divine force conceptualized as half man and half antelope who introduced agricultural methods to the Bamana.

Animal symbols may also take more abstract form. In the Cameroon Grassfields, circular medallions represent spiders, a symbol of supernatural wisdom, and diamond- shaped motifs refer to frogs, which stand for fertility and increase (image 26). Some forms of symbolism in African art use plants as points of reference. On cast plaques from Benin, a background pattern of river leaves is a symbol for Olokun, god of the sea (below).

Other Forms of Symbolism



Figure **13.4.1.26**: Headdress: Janus, 19th–20th century, Nigeria, Lower Cross River region, Ejagham or Bale people, Wood, hide, pigment, cane, horn, and nails, 53.3 x 43 x 25 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Symbols may be nonrepresentational. Geometric patterns on Bwa plank masks have multiple levels of meaning that refer to ideals of social and moral behavior taught to initiates (**example here**). Materials also hold symbolic value. Gold foil used in Asante regalia alludes to the sun and to life's vital force (**example here**). Indigenous forms of writing, such as nsibidi used among various cultures in Nigeria's Cross River region, embody multiple levels of symbolic meaning that can be accessed only by the initiated. Gestures, too, are a form of symbolism (see the example above where painted designs on the forehead and cheeks of the faces represent nsibidi, an indigenous writing). In Kongo art, a seated pose illustrates a dictum about balance, composure, and reflection (example, below), while a protruding tongue refers indirectly to the activation of medicines.



Figure (Tumba), 19th–20th century, Kongo peoples, Bamboma village, Angola or Democratic Republic of the Congo, Steatite, 41.3 x 21.9 x 13 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

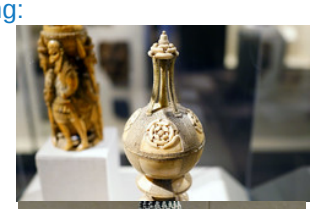
© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

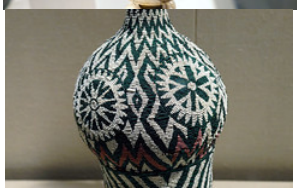
Additional resources:

Essays on African Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688



Figure 13.4.1.28: More Smarthistory images…

Form and meaning

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure 13.4.1.29: Helmet Mask, 19th-20th century, Sierra Leone, Moyamba region, Mende or Sherbro people, wood, metal, 47.9 x 22.2 x 23.5cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Abstraction and Idealization

Realism or physical resemblance is generally not the goal of the African artist. Many forms of African art are characterized by their visual abstraction, or departure from representational accuracy. Artists interpret human or animal forms creatively through innovative form and composition. The degree of abstraction can range from idealized naturalism, as in the cast brass heads of Benin kings (below, left), to more simplified, geometrically conceived forms, as in the Baga headdress (below).



Figure **13.4.1.30**: Head of an Oba, Nigeria, Court of Benin, 16th century, brass, 23.5 x 21.9 c 22.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

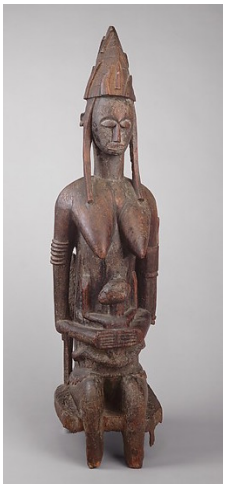


Figure **13.4.1.31**: Mother and Child, 15th–20th century, Mali, Bamana peoples, wood, 123.5 x 36.6 x 36.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The decision to create abstract representations is a conscious one, evidenced by the technical ability of African artists to create naturalistic art, as seen, for example, in the art of Ife, in present-day Nigeria. Idealization is frequently seen in representations of human beings. Individuals are almost always depicted in the prime of life, never in old age or poor health. Culturally accepted standards of moral character and physical beauty are expressed through formal emphasis.

Masks used by the women's Sande society, for example, present Mende cultural ideals of female beauty (top of page). Instead of a physical likeness, the artist highlights admired features, such as narrow eyes, a small mouth, carefully braided hair, and a ringed neck. Idealized images often relate to expected social roles and emphasize distinctions between male and female.

In Bamana statuary, full breasts and a swelling belly highlight a woman's role as nurturer (left). At the same time, **complementary male and female pairs** of figures express the concept of an ideal social unit through matched gestures, stances, and expressions.



Figure 13.4.1.32: Headdress: Female Bust (D'mba), 19th–20th century, Baga people, wood, 118.1 x 35.3 x 67.5cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Surface

Once an artifact leaves its creator's hands, its visual appearance may be altered through use in ritual or performance contexts. Repeated handling of an artifact during ceremonies can create a smoothly worn surface, while ritual applications of palm oil may result in a lustrous sheen (example here). During ceremonies, decorative elements, such as beads, metal jewelry, and fabric, can be added to a work. Applications of sacrificial substances and organic materials create an encrusted surface that literally and figuratively empowers an object (example here). Masks and figurative sculptures may also be repainted from one season to the next. Bwa masks, for example, are soaked after the harvest and repainted red, white, and black, generally with natural vegetal or mineral pigments but now also with European enamel paints (example here).



Figure **13.4.1.33**: Headdress: Janus, 19th–20th century, Nigeria, Lower Cross River region, Ejagham or Bale people, Wood, hide, pigment, cane, horn, and nails, 53.3 x 43 x 25 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)



Figure **13.4.1.34**: Headdress: Janus, 19th–20th century, Nigeria, Lower Cross River region, Ejagham or Bale people, Wood, hide, pigment, cane, horn, and nails, 53.3 x 43 x 25 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

While creations by African artists have been admired by Western viewers for their formal power and beauty, it is important to understand these artifacts on their own terms. Many African artworks were (and continue to be) created to serve a social, religious, or political function. In its original setting, an artifact may have different uses and embody a variety of meanings. These uses may change over time. A mask originally created for a particular performance may be used in a different context at a later time. **Nwantantay masks**, used by the southern Bwa in Burkina Faso, may be performed during burial ceremonies and also for annual renewal rites. Artworks can also have different meanings for different individuals or groups. A sculpture owned by an elite association holds deeper levels of meaning for its members than for the general public, who may understand only its basic meaning. The painted designs on an Ejagham headdress, for example, represent an indigenous form of writing, the meanings of which are restricted to individuals of the highest status and rank (left and above). Understanding the cultural contexts and symbolic meanings of African art therefore enhances our appreciation of its form.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

Headdress: Female Bust (D'mba) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Head of an Oba at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Helmet Mask at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Janus Headdress at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



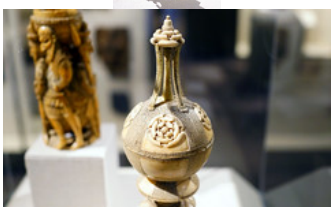





















Figure **13.4.1.35**: More Smarthistory images…

Religion and the Spiritual Realm

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure 13.4.1.36: Seated (Dogon) Couple, 18th-early 19th century (Dogon peoples), Mali, wood and metal, 73 x 23.7 (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Traditional religions in Africa

Most traditional religions in Africa have developed at the local level and are unique to a particular society. Common elements include a belief in a creator god, who is rarely if ever represented in art and directly approached by worshipers. Instead, the supreme deity is petitioned through intermediaries, or lesser spirits. These spirits may be related to the natural world and have control over powerful natural phenomena. For instance, **Nwantantay masks** used by the Bwa of Burkina Faso represent various flying spirits that inhabit the natural world and can offer protection. These flying spirits are believed to take physical form as insects or water fowl. In Guinea, Baga beliefs describe local water spirits, called *Niniganné*, associated with both wealth and danger that take symbolic form as snakes. Nature spirits, appealed to by Baule diviners in Côte d'Ivoire for spiritual insights, are conceived of as grotesque beings associated with untamed wilderness (**example here**).



Figure 13.4.1.37: Ci wara kun (Male and Female Antelope Headdresses), 19th – 20th century, Bamana peoples, wood, 90.7 x 40 x 8.5 cm, Segou region, Mali (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figures (Ndeo), 19th–mid-20th century, Senufo peoples, Korhogo region, Bandama River region, Côte d'Ivoire, wood, pigment, 60.2 x 14 x 11.8cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, **female figure** and **male figure**)

Other spirits represent founding ancestors, whose activities are described in stories about the creation of the world and the beginnings of human life and agriculture. The **Dogon of Mali** recount their genesis story with reference to Nommo, a primordial being who guided an ark with the eight original ancestors from heaven to populate the earth (top of page). Also in Mali, Bamana agricultural ceremonies invoke Ci Wara, the half man and half antelope credited with introducing agriculture to humanity (above). The original ancestors in Senufo (Côte d'Ivoire) belief are represented by a monumental pair of male and female figures exemplifying an ideal social unit (example left).

The category of spirits believed to be most accessible to humans is that of recently deceased ancestors, who can intercede on behalf of the living community. Among the Akan in Ghana, ancestors are commemorated by terracotta sculptures that, when placed in a

sacred grove near the cemetery, serve as a focal point for funeral rites and a point of contact with the deceased (**example here**). Fang societies preserved the bones of important deceased individuals in bark containers in the belief that their relics held great spiritual power (**example here**). In many large states, a living king and leader may be regarded as divine as well. In the kingdom of Benin, in today's Nigeria, the Oba historically was considered semi-divine and therefore constituted the political and spiritual focus of the kingdom (**example here**).

Christianity in Africa

In addition to indigenous religions at a local level, other religions are also practiced throughout Africa. Christianity has existed in Egypt and northern Africa since the second century. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was established in the fourth century by King Ezana, who adopted Christianity as the state religion (**example here**). In the late fifteenth century, Christianity was introduced into sub- Saharan Africa by Portuguese explorers and traders. Although most African cultures did not adopt the religion, the Kongo king Afonso Mvemba a Nzinga established Christianity as the state religion in the early sixteenth century (**example here**). During the colonial period, Christianity gained converts throughout the continent.



Figure **13.4.1.39**: Crucifix, 16th-17th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Angola; Republic of the Congo, solid cast brass, 27.3 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Islam came to Egypt after 640, then spread below the Sahara in the eighth and ninth centuries through traders and scholars. On the east coast, Arab and Persian colonizers introduced Islam beginning in the eighth century. Although the acceptance of Islam or Christianity sometimes precluded the practice of traditional religions, in many cases they coexisted or were incorporated into preexisting beliefs. The adoption of Islam and Christianity also led to the abandonment of many earlier forms of artistic expression.



Figure 13.4.1.40: Head of an Oba, Nigeria, Court of Benin, 16th century, brass, 23.5 x 21.9 c 22.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Religious practice in Africa centers on a desire to engage the spiritual world in the interests of social stability and well-being. Annual rites of renewal among the Bwa, for example, are designed to seek the continued goodwill of nature spirits (example here). Political leaders also seek religious guidance to ensure the success of their reign. Fon kings, for example, referenced a divination process known as fa, which predicted the nature and character of their reign (example here). Personal misfortune, such as illness, death, or barrenness, or community crises, including war or drought, are also cause to petition the spirits for guidance and assistance. Art objects are employed as vehicles for spiritual communication in diverse ways. Some are created for use in an altar or shrine and may receive sacrificial offerings. The Dogon of Mali, for example, show gratitude to the ancestors by offering pieces of meat in a monumental container presented to the family altar (below). In the kingdom of Benin (Nigeria), cast brass heads commemorating deceased kings are placed on royal ancestral altars, where they serve as a point of contact with the king's royal ancestors (above).



Figure 13.4.1.41: Ritual Vessel (Aduno Koro): Horse, 19th–20th century, Mali, Dogon peoples, wood, 18.4 x 56.9 x 10.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Other objects are used by diviners to attract and tap into spiritual forces. The dazzling beauty of an expertly carved Baule figure sculpture lures a nature spirit into inhabiting the sculpture, thereby aiding a diviner's work (example here). Such objects themselves are often not inherently powerful but must be activated through ritual offerings or by a knowledgeable religious specialist.

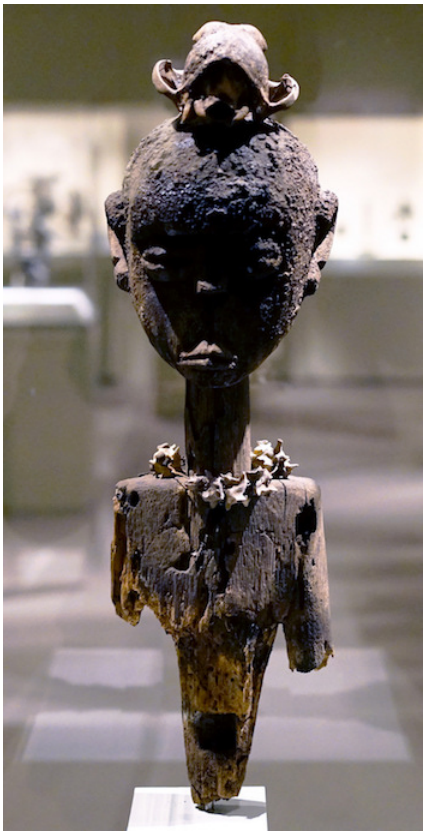


Figure **13.4.1.42**: Bocio, 19th–early 20th century, Fon peoples, Republic of Benin, wood, bone, metal wire, sacrificial materials (including dog skull), 49.5 x 14.6 x 14.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Fon diviners empower figurative sculptures called *bocio* with organic substances that ensure their client's health and well-being (left). Similarly, Kongo ritual objects known as *nkisi* derive their potency from various substances, both organic and man-made, added to a carved figure by a ritual specialist (**example here**). The unseen forces of nature or the spiritual world are called upon to serve a variety of purposes, including communicating with the spirits, honoring ancestors, healing sickness, or reinforcing societal standards, through masked performances. Masquerades involve the active participation of dancers, musicians, and even the audience, in addition to the masked dancer, who serves as the vehicle through which these invisible powers become manifest. By donning a mask and its associated costume, the dancer transcends his own identity and is transformed into a powerful spiritual being. Among the Dogon, masks are worn at dama, a collective funerary rite for men whose goal is to ensure safe passage of the deceased's spirit to the world of the ancestors (**example here**). Masked performances by members of the Bamana Komo association convey knowledge of their history, beliefs, and rituals to initiated members (**example here**)**.** The massive sculpted headdress known as D'mba among the Baga is seen as a symbol of cultural reinvention and appears on various occasions marking personal and communal growth (**example here**). Among the Mende and their neighbors, masquerades of the Sande society encourage and celebrate young female initiates and offer a model of feminine beauty and spiritual power (**example here**).

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

African Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Seated (Dogon) Couple at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Headdress: Male Antelope (Ci Wara) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

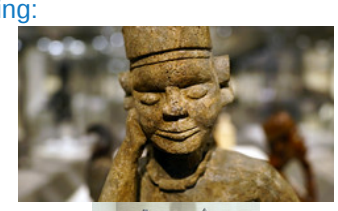
Male and Female Poro Altar Figures (*Ndeo*) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ritual Vessel (Aduno Koro): Horse at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Crucifix from the Democratic Republic of Congo at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Art and Oracle: African Art and Rituals of Divination (ebook from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688











Figure **13.4.1.43**: More Smarthistory images…

Art and politics

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE

Political institutions in Africa that predate European colonization have ranged from large, centralized kingdoms led by a single ruler to smaller, village-based societies. Centralized states may vary in size and complexity but are generally ruled by a chief or king, supported by a hierarchical bureaucracy. In many different societies, leaders are considered to be semi-divine. In less centralized societies, power is not vested in a single individual. Instead, authority may be exercised by family heads, a council of elders, or local social or political institutions. African political institutions were dramatically impacted by colonial rule. The role of traditional rulers continues to change in post-independence Africa, where modern states are governed by national leaders.



Figure **13.4.1.44**: Head of an Oba, Nigeria, Court of Benin, 16th century, brass, 23.5 x 21.9 c 22.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In centralized states, leaders have historically played an important role as patrons of the arts. Often, leaders held monopolies over the materials used and controlled artistic production as well (see image above). They commissioned a wide range of prestige objects, distinguished by the lavish use of luxury materials (see below), as well as complex architectural programs (**example here**). Works made of metal, ivory, or beads were not only visually spectacular, but also reminded the public of the king's wealth and power. Such art forms underscored the king's fundamental difference from—and superiority to—his subjects. Royal arts are often used in ceremonial contexts that mark and legitimize political authority. Handheld objects, such as flywhisks, staffs (like the one below), and pipes, are used as personal regalia to indicate rank and position within the court.



Figure 13.4.1.45: Detail, Linguist Staff (*Okyeame*), 19th-early 20th century, Ghana, Akan peoples, Asante, gold foil, wood, nails, 156.5 x 14.6 x 5.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Special seats of office and clothes and regalia made of expensive materials (example here) distinguish the leader's exalted position and set him apart, both literally and figuratively, from his subjects. Larger works legitimize political power to a broad public. Portraits of past leaders document dynastic lines of leadership and serve as a visual reminder of the present king's legacy like the portrait of an Oba above). Such portraits generally present an idealized depiction of a youthful and vigorous king and emphasize the various trappings of royalty.



Figure 13.4.1.46: Kòmò Helmet Mask (*Kòmòkun*), 19th–mid-20th century, Guinea or Mali or Burkina Faso or Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, Komo or Koma Power Association, Wood, bird skull, porcupine quills, horns, cotton, sacrificial materials, 35.2 x 22.1 x 85.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Among smaller, village-based societies, in which governance is distributed among local associations, artworks do not glorify a particular leader. Instead of lavish displays of royal regalia, masks and figures are used as agents of social control or education. Such works are generally commissioned by a group of individuals, such as a council of elders or members of a religious association. They give visual form to spiritual forces whose power is enlisted to maintain order and well-being in a community. Sometimes, artworks are deliberately fearsome, employing elements of the natural world considered inherently powerful, such as sacrificial blood or medicinal plants (example above). In other contexts, the sculpture's imagery presents cultural ideals held collectively by the society (example here).

Additional resources:

African art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

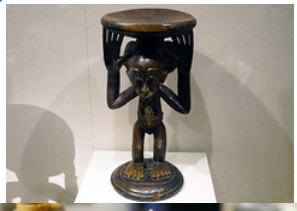
Barbara W. Blackmun, Art and Rule in the Benin Kingdom, on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Michelle Gilbert, Akan Leadership and Ceremony, on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Kathy Curnow, Benin Kingdom Leadership Regalia on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Joseph Aurélien Cornet, Kuba Art and Rule on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



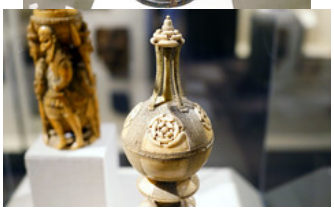


























Figure **13.4.1.47**: More Smarthistory images…

Rites of passage

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figures (*Ndeo*), 19th–mid-20th century, Senufo peoples, Korhogo region, Bandama River region, Côte d'Ivoire, wood, pigment, 60.2 x 14 x 11.8cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In many African societies, art plays an important role in various rites of passage throughout the cycle of life. These rituals mark an individual's transition from one stage of life to another. The birth of a child, a youth's coming of age, and the funeral of a respected elder are all events in which an individual undergoes a change of status. During these transitional periods, individuals are considered to be especially vulnerable to spiritual forces. Art objects are therefore created and employed to assist in the rite of passage and to reinforce community values.

The birth of a child is an important event, not only for a family but for society as well. Children ensure the continuity of a community, and therefore a woman's ability to bear children inspires awe. Ideals of motherhood and nurturance are often expressed visually through figurative sculpture. Among the Senufo, for example, female figures pay homage to the important roles women play as founders of lineages and guardians of male initiates (example above). The importance of motherhood is symbolized by a gently swelling belly and lines of scarification radiating from the navel, considered the source of life. In other societies, such as the Bamana, figural sculptures are employed in ceremonies designed to assist women having difficulty conceiving (example below). They serve simultaneously as a point of contact for spiritual intercession and as a visual reminder of physical and moral ideals.

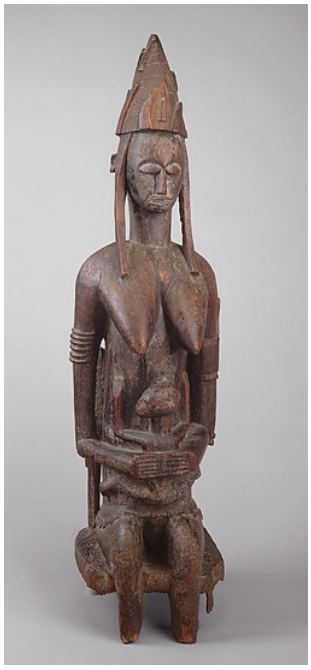


Figure 13.4.1.49: Mother and Child, 15th–20th century, Mali, Bougouni or Dioila region, Bamana peoples, wood, 123.5 x 36.6 x 36.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Initiation, or the coming of age of a boy or girl, is a transition frequently marked by ceremony and celebration. The education of youths in preparation for the responsibilities of adulthood is often a long and arduous process. Initiation rites usually begin at the onset of puberty.

Boys, and to a lesser extent girls, are separated from their families and taken to a secluded area on the outskirts of the community where they undergo a sustained period of instruction and, more typically in the past than now, circumcision. At the conclusion of this mentally and physically rigorous period, they are reintroduced to society as fully initiated adults and given the responsibilities and privileges that accompany their new status.During initiation, artworks protect and impart moral lessons to the youths. The spiritual forces associated with this period of transformation are often given visual expression in the form of masked performances.

During the initiation of boys, male dancers wearing wooden masks may make several appearances. Their performances can serve diverse purposes—to educate boys about their future social role, to bolster morale, to impress upon them respect for authority, or simply to entertain and relieve stress. The initiation of girls rarely includes the use of wooden masks, focusing more on transforming the body through the application of pigment.



Figure 13.4.1.50: Headdress, 19th–20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yaka peoples, wood, cane, raffia, pigment, 45.1 x 61 x 54.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The women's Sande society, found among the Mende and their neighbors, is one of the few organizations in which women wear wooden masks as part of initiation ceremonies (example here). Many initiation organizations continue in today's Africa, often adapting to contemporary lifestyles. For example, in the past, the Sande society's initiation process could take months to complete;

now, Sande sessions have adapted to the calendars of secondary schools and initiation may be completed during vacation and holiday periods.

In many African societies, death is not considered an end but rather another transition. The passing of a respected elder is a time of grief and lamentation but also celebration. In this final rite of passage, the deceased joins the realm of the honored ancestors. While the dead are buried soon after death, a formal funeral often takes place at a later time. Funeral ceremonies with masked performances serve to celebrate the life of an individual and to assist the soul of the deceased in his or her passage from the human realm to that of the spirits (example here). Such ceremonies generally mark the end of a period of mourning and may be collective, honoring the lives of the deceased over a number of years.



Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble: Seated Female, 19th–early 20th century, Fang peoples, Okak group, Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, wood, metal, 64 x 20 x 16.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Figurative sculpture is also employed to commemorate important ancestors. Representations of the deceased, individualized through details of hairstyle, dress, and scarification, serve not only as memorials but also as a focal point for rituals communicating with ancestors (**example here**). In some central African societies, certain bones of the deceased are believed to contain great power and are preserved in a reliquary. In such cases, figurative sculpture attached to the reliquary does not represent the ancestor but honors and amplifies the power of the sacred relics (example above).

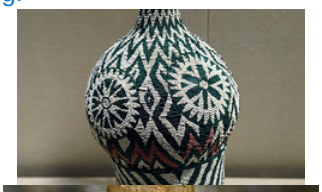
Additional resources:

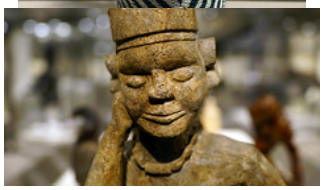
Senufo Arts and Poro Initiation in Northern Côte d'Ivoire on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Manuel Jordan, Art and Initiation in Western Zambia on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Ruth Phillips, Henrietta Cosentino and Rebecca Bussell, Women's Art and Initiation in Mendeland in Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688



Figure 13.4.1.52: More Smarthistory images…

Art and the individual

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure 13.4.1.53: Zlan of Belewale, Ceremonial Ladle (Wakemia or Wunkirmian), before 1960, Dan peoples, wood, fiber, metal, pigment, 13.3 × 58.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

While many kinds of African art are employed in communal contexts, others serve the needs of individuals. Domestic furnishings and objects of personal use, while practical in purpose, also have an aesthetic dimension. The artistic enhancement of objects of utilitarian function reflect and reinforce an individual's standing and status in society. Details of form and decoration personalize an object, marking it as the property of a specific individual and, occasionally, providing information about ethnic affiliation, social status, or rank. At the same time, the artistic inventiveness and careful execution of such works clearly indicate a desire to integrate aesthetics into daily life.



Figures, Côte d'Ivoire, central Côte d'Ivoire, Baule peoples, wood, pigment, beads and iron, 55.4 x 10.2 x 10.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Personal adornment and dress are important forms of aesthetic expression. Scarification and hairstyle, in particular, are regarded by Africans as means by which the body is refined and civilized. Specifics of bodily ornamentation are often depicted in fine detail on masks and figurative sculpture, indicating their importance as symbols of cultural, personal, and/or professional identity (example above). Dress is also a means of self-expression and definition. Certain forms of textiles identify the wearer by age or status and may also convey personal identity as well (example below). Textiles have also historically been conceived as a form of wealth and their extensive use comments upon the wearer's access to riches.



Figure **13.4.1.55**: Married Woman's Apron (Ijogolo), 19th-20th century, South Africa, Ndebele peoples, leather, beads and thread, 75.6 x 67.3cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art)**

Additional resources:

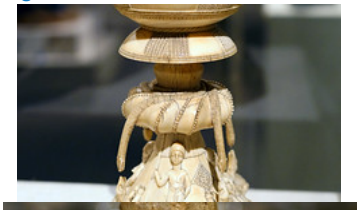
Kingdoms of Madagascar: Malagasy Textile Arts on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Tutsi Basketry on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Rachel Hoffman, Textiles in Mali on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Fred T. Smith, Frafra Leatherwork and Brass Bangles on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688











Figure 13.4.1.56: More Smarthistory images…

African art and the effects of European contact and colonization

by DR. PERI KLEMM



Figure 13.4.1.57: Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba), 16th century, Edo peoples, Court of Benin, Nigeria, ivory, iron, copper, 23.8 x 12.7 x 8.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.4.1.58: Portuguese explorers with beards and hats flanked by mudfish (detail), Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba), 16th century, Edo peoples, Court of Benin, Nigeria, ivory, iron, copper, 23.8 x 12.7 x 8.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Early encounters with Europeans were often recorded in African art. Look closely at the top of the mask above (and detail, left). Do you see faces? These represent Portuguese explorers with beards and hats (flanked by mudfish) who visited the Benin Kingdom along the west coast of Africa in the late 1400s. These explorers began to collect ivory which they referred to as “white gold.”

Saltcellars like the one below, commissioned by Portuguese officers and exquisitely produced by West African carvers, held precious table salt. They would have been taken back to Portugal to be displayed in curiosity cabinets. Today their carvings serve as a record of the introduction of guns, Christianity, and European commodities to West Africa.

By the 1880s European powers were interested in Africa’s resources, particularly mineral wealth and forests. Today, Africa is divided into 53 independent countries but many scholars argue that the boundaries that separate these countries are really artificial. They were drawn by Europeans at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85 without a single African present. They did not divide the continent by cultural or tribal region, but instead created borders based on their own interests. The problems this created—separating families, language groups, trading partners, pastoralists from watering holes, etc.—are still very much at issue today.



Figure 13.4.1.59: Lidded Saltcellar, Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, 15th-16th century, ivory, 29.8 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Movements in African History and Art

African cultures never existed in isolation—there was always movement, trade, and the exchange of ideas. And logically African art is dynamic and has changed in form, function, and meaning over time. Nevertheless, in the Western art market and in academia, there exists the concept of "traditional" African art. Usually this refers to "indigenous art traditions that were viable and active prior to the colonization of Africa by European powers in the late nineteenth century. Implicit in the use of the word traditional is the assumption that the art which it describes is static and unchanging."[1] Many collectors and museum professionals place far greater value on African objects created prior to colonization. For them, pre-colonial objects have an aura of an untainted, timeless past when artists only made artworks for their own communities unaffected by the outside world. These objects are too often seen in opposition to work produced today using Western materials and conventions by artists who are engaged in a global discourse and who make works of art to be sold.



Figure **13.4.1.60**: Lidded Saltcellar (detail), Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, 15th-16th century, ivory, 29.8 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In reality, some African art has always functioned as a commodity and artists have always drawn inspiration and materials from outside sources. While many auction houses and art museums clearly differentiate between "traditional" African art created prior to the colonial period and artwork created during and after colonization, African art historians are beginning to dispel this simplistic division and instead, ask their audiences to recognize the continuity and dynamism of African art. Looking closer, scholars find that specific historical moments had a profound affect on African communities and their art. During the slave trade and colonization, for example, some artists created work to come to terms with these horrific events—experiences that often stripped people of their cultural, religious and political identities.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

One of the most damaging experiences for many ethnic groups in Africa was the **transatlantic slave trade**. While slavery had long existed in Africa, the transatlantic slave trade constituted a mass movement of peoples over four and a half centuries to colonies in North and South America. Ten million people were taken to labor on cotton, rum, and sugar plantations in the new world. Slavery coupled with the colonial experience had a profound effect on Africa and still causes strife. For example, Ghana has over 80 ethnic groups and during slave raids, different groups were pitted against one another—those living near the coast were involved in slave raiding in the interior in exchange for Portuguese and Dutch guns. Territorial disputes, poverty, famine, corruption, and disease increased as a result of the brutality of the slave trade and European colonization.

The Colonial Period

With the collapse of the Atlantic slave trade in the 19th century, European imperialism continued to focus on Africa as a source for raw materials and markets for the goods produced by industrialized nations. Africa was partitioned by the European powers during the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, a meeting where not a single African was present. The result was a continent defined by artificial borders with little concern for existing ethnic, linguistic, or geographic realities.

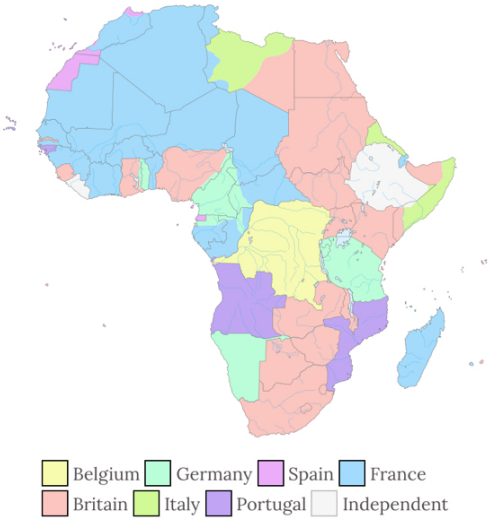


Figure 13.4.1.61: Colonial Africa in 1913

European nations claimed land in order to secure access to the natural resources they needed to support rapidly growing industrial economies. Once European nations secured African territories, they embarked on a system of governance that enforced the provision of natural resources— with dire consequences for people and the environment.

Resistance to colonial rule grew steadily and between 1950 and 1980, 47 nations achieved independence; but even with independence the problems associated with the slave trade and colonialism remained. The introduction of Christianity and the spread of Islam in the 19th and 20th century also transformed many African societies and many traditional art practices associated with indigenous religions declined. In addition, as imported manufactured goods entered local economies, hand-made objects like ceramic vessels and fiber baskets were replaced by factory-made containers. Nevertheless, one way people made sense of these changes was through art and performance. Art plays a central role, particularly in oral societies, as a way to remember and heal. As African artists began catering to a new market of middle-class urban Africans and foreigners, new art-making practices developed. Self-taught and academically trained painters, for example, began depicting their experiences with colonialism and independence; as fine artists, their work is largely secular in content and meant to be displayed in galleries or modern homes (for example, see the work of **Cheri Samba**, **Jane Alexander**, and **Tshibumba Kanda-Matulu**).

Globalization Today

The diverse and complex systems now at play as a result of globalization are having a profound impact on Africa. Some scholars argue that globalization will have even greater consequences than the slave trade and colonization in terms of population movement, environmental impact, and economic, social and political changes. Whatever the result, these stresses will be chronicled by the continent's many brilliant artists.

[1] Judith Perani and Fred T. Smith, *The Visual Arts of Africa: Gender, Power, and Life Cycle Rituals* (Prentice Hall, 1998) p. xvii.

Additional resources:

Afro-Portugese Ivories on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art

The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database

The Reception of African Art in the West

by DR. PERI KLEMM



Figure **13.4.1.62**: View of archaeological and ethnographic collections (Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford) (photo: **Jorge Royan**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

When early European explorers brought back souvenirs from their trips to the African continent they were regarded as curiosities and they didn't find a home in art museums for centuries. Instead, these objects became part of natural history museums—along with fossilized remains, flora and fauna, and purely utilitarian objects. They were considered the man-made material remains of a culture. Clouded by the framework of Social Darwinism in the 19th century and other beliefs that justified racial hierarchies, peoples of African, Pacific, and Native American descent were regarded as less civilized, even less human. Attitudes about their art were also determined by pre-conceived ideas about race and therefore, their creations were not categorized as "Art" in Euro-American sense.



Figure **13.4.1.63**: Plank Mask (Nwantantay), 19th-20th century, Bwa peoples, wood, pigment, fiber, 182.9 x 28.2 x 26 cm, Burkina Faso (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

By the early 1900s however, these same objects that were initially regarded as artifacts of material culture, began to be exhibited in Western art museums and galleries as "art." The objects themselves had not changed, but there was a shift in the attitudes and assumptions about what constituted a work of art.

To historicize this issue more, we can divide the history of the display and reception of African art into four periods. In the eighteenth century, objects like the ones illustrated here would likely be housed in a “curiosity cabinet”—in a private family parlor where trinkets and novelties acquired over generations, often while traveling, were displayed. The artist, culture, and function of these objects was not usually recorded or regarded as significant. By the nineteenth century, many of these curiosity cabinet collections were donated first to natural history museums where they were categorized and classified in the name of science along with flora, fauna, and skeletal remains. By the twentieth century, some of these same works were exhibited in fine art galleries and museums. Over time, African art has become widely collected and ever more popular.



Figure, terracotta, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta region, Djenné peoples, 25/4 x 29.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Some of the assumptions about what constitutes art is still very much a part of the Western aesthetic system. For example, “high art” is still thought of as painting and sculpture. Because many African artworks served a specific function, Westerners have sometimes not regarded these as art. It is worth remembering, however, that the concept of “art” divorced from ritual and political function, is a relatively recent development in the West. Prior to the 18th century, most artistic traditions around the world were functional as well as aesthetic, and arguments can be made that all art serves social and economic functions. The objects that African artists create—while useful—embody aesthetic preferences and may be admired for their form, composition and invention.

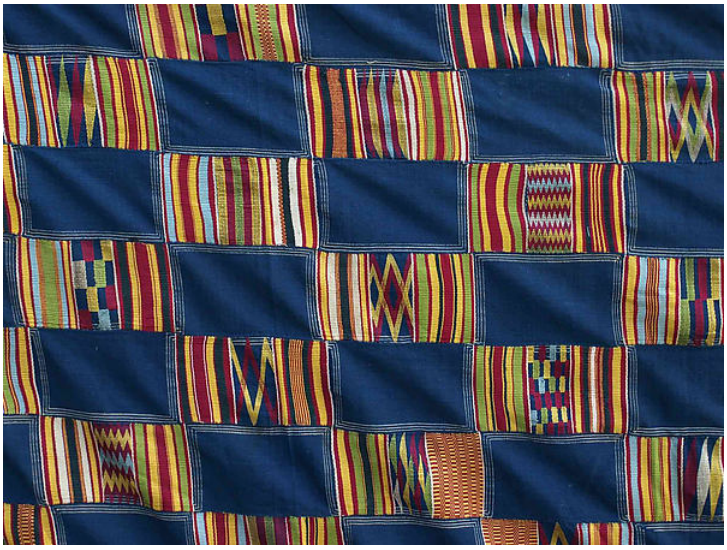


Figure 13.4.1.65: Detail, Man's Prestige Cloth, early 20th century, Akan peoples, Asante group, silk and cotton, 289.6 x 172.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Eighteenth-century theories

In Eighteenth-century Europe, philosophers and critics constructed a definition of "art" in which the object was unique, complex, irreplaceable, inspired by the natural world, and with the exception of architecture, non-functional. In contrast, non-Western art was viewed as not unique, simply produced, replaceable, abstract, and utilitarian. Therefore, Non-Western art was *not* considered to be art.

Nineteenth-century theories

Nineteenth century notions of art were redefined by theories of cultural evolution. Social Darwinism was used to support the claim that all cultures progress along an evolutionary ladder. Western culture was seen as the most advanced and inherently superior. Societies in Africa were viewed as more primitive, a state of being from which modern Western society evolved. Franz Boas in 1927 in his book *Primitive Art* shows that cultural evolutionism is seriously flawed. He argued that contemporary societies cannot be arranged on a ladder of "least evolved" or "most advanced." Nor can their art.

Twentieth-century-cultural relativism and Pablo Picasso



Figure 13.4.1.66: Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, oil on canvas, 243.9 x 233.7 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

Anthropologists and art historians came to realize that non-Western cultures should not be judged according to the values of the West, leading to a reevaluation of the nature of "art." However, it was modern Western artists who brought non-Western objects into the popular imagination as works of art worthy of aesthetic consideration. Looking for a new way to represent modernity, artists such as Andre Derain, Amedeo Modigliani, and Pablo Picasso turned to non-Western art for stylistic inspiration. We see this

in Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (above). The women's faces on the right of the canvas have been painted as masks inspired by African artworks Picasso observed on his trip to the Trocadero Museum in Paris in 1907:

> ***All alone in that awful museum with masks, dolls made by the redskins, dusty manikins. Les Demoiselles d'Avignon must have come to me that very day, but not at all because of the forms; because it was my first exorcism painting — yes absolutely!… The masks weren't just like any other pieces of sculpture. Not at all. They were magic things. But why weren't the Egyptian pieces or the Chaldean? We hadn't realized it. 'Those were primitive, not magic things. The Negro pieces were mediators. They were against everything — against unknown, threatening spirits. I always looked at fetishes. I understood; I too am against everything. I understood what the Negroes used their sculpture for. Why sculpt like that and not some other way? After all, they weren't Cubists! Since Cubism didn't exist.***

In the quote above, Picasso recognized that the African and Amerindian artists whose work he saw at the museum in Paris were deliberately using abstraction. He doesn't focus on why they chose this style but he adopts it, none-the-less, to pursue his own expressive interests. For contemporary avant-garde artists, African art offered abstraction as a strategy for the representation of modernity. The quote also tells us that Picasso, like many Western collectors, didn't know much about the function, culture, or history of African objects and he seems to have focused on their purely formal properties. **Picasso**, **Piet Mondrian**, **Constantin Brancusi**, **Georges Braque** and other modernists helped Western viewers to see these objects as "art" but the cultural meanings of these works remained opaque. However, over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, scholars began to question social Darwinism and seek out indigenous interpretations of the form and function of objects.

Today, many contemporary African artists are influenced by tradition-based African art (see for example, **El Anatsui**). African arts played a central role in their communities, whether to communicate royalty, sacrality, inner virtues, aesthetic interests, genealogy, or other concerns. As the art historian Robert Farris Thompson has argued for the Yoruba, African art is used to make things happen, it is efficacious and necessary for events like rituals, masquerades, and life cycle transitions to successfully occur.

Additional resources:

African influences in Modern Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Collecting for the Kunstkammer on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Western appreciation of African art

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble: Seated Female, 19th–early 20th century, Fang peoples, Okak group, Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, wood, metal, 64 x 20 x 16.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The appreciation of African art in the Western world has had an enormous impact not only on the development of modern art in Europe and the United States, but also on the way African art is presented in a Western museum setting. Although objects from Africa were brought to Europe as early as the fifteenth century, it was during the colonial period that a greater awareness of African art developed. The cultural and aesthetic milieu of late-nineteenth-century Europe fostered an atmosphere in which African artifacts, once regarded as mere curios, became admired for their artistic qualities.

African sculpture, in particular, served as a catalyst for the innovations of modernist artists. Seeking alternatives to realistic representation, Western artists admired African sculpture for its abstract conceptual approach to the human form. For example, the powerfully carved Fang reliquary figure (right), with its bulbous and fluid forms, attracted the attention of the painter André Derain and the sculptor Jacob Epstein, both of whom once owned the sculpture.

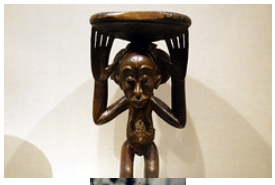
Increasing interest among artists and their patrons gradually brought African art to prominence in the Western art world. Along with this growing admiration for African art, the aesthetic preferences of collectors and dealers resulted in the development of distinctions between art and artifact. Masks and figurative statuary in wood and metal—genres and media most readily assimilated into established categories of fine art in the West—were preferred over more overtly utilitarian objects, such as vessels or staffs. Masks and figurative statuary are more commonly found in western and central Africa. The legacy of early Western taste, with its emphasis on sculptural forms such as masks and figures, continues to inform most museum collections of African art.

As African art became more widely appreciated in the West, scholars began to study both its stylistic diversity and the meanings that African artifacts hold for their makers. Our understanding of African art has been shaped by the work of anthropologists and art historians, many of whom have spent considerable time doing research in Africa on specific cultural traditions. African scholars are also undertaking research into their own heritage. Their sustained commentaries have led to new information and insights, providing a better understanding of the complex cultural meanings embodied in art. At the same time, scholars today recognize that interpreting the creation, form, and use of African art is an inexact science, as meanings and functions shift over time and across regions.

Additional resources:

African Influences in Modern Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88688







Figure **13.4.1.68**: More Smarthistory images…

13.4.1: A beginner's guide is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **4.1: A beginner's guide** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa

East Africa

For two millennia, East Africa has been home to powerful empires and prosperous trading cities.

c. 1 C.E. - present

About East Africa

by SMARTHISTORY

East Africa is made up Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti (Horn of Africa), Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi (the African Great Lakes region) and the island nations of Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, Réunion and Mayotte in the Indian Ocean.

Create your own visited countries map or check out the JavaScript Charts.

The art of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is known for its magnificent churches, illuminated manuscripts, and world-famous contemporary art.

c. 1 C.E. - present

Christian Ethiopian art

by DR. JACOPO GNISCI



Figure **13.4.2.1**: Church of St. George, c. 12th/13th century, Lalibela, Amhara Region (photo: **Rod Waddington**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Ethiopia is a country in Africa with ancient Christian roots. It possesses a vigorous artistic tradition and is home to hundreds of old churches and monasteries perched at the top of hard-to-access mountains, hidden by lush vegetation, or surrounded by the tranquil waters of one of its lakes.

What is Christian Ethiopian art?

The introduction of Christian elements in art and the construction of churches in Ethiopia must have started shortly after the introduction of Christianity and continues to this day, since about half of the population are practicing Christians. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church claims that Christianity reached the country in the 1st century C.E. (thanks to the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch described in the Acts of the Apostles 8:26-38), while archaeological evidence suggests that Christianity spread after the conversion of the Ethiopian king Ezana during the first half of the 4th century C.E.

The term “Christian Ethiopian art” therefore refers to a body of material evidence produced over a long period of time. It is a broad definition of spaces and artworks with an Orthodox Christian character that encompasses churches and their decorations as well as illuminated manuscripts and a range of objects (crosses, chalices, patens, icons, etc.) which were used for the liturgy (public worship), for learning, or which simply expressed the religious beliefs of their owners. We can infer that from the thirteenth century onwards works of art were for the most part produced by members of the Ethiopian clergy.

Periodization

Artworks from Ethiopia can and should be contextualized within the country’s historical development. Scholars still disagree on how to divide and classify the development of Christian Ethiopian art into chronological phases. In this essay, the development of Christian Ethiopian art is broadly divided into the eight periods listed below, but it must be kept in mind that the dates for the earlier periods are still debated and we have very limited evidence prior to the early Solomonic period (1270-1527).

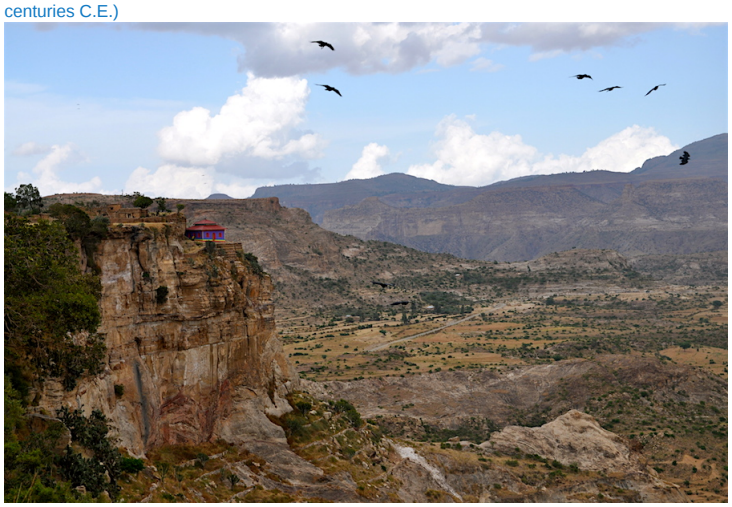


Figure 13.4.2.2: View from Debre Damo, the monastery is accessible only by rope up a sheer cliff (photo: Fabian Lambeck, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.4.2.3

This period takes its name from the city of Aksum which had been the capital of Ethiopia for several centuries before the conversion to Christianity of King Ezana (who ruled from c. 320–360) and served as capital for several centuries after. While we cannot rule out the possibility that Christianity had been present in the country prior to the conversion of this ruler, it is only starting from this period that expressions of distinctly Christian beliefs appear in the material record.

A small number of Ethiopian churches, such as Debre Damo (above) and Degum, can be tentatively ascribed to the Aksumite period. These two structures probably date to the 6th century or later. Still standing pre-6th century Aksumite churches have not been confidently identified. However, archaeologists believe that a small number of now-ruined structures dating to the 4th or 5th century functioned as churches—a conclusion based on features such as their orientation. A large stepped podium in the compound of the church of Mary of Zion in Aksum (considered by the Ethiopians as the dwelling place of the Ark of the Covenant), probably once gave access to a large church built during this period.



Figure 13.4.2.4: Gold coin, c. 270-300 C.E., gold, Aksumite, modern Ethiopia © Trustees of the British Museum. Obverse showing head and shoulders bust of King Endubis facing right, wearing headcloth with rays at forehead and triangular ribbon behind, framed by two wheat-stalks. Disc and crescent at top.

Aksumite churches adopted the basilica plan. These churches were constructed using well-established local building techniques and their style reflects local traditions. Although very little art survives from the Aksumite period, recent radiocarbon analyses of two illuminated Ethiopic manuscripts known as the Garima Gospels suggest that these were produced respectively between the 4th-6th and 5th-7th centuries. Aksumite coins (left) can also be looked at to gain insight into artistic conventions of the period.

The Post-Askumite period (c. 8th/9th-12th centuries C.E.)

A number of factors contributed to the gradual impoverishment and decline of the Aksumite kingdom. The Arab expansion into Northern Africa cut off the kingdom's access to the Red-Sea waterway (and to the markets which could be reached through it and on which a large part of the kingdom's prosperity had been based). There is also evidence to suggest that some of the kingdom's natural resources, such as gold and ivory, had been depleted. Very little is known about this phase of Ethiopian history and scholars even disagree on the dates of its beginning and end.

The political center of Ethiopia seems to have gradually shifted to the southern and eastern parts of the Tigray region in the Post-Aksumite period. A few churches in these areas have been tentatively attributed to this period, but subsequent adaptations combined with the inability to obtain permissions to conduct archaeological surveys make dating difficult. It seems likely that churches continued to be built as well as hewn (cut) out of rock. A group of funerary hypogea (underground chambers) in the Hawzien plain (in northern Ethiopia) may have been transformed into churches during the post-Aksumite period. This could be the case for churches such as Abreha-we-Atsbeha (below) and Tcherqos Wukro (the paintings in these churches probably date from a later period). According to local oral traditions, a small number of iron crosses date to the Aksumite or Post-Aksumite periods, but the absence of reliable dating methods and the fact that such crosses were produced at least until the sixteenth century, makes it extremely difficult to verify these claims.



Figure **13.4.2.5**: Interior of the church of Abreha-we-Atsbeha, post-Aksumite Period(?), Tigray Region (photo: **Jay Ramji**, by permission)

The Zagwe period (c. 1140-1270 C.E.)

By the first half of the twelfth century, the center of power of the Christian Kingdom had shifted even further south, to the Lasta region (a historic district in north-central Ethiopia). From their capital Adeffa, members of the Zagwe dynasty (from whom this period takes its name), ruled over a realm which stretched from much of modern Eritrea to northern and central Ethiopia. While limited evidence about their capital exists, the churches of Lalibela—a town which takes its name from the Zagwe ruler credited with its founding—stand as a testament to the artistic achievements of this period.



Figure **13.4.2.6**: Bete Maryam, Lalibela, Ethiopia, 12th-13th century (photo: A. Davey, CC BY 2.0)

Lalibela includes twelve buildings destined for worship which, together with a network of linking corridors and chambers, are entirely carved or "hewn" out of living rock. The tradition of hewing churches out of rock, already attested in the previous periods, is here taken to a whole new level. The churches, several of which are free-standing, such as Bete Gyorgis (Church of St. George, image at top of page), have more elaborate and well-defined façades. They include architectural elements inspired by buildings from the Aksumite Period. Furthermore, some, such as Bete Maryam, feature exquisite internal decorations (above), which are also carved out of the rock, as well as wall paintings. The interiors of the churches blend Aksumite elements with more recent elements of Copto-Arabic derivation. In Bete Maryam, for example, the architectural elements—such as the hewn capitals and window frames—imitate Aksumite models (see below), whereas the paintings can be compared with those in the medieval Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea.



Figure **13.4.2.7**: Left: exterior, Bete Maryam, Lalibela, Ethiopia, 12th-13th century (photo: Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 3.0); right: interior, Bete Maryam, Lalibela, Ethiopia, 13th century (photo: A. Davey, CC BY 2.0)

Several wooden altars survive from this period, some decorated with figures, together with numerous crosses, some of which are engraved. No illuminated manuscripts or icons from this period have been discovered thus far.

The Early Solomonic period (1270-1527)

By 1270, the last Zagwe ruler was overthrown by Yekunno Amlak, who claimed to descend from the kings of the Aksumite period and traced his lineage all the way back to the biblical union of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. His descendants—the Solomonics—ruled Ethiopia until the third quarter of the twentieth century. For much of this period, the Solomonics did not have a fixed capital, but moved across the country according to the seasons and their needs.

The Solomonics were as active as patrons of the arts as their predecessors, and endowed churches with hundreds of precious gifts. Works of art were also donated to ecclesiastic centers by nobles and clergymen, as well as by individuals known from dedicatory inscriptions on the work they commissioned. The rock-cut church of **Gannata Maryam**, a few kilometers south-east of Lalibela, features an almost complete set of murals depicting saints, angels, and motifs inspired by the New Testament. The church also features a portrait of Yekunno Amlak. Numerous illuminated manuscripts, particularly **Gospel books**, were created between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth centuries. A few dozen feature not just Canon Tables and portraits of the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), as in the earlier Garima Gospels**,** but also scenes from the Old and New Testaments.



Figure **13.4.2.8**: Annunciation, Ethiopien d'Abbadie *105*, fol. 5, (photo: **Bibliothèque nationale de France**).

By the turn of the fifteenth century other manuscripts, especially Psalters**,** are frequently illustrated and crosses are often embellished with depictions of saints and of the Virgin and Child (above). The earliest surviving **Ethiopian icons** also date from this century (above and below). Written sources suggest that the Ethiopian Emperor Zar'a Ya'eqob encouraged the use of panel paintings in church rituals. While other artistic mediums used during the fifteenth century are largely indebted to the art of the fourteenth century, the icons feature new iconographic motifs and the lines are more elegant and sinuous and the figures have less rigid poses.



Figure 13.4.2.9: Diptych with Mary and Her Son Flanked by Archangels, Apostles and a Saint, Ethiopia, 15th century, tempera on wood, left panel: 8 7/8 x 7 13/16 x 5/8 inches (**The Walters Art Museum**)

The mid-Solomonic period (1527-1632)

After a period of relative stability in the fifteenth century, a sequence of events shook the Ethiopian kingdom to its foundations, bringing it to the brink of collapse. First, came an invasion from the neighboring Muslim Sultanate of Adal led by a general called Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi whose army pillaged and destroyed numerous churches and Christian works of art across the country between 1529 and 1543. Incursions by the Oromo people from the south throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries further strained the country's fragile structures. To make matters worse, the conversion to Catholicism of Emperor Susenyos in 1622 soon plunged the country into a civil war, for many of his subjects refused to adhere to the religious beliefs and liturgical practices that the Jesuit missionaries present in Ethiopia wanted to enforce. The conflict lasted until his abdication in favor of his son Fasilides in 1632.

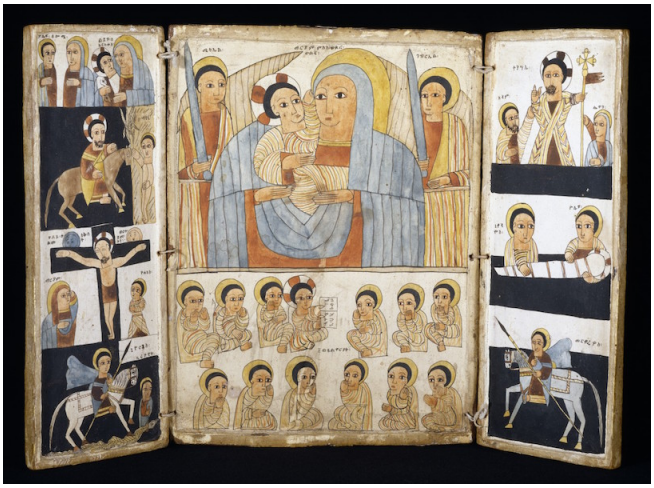


Figure 13.4.2.9: Triptych with Mary and Her Son, Archangels, Scenes from Life of Christ and Saints, Ethiopia, early 16th century, tempera on wood, 10-1/2 x 7-7/8 x 1-1/16 inches (**The Walters Art Museum**)

This phase of Ethiopian art has been sometimes described as period of "transition" because artworks produced during the sixteenth century still include stylistic and iconographic elements that are typical of the fifteenth century, while foreshadowing developments which will take place in the second half of the seventeenth century. However, as such, this description of transition is applicable to most historical periods, and is therefore not particularly helpful. The art produced during the mid-Solomonic period reflects the difficult situation the country was in. The practice of decorating manuscripts with pictures and geometric motifs declined considerably, and few crosses and churches have been confidently attributed to the sixteenth century. Moreover, although numerous icons from this period have survived, these seldom achieve the linear elegance of painted panels from the fifteenth-century.



Figure **13.4.2.10**: Zämänfäs Qeddus (Scribe), *Archangels Michael and Gabriel*, late 17th century (Early Gondarine), tempera and ink on parchment, 10 x 9 1/16 inches (**The Walters Art Museum**)



Figure **13.4.2.11**

The ascent to the throne of Fasilides in 1632 marks the beginning of a period of renewed stability for Ethiopia and the Solomonic dynasty. Fasilides ordered a new a capital, Gondar, about 50 kilometers north of Lake Tana (the largest lake in Ethiopia). He and his successors funded the construction of palaces and banquet halls within the royal compound that still exist today and they promoted the building of churches near by and in the Lake Tana region. The adoption of a circular plan for the construction of churches becomes standard (as opposed to the longitudinal format of the basilica).

Scholars usually divide the Gondarine period into two stylistic phases. The first Gondarine style (above), is characterized by the use of bright colors and the absence of shading. The clothing, often embellished with decorative elements, is usually painted in red, blue or yellow and the folds are indicating with simple parallel lines. The contour lines are well-defined and the modeling of the face is executed using a plain coral red resulting in an unnatural effect.

Works painted in the second Gondarine style (below), which was developed roughly during the reign of Iyasu II (1730-1755), have darker shades of color; the contour lines become lighter and a more delicate use of shading confers volume to the bodies and faces of the figures. A number of new themes, many of which were inspired from books printed in Europe, appear during the eighteenth century and it becomes increasingly common to find depictions of donors and patrons. Numerous crosses (like **this processional cross** from The British Museum), decorated with depictions of the Virgin Mary, Jesus, and saints were produced during the second part of the Gondarine period.



Figure **13.4.2.12**: Adoration of the Magi, from an illuminated manuscript, folio 27r, Vellum, tempera, and leather binding, 12 5/8 x 8 11/16 x 2 3/8 inches (Princeton University Art Museum)

Zemene Mesafint period (1769-1855)

The period known as Zemene Mesafint, or the Era of Judges, begins with the deposition of Emperor Iyosas. This period, which lasted almost a century, saw a decline in the prestige, influence, and authority of the Solomonics, and witnessed the rise of a number of regional warlords who fought against each other for supremacy. This period has received less attention from historians, but seems to have been characterized by a decline in the production of art. Paintings from this period are strongly indebted to works executed during the second Gondarine style in terms of themes and forms, but the palette used by artists moves once again toward bright, plain colors.

The Late Solomonic period (1855-1974)



Figure **13.4.2.13**: Emperor Menelik II, the Archangel Raguel, and a court writer, c. 1889, Entoto Raguel Church, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (photo: author)

The final historical period begins with the ascent to the throne of Tewodros II, who claimed Solomonic descent and ends with the deposition of Haile Selassie, the event that marks the end of Solomonic rule in Ethiopia.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, church painting continues to show indebtedness to the second Gondarine style, but contemporary figures and events are depicted next to religious subjects with an increasing frequency. Moreover, while patrons had occasionally been depicted from the Zagwe period onwards in an idealized manner, by the turn of the twentieth century they are portrayed more realistically, as can be seen by the painting of Emperor Menelik II (above) in the church of Entoto Raguel. After the Second World War, traditionally trained Ethiopian painters, such as Qes Adamu Tesfaw, continued to work alongside artists influenced by **modernism**. The use of imported synthetic colors became increasingly common and by the 1960s icons and manuscripts were created, to a large extent, for the tourist **market**.

Additional resources

Foundations of Aksumite Civilization and Its Christian Legacy (First–Seventh Centuries) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Monumental Architecture and Stelae of the Aksumite Empire on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Christianity in Ethiopia on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ethiopia's Enduring Cultural Heritage on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Biblical narrative of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon (I Kings 10)

Review of a recent biography of the life of Haile Selassie

An Ethiopian icon

by DR. JACOPO GNISCI



Figure **13.4.2.14**: *Diptych with Mary and Her Son Flanked by Archangels, Apostles and a Saint*, Ethiopia, 15th century, tempera on wood, left panel: 8 7/8 x 7 13/16 x 5/8 inches (**The Walters Art Museum**)

The term icon is used to refer to a devotional image. It is typically painted on a flat wooden panel, although in Ethiopia, as in other traditions, materials such as metal or stone could also be used to produce this type of image. The earliest known Ethiopian icons have been dated to the fifteenth century and are generally painted with tempera on gesso-primed wooden panels. Ethiopian icons from this period typically portray the Virgin and Child, the Apostles, and Saint George.

The piece shown here, which can be dated tentatively to the second half of the fifteenth century, features precisely such a combination of subjects. On the left panel, the Child touches his Mother's chin, a gesture of tenderness which appears more frequently in works from this period onwards. The central pair is flanked by two angels with unsheathed swords who act as their royal guard.

The right panel is decorated with portraits of the Apostles who turn their gaze in adoration towards the Virgin and Child. In the bottom right corner is a representation of Saint George on horseback. The names of several of the figures on the right panel have been written on the borders which divide the scene into registers. It is likely that inscriptions identifying the upper row of Apostles and the Virgin and Child were originally present on the upper frame of the two panels. Icons such as this were most likely created to encourage devotion towards the Virgin Mary in accordance with the wishes of the Ethiopian emperor Zar'a Yaʿ əqob (who ruled from 1434–68) and would have been used in churches and in religious processions.

Additional resources:

Jacopo Gnisci, "A Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Icon of the Virgin and Child by the Master of the Amber-Spotted Tunic," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, vol. 65 (2019), pp. 183–93.

Marilyn E. Heldman, *The Marian Icons of the Painter Frē Ṣeyon: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Art, Patronage, and Spirituality* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994).

The kingdom of Aksum

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

One of the four greatest powers in the world



Figure **13.4.2.15**

Aksum was the name of a city and a kingdom which is essentially modern-day northern Ethiopia (Tigray province) and Eritrea. Research shows that Aksum was a major naval and trading power from the 1st to the 7th centuries C.E. As a civilization it had a profound impact upon the people of Egypt, southern Arabia, Europe and Asia, all of whom were visitors to its shores, and in some cases were residents.

Aksum developed a civilization and empire whose influence, at its height in the 4th and 5th centuries C.E., extended throughout the regions lying south of the Roman Empire, from the fringes of the Sahara in the west, across the Red Sea to the inner Arabian desert in the east. The Aksumites developed Africa's only indigenous written script, Ge'ez. They traded with Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean, and Arabia.

Despite its power and reputation—it was described by a Persian writer as one of the four greatest powers in the world at the time—very little is known about Aksum. Written scripts existed, but no histories or descriptions have been found to make this African civilization come alive.



Figure **13.4.2.16**: *Pyxis*, 5th century, ivory with the base restored in wood, 11.3 cm in diameter, Alexandria, Egypt © Trustees of the British Museum

A counterpoint to the Greek and Roman worlds

Aksum provides a counterpoint to the Greek and Roman worlds, and is an interesting example of a sub-Saharan civilization flourishing towards the end of the period of the great Mediterranean empires. It provides a link between the trading systems of the Mediterranean and the Asiatic world, and shows the extent of international commerce at that time. It holds the fascination of being a "lost" civilization, yet one that was African, Christian, with its own script, coinage, and international reputation. It was arguably as advanced as the Western European societies of the time.

The society was hierarchical with a king at the top, then nobles, and the general population below. This hierarchy can be discerned by the buildings that have been found, and the wealth of the goods found in them. Although Aksum had writing, very little has been found out about society from inscriptions. It can be assumed that priests were important, and probably traders, too, because of the money they would have made. Most of the poor were probably craftsmen or farmers. In some descriptions, the ruler is described as "King of Kings" which might suggest that there were other, junior kings in outlying parts of the empire which the Aksumites gradually took over.There is evidence of at least 10–12 small towns in the kingdom, which suggests it was an urban society, but for descriptions of these there is only archaeological evidence. Little or nothing is known about such things as the role of women and family life.

Christianity

Aksum embraced the Orthodox tradition of Christianity in the 4th century (c. 340–356 C.E.) under the rule of King Ezana. The king had been converted by Frumentius, a former Syrian captive who was made Bishop of Aksum. On his return, Frumentius had promptly baptized King Ezana, who then declared Aksum a Christian state, followed by the king's active converting of the Aksumites. By the 6th century, King Kaleb was recognized as a Christian by the emperor Justin I of Byzantium (ruled 518–527) when he sought Kaleb's support in avenging atrocities suffered by fellow Christians in South Arabia. This invasion saw the inclusion of the region into the Aksumite kingdom for the next seven decades.

Judaism

Although Christianity had a profound effect upon Aksum, Judaism also had a substantial impact on the kingdom. A group of people from the region called the Beta Israel have been described as "Black Jews." Although their scriptures and prayers are in Ge'ez, rather than in Hebrew, they adhere to religious beliefs and practices set out in the Pentateuch (Torah), the religious texts of the Jewish religion. Although often regarded by scholars/academics as not technically '"Jewish" but instead a pre-Christian, Semitic people, their religion shares a common ancestry with modern Judaism. Between 1985 and 1991 almost the whole Beta Israel population of Ethiopia was moved to Israel.

Solomon and Sheba

The Queen of Sheba and King Solomon are important figures in Ethiopian heritage. Traditional accounts describe their meeting when Sheba, Queen of Aksum, went to Jerusalem, and their son Menelik I formed the Solomonic dynasty from which the rulers of Ethiopia (up to the 1970s) are said to be descended. It has also been claimed that Aksum is the home of the Biblical Ark of the Covenant, in which lies the "Tablets of Law" upon which the Ten Commandments are inscribed. Menelik is believed to have taken it on a visit to Jerusalem to see his father. It is supposed to reside still in the Church of St Mary in Aksum, though no-one is allowed to set eyes on it. Replicas of the Ark, called Tabots, are housed in all of Ethiopia's churches, and are carried in procession on special days.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Aksumite Coins

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Coins have a unique significance in the history of Aksum. They are particularly important because they provide evidence of Aksum and its rulers. The inscriptions on the coins highlight the fact that Aksumites were a literate people with knowledge of both Ethiopic and Greek languages.

Conversion to Christianity

It is generally thought that the first Aksumite coins were intended for international trade. These coins, bearing the name of King Endybis (c. 270/290 C.E.), were mainly struck in gold and silver and followed the weight standard which existed in the Roman Empire. Initially, the symbols of the crescent and disc, which were common to the religions in South Arabia to which Aksum adhered, were used on early Aksumite coins. But after the conversion of King Ezana around 340–356 C.E., the king made a powerful statement by replacing the existing symbols with a cross which clearly denoted the importance that Christianity now had in the kingdom. The coins also had a portrait of the ruler on the obverse and reverse of the coin along with teff, a local type of wheat. Inscriptions were another form of information included on the coins.



Figure **13.4.2.17**: *Gold coin*, c. 270-300 C.E., gold, Aksumite, modern Ethiopia © Trustees of the British Museum. Obverse showing head and shoulders bust of King Endubis facing right, wearing headcloth with rays at forehead and triangular ribbon behind, framed by two wheat-stalks. Disc and crescent at top.

For the most part, gold coins were inscribed in Greek and often intended for exports, while silver and copper coins were insribed in Ge'ez (Aksumite script). From the 4th century C.E., an increasing number of copper coins were issued which had evidently Christian inscriptions such as "Joy and Peace to the People" and "He conquers through Christ." With the replacement of gold coins with copper ones, the craftsmen of Aksum started using specialized techniques of gilding, which was unique to the kingdom and involved gold leaf being added to crowns and other symbols to enhance the appearance, and most probably the value, of coins.



Figure **13.4.2.18**: *Coin of King Joel*, 6th century C.E., Aksum, modern Ethiopia © Trustees of the British Museum

This coin was minted during the reign of King Joel in sixth-century Aksum. Between the second and the ninth centuries, the kingdom of Aksum prospered in Ethiopia. The trade routes along the Nile Valley that led to the Red Sea and on into the Indian Ocean made Aksum a destination for many merchants and travelers.

The large cross on the reverse of the coin symbolizes the country's shift to Christianity. This took place during the fourth century when a traveller named Frumentius converted Aksum's ruler, King Ezana. The old religious symbols of the sun and the moon no longer appeared on coins and were replaced with a cross, which was enlarged over the years.

The religious symbolism on these coins had strong political implications, as it aligned Aksum's religious identity with its main trading partners, Rome, and later Byzantium.

Suggested readings:

J. Williams (ed.), *Money: a history* (London, The British Museum Press, 1997).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Illuminated Gospel

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.2.19**: Illuminated Gospel, Amhara peoples, Ethiopia, late 14th–early 15th century, parchment (vellum), wood (acacia), tempera and ink, 41.9 x 28.6 x 10.2 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

This full-page illumination is one of twenty-four from a manuscript of the Gospel that reflects Ethiopia's longstanding Christian heritage. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was established in the fourth century by King Ezana (who ruled 320–350). He adopted Christianity as the official state religion of Aksum, a kingdom located in the highlands of present-day Ethiopia. As the Christian state expanded over the centuries, monasteries were founded throughout the region. These became important centers of learning and artistic production, as well as influential outposts of state power.

The manuscript was created at a monastic center near Lake Tana in the early fifteenth century. It is composed of 178 leaves of vellum bound between acacia wood covers. The illuminations depict scenes from the life of Christ and portraits of the Evangelists. This text and its pictorial format are based upon manuscripts produced by the Coptic Church. Here, however, these prototypes are transformed into local forms of expression. For example, the imagery is two-dimensional and linear, which is characteristic of Ethiopian painting. Additionally, the text is inscribed not in its original Greek, but in Ge'ez, the ancient liturgical language of Ethiopia. Ge'ez is one of the world's oldest writing systems and is the foundation of today's Amharic, Ethiopia's national language.



Figure 13.4.2.20: Christ (detail), Illuminated Gospel, Amhara peoples, Ethiopia, late 14th–early 15th century, parchment (vellum), wood (acacia), tempera and ink, 41.9 x 28.6 x 10.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In this depiction of the Ascension of Christ into heaven, he appears framed in a red circle at the summit, surrounded by the four beasts of the Evangelists. Below, Mary and the Apostles gesture upward. The stylistic conventions seen here, such as the abbreviated definition of facial features and boldly articulated figures, are consistent throughout the manuscript, suggesting the hand of a single artist. The artist depicts the figures' heads frontally and their bodies frequently in profile. The use of red, yellow, green, and blue as the predominant color scheme is typical of Ethiopian manuscripts from this period. The images were intended to be viewed during liturgical processions.



Figure 13.4.2.21: Mary and the apostles (detail), Illuminated Gospel, Amhara peoples, Ethiopia, late 14th–early 15th century, parchment (vellum), wood (acacia), tempera and ink, 41.9 x 28.6 x 10.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Gospels were considered among the most holy of Christian texts by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Such manuscripts were often commissioned by wealthy patrons for presentation as gifts to churches. While the text demonstrated the erudition of its monastic creator, the elaborate ornamentation reflected the prestige of the benefactors. Many works of Ethiopian art were destroyed by Islamic incursions during the sixteenth century, making this manuscript a rare survivor.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

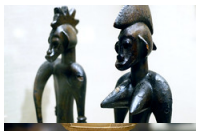
This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Art of the Book in the Middle Ages on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

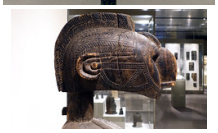
Eastern and Southern Africa on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Christianity in Ethiopia on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Prayer Book: Arganonä Maryam (The Organ of Mary) in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art







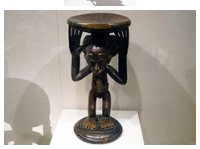











Figure 13.4.2.22: More Smarthistory images…

Julie Mehretu, *Stadia II*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG

Julie Mehretu, <em

Stadia II, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144" (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)" height="430" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...2ff4082c3a.jpg
" width="560">

Figure 13.4.2.23: Julie Mehretu, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Opening / Ceremonies

When looking at *Stadia II*, first try to isolate the black lines from the rest of the composition. Does this centrifugal structure remind you of a sports arena, an amphitheater or opera house? Perhaps a political chamber? It could denote all of these, broadly invoking our experiences as individuals and collective bodies in such spaces. The built environment, for Mehretu, provides a setting in which people can gather, protest, pray, and riot in mass numbers.

Now, try to imagine yourself in a large stadium, at an important athletic championship such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics. How do the crowds behave? What types of phrases or slogans are they shouting, and at what volume? Think about the matching clothing and the painted faces of spectators wearing team colors, or the flags and banners that they wave over their heads.

In her monumental paintings, murals, and works on paper, Julie Mehretu overlays architectural plans, diagrams, and maps of the urban environment with abstract forms and personal notations. The resulting compositions convey the energy and chaos of today's globalized world. *Stadia II* is part of a triptych of works created in 2004, and explores themes such as nationalism and revolution as they occur in the worlds of art, sports, and contemporary politics.

Gaze back into the painting and observe the various shards of color floating over the work's architectural skeleton. The scene, however abstract, could easily represent our visualization of the sports arena. Small circles, dots, and hash marks float through the open space at the center of the composition, resembling the eruption of confetti that announces a winning team's victory (or, alternately, that of a lucky political candidate on Election Day).



Figure 13.4.2.24: Julie Mehretu, detail, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Notice the larger circles, triangles, blocks and parallelograms that float across the upper register. Far from arbitrary, these basic pictorial elements could comprise the designs of nearly any country's national flag. The cluster of red and blue stripes, for instance, located along the top-right edge of the canvas, resemble the American flag, without necessarily resolving into a perfect match. We may also find corporate logos and religious symbols interspersed throughout; Mehretu is intentional in drawing analogies between these forms and the propagandistic ways in which they are often used.

Lastly, observe the painterly grey marks that seem to rise from the lower and central registers like plumes of smoke. Stadiums and capital buildings can represent triumph, pride and celebration, but they are also common targets for bombings and acts of terror, which are often motivated by a comparable degree of zealousness and ideological fervor.

Process

Mehretu's working process begins with the projection of maps and diagrams onto the work's blank surface. From these, the artist makes traces and hash marks that eventually grow into characters and communities. The first layer is coated with an acrylic-and-silica mixture that seals the drawing under a transparent ground. After drying, this ground is itself overlaid with more figures and photographs that are again assimilated into the composition.

The artist describes her final product as containing a "stratified, tectonic geology (…) with the characters themselves buried—as if they were fossils."[1] This distinct sense of temporality serves as a metaphor for history, memory, and the legacies of past cultural epochs that still influence contemporary life.

Utopian Abstraction

While nationalism, sports and global politics are key points of entry into the work, Mehretu also considers art historical precedents for these themes.

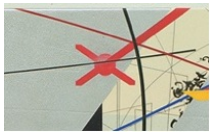


Figure **13.4.2.25**: Julie Mehretu, detail, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Take a look at the orange diamonds at the side edges, the black quadrilaterals interspersed above, or the dynamic red "X" found at the top edge. These lines and shapes are unmistakable references to the Russian constructivist and Bauhaus movements of the early twentieth century, and to artists such as Alexandr Rodchenko, Kasmir Malevich, El Lissitzky, and Wassily Kandinsky. These artists conceived of pure abstraction as a way to wipe clean the slate of history and to promote universalism and collectivity in art, politics and culture.

Mehretu has long explored the use of abstraction in service of revolution and utopian politics throughout the history of Modernist art, "I am (…) interested in what Kandinsky referred to in 'The Great Utopia' when he talked about the inevitable implosion and/or explosion of our constructed spaces out of the sheer necessity of agency. So, for me, the coliseum, the amphitheater, and the stadium are perfect metaphoric constructed spaces."[2] These can represent both the organized sterility of institutions and the "chaos, violence, and disorder" of revolution and mass gathering.

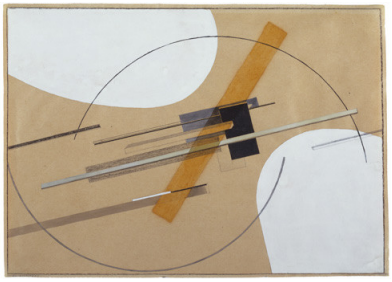


Figure **13.4.2.26**: El Lissitzky, *Proun (Entwurf zu Proun, S.K.)*, 1922-23, watercolor, gouache, india ink,graphite, conté crayon, and varnish on buff paper, 8 7/16 × 11 3/4″ / 21.4 × 29.7 cm (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York)

Global Networks

Because Mehretu builds her piece from multiple layers of figure and ground alike, the colors, shapes, and planar forms in *Stadia II* seem to be suspended between surfaces, and are often caught in a swirling motion around the axis of her compositions. The dynamism of the work makes reference to traffic patterns, wind and water currents, migrations, border crossings and travel.

Depicting patterns of movement, Mehretu emphasizes, on one hand, the militarization of bodies moving within and between national (or digital) spaces, and acknowledges the increasing speeds at which the world seems to be moving. Yet, while her compositions might be vertiginous and disorienting at times, we are given a chance to reflect on the potential and importance of such interconnectedness.

Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mehretu has lived in Michigan, Rhode Island, and Dakar Senegal, and now resides in New York City.

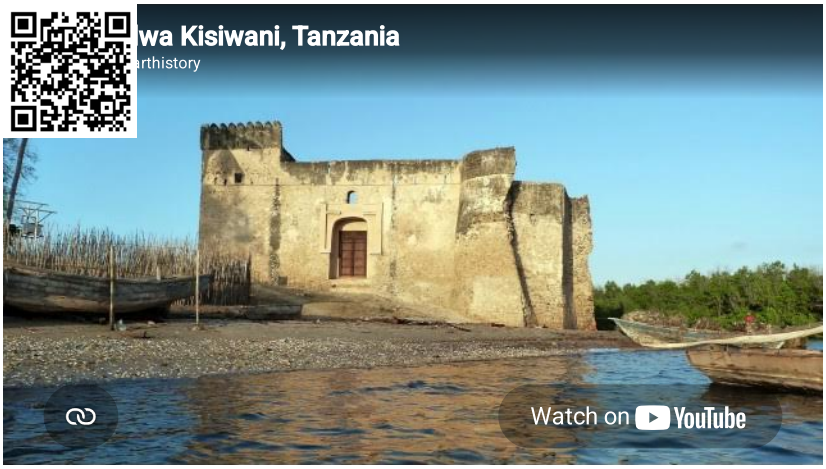
1. Julie Mehretu, quoted in Thelma Golden, "Julie Mehretu's Eruptive Lines of Flight as Ethos of Revolution," in *Julie Mehretu: The Drawings*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Thelma Golden, New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2007.

2. Julie Mehretu, "Looking Back: Email Interview between Julie Mehretu and Olukemi Ilesanmi, April 2003" in *Drawing into Painting*, Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003: 13-14.

Tanzania

Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania

by STEVEN ZUCKER, WORLD MONUMENTS FUND and STEPHEN BATTLE



Video **13.4.2.1**: A conversation with Stephen Battle, World Monuments Fund and Steven Zucker, Smarthistory about the history and architecture of Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania

13.4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.4.3: West Africa

West Africa

From rich textiles and elaborate masquerades to some of Africa's most well-known architecture.

13th century - present

About West Africa

by SMARTHISTORY

West Africa includes Benin, Burkina Faso, the Cape Verde Islands, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome, Principe and Togo.

Create your own visited countries map or check out the JavaScript Charts.

Burkina Faso

Mask (Nwantantay) (Bwa peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.1**: *Mask (Nwantantay)*, Burkina Faso, Black Volta River region, Bwa peoples. 19th–20th century, wood, pigment, and fiber, 182.9 x 28.2 x 26 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Among the southern Bwa peoples in Burkina Faso, large wooden plank masks are carved to represent various flying spirits that inhabit the natural world. These spirits, though largely invisible, are associated with water and can take physical form as insects that gather around a pool after a heavy rain or as a large water fowl, like an ibis. Some Bwa describe a mythological encounter in which a flying spirit appeared before a human, offering protection and service. A tall plank mask was created after this encounter to honor the spirit and ensure its continued beneficence.

This mask has a circular face and tall, vertical superstructure with a series of downward-curving hooks projecting from both the front and the back. The protruding, diamond-shaped mouth with jagged teeth is pierced to allow the wearer to see. Brightly painted patterns in red, black, and white enhance the bold geometric shape of the plank. These designs refer to important Bwa ideals of social and moral behavior that are taught over the course of initiation. Each symbol has multiple levels of meaning that older initiates reveal gradually to novices as they mature. The checkerboard pattern of black and white squares, for example, refers on one level to the animal skins on which people sit: white representing the clean, fresh hides assigned to youths and black suggesting the darkened skins owned by elders. On a less literal level, the juxtaposition of white and black squares suggests abstract concepts such as the separation of good from evil, and of light from dark.

Nwantantay masks are part of diverse ensembles of masks that represent animals, insects, humans, and supernatural creatures. The masks are commissioned and owned by large, extended families, or clans. The masks are used on several occasions throughout the year, including initiations, burials, annual renewal rites associated with planting and harvesting, and ceremonies celebrating the consecration of a new mask. These events are often competitive, with individual clans striving to present the most elaborate and inventive performance in the community. The mask is worn by a skilled dancer who secures it over his face by gripping a fiber rope on the mask's back with his teeth. His body is concealed by a bushy fiber costume, traditionally dyed red or black, but now also seen in the bright green, yellow, and purple of European dyes. Accompanied by musicians playing flutes and drums and women singing songs, the masquerader moves rapidly, imitating the behavior of a flying spirit. With fiber costume twirling, he twists back and forth, then dips low to the ground, rotating the mask to suggest a disembodied apparition.

The tradition of carving and performing wooden masks is a recent one among the southern Bwa, adopted within the past hundred years from the neighboring Nunuma and Winiama peoples. Previously, the Bwa had created masks of leaves, vines, and grasses for use in ceremonies honoring Do, the earthly representative of the creator god. Resulting from the constant interplay of people and ideas, this example of cultural borrowing demonstrates the dynamism of masking traditions in the region and, in particular, the openness to innovation and adaptation that characterizes Bwa culture.

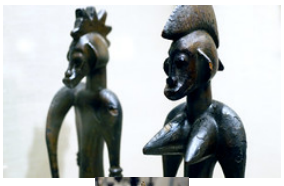
© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Christopher D. Roy, The art of Burkina Faso on Art & Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Do in Leaves and Wood Among the Bobo and the Bwa from Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)







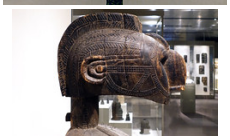
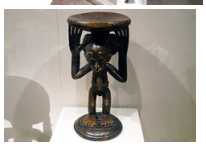
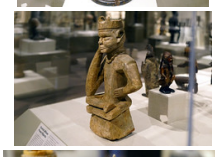








Figure **13.4.3.2**: More Smarthistory images…

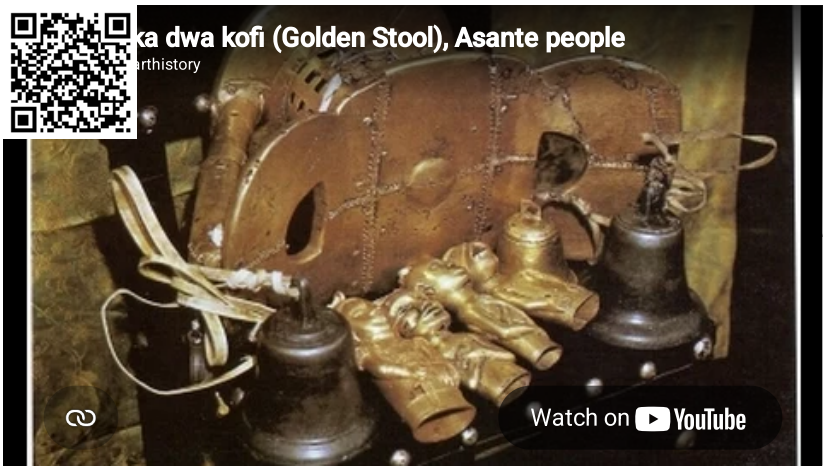
The art of Ghana

From Kente cloth to the metallic textiles of El Anatsui.

17th century - present

Golden Stool (Sika dwa kofi), Asante peoples

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.4.3.1**: Golden Stool (Sika dwa kofi), Asante Peoples (Ghana), c. 1700 and Asante weights (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology)

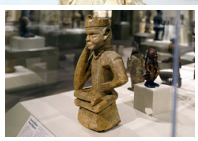
It took a miracle to bring this golden stool to Earth—and another one to keep it out of British hands.











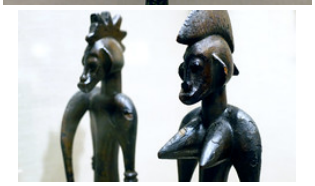







Figure **13.4.3.3**: More Smarthistory images…

Linguist Staff (Okyeamepoma) (Asante peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.4**: Detail, Linguist Staff (Okyeame), 19th-early 20th century, Ghana, Akan peoples, Asante, gold foil, wood, nails, 156.5 x 14.6 x 5.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure **13.4.3.5**: Linguist Staff (Okyeame), 19th-early 20th century, Ghana, Akan peoples, Asante, gold foil, wood, nails, 156.5 x 14.6 x 5.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This magnificent gold-covered staff was created to serve as an insignia of office for an *okyeame*, a high-ranking advisor to an Asante ruler. The position of *okyeame* encompasses a broad set of responsibilities, including mediation, judicial advocacy, political troubleshooting, and the preservation and interpretation of royal history. The *okyeame*'s most visible public role is as principal intermediary between the ruler and those who seek his counsel, leading to the popular characterization of his profession as being that of a linguist. Drawing upon vast knowledge and considerable oratorical and diplomatic skills, the *okyeame* eloquently engages in verbal discourse on behalf of the chief and his visitors. He relays the words of visitors to the king and transmits the king's response, often with poetic or metaphorical embellishment.

Imagery on the finial of linguist staffs typically illustrates Asante proverbs about power and institutional responsibilities. Here, a spider on its web is flanked by two figures, representing the proverb: “No one goes to the house of the spider to teach it wisdom.” The spider is a fitting symbol for respect due to a person with great oratorical and diplomatic skills. In Ghana, Ananse the spider is the bringer of the wisdom of Nyame, the supreme creator god of the Asante, and is the originator of folk tales and proverbs. The staff is composed of a long wooden shaft carved in two interlocking sections and a separate finial attached to the base. It is covered entirely with gold foil, a material that alludes to the sun, and to the vital force or soul contained within all living things.

Although the institutional office of *okyeame* is believed to be centuries old, the use of figural wooden linguist staffs as insignia is probably a more recent development. Prior to the late nineteenth century, linguist staffs took the form of a simple cane, a tradition likely borrowed from European prototypes in the mid-seventeenth century. During the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, the British gave official staffs, often made with figural finials, to Akan chiefs who represented the colonial authorities. Since 1900, hundreds of figural linguist staffs have been carved not only for linguists but also for representatives of other institutions, such as associations of fishermen, carpenters, and musicians.

The Asante kingdom, part of the larger Akan culture, was formed around 1700 under the leadership of Osei Tutu. Osei Tutu brought together a confederation of states that had grown wealthy and powerful as a result of the area’s lucrative trade in gold, sold to both northern merchants across the Sahara and European navigators. The centralized system of government that emerged was a complex network of chiefs and court officials under a single paramount leader. A variety of gold regalia was used to distinguish rank and position within the court.

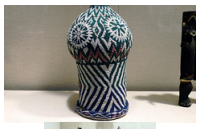
© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

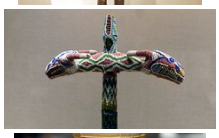
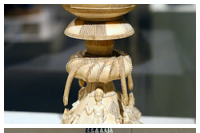
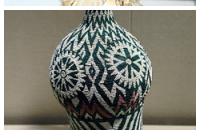
This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

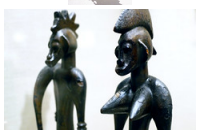
Art of the Asante Kingdom on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Gold in Asante Courtly Arts on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History







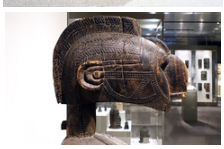





Figure **13.4.3.6**: More Smarthistory images…

Kente cloth

by DR. COURTNAY MICOTS



Figure **13.4.3.7**: Asante kente cloth, 20th century, silk and cotton (Vatican Museums)

Inspired by a spider's web

Among the Asante (or Ashanti) people of Ghana, West Africa, a popular legend relates how two young men—Ota Karaban and his friend Kwaku Ameyaw—learned the art of weaving by observing a spider weaving its web. One night, the two went out into the forest to check their traps, and they were amazed by a beautiful spider's web whose many unique designs sparkled in the moonlight. The spider, named Ananse, offered to show the men how to weave such designs in exchange for a few favors. After completing the favors and learning how to weave the designs with a single thread, the men returned home to Bonwire, and their discovery was soon reported to Asantehene Osei Tutu, first ruler of the Asante kingdom. The *asantehene* adopted their creation, named *kente*, as a royal cloth reserved for special occasions, and Bonwire became the leading kente weaving center for the asantehene and his court.

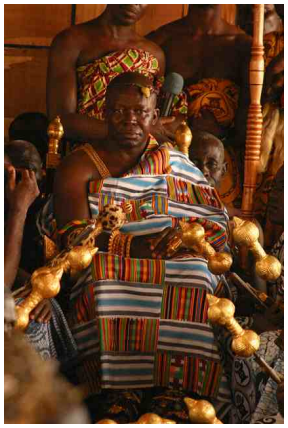


Figure **13.4.3.8**: Asantehene Osei Tutu II wearing kente cloth, 2005 (photo: **Retlaw Snellac**, CC BY 2.0)

A royal cloth

Originally, the use of kente was reserved for Asante royalty and limited to special social and sacred functions. Even as production has increased and kente has become more accessible to those outside the royal court, it continues to be associated with wealth, high social status, and cultural sophistication. Kente is also found in Asante shrines to the deities, or *abosom*, as a mark of their spiritual power.



Figure **13.4.3.9**: Ewe kente cloth (detail), 1920-40, Ghana, cotton, 339 x 198 cm (The British Museum)

Historians maintain that kente cloth grew out of various weaving traditions that existed in West Africa prior to the formation of the Asante Kingdom. These techniques were appropriated through vast trade networks, as were materials such as French and Italian silk, which became increasingly desired in the 18th century and were combined with cotton and wool to make kente.

Kente cloth is also worn by the Ewe people, who were under the rule of the Asante kingdom in the late 18th century. It is believed that the Ewe, who had a previous tradition of horizontal loom weaving, adopted the style of kente cloth production from the Asante—with some important differences. Since the Ewe were not centralized, kente was not limited to use by royalty, though the cloth was still associated with prestige and special occasions. A greater variety in the patterns and functions exist in Ewe kente, and the symbolism of the patterns often has more to do with daily life than with social standing or wealth.

Weaving kente

Kente is woven on a horizontal strip loom, which produces a narrow band of cloth about four inches wide. Several of these strips are carefully arranged and hand-sewn together to create a cloth of the desired size. Most kente weavers are men.

Weaving involves the crossing of a row of parallel threads called the warp (threads running vertically) with another row called the weft (threads running horizontally). A horizontal loom, constructed with wood, consists of a set of two, four or six heddles (loops for holding thread), which are used for separating and guiding the warp threads. These are attached to treadles (foot pedals) with pulleys that have spools of thread inserted in them. The pulleys can be used to move the warp threads apart. As the weaver divides the warp threads, he uses a shuttle (a small wooden device carrying a bobbin, or small spool of thread) to insert the weft threads between them. These various parts of the loom, like the motifs in the cloth, all have symbolic significance and are accorded a great deal of respect.



Figure **13.4.3.10**: Kente weaver in Adanwomase village, Ashanti Region, Ghana (photo: **Shawn Zamechek**, CC BY 2.0)

By alternating colors in the warp and weft, a weaver can create complex patterns, which in kente cloth are valued for both their visual effect and their symbolism. Patterns can exist vertically (in the warp), or horizontally (in the weft), or both.

A cloth with a name

Patterns each have a name, as does each cloth in its entirety. Names are sometimes given by weavers who obtain them through dreams or during contemplative moments when they are said to be in communion with the spiritual world. Alternatively, chiefs and elders may ascribe names to cloths that they specially commission. Names can be inspired by historical events, proverbs, philosophical concepts, oral literature, moral values, human and animal behavior, individual achievements, or even individuals in pop culture. In the past, when purchasing a cloth, the aesthetic and social appeal of the cloth's was as important as—or sometimes even more important than—its visual pattern or color.

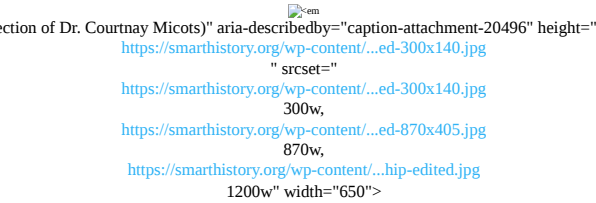


Figure **13.4.3.11**: The King has Boarded the Ship (Asante kente cloth), c. 1985, rayon (collection of Dr. Courtnay Micots)

This cloth is named *The King Has Boarded the Ship*, and it includes both warp and weft patterns. The warp pattern, consisting of two multicolor stripes on blue, relates to the proverb "*Fie buo yE buna*," meaning the head of the family has a difficult task. The weft patterns vary throughout the cloth; these examples are "*NkyEmfrE*," a broken pot, and "*Kwadum Asa*," an empty gunpowder keg.

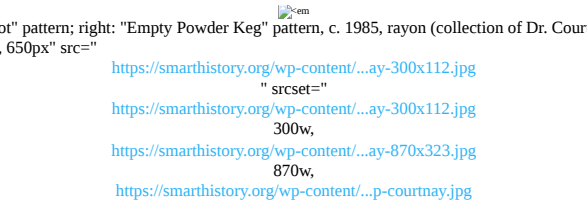


Figure **13.4.3.12**: The King has Boarded the Ship (details), left: "Broken Pot" pattern; right: "Empty Powder Keg" pattern, c. 1985, rayon (collection of Dr. Courtnay Micots)

Wearing kente

There are differences in how the cloth is worn by men and women. On average, a men's size cloth measures 24 strips wide, making it about 8 feet wide and 12 feet long. Men usually wear one piece wrapped around the body, leaving the right shoulder and hand uncovered, in a toga-like style. Women may wear either one large piece or a combination of two or three pieces of varying sizes ranging

from 5-12 strips, averaging of 6 feet long. Age, marital status, and social standing may determine the size and design of the cloth an individual would wear.



Figure **13.4.3.13**: Men (left) and women (right) wearing kente at the Kente Cloth Festival in Kpetoe, September 2005 (photos: **John Nash**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Social changes and modern living have brought about significant changes in how kente is used. It is no longer only the privilege of royalty; anyone who can afford it can buy kente. The old tradition of not cutting the cloth has also long been set aside, and it may be sewn into other forms such as dresses, shirts, or shoes. Printed versions of kente are mass produced and marketed, and both woven and printed versions are used by fashion designers in Ghana and abroad.



Figure **13.4.3.14**: Kente print bag, 1990s (photo: **Huzzah Vintage**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Kente is more than just a cloth. It is an iconic visual representation of the history, philosophy, ethics, oral literature, religious belief, social values, and political thought of West Africa. Kente is exported as one of the key symbols of African heritage and pride in African ancestry throughout the diaspora. In spite of the proliferation of both the hand-woven and machine-printed kente, the design is still regarded as a symbol of social prestige, nobility, and cultural sophistication.

Additional resources:

Videos of kente weaving: Kente Weavers of Asante, Bonwire Kente, Bonwire Kente weavers

"Wrapped in Pride" from the National Museum of African Art

"Asante Textile Arts" from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Memorial Head (Akan peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE

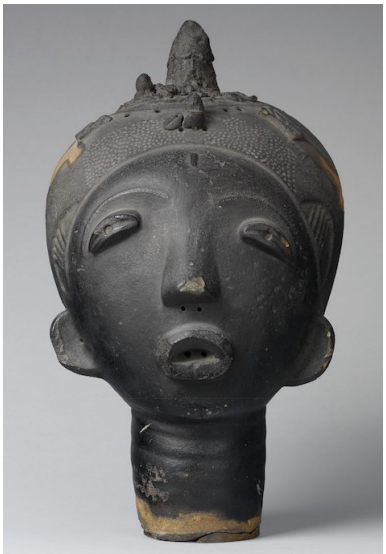


Figure **13.4.3.15**: *Memorial Head (Ntiri)*, 17th century (?), Ghana, Adanse traditional area, Fomena, Akan peoples, 31.3 x 19 x 14.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Since the late sixteenth century, Akan women potters have created ceramic heads and sometimes complete figures to commemorate deceased royals and individuals of high status. During the funeral, family members placed the terracotta portraits of the deceased in a sacred grove near the cemetery, sometimes with representations of other family members. These sculptures served as the focal point for funerary rites in which libations and food were offered to the ancestors.

This example has a rounded face with protruding elliptical eyes that tilt downward and a delicately shaped nose. These circular shapes are repeated by the eyebrows, ears, and open, oval-shaped mouth which projects from the smooth surface of the face. An incised line curves around the forehead, indicating the hairline. The surface of the sculpture has been covered with a clay slip tinted black, a color linked to the ancestral world and spiritual power in Akan thought.

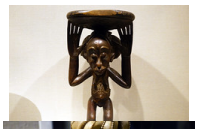
Like other examples of African portraiture, these commemorative sculptures are idealized representations that convey individuality through specifics of scarification and hairstyle. The artist would typically be summoned to the deathbed of the deceased in order to observe his or her distinguishing characteristics, which she would depict later, working from memory to capture the individual's essence. The figural terracotta sculptures vary enormously in style, ranging from fairly naturalistic and sculpturally rounded forms to examples that are solid, flat, and more dramatically stylized.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

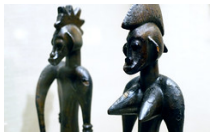
Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ghana on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History





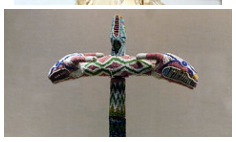







Figure **13.4.3.16**: More Smarthistory images…

Akua'ba Female Figure (Akan peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM

Akua'ba, n.d., (Asante people) Ghana, wood (The British Museum) © Trustees of the British Museum" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-16893" height="500" sizes="(max-width: 375px) 100vw, 375px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...2/akuababm.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...2/akuababm.jpg

800w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...bm-300x400.jpg

300w" width="375">

Figure **13.4.3.17**: *Akua'ba*, n.d., (Asante people) Ghana, wood (The British Museum) © Trustees of the British Museum

According to Akan myth, in the distant past a woman named Akua could not conceive. Akua sought first the spiritual reason for her infertility. She went to a diviner. He told her to commission a carver to create for her a wooden child and to care for that child as though it were her own. Akua did as she was told and within a few months, she conceived.

Among the Akan peoples, women who had trouble becoming pregnant might utilize one of these figures in the same way Akua did, if a diviner—after ritual prophecy—ascertained that it might be helpful. A carver would then create a figure for her and she would carry it on her back, offer it symbolical food and drink, and honor it on a shrine in her home until she conceived a child (*ba*). The figure could be gifted to another female family member if she, too, sought spiritual help to bear a child.

Akua'ba figures were important fertility aids among Akan-speakers in Ghana in the past. They depict an abstracted female form in wood and were created by male carvers.

While this figure is called Akua'ba (Akua's child), it is clearly not meant to resemble a child. Rather, it depicts a highly abstracted and idealized woman in the prime of life (example above left). African art almost always depicts figures in their prime. This time, just after puberty, when young people are generally healthy, strong, initiated, and fertile, is when humans are most ripe with potential—they have the knowledge to successfully pursue adulthood and the physical maturation to marry and procreate. For new parents, this is the stage one hopes for one's child, especially since high infant and childhood mortality rates remain a formidable reality. The figure is also always female, since Akan culture is matrilineal.

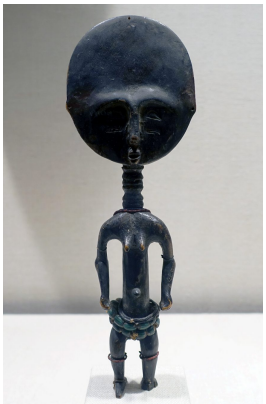


Figure **13.4.3.18**: Akua'ba, 19th-20th century, (Asante people) Ghana, wood, beads, string, 27.2 x 9.7 x 3.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

While meant to convey the prime of life, the *akua'ba* is also quite abstract. Her body has been reduced to a tubular form with small arms, a ringed neck, and a large, flat head. Some *akua'ba* also have a rectangular head and more recent forms include a more naturalistic body (example right). By emphasizing certain features, the artist has communicated the Akan ideal of female beauty. Her large,

rounded forehead, understood as the place where knowledge resides, suggests the wealth of knowledge and intellectual maturity this child should have. Her ringed neck is intended to denote rolls of fat. Extra body fat at this lifecycle state suggests that the young woman is full-figured and capable of baring healthy children. Lastly, her high, protruding breasts suggest a woman who has not yet bore and nursed children. The *akua'ba* therefore demonstrates three important qualities of womanhood (wisdom, girth, and the prime of life) that relate to her physical and mental abilities.

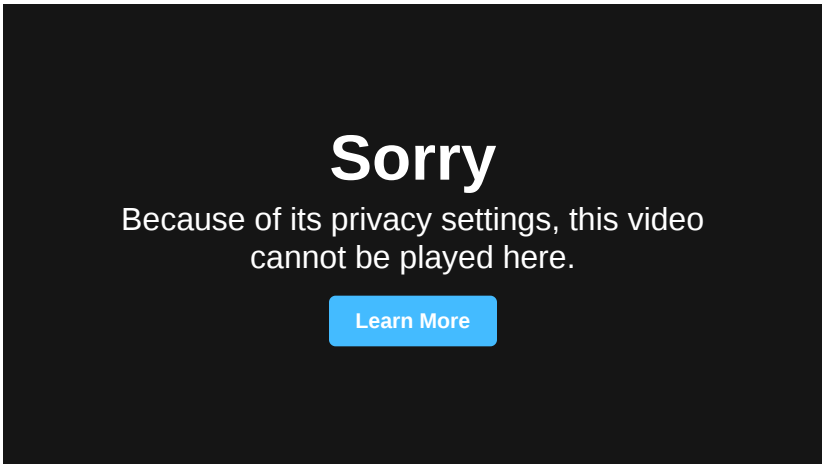
Due to their unique look and portable size, a*kua'ba* figures have become marketable tourist items and are now part of the Western visual vocabulary. Images of *akua'ba* have become generalized icons of Africa in commercial settings and it is common to find them depicted in jewelry, greeting cards, print ads and mass media (one is **featured on the mantel** of the television sitcom Will and Grace). Taken out of the Akan context, altered by Western tastes (which might add beads and paint), and marketed as a universal symbol of Africa, the *akua'ba* figure is now part of Western popular culture.

Additional resources:

Akua'ba on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Asafo Flags: Stitches Through Time

by HENI TALKS



Gus Casely-Hayford - Asafo Flags: Stitches Through Time from HENI Talks on Vimeo.

Gus Casely-Hayford traces the history of Asafo Flags, unique textiles from Ghana. He draws upon his own personal and historical perspectives to help us understand the lasting relevance of these cultural artefacts.

Featuring national symbols alongside local motifs, Asafo Flags conjure a vibrant past. Whilst flagging familial identity, they also served to signal existing military allegiances with arriving European forces in the 16th century. In 'a glorious defiance against time', these flags provide 'a visual metaphor for what community could mean.'

El Anatsui

El Anatsui, *Untitled*

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.4.3.2**: El Anatsui, *Untitled*, 2009, repurposed printed aluminum, copper, 256.5 × 284.5 × 27.9 cm as installed (Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C.)

The artist transforms metal from alcohol bottles into textiles that represent libations for ancestors.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.4.3.19: More Smarthistory images…

El Anatsui, *Old Man's Cloth*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG

Old Man's Cloth hangs like a large tapestry, but when we look closer, it's easy to become captivated by the small metal fragments that comprise the work in hundreds. Arranged within a shifting grid of stripes and blocks of color, the components form their own internal maps across the surface, melding into vertical gold bands, interlocking black and silver rows, or a deviant red piece floating in a field of black. While *Old Man's Cloth* would have been laid flat during its construction, it is contorted and manipulated during installation, so that the individual metal pieces can catch the light from every angle. This brilliant visual effect makes its humble origins all the more impressive.



Figure 13.4.3.20: El Anatsui, *Old Man's Cloth*, 2003, aluminum and copper wire, 16′ x 17′ 1″ / 487.7 x 520.7 cm (Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL)

The Medium or the Message?

Old Man's Cloth has been constructed from flattened liquor bottle labels that the artist collects near his home in Southern Nigeria. While critics often write about Anatsui's metal wall hangings using the language of textiles, the labels and bottle caps are typically fastened together with copper wire and attached corner-to-corner. As such, the issue of medium is one of the first to inspire debate amongst viewers—are the wall hangings two-dimensional or three-dimensional? Are they sculptures, even as they hang against the wall like paintings? Are they individual works or immersive installations? Lastly, are they "fine art" or simply an innovative form of "craft"?

Purposefully disregarding the limited categories imposed by Western art history, Anatsui's practice emerges from a more expanded understanding of what art can be that stems from both the radical practices of the late-1960s, and from a vantage point outside of the Western tradition completely. As scholar Susan Vogel has explained, "such categories did not exist in classic African traditions, which made no distinction between art and craft, high art and low."

Anatsui's choice of discarded liquor bottle caps as a medium has as much to do with their formal properties as with their historical associations. As an African artist whose career was forged during the utopia of mid-century African independence movements, his work has always engaged his region's history and culture. The bottle caps, for Anatsui, signify a fraught history of trade between Africa and Europe. As he explained,

Alcohol was one of the commodities brought with [Europeans] to exchange for goods in Africa. Eventually alcohol become one of the items used in the transatlantic slave trade. They made rum in the West Indies, took it to Liverpool, and then it made its way back to Africa. I thought that the bottle caps had a strong reference to the history of Africa.

Figure **13.4.3.21**: El Anatsui, *Old Man's Cloth* (detail), 2003, aluminum and copper wire, 16′ x 17′ 1″ / 487.7 x 520.7 cm (Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL)

The luminescent gold colors also recall the colonial past of Anatsui's home country—modern Ghana was previously a British colony called The Gold Coast until its independence in 1957. The fluid movements of the work's surface remind us of the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, which carried slave-ships and traders between Africa, Europe and the New World. By bestowing his works with titles such as Man's Cloth and Woman's Cloth, Anatsui also makes reference to the significance of textiles in African societies, and their own historical role in trade networks.

Old Man's Cloth was included in one of Anatsui's first exhibitions of hanging metal sculptures. Held at London's October Gallery in 2004, the show was entitled "Gawu," which means "metal cloak" in Ewe. Old Man's Cloth is unique for its uneven and jagged edges as well as the "rough texture" of the recycled labels that are incorporated into the piece.

Modernism in Africa

El Anatsui was born in Ghana in 1944, and was trained in an academic European curriculum. In 1964, when he began his studies, many parts of Africa were experiencing a cultural renaissance associated with decolonization movements. Anatsui himself joined the unofficial "Sankofa" movement, which was invested in unearthing and reclaiming Africa's rich indigenous traditions and assimilating these with the European-influenced aspects of society. His earliest works, for example, included a series of wooden market trays into which he burned designs inspired by African graphic systems and adinkra motifs (symbols widely used by the Akan people of Ghana).

In 1975, Anatsui joined the faculty at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Nsukka was a vibrant creative capital for African artists and writers in the 1970s, many of whom spearheaded the Zaria Rebellion in the early 1960s and revived the traditional art form of uli wall and body painting in their contemporary works.

Anatsui's work differed slightly from that of his colleagues in his insistence on abstraction. In some of his first mature works, he used an electric chainsaw to slash geometric patterns into wood. Though abstract, these works were metaphorically rich; Anatsui chose woods of different colors to represent the diversity of African cultures, while the violence of the chainsaw enacted the ruptures imposed by European imperialist expansion.

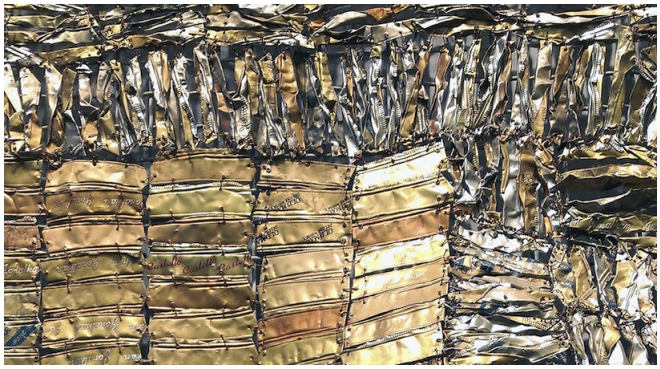


Figure **13.4.3.22**: El Anatsui, *Hovor II* (detail), 2004 showing tiny bits of scrap tin, woven pieced together with wire (Photo: Amy M. Youngs, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Critical Reception: African or Contemporary?

When two of Anatsui's metal wall hangings appeared in the 2007 Venice Biennale, they were lauded by the public and swiftly cemented his place as a leading international contemporary artist. He had, in fact, already shown in Venice almost two decades earlier in 1990, when he participated in a small exhibition surveying contemporary African art. During the time that lapsed between the two exhibitions, the art world became more receptive to artists outside of its Western centers, and by 2007, Anatsui could exhibit not only as a representative of the continent, but as an individual artist whose work was significant in its own right.

As such, his work provides an excellent opportunity for discussion about the relationships between artists at the center and at the periphery, and between the West and the Global South. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for instance, has now acquired two of Anatsui's metal wall hangings, but they are owned by two different curatorial departments: the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, and Modern and Contemporary Art. Both were recently on view at the same time, but in separate galleries. Visitors, students, and art historians should continue to ask themselves which designation seems more appropriate, and for what reasons. Should we understand his art as a product of its place, its time, or both? What do we see in Anatsui's work when it is placed among African masks and ritual objects, and how do our impressions change when this work is placed beside contemporary art from around the world?

There are no correct answers to these questions, but they are indicative of the changes that have taken place both in the art world, and in today's increasingly connected society at large.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.4.3.23**: More Smarthistory images…

Guinea

Headdress: Female Bust (D'mba)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Video **13.4.3.3**: D'mba mask (Baga peoples, Guinea), 19th-20th century, wood, 118.1 x 35.3 x 67.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) Speakers: Dr. Peri Klemm and Dr. Beth Harris

This massive headdress is an example of a regional artistic tradition that dates to at least 1886 and possibly to the early seventeenth century. Among Baga subgroups the headdress is referred to variously as D'mba or Yamban, an abstract concept personifying local ideals of female power, goodness, and social comportment.

Carved from a single piece of wood, this work takes the form of a large head and slender neck supported by a yoke with four projecting legs. Flat, pendulous breasts signify that the subject is a mature woman who has nursed many children. She is distinguished from ordinary Baga by her intricately braided coiffure with high central crest, a hairstyle associated with Fulbe women, who are renowned for their physical beauty. This coiffure is also a reminder of cultural origins, as the Fulbe live in the Futa Jallon mountains, the ancestral homeland of the Baga people.



Figure 13.4.3.24: *Headdress: Female Bust (D'mba)*, 19th-20th century, Guinea, Niger River region, Baga peoples, wood, 181.1 x 35.3 x 67.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Incised linear patterns representing scarification marks decorate her face, neck, and breasts. Such monumental structures, carried on the shoulders of the performer, often weigh more than eighty pounds. In its original context, the headdress would have had a thick raffia skirt attached to the bottom of the yoke. A shawl of dark cotton cloth, imported from Europe, would be tied around the shoulders, hiding the legs of the yoke.

The ideals of womanhood expressed symbolically by the strong forms of the headdress are reinforced by the movement of the male dancer, who communicates a model of virtuous behavior for Baga women. Performances documented in the 1990s describe the dramatic entrance of the masquerader in a central plaza, preceded by a processional line of drummers. Despite its unwieldy size, the headdress is manipulated skillfully by the dancer, whose movements are alternately composed and vigorous. As the dancer twirls to the accompaniment of drums, the assembled audience of male and female onlookers participates actively. Some reach to touch the breasts of the headdress, affirming its blessings of fertility, while others throw rice, symbolizing agricultural bounty. Songs prescribing proper social behavior are led by women who are joined in the chorus by men. Beginning at sunrise, the celebration continues through sundown and sometimes over the course of many days.



Figure 13.4.3.25: Detail, *Headdress: Female Bust (D'mba)*, 19th-20th century, Guinea, Niger River region, Baga peoples, wood, 181.1 x 35.3 x 67.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Historically, such masks were used in dances held at planting times and harvest celebrations, as well as at marriages, funerals, and ceremonies in honor of special guests. Following Guinea's independence from France in 1958 and its adoption of a Marxist government, the tradition was suppressed by Muslim leaders and state officials. In the 1990s, the lifting of decades of censorship was followed by a popular revival of earlier art forms. In Baga society, D'mba (or Yamban) now appears publicly on occasions marking personal and communal growth, including marriages, births, and harvest festivals, as well as celebratory occasions such as soccer tournaments.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This work on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Baga peoples from *Art and Life in Africa* (University of Iowa)

The art of the Ivory Coast

To the Baule people, sculpture serves many functions and these can shift over time and within different contexts.

19th - 20th century

Owie Kimou, Portrait Mask *(Mblo)* of Moya Yanso (Baule peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM

Owie Kimou, Portrait Mask (<em
Mblo) of Moya Yanso, Baule peoples (Côte d'Ivoire), early 20th century C.E., wood, brass, pigment, 36.2 cm high (private collection)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-12660" height="500" sizes="(max-width: 351px) 100vw, 351px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...mblobaule2.png
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...mblobaule2.png
351w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...e2-300x427.png
300w" width="351">

Figure 13.4.3.26: Owie Kimou, Portrait Mask (*Mblo*) of Moya Yanso, Baule peoples (Côte d'Ivoire), early 20th century C.E., wood, brass, pigment, 36.2 cm high (private collection)

The 400,000 Baule who live in central Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa have a rich carving tradition. Many sculpted figures and masks of human form are utilized in personal shrines and in masquerade performances. This mask was part of a secular masquerade in the village of Kami in the early 1900s.

Masquerade

The Baule recognize two types of entertainment masks, *Goli* and *Mblo*. To perform a *Mblo* mask, like the one depicted, a masker in a cloth costume conceals his face with a small, wooden mask and dances for an audience accompanied by drummers, singers, dancers, and orators in a series of skits. In the village of Kami, the *Mblo* parodies and dances are referred to as *Gbagba*. When not in use, the *Gbagba* masks were kept out of sight so it is unusual that we get to see a mask displayed in this manner.

To the Baule, sculpture serves many functions and these can shift over time and within different contexts. The *Gbagba* masquerade is a form of entertainment no longer practiced in Kami since the 1980s, replaced today by newer masks and performance styles. What is known, however, is that masks like this one were not intended to be hung on a wall and appreciated, first and foremost, for their physical characteristics. Sculpture throughout West Africa has the power to act; to make things happen. A carving of a figure, for example, can be utilized by practitioners to communicate with ancestors and spirits. The physical presence of a mask can allow the invisible world to interact with and influence the visible world of humans. Scholar Susan Vogel mentions that *Gbagba* could bring social relief at the end of a long day and respite from everyday chores. It allowed residents to socialize, mourn, celebrate, feast, and even, court.[1]

Moya Yanso

In the case of this *Gbagba* mask, Vogel tells us that it was meant to honor a respected member of Baule society. This mask is unusual. Most older African carving come into Western collections without information about the artist or subject, but in this case, both the carver and the sitter have been recorded. In the photograph below we see an older woman seated next to the portrait mask. She is Moya Yanso and this is her image carved by a well-known Baule artist, Owie Kimou. The man holding the mask is her stepson who danced this mask in a *Gbagba* performance. It was commissioned and originally worn by Kouame Ziarey, Moya Yanso's husband and later his sons. Revered as a great dancer, Moya Yanso accompanied the mask in performances throughout her adult life until she was no longer physically able. This portrait mask tradition came to end in the early 1980s with the decline of *Gbagba* and while entertainment masks continue, they are no longer carved to represent specific individuals.

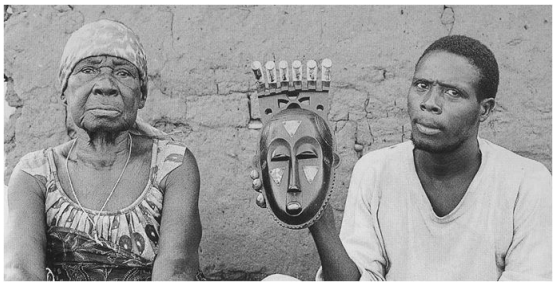


Figure **13.4.3.27**: Moya Yanso and her stepson holding the portrait mask, 1971

Portrait masks characteristically have an oval face with an elongated nose, small, open mouth, downcast slit eyes with projecting pieces that extend beyond the crest to suggest animal horns. Most also have scarification patterns at the temple and a high gloss patina. These stylistic attributes are actually a visual vocabulary that suggests what it means to be a good, honorable, respected, and beautiful person in Baule society. The half slit eyes and high forehead suggest modesty and wisdom respectively. The nasolabial fold depicted as a line between the sides of the nose to the outsides of the mouth and the beard-like projecting triangular patterns that extends from the bottom of the ears to the chin, suggest age. The triangular brass additions heighten the lustrous patina when danced in the sunlight, a suggestion of health.

An Ideal

The hairstyles of portrait masks are known to be quite realistic but other features, like the six projecting tubular pieces at the crown, are abstract. This is not a realistic representation of the woman in the photograph, rather, it suggests an idealized inner state of beauty and morality associated with Moya Yanso.



Figure **13.4.3.28**: Owie Kimou, Portrait Mask (Mblo) of Moya Yanso, Baule peoples (Côte d'Ivoire), early 20th century C.E., wood, brass, pigment, 36.2 cm high (private collection)

Notice that Moya Yanso's portrait mask is in the hands of her stepson in the photograph. Masking is the prerogative of men. While women attend masquerades as audience members and can perform with masked dancers, they do not wear or own masks themselves. The performers and makers of masks as well as those who commission them are always men.

From West Africa to the Midwest

It is interesting to note the way in which African objects gather value in the West. This mask was acquired from the family of Moya Yanso in 1997 by a collector in Brussels, then sold to a French collector, and finally sold through the Sotheby's auction house in 1999 for 197,000 US dollars to a collector in Minneapolis. The mask has also been exhibited at the Yale University Art Gallery, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Museum for African Art in New York. It is featured on the front cover of *Baule: African Art, Western Eyes* (1997) by Susan Vogel, who has written extensively on Baule art and first conducted fieldwork in Kami village in the 1960s.

For many collectors in the West, it is the formal properties of the mask that are alluring. Like the avant-garde artists in the early 20th century who were looking for new stylistic avenues to represent the modern condition, collectors today value the abstract qualities of Baule art. Vogel aptly notes that "Baule believers first encounter the object's indwelling spiritual powers, or the metaphysical ideas it evokes, while the connoisseur begins with the visible forms, colors, textures—the artist's material creation."[2] Among the Baule up to the 1970s, this mask would remain hidden unless performed with musicians and dancers. To separate this mask from its masquerade is to give it new life as aesthetic object.

[1] Susan M. Vogel, *Baule: African Art, Western Eyes*, New Haven, 1997, p. 140
[2] Vogel, p. 18

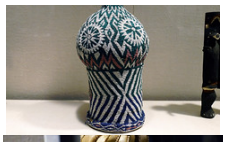
Additional resources

Ravenhill, P. “Likeness and Nearness: The Intentionality of the Head in Baule “Art,“ *African Arts*, 33(2), 2002.

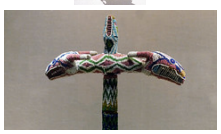
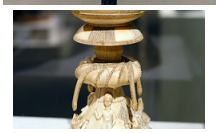
Susan M. Vogel, *Baule: African Art, Western Eyes*, New Haven, 1997.

Susan M. Vogel, “Known Artists but Anonymous Works: Fieldwork and Art History”, *African Arts*, Vol. 31(1), 1999.

Sotheby’s Auction Catalogue





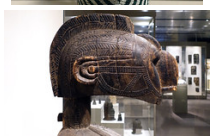
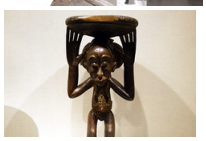
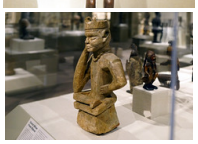








Figure **13.4.3.29**: More Smarthistory images…

Pair of Diviner's Figures (Baule peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figures, Côte d'Ivoire, central Côte d'Ivoire, Baule peoples, wood, pigment, beads and iron, 55.4 x 10.2 x 10.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Carved by the same hand, these figures reflect and embody Baule ideals of civilized beauty. In Baule society, diviners commission such figures from artists to attract the attention of *asye usu*, or nature spirits. *Asye usu* are considered to be grotesque and volatile beings associated with the untamed elements of nature. The spirits are seduced from the wilderness by the figures' dazzling beauty and lured into inhabiting the sculptures, which embody the civilized values the *asye usu* lack and therefore find so desirable. The *asye usu* are then induced into sharing spiritual insights, conveyed through the medium of the diviner.

Such figures are prominently displayed during ritual sessions with clients who seek clarification about their difficulties, which can range from poor harvests to physical illness. The presence of the sculptures and the sacrificial material applied to their feet (never to the smooth surfaces of their bodies), along with repeated striking of a gong, help to induce the trance state that allows the diviner to communicate with the *asye usu*. The diviner can then gain insights and revelations regarding the source of the client's problems. The ownership of such extraordinary works also serves to further the professional standing of the diviner, who must impress potential clients with the caliber and sophistication of the instruments used in his or her practice.



Figures, Côte d'Ivoire, central Côte d'Ivoire, Baule peoples, wood, pigment, beads and iron, 55.4 x 10.2 x 10.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Although depicted separately, the male and female figures are perfectly harmonized through their matched forms, gestures, stances, and expressions. Their elaborate coiffures, intricate scarification, and beaded accoutrements signify cultural refinement and status. Their erect, balanced pose and partially closed eyes imply respect, self-control, and serenity. The fully rounded muscles of their flexed legs suggest physical strength, youthful energy, and the potential for action. White kaolin accentuates the elegant arches of their eyebrows, reflecting the practice of diviners, who apply the fine clay around their eyes to facilitate communication with the spirits.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

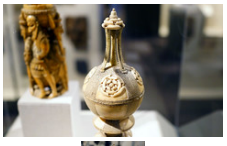
Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Baule on *Art and Life in Africa* (University of Iowa)











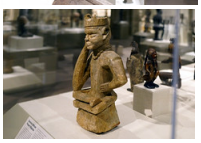
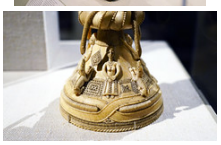






Figure **13.4.3.32**: More Smarthistory images…

The art of Mali

The art of Mali takes many diverse forms, but it all celebrates the bonds of the communities that create it.

13th century - present

Saving Timbuktu's manuscripts

by FATHER COLUMBA STEWART, OSB and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.4.3.4**: A conversation with Father Columba Stewart, OSB, executive director of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (Collegeville, Minnesota) and Dr. Beth Harris

A heroic effort to save and preserve Mali's long manuscript tradition.

Additional resources:

"The Monk Who Saves Manuscripts From ISIS" (*The Atlantic*, February 23, 2017)

Hill Museum and Manuscript Library

Seated Figure (Djenné peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Video **13.4.3.5**: *Seated Figure*, terracotta, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta region, Djenné peoples, 25/4 x 29.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), 82nd & Fifth: "Bundle of Emotions" by Yaëlle Biro.

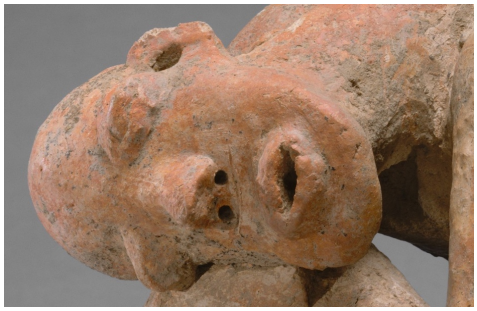
Among the earliest known examples of art from sub-Saharan Africa are terracotta figures like this one from the inland delta of the Niger River, near the present-day home of the Dogon and Bamana peoples.

In this region of Mali, the ancient city of Jenne-jeno ("Old Jenne") flourished as a center for agriculture, trade, and art from the middle of the first millennium until about 1600. The terracotta figures associated with this civilization represent men and women, singular and in pairs, in a variety of attire and poses, including sitting, kneeling, and on horseback. The diversity of imagery and the skill with which they were modeled reveal the rich sculptural heritage of a sophisticated urban culture.



Figure, Mali, Inland Niger Delta region, Djenné peoples, 13th century, terracotta, 25/4 x 29.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This figure sits, hunched over, with both arms clasping an upraised leg, its head tilted sideways to rest against its bent knee. The posture evokes a pensive attitude that is reinforced by the expressiveness of the facial features: the bulging eyes, large ears, and protruding mouth are all stylistically characteristic of works from this region.



Figure, terracotta, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta region, Djenné peoples, 25/4 x 29.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The fluid contours of the body emphasize the long sweeping curve of the neck and back and the rhythmic play of intertwined limbs. Except for the barest suggestion of shoulder blades, fingers, and toes, the figure lacks anatomical details. On the back are three rows of raised marks and two rows of marks punched into the clay. These have been variously interpreted as scarification marks or symptoms of a disease.



Figure, terracotta, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta region, Djenné peoples, 25/4 x 29.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Thermoluminescence tests indicate that this figure was fired during the first half of the thirteenth century. Other terracotta figures recovered (and, in many cases, looted) from various sites throughout the Inland Niger Delta have been dated from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Artists—either men or women—modeled the figures by hand, using clay mixed with grog (crushed potsherds). Details of dress, jewelry, and body ornament were either added on or incised. Once complete, the work was polished, covered with a reddish-toned clay slip, and then fired, probably in an open-pit kiln.

The surviving figures vary in style and subject matter, suggesting that the sculptors had considerable artistic freedom. Our understanding of the use and meaning of such works remains speculative. A few controlled archaeological digs have revealed similar figures that were originally set into the walls of houses. Oral history collected recently in the region supports the archaeological evidence, as the figures are said to have been venerated in special sanctuaries and private homes. There is little consensus, however, on the meaning of the various forms of the terracotta figures. Scholars have suggested that this figure conveys an attitude of mourning. Its seated pose, shaved head, and lack of dress recall mourning customs still practiced by some in this region of western Africa.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

Explore this object—360 view, from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Empires of the Western Sudan: Mali Empire on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Neil Brodie & Donna Yates, "Nok Terracottas" on *Trafficking Culture*

Holland Cotter, "Imperiled Legacy for African Art," *The New York Times* (August 2, 2012)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.4.3.36**: More Smarthistory images…

Lost History: the terracotta sculpture of Djenne Djenno

by DR. KRISTINA VAN DYKE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.4.3.6**: Seated figure, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta (Djenné peoples), terracotta, 25.4 x 29.9cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) Speakers: Dr. Kristina Van Dyke and Dr. Steven Zucker

Are these little-understood figures representations of diseased people, or an attempt to ward off illness?

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Djenné on Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Works from Djenné at the Yale University Art Gallery

The Spread of Islam in West Africa (Stanford University)

Great Mosque of Djenné (Djenné peoples)

by DR. ELISA DAINESE



Figure **13.4.3.37**: Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 1907 (photo: **Mark Abel**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

As one of the wonders of Africa, and one of the most unique religious buildings in the world, the Great Mosque of Djenné, in present-day Mali, is also the greatest achievement of Sudano-Sahelian architecture (Sudano-Sahelian refers to the Sudanian and Sahel grassland of West Africa). It is also the largest mud-built structure in the world. We experience its monumentality from afar as it dwarfs the city of Djenné. Imagine arriving at the towering mosque from the neighborhoods of low-rise adobe houses that comprise the city.

Djenné was founded between 800 and 1250 C.E., and it flourished as a great center of commerce, learning, and Islam, which had been practiced from the beginning of the 13th century. Soon thereafter, the Great Mosque became one of the most important buildings in town primarily because it became a political symbol for local residents and for colonial powers like the French who took control of Mali in 1892. Over the centuries, the Great Mosque has become the epicenter of the religious and cultural life of Mali, and the community of Djenné. It is also the site of a unique annual festival called the *Crepissage de la Grand Mosquée* (Plastering of the Great Mosque).



Figure **13.4.3.38**: Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 1907 (photo: **herr_hartmann**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Great Mosque that we see today is its third reconstruction, completed in 1907. According to legend, the original Great Mosque was probably erected in the 13th century, when King Koi Konboro—Djenné's twenty-sixth ruler and its first Muslim sultan (king)—decided to use local materials and traditional design techniques to build a place of Muslim worship in town. King Konboro's successors and the town's rulers added two towers to the mosque and surrounded the main building with a wall. The mosque compound continued to expand over the centuries, and by the 16th century, popular accounts claimed half of Djenné's population could fit in the mosque's galleries.

The first Great Mosque and its reconstructions

Some of the earliest European writings on the first Great Mosque came from the French explorer René Caillié who wrote in detail about the structure in his travelogue *Journal d'un voyage a Temboctou et à Jenné* (*Journal of a Voyage to Timbuktu and Djenné*). Caillié traveled to Djenné in 1827, and he was the only European to see the monument before it fell into ruin. In his travelogue, he wrote that the building was already in bad repair from the lack of upkeep. In the Sahel—the transitional zone between the Sahara and the humid savannas to the south—adobe and mud buildings such as the Great Mosque require periodic and often annual re-plastering. If re-plastering does not occur, the exteriors of the structures melt in the rainy season. Based on Caillié's description, his visit likely coincided with a period when the mosque had not been re-plastered for several years, and multiple rainy seasons had probably washed away all the plaster and worn the mud-brick.

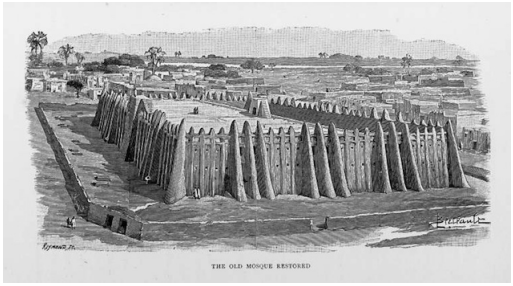


Figure **13.4.3.39**: "The Old Mosque Restored," from Félix Dubois, Timbuctoo the Mysterious (London: William Heinemann, 1897), pp. 157.

A second mosque built between 1834 and 1836 replaced the original and damaged building described by Caillié. We can see evidence of this construction in drawings by the French journalist Felix Dubois. In 1896, three years after the French conquest of the city, Dubois published a plan of the mosque based on his survey of the ruins. The structure drawn by Dubois (above) was more compact than the one that is seen today. Based on the drawings, the second construction of the Great Mosque was more massive than the first and defined by its weightiness. It also featured a series of low minaret towers and equidistant pillar supports.

The present and third iteration of the Great Mosque was completed in 1907, and some scholars argue that the French constructed it during their period of occupation of the city starting in 1892. However, no colonial documents support this theory. New scholarship supports the idea that the mason's guild of Djenné built the current mosque with the help of forced laborers from villages of adjacent regions, brought in by French colonial authorities. To accompany and motivate workers, musicians were provided who played drums and flutes. Workers included masons who mixed tons of mud, sand, rice-husks, and water and formed the bricks that shape the current structure.

The Great Mosque today



Figure **13.4.3.40**: Roof (detail), Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 1907 (photo: **un_photo**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

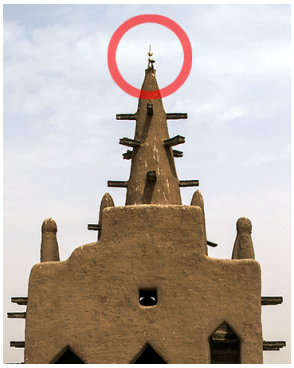


Figure **13.4.3.41**: Ostrich eggs circled in red (detail), Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 1907 (photo: **un_photo**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Great Mosque that we see today is rectilinear in plan and is partly enclosed by an exterior wall. An earthen roof covers the building, which is supported by monumental pillars.
The roof has several holes covered by terra-cotta lids (above), which provide its interior spaces with fresh air even during the hottest days. The façade of the Great Mosque includes three minarets and a series of engaged columns that together create a rhythmic effect (below).

At the top of the pillars are conical extensions with ostrich eggs placed at the very top—symbol of fertility and purity in the Malian region. Timber beams throughout the exterior are both decorative and structural. These elements also function as scaffolding for the re-plastering of the mosque during the annual festival of the *Crepissage*. Compared to images and descriptions of the previous buildings, the present Great Mosque includes several innovations such as a special court reserved for women and a principal entrance with earthen pillars, that signal the graves of two local religious leaders.



Figure 13.4.3.42: Façade (detail), Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 1907 (photo: lhhais, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Re-plastering the Mosque

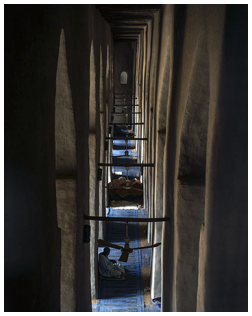


Figure 13.4.3.43: Interior view, Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 1907 (photo: UN Mission in Mali, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

During the annual festival of the *Crepissage de la Grand Mosquée*, the entire city contributes to the re-plastering of the mosque's exterior by kneading into it a mud plaster made from a mixture of butter and fine clay from the alluvial soil of the nearby Niger and

Bani Rivers. The men of the community usually take up the task of mixing the construction material. As in the past, musicians entertain them during their labors, while women provide water for the mixture. Elders also contribute through their presence on site, by sitting on terrace walls and giving advice. Mixing work and play, young boys sing, run, and dash everywhere.

Over the years Djenné's inhabitants have withstood repeated attempts to change the character of their exceptional mosque and the nature of the annual festival. For instance, some have tried to suppress the playing of music during the *Crepissage*, and foreign Muslim investors have also offered to rebuild the mosque in concrete and tile its current sand floor. Djenné's community has unrelentingly striven to maintain its cultural heritage and the unique character of the Great Mosque. In 1988, the tenacious effort led to the designation of the site and the entire town of Djenné as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Backstory

The Great Mosque of Djenné is only one of many important monuments in the area known as the Djenné Circle, which also includes the archaeological sites of Djenné-Djeno, Hambarketolo, Tonomba and Kaniana. The region is known especially for its characteristic earthen architecture, which, as noted above, requires continuous upkeep by the local community.

Djenné's unique form of architecture also makes it particularly susceptible to environmental threats, especially flooding. The town is situated along a river, and in 2016, torrential rains led to massive floods that caused one historic 16th-century palace to collapse, and left the Great Mosque with significant cracks its pillars. Construction of new buildings on the archaeological sites and inadequate waste disposal infrastructure also present continual problems.

UNESCO and other agencies have supported the restoration of the riverbanks in Djenné to help prevent flooding, and the four archaeological sites have now gained official status as properties of the state, which shields them from urban development. However, the conservation situation in Djenné remains fragile. Since the civil war in Northern Mali in 2012, the government has had limited bandwidth to deal with all of the various measures necessary to successfully protect, maintain, and monitor these sites. UNESCO has also noted a lack of funding from outside partners, who, **according to the agency**, have shown greater interest in Timbuktu, where terrorists **vandalized** several historic mausoleums and a mosque in 2012.

The current state of Djenné highlights the complex network of factors that affect world heritage: armed conflict and civil unrest, environmental threats, urban development, and lack of cooperation between agencies can all undermine the fate of monuments like the Great Mosque. Such circumstances remind us of the importance and the difficulty of conservation efforts not just in Djenné, but around the globe.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional Resources:

The website of the Great Mosque of Djenné

Katarina Höije, "The mud mosque of Mali" from Roads and Kingdoms (May 2018)

Old Towns of Djenné (from UNESCO)

UNESCO State of Conservation report for the Old Towns of Djenné

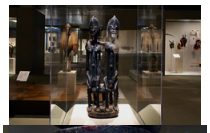
Dogon Couple (Dogon peoples)

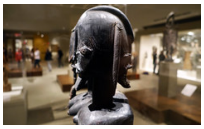
by STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. PERI KLEMM

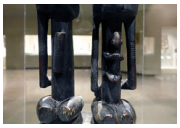
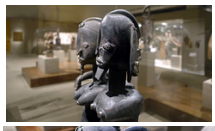
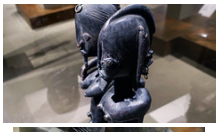
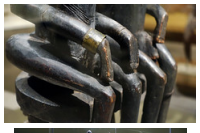
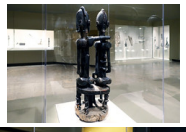


Video **13.4.3.7**: Dogon Couple, 18th-early 19th century (Dogon peoples), Mali, wood and metal, 73 x 23.7 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
Speakers: Dr. Peri Klemm and Dr. Steven Zucker

Is this a couple, or could this pair relate to a story from Dogon cosmology?





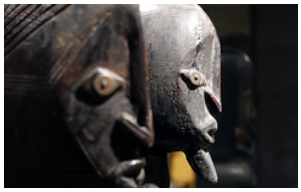





Figure **13.4.3.44**: More Smarthistory images…

Mask (Kanaga) (Dogon peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE

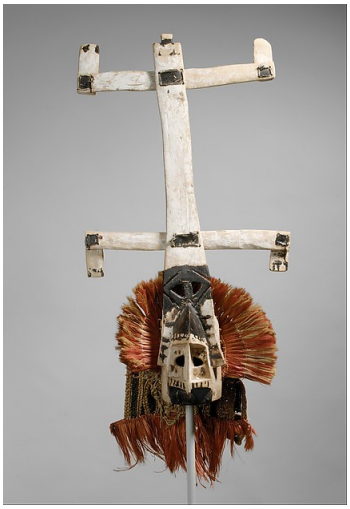


Figure **13.4.3.45**: *Mask (Kanaga)*, Mali, Dogon peoples, 20th century, wood, fiber, hide, pigment, 53.6 x 97.2 x 15.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Dogon masks, such as this one called *kanaga*, are worn primarily at *dama*, a collective funerary rite for Dogon men. The ritual's goal is to ensure the safe passage of the spirits of the deceased to the world of the ancestors. The ceremony is organized by members of Awa, a male initiation society with ritual and political roles within Dogon society. As part of the public rites related to death and remembrance, Awa society members are responsible for the creation and performance of the masks.

Like other Dogon wooden masks, *kanaga* masks depict the face as a rectangular box with deeply hollowed channels for the eyes. The superstructure above the face identifies this mask as a *kanaga*: a double-barred cross with short vertical elements projecting from the ends of the horizontal bars. This abstract form has been interpreted on two levels: literally, as a representation of a bird, and, on a more esoteric level, as a symbol of the creative force of god and the arrangement of the universe. In the latter interpretation, the upper crossbar represents the sky and the lower one, the earth.

This *kanaga* mask was collected complete with some of its costume elements. Attached to the wooden face mask is a hood composed of plaited fiber strips dyed black and yellow with a short fiber fringe that covers the dancer's head. A ruff of red and yellow fibers frames the face. The dancer also wore a black vest woven of fiber and embroidered with white cowry shells and fiber armbands at the wrists and elbows. This ensemble included a long skirt of loosely strung, curly black fibers and a short overskirt composed of straight red and yellow fibers, worn over trousers.

More than eighty different types of masks, of both wood and fiber, have been documented in *dama* performances. They represent various human characters familiar to the Dogon community, such as hunters, warriors, healers, women, and people from neighboring ethnic groups. The masks may also depict animals, birds, objects, and abstract concepts.

Because preparations are elaborate and costly, the *dama* may be held several years after the death and burial of an individual. Performances take place over a six-day period, culminating with a procession of masked dancers who escort the souls of the dead from the village, where they might cause harm, to their final resting place in the spiritual realm. The ceremony recalls the origins of the Dogon people, while also marking the end of the mourning period for the recently deceased. Today, such masks continue to be worn at *dama* performances but are also danced on other, more secular occasions, such as national holidays and as demonstrations organized for the benefit of tourists.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

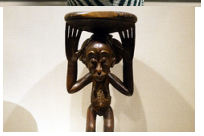
Additional resources:

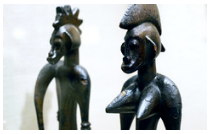
This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dogon art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dogon peoples from *Art and Life in Africa* (University of Iowa)

Dogon Dama from National Geographic (video)





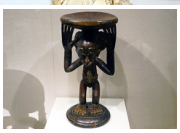









Figure **13.4.3.46**: More Smarthistory images…

Male and Female Antelope Headdresses (Ci wara) (Bamana peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.47**: Headdress: Male Antelope (Ci Wara), 19th–20th century Mali, Bamako region, Bamana, wood, metal bands, 71.1 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Pairs of carved wooden headdresses in the form of antelopes, like these examples, refer to the mythic culture hero Ci Wara, a divine force conceived of as half man and half antelope. Bamana oral traditions credit Ci Wara with introducing to humanity agricultural methods and an understanding of earth, animals, and plants. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ci Wara was invoked and honored by members of a men's agricultural association, also called *ci wara*, in village-wide performances that celebrated the skills of successful farmers. These performances featured a pair of dancers wearing sculpted headdresses, one representing a male antelope and the other a female. They held sticks in their hands to paw the earth just as the mythic Ci Wara did when he first taught men to plant seeds.

In performance, the paired dancers symbolize the union between men and women, essential for the continuity of the community. The formal features of the headdress also reference elements of nature necessary to sustain life. The male serves as a metaphor for the sun, while the female is associated with the earth. The long strands of raffia fibers attached to the headdress, concealing the dancer, are likened to streams of water.



Figure **13.4.3.48**: Headdress: Female Antelope (Ci Wara), 19th–20th century Mali, Bamako region, Bamana, wood, metal bands, 71.2 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Although *ci wara* headdresses are generally described as representing antelopes, they incorporate features of other animals, including aardvarks and pangolins. These animals are selected for their symbolic value. In this pair, the horns and long, arched neck represent the antelope, associated with grace and strength. The head with a long, pointed nose and the low-slung body are features of the

aardvark, admired for its determination in digging. The sculpted headdress is attached to a basketry skullcap (now missing on these examples) and secured on top of the dancer's head with a cotton strip. The dancer's face would be covered by a semitransparent cloth, and a costume of darkened raffia fiber would cloak the dancer's body.



Figure 13.4.3.49: Ci wara kun (Male and Female Antelope Headdresses), 19th – 20th century, Bamana peoples, wood, 90.7 x 40 x 8.5 cm, Segou region, Mali (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The silhouette-like nature of sculptural representation is noted for its elegant play of positive and negative space. The male, identified as a roan antelope, is distinguished by its long horns and elaborate openwork mane. The female, representing an oryx antelope, carries a fawn on her back, a reference to human mothers, who carry babies on their backs as they till the fields. The face and horns of both are decorated with delicate chip-carved patterning, incised linear designs, and metal appliqué and strips.

The Bamana, who live in the southern part of present-day Mali, have long considered farming to be among the most noble of all professions. Traditionally, Bamana farmers have worked arduously in the savanna fields from May to October, when it rains regularly, in order to provide enough food during the long, dry season. Today, despite the significant social changes that have impacted contemporary Bamana experience, farming remains central to their identity. Although many Bamana have adopted Islam over the course of the last century, theatrical ci wara dances continue in many Bamana villages, celebrating their agrarian lifestyle. Among the continent's most well-known forms of expression, the elegantly abstract form of the *ci wara* headdress has also been adopted as a national symbol of cultural identity, used as a logo by Mali's official airline and found on the national currency.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)



Video 13.4.3.8: *The Artist Project: Willie Cole* (from The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Willie Cole, born in 1955, is an American sculptor who lives and works in New Jersey. See **an example of his work here**.

Additional resources:

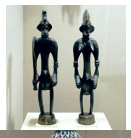
This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bamana art from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

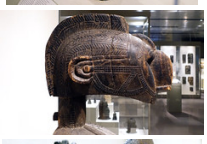
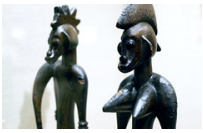
Ci Wara on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

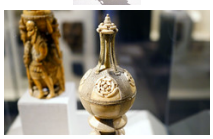
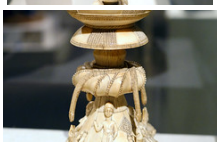
Bamana peoples on *Art and Life in Africa* (University of Iowa)

Genesis: Ideas of Origin in African Sculpture (Met publication)





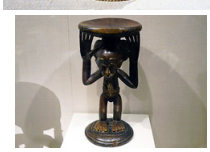




Figure **13.4.3.50**: More Smarthistory images…

Kòmò Helmet Mask (Kòmòkunw) (Bamana peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.51**: Kòmò Helmet Mask (*Kòmòkun*), 19th–mid-20th century, Guinea or Mali or Burkina Faso or Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, Komo or Koma Power Association, Wood, bird skull, porcupine quills, horns, cotton, sacrificial materials, 35.2 x 22.1 x 85.6 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

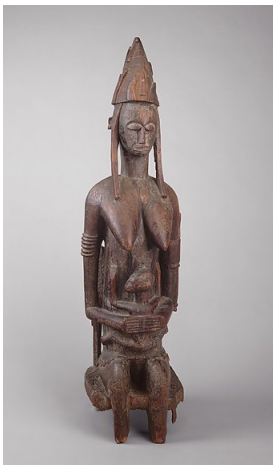


Figure **13.4.3.52**: Mother and Child, 15th-20th century, Mali, Bougouni or Dioila region, Bamana peoples, wood, 123.5 x 36.6 x 36.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

This headdress (above) was made and used by a member of the Komo society, an association of blacksmiths found among the Bamana and other Mande-speaking communities in the region. Komo association members enforce community laws, make judicial decisions, and offer protection from illness, misfortune, and malevolent forces. The headdress embodies the secret knowledge and awesome power of the society; its rough and unattractive form is therefore intended to be visually intimidating. While works like the Bamana maternity figure (left) depict a human ideal, this headdress is explicitly about harnessing the forces of untamed nature, a concept expressed visually in its form and material.

The wooden structure of the headdress has a domed head, gaping mouth, and long horns. Attached are antelope horns, a bird skull with a sharp beak, and porcupine quills, elements chosen for their metaphorical associations since they provide animals with power and protection. The animals themselves hold symbolic value in Bamana culture. Birds, for example, are associated with wisdom and divinatory powers, while porcupines signify the importance of preserving knowledge. The mask was further enhanced by the application of ritual substances formed from a mixture of earth, sacrificial animal blood, and medicinal plants. This material was replenished on a regular basis, endowing the mask with the critical life force, or *nyama*, that is the source of its extraordinary power.



Figure **13.4.3.53**: Alternate view, Kòmò Helmet Mask *(Kòmòkun)*, 19th–mid-20th century, Guinea or Mali or Burkina Faso or Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, Komo or Koma Power Association, Wood, bird skull, porcupine quills, horns, cotton, sacrificial materials, 35.2 x 22.1 x 85.6 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Komo society headdresses are **made by blacksmiths**, a specialized artisan group among the Bamana whose profession is inherited. Blacksmiths are greatly respected within their community for the special knowledge and technical skills that allow them to use fire, water, and air to transform iron ore into tools and weapons. Ironworking is considered an especially dangerous profession, one that requires courage and extraordinary abilities to manage the potentially destructive spiritual forces released during the process. Blacksmiths are therefore uniquely qualified to create Komo headdresses, which combine terrifying forms and inherently harmful materials in an object of benefit to the community.

The headdress is worn in dramatic **performances** that serve as a focal point of Komo society meetings. Held in private and restricted to initiated members, these meetings provide an opportunity to gain an understanding of the society's history, beliefs, and rituals. Accompanied by bards and musicians, a high-ranking Komo member appears wearing a headdress like this strapped on the top of his head. His face is covered with a semitransparent cloth and he wears a costume of black feathers enhanced with amulets over a hooped skirt. The dancer's performance is acrobatic and intense, featuring spectacular feats that suggest extraordinary powers. His performance responds to petitions for assistance from members of the community. Through song and dance, the Komo member gradually reveals solutions to a variety of concerns that have been presented to him, from crop failure to infertility.

Considered the most powerful of men's associations in the region, Komo has an ancient history and was well established by the time the Mali empire rose to power in the thirteenth century. Individual community branches of Komo, which are distributed widely across the region, gain authority through strong leadership, coalitions with wilderness spirits, and effective use of power objects.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Komo among Tagwa-Senufo Peoples in Southwest Burkina Faso in *Art and Life in Africa* (University of Iowa)

Seydou Keïta, *Untitled* (Seated Woman with Chevron Print Dress)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.54**: Seydou Keïta, *Untitled [Seated Woman with Chevron Print Dress]*, 1956, printed 1997, Mali, Bamako, gelatin silver print, 60.96 x 50.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**) © Seydou Keïta

Commercial studio portrait photography was introduced in Mali in the 1930s and developed into a thriving industry in Bamako, the capital city, during the postwar period. Bamako's rapid economic development and accompanying population boom fueled demand for photographic portraits. Such photographs were commissioned by members of the growing middle class as mementos to be displayed on the walls of their homes or sent to faraway family members.

Among the busiest portrait studios in Bamako was that of photographer Seydou Keïta. Born in 1923, Keïta originally apprenticed as a carpenter but found his vocational calling when he was given a 6 x 9 Kodak Brownie camera by his uncle. After experimenting on his own, Keïta learned darkroom techniques from two established commercial photographers. He opened his own studio in 1948 in Bamako-Koura, an area of the city whose proximity to a train station and popular marketplace ensured a steady stream of potential clients.

Keïta soon became highly successful as a commercial photographer, producing tens of thousands of portraits over the course of his career. He developed a consistent and recognizable signature style that proved popular with local clients, who requested that their prints include a stamp with Keïta's name. A typical sitting took place during the day in his outside courtyard and could last up to an hour. Keïta gave his sitters the opportunity to individualize their portraits, helping them select a flattering pose and offering a variety of accessories as props. He posed his clients against a printed cloth, which often resulted in vibrant juxtapositions between the patterns of the sitter's clothes and that of the backdrop. Other compositional strategies included the use of a shallow depth of field and an emphasis on repetition and symmetry in framing his subject.

In this portrait, a woman reclines on her side with a relaxed and self-possessed dignity. The tight cropping places the focus entirely on the sitter, while the camera angle makes her appear on a slightly tilted slope, creating a symmetrical composition. The floral print of the woman's boubou (a traditional form of dress) contrasts with the bold black and white checkered blanket in the foreground and the swirling arabesques of the cloth backdrop, creating a syncopated clash of patterns and rhythms. Her dress and pose communicate significant aspects of her identity, revealing how traditional concepts of portraiture are maintained and modified through the medium of photography. Her head wrap is worn in a trendy style called "à la Gaulle," its jaunty angle framing the scarification marks of ethnic affiliation that she bears on her forehead. She rests her left arm casually at her waist, dangling her long slender fingers, which are considered a sign of high social standing.

When Mali won independence from France in 1962, Keïta was offered a position as official government photographer, where he remained until 1977. His governmental responsibilities required him to close his studio in 1964 and he never reopened his portrait practice, although he did continue his photography. Beginning in the 1990s, Keïta's work was included in several exhibitions in the United States and Europe, bringing him considerable fame in the international art world.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Western and Central Sudan, 1900 A.D.–present on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The artist's website

The art of Nigeria

From the Kingdom of Benin to the arts of the Yoruba, Nigeria is home to ancient and vibrant art traditions.

c. 15th century - present

Benin Plaques

by DR. KATHRYN WYSOCKI GUNSCH and DR. BETH HARRIS



How to impress your courtiers: a lesson from the Kingdom of Benin

Additional resources

Benin plaques at the MFA, Boston

Kathryn Wysocki Gunsch, The Benin Plaques A 16th Century Imperial Monument, Oxford: Routledge, 2018

The Kingdom of Benin

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Until the late 19th century, one of the major powers in West Africa was the kingdom of Benin, in what is now southwest Nigeria. When European merchant ships began to visit West Africa from the 15th century onwards, Benin came to control the trade between the inland peoples and the Europeans on the coast. The kingdom of Benin was also well known to European traders and merchants during the 16th and 17th centuries, when it became wealthy partly due to the slave trade.

A vivid picture



Figure **13.4.3.55**: These men took part in the expedition made by the British in 1897. In the background you can see the palace roof with a snake made of brass slithering down it. Photos like this one are the best guide we have to knowing what the palace of Benin looked like.

When the British tried to expand their own trade in the 19th century, the Benin people killed their envoys. So in 1897, the British sent an armed expedition which captured the king of Benin, destroyed his palace and took away large quantities of sculpture and regalia, including works in wood, ivory and especially brass. Some of these objects came from royal altars for the king's ancestors, but among them were a large number of cast brass plaques made to decorate the wooden pillars of the palace. These had been left in the palace storerooms while part of the palace was being rebuilt. As it later emerged, most of them were probably made between about 1550 – 1650. The people and scenes that the plaques depict are so many and varied that they give a vivid picture of the court and kingdom of that time. The plaques were most sought after and were bought by museums across Europe and America—you can see them at the British Museum, in Chicago, Vienna, Paris and a large collection can be viewed in Berlin.

A sensation

The arrival and reception of the bronze plaques caused a sensation in Europe. Scholars struggled to understand how African craftsmen could have made such works of art, proposing some wild theories to explain them. Quickly, however, research showed that the Benin bronzes were entirely West African creations without European influence, and they transformed European understanding of African history.



Figure **13.4.3.56**: Brass plaque showing the Oba of Benin with attendants, 16th century, 51 x 37 cm, Edo peoples, Benin, Nigeria © Trustees of the British Museum

When the son of the deposed king revived the Benin monarchy in 1914, now under British rule, he did his best to restore the palace and continue the ancient traditions of the Benin monarchy. Because these traditions are followed in the modern city of Benin, it is still possible to recognize many of the scenes cast in brass by Benin artists about five hundred years ago.

As decorations for the halls of the king's palace, the plaques were designed to proclaim and glorify the prestige, status, and achievements of the king, so they give an informative but very one-sided view of the kingdom of Benin. They do not show how the ordinary people lived in the villages outside the city as farmers, growing their yams and vegetables in gardens cleared from the tropical forest. Nor do they show how most of the townspeople lived, employed in crafts such as the making of the brass plaques themselves. And most striking of all, there are no women or children shown in the plaques, which means that more than half of the people of the king's court are not shown.

Many of the brass plaques from the king's palace show images of Portuguese men, whose costumes indicate that they were made during the 16th and 17th centuries. Although Benin had no gold to offer, they supplied the Portuguese with pepper, ivory, leopard skins and people, who were taken as slaves to work elsewhere in Africa and in the Portuguese colonies in Brazil. Many of these people were captives taken in the wars in which the Benin people conquered their neighbours far and wide and made them part of the kingdom, or they were sent by the conquered local chiefs as tribute to the king.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Benin Art: Patrons, Artists and Current Controversies

by DR. KATHRYN WYSOCKI GUNSCH

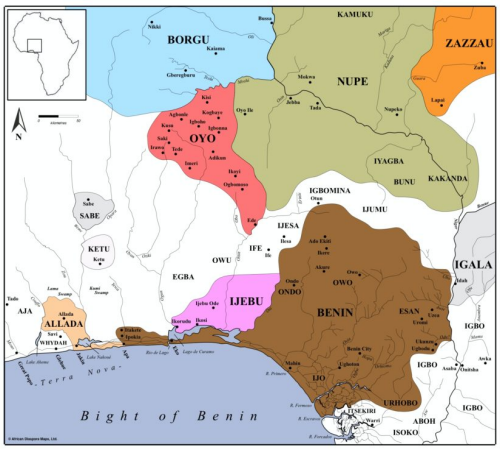


Figure **13.4.3.57**: States of the Bight of Benin Interior c. 1580, courtesy of Henry B. Lovejoy, African Diaspora Maps Ltd., (CC BY 4.0)

In the age of social media, nearly everyone can present an idealized version of their real lives to the world. In the past, however, only the wealthiest and most powerful could afford to shape their image for the public. During the sixteenth century, the kings of Benin (in present-day Nigeria), reigned over nearly two million subjects and commanded a feared military force, but they also faced internal political problems that threatened the throne.

Politics, power, and art



Figure **13.4.3.58**: Igue Festival: Edo govt delegation visits Oba Ewuare II

The Kingdom of Benin was founded around the year 900, but it reached the height of its power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a result of the conquests of new territories by two kings — Oba Ewuare and his son Oba Ozolua (Oba means "king").

The Obas of Benin amassed great wealth by controlling trade routes reaching from the river Niger in the East to the western border with the kingdom of Dahomey. Taxes on pepper, ivory, and enslaved persons, and annual tribute payments from conquered lands in their expanding empire, also increased the wealth of the Kingdom.

Royal art from this period (and from a slightly later time of renewed wealth and power in the eighteenth century), was designed to broadcast and strengthen dynastic power. **Benin court art** celebrates the prestige of the monarchy to outsiders (like traders and ambassadors), as well as to courtiers who might try to wrest power from the king.

In the early sixteenth century, Oba Esigie successfully consolidated Benin's power over conquered territories. He took the throne after a civil war with his older brother and soon after defended Benin City from an attack from a neighboring kingdom (Idah). His commissions were designed to address the turmoil of his early reign. Esigie was a brilliant politician, and he commissioned great works of art and new festivals to assert the legitimacy of his reign.

The festival of Ugie Oro

Esigie instituted the festival of Ugie Oro, where high-ranking courtiers process around Benin City striking bronze staffs with a bird on top. The festival refers to the Idah war, when leading courtiers refused to support Esigie in his defense of the city. A bird in a tree en route to the battle prophesied that Esigie and his troops would be defeated. Esigie shot the bird and carried it as his battle standard. When he won the war against the Idah, he instituted the festival to point out that the advice of the courtiers—and the bird—had been nothing more than the empty noise produced by clanging the bronze staffs, pointing out that courtiers' should defer to the wisdom of the king.



Figure **13.4.3.59**: Artist Unidentified, Staff showing a bird of prophesy, 19th century, Copper alloy (Robert Owen Lehman Collection, Courtesy **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

In the **plaques** he commissioned to ornament his audience hall, Esigie surrounded himself with images of courtiers in processions, including the festival of Ugie Oro, or engaging in other acts of service and praise—reminding them to honor and obey his authority. Today, artworks from the period of Esigie's reign are among the most celebrated in African art history, combining fascinating narratives on the majesty of the kingdom, luxurious materials, and fine workmanship.

Royal Patronage in the 18th and 19th centuries



Figure **13.4.3.60**: Throne stool of Oba Eresoyen, 1735-50, Kingdom of Benin, Nigeria, brass, 40 x 40.5 cm (**Ethnological Museum of the National Museums in Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz**)

Changes in Benin art are tightly intertwined with the changing fortunes of the kingdom, because the Oba was historically the primary patron for all artwork in bronze and **ivory**. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, Benin recovered from a series of succession struggles and wars that weakened the court and devastated its finances. Oba Akenzua I and his successor, Oba Eresoyen, strengthened the king's role and instituted new traditions and art forms to signal their regained power.

Akenzua and Eresoyen ushered in a period of renewed wealth and political power for the kingdom that continued into the 19th century. Akenzua and Eresoyen compared themselves to Ozolua and Esigie, starting the tradition of viewing Ozolua and Esigie as two of the most important kings in Benin history.

Oba Eresoyen was a major patron of the bronze-casting guild, and commissioned an elaborate copy of a bronze state stool owned by Oba Esigie—metaphorically connecting the two reigns. Eresoyen is also known as a patron of the ivory guild, and may have introduced the intricately carved tusk for memorial altars that first appear in the eighteenth century.

On memorial altars, ten to sixty tusks were displayed on top of brass commemorative heads. The **tusk** held in the Berlin Ethnographic Museum, is one of the oldest known. We see an Oba, his arms supported by attendants, placed in the center of the tusk, the most visible position. Surrounding this central triad are figures relating to the dynasty of great Obas—including two Portuguese men on horseback that refer to the reigns of Ozolua and Esigie—and motifs representing leading courtiers and priests serving the king.



Figure **13.4.3.61**: Benin ancestral altars (left), photographed in 1936 (**Etnografiska museet, Stockholm**) and an altar tusk (right) 1888 – 97, Kingdom of Benin, Nigeria, ivory, 111.8 x 31.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The Artists

The Igun Eronmwon (brass-caster's guild), and the Igbesanmwan (ivory and wood carvers' guild), are responsible for all the art made for the Oba. Until the 20th century, royal artists were not allowed to make pieces for other clients without special permission. Membership in the royal artists' guilds is hereditary—even today. The head of each guild inherits his position from his father. He is responsible for receiving commissions from the king, overseeing the design of the work, and assigning parts of the project to different artists. For this reason, nearly all historical Benin art is made in a workshop style, with individual artists contributing pieces of the whole.

While the Igun Eronmwon and Igbesanmwan guilds are separate, they often make artworks that are displayed together. Commemorative heads made for the memorial altar of a king (see ancestral altars above), for example, combine a cast-bronze head with a carved ivory tusk rising from the top, just as an ivory leopard may be finished with inlaid bronze spots.

Controversy



Figure **13.4.3.62**: Pair of leopards, 19th century, Court of Benin, Nigeria, ivory with metal inlay, 48.0 x 80.0 x 13.0 cm (**Royal Collection Trust**, © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2017)

Like other artworks taken from their place of origin by colonial occupiers, artworks from Benin are part of a public conversation on cultural patrimony and the ethics of collecting. The provenance (ownership history), of Benin artworks in Europe and America usually includes a moment in 1897 when Benin City was invaded by British soldiers and a part of the royal treasury was claimed by the British state as spoils of war. In the following years, other artworks were taken from Benin by individual soldiers, or pillaged from the palace and sold.

Today, the palace in Benin City and the Nigerian government both claim ownership of Benin art held in foreign collections. Museums and private owners have provided a spectrum of responses. In 2014, British citizen Mark Walker **returned** two Benin artworks he inherited from his grandfather, a soldier in the 1897 invasion, to reigning Oba Erediauwa, because he felt that the Oba was the only rightful owner. The Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) Museum is **working** to determine how to return a commemorative head to Nigeria, given the competing claims of the palace and the government.

A coalition of European museums that hold the largest collections of Benin art have been meeting with representatives of the palace and the Nigerian government since 2007, and at present plan to collaborate by **sharing** their collections through loans to a new Nigerian museum built on palace grounds. The public conversation on Benin art weighs the competing ownership claims of the palace and the government, the ethical obligation to respect communities' rights regarding their cultural patrimony, and the belief that museum collections should present world art to foster cross-cultural understanding.

Additional Resources:

Art of the Benin Kingdom at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Benin chronology on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn TImeline of Art History

Kathryn Gunsch, *The Benin Plaques: A 16th Century Imperial Monument* (Routledge Research in Art History, 2017)

Paula Ben-Amos, *Art, Innovation, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Benin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999)

Barbara Plankensteiner, et al, *Benin Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria* (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum mit MVK und ÖTM, 2007)

The Imagery of Power on Benin Bronze Plaques

by DR. KATHRYN WYSOCKI GUNSCH



Figure **13.4.3.63**: Artist Unidentified, *Relief plaque showing two officials with raised swords*, c. 1530-1570, copper alloy (Robert Owen Lehman Collection, **Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

Designed to impress

Think of the last time you saw an interior space that impressed you. Whether you were watching *Game of Thrones* or reality TV, walking onto a college campus or into a major museum for the first time, some spaces are designed to wow—and intimidate—visitors. The audience hall in the palace in Benin City, in present-day Nigeria, was a space made to wow. It communicated to visiting ambassadors, traders, courtiers, and subjects the power and wealth of the Oba (the king).

Privileged regalia

During the sixteenth century, the pillars of the Oba's audience hall would have been covered in bronze relief plaques like the one above. Two men stand with their feet firmly planted on an imagined plane. The men wear coral beaded regalia from head to toe—coral crowns, special high collars called *odigba* that signal their elite rank, beaded sashes across their chests, and beaded bands around their wrists and ankles.



Figure **13.4.3.64**: Leopard-head hip ornament, 16th – 19th century, 19.1 x 12.1 x 5.4 cm, Edo peoples, Benin, Nigeria (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Only the Oba could grant permission to wear coral, an imported luxury related to his control of overseas trade with Portugal and, later, the Dutch, English, and French. The coral and the river-leaf pattern in the background also refers to Olokun, the god of wealth whose palace is under the sea.

The scars on the men's chests, called *iwu*, were the mark of Benin subjects until the late nineteenth century. While the men's attire signals their position within the court and their reliance on the king, their gesture announces that they are loyal and obedient subjects. Each figure holds a special fish-shaped sword, called an ***eben***, aloft. Even today, these swords are used to dance in honor of the Oba. During palace festivities, courtiers throw them spinning into the air and catch them before they touch the ground — a display to honor the king.

Decoration for a grand palace

The plaque above was originally displayed on a pillar in an audience hall located deep within the palace. Pillars held up the roof of a veranda with built-in seating that ran around a large open-air courtyard in the center.

Historical accounts from visiting traders to Benin City suggest that the audience courtyard was roughly 30 by 60 meters (98.43 x 196.85 feet) [1] and could fit 500 people.[2] Likely beginning during the reigns of Oba Esigie (who ruled from 1517 to the 1550s) and his son Orhogbua (who ruled from the 1550s–1570s), the pillars surrounding the audience court were covered with more than 850 bronze relief plaques like this one.



Figure **13.4.3.65**: Plaque depicting an audience hall, 16th -17th century, 55 x 39 cm, Edo peoples, Benin, Nigeria (photo: **British Museum**, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

A surviving plaque shows what the audience hall must have looked like at the time, with a high roof ornamented by a cast-bronze snake and depictions of courtiers and warriors on the plaques decorating the pillars below. Hanging on all sides of the columns, the plaques would have created the impression that the pillars were of solid bronze — a form of currency at the time.

The plaques were deinstalled from the audience court in Benin City before the beginning of the eighteenth century, and kept in a storeroom within the palace until the **British invasion of 1897**. They are kept today in museums in Nigeria, the **UK, Germany, Austria, and the United States**. Recent research suggests that the plaques were made in three separate periods.



Figure **13.4.3.66**: Artist Unidentified, *Relief plaque showing a crocodile with mudfish*, c. 1530-1570, copper alloy (Robert Owen Lehman Collection, **Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

Casting in bronze

The plaques were all made using the **lost wax method**, where an artist creates a form in wax, covers it in layers of clay, and bakes the mold until the wax runs out. The artist then pours molten bronze into the hardened clay form, and breaks the form to release the final casting.

The early plaques are all low reliefs, meaning that they are fairly flat, without many details that rise off the surface of the plaque, like this plaque depicting a crocodile biting a mudfish.

From low to high relief

Low reliefs are easier to cast, because the artist does not need to worry about molten metal reaching each part of the form before it cools. In the later series of plaques, however, artists cast high reliefs, meaning that they have greater depth. In the plaque discussed above, the thin swords are fully free of the plaque surface, a daring compositional choice that required careful management of the hot bronze to fill the form.



Figure **13.4.3.67**: Detail of relief plaque showing two officials with raised swords, showing the high relief of the bodies and fully-free swords (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The switch to high relief suggests that the artists were becoming more confident in the medium of bronze reliefs. It may also reflect the artists' observations of how the completed reliefs looked once installed on the palace pillars. The later plaques, characterized by high-relief compositions of human figures that fill the entire surface, would have been easier to see from across the large courtyard.

Art for legitimacy

Why did the kings of Benin commission this ambitious program of court decoration? Oba Esigie fought his brother for the throne and then faced an attack from a neighboring army and the disobedience of his senior courtiers. He may have commissioned the plaques to assert his wealth and power to internal and external enemies, creating the impression of a strong monarchy despite the rocky start to his reign.



Figure **13.4.3.68**: Artist Unidentified, *Relief plaque showing a dignitary with drum and two attendants striking gongs*, c. 1530-1570, copper alloy (Robert Owen Lehman Collection, **Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

The earlier plaques depict elements of regalia and metaphorical animals relating to the Oba, as well as courtiers and warriors depicted in simple, three-person compositions in hierarchical scale, where the most important person is largest. All of these motifs indirectly allude to the king and his power. The narrative presented by the later plaques more explicitly honors the might and authority of the king.

Rather than referring to the Oba through court regalia or metaphorical creatures, these compositions depict people in direct service to the crown: participating in processionals, battles or ceremonies, like the men holding the *eben* dance swords. The plaque commission was likely one element in cementing Esigie's authority. By the end of his reign and through the reign of his son Orhogbua, the court gave greater support to the monarchy.

Notes

1. Translation of Olfert Dapper's *Naukeurige Beschrijvingen der Afrikaensche gewesten*, 1676 edition, published in Adam Jones, *Olfert Dapper's Description of Benin* (1668) (Madison: University of Wisconsin Madison, 1998), p. 11.
2. A.F.C. Ryder, "The Benin Missions," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2, no. 2 (1960), p. 244.

Additional resources

Read more about a chronology for Benin art

Kate Ezra, *Royal Art of Benin: The Perls Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992).

Kathryn Gunsch, *The Benin Plaques: A 16th-Century Imperial Monument* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018).

Barbara Plankensteiner, et al., *Benin Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria* (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum mit MVK und ÖTM, 2007).

Benin and the Portuguese

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Brass

Trade with the Portuguese probably encouraged the growth of brass casting in Benin at this time. Although West Africans invented the smelting of copper and zinc ores and the casting of brass at least as long ago as the 10th century, they did not produce enough metal to supply the casting industry of Benin city, which gave such splendor to the king's palace. The Portuguese found a ready market for brass ingots, often made in the form of bracelets called "manillas."

These were made in the Low Countries (modern Holland), traded throughout West Africa as a kind of currency, and melted down by the brass workers of Benin. When the Portuguese arrived in Benin, Nigeria, in the fifteenth century, they quickly started trading brass and copper for pepper, cloth, ivory and slaves. In the 1490s a Portuguese trader wrote that at Benin copper bracelets were more highly prized than brass ones.



Figure **13.4.3.69**: *Brass manilla (bracelet)*, 19th century C.E. © Trustees of the British Museum

The number of manillas in circulation increased dramatically from the sixteenth century when they became one of the standard trade currencies. Millions were made in Europe, along with brass and copper pots and pans, and imported into Africa for trade. Research by British Museum scientists has shown that objects like these were melted down and made into works of art such as the Benin bronze plaques.

A Portuguese soldier



Figure **13.4.3.70**: *Brass figure of a Portuguese soldier holding a musket*, 17th century C.E., Benin, Nigeria © Trustees of the British Museum

This is an image of a Portuguese soldier. He wears a typical 16th century European costume, with steel helmet and sword, and he carries a flintlock gun. Guns were new to the people of West Africa when the Portuguese arrived. So, Africans traded them from Europeans and learned to make them for themselves, to help them in their wars against peoples who still only had hand weapons or bows and arrows. Sometimes the king of Benin even employed Portuguese soldiers, like this man, to fight as mercenaries in his wars. Figures of Europeans such as this Portuguese soldier were kept on royal altars or on the roof of the royal palace in Benin city.

Control of trade

The rulers of Benin fought their neighbours for control to the supply of goods which could be traded to the Europeans on the coast. The king himself was in charge of trading slaves, ivory and other important goods, so that all the profit went to support his court and government.

Other merchants could only trade with the king's permission. To prevent unauthorized trading, Europeans were seldom allowed to travel inland or visit Benin city.

Suggested readings:

J. Williams (ed.), *Money: a history* (London, The British Museum Press, 1997).

K. Yoshida and J. Mack (eds.), *Images of other cultures* (Osaka, National Museum of Ethnology, 1997).

P. Girshick Ben-Amos, *The art of Benin* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba) (Edo peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.71**: *Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba)*, 16th century, Edo peoples, Court of Benin, Nigeria, ivory, iron, copper, 23.8 x 12.7 x 8.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

This pendant mask was created in the early sixteenth century for an Oba named Esigie, in honor of his mother Idia. The face has softly modeled, naturalistic features, with graceful curves that echo the oval shape of the head. Four carved scarification marks, a number associated with females, indicate her gender.



Figure **13.4.3.72**: Detail, *Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba)*, 16th century, Edo peoples, Court of Benin, Nigeria, ivory, iron, copper, 23.8 x 12.7 x 8.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Iron inlays for the pupils and rims of the eyes intensify the Queen Mother's authoritative gaze and suggest her inner strength. The two vertical depressions on her forehead were also inlaid with iron. She is depicted wearing a choker of coral beads and her hair is arranged in an elegant configuration that resembles a tiara. The intricately carved openwork designs are stylized mudfish alternating with the faces of Portuguese traders. Both motifs are associated with the Oba and his counterpart, the sea god Olokun. The mudfish is a creature that lives both on land and in water, and a symbol of the king's dual nature as both human and divine. Similarly, the Portuguese, as voyagers from across the sea, may have been seen as denizens of Olokun's realm. Like the sea god, they brought great wealth and power to the Oba.



Figure **13.4.3.73**: *Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba)*, 16th century, Edo peoples, Court of Benin, Nigeria, ivory, iron, copper, 23.8 x 12.7 x 8.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In Benin culture, ivory holds both material and symbolic value. As a luxury good, ivory was Benin's principal commercial commodity and helped to attract Portuguese traders who, in turn, brought wealth to the kingdom in the form of copper and coral. In addition, ivory is white, a color that symbolizes ritual purity and is also associated with Olokun, who is considered to be a source of extraordinary wealth and fertility.

Queen Idia is honored as a powerful and politically astute woman who provided critical assistance to her son during the kingdom's battles to expand. Upon the successful conclusion of the war, Esigie paid tribute to Idia by bestowing upon her the title of Queen Mother, a custom that has continued with subsequent rulers until the present time. The title of Queen Mother, or *Iyoba*, is given to the woman who bears the Oba's first son, the future ruler of the kingdom. Historically, the Queen Mother would have no other children and, instead, devote her life to raising her son. Oba Esigie is said to have worn the mask as a pectoral during rites commemorating his mother. The hollow back, holes around the perimeter, and stopper composed of several tendrils of hair at the summit suggest that the mask functioned as an amulet, filled with special and powerful materials that protected the wearer. Today, such pendants are worn at annual ceremonies of spiritual renewal and purification.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

African Ivories (Metropolitan Museum of Art publication)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

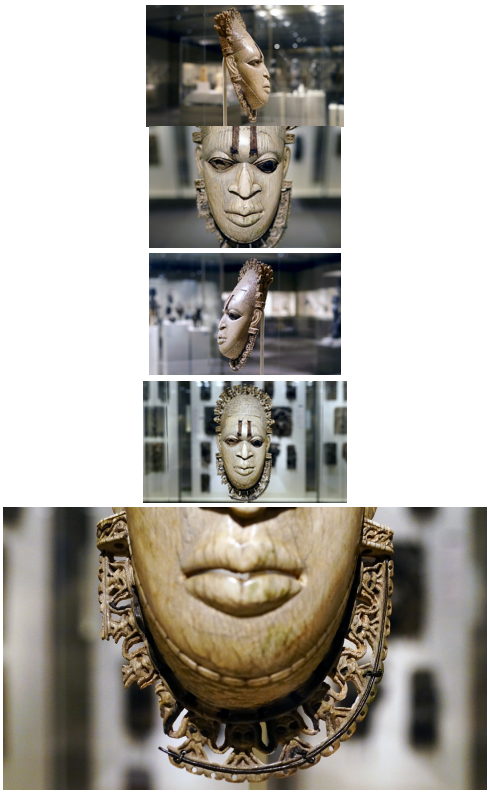
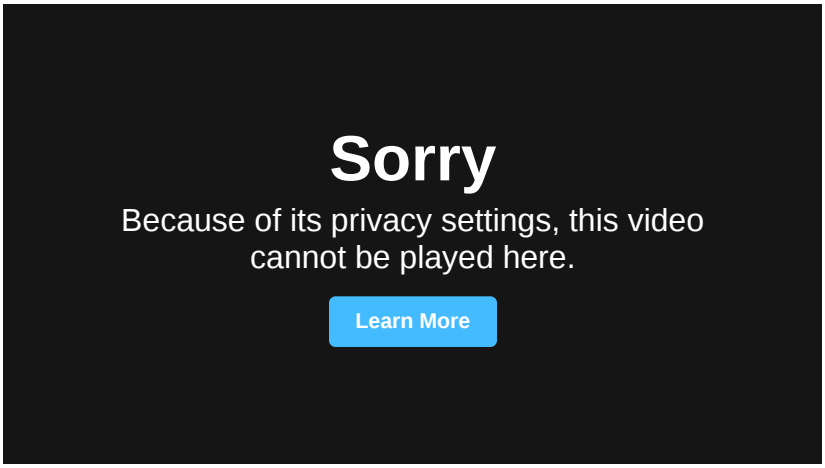


Figure 13.4.3.74: More Smarthistory images…

Benin ivory mask (Edo peoples)

by HENI TALKS



Gus Casely-Hayford - 'A Physical Essay in Power': The striking story of a Benin ivory mask from HENI Talks on Vimeo.

Cultural Historian Dr. Gus Casely-Hayford tells the remarkable story of a sixteenth century ivory mask from Benin, West Africa.

Contrary to its serene visage, Casely-Hayford explores how this finely carved artefact is a 'physical essay in power': a testament to subterfuge, savvy trading networks and bloodshed. Casely-Hayford also reflects on the mask's changing status in the British Museum over the course of the past century, and how such objects – once regarded as 'primitive' – had a profound impact on the Western twentieth century avant-garde. With the rise of post-Colonial theory, such works in Western collections are now securing the status that their cultural significance merits.

Benin plaque: *Equestrian Oba and Attendants*

by GREG STUART



Figure **13.4.3.75**: Plaque: *Equestrian Oba and Attendants*, Edo peoples (Benin Kingdom), 1550–1680, brass, 19 7/16 x 16 1/2 x 4 1/2″ / 49.5 x 41.9 x 11.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This remarkable brass plaque, dated between 1550-1680, depicts an Oba (or king) and his attendants from the Benin Empire—a powerful kingdom located in present-day Nigeria. We know that the central figure is an Oba because of his distinctive coral beaded regalia. Also, attendants hold shields above his head, either to protect him from attack or possibly from the hot, tropical sun. This was a privilege only afforded to an Oba.

The figures around him range in size, not because of their actual height or distance from the Oba, but rather due to their level of importance within the court. This convention of sizing human figures based on status is known as “hierarchic scale” and is found in artwork from cultures around the world and across time. The Oba would have travelled with a large cohort of attendants, warriors, servants, diplomats, chieftains, and priests.

The plaque originally hung alongside many others on posts throughout the palace of the Oba. The order of their placement on these posts would have told the history of the royal lineage of Benin’s Obas, who traced their dynasty all the way back to Oranmiyan, whose son was the first Oba of Benin. However, the sequence of plaques is lost to us since they were long held in storage when found by westerners in the 19th century. You may notice that the Oba rides sidesaddle on horseback, which would seem to indicate a connection to Oba Esigie (who ruled c. 1504-1550), the first Oba to travel by horse. However, without knowing the original order of the plaques, we will never know for certain whether this was Esigie, or a later Oba who emulated his brash new mode of travel.

Artists working in brass were organized under Esigie. Today, artists working in brass in Benin are part of a brass workers guild, and it was likely that previous generations would have also worked collectively. These artists created plaques and other sculptures using what is known as the “lost wax casting technique,” in which, first, a more malleable wax version of the final brass work is made. It is then covered in clay and fired to harden the clay, removing the wax, which melts away in the process (hence the term, “lost wax”). Hot, molten liquid brass is then poured into the clay mold. As the brass cools, it hardens, and the clay is removed, revealing the finished plaque.

Crossing cultures: a record of trade

Plaque (detail): <em

Equestrian Oba and Attendants, Edo peoples (Benin Kingdom), 1550–1680, brass, 19 7/16 x 16 1/2 x 4 1/2" / 49.5 x 41.9 x 11.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)" height="450" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...ed8ac3ca82.jpg
" width="772">

Figure **13.4.3.76**: Plaque (detail): *Equestrian Oba and Attendants*, Edo peoples (Benin Kingdom), 1550–1680, brass, 19 7/16 x 16 1/2 x 4 1/2″ / 49.5 x 41.9 x 11.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Almost every detail in this work speaks to the Benin Kingdom’s mutually beneficial trade with Portugal, which first made contact with Benin in the late 15th century. The Portuguese received items like peppers, cloth, and stone beads from Benin, while Benin received—among other items—the coral that makes up the beads worn by the Oba, and even the brass that makes up this plaque in the form of manillas, or armbands, worn by the Portuguese, which would have been melted down as the raw material for this plaque.



Figure **13.4.3.77**: Manilla, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, 17th century (?). Brass, 24 x 26 x 8 cm (Museum für Völkerkunde Wein, coll. A. Maschmann)



Figure **13.4.3.78**: Rosette shape and figure (detail), plaque: *Equestrian Oba and Attendants*, Edo peoples (Benin Kingdom), 1550–1680, brass, 19 7/16 x 16 1/2 x 4 1/2″ / 49.5 x 41.9 x 11.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The rosette shapes that adorn the background of the plaque were possibly derived from Christian crosses brought by these European traders. Even the horse that the Oba rides was originally introduced to West Africa from across the sea. There is nothing quite like these plaques in all of Africa or Europe from this period, and some scholars speculate that they were created as a way of reconciling traditional African brass sculptural forms with the illustrated books and prints that may have been in the possession of European travelers.

Troubled Legacy

Trade began to decline with Portugal as the Portuguese empire waned in the 18th century. By the 19th century, Britain was seeking to make inroads with Benin as a new trading partner. However, this partnership was much less mutually beneficial and was marked with frequent tension. After increased aggression from both nations, the British launched the Punitive Expedition of 1897, seizing the

Oba's palace, burning down the city around it, killing many, and looting the royal court's vast stores of art and treasure.



Figure **13.4.3.79**: British soldiers sit surrounded by Benin works of art during the British Punitive Expedition of 1897 (documentary photograph by Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson)

We know that this plaque was one of the artworks looted in the siege because Norman Burrows, a known trafficker in stolen Benin objects, owned it briefly during this time. This act of looting perpetrated by the British was later condemned as a criminal and violent act of British imperialism and colonialism. As such, there are many who believe that objects such as this plaque should be returned to the people of Benin, who remain deeply connected to their history and cultural traditions. However, there are others who feel that these remarkable objects are part of the world's heritage, and thus should remain in museum collections around the world as testament to this artistically rich culture.

Backstory

A consortium of European museums called the "Benin Dialogue Group," formed in 2007, has been meeting with representatives from Nigeria to discuss issues around repatriation. Their hope is to establish a system of rotating loans of artworks to Benin City, though the security and guaranteed return of the objects is a point of ongoing discussion, set to continue at a conference in 2018. The consortium includes representatves from the British Museum and Berlin's Humboldtforum, two of the institutions that hold the largest collections of objects from Benin. Other members of the group include museums in Cambridge, Vienna, Stockholm, Leiden, Leipzig and Dresden, Oxford, and Hamburg, and London. Museums in the United States and France, which also hold significant numbers of Benin artworks, have yet to become formally involved, though some, such as the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac in Paris, have been approached directly with restitution claims from Nigeria.

The ongoing dialogue between museums and nations from which important objects, like those from Benin, were forcibly removed, highlights the complexities of the current, post-colonial world. Should formerly colonized areas be repaid for the damage inflicted on them by colonial powers? Who is responsible for doing so, and how? Who has the ethical right to the ownership, display, and preservation of these important pieces of cultural heritage? The formation of consortia like the Benin Dialogue Group is a significant first step towards resolving some of these thorny and pressing questions.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

Alice Apley, "African Lost-Wax Casting" on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Art of Africa: A Resource for Educators (publication by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, available online)

"Origins and Empire: The Benin, Owo, and Ijebu Kingdoms" on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Benin chronology on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Benin from the Dallas Museum of Art

Kate Ezra, *Royal Arts of Benin: The Perls Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992).

Barbara Plankensteiner, (ed.). *Benin Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria* (Ghent, Belgium: Snoeck Publishers, 2007).

"Looted Benin bronzes to be lent back to Nigeria," *The Art Newspaper,* October 16, 2017

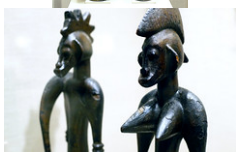















Figure **13.4.3.80**: More Smarthistory images…

Ere Ibeji Figures (Yoruba peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM



Figure, 19th-20th century, Nigeria, Yoruba peoples, wood, beads, cam wood powder, pigment, 9 1/4 x 3 9/16 inches (23.5 x 9 cm)

The Yoruba have one of the highest rates of twining in the world—it is estimated that out of every 1,000 births, 45-50 result in twins. Twins are revered among the Yoruba and come into this world with the protection of the *orisha* (deity) Shango who is evoked at the baby's naming ceremony when he or she is a few months old. Due to the low birth weight of twins and the high infant mortality rates in Nigeria, many twin babies do not live long. If a baby dies during childbirth, in the months leading up to the naming ceremony, the parents will seek consultation with an Ifá diviner, a Babalawo. If the Babalawo ascertains a spiritual cause, he will help the parents find a carver to create an *Ere ibeji* figure. An *Ere ibeji* is a wooden carving of a male or female figure once used by the Yoruba. The figure is thought to be a focal point for the spiritual energy of the deceased twin who, according to Yoruba traditional thought, resides in the supernatural realm where he/she is cared for by a spiritual mother.

Families, particularly grieving mothers, take comfort in the belief that a spiritual mother is caring for and guarding the departed child. The *Ere ibeji* is ritually washed, fed, clothed and carried in a cloth wrapper on the mother's back as a real baby would be carried. The *Ere ibeji* might also be decorated with camwood powder, blue paint, beads, shells, and precious textiles. But despite the fact that this carving can serve as a receptacle for the spirit of the dead child, *Ere ibeji* figures do not look like children. These figures are carved to represent an ideal type within the Yoruba criteria of beauty and in the prime of life—neither a child nor an old person.

The carving style emphasizes the conical head, an elaborate hairstyle, a roundness of the eyes and facial features, and a balanced composition between the body parts. Each of these features references a moral virtue or inner goodness all children should cultivate. *Ere ibeji* carvings reveal not only the importance of twins and a strong belief in the afterlife, but what Yoruba regard as beautiful and correct.



Figure **13.4.3.82**: *Ere Ibeji*, Yoruba, Nigeria, carved wood with attached personal ornaments including glass bead necklaces and girdles, metal armlets and strings of cowries attached from the wrists, 25 cm (National Museum of Scotland)

In the last fifty years, the practice of commissioning a carver to create an *Ere ibeji* has waned. *Ere ibeji* figures have become Western collector's items and artists are now carving for the tourist market. However, the practice of using spiritual figures has not stopped, though since the 1970s some parents have chosen to use manufactured, imported dolls or photographs instead of carved figures as receptacles for the spiritual energy of the deceased. These materials are generally less expensive, worldly, and modern. While *Ere ibeji* carvings have a distinct style, the fact that another medium can successfully serve the same purpose suggests that for the Yoruba, art is dynamic and flexible. While Western collectors demand an *Ere ibeji* that is similar to the image above, Yoruba practitioners were not constrained by a stylistic cannon and specific materials. For indigenous users, it is the concept behind this art making practice that is most important.

Additional resources:

Yoruba peoples on Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Kingdom of Ife: Sculptures from West Africa

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.4.3.83**

Ife (pronounced ee-feh) is today regarded as the spiritual heartland of the Yoruba people living in Nigeria, the Republic of Benin and their many descendants around the world. It is rightly regarded as the birthplace of some of the highest achievements of African art and culture, combining technical accomplishment with strong aesthetic appeal.

From the 12th to the 15th centuries, Ife flourished as a powerful, cosmopolitan and wealthy city-state in West Africa, in what is now modern Nigeria. It was an influential centre of trade connected to extensive local and long-distance trade networks which enabled the region to prosper.

Sculpture



Figure **13.4.3.84**: *The Ife Head*, c. 14th-15th century, brass, 35 cm high, Ife, Africa © Trustees of the British Museum

The artists of Ife developed a refined and highly naturalistic sculptural tradition in stone, terracotta, brass and copper and created a style unlike anything in Africa at the time. The technical sophistication of the casting process is matched by the artworks' enduring beauty. The human figures portray a wide cross-section of Ife society and include depictions of youth and old age, health and disease, suffering and serenity.

According to Yoruba myth, Ife was the center of the creation of the world and all mankind. Ife was home to many sacred groves located in the city's forests. Two groves in particular have revealed numerous sculptures: the Ore Grove with its stone monoliths, human and animal figures and the Iwinrin Grove which is associated with terra-cotta heads and fragments from life-size figures.

The identification and function of this head, in common with the others discovered at this site, remain uncertain. Its elaborate beaded headdress, possibly representing a crown, suggest that it was associated with an Ooni, a ruler of Ife.

Other sites have revealed spectacular pieces with royal associations, including the only known complete king figure and an exquisite terra-cotta head, possibly portraying a queen both from Ita Yemoo.

Ife today

Today Ife remains a major spiritual and religious centre for the Yoruba people. Some of its shrines and groves are still in use and rituals to key gods are performed regularly. Works of art from Ife have become iconic symbols of regional and national unity, and of pan-African identity. Since Independence in 1960 enthusiasm for copies or reproductions of heritage items with nostalgic associations has increased. The "Ori Olokun" head was chosen as the logo for the All-Africa Games held in Lagos in 1973 and has been adopted as the logo of numerous commercial, educational and financial institutions. Such images have become universal symbols of African heritage.
© Trustees of the British Museum

Ife uncovered

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



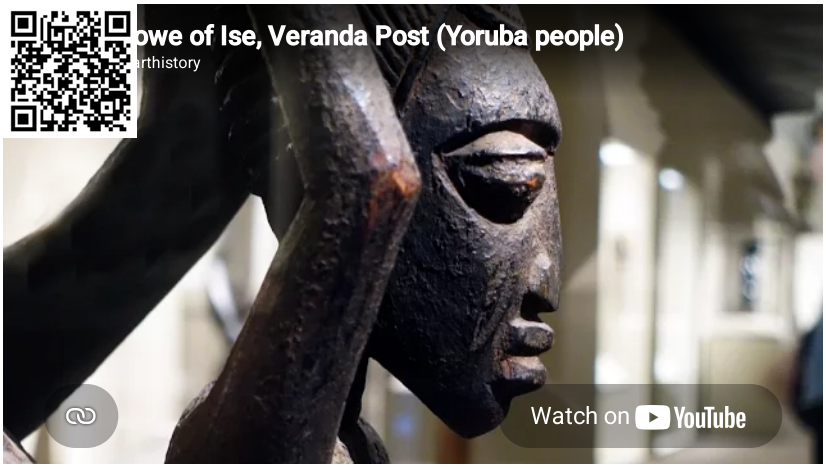
Video **13.4.3.10**: Professor John Picton and metallurgist Paul Craddock discuss the meaning and the making of the sculptures in the exhibition Kingdom of Ife sculptures from West Africa. © Trustees of the British Museum. Created by British Museum.

Little was known of the Ife civilization—that is until seventeen cast bronze heads were found by chance.

Olowe of Ise

Olowe of Ise, veranda post (Yoruba peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM, DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Video **13.4.3.11**: Olowe of Ise, Veranda post, before 1938, Nigeria, Yoruba peoples, wood, pigment, 180.3 x 28.6 x 35.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City). Speakers: Dr. Peri Klemm and Dr. Steven Zucker



Figure **13.4.3.85**: Olowe of Ise, Veranda post, before 1938 (Yoruba people, Nigeria), wood, pigment, 180.3 x 28.6 x 35.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City)

In the early twentieth century, a Yoruba ruler commissioned this architectural column from one of the most renowned sculptors in the history of Yoruba art, Olowe of Ise. Born in the nineteenth century in Efon-Alaiye, a famed carving center, Olowe moved as a youth southeast to Ise. There, his artistic reputation was established when he carved a program of architectural sculptures for its king, the Arinjale. Subsequent commissions of architectural sculpture for the palaces of other regional leaders brought Olowe even greater recognition as a master sculptor. Admired by his contemporaries, Olowe's artistic talent is recalled in oriki, or praise poems, composed in his honor. His accomplishments were also recognized in the West. In 1924, a pair of his palace doors was exhibited in London and acquired for the British Museum.

Olowe created this veranda post, one of several, for the exterior courtyard of a Yoruba palace. Carved from one piece of wood, the composition combines two classic Yoruba icons of power and leadership. The most prominent of these is the equestrian warrior, who is depicted frontally sitting regally on a diminutive horse. He holds a spear and a revolver. The image of the mounted warrior symbolizes the military might needed to form kingdoms. Local leaders adopted this image to validate their rule. At the base of the post, the kneeling female figure is depicted as the dominant form. In Yoruba culture, women are honored as the source of human life and embody ideas of spiritual, political, and economic power. These allegorical representations underscore the wealth and power of the ruler who commissioned the work.

Here, as in other examples of African sculpture, proportion and scale are altered and exaggerated to symbolize ideas. The disproportionately large heads represent character, self-control, and motivation. Eyes are large to suggest awareness. Among the Yoruba, the most beautiful people have a gap between their upper front teeth. The woman's exaggerated breasts symbolize her ability to have children and to nurture them. The woman is represented slightly larger than the warrior, suggesting that she is the essential support. The warrior's horse, less important than its rider, is depicted as smaller. The subordinate role of the two youths by the woman's side is suggested by their small scale.



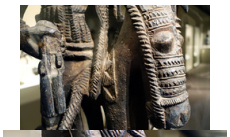
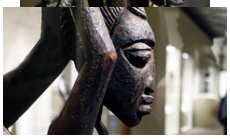
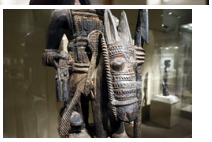
Figure **13.4.3.86**: Detail, Olowe of Ise, Veranda post, before 1938 (Yoruba people, Nigeria), wood, pigment, 180.3 x 28.6 x 35.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City)

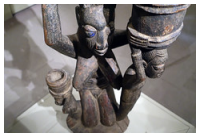
Stylistically, Olowe was very innovative in his composition. He is especially known for the manner in which figures project beyond the immediate boundaries of the sculptural space. Here, instead of the usual Yoruba practice of depicting figures in frontal poses, he sculpted the female figure turning toward the left with the two smaller attendants radiating outward at oblique angles. The compressed style of the upper portion of the column, with its weighty and self-contained equestrian figure, contrasts with the sense of kinetic energy created by the dynamic composition of multiple figures below. The sculpture's formal complexity is enhanced by its textured surface, with details originally painted in black, white, and royal blue. The deep carving style was well suited to the intense raking sunlight of its original setting just inside an exterior veranda.

The Yoruba, who live in southwestern Nigeria and southern Benin, are a diverse people with a rich cultural and artistic heritage of considerable antiquity. Although they number over 15 million people, the Yoruba embrace an overarching common identity through shared language and history. They trace the origins of both life and civilization to their founding city of Ile-Ife, which was a thriving urban center by the eleventh century. In the centuries that followed, numerous autonomous city-states developed, related through professed descent from Ile-Ife. In general, each city-state was governed by a sacred ruler, whose power was balanced by a council of elders. Artists working for these regional leaders produced a wide range of art forms designed to glorify the status of the king and his court.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88690



Figure **13.4.3.87**: More Smarthistory images…

Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife

by DEBORAH STOKES

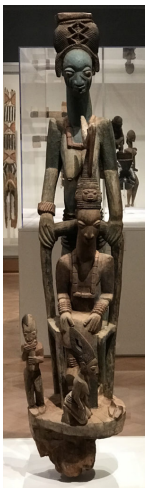


Figure **13.4.3.88**: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, early 20th century, wood and pigment (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, **Art Institute of Chicago**)

Like sculpture in Medieval Europe often created to embellish architecture, this magnificent work was commissioned for a principal entryway, originally one in a suite of five veranda posts. Hand carved from one sizeable piece of high-density hardwood timber, this work by the renowned Yoruba artist Olowe of Ise originally measured more than five feet high.

He has skillfully created a complex composition comprised of five figural elements on a circular base: the crowned king, his senior wife, and three smaller attendants (one now missing) in the royal household. Portrayals of rulers and their privileged power of earthly and divine authority unite the many global art traditions across time and space.



Figure **13.4.3.89**: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, detail (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, **Art Institute of Chicago**)

Master carver

Similar to the systems of Medieval European guilds of craftsmen, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Yoruba artistic traditions were maintained by artists working in specialized carving centers throughout the southwest area of Nigeria. “Master carver” designated a person who attained the skills through training and advanced from apprentice to master within a locally established carving center or compound. A carver with exceptional talent often set up a studio on his own, accepted apprentices and assistants, and was commissioned directly.

One great master carver, **Olowe of Ise**, became a widely celebrated artist for his virtuosity of invention and design developed through the production of a range of notable and important royal commissions in the early twentieth century. Born in the town of Ise, according to published accounts, most of his life was spent working in the court center of Ise though he took commissions from other royal patrons over a wide area in the Ekiti region.

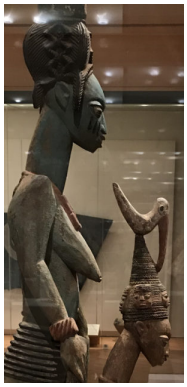


Figure 13.4.3.90: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, detail (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, Art Institute of Chicago)

Signature Style

Olowe's highly original and unique style results from the variety of elements and details that he has made his own and that can be found in many of his published works. His remarkable ability to free the figures from the dense hardwood is unlike any other Yoruba carver. His virtuosity can be seen in the elegant balance of the fully three-dimensional figures in a tiered composition and placed in a variety of poses on a single base.

He treats the heads as a single ovoid form leading the eye to the crowned head of the king (*Ogoga*) and his attendant queen. The heads project at a diagonal angle that are mounted on highly elongated and slightly forward-bending necks, creating a distinct line down to their squared shoulders. The convention of elongating the figure, head, and neck can be seen in many of Olowe's carvings, creating a solid "mounting" to visually highlight the importance of the head that holds *ase*, or the inner spiritual power, dignity, strength, and sacredness of one's destiny.

Yoruba traditional thought and belief is often made manifest through hieratic proportions. The status of the king's consort is visually relayed by her physical size. However, it is balanced by the location of the seated king at the center of the post. His crowned head has been positioned so that it would be viewed at eye level in the original veranda setting. His feet are not allowed to touch the earth, a symbol of his transcendent position. His eyes are downcast, introspective, and attentive to the world beyond. He wears a conical beaded crown, signifying the legitimacy of his reign. The crown is decorated with four carved ancestral faces or 'heads' with open eyes, a reference to the divine line of descent and spiritual wisdom (*ase*) it contains.



Figure 13.4.3.91: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, detail (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, Art Institute of Chicago)

The style of the hats with serrated lines can be found in many of Olowe's works. In traditional Yoruba religious belief, the crown is the key emblem of the power of a sanctified reign, signaling the transformation of the human wearing it into a conduit to the spiritual, ancestral realm. Three small figures, scaled according to culturally-specific status, are at the base: a female who kneels in a gesture of humility and reverence; a standing court messenger identified by his half-shaved head playing a flute announcing the king's presence; and a third, now missing, standing while holding a large circular fan, emblem of royalty and Osun, the river deity.



Figure 13.4.3.92: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, detail (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, Art Institute of Chicago)



Figure 13.4.3.93: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, detail (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, Art Institute of Chicago)

The king sits poised, leaning slightly forward, his weight held by his hands on his knees. A bird at the summit of his crown, a sign of transformational abilities and the protection of ancestral mothers, is rendered with an elongated beak that extends down to touch the very center of the beaded crown. Its tail points upward to the head of the standing consort who wears three vertical parallel facial marks with a line running from the left side of the bridge of the nose, identifying lineage to a principal Yoruba family, the Egbas.

She displays a once common practice in the Ekiti area of filing the front teeth as a sign of beauty and rank. Her elaborate hairstyle would reflect one worn for a festival honoring a deity (*orisha*) or during a chieftaincy installation. On her back, Olowe has replicated the queen's striking scarification patterns that are associated with her community and high status.

The formidable queen stands erect behind and towering over the king, yet they are visually connected by her hands gently resting on the back of the throne. Beaded coral adornments worn by the king and queen echo the form of their squared shoulders, and other beaded adornments are included, worn by entitlement as a member of the royal household. Traces of blue, red, and white pigments can be seen. They were once most likely prominent, but the colors have faded over time as the work was exposed to the outdoors.

A suite of five architectural posts commissioned from Olowe by the crowned king (*Ogoga*) of the town of Ikere, in Ekiti state, could be found situated in the principal entry to the local palace veranda and reception courtyard. Three of the major carvings appear to be functional supports, extending to the top of the veranda roof. Two multi-tiered figural posts flank a central geometric form, while two others facing outward represent a senior mother presenting her twins and a royal equestrian. A smaller freestanding equestrian figural group is at the center.



Figure 13.4.3.94: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Post of Enthroned King and Senior Wife, detail (photo: Dr. Delinda Collier, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, Art Institute of Chicago)

Photographed in situ more than two decades later (1958 and 1964), three of the original works had been reinstalled under a newly replaced palace veranda. The enthroned king with his senior wife is repositioned at the center and facing outward toward visiting guests, flanked by the senior mother with twins and the royal equestrian. All three appear to be structural supports. All three are now in American collections.

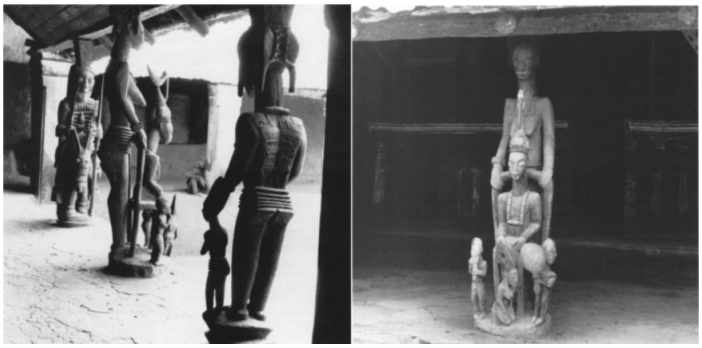


Figure **13.4.3.95**: Olowe of Ise, Veranda Posts in situ, Inner courtyard, palace of the ogoga, king of Ikere (photos by William Flagg, from Pemberton, John. "Art and Rituals for Yoruba Sacred Kings." *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 15, no. 2 (1989): 97-174

Global Connections

Olowe of Ise was flourishing in southwest Nigeria in the early twentieth century, coinciding with the time when early **Modernism** was emerging in the avant-garde circles in Paris studios. African art was **displayed** in the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in Paris, arriving in the late nineteenth century as a result of scientific expeditions and colonial conquest.



Figure **13.4.3.96**: Constantin Brancusi, *King of Kings*, c. 1938, wood, 300.7 x 48.3 x 46 cm (photo: **V**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Constantin Brancusi would have been inspired by works from francophone colonies, as *King of Kings* demonstrates. Similar to Olowe's veranda posts, this work was originally intended to stand in an architectural space, *Temple of Meditation*, a private sanctuary commissioned in 1933 by the Maharaja Yeshwant Rao Holkar of Indore.



Figure **13.4.3.97**: David Adjaye Associates, National Museum of African American History and Culture (photo: **Mondoo59**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Architect David Adjaye was inspired by the top element of another of Olowe's veranda posts for his design of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Institution. Depicting a notable equestrian leader, the multi-figural veranda post is on long term loan from the Museum of Five Continents, Munich, Germany and installed on the 4th floor.

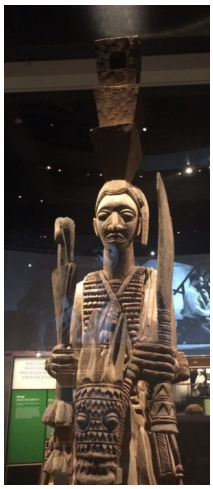


Figure **13.4.3.98**: Olowe of Ise, Equestrian veranda post, detail (photo: C-Monster, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Additional resources

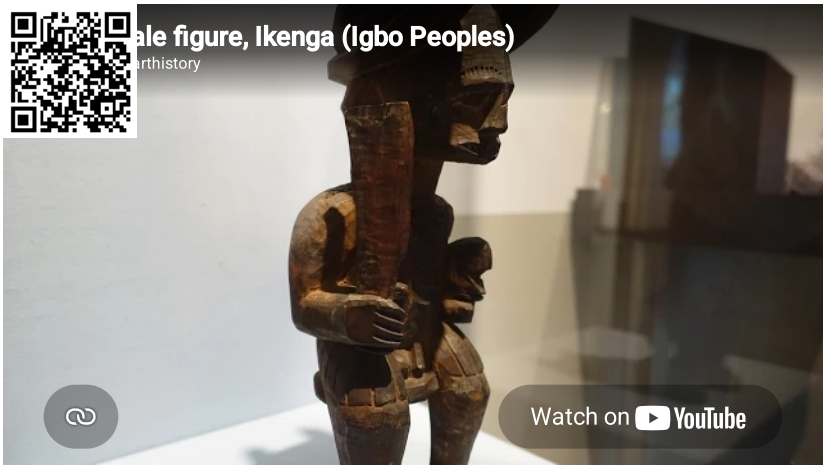
Walker, R.A., *Olowe of Ise: A Yoruba Sculptor to Kings*, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 1998

Olowe of Ise in the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

Read more about Olowe of Ise

Ikenga (Igbo peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.4.3.12**: *Ikenga*, Igbo peoples, Nigeria, wood (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology)

These carved wooden figures have human faces but animal attributes, and reflected the achievements of their owners.



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88690



Figure 13.4.3.99: More Smarthistory images…

Uche Okeke

by PERRIN LATHROP

> ***"Young artists in a new nation, that is what we are! We must grow with the new Nigeria and work to satisfy her traditional love for art or perish with our colonial past."***
>
> ***—Uche Okeke, from the "Zaria Art Society Manifesto," Natural Synthesis, 1960***

The Art Society of Zaria

During the period leading up to and following Nigerian independence in 1960, artists appropriated cultural and aesthetic traditions from around the country as a means of defining a new national identity. They drew upon narratives from Yoruba, Igbo, Urhobo and other cultures, Bible stories, local histories and artistic traditions to inform the content and style of their works, manipulating tales from the past to produce a mythology for the present.

This practice was defined as "natural synthesis" by the Art Society at Zaria, an arts group formed in the late 1950s by Uche Okeke, Demas Nwoko, Simon Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya and other art students at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology (now Ahmadu Bello University) at Zaria in the northern region of Nigeria. The Art Society sought to reconsider the emphasis on Western academic artistic traditions espoused by the largely European faculty at Zaria, an art program associated with Goldsmiths (part of the University of London). Moving away from traditions steeped in colonialism, "natural synthesis" merged the best of indigenous art traditions, forms and ideas with useful ones from Western cultures to create a uniquely Nigerian aesthetic perspective.



Figure 13.4.3.100: Uli body designs from Awka District, collected by W.B. Yeatman c. 1933 (Pitt-Rivers Museum, University of Oxford)

Later known as the Zaria Rebels, the members of the Art Society devised an academic program outside of the official university curriculum. The members thoroughly researched indigenous cultural and artistic traditions, produced works based on their findings and met regularly to discuss the outcomes. Though they took a similar conceptual approach to art making, the vast diversity inherent in the practices they analyzed led to great variation in their formal and stylistic synthesis.

The *Uli* aesthetic

Uche Okeke, the Art Society's second president, drew inspiration for a new visual language from *uli*, an Igbo female body and wall painting tradition from southeastern Nigeria that is based on sinuous abstract forms derived from nature (above). In *uli*, Okeke saw "limitless expression," internalizing the drawing technique he learned from his mother, a renowned uli draughtswoman, to serve a modernist sensibility.



Figure 13.4.3.101: Uche Okeke, *Owls*, From the *Oja Suite*, 1962, ink on paper © The Estate of Uche Okeke (Newark Museum)

While waiting in Abule Oje, Lagos in 1962 for traveling papers to Munich, Germany, where he was to train in stained glass and mosaic at the Franz Meyer Studio, Okeke created a series of pen and ink drawings that make up his remarkable *Oja Suite*. In one drawing, *Owls* (left), vertical lines, zigzags, spirals (*agwolagwo* or snake motif) and v-shapes (*okala isinwaoji* or three-lobed kola nut motif) come together to form two owls perched amidst dense foliage under a full moon. With his spare manipulation of line and spontaneous employment of *uli* symbols, Okeke distills cosmic and animal forms to their essential components. Okeke does not simply mimic *uli* forms but internalizes the flowing, poetic process of the drawing tradition itself, analyzing and exploiting its formal potential.

In drawings like *Owls*, the meanings of particular *uli* symbols become untied from their referents and depend entirely upon the other lines, motifs and spaces within the composition for interpretation. In Okeke's hands, the flowing lines and naturalistic patterns of *uli* converge to form vegetal, human and animal compositions that give form the artist's conception of a new Nigeria.

Civil war

After his return from Germany in 1963, Okeke settled in Enugu, then capital of Nigeria's Eastern Region. With the help of other former Art Society artists, Okeke established a cultural center, which he directed from 1964 to 1967. Modeled on prominent scholar Ulli Beier's Mbari Artists and Writers Club in Ibadan, Okeke's Mbari Enugu brought together artists, writers, dramatists and intellectuals to exchange ideas, collaborate, exhibit and discuss new work.

From 1967 to 1970, Nigeria's brutal civil war, known as the Nigerian-Biafran War, tore apart the newly independent nation with economic, ethnic, cultural and religious conflict. Though the southeastern provinces attempted secession to establish the short-lived Republic of Biafra, Nigeria remained largely united despite endemic corruption, poverty, inequality and injustice.



Figure **13.4.3.102**: Uche Okeke, *Refugee Family*, 1966, linotype

In the lead up to and during the war, Okeke mobilized participants at the Mbari to produce art, literature and performances that reflected their experiences of the conflict. With a heightened awareness of the failure, hope and tragedy of humanity, Okeke produced works like *Refugee Family* (1966) that meditated on the pogroms (organized massacres of particular ethnic groups) inflicted upon Igbo in Northern Nigeria at the start of the war. Alienated figures in earth tones are sparely outlined with thick *uli*-influenced strokes. The work's modest medium (linocut on paper) and technique represent the artist's need to process the conflict through visual production, despite the dearth of art materials available at the time.

Nsukka

After the war, Okeke joined the faculty of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he ran the Department of Fine and Applied Arts from 1971 to 1983. Under his direction, Nsukka rose to prominence as a center of Nigeria's artistic creativity, drawing artists like the renowned El Anatsui to its ranks. At Nsukka, Okeke further developed his synthesis theory, encouraging students to research Nigerian art traditions to solve formal problems in their work. The artist's own experiments with *uli* became increasingly abstract in prints like ***Isi Nwoji* (1972)** where *uli* motifs, like the diamond-shaped kola nut (*isioji*), are clearly defined but with a bolder graphic approach.

The oil boom of the mid-1970s expanded Nigeria's income capacity, but also brought massive official corruption and the institution of a series of military regimes from 1983 to 1998. Under Okeke's supervision, Nsukka students like Obiora Udechukwu manipulated *uli*, and later *nsibidi*, another indigenous graphic system, and even Chinese *li* calligraphy to give form to the social and political struggles preoccupying everyday life in Nigeria.

Through Udechukwu, who later became a prominent professor at Nsukka, Okeke's rigorous intellectual inquiry into *uli* influenced another generation of artists, including Tayo Adenaike, Olu Oguibe, Chika Okeke-Agulu and Marcia Kure, among others. Like Okeke, these artists continue to think deeply about place and history in their very contemporary manipulations of design traditions from the past.

Additional Resources:

"The Poetics of Line: Seven Artists of the Nsukka Group," National Museum of African Art

Ulli Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968).

Clementine Deliss, *Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa* (New York: Flammarion, 1995).

C. Krydz Ikwuemesi, ed. *The Triumph of a Vision: An Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria* (Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery, 2003).

Chika Okeke-Agulu, "Nationalism and Rhetoric of Modernism in Nigeria: The Art of Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko, 1960-1968," *African Arts*, vol. 39, no. 1 (Spring 2006): pp. 26-37, 92-3.

Simon Ottenberg, *New Traditions from Nigeria: Seven Artists of the Nsukka Group* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

Simon Ottenberg, ed. *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and University of Washington Press, 2002).

Yinka Shonibare, *The Swing (After Fragonard)*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure **13.4.3.103**: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *The Swing (After Fragonard)*, 2001 (Tate, London) © Yinka Shonibare

With her fingers delicately grasping the thickly coiled rope of a swing suspended mid-flight, a life-sized female mannequin flirtatiously kicks up her left foot, projecting her slipper into the air where it hovers above a tangle of branches. Our gaze is directed from the arch of her foot towards the vibrant trim of her petticoat, gown and coat.

A recreation of a Rococo painting

The Swing (After Fragonard) is a three-dimensional recreation of the Rococo painting after which it was titled, which itself offers testimony to the opulence and frivolity of pre-Revolutionary France. Painted in 1767, Jean-Honoré Fragonard's *The Swing* depicts a coquettish young girl swinging in a lush and fertile forest and, of course, playfully kicking up her shoe. A sculpture of a bashful cherub looks on, but he is not alone; the female figure is flanked by two male figures lurking in the shadows, one seems to push her swing from behind, as the other mischievously glances up the layers of her dress to catch a glimpse of what is beneath.

Living with History

> ***Living in England, with my colonial relationship to this country, one cannot escape all these Victorian things, because they are everywhere: in architecture, culture, attitude…***



Figure 13.4.3.104: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, oil on canvas, 1767 (Wallace Collection, London

Shonibare's quotations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century style and sensibility are visually captivating; at the same time, tableaux such as *The Swing* contain some dark undertones. To begin with, the beautiful young protagonist of Fragonard's painting has somehow become headless. This is likely a reference to the use of the guillotine during the Reign of Terror in the 1790s, when members of the French aristocracy were publicly beheaded. Drawing our attention to questions of excess, class and morality that were raised by revolutionaries two centuries ago, Shonibare invites us to also consider the increasing disparity between economic classes today, especially alongside the growing culture of paranoia, terror and xenophobia in global politics since 9/11.

As a British-born Nigerian, raised between Lagos and London, Shonibare is especially perceptive to the ways in which issues of access, nationalism and belonging have their roots in modern European history, particularly with regards to the United Kingdom and its relationship to its former colonies. Here is where the specific fabrics that Shonibare utilizes become more relevant, as their symbolism is steeped in histories of cultural appropriation, imperialism and power.

Indonesian motifs, made by Europeans, sold in West Africa

Though tailored in the fashion of eighteenth-century French aristocratic style, the costume that is modeled by Shonibare's protagonist has been sewn from colorful and abstractly patterned fabrics with quite different origins: the bright golds, reds and blues arranged in geometric motifs across her ruffled skirt are typical of the "African" Dutch wax fabrics that Shonibare has famously used to adorn his figural tableaux throughout his career.



Figure 13.4.3.105: Dutch wax print fabrics (photo: **ipercher**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

While these fabrics have come to signify African identity today, the patterns on Dutch wax fabrics were originally based on motifs found in Indonesian batiks, and were manufactured in England and Holland in the nineteenth-century. Predictably, the European imitations did not prove lucrative when sold in South Asian markets, so Dutch manufacturers then marketed the textiles to their West African colonies, where they have since been appropriated and integrated into local visual culture.

As such, Dutch wax fabrics as we know them today are the product of the complex economic and cultural entanglements that resulted from European imperialism. As curator Okwui Enwezor has explained, Shonibare uses the fabrics "as a tool to investigate the place of ethnicity and the stereotype in modernist representation. (…) The textile is neither Dutch nor African, therefore, the itinerary of ideas it circulates are never quite stable in their authority or meaning."

Aesthetics and Authenticity

As fictional as their "African-ness" may appear to be, however, the fabrics have now been completely assimilated in places like Nigeria, where Shonibare grew up. As Enwezor points out, the material is "both fake and authentic, both readymade and original," not to mention indisputably cosmopolitan.

The question of what is "authentically" African has personal resonance for Shonibare, who, as an art student in London, was shocked when one of his instructors suggested that he make work that expressed his African identity. This conversation prompted him to think about stereotypes and the areas that exist between categories of identity and culture. The artist began using the material in 1992.

In Pursuit of Leisure

What might Shonibare wish to communicate by bringing together these "African" textiles with Fragonard's Rococo images, or any of the other European masterpieces that the artist has appropriated in his sculptural installations?

In imaging this particular moment in European history, Shonibare wishes to forge connections between imperialism, the aristocracy, and the "colonized wealthy class." In *The Swing (After Fragonard)*, which is loaded with references to the French Revolution, the Age of Enlightenment and colonial expansion into Africa, Shonibare asks us to consider how a simple act of leisure can be so controversial.

> ***While the leisure pursuit might look frivolous (…) my depiction of it is a way of engaging in that power. It is actually an expression of something much more profoundly serious insofar as the accumulation of wealth and power that is personified in leisure was no doubt a product of exploiting people.***

In this and other works, Shonibare chooses stories—including biographies, world events, and works of art—which are already effective allegories concerning race, class, corruption and greed, calling our attention to some of the darker moments in Western history. However, his use of the Dutch Wax fabric, with its spurious origins and its misleading aesthetic identity, serve as a reminder that history and truth are also themselves constructions.

Republic of Benin

Buffalo (*Bocio*) (Fon peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure 13.4.3.1: Buffalo (Bocio), 19th century, Republic of Benin, Fon peoples, silver, iron, and wood, 30.5 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Royal works of art, like this silver buffalo, were made by members of the Huntondji family, who served Fon kings as jewelers and smiths since the eighteenth century. Though small in size, this shimmering silver creature radiates strength and determination. Bulging eyes, bared teeth, black curved horns, cocked ears, and swishing tail create this effect. Its eyes, horns, and tail are made from iron, a material associated with the Fon war god, Gu. The forest buffalo was an emblem of the Fon king Guezo, who ruled Dahomey (modern Republic of Benin) from 1818 until 1858. The qualities associated with a ruler's emblem—in the case of the buffalo, strength, enduring memory, and royal legacy—were seen as defining a king's reign. Although he came to power by usurping the throne of his older brother, Guezo is recalled as an important leader who unified the diverse constituencies of the kingdom.

Symbols of Fon kings were determined in a divination ceremony known as *fa*, which predicted the nature and character of each king's reign. The buffalo emblem is one of 256 different *fa* divination signs, which were represented in a variety of artistic media created to support and enhance the king's authority. Sculptural forms, like this example, in addition to functioning as royal symbols, also served as bocio, empowered objects that provided protection to the king. Placed in palace shrines where they served as the focus of prayer, these works were given potency through the presence of powerful substances in their interiors. Royal bocio were also displayed during ceremonial processions and transported to battlefields during times of war.



Figure 13.4.3.2: Detail, *Buffalo (Bocio)*, 19th century, Republic of Benin, Fon people, silver, iron, and wood, 30.5 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

To create this buffalo figure, the sculptor sheathed a solid wooden core with very thin pieces of silver. He tacked these pieces to the surface in individual sheets, creating a patchwork effect. Then he finished the surface with hatching marks to simulate hide and incised vertical lines for the large, bared teeth. The sculptor's technique was a clever one, because silver was a luxury material derived primarily from European coins. The artist's technique of encasing wood in sheet metal maximized the visual effects of a costly material without using the large quantities of metal required for lost-wax casting.

The Fon kingdom of Dahomey, founded in the early seventeenth century, was an important regional power renowned for its strong monarchy, military prowess, and impressive court arts. Dahomey's influence expanded in the eighteenth century with the capture of the port city of Ouidah. From this coastal center, the kingdom participated in lucrative trade with Europeans, growing prosperous first by serving as a middleman in the Atlantic slave trade and, later, by selling palm oil. French colonization and the subsequent abolishment of the institution of kingship led to the fall of Dahomey in the late nineteenth century.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Portraits of African Leadership: Living Rulers

The art of Sierra Leone

15th - 20th century

Lidded Saltcellar

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.3**: *Lidded Saltcellar*, Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, 15th-16th century, ivory, 29.8 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This magnificent lidded ivory saltcellar was carved by a Sapi sculptor working in what is now Sierra Leone. This work is part of a group of ivory artifacts created during the earliest period of exchange between Africans living south of the Sahara and Europeans.



Figure **13.4.3.4**

During the second half of the fifteenth century, journeys of exploration brought Portuguese navigators into direct contact with cultures of coastal western Africa. At a number of coastal centers in present-day Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, as well as Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo, the travelers encountered African carvers of considerable talent and professional skill. They commissioned African works in ivory for export as souvenirs of their travels or as gifts for the European nobility who financed their voyages. Many of the artifacts entered European princely collections, formed as cabinets of curiosities. These works, whose African origins had been forgotten until recent art historical research unearthed them, have come to be known as Afro-Portuguese ivories.



Figure **13.4.3.5**: Rosettes (detail), *Lidded Saltcellar*, Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, 15th-16th century, ivory, 29.8 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

At the time, salt was rare and therefore very expensive in Europe. To be able to display this precious commodity in such a finely carved and elaborately detailed vessel was a symbol of wealth and prestige at the table of a wealthy Portuguese. Local artists are believed to have been shown European prototypes on which to base their creations.

This vessel's form and some elements of its decoration recall European saltcellars. For example, an acorn nestled inside the stylized petals of a rose crowns the top of the container, while four rosettes carved in relief surround the upper part of the lid (above).



Figure **13.4.3.6**: Snakes (detail), *Lidded Saltcellar*, Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, 15th-16th century, ivory, 29.8 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Most of the designs, however, are distinctly African, reflecting Sapi artistic sensibilities. Four figures wearing local dress are sculpted around the base (below). Two are warriors bearing swords and shields, and two are women. Above them, curving around the disk of ivory, are four delicately carved snakes that drop down toward four dogs represented in a state of alarm with bared fangs, drawn-back ears, and bristling fur.



Figure **13.4.3.7**: Detail, *Lidded Saltcellar*, Sierra Leone, Sapi-Portugese, 15th-16th century, ivory, 29.8 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Although the Sapi peoples have dispersed to other locales since the sixteenth century, traditions associated with contemporary peoples related to the Sapi, notably the Baga, provide insights into the meaning of such imagery. In Baga belief, snakes are identified with local water spirits, called Niniganné. The Niniganné are described as powerful beings with long, smooth hair and brilliant scales. They are believed to be capable of spanning two realms—the earthly and the spiritual—and are associated with waterways, wealth (in the form of clothing and metal), and danger. These attributes coincide with Sapi perceptions of the Portuguese seafarers, whose flowing hair and unusual attire may be compared to descriptions of Niniganné. Like the water spirits, the Portuguese visitors were regarded as powerful individuals with mystical abilities who traveled across the water bringing great riches, in the form of trade. They also brought danger, since, beginning as early as 1512, the Portuguese king required that ships returning from Africa be laden with slaves.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Afro-Portugese Ivories on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ivory and Boxwood Carvings, 1450–1800 on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Stone Head (mahe yafei), Kisi peoples

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.4.3.8**: *Stone head (mahe yafei)*, 16th – 18th century, Sierra Leone, Kisi peoples, steatite or soapstone, 24 x 10 x 17.5 cm © Trustees of the British Museum

Found accidentally

Numerous enigmatic sculptures carved in stone have been found over a wide area of Sierra Leone and western Liberia. Most of these sculptures are in human form. The Mende people who occupy the largest area where they have been discovered call them nomoli meaning “found spirit”; they are characterised by their bulging eyes and flaring nostrils.

The Mende regard them as “rice gods” and make offerings to them to increase their harvest yields. Other sculptures associated with the Kisi people, known as pomdo, are more varied in form. They are viewed as ancestor figures and are placed in shrines. Little is known about the age, use or origins of these sculptures. They have been found accidentally by local farmers buried in the earth or in waterways, and by diamond miners.

Larger, pedestal heads such as this one, appear to form a sub-group of the figures described above. This magnificent steatite head is rendered in a naturalistic style. It stands on a solid pedestal base with its head tilted majestically backwards. The elaborate hairstyle with top knot and the representation of earrings is beautifully captured. Other heads of this type are carved with beards or moustaches and some are depicted wearing nose-rings. Such attributes suggest that these heads represent people of status, possibly chiefs or community leaders.

Portuguese accounts from the early seventeenth century describe chiefs with elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold rings in their nose and ears but there is no mention of an active stone carving tradition at this time. The sculptures bear stylistic similarities to ivory salt cellars produced by Sapi artists for European clients between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Scholars currently believe that some of these stone sculptures may have been made prior to the arrival of Europeans on the coast in 1463.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Bundu / Sowei Helmet Mask (Mende peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.4.3.1**: Helmet Mask for Sande Society (*Ndoli Jowei*), Mende peoples, Nguabu Master (Moyamba district, Sierra Leone), late 19th-early 20th century, wood and pigment, 39.4 x 23.5 x 26 cm (Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York)

The Mende initiation rite for young women is the only known masquerade tradition where the mask-wearers are female.

Sowei refers most specifically to medicine—the kind of medicine that female healers/herbalists utilize. Embodied in this idea of medicine is a spiritual force. The mask, when danced, is a visual expression of this spirit. The term also refers to the custodian of the medicine — a Sande official.

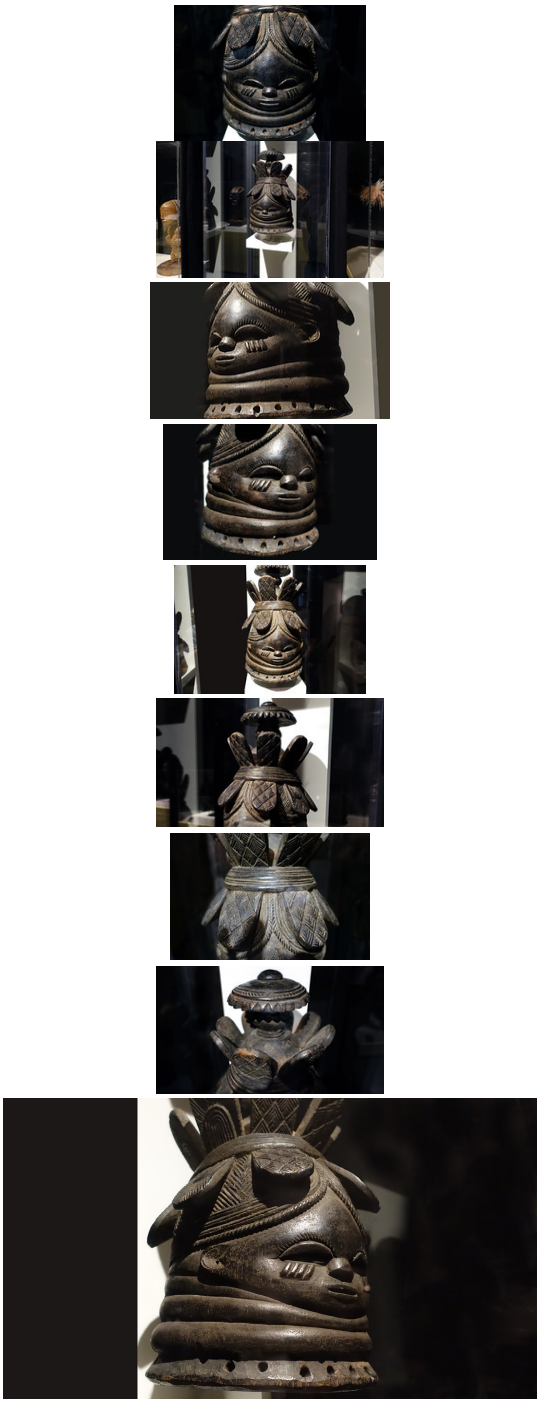


Figure **13.4.3.9**: More Smarthistory images…

Helmet Mask

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure 13.4.3.10: *Helmet Mask*, 19th-20th century, Sierra Leone, Moyamba region, Mende or Sherbro peoples, wood, metal, 47.9 x 22.2 x 23.5cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This helmet mask reveals the hand of a master through its refined carving, harmonious design, and innovative elements. Within Mende and Sherbro culture, helmet masks are carved with symbolic features intended to endow the wearer with spiritual power. Senior members of two distinct initiation societies, Sande and Humui, may have worn this work in performances.

Sande is a powerful pan-ethnic women's association responsible for the education and moral development of young girls. Helmet masks of this kind represent its guardian spirit and allude to an idealized female beauty. Historically, the Sande initiation process took months to complete, yet today sessions are coordinated with the calendars of secondary schools and may be completed during vacations and holidays. Such masks are worn by initiated Sande women at performances that celebrate the completion of the young initiates' training period.



Figure 13.4.3.11: Detail, *Helmet Mask*, 19th-20th century, Sierra Leone, Moyamba region, Mende or Sherbro peoples, wood, metal, 47.9 x 22.2 x 23.5cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The masks are finely carved to convey admired feminine features: an elaborate coiffure, a smooth, broad forehead, narrowly slit eyes, a small, composed mouth, and a sensuously ringed neck. This composition of forms and symmetry creates a serene facial expression that implies self-control. The presence of a beard, a symbol synonymous with the wisdom men achieve with age and experience, may suggest that, through Sande, women attain knowledge equal to men. Directly below the curve of the beard are two slots through which the performer can see.

The mask's glossy black patina evokes the beauty of clean, healthy, oiled skin. It may also refer to the blackness of the river bottom, where the Sande spirit is believed to reside. In this interpretation, the ringed neck may refer to the circular ripples of water that are formed as the Sande spirit emerges from her watery realm.

In Humui, a medicine society for men and women, this type of helmet mask has been used to address curative needs, especially mental illness. The four projecting animal-horn amulets that rise from the perimeter may be a reference to the animal horns filled with protective medicinal ingredients worn by Humui members.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This mask at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Cotton hammock (Vai peoples)

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure 13.4.3.12: Cotton hammock, early 20th century, Vai peoples, cotton, 213 x 125 cm, Sierra Leone © Trustees of the British Museum

Made for a chief

This is an elaborate hammock probably made for a male or female chief in Sierra Leone in the early twentieth century. Prior to the advent of motorised vehicles and an extended road network after the Second World War men and women of status in Sierra Leone used elaborate hammocks as a key means of transport in inland areas. During the colonial period British officials would also commission hammocks for their personal use.

These hammocks had a heavy wooden frame with a cloth canopy to protect them from the sun and the hammock was supported on the heads of four bearers. The slung part of the hammock was made from between three to five strips of woven cotton sewn together edge to edge to form a wide cloth. The ends were doubled over to form a loop through which the carrying poles were inserted.

Wealth and prestige

The cloth used for the slung part of the hammocks was inspired by the *kpokpo*("country cloth") tradition. Such cloth was woven in varying width narrow strips by men using a double-heddle loom. *Kpokpo* cloths use predominantly locally grown cotton often combined with imported machine spun yarn to provide greater strength and a wider range of colours. These specialist weavers demonstrated their creative ingenuity and technical knowledge in the design and patterning of some of these cloths which displayed the prestige and wealth of their owners.

This hammock is woven in three weft-faced strips in various shades of indigo, brown, red, and natural colours. Supplementary weft float motifs in black and white cotton thread are scattered – seemingly randomly – along the weft bands.

The centre of each band has a block of densely-worked tapestry weave geometric motifs. Along each side of the hammock are three separately woven flaps with bold weft stripes and natural-coloured pompoms. These would have been highly visible as the hammock travelled along and may have been specially designed for such public display.

The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Ceremonial Ladle (Dan peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.3.13**: Zlan of Belewale, Ceremonial Ladle *(Wakemia* or *Wunkirmian)*, Libera, Dan peoples, before 1960, wood, fiber, metal, and pigment, 13.3 × 58.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Among the We and neighboring Dan peoples, large, sculpted ladles like this one are created to honor women known as *wunkirle*, a title earned through their exceptional generosity and hospitality. This title is bestowed upon one woman from each village quarter who has demonstrated outstanding abilities as an industrious farmer, a bountiful provider of food, and a gracious host. The chosen woman is expected to offer hospitality to all who come to her door at the great celebrations that occur before the planting season begins. As *wunkirle*, she leads a procession of women carrying pots of cooked rice and soup and directs the distribution of the food to all the guests in attendance. Her duties also include hosting itinerant bands of musicians and entertainers as well as later providing food for men who toil in the fields during the planting season.

Such ladles are carved as an emblem of honor for a particular *wunkirle* and are typically passed on to the successor she selects to replace her. According to We belief, these ceremonial ladles embody a spiritual force, called *dü*, which sustains the wunkirle's exceptional abilities to organize feasts, bringing her great fame and social status. Women who have been honored as *wunkirle* often accompany male dancers wearing masks in performances. Bearing their ladles in hand, the women dance with the masker, offering gifts and blessings.



Figure **13.4.3.14**: Detail, Zlan of Belewale, Ceremonial Ladle *(Wakemia* or *Wunkirmian)*, Libera, Dan peoples, before 1960, wood, fiber, metal, and pigment, 13.3 × 58.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

This ladle takes the form of a long, scooplike bowl surmounted by a handle in the shape of a female head. It is attributed to the artist Zlan, a master carver active during the first half of the twentieth century. The face, sculpted in a style characteristic of Zlan's work, features slit eyes, a generous mouth with four metal- tab teeth, and a line of delicately incised scarification from forehead to nose. White kaolin clay around the eyes and extending to the sides represents the band of white kaolin clay that Dan women often apply cosmetically to symbolize the heightened powers of sight one must possess to be aware of the spiritual realm. A carved coiffure of two large crescents extending front to back is embellished with plaited fiber along the central ridges. On such ladles, the sculpted head is believed to be a portrait of the original owner of the ladle, whose individuality is conveyed through details of specific scarification and coiffure design features, rather than physical likeness.



Figure **13.4.3.15**: Source

Zlan's work was much sought after by wealthy patrons in Dan, Mano, and We villages in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The son of a carver, Zlan was born around the turn of the twentieth century in a We town on the River Cess, which forms a border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Zlan's early demonstration of artistic talent was recognized and encouraged by his mother, who gave him his first adze. He secured his first commission for a sculpture around the age of thirteen and eventually gained widespread recognition for his masterful carvings, many of which now grace museum collections in the United States and Europe.

Until his death sometime before 1960, Zlan served as a mentor to many students during their apprenticeship, establishing his village of Belewale as a major center of carving. According to the recollections of locals, Zlan was often assisted in carving by his wife Sonzlanwon, who blocked out forms in the wood for Zlan to finish. The tradition of carving has continued in Zlan's family, at least through the late 1980s, carried on by his nephews Wrudugweh and Blekwa as well as a niece, Ziate.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

13.4.3: West Africa is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **4.3: West Africa** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.4.4: Central Africa

Central Africa

Masks, reliquaries, power figures and more.

16th - 20th century

About Central Africa

by SMARTHISTORY

Central Africa includes Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Rwanda.

Create your own visited countries map or check out the JavaScript Charts.

Cameroon

In the Grasslands region of northwestern Cameroon, bead embroidery is one of the most lavish arts.

19th-20th century

Ceremonial Palm Wine Vessel (Cameroon Grasslands peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.4.1**: Ceremonial Palm Wine Vessel, 19th–20th century, Grassfields region, Cameroon, gourd, glass beads, cloth, cane, wood, 76.2 x 30.8 x 19.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Of the many ritual items in a Grassfields kingdom's royal treasury, bead-embroidered calabashes are among the most important. These containers were used exclusively by the Fon (chief) to store palm wine served on ceremonial occasions. The ritual consumption of palm wine was considered a sacred activity and reinforced the Fon's spiritual and political power. Palm wine was also an essential component of sacrificial libations to the ancestors.



Figure **13.4.4.2**: Animal heads (detail), Ceremonial Palm Wine Vessel, 19th–20th century, Grassfields region, Cameroon, gourd, glass beads, cloth, cane, wood, 76.2 x 30.8 x 19.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

This example features a long-necked calabash attached to a tall cylindrical basketry base. The carved wood stopper has two horned animal heads facing opposing directions and a third animal head pointing upward, symbols of all-seeing powers (above). The entire assemblage is covered with cloth embroidered with strands of translucent and opaque glass beads that form intricate and colorful circular, diamond-shaped, and zigzag patterns.

These abstract geometric motifs symbolize attributes of royal power. The circular medallions surrounding the spherical body refer to the earth spider, a symbol of supernatural wisdom and communication. Because this type of spider burrows in the earth, it is believed to have the ability to unite humans, who live above the ground, with the ancestors who are buried below. Diamond-shaped motifs on the stopper and on the sides and bottom rim of the stand represent the frog, a symbol of fertility and increase. Their presence on the container conveys the idea that, with the support of many people, a peaceful and prosperous kingdom is possible.



Figure **13.4.4.3**: Bottom (detail), Ceremonial Palm Wine Vessel, 19th–20th century, Grassfields region, Cameroon, gourd, glass beads, cloth, cane, wood, 76.2 x 30.8 x 19.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Rulers throughout the many kingdoms in the Grassfields region of western Cameroon employed a range of art objects to assert their political, economic, and religious power. Presented publicly in lavish displays of wealth and power, many court objects were distinguished by their elaborate bead embroidery. Imported from Europe, beads were considered a luxury material whose use and distribution were controlled by the Fon. The decoration of wooden sculpture with vast quantities of brilliantly colored beads transformed utilitarian objects, such as stools, vessels, and pipes, into symbols of royal status and prestige.



Figure **13.4.4.4**: Animal head (detail), Ceremonial Palm Wine Vessel, 19th–20th century, Grassfields region, Cameroon, gourd, glass beads, cloth, cane, wood, 76.2 x 30.8 x 19.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Trade Relations among European and African Nations

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.4.4.5: More Smarthistory images…

Elephant Mask (Bamileke Peoples)

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.4.4.1: *Elephant (Aka) Mask*, Kuosi Society, Bamileke Peoples, Grassfields region of Cameroon, 20th century, cloth, beads, raffia, fiber, 146.7 x 52.1 x 29.2 cm (Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York)

The austere display of this powerful object masks the complexity of its original context.

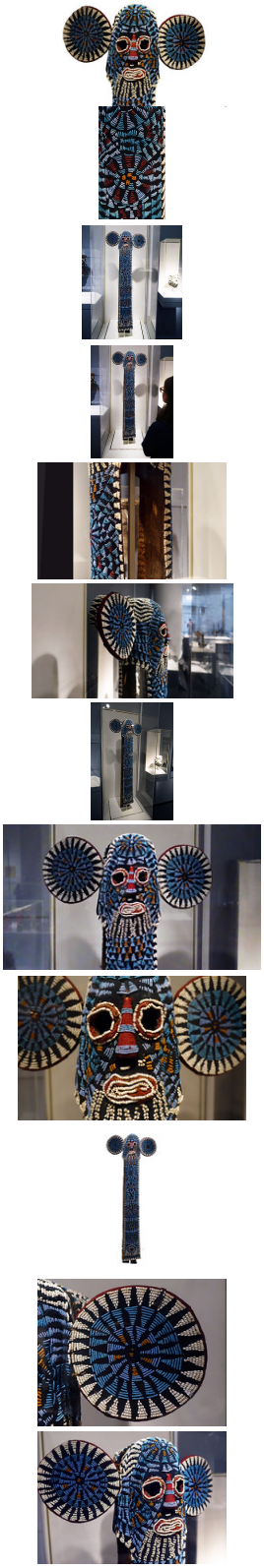


Figure **13.4.4.6**: More Smarthistory images…

Democratic Republic of the Congo

This region is home to numerous cultures and their art.

16th-20th century

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.4.7**: Crucifix, 16th-17th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kongo peoples, solid cast brass, 27.3 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

When Portuguese explorers first arrived at the mouth of the Zaire River in 1483, the Kongo kingdom was thriving and prosperous, with extensive commercial networks between the coast, interior, and equatorial forests to the north. Portugal and Kongo soon established a strong trading partnership. In addition to material goods, the Portuguese also brought Christianity, which was rapidly adopted by Kongo rulers and established as the state religion in the early sixteenth century by King Afonso Mvemba a Nzinga. The adoption of Christianity allowed Kongo kings to foster international alliances not only with Portuguese leaders but also with the Vatican. In response to their new faith, Kongo craftsmen began to introduce Christian iconography into their artistic repertoire.

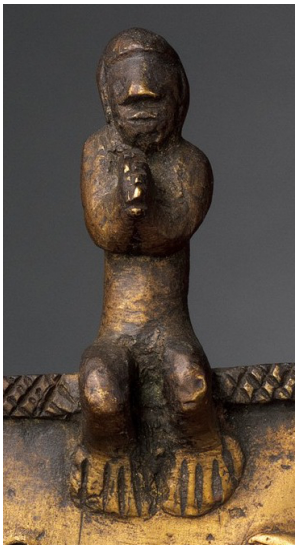


Figure **13.4.4.8**: Detail, Crucifix, 16th-17th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Angola; Republic of the Congo, solid cast brass, 27.3 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This crucifix demonstrates how Kongo artists adapted and transformed Western Christian prototypes.

Although the general depiction of the central Christ figure with arms extended follows Western conventions, the features of the face are African. The presence of four smaller figures with clasped hands—two seated on the top edges of the cross, one at the apex, and one at the base—is a departure from standard iconography (left). These figures are more abstract and remote, in contrast to the expressionistic treatment of Christ.

Western forms like the crucifix resonated profoundly with preexisting Kongo religious practices. In Kongo belief, the cross was already regarded as a powerful emblem of spirituality and a metaphor for the cosmos. An icon of a cross within a circle, referred to as the Four Moments of the Sun, represents the four parts of the day (dawn, noon, dusk, and night) that symbolize more broadly the cyclical journey of life.

Kongo kings, having adopted Christianity as the state religion, commissioned locally made crucifixes for use as emblems of leadership and power. These crucifixes were cast with copper alloys. The use of copper, a valued import from Europe, reinforced the association with wealth and power. Although Christianity was eventually rejected by the Kongo in the seventeenth century, such works continued to be made as symbols of indigenous cosmological concepts.

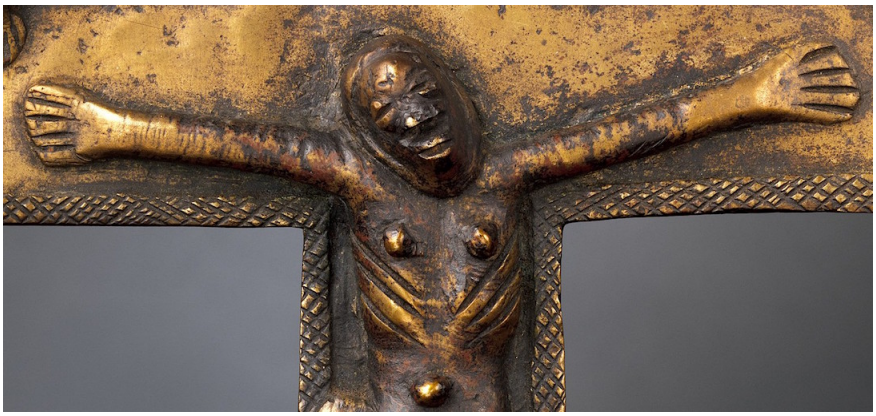


Figure 13.4.4.9: Detail, Crucifix, 16th-17th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Angola; Republic of the Congo, solid cast brass, 27.3 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This sculpture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Central Africa, c. 1600-1800 on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Female *(pwo)* Mask

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.4.4.2: Female (*pwo*) mask, Chokwe peoples, Democratic Republic of Congo, early 20th century, wood, plant fiber, pigment, copper alloy, 39.1 cm high (Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C.)

This mask was made and worn by men, but its purpose is to honor women who have bravely survived childbirth.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

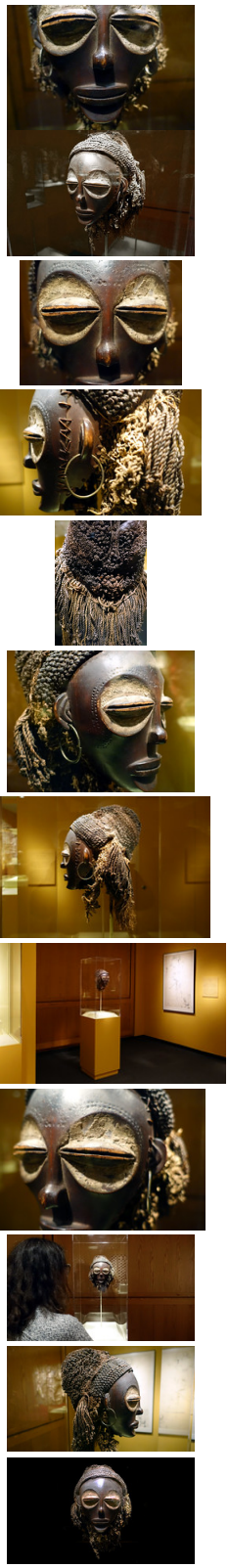
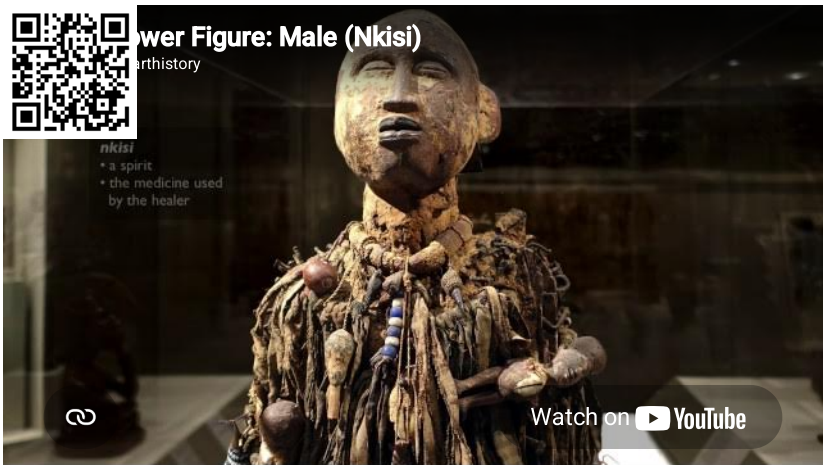


Figure 13.4.4.10: More Smarthistory images…

Power Figure (*Nkisi Nkondi*), Kongo peoples

by DR. SHAWNYA L. HARRIS and DR. PERI KLEMM



Video **13.4.4.3**:

Power Figure: Male (Nkisi), 19th-mid 20th century, Kongo peoples, wood, pigment, nails, cloth, beads, shells, arrows, leather, nuts and twine, 58.8 x 26 x 25.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Dr. Peri Klemm and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure **13.4.4.11**: *Power figure (Nkisi nkondi)*, Kongo peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo). c. late 19th century, wood and metal, 36 x 18 1/2 x 14 1/4″ / 16/8 x 47 x 36.2 cm (Detroit Institute of Arts)

Divine protection

Sacred medicines and divine protection are central to the belief of the Kongo peoples (Democratic Republic of Congo). The Kongo believe that the great god, Ne Kongo, brought the first sacred medicine (or *nkisi*) down from heaven in an earthenware vessel set upon three stones or termite mounds.

A *nkisi* (plural: *minkisi*) is loosely translated as a "spirit" yet it is represented as a container of sacred substances which are activated by supernatural forces that can be summoned into the physical world. Visually, these *minkisi* can be as simple as pottery or vessels containing medicinal herbs and other elements determined to be beneficial in curing physical illness or alleviating social ills. In other instances *minkisi* can be represented as small bundles, shells, and carved wooden figures. *Minkisi* represent the ability to both 'contain' and 'release' spiritual forces which can have both positive and negative consequences on the community.

Nkisi nkondi

A fascinating example of a *nkisi* can be found in a power figure called *nkisi nkondi* (a power figure is a magical charm seemingly carved in the likeness of human being, meant to highlight its function in human affairs.). A *nkisi nkondi* can act as an oath taking image which is used to resolve verbal disputes or lawsuits *(mambu)* as well as an avenger (the term *nkondi* means 'hunter') or guardian if sorcery or any form of evil has been committed. These *minkisi* are wooden figures representing a human or animal such as a dog (*nkisi kozo*) carved under the divine authority and in consultation with an *nganga* or spiritual specialist who activates these figures through chants, prayers and the preparation of sacred substances which are aimed at 'curing' physical, social or spiritual ailments.

Insertions



Figure (Nkisi N'Kondi: Mangaaka), mid to late nineteenth century, wood, paint, metal, resin, ceramic, 46 7/16″ / 118 cm high, Democratic Republic of Congo (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Nkisi nkondi figures are highly recognizable through an accumulation of pegs, blades, nails or other sharp objects inserted into its surface. Medicinal combinations called *bilongo* are sometimes stored in the head of the figure but frequently in the belly of the figure which is shielded by a piece of glass, mirror or other reflective surface. The glass represents the 'other world' inhabited by the spirits of the dead who can peer through and see potential enemies. Elements with a variety of purposes are contained within the *bilongo.* Seeds may be inserted to tell a spirit to replicate itself; *mpemba* or

white soil deposits found near cemeteries represent and enlist support from the spiritual realm. Claws may incite the spirits to grasp something while stones may activate the spirits to pelt enemies or protect one from being pelted.

The insertions are driven into the figure by the *nganga* and represent the *mambu* and the type or degree of severity of an issue can be suggested through the material itself. A peg may refer to a matter being 'settled' whereas a nail, deeply inserted may represent a more serious offense such as murder. Prior to insertion, opposing parties or clients often lick the blades or nails, to seal the function or purpose of the *nkisi* through their saliva. If an oath is broken by one of the parties or evil befalls one of them, the *nkisi nkondi* will become activated to carry out its mission of destruction or divine protection.

Migrations

Europeans may have encountered these objects during expeditions to the Congo as early as the 15th century. However, several of these "fetish" objects, as they were often termed, were confiscated by missionaries in the late 19th century and were destroyed as evidence of sorcery or heathenism. Nevertheless, several were collected as objects of fascination and even as an object of study of Kongo culture. Kongo traditions such as those of the *nkisi nkondi* have survived over the centuries and migrated to the Americas and the Caribbean via Afro-Atlantic religious practices such as vodun, Palo Monte, and macumba. In Hollywood these figures have morphed into objects of superstition such as New Orleans voodoo dolls covered with stick pins. Nonetheless, *minkisi* have left an indelible imprint as visually provocative figures of spiritual importance and protection.



Figure (Nkisi N'Kondi: Mangaaka), mid to late nineteenth century, wood, paint, metal, resin, ceramic, 46 7/16″ / 118 cm high, Democratic Republic of Congo (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Essay by Dr. Shawnya Harris

Additional resources:

This figure at the Detroit Institute of Arts

The sculpture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Nkisi Nkondi on Art Through Time

Nkisi Nkondi on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

David C. Driskell, Michael D. Harris, Wyatt Macgaffey, and Sylvia H. Williams, *Astonishment and power* (Washington: Published for the National Museum of African Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993).

Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the spirit: African and Afro-American art and philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983).

Ndop Portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul (Kuba peoples)

by ROGER D. ARNOLD

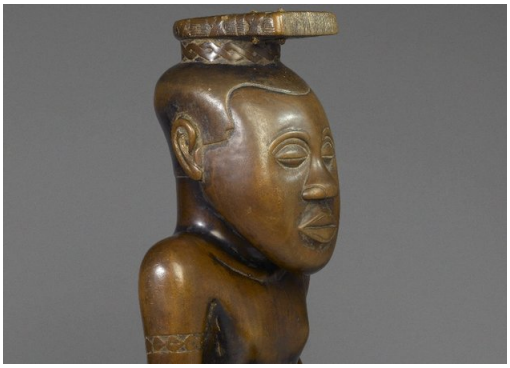


Figure **13.4.4.14**: Detail, *Ndop Portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul*, c. 1760-80, wood and camwood powder, 19-1/2 x 7-5/8 x 8-5/8″ (Brooklyn Museum)

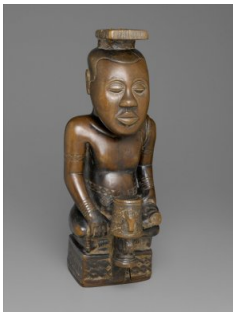


Figure **13.4.4.15**: Ndop Portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul, c. 1760-80, wood and camwood powder, 19-1/2 x 7-5/8 x 8-5/8″ (Brooklyn Museum)

In all world cultures, artists honor remarkable leaders by creating lasting works of art in their honor. Historical leaders in the West, like Charlemagne and Alexander the Great were celebrated for their accomplishments during their lifetime and remembered through many works of art created to preserve their legacy. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Kuba King Mishe miShyaang maMbul was celebrated throughout his kingdom for his generosity and for the great number of his loyal subjects. He was even the recipient of his own praise song. At the height of his reign in 1710,

he commissioned an idealized portrait-statue called an *ndop*. With the commission of his *ndop*, Mishe miShyaang maMbul recorded his reign for posterity and solidified his accomplishments amongst the pantheon of his predecessors. The *ndop* that portrayed his likeness was eventually purchased by the Brooklyn Museum in 1961 and has been on view at the museum since that time. It was first collected in 1909 by a colonial minister in what was then the Belgian Congo, the European country's colony.



Figure **13.4.4.16**: Frontal view, *Ndop Portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul*, c. 1760-80, wood and camwood powder, 19-1/2 x 7-5/8 x 8-5/8″ (Brooklyn Museum)

Why are Mishe miShyaang maMbul and others commemorated in the arts of Africa largely unknown to us? Unlike in Euro-American contexts, history in Sub-Saharan Africa was not written down by members of cultural communities until colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead of written records, oral narrative was the primary method for collective and personal histories to be passed down from one generation to the next. As these spoken histories were passed down, they were changed and adapted to reflect their times. The changing nature of oral narrative is like a highly complex game of telephone, where the words can be changed and often only the spirit of the original meaning is preserved.

Before being purchased by Western collectors and museums, African sculptures served as important historical markers within their communities. The *ndop* sculptural record helps freeze a moment in time that would otherwise be transformed during its transmission from generation to generation. When we look at these sculptures in museums, it is important to remember that they were created about, and for, individuals. Since information and history was transferred orally in Africa, sculptural traditions like the *ndop* can help us gain insight into information about historical individuals and their cultural ideals.

The Kuba Artist

The Kuba live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the southern fringes of the equatorial forest in an area bounded by two rivers called the Kasai and Sankuru. Over a period of three centuries of movement and exchange beginning in the 17th century, this loose confederacy of people formed into a durable kingdom. Since that time, the name "Kuba" largely refers to nineteen unique but related ethnic groups, all of which acknowledge the leadership of the same leader (*nyim*).

The Kuba are renowned for a dynamic artistic legacy across media. Historically, Kuba artists were professional woodcarvers, blacksmiths, and weavers who worked exclusively for the *nyim*. Kuba artists learned their art by becoming apprentices to others who were well-known and accomplished in their community. Similar to art traditions in other world cultures, the apprentices imitated or copied early pieces from their teachers until they were skilled enough to develop their own designs. Although the names of individual artists were not written down—and are not known to us today—artists were sought after by name and were important to the Kuba royal court and beyond.

Ndop Sculpture

The *ndop* statues might be the the most revered of all Kuba art forms. The *ndop* (literally meaning "statue") are a genre of figurative wood sculpture that portrays important Kuba leaders throughout the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Art historians believe that there are seven *ndop* statues of historical significance in Western museums. These seven are significant because the lives of the *nyim* they portray were celebrated in oral histories that were recorded and written down by early European visitors, so we know the most about them.



Figure **13.4.4.17**: Ndop, wooden carving of King Shyaam aMbul aNgoong, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), late 18th century, wood, 55 cm high (British Museum)

You can travel to the British Museum in England or the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Belgium to see *ndop*. *Ndop* sculptures that are on view at the British Museum were brought to Europe from Africa by Hungarian ethnographer Emil Torday. Torday and other early visitors to the Kuba court documented oral traditions related to artwork. Art historians have since tried to reconstruct and sort out these early accounts; they use the sculptures themselves to interpret precolonial Kuba history.

Ndop sculpture have rounded contours creating forms that define the head, shoulders and stomach, and also feature a defined collarbone. While the relative naturalism may appear to have been informed by an artist's one-to-one observation of the *nyim*, *ndop* sculptures aren't exact likenesses; they are not actually created from direct observation. Instead, cultural conventions and visual precedents guide the artists in making the sculpture. The expression on the face, the position of the body, and the regalia were meant to faithfully represent the ideal of a king—but not an individual King. For example, the facial features of each statue follow sculpting conventions and do not represent features of a specific individual. All figures are sculpted using a one-to-three proportion—the head of the statue was sculpted to be one third the size of the total statue. Kuba artists emphasized the head because it was considered to be the seat of intelligence, a valued ideal.



Figure **13.4.4.18**: Detail, *Ndop Portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul*, c. 1760-80, wood and camwood powder, 19-1/2 x 7-5/8 x 8-5/8″ (Brooklyn Museum)

How are we able to identify each *ndop*, then? There are specific attributes that link each *ndop* to named individuals. All ndop sculpture would feature a geometric motif and an emblem (*ibol*), chosen by the *nyim* when he was installed as a leader and commissioned his *ndop.* The geometric motif pattern and the ibol served as identifying symbols of his reign and was sculpted in prominent relief on the front of each base. The *ibol* is a signifier that gives the *ndop* its particular identity, making it clear who the sculpture portrays and what reign it represents. A drum with a severed hand is the *ibol* for Mishe miShyaang maMbul's reign, and that helps us identify the sculpture as his likeness.

Other styles or conventions that were followed by sculptors of *Ndop* can be found in royal regalia such as belts, armbands, bracelets, shoulder ornaments, and a unique projecting headdress, called a shody. The arms of each *ndop* extend vertically at either side of the torso, with the left hand grasping the handle of a ceremonial knife (*ikul*) and the right hand resting on the knee. Artists decorated the surface of the sculpture by carving representations of what was conventionally worn; the finely chiseled details correspond to objects that represent the prerogative and prestige of the *nyim*.

The *ndop* of Mishe miShyaang maMbul is part of a larger genre of figurative wood sculpture in Kuba art. These sculptures were commissioned by Kuba leaders or *nyim* to preserve their accomplishments for posterity. Because transmission of knowledge in this part of Africa is through oral narrative, names and histories of the past are often lost. The *ndop* sculptures serve as important markers of cultural ideals. They also reveal a chronological lineage through their visual signifiers.

Additional Reading

Binkley, David A. and Patricia Darish. *Kuba*. Milan: 5 Continents Press, 2010.

LaGamma, Alisa. *Heroic Africans: Legendary Leaders, Iconic Sculptures*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011.

Siegmann, William and Joseph Adande. *African Art: A Century At The Brooklyn Museum*. New York: Prestel, 2009.

Vansina, Jan. "Recording the Oral History of the Bakuba." *Journal of African History* 1:1, 1960, 43 – 61.

Lukasa (Memory Board) (Luba peoples)

by JULIET MOSS

Performing history

While Europeans may open a history book to learn about their past, in the Luba Kingdom of the Democratic Republic of Congo, history was traditionally performed—not read. In fact, Luba royal history is not chronological and static as Westerners learn it. Rather, it is a dynamic oral narrative which reinforces the foundations upon which Luba kingship is established and supports the current leadership. This history is also used to interpret and judge contemporary situations.



Figure **13.4.4.19**: *Lukasa* (memory board), Mbudye Society, Luba peoples, Democratic Republic of Congo, c. 19th to 20th century, wood, beads and metal

Special objects known as *lukasa* (memory boards) are used by experts in the oral retelling of history in Luba culture. The recounting of the past is performative and includes dance and song. The master who has the skill and knowledge to read the *lukasa* will utilize it as a mnemonic device, touching and feeling the beads, shells, and pegs to recount history and solve current problems.

Luba Kingdom

The Luba Kingdom of the Democratic Republic of Congo was a very powerful and influential presence from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries in central Africa. Their art highlights the roles that objects played in granting the holders the authority of kingship and royal power.

The Luba people are one of the Bantu peoples of Central Africa and the largest ethnic group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Kingdom of the Luba arose in the Upemba Depression (a large marshy area comprising some fifty lakes) in what is now the southern Democratic Republic of Congo. The Luba had access to a wealth of natural resources including gold, ivory, and copper, but they also produced and traded a variety of goods such as pottery and wooden sculpture.

Lukasa

For the Luba people, kingship is sacred, and the elite Mbudye Society (whose members are considered “men of memory,” and who have extensive religious training) use the *lukasa* to recount history in the context of spiritual rituals. Diviners (who have the power to predict the future) can also read the *lukasa*.

Each *lukasa* is different but small enough to hold in the left hand. The board is “read” by touching its surface with the right forefinger. The tactile qualities are apparent. The *lukasa* illustrated here is one of the oldest known examples, with carved geometric designs on the back and sides, and complex clusters of beads of various sizes whose colors have faded over time. The board is narrower at the center making it easy to hold.

The *lukasa* is typically arranged with large beads surrounded by smaller beads or a line of beads, the configuration of which dictates certain kinds of information. This information can be interpreted in a variety of ways and the expert might change his manner of delivery and his reading based upon his audience and assignment. The most important function of the *lukasa* was to serve as a memory aid that describes the myths surrounding the origins of the Luba empire, including recitation of the names of the royal Luba line.

Additional resources:

Ways of Recording African History on the The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Luba People from Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Lukasa from learner.org

Mary Nooter Roberts, “The King is a Woman: Shaping Power in Luba Royal Arts,” African Arts, Autumn 2013, pp. 68-81

Art and Oracle: African Art and Rituals of Divination

Lukasa in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Lukasa (memory board) in the Collection of the Brooklyn Museum

Buli Master, possibly Ngongo ya Chintu, Prestige Stool: Female Caryatid (Luba or Hemba peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.4.20**: Buli Master, possibly Ngongo ya Chintu, *Prestige Stool: Female Caryatid*, 19th century, Luba or Hemba peoples, Buli village, Democratic Republic of the Congo, wood, metal studs, 61 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)



Figure **13.4.4.21**: Buli Master, possibly Ngongo ya Chintu, Prestige Stool: Female Caryatid, 19th century, Luba or Hemba peoples, Buli village, Democratic Republic of the Congo, wood, metal studs, 61 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Sculpted seats are among the most important insignia of office used exclusively by Luba rulers, including kings, chiefs, and the heads of clans or lineages. A royal stool is believed to serve as a receptacle for a ruler’s spirit. It therefore holds great symbolic value as the repository and wellspring of sacred kingship. Such seats, part of the ensemble of regalia that constitutes a Luba treasury, are an integral part of the investiture ceremony establishing a ruler’s political authority. Except for these rare ceremonial occasions, the royal stool was wrapped in cloth and safeguarded by a specially designated official.

This figurative example is supported by a standing female figure whose high status is indicated by her elaborate four-lobed coiffure and intricate raised scarification patterns on her torso, both front and back. The depiction of women on royal stools acknowledges their important political and symbolic roles in Luba society. Historically, female royals were often married to chiefs in outlying areas, helping to expand and unify the kingdom. Because the Luba trace succession and inheritance through the female line, such marriages established important bonds of kinship and allegiance. The imagery of the female supporting the stool symbolizes the fact that the chief or king inherits the right to rule through his female ancestors. Luba leaders owned a series of items of regalia depicting female figures which referred to the female body as a receptacle for the spiritual power of divine kingships.



Figure 13.4.4.22: Detail, Buli Master, possibly Ngongo ya Chintu, *Prestige Stool: Female Caryatid*, 19th century, Luba or Hemba peoples, Buli village, Democratic Republic of the Congo, wood, metal studs, 61 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

This royal ceremonial stool was created by an artist known as the Buli Master, celebrated for the distinctive formal structure and emotional appeal of his sculptures. His extraordinary artistic legacy is a corpus of about twenty stylistically related works, all demonstrating a unique expressionism. Lacking the youthful idealism more commonly seen in African sculpture, this figure has an elongated face with prominent cheekbones, arching brows, half-closed eyes set in sunken sockets, a high rounded forehead, and pursed lips. Her body is small and stooped, suggesting that the seat weighs heavily upon her. These features create a sense of sadness or suffering not typically seen in African sculpture, which tends to be fairly emotionless.

The Buli Master, named after a village in the eastern part of Democratic Republic of Congo where some of his works were acquired, is believed to have been active in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The sculptor has created a dynamic formal composition, building in volume and complexity from the base to the top. Her large feet, barely raised from the base of the stool, provide the foundation for the stool's vertical support formed by her short sturdy legs, torso, and large oval head. The seat rests upon her coiffure and the tips of her fingers. The sense that she bears a heavy burden is reinforced by exaggerated flattened hands.

All royal stools are conceived of as replicas of an original seat of office given to the Luba king Kalala Ilunga. The Luba kingdom was said to have been founded by Kalala Ilunga, a heroic prince who overthrew his despotic uncle to establish a new dynasty of divine rulers. Leaders of the various Luba chiefdoms in the area have historically traced their descent from this founding ruler. Their exalted position within this sacred line of succession is expressed materially by the possession of royal insignia designed to bolster chiefly authority.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mary Nooter Roberts, Luba Art and Divination on Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.4.4.23: More Smarthistory images…

Double Prestige Panel (Kuba peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.4.24**: Double Prestige Panel, 19th-20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sankuru River region, Kuba peoples, raffia palm fiber, 51.4 x 116.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This double panel of raffia cloth with cut-pile embroidery was created to serve as a prestige item in Kuba society. The Kuba kingdom has a complex political structure composed of independent chiefdoms under the central authority of a king. It was founded in the early seventeenth century by Shyaam a-Mbul a Ngoong, a ruler who brought together some seventeen different ethnic groups into a unified polity. Shyaam is recalled as a dynamic and innovative leader who introduced a number of important Kuba artistic traditions, including lavish woven and embroidered textiles made of raffia. In fact, the Kuba founding ruler is said to have identified so closely with the patronage of these textiles that he adopted the term for raffia palm, shyaam, as his name.

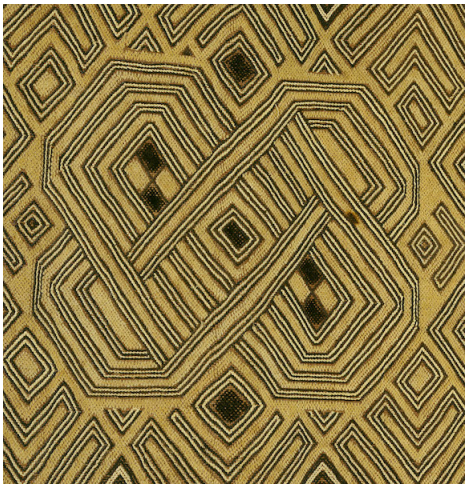


Figure **13.4.4.25**: Double Prestige Panel, 19th-20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sankuru River region, Kuba peoples, raffia palm fiber, 51.4 x 116.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In this complex composition, each panel features a large central interlacing motif against a diamond-patterned background. The dense patterns have been embroidered with strands of dyed raffia fiber that are cut close to the surface, creating a soft, velvety texture. Varying in both tone and texture, the patterns project dramatically from the gold field.

The preparation, production, and design of Kuba raffia textiles require the collaborative efforts of both men and women. Men are responsible for cultivating raffia palm trees and collecting the outer layers of the fronds, which yield fiber strands. They weave these strands on a vertical heddle loom into panels of cloth. Individual woven units, known as mbala, are softened and refined to a linen-like texture by pounding. These flat-woven panels may then be decorated and stitched together to form garments. Women assemble and decorate their own skirts, which can be up to nine yards in length. Men fashion their skirts, which can be of greater length and have a border of raffia tufts. Both genders employ a range of decorative processes, including dying, appliqué, embroidery, and patchwork, although some distinctive techniques, such as openwork and cut- pile, are practiced only by women. The completed garments are worn differently: women wrap the skirt around their bodies, while men gather the cloth around their hips, secured by a belt with the top folded over.



Figure **13.4.4.26**: Double Prestige Panel, 19th-20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sankuru River region, Kuba peoples, raffia palm fiber, 51.4 x 116.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Some raffia cloth, like this panel, was not fashioned into garments, but was displayed instead as prestige items. In the past, individual panels of raffia textiles were used as objects of exchange in financial, legal, and even marital transactions. They were also displayed and offered as memorial gifts during funerals, as an indication of the deceased's importance as well as the generosity of the surviving family members. Today, despite the availability of machine- made cotton cloth, raffia textiles are still regarded as the only kind of garment appropriate to adorn the body of the deceased. An important individual may be buried dressed in multiple layers of raffia skirts, often family treasures passed down through generations.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

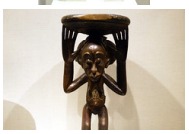
The work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

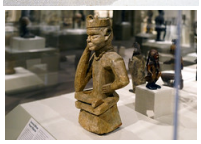
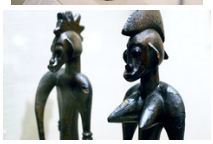
Kingdoms of the Savanna: The Kuba Kingdom

Kuba Peoples on Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

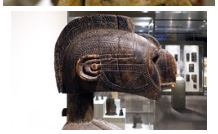
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88691





Figure **13.4.4.27**: More Smarthistory images…

Figurative Harp *(Domu)* (Mangbetu peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.4.28**: *Figurative Harp (Domu)*, 19th–20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mangbetu peoples, wood and hide, 52.1 x 48.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In northern Democratic Republic of Congo, the Mangbetu peoples established an influential centralized kingdom that reached its apex of power during the second half of the nineteenth century. Mangbetu aristocrats surrounded themselves with a variety of finely crafted utilitarian objects, including boxes, stools, weapons, and musical instruments. The opulence of the kingdom captured the attention of European visitors to the region, who described Mangbetu court life and its artistic traditions in glowing terms.

This musical instrument, with freestanding strings that rise in a horizontal plane from its belly to neck, is a harp. The curved neck ends in a finely carved head with partially open mouth, as if in song. The wooden sound box is covered with carefully stitched animal hide. When playing the harp, a musician sat with the sound box on his lap and the neck pointing away from him. He held the neck with his left hand and plucked the strings with both. The harp player adjusted the tone of each string by turning the tuning pegs set in the harp's neck. Harp players performed for the entertainment of community groups and, as they played, sang about events in their travels and heroic deeds of the past.



Figure **13.4.4.29**: Detail, Figurative Harp (Domu), 19th–20th century, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mangbetu peoples, wood and hide, 52.1 x 48.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The presence of a carved head on this harp may reflect an African response to Western aesthetic taste and patronage. In the colonial period, Europeans began to commission sculpture from local Mangbetu artists, expanding the demand for such works. Fascinated by the bound and elongated heads once common among the Mangbetu (fig. 9), European patrons encouraged artists to include human forms on objects that were previously nonfigurative. Although popular as gifts to visiting foreign dignitaries, these figurative objects were rarely commissioned for local use and their production eventually ceased.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Enid Schildkrout, "Mangbutu Royal Art and Herbert Lang, 1902-1906," in Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Gabon

The art by people in this region is of immense spiritual significance.

19th-20th century

Kota reliquary (mbulu ngulu)

by DR. KATHRYN WYSOCKI GUNSCH and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.4.4.4**: Kota reliquary figure (mbulu ngulu), late 19th to early 20th century, Gabon, wood, copper, brass, and bone, 59.69 cm high (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

These reliquary figures helped a nomadic society to honor their loved ones after death.

Additional resources

This sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Female Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble (Fang peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble: Seated Female, 19th–early 20th century, Fang peoples, Okak group, Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, wood, metal, 64 x 20 x 16.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)



Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble: Seated Female, 19th–early 20th century, Fang peoples, Okak group, Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, wood, metal, 64 x 20 x 16.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Fang peoples of Gabon believed that ancestral relics held great spiritual power. Byeri was a Fang association devoted to the veneration of lineage ancestors and founders, leaders, and fertile women who made significant contributions to society during their lifetime. After death, their relics, particularly the skull, were conserved in cylindrical bark containers and guarded by carved wooden heads or figures mounted atop the receptacles.

The lustrous black surface of this carved female figure still glistens from repeated applications of palm oil used for ritual purification. The sculptor shaped this figure to illustrate the ability to hold opposites in balance, a quality admired by the Fang. He juxtaposed the large head of an infant with the developed body of an adult. The static pose and expressionless face contrast with the palpable tension of the bulging muscles and the projecting forms of the arms, legs, and breasts. These reliquary sculptures may be male or female and are not considered portraits of the deceased. They were often decorated with gifts of jewelry or feathers and received ritual offerings of libations, such as palm oil.

On the occasion of initiation into Byeri, the figures were removed from their containers and manipulated like puppets in performances that dramatized the raising of the dead for didactic purposes. During the early twentieth century, Fang reliquary sculpture began to be acquired by Western collectors, who admired the inspired interpretation of the human form. This particular work was formerly in the collections of two well- known modernist artists, the painter André Derain and the sculptor Jacob Epstein.

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fang people in Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

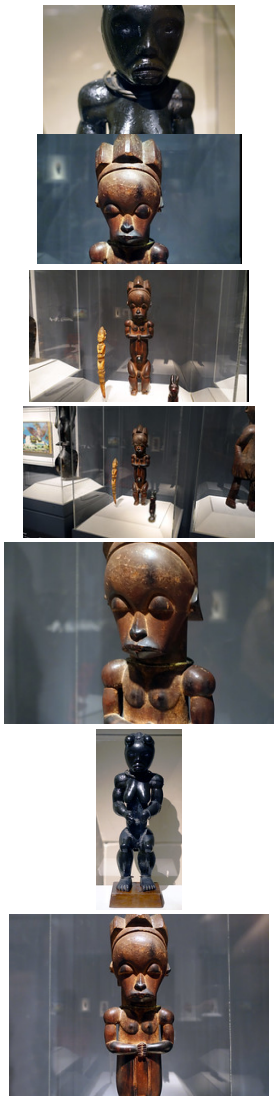
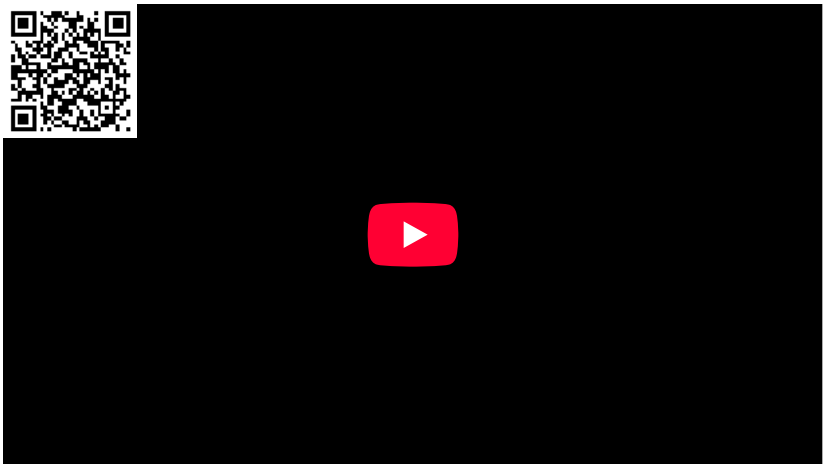


Figure **13.4.4.32**: More Smarthistory images…

Female Reliquary Guardian Figure (Fang peoples)—video

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. PERI KLEMM



Video **13.4.4.5**: Reliquary Guardian Figure (Eyema-o-Byeri), Gabon, Fang peoples, mid 18th to mid 19th century, wood and iron, 58.4 cm high (Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York)

These figures look calm and contemplative, but also display real strength and vitality in their muscular forms.

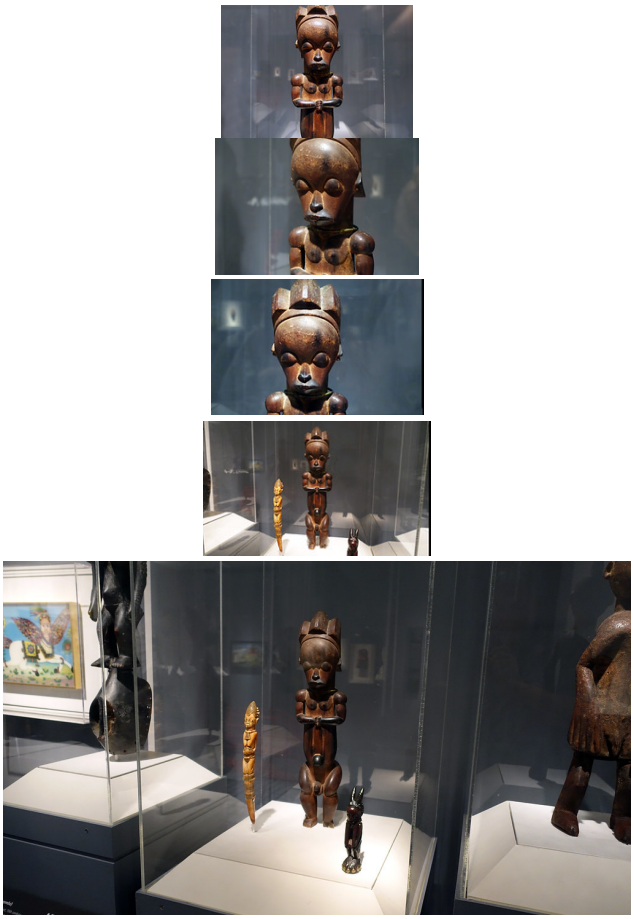


Figure **13.4.4.33**: More Smarthistory images…

13.4.4: Central Africa is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **4.4: Central Africa** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.4.5: North Africa

North Africa

Prehistoric rock art, ancient Egypt, and the art of Islam.

12,000 B.C.E. - 900 C.E.

About North Africa

by SMARTHISTORY

North Africa includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and the Canary and Madeira Islands.

Create your own visited countries map or check out the JavaScript Charts.

Algeria and Libya

The art of Algeria

Algeria is home to some of the world's most significant ancient rock art.

12,000 - 2,000 B.C.E.

Rock Art in North Africa

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.4.5.1**: Tuareg looking over the Tassili n'Ajjer massif. 2013,2034.4551 © TARA/David Coulson



Figure **13.4.5.2**: View of section of rock shelter wall containing painting of 'La Dame Noire de Sefar'("the Black Lady of Sefar"). Row of small stones placed in front of paintings to mark closest approach for tourists. Sefar, Ajjer Plateau, Djanet, Tassili, Algeria. Reproduced by permission of the artist. Copyright TARA/ David Coulson

Forests of Stone

Algeria is Africa's largest country and most of it falls within the Sahara Desert. It also hosts a rich rock art concentration. Most of the sites are found in the south east of the country near its borders with Libya and Niger but there are also important concentrations in the Algerian Maghreb and in the Hoggar Mountains in the central south.

The most renowned of all these areas is the Tassili n'Ajjer (meaning "plateau of chasms") in the south east. Water and sand erosion have carved out a landscape of thin passageways, large arches, and high-pillared rocks, described as "forests of stone" by French archaeologist and ethnographer Henri Lhote. The resulting undercuts at cliff bases have created rock shelters with smooth walls ideal for painting and engraving (left).

The Ajjer plateau rises to approximately 500-600 meters above the plain of Djanet, an oasis city, and capital of Djanet District, in Illizi Province, southeast Algeria. The region has been inhabited since Neolithic times, when the environment was much wetter and sustained a wider extent of flora and fauna as witnessed in the numerous rock paintings of Tassili n'Ajjer. Classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1982 and Biosphere Reserve in 1986, Tassili n'Ajjer covers a vast area of desert landscape in southern Algeria, stretching from the Niger and Libyan border area, north and east of Djanet, as far as Illizi and Amguid, covering an area of 72,000 sq. km.



Figure **13.4.5.3**: Map showing location in north Africa of Tassili N'Ajjer National Park, Imagery @2015 Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Landsat, IBCAO, U.S. Geological Survey, Map data @2015 Google

The rock art of the Tassili region was introduced to Western eyes as a result of visits and sketches made by French legionnaires, in particular a Lt. Brenans during the 1930s. On several of his expeditions, Lt. Brenans took French archaeologist Henri Lhote who went on to revisit sites in Algeria between 1956-1970 documenting and recording the images he found. Regrettably, some previous methods of recording and/or documenting have caused damage to the vibrancy and integrity of the images.

Subject matter

More than 15,000 rock paintings and engravings, dating back as far as 12,000 years are located in this region and have made Tassili world famous for this reason. The art depicts herds of cattle and large wild animals such as giraffe and elephant, as well as human activities such as hunting and dancing. The area is especially famous for its Round Head paintings which were first described and published by Henri Lhote in the 1950s. Thought to date from around 9,000 years old, some of these paintings are the largest found on the African continent, measuring up to 13 feet in height.



Figure **13.4.5.4**: Painted rock art depicting five red figures, from Jabbaren, Ajjer Plateau, Djanet, Tassili, Algeria. 2013,2034.4248 © TARA/David Coulson

Although the styles and subjects of north African rock art vary, there are commonalities: images are most often figurative and frequently depict animals, both wild and domestic. There are also many images of human figures, sometimes with accessories such as recognisable weaponry or clothing. These may be painted or engraved, with frequent occurrences of both, at times in the same context. Engravings are generally more common, although this may simply be a preservation bias due to their greater durability.

The physical context of rock art sites varies depending on geographical and topographical factors—for example, Moroccan rock engravings are often found on open rocky outcrops, while Tunisia's Djebibina rock art sites have all been found in rock shelters. Rock art in the vast and harsh environments of the Sahara is often inaccessible and hard to find, and there is probably a great deal of rock art that is yet to be seen by archaeologists; what is known has mostly been documented within the last century.

The British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Rock Art in the Green Sahara (Africa)

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Rock art is one of the best records of the life of past peoples who lived across the Sahara.



Video **13.4.5.1**: Video from The British Museum

The Sahara is the world's largest hot desert, spanning the entire northern part of Africa. Yet it hasn't always been dry — archaeological and geological research shows that it has undergone major climatic changes over thousands of years. Rock art often depicts extraordinary images of life, landscape and animals that show a time when the Sahara was much greener and wetter than it is now.

This film is in collaborative partnership with the Leverhulme Trust-funded project: "Peopling the Green Sahara. A multi-proxy approach to reconstructing the ecological and demographic history of the Saharan Holocene", Paul Breeze, Nick Drake and Katie Manning, Department of Geography, King's College London Modelling and mapping of the Green Sahara ©Kings College London Images ©Trust for African Rock Art (TARA)/David Coulson & ©Kings College London

Running Horned Woman, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria

by NATHALIE HAGER

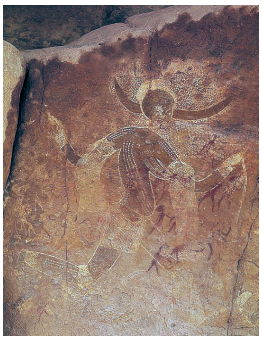


Figure **13.4.5.5**: *Running Horned Woman*, 6,000-4,000 B.C.E., pigment on rock, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria

"Discovery"

Between 1933 and 1940, camel corps officer Lieutenant Brenans of the French Foreign Legion completed a series of small sketches and hand written notes detailing his discovery of dozens of rock art sites deep within the canyons of the Tassili n'Ajjer. Tassili n'Ajjer is a difficult to access plateau in the Algerian section of the Sahara Desert near the borders of Libya and Niger in northern Africa (see map below). Brenans donated hundreds of his sketches to the Bardo Museum in Algiers, alerting the scientific community to one of the richest rock art concentrations on Earth and prompting site visits that included fellow Frenchman and archaeologist Henri Lhote.

Lhote recognized the importance of the region and returned again and again, most notably in 1956 with a team of copyists for a 16 month expedition to map and study the rock art of the Tassili. Two years later Lhote published *A la découverte des fresques du Tassili*. The book became an instant best-seller, and today is one of the most popular texts on archaeological discovery.



Figure **13.4.5.6**: Sand and rocks, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria (photo: **Akli Salah**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Lhote made African rock art famous by bringing some of the estimated 15,000 human figure and animal paintings and engravings found on the rock walls of the Tassili's many gorges and shelters it to the wider public. Yet contrary to the impression left by the title of his book, neither Lhote nor his team could lay claim to having discovered Central Saharan rock art: long before Lhote, and even before Brenans, in the late nineteenth century a number of travelers from Germany, Switzerland, and France had noted the existence of "strange" and "important" rock sculptures in Ghat, Tadrart Acacus, and Upper Tassili. But it was the Tuareg—the indigenous peoples of the region, many of whom served as guides to these early European explorers—who long knew of the paintings and engravings covering the rock faces of the Tassili.



Figure **13.4.5.7**: Tassili n'Ajjer is a Tamahaq name meaning "plateau" of the Ajjer people (the Kel Ajjer is group of tribes whose traditional territory was here). Much of the 1,500-2,100 meter high plateau is protected by an 80,000 square kilometer National Park.

The "Horned Goddess"

Lhote published not only reproductions of the paintings and engravings he found on the rock walls of the Tassili, but also his observations. In one excerpt he reported that with a can of water and a sponge in hand he set out to investigate a "curious figure" spotted by a member of his team in an isolated rock shelter located within a compact group of mountains known as the Aouanrhet massif, the highest of all the "rock cities" on the Tassili. Lhote swabbed the wall with water to reveal a figure he called the "Horned Goddess":

> ***On the damp rock surface stood out the gracious silhouette of a woman running. One of her legs, slightly flexed, just touched the ground, while the other was raised in the air as high as it would normally go. From the knees, the belt and the widely outstretched arms fell fine fringes. From either side of the head and above two horns that spread out horizontally was an extensive dotted area resembling a cloud of grain falling from a wheat field. Although the whole assemblage was skillfully and carefully composed there was something free and easy about it…***



Figure **13.4.5.8**: Visible in this reproduction of the original rock painting are two groupings in red ochre of small human figures superimposed onto the horned goddess

The *Running Horned Woman*, the title by which the painting is commonly known today, was found in a massif so secluded and so difficult to access that Lhote's team concluded that the collection of shelters was likely a sanctuary and the female figure—"the most beautiful, the most finished and the most original"—a goddess:

> ***Perhaps we have here the figure of a priestess of some agricultural religion or the picture of a goddess of such a cult who foreshadow—or is derived from—the goddess Isis, to whom, in Egypt, was attributed the discovery of agriculture.***

Lhote's suggestion that the painting's source was Egyptian was influenced by a recently published hypothesis by his mentor, the French anthropologist Henri Breuil, the then undisputed authority on prehistoric rock art who was renowned for his work on Paleolithic cave art in Europe. In an essay titled, "The White Lady of Brandberg, South-West Africa, Her Companions and Her Guards," Breuil famously claimed that a painting discovered in a small rock shelter in Namibia showed influences of Classical antiquity and was not African in origin, but possibly the work of Phoenician travellers from the Mediterranean. Lhote, equally convinced of outside influence, linked the Tassili painting's provenance with Breuil's ideas and revised the title to the 'White Lady' of Aouanrhet:

> ***In other paintings found a few days later in the same massif we were able to discern, from some characteristic features, an indication of Egyptian influence. Some features are, no doubt, not very marked in our 'White Lady'; still, all the same, some details as the curve of the breasts, led us to think that the picture may have been executed at a time when Egyptian traditions were beginning to be felt in the Tassili.***

Foreign influence?

Time and scholarship would reveal that the assignment of Egyptian influence on the *Running Horned Woman* was erroneous, and Lhote the victim of a hoax: French members of his team made "copies" of Egyptionized figures, passing them off as faithful reproductions of authentic Tassili rock wall paintings. These fakes were accepted by Lhote (if indeed he knew nothing of the forgeries), and falsely sustained his belief in the possibility of foreign influence on Central Saharan rock art. Breuil's theories were likewise discredited: the myth of the "White Lady" was rejected by every archaeologist of repute, and his promotion of foreign influence viewed as racist.

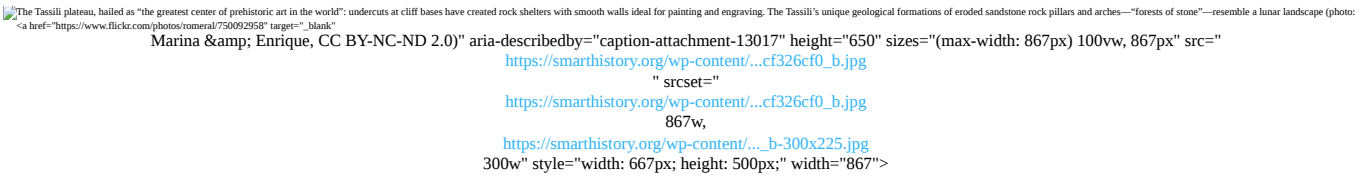


Figure **13.4.5.9**: The Tassili plateau, hailed as "the greatest center of prehistoric art in the world": undercuts at cliff bases have created rock shelters with smooth walls ideal for painting and engraving. The Tassili's unique geological formations of eroded sandstone rock pillars and arches—"forests of stone"—resemble a lunar landscape. (photo: **Marina & Enrique**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Yet Breuil and Lhote were not alone in finding it hard to believe that ancient Africans discovered how to make art on their own, or to have developed artistic sensibilities. Until quite recently many Europeans maintained that art "spread" or was "taken" into Africa, and, aiming to prove this thesis, anointed many works with Classical sounding names and sought out similarities with early rock art in Europe. Although such vestiges of colonial thinking are today facing a reckoning, cases such as the "White Lady" (both of Namibia and of Tassili) remind us of the perils of imposing cultural values from the outside.

Chronology

While we have yet to learn how, and in what places, the practice of rock art began, no firm evidence has been found to show that African rock art—some ten million images across the continent—was anything other than a spontaneous initiative by early Africans. Scholars have estimated the earliest art to date to 12,000 or more years ago, yet despite the use of both direct and indirect dating

techniques very few firm dates exist (“direct dating” uses measurable physical and chemical analysis, such as radiocarbon dating, while “indirect dating” primarily uses associations from the archaeological context). In the north, where rock art tends to be quite diverse, research has focused on providing detailed descriptions of the art and placing works in chronological sequence based on style and content. This ordering approach results in useful classification and dating systems, dividing the Tassili paintings and engravings into periods of concurrent and overlapping traditions (the *Running Horned Woman* is estimated to date to approximately 6,000 to 4,000 B.C.E.—placing it within the “Round Head Period”), but offers little in the way of interpretation of the painting itself.



Figure **13.4.5.10**: *Running Horned Woman* (detail) (photo: **FJ Expeditions**)

Advancing an interpretation of the *Running Horned Woman*

Who was the *Running Horned Woman*? Was she indeed a goddess, and her rock shelter some sort of sanctuary? What does the image mean? And why did the artist make it? For so long the search for meaning in rock art was considered inappropriate and unachievable—only recently have scholars endeavored to move beyond the mere description of images and styles, and, using a variety of interdisciplinary methods, make serious attempts to interpret the rock art of the Central Sahara.

Lhote recounted that the *Running Horned Woman* was found on an isolated rock whose base was hollowed out into a number of small shelters that could not have been used as dwellings. This remote location, coupled with an image of marked pictorial quality—depicting a female with two horns on her head, dots on her body probably representing scarification, and wearing such attributes of the dance as armlets and garters—suggested to him that the site, and the subject of the painting, fell outside of the everyday. More recent scholarship has supported Lhote’s belief in the painting’s symbolic, rather than literal, representation. As Jitka Soukopova has noted, “Hunter- gatherers were unlikely to wear horns (or other accessories on the head) and to make paintings on their whole bodies in their ordinary life.”[1] . Rather, this female horned figure, her body adorned and decorated, found in one of the highest massifs in the Tassili—a region is believed to hold special status due to its elevation and unique topology—suggests ritual, rite, or ceremony.



Figure **13.4.5.11**: Archers, Tassili n’Ajjer (photo: **Patrick Gruban**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

But there is further work to be done to advance an interpretation of the *Running Horned Woman*. Increasingly scholars have studied rock shelter sites as a whole, rather than isolating individual depictions, and the shelter’s location relative to the overall landscape and nearby water courses, in order to learn the significance of various “rock cities” in both image making and image viewing.

Archaeological data from decorated pottery, which is a dated artistic tradition, is key in suggesting that the concept of art was firmly established in the Central Sahara at the time of Tassili rock art production. Comparative studies with other rock art complexes, specifically the search for similarities in fundamental concepts in African religious beliefs, might yield the most fruitful approaches to interpretation. In other words, just as southern African rock studies have **benefitted from tracing the beliefs and practices of the San people**, so too may a study of Tuareg ethnography shed light on the ancient rock art sites of the Tassili.

Afterword: the threatened rock art of the Central Sahara

Tassili’s rock walls were commonly sponged with water in order to enhance the reproduction of its images, either in trace, sketch, or photograph. This washing of the rock face has had a devastating effect on the art, upsetting the physical, chemical, and biological balance of the images and their rock supports. Many of the region’s subsequent visitors—tourists, collectors, photographers, and the next generation of researchers—all captivated by Lhote’s “discovery”—have continued the practice of moistening the paintings in order to reveal them. Today scholars report paintings that are severely faded while some have simply disappeared. In addition, others have suffered from irreversible damage caused by outright vandalism: art looted or stolen as souvenirs. In order to protect this valuable center of African rock art heritage, Tassili N’Ajjer was declared a National Park in 1972. It was classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1982 and a Biosphere Reserve in 1986.

[1] Jitka Soukopova, “The Earliest Rock Paintings of the Central Sahara: Approaching Interpretation,” *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2011), p. 199.

Additional resources

African Rock Art: TassilinAjjer – Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Tassili n’Ajjer – African World Heritage Sites

Tassili n’Ajjer, UNESCO

TARA – Trust for African Rock Art: Algeria and TARA Interactive Rock Art Map

David Coulson and Alec Campbell, *African Rock Art: Paintings and Engravings on Stone* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001).

David Coulson and Alec Campbell, “Rock Art of the Tassili n Ajjer, Algeria.” *Adoranten*, no. 1 (2010), p. 115.

Jeremy H. Keenan, “The Lesser Gods of the Sahara.” *Public Archaeology* 2, no. 3 (2002), pp. 131-50.

Jean Dominque Lajoux, *The Rock Paintings of Tassili*, translated by G. D. Liversage (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963).

Henri Lhote, *The Search for the Tassili Frescoes*, translated by Alan H. Brodrick (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1959).

Jitka Soukopova, "The Earliest Rock Paintings of the Central Sahara: Approaching Interpretation," *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2011), pp. 193-216.

Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus

by UNESCO



Video **13.4.5.2**: Source: UNESCO TV / © NHK Nippon Hoso Kyokai URL: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/287/.

On the borders of Tassili N'Ajjer in Algeria, also a World Heritage site, this rocky massif has thousands of cave paintings in very different styles, dating from 12,000 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.. They reflect marked changes in the fauna and flora, and also the different ways of life of the populations that succeeded one another in this region of the Sahara.

Egypt

Ancient Egypt

by DR. PERI KLEMM



Figure **13.4.5.12**: Detail, *Hunefer's Judgement in the presence of Osiris*, Book of the Dead of Hunefer, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom, c. 1275 B.C.E., papyrus, Thebes, Egypt (British Museum)

Since the arts of ancient Egypt have conceptual, thematic, and stylistic connections to the traditional arts of Africa, Mediterranean cultures, and the Islamic world, it is difficult to place them in one geographic category. In general, Egyptologists study ancient Egypt as it connects to the ancient world beyond Africa so Smarthistory and most art history textbooks have chosen to place the bulk of Egyptian artworks within the Ancient Mediterranean section. Many scholars agree that an explicitly Western approach to the study of Egyptian art is problematic and a new, rich field of study that addresses ancient art within the framework of African art history is underway. By including links to ancient Egypt art here, we hope to remind readers of Egypt's firm placement within North Africa and the need to examine this work from various disciplinary perspectives.

Ancient Egypt

Predynastic and Old Kingdom

Middle and New Kingdom

Ptolemaic

The art of Tunisia

One of the earliest mosques in Africa is found here.

670 - 900 C.E.

The Great Mosque of Kairouan

by DR. COLETTE APELIAN



Figure **13.4.5.13**: Sahn (courtyard) and minaret, Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia c. 836-75 (photo: **Andrew Watson**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

A new city

Seventh-century North Africa was not the easiest place to establish a new city. It required battling Byzantines; convincing Berbers, the indigenous people of North Africa, to accept centralized Muslim rule; and persuading Middle Eastern merchants to move to North Africa. So, in 670 CE, conquering general Sidi Okba constructed a Friday Mosque (*masjid-i jami`* or *jami`*) in what was becoming Kairouan in modern day Tunisia. A Friday Mosque is used for communal prayers on the Muslim holy day, Friday. The mosque was a critical addition, communicating that Kairouan would become a cosmopolitan metropolis under strong Muslim control, an important distinction at this time and place.

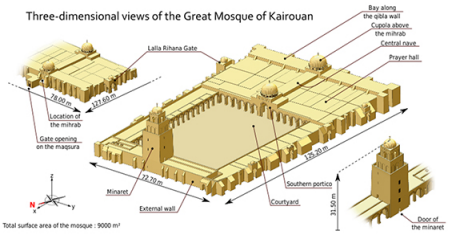


Figure **13.4.5.14**: Rendering of the Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia. From left to right: zoom on the south wall (seen from the outside), global view of the mosque, zoom on the minaret seen from the court (graphic: **Tachymètre**)

Known as the Great Mosque of Kairouan, it is an early example of a hypostyle mosque that also reflects how pre-Islamic and eastern Islamic art and motifs were incorporated into the religious architecture of Islamic North Africa. The aesthetics signified the Great Mosque and Kairouan, and, thus, its patrons, were just as important as the religious structures, cities, and rulers of other empires in this region, and that Kairouan was part of the burgeoning Islamic empire.

The Aghlabids

During the eighth century, Sidi Okba's mosque was rebuilt at least twice as Kairouan prospered. However, the mosque we see today is essentially ninth century. The Aghlabids (800-909 C.E.) were the semi-independent rulers of much of North Africa. In 836, Prince Ziyadat Allah I tore down most of the earlier mudbrick structure and rebuilt it in more permanent stone, brick, and wood. The prayer hall or sanctuary is supported by rows of columns and there is an open courtyard, that are characteristic of a hypostyle plan.



Figure **13.4.5.15**: Great Mosque of Kairouan prayer hall facade (photo: **Damian Entwistle**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

In the late ninth century, another Aghlabid ruler embellished the courtyard entrance to the prayer space and added a dome over the central arches and portal. The dome emphasizes the placement of the mihrab, or prayer niche (below), which is on the same central axis and also under a cupola to signify its importance.

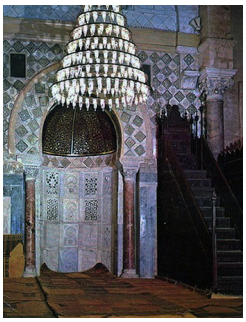


Figure **13.4.5.16**: Mihrab (left) and minbar (right), Interior view of the dome, Great Mosque of Kairouan

The dome is an architectural element borrowed from Roman and Byzantine architecture. The small windows in the drum of the dome above the mihrab space let natural light into what was an otherwise dim interior. Rays fall around the most significant area of the mosque, the mihrab. The drum rests on squinches, small arches decorated with shell over rosette designs similar to examples in Roman, Byzantine, and Umayyad Islamic art. The stone dome is constructed of twenty four ribs that each have a small corbel at their base, so the dome looks like a cut cantaloupe, according to the architectural historian K. A. C. Creswell.



Figure **13.4.5.17**: Interior view of the dome above the mihrab, Great Mosque of Kairouan (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure **13.4.5.18**: Exterior view of the mihrab dome in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia (photo: **Chuck Moravec**, CC BY 2.0)

Other architectural elements link the Great Mosque of Kairouan with earlier and contemporary Islamic religious structures and pre-Islamic buildings. They also show the joint religious and secular importance of the Great Mosque of Kairouan. Like other hypostyle mosques, such as the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, the mosque of Kairouan is roughly rectangular. Wider aisles leading to the mihrab and along the qibla wall give it a T-plan. The sanctuary roof and courtyard porticos are supported by repurposed Roman and Byzantine columns and capitals.



Figure **13.4.5.19**: View of lustre tiles that surround the mihrab (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The lower portion of the mihrab is decorated with openwork marble panels in floral and geometric vine designs. Though the excessively decorated mihrab is unique, the panels are from the Syrian area. Around the mihrab are lustre tiles from Iraq. They also feature stylized floral patterns like Byzantine and eastern Islamic examples.

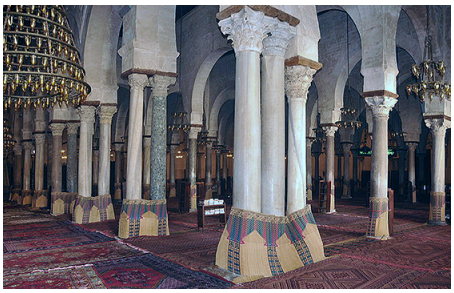


Figure **13.4.5.20**: Prayer Hall, Great Mosque of Kairouan (photo: **Citizen59**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Since it was used for Friday prayer, the mosque has a ninth-century minbar, a narrow wooden pulpit where the weekly sermon was delivered. It is said to be the oldest surviving wooden minbar. Like Christian pulpits, the minbar made the prayer leader more visible and audible. Because a ruler's legitimacy could rest upon the mention of his name during the sermon, the minbar served both religious and secular purposes. The minbar is made from teak imported from Asia, an expensive material exemplifying Kairouan's commercial reach. The side of the minbar closest to the mihrab is composed of elaborately carved latticework with vegetal, floral, and geometric designs evocative of those used in Byzantine and Umayyad architecture.



Figure **13.4.5.21**: Minaret, Great Mosque of Kairouan (photo: **Tab59**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The minaret dates from the early ninth century, or at least its lower portion does. Perhaps inspired by Roman lighthouses, the massive square Kairouan minaret is about thirty two meters tall, over one hundred feet, making it one of the highest structures around. So in addition to functioning as a place to call for prayer, the minaret identifies the mosque's presence and location in the city while helping to define the city's religious identity. As it was placed just off the mihrab axis, it also affirmed the mihrab's importance.

The mosque continued to be modified after the Aghlabids, showing that it remained religiously and socially significant even as Kairouan fell into decline. A Zirid, al-Mu'izz ibn Badis (ruled 1016-62 CE), commissioned a wooden maqsura, an enclosed space within a mosque that was reserved for the ruler and his associates. The maqsura is assembled from cutwork wooden screens topped with bands of carved abstracted vegetal motifs set into geometric frames, kufic-style script inscriptions, and merlons, which look like the crenellations a top a fortress wall. Maqsuras are said to indicate political instability in a society. They remove a ruler from the rest of the worshippers. So, the enclosure, along with its inscription, protected the lives and affirmed the status of persons allowed inside.

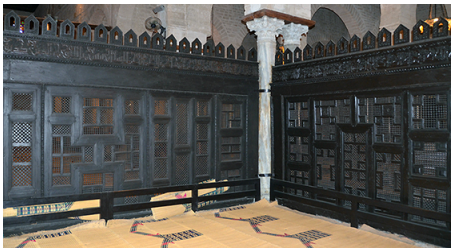


Figure 13.4.5.22: Maqsura, Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia (photo: Richard Mortel, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In the thirteenth century, the Hafsids gave the mosque a more fortified look when they added buttresses to support falling exterior walls, a practice continued in later centuries. In 1294, Caliph al-Mustansir restored the courtyard and added monumental portals, such as Bab al-Ma on the east and the domed Bab Lalla Rejana on the west. Additional gates were constructed in later centuries. Carved stone panels inside the mosque and on the exterior acted like billboards advertising which patron was responsible for construction and restoration.

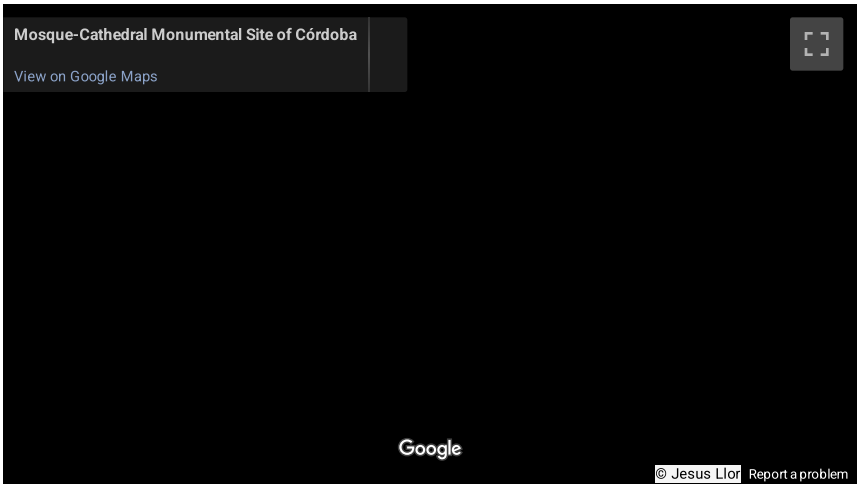
An intellectual center

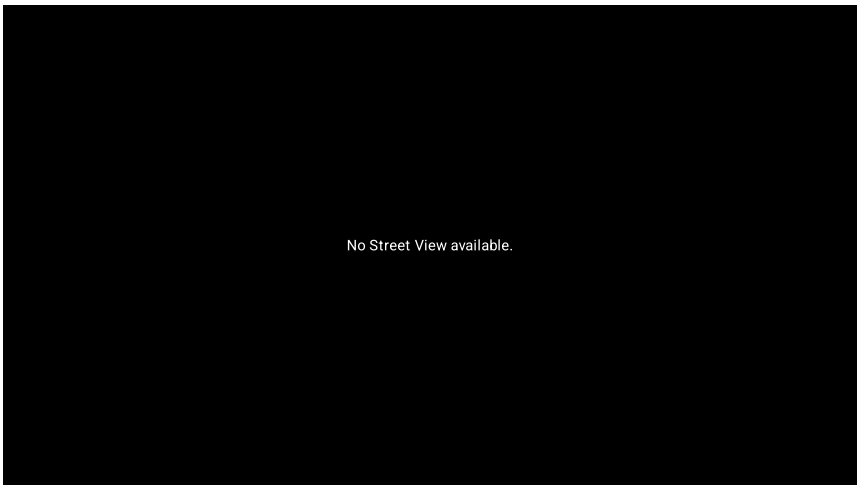
The Great Mosque was literally and figuratively at the center of Kairouan activity, growth, and prestige. Though the mosque is now near the northwest city ramparts established in the eleventh century, when Sidi Okba founded Kairouan, it was probably closer to the center of town, near what was the governor's residence and the main thoroughfare, a symbolically prominent and physical visible part of the city. By the mid-tenth century, Kairouan became a thriving settlement with marketplaces, agriculture imported from surrounding towns, cisterns supplying water, and textile and ceramic manufacturing areas. It was a political capital, a pilgrimage city, and intellectual center, particularly for the Maliki school of Sunni Islam and the sciences. The Great Mosque had fifteen thoroughfares leading from it into a city that may have had a circular layout like Baghdad, the capital of the Islamic empire during Kairouan's heyday. As a Friday Mosque, it was one of if not the largest buildings in town.



Figure 13.4.5.23: Exterior of the Qibla Wall, Great Mosque of Kairouan (photo: Gavinother, CC BY 2.0)

The Great Mosque of Kairouan was a public structure, set along roads that served a city with a vibrant commercial, educational, and religious life. As such, it assumed the important function of representing a cosmopolitan and urbane Kairouan, one of the first cities organized under Muslim rule in North Africa. Even today, the Great Mosque of Kairouan reflects the time and place in which it was built.





Additional resources:

Images of the mosque from Manar Al-Athar (University of Oxford)

Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800* (New York: Yale University Press, 1995).

K. A. C. Creswell and James W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 1989).

Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250* (New York: Yale University Press, 2001).

Peter Harrison, *Castles of God: Fortified Religious Buildings of the World* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2004).

Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: form, function, and meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture*, New York: Electa/Rizzoli, 1975.

Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Mourad Rammah, "Kairouan," *Museum with no Frontiers, Islamic Art in the Mediterranean, Ifriqiya. Thirteen Centuries of Art and Architecture in Tunisia* (Vienna: Electa, 2002).

Andrew Petersen, Dictionary of Islamic Architecture (New York: Routledge, 1999).

Kairouan (from UNESCO)

by UNESCO



Video 13.4.5.24: Video from UNESCO TV / © NHK Nippon Hoso Kyokai

Founded in 670, Kairouan flourished under the Aghlabid dynasty in the 9th century. Despite the transfer of the political capital to Tunis in the 12th century, Kairouan remained the Maghreb's principal holy city. Its rich architectural heritage includes the Great Mosque, with its marble and porphyry columns, and the 9th-century Mosque of the Three Gates.

13.4.5: North Africa is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **4.5: North Africa** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.4.6: Southern Africa

Southern Africa

Southern Africa is home to William Kentridge, Great Zimbabwe, and the Apollo 11 Stones.

28,000 B.C.E. - present

About Southern Africa

by SMARTHISTORY

Southern Africa includes Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Create your own visited countries map or check out the JavaScript Charts.

The art of Namibia

In the mountains of Southern Namibia, researchers uncovered stunning rock art from nearly 30,000 years ago.

28,000 - 26,000 B.C.E.

Origins of rock art in Africa

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

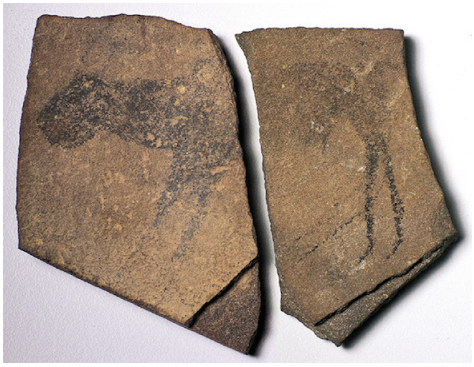


Figure **13.4.6.1**: Quartzite slabs depicting animals, Apollo 11 Cave, Namibia, c. 25,500–25,300 B.C.E. Image courtesy of State Museum of Namibia.

Rock art and the origins of art in Africa

The oldest scientifically-dated figurative rock art in Africa dates from around 26,000-28,000 years ago and is found in Namibia.

Between 1969 and 1972, German archaeologist, W.E. Wendt, researching in an area known locally as “Goachanas,” unearthed several painted slabs in a cave he named Apollo 11, after NASA’s successful moon landing mission.

Seven painted stone slabs of brown-grey quartzite, depicting a variety of animals painted in charcoal, ochre and white, were located in a Middle Stone Age deposit (100,000–60,000 years ago). These images are not easily identifiable to species level, but have been interpreted variously as felines and/or bovids; one in particular has been observed to be either a zebra, giraffe or ostrich, demonstrating the ambiguous nature of the depictions.

Art and our modern mind

While the Apollo 11 plaques may be the oldest discovered representational art in Africa, this is not the beginning of the story of art. It is now well-established, through genetic and fossil evidence, that anatomically modern humans (Homo sapiens sapiens) developed in Africa more than 100,000 years ago; of these, a small group left the Continent around 60,000-80,000 years ago and spread throughout the rest of the world.

Recently discovered examples of patterned stone, ochre and ostrich eggshell, as well as evidence of personal ornamentation emerging from Middle Stone Age Africa, have demonstrated that “art” is not only a much older phenomenon than previously thought, but that it has its roots in the African continent. Africa is where we share a common humanity.

The first examples of what we might term “art” in Africa, dating from between 100,000–60,000 years ago, emerge in two very distinct forms: personal adornment in the form of perforated seashells suspended on twine, and incised and engraved stone, ochre and ostrich eggshell. Despite some sites being 8,000km and 40,000 years apart, an intriguing feature of the earliest art is that these first forays appear remarkably similar. It is worth noting here that the term “art” in this context is highly problematic, in that we cannot assume that humans living 100,000 years ago, or even 10,000 years ago, had a concept of art in the same way that we do, particularly in the modern Western sense. However, it remains a useful umbrella term for our purposes here.

Pattern and design

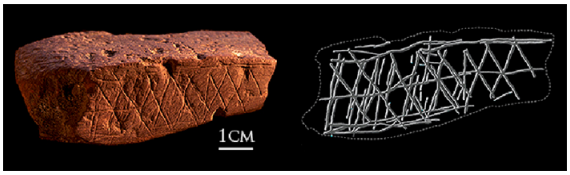


Figure **13.4.6.2**: Incised ochre from Blombos Cave, South Africa. Photo by Chris. S. Henshilwood © Chris. S. Henshilwood

The practice of engraving or incising, which emerges around 12,000 years ago in Saharan rock art, has its antecedents much earlier, up to 100,000 years ago. Incised and engraved stone, bone, ochre and ostrich eggshell have been found at sites in southern Africa. These marked objects share features in the expression of design, exhibiting patterns that have been classified as cross-hatching.

One of the most iconic and well-publicised sites that have yielded cross-hatch incised patterning on ochre is Blombos Cave, on the southern Cape shore of South Africa. Of the more than 8,500 fragments of ochre deriving from the MSA (Middle Stone Age) levels, 15 fragments show evidence of engraving. Two of these, dated to 77,000 years ago, have received the most attention for the design of cross-hatch pattern.

For many archaeologists, the incised pieces of ochre at Blombos are the most complex and best-formed evidence for early abstract representations, and are unequivocal evidence for symbolic thought and language. The debate about when we became a symbolic species and acquired fully syntactical language – what archaeologists term ‘modern human behaviour’ – is both complex and contested. It has been proposed that these cross-hatch patterns are clear evidence of thinking symbolically, because the motifs are not representational and as such are culturally constructed and arbitrary. Moreover, in order for the meaning of this motif to be conveyed to others, language is a prerequisite.

The Blombos engravings are not isolated occurrences, since the presence of such designs occur at more than half a dozen other sites in South Africa, suggesting that this pattern is indeed important in some way, and not the result of idiosyncratic behaviour. It is worth noting, however, that for some scholars, the premise that the pattern is symbolic is not so certain. The patterns may indeed have a meaning, but it is how that meaning is associated, either by resemblance (iconic) or correlation (indexical), that is important for our understanding of human cognition.

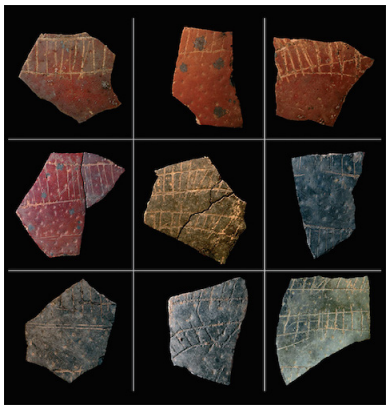


Figure **13.4.6.3**: Fragments of engraved ostrich eggshells from the Howiesons Poort of Diepkloof Rock Shelter, Western Cape, South Africa, dated to 60,000 BP. Courtesy of Jean-Pierre Texier, Diepkloof project. © Jean-Pierre Texier

Personal ornamentation and engraved designs are the earliest evidence of art in Africa, and are inextricably tied up with the development of human cognition. For tens of thousands of years, there has been not only a capacity for, but a motivation to adorn and to inscribe, to make visual that which is important. The interesting and pertinent issue in the context of this project is that the rock art we are cataloguing, describing and researching comes from a tradition that goes far back into African prehistory. The techniques and subject matter resonate over the millennia.

Additional resources:

British Museum African Rock Art Image Project

Apollo 11 (ca. 25,500–23,500 B.C.) and Wonderwerk (ca. 8000 B.C.) Cave Stones on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Trust for African Rock Art

© Trustees of the British Museum

Apollo 11 Cave Stones

by NATHALIE HAGER

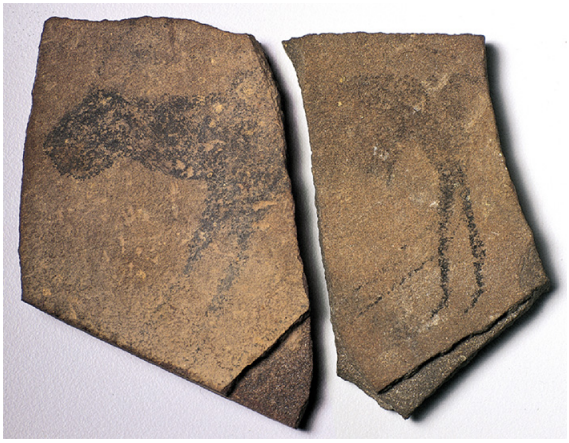


Figure **13.4.6.4**: Apollo 11 Cave Stones, Namibia, quartzite, c. 25,500–25,300 B.C.E. Image courtesy of State Museum of Namibia.

A significant discovery

Approximately 25,000 years ago, in a rock shelter in the Huns Mountains of Namibia on the southwest coast of Africa (today part of the Ai-Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park), an animal was drawn in charcoal on a hand-sized slab of stone. The stone was left behind, over time becoming buried on the floor of the cave by layers of sediment and debris until 1969 when a team led by German archaeologist W.E. Wendt excavated the rock shelter and found the first fragment (above, left). Wendt named the cave "Apollo 11" upon hearing on his shortwave radio of NASA's successful space mission to the moon. It was more than three years later however, after a subsequent excavation, when Wendt discovered the matching fragment (above, right), that archaeologists and art historians began to understand the significance of the find.



Figure **13.4.6.5**: Location of the Huns Mountains of Namibia, © Map Data Google

Indirect dating techniques

In total seven stone fragments of brown-grey quartzite, some of them depicting traces of animal figures drawn in charcoal, ocher, and white, were found buried in a concentrated area of the cave floor less than two meters square. While it is not possible to learn the actual date of the fragments, it is possible to estimate when the rocks were buried by radiocarbon dating the archaeological layer in which they were found. Archaeologists estimate that the cave stones were buried between 25,500 and 25,300 years ago during the Middle Stone Age period in southern Africa making them, at the time of their discovery, the oldest dated art known on the African continent and among the earliest evidence of human artistic expression worldwide. What was the Middle Stone Age?

While more recent discoveries of much older human artistic endeavors have corrected our understanding (consider the 2008 discovery of a 100,000-year-old paint workshop in the Blombos Cave on the southern coast of Africa), the stones remain the oldest examples of figurative art from the African continent. Their discovery contributes to our conception of early humanity's creative attempts, before the invention of formal writing, to express their thoughts about the world around them.

The origins of art?

Genetic and fossil evidence tells us that Homo sapiens (anatomically modern humans who evolved from an earlier species of hominids) developed on the continent of Africa more than 100,000 years ago and spread throughout the world. But what we do not know—what we have only been able to assume—is that art too began in Africa. Is Africa, where humanity originated, home to the world's oldest art? If so, can we say that art began in Africa?

100,000 years of human occupation



Figure **13.4.6.6**: View across Fish River Canyon toward the Huns Mountains, /Ai-/Ais – Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, southern Namibia (photo: **Thomas Schooch**, CC-BY-SA-3.00)

The Apollo 11 rock shelter overlooks a dry gorge, sitting twenty meters above what was once a river that ran along the valley floor. The cave entrance is wide, about twenty-eight meters across, and the cave itself is deep: eleven meters from front to back. While today a person can stand upright only in the front section of the cave, during the Middle Stone Age, as well as in the periods before and after, the rock shelter was an active site of ongoing human settlement.

Inside the cave, above and below the layer where the Apollo 11 cave stones were found, archaeologists unearthed a sequence of cultural layers representing over 100,000 years of human occupation. In these layers stone artifacts, typical of the Middle Stone Age period—such as blades, pointed flakes, and scraper—were found in raw materials not native to the region, signaling stone tool technology transported over long distances. Among the remnants of hearths, ostrich eggshell fragments bearing traces of red color were also found—either remnants of ornamental painting or evidence that the eggshells were used as containers for pigment.



Figure **13.4.6.7**: Excavation site of the Apollo 11 stones (photo: **Jutta Vogel Stiftung)**

On the cave walls, belonging to the Later Stone Age period, rock paintings were discovered depicting white and red zigzags, two handprints, three geometric images, and traces of color. And on the banks of the riverbed just upstream from the cave, engravings of a variety of animals, some with zigzag lines leading upwards, were found and dated to less than 2000 years ago.

The Apollo 11 Cave Stones

But the most well-known of the rock shelter's finds, and the most enigmatic, remain the Apollo 11 cave stones (image above). On the cleavage face of what was once a complete slab, an unidentified animal form was drawn resembling a feline in appearance but with human hind legs that were probably added later. Barely visible on the head of the animal are two slightly-curved horns likely belonging to an Oryx, a large grazing antelope; on the animal's underbelly, possibly the sexual organ of a bovid. What is a bovid?

Perhaps we have some kind of supernatural creature—a therianthrope, part human and part animal? If so, this may suggest a complex system of shamanistic belief. Taken together with the later rock paintings and the engravings, Apollo 11 becomes more than just a cave offering shelter from the elements. It becomes a site of ritual significance used by many over thousands of years.

The global origins of art

In the Middle Stone Age period in southern Africa prehistoric man was a hunter-gatherer, moving from place to place in search of food and shelter. But this modern human also drew an animal form with charcoal—a form as much imagined as it was observed. This is what makes the Apollo 11 cave stones find so interesting: the stones offer evidence that Homo sapiens in the Middle Stone Age—us, some 25,000 years ago—were not only anatomically modern, but behaviorally modern as well. That is to say, these early humans possessed the new and unique capacity for modern symbolic thought, "the human capacity," long before what was previously understood.

The cave stones are what archaeologists term *art mobilier* —small-scale prehistoric art that is moveable. But mobile art, and rock art generally, is not unique to Africa. Rock art is a global phenomenon that can be found across the World—in Europe, Asia, Australia, and North and South America. While we cannot know for certain what these early humans intended by the things that they made, by focusing on art as the product of humanity's creativity and imagination we can begin to explore where, and hypothesize why, art began.

Additional resources:

Introduction to Prehistoric Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Apollo 11 and Wonderwerk Cave Stones on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

African Rock Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"Africa: Continent of Origins," lecture was delivered by Dr. Ian Tattersall at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on the occasion of the symposium "Genesis: Exploration of Origins" on March 7, 2003.

"Homo Sapiens," from Becoming Human

British Museum – Rock Art and the Origins of Art in Africa

Namibia from the TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art

Bradshaw Foundation – Africa Rock Art Archive

John Masson, "Apollo 11 Cave in Southwest Namibia: Some Observations on the Site and its Rock Art," *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 61, no. 183 (2006), pp. 76-89.

Ralf Vogelsang, "The Rock-Shelter "Apollo 11" – Evidence of Early Modern Humans in South-Western Namibia," in *Heritage and Cultures in Modern Namibia – In-depth Views of the Country*, edited by Cornelia Limpricht and Megan Biesele (Göttingen, Windhoek-Namibia: Klaus Hess Publishers, 2008), pp. 183-196.

W. E. Wendt, "'Art Mobilier' from the Apollo 11 Cave, South West Africa: Africa's Oldest Dated Works of Art," *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* vol. 31, no. 121/122 (1976), pp. 5-11.

The art of South Africa

Over the last two centuries, artists in South Africa have responded to European colonialism in different ways.

19th - 20th century

Married Woman's Apron (Ndebele peoples)

by DR. CHRISTA CLARKE



Figure **13.4.6.8**: Married Woman's Apron (Ijogolo), 19th-20th century, South Africa, Ndebele peoples, leather, beads and thread, 75.6 x 67.3cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This five-paneled garment is known as an *ijogolo*, a bridal apron worn by Ndebele women. Upon marriage, the groom's family traditionally gave the bride a plain leather or canvas apron with five flaps. The newly married Ndebele woman embroidered that apron, creating bold geometric designs with imported glass beads. She would wear this apron on important ceremonial occasions to signify her married status. The multiple panels, referred to as "calves," symbolize the future children the woman will bear.

Throughout southern Africa, peoples wear beaded garments that comment upon their stage in life and convey aspects of their individual identity. Different types of beaded artifacts may communicate social and marital status, number of children, and a person's home region or ethnicity.

Although the historical origins of southern African beadwork are uncertain, it is known that glass beads from Europe were available in the area as early as the sixteenth century through trade with the Portuguese. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the region became the world's largest consumer of glass beads. Dating beaded works is difficult, although the color and size of the beads, the patterns and motifs, and the material used can all provide some indication of age. Older works typically have leather backings and use mostly small, white beads with minimal color designs, as in this example.

© 2006 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (by permission)

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

William Kentridge, drawing from *Tide Table (Soho in Deck Chair)*

by JOSH R. ROSE



Figure **13.4.6.9**: William Kentridge, Drawing from *Tide Table (Soho in Deck Chair)*, 2003, charcoal on paper, 81.28 x 121.92 cm (courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, NYC, © William Kentridge)

On the beach, but in a suit

It is a humorously discordant image: a man in a pinstriped suit sits on a deck chair at the beach, ignoring the overcast vista by reading a newspaper. The figure's balding head and newspaper are the brightest highlights against the smooth, rippling surf. South African artist William Kentridge has said the inspiration for this scene was a photograph of his grandfather similarly dressed at a beach near Capetown. The contrast of formal dress and beach setting—while whimsical—also suggests class distinctions and the disconnect between experiencing one's environment and codification as control: rather than watch the tide, the figure (as we come to find out) reads the newspaper's tide table (a chart that shows water heights over time for a particular location). The gulf separating understanding and experience in this drawing resonates in much of Kentridge's imagery and process.

"Successful Failures"

Kentridge was raised by two progressive lawyers in Johannesburg who actively helped disenfranchised South Africans navigate the legal system during the systemic inequalities of apartheid. The harsh racial and socioeconomic conditions in South Africa marked the earliest work Kentridge produced after studying visual art at the Johannesburg Art Foundation and theater at the L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

Kentridge's earliest passions were theater and opera (and he has continued working in these areas throughout his career), yet after realizing he was not cut out as an actor, he was "reduced to being an artist." As he has described it, "Every clear decision I have made was wrong. And the only thing that saved me was what I hadn't decided." This deceptively self-deprecating remark adequately describes the intentional openness and mutability of meaning Kentridge has built into his approach.

Process as Performance

The drawing above is the result of a film, *Tide Table*, the ninth film in the series "Drawings For Projection" begun in 1989. These films utilize a unique stop-motion technique: using a 16mm camera, Kentridge photographs each stage of a drawing on one sheet of paper as he continually modifies it through additions and erasures, often leaving ghostly remnants of previous marks on the page. He even periodically appears within the frame, such as by placing a new sheet in front of the camera when the previous drawing/scene is finished.



Figure **13.4.6.10**: William Kentridge, Drawing from *Tide Table*, 2003 © William Kentridge

The resulting work of art is generally comprised of two elements: an animated film and a series of drawings. Unlike traditional animation, which is painstakingly planned and comprised of thousands of single images each denoting a fraction of a second, Kentridge's films develop organically without any preparatory planning like storyboards, relying more on a stream-of-consciousness approach that strives for something between random chance and conscious premeditation. Kentridge associates this with the concept of "fortuna," in which his imagery and narrative are influenced by objects in his environment or ideas and motions that seem intrinsically related to—but independent of—the themes and narrative being tackled at the time. The relationship might be comparable to that of authors noting how their characters do something unexpected in the course of writing a novel. There is a performative quality to Kentridge's process, predicated by the spontaneity he fosters, his own appearances in the frame, and the film itself as a time-based record of his drawing process.

The Traces Always Remain

Kentridge's drawings for his films are often regarded as palimpsests. A palimpset is the word for a manuscript where the original text has been erased and overwritten (a practice common before paper was available and when parchment was expensive). In Kentridge's work, the sheet of paper becomes the locus for layer upon layer of images that evolve and shift, where the earlier states of the drawing exist only through traces intentionally left on the paper. In the film, these traces help intensify the movement of his figures, but also visually remark upon the process as a physical interaction of charcoal and eraser on paper.

The palimpsest quality to Kentridge's approach is one that many critics and historians have associated with his reaction to growing up during a turbulent and shifting period in South African history. Apartheid, legalized racial discrimination, dominated South African governance and society from 1948 until 1994. One way Kentridge has made overt reference to the atrocities of apartheid in his "Drawings for Projection" series is through the one pre-determined facet of these narratives: an established "cast" featuring the wealthy white real-estate developer and industrialist Soho Eckstein. Eckstein represents the authoritative oppressors ruling over black South Africans.

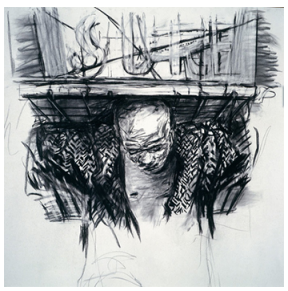


Figure **13.4.6.11**: William Kentridge, Drawing for the film *Monument*, 1990 © William Kentridge

In the 1990 film *Monument*, for example, Eckstein unveils a heroic monument showing a black worker struggling to carry a load of pristine marble objects. An ostensibly commemorative sculpture to the efforts of South Africans is revealed later to be an actual living person, not a sculpture. Racial discrimination is starkly reduced to the contrast between the "sculpted" worker's body and the white classically-styled load he bears.

In the 1991 film, *Mine*, a similar contrast is presented between Eckstein's white bed coverings and tray as he enjoys coffee, and the grueling, dank conditions of the mines that Eckstein owns. The two are linked visually by the downward action of the French-press coffee maker that becomes the elevator within the mines. Such contrasts seem intentionally provocative, both formally and thematically. Yet Kentridge admits that the decision to have the coffee plunger become the elevator shaft was another example of fortuna, inspired simply from the fact he had that type of coffee maker in his studio that day.



Figure **13.4.6.12**: William Kentridge, Drawing for the film *Mine*, 1991 © William Kentridge

A critical event linked to the legal dissolution of apartheid in the 1990s was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Commission was a five year investigation into the crimes and human rights abuses committed under apartheid from 1960 until May 10, 1994. The results of the investigation, broadcast on South African television, were intended to bring to light crimes committed and the breadth of the structure of racism and disenfranchisement.

Although Kentridge's process was established several years before the Commission, scholars like Jessica Dubow and Ruth Rosengarten have linked the palimpsest quality of Kentridge's "Drawings for Projection" with the contradictory nature of the Commission: although the broadcasts intended to reveal atrocities, they also established that the harrowing acts revealed were firmly "in the past" and therefore not reflective of the dawn of a post-apartheid South Africa. Dubow and Rosengarten suggest that Kentridge's palimpsest technique is reminiscent of the Commission's attempts to show —but also remove—traces of apartheid and that Kentridge's "finished" drawings similarly do not fully reveal everything that went into making them. The documentation of every stage of the drawing is only seen in the animated film, hence the reason the drawings and the films are intrinsically related and should not be separated.

Tide Table

The disconnect between documentation and direct experience seen in the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is also central to the drawing of Soho Eckstein sitting at the beach in a business suit. In the films he created after 1994, Kentridge presents Soho as a man whose life has fallen apart: between inexplicable health issues, violent nightmares, and the loss of his fortune, Kentridge portrays Eckstein's struggles in post-apartheid South Africa. Throughout Tide Table the artist provides a subtext that reflects upon youth, as a choir on the beach sings and a young boy dances and leaps in the surf. Often this occurs around Eckstein, as he sits in the deck chair, seeming to prefer the analytical table of tide flows in the newspaper and, in a later scene, pointedly placing the newspaper over his head to sleep (see above).

These images reinforce Eckstein's character as one who is more comfortable at a remove from human connection and the natural world, a portrayal that is common to many of the films in the series.

Eckstein's actions in *Tide Table* evoke a sense of loss for the comforts and advantages the character had during apartheid. Still, there is a glimmer of hope. Ultimately Eckstein observes those around him; he gets up, and playfully throws a rock into the water.

Additional Resources:

The artist discussing his 2003 film, *Tide Table* (SFMOMA)

The artist discusses his process (SFMOMA)

This film at SFMOMA

Interview with the artist

Kentridge Wikipedia entry

Zimbabwe

Great Zimbabwe

by DR. NANCY DEMERDASH



Figure **13.4.6.13**: Aerial view of Great Zimbabwe's Great Enclosure and adjacent ruins, looking southeast (photo: **Janice Bell**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Great Zimbabwe has been described as "one of the most dramatic architectural landscapes in sub-Saharan Africa."[1] It is the largest stone complex in Africa built before the modern era, aside from the monumental architecture of ancient Egypt. The ruins that survive are a four-hour drive south of Zimbabwe's present-day capital of Harare. It was constructed between the 11th and 15th centuries and was continuously inhabited by the Shona peoples until about 1450 (the Shona are the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe). But Great Zimbabwe was by no means a singular complex—at the site's cultural zenith, it is estimated that seven comparable states existed in this region.



Figure **13.4.6.14**

The word *zimbabwe* translates from the Bantu language of the Shona to either "judicial center" or "ruler's court or house." A few individual *zimbabwes* (houses) have survived exposure to the elements over the centuries. Within these clay structures, excavations have revealed interior furnishings such as pot-stands, elevated surfaces for sleeping and sitting, as well as hearths. Taken together, the settlement encompasses a cluster of approximately 250 royal houses built of clay, which in addition to other multi-story clay and thatch homes would have supported as many as 20,000 inhabitants —a exceptional scale for a sub-Saharan settlement at this time.

The stone constructions of Great Zimbabwe can be categorized into roughly three areas: the Hill Ruin (on a rocky hilltop), the Great Enclosure, and the Valley Ruins (map below). The Hill Ruin dates to approximately 1250, and incorporates a cave that remains a sacred site for the Shona peoples today. The cave once accommodated the residence of the ruler and his immediate family. The Hill Ruin also held a structure surrounded by 30-foot high walls and flanked by cylindrical towers and monoliths carved with elaborate geometric patterns.

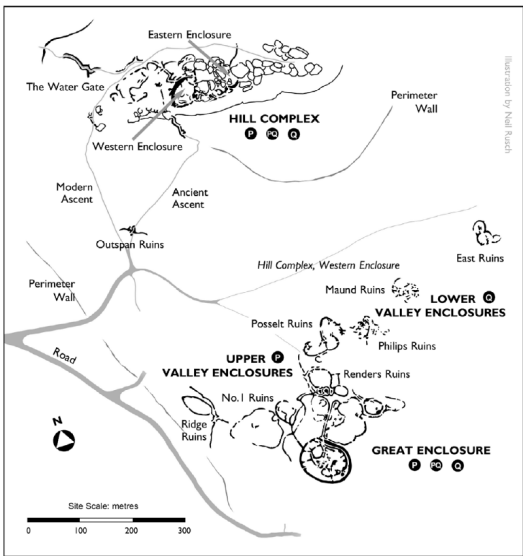


Figure **13.4.6.15**

Site plan of Great Zimbabwe (modified from an original plan by National Museums and Monuments ofZimbabwe) from Shadreck Chirikure and Innocent Pikirayi, "Inside and outside the dry stone walls: Revisiting the material culture of Great Zimbabwe," *Antiquity* 82 (December 2015), pp. 976-993. The letters refer to the types of stone construction (see **figure 4**).



Figure **13.4.6.16**: Between two walls, Great Enclosure, Great Zimbabwe (photo: Mandy, CC BY 2.0)

The Great Enclosure was completed in approximately 1450, and it too is a walled structure punctuated with turrets and monoliths, emulating the form of the earlier Hill Ruin. The massive outer wall is 32 feet high in some places. Inside the Great Enclosure, a smaller wall parallels the exterior wall creating a tight passageway leading to large towers. Because the Great Enclosure shares many structural similarities with the Hill Ruin, one interpretation suggests that the Great Enclosure was built to accommodate a surplus population and its religious and administrative activities. Another theory posits that the Great Enclosure may have functioned as a site for religious rituals.

The third section of Great Zimbabwe, the Valley Ruins, include a number of structures that offer evidence that the site served as a hub for commercial exchange and long distance trade. Archaeologists have found porcelain fragments originating from China, beads crafted in southeast Asia, and copper ingots from trading centers along the Zambezi River and from Central African kingdoms.[2]

A monolithic **soapstone sculpture** of a seated bird resting on atop a register of zigzags was unearthed here. The pronounced muscularity of the bird's breast and its defined talons suggest that this represents a bird of prey, and scholars have conjectured it could have been emblematic of the power of Shona kings as benefactors to their people and intercessors with their ancestors.



Figure **13.4.6.17**: Conical Tower, Great Zimbabwe (photo: Mandy, CC BY 2.0)

Conical tower

All of the walls at Great Zimbabwe were constructed from granite hewn locally. While some theories suggest that the granite enclosures were built for defense, these walls likely had no military function. Many segments within the walls have gaps, interrupted arcs or elements that seem to run counter to needs of protection. The fact that the structures were built without the use of mortar to bind the stones together supports speculation that the site was not, in fact, intended for defense. Nevertheless, these enclosures symbolize the power and prestige of the rulers of Great Zimbabwe.

The conical tower (above) of Great Zimbabwe is thought to have functioned as a granary. According to tradition, a Shona ruler shows his largess towards his subjects through his granary, often distributing grain as a symbol of his protection. Indeed, advancements in agricultural cultivation among Bantu-speaking peoples in sub-Saharan Africa transformed the pattern of life for many, including the Shona communities of present-day Zimbabwe.



Figure **13.4.6.18**: Great Enclosure entrance (restored), Great Zimbabwe (photo: Mandy, CC BY 2.0)

Wealth and trade

Archaeological debris indicate that the economy of Great Zimbabwe relied on the management of livestock. In fact, cattle may have allowed the Shona peoples to move from subsistence agriculture to mining and trade. Iron tools have been found on site, along with copper, and gold wire jewelry and ornaments. Great Zimbabwe is thought to have prospered, perhaps indirectly, from gold that was mined 25 miles from the city and that was transported to the Indian Ocean port at Sofala (below) where it made its way by dhow (sailing vessels), up the coast, and by way of **Kilwa Kisiwani**, to the markets of Cairo.

By about 1500, however, Great Zimbabwe's political and economic influence waned. Speculations as to why this occurred point to the frequency of droughts and environmental fragility, though other theories stress that Great Zimbabwe might have experienced political skirmishes over political succession that interrupted trade, still other theories hypothesize disease that may have afflicted livestock.[3]



Figure **13.4.6.19**

Great Zimbabwe stands as one of the most extensively developed centers in pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa and stands as a testament to the organization, autonomy, and economic power of the Shona peoples. The site remains a potent symbol not only to the Shona, but for Zimbabweans more broadly. After gaining independence from the British, the nation formerly named after the British industrialist and imperialist, Cecil Rhodes, was renamed Zimbabwe.



Figure **13.4.6.20**: Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) banknote featuring the conical tower at Great Zimbabwe, 1955 (The British Museum)

1. **Webber Ndoro, *The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe: Your Monument, Our Shrine* (ICCROM, 2005), p. 16.**

2. Peter Garlake, *Early Art and Architecture of Africa* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 153.

3. Garlake, 157.



Video **13.4.6.1**

Additional resources:

Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site (UNESCO)

Great Zimbabwe student worksheet (The British Museum)

Great Zimbabwe on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Webber Ndoro, *The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe: Your Monument, Our Shrine* (ICCROM, 2005)

Thomas N. Huffman, "Debating Great Zimbabwe," South African Archaeological Bulletin, 66 (2011), pp. 27-40.

——. The Soapstone Birds from Great Zimbabwe, African Arts, 18 (May 1985), pp. 68-73.

P. Hubbard, "The Zimbabwe Birds: Interpretation and Symbolism," *Honeyguide: Journal of Birdlife Zimbabwe* 55 (2009), pp. 109-116.

Great Zimbabwe from *Scientific American*

"Lost cities #9: racism and ruins – the plundering of Great Zimbabwe," *The Guardian* (August 18, 2016)

Peter S. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe* (Stein & Day Pub, 1973).

13.4.6: Southern Africa is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **4.6: Southern Africa** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.5: Asia

Asia

Discover thousands of years of art from the world's largest continent.

c. 3500 B.C.E. - present

13.5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia

13.5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism

13.5.3: China

13.5.4: Japan

13.5.5: Korea

13.5.6: Afghanistan

13.5.7: South Asia (I)

13.5.8: South Asia (II)

13.5.9: Southeast Asia

13.5.10: The Himalayas

Thumbnail: Chinese dragon. (Public Domain; via Pikst)

13.5: Asia is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia

A brief history of the cultures of Asia

by DR. SONIA COMAN

Historians divide history into large and small units in order to make characteristics and changes clear to themselves and to students. It's important to remember that any historical period is a construction and a simplification. In Asia, because of its huge land mass and multiple diverse cultures, there are several overlapping timelines. Also, for the same reason, different regions have different histories, but they all intersect — in myriad ways — at different points in history. Below are some important basics to get you started.



Figure **13.5.1.1**: Orthographic projection of Asia (image adapted from: Koyos + Ssolbergj CC BY-SA 4.0)

Geographical divisions

Here are the major subdivisions currently used in textbooks or in curatorial departments in art museums. Keep in mind that these categories are complicated by previous divisions, some of which reflect a violent history, such as campaigns of colonization by Western or Asian countries.

Central and North Asia, comprising territories bordered by the Caspian Sea in the west, China in the east, and Afghanistan in the south (which is at times considered part of the Central Asian region).

Unfamiliar with the term "North Asia"? There is a historical explanation. North Asia is better known as Eurasia, coinciding largely with Siberia, which became a part of Russia in the 17th century. "North Asia" is still an under-explored area within studies of Asia because historically it has been integral to studies of Russia, a transcontinental country whose leaders nevertheless endeavored to shape it as a European power.

West Asia, comprising Iraq (in ancient times, Mesopotamia), Iran (whose territory previously encompassed Persia), Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean (today's Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Gaza Strip, and West Bank), the Arabian Peninsula (comprising Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates), and Anatolia and the Caucasus (today's Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia).

East Asia, spanning Mongolia, mainland China, Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and North and South Korea.

Central and West Asia are better known as the “Near East” and the “Middle East”. By the same logic, East Asia has been referred to as the “Far East.” All these terms are Western-centric, reflecting European geopolitics. They are problematic terms because they isolate and lionize one vantage point. For the peoples of the “Far East,” for example, their territories and cultures are not “Eastern” nor “far.” Quite to the contrary, they represent the “home base” from which world geography is envisioned differently, complete with its own cultural and sociopolitical biases.

South and Southeast Asia, consisting of the countries that are geographically north of Australia, south of China and Japan, and west of Papua New Guinea. These countries are Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, East Timor, Laos, Singapore, Vietnam, Brunei, Burma, and Thailand. South Asia, also known as the Indian subcontinent, comprises the sub-Himalayan countries of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Bhutan, and the Maldives.

South Asia was often conflated with the vague and politically motivated category of “India,” from the perspective of Western powers (Portuguese, French, Dutch, and British) who dominated and colonized parts of the region at different points in time, as outlined later in this essay.

Click here for a political map of Asia.

Cultural divisions

A radically different way of looking at Asia’s cultural histories is to trace major transcultural phenomena — from religious to commercial — that spanned multiple periods and geographical regions. Such phenomena include:

- **Buddhism**, which developed in India in reaction to the established religion, Hinduism, and subsequently spread to other countries in South, Southeast, and East Asia. From the 6th century B.C.E. to the present day, Buddhism shaped various aspects central to these Asian cultures, from principles of government to visual and material culture.
- *See the Smarthistory resource on **Hinduism + Buddhism**.*
- **Islam**, founded by Muhammad in the early 7th century C.E. at Mecca (in modern-day Saudi Arabia), spread over the centuries in Central and Western Asia all the way to the Pacific nation of Indonesia, and reached non-Asian territories in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. One can trace the history of the Islamic world and its deep imprint on many Asian cultures and on pan-regional cultural phenomena within Asia and beyond.
- *See the Smarthistory resource, **Introduction to Islam***
- **The Silk Road**, named as such only in the 19th century, is a network of trade routes harkening back to the 2nd century B.C.E., which connected, over the centuries, territories from Eastern China to Southern Europe and North Africa. Although occasioned by trade, especially in silk, these pan-Asian routes had a significant influence on local cultures and enabled cross-cultural encounters.



Figure 13.5.1.2: Silk and Spice Routes (image: UNESCO, **Silk Roads: Dialogue, Diversity & Development**)

As you read the timeline below…

- keep these divisions in mind and notice changes and reconfigurations;
- think about parallel trajectories (similarly momentous developments occurring independently in different parts of the world) and points of convergence (cross-cultural encounters and developments);
- and remember that the "gray areas" of the past are typically the most complicated, but they also tend to provide some of the richest and most rewarding histories.

Note to teachers and students:
To a large extent, this periodization corresponds to that of AP World History.

Prehistoric (before c. 2500 B.C.E.)

The term "prehistoric" refers to the time before written history. In Asia as elsewhere, this is the period when the most fundamental aspects of human civilization as we know it are formed and developed. Communities transition from hunting and gathering to taming animals and cultivating land, especially as irrigation is mastered. Prehistoric men and women create complex tools, pottery, and clothing, build homes and monuments, and develop language and rituals expressed through diverse forms of art and eventually through writing.

WEST ASIA

In **Mesopotamia** (present-day Iraq), as early as 8000 B.C.E., sedentary agricultural communities are established. By 2500 B.C.E., monumental architecture testifies to the development of hierarchies of social and political power. Writing — newly invented — provides invaluable information about city-states, rulers, and their reigns. Invented by the Sumerians, the **cuneiform** system is the earliest writing we know. It is no coincidence that cuneiform inscriptions were impressed onto tablets made of clay -—one of the earliest and most ubiquitous mediums for cultural transmission and artistic expression.

EAST ASIA

In China, writing is first seen as inscriptions on **oracle bones**, a hallmark of the Shang dynasty (1700-1027 B.C.E.). Made of the shoulder blades of oxen or the underbellies of turtles, oracle bones — as their designation indicates — were used for divination

(foretelling the future). Up to that point, China had already developed a rich culture ranging from pottery and clay figurines to **carved jade** and **bronze ritual vessels** — the latter of which would have a lasting influence on Chinese art and design. Also, a central motif of Chinese art — the paired dragon and tiger, symbolizing water and wind in Chinese cosmology — first appears during this period. The earliest known example is a river-shell mosaic representation from c. 5300 B.C.E., excavated in a royal grave at Xishuipo, Henan province.

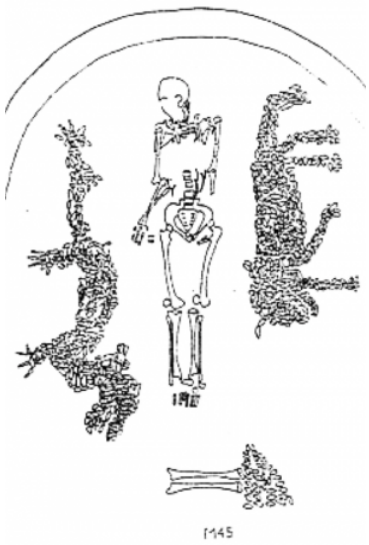


Figure **13.5.1.3**: Representations of dragon and tiger, mosaic of river clam shells, c. 5300 B.C.E., royal grave no. 45, Xishuipo, Henan province (diagram: Feng Shi, "Henan Puyang Xishuipo 45 Hao Mu de Tianwenxue Yanjiu," Wenwu, vol. 3, pp. 52-69).

Ancient – Conquests, New Empires, and New Religions (c. 2500 B.C.E. to 650 C.E.)

The ancient world is often thought of as a cradle of today's civilizations. It is home to important "firsts" and to changes that shaped cultural practices and artistic expressions. In Asia as elsewhere, it is a period of military conquests that contributed to the formation of the first great empires, which quickly became cultural hubs — sites of effervescent intellectual, spiritual and artistic life. The empires formed in this period extend across and beyond the geographical divisions outlined above.

CENTRAL & WEST ASIA

The first of these empires is that of Cyrus the Great, who founded the multi-state **Persian empire** in the 6th century B.C.E. and maintained control over a vast territory, that grew to encompass the (European) Balkans in the west and the Indus valley in the east. But empires come and go, and cultures transform in the process. Much of Cyrus's empire was conquered centuries later by Alexander the Great, who is known to have nurtured great admiration for Cyrus. Alexander's presence in West and Central Asia in the 3rd century B.C.E. had a lasting impact on visual representation in those regions and beyond. Known as Hellenism, this phenomenon brought characteristics of Greek art — especially its synthesis of naturalism and idealism — to local centers of cultural production, where they were emulated and transformed.

SOUTH ASIA

In the ancient region of Ghandara (today's Northwest Pakistan), this compelling fusion was at work, centuries later, in devotional images of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, such as the one below. Notice the subtly plump body, the expressiveness of the facial features, and the harmonious geometry of the clothing drapery. But human representations of the Buddha were not always the norm. In fact, in the earliest Indian images of the then-new religion, **Buddha's presence was indicated by means of footprints or an empty space under a parasol**. The Gandhara tradition was the first to develop human images of the Buddha. As Buddhism received increasingly significant patronage in South Asia, other styles emerged, marking a transition from narrative to devotional images. Known as a "Golden Age," the Gupta empire at its zenith (319 to 543 C.E.) saw the creation of "ideal" images of the Buddha, which spread along the Silk Road to China and beyond.



Figure 13.5.1.4: Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya (Buddha of the Future), c. 3rd century, Pakistan (ancient region of Gandhara), schist, H. 31 3/4 in. (80.7 cm) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, image: public domain).

Middle Ages – Realms and Societies (c. 650 C.E. to 1500 C.E.)

The concept of the "**Middle Ages**" has been developed in relation to Western cultures to mark a period between antiquity and the Renaissance that presents a degree of consistency not encountered in Asia during the same period. In the "Middle Ages" as during other timeframes, different Asian regions had considerably different histories. That said, across Asia, this was a time of remarkable developments in communication and science. For example, metal movable type had been invented in China by the 12th century (about 300 years before Gutenberg's movable type press in Europe). Advances in technology and science — such as the invention and improvement of gunpowder — were put in the service of warfare, which led to the consolidation of the political power of empires. One of the most prominent was the Mongol Empire (1206–1405), founded by Genghis Khan. At its height, the Mongol empire controlled much of Eurasia and the Silk Road and saw the transcontinental dissemination of movable type printing and the flourishing of local cultures, all largely due to Mongol patronage.

CENTRAL & WEST ASIA

Another major catalyst of cultural and artistic activity was the formation of the Islamic empire in Central and West Asia, starting around 634 C.E. It is during this period that the Islamic political structure known as the caliphate emerges. Typical of new leaders seeking to legitimize political power, the 7th– and 8th-century caliphs used art and architecture to mark their presence and shape the cultural identity of their expanding territories.

A striking example is the **Great Mosque (Friday Mosque) of Damascus** in today's Syria — one of the oldest in the world and larger than any other mosque built before it. Constructed under the patronage of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I (who ruled from 705–715), the mosque occupied a site that once housed a temple dedicated to a Syrian god, then a Roman temple dedicated to Jupiter, and later a church dedicated to John the Baptist. As the site itself had been considered holy during so many earlier political and cultural regimes, the Great Mosque of Damascus brought significant prestige to the caliphate. The Great Mosque has three minarets, all from different historical periods, and a prayer hall modeled on early Christian basilicas. Walls are adorned with opulent mosaics attributed to Byzantine craftsmen and possibly illustrating passages from the Qur'an.



Figure **13.5.1.5**: Mosaic, Great Mosque of Damascus (photo adapted from: **american rugbier**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

EAST ASIA

It is in this period that Islam is introduced to (parts of) China. In fact, this is a time of significant encounters and exchanges. For example, in 607, the first Japanese envoy is received by the Chinese imperial court. This diplomatic relationship opened a channel of cultural dissemination that had a lasting influence on Japanese political thought, literature, and the arts. Shortly thereafter, the Tang dynasty is established in China, leading to a cultural "golden age." Tang-dynasty poetry is among the most extraordinary literary achievements in our world heritage, and will become an extremely rich source of subject matter for Chinese (and Japanese) painters throughout the centuries. Ultimately weakened by rebellions, the Tang dynasty gave way to a succession of dynasties that bring into focus the ethnic and cultural diversity of the vast territory controlled by China.

For example, between the Song and Ming dynasties, the Yuan dynasty was established by the Mongol Kublai Khan and maintained power for almost a century before it fell, a result of tension between its roots in the culture of the Mongol empire and its efforts to become a legitimate part of Chinese culture. Although short-lived in comparison with the relatively peaceful and prosperous Ming dynasty that would replace it, the Yuan dynasty saw the emergence of now-classical figures in Chinese visual arts, notably the so-called "four masters of the Yuan dynasty" (**Huang Gongwang**, Ni Zan, Wang Meng, and Wu Zhen) — experimental ink painters cultivating ideals of individual expression. Their distinctive styles — compare the restrained brushwork of Ni Zan versus the elaborate, tapestry-like compositions of Wang Meng — inspired and challenged generations of Chinese painters.



Figure **13.5.1.6**: Left: Ni Zan, *Six Gentlemen* 六君子图, 14th century, ink on paper (Shanghai Museum); right: Wang Meng, *Ge Zhichuan Moving to the Mountains* 葛稚川移居圖, 14th century, ink on paper (Palace Museum, Beijing).

SOUTHEAST ASIA

South of China, another remarkable society flourished, that of the Khmers. On the territory of today's **Cambodia**, the Khmers founded the Hindu-Buddhist Angkor empire, which grew to vassalize much of mainland Southeast Asia as well as parts of Southern China. The cultural "golden age" of the Khmers' empire, datable to the 12th century, led to the construction of one of the world's largest religious monuments, the **Angkor Wat**, occupying over 400 acres in the Khmer capital of Angkor. Originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu, it gradually became a Buddhist temple as Buddhism was embraced by Khmer rulers, especially king Jayavarman VII—one of the most powerful leaders of the Angkor empire. With its many temples blending Hindu and Buddhist iconography, Angkor reflected the creative tension of a multicultural empire in its spectacular architecture.



Figure **13.5.1.7**: Aerial view, Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1116-1150 (photo: Peter Garnhum, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Early Modern – Self-Fashioning and Transcultural Encounters (c. 1500 – c. 1850)

As old empires consolidated their power and new rulers and dynasties emerged, this period saw some of the most remarkable expressions of self-fashioning. Coined by art historian Stephen Greenblatt with respect to the Western Renaissance (in particular, 16th-century England), "self-fashioning" is an apt term to describe cultural processes in Asia around the same period. Self-fashioning was a response to the power struggles of a world increasingly rich in cross-cultural encounters, ranging from military tensions and diplomatic missions to commercial exchanges along the Silk Road to cultural and scientific collaborations.

WEST ASIA

1501 marked the beginning of the Safavid rule in Persia — whose fascinating history presents a generative blend of transculturalism and self-fashioning. Safavids continued to rule for over two centuries; at its height, their empire comprised today's Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Armenia, eastern Georgia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan, as well as parts of Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Over this vast territory, many cultures intersected and the Safavids utilized architecture and the arts as a means to strengthen their control. The capital of **Isfahan** concentrated the empire's cultural power by providing resplendent examples of Safavid architecture and visual and material culture, thereby constituting a "microcosm" of the Safavid world.

A telling example of how the Safavids harnessed their multicultural reality is a curious and significant gift, presented in 1611 by the Safavid Shah Abbas in the memory of his spiritual ancestor, the Sufi Sheik Shaykh Safi al-Din, to be housed in his shrine at Ardabil. The gift consisted of over one thousand Chinese Ming-dynasty blue-and-white porcelain objects and is—to this day—one of the two most important collections of such ceramics outside China itself.

Why would a Safavid ruler donate and display Chinese artifacts in a gesture to honor the Safavids' spiritual founder? It has been argued that this is a prime example of "porcelain diplomacy." In other words, the Safavid shah sent a public message that his cosmopolitanism was a sign of his power on the world stage, signaled by his ownership of so many fine examples of coveted Chinese porcelain, now re-purposed as an offering to an important Safavid shrine. The gift was such an important part of the Ardabil architectural complex that a "Chinese [porcelain] house" (Chini Khaneh) was built to feature the ceramics in hundreds of specially-designed shelves carved into the walls.

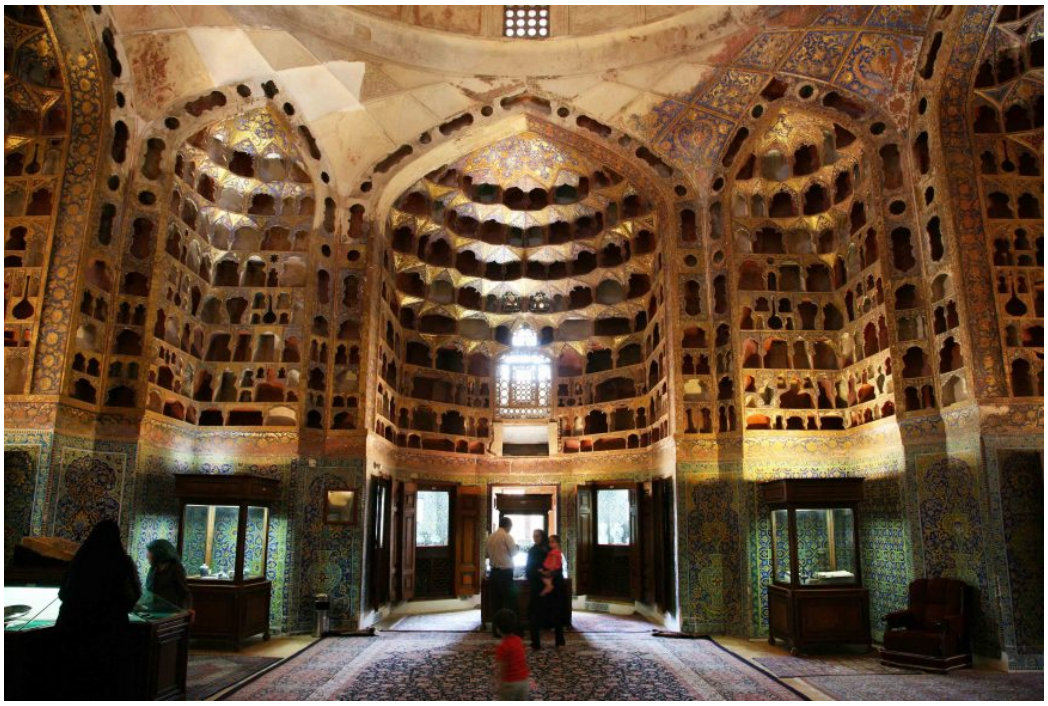


Figure **13.5.1.8**: Built-in shelves for Chinese porcelain, Chini Khaneh, Ardabil, Iran (photo: © UNESCO/Iran Images/Mohammad Tajik, Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah Shrine Ensemble, in the City of Ardabil, Iran)

EAST ASIA

In China, the Ming dynasty — under whose rule the production and global dissemination of blue-and-white porcelain flourished — gave way, in 1636, to the Qing dynasty. Led by Manchu emperors and ruling over a vast and culturally diverse territory, the Qing dynasty placed strategic emphasis on multiculturalism in a way that calls to mind similar efforts by the Safavids. The Qing court became an important patron of the arts, largely characterized by grandeur, opulence, and eccentricity of design.

In Japan, the early 17th century marked a turning point as the Tokugawa family took control of the country and began their long and relatively peaceful and prosperous shogunate. The Tokugawa ruled from Edo (present-day Tokyo), which gives the name for this period and where a vibrant urban culture developed. It was, to some extent, a foil to Kyoto, where the emperor continued to live, secluded in his palace.

Mostly shielded from the outside world (in contrast to Safavid Persia and Qing-dynasty China), the poets and painters of Edo-period Japan drew inspiration not only from nature and from the classics, but also from everyday life, developing the first so-called genre paintings (portrayals of common people engaged in routine activities). Within this category, a spectacular subtype was the *rakuchū rakugai zu* (“scenes in and around the capital”), depicting Kyoto and its suburbs in ways that mixed anecdotal detail from street life with vistas of the capital’s famous locations and seasonal festivals.

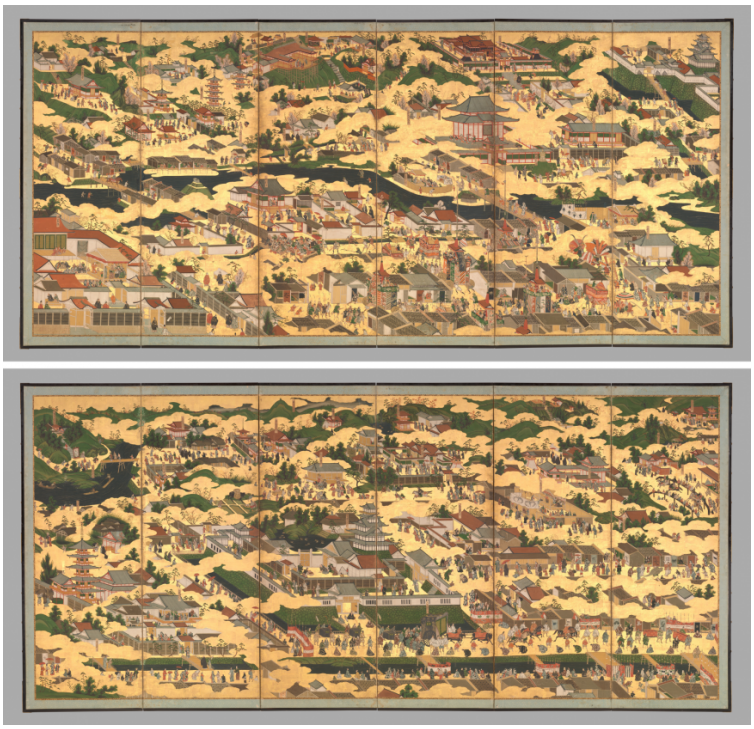


Figure **13.5.1.9**: “Scenes in and around the capital” (rakuchū rakugai zu 洛中洛外図), Edo period, 17th century, six-panel folding screens, ink, color, gold, and gold leaf on paper, 66 15/16 in. × 12 ft. 3/16 in. (170 × 366.2 cm) each (Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation, 2015, Metropolitan Museum of Art, image: public domain).

Modern (after c. 1850)

The 19th century brought major changes to Asia’s many worlds. By the mid-20th century, societies had undergone watershed transformations. In Japan, following the 1853 “black ship” expedition of American commodore Perry who demanded Japan’s “opening” to the world and the 1868 revolt that put an end to the Tokugawa shogunate and restored imperial power, the arts reflected an unprecedented broadening of styles and foreign influences, as well as imperial ambitions and rising nationalism that culminated during WWII. In China, the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912 marked the end of the country’s imperial history that had stretched for over two thousand years. The rise of the Communist Party, China’s participation in the first World War, and the Japanese aggressions in Manchuria all led to the country’s involvement in WWII and the subsequent establishment of the People’s Republic led by Mao Zedong. In response to centuries of autocratic and colonial rule, communism became a rallying point for revolutionaries in countries across Asia, each drawing on Karl Marx’s manifesto, as well as the 1918 October Revolution in Russia that had been led by Vladimir Lenin.

CENTRAL & NORTH ASIA

Soviet control altered local cultural and artistic expression to an even greater degree than the pre-revolution tsarist rule of the so-called Turkestan (comprising present-day Afghanistan, China’s Xinjiang province, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, eastern Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). Exploited for its natural resources, then subject to Soviet collectivization and mechanization, these regions struggled to maintain their multiple local identities, especially as mosques were closed, Arabic script was gradually replaced by the Latin and the Cyrillic scripts, and traditional crafts workshops were transformed into factories.

Posters and advertisements from Soviet-controlled Asia show the strong influence of modernist design (function-oriented form, bold compositions on a grid system, and visually striking typefaces) and illustrate how art was used aggressively as a tool for propaganda. Such images serve as a reminder of the power of images, which has been, and still can be, used to seduce, manipulate, and even erase and rewrite history.



Figure 13.5.1.10: Unknown artist, “Participation of women in work (…)”, Turkic text (Arabic script), book factory of the Central Publishing House of USSR Nations , 920s, print run: 2000 copies, 108.4×70 cm. (image: “Уголок Ленина,” Russian Perspectives on Islam)

SOUTH & SOUTHEAST ASIA

Colonization is another phenomenon that has had enormous consequences on the cultures and societies of Asia in the modern period. During the long 19th century, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam were colonized by France; the so-called Indian subcontinent was under British rule; and today’s Indonesia became a Dutch colony known as the Dutch East Indies. Not unlike the Soviet situation in central and North Asia, the European powers in colonial South and Southeast Asia exploited resources and dictated what was produced, how it got produced, and for what purposes. In the process, colonization problematized and eroded local craftsmanship and artistic traditions. However, colonial powers also invested in learning and recording local histories, which in turn strengthened the identity and self-image of colonized societies — a phenomenon reflected in the consciously non-Western art of some 20th century artists.

For example, in India, the *swadeshi* movement encouraged artists to envision a non-Western, solely Indian art. However, in the case of the Bengal School of painting that came out of this context, European and modern developments still found their way in the underpinning concepts of the new school. The *swadeshi*-inspired Bengal School shared many characteristics with the contemporaneous *Nihonga* (literally, “Japanese painting,”) in Japan. Like the Bengal School, *Nihonga* was defined in opposition to Western painting but bore the influence of Western ideas and techniques. Some proponents and practitioners of both schools knew and inspired one another.



Figure **13.5.1.11**: Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951), founder of the Bengal School of painting, *The Journey's End*, c. 1913, tempera on paper (National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, accession no. 1832, photo: public domain).

Contemporary Asian Cultures in a Global Context



Figure **13.5.1.12**: Ai Weiwei, Han Jar Overpainted with Coca-Cola Logo, 1995, earthenware, paint, 25.1 × 27.9 × 27. 9 cm, © Ai Weiwei (image: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

In an interconnected art world whose online presence and international fairs and biennials make regional identities more elusive than ever before, contemporary Asian art presents an extremely diverse range of individual styles and expressions. That said, internationally acclaimed artists like Subodh Gupta (Indian, b. 1964) and Takashi Murakami (Japanese, b. 1962) continue to explore the creative tension between tradition and innovation and between the global and the local.

Working within the same paradigm, artists like Ai Weiwei (Chinese, b. 1957) combine references to traditional cultural elements with an activist agenda (which, for Ai Weiwei, has resulted on occasion in his arrest in China). **Ai Weiwei** also exemplifies the practice, embraced by many contemporary artists across Asia, of working in a variety of mediums, ranging from site-specific installations to film and curatorial projects.

13.5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism

Hinduism + Buddhism

Buddhism developed in reaction to the established religion in India at the time—Hinduism.

6th century B.C.E. - present

Hinduism and Buddhism, an introduction

by DR. MELODY ROD-ARI



Figure 13.5.2.1: Detail, *Krishna Killing the Horse Demon Keshi*, Gupta period, 5th c. CE, terracotta (Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.5.2.2: Krishna Killing the Horse Demon Keshi, Gupta period, 5th c. CE, terracotta (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Origins of Hinduism

Unlike Christianity or Buddhism, Hinduism did not develop from the teachings of a single founder. Moreover, it has diverse traditions, owing to its long history and continued development over the course of more than 3000 years. The term Hindu originally referred to those living on the other side of the Indus River, and by the thirteenth century it simply referred to those living in India. It was only in the eighteenth century that the term Hindu became specifically related to an Indic religion generally.

Hindus adhere to the principles of the Vedas, which are a body of Sanskritic texts that date as early as 1700 B.C.E. However, unlike the Christian or Islamic traditions, which have the Bible and the Koran, Hinduism does not adhere to a single text. The lack of a single text, among other things, also makes Hinduism a difficult religion to define.

Hinduism is neither monotheistic nor is it polytheistic. Hinduism's emphasis on the universal spirit, or Brahman, allows for the existence of a pantheon of divinities while remaining devoted to a particular god. It is for this reason that some scholars have referred to Hinduism as a henotheistic religion (the belief in and worship of a single god while accepting the existence or possible existence of other deities). Hinduism can also be described as a religion that appreciates orthopraxy—or right praxis. Because doctrinal views vary so widely among Hindus, there is no norm based on orthodoxy or right belief. By contrast, ritualized acts are consistent among differing Hindu groups.



Figure 13.5.2.3: Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), c. 11th century, Copper alloy, Chola period, 68.3 x 56.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Within the Hindu pantheon are a number of gods, goddesses and deities; however, one entity is supreme, Brahman. Brahman is the Supreme Being; the One self-existent power; the Reality which is the source of all being and all knowing. Enlightenment for the Hindu is recognizing that all things are united.

Brahman is traditionally said to manifest on earth as the Trimutri: Brahma as the creator god; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. Brahman manifests himself on earth in other gods so that he will be more knowable. With this said, for Hindus, reaching salvation is understanding that everything is in union. The different names and forms that a god can take is immaterial as they are essentially Brahman.

However, as human beings we crave the protection of many gods, in particular those gods with a very specific power. Beyond the Trimutri are numerous Hindu gods and goddesses: Ganesha, the elephant headed god and Durga, the female warrior. Each god has a specific power and role. Ganesha, for example, is the lord of beginnings and the remover of obstacles. It is for this reason that images of Ganesha are present in Hindu temples, regardless of who the temple is dedicated to. Durga, who is solicited for protection, is also equally sought by women for fertility.

These personal deities are called *ishtadeva*. Having an *ishtadeva* does not mean a worshipper forsakes other gods, but it does mean that they have a more personal relationship with their patron deity.

Hindu Worship

For Hindu worshipers, the concept of *bhakti* is important. *Bhakti* is the devotion, honor and love one has for god. The physical actions, which one takes to express one's *bhakti* can be done in a number of ways such as through *darshan* and *puja*.

Darshan means auspicious sight. By making a pilgrimage to see a god at a temple or shrine, the practitioner is going there specifically to take darshan. It should be noted that for Hindus the image of a god is not just a symbol or a portrait of their god, but is in fact an embodiment of that god. While the god does not always reside in the image, he or she does, from time to time, descend to earth and takes the form of the image. Often these times coincide with special holidays or certain times of the day—especially when rituals in honor of the gods are taking place. It is during these times, when the god is present, that darshan is most effective. To worship the god, the practitioner must be seen by the god and in turn the practitioner must see the god.

The importance of sight and its reciprocation in worship is directly reflected in the production of Hindu images. Images of gods have large eyes, so that it is easier for them to see the practitioner and for the practitioner to make eye-contact with them. Moreover, there exists a strict set of parameters artisans must follow in order to create images of gods so that gods and goddesses will inhabit the body. Gods will not inhabit forms that they do not consider worthy of their stature. This set of rules is based on mathematical proportions and is called iconometry. Therefore, in order for an image to be successful it needs to have the appropriate iconography (forms and symbols) associated with the god and also have appropriate iconometry.

Beyond *darshan*, worship for a Hindu includes *puja* or offerings as a form of honoring. One can make *puja* by lustrating an image with ghee, milk or oils, or simply adorn an image with garlands of flowers.

The Hindu world

For Hindus, time and space are organized and conceived of as cyclical—where one era cycles into the next. In Hindu mythology there are cycles of cosmic ages from a golden age (*kitri yuga*) to the dark age (*kali yuga*). We are currently in a degenerate dark age. When it ends, in several millennia, the universe will be destroyed and Brahma will create it anew. Just as the universe and time is conceived as being cyclical so is the progress of the individual soul. For Hindus, the soul is bound to the samsaric wheel. Samsara is the continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

In order to escape this cycle one must realize everything is one, everything is Brahman. In other words, one's individual soul is the same as the universal soul. When this is accomplished it is called *moksa* and marks the end of the samsaric cycle of rebirth.

All of this is understood through Hindu Dharma. For the Hindus, Dharma explains why things are and why they should be—there must be order in everything including society. And this is where the idea of the caste system finds credence in Hinduism. One's ranking in the social caste system is dependent on ones karma, translated from the Sanskrit to mean "act/ion." For Hindus, karma originally began as a purely ritual act, which was the act of making sacrifice/offerings to the sacred fire/gods. For Hindus, it is the Brahmin, or the priestly class, who has access to the sacred fire, which directly corresponded to their social rank, which was at the top. Brahmins refers to an elite caste, which includes priests, scholars, teachers, etc.

Buddhism and the Buddha

The social caste system as described by Hindu Dharma was likely one of the biggest factors in the development of Buddhism. Buddhism developed in reaction to the established religion in India at the time—Hinduism (Brahminism). Buddhism, in contrast to Hinduism, has a single founder and while there is no singular text there are texts that outline the teachings of the Buddha as the great and exemplary teacher.



Figure **13.5.2.4**: Fasting Buddha Shakyamuni, 3rd-5th century Kushan period, Pakistan/ancient Gandhara (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Buddhism was founded by one individual, Siddhartha Gautama, sometime in 6th or 5th century B.C.E. Prince Siddhartha Gautama's biography has very much become a part of the foundation of the Buddhist teachings.

Prince Siddhartha Gautama lived a cloistered life of ease and abundance. At the age of 29 years he came across a sick man, an old man, a dead man and an ascetic. Siddhartha had never seen these unpleasant aspects of life before, and was profoundly moved and confused. He could no longer ignore the existence of suffering in the world and live his life of privilege, knowing that old age and death are our inevitable fate. It was at this time that he chose to depart from his sheltered life to become an ascetic and find the truth to the universe.

The middle way

He removed his jewels and rich robes forever, cut his hair and went into the forest and became an ascetic where he studied with a variety of sages and yogis, but he was unsatisfied with their teachings. He also practiced several types of self-mortification—most importantly starvation, because he wanted to concentrate exclusively on his spiritual advancements. These searches proved fruitless and he finally came to the realization that the Middle Path (avoiding extremes) was the path towards enlightenment. The middle path teaches adherents to avoid extremes. For Siddhartha that meant neither a life of luxury as a prince nor starving himself.

He traveled to a town in northern India called Bodh Gaya, where he sat under a type of tree called a bodhi tree and vowed to remain there until he reached enlightenment. After remaining in that spot in deep meditation for 49 days, he was tested one night by the demon god, Mara (a symbol of ignorance—he is not evil, just deluded). Mara tried to disrupt Siddhartha's meditation and sent his beautiful daughters to tempt him. Siddhartha remained unmoved, kept his meditation and thus passed this final trial and gained enlightenment. At the moment of his enlightenment, he came to be known as Buddha, which translates from Sanskrit as "enlightened one."



Figure 13.5.2.5: Lion Capital, Ashokan Pillar at Sarnath, c. 250 B.C.E., polished sandstone, 210 x 283 cm, Sarnath Museum, India (photo: AS Mysore for Vincent Arthur Smith, not in copyright – pre Independence princely state publication)

The Buddha's teachings utilized much of the same vocabulary of the Hindus. For example, Dharma for Hindus explains why things are and why they should be. For Buddhists, Dharma came to be defined as the teachings of the Buddha. The caste system became invalid as the Buddha simply denied its relevance towards reaching salvation—as his salvation denied the existence of the self.

For Hindus, salvation comes in realizing that everything is one, everything is in union with Brahman and one's soul is the same as the universal soul. When the Buddha taught that there was no self, there was no need to attach the self to Brahman. Similarly, in the Hindu context karma refers to ritual action—darshan and puja—whereas for the Buddhists karma has always been an ethical action. For Buddhists, karma (action)—whether good or bad —lay in the intention. Buddha deemphasized Brahmanical rituals by making karma an ethical act and focusing on intention. Moreover, the Brahmin caste who had direct access to the gods through rituals were no longer a privileged class in Buddhism. In Buddhism, anyone who understood the teachings of the Buddha could achieve salvation.

For Buddhists, salvation is gained through the understanding of the ways things really are according to the Buddha's Dharma. Once an individual has become enlightened they can then reach a state of nirvana. Nirvana is described as the extinguishment of suffering by escaping the continuous cycle of rebirth called samsara. An individual's ability to reach enlightenment and nirvana are dependent on their understanding of the Dharma. Recall that the goal for both Hindus and Buddhists is to escape the samsaric cycle of rebirth—but each religion's interpretation of how to do this and what it meant to get off the cycle differed.

The Buddha's teachings

The basic tenets of the Buddhist faith are called the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths are meant to uncover one's eyes of the dust from the secular world and show the practitioner that:

1. Life is suffering: it is suffering because we are not perfect nor is the world in which we live perfect.
2. The origin of suffering is attachment or desire: attachment to transient things and ignorance thereof. Objects of attachment also include the idea of a "self" which is a delusion, because there is no abiding self. What we call "self" is just an imagined entity, and we are merely a part of the ceaseless becoming of the universe.
3. The cessation of suffering can be attained through detachment of desire and craving.
4. The end of suffering is achieved by seeking the middle path. It is the middle way between the two extremes of excessive self-indulgence and excessive self-mortification, leading to the end of the cycle of rebirth.

The middle path can be achieved by following the Eightfold Path to end suffering and begin the course to reaching nirvana. The Eightfold Path requires the practitioner to seek:

1. Right or Perfect View: is the beginning and the end of the path, it simply means to see and to understand things as they really are and to realize the Four Noble Truths.
2. Right Intention: can be described as a commitment to ethical and mental self-improvement.
3. Right Speech: is abstaining from the use of false, slanderous and harmful words which hurt others.
4. Right Action: means to abstain from harming others, abstaining from taking what is not given to you and to avoid sexual misconduct.
5. Right livelihood: means that one should earn one's living in a righteous way and that wealth should be gained legally and peacefully.

6. Right Effort: is the prerequisite for the other principles of the path as one needs the will to act or else nothing will be achieved.
7. Right Mindfulness: the ability to contemplate actively ones' mind, body and soul.
8. Right Concentration: the ability to focus on right thoughts and actions through meditation.

Buddhist practice

During the time of the Buddha, there was only one school of Buddhism, which is the one that the Buddha taught; however, over time there came to be different sects of Buddhism. These Buddhist sects were produced by fissures within the monastic order. Such fissures occur in differences in practice not in belief in the doctrine. In other words, regardless of what sect of Buddhism one is talking about, all adhere to the Buddha's doctrine of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Two major schools of Buddhist thought are Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

Theravada Buddhism

Theravada translates to "the School of the Elders" since it is believed by some to be closer to the Buddha's original teachings. According to Theravada Buddhists, each person is responsible for their own enlightenment. There are teachers and models, and the Buddha is exemplary, but, everyone must ultimately reach enlightenment by their own volition. Today, Theravada Buddhism is practiced in much of mainland Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka.

Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana Buddhism was a school that developed in c. 100 C.E. Mahayana literally means: the "big vehicle." It is a big vehicle that transports more sentient beings off the samsaric cycle towards enlightenment and nirvana. One of the cornerstones of Mahayana Buddhism is compassion, which is visualized in the appearance of bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are altruistic enlightened beings that vow to delay their own parinirvana (final nirvana) until every sentient being reaches enlightenment. Mahayana Buddhism is most commonly practiced in East Asia and Vietnam.

Differences

Where Theravada and Mahayana differ is that Mahayana regards becoming a bodhisattva as the ultimate goal. Therefore depictions of bodhisattvas are frequent in Mahayana art. Another fundamental difference between the two schools is how they regard the character of the Buddha. Mahayana considers the Buddha to be nearly divine in nature—he is superhuman and as such, he is worshipped in Mahayana Buddhism.
Theravada considers the Buddha an exemplar, the great teacher.

Decline of Buddhism in India

By the thirteenth century Buddhism had largely disappeared from the country of its birth, though it has been kept alive in various forms across Asia. In fact, it is the single most important shared cultural phenomenon found throughout Asia was the transmission and adoption of Buddhism.

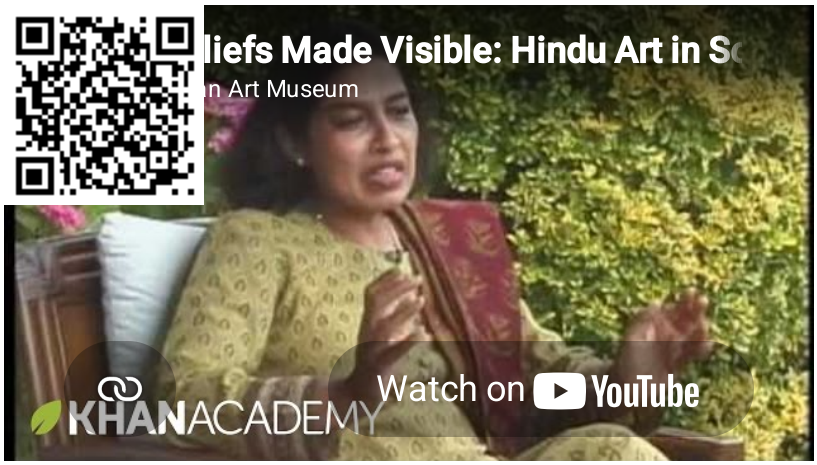
Additional resources:

Hinduism and Hindu art on The Metropolitan Museum's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Buddhism and Buddhist art on The Metropolitan Museum's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Beliefs made visible: Hindu art in South Asia

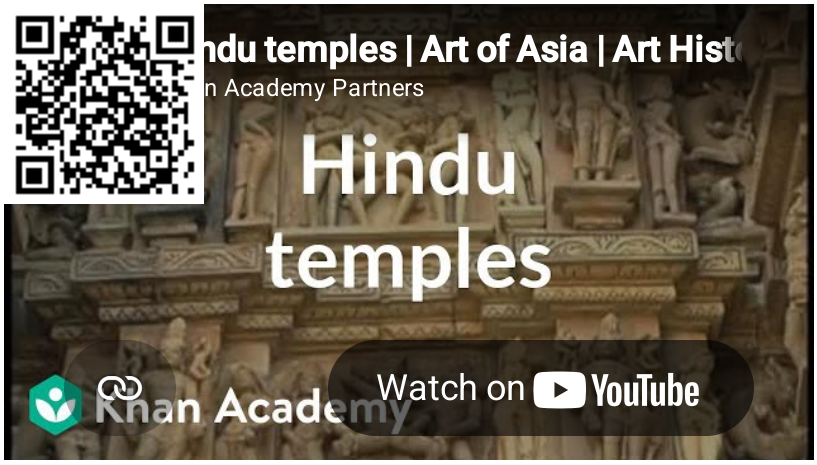
by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video 13.5.2.1: Video from the Asian Art Museum.

Hindu temples

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video 13.5.2.2: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

Introduction to Buddhism

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE

<em

Standing Buddha Offering Protection, late 5th century, Gupta period, India, red sandstone, 33 11/16" high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)" height="449" src="

https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...b92b1be13e.jpg

" width="275">

Figure 13.5.2.6: *Standing Buddha Offering Protection*, late 5th century, Gupta period, India, red sandstone, 33 11/16″ high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Buddhisms

When we talk about the religion that worships the Buddha, we refer to it as singular: Buddhism. However, it may be more accurate to talk about “Buddhisms.” The religion that originated in India took on so many different forms and adapted in such a variety ways that it is often difficult to see how the various sects of Buddhism are related. What do they all have in common? The worship of the Buddha, of course! But who was Buddha? Was Buddha a man or a god? In early forms of Buddhism, Buddha is most definitely a man. As the religion changes and adapts, the Buddha is deified.

Origins

Buddhism originated in what is today modern India, where it grew into an organized religion practiced by monks, nuns, and lay people. Its beliefs were written down forming a large canon. Buddhist images were also devised to be worshiped in sacred spaces. From India, Buddhism spread throughout Asia.

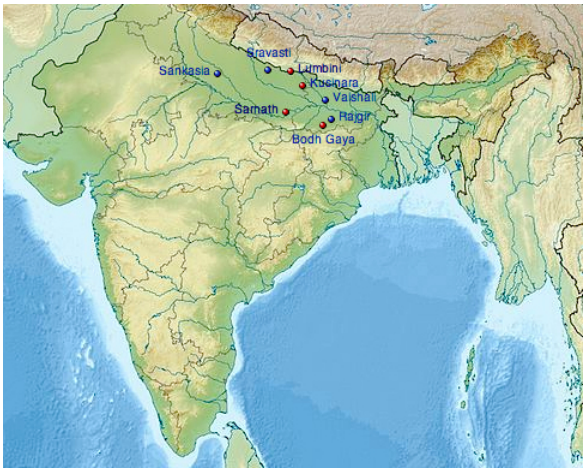


Figure **13.5.2.7**: The Eight Great Places of Buddhism (Four Great Places are plotted in red)

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the Buddha's achievement, we should try to imagine what life was like in early India, particularly in towns and villages of the Ganges River Valley—like Kapilavastu in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains—in what is now the country of Nepal. This is the area in which the Buddha was likely born, in about 560 B.C.E. Every year the river flooded the valley destroying crops. Monsoons came every year too, creating famine. There were also severe droughts and disease such as dysentery and cholera.

The Brahmanas (the Hindu priests) chanted the Vedic hymns (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism) and offered fire sacrifices to Brahma (the Hindu god of creation). However, they did not improve conditions for the common man. From the earliest times, Hindu society was stratified. Castes were firmly established in the economy with the Brahmanas the creators and perpetuators of a social order highly favorable to themselves.



Figure **13.5.2.8**: Seated Buddha, 200–300, Pakistan, perhaps Jamalgarhi, Peshawar valley, ancient region of Gandhara, schist, (source: **Asian Art Museum, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60S393**)

The Middle Way

One of the Buddha's greatest spiritual accomplishments was the doctrine of the Middle Way. He discovered the doctrine of the Middle Way only after he lived as an ascetic for some time. This experience convinced him that one should shun extremes. One

should avoid the pursuit of worldly desires on the one hand and severe, ascetic discipline on the other. Despite his doubts about existing religious practices, and his strong sense of mission, he did not think of himself as the creator of a new religion. Rather, he felt the need to purify the religion of his day.

Buddha took for granted the truth of cosmological perspectives indigenous to the Indus valley—the worldview that is often associated with Hindu conceptions. One must understand what time and space look like in the Buddhist framework of ancient India. This framework was shared by all, whether one was an adherent of Brahmanism, Jainism, or Buddhism.

Samsara and Time

Samsara (a Sanskrit word) literally means a "round" or a "cycle." In the ancient Indian worldview this means the endless cycle of rebirth and death—there is no beginning and no end. This endless cycle is governed by karma (causality).

In ancient India, time is measured in kalpa. There is an unending cycle of Destruction, Rubble, Renovation, and Duration. Each period is 20 kalpa long and they are thought of as a circle.

> ***Destruction:*** *Has a great beginning, but gets progressively worse. There are scourges of fire, water, wind.*
>
> ***Rubble:*** *Space is dark and empty, only wind exists in this stage, with seeds of karma.*
>
> ***Renovation:*** *This is the phase when things build up from the bottom.*
>
> ***4. Earth 3. Metal 2. Water 1. Wind***
>
> ***Whirling wind forms a disk of water. Impurities float to the top and form a disk of metal. This disk breaks down and forms the earth.***
>
> ***Duration:*** *This is the phase of preservation, and at the end of this phase, sentient beings appear.*

Space



Figure **13.5.2.9**: *Cosmic Mount Meru* (detail), 18th century, East Tibet or China, appliqué and embroidery with silk (The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore)

Mount Sumeru (or Meru) is the cosmic axis—that is, the link between heaven and earth. The Mountain is the center of the world in this cosmological conception, both physically and in terms of importance. On top of Mount Sumeru are the palaces of the Gods. Mount Sumeru is surrounded by seven chains of mountains and an ocean that has four continents: North = rectangle; West = circle; South = trapezoid (Jambudvipa, where humans live); East = crescent moon.

The Universe is vertically structured. At the top is the realm of “no form.” This realm has no qualities that can be perceived by the senses. It is impossible to have a conception of it. Next are the realms of form that can be perceived in various states of meditation. One can see pleasant sights, bright light, and perceive coolness.

Below is the realm of desire. This realm has six levels. This is our realm. The six levels are the six paths of rebirth. The highest realm is that of the gods (deva). Halfway between gods and humans are demi-gods (asura). Humans and animals dwell on the surface of Jambudvipa. Hungry ghosts inhabit the shadow world below the animals. This level has much pain and suffering. Beings here are always hungry and never satiated. Hell beings occupy the lowest level. There are 8 levels within this level. At the eighth and lowest level there is no rest between tortures.

Karma

How do people (beings) move about in this world? The answer is karma. Karma is the law that regulates all life in samsara. Existence in time and space is ruled by karma. Karma means action or deed. Every action has a result. Every deed has an effect. Karma is a built-in universe scale for good and evil—good leads to good result and vice versa. Karma governs the long-term and the short-term. Karma is never destroyed. In the short term good deeds lead to a good result and bad deeds lead to a bad result. Karma transgresses from one life to another. It determines how a being will be reborn (higher or lower). Karma is not predestination because the concept of predestination does not take into account free will. Your current circumstances are determined by deed in your previous life, but between the present and the future there is free will. Upward mobility is possible.

What are the implications of the Buddhist world view? Being reborn a human is rare and important—rare especially in the time of Buddha. Buddha is born only in a small time period within the phase of destruction. We are fortunate to have access to his teachings since there is limited time and place to be given the chance to encounter Buddha. A being can only encounter Buddha and benefit in the human realm.

Nirvana



Figure **13.5.2.10**: *Nirvana of the Buddha* (detail), early 14th century, Kamakura period, Japan, ink, color, gold and silver on silk (The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.)

How does one achieve salvation? All is impermanent. All is cyclical. All is painful. Even Gods suffer. They are only gods for one lifetime and then they are reborn lower down. Also Gods do not have access to Buddha. Beings need to find a way out of the endless cycle of rebirth. The goal is Nirvana. Nirvana is extinction. Nirvana is the traditional name for that which is not samsara. Where is Nirvana? Nowhere. Nirvana is outside the vertical concept of the universe.

Additional resources:

Buddhism and Buddhist art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Life of the Buddha on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Beliefs made visible: Buddhist art in South Asia

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.5.2.3**: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

The historical Buddha

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE

A human endeavor

Among the founders of the world's major religions, the Buddha was the only teacher who did not claim to be other than an ordinary human being. Other teachers were either God or directly inspired by God. The Buddha was simply a human being and he claimed no inspiration from any God or external power. He attributed all his realization, attainments and achievements to human endeavor and human intelligence. A man and only a man can become a Buddha. Every man has within himself the potential of becoming a Buddha if he so wills it and works at it. Nevertheless, the Buddha was such a perfect human that he came to be regarded in popular religion as super-human.

Man's position, according to Buddhism, is supreme. Man is his own master and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment over his destiny. If the Buddha is to be called a "savior" at all, it is only in the sense that he discovered and showed the path to liberation, to Nirvana, the path we are invited to follow ourselves.

It is with this principle of individual responsibility that the Buddha offers freedom to his disciples. This freedom of thought is unique in the history of religion and is necessary because, according to the Buddha, man's emancipation depends on his own realization of Truth, and not on the benevolent grace of a God or any external power as a reward for his obedient behavior.

Life of the Buddha

The main events of the Buddha's life are well known. He was born Siddhartha Gautama of the Shaka clan. He is said to have had a miraculous birth, precocious childhood, and a princely upbringing. He married and had a son.



Figure 13.5.2.11: *Fasting Buddha Shakyamuni*, 3rd-5th century Kushan period, Pakistan/ancient Gandhara (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

He encountered an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and a religious ascetic. He became aware of suffering and became convinced that his mission was to seek liberation for himself and others. He renounced his princely life, spent six years studying doctrines and undergoing yogic austerities. He then gave up ascetic practices for normal life. He spent seven weeks in the shade of a Bodhi tree until, finally, one night toward dawn, enlightenment came. Then he preached sermons and embarked on missionary travels for 45 years. He affected the lives of thousands—high and low. At the age of 80 he experienced his parinirvana—extinction itself.

This is the most basic outline of his life and mission. The literature inspired by the Buddha's story is as various as those who have told it in the last 2500 years. To the first of his followers, and the tradition associated with Theravada Buddhism and figures like the great Emperor Ashoka, the Buddha was a man, not a God. He was a teacher, not a savior. To this day the Theravada tradition prevails in parts of India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Thailand.

To those who, a few hundred years later, formed the Mahayana School, Buddha was a savior and often a God—a God concerned with man's sorrows above all else. The Mahayana form of Buddhism is in Tibet, Mongolia, Vietnam, Korea, China, and Japan. The historical Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) is also known as Shakyamuni.

The stupa

by DR. KAREN SHELBY



Video 13.5.2.4: Video from the Asian Art Museum



Figure **13.5.2.12**: Stupa 3, 1st c., Sanchi, India (photo: **Nagarjun Kandukuru**, CC: BY 2.0)

Can a mound of dirt represent the Buddha, the path to Enlightenment, a mountain and the universe all at the same time? It can if its a stupa. The stupa ("stupa" is Sanskrit for heap) is an important form of Buddhist architecture, though it predates Buddhism. It is generally considered to be a sepulchral monument—a place of burial or a receptacle for religious objects. At its simplest, a stupa is a dirt burial mound faced with stone. In Buddhism, the earliest stupas contained portions of the Buddha's ashes, and as a result, the stupa began to be associated with the body of the Buddha. Adding the Buddha's ashes to the mound of dirt activated it with the energy of the Buddha himself.

Early stupas

Before Buddhism, great teachers were buried in mounds. Some were cremated, but sometimes they were buried in a seated, meditative position. The mound of earth covered them up. Thus, the domed shape of the stupa came to represent a person seated in meditation much as the Buddha was when he achieved Enlightenment and knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. The base of the stupa represents his crossed legs as he sat in a meditative pose (called padmasana or the lotus position). The middle portion is the Buddha's body and the top of the mound, where a pole rises from the apex surrounded by a small fence, represents his head. Before images of the human Buddha were created, reliefs often depicted practitioners demonstrating devotion to a stupa.

The ashes of the Buddha were buried in stupas built at locations associated with important events in the Buddha's life including Lumbini (where he was born), Bodh Gaya (where he achieved Enlightenment), Deer Park at Sarnath (where he preached his first sermon sharing the Four Noble Truths (also called the dharma or the law), and Kushingara (where he died). The choice of these sites and others were based on both real and legendary events.

"Calm and glad"

According to legend, King Ashoka, who was the first king to embrace Buddhism (he ruled over most of the Indian subcontinent from c. 269 – 232 B.C.E.), created 84,000 stupas and divided the Buddha's ashes among them all. While this is an exaggeration (and the stupas were built by Ashoka some 250 years after the Buddha's death), it is clear that Ashoka was responsible for building many stupas all over northern India and the other territories under the Mauryan Dynasty in areas now known as Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

One of Ashoka's goals was to provide new converts with the tools to help with their new faith. In this, Ashoka was following the directions of the Buddha who, prior to his death (parinirvana), directed that stupas should be erected in places other than those associated with key moments of his life so that "the hearts of many shall be made calm and glad." Ashoka also built stupas in regions where the people might have difficulty reaching the stupas that contained the Buddha's ashes.



Figure 13.5.2.13: One of the most famous stupas, The Great Stupa (Mahastupa) was built at the birthplace of Ashoka's wife, Devi, daughter of a local merchant. in the village of Sanchi located on an important trade route in the state of Madya Pradesh, India (photo: **Nagarjun Kandukuru**, CC: BY 2.0)

Karmic benefits

The practice of building stupas spread with the Buddhist doctrine to Nepal and Tibet, Bhutan, Thailand, Burma, China and even the United States where large Buddhist communities are centered. While stupas have changed in form over the years, their function remains essentially unchanged. Stupas remind the Buddhist practitioner of the Buddha and his teachings almost 2,500 years after his death.

For Buddhists, building stupas also has karmic benefits. Karma, a key component in both Hinduism and Buddhism, is the energy generated by a person's actions and the ethical consequences of those actions. Karma affects a person's next existence or re-birth. For example, in the *Avadana Sutra* ten merits of building a stupa are outlined. One states that if a practitioner builds a stupa he or she will not be reborn in a remote location and will not suffer from extreme poverty. As a result, a vast number of stupas dot the countryside in Tibet (where they are called *chorten*) and in Burma (*chedi*).

The journey to enlightenment

Buddhists visit stupas to perform rituals that help them to achieve one of the most important goals of Buddhism: to understand the Buddha's teachings, known as the Four Noble Truths (also known as the dharma and the law) so when they die they cease to be caught up in *samsara*, the endless cycle of birth and death.

> ***The Four Noble Truths:***
> ***life is suffering (suffering=rebirth)***
> ***the cause of suffering is desire***
> ***the cause of desire must be overcome***
> ***when desire is overcome, there is no more suffering (suffering=rebirth)***

Once individuals come to fully understand The Four Noble Truths, they are able to achieve Enlightenment, or the complete knowledge of the dharma. In fact, Buddha means "the Enlightened One" and it is the knowledge that the Buddha gained on his way to achieving Enlightenment that Buddhist practitioners seek on their own journey toward Enlightenment.

The circle or wheel

One of the early sutras (a collection of sayings attributed to the Buddha forming a religious text) records that the Buddha gave specific directions regarding the appropriate method of honoring his remains (the *Maha-parinibbāna sutra*): his ashes were to be buried in a stupa at the crossing of the mythical four great roads (the four directions of space), the unmoving hub of the wheel, the place of Enlightenment.

If one thinks of the stupa as a circle or wheel, the unmoving center symbolizes Enlightenment. Likewise, the practitioner achieves stillness and peace when the Buddhist dharma is fully understood. Many stupas are placed on a square base, and the four sides

represent the four directions, north, south, east and west. Each side often has a gate in the center, which allows the practitioner to enter from any side. The gates are called *torana*. Each gate also represents the four great life events of the Buddha: East (Buddha's birth), South (Enlightenment), West (First Sermon where he preached his teachings or dharma), and North (Nirvana). The gates are turned at right angles to the axis mundi to indicate movement in the manner of the arms of a svastika, a directional symbol that, in Sanskrit, means "to be good" ("su" means good or auspicious and "asti" means to be). The *torana* are directional gates guiding the practitioner in the correct direction on the correct path to Enlightenment, the understanding of the Four Noble Truths.

A microcosm of the universe

At the top of stupa is a *yasti*, or spire, which symbolizes the *axis mundi* (a line through the earth's center around which the universe is thought to revolve). The *yasti* is surrounded by a *harmika*, a gate or fence, and is topped by *chattras* (umbrella-like objects symbolizing royalty and protection).

The stupa makes visible something that is so large as to be unimaginable. The axis symbolizes the center of the cosmos partitioning the world into six directions: north, south, east, west, the nadir and the zenith. This central axis, the axis mundi, is echoed in the same axis that bisects the human body. In this manner, the human body also functions as a microcosm of the universe. The spinal column is the axis that bisects Mt. Meru (the sacred mountain at the center of the Buddhist world) and around which the world pivots. The aim of the practitioner is to climb the mountain of one's own mind, ascending stage by stage through the planes of increasing levels of Enlightenment.

Circumambulation

The practitioner does not enter the stupa, it is a solid object. Instead, the practitioner circumambulates (walks around) it as a meditational practice focusing on the Buddha's teachings. This movement suggests the endless cycle of rebirth (samsara) and the spokes of the Eightfold Path (eight guidelines that assist the practitioner) that leads to knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and into the center of the unmoving hub of the wheel, Enlightenment. This walking meditation at a stupa enables the practitioner to visualize Enlightenment as the movement from the perimeter of the stupa to the unmoving hub at the center marked by the *yasti*.



Video **13.5.2.5**

The video above shows the perspective of someone circumambulating the Mahastupa in Sanchi, the soundtrack plays monks chanting Buddhist prayers, an aid in meditation. Circumambulation is also a part of other faiths. For example, Muslims circle the Kaaba in Mecca and cathedrals in the West such at Notre Dame in Paris include a semicircular ambulatory (a hall that wraps around the back of the choir, around the altar).

The practitioner can walk to circumambulate the stupa or move around it through a series of prostrations (a movement that brings the practitioner's body down low to the ground in a position of submission). An energetic and circular movement around the stupa

raises the body's temperature. Practitioners do this to mimic the heat of the fire that cremated the Buddha's body, a process that burned away the bonds of self-hood and attachment to the mundane or ordinary world. Attachments to the earthly realm are considered obstacles in the path toward Enlightenment. Circumambulation is not veneration for the relics themselves—a distinction sometime lost on novice practitioners. The Buddha did not want to be revered as a god, but wanted his ashes in the stupas to serve as a reminder of the Four Noble Truths.

Votive Offerings



Figure **13.5.2.14**: *Votive Stupa*, Bodhgaya, 8th century, stone, 78 x 44 x 35 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

Small stupas can function as votive offerings (objects that serve as the focal point for acts of devotion). In order to gain merit, to improve one's karma, individuals could sponsor the casting of a votive stupa. Indian and Tibetan stupas typically have inscriptions that state that the stupa was made "so that all beings may attain Enlightenment." Votive stupas can be consecrated and used in home altars or utilized in monastic shrines. Since they are small, they can be easily transported; votive stupas, along with small statues of the Buddha and other Buddhist deities, were carried across Nepal, over the Himalayas and into Tibet, helping to spread Buddhist doctrine. Votive stupas are often carved from stone or caste in bronze. The bronze stupas can also serve as a reliquary and ashes of important teachers can be encased inside.

This stupa clearly shows the link between the form of the stupa and the body of the Buddha. The Buddha is represented at his moment of Enlightenment, when he received the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (the dharma or law). He is making the earth touching gesture (*bhumisparsamudra*) and is seated in *padmasan*, the lotus position. He is seated in a gateway signifying a sacred space that recalls the gates on each side of monumental stupas.

Additional resources

The Stupa from the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

Votive Stupa at the Ashmolean Museum

Buddhist monasteries

by DR. KAREN SHELBY

Why Monasteries?

<em
Standing Male Worshipper (votive figure), c. 2900-2600 B.C.E., Eshnunna (modern Tell Asmar, Iraq), gypsum alabaster, shell, black limestone, bitumen, 11 5/8 x 5 1/8 x 3 7/8″ / 29.5 x 10 cm, Sumerian (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City)" height="475" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...7709d78811.jpg
" width="300">

Figure 13.5.2.15: *Standing Male Worshipper (votive figure)*, c. 2900-2600 B.C.E., Eshnunna (modern Tell Asmar, Iraq), gypsum alabaster, shell, black limestone, bitumen, 11 5/8 x 5 1/8 x 3 7/8″ / 29.5 x 10 cm, Sumerian (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City)

So what is a monastery exactly? A monastery is a community of men or women (monks or nuns), who have chosen to withdraw from society, forming a new community devoted to religious practice. The word monk comes from the Greek word monos, which means alone.

It can be difficult to focus a lot of time on prayers and religious ritual when time needs to be spent on everyday activities that insure one's survival (such as food and shelter). Think of the ancient Sumerian Votive Statues from Tell Asmar, for example. These statues were placed in a temple high above the village. Each statue represented an individual in continual prayer as a stand-in for the actual individual who was busy living, tending to crops, cooking food, and raising children. The person was depicted with hands clasped in prayer (at the heart center) with eyes wide open in perpetual engagement with the gods.

The work of the monastery

In Buddhism and Christianity however, instead of statues, monks or nuns pray on behalf of the people. The monastery typically becomes the spiritual focus of the nearest town or village. In Christianity the monks pray for the salvation of the souls of the living. But in Buddhism, there is no concept of the soul. The goal is not heaven, rather it is cessation from the endless cycle of rebirth (*samsara*), to achieve *moksha*, which is freedom or release from attachment to ego or the material world and an end to *samsara*, and to realize *nirvana* (or liberation), which is to be released into the infinite state of oneness with everything.

The Four Noble Truths or *Dharma*

It is difficult to achieve *moksha*, which is why the Buddha's teaching focuses on achieving Enlightenment or knowledge that helps the practitioner. This is described succinctly in his Four Noble Truths, also referred to as the *dharma* (the law):

> ***Life is suffering (suffering = rebirth)***
> ***The cause of suffering is desire***
> ***The cause of desire must be overcome***
> ***When desire is overcome, there is no more suffering (suffering = rebirth)***

Adept practitioners of Buddhism understood that not everyone was ready to perform the necessary rites to obtain the ultimate goals of ending *samsara* (rebirth). The common person could, however, improve their karma (an action or deed that enacts a cycle of cause and effect) by everyday charitable acts that were mostly directed toward the monastic community.

The Buddhist monks and nuns meditated and prayed on behalf of the lay community (or laity—basically everyone who is not a priest or monk), those without specialized knowledge of the faith, assisting them in the goal of realizing The Four Noble Truths. Monks and nuns also instructed the lay practitioner on how to conduct the rituals, how to meditate, and advised them about which Buddhist deity to focus on (this depended on the issue or obstacle in the practitioner's path to Enlightenment). The laity, in turn, supported the monks with donations of food and other necessary items. It was a mutually beneficial relationship.

The beginnings of monasteries

In the early years of Buddhism, following the practices of contemporary religions such as Hinduism and Jainism (and other faiths that no longer exist), monks dedicated themselves to an ascetic life (a practice of self-denial particular to the pursuit of religious or spiritual goals) wandering the country with no permanent living quarters. They were fed, clothed, and housed in inclement weather by people wishing to gain merit, which is a spiritual credit earned through virtuous acts. Eventually monastic complexes were created for the monks close enough to a town in order to receive alms or charity from the villagers, but far enough away so as not to be disturbed during meditation.

Three types of architecture: *stupa*, *vihara* and the *chaitya*

Buddhism, the first Indian religion to require large communal and monastic spaces, inspired three types of architecture.

The first was the *stupa*, a significant object in Buddhist art and architecture. On a very basic level it is a burial mound for the Buddha. The original *stupas* contained the Buddha's ashes. Relics are objects associated with an esteemed person, including that person's bones (or ashes in the case of the Buddha), or things the person used or had worn. The veneration, or respect, for relics is prevalent in many religious faiths, particularly in Christianity. By the time the Buddhist monasteries gained importance, the stupas were empty of these relics and simply became symbols of the Buddha and the Buddhist ideology.

Second was the construction of the *vihara*, a Buddhist monastery that also contained a residence hall for the monks.

Third was the *chaitya*, an assembly hall that contained a *stupa* (though one empty of relics). This became an important feature for the monasteries that were cut into cliffs in central India. The central hall of the chaitya was arranged to allow for circumambulation of the *stupa*.



Figure **13.5.2.16**: *Chaitya* at Karle near Lonavala, Maharashtra, first century B.C.E., (photo: **Fernando Stankuns**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The *stupa* is at the end of the nave (the main central aisle), as seen in the photo above. On either side of the columns are side aisles to help people walk through the space—around to the stupa, and back out. This is similar to the architecture of Early Christianity (for example, the side aisles at the Early Christian Church in Rome, Santa Sabina, which help the flow of people who come to worship at the altar at the end of the nave).

Buddhist Monasteries in India

In India, by the 1st century, many monasteries were founded as learning centers on sites already associated with Buddha and Buddhism. These sites include Lumbini where the Buddha was born, Bodh Gaya where he achieved enlightenment and the knowledge of the dharma (the Four Noble Truths), Sarnath (Deer Park) where he preached his first sermon sharing the *dharma*, and Kushingara where he died.



Figure 13.5.2.17: Great Stupa, Sanchi, India, 3rd century B.C.E. to first century C.E. (photo: R Barraez D´Lucca CC BY 2.0)

Ashoka: the first King to embrace Buddhism

Sites special to King Ashoka (304–232 B.C.E.), the first king (of northern India) to embrace Buddhism, were also integral to the building of monasteries. For example, the complex at Sanchi, where the original Great Stupa (Mahastupa) of Sanchi was created as a reliquary for the Buddha's ashes after his death, became the largest of many stupas that were created later when a monastery was built at the site. Ashoka added one of his famous pillars at this location—pillars that not only proclaimed his acceptance of Buddhism, but also served as instructional objects on Buddhist ideology.



Figure 13.5.2.18: An example of the monastic center at Vaishali. One can still see the remains of one of several stupas, the Ashokan pillar and the later addition of the monks' cells and the administrative center. Soon these types of monasteries were replaced by rock-cut accommodations because they were more durable. (Photo: **Abhishek Singh** CC BY-SA 3.0)

Between 120 BCE and 200 C.E. over 1000 viharas (a monastery with residence hall for the monks), and chaityas (a stupa monument hall), were established along ancient and prosperous trade routes. The monasteries required large living areas.

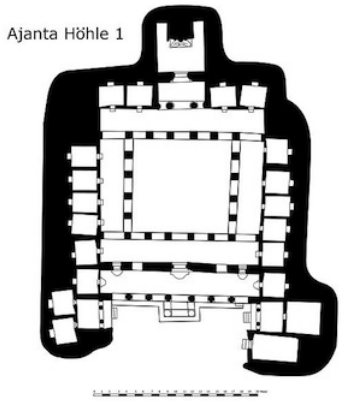


Figure **13.5.2.19**: Plan of cave 1 at Ajanta

A *vihara* was a dwelling of one or two stories, fronted by a pillared veranda. The monks' or nuns' cells were arranged around a central meeting hall as in the plan of the Ajanta vihara (left). Each cell contained a stone bed, a pillow and a niche for a lamp.

The monastery quickly became important and had a three-fold purpose: as a residence for monks, as a center for religious work (on behalf of the laity) and as a center for Buddhist learning. During Ashoka's reign in the 3rd century B.C.E., the Mahabodhi Temple (the Great Temple of Enlightenment where Buddha achieved his knowledge of the dharma—the Four Noble Truths) was built in Bodh Gaya, currently in the Indian state of Bihar in northern India. It contained a monastery and shrine. In order to acknowledge the exact site where the Buddha attained Enlightenment, Ashoka built a diamond throne (*vajrasana* – literally diamond seat) underscoring the indestructible path of the dharma.

Rock-cut caves

The rock-cut caves were established in the 3rd century B.C.E. in the western Deccan Plateau, which makes up most of the southern portion of India. The earliest rock-cut monastic centers include the Bhaja Caves, the Karle Caves and the Ajanta Caves.



Figure **13.5.2.20**: Bhaja Caves, c. 3rd century B.C.E. to 2nd century B.C.E. (photo: **Andrea Kirkby** CC BY-NC 2.0). Twenty-two caves are located at the site.

The objects found in the caves suggest a profitable relationship existed between the monks and wealthy traders. The Bhaja caves were located on a major trade route from the Arabian Sea eastward toward the Deccan region linking north and south India. Merchants, wealthy from the trade between the Roman Empire and southeast Asia, often sponsored architectural additions including pillars, arches, reliefs and façades to the caves. Buddhist monks, serving as missionaries, often accompanied traders throughout India, up into Nepal and Tibet, spreading the dharma as they travelled.

Bhaja



Figure **13.5.2.21**: *Chaitya* (monastic monument hall) at Bhaja, India, 1st century B.C.E. (photo: **Andrea Kirkby** CC BY-NC 2.0)

At Bhaja there are no representations of the Buddha other than the stupa since Bhaja was an active monastery during the earliest phase of Buddhism, *Hinayana* (lesser vehicle), when no images of the Buddha were created. In *Hinayana*, the memory of the historical Buddha and his teachings were still a very real part of the practice. The Buddha himself did not encourage worship of him (something images would encourage), but desired that the practitioner focus on the *dharma* (the law, the Four Noble Truths).

The main *chaitya* hall (which contained a memorial stupa, empty of relics, above) at Bhaja contains a solid stone stupa in the nave flanked by two side aisles. It is the earliest example of this type of rock-cut cave and closely resembles the wooden structures that preceded it. The columns slope inwards, which would have been necessary in the early wooden structures in the north of India in order to support the outward thrust from the top of the vault. In similar stone caves, sometimes the columns are placed in stone pots, which mimic the stone pots the wooden columns were positioned in, in order to thwart termites. This is an example of a practical architectural practice being adopted as the standard.



Figure **13.5.2.22**: Ajanta, cave 19 (photo: **Arian Zwegers**, CC BY 2.0)

Ajanta

At Ajanta, the earliest phase of construction also belongs to the Hinayana (lesser vehicle) phase of Buddhism (in which no human image of the Buddha was created). The caves are very similar to those at Bhaja. During the second phase of construction, Buddhism was in the Mahayana (greater vehicle) phase and images of the Buddha, predominantly drawn from the jataka stories—the life stories of the Buddha—were painted throughout. In Mahayana, which was more distant in time from the life of the Buddha, there was a need for physical reminders of the Buddha and his teachings. Thus images of the Buddha performing his Enlightenment

and his first sermon (when he shared the Four Noble Truths with the laity) proliferated. The paintings at Ajanta provide some of the earliest and finest examples of Buddhist painting from the period. The images also provide documentation of contemporary events and social custom under Gupta reign (320-550 C.E.).



Figure **13.5.2.23**: Ajanta, Cave 19 (interior) (photo: **Kirk Kittell**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Rock-cut monasteries become more complex

Eventually, the rock-cut monasteries became quite complex. They consisted of several stories with inner courtyards and veranda. Some facades had reliefs, images projecting from the stone, of the Buddha and other deities. A stupa was still placed in the central hall, but now an image of the Buddha was carved into it, underscoring that the Buddha is the *stupa*. Stories from the Buddha's life were also, at times, added to the interior in both paintings and reliefs.

Additional resources:

The art of Buddhism from the Freer | Sackler

Images of enlightenment: aniconic vs. iconic depictions of the Buddha in India

by DR. CRISTIN MCKNIGHT SETHI



Figure 13.5.2.24: Sculptural fragment depicting a stupa and devotees, from Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period, c. 100-80 B.C.E., reddish brown sandstone (Smithsonian, Freer Gallery of Art)

Depicting the divine

Representing divine figures has long been a thorny issue. After all, depicting the divine in human form would seem to define and limit the divine in a manner which seems to contradict the idea of God as infinite and all-powerful. There's also the fourth commandment, as offered in the Hebrew Bible, which reads:

> ***Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Exodus 20:1-17)***

While this commandment has been interpreted in various ways, Judaism and Islam both prohibit the representation of God and other divine figures in human form. Christianity has long relied on images of God, Christ, and the saints as a way of educating the public, but even so, at several points in history, images of divine figures were destroyed—often violently (the destruction of images is called "iconoclasm"). The earliest images of the Buddha also appear to avoid depicting him in human form, though scholars are still debating why this is the case.

Buddha, enlightenment and the Bodhi tree

The man who became known as the Buddha was a Hindu prince, named Siddhartha Gautama, who was born in the 5th or 6th century B.C.E. to a royal family—the leaders of the Shakya clan—living in what is now Nepal. When he was about 29 years old, Prince Siddhartha (who was also known as Shakyamuni) traveled outside of his sheltered palace and encountered an old man, a sick man, and a corpse—figures that, for the prince, epitomized the pain and suffering of the world. He also encountered an ascetic, someone who has chosen to abstain from the pleasures of life in order to pursue spiritual knowledge. After this experience, Prince Siddhartha decided to renounce his luxurious, royal life and to travel around the countryside as an ascetic, meditating and studying. Ultimately, Prince Siddhartha was seeking an end to worldly pain and suffering, and a release from the cycle of rebirth and death (*samsara*) that characterizes Hindu concepts of time (more on Hinduism and Buddhism **here**).

One of the most important moments in the story of Prince Siddhartha is when he reached spiritual enlightenment—a state of infinite knowledge—and became known as the Buddha or "the enlightened one." This occurred about six years after the prince renounced his royal life, while he was meditating underneath a fig tree outside a small village in the present-day state of Bihar,

India. The fig tree under which the Buddha reached enlightenment became known as the Bodhi (“awakened” or “enlightened”) tree, and the place where the Buddha sat became an important *tirtha* or sacred place known as Bodh Gaya (“awakened” or “enlightened” place).



Figure 13.5.2.25: Detail, Enlightenment face of Prasenajit pillar, from Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period, c. 100-80 B.C.E. reddish brown sandstone (Indian Museum, Kolkata) (photo: **Anandajoti Bhikkhu**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Early images of the Buddha at Bharhut

Some of the earliest depictions of the Buddha reaching enlightenment appear as sculptural friezes on the exterior of sacred Buddhist monuments known as *stupas*, which Buddhist monks and nuns built as part of their monastic complexes (more on *stupas* **here**).

One such depiction is originally from the *stupa* at Bharhut in the present-day state of Madhya Pradesh, India (left). Carved in reddish-brown sandstone sometime around 80-100 B.C.E. this depiction appears on a railing (*vedika*) pillar that once surrounded the main *stupa*. The scene shows several figures kneeling and standing on an architectural form that encircles a large tree.

The place of enlightenment or the moment of enlightenment?

An inscription that accompanies this scene, carved into the roof of the architectural form, identifies it as “the Bodhi tree of holy Shakyamuni” [1] which has led some scholars to interpret this depiction as the location, or the *tirtha*, where the Buddha’s enlightenment took place—the tree under which Prince Siddhartha reached enlightenment and the temple that devotees later constructed at this sacred site.

Some of the figures in the scene appear kneeling in prayer in front of an altar at the base of the tree. Celestial beings fly near the top of the tree, and appear to toss flower garlands on the branches. Their presence reinforces the sacrality of the site.

On the right side of the relief, we see a pillar topped with an elephant capital, which, scholars argue, supports the interpretation of this scene as the site of enlightenment. This pillar recalls those constructed by Emperor Ashoka—one of the first Buddhist rulers in India—who erected pillars with animal capitals at important sites of the Buddha’s life (below, left).



Figure 13.5.2.26: Ashokan pillar, c. 279 B.C.E. – 232 B.C.E, Vaishali, India (where Buddha preached his last sermon). Photo: **Rajeev Kumar**, CC: BY-SA 2.5)

In this interpretation, the Bharhut scene could be a depiction of pilgrimage—the kneeling devotees could be Buddhist practitioners traveling to Bodh Gaya as part of religious devotion, to visit the site where the Buddha reached enlightenment hundreds of years before.

However, some scholars argue that it is not simply the location (*tirtha*) of the Buddha's enlightenment depicted in this scene, but rather the actual moment of enlightenment itself—complete with an aniconic, symbolic representation of the Buddha. (What does aniconic mean?)

In this interpretation of the scene on the pillar from Bharhut, the Buddha appears not in human form—but rather symbolically, represented by the altar. What we are seeing here is a representation of the Buddha's formless state upon reaching spiritual enlightenment. In fact, some believe the inscription translates as "enlightenment of the Holy One Shakyamuni"[2] rather than the "Bodhi tree of holy Shakyamuni"—a reading that supports the interpretation of this scene as a depiction of the event of enlightenment not simply the place where enlightenment happened.

Other aniconic images of the Buddha



Figure 13.5.2.27: Story of Serpent King Erapata, with Erapata worshipping empty throne, on Prasenajit pillar, from Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period, c. 100-80 B.C.E., reddish brown sandstone (Indian Museum, Kolkata) (photo: **Anandajoti Bhikkhu**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Along the same lines, scholars argue that other sculptural friezes at important early Buddhist stupas like Bharhut depict scenes from the life of the Buddha, with the Buddha represented in aniconic form—as an empty throne (above), a wheel signifying the Buddha's creation of the Wheel of Law or Dharma (below, right), or footsteps (below, left), and sometimes even as a *stupa* (see the image at the top of this page). A third way to interpret the enlightenment scene from the Bharhut *stupa* and other so-called aniconic depictions of the Buddha is to read them as depictions of Buddhist doctrine or belief.



Figure 13.5.2.28: Left: Descent on Ajatachatru pillar, from Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India. Sunga period, c. 100-80 B.C.E., reddish brown sandstone and right: Wheel of Law on Prasenajit pillar, from Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period, c. 100-80 B.C.E., reddish brown sandstone (both, Indian Museum, Kolkata) (photo: **Anandajoti Bhikkhu**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Imagining the Buddha's Corporeal Body

This trend of depicting the Buddha in aniconic form continues until after the turn of the 1st century C.E. with the development of Mahayana Buddhism when we begin to see a large number of images of the Buddha in human or anthropomorphic form (below). These new, iconic images of the Buddha were particularly popular in the region of Gandhara (in present-day Pakistan) during the Kushana period and include depictions of the Buddha's enlightenment at Bodh Gaya (below). These anthropomorphic images usher in a new phase of Buddhist art in which artists convey meaning through the depiction of special bodily marks (*lakshanas*) and hand gestures (*mudras*) of the Buddha. In this anthropomorphic image of the Buddha's enlightenment, the artist depicts Prince Siddhartha seated on a throne, surrounded by the demon Mara and his army, who attempted—unsuccessfully—to thwart Prince Siddhartha's attainment of enlightenment. At the moment of enlightenment, the prince reaches his right hand towards the ground in a gesture (or *mudra*, and specifically the *bhumisparshamudra*)) of calling the earth to witness his spiritual awakening. In doing so he becomes the Buddha.



Figure 13.5.2.29: Sculptural fragment depicting Buddha's enlightenment, Gandhara, Kushana period, 2nd-3rd century C.E., schist, (Smithsonian, Freer Gallery of Art)

Additional resources:

Images of Bharhut stupa in Indian Museum, Kolkata

3-minute youtube video about Bharhut stupa

Late 19th century photographs in British Library Collection of British excavation of Bharhut stupa

Buddhism from the Freer Gallery of Art

Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* vol. 21 (1991), pp. 45 – 66.

Susan L. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal vol.* 49.4 (1990), pp. 401 – 408.

Jatakas: the many lives of Buddha as Bodhisattva

by DR. MANDIRA SHARMA



Figure 13.5.2.30: Detail, Mahakapi Jataka, Stupa 1 (the Great Stupa) at Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh), on a pillar of the west gateway/torana, dated c. 1st century B.C.E. – c. 1st century C.E.

Jatakas — the stories about virtues

Imagine a six-tusked elephant salvaging the lives of men while losing its own in an ordeal, or a monkey king saving the lives of his fellow monkeys by stretching his body between two trees to make a bridge for their safety. Stories like these recall tales told by parents or grandparents as bedtime stories for children. In a different context, however, these stories form an integral part of Buddhist Jataka tales.

The Jatakas are an important part of Buddhist art and literature. They describe the previous existences or births of the Buddha (the Enlightened One) when he appeared as Bodhisattvas (beings who are yet to attain enlightenment or *moksha*), in both human and non-human forms. These stories tell us how practicing different perfections or transcendental virtues (which are usually termed *paramitas*) are key to Buddhist approaches for attaining enlightenment (*moksha*) or the release from *samsara*, the endless cycle of rebirth.

Where to find the Jatakas

The literary text called the *Jataka* contains more than 500 tales and constitutes the tenth book of the fifteen texts written in the ancient Indic language of Pali that comprise the *Khuddaka Nikaya* of the *Sutta Pitaka* (the second of the Tripitaka or Buddhist Pali canon dealing with the doctrinal section of the Hinayana, a sect of Buddhism that emphasized the life of the **Historical Buddha, Shakyamuni**). The extant *Jataka* text that has come down to us is a commentary on the original Pali canonical *Jataka* book, which was in verse form. A few Jataka tales can also be traced to the *Cariya Pitaka*, the *Buddhavamsa*, and other parts of the Pali canon.

From story to a “Jataka”

Although it is beyond doubt that a large portion of the Jataka content is peculiar to Buddhism, these stories contain an unrivaled collection of folklore that likely circulated outside of Buddhist communities. A large number of Jatakas originally belonged to ancient Indian storytelling or narrative traditions that were both rich and varied. Telling stories, fables, anecdotes and fairy tales is a favorite method by which leaders of world religions seek more followers and increased popularity for their faiths. The inclusion of folk or popular components in the Jatakas ultimately enabled them to reach larger audiences through narrative elements that people could easily identify with. In some cases, a mundane or arbitrary story, originally unrelated to Buddhist ideas, was “buddhicized” and turned into a Jataka story.

Jatakas in art

Apart from the oral and literary forms, Jatakas reached the laity and monks through art, which proved to be a powerful tool in communicating Buddhist tenets and philosophy to a wide public. Jatakas are often found in sculptural reliefs or paintings in Buddhist **stupas** (Buddhist shrines with dome-shaped structures) and caves. It is no surprise, therefore, that the popularity of several Buddhist sites in what is now India, Bharhut, **Sanchi**, Amaravati, **Ajanta** and Nagarjunakonda, also feature brilliantly-produced Jataka depictions. Artists developed ingenious and visually effective methods to tell the Jataka stories without losing their essence and while making them easily understandable for a wide audience.

The story of the Great Monkey King at Bharhut

One Jataka story that became popular in Buddhist art is the Mahakapi Jataka. This Jataka describes how the Bodhisattva was born as a Great Monkey who dwelled in a beautiful Himalayan forest among a large troop of monkeys. According to the story, near the bank of the river Ganges a huge Banyan tree bore fruits with divine fragrance and flavor. Though the Great Monkey (the Bodhisattva) and his troop took utmost care to see that no fruit grew or fell from the branch that stretched towards the Ganges, one ripe fruit did fall into the river and was caught in the net of a fisherman who showed the fruit to the king of Benaras. The king went to the tree with his retinue and saw the monkeys eating the fruits. Annoyed, he ordered his archers to shoot them. The frightened monkeys approached the Bodhisattva, who comforted them and told them not to worry. He tried to make a bamboo bridge between the tree and another tree on the other side of the river. But somehow the bamboo shoot fell short of the length required to form the bridge. Realizing this, the Bodhisattva stretched himself at the end, so that his herd could pass safely over on his back. The monkeys escaped—treading on the back of the Bodhisattva. As the Mahakapi Jataka explains, the king was filled with deep emotion to see how the Bodhisattva endangered his own life for the safety of his retinue. The king commanded his attendants to safely bring down the Bodhisattva.



Figure 13.5.2.31: Mahakapi Jataka, roundel relief, Bharhut stupa, Madhya Pradesh, India, c. 2nd century B.C.E. – 1st century B.C.E. (Indian Museum, Kolkata, West Bengal, India)

A stunning representation of this Jataka is found in a medallion at Bharhut (an important Buddhist site in the present-day state of Madhya Pradesh, India). We see several moments of the story in this one medallion. The scene is divided into two by a flowing river shown teeming with fish. Flanking the river are two trees: the one on the right is inhabited by the monkeys, and the other, smaller tree on the left is the tree they escape to. In the middle of these trees the Great Monkey (the Bodhisattva) has fastened one end of the bamboo stem to the top of the tree on the left and the other end to the ankle of his right leg. He clings to two smaller upper branches of the tree on the right to form a bridge.

The artist(s) depict monkeys actively moving between the two trees that frame this scene: several monkeys clamber amidst the branches of the large banyan, one monkey appears to be leaping over the Bodhisattva's back, and two lucky monkeys have safely reached the far side. Below we see the next moment of the story with two men holding a piece a fabric as a safety net to catch the Great Monkey as he jumps down from the tree. In the final scene at the bottom, the Bodhisattva and the king sit across from one other, as the Bodhsiattva instructs the king in Buddhist law before dying from the wounds sustained during his dramatic feat to save the troop. The story tells us that the king then honored the Great Monkey with royal funeral rites.

Another version at Sanchi

Another depiction of the Mahakapi Jataka appears on the western gateway of the Great Stupa (Stupa 1) at **Sanchi**, also in Madhya Pradesh, India. The first scene, depicted at the bottom, shows the arrival of the king of Benaras, mounted on a horse accompanied by soldiers. The king is shown with a parasol or *chatra* over his head, which signifies his royal status. A feature that arouses curiosity is the portrayal of musicians who accompany the king—perhaps meant to accentuate the royal status of the king, suggesting that he travels with an entourage of attendants and musical accompaniment. To the right of the king an archer appears with bow and arrow aiming at the Bodhisattva (Great Monkey).



Figure **13.5.2.32**: Mahakapi Jataka, Stupa 1 (the Great Stupa) at Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh), on a pillar of west gateway /torana, dated ca. 1st century B.C.E. – 1st century C.E.

As at Bharhut, the artist(s) of the Sanchi relief show the Bodhisattva as the bridge by which monkeys escape to join the rest of the troop in the forest. On the left side of the river (which in this relief is full of active fish and rhythmic waves of water), two men, presumably following the order of the king, appear holding a sheet below the Great Monkey as he falls. The episodes depicted in the Sanchi panel give no indication of order through either time or cause and effect. Such is the complexity of this portrayal that even a viewer well-versed in this story must closely examine the panel, as art historian Vidya Dehejia puts it, to "read" it accurately. Apparently, the artist made this for an audience with previous knowledge of the Jataka stories.

The many other virtuous deeds and sacrifices of the Bodhisattva which make Jatakas extremely popular among the Buddhist community or *sangha* are included in such stories as Chaddanta, Vishvantara, Vidhurapandita, Ruru, Mahajanaka and Hamsa Jatakas. The Jatakas came to be portrayed in Central Asia, Afghanistan, China, Japan and Sri Lanka, leaving an indelible mark on Buddhist art and literature in the regions beyond the Indian subcontinent—becoming an inseparable part of Buddhist tradition.

Additional resources:

Buddhism and its Artistic Expression, from the Indian Museum, Kolkata

Paths to Perfection: Buddhist Art at the Freer|Sackler

Vidya Dehijia, *Discourse in Early Buddhist Art: Visual Narratives of India* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997).

———- "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 72, no. 3 (September, 1990), pp. 374-392.

The Jatakamala or Garland of Birth-Stories of Aryasura, translated by . J.S. Speyer (1st London ed. 1895; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982).

The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births, translated by various hands. ed. E.B. Cowell, 6 volumes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005).

John Marshall, *A Guide to Sanchi* (New Delhi: New Society, 1990).

S.C. Sarkar, A *Study on the Jatakas and the Avadanas: Critical and Comparative*, pt. 1 (Calcutta: Saraswat Library, 1981).

Seated Buddha

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video 13.5.2.6: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

Four Buddhas at the American Museum of Natural History

by DR. LAUREL KENDALL, DR. MONIQUE SCOTT, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.5.2.7: *Seated Gautama Buddha*, 18th Century, cast brass, gilt (Thailand); *Gandharan Seated Buddha with Double Halo*, attributed to the 3rd Century, green-gray schist (Pakistan); *Jizo, Kshitigarbha, Dhyani-Bodhisattao*, 19th Century, wood, gold (Japan); *Budai (Ho t'ai)/Maitreya, The Laughing Buddha*, c. 1900, metal (China)

This video was produced in cooperation with the American Museum of Natural History.

13.5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.3: China

China

From prehistoric jade to contemporary political art — the art of China engages and challenges.

c. 3500 B.C.E. - present

A beginner's guide

Imperial China, an introduction

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Imperial Chinese history is marked by the rise and fall of many dynasties and occasional periods of disunity, but overall the age was remarkably stable and marked by a sophisticated governing system that included the concept of a meritocracy. Each dynasty had its own distinct characteristics and in many eras encounters with foreign cultural and political influences through territorial expansion and waves of immigration also brought new stimulus to China. China had a highly literate society that greatly valued poetry and brush-written calligraphy, which, along with painting, were called the Three Perfections, reflecting the esteemed position of the arts in Chinese life. Imperial China produced many technological advancements that have enriched the world, including paper and porcelain.



Figure **13.5.3.1**: "The Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies," *The Admonitions Scroll*. Traditionally attributed to Gu Kaizhi (c. 344–406). Painting on silk with ink and colours, China, a work of the 6th to 7th century © Trustees of the British Museum

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism were the dominant teachings or religions in Imperial China and most individuals combined all three in their daily lives. Each of these teachings is represented by paintings in The British Museum, most notably by *The Admonitions Scroll* after Gu Kaizhi (image above) and the cache of Buddhist scroll paintings from the eighth to tenth century that had been rolled up and sealed away in the eleventh century in Cave 17 at Dunhuang's Caves of the Thousand Buddhas (discussed in this tutorial).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Chinese landscape painting

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Landscape painting is traditionally at the top of the hierarchy of Chinese painting styles. It is very popular and is associated with refined scholarly taste. The Chinese term for "landscape" is made up of two characters meaning "mountains and water." It is linked

with the philosophy of Daoism, which emphasizes harmony with the natural world.



Figure **13.5.3.2**: (detail), Zhu Xiuli, *Landscape*, c. 1985-89, handscroll, ink and colour on paper, 30.3 cm high, China © Trustees of the British Museum

Idealized landscapes

Chinese artists do not usually paint real places but imaginary, idealized landscapes. The Chinese phrase *woyou* expresses this idea of "wandering while lying down." In China, mountains are associated with religion because they reach up towards the heavens. People therefore believe that looking at paintings of mountains is good for the soul.

Chinese painting in general is seen as an extension of calligraphy and uses the same brushstrokes. The colors are restrained and subtle and the paintings are usually created in ink on paper, with a small amount of watercolor. They are not framed or glazed but mounted on silk in different formats such as hanging scrolls, handscrolls, album leaves and fan paintings.



Figure **13.5.3.3**: *Inkstone* © Trustees of the British Museum

The scholar's desk

In China, painters and calligraphers were traditionally scholars. The four basic pieces of equipment they used are called the Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio or *wenfangsibao*: paper, brush, ink and inkstone. A cake of ink is ground against the surface of the inkstone and water is gradually dropped from a water dropper, gathering in a well at one end of the stone. The brush is then dipped into the well and the depth of intensity of the ink depends on the wetness or dryness of the brush and the amount of water in the ink.

Ink cakes were made from carbonized pinewood, oil and glue, moulded into cakes or sticks and dried. The most prized inkstones were made of Duan stone from Guangdong province, although the one shown here is made of ceramic. Brushes had very pliable

hairs, usually made from deer, goat, wolf or hare. Wrist rests gave essential support while painting details. Other equipment used on a scholar's desk includes brush washers, seals, seal paste boxes, brush pots and brush stands.



Figure **13.5.3.4**: *Brush rest* © Trustees of the British Museum

In the seventeenth century print-painting manuals began to be designed to help train artists. These showed, step by step, how to paint in the style of particular artists. They illustrated a variety of subjects, from small rocks to mountains or tree branches to forests. The different brush strokes were named and explained.

The earliest landscapes

In China, the earliest landscapes were portrayed in three-dimensional form. Examples include mountain-shaped incense burners made of bronze or ceramic, produced as early as the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.). The earliest paintings date from the sixth century. Before the tenth century, the main subject was usually the human figure.



Figure **13.5.3.5**: *Scenes from the Life of the Buddha*, ink and colors on silk, 8th-early 9th century, Tang dynasty, 69 x 19.3 cm, from Cave 17, Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu province, China © Trustees of the British Museum

In the period following the Han dynasty, Buddhism spread across China. Artists began to illustrate stories of the life of the Buddha on earth and to create paradise paintings. In the background of some of these brightly colored Buddhist paintings, it is possible to see examples of early landscape painting.

This scene is one of a series of three representing the life of the historical Buddha, Prince Sakyamuni, when he lived on earth. The mountains are simple triangles and their ridges are painted with short brush strokes to create texture. The water in the river is

portrayed in a bold, diagrammatic way, conveying a sense of movement.

Chinese paintings are usually created in ink on paper and then mounted on silk. This is done using different formats including hanging scrolls, handscrolls, album leaves and fan paintings.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Chinese porcelain: decoration

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.5.3.6**: *Large underglaze-painted jar*, 14th century, Ming dynasty, Hongwu period, Jingdezhen, 67.2 cm tall, Jiangxi province, southern China © Trustees of the British Museum

Chinese porcelain decoration: underglaze blue and red

Though Chinese potters developed underglaze red decoration during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368 C.E.), pottery decorated in underglaze blue was produced in far greater quantities, due to the high demand from Asia and the Islamic countries of the Near and Middle East. Painting with underglaze red was more difficult than underglaze blue: the copper oxide used as the coloring agent was harder to control than the cobalt that was used for the underglaze blue. The firing left parts of the red areas grey, as on this large jar (above).

The first emperor of the Ming dynasty, which was to rule China for the next 300 years, was the general Zhu Yuanzhang (reigned 1368-98), whose title was Hongwu. He overthrew the Yuan dynasty, whose rulers had been foreigners (Mongols). He was determined to re-establish the dominance of Chinese style at court, and blue-and-white porcelain was produced in designs following Chinese rather than Islamic taste. Similar pieces were executed with underglaze red for use by the emperor.

Hongwu banned foreign trade several times, though this was never fully effective. The import of cobalt was disrupted, however, which resulted in a drop in the production of blue-and-white porcelain. For a short time at the end of the fourteenth century, more wares were decorated with underglaze red than underglaze blue.

Blue-and-white porcelain

The earliest blue-and-white ware found to date are temple vases inscribed 1351. These display a competence which indicate that the underglaze-painting technique was well-established by that time, probably originating in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Cobalt blue was imported from Iran, probably in cake form. It was ground into a pigment, which was painted directly onto the leather-hard porcelain body. The piece was then glazed and fired. “Blue-and-white” porcelain was used in temples and occasionally in burials within China, but most of the products of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) appear to have been exported.

Trade remained an essential part of blue-and-white porcelain production in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1644-1911). Europe, Japan and South-east Asia were important export markets. Vessels, with numerous bands of decoration, were painted with Chinese motifs, such as dragons, waves and floral scrolls. The potters of Jingdezhen also produced wares to satisfy the demands of the Middle Eastern market. Large dishes were densely decorated with geometric patterns inspired by Islamic metalwork or architectural decoration.

Blue-and-white porcelain was particularly admired by the Imperial court, and it is interesting to trace the shapes and motifs preferred by different emperors, many of whom ordered huge quantities of porcelain from the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen.



Figure **13.5.3.7**: *Blue-and-white porcelain jug*, early 15th century, Ming dynasty, Jingdezhen, 14 cm tall, Jiangxi province, southern China © Trustees of the British Museum. The jug probably had a lid, which has been lost.

The blue-and-white wares of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries often took their shapes from Islamic metalwork. The globular body, tall cylindrical neck and dragon handle of this jug all imitate contemporary metalwork of Timurid Persia. The crowded decoration of this jug is a feature of early blue-and-white porcelain that continued into the early part of the Ming dynasty. It is very different to the generally more subtle character of Chinese ornament. The motifs used in decorating the jug, however, are still distinctly Chinese, notably the breaking waves on the neck and floral scroll on the body.

Overglaze enamels

The term “overglaze enamels” is used to describe enamel decoration on the surface of a glaze which has already been fired. Once painted, the piece would be fired a second time, usually at a lower temperature.

The first use of overglaze enameling is found on the slip-covered wares of northern China. This was an innovation of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), with documented pieces as early as 1201. These were utilitarian wares, not for imperial use. Under the emperors of the Ming (1368-1644) and the Qing (1644-1911) dynasty, the various techniques of overglaze enameling reached their heights at the manufacturing centre in Jingdezhen.



Figure 13.5.3.8: *Doucai vase*, c. 1723-35, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period, Jingdezhen 9.5 x 6.8 cm, Jiangxi province, southern China © Trustees of the British Museum

The most highly prized technique is known as doucai ("joined" or "contrasted" colors), first produced under the Ming emperor Xuande (1426-35), but more usually associated with Chenghua (1465-87). Cobalt was used under the glaze to paint the outlines and areas of blue wash needed in the design. The piece was then glazed and fired at a high temperature. Overglaze colors were painted on to fill in the design. The piece was then fired again at a lower temperature. The vase above, which dates to the reign of Emperor Yongzheng (C.E. 1723-35), is a very good example of the technical perfection in later doucai wares. The main design comprises green, yellow and mauve dragon medallions. The dragons are five-clawed, whose use was restricted to the emperor. Auspicious Buddhist emblems decorate the shoulder of the vase.

New colors (including pink!)

There were also important developments under the Qing dynasty. Famille rose (pink), jaune (yellow), noire (black) and verte (green) were overglaze enamel-decorated porcelains made from the Kangxi period (1662-1722) and later.



Figure 13.5.3.9: *Famille rose butterfly bowl*, from Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, southern China, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period (1723-35), © Trustees of the British Museum

Accordingly to Chinese tradition, butterflies are an auspicious sign. They convey a wish for longevity, and were therefore often used to decorate birthday gifts or lanterns given during the Autumn Moon Festival: on the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar (usually around September). The Festival is celebrated by lighting lanterns of different shapes, sizes and colors, and by

gazing at the moon. The bowl above, made at the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen, may have been presented by the emperor to a family member or worthy subject on such an occasion.

The bowl is decorated in famille rose overglaze enamels. This technique was perfected under the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723-35) and is considered the last major technological breakthrough at the Jingdezhen kilns. The great innovation was the production of the distinctive pink enamel from which the wares take their name. The pink color was provided by adding a very small amount of gold to red pigment. The resulting color was opaque, as were the other famille rose enamels, and so could be mixed to create a wider range of colors than had been possible before.

Suggested readings:

S.J. Vainker, *Chinese pottery and porcelain: From Prehistory to the Present* (London, The British Museum Press, 1991).

Regina Krahl and Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Chinese Ceramics: Highlights of the Sir Percival David Collection* (British Museum Press, 2009).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Chinese porcelain: production and export

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Porcelain was first produced in China around 600 C.E. The skillful transformation of ordinary clay into beautiful objects has captivated the imagination of people throughout history and across the globe. Chinese ceramics, by far the most advanced in the world, were made for the imperial court, the domestic market, or for export.



Figure **13.5.3.10**: *Large porcelain flask*, c. 1426–1435, Ming dynasty, Xuande mark and period, painted with underglaze blue decoration, Jingdezhen, 12 x 5.8 cm, China © Trustees of the British Museum

What is porcelain?

The Chinese use the word ci to mean either porcelain or stoneware, not distinguishing between the two. In the West, porcelain usually refers to high-fired (about 1300º) white ceramics, whose bodies are translucent and make a ringing sound when struck. Stoneware is a tougher, non-translucent material, fired to a lower temperature (1100-1250º).

A number of white ceramics were made in China, several of which might be termed porcelain. The northern porcelains, such as Ding ware, were made predominantly of clay rich in kaolin. In southern China, porcelain stone was the main material. At the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, kaolin was added to porcelain stone; in Fujian province, on the coast and east of Jiangxi, porcelain stone was used alone. The results differed in that northern porcelains were more dense and compact, while southern porcelains were more glassy and “sugary.”

Ceramics may be fired in oxidizing or reducing conditions (increasing or restricting the amount of oxygen during the process). Northern porcelains were usually fired in oxidation, which results in warm, ivory-colored glazes. Southern wares were fired in

reduction, producing a cool, bluish tinge. An exception to this was blanc de Chine, or Dehua ware, from Fujian province, whose warm ivory hue came from oxidizing firings.

The export market

Chinese ceramics were first exported in large quantities during the Song dynasty (960-1279). The government supported this as an important source of revenue. Early in the period, ports were established in Guangzhou (Canton), Quanzhou, Hangzhou and Ningbo to facilitate commercial activity.

The ceramics trade established in the Song dynasty was maintained throughout the succeeding Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) and with a few interruptions, the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties as well. The markets were concentrated in different regions at different times, but the global influence of China's porcelains has been sustained throughout. Within Asia, up until the fourteenth century, the potters of Korea imitated China's porcelain with considerable success, and Japan's potters did so for a still longer period. In the Middle East, the twelfth-century attempts to reproduce Chinese wares went on throughout the Ming period. In Europe however, porcelain was barely known before the seventeenth century. The English and Germans produced mass quantities of a similar hard-bodied ware in the eighteenth century.

Chinese porcelain influenced the ceramics of importing countries, and was in turn, influenced by them. For example, importers commissioned certain shapes and designs, and many more were developed specifically for foreign markets; these often found their way in to the repertory of Chinese domestic items. In this way, Chinese ceramics were a vehicle for the worldwide exchange of ornamental styles.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Neolithic China

Jade has always been the material most highly prized in China, above silver and gold. From ancient times, this translucent stone has been worked into ornaments, ceremonial weapons and ritual objects.

c. 3500 - 1600 B.C.E.

Chinese jade: an introduction

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

What is jade?



Figure **13.5.3.11**: Jadeite

The English term "jade" is used to translate the Chinese word yu, which in fact refers to a number of minerals including nephrite, jadeite, serpentine and bowenite, while jade refers only to nephrite and jadeite.

Chemically, nephrite is a calcium magnesium silicate and is white in color. However, the presence of copper, chromium and iron produces colors ranging from subtle grey-greens to brilliant yellows and reds. Jadeite, which was very rarely used in China before the eighteenth century, is a silicate of sodium and magnesium and comes in a wider variety of colors than nephrite.

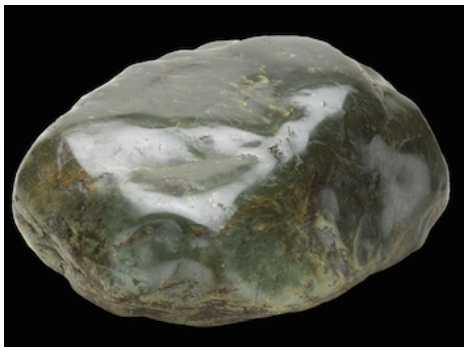


Figure 13.5.3.12: Nephrite

Nephrite is found in metamorphic rocks in mountains. As the rocks weather, the boulders of nephrite break off and are washed down to the foot of the mountain, from where they are retrieved. From the Han period (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.) jade was obtained from the oasis region of Khotan on the Silk Route. The oasis lies about 5000 miles from the areas where jade was first worked in the Hongshan (in Inner Mongolia) and the Liangzhu cultures (near Shanghai) about 3000 years before. It is likely that sources much nearer to those centers were known about in early periods and were subsequently exhausted.

Worn by kings and nobles in life and death

“Soft, smooth and glossy, it appeared to them like benevolence; fine, compact and strong – like intelligence” —attributed to Confucius (about 551-479 B.C.E.)

Jade has always been the material most highly prized by the Chinese, above silver and gold. From ancient times, this extremely tough translucent stone has been worked into ornaments, ceremonial weapons and ritual objects. Recent archaeological finds in many parts of China have revealed not only the antiquity of the skill of jade carving, but also the extraordinary levels of development it achieved at a very early date.

Jade was worn by kings and nobles and after death placed with them in the tomb. As a result, the material became associated with royalty and high status. It also came to be regarded as powerful in death, protecting the body from decay. In later times these magical properties were perhaps less explicitly recognized, jade being valued more for its use in exquisite ornaments and vessels, and for its links with antiquity. In the Ming and Qing periods ancient jade shapes and decorative patterns were often copied, thereby bringing the associations of the distant past to the Chinese peoples of later times.



Figure 13.5.3.13: Jade coiled dragon, c. 3500 B.C.E., Neolithic period, Hongshan culture, 4.6 x 7.6 cm, China © 2003 Private Collection © Trustees of the British Museum

The subtle variety of colors and textures of this exotic stone can be seen, as well as the many different types of carving, ranging from long, smooth Neolithic blades to later plaques, ornaments, dragons, animal and human sculpture.

Neolithic jade: Hongshan culture

It was long believed that Chinese civilization began in the Yellow River valley, but we now know that there were many earlier cultures both to the north and south of this area. From about 3800–2700 B.C.E. a group of Neolithic peoples known now as the Hongshan culture lived in the far north-east, in what is today Liaoning province and Inner Mongolia. The Hongshan were a sophisticated society that built impressive ceremonial sites. Jade was obviously highly valued by the Hongshan; artifacts made of jade were sometimes the only items placed in tombs along with the body of the deceased.

Major types of jade of this period include discs with holes and hoof-shaped objects that may have been ornaments worn in the hair. This coiled dragon is an example of another important shape, today known as a “pig-dragon,” which may have been derived from the slit ring, or *jue*. Many jade artifacts that survive from this period were used as pendants and some seem to have been attached to clothing or to the body.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Jade Cong

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.5.3.1**: Jade Cong, c. 2500 B.C.E., Liangzhu culture, Neolithic period, China (The British Museum). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure **13.5.3.14**: *Jade Cong*, c. 2500 B.C.E., Liangzhu culture, 3.4 x 12.7 cm, China © 2003 Private Collection © Trustees of the British Museum

Ancient China includes the Neolithic period (10,000 -2,000 B.C.E.), the Shang dynasty (c. 1500-1050 B.C.E.) and the Zhou dynasty (1050-221 B.C.E.). Each age was distinct, but common to each period were grand burials for the elite from which a wealth of objects have been excavated.

The Neolithic Period, defined as the age before the use of metal, witnessed a transition from a nomadic existence to one of settled farming. People made different pottery and stone tools in their regional communities. Stone workers employed jade to make prestigious, beautifully polished versions of utilitarian stone tools, such as axes, and also to make implements with possible

ceremonial or protective functions. The status of jade continues throughout Chinese history. Pottery also reached a high level with the introduction of the potter's wheel.

Neolithic Liangzhu culture

A group of Neolithic peoples grouped today as the Liangzhu culture lived in the Jiangsu province of China during the third millennium B.C.E. Their jades, ceramics and stone tools were highly sophisticated.

Cong

They used two distinct types of ritual jade objects: a disc, later known as a bi, and a tube, later known as a cong. The main types of cong have a square outer section around a circular inner part, and a circular hole, though jades of a bracelet shape also display some of the characteristics of cong. They clearly had great significance, but despite the many theories the meaning and purpose of bi and cong remain a mystery. They were buried in large numbers: one tomb alone had 25 bi and 33 cong. Spectacular examples have been found at all the major archaeological sites.



Figure **13.5.3.15**: *Jade Cong*, c. 2500 B.C.E., 49 cm high, China © Private Collection © Trustees of the British Museum

The principal decoration on cong of the Liangzhu period was the face pattern, which may refer to spirits or deities. On the square-sectioned pieces, like the examples here, the face pattern is placed across the corners, whereas on the bracelet form it appears in square panels. These faces are derived from a combination of a man-like figure and a mysterious beast.

Cong are among the most impressive yet most enigmatic of all ancient Chinese jade artifacts. Their function and meaning are completely unknown. Although they were made at many stages of the Neolithic and early historic period, the origin of the cong in the Neolithic cultures of south-east China has only been recognized in the last thirty years.

Cong were extremely difficult and time-consuming to produce. As jade cannot be split like other stones, it must be worked with a hard abrasive sand. This one is exceptionally long and may have been particularly important in its time.



Figure 13.5.3.16: *Jade disc, or bi*, Liangzhu culture, c. 2500 B.C.E., 18 cm in diameter © Private Collection, © Trustees of the British Museum

Bi

Stone rings were being made by the peoples of eastern China as early as the fifth millennium B.C.E. Jade discs have been found carefully laid on the bodies of the dead in tombs of the Hongshan culture (about 3800-2700 B.C.E.), a practice which was continued by later Neolithic cultures. Large and heavy jade discs such as this example, appear to have been an innovation of the Liangzhu culture (about 3000-2000 B.C.E.), although they are not found in all major Liangzhu tombs. The term bi is applied to wide discs with proportionately small central holes.

The most finely carved discs or bi of the best stone (like the example above) were placed in prominent positions, often near the stomach and the chest of the deceased. Other bi were aligned with the body. Where large numbers of discs are found, usually in small piles, they tend to be rather coarse, made of stone of inferior quality that has been worked in a cursory way.

We do not know what the true significance of these discs was, but they must have had an important ritual function as part of the burial. This is an exceptionally fine example, because the two faces are very highly polished.

Suggested readings:

J. Rawson, *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995, reprinted 2002).

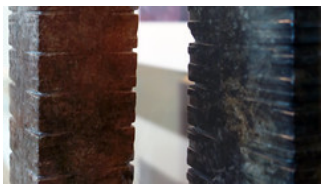
J. Rawson (ed.), *The British Museum book of Chinese Art* (London, The British Museum Press, 1992).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88697







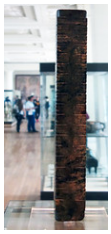




Figure 13.5.3.17: More Smarthistory images…

Working jade

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM

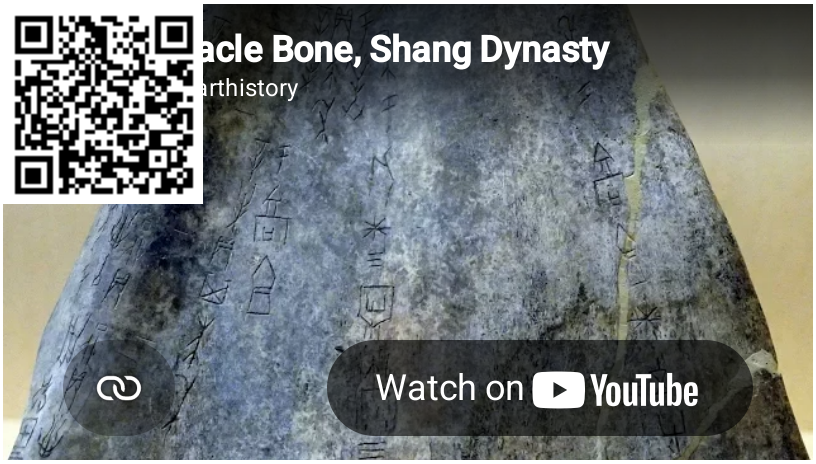


Video **13.5.3.2**: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**, San Francisco. This video explores the significance and working of jade in China.

Shang dynasty (c.1600-1046 B.C.E.)

Oracle Bone, Shang Dynasty

by DR. KRISTEN CHIEM and DR. BETH HARRIS



Speakers: Dr. Kristen Chiem and Dr. Beth Harris

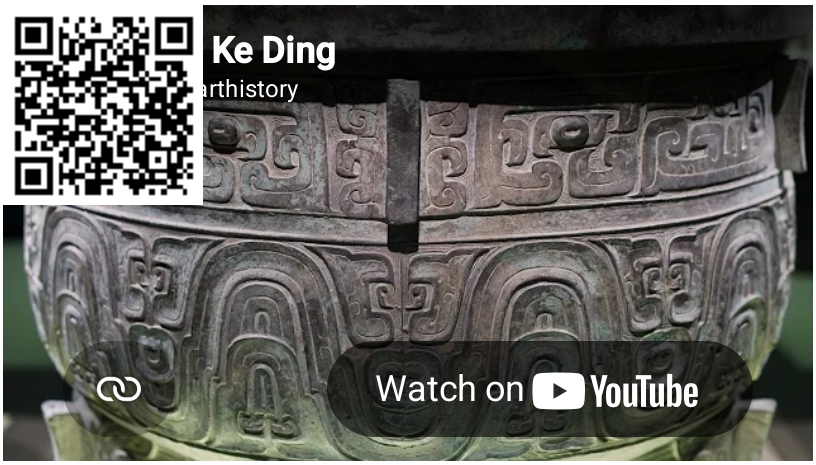
Jasmine Keane
Sep 2, 2020, 12:11 PM

Cite this page as: Dr. Kristen Chiem and Dr. Beth Harris, "Oracle Bone, Shang Dynasty," in *Smarthistory*, October 8, 2016, accessed September 2, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/oracle-bone/**.

Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 B.C.E.)

Da Ke Ding

by DR. KRISTEN CHIEM and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.5.3.4: *Da Ke Ding*, c. 1046 – 771 B.C.E. (late Western Zhou dynasty, China), bronze, 93.1 cm high (Shanghai Museum)
Speakers: Dr. Kristen Chiem and Dr. Beth Harris

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

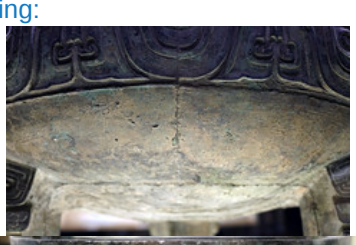











Figure **13.5.3.18**: More Smarthistory images…

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 B.C.E.)

Ambition and luxury: Marquis Yi of the Zeng State

by DR. KENT CAO

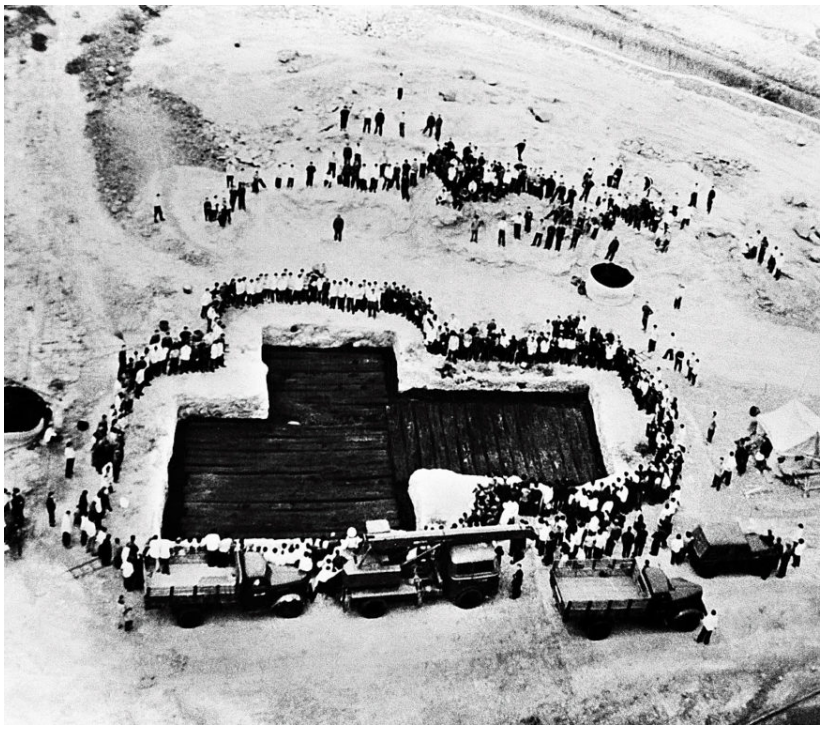


Figure **13.5.3.19**: Excavation site of the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), May 1978, Suixian, Hubei (**Hubei Provincial Museum**, Wuhan, China)

Imagine stumbling upon an undisturbed tomb filled with 15,000 items—from hundreds of jade and golden objects and enormous bronze wine vessels to massive lacquered coffins and a vast assortment of musical instruments. In 1978 in Leigudun, Suizhou, Hubei province, local military construction accidentally discovered such a luxurious tomb, one that was meant to impress. With all its contents still intact, this tomb (dating to the 5th century B.C.E during the Bronze Age) offers us a glimpse into how early burial customs and practices could not only reflect someone's ambition, but also elevate their status.

Definition: Bronze age

The Bronze Age in China spans from the seventeenth century B.C.E. to the third century B.C.E.



Figure 13.5.3.20: Map showing the many vassal states of the Zhou Dynasty in China. Zeng State is where Marquis Yi is from, and the larger more powerful Chu state interacted with Zeng state (map: SY, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Extensive bronze inscriptions suggest that the tomb owner was the Marquis Yi, who passed away in 433 B.C.E. or slightly later. He was of the Zeng state, a small southern state little known in the traditional historical record. Marquis Yi was active in the early Warring States period (481–221 B.C.E.), which witnessed the dissolution of the kin-shaped political system. Lords paid increasingly less respect to the nominal Zhou king, and they engaged in warfare against each other and competed for higher status and prestige.

Definition: Warring States period

The Warring States period is the second half of the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 B.C.E.).

Definition: Kin-shaped political system

The kings of the Zhou court were not able to effectively control the vast territory under their name. Therefore, the Zhou kings delegated land and populations to their sons, cousins, marital relatives and sometimes non-kin allies to establish vassal states. These states enjoyed political, taxational, and judicial autonomy while remaining politically and ritually subordinate to the king and assuming military and tributary obligations to the central court.



Figure 13.5.3.21: Gold food container and jade comb that was placed underneath Marquis Yi's head, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum)

Despite the turbulence of this era, the luxurious furnishings from Marquis's tomb with its overt display of wealth and power clearly reflect his ambition. The number of bronzes from his tomb is unmatched by any other burials in pre-imperial China. He was also buried with a number of ritual bronze vessels normally reserved for the Zhou kings, further implying the marquis's interest in attaining a more prominent status. Because most of the princely burials in the Warring States period have been looted, the integrity and wealth of Marquis Yi's tomb offers a rare opportunity to examine the elite culture and funerary customs in the late first millennium B.C.E.

Definition: Pre-imperial China

Pre-imperial China is a historical concept that predates the establishment of the Qin Empire (221–207 B.C.E.). The Qin Empire was the first empire in the history of China. One of the most prominent transformations that brought forth by the Qin was the replacement of the kinship-based government with a centralized bureaucratic system.

Tomb Structure

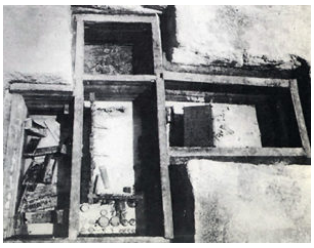


Figure 13.5.3.22: Aerial view of Marquis Yi's tomb

The tomb of Marquis Yi was originally more than 40 feet below surface level, with layers of charcoal, viscous, and dry soil piled on to it to protect it. It is one of the earliest examples in ancient China that demonstrates the desire to replicate aboveground living quarters in funerary practice. This practice was an attempt to sustain a person's secular privileges and pleasures in the afterlife. Inside, the tomb is divided into four compartments, each with a different designated function and associated objects. Here is a basic list of what was found:

Central chamber: extensive bronze ritual vessels and musical instruments for grand ancestral offering ceremonies and court banquets

North chamber: Chariot fittings and weapons such as bows, *ge*-halberds, shields, and armor

Definition: *Ge*-halberds

Ge-halberds are blades horizontally mounted onto the top of spears. They were the primary weapons used by foot soldiers.

East chamber: Marquis Yi's main coffins surrounded by eight smaller coffins found with female human sacrifice victims and a coffin for a dog

West chamber: additional thirteen female human sacrifice victims.

The female victims in the tomb were approximately twenty years old, and were likely Marquis's maids, musicians, and dancers. All these furnishings and the human entourage ensured that Marquis Yi would continue his sumptuous elite life after his death.

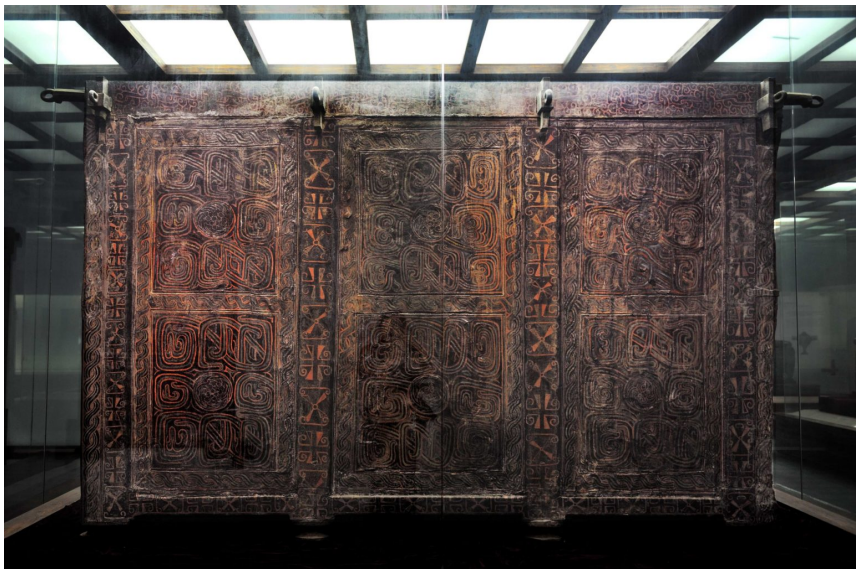


Figure **13.5.3.23**: Outer coffin, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., lacquered wood, 3.20 m in length, 2.10 m in width and 2.19 m in height, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Siyuwj**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Double coffins

Outer coffin

Marquis Yi rested in enormous double coffins, which are impressive for their sheer size, intricate patterns, and bright lacquer. The outer coffin is an enormous rectangular box. This exceptionally large wooden box even has a bronze framework to stabilize it. It has a black lacquer background, and is decorated with yellow and red intertwined serpents surrounding a central swirl. Abstract cloud motifs fill the border between the main units.



Figure **13.5.3.24**: Inner coffin, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., lacquered wood, 2.50 m long, 1.27 m wide and 1.32 m high, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum)

Inner coffin

The inner coffin is considerably smaller in size, allowing its makers to construct it solely from wooden panels. Entangled serpents, birds, fish, and other composite animals decorate the surface. Spiritual beings in semi-animal form with weapons in hand also stand guard.



Figure **13.5.3.25**: Window designs are flanked by horned figures holding weapons. Detail of inner coffin, (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., lacquered wood, 2.50 m long, 1.27 m wide and 1.32 m high, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum)



Figure **13.5.3.26**: Outer coffin with a square hole at the north end of the tomb, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., lacquered wood, 3.20 m in length, 2.10 m in width and 2.19 m in height, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Siyuwj**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Both coffins

A series of designs on both coffins facilitated the spirit of Marquis Yi to travel freely and continue to enjoy his unparalleled luxury in the afterlife. The Zeng craftsmen painted windows on the inner coffin. They also carved out a square hole on the lower right corner on the north end of the outer coffin. Similar square openings on the bottom of the tomb's wooden walls further enable access to all the chambers. Marquis Yi could ride his chariot in the north chamber for an outing and hold a sumptuous royal banquet in his central chamber.

Lacquer production was costly and time consuming. Craftsmen extracted lacquer from the toxic sap of the lacquer tree that is indigenous to China. The hazardous production process and the time-consuming application of multiple layers of lacquer on an item's surface led to the high price of lacquerware. Lacquer's lightness, vibrant colors, and glossy surface made it as prestigious as **ritual bronze vessels**. Besides the coffins, the tomb also had an extensive collection of other lacquerwares—letting anyone know once again of Marquis Yi's status.



Figure **13.5.3.27**: The chime bell set has 65 bells on three tiers. The largest chime bell is 152.30 cm high and weighs at 203.6 kg, the smallest is only 20.30 cm and 2.4 kg. Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., bronze and lacquer, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **YouTable**, CC BY-SA 4.0).

Chime Bell Set



Figure **13.5.3.28**: Hollow shaft bell (nao), Shang dynasty, c. 1200–1100 BCE, bronze, 70 x 52 x 35 cm, China, Yangzi River valley (**Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**)

The grand chime bell set is the largest item in the central chamber. In China, bronze musical bells trace their origin to the late second millennium B.C.E. clapperless *nao*-bells in the Yangtze River region in the south.

Definition: *Nao*-bells

Nao-bells are a bronze bell tradition indigenous to the middle to lower Yangtze River region. Usually geometric in surface decoration and found in the hilltop or river bank, *nao*-bells are considerably more voluminous than their northern counterparts. The larger ones can be over 1-meter tall and weigh over 100 kg.

Western Zhou elites began to institutionalize chime bells in the 9th century B.C.E. Bells began to be organized to cover an octave, and musical theory gradually developed. This systematic change added an acoustic dimension to the visual and gustatory experiences in the ritual performance of ancestral offerings.

Definition: Ancestral offerings

Food offerings for their deceased ancestors was a serious matter to the elites in Bronze Age China. The living sustained the deceased and the deceased, in return, blessed the living.



Figure 13.5.3.29: Bronze armed warrior holding up chime bells from the Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: Gary Todd)

Marquis Yi's bell set is the most extensive and best preserved known-to-date. Divided into eight groups, 65 bells occupy three tiers on L-shaped shelves. The wooden shelves, adorned by elaborate lacquer decoration and bronze components, are supported by six bronze statues of armed warriors. Unlike in Egypt and Mesopotamia in the third and second millennium B.C.E. where the appearance of the rulers was a major artistic theme, patrons and artists in early China almost purposefully eschewed direct human representations.

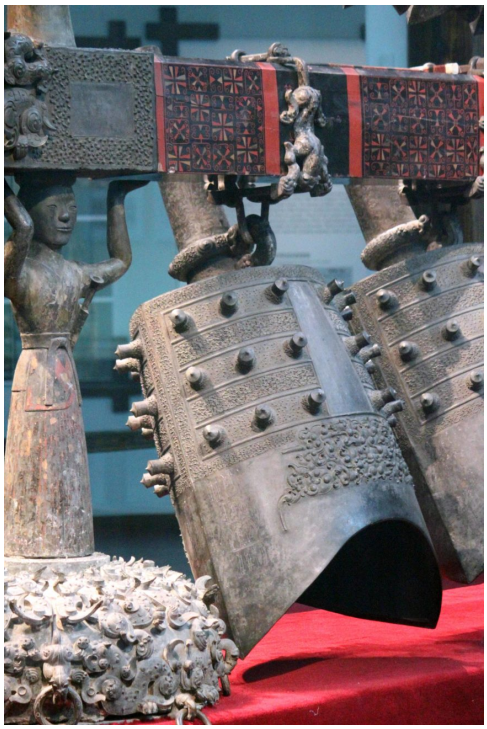


Figure 13.5.3.30: Bronze chime bell from the Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: Gary Todd)

The bronze warriors in Marquis Yi's bell set are a rare case of the representation of the human form in early Chinese art, indicative of the late first millennium trend toward increasing secularization. Scholars have proposed that the reason for this was that writing was ritually and politically more powerful than images in early China. We always see the name of the owner and that of the honored person cast on precious bronze vessels, but we almost never see the face of the patron in bronze art.

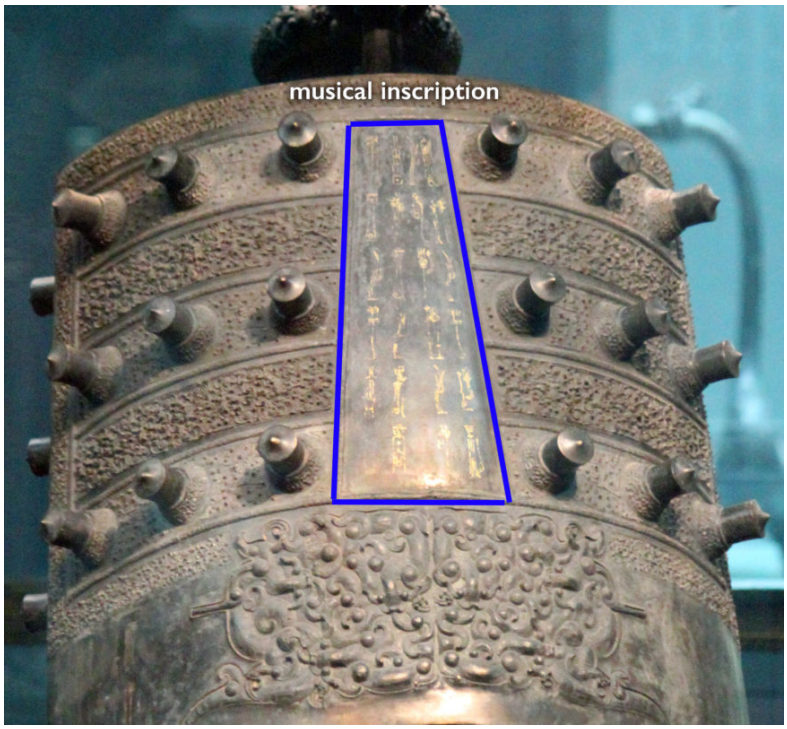


Figure 13.5.3.31: A golden musical inscription on the front of the bell details the pitch and scale of the bell. Chime bell from the Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: Gary Todd)

The bells range considerably in weight and height. Interlaced serpents in a dense pattern and granular texture rise up in low relief from the bell surface. Musical inscriptions in gold script are on the center, bottom, and side of the bells. A total of 3,755 characters explain in detail the pitches and scales that the chime bells are designed to play. Each bell is tuned to produce two clear pitches by striking the center and side. The entire set is capable of playing a five-note scale across five octaves. Tuning bronze bells is a highly technical, challenging task. Experienced Zeng state founders skillfully cast the bells with approximately correct pitches.

Definition: Founders

Our knowledge about the operation of a foundry at this time is limited. Bronze casting was likely a highly exclusive practice monopolized by the state, which also controlled labor, expertise, and raw materials.



Video 13.5.3.5: Listen to what the bells would have sounded like with modern-day reconstructions (video by Behring Global Educational Foundation)

A grand chime bell set would have been the center of court musical performances. Additional musical instruments, such as a 32-piece stone chime set, wooden zithers, drums, flutes, panpipes, and mouth organs, completed the ensemble. The bell set alone required a crew of five players. More than 20 musicians were needed to perform in the orchestra. The enormous labor and material investment in the court banquet certainly impressed most guests of Marquis Yi. What is more profound is the exceptional sophistication and grandeur of the musical system. Marquis Yi conveyed a strong message: Not only was he the head of an affluent state, he was also a highly cultured gentleman.



Figure **13.5.3.32**: Bronze *ding*, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**)

Ritual Bronze Vessels



Figure **13.5.3.33**: Bronze vessels from the tomb at Hubei Provincial Museum. This display gives an indication of how many vessels were found in the tomb. Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**)

Meticulously lined up in the southern end of the tomb's central chamber are many bronze vessels, which are breathtaking for their sheer scale, volume, and technical virtuosity. Ritual bronze vessels like these were used in ancestral offering ceremonies in Bronze Age China. The correct performance would please the ancestors, and strengthen elite status and power in return. Food offerings were the primary form of ancestral offerings in Bronze Age China. Often human sacrifice, especially that of war captives, was a key component in the offering ceremony. The the vessels for offerings? in the tomb of the Marquis Yi are considered one of the most impressive examples.

Beginning in the middle to late Western Zhou period (c. 9th century B.C.E.), a loose ranking system emerged to regulate the ritual bronze use in accordance with someone's prescribed elite status. The more bronze vessels you had, the higher your status. The king of the Zhou court (at the top of the social hierarchy) supposedly used 9 *ding*-cauldrons and 8 *gui*-basins, and his subordinate lords and princes were entitled to fewer vessels. The *ding* food-cauldron (which typically containing sacrificed animals) and the *gui* grain-basin were the centerpieces of the ritual paraphernalia for ancestral offering in Bronze Age China.



Figure **13.5.3.34**: Bronze *Gui*, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**)

This regulative system began to relax in the late first millennium B.C.E., as we see with the marquis's tomb. In it we find 9 *ding*-cauldrons and 8 *gui*-basins in the central chamber. They reveal the aspiration of Marquis Yi for a status beyond his reach as the ruler of a small southern state. Echoing the ritual relaxation at this time was the simplification and secularization of the bronze inscriptions. Most of Marquis Yi's bronzes bear the simple inscription "Marquis Yi of Zeng makes, holds, and uses forever." This inscription signals the broader shift from commemorative writing of the previous Western Zhou period to the straightforward indication of ownership in the Warring States period.



Figure **13.5.3.35**: Left: bronze lidded ding, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**); right: detail of bronze lidded ding, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**)



Figure **13.5.3.36**: Bronze drum base, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum)

Marquis Yi's bronzes represent the finest technical achievements in ancient bronze casting. Traditional piece-mold casting first emerged in the middle Yellow River valley in the early second millennium B.C.E. This technique was still practiced in the Zeng state foundry and accounts for most of Marquis Yi's bronzes. The most spectacular of this long established casting method is the bronze drum base. A swarm of burly serpents vigorously swirl up from the circular base and appear to be boldly exhibiting their brawny physiques in response to music. Each serpent was individually cast and then joined together.

Definition: Piece-mold casting

While the lost-wax casting prevailed in the Mediterranean world, the piece-mold casting was the primary casting method uniquely used in China. This technology draws on the rich tradition of pottery making in the Neolithic societies and employs an inner clay core and outer clay molds to cast bronze vessels. Decoration is either drawn directly on the outer molds or transferred to the molds from the original model.



Figure **13.5.3.37**: Bronze wine storage vessel, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China, 1.30 m in height and 1.10 m in width (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Cangminzho**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Another technical masterpiece of piece-mold casting is a pair of wine storage jars, which are the most voluminous bronze vessels in the tomb. Their immense volume prevented the founders from completing the casting in one attempt. A wide band that runs through the middle of the vessel body indicates that the upper and lower half were cast separately and joined together afterward.

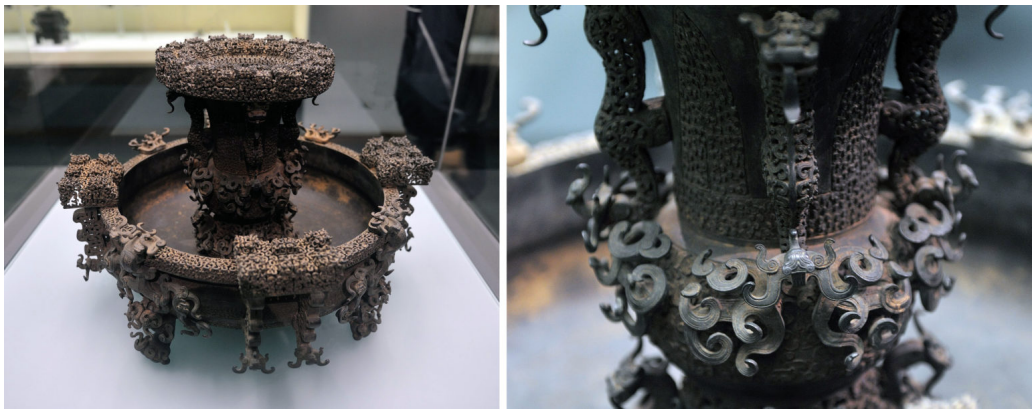


Figure **13.5.3.38**: Bronze zun-pan basin and vase. The pan held ice, while the zun held wine. Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Siyuwj**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Outside the piece-mold casting, the Zeng state casters also mastered other production methods. Archaeologists usually credit the *zun–pan* basin and vase set to lost-wax casting. The rim, which appears to be thick and full, consists of intensive miniaturized serpents that curl up and interlace with each other. These intricate designs, especially the deep undercuts and three-dimensional layerings, are nearly technically impossible in piece-mold casting. In addition, the Zeng casters employed copper and lead soldering to connect accessories such as handles, knobs, and legs to the main body of bronze vessels.



Figure **13.5.3.39**: Ritual bronze *guanfo*-basin (left) inlaid with red copper and a *dou*-stemmed bowl (right) with turquoise ornaments, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum)

Inlay also played a prominent role in decorating Marquis Yi's bronzes. There are ritual bronze sacrificial food vessels inlaid with red copper or even turquoise ornaments. In both cases, the Zeng founders first cast the bronze vessel with pre-arranged negative grooves. They then cast the copper and inserted the turquoise in the intaglio lines before finally polishing up the surface of the vessel.



Figure **13.5.3.40**: Bo-bell with a 31-character inscription, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., bronze and lacquer, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**)

Regional politics

Beyond revealing to us the wealth and ambition of the marquis, certain items in the tomb also tell us about regional politics and trans-regional, Eurasian connections. One bell from the bell chime set shows us how one local ruler of a small state was well-connected to more powerful rulers and larger states than Zeng.



Figure **13.5.3.41**: Chime bell set, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., bronze and lacquer, Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum; photo: **Gary Todd**)

In the center of the chime bell set is a sizable bronze *bo*-bell with a straight rim that looks different from the other *yong*-bells (with concave rims) surrounding it. The vertical hanging pose of this central *bo*-bell also stands out from the uniform tilted suspension seen across the racks holding all the bells. An inscription on the *bo*-bell indicates that it was a present from Xiong Zhang, the King Hui of the Chu state.

Definition: Chu state

While the lost-wax casting prevailed in the Mediterranean world, the piece-mold casting was the primary casting method uniquely used in China. This technology draws on the rich tradition of pottery making in the Neolithic societies and employs an inner clay core and outer clay molds to cast bronze vessels. Decoration is either drawn directly on the outer molds or transferred to the molds from the original model.

What did this gift mean for Marquis Yi?

The *bo*-bell indicates the importance of political strategizing during this time—by gifting it to the Marquis Yi of Zeng the nearby Chu king implies that the Zeng state was under the Chu protection (or even that Zeng was a client state to the Chu). The incorporation of the bell into the larger chime bell set suggests that Marquis Yi accepted the political patronage from the Chu state. While the gift suggests Marquis Yi had to compromise some of his power, his burial arrangement also appropriated kingly ritual prestige items like the 9 *ding* and 8 *gui*, which were usually reserved for the Zhou ruler. Borrowing from the kingly ritual bronze setting was more of a ceremonial rather than a political statement. Though he probably had less respect for the authority of the central Zhou court, Marquis Yi was not intending to usurp the throne and seize actual power.



Figure **13.5.3.42**: Beads with “dragonfly-eye” designs, soda-lime glass, Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Leigudun Tomb 1), Warring States period, late 5th century B.C.E., Suixian, Hubei, China (Hubei Provincial Museum)

Eurasian Connections

Certain objects in the tomb speak to the increased cultural exchange across the Eurasian continent at this time. 172 glass compound eye beads discovered in the inner coffin were the result of a wave of transcontinental communication. These glass beads, known as the “dragonfly eyes,” were a short-lived fad in Warring States China. Commonly featuring blue concentric circles in bright green or yellow background, compound eye beads find their earlier counterparts in Egypt, Iran, and the eastern Mediterranean. Raman spectroscopy examination shows that the colorants of Marquis Yi’s beads are primarily calcium- and sodium-based, which share similar chemical compositions with beads from West Asia. They were likely directly imported from the west. Soon Chinese craftsmen adopted the form of the exotic glass beads and achieved a comparable look with the locally sourced lead and barium.

Definition: Raman spectroscopy

This technique utilizes the properties of Raman Scattering, which emits a laser beam to detect the vibration of molecules and, subsequently, analyze the chemical composition of the sample.



Figure 13.5.3.43: Map showing the general Scythian area in Central Asia and the Tomb of Marquis Yi (© Google)

Recent archaeological excavations have unveiled matching glass beads in Scythian burials in Central Asia, implying that the nomads living in the Steppe played a vital role in the long-distance dissemination of the compound eye beads.

From massive burial chambers and gigantic double coffins to grand bronze vessels and chime bells, the tomb of Marquis Yi comprehensively reveals to us the splendid and sophisticated elite life in the Warring States period. All these rich furnishings expressively display the power and wealth of Marquis Yi and enabled his prestige and privilege to continue in the afterlife.

Additional resources

"China, 1000 B.C.–1 A.D.," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

"Resound: Ancient Bells of China," National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian

Bells of Ancient China, National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian

"Introduction to Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng," Hubei Provincial Museum

The Marquis Yi of Zeng, Bronze Objects, on Google Arts and Culture

The Marquis Yi of Zeng, Gold and Jade Objects, on Google Arts and Culture

Han dynasty (206 B.C.E. -220 C.E.)

Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE



Figure 13.5.3.44: Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui), 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

Maybe you *can* bring it with you…if you are rich enough. The elite men and women of the Han dynasty (China's second imperial dynasty, 206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) enjoyed an opulent lifestyle that could stretch into the afterlife. Today, the well-furnished tombs of the elite give us a glimpse of the luxurious goods they treasured and enjoyed. For instance, a wealthy official could afford beautiful silk robes in contrast to the homespun or paper garments of a laborer or peasant. Their tombs also inform us about their cosmological beliefs.

Marquis of Dai, Lady Dai, and a son

Three elite tombs, discovered in 1972, at Mawangdui, Hunan Province (eastern China) rank amongst the greatest archeological discoveries in China during the twentieth century. They are the tombs of a high-ranking Han official civil servant, the Marquis of Dai, Lady Dai (his wife), and their son. The Marquis died in 186 B.C.E., and his wife and son both died by 163 B.C.E. The Marquis' tomb was not in good condition when it was discovered. However, the objects in the son's and wife's tombs were of extraordinary quality and very well preserved. From these objects, we can see that Lady Dai and her son were to spend the afterlife in sumptuous comfort.



Figure **13.5.3.45**: Nesting coffins of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui), 2nd century B.C.E., wood, lacquered exteriors and interiors, 256 x 118 x 114 cm, 230 x 92 x 89 cm and 202 x 69 x 63cm, from tomb 1 (Hunan Provincial Museum)



Figure **13.5.3.46**: Diagram of *Funeral Banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*, 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

In Lady Dai's tomb, archaeologists found a painted silk banner over six feet long in excellent condition. The T-shaped banner was on top of the innermost of four nesting coffins. Although scholars still debate the function of these banners, we know they had some connection with the afterlife. They may be "name banners" used to identify the dead during the mourning ceremonies, or they may have been burial shrouds intended to aid the soul in its passage to the afterlife. Lady Dai's banner is important for two primary reasons. It is an early example of pictorial (representing naturalistic scenes not just abstract shapes) art in China. Secondly, the banner features the earliest known portrait in Chinese painting.

We can divide Lady Dai's banner into four horizontal registers (see diagram). In the lower central register, we see Lady Dai in an embroidered silk robe leaning on a staff. This remarkable portrait of Lady Dai is the earliest example of a painted portrait of a specific individual in China. She stands on a platform along with her servants–two in front and three behind.



Figure **13.5.3.47**: Lady Dai and her attendants (detail), *Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*, 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)



Figure **13.5.3.48**: Lady Dai and her attendants (detail), *Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*, 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

Long, sinuous dragons frame the scene on either side, and their white and pink bodies loop through a bi (a disc with a hole thought to represent the sky) underneath Lady Dai. We understand that this is not a portrait of Lady Dai in her former life, but an image of her in the afterlife enjoying the immortal comforts of her tomb as she ascends toward the heavens.

In the register below the scene of Lady Dai, we see sacrificial funerary rituals taking place in a mourning hall. Tripod containers and vase-shaped vessels for offering food and wine stand in the foreground. In the middle ground, seated mourners line up in two rows. Look for the mound in the center, between the two rows of mourners. If you look closely, you can see the patterns on the silk that match the robe Lady Dai wears in the scene above. Her corpse is wrapped in her finest robe! More vessels appear on a shelf in the background.



Figure **13.5.3.49**: Body of Lady Dai with mourners (detail), *Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*, 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

In the mourning scene, we can also appreciate the importance of Lady Dai's banner for understanding how artists began to represent depth and space in early Chinese painting. They made efforts to indicate depth through the use of the overlapping bodies of the mourners. They also made objects in the foreground larger, and objects in the background smaller, to create the illusion of space in the mourning hall.

The afterlife in Han dynasty China

Lady Dai's banner gives us some insight into cosmological beliefs and funeral practices of Han dynasty China. Above and below the scenes of Lady Dai and the mourning hall, we see images of heaven and the underworld. Toward the top, near the cross of the "T," two men face each other and guard the gate to the heavenly realm. Directly above the two men, at the very top of the banner, we see a deity with a human head and a dragon body.



Figure **13.5.3.50**: Heavenly realm (detail), *Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*, 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

On the left, a toad standing on a crescent moon flanks the dragon/human deity. On the right, we see what may be a three-legged crow within a pink sun. The moon and the sun are emblematic of a supernatural realm above the human world. Dragons and other immortal beings populate the sky. In the lower register, beneath the mourning hall, we see the underworld populated by two giant black fish, a red snake, a pair of blue goats, and an unidentified earthly deity. The deity appears to hold up the floor of the mourning hall, while the two fish cross to form a circle beneath him. The beings in the underworld symbolize water and earth, and they indicate an underground domain below the human world.



Figure **13.5.3.51**: Wooden outer coffin within the central coffin chamber surrounded by four side boxes, tomb 1, 672 x 488 x 280 cm

Four compartments surrounded Lady Dai's central tomb, and they offer some sense of the life she was expected to lead in the afterlife. The top compartment represented a room where Lady Dai was supposed to sit while having her meal. In this compartment, researchers found cushions, an armrest and her walking stick. The compartment also contained a meal laid out for her to eat in the afterlife. Lady Dai was 50 years old when she died, but her lavish tomb—marked by her funeral banner —ensured that she would enjoy the comforts of her earthly life for eternity.

This essay was written with the assistance of Dr. Wu Hung.

Additional Resources:

This object at the Han Provincial Museum

Northern Wei dynasty (386-534 C.E.)

Longmen caves, Luoyang

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE



Figure **13.5.3.52**: Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China, photo: jordi vilanova (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Imperial patronage

Worship and power struggles, enlightenment and suicide—the 2300 caves and niches filled with Buddhist art at Longmen in China has witnessed it all. The steep limestone cliffs extend for almost a mile and contain approximately 110,000 Buddhist stone statues, 60 stupas (hemispherical structures containing Buddhist relics) and 2,800 inscriptions carved on steles (vertical stone markers).

Buddhism, born in India, was transmitted to China intermittently and haphazardly. Starting as early as the 1st century C.E., Buddhism brought to China new images, texts, ideas about life and death, and new opportunities to assert authority. The Longmen cave-temple complex, located on both sides of the Yi River (south of the ancient capital of Luoyang), is an excellent site for understanding how rulers wielded this foreign religion to affirm assimilation and superiority.

Northern Wei Dynasty



Figure **13.5.3.53**: Location of the Longmen caves in China

Most of the carvings at the Longmen site date between the end of the 5th century and the middle of the 8th century—the periods of the Northern Wei (386–534 C.E.) through early Tang dynasties (618–907 C.E.). The Northern Wei was the most enduring and powerful of the northern Chinese dynasties that ruled before the reunification of China under the Sui and Tang dynasties.

The Wei dynasty was founded by Tuoba tribesmen (nomads from the frontiers of northern China) who were considered to be barbaric foreigners by the Han Chinese. Northern Wei Emperor Xiao Wen decided to move the capital south to Luoyang in 494 C.E., a region considered the cradle of Chinese civilization. Many of the Tuoba elite opposed the move and disapproved of Xiao Wen's eager adoption of Chinese culture. Even his own son disapproved and was forced to end his own life. At first, Emperor Xiao

Wen and rich citizens focused on building the city's administrative and court quarters—only later did they shift their energies and wealth into the construction of monasteries and temples. With all the efforts expended on the city, the court barely managed to complete one cave temple at Longmen—the Central Binyang Cave.



Figure 13.5.3.54: Entrance to Central Binyang Cave, 508–523 C.E. Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China, photo: Maite Elorza (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Central Binyang Cave

The Central Binyang Cave was one of three caves started in 508 C.E. It was commissioned by Emperor Xuan Wu in memory of his father. The other two caves, known as Northern and Southern Binyang, were never completed.

Imagine being surrounded by a myriad of carvings painted in brilliant blue, red, ochre and gold (most of the paint is now gone). Across from the entry is the most significant devotional grouping—a pentad (five figures—see image below).



Figure 13.5.3.55: Pentad, Central Binyang Cave, 508–523 C.E., Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China, photo: Miguel Discart (CC BY-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.5.3.56: Drapery, central Buddha (detail), Central Binyang Cave, 508–523 CE. Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China, photo: Dennis Kruyt (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.5.3.57: *Bodhisattvas and disciples*, Central Binyang Cave, 508–523 C.E., Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China, (photo: **jordan pickett**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The central Buddha, seated on a lion throne, is generally identified as Shakyamuni (the historical Buddha), although some scholars identify him as Maitreya (the Buddha of the future) based on the "giving" mudra—a hand gesture associated with Maitreya. He is assisted by two bodhisattvas and two disciples—Ananda and Kasyapa (bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have put off entering paradise in order to help others attain enlightenment).

The Buddha's monastic robe is rendered to appear as though tucked under him (image above). Ripples of folds cascade over the front of his throne. These linear and abstract motifs are typical of the mature Northern Wei style (as also seen in **this gilt bronze statue** of Buddhas Shakyamuni and Prabhutaratna, from 518 C.E.). The flattened, elongated bodies of the Longmen bodhisattvas (image left) are hidden under elaborately pleated and flaring skirts. The bodhisattvas wear draping scarves, jewelry and crowns with floral designs. Their gentle, smiling faces are rectangular and elongated.



Figure 13.5.3.58: *Lotus Ceiling with celestial deities* (detail), Central Binyang Cave, Northern Wei Dynasty, First Quarter of the 6th Century

Low relief carving covers the lateral walls, ceiling, and floor. Finely chiseled haloes back the images. The halo of the main Buddha extends up to merge with a lotus carving in the middle of the ceiling, where celestial deities appear to flutter down from the heavens with their scarves trailing. In contrast to the Northern Wei style seen on the pentad, the sinuous and dynamic surface decoration displays Chinese style. The Northern Wei craftsmen were able to marry two different aesthetics in one cave temple.

Two relief carvings of imperial processions (below) once flanked the doorway of the cave entrance. The emperor's procession is at the Metropolitan Museum, while the empress's procession is at the Nelson-Atkins Museum. These reliefs most likely commemorate historic events. According to records, the Empress Dowager visited the caves in 517 C.E., while the Emperor was present for consecration of the Central Binyang in 523 C.E.



Figure 13.5.3.59: Emperor Xiaowen and His Court, c. 522-23, China, Northern Wei dynasty, limestone with traces of pigment, 82″ x 12′ 11″ / 208.3 x 393.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.5.3.60: Offering Procession of the Empress as Donor with Her Court, c. 522 C.E., fine, dark-gray limestone, 80″ x 9′ 1 1/2″ / 203.2 x 278.13 cm (Nelson Atkins Museum)

These reliefs are the most tangible evidence that the Northern Wei craftsmen masterfully adopted the Chinese aesthetic. The style of the reliefs may be inspired by secular painting, since the figures all appear very gracious and solemn. They are clad in Chinese court robes and look genuinely Chinese—mission accomplished for the Northern Wei!

Tang Dynasty

The Tang dynasty (618–907 C.E.) is considered the age of "international Buddhism." Many Chinese, Indian, Central Asian and East Asian monks traveled throughout Asia. The centers of Buddhism in China were invigorated by these travels, and important developments in Buddhist thought and practice originated in China at this time.

Fengxian Temple

This imposing group of nine monumental images carved into the hard, gray limestone of Fengxian Temple at Longmen is a spectacular display of innovative style and iconography. Sponsored by the Emperor Gaozong and his wife, the future Empress Wu, the high relief sculptures are widely spaced in a semi-circle.



Figure 13.5.3.61: Central Vairocana Buddha surrounded on either side by a monk, bodhisattva, heavenly king, a Vajrapani (thunderbolt holder), 673–75 C.E., Tang dynasty, limestone, Luoyang, Henan province, (photo: Kevin Poh, CC BY 2.0)

The central Vairocana Buddha (more than 55 feet high including its pedestal) is flanked on either side by a bodhisattva, a heavenly king, and a thunderbolt holder *(vajrapani).* Vairocana represents the primordial Buddha who generates and presides over all the Buddhas of the infinite universes that form Buddhist cosmology. This idea—of the power of one supreme deity over all the others—resonated in the vast Tang Empire which was dominated by the Emperor at its summit and supported by his subordinate officials. These monumental sculptures intentionally mirrored the political situation. The dignity and imposing presence of Buddha and the sumptuous appearance of his attendant bodhisattvas is significant in this context.



Figure 13.5.3.62: Vairocana Buddha, monks and bodhisattvas, 673–75 C.E., Tang dynasty, limestone, Luoyang, Henan province, (photo: Sanjay P. K., CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Buddha, monks and *bodhisattvas* (above) display new softer and rounder modeling and serene facial expressions. In contrast, the heavenly guardians and the vajrapani are more engaging and animated. Notice the realistic musculature of the heavenly guardians and the forceful poses of the *vajrapani* (below).



Figure 13.5.3.63: Vaiśravana, one of The Four Heavenly Kings, is on the left (indicated by the stupa in his right hand). Vajrapāṇi (on the right) are spiritual beings that wield the thunderbolt, 673-675 C.E., Tang dynasty, limestone, Luoyang, Henan province, (photo: Sanjay P. K. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure **13.5.3.64**: Arhats, Kanjing Temple, Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China



Figure **13.5.3.65**: Arhats (detail), Kanjing Temple, Longmen Caves, Luoyang, China

Tang dynasty realism—whether fleshy or wizened, dignified or light-hearted—is displayed in the Kanjing cave Temple at Longmen. Here we see accurate portrayals of individuals. This temple was created from about 690-704 C.E. under the patronage of Empress Wu.

In the images of arhats (worthy monks who have advanced very far in their quest of Enlightenment), who line the walls, the carver sought to create intense realism. Although they are still mortal, arhats are capable of extraordinary deeds both physical and spiritual (they can move at free will through space, can understand the thoughts in people's minds, and hear the voices of far away speakers). Twenty-nine monks form a procession around the cave perimeter, linking the subject matter to the rising interest in Chan Buddhism (the Meditation School) fostered at court by the empress herself. These portraits record the lineage of the great patriarchs who transmitted the Buddhist doctrine.

Sovereignty and iconography

Foreign rulers of the Northern Wei, yearning for assimilation and control, made use of Buddhist images for authority and power. Tang dynasty leaders thrived during China's golden age, asserting their sovereignty with the assistance of Buddhist iconography. Today you can visit the stunning limestone remains in Luoyang, New York City, and Kansas City.

The author would like to thank her teacher, Professor Angela Howard.

Additional resources:

Longmen Grottoes from Unesco

Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386–589) on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Northern Qi dynasty (550-577)

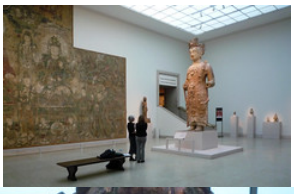
Bodhisattva, probably Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin)

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.5.3.6**: Bodhisattva, probably Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin), Northern Qi dynasty, c. 550-60, Shanxi Province, China, sandstone with pigments, 13-3/4 feet / 419.1 cm high (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88697

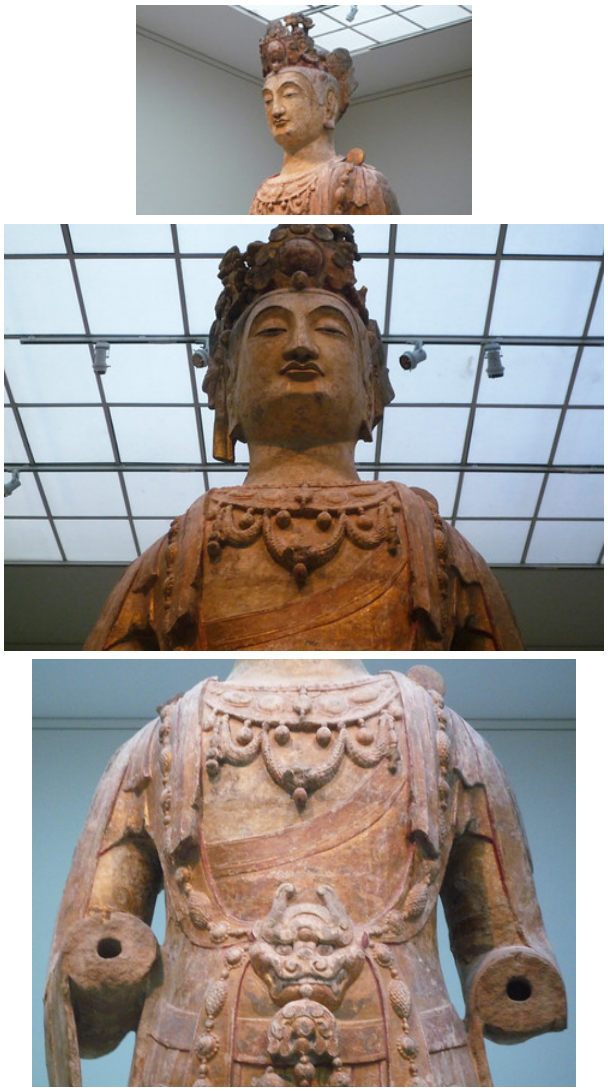


Figure 13.5.3.66: More Smarthistory images…

The art of the Tang dynasty

The Tang dynasty was one of the most powerful in Chinese history. In this period, China becomes the the most prominent civilization in East Asia—with links east to Korea and Japan and west, along the Silk Route.

618 - 907

Chinese Buddhist cave shrines

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.5.3.7**: This video explores ancient Buddhist cave shrines in China, including why the sites were created and the major sponsors and patrons. Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

Mogao caves at Dunhuang

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE



Figure **13.5.3.67**: Mogao Caves (photo: **Yaohua2000**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

A trove of Buddhist art

The ‘Caves of the Thousand Buddhas’ (Qianfodong), also known as Mogao, are a magnificent treasure trove of Buddhist art. They are located in the desert, about 15 miles south-east of the town of Dunhuang in north western China. By the late fourth century, the area had become a busy desert crossroads on the caravan routes of the Silk Road linking China and the West. Traders, pilgrims and other travellers stopped at the oasis town to secure provisions, pray for the journey ahead or give thanks for their survival. Records state that in 366 monks carved the first caves into the cliff stretching about 1 mile along the Daquan River.



Figure **13.5.3.68**

An archive rediscovered

At some point in the early eleventh century, an incredible archive—with up to 50,000 documents, hundreds of paintings, together with textiles and other artefacts—had been sealed up in a chamber adjacent to one of the caves (Cave 17). Its entrance was concealed behind a wall painting and the trove remained hidden from sight for centuries. In 1900, it was discovered by Wang Yuanlu, a Daoist monk who had appointed himself abbot and guardian of the cave-temples. The first Western expedition to reach Dunhuang arrived in 1879. More than twenty years later Hungarian-born Marc Aurel Stein, a British archaeologist and explorer, learned of the importance of the caves.

Paul Pelliot working in the library cave in 1908

Figure **13.5.3.69**: Paul Pelliot working in the library cave in 1908

Stein reached Dunhuang in 1907. He had heard rumours of the walled-in cave and its contents. The abbot sold Stein seven thousand complete manuscripts and six thousand fragments, as well as several cases loaded with paintings, embroideries and other artifacts. French explorer Paul Pelliot followed close on Stein's heels. Pelliot remarked in a letter, "During the first ten days I attacked nearly a thousand scrolls a day…"

Other expeditions followed and returned with many manuscripts and paintings. The result is that the Dunhuang manuscripts and scroll paintings are now scattered over the globe. The bulk of the material can be found in Beijing, London, Delhi, Paris, and Saint Petersburg. Studies based on the textual material found at Dunhuang have provided a better understanding of the extraordinary cross-fertilization of cultures and religions that occurred from the fourth through the fourteenth centuries.

A thousand years of art

There are about 492 extant cave-temples ranging in date from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries. During the thousand years of artistic activity at Dunhuang, the style of the wall paintings and sculptures changed. The early caves show greater Indian and

Western influence, while during the Tang dynasty (618-906 C.E.) the influence of the Chinese painting styles of the imperial court is apparent. During the tenth century, Dunhuang became more isolated and the organization of a local painting academy led to mass production of paintings with a unique style.



Figure **13.5.3.70**: Mural, Cave-temple 257, Dunhuang, Gansu Province

The cave-temples are all man-made, and the decoration of each appears to have been conceived and executed as a conceptual whole. The wall-paintings were done in dry fresco. The walls were prepared with a mixture of mud, straw, and reeds that were covered with a lime paste. The sculptures are constructed with a wooden armature, straw, reeds, and plaster. The colors in the paintings and on the sculptures were done with mineral pigments as well as gold and silver leaf. All the Dunhuang caves face east.

Changes in belief

The art also reflects the changes in religious belief and ritual at the pilgrim site. In the early caves, jataka tales (previous lives of the Historical Buddha) were commonly depicted. During the Tang dynasty, Pure Land Buddhism became very popular. This promoted the Buddha Amitabha, who helped the believer achieve rebirth in his Western Paradise, where even sinners are permitted, sitting within closed lotus buds listening to the heavenly sounds and the sermon of the Buddha, thus purifying them. Various Paradise paintings decorate the walls of the cave-temples of this period, each representing the realm of a different Buddha. Their Paradises are depicted as sumptuous Chinese palace settings.



Figure **13.5.3.71**: Western Paradise, Cave-temple 172, Tang dynasty, Dunhuang, Gansu province

Images of the caves

During WWII the famous, contemporary Chinese painter Zhang Daqian spent time at Dunhuang with his students. They copied the cave paintings. Photojournalist James Lo—a friend of Zhang Daqian—joined him at Dunhuang and systematically photographed the caves. Traveling partly on horseback, they arrived at Dunhuang in 1943 and began a photographic campaign that continued for eighteen months. The Lo Archive (a set is now housed at Princeton University) consists of about 2,500 black-and-white historic photographs. Since no electricity was available, James Lo devised a system of mirrors and cloth screens that bounced light along the corridors of the caves to illuminate the paintings and sculptures.

Today the Mogao cave-temples of Dunhuang are a World Heritage Site. Under a collaborative agreement with China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has been working with the Dunhuang Academy since 1989 on conservation. Tourists can visit selected cave-temples with a guide.

Backstory

The Mogao caves at Dunhuang were reclaimed from the encroaching Gobi desert beginning in the early twentieth century, but their conservation is an ongoing challenge. In addition to natural threats like sandstorms and rainwater, the caves' delicate murals face damage caused mainly by tourists (hundreds of thousands per year, up to 6,000 per day), whose presence adds dangerous levels of carbon dioxide and humidity to the air. Fortunately, much is being done to preserve the artworks at Dunhuang—and new technologies are also making it possible for the caves to be meticulously documented and shared around the world.

The Mogao caves were designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1987, and are overseen by international watchdog groups as well as a state-run institution called the **Dunhuang Research Academy**. Since 1989, they have been working with China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage and the Getty Conservation Institute on structural reinforcement, careful restoration and stabilization of the murals, and digital documentation. The Mogao caves were also a test site for the development of the **China Principles**, a set of international standards for preserving cultural heritage—not only in terms of physical assets, but also with respect to local traditions, environment, and history.

Images of the caves were first produced during World War II, when the famous contemporary Chinese painter Zhang Daqian spent time copying the cave paintings with his students. Photojournalist James Lo joined the effort by systematically photographing the caves using an ingenious system of mirrors to bounce natural light into the dark spaces. The Lo Archive (a set is now housed at Princeton University) consists of about 2,500 black-and-white photographs.

In recent years, teams have been working to create **physical replicas of the caves** that can be displayed at museums and other sites around the world. Virtual reality technology has also been used to create **immersive media environments** that replicate the experience of being in the caves, and preserve important data about the spaces' measurements and other physical properties. These types of reproductions can also help reduce the effects of human presence in the caves by **making digital reconstructions available** at Dunhuang itself: visitors can spend time looking closely at these "digital caves," allowing for stricter time limits and lower visitor numbers in the caves themselves. In addition, these digital versions can be shared easily around the world, along with a growing archive of high-quality photographs. The manuscripts and other objects from Cave 17, discussed above, have also been digitized and are **available online**.

New technologies are also making it possible to preserve and share data about other important Buddhist sites in China. At the Yungang Grottoes in northeastern China, where the sculpture is threatened not only by tourism but also **by China's high levels of industrial air pollution** and acid rain, **3-D scanning is being used** to model the monumental sculptures and create highly accurate reproductions that can be shared and shown around the globe.

The Mogao caves and Yungang Grottoes are outstanding human achievements that are now threatened by other types of human endeavors: climate change, tourism, and pollution. The continued development of new technologies and approaches for preserving and documenting these invaluable sites is essential to their survival.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources

International Dunhuang Project

Dunhuang Research Academy

The Caves at Dunhuang – New York Times Slideshow and related article by Holland Carter

Dunhuang Manuscripts on Wikipedia UNESCO World Heritage Site

Application of the China Principles at the Mogao Grottoes from the Getty Research Institute

Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art on China's Silk Road at the Getty Research Institute

Dunhuang UNESCO World Heritage Site webpage

The paintings and manuscripts from cave 17 at Mogao (1 of 2)

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Buddhism in China

Buddhism probably arrived in China during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.), and became a central feature of Chinese culture during the period of division that followed. Buddhist teaching ascribed great merit to the reproduction of images of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, in which the artisans had to follow strict rules of iconography.

A twelfth-century catalogue of the Chinese imperial painting collection lists Daoist and Buddhist works from the time of Gu Kaizhi (c. 344-406 C.E.) onwards. However, no paintings by major artists of this period have survived, because foreign religions were proscribed between 842 and 845, and many Buddhist monuments and works of art were destroyed.



Figure **13.5.3.72**: *Traveling monk*, 10th century, Five Dynasties or Northern Song Dynasty, wearing a hat, holding a fan and accompanied by a tiger, ink and colors on paper, from Cave 17, Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu province, China © Trustees of the British Museum. The little Buddha supported by a cloud may be there to protect him, and has been identified as Prabhutaratna (a Buddha of the past).

The Valley of the Thousand Buddhas

What has survived from the Tang period (618-906) is an important collection of Buddhist paintings on silk and paper, found in Cave 17, in the Valley of the Thousand Buddhas at the Chinese end of the Silk Road. Since Dunhuang was under Tibetan occupation at this time, its cave shrines and paintings escaped destruction.

The “Caves of the Thousand Buddhas,” or *Qianfodong*, are situated at Mogao, about 25 kilometres south-east of the oasis town of Dunhuang in Gansu province, western China, in the middle of the desert. By the late fourth century, the area had become a busy desert crossroads on the caravan routes of the Silk Road linking China and the West. Traders, pilgrims and other travelers stopped at the oasis town to stock up with provisions, pray for the journey ahead or give thanks for their survival. At about this time wandering monks carved the first caves into the long cliff stretching almost 2 kilometers in length along the Daquan River.

Over the next millennium more than 1000 caves of varying sizes were dug. Around five hundred of these were decorated as cave temples, carved from the gravel conglomerate of the escarpment. This material was not suitable for sculpture, as at other famous Buddhist cave temples at Yungang and Longmen. The Caves of the Thousand Buddhas gained their name from the legend of a monk who dreamt he saw a cloud with a thousand Buddhas floating over the valley.



Figure 13.5.3.73: Photograph of Dunhuang

When the Silk Road was abandoned under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), oasis towns lost their importance and many were deserted. Although the Mogao caves were not completely abandoned, by the nineteenth century they were largely forgotten, with only a few monks staying at the site. Unknown to them, at some point in the early eleventh century, an incredible archive—with up to 50,000 documents, hundreds of paintings, together with textiles and other artifacts—was sealed up in one of the caves (Cave 17). Its entrance concealed behind a wall painting, the cave remained hidden from sight for centuries, until 1900, when it was discovered by Wang Yuanlu, a Daoist monk who had appointed himself abbot and guardian of the caves.

The first Western expedition to reach Dunhuang, led by a Hungarian count, arrived in 1879. More than twenty years later one of its members, Lajos Lóczy, drew the attention of the Hungarian-born Marc Aurel Stein, by then a well-known British archaeologist and explorer, to the importance of the caves. Stein reached Dunhuang and Mogao in 1907 during his second expedition to Central Asia. By this time, he had heard rumors of the walled-in cave and its contents.

After delicate negotiations with Wang Yuanlu, Stein negotiated access to the cave. “Heaped up in layers,” Stein wrote, “but without any order, there appeared in the dim light of the priest’s little lamp a solid mass of manuscript bundles rising to a height of nearly ten feet…. Not in the driest soil could relics of a ruined site have so completely escaped injury as they had here in a carefully selected rock chamber, where, hidden behind a brick wall, …. these masses of manuscripts had lain undisturbed for centuries.” (M. Aurel Stein,*Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912; reprint, New York, Dover, 1987).

The abbot eventually sold Stein seven thousand complete manuscripts and six thousand fragments, as well as several cases loaded with paintings, embroideries and other artifacts; the money was used to fund restoration work at the caves.The manuscripts are now in the British Library and the paintings have been divided between the National Museum in New Delhi and the British Museum, where over three hundred paintings on silk, hemp and paper are kept.



Figure 13.5.3.74: *Bodhisattva as Guide of Souls*, early 10th century, Five Dynasties, ink and colors on a silk banner, from Cave 17, Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu province, China © Trustees of the British Museum

This painting is inscribed with the characters *yinlu pu* or "Bodhisattva leading the Way." It is one of several examples from Mogao of a bodhisattva leading the beautifully clad donor figure to the Pure Land, or Paradise, indicated by a Chinese building floating on clouds in the top left corner. The two figures are also supported by a cloud indicating that they are flying.

The bodhisattva, shown much larger than the donor, is holding a censer and a banner in his hand. The banner is one of many of the same type found at Mogao, with a triangular headpiece and streamers. The woman appears to be very wealthy, with gold hairpins in her hair. Actual examples of these were found in Chinese tombs. Her fashionably plump figure suggests that the painting was executed in the ninth or tenth century.

Suggested readings:

H. Wang (ed.), *Sir Aurel Stein. Proceedings of the British Museum Study Day 2002* (London, British Museum Occasional Paper 142, 2004).

H. Wang, *Money on the Silk Road. The Evidence from Eastern Central Asiato c. AD 800* (London, British Museum Press, 2004).

S. Whitfield, *Aurel Stein on the Silk Road* (London, British Museum Press, 2004).

J. Falconer, A. Kelecsenyi, A. Karteszi and L. Russell-Smith (E. Apor and H. Wang eds.), *Catalogue of the Collections of Sir Aurel Stein in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences* (published jointly by the British Museum and the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest [LHAS Oriental Series 11], 2002).

H. Wang (ed.), *Handbook to the Stein Collections in the UK* (London, British Museum Occasional Paper 129, 1999).

© Trustees of the British Museum

The paintings and manuscripts from cave 17 at Mogao (2 of 2)

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Change over a thousand years

During the thousand years of artistic activity at Mogao, the style of the wall paintings and sculptures changed, in part a reflection of the influences that reached it along the Silk Road. The early caves show greater Indian and Western influence, while during the Tang dynasty (618-906) the influence of the latest Chinese painting styles of the imperial court is evident. During the tenth century, Dunhuang became more isolated and the organization of a local painting academy led to mass production of paintings with a unique style.

The art also reflects the changes in religious belief and ritual at the pilgrim site. In the early caves, jataka stories (about Buddha's previous incarnations) were commonly depicted. During the Tang dynasty, Pure Land Buddhism became very popular. This

promoted the Buddha Amitabha, who helped the believer achieve rebirth in his Western Paradise, where even sinners are permitted, sitting within closed lotus buds listening to the heavenly sounds and the sermon of the Buddha, thereby purifying themselves.



Figure **13.5.3.75**: Buddha between two Bodhisatvas (detail), *Paradise of Shakyamuni*, early 9th century, Tang dynasty, with illustrations of episodes from the Baoen Sutra, ink and colours on silk, from Cave 17, Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu province, China © Trustees of the British Museum

In this Pure Land, or Paradise painting, Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, with his hands in the vitarka-mudra (gesture of preaching), sits between two bodhisattvas. A dancer and an orchestra perform before him. Another group sits below them. The Buddha has the sun and the moon on his robes, the cosmological emblems of Mount Shumeru. The scene is probably intended to represent Shakyamuni's cosmic aspect as expounded in the Lotus Sutra. Two mythical creatures standing on golden islands, the double-headed jiva-jiva and the kalavinka, flank this second group. A row of donors are shown at the base of the painting.



Figure **13.5.3.76**: Paradise of Shakyamuni, early 9th century, Tang dynasty, with illustrations of episodes from the Baoen Sutra, ink and colours on silk, from Cave 17, Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu province, China © Trustees of the British Museum

Along both sides of the painting a sequence of episodes tells the story of Prince Siddhartha from the Baoen-jing, the 'Sutra of Requiting Blessings Received'. This is a jataka about Shakyamuni's previous incarnation. Prince Siddhartha and his parents flee their palace upon hearing the murderous intent of a treacherous minister. When their provisions run out, Siddhartha offers his own flesh to his parents. After his parents have each taken a piece, Siddhartha is left by the roadside. A hungry lion appears, and the prince offers his final piece of flesh to the creature. The lion turns out to be the god Indra, who restores him to strength and wholeness.

Various Paradise paintings decorate the walls of the cave temples of this period, each representing the realm of a different Buddha. Their Paradises were shown in sumptuous Chinese palace settings. Simplified versions of these buildings appear on banners depicting bodhisattvas showing donors on their way to Paradise.

Patrons

The decoration of each cave-temple was usually commissioned by an individual (whether an official, monk, governor or merchant, for example) and dedicated to their families and deceased relatives. However, some were commissioned by groups of lay individuals, or a religious society. The responsibility for the cave's upkeep was often passed on to the patron's descendants, and it could stay in the same family for generations.

The caves were excavated by a team of workmen, who chizelled out the ceiling and walls, which were then plastered with clay tempered with chopped straw and finished with a thin layer of plaster. The paintings would have already been commissioned, and were executed by skilled workmen under the direction of a senior Buddhist monk. Sculptures made of stucco around a wooden armature were also an integral part of the decoration.

Patrons and their portraits played an increasingly important part as time passed. At first they were depicted as much smaller than the main figures in the composition and in a subordinate position to the side. However, they gradually increased in size, until by the tenth century they occupied a large proportion of the lowest register of the paintings. In some paintings they are shown as part of the main composition and in the same scale as the holy figures in the paintings.



Figure **13.5.3.77**: Kshitigarbha as Lord of the Six Ways, c. 963 C.E., dated 4th year of Jianlong, Northern Song Dynasty, ink and colours on silk, from Cave 17, Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu province, China © Trustees of the British Museum

The bodhisattva Kshitigarbha in the painting above is shown wearing a hood and seated on a lotus behind an altar accompanied by two worshipping bodhisattvas. On the three lines on each side of his halo are depicted "The Six Ways of Life": gods, animals and hell (top left) and humans, ashuras (mythical four-armed figures) and hungry ghosts (right).

In the lower section of the painting are donor figures, wearing fashionable clothes, the women with typical tenth-century hair styles decorated with hairpins and flowers. According to the inscription, the donor wished to avoid all bad forms of rebirth: "The maker of this painting was the disciple of pure faith, Kang Qingnu. His body lodges in the House of Fire and he fears to fall in the Five Evil Ways. Fortune and disaster are inconstant; his heart longs to be among the emancipated…". Kshitigarbha is depicted and invoked here as he had vowed to rescue souls even from the regions of hell, and this offers hope to the donor and his family.

Suggested readings:

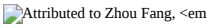
R. Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia:* Paintings from Dunhuang, vol. 2 (Tokyo, Kodansha International Ltd., 1982-85).

R. Whitfield and A. Farrer, *Caves of the thousand Buddhas* (London, The British Museum Press, 1990).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Attributed to Zhou Fang, Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair

by NINA WAN LAI-NA



Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair, c. late 8th–early 9th century, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-12940" height="256" sizes="(max-width: 1200px) 100vw, 1200px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...m_shenyang.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...m_shenyang.jpg
1200w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ang-300x64.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ng-870x186.jpg
870w" width="1200">

Figure **13.5.3.78**: Attributed to Zhou Fang, *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, c. late 8th–early 9th century, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)

“The Beautiful Woman” Genre of Chinese Painting

Throughout the history of Chinese art, painters never tired of adopting beautiful female figures as the subject of their depictions. With a stable political structure, flourishing economy and prosperous culture, the genre of “beautiful women painting” (*meirenhua*) enjoyed high popularity and reached significant achievement in the Tang dynasty (618-907).

Born into an aristocratic family in Chang’an (the modern city of Xi’an), Zhou Fang is a well-known Tang court artist who painted in this genre. Even though it is not signed, *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, now kept in the Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang, is traditionally attributed to Zhou Fang. It demonstrates how pictures of beautiful women can provide insight into ideals of feminine beauty and the social customs of the Tang dynasty. This horizontal scroll portrays five palace ladies and a maidservant amusing themselves in a garden scene. In the first section (below), two court ladies play with an adorable dog, one teasing it with a duster.



Figure **13.5.3.79**: Two court ladies play with a dog (detail), attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)

In the middle section (below), a third palace lady rendered in hierarchal scale (depicted larger because of her higher status) is followed by a maidservant holding a long-handled fan. She gazes at a red flower that she holds in her hand and prepares to adorn her hair with it. A crane passes in front of the lady.

Court lady and her maidservant (detail), attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), <em
Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-13053" height="700" sizes="(max-width: 1053px) 100vw, 1053px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05/detail2.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05/detail2.jpg
1053w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...l2-300x199.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...l2-870x578.jpg
870w" width="1053">

Figure **13.5.3.80**: Court lady and her maidservant (detail), attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)

Another court lady shown in a relatively small size strolls nearby with her hands clasped, adding a sense of depth and variation to the composition of the scroll (below). Beside a blooming magnolia tree growing next to a garden stone, the last lady in the picture catches a butterfly and her attention shifts to a dog that appears to be running to her. Representations of the leisure and amusements enjoyed by aristocratic women can be seen as a reflection of their idle and carefree life in the palace.



Figure 13.5.3.81: Attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)

Feminine Beauty in the Tang Dynasty

Court lady (detail), attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), <em
Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-13056" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 396px) 100vw, 396px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05/detail4.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05/detail4.jpg
396w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...l4-300x455.jpg
300w" width="396">

Figure 13.5.3.82: Court lady (detail), attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)

In the Tang dynasty a voluptuous body represented the ideal of feminine beauty. Zhou Fang's portrayals of court ladies in the scroll are characterized by round faces and plump figures. Their eyebrows are painted in the shape of butterfly wings and they display slender eyes, full noses and small, cherry-like mouths. Their hair style is done in a high bun adorned with delicate gold ornaments and artificial blossoms such as peonies or lotuses. The ladies' fair complexion comes from white pigment that was applied to their skin.

The court ladies are gracefully dressed in long, loose fitting gowns covered by transparent gauzes and scarves—all fashionable at the time. **Their costumes** of red, white or ocher hues are exquisitely decorated with repeated floral, cranes or geometric motifs that highlight the artist's meticulous care and sophisticated skill in painting this subject.

Under Zhou's brush, the plump bodies, facial traits, fair complexions, distinctive garments, and rich adornments together express the particular sense of the beauty and extravagance associated with aristocratic women of the Tang dynasty, and at the same time demonstrate broader aesthetic preferences for feminine beauty during this period. The artist's contemporaries tended to favor similar portrayals of women—who functioned as symbols of the wealth and culture of the Tang dynasty, traditionally considered one of the most prosperous and cultivated in the history of China.

The Custom of Wearing Flowers in Women's Hair



Figure **13.5.3.83**: Woman holding flower (detail), attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 46 x 180 cm (Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang province, China)

In *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, the huge blossoms worn in the ladies' high bun not only depicted a particular fashion of the time, but also a social custom performed by women during the springtime festival of "Flower Morning" in the Chinese tradition. According to a number of literary accounts, during this festival ladies adorned their hair with artificial flowers made in paper or silk, captured butterflies with their fans and held outdoor picnics in celebration of the springtime. On the one hand, the practice of wearing flowers expressed women's admiration for the beauty of the blossoms, but on the other hand, flowers symbolized the fleeting nature of youth.

Literary records provide clues for another symbolic meaning associated with this conventional practice. The ninth-century scholar Wang Renyu documented that every springtime, the Tang dynasty emperor Xuanzong (who ruled from 685–762) organized a banquet and required palace women to wear blossoms in their hair. Should a released butterfly alight on her blossom, the lady could be selected as a bed partner of the emperor. More broadly, the practice of women wearing flowers in their hair is associated with the pursuit of love and the desire for conjugal happiness—and is not a simple fashion accessory. Zhou excelled by further revealing the court ladies' inner emotions through the subtle depiction of their facial expressions in the masterpiece *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*, which, more than a thousand years after its creation, continues to hold great significance in Chinese art, history and culture.

Additional resources:

Zoomable image on the Google Art Project

The Tang Dynasty on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ellen Johnston Laing, "Notes on Ladies Wearing Flowers in their Hair," *Orientations*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Feb., 1990), pp. 32–39.

The art of the Song dynasty

The Song dynasty is known especially for the development of monumental landscape painting.

960 - 1279

Neo-Confucianism and Fan Kuan, *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*

by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE



Figure **13.5.3.84**: Fan Kuan, *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, ink on silk hanging scroll, c. 1000, 206.3 x 103.3 cm. (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Daoist mountain man, hermit, rustic, wine-lover—Fan Kuan has the reputation of having been truly unconventional. We know very little about this great artist, yet he painted the most majestic landscape painting of the early Song period. Everything about *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, which is possibly the only surviving work by Fan Kuan, is an orderly statement reflecting the artist's worldview.

Landscape as a subject

Fan Kuan's masterpiece is an outstanding example of Chinese landscape painting. Long before Western artists considered landscape anything more than a setting for figures, Chinese painters had elevated landscape as a subject in its own right. Bounded by mountain ranges and bisected by two great rivers—the Yellow and the Yangzi—China's natural landscape has played an important role in the shaping of the Chinese mind and character. From very early times, the Chinese viewed mountains as sacred and imagined them as the abode of immortals. The term for landscape painting (*shanshui hua*) in Chinese is translated as "mountain water painting."

After a period of upheaval

During the tumultuous Five Dynasties period in the early 10th century (an era of political upheaval from 907–960 C.E., between the fall of the Tang Dynasty and the founding of the Song Dynasty, when five dynasties quickly succeeded one another in the north, and more than twelve independent states were established, mainly in the south), recluse scholars who fled to the mountains saw the tall pine tree as representative of the virtuous man. In the early Northern Song dynasty that followed, from the mid-10th to the mid-11th century, gnarled pine trees and other symbolic elements were transformed into a grand and imposing landscape style.



Figure **13.5.3.85**: Gnarled pine trees (detail), Fan Kuan, *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, c. 1000, ink on silk hanging scroll, 206.3 x 103.3 cm. (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Fan Kuan painted a bold and straightforward example of Chinese landscape painting. After the long period of political disunity (the Five Dynasties period), Fan Kuan lived as a recluse and was one of many poets and artists of the time who were disenchanted with human affairs. He turned away from the world to seek spiritual enlightenment. Through his painting *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, Fan Kuan expressed a cosmic vision of man's harmonious existence in a vast but orderly universe. The Neo-Confucian search for absolute truth in nature as well as self-cultivation reached its climax in the 11th century and is demonstrated in this work. Fan Kuan's landscape epitomizes the early Northern Song monumental style of landscape painting. Nearly seven feet in height, the hanging scroll composition presents universal creation in its totality, and does so with the most economic of means.



Figure **13.5.3.86**: Temple in the forest (detail), Fan Kuan, *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, c. 1000, ink on silk hanging scroll, 206.3 x 103.3 cm. (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Immense boulders occupy the foreground and are presented to the viewer at eye level. Just beyond them one sees crisp, detailed brushwork describing rocky outcroppings, covered with trees. Looking closely, one sees two men driving a group of donkeys loaded with firewood and a temple partially hidden in the forest. In the background a central peak rises from a mist-filled chasm and is flanked by two smaller peaks. This solid screen of gritty rock takes up nearly two-thirds of the picture. The sheer height of the central peak is accentuated by a waterfall plummeting from a crevice near the summit and disappearing into the narrow valley.



Figure 13.5.3.87: Central peak (detail), Fan Kuan, *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, c. 1000, ink on silk hanging scroll, 206.3 x 103.3 cm. (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

The mountain form accurately captures the geological traits of southern Shaanxi and northwestern Henan provinces–thick vegetation grows only at the top of the bare steep-sided cliffs in thick layers of fine-grained soil known as loess. The mountains are triangular with deep crevices. In the painting they are conceived frontally and additively. To model the mountains, Fan Kuan used incisive thickening-and-thinning contour strokes, texture dots and ink wash. Strong, sharp brushstrokes depict the knotted trunks of the large trees. Notice the detailed brushwork that delineates the foliage and the fir trees silhouetted along the upper edge of the ledge in the middle distance.



Figure 13.5.3.88: Monumental landscape (detail), Fan Kuan, *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, c. 1000, ink on silk hanging scroll, 206.3 x 103.3 cm. (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

To convey the sheer size of the landscape depicted in *Travelers by Streams and Mountains*, Fan Kuan relied on suggestion rather than description. The gaps between the three distances act as breaks between changing views. Note the boulders in the foreground, the tree-covered rock outcropping in the middle, and the soaring peaks in the background. The additive images do not physically

connect; they are comprehended separately. The viewer is invited to imagine himself roaming freely, yet one must mentally jump from one distance to the next.

The unsurpassed grandeur and monumentality of Fan Kuan's composition is expressed through the skillful use of scale. Fan Kuan's landscape shows how the use of scale can dramatically heighten the sense of vastness and space. Diminutive figures are made visually even smaller in comparison to the enormous trees and soaring peaks. They are overwhelmed by their surroundings. Fan Kuan's signature is hidden among the leaves of one of the trees in the lower right corner.

Neo-Confucianism

The development of Monumental landscape painting coincided with that of Neo-Confucianism—a reinterpretation of Chinese moral philosophy. It was Buddhism that first introduced, from India, a system of metaphysics and a coherent worldview more advanced than anything known in China. With Buddhist thought, scholars in the 5th and 6th centuries engaged in philosophical discussions of truth and reality, being and non-being, substantiality and nonsubstantiality. Beginning in the late Tang and early Northern Song (960-1127), Neo-Confucian thinkers rebuilt Confucian ethics using Buddhist and Daoist metaphysics. Chinese philosophers found it useful to think in terms of complimentary opposites, interacting polarities— inner and outer, substance and function, knowledge and action. In their metaphysics they naturally employed the ancient yin and yang (Yin: feminine, dark, receptive, yielding, negative, and weak. Yang: masculine, bright, assertive, creative, positive, and strong.) The interaction of these complementary poles was viewed as integral to the processes that generate natural order.

Central to understanding Neo-Confucian thought is the conceptual pair of *li* and *qi*. *Li* is usually translated as principles. It can be understood as principles that underlie all phenomena. *Li* constitutes the underlying pattern of reality. Nothing can exist if there is no *li* for it. This applies to human conduct and to the physical world. *Qi* can be characterized as the vital force and substance of which man and the universe are made. *Qi* can also be conceived of as energy, but energy which occupies space. In its most refined form it occurs as mysterious ether, but condensed it becomes solid metal or rock.

Not as the human eye sees

The Neo-Confucian theory of observing things in the light of their own principles (*li*) clearly resonates in the immense splendor of Fan Kuan's masterpiece. Northern Song landscape painters did not paint as the human eye sees. By seeing things not through the human eye, but in the light of their own principles (*li*), Fan Kuan was able to organize and present different aspects of a landscape within a single composition—he does this with a constantly shifting viewpoint. In his masterful balance of *li* and *qi*, Fan Kuan created a microcosmic image of a moral and orderly universe.

Fan Kuan looked to nature and carefully studied the world around him. He expressed his own response to nature. As Fan Kuan sought to describe the external truth of the universe visually, he discovered at the same time an internal psychological truth. The bold directness of Fan's painting style was thought to be a reflection of his open character and generous disposition. His grand image of the beauty and majesty of nature reflects Fan Kuan's humble awe and pride.

Note from author: With tremendous debt to my teacher Wen Fong.

Additional Resources

This landscape painting on the Google Art Project

Landscape Painting in Chinese Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The National Palace Museum

Master of the (Fishing) Nets Garden

by DR. KRISTEN CHIEM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



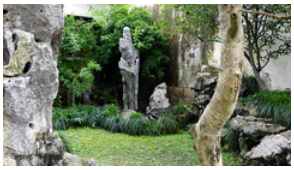
Video 13.5.3.8: The Master of the (Fishing) Nets Garden in Suzhou, China was originally designed by Shi Zhengzhi, a 12th century official during the Southern Song Dynasty. He named the garden, Yu Yin, the Fisherman's Retreat. Song Zonghuan, an 18th century court official renamed and restored the garden. It became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Astor Court in New York is a replica of one section of the Master of the Nets Garden.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88697



Figure **13.5.3.89**: More Smarthistory images…

Liang Kai, *Poet Strolling by a Marshy Bank*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.5.3.9**: Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The art of the Yuan dynasty

During the Yuan dynasty, China became a part of the Mongol empire.

1271 - 1368

Zheng Sixiao, Ink Orchid

by HUNG SHENG

The artist

Known by the name he adopted in his late thirties, Zheng Sixiao painted *Ink Orchid* to evoke his sentiments at a tumultuous time in Chinese history.

Zheng was born in Fujian province in 1241, which was then part of the Southern Song empire (1127 – 1279). The capital of the Southern Song empire was Lin'an (present-day Hangzhou).



Figure **13.5.3.90**: Map of the Southern Song in 1142 (**source**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Zheng was a student of the Imperial Academy of the Southern Song. He was considered one of the literati, or the educated elite. In 1279, the Mongolian armies conquered the Southern Song empire. Zheng, a patriot, went to Suzhou (just north of Lin'an) where he lived the life of a hermit. The fall of the Southern Song prompted Zheng to rename himself. Indeed it was a common practice for literati to bestow on themselves several names. Zheng renamed himself Zheng Sixiao. *Sixiao* implied "remember the Zhao." Zhao was the family name of the Song imperial family. The character for *xiao* 肖 was the same as the right side of the Chinese character for the word *zhao* 趙.

Zheng's patriotism was also demonstrated in his choice of another name for himself. He signed this painting *Suo-nan-weng*, which means southern-facing old man. He was so patriotic that he never lay or sat facing to the north—where the Mongolian capital was located. Zheng was also given the courtesy name of *Yiweng*, meaning old man who reminisced about the fallen dynasty.

The only surviving painting reliably attributed to Zheng is the short horizontal scroll *Ink Orchid*, a balanced, tranquil, symbolic monochrome painting.



Figure 13.5.3.91: Zheng Sixiao, *Ink Orchid*, 1306, handscroll, ink on paper, 25.7 x 42.4 cm. (Osaka Municipal Museum of Art)

The subject matter

The orchid, the blossoming plum, the bamboo and the chrysanthemum each embodied traditional Chinese virtues. Known as the "Four Gentlemen," the four plants were depicted by literati in different dynasties. The orchid with a faint, delicate fragrance grew in hidden and secluded places. Thus, the orchid can embody the characteristics of self-containment, reservation, simplicity, solitude and unpretentiousness. The description could also be used to describe how Zheng depicted himself. In Zheng's *Ink Orchid*, there are no eye-catching colors or meticulous details. Precise calligraphic strokes rendered the simple and balanced composition. Zheng's strokes depicted a few leaves and two orchid flowers. The deft use of brush and ink brings perspective, vitality and movement to the leaves and flowers. Unlike many western still life flower paintings, the ink orchid has no vase or basket.

There is also no depiction of roots. The orchid seems to float in the air. When people enquired as to why Zheng depicted it so, he was reported to have replied, "Don't you know that the soil was stolen by the barbarians?" The rootlessness of the orchid added to the symbolism, for it connoted that Zheng was also without a home with the collapse of the Southern Song. Zheng became a yimin, a leftover subject. The rootless orchid was a personal statement of his refusal to serve the Yuan Mongolian court—a court ruled by the foreigners.

The inscriptions and seals

Zheng wrote a poem to the right of the orchid (fig. a), which expressed his bitterness at the fall of the Song. He compared himself to the orchid, emphasizing its faint, everlasting fragrance. He signed the poem with his pseudonym "South-facing Old Man" ((fig. b). When he put the year and date, he denied the legitimacy of the Yuan dynasty by not noting its reign period (fig. c).

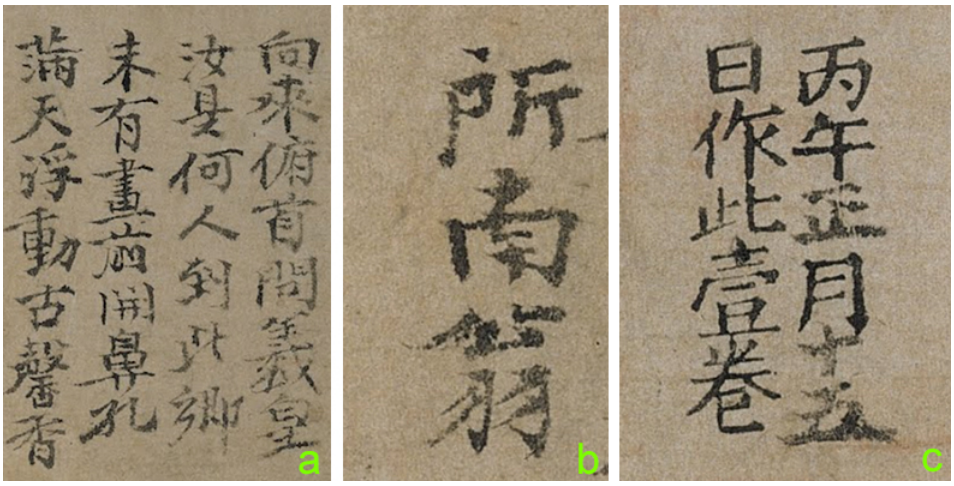


Figure **13.5.3.92**

Zheng stamped two of his seals on the painting. One seal was his pseudonym matched with his signature (fig. d) while another was a longer text with four vertical lines starting from the right (fig. e). The latter hinted that he would not paint for the Yuan officials even if they asked. It was almost thirty years after the Song collapsed that Zheng painted the piece, yet all of these components signaled his remembrance of and unyielding loyalty to the Song and his enduring resistance to the Yuan.



Figure **13.5.3.93**

Voids in the painting

When the painting was first created, it consisted merely of the orchid, the poem inscription at the right, the year and date indicated at the left and two of the seals at the lower left. In other words, the ink orchid exists in a void. The other inscriptions and seals were added by later literati and connoisseurs.

Leaving the background empty added great strength to the artwork. In the painting, the substance and the void complement each other. The void is not nothingness, but a space for imagination. Without details in the background, it also allows us to focus on the subject matter and inscription.

The rootless orchid lends insights into Zheng's artistic skills and philosophy as well as aspects of his life. While conveying a strong statement by Zheng, the painting did not arouse anger or hatred but a sense of quietness. It elegantly embodied the modesty and integrity of this reclusive literati. Many subsequent literati appreciated and respected Zheng's temperament and his depiction of the rootless orchid.

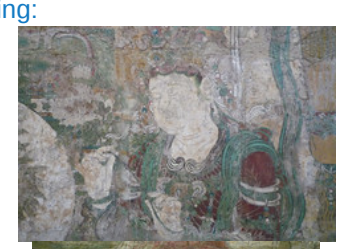
Buddha of Medicine Bhaishajyaguru (Yaoshi fo)

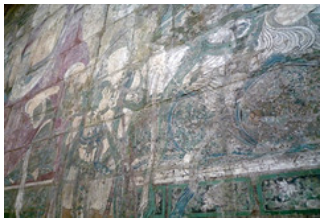
by DR. JENNIFER N. MCINTIRE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.5.3.10: *Buddha of Medicine Bhaishajyaguru (Yaoshi fo)*, c. 1319, Yuan dynasty, water-based pigments on clay mixed with straw, 24 feet, 8 inches x 49 feet 7 inches (751.8 cm x 1511.3 cm) (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





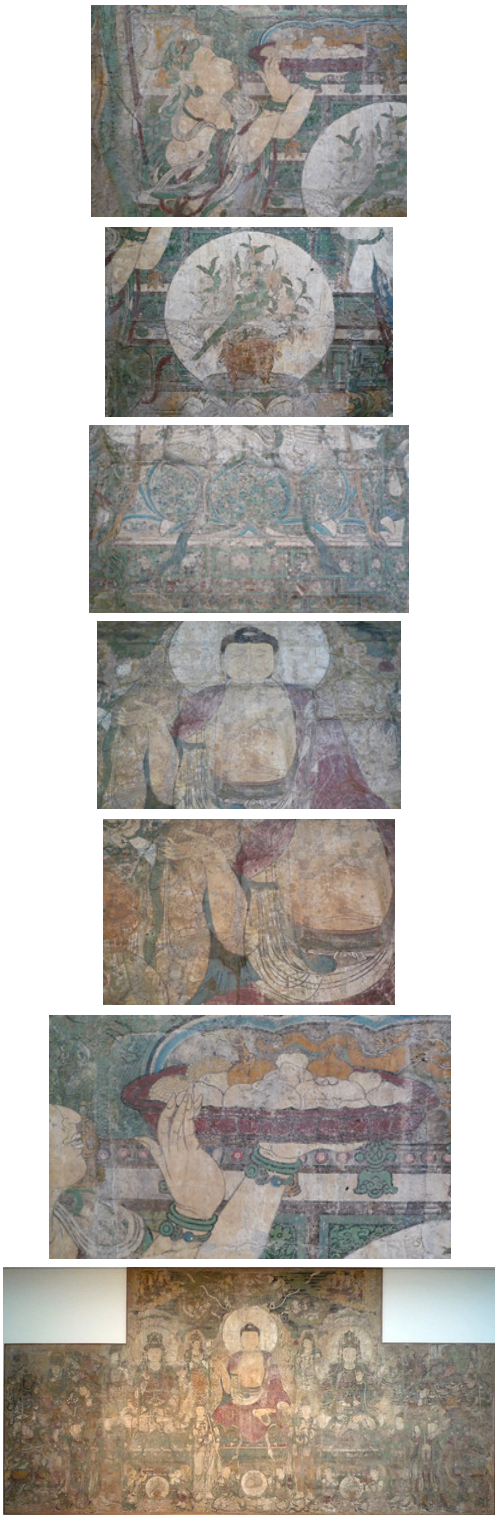



Figure **13.5.3.94**: More Smarthistory images…

Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*

by HUNG SHENG

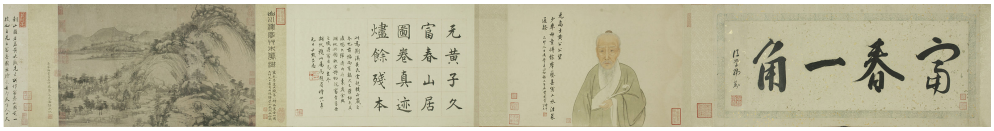


Figure **13.5.3.95**: “The Remaining Mountain” (first part of the scroll), Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 31.8 x 51.4 cm (Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Hangzhou)



Figure **13.5.3.96**: “The Master Wuyong Scroll” (second part of the scroll), Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

A story of survival

Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains is a legendary *shanshui* (landscape) painting created by the Yuan dynasty painter, Huang Gongwang. This handscroll, which is over 22 feet long, has a fascinating history. There are many stories associated with it—there are even stories about the inscriptions that have been added to the scroll over the years.

As the story goes, the handscroll escaped destruction because a nephew disobeyed his uncle’s dying wish. In the late Ming dynasty, a collector named Wu Hongyu was so fond of this handscroll that he put it next to him while sleeping and eating, even carrying it when he fled in bare feet during the Manchu conquest. On his deathbed in 1650, Wu instructed his nephew to burn the handscroll so that it could accompany him into the afterlife. The handscroll started to burn. Fortunately, Wu’s quick-thinking nephew saved it by substituting another painting, unbeknownst to the near-death Wu.

This burning of the handscroll resulted in it being separated into two parts as it appears today. The first part, “The Remaining Mountain” is now in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou while the latter part known as “The Master Wuyong Scroll” is in the National Palace Museum in Taipei where it has the status of a national treasure. The lengths of these scrolls vary greatly, the first part is 51.4 centimeters (a little more than 20 inches) and the latter is 636.9 centimeters (nearly 21 feet).

What is a Chinese handscroll painting?

Imagine you are hiking in a national park with a video camera. You film your progress on the hike with a range of camera shots: wide shots, medium shots, close ups, and so on. Appreciating a handscroll painting is similar to this visual journey.

Due to their horizontal format, you cannot view the entire handscroll all at once. Although museums often display handscrolls completely unrolled, from beginning to end, this is not the way artists intended for them to be experienced. Rather, they can be described as a slowly evolving journey of discovery that unfolds with intimate physical movement.

To view a handscroll one must begin by holding it in your hands. The handscroll is held by your left hand while the opening end of the handscroll is held by the right. The scroll is unrolled towards the left, shoulder width and at arms length so that the first section can be viewed. The right hand then rolls the start of the scroll to the left to re-roll the viewed section. The left hand then unrolls further towards the left until the new section is revealed for viewing. The right hand again re-rolls the viewed section. Section after section the process is repeated until the entire scroll is viewed. The process is then reversed to re-roll the entire scroll so that the first section is in correct position for the next viewing.



Figure 13.5.3.97: “The Remaining Mountain,” Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 31.8 x 51.4 cm (Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Hangzhou)

Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains is a landscape painting. The journey starts with a robust mountain viewed from a high angle, looking at the lush vegetation and rocks. This is in “the Remaining Mountain” section of the scroll, which is the shorter of the two sections (image above).



Figure 13.5.3.98: “The Master Wuyong Scroll,” Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

We now move to “The Master Wuyong Scroll,” in which you experience the scenery of lower slopes (image above). There are different forms of trees in the lower half of the composition with lots of empty space.



Figure **13.5.3.99**: "The Master Wuyong Scroll," Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Gradually, after the vast initial view, your eye rises as if you are ascending to a point from which you can see farther to the distant mountains (image above). There is a spectacular panorama in front of you. There are rounded mountains with lush trees and grass, houses and paths in the valleys. Further on, we see a figure fishing in a boat, and to the left, under the shade of some trees in the foreground, we see pavilions beside water (image below).



Figure **13.5.3.100**: "The Master Wuyong Scroll," Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Descending to a lower altitude, there is a nearby shore rendered in dry brushstrokes (on the far right) and groups of trees characterized by wet horizontal dots with great variations of ink tones (image below).



Figure **13.5.3.101**: “The Master Wuyong Scroll,” Huang Gongwang, Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Approaching the end of the scroll, a majestic peak echoes the robust mountain that we saw at the very beginning of the scroll. In an elegant finale, the journey ends with low-lying mountains rendered in pale ink washes that taper into blank space (image below).



Figure **13.5.3.102**: “The Master Wuyong Scroll,” Huang Gongwang, Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

The format of the handscroll allows for multiple perspectives in the same painting, embracing the landscape’s breadth and depth along the river and mountains as a continuous journey progressing through time and space.

While landscape is a subject of both Chinese and Western art, they differ in their respective approaches. A Chinese landscape is not a visual record of a particular day or a single view, but rather it captures the flow of traveling through changes in atmosphere and multiple perspectives. According to Huang’s own inscription on the handscroll, it took him three to four years to finish the painting. It was not consciously constructed, but executed in a spontaneous state. Huang added to the painting when the mood was right, using six sections of paper to create “The Master Wuyong Scroll.” Huang did not paint for the court or the art market, but painted for himself as form of leisure and self-expression.

Who was Huang Gongwang?

Huang came from a poor family. His original surname was Lu. When he was around eight years old, he encountered Huang Le who was in his nineties and had always wanted to have a son. Following the custom of the day, Lu was adopted and changed his surname to Huang. After much study Huang became an official-scholar, but he later was embroiled in a dispute and imprisoned. After his imprisonment, he abandoned the thought of reaching a higher official rank and returned to his hometown in Changshu, Jiangsu province, where he lived as Daoist and traveled to nearby sites. In 1347, in his late seventies, Huang travelled to the Fuchun region accompanied by his Daoist friend, Zheng Wuyong. He began painting this handscroll at that time, and finally finished it in his eighties. What is Daoism?

Definition: What is Daoism?

Taoism (Daoism) is an indigenous Chinese religion. Tao is often translated as “way” or “path.” The teachings of Taoism advocate following the "way" and integrating with the natural world. Its legendary founder was Laozi, who lived in the sixth century B.C.E. However, most scholars believed that the real history of Taoism is rooted in indigenous religion of the second

century and that it developed rapidly along with the advancement of Buddhism. Taoism developed its own unique meditation techniques. Taoists also had a particular interest in the pursuit of immortality and alchemy. As in the West, experiments in these pursuits led to unanticipated advances in chemistry and physics. (Zhaoyang Zhang, "Taoism in the Tang and Song dynasties," *Khan Academy*, www.khanacademy.org/partner-...ong-dynasties.).

Huang was a Han, an ethnic group of China. He also belonged to the social class of literati. The literati were educated elites who were interested in painting, calligraphy and poetry. Many literati in the Yuan dynasty, a dynasty founded by the Mongolians, were Han Chinese like Huang. They did not serve the non-Han court and lived a reclusive life. Painting to them was a kind of self-cultivation. Their intended audience was not the general public, but their circles of friends. Their paintings often emphasized the expression of the painters' temperaments rather than visual resemblance to forms.

Methods and techniques

The handscroll was executed with brush and ink on paper. The use of brush and ink was thought to denote the artist's spirit and temperament. The *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* handscroll is a visual feast of methods and techniques, with bold tones and subtle shades, wet and dry brushwork, sparse and dense applications of ink, as well as the twists and turns of calligraphic lines.



Figure **13.5.3.103**: "The Master Wuyong Scroll," Huang Gongwang, Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains, 1350, handscroll, ink on paper, 33 x 636.9 cm (National Palace Museum, Taipei)

Huang paid respect to earlier masters by appropriating the textural strokes they developed. For example, Huang used hemp-fiber textural strokes and alum-head textural strokes associated with the painters Dong Yuan and Juran (both of whom lived in the 10th century). The term "Alum head" is also used to describe the form of the boulders more generally. "Hemp-fiber" strokes refer to layers of long and thin strokes from the top to bottom of the mountain, while "alum-head" strokes shape the angular, small rocks on the top of the hills.

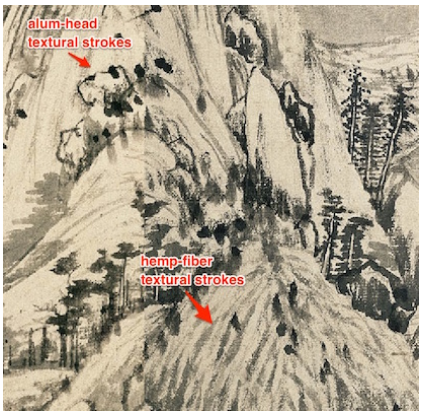


Figure **13.5.3.104**: Diagram of brushstrokes

A place in Chinese art history

While respecting tradition and past masters, Huang's handscroll created a dynamic composition and achieved a vitality that surpassed previous painters. Huang's influence on later generations of literati painters was enormous. In the wider context of Chinese art history, his work is considered a national treasure.

Additional resources:

Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains at the National Palace Museum

Brushstrokes: Styles and Techniques of Chinese Painting from the Asian Art Museum

About Daoism in the Tang and Song Dynasties

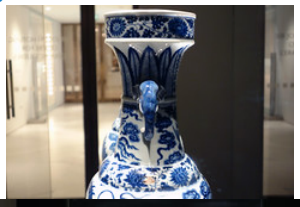
The David Vases

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



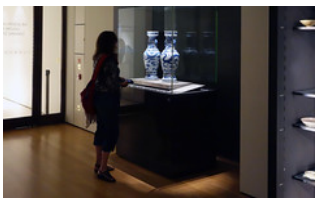
Video **13.5.3.11**: The David Vases, 1351 (Yuan dynasty), porcelain, cobalt and clear glaze, 63.6 x 20.7 cm each, Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, China (British Museum, London)

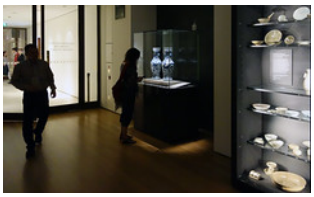
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88697



Figure 13.5.3.105: More Smarthistory images…

Ming dynasty (1368–1644)

A Ritual Ming dish

by JAN STUART, FREER GALLERY OF ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.5.3.12: A conversation with Jan Stuart, Melvin R. Seiden Curator of Chinese Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Steven Zucker in front of Dish with copper-red glaze, Ming dynasty, porcelain with copper-red glaze; on the base, a six-character cobalt-oxide (blue reign mark in a double circle under colorless glaze), c. 1426-35, 4.6 x 22 cm (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment and Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, F2015.2a-b)

Additional resources:

This object at the Freer Gallery of Art

The Forbidden City

by DR. YING-CHEN PENG



Video 13.5.3.13: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.



Figure 13.5.3.106: View of the Tongzi moat surrounding the Forbidden City , Beijing

The Forbidden City is a large precinct of red walls and yellow glazed roof tiles located in the heart of China's capital, Beijing. As its name suggests, the precinct is a micro-city in its own right. Measuring 961 meters in length and 753 meters in width, the Forbidden City is composed of more than 90 palace compounds including 98 buildings and surrounded by a moat as wide as 52 meters.



Figure 13.5.3.107: Aerial view of the Forbidden City (Imperial Palace Museum), Beijing, 15th century and later, Google Earth ©2015 Google

The Forbidden City was the political and ritual center of China for over 500 years. After its completion in 1420, the Forbidden City was home to 24 emperors, their families and servants during the Ming (1368–1644) and the Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. The last occupant (who was also the last emperor of imperial China), Puyi (1906–67), was expelled in 1925 when the precinct was transformed into the Palace Museum. Although it is no longer an imperial precinct, it remains one of the most important cultural heritage sites and the most visited museum in the People's Republic of China, with an average of eighty thousand visitors every day.



Figure 13.5.3.108: One of two enormous bronze Ming Dynasty lions guarding the Gate of Supreme Harmony in the Forbidden City (Imperial Palace Museum)

Construction and layout

The construction of the Forbidden City was the result of a scandalous coup d'état plotted by Zhu Di, the fourth son of the Ming dynasty's founder Zhu Yuanzhang, that made him the Chengzu emperor (his official title) in 1402. In order to solidify his power, the Chengzu emperor moved the capital, as well as his own army, from Nanjing in southeastern China to Beijing and began building a new heart of the empire, the Forbidden City.



Figure 13.5.3.109: Carved, painted dragons, lintel, Forbidden City (Imperial Palace Museum)

The establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1644 did not lessen the Forbidden City's pivotal status, as the Manchu imperial family continued to live and rule there. While no major change has been made since its completion, the precinct has undergone various renovations and minor constructions well into the twentieth-first century. Since the Forbidden City is a ceremonial, ritual and living space, the architects who designed its layout followed the ideal cosmic order in Confucian ideology that had held Chinese social structure together for centuries. This layout ensured that all activities within this micro-city were conducted in the manner appropriate to the participants' social and familial roles. All activities, such as imperial court ceremonies or life-cycle rituals, would take place in sophisticated palaces depending on the events' characteristics. Similarly, the court determined the occupants of the Forbidden City strictly according to their positions in the imperial family.

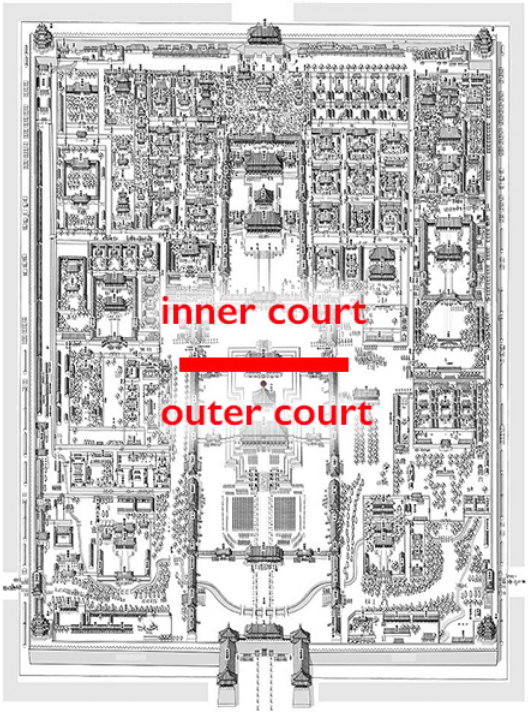


Figure **13.5.3.110**

The architectural style also reflects a sense of hierarchy. Each structure was designed in accordance with the *Treatise on Architectural Methods or State Building Standards* (*Yingzao fashi*), an eleventh-century manual that specified particular designs for buildings of different ranks in Chinese social structure.



Figure **13.5.3.111**: View of the Meridian Gate from outside the Forbidden City (Imperial Palace Museum)

Public and private life

Public and domestic spheres are clearly divided in the Forbidden City. The southern half, or the outer court, contains spectacular palace compounds of supra-human scale. This outer court belonged to the realm of state affairs, and only men had access to its spaces. It included the emperor's formal reception halls, places for religious rituals and state ceremonies, and also the Meridian Gate (Wumen) located at the south end of the central axis that served as the main entrance.



Figure 13.5.3.112: Looking to the Meridian Gate from the north (Imperial Palace Museum) (photo: inkelv112, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Upon passing the Meridian Gate, one immediately enters an immense courtyard paved with white marble stones in front of the Hall of Supreme Harmony (Taihedian). Since the Ming dynasty, officials gathered in front of the Meridian Gate before 3 a.m., waiting for the emperor's reception to start at 5 a.m.



Figure 13.5.3.113: View of the Hall of Supreme Harmony from the south (Imperial Palace Museum)

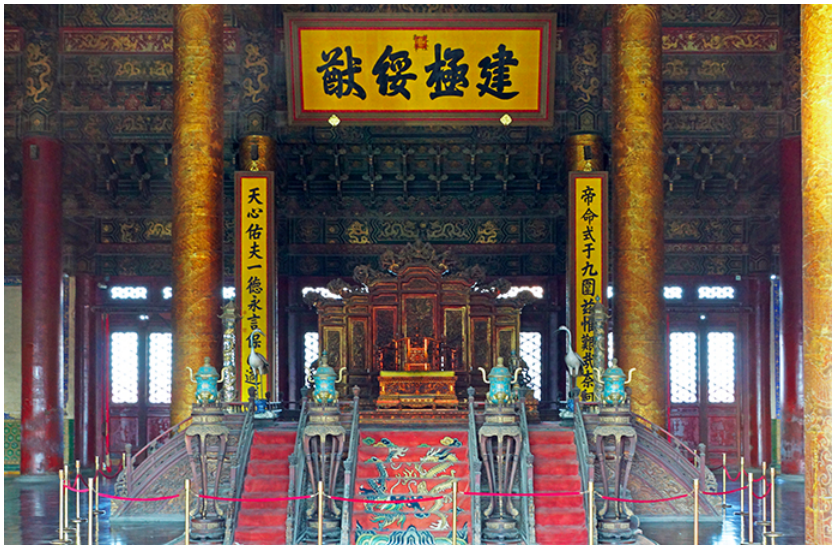


Figure 13.5.3.114: Throne, Hall of Supreme Harmony

While the outer court is reserved for men, the inner court is the domestic space, dedicated to the imperial family. The inner court includes the palaces in the northern part of the Forbidden City. Here, three of the most important palaces align with the city's central axis: the emperor's residence known as the Palace of Heavenly Purity (Qianqinggong) is located to the south while the empress's residence, the Palace of Earthly Tranquility (Kunninggong), is to the north. The Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union (Jiaotaidian), a smaller square building for imperial weddings and familial ceremonies, is sandwiched in between.



Figure 13.5.3.115:

Left: Palace of Earthly Tranquility (Kunninggong)
Center: Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union (Jiaotaidian)
Right: Palace of Heavenly Purity (Qianqinggong)

Although the Palace of Heavenly Purity was a grand palace building symbolizing the emperor's supreme status, it was too large for conducting private activities comfortably. Therefore, after the early 18th century Qing emperor, Yongzheng, moved his residence to the smaller Hall of Mental Cultivation (Yangxindian) to the west of the main axis, the Palace of Heavenly Purity became a space for ceremonial use and all subsequent emperors resided in the Hall of Mental Cultivation.



Figure **13.5.3.116**: Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union (Jiaotaidian)

The residences of the emperor's consorts flank the three major palaces in the inner court. Each side contains six identical, walled palace compounds, forming the shape of K'un "☷," one of the eight trigrams of ancient Chinese philosophy. It is the symbol of mother and earth, and thus is a metaphor for the proper feminine roles the occupants of these palaces should play. Such architectural and philosophical symmetry, however, fundamentally changed when the empress dowager Cixi (1835-1908) renovated the Palace of Eternal Spring (Changchungong) and the Palace of Gathered Elegance (Chuxiugong) in the west part of the inner court for her fortieth and fiftieth birthday in 1874 and 1884, respectively. The renovation transformed the original layout of six palace compounds into four, thereby breaking the shape of the symbolic trigram and implying the loosened control of Chinese patriarchal authority at the time.

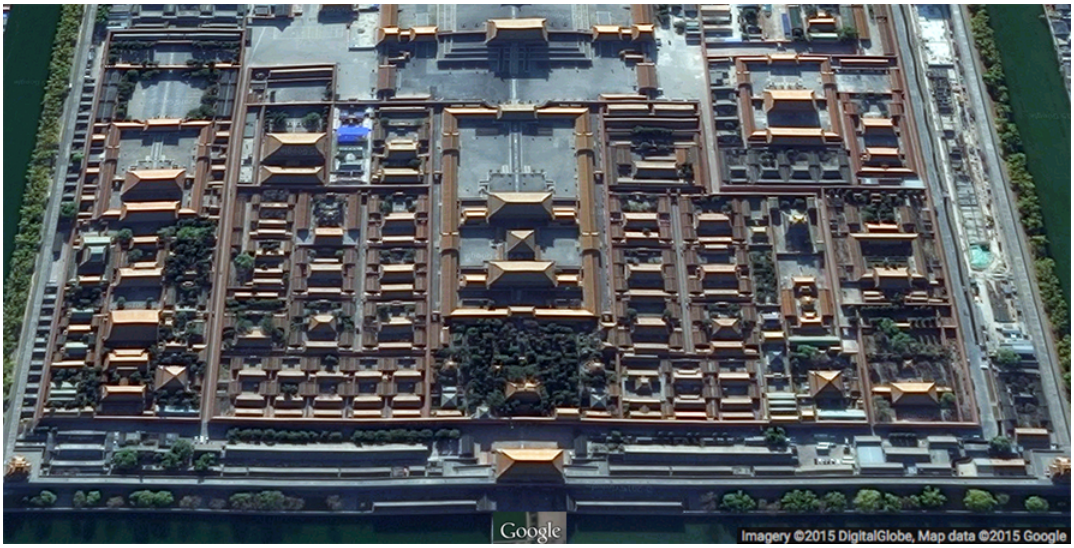


Figure **13.5.3.117**: Aerial view of the north end of the Forbidden City (Imperial Palace Museum) looking south, Google Earth ©2015 Google

The eastern and western sides of the inner court were reserved for the retired emperor and empress dowager. The emperor Qianlong (r. 1735–96) built his post-retirement palace, the Hall of Pleasant Longevity (Leshoutang), in the northeast corner of the Forbidden City. It was the last major construction in the imperial precinct. In addition to these palace compounds for the older generation,

there are also structures for the imperial family's religious activities in the east and west sides of the inner court, such as Buddhist and Daoist temples built during the Ming dynasty. The Manchus preserved most of these structures but also added spaces for their own shamanic beliefs.



Figure **13.5.3.118**: Scholar's Rock, Imperial garden

The Forbidden City now

Today, the Forbidden City is still changing. As a modern museum and an historical site, the museum strikes a balance by maintaining the structures and restoring the interiors of the palace compounds, and in certain instances transforming minor palace buildings and hallways into exhibition galleries for the exquisite artwork of the imperial collections. For many, the Forbidden City is a time capsule for China's past and an educational institute for the public to learn and appreciate the history and beauty of this ancient culture.

Essay by Dr. Ying-chen Peng

Additional resources:

Forbidden City plan

The Palace Museum

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Qing dynasty (1644-1912)

Bada Shanren, *Lotus and Ducks*

by STEPHEN D. ALLEE, FREER GALLERY OF ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

The angry ducks of Bada Shanren.



Video **13.5.3.14**: Bada Shanren 八大山人 (朱耷), *Lotus and Ducks* (colophon by Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩), c. 1696 (Qing dynasty), ink on paper (hanging scroll), image 185 x 95.8 cm (Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution). Speakers: Stephen D. Allee, Associate Curator for Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution and Steven Zucker.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Freer Gallery of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88697



Figure 13.5.3.119: More Smarthistory images…

The European Palaces of the Qianlong Emperor, Beijing

by DR. RACHEL MILLER



Figure 13.5.3.120: Bronze head of a rat, from the fountain of the Hall of the Calm Seas, European Palaces section of the Garden of Eternal Spring, Beijing, 1750s, bronze (photo: Vmenkov, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A controversial auction

In 2009, two eighteenth-century Chinese bronze sculptures — one representing a rat's head and the other a rabbit's — sold at a Christie's auction in Paris for $40.4 million. Soon afterwards, the art world watched, stunned, as the winning bidder, Cai Mingchao, announced at a press conference in Beijing that he had no intention of actually paying for the sculptures. Cai, a consultant for a group that seeks the return of Chinese artifacts, had intentionally sabotaged the auction as an act of patriotic protest. His bids on these bronze sculptures were intended to prevent the international sale of works of art that Cai and many Chinese citizens consider important artifacts of their cultural heritage.

However, when we examine the history of these sculptures' creation and the original context in which they were displayed, the issue becomes more complex. No matter where a person stands in the debate, it is important to acknowledge that these works — rather than being purely Chinese — represent an artistic encounter between East and West, marking a moment in Chinese history when the ruling dynasty was extraordinarily active in the collecting, display, and creation of European and European-style art.

The Garden of Eternal Spring

The rat and rabbit heads were originally created for the Garden of Eternal Spring, an enormous Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) garden northwest of the **Forbidden City** in Beijing, commissioned in the mid-eighteenth century by the Qianlong emperor (Qianlong was the sixth Emperor of the Qing dynasty). It was one of three large imperial gardens — The Garden of Perfect Brightness (Yuanming Yuan), the Garden of Eternal Spring (Changchun Yuan), and the Garden of Elegant Spring (Qichun Yuan). Today, these gardens are collectively referred to as the Yuanming Yuan, despite the fact that they were distinct construction projects.

These gardens are also sometimes called the "Old Summer Palace" in English, which inaccurately implies that this was a place of leisurely summer retreat, secondary in importance to the Forbidden City. In reality, the gardens were the primary residences of the Qing emperors for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Garden of Eternal Spring was begun in 1749 and consisted of hundreds of acres of pavilions, palaces, landscaping, artificial hills, and water features. When one of the few privileged guests who were allowed to view the palaces arrived in the northern section of this vast complex, a surprise awaited. Here, they would

suddenly encounter a sequence of stone buildings done in a hybrid Chinese-European style, known as the Xiyang Lou, or "European Palaces."

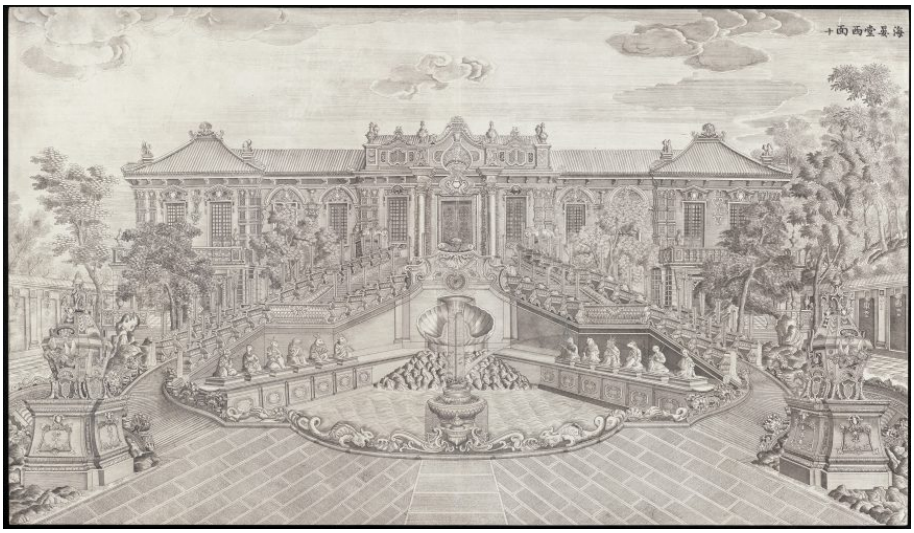


Figure **13.5.3.121**: Yi Lantai, West Façade of the Hall of Calm Seas, copperplate engraving, 1781–86 (photo: **Getty Digital Collections**)

The European Palaces were the result of a collaboration between the Qianlong emperor and a group of European Jesuit missionaries who were working at the Qing court as painters, botanists, mathematicians, and astronomers. The Jesuits are a Roman Catholic religious order founded during the 16th century who had been active as missionaries in China. Christianity had been outlawed during the reign of the Qianlong emperor's father, however, small number of Jesuits remained in China solely as servants to the emperor and subject to his command.

In the 1740s, one of these Jesuits showed the Qianlong emperor engravings of the fountains at **Versailles**, the principal royal residence in eighteenth-century France. Fascinated, the Chinese emperor commissioned an Italian Jesuit painter named Giuseppe Castiglione, known as Lang Shining in China, to oversee the construction of a similar fountain. Eventually this project dramatically expanded from a single fountain to an entire complex of palaces, scenic views, and waterworks. Although the European Palaces are usually attributed to Castiglione alone, he actually collaborated on this project with the prolific Lei family of imperial Chinese architects and with other Jesuits at court, including a hydraulics expert and mathematician named Michel Benoist.

A landscape full of surprises

According to traditional Chinese garden design, a garden should include discrete scenes that are sequentially revealed to the visitor as they traverse the landscape. Each view should contain an unexpected element that would astonish the viewer in its creativity and cleverness. The European Palaces, despite their foreign appearance, are fully in line with this tradition. A wall enclosed the section of the garden where the European palaces were; only the tall roofs of the structures, covered in traditional Chinese ceramic tiles, were visible from the rest of the garden. The viewer would have no reason to suspect that the buildings were unusual until they passed through the gate and suddenly encountered this fantastical vision of Europe.

As visitors traveled through the palace complex, it continuously concealed and revealed surprises. For example, the Aviary, which held the emperor's menagerie of peacocks and exotic birds, appeared to be entirely Chinese in design from the western façade; however, after the visitor exited the Aviary on the eastern side, they would look back over their shoulder to see a curved façade done in an exuberant European Rococo style. It would have appeared to them as if they had entered the building in China and exited in Europe.

Another visual trick was placed at the far eastern end of the European Palaces section. After descending from the Hill of Linear Perspective, the visitor would get on a boat to cross the Square Lake. On the eastern shore of the lake, Castiglione had painted twelve illusionistic scenes using European linear perspective. These paintings were meant to fool the viewer into thinking that an entire European city street had been constructed in the garden.

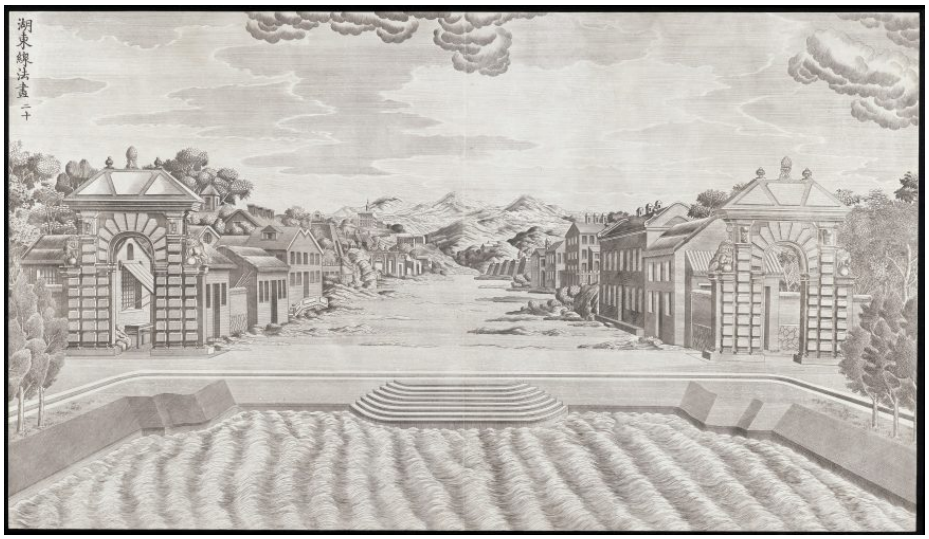


Figure 13.5.3.122: Yi Lantai, Perspective Painting of the Lake to the East, copperplate engraving, 1781–86 (photo: Getty Digital Collections)

Collecting Europe



Figure 13.5.3.123: Designed by François Boucher, woven by the Beauvais Manufactory, The Chinese Fair, tapestry, designed 1742, woven 1743–45 (Minneapolis Institute of Art)

The Qianlong emperor never actually lived in any of the European palaces and neither did any of his consorts, as has sometimes been asserted. Instead, the function of the European palaces was to hold his enormous collections of European and European-style objects. Some of these treasures were given to the emperor as diplomatic gifts by European monarchs, while others were imported from the West or even created in China as imitations of European luxury goods.

For example, the emperor ordered the construction of a new palace, the Distant Waters Observatory, specifically to display a set of Beauvais tapestries gifted to the emperor by King Louis XV of France. Interestingly, these tapestries, designed by François Boucher, depicted imaginary scenes of China. This was a unique situation in which a European artist's vision of Asia was hung in a fantastical European architectural setting commissioned by a Chinese emperor.

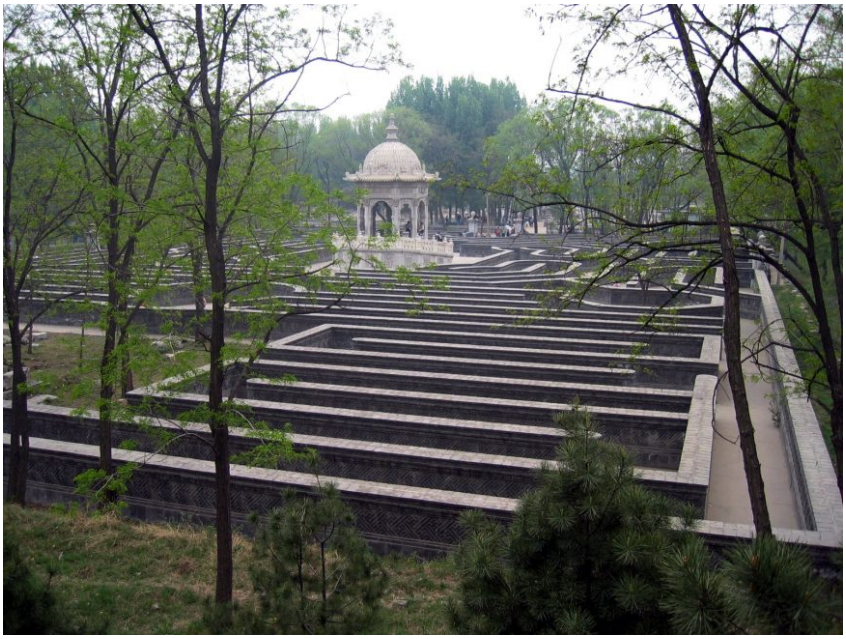


Figure **13.5.3.124**: Reconstructed Maze, original was built between 1747 and 1751 and destroyed in 1860. Yuanming Yuan Park, Beijing (photo: **Rolf Müller,** CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Qianlong emperor also had a particular interest in European technology like clocks and automata. In the garden maze (in Chinese, “The Garden of Ten Thousand Flowers”), the first to be built in China, there was a marble building that housed a collection of bird automata that could sing, as well as a large music box that had been brought from Europe.

Definition: Automata

An automaton is a mechanical device that seemingly moves on its own and mimics the actions of human figures or animals.

The fountains constructed throughout the garden form another collection of European-style machines and are particularly impressive from both an aesthetic and engineering point of view. The fountain in front of the Hall of Calm Seas included an ingenious water clock comprised of sculptures depicting the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac, including the rat and rabbit sculptures auctioned in 2009. Each animal was associated with a particular two-hour period of the day and water would shoot from the animal’s mouth during the appropriate time. At noon each day, water would spout from all of the animals at once. Even though these fountains were constructed using European hydraulics, their imagery was adapted to suit Chinese taste. For example, nude figures commonly decorated fountains in Europe, but were not used in the Garden of Eternal Spring. Instead, the fountains’ iconography referenced Chinese traditions, such as the animals of the zodiac, as well as other mythological stories and Daoist parables.

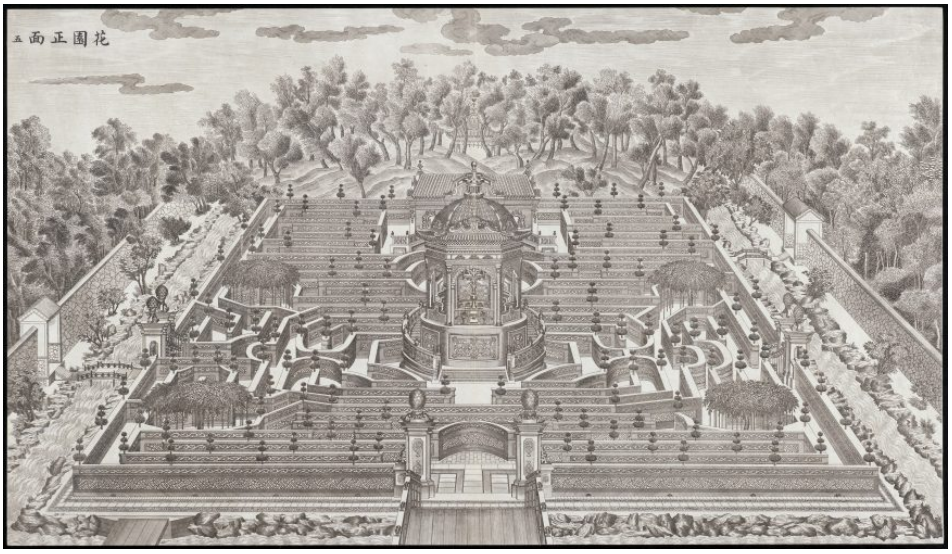


Figure **13.5.3.125**: Yi Lantai, Maze (Garden of Ten Thousand Flowers), copperplate engraving, 1781–86 (photo: **Getty Digital Collections**)

The European Palaces are often interpreted as expressions of the Qianlong emperor's power. Chinese emperors throughout history have viewed themselves as having a mandate to rule everything "under Heaven" (meaning, the entire world). Several scholars have connected this idea to the European palaces, asserting that the appropriation of European architecture and technology in the Garden of Eternal Spring was meant to be seen as a visual demonstration of Qing superiority over Europe and Qianlong's dominion over the known world. However, a recent alternative interpretation proposes that the Qianlong emperor was not interested in literally colonizing Europe. Instead, we should view his European Palaces as a means of "collecting" Europe. The emperor and his rare guests were always aware that the built structures in the garden were a fantasy of Europe conjured up at the emperor's command, demonstrating his mastery over reality itself. [1]

The aftermath

The glory days of the European palaces did not last long. Fortunately, the Qianlong emperor had commissioned Ilantai, a Manchu artist who had trained under Castiglione, to make copperplate engravings of the palaces. Without these engravings, it would be impossible to reconstruct the appearance of the garden, which was looted and badly damaged by British and French troops during the Second Opium War in 1860. In China, the stone ruins of the European palaces now symbolize the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history of the country, a time of domination by external imperial powers. Art collectors and government officials often invoke this history when discussing the need to repatriate objects looted from the imperial gardens of Beijing.



Figure 13.5.3.126: Ai Weiwei, Circle of Animals, Zodiac Heads, 2010, bronze, installation, New York City, May 2-July 15, 2011 (image: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Others, however, remember the European palaces as a place of cross-cultural interaction. Ai Weiwei created Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads in 2010 as a reaction to the 2009 auction of the rat and rabbit head. He reimagined the heads of all twelve zodiac animals from the water clock of the Hall of Calm Seas and has displayed these recreations in public venues all over the world. In interviews, Ai Weiwei has questioned the Chinese narrative about the zodiac heads, recalling the complex multicultural aspects of the Qianlong emperor's commission:

> ***I don't think the zodiac heads are a national treasure. They were designed by an Italian, made by a Frenchman for a Qing-dynasty emperor who was the ruler of China, but the Manchus of the Qing dynasty actually invaded China. So, if we talk about national treasure, what nation are we talking about?"Ai Weiwei: Interview Excerpts" in Ai Weiwei, Circle of Animals, Zodiac Heads, ed. S. Delson (New York: AW Asia, 2011), p. 42***

Notes

[1] Kristina Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

Additional Resources

More videos and resources on this from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, including an interview with Dr. Kristina Kleutghen

Kristina Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

The full set of Yi Lantai's twenty engravings of the European Palaces from Getty Digital Collections

Susan Delson, ed., *Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals* (New York: AW Asia, 2011).

Lillian M. Li, "The Garden of Perfect Brightness" on MIT's Visualizing Cultures – Part 1 (https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/garden_perfect_brightness/index.html) and Part 2 (https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/garden_perfect_brightness_02/ymy2_essay01.html)

Marco Musillo, *The Shining Inheritance: Italian Painters at the Qing Court, 1699-1812* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications 2016).

Richard E. Strassberg, “War and Peace: Four Intercultural Landscapes” in *China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications 2011), pp. 89-137.

Greg M. Thomas, “Yuanming Yuan/Versailles: Intercultural Interactions between Chinese and European Palace Cultures,” *Art History* vol. 32, no. 1 (2009), pp. 115-143.

The People’s Republic of China

The People's Republic of China was established after World War II. At first a strict Communist regime that looked to directly control art production as a mode of propaganda, since the 1980s, China has opened up to more diverse practices.

1949 - present

Liu Chunhua, *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan*

by DR. KRISTEN CHIEM



Figure **13.5.3.127**: Liu Chunhua, *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan*, 1967, oil on canvas

Striding atop a mountain peak wearing a look of determination on his face, *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan* shows a young Mao Zedong (Chinese Communist revolutionary, founding father of the People’s Republic of China, and leader of China from 1949-76) ready to weather any storm. In picturing a moment in Chinese Communist Party history, Liu Chunhua celebrated Chairman Mao (then in his seventies) and his longstanding commitment to Communist Party ideals. Painted in 1967 at the dawn of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, this work uses socialist realism to portray Chairman Mao as a revolutionary leader committed to championing the common people.

Socialist realism and Mao paintings



Figure **13.5.3.128**: Li Keran, *Ten Thousand Crimson Hills*, 1964, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper (collection of the artist’s family, Beijing)

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), artists focused on creating portraits of Mao, or "Mao paintings," which represented Mao's effort to regain his hold after bitter political struggles within the party. With the leadership of Mao's last wife, Jiang Qing, the movement aimed to quell criticisms of Mao in drama, literature, and the visual arts. More broadly, it aimed to correct political fallout from the disasters of the 1950s, especially the widespread famine and deaths that resulted from the Great Leap Forward (an attempt from 1958–61 to rapidly modernize China, transforming it from an agrarian economy into an industrialized, socialist society), and reinvigorate Communist ideology in general. In the years that followed, Mao would lead the country through a decade of violent class struggles aimed at purging traditional customs and capitalism from Chinese society.

In the early years of the Cultural Revolution, artists such as Liu Chunhua turned to a style known as socialist realism for creating portraits of Mao Zedong. Socialist realism was introduced to China in the 1950s in order to address the lives of the working class. Suitable for propaganda, socialist realism aimed for clear, intelligible subjects and emotionally moving themes. Subjects often included peasants, soldiers, and workers—all of whom represented the central concern of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party. Modeled after works in the Soviet Union, paintings in this style were rendered in oil on canvas. They notably departed from Chinese hanging scrolls in ink and paper, such as Li Keran's *Ten Thousand Crimson Hills*, painted in 1964 (left).

Standardized by the Central Propaganda Department, Mao paintings typically pictured the Chinese leader in an idealized fashion, as a luminous presence at the center of the composition. Unlike *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan*, portraits usually depicted Mao among the people, such as strolling through lush fields alongside smiling peasants.

The Anyuan Miners' Strike of 1922

Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan presents a critical moment in Chinese Communist Party history: Mao marching toward the coal mines of Anyuan, Jiangxi province in south-central China, where he was instrumental in organizing a nonviolent strike of thirteen thousand miners and railway workers. Occurring only a year after the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, the Anyuan Miners' Strike of 1922 was a defining moment for the Chinese Communist Party because the miners represented the suffering of the masses at the heart of the revolutionary cause. Many of the miners enlisted as soldiers in the Red Army (the army of the Chinese Communist Party), intent on following the young Mao toward revolution.



Figure **13.5.3.129**: Map showing Anyuan within Jiangxi province in China

Painting nearly half a century after the Anyuan Miners' Strike, Liu Chunhua created *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan* for a national exhibition. Liu Chunhua was a member of the Red Guard, or the group of radical youth whose mission was to attack the "four olds" (customs, habits, culture, and thinking). To create this painting, he studied old photographs of Mao and visited Anyuan to interview workers for visual veracity. Based on his findings, he rendered Mao wearing a traditional Chinese gown rather than Western attire, which is more commonly seen in portraits of Mao created during the Cultural Revolution. The cool color tonalities of *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan* also differ from other Mao paintings, which tended toward warm tones with clear, blue skies, such as Chen Yanning's *Chairman Mao Inspects the Guangdong Countryside* (below). Others often featured vibrant red accents—red being the color of revolution. Instead, Liu Chunhua opted for deep blue and purple hues to capture Mao's determination as he marched to address the plight of those suffering.



Figure **13.5.3.130**: From the painting by Chen Yanning, *Chairman Mao Inspects the Guangdong Countryside*, 1972, oil on canvas, 67 15/16 x 116″ (Sigg Collection)

In *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan*, Liu Chunhua adapted Chinese landscape conventions to a new style and purpose—an evocative portrayal that suggested that Mao was capable of leading the country toward revolution. He pictured his subject emerging atop a mountain with clouds of mist below. In China, landscapes such as this often evoked immortal realms, or extraordinary sites invested with the misty vapors of the mountain. However, a telephone pole is discernable in the lower left corner of the composition, and water cascades from a dam in the right—hints of modernity within the ethereal landscape. With an umbrella tucked beneath one arm and the other hand clenched into a fist, and wearing windswept robes, Mao appears superhuman, yet also practical and charismatic.

As a prominent icon in the Cultural Revolution, *Chairman Mao en Route to Anyuan* celebrated the grassroots nature of revolutionary history and cultivated devotion to Mao during a tumultuous time. As a brilliant example of Chinese Communist Party propaganda, it was reportedly reproduced over 900 million times, and distributed widely in print, sculpture, and other media.

Additional resources:

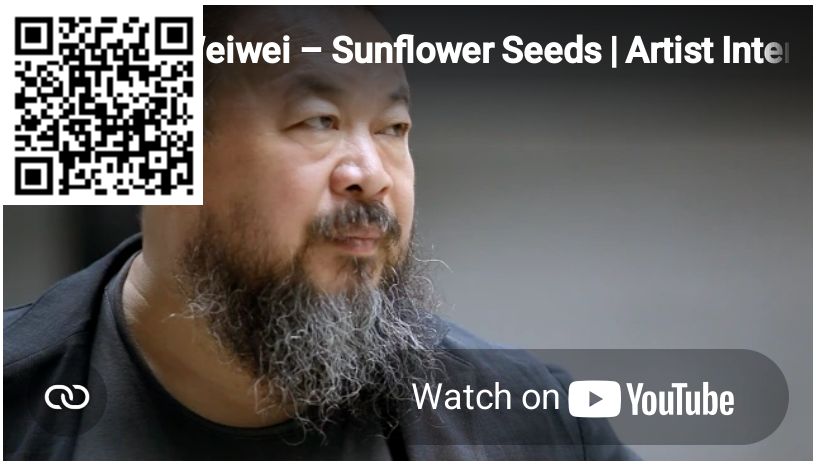
This painting on Art Through Time

Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian, *Art and China's Revolution* (New York: Asia Society, 2008).

Elizabeth J. Perry, *Anyuan Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*

by MEGAN LORRAINE DEBIN



Video 13.5.3.15: Video from Tate

Subversive seeds

Ai Weiwei often uses his art to critique political and economic injustice. This can be seen in work such as his 2010 installation, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)* at Tate Modern, London.



Figure 13.5.3.131: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (photo: Drew Bates, CC BY 2.0)

Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds) consists of more than 100 million tiny, handmade porcelain sunflower seeds, originally weighing in at 150 tons. They filled the enormous Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, an industrial building-turned-contemporary art space. Sunflower seeds evoke a warm personal memory for the artist, who recalls that while he was growing up, even the poorest in China would share sunflower seeds as a treat among friends. The use of sunflower seeds as the basis of his installation was also designed to subvert popular imagery rooted in the artist's childhood. Communist propaganda optimistically depicted leader Mao Zedong as the sun and the citizens of the People's Republic of China as sunflowers, turning toward their chairman. Ai Weiwei reasserts the sunflower seed as a symbol of camaraderie during difficult times.



Figure **13.5.3.132**: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London)

Though each of the 100 million carefully crafted individual seeds can draw the viewer's attention, once arranged together in a neat rectangle, or covering the floor of an entire room, the hyper-realistic seeds create a sense of vastness. In the Tate installation, there was a sense of precision in the arrangement of the seeds, creating visual order and uniformity. The individual seed is lost among the millions, a critique of the conformity and censorship inherent in modern China.



Figure **13.5.3.133**: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London) (photo: **Waldopepper**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Made In China

More than 1,600 artisans worked to make the individual porcelain seeds by hand in Jingdzhen, the city known as the "Porcelain Capital," where artists have been producing pottery for nearly 2000 years. Porcelain, first produced during the Han dynasty in about 200 B.C.E. and later mastered during the Tang dynasty, is made by heating white clay (kaolin) to a temperature over 1200 degrees Celsius. The fusion of the particles within the clay during firing allowed artists to create vessels with thin but strong walls. Porcelain— a symbol of imperial culture in China—was also made for export via the Silk Road and became important to the creation of the idea of China in the West.



Figure 13.5.3.134: Some of the 1,600 highly skilled craftspeople from Jingdezhen hired to create and paint porcelain sunflower seeds

Ai Weiwei's use of porcelain comments on the long history of this prized material while also rejecting the common negative connotations of the modern term "Made in China." Utilizing skilled artisans known for their exquisite craftsmanship to make objects that can only be differentiated one from another upon close inspection, alludes to the important porcelain tradition in Jingdzhen, as well as to the uniformity and diffusion of modern (cheap and fast) labor that is responsible for China's hard-won place in the world economy. *Sunflower Seeds* asks us to examine how our consumption of foreign-made goods affects the lives of others across the globe.

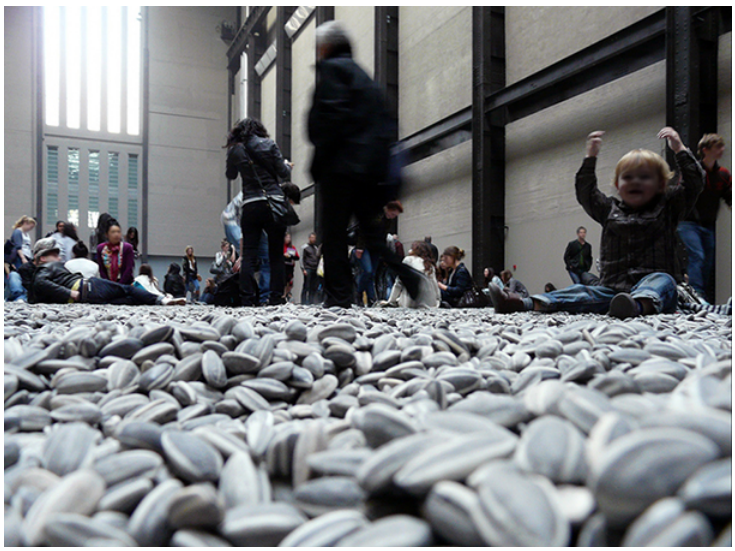


Figure 13.5.3.135: Ai Weiwei, Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds), 2010, one hundred million hand-painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London) (photo: Loz Flowers CC BY-SA 2.0)

How we experience an artwork impacts our perception of the work. In the tradition of participatory contemporary art, *Sunflower Seeds* asks the public to physically interact with the art. Initially, Tate visitors were invited to walk over and lie on the seeds, though the museum, in consultation with the artist, suspended this opportunity about a week into the exhibition because of safety concerns.

Art and activism

Ai Weiwei was arrested at the Beijing Capital International Airport on April 3, 2011 during his Tate exhibition.[1] He was detained for 81 days. The artist, along with many in the international community, asserted that his true offense was his political activism for democracy and human rights. Ai Weiwei had blogged for four years—investigating cover-ups and corruption in the government's handling of a devastating 2008 earthquake in Sichuan and the country's hosting of the Olympics. Ai Weiwei's blog was shut down

in 2009. Since then, he has turned to Twitter and Instagram. During his detention, the international community, including major US art institutions, rallied for his release. Officials eventually released him, charging Ai Weiwei with tax evasion, but his passport was withheld, preventing him from leaving the country for four years. It was returned in 2015.

Ai Weiwei, <em
@Large, 2015, Alcatraz, trace, Legos, (photo: Ian Abbott, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)" height="450" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...ee1f94abaf.jpg
" width="675">

Figure **13.5.3.136**: Ai Weiwei, *@Large*, 2015, Alcatraz, trace, Legos (photo: **Ian Abbott**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Ai Weiwei continues to address issues of human rights in his work. The 2015 exhibit *@Large*, installed on Alcatraz, the former island prison in the San Francisco Bay, comments on surveillance, freedom, and political prisoners by mixing fine and traditional arts with pop culture materials including silk dragon kites and Lego portraits (above).

[1] Andrew Jacobs, "**China Takes Dissident Artist Into Custody,**" *The New York Times*, 4/3/11, A4

Additional resources:

You can follow Ai Weiwei on Instagram and Twitter @aiww

More information on Ai Weiwei's Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower Seeds exhibition at the Tate

Ai Weiwei from art21

Ai Weiwei, *Remembering* and the Politics of Dissent

by JP MCMAHON



Figure **13.5.3.137**: Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

Dangerous Art

All art is political in the sense that all art takes place in the public arena and engages with an already existing ideology. Yet there are times when art becomes dangerously political for both the artist and the viewers who engage with that art. Think of Jacques-Louis David's involvement in the French Revolution—his individual investment in art following the bloodshed —and his imprisonment during the reign of terror. If it were not for certain sympathisers, David may well have ended up another victim of the guillotine. Goya is another example of an artist who fell foul of government power. There are instances in the 20th century when artists have faced down political power directly. Consider the photomontages of John Heartfield. Heartfield risked his life at times to produce covers for the magazine A/Z, which defied both Hitler and the Nazi Party.

Ai Weiwei

The Chinese artist, Ai Weiwei, offers is an important contemporary example. In 2011, Weiwei was arrested in China following a crack down by the government on so-called “political dissidents” (a specific category that the Chinese government uses to classify those who seek to subvert state power) for “alleged economic crimes” against the Chinese state. Weiwei has used his art to address both the corruption of the Chinese communist government and its outright neglect of human rights, particularly in the realm of the freedom of speech and thought. Weiwei has been successful in using the internet (which is severely restricted in China) as a medium for his art. His work is informed by two interconnected strands, his involvement with the Chinese avant-garde group “Stars” (which he helped found in 1978 during his time in the Beijing Film Academy) and the fact that he spent some of his formative years in New York, engaging there with the ideas of conceptual art, in particular the idea of the readymade. Many of the concepts and much of the material that Weiwei uses in his art practice are informed by post-conceptual thinking.



Figure **13.5.3.138**: Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern)

An International Audience



Figure **13.5.3.139**: Handpainted seeds (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern)

Weiwei has exhibited successfully in the West in many major shows, for example, the 48th Venice Biennale in Italy (1999) and Documenta 12 (2007). He also exhibited *Sunflower Seeds* (October, 2010) in the Turbine Hall in the Tate Modern. In this work, Weiwei filled the floor of the huge hall with one hundred million porcelain seeds, each individually hand-painted in the town of Jingdezhen by 1,600 Chinese artisans. Participants were encouraged to walk over the exhibited space (or even roll in the work) in order to experience the ideas of the effect of mass consumption on Chinese industry and 20th-century China’s history of famine and collective work. However, on October 16, 2010, Tate Modern stopped people from walking on the exhibit due to health liability concerns over porcelain dust.

"…a natural disaster is a public matter."

Perhaps the work that contributed most to Weiwei's current imprisonment and the destruction of his studio was his investigation of corruption in the construction of the schools that collapsed during the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China. Like many others, Weiwei investigated how improper material and the contravention of civil engineering laws led to the wholesale destruction of schools (which led in turn to the deaths of thousands of children trapped within them), Weiwei has produced a list of all the victims of the earthquake on his blog. This act is typical Weiwei's use of the internet to communicate information. This information is his "art", in much the way that American artists of the late 1960s used words and ideas as art.



Figure **13.5.3.140**: Visitors entering the Ai Weiwei show *So Sorry* in the Haus der Kunst (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

So Sorry

In his retrospective show *So Sorry* (October 2009 to January 2010, Munich, Germany), Weiwei created the installation *Remembering* on the façade of the Haus der Kunst. It was constructed from nine thousand children's backpacks. They spelled out the sentence "She lived happily for seven years in this world" in Chinese characters (this was a quote from a mother whose child died in the earthquake). Regarding this work, Weiwei said,

> ***The idea to use backpacks came from my visit to Sichuan after the earthquake in May 2008. During the earthquake many schools collapsed. Thousands of young students lost their lives, and you could see bags and study material everywhere. Then you realize individual life, media, and the lives of the students are serving very different purposes. The lives of the students disappeared within the state propaganda, and very soon everybody will forget everything.***

The title of the show referred to the apologies frequently expressed by governments and corporations when their negligence leads to tragedies, such as the collapse of schools during the earthquake. Two months before the opening of this exhibition Weiwei suffered a severe beating from Chinese police in Chengdu in August 2009, where he was trying to testify for Tan Zuoren, a fellow investigator of the shoddy construction and the student casualties. Weiwei underwent emergency brain surgery for internal bleeding as a result of the assault.



Figure **13.5.3.141**: Blue, yellow, and red backpacks (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

On April 3rd 2011, Weiwei was arrested at Beijing's airport while while waiting for a flight to Hong Kong. While his detention is broadly believed to be linked to his criticism of the Chinese government, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that he is "under investigation for alleged economic crimes." Weiwei's participation in the Jasmine Rallies, a series of peaceful protests which took place all over China in February, no doubt contributed to his arrest.

Additional Resources:

*Historical Note on the Haus der Kunst: The Haus der Kunst (designed by Paul Ludwig Troost, "first master builder to the führer") was sited by Adolf Hitler and sought to express Nazi ideology by using stone from German quarries and with its references to the work of Klenze and Schinkel. From its opening in 1937, the Haus der Kunst held exhibitions glorifying the "Blood and Soil" propaganda of the Nazi regime.

Ai Weiwei's TED Video

Tate Modern: Sunflower Seeds Video

Simon Elegant, "Ai Weiwei: Interview Transcript", *Time*, May 12, 2009

Roberta Smith, "12 Heads Do the Talking for a Silenced Artist," *The New York Times*, May 2011

13.5.3: China is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.3: China** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.4: Japan

Japan

From Shinto shrines and Buddhist gardens to the images of Hiroshige and Mariko Mori.

6th century C.E. - present

A beginner's guide

A brief history of the arts of Japan: the Jomon to Heian periods

by DR. SONIA COMAN



Figure **13.5.4.1**: Animated map of Japan in the world (image: adapted from **Wikimedia Commons**)

The arts of Japan are profoundly intertwined with this country's long and complex history. They are also often in dialogue with artistic and cultural developments in other parts of the world. From the earliest aesthetic expressions of the Neolithic period to today's contemporary art—here is a brief survey to get you started.

Please note that while the material is organized chronologically, it highlights major themes and introduces makers and objects recognized as especially influential.

Jōmon period (c. 10,500 – c. 300 B.C.E.): grasping the world, creating a world



Figure **13.5.4.2**: "Flame-rimmed" deep bowl, Middle Jomon period (c. 3500–2500 B.C.E.), earthenware with cord-marked and incised decoration, 13 inches tall (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The Jōmon period is Japan's Neolithic period. People obtained food by gathering, fishing, and hunting and often migrated to cooler or warmer areas as a result of shifts in climate. In Japanese, jōmon means "cord pattern," which refers to the technique of decorating Jōmon-period pottery.

As in most Neolithic cultures around the world, women made pots by hand. They would build vessels from the bottom up from coils of wet clay, mixed with other materials such as mica and crushed shells. The pots were then smoothed both inside and out and decorated with geometric patterns. The decoration was achieved by pressing cords on the malleable surface of the still moist clay body. Pots were left to dry completely before being fired at a low temperature (most likely, just reaching 900 degrees Celsius) in an outdoor fire pit.

Later in the Jōmon period, vessels presented ever more complex decoration, made through shallow incisions into the wet clay, and were even colored with natural pigments. Jōmon-period cord-marked pottery illustrates the remarkable skill and aesthetic sense of the people who produced them, as well as stylistic diversity of wares from different regions.



Figure **13.5.4.3**: "Goggle-eyed"-type dogū figurine, late Jōmon period (1,000- 400 B.C.E.), excavated in Tsugaru city, Aomori prefecture, Japan, clay, H. 34.2 cm (**Tokyo National Museum, Japan**)

Also from the Jōmon period, clay figurines have been found that are known in Japanese as dogū. These typically represent female figures with exaggerated features such as wide or goggled eyes, tiny waists, protruding hips, and sometimes large abdomens suggestive of pregnancy. They are unique to this period, as their production ceased by the 3rd century B.C.E. Their strong association with fertility and mysterious markings "tattooed" onto their clay bodies suggest their potential use in spiritual rituals, perhaps as effigies or images of goddesses. Besides dogū, this period also saw the production of phallic stone objects, which may have been a part of the same fertility rituals and beliefs.

Images of the female body as symbols of fertility are encountered in many parts of the world in the Neolithic period, presenting features unique to the regions and cultures that produced them. The preoccupation with fertility was increasingly twofold, namely the fertility of women and that of the land, as people began cultivating it and transitioning to a settled agricultural society.

Yayoi period (300 B.C.E. – 300 C.E.): influential importations from the Asian continent (I)



Figure **13.5.4.4**: Jar, Yayoi period, c. 100-300 C.E., earthenware with incised decoration, 10 inches tall. (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

People from the Asian continent who were cultivating crops migrated to the Japanese islands. Archaeological evidence suggests that these people gradually absorbed the Jōmon hunter-gatherer population and laid the foundation for a society that cultivated rice in paddy fields, produced bronze and iron tools, and was organized according to a hierarchical social structure. The Yayoi period's name comes from a neighborhood of Tokyo, Japan's capital, where artifacts from the period were first discovered.

Yayoi-period artifacts include ceramics that are stylistically very different from the cord-marked Jōmon-period ceramics. Although the same techniques were used, Yayoi pottery has sharper and cleaner shapes and surfaces, including smooth walls, sometimes covered in slip slip, and bases on which the pots could stand without being suspended by rope. Burnished surfaces, finer incisions, and sturdy constructions that suggest an interest in symmetry are characteristic of Yayoi pots.

Definition: Slip

Slip is a liquid clay mixture used in the production and decoration of pottery.



Figure **13.5.4.5**: Bronze bell (dōtaku 銅鐸), Yayoi period, H. 126.5 cm (Saitama Prefectural History & Folklore Museum, **Google Arts & Culture**)

Some studies suggest that Yayoi pottery is linked to Korean pottery of the time. The Korean influence extends beyond ceramics and can be seen in Yayoi metalwork as well. Notably, Yayoi period clapper-less bronze bells closely resemble much smaller Korean bells that were used to adorn domesticated animals such as horses.

These bells, together with bronze mirrors and occasionally weapons, were buried on hilltops. This practice was seemingly linked to ritual and may have been considered auspicious, perhaps for the fertility of the land in this primarily agricultural society. The magical or ritualistic function of the bells is further suggested by the fact that the bells were not only clapper-less, but they also had walls that were too thin to ring when hit.

The bells became larger later in the Yayoi period, and it is believed that the function of these larger bells was ornamental. Across regions and over the span of a few centuries, such bells varied in size from approximately 10 cm to over 1 meter in height.

Kofun period (ca. 3rd century – 538): influential importations from the Asian continent (II)

The Kofun 古墳 period is so named after the burial mounds of the ruling class. The practice of building tomb mounds of monumental proportions and burying treasures with the deceased arrived from the Asian continent during the 3rd century. Originally unadorned, these tombs became increasingly ornate; by the 6th century, burial chambers had painted decorations. The burial mounds were encircled with stones; hollow clay earthenware, known in Japanese as ***haniwa*** 埴輪, were scattered for protection on the land surrounding the mounds. *Kofun* were typically keyhole-shaped, had several tiers, and were surrounded by moats. The resulting structure amounted to an impressive display of power, advertising the control of the ruling families. The largest *kofun* is the Nintoku mausoleum, measuring 486 meters!



Figure 13.5.4.6: The Nintoku mausoleum in Sakai, Osaka prefecture, Japan, part of the Mozu-Furuichi group of ancient burial sites known as kofun (image: KYODO, Japan Times)

The hollow clay objects, *haniwa*, that were scattered around burial mounds in the Kofun period, have a fascinating history in their own right. Initially simple cylinders, *haniwa* became representational over the centuries, first modeled as houses and animals and ultimately as human figures, typically warriors. The later pieces have been of great help to anthropologists and historians as tokens of the material culture of the Kofun period, offering a glimpse into that society. Whether offerings for the dead or protective barriers meant to guard the tombs, *haniwa* have a strong aesthetic identity that continues to be a source of inspiration for Japanese ceramists.



Figure 13.5.4.7: Haniwa. Left to right: Cylindrical haniwa, 5th century, excavated in Kaga-shi, Ishikawa, earthenware (Tokyo National Museum, image: Steven Zucker); haniwa house, 5th century, excavated in Sakura-shi, Nara, earthenware (Tokyo National Museum); haniwa horse, 5th-6th century, Japan, earthenware, partially restored, H. 94 cm (Tokyo National Museum); haniwa of a female shrine attendant, 6th-7th century, Japan, earthenware, 88.9 cm high (Yale University Art Gallery)



Figure **13.5.4.8**: Shallow cup on tall pedestal foot, Kofun period, 6th century, Japan, Sue ware, unglazed stoneware, H. 15.1 cm (Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1907.525, **Freer Gallery of Art**)

Through gradual consolidation of political power, the Kofun-period Yamato clan became a kingdom with seemingly remarkable control over the population. In the 5th century, its center moved to the historical Kawachi and Izumi provinces (on the territory of present-day Osaka prefecture). It is there that the largest of the *kofun* burial mounds testify to a thriving Yamato society, one that was increasingly more secular and military.

Simultaneously, the potter's wheel was used for the first time in Japan, likely transmitted from Korea, where it had been adopted from China. This new technology was used to produce what is known as Sue ware—typically bluish-gray or charcoal-white footed jars and pitchers that had been fired in sloped-tunnel, single-chamber kilns (*anagama* 穴窯) at temperatures exceeding 1,000 degrees celsius. Like other types of ancient Japanese pottery, Sue ware continues to be a source of inspiration for ceramists, in Japan and beyond.

Asuka period (538-710): the introduction of Buddhism

The Asuka period is Japan's first historical period, different from the prehistoric periods reviewed so far because of the introduction of writing via Korea and China. With the Chinese written language also came standardized measuring systems, currency in the form of coins, and the practice of recording history and current events. Standardization and record-keeping also encouraged the crystallization of a centralized, bureaucratic government, modeled on the Chinese.

All this was imported when a new religion—**Buddhism**—was introduced in Japan, significantly changing Japanese culture and society. Unlike Japan's indigenous "way of the gods" (Shintō), Buddhism had anthropomorphic representations of deities. After the introduction of Buddhism, we see a shift in the visual and material culture of Shintō. If, before Buddhism, Shintō gods were associated with sacred objects such as mirrors and swords (the imperial insignia), after the introduction of the new religion they began to be represented in anthropomorphic images, although such images were hidden in the inner sanctuaries of **Shintō shrines**.

Definition: Shintō

Japan's indigineous religion, Shintō entails belief in the sacred power of animate and inanimate things, as well as ritual practices for the worship of ancestors and gods, known as *kami*.



Figure 13.5.4.9: 5-story pagoda and main hall, Hōryūji, Nara (image: Wikimedia Commons)

By the time Buddhism reached Japan, it had spread from India to China and had undergone several changes in imagery and styles. In Japan, Buddhism profoundly influenced indigenous culture, but it was equally shaped by it, resulting in new forms and modes of expression. The imperial household embarked on major Buddhist commissions. One of the earliest and most spectacular is a temple in Nara, Hōryūji or the "temple of flourishing law." The founding of Hōryūji is attributed to the ailing emperor Yomei, who died before seeing the temple completed; Yomei's consort, empress Suiko, and regent Prince Shōtoku (574-622) carried out the late emperor's wishes. Given the influence of empress Suiko's Buddhist patronage, the Asuka period is also referred to as the Suiko period. **Prince Shōtoku**, too, is celebrated as one of the earliest champions of Buddhism in Japan. In fact, a century after his death, he began to be worshipped as an incarnation of the historical Buddha.



Figure 13.5.4.10: Entasis columns, Chūmon kairō (cloister-gallery of Central Gate), mid-6th century – early 8th century, Hōryūji (image: **Hōryūji**, Nara)

Like the enduring legend and legacy of Prince Shōtoku, Hōryūji has had a long and complex life well past the Asuka Period. With structures that vanished in fires and earthquakes as early as the 7th century to the temple's pagoda that was dismantled and reassembled during World War II, Hōryūji underwent numerous changes and its buildings currently date from the Asuka period to the late 16th century! A complex site with some of the world's oldest wooden structures, Hōryūji exemplifies ancient Japanese architectural techniques and strategies, including the slight midpoint bulging of round columns, which has been compared to the similar practice of entasis in ancient Greek architecture.

Definition: Entasis

Entasis refers to a slightly convex curve in the shaft of a column, used to correct the visual illusion of concavity that occurs with straight shafts.



Figure **13.5.4.11**: Front and back views from before 1917, Kudara Kannon, carved 7th century, camphor wood, Hōryūji, Nara (image adapted from: **Wikimedia Commons**)

Hōryūji houses one of the best known, albeit mysterious, Buddhist representational sculptures of the Asuka period—the so-called Kudara Kannon 百済観音, a slim and life-size image of the **bodhisattva of compassion**, sculpted in camphor wood. The first cultural property in Japan to be designated as a "national treasure," this sculpture first appeared in Japanese records in the 17th century. The "Kudara" in its name, assigned well after the Asuka period, is the Japanese term for Baekje, one of the three historical kingdoms of Korea. The sculpture's astounding grace derives from its slight smile, slim frame, and flowing lines.



Figure **13.5.4.12**: Face and right hand of Great Buddha of Asuka, c. 609, cast bronze, 9 feet high (Asuka temple, image: **Wikimedia Commons**)

Hōryūji was not the only major temple developed in the Asuka period. When the capital was transferred from Asuka to Nara, a temple known as Hōkōji was relocated as well. In its new location, the temple grew significantly under the name of Gangōji. One of the temple's treasures is the *Asuka daibutsu* 飛鳥大仏 or the Great Buddha of Asuka—a devotional image that testifies to the early Buddhist representational tradition in Japan. It is also the oldest of the *daibutsu* or 'great Buddhas'—large sculptural devotional images of the Buddha.

Of the original, cast in 609 and attributed to a sculptor of Korean descent, only the face and the fingers of the right hand remain. These details, however, reveal the Chinese-inspired style of Tori Busshi, with soft features, smooth surfaces, and simple and elegant lines.



Figure **13.5.4.13**: The four Heavenly Kings (Shitennō 四天王), Hakuhō period, painted wood, roughly 133.5 cm high (Hōryūji, image adapted from: **j_butsuzo**)

The late Asuka period, also referred to as the Hakuhō period (late 7th century), saw a momentous transformation of Japanese society, prompted by the so-called Taika reforms. Implemented after the death of Prince Shōtoku, these reforms were modeled on the Chinese system of government and led to a greater centralization of Japanese imperial power. In the realm of Buddhist

sculpture, the Hakuhō period marked a rapid expansion and dissemination of Buddhist imagery across Japan. Full-bodied sculptures, like the four Heavenly Kings at Hōryūji, are more visually assertive than the Kudara Kannon and announce the influence of Tang-dynasty Chinese culture. In that, the Hakuhō period can also be considered the first segment of the subsequent era—the Nara period.

Nara period (710-794): the influence of Tang-dynasty Chinese culture



Figure **13.5.4.14**: Fragment of the *Flower Garland Sutra*, known as *Nigatsudō Burned Sutra* 二月堂焼経, c. 744, silver ink on indigo-dyed paper, 9-3/4 inches high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

China's Tang dynasty concentrated such a diverse range of foreign influences that its artistic and cultural characteristics are often referred to as the "Tang international style." This style had a major impact in Japan as well. Featuring an eclectic and exuberant mix of Central Asian, Persian, Indian, and Southeast Asian motifs, Tang-dynasty visual culture comprised paintings, ceramics, metalware, and textiles.

As these foreign imports were shaping Chinese artistic expression at home, Tang-dynasty artifacts and techniques spread beyond China to neighboring states and along the Silk Road. In Japan, the lavish Tang style was intertwined with Buddhist devotional art.

Elegantly transcribed sutras, calligraphed in silver ink on indigo-dyed paper, exemplify this form of Tang-inspired Nara-period art. The painstaking practice of copying Buddhist sacred texts by using precious materials was deemed to earn spiritual merit for everyone involved, from those preparing the materials to the patrons.

The intermingling of political power and Buddhism in the Nara period found its utmost expression in the building of **the "great eastern temple" or Tōdaiji** and, within this temple, in the casting of the "great Buddha"—a gigantic bronze statue that stood approximately 15 meters/ 16 yards tall and necessitated all available copper in Japan to produce the casting metal.



Figure **13.5.4.15**: The Great Buddha (daibutsu 大仏), 17th century replacement of an 8th century sculpture, Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan (photo: **throgers**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Although the current statue is a later replacement of the Nara-period artifact, it nonetheless suggests the effect of opulence and awe that it must have achieved in its day. Tōdaiji continued to transform and adapt through the centuries, but its identity is still inextricably linked to the grand scale and commensurate ambition of Nara-period culture.

Sociopolitical power was concentrated, during the Nara period, in the new Heijō capital (today's city of Nara). Surrounded by Buddhist temples, the Heijō palace was the primary site of imperial power. It also housed subsidiary ministries, modeled on the Chinese centralized government. Generous spaces characterized the palace complex. These spaces accommodated outdoor celebrations, like those of the New Year, but also served to emphasize a sense of distance and therefore the due reverence to the emperor. The palace complex was designed to separate the realm of the emperor from the outside world. That principle of

separation was reflected within the palace compound itself, where the emperor's living quarters were set apart from government buildings. The architectural configuration of the palace reflected the hierarchical configuration of power.

Little of the palace survives today, as various structures within the complex suffered the vicissitudes of nature and history, while others were transferred to the new capital, Heian, for which the next period was named.

Heian period (794-1185): courtly refinement and poetic expression

The new capital, Heian or Heian-kyō, was the city known today as Kyoto. There, during the Heian period, a lavish culture of refinement and poetic subtlety developed, and it would have a lasting influence on Japanese arts. The approximately four centuries that comprise the Heian period can be divided into three sub-periods, each of which contributed major stylistic developments to this culture of courtly refinement. The sub-periods are known as Jōgan, Fujiwara, and Insei.

The so-called Jōgan sub-period, spanning the reigns of two emperors during the second half of the 9th century, was rich in architectural and sculptural projects, largely spurred by the emergence and development of the two branches of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. Two Buddhist monks, Saichō and Kūkai (also known as Kobo Daishi), traveled to China on study missions and, upon their respective returns to Japan, went on to found the two Japanese schools of esoteric Buddhism: Tendai, established by Saichō, and Shingon, established by Kūkai.

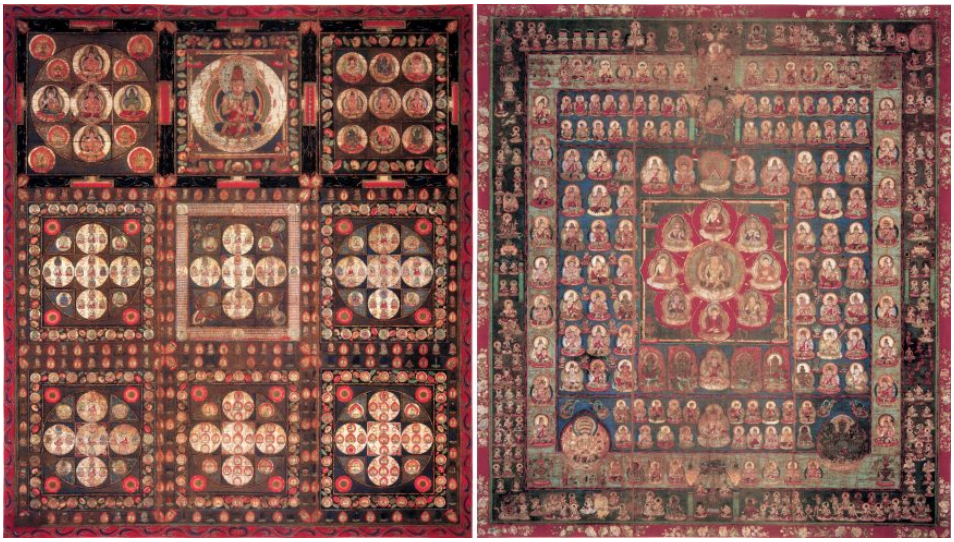


Figure **13.5.4.16**: Ryōkai mandala 両界曼荼羅 ("the mandala of the two worlds"). Left: Kongōkai mandala 金剛界曼荼羅 (diamond realm mandala); right: Taizōkai mandala 胎蔵界曼荼羅 (womb realm mandala), 9th century, color on silk, 183 x 154 cm (Tōji, Kyoto, image: adapted from **Wikimedia Commons**)



Figure **13.5.4.17**: In Esoteric Buddhist ritual, the Womb realm mandala is hung on the East wall, while the Diamond realm mandala is hung on the West wall. The mandalas face each other.

Among the many ideas and objects that they had brought back from China was the Mandala of the Two Worlds, a pair of mandalas that represent the central devotional image of Japan's schools of esoteric Buddhism. Comprised of the "Womb World Mandala" (mandala of principle) and the "Diamond World Mandala" (mandala of wisdom), the Mandala of the Two Worlds was first assembled as a pair by Kūkai's teacher in China. One such pair, still housed in Kūkai's temple in Kyoto (Tōji, the "eastern temple") represented a blueprint for countless mandalas made in Japan over the centuries.

Definition: Mandalas

Mandalas are diagrams of the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

It is believed that the consequential trip to China of Saichō and Kūkai was enabled by a member of the Fujiwara, the family that gives the name of one of the Heian sub-periods. The influence of the Fujiwara clan was paramount in the Japanese political and artistic world of the 9th and 10th centuries. Their power was bolstered by the ever-growing shōen system and ensured by their control of the imperial line, as Fujiwara daughters were married to imperial heirs.

Definition: Shōen system

Shōen were tax-exempt private estates that undermined state control.



Figure **13.5.4.18**: Phoenix Hall/ Hōōdō 鳳凰堂 (Byōdō-in, Uji, Japan, image: **Kansai Odyssey**)



Figure **13.5.4.19**: Phoenix statue on roof of Phoenix Hall, replaced in 1968 (image: **Byōdō-in**)

One of the only surviving structures from the Fujiwara period, the Phoenix Hall of the Byōdō-in (a Buddhist temple in Uji, outside Kyoto) is one of Japan's most valuable cultural assets, with a fascinating, multi-layered story. The Phoenix Hall derives its name from the statues of phoenixes—auspicious mythological birds in East Asian cultures—on its roof.

Completed in 1053, the Phoenix Hall was sponsored by a member of the Fujiwara family—Fujiwara no Yorimichi—a pious believer in yet another type of Buddhism, known as Pure Land. This occurred at a time when many imperial villas like the Byōdō-in were converted into Buddhist temples. Having spread to Japan through the efforts of the monk Hōnen, the Pure Land School of Buddhism taught that enlightenment could be achieved by invoking the name of Amida, the Buddha of infinite light. Practitioners engage in the ritualistic invocation of Amida's name—the *nenbutsu* 念仏—hoping to be reborn in Amida's Pure Land, or the Western Paradise, where they can continue their journey towards enlightenment undisturbed.



Figure **13.5.4.19**: Jōchō, Amida, 1053, gilded wood (Byōdō-in, Uji, Japan, image: **Byōdō-in**)

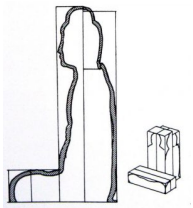


Figure **13.5.4.20**: Yosegi-zukuri 寄木造 technique. Different parts of the sculpture are independently carved from multiple wood blocks, then joined (image adapted from: **kanagawa-bunkaken**)

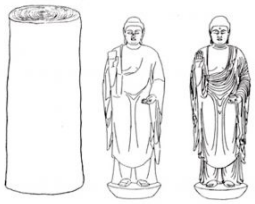


Figure **13.5.4.21**: Ichiboku-zukuri 一本造 technique. Left to right: block of wood; sculpture carved in rough form out of the wood block; fine details are further carved (image adapted from: **Nara National Museum**)

The Amida sculpture in the Phoenix Hall at Byōdō-in is the only work still extant by Jōchō, an influential sculptor who was awarded remarkable distinctions, worked on various commissions from the Fujiwara family, and organized fellow sculptors into a guild. Jōchō's Amida at Byōdō-in reflects the sculptor's *yosegi-zukuri* 寄木造 technique, in which the sculpture is formed from multiple joined pieces of wood. This technique was different from the *ichiboku-zukuri* 一本造 technique, according to which the sculpture is carved out of a single block of wood.

During the Heian period, the style known as *yamato-e* (大和絵 or 倭絵) is born. Understood as "Japanese" as opposed to "Chinese" or otherwise "foreign," *yamato-e* encompasses a wide range of technical and formal characteristics but refers to specific formats—folding screens (*byōbu* 屏風) and room partitions (*shōji* 障子)—and specific choices of subject matter—landscapes with recognizably Japanese features and illustrations of Japanese poetry, history, mythology, and folklore.

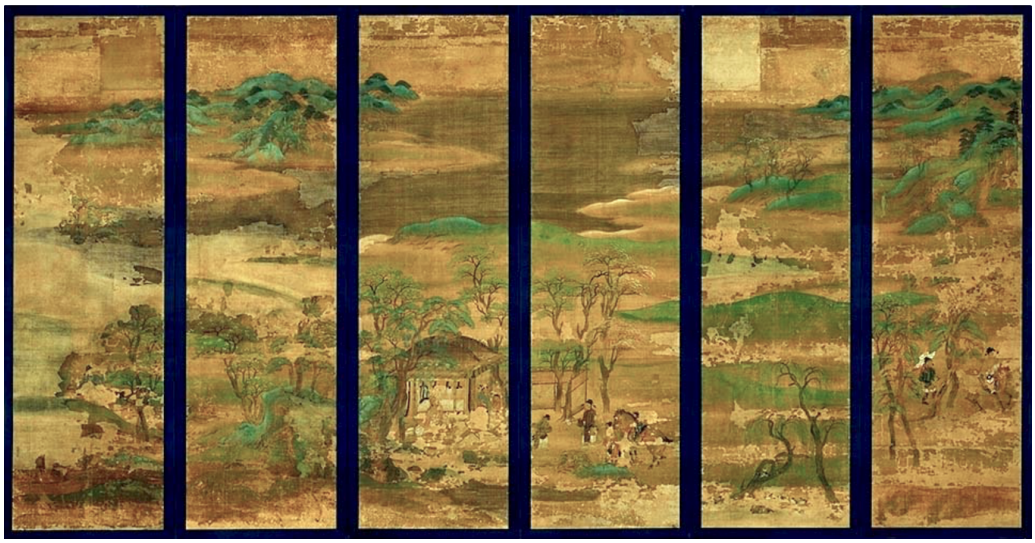


Figure **13.5.4.22**: One of the earliest examples of Heian-period *yamato-e* landscape painting. *Senzui byōbu* 山水屏風 (lit. “folding screen(s) with (imagery of) mountains and waters), six-fold screen, 11th century, color on silk, 146.4 x 42.7 cm, designated National Treasure (**Kyoto National Museum**)



Figure **13.5.4.23**: Detached segment of illustrated scroll of the *Tale of Genji*, 12th century, opaque colors on paper (**Tokyo National Museum**)

A favorite subject for late-Heian-period *yamato-e* was the ***Tale of Genji*** (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語), written in the first years of the 11th century and attributed to a lady-in-waiting at the imperial court, Murasaki Shikibu. A complex novel that focuses on the romantic interests and entanglements of the prince Genji and his entourage, the *Tale* also provides a fascinating entryway into Heian-period court life, complete with the aesthetic principles and practices that resided at its core.

The earliest illustrations of the *Tale* came in **handscroll format**. Surviving fragments exemplify the *yamato-e* mode of narrative painting: illustrations by episode interspersed with passages of text; roofless buildings, multiple viewpoints (typically both frontal and from above), and schematic renditions of faces (*hikime kagihana* 引目鉤鼻, literally translated as “drawn-line eyes, hook-shaped nose.”)

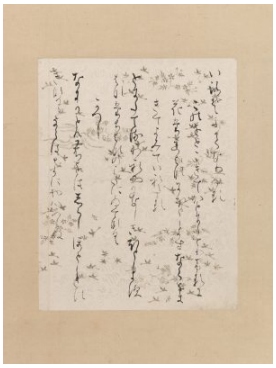


Figure **13.5.4.24**: “Lady Ise Collection”, poetry calligraphy, early 12th century, book page mounted as hanging scroll, ink on decorated paper (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

A brief review of the Heian period cannot be complete without mention of the development of Japanese poetry, *waka* in particular. *Waka* was an integral part of the *Tale of Genji*, and Murasaki Shikibu came to be known as one of the 6 immortal poets (all of whom were from the Heian period).

Definition: Waka

Waka are 5-line poems that speak to the confluence of human emotions and observations about the natural world, divided into 2 sections, namely a 2-line part responding to a 3-line part.

Permeating the spirit of Heian-period Japanese poetry and the imagery it inspired was a heightened sense of refinement, expressed in elegant verse, stylized visual motifs, precious materials, and embellished surfaces.

The Insei rule—the third and last of the Heian sub-periods —refers, literally, to the imperial practice of ruling from within a (monastery) compound. During Insei, cloistered emperors had a higher degree of political control. It was during this period that a sense of aesthetic and ethical congruence developed, according to which the beautiful and the good are intrinsically interconnected.

Definition: Cloistered emperors

Cloistered emperors retired and counterbalanced the power of the Fujiwara regents from the quarters of a Buddhist monastery, while their chosen successors fulfilled official duties.

Additional resources

JAANUS, an online dictionary of terms of Japanese arts and architecture

e-Museum, database of artifacts designated in Japan as national treasures and important cultural properties

On Japan in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Richard Bowring, Peter Kornicki, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

A brief history of the arts of Japan: the Kamakura to Azuchi-Momoyama periods

by DR. SONIA COMAN

Kamakura period (1185-1333): new aesthetic directions

The Insei rule gave way to an extra-imperial, although imperially sanctioned, military government, known in Japanese as *bakufu*. Military leaders—called *shōguns*—first came from the Minamoto family (whose headquarters in Kamakura gave the name to the period), then power concentrated in the (related) Hōjō family. Eventually, the Minamoto and Hōjō shōguns lost their respective control to internal struggles, the pressure of other clans, and an economy bankrupted by coastline fortifications undertaken in response to two (thwarted) Mongol and Korean invasions.

This binary system of government, comprising the shōgun's rule and the (nominal) rule of the emperor, significantly contributed to a shift in aesthetic interests and artistic expression. The taste of the new military leaders was different from the aesthetic refinement that dominated Heian-period court culture. They embraced instead a sense of honesty in representation and sought works that emanated robust energy. This new development toward life-likeness and a form of idealized realism is particularly evident in portraiture, both two-dimensional and sculptural.



Figure **13.5.4.25**: Left: Kamakura-period portrait of a revered monk (Portrait of Jion Daishi, 14th century, ink and color on silk, **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). Right: Heian-period portrayal of courtier (Segment of illustrated scroll of the Tale of Genji, 12th century, opaque colors on paper, Tokyo National Museum). Note the difference in how the faces are depicted.

More detailed portraits of lay and religious leaders contrasted with the *hikime kagihana* (a line for the eye, a hook for the nose) practice of the Heian period, while narrative handscrolls differed from Heian-period Genji-themed pictures in their intricately detailed depictions of historical events. There is no better example than the episode of the **"Night Attack on the Sanjō Palace" from the *Scroll of Heiji Era Events***; here, the visual richness resulting from the imagination of the scroll's painter(s) makes the depiction appear brutally frank and viscerally impactful.



Figure **13.5.4.26**: "Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace" (detail), *Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era* (*Heiji monogatari emaki*), second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Figure **13.5.4.27**: Anonymous sculptor, portrait of Buddhist monk Chōgen, 1206, polychrome wood (Tōdaiji, image: **Wikimedia Commons**)



Figure 13.5.4.28: Unkei, Muchaku (Asanga), c. 1208-1212, polychrome wood (Kōfukuji, Nara, image: Sutori)

In sculpture, portrayals of revered monks reach an unprecedented degree of realism, whether modeled on the depicted figures or simply imagined. Sometimes the statues would have **rock-crystal inlaid eyes**, which heightened the immediacy of the figure's presence.

The sculptor Unkei and his successors, especially Jōkei, created Buddhist sculptures, carved from multiple blocks of wood, whose facial and bodily features expressed not only an interest in life-likeness, but also a sense of monumentality, sheer energy, and visceral force.

During the Kamakura period, the confluence or syncretism of Buddhism and the indigenous Shintō deepened. Paintings like the 14th-century Kumano shrine mandala contain representations of both Buddhist and Shintō deities, divided into registers that illustrate the fusion of the two world-views against the backdrop of famous sacred sites of Japan.

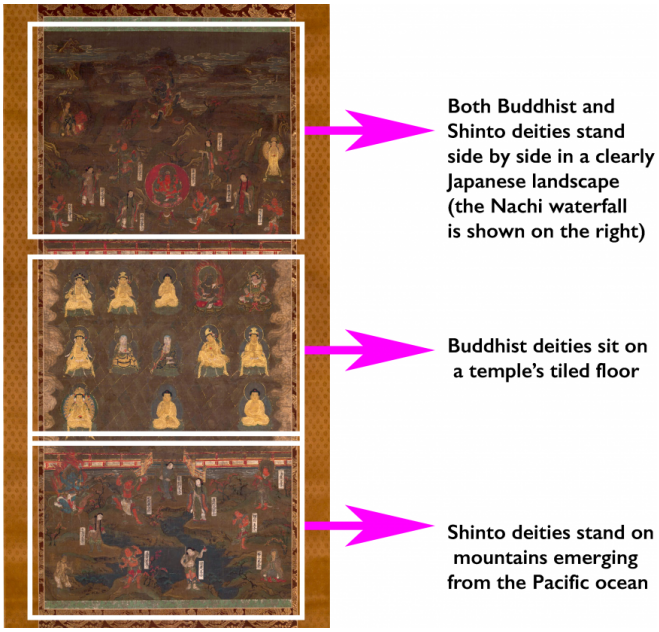


Figure 13.5.4.29: Kumano Shrine Mandala 熊野曼荼羅圖 (annotated), early 14th century, hanging scroll, ink, color, and gold on silk, image 131.9 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Nanbokuchō (1333 – 1392) and Muromachi (1392 – 1573) periods: Zen principles, ink painting, and elegant beauty

The Muromachi period, coinciding with the rule of Ashikaga shōguns, was one of the most turbulent and violent in Japanese history. It started with the Nanbokuchō ("the period of the southern and northern courts"), during which political power was split between the Ashikaga-controlled "northern" court and the "southern" and short-lived court of emperor Go-Daigo. The Muromachi period also included the Sengoku ("the age of the country at war"), a period of warfare and chaos in the aftermath of the Ōnin war (1467-1477), triggered by rivalry between provincial warlords.



Figure **13.5.4.30**: Zen Buddhist temple Rokuonji, commonly known as Kinkakuji/ Golden Pavilion, originally a villa, first built 1397, reconstructed 1955 (Kyoto, image: **Foto Captor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Two of the Ashikaga shōguns, Yoshimitsu (14th century) and Yoshimasa (15th century), are associated with the Kitayama and Higashiyama cultures, respectively—two sub-periods of cultural efflorescence that nurtured important developments in Japanese arts across mediums. Kitayama culture, so named after an area north of Kyoto where Ashikaga Yoshimitsu had a golden pavilion—Kinkakuji 金閣寺—built for his retirement, is known for the emergence of Noh and the increased influence of Zen Buddhism and Chinese ink painting.

Definition: Noh

Noh is a type of slow and ritualized dramatic performance with roots in Chinese dramatic arts and infused with Buddhist ideals.

Art coming from contemporaneous Ming-dynasty China as well older Chinese art—dating from the Song and Yuan dynasties, such as the works of Muqi (Mokkei 牧谿 in Japanese)—deeply influenced Japanese arts, especially the emerging local tradition of ink landscape painting.



Figure **13.5.4.31**: Muqi (active 13th century), *Kannon framed by Crane and Gibbons*, three hanging scrolls, ink and light color on silk, 174.2 cm x 98.8 cm (Kannon). Japanese artists like Hasegawa Tōhaku, who traced their stylistic roots to Sesshū, had opportunities to study these paintings at a Buddhist temple in Kyoto where they have been housed for centuries (Daitokuji)

The most influential Japanese ink master, the 15th-century painter and Zen monk **Sesshū Tōyō** combined, in his works, Zen principles and lessons learned from **Song-dynasty Chinese ink painting**—most notably a double sense of austerity and immediacy, highly admired by the Ashikaga shōguns and the samurai class who embraced Zen Buddhism.



Figure **13.5.4.32**: Sesshū, *Splashed-Ink Landscape* (or *Broken-Ink Landscape*, *haboku sansui zu*破墨山水図), 1495, ink on paper, 148.6 × 32.7 cm (full scroll) (Tokyo National Museum, image: **Wikimedia Commons**)

Sesshū was a celebrated artist in his own lifetime and continued to be revered as a model by later generations of painters. He became a Zen Buddhist monk at a young age and his master taught him both about Zen and about Chinese ink painting. To perfect his understanding of both, Sesshū traveled to China, where he was honored as a distinguished guest. It is believed that he painted in both palatial and monastic contexts. Upon his return to Japan, he laid the foundation for a new era of Japanese ink painting that straddled religious and lay patronage and combined Chinese and Japanese stylistic elements.

Over the centuries, painters emulated Sesshū's style, especially his "splashed ink" or "broken ink" technique, and its roots in the **literati tradition**, some even affixing the painter's seal to their works, all in an attempt to follow into the footsteps of a revered artist and to attract patrons. The Unkoku school strategically considered its painters to be in the direct lineage of Sesshū. The Hasegawa school similarly traced its stylistic genealogy to Sesshū. These two schools are just two of many examples of Japanese artists embracing a stylistic lineage, whether real or construed, leading back to Sesshū or another master. Legitimizing genealogies are a hallmark of Japanese art history.

Definition: "Splashed ink" or "broken ink" technique

In the "splashed ink" or "broken ink" technique, ink is spattered from a brush or directly from the hand to render texture and create a sense of volume.

The advancement of ink painting under the influence of Sesshū is part and parcel of the second Ashikaga-patronized sociocultural sub-period—the so-called Higashiyama culture, named after an area east of Kyoto, where the shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa had a silver pavilion—Ginkakuji 銀閣寺—built for his retirement.

The Higashiyama culture entailed programmatic patronage of the arts. During this period, the Kanō school of painting is established and its founder, Masanobu, is appointed official shogunal painter in the late 15th century. At this early stage, Kanō school painting is particularly indebted to Chinese ink painting and the Chinese bird-and-flower tradition. Masanobu's son, Kanō Motonobu, widened the school's painting repertoire by introducing color and indigenous motifs and thereby laid the foundation for an appealing synthesis of Chinese and Japanese elements.



Figure **13.5.4.33**: Kano Motonobu, *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*, 16th century, pair of folding screens, ink, color, and gold on paper, 162.4 × 360.2 cm each (**Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum**, Kobe)

The imperial court had its own favored line of painters, who worked in the *yamato-e* tradition and often specialized in pictures drawn from the *Tale of Genji*. (Both *yamato-e* and the *Tale of Genji* are described in the section on Heian-period art.) These painters are known as the Tosa school; the earliest mention of a painter named Tosa dates from the early 15th century and refers to a painter who was also the governor of the Tosa province. Contemporaneous with the beginnings of the Kanō school was **Tosa Mitsunobu**, who expanded his school's repertoire much like Kanō Motonobu did for his school, except in opposite directions: while the Kanō artist added elements of traditional Japanese painting, the Tosa artist began to incorporate elements of Chinese painting. In this sense, the two schools created separate versions of a Chinese-Japanese stylistic synthesis, with the Tosa relying more heavily on the Japanese tradition and the Kanō, on the Chinese.



Figure **13.5.4.34**: Storage jar, 14th-15th century, stoneware with natural ash glaze, Shigaraki, 46.7 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

At the same time, the tea ceremony (*chanoyū* 茶の湯) emerged as a ritualized form of preparing and enjoying powdered green tea. For this ritual, domestic ash-glazed stoneware vessels, coiled by hand and fired in wood-burning kilns, began to be favored for their austere elegance or sense of *sabi* 寂—an important Japanese aesthetic concept that stands for seeking beauty in what is simple, solitary, and withered.

These different art forms and mediums—painting, ceramics, dramatic performances, collaborative poetry-writing parties, and tea rituals—converged in shogunal residences like the Golden and Silver Pavilions and especially in the decor of these residences, governed by the aesthetic principle of *fūryū* 風流—another enduring aesthetic notion in Japan, referring to a refined taste that favors rarified elegance and sensual beauty.

Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573-1615): palatial opulence, bold expression, and the beauty of the imperfect



Figure **13.5.4.35**: Reconstruction of main keep of Azuchi Castle (Ise Azuchi-Momoyama Bunka Mura, image: **Wikimedia Commons**)

The Azuchi-Momoyama period gets its name from the opulent residences of two warlords who attempted to unify Japan at the end of the Sengoku ("warring states") era, namely Oda Nobunaga's Azuchi Castle and Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Fushimi or Momoyama Castle. Both castles were not only martial structures for strategic warfare and defense, but also luxurious mansions meant to impress and intimidate political rivals. The architectural style of these residences derived from that of the pavilions built by Ashikaga shōguns during the previous historical period. Also, both castles' locations were carefully selected for their optimal proximity to the capital—Nobunaga's castle was built just outside of Kyoto on the shores of lake Biwa, while Hideyoshi's was in Kyoto itself, in the southeastern ward of Fushimi.

That the two castles were built only 20 years apart reveals the rapid succession of consequential political events that defined the Momoyama period: Oda Nobunaga rose to power starting in 1560 and by 1582, when he was betrayed by his own retainers, he had managed to gain control of most of Japan's main island of Honshū.

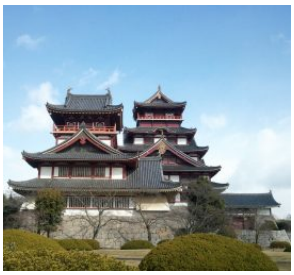


Figure **13.5.4.36**: Fushimi-Momoyama castle, built 1594, rebuilt 1964 (Fushimi Ward, Kyoto, image: **Wikimedia Commons**)

Nobunaga's warrior, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, succeeded him and used his strategic thinking and negotiation skills to continue the efforts of unification, besides twice invading Korea (in 1592 and 1597). He was succeeded by another former retainer of Oda Nobunaga, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who managed to secure unprecedented power in 1600, winning the most important of Japanese feudal battles, that of Sekigahara.

Only three years later, Tokugawa Ieyasu was appointed shōgun by the emperor and spent the remainder of his years consolidating the Tokugawa shōgunate, which would become a 250-year rule of relative peace and prosperity. Only forty years had passed from Nobunaga's ascension to power to Ieyasu's appointment as shōgun, but these were years filled with momentous change.

Like other opulent residences of its time, the Azuchi castle comprised numerous buildings in the *shoin* 書院 architectural style, developed in the Momoyama period. This style entailed a main area flanked by aisles, wall-to-wall tatami-mat flooring, square pillars, and various types of sliding doors and walls that partitioned and reconfigured space. *Shoin* also featured an alcove in the reception room, known as *tokonoma*, and elements developed in the Muromachi period for shogunal residences such as staggered shelves and a built-in desk.

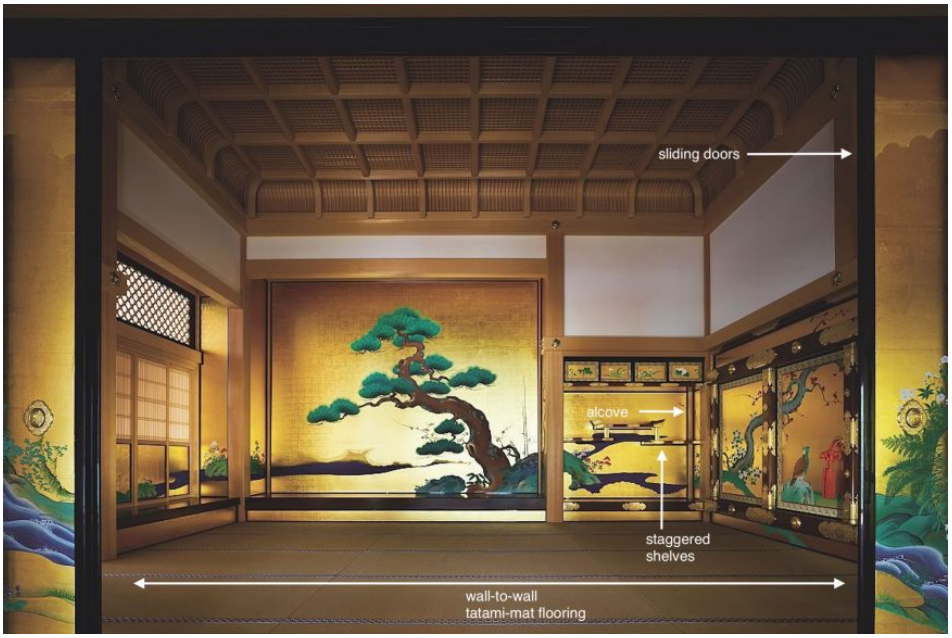


Figure **13.5.4.37**: Jodan-no-ma (feudal lord's audience chamber), Honmaru Palace, Nagoya Castle, first built 1615 for Tokugawa Ieyasu's son, reconstructed 2009-18 (image adapted from: **japan-guide**)



Figure **13.5.4.38**: Kano Eitoku, *Chinese lions*, 16th century, six-fold screen, color and gold on paper, 223.6×451.8 (**Sannomaru, Imperial Household Agency**, Japan)

In addition to displaying the power of their owners, Nobunaga's and Hideyoshi's castles featured the bold and expressive art that characterized the Momoyama period, perhaps mirroring the energy and courage of the era's military leaders.

Nobunaga's Azuchi castle was adorned with the highly expressive paintings of Kanō Eitoku, the grandson of Motonobu, the Kanō painter who established the synthetic Chinese-Japanese aesthetic of the shōgun-patronized school. The very few surviving paintings of Eitoku exemplify this painter's innovative approach to painting, characterized by dynamic compositions, bold and expressive brushwork, oversized animals, and imagery drawn from nature but set against an opulent golden background that would shimmer in the relatively dark interiors of the warlords' residences. It can be said that Eitoku's style matched the power that the painter's patrons had and wished to put on display.



Figure **13.5.4.39**: Hasegawa Tōhaku, *Pine trees*, 16th century, ink on paper, pair of six-fold screens, 156.8 x 356 cm (**Tokyo National Museum**)

A rival of the Kanō school emerged in the person of Hasegawa Tōhaku, who may have studied both with Kanō painters and with a pupil of Muromachi-period ink master Sesshū. Tōhaku eventually claimed to be a descendant of Sesshū and developed a bold and highly expressive style, working typically in monochrome ink. His ties to influential tea masters and Zen teachers helped him secure important commissions. Another artist who received major commissions, alongside Kanō Eitoku and Hasegawa Tōhaku, was Kaihō Yūshō, whose military experience and Zen Buddhist training influenced his unique brand of highly charged compositions combining dramatic ink washes and unusually long brushstrokes.



Figure **13.5.4.40**: Kaihō Yūshō, *Dragons and clouds*, 1599, ink on paper (Ken'ninji, Kyoto, image: **Japan Times**)



Figure **13.5.4.41**: Clog-shaped tea bowl with plum-blossom motifs and geometric patterns, early 17th century, stoneware with iron-black glaze, Mino ware, black Oribe type, 7.6 x 14.3 cm, diameter of foot 5.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

At the intersection of impressive palatial architecture and powerful ink paintings was another art form, nascent in the Muromachi period—the tea ceremony or *chanoyu* 茶の湯. In the second half of the 16th century, the tea master Sen no Rikyū revolutionized the practice of tea by modeling it on *wabi*, an aesthetic concept closely related to that of *sabi*. *Wabi* refers to finding beauty in simple, even humble things. Embracing the spirit of *wabi* and *sabi*, a disciple of Sen no Rikyū, Furuta Oribe, actively supported a new type of local ceramics that became so intertwined with Oribe's style and efforts that they came to be known as Oribe ware. These new ceramics were radically different in a number of ways. First, they were locally produced and became popular enough to compete with Chinese ceramics in the aesthetic hierarchies of tea masters. Second, they are characterized by a distinctive practice of intentionally distorting the shapes of the vessels in response to the *wabi* aesthetic that valued the imperfect.

Definition: Chanoyu 茶の湯

Chanoyu refers to the rituals surrounding the preparation and enjoyment of powdered green tea or matcha.

Definition: Sabi

Sabi is an important Japanese aesthetic concept that stands for seeking beauty in what is simple, solitary, and withered.

The Momoyama period is also remembered for intensified contact with other cultures. Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch ships landed in the Southern island of Kyushu and brought to Japan previously unknown markets, objects, and concepts; firearms, for example, were introduced by the Portuguese as early as 1543. International trade and the spread of Christianity were regarded with suspicion and therefore short-lived, culminating in the self-isolation policy instituted by the Tokugawa. However, trade continued with the Chinese and the Dutch, and a small number of Christians continued to practice in secret.



Figure **13.5.4.42**: Nanban folding screen (one of a pair), *Arrival of the Europeans*, first quarter of the 17th century, ink, color, and gold on paper, 105.1 × 260.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Despite its brevity and limitations, the late 16th-century encounter with Europeans had a lasting influence. In the port of Nagasaki, Japanese artists were able to observe the foreign visitors' dress, manners, and habits, and a new painting genre emerged, the so-called *nanban* (literally, "Southern barbarians," the name given in Japan to the Europeans who arrived from India via a Southern sea route). *Nanban* paintings depict not only European priests and traders, but also Goanese sailors, who traveled with the merchants and missionaries, and even Caucasian women, although there were no women among those who landed in Japan at the time. *Nanban* screens became very popular and many copies were made, increasingly more removed from first-hand observations and reliant upon the painters' imagination.



Figure **13.5.4.43**: Writing box with Nanban figures, 1633, black lacquer with gold and silver maki-e, polychrome lacquer, and gold and silver foil inlay, 4.76 × 22.23 × 20.96 cm (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**)

Nanban imagery was not confined to painted folding screens; we encounter *nanban* motifs in other mediums such as ceramics and lacquerware. The inside of the writing box shown here presents images of Portuguese and Indian or African figures, while the outside is decorated with traditional Japanese motifs of fallen cherry blossoms. Objects such as this writing box exemplify not only the integration of *nanban* imagery in Japanese visual culture, but also an important Japanese aesthetic principle, that of *kazari*. Translated as both "ornament" and "the act of decoration," *kazari* is also a mode of display—and so much more than that. Above all, *kazari* is an organizing principle of aesthetic and social dimensions that seeks visually and conceptually stimulating juxtapositions that transform the appearance of both objects and spaces, activating the viewer's own creativity and imagination.

Additional resources:

JAANUS, an online dictionary of terms of Japanese arts and architecture

e-Museum, database of artifacts designated in Japan as national treasures and important cultural properties

On Japan in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Richard Bowring, Peter Kornicki, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

A brief history of the arts of Japan: the Edo period

by DR. SONIA COMAN

Edo period: artisans, merchants, and a flourishing urban culture

Tokugawa Ieyasu's victory and territorial unification paved the way to a powerful new government. The Tokugawa shogunate would rule for over 250 years—a period of relative peace and increased prosperity. A vibrant urban culture developed in the city of Edo (today's Tokyo) as well as in Kyoto and elsewhere. Artisans and merchants became important producers and consumers of new forms of visual and material culture. Often referred to as Japan's "early modern" era, the long-lived Edo period is divided in multiple sub-periods, the first of which are the Kan'ei and Genroku eras, spanning the period from the 1620s to the early 1700s.



Figure **13.5.4.44**: Kanō Sanraku, *Dragon and Tiger*, early Edo period, 17th century, pair of folding screens, color and gold on paper, 178 x 357 cm each (Myoshinji temple, Kyoto, image: **Wikimedia Commons**)



Figure **13.5.4.45**: Kanō Tan'yū, *Landscape in Moonlight*, after 1662, one of three hanging scrolls, ink on silk, 100.6 x 42.5 cm. The signature mentions the painter's Hōin title, "Seal of the Buddhist Law." (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

During the Kan'ei era, the Kanō school of painting, founded in the Muromachi period, flourished under the leadership of three of its most characteristic painters: Kanō Tan'yū, Kanō Sanraku, and Kanō Sansetsu. Their styles both emulated and departed from the formidable painting of Kanō Eitoku (discussed in the Momoyama-period section). Tan'yū was Eitoku's grandson, Sanraku was his adopted son, and Sansetsu was Sanraku's son-in-law (whom Sanraku eventually adopted as heir).

Their respective styles shared a creative tension between two diverging artistic directions: on the one hand, they were deeply influenced by the boldly expressive and monumental painting style of Eitoku; on the other hand, they adopted a less dramatic and subtly elegant manner, including a return to Chinese models and the earlier style of the Kanō school.

Tan'yū, in particular, spearheaded this conservative turn. His move to Edo as the painter of the Tokugawa shōgun marked a break with the Kyoto-based Kanō painters (including Sanraku and Sansetsu), one that was reflected in contemporaneous treatises that opined on issues of hierarchy and legitimacy within the school.

A versatile artist steeped in the Chinese tradition, Tan'yū was a connoisseur and collector of Chinese paintings. Drawing on his erudite visual vocabulary, Tan'yū painted both poetic landscapes in monochrome ink, typically evocative of classical subjects, and polychrome paintings in the Japanese style, accommodating large-scale commissions for palatial settings. In appreciation of his work, he was awarded, at age 61, the honorific title Hōin ("Seal of the Buddhist Law").



Figure **13.5.4.46**: Dish depicting lady with parasol, c. 1734–37, Hizen ware, Imari, design attributed to the Dutch Cornelis Pronk, porcelain with cobalt blue under clear glaze, 26.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The Kan'ei and Genroku eras witnessed major developments in another medium, namely porcelain. The pioneers of Japanese porcelain were Korean potters brought to Japan after Toyotomi Hideyoshi's incursions into Korea during the Momoyama period. These potters settled in Kyushu and paved the way for one of the world's most innovative and prolific porcelain centers. Arita,

Imari, Kakiemon are now household names, in part because of the 17th-century export of such wares from Northern Kyushu via the Dutch East India Company. This international trade company had contributed significantly to the global appeal of Chinese porcelain, particularly the blue-and-white variety. Despite the Tokugawa's policy of self-isolation, the exception of allowing some Chinese and Dutch agents to continue international trade, combined with the political turmoil in China caused by the downfall of the Ming dynasty, created the optimal context for the Dutch to replace Chinese blue-and-white porcelain with Japanese porcelain in global trade. Japanese export ware, often referred to as Imari ware, emulated Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and reflected the Western tastes to which it catered.



Figure **13.5.4.47**



Figure **13.5.4.48**: Plate depicting autumn grasses and lozenge-shaped mist, Nabeshima ware, porcelain with underglaze blue and celadon glaze, 20.32 cm (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**)

Among the different porcelain kilns of northern Kyushu, Nabeshima ware was not for export but produced exclusively for the domestic market. The lord of Nabeshima, who had brought the Korean potters to his domain, embraced the local production that developed in the 17th century and patronized a special kiln whose porcelain he offered as strategic gifts to the shogun and other feudal lords. With its production processes kept secret, Nabeshima porcelain is distinguishable by its exquisite surfaces, adorned with delicate motifs drawn not from Chinese or European sources, but from the traditional Japanese visual repertory.

With its smooth surfaces and well-defined shapes, porcelain was markedly different from the stoneware produced in other ceramic centers of Japan, like the Oribe ware for tea rituals (described in the section on the Momoyama period). During the Edo period, the tea ceremony—both *chanoyu* and *sencha*, a different type of ritual for the preparation and enjoyment of steeped leaf tea—continued to flourish. *Sencha*, in particular, was integral to the literati culture. Japanese literati or *bunjin* modeled themselves on Chinese scholar-philosophers who were well-versed in painting, calligraphy, and writing poetry. As scholars with artistic pursuits, *bunjin* were not professional painters, but used painting—especially spontaneous renderings of landscapes, poems, and Chinese and Japanese traditional motifs in ink wash—as ways of expressing the inner energy of cultivated spirits that sought to achieve excellence by removing themselves from society and even defying societal norms. This model of reclusion was particularly embraced in periods of political unrest, which was definitely the case in Japan at the end of the 16th century during the turmoil that characterized Momoyama, the 40-year span that led to the Edo period. Gradually, literati practices developed a core tension

between the rebellious and the highly individualistic, on the one hand, and the ritualistic and the normative, on the other, as traditions and lineages began to became more rigid over time.



Figure **13.5.4.49**: Ike no Taiga and Yosa Buson, *Ten Conveniences and Ten Pleasures*, 1771, paired albums, color on paper, 17.7 x 17.7 cm (in the collection of the late Kawabata Yasunari, Kawabata Foundation, Kanagawa prefecture, image adapted from: **Web Japan**)

Bunjinga, literally translatable as "literati painting," refers to painting practiced by these learned men. Literati painting often brought together references to both classical Chinese themes and local and contemporaneous literary sources, especially poems, often written by the painters themselves. The 18th-century *haikai-no-renga* poet Yosa Buson was also an accomplished painter and, in the collaborative spirit of *haikai-no-renga*, co-authored, with Ike no Taiga, a pair of albums on the Chinese theme of the "ten conveniences" and "ten pleasures" of life, combining idealized depictions of nature (mostly by Buson) with anecdotal renditions of human activities (mostly by Taiga). The collaboration between Buson and Taiga was both collegial and competitive, calling to mind the centuries-old Japanese tradition of poetry and picture contests that showcased talent and skill.



Figure **13.5.4.50**: Maruyama Ōkyo, *Pine Trees in Snow*, between 1781 and 1789, left screen of a pair of folding screens, ink, color, and gold on paper (Mitsui Memorial Museum, image: **Wikimedia Commons**, public domain)

A foil to Buson's and Taiga's approach to painting was the renewed search for realism of painter Maruyama Okyo. His naturalistic rendition of birds and animals, human figures, and landscapes contrasted with the literati mode by focusing on a rational regimen of visual representation, grounded in observation of the natural world. Trained in the European techniques of shading and one-point perspective, Okyo nonetheless created a synthesis of western-inspired naturalism and traditional Japanese techniques, styles, and subject matter. Okyo's mode of painting was transmitted via the Maruyama-Shijō school, that Okyo first established as the Maruyama school. It was continued by Matsumura Goshun (whose studio was on the Shijō street in Kyoto), a painter who first studied with Buson and then turned to Okyo. These two closely related schools have been referred to as one entity since the late

Edo period, when the distinctions between the two had faded. One of the most notable painters in the lineage of Goshun was Shibata Zeshin, a disciple of one of Goshun's students, and an innovative painter and lacquer artist.

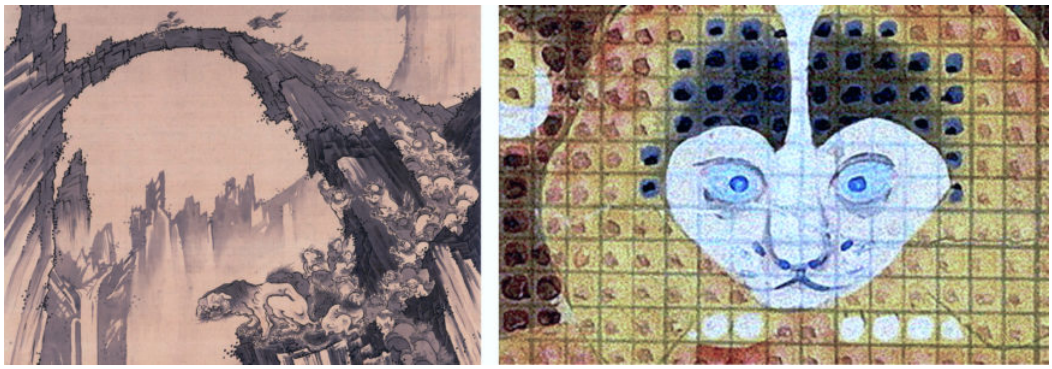


Figure **13.5.4.51**: Left: Soga Shōhaku, *Lions at the Stone Bridge of Mount Tiantai*, 1779, hanging scroll, ink on silk, 114 × 50.8 cm, detail (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, full size image available **here**). Right: Itō Jakuchū, *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in Imaginary Scene*, 18th century, pair of six-panel folding screens, ink and colors on paper, 137.5 × W355.6 cm, detail (Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, full size image available **here**)

Painters working outside established schools like the Tosa and the Kanō diverged from established modes of painting to varying degrees. Those whose styles were particularly unconventional have been recently re-evaluated as forming a "lineage of eccentrics" by Japanese art historian Tsuji Nobuo. Included in this "lineage" are Iwasa Matabei, Kano Sansetsu, Ito Jakuchu, Soga Shohaku, Nagasawa Rosetsu and Utagawa Kuniyoshi—each of whom had individual trajectories in their respective processes of maturing as visual artists. What they shared was a highly personal approach to painting, often characterized by unusual techniques and atypical subject matter. In *Lions at the Stone Bridge at Mt. Tiantai*, Soga Shōhaku chose a rarely depicted Buddhist theme and imagined it in novel ways, adding a whimsical dimension to it. In *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in Imaginary Scene*, Itō Jakuchū painstakingly painted no fewer than 43,000 colored squares to create a fantastical, mosaic-like composition.

During the Edo period, a bustling urban culture developed. Merchants, craftsmen, and entertainers helped shape cultural and artistic tastes through their products and programs. Collaborative linked-verse parties and new forms of entertainment like kabuki theater became staples of the urban lifestyle. Tourism, too, gained in popularity as travelers went on pilgrimages to shrines, temples, and famous sites (*meisho* 名所), often associated with classical poems and traditional tales. All these cultural practices were mirrored in the popular paintings and prints known collectively as *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵. Literally "pictures of the floating world," *ukiyo-e* can be best defined as genre painting for and about "common people" (*shōmin* 庶民)—members of the middle class of Edo-period Japanese society.



Figure **13.5.4.52**: Hishikawa Moronobu, *Two Lovers*, c. 1675–80, polychrome woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 22.9 x 33.7 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Trained in his family's textile business, 17th-century painter Hishikawa Moronobu was the earliest of the *ukiyo-e* masters. He focused on images of beautiful women (*bijin* 美人) and worked both in painting and **woodblock printing**. His depiction of women and lovers in Edo's pleasure quarters deeply influenced subsequent *ukiyo-e* painters and print designers, notably Miyagawa Chōshun. Initially educated in the Tosa school, Chōshun signed his works by adding "yamato-e" to his name—a practice indicating that in its early days, *ukiyo-e* was regarded as a successor to the *yamato-e* style.



Figure **13.5.4.53**: Iwasa Matabei, *The Tale of Yamanaka Tokiwa*, 17th century, handscroll, ink and color on paper, total length of over 70 meters, detail (Important Cultural Property, **MOA Museum of Art**, Atami, Shizuoka, Japan)

Contemporaneous with the ukiyo-e master Hishikawa Moronobu was the painter Iwasa Matabei, who, like Moronobu and his followers, saw himself as an heir to the *yamato-e* and Tosa-school traditions. Given his anecdotal painting style and his allegiance to Japanese subjects and painting techniques, Matabei is often regarded as a founding figure of *ukiyo-e* along with Moronobu. Matabei drew inspiration for his paintings from the classics of Japanese literature such as the Tale of Genji. However, in the spirit of *ukiyo-e*, his paintings are infused with a sense of everyday life and personal experience. The highly personal dimension of his art made others think of Matabei as one of the "eccentrics" (used here in the sense previously explained in relation to Shōhaku and Jakuchū, and aligned with the definition of art historian Tsuji Nobuo). Whether Tosa, *ukiyo-e*, or eccentric, Matabei broke with tradition by focusing on contemporaneous experiences and aspects of everyday life. Often, these themes were playfully intertwined with classical subject matter, resulting in a visual simile, which was at times parody, known as *mitate*. Realities of the present were superimposed over classical or mythic themes of the past. This practice ranges in Edo-period painting from an emphasis on the mundane and the anecdotal, as seen in Matabei's compositions, to playful depictions of contemporaneous figures (such as beautiful

women and kabuki actors) in the guise of legendary or historical figures such as poets and warriors, as seen later in the works of 18th- and 19th-century ukiyo-e artists like Andō (Utagawa) Hiroshige and **Utagawa Kunisada**.



Figure **13.5.4.54**: Hokusai, *Random Sketches* (*Manga*), 1834, eight volumes of woodblock printed books, ink and color on paper, 22.9 x 15.9 cm, two-page spread (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). Hokusai's *Manga* create a microcosm of Edo-period culture and have been a major source of inspiration for European artists in the 19th century.



Figure **13.5.4.55**: Hokusai, *Woodcutter*, 1849, ink and color on silk, 113.6 × 39.6 cm (Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1904.182, **Freer Gallery of Art**)

Ukiyo-e images were made available in a variety of formats, from paintings and *surimono* to picture books (*ehon* 画本) and loose woodblock prints, often conceived in series (e.g. **thirty-six views of Mount Fuji**, **seven episodes in the life of 9th-century poetess Ono no Komachi**). One of the best known *ukiyo-e* masters and an emblem for Japanese art in the western world, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) not only designed woodblock print series and picture books, but also authored numerous paintings. Leading a frugal life and living in unkempt abodes, Hokusai was remarkably prolific over his long life, adopting various monikers and carefully dating his works by indicating how old he was when he painted them. Hokusai is deservedly famous for his exceptional draughtsmanship and exuberant imagination, coupled with a fine understanding of Japanese life and culture, both classical and contemporaneous. Like other Edo-period painters, he often inserted himself in his own work via quasi-self-portraits and reflections on impermanence and old age.

The Edo period saw an intensified circulation of visual vocabulary and aesthetic principles between mediums (paintings, ceramics, lacquerware, and textiles often shared the similar motifs) and crossing different registers of culture from design to popular culture to nostalgia for a romanticized pre-modern past. These intersections were further enabled by collaborations between artists of different specializations. One of the most consequential of these collaborations was that between the Kyoto-based, 17th-century painter Tawaraya Sōtatsu and calligrapher and ceramist Hon'ami Kōetsu.



Figure **13.5.4.56**: Tawaraya Sōtatsu (painting), Hon'ami Kōetsu (calligraphy), *Poems from the Kokin wakashū*, early 1600s, handscroll, ink, gold, silver, and mica on paper, 33 cm high, detail (Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1903.309, **Freer Gallery of Art**)



Figure **13.5.4.57**: Hon'ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦, Tea bowl named *Mino-game* ("long-tailed tortoise"), earthenware with black Raku glaze, 8.7 x 12.5 x 12.5 cm (**Freer Gallery of Art**)

Their combined practice entailed an elegant aesthetic emphasizing traditional cultural references shared across painting, poetry, calligraphy, lacquer, ceramics, and tea ritual.

Along with potter Nonomura Ninsei, Kōetsu was among the first to sign their pottery in Japan. He would shape his tea bowls, then send them to the Raku-ware workshop to have the bowls glazed and fired. Kōetsu worked across multiple media and his collaborations with painters and potters contributed to a more unified visual culture. As is the case with Japanese art across the ages, lineages played a vital role in the survival and transformation of Sōtatsu's and Kōetsu's aesthetic programs.



Figure **13.5.4.58**: Ogata Kenzan's Narutaki workshop (1699-1712), Incense container with imagery from *Tales of Ise*, stoneware, underglaze cobalt and overglaze enamels, 2.5 x 10 x 7.3 cm (Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1907.84a-b, **Freer Gallery of Art**)

The intertwined styles of these two 17th-century artists were emulated and consolidated by the early-18th-century artists Ogata Kōrin and his brother Ogata Kenzan, who became school leaders in their own right. A familial relationship doubled this stylistic genealogy: Kōrin and Kenzan's great-grandmother was an elder sister of Kōetsu. And the two brothers collaborated on occasion. Kōrin specialized in painting, while Kenzan became one of the most influential names in Kyoto-area ceramics. Later generations of potters emulated and even copied Kenzan's style, while Kōrin gave his name to a new school, Rinpa ("Rin 琳" from "Kōrin 光琳" + "pa/ ha 派", meaning "school"), that traced its aesthetic origins to Kōrin's and Kenzan's models, namely Sōtatsu and Kōetsu.

Rinpa artists' refined and ingenious designs were based on traditional themes and motifs, and rendered in gold, silver, and bold colors. They worked across mediums and genres ranging from painting to lacquer and from episodes in the *Tale of Genji* to depictions of the four seasons.



Figure **13.5.4.59**: Left: Ogata Kōrin, *Irises at Yatsuhashi (Eight Bridges)*, after 1709, one of a pair of folding screens, ink, color, and gold on paper, 163.7 x 352.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). The depicted motifs evoke the classical Japanese text, the *Tales of Ise*. Right: Sakai Hōitsu, *Summer and Autumn Flowers*, right screen of a pair of screens, 164.5 x 181.8 cm (**Tokyo National Museum**). Hōitsu was a Rinpa artist who revived Kōrin's style in the late 18th and early 19th century.

Additional resources

JAANUS, an online dictionary of terms of Japanese arts and architecture

e-Museum, database of artifacts designated in Japan as national treasures and important cultural properties

On Japan in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Nobuo Tsuji, translated by Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, *History of Art in Japan* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2019)

Richard Bowring, Peter Kornicki, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

A brief history of the arts of Japan: the Meiji to Reiwa periods

by DR. SONIA COMAN

From the Meiji restoration (1868) to the first year of Reiwa (2019): modern and contemporary art, part I

Meiji period (1868-1912)



Figure **13.5.4.60**: Nanri Kajū II, pair of vases, c. 1875, porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enameling and gilding, 75.7 cm high (**Philadelphia Museum of Art**)

1868 was a watershed year for Japan. After over two centuries of shogunal rule, practical political power was restored to the emperor (Meiji). 15 years earlier, the American commodore Matthew Perry led a military and diplomatic expedition to Japan, opening the country to foreign trade and thereby ending the Tokugawa-imposed self-isolation policy. The effects of this forcible "opening" were manifold and deeply affected Japan's social and cultural fabric. Japan began to participate in World's Fairs, curating displays of samples of Japanese cultural tradition designed for the outside world to see, and often taking the form of new porcelain vases that impressed through their monumental scale, technical excellence, and intricate decoration.

In the realm of painting, the 1870s saw a new mode of image-making that embraced western styles and techniques, known in Japanese as *yōga* 洋画 ("Western-style painting.") A pioneering *yōga* artist, Takahashi Yuichi assisted Antonio Fontanesi, the "foreign advisor" appointed by the Meiji government to teach oil painting at the newly established Technical Fine Arts School in

Tokyo. Further developed by painters like Kuroda Seiki, who studied extensively in Paris and worked in Japan into the 1920s, *yōga* largely embraced contemporaneous styles of French painting, from the Barbizon School to **Impressionism**, and their connected practices, from painting from nature to favoring subject matter drawn from the here and now.

Definition: The Barbizon School

The Barbizon School comprised French artists who moved toward realism in the landscapes they painted in the environs of the Fontainebleau forest outside Paris, beginning in the 1830s, deeply influenced by English painter John Constable.



Figure **13.5.4.61**: Kuroda Seiki, *Lakeside*, 1897, oil on canvas, 69 x 84 cm (Important Cultural Property, **Tokyo National Museum**)

As a foil to *yōga*, other Japanese visual artists developed a parallel mode of painting, known as *nihonga* 日本画 (literally, "Japanese painting.") Rejecting a straightforward adoption of techniques and styles from Euro-American pictorial traditions, *nihonga* was not a direct continuation of the earlier *yamato-e* either. Instead, *nihonga* broadened the traditional themes of *yamato-e*, created new blends of Japanese stylistic traditions like Kanō and Rinpa, and even incorporated western modes of pictorial realism in its reinvention of Japanese painting.

Definition: *Yamato-e*

Born in the Heian period, *yamato-e* is a painting style understood as "Japanese" as opposed to "Chinese" or otherwise "foreign." It refers to specific formats, i.e. folding screens and room partitions, and specific themes, i.e. landscapes with recognizably Japanese features and illustrations of Japanese poetry, history, and mythology.



Figure **13.5.4.62**: Yokoyama Taikan, *Kutsugen (The Legendary Chinese Poet Qu Yuan)*, 1898, hanging scroll, colors on silk, 132.7 × 289.7 cm (Itsukushima shrine, Hiroshima, image: public domain). This painting is thought to express the painter's loyalty to his teacher—the influential, if controversial, thinker Okakura Kakuzō. Resentful against oppressive authority, this classical Chinese poet becomes here a surrogate for Okakura, who had just resigned from the new Tokyo Fine Arts School because of internal frictions.

Two artists who significantly shaped *nihonga* were Kanō Hōgai and Yokoyama Taikan. Remembered as the last great master of the Kanō school, Kanō Hōgai helped pioneer *nihonga* alongside fellow painter Hashimoto Gahō, himself trained in the Kanō style, and Ernest Fenollosa, an American poet and art critic who assumed important cultural positions in Meiji-period Japan, as professor of philosophy and curator at the newly established Tokyo Imperial University and Imperial Museum, respectively. Modeled on European and American universities and museums, such institutions altered the old structures of the Japanese cultural field. New words became necessary in the Japanese language to translate and use foreign concepts such as "fine art" or "artist." Thinkers like Fenollosa or Okakura Kakuzō—a sort of cultural ambassador who explained, through his subjective lens, Japanese culture to elite American audiences—affected both the production and the reception of what constituted "Japanese art" in the Meiji period. Born out of Okakura's teachings on traditional Japanese culture was the quintessentially *nihonga* style of painter Yokoyama Taikan. His paintings combine canonically Japanese and western-inspired elements with unconventional techniques and high symbolic content.



Figure **13.5.4.63**: Otagaki Rengetsu, Sencha cups with poems, 19th century, white stoneware, 4.13 × 6.51 × 6.35 cm (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**)

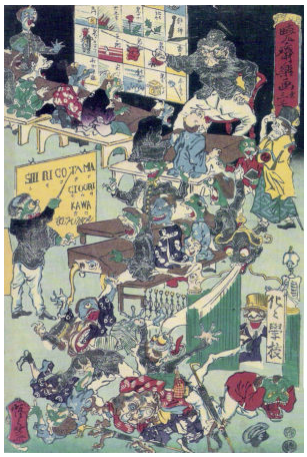


Figure 13.5.4.64: Kawanabe Kyosai, *School for Demons and Ghosts*, 1870s, woodblock print (image: public domain). Here, Kyosai imagines demons and other fantastical creatures learning new vocabulary—a commentary on the newly instituted Meiji-period compulsory education.

Yet other modes of painting co-existed with the strong *yōga* and *nihonga* trends. Somewhat aligned with Euro-American post-Impressionism, the artist Tomioka Tessai created his individualistic style through an inventive blend of influences, largely drawn from classical Japanese and Chinese sources. Tessai's mentor, friend, and frequent collaborator was Otagaki Rengetsu, an artist and Buddhist nun who expressed her unique style via pottery, poetry, painting, and calligraphy. Another idiosyncratic artist of the period was Kawanabe Kyōsai, who "translated" his experience of the drastic changes that Japan underwent in the 19th century into caricatures within an exuberantly inventive pictorial realm. Through such artists, the Meiji period furthered the spirit of centuries of poetic and playful interplay among mediums and styles in Japanese arts.

Spurred by new ideas about the nation-state and by the reconfiguration of society in the modern era, Japanese urban life was transformed in the Meiji period. With this transformation came different modes of living and new architectural styles for buildings that housed newly established public institutions and for family homes, influenced by western-centric concepts of domesticity. Modeled on western architecture, buildings were built with brick and stone instead of the traditional wood. Merging international and indigenous elements, an eclectic architectural style emerged, championed by architects like Itō Chūta, who also helped establish cultural preservation laws for ancient structures such as temples and shrines.



Figure 13.5.4.65: Itō Chūta, Main Gate, Tokyo Imperial University (currently the University of Tokyo), built 1912. This gate is emblematic of Meiji-period architecture as it combines Euro-American elements—note the use of steel and granite—and Japanese elements—note the traditional gate style, known as *kabuki-mon* (photo: XIIIfromTOKYO, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Taishō period (1912-1926)

The Taishō period continued the process of adoption and transformation of foreign models. During this period Japan participated in World War I and continued its colonial rule of Korea and Taiwan, occupations dating from the Meiji period. In the cultural field, the eclectic style that had emerged in architecture continued to flourish, with structures emulating modernist trends like Bauhaus and

Art Deco. The Great Kantō earthquake of 1923, a natural disaster of catastrophic proportions, not only destroyed buildings and other cultural properties, but marked a shift in Japanese society from the optimism of the Taishō period to the radicalized nationalism of subsequent decades.



Figure **13.5.4.66**: Yasuda Auditorium, architect: Uchida Yoshikazu, patron: Yasuda Zenjiro, built 1925, renovated after 1968 (image: **Kakidai** CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Yasuda auditorium, built in 1925 on the campus of the University of Tokyo, epitomizes the brief but consequential Taishō period. Designed in an Art Deco mode and reminiscent of the campus of the University of Cambridge, the Yasuda auditorium was sponsored by one of the founders of the Yasuda *zaibatsu*. It was intended as a temporary resting facility for the emperor when he visited the university. As such, the auditorium embodied the socio-cultural influence of the new financial magnates, the rising nationalism concentrated in the persona of the emperor, the adoption of the European Art-Deco architectural style, and the affirmation of the university as a modern research center.

Definition: *Zaibatsu*

Zaibatsu refers to Japanese industrial and financial conglomerates whose economic and socio-political influence dominated Japan from the Meiji period to the end of World War II.



Figure **13.5.4.67**: Yoshida Hiroshi, *Sailing Boats: Evening Glow*, 1921, *shin hanga*, woodblock print, ink and colors on paper (Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Robert O. Muller Collection)

Nihonga, or (modern) Japanese painting, continued to develop at the intersection of Japanese tradition, western techniques, and individual styles. The *Nihonga* painter Yokoyama Taikan resurrected the *Nihon Bijutsuin* (Japan Art Institute) after it had lapsed following the death of its leader, the controversial but influential thinker Okakura Kakuzō. Such developments ensured a

continuation of Meiji-period discourses on the arts, entailing the adoption of western notions and terms and the formulation and crystallization of new concepts, all reflected in newly coined Japanese-language words.

An equivalent to *Nihonga* was the *shin hanga* phenomenon, namely the formation of new modes and styles of printmaking that simultaneously revitalized *ukiyo-e* (as defined in the section on Edo-period arts) and incorporated elements of modern design and western-inspired realism. While *shin hanga* largely preserved the multiple hands traditionally involved in the design and production of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, another mode of Japanese printmaking that emerged in the 1910s, known as *sōsaku hanga*, emphasized individual expression and featured a sole creator in charge of all aspects of the print's production (from drawing to carving to printing). *Sōsaku hanga* resonated, and drew upon, contemporaneous thinkers and writers like Natsume Sōseki who advocated self-expression.

From the Meiji restoration (1868) to the first year of Reiwa (2019): modern and contemporary art, part II

Shōwa period (1926-1989)



Figure **13.5.4.68**: Hirai Teruschichi, *Fantasies of the Moon*, 1938, gelatin silver print, painted collage (© Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture, image: **Tokyo Digital Museum**)

The years leading to Japan's involvement in World War II saw the rise of militarism, ultra-nationalism, and increasing imperialistic ambitions, fueled in part by Japan's emulation of western colonialism. In the 1920s and 30s, Japanese poets, photographers, and painters who had studied abroad developed, in Japan, styles aligned with contemporaneous global art movements, combining elements of **surrealism**, absurdist **Dada**, and **futurism**. For example, the paintings of Fukuzawa Ichirō combined surrealist imagery with political commentary; Hirai Terushichi made use of color painting and photomontage to create photographic prints that blurred the boundary between reality and imagination.



Figure **13.5.4.69**: Leonard Tsuguharu Foujita, *Battle on the Bank of the Halha*, 1941, oil on canvas (National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo)

Such artists were silenced in 1941 by the Japanese "thought police" that aimed to control any and all ideologies that seemed to pose a threat to the ideals and agenda of the Nazi-allied Empire of Japan. War-time painting depicting military men and battles came to be heavily criticized after the war for their political charge, but recent scholarship by Ikeda Asato suggests that seemingly apolitical paintings of the pre-war period, which romanticized subjects of "authentic" Japanese culture such as Mount Fuji or *bijin* ("beautiful women"), can also be understood as having supported the militaristic state ideology of the time.

Postwar Japan was a period of unprecedented change. From the end of the war in 1945 to 1952, Japan was occupied by the victorious Allied forces, led by American General Douglas MacArthur. From 1952 to the death of the Shōwa emperor (Hirohito) in 1989, Japan witnessed a successful U.S.-influenced economic redevelopment. In the cultural sphere, as early as 1954, the newly

established Gutai art association promoted “concrete” or “embodied” artistic expressions, pushing abstraction to its limits and foreshadowing the performance and conceptual art of the 1960s and 70s.



Figure 13.5.4.70: Sekine Nobuo, *Phase: Mother Earth*, 1968, earth and cement, 220 x 270 cm (equally sized hole and cylinder) (Kobe Suma Rikyū Park Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition, 1968, image: **Murai Osamu**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

In those later decades, the exploration of materiality continued to preoccupy artists of the so-called *mono-ha* (literally “school of things”), including the Korean Lee Ufan. Mono-ha artists created works that tested the tension between natural and manmade materials and between their chosen materials and the environment in which they were placed. Mono-ha artists may have been influenced by the sociopolitical climate of distrust, protest, and counterculture that dominated the 60s and 70s. Referring to one of his most influential works, *Phase: Mother Earth*, consisting of a deep and wide hole in the ground and an equally sized cylinder of the excavated earth, the Mono-ha artist Sekine Nobuo affirmed:

> ***“If you dig a hole in the earth and keep digging forever, (…) and if you go on to pull out all the earth, [the Earth] will be reversed into a negative version of itself.”Sekine Nobuo cited in Reconsidering Mono-ha, The National Museum of Art, Osaka, 2005, p. 74***

The Great Kantō earthquake of 1923 and the ravages of war created successive scenes of destruction and contributed to a collective memory of ruins, used as evocative subject matter by Japanese painters and photographers to this day.

In the postwar period, reconstruction was not only political and economic, but also literal, in the urban and architectural sense. Modernism was adopted as the language of this reconstruction. The architect Tange Kenzo, who worked for Maekawa Kunio, one of **Le Corbusier**’s disciples, became one of the most consequential postwar modernists both as an architect and as an urban planner.



Figure 13.5.4.71: Kurokawa Kisho, the Nakagin Capsule Tower, Tokyo, completed 1972, detail of exterior view of prefabricated units (image: City Lab)

Tange's unrealized "Plan for Tokyo 1960" heavily influenced the Metabolist movement, which Tange himself supported. Emblematic of Metabolism is the Nakagin Capsule Tower in Shinbashi, Tokyo, whose capsule-like rooms are prefabricated units meant to be replaced once they wore out. The "capsules" were designed as integral to a megastructure of both permanent and impermanent parts, built in the spirit of organic growth.

Definition: Metabolist movement

Metabolism is the name of a postwar architectural movement whose core ideas entailed a rapprochement between interconnected architectural structures and the principles and appearances of organic growth.

Heisei period (1989-2019)

Corresponding to the reign of emperor Akihito, the Heisei (literally, "achieving peace") was a period of peace, but one that nonetheless witnessed economic stagnation and natural disasters. In the cultural sphere, the Heisei period saw the establishment of new art museums and the adoption of new means of expression among Japanese artists, although always in dialogue with the recent or more distant past.



Figure 13.5.4.72: Yoshitomo Nara, *Untitled (Eye Patch)*, 2012, woodcut with collage additions, 68.7 x 48.3 cm, Pace Editions, Inc. (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Manga and anime exploded in popularity and influence during this period, although both have deep histories. Manga refers generally to comics and its roots harken back to medieval narrative picture scrolls. Anime refers, of course, to animation, which

goes back to the early 20th century and includes, in Japan, the controversial history of its use as a propaganda tool during World War II. In the 1990s, the anime industry grew via revivals and sequels of popular 1970s productions as well as via new genres.

Popular both domestically and internationally, anime and manga are closely related to the principle of *kawaii*, translated as "cute." This culture of "cuteness" has often been understood as a form of escapism from the harsh realities of the postwar period and of a country often threatened by calamitous natural disasters. Artists like Yoshitomo Nara and Murakami Takashi use elements from manga and anime to explore the darker underside of *kawaii*.

Artists like Murakami Takashi refer not only to the contemporaneous culture of manga and anime in their works, but also to older lineages and genealogies of Japanese art history. Murakami is a case in point with his personal and often provocative interpretations of Edo-period "eccentric" painters whose works nonetheless became integral to the canon of Japanese visual arts. Like **Andy Warhol** or more recently **Jeff Koons**, Murakami complements his works in painting, sculpture, and installation with merchandise and publications produced by his company, Kaikai Kiki.

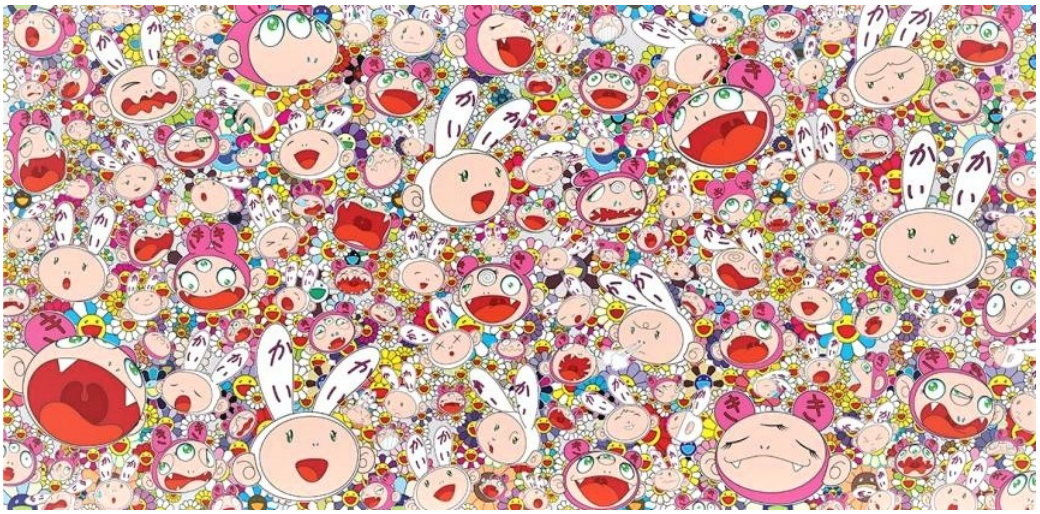


Figure **13.5.4.73**: Takashi Murakami, *Lots, lots of Kaikai and Kiki*, 2009, acrylic and platinum leaf on canvas on aluminum frame, 300 x 608 cm (private collection, © Takashi Murakami, Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd.) In this painting, the seemingly inescapable accumulation of otherwise "cute" anime-like figures creates a disquieting realm, one that can serve as playful commentary both on the "flat" representation of traditional Japanese painting and on the overwhelming presence of commercial imagery.

Contemporary Japanese artists use a variety of mediums to express their vision or to focus on the perfection and re-invention of a medium. For example, Sugimoto Hiroshi has gained international acclaim for his contemplative photographs of seascapes as well as for his site-specific sculptural and architectural works. **Mariko Mori** epitomizes the multidisciplinary artist, exploring her sense of identity and developing her surreal imagery through photography, video, sculpture, installation, and performance. Distinct from artists like Sugimoto and Mori, many contemporary Japanese ceramists devote themselves exclusively to the materials and practices of ceramic art; and similar to artists like Murakami, they produce new works that both honor and challenge tradition.



Figure **13.5.4.74**: Mariko Mori, *Esoteric Cosmos (Pure Land)*, 1996-98, glass with photo interlayer, 305 x 610 x 2.2 cm (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, © Mariko Mori)

As of May 1st, 2019, when emperor Akihito's son, Naruhito, ascended the throne, we entered a new era for Japan, namely the Reiwa (translatable to "beautiful harmony"). In Japan as elsewhere, the art of today continues to resonate with the past, while carving its own path forward.

Additional resources

JAANUS, an online dictionary of terms of Japanese arts and architecture

e-Museum, database of artifacts designated in Japan as national treasures and important cultural properties

On Japan in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Richard Bowring, Peter Kornicki, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Japanese art: the formats of two-dimensional works

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Japanese two-dimensional works of art can take a number of different formats—printed books (*ehon*), single- or multi-sheet prints (*hanga*), paintings in the form of hanging-scrolls (*kakemono*) and handscrolls (*emaki*), moveable folding screens (*byōbu*), usually in pairs, sliding door paintings (*fusuma-e*) and smaller scale fan paintings and album leaves. The screens and sliding doors also served to exclude draughts or divide rooms, and were changed according to the season. Hanging-scrolls were displayed, sometimes in pairs or sets of three in the *tokonoma* (ceremonial alcoves) of reception rooms of mansions and, again, could be changed according to the season, or to honor a special visitor. All such works were viewed seated at floor level on tatami mats.



Figure **13.5.4.75**: *Shaka no honji (The Story of Sakyamuni)*, from a set of three hand scrolls, ink and color on paper, 17th-18th century, 32.9 x 1703.4 cm, Tosa School, Edo Period, Japan © The Trustees of the British Museum. The story, which evolved in medieval Japan, interweaves the basic religious message of the life of Prince Siddhartha Gautama through his enlightenment to become the Buddha Shakyamuni (Japanese: Shaka), with the more human story of his relationship to his mother Queen Maya. In this scene he gains enlightenment.

Handscrolls (like the one above) were usually placed on a low table and unrolled from right to left to show a narrative story or seasonal sequence. Print series, small-scale paintings or fan paintings were often mounted in albums. Individual prints, especially the Ukiyo-e portraits of popular actors or courtesans, might be pasted to a screen. The size of the print was limited by the size of cherry-wood block available. Often two, three or more sheets were arranged side by side to depict a wider scene. Books were printed two pages to one sheet of paper, which was then folded, and the sheets sewn together at the spine with a plain cover.

Hanging Scrolls

Kakemono (hanging scrolls) were originally used to display Buddhist paintings, and calligraphy. The painting in ink and colors on either silk or paper was backed with paper and given silk borders chosen to harmonize with the painting. Finally, a roller was affixed to the bottom. Scrolls were kept in specially made paulownia wooden boxes to protect them from dust, changing climate conditions and insect damage.



Figure 13.5.4.76: Gan Ku, *Tiger*, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. 169 x 114.5 cm, Japan © The Trustees of the British Museum

Suggested readings:

L. Smith, V. Harris and T. Clark, *Japanese art: masterpieces in The British Museum* (London, The British Museum Press, 1990)

© Trustees of the British Museum

Kofun period (300-552 C.E.)

Haniwa Warrior

by DR. YOKO HSUEH SHIRAI



Video 13.5.4.1: Haniwa warrior in keiko armor (Kofun period), c. 6th century, excavated in lizuka-machi, Ota City, Gunma, Japan, terracotta, 130.5 cm high (Tokyo National Museum)

Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure 13.5.4.77: *Haniwa: Tomb Sculpture of a Seated Warrior*, Japan, late Tumulus period, c. 500-600 C.E., coil-built eathenware with applied decoration, 31 x 14 3/8 x 15 inches / 78.7 x 36.5 x 38.1 cm (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

Funerary objects meant to be seen

Haniwa ("clay cylinder" or "circle of clay" in Japanese) are large hollow, earthenware funerary objects found in Japan. Massive quantities of *haniwa*—many nearly life sized—were carefully placed on top of colossal, mounded tombs, known as *kofun* ("old tomb" in Japanese). During the Kofun Period (c. 250 to c. 600 C.E.), *haniwa* evolved in many ways—their shape, the way they were placed on the mounded tombs and, presumably, their specific function or ritual use.

We don't know much about *haniwa* or the Kofun Period because there was no writing system in Japan at the time. However, there is general agreement that *haniwa* were meant to be seen. That is, instead of being buried deep underground with the deceased, *haniwa* occupied and marked the open surfaces of the colossal tombs. However, it is unlikely that they were readily visible to any person who happened to pass by since the tombs were sacred, ritualized spaces that were usually surrounded by one or more moats. As a result, close visual contact with *haniwa* would not have been easy for unauthorized visitors. So who was the intended audience of *haniwa*? Let's explore further.

Monumental tombs and early Japan

Unlike many other ancient civilizations, we cannot rely on written records to inform us about the names or locations of the earliest kingdoms in Japan. Yet study of *kofun* indicate that a powerful state had emerged by around 250 C.E. This state is identified by various names (such as the Yamato polity), and was generally centered in what is now Nara, Kyoto, and Osaka prefectures.

We know that a powerful state emerged since vast resources were needed to construct these monumental tombs—starting with the economic means to sacrifice valuable flat land that could otherwise be used for farming and growing rice. Hundreds of workers were also necessary, and archaeologists excavating *kofun* have recovered pottery from neighboring locations such as present day Nagoya—suggesting that people came from elsewhere to Yamato to serve the needs of this early state.

Many monumental tombs (*kofun*) were constructed in the shape of a keyhole—otherwise known as *zenpō kōen fun* ("front squared, rear rounded tomb"). The square part is the front end while the round section is the rear and contains the body (eventually bodies) of the deceased. Keyhole-shaped tombs were adopted as a kind of signature style of this state. Keep in mind that the tombs could have been made in any particular shape—perhaps an octagon—but it was this keyhole shape that was appropriated and then replicated in other regions. Clearly, a formidable political center had emerged with the ability both to build their own colossal tombs and to extend their funerary practices to distant regions. In other words, the gradual adoption of keyhole-shaped colossal

tombs over a wide range attests to the existence of a large, organized state with the authority to compel other, competing kingdoms to adopt their practices, likely through the formation of alliances or perhaps by military coercion.



Figure **13.5.4.78**: Hashihaka Kofun, Sakurai city, 3rd century (photo: Google earth, Imagery ©2015 Google, Map Data, ©2015 Zenrin)

Most of the earliest surviving keyhole-shaped colossal tombs dating to the 3rd century are found in Nara prefecture. One of these is the famous Hashihaka kofun in Sakurai city—measuring about 280 meters in length and 30 meters in height (image above). As a point of comparison, the pyramid of Khufu in Giza measures about 230m in length and 146m in height.

Three periods in tomb-building practices

Scholars identify three major chronological periods or shifts in *kofun*-building practices, changes that might correlate to changes in the political climate. Not only did the physical shape and size of the tombs transform, so did the type of *haniwa*, sarcophagi, and other features used in conjunction with the tombs.

- Early Kofun period: c. 250 C.E. – c. 400 C.E.
- Middle Kofun period: c. 400 – c. 500 C.E.
- Late Kofun period: c. 500 – c. 600 C.E.



Figure **13.5.4.79**: Daisen-Kofun, the tomb of Emperor Nintoku, Osaka, Kofun period, late 4th to early 5th century (photo: copyright © National Land Image Information, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism)

The colossal tombs reach a maximum size during the Middle Kofun period, and a well-known example is the Daisenryō kofun (also referred to as the Emperor Nintoku tomb) in Sakai city, Osaka prefecture (image, left).

This is the largest, extant *kofun* and one of the world's largest funerary monuments, measuring roughly 486m in length, 36m in height, and may have had 15,000 *haniwa* placed on top.

This trend towards building *kofun* that were increasingly larger seems to reflect the increasingly powerful rulers of this kingdom; however, by the Late Kofun period the size of the tombs begin to shrink in size. This may have resulted from the unsustainable practice of using up valuable farming land for tombs. Another factor may have been the arrival of new immigrant groups, primarily via the Korean peninsula, who could effectively challenge the authority and dominance of the Yamato monarchs.

By 600 C.E. or so, mounded tombs were no longer made in the keyhole shape, were considerably smaller, and often took a rounded form. Manufacture of *haniwa* also ended when keyhole-shaped *kofun* ceased to be built.

Evolution and placement of *haniwa*

When *kofun* were newly completed, the surfaces of the mounds were bare of vegetation—the forests that now cover these tombs are the natural consequence of centuries of neglect. Instead, gravel (or other hard stones), or *haniwa*, were elaborately arranged on the surfaces. Each *haniwa* was hand-created.



Figure **13.5.4.80**: Cylindrical Haniwa, 6th century, clay (Saitama Prefectural Museum of the Sakitama Ancient Burial Mounds)

The earliest *haniwa*, from c. 250 C.E. to around the 450s, were simple forms and most were cylindrical. There were also *haniwa* whose upper section was not cylindrical but made to replicate shapes based on ritual or military objects.

While the arrangement of *haniwa* varied from one tomb to another, consecutive *haniwa* were often lined up along the outermost perimeter of the tomb surface, as if to mark boundaries. In addition to this chain of *haniwa* on the outer perimeter, inner sections located near the center of the tomb have also been outlined by *haniwa* as if to designate a special or main staging area.

Haniwa in the form of animals, people and buildings



Figure **13.5.4.81**: Haniwa Horse, c. 300–645, red earthenware, 14 7/8 inches (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston)



Figure **13.5.4.82**: Haniwa, standing female, 6th–7th century, reddish earthenware, 88.9 x 26.7 x 20.3 cm / 35 x 10 1/2 x 8 inches (Yale University Art Gallery) "The round clay pieces attached to her neckline appear to be the remnant of a necklace, which suggests she could represent a miko, a maiden serving in Shinto rituals." (**source**)

A major shift occurred around 450 C.E., corresponding to the time when *kofun* reached their maximum size. The upper section of the *haniwa* were modeled after animals and people (such as female ritual specialists and male warriors). The reason behind this innovation is not known, but presumably reflects changes in funerary practice.



Figure 13.5.4.83: House-shaped Haniwa, 6th century, clay (Museum of the Sakitama Ancient Burial Mounds)

Haniwa modeled after residential or other kinds of buildings were also made and these were often located above the burial chamber in the rounded section of the tomb. While the outer perimeter might still be predominated by cylindrical *haniwa*, a few house-shaped *haniwa* in the center might resemble a miniature village.

Archaeologists have also unearthed *haniwa* in the form of ritual specialists and warriors standing in parade-like fashion in front of the houses, as if to stand guard and conduct special ceremonies for the benefit of the deceased.

What role did *haniwa* play?

This now leads us to the question of function and intended audience. What role did *haniwa* play? Who or what was the intended audience? No one knows for sure, but a number of theories have been proposed. It is also important to remember that function and meaning changed over time and place. The most common understanding is that *haniwa* were initially used to define the perimeter of the sacred tomb, separating and magically protecting the deceased from the profane space of the living.

With the development of *haniwa* modeled after humans, the ritual specialists were probably arranged on the tomb to re-enact funerary ceremonies seeking to protect the deceased from harm in the supernatural world, while warriors likely stood guard against enemies—whether human or not. In this sense, *haniwa* may have been intended to be seen by the un-living, perhaps demons or vengeful ghosts. At the same time, some scholars believe *haniwa* were also intended to be seen by the living (even if only a highly selective few). The range and kinds of *haniwa* representing aspects from the life of the deceased may have served to indicate the high status and wealth of the tomb's occupants. Inclusion of animal-shaped *haniwa* could be explained as an attempt to replicate a kind of exotic zoo or pleasure garden stocked with animals acquired by the deceased, but this is highly speculative.



Figure 13.5.4.84: Haniwa (Hollow Clay Sculpture) of a Warrior, Kofun period, Japan, 5th – early 6th century, earthenware with painted, incised and applied decoration (Kanto region) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Style

As for stylistic aspects, the anthropomorphic (human-shaped) *haniwa* have a distinct appearance, consisting of a small head and blank, minimalist face with cutout openings for eyes and almost no attempt to portray a body with any degree of realism. Yet,

oddly, there is a tremendous amount of detail on accessories and wardrobe, often appearing as lifelike replicas of actual weaponry, metal ornaments, and clothing. This somewhat bizarre contrast between the general and the specific is puzzling. One theory suggests that faces and heads were kept small and plain to keep each *haniwa* as light as possible on top, preventing the clay figure from toppling over. The large holes that perforate various sections may have had a similar function, to reduce overall weight and to facilitate uniform drying of the wet clay as a way to prevent cracks. In this sense, although physical, bodily attributes could be compromised, the correct tools and wardrobe that both identify and empower individuals to fulfill their job requirements were of utmost importance.

Among the *haniwa*, it could be said that the most precise, careful attention to detail was reserved for warriors and their horses, reminding us of the critical role played by the military during the Kofun period—a time of massive armed conflict. We now turn to the only *haniwa* that has received designation as a National Treasure in Japan—the *Haniwa Warrior* from Gunma prefecture currently housed at Tokyo National Museum.



Figure **13.5.4.85**: Haniwa Armored Man, National treasure, excavated in Iizuka-machi, Ota City, Gunma Prefecture, Kofun period/6th century 130.5 cm (Tokyo National Museum) **zoomable image** ©National Institutes for Cultural Heritage

Closeup of the Warrior Haniwa

This national treasure (TNM J-36697) is one of several *haniwa* unearthed from the vicinity of Ōta city in Gunma prefecture, which tells us that this was an advanced, regional center for *haniwa* manufacture (Gunma is located to the north of Tokyo, quite far from Nara). This *haniwa* offers viewers a rare opportunity to see the detailed armor and weaponry (sword, bow, and quiver) of an ancient clay warrior from this region during the late Kofun period.

Starting with the visorless helmet, especially fascinating is the series of small, evenly spaced half-spherical rivets that appear on a raised section on top of the helmet, in addition to raised strips that connect the sides and front to a narrow band that circles around the forehead and continues behind the head. These rivets are believed to represent metal rivets, suggesting that the warrior's head was protected by a metal helmet. Attached to the helmet are thick protective ear flaps, seemingly made of padded fabric or leather, while a sheet of thinner material wraps around the rest of the head and neck. Rivets also appear on the narrow quiver, containing four or more arrows, strapped to the warrior's back.

The short-sleeved body armor that flares outward near the hips does not have rivets, but is covered by thin, vertically incised markings. Two large looped ties found on the chest suggest that this armor was laced together; whether the armor was made by stringing together thin iron plates is unclear based on the visual evidence, but remains as a possibility.

On both forearms, the clay warrior wears padded, protective guards. A wide, sheathed sword falls diagonally across the front of the body, apparently hanging from the waist: the warrior has his right hand on the hilt, ready to the draw the sword at a moment's notice. The fingers of the left hand gently clasp a thin, vertical object that seems to be a bow; fastened just above the wrist on this hand is a thick, sausage-like object that may be a device to protect his hand from the bowstring.




Figure **13.5.4.86**: Helmet (detail), *Haniwa Armored Man*, National treasure, excavated in Iizuka-machi, Ota City, Gunma Prefecture, Kofun period/6th century 130.5 cm (Tokyo National Museum) ©National Institutes for Cultural Heritage



Figure **13.5.4.88**: Face (detail), *Haniwa Armored Man*, National treasure, excavated in Iizuka-machi, Ota City, Gunma Prefecture, Kofun period/6th century 130.5 cm (Tokyo National Museum) ©National Institutes for Cultural Heritage

Standing upright with a mask-like, emotionless face (two narrow slits for eyes, an even more narrow slit for the mouth, and a protruding nose), you might not feel immediately threatened by this warrior. Yet, after observing how this *haniwa* warrior is, in fact, extremely well-armed with his formidable armor, a weapon in each hand, and supply of arrows on his back—clearly prepared to quickly strike down any enemy that comes his way—you might become a bit more apprehensive.

The intended function of this particular *haniwa* is not ambiguous, but the question of whether all *haniwa*—both figurative and non-figurative—were believed to protect the tomb's occupants in similar fashion is one that is difficult to answer, inviting us to keep pondering the secrets that were buried both inside and outside *kofun* in ancient Japan.

Additional resources:

Haniwa Armored Man, zoomable images from the e-Museum for the National Treasures & Important Cultural Properties of National Museums, Japan

Kofun Period on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Haniwa at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Haniwa on the Google Art Project

Haniwa Horse at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Haniwa at LACMA

Museum of the Sakitama Ancient Burial Mounds

Haniwa at the Asian Art Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

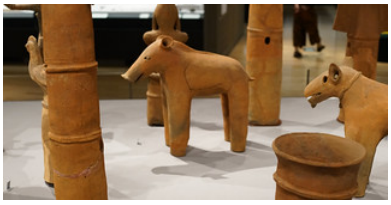
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88698



Figure 13.5.4.89: More Smarthistory images…

Nara period (710-794)

Tōdai-ji

by DR. DEANNA MACDONALD



Figure **13.5.4.90**: Daibutsuden (Great Buddha Hall), Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan, 743, rebuilt. c. 1700 (photo: author, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Built to impress, twice

When completed in the 740s, Tōdai-ji (or “Great Eastern Temple”) was the largest building project ever on Japanese soil. Its creation reflects the complex intermingling of Buddhism and politics in early Japan. When it was rebuilt in the twelfth century, it ushered in a new era of Shoguns and helped to found Japan’s most celebrated school of sculpture. It was built to impress. Twice. What is a shogun?

Definition: Shogun

"The term shogun...is an ancient military term that was adopted in the twelfth century for the dominant warlord who held political and martial power in Japan while the emperor in Kyoto maintained his position as figural head of state and cultural leader. The members of the Minamoto, Ashikaga, and Tokugawa families who held the position of shogun successively from the twelfth to nineteenth centuries varied greatly in the extent and security of their authority and the stability and prosperity of the realm under their command." (Department of Asian Art. "Shoguns and Art". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shga/hd_shga.htm (October 2004))

Buddhism, Emperor Shomu and the creation of Tōdai-ji

The roots of Tōdai-ji are found in the arrival of Buddhism in Japan in the sixth century. Buddhism made its way from India along the Silk Route through Central Asia, China and Korea. Mahayana Buddhism was officially introduced to the Japanese Imperial court around 552 by an emissary from a Korean king who offered the Japanese Emperor Kimmei a gilded bronze statue of the Buddha, a copy of the Buddhist sutras (sacred writings) and a letter stating: “This doctrine can create religious merit and retribution without measure and bounds and so lead on to a full appreciation of the highest wisdom.” About Mahayana Buddhism and the Silk Road

Definition: Mahayana Buddhism and the Silk Road

Two major schools of Buddhist thought are Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. According to Theravada Buddhists, each person is responsible for their own enlightenment. Mahayana Buddhism was a school that arose c. 100 C.E. Mahayana literally means: the big vehicle. It is a big “vehicle” that transports more sentient beings across the ocean of existence, from the wheel of Samsara (reincarnation) to enlightenment and nirvana. The cornerstone of Mahayana Buddhism is belief in bodhisattvas, altruistic enlightened beings who delay their own final nirvana until every sentient being reaches enlightenment. (explanation by Dr. Melody Rod-ari)

"**The Silk Road** is a metaphor for long-distance trade across Asia that first developed from around 300 B.C. to roughly 200 A.D. It was not, in fact, a "road," but rather a collection of land and sea routes linking cities, trading posts, caravan watering places, and hostels between the eastern Mediterranean and China." ("The Silk Road." New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions.../the-silk-road (June 2009))



Figure 13.5.4.91: The Great Buddha (Daibutsu), 17th century replacement of an 8th century sculpture, Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan (photo: author, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Buddhism quickly became associated with the Imperial court whose members became the patrons of early Buddhist art and architecture. This connection between sacred and secular power would define Japan's ruling elite for centuries to come. These early Buddhist projects also reveal the receptivity of Japan to foreign ideas and goods—as Buddhist monks and craftspeople came to Japan.

Buddhism's influence grew in the Nara era (710-794) during the reign of Emperor Shomu and his consort, Empress Komyo who fused Buddhist doctrine and political policy—promoting Buddhism as the protector of the state. In 741, reportedly following the Empress' wishes, Shomu ordered temples, monasteries and convents to be built throughout Japan's 66 provinces. This national system of monasteries, known as the Kokubun-ji, would be under the jurisdiction of the new imperial Tōdai-ji ("Great Eastern Temple") to be built in the capital of Nara.

Building Tōdai-ji

Why build on such an unprecedented scale? Emperor Shomu's motives seem to have been a mix of the spiritual and the pragmatic: in his bid to unite various Japanese clans under his centralized rule, Shomu also promoted spiritual unity. Tōdai-ji would be the chief temple of the Kokubun-ji system and be the center of national ritual. Its construction brought together the best craftspeople in Japan with the latest building technology. It was architecture to impress—displaying the power, prestige and piety of the imperial house of Japan.

However the project was not without its critics. Every person in Japan was required to contribute through a special tax to its construction and the court chronicle, the *Shoku Nihon-gi*, notes that, "…the people are made to suffer by the construction of Tōdai-ji and the clans worry over their suffering."

Bronze Buddha

Tōdai-ji included the usual components of a Buddhist complex. At its symbolic heart was the massive *hondō* (main hall), also called the *Daibutsuden* (Great Buddha Hall), which when completed in 752, measured 50 meters by 86 meters and was supported

by 84 massive cypress pillars. It held a huge bronze Buddha figure (the *Daibutsu*) created between 743 to 752. Subsequently, two nine-story pagodas, a lecture hall and quarters for the monks were added to the complex.



Figure **13.5.4.92**: The Great Buddha (Daibutsu), 17th century replacement of an 8th century sculpture, Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan (photo: **throgers,** CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The statue was inspired by similar statues of the Buddha in China and was commissioned by Emperor Shomu in 743. This colossal Buddha required all the available copper in Japan and workers used an estimated 163,000 cubic feet of charcoal to produce the metal alloy and form the bronze figure. It was completed in 749, though the snail-curl hair (one of the 32 signs of the Buddha's divinity) took an additional two years.

When completed, the entire Japanese court, government officials and Buddhist dignitaries from China and India attended the Buddha's "eye-opening" ceremony. Overseen by the Empress Koken and attended by the retired Emperor Shomu and Empress Komyo, an Indian monk named Bodhisena is recorded as painting in the Buddha's eyes, symbolically imbuing it with life. The Emperor Shōmu himself is said to have sat in front of Great Buddha and vowed himself to be a servant of the Three Treasures of Buddhism: the Buddha, Buddhist Law, and Buddhist Monastic Community. No images of the ceremony survive but a Nara period scroll painting depicts a sole, humbly small figure at the Daibutsu's base suggesting its awe-inspiring presence.



Figure 13.5.4.93: Great Buddha, lotus petal (detail), 17th century replacement of an 8th century sculpture, Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan

The Daibutsu sits upon a bronze lotus petal pedestal that is engraved with images of the Shaka (the historical Buddha, known also as Shakyamuni) Buddha and varied Bodhisattvas (sacred beings). The petal surfaces (image left) are etched with fleshy figures with swelling chests, full faces and swirling drapery in a style typical of the elegant naturalism of Nara era imagery. The petals are the only reminders of the original statue, which was destroyed by fire in the twelfth century. Today's statue is a seventeenth-century replacement but remains a revered figure with an annual ritual cleaning ceremony each August.

Chogen and the rebuilding of Tōdai-ji in the Kamakura Era (1185-1333)

The Genpei Civil War (1180-85) saw countless temples destroyed as Buddhist clergy took sides in clan warfare. Japan's principal temple Tōdai-ji sided with the eventually victorious Minamoto clan but was burned by the soon-to-be defeated Taira clan in 1180.

The destruction of this revered Temple shocked Japan. At the war's end, the reconstruction of Tōdai-ji was one of the first projects undertaken by Minamoto Yoritomo who, as the new ruling Shogun, was eager to present the Minamoto as national saviors. The aristocracy and the warrior elite contributed funds and the Buddhist priest Shunjobo Chogen was placed in charge of reconstruction. Tōdai-ji again became the largest building project in Japan.



Figure 13.5.4.94: Nandaimon (Great South Gate), end of the 12th century ,Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan



Figure **13.5.4.95**: Brackets, Nandaimon (Great South Gate), end of the 12th century , Tōdai-ji, Nara, Japan (photo: author, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Chōgen was unique in his generation in that he made three trips to China between 1167-1176. His experience of Song Dynasty Buddhist architecture inspired the rebuilding of the temples of Nara, in what became know as the “Great Buddha” or the “Indian” style.

The key-surviving example of this style is Tōdai-ji’s Great South Gate—Nandaimon—which dates to 1199. An elaborate bracketing system supports the broad-eaved, two-tiered roof. The Nandaimon holds the 2 massive wooden sculptures of Guardian Kings (Kongō Rikishi) by masters of the Kei School of Sculpture.

Kei School of Sculpture

The large scale rebuilding after the Genpei Civil War created a multitude of commissions for builders, carpenters and sculptors. This concentration of talent led to the emergence of the Kei School of sculpture—considered by many to be the peak of Japanese sculpture. Noted for its austere realism and the dynamic, muscularity of its figures, the Kei School reflects the Buddhism and warrior-centered culture of the Kamakura era (1185–1333).

Unkei is considered the leading figure of the Kei school, with a career spanning over 30 years. His distinctive style emerged in his work on the refurbishment of the many Nara temples/shrines, most particularly Tōdai-ji. Unkei’s fierce guardian figure Ungyō in the Nandaimon is typical of Unkei’s powerful, dynamic bodies. It stands in dramatic contrapposto opposite the other muscular Guardian King, Agyō, created with Kaikei and other Kei sculptors.

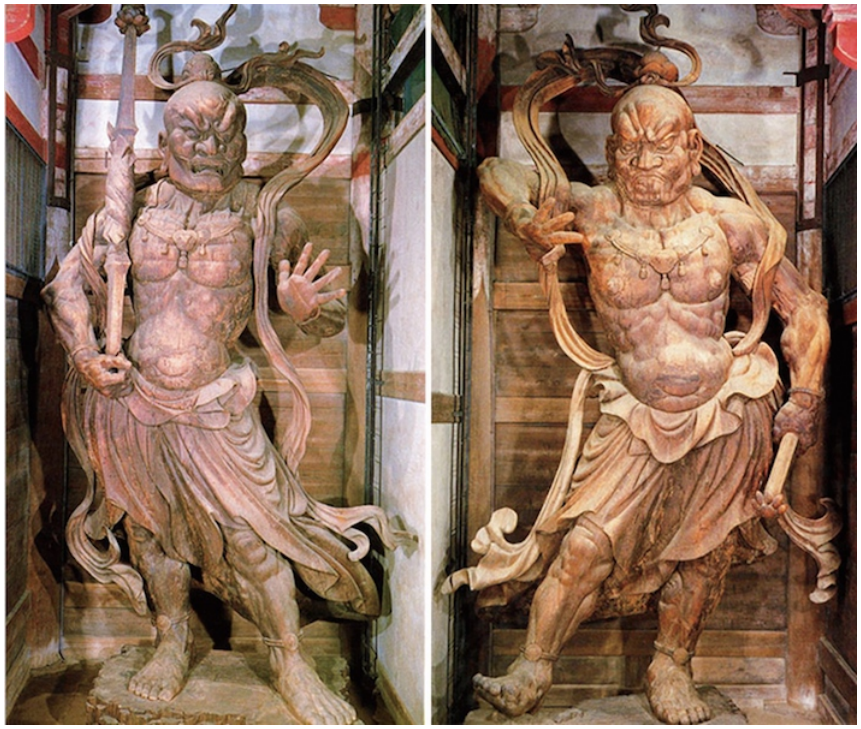


Figure 13.5.4.96: Left: Ungyō, right: Agyō, both c. 1203, Nandaimon (Great South Gate), Tōdai-ji Nara, Japan (Asahi Shimbun file photo)

Both figures are fashioned of cypress wood and stand over eight meters tall. They were made using the joint block technique (*yosegi zukuri*), that used eight or nine large wood blocks over which another layer of wooden planks were attached. The outer wood was then carved and painted. Only a few traces of color remain.

Ecology, craftsmanship & early Buddhist art in Japan

The grand Buddhist architectural and sculptural projects of early Japan share a common material—wood–and are thus closely linked to the natural environment and to the long history of wood craftsmanship in Japan.

When Korean craftsmen brought Buddhist temple architecture to Japan in the sixth century, Japanese carpenters were already using complex wooden joints (instead of nails) to hold buildings together. The Korean's technology allowed for the support of larger, tile-roof structures that used brackets and sturdy foundation pillars to funnel weight to the ground. This technology ushered in a new, larger scale in Japanese architecture.

Monumental timber framed architecture requires enormous amounts of wood. The wood of choice was cypress, which grows up to forty meters tall and has a straight tight grain that easily splits into long beams and is resistant to rot.

The eighth-century campaign to construct Buddhist temples in every Japanese province under Imperial control (mostly in the Kinai area, today home to Osaka and Kyoto) is estimated to have resulted in the construction 600-850 temples using three million cubic meters of wood. As the years progressed Kinai's old growth forests were exhausted and builders had to travel farther for wood.



Figure **13.5.4.97**: Model, Nara-era (8th century) Tōdai-ji

By far the most prestigious and wood-demanding project was the Imperial monastery of Tōdai-ji. Eighth-century Tōdai-ji had two 9-storey pagodas and a 50 x 86 meter great hall supported by 84 massive cypress pillars that used at least 2200 acres of local forest. After Tōdai-ji's destruction in 1180, it was rebuilt under the supervision of the monk Chogen, who solicited aid from all over Western Japan. Builders had to travel hundreds of kilometers from Kinai to find suitable wood. Whole forests were cleared to find tall cypresses for pillars, which were then transported at great cost: 118 dams were built to raise river levels in order to transport the massive pillars. And that was only the pillars—wood for the rest of the structure came from at least ten provinces.

Tōdai-ji's reconstructed main hall was only half the size of the original and its pagodas several stories shorter. The availability or scarcity of quality local wood was a major factor in the design and evolution of architecture in Japan. For example, the growing scarcity of cypress of structural dimensions led to innovations that allowed carpenters to work with less straight-grained woods, like red pine and zelkova.

Additional resources:

Historic monuments of Ancient Nara (UNESCO)

Video from UNESCO on the great Buddha sculpture

Japan, 500-100 A.D. on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Shōsōin Repository and its treasure

by DR. MARIACHIARA GASPARINI

Shōsōin Repository



Figure **13.5.4.98**: Shōsōin Repository (photo: **z tanuki**, CC BY 3.0)

In the Japanese city, Nara, on the northwest rear corner of **Tōdai-ji Temple's** Daibutsuden Hall stands a building largely unaltered since the 8th century. Of age-darkened cypress and deceptively plain, its distinctively ribbed walls, punctuated by large flat

rectangular doors, find an echo in the linear grooves of its deeply eaved, flaring roof of ceramic tiles. Poised on forty columns and lacking stairs, its simple box shape seems to float. This vision of austere, geometric elegance is the Shōsōin Repository.



Figure **13.5.4.99**: Map of the Silk Roads (various overland routes across Eurasia)

For almost 1200 years, until the twentieth century, it preserved in excellent condition approximately nine thousand artifacts from China, Southeast Asia, Iran, and the Middle East—a miscellany connecting ancient Japan to the cultural trade and artistic exchange of the Eurasian continent. While other collections worldwide hold treasures from the ancient Silk Roads, the Shōsōin is unique as a time capsule of the entire known world of its time—when Nara-period Japan glowed as a star in the brilliant cultural cosmos of **Tang-dynasty China** (618-907).



Figure **13.5.4.100**: The Daibutsu, Vairocana, at Tōdai-ji, Nara (photo: **JahnmitJa**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The structure and its context

Despite its grand spiritual setting, the Shōsōin itself is practical, and not intrinsically religious. It typifies a renowned form of storehouse called an *azekura zukuri*, developed by ancient Japanese village carpenters to hold grain and other foodstuffs that formed the lifeblood of their agrarian society. Often referred to as of "log cabin style," this two thousand-year-old design is not the

primitive, drafty pile the expression typically calls to mind. Nor is it simply a matter of taste. Its appearance owes to sophisticated structural engineering that makes brilliant use of wood's basic property to expand and contract according to weather conditions. The precisely planed, triangular logs interlock to form a flat wall on the interior and the uniquely ribbed exterior.

The ceramic tiles and hip-and-gable design of the roof both shed water and repel fire. The columns that raise it from the ground stand on natural stone. In all, this creates a natural climate regulation system that lessens the dampness of Japan's humid climate, and discourages infestation by vermin. The absence of permanent stairs deters thieves. The wooden chests in which most of the objects were kept provided additional protection, preventing light and pollution from damaging the organic materials. The secure, ventilated conditions proved ideal for protecting the prized possessions of Japan's Buddhist monastic communities. The Shōsōin is the oldest extant example of such treasure houses.



Figure 13.5.4.101: Azekura zukuri interlocking technique (photo: ignis, CC BY-SA 2.5)

The Shōsōin interior contains three rooms on two floors, each with an entrance door. Despite the lack of written sources confirming its dating, a recent analysis of the timbers has confirmed a middle-8th century construction date (note that the middle room walls with additional flat beams that are different from those of the other two, is likely not original). Restorations done during the much later Edo period (1603 – 1868), including iron strips added to the columns and copper plates added to protect the floor edging, do not significantly impact the repository.

Objects as Buddhist offerings

Founded by early emperors, Tōdai-ji was one Japan's highest-ranking Buddhist monastic communities and remains an important religious center. Patronage from members of imperial and noble families, as acts of piety, made it among the wealthiest. The Shōsōin mainly served to house personal possessions donated by Empress Kōmyō to the Daibutsu Vairocana, a Buddha that is the world's largest cast-bronze statue. These gifts were made after the death of her husband, Emperor Shōmu in 756, in order to ensure the protection of his soul. These offerings were stored in the Northern room.

Senior monks used the Middle and Southern rooms for ceremonial objects, and in the 10th century, articles and documents were added from another smaller repository nearby. While the Southern room remained accessible until the Meiji period (1868-1912), sometime in the 12th century, Japan's Imperial household sealed the Middle and Northern rooms. High-ranking ministers took responsibility for their security. From this point on the Shōsōin was rarely opened and over the centuries it survived both war and fire, leaving virtually all the ancient cultural treasures intact.

The treasure at the Shōsōin Repository

The thousands of items preserved in the Shōsōin repository include manuscripts, musical instruments, textiles, shoes, banners, ceramics and glass, metalwork, and lacquerware. These objects showcase the high level of craftsmanship and the complex techniques available to the imperial household during this early period, some of which are now lost.

We also benefit from the meticulous records of these objects kept by ancient caretakers. Thanks to an inscription on each, today we know its date, usage, and sometimes its provenance—all of which help to put the objects in context. The material preserved in the repository is particularly important because it created the foundation for the Japanese art and style that followed, which originated in this era against the backdrop of China's Tang Dynasty (which has long been seen as a golden age of art, music, and literature, and economic and political influence across East Asia). Nara was modeled after Chang'an (now Xi'an in China) the Tang capital, and a self-proclaimed center of Buddhism. It was especially between the 7th and 8th centuries that Japan, welcoming foreign people and sending envoys abroad, studied, preserved, and developed its own artistic culture.

Silk Roads

The unquestionable beauty and finesse of the mulberry wood lute inlaid with mother of pearl makes evident Tang China's wide, complex cultural impact. Known in Japan as a *Kuwanoki no genia* and in China as a *pipa*, this pear-shaped 5-string instrument was likely introduced originally to China from Central Asia in the 1st or 2nd century C.E., and would attain a lasting popularity. This particular 8th century example from the Shōsōin very much recalls the type of *pipa* depicted on murals of the 3rd-4th century Buddhist cave complexes of Dunhuang and Yulin in what is now Gansu Province, China—vestiges of a chain of major monastic centers that once spread Buddhism and served as junctions for the interchange of ideas, goods and peoples along the northern Silk Roads.



Figure **13.5.4.102**: *Kuwanoki no genia* (a composite image showing front and back), Tang Dynasty, 8th century, (Shōsōin Repository, Nara) (front and back)



Figure **13.5.4.103**: Mother-of-pearl inlaid bronze and lacquer mirror (Shōsōin Repository, Nara)

Far east across the Yellow Sea, the Sea of Japan, and the ancient kingdoms of the Korean peninsula, the route concluded with the imperial monasteries of Nara-era Japan, including Tōdai-ji.

The large floral motif embellishing the *Kuwanoki no genia* and other objects in the repository, such as mirrors, boxes, and ritual rugs offer further links. Typical of the late Tang period, this motif is generally recognized as an emblem of the Tang dynasty; and in Japan it is known as *kara-hana*, meaning "Tang flower."



Figure **13.5.4.104**: Musicians (pipa at the bottom right and held by the central dancing character behind the shoulders) from the Western Paradise of Amitaba, Dunhuang Cave 112, Middle Tang Period, 8th century

Sasanian influence

Correspondence with visual material from these Chinese caves confirms that many objects in the Shōsōin enjoyed actual use. The repository artifacts likewise make very tangible the Silk Route's far-flung connections and the complexities. For example, a handsome glass bowl with cut hollow facets finds an echo in a 9th century banner discovered in the **Mogao caves at Dunhuang**.



Figure 13.5.4.105: Left: Hakururi no wan from the Shōsōin Repository; right: Banner (detail) of a Bodhisattva holding a glass (British Museum)

The banner portrays an important deity, a Bodhisattva, holding a similar bowl his hand (in Japanese the bowl is called a *Hakururi no wan*). This type of glass is commonly known as "Sasanian glass," referring to the last pre-Islamic Iranian dynasty that, from the 3rd to the 7th century, dominated a vast Eurasia territory (from Central Asia to Iraq). But this type of glass was already being produced before the Sasanian period, and also elsewhere in the Middle East. A similar, much earlier type also was discovered in **Palmyra** (in modern Syria).

Ancient fabrics were among the most highly prized of luxury items in ancient times and represent the majority of the artifacts from the Shōsōin. Similar patterned textiles remain among the important possessions of other Buddhist communities established during the era of imperial Nara (such as Hōryū-ji). Almost entirely made of silk and ramie, they belong to the second period of textile development in Japan, which like other items in the Shōsōin, reflect Tang China's influence in their motifs, such as the floral medallion made in weft-faced compounds (generally known in the West as samite). An earlier, first phase can be dated to between the 4th or 5th centuries, possibly when early emperors invited textile weavers to Japan from Korean kingdoms and China, societies that were then far more sophisticated.



Figure 13.5.4.106: Reproduction of a silk twill textile, woven in Japan, imitating a Sasanian Persian original, from the Shōsōin repository in Nara (originally held in Horyuji Temple), 6th–7th century (private collection)

In particular, a clan of artisans called the *Nishiki* is mentioned in early Japanese historical accounts, most famously "A Record of Ancient Things" (*Kojiki*) and "Chronicles of Japan" (*Nihon Shoki*). Not by coincidence, the term *nishiki* has long referred to Japanese polychrome patterned weavings.

Amongst the Iranian or Iranian-inspired artifacts in Nara, there is a particular *nishiki* fragment, now considered a national treasure, which shows the artistic collaboration among a diverse group of artisans of different ethnic groups who combined their artistic and technical expertise. Its design consists of a repetition of beaded roundels enclosing pairs of mirrored hunters on a winged horse, drawing a bow at a rearing lion. All the pictorial elements in the composition (crown, roundel, flower, etc.) link to Sasanian motifs, though the Chinese characters in the bodies of the horses suggest possible Chinese-Central Asian production. Such collaborations were quite frequent along the Silk Road, especially in the area between Sogdiana (a colony of the Eastern Sasanian Empire) and Turfan in the Xinjiang Province. The composition often appears on Sasanian metalwork in collections worldwide.

Today

In 1997, the Shōsōin building was designated as a National Treasure and registered as part of the World Heritage. Its contents are no longer kept there but in two secure buildings built nearby in 1953 and 1962, called the Eastern and the Western Repository. Every autumn, for about two weeks, fifty to sixty items are exhibited in the Nara National Museum (with a related catalog), giving the public the opportunity to admire and learn about many of the Buddhist-inspired artifacts preserved by the Shōsōin that characterize the "Nara period." The Shōsōin's treasure as a whole represents the cultural transfers that occurred along the Silk Road, which stretched in the East through China and Korea, and placed Japan in an ancient global context.

Additional resources:

History of Shōsōin from the Imperial Household Agency shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/Home/About/History

Collections of Persian Art in Japan

Complete list of SHOSOIN Collection solid objects 'Shosoin Tanabetu MOKUROKU', Nara, Japan

Japan's Oldest Archive: A Workshop on the Shosoin

Heleanor Feltham, "Lions, Silks and Silver: The Influence of Sasanian Persia," Victor H. Mair, editor, Sino-Platonic Papers, 2010.

Traveling the Silk Road from the American Museum of Natural History

Ry-Oichi Hayashi. *The Silk Road and the Shoso-In* (The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art ; V. 6. Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 1980).

Kaneo Matsumoto, *Jōdai –Gire: 7th and 8th Century Textiles in Japan from the Shōsō-in and Hōryū-ji* (Kyoto: Shikosha Publishing Co. Ltd., 1984).

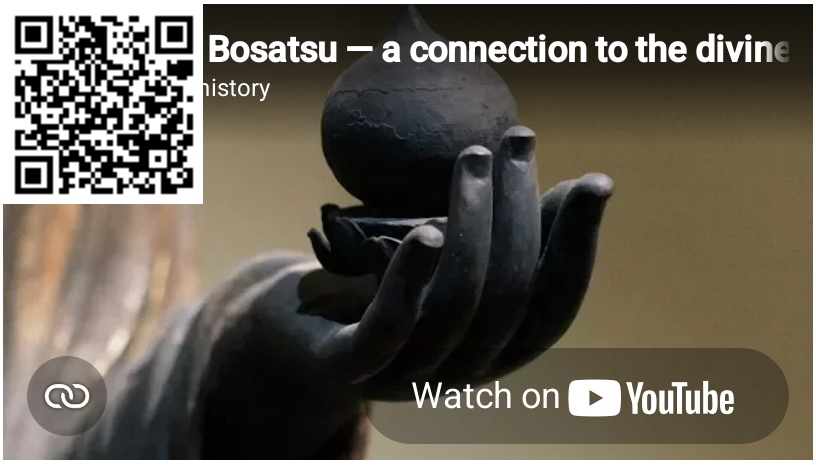
Kamakura period

The shoguns (military leaders) gradually gained power over the nobility during this turbulent period.

1185 - 1333

Jizō Bosatsu

*by **DR. HANNAH SIGUR** and **DR. STEVEN ZUCKER***



Video **13.5.4.2**: Jizō Bosatsu, late 12th to mid-13th century, Kamakura period, Japan, wood with lacquer, gold leaf, cutout gold foil decoration, and color, 181.6 x 72.4 x 57.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) Speakers: Dr. Hannah Sigur and Dr. Steven Zucker

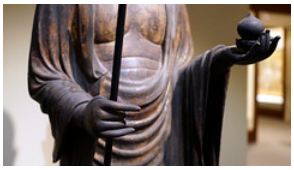
Additional resources:

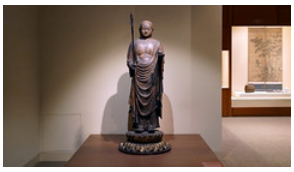
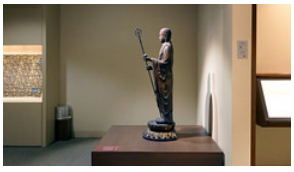
This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

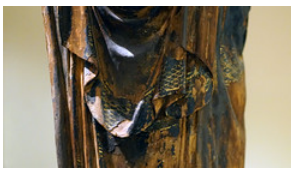
Kamakura and Nanbokucho Periods on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







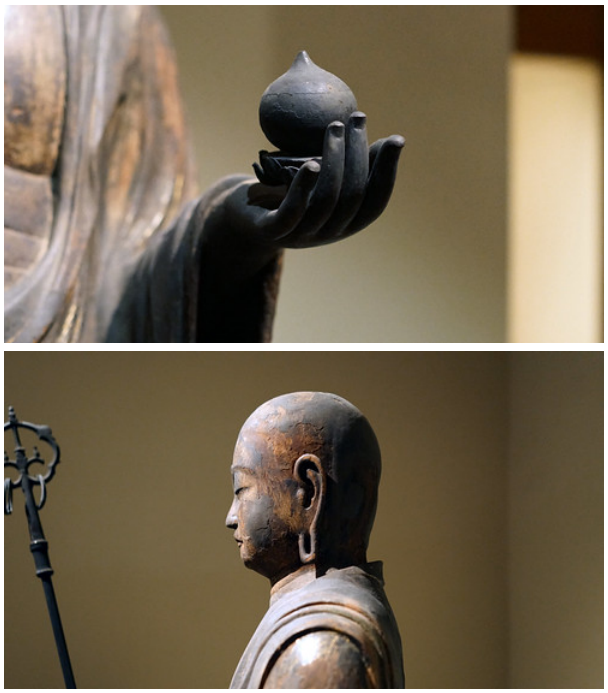



Figure 13.5.4.107: More Smarthistory images…

Prince Shōtoku at Age Two

by DR. RACHEL SAUNDERS and ANGELA CHANG



Video 13.5.4.3: Prince Shōtoku at Age Two, Kamakura period, c. 1292, Japanese cypress, assembled woodblock construction with polychromy and rock-crystal inlaid eyes (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum)

Speakers:
Rachel Saunders, Ph.D., Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Associate Curator of Asian Art, Harvard Art Museums
Angela Chang, Conservator of Objects and Sculpture, Assistant Director, Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard Art Museums
Steven Zucker, Ph.D.

Additional resources:

This work at the Harvard Art Museums

Research on Prince Shōtoku from Harvard's East Asian Art program

Illustrated Biography of Prince Shōtoku at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace

by DR. HANNAH SIGUR



Figure **13.5.4.108**: Burning Palace (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

It is hard to imagine an image of war that matches the visceral and psychological power of the *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*. This thirteenth-century portrayal of a notorious incident from a century earlier appears on a hand scroll, a common East Asian painting format in Japan called an *emaki*. It also is a prime example of the action-packed *otoko-e*, "men's paintings," created in the Kamakura period.

Definition: Hand scroll

A handscroll is meant to be held and unrolled section by section horizontally in contrast to a scroll that is intended to be hung and is vertically oriented.

Definition: Kamakura period

The **Kamakura period** lasted from 1185 until 1333. It was initiated by the Shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo and marked the beginning of feudal Japan and the samurai caste.



Figure **13.5.4.109**: Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace fully unrolled (right side above, left side below), Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Designed to be unrolled in sections for close-up viewing, it shows the basic features of this pictorial form: a bird's eye view of action moves right-to-left (between a written introduction and conclusion). In vibrant outline and washes of color, the story (one

event in an insurrection—more on this below) unfolds sequentially, so the main characters appear multiple times. The attention to detail is so exact that historians consider it a uniquely valuable reference for this period: from the royal mansion's walled gateways, unpainted wooden buildings linked by corridors, bark roofs, large shutters and bamboo blinds that open to verandas, to the scores of foot soldiers, cavalry, courtiers, priests, imperial police, and even the occasional lady—each individualized by gesture and facial expression from horror to morbid humor, robes, armor, and weaponry easily identifiable according to rank, design, and type.



Figure **13.5.4.110**: Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace without framing text, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Unfurled this work stands apart. Its now-forgotten artist used the expressive potential of the long, narrow *emaki* format with such interpretive brilliance that he perhaps considered that on occasion it might be fully open. He organized a jumble of minutiae into a cohesive narrative arc.



Figure **13.5.4.111**: Opening text and ox cart (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Beginning from a point of ominous calm, a single ox carriage transports the eye to a tangle of shoving and colliding carts and warriors. With escalating violence, the energy pulses, swells, and then rushes to a crescendo of graphic hand-to-hand mayhem—decapitations, stabbings and hacking, the battle's apex marked at the center by the palace rooflines slashing through the havoc like a bolt of lightening followed by an explosion of billowing flame and women fleeing for their lives amid the din.



Figure **13.5.4.112**: Palace (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

The chaos ebbs as victors and dazed survivors stream through the rear gate, and ends in grisly, surreal calm with the dressed and tagged heads of vanquished nobles on pikes, a disorderly cluster of foot soldiers and cavalry surrounding the ox carriage, their general trotting before them in victorious satisfaction over the smoking wreckage and bloody atrocity left behind.



Figure **13.5.4.113**: Warriors enter palace below a zig-zag roofline (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

The *Night Attack at Sanjô Palace* arrests even the casual viewer with its sheer comprehensibility. Although the artist would likely not have imagined an audience beyond the world he knew, his vision has enthralled viewers across centuries and cultures, making this painting not only among the very finest picture scrolls ever conceived, but also among the most gripping depictions of warfare —creating an irresistible urge to examine the work closely. But in depicting an event that really happened, it comes fully to life only when we know something of what it so vividly portrays.



Figure **13.5.4.114**: One of numerous violent confrontations within the palace (detail), *Attack Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

This begins in a brief introduction to a complicated yet fascinating chapter in Japanese history. Incredibly, the appalling incident at Sanjô Palace depicted on the scroll was but one chapter in the vicious Heiji Insurrection of 1159-60. This short war, with two other famous conflicts before and after, punctuated a brutal epoch that came to a close in 1192 with the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate. The stories of these flashpoints of blood thirst, collectively called *gunki monogatari*, or “war tales,” have inspired a huge body of art over the centuries. *The Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, once part of a larger set that pictorialized the entire Heiji incident, survives with two other scrolls, one of them only in remnants.

Definition: Kamakura shogunate

Shōgun refers to the rule of a military leader. Shōgun warlords ruled Japan from 1192 until 1867 though they were, in theory, appointed by the emperor. Their rule is known as the shogunate.



Figure **13.5.4.115**: First half of the handscroll, *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (Heiji monogatari emaki) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Stories of romanticized martial derring-do, *gunki monogatari* are history recounted by the victors. They celebrate Japan's change from a realm controlled by a royal court to one ruled by samurai. But the events originated in the unusual, even unique, nature of Japan's imperial world. Centered in the city of Kyôto, in some ways it resembled many ancient kingdoms. It was prey to shifting loyalties, betrayals, and factional divisions among ambitious families who would stop at nothing in the quest for power. As elsewhere, emperors had several consorts, and noble daughters served as tools in political marriages to elevate the power of their families, and above all their clan head.



Figure **13.5.4.116**: Second half of the handscroll, *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace* (detail, left half), Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Unusually, a few patriarchs managed over time to displace imperial authority, relegating emperors to stultifying ceremonial functions. And possibly uniquely, Japanese emperors found a way to reclaim some of that lost power: by abdicating in favor of a successor. Freed from onerous rituals, a "retired" emperor could assert himself. Which prince from which wife of which current or previous emperor would succeed to the throne stood highest among the disputes. By the twelfth century, nobles as well as current and retired emperors had all turned to samurai clans to resolve their bitter rivalries.



Figure **13.5.4.117**: Fire (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

The cast of characters in the *Night Attack at the Sanjô Palace* came from this treacherous world. Sanjô Palace was the home of former Emperor Go-Shirakawa, known for a career as the wiliest and longest-lived of retired royals. He had recently abdicated in favor of his son Emperor Nijô. The two emperors backed vying sides of the Fujiwara clan, a conspiratorial family unsurpassed in subjugating and sometimes choosing a succession of emperors. One member of this clan, Fujiwara no Nobuyori,[1] plotted against everyone. The Taira and the Minamoto clans served powerful interests in all of these disputes, while also pursuing their own ambitions as bitter rivals of the other.

Who were the Minamoto and the Taira samurai clans?.

Definition: The Minamoto and the Taira samurai clans

The Taira and Minamoto samurai clans may have originated in the early 9th century when emperors demoted members of their families to the lesser rank of noble.

The samurai Taira clan (also known as Heike) was one of four powerful families during this period.

The samurai Minamoto clan (also known as Genji) was another of the four noble families of this period.



Figure **13.5.4.118**: Dead archer (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Simply put the Night Attack was part of Fujiwara no Nobuyori's bid to seize power by abducting both the emperor and the retired emperor. Backed by Minamoto no Yoshitomo, head of that clan, Nobuyori saw an opportunity when the head of the Taira clan, who supported Emperor Nijō, left Kyōto on a pilgrimage. The *emaki* depicts the seizing of the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa. Three key elements appear multiple times, orienting the eye and organizing the sweep of events: guided by a groom inside, the elegant ox carriage that will carry off Go-Shirakawa opens the action.



Figure **13.5.4.119**: Tumult at the palace gate, note the two women (top left) distinguished by flowing hair and aided by an attendent, fleeing the battle as fast as their voluminous robes will allow (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

We see it knocked about with others in the crush of fighting at the palace wall, on the veranda where Nobuyori in colorful armor orders Go-Shirakawa into it, and finally in the surge of departing victors where two soldiers lolling on top lending an air of indignity and insult to the monarch. Nobuyori, now in court robes and on horseback, appears in front, glancing back at the carriage. A mounted Minamoto Yoshitomo, distinguished by red armor and a distinctive horned helmet, appears twice—behind the carriage as it crashes onto the veranda, and brandishing a bow and arrow, cantering behind it in the departing crowd.



Figure **13.5.4.120**: Palace gate (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace* (detail, left center), Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

The remainder of the Heiji Rebellion story appeared on other *emaki* in the set, now mostly lost: the kidnapping of Emperor Nijô, the slaughter of another noble household, Nobuyori forcing Nijô to appoint him chancellor, Taira Kiyomori's return to decimate the schemers, and finally Kiyomori's mistake—banishing rather than executing several of Minamoto sons. Minamoto no Yoritomo and his brother Yoshitsune would return years later to destroy the Taira clan in the Gempei War and found the first of four military

governments of the Shōgunate that ruled Japan from 1192 until 1867. Emperors and nobles remained in Kyoto, but were politically powerless. Feudal culture came to a violent end in 1868 at the hands of other samurai clans. They brought the young emperor Meiji into a new role as the monarch (really a figurehead) of a modern nation. Over the Meiji era's early tumultuous decades many spectacular works of art left Japan to join important collections in the West. The *Night Attack at Sanjô Palace*, once owned by a powerful samurai family, came into the possession of an influential American who brought it home to Boston. It has been a highlight of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston since 1889.



Figure **13.5.4.121**: Closing sequence (detail), *Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace*, Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) Japanese, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century, 45.9 x 774.5 x 7.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

[1] Japanese surnames come first and given names come second. Fujiwara and Taira are surnames. The Chinese characters used have different pronunciations that can appear at different times. "Minamoto" can be "Genji;" "Taira" can be "Heike."

Additional resources:

This Handscroll at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Interactive scroll, Bowdoin College

The scroll's text:

At about the hour of the ox (2 am) on the ninth day, Lord Nobuyori proceeded with several hundred mounted soldiers to the Sanjō Palace, the residence of the Retired Emperor, and said, "Since I have heard that I am to be struck down, I intend to go to the east. I have served you close at hand for years and have been favored more than others by Your Majesty, and so it is indeed sad for me to part from my lord and abruptly leave the capital."

Then the Retired Emperor said, "What sort of an affair is this? Who would strike you?" But without hearing him out, soldiers hastily brought up the Imperial carriage. "You must hasten into the Imperial carriage. Now, set fire to the Palace," ordered Nobuyori, and His Majesty unwillingly got into the Imperial carriage. Jōsaimon'in had already gotten in. It was Lord Moronaka who had brought up the Imperial carriage. Nobuyori, Yoshitomo, Shigenari, the Sado Vice-Minister of Ceremonial, Minamoto Mitsumoto, the Commisioner of the Police, Suezane, the former Commisioner of Police, and the others surrounded the Imperial carriage and took it to the Imperial Palace. They shoved him into the Palace Single-Copy Library, where Shigenari and Mitsumoto guarded him.

Soldiers blockaded the Palace on all four sides and set fire to it. Those who fled out they shot or hacked to death. Many jumped into the wells, hoping that they might save themselves. The ladies-in-waiting of high and low rank and the girls of the women's quarters, running out screaming and shouting, fell and lay prostrate, stepped on by the horses and trampled by the men. It was more than terrible. No one knows the number of persons who lost their lives.

Some said that Yoshitomo had raised a rebellion and had broken into the Sanjō Palace in a night attack and set it on fire and that even the Retired Emperor had not escaped the flames. Some also shouted that His Imperial Highness had gone to the Imperial Palace. Consequently, the "Great Lord" the Lord Chancellor, and all the other nobles and courtiers came in a crowd. the noise of their horses and carriages rushing back and forth was like thunder, and greatly did it resound both in heaven and on earth.

At the hour of the tiger (4 am) the same night, they seized the dwelling of the Shinzei at Anegakoji Nishinotoin and set fire to it. For the past three or four years arms had been banned, and the Empire had been at peace, but now suddenly this disturbance had broken out, and both the Imperial Palace and the capital were filled with soldiers. The noble and lowly lamented together, wondering what had happened.

Translation from Reischauer & Yamagiwa, *Early Japanese Literature*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1951, p. 451-453



Video **13.5.4.4**

Muromachi period

Named for a part of Kyoto, this period produced some of Japan's most treasured art and architecture.

1392 - 1573

Bamboo in the Four Seasons: painting and poetry in Japan

by DR. SONIA COMAN and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.5.4.5**: *Bamboo in the Four Seasons*, attributed to Tosa Mistunobu, late 15th to early 16th century (Muromachi period), Japan, ink, color and gold leaf on paper, each screen 157 x 360 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Sonia Coman and Steven Zucker

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





Figure 13.5.4.122: More Smarthistory images…

Ryōanji (Peaceful Dragon Temple)

by DR. YOONJUNG SEO



Video 13.5.4.6: Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Zen Buddhism and the rock garden of Ryōanji

Ryōanji is a temple located in north Kyoto, Japan affiliated with a branch of Zen Buddhism. The followers of Zen Buddhism pursued “enlightenment” or “awakening” by means of self-introspection and personal experience in daily life. The quintessence and aesthetics of Zen is epitomized in the rock garden and architecture of Ryōanji.

Ryōanji thrived as a great Zen center for the cultural activities of the elite from the late sixteenth through the first half of the seventeenth century under the patronage of the Hosokawa family. The temple and its gardens are listed as one of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto. In the late 1990, the garden attracted over a million visitors annually and is regarded as an expression of Zen art and a symbol of Zen Buddhism and Japanese culture.



Figure 13.5.4.123: Rock garden, Ryōanji, Kyoto, Japan (photo: Vincent Briccoli, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

When visitors pass through main gate, they encounter the Mirror Pond (Kyōyōchi) on the left with a scenic view of surrounding mountains. Walking along the pilgrim's path and entering the second gate, visitors arrive at the main building of the monastery, the hōjo (abbot's residence). The rock garden is located in the front of the hojo and is viewed either from the wooden veranda embracing the building or from inside the room. What is Zen Buddhism?

Dry Landscape Garden (*karesansui*) in Ryōanji



Figure 13.5.4.124: Rock garden, Ryōanji, Kyoto, Japan (photo: Mr Hicks46, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The Ryōanji garden is the one of the most famous examples of a rock garden—a form which developed during the Muromachi period (1392-1573) with the efflorescence of Zen Buddhism in medieval Japan. This type of garden consists of rocks and pebbles

rather than vegetation and water, and was mainly created on the grounds of temples for encouraging contemplation. White gravel often symbolizes flowing elements such as waterfalls, rivers, creeks, or sea, while rocks suggest islands, shores, or bridges.



Figure 13.5.4.125: Muqi Fachang, *Fishing Village at Sunset*, a section of "Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers," 13th-century handscroll, cut and remounted as eight hanging scrolls (Nezu Museum, Tokyo)

The garden may have been inspired by aspects of both Japanese and Chinese culture. For instance, Shinto, an indigenous religion of Japan, focuses on the worship of deities in nature. Also, Zen Buddhism, which derived from Chan Buddhism in China, emphasizes meditation as a path toward enlightenment. Medieval Chinese landscape paintings associated with this sect of Buddhism often displayed a sparse, monochromatic style that reflected a spontaneous approach to enlightenment (see the example, left). Together, these concepts promoted the aesthetic values of rustic simplicity, spontaneity, and truth to materials that came to characterize Zen art. Today, the sea of gravel, rocks, and moss of the rock garden and the earthy tones of the clay walls contrast with the blossoming foliage beyond—evoking stillness and contemplation suitable for meditation.

Like other Japanese rock gardens, the Ryōanji garden presents stones surrounded by raked white gravel with a minimal use of plants. Fifteen rocks of different sizes are carefully arranged in groups amidst the raked pebbles covering a 250 square-meter rectangle of ground. The stones are carefully arranged so that one can only see no more than fourteen of the fifteen at once from any angle. Staring from the largest group on the far left, a visitor's eyes rhythmically move through the garden from the front to the rear and back, and then from the front to the right upper corner.

The garden is located on the south side of the hōjō, the main building used for the abbot's personal study and living quarters. The hōjō is divided into six rooms by sliding doors called *fusuma*; three rooms on the south (a reception, a lecture room and a meeting room) and those on the north (a study, a changing room and a central room consisting of three subdivisions of a serving chamber, alter, and sleeping room). The hōjō also includes gardens on each side of the building—a moss garden called the West Garden, a stone and moss garden, and a garden with a tea house.



Figure 13.5.4.126: Rock garden, Ryōanji, Kyoto, Japan (photo: Andy H, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0))

Date? Creator?

Scholars debate the exact dating of the garden, but the consensus is that it was originally created in the fifteenth century and that its present design dates from the Edo period ((1615–1868). The identity of the garden's creator is also controversial, as no records of the rock garden can be found prior to the early 1680s. Early descriptions explain that the garden has nine big stones representing "tiger cubs crossing the water" and attribute the design to Matsumoto, the chief patron of Ryōanji, or Sōami, the connoisseur, painter, and garden designer attending the Ashikaga shogunate. An inscription carved on the back of one stone bears witness to the

involvement of professional laborers in the garden's architecture—the stone has two names, Kotaro and Hikojiro, who were known as *sensui kawaramono* (riverbank workers) belonging to the lower social strata. As the garden has fifteen stones today, it is certain that the arrangement we see now cannot be the same as the original medieval design (which had nine stones). Although it remains unclear who designed the garden, or what it originally looked like, it is evident that the Ryōanji garden has changed throughout time.

The meaning of the garden

Many different theories on the garden's meaning have been suggested—some say it represents islands floating on an ocean, or a mother tiger carrying cubs over the sea, while others say it symbolizes the Japanese aesthetic concept of *wabi* (refined austerity) and *sabi* (subdued taste), or the fundamental ideal of Zen philosophy. A more recent theory argues that it is an expression of a pure form of abstract composition meant to incite meditation. Whether originally intended to represent pictorial images or symbolize metaphysical concepts, it is certain that the rustic austerity and minimalist rock garden at Ryōanji has played a significant role in art and architecture from medieval times to the present in Japan.

Art and architecture in Ryōanji



Figure **13.5.4.127**: Kyōyōchi (Mirror Pond,) Ryōanji, Kyoto, Japan (photo: **jpellgen**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The fame of the stone garden at Ryōanji is so imposing that it has overwhelmed the other parts of the temple, including *Kyōyōchi* (Mirror Pond, located in the lower part of the site), a small west garden, and a rear garden with a teahouse. The Mirror Pond is reminiscent of courtly gardens from the Heian period (794 to 1185), while the teahouse and garden date back to the seventh century. Near the teahouse is a famous stone water basin.



Figure **13.5.4.128**: Appreciation of Painting, from a set of the "Four Accomplishments," Kano school, Momoyama period, c. 1606, four of eight panels mounted on sliding-door panels, ink, color, gold and gold leaf on paper, 72 inches x 24 feet / 182/9 x 731.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The wall door paintings that once decorated the *hōjō* are preserved today in Japanese and overseas collections. Among them, two large panels depicting “Chinese Immortals” and the “Four Elegant Accomplishments” (above) belonged to Ryōanji’s main hall and once faced its rock garden. They were removed from Ryōanji and sold in 1895, when Buddhism was persecuted during the new Meiji regime. These works entered the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1989. Contrary to the austere monochrome ink paintings of landscapes and bird-and-flower paintings decorating the abbot’s quarters in Zen temples dating from the Muromachi period, they depict Chinese narrative themes rendered with extravagant colors on golden backgrounds. This permits a glimpse into a radical shift in the interior program of the Zen monastery during the late Momoyama and early Edo periods, led by the rise of samurai warlords as prominent patrons of art and formidable political entities.



Figure **13.5.4.129**: Hōjō, Ryōanji, Kyoto, Japan (photo: **Eddy Chang**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Ryōanji and Zen culture in the modern era

Recent scholars criticize the romanticized notion of Zen art and culture as a symbol of Japanese aesthetic—pointing out that this interpretation is largely a product of the twentieth century, fueled by growing nationalism in Japan.

Furthermore, Zen Buddhism was disseminated in the West and filtered through modernist artists, who were fascinated by the minimalistic perspectives and abstracted forms of Japanese rock gardens. Whatever the skepticism one reserves for existing assumptions about the Zen garden and culture, no one can deny the cultural and historical significance of Ryōanji and its rock garden.

Additional resources:

Ryoan-ji website

Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities) video from UNESCO

History of Gardens in East Asia: Online Resources (Bard Graduate Center)

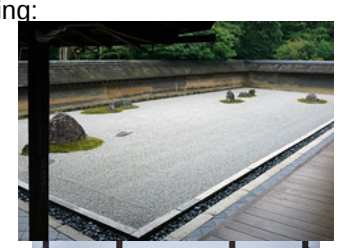
François Berthier and Graham Parkes, *Reading Zen in the Rocks: the Japanese Dry Landscape Garden* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Kendall H. Brown and David M. Cobb, *Quiet Beauty: Japanese Gardens of North America* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2013).

Wybe Kuitert, *Themes in the History of Japanese Garden Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002).

Hiroshi Onish, “Immortals and Sages: Paintings from Ryoanji Temple,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 51, no. 1 (Summer, 1993).

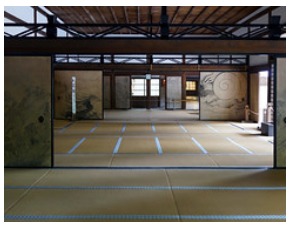
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88698



Figure 13.5.4.130: More Smarthistory images…

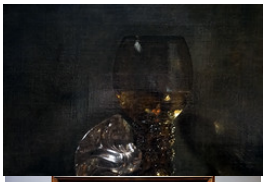
Muromachi to Momoyama period Negoro ware ewer

by DR. MARIBETH GRAYBILL and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.5.4.7**: Negoro ware ewer, Negoro workshop, Muromachi period (1392-1573) to Momoyama period (1573-1615) second half of 16th century, lacquered wood, Wakayama prefecture, Japan (Portland Art Museum). This video was produced in cooperation with Portland Art Museum.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88698









Figure 13.5.4.131: More Smarthistory images…

Edo period

Strict feudal rule and a rising middle class characterizes this period.

1615 - 1868

A portrait of St. Francis Xavier and Christianity in Japan

*by **DR. RACHEL MILLER***



Figure **13.5.4.132**: Unknown Japanese painter, *St. Francis Xavier*, late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, Japanese watercolors on paper, 61 x 48.7 cm (Kobe City Museum)

A Discovery in Takatsuki

In 1920, researchers from the Kyoto Imperial University in Japan made a miraculous discovery. They found a locked chest—seemingly unopened for centuries—tied to a beam in the ceiling of an old house. When they opened it, they discovered a small collection of Christian artworks and texts. These were rare survivors from the European missions that sought to convert the Japanese people (who traditionally practiced Shinto and Buddhism) to Catholicism. This effort dramatically came to an end in 1614 when the Tokugawa government outlawed Christianity and expelled all European missionaries.

The two paintings in the chest—likely created by unknown Japanese-Christian artists—depicted the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary and St. Francis Xavier, the first Catholic missionary in Japan and a member of the Society of Jesus. Unfortunately, the box contained no documentary records that could tell us when this image of Francis Xavier was created, where or who it was made for, or how it was used. Although many of the basic facts about the painting remain the subject of debate, it is clear that the painting is an invaluable record of cultural, religious, and artistic interaction between Europe and Japan in the early modern period.

Definition: The Society of Jesus

Members of the Society of Jesus are called the Jesuits. They are a Roman Catholic religious order founded during the 16th century.

The Failed Mission to Japan

In July 1549, Francis Xavier arrived in Japan, hoping to find success converting the Japanese to Christianity. Xavier initially struggled due to his lack of knowledge of the Japanese language and his inaccurate understanding of Japanese Buddhism. Still, he laid the foundation for a successful mission that continued to grow after he left Japan to return to India two years later. Scholars have estimated that more than 300,000 people in Japan converted to Christianity over the next fifty years. However, this brief Christian experiment ended in 1614 when the Tokugawa government outlawed the religion, beginning a period of persecution that resulted in the torture and execution of more than a thousand Japanese Christians and European missionaries. At this time, all Christian churches that had been built in Japan were destroyed, along with the works of art that had decorated them.



Figure 13.5.4.133: Maria-Kannon, Dehua porcelain from Fujian Province, China, imported to Japan for Christian veneration (Nantoyōsō Collection, Japan; photo: **Iwanafish**)

A sizeable portion of these Christians managed to continue to practice their faith despite the constant danger of detection by government officials. Christian works of art played an important role in helping them maintain their devotional practices, and create a sense of religious community and identity. For example, statues of the bodhisattva Kannon in a feminine form holding a child (such as the one above) appeared Buddhist on the surface, but due to similarities in iconography, could be regarded as images of the Virgin and Child by secret Christians. Devotional images with obvious Christian iconography that had no Buddhist counterpart, such as the Kobe painting of St. Francis Xavier, were more dangerous. In many cases, they had to be hidden away.



Figure 13.5.4.134: Left: Unknown Japanese painter, *St. Francis Xavier*, late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, Japanese watercolors on paper, 61 x 48.7 cm (Kobe City Museum); right: Hieronymus Wierix, *St. Francis Xavier*, 1596, engraving, 84 mm x 61 mm (**Rijksmuseum**)

The Kobe painting of St. Francis Xavier is undeniably a product of both Japanese and European visual culture. The materials are Japanese, but the artist demonstrates some familiarity with European pictorial techniques like modeling in light and shade. The artist has also based the composition on prints of Xavier, such as those by Flemish printmakers Theodoor Galle and Hieronymus Wierix. European prints were sent to overseas missions to instruct converts in their new faith and also served as source material for non-European artists. They were a common means by which artistic knowledge circulated throughout the early modern world.



Figure 13.5.4.135: Unknown Japanese painter, *St. Francis Xavier*, detail, late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, Japanese watercolors on paper, 61 x 48.7 cm (Kobe City Museum)

The Kobe painting of Xavier follows the basic format of the Wierix and Galle prints by depicting the saint from the waist up in a three-quarter pose. His physical appearance is consistent with textual descriptions written by those who knew him in life. These accounts stress his light complexion, beard, dark hair, and eyes always uplifted towards heaven. In his left hand, he holds a flaming heart from which a crucifix emerges. In the upper right portion of the painting, the background, a neutral dark blue field in most of the painting, transforms into dark clouds that part to reveal a golden aura that surrounds the crucifix.

Emerging from Xavier's mouth is the Latin phrase "Satis est, Domine, satis est," meaning "It is enough, O Lord, it is enough." Many sources record that Xavier, when he thought no one was observing him, would open his cassock to try to cool his burning heart and would utter this phrase, marveling at the generous consolations God had sent him.

Definition: Cassock

A cassock is an ankle-length garment worn by members of the clergy in the Catholic or Anglican Church.

Below the image of Xavier is an inscription in Latin identifying him as a saint and a member of the Society of Jesus. His name is repeated once more, in the bottom-most portion of the painting, where Chinese characters are used to write out the words "St. Francis Xavier Sacrament" phonetically. The painting is also signed "Gyofu Kanjin," a confusing signature that is not really a name, but instead translates to "fisherman."

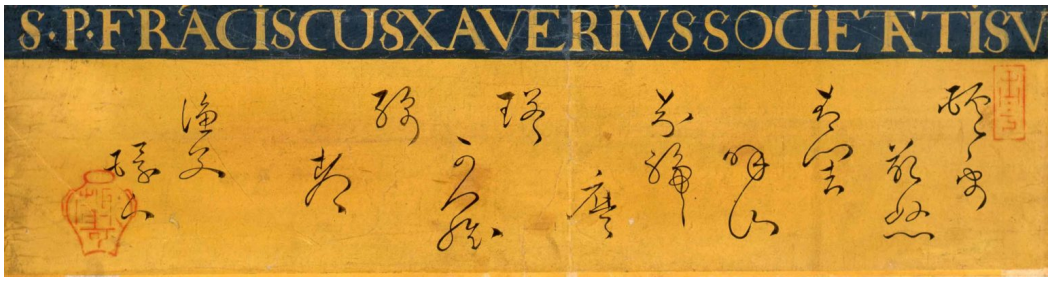


Figure **13.5.4.136**: Unknown Japanese painter, *St. Francis Xavier*, detail, late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, Japanese watercolors on paper, 61 x 48.7 cm (Kobe City Museum)

The only other clue to the artist's identity is a red seal in the lower left portion of the painting, shaped like a pot. This is the seal of the Kanō school, a painting workshop that dominated the artistic scene of the Tokugawa period. One scholar has hypothesized that the Kobe portrait of Francis Xavier was painted by a Japanese artist who had initially trained with the Kanō, but then converted to Christianity and became a priest. This might explain the signature on the portrait, which refers to the artist as a "fisherman" perhaps meaning a "fisher of men." [1] For the time being, however, this remains speculation.

Japanese Devotion to St. Francis Xavier

Early modern Japanese Christians were especially devoted to Xavier since he had been the first Catholic missionary to bring knowledge of the **Gospel** to Japan and had supposedly worked several miracles in the Japanese islands. One of the most prominent Xavierian devotees was Ōtomo Yoshishige, a sixteenth-century daimyo who, after his baptism, had taken the Christian name Francisco in honor of Xavier. In 1585, he wrote a letter to Rome asking that Xavier be canonized, so that Japanese Christians could build churches dedicated to Xavier, set up images depicting him on altars, celebrate his Mass, and pray to him for intercession. We know nothing about where the Kobe painting of Xavier was originally displayed, but if it was painted before the prohibition against Christianity, it is possible that it would have been put up in a church on an altar. One scholar has proposed that it was publicly displayed in the Jesuit church in Kyoto and later taken to Takatsuki to be concealed after Christianity was prohibited.[2] Like most things related to the Kobe *St. Francis* painting, this is just an educated guess.

Definition: Daimyo

A daimyo is a Japanese feudal lord.

We do have a few scattered mentions of other images of St. Francis Xavier in letters written by the Jesuit missionaries who remained in hiding in Japan after the 1614 prohibition. A 1625 letter written by a Jesuit who managed to evade the authorities mentions that he brought an image of St. Francis Xavier to a group of hidden Christians in Yamaguchi. These brief, but tantalizing,

references demonstrate that although its survival was extraordinary, the painting of Francis Xavier itself was not unique. At the time it was created, it was but one example of the vibrant visual and material culture of Japanese Christianity that celebrated Francis Xavier, the "Apostle of Japan" whose mission had inaugurated the Japanese Catholic Church.

Notes

[1] Grace Vlam, "The Portrait of S. Francis Xavier in Kobe," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 42, no. 1 (1979): pp. 48-60.

[2] Vlam, "The Portrait of S. Francis Xavier in Kobe," pp. 48-60.

Additional Resources

Read more about the **Tokugawa period in Japan on Smarthistory**

Read more about printmakers **like Theodoor Galle on Smarthistory**

Read more about the **Kobe City Museum** in Japan

Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542–1742* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbic Books, 1994).

Junhyoung Michael Shin, "Avalokiteśvara's Manifestation as the Virgin Mary: The Jesuit Adaptation and the Visual Conflation in Japanese Catholicism after 1614," *Church History* 80, no. 1 (2011): 1-39.

Grace Vlam, "The Portrait of S. Francis Xavier in Kobe," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 42, no. 1 (1979): 48-60.

Ogata Kōrin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms*

by DR. HANNAH SIGUR



Figure **13.5.4.137**: Ogata Kōrin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, Edo period, 18th century, pair of two-fold screens, color and gold leaf on paper, 156 ×172.2 cm each, National Treasure (MOA Museum in Atami, Japan)

A landscape transformed

In *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, Ogata Kôrin transforms a very simple landscape theme—two flowering trees on either side of a brook—into a dream vision. Executed in black ink and blotchy washes of gem-like mineral color on a pair of folding screens, the image seems both abstract and realistic at the same time. Its background, a subtle grid of gold leaf, denies any sense of place or time and imbues everything with an ethereal glow. The stream's swelling metallic curls and spirals are a make-believe of flowing water, and its sharply tapered serpentine contour lines angle the picture plane in an unnatural upward tilt. The trunks of the trees are nothing more than pools of mottled color without so much as an outline. These forms and spaces appear flat to the eye. Yet the artist's intimate knowledge of how a plum tree grows can be seen in their writhing forms and tangle of shoots and branches.



Figure **13.5.4.138**: Right side, red blossoms (detail), Ogata Kōrin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, Edo period, 18th century, pair of two-fold screens, color and gold leaf on paper, 156 ×172.2 cm each, National Treasure (MOA Museum in Atami, Japan)

Enveloping us in spring

In planning its imagery Kôrin closely considered the function of the folding screen within the traditional Japanese interior. The two sections would have been positioned separately yet near enough to each other to define an enclosed space. At 156 cm (or approximately 67 inches) in height, they towered over the average Japanese person of the day. Kôrin depicted only the lower parts of the trees, as if viewed from very near: the tree with red blossoms thrusts upward from the ground and out of sight; the white pushes leftward out of view and then, two slender branches appear to spring back diagonally downward from the top corner and jab upward. With each screen standing hinged at its central fold, a viewer experiences these exaggerated two-dimensional images in three dimensions. Stopping us in our tracks by confounding logic with this combination of pure design and intimate naturalism, Kôrin envelops us in the pulsing vitality of early spring.

Rinpa, or “School of Kôrin”

An acknowledged masterpiece painted toward the end of his life, *Red and White Plum Blossoms* exemplifies a style that for many epitomizes Japanese art. It has profoundly impacted modernism in the West, most famously in the work of Gustav Klimt. Since the 19th century this combination of abstraction and naturalism, monumental presence, dynamism and gorgeous sensuality has commonly been referred to as *Rinpa*, or “School of Kôrin.” But Kôrin neither originated this aesthetic, nor presided over a formal school; more accurately he stood at the forefront of a loose movement of like-minded artists and designers in various media. Rinpa first appeared a century earlier, in the brilliant relationship of a gifted calligrapher, connoisseur, and intellectual named Hon’ami Kôetsu, and an equally gifted painter of fans and screens, Tarawaya Sôtatsu, who created works that aimed to satisfy the luxurious tastes of 17th century Kyoto’s aristocrats and wealthy merchants (below).



Figure **13.5.4.139**: Tawaraya Sōtatsu, *Waves at Matsushima*, c. 1600–40, right side of a pair of six-panel folding screens, ink, color, gold, and silver on paper (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.)

Entranced by a few of Sôtatsu's paintings that he saw in the collection of a patron, Kôrin taught himself the techniques: images pared to bare essentials and then dramatically magnified, emphasis on the interplay of forms, colors, and textures, and unconventional adaptations of ink painting methods. These methods included *tarashikomi*, or dilute washes of color blended while very wet, and *mokkotsu*, or "bonelessness," which creates forms without exterior outlines. Some scholars now use terms such as Sôtatsu-Kôrinha, Kôetsuha, and Kôetsu-Kôrinha rather than Rinpa, in recognition of its actual origins. Yet Kôrin is owed a great debt as the one who revived a dazzling creative approach from obscurity and whose vibrant works firmly established his own reputation.



Figure **13.5.4.140**: Left side, white plum blossoms (detail), Ogata Kōrin, *Red and White Plum Blossoms*, Edo period, 18th century, pair of two-fold screens, color and gold leaf on paper, 156 ×172.2 cm each, National Treasure (MOA Museum in Atami, Japan)

A profligate who squandered his family's enormous wealth, Kôrin benefitted from the wide design experience afforded by its position as one of Kyoto's most distinguished producers and purveyors of fine textiles. This he combined with painting studies in one of Japan's preeminent studios. His numerous works in this sophisticated style thus encompass many media, formats and

subjects—paintings in color and ink on large screens, small albums, fans, hanging and hand scrolls, printed books, lacquers, ceramics and even textiles.

Initially inspired by Japanese classical literature, the Rinpa movement's attention soon extended to themes from nature, including Chinese motifs that may have influenced Kôrin's choice of plum trees for this painting. Looking now at the impact of his work from over three centuries ago, it seems incredible that a vision so dramatic, luxurious and radical could ever have fallen into obscurity.

Additional resources:

Rinpa Painting Style on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Utagawa Kunisada I, *Visiting Komachi*, from the series *Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi*

by DR. SONIA COMAN



Figure **13.5.4.141**: Utagawa Kunisada I (Toyokuni III), *Visiting Komachi (Kayoi Komachi)*, from the series *Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi (Tōsei Bijin Nana Komachi)*, c. 1821-22, published by Kawaguchiya Uhei (Fukusendō), woodblock print: ink and color on paper, 36.5 x 25.5 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

Wearing a striped outer robe over her kimono, a young woman lingers near an empty carriage, her hand delicately touching its roof. The green of the carriage (in this case, actually a litter) matches the color of the woman's kimono, suggesting a link between the person and the vehicle. The outer robe and headscarf indicate that the scene must occur in cold weather. What we are seeing, then, is perhaps a woman who left her house to take a look at her carriage. But why is she looking at it? And why is her expression downcast, even despondent?

Definition: Litter

A litter is a wheelless, human-powered vehicle.



Figure 13.5.4.142: Utagawa Kunisada I (Toyokuni III), *Visiting Komachi (Kayoi Komachi)* (detail), from the series *Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi (Tōsei Bijin Nana Komachi)*, c. 1821-22, published by Kawaguchiya Uhei (Fukusendō), woodblock print: ink and color on paper, 36.5 x 25.5 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

From the title of this print by *ukiyo-e* master Utagawa Kunisada I, written in white characters on a black background in the top right corner, we learn that the image is one of a series of seven depictions of contemporaneous women (literally, "modern beauties" or *tōsei bijin*).

The genre of *ukiyo-e* (literally translatable as "pictures of the floating world") comprises paintings and prints, though woodblock prints were its main medium. It flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, supported by Japan's middle class. *Ukiyo-e* works were collaborations between painters, publishers, carvers, and printers, with subject matter drawn from the transitory (thus "floating"), but enjoyable worlds of pleasure quarters, the popular theater, and urban life, especially the streets of Edo. *Ukiyo-e* also featured parodies of classical themes set in contemporaneous circumstances.

Definition: Edo

Edo, which was renamed Tokyo in 1868, was the most powerful city in Japan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

A legendary poetess

Here, Kunisada, the artist, represents a modern beauty in the guise of ninth-century poetess Ono no Komachi, the only woman amongst the "six poetry immortals" (*rokkasen)*. Each scene in Kunisada's "Seven Komachi" series relates a story or anecdote associated with Komachi's life.

Definition: "Six poetry immortals" (rokkasen)

The "six poetry immortals" was an idea introduced in the tenth century in one of Japan's most influential imperial poetry anthologies, the *Kokin Wakashū*.

Utagawa Kunisada I (Toyokuni III), <em
Visiting Komachi (Kayoi Komachi) (detail), from the series
Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi (Tōsei Bijin Nana Komachi)
, c. 1821-22, published by Kawaguchiya Uhei (Fukusendō), woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 36.5 x 25.5 cm (
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-26495" height="425" sizes="(max-width: 300px) 100vw, 300px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...an-300x425.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...an-300x425.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...achi-woman.jpg
660w" width="300">

Figure 13.5.4.143: Utagawa Kunisada I (Toyokuni III), *Visiting Komachi (Kayoi Komachi)* (detail), from the series *Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi (Tōsei Bijin Nana Komachi)*, c. 1821-22, published by Kawaguchiya Uhei (Fukusendō), woodblock print: ink and color on paper, 36.5 x 25.5 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

In this print, the empty carriage helps us identify that the specific story being illustrated, out of the aforementioned seven, is the one known as “Visiting Komachi” (*Kayoi Komachi*). According to legend, Komachi, renowned for her beauty and talent, attracted the attention of many suitors, including General Fukakusa, who sought to become her lover. Komachi tested his devotion by asking him to spend 100 nights outside her door, in the garden, irrespective of weather conditions. He agreed and marked each night on the shaft of her carriage, but died on the last night because of the harsh winter. The scene illustrated in Kunisada’s print may be from the very end of the story, when Komachi learns about his death and goes to see the carriage. Other versions of this story circulated orally in Japan over the centuries, and some were used as plotlines for plays in the Japanese Noh tradition of musical drama.

Definition: Noh

Dating from the Muromachi period (the fourteenth century), Noh is a traditional form of dramatic performance that combines music, spoken word, ritualized movement, elaborate costumes, and character-specific masks, performed on a bare stage that includes a bridge-like passageway. Noh plays featured narratives about gods, famed warriors, elegant women, madwomen, and supernatural creatures, many of which were derived from classical literature.

This image leaves it to the viewer to imagine the inner life of the heroine. Is she remorseful? Is she mourning? However, the print’s title reminds us that the depicted woman is not actually Komachi herself, but someone else, from a later era, who is enacting the role of the poetess. The image refers to the “Visiting Komachi” story through her accoutrements and props (especially the carriage as a stand-in for the missing lover). Considering the multilayered aspect of the subject matter, the gaze of the depicted woman may actually suggest that she is engrossed in thinking about the *real* Komachi. In providing these references to a larger cultural tradition, Kunisada adds conceptual depth to his portrayal of a beautiful woman.

Pictures within pictures, stories within stories

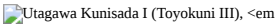


Figure **13.5.4.144**: Utagawa Kunisada I (Toyokuni III), *Visiting Komachi (Kayoi Komachi)* (detail), from the series *Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi (Tōsei Bijin Nana Komachi)*, c. 1821-22, published by Kawaguchiya Uhei (Fukusendō), woodblock print: ink and color on paper, 36.5 x 25.5 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

The artifice of the image is further complicated by the inclusion of a cartouche, or image-within-image (known as *gachūga*). The *gachūga* functions like a legend for the “main” image, depicting the “real” Komachi, also clad in outerwear, as well as a poem attributed to her. The choice of color for her outer robe— the same green as the carriage and as the kimono of the “modern beauty”—weaves the two images together and creates a visual rhyme between the historical Komachi and the contemporaneous Komachi. This visual link illustrates the process of channeling the spirit of the poetess.

Placed in the top left corner of the print and framed with floral motifs, the *gachūga* provides access to another visual realm and calls into question the nature of the space behind the central figure. Is this image-within-image floating in space, as it were, or is it a flat picture affixed to a wall-like surface behind the centrally positioned woman? This ambiguous spatial quality of the image-within-image contributes to the overall richness of the print’s visual message.

A ghostly presence

This form of communication could have also indicated a supernatural dimension, considering the frequent inclusion, in Noh drama, of ghost characters, many of which became subject matter for paintings, prints, and ceramic and lacquer decoration. In the case of Komachi, the ghost character was especially popular because of stories that contrasted her beauty as a young woman with her decaying image in old age; other stories described her as a cold-hearted woman (or “femme fatale”). These characterizations set the

stage for plots where Komachi's ghost returned to the world to act on her inner conflicts. In this print, the inclusion of an image of Komachi and of a woman in the guise of Komachi calls to mind the spectral presence of this legendary character and its plotlines from Noh drama.

In the image-within-image, the figure of Komachi is framed by a *waka* poem attributed to her. It reads:

> ***iro miede / 色みへて***
> ***utsurou mono wa / うつろふものは***
> ***yo no naka no / 世の中の***
> ***hito no kokoro no / 人のこゝろの***
> ***hana ni zo arikeri / 花にぞありけり***

I propose the following prose translation as one way of interpreting these lines: "It is by their changing colors that we know the flowers of men's hearts to fade in this transient world."

Republished in collections of ancient poems and paired with images of Komachi herself, as in this print, the poem speaks to the connection between the ephemerality of outer appearances and the changes that characterize matters of the heart. This poetic message is at the core of what Komachi came to signify over the centuries in Japanese literary and visual culture.

Layers of legend



Figure **13.5.4.145**: Utagawa Toyokuni I, *Komachi at Sekidera Temple (Sekidera Komachi)*: Actor Sawamura Tanosuke II, from the series *Present-day Actors as the Seven Komachi (Imayô yakusha nana Komachi)*, 1812, woodblock print: ink and color on paper, 39.2 x 26.3 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

The other stories in the "Seven Komachi" series resonate with this poetic message, too. For example, "*Sekidera Komachi* " invokes a story according to which an aged Komachi forgets about her fading beauty by dancing with a child on the occasion of the stars festival (*Tanabata*). The episode serves as a reminder of the ephemeral and cyclical nature of life, and it was also used by multiple artists, including Kunisada, as a pretext for depicting beautiful women in guise of the poetess.

With no historical evidence to prove the accuracy of any of these narratives, the poems, plays, and images representing Ono no Komachi merged in the Japanese collective imagination, to form a composite legendary character. The Komachi motif occasioned visual representations that playfully combined it with contemporaneous elements, as is the case with Kunisada's *Kayoi Komachi* print.

Kunisada's series is only one of several *ukiyo-e* series that use Komachi-associated stories in conjunction with some aspect of contemporaneous life and society (for instance, courtesans in guise of Komachi, young theater actors in the role of Komachi, or pairs of beautiful women in landscapes that evoke the seven stories). Such images spanned multiple centuries and media, from folding screens to painted shells to lacquer boxes, epitomizing the wide circulation of staple motifs and the intimate connection between literature and the visual arts in Japanese culture.



Figure **13.5.4.146**: Shûôsai Hidemasa, Clam-shell with the Vindication of Ono No Komachi, early 19th century, stained ivory, 3.1 x 4.4 x 3 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

Additional Resources:

This work at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Japanese woodblock prints at Ukiyo-e.org

Other prints in Kunisada's *Modern Beauties as the Seven Komachi* series

Biography of Utagawa Kunisada I (Toyokuni III)

Example of another version of the "Visiting Komachi" story

Example of another visual representation of the Kayoi Komachi episode by Suzuki Harunobu

A lacquer inkstone box featuring the Komachi motif

A resource on Noh drama, including synopsis of Komachi-themed play

Hokusai

Hokusai, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa (The Great Wave)*

by LEILA ANNE HARRIS



Figure **13.5.4.147**: Katsushika Hokusai, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa (Kanagawa oki nami ura)*, also known as *The Great Wave*, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei)*, c. 1830-32, polychrome woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 10 1/8 x 14 15 /16″ / 25.7 x 37.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Katsushika Hokusai's *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, also called *The Great Wave* has became one of the most famous works of art in the world—and debatably the most iconic work of Japanese art. Initially, thousands of copies of this print were quickly produced and sold cheaply. Despite the fact that it was created at a time when Japanese trade was heavily restricted, Hokusai's print displays the influence of Dutch art, and proved to be inspirational for many artists working in Europe later in the nineteenth century.

Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji



Figure **13.5.4.148**: Fishing boats (detail), *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, c. 1830-32, polychrome woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 10 1/8 x 14 15 /16″ / 25.7 x 37.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Under the Wave off Kanagawa is part of a series of prints titled *Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji*, which Hokusai made between 1830 and 1833. It is a polychrome (multi-colored) woodblock print, made of ink and color on paper that is approximately 10 x 14 inches. All of the images in the series feature a glimpse of the mountain, but as you can see from this example, Mount Fuji does not always dominate the frame. Instead, here, the foreground is filled with a massive cresting wave. The threatening wave is pictured just moments before crashing down on to three fishing boats below. Under the Wave off Kanagawa is full of visual play. The mountain, made tiny by the use of perspective, appears as if it too will be swallowed up by the wave. Hokusai's optical play can also be lighthearted, and the spray from top of the crashing wave looks like snow falling on the mountain.



Figure **13.5.4.149**: Katsushika Hokusai, *Fine Wind, Clear Weather*, Also known as *Red Fuju*, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, c. 1830-31, woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 9 5/8 x 15″ / 24.4 x 38.1 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Hokusai has arranged the composition to frame Mount Fuji. The curves of the wave and hull of one boat dip down just low enough to allow the base of Mount Fuji to be visible, and the white top of the great wave creates a diagonal line that leads the viewers eye directly to the peak of the mountain top.

Across the thirty-six prints that constitute this series, Hokusai varies his representation of the mountain. In other prints the mountain fills the composition, or is reduced to a small detail in the background of bustling city life.

Who was Katsushika Hokusai?

Hokusai was born in 1760 in Edo (now Tokyo), Japan. During the artist's lifetime he went by many different names; he began calling himself Hokusai in 1797. Hokusai discovered Western prints that came to Japan by way of Dutch trade. From the Dutch artwork Hokusai became interested in linear perspective. Subsequently, Hokusai created a Japanese variant of linear perspective. The influence of Dutch art can also be seen in the use of a low horizon line and the distinctive European color, Prussian blue.

Hokusai was interested in oblique angles, contrasts of near and far, and contrasts of manmade and the natural. These can be seen in

Under the Wave off Kanagawa through the juxtaposition of the large wave in the foreground which dwarfs the small mountain in the distance, as well as the inclusion of the men and boats amidst the powerful waves.

Why Mount Fuji?



Figure **13.5.4.150**: Mount Fuji, Japan

Mount Fuji is the highest mountain in Japan and has long been considered sacred. Hokusai is often described as having a personal fascination with the mountain, which sparked his interest in making this series. However, he was also responding to a boom in domestic travel and the corresponding market for images of Mount Fuji. Japanese woodblock prints were often purchased as souvenirs. The original audience for Hokusai's prints was ordinary townspeople who were followers of the "Fuji cult" and made pilgrimages to climb the mountain, or tourists visiting the new capital city. Although the skyscrapers in Tokyo obscure the view of Mount Fuji today, for Hokusai's audience the peak of the mountain would have been visible across the city.

The making of Ukiyo-e Prints

Ukiyo-e is the name for Japanese woodblock prints made during the Edo Period. Ukiyo-e, which originated as a Buddhist term, means "floating world" and refers to the impermanence of the world. The earliest prints were made in only black and white, but later, as is evident from Hokusai's work, additional colors were added. A separate block of wood was used for each color. Each print is made with a final overlay of black line, which helps to break up the flat colors. Ukiyo-e prints are recognizable for their emphasis on line and pure, bright color, as well as their ability to distill form down to the minimum.

Hokusai moved away from the tradition of making images of courtesans and actors, which was the customary subject of ukiyo-e prints. Instead, his work focused on the daily life of Japanese people from a variety of social levels. Such as the quotidian scene of fishermen battling the sea off the coast of Mount Fuji that we see in The Great Wave. This change of subject matter was a breakthrough in both ukiyo-e prints and in Hokusai's career.

Popularity of Ukiyo-e prints in Europe

Beginning in 1640, Japan was largely closed off to the world and only limited interaction with China and Holland was allowed. This changed in the 1850s, when trade was forced open by American naval commodore, Matthew C. Perry. After this, there was a flood of Japanese visual culture into the West. At the 1867 International Exposition in Paris, Hokusai's work was on view at the Japanese pavilion. This was the first introduction of Japanese culture to mass audiences in the West, and a craze for collecting art called Japonisme ensued. Additionally, Impressionist artists in Paris, such as Claude Monet, were great fans of Japanese prints. The flattening of space, an interest in atmospheric conditions, and the impermanence of modern city life—all visible in Hokusai's prints—both reaffirmed their own artistic interests and inspired many future works of art.

Additional resources:

This print at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ukiyo-e Techniques

Art of the Pleasure Quarters and The Ukiyo-e Style on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Woodblock Prints in the Ukiyo-e style on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Japanese woodblock print search

The Floating World of Ukiyo-e, a Library of Congress exhibition site

Beyond the Great Wave — Hokusai at 90

by DR. FRANK FELTENS, FREER GALLERY OF ART and DR. BETH HARRIS

A fisherman and a woodcutter — at age 90, the great Japanese artist Hokusai painted these moving images of contentment.



Video **13.5.4.8**: A conversation with Dr. Frank Feltens, The Japan Foundation Assistant Curator of Japanese Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Dr. Beth Harris, in front of Katsushika Hokusai, *Fisherman*, 1849, ink and color on silk, 113 x 39.6 cm and *Woodcutter*, 1849, ink and color on silk, 113.6 × 39.6 cm (Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Charles Lang Freer in 1920, F1904.181 and 1904.182)

Additional resources:

These paintings at the Freer Gallery of Art (the Fisherman and the Woodcutter)

Upcoming exhibition at the Freer Gallery of Art: Hokusai: Mad about Painting

20th century

Mariko Mori, *Pure Land*

*by **KATRINA KLAASMEYER***

Floating on a lotus blossom

Set within a golden landscape, a female figure serenely floats above a lotus blossom while six alien musicians whirl by on bubbly clouds. Her pink robes mirror the predominantly pale orange, yellow and pink of the water, land and sky—firmly embedding her within the tranquil scene. *Pure Land*, a photograph set within glass, is the counterpart of Mori's three-dimensional video installation, *Nirvana*, 1997. *Nirvana* animates the imagery we see in *Pure Land*. Viewed within a darkened room with the aid of three-dimensional glasses, *Nirvana's* audience was limited to a group of 20 people at a time. During the seven minute video, the central female figure would hum and whisper echoed rhythms as if meditating, while the little musicians floated around her. At the conclusion, a fan came on and blew cool, scented air into the audience's faces. Through the integration of sensory elements such as three-dimensional imagery, sound, scent, and the gentle touch of a breeze, combined with the limited viewing audience, *Nirvana* created an immersive, intimate experience. As its photographic counterpart, *Pure Land* captures a moment of this experience, enabling the viewer a longer, perhaps more meditative, relationship with the work.



Figure **13.5.4.151**: Mariko Mori, *Pure Land*, 1996-98, glass with photo interlayer, 305 x 610 x 2.2 cm



Figure **13.5.4.152**: Mariko Mori, *Enlightenment Capsule*, 1996-1998, plastic, solar transmitting device, fiber optic cables, 108 x 83 x 83 inches

Symbolism and spiritual allusions

Every element we see here has significance that may not be apparent at first glance—the serene landscape, with its golden sky, smooth pink land masses, and perfectly still water, is rich with symbolism. *Pure Land* is set during sunrise in the landscape of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, called "dead" because the high salinity of its water does not support fish or plant life. In Shinto tradition, salt is used as an agent of purification. Floating in the water is a lotus blossom—symbol of purity and rebirth into paradise. This blossom resembles one in Mori's 1998 sculptural installation, *Enlightenment Capsule* (left), which featured a rainbow-colored acrylic lotus blossom set within a space-age capsule illuminated by sunlight. In both *Enlightenment Capsule* and *Pure Land* Mori blends traditional symbolism with futuristic elements. On the right hand side of the background of *Pure Land*is a fantastical object which resembles a playful futuristic spacecraft with arms. This may be a variation of a **Tibetan stupa**—a sacred Buddhist monument originally used as a burial mound. Through her imaginative reinterpretation of symbols steeped in tradition, the artist creates a timeless setting appropriate for meditation on death, purification, and rebirth.

Immersion

The distant horizon line, combined with the larger island in the foreground that seems to continue into the viewer's space, create a sense of immersion, as if one were present with these fantastical figures. Perhaps this feeling of personal involvement ties in with the title itself, *Pure Land*, which is the paradise of Amida (or Amitabha) Buddha who descends to greet devotees at the moment of their death and takes them back to his "Pure Land of Perfect Bliss."



Figure **13.5.4.153**: *Descent of Amitabha and the Heavenly Multitude*, Heian period, 12th century, National Treasure (Yushi Hachiman Ko)

Beginning with the eleventh century in Japan, several paintings and sculptures were made on this theme, such as the *Descent of Amida and the Heavenly Multitude* (above). In this type of imagery, Amida Buddha, resting on a lotus blossom and holding his hands in a symbolic gesture known as a mudra, is typically surrounded by celestial attendants in a sea of swirling clouds. These attendants are boddhisattvas, enlightened beings who act out of great compassion to help others achieve enlightenment. In a sculptural example from Byodo-in Temple, 52 boddhisattvas fly on clouds on either side of Amida Buddha (below); some are seated quietly with their hands joined in prayer, some hold a lotus blossom to receive the soul of the deceased, while others are playing musical instruments.



Figure **13.5.4.154**: Jōchō, Amida Buddha, Heian Period, c. 1053, wood covered with wood leaf, 295 cm (Phoenix Hall, Byodo-in, Kyoto)



Figure **13.5.4.155**: Mariko Mori, *Oneness*, on exhibit in 2007 at the Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art, Luxembourg (MUDAM) (**photo: Mark Weston**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In Mori's version, these celestial attendants are pastel-colored alien figures with large pointy heads and delicate bodies. Each figure plays a different instrument as they float on their light blue bubbly clouds. The two musicians in the foreground are blurred, as if they are flying quickly toward the viewer. These muscians appear again in a later sculptural installation by Mori, *Oneness*, 2003 (left). In this work, the six aliens are given three-dimensional form, complete with soft, flesh-like material. They stand in a circle facing outward as they hold each other's hands. The viewer becomes an active participant in the work—when a person hugs one of the figures, its eyes light up and you feel its heartbeat. As in the Nirvana video installation upon which *Pure Land* is based, Mori seems to want to engage more than just the viewer's sense of sight and for each participant to have a direct experience with the artwork. Perhaps more significantly, *Oneness* is a metaphor for bringing in the outsider, achieved through revealing commonalities of experience. The binding together of seemingly disparate realities is a central theme throughout Mori's work.

Artist as object

Another element typical in Mori's work is for the artist to cast herself in the principle role, and *Pure Land* is no exception. The central female figure is the artist herself, wearing an elaborate costume and headdress, both of her own design. Born in Tokyo in 1967, Mori studied design at Tokyo's Bunka Fashion College and worked part-time as a fashion model, which she originally considered a form of personal creativity. However, she found modeling an inadequate medium in which to express herself fully, so she began to stage elaborate tableaux, taking full creative control of the process, acting as director, producer, set and costume designer, and model. This recalls the practices of other photographers, most notably **Cindy Sherman**, as well as **Yasumasa Morimura**, the Japanese photographer notorious for substituting himself for figures in famous paintings throughout art history.

In the *Pure Land* photograph, Mori's light blue, pupil-less eyes, gaze serenely somewhere beyond our vision. Like the Amida Buddha, she rests above a lotus blossom and holds her right hand in a mudra of blessing and teaching; the circle formed by the index finger and thumb is the sign of the Wheel of Law. In her left hand she holds a *hojyu*, or magical wishing jewel, in the shape of a lotus bud. This figure is inspired by Kichijoten, originally the Indian goddess, Shri Lakshmi, who was eventually incorporated into Buddhism, and typically represents fertility, fortune, and beauty. Here Mori bares comparison with a well-known eighth-century painting of Kichijoten from Yukushi-ji Temple in Nara. Similarities include the serene elegance, softly fluttering gown, and wish-granting jewel. The eighth-century painting depicts the clothing and appearance of an elegant lady of the Chinese Tang Dynasty, and it may have been an object of veneration during the annual New Year event when devotees prayed for happiness and fertility. In this manner, a beautiful, elegant woman was seen to embody the ideas of good fortune and prosperity and became an object of worship.



Figure 13.5.4.156: Left: Kichijoten from Yukushi-ji Temple in Nara, 8th century, color on hemp, 53 x 31.7 cm; right: Mariko Mori, Pure Land, 1996-98, glass with photo interlayer, 305 x 610 x 2.2 cm

By taking on this ancient persona, Mori dissolves her own identity and is transformed into the elegant Tang lady and goddess of fortune, while simultaneously performing the welcoming role of Amida Buddha. Mori's enlightened self-representation descends to guide the viewer into a "Pure Land of Perfect Bliss" of her own creation. Perhaps more significantly, the artist seeks to lead the viewer into her immersive paradise. In both formats, the multi-sensory video *Nirvana* and purely visual *Pure Land* photograph, the message is clear: enlightenment is for all.

Additional resources:

Mariko Mori at the Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art

Video—The Artist Project: Mariko Mori (from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Scott Indriskek, "Mariko Mori wants to bring her nature-loving art to six continents," *Modern Painters* (May 2011)

Visualizing an Endless Universe: Mariko Mori Makes the Cosmos Life-Size

---

13.5.4: Japan is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.4: Japan** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.5: Korea

Korea

Powerful kingdoms have ruled the Korean peninsula for millennia, creating luxurious art for the elite.

57 B.C.E. - present

Gold and jade crown, Silla Kingdom

by DR. KRISTEN CHIEM



Figure **13.5.5.1**: Crown, Silla kingdom, second half of 5th century, gold and jade, excavated from the north mound of Hwangnam Daechong Tomb, 10 3/4″ / 27.3 cm high (Gyeongju National Museum, Korea, National Treasure 191)

All that glitters was gold in ancient Korea. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Korean peninsula was divided between three rivaling kingdoms. The most powerful of these was the Silla kingdom in the southeast of the peninsula. Chinese emissaries described the kingdom as a country of gold, and perhaps they had seen its crowns adorned with shimmering gold and jade.

Although their fragile gold construction initially led some to believe that these crowns were made specifically for burial, recent research has revealed that they were also used in ceremonial rites of the Silla royalty during the Three Kingdoms Period (57 B.C.E. – 676 C.E.). Prior to the adoption of Buddhism, Koreans practiced shamanism, which is a kind of nature worship that requires the expertise of a priest-like figure, or shaman, who intercedes to alleviate problems facing the community. Silla royalty upheld shamanistic practices in ceremonial rites such as coronations and memorial services. In these sacred rituals, the gold crowns emphasized the power of the wearer through their precious materials and natural imagery.



Figure 13.5.5.2: Crown (detail), Silla kingdom, second half of 5th century, gold and jade, excavated from the north mound of Hwangnam Daechong Tomb, 10 3/4″ / 27.3 cm high, (Gyeongju National Museum, Korea, National Treasure 191) (photo: Republic of Korea, CC BY-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.5.5.3: Map showing the Silla kingdom in the latter half of the sixth century

Worn around the forehead, this tree-shaped crown (*daegwan*) is the headband type found in the south in royal tombs at the Silla capital, Gyeongju. Between the fifth and sixth centuries, Silla crowns became increasingly lavish with more ornamentation and additional, increasingly elongated branch-like protrusions. In this crown, three tree-shaped vertical elements evoke the sacred tree that once stood in the ritual precinct of Gyeongju. This sacred tree was conceived of as a "world tree," or an axis mundi that connected heaven and earth. Two additional antler-shaped protrusions may refer to the reindeer that were native to the Eurasian steppe that lies to the north of the peninsula. Attached to the branch-like features of the crown are tiny gold discs and jade ornaments called *gogok*. These jade ornaments symbolize ripe fruits hanging from tree branches, representing fertility and abundance. With sunlight falling on its golden discs, the crown must have been a luminous sight indeed.



Figure 13.5.5.4: Conical Cap, Silla kingdom, 5th–6th century, gold, found in the Cheonmachong (Flying Horse) Tomb, (Gyeongju National Museum, Korea, National Treasure 189)



Figure 13.5.5.5: Illustration of Silla envoy wearing a conical cap with wing-shaped ornament, detail of a mural in the Tomb of Li Xian, 706 C.E., Qianling, Shaanxi province (China)

A second type of crown, the conical cap (*mogwan*), was found throughout the peninsula. Although it was initially thought to be an internal component of the headband crown, mural paintings show that it was worn independently over a topknot to proclaim the rank and social status of its wearer. The cap was secured to the head with double straps under the chin, as indicated by the small holes along either side of the cap. Appendages in the shape of wings, feathers, or flowers often were used to accessorize the crown, and those ornaments tended to be geographically specific to each kingdom.

Eurasian connections

The Silla crown demonstrates cultural interactions between the Korean peninsula and the Eurasian steppe (thousands of miles of grassland that stretches from central Europe through Asia). Scytho-Siberian peoples of the Eurasian steppe created golden diadems similar to the Silla crown, such as a crown from Tillya Tepe (an archaeological site of six nomad graves that contained objects known as the “Bactrian Hoard”) in modern-day Afghanistan. With five tree-shaped projections, flower ornaments and reflective discs, the Tillya Tepe crown can be compared with the natural imagery and radiant gold of the Silla crown. Though separated by many miles and by centuries, both crowns attest to shamanic beliefs prevalent among the nomadic cultures of the Eurasian steppe.



Figure **13.5.5.6**: Gold crown, Tillya Tepe, 1st century C.E. (National Museum of Afghanistan) © Thierry Ollivier / Musée Guimet

Burial customs in the Three Kingdoms Period

Though their use of gold and practice of shamanism related to the northern steppe cultures, the Silla royalty adopted the burial customs of the Chinese by burying their elite in mounded tombs. In Chinese burials, objects that were important in life were often taken to the grave. Similarly, power objects like the Silla gold crowns were used both above ground and below, and their luxurious materials conveyed the social status of the tomb occupant in the afterlife.



Figure **13.5.5.7**: Belt with pendant ornaments. Korea, Silla kingdom, second half of 5th century, gold, excavated from the north mound of Hwangnam Daechong Tomb. 47 1/4″ / 120 cm long, (Gyeongju National Museum, Korea, National Treasure 192)

In addition to crowns, belts, earrings, other jewelry were placed in Korean tombs during the Three Kingdoms era to represent the rank and identity of the wearer. This gold belt, for instance, was made for the burial of a Silla king. It was like a tool belt or charm bracelet, with pendants that dangled from its band of interlinked square plates and entwining dragon openwork. Some objects were practical, such as knife sheaths and needle boxes, which evoked nomadic life on the Eurasian steppe. Others were symbolic, such as the comma-shaped ornaments seen on the Silla crown or miniature fish, which may have been charms to avert evil. The materials of the belt also corresponded to social status; for example, tombs of the Silla royalty had gold belts, while the nobility in other regions of the peninsula had silver or gilt-bronze belts.

Korea and the Silk Road

Stretching from the Mediterranean to the Silla kingdom at the tip of the Korean peninsula, the Silk Road connected a vast terrain of ancient cultures. While the Silla kingdom shared shamanism with the Eurasian steppe and burial customs with China and Japan, the Silk Road was a main route for conveying materials, techniques, and ideas from as far away as Rome. Luxury objects in tombs of

the Silla elite, such as these earrings, are made of gold and decorated with stylized foliage that resembles the Silla crown. Two tiers of leaf-shaped ornaments dangle from double loops adorned with floral motifs, continuing the imagery of the sacred world tree.



Figure **13.5.5.8**: Pair of earrings. Korea, Silla kingdom, second quarter of 6th century, excavated from Bomun-dong Hapjangbun Tomb, gold, 3 3/8″ / 8.6 cm long (left), 3 3/8 in. / 8.75 cm long (right), (National Museum of Korea, National Treasure 90)

However, a closer look at the thick, upper loop of each earring reveals the technique of granulation. Metalworking techniques, such as granulation (a technique whereby a surface is covered in spherules or granules of precious metal) and filigree—seen in the Mediterranean—appear to have traveled along the Silk Road. Silla tombs also contained other objects, such as Roman glass bowls and ewers, which reveal the extent to which luxury materials traveled via the Silk Road. These prized imports clearly inspired new forms of Korean-made luxury goods for use in both life and death.

Additional resources:

View the crown up close on the Google Art Project

View the conical cap up close on the Google Art Project

Soyoung Lee and Denise Patry Leidy, *Silla: Korea's Golden Kingdom*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2013.

Gold Treasures: The Royal Tombs of Silla on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"Silla: Korea's Golden Kingdom" at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Tomb construction animation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

"Silla Korea and the Silk Road: Golden Age, Golden Threads," at the Korea Society

Korean Celadons of the Goryeo Dynasty

by SOL JUNG



Figure 13.5.5.9: Maebyŏng decorated with cranes and clouds, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, first half of the 12th century, stoneware with inlaid decoration under celadon glaze, H. 33.7 cm; D. 19.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Cranes fly amongst floating clouds on the cool blue-green background of a curvaceous ceramic vessel. This object, called a *maebyeong*, is representative of Korean celadons made during the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392). Celedons are ceramics with a distinctive green-blue glaze. The color, coupled with intricate inlaid ornamentation, are part of what has made Goryeo celadons desirable and recognizable objects for centuries. Korean potters adapted and refined celadon technology from China to create distinctively Korean ceramics revered by elites in Korea, China, and Japan alike. Many of the Korean celadons in museum collections, such as jars, bowls, and cups, were archaeological artifacts excavated from tombs and royal palaces. The combination of vibrant colors, delicate forms, and intricate decorative techniques contribute to the renown of Goryeo celadons as exemplary works of Korean art.

Definition: The Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392)

The Goryeo or Koryŏ Dynasty unified the Korean Peninsula and was a time of great artistic and cultural achievements. Koryŏ also gives its name to Korea.

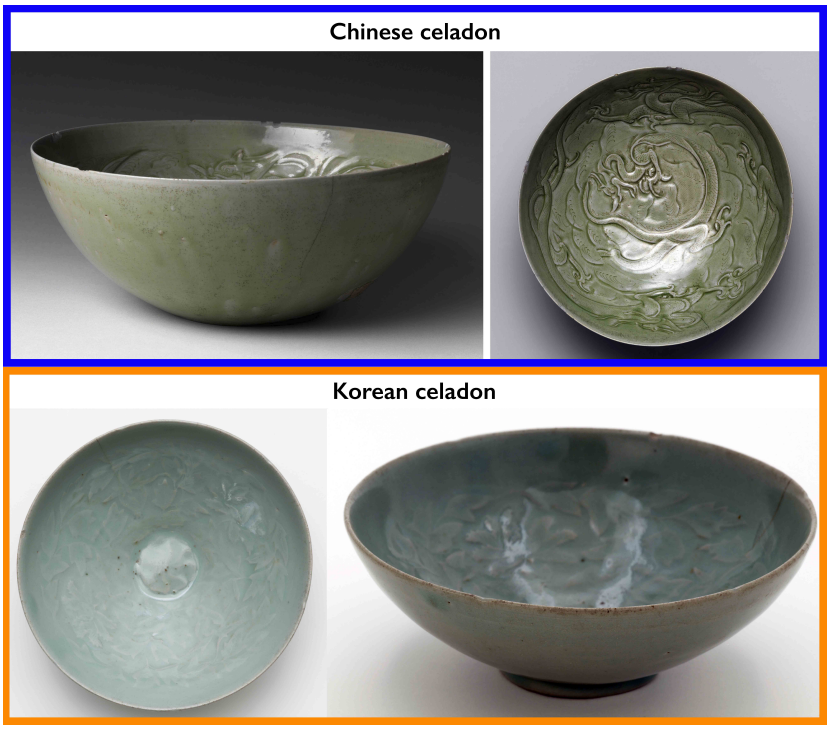


Figure **13.5.5.10**: Top: Bowl with Dragons among Waves, China, Five Dynasties, 10th century, Stoneware with incised decoration under celadon glaze, Mouth D. 27 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**); bottom: Bowl with molded decoration of peony blossoms, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, mid-12th century, Stoneware with celadon glaze, H x W: 6.5 x 18.1 cm (**National Museum of Asian Art**)

Materiality, technique, and aesthetic

Archaeological evidence shows that Korean ceramic technology was advanced even before the Goryeo Dynasty. Korean stoneware from the Three Kingdoms Period (57 B.C.E.–676 C.E.) was fired at temperatures of 1000°C or higher, making it the earliest example of high-fired ceramics in the entire world. However, it was not until the Goryeo period that royal patronage focused on the production of a specific ceramic type, namely celadons.

Tenth-century Korean potters modified Chinese techniques to produce their own version of celadons. Potters used iron-rich clay to form the vessels and a glaze consisting of iron oxide, manganese oxide, and quartz particles. To achieve a consistent blue-green hue, Goryeo artisans developed a two-step firing process. The first step is bisque firing, which dries out and hardens unglazed vessels to make them stable and easier to handle. The second step involves firing glazed vessels in a low-oxygen “reducing” atmosphere to produce the desired celadon color and glossy texture.



Figure **13.5.5.11**: Celadon bowl with incised parrot design, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, stoneware with celadon glaze, H. 7.5 cm; Mouth D. 16.6 cm (**National Museum of Korea**)

Chinese potters fired their celadons in brick kilns, but Korean artisans used traditional mud kilns that effectively blocked the flow of oxygen to produce a brilliant celadon tone. Chinese celadons from the Yue kilns, for example, have a warmer olive green glaze compared to the cooler blue-green hue of Goryeo celadons. Achieving a uniform glaze color for celadons marked a shift in Korean ceramic production.



Figure **13.5.5.12**: Left: Ewer, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, mid-13th century, stoneware with copper-red pigment and white slip under celadon glaze, 30.5 x 16.7 cm (**National Museum of Asian Art**); right: Celadon Jar with Inlaid Monkey and Tree Design in Overglaze Gold, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, stoneware inlaid decoration and overglaze gold pigment on celadon glaze, H. 25.5 cm (**National Museum of Korea**)

Form, color, and ornament became important factors in ceramic appreciation. Early Goryeo celadons emulated Chinese forms, but, gradually, Korean artisans developed their own aesthetic. Potters used molds to create ideal shapes and press popular patterns onto vessels. An incision technique adorned the clay surface with subtle linear designs, which were enhanced by the pooling of glaze in the grooves of varying depths. Flowers and birds were common motifs, particularly lotuses, peonies, parrots, waterfowl, and cranes. Goryeo celadons also featured painted underglaze elements; iron oxide fired to a black or brown, and copper oxide used for red. In rare instances, gold was applied over the celadon glaze to enhance underglaze designs.



Figure **13.5.5.13**: Left: Melon-shaped ewer with bamboo decoration, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, first half of the 12th century, Stoneware with carved and incised design under celadon glaze, H. 21.6 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**); right: Incense burner, Celadon with openwork geometric design, Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, 12th century, Stoneware with celadon glaze, H. 15.3 cm (**National Museum of Korea**)

Fanciful forms, such as melon-shaped ewers (or pitchers), and elaborate incense burners featuring latticed openwork, demonstrate the careful handiwork involved in making luxury celadons.



Figure **13.5.5.14**: Maebyŏng decorated with cranes and clouds (detail), Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, first half of the 12th century, stoneware with inlaid decoration under celadon glaze, H. 33.7 cm; D. 19.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In the mid-twelfth century, Goryeo potters began using an inlay technique called *sanggam* to adorn celadons. Potters stamped or carved out a design, then filled it with white or black slip before the first bisque firing (slip is a mixture of clay, water, and typically a mineral pigment). The inlay on a *maebyeong* decorated with cranes and clouds best exemplifies this technique of *sanggam*. The potter used white slip to depict the cranes and clouds, adding intricate details such as feathers and curlicued wisps. The addition of black slip accentuates the crane's form. Such inlaid creations, uncommon in China, became emblematic of a Goryeo ceramic aesthetic.

Royal patronage and maritime trade

Goryeo celadons adorned the lives of the elite. Potters fashioned celadons into tableware, such as bowls, plates, cups, and ewers, ritual implements, such as incense burners and kundika bottles, and decorative vessels, such as flower containers and cosmetic

cases. Some monumental buildings even featured elaborate celadon tiles.

Definition: Kundika

Kundika are ritual pitchers.

The Goryeo royal court heavily invested in celadon production and the development of its refined ornamentation. Archaeological evidence indicates that celadon production started in the Goryeo capital of Gaeseong in the second quarter of the tenth century. In the late eleventh to early thirteenth centuries, celadon kilns were re-established in Gangjin, located in today's South Jeolla province.



Figure 13.5.5.15: Map of the Korean Peninsula showing Gaeseong and Gangjin (underlying map © Google)

Celadon kilns flourished in Gangjin: its ecological features provided material resources for ceramic production such as raw clay and firewood, and the geography offered a natural port where ships could dock to load cargo for transport. The strategic placement of Goryeo royal warehouses along the entire Korean coastline consolidated local goods from different districts to be sent yearly to the capital of Gaeseong as tax payment. Gangjin shipped large quantities of celadons to the capital for the royal court and and the nobility to display, gift, and use in their palaces. The structure of the flat-bottomed Goryeo ships allowed for stable, smooth sailing, especially when loaded with a cargo of heavy ceramics. Compared to bumpy travel over land, maritime travel facilitated the safe handling of large quantities of ceramics, keeping these valuable goods intact.

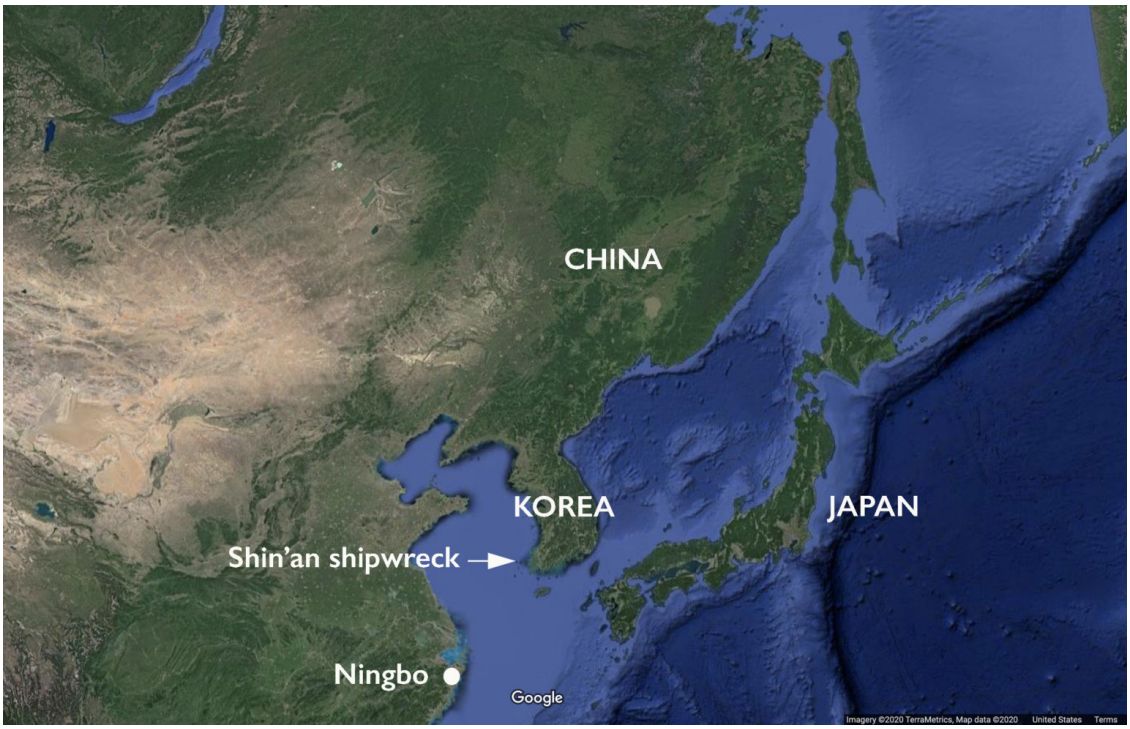


Figure **13.5.5.16**: Goryeo celadons were traded across vast distances. The Shin'an shipwreck helps us to understand these broader trade networks. (underlying map © Google)

Goryeo celadons travelled across the sea to China and Japan. The 1976 excavation of the Shin'an shipwreck off Korea's southwest coast unearthed a massive cargo of ceramics, coins, lacquerware, incense, and herbs. The ship departed from the Chinese port of Ningbo and was headed for Japan when it sank in 1323. Though the majority of excavated ceramics were Chinese, there were seven Goryeo celadon vessels on the ship specially selected for the Japanese market. Goryeo celadons have a substantive presence at medieval Japanese (1130–1600) archaeological sites, revealing that Buddhist monks, urban dwellers, military elites, and nobility enthusiastically collected these Korean ceramics.

Korean celadons in historical records

Historical accounts speak of Chinese appreciation for Goryeo celadons. The Chinese Song Dynasty (960–1279) envoy, Xu Jing, visited the Goryeo capital, Gaeseong, in 1123. Xu noted the similarity of Goryeo celadons to ceramics at China's famous Yue and Ru kilns. Xu expressed personal praise for Goryeo ceramics, stating that "those recently made show excellent craftsmanship and much improved color." In a contemporaneous collection of writings, *Brocade in the Sleeve* (*Xiuzhongjin*), Song Dynasty author, Taiping Laoren, mentioned "jade-colored celadon of Goryeo" along with other luxury items as "the best under heaven" and "incomparable to any." These records reveal how Chinese elites during the Song Dynasty acknowledged and admired the beauty of Korean celadon glazes.[1]

The *History of Goryeo* (*Goryeosa*) records a diplomatic episode where Kublai Khan examined a Goryeo gold-painted celadon vessel (the Mongol ruler had defeated the Chinese and established the Yuan Dynasty). He asked a Goryeo envoy, Jo Ingyu, if the gold strengthens the vessel. Jo replied no, explaining that it is merely decorative. Next, Kublai asked if the gold can be reused. When Jo answered no, Kublai demanded that such ceramics no longer be made. Since the Goryeo usually offered metal vessels to the Mongol khans as tribute, these rare gold-painted celadons were most likely exclusive gifts for the Mongol court. Though the Goryeo court wanted to impress Kublai, his disappointment at the wasteful use of precious gold reveals a clash between Mongol and Goryeo aesthetics. Nonetheless, Goryeo celadons remained a popular item among Mongol elites, and under Kublai's rule, an active ceramics trade unfolded between Korea and China.

Goryeo potters successfully produced exquisite celadons, which gained recognition within East Asia as ceramics unique to Korea. Goryeo celadons are now iconic objects—they are the earliest Korean ceramics studied and appreciated for their aesthetic and art historical value, making them important objects to study today.

Notes:

[1] Namwon Jang, “Introduction and Development of Koryŏ Celadon,” in *A Companion to Korean Art*, eds., J.P. Park, Burglind Jungmann, and Juhyung Rhi (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons, 2020), pp. 144–145

Additional resources:

Cranes and Clouds: The Art of Korean Ceramic Inlay, National Museum of Asian Art

Lee, Soyoung. “**Goryeo Celadon**.” In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*

Jang, Namwon. “Introduction and Development of Goryeo Celadon,” in *A Companion to Korean Art*. Edited by J.P. Park, Burglind Jungmann, and Juhyung Rhi (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons, 2020), pp. 133–156.

Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara

by DR. YOONJUNG SEO



Figure **13.5.5.17**: Three Goryeo paintings of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara. Left: mid-14th century, ink, color and gold on silk, 98.3 x 47.7 cm (Freer Gallery of Art); center: Kim Wu et al., 1310, ink, colors, and gold on silk, 419.5 x 101.5 cm. (Kagami Shrine, Karatsu City, Japan); right: 14th century, color on silk, 104 x 55.9 cm (Musée Guimet, Paris)

Goryeo Buddhist Painting



Figure **13.5.5.18**: Amitabha triad, c. 13th century, ink, color and gold on silk, 211.5 x 80 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The term “Goryeo Buddhist Painting” refers to a group of Korean paintings, mostly from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that depict Buddhist icons, typically in a format of large hanging scrolls. As Buddhism flourished as the official religion during the Goryeo dynasty, various Buddhist artworks were produced under royal patronage and used for state-sponsored ceremonies and funerary rituals. These paintings reflect not only the beliefs, but the taste and refinement of the Goryeo royalty and nobility.

Definition: Goryeo dynasty

The Goryeo dynasty ruled the Korean peninsula from 918 to 1392. The modern word “Korea” is derived from the name of this dynasty.



Figure **13.5.5.19**: Buddha Amitabha and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, mid-late 14th century, ink, color, and gold on silk, 160.3 x 86 cm (Freer Gallery of Art)

Pure Land Buddhism, focused on the Buddha Amitābha, is a branch of **Mahayana Buddhism** and one of the most widely practiced traditions of Buddhism in East Asia. It promises believers rebirth in Amitābha’s Western Paradise and enjoyed enormous popularity in Goryeo society. The Amitabha Buddha was typically portrayed either alone, in a triad, or flanked by the Eight Great Bodhisattvas. The bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Ksitigarbha were also widely worshipped in the Goryeo kingdom, and numerous scroll paintings attest to their popularity.

Definition: The Eight Great Bodhisattvas

Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have chosen to stay on earth to help others achieve enlightenment. The Eight Great Bodhisattvas each represent a particular characteristic of the Buddha, such as wisdom or compassion.



Figure 13.5.5.20: Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, first half of the 14th century, ink and color on silk, image 114.5 x 55.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara



Figure 13.5.5.21: Rosary beads, detail of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, first half of the 14th century, ink and color on silk, image 114.5 x 55.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In this painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (above), the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is depicted in typical Goryeo fashion as "Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara." He is shown seated on a rocky outcrop protruding from the sea in his mountain-island abode, Mount Potalaka, where water flows from numerous springs and the landscape is populated by fragrant grass and flowers, marvelous trees, and coral. He sits with his right leg crossed and his left foot placed on a lotus-flower support, holding a crystal rosary in his hand. He is dressed in dazzling robes and sashes, with intricate gold details on his jewelry and clothing.

Definition: Rosary

A rosary is string of beads used for prayer and chanting.



Figure 13.5.5.22: Sudhana, detail of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, first half of the 14th century, ink and color on silk, image 114.5 x 55.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Goryeo Buddhist paintings are well known for their delicate details and sumptuous execution. They include exquisitely drawn garments created through the ample use of mineral pigments accented with gold, and illusionary effects seen in the depiction of transparent veils. Here, long transparent veils extend from Avalokiteśvara's crown to the pond in the lower portion of the painting, adorned with patterns of white hemp leaves or white medallions filled with flower patterns and plant scroll designs. Two stalks of bamboo are depicted behind the rock where Avalokiteśvara is seated, and his body and head are surrounded by a large luminous mandorla and a nimbus, or halo, to represent his divinity. On the rock table to one side, we see a bronze or ceramic kundīka vessel with willow branches. In the lower right-hand corner of the painting, the boy pilgrim Sudhana, who travels to seek enlightenment and wisdom, appears in a pose of adoration.

Definition: Pigments

Pigments are substances used in paint to give it a particular hue. They are often derived from minerals.

Definition: Mandorla

A mandorla is an oval shape that surrounds the entire figure.

Definition: Kundīka vessels

Kundīka vessels are jars used for Buddhist ritual purposes.



Figure 13.5.5.23: Detail of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara with kundīka vessel at left, first half of the 14th century, ink and color on silk, image 114.5 x 55.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

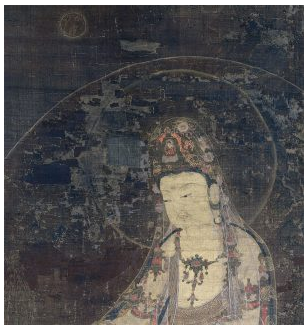


Figure **13.5.5.24**: Detail of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, first half of the 14th century, ink and color on silk, image 114.5 x 55.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Goryeo Buddhist paintings were made by applying color to both the front and back of the silk canvas. By working on the reverse side of the canvas, artists could create subtle effects, intensifying and contrasting with the primary colors painted on the front. Gold was extensively used to delineate figures and to accentuate the decorative patterns on robes and jewelry. The body was outlined with ink, while a thin red line was employed for the facial features.

In some paintings, a diminutive moon is depicted at the top, from which the name “Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara” originates. The willow tree motif may symbolize the cleansing and healing power of the deity, and is also closely related to Chinese Buddhist paintings of the Western Xia dynasty (1038-1227), which flourished around the same time. [1] However, there are also several notable features unique to Goryeo artworks..



Figure **13.5.5.25**: Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara, color on silk, 227.9 x 125.8 cm (Daitoku-ji, Japan)



Figure 13.5.5.26: The dragon king and his retinue, detail of Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara, color on silk, 227.9 x 125.8 cm (Daitoku-ji, Japan)

Goryeo Buddhist paintings frequently include secular and mythical figures, depicted as worshippers or patrons. They are often members of the royalty, aristocrats, or donors of paintings, wearing elegant court dress and elaborate hairdos decorated with jewelry and gold. These depictions allow us a glimpse into the taste for luxury and splendor amongst the ruling class in Goryeo society. For instance, in the painting of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara held in the Daitoku-ji in Japan (above), a group of worshippers are depicted in the lower corner of this painting, kneeling and holding their hands together in a gesture of courtesy. They are identified as the mythical dragon king of the Eastern Sea, his queen, his royal entourage, and monsters bearing offerings of incense, coral, and pearls to the deity. Despite their small scale, these figures play an important role in the painting as well as the ritual context, acting as intermediaries between the secular and sacred worlds and inviting the viewer to the scene.

Tales from folklore



Figure 13.5.5.27: Rabbit pounding the elixir of immortality, detail of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, first half of the 14th century, ink and color on silk, image 114.5 x 55.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Motifs from indigenous myths, miraculous stories, and folklore predating Buddhism were also incorporated in depictions of this deity to highlight his spiritual power. For instance, the blue bird, the dragon king, the rosary, and the pair of bamboo stalks in the Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara are related to stories about the famous Korean monks Ŭisang and Wonhyo and their miraculous encounters with Avalokiteśvara. A rabbit pounding the elixir of immortality under a laurel tree in the moonlight is another motif derived from a myth of ancient pre-Buddhist China, which tells of a rabbit (whose image can be seen on the face of the moon) who uses a mortar and pestle to prepare a life-giving potion for the Moon Goddess.

Painted in vibrant colors of red, green, and blue with gold pigments, exquisite Goryeo Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara paintings represent the religious fervor of ardent believers in Pure Land Buddhism, as well as the splendid material culture of upper-class Goryeo society.

[1] It is not known for certain when or why the willow tree and the moon were included as standard features in Goryeo Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara paintings. Historical records indicate that the iconography of Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, encircled by a full moon and seated in a bamboo grove, was invented by the famous Tang painter Zhou Fang (act.mid-ninth century). Although Zhou Fang's painting does not exist any longer, the close affinities between similar works and Goryeo paintings suggest that the iconography of Goryeo Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara was based on that of Chinese precedents.

Additional resources:

This work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Essay on Korea, 1000-1400 A.D. from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Yukio Lippit, "Goryeo Buddhist Painting in an Interregional Context," *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 35 (2008), pages 192-232.

Portrait of Sin Sukju

by DR. KRISTEN CHIEM



Figure **13.5.5.28**: *Portrait of Sin Sukju*, second half of the 15th century, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 167 x 109.5 cm, Goryeong Sin Family Collection, Cheongwon, Treasure no. 613.

Portrait paintings commemorated the sitter in both life and death in Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) Korea. This painting depicts Sin Sukju (1417-75) as a "meritorious subject," or an official honored for his distinguished service at court and loyalty to the king during a tumultuous time. Skilled in capturing the likeness of the sitter while still adhering to pictorial conventions, artists in the Royal Bureau of Painting (a government agency staffed with artists) created portraits of officials awarded this honorary title. These paintings would be cherished by their families and worshiped for generations to follow.

Definition: Joseon dynasty

The Joseon, or Yi dynasty, was founded in 1392 by the military leader Yi Song-gye and lasted until 1910. It was the last imperial dynasty and the longest in the history of Korea.

A meritorious portrait

This painting shows Sin Sukju dressed in his official robes with a black silk hat on his head. In accordance with Korean portraiture conventions, court artists pictured subjects like Sin Sukju seated in a full-length view, often with their heads turned slightly and only one ear showing. Crisp, angular lines and subtle gradations of color characterize the folds of his gown. Here, the subject is seated in a folding chair with cabriole-style arms, where the upper part is convex and the bottom part is concave. Leather shoes adorn his feet, which rest on an intricately carved wooden footstool. In proper decorum, his hands are folded neatly and concealed within his sleeves. He wears a rank badge on his chest.

Rank badges are insignia typically made of embroidered silk. They indicate the status of the official, which could be anyone from the emperor down to a local official. As in Ming-dynasty China (1368–1644), images of birds on rank badges precisely identified the rank of the wearer. Here, Sin Sukju's rank badge shows a pair of peacocks amongst flowering plants and clouds. It is an auspicious scene suiting a civic official, and especially luminous with the use of gold embroidery. Crafted in sets, rank badges were worn on both the front and back of the official overcoat.

Physical likeness

Although portraiture conventions, such as the attire and posture of the sitter, were quite formulaic, the facial features were painted with the goal of transmitting a sense of unique, physical likeness. This careful attention to the sitter's face, such as wrinkles and bone structure, served the Korean belief that the face could reveal important clues about the subject.



Figure **13.5.5.29**: *Portrait of Sin Sukju* (detail), second half of the 15th century, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 167 x 109.5 cm, Goryeong Sin Family Collection, Cheongwon, Treasure no. 613.

Look carefully and you might notice the wrinkles around the edges of Sin Sukju's eyes ("crow's feet"). His thin, almond-shaped eyes are bright and clear, and his mouth is surrounded by deep grooves where his moustache meets his chin. His solemn visage exudes wisdom and dignity.

The meticulous brushwork on Sin Sukju's face is even more striking in comparison with the solid, undulating lines and bold blocks of color that define his attire. Highly skilled artists at the court may have collaborated on portraits, such that one artist may have painted the robes according to the prescribed rank or title, while another may have painted the face in great detail. Later portraits developed this interest in the face even further with the use of Western painting techniques introduced to Korea by Jesuit missionaries in China in the eighteenth century.



Figure **13.5.5.30**: *Portrait of Sin Sukju* (detail), second half of the 15th century, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 167 x 109.5 cm, Goryeong Sin Family Collection, Cheongwon, Treasure no. 613.

Sin Sukju and *Hwagi*

Sin Sukju was an eminent scholar and a powerful politician who rose to the rank of Prime Minister. Named a meritorious subject four times in his life, he served both King Sejong and King Sejo. Remarkably, he managed to maintain court favor through the tumult of King Sejo's coup in 1453. In the course of capturing the throne, King Sejo arrested and killed his own brother, Prince Anpyeong, who Sin Sukju had also served until the prince's untimely death.

It was his service to Prince Anpyeong that earned Sin Sukju a significant place in the history of art. In 1445, Sin Sukju compiled *Hwagi (Commentaries on Painting)*, which contains a catalogue of Prince Anpyeong's collection of paintings. Sin Sukju's detailed records revealed the prince's interest in Chinese paintings and his patronage of the Joseon court painter, An Gyeon, who was professionally active as an artist for 30 years beginning in approximately 1440. Sin Sukju's commentaries have helped scholars to identify specific works and prompted speculation on the cultural exchange between China and Korea.

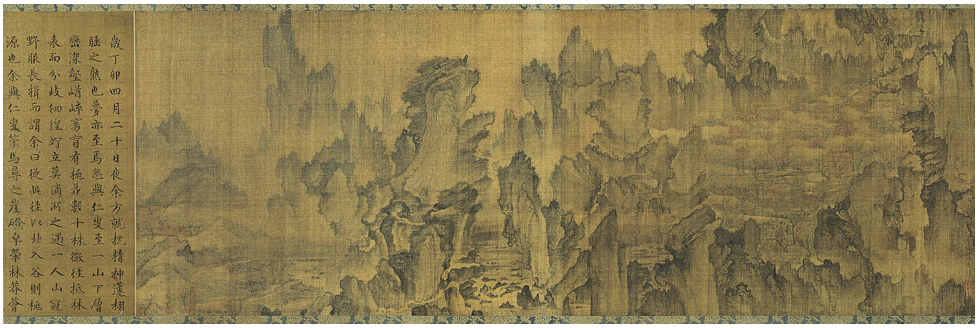


Figure **13.5.5.31**: An Gyeon, *Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land*, 1447, handscroll with ink and light color on silk, 38.6 x 106.2 cm, Tenri Central Library, Tenri University, Nara, Japan

Ancestral worship

In addition to the virtue of loyalty (such as the devotion of a subject to his ruler), Confucianism emphasized filial piety, or honor and respect for one's elders and ancestors. Even more important than recording the sitter's appearance and preserving his rank during life, portrait painting served as a focus for ancestral rituals after his death. It was thought that when a person died, the soul of the deceased remained among the world of the living until it gradually dissipated. Rendered in the format of a hanging scroll, this painting likely hung within the family shrine to guide the soul in the practice of ancestral worship. In this way, *Portrait of Sin*

Sukju reflected both the honor that Sin Sukju brought to his lineage as a meritorious official as well as Confucian beliefs about the afterlife.

Definition: Confucianism

Confucianism is named after Kong Qiu (later given the Latinized name Confucius) who lived from approximately 551 until 479 B.C.E. Confucianism is a philosophical system that stresses a moral and ethical order. the teachings of Kong Qiu have had an immense impact on Chinese culture for more than two millennium.

Additional resources:

Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400–1600 Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Cho, Sunmie. "Joseon Dynasty Portraits of Meritorious Subjects," *Korea Journal* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 151–85.

Jungmann, Burglind. "Sin Sukju's Record on the Painting Collection of Prince Anpyeong and Early Joseon Antiquarianism," *Archives of Asian Art* 61 (2011), pp. 107-126.

Lee, Soyoung, with essays by JaHyun Kim Haboush, Sunpyo Hong, and Chin-Sung Chang, *Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400-1600*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009

Song Su-Nam, *Summer Trees*

by DR. HANNAH SIGUR

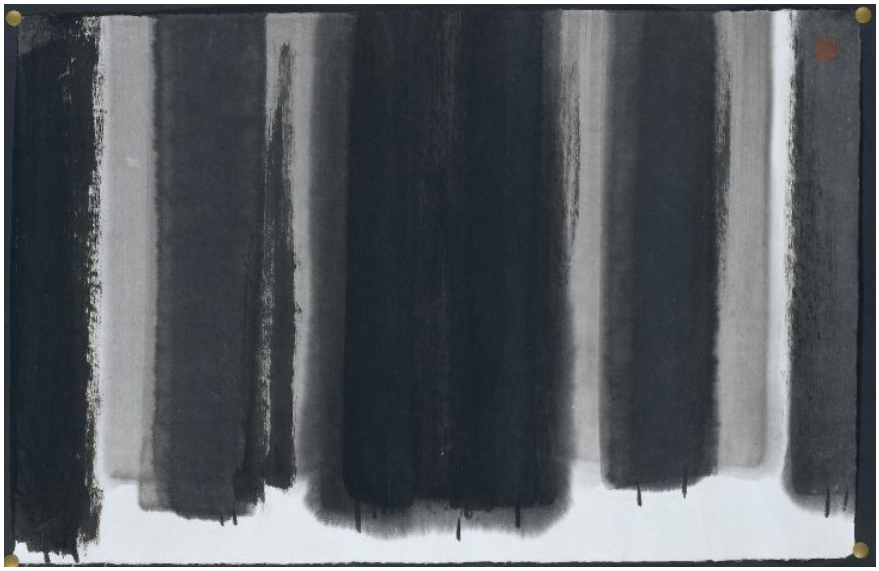


Figure **13.5.5.32**: Song Su-Nam, *Summer Trees*, 1979, ink on paper, 2 feet 1-5/8 inches high (British Museum) © Song Su-Nam

Modern, but deeply rooted in tradition

In Song Su-nam's *Summer Trees*, broad, vertical parallel brush strokes of ink blend and bleed from one to the other in a stark palette of velvety blacks and diluted grays. The feathery edges of some reveal them to be pale washes applied to very wet paper, while the darkest appear as streaks that show both ink and paper were nearly dry. The forms overlap and stop just short of the bottom edge of the paper, suggesting a sense of shallow space—though one that would be difficult to enter. Only a practiced hand could control ink with such simplicity and impact. The painting exudes psychological power, despite its relatively modest proportions (it is only a little more than 2 feet high).

Song's exploration of tone (the shades of black and gray) and the effects produced by the marks of the brush, the wet paper, and dripping ink, has led some to think that these abstract, formal qualities are the real subject of this very modern-looking work. But it is important that the title refers to the natural world. Song created *Summer Trees*in 1979, but he made at least two similar paintings. One, in 1986, he called *Tree* (below). Not until **the second**, painted in 2000, did he fully embrace abstraction by leaving the work

untitled. His title—and even his decision to create a work in ink—shows us that though clearly addressing issues of contemporary art—Song's work is deeply rooted in tradition.

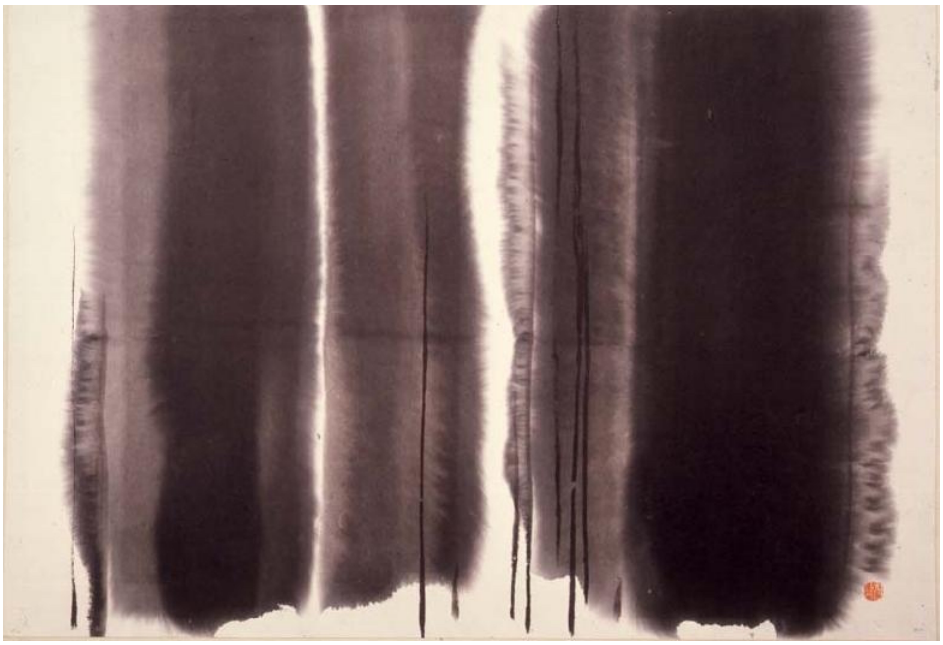


Figure **13.5.5.33**: Song Su-Nam, *Tree*, 1985, india ink on Korean paper, 94 x 138 cm (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea) © Song Su-Nam



Figure **13.5.5.34**: Ni Zan, *Six Gentleman*, 1345, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 61.9 x 33.3 cm (Shanghai Museum)

Ink

To choose the medium of ink on paper was important for the artist, a leader of Korea's "Sumukhwa" or Oriental Ink Movement of the 1980s. Sumukwha is the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese word for "ink wash painting," also called "literati painting." The "literatus" can be defined as a "scholar-poet" or "scholar-artist," a type of ideal man that emerged in China in the eleventh century or before. Chinese poetry was considered the noblest art and "ink wash painting" was its twin, because writing a poem and making

a painting used the same tools and techniques—one resulting in words, the other a picture. In their simplicity and reductiveness, the style of ink wash paintings created centuries ago often seem to match Western notions of abstraction (left).

In Chinese poetry, mountainous landscapes and the plants that grow in them serve as metaphors for the ideal qualities of the literatus himself—qualities such as loyalty, intelligence, spirituality, and strength in adversity. The world the literatus wants to live in is one of beauty, deep in nature, away from the centers of power and money. These themes provided painters with a library of motifs. From the 1970s–90s, Song created many such landscapes, executed unconventionally, with and without titles. *Summer Trees* may also reference a traditional theme: a group of pine trees can symbolize a gathering of friends of upright character. Whatever his intention with this title, Song was clearly alluding to the special world of the literati. Highly educated and a respected professor, he stood among the modern literati of Korea.

A Korean identity



Figure **13.5.5.35**: Morris Louis, *Pungent Distances*, 1961, magna on canvas, 231.8 x 150.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) © 1961 Morris Louis

Song's interest in abstraction and the formal properties of ink has led some art historians to attribute the inspiration for his work to that of American artists like Morris Louis who used the medium of acrylic resin on canvas in his "Stripe" paintings of the 1960s, which resemble Song's works of later decades such as Summer Trees. But in Korea during the 1980s there was a tension between the influence of Western art that used oil paint (whether traditional or contemporary in style), and traditional Korean art that used an East Asian style, the vocabulary of traditional motifs, and the medium of ink for calligraphy and painting. Song felt very strongly that the materials and styles of Western art did not express his identity as a Korean.

Sumukwha provided Song and his circle with a way to express Korean identity. Since antiquity, the country had taken great pride in a political and cultural distinctiveness that was recognized throughout Asia. Yet the twentieth century had brought humiliating trauma: the end of Korea's ancient monarchy, colonization by the Japanese who had attempted to obliterate the Korean language, mass destruction during the Korean War (1950-53), and the partitioning of the nation. In South Korea, where Song lived, the country was healing but endured authoritarian government and student unrest. People lived in constant fear of hostility from North Korea. For protection, they accepted a conspicuous American military presence, but this cast modernization in a decidedly Westernized light.

Sumukwha's ideal—the literatus—presented a compelling antidote to the psychological displacement felt by Song's circle of artists and intellectuals: a model individual of character and moral compass no matter what challenges life presents; and a way of expressing those ideals through his iconic tools of ink and brush. *Summer Trees*, with its allusions to friendship and a balmy season, could be Song's statement of optimism in the rediscovery of traditional values recast for modern times.

Additional resources:

Song's work at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

Special Exhibition of Donated Works: Song Soo-nam at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

Park Soo-mee. "Artist's Willingness to Experiment with Korean Ink Bent Boundaries" *Korea JoongAng Daily*,February 26, 2004

Kim Seong-Heui, translated by Seung Il Oh, "On the Basis of Art Educational Implications"

Joan Kee, "The Curious Case of Contemporary Ink Painting" *Art Journal*, vol. 69, no. 3, 2010, pp. 88 – 113.

Lee Kyeung-sung. “Song Su-nam: The Ink Images Expanding Into Infinity,” exhibition of Song Su-nam, Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawaii, March 1 – 17, 1980.

Francis Mullany, *Symbolism in Korean Brush Painting* (Kent: Global Oriental 2006)

Jane Portal, *Korea, Art and Archaeology* (London: The British Museum Press, 2000)

13.5.5: Korea is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.5: Korea** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.6: Afghanistan

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has long been a crossroads of cultures from both the east and the west.

1st century C.E. - present

Crossroads of the ancient world

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Because of Afghanistan's geographical position—on the edge of central Asia with India and China beyond to the east, and Iran, the Middle East and the numerous cultures of the Mediterranean and the rest of Europe to the west—it was criss-crossed by ancient trade routes. In many ways, then as now, it was a hub and meeting place for diverse cultures and neighbors, both near and distant, over thousands of years.

In the modern world it's all too easy to think of Afghanistan solely as a place of conflict—but taking the long view we can see in the rich materials and ornate craftsmanship of these objects a far broader story.

Afghanistan has always been a part of a complex network of cultures that doesn't always take account of contemporary political boundaries. Long-distance travel and globalization may seem like relatively new inventions, but the ancient world was much more connected than many of us may think.



Figure **13.5.6.1**: *Inlaid gold pendant from Tillya Tepe*, 1st century C.E., National Museum of Afghanistan © Thierry Ollivier / Musée Guimet © Trustees of the British Museum

One of the pieces on loan from the National Museum in Kabul illustrates this point particularly well: a pendant from the Tillya Tepe hoard found in the north-west of the country (above). It features inlays of gold and turquoise. Two dragon-like beasts in the design suggest to some the influence of Chinese art but to others, represent the heavenly horses of the Ferghana valley of neighboring Central Asia.

It also includes lapis lazuli, a type of blue stone only found in Afghanistan but coveted in the wider world for thousands of years. It crops up in the jewelry of ancient Egypt, the art of the ancient near east and as far afield as the art of the Italian Renaissance.

The fact we nearly lost many of these stunning objects and signposts to the past to the events of Afghanistan's recent history underlines how precious they are as well as the fragility of cultural heritage.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Bamiyan Buddhas

by DR. MELODY ROD-ARI

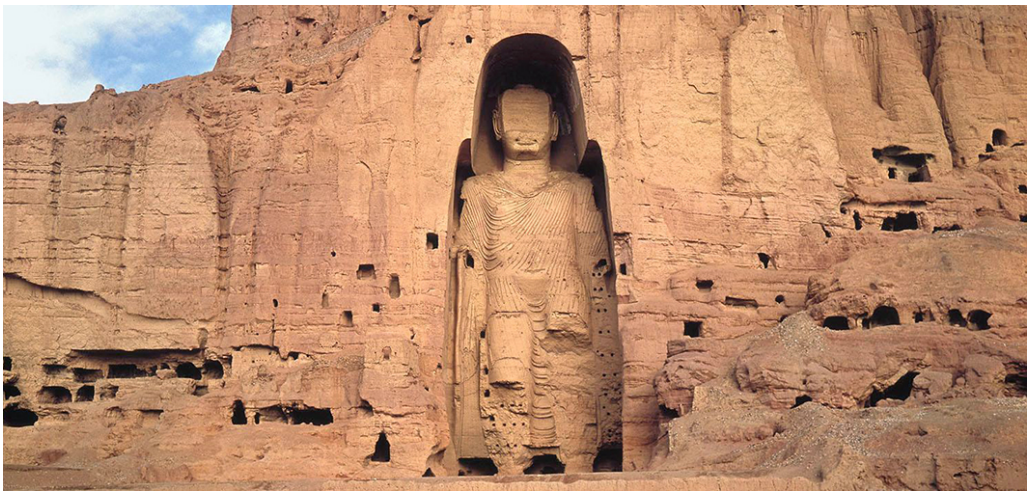


Figure **13.5.6.2**: West Buddha surrounded by caves, c. 6th-7th C.E., stone, stucco, paint, 175 feet high, Bamiyan, Afghanistan, destroyed 2001 (photo: © **Afghanistan Embassy**)

Prior to their recent destruction, the sixth-to-seventh-century, rock-cut Buddha sculptures in the Bamiyan Valley of central Afghanistan were considered the largest in the world. Known collectively as the Bamiyan Buddhas, the two monumental sculptures have amazed both Buddhist and non-Buddhist visitors for more than a 1000 years. Like many of the world's great ancient monuments, little is known about who commissioned the Bamiyan Buddhas or the sculptors who carved them. However, their very existence points to the importance of the Buddhist faith and the Bamiyan Valley during this period.

Buddhism along the Silk Route

Bamiyan is located between the Indian subcontinent (to the southeast) and Central Asia (to the north), which made it an important location close to one of the most important branches of the Silk Route. The Silk Route was an ancient series of linked trade routes that connected the East to the West and carried both material wealth and ideas. Bamiyan's central location along the Silk Route, along with its fertile plains amid harsh terrain, made it an ideal location for merchants and missionaries to stop during their travels. Many of the missionaries and merchants in this area during the middle of the first millennium were practitioners of the Buddhist faith. Buddhism had long been an important religion in the region, having been introduced during the early Kushan period.



Figure **13.5.6.3**: Map showing Bamiyan and contemporary contiguous nations

Buddhism spread, in part, because it was not location specific. Believers did not need to worship at a particular temple or at a particular site as part of their practice. Worship could take place anywhere and at anytime. This freedom resulted in the emergence of Buddhist cave architecture throughout Asia. Indeed, if one visits Bamiyan today, one will see nearly 1000 Buddhist caves carved along 1300 meters of cliff face.[1] It is against this backdrop of carved caves that the two monumental Buddha images were carved.



Figure **13.5.6.4**: Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (photo: © **UNESCO/G. Gonzales Brigas**)

Monumental Buddhas

Prior to their destruction in 2001, two monumental Buddha sculptures could be seen carved into the cliff facing the Bamiyan Valley. The larger of the two figures, located on the western end (on the right in the photo above), measured 175 feet in height. The art historian Susan Huntington has argued that it represented the Buddha Vairochana. The smaller of the two monumental statues, located to the east, depicted the Buddha Shakyamuni. This figure was also enormous and measured 120 feet in height.

Both images were carved into niches of the cliff side in high relief. The area near the heads of both Buddha figures and the area around the larger Buddha's feet were carved in the round, allowing worshippers to circumambulate. Circumambulation, which is the act of walking around an object such as a stupa (a reliquary mound) or an image of the Buddha, is a common practice in Buddhist worship.

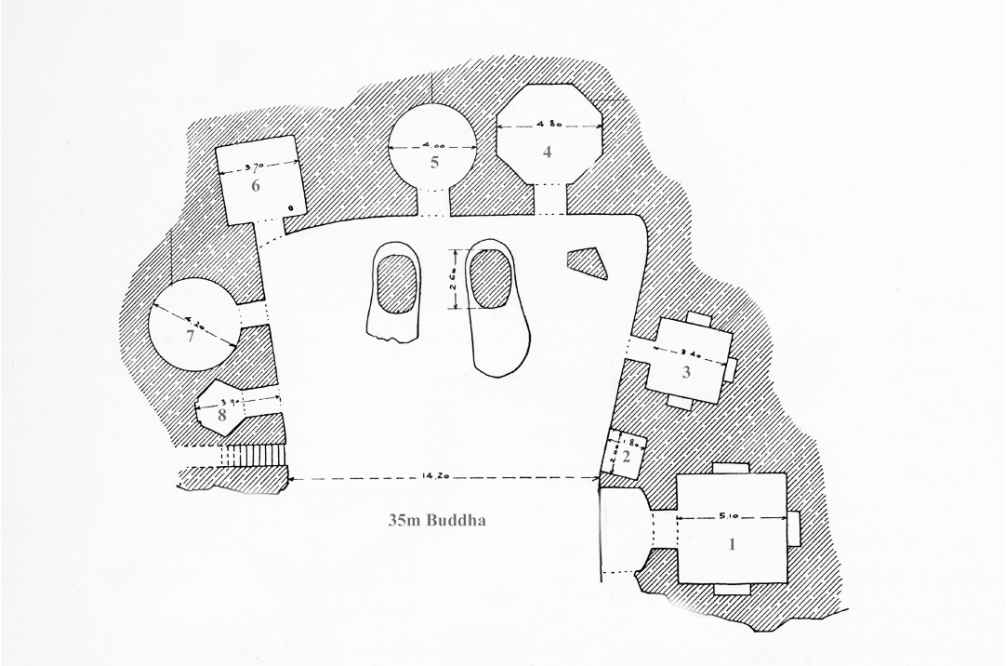


Figure **13.5.6.5**: Plan of larger Buddha showing feet carved in the round and smaller cave chapels (Godard, Godard, and Hackin, *Les Antiquites Bouddhiques de Bamiyan*, Paris and Brussels: les Editions G. Van Oest, 1928, fig. 18)

The two large Buddha images reflected the international environment of the Bamiyan Valley and were influenced by the art and cultures of India, Central Asia and even ancient Greek culture. For example, both Buddhas wore flowing robes and have been described as having wavy curls of hair. This hairstyle and the flowing drapery are elements rooted in early Gandharan Buddhist imagery that combined Hellenistic Greek traditions of representation with Indian subject matter.[2]



Figure **13.5.6.6**: East Buddha (detail with drapery in 1975), c. 6th-7th c C.E., stone, stucco, painted, 120 feet high, Bamiyan, Afghanistan, destroyed 2001 (photo: **Pierre Le Bigot**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Much of what we know about the monumental Buddha sculptures comes from the Chinese monk Xuanzang (Hsuan-Tsang) who traveled to Bamiyan in 643 and documented his travels in the text The Great Tang Records of the Western Regions (Da Tang Xiyu Ji). As the earliest text describing the Buddha images, Xuanzang's writings provide us with remarkable descriptions of the sculptures and the vibrant communities that inhabited the region. He wrote:

> ***When merchants coming and going happen to witness visions of heavenly deities, whether as good omens or as predictions of disaster, they worship the deities to pray for blessedness. There are several tens of monasteries with several thousand monks, who follow the Hinayana teachings of the Lokottaravada school. To the northeast of the city, there is at a corner of the mountains a rock statue of the Buddha standing, one hundred forty or fifty feet in height, a dazzling golden color and adorned with brilliant gems. To the east there is a monastery built by a previous king of the country. To the east of the monastery there is a copper statue of the Buddha standing, more than one hundred feet tall. It was cast in separate pieces and then welded together into shape.[3]***

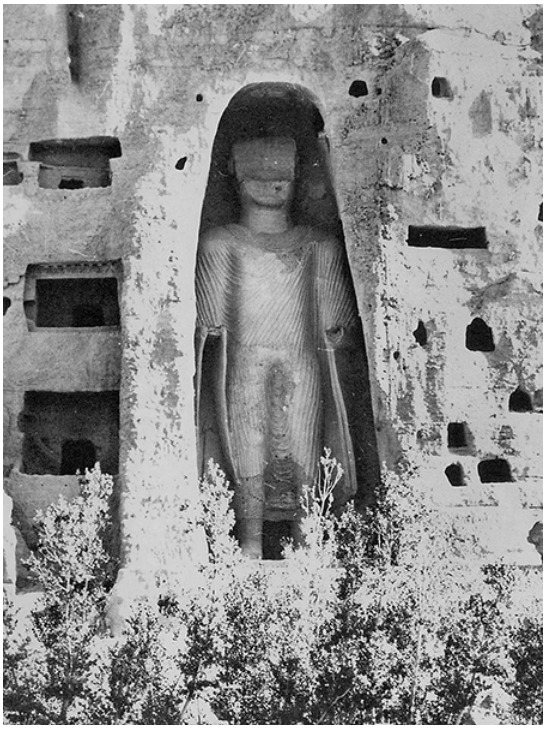


Figure 13.5.6.7: East Buddha, c. 6th-7th c C.E., stone, stucco, painted, 120 feet high, Bamiyan, Afghanistan, destroyed 2001 (photo: © **Dr. H. Crane**)

Xuanzang's descriptions of the Buddhas provide us great insight into not only what they might have looked like in the seventh century but also how they were engaged with the community around them. Perhaps most surprising to our modern experience with Buddha imagery is that the monumental rock-cut sculptures are described by Xuanzang as being adorned with metal, color, and gems—not stripped down as we often see them in museums and galleries.

Scholars agree that both images were covered in pigments of various hues so that they appeared to be made of metal and other materials, but that they were not cast entirely of "copper" as Xuanzang suggests of the smaller Buddha image. However, scholars such as Deborah Klimburg-Salter have argued that both of the monumental Buddhas' faces were constructed of masks made of wood clad by a thin layer of brass, which were inserted onto ledges that appeared above the lower lips of both images.[4] Finbarr Barry Flood argues that the cuts to the faces were a later iconoclastic act.[5]

While there is debate over the material and treatment of the Buddha's faces, we know that pigments were applied to the stucco that covered the stone surfaces of the sculptures. Stucco helped to even out the textured rock surface. One can imagine what a powerful impression these monumental Buddhas would have made on passersby and worshippers.



Figure 13.5.6.8: West niche, c. 6th-7th c C.E., stone, stucco, paint, Bamiyan, Afghanistan, Buddha destroyed 2001 (photo: Carlos Ugarte, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Backstory

In 2001, Mullah Omar ordered Taliban forces to **demolish the Bamiyan Buddhas**. As reported in ***The Guardian***, the destruction took several weeks, and the two figures "proved remarkably solid. Anti-aircraft guns had little effect, so the engineers placed anti-tank mines between their feet, then bored holes into their heads and packed them with dynamite." Only outlines of the figures and a few details now remain in place; fragments of them (including about 30% of the smaller Buddha) are piled nearby.

The Taliban's direction to destroy the Buddha images was motivated, in part, by the group's extreme iconoclastic campaign as well as their disdain for the fact that money from western countries was being spent on protecting the images while there was an intense and growing need for humanitarian aid in the region. It was also unquestionably an act designed to gain global media attention, as video and photographs of the destruction circulated quickly and were seen all over the world.



Figure 13.5.6.9: Two women walk past the site of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, June, 2012 (photo: Sgt. Ken Scar, public domain)

Bamiyan is now listed by UNESCO as a **World Heritage Site in Danger**, and debates over how to restore the site connect to both national and international issues around what constitutes proper preservation, interpretation, and remembrance at former sites of violence. The questions that must now be answered about Bamiyan are: how do we preserve what is left at the site from further destruction or deterioration? How do we do so in a way that takes into account the needs and desires of the local, national, and international communities for whom this site holds meaning? And how do we properly memorialize the tragedy of the Buddhas' recent destruction?

The Taliban's claim that destroying the Buddha sculptures was an Islamic act is belied by the fact that Bamiyan had become predominantly Muslim by the tenth century and that the sculptures had up until 2001 remained a largely intact. Distinct, non-Buddhist local traditions had grown up around the two sculptures, with a legend characterizing them as doomed lovers who had

pledged to live out their commitment to one another by standing together in stone for eternity. “Local people had completely forgotten they were figures of the Buddha,” said the head of historical monuments in Bamiyan province.



Figure 13.5.6.10: Scaffolding for reconstructing the Buddha of Bamiyan (photo: Tracy Hunter, CC BY 2.0)

Preservation efforts by an international team have been ongoing since 2001. The porous sandstone that makes up the site makes it vulnerable to quick erosion, and the niches, the cliff face, and the surrounding caves have needed to be shored up with props and grouting to prevent collapse. There has also been an ongoing debate over how and whether to reconstruct parts of the site. One proposal, backed most heavily by the German arm of ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites, an international organization that supports preservation and monument protection) supports using the original fragments along with new material to reconstruct the smaller Buddha figure. Other experts oppose this idea, saying that the niches ought to be preserved as empty memorials to the sculptures’ violent destruction, similar to other sites like the Genbaku dome in Hiroshima or the Gedächtniskirche in Berlin. In 2015, two Chinese documentary filmmakers used 3-D technology to project holograms of the Buddhas into their niches as a temporary monument to their loss, but no permanent solutions have yet been pursued. Work by a German ICOMOS team at Bamiyan was stopped in 2013 because it was suspected that they were already rebuilding the feet of the smaller Buddha from scratch, violating both an official 2011 decision to not rebuild the sculpture, as well as the terms of the international 1964 Venice Charter, which specifies that original material must be used in reconstructions. [6]

Recently, however, the government of Afghanistan has requested that the reconstruction of the smaller statue be undertaken, citing, among other reasons, the dire need for tourist income to Bamiyan. The Bamiyan area, one of the poorest in Afghanistan, is home to a distinct ethnic group, the Hazara, who resisted Taliban influence and have also long resented what they see as discrimination by the country’s leaders in Kabul. However, how to reconstruct the Buddha figure is still the subject of debate. A UNESCO meeting of international experts in 2017 concluded that “any consideration of recovery and reconstruction should be based on thorough multi-disciplinary research and scientific analysis, to ensure an understanding of the structural, material and other characteristics of the damaged heritage property”—in other words, ample funding and time are needed in order to ensure that the work takes place in proper and ethical ways.



Figure **13.5.6.11**: Mural in one of the newly-discovered grottoes (photo: **Jerrye and Roy Klotz, MD**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas was a huge loss for our understanding of human history. However, even in darkness light has a way of emerging. Since their destruction, several new discoveries have been made near the sites of the Bamiyan Buddhas including the discovery of fragments of a 62-foot long reclining Buddha, as well as several caves with murals that may be the world's **earliest examples of oil paint**.

As the **UNESCO 2017 report** states, "the Bamiyan World Heritage property should be considered a place of collective identity and memory, particularly for the local communities; the archaeological remains cannot be separated from their natural and cultural landscape nor from local perspectives."

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

1. Takayasu Higuchi and Gina Barnes, "Bamiyan: Buddhist Cave Temples in Afghanistan," *World Archaeology* vol. 27., no. 2., *Buddhist Archaeology* (Oct., 1995), pp. 282-302.
2. Llewelyn Morgan, *Buddhas of Bamiyan: Wonders of the World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 7.
3. Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, translated Li Rongxi (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996), p. 38.
4. Deborah Klimburg-Salter, *The Kingdom of Bamiyan: Buddhist Art and Culture of the Hindu Kush* (Naples and Rome: Instituto Universitario Orientale and Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989), 87-92.
5. Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *Art Bulletin*, vol. LXXXIV, Number 4 (December 2002), p. 648.
6. Constance Wyndham, "Reconstructing Afghan Identity: Nation-building, International Relations, and the Safeguarding of Afghanistan's Buddhist Heritage," in *Museums, Heritage and International Development*, ed. Paul Basu and Wayne Modest (Routledge. 2014), p. 126

Additional resources:

Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (UNESCO)

UNESCO Bamiyan photo gallery

UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in Danger

Unesco video on the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley

Pre–Angkor Traditions: The Mekong Delta and Peninsular Thailand on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"Taliban blow apart 2,000 years of Buddhist history," *The Guardian*, March 3, 2001

"Disputes damage hopes of rebuilding Afghanistan's Bamiyan Buddhas," *The Guardian*, January 10, 2015

"Afghanistan's Buddhas Rise Again," *The Atlantic*, June 10, 2015

"See the Buddhas of Bamiyan, Destroyed by the Taliban, Resurrected as Holograms," *Artnet News*, June 12, 2015

"Reconstruction of Bamiyan Buddha in the Works?" *Committee for Cultural Policy*, December 15, 2017

1964 Venice Charter

UNESCO technical meeting and International Symposium on "The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues"

Conclusions on the Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value

Dado Panel, Courtyard of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III

by ELIZABETH KURTULIK MERCURI



Figure **13.5.6.12**: Dado Panel from the Courtyard of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III of Ghazni, 1112 C.E., marble, 28 1/8 x 12 13/16 x 3 1/2″ (Brooklyn Museum of Art)

The dado panel from the Courtyard of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III is a fine example of the artistic preferences of the Ghaznavid dynasty, which ruled the Indian subcontinent from 977 to 1186 C.E. A dado panel is a two to three foot lower part of a wall, typically decorated in a variety of media. This dado panel formed part of a larger dado, found within the courtyard of the Palace of Mas'ud III, just south of Kabul, Afghanistan, and it is currently located in the Brooklyn Museum's Arts of the Islamic World collection. Although the panel was not found in-situ, it closely resembles other panels found within the palace's courtyard.



Figure 13.5.6.13: Kufic script in folio from a Qur'an, c. 900-950 C.E., gold leaf, silver and ink on parchment with indigo, 28.5 x 37.5 cm, probably made in Tunisia, Qairawan (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

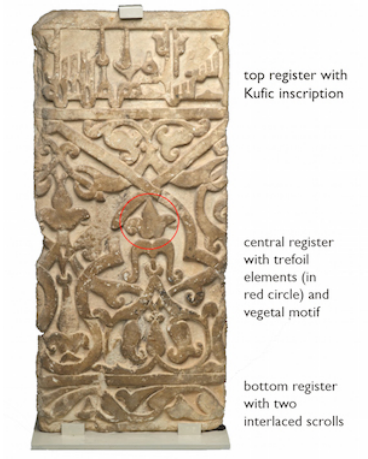


Figure 13.5.6.14: Dado panel with three registers

The panel can be broken up into three registers (below left). The top register contains a Kufic inscription, which would have been part of a continuous inscription that encircled the entire courtyard across the tops of multiple adjacent panels. Kufic script is a style of writing Arabic popular from the seventh century C.E. until the late tenth century C.E., as seen in the page from the Qur'an above. The central register of the dado panel is a large sequence of trefoil (tri-lobed leaf) elements with a vegetal motif, and the bottom register consists of two scrolls interlaced with each other. The panel would have been painted blue and red as well as gilded. It shows signs of wear, with markings and discoloration, most likely from exposure to various elements over time.

Uncovering a palace

The Ghaznavids were of Turkish origin, and they preferred a fusion of Iranian and Arab stylistic influences, along with a strong interest in Persian art and poetry. Their capital, Ghazni lied on an important trade route, resulting in influences from around the region. The Palace of Mas'ud III provides the best evidence for the social, cultural and artistic nature of the Ghaznavid Dynasty. The construction date is unknown but it was completed towards the end of the dynasty. It was built of a combination of baked and unbaked brick with pressed clay. It sits on a quadrangular plan organized around a central courtyard with four iwans.



Figure 13.5.6.15: Minaret constructed near Royal Palace of Mas'ud III of Ghazni, 12th century, Afghanistan (photo: kabulpublicdiplomacy, CC BY-ND 2.0)

The two excavations that were carried out between 1957 and 1966 produced a number of finds, including a long dado frieze in the courtyard. About forty-four panels were found in-situ and about four hundred dado fragments were also recovered. It is believed that there were about five hundred panels in all. They are made of marble, which came from a marble quarry found near Ghazni. The Ghaznavids used a large amount of marble throughout the city, during a time where brick and stucco were favored for décor purposes. The influence of the city of Baghdad, which was also built up heavily with marble by the Abbasids possibly explains the popularity of the medium at this time. Ghazni has only recently attracted scholars with the discovery of a great-stylized minaret, also dating to Mas'ud III's reign (above).

Persian poetry

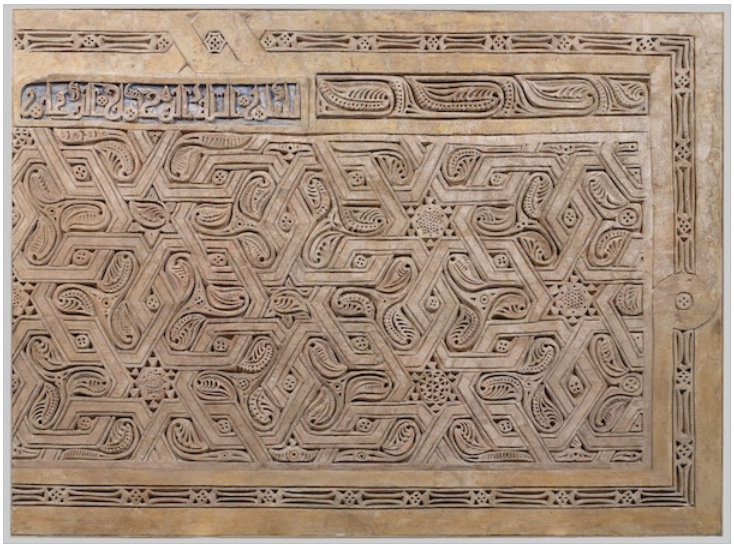


Figure 13.5.6.16: Dado Panel with inscription in upper left corner, 10th century, Iran, stucco; carved, with some cast plaster elements, 68 5/8 x 92 3/4″ (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Although the Kufic inscription on this panel has not been translated, translations of other sections of the frieze contain a Persian poem that praised the Ghaznavid rulers. There is no author or written text to accompany the work, but scholars believe that the poet was someone associated with court life who probably wrote the poem for this specific purpose. This particular inscription, from the twelfth century, is one of the oldest uses of Persian in place of Arabic. It is likely that the inscription was commissioned in conjunction with the completion of the building, a practice that is also seen in Sicily and Alhambra. In Persia, it was common practice to adorn sacred and secular buildings with inscriptions (see the example from Iran, above).

Part of a larger whole

The dado panel from the Brooklyn Museum is part of a much larger work of art and a representation of the very essence of the Ghaznavid Dynasty. It is evident that the Ghazavids were deviating from the artistic and architectural norms of the time with the construction of the palace dado frieze. Not only did they follow the Abbasids' use of marble for decorative purposes, but they also used Persian within the dado inscription, which was unique at the time. The use of the inscription on the dado as a commemorative display to honor the leaders of the dynasty and mark the construction of the building was also unusual. The use of Persian terms in place of Arab letters might have been a result of their expanding empire, of the dynasty's influential origins, or of an appreciation for Persian literature. The dado panel at the Brooklyn Museum is a rare work of art from a period of creative nonconformity, and it is representative of the Ghaznavids' signature artistic style.

Additional resources:

This work at the Brooklyn Museum of Art

Alessio Bombaci, *The Kufic Inscription in Persian Verses in the Court of the Royal Palace of Mas'ud III at Ghazni* (Rome: Insituto Italiano per Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966).

—- "Summary Report on the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan. Introduction to the Excavations at Ghazni," *East and West*, Vol. 10, No. 1 / 2 (March-June 1959), pp. 3-22.

C. E. Bosworth, "The Ghaznavids," *UNESCO History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. IVa, 2014.

Roberta Giunta, "Islamic Ghazni An IsIAO Archaeological Project in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Report (July 2004-June 2005)," *East and West*, Vol. 55, No. 1 / 4 (December 2005), pp. 473-484.

13.5.6: Afghanistan is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.6: Afghanistan** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.7: South Asia (I)

South Asia

Indigenous traditions & cross-cultural interaction inspire much art and architecture from the region

4th century B.C.E. – 1799 C.E.

A beginner's guide

A brief history of the art of South Asia: Prehistory – c. 500 C.E.

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure **13.5.7.1**: Dog from Harappa, 2600 – 1900 B.C.E., terracotta, 1.9 x 5.3 x 3.3 cm (© **Richard H. Meadow**, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan)



Figure **13.5.7.2**: *Vihara* and stone bed (inset), Ajanta caves, 5th century, Aurangabad (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Art is a wonderfully tangible pathway to past cultures. In the large collar of a tiny terracotta dog from Harappa, in present-day Pakistan, we learn about people and their dogs four thousand years ago. In beds made of stone inside rock-cut *viharas* (monastic houses) in the hillside of Ajanta, in India, we glimpse the lives of Buddhist monks in the first century B.C.E. And in pieces of furniture fashioned from ivory and bone found in Begram in Afghanistan, we get a taste of the luxury and artistic skill that people — much like you and I — cherished nearly two millennia ago.

A few considerations

South Asia (according to the modern designation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), includes the following countries:

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- India
- Maldives
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka

In this brief introduction to the art and cultures of South Asia from prehistory to c. 500 of the Common Era, we refer to these countries to aid in geographically orienting you to the material culture discussed. It is important to remember, however, that over the course of history, the sovereign nations of South Asia experienced both distinct and shared histories, and these often do not correspond to modern-day borders.

Definition: Material culture

Material culture refers to art, architecture, written records, and everyday objects used by a culture.

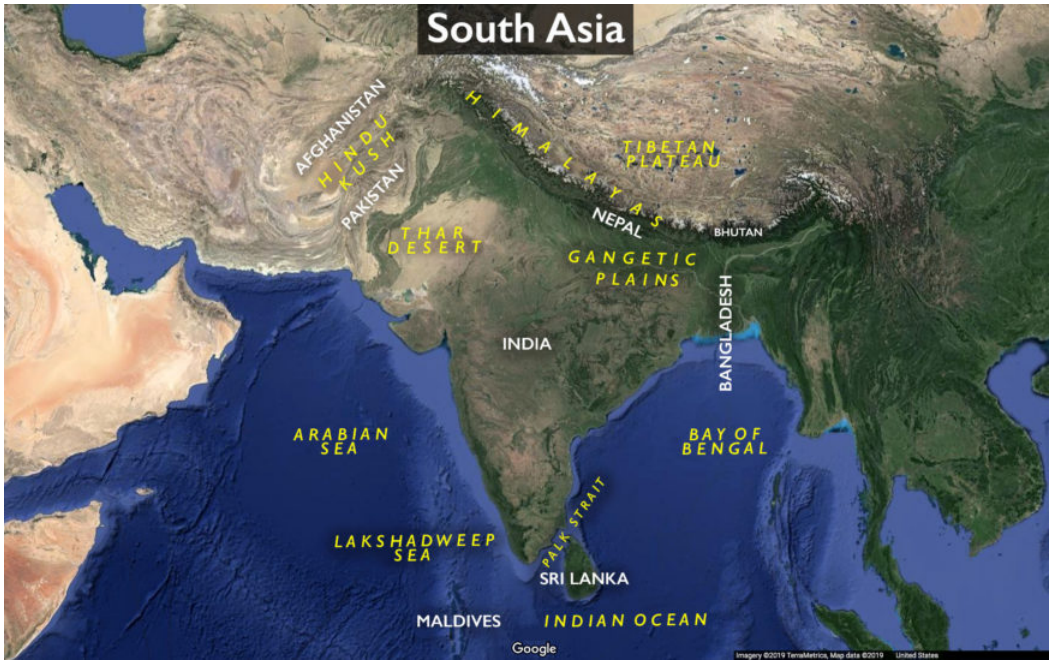


Figure **13.5.7.3**: Map 1: South Asia

The artifacts, coins, and written records of empires and kingdoms that emerged and dissolved throughout history help us anchor the boundaries of people who shared a common lifestyle, language, and religion. In the study of prehistoric artifacts, other factors — such as shared technologies and ritual practices — help us recognize patterns of living that indicate geographically coherent cultures and societies.

Topography too (marked in yellow in the map above) influenced cultural and political histories. The Hindu Kush mountain range (in Afghanistan), the Himalayas (in Bhutan, Nepal, India, and Pakistan), the Thar desert (in northwestern India), the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Lakshadweep Sea that surround the Indian peninsula, and the Palk Strait between India and the island nation of Sri Lanka, all played important roles in shaping the histories and the art histories of South Asia.

Prehistory

Archaeology can help us understand much about prehistoric civilizations. A stone tool, discovered in Isampur in India (see inset in the map below), for instance, confirms human settlement in the region as early as 1.1 million years ago.

Definition: Prehistoric

Prehistory refers to a time before written records.

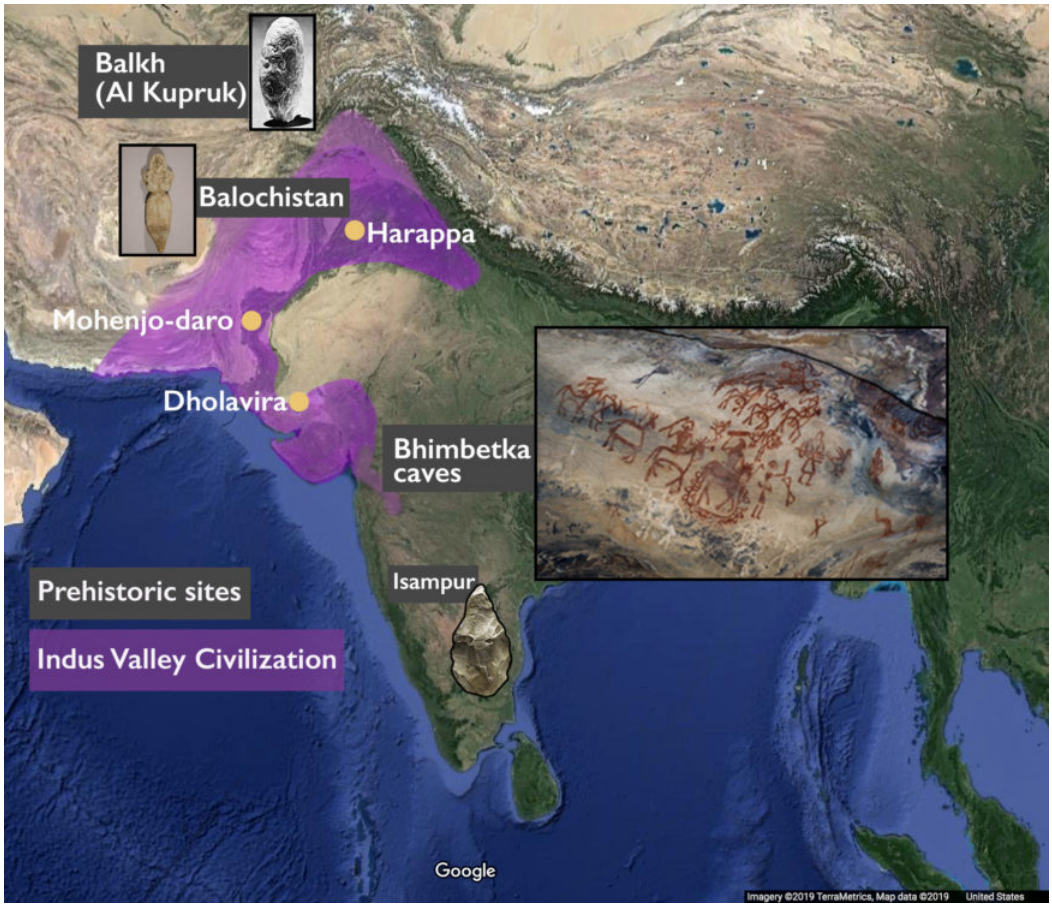


Figure **13.5.7.4**: Map 2: Prehistoric sites and the Indus Valley Civilization. Clockwise from left: *Seated Mother Goddess*, 3000 – 2500 B.C.E., Pakistan, Baluchistan (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**); Sculpted face, c. 20,000 B.C.E., Aq Kupruk, Afghanistan (photo: **CEMML, Colorado State University**); Cave paintings, c. 9000 B.C.E., Bhimbetka, India (photo: **Bernard Gagnon**, CC BY-SA-3.0); Handaxe, about 1.1 million years old, Isampur, India (**Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History**).

Some of the earliest portrayals of ancient peoples in South Asia are found in the Bhimbetka caves, dated c. 9000 B.C.E., in central India. The paintings show figures dancing and humans hunting (see inset in the map above), as well as a person being **hunted or attacked** by an animal. Excavated tools, **pottery**, and figurines of animals and humans found in Balochistan, Pakistan, also tell us about the interests and activities of people from c. 7500 – 2500 B.C.E. In the inset in the map above is an artifact from Balochistan that is thought to represent a fertility or cult goddess. From a time relatively more recent — c. 20,000 B.C.E. — is a limestone pebble with a face incised on it (inset in map above) from the archaeological site of Aq Kupruk II in the Balkh province of Afghanistan. The pebble poses interesting questions — who made it? And why?

The Indus Valley Civilization

Between 2600 and 1900 B.C.E., several settlements (see map 2 above) thrived around the river Indus which extends from the Tibetan plateau and flows into the Arabian Sea. These settlements — Indus cities have been excavated in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan — are known collectively as the Indus Valley Civilization.



Figure **13.5.7.5**: Excavated ruins of Mohenjo-daro, with the Great Bath in the foreground and the granary mound in the background (photo: **Saqib Qayyum**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Large sites such as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in Pakistan have revealed highly efficient urban-planning, well-designed homes and neighborhoods laid out on a grid pattern, granaries, and public buildings all built with uniformly sized bricks. The Indus people were skilled in the management of natural resources; the site of Dholavira in Gujarat, India for instance, had a sophisticated system of water management. A complex writing system was also in use in this period, although sadly, the Indus script remains undeciphered.



Figure **13.5.7.6**: Stamp seal and modern impression: unicorn and incense burner (?), c. 2600 – 1900 B.C.E., Indus (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Miniature terracotta figurines of a range of animals including the rhinoceros, birds, and dogs, and bullock drawn carts with drivers (see below) have been excavated from Indus sites. Whether they represent votive images or are simply children's toys is as yet undecided. Board games, jewelry made of shells and beads, and stone and bronze figurines have also been discovered as have many steatite seals. These seals may have been used in trade and ritual and are distinguishable by their engravings of animals, humans, possibly divine beings, and, on occasion, unicorns!



Figure **13.5.7.7**: Terracotta figures, c. 2500 B.C.E. Indus Valley Culture, Chanhu Daro, Pakistan (**Brooklyn Museum**)

The Vedic period

By c. 1300 B.C.E., speakers of Sanskrit (known as the Aryas) had settled in the northwest region of the Indian subcontinent. The *Rigveda*, the earliest of four *Vedas* (Sanskrit for "knowledge") — a compendium of sacred scriptures on ritual, liturgy, and moral principles — is dated to this period. [1] The *Vedas* were a significant influence on the development of the Hindu religion. Like the material artifacts from the Indus Civilization above, the *Vedas* also carry glimpses of life in the Vedic period. We learn of the people who lived in the region prior to the arrival of the Aryas, as well as details on societal relationships, daily life, and the worship of gods and goddesses from Vedic hymns.

Scholars have been able to discern the eventual movement of people to the Gangetic plains of India (see map 5 below) from the three later *Vedas* — the *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Atharvaveda*. [2] Another important set of sacred texts, collectively known as the *Upanishad*, were composed sometime between the seventh and the fifth centuries B.C.E., and served as an elucidation of the *Vedas*. [3]

Buddhism

The Magadha region (roughly centered around Bihar and northeastern India, see map 5 below) would become a place of socio-religious debate and the birthplace of two major religions — Buddhism and Jainism — that were born in critical reaction to Vedic traditions. Some scholars have suggested that existing spiritual traditions in Magadha — the belief in rebirth and karma, for instance, was absorbed into Brahmanism (a precursor to Hinduism), Buddhism, and Jainism. [4]

Born Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini, in present-day Nepal, the exact date of the Buddha's birth is not known, but scholarly consensus dates his death around c. 400 B.C.E. [5] The Buddha's teachings offered people a new path to salvation that was different from the ritual-based practices of the Vedic religion. You can read about Brahmanic Hinduism and Buddhism, including the life of the historic Buddha, *jatakas*, and the Buddha's teachings **here**.

Buddhist **monastic sites** were adorned with narrative panels that celebrated the life of the Buddha — first in aniconic form and later in iconic form — as well as with a wealth of sculptural representations of men, women, animals, architecture, plants, and nature spirits, including *yakshis* (female goddesses), *yakshas* (male gods), and *mithuna* (couples) in a nod to pre-Buddhist traditions of reverence for fertility spirits.

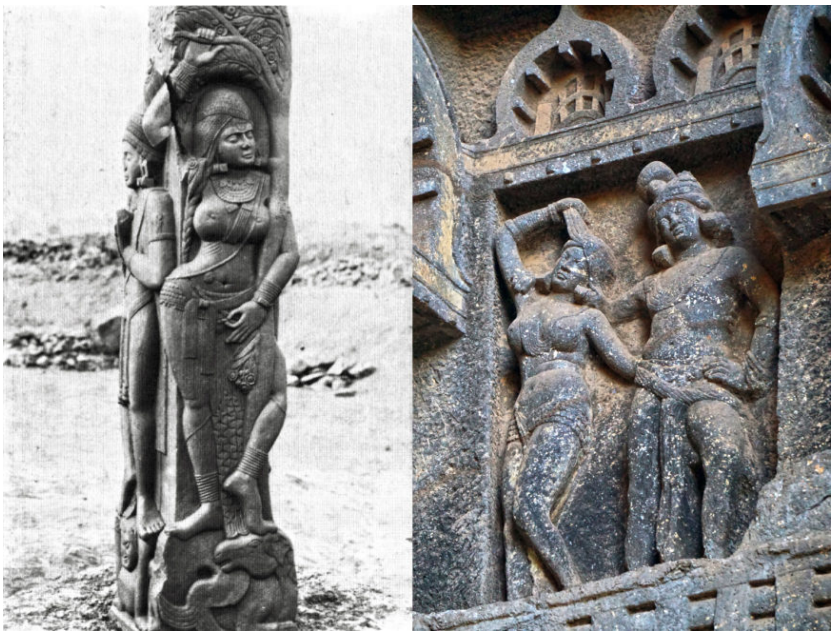


Figure **13.5.7.8**: Left: A *yakshi* and *yaksha* at Bharhut stupa, 1st century B.C.E., Madhya Pradesh (photo: **public domain**); Right: Mithuna, Karle Caves, Maharashtra, 2nd century (photo: **Photo Dharma**, CC BY-2.0).

According to tradition, on his death, the Buddha's cremated remains were distributed amongst nine clans. These relics came to be deposited in stupas (burial mounds) where they were then worshipped by the Buddha's followers. By the early centuries of the Common Era, Buddhist sites were found throughout India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (see map 4).

Jainism

The founder of the Jain religion, Mahavira, is believed to be a contemporary of the Buddha. Like Buddhism, Jainism offered a path to salvation that was unencumbered by ritual. In Jain tradition, the twenty-four *Jinas* (Sanskrit for "victor") who have overcome *karma* (the sum of a person's actions) through a life of spirituality and goodness serve as role models for Jains and the path to salvation. Mahavira was the twenty-fourth and final *Jina*.



Figure **13.5.7.9**: Left: Head of Jina, 2nd century, Kushan period, Mathura, red mottled sandstone, 8 1/2 x 7 3/16 inches (**Cleveland Museum of Art**); Right: Jain Svetambara Tirthankara in Meditation, 11th century, Solanki period, marble, 39 inches high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Jinas are often shown in the meditative posture — either seated or standing — and emphasize austerity, immobility, and asceticism. Jain sacred imagery also involves images of nature deities as well as gods and goddesses such as Indra and Saraswati who are important deities in Hinduism. Images of the *Jina* may have the *srivatsa* (an ancient symbol) marked on their chest (see image on right, above), which distinguishes them from sometimes visually congruent images of the Buddha.

The Mauryas

In c. 326 B.C.E., Alexander of Macedonia invaded the Indian subcontinent. Alexander reached as far as the river Beas in present-day Punjab, India (see map 3) before he was forced to acquiesce the exhaustion of his army and their wish to return home. Alexander's incursions had a lasting impact on South Asian history. One of his generals, Seleucus Nicator, would become the ruler of the Seleucid Empire which stretched from Anatolia to Afghanistan and Pakistan, including parts of the Indus Valley. Seleucus's ambitions for more territory was curbed, however, by Chandragupta of the Maurya dynasty.



Figure **13.5.7.10**: Pillar capital from Pataliputra, the capital of the Maurya dynasty in Bihar, c. 3rd century B.C.E., Patna Museum (photo: **Nalanda001**, CC BY-SA-4.0). Very little survives from the Mauryan period.

A treatise on war and diplomacy composed by the minister Kautilya in Chandragupta's court offers a remarkable glimpse into the Mauryan kingdom and its policies. Along with rules for military regiments and economic strategy, this treatise, the *Arthashastra*,

details policies on the exemption of taxes in times of disaster, guidelines for the use of state resources for the care of elephants and horses, and the protection of natural resources such as forests.

Much of Chandragupta's life is misted by legend. What is certain is that he was a formidable ruler and warrior and that the Maurya kingdom under his rule was a prosperous one. Chandragupta's son Bindusura maintained his father's territorial gains, but his life too is poorly documented in contemporary accounts. According to tradition, Chandragupta converted to Jainism at the end of his life.

We have far more information about Chandragupta's grandson, the emperor Ashoka. Ashoka too was a formidable ruler, but he vowed to rule, later in life, through non-violent means in adherence with the teachings of the Buddha. Ashoka helped spread Buddhism across the entire Indian subcontinent with the installation of **pillars** that proclaimed *dhamma* (Buddhist law). In addition to Buddhist philosophy, these edicts also detailed state provisions on social welfare for both people and animals.

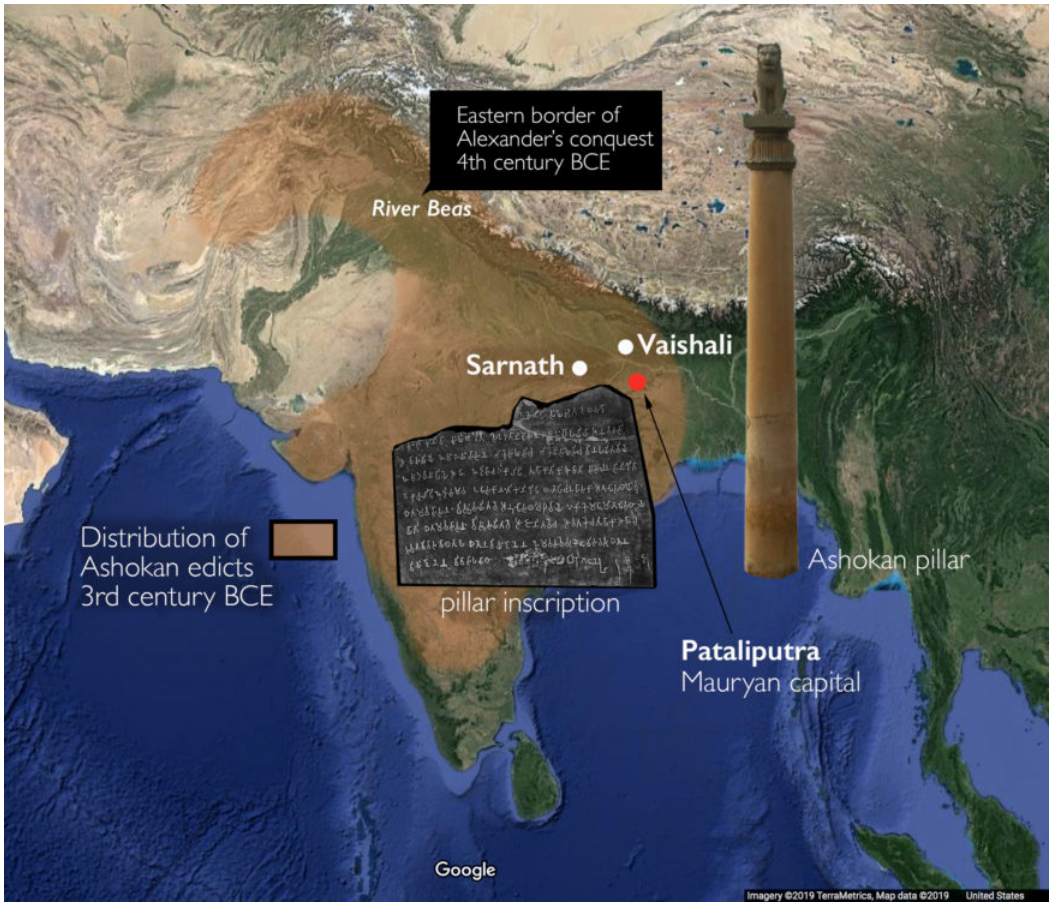


Figure **13.5.7.11**: Map 3: Distribution of Emperor Ashoka's edicts, 3rd century B.C.E. Pillar inscription from Sarnath (**public domain**); Ashokan pillar at Vaishali, Bihar (photo: **Bpilgrim**, CC BY-SA 2.5)

Ashokan edicts have been found (see map 3) in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, and often in the language associated with the people who lived in those areas. Pillars were inscribed in Prakrit in the Kharoshthi and Brahmi scripts, Greek, and Aramaic, as well as in bilingual scripts. While we have not found Ashokan edicts in Sri Lanka, it is believed that Buddhism also spread to the island during Ashoka's reign in the third century B.C.E. More edicts are likely to be discovered in the future; a team of archaeologists at UCLA is using **geographic modeling** to help accomplish just that.

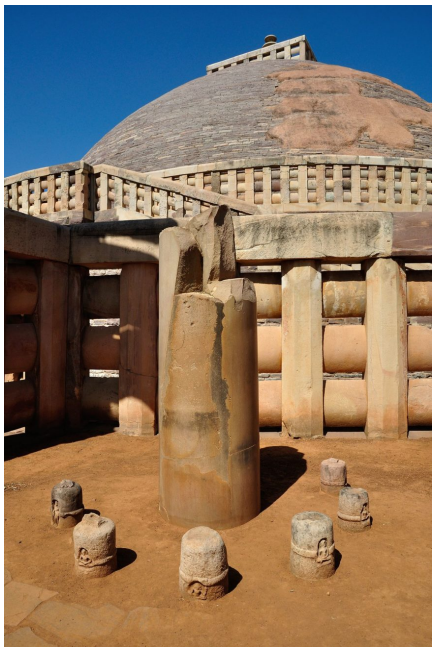


Figure **13.5.7.12**: Ashokan pillar near Sanchi stupa, c. 3rd century B.C.E., Madhya Pradesh (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY-3.0)

A now broken Ashokan pillar at the great stupa at **Sanchi**, a Buddhist complex associated with the patronage of the emperor, was retained when the stupa was expanded to twice its size and faced with stone in the first century B.C.E. Stupas are quintessential monuments to the memory of the Buddha and are burial mounds for the relics of other important persons. Stupas were often built in the midst of large monastic settlements known as *samgha(s)*.

As Buddhism spread, monastic complexes were established in sites in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal. The stupa of Jetavanaramaya is located in one of the oldest known *samghas* in Sri Lanka, and dates to the third century C.E. It is believed, however, that the oral Buddhist canon was written down during the reign of Sri Lankan king Vatthagamini (29 – 17 B.C.E.). [6] Other examples of well-known and early Buddhist sites include **Amaravati**, Bharhut, and Nagarjunakonda in India, Takht-i-bahi in Pakistan, and Mes Aynak in Afghanistan (see map 4).

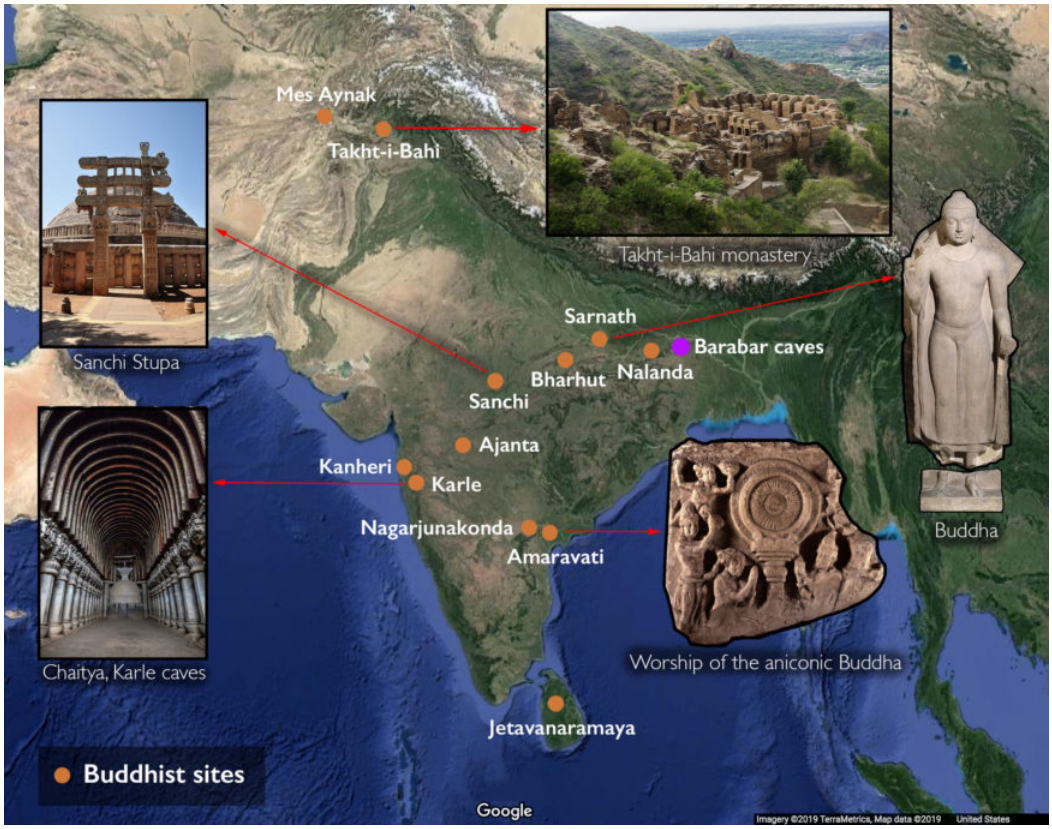


Figure **13.5.7.13**: Map 4: Select Buddhist rock-cut caves, stupas, and monasteries. Clockwise from left: Rock-cut chaitya, c. 120, Karle (photo: **Kevin Standage**, CC BY-SA-2.0); Sanchi stupa, c. 3rd century B.C.E., Madhya Pradesh (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY-3.0); Takht-i-Bahi Buddhist monastery, 2nd century (photo: **Asif Nawaz**, CC BY-SA-3.0); Buddha, 5th c, sandstone, Sarnath (**The British Museum**); Fragment of a dome slab showing the worship of the aniconic Buddha from Amaravati stupa, 2nd century, Andhra Pradesh (**The British Museum**).

Monastic sites often show multiple phases of construction spanning centuries, indicating the sustained patronage and popularity of Buddhism. **Nagarjunakonda**, in particular, also preserves a record of the expanding footprint of monastic complexes with its multiple stupas, prayer halls, temples, and housing accommodations.

Buddhist sites regularly received the patronage of both Buddhist and Hindu kings, as well as that of ordinary people, including Buddhist monks and nuns, merchants, and travelers. Sanchi is remarkable for the information it preserves on ordinary people. Inscribed on the great stupa are 631 donative inscriptions that tell us about the people — from merchants to monks to nuns — who contributed to the reconstruction and beautification of the stupa in the first century B.C.E. [7]



Figure **13.5.7.14**: Great Stupa at Sanchi, 3rd century – 1st century B.C.E., Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh (photo: **AyushDwivedi1947**, CC BY-SA 4.0; **Tushar Pokle**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The stupa's four extraordinary gateways (*torana*), once carried six images each of *yakshis*. These figures served as architectural brackets and as symbols of fertility — in obeisance to the auspicious quality associated with images of women on sacred structures. [8]

Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Sanchi, and countless other Buddhist monastic complexes were built at crossroads and close to trade-routes across the Indian subcontinent. This allowed monasteries to be of service to weary travelers and adhere to the Buddha's instruction on the importance of sharing his teachings far and wide.

Buddhist *samghas* (monastic complexes) were also established in rock-cut caves. There are a large number of Buddhist rock-cut monastic caves in India — ranging from elaborately decorated to simply appointed. Caves hold a special significance in Buddhist tradition; according to Buddhist belief, when the Hindu god Indra went to visit the Buddha, he found him meditating in a cave.

Some of the most elaborate rock-cut caves are found at **Ajanta** and are dated to the fifth century of the Common Era, while a less embellished but no less stunning (rock-cutting is no easy task!) monastic complex can be found in the Barabar caves, dated to the third century B.C.E., in Bihar. The facade of the Lomas Rishi cave (image below) displays one of the earliest known representations of the "chaitya-arch" — an ornamented ogee shaped arch that replicated wooden construction in stone and became a commonly used feature in Buddhist rock-cut architecture in India. While the cave complex at Barabar belonged to an ascetic community known as the Ajivikas rather than the Buddhists, nearby inscriptions indicate that this community enjoyed the patronage of emperor Ashoka.



Figure **13.5.7.15**: Entrance to the Lomas Rishi cave, Barabar, 3rd century B.C.E. (photo: **Photo Dharma**, CC BY-2.0)

On occasion, rock-cut caves and sculpture preserve glimpses of older architectural traditions. In the caves of Karle, Maharashtra, for instance, we find the original **wooden beams** from the first century B.C.E.; the use of wood (see inset in map 4, above) in the ceiling ribs was a purely decorative choice that imitated the style of wooden Buddhist *chaityas* (Buddhist chapels).

The adornment of rock-cut caves followed the same temporal progression of representing the Buddha — i.e., from **aniconic (as emblems) to iconic (in human form)**. Whereas earlier Buddhist sites employed anionic symbols such as parasols, footprints, and even stupas to signify the presence of the Buddha, in time, representational imagery of the Buddha became the norm. The image below from Sanchi stupa shows an episode from the Buddha's life known as the Great Departure. It represents the moment when the Buddha left his life in the palace for good.

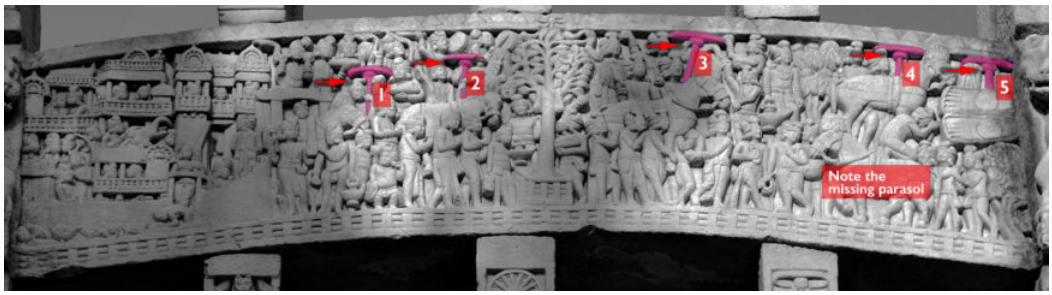


Figure **13.5.7.16**: The Great Departure, Sanchi stupa, eastern gateway, 1st century B.C.E. (photo: **Anandajoti Bhikkhu**, CC BY 2.0)

The parasols (shown in pink) indicate the Buddha's movement from left to right. Once the Buddha disembarks at his destination and the horse returns to the palace, the Buddha's absence on the horse is signaled by the absence of the parasol. The parasol remains with the Buddha who is now signified by a set of footprints. Also note how as the Buddha proceeded quietly into the night, the attendants helped carry the horse!



Figure **13.5.7.17**: Rock-cut caves at Ajanta showing a solid stupa (left) and a stupa with the image of the Buddha (right), c. 2nd century B.C.E. to 5th century C.E., Aurangabad (photos: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA-NC-4.0)

In general, in earlier rock-cut sites, we find stupas made of solid-rock serving as aniconic emblems of the Buddha and the focus of devotion. In later rock-cut *chaityas*, an image of the iconic Buddha was attached to the solid stupa (see image above), or the stupa was replaced altogether by the image of the Buddha. You can read about the complex ways in which the Buddha was portrayed in art **here**.

Despite the popularity of Buddhism in the centuries around the start of the Common Era, other religions continued to thrive. Two important Sanskrit Hindu epics — the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, for instance, are thought to have been composed in c. 300 B.C.E. — 300 C.E. and 200 B.C.E. — 200 C.E. respectively. [9]

The Kushans

Between the second century B.C.E. and the third century C.E., the Kushan empire became a dominant force in the northwestern part of the subcontinent. The Kushans were active in both sea and land trade and had capitals in Kapisa (near Kabul, Afghanistan), Peshawar, Pakistan and in Mathura, India. Kushan territory under the rule of the third emperor Kanishka (2nd century C.E.) also included, in addition to north India, what is today parts of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.



Figure 13.5.7.18: Map 5: Select sites and areas of historical importance, 6th century B.C.E. — 5th century C.E.

Two types of iconic Buddha images were produced during the Kushan period — the Gandharan and the Mathuran Buddhas — distinguishable by both style and medium. Just as Mathuran Buddhas followed the style of local sculptural traditions, in Gandhara, images of the Buddha followed a Greco-Roman aesthetic, thanks in part to the presence of plentiful Hellenistic imagery and Macedonian and Parthian influences in the region.



Figure **13.5.7.19**: Left: Standing Buddha, c. 2nd – 3rd century, Mathura style, Government Museum Mathura (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY-3.0); Right: Buddha, possibly from Takht-i-bahi monastery, 3rd century, Gandhara style (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)



Figure **13.5.7.20**: Coin of Kanishka, c. 130, ancient region of Gandhara, Pakistan (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Kushan emperor Kanishka is considered second only to Ashoka for his contribution to Buddhism. He is credited with the building of an enormous stupa (reportedly somewhere between 295 and 690 feet high) with multiple stories and thirteen copper umbrellas. Only the foundation of the building — itself 286 feet long — survives today in Shahji-ki-Dheri, outside Peshawar, Pakistan. [10] A gold coin has survived that was minted during Kanishka's reign and likely shows that ruler.

Hundreds of ivory and bone furniture pieces, figurines, and a large number of practical and **extravagant wares**, produced in South Asia and as far away as China, Rome, and Roman-Egypt, dated to the Kushan period, have been discovered in Begram, Afghanistan. These objects tell us about the kinds of goods that travelled the Silk Road in the first and second centuries. By the second century, Buddhism had also travelled and spread farther east to Central Asia and China via these same routes. The earliest known translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese is dated to the second century C.E.



Figure **13.5.7.21**: Ivory figurine, Begram, Afghanistan, 1st century (photo: **JC Merriman**, CC BY-2.0)

The golden age

By the early centuries of the first millennium, the Vedic religion had evolved into the Hindu religion. While a core tenet of Hinduism — the concept of the Brahman (omnipresent consciousness) — had already been formulated in the *Upanishads*, many of the gods and goddesses that we see in Hindu art are found in the *Puranas* (ancient stories) that were composed in this period.



Figure **13.5.7.22**: Vishnu, 5th century, Gupta period, Mathura, red sandstone, 109 x 67 x 22 cm, National Museum, New Delhi (photo: **Jen**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The rise of the Gupta dynasty (c. 320 – 647) marked an important time for art, architecture, and literature. It was also a period of strong global trade; scholars believe that the Gupta sculptural and temple-building style can be found in the early medieval remnants of Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture in Southeast Asia. A coin shows king Samudragupta, one of the Gupta dynasty's most successful rulers and one who greatly expanded the dynasty's power and territories. The inclusion of a goddess on the reverse side of the coin implies divine kingship in an effort to suggest that the king's rule was mandated by the gods.



Figure **13.5.7.23**: Coin showing the ruler Samudragupta (left) and a goddess (right), 330 – 376 C.E., gold (**The British Museum**)

Some of the most celebrated writers and composers of drama, poetry, and prose, lived in this period — Kālidāsa and Bānabhatta, among them. The number zero was invented as were Arabic numerals, which were referred to by Arabs as *hindisat* ("the Indian art"). This was also the era of great scientists; the astronomer Aryabhata in the sixth century calculated the solar year at 365.3586805 days and theorized that the earth rotated on its own axis. [11]

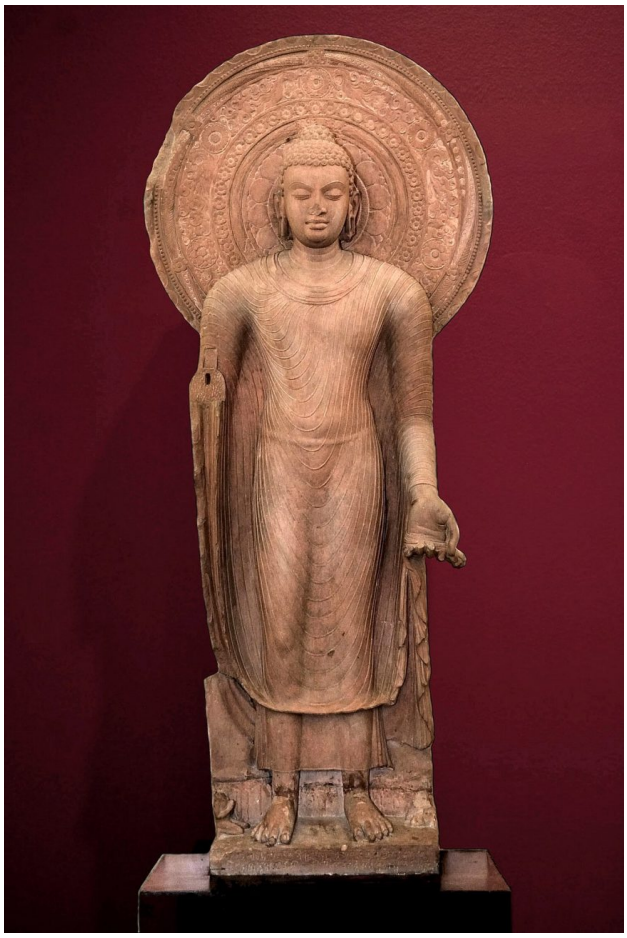


Figure **13.5.7.24**: Standing Buddha, 5th century, Gupta period, Mathura, Mathura Museum (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY-2.0)

It was also during the Gupta period that a new type of Buddha image — the Gupta Buddha emerged. Buddha images in this period continued to be produced in Mathura, but also in Sarnath and in Nalanda (see map 4). Each area had access to quarries of a specific type of stone which have helped art historians determine where an image may have been produced.

Hindu art and architecture also flourished in the Gupta period. One of the most famous religious sites associated with the Guptas is the Udayagiri complex of rock-cut caves in Madhya Pradesh (see map 5). The Udayagiri Caves are made up of twenty caves, nineteen of which are dedicated to Hindu gods and date to the fourth and fifth centuries. There is also one Jain cave that is dated to the early fifth century.



Figure **13.5.7.25**: Vishnu as the avatar Varaha rescuing Bhudevi, the goddess earth, Udayagiri cave no. 5, 5th century, Gupta period, Madhya Pradesh (photo: **Asitjain**, CC BY-SA-3.0)

Throughout the Gupta period, regional kingdoms led by independent rulers prospered. In most instances, there was also an easy relationship between the Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain religions; as an example, the famous Buddhist rock-cut caves at **Ajanta** in Aurangabad enjoyed the patronage of the Hindu Vakataka dynasty.

In contemporaneous South India, the culturally cohesive region known as *Tamilakam* (see map 5) produced a valuable set of texts known as *Sangam* (old Tamil for "academy") literature. These texts were composed in the old Tamil language and are rich in information on ancient South Indian kings, religious devotion, temple building, daily life, and even grammar.



Figure 13.5.7.26: Bhitargaon temple, 5th century, Gupta period, Uttar Pradesh (**Ankitshilu**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Structural Hindu temples were also built in this period, although the choice of brick and other more perishable construction materials has meant that most have not survived. An exception is the brick temple at Bhitargaon in Uttar Pradesh (north India) which is dated to the mid-fifth century (see above). The style and the skill of the architects and builders of Bhitargaon, as well as of **Deogarh** — a sixth-century structural stone temple also in Uttar Pradesh — suggests that a highly developed tradition of temple building was present by this point in time.

In fifth century Sri Lanka, a ruler named Kassapa built an extraordinary palace fortress atop a hill in his new capital. The site gets its name — Sigiriya — after "lion rock," thanks to its enormous gateway in the form of a lion, of which only giant paws built from brick survive (see inset in map 6). Kassapa's palace once included gardens and lakes and dozens, perhaps hundreds of mural figures of women that have been interpreted by scholars as either *apsaras* (heavenly beings) or ladies-in-waiting. Roughly 22 figures remain today.

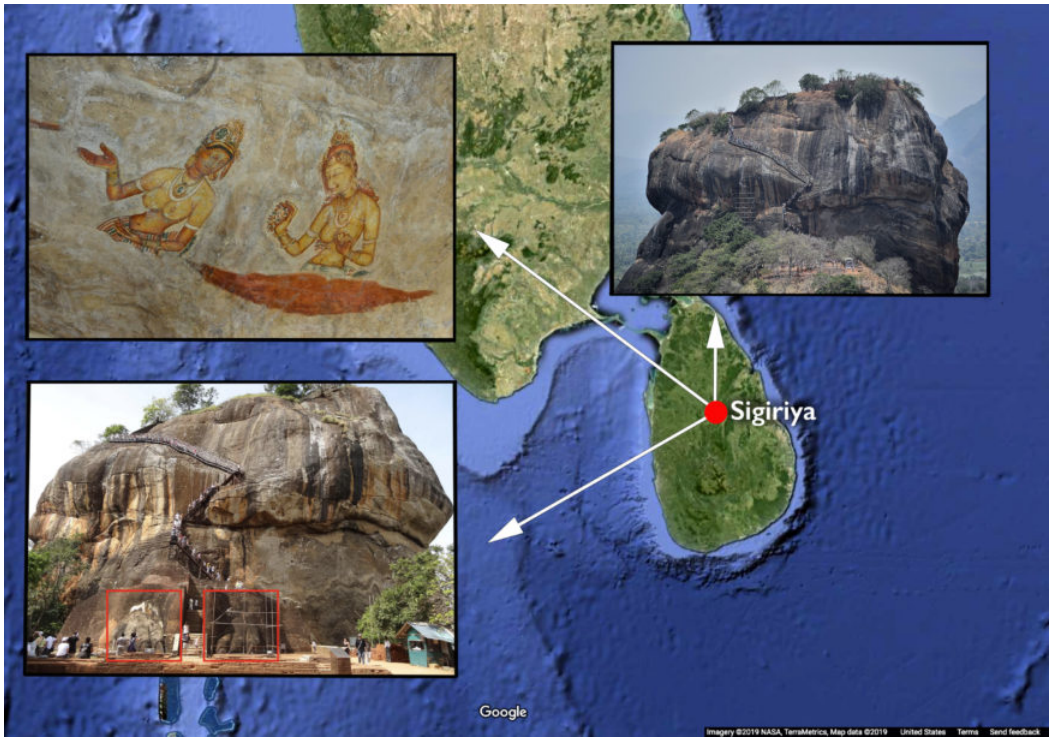


Figure 13.5.7.27: Map 6: Sigiriya, Sri Lanka, 5th century C.E.; clockwise from left: Lion gateway (**Cherubino**, CC BY-SA 3.0), mural painting of female figures (**Brian Ralphs**, CC BY-2.0), and view of the Sigiriya fortress (**Teseum**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Also at Sigiriya is a gallery known as the mirror wall (once a wall with polished plaster) as well as 685 instances of graffiti dating between the eighth and the tenth centuries. [12] Aside from its association with its patron king, Sigiriya is an important site in the history of Buddhism and is mentioned in the Sri Lankan Buddhist chronicle the *Culavamsa*.

Trade and exchange



Figure 13.5.7.28: Ivory statuette found in Pompeii, c. 1st century C.E. (**Museo Archeologico Napoli**)

Before we move on to the next section of this three-part introduction to South Asia, a word is necessary on the region's long history of contact and exchange with other parts of the world. The Gupta period enjoyed trade with Southeast Asia and even older networks of trade existed along the Silk Road and in the Indian Ocean. Scholars have also suggested that trade brought beads and precious stones from the Indus Valley to Mesopotamia as early as the third millennium B.C.E.

In the first century of the Common Era, a Greek sailor wrote the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* — a text that provides remarkable details on thriving trade by sea and by land in the Indian Ocean. We learn of routes, the best times to travel, the monsoon winds and their impact on sea travel, the commodities that were traded, the money exchanged, and more.

The Roman historian Pliny the Elder similarly records valuable information in his *Historia Naturalis* from the year 77 C.E. He reported, for instance, on which pirate-filled ports to avoid in western India and wrote somewhat sardonically of his disdain for his fellow Romans' obsession with pepper and luxury goods.

Buddhist sites also acknowledge the cosmopolitan milieu of ancient South Asia. At a rock-cut cave in Karle (see map 4), inscriptions dating to the early second century C.E. record gifts of stone pillars by *yavanas* (foreigners). Roman coins from the first and second centuries have also been found in Nagarjunakonda, as well as near the ancient port town of Muziris in Kerala. In addition, Roman amphorae have been found in the archaeological site of Arikamedu in Tamil Nadu (see map 5).

As Pliny tells us, much also travelled abroad. The most famous of all objects to travel to Rome was an ivory figurine of a woman. A little under ten inches tall, this astonishing figurine with hair and jewelry much like that of the women carved on the *toranas* at Sanchi somehow survived the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year 79 C.E. and was discovered in the ashes of Pompeii.

Notes

[1] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), 37.

[2] R.U.S. Prasad, *The Rig-Vedic and Post-Rig-Vedic Polity (1500 B.C.E. – 500 B.C.E.)* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2015), 107.

[3] Patrick Olivelle *The early Upanisads: annotated text and translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 12.

[4] Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: studies in the culture of early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 15 – 54.

[5] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), 40.

[6] Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 3 (1990): 376.

[7] *ibid*., 379.

[8] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), 65 – 66.

[9] Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: an Alternative History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 693.

[10] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), 85.

[11] *ibid*., 96 – 97.

[12] Joanna Williams, "Construction of Gender in the Paintings and Graffiti of Sigiriya," in *Representing the Body: Gender Issues in Indian Art*, Vidya Dehejia ed. (New York: Kali for Women, 1997), 56.

Additional resources

British Museum's Virtual tour of Amaravati stupa

Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Frederick M. Asher, "Visual Culture of the Indian Ocean: India in a polycentric world," *Diogenes* 58/3 (2011): 67 – 84.

Ute Franke, "Baluchistan and the Borderlands," in *Encyclopedia of archaeology*, Deborah M. Pearsall ed. (San Diego: Elsevier/Academic Press, c2008).

J. Mark Kenoyer, T. Douglas Price, and James H. Burton, "A new approach to tracking connections between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia: initial results of strontium isotope analyses from Harappa and Ur," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40 (2013): 2286 – 2297.

Paul J. Kosmin, *Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

Yasodhar Mathpal, *Prehistoric rock paintings of Bhimbetka, Central India* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1984).

Partha Mitter, *Indian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Jan Nattier, *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Traditions: Texts from the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms Periods* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, 2008).

Patrick Olivelle and Mark McClish, ed. and trans.,*The Arthaśāstra: selections from the classic Indian work on statecraft* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2012).

Monica L. Smith, Thomas W. Gillespie, Scott Barron and Kanika Kalra, "Finding history: the locational geography of Ashokan inscriptions in the Indian subcontinent," *Antiquity* 90 (April 2016): 376 – 392.

Submerged, burned, and scattered: celebrating the destruction of objects in South Asia

by DR. CRISTIN MCKNIGHT SETHI



Figure 13.5.7.29: Ketaki Sheth, *Girl at Ganpati Immersion, Chowpatty*, 2002, gelatin silver print, 36.8 x 55.9 cm (National Museum of Asian Art, Washington DC)

A photograph by artist Ketaki Sheth depicts a little girl, wearing a lacy floral dress and standing upon the shoulders of a man, perhaps her father, to get a better view of the surrounding crowd that carries a large sculptural image of the Hindu god Ganesha. Sheth captures a moment of stillness during an otherwise boisterous and energetic occasion: the artist brings us above the crowd and into the clouds that backlight the richly adorned body of the elephant-headed deity—remover of obstacles and **son of Shiva** and **Parvati**—on his way toward a body of water for ritual immersion during the annual festival of Ganesha Chaturthi.

Impermanence and belief

The practice of ritually submerging, and thereby destroying, sculptural images of Ganesha during Ganesha Chaturthi represents one of several religious and cultural acts in South Asia which complicate ideas about the value and permanence of material objects. Makers involved in these practices produce objects and artistic depictions with the knowledge that the products of their creative labor are temporary and will be intentionally destroyed or deteriorate over time. In some cases these practices of ritual destruction resonate with ideas about the cyclical nature of time as described in concepts like ***samsara***. In other cases the destruction of an object is symbolic of the removal of evil and the restoration of good in the universe. In still other cases, we find beautifully wrought material objects whose impermanence is embedded in their form and function, much like disposable paper plates.

These examples challenge us to push against the preciousness of objects—an approach that we encounter so often in the study of art—and to rethink the way we value the permanence / impermanence of material things. This call to rethink our valuation of objects is also critical to the decolonizing of the discipline of art history; privileging objects of durable and precious materials over

ephemeral works of art (such as things made from unfired clay, paper, or cotton fiber) is in many ways a legacy of British colonial rule on the subcontinent that sought to promote a Eurocentric view and valuation of objects and artistic practices.[1]

For the Ganesha images created in celebration of Ganesha Chaturthi, their destruction is a joyous celebration. Occurring in August or September of each year according to the Hindu lunar calendar, the ritual immersion of Ganesha marks the deity's birth and symbolic return to the earth. [2] According to legend, Ganesha was created from clay by the goddess Parvati and was given an elephant's head after his father, the god Shiva, inadvertently beheaded him. Ganesha Chaturthi celebrates the moment when the deity received his elephant head, and his ritual immersion in water each year following ten days of rites is a significant event that bestows blessings on devotees.

Immersion as purification

It is not surprising that worshippers laboriously carry sacred sculptural images or *murtis* of Ganesha to local bodies of water for ritual immersion. Water is a symbolic purifier in South Asia and used in numerous religious and cultural practices connected with worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses as well as honoring holy figures, saints, and sacred architecture in **Buddhist**, **Christian**, Jain, **Muslim**, and Sikh beliefs. For the Hindu devotees participating in ritual immersion festivals like Ganesha Chaturthi, the water itself is sacred and ultimately connected to the holiest river in India, the Ganga.[3]



Figure **13.5.7.30**: Ganesh Visarjan at Girgaum Chowpatty, c. 2007 (photo: **Chris**: CC BY 2.0)

Historically, artists made disposable or perishable *murtis* of the god from unfired clay or low-fired terracotta decorated with natural pigments. [4] These images would slowly dissolve in water and eventually be reincorporated into the ecosystem. However, over the last several decades increasingly larger Ganesha images made from synthetic paints, gypsum plaster (plaster of Paris), and plastic ornaments have become popular, and the heavy metals and toxins associated with these raw materials have leached into India's waterways, creating dangerous amounts of pollution. [5] Recently, the Government of India's Central Pollution Control Board established rules requiring that devotees use Ganesha *murtis* made from biodegradable materials (like terracotta) and have encouraged that ritual immersion practices occur in specially-designated water tanks.



Figure 13.5.7.31: Alpana patterns created for the festival of Sankranti. Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh, India, 2020 (photo: Dr. Cristin McKnight Sethi, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In addition to annual events like Ganesha Chaturthi, the making of temporary, perishable objects and artistic depictions appear on a daily basis in many parts of India through the creation of decorative floor paintings known by various names including *alpana*, *kollam*, and *rangoli*. [6] Typically made by female members of a household or community using rice flour, chalk, powdered pigments, or flowers, the symmetrical forms of these temporary paintings symbolize divine power. They are intended to sanctify a space, and have ancient origins in goddess worship. [7] For special festivals some women create particularly elaborate floor paintings that last for several months or even up to a year. There are many, however, who treat this practice as a daily ritual with the intention that the painting will be swept clean and remade each morning—the epitome of intangible cultural heritage. [8]



Figure 13.5.7.32: Left: *Rangoli* in chalk (photo: **ramya_aiyappan**, CC BY-NC 2.0) Right: *Rangoli* in chalk and flowers (photo: **McKay Savage**, CC BY 2.0)

Destroying the demon king

A particularly dramatic example of the ritual destruction of objects occurs with sculptural effigies of the demon king Ravana and his demon armies which are burned and physically torn apart during multi-day performances of the *Ramacharitamanas*, the Hindi version of the story of Rama which is especially popular throughout North India and famously performed in the city of Ramnagar. [9] This performance, known locally as *Ramlila*, narrates the story of Rama, an earthly form or *avatar* of the Hindu god Vishnu, who is the beloved king of the city of Ayodhya and husband to Sita, an avatar of the goddess Lakshmi. The *Ramacharitamanas*,

similar to the Sanskrit ***Ramayana***, describes the adventures of Rama, his brother Lakshmana, and Sita during their fourteen-year exile from Ayodhya. The story culminates in a series of battles between Rama and the powerful demon king, Ravana, who has abducted Sita and held her captive at his palace in Lanka.

In the final days of the Ramlila performance, sculptural depictions of Ravana and other demons made from bamboo and paper are set ablaze to symbolize their mythological destruction. The most dramatic moment in the Ramlila performance occurs on Dussehra, an important Hindu festival celebrated throughout India, when participants destroy sculptural depictions of Ravana, sometimes 75-feet tall and filled with firecrackers, to mark Rama's victory over the demon king and the ultimate victory of good over evil.



Figure **13.5.7.33**: Destruction of a Ravana sculpture during Dusshera at Ranthambore, Sawai Madhopur. Rajasthan, Oct 2019 (photo: **Kandukuru Nagarjun**, CC BY 2.0)

In other parts of India, Dusshera is celebrated as a way to mark the goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura, understood by devotees as a mythological act that restores ***dharma*** to the universe. Worshippers celebrate Dusshera by creating elaborate temporary altars or *pandals* for Durga, many of which are then submerged in water on Dusshera, marking the culmination of nine nights of celebration known as *Navratri*. The *pandals* made for the worship or ***puja*** of Durga are most famously created in Bengal where families, neighborhoods, community organizations, and businesses commission elaborate *pandals* that incorporate depictions of iconic architecture and motifs from popular culture. [10]



Figure **13.5.7.34**: Durga puja pandal modeled after the Pantheon (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY 3.0)



Figure **13.5.7.35**: Raghu Rai, *INDIA, Calcutta, Finally, Durga is brought to the Ganges for immersion*. Magnum Photos PAR156220
© Raghu Rai / Magnum Photos

A photograph by artist Raghu Rai depicts the ritual immersion of Durga during a Dusshera celebration in Kolkata. In Rai's image we see a larger-than-life *murti* of Durga being carried with bamboo poles to the Ganga by several human figures—a scene that parallels depictions of Ganesha Chaturthi. These human devotees work together to hoist the goddess into the river. We see Durga's many arms clearly holding the weapons she uses to vanquish Mahishasura and her lion mount or *vahana* with its mouth agape seated nearby. A nineteenth-century painting of a similar moment suggests earlier practices of this form of ritual immersion. While the focus in the painting is on the elaborately adorned *murti* of Durga and the human devotees who carry her *pandal* in procession, in the foreground of the scene appears loose brushstrokes that hint at water, perhaps a subtle indication of the immersion to come.



Figure 13.5.7.36: Durga Puja: a procession carrying an idol of Durga to honor her victory over evil, 19th century, in *A Collection of Indian costumes, types and occupations*, gouache on mica (Wellcome Library, CC BY 4.0)

Flowers and cups



Figure 13.5.7.37: Adornment (*alankara*) of Ganesha murti in a home shrine, Bangalore, 2004 (photo: Dr. Cristin McKnight Sethi, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The practice of ritually submerging or destroying images is not limited to depictions of gods, goddesses, or demons, but even applies to the floral garlands that adorn many sacred images. The practice of *alankara* or adorning a *murti* includes dressing the deity in strands of marigolds, roses, and jasmine flowers. Floral offerings are also used in worship at other religious sites in India including Sufi shrines, Sikh temples, and Christian churches. These flowers are most often tossed into water after their use in

religious rites. Once blessed by the divine these floral offerings need to be disposed of in the holiest way possible, either scattered in a sacred river like the Ganga or immersed in a local body of water.



Figure **13.5.7.38**: Discarded flowers, Varanasi (Banaras), India, 2011 (photo: **Eric Parker**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

With increased scrutiny over environmental repercussions of such ritual practices, entrepreneurs and designers have begun to collect these discarded flowers and upcycle them into new products. Textile artist Rupa Trivedi and her team at Adiv Pure Nature have created a way to reuse flowers discarded by the Siddhivinayak Hindu temple and the Haji Ali Sufi shrine in Mumbai to create contact-dyed garments and home textiles. In these textiles the temporary floral offerings are made more permanent by imprinting their natural pigments onto cotton and silk fibers. By using water throughout the mordanting and dyeing process, Trivedi maintains the sacred connection to water that is so pivotal to ritual immersion. While Trivedi's textiles give new life to floral offerings that would otherwise decompose into the earth, it is striking that textiles as a medium epitomize intangibility and impermanence: textiles are objects that break apart through wear and tear, fade under excessive exposure to sunlight, and deteriorate when subjected to bacteria, fungus, or invasive insects.



Figure **13.5.7.39**: Detail of fabric by **Adiv Pure Nature** dyed with upcycled marigold flowers

Perhaps the most pervasive example of the regular destruction of impermanent, temporary objects occurs through the culture of food. Ceramic artists all over South Asia produce small vessels from low-fired terracotta to be used for drinking spiced tea known as *masala chai* or yoghurt beverages known as *lassis* which are sold at roadside stands and eateries. While many vendors of *chai* and *lassi* have taken to glass, paper, plastic, and styrofoam substitutes, there are still some who prefer to use traditional clay cups. The potters who make these hand-thrown vessels do so with the knowledge that these objects will have short lives: they will be thrown to the ground or crushed underfoot after the *chai* or *lassi* has been drunk.



Figure 13.5.7.40: A boy stands in a potter's yard, holding traditional clay cups (photo: Meena Kadri, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Much of the value of these objects lies in their impermanence and the easy way they return to the earth. While some *chai* or *lassi* cups may enter into museum collections—quintessential repositories of permanent objects—their most potent cultural value and circulation is in their temporary use and ultimate demise. As such these vessels remind us that not all tangible cultural heritage is in need of preservation, and sometimes a community requires, even celebrates, the destruction of cultural objects.



Figure 13.5.7.41: Left: Masala chai in terracotta cups (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY 3.0); Right: Chai vendor, Kolkata (photo: Nomad Tales, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Notes:

1. For an expanded discussion of colonial valuation of "fine arts" vs. "craft" within the context of unfired clay sculpture see Susan Bean, "The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal in the Artscape of Modern South Asia," in Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton, eds., *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2011), 604–628.
2. Ganesha Chaturthi occurs every year on the day of Ananta Caturdasi in the month of Bhadrapada (according to the Chandramana calendar).
3. For more on the sacred nature of the Ganga and its connection to other bodies of water in India, see Diana Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography* (New York: Random House, 2012), 131–188.
4. Clay has been a material of ritual importance on the subcontinent for millennia. See Bean, "The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal," 609.
5. For further discussion of the environmental implications of ritual immersion of synthetic Ganesha images see Dinesh C. Sharma, "Idol immersion poses water pollution threat" in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* (October 2014, Vol. 12,

No. 8): 431; and M. Vikram Reddy and A. Vijay Kumar, “Effects of Ganesh-idol immersion on some water quality parameters of Hussainsagar Lake” in *Current Science*, Vol. 81, No. 11 (10 December 2001): 1412–1413.

6. There are comparable ornamental patterns made on the walls of homes. See for example, Asimakrishna Dasa, *Evening Blossoms: The Temple Tradition of Sanjhi in Vrndavana* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1996).
7. See for example, Stella Kramrisch, “The Art Ritual of Women,” in *Unknown India* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1968); and Pupul Jayakar, *The Earthen Drum: An Introduction to the Ritual Arts of Rural India* (New Delhi: National Museum, 1980).
8. Tibetan Buddhist monks are famous for creating similar temporary paintings in the form of sand mandalas. For example, see **monks creating a mandala at the Rubin Museum**.
9. For more on the Ramlila of Ramnagar, see Richard Schechner and Linda Hess, “The Ramlila of Ramnagar” in *The Drama Review: TDR*, September 1977, Vol. 21, No. 3, Annual Performance Issue (September 1977): 51–82; and “**Ramnagar Ramlila: All about the 200-yr-old cultural extravaganza**.”
10. For more on Durga Puja pandals and their makers see Bean, “The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal in the Artscape of Modern South Asia,” 604–628; Tapati Guha-Thakurta, “From Spectacle to ‘Art’” in *ArtIndia* Vol 9, Issue 3 (Quarter 3, 2004): 34–56; Krishna Dutta, *Image-Makers of Kumortuli and the Durga Puja Festival*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2016; and Geir Heirestad, “The Durga Puja Business,” in *Caste, Entrepreneurship and the Illusions of Tradition: Branding the Potters of Kolkata* (Anthem Press, 2017), 1–6.

Beliefs made visible: Buddhist art in South Asia

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.5.7.1**: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

Bodh Gaya: center of the Buddhist world

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.5.7.2**: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

Beliefs made visible: Hindu art in South Asia

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.5.7.3**: Video from the Asian Art Museum.

Discovering Sacred Texts: Hinduism

by THE BRITISH LIBRARY



Video 13.5.7.4

Additional resources:

The British Library's Sacred Texts website

Varanasi: sacred city

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video 13.5.7.5: Video from the Asian Art Museum

Three Hindu gods

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure 13.5.7.42: *Stele with a standing figure of Vishnu*, 12th century, Pala dynasty, 162.56 cm, Bengal, eastern India © Trustees of the British Museum

Vishnu is one of the most popular gods of the Hindu pantheon. His portrayal here is standard: a royal figure standing tall, crowned and bejeweled, in keeping with his role as king and preserver of order within the universe. He carries a gada (mace) and chakra (disc) in his hands. The other two hands, which would have held a lotus and conch, are broken. On his forehead he wears a vertical mark or tilak, commonly worn by followers of Vishnu. In keeping with his iconography as the divine king, he is heavily bejeweled, wears a sacred thread that runs over his left shoulder and a long garland that comes down to his knees.

He stands flanked by two attendants, who may be his consorts Bhu and Shri, on a double lotus. The stele has a triangular top unlike earlier examples which were usually in the shape of a gently lobed arch. On either side of his crown are celestial garland bearers and musicians, the Vidyadharas and Kinnaras. A *kirtimukha*, or auspicious face of glory, is carved on the top centre of the arch.

The sculpture is typical of workmanship of the Pala dynasty of twelfth-century Bengal. The heart-shaped face with stylized arched eyebrows, long eyes that are slightly upturned at the ends, the broad nose, and the pursed smile are all characteristic.

A temple image of the Divine Couple: Shiva and Parvati



Figure 13.5.7.43: *Bronze figures of Shiva and Parvati*, early 11th century, bronze, 67cm high, western Deccan, India © Trustees of the British Museum

Shiva is a powerful Hindu deity. He has a female consort, like most of the gods, one of whose names is Parvati, “the daughter of the mountain.” Shiva and Parvati may appear as a loving couple sitting together in a form called Umamaheshvara. In this example

two separate bronze images have been designed as a group. Both Shiva and Parvati wear elaborate jewelry. Shiva is the more powerful deity and so he is depicted with four arms and is the taller figure. In his hands he holds his weapon, the trident, a small deer and a fruit. His fourth hand is raised in reassurance (*abhayamudra*). Like other images of Shiva he wears two different earrings. Parvati holds a lotus in one hand and a round fruit in the other.

Bronze-casting in the eleventh century was highly developed in Tamil Nadu in the far south of India. However, these two bronzes are unusually large for the Deccan in the same period.

The erect frontal pose of these two figures contrasts with the relaxed, naturalistic posture of many images from Tamil Nadu of the Chola period.

The Hindu creator god



Figure **13.5.7.44**: *Stone figure of Brahma*, c. 1110-1150, Chola dynasty, 131 cm high, from Tamil Nadu, southern India © Trustees of the British Museum

It is often said that there is a trinity of Hindu gods: Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer. But while Vishnu and Shiva have followers and temples all over India, Brahma is not worshiped as a major deity. Brahma is the personified form of an indefinable and unknowable divine principle called by Hindus brahman. In the myth of Shiva as Lingodbhava, when Brahma searches for the top of the linga of fire, Brahma falsely claimed that he had found flowers on its summit, when in fact the Shiva linga was without end. For this lie he was punished by having no devotees. There are very few temples dedicated to Brahma alone in India. The only one of renown is at Pushkar, in Rajasthan.

Brahma can be recognized by his four heads, only three of which are visible in this sculpture. In two of his four hands he holds a water pot and a rosary. Brahma originally had five heads but Shiva, in a fit of rage, cut one off. Shiva as Bhairava is depicted as a wandering ascetic with Brahma's fifth head stuck to his hand as a reminder of his crime. Brahma is commonly placed in a niche on the north side of Shaiva temples in Tamil Nadu together with sculptures of Dakshinamurti and Lingodbhava.

Suggested readings:

T. R. Blurton, *Hindu art* (London, The British Museum Press, 1992).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Ganesha Jayanti, Lord of Beginnings

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure of Gaṇeśa, 13th century, schist, 119 cm high © Trustees of the British Museum. Typically corpulent and holding a bowl of sweets, the god is shown standing on a lotus pedestal at the base of which crouches his rat “vahana” (mount). His anklets are of snakes, as is the sacred thread wound across his chest. The arch within which he stands is of a standard Indian decorative type with a lion mask (*kirttimukha*) at the top, and aquatic monsters (*makaras*) at each end.

The remover of obstacles

The elephant-headed Ganesha is renowned throughout India as the Lord of Beginnings, and both the placer and the remover of obstacles. It is for this reason that he is worshipped before any new venture is begun, when his benediction is essential. Temporary statues are created every year for the *Ganeshchaturthi* festival in Mumbai, and are placed in public or domestic shrines before being immersed in water at the end of the celebrations.

February 3, 2014 was the Hindu festival of *Ganesha Jayanti*, Ganesha’s birthday. The main annual Ganesha festival, *Ganeshchaturthi*, is celebrated from August to September, but this is another significant time for worshipers of Ganesha.



Figure 13.5.7.46: *A contemporary statue of Ganesha from Mumbai* © Trustees of the British Museum

Different traditions celebrate Ganesha Jayanti (Ganesha’s birthday) on different days. It is usually observed in the month of *Magha* (January to February) on the fourth day of Shukla paksha, the bright fortnight or waxing moon in the Hindu calendar, particularly in the Indian states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. The celebrations of Ganesha Jayanti in the month of *Magha* are simple, with devotees observing a fast. Before worship, devotees take a bath of water mixed with til (sesame seeds) after smearing a paste of the same substance on their body.

Domestic shrines and temples are decorated for the occasion. Special offerings are made to the permanent Ganesha images which are worshipped daily. In some places Ganesha is symbolically worshipped in the form of a cone made of turmeric or cow dung. Food offerings of ladoos (sweet balls) made of til and jaggery (sugar) are offered with great devotion. In some households and temples small images of Ganesha are placed in cradles and worshipped.

The practical reason for making offerings prepared of til and jaggery or applying sesame paste to the body is that when this festival is celebrated it is mid-winter and the body requires high energy supplements. The devotees consider their beloved Ganesha as human and offer preparations of sesame and sugar to provide energy and keep the body warm.

The Ganesha Jayanti festival (*Magha shukla Chaturthi*) is publicly celebrated in a relatively small number of places, where specially created clay images of Ganesha are worshipped and immersed in the sea or river after 11 or 21 days. During this month the devotees go on a pilgrimage to one of the many Ganesha temples across India. In Maharashtra there are eight places which are particularly sacred to Ganesha, known as *Ashtavinaykas* (Ashta means eight and *Vinayaka* is one of the many names of Ganesha) and the pilgrimage is known as *Ashtavinayaka yatra*. These are at Morgaon, Theur, Lenyadri, Ozar, Ranjangaon, Siddhatek, Pali and Mahad.

Manisha Nene, Assistant Director, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS)

Suggested readings:

P.B. Courtright, *Ganesa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings* (Oxford, 1985).

P. Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A history of European reactions to Indian Art* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

R.L. Brown, *Ganesha: Studies of an Asian God* (Albany, 1991).

P. Pal, *Ganesh the benevolent* (Bombay, Marg, 1995).

© Trustees of the British Museum

The making and worship of Ganesha statues in Maharashtra

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.5.7.6**: The elephant-headed Ganesha is one of the most popular Hindu gods — the creator and remover of obstacles. The main stone sculpture in the display was carved from schist around 800 years ago and was originally positioned on the outside of a temple in the eastern state of Orissa (recently renamed Odisha). The display brings this sculpture together with other more recent depictions of Ganesha created for different purposes. Among these are the temporary statues created every year for the Ganeshchaturthi festival in Mumbai, which are placed in public or domestic shrines before being immersed in water at the end of the celebrations. © Trustees of the British Museum. Created by British Museum.

Introduction to Islam

by DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS



Figure 13.5.7.47: Great Mosque at Damascus (Photo: G. Lewis)

Origins and the life of Muhammad the Prophet

Islam, Judaism and Christianity are three of the world's great monotheistic faiths. They share many of the same holy sites, such as Jerusalem, and prophets, such as Abraham. Collectively, scholars refer to these three religions as the Abrahamic faiths, since Abraham and his family played vital roles in the formation of these religions.

Islam was founded by Muhammad (c. 570-632 C.E.), a merchant from the city of Mecca, now in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Mecca was a well-established trading city. The Kaaba (in Mecca) is the focus of pilgrimage for Muslims.

The Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, provides very little detail about Muhammad's life; however, the hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet, which were largely compiled in the centuries following Muhammad's death, provide a larger narrative for the events in his life. Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. in Mecca, and his early life was unremarkable. He married a wealthy widow named Khadija. Around 610 C.E., Muhammad had his first religious experience, where he was instructed to recite by the Angel Gabriel. After a period of introspection and self-doubt, Muhammad accepted his role as God's prophet and began to preach word of the one God, or Allah in Arabic. His first convert was his wife.

Muhammad's divine recitations form the Qur'an; unlike the Bible or Hindu epics, it is organized into verses, known as ayat. During one of his many visions, in 621 C.E., Muhammad was taken on the famous Night Journey by the Angel Gabriel, travelling from Mecca to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem, from where he ascended into heaven. The site of his ascension is believed to be the stone around which the Dome of the Rock was built. Eventually in 622, Muhammad and his followers fled Mecca for the city of Yathrib, which is known as Medina today, where his community was welcomed. This event is known as the hijra, or emigration. 622, the year of the hijra (A.H.), marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar, which is still in use today.

Between 625-630 C.E., there were a series of battles fought between the Meccans and Muhammad and the new Muslim community. Eventually, Muhammad was victorious and reentered Mecca in 630.

One of Muhammad's first actions was to purge the Kaaba of all of its idols (before this, the Kaaba was a major site of pilgrimage for the polytheistic religious traditions of the Arabian Peninsula and contained numerous idols of pagan gods). The Kaaba is believed to have been built by Abraham (or Ibrahim as he is known in Arabic) and his son, Ishmael. The Arabs claim descent from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. The Kaaba then became the most important center for pilgrimage in Islam.

In 632, Muhammad died in Medina. Muslims believe that he was the final in a line of prophets, which included Moses, Abraham, and Jesus.

After Muhammad's death

The century following Muhammad's death was dominated by military conquest and expansion. Muhammad was succeeded by the four "rightly-guided" Caliphs (khalifa or successor in Arabic): Abu Bakr (632-34 C.E.), Umar (634-44 C.E.), Uthman (644-56 C.E.), and Ali (656-661 C.E.). The Qur'an is believed to have been codified during Uthman's reign. The final caliph, Ali, was married to Fatima, Muhammad's daughter and was murdered in 661. The death of Ali is a very important event; his followers, who believed that he should have succeeded Muhammad directly, became known as the Shi'a, meaning the followers of Ali. Today, the Shi'ite community is composed of several different branches, and there are large Shi'a populations in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain. The Sunnis, who do not hold that Ali should have directly succeeded Muhammad, compose the largest branch of Islam; their adherents can be found across North Africa, the Middle East, as well as in Asia and Europe.

During the seventh and early eighth centuries, the Arab armies conquered large swaths of territory in the Middle East, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and Central Asia, despite on-going civil wars in Arabia and the Middle East. Eventually, the Umayyad Dynasty emerged as the rulers, with Abd al-Malik completing the Dome of the Rock, one of the earliest surviving Islamic monuments, in 691/2 C.E. The Umayyads reigned until 749/50 C.E., when they were overthrown, and the Abbasid Dynasty assumed the Caliphate and ruled large sections of the Islamic world. However, with the Abbasid Revolution, no one ruler would ever again control all of the Islamic lands.

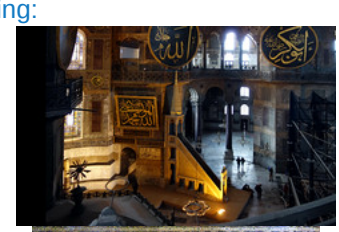
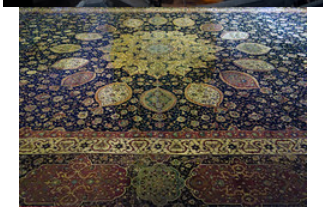
Additional resources:

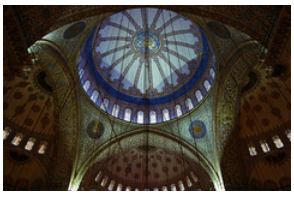
The Birth of Islam on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

World Religions in Art: Islam (from the Minneapolis Museum of Art)

BBC Article on the Sunni and Shi'a

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

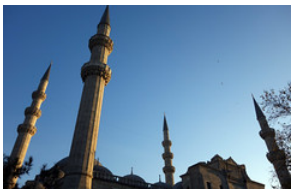



Figure 13.5.7.48: More Smarthistory images…

An Indus Seal

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure 13.5.7.49: Seal, 2500–2400 B.C.E., steatite, coated with alkali, and baked, Mohenjodaro, Indus Valley Civilization (**National Museum Delhi**)

Incised on this small stone (less than two inches across), we see a large figure seated on a dais surrounded by a horned buffalo, a rhinoceros, an elephant, and a tiger. Beneath the platform is a small antlered deer that is one of a pair. Although the deer on the right has broken off at some point, enough of its antler remains to determine that the deer has its head turned away from the center and, like its partner, was looking out towards the edge of the seat. An inscription (as yet untranslated), has been carved into the very top of the seal, with one symbol apparently displaced to the space between the elephant and the tiger. The stone seal, which would have been pressed onto a soft base such as clay to create a positive imprint, is dated to c. 2500–2400 B.C.E. and was found in the archaeological site of Mohenjo-daro, in what is now Sindh, Pakistan.

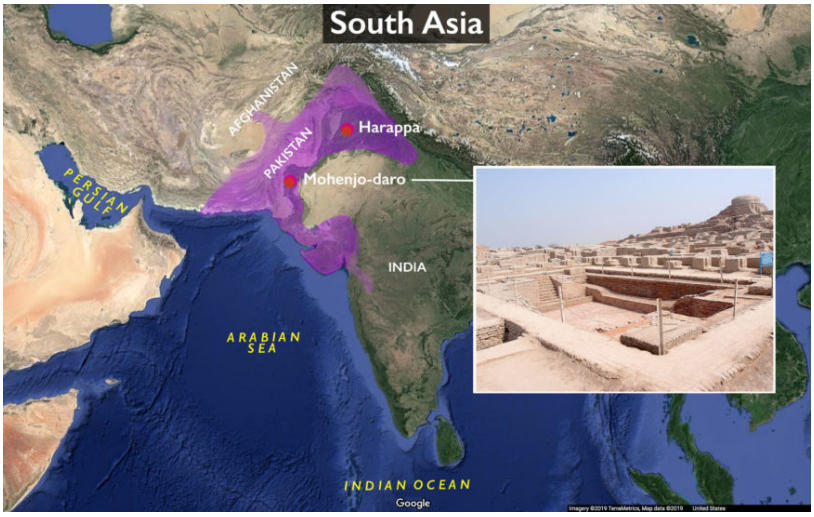


Figure 13.5.7.50: Map showing Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, two of several major sites of the Indus Valley Civilization (area marked in purple). Inset: Mohenjo-daro (photo: **Saqib Qayyum**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Imprints of an ancient civilization

Mohenjo-daro was one in a series of settlements that is collectively known as the Indus Valley Civilization. Named after the Indus River, this early civilization encompassed a vast swath of present-day Pakistan and northwestern India. Mohenjo-daro had an estimated 40,000 residents and was a well-planned settlement with efficient urban facilities that included street drainage, a sewage system, and large civic buildings. Residents also had access to well-water and many had baths in their homes.

Seals numbering in the thousands have been discovered in excavations of Indus cities as well as in sites in the Persian Gulf in southwest Asia. Seals from the Gulf region have similarly been found in Indus cities. The finds suggest active trade and exchange between these areas in the third millennium B.C.E.



Figure **13.5.7.51**: Front and back of seal with two-horned bull and inscription, Indus Valley Civilization, c. 2000 B.C.E., steatite, 1 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches (**Cleveland Museum of Art**)

Seals often feature a single, large animal such as buffaloes, rhinoceroses, and elephants. The animals are always shown in profile and sometimes standing alongside feeding troughs. Unicorns (that is, animals with a single horn), are also seen on Indus seals, as are trees and animals with a single body and **multiple heads**. On the rear of the seals is a single and centered rounded projection (see above) with a bored hole with which the seal could be strung.



Figure **13.5.7.52**: Stamp seal (left) and modern impression (right): unicorn, c. 2600–1900 B.C.E., burnt steatite, 1 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 3/8 inches (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Reading Indus seals

The seals include inscriptions in the form of pictograms that unfortunately we cannot yet read; the Indus Valley script is yet to be deciphered. Scholarship has been able to determine, however, that most seals were likely important components of trade. Clay

sealings (the positive imprints of the seals) have revealed traces of rope that suggest that they may have been used to brand fastened bundles of merchandise. It has also been theorized that the inscriptions on the seals indicate ownership and that the animals are emblems that referenced particular persons and merchant guilds.

Lord of the beasts



Figure **13.5.7.53**: Seal, 2500–2400 B.C.E., steatite, Mohenjodaro, Indus Valley Civilization (National Museum Delhi)

The figure's frontality and symmetry demands deference, as does its impressively large and deeply curved horned headdress. The face is long, with a prominent nose, deeply set eyes, and a closed mouth. The figure wears what looks like several necklaces over the chest as well as bangles and bracelets along the length of the arms. There appears to also be a belt at the waist with a tassel, but it is unclear what, if anything, is worn below the waist. The legs are elongated and, even folded at the knee, occupy the length of the seat. The right arm falls gracefully towards the knee, but does not touch it. Based on **other examples** of this general type of seated figure, we can imagine that the left hand was similarly positioned.

The figure has been described by scholars variously as male, female, with multiple heads, and not. It is also most frequently described as the *Pashupati* seal, after an epithet for the Hindu god Shiva that means "lord of beasts." The figure's apparent mastery over wild animals is thought to be implied by the type of animals — that is, the buffalo, rhinoceros, elephant, and the tiger — included in the seal.

The pair of relatively smaller stylized deer below the figure appear to be different in conception from the other animals. But questions remain: Is this a narrative scene that shows deer gathered at a site? Or are the deer meant to be understood as designs on the dais? The other animals, in contrast, are far more prominent and their importance to the seal's messaging is evident. They are powerful animals and as if to emphasize this point further the tiger is shown rearing, with its mouth open (while the seated figure appears unfazed).

An early form of Shiva?

Early scholarship [1] posited that the figure in the seal was an ancient *Vedic* form (named Rudra) of the Hindu god Shiva. This theory was based in part on the following:

- The animals in the seal imply the figure's dominion over animals and that an epithet of Rudra – *Pashupati*, the lord of animals – is similarly an epithet of Shiva.
- The figure is seated in a yogic pose (in particular with heels together) and an aspect of Shiva is known as *Yogisvara* – the supreme yogi (practitioner of yoga).
- A supposition that the figure has three faces as opposed to just one and Shiva is sometimes represented in sacred art with three or more faces.

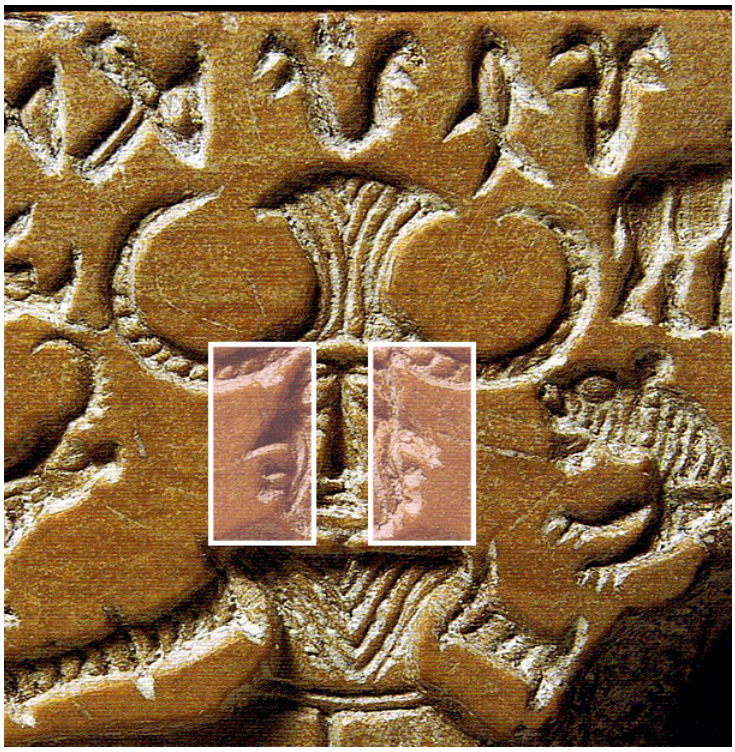


Figure **13.5.7.54**: Purported lateral faces on the seal

The substantial chronological gap between the date of the seal (third millennium B.C.E.) and the date of the Vedas (second millennium B.C.E.) should also be noted, although this does not necessarily preclude the inclusion of older traditions in the sacred Vedic texts. There are other major points to be considered, however, that complicate an identification of the figure as a type of proto-Shiva.

- The link between the seal's iconography and the Vedic themes that have been used to support the *Pashupati* and Rudra-Shiva thesis are indeterminate. [2]
- Yoga was likely known and practiced for centuries before it was codified into a series of prescribed mental and physical exercises in the second century B.C.E., but it is unclear if the figure in the seal is in fact an early representation of the practice of yoga.
- The presence of lateral faces on the figure is not accepted by all scholars; it is uncertain if the sharp protuberances on either side of the figure's head indicate facial features. In addition, representations of Shiva with three or more faces have so far only been dated to the much later (medieval) period; see the multiple faces of Shiva as *Sadashiva* carved in the sixth century **here**, for example.

Iconographic symbolism

It is evident from the figure's controlled and meditative bearing that we are witnessing a type of principled self-discipline and asceticism that calls for reverence. Taken with the careful design of the seal — in particular, the primary place of importance given to the main figure, their throne-like dais, regal adornment and frontal pose, and the subsidiary positioning of powerful animals — it is clear, that the seal would have held great symbolic and reverential import for its owner.

Although our inability to read the inscription on the seal undermines our understanding of the intended purpose and meaning of the seal, its iconography bring us a step closer to understanding the people of the Indus Valley Civilization and their rich spiritual culture.

Notes:

[1] See "Male god, the proto-type of the historic Shiva," in *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, vol 1, edited by John Marshall (London: Arthur Probstain, 1931), pp. 52–56.

[2] See Doris Srinivasan, “The So-Called Proto-Siva Seal from Mohenjo-Daro: An Iconological Assessment, *Archives of Asian Art* 29 (1975/1976), pp. 47–58. Based on a study of pre-Indus and Indus period material culture, Srinivasan has forwarded the alternate possibility that the figure represented on the seal may be a “divine bull-man” and that the inclusion of the animals on the seal is indicative of an invocation for a successful hunt. Srinivasan, *ibid*., p.57.

Additional resources:

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997).

John Marshall, ed., *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, vol 1, edited by John Marshall (London: Arthur Probstain, 1931).

Romila Thapar, *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

Doris Srinivasan, “The So-Called Proto-Siva Seal from Mohenjo-Daro: An Iconological Assessment, *Archives of Asian Art* 29 (1975/1976), pp. 47–58.

More on the Indus Valley Civilization

Pasupati seal at the National Museum, New Delhi

Art of the Magadha dynasties

The powers that arose in the Magadha region influenced India for centuries afterward.

4th century B.C.E. – 7th century C.E.

The Pillars of Ashoka

by DR. KAREN SHELBY



Figure **13.5.7.55**: Ashokan pillar, c. 279 B.C.E. – 232 B.C.E, Vaishali, India (where Buddha preached his last sermon). Photo: Rajeev Kumar, CC: BY-SA 2.5)

A Buddhist king

What happens when a powerful ruler adopts a new religion that contradicts the life into which he was born? What about when this change occurs during the height of his rule when things are pretty much going his way? How is that information conveyed over a large geographical region with thousands of inhabitants?

King Ashoka, who many believe was an early convert to Buddhism, decided to solve these problems by erecting pillars that rose some 50 feet into the sky. The pillars were raised throughout the Magadha region in the North of India that had emerged as the center of the first Indian empire, the Mauryan Dynasty (322-185 B.C.E). Written on these pillars, intertwined in the message of Buddhist compassion, were the merits of King Ashoka.

The third emperor of the Mauryan dynasty, Ashoka (pronounced Ashoke), who ruled from c. 279 B.C.E. – 232 B.C.E., was the first leader to accept Buddhism and thus the first major patron of Buddhist art.[1] Ashoka made a dramatic conversion to Buddhism after witnessing the carnage that resulted from his conquest of the village of Kalinga. He adopted the teachings of the Buddha known as the Four Noble Truths, referred to as the dharma (the law):

> ***Life is suffering (suffering=rebirth)***
> ***the cause of suffering is desire***
> ***the cause of desire must be overcome***
> ***when desire is overcome, there is no more suffering (suffering=rebirth)***

Individuals who come to fully understand the Four Noble Truths are able to achieve Enlightenment, ending samsara, the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. Ashoka also pledged to follow the Six Cardinal Perfections (the Paramitas), which were codes of conduct created after the Buddha's death providing instructions for the Buddhist practitioners to follow a compassionate Buddhist practice. Ashoka did not require that everyone in his kingdom become Buddhist, and Buddhism did not become the state religion, but through Ashoka's support, it spread widely and rapidly.

The pillars



Figure **13.5.7.56**: Ashokan pillar capital at Vaishali, Bihar, India, c. 250 B.C.E. (photo: **mself**, CC BY-SA 2.5)

One of Ashoka's first artistic programs was to erect the pillars that are now scattered throughout what was the Mauryan empire. The pillars vary from 40 to 50 feet in height. They are cut from two different types of stone—one for the shaft and another for the capital. The shaft was almost always cut from a single piece of stone. Laborers cut and dragged the stone from quarries in Mathura and Chunar, located in the northern part of India within Ashoka's empire. The pillars weigh about 50 tons each. Only 19 of the original pillars survive and many are in fragments. The first pillar was discovered in the sixteenth century.

Lotus and lion

The physical appearance of the pillars underscores the Buddhist doctrine. Most of the pillars were topped by sculptures of animals. Each pillar is also topped by an inverted lotus flower, which is the most pervasive symbol of Buddhism (a lotus flower rises from

the muddy water to bloom unblemished on the surface—thus the lotus became an analogy for the Buddhist practitioner as he or she, living with the challenges of everyday life and the endless cycle of birth and rebirth, was able to achieve Enlightenment, or the knowledge of how to be released from samsara, through following the Four Noble Truths). This flower, and the animal that surmount it, form the capital, the topmost part of a column. Most pillars are topped with a single lion or a bull in either seated or standing positions. The Buddha was born into the Shakya or lion clan. The lion, in many cultures, also indicates royalty or leadership. The animals are always in the round and carved from a single piece of stone.

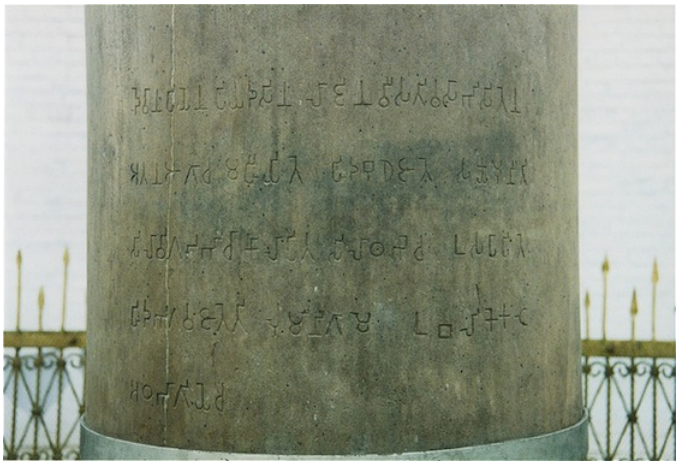


Figure 13.5.7.57: Ashoka Pillar at Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha (photo: Charlie Phillips, CC: BY 2.0)

The edicts

Some pillars had edicts (proclamations) inscribed upon them. The edicts were translated in the 1830s. Since the seventeenth century, 150 Ashokan edicts have been found carved into the face of rocks and cave walls as well as the pillars, all of which served to mark his kingdom, which stretched across northern India and south to below the central Deccan plateau and in areas now known as Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. The rocks and pillars were placed along trade routes and in border cities where the edicts would be read by the largest number of people possible. They were also erected at pilgrimage sites such as at Bodh Gaya, the place of Buddha's Enlightenment, and Sarnath, the site of his First Sermon and Sanchi, where the Mahastupa, the Great Stupa of Sanchi, is located (a stupa is a burial mound for an esteemed person. When the Buddha died, he was cremated and his ashes were divided and buried in several stupas. These stupas became pilgrimage sites for Buddhist practitioners).

Some pillars were also inscribed with dedicatory inscriptions, which firmly date them and name Ashoka as the patron. The script was Brahmi, the language from which all Indic language developed. A few of the edicts found in the western part of India are written in a script that is closely related to Sanskrit and a pillar in Afghanistan is inscribed in both Aramaic and Greek—demonstrating Ashoka's desire to reach the many cultures of his kingdom. Some of the inscriptions are secular in nature. Ashoka apologizes for the massacre in Kalinga and assures the people that he now only has their welfare in mind. Some boast of the good works that Ashoka has done, underscoring his desire to provide for his people.



Figure **13.5.7.58**: Ashokan Pillar on a relief at the Mahastupa at Sanchi, north gate (torana) post, 3rd c. B.C.E. (photo: **Nandanupadhyay**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

The pillars (and the stupas) were created in the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) period. Hinayana is the first stage of Buddhism, roughly dated from the sixth c. to the first century B.C.E., in which no images of the Buddha were made. The memory of the historical Buddha and his teachings was enough to sustain the practitioners. But several symbols became popular as stand-ins for the human likeness of the Buddha. The lotus, as noted above, is one. The lion, which is typically seen on the Ashokan pillars, is another. The wheel (cakra) is a symbol of both samsara, the endless circle of birth and rebirth, and the dharma, the Four Noble Truths.

Why a pillar?

There are a few hypotheses about why Ashoka used the pillar as a means for communicating his Buddhist message. It is quite possible that Persian artists came to Ashoka's empire in search of work, bringing with them the form of the pillar, which was common in Persian art. But it is also likely that Ashoka chose the pillar because it was already an established Indian art form. In both Buddhism and Hinduism, the pillar symbolized the axis mundi (the axis on which the world spins).

The pillars and edicts represent the first physical evidence of the Buddhist faith. The inscriptions assert Ashoka's Buddhism and support his desire to spread the dharma throughout his kingdom. The edicts say nothing about the philosophical aspects of Buddhism and scholars have suggested that this demonstrates that Ashoka had a very simple and naïve understanding of the dharma. But, as Ven S. Dhammika suggests, Ashoka's goal was not to expound on the truths of Buddhism, but to inform the people of his reforms and encourage them to live a moral life. The edicts, through their strategic placement and couched in the Buddhist dharma, serve to underscore Ashoka's administrative role as a tolerant leader.

Edict #6 is a good example:

> ***Beloved of the Gods speaks thus: Twelve years after my coronation I started to have Dhamma edicts written for the welfare and happiness of the people, and so that not transgressing them they might grow in the Dhamma. Thinking: "How can the welfare and happiness of the people be secured?" I give my attention to my relatives, to those dwelling far, so I can lead them to happiness and then I act accordingly. I do the same for all groups. I have honored all religions with various honors. But I consider it best to meet with people personally.***

[1] The details and extent to which Emperor Ashoka was a practicing Buddhist is a topic debated by scholars, though it is widely accepted that he was the first major patron of Buddhist art on the Indian subcontinent. For more discussions as to whether or not Ashoka was a "secular" ruler, see Akeel Bilgrami, ed.,*Beyond the Secular West* (Columbia University Press, 2016); Charles Taylor and Alfred Stepan, eds., *Boundaries of Toleration: Religion, Culture, and Public Life* (Columbia University Press, 2014); and Ashis Nandy, "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance," *Alternatives XIII* (1988), pp. 177-194. For more on

Ashoka's relationship with the Buddhist community and doctrine, see Alf Hiltebeitel, "King Asoka's Dhamma," in *Dharma* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), pp. 12-18 and John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana* (Princeton University Press, 1983).

Additional resources:

Edicts of Ashoka from PBS

Pillar of Ashoka (BBC/British Museum History of the World in 100 Objects – audio)

Lion Capital, Ashokan Pillar at Sarnath

by DR. KAREN SHELBY



Figure 13.5.7.59: Lion Capital, Ashokan Pillar at Sarnath, c. 250 B.C.E., polished sandstone, 210 x 283 cm (Archaeological Museum Sarnath, India)

Site of Buddha's First Sermon

The most celebrated of the Ashokan pillars is the one erected at Sarnath, the site of Buddha's First Sermon where he shared the Four Noble Truths (the dharma or the law). Currently, the pillar remains where it was originally sunk into the ground, but the capital is now on display at the Sarnath Museum. It is this pillar that was adopted as the national emblem of India. It is depicted on the one rupee note and the two rupee coin.

The Pillar

The pillar is a symbol of the axis mundi (cosmic axis) and of the column that rises everyday at noon from the legendary Lake Anavatapta (the lake at the center of the universe according to Buddhist cosmology) to touch the sun.

The Capital

The top of the column—the capital—has three parts. First, a base of a lotus flower, the most ubiquitous symbol of Buddhism.

Then, a drum on which four animals are carved representing the four cardinal directions: a horse (west), an ox (east), an elephant (south), and a lion (north). They also represent the four rivers that leave Lake Anavatapta and enter the world as the four major rivers. Each of the animals can also be identified by each of the four perils of samsara. The moving animals follow one another endlessly turning the wheel of existence.



Figure **13.5.7.60**

Four lions stand atop the drum, each facing in the four cardinal directions. Their mouths are open roaring or spreading the dharma, the Four Noble Truths, across the land. The lion references the Buddha, formerly Shakyamuni, a member of the Shakya (lion) clan. The lion is also a symbol of royalty and leadership and may also represent the Buddhist king Ashoka who ordered these columns. A cakra (wheel) was originally mounted above the lions.

Some of the lion capitals that survive have a row of geese carved below the lions. The goose is an ancient Vedic symbol (Veda means knowledge in Sanskrit and the Vedas refers to the canonical collection of hymns, prayers and liturgical formulas that make up the earliest of the Hindu sacred writings. Many of the Buddhist symbols and practices derive from these early texts). The flight of the goose is thought of as a link between the earthly and heavenly spheres.



Figure **13.5.7.61**: Lion Capital, Ashokan Pillar at Sarnath, c. 250 B.C.E., polished sandstone, 210 x 283 cm, Sarnath Museum, India (photo: **AS Mysore for Vincent Arthur Smith**, not in copyright – pre Independence princely state publication)

The pillar reads from bottom to top. The lotus represents the murky water of the mundane world and the four animals remind the practitioner of the unending cycle of samsara as we remain, through our ignorance and fear, stuck in the material world. But the cakras between them offer the promise of the Eightfold Path, that guide one to the unmoving center at the hub of the wheel. Note that in these particular cakras, the number of spokes in the wheel (eight for the Eightfold Path), had not yet been standardized.

The lions are the Buddha himself from whom the knowledge of release from samsara is possible. And the cakra that once stood at the apex represents moksa, the release from samsara. The symbolism of moving up the column toward Enlightenment parallels the way in which the practitioner meditates on the stupa in order to attain the same goal.

Additional Resources:

This sculpture at the Archaeological Museum Sarnath

Lion Capital of Asoka Wikipedia entry

The Great Stupa at Sanchi

by DR. KAREN SHELBY



Video 13.5.7.7: Video from the Asian Art Museum



Figure 13.5.7.62: Stupa 3, 1st c., Sanchi, India (photo: Nagarjun Kandukuru, CC: BY 2.0)

Can a mound of dirt represent the Buddha, the path to Enlightenment, a mountain and the universe all at the same time? It can if its a stupa. The stupa ("stupa" is Sanskrit for heap) is an important form of Buddhist architecture, though it predates Buddhism. It is generally considered to be a sepulchral monument—a place of burial or a receptacle for religious objects. At its simplest, a stupa is a dirt burial mound faced with stone. In Buddhism, the earliest stupas contained portions of the Buddha's ashes, and as a result, the stupa began to be associated with the body of the Buddha. Adding the Buddha's ashes to the mound of dirt activated it with the energy of the Buddha himself.

Early stupas

Before Buddhism, great teachers were buried in mounds. Some were cremated, but sometimes they were buried in a seated, meditative position. The mound of earth covered them up. Thus, the domed shape of the stupa came to represent a person seated in meditation much as the Buddha was when he achieved Enlightenment and knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. The base of the stupa represents his crossed legs as he sat in a meditative pose (called padmasana or the lotus position). The middle portion is the Buddha's body and the top of the mound, where a pole rises from the apex surrounded by a small fence, represents his head. Before images of the human Buddha were created, reliefs often depicted practitioners demonstrating devotion to a stupa.

The ashes of the Buddha were buried in stupas built at locations associated with important events in the Buddha's life including Lumbini (where he was born), Bodh Gaya (where he achieved Enlightenment), Deer Park at Sarnath (where he preached his first sermon sharing the Four Noble Truths (also called the dharma or the law), and Kushingara (where he died). The choice of these sites and others were based on both real and legendary events.

"Calm and glad"

According to legend, King Ashoka, who was the first king to embrace Buddhism (he ruled over most of the Indian subcontinent from c. 269 – 232 B.C.E.), created 84,000 stupas and divided the Buddha's ashes among them all. While this is an exaggeration

(and the stupas were built by Ashoka some 250 years after the Buddha's death), it is clear that Ashoka was responsible for building many stupas all over northern India and the other territories under the Mauryan Dynasty in areas now known as Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

One of Ashoka's goals was to provide new converts with the tools to help with their new faith. In this, Ashoka was following the directions of the Buddha who, prior to his death (parinirvana), directed that stupas should be erected in places other than those associated with key moments of his life so that "the hearts of many shall be made calm and glad." Ashoka also built stupas in regions where the people might have difficulty reaching the stupas that contained the Buddha's ashes.



Figure **13.5.7.63**: One of the most famous stupas, The Great Stupa (Mahastupa) was built at the birthplace of Ashoka's wife, Devi, daughter of a local merchant. in the village of Sanchi located on an important trade route in the state of Madya Pradesh, India (photo: **Nagarjun Kandukuru**, CC: BY 2.0)

Karmic benefits

The practice of building stupas spread with the Buddhist doctrine to Nepal and Tibet, Bhutan, Thailand, Burma, China and even the United States where large Buddhist communities are centered. While stupas have changed in form over the years, their function remains essentially unchanged. Stupas remind the Buddhist practitioner of the Buddha and his teachings almost 2,500 years after his death.

For Buddhists, building stupas also has karmic benefits. Karma, a key component in both Hinduism and Buddhism, is the energy generated by a person's actions and the ethical consequences of those actions. Karma affects a person's next existence or re-birth. For example, in the *Avadana Sutra* ten merits of building a stupa are outlined. One states that if a practitioner builds a stupa he or she will not be reborn in a remote location and will not suffer from extreme poverty. As a result, a vast number of stupas dot the countryside in Tibet (where they are called *chorten*) and in Burma (*chedi*).

The journey to enlightenment

Buddhists visit stupas to perform rituals that help them to achieve one of the most important goals of Buddhism: to understand the Buddha's teachings, known as the Four Noble Truths (also known as the dharma and the law) so when they die they cease to be caught up in *samsara*, the endless cycle of birth and death.

> ***The Four Noble Truths:***
> ***life is suffering (suffering=rebirth)***
> ***the cause of suffering is desire***
> ***the cause of desire must be overcome***
> ***when desire is overcome, there is no more suffering (suffering=rebirth)***

Once individuals come to fully understand The Four Noble Truths, they are able to achieve Enlightenment, or the complete knowledge of the dharma. In fact, Buddha means "the Enlightened One" and it is the knowledge that the Buddha gained on his way to achieving Enlightenment that Buddhist practitioners seek on their own journey toward Enlightenment.

The circle or wheel

One of the early sutras (a collection of sayings attributed to the Buddha forming a religious text) records that the Buddha gave specific directions regarding the appropriate method of honoring his remains (the *Maha-parinibbāna sutra*): his ashes were to be buried in a stupa at the crossing of the mythical four great roads (the four directions of space), the unmoving hub of the wheel, the place of Enlightenment.

If one thinks of the stupa as a circle or wheel, the unmoving center symbolizes Enlightenment. Likewise, the practitioner achieves stillness and peace when the Buddhist dharma is fully understood. Many stupas are placed on a square base, and the four sides represent the four directions, north, south, east and west. Each side often has a gate in the center, which allows the practitioner to enter from any side. The gates are called *torana*. Each gate also represents the four great life events of the Buddha: East (Buddha's birth), South (Enlightenment), West (First Sermon where he preached his teachings or dharma), and North (Nirvana). The gates are turned at right angles to the axis mundi to indicate movement in the manner of the arms of a svastika, a directional symbol that, in Sanskrit, means "to be good" ("su" means good or auspicious and "asti" means to be). The *torana* are directional gates guiding the practitioner in the correct direction on the correct path to Enlightenment, the understanding of the Four Noble Truths.

A microcosm of the universe

At the top of stupa is a *yasti*, or spire, which symbolizes the *axis mundi* (a line through the earth's center around which the universe is thought to revolve). The *yasti* is surrounded by a *harmika*, a gate or fence, and is topped by *chattras* (umbrella-like objects symbolizing royalty and protection).

The stupa makes visible something that is so large as to be unimaginable. The axis symbolizes the center of the cosmos partitioning the world into six directions: north, south, east, west, the nadir and the zenith. This central axis, the axis mundi, is echoed in the same axis that bisects the human body. In this manner, the human body also functions as a microcosm of the universe. The spinal column is the axis that bisects Mt. Meru (the sacred mountain at the center of the Buddhist world) and around which the world pivots. The aim of the practitioner is to climb the mountain of one's own mind, ascending stage by stage through the planes of increasing levels of Enlightenment.

Circumambulation

The practitioner does not enter the stupa, it is a solid object. Instead, the practitioner circumambulates (walks around) it as a meditational practice focusing on the Buddha's teachings. This movement suggests the endless cycle of rebirth (samsara) and the spokes of the Eightfold Path (eight guidelines that assist the practitioner) that leads to knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and into the center of the unmoving hub of the wheel, Enlightenment. This walking meditation at a stupa enables the practitioner to visualize Enlightenment as the movement from the perimeter of the stupa to the unmoving hub at the center marked by the *yasti*.



Video **13.5.7.8**

This video/animation shows the perspective of someone circumambulating the Mahastupa in Sanchi, the soundtrack plays monks chanting Buddhist prayers, an aid in medition. Circumambulation is also a part of other faiths. For example, Muslims circle the Kaaba in Mecca and cathedrals in the West such at Notre Dame in Paris include a semicircular ambulatory (a hall that wraps around the back of the choir, around the altar).

The practitioner can walk to circumambulate the stupa or move around it through a series of prostrations (a movement that brings the practitioner's body down low to the ground in a position of submission). An energetic and circular movement around the stupa raises the body's temperature. Practitioners do this to mimic the heat of the fire that cremated the Buddha's body, a process that burned away the bonds of self-hood and attachment to the mundane or ordinary world. Attachments to the earthly realm are considered obstacles in the path toward Enlightenment. Circumambulation is not veneration for the relics themselves—a distinction sometime lost on novice practitioners. The Buddha did not want to be revered as a god, but wanted his ashes in the stupas to serve as a reminder of the Four Noble Truths.

Votive Offerings



Figure **13.5.7.64**: *Votive Stupa*, Bodhgaya, 8th century, stone, 78 x 44 x 35 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

Small stupas can function as votive offerings (objects that serve as the focal point for acts of devotion). In order to gain merit, to improve one's karma, individuals could sponsor the casting of a votive stupa. Indian and Tibetan stupas typically have inscriptions that state that the stupa was made "so that all beings may attain Enlightenment." Votive stupas can be consecrated and used in home altars or utilized in monastic shrines. Since they are small, they can be easily transported; votive stupas, along with small statues of the Buddha and other Buddhist deities, were carried across Nepal, over the Himalayas and into Tibet, helping to spread Buddhist doctrine. Votive stupas are often carved from stone or caste in bronze. The bronze stupas can also serve as a reliquary and ashes of important teachers can be encased inside.

This stupa clearly shows the link between the form of the stupa and the body of the Buddha. The Buddha is represented at his moment of Enlightenment, when he received the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (the dharma or law). He is making the earth touching gesture (*bhumisparsamudra*) and is seated in *padmasan*, the lotus position. He is seated in a gateway signifying a sacred space that recalls the gates on each side of monumental stupas.

Additional resources

The Stupa from the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

Votive Stupa at the Ashmolean Museum

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure **13.5.7.65**: *Seated Buddha with Two Attendants*, c. 132 C.E., Kushan period, from Mathura, red sandstone, 36 5/8 x 33 5/8 x 6 5/16 inches (**Kimbell Art Museum**)

Seated Buddha with Two Attendants is an early example of the **Buddha** shown in anthropomorphic (human) form. The historic Buddha, born a prince named Siddhartha Gautama, is believed to have lived and preached in the fifth century B.C.E. When he died, his relics and the **stupas** that came to symbolize the Buddha became the primary focus of devotion for his followers.



Figure **13.5.7.66**: Great Stupa at Sanchi, 3rd c. B.C.E.–1st c. C.E., Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh (photo: **AyushDwivedi1947**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Buddha was not shown in human form in early Indian art, but rather, in **aniconic** (symbolic) form. Stupas were adorned with visually engaging stories that celebrated the Buddha with symbols—footprints, thrones, and parasols, for example—that signified the presence of the Buddha and commanded the respect that the Buddha himself would receive.

The reasons for avoiding anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha in those early centuries may have centered on the belief that the Buddha—who had lived 550 lifetimes and had achieved *nirvana* (liberation from the cycle of karmic rebirth)—was freed of the human form. By the turn of the **common era**, however, Buddhist beliefs had changed. The Buddha was deified, and with the development of the anthropomorphic Buddha, devotees were given a new focus for their ritual practices in **shrines and monasteries**.

Seated Buddha

Smiling, the Buddha sits cross-legged and rests a closed fist on his left knee. Layers of cloth gathered on his left arm and shoulder fall gracefully down his back, while the curved indentation across his chest and across his calves suggests the lightness of his robe. The Buddha holds his right hand up in *abhaya mudra*—a gesture of protection and reassurance. Wheels (marked on the palm of his hand and on his feet) and lotuses on his feet announce the Buddha's divinity. Other signifiers of his godliness, such as the *ushnisha* (cranial protuberance, see image below) and *urna* (auspicious mark on the forehead) have been lost over time. The *ushnisha* would have been covered by a tightly twisted hair–bun and centered above the Buddha's head, while the *urna* was likely once a small rock crystal. The historic Buddha's life as a prince prior to his enlightenment is referenced by his elongated ears, which were caused by the heavy jewelry that he once wore.



Figure **13.5.7.67**: To visualize the lost *ushnisha* and *urna* on the *Seated Buddha with Two Attendants* (left), 132 C.E. (**Kimbell Art Museum**), we can compare it with another early Buddha image, the Katra stele (right), end of the 1st century C.E. (Government Museum, Mathura) (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly,** CC BY-3.0)

Although the mottled red color of the stone in the *Seated Buddha* is striking, our attention is focused on the sculptors' meticulous carving. A close look at the Buddha shows carefully outlined fingers on his left hand and a beautifully detailed thumb and fingernail, a realistic portrayal of the knees and wrists, and a softly modeled stomach. The face is also particularly compelling, and we can almost see the Buddha's chin lift as he smiles.

The Buddha's Attendants

Gods and goddesses in Indian art are often accompanied by attendants, and here the Buddha has two. The artists have employed a technique known as hierarchic scaling to emphasize the Buddha's importance because the smaller scale of the attendant figures highlights his monumentality. Imagine how the Buddha would tower over his attendants if he were to stand! The attendants mirror one another in their stances and adornment, and they both carry a *chauri* (fly-whisk) in their right hand in a gesture that indicates their service to the Buddha. Subtle differences in their facial features and in their headdresses suggest individual personalities.



Figure **13.5.7.68**: *Seated Buddha* shown with approximate halo (**Kimbell Art Museum**) and *Stele with Bodhisattva and Two Attendants*, c. 2nd century C.E., red sandstone, 7 5/16 x 8 7/16 x 2 3/4 inches (**Harvard Art Museums**)

This type of representation of the Buddha appears to have been popular in the second century C.E. Comparing the *Seated Buddha* to similar stelae from the same period helps us determine its missing parts. Looking at a stele known as the Katra stele (after Katra, an archaeological site in Mathura, India) and another titled *Stele with Bodhisattva and Two Attendants* in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums, we can see that the upper portion of the *Seated Buddha* may have once had a large halo and flying celestial beings. Halos (referencing rays of light) and celestial beings signify divine radiance and the attendance of a heavenly retinue.

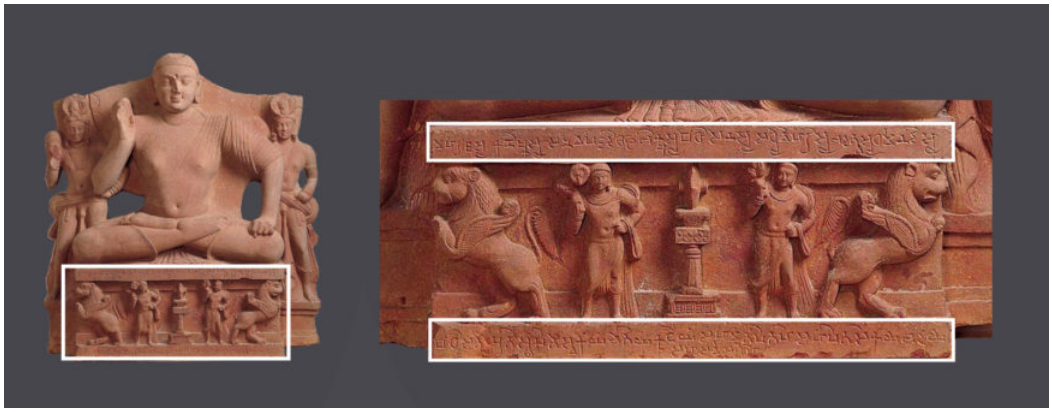


Figure **13.5.7.69**: Detail of relief panel (highlighted) and inscription on the dais, *Seated Buddha* (**Kimbell Art Museum**)

Inscriptions and dates

On the face of the carved dais are rampant leogryphs and a pair of attendants who flank a pillar. The Buddhist character of the pillar is evident by the wheel (the wheel symbolizes the Buddha's teachings) that is shown in profile at its summit. The pillar and the wheel represent the Buddha and his teachings, and are flanked by attendants just as the figure of the Buddha is above.

The relief panel is framed by two lines of text in Sanskrit. [1] Inscriptions such as these record donors' gifts for posterity and include the date of the donation. These dates followed the regnal years of the king who was in power at that time. The inscription on the *Seated Buddha* mentions the dedication of the image during the fourth year of the Kushan dynasty (c. 2nd century B.C.E.—3rd century C.E.) king Kanishka. Although scholars continue to refine the year in which Kanishka ascended the throne, the current consensus suggests that the image would have been dedicated in c. 132 C.E. *Seated Buddha* is one of only a few Buddha images that has been dated with an inscription to this early period in the common era. Having this frame of reference is invaluable because it helps scholars date stylistically similar images to this period.

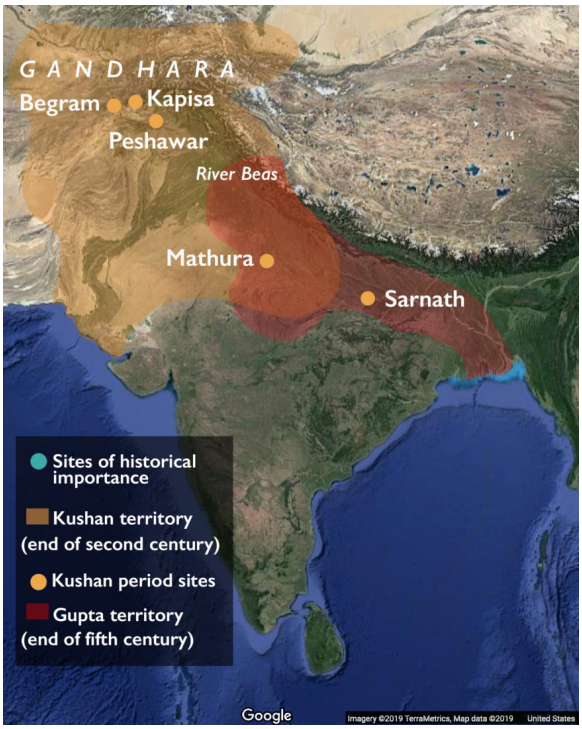


Figure 13.5.7.70: The Kushan and Gupta period

Gandhara and Mathura

The sandstone from which *Seated Buddha* was carved was preferred by the artist workshops of Mathura, a city in northern India. Mathura and the Gandhara region (in present-day Pakistan) have yielded the earliest known anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha. Both Gandhara and Mathura were under the rulership of the Kushan kings at the turn of the common era and were important political centers; the Kushans' winter capital was located in Mathura and their summer capital in Gandhara.



Figure 13.5.7.71: A comparison of Buddhas from Mathura and Gandhara. Left: Katra stele, Government Museum, Mathura (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY-3.0); right: *The Buddha*, c. 2nd–3rd century C.E., from Gandhara, schist, approximately 37 x 21 x 9 inches (**The British Museum**). Note the differences in the style of the Buddhas' hair, robe, and drapery.

Gandhara Buddha

The anthropomorphic form of the Buddha in Gandhara and Mathura developed simultaneously and yet resulted in remarkably distinct styles. [2] The Gandhara region's encounter with Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.E. and its history of Indo-Greek rulers in the centuries thereafter meant that a **classical** and **Hellenistic (Greek)** style of art and architecture was a part of the Gandhara region's artistic vocabulary. Buddhas from Gandhara show a familiarity with Greco-Roman styles of sculpture; this is apparent in the comparison below, for example, in the drapery, hair, facial features, and musculature of the Gandhara Buddha.



Figure **13.5.7.72**: Comparison of a Buddha from Gandhara with a Roman sculpture. Left: Buddha, c. 2nd–3rd century C.E., Gandhara, schist (**Tokyo National Museum**); right: "Caligula," 1st century C.E., Roman, marble (**Virginia Museum of Fine Art**)

Mathura Buddha

As opposed to their Gandharan counterparts—with their inward-looking meditative expressions—Buddhas produced contemporaneously in Mathura look directly at us, as we see in the *Seated Buddha*. Their heads are smooth and topped with the *kaparda* (Sanskrit for a braided and coiled hairstyle) in striking contrast to the stylized hair of the Buddhas of Gandhara. They are also most often depicted wearing monastic robes (known as *sangati*) with one shoulder left bare.



Figure **13.5.7.73**: Left: Yaksha figure, c. 150 B.C.E., approximately 8 feet high (Government Museum, Mathura, photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY-3.0); right: *Bala Bodhisattva*, c. 130 C.E., approximately 6 feet 7 inches (Sarnath Museum, **©Archaeological Survey of India**)

Artists in Mathura were inspired by the regional style of sculptures. Art historians have suggested that one inspiration for the Mathura style of the Buddha may be images of *yakshas* (male fertility spirits). A comparison of a standing *yaksha* image with a

standing sculpture known as the *Bala Bodhisattva* reveals shared commonalities in their monumental size, columnar character, emphatically frontal attitude, and broad shoulders.

Artists would have refined existing sculptural forms (like that of the Yaksha figure) to create the newly popular anthropomorphic form of the Buddha. Although *Bala Bodhisattva* is identified not as the Buddha but rather as a *bodhisattva* (a being who is on the path to enlightenment) the iconographic treatment of the Buddha and *bodhisattvas* is identical in this early period.



Figure **13.5.7.74**: *Standing Buddha*, c. 5th century C.E., Gupta period (©2017 The Presidents Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhavan)

Images produced in Mathura in the **Gupta period** (c. 4th–7th centuries C.E.), like this *Standing Buddha*, would develop the Mathura style of the Kushan period even further. The Buddha's facial features are softer, the folds on his robe (which will cover both of his shoulders) are a cascade of looped strings, his hair is beautifully coiled, and his eyes lower, looking inward.

Standing Buddha from the Gupta period and *Seated Buddha with Two Attendants* from the earlier Kushan period illustrate the development of the Buddha image in early history. Both images were produced in Mathura from the same stone and both represent a standard type of Buddha image from their respective eras. They are apt examples of how artistic processes and styles change over time.

Notes:

[1] In particular, a type of "Buddhist Sanskrit." See Gérard Fussman cited under References.

[2] The question of which style of Buddha came first (i.e., the Buddha from Mathura or Gandhara) and hence represents the earliest type of anthropomorphic Buddha image has been a long debated issue. See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Alfred Foucher cited below.

Additional resources:

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," *The Art Bulletin* 9, no. 4 (1927): 287–329.

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997).

Alfred Foucher, "The Greek Origin of the Image of Buddha." In Alfred Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and other Essays in Indian and Central–Asian Archaeology* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1997), pp. 111–137.

Gérard Fussman, "Documents épigraphiques kochans (V). Buddha et Bodhisattva dans l'art de Mathura: deux Bodhisattvas inscrits de l'an 4 et l'an 8," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (1988), pp. 5–26.

Prudence R. Myer, “Bodhisattvas and Buddhas: Early Buddhist Images from Mathura,” *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 2 (1986): 107–142.

Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture At Mathura, ca. 150 BCE–100 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

Ju-Hyung Rhi, “From Bodhisattva to Buddha: The Beginning of Iconic Representation in Buddhist Art,” *Artibus Asiae* 54, no. 3 / 4 (1994): 207–225.

Gupta Period

The Gupta Period

by DR. ARATHI MENON

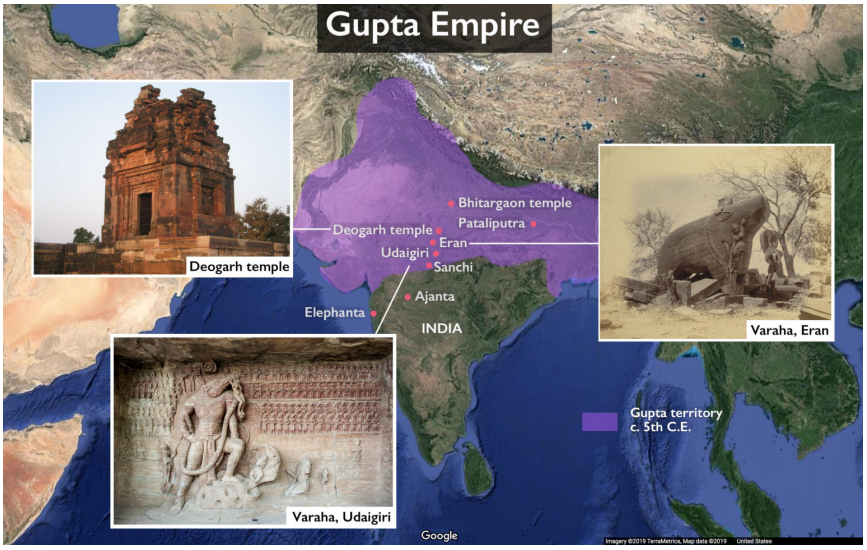


Figure **13.5.7.75**: Approximate extent of the Gupta Empire, c. 5th century C.E. (adapted from **Woudloper**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

During the Gupta period (c. 320 – 647 C.E., named for the Gupta dynasty) there were tremendous advances in poetry, prose, and drama as well as important discoveries in mathematics and astronomy. This was the age of some of the most celebrated creatives in Indian history, including the fifth century writer Kālidāsa whose works would influence generations of writers. This was also the period in which the fifth century astronomer Aryabhata theorized that the earth rotated on its own axis and calculated the solar year at 365.3586805 days.

The *Puranas*, a compendium of **religious literature** considered sacred to both the Hindu and Jain religious traditions and consisting of stories and the genealogies of the gods, folk tales, and traditional lore, grew in prominence during the Gupta years. While it is difficult to date the *Puranas* because they contain anonymous texts compiled over many centuries both before and after the Gupta period, we know that *Puranic* stories were a popular religious and cultural reference during the Gupta years from the depiction of *Puranic* episodes in art and architecture. Kālidāsa’s poetry and plays also frequently engaged with episodes from the *Puranas.*

The Guptas were ambitious rulers and by the end of the fourth century claimed dominance over a vast swathe of northern India (see map above). They maintained a capital at Pataliputra, the same ancient center used by the formidable, and earlier, Mauryan empire (4th – 2nd century B.C.E.) and that of the emperor **Ashoka Maurya** (3rd century B.C.E.).



Figure **13.5.7.76**: Emperor Chandragupta II on his horse, c. 380 – 415 C.E., gold coin (**The British Museum**)

The gold coin above shows Chandragupta II — one of the earliest and most successful Gupta rulers — who reigned from c. 380 C.E. to 415 C.E. Chandragupta is regally dressed, as is his horse, and he holds a bow as his sash flies behind him. This type of iconography emphasizes the emperor's identification as a conqueror and the inclusion of a goddess (on the reverse side of this coin, not shown) implies divinely mandated rule. Fa Hsien, a Buddhist pilgrim from China, who was in India during the reign of this king wrote with admiration about the prosperity of the empire, describing it as a charitable place with hospitals, rest-houses, and medicine for those in need.

The Golden Age of Indian Culture?

Although Gupta overlordship was significant throughout the empire in the early years and later, local rulers were allowed a fair bit of autonomy in their territories. It is important therefore to not conflate the innovations and achievements of the Gupta period with the Guptas, and to acknowledge the contributions of regional dynasties. This is particularly important when works of art and architecture dated to the Gupta period are missing contextual information. Rather than assigning the Gupta dynastic label to these works of art and architecture, art historians use methods of connoisseurship to understand the artists, patrons, and provenance of these works. In the process, we are able to better understand the artistic developments of the period as a whole.

The Gupta period was termed the "Golden Age of Indian Culture" by some early observers who assigned the vast quantity and sophisticated quality of art from that period to the sponsorship of the Guptas. The term "Golden Age" was based on the desire of these writers for an ideal or classical style of art (using the art of ancient Greece as an example), and the opinion that art after the Gupta period was less classical and too decadent to be tasteful. The artistic developments of regional kingdoms in the Gupta era problematizes this Eurocentric perspective. The fifth and sixth century rock-cut temples at **Ajanta** and **Elephanta**, in the domain of the Vakataka and Kalachuri rulers respectively, are prominent sites that point to a richer and more complex art history of the Gupta period.

That is not to say that the Gupta rulers themselves were not important patrons of art and architecture. The Udaigiri complex of rock-cut caves in Madhya Pradesh (a large state in central India) is a an exceptional site with inscriptions that indicate sponsorship from the Gupta court. Nineteen of the site's twenty caves are dedicated to Hindu gods and date to the fourth and fifth centuries; one cave is dedicated to the Jain religion and is dated to the early fifth century.



Figure **13.5.7.77**: Varaha panel, cave number 5, 5th century C.E., Udaigiri rock-cut caves, Madhya Pradesh (photo: **Asitjain**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Varaha, the man-boar avatar

A sculptural panel at Udaigiri (in cave number 5) depicts the Hindu god Vishnu in his man-boar form *avatar* known as Varaha. The panel shows Varaha rescuing Bhudevi (goddess of earth) from a cosmic flood, a story that is recounted frequently in Hindu religious literature, including the *Puranas.* Varaha is shown here as a hero posing regally with the goddess as she dangles from his tusk. An audience of gods, sages, and people — most in crowds of organized rows — witness the event with awe.



Figure **13.5.7.78**: Varaha, 5th century CE, Eran, Madhya Pradesh (photo: **ArnoldBetten**, public domain)

Scholars have suggested that the Guptas may have been especially attached to the Varaha avatar of Vishnu. A remarkable sculpture — this time showing the Varaha *avatar* in the form of a boar (not a man-boar as at Udaigiri cave number 5) — is found in Eran, another site in Madhya Pradesh. Eran has a number of temples dated to the Gupta period and its association with the Guptas is well-established by way of inscriptions.

Eran's Varaha is colossal – nearly twelve feet in height – and is shown again with the goddess holding on to his tusk. The artists cleverly included the witnesses of the miracle on Varaha's body itself which is covered almost entirely by rows of spectators.

Additional figures are also carved on his ears and snout.

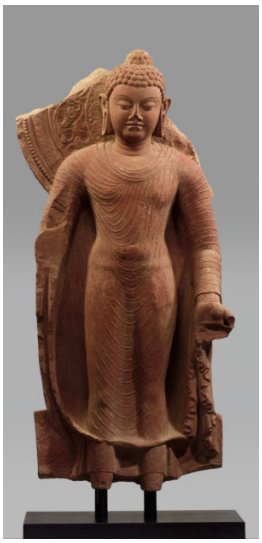


Figure 13.5.7.79: Standing Buddha Offering Protection, late 5th century, red sandstone, Mathura (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The Gupta Buddha

The **aniconic tradition** of representing the Buddha was abandoned by this stage in favor of depictions of the deified Buddha and the Gupta period boasts some of the most impressive examples. Scholars have suggested that the style of the Gupta Buddha evolved out of the Gandhara and Mathura style of Buddhas. The Gandhara and Mathura Buddhas were distinct versions of the Buddha image developed during the Kushan empire (2nd century B.C.E. – 3rd century C.E.) in the Gandhara and Mathura regions respectively. Kushan-ruled territories became part of the Gupta empire and it is certainly possible that the aesthetic style of Buddha images produced in those areas inspired the development of the Gupta Buddha.

The process by which the amalgamation of features from both the Gandhara and Mathura styles led to the Gupta image was surely a complex and involved process that developed over centuries. In addition, while Gupta period artists appear to have inherited the developments of the Kushan empire in many aspects, they likely also gained from the developments of art produced in other regions and kingdoms — both previous and contemporaneous. It is helpful to also remember that artists and therefore styles of art may have been itinerant at various points in history.

Gupta period Buddhas are characterized by covered shoulders, a head full of tight curls that cover even the *ushnisha*, and ornately carved halos. Images of the Jina (the 24 great teachers and perfected beings of the Jain religion) from this period are closely similar to Buddha images, especially in the rendering of a head of tight curls. The **Jina's** posture and adornment follows the iconographic prescriptions of Jain sacred imagery and emphasize immobility and austerity.

"Gupta" as a style

While using the Gupta dynastic label to categorize all art produced in the Gupta period is, as we have seen above, problematic, there are certain developments in style and iconography from the Gupta period that are important to note, such as the tendency to render deities as life-sized or larger and the consistent use of hierarchic scaling. See the Varaha panel at Udaigiri above, for example.

Workshops in the Gupta period also employed signature styles. Images of the Buddha from the Mathura region, for instance, were produced in mottled red sandstone. The Mathura workshops also preferred to render the folds of the Buddha's robes as looped strings as opposed to the thick folds preferred by Gandharan workshops in the Kushan period. Buddha images from the region of Sarnath, on the other hand, were made from a yellowish-tan sandstone and are shown wearing smooth robes.



Figure **13.5.7.80**: Left to right: *Buddha*, 3rd century CE, schist, Gandhara (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**); *Standing Buddha*, c. 5th century CE, red sandstone, Mathura (**Rashtrapati Bhavan Presidential Palace, New Delhi**); *Standing Buddha*, 474 CE, sandstone, Sarnath (**Sarnath Museum**)

Scholars believe that portable Gupta period Buddhas, carried by pilgrims back to their homelands, played a role in the development of the Buddha image in the art of East and Southeast Asia. The Gupta Buddha would also influence later images of the Buddha in South Asia — such as those that were produced in the territory of the Pala dynasty (c. 700 – 1200) in eastern India. The Pala period saw the Buddha image develop even further and is notable for its inclusion of **ornate crowns**.

Gupta period sculpture and painting

In addition to its prolific production of Buddha images, the Gupta period is also known for its Hindu and Jain sacred imagery fashioned from terracotta, stone, and **metal**. Surviving terracotta examples include sculptural plaques that were meant to adorn the walls of temples.



Figure **13.5.7.81**: Krishna Killing the Horse Demon Keshi, 5th century, terracotta (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The terracotta panel above shows the Hindu god Krishna (also an *avatar* of Vishnu) killing the horse demon Keshi. Krishna pushes the horse-demon back with his leg and sticks his elbow in Keshi's mouth to stop the demon's advance. If there is any doubt as to the aftermath of this encounter, the dead Keshi lies at the bottom of the panel.

Painting too was likely a popular art-form in the Gupta period, although sadly, few examples have survived. If the mural paintings at the Buddhist rock-cut caves of Ajanta are any indication, painting techniques by the fifth century were highly developed. Ajanta's paintings are also priceless for the clues that they contain on the artistic achievements of the period; we only need look at the accessories and clothes worn by the protagonists of the murals as well as at the architectural spaces that they occupy to better know the style of jewelry, textiles, and secular architecture that was popular at that time.



Figure **13.5.7.82**: Mural in cave 1, Ajanta, 5th century C.E., Aurangabad

Temple architecture

Most Gupta-period architecture that survives in-situ is religious in nature and is built from stone and brick. A modest temple structure known as number 17 at the sacred complex at Sanchi – famous for its **great stupa,** and believed to date to the early fifth

century, gives an idea of the early style of Indian temple architecture.



Figure **13.5.7.83**: Temple number 17, Sanchi (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY 3.0)

Temple number 17 is flat-roofed, mostly unadorned, and has an attached portico marked by four pillars topped with lion capitals. The temple is quite different from another fifth century brick-temple at **Bhitargaon** that sits at the center of a square plan and would have once had an impressive *shikara* (pyramidal roof). Although the temple is heavily reconstructed today, it still preserves some of its sculptured terracotta panels, providing a glimpse of its original grandeur.



Figure **13.5.7.84**: Dashavatara Temple, 6th century C.E., Deogarh (photo: **Work2win**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Another Gupta period temple, the sixth century Dasavatara temple at Deogarh (above), also sits at the center of a plinth (an architectural feature that becomes increasingly common in temple building). Like Bhitargaon, Deogarh features sculptured panels,

although here, three large niches containing sacred imagery associated with the god Vishnu receive special prominence — each one featured on its own wall. The panels may have originally been located within an ambulatory that is now missing.

By the end of the sixth-century, hastened by military incursions and the loss of territories, the Gupta empire fell into decline. Nevertheless, the Gupta period's formative developments in art, architecture, and religious iconography would have a lasting impact on the art and architecture of South and Southeast Asia.

References:

Frederick Asher, "Historical and Political Allegory in Gupta Art." In *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. Bardwell Smith (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), pp. 55 – 57.

Catherine Becker, "Not your average boar: the colossal varaha at Eran, an iconographic innovation," *Artibus Asiae* 70, no. 1, "To My Mind": Studies in South Asian Art History in Honor of Joanna Gottfried Williams. Part II (2010): 123 – 149.

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997).

Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: an Alternative History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Partha Mitter, *Indian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Ju-Hyung Rhi, "From Bodhisattva to Buddha: the Beginning of Iconic Representation in Buddhist Art," *Artibus Asiae* 54, no. 3 / 4 (1994): 207 – 225.

Bardwell L. Smith, *Essays on Gupta Culture* (Columbia: South Asia Books, 1983).

Additional resources

A record of Buddhistic Kingdoms by Fa-Hsien

Art of the Silk Road: Cultures: The Gupta Dynasty

Recognizing the Gods

The Caves of Ajanta

by AJANTA SHAH



Figure **13.5.7.85**: The Caves at Ajanta, India, c. 200 B.C.E. – 650 C.E. (**public domain**)

Hidden away in the hills of northwest India, some 200 miles from the busy streets of Mumbai, emerges a magnificent jewel of art and religion: the Ajanta Caves.



Figure **13.5.7.86**: Ajanta, Cave 26, (photo: **Arian Zwegers**, CC: BY 2.0)

The caves, cut into the face of a mountain, form a horseshoe shape around the Wangorah River. They are an example of one of Indian's unique artistic traditions known as rock cut temples. Ajanta consists of thirty caves, each dedicated to the life of the Buddha.

Each cave is filled with sculpture, wall murals, and ceiling paintings. Though much of this site has collapsed, what remains at Ajanta has allowed a glimpse into the artistic traditions of ancient India.

Monasteries and sanctuaries

The caves at Ajanta date from the second century B.C.E. to 650 C.E. and were cut into the mountainside in two distinct phases. Discovered by chance in 1819 by British soldiers on a hunt, the Ajanta Caves have become an icon of ancient Indian art, and have influenced subsequent artists and styles. The caves at the site are not numbered chronologically. Instead, their numbering is based on location, beginning with cave 1 on the north side of the horseshoe. All of the caves at Ajanta fall into the category of Vihara (monasteries with residence halls), or Chaitya-grihas (sanctuaries/stupa monument halls). Nevertheless, each cave has its own unique characteristics, making it difficult to write about Ajanta as a whole.

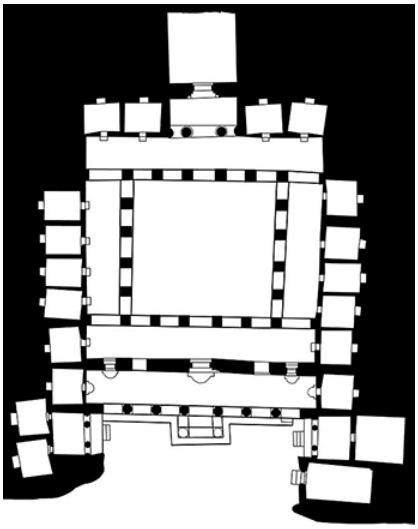


Figure **13.5.7.87**: Plan of Cave 1 (diagram by **Erik128**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

The Ajanta caves are engulfed in darkness. In fact, this lack of light is crucial to the experience at Ajanta; demanding the viewer's time while intensifying a sense of the mysterious. There may have been dim artificial lighting created by oil lamps in the past.

However, even today, the majority of the caves remain almost completely dark and without the help of artificial lighting, the caves remain in their original state.

Cave 1 is a magnificently painted Vihara (monastery), filled with wall murals, sculptures, and ceiling paintings, that date back to the fifth century. Originally, Cave 1 also had a porch which led to the main hall, however it has since collapsed.

The main hall of Cave 1 is a square in plan, with aisles along all four sides. Adjacent to these aisles are doorways leading to fourteen small chambers. Cave 1 contains twenty painted and carved pillars. Above the pillars are reliefs depicting tales from the life of Buddha (**Jatakas**). Located at the rear of the hall is a large shrine of the Buddha. The walls were originally covered in paintings, but today there are only nine surviving images, the most famous being the Bodhisattva Padmapani (Padmapani in Sanskrit literally translates into “one who holds the lotus”).



Figure **13.5.7.88**: View to the rear of Cave 1 with the Bodhisattva Padmapani to the left of the Buddha Shrine (photo: **Christian Luczanits**, CC: BY-SA 3.0)

Avalokitesvara

This painting can be found to the left on the main shrine. It depicts one of the most beloved bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara. The term “bodhisattva” refers to a person that has been awakened by the Buddhist spirit. According to Mahayana doctrine, Alavokitesvara postponed his ascension into Buddhahood until he assisted every being in achieving Nirvana. Avalokitesvara takes the largest numbers of forms across Asia. Originally, a masculine form, Avalokitesvara is also known as the feminine Guanyin in China, and Kuan Yin in Japan.



Figure **13.5.7.89**: Bodhisattva Padmapani (detail), Cave 1

In the painting, his tan body, darkened only by the locks of curly hair, is delicate and elegant. He is adorned with pearls, amythyst, and other attributes of traditional Indian jewelry. On his head sits a magnificent crown, which at some point was most likely colored in extreme detail, but over time has faded. His eyes are lowered in a meditative state. His calm, spiritual face sets the tone and mood of the room. In his right hand, he holds a lotus blossom, which may represent his spiritual awakening.

Ceiling painting

If you look up from the beautiful wall paintings you see the geometric designs and motifs that adorn the ceiling. There are also images of peacocks, subtly decorated in blue paint made from lapis lazuli. One of the panels shows a decorative vegetable motif that looks similar to our modern day green bell pepper. In addition to this, there is a creature with a bull's head whose body transforms into swirling curvaceous lines that blend into the floral decoration of the next panel.



Figure 13.5.7.90: Ajanta Stamp, 1949

The ceiling paintings are so beautiful that one of the panels, which depicts a running elephant surrounded by flowers, was chosen as the official logo of India's Department of Tourism. The elephant is shown playfully galloping, as his trunk swirls close to his body.

The painting techniques at Ajanta are similar to European fresco technique. The primary difference is that the layer of plaster was dry when it was painted. First, a rough plaster of clay, cow dung, and rice husks were pressed on to the rough cave walls. This was then coated with lime paste in order to create a smooth working surface. The dark outlines of the figures were then added followed by a pallete of only 6 colors. The pigments the artists used came from natural resources: red and yellow ocher, crushed green malachite, blue lapis lazuli, etc.



Figure 13.5.7.91: Reclining Buddha, Cave 26 (photo: Shriram Rajagopalan, CC: BY 2.0)

In 1983, UNESCO World Heritage Centre selected the Ajanta Caves to be a part of their preservation endeavors. Today, the caves at Ajanta remain one of the most visited architectural sites in India. They are a living representation of one of the grandest artistic styles in Indian art and history.

Additional resources

Ajanta, UNESCO World Heritage Site

Ajanta Painting, *National Geographic*

Professor Walter Spink explores Ajanta

The Cave of Shiva at Elephanta

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure 13.5.7.92: Map showing location of Elephanta

On Gharapuri island on the west coast of India, not far from the city of Mumbai, is the rock-cut complex of monuments popularly known as Elephanta. Visitors travel by boat from Mumbai and then climb a hill either by train or by over a hundred stairs to reach the caves of Elephanta. A large reconstructed stone elephant (below) from Gharapuri that is believed to have inspired the references of Portuguese colonists to the island as *a ilha do elefante* (the island of the elephant) [1], is found today at the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum.



Figure **13.5.7.93**: Stone elephant, originally located on Gharapuri island, c. 6th century C.E. (photo: **Elroy Serrao**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Elephanta island has multiple Hindu caves and Buddhist monuments, as well as excavated caves that were left incomplete. This essay focuses on one particularly remarkable rock-cut cave that is an early example of an unconventional and innovative religious program in stone. The cave temple is dated to the sixth century and is dedicated to the Hindu god **Shiva**.

In Hinduism, god transcends form. But an emphasis on an underlying omnipotent and universal spirit (**Brahman**) allows for the existence of a large pantheon of deities. Each deity can, in turn, have many embodiments and a range of iconographic representations are employed in Hindu sacred art to tangibly portray the gods.

The cave of Shiva at Elephanta has at least ten distinct representations of Shiva; two of these – Shiva as ***Ardhanarishvara***, in which Shiva and the goddess Parvati are joined as one, and Shiva as ***Gangadhara***, in which Shiva is shown bearing the force of the river goddess Ganga's descent to earth, are referenced below. Shiva's manifestation as ***Sadashiva*** wherein the manifold aspects of Shiva are depicted on multiple faces is also discussed, as is the cave's Shiva *linga*. Like *Sasashiva*, and the many other forms of Shiva at Elephanta, the *linga* references the all-pervading nature of the deity, but does so in the form of an aniconic (non-representational) symbol.

The resources that it must have taken to conceptualize, excavate, and execute this cave suggests a considerable investment on the part of its patron or patrons. Scholars have suggested that the cave may have been sponsored by Krishnaraja I (who ruled from c. 550 – 575 C.E), a known Shiva devotee and ruler of the Kalachuri kingdom that was active in the region in the sixth and seventh centuries. Krishnaraja's coins have been found at the site, but the extent of the Kalachuris' direct involvement with the cave remains unresolved.



Figure **13.5.7.94**: Eastern entrance, Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Elidioo**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

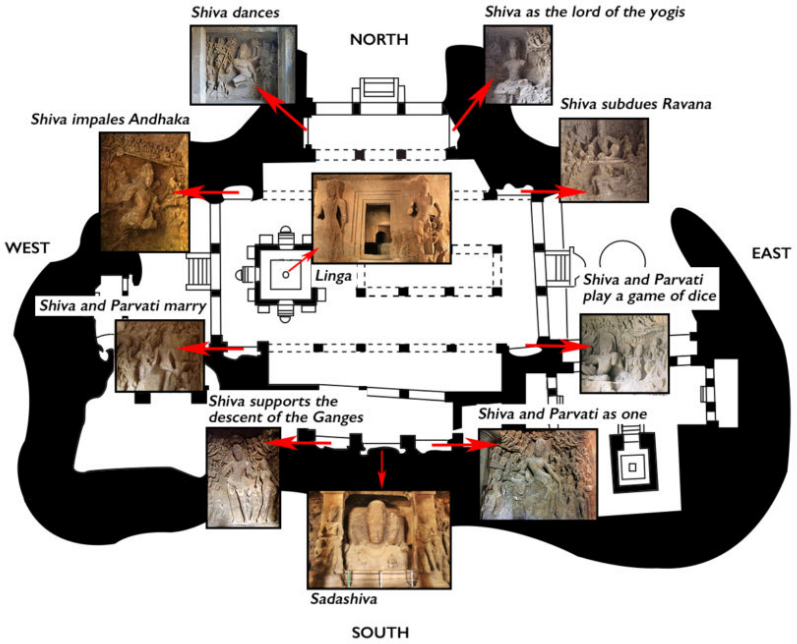


Figure **13.5.7.95**: Main features of Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island. Plan adapted from fig. 1, p. 18 of George Michell's "The Architecture of Elephanta" (see reference below). Photo credits for insets (from left to right): Shiva dances (**Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, CC BY 2.0), Shiva as the lord of yogis (**Scott McLeod**, CC BY 2.0), Shiva subdues Ravana (**Sivaraj D.**, CC BY-3.0), Shiva and Parvati play a game of dice on mount Kailasa (**Andy Hay**, CC BY 2.0), Ardhanarishvara (**Ricardo Martins**, CC BY 2.0), *Sadashiva* (**Ronakshah1990**, CC BY-SA 4.0), Shiva supports the descent of the Ganges (**Sivaraj D.**, CC BY-SA 3.0), Shiva and Parvati marry (**Sivaraj D.**, CC BY-SA 3.0), Shiva slays Andhaka (**Elroy Serrao**, CC BY-SA 2.0); *Linga* shrine (**Ricardo Martins**, CC BY 2.0).

A pillared hall with a shrine at the end

The interior of the cave measures approximately 130 x 130 feet.[2] Its pillared hall is lit by natural light from just three openings — one each at the east, the north, and the west ends of the cave. The openings at the east and the north sides of the cave serve as entrances with sunken courtyards and **impressive porticoes**. The opening on the west opens to a **small open-air corridor** that leads to a side shrine.

As we enter the cave from the eastern entrance, we encounter an impressive row of tall pillars and a large square shrine situated near the far west end of the cave (see image below). The pillars have fluted tops and cushion capitals and four small seated figures

at each corner of their plain rectangular bases. At a height of about sixteen feet, carved beams with brackets that rest on the pillars' capitals travel east to west in the cave's ceiling. [3] With the exception of the nine large bas-reliefs (illustrated in the plan above) and the guardian figures on the shrine and on the cave's south wall, the walls of the cave and of the shrine are undecorated.



Figure **13.5.7.96**: Looking towards the west end of the cave at the shrine with the Shiva *linga*, Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The entire cave and everything in it can be seen as one large sculptural piece that embraces both the character of the hill from which it is carved and the design of built structures that were likely in vogue in the sixth century. The inclusion of the pillars in the cave gives the impression that they are weight-bearing columns that reinforce the roof as they would in a built structure, and that they are aided in that task by the ceiling beams.

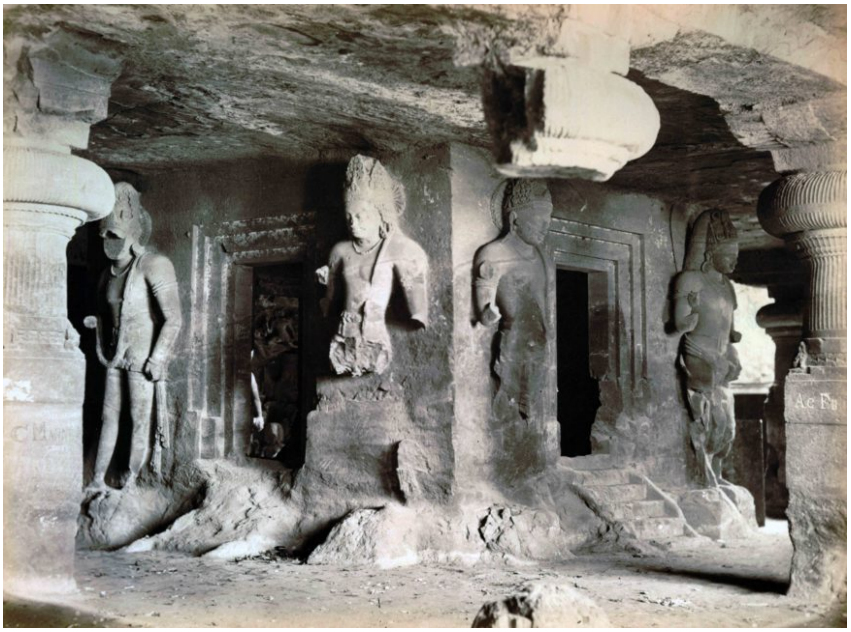


Figure **13.5.7.97**: View of the *linga* shrine and its guardians before reconstruction, photo taken c. 1875, Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **public domain**)

A shrine for Shiva *linga*

The shrine near the far west end of the cave is carefully subtracted from the hill to appear free-standing. But the shrine, along with the Shiva *linga* within it, is a part and parcel of the hill. A short set of stairs on all four sides of the shrine leads to four open doorways and there is enough space within the shrine to allow the devotee room to circumambulate the *linga*. When devotees pray

to the **linga**, they are praying to an aniconic representation of Shiva and acknowledging the sacred generative aspect of the universe.

Each of the shrine's four entrances are flanked by majestic guardian figures who are as tall as the shrine. Some of these figures are accompanied by smaller attendants and hierarchic scale is employed to indicate the relative importance of the larger figures.



Figure **13.5.7.98**: The *linga* and the shrine's guardians (each in a "three-bent pose"), Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Ricardo Martins**, CC BY-2.0)

The guardians are shown wearing elaborate crowns and jewelry including earrings, armbands, necklaces, and belts. Each pair of guardians at each entrance is also shown in the *tribhanga* (three-bent pose) in such a way that they appear to balance one another. The figure to our left in the image above, for example, leans to their left whereas the figure to our right leans to their right. The resulting effect is subtle but provides a remarkable quality of naturalism to the enormous stone figures.

It is difficult to know for certain what the guardians once held in their hands. The extensive damage, particularly to the lower half of these figures and the cave's bas-reliefs, was caused by artillery training conducted by Portuguese forces in the sixteenth century.



Figure **13.5.7.99**: Sadashiva, south wall of Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Ronakshah1990**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The many faces of Shiva

If we enter the cave again, this time via the northern entrance, we again encounter the same pillared hall. But as we move further into the cave, a centerpiece in shadow at the far end of the cave comes into view. Here we find a deeply recessed, nearly 21 foot tall, three-headed Shiva known as *Sadashiva* (see above). A fourth head at the rear and a fifth head at the top is implied. Again, tall guardian figures and attendants flank either side of the icon just as they do at the four entrances of the shrine dedicated to the aniconic *linga*.

We only see a part of ***Sadashiva***, that is, from the chest upwards, and the suggestion is that the god is emerging from the mountain. The artists have carved the image with such skill that the broad shoulders of the central face appears to seamlessly carry the heads shown in profile. The faces each acknowledge an aspect of Shiva — the image at the center is calm and welcoming while the face to the viewer's left shows Shiva's ferocious aspect. His fierceness is emphasized by a twisted mustache, frowning expression, skulls and snakes in his matted hair, and earrings in the form of snakes. The face on the viewer's right is meant to signify a gentler aspect of Shiva. This face is shown with soft curls, wearing a sweet-tempered smile, and carrying a lotus.

Theatrical opposites

The cave continues exploring Shiva's various aspects in bas-reliefs that are carved in deeply framed niches that are as tall as the height of the cave. Eight sculptural panels — two each at the three entrances into the cave and two flanking the *Sadhashiva* are carved facing one another. Each representation of Shiva is large and impressive and the scenes are filled with subsidiary figures — divine and otherwise — who witness and participate in each episode. The subsidiary figures, even the gods, are rendered much smaller than Shiva.



Figure **13.5.7.100**: Shiva impales the demon Andhaka (left) and Shiva and Parvati marry (right), Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The eight bas-reliefs are as follows:

EAST	Shiva subdues Ravana as the demon shakes mount Kailasa	Shiva and Parvati at home on mount Kailasa
SOUTH	Shiva and Parvati as one (*Ardhanarishvara*)	Shiva assists in the descent of the Ganges
WEST	Shiva and Parvati marry	Shiva impales the demon Andhaka
NORTH	Shiva dancing	Shiva as lord of the yogis

Figure 13.5.7.101: Chart of bas-reliefs (clockwise from eastern entrance) at Elephanta's cave of Shiva, 6th century C.E., India. Shiva's active moods are marked in purple and his passive moods in blue.

Architectural historian George Michell has suggested that Elephanta's artists intentionally wove an exploration of the active and passive moods of Shiva in the sculptural program of the cave's bas-reliefs. [4] Michell's theory is compelling; in the chart above, purple is used to denote the bas-reliefs that celebrate Shiva's dynamic, energetic, and vigorous moods and the color blue is used to denote calmer episodes. This oppositional formula also extends to the iconic *Sadashiva* with its fierce and gentle aspects, as well as to the *linga* and *Sadashiva* as unmanifested and manifested representations of Shiva respectively.

The bas-reliefs that flank *Sadashiva* at the south wall are somewhat different in their antithetic message. To the viewers' left we find Shiva and the goddess Parvati joined as one, in a manifestation known as *Ardhanarishvara*. As is common in representations of *Ardhanarishvara*, which translates literally to Shiva as half-woman, the deity is presented as a composite male and female figure. Fused at the exact center, the male half of the body is shown leaning on Shiva's *vahana* (vehicle), the bull.

In the panel on the right, we see a representation known as Shiva *Gangadhara*, that is, Shiva as the bearer of the river Ganga. The river Ganges (also known as Ganga) is personified here as a three-headed goddess in the process of descending to earth via Shiva's matted hair. By supporting goddess Ganga's descent, Shiva softens the considerable force of the river's descent to our world, which would otherwise shatter. Art historian Vidya Dehejia has pointed out that the goddess Parvati, conceivably annoyed at her husband's role in the episode, is shown by the artist as moving away from Shiva in a subtle foreshadowing, perhaps, of disconcert. [5]



Figure 13.5.7.102: Ardhanarishvara (left) and Shiva *Gangadhara* (right), Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA 4.0)

In **Hinduism**, images of the gods are embodiments of the gods and to enter a temple is to enter the home of god. Devotees are happy to take the pilgrimage necessary to see and to be seen by god in an act of *darshan* (auspicious sight). At Elephanta, in this grand cave temple with Shiva's manifest and unmanifest forms and his fierce and pleasant selves, the intention appears to have been to offer the devotee much more. With each theatrical introduction to Shiva, the devotee is offered again and again the opportunity to honor and to know their god in a multitude of profound ways.

Footnotes:

[1] J. Gerson da Cunha, *The origin of Bombay* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, c1993), p. 20.

[2] Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 443.

[3] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1997), p. 125.

[4] George Michell, "The Architecture of Elephanta: An Interpretation." In *Elephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 23 – 24.

[5] Dehejia, p. 129.

Additional resources:

Carmel Berkson et al., *ELephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

J. Gerson da Cunha, *The origin of Bombay* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, c1993).

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1997).

Wendy Doniger, "The Myths Depicted at Elephanta." In *Elephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

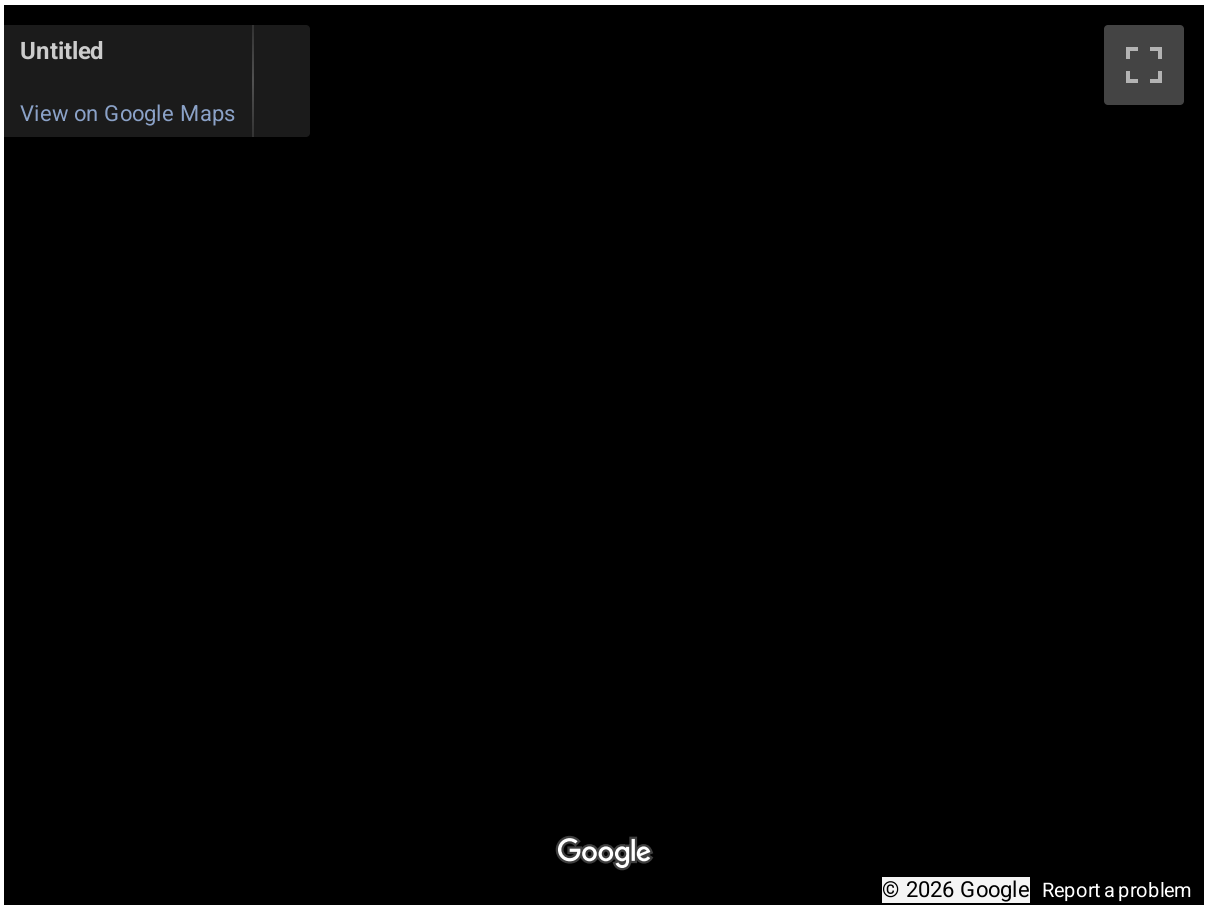
George Michell, "The Architecture of Elephanta: An Interpretation." In *Elephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

Elephanta Caves, UNESCO World Heritage Site

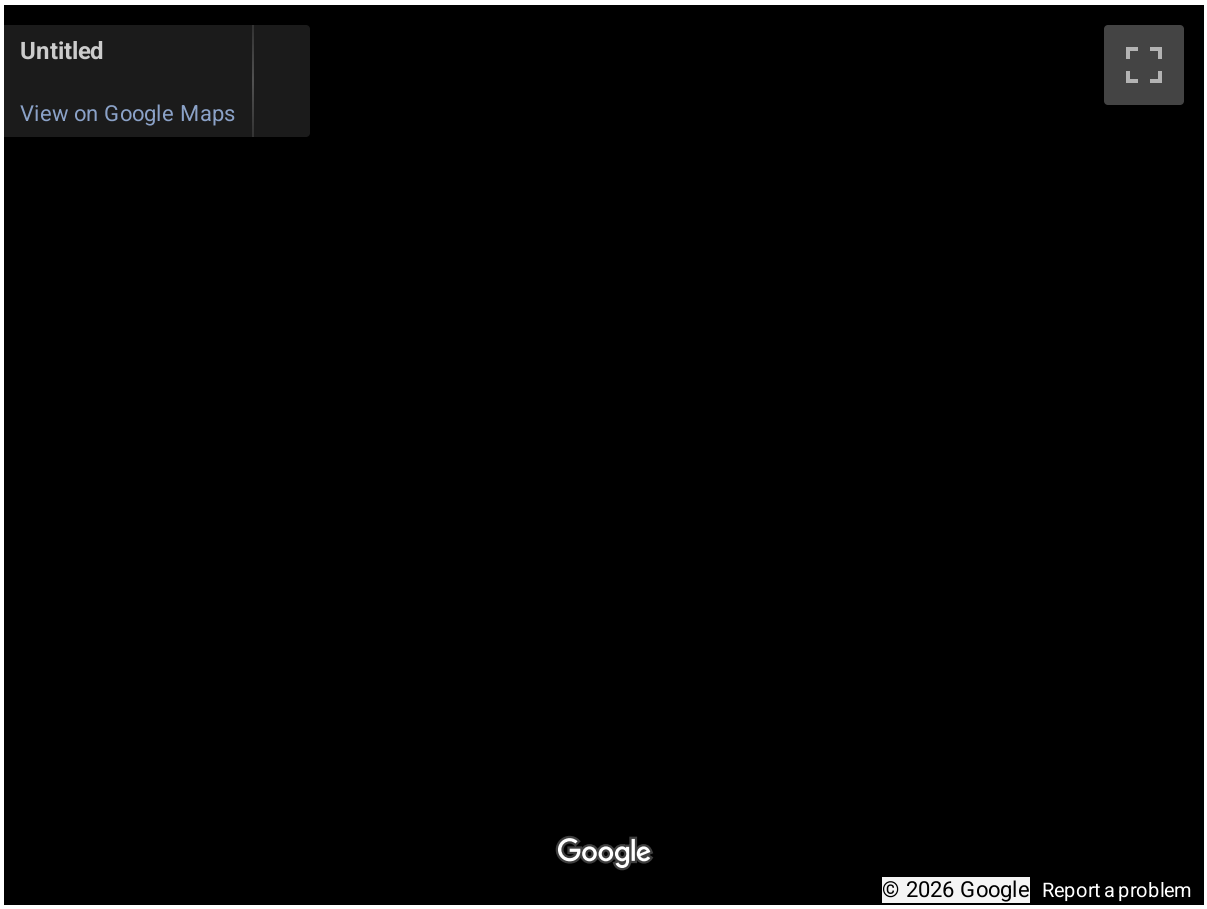
3D tour of the Shiva cave at Elephanta

Elephanta: Spirituality set in stone

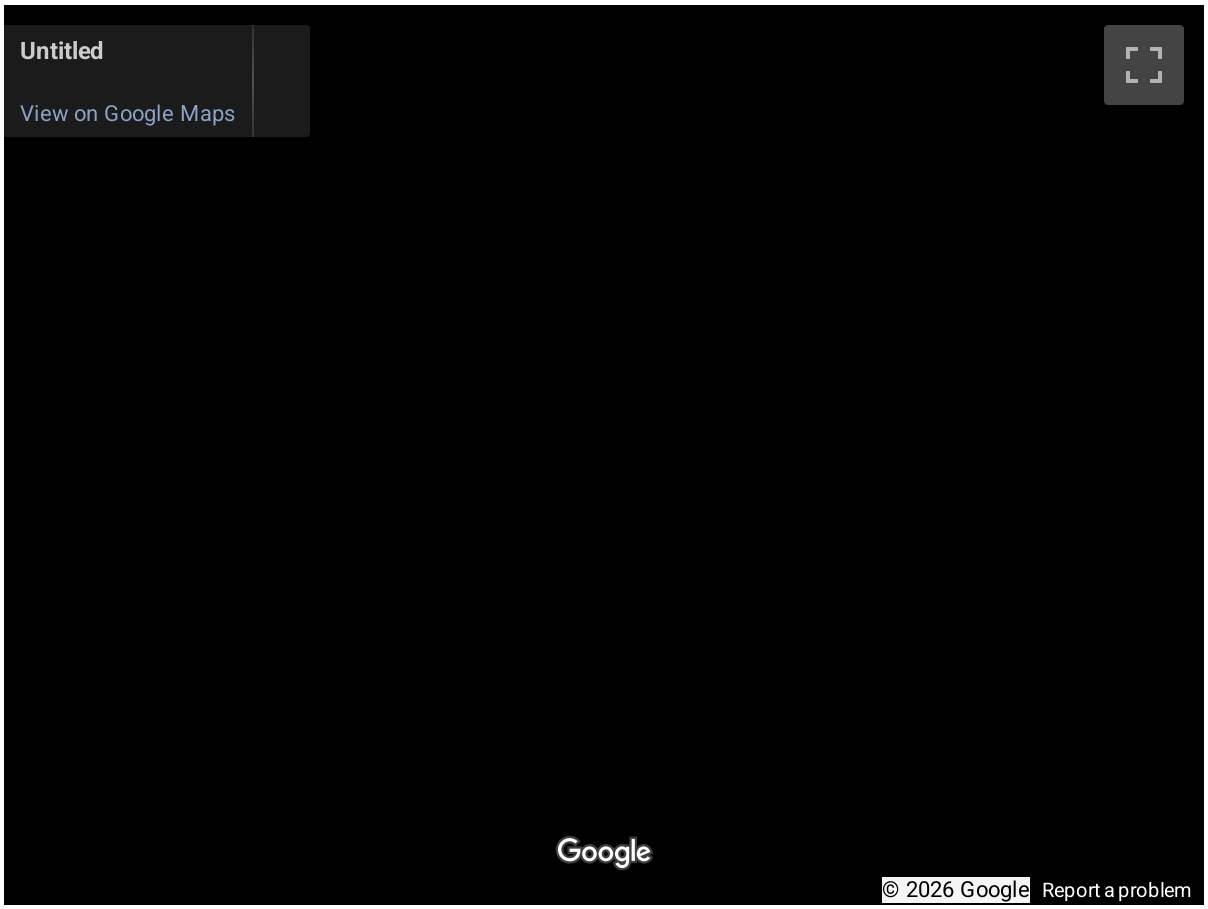
Shiva as the lord of yogis



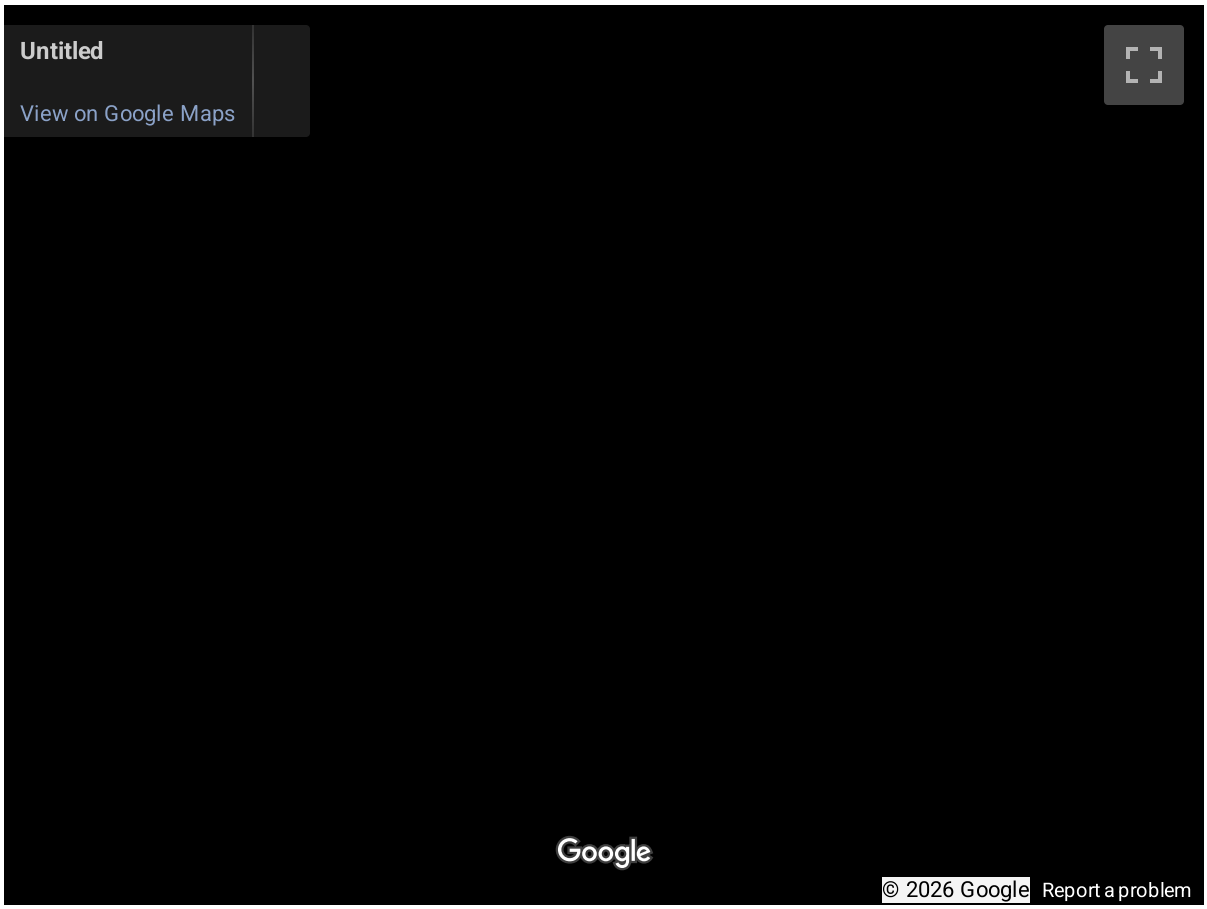
Shiva dances



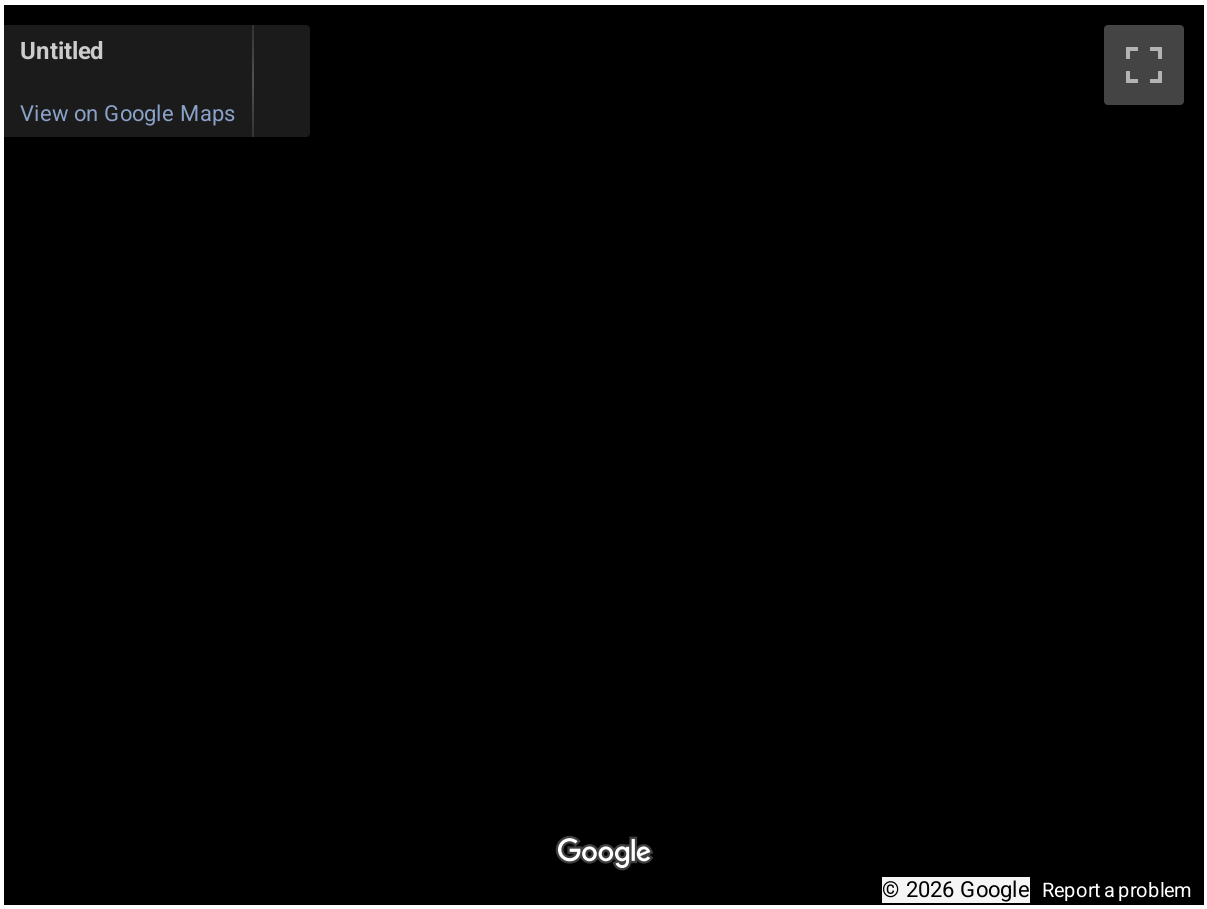
Shiva and Parvati play a game of dice at home on mount Kailasa



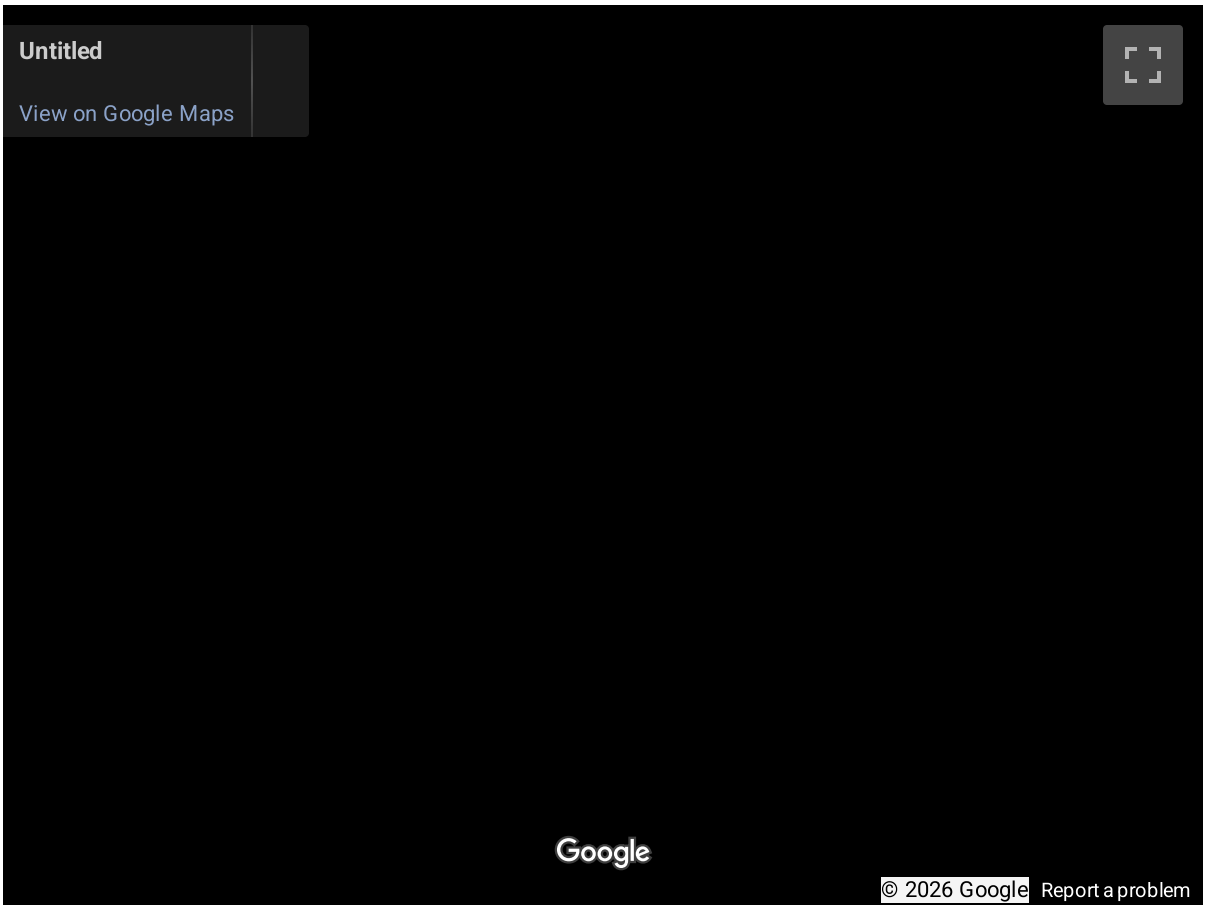
Shiva subdues Ravana as the demon shakes mount Kailasa



Shiva impales the demon Andhaka



Shiva and Parvati marry



The Cave of Shiva at Elephanta

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure **13.5.7.92**: Map showing location of Elephanta

On Gharapuri island on the west coast of India, not far from the city of Mumbai, is the rock-cut complex of monuments popularly known as Elephanta. Visitors travel by boat from Mumbai and then climb a hill either by train or by over a hundred stairs to reach the caves of Elephanta. A large reconstructed stone elephant (below) from Gharapuri that is believed to have inspired the references of Portuguese colonists to the island as *a ilha do elefante* (the island of the elephant) [1], is found today at the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum.



Figure **13.5.7.93**: Stone elephant, originally located on Gharapuri island, c. 6th century C.E. (photo: **Elroy Serrao**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Elephanta island has multiple Hindu caves and Buddhist monuments, as well as excavated caves that were left incomplete. This essay focuses on one particularly remarkable rock-cut cave that is an early example of an unconventional and innovative religious program in stone. The cave temple is dated to the sixth century and is dedicated to the Hindu god **Shiva**.

In Hinduism, god transcends form. But an emphasis on an underlying omnipotent and universal spirit (**Brahman**) allows for the existence of a large pantheon of deities. Each deity can, in turn, have many embodiments and a range of iconographic representations are employed in Hindu sacred art to tangibly portray the gods.

The cave of Shiva at Elephanta has at least ten distinct representations of Shiva; two of these – Shiva as ***Ardhanarishvara***, in which Shiva and the goddess Parvati are joined as one, and Shiva as ***Gangadhara***, in which Shiva is shown bearing the force of the river goddess Ganga's descent to earth, are referenced below. Shiva's manifestation as ***Sadashiva*** wherein the manifold aspects of Shiva are depicted on multiple faces is also discussed, as is the cave's Shiva *linga*. Like *Sasashiva*, and the many other forms of Shiva at Elephanta, the *linga* references the all-pervading nature of the deity, but does so in the form of an aniconic (non-representational) symbol.

The resources that it must have taken to conceptualize, excavate, and execute this cave suggests a considerable investment on the part of its patron or patrons. Scholars have suggested that the cave may have been sponsored by Krishnaraja I (who ruled from c. 550 – 575 C.E), a known Shiva devotee and ruler of the Kalachuri kingdom that was active in the region in the sixth and seventh centuries. Krishnaraja's coins have been found at the site, but the extent of the Kalachuris' direct involvement with the cave remains unresolved.



Figure 13.5.7.94: Eastern entrance, Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: Elidioo, CC BY-SA 4.0)

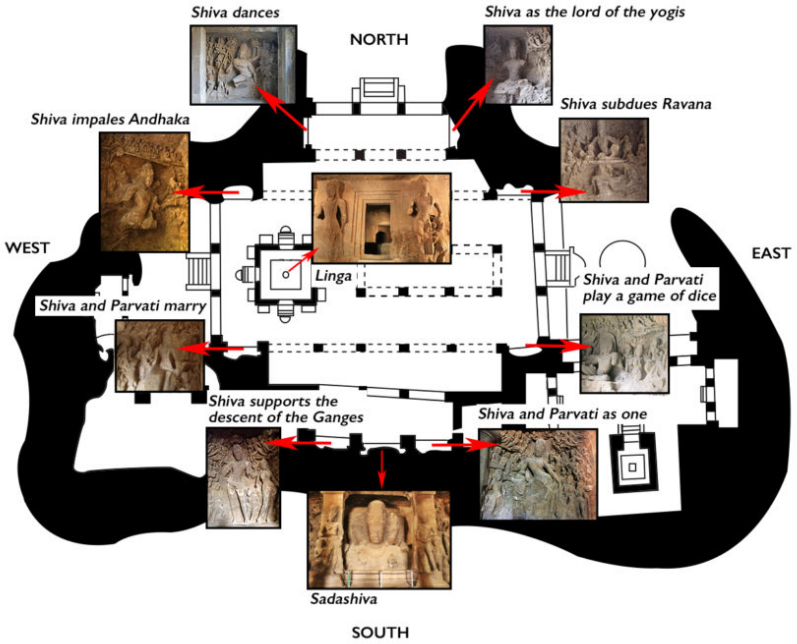


Figure 13.5.7.95: Main features of Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island. Plan adapted from fig. 1, p. 18 of George Michell's "The Architecture of Elephanta" (see reference below). Photo credits for insets (from left to right): Shiva dances (**Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, CC BY 2.0), Shiva as the lord of yogis (**Scott McLeod**, CC BY 2.0), Shiva subdues Ravana (**Sivaraj D.**, CC BY-3.0), Shiva and Parvati play a game of dice on mount Kailasa (**Andy Hay**, CC BY 2.0), Ardhanarishvara (**Ricardo Martins**, CC BY 2.0), *Sadashiva* (**Ronakshah1990**, CC BY-SA 4.0), Shiva supports the descent of the Ganges (**Sivaraj D.**, CC BY-SA 3.0), Shiva and Parvati marry (**Sivaraj D.**, CC BY-SA 3.0), Shiva slays Andhaka (**Elroy Serrao**, CC BY-SA 2.0); *Linga* shrine (**Ricardo Martins**, CC BY 2.0).

A pillared hall with a shrine at the end

The interior of the cave measures approximately 130 x 130 feet.[2] Its pillared hall is lit by natural light from just three openings — one each at the east, the north, and the west ends of the cave. The openings at the east and the north sides of the cave serve as entrances with sunken courtyards and **impressive porticoes**. The opening on the west opens to a **small open-air corridor** that leads to a side shrine.

As we enter the cave from the eastern entrance, we encounter an impressive row of tall pillars and a large square shrine situated near the far west end of the cave (see image below). The pillars have fluted tops and cushion capitals and four small seated figures

at each corner of their plain rectangular bases. At a height of about sixteen feet, carved beams with brackets that rest on the pillars' capitals travel east to west in the cave's ceiling. [3] With the exception of the nine large bas-reliefs (illustrated in the plan above) and the guardian figures on the shrine and on the cave's south wall, the walls of the cave and of the shrine are undecorated.



Figure **13.5.7.96**: Looking towards the west end of the cave at the shrine with the Shiva *linga*, Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The entire cave and everything in it can be seen as one large sculptural piece that embraces both the character of the hill from which it is carved and the design of built structures that were likely in vogue in the sixth century. The inclusion of the pillars in the cave gives the impression that they are weight-bearing columns that reinforce the roof as they would in a built structure, and that they are aided in that task by the ceiling beams.

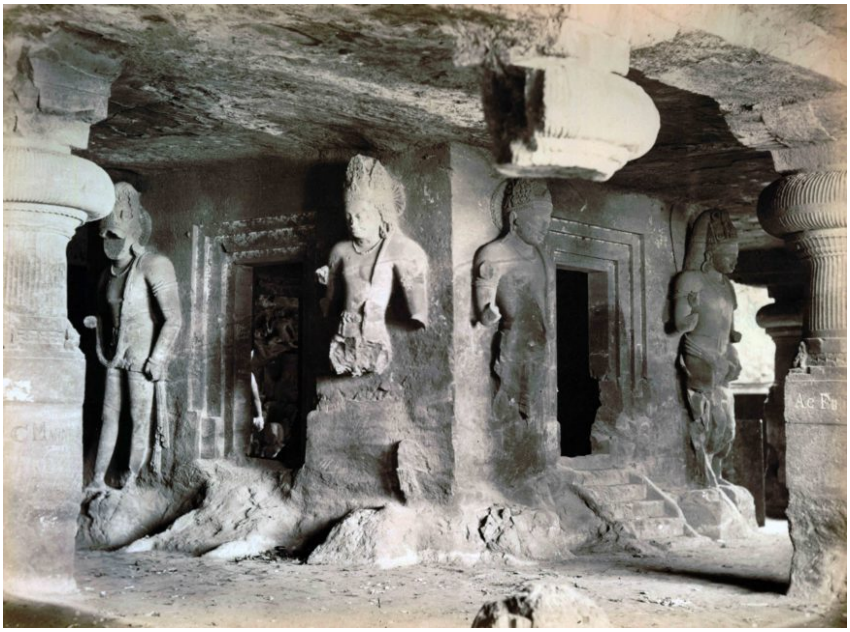


Figure **13.5.7.97**: View of the *linga* shrine and its guardians before reconstruction, photo taken c. 1875, Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **public domain**)

A shrine for Shiva *linga*

The shrine near the far west end of the cave is carefully subtracted from the hill to appear free-standing. But the shrine, along with the Shiva *linga* within it, is a part and parcel of the hill. A short set of stairs on all four sides of the shrine leads to four open doorways and there is enough space within the shrine to allow the devotee room to circumambulate the *linga*. When devotees pray

to the **linga**, they are praying to an aniconic representation of Shiva and acknowledging the sacred generative aspect of the universe.

Each of the shrine's four entrances are flanked by majestic guardian figures who are as tall as the shrine. Some of these figures are accompanied by smaller attendants and hierarchic scale is employed to indicate the relative importance of the larger figures.



Figure **13.5.7.98**: The *linga* and the shrine's guardians (each in a "three-bent pose"), Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Ricardo Martins**, CC BY-2.0)

The guardians are shown wearing elaborate crowns and jewelry including earrings, armbands, necklaces, and belts. Each pair of guardians at each entrance is also shown in the *tribhanga* (three-bent pose) in such a way that they appear to balance one another. The figure to our left in the image above, for example, leans to their left whereas the figure to our right leans to their right. The resulting effect is subtle but provides a remarkable quality of naturalism to the enormous stone figures.

It is difficult to know for certain what the guardians once held in their hands. The extensive damage, particularly to the lower half of these figures and the cave's bas-reliefs, was caused by artillery training conducted by Portuguese forces in the sixteenth century.



Figure **13.5.7.99**: Sadashiva, south wall of Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: **Ronakshah1990**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The many faces of Shiva

If we enter the cave again, this time via the northern entrance, we again encounter the same pillared hall. But as we move further into the cave, a centerpiece in shadow at the far end of the cave comes into view. Here we find a deeply recessed, nearly 21 foot tall, three-headed Shiva known as *Sadashiva* (see above). A fourth head at the rear and a fifth head at the top is implied. Again, tall guardian figures and attendants flank either side of the icon just as they do at the four entrances of the shrine dedicated to the aniconic *linga*.

We only see a part of ***Sadashiva***, that is, from the chest upwards, and the suggestion is that the god is emerging from the mountain. The artists have carved the image with such skill that the broad shoulders of the central face appears to seamlessly carry the heads shown in profile. The faces each acknowledge an aspect of Shiva — the image at the center is calm and welcoming while the face to the viewer's left shows Shiva's ferocious aspect. His fierceness is emphasized by a twisted mustache, frowning expression, skulls and snakes in his matted hair, and earrings in the form of snakes. The face on the viewer's right is meant to signify a gentler aspect of Shiva. This face is shown with soft curls, wearing a sweet-tempered smile, and carrying a lotus.

Theatrical opposites

The cave continues exploring Shiva's various aspects in bas-reliefs that are carved in deeply framed niches that are as tall as the height of the cave. Eight sculptural panels — two each at the three entrances into the cave and two flanking the *Sadhashiva* are carved facing one another. Each representation of Shiva is large and impressive and the scenes are filled with subsidiary figures — divine and otherwise — who witness and participate in each episode. The subsidiary figures, even the gods, are rendered much smaller than Shiva.



Figure **13.5.7.100**: Shiva impales the demon Andhaka (left) and Shiva and Parvati marry (right), Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The eight bas-reliefs are as follows:

EAST	Shiva subdues Ravana as the demon shakes mount Kailasa	Shiva and Parvati at home on mount Kailasa
SOUTH	Shiva and Parvati as one (*Ardhanarishvara*)	Shiva assists in the descent of the Ganges
WEST	Shiva and Parvati marry	Shiva impales the demon Andhaka
NORTH	Shiva dancing	Shiva as lord of the yogis

Figure 13.5.7.101: Chart of bas-reliefs (clockwise from eastern entrance) at Elephanta's cave of Shiva, 6th century C.E., India. Shiva's active moods are marked in purple and his passive moods in blue.

Architectural historian George Michell has suggested that Elephanta's artists intentionally wove an exploration of the active and passive moods of Shiva in the sculptural program of the cave's bas-reliefs. [4] Michell's theory is compelling; in the chart above, purple is used to denote the bas-reliefs that celebrate Shiva's dynamic, energetic, and vigorous moods and the color blue is used to denote calmer episodes. This oppositional formula also extends to the iconic *Sadashiva* with its fierce and gentle aspects, as well as to the *linga* and *Sadashiva* as unmanifested and manifested representations of Shiva respectively.

The bas-reliefs that flank *Sadashiva* at the south wall are somewhat different in their antithetic message. To the viewers' left we find Shiva and the goddess Parvati joined as one, in a manifestation known as *Ardhanarishvara*. As is common in representations of *Ardhanarishvara*, which translates literally to Shiva as half-woman, the deity is presented as a composite male and female figure. Fused at the exact center, the male half of the body is shown leaning on Shiva's *vahana* (vehicle), the bull.

In the panel on the right, we see a representation known as Shiva *Gangadhara*, that is, Shiva as the bearer of the river Ganga. The river Ganges (also known as Ganga) is personified here as a three-headed goddess in the process of descending to earth via Shiva's matted hair. By supporting goddess Ganga's descent, Shiva softens the considerable force of the river's descent to our world, which would otherwise shatter. Art historian Vidya Dehejia has pointed out that the goddess Parvati, conceivably annoyed at her husband's role in the episode, is shown by the artist as moving away from Shiva in a subtle foreshadowing, perhaps, of disconcert. [5]



Figure 13.5.7.102: Ardhanarishvara (left) and Shiva *Gangadhara* (right), Elephanta's Cave of Shiva, c. 6th century C.E. Gharapuri island (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA 4.0)

In **Hinduism**, images of the gods are embodiments of the gods and to enter a temple is to enter the home of god. Devotees are happy to take the pilgrimage necessary to see and to be seen by god in an act of *darshan* (auspicious sight). At Elephanta, in this grand cave temple with Shiva's manifest and unmanifest forms and his fierce and pleasant selves, the intention appears to have been to offer the devotee much more. With each theatrical introduction to Shiva, the devotee is offered again and again the opportunity to honor and to know their god in a multitude of profound ways.

Footnotes:

[1] J. Gerson da Cunha, *The origin of Bombay* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, c1993), p. 20.

[2] Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 443.

[3] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1997), p. 125.

[4] George Michell, "The Architecture of Elephanta: An Interpretation." In *Elephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 23 – 24.

[5] Dehejia, p. 129.

Additional resources:

Carmel Berkson et al., *ELephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

J. Gerson da Cunha, *The origin of Bombay* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, c1993).

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1997).

Wendy Doniger, "The Myths Depicted at Elephanta." In *Elephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

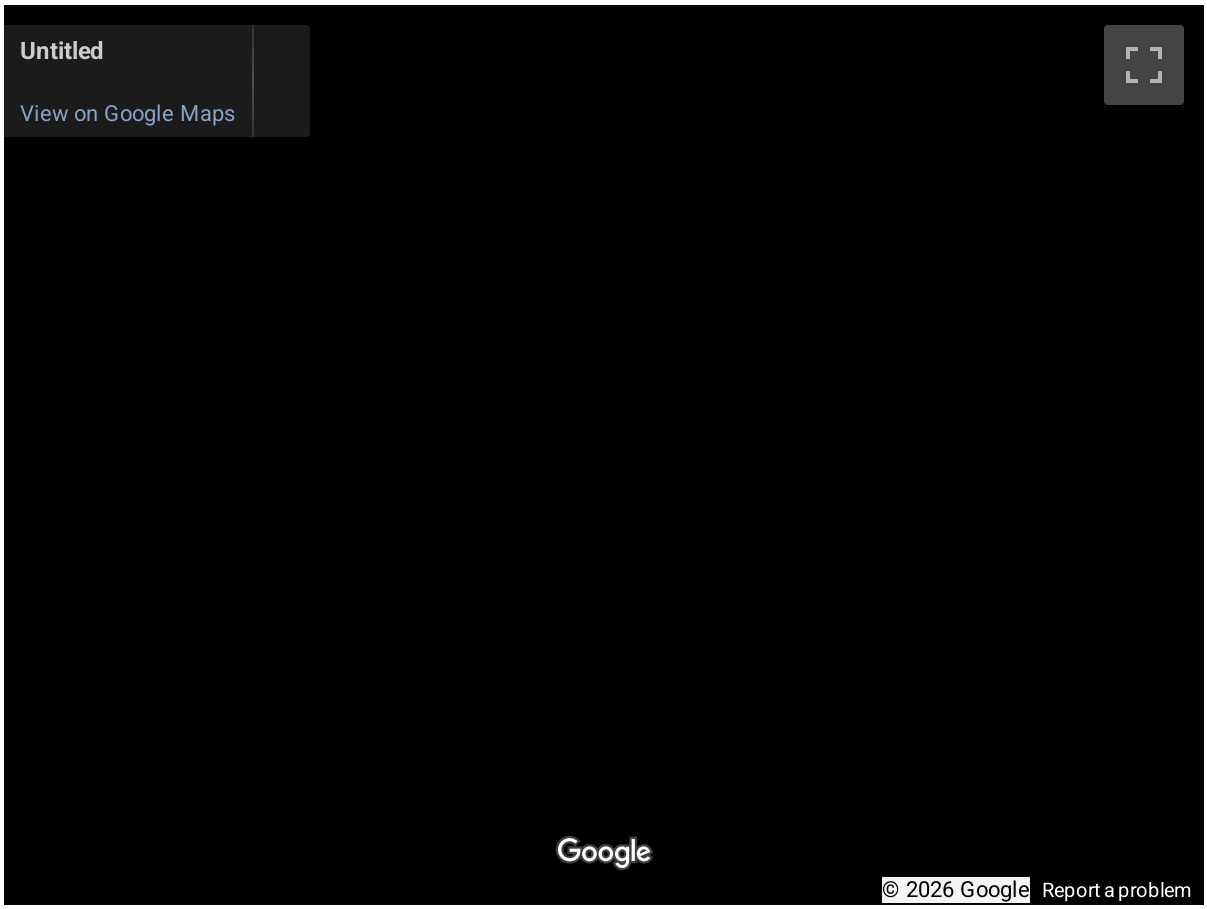
George Michell, "The Architecture of Elephanta: An Interpretation." In *Elephanta – The Cave of Shiva* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

Elephanta Caves, UNESCO World Heritage Site

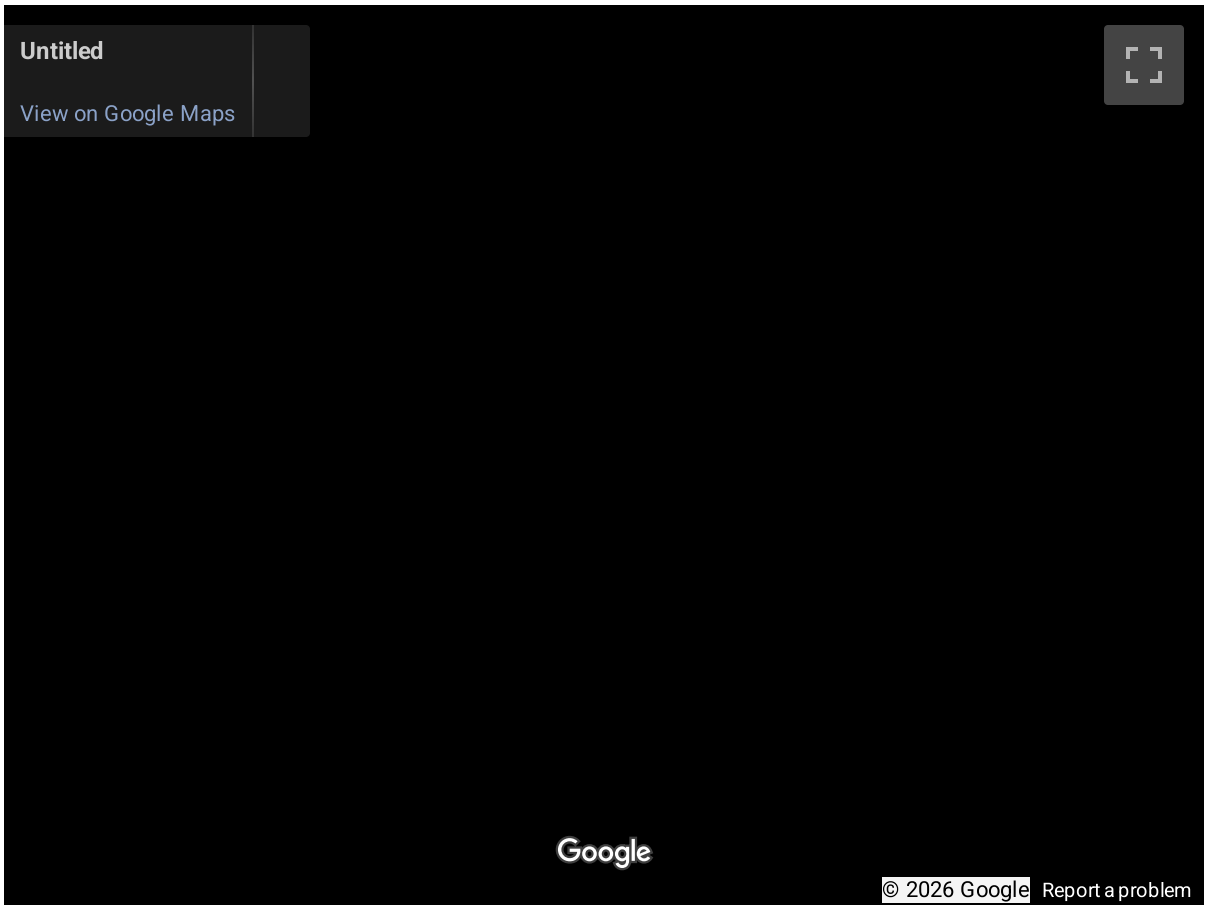
3D tour of the Shiva cave at Elephanta

Elephanta: Spirituality set in stone

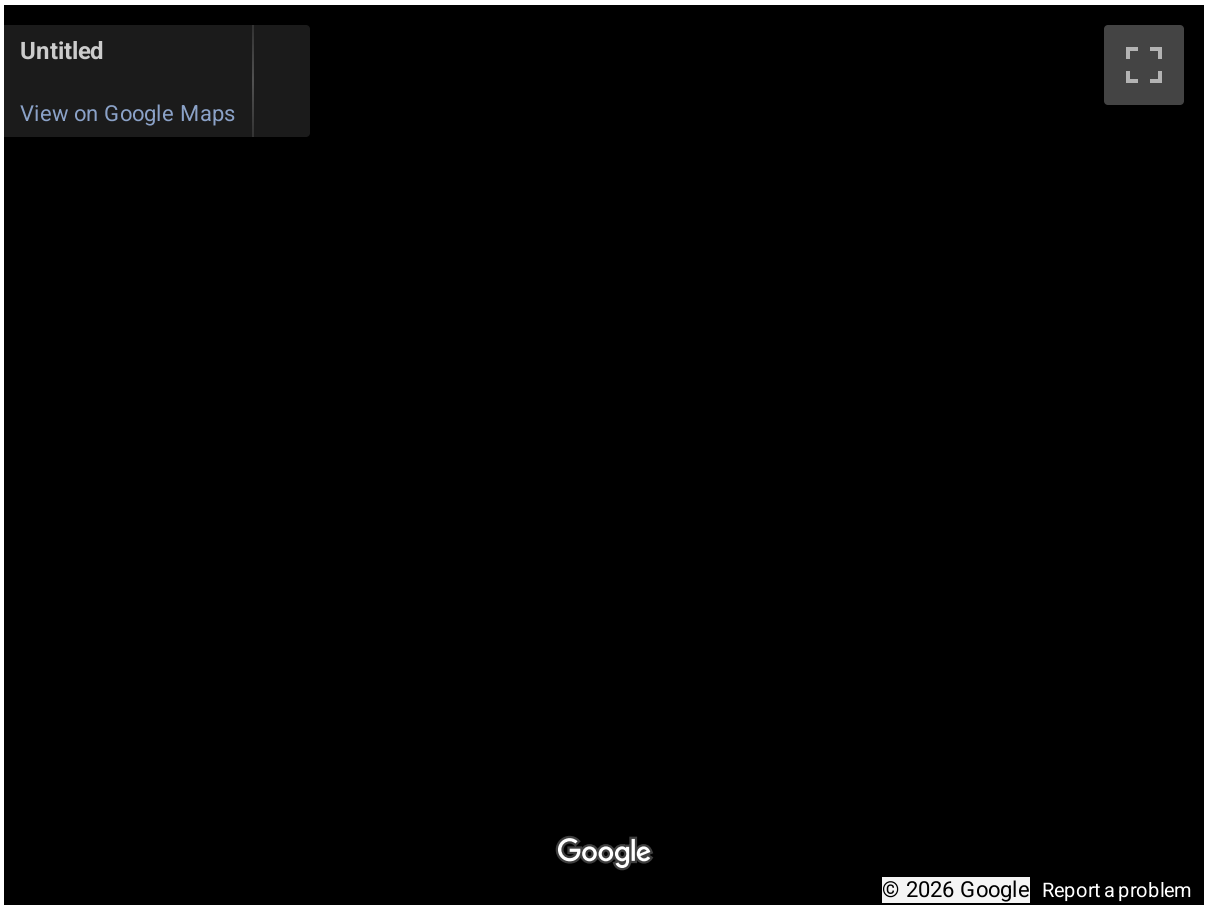
Shiva as the lord of yogis



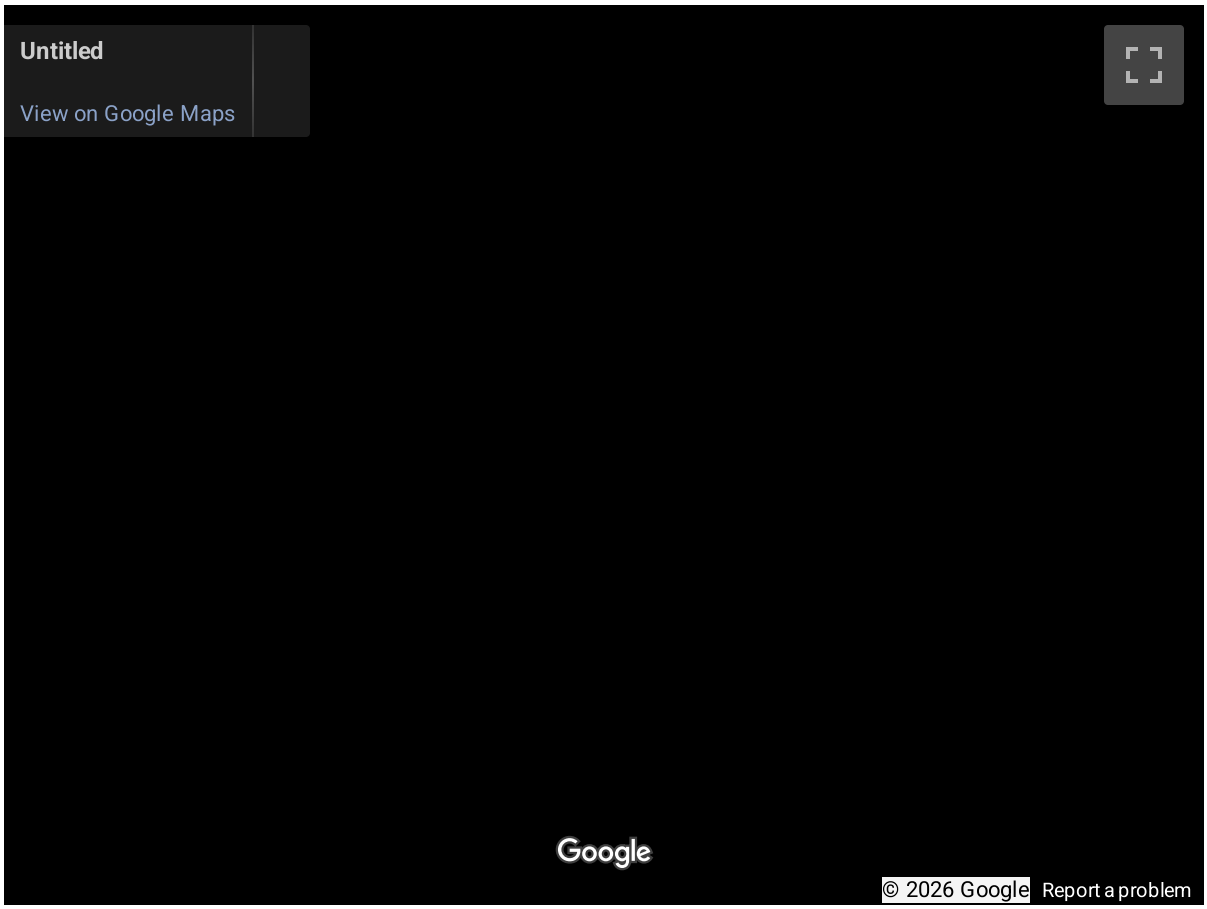
Shiva dances



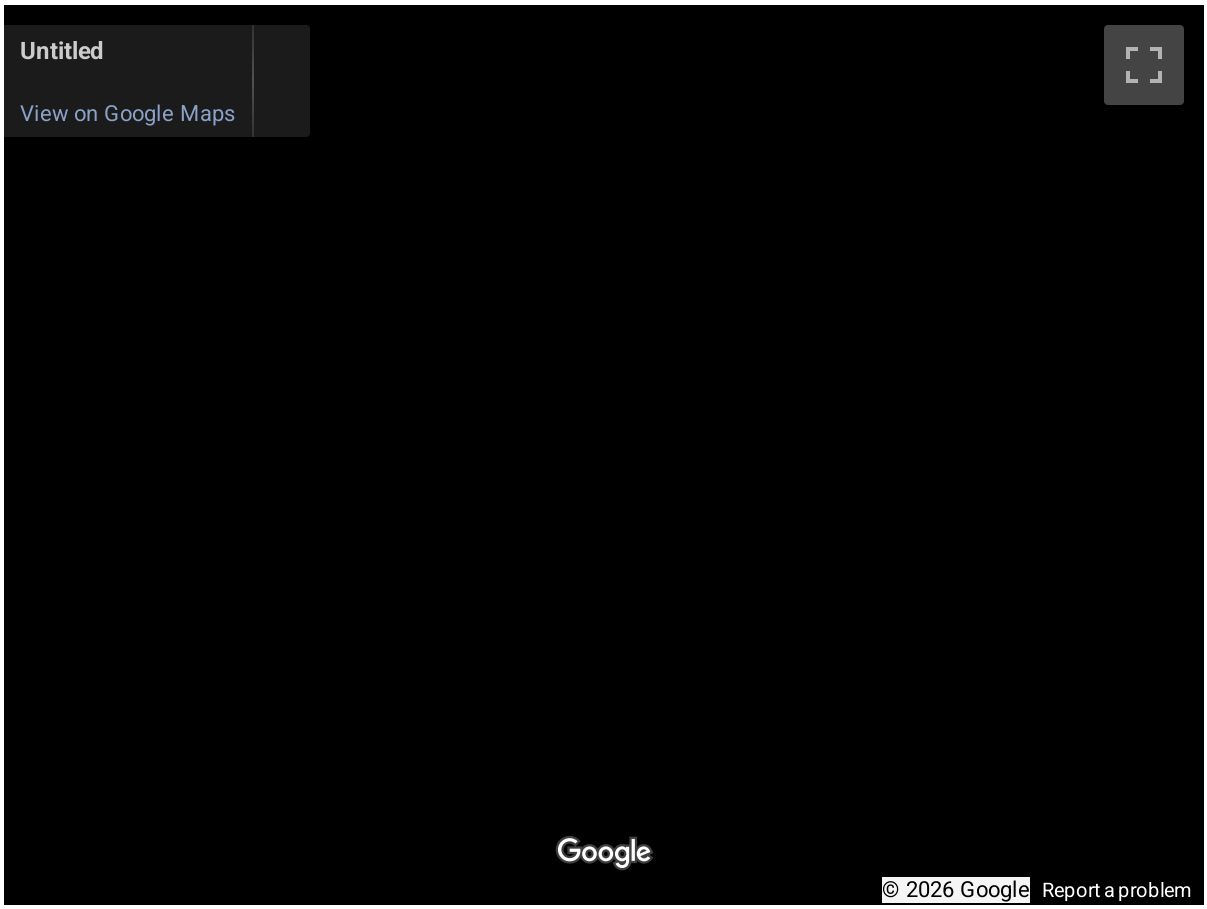
Shiva and Parvati play a game of dice at home on mount Kailasa



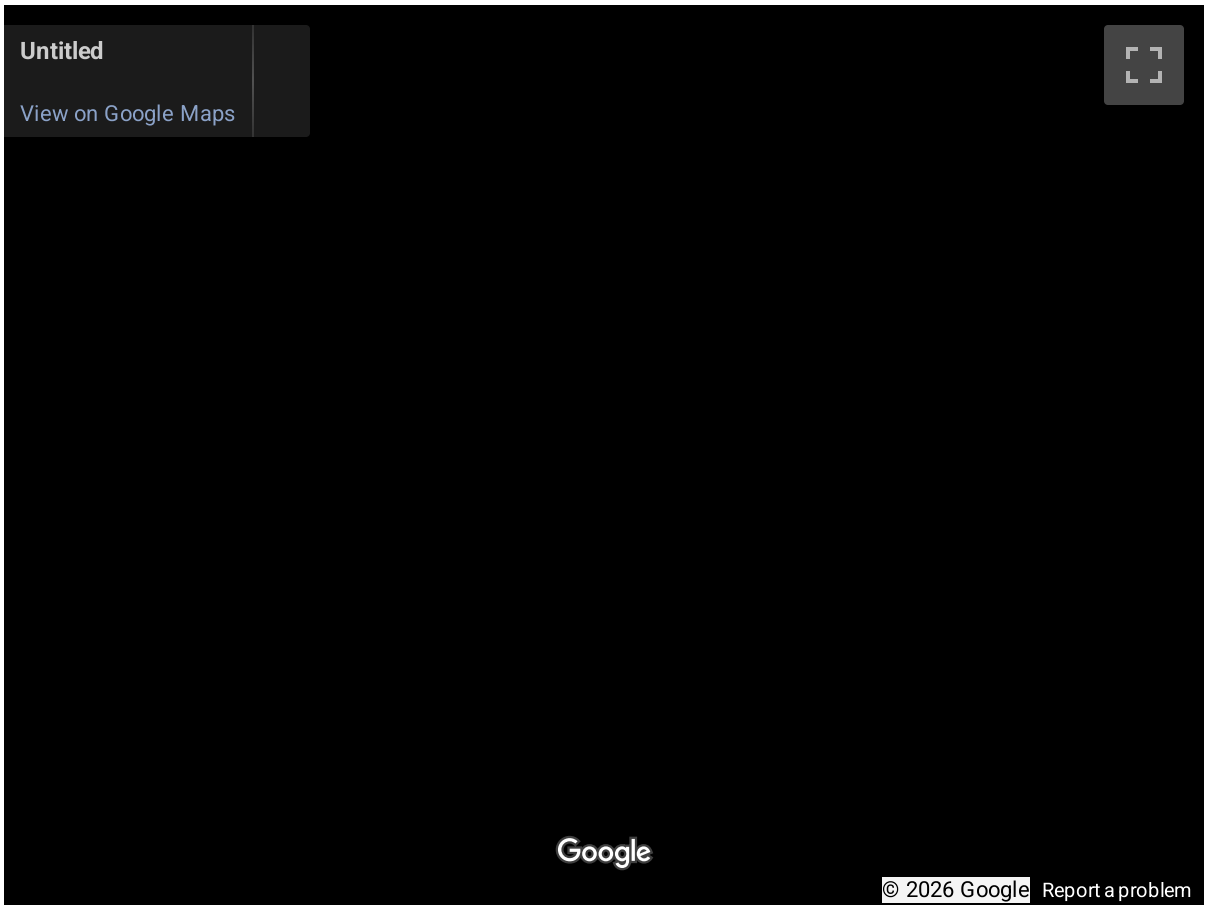
Shiva subdues Ravana as the demon shakes mount Kailasa



Shiva impales the demon Andhaka



Shiva and Parvati marry



13.5.7: South Asia (I) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.7: South Asia (I)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.8: South Asia (II)

Pallava dynasty

The Great Relief at Mamallapuram

by EDWARD FOSMIRE



Figure **13.5.8.1**: *Descent of the Ganges* or *Arjuna's Penance*, 7th-8th century, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India (photo: Nireekshit, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A cat stands on one leg in imitation of a holy man while plump mice gather around. A family of elephants, with several calves in tow, approaches a river to drink. Half human-half snake figures slither up a crevice. Holy men stand on one foot while gazing into the sun. All these and more—including over one hundred depictions of humans, deities, spirits and animals—populate a massive relief sculpture, often called The Great Relief, near the coast in Mamallapuram (also known as Mahabalipuram), in southeast India. This particular relief is the most well-known of the monuments at Mamallapuram that were carved from massive granite boulders naturally scattered throughout the region (there are over one hundred of these *in situ* carvings). This carving is one of the largest relief sculptures in the world, measuring 83 x 38 feet (25 x 12 meters), covering most of the faces of two adjoining boulders, with a large cleft in the center.

This enigmatic artwork was created during the Pallava Dynasty (third-ninth centuries C.E.). Despite its long history of at least 1,200 years and plenty of scholarly attention, experts remain uncertain about its precise subject matter. It has been variously interpreted as a visual narrative of the "Descent of the Ganges," "Arjuna's Penance," or other stories from the vast Hindu tradition.

Who were the Pallavas?

The origins and chronology of the Pallava rulers are ambiguous, but they seemed to have come from the north and taken advantage of a power vacuum in southeast India during the third or fourth centuries C.E. They ruled from the nearby capital at Kanchipuram while utilizing Mamallapuram as a port city and for religious monuments and rituals. Pallava rule peaked in the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. During this time, the ruler Narasimhavarman I commissioned the monuments at Mamallapuram. He was a devout Hindu as well as a lover of the arts. One of the challenges of learning about Indian history and philosophy is that a given person, deity, or place is often known by many different names. In this case, Narasimhavarman I was also known as Kala Sumatra, "Ocean of the Arts."



Figure 13.5.8.2: Elephant with calves, cat standing on one leg, and half human-half snake figures slithering up the cleft in the stone, *Descent of the Ganges* or *Arjuna's Penance*, 7th-8th century, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India (photo: **pavbalane**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure 13.5.8.3: Nagas (snake deities), *Descent of the Ganges* or *Arjuna's Penance*, 7-8th C., Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India (photo: Mahesh Balasubramanian, CC BY 2.0)

The Descent of the Ganges?

The "Descent of the Ganges" is a well-loved Hindu story about the origins and religious significance of the sacred Ganges river. The story tells how the gods allowed the Ganges to descend from the heavens to reward a sage named Bhagiratha, who had practiced many years of spiritual devotion. The water from the river was meant to purify the ashes of Bhagiratha's deceased ancestors while providing life-giving water to all creatures, great and small. To prevent the force of the cascade from destroying the earth, Lord Shiva (one of the primary deities of **Hinduism**) manifested under its fall and allowed the water to get caught in his long, matted hair so that it trickled out in gentle tributaries.

On the Mamallapuram relief, Shiva is depicted as one of the largest figures along with an ascetic (a holy man in a yoga pose—see image below). We know that this is Shiva because he is shown with the common attributes of the god: four arms, a crown of hair piled atop his head, and holding his favored symbol, the trident.

However, he is not shown in the typical manner of the "Descent of the Ganges" story—in his role of savior, allowing the sacred waters to fall on his head. Some traditional depictions of Shiva include a small mermaid-like figure in his hair, symbolizing Ganga as a personification of the Ganges River. Here at Mamallapuram, though, Ganga is not depicted in anthropomorphic (human-like) form or as a sculpted depiction of water, but may instead have been represented by actual water that would have flowed down the cleft of the rock. Contributing to the interpretation that the central cleft represents a channel for the Ganges as it falls from heaven are the sculptures of three Nagas (image above). Nagas are snake deities that embody the qualities of fertility and prosperity, and act as protectors of bodies of water. Scholars believe that a concave depression in the top of the boulder collected water which was then sent down the central cleft in imitation of the falling Ganges.

This may have been done especially frequently during the wet monsoon season, serving as a visual indication of the divine authority of the Pallava kings as they recreated this important religious story for onlookers and dignitaries. The Pallavas controlled

the Kaveri, a local river and a source of their political strength in the region. It is likely that the rulers wanted to symbolically connect the Kaveri and the Ganges to remind viewers of both their earthly and divine power.

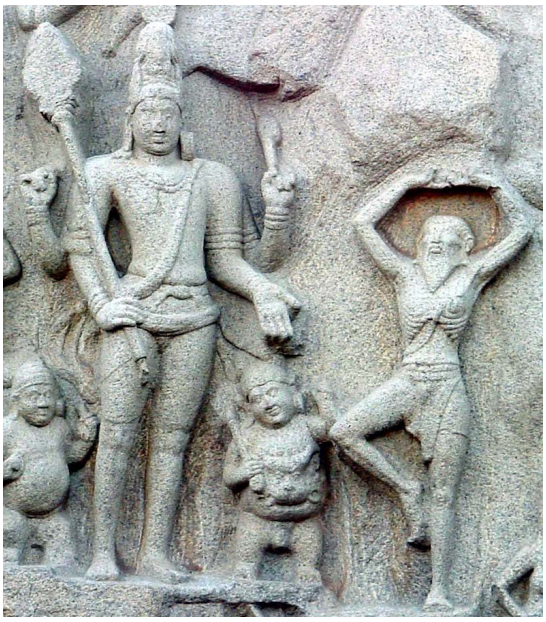


Figure **13.5.8.4**: Shiva and Arjuna (?), *Descent of the Ganges* or *Arjuna's Penance*, 7th-8th century, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India

Arjuna's Penance?

A second interpretation focuses not on the Ganges, but on the devotion of the archer Arjuna, hero of the epic *Mahabharata*. The conflicts between the cousins of Arjuna (the Kauravas) and his brothers (the Pandavas) are legendary and form the focal point of this grand tale.

If this interpretation is correct, part of the scene at Mamallapuram (shown here) may depict the famed warrior Arjuna beseeching the god Shiva to provide him with his powerful weapon in aid against his enemies. Arjuna may be one (or all) of the figures depicted performing yogic devotion. In the detail here, a four-armed Shiva appears to be presenting a small figure with a fearsome face on his belly to the holy man who may be Arjuna and who stands on one leg. This small figure may be a personification of *pashupatastra*, Shiva's most fearsome weapon.

A special relationship to the Gods

The protagonists of both interpretations—Arjuna and Bhagiratha—are heroic individuals who, through their penance, have a special relationship to the gods. Arjuna and Bhagiratha were protectors of their families, clans, and the earth. The relief may express the idea that the Pallava rulers, through their special connection to gods, were protectors of their lands and people.



Figure **13.5.8.5**: Cat standing on one leg (detail), *Descent of the Ganges* or *Arjuna's Penance*, 7th-8th century, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India (photo: **pavbalane**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Joyful Element: Something for Everyone?

The Great Relief is complex and it is likely that very few people grasped all of its layers of meaning. The casual viewer may have been drawn to the amusing elements of the Great Relief. Perhaps the best known detail in this vein is the cat who acts like a holy man (standing on one leg!) surrounded by unsuspecting mice who will soon become his dinner (image above). Charming elephants and their playful calves also lumber into the scene. But the elephants may also have additional significance—they may symbolize the protective capacity of the Pallava rulers over their people, since in the real world elephants almost always have just a single calf, and here we see at least seven.

Punctuating the entire relief are a multitude of fantastic beasts, hybrid figures, and airborne deities. These extraordinary representations allow anyone to enjoy the relief even with little or no understanding of its complex mythology. These delightful scenes may have provided an "entry point" for viewers in the seventh century just as they do today, while more learned viewers would recognize deeper layers of meaning.



Figure **13.5.8.6**: Elephants and other figures (detail), *Descent of the Ganges* or *Arjuna's Penance*, 7th-8th century, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India (photo: **Sankkk**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Conflicting Stories or Multiple Meanings?

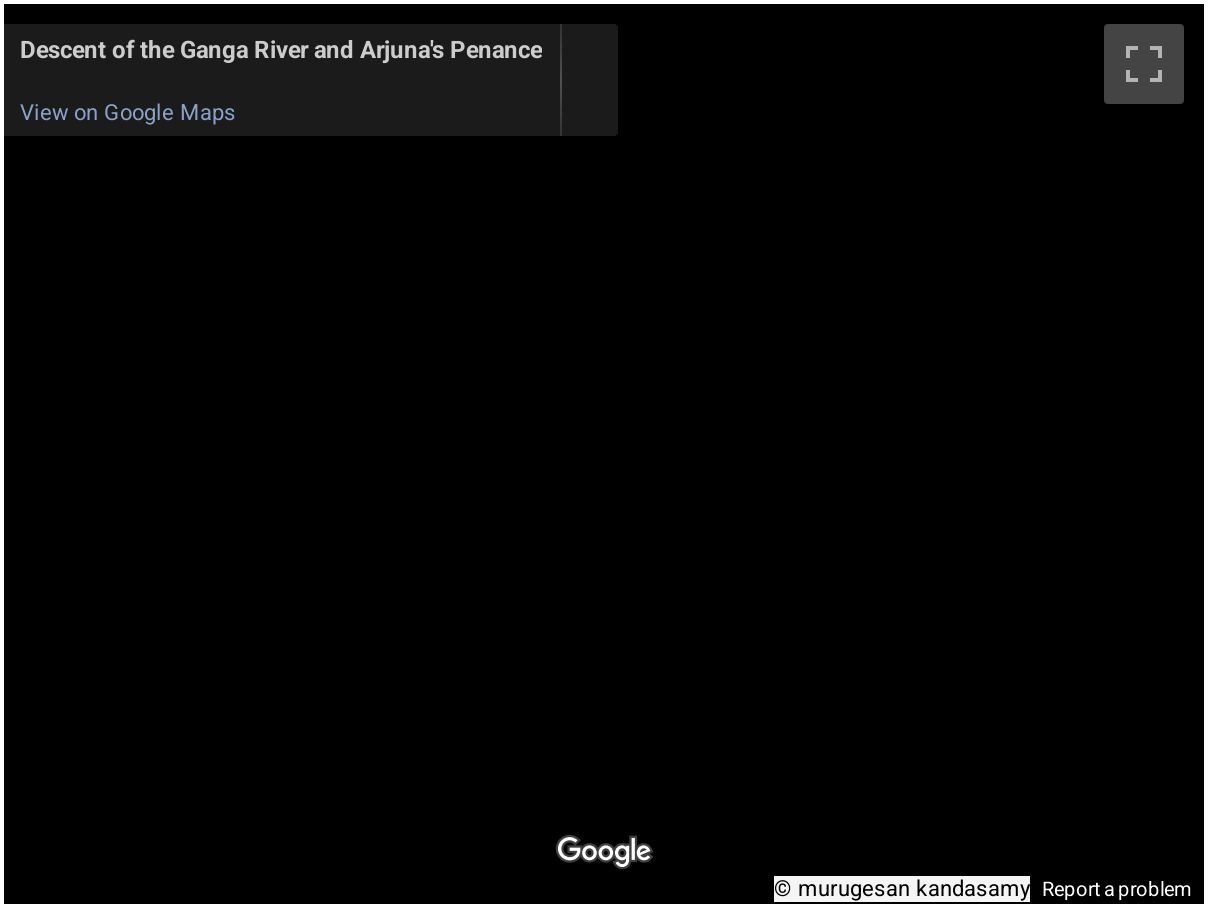
Hinduism is populated with a vast number of gods and goddesses (along with their manifestations or avatars), as well as saints, demons, demigods, and beasts. It is a belief system that is often multi-layered and seemingly contradictory; the fortunes of gods and humans alike shift frequently while time and space and good and evil are fluid and ever-changing. In light of this unstructured quality of Hinduism (as compared to many other religions), the contemporary non-Hindu viewer of these monuments shouldn't be too concerned that there is some ambiguity in the Great Relief. In an excellent article about the relief, the scholar Padma Kaimal emphasizes its "playful ambiguity" and remarks that "the absence of … such unequivocal signs creates space for the coexistence and interaction of multiple voices and therefore meanings." [1] She draws a parallel between the visual art and the language of the Pallava court—both incorporate puns and multilayered meanings. The art historian Michael Rabe similarly contends that the work may have been intentionally created as "a deliberate conundrum," allowing the viewer to witness intermingled and "repeated occasions when Shiva's favor has been bestowed." [2] The Pallava rulers glorified Shiva as the most significant deity, so it is logical that the focus here would be on stories connected to that god.

Whatever the correct interpretations are, this sculpture appears to incorporate religious storytelling, allusions to Pallava power and protection, and joyful scenes of animals, people, and deities. Some elements of the relief would appeal to educated members of the court and the priestly class, others to visiting dignitaries, and still others to the average citizen. Today, as in the preceding fourteen centuries, the Great Relief at Mamallapuram does not fail to impress as it draws visitors from across India and the rest of the world. Even when not fully understood, the Great Relief contains something for everyone.

Notes:

[1] Padma Kaimal, "Playful Ambiguity and Political Authority in the Large Relief at Mamallapuram," *Ars Orientalis* 24 (1994), pp. 1-27.

[2] Michael Rabe, *The Great Penance at Māmallapuram: Deciphering a Visual Text* (Institute of Asian Studies, 2001), p. xxii.



Additional resources:

Edward Wong, “Temples Where Gods Come to Life,” *New York Times*, September 19, 2009.

Hinduism and Hindu art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Shore Temple, Mamallapuram

by DR. ANISHA SAXENA



Figure **13.5.8.7**: Shore Temple, Mamallapuram, India (photo: **KenWalker**, CC-BY-SA-3.0)



Figure **13.5.8.8**: The Bay of Bengal (map: **NormanEinstein**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Seashore as canvas

Along the shores of one of the largest bays in the world, the Bay of Bengal, stands a temple complex that draws inspiration from the sea and its naturally occurring rock formations. The majestic Shore Temple (known locally as *Alaivay-k-kovil*) sits beside the sea in the small town of Mamallapuram in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. This complex of three separate shrines was constructed

under the patronage of the Pallava king Nrasimhavarman II Rajasimha, who ascended the throne in 700 C.E. and ruled for about twenty years.

The Pallavas and the city of Mamallapuram

Mamallapuram, also known as Mahabalipuram, was an important port town during India's early history and developed as a key center for artistic activity under the patronage of the Pallava rulers. Narasimhavarman I, who took the epithet Mamalla (meaning "great warrior"), ruled for about 38 years beginning in 630 C.E. and sponsored a large number of rock-cut monuments at Mamallapuram, including cave shrines, monolithic temples, and large sculptures carved out of boulders. While the Pallava kings primarily worshipped the god **Shiva**, they also supported the creation of temples dedicated to other Hindu gods and goddesses and to other religious traditions such as Jainism. The Pallava rulers were particularly inspired by the growing personal devotional movement known as *bhakti*.

A temple in Dravidian style

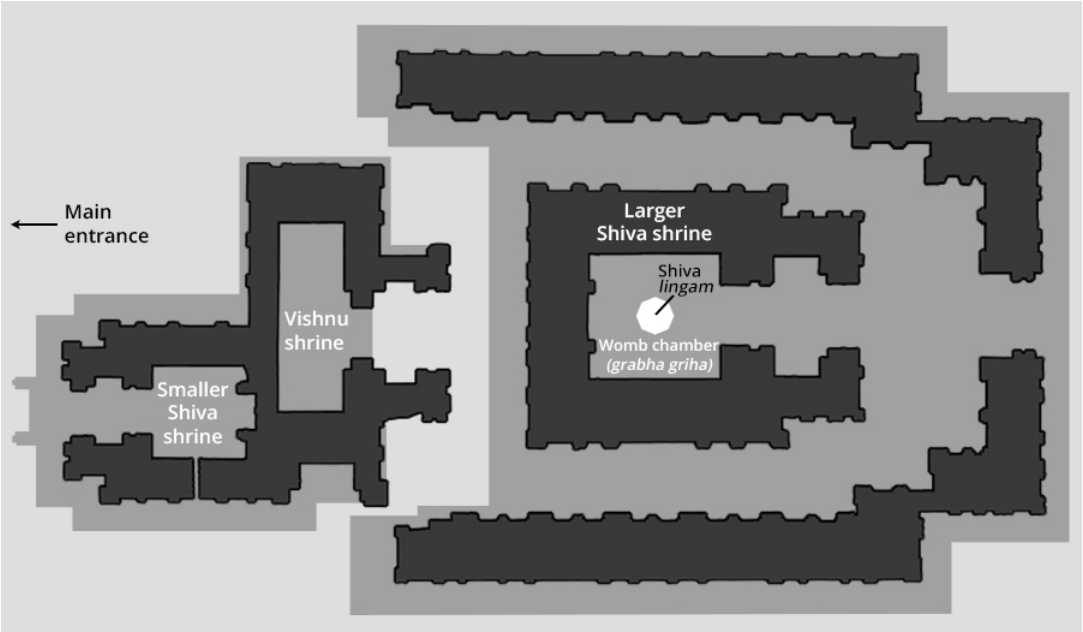


Figure **13.5.8.9**: Plan of the Shore Temple

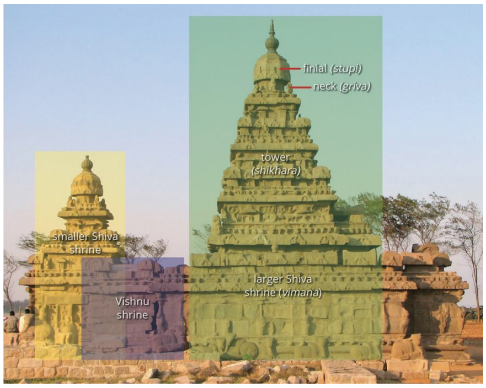


Figure **13.5.8.10**: Shore Temple, elevation showing shrines and architectural elements (photo: **Bernard Gagnon**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Indian temple architecture can be broadly divided into two schools: the **Nagara**, or the North Indian tradition, and the **Dravidian**, or South Indian style of architecture. Both Nagara and Dravidian temples consist of a main shrine (*vimana)* which houses the inner sanctum known as *grabha griha* (literally "womb chamber"), topped by a pyramidal tower known as a *sikhara.* At the Shore Temple, the entire superstructure has an octagonal neck (*griva*) topped by a round *stupi* or finial. Dravidian temples are typically enclosed within an outer wall (*prakara*, shown below) with a large gateway tower known as a *gopura*.



Figure **13.5.8.11**: Shore Temple, Mamallapuram, showing Dravidian roof structure and outer enclosure walls with gateway (photo: **SatishKumar**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

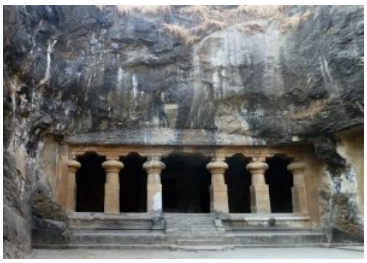


Figure **13.5.8.12**: Cave 1, Elephanta Caves, Mumbai, India, 5th-8th century C.E. (photo: **Hiroki Ogawa**, CC BY 3.0)

The development of early Indian architecture demonstrates a progression from structures of wood and timber to cave shrines, rock cut structures, and eventually freestanding temples constructed out of mortar and stone. Cave shrines were dug into cliffs and hills and their scheme and ornamentation clearly exhibit the continuing influence of traditions used in earlier wooden structures. The rock cut temples were constructed out of large freestanding boulders that artists would work by carving the rocks from the top to the bottom on both the exterior and interior simultaneously.

A temple with three shrines

The Shore Temple is both a rock cut and a free-standing structural temple. The entire temple stands on a naturally occurring granite boulder. The complex consists of three separate shrines: two dedicated to the god Shiva, and one to Vishnu. The Vishnu shrine is the oldest and smallest of the three shrines. The other elements of the temple, including the gateways, walls, and superstructures were constructed out of quarried stone and mortar.



Figure **13.5.8.13**: Image of reclining Vishnu in the Vishnu shrine of the Shore Temple (photo: **Pratapy9**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The entrance to the temple complex is from the western gateway, facing the smaller Shiva shrine. On each side of the gateway stand door guardians known as *dvarapalas* who welcome visitors to the complex and mark the site as sacred. The smaller Vishnu temple sits between the two Shiva shrines, connecting the two. It has a rectangular plan with a flat roof and houses a carved image of the god Vishnu sleeping. Images of Vishnu reclining or sleeping on the cosmic serpent Shesha-Ananta, appear throughout Indian

art. While the artists who made this carving did not include a depiction of Shesha-Ananta, it is possible that originally the rock was painted to include the snake. The shrine walls have carvings depicting the life stories of Vishnu and one of his avatars, Krishna.



Figure **13.5.8.14**: Lingam and carvings in the large Shiva shrine of the Shore Temple (photo: **Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, CC BY 3.0)

Like the Vishnu shrine, the two Shiva shrines include rich sculptural depictions on both their inner and outer walls. The large Shiva shrine faces east, and has a square plan with a sanctum and a small pillared porch known as a *mandapa*. At the center of the shrine is a *lingam*, the aniconic form of Shiva in the shape of a phallus. Though the temple is not a site of active worship today, visitors can sometimes be seen worshipping and offering flowers to the *lingam*, bringing the sacred site back to life.

On the back wall of the shrine appear carvings of Shiva (this time in anthropomorphic or human-like form) with his consort, the goddess Parvati, and their son Skanda. The inner walls of the *mandapa* contain images of the gods Brahma and Vishnu, and the outer north wall of the sanctum includes more sculptures of Shiva as well as a depiction of the goddess Durga. The small Shiva shrine faces west and has a square plan with a sanctum and two *mandapas*. As with the larger Shiva shrine, the smaller shrine's sanctum originally housed a *lingam*, which is now missing. A sculpted panel depicting Shiva, Parvati, and Skanda enlivens the back wall. Both Shiva shrines have identical multi-storied pyramidal superstructures typical of the Dravidian style.



Figure **13.5.8.15**: Shore Temple, outer wall with Nandi figures (photo: **Thamizhpparithi Maari**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The rich sculptural program seen throughout the three shrines continues on the outer walls of the Shore Temple, facing the sea. Years of wind and water have worn away the details of these carvings, much in the same way that the sea erodes and shapes boulders over centuries. A row of seated bulls appear at the entrance wall (*prakara*) of the larger Shiva shrine. These bulls represent Nandi, the *vahana* or vehicle of the god Shiva. Nandi is believed to be the guardian of Shiva's home in the Himalayas, Mount Kailasha, and a seated Nandi sculpture is an essential part of a Shiva temple.

A majestic sight

As an architectural form, the Shore Temple is of immense importance, situated on the culmination of two architectural phases of Pallava architecture: it demonstrates progression from rock cut structures to free standing structural temples, and displays all the elements of mature Dravidian architecture. It signifies religious harmony with sacred spaces dedicated to both Shiva and Vishnu, and was also an important symbol of Pallava political and economic strength.

According to legend, sailors and merchants at sea could spot the *shikharas* of the temple from a distance and use those majestic towers to mark their arrival to the prosperous port city of Mahabalipuram. In this way, not only was the temple a home for the gods Shiva and Vishnu, but also a feature of the landscape, and an icon of the dominion of the great Pallava kings.

Additional resources:

Michael W. Meister, ed. *Encyclopeadia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India Lower Drāviḍadēśa 200 B.C.-A.D.1324*, vol. I, part I (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1983)

Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (New York: Weatherhill, 1985)

R. Nagaswamy, *Mahabalipuram* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Durga Slays the Buffalo Demon at Mamallapuram

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure **13.5.8.16**: Durga slays the Buffalo Demon Mahishasura, bas-relief (north), Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite, approximately 2.4 x 4.6 m (photo: © Arathi Menon, all rights reserved)

An epic battle

Imagine the anguish of the gods as the end of their reign neared. A seemingly invincible buffalo demon, Mahishasura, had already conquered the world and seemed poised for victory over the heavens. Could he be stopped? It seemed unlikely — Mahishasura had, after all, received a special gift from the god Brahma — an assurance that the demon could never be killed by man or god.

Just then, when all seemed lost, a great mass of blazing energy began to radiate from the gods. It moved and coalesced until finally, *shakti* ("force" in sanskrit—a formless energetic entity that is feminine and divine) materialized. She was a sight to behold: beautiful, strong, and riding a fierce lion, she was endowed with the weapons and the power of each of the gods.

The buffalo demon Mahishasura was quite sure that a woman could never defeat him and promptly proposed marriage. Her cool rejection led to battle and in the end, the goddess effortlessly pierced him with a trident, decapitated him, and sent his army scurrying. With the heavens and the world saved, the goddess promised to help the gods and the earth whenever she was needed.



Figure **13.5.8.17**

The story of Mahishasuramardini (in Sanskrit: "crusher of Mahishasura") is preserved in a devotional text from c. 600 C.E. titled the *Devi Mahatmya* ("Glory of the Goddess") which exalts the divine feminine force *shakti*, also known as Mahadevi.

This episode, which recounts the deeds of the goddess Chandika (later known as Durga), a fierce warrior, is carved in an exquisite bas-relief panel inside a rock-cut cave temple known as Mahishasuramardini *mandapa* (hall) in the town of Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu, India. [1]

Mamallapuram was an important port in the medieval period in the Pallava kingdom. It is well known for its **temples** and **rock-cut monuments** that were built by the Pallava rulers and date between the sixth and the eighth centuries C.E.



Figure **13.5.8.18**: The Goddess Durga (Mahishasuramardini) Victorious over the Buffalo Demon, Mahisha (Java, Indonesia), c. 9th century, volcanic stone (andesite), 1.5 m high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

From the carved walls of Hindu temples, to manuscript paintings, murals, and contemporary art, Durga's encounter with Mahishasura has been a popular subject among artists in South Asia and Southeast Asia for centuries. In temples and religious sculpture, she is often depicted as either calmly victorious standing on a decapitated buffalo head (as in the sculpture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art) or in the act of killing a buffalo-headed figure from whose cut neck a demon in the form of a man emerges. The seventh-century sculptors in Mamallapuram chose to portray the battle just prior to the goddess's triumph over the demon. [2]



Figure **13.5.8.19**: Aerial view of the Mahishasuramardini Mandapa below and the Olakkanesvara temple above, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite (photo: **Nigel Swales**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Carved from stone

The Mahishasuramardini relief is located in a rectangular granite rock-cut cave dedicated to the god Shiva. The temple is carved from an enormous boulder that also carries the constructed (as opposed to rock-cut) Olakkanesvara temple on the rock's summit. The cave temple is open to the east with four widely spaced columns, allowing light to enter (though the windowless shrines at the rear of the temple remain dark). Like many monuments at Mamallapuram, the Mahishasuramardini *mandapa* was left unfinished; note, for instance, how the stairs have been outlined but not carved on the exterior of the cave. [3]



Figure **13.5.8.20**: Exterior view of the Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite (photo: CC BY-SA 3.0)

The relief panel is large at a little over eight feet tall and nearly fifteen feet long. It is carved in a niche on the north side of the cave (that is, to your right as you enter the temple) and is a contrast to the equally large but far less dynamic panel opposite (image below). That panel, on the south side of the cave, shows the god Vishnu resting on the giant serpent Shesha. Here, Shesha protects Vishnu from the ill-will of the two figures on the far right side of the panel who hurriedly leave the scene.

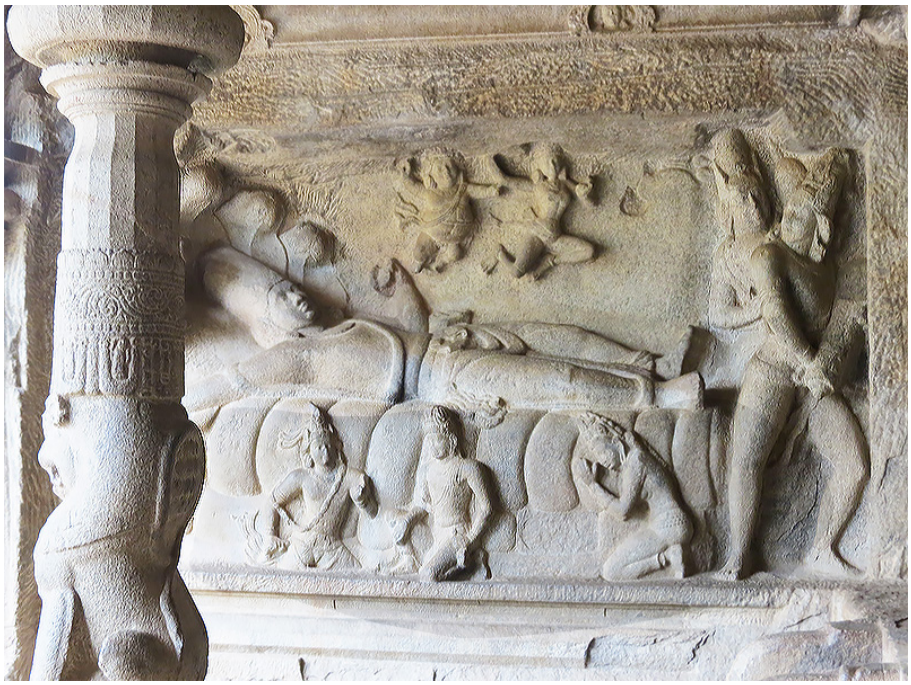


Figure **13.5.8.21**: Bas-relief (south) in the Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, across from the Durga relief, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite, approximately 2.4 x 4.6 m (photo: © Arathi Menon, all rights reserved)

Riding to victory



Figure **13.5.8.22**: Detail showing the depth of the relief carving, Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, ca. 7th century, granite (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY 2.0)

In opposition, the energetic spectacle of Mahishasuramardini is clearly a scene of battle. The sculptors cleverly manipulated the depth of the relief to convey the liveliness of the clash between good and evil; the modulation of shallow and deep carving allow the goddess and her army to materialize from the background, as if by surprise, while the buffalo demon and his army — all of whom are depicted as men — hasten their retreat. Mahisha, the seated soldier at the far bottom right of the niche, and the soldier above him who is running with a shield and sword, are carved so deeply that their exit from the battle, the relief, and even the temple itself, seems imminent.

The goddess is roughly life-sized and draws her bow as she steadies an implied arrow. [4] The weapons in her six other arms have been identified, in clockwise order:

- a sword
- a bell
- a wheel (or discus)
- a noose to restrain her enemies
- a conch shell
- a shield [5]



Figure **13.5.8.23**: Durga (detail), Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite (photo: © Arathi Menon, all rights reserved)

She is shown wearing a *dhoti* (cloth tied at the waist) — notice the hem just above the knee that delineates the garment — and a *kuca bandha* (breast band). Like the *kuca bandha*, the *dhoti* may have once carried patterned details, but this is no longer visible. Durga is also adorned with a distinct crown and jewelry including large earrings, necklaces, bangles, armlets, belt, and anklets, all of which demonstrate her divinity and royalty. Even the goddess's *vahana* (vehicle), a lion, is beautifully ornamented with a mane of neatly demarcated ringlets.

Durga is surrounded by an entourage of several *gana* (small, male attendants) and a singularly remarkable female warrior at the bottom center who is raising her sword (see detail below). In addition to *gana* who support the goddess in battle, see for instance the moustached *gana* who stands beneath her foot and takes aim at the villains, again, with an implied arrow, and the others that appear at the ready with sword and shield, there are *gana* who underscore the goddess's identity as both divine and royal. Two *gana* carry attributes signifying royalty (i.e., a parasol and a fly-whisk) above the goddess and another (at the top-left) flies into the scene holding a plate with offerings for Durga.



Figure **13.5.8.24**: Diagram showing the forward thrust of Durga and her attendants as she slays the Buffalo Demon Mahishasura, bas-relief (north), Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite, approximately 2.4 x 4.6 m (photo: © Arathi Menon, all rights reserved)

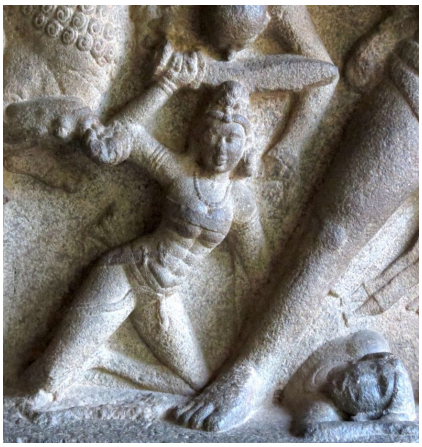


Figure **13.5.8.25**: Warrior (detail), Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, ca. 7th century, granite (photo: © Arathi Menon, all rights reserved)

The scene is cleverly rendered; *ganas* sculpted in varying states of relief and sizes with their accessories, limbs, and torsos carefully angled, contribute to a sense that the attendants and Durga's lion are in the process of emerging *in force* from the background. This exquisite engineering of space and volume has done much to convey the excitement of the scene—the lion appears to burst into battle and we can almost hear a ferocious roar escape his open mouth. The forward thrust of the winning side is facilitated by an arc at roughly the center of the panel.

Follow the curve of Durga's bow to the torso of the falling figure with a shaven head to the pose of the kneeling warrior whose sword that falling figure is about to meet.

Dressed like the goddess in a *dhoti* and *kucha bandha* and with some jewelry, the warrior mirrors the calm and confident expression of the goddess. Individuality and strength in battle is portrayed in her magnificently rendered stomach.



Figure 13.5.8.26: Buffalo demon and his army retreat (detail), Mahishasuramardini Mandapa, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, India, c. 7th century, granite (photo: © Arathi Menon, all rights reserved)

The battle turns

The left knee of the kneeling warrior disappears behind the enormous foot of Mahishasura, which remains firmly pointed in the direction of the goddess's camp; in the mind of the buffalo demon, the fight may yet be won. This hope is represented vividly: affected by the onslaught, Mahishasura's left leg bends to flee, but he remains steady, holding his heavy club with both hands to continue the fight. He is dressed in princely attire with a *dhoti* and jewelry and his sharp buffalo horns sit beneath a crown. Mahishasura's status is further emphasized with a parasol, although it is unclear which of his attendants carries that attribute over his head.

Just as the artists angled, foreshortened, and positioned the goddess's entourage to convey the impression that the army was rushing into battle, the same devices are employed to foreshadow the failure of the demon army. Mahishasura's bent knee, the elbow of the fallen figure behind him, and the seated pose of the collapsed soldier, angle away from the panel and, indeed, the temple. The expression of abject horror recorded on the face of the foreshortened figure of a fallen soldier as he lies dangerously close to his master's giant foot similarly signals that the end of the battle nears.

Unequivocal triumph

In the devotional text *Devi Mahatmya* referred to above, the goddess manifests from within male gods and destroys demons with the weapons that she receives from those gods. By virtue of her gender and her beauty, she catches Mahishasura by surprise, for he does not believe that she is capable of his destruction. At Mamallapuram, the sculptors followed the standard formulae of artistic treatises in their depiction of the goddess as a model of perfect womanhood. And in Durga's modest size, relative to that of the buffalo demon, they signaled the apparent impossibility of Mahishasura's defeat.

But the masterful storytellers at Mamallapuram also made certain that there was not a doubt that the mighty Mahishasura would fall. In the assured attitude of the goddess and the ease with which she overwhelms Mahishasura and his army, we are reminded that without the goddess, all would have been lost.



Figure 13.5.8.27: *The Great Goddess Durga (Mahishasuramardini) Slaying the Buffalo Demon*, Kota (Rajasthan, India), watercolor and metallic paint on paper, c. 1750, image 9 7/8 × 11 inches; sheet: 10 11/16 × 12 3/8 inches (**Philadelphia Museum of Art, Stella Kramrisch Collection 1994**)

Notes:

1. For more on *shakti* and Chandika see Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: An Alternative History* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), pp. 387 – 392.
2. While this penultimate moment is better described according to the scholars Vidya Dehejia and Gary Tartakov as *Mahishasurasainyavadha* ("the slaying of the armies of Mahishasura"), we follow the popular designation of Mahishasuramardini here. See Vidya Dehejia and Gary Tartakov, "Sharing, Intrusion, and Influence: The Mahiṣāsuramardinī Imagery of the Calukyas and the Pallavas," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (1984), p. 291.
3. The unfinished state did not affect the religious function of this site. A study of the phenomenon of unfinished shrines and an examination of the difference between usable and unusable unfinished monuments was recently published by art historian Vidya Dehejia and sculptor Peter Rockwell. See: *The Unfinished: Stone Carvers at Work on the Indian Subcontinent* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2016).
4. If depicted, the arrow would have crossed Durga's face as she took aim at Mahishasura. It is left uncarved in an effort, on the part of the sculptor, not to obscure the face of the goddess.
5. Dehejia and Tartakov, "Sharing," p. 289.

Additional Resources:

Group of Monuments at Mamallapuram (UNESCO)

Rock-cut architecture of India: Mamallapuram

Images of gods and goddesses in Indian art

Chola dynasty

Queen or goddess?

by DR. EMMA NATALYA STEIN, FREER GALLERY OF ART and DR. BETH HARRIS

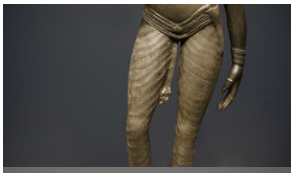
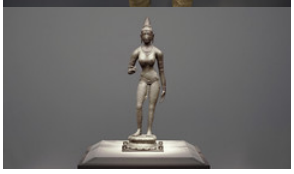


Video 13.5.8.1: *Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi as the Goddess Parvati*, Chola Dynasty (reign of Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi), 10th century, bronze, 107.3 x 33.4 x 25.7 cm (Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, F1929.84) Speakers: Dr. Emma Natalya Stein, Curatorial Fellow for Southeast Asian Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

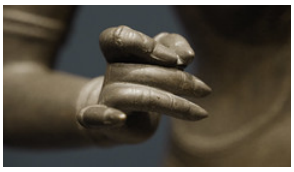
Additional resources

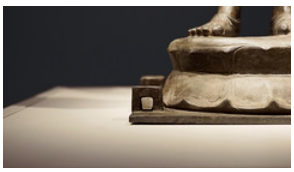
This sculpture at the National Museum of Asian Art

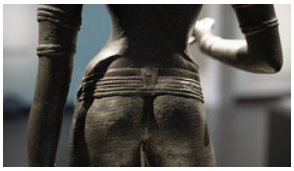
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









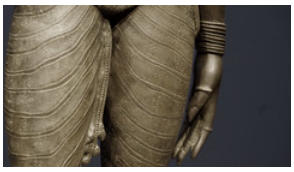




Figure 13.5.8.28: More Smarthistory images…

Rajarajesvara temple, Tanjavur

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure 13.5.8.29: Entrance into the Rajarajesvara temple complex, c. 1004–1010, Chola period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: KARTY, CC BY-SA 4.0)

To see the Hindu god Shiva in the Rajarajesvara temple complex in Tanjavur, we must enter two impressive gateways, walk into a cloistered courtyard, past an enormous stone bull, climb the stairs of the largest temple, and proceed through halls filled with beautifully carved pillars. Then, straight ahead, at the far end of the interior of the temple is the monumental Shiva *linga* — an aniconic (non-representational) emblem of the deity. Above the *linga*, a tall superstructure rises, reaching a height of 216 feet from the ground. This is the symbolic core of the Rajarajesvara temple, the city of Tanjavur, and the Chola empire.



Figure **13.5.8.30**: Rajarajesvara temple (south), c. 1004–1010, Chola period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: **Emanuel DYAN**, CC BY 2.0)

The Rajarajesvara temple was built by one of the most successful rulers of the medieval period, Rajaraja Chola I. Tanjavur was the capital of the Cholas, an empire that ruled much of present-day South India from c. 848 until 1279. Although this region had been home for the Cholas for generations — they are even mentioned in an **Ashokan** edict from the third century B.C.E. [1] — it is the family of Chola rulers who emerged in the ninth century who would leave an indelible mark on the history of art and architecture.

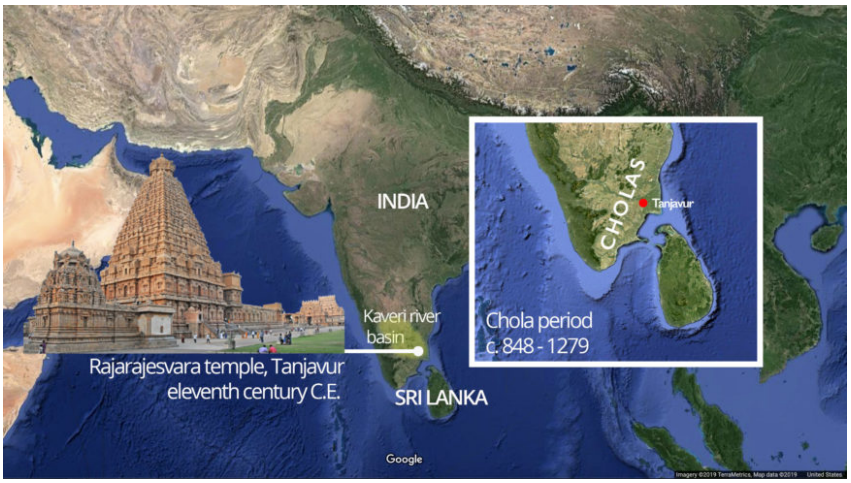


Figure **13.5.8.31**: Location of Rajarajesvara temple in the Chola capital of Tanjavur. Inset shows Chola territory in South India

The Cholas' prosperity was largely due to their investment in harnessing water in the Kaveri river basin for agricultural and irrigation projects and turning vast areas into cultivable land. This, alongside their increased commercial endeavors and active participation in Indian Ocean maritime trade contributed to a thriving empire.

Rajarajesvara temple is emblematic of the Cholas' might and prosperity at the turn of the eleventh century. At that point Chola territory had expanded to include much of south India and parts of Sri Lanka. Chola influence also extended to Southeast Asia where they had established profitable commercial interests with the kingdom of Srivijaya in Indonesia.

Records in stone

The immense skill of the Rajarajesvara temple's architect, builders, and sculptors is immediately apparent from the size and the grandeur of the temple. Also clearly evident is the significant amount of resources — people, time, and stone — that was involved.

The temple preserves records in the form of inscriptions that are carved on its stone base. The inscriptions provide a wealth of information; the gifts received by the temple in the form of jewelry, **processional bronze images** for use in ritual and festivals, and endowments given for the maintenance of temple activities are documented.



Figure **13.5.8.32**: Inscriptions (in the Tamil language) on the base of Rajarajesvara temple, c. 1004–1010, Chola period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: **KARTY**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Inscriptions also provide details on the conduct of rituals, the allocation of resources owned by the temple, and mention the names of donors. The temple received contributions from the king, queens, ministers and feudatories, as well as the temple's priests and administrators.

Royal, sacred, and cultural center

The Rajarajesvara temple was located within a royal and sacred complex. The king's palace, which was nearby, doesn't survive. The temple's impressive height (it was the largest of its kind at the time) and wealth must have impressed Tanjavur's citizenry. The temple's economic influence was considerable — many people tended the lands owned by the temple, and the temple employed hundreds as dancers, priests, accountants, and administrators. Rajarajesvara temple was also an influential cultural center with performances of dance and music, as well as a place of spiritual education and discourse.



Figure **13.5.8.33**: Approximate difference in size between earlier regional temples (indicated by scaled temple on left) and Rajarajesvara temple. At 216 feet, Rajarajesvara temple is roughly fives times larger than earlier temples. (photo: **Arian Zwegers**, CC BY-2.0)

The Cholas were not new to temple building. Inscriptions on the walls of earlier temples tell us that the Chola queen **Sembiyan Mahadevi** was an enthusiastic temple builder. She even rebuilt older brick temples in stone, making sure that the inscriptions of those temples were re-inscribed on their rebuilt walls.

There was no comparable Chola antecedent for the monumental size of the Rajarajesvara temple (see its relative difference in scale from earlier temples in the image above). Rajarajesvara stands as testament to the unhesitating confidence of those who dreamed, conceptualized, and engineered the temple.

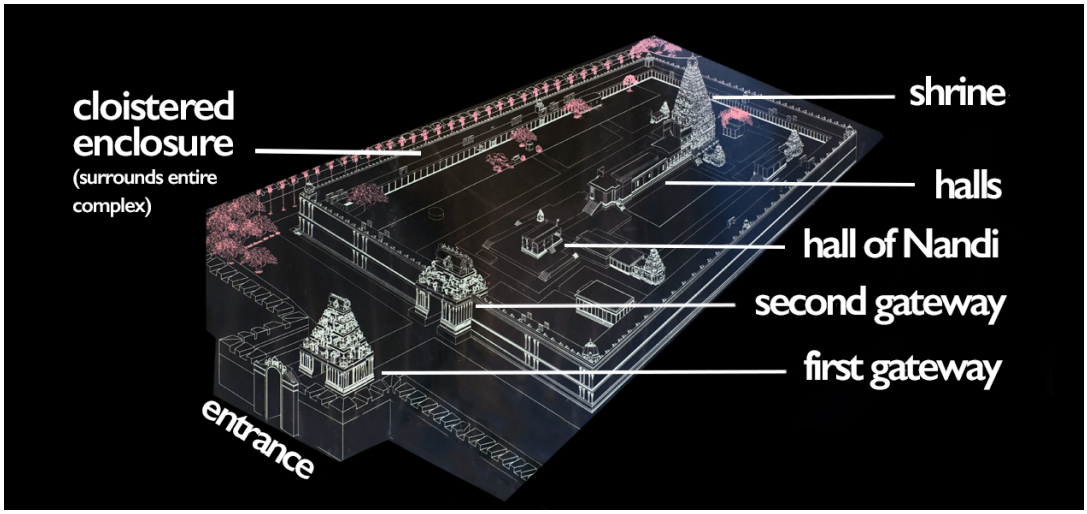
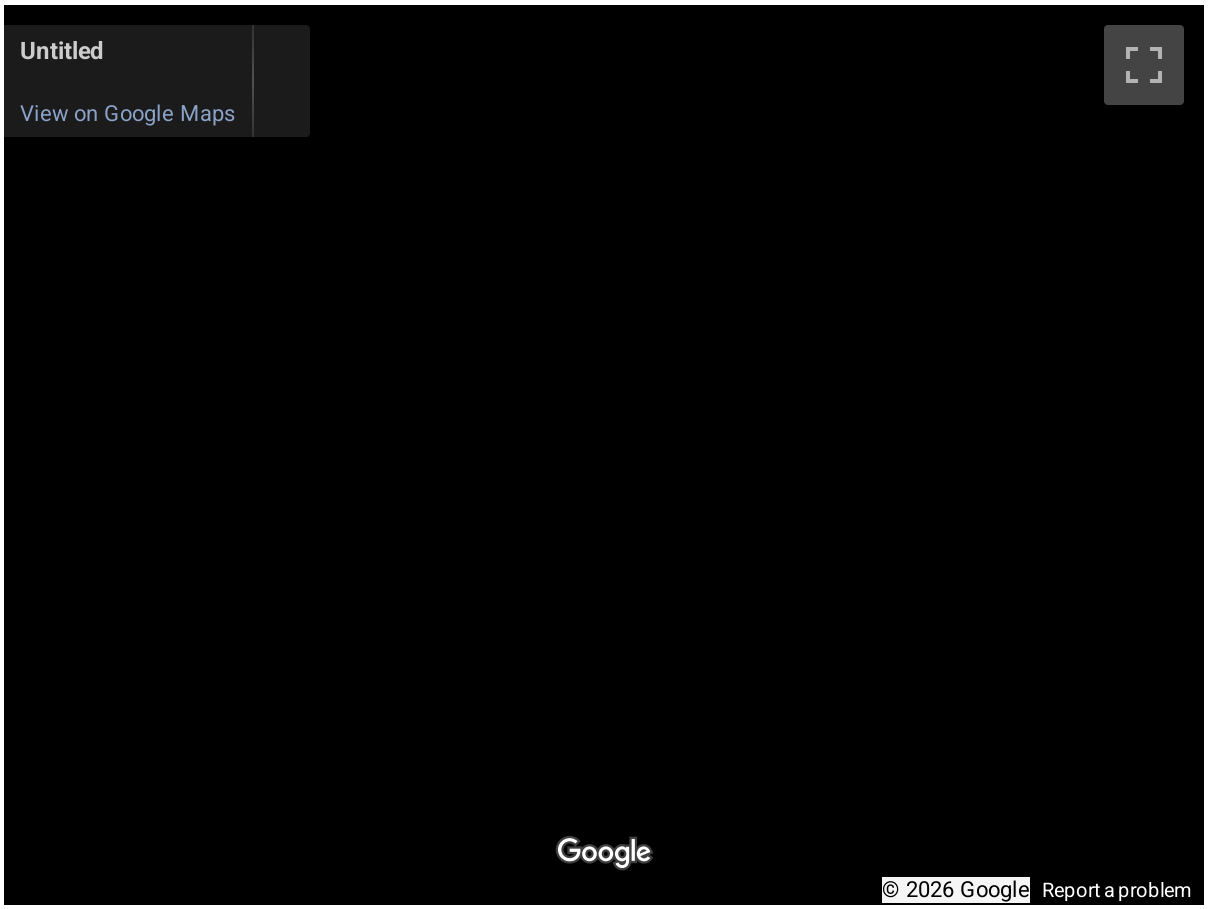


Figure **13.5.8.34**: Plan of the Rajarajesvara temple complex (photo: **Junykwilfred**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A grand entrance

Just past a moat, a large and impressive *gopura* (gateway) stands as the first entryway into the sacred complex (see plan above). A short walk reveals a second *gopura* with two massive guardian figures carved in high relief, flanking the entryway. Guardians are a common feature in Indian temple architecture. They are protective figures who safeguard portals to the gods and are often portrayed as intimidating. The guardian figures here are large, multi–armed and hold a mace (club) — attributes that highlight their role as divine guardians. The guardians are dynamic and animated; they are adorned with elaborate jewelry and clothing, have

raised eyebrows and sharp fangs, and they rest an arm and a foot on their weapon as they stand confidently and at the ready to protect.



View of the second *gopura* (entryway) into the Rajarajesvara temple complex



Figure **13.5.8.35**: Guardian figure at the second *gopura*, Rajarajesvara temple, c. 1004–1010, Chola period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA-NC 4.0)

The second *gopura* (gateway) is part of a tall cloister (covered walkway) that surrounds the temple enclosure. The *gopura* is adorned with relief carvings below the guardians and sculptures on the superstructure above. These are smaller in scale relative to the guardian figures.



Figure 13.5.8.36: View of the Nandi *mandapa* (hall of Nandi) and the two *gopuram* (gateways) from inside the temple enclosure (photo: **Vbmindia**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Within the enclosure, a large monolithic stone bull is dressed with jewelry and a necklace of bells. This is Nandi, Shiva's *vahana*. He sits with his back to the *gopura*, facing the main temple structure (which houses Shiva). Nandi and the open pillared stone canopy over him are dated to the sixteenth century or later, although the platform upon which Nandi is seated may be earlier. As a living temple (a temple that is an active site for worship), Rajarajesvara continued to receive gifts (such as funds for a new Nandi and canopy) long after the temple's construction.



Figure **13.5.8.37**: Nandi, Rajarajesvara temple, c. 16th – 17th centuries, Nayak period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: **Thamizhpparithi Maari**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Dravida style

There are multiple Indian temple architectural styles, the most common of which are *dravida* and *nagara*. The *dravida* style of temple architecture is more frequently adopted in south India, while temples in north India are more often built in the ***nagara*** style. Rajarajesvara is built in the *dravida* style.

The main structure is comprised of the shrine and two pillared halls that are attached and arranged one following the other. The hall closer to the entrance of the structure is known as the *mukhamandapa* (front hall) and the hall nearest to the shrine is known as the *mahamandapa* (great hall). At the center of the shrine is the *garbagriha* (sanctum) — the chamber of god. Above the shrine is a pyramidal superstructure known as the *vimana*.



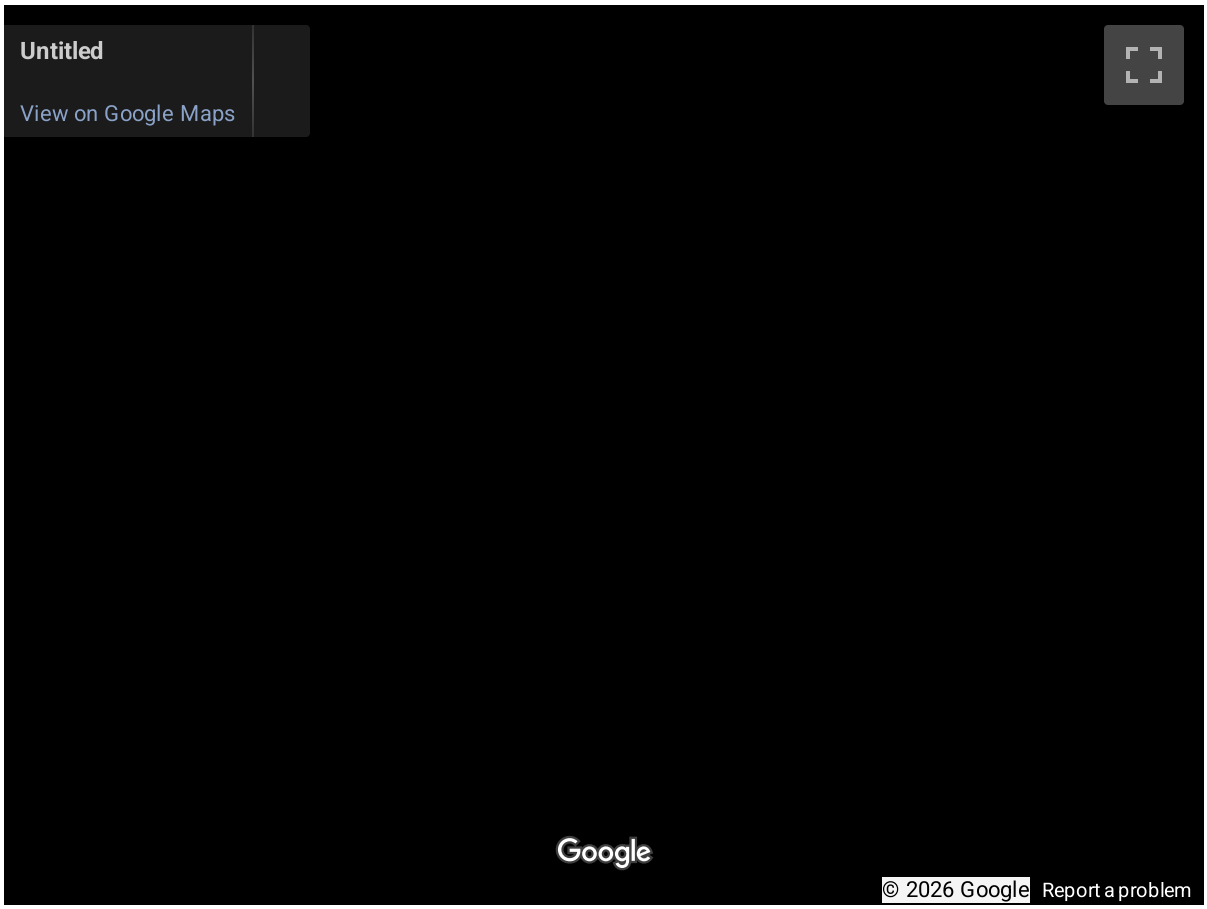
Figure 13.5.8.38: Annotated view of Rajarajesvara temple, c. 1004–1010, Chola period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA-NC 4.0)

Larger than life-size images of Shiva within decorated niches and framing pilasters line the exterior walls of the shrine on two levels. In Hindu belief, gods have myriad manifestations; each form represents a particular purpose or legend, but always represents the one and the same supreme being. Doorways pierce the center of the rows of figures.



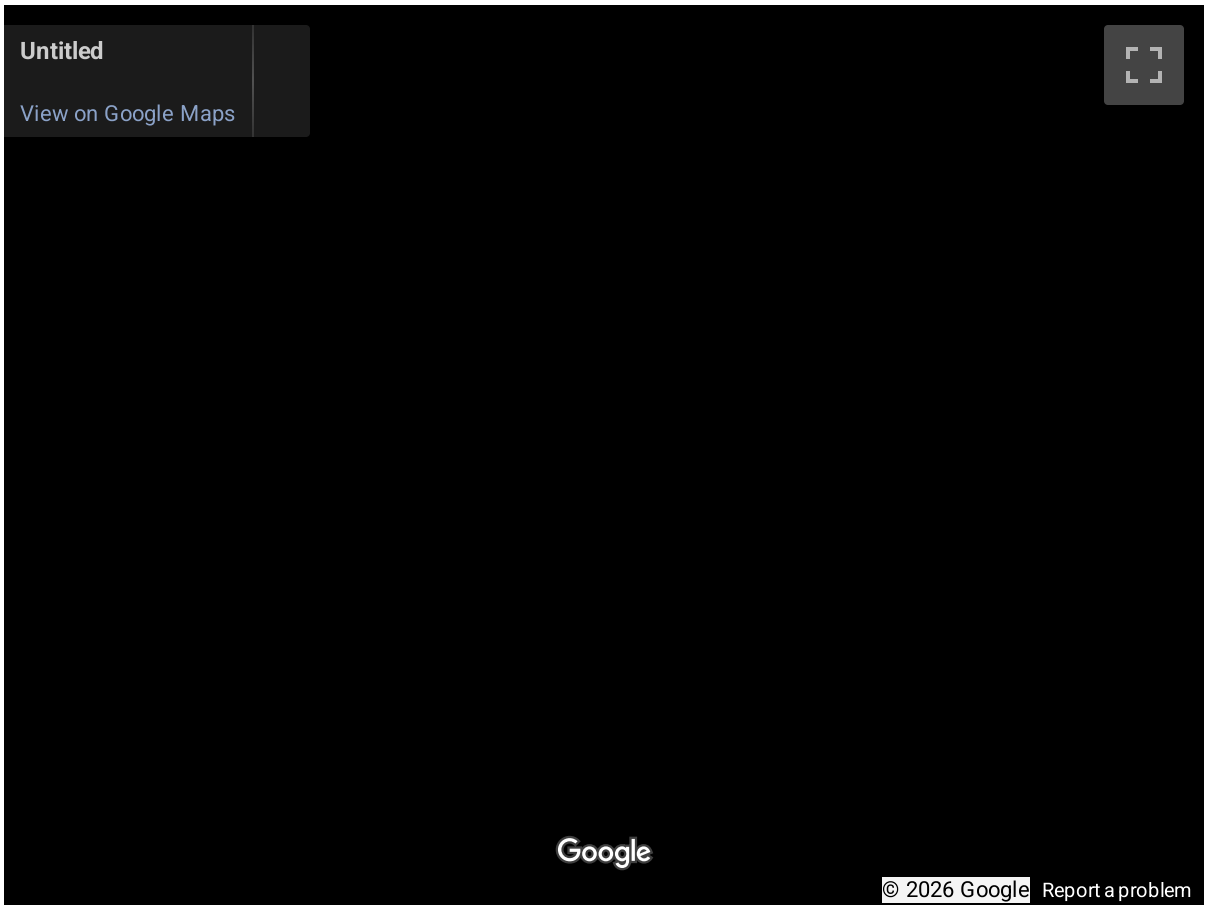
Figure 13.5.8.39: South wall of Rajarajesvara temple. Shiva as Tripurantaka marked in red; various forms of Shiva marked in green. Guardian figures flank the doorway at the center of the lower level. (photo: Arathi Menon, CC BY-SA-NC 4.0)

The images of Shiva on the lower level show the deity in a **number of different embodiments**. Six niches on the upper level depict Shiva as *Tripurantaka* — a form in which Shiva defeated the three cities of the *asuras* (malevolent adversaries of the gods). Art historian Vidya Dehejia has suggested that the emphatic repetition of *Tripurantaka*, although in different poses, was likely significant to Rajaraja and his identity as conqueror. [2]



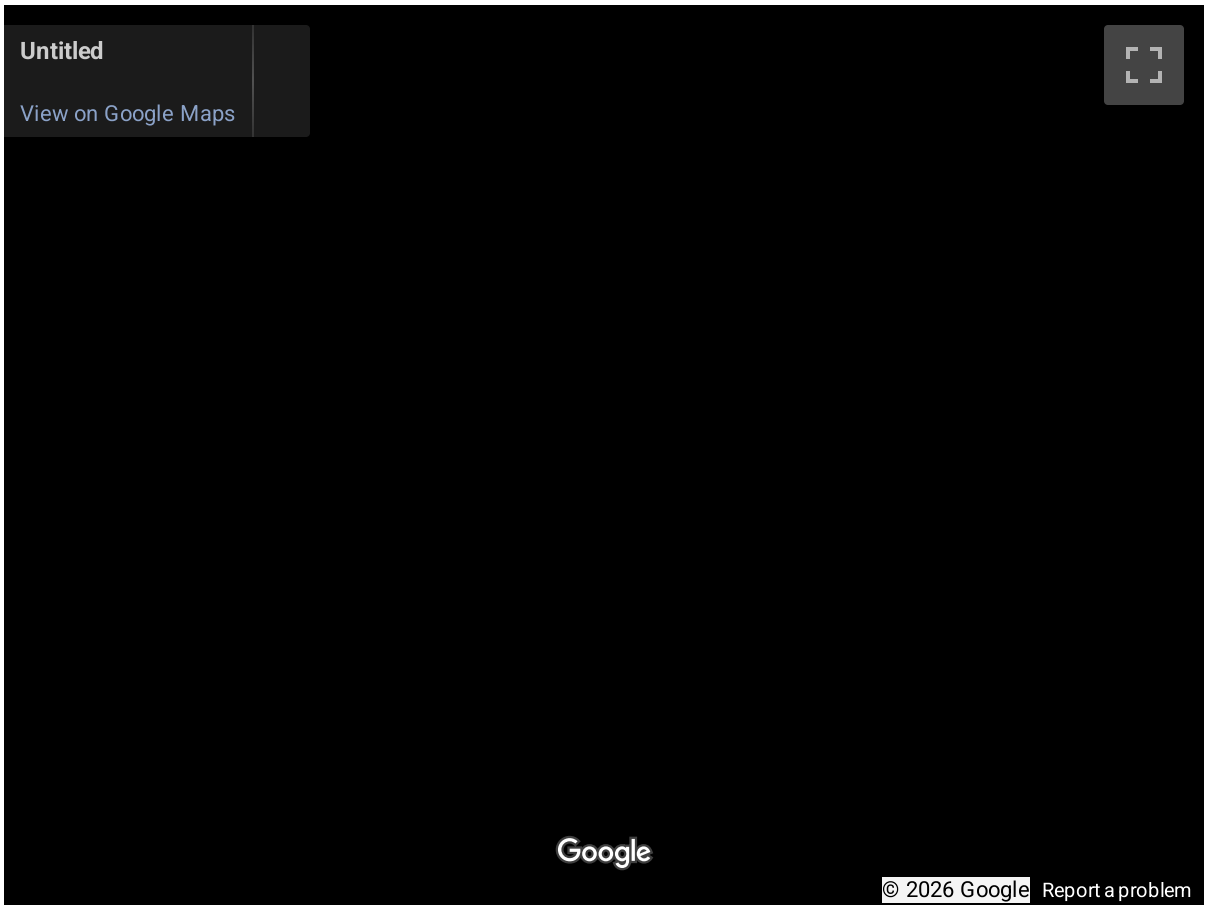
View of the rear wall (west) of the Rajarajesvara temple shrine. Note the various forms of Shiva and the two guardian figures (flanking the doorway) on the lower level and the images of Shiva as *Tripurantaka* on the upper level.

The exterior wall of the two halls in front of the shrine differ in their sculptural program. Here we find pierced stone windows, gods in decorated niches and pilasters, and incomplete carvings. Common to the walls of both the shrine and the two halls are a pair of continuous architectural **courses of *yalis*** (mythical creatures) who serve both a decorative and apotropaic (protective) function.



View of the exterior of the temple halls (north) at Rajarajesvara

The main entrance into the structure is at its east end (facing Nandi the bull). The entryway is reached via two flights of stairs – one each at the north and south ends of a platform. The pillars on that platform and the frontal stairs are later additions. [3] There are also two sets of stairs and entrances flanked by guardians at the north and south sides of the building closer to the shrine.



View of the entrance (east) into the main temple at Rajarajesvara. The frontal stairs and the pillars up front are later additions.

Shrine and superstructure

Surrounding the *garbagriha* (sanctum) at the center of the shrine (see the plan below) is a circumambulatory path with wall murals (painted with a wet lime-wash and mineral pigments) that celebrate the legends of Shiva. The ceiling of this circumambulatory path serves as the floor of a balconied platform above. Carved in low relief on the balcony's railing are images of dancing Shiva. [4] From here, tapered and corbeled slabs of masonry lend support to the remaining upper levels of the hollow *vimana*. [5]

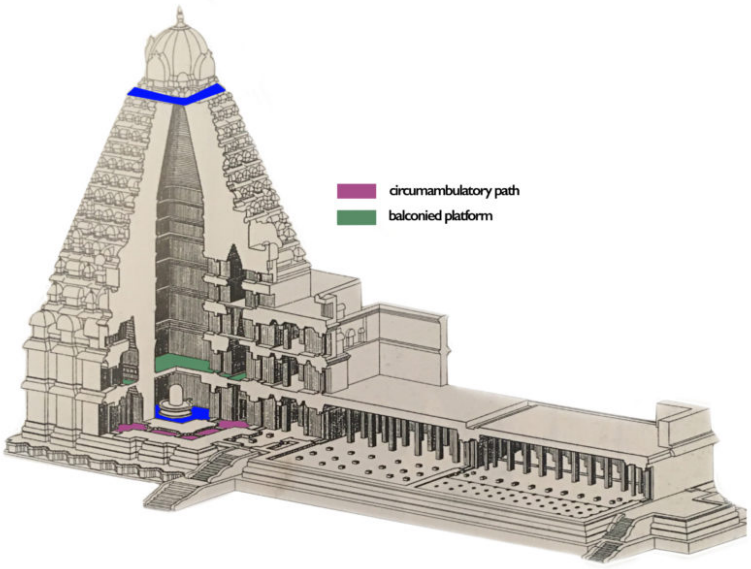


Figure **13.5.8.40**: Isometric drawing adapted from Partha Mitter, *Indian Art* (Oxford, 2001), p. 59. Areas in blue indicate the identical size of the sanctum and the uppermost platform of the *vimana*.

The *vimana* is decorated in horizontal registers on the exterior and at its very top carries a crowning piece known as the *stupi*. Above the *stupi* stands the *kalasha*, a pot-shaped finial that is made from copper.

The monumental *linga* — roughly 12 feet tall, beautifully adorned with flowers and glistening from the gold and the light of oil lamps — is immediately awe-inspiring. Only priests can enter the sanctum; devotees stand just outside the sanctum for **darshan** (to see and be seen by god) and for puja.



Figure **13.5.8.41**: Vimana, Rajajesvara temple complex, c. 1004–1010, Chola period, Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu (photo: **Gayathriveluri**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

New heights

The temple's architect and builders would have followed the general rules prescribed in treatises for the design of the sacred complex and its sculptures. Treatises on art and architecture were developed over centuries of temple building and offered precise instructions on appropriate siting, layout, and measurements for temple construction and ornamentation. Even with that guidance, the enormity of this project will have made for a complex undertaking.

More than a thousand years since it was built, there is little doubt that Rajarajesvara temple holds an important place in the legacy of the Cholas. By building a temple so incredible, Rajaraja Chola I aptly epitomized both his triumphant reign as king and gratitude for his achievements. And he affirmed — for all to see — the religious benediction of Shiva at the heart of his empire.

Notes:

[1] See the 2nd major rock edict of Ashoka, for example, in Romila Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 251.

[2] Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon, 1997), p. 214–6.

[3] K.R. Srinivasan, "Middle Colanadu style, c. A.D. 1000–1078; Colas of Tanjavur: Phase II." In *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India Lower Dravidadesa, 200 B.C.– A.D. 1324*, edited by Michael W. Meister (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), p. 239.

[4] Dehejia, *ibid*., pp. 217-8.

[5] Srinivasan, *ibid*., pp. 238.

Additional resources:

Great Chola Temples

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon, 1997), pp. 207–24.

Vidya Dehejia, *Art of the Imperial Cholas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

Partha Mitter, *Indian Art* (London: Oxford, 2001), pp. 57–9.

K.R. Srinivasan, "Middle Colanadu style, c. A.D. 1000–1078; Colas of Tanjavur: Phase II." In *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India Lower Dravidadesa, 200 B.C.– A.D. 1324*, edited by Michael W. Meister (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), pp. 234–41.

Romila Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)

by FARISA KHALID



Figure **13.5.8.42**: Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), c. 11th century, Copper alloy, Chola period, 68.3 x 56.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

A sacred object out of context

The art of medieval India, like the art of medieval Europe, was primarily in the service of religion. The devotee's spiritual experience was enhanced by meditation inspired by works of art and architecture. Just as the luminous upper chapel of the Sainte Chapelle dazzled and overwhelmed worshipers in France, the looming bronze statues of Shiva and Parvati in, for example, the inner halls of the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, in south India would have awed a Hindu devotee.

It is important to keep in mind that the bronze *Shiva as Lord of the Dance* ("*Nataraja*"—nata meaning dance or performance, and raja meaning king or lord), is a sacred object that has been taken out of its original context—in fact, we don't even know where this particular sculpture was originally venerated. In the intimate spaces of the Florence and Herbert Irving South Asian Galleries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the *Shiva Nataraja* is surrounded by other metal statues of Hindu gods including the Lords Vishnu, Parvati, and Hanuman. It is easy to become absorbed in the dark quiet of these galleries with its remarkable collection of divine figures, but it is important to remember that this particular statue was intended to be movable, which explains its moderate size and sizeable circular base, ideal for lifting and hoisting onto a shoulder.



Figure **13.5.8.43**: Shiva Nataraja in procession. (photo: **Neil Greentree**. Source: Smithsonian Institution)

Made for mobility

From the eleventh century and onwards, Hindu devotees carried these statues in processional parades as priests followed chanting prayers and bestowing blessings on people gathered for this purpose. Sometimes the statues would be adorned in resplendent red and green clothes and gold jewelry to denote the glorious human form of the gods. In these processions The *Shiva Nataraja* may have had its legs wrapped with a white and red cloth, adorned with flowers, and surrounded by candles. In a religious Hindu

context, the statue is the literal embodiment of the divine. When the worshiper comes before the statue and begins to pray, faith activates the divine energy inherent in the statue, and at that moment, Shiva is present.

A bronze Shiva

Shiva constitutes a part of a powerful triad of divine energy within the cosmos of the Hindu religion. There is Brahma, the benevolent creator of the universe; there is Vishnu, the sagacious preserver; then there is Shiva, the destroyer. “Destroyer” in this sense is not an entirely negative force, but one that is expansive in its impact. In Hindu religious philosophy all things must come to a natural end so they can begin anew, and Shiva is the agent that brings about this end so that a new cycle can begin.

The Metropolitan Museum’s *Shiva Nataraja* was made some time in the eleventh century during the Chola Dynasty (ninth-thirteenth centuries C.E.) in south India, in what is now the state of Tamil Nadu. One of the longest lasting empires of south India, the Chola Dynasty heralded a golden age of exploration, trade, and artistic development. A great area of innovation within the arts of the Chola period was in the field of metalwork, particularly in bronze sculpture. The expanse of the Chola empire stretched south-east towards Sri Lanka and gave the kingdom access to vast copper reserves that enabled the proliferation of bronze work by skilled artisans.

During this period a new kind of sculpture is made, one that combines the expressive qualities of stone temple carvings with the rich iconography possible in bronze casting. This image of Shiva is taken from the ancient Indian manual of visual depiction, the *Shilpa Shastras* (The Science or Rules of Sculpture), which contained a precise set of measurements and shapes for the limbs and proportions of the divine figure. Arms were to be long like stalks of bamboo, faces round like the moon, and eyes shaped like almonds or the leaves of a lotus. The *Shastras* were a primer on the ideals of beauty and physical perfection within ancient Hindu ideology.



Figure **13.5.8.44**: Round face, almond eyes and long arms of Shiva surrounded by circle of fire (detail), Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), c. 11th century, Copper alloy, Chola period, 68.3 x 56.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

A dance within the cosmic circle of fire

Here, Shiva embodies those perfect physical qualities as he is frozen in the moment of his dance within the cosmic circle of fire that is the simultaneous and continuous creation and destruction of the universe. The ring of fire that surrounds the figure is the encapsulated cosmos of mass, time, and space, whose endless cycle of annihilation and regeneration moves in tune to the beat of Shiva’s drum and the rhythm of his steps.

In his upper right hand he holds the *damaru*, the drum whose beats syncopate the act of creation and the passage of time.



Figure 13.5.8.45: Shiva's upper left hand holding the agni, the flame of destruction (detail), Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), c. 11th century, Copper alloy, Chola period, 68.3 x 56.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

His lower right hand with his palm raised and facing the viewer is lifted in the gesture of the *abhaya mudra*, which says to the supplicant, "Be not afraid, for those who follow the path of righteousness will have my blessing."

Shiva's lower left hand stretches diagonally across his chest with his palm facing down towards his raised left foot, which signifies spiritual grace and fulfillment through meditation and mastery over one's baser appetites.

In his upper left hand he holds the *agni* (image left), the flame of destruction that annihilates all that the sound of the *damaru* has drummed into existence.



Figure 13.5.8.46: Shiva's foot on Apasmara (detail), Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), c. 11th century, Copper alloy, Chola period, 68.3 x 56.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Shiva's right foot stands upon the huddled dwarf, the demon Apasmara, the embodiment of ignorance.



Figure **13.5.8.47**: Shiva's tranquil expression with long hair streaming (detail), Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), c. 11th century, Copper alloy, Chola period, 68.3 x 56.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Shiva's hair, the long hair of the yogi, streams out across the space within the halo of fire that constitutes the universe. Throughout this entire process of chaos and renewal, the face of the god remains tranquil, transfixed in what the historian of South Asian art Heinrich Zimmer calls, "the mask of god's eternal essence."

Beyond grace there is perfection

The supple and expressive quality of the dancing Shiva is one of the touchstones of South Asian, and indeed, world sculpture. When the French sculptor Auguste Rodin saw some photographs of the eleventh century bronze *Shiva Nataraja* in the Madras Museum around 1915, he wrote that it seemed to him the "perfect expression of rhythmic movement in the world." In an essay he wrote that was published in 1921 he wrote that the *Shiva Nataraja* has "what many people cannot see—the unknown depths, the core of life. There is grace in elegance, but beyond grace there is perfection." The English philosopher Aldous Huxley said in an interview in 1961 that the Hindu image of god as a dancer is unlike anything he had seen in Western art. "We don't have anything that approaches the symbolism of this work of art, which is both cosmic and psychological."

The eloquent bronze statue of the *Shiva Nataraja*, despite the impact of its formal beauty on Rodin who knew little of its background, is incomplete without an understanding of its symbolism and religious significance. Bronzes of the Chola period such as *Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)* arose out of a need to transmute the divine into a physical embodiment of beauty.

Additional Resources:

This sculpture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Shiva Nataraja from the Smithsonian

This sculpture on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Hinduism and Hindu Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Chandella dynasty

Sacred space and symbolic form at Lakshmana Temple, Khajuraho (India)

by DR. CRISTIN MCKNIGHT SETHI



Figure 13.5.8.48: Sculpture of a woman removing a thorn from her foot, northwest side exterior wall, Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 C.E. (**image source**)

Ideal female beauty

Look closely at the image to the left. Imagine an elegant woman walks barefoot along a path accompanied by her attendant. She steps on a thorn and turns—adeptly bending her left leg, twisting her body, and arching her back—to point out the thorn and ask her attendant's help in removing it. As she turns the viewer sees her face: it is round like the full moon with a slender nose, plump lips, arched eyebrows, and eyes shaped like lotus petals. While her right hand points to the thorn in her foot, her left hand raises in a gesture of reassurance.

Images of beautiful women like this one from the northwest exterior wall of the Lakshmana Temple at Khajuraho in India have captivated viewers for centuries. Depicting idealized female beauty was important for temple architecture and considered auspicious, even protective. Texts written for temple builders describe different "types" of women to include within a temple's sculptural program, and emphasize their roles as symbols of fertility, growth, and prosperity. Additionally, images of loving couples known as *mithuna* (literally "the state of being a couple") appear on the Lakshmana temple as symbols of divine union and *moksha*, the final release from *samsara* (the cycle of death and rebirth).[1]

The temples at Khajuraho, including the Lakshmana temple, have become famous for these amorous images—variations of which graphically depict figures engaged in sexual intercourse. These erotic images were not intended to be titillating or provocative, but instead served ritual and symbolic function significant to the builders, patrons, and devotees of these captivating structures.[2]



Figure 13.5.8.49: Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 C.E. (Chandella period), sandstone (photo: **Christopher Voitus**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Chandella rule at Khajuraho



Figure 13.5.8.50: Location of Khajuraho, India

The Lakshmana temple was the first of several temples built by the Chandella kings in their newly-created capital of Khajuraho. Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, the Chandellas patronized artists, poets, and performers, and built irrigation systems, palaces, and numerous temples out of sandstone. At one time over 80 temples existed at this site, including several Hindu temples dedicated to the gods Shiva, Vishnu, and Surya.[3] There were also temples built to honor the divine teachers of Jainism (an ancient Indian religion). Approximately 30 temples remain at Khajuraho today.

The original patron of the Lakshmana temple was a leader of the Chandella clan, Yashovarman, who gained control over territories in the Bundelkhand region of central India that was once part of the larger Pratihara Dynasty. Yashovarman sought to build a temple to legitimize his rule over these territories, though he died before it was finished. His son Dhanga completed the work and dedicated the temple in 954 C.E.

Vaikuntha Vishnu, womb chamber (<em
garbha griha), Lakshmana temple. 1076-1099 C.E., sandstone (photo: Christine Chauvin, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-13168" height="800" sizes="(max-width: 1108px) 100vw, 1108px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...4435a2f2_k.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...4435a2f2_k.jpg
1108w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._k-300x217.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._k-870x628.jpg
870w" style="width: 682px; height: 492px;" width="1108">

Figure **13.5.8.51**: Vaikuntha Vishnu, womb chamber (*garba griha*), Lakshmana temple. 1076-1099 C.E., sandstone (photo: **Christine Chauvin**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The central deity at the Lakshmana temple is an image of Vishnu in his three-headed form known as Vaikuntha[4] who sits inside the temple's inner womb chamber also known as *garba griha* (above)—an architectural feature at the heart of all Hindu temples regardless of size or location. The womb chamber is the symbolic and physical core of the temple's shrine. It is dark, windowless, and designed for intimate, individualized worship of the divine—quite different from large congregational worshipping spaces that characterize many Christian churches and Muslim mosques.

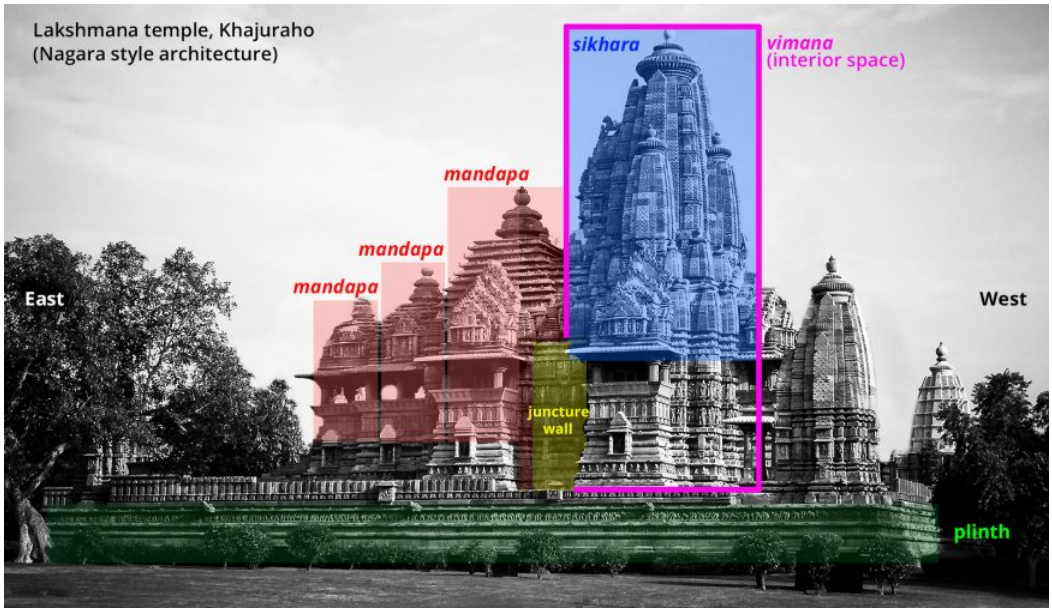


Figure **13.5.8.52**

The Lakshmana Temple is an excellent example of Nagara style Hindu temple architecture.[5] In its most basic form, a Nagara temple consists of a shrine known as *vimana* (essentially the shell of the womb chamber) and a flat-roofed entry porch known as *mandapa*. The shrine of Nagara temples include a base platform and a large superstructure known as *sikhara* (meaning mountain peak), which viewers can see from a distance.[6] The Lakshmana temple's superstructure appear like the many rising peaks of a mountain range.

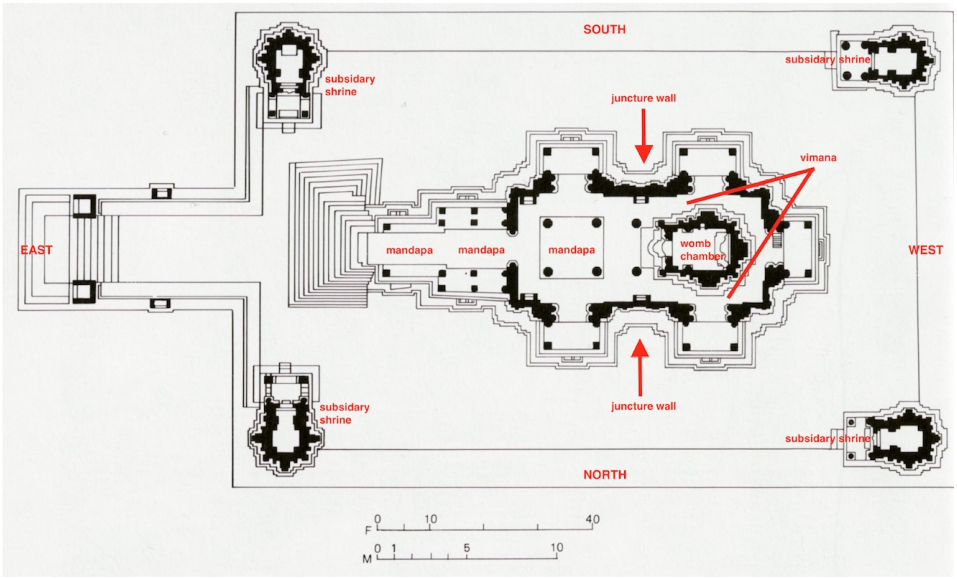


Figure 13.5.8.53: Plan of Lakshmana temple

Approaching the divine

Devotees approach the Lakshamana temple from the east and walk around its entirety—an activity known as circumambulation. They begin **walking along the large plinth** of the temple's base, moving in a clockwise direction starting from the left of the stairs. Sculpted friezes along the plinth depict images of daily life, love, and war and many recall historical events of the Chandella period (see image below and **Google Street View**).



Figure 13.5.8.54: Section of a narrative frieze encircling the temple at the level of the plinth, Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 (photo: **Sheep"R"Us**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure 13.5.8.55: Ganesha in niche, exterior mandapa wall, south side, Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 (photo: Manuel Menal, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Devotees then climb the stairs of the plinth, and encounter another set of images, including **deities sculpted within niches** on the exterior wall of the temple (**view in Google Street View**).

In one niche (left) the elephant-headed Ganesha appears. His presence suggests that devotees are moving in the correct direction for circumambulation, as Ganesha is a god typically worshipped at the start of things.

Other sculpted forms appear nearby in lively, active postures: swaying hips, bent arms, and tilted heads which create a dramatic "triple-bend" **contrapposto** pose, all carved in deep relief emphasizing their three-dimensionality. It is here —specifically on the exterior juncture wall between the *vimana* and the *mandapa* (see diagram above)—where devotees encounter erotic images of **couples embraced in sexual union** (see image below and **here on Google Street View**). This place of architectural juncture serves a symbolic function as the joining of the *vimana* and *mandapa*, accentuated by the depiction of "joined" couples.

Four **smaller, subsidiary shrines** sit at each corner of the plinth. These shrines appear like miniature temples with their own *vimanas*, *sikharas*, *mandapas*, and womb chambers with images of deities, originally other forms or avatars of Vishnu.

Following circumambulation of the exterior of the temple, devotees encounter three *mandapas*, which prepare them for entering the *vimana*. Each *mandapa* has a pyramidal-shaped roof that increases in size as devotees move from east to west.



Figure 13.5.8.56: Figural groupings on the temple exterior including Shiva, Mithuna, and erotic couples, Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 (photo: **Antoine Taveneaux**, CC BY-SA 3.0). **View this on Goole Street View**.

Once devotees pass through the third and final *mandapa* they find **an enclosed passage** along the wall of the shrine, allowing them to circumambulate this sacred structure in a clockwise direction. The act of circumambulation, of moving around the various components of the temple, allow devotees to physically experience this sacred space and with it the body of the divine.

Entrance to the first Mandapa, Lakshmana Temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lakshmana_Temple_17.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lakshmana_Temple_17.jpg" target="_blank"
Antoine Taveneaux, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-13188" height="2592" sizes="(max-width: 3872px) 100vw, 3872px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._temple_17.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._temple_17.jpg
3872w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...17-300x201.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...17-870x582.jpg
870w" style="width: 589px; height: 700px;" width="3872">

Figure 13.5.8.57: Entrance to the *Mandapa*, Lakshmana Temple, Khajuraho, Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh, India, dedicated 954 (photo: **Antoine Taveneaux**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Notes:

[1] *Mithuna* figures appear on numerous Hindu temples and Buddhist monastic sites throughout South Asia from as early as the first century C.E. *Maithuna* is a related term that references figures depicted in the act of sexual intercourse.

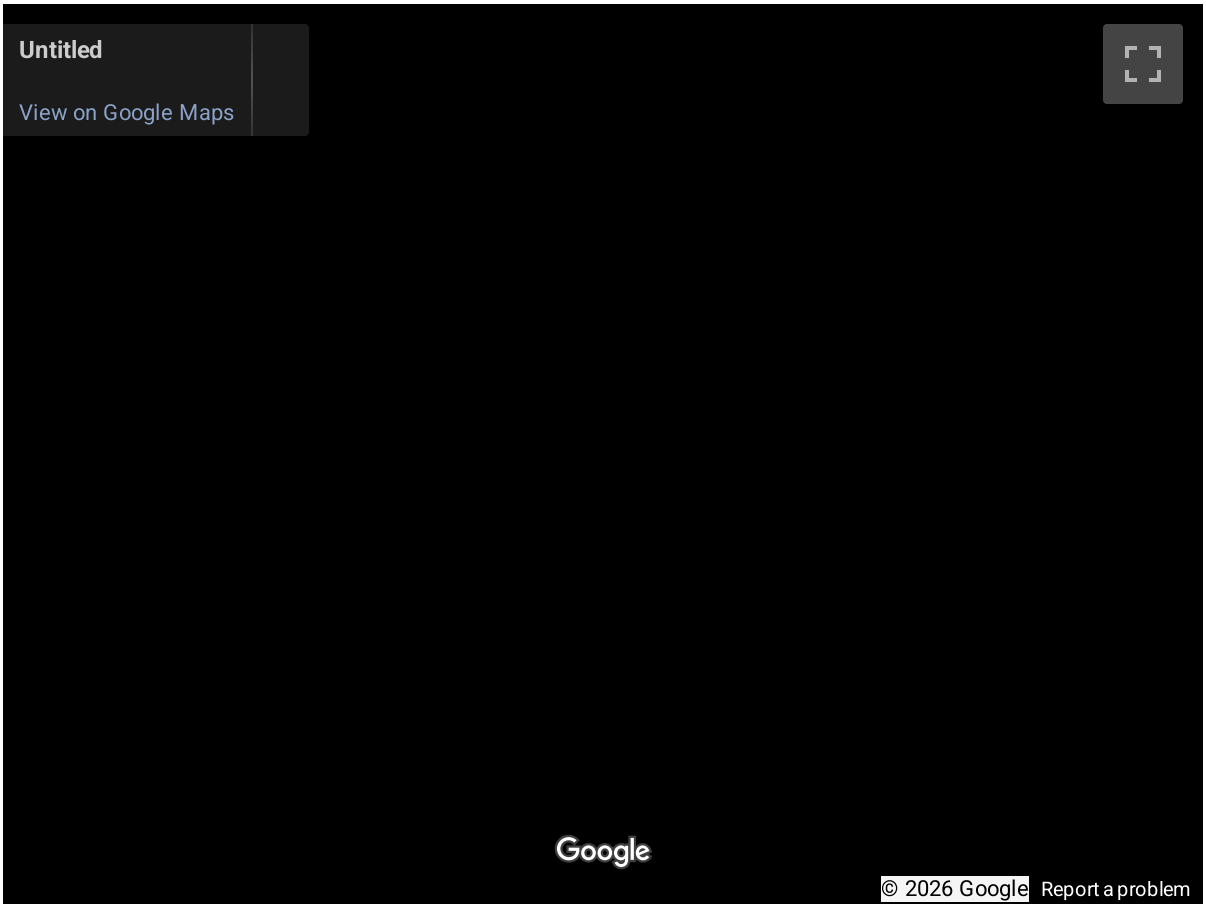
[2] Some scholars suggest that these erotic images may be connected to Kapalika tantric practices prevalent at Khajuraho during Chandella rule. These practices included drinking wine, eating flesh, human sacrifice, using human skulls as drinking vessels, and sexual union, particularly with females who were given central importance (as the seat of the divine). The idea was that by indulging in the bodily and material world, a practitioner was able to overcome the temptations of the senses. However, these esoteric practices were generally looked down upon by others in South Asian society and accordingly very often were done in secrecy, which raises questions about the logic of including Kapalika-related images on the exterior of a temple for all to see. For a compelling discussion on the history of popular and scholarly perception of the nude figures at Khajuraho, see Tapati Guha-Thakurta's essay referenced below.

[3] There is also at least one temple at Khajuraho, the Chausath Yogini Temple, dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Durga and 64 (“chausath”) of her female attendants known as yoginis. It was built by a previous dynasty who ruled in the area before the Chandella kings rose to power.

[4] The original Vaikuntha at Lakshmana temple was itself politically significant: Yashovarman took it from the Pratihara overlord of the region. Susan Huntington indicates that the stone image currently on view at Lakshmana temple, while indeed a form of Vaikuntha, is not in fact the original (metal) image which Yashovarman appropriated from the Pratihara ruler. Appropriating another ruler’s family deity as a political maneuver was a widespread practice throughout South Asia. For more on this practice, see the work of Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval ‘Hindu-Muslim’ Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), particularly Chapter 4. A similar Vaikuntha image now appears in the central shrine of the Lakshmana temple and is notable for its depiction of the deity’s three heads with a human face at the front (east), a lion’s face on the left (south), and a boar’s face on the right (north)—the latter two of which are now badly damaged. An implied, though not visible fourth face is that of a demon’s head at the rear of the image (west-facing) which has led some scholars to identify this form as Chaturmurti or four-faced.

[5] In general, there are two main styles of Hindu temple architecture: the Nagara style, which dominates temples from the northern regions of India, and the Dravida style, which appears more often in the South.

[6] The base platform is sometimes known as *pitha*, meaning “seat.” A flattened bulb-shaped topper known as *amalaka* appears at the top of the superstructure or *sikhara*. The *amalaka* is named after the local amla fruit and is symbolic of abundance and growth.



Additional resources:

Beliefs Made Visible: Hindu Temples in South Asia

Hinduism and Buddhism, an Introduction

Ganesha in a Temple Niche from the Asian Art Museum

Hindu Temples from the Asian Art Museum

Vidya Dehejia, “Reading Love Imagery on the Indian Temple,” *Love in Asian Art and Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution), pp. 97-112.

Vidya Dehejia, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving Boundaries Between Sacred and Profane in India’s Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Tapati Guha-Thakurta, “Art History and the Nude: On Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality in Contemporary India,” in *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (New York: Weatherhill, 1985), 466-477.

Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, vols. 1 and 2 (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1946), pp. 131-144 and 346-347.

Michael Meister, “Juncture and Conjuncture: Punning and Temple Architecture,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 41, No. 2/3 (1979), pp. 226-234.

The Delhi Sultanate

The Qutb complex and early Sultanate architecture

by DR. ARATHI MENON



Figure 13.5.8.58: The courtyard of the Qutb mosque, c. 1192, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Indrajit Das**, CC BY-SA 4.0). In the foreground are pillars of the colonnaded walkway and in the background is a c. 4th – 5th century iron pillar and the mosque’s arched screen and prayer hall.

Layers of cultural, religious, and political history converge in the **Qutb** archaeological complex in Mehrauli, in Delhi, India. In its beautiful gateways, tombs, lofty screens, and pillared colonnades is a record of a centuries-long history of artistic vision, building techniques, and patronage. At the heart of the Qutb complex is a twelfth century mosque— an early example in the rich history of Indo-Islamic art and architecture.

The Qutb mosque is important for our understanding of the early part of the Delhi Sultanate (1206 – 1526), a period when new rulers would seek to cement their authority and legitimacy as kings in northern India. “Delhi Sultanate” is a collective term that refers to the Turko-Islamic dynasties that ruled, one after the other, from Delhi. [1] The monuments discussed in this essay were built by the three earliest rulers of the Sultanate. [2]

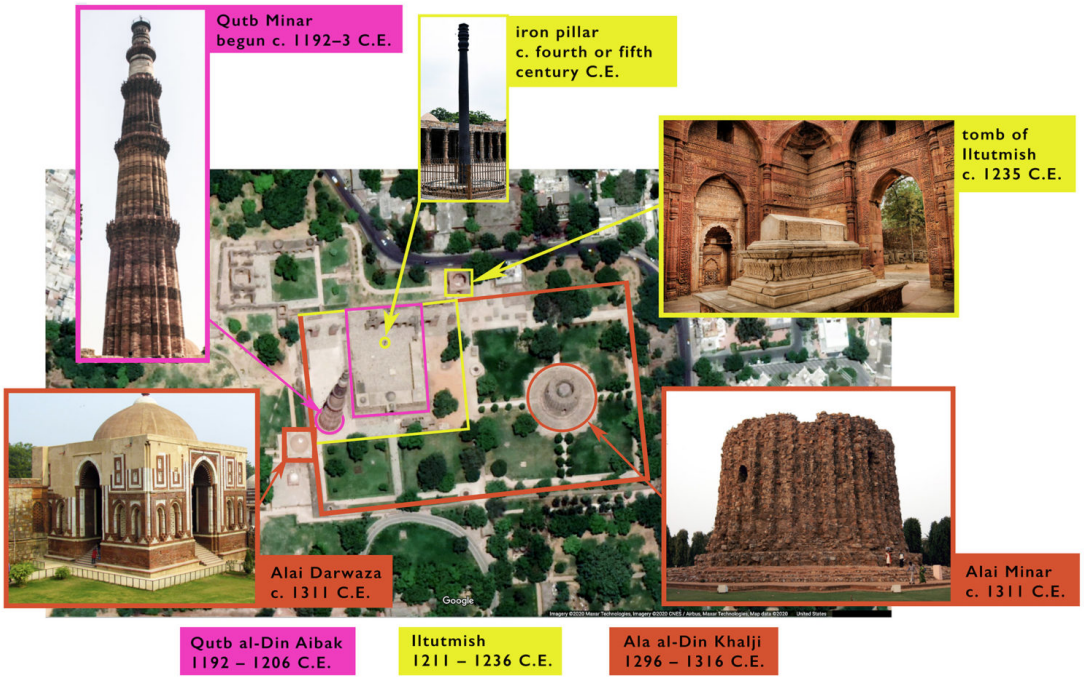


Figure **13.5.8.59**: Plan of the Qutb complex showing the phases of construction of select monuments (photos: clockwise from top, **Indrajit Das**, CC BY-SA 4.0; **Bikashrd**, CC BY-SA 4.0; **Kavaiyan**, CC BY-SA 2.0; **Alimallick**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In addition to the mosque, this essay discusses the following structures in the Qutb complex of monuments:

- **the iron pillar**
- **Qutb Minar**
- **the tomb of Iltutmish**
- **the Alai Darwaza**
- **and the Alai minar**



Figure **13.5.8.60**: The 238 foot tall Qutb Minar in the background, c. 1192, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Indrajit Das**, CC BY-SA 4.0).

The first Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate

Before Qutb al-Din Aibak was the first sultan of the Delhi Sultanate, he was a Turkic military slave and a general in the army of the Ghurid dynasty of Afghanistan. He played an important role in conquering Delhi in 1192, as part of the territorial ambitions of the eleventh century Ghurid ruler Muhammad Ghuri.

As the Ghurid administrator in Delhi, Aibak oversaw the building of congregational mosques, including the Qutb mosque. The mosque is believed to have been built quickly as a matter of necessity—not only would the Ghurid forces have needed a place to pray, but a mosque was crucial for the proclamation of the name of the ruler during the weekly congregational prayer. In this context, such proclamations would have affirmed the legitimacy of Muhammad's Ghuri's right to rule.

Stylistic influences that define early Delhi Sultanate architecture



Figure **13.5.8.61**: Map showing the Qutb archaeological complex in Delhi, India

Islamic monuments in South Asia did not begin with the Delhi Sultanate; mosques were built when Islam was introduced in Sindh (in present-day Pakistan) in the eighth century as well as for Muslim merchants and communities who lived in various ports and towns across the subcontinent. Few of these structures have survived however and the Qutb mosque holds the distinction of being the oldest mosque in Delhi, an early example of Islamic architecture in India, and one that synthesizes Persian, Islamic, and Indian influences.

Qutb al-Din Aibak had come to India from Afghanistan and was familiar with its diverse architectural landscape. Afghanistan's architecture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries reflected both its pre-Islamic and Islamic history, as well as cultural exchange with Central Asia and India. Historians also describe the court of the Delhi Sultanate as Persianized, because it made use of the Persian language, literature, and Perso-Islamic art and architecture.

The architecture of the Delhi Sultanate is notable for its stylized decorative ornament which seamlessly incorporates features from Islamic artistic traditions such as arabesques (intertwining and scrolling vines), calligraphy, and geometric forms with Indian influences such as the floral motifs that adorn the calligraphy in the Qutb complex minar (tower) below.



Figure **13.5.8.62**: Detail of the Qutb Minar, begun c. 1192, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Dennis Jarvis**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The hand of the Indian mason is discernible in the post and lintel and corbeling methods of construction employed in the earliest monuments in the complex, namely the Qutb mosque colonnade and prayer hall, its screen, and Iltutmish's tomb. Later monuments at the Qutb complex (such as the fourteenth-century gateway Alai Darwaza) show a shift towards building techniques common in Islamic architecture outside of India. Arches in the Alai Darwaza, for instance, are not corbeled, but rather built with a series of wedge-shaped stones and a keystone.

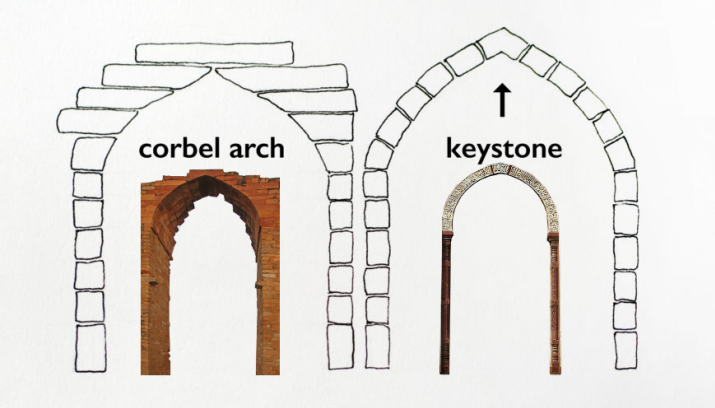
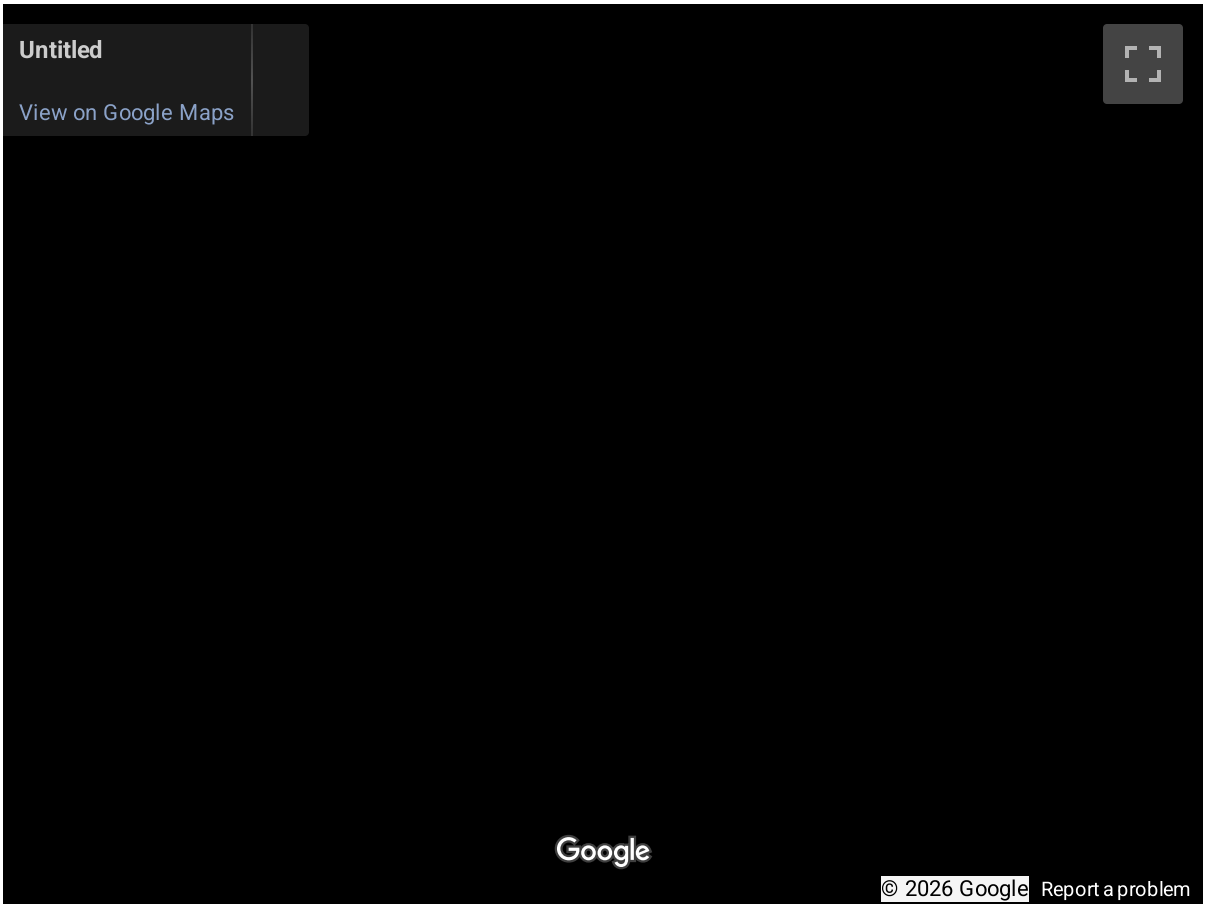


Figure **13.5.8.63**: A corbeled arch on the left (inset: Qutb mosque screen, dated 1198) and arch with a keystone on the right (inset: entrance to the Alai Darwaza, dated 1311). Photos: **Gerd Eichmann**, CC BY-SA 4.0; **Varun Shiv Kapur**, CC BY 2.0).



Entrance into the Qutb mosque, begun c. 1192, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi

The Qutb mosque and architectural re-use

The main entrance into the mosque today is on its east side. This arched doorway leads to a pillared colonnade and an open-air courtyard that is enclosed on three sides. Directly across from the main entrance, at the far end of the mosque, is an iron pillar, a monumental stone screen, and a hypostyle prayer hall.

Pillars, ceilings and stones from multiple older Hindu and Jain temples were reused in the construction of the colonnades surrounding the mosque's open courtyard and in the prayer hall. Since the desired height for the colonnade did not match the height of older temple pillars, two or three pillars were stacked, one on top of the other, to reach the required elevation.

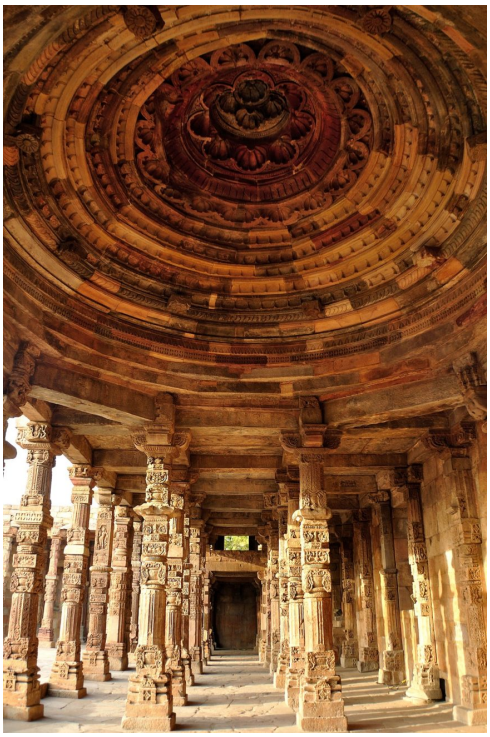


Figure **13.5.8.64**: A view of a temple ceiling (constructed in the post and lintel and corbel technique) and pillars in the colonnaded walkway of the Qutb mosque, begun c. 1192, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Divya Gupta**, CC BY-SA 3.0).

Indian temple pillars are often adorned with anthropomorphic figures of deities and divine beings, mythical zoomorphic, and apotropaic motifs, as well as decorative bands of flowers. A belief by the builders of this mosque in a proscription against the portrayal of living beings is evident in the removal of the faces carved in the older stonework. Other decorative motifs were left untouched, likely for their apotropaic and ornamental qualities.



Figure **13.5.8.65**: View of pillars in the colonnaded walkway (left) and pillar detail with faces obscured (right), Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photos: **Johan Ekedum**, CC BY-SA 4.0; **Ronakshah1990**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Art historian Finbarr Flood has examined the complex motivations behind the re-use of stone at the Qutb mosque within a broad socio-political framework and has asked questions that go beyond the generally held view of religious iconoclasm (destruction of images). [3] Flood's work has pointed to the probable use of spoliated (repurposed) stones from temples associated with the polities that were conquered by the Ghurid army (hence suggesting a political rather than religious motive), and has examined the important artistic interventions at the mosque (such as the meaning behind the addition of new stones that were carved to emulate temple pillars). [4]



Figure 13.5.8.66: Courtyard of the Qutb mosque, begun c. 1192, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Daniel Villafruela**, CC BY-SA 3.0). A c. 4th – 5th century iron pillar and the 12th century stone screen and prayer hall built by Qutb al-Din Aibak are seen here.

In 1198 Aibak commissioned a monumental sandstone screen with five pointed arches that was built between the courtyard and the prayer hall. The screen was constructed with corbeled arches and is emphatically decorative with bands of calligraphy, arabesques, and other motifs, including flowers and stems that pop over, under, and through the stylized letters (see below).



Figure 13.5.8.67: An arch in the screen (left) and a detail showing the calligraphy on the screen (right), Qutb mosque, screen begun c. 1198, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photos: **Varun Shiv Kapur**, CC BY 2.0; **Dennis Jarvis**, CC BY-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.5.8.68: The prayer hall west of the screen has lost most of its components and the original mihrab (the niche that marks the direction of Mecca) no longer survives. Qutb mosque, c. 1192-3, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: Ronakshah1990, CC BY-SA 4.0).



Figure 13.5.8.69: Iron pillar in the courtyard of the Qutb mosque, dated c. 4th—5th century C.E., Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Ranjith Siji**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

An enduring legacy

In 1206, following the death of Muhammad Ghuri, Aibak declared himself ruler of the independent Mamluk (translated as “slave”) dynasty. Aibak’s efforts in building the Qutb mosque would endure longer than his tenure as sultan. Later rulers retained the mosque during expansions, indicating their reverence for the first mosque built in Delhi, and their regard for Aibak himself.

When Iltutmish became the new sultan of the Mamluk dynasty in 1211, he made Delhi the capital of the sultanate. During his reign, Iltutmish extended the screen and prayer hall on both sides of the west end of the Qutb mosque and added surrounding colonnades that, in effect, enclosed the original mosque. Iltutmish is also believed to have been responsible for the installation of the iron pillar in the mosque, a *dhwaja stambha* (ceremonial pillar) that dates to the fourth or fifth century and was originally installed in a Hindu temple.

The pillar has an inscription in the Sanskrit language that praises and eulogizes a ruler. In installing the pillar in the mosque and giving it pride of place, Iltutmish was following a tradition of previous rulers who appropriated such emblems of historic kingship to announce their legitimacy. In appropriating the pillar—and in effect the Qutb mosque as a whole—Iltutmish sought to affirm his political authority and legitimacy. [5]

Just as Iltutmish enclosed Aibak's mosque with his additions, Ala al-Din Khalji, the ruler of the next Sultanate, would enclose the extension built by Iltutmish. Khalji had even grander plans, although his efforts were only partially realized (see annotated plan below).

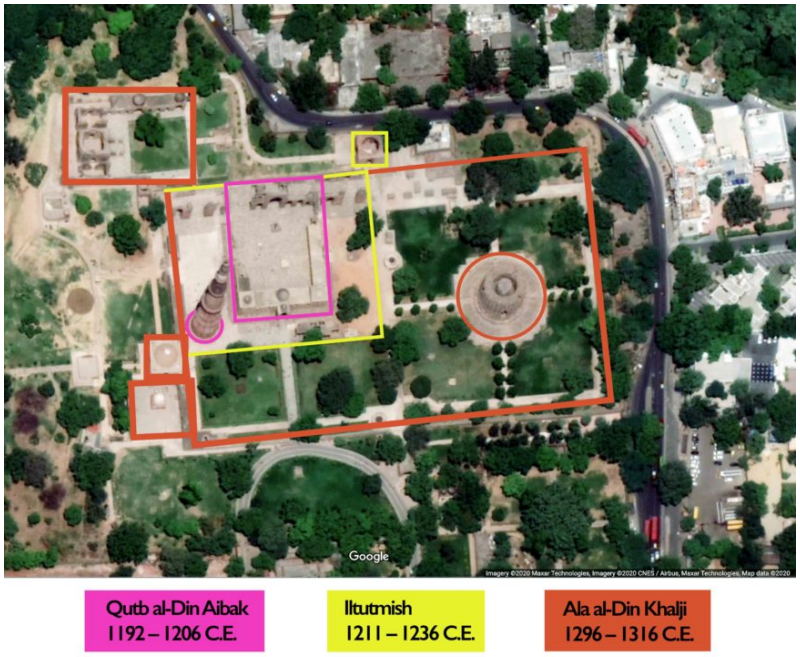


Figure **13.5.8.70**: Plan of the Qutb complex showing the extension of the mosque by Iltutmish and Ala al-din Khalji



Figure **13.5.8.71**: Qutb Minar, begun c. 1192–3, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **lensnmatter**, CC BY-2.0)

The Qutb Minar

In 1192–93, soon after conquering Delhi, Aibak also began work on the Qutb Minar, the impressive 238 foot tall minaret (tower) of red and light sandstone for his Ghurid overlord. The minar's tapering, fluted, and angular bands contribute to the soaring affect of the monument. Its balconies are decorated with *muqarna* style (three-dimensional honeycomb forms) corbels that allow us to imagine the expansive views of Delhi from each of its five stories. The minar is decorated with bands of calligraphy that are both historic (referencing Muhammad Ghuri) and religious.



Figure **13.5.8.72**: Detail of the Qutb Minar, begun c. 1192–3, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **juggadery**, CC BY-2.0)

Construction on the minar had only reached the height of its first story at the time of Aibak's death in 1210. The minar would be completed by Iltutmish and its great height and beauty would became emblematic of the power of the Delhi Sultanate.



Figure **13.5.8.73**: Exterior view of Iltutmish's tomb, c. 1236, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Varun Shiv Kapur**, CC BY 2.0)

An open-air tomb

Iltutmish's tomb, which the namesake commissioned during his reign, is located in the northwest corner of the Qutb complex, outside of the mosque's courtyard. Constructed from new stone (that is, not spolia), this square tomb is relatively simple in its

exterior decorative program, but its interior stuns with its overwhelming ornament. Tall pointed arches frame arched doorways and niches, and calligraphic inscriptions from the Quran, floral ornament, arabesques, and geometric patterns adorn the walls.

Although it has been suggested that the tomb is missing its dome, its absence may have been intentional, allowing light to bathe the marble grave marker. Like the ornament that surrounds the tomb's interior, this light directs our focus to the center of the monument, below which lies Iltutmish's burial chamber.



Figure **13.5.8.74**: Iltutmish's tomb, c. 1236, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Varun Shiv Kapur**, CC BY 2.0)

Like the Qutb mosque and screen, Iltutmish's tomb was built in the post and lintel fashion and its arches were corbeled. In contrast, less than a hundred years later, arches in Ala al-Din Khalji's monuments were constructed with a keystone at its summit.

Domed gateways

Ala al-Din Khalji, a fourteenth century ruler who conducted many campaigns to subjugate rivals and to increase his wealth, had plans to expand the Qutb complex substantially. Although he was largely unsuccessful in realizing these ambitions, a ceremonial gateway attributed to his patronage is one of the site's most important monuments. It is the only remaining monumental gateway of four that are believed to have been built along the perimeter walls of the complex.



Figure **13.5.8.75**: Alai Darwaza, c. 1311, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Dennis Jarvis**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Known as the Alai Darwaza, the gateway is a square structure built in 1311. Like Iltutmish's tomb, the gateway is built from new stone. The tall red base, the alternation of white marble and red sandstone ornament, and the latticed windows lend substantial grandeur to the gateway.

The arches in the Alai Darwaza are in the form of horseshoe arches (literally an arch in the form of a horseshoe); the same form is used to also ornament the **squinches**, i.e., the transition (at the corners of the structure) from the square base to the octagonal ceiling that helps receive the dome. The dome rests on the arches and squinches, in the fashion commonly found in contemporaneous Islamic architecture outside of India.

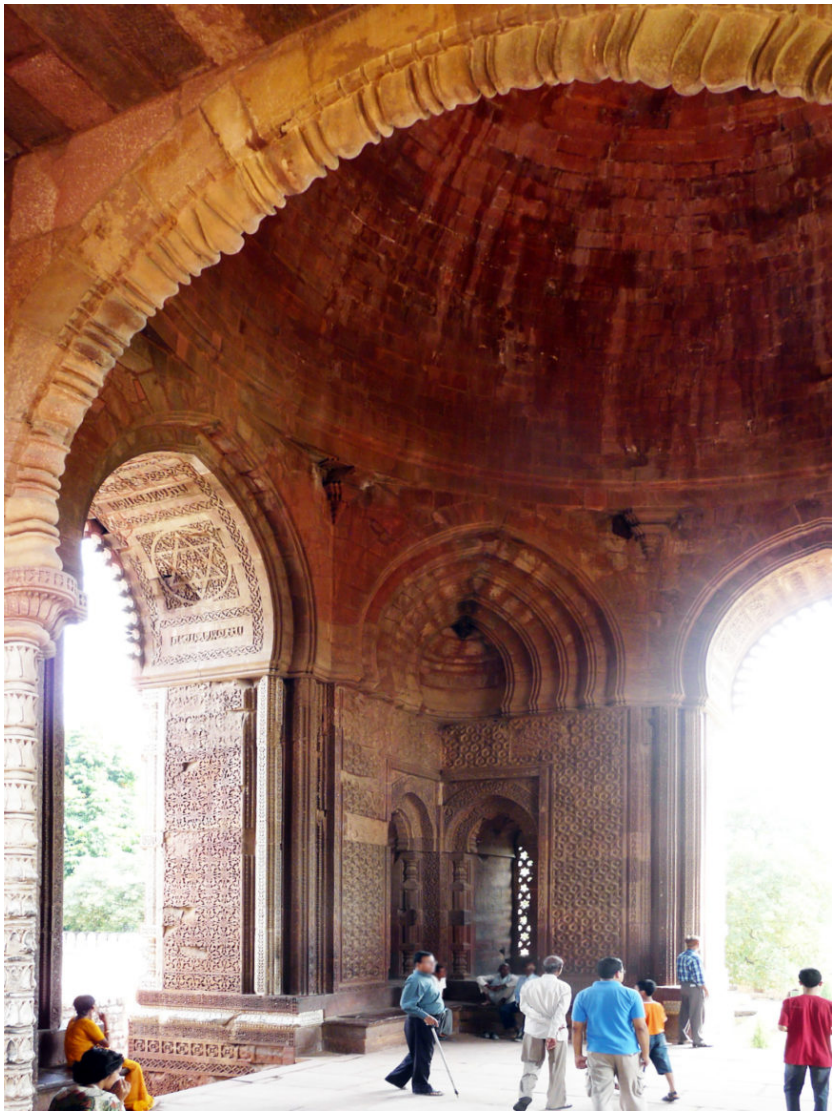


Figure **13.5.8.76**: Interior of the Alai Darwaza showing part of the dome, horseshoe-arch doorways, and the squinch (in the ceiling corner, above the latticed window), c. 1311, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Varun Shiv Kapur**, CC BY 2.0)

While building techniques changed from the corbeled arches of the Qutb mosque to the keystone-arches of the Alai Darwaza, there were also continuities. The use of Indic style architectural ornament (flowers, lotus buds, and bells), for example, remained an emphatic part of the sculptural vocabulary of Sultanate architecture.

Alai Minar

Ala al-Din also began construction of a minar that would have been considerably taller than the Qutb Minar, had it been completed —the unfinished base rises 80 feet in height. All that was built is the rubble core of the structure; the minar would have eventually been faced with stone, perhaps in a fashion and with adornment similar to that of the Qutb Minar.



Figure **13.5.8.77**: Alai Minar, c. 1311, Qutb archaeological complex, Delhi (photo: **Kavaiyan**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The early sultans of the Delhi Sultanate employed architecture as a tool to announce, maintain, and advance their identity as rulers. Much like older monuments were appropriated in the construction of the Qutb mosque, subsequent sultans appropriated the Sultanate's earliest work to advance their claims to legitimacy.

The Qutb complex today

The Qutb complex of monuments is now a popular tourist destination, a transformation that can be traced back to the nineteenth century when the grounds were redesigned to appeal to English colonial visitors. The monuments were surrounded by neatly manicured lawns, roads were diverted for the exclusive use of visitors, and enclosures were built to fashion a tranquil setting. Although the Qutb complex has been changed throughout its history, the vision of its original builders remain plainly transparent.

Many thanks to Dr. Marta Becherini for her comments on this essay.

Notes:

[1] The five dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate were: Mamluk (1206–90), Khalji (1290–1320), Tughlaq (1320–1414), Sayyid (1414–51), and Lodi dynasties (1451–1526).

[2] These were Qutb al-Din Aibak (ruled 1206–10) and Shams al-Din Iltutmish (r. 1211–36) of the Mamluk Sultanate, and Ala al-Din (r. 1296–1316) of the Khalji Sultanate.

[3] Flood has shown that the inscription referencing the use of stone from 27 temples in the mosque's entrance is anachronistic to Aibak's reign; it is hence not considered here. See Finbarr Barry Flood, "Appropriation as Inscription: Making History in the First Friday Mosque of Delhi." In *Reuse value [electronic resource] : spolia and appropriation in art and architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, edited by Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 121-47.

[4] See Flood's *Objects of translation: material culture and medieval "Hindu-Muslim" encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); "Refiguring Iconoclasm in the early Indian mosque." In *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, edited by Anne McClanan and Jeff Johnson (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 15–40; and "Appropriation as Inscription."

[5] Flood, *Objects*, pp. 247-51.

References:

Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Aditi Chandra, "On *Becoming* a Monument: Landscaping, Views, and Tourists at the Qutb Complex," in *On the Becoming and Unbecoming of Monuments: Archaeology, Tourism and Delhi's Islamic Architecture (1828-1963).* University of Minnesota, 2011, pp. 16-70.

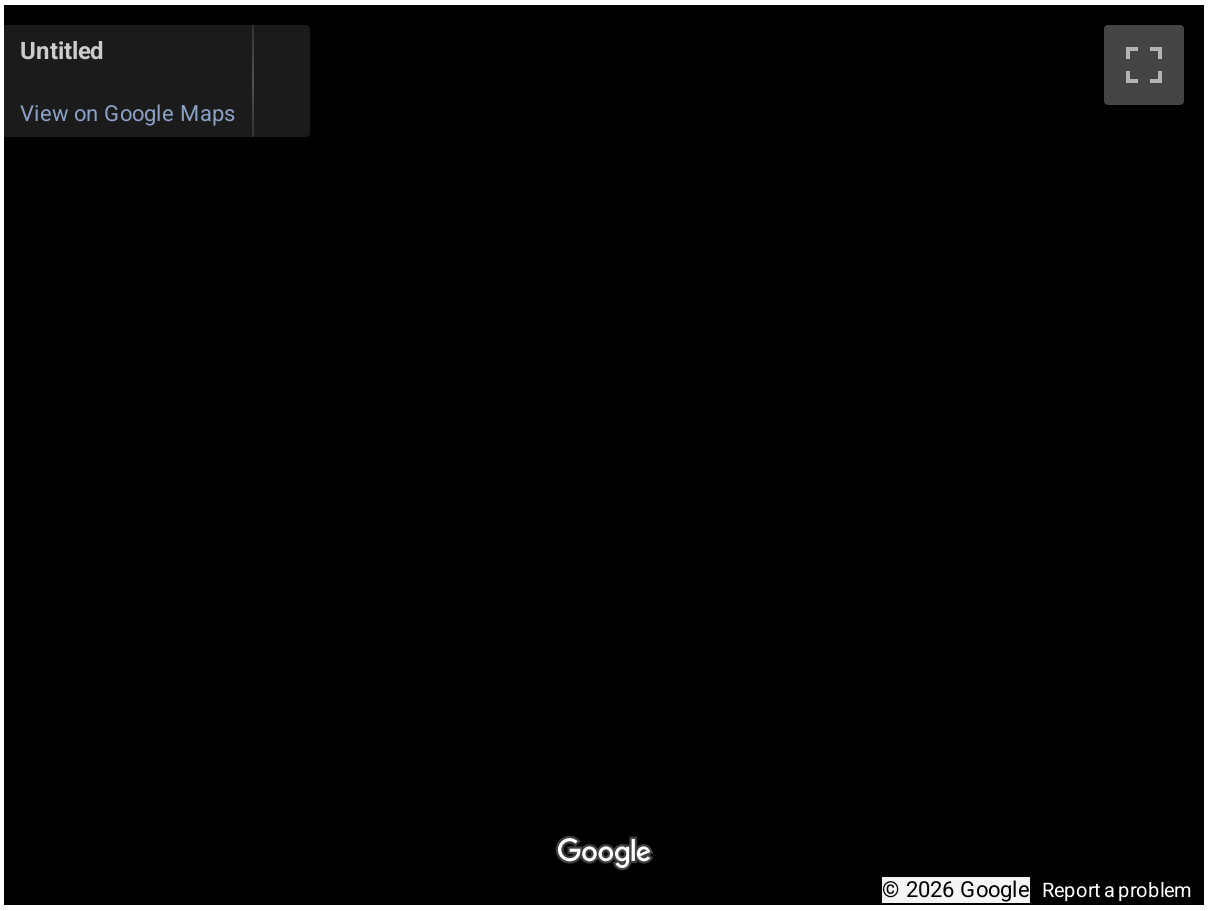
Finbarr Barry Flood, "Appropriation as Inscription: Making History in the First Friday Mosque of Delhi." In *Reuse value [electronic resource] : spolia and appropriation in art and architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, edited by Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 121-47.

Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of translation: material culture and medieval "Hindu-Muslim" encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

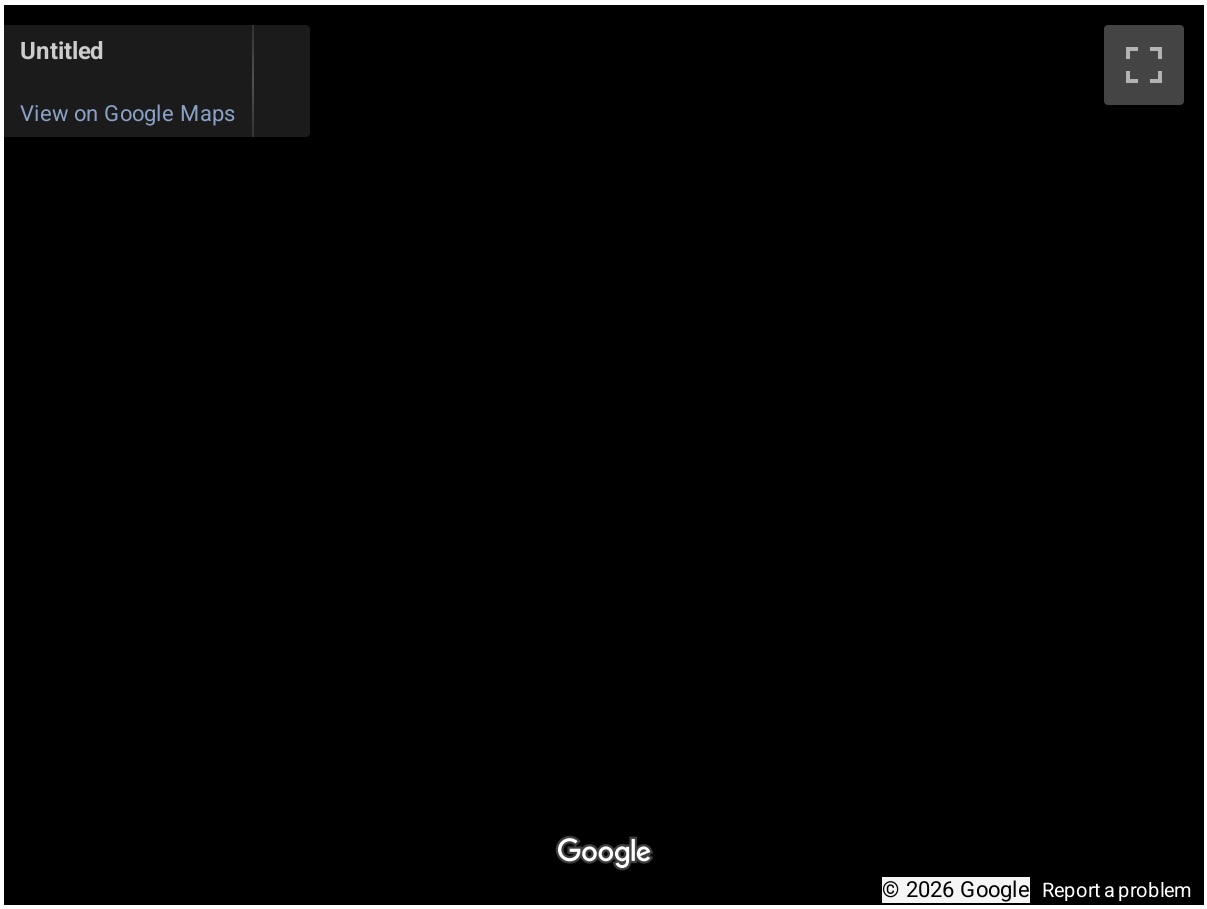
Finbarr Barry Flood, "Refiguring Iconoclasm in the early Indian mosque." In *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, edited by Anne McClanan and Jeff Johnson (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 15–40.

Street views:

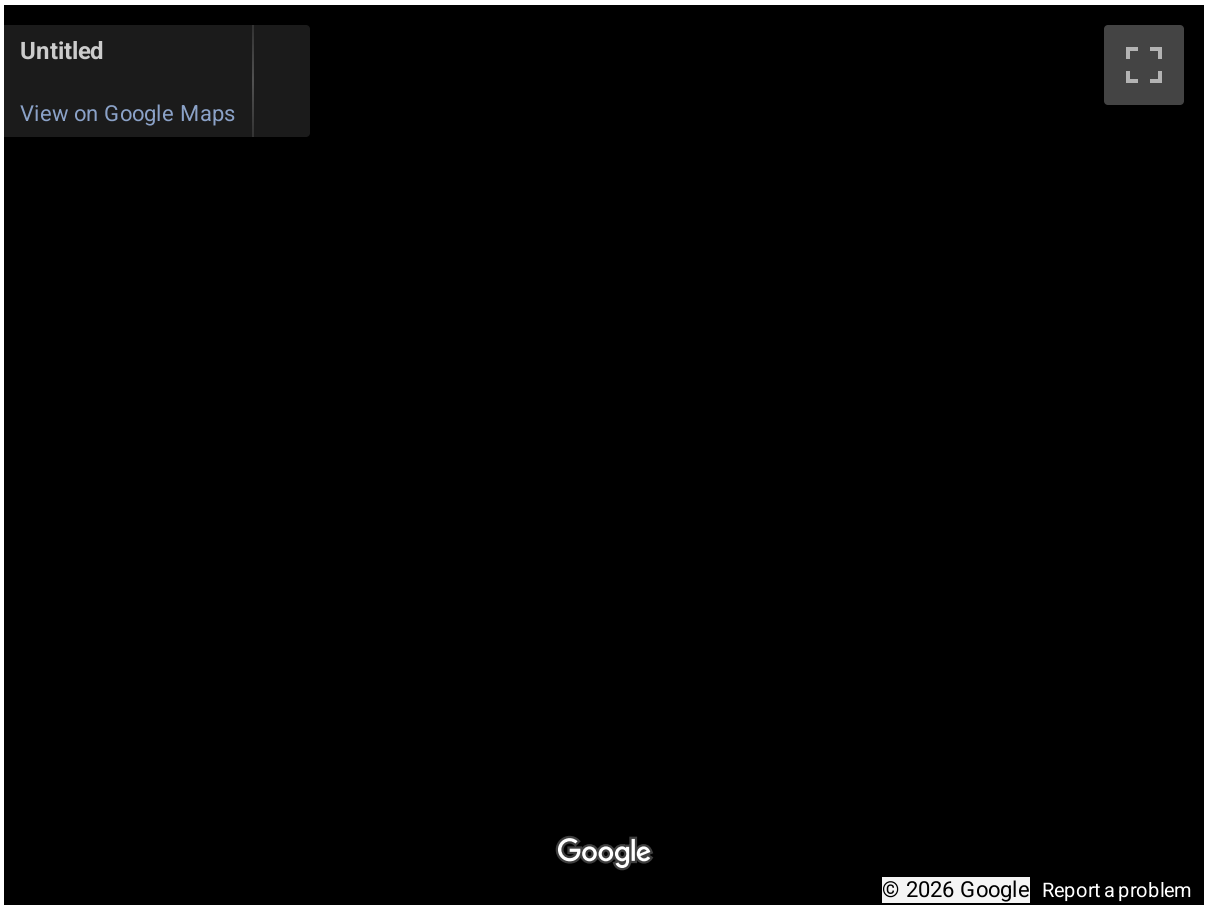
Qutb mosque



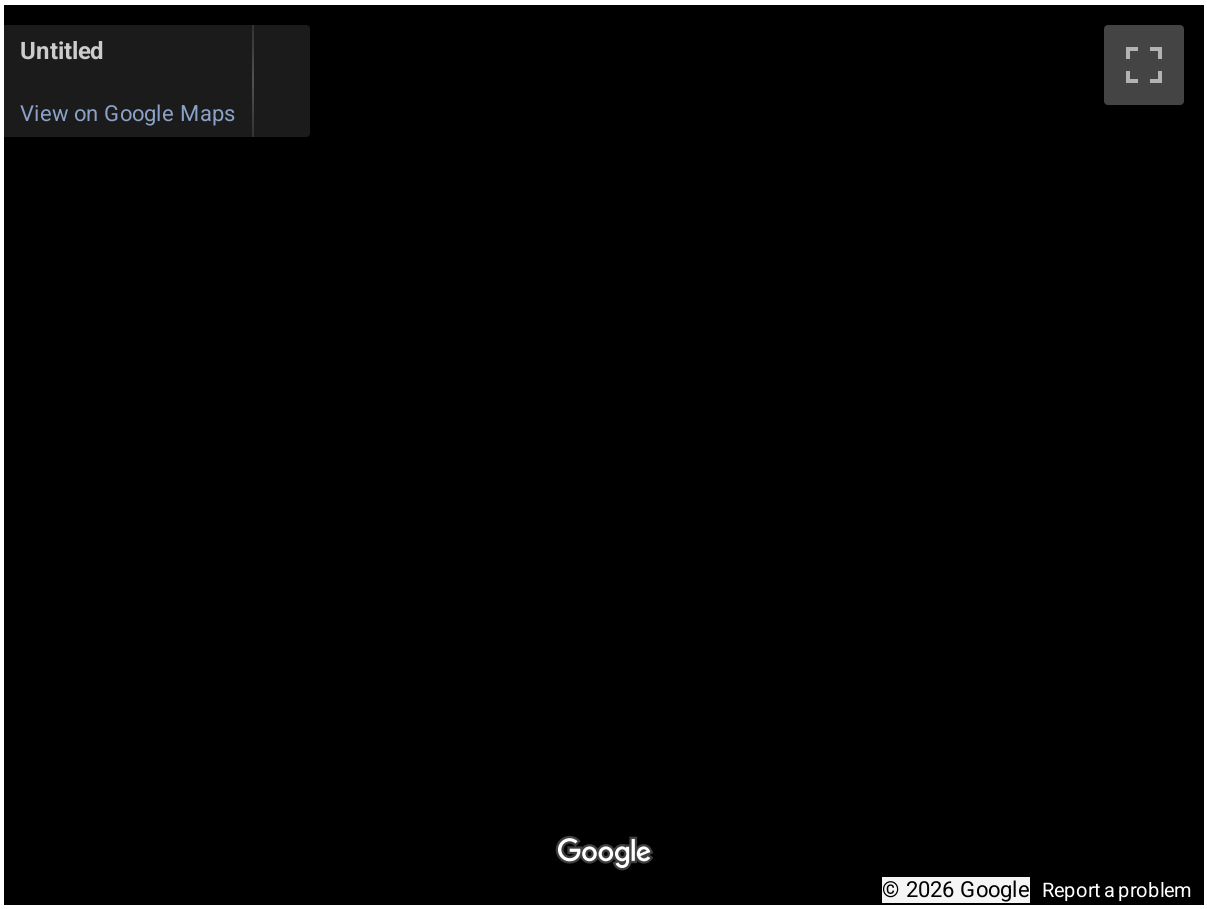
Qutb Minar



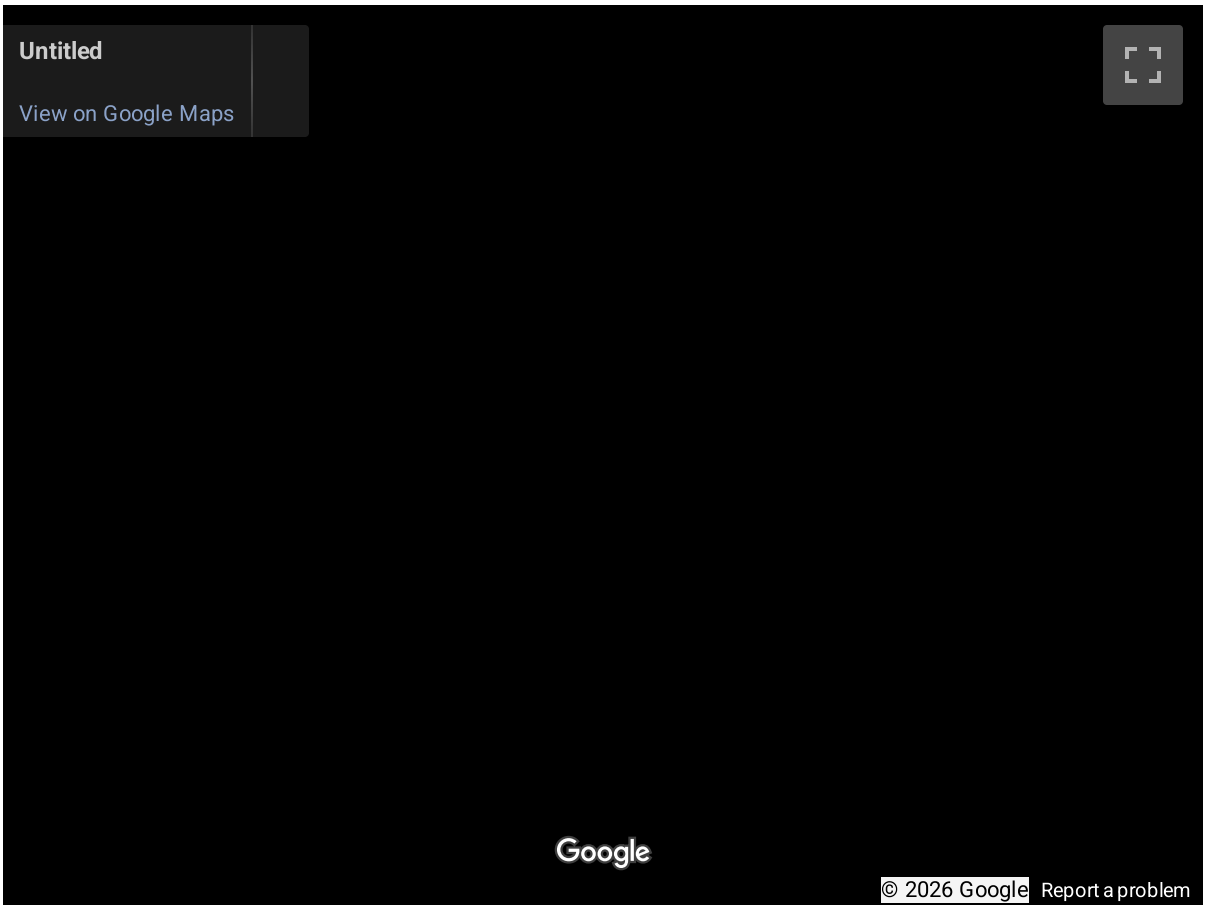
View of Iltutmish's tomb



Alai Darwaza


Untitled
View on Google Maps
Google
© 2026 Google
Report a problem

Alai Minar



Art of the Mughal empire

Islam gained influence in India under the Mughals in the sixteenth century.

1526 - 1858

The Taj Mahal

by ROSHNA KAPADIA



Figure **13.5.8.78**: Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: **Mathew Knott**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Shah Jahan was the fifth ruler of the Mughal dynasty. During the third year of his reign, his favorite wife (known as Mumtaz Mahal), died due to complications arising from the birth of their fourteenth child. Deeply saddened, the emperor started planning the construction of a suitable, permanent resting place for his beloved wife almost immediately. The result of his efforts and resources was the creation of what was called the Luminous Tomb in contemporary Mughal texts and is what the world knows today as the Taj Mahal.

In general terms, Sunni Muslims favor a simple burial, under an open sky. But notable domed mausolea for Mughals (as well as for other Central Asian rulers) were built prior to Shah Jahan's rule, so in this regard, the Taj is not unique. The Taj is, however, exceptional for its monumental scale, stunning gardens, lavish ornamentation, and its overt use of white marble.



Figure 13.5.8.79: Taj Mahal and Yamuna River (photo: Louis Vest, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The location



Figure 13.5.8.80: Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal in Agra, where he took the throne in 1628. First conquered by Muslim invaders in the eleventh century, the city had been transformed into a flourishing area of trade during Shah Jahan's rule. Situated on the banks of the Yamuna River allowed for easy access to water, and Agra soon earned the reputation as a "riverfront garden city," on account of its meticulously planned gardens, lush with flowering bushes and fruit-bearing trees in the sixteenth century.



Figure **13.5.8.81**: Entrance, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53

Entry to the Taj Mahal complex via the forecourt, which in the sixteenth century housed shops, and through a monumental gate of inlaid and highly decorated red sandstone made for a first impression of grand splendor and symmetry: aligned along a long water channel through this gate is the Taj—set majestically on a raised platform on the north end. The rectangular complex runs roughly 1860 feet on the north-south axis, and 1000 feet on the east-west axis.

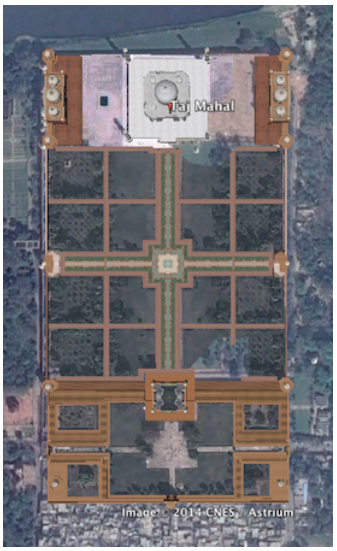


Figure **13.5.8.82**: Aerial view from Google Earth, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53

The white-marble mausoleum is flanked on either side by identical buildings in red sandstone. One of these serves as a mosque, and the other, whose exact function is unknown, provides architectural balance.

The marble structure is topped by a bulbous dome and surrounded by four minarets of equal height. While minarets in Islamic architecture are usually associated with mosques—for use by the muezzin who leads the call to prayer—here, they are not functional, but ornamental, once again underscoring the Mughal focus on structural balance and harmony.

The interior floor plan of the Taj exhibits the *hasht bishisht* (eight levels) principle, alluding to the eight levels of paradise. Consisting of eight halls and side rooms connected to the main space in a cross-axial plan—the favored design for Islamic architecture from the mid-fifteenth century—the center of the main chamber holds Mumtaz Mahal's intricately decorated marble cenotaph on a raised platform. The emperor's cenotaph was laid down beside hers after he died three decades later—both are encased in an octagon of exquisitely carved white-marble screens. The coffins bearing their remains lie in the spaces directly beneath the cenotaphs.



Figure 13.5.8.83: Cenotaphs, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: Derek A Young, CC BY-NC 2.0)



Figure 13.5.8.84: Carving and inlaid stone, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: Martin Lambie, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Qur'anic verses inscribed into the walls of the building and designs inlaid with semi-precious stones—coral, onyx, carnelian, amethyst, and lapis lazuli—add to the splendor of the Taj's white exterior. The dominant theme of the carved imagery is floral, showing some recognizable, and other fanciful species of flowers—another link to the theme of paradise

Some of the Taj Mahal's architecture fuses aspects from other Islamic traditions, but other aspects reflect with indigenous style elements. In particular, this is evident in the umbrella-shaped ornamental chhatris (dome shaped pavillions) atop the pavilions and minarets.

And whereas most Mughal-era buildings tended to use red stone for exteriors and functional architecture (such as military buildings and forts)—reserving white marble for special inner spaces or for the tombs of holy men, the Taj's entire main structure is constructed of white marble and the auxiliary buildings are composed of red sandstone. This white-and-red color scheme of the built complex may correspond with principles laid down in ancient Hindu texts—in which white stood for purity and the priestly class, and red represented the color of the warrior class.

The gardens

Stretching in front of the Taj Mahal is a monumental char bagh garden. Typically, a char bagh was divided into four main quadrants, with a building (such as a pavilion or tomb) along its central axis. When viewed from the main gateway today, the Taj Mahal appears to deviate from this norm, as it is not centrally placed within the garden, but rather located at the end of a complex that is backed by the river, such as was found in other Mughal-era pleasure gardens.



Figure 13.5.8.85: View from the Mahtab Bagh, Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: Steve Evans, CC BY-NC 2.0)

When viewed from the Mahtab Bagh, moonlight gardens, across the river, however, the monument appears to be centrally located in a grander complex than originally thought. This view, only possible when one incorporates the Yamuna River into the complex, speaks to the brilliance of the architect. Moreover, by raising the Taj onto an elevated foundation, the builders ensured that Shah Jahan's funerary complex as well as the tombs of other Mughal nobles along with their attached gardens could be viewed from many angles along the river.

The garden incorporated waterways and fountains. This was a new type of gardening that was introduced to India by Babur, Shah Jahan's great great grandfather in the sixteenth century. Given the passage of time and the intervention of many individuals in the garden since its construction, it is hard to determine the original planting and layout scheme of the garden beds at the Taj.

From the outset, the Taj was conceived of as a building that would be remembered for its magnificence for ages to come, and to that end, the best material and skills were employed. The finest marble came from quarries 250 miles away in Makrarna, Rajasthan. Mir Abd Al-Karim was designated as the lead architect. Abdul Haqq was chosen as the calligrapher, and Ustad Ahmad Lahauri was made the supervisor. Shah Jahan made sure that the principles of Mughal architecture were incorporated into the design throughout the building process.



Figure 13.5.8.86: Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-53 (photo: LASZLO ILYES, CC BY 2.0)

What the Taj Mahal represents

When Mumtaz Mahal died at age 38 in 1631, the emperor is reported to have refused to engage in court festivities, postponed two of his sons' weddings, and allegedly made frequent visits to his wife's temporary resting place (in Burhanpur) during the time it took for the building of the Taj to be completed. Stories like these have led to the Taj Mahal being referred to as an architectural

"symbol of love" in popular literature. But there are other theories: one suggests that the Taj is not a funeral monument, and that Shah Jahan might have built a similar structure even if his wife had not died. Based on the metaphoric specificity of Qur'anic and other inscriptions and the emperor's love of thrones, another theory maintains that the Taj Mahal is a symbolic representation of a Divine Throne—the seat of God—on the Day of Judgment. A third view holds that the monument was built to represent a replica of a house of paradise. In the "paradisiacal mansion" theory, the Taj was something of a vanity project, built to glorify Mughal rule and the emperor himself.

If his accession to the throne was smooth, Shah Jahan's departure from it was not. The emperor died not as a ruler, but as a prisoner. Relegated to Agra Fort under house arrest for eight years prior to his death in 1666, Shah Jahan could enjoy only a distant view of the Taj Mahal. But the resplendent marble mausoleum he built "with posterity in mind" endures, more than 350 years after it was constructed, and is believed to be the most recognizable sight in the world today. Laid to rest beside his beloved wife in the Taj Mahal, the man once called Padshah—King of the World—enjoys enduring fame, too, for having commissioned the world's most extravagant and memorable mausoleum.

Backstory

The Taj Mahal is one of the world's great tourist attractions, hosting millions of visitors per year. Though it was designated as **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1983 and is currently overseen by the Archaeological Survey of India, its heavy visitor traffic is just one of the many factors that threaten the integrity of the site.

One of the biggest risk factors for the Taj Mahal is air pollution, which discolors the exterior and, some experts think, causes acid rain that deteriorates the marble. Air pollution is caused by a multitude of factors including industry, vehicle emissions, and the burning of household waste. The government of India designated an area called the Taj Trapezium Zone (named for its trapezoidal shape), a 10,400 square kilometer swath (about 4,000 square miles) of Agra encompassing the Taj Mahal as well as the Agra Fort and the historic Mughal settlement of Fatehpur Sikri. Oil refineries and coal-burning industries have been ordered to regulate their emissions or switch to natural gas within this zone, and most have complied.

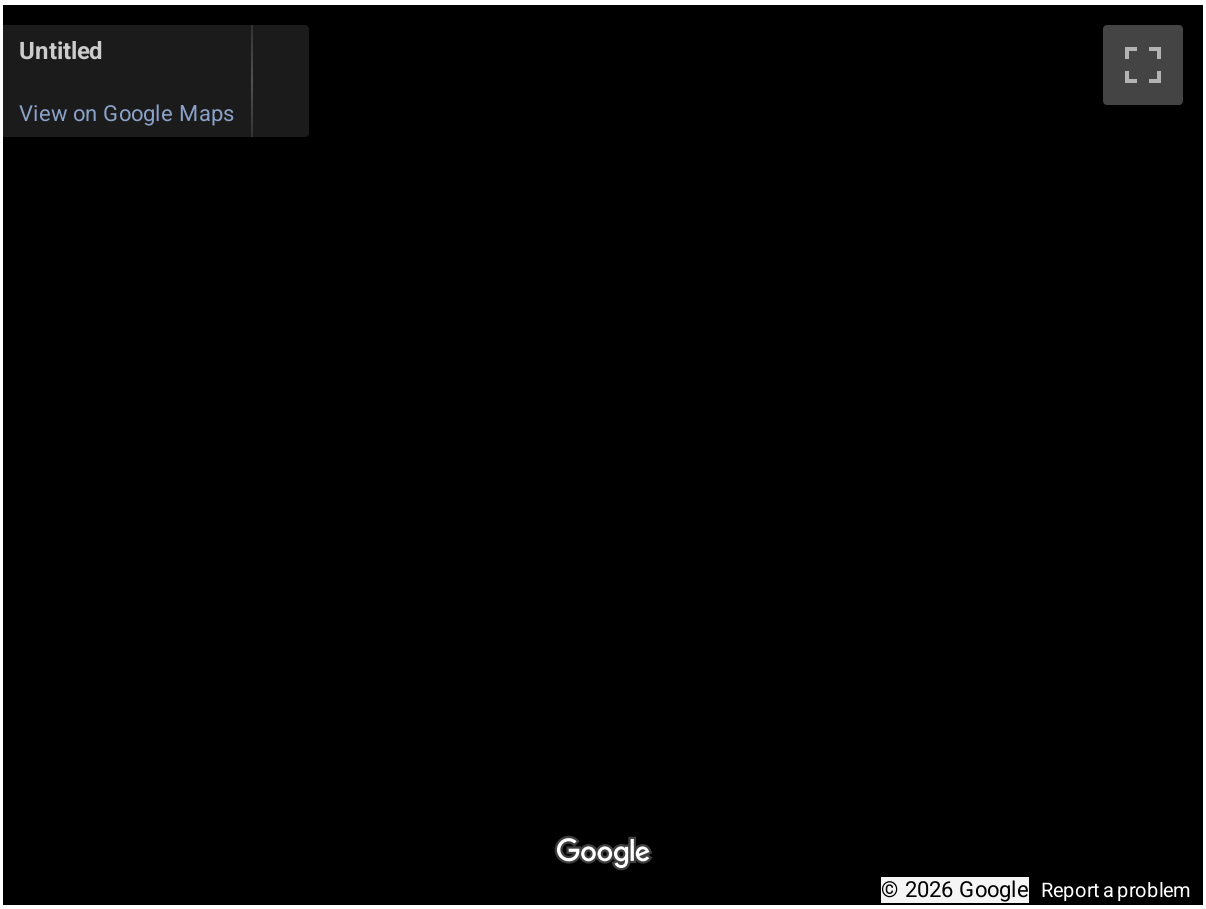
There has also been a ban on auto traffic near the Taj Mahal, air quality monitors have been installed, and the Archaeological Survey of India has proposed a **tourist cap** and increased fees to limit visitor impact.

Another potential risk for the Taj Mahal is the drying up of the Yamuna River, which flows along the rear of the complex. The river has been partially dammed upstream from the Taj Mahal in order to augment municipal water supplies, and some argue that the changes in the soil due to the lower water table may be threatening the structural integrity of the monument. **Various activists and scholars** have claimed to have found cracks in the marble platform, sinking of the structure, and tipping of the minarets, though **UNESCO** asserts that

> ***The physical fabric is in good condition and structural stability, nature of foundation, verticality of the minarets and other constructional aspects of Taj Mahal have been studied and continue to be monitored.***

The Taj Mahal is rightly a top destination for millions of travelers. As global tourism grows and the economic pressures of industry continue to increase, the authorities who oversee the site must strive to implement legal and structural measures to ensure that this irreplaceable monument survives.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee



Additional resources:

The Taj Mahal on the UNESCO website

Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor, translated, edited and annotated by Wheeler M. Thackston (Oxford University Press, 1996).

Milo C. Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World: The Padshahnama*, with new Translations by Wheeler Thackston (Thames and Hudson, 1997).

Wayne Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of its Symbolic Meaning," *Art Bulletin*, vol 61, no 1, March 1979, pp. 7-37.

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (Phaidon, 1997).

Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of its History and Development (1526-1858)* (Neues Publishing Company, 1991).

_____, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (Thames and Hudson, 2006).

_____, "The Taj Mahal: Architecture, Symbolism and Urban Significance," *Muqarnas*, vol. 22, 2005.

George Michell, George and Amit Pasricha, *Mughal Architecture and Gardens* (Antique Collectors' Club, 2011).

D. Fairchild Ruggles, "A Garden in Landscape," in *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes: Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

Giles Tillotson, *Taj Mahal* (Harvard University Press, 2008).

"How to Save the Taj Mahal?" Smithsonian.com, September 2011

"Is a cap on tourists at the Taj Mahal a sign of things to come?" *The Telegraph*, January 5, 2018

"The Slow Decay of the Taj Mahal," *The Diplomat*, August 1, 2016

Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*

by ROSHNA KAPADIA



Figure **13.5.8.87**: Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Seizer of the world

When Akbar, the third Emperor of the Mughal dynasty, had no living heir at age 28, he consulted with a Sufi (an Islamic mystic), Shaikh Salim, who assured him a son would come. Soon after, when a male child was born, he was named Salim. Upon his ascent to the throne in 1605, Prince Salim decided to give himself the honorific title of Nur ud-Din ("Light of Faith") and the name Jahangir ("Seizer of the World").

In this miniature painting, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*, flames of gold radiate from the Emperor's head against a background of a larger, darker gold disc. A slim crescent moon hugs most of the disc's border, creating a harmonious fusion between the sun and the moon (thus, day and night), and symbolizing the ruler's emperorship and divine truth.

Jahangir is shown seated on an elevated, stone-studded platform whose circular form mimics the disc above. The Emperor is the biggest of the five human figures painted, and the disc with his halo—a visual manifestation of his title of honor—is the largest object in this painting.



Figure **13.5.8.88**: Emperor on a pedestal (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Jahangir favors a holy man over kings

Jahangir faces four bearded men of varying ethnicity, who stand in a receiving-line format on a blue carpet embellished with arabesque flower designs and fanciful beast motifs. Almost on par with the Emperor's level stands the Sufi Shaikh, who accepts the gifted book, a hint of a smile brightening his face. By engaging directly only with the Shaikh, Jahangir is making a statement about his spiritual leanings. Inscriptions in the cartouches on the top and bottom margins of the folio reiterate the fact that the Emperor favors visitation with a holy man over an audience with kings.



Figure 13.5.8.89: From top to bottom, in order of importance, Ottoman Sultan, King James I of England, and the artist Bichitr (detail), *Bichitr, Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Below the Shaikh, and thus, second in the hierarchical order of importance, stands an Ottoman Sultan. The unidentified leader, dressed in gold-embroidered green clothing and a turban tied in a style that distinguishes him as a foreigner, looks in the direction of the throne, his hands joined in respectful supplication.

The third standing figure awaiting a reception with the Emperor has been identified as King James I of England. By his European attire—plumed hat worn at a tilt; pink cloak; fitted shirt with lace ruff; and elaborate jewelry—he appears distinctive. His uniquely frontal posture and direct gaze also make him appear indecorous and perhaps even uneasy.

Last in line is Bichitr, the artist responsible for this miniature, shown wearing an understated yellow jama (robe) tied on his left, which indicates that he is a Hindu in service at the Mughal court—a reminder that artists who created Islamic art were not always Muslim.

This miniature folio was once a part of a muraqqa', or album, which would typically have had alternating folios containing calligraphic text and painting. In all, six such albums are attributed to the rule of Jahangir and his heir, Shah Jahan. But the folios, which vary greatly in subject matter, have now been widely dispersed over collections across three continents.

During Mughal rule artists were singled out for their special talents—some for their detailed work in botanical paintings; others for naturalistic treatment of fauna; while some artists were lauded for their calligraphic skills. In recent scholarship, Bichitr's reputation is strong in formal portraiture, and within this category, his superior rendering of hands.



Figure 13.5.8.90: Shaikh's bare hands and the bejeweled hands of Jahangir (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Jahangir and the Shaikh

Clear to the observer is the stark contrast between Jahangir's gem-studded wrist bracelets and finger rings and the Shaikh's bare hands, the distinction between rich and poor, and the pursuit of material and spiritual endeavors. Less clear is the implied deference to the Emperor by the elderly Shaikh's decision to accept the imperial gift not directly in his hands, but in his shawl (thereby avoiding physical contact with a royal personage, a cultural taboo). A similar principle is at work in the action of the Sultan who presses his palms together in a respectful gesture. By agreeing to adopt the manner of greeting of the foreign country in which he is a guest, the Ottoman leader exhibits both respect and humility.



Figure 13.5.8.91: King James I of England (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

King James

King James' depiction is slightly more complex: Bichitr based his image of the English monarch on a portrait by John de Crtiz, which is believed to have been given to Jahangir by Sir Thomas Roe, the first English Ambassador to the Mughal court (this was a way to cement diplomatic relations and gifted items went both ways, east and west). In Bichitr's miniature, only one of King James's hands can be seen, and it is worth noting that it has been positioned close to—but not touching—the hilt of his weapon. Typically, at this time, portraits of European Kings depicted one hand of the monarch resting on his hip, and the other on his sword. Thus, we can speculate that Bichitr deliberately altered the positioning of the king's hand to avoid an interpretation of a threat to his Emperor.

A self-portrait

Finally, the artist paints himself holding a red-bordered miniature painting as though it were a prized treasure. In this tiny painting-within-a-painting, Bichitr replicates his yellow jama (a man's robe)—perhaps to clarify his identity—and places himself alongside

two horses and an elephant, which may have been imperial gifts. He shows himself bowing in the direction of his Emperor in humble gratitude. To underscore his humility, Bichitr puts his signature on the stool over which the Emperor's feet would have to step in order to take his seat.



Figure 13.5.8.92: Angel's at Jahangir's pedestal (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Putti and other (more mysterious) figures

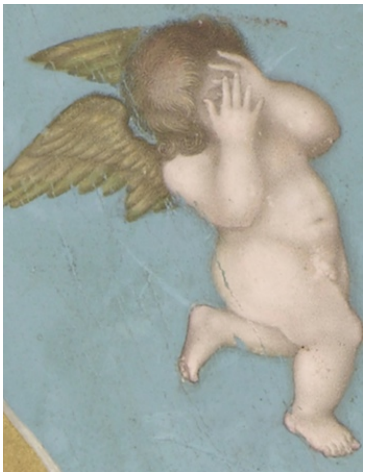


Figure 13.5.8.93: Crying putto (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Beneath Jahangir's seat, crouching angels write (in Persian), "O Shah, May the Span of Your Life be a Thousand Years," at the base of a mighty hourglass that makes up the pedestal of Jahangir's throne. This reading is a clear allusion to the passage of time, but the putti figures (borrowed from European iconography) suspended in mid-air toward the top of the painting provide few clues as to their purpose or meaning.

Facing away from the Emperor, the putto on the left holds a bow with a broken string and a bent arrow, while the one on the right covers his face with his hands. Does he shield his eyes from the Emperor's radiance, as some scholars believe? Or as others suggest, is he crying because time is running out for the Emperor (as represented in the slipping sand in the hourglass)?



Figure **13.5.8.94**: Kneeling figure at base of footstool (detail), Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* from the "St. Petersburg Album," 1615-1618, opaque watercolor, gold and ink on paper, 18 x 25.3 cm (Freer|Sackler: The Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art)

Also cryptic is the many-headed kneeling figure that forms the base of Jahangir's footstool. Questions remain as to who these auxiliary figures are and what they or their actions represent.

Allegorical portraits were a popular painting genre among Jahangir's court painters from 1615. To flatter their Emperor, Jahangir's artists portrayed him in imagined victories over rivals and enemies or painted events reflecting imperial desire. Regardless of whether Jahangir actually met the Shaikh or was visited by a real Ottoman Sultan (King James I certainly did not visit the Mughal court), Bichitr has dutifully indulged his patron's desire to be seen as powerful ruler (in a position of superiority to other kings), but with a spiritual bent. While doing so, the artist has also cleverly taken the opportunity to immortalize himself.

Additional resources:

This work at the Freer|Sackler

Commentary by Stuart Cary Welch on this miniature

High resolution image at the Google Art Project

The Art of the Mughals after 1600 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Another image of Jahangir from the same album at the Freer|Sackler

Crill, Rosemary and Kapil Jariwala, eds. *The Indian Portrait: 1580-1860* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2010).

Guy, John and Jorrit Britschgi, *The Wonder of the Age: Master Painters of India 1100-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011).

Thomas Lawton and Thomas W Lenz, eds. *Beyond the Legacy: Anniversary Acquisition for the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M Sackler Gallery* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998).

Julian Raby, ed. *Ideals of Beauty: Asian and American Art in the Freer and Sackler Galleries* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2010).

Sumathi Ramaswamy, "The Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 49 no. 4 (2007), pp. 751-782.

Seyller, John, "A Mughal Code of Connoisseurship," *Muqarnas*, vol. 17 (2000), pp. 177-202.

Welch, Stuart Cary. *India: Art and Culture 1300-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985).

Wright, Elaine, ed. *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2008).

by KATRINA KLAASMEYER



Figure 13.5.8.95: "Emperor Akbar on an elephant hunt," Basawan and Chetar, illustrations from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, each page 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

In these small, brilliantly-colored paintings from the *Akbarnama* (*Book of Akbar*), a rampaging elephant crashes over a bridge of boats on the River Jumna, in front of the Agra Fort. He is so out of control that his tusks, trunk, and front leg burst through the edge of the frame (see image below). Several nearby men scramble to get out of the way, clinging to the edges of their boats or leaping into the water for safety. The accompanying right page shows a swirling mass of onlookers, each expressing distress and astonishment at the event unfolding before their eyes.



Figure **13.5.8.96**: “Ran Bagha crossing the River Jumna” (detail), Basawan and Chetar, illustration from the Akbarnama, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

The scene is a royal elephant hunt where the Mughal emperor, Akbar, has mounted Hawa’i—an elephant known for its wild and uncontrollable disposition—to fight the equally fierce elephant Ran Bagha, who leads them on a wild chase across the river. The most prominent onlooker is the Prime Minister Ataga Khan, **who holds his hands in prayer** for a peaceful resolution to this chaotic scene. In the midst of the turmoil, we see Emperor Akbar, upright and unfazed, riding barefoot on the royal elephant—the very embodiment of majestic strength, courage, and faith in divine protection (below). These illustrations encapsulate, both symbolically and literally, the significant achievements of this remarkable man as told in the *Akbarnama*, the book he commissioned as the official chronicle of his reign.



Figure **13.5.8.97**: Basawan and Chetar, “Akbar” (detail) from the Akbarnama, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum, London**)

Akbar the Great

Abū al-Fatḥ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar was the third emperor of a new dynasty, the Mughals, a Muslim empire established in India in the early sixteenth century by Babur, a descendent of Genghis Khan. (The name itself, Mughal, attests to this legacy, as it is the Persian and Arabic word for “Mongol”). Upon Babur’s death in 1530, the new empire was left to his 22-year-old son, Humayun, who quickly lost control of the majority of his domain as sultans fought to regain their land. In 1543 Humayun was forced to flee India and leave his young son Akbar in the care of his family at Kandahar.



Figure 13.5.8.98: Emperor Humayun, 18th century, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor on paper, 18.3 x 11.1 cm (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

These events could have led to the end of both the fledgling empire and their lives, yet circumstances took a turn that had a profound impact on the destiny of the Mughals, and in particular that of Akbar. The Safavid Shah Tahmasp I welcomed Humayun to his court in Persia (present-day Iran), not as a fugitive, but as an equal, granting him protection and military support. Immersed for two years in the refinement and splendor of the arts and culture there, Humayun was exposed to an opulence and sophistication unlike anything he had ever seen in his father's military encampments. As a result of his stay in Iran, the original language of the Mughals was abandoned in favor of Persian, monumental architectural forms were adopted and refined, and an imperial workshop of painters in the Persian miniature style was founded. Reunited with his son in 1545, Humayun eventually regained control of India before dying suddenly in 1556. When Akbar inherited the Mughal territories at 13 years old, he was surrounded by rivals on all sides: there was no stable government, no art the empire could call its own, and not much hope for a future. However, within less than 50 years, Akbar created all of these things and succeeded in bringing together the diverse peoples and cultures of India to form an unprecedented, cooperative whole. Akbar was instrumental in the formation of a powerful empire that lasted over 200 years.



Figure **13.5.8.99**: "Emperor Akbar chasing Ran Bagha across the River Jumna," Basawan and Chetar, illustration from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

Across many cultures and time periods, a ruler's control over the natural world is a defining symbol of noble power, and Mughal India was no exception. Akbar's regal authority, military prowess, and personal courage are visibly celebrated in this painting through his complete control of an elephant—an animal with a long history in Indian culture as the embodiment of majesty, power, and dignity. Yet this illustration shows us Akbar's great triumphs in more than just the subject matter: the innovations in the work's artistic style are also reflective of the acute intelligence, voracious curiosity, and enthusiastic artistic sponsorship for which Akbar is remembered.

Mughal painting under Akbar the Great

Akbar was a champion of new styles in literature, architecture, music, and painting. Although he was illiterate, at the time of his death in 1605 the imperial library contained 24,000 volumes, and the number of painters in the imperial workshop had expanded greatly. Much like his political policies, which encouraged tolerance, Akbar's court included artists from all regions of India, creating a melting pot of techniques and styles. As a result, Mughal painting under Akbar the Great is known for its unique blend of indigenous Indian, Persian, and Western traditions.

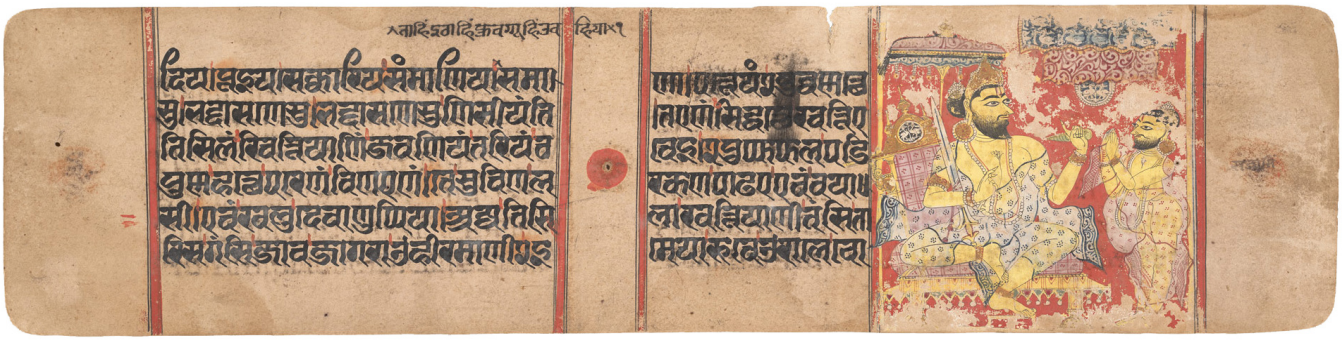


Figure **13.5.8.100**: "King Siddhartha Listens to an Astrologer Forecast the Conception and Birth of His Son, the Jina Mahavira," from a *Kalpasutra* manuscript, late 14th century, India, opaque watercolor on paper, 8.6 x 35.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

This page from a *Kalpasutra* manuscript from the fourteenth century beautifully illustrates the basic qualities of the Indian tradition, with its use of bold primary colors and its horizontal format. The visual emphasis is on the text, which occupies roughly two-thirds of the page. Although the illustration (which shows King Siddhartha speaking to an astrologer who will foretell his son's birth) takes up the smallest portion of the page, the size of the figure is very large in relation to the picture plane, with the king's form filling up the space of the frame.



Figure 13.5.8.101: "The Concourse of the Birds," from Habiballah of Sava, *Mantiq al-tair (Language of the Birds*), c. 1600, Iran, ink, opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper, 25.4 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

In contrast, the Persian tradition (above) preferred a vertical format, with greater emphasis on landscape and decorative elements. In "The Concourse of the Birds," an illustration of a mystical poem made around 1600, the color palette is much more subdued, with a preference for pastel colors like pinks, soft blues, and soft greens. The figures in the painting are relatively small, completely embedded within a scene that is rendered with painstaking detail. The subject matter of this type of manuscript—typically poetry or the pleasures of courtly life—was meant to illustrate the elegance and refinement of the ruler. How could it be possible to blend two such disparate artistic traditions?



Figure **13.5.8.102**: “Lovers in a Landscape,” Mir Kalan Khan, 1760-70, India, miniature pasted on an album leaf, 22.2 × 15.2 cm (**The David Collection**, Copenhagen)

To further complicate matters, Western missionaries made contact with Akbar in the late sixteenth century, bringing with them European artworks and religious texts illustrated with engravings. Akbar and his expansive atelier of painters were intrigued by the illusion of depth achieved through linear perspective, as well as by novel visual attributes such as halos on religious figures. Some scholars have characterized these Western artistic traditions as the ultimate goal to which Akbar and his painters aspired; however, many Islamic artists instead integrated this new visual vocabulary into their own rich traditions. In “Lovers in a Landscape” (above), a miniature made by Mir Kalan Khan in the eighteenth century, the two figures on the left are distinctly Persian in style, with three-quarter views of their faces, slender, swaying bodies, and densely patterned clothing. By contrast, the woman on the right is seen in profile, with hints of Western-style depth and volume such as the gentle folds of drapery. Through the balance of seemingly contradictory styles, the artist has created a scene with two levels of reality: it is as if the female musician on the right, reciting a traditional Persian love story, is singing the fictional couple into physical existence.

The elephant hunt: a blend of styles



Figure **13.5.8.103**: "Ataga Khan and onlookers praying for a peaceful resolution" (detail), Basawan and Chetar, illustration from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 33 x 30 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

The artists in Akbar's atelier were equally proficient at blending elements from Indian, Persian, and Western traditions, while developing a distinct style of their own. In the illustration of the elephant hunt from the *Akbarnama*, they have retained the vertical format favored in Persian painting, as well as its traditionally intricate patterning of nature, seen in the rhythmic pulsing of the waves. In the right panel, the onlookers express fear and awe through the standardized Persian gesture of lightly pressing a finger to the lips. Yet many other figures are seen with their arms thrown overhead in distress, or with their bodies positioned off-balance, demonstrating the artists' independence in choosing whether or not to utilize standard gestures.

The vibrant hues, on the other hand—especially the deep reds and yellows—call to mind the Indian tradition and its preference for saturated primary colors. The scale of the figures in relation to the picture plane is also much larger than in the Persian style, demonstrating a preference for the Indian tradition's emphasis on the human form. Elements from Western artistic traditions are also present, most notably the indication of depth and distance achieved by rendering the boats and buildings as increasingly small as one looks to the top of the page.

Clearly, these artists enjoyed a remarkable degree of freedom to experiment and develop new artistic amalgams under Akbar's patronage. Akbar's court historian, Abu'l Fazl, noted the intense personal interest taken by Akbar in his workshop, where he personally commissioned specific subjects and conducted regular viewings of new work each week. In the illustrations of the elephant hunt, we can see his preference for depictions of heroic personal feats. From the sharp diagonal placement of the elephants upon their precarious bridge of boats, to the depiction of the thrilling story at its climax, this scene is full of vigor, action and excitement.



Figure **13.5.8.104**: Left: “Hunting a cheetah,” La’l and Kesav Khord, illustration from the *Akbarnama*, c. 1586-89, Mughal Empire, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 33 x 20 cm (© **Victoria and Albert Museum**, London); Right: “Prison Break,” illustration from a *Hamza Nama* manuscript, 1562-77, Imperial Mughal school (**Brooklyn Museum**)

Other examples of such themes abound in Mughal art, such as a hunting scene from the *Akbarnama* which shows the decisive moment the cheetah tears into its prey (above left), or the scene of a prison break from the *Hamza Nama* manuscript, with blood spurting from the necks of those recently beheaded (above right). Yet the elephant hunt illustration is also more than a dynamic illustration of a charismatic emperor. In it we can see the new, innovative style distinct to Akbar and his court, where the personality of the ruler and a cosmopolitan blend of styles resulted in art that was unmistakably Mughal.

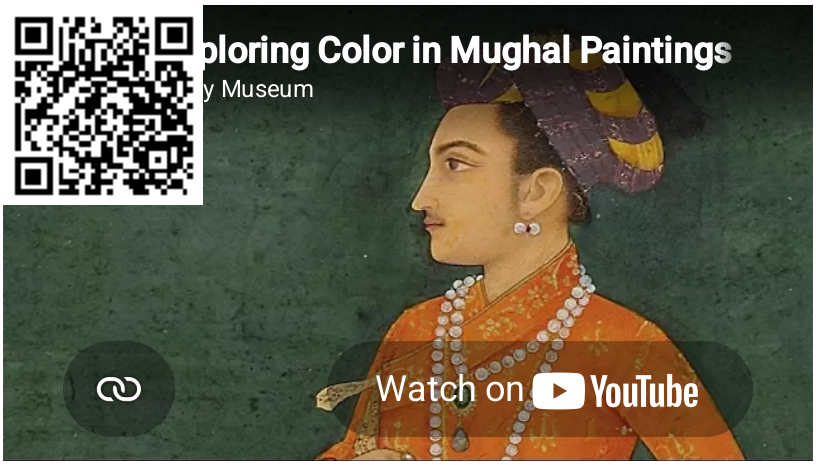
Additional resources:

See the left and right pages of this work at the Victoria and Albert Museum

“The Art of the Mughals before 1600” on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Exploring Color in Mughal Paintings

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video 13.5.8.2: This video accompanied the exhibition “Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India” (March 13, 2018 – June 24, 2018) at the Getty Museum. For more information visit: **www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/…**

Rajput Mewar

A page from the Mewar Ramayana

by DR. ARATHI MENON

What’s in a story?

In its simplest form, a story has a beginning, an end, and events that unfold in between. It has a cast of characters—protagonists we cheer and villains we don’t—and backdrops that supply the appropriate context, space, and mood for a story to unfold. Stories are dynamic and are transformed by the creativity and vision of storytellers.

In the painted page below, the seventeenth-century master Sahib Din employed a range of colors, spatial devices, directional poses, and gestures to portray multiple events across multiple timelines. All of it is painted on a single horizontal page, only slightly larger than a sheet of typing paper.



Figure 13.5.8.105: “Indrajit meets with Ravana, then binds Rama and Laksmana with magic serpents; Sita is told they are dead,” folio from the *Yuddha Kanda* of the *Ramayana*, by Sahib Din, Udaipur, c. 1650-52, watercolor on paper, approximately 9 x 15.38 inches (British Library, Add. 15297(1), f.34 r)

The scenes portrayed in this page are a part of a much larger story, from the ancient Indian epic poem known as the *Ramayana*. The *Ramayana* was composed in Sanskrit between c. 200 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. The story centers on the confrontation of good and evil, and an exploration of the human condition. The principle characters experience love, loss, loyalty, conflict, fear, and friendship, all of which is underscored by a sense of *dharmic* or moral duty.

The hero of the *Ramayana* is the virtuous and benevolent prince Rama. Rama is accompanied by his loyal brother the prince Laksmana and many friends in a bid to rescue Rama’s wife Sita. Sita has been abducted by the demon king Ravana and is being held in the demon’s palace in the fabled kingdom of Lankapura. The *Ramayana* is an important text in Hinduism and Rama is held as one of the avatars of the god Vishnu.



Figure **13.5.8.106**: Sanskrit text and facing page showing Rama, Sita, and Laksmana living in exile, from the *Ayodhya Kanda* of the *Ramayana*, by Sahib Din, Udaipur, c. 1650-2, watercolor on paper, approximately 9 x 15.38 inches (British Library, Add. MS 15296(1) ff.70v and 71r).

According to tradition, the epic (which unfolds over multiple cantos) was composed by the legendary sage Valmiki. Scholars believe that in its earliest form, the *Ramayana* may have had as many as twenty thousand verses that were organized in five *kanda* (books). By the time the Mewar *Ramayana* manuscript was commissioned in c. 1650 C.E., the epic had grown to twenty-four thousand verses that were organized into seven thematic books centered on:

1. Rama's and Laksmana's childhood and life in Ayodhya; Sita's early life;
2. Rama's departure from Ayodhya and the start of his, Sita's, and Laksmana's life in exile;
3. life in exile and the abduction of Sita by Ravana;
4. adventures of Rama, Laksmana, and their allies;
5. adventures of Rama's friend and ally Hanuman;
6. battles between Rama and Ravana's armies and Rama's eventual triumph; Sita's return;
7. Rama's reign as king of Ayodhya.

The Mewar *Ramayana's* patron

The Mewar *Ramayana* is named for the royal Sesodiya Rajput court in the region of Mewar (in northwestern India) that commissioned it. The manuscript's principal patron was the Maharana (*Maha*: great; *rana*: king) Jagat Singh, who ruled c. 1628–52. The rana's investment in the production of the manuscript was immense—the illustrations in the Mewar *Ramayana* alone number four hundred. Scholars suggest that Rama's identity as a righteous and powerful ruler in the poem would have been appealing to the royal patron Jagat Singh, particularly since his family, the Sesodiya Rajputs, claimed an ancestral connection to Rama.

A distinct Mewari style

Manuscripts produced in the Mewari imperial workshop were wrapped, unbound, in red cloth. A single scribe was responsible for all of the text in the Mewar *Ramayana*. However, at least three master artists and their respective workshops were selected to work

on the seven volumes. An especially engaging artist, Sahib Din was responsible for all of the paintings in the the second and the sixth books, including the painted folio depicting “Indrajit meets with Ravana, then binds Rama and Laksmana with magic serpents; Sita is told they are dead” found in book six (see top of page) .

The Mewar *ranas* had become a vassal state of the Mughal empire—after decades of confrontation—during the reign of Jagat Singh’s grandfather Amar Singh in the early 17th century. The calm that resulted allowed contact and exchange between the courts. Even so, Mewar paintings remained distinct in style. This can be seen in the use of red and yellow borders, the use of bold deep colors, and the horizontal format which can be traced to the ancient custom of using palm leaves as a writing surface. The distinct style of Mewari paintings compared to those produced in the royal Mughal workshops can be seen by comparing a Mewari and a Mughal depiction of the same scene (images below).



Figure **13.5.8.107**: Left: “Hanuman carrying a mountain of healing herbs,” folio from Mughal style *Ramayana*, late 16th century, 10-13/16 x 6 inches, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper (**National Museum of Asian Art**); Right: “Hanuman goes to find the healing herbs, and returns with the mountain peak,” page from the *Yuddha Kanda* of the *Ramayana*, by Sahib Din, Udaipur, c. 1650-52, watercolor on paper, approximately 9 x 15.38 inches (**The British Library**, Add. 15297(1), f.100 r)

Mewari paintings rejected the vertical format, the relative naturalism in color, and the greater emphasis on depth found in Mughal paintings at this time. Mewari painters also depicted multiple episodes in a single scene, unlike the focus on a single event often found in Mughal paintings. Mewari techniques were also distinct. Where Mughal painters burnished each new layer of paint with a smooth stone, Mewari paintings were burnished just once after the painting was completed.

Mewari paintings more closely aligned with older regional painting traditions. A comparison between a painted folio completed more than a century before the Mewar *Ramayana* reveals similarities in the use of intense blocks of color as backgrounds, shallow foregrounds, and in the stylized portrayal of figures.





Figure 13.5.8.108: Left: "Krishna is Pampered by His Ladies," *Bhagavata Purana* manuscript, c. 1520-40, North India (Delhi-Agra region), opaque watercolor and ink on paper, 6 7/8 x 9 3/16 inches (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); Right: "Indrajit meets with Ravana," c. 1650-2.

Mewari manuscript paintings are especially ingenious in their portrayal of the passage of time and the representation of action. Art historian Vidya Dehejia has identified the "Indrajit meets with Ravana" page as an example of "complex synoptic portrayal." In other words, the representation of multiple events within a single frame without a clear indication of the sequence of events. [1]

The artist, Sahib Din, used architectural features, bold colors, and manipulated perspective to structure distinct spaces that portray sequential events simultaneously. Even though the progression of events is not apparent, there is in fact a beginning, a middle and an end. The assumption is that the viewer is reading the matching text and has prior knowledge of the story. In this way, the images invite the viewer to unravel the painting's narrative sequence.

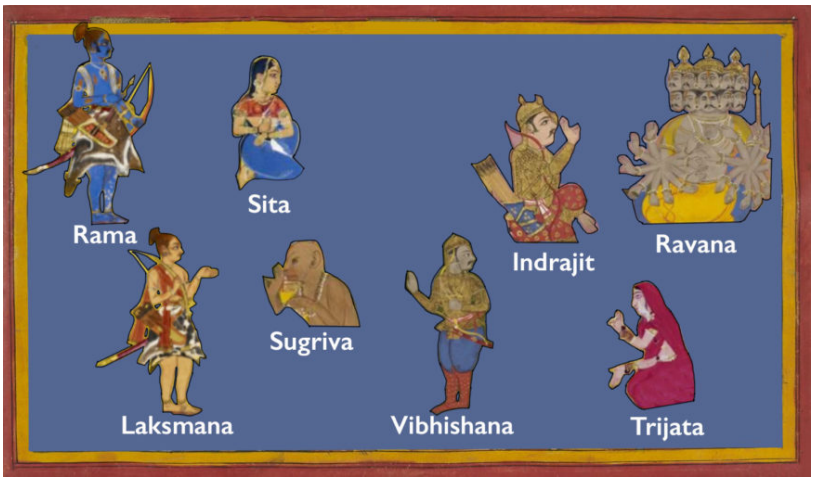


Figure 13.5.8.109: "Indrajit meets with Ravana, then binds Rama and Laksmana with magic serpents; Sita is told they are dead," folio from the *Yuddha Kanda* of the *Ramayana*, by Sahib Din, Udaipur, c. 1650-52, watercolor on paper, approximately 9 x 15.38 inches (British Library, Add. 15297(1), f.34 r)

Sahib Din tells the story

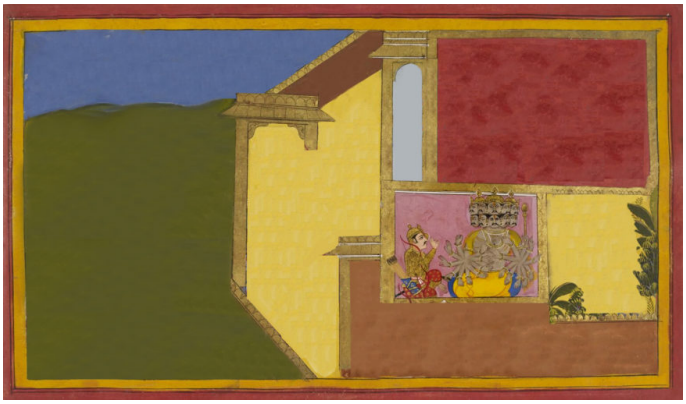
The painted page, "Indrajit meets with Ravana" (above) is from the sixth book known as the *Yuddha Kanda*, or the book of battles. Many of the pages of text in the book of battles are written on the reverse side of a painted page, although a few pages have text on

both sides. The text and illustrations mostly stay on pace with one another. The page “Indrajit meets with Ravana,” portrays events from three cantos [2] and involves several protagonists. Almost all of these protagonists (shown below) appear more than once.



Figures of Rama and Laksmana (not by Sahib Din) taken from a page titled “Hanuman espies Rama and Laksmana as they approach Lake Pampa,” from the *Kiskindha Kanda* of the *Ramayana*, Mewar-Deccani style, Udaipur, 1653. British Library, Add.15297(1), f.2r. All other figures from the “Indrajit meets with Ravana” folio in the *Yuddha Kanda*.

Sahib Din chose to illustrate eleven moments in the principal narrative of this painting. The progression of events are each isolated below.



Scene 1: the plan

The demon-king Ravana and his son Indrajit plan in private to defeat the prince Rama and his brother Laksmana. The multi-headed and multi-armed Ravana is much larger than his son Indrajit. Ravana is shown seated against a blue pillow, indicating his comfort within a palace represented by architectural features that structure the right side of the painting.



Scene 2: Indrajit and his retinue leave the palace

Indrajit is recognizable among the figures walking through the doorway by the royal clothing he wears, a helmet, armor, and a bow and quiver of arrows. He has now appeared twice.



Scene 3: Indrajit shoots magical arrows

A charioteer holds the reigns steady while Indrajit takes aim and shoots magical arrows at Rama and Laksmana. The arrows turn into snakes and the princes lie incapacitated while their allies are inconsolable. Because Indrajit's actions were not seen, the artist has placed him at some distance behind a hill.



Scene 4: Vibhishana assures Sugriva

In the fourth scene, Vibhishana—Ravana's brother, an ally of Rama, and on the side of good—stands (wearing red boots) near Rama and Laksmana's feet. He assures Sugriva—the deposed monkey king and an ally of Rama—that the brothers are unharmed. Sugriva is shown wearing a necklace of pearls (indicating his royalty) and listening to Vibhishana.



Scene 5: Indrajit returns to the palace

Indrajit is shown a fourth time, but now at the center of the painting as he returns to the palace. His triumphant return is indicated by the crowd of figures, musical instruments, and the jubilant music they play.



Scenes 6 and 7: Indrajit enters the throne room; Indrajit embraces Ravana

Scene 6: Indrajit enters his father's quarters with his retinue. Ravana is again shown larger than his son. Indrajit and his soldiers report that Rama and Laksmana have been felled.

Scene 7: Father and son embrace over Indrajit's success.

The same red background at the top right corner of the painting is used to indicate the throne room for scenes 6 and 7. Similarly, the figures of Ravana and the retinue are used for both scenes. Only the figure of Indrajit is repeated.



Scene 8: Sita in the palace garden

Sita, Rama's abducted wife, is shown seated in a garden within Ravana's palace. She is surrounded by trees and has a finger to her mouth in a gesture of contemplation.



Scene 9: The demoness Trijata misleads Sita

The demoness Trijata (an agent of Ravana) tells Sita that Rama and Laksmana have been killed. Trijata offers to take Sita to see for herself (indicated by the inclusion of the chariot behind them). Just as the throne room was reused in scenes six and seven, here the garden serves as the backdrop for scenes 8 and 9.



Scene 10: The flying chariot

Trijata and Sita fly out of the palace on a golden chariot. Trijata sits in the front, as if leading the way.



Scene 11: Trijata points to Rama and Laksmana

Trijata and Sita fly over the battlefield where Rama and Laksmana lie immobilized by the magical arrow-snakes. Trijata and Sita now face one another and the demoness points to the seemingly dead princes. Sita does not look, but is forlorn.

In the next illustrated page (not shown), Rama and Laksmana are freed when the magical snakes flee upon the arrival of the divine eagle Garuda.

Left and right, good and wicked

Sahib Din was careful to remain faithful to the details of the *Ramayana*, however incidental. Paradoxically, the artist's evident knowledge of the story [3] enable his paintings to shine independently of the text that they are meant to illustrate.

The artist evokes from the reader an emotional investment in the characters he depicts. In addition to Sahib Din's sensitive portrayals of Sita, the exchange between Vibhishana and Sugriva in scene four (in which Vibhishana assures Sugriva that Rama and Laksmana are still alive) conveys remarkable empathy. Sahib Din painted the eyes of Vibhishana and Sugriva in line with one another, expressing a shared moment of commiseration.

The composition of the painting reinforces the separation of heroes from villains. Rama and his army are placed on the left side; while Ravana and his kingdom Lankapura are placed on the right. This division of left (good) and right (wicked), follows the spatial organization that Sahib Din employs throughout most of the book of battles.

The artist also used this arrangement to portray multiple events within the same setting. The expansive backdrop on the left serves as the setting for Indrajit shooting magical arrows, Rama and Laksmana laying incapacitated, Vibhishana assuring Sugriva, and

Trijata misleading Sita as they fly over the battlefield.



Figure **13.5.8.111**: Map showing Mewar capitals of Chittor and Udaipur (photos: **Ssjoshi111**, CC BY-SA 3.0; **Jakob Halun**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Mewar *Ramayana* as metaphor

While the battle between good and evil forms the arc of the *Ramayana*, the defining message of the epic is of Rama as a paragon of *dharma*. Rama sought to live his life sincerely as *dharma* requires—as a model son, brother, husband, prince, and king—no matter the personal consequences. Scholars believe that the Sesodiya Rajputs' claim that they were the descendent of Rama in combination with the Maharana Jagat Singh's considerable investment in the Mewar *Ramayana* indicates that the king sought to align himself with Rama as the perfect *dharmic* exemplar.

Vidya Dehejia has noted the timing of Jagat Singh's commission of the *Ramayana* near the end of his reign, and the fact that it coincided with the rebuilding of Chittor, a Mewar fort that was destroyed during the protracted struggle between the Mughals and the Mewars. Although Jagat Singh's grandfather Amar Singh had promised the Mughals (as part of the Mughal-Mewar treaty) that Chittor would never be rebuilt, Jagat Singh (based at the time in his capital of Udaipur) broke that promise and repaired the fort. Dehejia has suggested that the Mewar *Ramayana* might offer insight on the rana's thinking at that time—perhaps he, like Rama, symbolized the good side, and Ravana and the Mughals stood to the right.

Notes:

[1] "The Treatment of Narrative in Jagat Singh's Ramayana: A Preliminary Study," *Artibus Asiae* 56, no. 3/4 (1996): 308. Dehejia categorizes modes of narration as follows:

- **conflated**: The protagonist appears only once and is meant to be understood as participating in multiple events. Knowledge of the text is required to understand the sequence of events.
- **continuous**: Events are represented continuously and within a single frame. Multiple appearances of a protagonist indicates successive moments and spaces. It is not always clear where the narration begins. See the painting in this essay of Rama, Sita, and Laksmana living in exile in the forest.
- **monoscenic**: A single central event is depicted.
- **synoptic**: Multiple events are portrayed within a single frame. There is no clear indication of the sequence of events.

Also see Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *Art Bulletin* LXXII (September 1990): 374-92.

[2] Specifically, cantos 45, 46 and 47. See Dehejia, "The Treatment of Narrative," p. 322.

[3] *ibid*., p. 323.

References:

Vidya Dehejia, “The Treatment of Narrative in Jagat Singh’s Ramayana: A Preliminary Study,” *Artibus Asiae* 56, no. 3/4 (1996): 303-24.

J.P. Losty, “Sahib Din’s Book of Battles: Rana Jagat Singh’s *Yuddhakanda*, in *The Legend of Rama: Artistic Visions*, ed. Vidya Dehejia (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1994), pp. 101-16.

Additional resources:

Turning the pages of the Mewar Ramayana (The British Library)

Vijayanagara Empire + Nayak dynasty

The Meenakshi Temple at Madurai

by EDWARD FOSMIRE



Figure **13.5.8.112**: Meenakshi Temple, Madurai, Tamil Naidu, India (photo: **Jorge Royan**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Imagine approaching a temple complex where you are greeted by a soaring gateway more than fifteen stories tall, covered in 1500 brightly painted sculptures of divine and demonic figures. It’s overwhelming and disorienting, but it is just a taste of what awaits the pilgrim or sightseer at the Meenakshi Temple in the town of Madurai in southern India. With its numerous towers and its warren of associated sacred spaces, it embodies the active continuation of an ancient set of religious and artistic traditions in southern India.

Today, approximately 20,000 people per day visit the Meenakshi Temple’s almost 700,000 square feet of space, including the two principal sanctuaries and dozens of shrines of varying sizes. Bordered by high walls and gateways, it is a bewildering collection of indoor and outdoor spaces: small, cramped shrines, vast halls, low and high ceilings, darkness, light, hustle and bustle, quiet spaces, and chaos. All told, it contains around 30,000 sculptures.



Figure **13.5.8.113**: Madurai, India (underlying view © 2018 Google maps)

Many sacred sites and structures in India have mythical origins, and the city of Madurai near the southern tip of the subcontinent in Tamil Nadu state is no exception. According to tradition, more than 3500 years ago the god Indra installed a small tower over a naturally formed stone *lingam* as a sign of devotion to **Shiva**, one of the primary deities in the vast Hindu pantheon. (Typically considered the god of destruction, Shiva's characteristics also include creation and virility.) Other gods followed Indra's lead and began to worship there. Soon a human devotee witnessed the miraculous scene of gods worshipping at the lingam and notified the local king, Kulashekhara Pandya, who built a temple at the site.

The story of the figure of Meenakshi is also legendary. It describes a Pandya king, Malayadhvaja, who hoped for a son and heir. He carefully performed a fire ceremony requesting that the gods fulfill this wish. Instead, he was granted a daughter, Meenakshi, who was born with three breasts. The gods told the king not to worry, but to raise Meenakshi as a brave warrior, just as he would a son, and that when she grew up and met her true love, her third breast would disappear. Meenakshi proved herself gifted in battle, conquering armies in all directions. When she sought to attack the north, however, she was confronted by the god Shiva, who dwells on Mount Kailasha, deep in the Himalayas. Upon seeing him, one of her breasts fell off and the prophecy was realized.

Kumaraguruparar, a great seventeenth-century Tamil poet and devotee of Shiva, described this moment:

> ***When you saw Shiva on the battlefield,***
> ***your third curving breast disappeared.***
> ***You bowed to him shyly and were amazed to see***
> ***that suddenly you had only two breasts.***
>
> ***Your heart was filled only with him.***
> ***You looked at him sweetly***
> ***with a nectar-like side glance, and felt shy. [1]***

Another principal god in the Hindu pantheon, Vishnu (in the guise of Meenakshi's brother), presided over the wedding of Shiva and Meenakshi, and the divine couple made their home in Madurai, where they ruled (and continue to symbolically rule) as queen and king.



Figure **13.5.8.114**: Vishnu presiding over the marriage of Shiva and Meenakshi, Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY 2.0)

Temple complex plan

The earliest temple at Madurai was likely constructed in the seventh century C.E., but the temple complex we experience today is largely the work of the Nayak dynasty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They enlarged the complex and redesigned the surrounding streets in accordance with the sacred tradition of the *Vastu Shastra* (Hindu texts prescribing the form, proportions, measurements, ground plan, and layout of architecture).



Figure **13.5.8.115**: Meenakshi Temple, Madurai, India (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY 2.0)

The Meenakshi Temple is a prime example of Dravidian architecture—a style of Hindu architecture common in the southern states of India. Characteristics of Dravidian architecture often include covered porches on temples, tall entry gate towers on two or more sides, many-pillared halls, and a water tank or reservoir for ritual bathing.

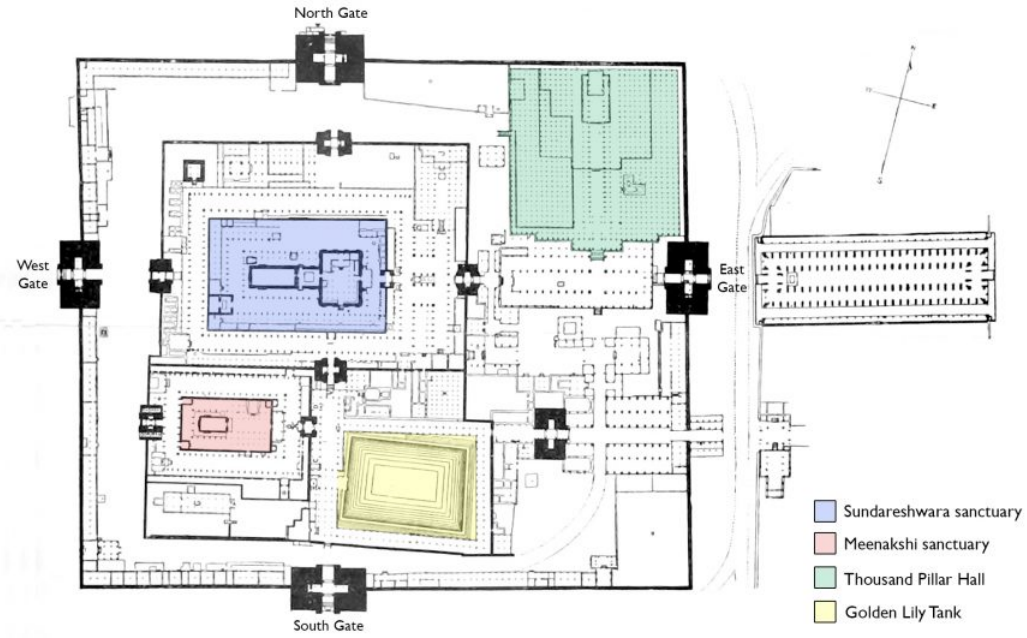


Figure 13.5.8.116: Plan of Meenakshi Temple, from **John Murray, *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma, and Ceylon* (London: J. Murray, 1911)**

Two principal sanctuaries (accessible only by Hindus) sit at the center of the temple complex: one dedicated to Meenakshi (who is considered a manifestation of the goddess Parvati), and another dedicated to Sundareshwara or "Beautiful Lord" (a form of the god Shiva). A gold finial, visible only from a high vantage point, caps each of these sanctuaries. Fronting each sanctuary is a *mandapa* (a pillared, porch-like structure) that pilgrims pass through as they make their way to the *garbagriha* (the innermost sacred areas of the sanctuary).

Each Friday evening, sculpted figures of Meenakshi and Sundareshwara are placed upon a swing in the temple and gently rocked in imitation of a romantic interlude, and each spring they are celebrated in a massive multi-day festival.



Figure **13.5.8.117**: Golden Lily Tank, Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **YashiWong**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

At the south end of the complex is the Golden Lily Tank, which is used by believers for ritual bathing before they enter the sanctuaries of Meenakshi and Sundareshwara. The northeast corner of the complex is occupied by the Thousand Pillar Hall, a vast, ornate *mandapa*. Although there are actually only 985 pillars, the effect is impressive, with most of the stone pillars carved in high or low relief depicting gods, demons, and divine animals. Originally this space was likely used for religious dancing and musical performances as well as a place to gain an audience with the king. Today the Thousand Pillar Hall functions primarily as a museum, with exhibitions of bronze sculptures, paintings, and objects from the temple's history.

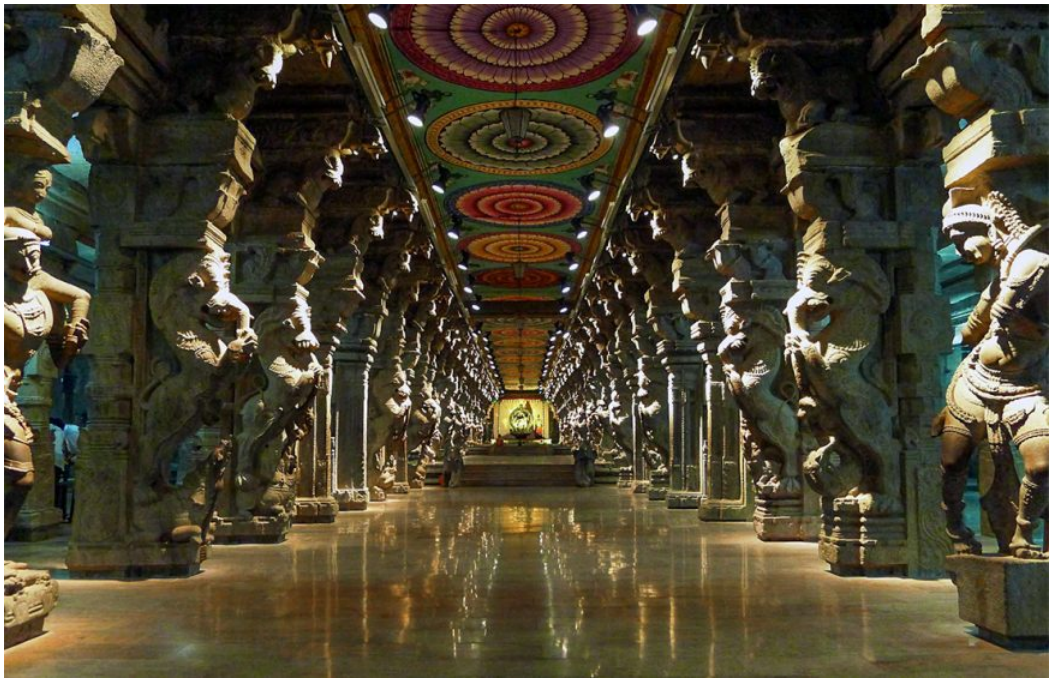


Figure **13.5.8.118**: Thousand Pillar Hall, Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **Brad Coy**, CC BY-NC 2.0)



Figure 13.5.8.119: Gopura, Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **Jorge Royan**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

We now return to the most noticeable feature of the complex—the massive towers, or *gopuras*, which are actually entry gates, marked on the plan above as black rectangles. Some visitors to the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai mistake the *gopuras* for the sacred temples and shrines themselves. The word *gopura* may be derived from the Tamil words *ko* meaning "king," and *puram* meaning "exterior or gateway"; or from the Sanskrit *go* meaning "cow" and *puram* meaning "town." Here, there are fourteen gopuras roughly oriented to the cardinal directions and flanking either the temple of Meenakshi or Sundareshwara, or the entire walled compound. They generally increase in height as one moves further away from the center of the complex, as the outermost sections were continually added to by a succession of rulers, who commissioned ever grander towers as a sign of their power and devotion. The *gopuras* act as symbolic markers for the sacred space into which they lead and most are covered with a profusion of brightly painted stucco figures representing gods and demons.

The tallest *gopura* rises to approximately 170 feet and contains more than 1500 figures that are repaired and repainted every twelve years. This multitude of brightly-colored figures excites some visitors and repels others. It is likely that most Hindu temples (just like their ancient Greek and Egyptian counterparts) were painted in vibrant hues, and many are still today.

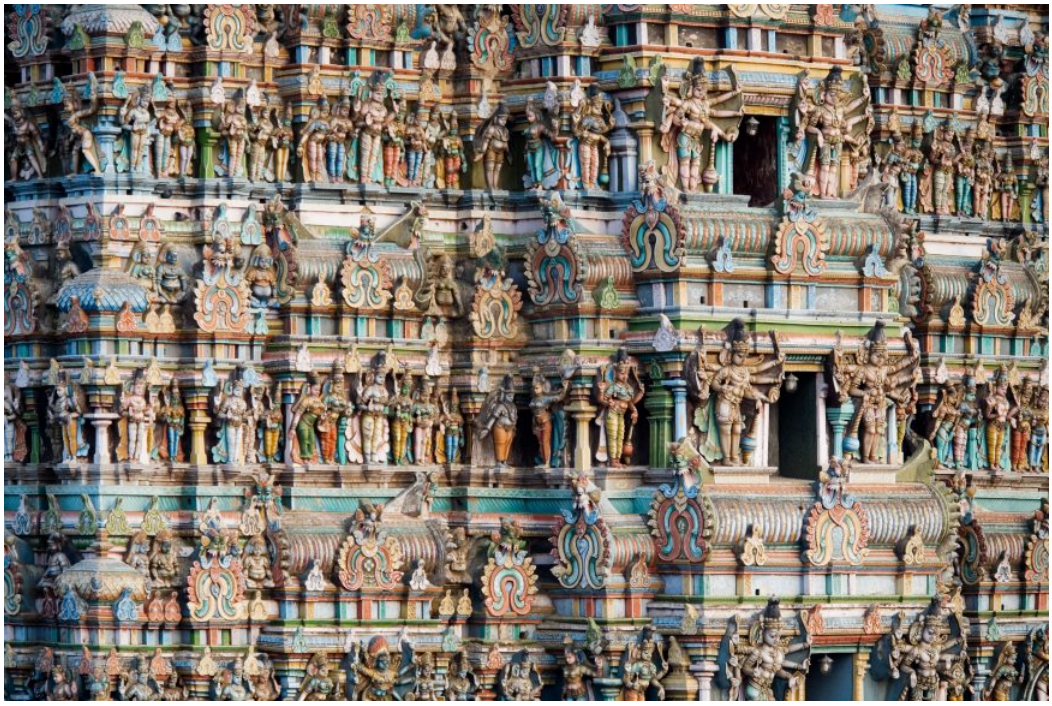


Figure 13.5.8.120: Gopura sculptures, Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **Jorge Royan**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The heart of Madurai



Figure 13.5.8.121: Bazaar inside the Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY 2.0)

The Meenakshi Temple is in many ways a microcosm of the earthly and spiritual characteristics of Hindu India. It is bustling, crowded, and filled with people from all walks of life. As is true for many **Hindu temples**, one can find many small shops throughout the Meenakshi temple complex, selling fruits and flowers for offerings, guidebooks, small votive sculptures, jewelry, commemorative t-shirts, and other souvenirs.

The temple's shrines, pillars, sculptures, and paintings are populated with a dazzling quantity of divine beings who engage in various activities, can manifest in multiple guises and places simultaneously, and are subject to dissolution and rebirth. On the famous *gopuras*, figures of gods and goddesses are repeated as though reincarnated many times over as they rise towards the heavens, symbolically preventing the defilements of the everyday world from polluting the sacred spaces within.

The Meenakshi Temple is the physical center of the city of Madurai as well as its economic, mythical, and spiritual heart. Its importance radiates outward from the central shines through Madurai to the entire Tamil-speaking region in south India, and

beyond.

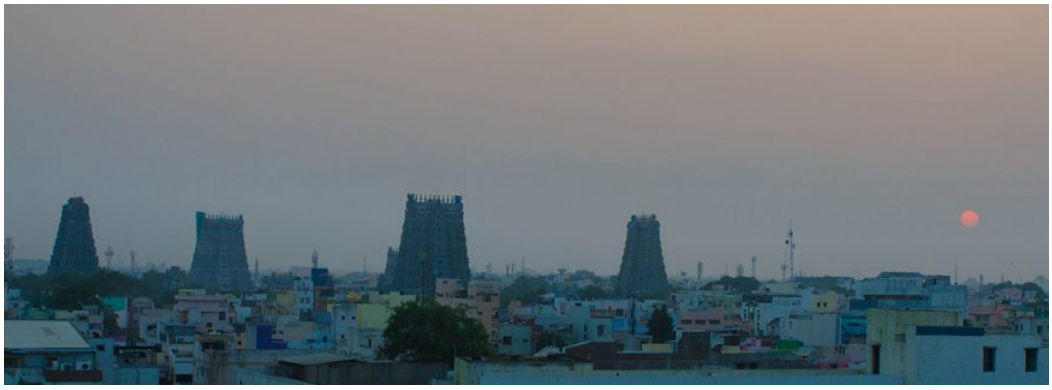


Figure **13.5.8.122**: Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (photo: **Ashwin Kumar**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

[1] Kumaraguruparar, “Meenakshiammai Pillaittamai,” translated by Kausalya Hart, in ***Project Madurai*** (University of California, Berkeley, 2011)

[2] The targeted dismantling and re-use of important structures was a common practice in India both as a practical matter and as a means of expressing a change in royal authority.

Additional resources:

Meenakshi Temple website

A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), page 76.

Diana Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography* (NY: Three Rivers Press, 2012).

William P. Harman, *The Sacred Marriage of a Hindu Goddess* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992).

T.G.S. Balaram Iyer, *History and Description of Sri Meenakshi Temple (*Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India: Sri Karthak Agency, 2013).

Kingdom of Mysore

Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore

Tipu’s Tiger

by DR. JOCELYN ANDERSON



Figure **13.5.8.123**: *Tipu's Tiger* (also *Tippoo's Tiger*), c. 1793, Mysore, painted wood with metal fixtures (**The Victoria and Albert Museum**, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

An extraordinary object

Tipu Sultan's mechanical tiger has long been one of the most well-known items in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. A large automaton (a machine that can move by itself), the tiger is shown in the act of attacking a European man. When played, the man's left arm flails and the organ emits the sounds of the roaring cat and the cries of its victim. Perhaps what is most striking about the tiger is its change in ownership and meanings: it was made for an Indian ruler who spent much of his adult life fighting the British, and it later became a tool for imperial propaganda in Britain.

Tipu Sultan and tigers



Figure **13.5.8.124**: *Portrait of Tippoo Sultan*, watercolor on paper, 26 x 20.6 cm (**Freer Gallery of Art**)

Tipu Sultan was the ruler of Mysore, a territory in what is now southern India. Coming to power in 1782, Tipu Sultan was a strong, assertive leader, committed to strengthening his power: he established Mysore as a kingdom independent from the Mughal empire, and he attempted to develop new alliances and industries. Throughout his rule, he was interested in adapting European technologies and in building Mysore's international profile: he ordered a wide range of European goods for his court, hired European craftsmen, reformed his military and sent embassies to the Ottoman empire and the king of France.

Tipu Sultan adopted the tiger as a personal symbol of his rule—representations of tigers decorated his throne, weapons and armor; the tiger stripe motif was painted on walls and used in uniforms; he kept live tigers to guard his palace. The British referred to him as the "Tiger of Mysore." His mechanical tiger was a part of this personal display, albeit an unusual one. It combines a painted wood casing (possibly made by an Indian craftsman) with an internal metal and ivory mechanism (possibly made by a European craftsman working at his court).



Figure 13.5.8.125: Palanquin pole end, c. 1782-99, silver, gilt (Victoria and Albert Museum, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Tipu Sultan and the British

Even before Tipu Sultan's rule, Mysore had a hostile relationship with the the East India Company, which had been expanding their influence in the Indian subcontinent since the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The First Anglo-Mysore War broke out in 1767, during the rule of Tipu Sultan's father, and ended in 1769 in British defeat; the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–84) also saw significant victories for Mysore but neither side ultimately made material gains. Unlike the first two, the Third Anglo-Mysore War led to a clear British victory in 1792. In the treaty negotiations, General Charles Cornwallis demanded a massive financial tribute as well as half of Mysore's territories. In order to ensure Tipu Sultan met these demands, he took two of Tipu Sultan's sons, Prince Abdul Khaliq and Prince Muza-ud-din, then ages eight and five respectively, as hostages. Numerous British artists painted depictions of this moment, typically showing Cornwallis as a benevolent leader welcoming the children into his care (see below and more here and here). For Tipu Sultan, however, this treaty was extremely debilitating for his country, and humiliating and hurtful for him personally. It was after this treaty that he had the mechanical tiger made.



Print made by Daniel Orme, *The Delivery of the Definitive Treaty by the Hostage Princes into the Hands of Lord Cornwallis*, 1793, Stipple engraving on medium, slightly textured, cream wove paper (**Yale Center for British Art**)

The fall of Srirangapatnam

The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War broke out in 1799, and ended when the British took Srirangapatnam, Tipu Sultan's capital (known to the British as Seringapatam) in May of that year. Tipu Sultan was killed during the attack, and soldiers serving under the British looted and pillaged the palace and city; it was a few days before Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, established order. Many of Tipu Sultan's most valuable treasures were distributed as prizes, and items made of precious metals and jewels were broken up. Pieces of his magnificent gold throne were sent to the king and the East India Company directors in London. The mechanical tiger was not especially valuable, but it was unique, and it too was sent to Britain.

The Tiger in England

For Tipu Sultan, the mechanical tiger represented his hostility to the British, but for the British, it came to represent the type of ruler he was. Nowhere is this clearer than in one of the first press reports about it:

> ***The following may be deemed a sufficient proof (if any yet were wanting) of the deep hatred of Tippoo Saib towards the English nation: A most curious piece of mechanism, as large as life, representing a Royal tyger in the act of devouring a prostrate European Officer, was found in a room of the Palace at Seringapatam … There are some barrels in imitation of an organ within the body of the tyger, and a row of keys of natural notes. The sounds produced by the organ are intended to resemble the cries of a person in distress, intermixed with the horrid roar of the tyger. The machinery is so contrived, that while the organ is playing, the hand of the European is often lifted up to express the agony of his helpless and deplorable condition. The whole of this machine, which is of wood, was executed from a design of, and under the immediate orders of, Tippoo Sultaun, whose custom in the afternoon it was to amuse himself with a sight of this miserable emblematical triumph…'***

> ***('Musical Tyger,' St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post, 17 – 19 April 1800 (Issue 6605)).***

The mechanical tiger was placed on display shortly after it arrived in London, and it became an emblem of fierce hostility between the British and Indian rulers. At the height of the British Empire, it was associated with colonial propaganda which depicted Indian leaders as cruel tyrants. More recently, in the postcolonial context, the tiger has come to represent Indian resistance to British rule, as well as British prejudice and imperial aggression.



Video 13.5.8.3

Additional resources:

This work at the V&A (and more from the V&A)

This work in the Open University's Travelling Objects project

Seringapatam sword

13.5.8: South Asia (II) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.8: South Asia (II)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.9: Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is home to some of the largest and most complex religious architecture in the world.

1st millennium B.C.E. - c. 1200

The art of Cambodia

The great Hindu monuments of Cambodia have long been targets of looting and trafficking.

10th-12th century

Angkor Wat

by DR. MELODY ROD-ARI



Figure **13.5.9.1**: Aerial view, Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1116-1150 (photo: **shankar s.**, CC BY 2.0)

A temple with a lost name

Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, Cambodia is the largest religious monument in the world. Angkor Wat, translated from Khmer (the official language of Cambodia), literally means “City Temple.” As far as names go this is as generic as it gets. Angkor Wat was not the original name given to the temple when it was built in the twelfth century. We have little knowledge of how this temple was referred to during the time of its use, as there are no extant texts or inscriptions that mention the temple by name—this is quite incredible if we consider the fact that Angkor Wat is the greatest religious construction project in Southeast Asia.

A possible reason why the temple’s original name may have never been documented is that it was such an important and famous monument that there was no need to refer to it by its name. We have several references to the king who built the temple, King Suryavarman II (1113-1145/50 C.E.), and events that took place at the temple, but no mention of its name.

Historical Context

Angkor Wat is dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu who is one of the three principal gods in the Hindu pantheon (Shiva and Brahma are the others). Among them he is known as the “Protector.” The major patron of Angkor Wat was King Suryavarman II, whose name translates as the “protector of the sun.” Many scholars believe that Angkor Wat was not only a temple dedicated to Vishnu but that it was also intended to serve as the king’s mausoleum in death.



Figure 13.5.9.2: Angkor Wat. Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1116-1150 (photo: Benjamin Jakabek, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The construction of Angkor Wat likely began in the year 1116 C.E.—three years after King Suryavarman II came to the throne—with construction ending in 1150, shortly after the king's death. Evidence for these dates comes in part from inscriptions, which are vague, but also from the architectural design and artistic style of the temple and its associated sculptures.

The building of temples by Khmer kings was a means of legitimizing their claim to political office and also to lay claim to the protection and powers of the gods. Hindu temples are not a place for religious congregation; instead; they are homes of the god. In order for a king to lay claim to his political office he had to prove that the gods did not support his predecessors or his enemies. To this end, the king had to build the grandest temple/palace for the gods, one that proved to be more lavish than any previous temples. In doing so, the king could make visible his ability to harness the energy and resources to construct the temple, and assert that his temple was the only place that a god would consider residing in on earth.

The building of Angkor Wat is likely to have necessitated some 300,000 workers, which included architects, construction workers, masons, sculptors and the servants to feed these workers. Construction of the site took over 30 years and was never completely finished. The site is built entirely out of stone, which is incredible as close examination of the temple demonstrates that almost every surface is treated and carved with narrative or decorative details.

Carved Bas Reliefs of Hindu Narratives

There are 1,200 square meters of carved bas reliefs at Angkor Wat, representing eight different Hindu stories. Perhaps the most important narrative represented at Angkor Wat is the *Churning of the Ocean of Milk* (below), which depicts a story about the beginning of time and the creation of the universe. It is also a story about the victory of good over evil. In the story, *devas* (gods) are fighting the *asuras* (demons) in order reclaim order and power for the gods who have lost it. In order to reclaim peace and order, the elixir of life (*amrita*) needs to be released from the earth; however, the only way for the elixir to be released is for the gods and demons to first work together. To this end, both sides are aware that once the amrita is released there will be a battle to attain it.



Figure 13.5.9.3: Churning of the Ocean of Milk (detail), Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1116-1150 (photo: John Brennan, CC BY-ND 2.0)

The relief depicts the moment when the two sides are churning the ocean of milk. In the detail above you can see that the gods and demons are playing a sort of tug-of-war with the Naga or serpent king as their divine rope. The Naga is being spun on Mt. Mandara represented by Vishnu (in the center). Several things happen while the churning of milk takes place. One event is that the foam from the churning produces *apsaras* or celestial maidens who are carved in relief throughout Angkor Wat (we see them here on either side of Vishnu, above the gods and demons). Once the elixir is released, Indra (the Vedic god who is considered the king of all the gods) is seen descending from heaven to catch it and save the world from the destruction of the demons.

Angkor Wat as Temple Mountain



Figure 13.5.9.4: Aerial view, Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1116-1150 (photo: Peter Garnhum, CC BY-NC 2.0)

An aerial view of Angkor Wat demonstrates that the temple is made up of an expansive enclosure wall, which separates the sacred temple grounds from the protective moat that surrounds the entire complex (the moat is visible in the photograph at the top of the page). The temple proper is comprised of three galleries (a passageway running along the length of the temple) with a central sanctuary, marked by five stone towers.



Figure 13.5.9.5: Gallery, Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1116-1150 (photo: fmpgoh, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

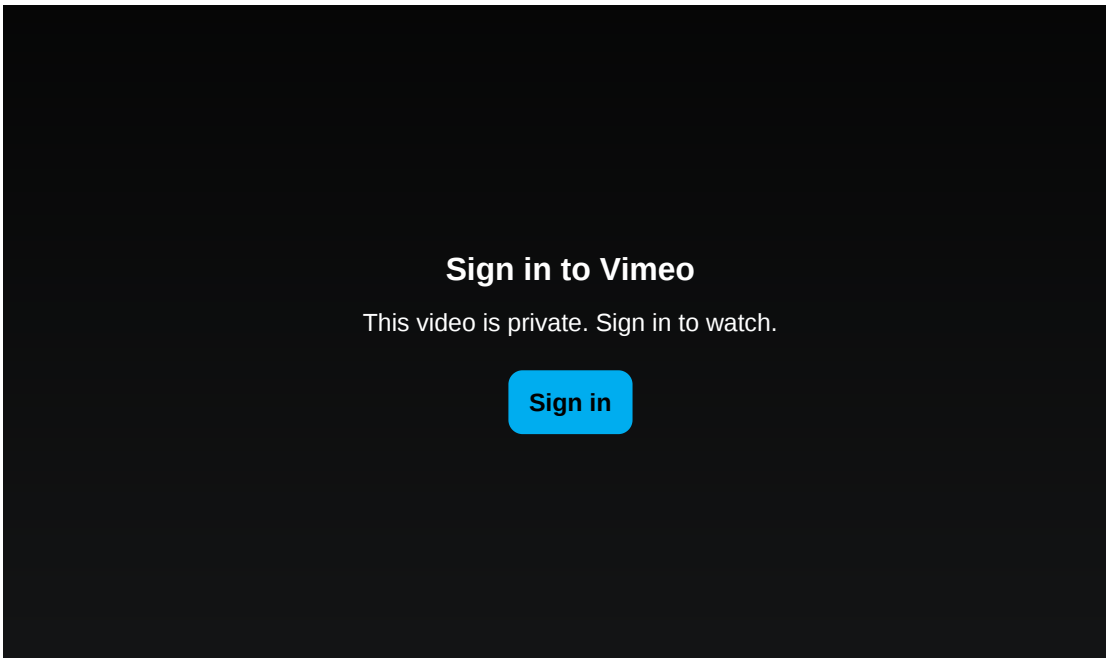
The five stone towers are intended to mimic the five mountain ranges of Mt. Meru—the mythical home of the gods, for both Hindus and Buddhists. The temple mountain as an architectural design was invented in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian architects quite literally envisioned temples dedicated to Hindu gods on earth as a representation of Mt. Meru. The galleries and the empty spaces that they created between one another and the moat are envisioned as the mountain ranges and oceans that surround Mt. Meru. Mt. Meru is not only home to the gods, it is also considered an axis-mundi. An axis-mundi is a cosmic or world axis that connects heaven and earth. In designing Angkor Wat in this way, King Suryavarman II and his architects intended for the temple to serve as the supreme abode for Vishnu. Similarly, the symbolism of Angkor Wat serving as an axis mundi was intended to demonstrate the Angkor Kingdom's and the king's central place in the universe. In addition to envisioning Angkor Wat as Mt. Meru on earth, the temple's architects, of whom we know nothing, also ingeniously designed the temple so that embedded in the temple's construction is a map of the cosmos (mandala) as well as a historical record of the temple's patron.

Angkor Wat as a Mandala

According to ancient Sanskrit and Khmer texts, religious monuments and specifically temples must be organized in such a way that they are in harmony with the universe, meaning that the temple should be planned according to the rising sun and moon, in addition to symbolizing the recurrent time sequences of the days, months and years. The central axis of these temples should also be aligned with the planets, thus connecting the structure to the cosmos so that temples become spiritual, political, cosmological, astronomical and geo-physical centers. They are, in other words, intended to represent microcosms of the universe and are organized as mandalas—diagrams of the universe.

Angkor Wat Today

Angkor Wat continues to play an important role in Cambodia even though most of the population is now Buddhist. Since the fifteenth century, Buddhists have used the temple and visitors today will see, among the thousands of visitors, Buddhist monks and nuns who worship at the site. Angkor Wat has also become an important symbol for the Cambodian nation. Today, the Cambodian flag has emblazoned on it the silhouette of Angkor Wat.



Video 13.5.9.1: **World Monuments Fund at Angkor Wat: The Churning of the Sea of Milk Gallery**

At the magnificent temple of Angkor Wat, World Monuments Fund is restoring the *Churning of the Sea of Milk* Gallery. Rainwater and harmful salts have leaked through the roof of the gallery, which forms the south half of Angkor Wat's prominent east façade, damaging the fragile surface of the frieze. Without treatment, the deterioration will increase at an alarming rate, risking the eventual loss of what most historians regard as the most ambitious and finely produced stone sculptures in Khmer art.

Additional resources:

Angkor Wat from Unesco

Temples of Angkor, google street-view interactive

"In Cambodia, Along the Path to Something Profound," NY TImes (May 13, 2015)

The Looting of Cambodian Antiquities

by TESS DAVIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.5.9.2: The looting of ancient Cambodian antiquities from Prasat Chen, the 10th century the Khmer capital at Koh Ker ARCHES: At Risk Cultural Heritage Education Series

Additional resources:

"Sotheby's Accused of Deceit in Sale of Khmer Statue" (*The New York Times*, November 13, 2012)

Rebuilding Koh Ker: A 3D Reconstruction Restores Context to a Looted Khmer Temple (from Chasing Aphrodite)

Cambodia Vs. Sotheby's In A Battle Over Antiquities (from NPR)

Return of six of the nine statues looted from Cambodia (UNESCO)

Red List of Cambodian Antiquities at Risk (ICOM)

The Scourge of Looting: Trafficking Antiquities, from Temple to Museum

by TESS DAVIS



Video 13.5.9.3: Archaeologist and legal expert Tess Davis talks about the illicit antiquities trade, and how the looting of archaeological sites in conflict zones goes to fund paramilitary groups and terrorist organizations.

Sotheby's Returns Looted 10th Century Statue to Cambodia

by TESS DAVIS



Video 13.5.9.4: Archaeologist and legal expert Tess Davis talks about Sotheby's attempt to auction an ancient Cambodian statue that had been looted by the Khmer Rouge in 1972; and the statue's eventual return home.

Indonesia

Borobudur

by ROBERT E. GORDON



Figure **13.5.9.6**: Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: **Claire André**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Borobudur and the concept of path in Buddhism

Paths have been pervasive in human civilization. We are all familiar with the streets, trails, and lanes along which we routinely travel. Ancient Roman roads are utilized in some places even today. In contemporary computer culture we follow "paths" on webpages as we find our way to the information or experience we are searching for or find unexpectedly. There are simulated paths in complex first-person virtual reality video environments, where role-playing games formulate their content around the path to be conquered. The idea of path is an important concept in Buddhism, and is essential in understanding the meaning and purpose of one of the most remarkable and impressive monuments in the world: Borobudur.



Figure **13.5.9.7**: Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: **Claire André**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Located on the island of Java in Indonesia, the rulers of the Śailendra Dynasty built the Temple of Borobudur around 800 C.E. as a monument to the Buddha (exact dates vary among scholars). The temple (or candi in Javanese, pronounced "chandi") fell into disuse roughly one hundred years after its completion when, for still unknown reasons, the rulers of Java relocated the governing center to another part of the island. The British Lieutenant Governor on Java, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, only rediscovered the site in 1814 upon hearing reports from islanders of an incredible sanctuary deep within the island's interior. [1]



Figure **13.5.9.8**: Bodobudur, photo: **Wilson Loo Kok Wee** (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Candi Borobudur's design was conceived of by the poet, thinker, and architect Gunadharma, considered by many today to be a man of great vision and devotion. The temple has been described in a number of ways. Its basic structure resembles that of a pyramid, yet it has been also referred to as a caitya (shrine), a stupa (reliquary), and a sacred mountain. In fact, the name Śailendra literally means "Lord of the Mountain." While the temple exhibits characteristics of all these architectural configurations, its overall plan is that of a three-dimensional mandala—a diagram of the cosmos used for meditation—and it is in that sense where the richest understanding of the monument occurs.

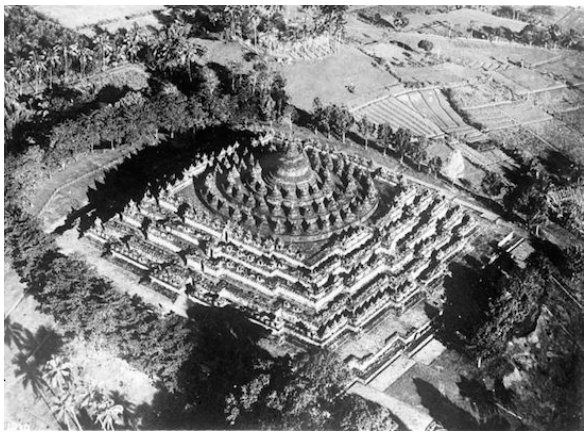


Figure 13.5.9.9: Aerial photo of Borobudur (Tropenmuseum Collection)

The journey

Set high upon a hill vertically enhanced by its builders to achieve a greater elevation, Borobudur consists of a series of open-air passageways that radiate around a central axis mundi (cosmic axis). Devotees circumambulate clockwise along walkways that gradually ascend to its uppermost level. At Borobudur, geometry, geomancy, and theology all instruct adherents toward the ultimate goal of enlightenment. Meticulously carved relief sculptures mediate a physical and spiritual journey that guides pilgrims progressively toward higher states of consciousness.



Figure 13.5.9.10: Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Wilson Loo Kok Wee, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The entire site contains 504 statues of the Buddha. 1460 stone reliefs on the walls and opposite balustrades decorate the first four galleries, with an additional 1212 decorative reliefs augmenting the path. The relief sculptures narrate the Buddha's teachings (the Dharma), depict various events related to his past lives (Jatakas), and illustrate didactic stories taken from important Buddhist scriptures (sutras). Interestingly, another 160 relief sculptures adorn the base of the monument, but are concealed behind stone buttresses that were added shortly after the building's construction in order to further support the structure's weight. The hidden narrative reliefs were photographed when they were discovered in the late 19th century before the stones were put back to help ensure the temple's stability.



Figure 13.5.9.11: Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Gildardo Sánchez, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.5.9.12: Borobudur, Indonesia, central stupa at the temple's apex in the distance (photo: pierre c. 38, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Moving past the base and through the four galleries, the devotee emerges onto the three upper terraces, encountering 72 stupas each containing a three-dimensional sculpture of a seated Buddha within a stone latticework. At the temple's apex sits the large central stupa, a symbol of the enlightened mind.

The experience of meaning

While the sheer size and scope of a mandala structure such as this makes the site worthy of admiration, it is important to understand how the experience of Borobudur relates to the philosophic and spiritual underpinnings of the Buddhist religion it reifies and commemorates. Since its inception, roughly 2500 years ago, Buddhism has directly engaged what it sees as the paradoxical nature of human existence. The most essential tenet the religion promulgates is the impermanent, transient nature of existence. Transcendental wisdom via the Dharma (the Noble Eight-Fold Path) hinges on recognizing that attachment to the idea of a fixed, immutable "self" is a delusion.

Enlightenment entails embracing the concept of "no-self" (*anattā*), understood to be at the heart of eliminating the suffering and dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) of sentient beings. This is the ultimate message expressed in the sacred scriptures that are solidified in artistic magnificence along the stone walls and railings of Borobudur. The physical movement of circumambulating the structure symbolizes the non-physical—or spiritual—path of enlightenment. In a real sense, then, the concept of path within Borobudur monumentalizes the impermanent. Like a river that is never the same from moment to moment, to physically move along the path while meditating on the spiritual message of the sutras is meant to help one fully embrace the Buddha's paradoxical message of impermanence.



Figure 13.5.9.13: From the Gandavyuha Sutra, Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Photo Dharma, CC BY 2.0)

The texts illustrated on the walls refer to pathways as well. For instance, the Gandavyuha Sutra forms a major segment of the temple's upper galleries. The last chapter of a larger text called the Flower Garland Sutra, it relates the story of Suddhana, a youth who commences a journey to meet fifty-three teachers while seeking the path to enlightenment. The concept of "path" is a central theme in the text. He eventually meets an enlightened being (bodhisattva) named Samantabadhra. Excerpts from the larger sutra illustrate the concepts under discussion:

> ***"I will lead those who have lost their way to the right road. I will be a bright light for those in the dark night, and cause the poor and destitute to uncover hidden treasures. The Bodhisattva impartially benefits all living beings in this manner.***

> ***I vow to shut the door to evil destinies and open the right paths of humans, gods and that of Nirvana.***
>
> ***Once any sentient beings see the Buddha, it will cause them to clear away habitual obstructions. And forever abandon devilish actions: This is the path traveled by Illumination.***
>
> ***Sentient Beings are blinded by ignorance, always confused; the light of Buddha illuminates the path of safety. To rescue them and cause suffering to be removed.***
>
> ***All sentient beings are on false paths—Buddha shows them the right path, inconceivable, causing all worlds to be vessels of truth…"***

The full text is available here.

From darkness into light

The idea of moving from the darkness into the light is the final element of the experience of Borobudur. The temple's pathway takes one from the earthly realm of desire (*kamadhatu*), represented and documented on the hidden narratives of the structure's earthbound base, through the world of forms (*rupadhatu*) as expounded on the narratives carved along the four galleries set at right angles, until one finally emerges into the realm of formlessness (*arupadhatu*) as symbolized and manifested in the open circular terraces crowned with 72 stupas.



Figure 13.5.9.14: Crowning stupa, Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Paul Atkinson, CC BY-SA 2.0)

However, the symbolization of enlightenment these stupas represent is not intended to be merely aesthetic. Buddhist stupas and mandalas are understood as "spiritual technologies" that harness spiritual "energies" in the creation of sacred space. The repetition of form and the circumabulatory progress of the pilgrim mimic, and thereby access, the cosmological as a microcosm. The clockwise movement around the cosmic

center reproduces the macrocosmic path of the sun. Thus, when one emerges from the dark galleries representing the realms of desire and form into the light of the "formless" circular open air upper walkways, the material effect of light on one's physical form merges concomitantly with the spiritual enlightenment generated by the metaphysical journey of the sacred path.

Light, in all its paradoxes, is the ultimate goal. The crowning stupa of this sacred mountain is dedicated to the "Great Sun Buddha" Vairocana. The temple sits in cosmic proximity to the nearby volcano Mt. Merapi. During certain times of the year the path of the rising sun in the East seems to emerge out of the mountain to strike the temple's peak in radiant synergy. Light illuminates the stone in a way that is intended to be more than beautiful. The brilliance of the site can be found in how the Borobudur mandala blends the metaphysical and physical, the symbolic and the material, the cosmological and the earthly within the structure of its physical setting and the framework of spiritual paradox.

Notes:

[1] Borobudur and many other archaeological sites in South and Southeast Asia often have orientalized narratives attached to them wherein colonizers "discover" or "bring to light" ancient monuments. These distortions discount the real and living history of the site.

Thailand

Ban Chiang Clay Jar

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Patterned pottery from the earliest agricultural communities of Thailand

Neolithic cultures based on agriculture and the use of stone tools appeared throughout mainland South-east Asia between 4000 B.C.E. and 1000 B.C.E.

Bronze technology became widespread in the northern part during the second millennium B.C.E. and iron after 500 B.C.E. The expansion of settlements, the spread of agriculture and the use of metal technology were closely connected with the Neolithic cultures of southern China.

Ban Chiang



Figure **13.5.9.15**: Ban Chiang Clay Jar, Ban Chiang, north-eastern Thailand, 1st millennium B.C.E. © Trustees of the British Museum

The site of Ban Chiang was excavated from the late 1960s. Until then the period prior to the spread of an Indianized culture in the first millennium C.E. was relatively unknown. The finds at Ban Chiang and other sites clearly demonstrated that the prehistory of Thailand and South-east Asia was far more complex than had previously been thought.

The site at Ban Chiang was occupied from around 3000 B.C.E. to the early centuries C.E. The earliest levels are agricultural but date before the use of bronze, which began to be used from around 2000 B.C.E. Burials with grave goods were excavated in addition to large quantities of decorated pottery in a variety of styles, for which the site is famous. Elaborately decorated pots such as this one were produced in the first millennium B.C.E. A great variety of decorative motifs feature on this pottery including the red spiral patterns that densely cover the surface of this pot. These are similar to those found on contemporary pottery in southern China.

Additional resources:

C. Higham, T*he archaeology of mainland Southeast Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 1989)

N. Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Southeast Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 1992)

© Trustees of the British Museum

13.5.9: Southeast Asia is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.9: Southeast Asia** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.5.10: The Himalayas

Tibet

Jowo Rinpoche, Jokhang Temple, Tibet

by DR. MELODY ROD-ARI



Jowo Shakyamuni, Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet, Yarlung Dynasty, brought to Tibet in 641(?), gilt metals with semiprecious stones, pearls, and paint and various offerings (photo: ziyi xu, CC BY-SA 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-12557" height="666" sizes="(max-width: 500px) 100vw, 500px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f194f466_o.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f194f466_o.jpg
600w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x400.jpg
300w" style="width: 404px; height: 538px;" width="500">

Figure **13.5.10.1**: *Jowo Shakyamuni*, Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet, Yarlung Dynasty, brought to Tibet in 641(?), gilt metals with semiprecious stones, pearls, and paint and various offerings (photo: **ziyi xu**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

There are hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of images of the Buddha Shakyamuni that exist in the world today. Some are big, some are small, some are made of precious materials like gold, while others are carved of stone, cast from bronze, molded from plastic, painted on silk, or printed on paper. What makes one image of the Buddha Shakyamuni more sacred than an other? Is it its material composition, its age, its owner? Is it all of the above, or is it something else?

The Jowo Shakyamuni

The *Jowo Shakyamuni*, or *Jowo Rinpoche* (Rinpoche means ”precious one” in the Tibetan language), is a larger than life-size image of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni housed in the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Tibet. Today, the Jowo Shakyamuni can be seen seated against a resplendent gold and bejeweled throne. The image itself is made of gilt metal—the effect is an image of gold hue with shocking blue hair.

Jowo Shakyamuni is seated with his legs in the lotus position or *padmasana*. His left hand is in the mudra (hand gesture) of meditation (*dhyana mudra*) and his right hand is in the gesture of “calling the earth to witness” (*bhumisparsha mudra*). Together, these postures signify the moment of the Buddha’s enlightenment. He is shown wearing a thin monk’s robe, which drapes over his body and covers his left shoulder. When dressed, *Jowo Shakyamuni* is presented with a magnificent jeweled crown and robes. Read more about Buddhism **here** and **here**.



Figure **13.5.10.2**: *Jowo Shakyamuni*, Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet. Yarlung Dynasty, brought to Tibet in 641(?) Gilt metals with semiprecious stones, pearls, and paint; various offerings (photo: **ziyi xu**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The sculpture has undergone restoration and reconstruction over its history. The most recent of which took place after the **Cultural Revolution**. It is not known what the image may have originally looked like in the seventh century when it was made; however, early texts describe the sculpture as being depicted in a similarly enlightened state (seated in *padmasana* with hands in *bhumisparsha mudra*). One of the main variations is described in an eleventh century text titled the Vase-Shaped Pillar Testament —the earliest written description of the image—which states that a wrathful deity is seen protruding from the Buddha's neck.[1] No such wrathful deity can be seen today on the sculpture. Similarly, the resplendent crown and robes that the sculpture is seen wearing today are much later additions. Nonetheless, the continued restoration and veneration of the *Jowo Shakyamuni* over the course of its 1300-year history is a testament to its religious and cultural importance in Tibet.

The most sacred Buddha image in Tibet

The *Jowo Shakyamuni* is considered the most sacred and important Buddha image in Tibet because it is believed to have been carved by the celestial architect Viswakarma in India during the lifetime of the Buddha Shakyamuni (sixth to fifth centuries B.C.E.). Texts such as the eleventh-century *Vase-Shaped Pillar Testament* suggest that the *Jowo Shakyamuni* was sculpted from a life portrait of the Buddha. The purpose of the statue's carving was to act as the Buddha's proxy after his *parinirvana* or departure from the world. The religious significance and sacred power of the *Jowo Shakyamuni* therefore comes from its actual likeness of the Buddha as well as its having been carved by Viswakarma. Such claims of likeness and celestial origins are not unique to the *Jowo Shakyamuni*—the Emerald Buddha in Thailand and the Seiryoji Buddha in Japan have almost identical origin stories.

Dating

While texts regarding the sculpture's origins and history would like us to believe that the *Jowo Shakyamuni* is the most accurate and thereby the earliest portrait of the Buddha, the sculpture in its original form was likely made sometime during the early to mid seventh century C.E. The invention of the Buddha image in anthropomorphic (human) form dates to after the turn of the first century C.E. (circa early second century), with the advent of Mahayana Buddhism during the Kushan Dynasty. The purported date of the *Jowo Shakyamuni* to the time of the Buddha from the sixth to fifth centuries B.C.E. is not consistent with the development of Buddha imagery in the history of Buddhist art, nor does the actual sculpture conform to stylistic conventions of early Buddha images (read more about early images of Buddha **here**). More convincing is an early to mid seventh century date of production for the Jowo Shakyamuni.

The earliest evidence for the sculpture dates to the seventh century when the Chinese princess, Wencheng Gongzhu, is said to have brought it to Tibet as part of her marriage dowry to emperor Songtsen Gampo in 641. This date also coincides with the foundation of Buddhism in Tibet. What this suggests is that while the Jowo Shakyamuni is not among the first images of the Buddha, its importance is not diminished as its appearance in Tibet coincides with the foundation of Buddhism in the country.

The Buddha in Lhasa

While the *Jowo Shakyamuni* is not a sculpted-from-life portrait of the Buddha, nor is it the earliest image of the Buddha, it nonetheless holds cultural and religious importance to those who worship the image as such. This is evidenced by its continued veneration, the dressing of the sculpture for special occasions and feeding of it as if it were the Buddha on earth. So what makes one image of the Buddha Shakyamuni more sacred than another? In examining the *Jowo Shakyamuni*, it is the sculpture's purported direct lineage to the Buddha, as well as the belief that it is the most accurate portrait of the Buddha Shakyamuni.

[1] There are multiple versions of the Vase-Shaped Pillar Testament.

Sacred arts of Tibet

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.5.10.1**: Video from The Asian Art Museum

Mahakala, Protector of the Tent, c. 1500

by DR. KURT BEHRENDT, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.5.10.2**: Mahakala, Protector of the Tent, c. 1500, Central Tibet, distemper on cloth, 162.6 x 134.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Additional resources:

This work of art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Explore further

13.5.10: The Himalayas is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **5.10: The Himalayas** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.6: Medieval Europe + Byzantine

Medieval Europe + Byzantium

The period in Europe and West Asia between classical antiquity and the Renaissance.

c. 330 - 1453 C.E.

13.6.1: A beginner's guide

13.6.2: Christianity and art

13.6.3: Judaism and art

13.6.4: Books in Medieval Europe

13.6.5: Early Christian

13.6.6: Byzantine

13.6.7: Early Medieval

13.6.8: Carolingian

13.6.9: Ottonian

13.6.10: Viking Age

13.6.11: Romanesque

13.6.12: Gothic

13.6.13: The Crusades

Thumbnail: An emperor of the Byzantine Empire is guarded by two Vikings with spear (Varangian Guardsmen). From the Chronicle of John Skylitzes.

13.6: Medieval Europe + Byzantine is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.6.1: A beginner's guide

Introduction to the Middle Ages

by DR. NANCY ROSS

The dark ages?

So much of what the average person knows, or thinks they know, about the Middle Ages comes from film and tv. When I polled a group of well-educated friends on Facebook, they told me that the word “medieval” called to mind Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Blackadder, The Sword in the Stone, lusty wenches, feasting, courtly love, the plague, jousting and chain mail.



Figure **13.6.1.1**: Roman de la Rose, M. 948, fol. 12r, 16th century (**Morgan Library and Museum**, New York) © Morgan Library, New York

Perhaps someone who had seen (or better yet read) *The Name of the Rose* or *Pillars of the Earth* would add cathedrals, manuscripts, monasteries, feudalism, monks and friars.

Petrarch, an Italian poet and scholar of the fourteenth century, famously referred to the period of time between the fall of the Roman Empire (c. 476) and his own day (c. 1330s) as the Dark Ages.

Petrarch believed that the Dark Ages was a period of intellectual darkness due to the loss of the classical learning, which he saw as light. Later historians picked up on this idea and ultimately the term Dark Ages was transformed into Middle Ages. Broadly speaking, the Middle Ages is the period of time in Europe between the end of antiquity in the fifth century and the Renaissance, or rebirth of classical learning, in the fifteenth century and sixteenth centuries.

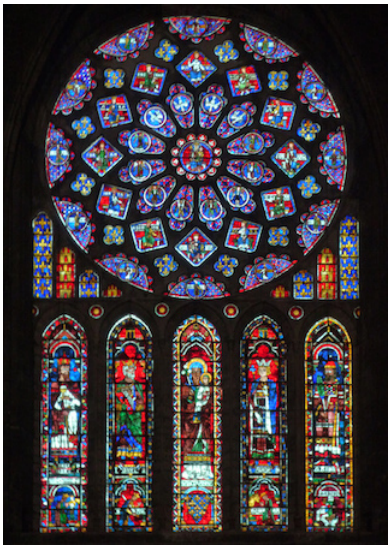


Figure 13.6.1.2: North Transept Rose Window, c. 1235, Chartres Cathedral, France, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 —video here

Not so dark after all

Characterizing the Middle Ages as a period of darkness falling between two greater, more intellectually significant periods in history is misleading. The Middle Ages was not a time of ignorance and backwardness, but rather a period during which Christianity flourished in Europe. Christianity, and specifically Catholicism in the Latin West, brought with it new views of life and the world that rejected the traditions and learning of the ancient world.

During this time, the Roman Empire slowly fragmented into many smaller political entities. The geographical boundaries for European countries today were established during the Middle Ages. This was a period that heralded the formation and rise of universities, the establishment of the rule of law, numerous periods of ecclesiastical reform and the birth of the tourism industry. Many works of medieval literature, such as the Canterbury Tales, the Divine Comedy, and The Song of Roland, are widely read and studied today.

The visual arts prospered during Middles Ages, which created its own aesthetic values. The wealthiest and most influential members of society commissioned cathedrals, churches, sculpture, painting, textiles, manuscripts, jewelry and ritual items from artists. Many of these commissions were religious in nature but medieval artists also produced secular art. Few names of artists survive and fewer documents record their business dealings, but they left behind an impressive legacy of art and culture.

Byzantium

When I polled the same group of friends about the word “Byzantine,” many struggled to come up with answers. Among the better ones were the song “Istanbul (Not Constantinople)” sung by They Might Be Giants, crusades, things that are too complex (like the tax code or medical billing), Hagia Sophia, the poet Yeats, mosaics, monks, and icons. Unlike Western Europe in the Middle Ages, the Byzantine Empire is not romanticized in television and film.



Figure 13.6.1.3: Byzantine Empire in 650 C.E.

In the medieval West, the Roman Empire fragmented, but in the Byzantine East, it remained a strong, centrally-focused political entity. Byzantine emperors ruled from Constantinople, which they thought of as the New Rome. Constantinople housed Hagia Sophia, one of the world's largest churches, and was a major center of artistic production.



Figure 13.6.1.4: Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532-37 (architects: Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles), photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 —video here

The Byzantine Empire experienced two periods of Iconoclasm (730-787 and 814-842), when images and image-making were problematic. Iconoclasm left a visible legacy on Byzantine art because it created limits on what artists could represent and how those subjects could be represented. Byzantine Art is broken into three periods. Early Byzantine or Early Christian art begins with the earliest extant Christian works of art c. 250 and ends with the end of Iconoclasm in 842. Middle Byzantine art picks up at the end of Iconoclasm and extends to the sack of Constantinople by Latin Crusaders in 1204. Late Byzantine art was made between the sack of Constantinople and the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

In the European West, Medieval art is often broken into smaller periods. These date ranges vary by location.

c.780-900 – Carolingian Art
c.900-1000 – Ottonian Art
c.1000-1200 – Romanesque Art
c.1200-1400 – Gothic Art

Additional resources:

Art and Death in the Middle Ages on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History)

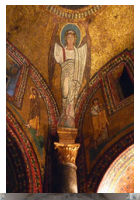
Byzantium from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Icons and Iconoclasm on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Classical Antiquity in the Middle Ages, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Hagia Sophia on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

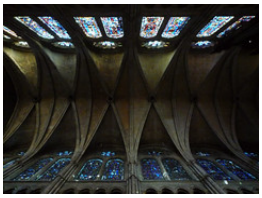
















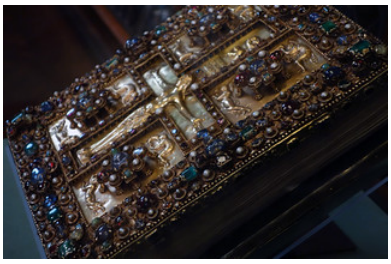


Figure **13.6.1.5**: More Smarthistory images…

A new pictorial language: the image in early medieval art

by DR. NANCY ROSS



Figure **13.6.1.6**: Praxiteles, *Cnidian Aphrodite*, 4th century – marble copy known as the "Capitoline Venus," marble, 193 cm high (Capitoline Museum, Rome), photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA

An illusion of reality

Classical art, or the art of ancient Greece and Rome, sought to create a convincing illusion for the viewer. Artists sculpting the images of gods and goddesses tried to make their statues appear like an idealized human figure. Some of these sculptures, such as the Aphrodite of Knidos by Praxiteles, were so lifelike that legends spread about the statues coming to life and speaking to people. After all, a statue of a god or goddess in the ancient world was believed to embody deity.

The problem for early Christians

The illusionary quality of classical art posed a significant problem for early Christian theologians. When God dictated the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, God expressly forbade the Israelites from making any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth (Exodus 20:4). Early Christians saw themselves as the spiritual progeny of the Israelites and tried to comply with this commandment. Nevertheless, many early Christians were converted pagans who were accustomed to images in religious worship. The use of images in religious ritual was visually compelling and difficult to abandon.

Tertullian asks: Can artists be Christians?

Tertullian, an influential early Christian author living in the second and third centuries, wrote a treatise titled On Idolatry in which he asks if artists could, in fact, be Christians. In this text, he argues that all illusionary art, or all art that seeks to look like something or someone in nature, has the potential to be worshiped as an idol. Arguing fervently against artists as Christians, he acknowledges that there are many artists who are Christians and indeed some who are even priests. In the end, Tertullian asks artists to quit their work and become craftsmen.

Augustine: Illusionary images are lies

Another influential early Christian writer, St. Augustine of Hippo, was also concerned about images, but for different reasons. In his Soliloquies (386-87), Augustine observes that illusionary images, like actors, are lying. An actor on a stage lies because he is playing a part, trying to convince you that he is a character in the script when in truth he is not. An image lies because it is not the thing it claims to be. A painting of a cat is not a cat, but the artist tries to convince the viewer that it is. Augustine cannot reconcile these lies with patterns of divine truth and therefore does not see a place for images in Christian practice.*

Fortunately for art and history, not everyone agreed with Tertullian and Augustine and the use of images persisted. Nevertheless their style and appearance changed in order to be more compatible with theology.



Figure **13.6.1.7**: Mosaic in the apse of the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, 6th century (Ravenna, Italy), , photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA

Towards abstraction (and away from illusion)

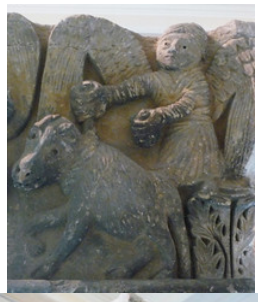
Christian art, which was initially influenced by the illusionary quality of classical art, started to move away from naturalistic representation and instead pushed toward abstraction. Artists began to abandon classical artistic conventions like shading, modeling and perspective conventions that make the image appear more real. They no longer observed details in nature to record them in paint, bronze, marble, or mosaic.

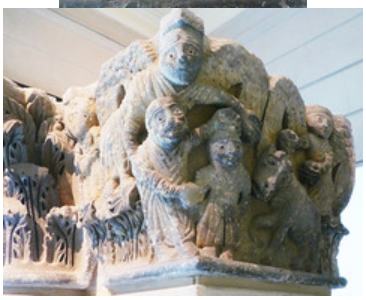
Instead, artists favored flat representations of people, animals and objects that only looked nominally like their subjects in real life. Artists were no longer creating the lies that Augustine warned against, as these abstracted images removed at least some of the temptations for idolatry. This new style, adopted over several generations, created a comfortable distance between the new Christian empire and its pagan past.

In Western Europe, this approach to the visual arts dominated until the imperial rule of Charlemagne (800-814) and the accompanying Carolingian Renaissance. This controversy over the legitimacy and orthodoxy of images continued and intensified in the Byzantine Empire. The issue was eventually resolved, in favor of images, during the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.

*There is some irony here since Augustine's position echos, to some extent, the writing of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. In book X of The Republic (c. 360 B.C.E.), Plato describes a true thing as having been made by God, while in the earthly sphere, a carpenter, for example, can only build a replica of this truth (Plato uses a bed to illustrate his point). Plato states that a painter who renders the carpenter's bed creates an illusion that is two steps from the truth of God.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















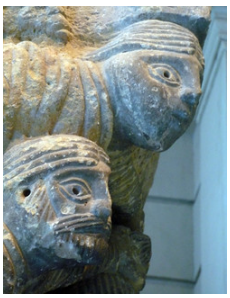




Figure 13.6.1.8: More Smarthistory images…

An Introduction to the Bestiary, Book of Beasts in the Medieval World

by ELIZABETH MORRISON and LARISA GROLLEMOND



Figure 13.6.1.9: Griffin (detail) from *Book of Flowers*, 1460, unknown illuminator, made in France and Belgium. Parchment, 16 1/16 × 11 1/4 inches (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands, Ms.72 A 23, fol. 46)

The bestiary — the medieval book of beasts — was among the most popular illuminated texts in northern Europe during the Middle Ages (about 500–1500). Medieval Christians understood every element of the world as a manifestation of God, and bestiaries largely focused on each animal's religious meaning. The book brought creatures both real and fantastic to life before the reader's eyes, offering Christian inspiration as well as entertainment.

The stories and images from the bestiary became so popular that they escaped from the book's pages to inhabit a myriad of other art forms, ranging from magnificent tapestries to exquisitely carved ivories. In fact, the stories of the bestiary pervaded both medieval and modern popular culture. Even if you haven't heard of the medieval bestiary, you will recognize many of its stories.

Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World is the first exhibition ever dedicated to the bestiary and its influence. It gathers together more than a hundred works from institutions across the United States and Europe, including one-third of the world's surviving illuminated bestiaries. As manuscripts specialists, curators of this exhibition, and editors of the **accompanying book**, in this post we introduce key stories from the bestiary, describe the contents of a typical bestiary, and explore the bestiary's centuries-long influence.

How bestiaries work — The unicorn

The **unicorn** offers a primary example of the bestiary's complex symbolism, as well as its influence on both medieval and modern imaginations.

The unicorn was described in the text of the bestiary as a wild, untamable beast that could be captured only by a maiden in the woods. Upon meeting the maiden, the unicorn would lay its head in her lap, making it vulnerable to the attack of hunters.



Figure **13.6.1.10**: Unicorn (detail) from **The Ashmole Bestiary**, about 1210–20, unknown illuminator, made in England. Parchment, 10 7/8 × 7 3/16 inches (The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Ms. Ashmole 1511, fol. 14v)

In the bestiary, however, the unicorn's appearance and capture were only half the story. The unicorn also symbolized the Incarnation, the moment when Christ was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, rendering him human and vulnerable to death. In the luxurious image shown above, the beast rests in the lap of a maiden seated before a tree, while a hunter on the right stabs the animal in its side. The unicorn symbolizes Christ and the maiden represents his mother the Virgin Mary, while the killing of the creature serves as an allegory for Christ's death.

The widespread diffusion of the bestiary popularized the unicorn's tale, which was adapted in many other media in addition to manuscripts. At the center of this carved bone saddle, for example, a stately unicorn looks over its shoulder at an elegant maiden, echoing the bestiary story.

Thanks to its proclivity for maidens, the unicorn also became a focus of stories of romance and chivalry, transforming from a religious symbol into an emblem of courtly love.



Figure **13.6.1.11**: Parade Saddle, about 1450, unknown creator, made in Germany or Tyrol, bone, polychromy, wood, leather, iron alloy, 16 1/2 × 17 × 21 9/16 inches (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1904, 04.3.250)

Text and image in the bestiary

Medieval bestiaries contained anywhere from a few dozen to more than a hundred descriptions of animals, each accompanied by an iconic image. Some descriptions explained a creature's Christian significance, such as the unicorn as a symbol for Christ, while others focused on physical characteristics. The selection and order of the beasts varied, though many bestiaries divided them into a hierarchy of land animals, birds, serpents, and sea creatures. The bestiary was originally intended for religious education within the church, but it was eventually sought after by wealthy members of society for devotional reading as well as entertainment.



Figure **13.6.1.12**: Lion (detail) in a bestiary, about 1225–50, unknown illuminator, made in England, parchment, 11 5/8 × 7 1/2 inches (**The Bodleian Libraries**, University of Oxford, Ms. Bodl. 764, fol. 2v)

The lion was known in the bestiary as the “king of beasts,” and as such, was placed first. In this spectacularly colorful image, a jaunty lion waves to the viewer at top. In the middle, three cubs playfully crawl over their adult counterpart. At bottom, cubs are brought to life by their parents, who lick and breathe on them. According to the bestiary, lion cubs are born dead, and after three days their parents literally breathe life into them. This behavior was believed to have been put into the lion at the beginning of time by God as a reflection of the Crucifixion of Christ and his Resurrection three days later.



Figure **13.6.1.13**: Parandrus in a bestiary, about 1200–1210, unknown illuminator, made in England, parchment, 8 11/16 × 6 5/16 inches (**The British Library**, image: Granger)

After introducing the lion, the typical bestiary presented a section devoted to land animals. According to the text in this example, the four-legged beast depicted at bottom can move its long horns independently, so that one can face forward and the other backward to defend against dual threats. The artist emphasized this flexibility by showing one of the animal's horns slicing through the text itself. Such interaction between text and image was a hallmark of the bestiary tradition.

Birds



Figure **13.6.1.14**: Eagles (detail) from a Workshop Bestiary, about 1185, unknown illuminator, made in England, vellum, 8 7/16 × 6 1/8 inches (**The Morgan Library & Museum**, New York, Ms. M.81, fol. 48)

This opening shows a manuscript's transition from land animals to birds. Just as the lion was known as the king of beasts, the eagle was supreme among birds. The eagle was described as losing its sight as it grows old, only to be rejuvenated by gazing at the sun.

Serpents



Figure **13.6.1.15**: Dragon in a bestiary, about 1240–50, unknown illuminator, made in England, parchment, 11 × 6 1/2 inches (**The British Library**, London, Harley Ms. 3244, fol. 59.)

Serpents often came next. This page depicts the dragon, king of serpents, with a fire-breathing specimen stretching diagonally across the page. The section of the text that describes the power of the dragon's tail is visually interrupted by the tail itself, demonstrating the formidable nature of the beast as well as the meaningful ways in which text and image interacted in the bestiary.



Figure **13.6.1.16**: Whale (detail) from a bestiary, about 1270, unknown illuminator, made possibly in Thérouanne, France, tempera colors, gold leaf, and ink on parchment, 7 1/2 × 5 5/8 inches (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, Ms. Ludwig XV 3 [83.MR.173], fol. 89v. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

The final section of the bestiary usually dealt with sea creatures. Here an enormous whale plunges into the depths, dragging two hapless fishermen with it. The text describes this beast as so massive that sailors confuse its back for an island. When they make camp and light a fire, the whale feels the heat and dives down, drowning its surprised visitors. This story is presented as a warning against the deceptions of the devil. The artist skillfully evokes the sense of horror felt by the sailors at the exact moment they discover their tragic mistake.

Beasts beyond the bestiary

The bestiary's stories and images were so popular that medieval artists readily adapted them for other kinds of manuscripts, as well as for various other types of art.

Because many bestiary animals communicated complex religious messages, they often appeared in liturgical and devotional contexts where worshippers could easily link them to Christian ideology. But the well-known characteristics associated with numerous beasts—the unicorn, the elephant, and the fox, among others—also made them an ideal match for secular artworks made for the elite world of the court. Over time, the memorable creatures that were central to the bestiary tradition pervaded the visual vocabulary of the medieval world, becoming some of the most common symbols in art of the Middle Ages.



Figure **13.6.1.17**: Bronze candlestick in the form of an elephant carrying a howdah, about 1200–1400, unknown creator, made in Germany, bronze, 6 5/8 × 2 1/16 × 4 1/16 inches (**Victoria and Albert Museum, London**)

For example, the elephant appears as a symbol of strength in artworks of many media, including this metal candlestick. The howdah, a structure used to carry soldiers on the back of an elephant, was a symbol of the animal's might. This candlestick is ingeniously shaped so that the pricket (spike) for the candle stands on the upper tower of the howdah, while the crenellated edge of the tray is designed to catch the wax.



Figure **13.6.1.18**: Reynard Disguised as a Doctor before King Noble (detail) from New Adventures of Reynard, after 1292, Jacquemart Giélée, made in France, parchment, 11 3/16 × 7 7/8 inches (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Ms. fr. 372, fol. 36)

The fox was described in the bestiary as a trickster that would roll over on its back and pretend to be dead, luring unsuspecting birds into its midst. The fox would then snap its jaws shut on the birds that had fallen for the ruse. Tales of the fox spread far and

wide in the Middle Ages, even informing popular literature of the period.

A series of medieval moral stories with animal characters revolves around a trickster fox named Reynard. A lion called Noble, the literal king of beasts in the tale, often tries to hold Reynard accountable for his ploys. The tales of Reynard became so popular in France that the common word for fox in modern French does not derive from the Latin term *vulpus*, but is actually the word *reynard*.



Figure **13.6.1.19**: Tapestry with Flowers and Animals, about 1530–45, unknown creator, made in Belgium, wool, silk, tapestry weave, 11 ft. 6 7/8 in. x 13 ft. 1 3/4 inches (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**, Gift of Mrs. C.J. Martin in memory of Charles Jarius Martin, 34.4)

The animals in this *millefleurs* (thousand-flowers) tapestry seem at first to be scattered randomly for purely decorative effect. Yet the stag, the unicorn, and the lion were all associated with Christ in the stories of the bestiary. Their careful placement in this tapestry, forming a vertical row of three within the triangle created by the rosebushes, strengthens the group's resonance with the Christian concept of the Trinity — the three manifestations of God as the Father, the Son (Christ), and the Holy Spirit.



Figure 13.6.1.20: Lion in the *Rothschild Pentateuch*, 1296, unknown illuminator, made in France and Germany, tempera colors, gold, and ink, 10 13/16 × 8 1/4 inches (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Acquired with the generous support of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, Ms. 116 (2018.43), fol. 32v. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

The use of animals as allegories for human virtues and vices was not limited to European Christian art, but was a widespread phenomenon that transcended geography and religion. In this Hebrew Bible, the bestiary image of a father lion breathing life into his dead cub accompanies the passage in Genesis in which God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. According to some rabbinic commentaries, Abraham actually killed Isaac, but Isaac was miraculously brought back to life. For Christians, the tale of the lion was seen as a reference to Christ's death and resurrection, but here a Jewish audience might have viewed it within the framework of the story of Abraham and the revival of Isaac.

The bestiary and natural history

The medieval bestiary was never intended as a scientific work, but much of its lore was eventually incorporated into the nascent field of natural history. The period of the bestiary's greatest popularity, from about 1100 to 1300, corresponded with a movement to create encyclopedias that would gather all knowledge. Many of these encyclopedias included a section devoted to animals, which relied heavily on the bestiary but often stripped away the Christian symbolism.

At this same time, the European conception of the world was being broadened by a growth in trade and travel that increasingly linked Western Europe with other parts of the globe. In the developing field of cartography, maps and navigational charts represented the world's creatures in their respective regions.



Figure **13.6.1.21**: Ibex Horn (“Griffin Claw”), 1500s or earlier (horn), about 1575–1625 (mount), unknown maker, England, ibex horn with a silver mount, 28 inches wide (Trustees of **The British Museum**, London, OA.24)

The griffin is one of only a few animals to be illustrated in what is often identified as the first medieval encyclopedia, known as the *Book of Flowers* (see image at the top of this article). A mythical hybrid between a lion and an eagle, the griffin was believed to carry away full-grown men to feed its young; this legend is found in ancient texts as well as the medieval bestiary. The griffin’s featured presence in this book—along with its alleged remains in church treasuries across Europe—attests to its central place in the medieval imagination.

The griffin’s presence in such texts lent credibility to supposed griffin claws (usually ibex horns), which were highly prized as physical specimens well into the late sixteenth century. An inscription on the mount identifies this example as belonging to the shrine of Saint Cuthbert in Durham, which recorded two such claws in addition to several “griffin eggs” (probably ostrich eggs) in an inventory from 1383.



Figure **13.6.1.22**: Nautical Chart, 1586, Mateo Prunes, Spain, parchment, 46 1/16 x 27 9/16 inches (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, GE AA-570)

Medieval maps were often oriented with south on the left and north on the right. In this chart made for navigation at sea, many animals occupy the left-hand portion representing Africa. Creatures such as the unicorn, camel, and lion reflect the medieval perception of far-flung lands as exotic and perhaps dangerous.

The legacy of the bestiary

In the visual arts, the rich legacy of the bestiary lasted far beyond the Middle Ages. Twentieth-century artists revived the pairing of animal imagery and text, calling their creations “bestiaries” after the medieval example. Today the term often refers to any collection of descriptions of animals, whether in words or images, but not necessarily with associated allegories or Christian connotations.

Writers and artists revived the genre of the illustrated bestiary in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when a variety of new poetic and prose texts of animal lore appeared with illustrations created by established artists and printmakers.

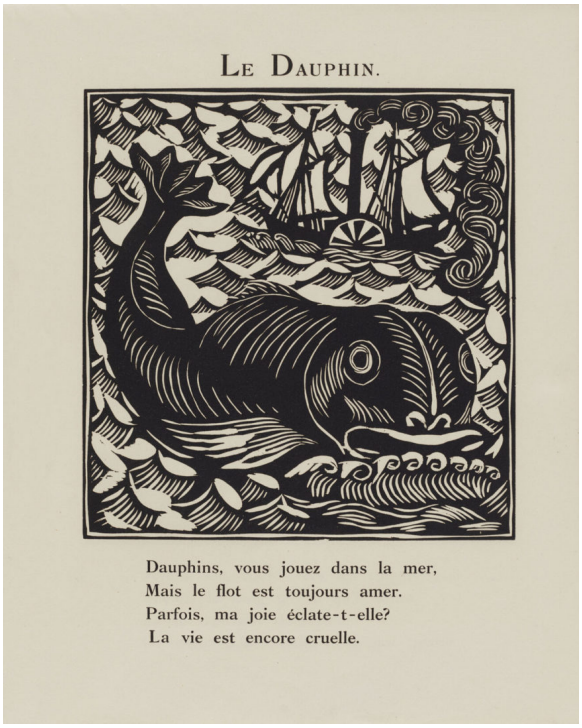


Figure **13.6.1.23**: Raoul Dufy and Guillaume Apollinaire, Dolphin, from *Le bestiaire, ou cortège d'Orphée*, 1911, woodcut, 13 inches (Special Research Collections, UCSB Library, University of California, Santa Barbara)

A notable example of the early twentieth-century bestiary was the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire's foray into illustrated fine art books. Apollinaire's text was eventually published with thirty wood engravings by Raoul Dufy. Dufy's wood engravings of animals are bold and forceful, with large swaths of deeply imprinted black ink contrasting with the milky white paper, imitating the block-book style of the early printed images of the fifteenth century.

The human relationship to the animal world is today a subject of intense interest and even debate, with the animals themselves caught in between as questions of conservation and environmental change are addressed by scientists, politicians, and activists. Contemporary artists, too, respond to these questions, participating in a long tradition of depicting animals in art that offers a commentary on the role of animals in our world.



Figure **13.6.1.24**: Kate Clark, *Licking the Plate* (detail), hide and horns, foam, clay, thread, pins, rubber eyes, 10 x 10 x 4 feet (photo: **rocor**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The taxidermy hybrid creatures created by contemporary sculptor Kate Clark speak to the ubiquitous tendency of humans to see themselves in animals. Clark often "upcycles" hides that taxidermists or hunters don't want. This work, entitled *Licking the Plate*, crystallizes this impulse, combining as it does an animal body with a human face that seems uncannily animate, reaching out across space and compelling the viewer to engage with the creature directly. As the medieval bestiary used animals to teach moral lessons, the fusion of human and animal in Clark's work invites viewers to examine their natural instincts, the animal within, and the characteristics that unite disparate animal kingdoms.

This essay first appeared in ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0).

Additional resources:

Morrison, Elizabeth, and Larisa Grollemond. *Book of Beasts : The Bestiary in the Medieval World*. Los Angeles: Published by the J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019.

Videos on the Getty's Facebook page introducing key animals from the bestiary through manuscripts in the Getty's collection

Profiles of 18 bestiary animals

Kate Clark's website

The medieval calendar

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video 13.6.1.1: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Chivalry in the Middle Ages

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video 13.6.1.2: Video by the J. Paul Getty Museum

Medieval goldsmiths

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video 13.6.1.3: Video from The British Museum.

A Global Middle Ages through the Pages of Decorated Books

by DR. BRYAN C. KEENE



Figure **13.6.1.25**: Facsimile of the Dresden Codex (detail), 13th or 14th century, made in the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico (Dresden, Germany, Saxon State Library, Mscr.Dresd. R 310. The Getty Research Institute, 2645-271)

Manuscripts and printed books—like today's museums, archives, and libraries—provide glimpses into how people have perceived the Earth, its many cultures, and everyone's place in it. ***Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts***, a new book from Getty Publications, invites you to explore this theme, presenting a range of book types from premodern Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Austronesia.



Figure 13.6.1.26: Gospel book, about 1480–1520, made in Gunda Gunde Monastery, Ethiopia (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 105, 2010.17)

The production of books is a collaborative undertaking. In the premodern period, this process could involve the makers of writing surfaces, binding supports, scribes, procurers and creators of pigment, merchants, artists, patrons, and eventually the readers, viewers, or listeners. *Toward a Global Middle Ages* includes essays by twenty-six authors who are specialists of the art of the book.



Figure 13.6.1.27: Books produced during a global Middle Ages reveal a vast variety of structures and styles. Pages from a Prajnaparamita (The Perfection of Wisdom) manuscript (detail), 1025, made in Bihar, India (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.86.185a-d)

Whose Middle Ages?

What do we mean by a global Middle Ages (or medieval period)? Writing about the Middle Ages has traditionally centered on the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities in Europe, Western Asia, and the greater Mediterranean between the years 500 and 1500. The term “Middle Ages” was used in the nineteenth century to describe a *medium aevum*, a middle age between the Roman Empire and the Renaissance.



Figure **13.6.1.28**: The Rothschild Pentateuch, 1296, made in France and/or Germany (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, Ms. 116, 2018.43)

For decades, scholars have challenged this Eurocentric view of the past, turning attention to a *global* Middle Ages that includes Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Austronesia. Some of these scholars seek to uncover networks, pathways, routes, or links between people and places. In doing so, an aim has been to reveal the lives of those who have been silenced by history or tradition: women, enslaved individuals, Indigenous peoples, queer or disabled groups. Others take a comparative approach, examining similar phenomena in different places at the same time or over time. *Toward a Global Middle Ages* expands upon these perspectives.



Figure 13.6.1.29: Mogao Caves 16-17 (Library Cave), Dunhuang, Gansu Province, China, 862; sealed around 1000 (photo: Dunhuang Academy)

There are also discussions about the meaning of "global" at a local level, and whether it is possible to speak of early globalities prior to the sustained transatlantic contacts between Europe, the Americas, and Africa in the late fifteenth century (it should be acknowledged that the latter view still largely centers on Europe—as indicated below and in the volume, peoples of northeastern China and Siberia had contacts with First Nation peoples, including those who inhabited the Aleutian Islands).



Figure 13.6.1.30: Folios from a Qur'an, Shiraz, Iran, 1550–75 (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.2010.54.1)

Some scholars select a hemispheric focus—referring to a *hemispheric Middle Ages*—that concentrates on Africa, Europe, and Asia on the one hand, and the Americas on the other. With this approach, we can still find connections through comparisons if we look to

astronomy or astrology, for example, as I discuss in *Toward a Global Middle Ages* and have outlined briefly **before**; we might also consider global climate change (evidenced through **ice cores** and testimony from manuscripts or oral traditions) and the spread of **diseases** or the relationship between botany and linguistic development of words for popular trade goods, such as **sweet potato** or **tea**. Whichever methodology seems most applicable to the scope of a given study, one recommendation is to continually resist Eurocentrism and to cross boundaries—of periodization, discipline or specialization, historical or present-day geography, language (of documents and of academic training), and so forth.

It takes time to redirect the writing of history. The authors of this book therefore describe what we do as working *toward* a global Middle Ages.

Paper, Parchment, and Palm Leaves

Books were key modes of cultural expression and exchange throughout the Middle Ages. Manuscript means "handwritten," from the Latin words *manus* ("hand") and *scriptus* ("written"). Lavish examples were often embellished with metallic leaf or paint that shimmered in the light, which gives us the term "illuminated." Print technology allowed images and texts to be replicated, and some global traditions combined manuscript and print.



Figure **13.6.1.31**: Two images on different supports depicting scribes at work, illustrating the collaborative undertaking of book-making. Left: Codex-Style Cylinder Vessel with Scribes, 650–800, Guatemala or Mexico, Northern Petén or Southern Campeche, Maya, ceramic (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.2010.115.562); right: Gospel book, 1386, made in Lake Van, historic Armenian kingdom, black ink and watercolor on paper, 9 7/16 × 6 1/2 inches (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig II 6 (83.MB.70), fol. 13v.)

Across Afro-Eurasia, the Americas, and Austronesia during the medieval period, bookmakers used a variety of supports and structures, including paper, parchment, and palm leaves. Each of these could be gathered together in various ways: bound as a codex, rolled as a scroll, or folded as an album. In some instances, we have to look at other types of artworks for glimpses of book or writing traditions (as with the Maya, whose long history of codex creation was decimated by the Spanish conquest yet ceramic vessels provide evidence for early manuscript production in Mesoamerica). The examples shown in this post hint at the diversity of book types and formats.

Manuscripts and books operated alongside other forms of literacy and visual storytelling throughout the Middle Ages. These include glyphic and graphic examples—characters or symbols carved or painted onto a surface, such as stone, ceramic, or the body—as well as oral traditions and memory aids. Such varied objects shed light on the many ways in which the book, broadly defined, functioned in multiple contexts in the past, and on the relationship between the visual arts and language, storytelling, and the commemoration of the past.



Figure **13.6.1.33**: Across the medieval globe, people depicted the world as they knew it, including maps, luxury goods from local and distant lands, legendary peoples, "new worlds," the "known world," or even of the universe. World map from the *Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes*, Egypt, 1020–50 CE / 410–41 AH (Oxford, **Bodleian Library**, Ms. Arab c.90)

Maps are another focus of the new publication. Like manuscripts, maps present world views, including views of self and others; they also change frequently and are often political.

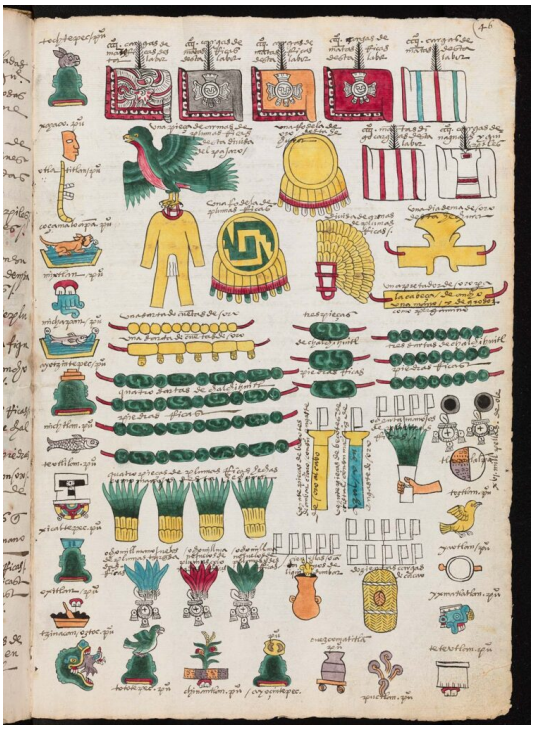


Figure **13.6.1.34**: Codex Mendoza, 1542, possibly Francisco Gualpuyogualcal and Juan Gonzalez (artists), Nahua and Spanish culture, made in Mexico City (Oxford, **Bodleian Library**, Ms. Arch. Selden A.1)

Fascinating parallels emerge when looking at maps across cultures. The 11th-century “Book of Curiosities” from Egypt, for example, describes legendary peoples and creatures that also appear in a 13th-century European compendium of Latin texts. The Ottoman admiral-mapmaker Piri Reis and the Korean scholar Kwon Kun created maps that include portions of the Americas (Brazil and the Aleutian Islands of present-day Alaska, respectively).



Figure **13.6.1.35**: Bestiary, 1277 or after, made in Thérouanne (Flanders), present-day France. Tempera colors, pen and ink, gold leaf, and gold paint on parchment, 9 3/16 × 6 7/16 in. (The J. Paul Getty Museum, **Ms. Ludwig XV 4**, 83.MR.174, fol. 120)

Mapping can also take many forms. On the **Shoshone-Bannock Map Rock** in Idaho, for example, Indigenous mapmakers charted astrological and geographic information onto the surface of rocks. The 1542 Codex Mendoza features **a Nahua map of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan** and visualizes the tribute from the provinces as luxury items of jade and feathers.



Figure **13.6.1.36**: Piri Reis world map (detail), Isbantul 1513 CE / AH 919 (Istanbul, Topkapi Sarayi Museum, No. H 1824)

Through these and many other examples of maps, manuscripts, and related book arts, *Toward a Global Middle Ages* demonstrates that geographic and cultural boundaries were and are porous, fluid, and permeable.

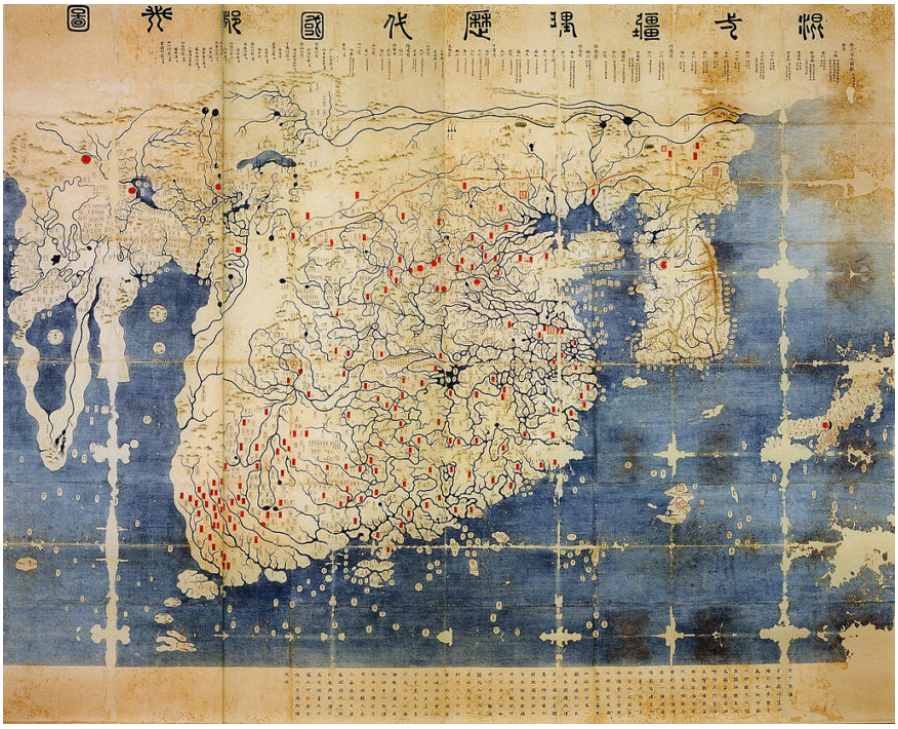


Figure **13.6.1.37**: Kangnido Map, 1402, copy from the late 15th century (Honkoo-ji Tokiwa Museum of Historcal Materials, Shimabara, Nagasaki prefecture, Japan)

My co-authors and I hope this new book contributes to the vibrant conversations about a global Middle Ages, and to the role of manuscripts and visual culture in these conversations. I welcome comments and questions about the book and its themes, and particularly hope it can be of use to instructors and students—see the resource list below, prepared with research and classroom use in mind.



Figure 13.6.1.38: Map Rock Petroglyph, Shoshone-Bannock People, Givens Hot Springs, Canyon County, southwestern Idaho, 1054 or later (photo: Rosemarie Ann and Kenneth D. Keene)

This essay first appeared on ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0).

Additional resources

Download a resource list for *Toward a Global Middle Ages*, including the table of contents, related Getty online resources, and a list of manuscripts and books discussed in the book.

Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts, ed. Bryan C. Keene (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019)

Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen, "Introduction: Towards a Global Middle Ages," *Past & Present*, vol. 238 (November 2018), pp. 1–44

Musical imagery in the Global Middle Ages

by DR. LINDSAY COOK



Figure 13.6.1.39: Hare blowing hunting horn (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, Hell Panel, *The Garden of Earthly Delights Triptych*, right wing, c. 1490–1500, oil on panel (**Museo del Prado, Madrid**)

Infernal Noise

In the Hell panel of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych, an anthropomorphic, fully clothed hare blows a hunting horn, the hunted aping the hunter. A naked man, penetrated by a recorder, carries an oversized shawm (wind instrument) on his back, apparently suffering under its weight, his posture reminiscent of Jesus' in images of Christ carrying the cross.



Figure 13.6.1.40: Man carrying shawm, Hieronymus Bosch, Hell Panel, *The Garden of Earthly Delights Triptych*, right wing (detail), c. 1490–1500, oil on panel (**Museo del Prado, Madrid**)



Figure **13.6.1.41**: Harp (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights Triptych*

At left, a naked figure is bound to the neck of an elegant lute. Bizarre as these ghastly scenes may appear, they actually have a certain logic. In fact, they respond to a vast and surprisingly consistent body of global medieval musical images, examples of which we will explore below. If anything, the Boschian scene leverages the instrument's usual associations with melodious, soothing music and puts an ironic twist on the sacred to visualize the profane.

David and his harp

In Bosch's triptych, a finely crafted harp protrudes at an angle from the broken rosette of a lute. A slick, black, reptilian tail curls around the wooden frame of the harp, boring a hole through its top. The gargantuan string instrument becomes an instrument of torture, its delicate, taut strings running clear through the body of a naked figure—one of the damned. The detail sends a moralizing message—condemning some forms of instrumental music as sinful.



Figure **13.6.1.42**: King David playing the harp, lower margin of a leaf from a Book of Hours, c. 1460, Utrecht (**Morgan Library & Museum**, MS M.1209)

And yet, more innocuous visual representations of harpists also abound in global medieval art, demonstrating that string instruments frequently referred to praising God rather than sinful worldly pleasure. A similar harp appears in a Dutch vernacular Book of Hours produced in Utrecht a few decades before Bosch painted his triptych. In the lower margin of one page, the biblical King David strums a contemporary harp. In medieval **Judaism**, **Christianity**, and **Islam**, the psalms were attributed to David, and multiple sacred texts associated with the Abrahamic faiths attested to David's musicality. For example, the Islamic **Qur'an** portrays David as a prophet whose songs praising God reverberated throughout the landscape, amplified by birdsong:

> ***We made the mountains and the birds celebrate Our praises with David. [1]***



Figure **13.6.1.43**: Sura 21:79–80, fol. 18r in an early Qur'an manuscript, c. 9th/10th century (ca. 3rd/4th century AH) (Copenhagen, The Royal Danish Library, **Cod. Arab. 38**)

In one early Qur'an manuscript, this particular verse (*aya*) takes up most of the parchment page. The text is the focal point. Unlike the Book of Hours from Utrecht, there is no figural imagery in the margins. It is only the Qur'anic verse itself, written calligraphically in **Kufic script** with black letters and red vowel marks, that would bring the musician David to the reader's mind. Medieval Jewish and Christian manuscripts likewise address David's musical prowess through the beautifully written word. Many sumptuous sacred books also contain musical imagery to amplify the message. David is so often shown playing the harp in medieval manuscripts, stained glass, and sculpture that it is among the most stable and readily identifiable examples of medieval musical iconography.



Figure **13.6.1.44**: David playing the harp. Left: half-page illumination, fol. 302r of a Pentateuch, Germany, early 14th century CE (ca. AM 5060-5085) (**British Library**, Add MS 15282); right: full-page illumination, fol. 117v of a Miscellany, France, c. 1277–1324 (ca. AM 5038-5085) (**British Library**, Add MS 11639)

Two roughly contemporaneous illuminated **Hebrew** scriptural manuscripts—one created in what is now Germany, and the other produced in present-day France—contain depictions of King David playing the harp. In both cases, the biblical ruler is shown crowned and enthroned, his body positioned within a micro-architectural frame. The musical iconography appears in a different context in each manuscript. The half-page illumination featuring a combination of figural, zoomorphic, textual, and architectonic elements acts as the heading of the book of Ecclesiastes, whereas the full-page illumination, with a descriptive label written in Hebrew in the lower margin, is one in a series of full-page illustrations sandwiched between the book of Deuteronomy and the Haftarot.



Figure **13.6.1.45**: Left: David playing the begena, fol. 6v of a Psalter, Ethiopia, mid-15th century (Oxford, **Bodleian Libraries**, MS. Aeth. d. 19); right: David playing the kithara, fol. 1v of a Psalter, Constantinople, 10th century (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**, MS Grec 139)

David is shown playing a contemporary harp in the examples we have seen thus far. Similarly, in a 15th-century Ethiopic Psalter, David raises his left hand to play a contemporary begena, a ten-stringed box lyre.

Occasionally, however, medieval artists showed David playing a historical or fanciful instrument, presumably as a means of historicizing the biblical figure. For example, the illuminator of the so-called ***Paris Psalter***, a 10th-century Byzantine Psalter made in Constantinople, apparently meant to depict the historical instrument identified in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint) as a kithara (*κιθάρᾳ*). A classicizing, full-page illumination shows David extending his right index finger to pluck a string of a kind of box lyre.



Figure **13.6.1.46**: David playing the harp before Saul, fol. 26v of *The Morgan Picture Bible* (detail), Paris, ca. 1244-1254 CE (**The Morgan Library & Museum**, MS M.638)

Soothing Melodies

But of all the instruments mentioned in the Bible, why was David most closely associated with the harp? One Bible story explicitly draws a connection between the two:

> ***So whenever the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed, and was better, for the evil spirit departed from him.[2]***

This passage demonstrates the powerful effects of David's harp music: it wards off evil and soothes the king. A detailed version of the scene appears on a page of *The Morgan Picture Bible*. At left, David trains his gaze on the strings of his harp as he plays, the curve of his body mirroring the frame of his instrument. At right, the palliative effects of the music are evident. A winged creature, the physical manifestation of the evil spirit that had been tormenting King Saul, flees the scene. The king is left in a peaceful slumber, with his right hand gently cradling his head as he nods off.



Figure 13.6.1.47: Bowl with Bahram Gur and Azada, Kashan, late 12th–early 13th century (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Moving Melodies

It is not only in medieval sacred art that harp music elicits physical, emotional, and supernatural responses. Painted on the inside of a ceramic bowl made in Kashan (in modern-day Iran), a hunter and a harpist ride together on the back of a racing camel. The hunter holds his bow with his right hand, and he wraps the fingers of his left hand around the string of his bow, withdrawing his arm to release an arrow. Behind him, the harpist grasps the frame of her instrument with her right hand, curling the fingers of her left hand to pluck the harp strings. The scene comes from the *Book of Kings* (***Shahnama***), the 10th-century Persian poet Firdausi's epic poem, and thus the two figures on camelback represent the **Sasanian** prince **Bahram Gur** and the harpist Azada. The unmistakable visual parallel between Bahram Gur's weapon and Azada's musical instrument is made explicit in the text of another version of the story, written by the 12th-century poet Nizami. In it, the harpist is named Fitna, not Azada; Bahram Gur hunts onager rather than gazelle; and the effects of the harpist's mellifluous music on human beings and animals alike are more fully articulated:

> ***She played and sang with elegance,***
>
> ***and was quick-footed at the dance.***
>
> ***When to the lute she joined her song,***
>
> ***the birds from air to ground would throng.***
>
> ***Most often, at the hunt or feast,***
>
> ***the king her sweet songs would request.***
>
> ***The harp her weapon, the king's the bow:***
>
> ***she struck up tunes, he laid game low. [3]***



Figure 13.6.1.48: Left: “Bahram Gur’s Skill with the Bow,” fol. 17v from a *Haft Paykar* (Seven Portraits) of the *Khamsa* (Quintet) of Nizami, Herat, ca. 1430 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); right: detail of Fitna playing the harp

Illustrated copies of Nizami’s poem frequently juxtapose Bahram Gur’s bow and Fitna’s harp, as on a page of a magnificent 15th-century manuscript painted in Herat, in what is now Afghanistan. In this visual interpretation, Fitna is mounted on a horse, playing a harp whose blue sound box with gold detailing is as intricately embellished as the fine textiles she wears. Appearing in the context of an idealized portrayal of the Persian ruler, the harp evokes the courtly culture of a distant and heroic Sasanian past.



Figure 13.6.1.49: *Seated Female Musicians*, with the *konghou* (harpist) second from the left, China, late 7th century (Tang dynasty) (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The courtly setting for harp music is common across temporal, geographic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. For example, Chinese funerary figurines known as *mingqi* sometimes took the form of courtly musicians, as in a Tang example of a harp (*konghou*) player—one of a group of seated female musicians meant to go on entertaining the deceased in the afterlife. A poem written by Li He a century after the figurines were created opens by identifying the provinces where the wood (for the sound box) and silk (for the strings) were sourced to build the titular character’s 23-stringed harp. In the poem, Li Ping’s harp playing triggers emotional, physical, and cosmic responses:

Silk from Wu, paulownia from Shu,

Strummed in high autumn,

In the white sky the frozen clouds

Falling, not floating.

Ladies of the River weeping among bamboos,

The White Girl mournful

As Li Ping plays his harp

In the center of the Kingdom.

Jade from Mount Kun is shattered,

Phoenixes shriek,

Lotuses are weeping dew,

Fragrant orchids smile.

Before the twelve gates of the city

The cold light melts,

The twenty-three strings can move

The Purple Emperor. [4]



Figure **13.6.1.50**: Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych, right wing (detail), c. 1490–1500, oil on panel (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Studying musical iconography

Texts and images produced throughout the medieval world reveal that, in the hands of an adept player, harp music could elicit powerful responses. It could enchant courtly listeners, ward off evil, or even reshape the material world. Seen in this light, the harp in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych may have been an indictment of anyone who chose to wield this power to nefarious ends.

As this brief overview has shown, studying musical iconography requires an eye for detail; an appreciation for the power of music to move listeners; open-mindedness about the ways images of sound and music conveyed meaning, often in tandem with religious or poetic texts; and, in light of the fact that instruments are played with the human body, a healthy sense of humor.

The open-access database **Musiconis**, newly available in English, makes a vast repository of medieval musical imagery available to scholars, students, and the general public. Readers are invited to explore the objects in Musiconis at their leisure to make new connections and draw their own conclusions about the role of music in global medieval art.

Notes:

[1] Sura 21 (The Prophets [*al-Anbiya'*]), Aya 79, Qur'an, trans. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 206.

[2] 1 Samuel 16:23, Douay-Rheims Bible.

[3] Nizami, *Haft Paykar: A Medieval Persian Romance*, trans. Julie Scott Meisami (Hackett, 2015), 25, pp. 16-19.

[4] Li He, "Song: Li Ping at the Vertical Harp [*Li Ping Konghou Yin*]," in *The Collected Poems of Li He*, trans. J. D. Frodsham (New York Review of Books, 2016), p. 74.

Additional resources

Search the Musiconis medieval musical iconography database (in English and French)

Nasrin Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the Shahnama as a Mirror for Princes* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016).

Sarah E. Bond, "British Exhibitions of Ethiopian Manuscripts Prompt Questions About Repatriation," Hyperallergic (blog), June 18, 2018.

Susan Boynton and Diane Reilly, eds., *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music, and Sound* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019 [1992]).

Heather Colburn Clydesdale, "The Vibrant Role of *Mingqi* in Early Chinese Burials," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (April 2009).

Marc Michael Epstein, "The Elephant and the Law: The Medieval Jewish Minority Adapts a Christian Motif," *The Art Bulletin* vol. 76, no. 3 (September 1994), pp. 464-478.

David R. M. Irving, "Psalms, Islam, and Music: Dialogues and Divergence about David in Christian-Muslim Encounters of the Seventeenth Century," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* vol. 2, no. 1 (2016), pp. 53-78.

Bo Lawergren, "Harp," Encyclopedia Iranica, December 15, 2003.

Bo Lawergren, "Harps on the Ancient Silk Road," in *Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Conservation of Grotto Sites*, ed. Neville Agnew (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2010), pp. 117-123.

Alexandra Schwartz, "Click Here to Visit Hell: An Interactive 'Garden of Earthly Delights,'" *The New Yorker*, April 12, 2016.

Stéphanie Weisser, "The Ethiopian Lyre *bagana*: an instrument for emotion," *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition* (2006), pp. 376-382.

13.6.1: A beginner's guide is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.1: A beginner's guide** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.2: Christianity and art

Christianity and art

Little is known about Jesus beyond biblical accounts, though we do know more about the cultural and political context in which he lived.

Christianity, an introduction

by DR. BETH HARRIS, DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. NANCY ROSS

How little we know

Almost nothing is known about Jesus beyond biblical accounts, although we do know quite a bit more about the cultural and political context in which he lived—for example, Jerusalem in the first century. What follows is an introductory historical summary of Christianity. It hardly needs stating that there are many interpretations and disagreements among historians.



Figure **13.6.2.1**: *The Good Shepherd*, The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, 425 C.E., mosaic, Ravenna, Italy, photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Jesus v. Rome

The biblical Jesus, described in the Gospels as the son of a carpenter, was a Jew and a champion of the underdog. He rebelled against the occupying Roman government in what was then Palestine (at this point the Roman Empire stretched across the Mediterranean). He was crucified for upsetting the social order and challenging the authority of the Romans and their local Jewish leaders. The Romans crucified Jesus, a typical method of execution—especially for those accused of crimes against the government.

Jesus's followers claim that after three days he rose from the grave and later ascended into heaven. His original followers, known as disciples or apostles, traveled great distances and spread Jesus's message. His life is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are found in the New Testament. "Christ" means messiah or savior (this belief in a savior is a traditional part of Jewish theology).

Old and New Testaments

Early on, there were many ways that Christianity was practiced and understood, and it wasn't until the second century that Christianity began to be understood as a religion distinct from Judaism (it's helpful to remember that Judaism itself had many different sects). Christians were sometimes severely persecuted by the Romans. In the early fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine experienced a miraculous conversion and made it legally acceptable to be a Christian. Less than a hundred years later, the Roman Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official state religion.



Figure 13.6.2.2: Sacrifice of Isaac, mosaic, early 6th century, San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The first Christians were Jews (whose bible we refer to as the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible). But soon pagans too converted to this new religion. Christians saw the predictions of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible come to fulfillment in the life of Jesus Christ—hence the "Bible" of the Christians includes both the Hebrew Bible (or the Old Testament) and the New Testament.

In addition to the fulfillment of prophecy, Christians saw parallels between the events of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. These parallels, or foreshadowings, are called typology. One example would be Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, and the later sacrifice of Christ on the cross. We often see these comparisons in Christian art offered as a revelation of God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

Different Christianities

Unlike Greek and Roman religions (there was both an official "state" religion as well as other cults), Christianity emphasized belief and a personal relationship with God. The doctrines, or main teachings, of Christianity were determined in a series of councils in the early Christian period, such as the Council of Nicea in 325. This resulted in a common statement of belief known as the Nicene Creed, which is still used by some churches today.

Nevertheless, there is great diversity in Christian belief and practice. This was true even in the early days of Christianity, when, for example, Arians (who believed that the three parts of the Holy Trinity were not equal) and Donatists (who held that priests who had renounced their Christian faith during periods of persecution could not administer the sacraments), were considered heretics (someone who goes against official teaching). Today there are approximately 2.2 billion Christians who belong to a multitude of sects.

The two dominant early branches of Christianity were the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, rooted in Western and Eastern Europe respectively. Protestantism (and its different forms) emerged only later, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Before that there was essentially just one church in Western Europe—what we would call the Roman Catholic church today (to differentiate it from other forms of Christianity in the West such as Lutheranism, Methodism etc.). Christianity spread throughout the world. In the sixteenth century, the Jesuits (a Catholic order), sent missionaries to Asia, North and South America, and Africa often in concert with Europe's colonial expansion.



Figure **13.6.2.3**: Masaccio, Holy Trinity with the Virgin and Saint John, c. 1427, Fresco, 667 x 317 cm, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

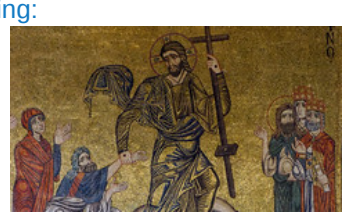
Christianity holds that God has a three-part nature—that God is a trinity (God the father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ)* and that it was Jesus's death on the cross—his sacrifice—that allowed for human beings to have the possibility of eternal life in heaven. In Christian theology, Christ is seen as the second Adam, and Mary (Jesus's mother) is seen as the second Eve. The idea here is that where Adam and Eve caused original sin, and were expelled from paradise (the Garden of Eden), Mary and Christ made it possible for human beings to have eternal life in paradise (heaven), through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Christian practice centers on the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is sometimes referred to as Communion. Christians eat bread and drink wine to remember Christ's sacrifice for the sins of humankind. Christ himself initiated this practice at the Last Supper. Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believe that the bread and wine literally transform into the body and blood of Christ, whereas Protestants and other Christians see the Eucharist as symbolic reminder and re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.

Christians demonstrate their faith by engaging in good (charitable) works (works of art—like the frescoes by Giotto in the Arena Chapel—were often created as good works). They often engage in rituals (sacraments) such as partaking of the Eucharist or being baptized. Traditional Christian churches have a hierarchical structure of clergy. Devout men and women sometimes become nuns or monks and may separate themselves from the world and live a cloistered life devoted to prayer in a monastery.

*There are also nontrinitian Christians.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Bust of Christ Under Triumphal Arch, San Vitale, Ravenna

Apse Mosaic detail with Christ and Angels, San Vitale, Ravenna















Figure **13.6.2.4**: More Smarthistory images…

Standard scenes from the life of Christ in art

by DR. NANCY ROSS



Figure **13.6.2.5**: Fra Angelico, T*he Annunciation*, c. 1438-47, fresco, 230 x 321 cm (Convent of San Marco, Florence)

The Annunciation: The angel Gabriel visits Mary to announce to her that she will be the mother of God. At this moment, Jesus Christ miraculously conceived, and God is made flesh and blood.

The Visitation: Mary and Elizabeth, who are cousins, meet. Mary is pregnant with Jesus and Elizabeth is pregnant with St. John the Baptist. Elizabeth (and her son in her womb) recognize the miracle of Christ in Mary's womb.



Figure **13.6.2.6**: Duccio, *The Nativity with the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekial*, 1308-11 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

The Nativity: Mary gave birth to Christ in a stable while the animals watched. In works of art, Joseph, Mary's husband, often sits off to the side and sleeps.



Figure 13.6.2.7: Missal of Eberhard von Greiffenklau, *Adoration of the Magi*, Walters Manuscript W.174, fol. 19v detail (The Walters Art Museum)

Adoration of the Magi: Three Magi (by tradition, kings from the East), follow a miraculous star that leads them to Christ, who has just been born in a stable. The Magi offer gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (both are aromatic tree resins), and worship the infant Christ.

The Presentation: Mary and Joseph present Christ in the temple at Jerusalem. They encounter Simeon, who was told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the messiah.



Figure 13.6.2.8: Duccio, *The Temptation of Christ on the Mountain*, 1308-11, tempera on poplar panel, 17 x 18 1/8 inches / 43.2 x 46 cm (The Frick Collection)

The Temptation: Satan visited Christ during his 40 day fast in the wilderness and tempted him to use his powers. In the third and final temptation, Satan asked Christ to worship him, which Christ refused to do.



Figure 13.6.2.9: The Healing of the Blind Man and the Raising of Lazarus, 1120-40, fresco, made in Castile-León, Spain, 65 x 134 inches/ 165.1 x 340.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Raising of Lazarus: This was one of the many miracles Christ performed that are recorded in the Gospels. Christ was friends with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, who were siblings. Lazarus became ill and his sisters sent to Christ for help. Lazarus died and was

in the grave for four days before Christ raised him from the dead by calling him out of his tomb.



Figure **13.6.2.10**: Giotto, *The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem*, c. 1305, fresco, 200 x 185 cm (Arena Chapel, Padua)

Entry into Jerusalem: Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, where he was greeted by crowds of people. These crowds laid down their cloaks for him and waved palm branches at him, welcoming him into Jerusalem as their leader.

The Last Supper: Christ ate dinner with his apostles and encouraged them to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him. He also told the apostles that one of them would betray him.

Agony in the Garden: After the Last Supper, Christ went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane with his apostles. He asked them to wait and pray with him, but they fell asleep. Jesus prayed alone and bled from every pore.



Figure **13.6.2.11**: The Kiss of Judas, early 16th century, ink and pigments on parchment (The Walters Art Museum)

Kiss of Judas: Judas, who has been paid 30 pieces of silver to betray Christ's whereabouts to the Roman authorities, leads them to him, and identifies him with a kiss (or an embrace). Christ is arrested by the Romans.

Christ before Pilate: Roman soldiers take Christ to Pilate, the Roman prefect. Pilate tries Jesus, but does not find him guilty. Pilate tells the angry crowd that he will release one prisoner, but they do not choose Jesus. Pilate orders Christ to be whipped and crucified.



Figure 13.6.2.12: Single leaf and fragment with Crucifixion and colophon, Crucifixion, Walters Manuscript W.732, fol. W.732Ar (The Walters Art Museum)

The Crucifixion: Christ is crucified at Golgotha as his mother Mary and the apostle John watch. Jesus is offered vinegar and soon dies. He is stabbed with a lance after his death. Pilate gives Joseph of Arimathea permission to take the body of Christ off the cross. Joseph places the body in a tomb and rolls a large stone over the door. Pilate orders guards to watch the tomb.



Figure 13.6.2.13: Deposition, Book of Hours, Walters Manuscript W.246, fol. 25v (The Walters Art Museum)

Descent from the Cross (also known as The Deposition): Christ's body is taken down from the cross by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. They bring a shroud for the body. Other figures often included in representations of this scene are the Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist and the three Marys (three women mentioned in the Gospels as followers of Christ, all named Mary but not including the Virgin Mary, Jesus' mother).

The Marys at the Tomb: In one tradition, the three Marys were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Mary Salome, in another, they were the three daughters of St. Anne. They went to the tomb to wash and anoint the body of Christ, but when they got there, the large stone was rolled away from the door. An angel tells the Marys that Christ is not there. Throughout the Middle Ages, this scene signaled the Resurrection of Christ.



Figure 13.6.2.14: The Resurrection, Homilary, Walters Manuscript W.148, fol. 23v (The Walters Art Museum)

The Resurrection: Christ emerges triumphant from the tomb and carries the banner of the resurrection, a white flag with a red cross. This scene was first developed in Early Renaissance art.

Noli me Tangere: Mary Magdalene went to the tomb to mourn Christ. She finds Christ, but initially mistakes him for the gardener. When Mary realizes that he is Christ, he says “Touch me not” or “noli me tangere” in Latin.

The Ascension/Pentecost: After forty days with his followers, Christ ascends into heaven. As he does this, the Holy Spirit descends on them, an event known as Pentecost.

Last Judgment: Christ is often represented in art as judge at the end of time. These scenes often show Christ enthroned in heaven surrounded by apostles and angels, who help him judge the souls of humankind. Good Christians go to heaven, a beautiful orderly place, and the damned go to hell where they are tormented for eternity.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

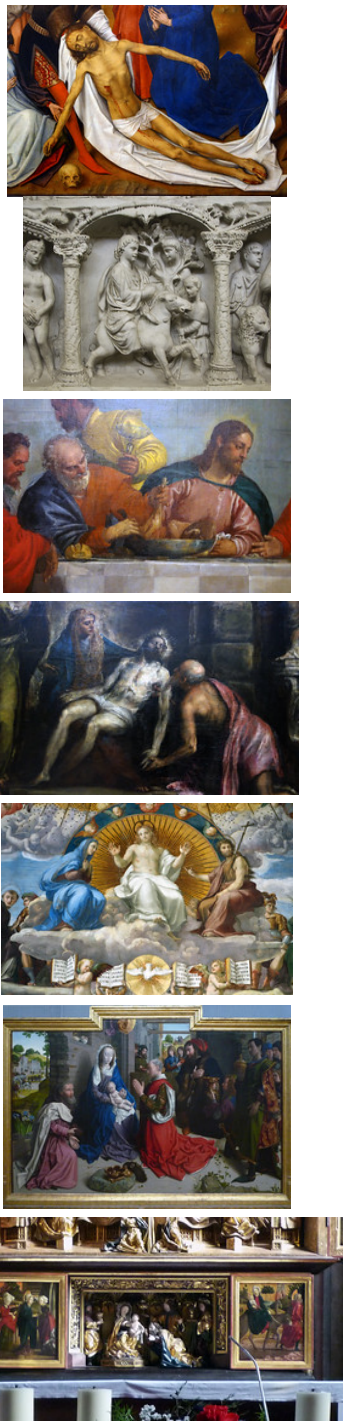


Figure 13.6.2.15: More Smarthistory images…

Architecture and liturgy

by DR. JENNIFER FREEMAN



Figure 13.6.2.16: Priest receiving communion before altar (detail), Master of the Church Fathers' Border, *The Mass of Saint Gregory*, late 15th century, metalcut with traces of hand-coloring; second state, 13 7/8 x 19 15/16 in (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The relationship between liturgy and architecture—between worship and the space in which it occurs—has a rich history in the Christian tradition. Its roots go back well before the emergence of Christianity to origins in Jewish worship. The term "liturgy" is from a Greek word that means "public service" or "work of the people" and has long been used to describe Christian worship. Today, churches are often described as either "liturgical" (e.g., Catholic, Episcopalian) or "non-liturgical" (e.g., Baptist, Pentecostal) depending on whether or not they use a scripted liturgy (such as the Book of Common Prayer). However, in its most basic sense, a liturgy is simply the order of events in a church service; therefore all churches are liturgical in the sense that all of their services have some kind of structure (welcome, opening prayer, hymn singing, sermon, closing prayer, dismissal, etc.).

Jewish origins

As described in the Jewish Bible (Exodus 25-31), during their exile in the desert, the Israelites made sacrifices to God in the Tabernacle, which was a huge moveable tent. In a large outer court, they made sacrifices, and they burned incense in an inner chamber, dubbed the "Holy of Holies." The Holy of Holies housed the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments and the manna (the substance miraculously supplied as food to the Israelites in the wilderness), and was where God chose to reveal his presence. It wasn't until King Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem (possibly in the tenth century B.C.E.) that the Jews had a permanent place of worship. Although made of stone, the Temple had a similar layout as the Tabernacle. This Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.E. and was replaced by the Second Temple (now the location of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, image below).



Figure 13.6.2.17: View of the Dome of the Rock with western wall of Second Temple in the foreground, Jerusalem (photo: **askii**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

We don't know much about the details of Temple liturgy, but worship included animal sacrifices, incense burning, chanting of the Psalms, blessings, and the making and eating of the "showbread" (bread placed on a specially dedicated table in the Temple as an offering to God).



Figure 13.6.2.18: Detail from the relief panel showing the Spoils of Jerusalem being brought into Rome, Arch of Titus, after 81 C.E., marble, 7 feet, 10 inches high, Rome

After the Roman commander (and later emperor) Titus destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the Jews were forced to worship only in their synagogues, which were—and remain today—halls for prayer and study (but not sacrifice). In addition to chanting psalms, prayers, and blessings, services in the synagogue also included the reading of scripture and teaching. This was reflected in the synagogue architecture, which included the *bema*, a platform from which men could read scripture and teach.

Early Christian worship

Many of the first Christians were Jews and so continued and reinterpreted many practices from the Temple and synagogue. We know from early Christian texts, such as the writings of Tertullian, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Justin Martyr, and the *Didache* (a first or second century text of possible Syrian origins) and the New Testament book of Hebrews that early Christian worship included some type of creedal statement, hymns, prayers, the reading of the Septuagint (the Hebrew Bible translated into Greek), teaching, meals, and baptism.

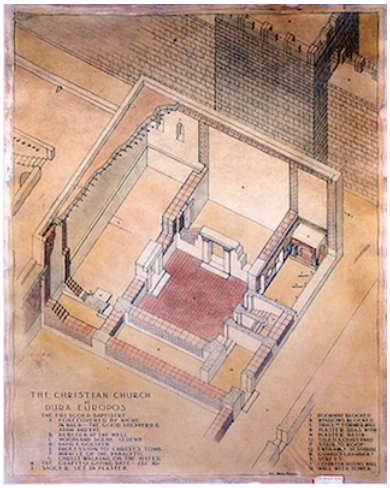


Figure 13.6.2.19: Isometric rendering of the Christian building at Dura-Europos (c. 240 C.E.), by Henry Pearson, 1932-34

Before the year 313 C.E., when the emperor Constantine legalized Christianity with the Edict of Milan, Christian worship occurred in homes, at grave sites of saints and loved ones, and even outdoors. One of the earliest existing churches (dating to about 254 C.E.) is found at Dura Europos, a Roman outpost in Syria (sketch of plan, above). This small church had been converted from a typical Roman home, which had a square layout with a courtyard at its center. The church members apparently knocked down one of the walls to create a larger hall for teaching and the celebration of the eucharist for (for Catholics, the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ). One of the rooms was also turned into a baptistery, which contains some of the earliest surviving Christian frescoes.



Figure 13.6.2.20: View across central nave to one of two side aisles, Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine (Basilica Nova), Roman Forum, c. 306-312 C.E. (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Christian use of the Roman basilica

Not long after his conversion and subsequent legalization of Christianity, Constantine began an extensive building campaign to support his new state religion in major cities such as Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. In looking for a structure to address the spatial needs of the developing Christian liturgy (such as increasing congregation size and more elaborate processions), he adapted the Roman basilica, which until that point had been used exclusively as a civic building, like the Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine (above).

Roman basilicas were long rectangular buildings, often with a central nave (a wide, center aisle) and two side aisles. There was at least one semicircular apse, often at one end of the building, in which the magistrates sat and heard their cases. The basilica was in many ways the perfect building to adapt into a church because it did not have the pagan associations that Roman temples did and was large enough to accommodate the growing Christian population.



Figure 13.6.2.21: Exterior view of the apse, Basilica of Santa Sabina, c. 432 C.E., Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Early Christian basilicas such as Santa Sabina (above) and San Paolo fuori le Mura (St. Paul's Outside the Walls) maintained the basic structure of the Roman basilica, but distinctly Christian elements were added. The bema was retained from the synagogue and continued to be used as the raised platform from which priests preached (by the late Middle Ages this was often attached to a pillar to one side of the central aisle of the nave). Many churches added the ambo, an even higher platform, accessed by stairs, from which the Gospel was read and sermons were preached—in which case the bema was reserved for the recitation of prayers and the reading of the Epistles or Old Testament. Another distinctly Christian architectural element was the transept, which was added near the apse-end of the building to form a cross-shape and provide additional space (see the plan below).



Figure 13.6.2.22: View down the nave toward the apse with altar, Basilica of Santa Sabina, c. 432 C.E., Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Most significant among the Christian additions to the basilica, and the central focus for the liturgy, was the altar upon which the eucharist was celebrated. Altars were located either right in front of or just inside of the apse (as in Santa Sabina, above)—that is, within the Christian equivalent of the Jewish Holy of Holies. Up until the Middle Ages, most altars were wooden table-like structures; they then transitioned into stone. In the early fifth century, the Church formally required the installation of saints' relics (often bone fragments) in altars. This practice was based in part on the tradition of placing altars on top of martyrs' tombs (like at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome) and the text of Revelation 6:9-10, which describes martyrs crying out for justice from under the altar in heaven. The three main areas of the church came to be ascribed with symbolic meaning: the narthex, or entry, was the world; the nave, or main hall, was the Kingdom of God; and the sanctuary, or altar area—like the Holy of Holies—was heaven.

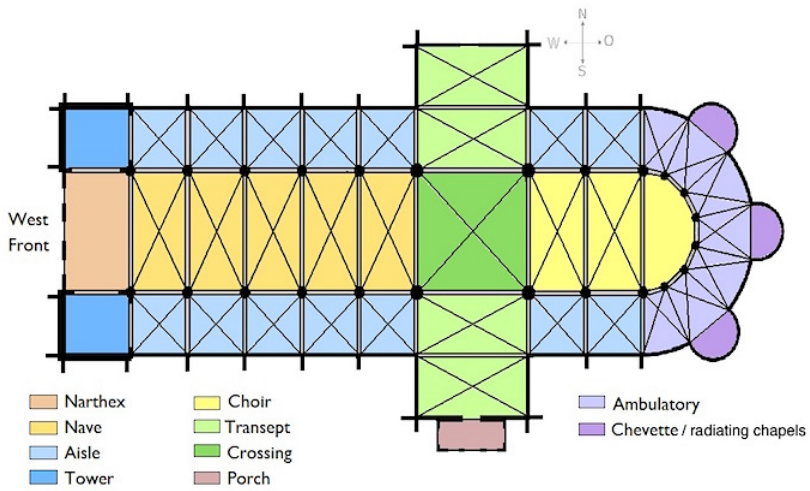


Figure 13.6.2.23: Medieval church floor plan, diagram: Benutzer:Leonce49, CC BY-SA 3.0

Medieval worship

The structures of both the liturgy and church architecture remained basically the same in the Middle Ages, but became increasingly complex and diverse as Christianity spread throughout the empire. We can think of the liturgy as the script and the church architecture as the stage upon which it was performed (below). The "actors" were the clergy of course, consisting of priests, deacons, and liturgical assistants, but the congregation also had an essential role. They not only participated in the call and response of prayers and hymns in the liturgy and walked in processions within and without the church walls, but they also practiced personal devotion during the celebration of liturgy. It was not uncommon for lay people to move about the building independent of the liturgy in order to pray or light candles at the smaller shrines in a church's side chapels.



Figure 13.6.2.24: View down the nave to the altarpiece by Michael Pacher (1471-81), Parish Church, Saint Wolfgang, Austria (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

As is still the case in modern churches, liturgy and architecture mutually influenced one another in the Middle Ages. The walls and floors of medieval churches were often covered with plaques and tombs dedicated to church members and saints, as well as images

of Christ, Mary, saints, and angels. These images and memorials influenced the movements of the faithful, as they moved about the church interior to venerate their particular favorites. A shrine of a popular or historically important saint would receive more attention, perhaps in the form of donations, and thus would be embellished. Or if, for example, the bones of a saint or martyr were interred in a particular location of the church, others would seek to be buried as close as possible to that tomb, and so on. These are just a few of the many ways in which theology and devotional practice could influence the church environment and vice versa.

There were also areas of the church that were off-limits for the laity (the non-clergy public), most notably the altar area. Initially the use of chancels (below), or waist-high walls, were used to separate the congregation from the altar for very practical reasons like keeping dogs away from the bread and the wine of the eucharist or retaining large crowds on major holidays. However, with time, these partitions were made higher and more ornate, peaking in the late Middle Ages when they often reached the ceiling of the church and completely obstructed the congregation's view of the altar.



Figure 13.6.2.25: Chancel (9th century), Basilica of Santa Sabina, c. 432 C.E., Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Relics and pilgrimage

Images and relics also influenced religious activity on a much larger scale beyond the walls of the church. Religious pilgrimage had been an important part of Christian devotion since the time of Constantine and his building campaign in the Holy Land and Constantinople (a pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place). Of course, not everyone was financially or physically able to make such a trek and in response, church architecture and religious objects (such as reliquaries) began to invoke elements of particular pilgrimage sites or recreate pilgrimages on a smaller scale. For example, architectural elements of Holy Land buildings such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher were often referenced in the churches of Western Europe, or even explicitly invoked, as in the name of the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (the basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem) in Rome. Relics of important saints were also used to refocus attention. For instance, the founding of a new political center (say, Charlemagne's palace and chapel at Aachen) often entailed the relocation of relics to embody divine approval and authority and/or entice pilgrims and visitors.



Figure **13.6.2.26**: Chapel of Wenceslas, 1344-64, Prague Cathedral (photo: Woodlet, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

We should also note that, in a sense, the physical progression of the faithful from the nave of the church to the altar—if and when they participated in the eucharist—was itself a small-scale, local version of a pilgrimage, in which they moved from their present reality to the future promise of heaven. The spiritual understanding of the church and its architecture also impacted the actual design of medieval churches. Biblical passages such as Revelation 21:9-21, which describes a vision of an angel measuring the city of the Heavenly Jerusalem, inspired medieval Christians to ascribe spiritual significance to the dimensions and proportions of church architecture. Revelation 21:9-21 is illustrated, for example, in the eleventh-century manuscript of Beatus of Liébana's Commentary on the Apocalypse (below), which depicts one angel holding a measuring rod in the city center as twelve angels stand at its twelve gates, visually becoming part of the architecture of the Heavenly Jerusalem. While, in a sense, all medieval churches were understood to be symbolic of the Heavenly Jerusalem, some invoked its imagery more literally, as found in the use of semiprecious stones (cf. Rev. 21:9,19) set into the dado (lower walls) of the chapels of St Catherine and the Holy Cross at Karlstein, and the chapel of Wenceslas in the Prague Cathedral (above).



Figure **13.6.2.27**: Beatus of Liébana, Commentary on the Apocalypse, 11th century (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional), f. 253v

Another example of spiritual architecture is found in the monastic complex of the Plan of St. Gall (c. 820 C.E.) (below), the exact purpose of which remains a matter of scholarly debate today. Christian monasticism dates back to the desert monks of the fourth century. The monks led lives of poverty, prayer, and asceticism which were formalized in several important guidebooks or "rules"; one of the most influential was the Rule of St. Benedict, which regulated the monks' lives by hourly prayer and the celebration of the liturgy, or the "offices." Something of this regulation is visible in the Plan of St. Gall, which depicts more than forty structures, including a church, a scriptorium (a place where monks who were scribes copied books), residence halls, and buildings for preparing and eating food. Grids and squares dominate the Plan's buildings and gardens, creating a visual sense of order. Regardless of whether its elaborate schematic was intended for the construction of an actual building in the Carolingian empire, it seems that the Plan of St. Gall was meant to be a diagram of the ideal, spiritual monastery.

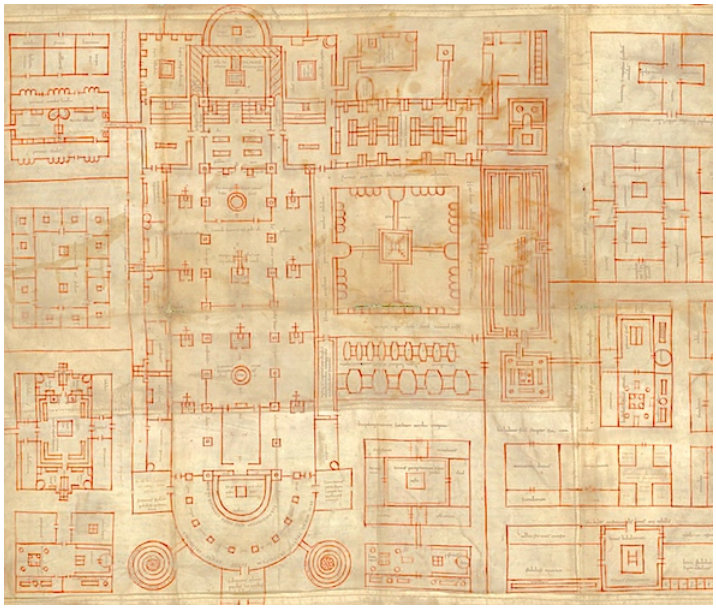


Figure **13.6.2.28**: Detail, Plan of St. Gall, c. 820 C.E.

Mapping time

In short, while there was a broad range of experience and understanding of the church and its liturgy throughout Europe—from the peasant who attended rarely if ever, to the clergy who used and often commissioned buildings and furnishings, to the aristocrats who funded much of medieval monumental art and manuscripts, even to kings and the emperor himself—life in the Middle Ages was measured out by the liturgical calendar. Churches were focal points of the medieval landscape and their ceremonies and processions periodically mapped out the sacred even beyond the church walls.

Additional resources:

A Smarthistory video on the *Relief from the Arch of Titus showing the spoils of Jerusalem being brought into Rome*

More from Smarthistory on pilgrimages and the cult of the relic

Pilgrimage in Medieval Europe on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Dura Europos from the Yale University Art Gallery

St. Gall monastery plan

Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Allan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture: From the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

Thomas J. Doig and E. Ann Matter, eds. *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, 2nd ed. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005).

Richard Kieckhefer, *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*. Revised and translated by William G. Storey and Niels Krogh Rasmussen, (O.P. Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1986).

James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993).

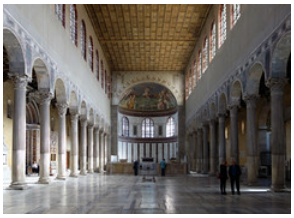
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













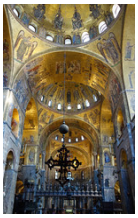




Figure 13.6.2.29: More Smarthistory images…

13.6.2: Christianity and art is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.2: Christianity and art** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.3: Judaism and art

Judaism and art

The early Israelites made sacrifices at the Holy Temple, and they were distinct from other Levantine peoples, each of whom worshipped their local gods.

Jewish history to the middle ages

by DR. JESSICA HAMMERMAN and DR. SHAINA HAMMERMAN



Figure **13.6.3.1**: Panel from a Torah Shrine from the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo, 11th century, wood (walnut) with traces of paint and gilt, 87.3 x 36.7 cm (The Walters Art Museum). The patterns of vine scrolls and lozenges shows the influence of Islamic art.

For every period of Jewish history, interactions with non-Jews have been essential to forming Jewish culture and identity. The early Israelites made animal sacrifices at the Holy Temple, and they were distinct from other Levantine peoples, each of whom worshiped their local gods.

The Diaspora

Although there is no archaeological evidence for it, the Hebrew Bible describes a Temple in Jerusalem erected by King Solomon, probably sometime during the tenth century B.C.E. The Bible also describes the Temple's destruction at the hand of the Babylonians 500 years later. Since the fall of the first Temple, Jews scattered throughout the Levant and Mesopotamia, creating competing cultures. Rabbinical scholars realized then that it would be necessary to write down oral interpretations—and they set the blueprint for future generations who would debate and reinterpret Jewish laws. The best-known rabbinical scholar was Hillel (70 B.C.E. to 10 C.E.). Hillel developed methods for interpreting the Hebrew Bible that were flexible. Since its inception, Judaism has been subject to community ritual interpretation and context.

A new Temple was constructed a century after the first was destroyed when some Jews returned to the Land of Israel. In 70 C.E., at the Roman siege of Jerusalem, Jews dispersed throughout northern Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. This widespread dispersion of Jews outside of the Land of Israel is called the Diaspora.

The Middle Ages

In the Diaspora, Jewish groups lived in both Muslim- and Christian-dominated areas. Local communities had distinct traditions, but the differences between those who came from Muslim areas and those who came from Christian areas was more pronounced. Jews who can trace their ancestry back to Central and Eastern European areas are now known as Ashkenazim, and those who come from the Islamic world are now known as Sephardim. Sephardic Jews technically trace their origins back to the Iberian Peninsula, but Jews from the historically Muslim lands of the Middle East and North Africa (referred to as Mizrahi and Maghrebi, respectively), have been conflated with contemporary Sephardim since they share many of the same customs. These labels did not become widely used until the 1960s, when Jews from Islamic lands emigrated into Europe, the United States, and Israel. On a global scale, these distinctions weren't relevant until after World War II.

In both Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities, Jews in the Middle Ages had to pay taxes in exchange for communal autonomy. Just as they came to speak the vernacular languages of the non-Jews among whom they lived, they also adopted the architectural, musical, culinary, and literary styles of their neighbors.

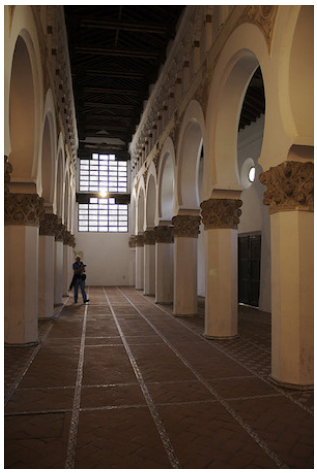


Figure 13.6.3.2: Santa Maria la Blanca, former synagogue in Toledo, Spain. Erected in 1180, it may be the oldest synagogue in Europe still standing. It is now owned and preserved by the Catholic Church as a museum (photo: Nik McPhee, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Synagogues in Christian-dominated lands are sometimes drab on the exterior but extremely ornate on the inside. Synagogues in Muslim lands have domes and arches that mimic Islamic architecture, such as the Santa Maria la Blanca in Toledo, Spain, or the Algiers Grande Synagogue in Algeria.

In Europe, persecution of Jews began after the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, crusading mobs massacred Jews throughout Europe. Crusaders blamed Jews for crucifying Jesus, an accusation that was extended in order to claim that Jews were committing the ritual murder of Christian children, known as the blood libel.

Jews that lived in Europe were easy, early targets for Crusaders since the Muslims,from whom they hoped to wrest the Holy Lands, were far from home.. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Jews in Spain were subject to violent forms of anti-Judaism. The Spanish Inquisition forced conversions and expulsions of the many Jewish residents of the Iberian Peninsula.



Figure 13.6.3.3: Belt Fitting from Yemen (The Walters Art Museum) The back is blank except for an Arabic stamp with the name and date of the Muslim ruler, Imam al-Mansur al-Husayn, and an engraved inscription in Hebrew that names the silversmith, Yahya Tayyib

Life for Jews in Islamic lands was comparatively tranquil. In areas dominated by Muslims, Jews in the Middle Ages were tolerated as a “dhimmi”—a people of the book. Unlike in the Christian world, Jewish people were not the only non-Muslim inhabitants (there were also Christians, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists, etc.). Jews were integrated into the economy, and they were allowed to practice their religion freely. Jews conducted business with non-Jews in the Middle Ages and the similarities in art, music, and food traditions speak to Jewish and non-Jewish interaction. But their communal lives remained mostly separate—Jewish dietary laws, or kashrut, meant that Jews had their own butchers, bakers, and even wine producers. The weekly Sabbath meant that Jewish merchants and peasants would refrain from work, while Christian or Muslim commerce might continue. And Jewish law forbid marriage outside of the religion, further solidifying boundaries between Jews and their neighbors—boundaries that in some later instances became walled ghettos within which Jews were forced to live.

Additional resources:

Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls, 1500-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press,2001).

Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Writing a history of Jewish architecture

by DR. STEVEN FINE

How is it that the Jews, called by Scripture “the smallest of all the nations” (Deut. 7:7) merit a section on religious architecture placed alongside the glories of Christendom, Islam, and Buddhism? After all, the Jews today number something around fourteen million, the same number that existed before the massacre of six million in Europe and the dissolution of communities across Europe and the Arab world during the 1940s. This is a numerical highpoint. In previous centuries, the numbers were far smaller. Just on the basis of demography, then, it would be hard to justify the inclusion of Judaism in this history of art and architecture.

A national style?

More difficult, perhaps, from the first century through the establishment of modern Israel in 1948 Jews could not claim (or assert, as new European nations states did) a “national” identity or a “national” style of art based upon landed nationalism—categories that were of central importance to nineteenth and twentieth century constructions of architectural history and style. Theirs was a minority architecture, reflecting a minority existence.

The Temple of Solomon (c. 900 B.C.E.), modern scholars tell us, was a typical near eastern temple, while the great synagogues constructed at the turn of the twentieth century were art deco palaces. Even on a quality level, it is hard to include Jewish architecture among the great religious architecture of the world.



Figure **13.6.3.4**: Model of Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem, Israel Museum, photo: **Juan R. Cuadra**, public domain

The greatest of Jewish building, the temples of Solomon (destroyed 586 B.C.E.) and Herod in Jerusalem (destroyed 70 C.E.) are long gone, and never again have Jews controlled extensive resources for building, nor land for construction. There is no Jewish parallel to Saint Peters (neither the “Old” one built by Constantine nor Julius II’s), nor Hagia Sophia, the temples of Varanasi, nor the Forbidden City. Small Jewish communities, stretched across the world from late antique Palestine to Kaifeng in 17th century China to contemporary America and Israel built synagogues—often buildings of great beauty and historical significance, but mostly pretty limited from an architectural standpoint. There were no Jewish benefactors to compete with Justinian or Saladin or the della Rovere; and virtually no government sponsorship of magnificent synagogues. Jewish architecture is always derivative of local styles and patterns, and responds to the needs of local minority communities. It never drove those styles. Jewish “architecture” through the ages was a hybrid architecture—a term scorned by nineteenth and twentieth century racial and national purists, but celebrated in our own “post-modern” age.



Figure 13.6.3.5: The Zodiac, mosaic floor, Beit Alpha Synagogue, early 6th century (Beit Alpha National Park, Israel), public domain

Longevity

What Jews lacked in territory, wealth and numbers, they made up for in longevity. Jews—short for "the Judeans," trace their cultural heritage, and sometimes their physical lineage, to the biblical patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (also called Israel) and to the land of Israel (called in Roman times Judaea)—an unbroken chain of 3000 years. This is not just an "imagined" history. No other western community can assert—based upon rich documentary and physical evidence—to have encountered both Cyrus the Great and Innocent III, Caligula and Mohammed, Victoria, Stalin and Rembrandt. Though a minority, Jews maintained rich mimetic traditions across the empires that make up the "Western world," and an astonishingly complex book culture that has sustained their sense of group cohesion. From antiquity to modern times, it was (and in many ways, still is) possible to travel from Jewish community to Jewish community from Persia to Spain and beyond—as travelers did—and find Jews who shared an all encompassing religious culture—even if they ate "strange" (though always kosher) foods, dressed "funny" (though males still wore the biblically mandated ritual "fringes") and practiced "strange" local liturgical customs. Not speaking the same vernacular language, a visitor from, say, Germany might have communicated with his hosts in, say, Egypt, by drawing upon mix of "peculiarly pronounced" Hebrew and Aramaic gained through exposure to vast quantities of canonical religious texts.

Jews and their texts—not always together—have been active in what some textbooks still call "the Western Experience" from its beginning. The religious traditions associated with Jesus and Mohammed both assert that Jewish scripture, and interaction with Jews, is essential their own revelations, both of which assert relationship by virtue of having "superseded" the revelation of Moses. In other words, Jews "matter" to Christians and to Muslims, and by virtue of living among them, Christians and Muslims "mattered" to Jews.

The study of Jewish art and architecture

The academic study of Jewish architecture developed from the eighteenth century onward, when Christian Hebraists and bible scholars developed interests in biblical architecture—the Mosaic Tabernacle, the Solomonic Temple and the Herodian Temple—the latter visited by Jesus, who according to the Gospels predicted its destruction in 70 C.E. under emperor Vespasian. Post-"biblical" Jewish architecture did not become a focus of research until discoveries by the Palestine Exploration Fund of late antique synagogues during the 1860s. Medieval and early modern buildings took a bit longer to occasion scholarly interest. Jews in 19th century Europe, America and to some degree Islamic lands and south Asia, were engaged in a full-scale building boom; the largest since Herod the Great's rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple beginning 20/19 B.C.E. Newly emancipated and emancipating communities asserted their presence by building huge synagogues, experimenting with a wide range of forms, from neo-Egyptian to neo-classical and neo-moresque, eventually settling upon the modern yet traditionalist tones of art deco.

Only at the end of the 19th century did scholars begin to look back and study "Jewish art," including Jewish architecture; often looking—whether intentionally or not—for roots for the contemporary boom in earlier periods. Hoping to prove that "Jews do art too," Jews of all stripes hoped to prove their humanity through the creation and study of Jewish art. It was only in post-war New York that the first—and perhaps still the best—comprehensive surveys of Jewish religious architecture were written, both by art historian/architect Rachel Wischnitzer. These were entitled *European Synagogue Architecture* and *Synagogue Architecture in America*. By then, the State of Israel had been established, and "Jewish art"—including architecture—became the national art.

The canonical book of this process was Cecil Roth's *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History*, first published in Hebrew in 1958 and still in print in Hebrew. This anthology brought together scholars who had been scattered throughout the world due to the War to present a comprehensive history, from Solomon to the present. Architecture—until the modern period, all of it "religious" appears in every period and in almost every article, with some articles dedicated to this subject. The study of Jewish architecture has been of particular interest to Israeli scholars, but also to Americans and Europeans, and the Hebrew University's Center for Jewish Art has sent teams across the world to document historical synagogues—most no longer used. In Europe, this work takes on additional significance, as it has been spawned by a real interest to regain a now-lost heritage—particularly in the East, as Europe, particularly since the fall of Communism, has sought to develop a more tolerant European tradition and usable history.

In recent years, Jewish visual culture has been deeply assimilated into the academic study of Judaism, really for the first time. Cultural historians, working with art historians and architectural historians, have begun to focus upon the very elements of Jewish "minority" architecture that in previous generations were often spurned. The process by which a small minority group melded with its general environment, transforming and being transformed within that environment has become the stuff of contemporary scholarship. In many ways, the Jews have been the "canary in the coal mine," the test case for theoretical discussion of what it means to live in diaspora and to be Europe's first, earliest and most intimate—colonized people.

Medieval synagogues in Toledo, Spain

by DR. DIANE REILLY



Figure **13.6.3.6**: View of Toledo, Spain with the Samuel Halevi Abulafia synagogue at the center and the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes in the background (photo: **Yildori**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

By the time the first surviving synagogues were built in Spain, Jews had lived there for more than a thousand years. The first Jews likely arrived on the Iberian peninsula among the Roman conquerors and colonizers who flowed there in the first century C.E. Jews were persecuted by Christians during the Late Antique period (beginning in the 4th century), but when Muslim rule was established in 711, the legal and economic status of Jews improved. Often well integrated into the governments and economies of the cities in Muslim Al-Andalus, many Jews spoke Arabic and wore the same clothes as their Muslim neighbors.

Although population estimates for pre-modern periods are notoriously unreliable, one scholar has estimated that the Jewish population of Spain grew to be larger than the Jewish populations of every other part of the medieval world combined. Given the size and wealth of the Spanish Jewish communities of Al-Andalus, we can be certain that they built many synagogues in the quarters of the cities where they lived, but none survive from before the south of Spain was reconquered by northern, Christian rulers. Spain's most remarkable medieval synagogues are found in former Islamic capitals, but they were built after these cities were again governed by Christians.



Figure 13.6.3.7: Ibn Shoshan Synagogue (now Santa María la Blanca), first built 1180, Toledo, Spain (photo: Benjamín Núñez González, CC BY-SA 3.0)

By the late Middle Ages, there were at least eleven synagogues in the city of Toledo in central Spain. Two of these—the Samuel Halevi Abulafia synagogue and the Ibn Shoshan synagogue—stand only a few blocks apart in the old Jewish quarter. Both synagogues display a style inspired by the Islamic buildings that surrounded them, sometimes called *Mudéjar*. This style was used by Muslim, Christian, and Jewish patrons and builders living in parts of Spain formerly governed by Muslims. The earlier Muslim builders had themselves borrowed from the cultures that preceded their arrival by including details that had been popular with Romans and Late Antique Christians in Spain, such as reused columns, Corinthian capitals and horseshoe arches.

A twelfth-century synagogue for Toledo's Jewish community

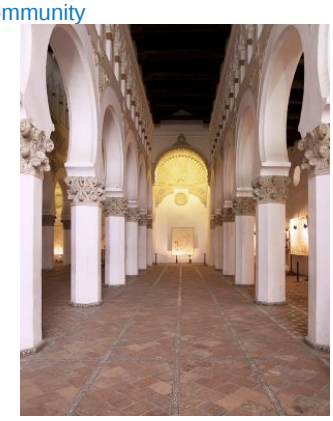


Figure 13.6.3.8: Ibn Shoshan Synagogue (now Santa María la Blanca), first built 1180, Toledo, Spain (photo: **José Luis Filpo Cabana**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Ibn Shoshan Synagogue was likely first built around 1180, and was probably renovated by a member of the Spanish royal court in the thirteenth century before it was converted into a church (renamed Santa María la Blanca) in 1411. The bimah, Torah ark, and seats for the congregation were destroyed when the building was converted into a church. All that remains from the synagogue is the architecture.



Figure 13.6.3.8: Detail of capital in Ibn Shoshan Synagogue (now Santa María la Blanca), first built 1180, Toledo, Spain (photo: **Harvey Barrison**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The interior is divided into five aisles by four rows of stout octagonal piers. The piers carry rows of capitals decorated with stucco pinecones and volutes, surmounted by giant horseshoe arches.

Above the arches are layers of low-relief stucco tendrils and roundels, scallop shells, geometric interlacing, and rows of blind arches with multiple lobes (called poly-lobed arches), a wealth of surface decoration that recalls the type found in earlier Spanish buildings like the **Great Mosque at Cordoba**.

We know this wasn't simply a local Toledan style, but one popular in other parts of Spain, because the Jewish community to the north in Segovia built a very similar synagogue, now destroyed, at almost the same time.

A private synagogue for a royal advisor

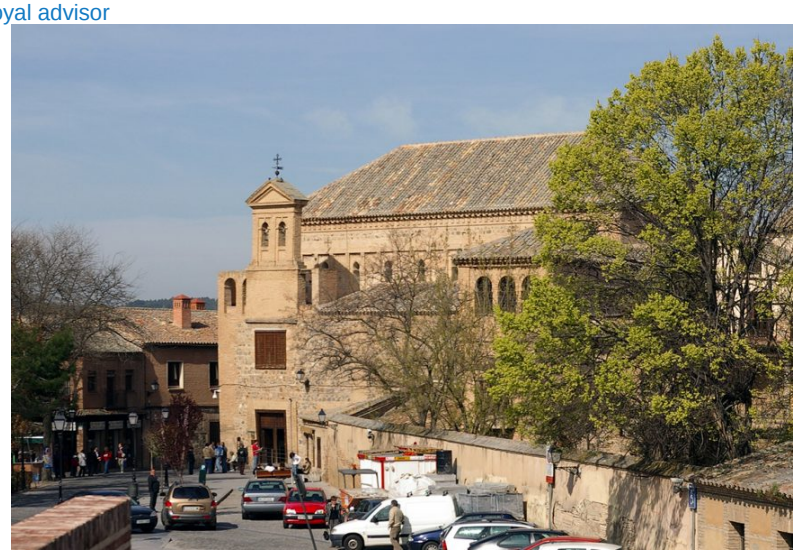


Figure **13.6.3.9**: Samuel Halevi Abulafia synagogue (now El Transito de Nuestra Señora), c. 1360, Toledo, Spain (photo: **Olivier Lévy**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.6.3.10**: Samuel Halevi Abulafia synagogue, c. 1360, Toledo, Spain (photo: **Antonio.velez**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Almost two hundred years later, around 1360, a new synagogue was built in a different but related style by Samuel Halevi Abulafia, treasurer and advisor to the Spanish King Pedro I of Castile. Unlike the Ibn Shoshan synagogue, this one was private, and attached to Halevi's palace, although it would have been a significant monument in the neighborhood given its height.

Instead of being divided into aisles by rows of arches, the Samuel Halevi Abulafia synagogue (later known as the church of El Transito de Nuestra Señora) is dominated by a soaring, open hall that is oriented towards a triple-arched Torah niche. The upper parts of the interior walls and the wall surrounding the Torah niche are blanketed with low-relief stucco decoration.

Right underneath the decorative wooden ceiling are ranks of colonnettes supporting poly-lobed arches that hug the wall, very similar to those at the Ibn Shoshan synagogue nearby. Below these are geometrically organized patterns of leaves, flowers, scallop shells, and interlacing tendrils, as well as the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Castile (a three-turreted castle). A wealth of Hebrew and Arabic inscriptions praise King Pedro, the building's architect, Don Meir Abdeil, and the royal treasurer and patron of the synagogue, Samuel Halevi, who is described as "prince among the princes of the tribe of Levi." Inscriptions also quote literary and religious texts, including the Bible and the Qur'an.



Figure **13.6.3.11**: Wall reliefs and colonnettes, Samuel Halevi Abulafia synagogue, c. 1360, Toledo, Spain (photo: **Windwhistler**, CC 0)

This was the same style that King Pedro (who was Catholic) favored in his own palace architecture, making it a decorative language common to the Muslim, Christian and Jewish elites. Samuel may have wanted to celebrate his own integration into the power center of the kingdom by imitating its court style, but unfortunately his success was short-lived. Soon after the synagogue was completed, Pedro had him arrested, tortured, and executed.

Though the Jewish population in Spain was increasingly persecuted and finally in 1492, officially banished (unless they converted to Christianity), these synagogue structures attest to their long presence, and to the close interconnections between Muslim, Jewish, and Christian cultures in medieval Spain.

Additional resources:

History of Santa María la Blanca on toledomonumental.com (in Spanish)

"'We want action': call to return former Toledo synagogue to Jewish community," *The Guardian*, March 8, 2017

Website of the Museo Safardi, El Transito (in Spanish)

History of the El Transito Synagogue from Beit Hatfutsot, The Museum of the Jewish People

Norman Roth, "New Light on the Jews of Mozarabic Toledo," *AJS Review* 11 (1986), pp. 189-220.

Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain, ed. Vivian B. Mann, Thomas F. Glick and Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: The Jewish Museum; George Braziller, 1992).

R. Wischnitzer, *The Architecture of the European Synagogue* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 35.

The Golden Haggadah

by DR. ELISA FOSTER



Figure 13.6.3.12: The preparation for the Passover festival: upper right: Miriam (Moses' sister), holding a timbrel decorated with an Islamic motif, is joined by maidens dancing and playing contemporary musical instruments; upper left: the master of the house, sitting under a canopy, orders the distribution of matzoh (unleavened bread) and haroset (a sweet made from nuts and fruit) to the children; lower right: the house is prepared for Passover, the man holding a candle searches for leavened bread on the night before Passover and the woman and girl clean; bottom left: sheep are slaughtered for Passover and a man purifies utensils in a cauldron over a fire. From the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320, northern Spain, probably Barcelona (British Library, MS. 27210, fol. 15 recto)

On the eve of the Jewish holiday of Passover, a child traditionally asks a critical question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This question sets up the ritual narration of the story of Passover, when Moses led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt with a series of miraculous events (recounted in the Jewish Bible in the book of Exodus).



Figure 13.6.3.13: Four plagues (clockwise from top left): painful boils afflict the Egyptians, swarms of frogs overrun the land, pestilence kills the domestic animals and wild animals invade the city. From the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320, northern Spain, probably Barcelona (British Library, MS. 27210, fol. 12 verso)

For the last and most terrible in a series of miraculous plagues that ultimately convinced the Egyptian Pharaoh to free the Jews—the death of the first born sons of Egypt—Moses commanded the Jews to paint a red mark on their doors. In doing so, the Angel of Death "passed over" these homes and the children survived. The story of Passover—of miraculous salvation from slavery—is one that is recounted annually by many Jews at a seder, the ritual meal that marks the beginning of the holiday.



Figure **13.6.3.14**: The plague of the first-born: in the upper-right corner, three scenes: an angel strikes a man, the queen mourns her baby, and the funeral of the first-born; upper left: Pharaoh orders the Israelites to leave Egypt, the Israelites, holding lumps of dough, walk with hands raised illustrating the verse: "And the children of Israel went out with a high hand"; bottom right: pursuing Egyptians are shown as contemporary knights led by a king; bottom left: the Israelites' safely cross the Red Sea, Moses takes a last look at the drowning Egyptians. From the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320, northern Spain Plagues (clockwise from top left), probably Barcelona (British Library, MS. 27210, fol. 14 verso)

A luxurious book

The book used to tell the story of Passover around the seder table each year is a special one, known as a haggadah (haggadot, pl). The Golden Haggadah, as you might imagine given its name, is one of the most luxurious examples of these books ever created. In fact, it is one of the most luxurious examples of a medieval illuminated manuscript, regardless of use or patronage. So although the Golden Hagaddah has a practical purpose, it is also a fine work of art used to signal the wealth of its owners.



Figure 13.6.3.15: Left: Taking his family back to Egypt, Moses meets Aaron on the way and Zipporah, holding two babies in her arms, rides a mule; right: an angel appears above the bush that burns but is not consumed and on divine instructions, Moses takes off his shoes and hides his face when he hears the voice of God. Upper part of a page from the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320, Northern Spain, probably Barcelona (British Library, MS. 27210, fol. 1o verso)

A hagaddah usually includes the prayers and readings said during the meal and sometimes contained images that could have served as a sort of pictorial aid to envision the history of Passover around the table. In fact, the word “haggadah” actually means “narration” in Hebrew. The Golden Haggadah is one of the most lavishly decorated medieval Haggadot, containing 56 miniatures (small paintings) found within the manuscript. The reason it is called the “Golden” Haggadah is clear—each miniature is decorated with a brilliant gold-leaf background. As such, this manuscript would have been quite expensive to produce and was certainly owned by a wealthy Jewish family. So although many haggadot show signs of use—splashes of wine, etc.—the fine condition of this particular haggadah means that it might have served a more ceremonial purpose, intended to showcase the prosperity of this family living near Barcelona in the early fourteenth century.

Gothic in style



Figure 13.6.3.16: Moses and Aaron come before Pharaoh, from the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320, Northern Spain, probably Barcelona (British Library, MS. 27210, fol. 1o verso)

The fact that the Golden Haggadah was so richly illuminated is important. Although the second commandment in Judaism forbids the making of “graven images,” haggadot were often seen as education rather than religious and therefore exempt from this rule. The style of the manuscript may look familiar to you—it is very similar to Christian Gothic manuscripts such as the Bible of Saint Louis (below). Look, for example, at the figure of Moses and the Pharaoh (above). He doesn’t really look like an Egyptian pharaoh at all but more like a French king. The long flowing body, small architectural details and patterned background reveal that this manuscript was created during the Gothic period. Whether the artists of the Golden Haggadah themselves were Jewish is open to debate, although it is certainly evident that regardless of their religious beliefs, the dominant style of Christian art in Europe clearly influenced the artists of this manuscript.



Figure **13.6.3.17**: Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France (detail), Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), c. 1225–1245, ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum (The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 240, fol. 8)

Cross-cultural styles

So the Golden Haggadah is both stylistically an example of Jewish art and Gothic art. Often Christian art is associated with the Gothic style but it is important to remember that artists, regardless of faith, were exchanging ideas and techniques. In fact, while the Golden Haggadah looks Christian (Gothic) in style, other examples of Jewish manuscripts, such as the Sarajevo Haggadah, blend both Christian and Islamic influences. This cross-cultural borrowing of artistic styles happened throughout Europe, but was especially strong in medieval Spain, where Jews, Christians and Muslims lived together for many centuries. Despite periods of persecution, the Jews of Spain, known as Sephardic Jews, developed a rich culture of Judaism on the Iberian Peninsula. The Golden Haggadah thus stands as a testament to the impact and significance of Jewish culture in medieval Spain—and the rich multicultural atmosphere of that produced such a magnificent manuscript.

Additional resources:

The Golden Haggadah at the British Library (digital manuscript)

Digital Hebrew Treasures from the British Library Collections (British Library blog)

About the Golden Haggadah, from the British Library and more here

Beṣalel Narkiss, *The Golden Haggadah A Fourteenth-Century Illuminated Hebrew Manuscript in the British Museum* (London: Eugrammia Press, 1970).

Joseph Gutmann, *Hebrew Manuscript Painting* (New York: Braziller, 1978)

Marc Michael Epstein, *The Medieval Haggadah: Art, Narrative, and Religious Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

Katrin Kogman-Appel, “Coping with Christian Pictorial Sources: What Did Jewish Miniaturists Not Paint?” *Speculum*, 75 (2000), pp. 816-58.

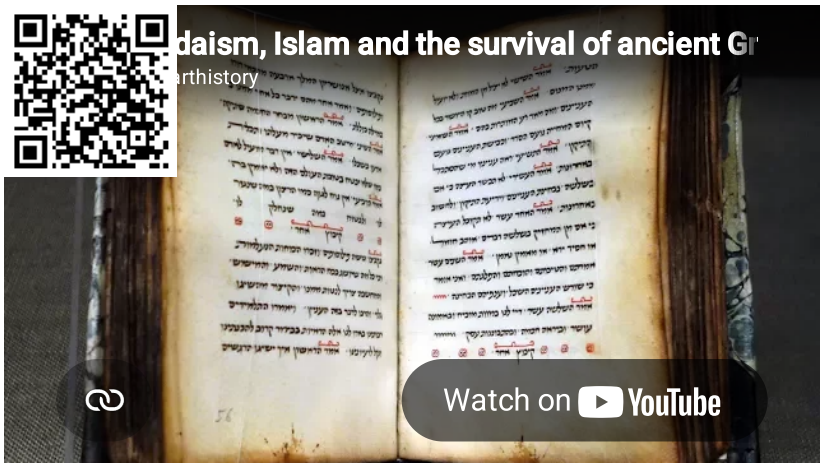
Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Illuminated Haggadot from Medieval Spain. Biblical Imagery and the Passover Holiday* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art Between Islam and Christianity: the Decoration of Hebrew Bibles in Medieval Spain* (Lieden: Brill, 2004), pp. 179-85.

Julie Harris, “Polemical Images in the Golden Haggadah (British Library Add. MS 27210),” *Medieval Encounters*, 8 (2002), pp. 105-22.

Book of Morals of Philosophers

by DR. RONNIE PERELIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Videos **13.6.3.1**: *Sefer Musre Hafilosofim (Book of Morals of Philosophers)*, 13th -15th century, ink and opaque watercolor on parchment, Spain (The Hispanic Society of America, New York)

Additional resources:

Biography of Hunayn ibn Ishaq

The Iberian Peninsula, 1000-1400 C.E. from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Definition of Sephardim from the Jewish Virtual Library

The manuscripts of Luis de Carvajal

by DR. RONNIE PERELIS



Figure **13.6.3.18**: Luis de Carvajal, *Decalogue (The Ten Commandments)*, c. 1596 (Princeton University Digital Library)

A secret faith

In 1596, Luis de Carvajal, along with his mother and sisters, were condemned to the flames of an *auto da fé* in Mexico City for their secret adherence to Judaism. The Carvajals were *conversos*, descendants of Jews who converted to Catholicism often under great duress in Spain and Portugal during the late middle ages. A minority of these converts maintained their ancestral faith in secret, braving the wrath of the Inquisition.

The Carvajals moved to Mexico for the same reason other Spaniards left the Old World for the New—economic opportunities and the chance to remake themselves in a new land. While the Inquisition only functioned in the Americas beginning in 1571, many *conversos* migrated to the ports and major urban centers of the Americas from the earliest days of Spanish conquest and colonization in the early 16th century. Carvajal's uncle, also named Luis de Carvajal, was a decorated *conquistador* who was named the governor of the frontier territory of the Nuevo Reino de León in the Northeastern part of modern-day Mexico, and he invited relatives to join him in **New Spain**. Though he was a devout Catholic, much of his family, including his nephew

Luis, who worked as his main assistant, were crypto-Jews. Eventually the secret unraveled, and the family was arrested by the Inquisition in 1589. The younger Luis, his mother, and his sisters all asked for mercy and were placed in a monastery to serve out their penance. The uncle was stripped of his position and exiled; he died in prison.

A life story lost and found

Soon after the younger Carvajal was released from the monastery, he began to compose an electrifying spiritual autobiography. He was a trained calligrapher and he wrote his life story in tiny, lucid script in a small leather-bound book that he kept hidden on his person throughout his travels. In these writings, he charts the guiding hand of Providence in his spiritual adventures, and his last entry tells of his planned escape to Italy. Sadly, Carvajal and his family were arrested before they made it to safety, and the autobiography which was meant to declare God's mercies was found and used by the Inquisitors as evidence against them.

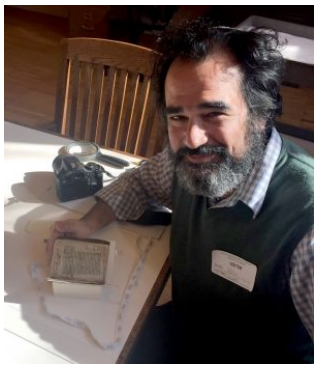


Figure **13.6.3.19**: The author with the Luis de Carvajal manuscripts at the New York Historical Society (courtesy of author)

The autobiography, along with some of Carvajal's other writings, were preserved with the extensive trial records and stored in the Mexican National Archives until they were mysteriously stolen in 1932. These documents were thought to have been lost for over eighty years, until they resurfaced and were identified as the long-lost texts by Leonard Milberg, a renowned collector. Milberg alerted the authorities and arranged for the return of these documents to Mexico.

Before their official return, however, the manuscripts were put on display at the New York Historical society, where I had a chance to look at them up close. I have been working on Carvajal's life story for the past 15 years and I was overjoyed to finally see his handwriting and read the lines he penned with such passion. I—and all of the scholars who have investigated this sensational case of crypto-Jewish activity in the heart of colonial Mexico—had previously relied on a transcription of Carvajal's autobiography made by Alfonso Toro a few years prior to the theft of the manuscripts. After many years living with this text, analyzing, contextualizing, and turning it around in my head, it was a real thrill to sit with the original, up close.

New discoveries, new questions

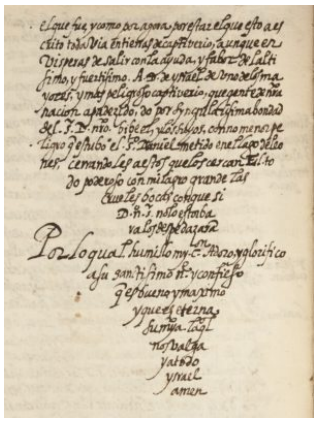


Figure **13.6.3.20**: Final page of Luis de Carvajal's spiritual autobiography, c. 1596 (Princeton University Digital Library)

The small bundle of manuscripts seemed to be inviting me in with their neat lines of tiny script. The first section was like meeting an old friend, or seeing the face of a longtime pen pal. I knew the lines of Carvajal's autobiography inside and out, but I had never seen them in his own hand, nor did I know about the small side notes and elegant arrangement of the heading—the dedication to the Lord of Hosts that announces the beginning of his tale—nor the way he arranged the last lines in a final triangular flourish. Those details point to the fact that it was a text he went back to, added to, and revised. It also tells me that he really thought that he was about to escape the shadow of persecution and that his story of trials and tribulations was coming to a favorable end.

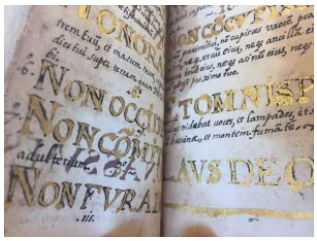


Figure 13.6.3.21: Luis de Carvajal, Decalogue (The Ten Commandments) (detail), c. 1596 (photo courtesy of the author)

But then I encountered works I had never known about like *El modo que es de Rezar*, a guide to prayer for himself and for his fellow secret Jews in Mexico, and a list of the acts of mercy that the "most high God performed for Joseph"—a review of the major events of his short and tumultuous life.

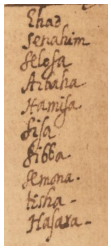


Figure 13.6.3.22: List of transliterated Hebrew numbers (detail), Luis de Carvajal manuscript, c. 1596 (Princeton University Digital Library)

Right before this list, which takes up two pages, I found a section with the ten commandments in Latin, written out in beautiful large letters with gold leaf. New questions emerged: I knew Carvajal was an expert calligrapher, but where would he have had access to the materials and knowledge of the technique to apply the gold leaf?

There is another page towards the end with a list of Jewish holidays and their corresponding Christian dates, along with another column featuring the name of the Hebrew months and a list of transliterated Hebrew numbers from one to ten—a Hebrew primer for a fully Latinized Converso Jew? What follows is even harder to understand—some psalms in Latin and some prayers in Portuguese, along with some deeply cryptic lists that seem to be mystical codes waiting to be deciphered.

More to decipher

The story of the Carvajal family has intrigued historians of colonial Mexico and has caught the imagination of a wide range of Mexican intellectuals and artists. Their experience is often read as an exemplary tale of the abuses of religious authority and the struggle for freedom of belief. I believe that the story of the Carvajals also complicates and enriches our understanding of Latin American religious history and points to the diversity of colonial society and the dynamism of religious creativity and expression that can still speak to spiritual seekers today.

Now that these texts have been digitized and the originals are securely back in Mexico, scholars will be able to explore and ask more questions of these beguiling records of a vibrant and short-lived religious life.

Additional resources:

Digitized version of the Luis de Carvajal manuscripts from Princeton University Digital Library

"A Secret Jew, the New World, a Lost Book: Mystery Solved," *The New York Times*, January 1, 2017

Ronnie Perelis, *Narratives from the Sephardic Atlantic: Blood and Faith* (Indiana University Press, 2016)

Altneushul, Prague

by DR. CAROL HERSELLE KRINSKY



Figure **13.6.3.23**: Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Øyvind Holmstad**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In architecture, there is often a dominant mode of design in a given country or region at a particular moment in history. In central and western Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was customary to use Gothic elements such as pointed arches, rib vaults, and thin walls filled with stained glass.

But what about minority groups? Did they follow the trends of the majority or were they told what and how to build by the majority culture? Did the minorities have architects of their own on whom to rely, or were the minority members excluded from certain professions? We know about exclusion and discrimination from modern history. But what happened in the later middle ages?

Jews in Medieval Europe

For centuries, Jews were the most noticeable minority in Europe. They lived only in certain regions, and were excluded from others. Their numbers were usually restricted, even in places where they were allowed to live. Nevertheless, Jews were useful members of society, in part because most Jewish men were literate—they were, and still are, expected to read their prayers (poor Roman Catholics had no schools and relied on priests to read on their behalf). Literate people could be useful in commerce and in keeping records, so some rulers allowed Jews to live in their cities. Often, there was a district designated for Jews, perhaps near the commercial district of a city, near the city walls, or near the palace of the ruler whom they served, (there were formal walled ghettoes only from the mid-sixteenth century onward).



Figure **13.6.3.24**: Křižovnický plán (Map of Prague), 1665. **Archiv hlavního města Prahy** showing Josefov (Prague's Jewish quarter) in blue

Synagogue architecture

Every Jewish community had to have a place of worship, called a synagogue (from a Greek word related to assembling). Only a few rules governed the design of a synagogue; these rules were found in the Talmud. Later congregations of Jews adhered to these rules as best they could, despite the restrictions on their residence and use of land. Ideally, a synagogue's focal point, the end of the building's central axis, would face Jerusalem (to the southeast from the city of Prague).

The synagogue would contain carefully hand-written scrolls of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible that were held in chest known as a Torah ark when not in use. The ark was located at the building's focal point. When the scrolls were removed from their storage chest, they would be carried ceremoniously to the center of the synagogue where the elders of the congregation would mount a low platform (*bimah*) and place the scrolls on a reading table. It would be an honor to be called to read to the congregation. In addition, no one was allowed to live above the synagogue; religious activity was to have pride of place and women would not occupy the same part of the building as men in order to avoid distracting the men from their prayers. Animals and other unclean things were not be allowed to defile the synagogue interior.

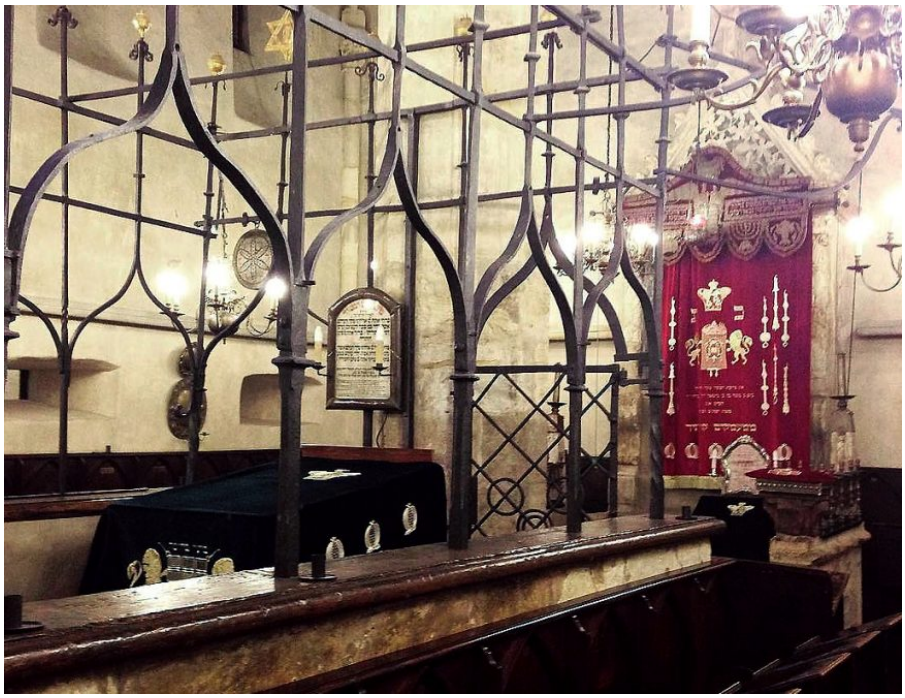


Figure **13.6.3.25**: View with *bimah* at left, Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Chajm Guski**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The Altneushul: a Gothic synagogue

An important late medieval synagogue in Prague is called the Old New Synagogue because the city later gained a newer New Synagogue. It is generally known as the Altneushul in Yiddish. It seems to have originally been a small rectangular building erected in the thirteenth century, but late in that century or in the next one, the original synagogue was enlarged. Both stages of construction were apparently designed and built by Christians, because Jews were either formally or tacitly excluded from the guilds (trade associations) of the building crafts. An architect who at other times worked on churches seems to have been in charge because ornamental details are similar to those of a local church; the architect was therefore almost certainly Roman Catholic.

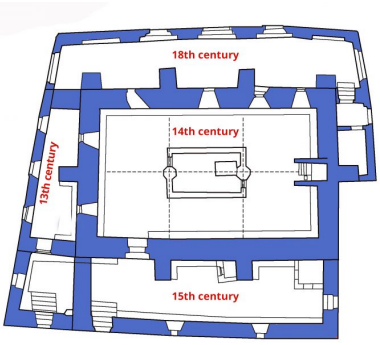


Figure **13.6.3.26**: Altneushul plan

The synagogue stands in what was once the heart of the Jewish quarter. Its floor is lower than the level of the street in order to allow the congregation to utter the words of Psalm 130:1, "Out of the depths, I cry to Thee, O Lord." The location has become all the more noticeable over time as the level of

nearby streets has risen with re-paving, and as Pařížská (Paris Street), just to the east, was built in the nineteenth century to clear part of the old, crowded Jewish neighborhood.



Figure **13.6.3.27**: Rib vaulting, Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Peco~commonswiki** (?), CC BY-SA 2.5)

The Altneushul, beyond the vestibule, is a rectangle about 26 feet wide and 45 feet long. It is composed of six bays arranged in two aisles, each with three bays. On the long east-west axis in the center of the building, two slender octagonal pillars allow the interior to be wider than it would have been without these supports. Leaf forms adorn the capitals.

Rib vaults cover each bay, but unlike the four-part, X-shaped ribs found in many Gothic-style vaults, those at the Altneushul have an extra, fifth rib, probably to help ensure stability; the same design can be seen in some secular and Christian buildings of the time. The *bimah* stands between the octagonal pillars in the center of the synagogue, and the ark on the eastern wall terminates the principal axis of the interior.



Figure **13.6.3.28**: Interior view, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A place for prayer and study

This is clearly not the plan of a church. Jews had no need for a church plan with a nave, side aisles, chapels, and a transept because their rituals and customs differed from those of Roman Catholics. Instead, the plan of the Altneushul is more similar to the plan of certain secular buildings, as well as to some chapter houses. The plan of a meeting room was useful for a synagogue in which men meet to read and discuss religious doctrine. When possible, Jews and the Christians would not have wanted to imitate each other's religious architecture, although in some of the simplest churches, chapels, and synagogues, a single room had to suffice for the congregation. Nevertheless, because members of both religions used the same builders, the individual components or ornamental details of the various buildings often resemble each other in design. The Altneushul has only plant decoration, because at that time, Jews would not allow images of human beings within a religious context.



Figure 13.6.3.29: Tympanum, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble, CC BY 2.0)

Seats and desks are distinctive features of a medieval synagogue; medieval churches had no seats and there was no need for desks since most Christians were not literate. Seats are necessary in synagogues because Jews spend hours there, reading their own prayers—in the middle ages, each man did so at his own pace—and discussing religious doctrine. Books were placed on the desks during the reading, and were later stored inside the desks for the next day's prayer and study meetings, along with the prayer shawls worn during religious services. In the Altneushul, the seats either face the *bimah*, or are arranged around the *bimah* platform; the ones we see today are neo-Gothic but reflect the original arrangement. This disposition assures that everyone is close to the *bimah* where the Torah portion is read each day. Members of the congregation faced each other during prayer, and that practice enhanced the sense of community. This is different from the practice in churches of that time, where the clergymen led Roman Catholics who stood one behind another and listened to a single authoritative voice.



Figure 13.6.3.30: Desks, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble, CC BY 2.0)

Lighting fixtures are important in synagogues because each man must read the essential texts. In this building, the windows are small, either for customary or structural reasons or to prevent vandals from breaking large and expensive windows. Therefore, artificial lighting was needed and was provided by candlesticks but also by hanging lamps and other devices; the ones in place today are post-medieval.

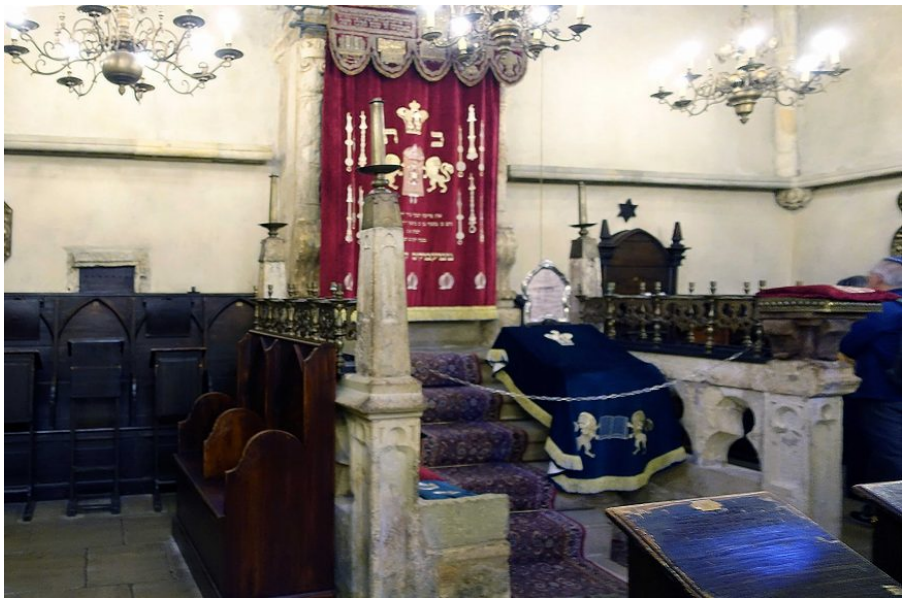


Figure 13.6.3.31: Interior view with Torah ark, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Steven Zucker)

Often, the *bimah* was made of wood, with a railing around it. The reading desk on the *bimah* faced the ark. In the Altneushul, the *bimah* is a delicate metal construction from the late fifteenth century that allows members of the congregation to easily see the reader. Both the entrance door and the pointed gable over the ark have carved decoration showing vines and fruits, though the ark is often concealed by a handsome curtain placed over it.



Figure 13.6.3.32: Opening to women's area, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Chajm Guski, CC BY-SA 2.0)

And the women?

So far, this essay has mentioned only men. Where were the women if they were not permitted in the main room of the synagogue? Evidence suggests that in early centuries, they were either excluded from synagogue activity or were accommodated in annexes. By the fourteenth century, a first women's annex was built at the Altneushul with small windows that opened to the main room where the men gathered. This allowed women to hear the prayers but not to see the men or be seen by them. In the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the congregation built additional annexes to accommodate the increasing numbers of women who elected to, or were allowed to, attend religious services. In the late middle ages, too, the high saddle roof and the brick gable were added, making the synagogue more prominent in the neighborhood.



Figure **13.6.3.33**: Josef Niklas and Vojtěch Ignác Ullmann, Spanish Synagogue, Prague, 1886 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

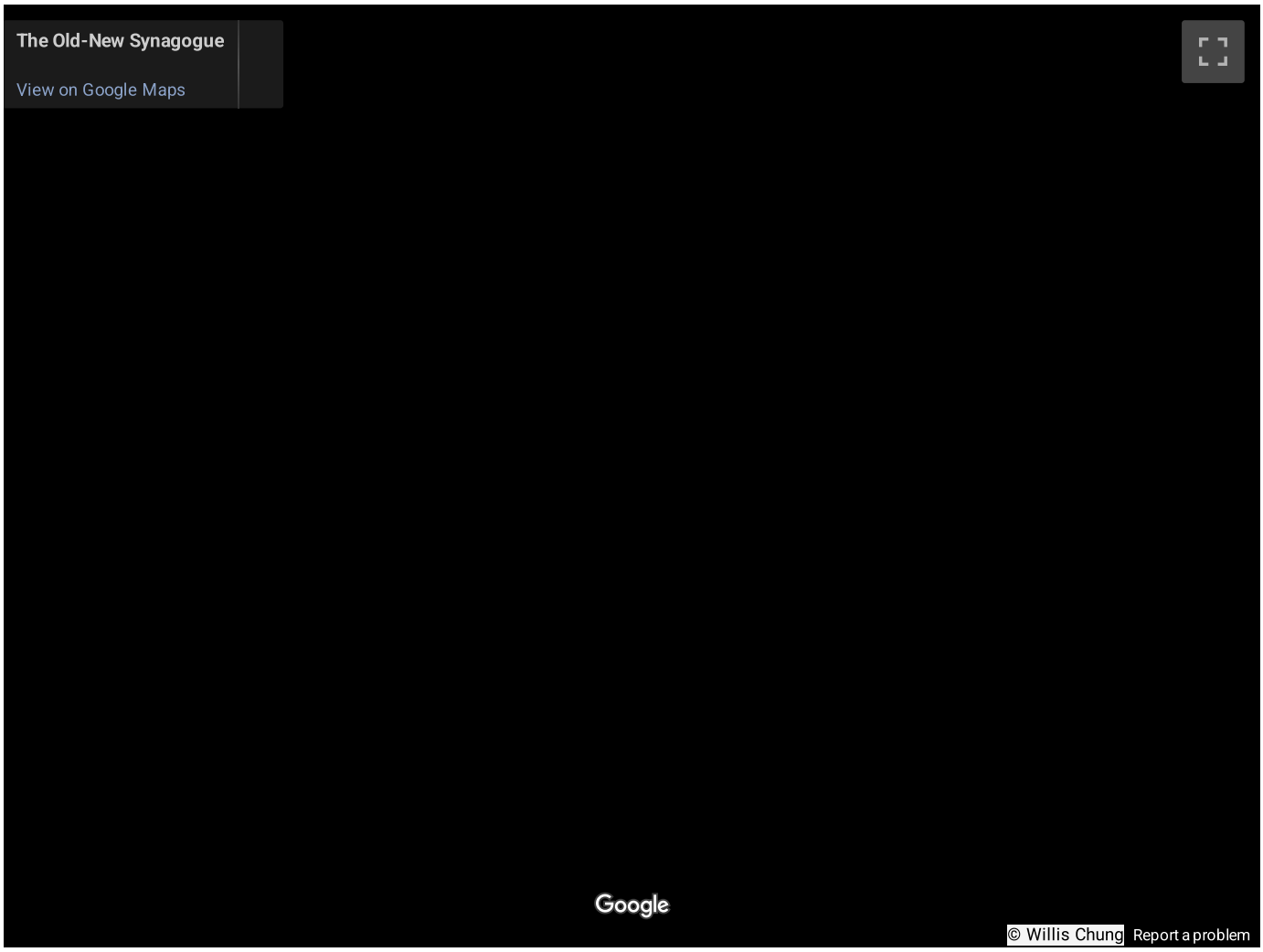
Loss and survival

Given the horrors perpetrated against European Jews during the Second World War, it may seem surprising that this building and several later synagogues in Prague have survived. The Pinkas Synagogue from the late fifteenth century is now a memorial; its walls are painted with the names of over 77,000 Czech Jews who were deported and murdered.



Figure **13.6.3.34**: Pinkas Synagogue Memorial, detail of names written on the walls (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Perversely, the Nazis and their collaborators left these buildings standing in order to provide the setting for a museum of a vanished people that was to contain artifacts collected from the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia and material from an early twentieth-century Jewish museum. These objects are now displayed in several of the other surviving synagogues in Prague, but the Altneushul, as the oldest survivor, has been left to illustrate the appearance of an unusually distinctive medieval synagogue.



Additional Resources:

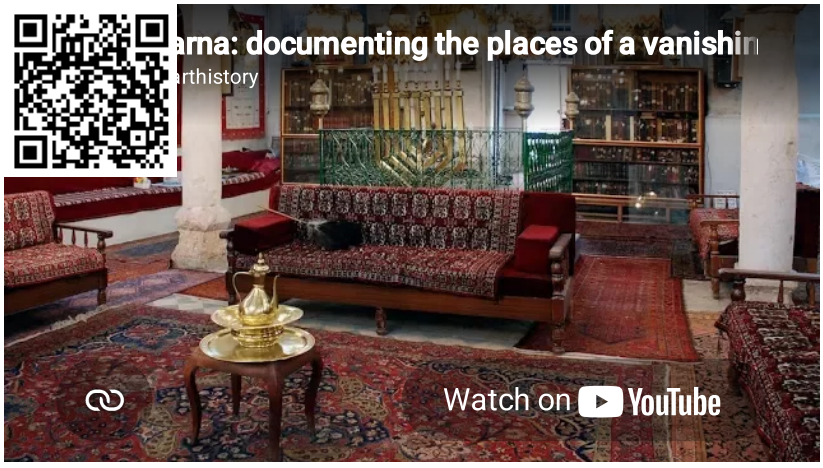
Arno Pařik, Dana Cabanova, Petr Kliment, *Prague Synagogues*, Prague, Jewish Museum, 2000

YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe

Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning*, New York, Architectural History Foundation, rev. ed., 1988

Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue, Jobar (Syria)

by JASON GUBERMAN-PFEFFER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.3.2**: A conversation with Jason Guberman-Pfeffer, Executive Director, Digital Heritage Mapping, Inc. and Coordinator, Diarna Geo-Museum and Beth Harris.

Additional resources:

Diarna

Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue (Jobar Synagogue) at Diarna

Syria accuses Israel of Stealing Artifacts from Damascus (The Times of Israel)

13.6.3: Judaism and art is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.3: Judaism and art** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.4: Books in Medieval Europe

Books in medieval Europe

The hand-made books of the Middle Ages are known as manuscripts.

c. 330 - 1300 C.E.

A beginner's guide to books in medieval Europe

More medieval books survive from the Middle Ages than any other artistic medium.

c. 330 - 1300 C.E.

Recording and disseminating information is quick and easy today, but in the Middle Ages this process was slow and laborious. Monastic libraries housed most books and all books were copied by hand, usually by monks. This process of copying and disseminating books was essential to the preservation of knowledge.

Medieval manuscripts, an introduction

by DR. NANCY ROSS



Figure **13.6.4.1**: Giovanni Todeschino, Jean Bourdichon and Master of Claude of France, *Book of Hours of Frederic of Aragon*, Tours, ca. 1501-1502 (French National Library)

What survives



Figure **13.6.4.2**: Full-page miniature of St. Luke as an evangelist, 6th century. This page prefaces the Gospel of Luke in the St. Augustine Gospels (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 286). Click here to see a zoomable image

More medieval books survive from the Middle Ages than any other artistic medium. Scholars refer to the hand-made books of the Middle Ages as manuscripts. Books that contain artistic decoration are called illuminated manuscripts. Manuscripts that survive from the European Middle Ages are generally religious books that reflect the canon, doctrine and practices of Christianity, though there are Jewish and Muslim books and other types of books that survive from this time period as well.

The codex vs. the scroll

A medieval manuscript is a codex (pl. codices), meaning a book made of pages bound between two boards. Ancient scribes wrote on scrolls that were stored in boxes. These ancient scrolls only survive in occasional fragments, as a scroll is especially vulnerable to physical degradation. The pages of codices, on the other hand, are protected by their covers and have a much greater chance for survival. Thus, medieval books survive in large numbers.

Where to see medieval manuscripts

The Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris and the British Library in London house the world's largest collections of medieval manuscripts. Though normally only available to scholars, many museums and libraries put some of their manuscript treasures on display. Digitizing, or creating high quality digital images of manuscripts, is increasingly common and these images are normally available on the Internet, furthering the study of these medieval books.

What's in the books

The original manuscripts of the Bible, the works of Aristotle and Plato and other ancient writers do not survive. They are known today because medieval scribes diligently copied them.

A slow and laborious process

Recording and disseminating information is quick and easy today, but in the Middle Ages this process was slow and laborious. Monastery libraries housed most books and all books were copied by hand, usually by monks. This process of copying and disseminating books was essential to the preservation of knowledge.

Some monks traveled to distant monasteries to view and copy books to bring back to their own monastery's library. Fires destroyed many medieval libraries and the books they housed. Because of this and other accidents of history, not all texts survived the Middle Ages. *The Name of the Rose*, a novel by Umberto Eco, imagines such a fate for Aristotle's lost work on poetics.

Books & Christianity

Books were essential to the practice of Christianity. Medieval Christian missionaries, such as St. Augustine of Canterbury, brought books with them as they traveled from place to place preaching and establishing new churches. *The Gospel Book of St. Augustine*

survives today in the Parker Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It contains the text of the gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John of the New Testament—an essential work for teaching potential converts about the life of Christ. A series of images illustrating the life of Christ prefaces the text and each book of the gospels begins with an illustration detailing the events unique to that gospel, though some of these are now lost.

Illustrations

The oldest illuminated manuscripts are among the oldest manuscripts in existence. The illustration of books was functional as well as decorative. Illuminated initials and painted miniatures marked the beginnings of important sections in the text and allowed readers to navigate the book.

Prefatory image cycles prepared the mind of the reader to engage with the text. Some illustrations elaborate doctrines, record events or simply tell stories. Even readers' doodles are intriguing to contemporary scholars.

Word and image

In illuminated manuscripts, words and images worked together to inform the medieval reader and occasionally these readers left their own mark. These books are highly interactive. Nearly all medieval manuscripts provide ample space in the margins for readers' notes and comments. In this way, illuminated manuscripts are different from other types of media in that they provided spaces for readers to record their reactions to image and text.

Manuscripts: major works of art

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video **13.6.4.1**: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Making manuscripts

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video 13.6.4.2: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum

The Bestiary

by DR. NANCY ROSS

A book of beasts



Figure 13.6.4.3: The phoenix from folio 56 recto of the Aberdeen Bestiary, written and illuminated in England around 1200. The Bestiary describes this magical bird as building its own funeral pyre and then rising from the ashes.

Have you ever heard that elephants are afraid of mice? Or that foxes are deceptive? These characterizations of animals come from a medieval book called the Bestiary, or Book of Beasts. Though these books are not known to many today, you are likely familiar with some of their content. The magical beasts in the Harry Potter series come directly from medieval bestiaries. Descriptions of unicorns, phoenixes, basilisks, and centaurs are all included in the text, but misspell “bestiary” in a Google search and you will likely regret it.

The Bestiary is a medieval encyclopedia that identifies a selection of animals, plants, and precious stones. Some really exist in nature and others do not. Each entry includes a physical description, an overview of the animal’s supposed characteristics, and a run-down of its moral qualities. Many versions of these books include illustrations. Its worth keeping in mind that Bestiaries pre-date the printing press. They were copied by hand at different times and places, resulting in a wide range of variations.



Figure 13.6.4.4: The beaver from folio 11 recto of the Aberdeen Bestiary, written and illuminated in England around 1200. The beaver shows off his testicles to escape the hunters.

From a Christian perspective

The lack of scientific information in each entry makes them entertaining to read. For example, the Bestiary text describes the beaver as a gentle animal whose testicles are valued for their medicinal properties. If a beaver senses that he is being hunted, he will bite off his testicles and throw them to the hunter to save his own life. If a beaver has already done this and is hunted again, he will stand on his hind legs and show the hunter that his testicles are already missing and the hunter will let him go. The text then goes on to give a Christian moralization of the beaver, stating that "every man who heeds God's commandment and wishes to live chastely should cut off all his vices and shameless acts, and cast them from him into the face of the devil" (source).

Sources



Figure 13.6.4.5: Adam names the animals from folio 5 recto of the Aberdeen Bestiary, written and illuminated in England around 1200

The Bestiary text is made up of several components. The bulk of the text comes from the Physiologus, a second century Greek text by an anonymous author. Relevant comments by other ancient authors such as Aristotle, Herodotus, Pliny the Elder, and Aelian are also included. The Etymologiae of Isidore of Seville, the late fifth and sixth century Archbishop, constitute a significant portion of the text. Layers of Christian commentary and moralizations were added to those earlier texts.

Content

The Bestiary begins with a retelling of the creation story from Genesis. An important event is Adam, the first man, naming all of the animals. This scene is often included in illustrated Bestiaries. Isidore of Seville believed that the names of animals were significant. He believed that an etymological study of each animal's name would reveal something about the nature of each animal.

The content of the Bestiary, particularly the moralizations on the animals, is echoed in many medieval texts, from sermons to stories. Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale," an animal story from the Canterbury Tales, makes use of the Bestiary. The main characters are a sly, deceptive fox and Chanticleer, a foolish and egotistical rooster.

Illustrations

The Bestiary was an enormously popular book in the Middle Ages and more than 130 medieval copies survive today. These copies come from all over Western Europe. The earliest manuscripts date from the tenth century and many survive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Many illustrations were drawn by artists who had never seen the relevant animal, but used the physical descriptions as a guide. The Bestiary text was influential, but these portable illustrations of animals were equally influential and likely served as models for animals in other manuscript illustrations, stone carving, wall painting, stained glass, and other media.

A Global Middle Ages through the Pages of Decorated Books

by DR. BRYAN C. KEENE



Figure 13.6.4.6: Facsimile of the Dresden Codex (detail), 13th or 14th century, made in the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico (Dresden, Germany, Saxon State Library, Mscr.Dresd. R 310. The Getty Research Institute, 2645-271)

Manuscripts and printed books—like today's museums, archives, and libraries—provide glimpses into how people have perceived the Earth, its many cultures, and everyone's place in it. ***Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts***, a new book from Getty Publications, invites you to explore this theme, presenting a range of book types from premodern Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Austronesia.



Figure 13.6.4.7: Gospel book, about 1480–1520, made in Gunda Gunde Monastery, Ethiopia (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, Ms. 105, 2010.17)

The production of books is a collaborative undertaking. In the premodern period, this process could involve the makers of writing surfaces, binding supports, scribes, procurers and creators of pigment, merchants, artists, patrons, and eventually the readers, viewers, or listeners. *Toward a Global Middle Ages* includes essays by twenty-six authors who are specialists of the art of the book.



Figure **13.6.4.8**: Books produced during a global Middle Ages reveal a vast variety of structures and styles. Pages from a Prajnaparamita (The Perfection of Wisdom) manuscript (detail), 1025, made in Bihar, India (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art**, M.86.185a-d)

Whose Middle Ages?

What do we mean by a global Middle Ages (or medieval period)? Writing about the Middle Ages has traditionally centered on the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities in Europe, Western Asia, and the greater Mediterranean between the years 500 and 1500. The term “Middle Ages” was used in the nineteenth century to describe a *medium aevum*, a middle age between the Roman Empire and the Renaissance.



Figure 13.6.4.9: The Rothschild Pentateuch, 1296, made in France and/or Germany (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 116, 2018.43)

For decades, scholars have challenged this Eurocentric view of the past, turning attention to a *global* Middle Ages that includes Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Austronesia. Some of these scholars seek to uncover networks, pathways, routes, or links between people and places. In doing so, an aim has been to reveal the lives of those who have been silenced by history or tradition: women, enslaved individuals, Indigenous peoples, queer or disabled groups. Others take a comparative approach, examining similar phenomena in different places at the same time or over time. *Toward a Global Middle Ages* expands upon these perspectives.



Figure 13.6.4.10: Mogao Caves 16-17 (Library Cave), Dunhuang, Gansu Province, China, 862; sealed around 1000 (photo: Dunhuang Academy)

There are also discussions about the meaning of “global” at a local level, and whether it is possible to speak of early globalities prior to the sustained transatlantic contacts between Europe, the Americas, and Africa in the late fifteenth century (it should be acknowledged that the latter view still largely centers on Europe—as indicated below and in the volume, peoples of northeastern China and Siberia had contacts with First Nation peoples, including those who inhabited the Aleutian Islands).



Figure 13.6.4.11: Folios from a Qur’an, Shiraz, Iran, 1550–75 (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.2010.54.1)

Some scholars select a hemispheric focus—referring to a *hemispheric Middle Ages*—that concentrates on Africa, Europe, and Asia on the one hand, and the Americas on the other. With this approach, we can still find connections through comparisons if we look to astronomy or astrology, for example, as I discuss in *Toward a Global Middle Ages* and have outlined briefly **before**; we might also consider global climate change (evidenced through **ice cores** and testimony from manuscripts or oral traditions) and the spread of **diseases** or the relationship between botany and linguistic development of words for popular trade goods, such as **sweet potato** or **tea**. Whichever methodology seems most applicable to the scope of a given study, one recommendation is to continually resist Eurocentrism and to cross boundaries—of periodization, discipline or specialization, historical or present-day geography, language (of documents and of academic training), and so forth.

It takes time to redirect the writing of history. The authors of this book therefore describe what we do as working *toward* a global Middle Ages.

Paper, Parchment, and Palm Leaves

Books were key modes of cultural expression and exchange throughout the Middle Ages. Manuscript means “handwritten,” from the Latin words *manus* (“hand”) and *scriptus* (“written”). Lavish examples were often embellished with metallic leaf or paint that shimmered in the light, which gives us the term “illuminated.” Print technology allowed images and texts to be replicated, and some global traditions combined manuscript and print.



Figure **13.6.4.12**: Two images on different supports depicting scribes at work, illustrating the collaborative undertaking of book-making. Left: Codex-Style Cylinder Vessel with Scribes, 650–800, Guatemala or Mexico, Northern Petén or Southern Campeche, Maya, ceramic (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.2010.115.562); right: Gospel book, 1386, made in Lake Van, historic Armenian kingdom, black ink and watercolor on paper, 9 7/16 × 6 1/2 inches (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig II 6 (83.MB.70), fol. 13v.)

Across Afro-Eurasia, the Americas, and Austronesia during the medieval period, bookmakers used a variety of supports and structures, including paper, parchment, and palm leaves. Each of these could be gathered together in various ways: bound as a codex, rolled as a scroll, or folded as an album. In some instances, we have to look at other types of artworks for glimpses of book or writing traditions (as with the Maya, whose long history of codex creation was decimated by the Spanish conquest yet ceramic vessels provide evidence for early manuscript production in Mesoamerica). The examples shown in this post hint at the diversity of book types and formats.

Manuscripts and books operated alongside other forms of literacy and visual storytelling throughout the Middle Ages. These include glyphic and graphic examples—characters or symbols carved or painted onto a surface, such as stone, ceramic, or the body—as well as oral traditions and memory aids. Such varied objects shed light on the many ways in which the book, broadly defined, functioned in multiple contexts in the past, and on the relationship between the visual arts and language, storytelling, and the commemoration of the past.



Figure **13.6.4.13**: Across the medieval globe, people depicted the world as they knew it, including maps, luxury goods from local and distant lands, legendary peoples, "new worlds," the "known world," or even of the universe. World map from the *Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes*, Egypt, 1020–50 CE / 410–41 AH (Oxford, **Bodleian Library**, Ms. Arab c.90)

Maps are another focus of the new publication. Like manuscripts, maps present world views, including views of self and others; they also change frequently and are often political.

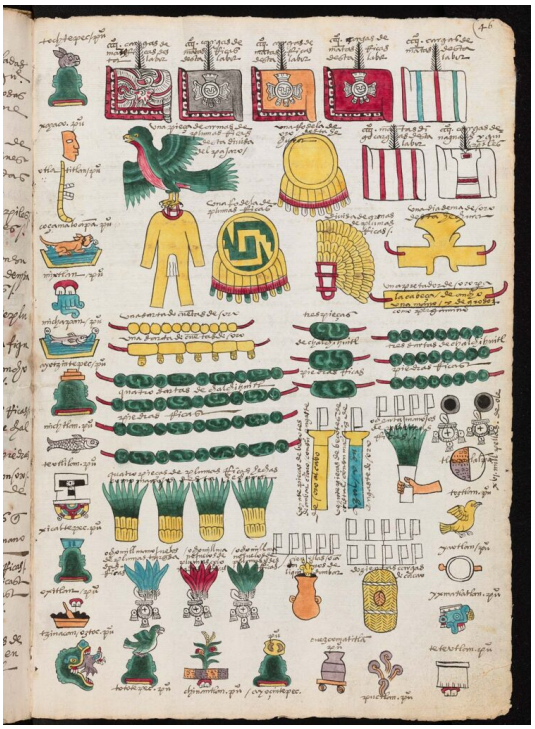


Figure **13.6.4.14**: Codex Mendoza, 1542, possibly Francisco Gualpuyogualcal and Juan Gonzalez (artists), Nahua and Spanish culture, made in Mexico City (Oxford, **Bodleian Library**, Ms. Arch. Selden A.1)

Fascinating parallels emerge when looking at maps across cultures. The 11th-century “Book of Curiosities” from Egypt, for example, describes legendary peoples and creatures that also appear in a 13th-century European compendium of Latin texts. The Ottoman admiral-mapmaker Piri Reis and the Korean scholar Kwon Kun created maps that include portions of the Americas (Brazil and the Aleutian Islands of present-day Alaska, respectively).



Figure **13.6.4.15**: Bestiary, 1277 or after, made in Thérouanne (Flanders), present-day France. Tempera colors, pen and ink, gold leaf, and gold paint on parchment, 9 3/16 × 6 7/16 in. (The J. Paul Getty Museum, **Ms. Ludwig XV 4**, 83.MR.174, fol. 120)

Mapping can also take many forms. On the **Shoshone-Bannock Map Rock** in Idaho, for example, Indigenous mapmakers charted astrological and geographic information onto the surface of rocks. The 1542 Codex Mendoza features **a Nahua map of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan** and visualizes the tribute from the provinces as luxury items of jade and feathers.



Figure **13.6.4.16**: Piri Reis world map (detail), Isbantul 1513 CE / AH 919 (Istanbul, Topkapi Sarayi Museum, No. H 1824)

Through these and many other examples of maps, manuscripts, and related book arts, *Toward a Global Middle Ages* demonstrates that geographic and cultural boundaries were and are porous, fluid, and permeable.

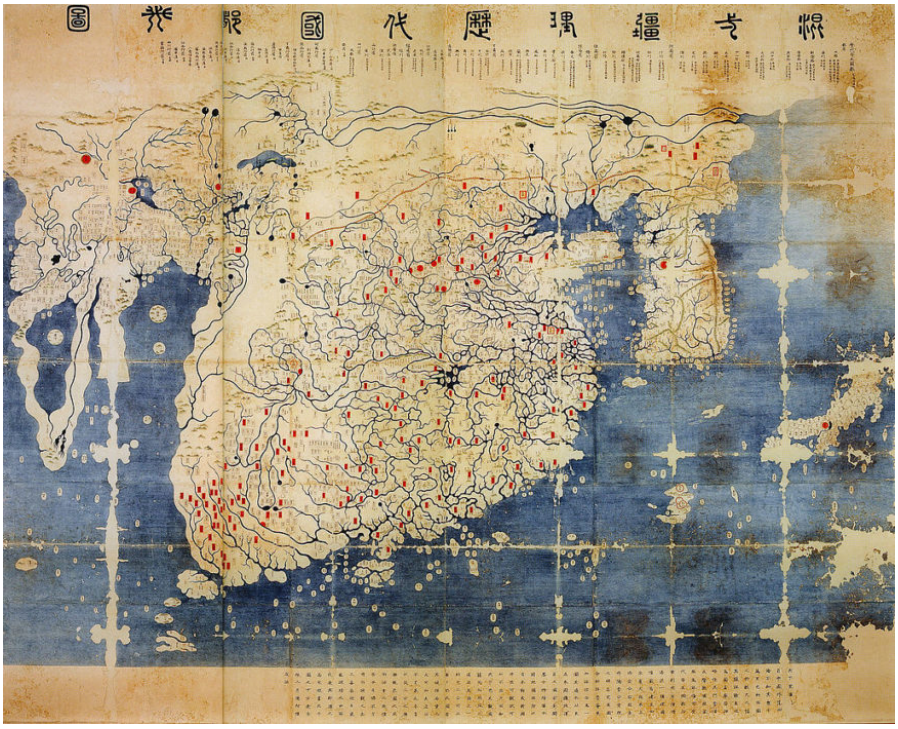


Figure **13.6.4.17**: Kangnido Map, 1402, copy from the late 15th century (Honkoo-ji Tokiwa Museum of Historcal Materials, Shimabara, Nagasaki prefecture, Japan)

My co-authors and I hope this new book contributes to the vibrant conversations about a global Middle Ages, and to the role of manuscripts and visual culture in these conversations. I welcome comments and questions about the book and its themes, and particularly hope it can be of use to instructors and students—see the resource list below, prepared with research and classroom use in mind.



Figure 13.6.4.18: Map Rock Petroglyph, Shoshone-Bannock People, Givens Hot Springs, Canyon County, southwestern Idaho, 1054 or later (photo: Rosemarie Ann and Kenneth D. Keene)

This essay first appeared on ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0).

Additional resources

Download a resource list for *Toward a Global Middle Ages*, including the table of contents, related Getty online resources, and a list of manuscripts and books discussed in the book.

Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts, ed. Bryan C. Keene (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019)

Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen, "Introduction: Towards a Global Middle Ages," *Past & Present*, vol. 238 (November 2018), pp. 1–44

Visions of Paradise in a Global Middle Ages

by DR. BRYAN C. KEENE



Figure 13.6.4.19: *Krishna Uprooting the Parijata Tree* from a *Bhagavata Purana* manuscript, 1525–50, made in Delhi region or Rajasthan, India, opaque watercolor and ink on paper, 7 1/4 × 9 1/2 inches (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.72.1.26, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA)

The word “paradise” often describes an idyllic place of unmatched beauty, but it can also refer to a mindset of harmony and bliss. Several world religions share these conceptions of paradise, but the paths for locating it—whether in a physical environment, a metaphysical realm like heaven, or a state of transcendence—have varied greatly. The image above shows the blue-skinned Hindu deity Krishna (an incarnation of Vishnu, “the preserver”) transplanting the sacred *parijata* tree from heaven. He carries the plant to earth along with his wife Satyabhama, who ride together atop an eagle-like mythical being called Garuda. At right, the many-eyed god Indra and his consort witness the event.

The exhibition **Pathways to Paradise: Medieval India and Europe** (2018) presented a selection of illuminated manuscripts and luxury objects from Asia, Africa, and Europe that communicate the spiritual quests of individuals who sought sacred groves, providential gems, and guides to enlightenment. This essay introduces several of the objects from the exhibition.

A Global Middle Ages



Figure 13.6.4.20: Text Pages from a Qur’an (Surah 6:109-111), ninth century (third century AH), made in North Africa. Pen and ink, gold paint, and tempera colors, 5 11/16 × 8 3/16 in. (each leaf) (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig X 1 (83.MM.118), fols. 5v-6)

The majority of the manuscripts in the Getty's collection were produced in Western Europe from the ninth through the sixteenth century, with additional examples from important centers of the Byzantine world (the Eastern Roman Empire), Armenia, Ethiopia, and elsewhere. Exhibitions allow us to expand the traditional narratives about a European Middle Ages to consider a global Middle Ages of trasnational connections. By doing so, our holdings of a ninth-century Qur'an from Tunisia (above), a silk veil in a thirteenth-century Byzantine Gospel book, and a page from a fifteenth-century Gospel book from Ethiopia (both below) find new relationships alongside leaves from Buddhist manuscripts on loan from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art—all of which include areas painted or dyed with the blue pigment indigo, which was largely sourced in India at the time.



Figure 13.6.4.21: The Ascension in a Gospel book, with silk veil (top) used to protect the sacred image, early and late 13th century, made in Nicea or Nicomedia, Turkey. Tempera colors and gold leaf on parchment, 8 1/8 × 5 7/8 in. **The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig II 5 (83.MB.69)**, fol. 188. Saint John from a Gospel book, late fourteenth–early fifteenth century, made in Ethiopia. Tempera colors on parchment, 13 1/4 × 9 3/16 inches (**The J. Paul Getty Museum, gift of Sam Fogg, Ms. 89 (2005.3)**, verso).

Empires in the Indian subcontinent, the Hindu Kush, and the Tibetan or Himalayan Plateau shared intertwined histories with principalities to the west, from the Greeks and Romans to the Persianate, Christian, and Islamic kingdoms of Central Asia or East Africa. Similarly, peoples throughout Europe and the Mediterranean had contact with and developed imagined ideas about the land of India—its peoples, religions, and natural wonders—since ancient times. Art from Gandhara (present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan), for example, combined elements from Greece, Rome, Persia, and local traditions, demonstrating the long history of contact at this crossroads of civilizations.



Figure **13.6.4.22**: Buddha Shakyamuni (detail) from a *Paramartha Namasangiti* manuscript, about 1200, made in Nepal. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 3 × 10 7/8 in. (full sheet) (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Peter Smoot in memory of Herbert R. Cole, M.83.7.1)**

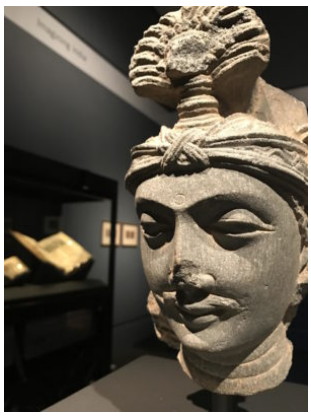


Figure **13.6.4.23**: Head of a Bodhisattva, third century, made in Gandhara. Schist, 9 in. high. **(The J. Paul Getty Museum, Gift of Dr. Sidney and Idelle Port, 83.AJ.390**)

In the exhibition, a beautifully carved Gandharan head of a bodhisattva—an enlightened follower of the Buddha who helps others reach Nirvana (release from cycles of desire and suffering)—greets visitors upon entering the gallery. A mostly complete **statue from the Norton Simon Museum** gives a sense of the various cultural influences (the bodhisattva Maitreya wears a Greco-Roman style toga), and **a relief from LACMA** shows Buddha Shakyamuni seated near a Corinthian column, another instance of Roman inspiration.

The Middle Ages (about 500–1500) witnessed increased movement between Europe, Byzantium, the Islamic world, and India. One of the historical figures whose legacy links these cultures is Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.), whose military campaigns took him from Macedonia to Northwest India. This range explains some of the transculturation in art from regions like Gandhara. Few contemporary accounts survive about the Macedonian world ruler, but classical and medieval writers in Europe, Central Asia, and India preserved his memory through histories, chronicles, and romances.

Rudolf von Ems (about 1200–1254) based this German World Chronicle on Roman sources, which cast Alexander as an ideal ruler from “the East.” According to the text, Alexander sought the mythical earthly paradise during his military campaigns across Asia. On one journey, an elderly man presented the ruler with a precious gem said to be from paradise, which weighed more than any

other jewel. When the stone was ground into a powder, it became light and worthless. The message to Alexander was that his reign would be great in life but forgotten in death, a paradox given his enduring fame today.



Figure 13.6.4.24: Left: Alexander the Great Has the Stone of Paradise Weighed from Rudolf von Ems's *World Chronicle*, about 1400–10, made in Regensburg, Bavaria. Tempera colors, gold, silver paint, and ink on parchment,13 3/16 × 9 1/4 in. **(The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 33, 88.MP.70)**, fol. 219; right: Iskandar Finds Khizar and Ilyas at the Fountain of Immortality from Nizami's *Khamza*, 1485–95, made in Shiraz, Iran. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 8 7/8 x 6 inches (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky, M.73.5.590)**

The cross-cultural legacy of Alexander the Great is also present in a fifteenth century Persian text from Iran called the Khamsa of Nizami (1141–1209). Following military campaigns in Eastern Africa, India, and China, the world-ruler Iskandar (Persian for Alexander the Great) began a journey to find the Fountain of Immortality. Nizami wrote that the magical youth-granting waters flowed from the North Pole. The prophets Khizar and Ilyas guide Iskandar through a place called the Land of Gloom or Darkness but they also conceal the stream of the Fountain. The rich traditions for illuminated manuscripts about Alexander/Iskandar connected distant regions of Eurasia from ancient to Early Modern times, especially episodes about his more fantastic exploits or encounters, such as his journeys under the sea or into the sky.



Figure **13.6.4.25**: Portolan Chart, 1516, Vesconte Maggiolo, made in Naples. Parchment, 102 x 152 cm. (**The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California, HM 427)**

A nearly-five-foot-long map designed by cartographer Vesconte Maggiolo (1478–1530) in 1516 provides a point of connection. From India and Central Asia in the East to the Caribbean and the Americas to the West, the map presents an extensive view of the world as understood by a man living in Naples in the early sixteenth century (**explore a high-resolution version of the map here**).



Figure **13.6.4.26**: Schematic diagram of the Portolan Chart showing its position on a world map (credit: Jennifer Minasian)

Across Afro-Eurasia, Vesconte Maggiolo depicted tents and enthroned rulers to mark the major kingdoms known to him, including Morocco, France, and Persia. Multicolored islands indicate fabled sites of gem mining, silk production, and the spice trade, all of which derive from a long literary and visual tradition in the Mediterranean. A roundel of the Virgin and Child, situated in the Atlantic Ocean near several ships returning to Europe, suggests the missionary and mercantile agendas of the period.



Figure **13.6.4.27**: Details of Portolan Chart showing the Virgin and Child in the Atlantic with ships, and the Kingdom of Prester John and the Garden of Eden (**The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California, HM 427)**

On the map, the earthly paradise known as the Garden of Eden emerges in the kingdom of Prester John, a mythical Christian king shown here in Africa (in the vicinity of Ethiopia) but who was also associated with India or lands farther east. The biblical book of Genesis describes the paradisiacal garden at the source of four rivers: the Pison (possibly in Syria), the Gihon (said to be in Ethiopia), and the Tigris and Euphrates (in ancient Mesopotamia, primarily in present-day Iraq). The artist of a devotional manuscript made in East Anglia, England labeled the rivers and showed them surging forth from a walled orchard where God placed Adam and Eve.



Figure **13.6.4.28**: The Garden of Eden in an illustrated Vita Christi with devotional supplements, about 1490, made in East Anglia, England (**The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 101, 2008.3)**, fols. 7v–8.

The Dominican writer Vincent of Beauvais (1184–1264) wrote a comprehensive world history that began with the biblical creation story and extended to the year 1254. He derived his knowledge of the East from a range of sources, including the Roman author Solonius (third century) and the Franciscan missionary John of Plano Carpini (about 1185–1252). Accordingly, Vincent of Beauvais locates the Garden of Eden not in Ethiopia but beyond the land of India and the Island of Taprobane (Sri Lanka). In other words, paradise was a place that was virtually inaccessible in the spatial imagination of sedentary writers, readers, and viewers in Europe.



Figure **13.6.4.29**: The Angel of Paradise with a Sword and The Land of India in Vincent of Beauvais's *Mirror of History*, Ghent, about 1475. Tempera colors, gold leaf, and gold paint on parchment, 17 1/4 × 12 inches (**The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XII 5, 83.MP.148)**, vol. 1, fols. 54v–55.



Figure **13.6.4.30**: The Angel of Paradise with a Sword (detail) in Vincent of Beauvais's *Mirror of History*, about 1475, made in Ghent. Tempera colors, gold leaf, and gold paint on parchment, 17 1/4 × 12 in. **The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XII 5 (83.MP.148)**, vol. 1, fol. 54v.

Based on the descriptions in the text, the illuminator rendered an elephant, a griffin, and blue-skinned people wearing indigo-dyed clothing. Additionally, the author mentions exports from East Asia that include spices and ivory, as well as gems believed to come from the rivers of paradise (the detail shows purple, red, and green jewels within one of the rivulets). The relationship between gems and India is a theme explored in the exhibition through a range of objects produced from the Rhine-Meuse region in Europe to Jammu and Kashmir in India.

Infinite Gems: The Auspicious Çintemani

People, manuscripts, and luxury items moved with considerable frequency throughout the premodern world. An ivory plaque (middle row, below, second from left), for example, likely came from the tusk of an African elephant, and once carved, it adorned the cover of a Gospel book from Central Europe. The colored glass pieces were likely meant to simulate rubies and emeralds, precious gemstones often sourced from Central Asia and India, and which symbolically referred to descriptions of Heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation.

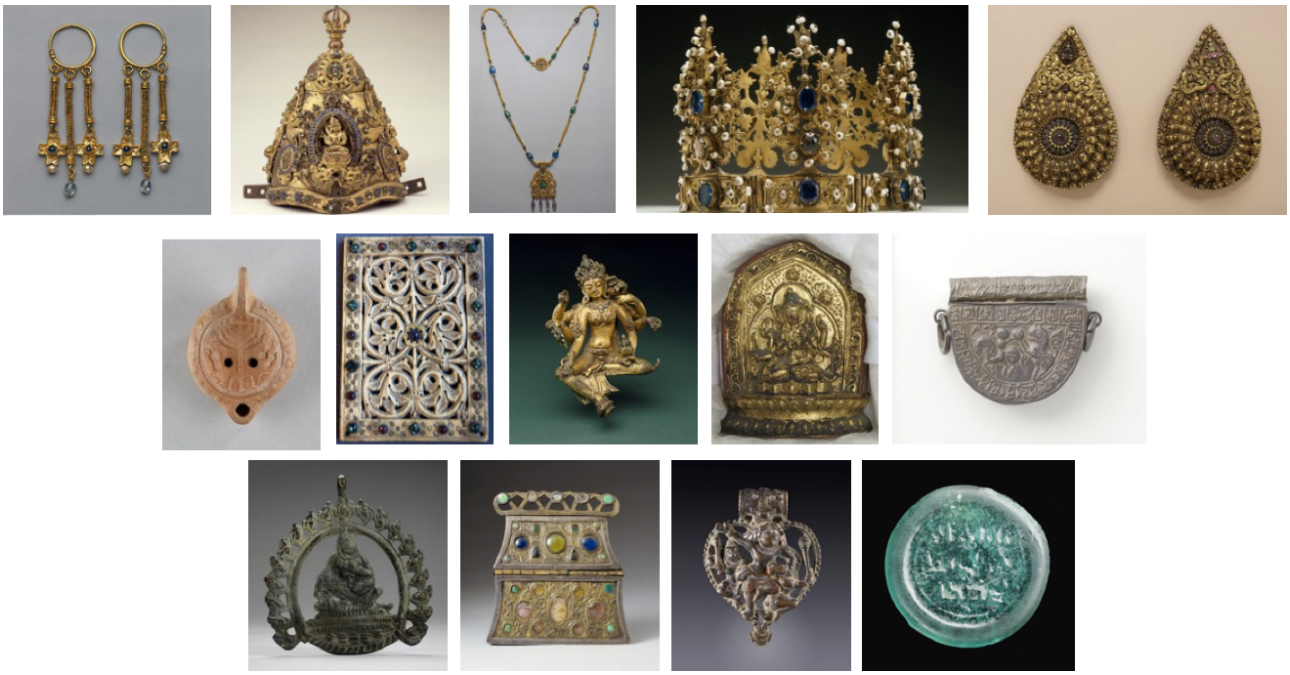


Figure 13.6.4.31: Top row, left to right: Earrings, sixth–seventh century, Byzantine. Ferrell Collection. Ritual Crown, twelfth century, made in Nepal (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of The Ahmanson Foundation, M.81.67). Pendant and Necklace, sixth–seventh century, Byzantine (Ferrell Collection). Articulated Crown, fifteenth century, Bohemia (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of the Judas Collections, M.84.200). Pair of Oversize Earrings for an Image, sixteenth century, made in Tibet (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Helene and Dr. Joseph Pollock, M.89.112.2a-b). Center row, left to right: Lamp, first–fourth century, Roman, made in Asia Minor (The J. Paul Getty Museum, 83.AQ.377.273). Ivory Plaque from the binding of a Carolingian lectionary (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig IV 1, 83.MD.73). The Buddhist Goddess Vasudhara, twelfth century (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.79.9.5). Center row, fourth from left: The Buddhist Goddess Ushnishavijaya, eigtheenth century, Tibet or China (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Klejman of New York, M.71.26.7). Amulet, eleventh century, made in Iran.(Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Camilla Chandler Frost, M.2002.1.545.a-b). Bottom row, left to right: Pendant with a Siddha, eighth–ninth century, made in Jammu and Kashmir, India (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Daniel Ostroff, AC1999.239.1). Carolingian Burse-Reliquary, eighth century, made in German (The J. Paul Getty Museum, 85.SE.53). Pendant with Narasimha, ninth–tenth century, made in Jammu and Kashmir, India (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by The Smart Family Foundation in memory of Florence Smart Richards, M.91.38). Weight with Arabic Script, ninth–twelfth century, made in Afghanistan (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Neil Kreitman, M.90.175.8)

Other raw materials such as sapphires, turquoise, gold, and silver were especially prized trade goods. Many cultures and religions ascribe magical or healing properties to gems or metals, and these associations often involved ideas about the divine and the afterlife. While some precious goods—such as jewelry, amulets, and reliquaries—were highly portable and therefore had the potential to traverse great distances, other objects—including crowns, oil lamps, and votive statues—could serve local audiences at court, in temples, or in shrines.



Figure **13.6.4.32**: Installation views of the exhibition Pathways to Paradise: Medieval India and Europe showing objects in the section “The Power of Gems and Precious Materials”

Buddhist priests in Nepal, for example, wore crowns shaped to recall the division of the universe into earth, atmosphere, and heaven, a cosmological theme complemented by gem settings. A small gilt copper votive sculpture of the Buddhist goddess Vasudhara, bejeweled with semiprecious stones, holds grain, a waterspout, a gem, and a sacred manuscript, all symbols of paradise and prosperity.

Stories from the life of the Buddha **reached European audiences** through a lengthy process of translation from Sanskrit to Arabic, Georgian, Greek, and eventually Latin and German. Vignettes from the life of the Indian “enlightened one” became part of the hagiography of Christian Saints Josaphat and his spiritual mentor, Barlaam (The name Josaphat derives from the Sanskrit word *bodhisattva*). The author Rudolf von Ems (c. 1200–1254) wrote that an Indian prince called Josaphat meditated beneath a tree after witnessing illness, old age, and death for the first time, having lived his entire life until that point in a palace. In a sacred grove, Josaphat met the Christian missionary and merchant Barlaam, who offered Josaphat a precious gem (known as the *çintemani* in Sanskrit or the *triratna* in Pali).



Figure **13.6.4.33**: Josaphat Speaking to the Merchant Barlaam about the Precious Gem in Rudolf von Ems's *Barlaam and Josaphat*, 1469, follower of Hans Schilling, made in Hagenau, Alsace, ink, colored washes, and tempera colors on paper, 11 1/4 × 8 in. (**The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XV 9, 83.MR.179)**, fol. 43v. *Buddha Shakyamuni* from an *Ashtasarika Prajnaparamita* manuscript, fifteenth century, made in Central Tibet (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal, M.82.60)**

In a thirteenth-century Tibetan *Ashtasarika Prajnaparamita* (The Perfection of Wisdom) manuscript, the *çintemani* design of three dots can be seen in the background of all three pages, as well as on the cloth that extends from the Buddha's throne (at top). The same pattern can be seen on the thirteenth-century Nepalese *Paramartha Namasangiti* manuscript shown above. The concept of a wish-granting or protective jewel originated in Hindu and Buddhist sacred texts, but eventually, the motif became a favorite pattern on luxury textiles throughout the Persian Empire, the Islamic world, East Asia, and Europe. As medievalist Jaroslav Fulda has demonstrated, representations in sculpture can be found on the Sasanian tombs at Naqsh-e Rustam, northwest of Persepolis, Iran, and the textile pattern was represented on garments of holy figures as early as the ninth century in the Book of Kells.

I have also found pictorial depictions of the design in Buddhist paintings from Dunhuang to Tibet, Bihar, and elsewhere. The borders around the *Prajnaparamita* scenes are closely related to cotton and silk textiles from India and the Islamic world, specifically in Persia, suggesting that the çintemani pattern was transmitted by way of the sericulture trade. In the exhibition, a selection of objects highlight these global connections.



Figure **13.6.4.34**: Left: Çintemani Lokeshvara, c. sixteenth century, made in Nepal, wood with paint, 52 1/2 inchess high (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Anna Bing Arnold, M.84.93);** right:Fragment of a Dress or Furnishing Fabric with Çintemani Design, mid-sixteenth century, made in Bursa or Istanbul (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Edwin Binney the 3rd Collection of Turkish Art, M.85.237.1).**

In Nepal, Çintemani Lokesvara is one of the many forms of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who represents compassion. He grasps in one hand the wish-granting gem—the çintemani—and with the other welcomes all devotees, who would have visited the sculpture in a shrine. A fragment of a dress or furnishing fabric with the çintemani design from Bursa or Istanbul is a focus point in the exhibition—the silver metallic threads on gold and crimson silk satin is truly stunning.

With twenty manuscripts, over twenty coins, fifteen luxury objects, three sculptures, and a textile, the exhibition included numerous potential pathways to paradise. I encourage you to reflect on your own ideas about how to achieve a state of absolute perfection in a busy world.

This essay was first published on ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0)

Additional resources:

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom. *Images of Paradise in Islamic Art* (Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College 1991)
Bryan Keene, *Gardens of the Renaissance* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2013)
Bryan Keene, ed. *The World in a Book: Manuscripts and a Global Middle Ages* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019)
Bryan Keene and Morgan Conger, “Sestieri al paradiso: l’India e l’Europa nel Medioevo,” in *Alumina Pagine Miniate*, no. 60 (Jan.-Mar. 2018), pp. 50-57
James McHugh, “The Incense Trees of the Land of Emeralds: The Exotic Material Culture of *Kamasatra*,” in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, no. 39 (2011), pp. 63-100
James McHugh, “Gemstones,” in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen, Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar, Vasudha Narayana (2012)
Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (1985)
Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (1993)
Pratapaditya Pal, *Puja and Piety: Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist Art from the Indian Subcontinent* (2016)
David T Sanford, “Identification of Three Miniatures in the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection,” in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1970), pp. 42–47

Alessandro Scafi, ed. *The Cosmography of Paradise: The Other World from Ancient Mesopotamia to Medieval Europe* (Warburg Institute 2016)

Making the medieval book

For much of the Middle Ages dead cows were the main ingredient for books. What was frolicking in the meadow one month, may have been a page in a Bible the next.

Listening to the medieval book

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.4.3**: Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 1100, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 78 E 59 and *Paris Bible*, mid 13th century, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 132 F 21. Special thanks to Ed van der Vlist, Curator of Medieval Manuscripts, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands.

An introduction to medieval scripts

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.4.4**: Can you tell the difference between Carolingian Minuscule and Gothic script? Watch this video and you'll learn how.

A medieval textbook

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.6.4.5: Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 1100 (The National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague, MS 78 E 59)

Special thanks to Ed van der Vlist, Curator of Medieval Manuscripts, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands.

Parchment (the good, the bad, and the ugly)

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure 13.6.4.35: Constantinus Africanus, *Liber Pantegni*, 11th century, parchment, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 73 J 6

Parchment

For much of the Middle Ages dead cows were the main ingredient for books. What was frolicking in the meadow one month, may have been a page in a Bible the next. The skin of animals (calves, goats, sheep) was turned into parchment, which was subsequently cut into sheets. Parchment was introduced in late antiquity, when the codex (a book made of double leaves), was born and started to replace the papyrus scroll.

There is a lot you can tell from medieval skin. Like a physician today, the book historian can make a diagnosis by observing it carefully. The quality of parchment sheets varied considerably. Like people today, not all medieval creatures had perfect skin. Some cows loved to rub against trees while others were particularly prone to insect bites. We can still see these defects today, which appear as tiny holes, gaps or dark patches as we read Saint Jerome or Chaucer.



Figure **13.6.4.36**: An example of high-quality parchment. *Paris Bible*, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 132 F 21, mid 13th century

The quality of the page also had a lot to do with preparation. A scribe producing a book for his own library may be less attentive than one that worked in a monastic community. The best sheets have a deep-white color, with a hint of yellow. They feel like velvet and make a slight rustling sound when you turn the page—suspenseful whispers that teased the reader (image above). Bad skin, by contrast, crackles. It is of uneven thickness, and shows staining and a variety of colors (image below). Unlike what you may have thought, looking at imperfect skin is far more interesting than studying its perfect counterpart. This is because a defect tells a powerful story, shedding light on the book's production and providing clues about its use and storage post-production.

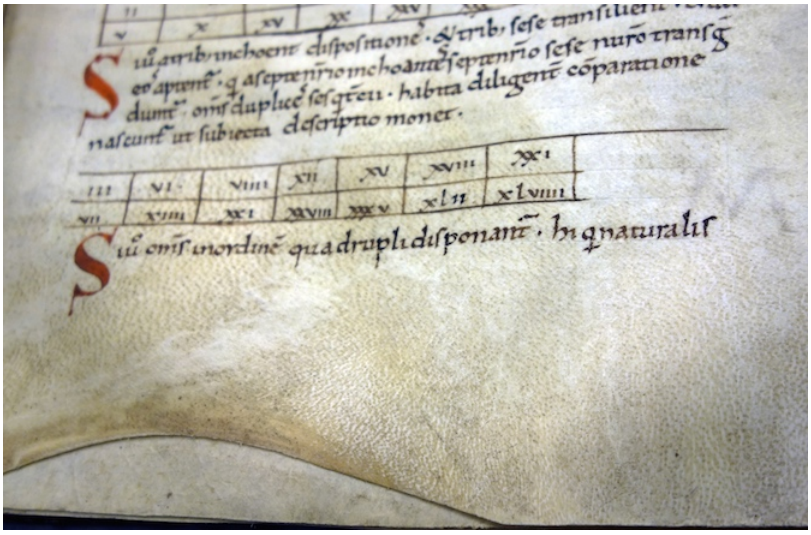


Figure **13.6.4.37**: Detail showing hair follicles, the uneven edge of the animal skin and uneven coloring on the parchment from a book likely used in monastic education: Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 78 E 59, c. 1100



Figure **13.6.4.38**: A cut, accidentally left there by the medieval parchment maker when he scraped the hairs off the processed skin. The hole contains some white hairs from the cow who "donated" his skin for the production of this book. Leiden, University Library, BUR MS Q 1, c. 1100 (photo: Erik Kwakkel)



Figure **13.6.4.38**: "Through-view" of an animal head initial. Eastern France, the first third of the ninth century (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc.Nat. MS 1, fol. 25v and 26v).

Medieval craftsmen were well aware of the varying quality of animal skins, which they used as the basis for their books. However, calves, sheep or goats that had given up their livelihood and skin for the sake of medieval readers were not always to blame—and neither were the scribes. The most common imperfections are holes produced by the knife of the parchment maker.

Preparing parchment was a delicate business. In order to clear the skin of flesh and hair, it was attached to a wooden frame, tight like a drum. If the round knife of the parchment maker (the lunellum) cut too deep during this scraping process, elongated rips or holes would appear. A small puncture easily became a gaping hole. The art of preparing animal skin was to apply just the right amount of pressure.

However, readers did not seem to mind the holes too much and scribes usually just wrote around them, or they repaired them. Sometimes the reader is given an unexpected sneak peek onto the next page—where a dragon may just be introduced into the story (as in the image above).



Figure 13.6.4.39: A tear repaired through sewing, leaving a “snake” pattern across the page. Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 25, 11th century

The jabs of parchment makers—and the resulting holes—were sometimes stitched together. The image above shows a former rip (a long one) snaking across the page: the scribe has stitched it up like a patient in post-op.

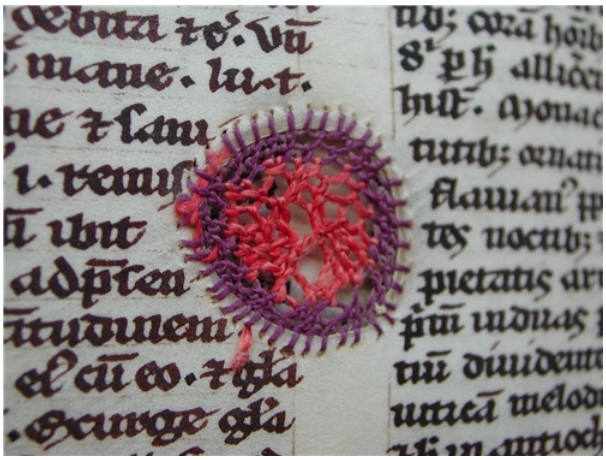


Figure 13.6.4.40: A hole in the page is filled with embroidery by the nuns who owned the manuscript. Uppsala, University Library, Shelfmark unknown (14th century)—source

Repairing holes was sometimes done more eloquently. In the manuscript above, the hole is not made to disappear, but it is highlighted by colored threads. In some monastic communities this must have been common practice, given that they repaired a lot of books with such “embroidery.” The practice turned defect into art: good-looking bad skin.

Hair follicles



Figure **13.6.4.41**: A follicle pattern with such pronounced “dots” that the scribe felt compelled to write around them. Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 191 A, 12th century (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Another skin problem encountered by scribes during a book’s production was the animal’s hair follicle—the skin organ that produces hair (seen above). These follicles show as pronounced black dots on the white page. Often parchment makers or scribes were able to sand them away, producing the desired smooth and cream-colored surface. However, if the follicles had been too deep in a calf or sheep, no dermatologist could have removed the imperfection, let alone the blunt instruments of the scribe. The only thing to do was to write around the patch. The follicles are helpful because they allow us to determine— from the distance between them—whether the animal was a calf, a sheep or a goat. This, in turn, may shed light on where the manuscript was produced: the use of goat, for example, often points to Italy.

The transition to paper

In the 12th century another material appeared in Europe: paper. Imported from Arabic culture, it was first exclusively used for documentary purposes, such as account books and letters. In a remarkable shift of scribal practices, in the fourteenth century scribes all over Europe started to use paper for manuscripts. Conservative scribes, such as monks, ignored the new material for some time, while others—especially those who wanted to economize—embraced it. Paper and parchment were used for all sorts of manuscripts, from chunky volumes to small portable books.

Additional resources:

Making parchment (BBC video)

Making Manuscripts: The Page

by DR. KATHLEEN DOYLE AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY



Video 13.6.4.6: How did scribes prepare their pages for writing? Patricia Lovett examines the tools for ruling and line marking in medieval books.

Skins and scraps

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

Leftovers (*schedulae*)

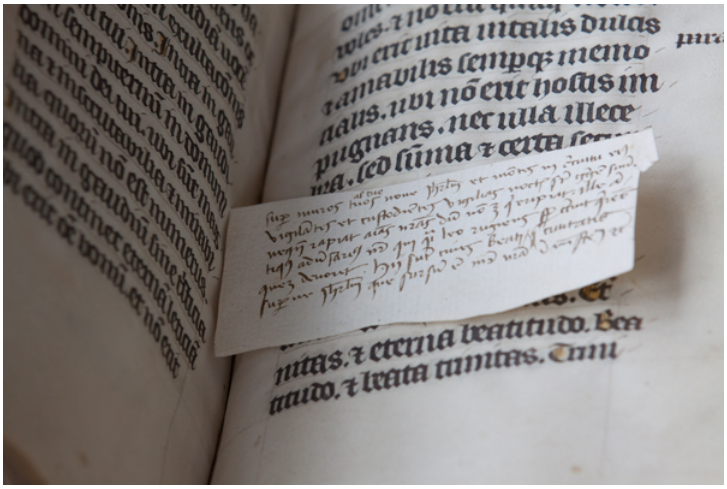


Figure 13.6.4.42: Tiny slip of parchment, likely made from scrap material, inserted to add notes to the text, *Schedula*, Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 139, 15th century (photo: Giulio Menna)

When the scribe cut sheets out of the animal hide, he would normally use the best part of the skin—what may be called the "prime cut." This meant staying clear of the very edge of the skin because these areas were very thin and translucent, and deemed unsuitable for books. The scribe therefore cut a rim of parchment from the edge of the skin. It usually came off in tiny bits and pieces, which he called *schedulae*—strips. These odds and ends were thrown in the bin. Sometimes they were taken out to be used as scraps, for example for taking notes in the classroom or for smaller pages inserted into existing manuscripts (see image above). These tiny pages supplemented the text or added notes, like our yellow sticky notes today.

Layers (palimpsest)

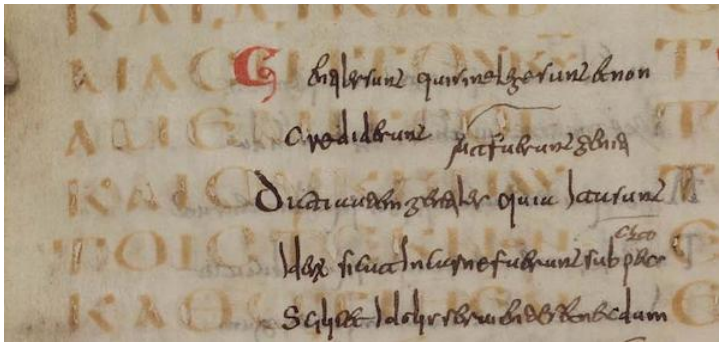


Figure **13.6.4.43**: An example of a palimpsest, Codex Guelferbytanus A, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS Lc 1, 6-13, fol. 90v, 6th century (lower text)

What to do when you run out of parchment as a medieval scribe? You can look around for something else to write on, such as left-over parchment strips in the bin (*schedulae*), or use paper, if it is available. Alternatively, you can take a book that is no longer used from your monastery's library and scrape the text off its pages. You then simply apply text of your own. Such recycling resulted in a "palimpsest," which holds a removed "lower text" and a newer "upper text." The ink of the reapplied text often does not stick to the page very well, as is clearly seen in the image. Moreover, the older reading often shines through. Especially important are palimpsests from the earlier Middle Ages, because underneath this old text an even older work is buried, like a stowaway. With digital photography the lower text can sometimes be made visible again, which makes studying these books like digging for treasure.

Post-production



Figure **13.6.4.44**: Scribe purchasing parchment, Hamburg Bible, 1255 (Copenhagen, Royal Library. MS 4, 2o) f. 183v.

Bad skin may also tell us something about the individuals who owned, read and stored manuscripts. The presence of holes and rips may for example indicate the cost of the materials. Studies suggest that parchment was sold in four different grades, which implies that sheets with and without visible deficiencies may have been sold at different rates. If this was indeed the case, an abundance of elongated holes in a manuscript may just point at an attempt to economize on the cost of the writing support. In other words, bad skin may have come at a good price.

Parchment provides other information about readers as well, for example that he or she stored a book in an unsuitable location. Damp places, for one, would leave a mark on the manuscript's skin, as is clearly seen in a manuscript I sometimes call the "Moldy Psalter"—for moldy it is.



Figure 13.6.4.45: Mold has attacked these pages and turned them purple, in an almost beautiful way. Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 2896, 12th century (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

On nearly every page the top corner shows a purple rash from the mold that once attacked the skin. It is currently safe and the mold is gone, but the purple stains show just how dangerously close the book came to destruction—some corners have actually been eaten away. Similarly, if a book was stored without the proper pressure produced by a closed binding, for example because the clasp was missing, the parchment would buckle and produce “waves” on the page.

Apart from such attacks by mother nature, a manuscript could also be scarred for life by the hand of men—those evil users of books. Well known are cases where scribes and readers erased text with a knife, either because the reading was wrong or because they disagreed with it. However, in the wrong hands a knife could easily have a more severe impact on the book’s skin. All those shiny letters on the medieval page were too much for some beholders. The individual that gazed at the golden letters in the manuscript shown below used his knife to remove some of them.



Figure 13.6.4.46: The golden letters in this manuscript were stolen by a thief in the past, who cut them out with a knife. Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 59, 14th century (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

While the velvety softness of perfect skin can be quite appealing to handle, getting to know imperfect parchment is ultimately more interesting and rewarding. Damage is telling, and it may shed light on such things as the attitude of scribes (who did not necessarily mind holes on the page), the manner in which a book was stored by its owner (with a missing clasp or in a wet environment), and even the state of mind of those looking at it (“Must cut out golden letters!”). As a book historian it feels good to work with bad skin.

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure 13.6.4.47: Into a letter P: St Paul at the desk with ruled quire, writing, *Hamburg Bible*, 1255, Denmark, The Royal Library, MS GKS 4 2°, vol. III, f. 125r

Get set!

Before a single word flowed from his pen, the scribe needed to prepare the page. Whether he had opted for parchment or paper, the sheets were completely blank to start with. So, he first needed to think about a sensible layout, carefully considering his options. Did the text he was about to copy carry certain conventions? Was it, for example, a book that was to contain glosses (notes), or was it made for portable use? Preparing the page was a labor-intensive process, especially when the scribe had opted for a complex layout, with multiple columns and glosses. It was important to get it right since a messy layout would produce a messy book.

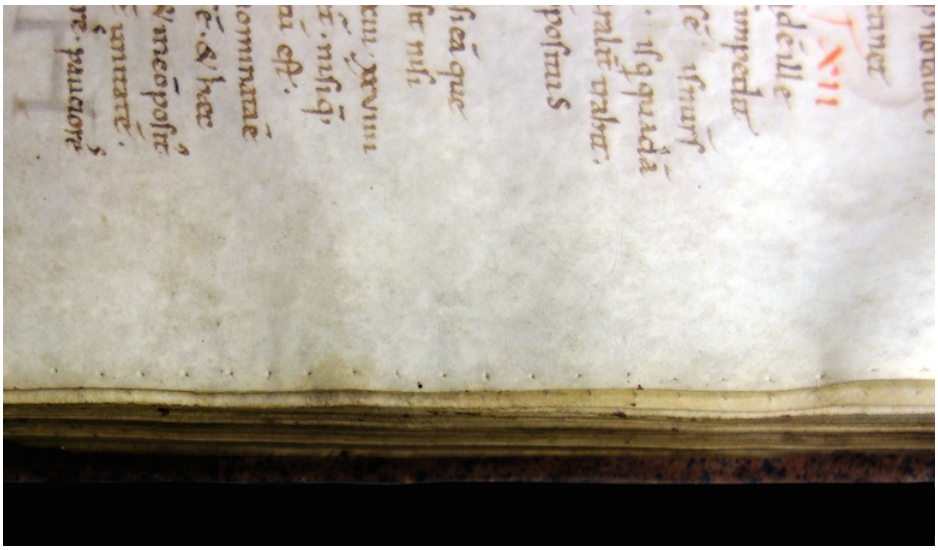


Figure 13.6.4.48: Prickings at the parchment edge used to create a ruled page. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, c. 1100, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 78 E 59

Rules

Unlike our notebooks today, medieval paper and parchment sheets did not come with ruled lines when you purchased them. A medieval page consisted of both horizontal and vertical ruling. To add these guiding lines to the blank page, the scribe would prick tiny holes in the outer margins, as well as in the upper and lower ones. Lines were then drawn between these holes, usually with the help of a ruler: horizontal lines to guide the space between each line of text, and vertical lines to confine the left and right side of the textblock.

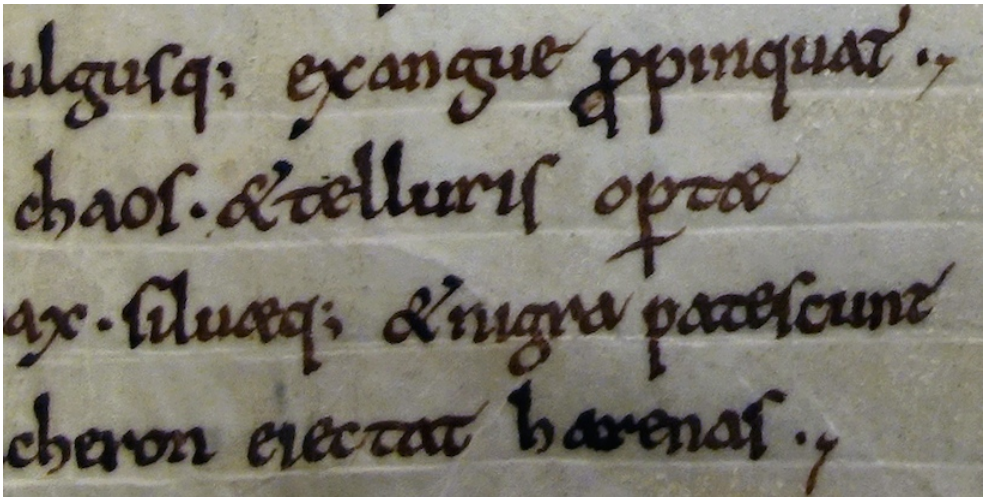


Figure 13.6.4.49: Blind rules created with a hard point (detail), Statius, *Thebais*, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 128 A 38, c. 1100

Until the early twelfth century the ruling was done by pressing down on the parchment with a sharp object (a “hard point”), producing a “gutter” that would guide the scribe’s pen. In the twelfth century this type of ruling was replaced by drawing lines with a pencil (called a “plummet”), which left more visible traces on the surface of the page. From the thirteenth century a pen was used as well. Because of all these horizontal and vertical lines, if a layout was very complex, the ruling pattern may appear as a true cobweb.

Puzzles

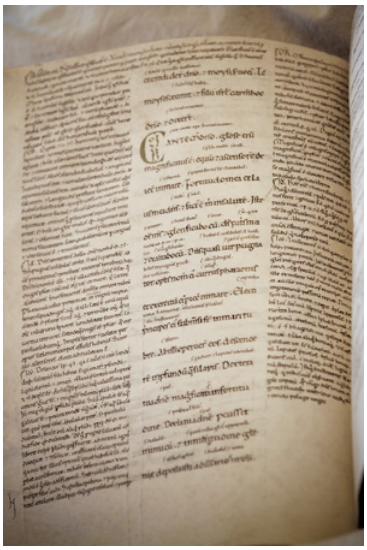


Figure 13.6.4.50: Leiden, University Library, VLQ MS 104, Glossed Bible (photo: Giulio Menna)

How a page was designed depended on a variety of factors, including the number of required text columns, the space left blank for decoration, and the presence of marginal glosses and running titles. The most basic layout consisted of a single column of text. They are frequently encountered in Books of Hours (books made for use in private devotion), because these are commonly smaller books, which facilitated portability. Bigger books of two or more columns often required more work in the design stage, especially if that book also featured a marginal commentary. Particularly challenging were those cases where the commentary was of unequal length. This meant that the scribe had to design each page separately. Piecing together the segments of main text and commentary (see image) was like solving a puzzle.



Figure 13.6.4.51: Quire consisting of 5 bifolia (source: Fitzwilliam Museum)

As with our modern books, medieval manuscripts consist of quires**,** small packages of folded leaves. Scribes often produced the quires themselves, but it also appears that they used prefabricated quires bought in a shop. The scribe would copy the text onto the pages of the quire, which would later be bound together to form the completed manuscript. To make sure that each finished quire ended up in the correct order, the scribe often wrote the first words of the next quire in the lower margin of the last page he copied. These are called “catchwords.”



Figure 13.6.4.52: A dog decorating a catchword at the bottom of a medieval page, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Misc. MS 110, fol. 17v, c. 1400

If the catchword at the end of the quire matched the first word on the next quire, then they were in the correct sequence. To help binders put the quires in the right order, scribes would also number them. In the later Middle Ages, further organization was added to the page by also numbering the individual bifolia, so as to keep track of their specific location within the quire. In spite of all this emphasis on location, from time to time binders still jumbled up the sequence.

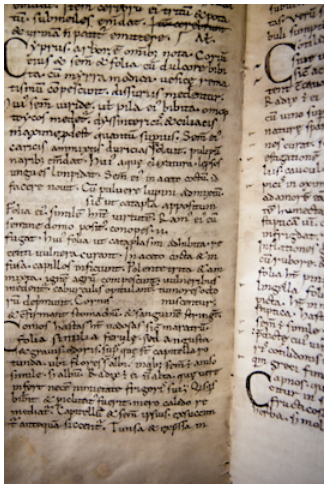


Figure 13.6.4.53: Leiden, University Library, VLQ MS 1, 11th century (photo: Giulio Menna)

Bundling sheets

Quires are usually made from bifolia (singular: bifolium) or double-sheets of parchment or paper. To create a bifolium, a sheet is folded in half (each half is called a “folium,” which consists of two pages, i.e. the front and back of the folium). If the quire is the

building block of the medieval book, the bifolium is what defines the quire: four, five or six of them were bundled up and subsequently filled with text.

Looking closely at the binding of the book, each bifolium appears to embrace its neighbor, bonding together to produce a strong quire. Before roughly 1200, bifolia were usually cut from processed animal skins, each of which usually supplied usually one to four double-sheets. They were either cut from the skin, or the skin was simply folded, either once (folio), twice (quarto), or three times (octavo). Paper double-sheets were exclusively produced by folding the full sheet.

Irregularities



Figure **13.6.4.54**: Quires bound together, Irenaeus of Lyons, Leiden, University Library, MS VLF 33, 1300-1350 (photo: Giulio Menna)

Quires form the building blocks of the manuscript. How many bifolia the scribe bundled together often depended on his or her location. Book producers in England, for example, are known to have regularly produced quires of six bifolia, while scribes on the continent typically preferred quires of four bifolia. Some quires are irregular. An extra folium could be added (called a singleton) or a leaf could be cut out. Such instances of irregularity are of great interest to book historians, because they may suggest that the original composition was expanded by the scribe (for which an extra folium was needed) or because a blank folium was removed at a later stage, for example because it came in handy for taking notes.

Additional resources:

The making of a medieval manuscript (interactive from the Fitzwilliam Museum)

Words, words, words: medieval handwriting

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure 13.6.4.55: Jean le Tavernier, *Portrait of Jean Miélot in his workshop*, after 1456, Miracles de Notre Dame, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 9198

The hard work of the scribe

> ***"The fingers write, but the whole body suffers," (medieval saying)***

Parchment makers prepared skins, scribes cut their pens and filled their ink pots, and binders packed their workshops with leather and wood. All these activities would be in vain were it not for the single event that sparked them: copying words.

Writing a medieval text with a quill is hard work. The pen could only make a more or less downward movement because of how the nib was cut. It meant that letters had to be broken up into multiple pen strokes. This made writing a very slow process: a Bible could easily take a year to complete. A scribe's handwriting—script—can tell us where and when he was trained to write. Script tells us these things because the shape of letters was constantly changing—script is thus an important historical tool that helps to place stories and information into their proper cultural-historical setting.

What you can learn from medieval script

Medieval script—the handwriting of the scribe—is the material representation of a text. An author may have composed the text, producing the original thought, poem or story, but it was often the scribe who put these words on the page. Much rides on how he did this. If he was inexperienced, it may be difficult to decipher his writing. If he was sloppy, the wrong words may appear on the page, or the right ones in the wrong order. The handwriting of scribes varied considerably. Not only did individual scribes vary their individual letter forms, as we still do today, but style of medieval script often depended on when and where it was written. This makes script extremely useful for book historians: the producer of a manuscript may tell us, between the lines, where and when he made the book. "My maker is from Germany," a letter or abbreviation may for example say. From time to time scribes would even say so explicitly, in a colophon at the end of the book.

The main book script of the Middle Ages: Caroline Minuscule

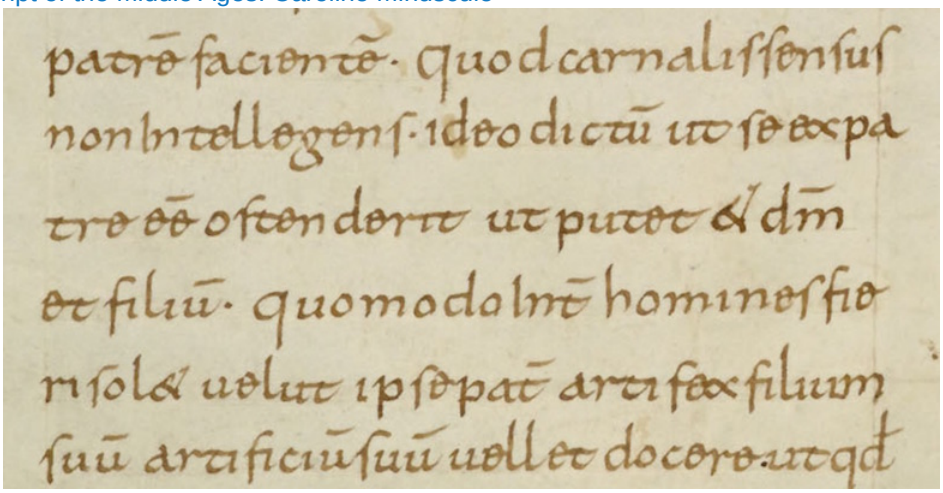


Figure **13.6.4.56**: Carolingian script (detail), Liberatus of Carthage, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 75 B 24, fol. 4r, 10th century

Caroline Minuscule is the primary script of the early Middle Ages. Created in the late eighth century, it became the main book script in the empire of Charlemagne. It is an elegant script with a particularly round and spacious appearance Because Charlemagne had conquered a vast amount of territory during his reign, he found himself with an empire of many cultures, each with its own style of handwriting. A cohesive and unifying script was needed if his administration was to function properly. Caroline Minuscule looks familiar to our modern eyes because producers of typeface working for early Italian printers used it as a model. In fact, the ubiquitous default font "Times Roman" on our computers is also based on Caroline Minuscule.

The transition to Gothic script

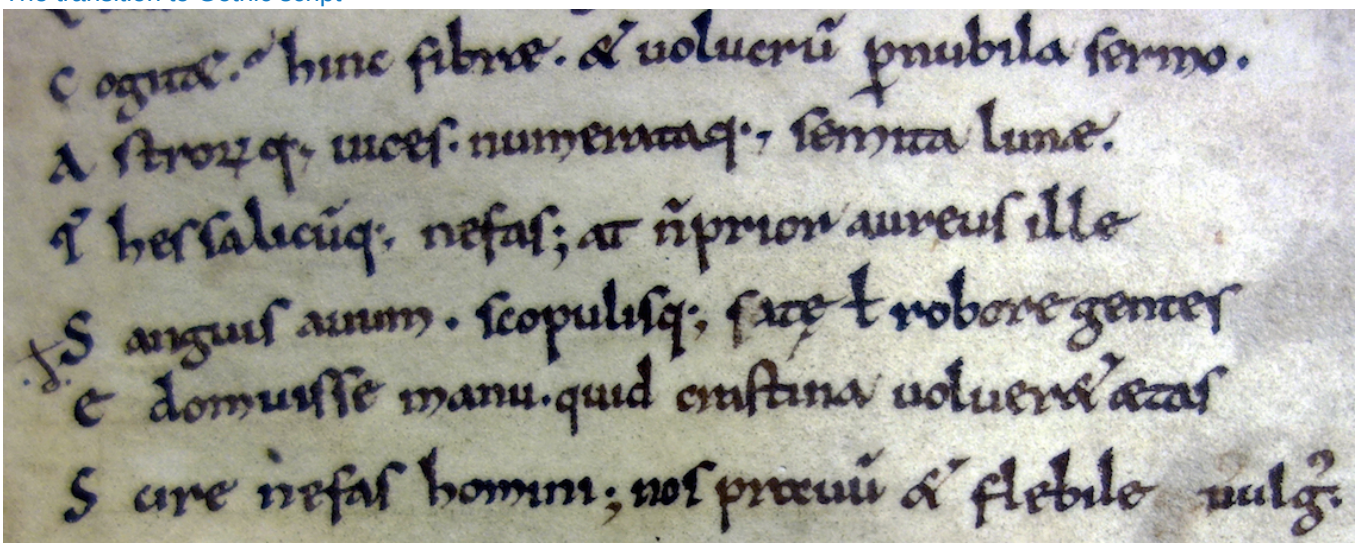


Figure **13.6.4.57**: A transitional script, where some letters retain the form of the Caroline Minuscule, and some begin to show features of Gothic script. Statius, *Thebais*, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 128 A 38, c. 1100

From the middle of the eleventh century Caroline Minuscule, the dominant book script at that time, started to include new letter forms. By 1100 the number of letter transformations had grown to such an extent that the script looked different from Caroline. Slowly the script evolved into what may be regarded as the second major book script of the Middle Ages: Gothic (used from c. 1225). Where Caroline was a unifying script, the transitional script of "The Long Twelfth Century" (1075-1225) divided Europe in distinct regions. Scribes in Europe adopted the new, hybrid writing form at different speeds, while they also varied the actual appearance of certain letter forms. Scribes in Germany, for example, were far more conservative than their peers in France and England.

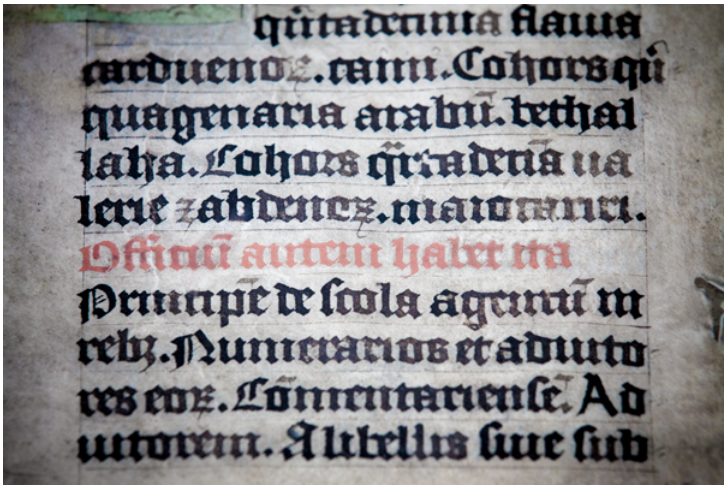


Figure **13.6.4.58**: Leiden, University Library, LTK MS 576, 15th century (photo: Giulio Menna)

Books written between 1250 and 1600 were copied in a variety of Gothic scripts, some of which sport very different features. On the one side of the spectrum, there are formal book hands, presenting upright letters that appear to stand at attention. On the other side there are more casual cursive scripts, which were written with a thinner pen and featured connecting loops. By the early fifteenth century these two script forms were equally popular, although cursive script was introduced much later in book production. The introduction of cursive script is part of a broadening palette of scripts. This expansion may have resulted from the commercialization of book production—a consequence of the increasing demands of readers who purchased their books in small urban shops.

Cursive script began its career in the world of administration. Here it was used for account books, charters and other administrative texts. The clerks who produced these documents used a much thinner pen than what was used for formal book script. The flexible tip allowed for a faster pace and it gave the script a kind of "casual" feel.

While book script required the pen to be lifted between each stroke that formed the letter, with cursive script the pen remained on the surface of the page, with each letter connected by a ligature (or loop). Around 1300 this administrative script was exported to the world of book production. Students and scholars were early adopters, as were individuals involved in administrative duties, such as clerks, notaries and merchants. Civic clerks, for example, are known to have produced literary manuscripts after-hours, in part for an urban clientele who paid for their services. These professional users encouraged the migration of the script beyond its initial administrative setting.

Additional resources:

How to make a pen (video from English Heritage)

From Manuscript to Print: the Evolution of the Medieval Book

"The art of the book" in Flemish Miniatures, online exhibition from the National Library of France

Making books for profit in medieval times

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

While one may be inclined to emphasize how "foreign" the medieval book is—they are, after all, made of dead cows, and are handwritten—they present such recognizably modern features as a justified text, footnotes, running titles and page numbers.



Figure 13.6.4.59: Leaf (page) number in Paris Bible, London, British Library, Arundel MS 311, fol. 240, 13th century

Visiting a bookseller

The similarities run much further than mere physical traits, however. Take for example the manner in which the book was made and acquired from the 13th century onwards. If you wanted a book in the later Middle Ages you went to a store, as in our modern day. However, the bookseller did not normally have any books in stock—except for perhaps some second-hand copies. You would tell him what you wanted, both content-wise and with respect to the object's material features. You could specify, for example, that he use paper (instead of parchment), cursive script (and not book script) and add miniatures (or forego decoration). Just like so many other objects you bought in late-medieval society, the commercially-made manuscript was custom-tailored to the individual who purchased it.

The professionals who made books for profit were usually found near the biggest church in town. This was a well-chosen spot as canons and clerics (i.e. people who visited the church and who could read) formed an important part of the clientele. By the 14th century true communities of the book had formed in the neighborhoods around churches and cathedrals. Evidence from such cities as Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, London and Paris suggests that in these communities a diverse group of artisans interacted with clients and with each other. It was a world bound not only by the book, however, but also by profit.

Marketing

Whether you were scribe, illuminator or binder, as a professional you would strive for quality and diversity as this ensured bread and butter on the table. In parallel to our modern book business, medieval manuscript artisans used various marketing strategies to attract new clientele. The most striking of these is advertisements. Scribes hung large sheets outside their doors to show what kind of scripts they had mastered. The short writing samples found on these sheets were often accompanied by the names of the scripts, which shows just how professional the world of the book had become. A particularly rich specimen survives from the shop of Herman Strepel, a professional scribe in Münster (c. 1447). In the true spirit of medieval marketing he wrote the names of all the scripts in golden letters on his advertisement sheet.



Figure 13.6.4.60: Advertisement sheet from Herman Strepel, professional scribe in Münster, The Hague, Royal Library, 76 D MS 45, c. 1447

Scribes also included advertisements in books they had copied for a client. An example of such “spam” is found in a French manuscript made in Paris by a scribe who calls himself Herneis. On the last page of the book he writes, “If someone else would like such a handsome book, come and look me up in Paris, across the Notre Dame cathedral.” Herneis and his fellow bookmen lived and worked in the Rue Neuve Notre Dame, which served as the center of commercially-made vernacular books. Similarly, students were served in the Rue St Jacques, on the Left Bank, where the latest Latin textbooks were on offer. For Parisians and students it was handy to have all the professionals in one street: you knew where to go when you needed a book and it was easy to check out who was available for making one for you.

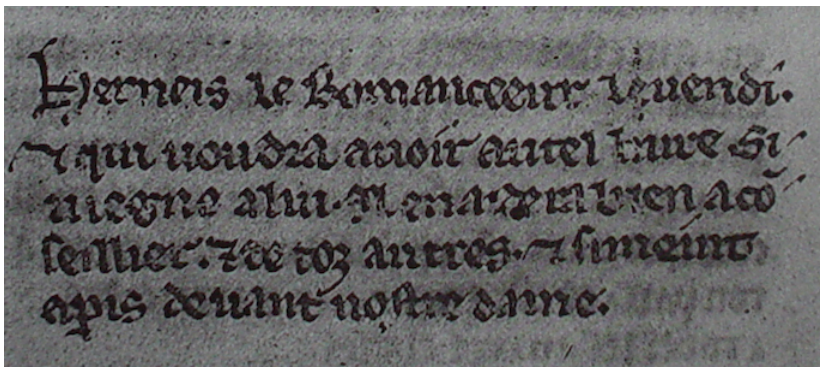


Figure 13.6.4.61: Advertisement by Herneis le Romanceur, professional scribe in Paris. Giessen, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 945, 13th century

Book streets

This centralization was equally convenient, however, for the artisans themselves. Booksellers (also called stationers) in Rue Neuve Notre Dame and in other such “book streets” in European cities depended on the professional scribes, illuminators and binders that lived in their vicinity. They would hire them for various projects. When a client came to order a book from a stationer, the latter would divide the work among the artisans he usually worked with. One copied the text, another drew the images, and a third bound the book. These hired hands were given contracts which specified precisely what they would have to do and how much money they received for it. From time to time the stationer would come and check on the progress they made. In some manuscripts these cost estimates were scribbled in the margin. Although making books for profit was a common scenario in the later Middle Ages, it did not make you particularly rich. On the last page of a Middle Dutch chronicle a clearly frustrated scribe wrote, “For so little money I never want to produce a book ever again!”

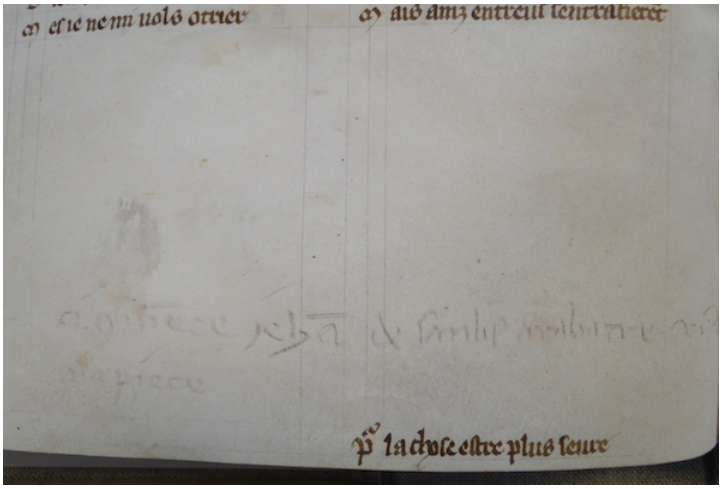


Figure 13.6.4.62: Marginal note in pencil regarding payment to the professional scribe Jehan de Sanlis, “ci (com)me(n)ce Jeha(n) de Sanlis a ratable VI d. a la piece” (Jehan de Sanlis made this for 6 pence per quire), The Hague, Royal Library, MS 71 A 24, 13th century

The printing press and the demise of the manuscript

The world of professional medieval scribes was shaken up by the coming of Gutenberg’s printing press around the middle of the 15th century. The ink pots dried up and the handwritten book slowly turned into an archaic object that was more costly than its printed counterpart. In the 16th century only large choir books (which did not fit on the press) and handsome presentation copies, custom-made for an affluent client, were still written by hand.

And so we see scribes jumping the handwritten ship, many ending up working in printing shops. Here, too, a striking parallel between the medieval and modern world of the book may be pointed out. Medieval producers and salesmen of books had to adapt to the new medium made popular by Johannes Gutenberg, just as publishers today have to change their ways in a world where pixels are gaining ground over ink.

Decorating the book

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

Dazzling

Some medieval readers preferred pretty pictures and shiny decoration in their books. Not only did the sparkling page appeal to them, it also proved their economic status, or that the gift they gave was special. Undecorated books were also expensive, but decorated copies cost a true fortune, especially if gold was used. In a process called gilding, the decorator would apply an ultra-thin film of flattened gold to the page, which looked not unlike our modern tin foil.



Figure 13.6.4.63: Gilding, Leiden, University Library, VLQ MS 4, 14th century (photo: Giulio Menna)

This page shows that the golden shapes were not appended directly to the surface of the parchment, but that they were stretched over little “hills” of plaster (note how the orange primer is shining through). This way the gold would catch the light from different angles, maximizing its dazzling effect.

Colorful books



Figure **13.6.4.64**: Decorated initial, Leiden, University Library, VLQ MS 38, 12th century (photo: Giulio Menna)

When the quires were filled with text, the rubrics (title or chapter heading, often in red) were in place, and the scribe had corrected his work, it was time for the finishing touches. Many medieval books contain some kind of decoration in addition to the written words, usually executed by a different artisan. There is a considerable variation in style and quality of decoration, and, consequently, in cost. At the lower end of the scale is penwork flourishing, red and blue lines drawn with the pen in various patterns and shapes. Some of these typify local styles, allowing us to tie a manuscript to a specific country, city or religious house. At the higher end of the scale is illumination: often sophisticated little paintings that included color and often gold. While decorated books stand out among their other cousins, on the whole they were not very common.



Figure **13.6.4.65**: Historiated initial, Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 14 D, 13th century

One-letter stories

Normally, letters work together to form words that present a story. From time to time, however, we encounter a letter that contains a narrative all by itself. This giant P initiates the name Paulus (Paul), who was the author of the following Bible text. To mark the beginning of the text the decorator extended the P and applied color and gold to it, turning the letter into a visual aid. Contained in the letter is St Paul himself, presented as the soldier of Christ. In his hand there is a large sword, his standard attribute in medieval decoration, and his head is clearly bald, which also aided in his identification.

While in this case the intensions of the decorator are clear, the meaning of some such historiated initials can only be understood by reading the story they initiate. Miniatures contained even more extensive narratives.



Figure **13.6.4.66**: Leiden, University Library, VLQ MS 4

Penwork

In medieval times, penwork flourishing was the quickest and easiest way to add some color to the page. This style of decoration typically involves thin lines, usually in red and blue, drawn with a pen rather than a brush. The swirly lines form lively patterns with unexpected twists and turns, creating miniature mazes in which your eye gets lost easily. If you look carefully you may recognize familiar objects: a tree, the moon, pearls, a smiling face. The central figure attracting all of this artistic attention is the capital letter that needed decorating, in this case the letter “M” (for “Marcus”). The penwork decoration supported an important function of this letter, navigating the reader to the beginning of a new section of text. The specific flourishing patterns can often be pinpointed to a certain city or region, which turns these happy lines into a useful tool for the book historian.

Medieval supermodels

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure **13.6.4.67**: Initial letter T, Gregorius Bock, Medieval Scribal Pattern Book, 1510-1517, Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 439, fol. 48r

This essay is devoted to a particularly attractive and rare kind of medieval manuscript: the model book. A feast to the eye, the object is filled with drawings and paintings that were meant to show scribes and illuminators how to decorate letters, paint initials,

or add large segments of decoration to the page. Within this tradition, two types of model books can roughly be distinguished. Some functioned as instruction manuals. In these books, the drawings might be accompanied by a narrative or explanation that instructs the artisan how to proceed, usually in a step-by-step process. Other model books appear to have merely functioned as a source of inspiration: they present a wide array of shapes and drawings from which the artisan could take his pick.

The level of sophistication among surviving model books varies considerably. On the lower end of the spectrum there are pattern books that merely show how to make enlarged letters with some minor flourishing. On the higher end, by contrast, there are copies with high-quality stand-alone designs and sophisticated historiated initials inhabited by figures and scenes. Evidently the requirements of the artisans varied; and by proxy, so did the taste of medieval readers. It is this variation that makes model books so fascinating, both as physical objects and as cultural artifacts.

Plainly decorated letters

To start at the lower end of the spectrum, some model books merely showed scribes how to execute a certain script or how to draw plain enlarged capitals—the most basic kind of decoration.



Figure **13.6.4.68**: Gregorius Bock, Medieval Scribal Pattern Book, 1510-1517, Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 439, fols. 30v-31r

The book opening seen above is from Gregorius Bock's Scribal Pattern Book, which provides instruction on both fronts (**more about the manuscript here**). Produced in 1510-1517, the first part of the small parchment book contains a series of alphabets in different scripts, some of which are clearly influenced by print typefaces. The second part contains decorative initials arranged in alphabetical order. In the introduction to his manual, Gregorius adds a dedication to his cousin Heinrich Lercher Wyss of Stuttgart, who was scribe to the Duke of Württemberg. The arrangement of the material shows how Heinrich likely used the book: he would thumb through its pages until he had reached either an alphabet or capital letter to his liking.



Figure **13.6.4.69**: Model book (probably made in Florence), Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 83-1972, c. 1150-1175, fol. 1r

While Bock's letters are a pleasure to look at, especially for the book historian, his designs are not exactly rocket science. More complex—but still relatively plain—are the models provided by a much older pattern book in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. This appears to be the oldest surviving pattern book for initials: it dates from c. 1150 and was produced and used in a Tuscan workshop. The choice is much more limited than in the previous example: the Cambridge copy does not provide multiple alphabets, nor does it present a wide range of initials (in fact, only about twenty are present). Interestingly, some manuscripts survive in which we encounter decorated letters that could well be modeled from this or a similar model book (like **British Library, Harley MS 7183**).

Elaborately decorated letters

On the more upscale end of things is the model book known as the Macclesfield Alphabet Book. It was made and used in fifteenth-century England, apparently for the transmission of ideas to decorators or their assistants.



Figure **13.6.4.70**: Letter K: from the "Macclesfield Alphabet Book," 15th-16th century, London, British Library, Add. MS 88887, fol. 17r

The artisans were offered quite a lot of choice, given that we encounter no less than fourteen different alphabets on its pages. What makes this book so special, however, is their quality and the manner in which the letters are designed: their shapes are produced by human figures in various uncomfortable positions—doing yoga exercises, it seems.



Figure **13.6.4.71**: Giovannino de Grassi, Alphabet Book, late 14th century, Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica, MS Cassaf. 1.21



Figure **13.6.4.72**: Anonymous Lombard (workshop of Giovannino de'Grassi), Two studies of a cheetah, 1410, watercolor and bodycolor on vellum, 16.4 x 12.3 cm. © Trustees of the British Museum

A similar subject matter is encountered in the alphabet book of the Italian artist Giovannino de Grassi (above). This book was created at the Visconti court in Milan and features both initial letters and stand-alone drawings. The Visconti's were important patrons of the arts and so it makes sense that we see their generosity extend into the world of book production.

Giovannino was known for depicting exotic animals in their natural habitat and this book features such images as well. His pages provided models for other artists who wished to replicate his realistic depictions (the image of the cheetah to the left is from his workshop).

Marginal decoration

Even more sophisticated are model books that show how to create elaborate decoration that runs in the margin along the length of the page. These border decorations, with their curly leaves and unexpected turns, could be tricky to produce.



Figure **13.6.4.73**: Göttingen Model Book, c. 1450, Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Uffenb. MS 51 (left) and the same decoration executed in an actual book, a Gutenberg Bible (right)

The so-called Göttingen Model Book, made around 1450, provides a solution to this problem. Its pages not only show, step by step, how to build a 3D leaf pattern, they also present detailed instructions like the following:

> ***The foliage one shall first draw with a lead or a point. Then one shall outline the foliage with a pen and with very thin ink or with thin black color. Then one shall polish the foliage with a tooth, so that the color can be applied smoothly, but not too firmly. Then one shall paint it with the colors, one side right and the other side left or reversed, with a brush, namely light red and green. […] (source)***

The drawings and narrative clearly complement one another. From time to time the instructions mention something like “as it is shown here” or “as the image shows.” A model book can hardly be clearer than this: while the alphabet books shown above were more or less meant to simply inspire the artist, the Göttingen book really takes the artist by the hand and guides him through each step of the production process. The instructions apparently worked well, as is shown by a surviving Gutenburg Bible that contains these very leafy borders (see above right).

The final point

Models are crucial in any learning process. Observing how something is done helps you acquire a skill you lack as much as it encourages you to develop further those you already have. Moreover, there is an additional use to these pattern books that has not yet been mentioned: patrons visiting artisans’ shops could well have been given these objects to find out what the book-maker was capable of providing. Given its many uses, it is hardly surprising that the tradition shown in this blog is also encountered in other cultures, including Byzantine and Arabic book production.



Figure 13.6.4.74: Outline drawings from a pattern book, Yale, Beinecke MS 553, 1400-1600

One particularly unusual Arabic specimen deserves to make the final point of this post. The fragment shown above presented Arabic decorators with models of scenes from the New Testament. It figures that the artisans, used to decorating the Qur'an, needed a little inspiration when it came to the Bible. This specimen is also interesting because some of the figures have been outlined by tiny holes, meaning that the sheet could be used as "tracing paper" (click the image to see this closer). While this ultimate instruction method took all potential flaws and creativity out of the modeling process, it allowed decorators with lesser talents to produce something beautiful.

Additional resources:

More information on Gregorius Bock's Scribal Pattern Book

Macclesfeld Alphabet Book at the British Library

Blog post on the Macclesfeld Alphabet Book from the British Library

Göttingen Model Book

Binding the book

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure 13.6.4.75: Wooden board of a late-medieval binding, Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 114 (photo: Giulio Menna)

Woodwork

Medieval manuscripts, even small ones, can be surprisingly heavy. Giant Bibles, large volumes that can stand half a meter tall, weigh as much as twenty-five kilos. It requires two library staff members to carry the object to your table. A fair part of this weight is produced by the boards of the bookbinding. To protect the stack of quires that made up the actual manuscript, a wooden board was placed on the front and back. The quires were then tied to thin leather straps, which were pushed through channels drilled through the boards. The straps were pegged into the wood, as seen in the image (note the white straps). It produced a surprisingly firm binding, which lasted for centuries. All this crafty woodwork is presently hidden from our eyes because the boards were subsequently covered with leather (which was often fitted with decoration). Thousands of pieces of medieval trees are presently hidden inside book bindings, like a shelved mini forest.

Wrapper



Figure **13.6.4.76**: Parchment “limp binding,” Leiden, University Library, VLQ MS 1, 11th century (binding 17th? century) (photo: Giulio Menna)

The so-called “limp binding” is another type of binding that was in popular use in medieval times. Its most notable feature is the absence of boards, which explains its name. With a limp binding the quires are covered by a plain parchment wrapper without the support of wooden boards.The quires in these bindings—usually a limited number—are attached to the outer parchment with thin strings, which are visible on the outside. A limp binding resulted in a lighter manuscript, which meant it was easier to transport. This type of binding also decreased the cost, given that wood was not needed and that the binding process was less time-consuming. This is likely why this type of bookbinding was so popular among medieval students.

Accessories



Figure **13.6.4.77**: Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 2778 (photo: Giulio Menna)

Many medieval books were a joy to look at even when they were closed. Various shiny “accessories” were drilled in and attached to the wooden boards on the outside of the book. The most pronounced of these are the so-called “bosses,” protective metal pieces attached to each corner of the binding. Much more common are clasps, pieces of metal that kept the book closed. These were needed because, unlike paper, parchment has a tendency to expand and buckle, which could push the book open. A clasp was therefore needed to keep the book closed when not in use, protecting the text inside. Also frequently added to the binding is decoration—flower motifs, playful line patterns, and at times even a painted scene. Such decorative elements on the outside of the binding became particularly common near the end of the Middle Ages.

Clasps: hugging a medieval book

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure **13.6.4.78**: Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 2579, 15th century (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Book historians tend to compare features of the medieval book to body parts. Thus the manuscript’s “head” (top edge) is connected to its “spine” (the back) via the “shoulder” (the area where board meets spine). There are even terms that compare a medieval book’s physical features to human activities or conditions. A large letter with a lively figure inside is called a “gymnastic initial,” for example, while line ruling that is nearly invisible is “blind.” This article takes this projection phenomenon a step further. It shows how one particular feature of the medieval binding eerily resembles a body part, not just in appearance but even in function: the clasp.

Arm and hand

While a medieval book was produced to be opened and used, medieval makers of manuscripts paid just as much attention to closing it. In order to preserve the organic pages, which were often made of parchment, it was necessary to keep the volume tightly closed when it was not used. Not only did this keep moisture out, but parchment also has a natural tendency to buckle, especially when handled at room temperature. In fact, parchment pages curl up with so much force that the wooden boards would be pushed open were it not for a smart device designed to keep the lid on: the clasp.



Figure 13.6.4.79: Book clasp in shape of hand, 18th century (?) (source: **Daniel Crouch Rare Books**)

The clasp is like an arm that extends from the one wooden board to the other. Indeed, it is hard not to think of clasps as hugging arms that embrace the leaves, safeguarding them from the harsh reality of medieval book use. Appropriately, the primary purpose of clasps was to protect the pages. They generated the pressure needed to keep the pages flat, while producing a firm object that could withstand every-day use in a medieval library—like falling off a desk or a shelf. At the end of the arm a tiny "hand" locks into an extension, as clearly visible in the image above. How great that some book binders played with the image of a hand grabbing onto the opposite clasp, as this eighteenth century example shows (above).



Figure 13.6.4.80: Late medieval binding that has lost its clasps, Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 96 (14th century) (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Generally, two clasps were able to contain the force issued by the buckling parchment of a book. However, it was important to get it right as a bookbinder. When the distance between the one end of the arm (the "arm pit") and the handle bar was too large, there was insufficient pressure. By contrast, if the distance was too little, the book did not close. Medieval manuscripts that have lost their clasps (by far the majority) show what happens to the bookblock when the pressure was too low: unhappy pages with a wavy pattern appeared (above).

Exotic arms

Some readers preferred exotic clasps. A particularly remarkable specimen is **in the National Library of Sweden**. The book it helps to close is tiny, no larger than an iPhone. Made c. 1500, it was designed for the road: it concerns a portable Book of Hours (or prayer book) that was carried around by a pilgrim on his religious pilgrimage. The clasp holding it closed is in fact a skull carved out of bone. The theme is fitting for a pilgrim seeking redemption, finding his way along the dusty roads of medieval Europe. Every time he sat down to open his book he was confronted with his future, which looked rather grim: Memento mori, remember that you will die one day. Better smarten up and keep on going!

The exoticness of clasps is sometimes connected to their number instead of their shape. Clasps are a must for a peculiar binding known as *dos-à-dos* (or "back-to-back"). While such bindings usually hold two books bound together at their backs (hence the name), the **National Library of Sweden** owns a unique variant that contains no less than six books. They are all devotional texts printed in Germany during the 1550s and 1570s (including Martin Luther, *Der kleine Catechismus*) and each one is closed with its own tiny clasp (see the various openings **here**). A book with six arms and hands: it is quite the display of craftsmanship.



Figure **13.6.4.81**: The chained library in Zutphen, the Netherlands (De Librije) (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

If clasps can be compared to arms, another feature of the bookbinding must be called "feet." During the later Middle Ages it became customary to store manuscripts on lecterns. In lectern libraries, which were found in monastic houses and churches, readers consulted books on uncomfortable benches. The libraries often had a semi-public function, with outsiders walking in and out to consult books. To facilitate such use—and to make sure no books were unlawfully removed—the objects were usually chained to the lecterns (above).

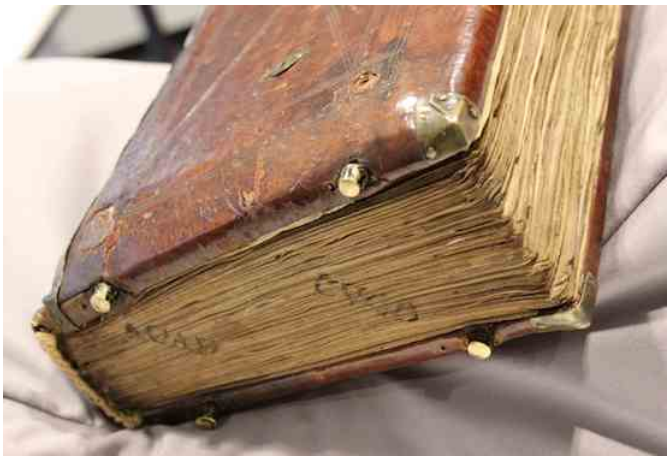


Figure **13.6.4.82**: Late medieval bookbinding with "feet," Leiden, University Library, BUR MS Q 1, c. 1100 (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Books in lectern libraries were not read on a flat surface (such as a desk), but erect – the objects were resting, after all, on nearly vertical stands. This kind of use came with a challenge: the shuffling that inevitably happened when the book was read, wore out the lower edge of the binding. More importantly, since the medieval book block was flush with the binding, the constant contact with the lectern as the reader flipped through the book could easily damage the page. A simple tool was invented to prevent such damage: "feet"—tiny pieces of brass that hoisted the book up and made it hover, as it were (above). The feet that are attached to bindings are often shiny. It shows just how much the book was used—and how much damage was prevented by the attached feet (see below).



Figure 13.6.4.83: Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 67, 9th century (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

There is something very attractive about these body parts. They show just how much bookbinders and readers were in tune with the needs of the book as an object. They packaged them so that they could withstand rough consultation, while their designs also left room for a certain amount of fun—as the hand-clasp and perhaps even the skull-clasp shows. The hug given by these strong arms protected the book's most precious cargo, the text, both from accidents in the medieval library and, as much as possible, from the inevitable decay of time.

Medieval books in leather (and other materials)

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

Every book needs a coat, a protective layer. Without it, after all, the pages would be exposed to the elements and the dirty hands of readers. And so from the very early days of the book the object was given a binding. Medieval bindings mostly consist of two components: boards, commonly made out of wood (but in the later Middle Ages also from compressed paper), and something to cover the boards with. While in medieval times the most common covering material was leather, there is great variation observed in the kind that was used, as well as how it was decorated. Readers and reading communities had their own preferences in this regard. As a result one can "read" as much from the outside of the book as from its pages: they both transmit important cultural-historical information. This is an essay with an exotic twist, which includes bindings made from seal and human skin.



Figure 13.6.4.84: London, British Library, Add. 89000, 7th century. The St Cuthbert Gospel (formerly known as the Stonyhurst Gospel) is the oldest intact European book—i.e. still in its original binding.

Wearing leather

Most medieval bindings were made out of animal skin—usually it was a calf or pig who involuntarily ended up protecting the manuscript. Leather proved an ideal material for binding books. It is stiff, which means it does an excellent job protecting the

precious cargo inside, while at the same time adding to the desired “firmness” of the book. The material also repels water quite well. This benefit may seem odd, but it’s not. While monks may not have been reading books in the bath tub, they did consult them in the cloister, which was often a damp environment—given that the hallways were in the open air.



Figure **13.6.4.85**: Leather binding used for a papyrus book, London, British Library, Papyrus 1442, dating 716-717

An added bonus of leather was that it accommodated blind-tooled decoration, which was applied in mesmerizing shapes and patterns. The oldest book to survive with its original binding still in place is the seventh-century St Cuthbert Gospel (which is a Gospel of John, in fact, image above). It shows just how utterly charming early-medieval leather bindings were; and how beautifully they were decorated. The manuscript in question was placed in the coffin of St Cuthbert shortly after his death in 687. It was discovered when the grave was opened in the early twelfth century. By then a cult had grown around St Cuthbert, so the book and its original binding were both well taken care of. In fact, the binding looks like it was made yesterday.

The use of leather bindings predates books made out of parchment—like the book of St Cuthbert. Before parchment became common, books were made from plants—papyrus. Such papyrus codices were extremely fragile and they needed the protective qualities of leather, which may ultimately be the origins of the tradition of using skin for bindings. Given that papyrus not used after the fifth century (with some exceptions), very few original bindings of papyrus books survive. The oldest specimens we have are those in the so-called Nag Hammadi Archive, which date back to the third and fourth centuries. As you can see from the image to the left, these covers of papyrus books were also decorated handsomely.

Exotic leather



Figure **13.6.4.86**: Seal skin binding. Landsbókasafn Íslands, National and University Library of Iceland, GKS 2870 4to, Njáls saga, 1290-1310

What to do if you need a leather binding, but there are no cows or pigs to slaughter for this purpose? The answer is seen in the image above, which shows a book that was copied and bound in Iceland. Naturally the binder turned to creatures that were available there. This is how a poor seal ended up covering this **Old Icelandic book** with sermons, which was made around 1200. If you look carefully you can still see a significant amount of hair on the outside. As with other cases where animal hair is found on book covers, the hairs have turned green over time (or perhaps from the liquids involved in processing animal skin into leather).

But the skin used for bookbindings is not limited to animals. Under the name anthropodermic bibliopegy goes the practice of using human skin for binding books. It turns out to be a post-medieval practice, which was particularly popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. The **cover seen here** dates from the early 17th century and the skin was taken from the priest Father Henry Garnet. He was executed in 1606 for his role in the Gunpowder Plot—the attempt to ignite 36 barrels of gunpowder under the British Parliament. The book in question actually outlines the story of the plot and the evidence of Garnet's guilt. The origins of the binding must have given the reader significant satisfaction.

The last word: cloth

Not all medieval books were dressed up in leather. Less commonly used, perhaps because it is more fragile, is cloth. This material handled the frequent use of a book far less well than leather. The real-world use of a medieval book was such that the object would be pushed back and forth over a wooden desk, which did not exactly contribute to a long life. The cloth binding **seen here** dates from the middle of the fifteenth century and it covers a monastic rule.

The manuscript has a particularly pretty button to close the volume up, adding to the charm of this beautiful bookbinding. In the age of the printed book such cloth bindings became more common, perhaps because more books were privately owned. This meant, of course, that the objects were not consulted on the hard surface of a wooden desk, but on the soft lap of the reader. As with embroidered bindings, which also increased in popularity in post-medieval times, cloth may have been regarded as a more suitable material for private reading.

Additional resources:

St Cuthbert Gospel from the British Library blog

Nag Hammadi Archive (some of the oldest specimins of papyrus bindings)

Photo in the News: Book Bound in Human Skin

Judging a Book by its Cover: Manuscript Bindings Without Bling

Using the medieval book

Consulting a medieval book was challenging—they could be very heavy and half a meter wide (more than 1.5 feet) when open.

c. 330 - 1300 C.E.

The medieval desktop

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure 13.6.4.87: Desktop (detail), Albrecht Dürer, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, 1526, detail of an engraving (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

We are used to having multiple books open at the same time when looking things up at home or writing an essay for class. Whether PDFs, e-books or good-old-fashioned paper volumes, switching between books in a smooth movement is something we don't often think about. This was very different in medieval times. In those days, books tended to resist when you tried to move them: they were as heavy as a brick and easily twice that size. A related problem was one of space. The average medieval book has a wingspan of at least half a meter wide when open. Consequently, comfortably placing two books in front of you was a stretch, let alone multiple volumes. In an early-sixteenth-century depiction of Erasmus, the scholar cannot even place a single book on his desk as he is writing a letter (above).

Interestingly, the challenges of medieval book consultation stands in stark contrast with what we know about reading and studying in the period. We know that readers were interested in learning different points of view with respect to their topic of inquiry, and so browsed through a great number of volumes at the same time. Sparked by this contradiction, this article explores medieval desktops. How many books are being consulted at the same time in medieval depictions of reading? How are the objects laid out across the available space? In short, how are we to understand the logistics behind the devouring of knowledge in the last four centuries of the Middle Ages? As will become clear, the answers to these questions vary greatly depending on why an individual handled multiple books at the same time.

Scribes

The first group of individuals who had to manage multiple books were scribes. By definition, a scribe had to have at least two books on his desk: the one he was making (a growing pile of quires, which remained unbound until the very end) and the one he was copying from (called the "exemplar"). While keeping track of the loose quires may have been challenging, of the groups discussed here scribes had it the easiest. After all, the individual was only technically reading one book—the one he was copying from. This explains why their deskspace was of limited size, at least judging from surviving depictions.



Figure 13.6.4.88: Jean Le Tavernier (illuminator), *Jean Miélot in his study*, after 1450, Buonaccorso of Pistoia, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9278-80, fol. 10r

In most cases their working space was erect rather than flat. The famous image of Jean Miélot at work (above) shows how the desktop of the scribe had a 45-degree angle, resulting in an almost erect surface. Clearly visible is also a vertical orientation in the line-up of the books: one was placed above the other. In fact, the desktop in this image is split in half, with the lower half containing the book under production, as well as the scribe's tools (ink pots and pens), while the upper half holds the exemplar. Miélot obviously needed to go shopping for a larger desk, because we see books laying around on the ground and on a bench.



Figure 13.6.4.89: Miniature of the translator, Simon de Hesdin, at work in his study, Valerius Maximus, translated by Simon de Hesdin and Nicholas de Gonesse, Facta et dicta memorabilia, 1479, London, British Library, Royal MS 18 E. III, fol. 24r

Interestingly, there are also desks with a horizontal orientation. The image at the left shows the translator Simon de Hesdin at work. Although the books are out of sight, the desk clearly provides room for two books. However, they placed next to one another. This may be specially done for the task of a translator, who needed to carefully read the source text and subsequently scribbling down the translation in loose quires or on loose sheets. This way, both books would be right before him: there was no need to look up at a high book platform.

Readers

While it is easy to find images of scribes with a desk full of books, it is less common to encounter readers in similar situations. That is to say: there are very few medieval scenes in which someone is reading but not writing—where books are present but pens are not. In part, this has to do with medieval study practices. Readers would usually have a pen nearby even when they were just

reading. After all, remarks and critiques needed to be added to the margin at the spur of the moment. “Penless” images, while rare, often show a crowded desktop. The image below shows Christine de Pisan (a late medieval author) browsing multiple books at a big desk.



Figure 13.6.4.90: Christine de Pisan in her study. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9009-11

The absence of the pen may result from an urge to depict Christine as an avid reader. This is emphasized, I think, by the various volumes that lay open—note how some open books are facing down, the way we still do today! From the late medieval period a special tool was available for readers who did not like the clutter shown on Christine’s desk: the book carousel.



Figure 13.6.4.91: Roman de la Rose, probably 2nd half of 15th century, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce MS 195, fol. 1r

These carousels allowed readers to consult multiple manuscripts in a very convenient fashion, by spinning (slowly!) the top part, which moved. The oldest one I could find dates from the fourteenth century (here), but it is possible they were in use even earlier. It is striking that these two scenes (above and below) show readers—scholars—without pens, even though the second seems to hold an invisible one.



Figure 13.6.4.92: Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL Collection (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Book hipster

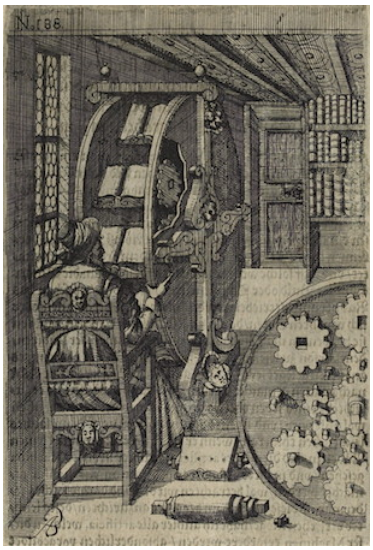


Figure 13.6.4.93: Book wheel, Agostino Ramelli, *Diverse et artificiose machine*, [Leipzig] Durch Henning Grossen den Jüngern, 1620 (first published 1588), p. 440

Cleverly, the medieval “spinning wheels” circumvented the constrictions of the limited space a regular desktop provided. However, what if you need even more real estate than the turning desktop could offer? The answer to this question is perhaps one of the most intriguing pieces of book furniture that survive from the past: the book wheel.

The image at left shows the book wheel invented by the Renaissance engineer Agostino Ramelli, whose concept was based on medieval designs. The upside to the carousel is obvious: there was space for a lot of books. This practice is not unlike deciding to hook up a second monitor to your computer, except that the individual is actually watching twelve monitors at the same time—like a trader on Wall Street. I have sat behind one from the 17th century myself and it is truly a majestic feeling to spin the wheel. The click-click sound of the gears hidden inside the device is simply mesmerizing.



Figure **13.6.4.94**: A scribe identified as Priscian or Donatus, part of a series of Liberal Arts and scribes on the archivolt of the right bay, West Portal, Chartres, c.1150) (photo: Holly Hayes)

While desktops (in their great variety) are representative of how most scribes and readers handled their books, there is also a surface space that is more exceptional—and that can only be addressed as a "laptop." The use of such portable desks, which sat on the scribe's lap, is well documented for the early-modern period. They were used, for example, by noblemen or secretaries drafting documents and letters while on the road.

The portable desktop was generally a box with a slightly angled surface, inside which the writing materials were stored, including sheets, ink and pens. Interestingly, this practice—and tool—goes back to at least the twelfth century (see image, left). The device contained a hole for the ink pot and inside may well have been blank sheets—in parallel to the portable kits from the Renaissance.

Apart from the fact that the actual desk space was more limited than what we are used to, the medieval desktop was not so different from ours, including how messy it was. They contained books, both open and closed, as well as writing tools. However, more so than in our present time, desktops were a necessary tool, whether they were packed (as in Christine's case) or with only one or two books in place (as with most scribes). The medieval quill, after all, needed a stable and even surface. While desktops may seem trivial objects to us, they were crucially important to both medieval scribes and readers.

Additional resources:

More about Christine de Pizan in her study

Browse images in the Roman de la Rose in the Bodeian Library

Browse Agostino Ramelli's *Diverse et artificiose machine* at the Library of Congress

Book wheel from 1625, in the Herzog August library Wolfenbüttel

A portable writing desk from the Walters Art Museum

Getting personal in the margins

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL



Figure 13.6.4.95: Herbert of Boshom, *Glossed Psalter*, late 12th century, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.5.4, fol. 33v (**view the entire manuscript here**)

At its very heart the medieval book is a vehicle of information. It was an expensive receptacle for text, which was poured onto the page by the scribe, and retrieved by the reader. As strange as this may sound, as a book historian I have limited interest in the actual text found on the medieval page. My job is to look at books, not to read them: knowing author, genre and purpose often suffices for what I do. Very different, however, is my attitude towards words found in the margins, placed there "extra-textually" by scribes and readers. Here we may find information about the production circumstances of a given manuscript and the attitude of scribes or readers towards a text. In most books, there was ample room to add such details, because on average a stunning fifty percent of the medieval page was left blank. It is in this vast emptiness—so often overlooked in editions of texts—that we may pick up key information about the long life of the book.

Pointing a finger

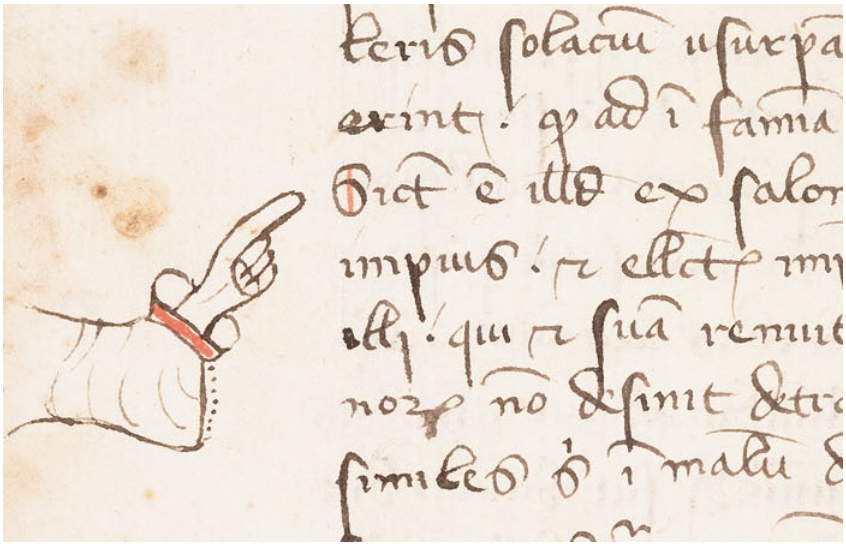


Figure 13.6.4.96: Isadore of Seville, *Sententiae*, Lawrence, University of Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, MS C54, fol. 96v (**view selections of the manuscript here)**

We are taught not to point, but in the margin of the page it is okay. Readers frequently felt the need to mark a certain passage, for example for future reference, or to debate its meaning. To do so, they added manicula (Latin for "little hand")—those highly entertaining pointing fingers. This is good news for us, because they facilitate a look into the mind of a medieval reader. It is not uncommon that a person's interest shines through the collection of marginal hands in a manuscript. While most individuals simply marked spots with an X, the pointing hand provided a much clearer—and more expressive—signpost.

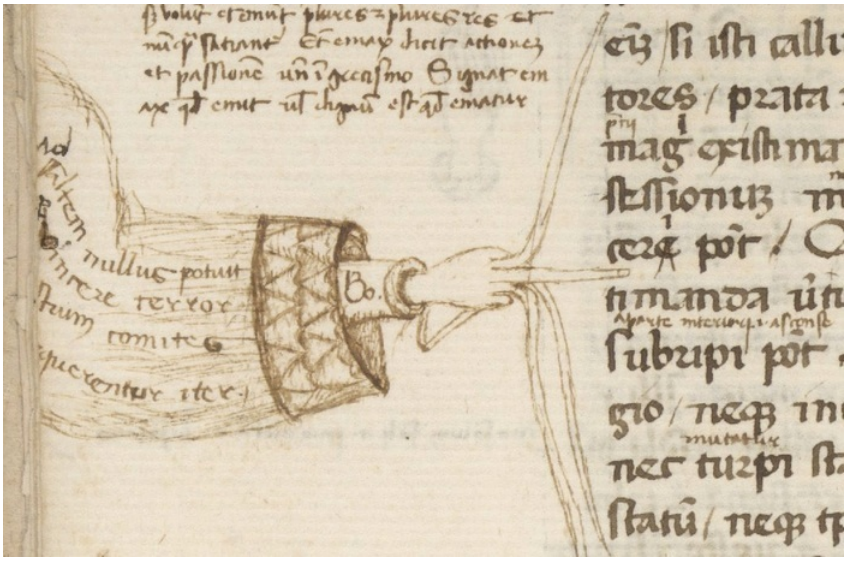


Figure 13.6.4.97: Unusual manicule with five spread fingers, Cicero, *Paradoxa stoicorum*, 14th century, Berkeley, Bancroft Library, BANC MS UCB 85, fol. 5v

A particularly entertaining pair is found in Berkeley's Bancroft Library. To mark a particularly long passage we encounter a hand where all five fingers have been drafted into service, while in another case the hand is replaced by an octopus with five tentacles.

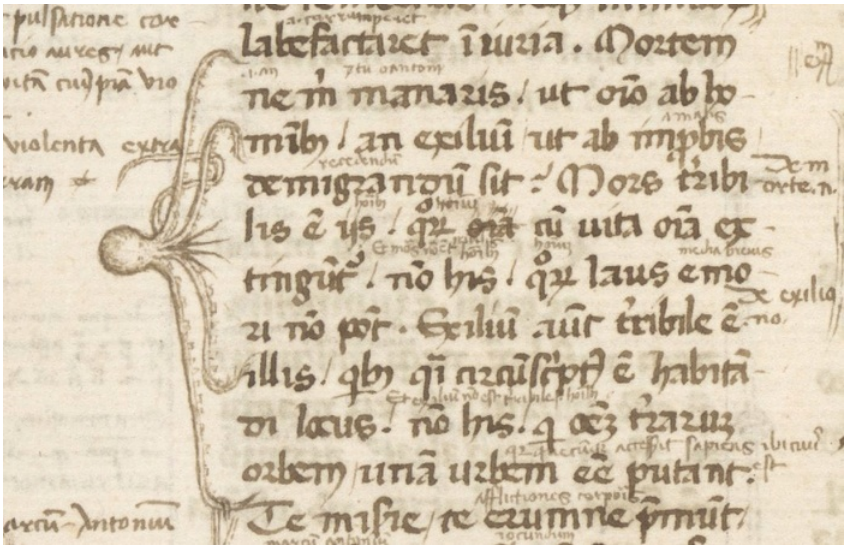


Figure 13.6.4.98: Marginal bracket in the shape of an octopus (with five legs), Cicero, Paradoxa stoicorum, 14th century, Berkeley, Bancroft Library, BANC MS UCB 85, fol. 1v

From time to time a debatable passage is highlighted by a pointing device that is part of the book's decoration, like Augustine taking a stance while aiming his spear at a gloss in the text (image at the top of the page).

Critiquing authorities

There is nothing more inviting to a critical mind than the empty space of the margin. Medieval readers frequently felt the need to vent in that location, for different reasons. Like Augustine and his spear—they would express their dismay about something. There is the Carthusian monk from Herne, for example, who could not handle the poor Latin-Dutch Bible translation he was reading. With a pen shaking from frustration he wrote: "Whoever translated these Gospels, did a very poor job!" (14th century, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, S.n. 12.857, fol. 95v). The same person is encountered in the margins of a different manuscript, where he corrected yet another flawed translation (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 2849-51). Providing improved readings in the margins he added the following personal touch: "This is how I would have translated it." Take that, translator!



Figure 13.6.4.99: Aristotle, *Libri Naturalis*, London, British Library, Harley MS 3487, f. 16v

While such explicit remarks are exceptional, critiquing the text in the margin was a normal thing to do as a medieval reader. In most cases he or she would jot down a gloss next to the actual text and connect the two with so-called tie marks—the precursor of our footnote (see the left margin in the image above). This practice became particularly popular in the university classroom of the thirteenth century. The *De disciplina scholarum*, a student guidebook from Paris, stipulated that wax tablets or tiny slips of parchment be taken into the classroom for note-taking. These notes were later added to the margins of students' textbooks. Aristotle manuscripts—the main textbook for the Arts Faculty—even provided a clever "zoning" system to accommodate criticism: the margins were broken up into vertical columns where the opinions of master and student would settle (see image above).

Smart bookmarks

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

Marking pages for future reading predates browsers and the web. In fact, the practice is much older even than printed books. This essay introduces various ways in which monks and other medieval readers kept track of the page at which they had stopped reading —and from which they planned to continue in the near future. What tools were available for this purpose? And how did these differ from one another? Apart from addressing these two queries, this post also reports on a genuine discovery: a new specimen of a rare but particularly smart type of bookmark, found at the University Library in Leiden. Cleverly, and unlike our modern equivalent, the bookmark in question showed medieval readers not only at what page they had stopped reading, but also in which text column and line they had left off.



Figure **13.6.4.100**: Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 2001 (12th century) (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

But let's start at the beginning. If certain bookmarks can be called "smart," it follows that others were, well, dumb. In bookmark terms that qualifier must go to types that are fixed to one specific page rather than being able to freely move throughout the book. The image above shows such a static bookmark, perhaps as old as the twelfth century. It was produced by making a small cut in the corner of the page, after which a strip of parchment was guided through a small incision, and then folded outwards, so as to stick out of the book. The result was as unmovable as it was destructive to the page—adding to its unflattering qualifier "dumb."

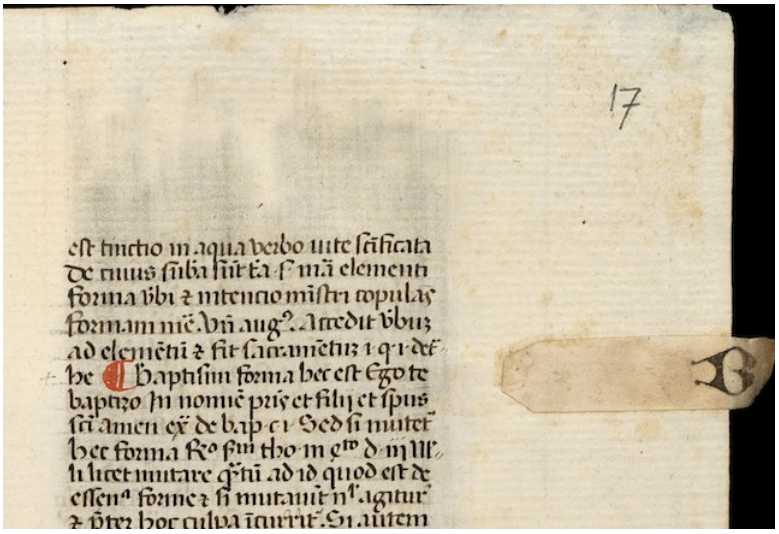


Figure **13.6.4.101**: Glued-on parchment strip with letter B, *Summa de casibus conscientiae / Bartholomeus of San Concordio*, c. 1460-1480, **Utrecht, University Library**, MS 146, fol. 17r)

A slightly less invasive version, no doubt preferred by medieval librarians, didn't involve cutting but glueing a tiny strip of parchment on the long side of the page. These so-called "fore-edge" bookmarks could even be filled with extra information, for example what section started at the marked location ("B" for "Baptism" in the image above).

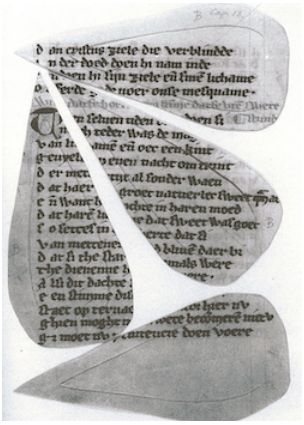


Figure 13.6.4.102: Broeder Geraert, *Vitae of St. Christina the Astonishing and St. Lutgard*, 13th century, Amsterdam, University Library, MSS I G 56-57

Far more interesting from a book-historical point of view are the more dynamic bookmarks, which could be used at any page of the manuscript because they were movable.

An unusual example is seen here (left)—heart-shaped bookmarks that could be clipped onto a page. Interestingly, they were cut out of a thirteenth-century manuscript with a Middle Dutch saint's life. The culprits were nuns in the 20th century, who clearly did not appreciate old books. Only a small number of pages of this very important manuscript have survived undamaged. When you study the book in the University Library of Amsterdam, as I did a few years back, a curious collection of full leaves and heart-shaped fragments ends up on your desk.

The downside of such clip-on bookmarks is that time tended not to be very kind to them. Since they could be separated from the page, many actually were: they fell out or were never re-inserted by the reader. The solution to the vanishing bookmark came in the form of what is called a "register bookmark." This type, which looks like a spider with its legs trapped, was securely fastened to the top of the binding (visible below), so it couldn't get lost. Additionally, the bookmark allowed the reader to mark multiple locations in the book.



Figure 13.6.4.103: Auckland Libraries, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Med. MS S.1588 (source)

Evidently, these two groups of bookmarks—static and dynamic—provided very different approaches to marking information—and thus to a book's use. Readers who added clip-on or "spider" bookmarks anticipated they would need to retrieve information not from one single page but from a changing number of pages. In other words, movable bookmarks served an audience with a shifting knowledge "appetite," while the static ones encouraged a more "ritual" use of a book. In other words, both types are telling, in their own way, about medieval reading culture.



Figure **13.6.4.104**: Gilbert, de La Porrée, Commentary on the Pauline Epistles, c. 1160-1200, Harvard, Houghton Library, MS 277, fol. 115v

And then there is, finally, the multi-dynamic bookmark – and the story of how a new specimen of this type was discovered. The qualifier "multi-dynamic", which is my own, refers to the fact that this bookmark is of the moving type, while at the same time it is able to do much more than simply marking a page. The bookmark's use is as simple as it is clever. This becomes clear when we look at the bookmark in action, for example in this twelfth-century Bible in the Houghton Library.

As you can see, the bookmark consists of two components. As with the spider bookmark, it features a string attached to the top of the binding (in this case the string is a strip from a recycled manuscript page). This allowed the reader to mark a certain page. Nothing new here. The second component, however, is what makes this a smart bookmark: a disk with the numbers 1-4 written on it, fitted in a tiny sleeve. The reader would pull down the marker along the string until the flat top hit the line where he had stopped reading. The disk could subsequently be turned to the appropriate column—an open medieval book usually showed four columns of text—meaning the device marked page, column and line.

Discovery



Figure **13.6.4.105**: A medieval revolving bookmark (sold at Sotheby's, July 5, 2005, lot 16)

Although such rotating bookmarks were used well into the age of print (see an example **here**), only about thirty-five have survived according to an inventory published in the Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society (2001). It figures that when in 2005 a tiny specimen of 41 × 22 mm (the size of two thumbnails) was sold off at Sotheby's, it went for a stunning $ 11,000.

Just to illustrate that new specimen still emerge, I recently discovered one in the University Library in Leiden, where it was filed in an early-twentieth-century filing cabinet of the Bibliotheca Manuscript Neerlandica—since moved to a fragment collection with shelfmark BPL 3327).



Figure 13.6.4.106: Revolving bookmark fragment, Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 3327 (14th century?) (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

The Leiden artifact (above) shows all the characteristics of a rotating bookmark: a small parchment disk with four numbers and a tiny hole in the middle. Interestingly, it is only the second specimen identified in Dutch collections, although the one in Leiden is clearly the oldest of the two (**here is the other**). While it is hard to date the red roman numbers with precision, it appears they were put on the parchment in the fourteenth century. The striking difference with the Houghton Library specimen above is that the new find comes without its sleeve, which does not survive. It is astonishing still that the tiny disk made it to our day and age. It must have been hidden in the darkness of a manuscript for several hundreds of years until it got separated and became an orphan—sleeveless and without a home.

Finding books

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

Books love to hide from us. While you were sure you put your current read on the kitchen table, it turns up next to your comfortable chair in the living room. As you handle more books at the same time, it becomes increasingly challenging to keep track of their location. In the Middle Ages it was even more difficult to locate a specific book. Unlike today, medieval books lacked a standard size, so you couldn't really make neat piles—which brings a bit of order to chaos. Finding a book was also made difficult by the fact that the spine title had not yet been invented.

So how did medieval readers locate books, especially when they owned a lot of them? The answer lies in a neat trick that resembles our modern GPS : a book was tagged with a unique identifier (a shelfmark) that was entered into a searchable database (a library catalogue), which could subsequently be consulted with a handheld device (a portable version of the catalogue). Here is how to plot the route to a specific book in the medieval library.



Figure **13.6.4.107**: Medieval shelfmark. London, **British Library**, Royal MS 10 A.xi

The most effective tool for retrieving a book in medieval times was to give it a number and placing it in the correct sequential order on the shelf. It is still common practice in modern libraries, for good reason: as long as the shelver puts the object back in the right spot, you will be able to find it again quickly. Such book numbers—shelfmarks—come in various forms. The more books a library owned, the more complex the shelfmarks had to become. The most simple type merely stated that the book in question was the "twelfth volume" in the cupboard (image above).

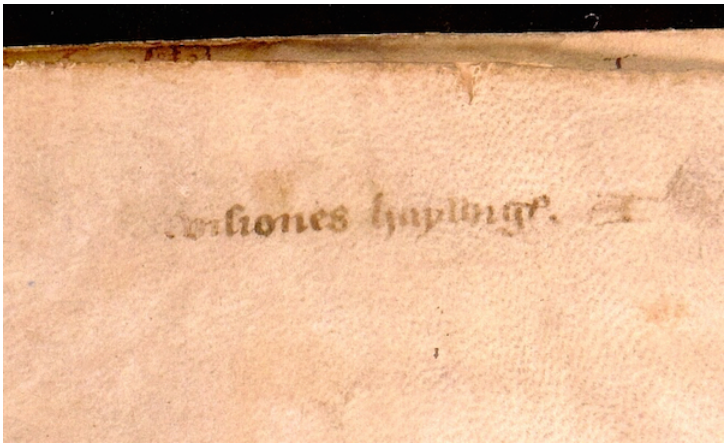


Figure **13.6.4.108**: Ghent, University Library, MS 941 (14th century), flyleaf with title and faint shelfmark "A" (15th century), **view the digitized book here**

Similarly, in small collections books were marked with single letters. In Bethlehem Priory near Brussels each item in the small library of Middle Dutch (i.e. non-Latin) books was given a letter, which was placed on an empty page in front of the manuscript together with a short title. The first volume in this mini library was a late-fourteenth-century copy of works by the mystic Hadewijch (above), and on the flyleaf we can still faintly read "Visiones haywigis. A," showing it was the first book on the shelf.



Figure 13.6.4.109: Chained library “De Librije” in Zutphen, The Netherlands (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Larger libraries–exceeding 26 books–needed a more sophisticated shelfmark system. A particularly clever one is found in manuscripts that were placed on lecterns, like those used in chained libraries. The shelfmarks had two components: a letter that pointed to the appropriate lectern, and a number that indicated the book’s position on the shelf. Because manuscripts were placed on both sides of the lectern, color was added to distinguish between the sides: red numbers referred to books placed on the right side, black ones to those on the left.

The shelfmark tag on the front cover of Lucan’s Pharsalia (below) (“Q 2″) is a variation on this theme. Here the letter was made red so as to indicate on what side of the lectern the book was to be placed. It shows that the fifteenth-century owner of the book, the Benedictine Abbey of Egmond, near Amsterdam, owned a lectern library. Much like a modern GPS, the tag “(red) Q 2″ ties the manuscript to a unique location: it is the third book on the right side of the sixteenth lectern.



Figure 13.6.4.110: Leiden, University Library, BUR MS Q 1, c. 1100, binding 15th century (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Catalogues

Having a location tag is only useful, of course, if there is a searchable database from which the book’s location may be retrieved. How would you otherwise get to Lucan’s Pharsalia in the library, or even know it is present there? The library catalogue is such a database. Up to 1200 the contents list of a monastic library was usually merely an inventory: it marked the presence of a book, but not its location. The later Middle Ages saw a surge of real catalogues, listing books and their location. Some of these catalogues were written out in books (as we will see in a moment), while others were pasted to the wall in the library.



Figure 13.6.4.111: Leiden, Regionaal Archief, Kloosters 885 Inv. Nr. 208A (wall catalogue, 15th century) (photo, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

A particularly big wall catalogue survives from Lopsen Abbey near Leiden: it originally measured 800×590 mm (above). The books in this list are numbered sequentially (1, 2, 3, etc.) within categories such as “books read during the meals” (*libri refectoriales*”) and “books for personal, spiritual development (*libri devoti et utiles*). However, there is no clear indication as to where the object may be found (the same in this wall catalogue). Readers had to wander through the library to find the right section and then start counting to find the book they were looking for. Not very efficient.

By contrast, other late-medieval catalogues are very clear about the location of a book. Catalogues survive from several monastic libraries in the Forest of Soignes (just outside of Brussels) that actually refer to the sophisticated type of shelfmark seen in the Leiden University Library example above. The ones from Zevenborren Priory (now Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MSS II 1038 and 7602, both early 16th century) refer to books on both the “black side” and the “red side” of the lectern.

Handheld device

The catalogue of the lectern library in another abbey in the forest, nearby Rooklooster Priory, is the cleverest of the lot. It comes in the form of a book with a peculiar shape (now Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS II 152). It is long and narrow—a format that indicates it was made for handheld use, as research has shown. Curiously, the shape of the pages resembles the long inventory slips on the side of book cupboards in chained libraries (see the wooden frames clearly visible in the image below). The hand-held Rooklooster catalogue must have been copied directly from such slips on the side of the lecterns.



Figure 13.6.4.112: Bookcases in Hereford Chained Library

What a clever tool the user ended up with. The open catalogue in his hand presented two columns, one for books on the “black” (left-hand side) side of the lectern, another for books on the “red” (right-hand) side. Moreover, each column is divided into two halves. The top half lists books placed on the upper shelf of the lectern, the lower half those on the lower shelf (these shelves were placed under the lectern, as seen in the image below).



Figure **13.6.4.113**: Cesena, Bibliotheca Malastestiana: lectern with shelf (**source**)

Standing in front of a lectern with his handheld device, the reader knew precisely which of the volumes in front of him was the one he was looking for: he could identify it without even opening it. This particular medieval catalogue is not unlike a modern navigation system, with “GPS coordinates” directing readers to such works as Ambrose on the Psalms (Black A 1) and Augustine’s Civitate Dei (Red A 5). The only difference is that it never ran out of batteries.

The medieval origins of the modern footnote

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

As in our modern day, the urge to write down a note in medieval times often came while reading a book. And so the margins of the page grew into a prime location where the reader could vent his objections or—albeit more rarely—express his or her approval.

This essay deals with the logistics behind this “window dressing”: it shows how a reader with many important things to say kept track of his marginal comments. Particularly, it deals with a serious problem that came with adding notes to the page: how to connect a particular comment, placed among a dozen others, to the specific text passage it refers to. The clever system that was created for this purpose lives on as our modern footnote.

Disconnected

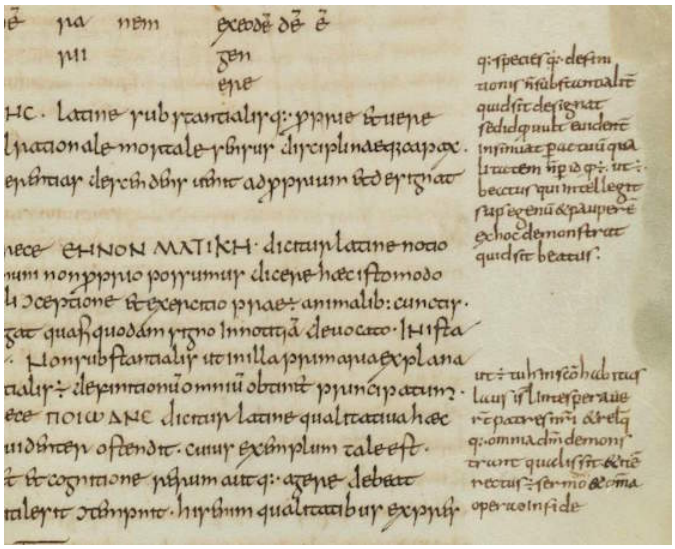


Figure **13.6.4.114**: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 234, fol. 11r (9th century), **view the book here**

The crux of our footnote system is the presence of a symbol that connects the note to the relevant location in the text. Curiously, in medieval times it was quite common not to have such connections in place, perhaps especially in the earlier period (see above). When few remarks were added to the page, a reader could deduce with relative ease to which passage a marginal note referred.

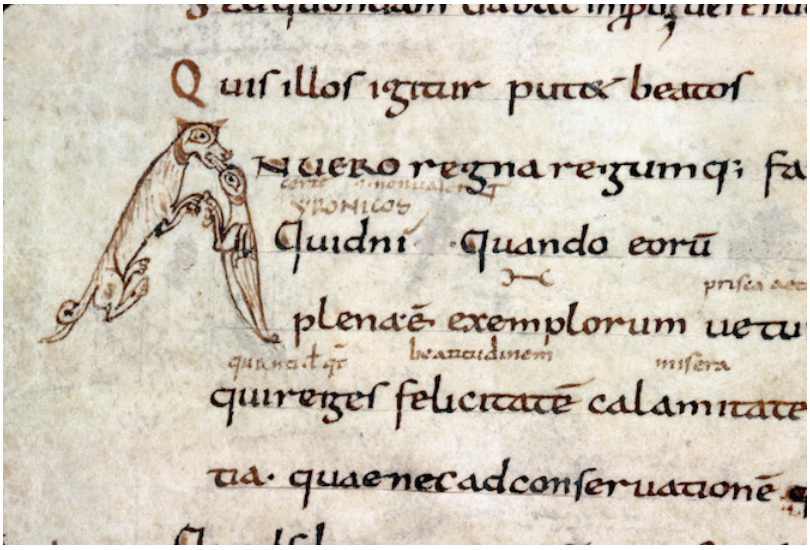


Figure **13.6.4.115**: Alençon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 12, fol. 21v (10th century)

It helped if a text was in popular use or known by heart, as many medieval works were. In such cases the note made sense instantly because the reader was familiar with the referenced literary context. Moreover, as long as notes were few and short, a reader could simply insert them—interlinearly—above the relevant word or passage (see above).

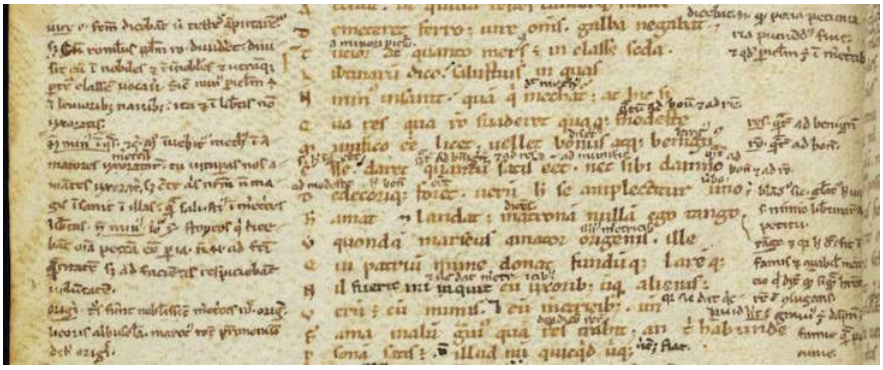


Figure **13.6.4.116**: Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cod. 89, fol. 59v (Horace, 12th century), **view the book here**

Cleverly, in this system the very position of the remark identified the word to which it referred. However, as the number and size of such comments increased, it became impossible to place them between the lines. The great blank space provided by the margins was now drafted into service. It is here that the absence of a proper reference system was felt. As the marginal body of remarks and critique began to accumulate, the page became a messy place, a labyrinth in which it became impossible for readers to find specific pieces of information (see above). In came the footnote.

Dots and lines

Connecting a marginal remark to the relevant passage in the text was usually done with a duplicated symbol, called a *signe de renvoi*: one was placed in front of the marginal note, the other near the word or passage that the remark commented upon. While it is hard to deduce a clear pattern of development, it appears that in the early stages of using such footnotes scribes and readers resorted to plain symbols rather than letters or numbers. These symbols varied considerably in shape and sophistication. At the high end of the spectrum we encounter complex symbols, such as the reversed letter E seen in the image below (magnified).

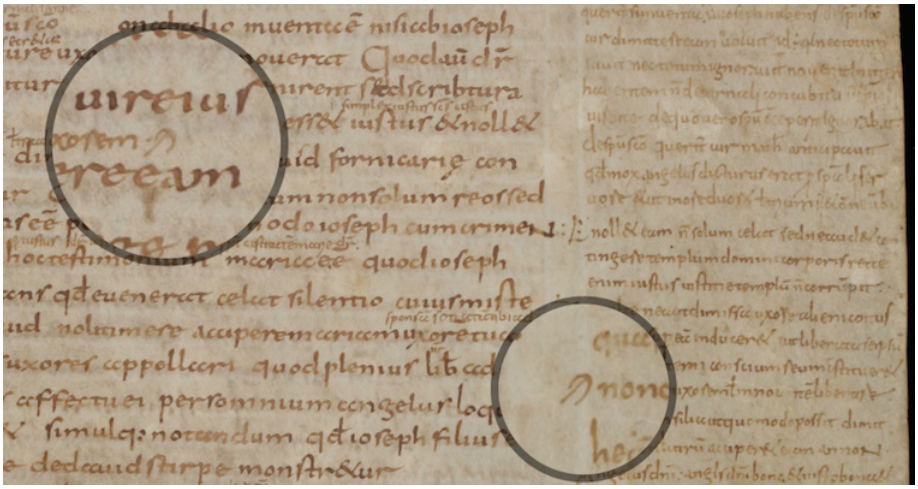


Figure 13.6.4.117: St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 4, p. 170 (820-840), view the book here

More popular, however, were less complex symbols, which could be added to the page much quicker. Dots and lines are particularly common ingredients of such footnote symbols. Interestingly, their first appearance is not as a connector of comment and text, but as an insertion mark that added an omitted line into the text. In the image below such an omitted line is placed in the margin accompanied by a symbol made up of a line and a dot. It is repeated in the text itself, near the location where the line belonged. This omission mark may well be the origins of the footnote system that would emerge over the course of the Middle Ages—and that we still use today, almost unchanged.

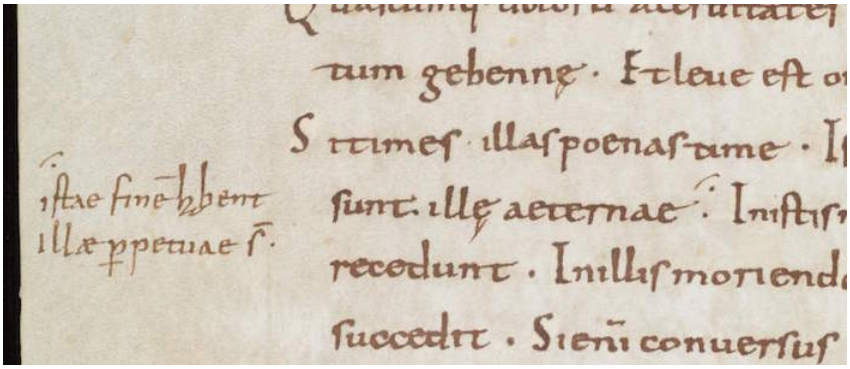


Figure 13.6.4.118: Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 172, p. 20 (9th century), view the book here

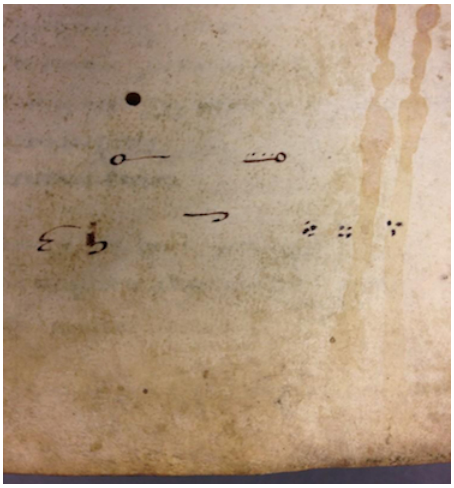


Figure 13.6.4.119: Leiden, University Library, VLF MS 69, flyleaf (12th century) (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

Scribes used different versions of the line-and-dot symbol. In fact, they had to if they were to produce unique ties between comment and text. When dots were used, their number would increase as more notes were added. Alternatively, the position of the dots could be varied, so that they formed different—unique!—patterns.

Customizing the line-type footnote, scribes usually distinguished one from the other by added circles, which were attached at different locations and in varying numbers. In what is a most unusual find, in a Leiden manuscript we see a scribe practicing his dot and line footnote symbols (left). It shows variations in the number and pattern of dots, as well as in the treatments of lines.

Letters

Closest to our modern system of footnotes, finally, is the use of letters to tie a marginal remark to its proper location in the text. In some manuscripts we see the entire alphabet running down the margin. The image to the left shows a page from a manuscript with works by Horace (left column) to which a high volume of notes were added (right column), all of which are connected to specific passages with the letters A to Z.

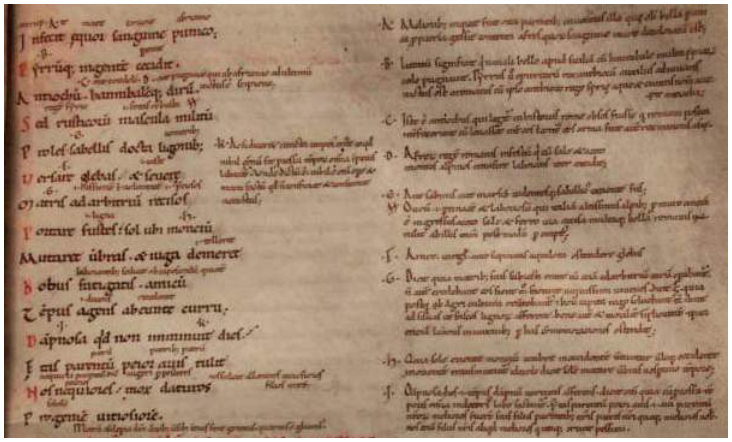


Figure **13.6.4.120**: Leeuwarden, Tresoar, 45HS, fol. 45r (c. 1100), (photo: Erik Kwakkel)

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries such classical texts were most commonly used in a classroom setting. The instructors who used the books, typically in a monastic school, had many things to explain to their students, as the notes show. It made sense to organise such added information in a clear manner, and the alphabet came in handy in this respect. Some pages in this particular book contain more footnotes than there are letters in the alphabet, which challenged the system. In such cases the user added into the mix symbols made from lines and dots.

The last word: numerals

So where are the medieval footnotes that make use of numbers, like we do today? Curiously, I have not been able to find them, which makes sense. Roman numerals would not be suitable for the task. Placed out of context, as a symbol initiating a segment of text (i.e. the marginal comment) they would easily be mistaken for a letter—which they are, graphically speaking. Moreover, a high Roman numeral would quickly take in a lot of space —not what you want in a note symbol. Arabic numerals were far less popular than Roman numerals, even in the later Middle Ages. Readers may not have felt comfortable enough with these new numbers to use them in the margin. In fact, some scribes in the later Middle Ages are still confused by the zero. The leap from alphabet to numerals—from the medieval to our modern system— appears to have been taken in the age of print.

Medieval notepads

by DR. ERIK KWAKKEL

We are surrounded by pieces of scrap paper. We chuck tons of them in the waste bin each year, leave them lying on our desks, use them as bookmarks, stuff them in our pockets, and toss them on the street. And so we usually do not have to look hard or long when we need a piece of paper for our shopping list or for writing down a thought. This was very different in medieval times. Writing material—of any kind—was very expensive back then, which meant that scribes used a paper or parchment sheet to the max: everything was used. As a result, there was nothing obvious lying around on one's desk that was suitable for scrap material. So how did the medieval person make notes?

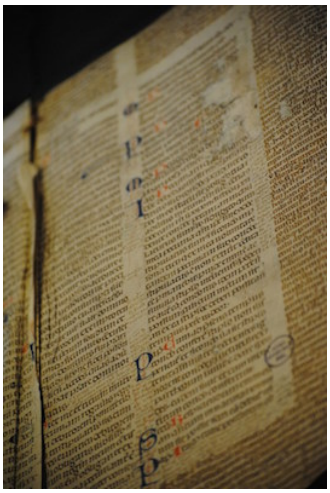


Figure 13.6.4.121: Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 2888 (Italy, 13th century) (Photo: **Julie Somers, Turning Over a New Leaf**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The most common and sensible location for putting down thoughts, critique or notes was the margin of the medieval book. Consider this: you wouldn't think so looking at a medieval page, but on average only half of it was filled with the actual text. A shocking fifty to sixty percent was designed to be margin. As inefficient as this may seem, the space came in handy for the reader. As the Middle Ages progressed it became more and more common to resort to the margin for note-taking. Notably, the thirteenth century gave birth to two particularly smart book designs that accommodated such use. Both types are connected to the emerging university, which makes sense as this was a note-taking environment par excellence—then and now.

The first of these is seen in the image above, which shows a page of a law manuscript that actually contains two kinds of texts. Found in the two central columns is the *Digest of Justianian*, written in a slightly larger letter. Draped around it, in a smaller letter, is the commentary to this work: these are the notes of smart teachers from the past, put there collectively to help the reader make sense of the law. This specific style of presenting two works on the one page, where the glosses (commentary) are presented as "square brackets", is called *textus inclusus*. An Italian reader in the thirteenth century added his own two-cents to these "prefab" opinions that came with the book: in the image above we see them scribbled between the two central columns.



Figure 13.6.4.122: London, British Library, Harley MS 3487, 13th century (**source**)

The second thirteenth-century book layout that was specially designed to accommodate note-taking is as clever as the text on its pages. We encounter it first and foremost in manuscripts with works by Aristotle, although the design would spread to other domains, including law and medicine.

As seen in the image above, the margins surrounding the Aristotle text (which form the two central columns) were left completely blank by the scribe. The tiny writing that is seen there now is from a student in the Arts Faculty, where the works of Aristotle

formed the main textbook, called the *Corpus vetustius* (the old corpus).



Figure **13.6.4.123**: Detail, London, British Library, Harley MS 3487, 13th century (**source**)

If you look carefully at the detail above you see five vertical commentary columns marked by thin pencil lines, which allowed for five “pillars” of notes. Cleverly, in this page design the start of the note could be placed at the same height as the Aristotle line on which it commented, not just one time, but five times over! Larger comments were placed in the larger blank areas in the lower margin. Some of these Aristotle textbooks contained up to twenty “zones” for notes, which would ultimately be connected to the main text with the help of symbols resembling our current footnotes.

Yellow sticky notes

Paper and parchment sheets were commonly used to the max, meaning no redundant material was left that could be used for scraps. However, when the animal skin was turned into parchment sheets such redundant material was left over. In the process the outer rim of the dried skin was removed, because these “offcuts” were deemed unsuitable for writing on. The material was too thick for a regular page and its surface was slippery and translucent, not to mention that most offcuts were too small for normal pages. They consequently ended up in the recycling bin of the parchment maker.

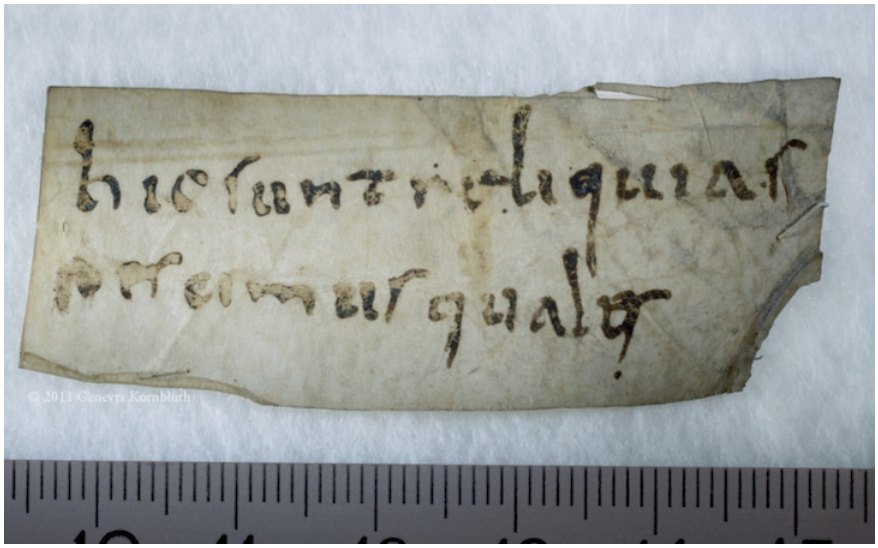


Figure **13.6.4.124**: Sens CT Library, J 36 (Chartaire 156), 9th century (photo: **Genevra Kornbluth**)

Interestingly, these small, scrappy slips of parchment were sometimes sold to clients. Offcuts were used for text with a short lifespan, such as letters and drafts. In addition, it was used when a text was “utilitarian” and did not need to be produced from regular – more expensive—parchment. An example is seen in the image above, which shows a short description strapped to a bone

that belonged to a saint. Such “relic labels” were important because of course nobody wanted to mistake the big toe of St Peter for that of St Paul. Such information was scribbled on the parchment strip, usually in low-quality (fast) handwriting.

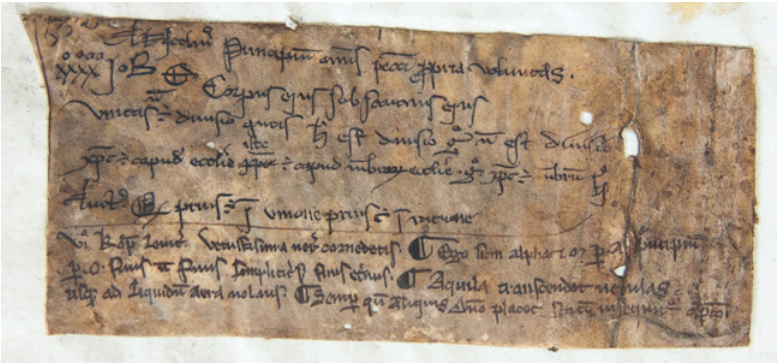


Figure **13.6.4.125**: Leiden, University Library, BPL MS 191 D, fragment, 13th century (photo: Giulio Menna)

Offcuts were also frequently used by students and scholars, for example for taking notes in the classroom (image above, **more here**). In fact, in *De discipline scholarum*, a guidebook made in the 1230s for students and teachers at the University of Paris, it is explained how a student should bring such slips of parchment to class for taking notes. Interestingly, some of these slips have survived because they were pasted in a student’s textbook, like the one seen in the image above. These are truly the medieval equivalent of our “yellow sticky notes.” The practice of bringing scrap material into the classroom was a much broader medieval phenomenon, as is shown by the famous birch bark notes that survive from 13th-century Russia. The image below shows funny “stick figure” doodles drawn by the student Onfim as he was sitting—bored no doubt—in class.



Figure **13.6.4.126**: Novgorod, Museum of History, birch bark strip 202, from pupil Onfim, dated 1240-1260

The last word: Notepad

There is evidence that multiple parchment offcuts were sometimes bound together, by pricking a hole in them and pulling a cord through. These bundles, which essentially form a true notepad in the modern sense of the word, could be of considerable size. A specimen in the University Library, Würzburg consists of thirty slips. A type of notepad that was even more popular in medieval times was the wax tablet (**here is a collection of them**). These, too, were often tied together into a bundle, forming a notepad of perhaps six or so “pages” (image below, note the holes for the cords on the left side). Smart pages, that is, because the contents could be erased from the soft wax (with the flat back of the stylus), presenting vacant space for fresh thoughts.



Figure 13.6.4.127: Michigan, University Library, Papyrology Collection, Inv. 768, 4th-6th century (photo: **University of Michigan Library**, CC BY 3.0)

This particular one, which is a stunning 1500 years old, was likely used in a classroom setting in Christian Egypt, probably by one Ischyrion, whose name is carved into the wood on the other side. Curiously, the object preserves some of its original contents. When you pressed too hard with your sharp stylus, an imprint was left in the wood behind the wax. We therefore know that Ischyrion was studying the Bible, given that the indentations have been identified as Proverbs VII, 3-13.

As with the other examples of note-taking shown in this post, the tablet is a time capsule that presents us with the thoughts of individuals that lived over a thousand years ago. While the notepads from Egypt, France, Italy and Russia present highly personal scribbles not meant for posterity, time turned them into fossilized pieces of public history stuck to pages, slips and tablets.

Additional resources:

Blog post on the birch bark notes discovered near the city of Novgorod, Russia

The birch bark notes from the Russia-InfoCentre

13.6.4: Books in Medieval Europe is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.4: Books in Medieval Europe** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.5: Early Christian

Early Christian art

Once thought to have indicated a "decline" in artistic skill, early Christian art is now understood to represent a major shift in the way that artists and patrons visualized their beliefs and their world.

c. 200 - 500 C.E.

Early Christianity, an introduction

by DR. ALLEN FARBER

Key events



Figure **13.6.5.1**: Colossal statue of Constantine the Great, 4th century (Capitoline Museum, Rome) (photo: **Jean-Christophe BENOIST** CC BY 2.5)

Two important moments played a critical role in the development of early Christianity:

1. The decision of the Apostle Paul to spread Christianity beyond the Jewish communities of Palestine into the Greco-Roman world.
2. When the Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity and became its patron at the beginning of the fourth century

The creation and nature of Christian art were directly impacted by these moments.

The spread of Christianity

As implicit in the names of his Epistles, Paul spread Christianity to the Greek and Roman cities of the ancient Mediterranean world. In cities like Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, and Rome, Paul encountered the religious and cultural experience of the Greco Roman world. This encounter played a major role in the formation of Christianity.



Figure 13.6.5.2: The Tomb of St. John the Apostle from the Basilica of St. John, 6th century, Ephesus, near modern day Selçuk, Turkey



Figure 13.6.5.3: Rotunda of Galerius, later a Christian church, and afterwards a mosque. Today it is known as the Church of the Rotunda, 4th century CE, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: George M. Groutas, CC BY 2.0)

Christianity as a mystery cult

Christianity in its first three centuries was one of a large number of mystery religions that flourished in the Roman world. Religion in the Roman world was divided between the public, inclusive cults of civic religions and the secretive, exclusive mystery cults. The emphasis in the civic cults was on customary practices, especially sacrifices. Since the early history of the polis or city state in Greek culture, the public cults played an important role in defining civic identity.



Figure 13.6.5.4: Arch of Titus and Colosseum, late 1st century C.E., Rome

As it expanded and assimilated more people, Rome continued to use the public religious experience to define the identity of its citizens. The polytheism of the Romans allowed the assimilation of the gods of the people it had conquered.

Thus, when the Emperor Hadrian created the Pantheon in the early second century, the building's dedication to all the gods signified the Roman ambition of bringing cosmos or order to the gods, just as new and foreign societies were brought into political order through the spread of Roman imperial authority. The order of Roman authority on earth is a reflection of the divine cosmos.



Figure 13.6.5.5: Pantheon, completed 126 C.E., Rome

For most adherents of mystery cults, there was no contradiction in participating in both the public cults and a mystery cult. The different religious experiences appealed to different aspects of life. In contrast to the civic identity which was at the focus of the public cults, the mystery religions appealed to the participant's concerns for personal salvation. The mystery cults focused on a central mystery that would only be known by those who had become initiated into the teachings of the cult.

Monotheism

These are characteristics Christianity shares with numerous other mystery cults. In early Christianity emphasis was placed on baptism, which marked the initiation of the convert into the mysteries of the faith. The Christian emphasis on the belief in salvation and an afterlife is consistent with the other mystery cults. The monotheism of Christianity, though, was a crucial difference from the other cults. The refusal of the early Christians to participate in the civic cults due to their monotheistic beliefs lead to their persecution. Christians were seen as anti-social.

Additional resources:

Introduction to the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) from Open Yale Courses

New Testament Reading Room from the Tyndale Seminary

"Shedding Light on the Catacombs of Rome from BBC News

From Jesus to Christ from PBS

Fathers of the Church (biography and texts) from the Catholic Encyclopedia

Early Christian art

by DR. ALLEN FARBER

The beginnings of an identifiable Christian art can be traced to the end of the second century and the beginning of the third century. Considering the Old Testament prohibitions against graven images, it is important to consider why Christian art developed in the first place. The use of images will be a continuing issue in the history of Christianity. The best explanation for the emergence of Christian art in the early church is due to the important role images played in Greco-Roman culture.

As Christianity gained converts, these new Christians had been brought up on the value of images in their previous cultural experience and they wanted to continue this in their Christian experience. For example, there was a change in burial practices in the Roman world away from cremation to inhumation. Outside the city walls of Rome, adjacent to major roads, catacombs were dug into the ground to bury the dead. Families would have chambers or cubicula dug to bury their members. Wealthy Romans would also have sarcophagi or marble tombs carved for their burial. The Christian converts wanted the same things. Christian catacombs were dug frequently adjacent to non-Christian ones, and sarcophagi with Christian imagery were apparently popular with the richer Christians.



Figure **13.6.5.6**: Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble (Treasury of Saint Peter's Basilica)

Junius Bassus, a Roman praefectus urbi or high ranking government administrator, died in 359 C.E. Scholars believe that he converted to Christianity shortly before his death accounting for the inclusion of Christ and scenes from the Bible. (Photograph above shows a plaster cast of the original.)

Themes of death and resurrection

A striking aspect of the Christian art of the third century is the absence of the imagery that will dominate later Christian art. We do not find in this early period images of the Nativity, Crucifixion, or Resurrection of Christ, for example. This absence of direct images of the life of Christ is best explained by the status of Christianity as a mystery religion. The story of the Crucifixion and Resurrection would be part of the secrets of the cult.

While not directly representing these central Christian images, the theme of death and resurrection was represented through a series of images, many of which were derived from the Old Testament that echoed the themes. For example, the story of Jonah—being swallowed by a great fish and then after spending three days and three nights in the belly of the beast is vomited out on dry ground

—was seen by early Christians as an anticipation or prefiguration of the story of Christ's own death and resurrection. Images of Jonah, along with those of Daniel in the Lion's Den, the Three Hebrews in the Firey Furnace, Moses Striking the Rock, among others, are widely popular in the Christian art of the third century, both in paintings and on sarcophagi.

All of these can be seen to allegorically allude to the principal narratives of the life of Christ. The common subject of salvation echoes the major emphasis in the mystery religions on personal salvation. The appearance of these subjects frequently adjacent to each other in the catacombs and sarcophagi can be read as a visual litany: save me Lord as you have saved Jonah from the belly of the great fish, save me Lord as you have saved the Hebrews in the desert, save me Lord as you have saved Daniel in the Lion's den, etc.

One can imagine that early Christians—who were rallying around the nascent religious authority of the Church against the regular threats of persecution by imperial authority—would find great meaning in the story of Moses of striking the rock to provide water for the Israelites fleeing the authority of the Pharaoh on their exodus to the Promised Land.

Christianity's canonical texts and the New Testament

One of the major differences between Christianity and the public cults was the central role faith plays in Christianity and the importance of orthodox beliefs. The history of the early Church is marked by the struggle to establish a canonical set of texts and the establishment of orthodox doctrine.

Questions about the nature of the Trinity and Christ would continue to challenge religious authority. Within the civic cults there were no central texts and there were no orthodox doctrinal positions. The emphasis was on maintaining customary traditions. One accepted the existence of the gods, but there was no emphasis on belief in the gods.

The Christian emphasis on orthodox doctrine has its closest parallels in the Greek and Roman world to the role of philosophy. Schools of philosophy centered around the teachings or doctrines of a particular teacher. The schools of philosophy proposed specific conceptions of reality. Ancient philosophy was influential in the formation of Christian theology. For example, the opening of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God…," is unmistakably based on the idea of the "logos" going back to the philosophy of Heraclitus (ca. 535 – 475 BCE). Christian apologists like Justin Martyr writing in the second century understood Christ as the Logos or the Word of God who served as an intermediary between God and the World.

Early representations of Christ and the apostles



Figure **13.6.5.7**: Christ and the Apostles, Catacombs of Domitilla, 4th century C.E., Rome

An early representation of Christ found in the Catacomb of Domitilla shows the figure of Christ flanked by a group of his disciples or students. Those experienced with later Christian imagery might mistake this for an image of the Last Supper, but instead this image does not tell any story. It conveys rather the idea that Christ is the true teacher.

Christ draped in classical garb holds a scroll in his left hand while his right hand is outstretched in the so-called *ad locutio* gesture, or the gesture of the orator. The dress, scroll, and gesture all establish the authority of Christ, who is placed in the center of his disciples. Christ is thus treated like the philosopher surrounded by his students or disciples.



Figure 13.6.5.8: Comparably, an early representation of the apostle Paul (left), identifiable with his characteristic pointed beard and high forehead, is based on the convention of the philosopher, as exemplified by a Roman copy of a late fourth century B.C.E. portrait of the fifth century B.C.E. playwright Sophocles (right).

Additional resources:

Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century

Introduction to the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), Yale University Open Course videos

New Testament Reading Room, Tyndale Seminary

"Shedding Light on the Catacombs of Rome," BBC News

"From Jesus to Christ," Frontline PBS site

"The Fathers of the Church," biography and texts from the Catholic Encyclopedia

Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.5.1: Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome, late 2nd century – 4th century C.E.

Early Christian art and architecture after Constantine

by DR. ALLEN FARBER

By the beginning of the fourth century Christianity was a growing mystery religion in the cities of the Roman world. It was attracting converts from different social levels. Christian theology and art was enriched through the cultural interaction with the Greco-Roman world. But Christianity would be radically transformed through the actions of a single man.

Rome becomes Christian and Constantine builds churches

In 312, the Emperor Constantine defeated his principal rival Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. Accounts of the battle describe how Constantine saw a sign in the heavens portending his victory. Eusebius, Constantine's principal biographer, describes the sign as the Chi Rho, the first two letters in the Greek spelling of the name Christos.



Figure 13.6.5.9: Colossus of Constantine, c. 312-15 (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome)

After that victory Constantine became the principal patron of Christianity. In 313 he issued the Edict of Milan which granted religious toleration. Although Christianity would not become the official religion of Rome until the end of the fourth century, Constantine's imperial sanction of Christianity transformed its status and nature. Neither imperial Rome or Christianity would be the same after this moment. Rome would become Christian, and Christianity would take on the aura of imperial Rome.

The transformation of Christianity is dramatically evident in a comparison between the architecture of the pre-Constantinian church and that of the Constantinian and post-Constantinian church. During the pre-Constantinian period, there was not much that distinguished the Christian churches from typical domestic architecture. A striking example of this is presented by a Christian community house, from the Syrian town of Dura-Europos. Here a typical home has been adapted to the needs of the congregation.

A wall was taken down to combine two rooms: this was undoubtedly the room for services. It is significant that the most elaborate aspect of the house is the room designed as a baptistry. This reflects the importance of the sacrament of Baptism to initiate new members into the mysteries of the faith. Otherwise this building would not stand out from the other houses. This domestic architecture obviously would not meet the needs of Constantine's architects.

Emperors for centuries had been responsible for the construction of temples throughout the Roman Empire. We have already observed the role of the public cults in defining one's civic identity, and Emperors understood the construction of temples as testament to their pietas, or respect for the customary religious practices and traditions. So it was natural for Constantine to want to construct edifices in honor of Christianity. He built churches in Rome including the Church of St. Peter, he built churches in the Holy Land, most notably the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and he built churches in his newly-constructed capital of Constantinople.

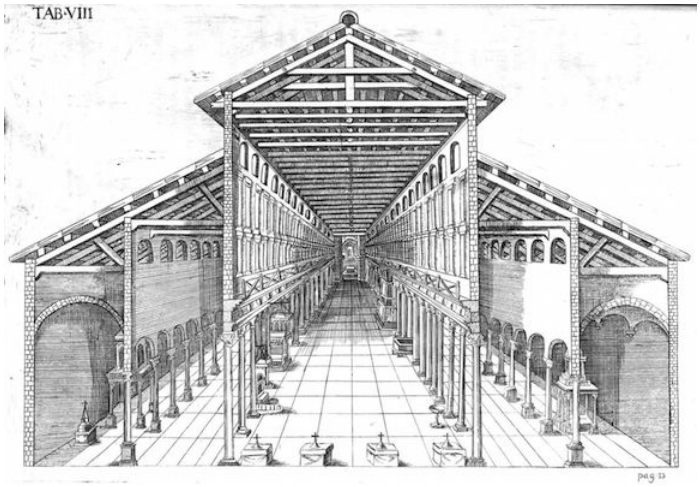


Figure **13.6.5.10**: Old St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, from: Giovanni Ciampini, *De sacris aedificiis a Constantino Magno constructis: synopsis historica*, 1693, p. 33

The basilica

In creating these churches, Constantine and his architects confronted a major challenge: what should be the physical form of the church? Clearly the traditional form of the Roman temple would be inappropriate both from associations with pagan cults but also from the difference in function. Temples served as treasuries and dwellings for the cult; sacrifices occurred on outdoor altars with the temple as a backdrop. This meant that Roman temple architecture was largely an architecture of the exterior. Since Christianity was a mystery religion that demanded initiation to participate in religious practices, Christian architecture put greater emphasis on the interior. The Christian churches needed large interior spaces to house the growing congregations and to mark the clear separation of the faithful from the unfaithful. At the same time, the new Christian churches needed to be visually meaningful. The buildings needed to convey the new authority of Christianity. These factors were instrumental in the formulation during the Constantinian period of an architectural form that would become the core of Christian architecture to our own time: the Christian Basilica.



Figure **13.6.5.11**: Reconstruction of the interior of the Basilica Ulpia

The basilica was not a new architectural form. The Romans had been building basilicas in their cities and as part of palace complexes for centuries. A particularly lavish one was the so-called Basilica Ulpia constructed as part of the Forum of the Emperor Trajan in the early second century. Basilicas had diverse functions but essentially they served as formal public meeting places. One of the major functions of the basilicas was as a site for law courts. These were housed in an architectural form known as the apse. In the Basilica Ulpia, these semi-circular forms project from either end of the building, but in some cases, the apses would project off of the length of the building. The magistrate who served as the representative of the authority of the Emperor would sit in a formal throne in the apse and issue his judgments. This function gave an aura of political authority to the basilicas.



Figure **13.6.5.12**: Aula Palatina, Trier, early 4th century C.E. (photo: **Beth M527**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The basilica at Trier (Aula Palatina)

Basilicas also served as audience halls as a part of imperial palaces. A well-preserved example is found in the northern German town of Trier. Constantine built a basilica as part of a palace complex in Trier which served as his northern capital. Although a fairly simple architectural form and now stripped of its original interior decoration, the basilica must have been an imposing stage for the emperor. Imagine the emperor dressed in imperial regalia marching up the central axis as he makes his dramatic adventus or entrance along with other members of his court. This space would have humbled an emissary who approached the enthroned emperor seated in the apse.

Additional resources:

Dura Europos (Yale University)

Dura Europos: Crossroads of Cultures

Santa Maria Antiqua

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88710

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



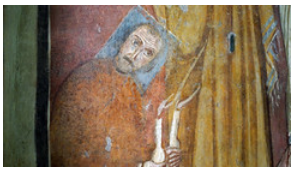











Figure 13.6.5.13: More Smarthistory images…

Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus

by DR. ALLEN FARBER



Video 13.6.5.3: Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus (Sarcophagus with philosopher, orant, and Old and New Testament scenes), c. 270 C.E., marble, 23 1/4 x 86 inches (Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure 13.6.5.14: Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus, c. 275 C.E., white veined marble, found under the floor of Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome

Early Christian and Roman (pagan) art

This third century sarcophagus from the Church of Santa Maria was undoubtedly made to serve as the tomb of a relatively prosperous third century Christian. As we will see below, Early Christian art borrowed many forms from pagan art.

The male philosopher type that we see in the center of the Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus (above) is easily identifiable with the same type in another third century sarcophagus (below), but in this case a non-Christian one.



Figure 13.6.5.15: Asiatic sarcophagus from Sidamara, c. 250 C.E. (Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Istanbul) (photo: Richard Mortel, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The female figure beside him in the Santa Maria Antiqua sarcophagus who holds her arms outstretched combines two different conventions. The outstretched hands in Early Christian art represent the so-called “orant” or praying figure. This is the same gesture found in the catacomb paintings of Jonah being vomited from the great fish, the Hebrews in the Furnace, and Daniel in the Lions den.



Figure **13.6.5.16**: Left to right: Orant from the Sarcophagus of Sabinus, c. 310-20 (Vatican Museums); Orant from the Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus, c. 270, Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome; Orant from the Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome, fresco, late 2nd century through the 4th century C.E.



Figure **13.6.5.17**: Illustration of Dioscorides, late 6th century C.E., illuminated manuscript

The juxtaposition of this female figure with the philosopher figure associates her with the convention of the muse in ancient Greek and Roman art (as a source of inspiration for the philosopher). This convention is illustrated in a later sixth century miniature showing the figure of Dioscorides, an ancient Greek physician, pharmacologist, and botanist (left).

On the left side of the sarcophagus (below), Jonah is represented sleeping under the ivy after being vomited from the great fish. The pose of the reclining Jonah with his arm over his head is based on the mythological figure of Endymion, whose wish to sleep for ever—and thus become ageless and immortal—explains the popularity of this subject on non-Christian sarcophagi (see the detail from a Roman sarcophagus below).



Figure 13.6.5.18: Jonah (detail), Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus, c. 275 C.E., white veined marble, found under the floor of Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome



Figure 13.6.5.19: Endymion (detail), Marble sarcophagus with the myth of Selene and Endymion, early 3rd century C.E., Roman, marble, 28 1/2 inches / 72.39 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.6.5.20: Moschophoros, early 6th century B.C.E., marble (Acropolis Museum, Athens)

Another popular Early Christian image appears on the *Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus*, known as the Good Shepherd (below). While echoing the New Testament parable of the Good Shepherd and the Psalms of David, the motif had clear parallels in Greek and Roman art, going back at least to Archaic Greek art, as exemplified by the so-called *Moschophoros*, or calf-bearer, from the early sixth century B.C.E. (left).

On the far right of the *Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus*, we see an image of the Baptism of Christ (below). The inclusion of this relatively rare representation of Christ probably refers to the importance of the sacrament of Baptism, which signified death and rebirth into a new Christian life.



Figure 13.6.5.21: Good Shepherd and Baptism (detail), Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus, c. 275 C.E., white veined marble, found under the floor of Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome

A curious detail about the male and female figures at the center of the *Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus* is that their faces are unfinished. This suggests that this tomb was not made with a specific patron in mind. Rather, it was fabricated on a speculative basis, with the expectation that a patron would buy it and have his—and presumably his wife's—likenesses added. If this is true, it

says a lot about the nature of the art industry and the status of Christianity at this period. To produce a sarcophagus like this meant a serious commitment on the part of the maker. The expense of the stone and the time taken to carve it were considerable. A craftsman would not have made a commitment like this without a sense of certainty that someone would purchase it.



Figure **13.6.5.22**: Orant and Seated figure (detail), Santa Maria Antiqua Sarcophagus, c. 275 C.E., white veined marble, found under the floor of Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome

Additional resources

Endymion Sarcophagus on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Schmid, Werner Schmid, "Finding Sanctuary: An Early Christian Wonder in the Heart of the Roman Forum," *Icon* (2005), pp. 22-27.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











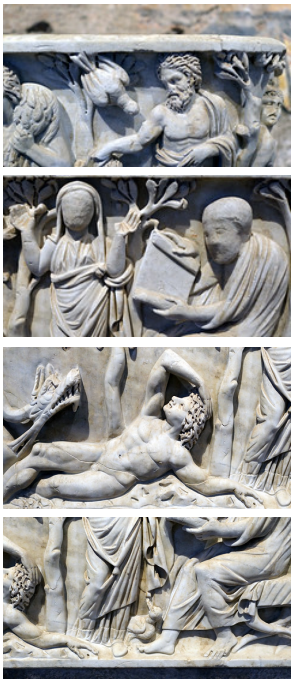


Figure 13.6.5.23: More Smarthistory images…

The Good Shepherd in Early Christianity

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.5.4: A conversation with Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker in front of Christ as the Good Shepherd, 300–350 C.E., marble, 39 inches high (Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican Museums, Rome)

Santa Pudenziana

by DR. ALLEN FARBER



Figure 13.6.5.24: Pediment above the door of Santa Pudenziana, 4th century C.E., Rome

A ritual space



Figure 13.6.5.25: Nave of Santa Pudenziana, 4th century C.E.

The opulent interior of the Constantinian basilicas would have created an effective space for increasingly elaborate rituals. Influenced by the splendor of the rituals associated with the emperor, the liturgy placed emphasis on the dramatic entrances and the stages of the rituals. For example, the *introit* or entrance of the priest into the church was influenced by the *adventus* or arrival of the emperor.

The culmination of the entrance as well as the focal point of the architecture was the apse. It was here that the sacraments would be performed, and it was here that the priest would proclaim the word. In Roman civic and imperial basilicas, the apse had been the seat of authority. In the civic basilicas this is where the magistrate would sit adjacent to an imperial image and dispense judgment. In the imperial basilicas, the emperor would be enthroned. These associations with authority made the apse a suitable stage for the Christian rituals. The priest would be like the magistrate proclaiming the word of a higher authority.

A late fourth century mosaic in the apse of the Roman church of Santa Pudenziana visualizes this. We see in this image a dramatic transformation in the conception of Christ from the pre-Constantinian period.



Figure **13.6.5.26**: Apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana, 4th century C.E., Rome

From teacher to God

In the Santa Pudenziana mosaic, Christ is shown in the center seated on a jewel-encrusted throne. He wears a gold toga with purple trim, both colors associated with imperial authority. His right hand is extended in the *ad locutio* gesture conventional in imperial representations. Holding a book in his right hand, Christ is shown proclaiming the word. This is dependent on another convention of Roman imperial art of the so-called *traditio legis*, or the handing down of the law. A silver plate made for the Emperor Theodosius in 388 to mark the tenth anniversary of his accession to power shows the Emperor in the center handing down the scroll of the law. Notably the Emperor Theodosius is shown with a halo much like the figure of Christ.



Figure **13.6.5.27**: Detail of the apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana, 4th century C.E., Rome

While the halo would become a standard convention in Christian art to demarcate sacred figures, the origins of this convention can be found in imperial representations like the image of Theodosius. Behind the figure of Christ appears an elaborate city. In the center appears a hill surmounted by a jewel-encrusted Cross. This identifies the city as Jerusalem and the hill as Golgotha, but this is not the earthly city but rather the heavenly Jerusalem. This is made clear by the four figures seen hovering in the sky around the Cross. These are identifiable as the four beasts that are described as accompanying the lamb in the Book of Revelation.



Figure 13.6.5.28: Winged lion representing St. Mark, one of the Four Evangelists, apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana, 4th century C.E., Rome (photo: Lawrence OP, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The winged man, the winged lion, the winged ox, and the eagle became in Christian art symbols for the Four Evangelists, but in the context of the Santa Pudenziana mosaic, they define the realm as outside earthly time and space or as the heavenly realm. Christ is thus represented as the ruler of the heavenly city. The cross has become a sign the triumph of Christ. This mosaic finds a clear echo in the following excerpt from the writings of the early Christian theologian, St. John Chrysostom:

> ***You will see the king, seated on the throne of that unutterable glory, together with the angels and archangels standing beside him, as well as the countless legions of the ranks of the saints. This is how the Holy City appears….In this city is towering the wonderful and glorious sign of victory, the Cross, the victory booty of Christ, the first fruit of our human kind, the spoils of war of our king.***

The language of this passage shows the unmistakable influence of the Roman emphasis on triumph. The cross is characterized as a trophy or victory monument. Christ is conceived of as a warrior king. The order of the heavenly realm is characterized as like the Roman army divided up into legions. Both the text and mosaic reflect the transformation in the conception of Christ. These document the merging of Christianity with Roman imperial authority.



Figure 13.6.5.29: Christ and the Apostles, Catacombs of Domitilla, 4th century C.E., Rome

It is this aura of imperial authority that distinguishes the Santa Pudenziana mosaic from the painting of Christ and his disciples from the Catacomb of Domitilla, Christ in the catacomb painting is simply a teacher, while in the mosaic Christ has been transformed into the ruler of heaven. Even his long flowing beard and hair construct Christ as being like Zeus or Jupiter. The

mosaic makes clear that all authority comes from Christ. He delegates that authority to his flanking apostles. It is significant that in the Santa Pudenziana mosaic the figure of Christ is flanked by the figure of St. Paul on the left and the figure of St. Peter on the right. These are the principal apostles.



Figure **13.6.5.30**: Detail of the apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana, 4th century C.E., Rome (photo: **Richard Mortel**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

By the fourth century, it was already established that the Bishop of Rome, or the Pope, was the successor of St. Peter, the founder of the Church of Rome. Just as power descends from Christ through the apostles, so at the end of time that power will be returned to Christ. The standing female figures can be identified as personifications of the major division of Christianity between church of the Jews and that of the Gentiles. They can be seen as offering up their crowns to Christ like the 24 Elders are described as returning their crowns in the Book of Revelation.



Figure **13.6.5.31**: Missorium of Theodosius, 388 C.E. (Academia de la Historia, Madrid)

The meaning is clear that all authority comes from Christ just as in the *Missorium of Theodosius* which shows the transmission of authority from the Emperor to his co-emperors. This emphasis on authority should be understood in the context of the religious debates of the period. When Constantine accepted Christianity, there was not one Christianity but a wide diversity of different versions. A central concern for Constantine was the establishment of Christian orthodoxy in order to unify the church.



Figure **13.6.5.32**: Christ treading the Lion and Asp mosaic from the Archiepiscipal Palace, 5th century C.E. (Archiepiscipal Palace, Ravenna)

Christianity underwent a fundamental transformation with its acceptance by Constantine. The imagery of Christian art before Constantine appealed to the believer's desires for personal salvation, while the dominant themes of Christian art after Constantine emphasized the authority of Christ and His church in the world.

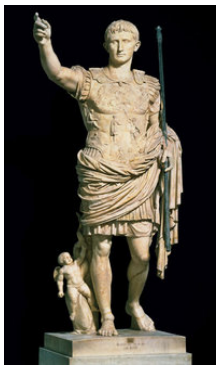
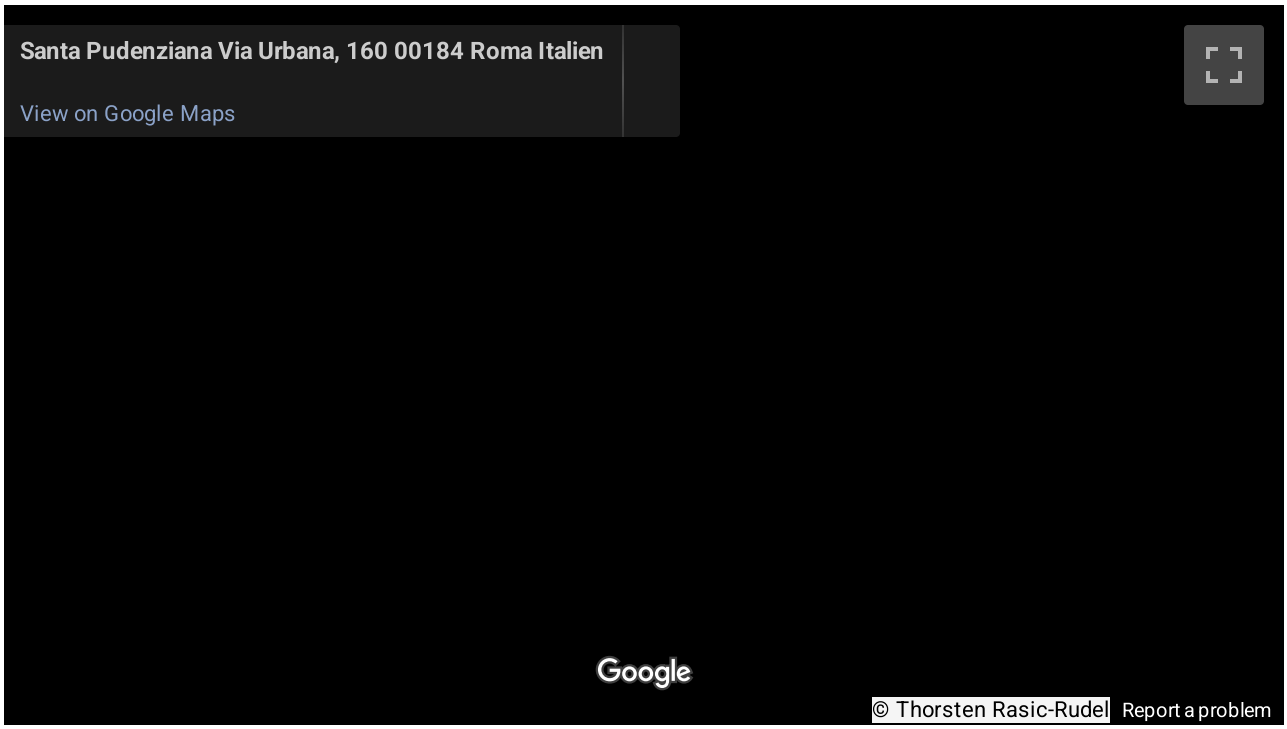


Figure **13.6.5.33**: Augustus of Primaporta, 13 B.C.E. to 15 C.E.

Just as Rome became Christian, Christianity and Christ took on the aura of Imperial Rome. A dramatic example of this is presented by a mosaic of Christ in the Archepiscopal palace in Ravenna. Here Christ is shown wearing the cuirass, or the breastplate, regularly depicted in images of Roman Emperors and generals. The staff of imperial authority has been transformed into the cross.



Additional resources:

Photographs of Santa Pudenziana at Kunsthistorie

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Santa Pudenziana Mosaic with detail of Christ



Santa Pudenziana Apse Mosaic

Santa Pudenziana Apse Mosaic with detail of left

Santa Pudenziana Mosaic—full

Santa Pudenziana Nave



Figure 13.6.5.34: More Smarthistory images…

Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus

by DR. ALLEN FARBER



Video **13.6.5.5**: *Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus*, marble, 359 C.E. (Treasury of Saint Peter's Basilica)

Please note that due to photography restrictions, the images used in the video above show the plaster cast on display in the Vatican Museum. Nevertheless, the audio conversation was recorded in the treasury in Saint Peter's Basilica, in front of the original sarcophagus.

Christianity becomes legal

By the middle of the fourth century Christianity had undergone a dramatic transformation. Before Emperor Constantine's acceptance, Christianity had a marginal status in the Roman world. Attracting converts in the urban populations, Christianity appealed to the faithful's desires for personal salvation; however, due to Christianity's monotheism (which prohibited its followers from participating in the public cults), Christians suffered periodic episodes of persecution. By the middle of the fourth century, Christianity under imperial patronage had become a part of the establishment. The elite of Roman society were becoming new converts.



Figure **13.6.5.35**: Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble (Treasury, St. Peter's Basilica)

Such an individual was Junius Bassus. He was a member of a senatorial family. His father had held the position of Praetorian prefect, which involved administration of the Western Empire. Junius Bassus held the position of praefectus urbi for Rome. The office of urban prefect was established in the early period of Rome under the kings. It was a position held by members of the most

elite families of Rome. In his role as prefect, Junius Bassus was responsible for the administration of the city of Rome. When Junius Bassus died at the age of 42 in the year 359, a sarcophagus was made for him. As recorded in an inscription on the sarcophagus now in the Vatican collection, Junius Bassus had become a convert to Christianity shortly before his death.

The birth of Christian symbolism in art

The style and iconography of this sarcophagus reflects the transformed status of Christianity. This is most evident in the image at the center of the upper register. Before the time of Constantine, the figure of Christ was rarely directly represented, but here on the Junius Bassus sarcophagus we see Christ prominently represented not in a narrative representation from the New Testament but in a formula derived from Roman Imperial art. The *traditio legis* ("giving of the law") was a formula in Roman art to give visual testament to the emperor as the sole source of the law.

Already at this early period, artists had articulated identifiable formulas for representing Sts. Peter and Paul. Peter was represented with a bowl haircut and a short cropped beard, while the figure of Paul was represented with a pointed beard and usually a high forehead. In paintings, Peter has white hair and Paul's hair is black. The early establishment of these formulas was undoubtedly a product of the doctrine of apostolic authority in the early church. Bishops claimed that their authority could be traced back to the original Twelve Apostles.

Peter and Paul held the status as the principal apostles. The Bishops of Rome have understood themselves in a direct succession back to St. Peter, the founder of the church in Rome and its first bishop. The popularity of the formula of the *traditio legis* in Christian art in the fourth century was due to the importance of establishing orthodox Christian doctrine.

In contrast to the established formulas for representing Sts. Peter and Paul, early Christian art reveals two competing conceptions of Christ. The youthful, beardless Christ, based on representation of Apollo, vied for dominance with the long-haired and bearded Christ, based on representations of Jupiter or Zeus.



Figure **13.6.5.36**: Traditio legis, Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble, (Treasury of St. Peter's Basilica)

The feet of Christ in the Junius Bassus relief rest on the head of a bearded, muscular figure, who holds a billowing veil spread over his head. This is another formula derived from Roman art. A comparable figure appears at the top of the cuirass of the Augustus of Primaporta. The figure can be identified as the figure of Caelus, or the heavens. In the context of the Augustan statue, the figure of Caelus signifies Roman authority and its rule of everything earthly, that is, under the heavens. In the Junius Bassus relief, Caelus's position under Christ's feet signifies that Christ is the ruler of heaven.



Figure 13.6.5.37: Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble, (Treasury of St. Peter's Basilica); (cropped photo, originally by Miguel Hermoso Cuesta, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure 13.6.5.38: Adventus of Marcus Aurelius, 176-180 C.E., marble (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome) (photo: Jean-Pol Grandmont)

The lower register directly underneath depicts Christ's Entry into Jerusalem. This image was also based on a formula derived from Roman imperial art. The adventus was a formula devised to show the triumphal arrival of the emperor with figures offering homage. A relief from the reign of Marcus Aurelius (see image at near left) illustrates this formula. In including the Entry into Jerusalem, the designer of the Junius Bassus sarcophagus did not just use this to represent the New Testament story, but with the *adventus* iconography, this image signifies Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Whereas the *traditio legis* above conveys Christ's heavenly authority, it is likely that the Entry into Jerusalem in the form of the adventus was intended to signify Christ's earthly authority. The juxtaposition of the Christ in Majesty and the Entry into Jerusalem suggests that the planner of the sarcophagus had an intentional program in mind.

Old and New together

We can determine some intentionality in the inclusion of the Old and New Testament scenes. For example the image of Adam and Eve shown covering their nudity after the Fall was intended to refer to the doctrine of Original Sin that necessitated Christ's entry into the world to redeem humanity through His death and resurrection. Humanity is thus in need of salvation from this world.



Figure 13.6.5.39: Adam and Eve, Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble, (Treasury of St. Peter's Basilica)

The inclusion of the suffering of Job on the left hand side of the lower register conveyed the meaning how even the righteous must suffer the discomforts and pains of this life. Job is saved only by his unbroken faith in God.

The scene of Daniel in the lion's den to the right of the Entry into Jerusalem had been popular in earlier Christian art as another example of how salvation is achieved through faith in God.

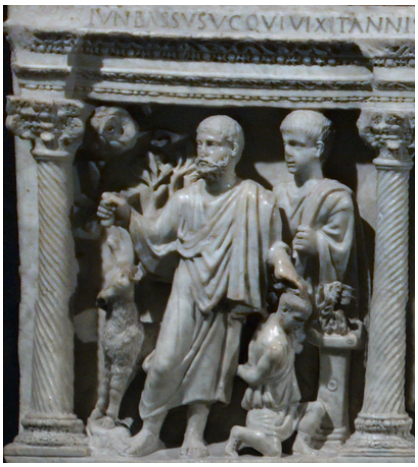


Figure 13.6.5.40: Sacrifice of Isaac, Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble, (Treasury of St. Peter's Basilica)

Salvation is a message in the relief of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac on the left hand side of the upper register. God challenged Abraham's faith by commanding Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. At the moment when Abraham is about to carry out the sacrifice his hand is stayed by an angel. Isaac is thus saved. It is likely that the inclusion of this scene in the context of the rest of the sarcophagus had another meaning as well. The story of the father's sacrifice of his only son was understood to refer to God's sacrifice of his son, Christ, on the Cross. Early Christian theologians attempting to integrate the Old and New Testaments saw in Old Testament stories prefigurations or precursors of New Testament stories. Throughout Christian art the popularity of Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac is explained by its typological reference to the Crucifixion of Christ.

Martyrdom

While not showing directly the Crucifixion of Christ, the inclusion of the Judgment of Pilate in two compartments on the right hand side of the upper register is an early appearance in Christian art of a scene drawn from Christ's Passion. The scene is based on the formula in Roman art of Justitia, illustrated here by a panel made for Marcus Aurelius. Here the emperor is shown seated on the sella curulis dispensing justice to a barbarian figure. On the sarcophagus Pilate is shown seated also on a sella curulis. The position of Pontius Pilate as the Roman prefect or governor of Judaea undoubtedly carried special meaning for Junius Bassus in his role as praefectus urbi in Rome. Junius Bassus as a senior magistrate would also be entitled to sit on a sella curulis.



Figure **13.6.5.41**: Judgment of Pilate, Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 359 C.E., marble, (Treasury of St. Peter's Basilica)

Just as Christ was judged by Roman authority, Saints. Peter and Paul were martyred under Roman rule. The remaining two scenes on the sarcophagus represent Saints. Peter and Paul being led to their martyrdoms. Peter and Paul as the principal apostles of Christ are again given prominence. Their martyrdoms witness Christ's own death. The artists seem to be making this point by the visual pairing of the scene of St. Peter being led to his matyrdom and the figure of Christ before Pilate. In both scenes the principal figure is flanked by two other figures.

The importance of Peter and Paul in Rome is made apparent in that two of the major churches that Constantine constructed in Rome were the **Church of St. Peter** and the **Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls.** The site of the Church of St. Peter has long believed to be the place of St. Peter's burial. The basilica was constructed in an ancient cemetary. Although we can not be certain the the Junius Bassus Sarcophagus was originally intended for this site, it would make sense that a prominent Roman Christian like Junius Bassus would want to be buried in close physical proximity to the burial spot of the founder of the Church of Rome.

Competing styles

At either end of the Junius Bassus sarcophagus appear Erotes harvesting grapes and wheat. A panel with the same subject was probably a part of a pagan sarcophagus made for a child. This iconography is based on images of the seasons in Roman art. Again the artists have taken conventions from Greek and Roman art and converted it into a Christian context. The wheat and grapes of the classical motif would be understood in the Christian context as a reference to the bread and wine of the Eucharist.



Figure **13.6.5.42**: Erotes harvesting grapes from the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (photo adapted from: **G. Dall'Orto**)



Figure **13.6.5.43**: Erotes harvesting wheat and grapes, third or fourth century C.E., marble (photo: **unknown**)

While the dumpy proportions are far from the standards of classical art, the style of the relief especially with the rich folds of drapery and soft facial features can be seen as classic or alluding to the classical style. Comparably the division of the relief into different registers and further subdivided by an architectural framework alludes to the orderly disposition of classical art. This choice of a style that alludes to classical art was undoubtedly intentional. The art of the period is marked by a number of competing styles. Just as rhetoricians were taught at this period to adjust their oratorical style to the intended audience, the choice of the classical style was seen as an indication of the high social status of the patron, Junius Bassus. In a similar way, the representation of the figures in togas was intentional. In Roman art, the toga was traditionally used as a symbol of high social status.

In both its style and iconography, the Junius Bassus Sarcophagus witnesses the adoption of the tradition of Greek and Roman art by Christian artists. Works like this were appealing to patrons like Junius Bassus who were a part of the upper level of Roman society. Christian art did not reject the classical tradition: rather, the classical tradition will be a reoccurring element in Christian art throughout the Middle Ages.

Additional resources:

Roman Sarcophagi on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.6.5.44**: More Smarthistory images…

Basilica of Santa Sabina, Rome

by DR. ALLEN FARBER



Video 13.6.5.6: Basilica of Santa Sabina, 422-432, Rome



Figure 13.6.5.45: Exterior view of the apse, Basilica of Santa Sabina, c. 432 C.E., Rome

Basilicas—a type of building used by the ancient Romans for diverse functions including as a site for law courts—is the category of building that Constantine's architects adapted to serve as the basis for the new churches. The original Constantinian buildings are now known only in plan, but an examination of a still extant early fifth century Roman basilica, the Church of Santa Sabina, helps us to understand the essential characteristics of the early Christian basilica.



Figure 13.6.5.46: View down the nave toward the apse, Basilica of Santa Sabina, c. 432 C.E., Rome



Figure 13.6.5.47: Basilica of Constantine (also known as the Aula Palatina), 4th century CE, Trier, Germany (photo: Hannah Swithinbank CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Like the Trier basilica, the Church of Santa Sabina has a dominant central axis that leads from the entrance to the apse, the site of the altar. This central space is known as the nave, and is flanked on either side by side aisles. The architecture is relatively simple with a wooden, truss roof. The wall of the nave is broken by clerestory windows that provide direct lighting in the nave. The wall does not contain the traditional classical orders articulated by columns and entablatures. Now plain, the walls apparently originally were decorated with mosaics.

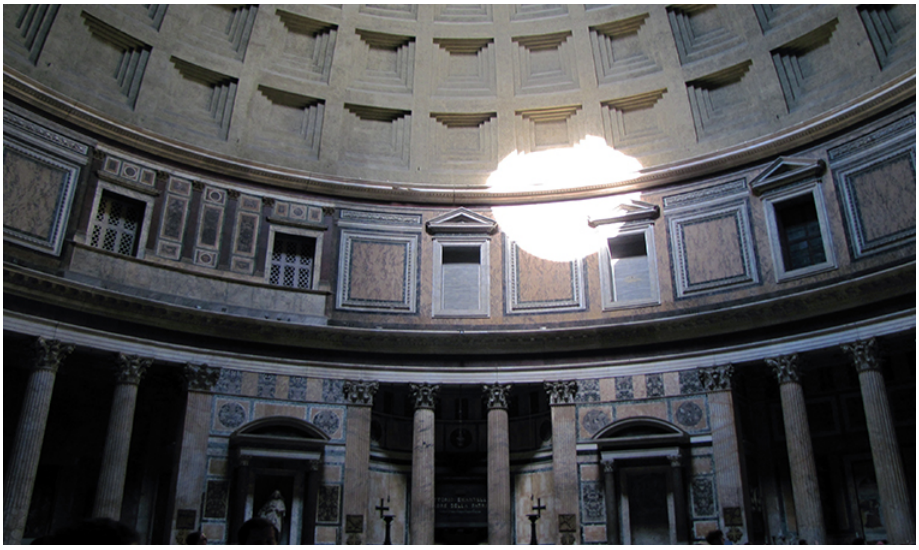


Figure 13.6.5.48: Interior view, The Pantheon, c. 125 C.E., Rome

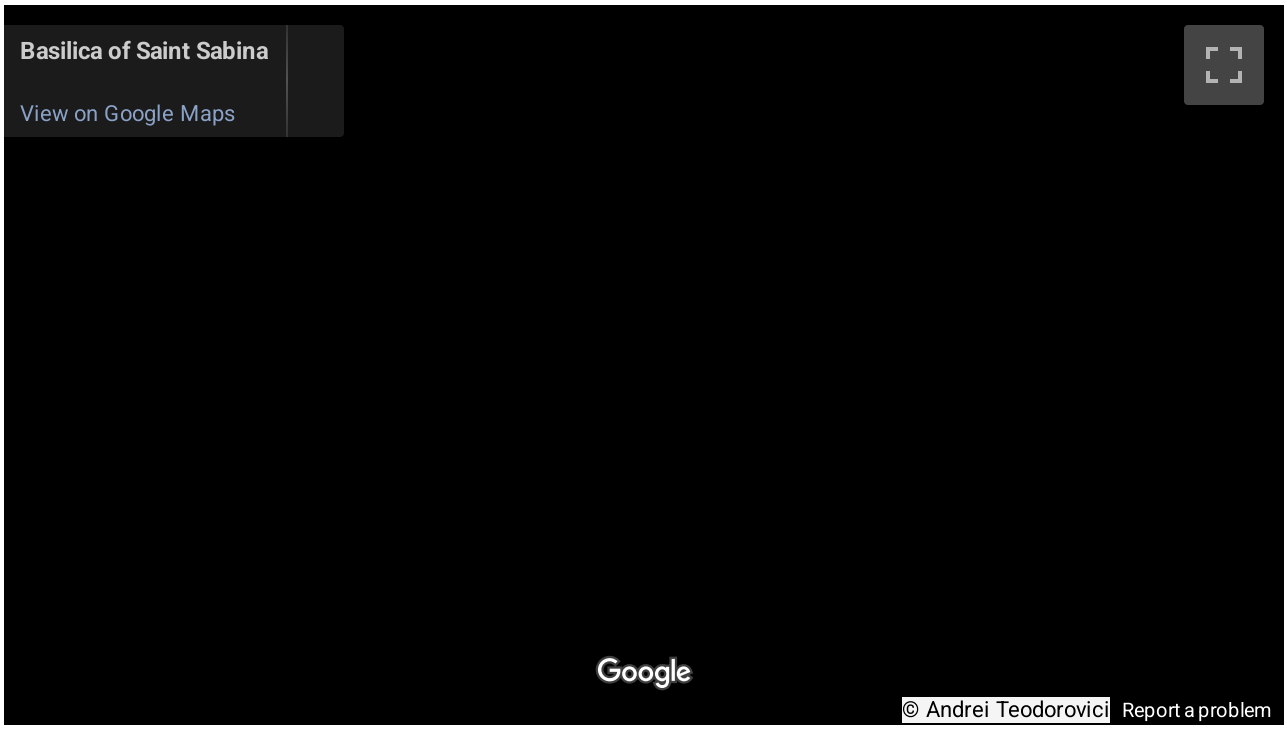
This interior would have had a dramatically different effect than the classical building. As exemplified by the interior of the Pantheon constructed in the second century by the Emperor Hadrian, the wall in the classical building was broken up into different levels by the horizontals of the entablatures. The columns and pilasters form verticals that tie together the different levels. Although this decor does not physically support the load of the building, the effect is to visualize the weight of the building. The thickness of the classical decor adds solidity to the building.



Figure 13.6.5.49: View of the aisle, Basilica of Santa Sabina, c. 432 C.E., Rome

In marked contrast, the nave wall of Santa Sabina has little sense of weight. The architect was particularly aware of the light effects in an interior space like this. The glass tiles of the mosaics would create a shimmering effect and the walls would appear to float. Light would have been understood as a symbol of divinity. Light was a symbol for Christ. The emphasis in this architecture is on the spiritual effect and not the physical. The opulent effect of the interior of the original Constantinian basilicas is brought out in a Spanish pilgrim's description of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem:

> ***The decorations are too marvelous for words. All you can see is gold, jewels and silk… You simply cannot imagine the number and sheer weight of the candles, tapers, lamps and everything else they use for the services…They are beyond description, and so is the magnificent building itself. It was built by Constantine and…was decorated with gold, mosaic, and precious marble, as much as his empire could provide.***



Additional resources:

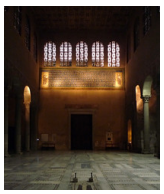
Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century (online catalogue from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





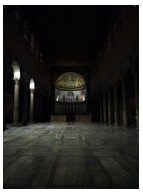














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88710

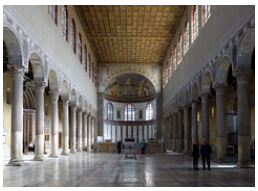








Figure 13.6.5.50: More Smarthistory images…

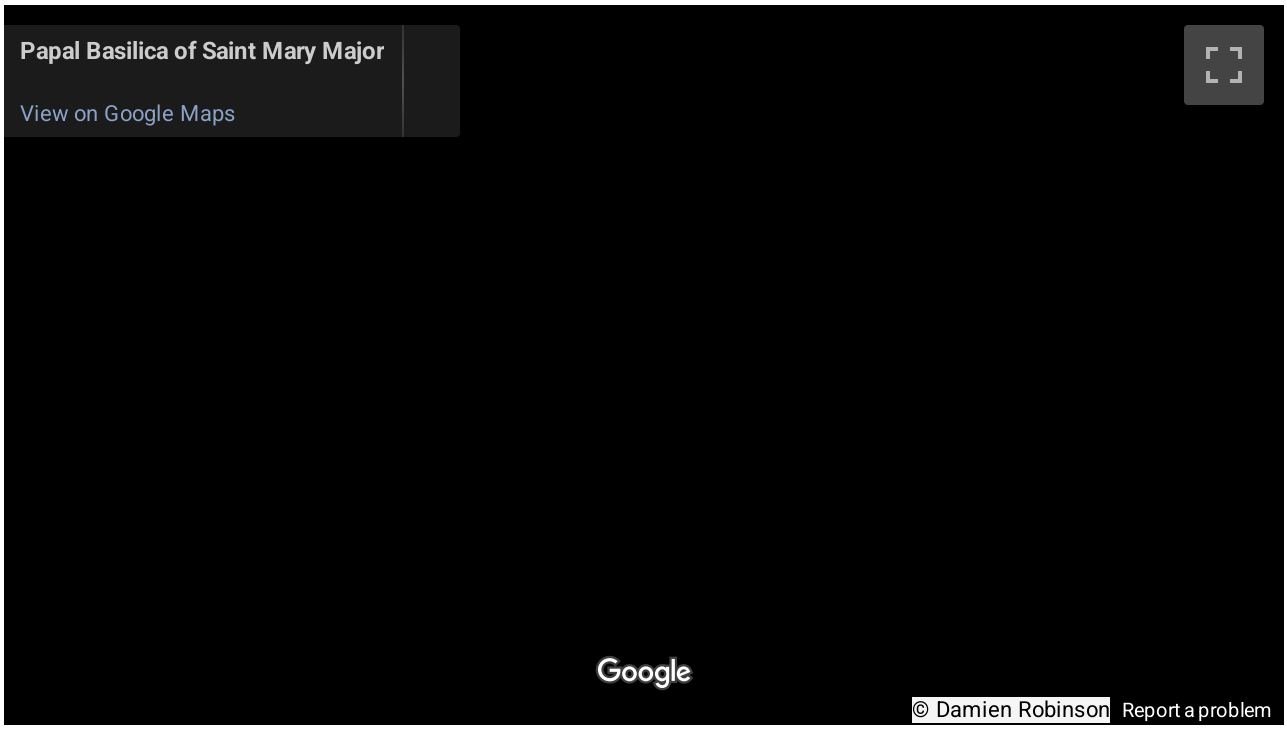
Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome

by RICHARD BOWEN and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.5.7: Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 5th century A.D.

This video was produced in cooperation with our partners at Context Travel.


Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major
View on Google Maps
Google
© Damien Robinson
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

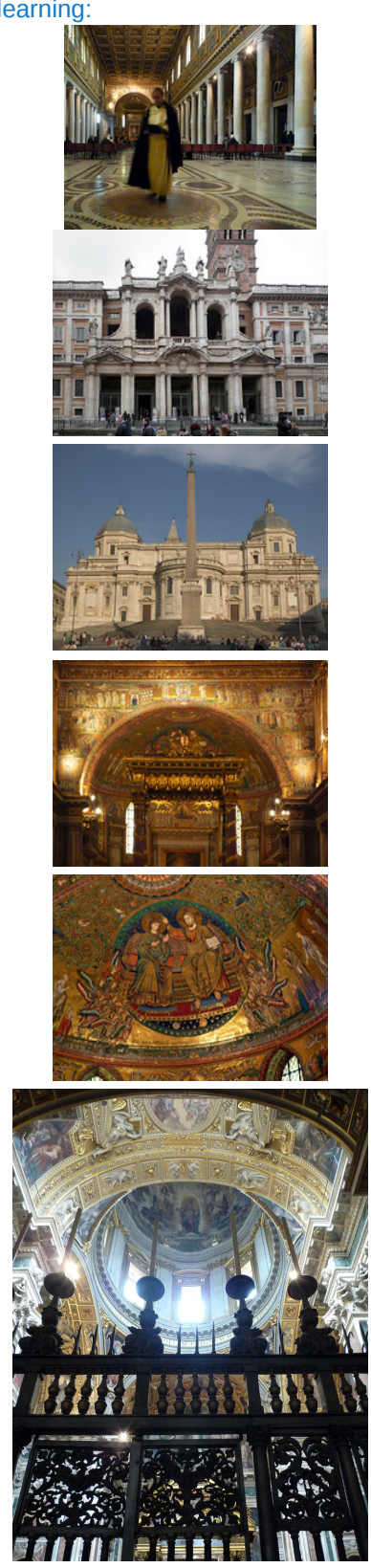


Figure **13.6.5.51**: More Smarthistory images…

The *Vienna Genesis*

by DR. DIANE REILLY



Figure **13.6.5.52**: The fall of man and God's covenant with Noah, from the *Vienna Genesis*, folio 3 recto, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 31.75 x 23.5 cm (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Wealthy Christian families living in the **Byzantine world** may have aspired to own a new kind of luxury object: the illustrated codex. Before the invention of printing in the 15th century, all texts were written or carved by hand. In the ancient world, manuscripts (texts written by hand), were found on a variety of portable surfaces. In the ancient Near East scribes wrote on clay tablets. In ancient Egypt and the ancient Greek and Roman world, information could be stored temporarily on wooden tablets coated with wax. A more lasting solution was to use scrolls made of papyrus (below): fibrous reeds that were dried in overlapping layers and then polished with a stone to create a smooth surface. Authors of papyrus scrolls usually divided their work into sections based on how much text could be held on a single scroll, leading to the concept of "chapters."

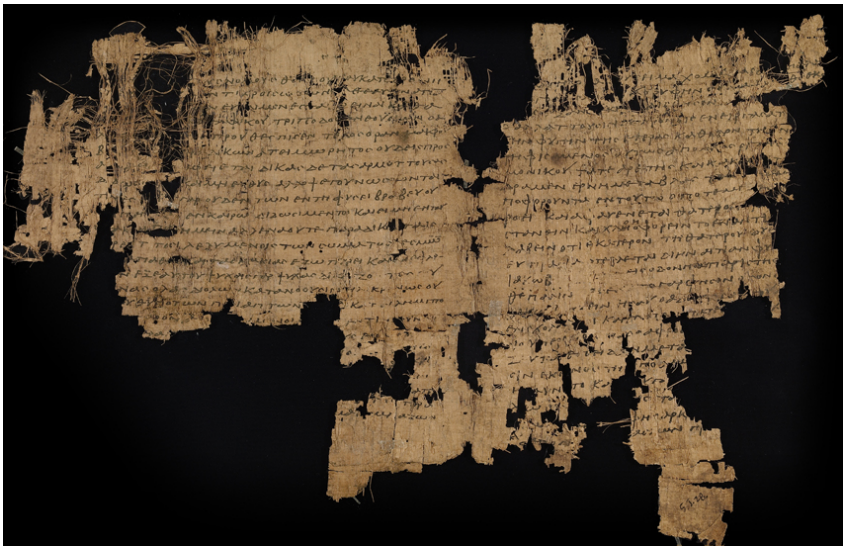


Figure **13.6.5.53**: Scripture Interpreted by Philo of Alexandria, papyrus manuscript fragment, 3rd century CE, Egypt, 20.3 x 30.5 cm (Bodleian Library, Oxford)

New materials, new possibilities

All of these materials preserved texts for the few literate members of the population, but the limitations of the materials themselves made it difficult to add illustrations to the text. Papyrus scrolls were rolled for storage and then unrolled when read, causing paint to

flake off. Text was scratched into the surface of a wax or clay tablet with a stylus, so only basic shapes could be created. Some time in the first or second century, however, the **parchment** codex (below), a more durable and flexible means of preserving and transporting text, began to replace wax tablets and papyrus scrolls. The **new popularity of the codex** coincided with the spread of Christianity, which required the use of texts for both the training of initiates and ritual practices.



Figure 13.6.5.54: Constantinus Africanus, *Liber Pantegni*, 11th century, parchment codex, The Hague, Royal Library, MS 73 J 6

The codex form allowed readers to find a discrete section of text quickly and to carry large amounts of text with them, which was useful for priests who traveled from place to place to serve communities of Christians. It was also essential for a religion that relied on text to establish the details of belief and set standards of conduct for its members. The vast majority of these codices were not decorated in any way, but some contained illustrations done with tempera paint that pictured events described in the text, interpreted these events, or even added visual content not found in the text.



Figure 13.6.5.55: Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 31.75 x 23.5 cm (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

A luxurious codex

The Early Byzantine *Vienna Genesis* gives us a taste of what manuscripts made for a wealthy patron, likely a member of the imperial family, might have looked like. Genesis—the first book of the Christian Old Testament—described the origin of the world and the story of the earliest humans, including their first encounters with God.

The *Vienna Genesis* manuscript, now only partially preserved, was a very luxurious but idiosyncratic copy of a Greek translation of the original Hebrew. The heavily abbreviated text is written on purple-dyed parchment with silver ink that has now eaten through the parchment surface in many places. These materials would have been appropriate to an imperial patron, although we have no way of knowing who that was. The *Vienna Genesis* may have been a luxury item intended for display, or it may have provided a synopsis of exciting stories from scripture to be read for edification or diversion by a wealthy Christian.

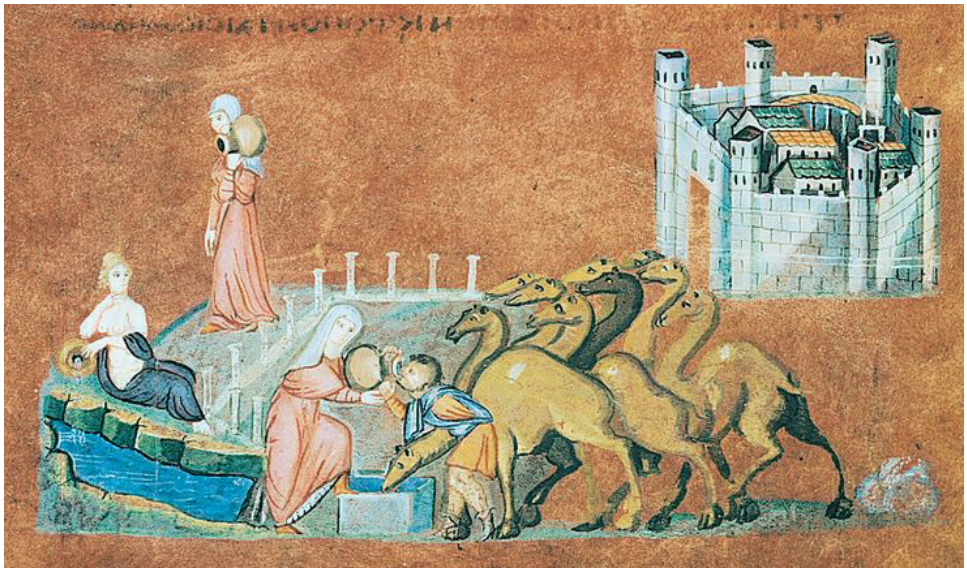


Figure **13.6.5.56**: Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 31.75 x 23.5 cm (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Telling a story

The top half of each page of the *Vienna Genesis* is filled with text, while the bottom half contains a fully colored painting depicting some part of the Genesis story. In the scene above, Eliezer, a servant of the prophet Abraham, has arrived at a city in Mesopotamia in search of a wife for Isaac, Abraham's son. The artist has used continuous narration, an artistic device popular with medieval artists but invented in the ancient world, wherein successive scenes are portrayed together in a single illustration, to suggest that the events illustrated happened in quick succession. In the upper right hand of the image a miniature walled city indicates that Eliezer has arrived at his destination. Rebecca, a kinswoman of Abraham, is shown twice. First, she walks down a path lined on one side with tiny spikes that symbolize a colonnaded street. Rebecca approaches a reclining, semi-nude woman who allows an overturned pot to drain into the river below. This is a personification of the river that feeds the well to the right, where Eliezer waits. Rebecca is shown a second time offering Eliezer and his camels a drink, a sign from God that she is to be Isaac's wife.



Figure **13.6.5.57**: Detail of Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 31.75 x 23.5 cm (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Ancient themes, new techniques

The personification of the river reveals the image's classical heritage, as does the use of modeling and white overpainting which lend naturalism to the garment folds and the swelling flanks of the camels.

The *Vienna Genesis* combines pictorial techniques familiar from the ancient world with content appropriate to a Christian audience, which is typical of Byzantine art. Though many of the details of this manuscript's production and ownership have been lost, it remains an example of how artists combined ancient modes of expression with the most current materials and forms to create luxurious objects for wealthy patrons.

Additional resources:

This work in the Austrian National Library

Weitzmann, Kurt, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, 1979 (pdf available)

The Story of Jacob from the Vienna Genesis

by DR. NANCY ROSS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.5.8**: *The Story of Jacob*, Vienna Genesis, folio 12v, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, cod. theol. gr. 31 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, *Vienna Genesis*

by DR. NANCY ROSS



Figure 13.6.5.58: Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 12-1/2 x 9-1/4″ (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Caught in between

It's not hard to find inspirational quotes about the difficulty and rewards of change and transition in our lives. There is always something old that we want to hang on to and there is always something new that we want to explore. Transitions are difficult.

The visual arts have undergone numerous changes and transitions from their prehistoric origins to the present. In Europe, artists and patrons of the ancient world loved realistic details and veracity. Medieval artists and patrons instead valued symbolism and abstraction.

The artist of the *Vienna Genesis* was caught between these two artistic value systems. Perhaps working in Syria or in Constantinople in the early 6th century, the artist likely did not know that this book would become the oldest surviving well-preserved illustrated biblical book and an excellent example of an artist caught in a moment of transition. The *Vienna Genesis* is a fragment of a Greek copy of the Book of Genesis. Books were luxury items and this book was an exceptionally fine example. It was written in silver ink on parchment that had been dyed purple, the color associated with royalty and empire. There are 24 surviving folios (pages) and they are thought to have come from a much larger book that included perhaps 192 illustrations on 96 folios, each page laid out as you can see above in the example of Rebecca and Eliezer at the well.



Figure 13.6.5.59: Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, detail of folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 12-1/2 x 9-1/4″ (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

This story is from Genesis 24. Abraham wanted to find a wife for his son Isaac and sent his servant Eliezer to find one from among Abraham's extended family. Eliezer took ten of Abraham's camels with him and stopped at a well to give them water. Eliezer prayed to God that Isaac's future wife would assist him with watering his camels. Rebecca arrives on the scene and assists Eliezer, who knows that she is the woman for Isaac. This story is about God intervening to ensure a sound marriage for Abraham's son.

Two episodes

The illustration of this biblical story shows two episodes, which is common in medieval art. Rebecca is shown twice, as she leaves her town to get water and then assisting Eliezer at the well with his camels. On the one hand, there are clear classical elements that recall artwork from ancient Greece and Rome. Rebecca walks by a colonnade (row of columns) that recall the details of classical architecture. Some of Eliezer's camels are shaded to emphasize that some are in the front and others in the back. The camel on the far right has one of its back legs in shadow to show a spatial relationship.



Figure 13.6.5.60: Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, detail of folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 12-1/2 x 9-1/4″ (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

Ancient Greek and Roman, but also Early Christian



Figure 13.6.5.61: Detail of Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, folio 7 recto from the *Vienna Genesis*, early 6th century, tempera, gold and silver on purple vellum, 12-1/2 x 9-1/4″ (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

The figure that most obviously recalls the Ancient Greek and Roman world is the reclining nude next to the river (left). This figure isn't part of the story of Rebecca and Eliezer, but serves as a personification of the source of the well's water. Representations of rivers and other bodies of water as people were common in the classical world (see below). The figure's sensuality is emphasized by her nudity and reclining pose, typical of Greek and Roman art. This stands in contrast to Rebecca's heavily draped and fully-covered body, typical of Early Christian art.

There are also elements of the illustration that recall Early Christian art, which is the earliest medieval art. The symbolic representation of the walled city, packed with rooftops and buildings that are not represented in a spatially consistent way, is typical of medieval art, as is the colonnade in miniature. Medieval artists weren't interested in realistic, consistent representations of space, but were satisfied with the more symbolic representations that we see here. The folds of the clothing are also simplified and reduced. The figures appear to be more cartoon-like than portraits of actual people.



Figure 13.6.5.62: River god Arno, c. 117-138 C.E. (with Renaissance era restorations), marble (Pio Clementino Museum, Vatican) (photo: © Colin / Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-3.0)

Today, it is a struggle for us to reconcile the figures of Rebecca, who only reveals her hands and face, with the casual nude reclining by the water. This contrast is evidence of the mix of artistic models and sources that were present in the early sixth century. To the artist who illustrated this book, I'm sure that this mix of styles and approaches made perfect sense, and represented a culture in transition.

Additional resources:

Weitzmann, Kurt, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, 1979 (pdf available)

Classicism and the Early Middle Ages

by DR. DIANE REILLY



Figure 13.6.5.63: The Mildenhall Treasure, fourth century C.E. (The British Museum) (photo: Estel, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In 1942 a farmer plowing a field in the East of England unearthed a substantial hoard of Roman silver dating from the fourth century, C.E. This became known as the "Mildenhall Treasure," named for the nearby town. Its original owner may have buried his collection of banqueting vessels when the Roman administration left England in 410 C.E., hoping that he could later retrieve it. Among the spoons, bowls, dishes, and ladles is a two-foot wide silver platter weighing almost eighteen pounds, with classical

motifs borrowed from antiquity (ancient Greece and Rome). However, though the platter depicts the gods Neptune and Bacchus, the owner was likely a follower of Christianity—a newly-sanctioned religion that was not yet the dominant belief system in Europe. This confluence of classical and Christian concepts is typical of the early middle ages. Because of the political and social upheavals happening in Europe at this time, the art of this period comprises a wide range of styles and themes that often blend classical elements with new and different ones.

A "decline"?

The transition between antiquity and the Middle Ages is often perceived as having been marked by a sharp break in beliefs and artistic style. This change was, in the past, characterized by scholars as a "decline." According to this narrative, the chaotic and unstable atmosphere of the **Roman Empire** in the later third century led many of its inhabitants to embrace new, minority religions imported from the empire's edges. Some of these were messianic religions that promised members an afterlife more pleasant than their current, increasingly difficult existences. At the same time, the economic struggles of the Late Roman Empire undermined investment in the artists' workshops where the naturalism of classical Roman art had been taught to generations of artists. Lacking the traditional training, means, and patrons who valued classicism, artists during this period often worked in a more static, two-dimensional style that emphasized ideas and symbols over naturalistic illusionism. The abandonment of naturalistic style also coincided, it seemed, with the rise of a new majority religion, Christianity, that rejected materiality and traditional forms of beauty in favor of simplicity and self-denial.



Figure **13.6.5.64**: Two reliefs from the Arch of Constantine: left: roundel showing Sacrifice to Apollo, c. 117-138 C.E.; right: Detail, Distribution of Largesse, 312-315

Two stone reliefs installed on the **Arch of Constantine** demonstrate this supposed "decline." The reused roundel with a sacrifice to Apollo (left) originally carved for a monument to the Emperor Trajan between 117 and 138 (when the Roman empire was more stable), displays many key characteristics of classicism: varied depth of relief, carefully delineated drapery folds, and figures shifting in space. By contrast, in the panel depicting the emperor distributing largesse (right), commissioned in the Late Empire between 312 and 315, the figures seem almost comically disproportionate, with enormous heads and hands, and draperies indicated by drilled lines.



Figure **13.6.5.65**: Funerary procession, Amiternum Tomb, c. 50-1 B.C.E. (Museum, Aquila) (photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The problem with the idea of a “decline” is that it ignores the many, often contradictory, currents of art and experience that existed in the late antique world. Romans had long sought to incorporate newly conquered and colonized populations by appropriating local religious beliefs and artistic traditions, in the process creating new, localized versions of Roman art that were sometimes less naturalistic. Even artists working in the capital, Rome, could choose to employ either naturalism or a more symbolic visual shorthand, depending on who made the art and who consumed it—as in the **Amiternum Tomb** (above), which was made during the first century, when classicism was the most prominent style. Instead of displaying a classical attention to composition, the artist has arrayed stocky figures of a variety of sizes in a seemingly haphazard way—going against the current artistic trends of the day.

Classicism survives

If works like the Amiternum Tomb help complicate the idea of an artistic decline, do they perhaps simply demonstrate variances in artists’ and patrons’ tastes? Some have argued that Emperor Constantine (who decriminalized Christianity in Rome in the early fourth century), and by extension the increasingly Christian populace, were, because of their beliefs, drawn to a non-classical style that denied naturalism in favor of a more symbolic set of forms. But surviving artworks commissioned by wealthy Romans show that, like their pagan peers, many Christians often still preferred a classicizing style—even if the subjects portrayed were new. For instance, in the middle of the fourth century the body of Junius Bassus, a Roman prefect (high official), was buried in an elaborate **marble sarcophagus**.



Figure **13.6.5.66**: Plaster cast of the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, the original marble sarcophagus dates to 359 C.E. and is located in the Treasury, St. Peter’s Basilica, Vatican City.

Since he was a Christian convert, Junius’s sarcophagus was covered with narrative and symbolic scenes from the Christian bible, all rendered in a classicizing style. The standing apostles are wrapped in Roman togas and the youthful Christ sits on a *sella curulis*, the animal-headed and -footed chair of the governing classes. Unlike most classical works, here the hands and heads of the figures are a little too large, but the artist was clearly attempting to employ the stylistic language of classicism to transmit Christian content.



Figure **13.6.5.67**: The Symmachi Panel, c. 400 C.E., carved elephant ivory (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

These aesthetic departures from strict classicism were not limited to Christian-sponsored art: the same tendencies are apparent in objects that were commissioned by avowed pagans around the same time. This ivory panel was commissioned to celebrate a marriage between members of two Roman patrician (noble) families, the Nicomachi and Symmachi. A female figure with an oversized head and hands stands next to an altar, while a comparatively tiny servant stands behind it. The woman's back leg projects in front of the surrounding frame, while her front leg, counterintuitively, stands on the ground within it, breaking the rules of naturalism. Based on the artworks that survive, we know that both pagan and Christian patrons found these kinds of contradictions in space and proportion acceptable.

A hoard of silver

There were also a diversity of themes preferred amongst patrons of different religions. Artworks from this time sometimes combine overtly pagan content with classicizing style, but for use by Christians. The so-called "Great Dish" found in the Mildenhall treasure is a shining example of such artistic combinations. Concentric rings of repoussé and engraved decoration celebrate the classical themes of the ocean and Bacchic revelry. The hair and beard of the Roman god Neptune in the center of the dish radiate dolphins and seaweed. Around him nymphs ride sea creatures.



Figure **13.6.5.68**: The Mildenhall Great Dish, 4th century C.E., silver, 60.5 cm diameter (The British Museum)

In the outer band Bacchus (the god of wine), Hercules, Pan and throngs of satyrs and maenads holding Bacchic thistle-headed staffs and a shepherd's crook twist and turn, draperies swirling, dancing with wine-induced abandon.



Figure **13.6.5.69**: The Mildenhall Great Dish, 4th century C.E., silver, 60.5 cm diameter (The British Museum) (photo: **Ian**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

While this dish's classicizing style and subject matter are undeniable, we known that its owner was likely Christian, as spoons from his dinnerware set (below) include the Christian symbols of the Chi-Rho and Alpha and Omega. Despite his Christianity, the owner likely felt perfectly comfortable displaying the platter with its exuberant dancing nudes on his sideboard for the admiration of his guests.

Rather than demonstrating a "decline" or a sharp break in artistic themes and styles, Roman artworks of the early middle ages display as much diversity and blending as the empire itself.



Figure **13.6.5.70**: Spoons from the Mildenhall Treasure, 4th century C.E., silver (The British Museum)

Additional Resources:

The Mildenhall Treasure Project at the British Museum

The Mildenhall Great Dish at the British Museum

The Symmachi Panel at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Dale Kinney and Anthony Cutler, "A Late Antique Ivory Plaque and Modern Response," *American Journal of Archaeology* 98 (1994), pp. 457-480

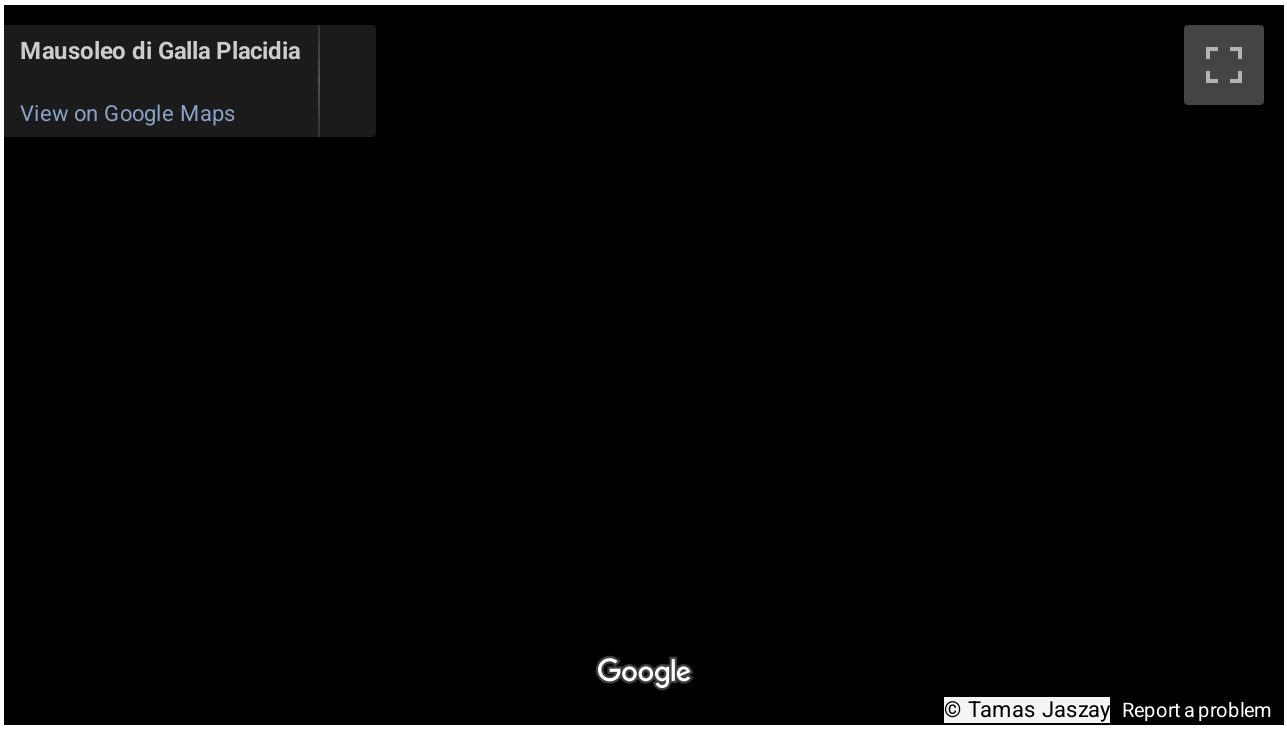
Richard Hobbs, *The Mildenhall Treasure* (London: The British Museum Press, 2012)

The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

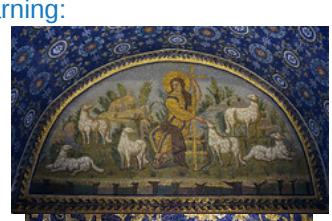
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



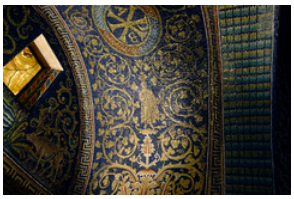
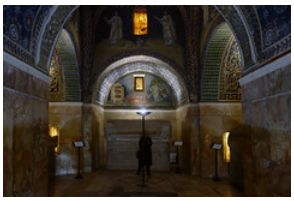
Video **13.6.5.9**: The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, 425 C.E., Ravenna (Italy)


Mausoleo di Galla Placidia
View on Google Maps
Google
© Tamas Jaszay
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:






https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88710



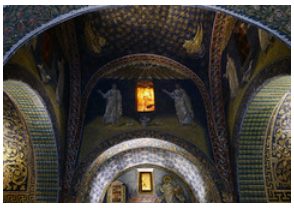





Figure 13.6.5.71: More Smarthistory images…

13.6.5: Early Christian is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.5: Early Christian** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.6: Byzantine

Byzantine art

The Roman Empire continued as the Byzantine Empire, with its capital at Constantinople.

c. 330 - 1453 C.E.

A beginner's guide

Byzantine art, an introduction

by DR. ELLEN HURST



Figure **13.6.6.1**: The Byzantine Empire near its peak under the Emperor Justinian, c. 550 C.E.

To speak of “Byzantine Art” is a bit problematic, since the Byzantine empire and its art spanned more than a millennium and penetrated geographic regions far from its capital in Constantinople. Thus, Byzantine art includes work created from the fourth century to the fifteenth century and encompassing parts of the Italian peninsula, the eastern edge of the Slavic world, the Middle East, and North Africa. So what is Byzantine art, and what do we mean when we use this term?



Figure **13.6.6.2**: Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532-37 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

It’s helpful to know that Byzantine art is generally divided up into three distinct periods:

> ***Early Byzantine (c. 330–843)***
> ***Middle Byzantine (c. 843–1204)***
> ***Late Byzantine (c. 1261–1453)***



Figure **13.6.6.3**: Virgin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George, sixth or early seventh century, encaustic on wood, 2′ 3″ x 1′ 7 3/8″ (St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt)

The Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity and in 330 moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), at the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire. Christianity flourished and gradually supplanted the Greco-Roman gods that had once defined Roman religion and culture. This religious shift dramatically affected the art that was created across the empire.

The earliest Christian churches were built during this period, including the famed Hagia Sophia (above), which was built in the sixth century under Emperor Justinian. Decorations for the interior of churches, including icons and mosaics, were also made during this period. Icons, such as the *Virgin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George* (left), served as tools for the faithful to access the spiritual world—they served as spiritual gateways.

Similarly, mosaics, such as those within the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna, sought to evoke the heavenly realm. In this work, ethereal figures seem to float against a gold background that is representative of no identifiable earthly space. By placing these figures in a spiritual world, the mosaics gave worshipers some access to that world as well. At the same time, there are real-world political messages affirming the power of the rulers in these mosaics. In this sense, art of the Byzantine Empire continued some of the traditions of Roman art.



Figure **13.6.6.4**: Emperor Justinian Mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna, c. 546-56

Generally speaking, Byzantine art differs from the art of the Romans in that it is interested in depicting that which we cannot see—the intangible world of Heaven and the spiritual. Thus, the Greco-Roman interest in depth and naturalism is replaced by an interest in flatness and mystery.

Middle Byzantine (c. 850–1204)

The Middle Byzantine period followed a period of crisis for the arts called the Iconoclastic Controversy, when the use of religious images was hotly contested. Iconoclasts (those who worried that the use of images was idolatrous), destroyed images, leaving few surviving images from the

Early Byzantine period. Fortunately for art history, those in favor of images won the fight and hundreds of years of Byzantine artistic production followed.

The stylistic and thematic interests of the Early Byzantine period continued during the Middle Byzantine period, with a focus on building churches and decorating their interiors. There were some significant changes in the empire, however, that brought about some change in the arts. First, the influence of the empire spread into the Slavic world with the Russian adoption of Orthodox Christianity in the tenth century. Byzantine art was therefore given new life in the Slavic lands.



Figure **13.6.6.5**: Hosios Loukas, Greece, early 11th century (photos: **Jonathan Khoo**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

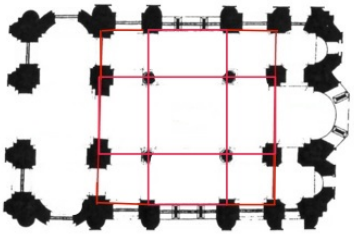


Figure **13.6.6.6**: Plan of a typical cross-in-square church (cross in square indicated by red lines)

Architecture in the Middle Byzantine period overwhelmingly moved toward the centralized cross-in-square plan for which Byzantine architecture is best known.

These churches were usually on a much smaller-scale than the massive Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, but, like Hagia Sophia, the roofline of these churches was always defined by a dome or domes. This period also saw increased ornamentation on church exteriors. A particularly good example of this is the tenth-century Hosios Loukas Monastery in Greece (above).



Figure 13.6.6.7: Harbaville Triptych, ivory, traces of polychromy, 28.2 x 24.2 cm (Louvre)



Figure 13.6.6.8: Lower register (detail), *Harbaville Triptych*, ivory, traces of polychromy, 28.2 x 24.2 cm (Louvre)

This was also a period of increased stability and wealth. As such, wealthy patrons commissioned private luxury items, including carved ivories, such as the celebrated Harbaville Tryptich (above and below), which was used as a private devotional object. Like the sixth-century icon discussed above (*Virgin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George*), it helped the viewer gain access to the heavenly realm. Interestingly, the heritage of the Greco-Roman world can be seen here, in the awareness of mass and space. See for example the subtle breaking of the straight fall of drapery by the right knee that projects forward in the two figures in the bottom register of the Harbaville Triptych (left). This interest in representing the body with some naturalism is reflective of a revived interest in the classical past during this period. So, as much as it is tempting to describe all Byzantine art as “ethereal” or “flattened,” it is more accurate to say that Byzantine art is diverse. There were many political and religious interests as well as distinct cultural forces that shaped the art of different periods and regions within the Byzantine Empire.

Late Byzantine (c. 1261– 1453)

Between 1204 and 1261, the Byzantine Empire suffered another crisis: the Latin Occupation. Crusaders from Western Europe invaded and captured Constantinople in 1204, temporarily toppling the empire in an attempt to bring the eastern empire back into the fold of western Christendom. (By this point Christianity had divided into two distinct camps: eastern [Orthodox] Christianity in the Byzantine Empire and western [Latin] Christianity in the European west.)



Figure **13.6.6.9**: Anastasis (Harrowing of Hell), c. 1310-20, fresco, Church of the Holy Savior of Chora/Kariye Museum, Istanbul

By 1261 the Byzantine Empire was free of its western occupiers and stood as an independent empire once again, albeit markedly weakened. The breadth of the empire had shrunk, and so had its power. Nevertheless Byzantium survived until the Ottomans took Constantinople in 1453. In spite of this period of diminished wealth and stability, the arts continued to flourish in the Late Byzantine period, much as it had before.



Figure **13.6.6.10**: Icon of St. George ('The Black George'), c. 1400-1450, tempera on panel, 77.4 x 57 cm (The British Museum)

Although Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453—bringing about the end of the Byzantine Empire—Byzantine art and culture continued to live on in its far-reaching outposts, as well as in Greece, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire, where it had flourished for so long. The Russian Empire, which was first starting to emerge around the time Constantinople fell, carried on as the heir of Byzantium, with churches and icons created in a distinct "Russo-Byzantine" style (left). Similarly, in Italy, when the Renaissance was first emerging, it borrowed heavily from the traditions of Byzantium. Cimabue's ***Madonna Enthroned*** of 1280–1290 is one of the earliest examples of the Renaissance interest in space and depth in panel painting. But the painting relies on Byzantine conventions and is altogether indebted to the arts of Byzantium.

So, while we can talk of the end of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, it is much more difficult to draw geographic or temporal boundaries around the empire, for it spread out to neighboring regions and persisted in artistic traditions long after its own demise.

Additional resources:

Harbaville Triptych at the Louvre

Byzantium on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

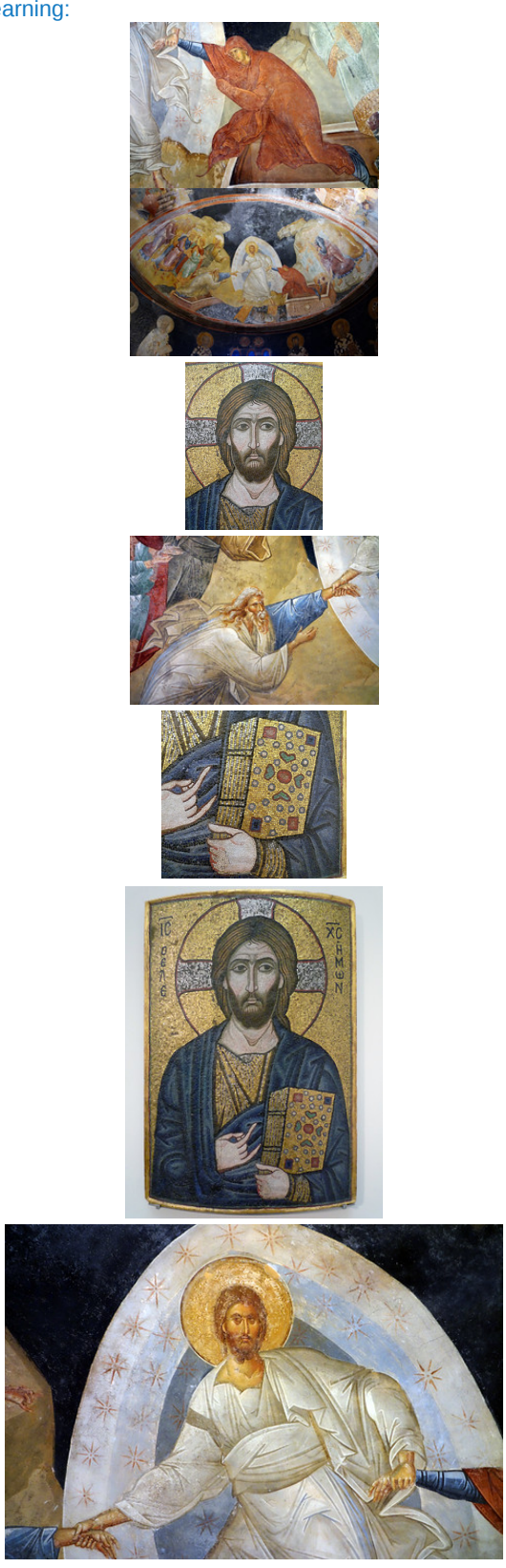


Figure 13.6.6.11: More Smarthistory images…

About the chronological periods of the Byzantine Empire

by DR. EVAN FREEMAN

This essay is intended to introduce the periods of Byzantine history, with attention to developments in art and architecture.



Figure **13.6.6.12**: **The Colossus of Constantine**, c. 312–15 (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

From Rome to Constantinople

In 313, the Roman Empire legalized Christianity, beginning a process that would eventually dismantle its centuries-old pagan tradition. Not long after, emperor Constantine transferred the empire's capital from Rome to the ancient Greek city of Byzantion (modern Istanbul). Constantine renamed the new capital city "Constantinople" ("the city of Constantine") after himself and dedicated it in the year 330. With these events, the Byzantine Empire was born—or was it?



Figure **13.6.6.13**: Map with Rome and Constantinople (underlying map © Google).

The term "Byzantine Empire" is a bit of a misnomer. The Byzantines understood their empire to be a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire and referred to themselves as "Romans." The use of the term "Byzantine" only became widespread in Europe after Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. For this reason, some scholars refer to Byzantium as the "Eastern Roman Empire."

Byzantine History

The history of Byzantium is remarkably long. If we reckon the history of the Eastern Roman Empire from the dedication of Constantinople in 330 until its fall to the Ottomans in 1453, the empire endured for some 1,123 years.

Scholars typically divide Byzantine history into three major periods: *Early Byzantium*, *Middle Byzantium*, and *Late Byzantium*. But it is important to note that these historical designations are the invention of modern scholars rather than the Byzantines themselves. Nevertheless, these periods can be helpful for marking significant events, contextualizing art and architecture, and understanding larger cultural trends in Byzantium's history.

Early Byzantium: c. 330–843

Scholars often disagree about the parameters of the Early Byzantine period. On the one hand, this period saw a continuation of Roman society and culture—so, is it really correct to say it began in 330? On the other, the empire's acceptance of Christianity and geographical shift to the east inaugurated a new era.



Figure **13.6.6.14**: Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna (Italy), c. 533–49 (apse mosaic, 6th century, triumphal arch mosaics, likely c. 7th–12th centuries) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Following Constantine's embrace of Christianity, the church enjoyed imperial patronage, constructing **monumental churches** in centers such as Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. In the west, the empire faced numerous attacks by Germanic nomads from the north, and Rome was sacked by the Goths in 410 and by the Vandals in 455. The city of Ravenna in northeastern Italy rose to prominence in the 5th and 6th centuries when it functioned as an imperial capital for the western half of the empire. Several churches adorned with opulent mosaics, such as **San Vitale** and the nearby **Sant'Apollinare in Classe**, testify to the importance of Ravenna during this time.

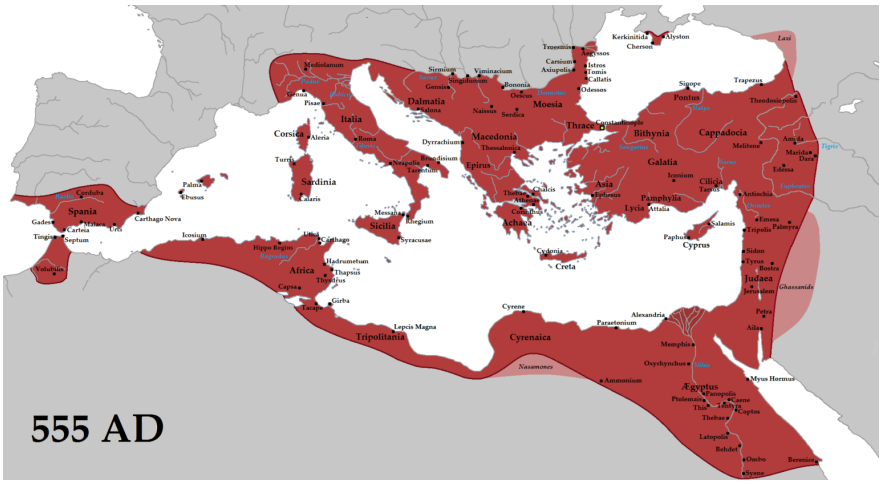


Figure **13.6.6.16**: Approximate boundaries of the Byzantine Empire under emperor Justinian I, c. 555 (**Tataryn,** CC BY-SA 3.0)

Under the sixth-century emperor Justinian I, who reigned 527–565, the Byzantine Empire expanded to its largest geographical area: encompassing the Balkans to the north, Egypt and other parts of north Africa to the south, Anatolia (what is now Turkey) and the Levant (including including modern Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan) to the east, and Italy and the southern Iberian Peninsula (now Spain and Portugal) to the west. Many of Byzantium's greatest architectural monuments, such as the innovative domed basilica of **Hagia Sophia** in Constantinople, were also built during **Justinian's** reign.

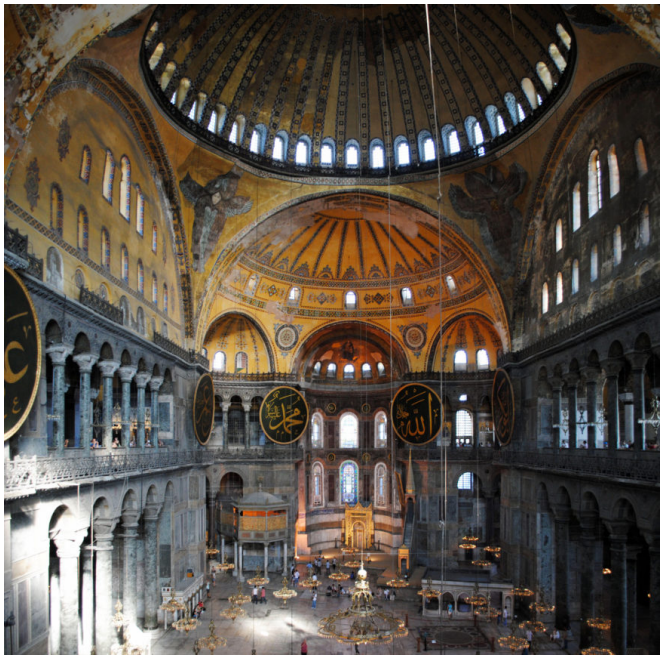


Figure 13.6.6.17: Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul), 532–37 (photo: © Robert G. Ousterhout)

Constantinople (map: Carolyn Connor and Tom Elliot, <a href="http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/free-maps/byzantine-constantinople/" target="_blank" rel="noopener"
Ancient World Mapping Center, CC BY-NC 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49875" height="285" sizes="(max-width: 350px) 100vw, 350px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...bl-870x707.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...bl-870x707.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...bl-300x244.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1248.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1663.jpg
2048w" width="350">

Figure 13.6.6.18: Constantinople (map: Carolyn Connor and Tom Elliot, **Ancient World Mapping Center**, CC BY-NC 3.0)

Following the example of Rome, Constantinople featured a number of outdoor public spaces—including major streets, ***fora***, as well as a hippodrome (a course for horse or chariot racing with public seating)—in which emperors and church officials often participated in showy public ceremonies such as processions.

Christian monasticism, which began to thrive in the 4th century, received imperial patronage at sites like Mount Sinai in Egypt.



Figure 13.6.6.19: Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt (photo: **Joonas Plaan**, CC BY 2.0)



Figure 13.6.6.20: Apse mosaic with Virgin and Child, c. 867, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Yet the mid-7th century began what some scholars call the "dark ages" or the "transitional period" in Byzantine history. Following the rise of **Islam** in Arabia and subsequent attacks by Arab invaders, Byzantium lost substantial territories, including Syria and Egypt, as well as the symbolically important city of Jerusalem with its sacred pilgrimage sites. The empire experienced a decline in trade and an economic downturn.

Against this backdrop, and perhaps fueled by anxieties about the fate of the empire, the so-called "**Iconoclastic Controversy**" erupted in Constantinople in the 8th and 9th centuries. Church leaders and emperors debated the use of religious images that depicted Christ and the saints, some honoring them as holy images, or "icons," and others condemning them as idols (like the images of deities in ancient Rome) and apparently destroying some. Finally, in 843, Church and imperial authorities definitively affirmed the use of religious images and ended the Iconoclastic Controversy, an event subsequently celebrated by the Byzantines as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

Middle Byzantium: c. 843–1204

In the period following Iconoclasm, the Byzantine empire enjoyed a growing economy and reclaimed some of the territories it lost earlier. With the affirmation of images in 843, art and architecture once again flourished. But Byzantine culture also underwent several changes.

Middle Byzantine churches elaborated on the innovations of Justinian's reign, but were often constructed by private patrons and tended to be smaller than the large imperial monuments of Early Byzantium. The smaller scale of Middle Byzantine churches also coincided with a reduction of large, public ceremonies.



Figure 13.6.6.21: Katholikon church, 11th century, Hosios Loukas, Boeotia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Monumental depictions of **Christ and the Virgin**, biblical events, and an array of various saints adorned church interiors, as seen in the sophisticated decorative programs at the monastery churches of **Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni, and Daphni** in Greece. But Middle Byzantine churches largely exclude depictions of the flora and fauna of the natural world that often appeared in **Early Byzantine mosaics**, perhaps in response to accusations of idolatry during the Iconoclastic Controversy. In addition to these developments in architecture and monumental art, exquisite examples of **manuscripts**, cloisonné enamels, stonework, and ivory carving survive from this period as well.

The Middle Byzantine period also saw increased tensions between the Byzantines and western Europeans (whom the Byzantines often referred to as "Latins" or "Franks"). The so-called "Great Schism" of 1054 signaled growing divisions between Orthodox Christians in Byzantium and Roman Catholics in western Europe.

The Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire: 1204–1261

In 1204, the Fourth Crusade—undertaken by western Europeans loyal to the pope in Rome—veered from its path to Jerusalem and sacked the Christian city of Constantinople. Many of Constantinople's artistic treasures were destroyed or **carried back to western Europe** as booty. The crusaders occupied Constantinople and established a "Latin Empire" in Byzantine territory. Exiled Byzantine leaders established three successor states: the Empire of Nicaea in northwestern Anatolia, the Empire of Trebizond in northeastern Anatolia, and the Despotate of Epirus in northwestern Greece and Albania. In 1261, the Empire of Nicaea retook Constantinople and crowned Michael VIII Palaiologos as emperor, establishing the Palaiologan dynasty that would reign until the end of the Byzantine Empire.



Figure 13.6.6.22: The route and results of the Fourth Crusade (Kandi, CC BY-SA 4.0)

While the Fourth Crusade fueled animosity between eastern and western Christians, the crusades nevertheless encouraged cross-cultural exchange that is apparent in the arts of Byzantium and western Europe, and particularly in Italian paintings of the late medieval and early Renaissance periods, exemplified by new **depictions of St. Francis** painted in the so-called Italo-Byzantine style.

Late Byzantium: 1261–1453

Artistic patronage again flourished after the Byzantines re-established their capital in 1261. Some scholars refer to this cultural flowering as the "Palaiologan Renaissance" (after the ruling Palaiologan dynasty). Several existing churches—such as the **Chora Monastery** in Constantinople—were renovated, **expanded**, and lavishly decorated with mosaics and frescos. Byzantine artists were also active outside Constantinople, both in Byzantine centers such as Thessaloniki, as well as in neighboring lands, such as the Kingdom of Serbia, where the signatures of the painters named Michael Astrapas and Eutychios have been preserved in frescos from the late 13th and early 14th centuries.



Figure **13.6.6.23**: Mosaic of Theodore Metochites offering the Chora church to Christ, Chora monastery, Constantinople (Istanbul) c. 1315–21 (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Yet the Byzantine Empire never fully recovered from the blow of the Fourth Crusade, and its territory continued to shrink. Byzantium's calls for military aid from western Europeans in the face of the growing threat of the Ottoman Turks in the east remained unanswered. In 1453, the Ottomans finally conquered Constantinople, converting many of Byzantium's great churches into **mosques**, and ending the long history of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.



Figure **13.6.6.24**: Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul—designed by Mimar Sinan and inaugurated 1557—was influenced by Byzantine architecture (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.6.6.25: Andrei Rublev, *The Trinity*, c. 1410, tempera on wood, 142 × 114 cm (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Post-Byzantium: after 1453

Despite the ultimate demise of the Byzantine Empire, the legacy of Byzantium continued. This is evident in formerly Byzantine territories like Crete, where the so-called "Cretan School" of iconography flourished under Venetian rule (a famous product of the Cretan School being Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known as **El Greco**).

But Byzantium's influence also continued to spread beyond its former cultural and geographic boundaries, in the architecture of the Ottomans, the icons of Russia, the paintings of Italy, and elsewhere.

Additional Resources



Video 13.6.6.1: "Byzantium (ca. 330–1453)," The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Iconoclastic controversies

by DR. DAVOR DŽALTO



Figure 13.6.6.26: Apa Abraham, c. 590-600, watercolor on panel, Egyptian (Bode Museum, Berlin)

The word “icon” refers to many different things today. For example, we use this word to refer to the small graphic symbols in our software and to powerful cultural figures. Nevertheless, these different meanings retain a connection to the word’s original meaning. “Icon” is Greek for “image” or “painting” and during the medieval era, this meant a religious image on a wooden panel used for prayer and devotion. More specifically, icons came to typify the art of the Orthodox Christian Church.

“Iconoclasm” refers to the destruction of images or hostility toward visual representations in general. More specifically, the word is used for the Iconoclastic Controversy that shook the Byzantine Empire for more than 100 years.

Open hostility toward religious representations began in 726 when Emperor Leo III publicly took a position against icons; this resulted in their removal from churches and their destruction. There had been many previous theological disputes over visual representations, their theological foundations and legitimacy. However, none of these caused the tremendous social, political and cultural upheaval of the Iconoclastic Controversy.



Figure **13.6.6.27**: Christ Pantocrator (The Ruler of the Universe), Catacombs of Commodilla, 4th century

Some historians believe that by prohibiting icons, the Emperor sought to integrate Muslim and Jewish populations. Both Muslims and Jews perceived Christian images (that existed from the earliest times of Christianity) as idols and in direct opposition to the Old Testament prohibition of visual representations. The first commandment states,

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. You shall not adore them, nor serve them (Exodus 20:3-5).

Another theory suggests that the prohibition was an attempt to restrain the growing wealth and power of the monasteries. They produced the icons and were a primary target of the violence of the Iconoclastic Controversy. Other scholars offer a less political motive, suggesting that the prohibition was primarily religious, an attempt to correct the wayward practice of worshiping images.

The trigger for Leo III’s prohibition may have even been the huge volcanic eruption in 726 in the Aegean Sea interpreted as a sign of God’s anger over the veneration of icons. There is no one simple answer to this complex event. What we do know is that the prohibition essentially caused a civil war which shook the political, social and religious spheres of the empire. The conflict pitted the emperor and certain high church officials (patriarchs, bishops) who supported iconoclasm, against other bishops, lower clergy, laity and monks, who defended the icons.



Figure **13.6.6.28**: Khludov Psalter (detail), 9th century. The image represents the Iconoclast theologian, John the Grammarian, and an iconoclast bishop destroying an image of Christ. (State Historical Museum, Moscow)

The original theological basis for iconoclasm was fairly weak. Arguments relied mostly on the Old Testament prohibition (quoted above). But it was clear that this prohibition was not absolute since God also instructs how to make three dimensional representations of the Cherubim (heavenly spirits or angels) for the Ark of the Covenant, which is also quoted in the Old Testament, just a couple of chapters after the passage that prohibits images (Exodus 25:18-20).

Emperor Constantine V gave a more nuanced theological rationale for iconoclasm. He claimed that each visual representation of Christ necessarily ends in a heresy since Christ, according to generally accepted Christian dogmas, is simultaneously God and man, united without separation, and any visual depiction of Christ either separates these natures, representing Christ's humanity alone, or confuses them.

The iconophile (pro-icon) counter-argument was most convincingly articulated by St. John of Damascus and St. Theodore the Studite. They claimed that the iconoclast arguments were simply confused. Images of Christ do not depict natures, being either Divine or human, but a concrete person—Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. They claimed that in Christ the meaning of the Old Testament prohibition is revealed: God prohibited any representation of God (or anything that could be worshiped as a god) because it was impossible to depict the invisible God. Any such representation would thus be an idol, essentially a false representation or false god. But in Christ's person, God became visible, as a concrete human being, so painting Christ is necessary as a proof that God truly, not seemingly, became man. The fact that one can depict Christ witnesses God's incarnation.



Figure 13.6.6.29: Madonna with Christ, 9th century, mosaic, Hagia Sophia (Istanbul). This mosaic follows the iconoclastic crisis and revives stylistic elements from early Christian art.

The first phase of iconoclasm ended in 787, when the Seventh Ecumenical (universal) Council of bishops met in Nicaea. This council affirmed the view of the iconophiles, ordering all right-believing (orthodox) Christians to respect holy icons, prohibiting at the same time their adoration as idolatry. Emperor Leo V initiated a second period of iconoclasm in 814, but in 843, Empress Theodora proclaimed the restoration of icons and affirmed the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical council. This event is still celebrated in the Orthodox Church as the "Feast of Orthodoxy."

Additional resources:

Icons and iconoclasm in Byzantium on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The power of icons

The Triumph of Images: Icons, Iconoclasm, and the Incarnation

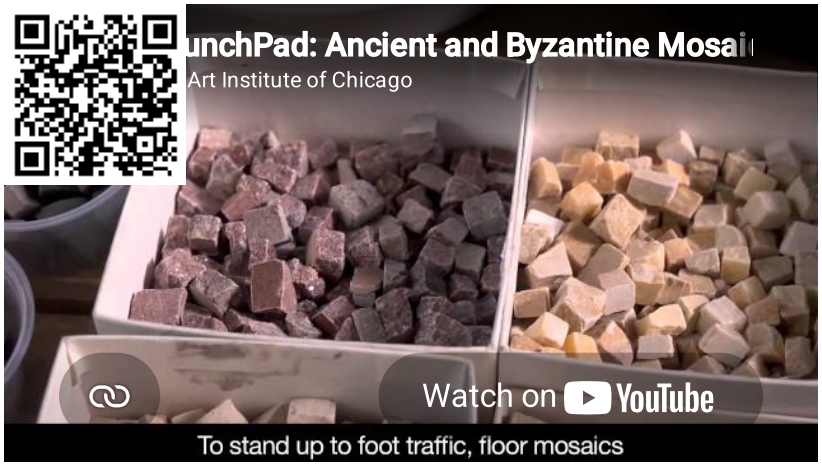
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.6.6.30: More Smarthistory images…

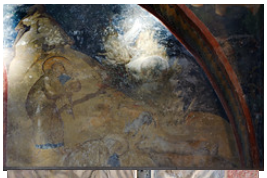
Ancient and Byzantine mosaic materials

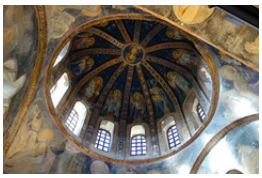
by ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO



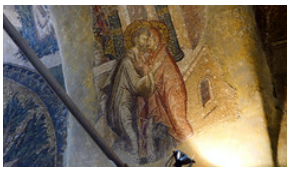
Video 13.6.6.2: Video from the Art Institute of Chicago

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88711



Figure **13.6.6.31**: More Smarthistory images…

Early Byzantine (including Iconoclasm)

The origins of Byzantine architecture

by DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

Periods of Byzantine history

Early Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) c. 330 – 843

Middle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

The Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

Late Byzantine 1261 – 1453

Post-Byzantine after 1453

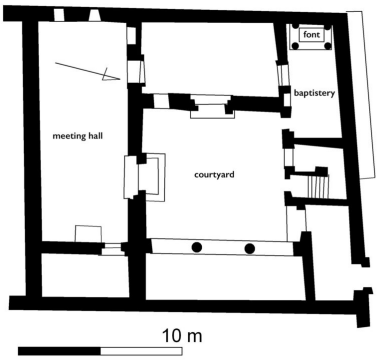


Figure **13.6.6.32**: Dura Europos, house church floor plan, c. 230 (adapted from plan by **Udimu**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Buildings for a minority religion

Officially Byzantine architecture begins with Constantine, but the seeds for its development were sown at least a century before the Edict of Milan (313) granted toleration to Christianity. Although limited physical evidence survives, a combination of archaeology and texts may help us

to understand the formation of an architecture in service of the new religion.

The *domus ecclesiae*, or house-church, most often represented an adaptation of an existing Late Antique residence to include a meeting hall and perhaps a baptistery. Most examples are known from texts; while there are significant remains in Rome, where they were known as *tituli*, most early sites of Christian worship were subsequently rebuilt and enlarged to give them a suitably public character, thus destroying much of the physical evidence.

Synagogues and mithraia from the period are considerably better preserved. A notable exception is the Christian House at Dura-Europas in Syria, built c. 200 on a typical courtyard plan. Modified c. 230, two rooms were joined to form a longitudinal meeting hall; another was provided with a *piscina* (a basin for water) to function as a baptistery for Christian initiation.

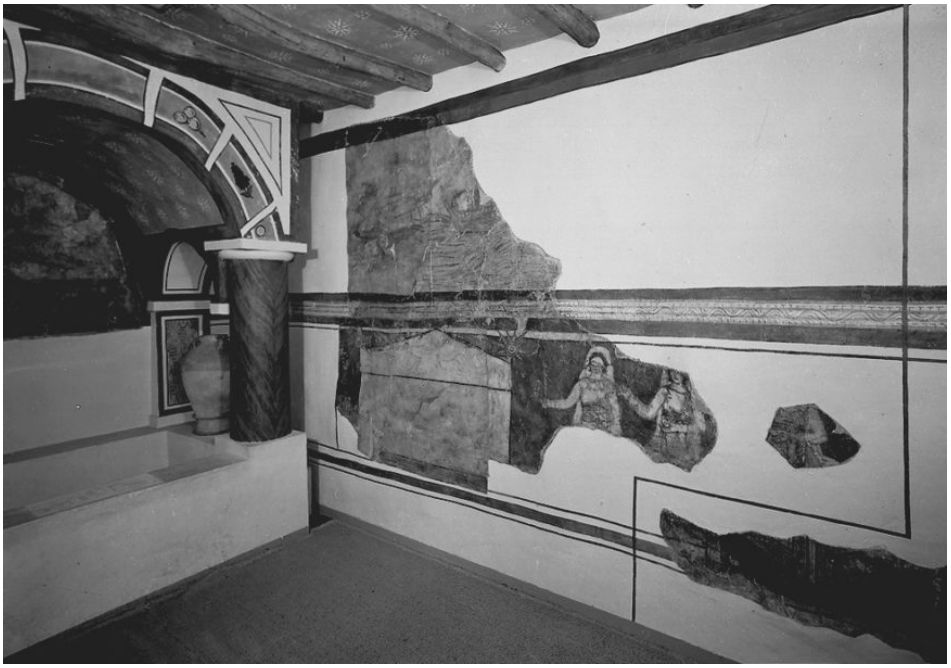


Figure **13.6.6.33**: Baptistery reconstruction, house church, Dura Europos, (Yale University Art Gallery)

Another house-church, considerably modified, was the house of St. Peter at Capharnaum, visited by early pilgrims.

Early Christian burials

Better evidence survives for burial customs, which were of prime concern in a religion that promised salvation after death. Unlike pagans, who practiced both cremation and inhumation (burial), Christians insisted upon inhumation because of the belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead at the end of days. In addition to *areae* (above-ground cemeteries) and **catacombs** (underground cemeteries), Christians required settings for commemorative banquets or *refrigeria*, a carry-over from pagan practices.

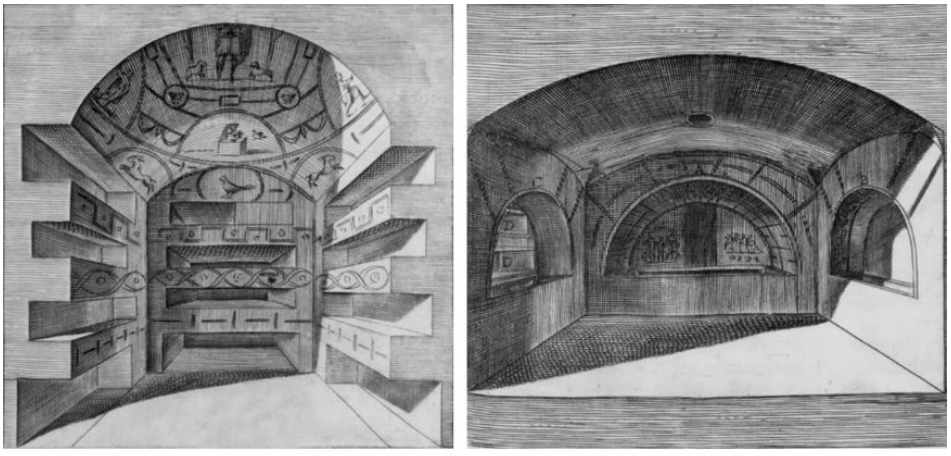


Figure **13.6.6.34**: Roman catacombs, *cubiculum* with *loculi* (left), *cubiculum* with *arcosolia* (right), adapted from Antonio Bosio, *Roma sotterranea, opera postuma di Antonio Bosio romano, antiquario ecclesiastico singolare de' suoi tempi* (Rome: 1632) (**Bibliothèque Nationale de France**)

The earliest Christian burials at the Roman catacombs were situated amid those of other religions, but by the end of the second century, exclusively Christian cemeteries are known, beginning with the Catacomb of St. Callixtus on the Via Appia, c. 230. Originally well organized with a series of parallel corridors carved into the tufa (a porous rock common in Italy), the catacombs expanded and grew more labyrinthine over the subsequent centuries. Within, the most common form of tomb was a simple, shelf-like *loculus* organized in multiple tiers in the walls of the corridors. Small *cubicula* surrounded with *arcosolium* tombs provided setting for wealthier burials and provide evidence of social stratification within the Christian community.

Above ground, a simple covered structure provided a setting for the *refrigeria*, such as the *triclia* excavated beneath S. Sebastiano, by the entrance to the catacombs.

The development of a cult of martyrs with the early church led to the development of commemorative monuments, usually called *martyria*, but also referred to in texts as *tropaia* and *heroa*. Among those in Rome, the most important was the tropaion marking the tomb of St. Peter in the necropolis on the Vatican Hill.



Figure **13.6.6.35**: Crypt of the Popes, Catacombs of Callixtus, Rome, 3rd century (photo: **Dnalor 01**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Increasing visibility

By the time of the Tetrarchy, Christian buildings had become more visible and more public, but without the scale and lavishness of their official successors. In Rome, the meeting hall of S. Crisogono seems to have been founded c. 300 as a visible Christian monument. Similarly in Nikomedia at the same time, the Christian meeting hall was prominent enough to be seen from the imperial palace. Just as the administrative structure of the church and the basic character of Christian worship were established in the early centuries, pre-Constantinian building laid the groundwork for later architectural developments, addressing the basic functions that would be of prime concern in later centuries: communal worship, initiation into the cult, burial, and the commemoration of the dead.



Figure 13.6.6.36: **The Colossus of Constantine**, c. 312-15 (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

With Constantine's acceptance of Christianity as an official religion of the Roman Empire in 313, he committed himself to the patronage of buildings meant to compete visually with their pagan counterparts. In major centers like Rome, this meant the construction of huge basilicas capable of holding congregations numbering into the thousands. Although the symbolic associations of the Christian basilica with its **Roman predecessors** have been debated, it thematized power and opulence in ways comparable to but not exclusive to imperial buildings.

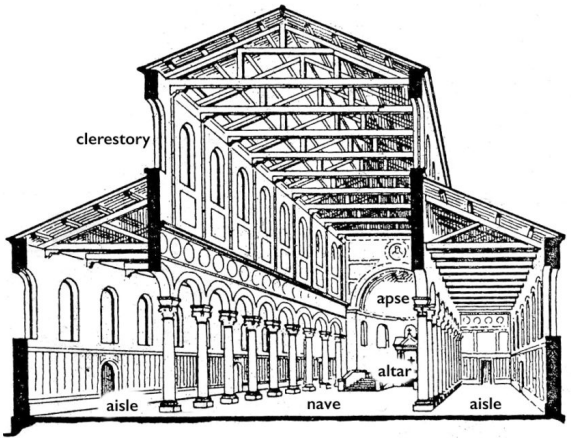


Figure 13.6.6.37: Elements of a Christian basilica, adapted from illustration of S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna, in Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, 6th ed. (London: B. T. Batsford, 1921)

Relief with Marco Aurelius sacrificing to Jupiter (Pietas Augusti) with a temple in the background, from the decoration of a triumphal arch, 177-180 C.E. (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bas_relief_from_Arch_of_Marcus_Aurelius_showing_sacrifice.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bas_relief_from_Arch_of_Marcus_Aurelius_showing_sacrifice.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"

MatthiasKabel, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49192" height="417" sizes="(max-width: 314px) 100vw, 314px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...e-870x1156.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...e-870x1156.jpg

870w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ce-300x399.jpg

300w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1156x1536.jpg

1156w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1541x2048.jpg

1541w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ice-scaled.jpg

1927w" width="314">

Figure 13.6.6.38: Relief with Marco Aurelius sacrificing to Jupiter (Pietas Augusti) with a temple in the background, from the decoration of a triumphal arch, 177-180 C.E. (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: **MatthiasKabel**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Formally, the basilica also stood in sharp contrast to the **pagan temple**, at which worship was conducted out of doors. The church basilica was essentially a meeting house, not a sacred structure, but a sacred presence was created by the congregation joining in common prayer—the people, not the building, comprised the *ekklesia* (the Greek word for "church").

The Lateran basilica, originally dedicated to Christ, was begun c. 313 to serve as Rome's cathedral, built on the grounds of an imperial palace, donated to be the residence of the bishop. Five-aisled in plan, the basilica's tall nave was illuminated by clerestory windows, which rose above coupled side aisles along the flanks and terminated in an apse at the west end, which held seats for the clergy. Before the apse, the altar was surrounded by a silver enclosure, decorated with statues of Christ and the Apostles.

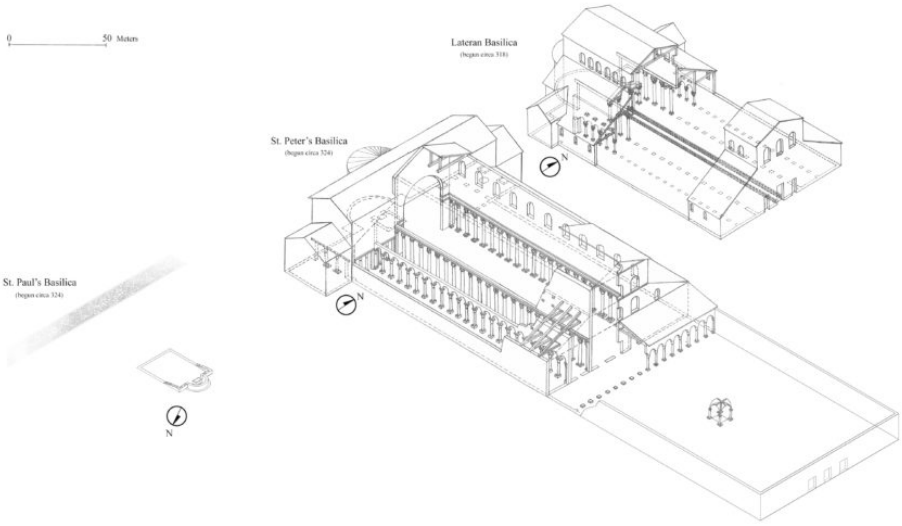


Figure **13.6.6.39**: Comparative view of the Constantinian basilicas at St. Paul's, St. Peter's, and at the Lateran. Model of St. Paul's by Evan Gallitelli. Image by Evan Gallitelli includes drawings by Konstantin Brandenburg published in Hugo Brandenburg's Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), fig. 1. (© **Nicola Camerlenghi**)

In addition to congregational churches, among which the Lateran stands at the forefront, a second type of basilica (or ambulatory basilica) appeared in Rome at the same time, set within the cemeteries outside the city walls, apparently associated with the venerated graves of martyrs. S. Sebastiano, probably originally the Basilica Apostolorum, which may have been begun immediately before the the Peace of the Church, rose on the site of the earlier *triclia*, in which graffiti testify to the special veneration of Peter and Paul at the site. These so-called cemetery basilicas provided a setting for commemorative funeral banquets. Essentially covered burial grounds, the floors of the basilicas were paved with graves and their walls enveloped by mausolea.

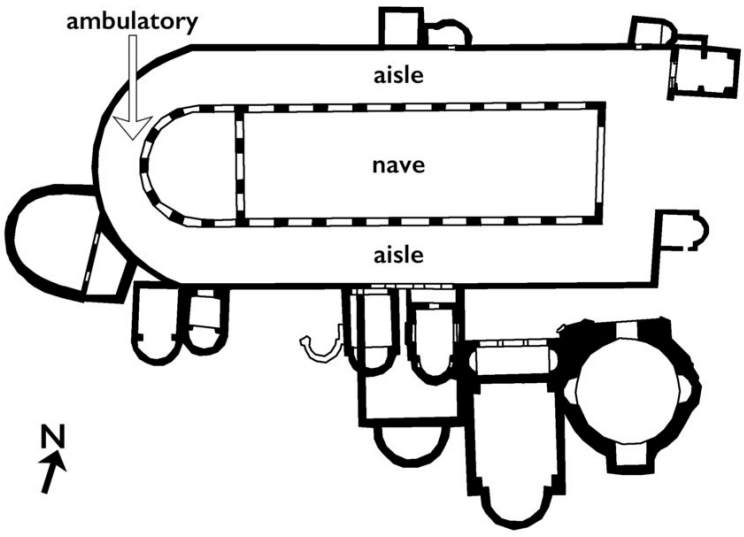


Figure **13.6.6.40**: Plan of the Basilica Apostolorum (redrawn, Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

In plan they were three-aisled, with the aisle continuing into an **ambulatory** surrounding the apse at the west end. By the end of the fourth century, however, the practice of the funerary banquet was suppressed, and the grand cemetery basilicas were either abandoned or transformed into parish churches.

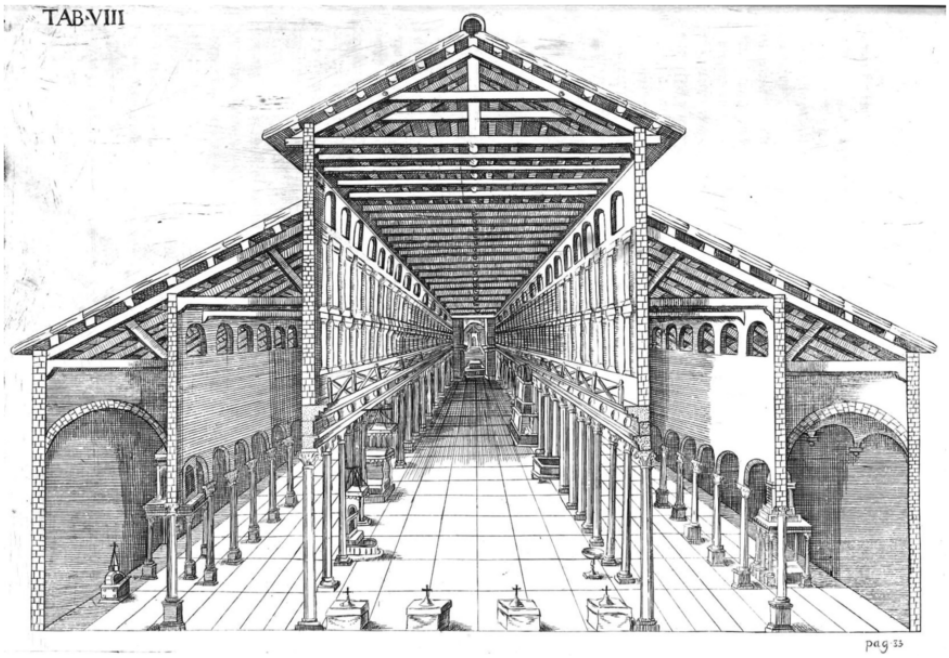


Figure **13.6.6.41**: Constantine's St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, from: Giovanni Ciampini, ***De sacris aedificiis a Constantino Magno constructis: synopsis historica***, 1693, p. 33



Figure **13.6.6.42**: Ciborium of Old St. Peter's, Werro, *Itinerarium von der saeligen Reise gegen Romeund Jerusalem im Jahr 1581* (Fribourg, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, ms. L 181, f. 16v)

Constantine also supported the construction of monumental martyria.

Most important in the West was St. Peter's basilica in Rome, begun c. 324, originally functioning as a combination of cemetery basilica and martyrium, sited so that the focal point was the marker at the tomb of Peter, covered by a ciborium (canopy) and located at the chord of the western apse. The enormous five-aisled basilica served as the setting for burials and the *refrigeria*. To this was juxtaposed a transept – essentially a transverse, single-aisled nave—which provided access to the saint's tomb. The eastern atrium seems to have been slightly later in date.

Reconstructed plan of Constantine's St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, c. 320, adapted from Banister F. Fletcher, <em
A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, 5th ed. (London: B. T. Batsford, 1905)." aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49156" height="346" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x346.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x346.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-300x119.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...eters-copy.jpg
1432w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.43**: Reconstructed plan of Constantine's St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, c. 320, adapted from Banister F. Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, 5th ed. (London: B. T. Batsford, 1905).

In the Holy Land, major shrines similarly juxtaposed congregational basilicas with centrally-planned commemorative structures housing the venerated site. At Bethlehem (c. 324), a short five-aisled basilica terminated in an octagon marking the site of Christ's birth. At Jerusalem,

Constantine's church of the Holy Sepulchre (dedicated 336) marked the sites of Christ's Crucifixion, Entombment, and Resurrection, and consisted of a sprawling complex with an atrium opening from the main street of the city; a five-aisled, galleried congregational basilica; an inner courtyard with the rock of Calvary in a chapel at its southeast corner; and the aedicula of the Tomb of Christ, freed from the surrounding bedrock, to the west. The Anastasis Rotunda, enclosing the Tomb aedicula, was completed only after Constantine's death.

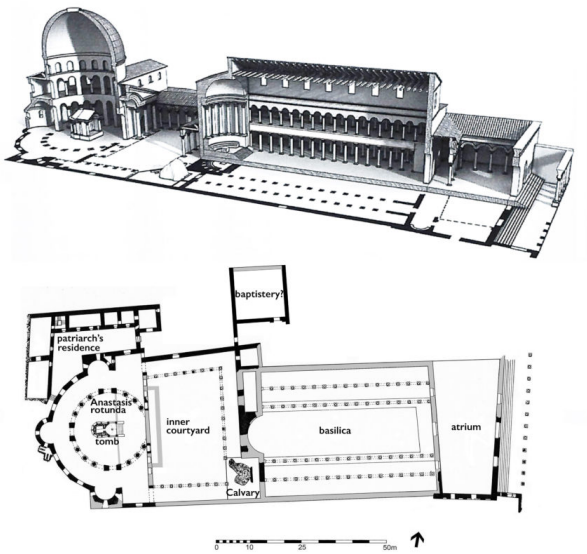


Figure 13.6.6.44: Restored plan and hypothetical section, church of the Holy Sepulchre, c. 350 C.E. (© Robert G: Ousterhout and Tayfun Öner)

Most martyria were considerably simpler, often no more than a small basilica. At Constantine's Eleona church on the Mount of Olives, for example, a simple basilica was constructed above the cave where Christ had taught the Apostles.

Pilgrims' accounts, such as that left by the Spanish nun Egeria (c. 380), provide a fascinating view of life at the shrines. These great buildings played an important role in the development of the **cult of relics**, but they were less important for the subsequent development of Byzantine architecture.

New Rome

In addition to his acceptance of Christianity, Constantine's other great achievement was the establishment of a new imperial residence and subsequent capital city in the East, strategically located on the straits of the Bosphorus. Nova Roma or Constantinople, as laid out in 324-330, expanded the urban armature of the old city of Byzantion westward to fill the peninsula between the Sea of Marmara and the Golden Horn, combining elements of Roman and Hellenistic city planning.

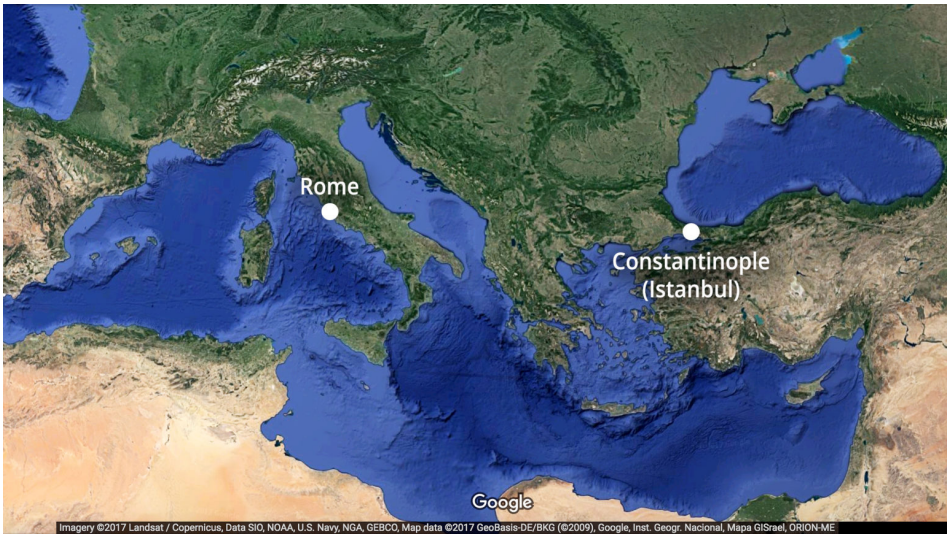


Figure 13.6.6.45: Map with Rome and Constantinople (underlying map © Google).

Like old Rome, the new city of Constantine was built on seven hills and divided into fourteen districts; its imperial palace lay next to its hippodrome, which was similarly equipped with a royal viewing box. As in Rome, there were a senate house, a Capitol, great baths, and other

public amenities; imperial fora provided its public spaces; triumphal columns, arches, and monuments, including a colossus of the emperor as Apollo-Helios, and a variety of dedications imparted mimetic associations with the old capital.

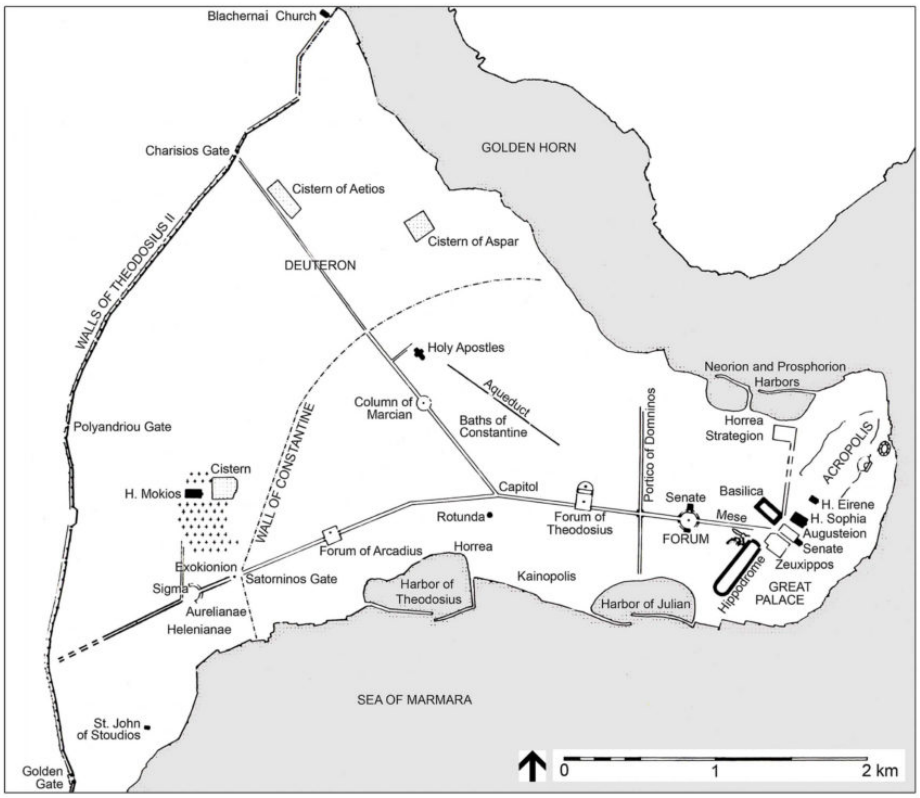


Figure 13.6.6.46: Constantinople, plan of the fifth century city (© Robert G. Ousterhout, based on Cyril Mango, *Développement urbaine de Constantinople*, 1985)

Constantine's own mausoleum was established in a position that encouraged a comparison with that of Augustus's mausoleum in Rome; the adjoining cruciform basilica—the church of the Holy Apostles—was apparently added by his sons. Beyond the much-altered porphyry column that once stood at the center of his forum, however, virtually nothing survives from the time of Constantine; the city continued to expand long after its foundation.



Figure 13.6.6.47: Ruins of the hippodrome in Constantinople, c. 1560, engraving by Étienne Dupérac, for *Onofrio Panvinio, De ludis circensibus*, 1600, probably based on a late 15th century drawing (photo: Paul K, CC BY 2.0)

Next: read about Early Byzantine architecture after Constantine

Additional Resources

Robert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Early Byzantine architecture after Constantine

by DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

Periods of Byzantine history

Early Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) c. 330 – 843

Middle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

The Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

Late Byzantine 1261 – 1453

Post-Byzantine after 1453



Figure 13.6.6.48: Santa Sabina, Rome, 522-532 (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Basilicas and new forms



Figure 13.6.6.49: Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, c. 490, Ravenna, Italy (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

After the time of Constantine, a standardized church architecture emerged, with the basilica for congregational worship dominating construction.

There were numerous regional variations: in Rome and the West, for example, basilicas usually were elongated without galleries, as at **S. Sabina** in Rome (522-32) or S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (c. 490).

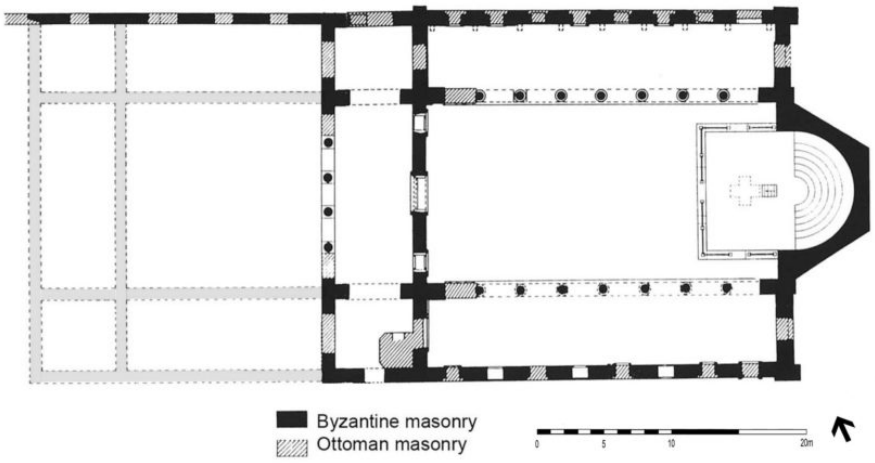


Figure **13.6.6.50**: Plan of St. John Stoudios, 458, Constantinople (Istanbul) (© Robert Ousterhout)

In the East the buildings were more compact and galleries were more common, as at St. John Stoudios in Constantinople (458) or the Achieropoiitos in Thessaloniki (early fifth century) **(view plan and elevation)**.



Figure **13.6.6.51**: Church of the Acheiropoietos, Thessaloniki, early 5th century (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

By the fifth century, the liturgy had become standardized, but, again, with some regional variations, evident in the planning and furnishing of basilicas. In general, the area of the altar was enclosed by a *templon* barrier, with semicircular seating for the officiants (the *synthronon*) in the curvature of the apse. The altar itself was covered by a ciborium. Within the nave, a raised pulpit or *ambo* provided a setting for the Gospel readings.

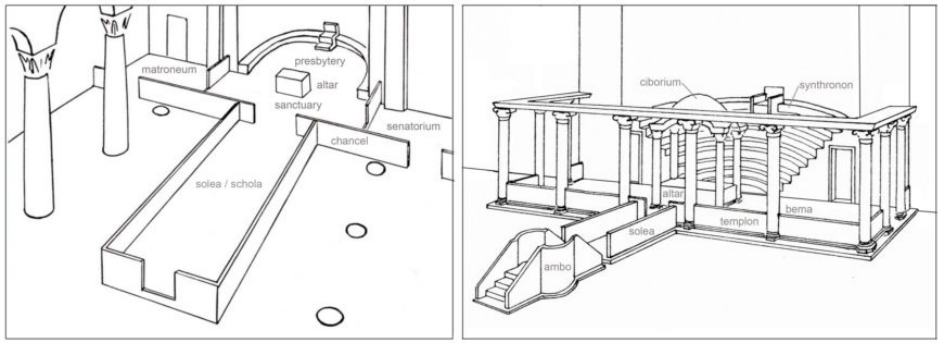


Figure **13.6.6.52**: Left: diagram of an early Christian Roman sanctuary; right: diagram of an early Christian Constantinopolitan sanctuary (© Robert G. Ousterhout, adapted from T. F. Mathews, "An Early Roman Chancel Arrangement and Its Liturgical Uses," 1962, and R. Naumann and H. Belting, *Euphemia-Kirche*, 1966)



Figure **13.6.6.53**: Santo Stefano Rotondo, Rome, c. 468–83 (photo: **Brad Hostetler**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The liturgy probably had less effect on the creation of new architectural designs than on the increasing symbolism and sanctification of the church building. Some new building types emerge, such as the cruciform church, the tetraconch, octagon, and a variety of centrally planned structures. Such forms may have had symbolic overtones; for example, the cruciform plan may be either a reflection of the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople or associated with the life-giving cross, as at S. Croce in Ravenna or SS. Apostoli in Milan. Other innovative designs may have had their origins in architectural geometry, such as the enigmatic S. Stefano Rotondo (468-83) in Rome. The aisled tetraconch churches, once thought to be a form associated with martyria, are most likely cathedrals or metropolitan churches. The early fifth-century tetraconch in the Library of Hadrian in Athens was probably the first cathedral of the city; that at Selucia Pieria-Antioch, from the late fifth century, was possibly a metropolitan church.



Figure **13.6.6.54**: Church furniture, left to right: restored templon, 10th century, Holy Apostles, Athens (Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0); synthronon, 6th c., Hagia Eirene, Constantinople (Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0); ciborium by Nicolaus Ranucius & sons, Italy, c. 1150 (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**); reconstructed ambo, 5th century (garden, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul) (Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Figure **13.6.6.55**: Orthodox (or Neonian) Baptistery, Ravenna, c. 400-450 (photo: **Kirk K**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Baptisteries

Baptisteries also appear as prominent buildings throughout the Empire, necessary for the elaborate ceremonies addressed to adult converts and catechumens. Most common was a symbolically resonant, octagonal building housing the font and attached to the cathedral, as with the Orthodox (or Neonian) Baptistery at Ravenna, c. 400-450. In Rome, the Lateran's baptistery was an independent, octagonal structure that stood north of the basilica's apse. Built under Constantine, the baptistery expanded under Pope Sixtus III in the fifth century with the addition of an ambulatory around its central structure. The inscription St. Ambrose composed for his baptistery at Milan clarifies the symbolism of such eight-sided buildings:

> ***The eight-sided temple has risen for sacred purposes***
> ***The octagonal font is worthy for this task.***
> ***It is seemly that the baptismal hall should arise in this number***
> ***By which true health returns to people***
> ***By the light of the resurrected Christinscription attributed to St. Ambrose of Milan***

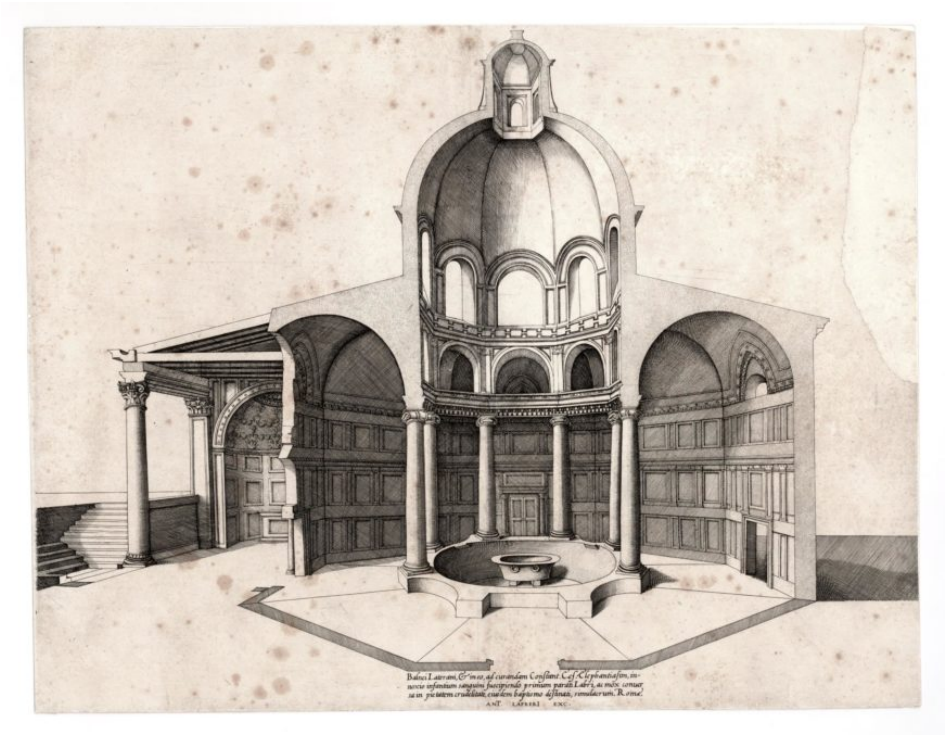


Figure 13.6.6.56: Nicolas Beatrizet, Lateran Baptistery in Rome, reconstruction, 1550s, engraving (The British Museum)



Figure 13.6.6.57: Baptismal font, Vitalis Basilica Baptistery, Sbeitla, Tunisia, 6th century (photo: Kirk K, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Associated with death and resurrection, the planning type derives from Late Roman mausolea, although not directly from the Anastasis Rotunda. Variations abound: at Butrint (in modern Albania) and Nocera (in southwestern Italy), for example, the baptisteries have ambulatories; in North Africa, the architecture tends to remain simple, while the form of the font is elaborated. With the change to infant baptism and a simplified ceremony, however, monumental baptisteries cease to be constructed after the sixth century.

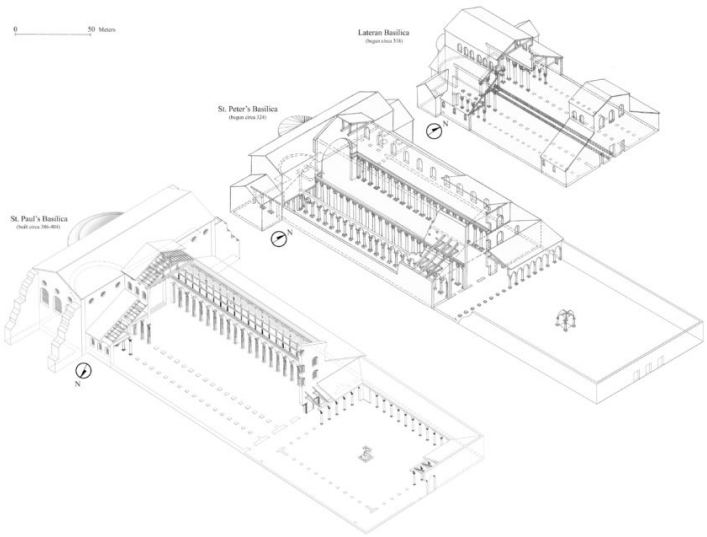


Figure 13.6.6.58: Comparative view of the Constantinian basilicas of St. Peter and at the Lateran, alongside the Theodosian basilica of St. Paul. All are depicted at the same scale. Model of St. Paul's by Evan Gallitelli. Image by Evan Gallitelli includes drawings by Konstantin Brandenburg published in Hugo Brandenburg's Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), fig. 1. (© Nicola Camerlenghi)

Martyria and Mausolea

Although the church gradually eliminated the great funeral banquets at the graves of martyrs, the cult of martyrs was manifest in other ways, notably the importance of pilgrimage and the dissemination of relics. In spite of this, there was not a standard architectural form for the martyria, which instead seem to depend on site-specific conditions or regional developments. In Rome, for example, S. Paolo fuori le mura (St. Paul Outside the Walls), begun 384, follows the model of St. Peter's in adding a transept to a huge five-aisled basilica.



Figure 13.6.6.59: St. Paul's fuori le mura (interior looking east before destruction), begun 384, Rome (etching by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 18th century)



Figure 13.6.6.60: St. Demetrios in his tomb, reliquary pendant, 11th century, gold and enamel, 3.7 x 4.6 x 1 cm (The British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

At Thessaloniki, the basilica of H. Demetrios (late fifth century) incorporated the remains of a crypt and other structures associated with the Roman bath where Demetrius was martyred.

At rural locations, large complexes emerged, as at Qal'at Sam'an, built c. 480-90 in Syria, which had four basilicas radiating from an octagonal core, where the stylite saint's column stood.

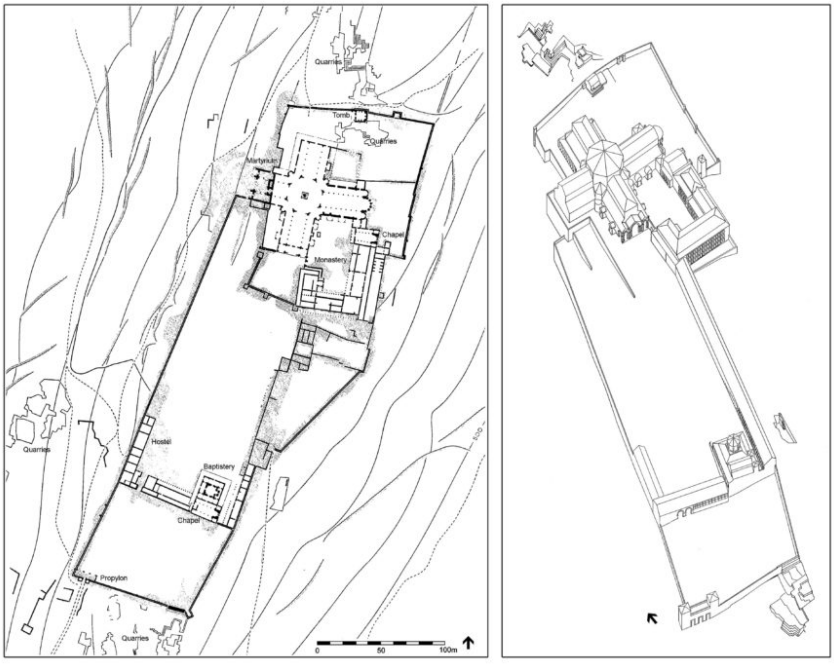


Figure 13.6.6.60: Plan and reconstruction of Qal'at Sem'an, (© Robert G. Ousterhout)

Abu Mena (CC BY 2.0 <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/cvk4hN" href="https://flic.kr/p/cvk4hN" target="_blank" rel="noopener"
Iris Fernandez, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48961" height="300" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x653.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x653.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="400">

Figure 13.6.6.61: Abu Mena (CC BY 2.0 Iris Fernandez, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

An entire city (Abu Mena), with church architecture of increasing complexity, grew around the venerated tomb of St. Menas in Egypt.

At Hierapolis in Asia Minor, a large octagonal complex was built at the site of the tomb of St. Philip (view plan).

At Ephesus, a cruciform church arose at the tomb of St. John the Evangelist.

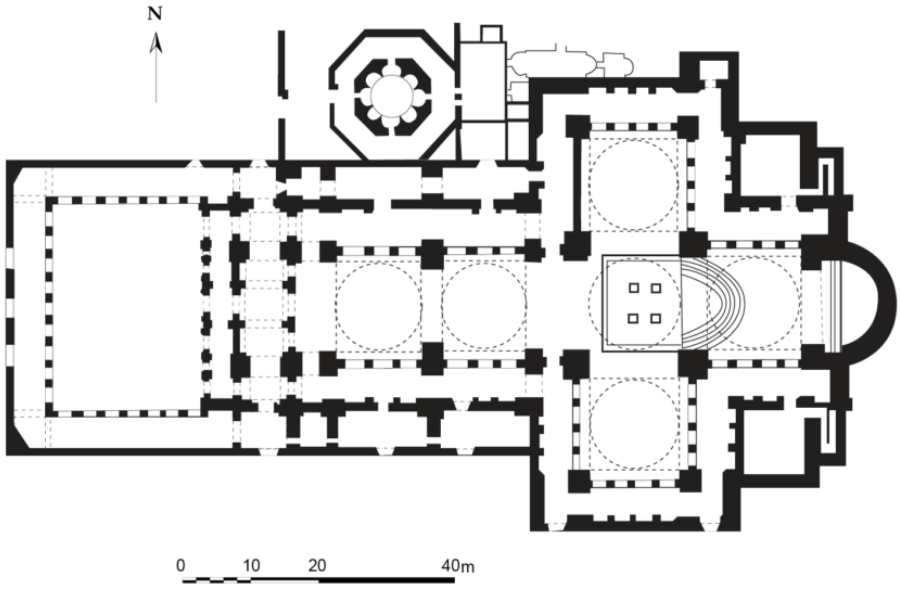


Figure 13.6.6.62: Reconstructed floor plan, church of St. John the Evangelist, Ephesus (Marsyas, CC BY 3.0)

Others were simpler in form. At the martyrium of St. Thekla at Meryemlik, c. 480, a three-aisled basilica was added above her holy cave. At Sinai, the sixth-century basilica was augmented by subsidiary chapels along its sides, but the holy site – the Burning Bush – lay outside, immediately to the east of its apse (view plan).

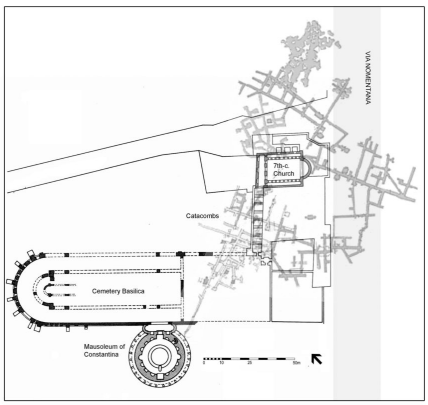


Figure 13.6.6.63: Rome, Sant'Agnese site plan: cemetery basilica with attached Mausoleum of Constantina (S. Costanza); medieval Basilica of Sant'Agnese above the catacombs (in gray) (© Robert Ousterhout)

The desire for privileged burial perpetuated the tradition of Late Antique mausolea, which were often octagonal or centrally planned. In Rome the fourth-century mausolea of Helena and Constantina were attached to cemetery basilicas.

Cruciform chapels seem to be a new creation, with a shape that derived its meaning from the life-giving Cross, a relationship emphasized in the well-preserved **Mausoleum of Galla Placidia**, built c. 425, in Ravenna, which was originally attached to a cruciform church dedicated to S. Croce.

In Constantinople, the successors of Constantine were buried in the rotunda at the church of the Holy Apostles or its dependencies.



Figure **13.6.6.64**: Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, c. 425 (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Monasticism

Monasticism began to play an increasingly important role in society, but from the perspective of architecture, early monasteries lacked systematic planning and were dependent on site-specific conditions. The coenobitical system (communal monasticism) included living quarters, with cells for the monks, as well as a refectory for common dining and a church or chapel for common worship. Evidence is preserved in the desert communities of Egypt and Palestine. At the Red Monastery at Sohag, the formal spaces are contained within a fortress-like complex, although it is unclear where with or without the enclosure the monks actually lived. In the Judean Desert, a variety of hermits' cells are preserved – simple caves carved into the rough landscape.



Figure **13.6.6.65**: Red Monastery church, Sohag, early 6th century (photo: Rob, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Urban Planning

In general, urban planning in this period follows Roman and Hellenistic models, as Justinian's new city of Iustiniana Prima (Caracin Grad, in modern Serbia) amply demonstrates.

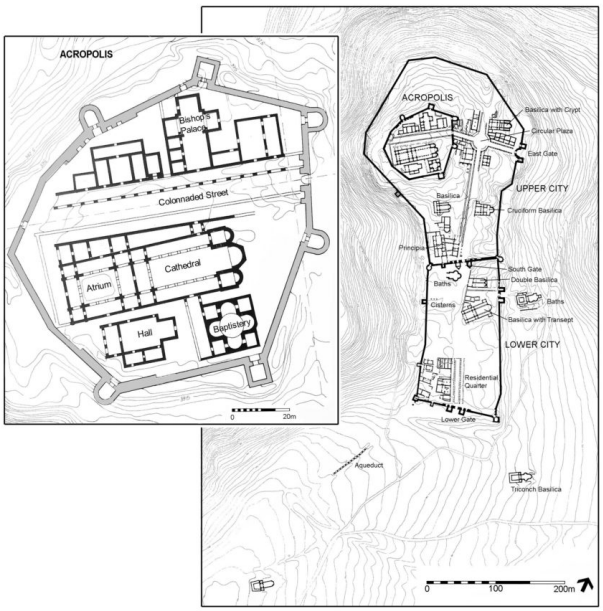


Figure **13.6.6.66**: Caričin Grad (Iustiniana Prima) site plan, with detail of the acropolis (© Robert Ousterhout)

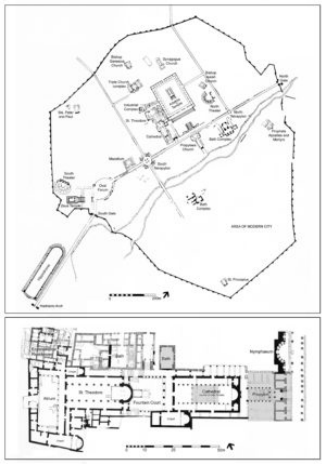


Figure **13.6.6.67**: Gerasa (Jerash), plan of the city with a detail of the Cathedral complex (© Robert Ousterhout)

At Gerasa (in modern Jordan), Thessaloniki, and elsewhere, existing city plans were reconfigured to give prominence to the new Christian structures.

In Jerusalem and Athens, there may have been an intentional visual juxtaposition of the new Christian cathedral with the abandoned Jewish or pagan temple.

While the Theodosian Code legislated the cessation of pagan worship, it recommended the preservation of the temple building and its contents because of their artistic value. The transformation of temples into churches was rare before the sixth century.

Defensive architecture followed Roman practices.

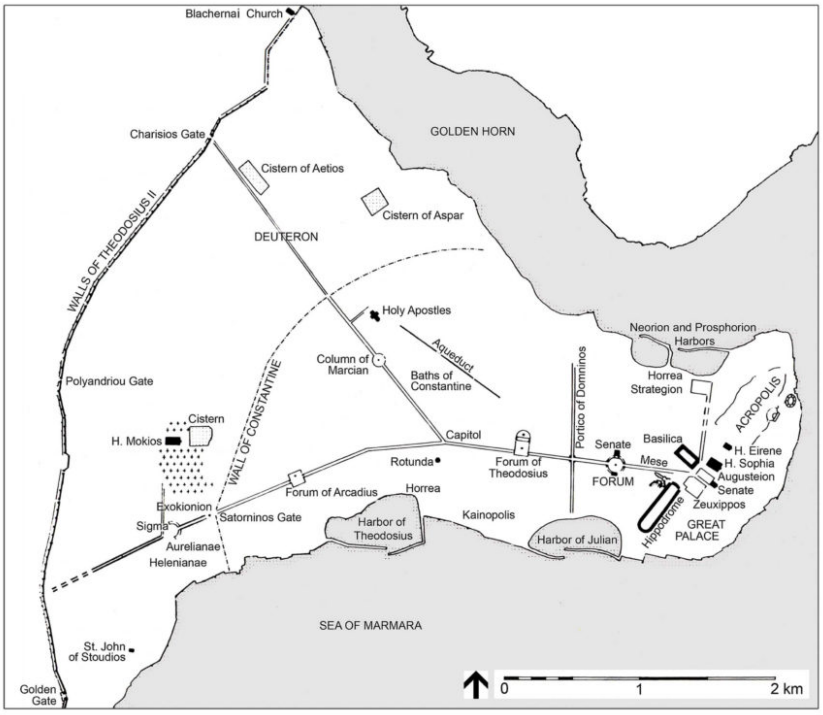


Figure **13.6.6.68**: Constantinople, plan of the fifth century city (© Robert G. Ousterhout, based on Cyril Mango, Développement urbaine de Constantinople, 1985)

The walls of Constantinople, added by Theodosius II (412-13) stand as a singular achievement, combining two lines of defensive walls with a moat. In a like manner, the system of aqueducts and cisterns at Constantinople expanded upon established Roman technology to create the most extensive water system in Antiquity.

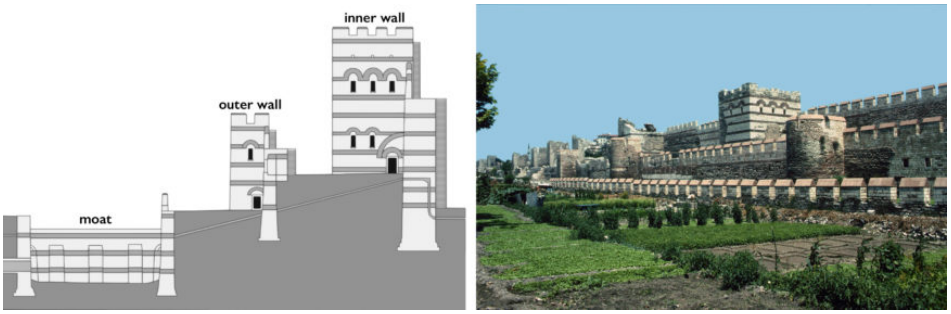


Figure **13.6.6.69**: Left: diagram of the Theodosian walls, Constantinople (adapted from **Glz19**, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: partially restored Theodosian walls with garden plots in the moat, Constantinople (Istanbul), 412-413 (photo: © Robert G. Ousterhout)

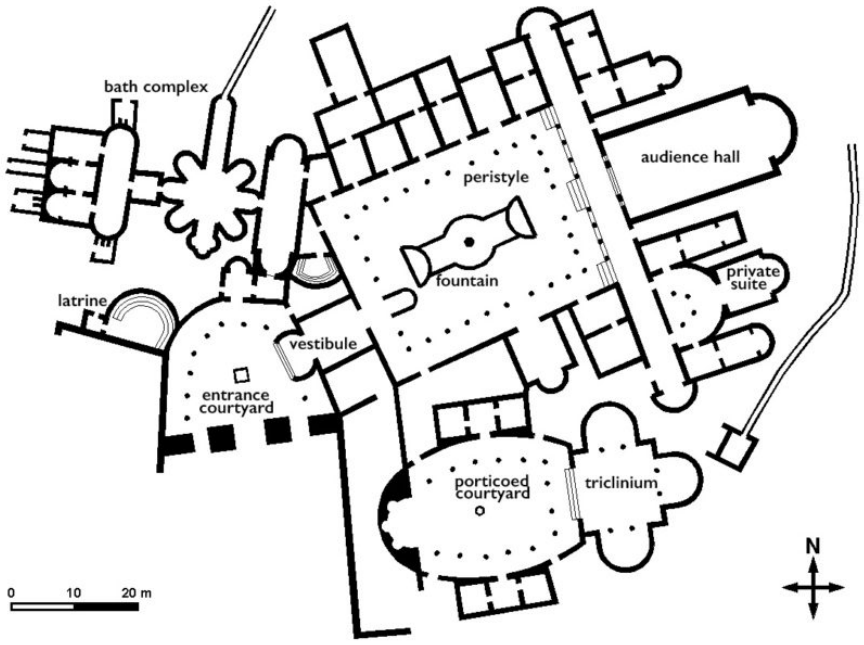


Figure **13.6.6.70**: Plan of villa, Piazza Armerina (adapted from plan by **Bjs**, CC0)

Standard planning continued in domestic architecture as well. Large houses excavated in Asia Minor (Sardis, Ephesus), North Africa (Carthage, Spaitla, Apollonia), Italy (Ravenna, Piazza Armerina), Greece (Athens, Argos), and elsewhere include porticoed gardens, audience halls, and triclinia (dining rooms). The Great Palace in Constantinople and the so-called Palace of Theodoric in Ravenna were essentially elaborations on or repetitions of the Late Roman villa. Perhaps the most significant changes in the Late Antique ***domus*** (house) were the increasing size and number of ceremonial spaces (audience halls and triclinia) – as at the early fourth century villa at Piazza Armerina (in Sicily) – and the incorporation of chapels into the domestic setting – as at the Palace of the Dux at Apollonia (in modern Libya). The latter phenomenon is indicative of the growing importance of private worship and was a source of growing concern in ecclesiastical legislation. With significant economic and social changes, however, by the end of the period under discussion, the *domus* disappeared.

Next: read about innovative architecture in the age of Justinian

Additional Resources

Robert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Woman with Scroll

by DR. EVAN FREEMAN and DR. ANNE MCCLANAN



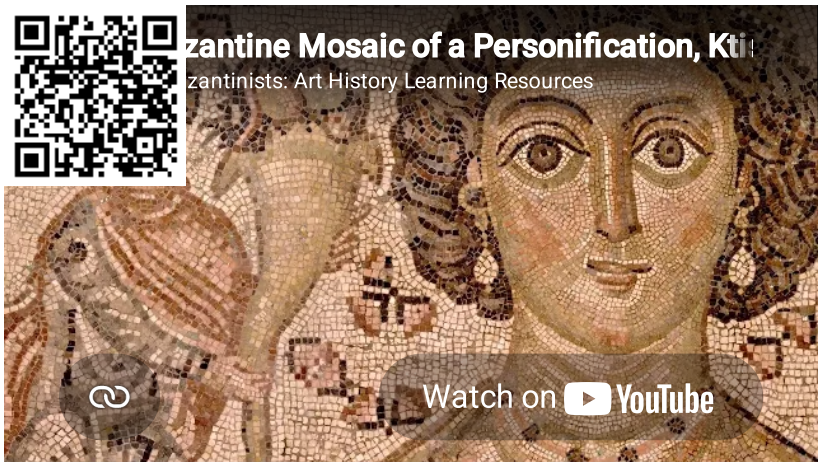
Video **13.6.6.3**: Evan and Anne discuss *Marble Portrait Bust of a Woman with a Scroll*, late 4th–early 5th century C.E., pentelic marble, 53 x 27.5 x 22.2 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection**)

Additional resources:

This sculpture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Byzantine Mosaic of a Personification, Ktisis

by DR. EVAN FREEMAN and DR. ANNE MCCLANAN



Video **13.6.6.4**: Evan and Anne discuss *Fragment of a Floor Mosaic with a Personification of Ktisis*, ca. 500–550 C.E. (with modern restoration), marble and glass, 151.1 x 199.7 x 2.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Additional resources:

This mosaic at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Innovative architecture in the age of Justinian

by DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

Periods of Byzantine history

Early Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) c. 330 – 843

Middle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

The Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

Late Byzantine 1261 – 1453

Post-Byzantine after 1453



Figure 13.6.6.71: Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul), 532-37 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

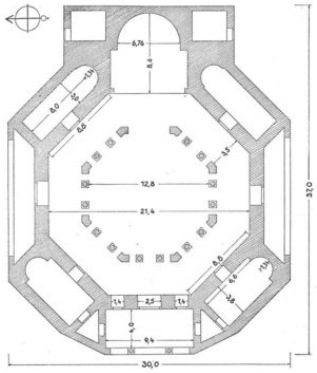


Figure 13.6.6.72: Plan of church of the Theotokos, c. 484, Mt. Gerizim (in modern Israel) (adapted from Schneider)

New trends

Although standardized church basilicas continued to be constructed, by the end of the fifth century, two important trends emerge in church architecture: the centralized plan, into which a longitudinal axis is introduced, and the longitudinal plan, into which a centralizing element is introduced.

The first type may be represented by the ruined church of the Theotokos on Mt. Gerizim (in modern Israel), c. 484, which has a developed sanctuary bay projecting beyond an aisled octagon with radiating chapels; the second by the so-called Domed Basilica at Meriamlik (on the southern coast of Turkey), c. 471-94, which superimposed a dome on a standard basilican nave (view plan). Both may be attributed to the patronage of emperor Zeno.



Figure 13.6.6.74: Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (Küçük Ayasofya Camii), Constantinople (Istanbul), completed before 536 (photo: © Robert G. Ousterhout)

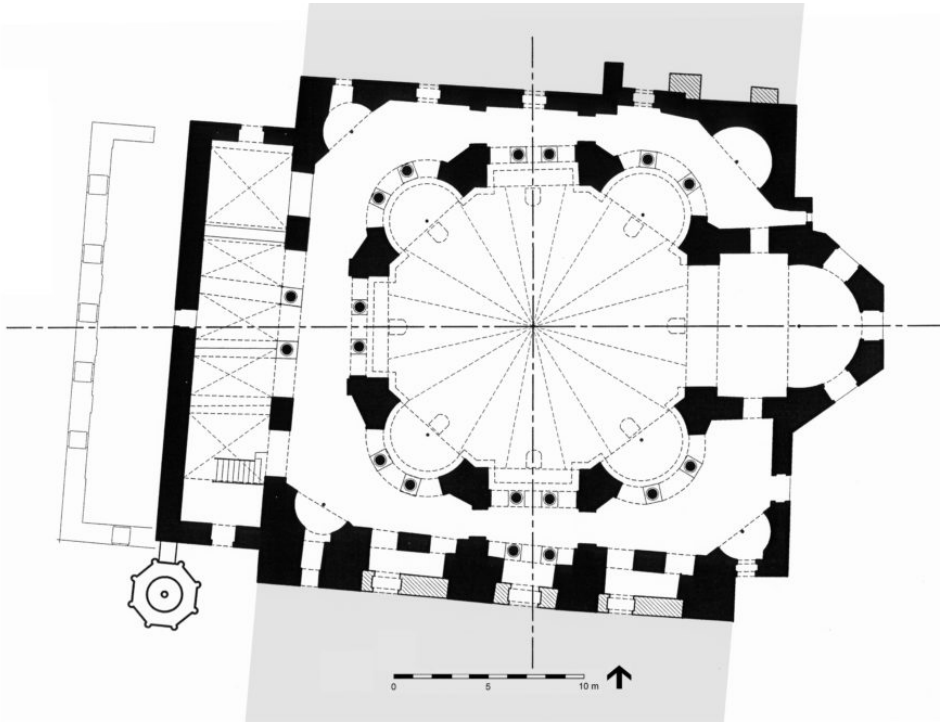


Figure 13.6.6.75: Plan of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (Küçük Ayasofya Camii), Constantinople (Istanbul), completed before 536 (© Robert G. Ousterhout, redrawn after J. Ebersolt and A. Thiers, Les Églises de Constantinople, 1913)

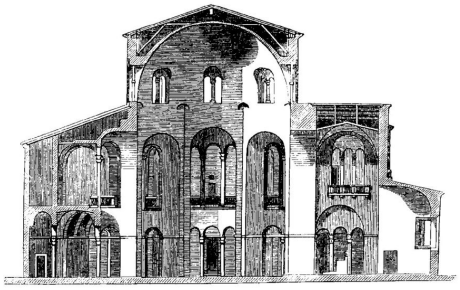


Figure **13.6.6.76**: Section of San Vitale, Ravenna, from James Fergusson, *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1855), 513

The reign of Justinian

Both trends are further developed during the reign of Justinian (reigned 527 to 565). HH. Sergios and Bakchos in Constantinople, completed before 536, and **S. Vitale** in Ravenna, completed c. 546/48, for example, are double-shelled octagons **(view plan of San Vitale)** of increasing geometric sophistication, with masonry domes covering their central spaces, perhaps originally combined with wooden roofs for the side aisles and galleries.



Figure **13.6.6.77**: San Vitale, c. 546/48, Ravenna (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

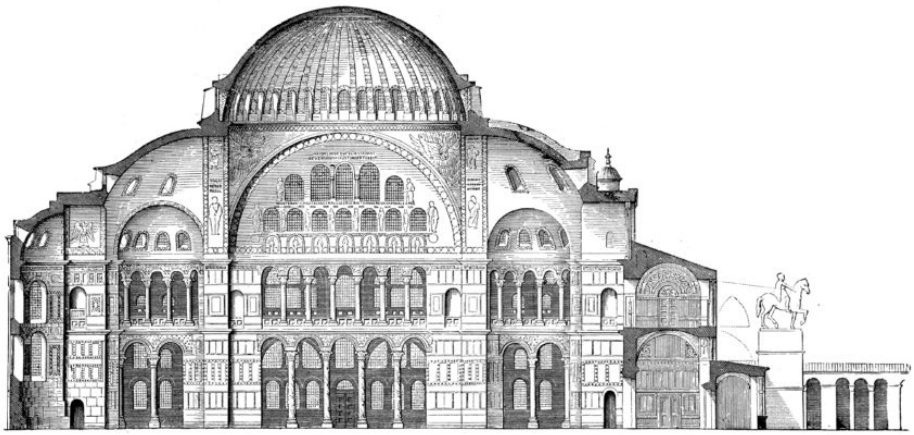


Figure 13.6.6.78: Section of Hagia Sophia by Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Istanbul, 532-37, from Wilhelm Lübke / Max Semrau: *Grundriß der Kunstgeschichte*. 14. Auflage. Paul Neff Verlag, Esslingen, 1908 **(view annotated section)**

Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

Several monumental basilicas of the period included domes and vaulting throughout, most notably at **Hagia Sophia**, built 532-37 by the *mechanikoi* Anthemios and Isidoros, which combines elements of the central plan and the basilica on an unprecedented scale.

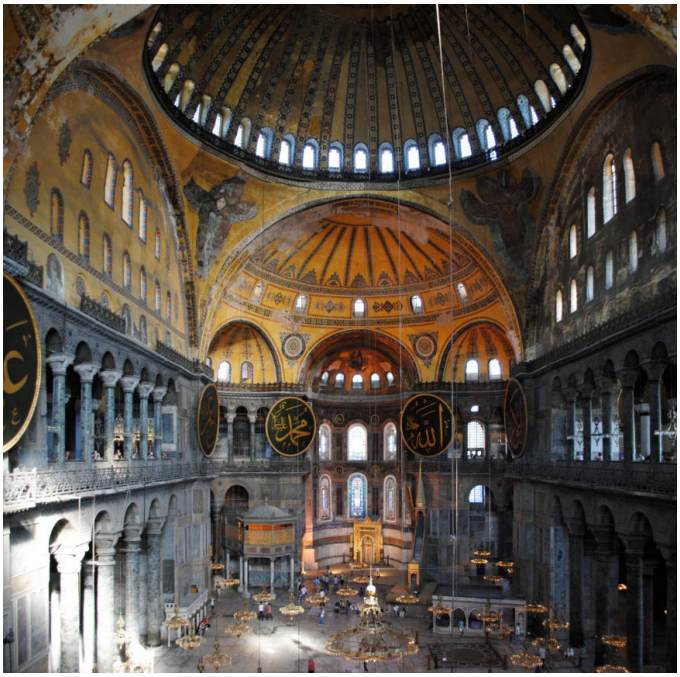


Figure 13.6.6.79: Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul), 532-37 (photo: © Robert G. Ousterhout) **(view annotated photo)**

Its unique design focused on a daring central dome of slightly more than 100 feet in diameter, raised above **pendentives**, and braced to the east and west by half-domes. The aisles and galleries are screened by colonnades (rows of columns), with exedrae (semicircular recesses) at the corners. Following the innovative trends in Late Roman architecture, the structural system concentrates the loads at critical points, opening the walls with large windows.

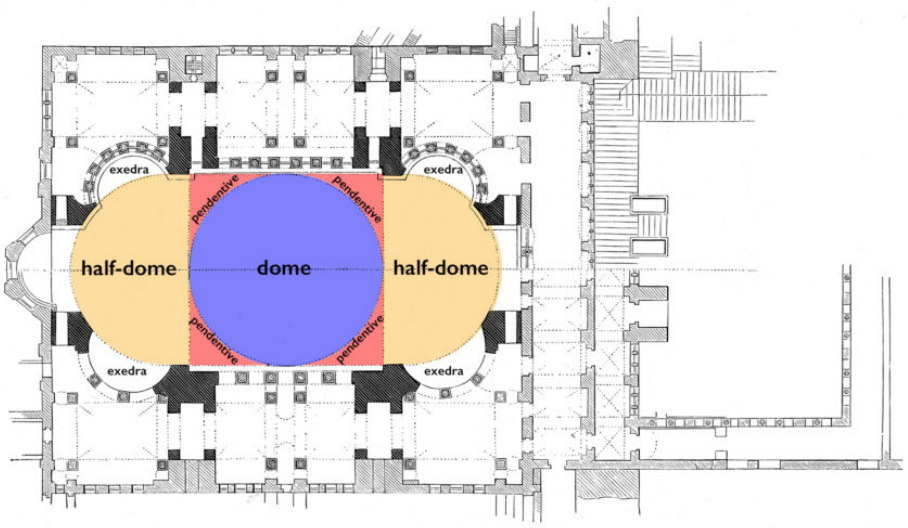


Figure 13.6.6.80: Floor plan of Hagia Sophia by Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Constantinople (Istanbul), 532-37, based on a diagram from Wilhelm Lübke / Max Semrau: *Grundriß der Kunstgeschichte*. 14. Auflage. Paul Neff Verlag, Esslingen, 1908.

With glistening marble revetments on all flat surfaces and more than seven acres of gold mosaic on the vaults, the effect was magical—whether in daylight or by candlelight, with the dome seeming to float aloft with no discernable means of support; accordingly Procopios writes that the interior impression was "altogether terrifying."

H. Eirene, Constantinople

Related to H. Sophia are the domed basilicas of H. Eirene in Constantinople, begun 532, and ruined Basilica 'B' in Philippi (Greece), built before 540, each with distinctive elements to its design. The common feature in all three buildings was an elongated nave, partially covered by a dome on pendentives, but lacking necessary lateral buttressing. All three buildings suffered partial or complete collapse in subsequent earthquakes. **Read about the redesign of H. Eirene after its collapse.**

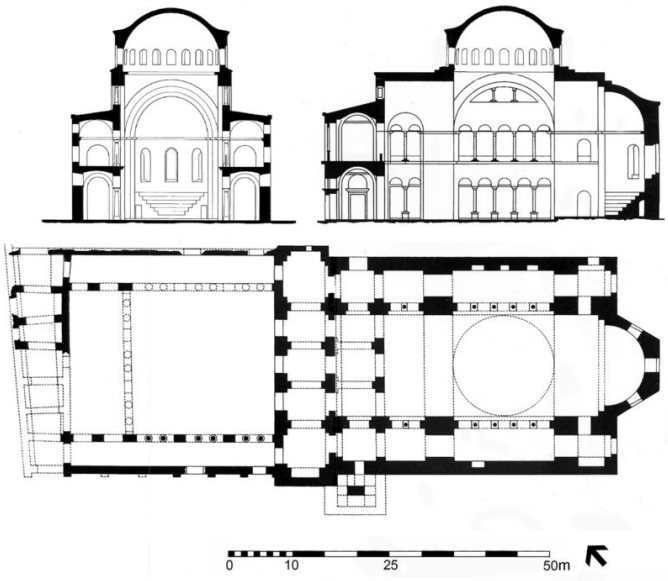


Figure 13.6.6.81: Hagia Eirene, Constantinople (Istanbul), plan and hypothetical sections of the sixth-century building (© Robert G. Ousterhout, adapted from S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 2010)

Hagia Sophia's new dome

At H. Sophia, textual accounts suggest that the first dome, which fell in 557, was a structurally daring, shallow pendentive dome, in which the curvature continued from the pendentives, but with a ring of windows at its base.



Figure 13.6.6.82: Dome of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (photo: © Robert G. Ousterhout)

A more stable, hemispherical dome replaced the original – essentially that which survives today, with partial collapses and repairs in the west and east quadrants in the tenth and fourteenth centuries.

Although H. Polyeuktos, built in Constantinople by Justinian's rival Juliana Anicia, is normally reconstructed as a domed basilica – and thus suggested to be the forerunner of H. Sophia, it was unlikely domed, although it was certainly its predecessor in lavishness.

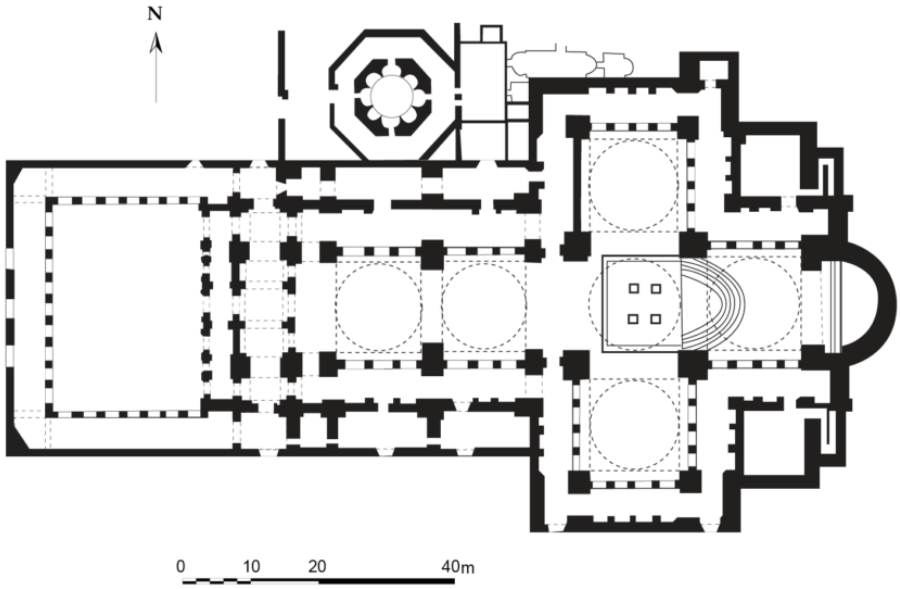


Figure 13.6.6.83: Reconstructed floor plan, church of St. John the Evangelist, Ephesus, drawn after Clive Foss, Ephesus after Antiquity: A late antique, Byzantine and Turkish City (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1979. (Cordanrad, CC BY 3.0)

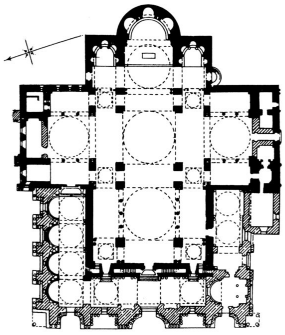


Figure **13.6.6.84**: Floor plan, Basilica of San Marco, Venice, from B. Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, 5th ed. (London: B. T. Batsford, 1905)

Five-domed churches

The spatial unit formed by the dome on pendentives could also be used as a design module, as at Justinian's rebuilding of the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, in which five domes covered the cruciform building.

A similar design was employed in the rebuilding of St. John's basilica at Ephesus, completed before 565, which because of its elongated nave took on a six-domed design.

The late eleventh-century **S. Marco in Venice** follows this sixth-century scheme.



Figure **13.6.6.85**: Inside the basilica at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai (photo: Library of Congress)

The enduring basilica

In spite of design innovations, traditional architecture continued in the sixth century with the wooden roofed basilica continuing as the standard church type.

At St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai, built c. 540, the church preserves its wooden roof and much of its decoration. The three-aisled plan incorporated numerous subsidiary chapels flanking the aisles.

At the sixth-century Cathedral of Caricin Grad, the three-aisled basilica included a vaulted sanctuary area, with the earliest securely dated example of pastophoria: apsed chapels—known as the *prothesis* and *diakonikon*—which flanked the central altar area to form a tripartite sanctuary. This tripartite form that would become standard in later centuries.



Figure 13.6.6.86: Hagia Sophia, Thessaloniki (photo: © Robert G. Ousterhout)

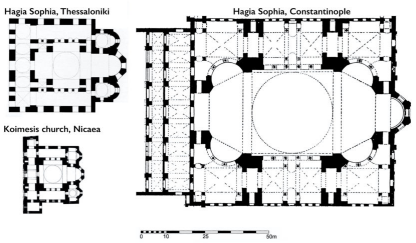


Figure 13.6.6.87: Plans drawn to the same scale, H. Sophia in Constantinople, H. Sophia in Thessaloniki, and the Koimesis church in Nicaea (© Robert G. Ousterhout)

Justinian's legacy

Church types of the subsequent period tend to follow in simplified form the grand developments of the age of Justinian. H. Sophia in Thessalonikie for example, built less than a century later than its namesake, is both considerably smaller and heavier, as is the Koimesis church at Nicaea.

Both correct the basic problems in the structural design by including broad arches to brace the dome on all four sides.

The Caucasus

In the Caucasus, Georgia and Armenia witness a flourishing of architecture in the seventh century, with numerous, distinctive, centrally planned, domed buildings, constructed of rubble faced with a fine ashlar, although their relationship with Byzantine architectural developments remains to be clarified.



Figure 13.6.6.88: Left: exterior view of the church of St. Hripsime, Vagarshapat, 618 (photo: Rita Willaert, CC BY 2.0); Right: interior view of St. Hripsime (photo: Andrea Kirkby, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The domed church of St. Hripsime at Vagarshapat has a dome rising above eight supports, set within a rectangular building.



Figure **13.6.6.89**: Church of the Cross, 586–604, Jvari (Mtskheta, Georgia) (photo: **Mamuka Gotsridze**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The church at Church of the Cross at Jvari (Mtskheta) is similar, but with its lateral apses projecting. The aisled tetraconch church of Zvartnots stands out as following Byzantine, particularly Syrian, models.

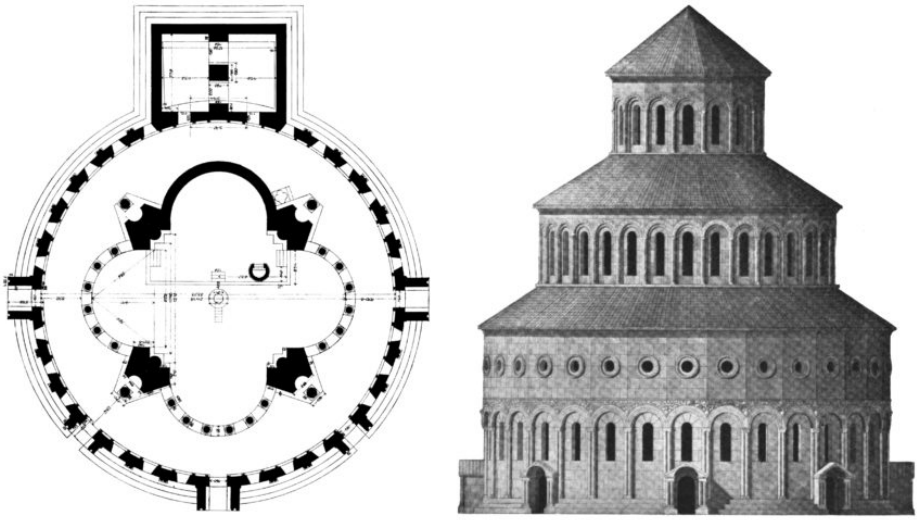


Figure **13.6.6.90**: Church of the Vigilant Powers (Zvart'nots'), Vagarshapat, plan and possible reconstructed elevations, from Josef Strzygowski, Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa, vol. 1 (Vienna: A. Schroll & Co., 1918), figs. 112 and 119.

Next: read about Byzantine architecture during Iconoclasm

Additional Resources

Robert G. Ousterhout, ***Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

by DR. WILLIAM ALLEN



Video 13.6.6.5: Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles (architects), Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532-37



Figure 13.6.6.91: Constantine the Great presents the city (Constantinople) and Justinian the Great presents Hagia Sophia to the Virgin, mosaic, probably 10th Century, Southwestern Entrance, Hagia Sophia (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A symbol of Byzantium

The great church of the Byzantine capital Constantinople (Istanbul) took its current structural form under the direction of the Emperor Justinian I. The church was dedicated in 537, amid great ceremony and the pride of the emperor (who was sometimes said to have seen the completed building in a dream). The daring engineering feats of the building are well known. Numerous medieval travelers praise the size and embellishment of the church. Tales abound of miracles associated with the church. Hagia Sophia is the symbol of Byzantium in the same way that the Parthenon embodies Classical Greece or the Eiffel Tower typifies Paris.



Figure 13.6.6.92: Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532-37 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Each of those structures express values and beliefs: perfect proportion, industrial confidence, a unique spirituality. By overall impression and attention to detail, the builders of Hagia Sophia left the world a mystical building. The fabric of the building denies that it can stand by its construction alone. Hagia Sophia's being seems to cry out for an other-worldly explanation of why it stands because much within the building seems dematerialized, an impression that must have been very real in the perception of the medieval faithful. The dematerialization can be seen in as small a detail as a column capital or in the building's dominant feature, its dome.

Let us start with a look at a column capital



Figure 13.6.6.93: Basket Capital, Hagia Sophia (photo: William Allen, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The capital is a derivative of the Classical Ionic order via the variations of the Roman composite capital and Byzantine invention. Shrunken volutes appear at the corners decorative detailing runs the circuit of lower regions of the capital. The column capital does important work, providing transition from what it supports to the round column beneath. What we see here is decoration that makes the capital appear light, even insubstantial. The whole appears more as filigree work than as robust stone capable of supporting enormous weight to the column.



Figure **13.6.6.94**: Ionic Capital, North Porch of the Erechtheion (Erechtheum), Acropolis, Athens, marble, 421-407 B.C.E., British Museum (photo: Steven Zucker CC:BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Compare the Hagia Sophia capital with a Classical Greek Ionic capital, this one from the Greek Erechtheum on the Acropolis, Athens. The capital has abundant decoration but the treatment does not diminish the work performed by the capital. The lines between the two spirals dip, suggesting the weight carried while the spirals seem to show a pent-up energy that pushes the capital up to meet the entablature, the weight it holds. The capital is a working member and its design expresses the working in an elegant way.



Figure **13.6.6.95**

The relationship between the two is similar to the evolution of the antique to the medieval seen in the mosaics of San Vitale. A capital fragment on the grounds of Hagia Sophia illustrates the carving technique. The stone is deeply drilled, creating shadows behind the vegetative decoration. The capital surface appears thin. The capital contradicts its task rather than expressing it.



Figure **13.6.6.96**: Deep Carving of Capital Fragment, Hagia Sophia (photo: William Allen, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

This deep carving appears throughout Hagia Sophia's capitals, spandrels, and entablatures. Everywhere we look stone visually denying its ability to do the work that it must do. The important point is that the decoration suggests that something other than sound building technique must be at work in holding up the building.

A golden dome suspended from heaven

We know that the faithful attributed the structural success of Hagia Sophia to divine intervention. Nothing is more illustrative of the attitude than descriptions of the dome of Hagia Sophia. Procopius, biographer of the Emperor Justinian and author of a book on the buildings of Justinian is the first to assert that the dome hovered over the building by divine intervention.

"…the huge spherical dome [makes] the structure exceptionally beautiful. Yet it seems not to rest upon solid masonry, but to cover the space with its golden dome suspended from Heaven." (from "The Buildings" by Procopius, Loeb Classical Library, 1940, online at the University of Chicago Penelope project)

The description became part of the lore of the great church and is repeated again and again over the centuries. A look at the base of the dome helps explain the descriptions.



Figure **13.6.6.97**: Hagia Sophia Dome, Semi-Dome and Cherubim in the pendentive (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The windows at the bottom of the dome are closely spaced, visually asserting that the base of the dome is insubstantial and hardly touching the building itself. The building planners did more than squeeze the windows together, they also lined the jambs or sides of the windows with gold mosaic. As light hits the gold it bounces around the openings and eats away at the structure and makes room for the imagination to see a floating dome.



Figure **13.6.6.98**: Windows at the Base of the Dome, Hagia Sophia (photo: William Allen, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

It would be difficult not to accept the fabric as consciously constructed to present a building that is dematerialized by common constructional expectation. Perception outweighs clinical explanation. To the faithful of Constantinople and its visitors, the building used divine intervention to do what otherwise would appear to be impossible. Perception supplies its own explanation: the dome is suspended from heaven by an invisible chain.

Advice from an angel?

An old story about Hagia Sophia, a story that comes down in several versions, is a pointed explanation of the miracle of the church. So goes the story: A youngster was among the craftsmen doing the construction. Realizing a problem with continuing work, the crew left the church to seek help (some versions say they sought help from the Imperial Palace). The youngster was left to guard the tools while the workmen were away. A figure appeared inside the building and told the boy the solution to the problem and told the boy to go to the workmen with the solution. Reassuring the boy that he, the figure, would stay and guard the tools until the boy returned, the boy set off. The solution that the boy delivered was so ingenious that the assembled problem solvers realized that the mysterious figure was no ordinary man but a divine presence, likely an angel. The boy was sent away and was never allowed to return to the capital. Thus the divine presence had to remain inside the great church by virtue of his promise and presumably is still there. Any doubt about the steadfastness of Hagia Sophia could hardly stand in the face of the fact that a divine guardian watches over the church.*

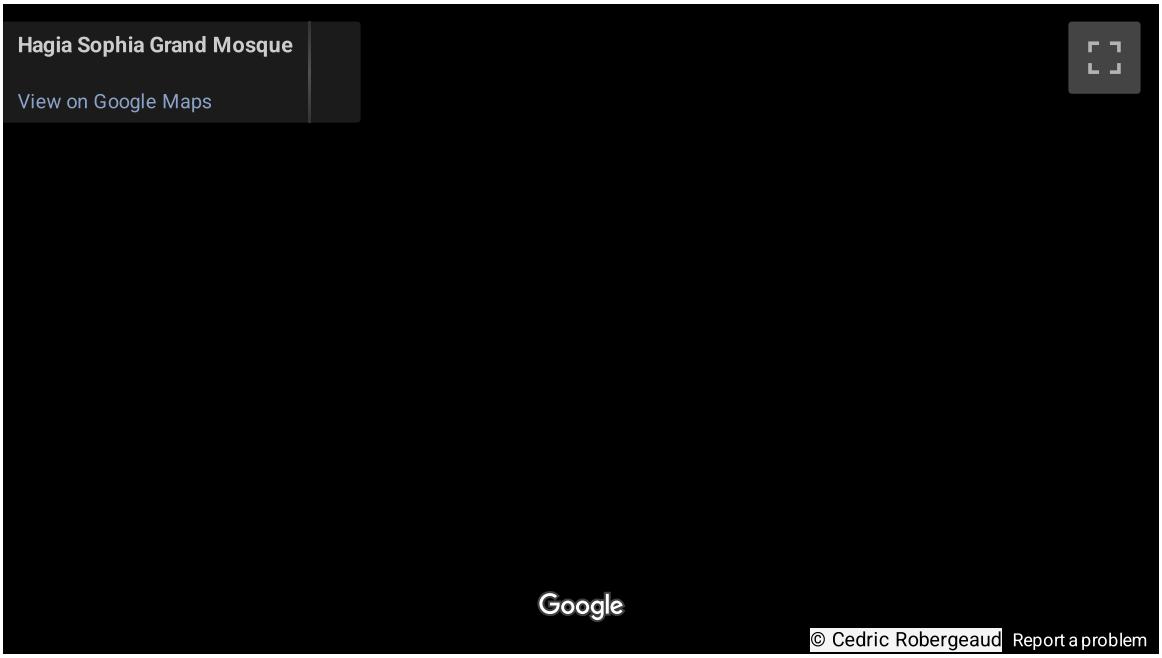
Damage and repairs

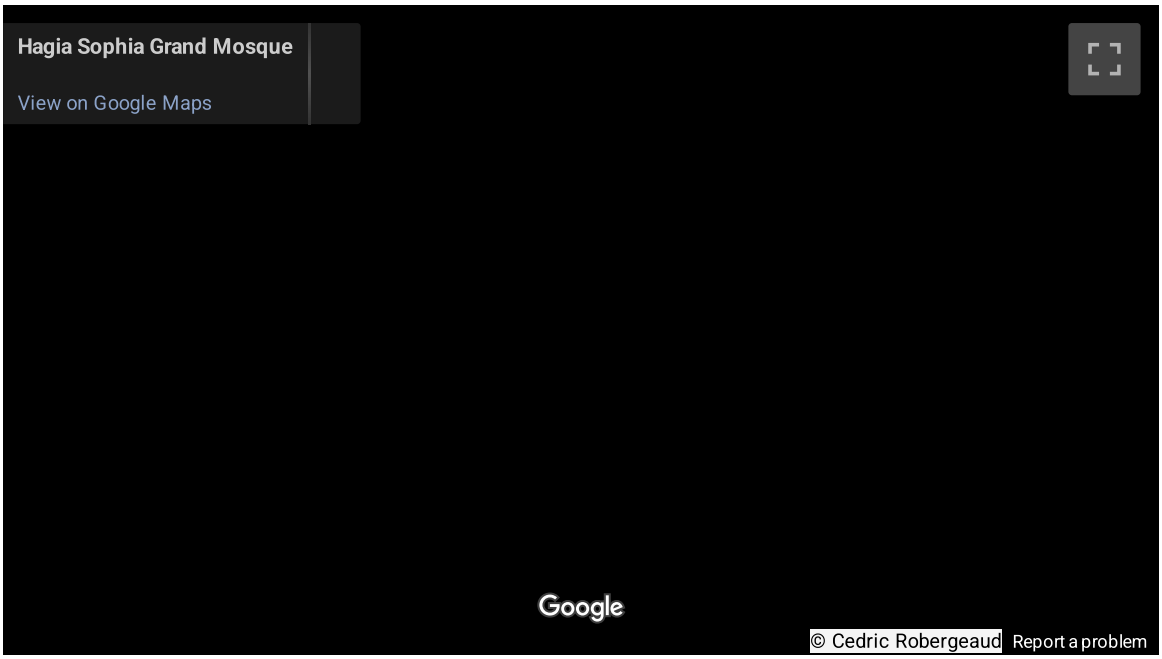
Hagia Sophia sits astride an earthquake fault. The building was severely damaged by three quakes during its early history. Extensive repairs were required. Despite the repairs, one assumes that the city saw the survival of the church, amid city rubble, as yet another indication of divine guardianship of the church.

Extensive repair and restoration are ongoing in the modern period. We likely pride ourselves on the ability of modern engineering to compensate for daring 6th Century building technique. Both ages have their belief systems and we are understandably certain of the rightness of our modern approach to care of the great monument. But we must also know that we would be lesser if we did not contemplate with some admiration the structural belief system of the Byzantine Age.

*Helen C. Evans, Ph.D., "Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the Twentieth Century," *Fourth Annual Pallas Lecture* (University of Michigan, 2006).

Historical outline: Isidore and Anthemius replaced the original 4th-century church commissioned by Emperor Constantine and a 5th-century structure that was destroyed during the Nika revolt of 532. The present Hagia Sophia or the Church of Holy Wisdom became a mosque in 1453 following the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans under Sultan Mehmed II. In 1934, Atatürk, founder of Modern Turkey, converted the mosque into a museum.

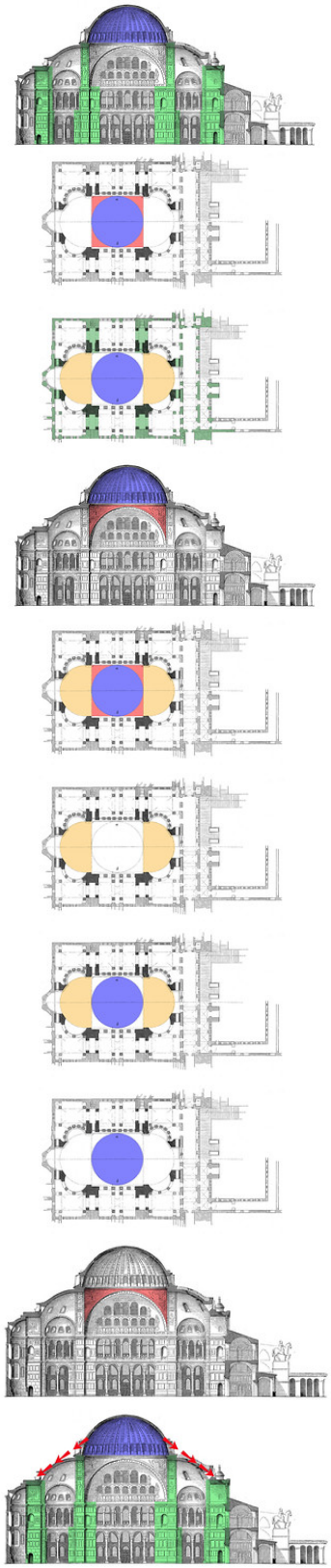




Additional resources:

Hagia Sophia on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88711

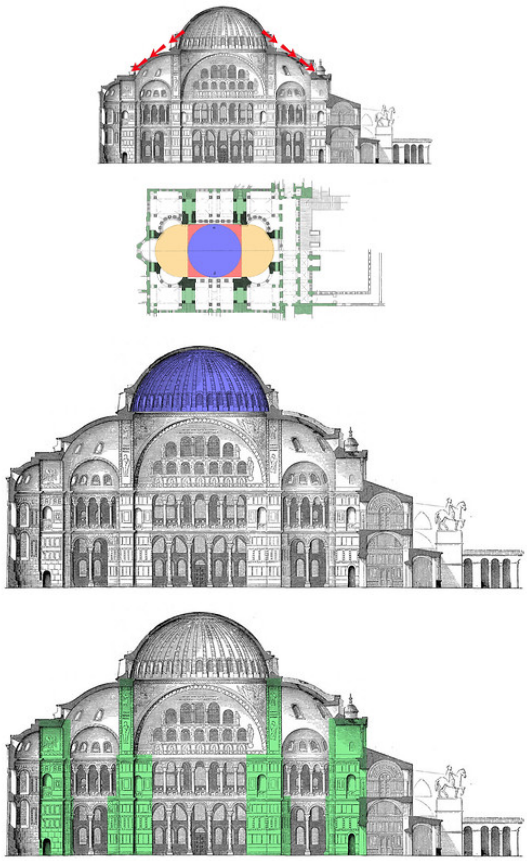
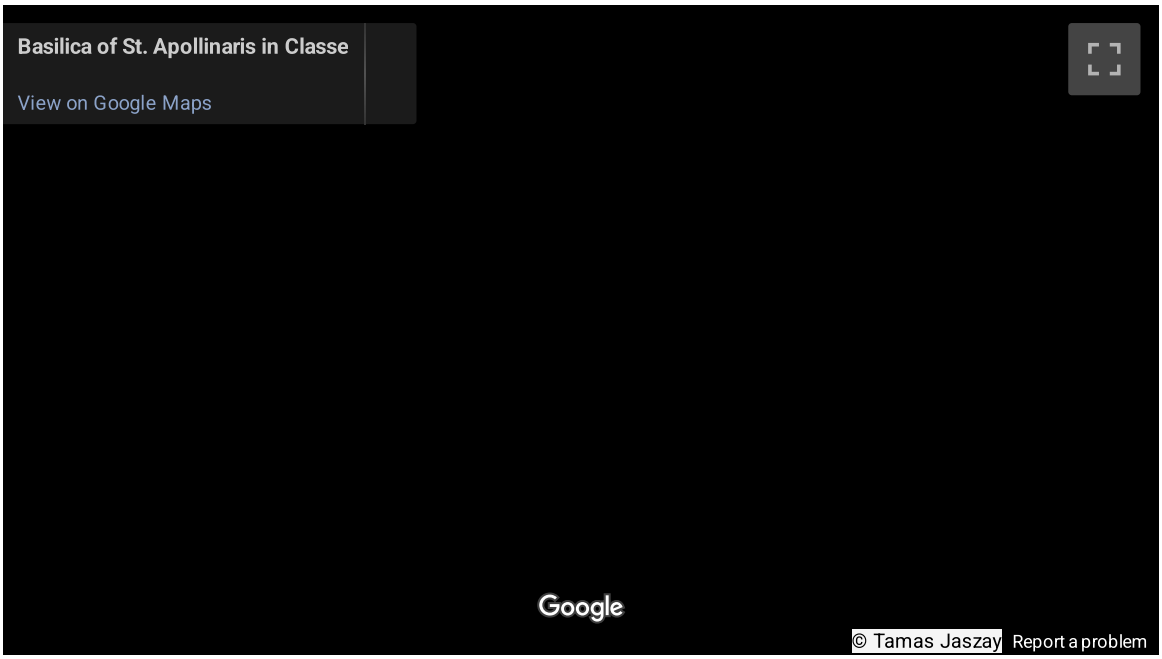


Figure **13.6.6.99**: More Smarthistory images…

Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna (Italy)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS




Basilica of St. Apollinaris in Classe
View on Google Maps
Google
© Tamas Jaszay
Report a problem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88711

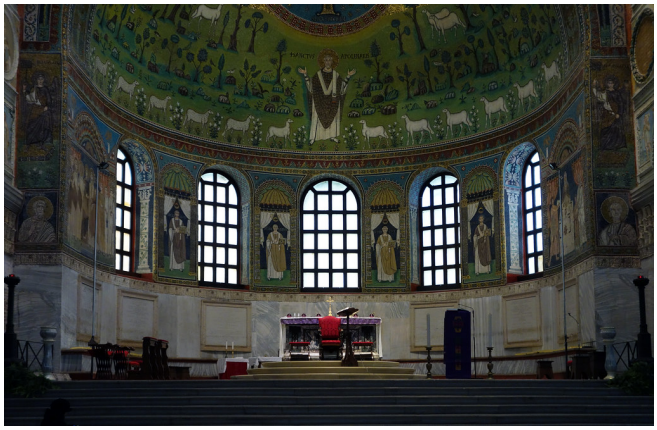


Figure **13.6.6.100**: More Smarthistory images…

San Vitale and the *Justinian Mosaic*

by DR. ALLEN FARBER



Video **13.6.6.7**: San Vitale, begun c. 526-527, consecrated 547, Ravenna (Italy)

San Vitale is one of the most important surviving examples of Byzantine architecture and mosaic work. It was begun in 526 or 527 under Ostrogothic rule. It was consecrated in 547 and completed soon after.



Figure **13.6.6.101**: San Vitale, consecrated 547, Ravenna (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

One of the most famous images of political authority from the Middle Ages is the mosaic of the Emperor Justinian and his court in the sanctuary of the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy. This image is an integral part of a much larger mosaic program in the chancel (the space around the altar).



Figure **13.6.6.102**: Apse mosaic (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A major theme of this mosaic program is the authority of the emperor in the Christian plan of history.

The mosaic program can also be seen to give visual testament to the two major ambitions of Justinian's reign: as heir to the tradition of Roman Emperors, Justinian sought to restore the territorial boundaries of the Empire. As the Christian Emperor, he saw himself as the defender of the faith. As such it was his duty to establish religious uniformity or Orthodoxy throughout the Empire.



Figure **13.6.6.103**: Justinian and his attendants (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Who's Who in the Mosaic and What They Carry

In the chancel mosaic Justinian is posed frontally in the center. He is haloed and wears a crown and a purple imperial robe. He is flanked by members of the clergy on his left with the most prominent figure the Bishop Maximianus of Ravenna being labelled with an inscription. To Justinian's right appear members of the imperial administration identified by the purple stripe, and at the very far left side of the mosaic appears a group of soldiers.

This mosaic thus establishes the central position of the Emperor between the power of the church and the power of the imperial administration and military.Like the Roman Emperors of the past, Justinian has religious, administrative, and military authority.



Figure **13.6.6.104**: Apse detail (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The clergy and Justinian carry in sequence from right to left a censer, the gospel book, the cross, and the bowl for the bread of the Eucharist. This identifies the mosaic as the so-called Little Entrance which marks the beginning of the Byzantine liturgy of the Eucharist.
Justinian's gesture of carrying the bowl with the bread of the Eucharist can be seen as an act of homage to the True King who appears in the adjacent apse mosaic (image left).

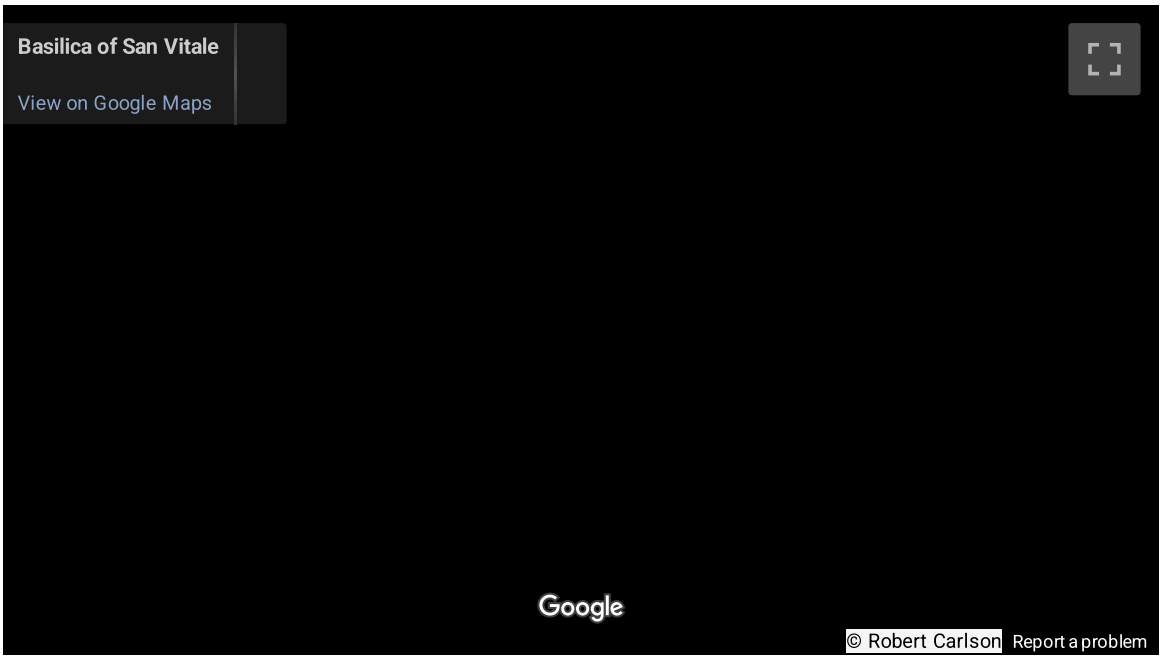
Christ, dressed in imperial purple and seated on an orb signifying universal dominion, offers the crown of martyrdom to St. Vitale, but the same gesture can be seen as offering the crown to Justinian in the mosaic below. Justinian is thus Christ's vice-regent on earth, and his army is actually the army of Christ as signified by the Chi-Rho on the shield.

Who's in Front?



Figure **13.6.6.105**

Closer examination of the Justinian mosaic reveals an ambiguity in the positioning of the figures of Justinian and the Bishop Maximianus. Overlapping suggests that Justinian is the closest figure to the viewer, but when the positioning of the figures on the picture plane is considered, it is evident that Maximianus's feet are lower on the picture plane which suggests that he is closer to the viewer. This can perhaps be seen as an indication of the tension between the authority of the Emperor and the church.



Additional resources:

360 view of the apse (Columbia University)

360 view from the nave (Columbia University)

Nazanin Hedayat Munroe, Dress Styles in the Mosaics of San Vitale

Sarah E. Bassett, Style and Meaning in the Imperial Panels at San Vitale

Mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna by Dr. Allen Farber

Byzantium on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

360-degree Panorama of the Apse of San Vitale from Columbia University

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

Chancel Capital (close), San Vitale, Ravenna

Underside of Triumphal Arch, San Vitale, Ravenna

Chancel and Apse (close), San Vitale, Ravenna

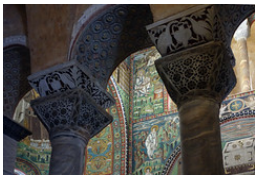


View from Chancel toward Atrium, San Vitale, Ravenna

View Up to Gallery, San Vitale, Ravenna

Chancel and Apse (far), San Vitale, Ravenna

Bust of Christ Under Triumphal Arch, San Vitale, Ravenna







Mirrored Stone Facing, San Vitale, Ravenna

View from Chancel to Central Dome, San Vitale, Ravenna

Empress Theodora Mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna

Figure **13.6.6.106**: More Smarthistory images…

Art and architecture of Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai

by DR. ANNE MCCLANAN



Figure 13.6.6.107: (The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt) (photo: **Joonas Plaan**, CC BY 2.0)

A monastery built on holy ground

The Monastery of Saint Catherine is the oldest active Eastern Orthodox monastery in the world, renowned for its extraordinary holdings of Byzantine art.

The location of the monastery is significant for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, because tradition identifies it as the place of the Burning Bush, a major biblical event where Moses encountered God:

> ***Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.***

Figure 13.6.6.108: Icon with Moses before the Burning Bush, early 13th century, Byzantine (Mount Sinai?), tempera and gold on wood, 92 x 64 cm (The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt)

The episode is represented in several artworks in the monastery's collection, including an early thirteenth-century icon made of tempera and gold on wood. This image represents the moment when God spoke to Moses: "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5, NRSV).

The Monastery of Saint Catherine was founded between 548–565 C.E., in the later years of the Byzantine emperor Justinian's reign, part of **a massive building program** that he had initiated across the empire.



Figure 13.6.6.109: Louis Haghe after David Roberts, *Monastery of St. Catherine beneath Mount Sinai*, 1849, colored lithograph (**Wellcome Collection**, CC BY 4.0)

The basilica

The monastery's exterior walls and main church, which pilgrims can still see today, largely survive from the original, sixth-century phase of construction. A few elements came later (for example, the belfry was added in the 19th century).

The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Katharinaklooster_R01.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Katharinaklooster_R01.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Marc Ryckaert, CC BY 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51921" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 768px) 100vw, 768px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x680.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x680.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-300x234.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ry-v2-copy.jpg
1175w" width="768">

Figure 13.6.6.110: The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine (view from the northeast), Sinai, Egypt (photo: **Marc Ryckaert**, CC BY 3.0)

Plan of Saint Catherine's Monastery (adapted from plan by <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Монастырь_св.екатерины.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Монастырь_св.екатерины.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Shakko, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-52029" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 682px) 100vw, 682px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v2-870x765.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v2-870x765.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v2-300x264.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1351.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1802.jpg
2048w" width="682">

Figure **13.6.6.111**: Plan of Saint Catherine's Monastery with the traditional location of the Burning Bush noted (adapted from plan by **Shakko**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.6.6.112**: The nave (central aisle) in the basilica at the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt (photo: **Library of Congress**)

Transfiguration mosaic

The church follows the pattern of a basilica, having a rectangular plan (**read more about basilica churches**). Monks have worshipped for 1,400 years inside this church.

Columns frame the central nave and above the altar is a recently-restored apse mosaic that might hint at the building's original name. The mosaic depicts a moment in the Christian New Testament called the "Transfiguration," in which Christ appears transformed by radiant light, an event witnessed by three of his apostles. The scene is set against a glimmering gold background. When the monastery was first built it might have been dedicated to the Transfiguration, which in Christian belief is like the Burning Bush in that it is a moment when God revealed himself to humanity.

Transfiguration Apse mosaic, 6th century, the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt (Photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/25F9WJi" href="https://flic.kr/p/25F9WJi" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Europa Nostra, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)
(view annotated photo)
" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51882" height="580" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1024.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1365.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.112**: Transfiguration Apse mosaic, 6th century, the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt (Photo: **Europa Nostra**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) **(view annotated photo)**, Here Jesus is shown in the center radiating light as John, Peter, and James witness the miracle. The two standing figures that frame the central group are the prophet's Elijah and Moses.

> ***Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him…***

> ***While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.***

enaming

ter, in the 9th century, when the body of the revered Egyptian Saint Catherine of Alexandria was discovered, the monastery was given the name that it l
ot until today.

Figure 13.6.6.113: Map with the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine (underlying map © Google)

ons and Iconoclasm



Figure 13.6.6.114: Iconoclasts destroying an icon of Christ, Khludov Psalter, 9th century (State Historical Museum, Moscow)

uring the **Iconoclastic period** of the eighth to ninth centuries, the Byzantine Empire, and particularly its capital city of Constantinople (modern Istanbu s convulsed with the question of whether religious images with human figures (called "icons") were appropriate, or whether such images were in eff ols, akin to the statues of gods in ancient Greece and Rome. In other words, did worshippers pray *through* icons to the holy figure represented, or did th ay *to* the physical image itself? The Iconoclasts (those who opposed images) attempted to ban icons and reportedly even destroyed some.

t by the time of the Iconoclastic controversy, the Sinai Peninsula, where Saint Catherine's Monastery is located, was under **Islamic** rather than Byzanti ntrol, enabling the monastery's icons to escape Iconoclasm. Other factors, including the monastery's isolated location, fortifications, continuc cupation by monks, as well as the dry climate of the region, all likely contributed to the preservation of icons at Sinai.



Figure 13.6.6.117: Christ Blessing, first half of the 6th century, encaustic on panel, 84 x 45.5 x 1.2 cm (The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt)

rly Byzantine Icons



Figure 13.6.6.118: Bronze statuette of Jupiter Capitolinus, 1st–2nd century C.E., bronze, 11.9 x 6 . 5.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

e sixth-century icon of Christ Blessing—or Christ "Pantokrator" (all-ruler), as this image would later become known—was painted using encaustic t abled the artist to create a vivid sense of **naturalism**. This icon was painted by a highly skilled artist, and therefore might have been made in the capi

y of Constantinople.

rist raises his right hand to give a blessing. His other hand holds an elaborate manuscript, which probably takes the form of a contemporary Gospel boo
phasizing Christ's identity as the embodied "Word" of God. This bearded, mature version of Christ—just one of several ways Christ appears in
ore Iconoclasm—draws on pre-Christian traditions of rendering other male divinities such as Jupiter.

e Monastery of Saint Catherine preserves a number of rare Early Byzantine icons such as this.

ad about another Early Byzantine icon at Saint Catherine's.



Figure **13.6.6.119**: Icon with the Heavenly Ladder of Saint John Climacus, late 12th century, tempera and gold on panel, 41.3 x 29.9 x 2.1 cm (The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt)

ddle Byzantine Icons

ter Iconoclasm, perhaps to avoid accusations of idolatry, Byzantine icons became less naturalistic. **Compare** this Middle Byzantine icon of the Heaver dder with the Early Byzantine icon of Christ. Notice, for example, the ethereal, flat gold background in the icon of the Ladder that replaces the landsca ıted at behind the halo in the sixth-century Christ "Pantokrator."

e Heavenly Ladder

is icon of the Heavenly Ladder was made at the monastery of Saint Catherine in the late 12th century, and illustrates the process of spiritual asc dertaken by monastics. The icon is based on a spiritual text of the same name, written by a monk called Saint John of the Ladder, who lived c. 579–6 l was a member of Saint Catherine's Monastery. In his writing, John warns his fellow monks about temptations of the monastic life; in the icon of dder, the artist depicts these temptations as elegantly silhouetted demons who attempt to tug the monks off the ladder as they climb toward Christ in per righthand corner.



Figure 13.6.6.120: Saint Theodosia, early 13th century, Constantinople, tempera and gold on panel (34 x 25.6 x 2.2 cm) (The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt)

ıint Theodosia

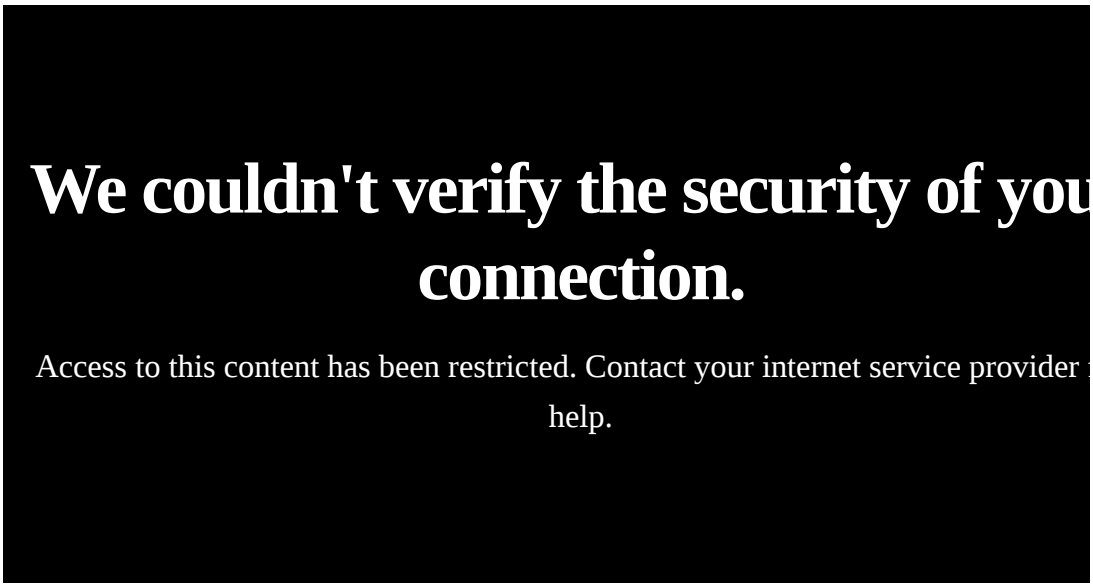
is 13th-century icon depicts Saint Theodosia and is one of five icons at Saint Catherine's that depict the same saint. Clearly, Saint Theodosia's cult w
ɔular at Sinai as it was elsewhere in the Byzantine world.

this image, Theodosia wears the somber dress of a nun. Although her historical status is debated (she may have been legendary rather than an act
torical figure), to the Christian faithful she represents the challenges faced during Iconoclasm, when she reputedly died defending a famed icon of Chr
Constantinople. The cross she holds represents her martyrdom. She was also famous in the late Byzantine period for healing miracles attributed to h
ther enhancing her appeal for worshippers.

ıint Catherine's Monastery today

e library of this centuries-old monastery houses many important medieval manuscripts in diverse languages such as Greek, Arabic, and Syriac.
ıtinues to attract pilgrims from around the world—some of the current monks now in residence hail from exotic lands such as Texas.

Additional Resources



Holy Image, Hallowed Ground from Igloo Editorial on Vimeo.

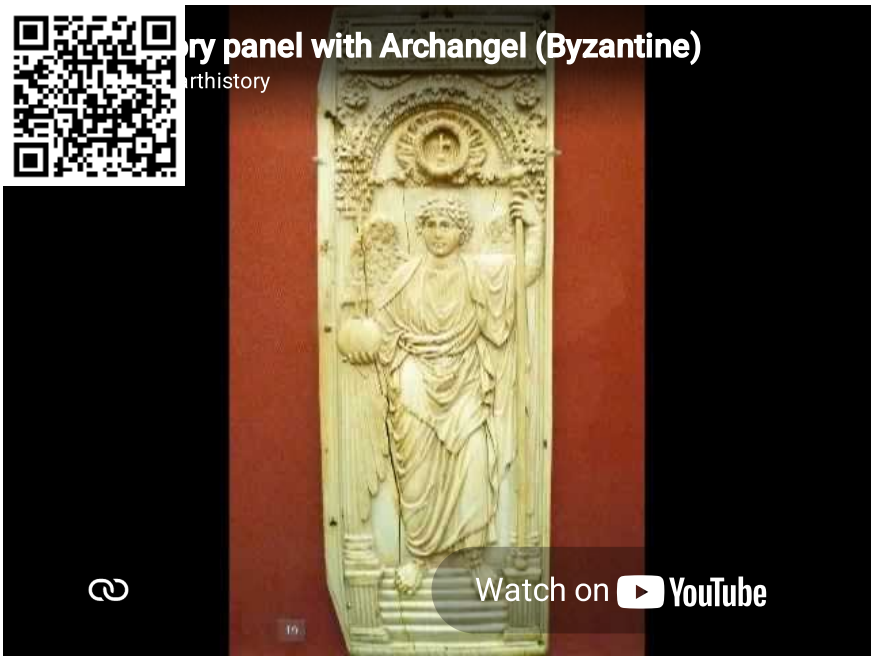


Video 13.6.6.8: The Icons of Sinai, Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University

Robert S. Nelson and Kirsten M. Collins, eds., *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006).

ory Panel with Archangel

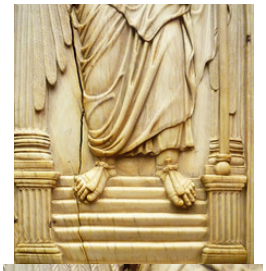
DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

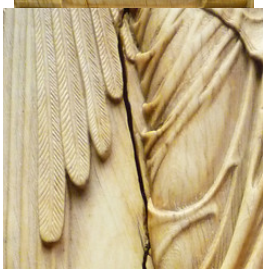


deo 13.6.6.9: Byzantine panel with archangel, ivory leaf from diptych, c. 525-50, 16.8 x 5.6 x 0.35″ / 42.8 x 14.3 x 0.9 cm, probably from Constantinop (modern Istanbul, Turkey), (British Museum, London)

e British Museum translates the text at the top of the panel as: “Receive the suppliant before you, despite his sinfulness.”

arthistory images for teaching and learning:













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88711



Figure **13.6.6.121**: More Smarthistory images…

The Emperor Triumphant (Barberini Ivory)

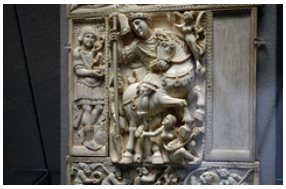
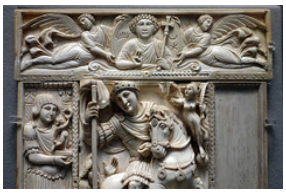
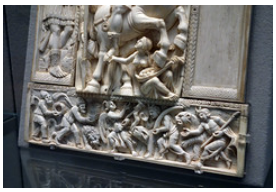
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

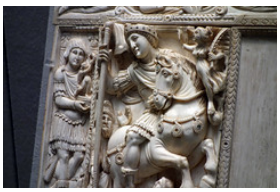


Video **13.6.6.10**: *The Emperor Triumphant (Barberini Ivory)*, mid-6th century, ivory, inlay, 34.2 x 26.8 x 2.8 (Musée du Louvre, Paris)
Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:






https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88711

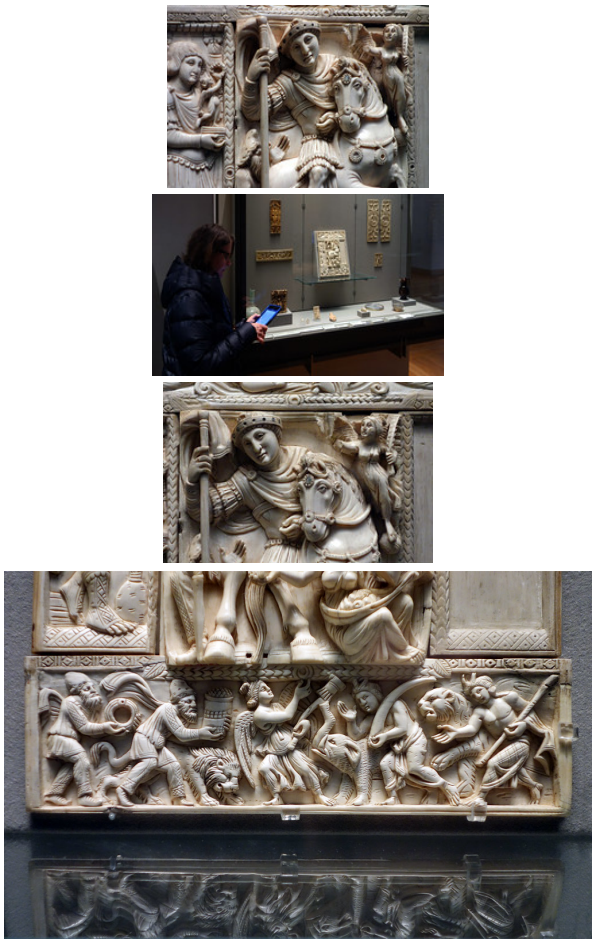


Figure **13.6.6.122**: More Smarthistory images…

'gin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George

DR. WILLIAM ALLEN



Figure **13.6.6.123**: Virgin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George, sixth or early seventh century, encaustic on wood, 2′ 3″ x 1′ 7 3/8″ (St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt)

Mount Sinai Monastery

ıe of thousands of important Byzantine images, books, and documents preserved at St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai (Egypt) is the remarkal :austic icon painting of the Virgin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George ("Icon" is Greek for "image" or "painting" and encaus ı painting technique that uses wax as a medium to carry the color).

e icon shows the Virgin and Child flanked by two soldier saints, St. Theodore to the left and St. George at the right. Above these are two angels who ga ward to the hand of God, from which light emanates, falling on the Virgin.

lectively classicizing

e painter selectively used the classicizing style inherited from Rome. The faces are modeled; we see the same convincing modeling in the heads of t gels (note the muscles of the necks) and the ease with which the heads turn almost three-quarters.

e space appears compressed, almost flat, at our first encounter. Yet we find spatial recession, first in the throne of the Virgin where we glimpse part of t ht side and a shadow cast by the throne; we also see a receding armrest as well as a projecting footrest. The Virgin, with a slight twist of her body, s nfortably on the throne, leaning her body left toward the edge of the throne. The child sits on her ample lap as the mother supports him with both han see the left knee of the Virgin beneath convincing drapery whose folds fall between her legs.

the top of the painting an architectural member turns and recedes at the heads of the angels. The architecture helps to create and close off the spa und the holy scene.



Figure **13.6.6.124**: Byzantine panel with archangel, Ivory leaf from diptych, ca. 525-50, 16.8 x 5.6 x 0.35 in./42.8 x 14.3 x 0.9 cm, probably from Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey), (British Museum, London)

e composition displays a spatial ambiguity that places the scene in a world that operates differently from our world, reminiscent of the spatial ambigu the earlier *Ivory panel with Archangel*. The ambiguity allows the scene to partake of the viewer's world but also separates the scene from the norm rld.

w in our icon is what we might call a "hierarchy of bodies." Theodore and George stand erect, feet on the ground, and gaze directly at the viewer w ge, passive eyes. While looking at us they show no recognition of the viewer and appear ready to receive something from us. The saints are sligh mated by the lifting of a heel by each as though they slowly step toward us.

e Virgin averts her gaze and does not make eye contact with the viewer. The ethereal angels concentrate on the hand above. The light tones of the ang l especially the slightly transparent rendering of their halos give the two an otherworldly appearance.



Figure **13.6.6.125**: Detail, *Virgin (Theotokos) and Child between Saints Theodore and George*, sixth or early seventh century, encaustic on wood, 2′ 3″ x 1′ 7 3/8″ (St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt)

sual movement upward, toward the hand of God

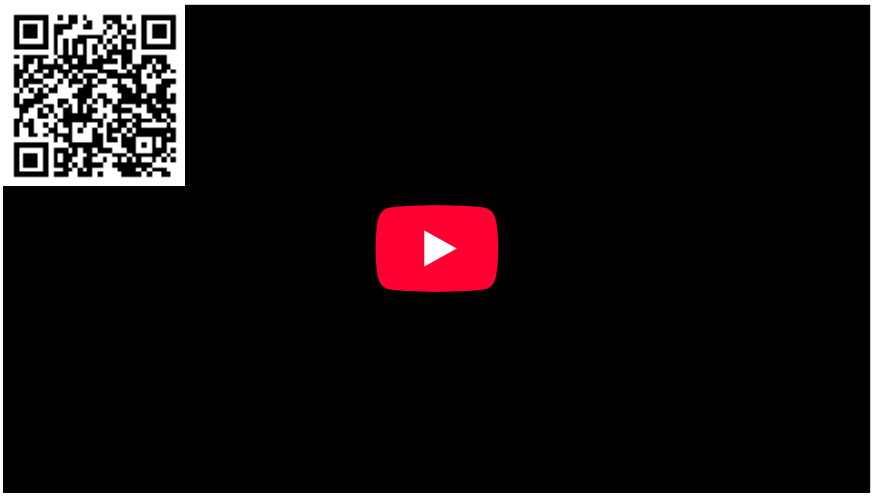
is supremely composed picture gives us an unmistakable sense of visual movement inward and upward, from the saints to the Virgin and from the Virg ward past the angels to the hand of God.

e passive saints seem to stand ready to receive the veneration of the viewer and pass it inward and upward until it reaches the most sacred realm depict the picture.

can describe the differing appearances as saints who seem to inhabit a world close to our own (they alone have a ground line), the Virgin and Child w elevated and look beyond us, and the angels who reside near the hand of God transcend our space. As the eye moves upward we pass through zones: nts, standing on ground and therefore closest to us, and then upward and more ethereal until we reach the holiest zone, that of the hand of God. The nes of holiness suggest a cosmos of the world, earth and real people, through the Virgin, heavenly angels, and finally the hand of God. The viewer w nds before the scene make this cosmos complete, from “our earth” to heaven.

chalice from the Attarouthi Treasure

DR. ANNE MCCLANAN *and* *DR. EVAN FREEMAN*



deo **13.6.6.11**: Anne and Evan discuss a Byzantine chalice (The Attarouthi Treasure — Chalice, Silver and gilded silver, 500–650 C.E., **The Metropolit Museum of Art**)

onoclastic controversies

DR. DAVOR DŽALTO



Figure **13.6.6.126**: Apa Abraham, c. 590-600, watercolor on panel, Egyptian (Bode Museum, Berlin)

e word “icon” refers to many different things today. For example, we use this word to refer to the small graphic symbols in our software and to power tural figures. Nevertheless, these different meanings retain a connection to the word’s original meaning. “Icon” is Greek for “image” or “painting” a cing the medieval era, this meant a religious image on a wooden panel used for prayer and devotion. More specifically, icons came to typify the art of thodox Christian Church.

onoclasm" refers to the destruction of images or hostility toward visual representations in general. More specifically, the word is used for t noclastic Controversy that shook the Byzantine Empire for more than 100 years.

en hostility toward religious representations began in 726 when Emperor Leo III publicly took a position against icons; this resulted in their remo m churches and their destruction. There had been many previous theological disputes over visual representations, their theological foundations a itimacy. However, none of these caused the tremendous social, political and cultural upheaval of the Iconoclastic Controversy.



Figure **13.6.6.128**: Christ Pantocrator (The Ruler of the Universe), Catacombs of Commodilla, 4th century

me historians believe that by prohibiting icons, the Emperor sought to integrate Muslim and Jewish populations. Both Muslims and Jews perceiv ristian images (that existed from the earliest times of Christianity) as idols and in direct opposition to the Old Testament prohibition of visi resentations. The first commandment states,

u shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the ea neath, or that is in the waters under the earth. You shall not adore them, nor serve them (Exodus 20:3-5).

other theory suggests that the prohibition was an attempt to restrain the growing wealth and power of the monasteries. They produced the icons and w rimary target of the violence of the Iconoclastic Controversy. Other scholars offer a less political motive, suggesting that the prohibition was primar igious, an attempt to correct the wayward practice of worshiping images.

e trigger for Leo III's prohibition may have even been the huge volcanic eruption in 726 in the Aegean Sea interpreted as a sign of God's anger over t neration of icons. There is no one simple answer to this complex event. What we do know is that the prohibition essentially caused a civil war wh ook the political, social and religious spheres of the empire. The conflict pitted the emperor and certain high church officials (patriarchs, bishops) w pported iconoclasm, against other bishops, lower clergy, laity and monks, who defended the icons.

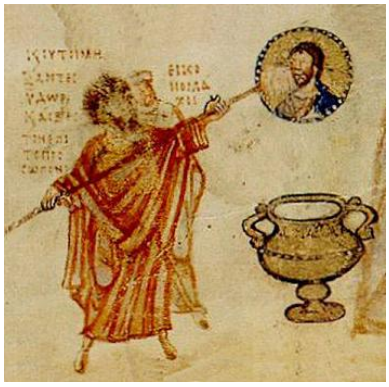


Figure **13.6.6.129**: Khludov Psalter (detail), 9th century. The image represents the Iconoclast theologian, John the Grammarian, and an iconoclast bishop destroying an image of Christ. (State Historical Museum, Moscow)

e original theological basis for iconoclasm was fairly weak. Arguments relied mostly on the Old Testament prohibition (quoted above). But it was cl t this prohibition was not absolute since God also instructs how to make three dimensional representations of the Cherubim (heavenly spirits or ange the Ark of the Covenant, which is also quoted in the Old Testament, just a couple of chapters after the passage that prohibits images (Exodus 25:18-20

nperor Constantine V gave a more nuanced theological rationale for iconoclasm. He claimed that each visual representation of Christ necessarily ends neresy since Christ, according to generally accepted Christian dogmas, is simultaneously God and man, united without separation, and any visi

piction of Christ either separates these natures, representing Christ's humanity alone, or confuses them.

e iconophile (pro-icon) counter-argument was most convincingly articulated by St. John of Damascus and St. Theodore the Studite. They claimed t iconoclast arguments were simply confused. Images of Christ do not depict natures, being either Divine or human, but a concrete person—Jesus Chr incarnate Son of God. They claimed that in Christ the meaning of the Old Testament prohibition is revealed: God prohibited any representation of G anything that could be worshiped as a god) because it was impossible to depict the invisible God. Any such representation would thus be an id sentially a false representation or false god. But in Christ's person, God became visible, as a concrete human being, so painting Christ is necessary a proof that God truly, not seemingly, became man. The fact that one can depict Christ witnesses God's incarnation.



Figure **13.6.6.130**: Madonna with Christ, 9th century, mosaic, Hagia Sophia (Istanbul). This mosaic follows the iconoclastic crisis and revives stylistic elements from early Christian art.

e first phase of iconoclasm ended in 787, when the Seventh Ecumenical (universal) Council of bishops met in Nicaea. This council affirmed the view iconophiles, ordering all right-believing (orthodox) Christians to respect holy icons, prohibiting at the same time their adoration as idolatry. Empe o V initiated a second period of iconoclasm in 814, but in 843, Empress Theodora proclaimed the restoration of icons and affirmed the decisions of venth Ecumenical council. This event is still celebrated in the Orthodox Church as the "Feast of Orthodoxy."

ditional resources:

ns and iconoclasm in Byzantium on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

e power of icons

e Triumph of Images: Icons, Iconoclasm, and the Incarnation

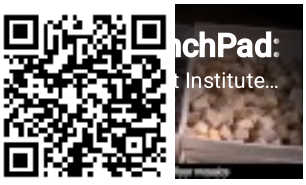
narthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.6.6.131**: More Smarthistory images…

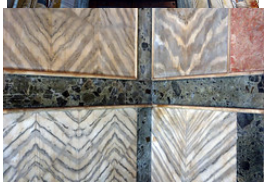
Ancient and Byzantine mosaic materials

by ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

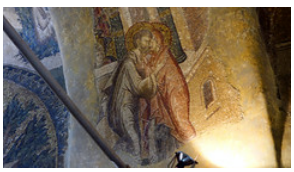
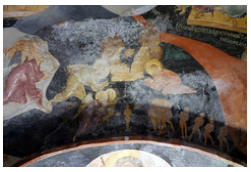
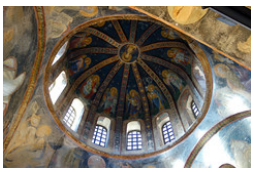
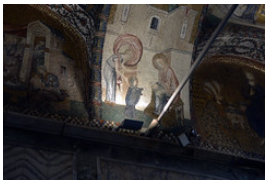


Video **13.6.6.12**: Video from the Art Institute of Chicago

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88711

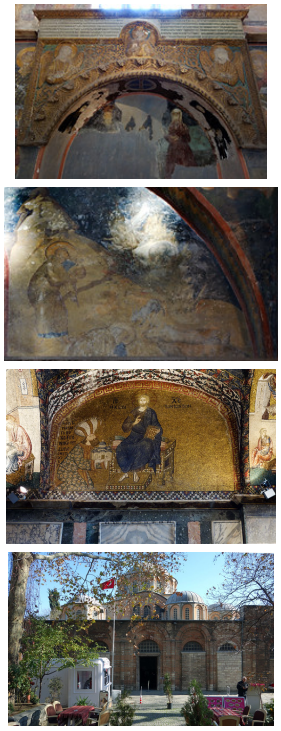


Figure **13.6.6.132**: More Smarthistory images…

Middle Byzantine

Theotokos mosaic, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.6.13**: *Theotokos mosaic*, 867, apse, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

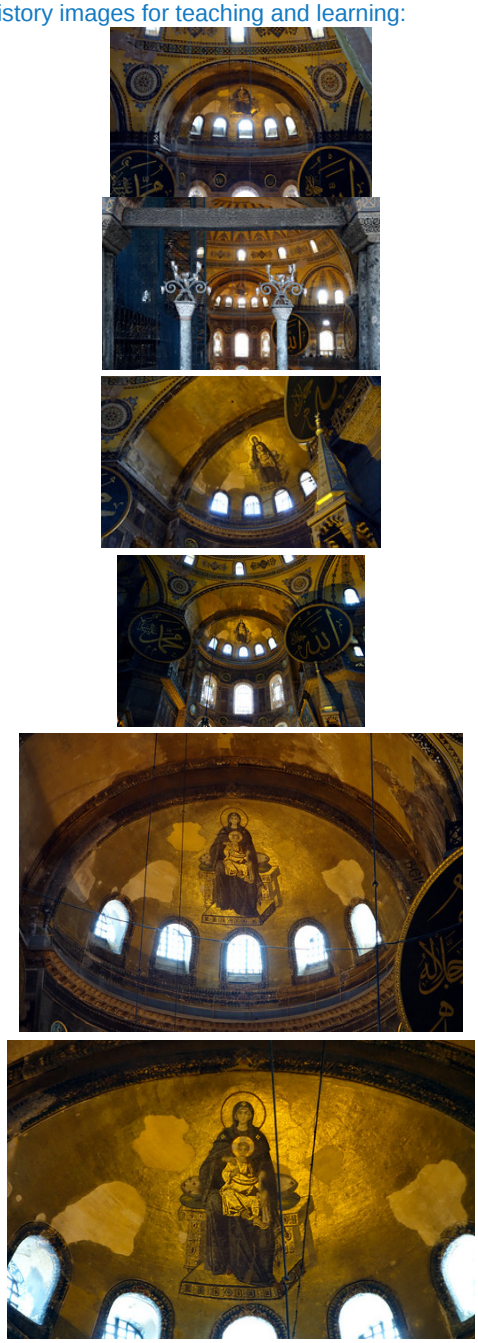


Figure **13.6.6.133**: More Smarthistory images…

e *Paris Psalter*

DR. ANNE MCCLANAN



Figure **13.6.6.134**: David Composing the Psalms, from the *Paris Psalter*, c. 900 C.E. 14-1/8 x 10-1/4″ / 36 x 26 cm (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

e classical past and the medieval Christian present

ıy would a Biblical king surround himself with pagans? The *Paris Psalter* embodies a complex mixture of the classical pagan past and the medie ristian present—all brought together to communicate a political message by the Byzantine emperor.

e Byzantine Empire, which ruled areas of the eastern Mediterranean from the fourth through fifteenth centuries, left a dazzling visual legacy that l luenced other medieval Christian and Islamic societies as well as countless artists in our own time.

ıat is a psalter?

e word “Psalter” in the name of this manuscript is the term we use for books and manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible’s Book of Psalms. Psalters were c the most commonly copied works in the Middle Ages because of their central role in medieval church ceremony.

e images



Figure **13.6.6.135**: David Glorified by the Women of Israel, from *The Paris Psalter*, c. 900 C.E. 14-1/8 x 10-1/4″ / 36 x 26 cm (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

is work was unusually large and lavishly illustrated, with 14 full-page illuminations included in its 449 folios (a folio is a leaf in a book). Eight of th ages depict the life of King David, who was often seen as a model of just rule for medieval kings. Because King David was traditionally considered hor of the Psalms, he is shown here in the role of musician and composer, sitting atop a boulder playing his harp in an idyllic pastoral setting.

is manuscript so carefully follows models from prior centuries that scholars once thought it was made during the reign of the Byzantine Empe stinian in the sixth century. Only later did research demonstrate that the Paris Psalter was actually made in the tenth century as an exquisite imitation man work from the third to fifth centuries—in other words, it was part of an intentional revival of the Classical past. Classical style, as a general ter ers to the naturalistic visual representation used during periods when, for example, the Roman emperors Augustus and Hadrian ruled.

ɜssical revival

e period of classical revival that produced the *Paris Psalter* is sometimes called the Macedonian Renaissance, because the Macedonian dynasty perors ruled the Byzantine Empire at the time. This classical revival followed Byzantine Iconoclasm. The notion that this Byzantine revival of man past was a Renaissance, in the sense of a full-scale revival of classical thinking and art such as in the Italian Renaissance, has been question wever, there is no doubt that we see in this, and other contemporary works, a conscious appropriation of elements of the classical artistic vocabulary.

us we have the conundrum of the Biblical David encircled by classical personifications (a figure that represents a place or attribute). In this example, ıted woman embodies the attribute of Melody. David's seated posture with his instrument is likely based on the classical tragic figure Orpheus, usua own similarly positioned holding his lyre. Likewise the hazy buildings in the background also belong to the Greco-Roman tradition of wall painting. T aning of the personifications such as the woman, Melody, perched beside David, is intriguing—within the medieval Christian context she presumal s now become a symbol of culture and erudition as opposed to her earlier significance as a minor deity in the pagan classical world.

tice how the surroundings including plants, animals and landscape differs from the resplendent gold backgrounds used in the imperial mosaics stinian and Theodora at Ravenna or the icon we call the *Vladimir Virgin*. In contrast, David is depicted naturalistically as a youthful shepherd, rather th grand king he was to become. The classicizing, more realistic style of the figures and the landscape coupled with the overt classical allusions made personifications show the pains taken to render a coherent vision uniting subject and style.



Figure **13.6.6.136**: Rape of Europa (detail, lid), *Veroli Casket*, second half of the 10th century, wood overlaid with ivory with traces of polychrome and gilding (Victoria and Albert Museum)

nnecting with great emperors of the past?

her Byzantine art from the so-called Macedonian Renaissance, such as the ivory *Veroli Casket* (above), also show a renewed interest in classicism t led upon Late Roman artistic models. The patron of the *Paris Psalter* perhaps sought to liken himself this way with great emperors of the past riving a style that had been out of favor for hundreds of years and perhaps evoked a "golden age." Choice of artistic style could function as a tool nveying meaning within the sophisticated Byzantine society at the time.

e *Paris Psalter* was produced in Constantinople, today known as Istanbul, and takes its name from its modern location, Paris' Bibliothèque Nationa e *Paris Psalter* manuscript, like most western medieval manuscripts, was not made from paper, but from carefully prepared animal skins. Medie nuscripts were far more rare and precious than mass-produced modern printed books. Large-scale examples, such as this, made for an aristocratic if perial patron, show how Biblical art of the highest craftsmanship could serve many purposes for its medieval audience and patrons.

ddle Byzantine church architecture

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

riods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine **c. 843 – 1204**

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire **1204 – 1261**

te Byzantine **1261 – 1453**

st-Byzantine **after 1453**



Figure **13.6.6.137**: Exterior of a cross-in-square church, Fatih Mosque (H. Stephanos ?), early 9th century, Trilye in Bithynia (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

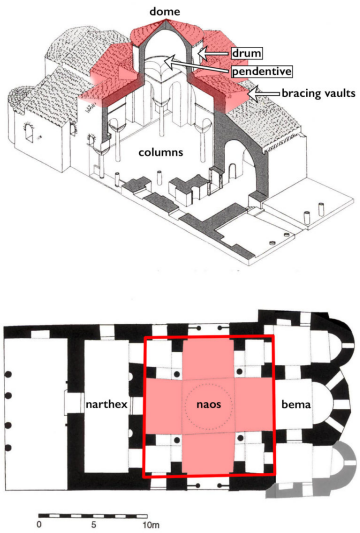


Figure **13.6.6.138**: Fatih Mosque (H. Stephanos ?), plan and isometric section highlighting the elements of a cross-in-square church, early 9th century, Trilye (Zeytinbağı) in Bithynia (adapted from plan and isometric section © Robert Ousterhout)

e cross-in-square church

e end of **Iconoclasm** (the conflict regarding religious images and their removal from churches) and the development of a theology of images h ›found effects on church design, in terms of the development of a standardized program of decoration and a concomitant standardized building desi; :h of which reflected the hierarchy of Orthodox belief. The pyramidal massing of forms, from a tall central dome to high crossing vaults, to lower cor ılts and walls, provides an ideal framework for **figural imagery**.

tih Mosque, Trilye

st seen in Trilye during the **Transitional Period**, the *cross-in-square* emerged as the standard church type following Iconoclasm.



Figure **13.6.6.139**: Myrelaion church (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

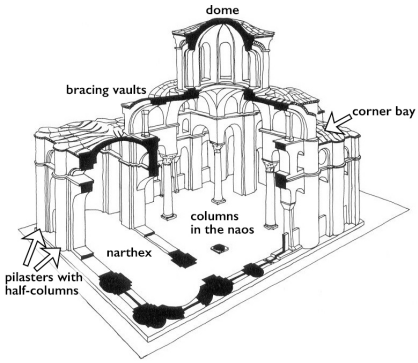


Figure **13.6.6.140**: Elements of a cross-in-square church, Myrelaion church (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul)

ıe Myrelaion, Constantinople

e Myrelaion church in Constantinople, built c. 920, achieves a balance between the articulation of the structural system and the coordination of t erior spaces. Forms cascade down from the central dome like a pyramid. Four bracing vaults extend outward in the form of a cross, set within the squa the plan below. Hence the term, "cross-in-square," which defines this building type spatially, in three dimensions, rather than as a floor plan. Fc umns support the dome and **subdivide the naos into nine bays**. Those in the corners are the lowest, and correspond in height with the narthex a *stophoria*—the side chambers in the bema that flank the **central altar area**. Pilasters with half-columns on the church's exterior correspond to inter lls and supports so one can "read" the internal structure based on its exterior articulation.

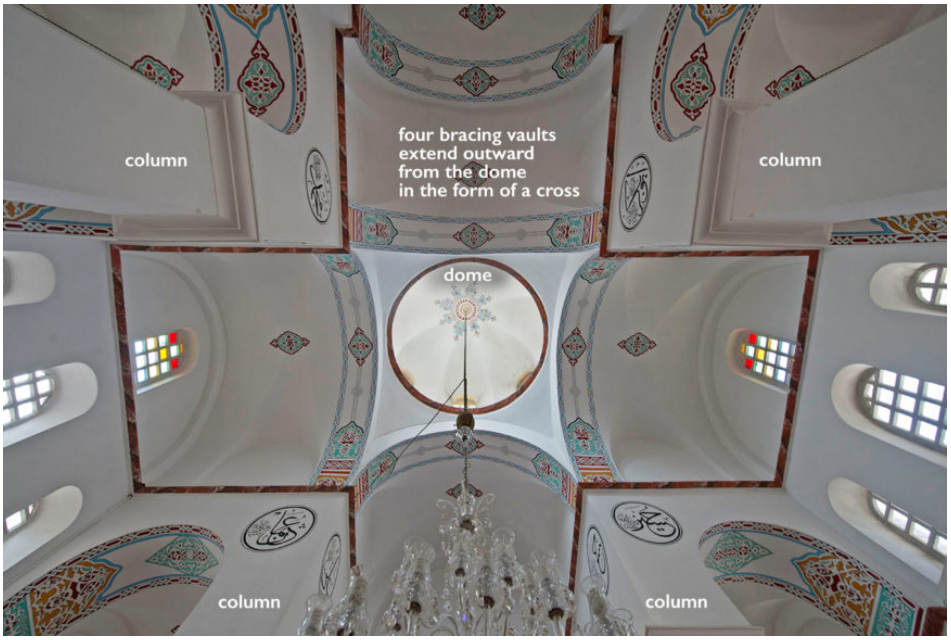


Figure **13.6.6.141**: Elements of a cross-in-square church, view of the naos, Myrelaion (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **Dosseman**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

iginally constructed as the palace chapel of Romanos Lekapenos, the building was lavishly decorated and served as the emperor's place of burial. L
ıny of the churches of Constantinople, the Myrelaion was converted into a mosque following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and
ɔwn today as the Bodrum Mosque.



Figure **13.6.6.142**: Panagia church, late 10th century, Hosios Loukas monastery, Boeotia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

e spread of the cross-in-square

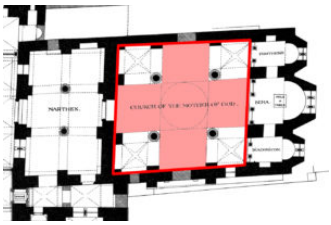


Figure **13.6.6.143**: Plan of the Panagia church (highlighting the dome, bracing vaults, and square naos), late 10th century, Hosios Loukas monastery, Boeotia

e cross-in-square type is widespread, first appearing in Greece in the late tenth century at the Panagia church at Hosios Loukas monastery. While neitl s nor the Myrelaion preserves internal decoration, the **Panagia ton Chalkeon** in Thessaloniki, dated by inscription to 1026, and the rock-cut Karan lise at Göreme, dated to the eleventh century, provide evidence of the developed interior cycle **(view plan of Karanlık Kilise Monastery)**. The sa ilding type appeared in central Anatolia, southern Italy, the Balkans, and Russia, with slight variations, and served a variety of functions, as palati mestic, monastic, parish, or funerary churches. The common denominator in all was the small scale appropriate to small groups of worshippers or priv e.



Figure 13.6.6.144: Karanlık Kilise, 11th century, Göreme, Cappadocia (photo: **Octavio L**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

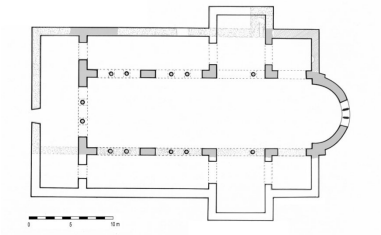


Figure 13.6.6.145: Old Metropolis basilica, reconstructed plan, 11th century, Verroia (© Robert Ousterhout).

e persistence of the basilica

th the revival of the empire beginning in the second half of the ninth century following the tumultuous **Transitional Period**, new church constructi curred most often as the result of private patronage. **Variations in church design** abound during the Middle Byzantine period (843-1204): basilicas a med basilicas continued to appear, notably when larger interior spaces were required, but in some regions, such as Kastoria in northern Greece, sm silicas persist. Occasionally, as with the ruined, three-aisled basilica at Servia and the Old Metropolis at Verroia (both in Northern Greece), there was n uitable **Early Christian basilica** to serve as the cathedral, so a basilica was built in the Middle Byzantine period.

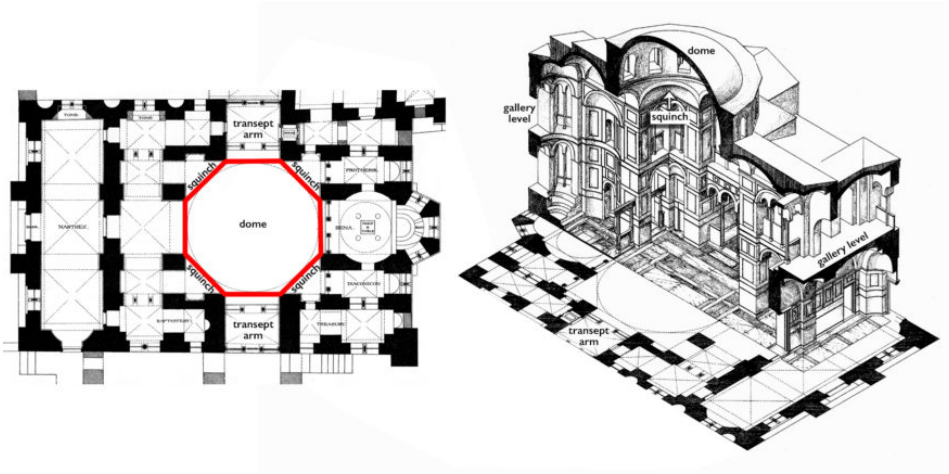


Figure 13.6.6.146: Annotated plan and isometric view of katholikon church (octagon highlighted), Hosios Loukas monastery, 11th century, Boeotia



Figure 13.6.6.147: View of dome, squinches, and octagon, katholikon church, 11th century, Hosios Loukas monastery, Boeotia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) **(view annotated image)**.

e octagon-domed church

he limited scale of the cross-in-square church seemed too small or too plain, the *octagon-domed church* provided more elaborated interior designs a nplex surfaces for mosaic decoration, while providing eight points of support for a larger dome. With **squinches** providing the transition to the dome, sign may be derived from Arab or Caucasian models. The eleventh-century *katholika* of Hosios Loukas monastery, of Nea Moni on Chios, and stroyed church of H. Georgios ton Manganon in Constantinople suggest the degree of variations possible.

e katholikon church at Hosios Loukas

Hosios Loukas, the tall naos is extended by transept arms and is enveloped by galleries and annexed chapels on two levels; the hemispherical dor es above squinches. Lavishly decorated with marble and mosaic, the circumstances of its construction remain unclear **(view plan and isometric view e Panagia and katholikon churches at Hosios Loukas monastery)**.

eft: view of Nea Moni from the west (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:NEA_MONH_ΣTA_XIONIA.jpg&oldid=391721734#/media/File:NEA_MONH_ΣTA_XIONIA.jpg ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:NEA_MONH_ΣTA_XIONIA.jpg&oldid=391721734#/media/File:NEA_MONH_ΣTA_XIONIA.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
IOUKAS, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: plan of katholikon of Nea Moni, Chios, 11th century (© Robert Ousterhout)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-381" height="407" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x407.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x407.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x141.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...d-1536x719.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...d-2048x959.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure 13.6.6.148: Left: view of Nea Moni from the west (photo: **FLIOUKAS**, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: plan of katholikon of Nea Moni, Chios, 11th century (© Robert Ousterhout)

Iosaics decorate the octaconch beneath the dome (with marble revetment lower down), Nea Moni, Chios, 11th century (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Εσωτερικό_-_Νέα_Μονή_Χίου.jpg" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Εσωτερικό_-_Νέα_Μονή_Χίου.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Meltedrainbow, CC BY-SA 4.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49328" height="221" sizes="(max-width: 295px) 100vw, 295px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...85-870x653.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ου-870x653.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ου-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="295">

Figure **13.6.6.149**: Mosaics decorate the octaconch beneath the dome (with marble revetment lower down), Nea Moni, Chios, 11th century (photo: **Meltedrainbow**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

a Moni on the island of Chios

Nea Moni ("new monastery") on the Greek island of Chios, the footprint of a cross-in-square church is maintained, along with low vaults to the tripart ıctuary (bema) and narthex, while the naos appears tower-like, its dome originally nine-sided, rising above a tall drum and an octaconch at t nsitional level. The unusual design and lavish decoration with marbles and mosaics may be the result of imperial patronage by Constantine ɔnomachos and the work of artisans from Constantinople.

Georgios ton Manganon in Constantinople

so attributed to the patronage of Monomachos—and also lavishly decorated—the church of H. Georgios ton Manganon in Constantinople (n stroyed) seems to have had an octagon-domed design, with the dome raised above reentrant piers that curved at the corners of the naos, which w veloped by an ambulatory. Known from descriptions and limited excavations, however, details of its elevation remain uncertain.

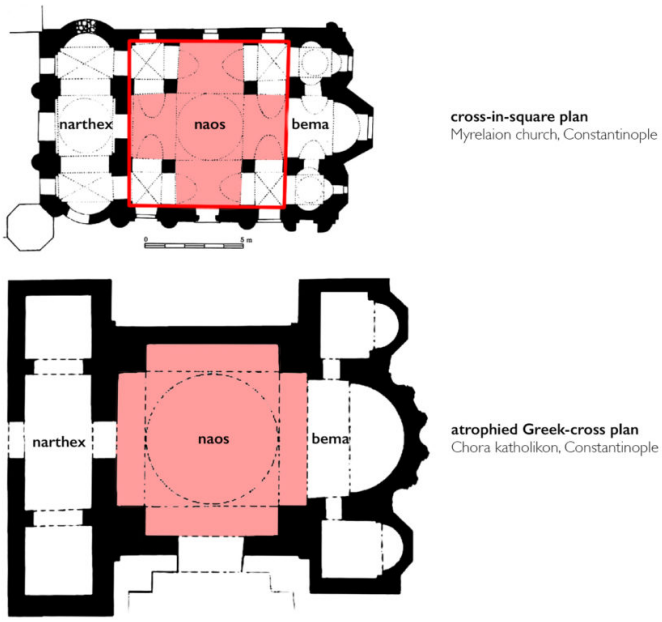


Figure **13.6.6.150**: Cross-in-square and atrophied Greek-cross plans compared (adapted from plans © Robert Ousterhout)



Figure **13.6.6.151**: Sv. Nikola (heavily restored), 12th century, Kuršumlija (photo: **CrniBombarder!!!**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

r churches of scale larger than a cross-in-square design could maintain, the cross-domed format could be adapted to provide a more stable structu stem and a more unified interior space, while allowing for a larger dome. Following the models developed in the **Transitional Period**, the design is ag pularized in the twelfth century, as occurred at the *katholikon* of the **Chora monastery**. Archaeology suggests that a cross-in-square church of t venth century was rebuilt in the early twelfth century on an atrophied Greek-cross plan. This design was imitated from Bithynia (H. Aberkios at Elegr Serbia (Sv. Nikola at Kursumlija) **(view plans of these atrophied Greek-cross churches)**. Such atrophied Greek-cross churches differ from cross- uare plans because of their larger domes, smaller crossarms, and lack of four supporting columns.



Figure **13.6.6.151**: Fatih Camii, plan and view of west façade, 12th century, Enez (Ainos) (plan and photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

med basilicas also reappear in the same period, as at the Fatih Camii at Enez or the **Gül Mosque** in Constantinople. Ambulatory-planned churches, su the twelfth-century Theotokos Pammakaristos in Constantinople, may have been intended to provide additional spaces for burial in close proximity naos.

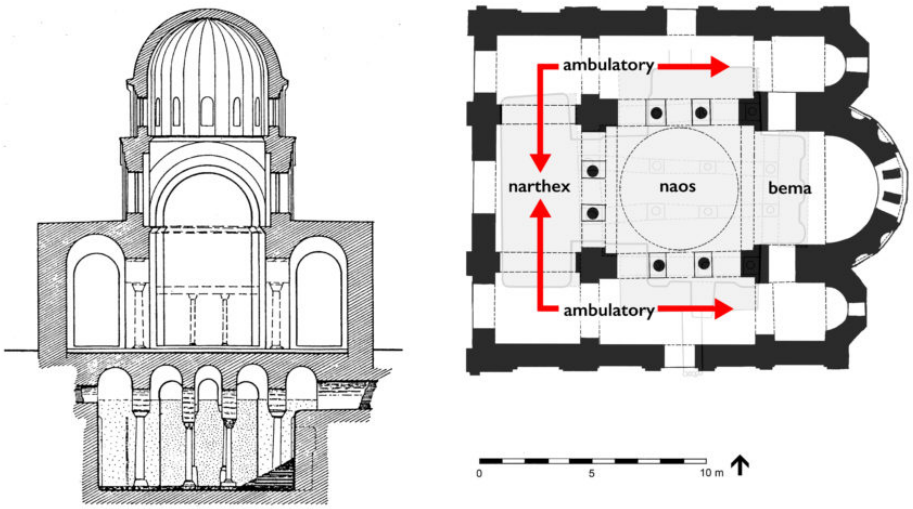


Figure **13.6.6.152**: Ambulatory plan, Theotokos Pammakaristos (Fethiye Mosque), hypothetical elevation and plan of the twelfth-century church and its cistern (shown in gray on the plan), Constantinople (Istanbul) (adapted from plan © Robert Ousterhout)

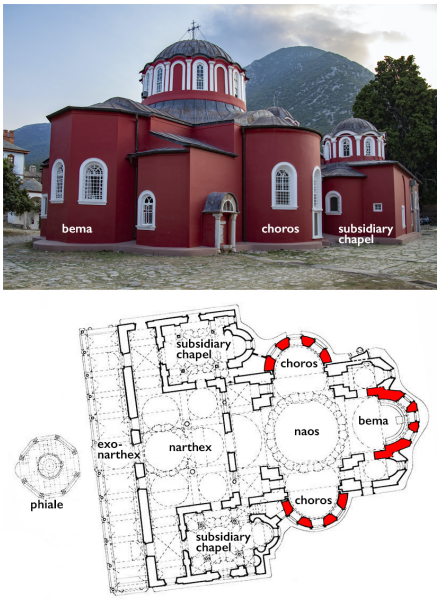


Figure **13.6.6.153**: Katholikon (three apses higlighted in plan), Megisti Lavra, begun in 962, Mount Athos (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, plan © Robert Ousterhout)

conch churches

e katholikon at Megisti Lavra on Mount Athos

conch churches appear in the monastic environment of Mount Athos (a mountain and peninsula in northeastern Greece and an important center stern Orthodox monasticism), with the addition of lateral apses—i.e. apses on the *sides* of the church—to a standard cross-in-square plan. The late ses, called *choroi*, provided a setting for the choirs of monks who sang the liturgy. It is unclear if the new church type emerged by means of la litions or modifications, but the new feature clearly responded to the requirements of the monastic service. At Megisti Lavra, the katholikon begun 2 was expanded gradually, with the addition of lateral apses to the naos, domed subsidiary chapels flanking the narthex, an outer narthex, and a *phi* nt) **(view plan of Megisti Lavra Monastery)**.

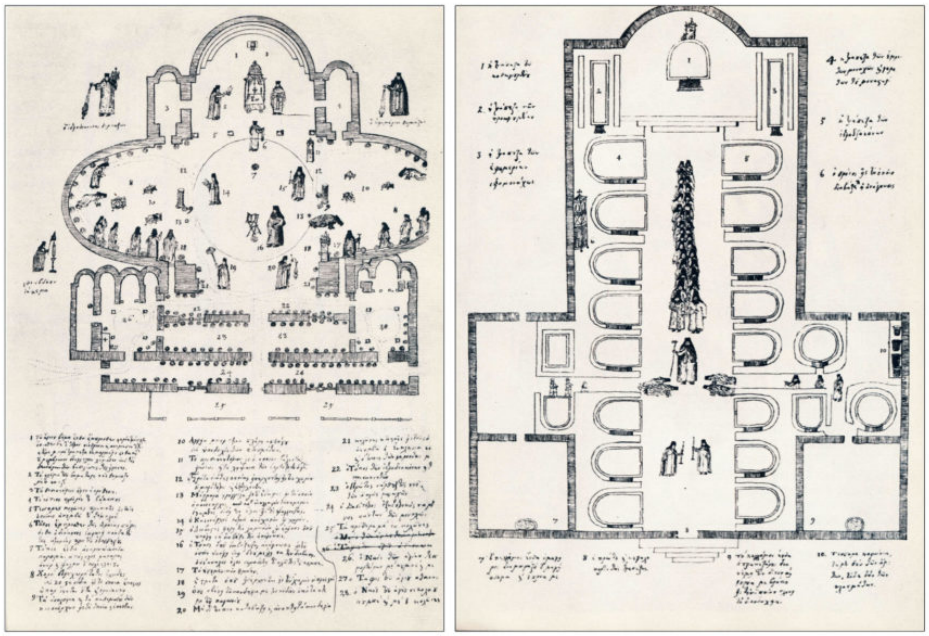


Figure **13.6.6.154**: Eighteenth-century plans of the katholikon and the trapeza with ceremonies in progress, Megisti Lavra, Mount Athos (V. G. Barskii, 1885–87)

Vatopedi and elsewhere on Mount Athos, the katholika appear to have triconch plans from the inception.



Figure 13.6.6.155: Choros with windows in upper left, katholikon, Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos (photo: Saint-Petersburg Theological Academy, CC BY-ND 2.0)

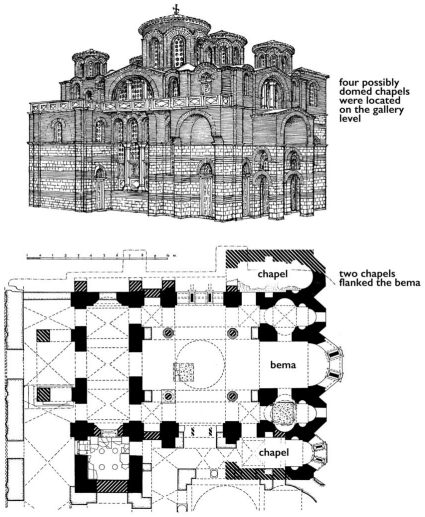


Figure 13.6.6.156: Hypothetical reconstruction (top) and plan (bottom), Theotokos tou Libos, 907, Constantinople (adapted from Megaw, "The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips")

eater complexity

eotokos tou Libos, Constantinople

nexed chapels and more complex plans appear regularly in the Middle Byzantine period. The monastic church of the Theotokos tou Libos nstantinople, built c. 907 as a cross-in-square church similar in scale and detail to the Myrelaion, included six subsidiary chapels in its original desi h two flanking the bema and four tiny, possibly domed chapels on the gallery level. The katholikon of Hosios Loukas has eight chapels, organized o levels. These subsidiary spaces have been interpreted as settings for private devotions, or possibly private liturgies, or as primarily commemorati ces, but they are clearly integrated into the overall design of the building. Often a single chapel is set to one side of the building, as at Sv. Nikola ršumlija.

xt: read about regional variations in Middle Byzantine architecture

ditional Resources

bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

egional variations in Middle Byzantine architecture

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

eriods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

te Byzantine 1261 – 1453

st-Byzantine after 1453



Figure 13.6.6.157: Map showing regional variations in Middle Byzantine architecture

nstantinople



Figure 13.6.6.158: Half-columns correspond to internal walls and supports at the Myrelaion church, c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

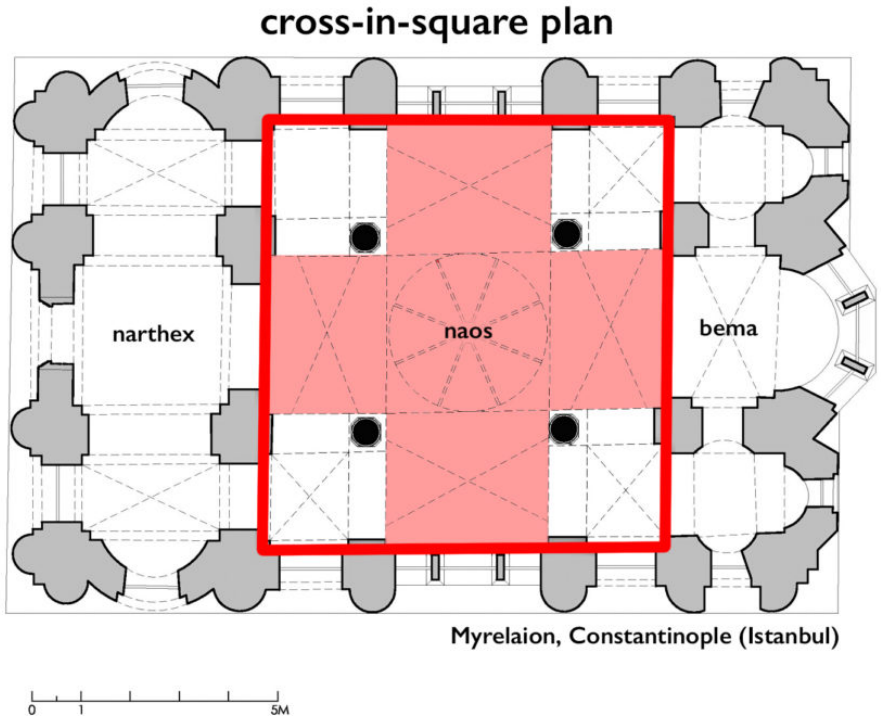


Figure 13.6.6.159: Cross-in-square plan, the Myrelaion church (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul) (adapted from plan © Vasileios Marinis)

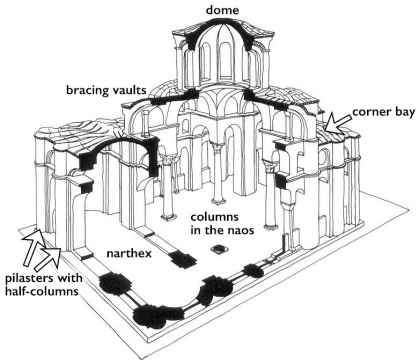


Figure 13.6.6.160: Elements of a cross-in-square church, inside the Myrelaion (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul)

urches in Constantinople from the Middle Byzantine period (843–1204), such as the tenth-century *cross-in-square* Myrelaion church (**read more abo s church type**), exhibit a balance between their various components: normally in the plan, the tripartite sanctuary is balanced by the narthex, and on t erior the structural divisions are emphasized by pilasters. In the case of the Myrelaion, half-columns have been affixed to pilasters. Some surfa ament occurs but it is usually limited, and in many instances exterior surfaces of churches may have been plastered.



Figure **13.6.6.161**: Myrelaion church (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **Jordan Pickett**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

the interior, **groin vaults** and ribbed or pumpkin domes created undulating surfaces for mosaic decoration. However, the present appearance of t erior of the Myrelaion reflects its conversion to a mosque following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453.



Figure **13.6.6.162**: Pantokrator Monastery (Zeyrek Mosque), c. 1118-36, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **Dismas87**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

ntokrator Monastery

the eleventh and twelfth centuries, large imperially-sponsored monastic complexes developed, in part as new settings for imperial and dynastic buria for example at the Pantokrator, built c. 1118-36 by John II and Eirene Komnenos. Three churches were built side by side in rapid succession **(view t ns of all three churches)**. The south church, dedicated to Christ Pantokrator, a large and lavishly decorated cross-in-square church, was the *katholik* the monastery; the north, also cross-in-square, was dedicated to the Virgin Eleousa and served the lay community. The middle church was single-ais l covered by two domes; dedicated to St. Michael, it functioned as the imperial mausoleum (referred to as the heroon in the monastic *typikon*).



Figure **13.6.6.163**: Two churches of Hosios Loukas Monastery seen from the east: the Panagia (right) and the katholikon (left), 10th and 11th centuries, Boeotia (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

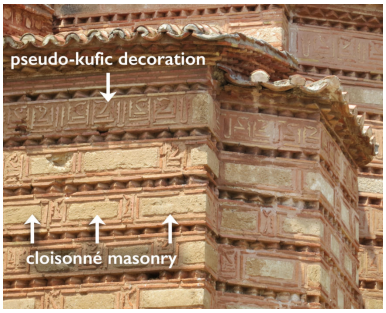


Figure **13.6.6.164**: Pseudo-kufic decoration and cloisonné masonry on the Panagia church, 10th century, Hosios Loukas, Boeotia (photo: **Brad Hostetler**, CC BY 2.0)

eece

sios Loukas Monastery

mainland Greece, vault forms were often simpler, but exterior surfaces often lavishly decorated, with cloisonné masonry and pseudo-kufic decoratio de of brick. The unusual **Greek-cross-octagon plan**, best known in the katholikon church at Hosios Loukas, inspired a number of regional examp **ad more about this church type**).

atolia

ypical of central Anatolia are churches of stone construction, such as Karagedik Kilise, 10th or 11th century, Peristrema, Turkey (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=2487" ref="http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=2487" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"

Gertrude Bell)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-50512" height="262" sizes="(max-width: 350px) 100vw, 350px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/.../Karagedik.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/.../Karagedik.jpg

619w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ik-300x224.jpg

300w" width="350">

Figure **13.6.6.165**: Typical of central Anatolia are churches of stone construction, such as Karagedik Kilise, 10th or 11th century, Peristrema, Turkey (photo: **Gertrude Bell**)

chitecture flourished in central **Anatolia** (which makes up the majority of modern Turkey) until the Seljuk conquest of the 1070s. Distinctive masoı urches are preserved in Cappadocia and Lycaonia, but they have been overshadowed in the scholarship by the hundreds of well-preserved rock-c urches, most notably those at Göreme, with their well-preserved painted programs, as at **Karanlık Kilise**. Most of these follow standardized designs, veloped in masonry architecture, but with some inventiveness evident in the detailing.

nlı Kilise

e cross-in-square church at the Çanlı Kilise (view plan) is carefully constructed of brick and stone, with design features suggesting an awareness chitecture from both Constantinople and the Caucasus.



Figure 13.6.6.166: Çanlı Kilise in 1907 (left) and 2014 (right), first phase of construction probably early 11th century, near Akhisar, Turkey (left photo: Gertrude Bell; right photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.6.6.167: Trdat, cathedral of Ani (dome does not survive), 1001 (photo: Hansm, CC BY-SA 3.0)

menia

thedral of Ani

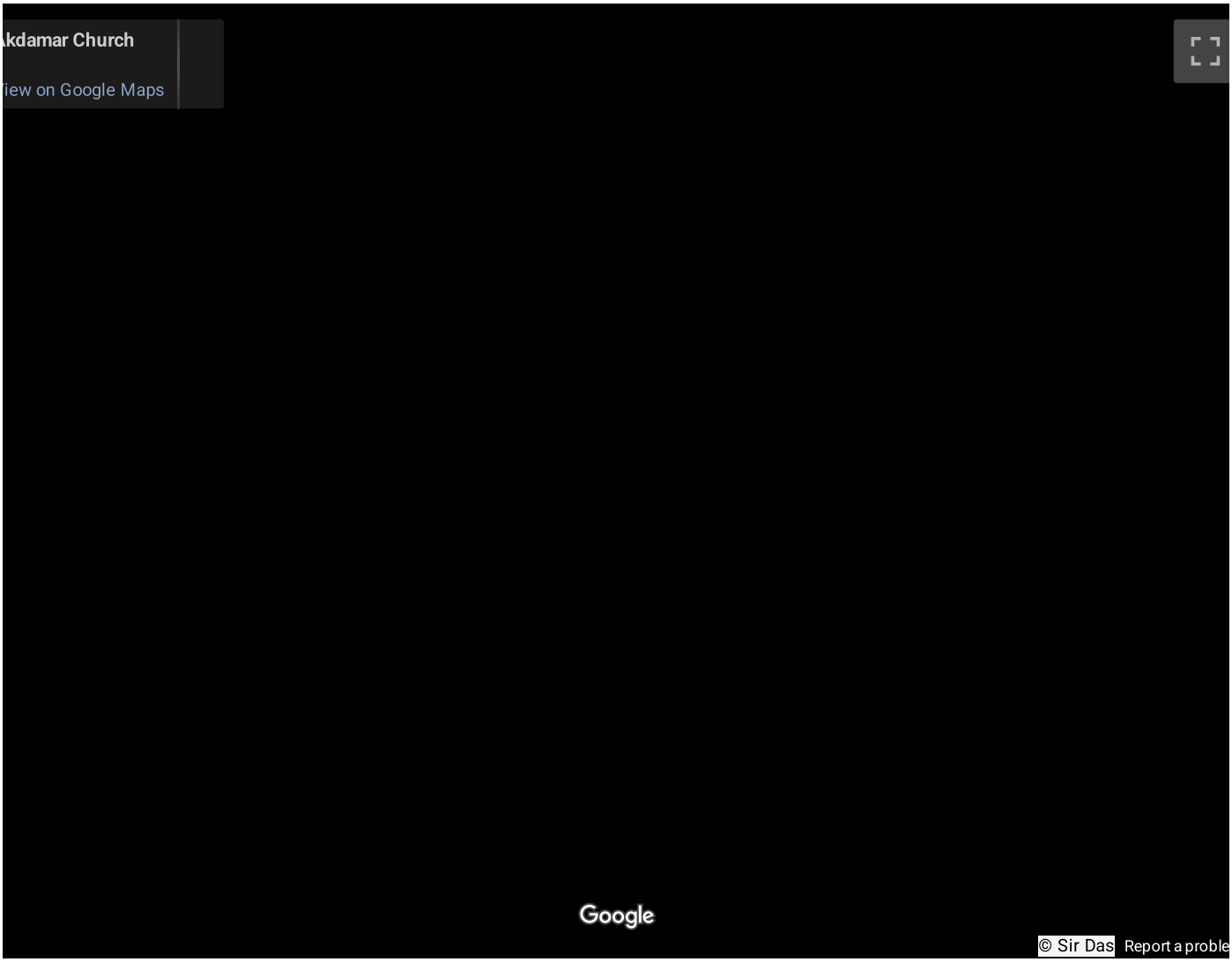
th Armenia and Georgia witnessed a revival of architecture in the tenth century. At Ani, the builder Trdat (responsible for rebuilding the dome of phia in Constantinople) built the cathedral as a domed basilica (view plan), as well as a church dedicated to St. Gregory, an aisled tetraconch followi model of Zvartnots, which is now in ruins.

urch of the Holy Cross at Ahtamar

e octagon-dome palace church of the Holy Cross at Ahtamar (915-21) (view plan and sections) follows earlier models but was lavishly decorated w ernal sculpture in contrast with most contemporary Byzantine churches.



Figure 13.6.6.168: Church of the Holy Cross, decorated with external sculpture, Ahtamar, Armenia (modern Turkey), 915-21, (left photo: Tom Klobe, CC BY-NC 2.0; right photo: Arne Schöllhorn, CC BY 2.0)



Church of the Holy Cross, Ahtamar, Armenia (modern Turkey)



Figure **13.6.6.169**: Church of St. John the Baptist, c. 963-73, Öşk Vank (photo: **Jean Paul Peters**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

eorgia

the Tao-Klarjeti region, several large domed basilicas were built in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, as at Öşk Vank, built c. 963-73 **(view plan)**, a
ıan, completed c. 1032; both are lavishly decorated with exterior sculpture, while the interiors display unusual vault forms. **Ot'ht'a Eklesia**, built at t
ne time is a grand, barrel-vaulted basilica. All are of distinctive stone construction.



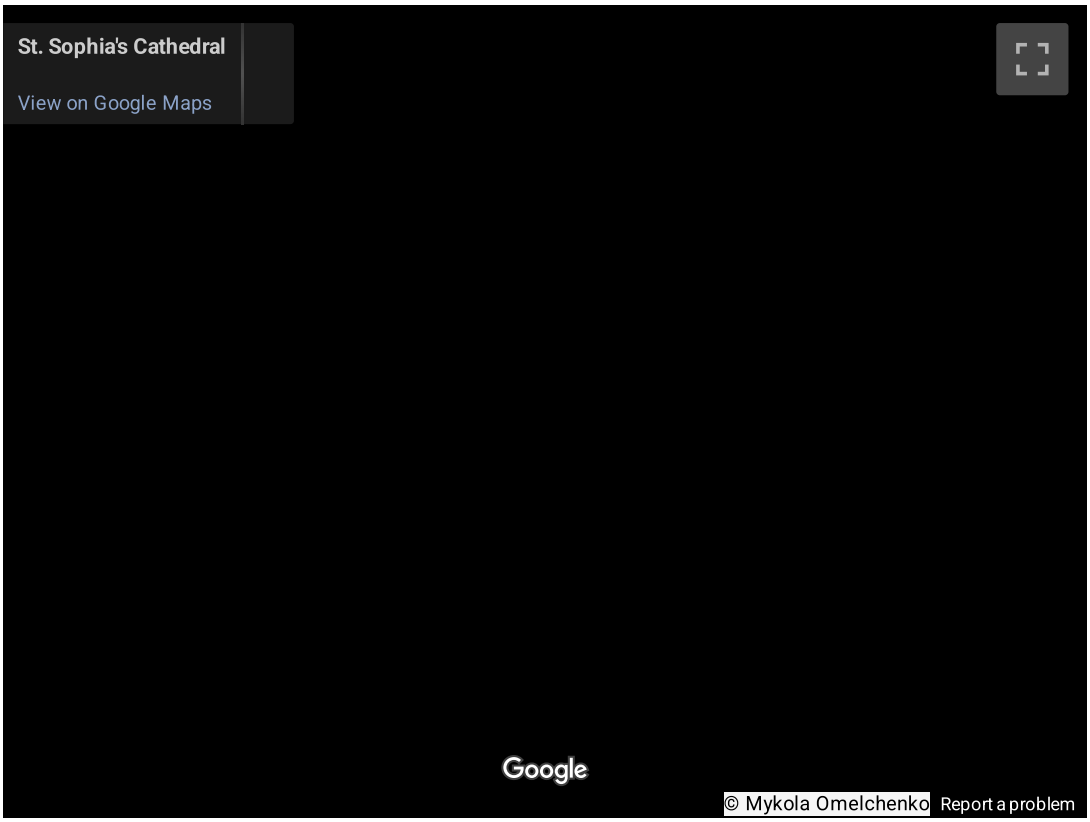
Figure **13.6.6.170**: Sv. Panteleimon, 1164, Nerezi (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

rbia and Bulgaria



Figure **13.6.6.171**: Sv. Nikola (heavily restored), 12th century, Kuršumlija (photo: **CrniBombarder!!!**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

general, the church architecture of Serbia and Bulgaria in this period betrays close associations with Greece and Constantinople. The five-domed chu Sv. Panteleimon at Nerezi **(view plan)**, built 1164 and well known for its **exquisite frescos**, is certainly inspired by the architecture of the capital, as . Nikola at Kuršumlija. The design of the latter example was subsequently followed at Studenica and Djurdjevi Stupovi (now heavily restored). Seve ge and distinctive basilicas were constructed to meet the demands of congregational worship, as at **Sv. Sofia** in Ohrid, constructed c. 1000, or the chu Pliska.



Interior of St. Sophia, begun 1037, Kiev, Ukraine

e Rus'

Sophia in Kiev

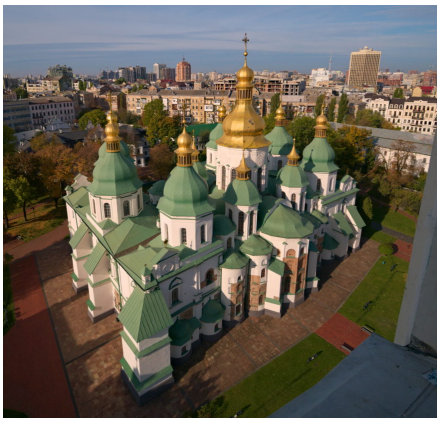


Figure **13.6.6.172**: St. Sophia, begun 1037 (with later additions), Kiev (photo: Daniel Kraft, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ter the Russian state was Christianized in 988, it similarly required large congregational churches for the recently converted population. At St. Sophia ev, begun 1037, and elsewhere, imported Byzantine masons familiar with the structural systems of the small, vaulted churches, elaborated a basic Mid zantine scheme, enveloping the tall domed core of the building with a series of ambulatories and galleries. These increased the interior space from wl uld have provided ample room for the private devotions of a few individuals to what was necessary for a large congregation. Following the init petus from Byzantium, however, as the center of power shifted northward, Russia looked to the Romanesque architecture of northern Europe piration, while maintaining the attenuated cross-in-square church as the standard type, as occurs at several twelfth-century churches in and arou adimir.



Figure **13.6.6.173**: Monastery of Hosios Meletios, founded 1081, Attica (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

ɔnasteries

ɔnasteries of the Middle Byzantine period commonly had the church as the central element, freestanding within a walled enclosure, the latter lined w
monastic cells and other buildings. Often the refectory (where the monks to their meals) was set in relationship to the church building, either opposite
allel to it. With most surviving examples, however, the original church building is preserved, but the other buildings have undergone numerc
onstructions, as at Hosios Meletios, Hosios Loukas, and the monasteries on Mount Athos, as well as at Studenica in Serbia.



Figure **13.6.6.174**: Studenica Monastery, founded 1190, Serbia (photo: **Blago**, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

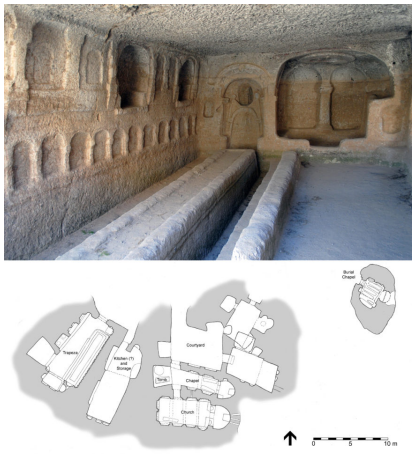


Figure 13.6.6.175: Geyikli Monastery, trapeza and plan, Soğanlı Valley, Cappadocia (photo and plan: © Robert Ousterhout)

cause of the site specificity and long construction history, it remains difficult to determine a “standard” Middle Byzantine monastery type. There are a merous well-preserved examples of monasteries in Cappadocia. At Göreme a cluster of small monastic ensembles developed in the Middle Byzanti iod, each equipped with its own church or chapel and a *trapeza* with a rock-cut table and benches. The *trapeza* at the Geyikli Kilise complex in ğanlı Valley is lavishly carved. Planning in these examples, however, was by necessity site-specific and often similar to domestic complexes.

xt: read about Middle Byzantine secular architecture and urban planning

ditional Resources

bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

saics and Microcosm: the Monasteries of Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni, and Daphni

DR. EVAN FREEMAN



Video 13.6.6.176: Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150 (photo: **Mark L. Darby**, all rights reserved)

static Motion

e city of Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire since its foundation by Constantine in 330 C.E., was roiled by noclastic Controversy in the 8th and 9th centuries. Emperors, bishops, and many others debated whether images, or “icons,” of God and the saints w

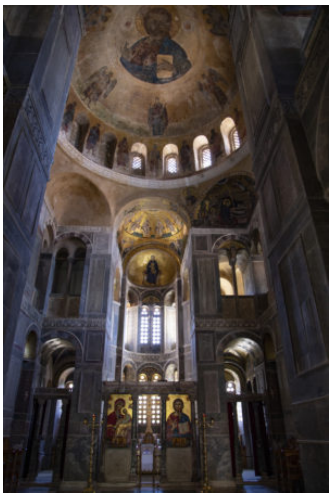
ly or heretical. Those in favor of images triumphed in 843. Soon after, a new church was built in Constantinople's great imperial palace and adorned w
h mosaic icons. The church was dedicated to the Virgin of the *Pharos*, named with the Greek word for a lighthouse, since a lighthouse stood near
ound 864, patriarch Photios of Constantinople—the highest-ranking cleric in the empire—gushed about the church of the Pharos and its glitteri
saics: "It is as if one had entered heaven itself . . . and was illuminated by the beauty in all forms shining all around like so many stars, so is one utte
azed." Photios describes how his whirling to view the church produced the impression that the church itself was moving:

> ***It seems that everything is in ecstatic motion, and the church itself is circling round. For the spectator, through his whirling about in all directions and being constantly astir, which he is forced to experience by the variegated spectacle on all sides, imagines that his personal condition is transferred to the object.***
>
> ***Photios of Constantinople, Homily 10***

otios offers us a tantalizing impression of the Pharos church and a sense of how Byzantines viewed mosaics during this period.



Video **13.6.6.177**: Map with Constantinople and the monasteries of Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni, and Daphni (map © Google)



Video **13.6.6.178**: View of the naos, katholikon, 11th century, Hosios Loukas, Boeotia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

ddle Byzantine mosaics

ıile the church of the Pharos has been lost, three churches from around the eleventh century preserve much of their original mosaic programs, wh
re likely inspired by churches like the church of the Pharos in the capital. These three monuments—Hosios Loukas, Nea Moni, and Daphni—point
nmon trends in Middle Byzantine mosaics, while also demonstrating the flexibility of church decoration during this period.

ɔsaics are patterns or images made of *tesserae*: small pieces of stone, glass, or other materials. They commonly adorned floors in antiquity but beca
ɔular decoration for church walls and ceilings in Byzantium, especially among wealthy patrons such as emperors.

the Middle Byzantine period (c. 843–1204), **domed, centrally planned churches** became more popular than the long, hall-like basilicas of previc
ıturies. While basilicas created a strong horizontal axis between the entrance on one end and the altar at the other, domed churches added a vertical a
ıt prompted viewers to look upward. New decorative programs developed in tandem with this architectural trend, covering walls and domes with mosa
l frescos of holy figures in complex, new configurations. The lower portions of churches were often decorated with marble revetment (thin panels
ırble, often beautifully colored).

ıurch as microcosm

zantine texts interpreted the domed church as a microcosm—a three-dimensional image of the cosmos—associating the sparkling gold vaults above w
heavens, and the colored marbles below with the earth. Within this framework, images often seem to be arranged hierarchically: with a heavenly Chı
gning above, events from sacred history unfolding below, and portraits of saints surrounding the worshippers in the lowest registers. Many of the
ages took on additional meanings as church services unfolded.



deo **13.6.6.179**: Left: “spatial icon” of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple at Hosios Loukas (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: Masacci
Holy Trinity fresco at Santa Maria Novella (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

ıatial icons

e mosaicists who decorated these churches made no effort to create illusionistic backdrops for the holy figures, as one often finds in works from
lian Renaissance, such as Masaccio’s ***Holy Trinity*** fresco. Instead, the holy figures situated in the curves and facets of these Middle Byzantine churcl
ɔear against a gold ground. Often, these prophets, saints, and angels seem to face and even communicate with each other across the space of the chur
ch “spatial icons”—as the art historian Otto Demus famously described them—created the impression that the holy figures occupied the same physi
ıce as the worshippers.



ideo 13.6.6.180: Panagia and katholikon churches seen from the east, 10th and 11th centuries, Hosios Loukas Monastery, Boeotia (© Robert Ousterhou

sios Loukas

e monastery of Hosios Loukas, located in central Greece, is probably the oldest of the three churches. It is named for St. Loukas of Steiris, a lo nastic saint who lived on this site and died in 953. Two connected churches survive here. The older church, dedicated to the Virgin and located to th, features a cross-in-square plan. The katholikon church, built to the south in the eleventh century, utilizes a larger, octagona-domed plan (**read mo out these church types**). The katholikon church retains many of its mosaics, undoubtedly the result of rich patronage. St. Luke's body was interr ween the two churches, and the monastery attracted pilgrims who sought the saint's healing.

Plan of Hosios Loukas, Boeotia, 11th century, from Robert Weir Schultz and Sidney Howard Barnsley, <em**The Monastery of Saint Luke of Stiris, in Phocis, and the Dependent monaste f Saint Nicolas in the Fields, near Skripou in Boetia (London: Macmillan, 1901)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49322" height="615 sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Luke-plan-copy-870x615.jpg" srcset="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Luke-plan-copy-870x615.jpg 870w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-ntent/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Luke-plan-copy-300x212.jpg 300w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Luke-plan-cop 1536x1086.jpg 1536w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Luke-plan-copy-2048x1447.jpg 2048w" width="870">**

Video 13.6.6.181: Plan of Hosios Loukas, Greece, 11th century, from Robert Weir Schultz and Sidney Howard Barnsley, *The Monastery of Saint Luke o Stiris, in Phocis, and the Dependent monastery of Saint Nicolas in the Fields, near Skripou in Boetia* (London: Macmillan, 1901)

orshippers entered the katholikon through the "narthex," a vestibule at the western end of the building. Here, they encountered portraits of saints a ge images of Christ's Passion and Resurrection: Christ washing his disciples' feet, the Crucifixion, the Anastasis, and the incredulous Thomas touchi wounds of the risen Christ.



deo 13.6.6.182: Narthex mosaics, left: a group of women saints, right: Christ washing his disciples' feet, katholikon, Hosios Loukas, Boeotia, 11th centu (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

orshippers then passed beneath a large mosaic of Christ Pantokrator to enter the main part of the church, or "naos." Christ displays an open book t claims him to be the "light of the world" (John 8:12). The mosaic's gold tesserae reflect sunlight from the front door in the daytime, and flickeri ndlelight at night.



Video **13.6.6.183**: Christ Pantokrater mosaic, narthex, katholikon, Hosios Loukas, 11th century, Boeotia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

large fresco of Christ surrounded by angels occupies the heavenly space of the dome in the naos. This fresco may replicate the original dome mosai ich have been lost. Four **squinches** beneath the dome displayed mosaic images from the life of Christ. The Annunciation likely once adorned t rtheast squinch but has been lost. The mosaics in the other three squinches depict Christ's Nativity, Presentation in the Jewish Temple, and Baptism.



Video **13.6.6.184**: Central dome and squiches, katholikon, Hosios Loukas monastery, Boeotia, 11th century (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

rious saints appear below. An abundance of monastic saints—including St. Loukas himself—reflects the building's function as a monastery church.



Video **13.6.6.185**: Hosios Loukas (St. Luke of Steiris) mosaic near his tomb, west wall of northern crossarm, katholikon, Hosios Loukas, 11th century, Boeotia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

›ceeding through the naos, worshippers saw an image of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost in a smaller dome above the altar. T ·gin and Child sit enthroned in the apse behind the altar, a reminder that God became a human being for the salvation of the world. During the Div urgy, this image of Christ's incarnation took on new significance as the bread and wine also became the body and blood of Christ.



ideo **13.6.6.186**: Pentecost, Virgin and Child mosaics, bema, katholikon, Hosios Loukas monastery, Boeotia, 11th century (photo: Evan Freeman, CC B SA 4.0)

·a Moni

rmit monks founded Nea Moni ("new monastery") on the island of Chios sometime before 1042, and its katholikon was built with the patronage ıperor Constantine IX Monomachos between 1049–1055. It features a rectangular plan, and its architectural design may have been adapted

commodate its mosaic program.

Left: view of Nea Moni from the west (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NEA_MONH_ΣTA_XIONIA.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NEA_MONH_ΣTA_XIONIA.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener"

LIOUKAS, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: Plan of katholikon of Nea Moni, Chios, 11th century (© Robert G. Ousterhout)" aria-describedby="captio attachment-49446" height="408" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...an-870x408.jpg" srcset="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...an-870x408.jpg 870w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...an-300x141.jpg 300w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...n-1536x719.jpg 1536w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...n-2048x959.jpg 2048w" width="870">

ideo 13.6.6.187: Left: view of Nea Moni from the west (photo: FLIOUKAS, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: Plan of katholikon of Nea Moni, Chios, 11th centu (© Robert G. Ousterhout)



Video 13.6.6.188: St. Joachim mosaic, 11th century, narthex, katholikon, Nea Moni, Chios (photo: Marmontel, CC BY-SA 2.0)

the narthex, worshippers again encountered an array of saints and large narrative images centering around Christ's Passion. In the naos, the main do s lost its mosaics. But remnants of cherubim and seraphim, evangelists, and apostles inhabit **pendentives** beneath the dome. Further down, ei ernating conches and niches displayed a ring scenes from the life of Christ. The Virgin appears in the eastern apse behind the altar with hands upraised ıyer, flanked by the archangels Gabriel and Michael.



Video 13.6.6.189: View of the naos, Nea Moni, Chios, 11th century (photo: **Meltedrainbow**, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Video **13.6.6.190**: Daphni Monastery seen from the east, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150 (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

ıphni

e monastery of Daphni, located just northwest of Athens, was likely the last of the three churches to be built, probably constructed between 1050–11
tle is known about the foundation of this cross-in-square church.

Plan and elevation of Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150, from from Robert Weir Schultz and Sidney Howard Barnsley, <em**The Monastery of Saint Luke of Stiris, in Phocis, and the ependent monastery of Saint Nicolas in the Fields, near Skripou in Boetia (London: Macmillan, 1901)" aria-describedby="caption-attachmen 9323" height="466" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Daphni-pla and-elevation-horizontal-870x466.jpg" srcset="https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Daphni-plan-and-elevation-horizontal-870x466.jpg 870w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Daphni-plan-and-elevation-horizontal-300x161.jpg 300w, https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Schulz-Daphni-plan-and-elevation-horizontal.jpg 1395w" width="870">

Video **13.6.6.191**: Plan and elevation of Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150, from from Robert Weir Schultz and Sidney Howard Barnsley, *The Monastery of Saint Luke of Stiris, in Phocis, and the Dependent monastery of Saint Nicolas in the Fields, near Skripou in Boetia* (London: Macmillan, 1901)



ideo **13.6.6.192**: Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple mosaic, narthex, Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150 (photo: **Mark L. Darby**, all right reserved)

re, the narthex combines scenes from the lives of Christ and the Virgin, suggesting the church may have been dedicated to Mary. Notably, the L pper and Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (where she was fed with heavenly bread by an angel) both appear on the eastern wall of the narth ere worshippers would have seen them as they entered the church. Such images were meant to connect past events from sacred history with ebration of the Eucharist in the present: Christ sharing bread and wine with his apostles at the Last Supper and Virgin eating heavenly bread in nple were both understood to prefigure and symbolize the Eucharist. The appearance of the Foot Washing in the narthexes of all three of these churcl y reflect the use of this part of the church for a ritual foot washing on Holy Thursday, when abbots imitated Christ by washing the feet of the monks.



Video **13.6.6.193**: View of the naos looking east, Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150 (photo: **Ktiv**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

monumental image of the heavenly Christ Pantokrator, framed by a rainbow mandorla in the central dome, dominates the naos. Photios interprets wl ıst have been a similar image in the Pharos church as Christ reigning from the heavens:

> ***You might say He is overseeing the earth, and devising its orderly arrangement and government, so accurately has the painter been inspired to represent, though only in forms and in colors, the Creator's care for us.***
>
> ***Photios of Constantinople, Homily 10***



Video 13.6.6.194: Christ Pantokrator mosaic, dome, Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150 (photo: Mark L. Darby, all rights reserved)

enes from the lives of Christ and the Virgin—such as the Annunciation—unfold in the squinches below and throughout the rest of the naos. The east
se reveals another Virgin and Child, and additional saints appear throughout the naos.



Video 13.6.6.195: Annunciation mosaic, Daphni monastery, Chaidari, c. 1050–1150 (photo: Mark L. Darby, all rights reserved)

r worshippers entering these churches, mosaics offered a vision of God reigning from on high, a reminder of salvation history, and face-to-fa
counters with so many saints who had come before. No wonder Photios found himself whirling around, trying to take in the overwhelming mosaics at t
aros church, and feeling as if he had "entered heaven itself."

ditional resources

rolyn L. Connor, *Saints and Spectacle: Byzantine Mosaics in their Cultural Setting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

o Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1947).

James, *Mosaics in the Medieval World: From Late antiquity to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

nry Maguire, "The Cycle of Images in the Church," in *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium, edited by Linda Safran* (University Park, P
e Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 121-151.

omas F. Mathews, “The Sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine Church Decoration,” *Perkins Journal* 41.3 (July 1988): 11-21.

omas F. Mathews, “The Transformation symbolism in Byzantine architecture and the meaning of the Pantokrator in the dome,” in *Church and People zantium: Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, twentieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Manchester, 1986, edited by Rosem orris*, (Birmingham: Center for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham, 1990), 191-214.

bert Ousterhout, “Originality in Byzantine Architecture: The Case of Nea Moni,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51.1 (March 199 -60.

lliam Tronzo, “Mimesis in Byzantium: Notes toward a History of the Function of the Image,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 25 (spring 1994): (

ktarkos Zarras, “Narrating the Sacred Story: New Testament Cycles in Middle and Late Byzantine Church Decoration,” in *The New Testament zantium*, edited by Derek Krueger and Robert S. Nelson (Washington: D.C.; Dumbarton Oaks, 2016).

ddle Byzantine secular architecture and urban planning

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

riods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

te Byzantine 1261 – 1453

st-Byzantine after 1453



Figure **13.6.6.196**: Evidence of secular architecture and urban planning in Middle Byzantium (underlying map © Google)

ıralization

hough churches such as Hagia Sophia are among Byzantium’s best known architecture, the Byzantines also built cities, palaces, houses, and pub rastructure such as aqueducts. Yet secular architecture can often be difficult to assess in the Middle Byzantine period (843 – 1204). After the si ıtury, the Byzantine Empire underwent a process of ruralization, as large centers were depopulated or abandoned, with a demographic shift to ıntryside. Often the inhabited area of a city was reduced to its fortified acropolis; at Ankara, Sardis, and Corinth, for example, the remainder of cient city was virtually abandoned. Even Constantinople—the capital of the Byzantine Empire—witnessed a cultural break in this period. Followin gue in 747, Constantine V resettled peasants from Greece and the Aegean Islands in the capital. Portions of the city fell into ruin, with public servi glected.

nagined view of Sparta, known as Lacedemonia during the Byzantine era, <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_f_28v.png"
ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_f_28v.png" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51035" height="262" sizes="(max-width: 401px) 100vw, 401px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...es_-_f_28v.png
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...es_-_f_28v.png
850w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...8v-300x196.png
300w" width="401">

Figure 13.6.6.197: Imagined view of Sparta, known as Lacedemonia during the Byzantine era, **Nuremberg Chronicle**, 1493

ban revivals

cultural revival began after the middle of the eighth century (after the resolution of the Iconoclastic controversy), but cities never achieved their forn ominence. As Byzantine society became more private and inward-turning, the home and family became the dominant social focus, with pub chitecture limited almost exclusively to defense.

d cities, new names

ten cities that had been abandoned were resettled with new names, the older ones forgotten: Abdera became Polystylon; Sparta became Lacedaemor tlements that were not abandoned shrank, with smaller circuits of fortification; texts refer to these as *kastra* rather than as *poleis*.



Figure 13.6.6.198: Monemvasia, c. 1690 (**Frederik de Wit**)



Figure 13.6.6.199: Monemvasia today (photo: **Mia Battaglia**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

ew towns

e few new towns of the period developed because of their strategic or protected locations, as at Monemvasia. In Cappadocia, numerous new agricultu tlements date from the tenth and eleventh centuries, cut into the soft volcanic rock formations, but these are no more than villages. **View a plan of t tlement at Çanlı Kilise near Akhisar in Cappadocia.**



Figure **13.6.6.200**: Ephesus, view looking eastward, with the ruins of the Temple of Artemis in the foreground and the hill of Ayasoluk with the Church of St. John in the distance (© Robert Ousterhout)



Figure **13.6.6.201**: Map of İznik showing the walls, cardo, and decumanus of Nicaea (adapted from Google earth in 10.10.2017) (Arzu Ispalar Çahantimur and Gözde Kırlı Özer, "**Space and Time Travelers Exploring Cultural Identity of the City**," CC BY 3.0)

econfiguring ancient cities

Ephesus, the ancient center was gradually abandoned in favor of the more easily defended hill of Ayasoluk, several kilometers inland, fortified arou church of St. John. At Sparta, the ancient acropolis was reinhabited beginning in the ninth century. In many older sites, the main streets continued uction, but new patterns of growth emerged within the urban rubble.

Nicaea (modern İznik), both the *cardo* and *decumanus* of the ancient city continued to be used (the cardo running north-south and the decuma uning east-west), but this is an almost unique example. New areas of settlement were characterized by growth in an *ad hoc* manner; streets appeared area between private properties, unpaved and unmaintained, as at Corinth and Athens.

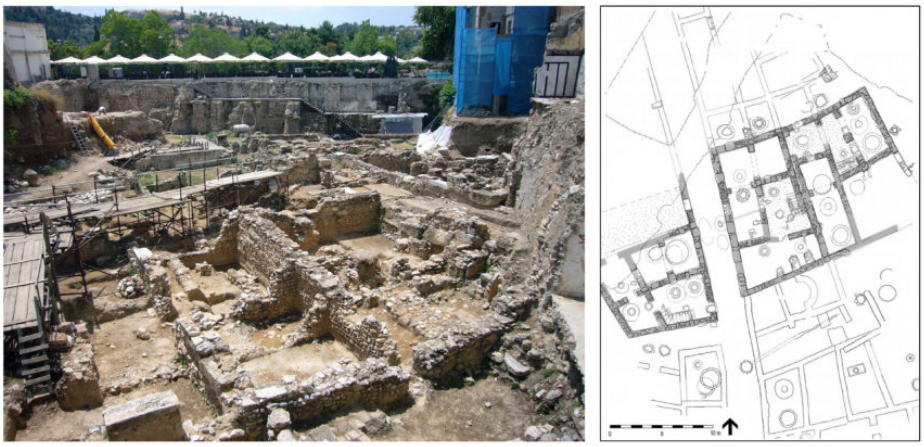


Figure **13.6.6.202**: Excavations of Byzantine houses, Athens (photo and plan © Robert Ousterhout)

ıblic spaces

nilarly, public spaces were abandoned and their functions replaced by streets of mixed use, with shops, workshops, and residences together. Market fa ł other large gatherings took place outside the walls, as for example the festival of St. John at Ephesus. Conversely, some activities that would have be ramural in ancient times moved within the confines of the medieval city; for example, within Constantinople, large areas were devoted to vegetal dens. More significantly, cemeteries gradually penetrated the city, many associated with religious foundations.



Figure **13.6.6.203**: Aqueduct of Valens, 4th century, supplied water to Constantinople (photo: **Laima Gūtmane** CC BY-SA 3.0)

ater supplies

other element necessary to the city was water. With the declining populations, most aqueducts fell into disrepair. The aqueducts supplyi nstantinople and Thessaloniki were maintained only with difficulty. A few new aqueducts were constructed, as at Thebes, and an extensive hydrau stem was developed in some parts of Cappadocia; at Corinth and Bursa, natural springs provided water. In most cases, private systems developed, w lls or cisterns to collect rainwater.



Figure 13.6.6.204: Basilica Cistern, 6th century, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Clint, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

ınstantinople

roughout the period, Constantinople remained unique in its urban character, appreciated by contemporaries for its wealth, its size, its paved streets, a
presence of the imperial court. By the twelfth century, its population may have been as high as 400,000.



Figure 13.6.6.205: Constantinople (map: Carolyn Connor and Tom Elliot, Ancient World Mapping Center, CC BY-NC 3.0)

e city also retained many of the great monuments of Late Antiquity; its spacious main streets, its forums bedecked with triumphal monuments, silicas and public buildings formed the backbone of the medieval city, and they continued to function throughout the Middle Byzantine period– haps in a diminished capacity.



Figure 13.6.6.206: Triumph of Emperor Basil II in the Madrid Skylitzes, between 1126 and 1150? (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitro. 26-2, fol. 183r)

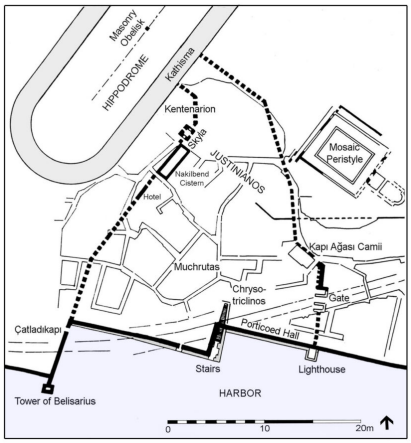


Figure 13.6.6.207: Reconstructed plan of the Boukoleon Palace, Constantinople (© Robert Ousterhout)

ough grandeur survived for emperors of the ninth and tenth centuries to stage imperial triumphs in the antique manner. The so-called Boukoleon Pala
resents the reduced core of the Great Palace (originally begun by Constantine the Great and subsequently expanded and rebuilt), enclosed by
tification wall, added by Nikephoros Phokas in the tenth century. By the twelfth century, the Blachernae Palace, located at the northern corner of the ci
l become the primary imperial residence.

w construction of the Middle Byzantine period was privately financed and controlled, and what might be regarded as public buildings—baths, doc
rehouses, hospitals, and orphanages—were frequently controlled by the monasteries. Moreover, new buildings were often of wood rather than of stone



Figure 13.6.6.208: Boukoleon Palace, sea façade, view of the great hall, enclosed by fortification wall built by Nikephoros Phokas in the 10th century, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

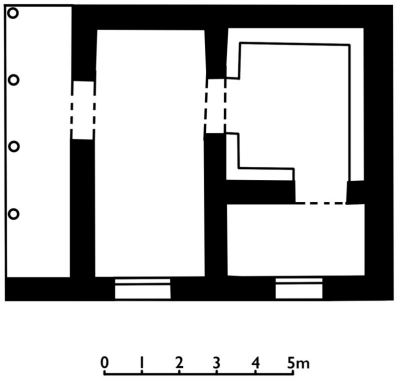


Figure 13.6.6.209: Reconstructed plan of a rural Byzantine house, Armatova, Elis, Greece (Evan Freeman, redrawn after C. Bouras, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

ımestic Architecture

ddle Byzantine domestic architecture is poorly preserved. A simple country house was excavated at Armatova in Elis, composed of small rectangu ıms and a porch. At Corinth, excavated medieval houses have courtyards with wells and ovens surrounded by rooms and storerooms. Although offerin all degree of comfort and efficiency, virtually no concern for aesthetics is evident. In Constantinople, multi-storied residences like **Roman *insulae*** s sted. In the twelfth century, John Tzetzes describes living in a three-storied tenement, with a priest, his children and pigs above him, and hay stored b mer on the ground floor.



Figure 13.6.6.210: Myrelaion church (Bodrum Mosque), c. 920, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

the Myrelaion in Constantinople, the foundations of a huge rotunda from a Late Antique palace were filled with a colonnaded cistern (for water stora form a level platform for the considerably smaller tenth-century Palace of Romanos Lekapenos, pi-shaped in plan, with a **portico** along the main faca

l with a chapel off to one side (which survives as the Bodrum Mosque today). Later, the complex was converted into a monastery.

hough known only from excavated remains, such urban forms may be reflected in the rock-cut courtyard dwellings of Cappadocia, such as those fou Çanlı Kilise near Akhisar, which similarly have the rooms organized around a courtyard, a porticoed façade, and a chapel. Often the main formal roo re given special articulation; other rooms may be identified as the kitchen, storerooms, cisterns, dovecotes, and stables.



Figure **13.6.6.211**: Remains of a rock-cut courtyard dwelling at Çanlı Kilise, Cappadocia, flourished 10th-11th centuries (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

vate estates grew in size and prominence, and by the twelfth century, the great, privately endowed monasteries and the mansions of the wealthy l come the distinguishing landmarks of the city. By the eleventh century, the monumentality of early forms was commonly replaced by complexity. Nc these great *oikoi*, with their sprawling mansions, courtyards, chapels, and gardens, survives, but their appearance is suggested a document of 12 scribing the Palace of Botaniates, which included gatehouses, two churches, courtyards, reception halls, dining halls, residential units, terraces, pavilio bles, a granary, vaulted substructures, cisterns, a bath complex, and rental properties. Wealthy estates in the countryside may have been fortified, such t described in *Digenes Akritas*, which was surrounded by gardens and defended by walls and towers, and also included a bathhouse and a church.

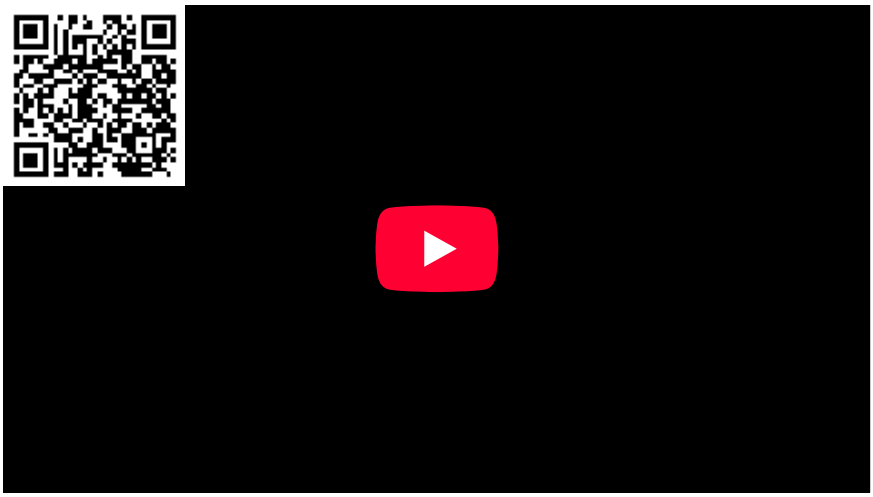
xt: read about Byzantine architecture and the Fourth Crusade

ditional Resources

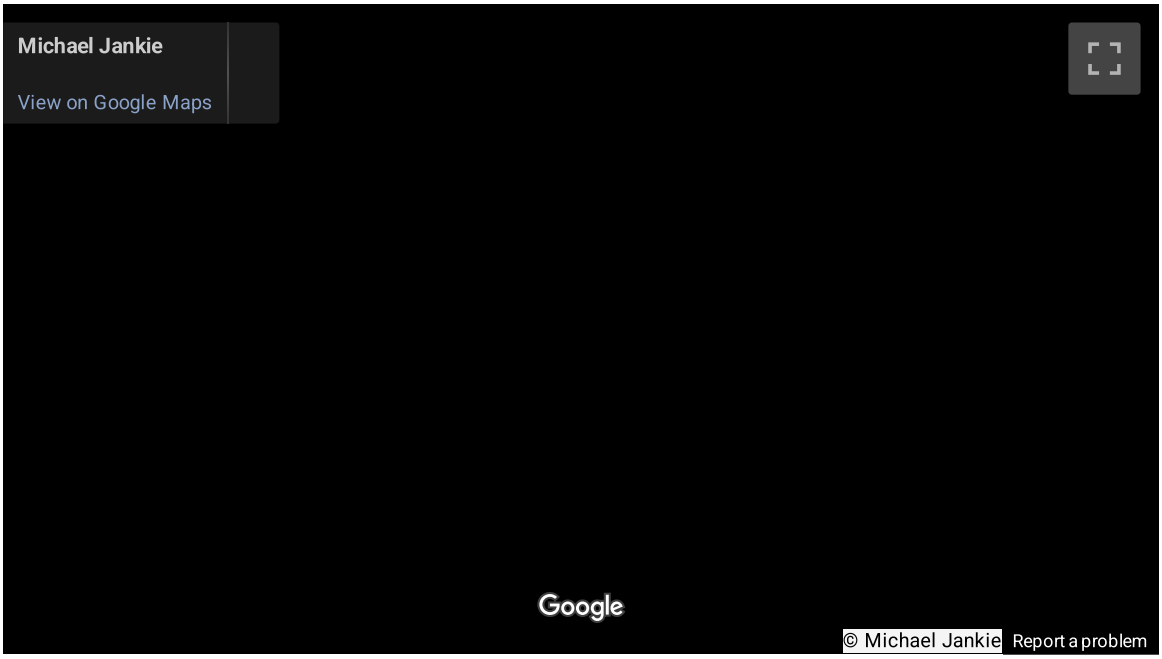
bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

aint Mark's Basilica, Venice

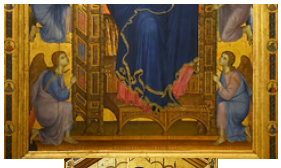
DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

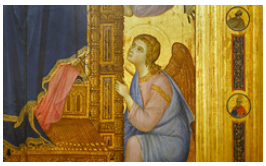


Video 13.6.6.13: Saint Mark’s Basilica, Venice, begun 1063 and Anastasis (The Harrowing of Hell) mosaic, c. 1180-1200, Middle Byzantine



narthistory images for teaching and learning:





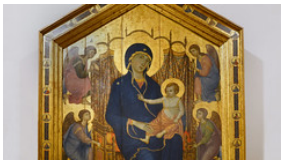








Figure **13.6.6.212**: More Smarthistory images…

ıe Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire

ʒantine Art and the Fourth Crusade

DR. NICOLETTE S. TRAHOULIA



Figure **13.6.6.213**: Basilica of San Marco, 11th century and later, Venice (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

ʏou visit Venice and walk around the Church of San Marco, you might wonder why the exterior of the church appears to be a mishmash of various pie sculpture done in different styles from different periods. The answer lies in the **Crusades**, and particularly with the Fourth Crusade that began in 1202.



Figure 13.6.6.214: Isidore of Miletus & Anthemius of Tralles for Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul), 532-37 (photo: Steven Zucker)

ɔnstantinople and the Crusades

ɹen the crusaders of the First Crusade arrived in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople (modern Istanbul) in 1096, the Byzantine emperor Alexio ɔmnenos agreed to help them go through Asia Minor on their way to the Holy Land. But wary of their motivations, he first made them swear allegiance n. The crusaders went on to conquer Jerusalem from the Arabs in 1099 and established crusader states in Palestine.



Figure 13.6.6.215: Map with the First through Fourth Crusades, from *Atlas of the Middle East*, Central Intelligence Agency, 1993

1203 a fourth expedition of crusaders were on their way to the Holy Land when they were again diverted to Constantinople. Alexios Angelos—the son ɔosed emperor Isaac II Angelos—enlisted the help of the crusaders to restore his father to the throne. Although he and his father did manage to r ntly with the help of the crusaders, they were soon deposed by Alexios V Doukas Mourtzouphlos. Angered because they did not receive the rewa ɔmised by Alexios Angelos and confronted with the immense riches of what was then the grandest city known to the West, the crusaders attacked a zed Constantinople on April 13, 1204. They would occupy the city until 1261 when Michael VIII Palaiologos reclaimed the city for the Byzantines.



Figure 13.6.6.216: Horses of San Marco (ancient Greek or Roman, likely Imperial Rome), 4th century B.C.E. to 4th century C.E., copper alloy, 235 x 250 cm each (Basilica of San Marco, Venice)

oting Byzantium

ıring the almost sixty years of occupation by the crusaders (or "Latins," as the Byzantines often referred to western Europeans during this perio nstantinople was looted of countless artworks. Many of these impressive artworks are now in museums and churches all over Europe. Venice, wh ›vided the ships for the Fourth Crusade, possesses much of the art that was taken by the crusaders, such as the life-size gilt **bronze horses** that w played on the **exterior of the Basilica of San Marco**. These horses were attributed to the famous sculptor **Lysippos** who worked in the fourth centu C.E., although they may have been made later.



Figure 13.6.6.217: Portraits of the Four Tetrarchs, from Constantinople, c. 305, porphyry, 4′ 3″ high (Basilica of San Marco, Venice) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.6.6.218: Foot from Portraits of the Four Tetrarchs, from Constantinople, c. 305, porphyry (Istanbul Archaeological Museum) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0)

ıother example of looted art is the porphyry **statues of the Tetrarchs** (four Roman emperors), now built into the side of the Basilica of San Marco nice. The missing foot of one of the Tetrarchs was found in Constantinople, confirming that this sculptural group was originally set up somewhere in t zantine capital. These statues represent a short-lived system of rule during the late Roman Empire when the emperor Diocletian was trying to stabil litical authority in a time of crisis by sharing rule among four emperors.

ımerous marble reliefs on the exterior of San Marco have been assigned a Byzantine provenance, such as the eleventh-century relief of Alexander t eat ascending in a chariot raised by griffins. This popular image of Alexander derived from the legendary *Alexander Romance* in which we read exander's bold attempt to explore the heavens in a chariot pulled by winged griffins.



Figure **13.6.6.219**: Left: Alexander the Great (top center) amidst spolia on the north wall of San Marco (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-SA 4.0); right: one of the *Pilastri Acritani* (piers from St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople) outside the Basilica of San Marco (photo: **Pi István Tóth**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

nate carved piers (known as the *Pilastri Acritani*) taken from the Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople stand near the south-west corner of S ırco. The grand Church of St. Polyeuktos was built in the 520s by the Byzantine aristocrat Anicia Juliana and its beauty and size rivaled that of t urch of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.



Figure **13.6.6.220**: Left: incense burner, 12th century, partially gilded silver, 36 x 30 cm. Right: chalice of emperor Romanos I or II, 10th century, sardonyx, silver gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, and pearls, 22.5 x 14 cm. (Treasury of San Marco, Venice) (photos: © **Regione del Veneto**)

ıcred spoils

e Treasury of San Marco is full of rich objects that must originally have come from Constantinople. Many fine examples of Byzantine metalwork a ımels are housed in the Treasury, such as the gilt-sliver incense burner in the form of a multi-domed structure that possibly represents a garden pavili e incense burner is decorated with female personifications on the exterior and mythological beasts, such as griffins. Another such object is a eucharis ılice made of a Late Antique onyx bowl set within a gilt silver frame and decorated with a series of enamels. The inscription on the chalice reads "G .p Romanos, the Orthodox Emperor," referring to either the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (920-44) or Romanos II (959-63).



Figure **13.6.6.221**: Byzantine successor states following the sack and occupation of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, 1204-1261 (underlying map © Google)



Figure **13.6.6.222**: Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou, drawing of fresco with procession with the Hodegetria, Vlacherna church near Arta, 1282-84

ınstantinople reclaimed

ıring the period of Constantinople's occupation by the crusaders, there were three Byzantine successor states, the Despotate of Epirus founded chael Komnenos Doukas (with Arta as its capital), the Empire of Nicaea founded by the Laskarid Dynasty, and the Empire of Trebizond founded exios Komnenos. It would be the Nicaeans who would later recapture Constantinople in 1261. In the Despotate of Epirus, the Monastery of the Panag Blachernae north of Arta contains a three-aisled basilica built in the 13th c. with a wall painting of the procession of the famous icon of the Virgin hous the Church of the Blachernae in Constantinople. The mural recreates the great city of Constantinople for the empire in exile.

on after the city was reconquered in 1261, a **mosaic** was put up in the south gallery of **Hagia Sophia**. Only the upper part survives today, but the figu re originally over twice life-size. Christ is represented in the center, flanked by the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist, a grouping called the Deësis. T ısaic was probably part of Michael VIII's major campaign to restore and renew Hagia Sophia after the alterations made by the crusaders. Perhaps ı ısaic was intended to celebrate the triumph of the Byzantines over the crusaders. The Deësis as a subject refers to the intercession of the Virgin and Jo ıh Christ on behalf of humankind. The mosaic may have stood as a kind of visual prayer to insure the city would never be taken again.



Figure **13.6.6.223**: Deësis (Christ with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist), c. 1261, mosaic, imperial enclosure, south gallery, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

ditional Resources

eraviglie di Venezia, http://www.meravigliedivenezia.it/en/index.html

vid Buckton, ed., *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (Milan: Olivetti, 1984)

nry Maguire and Robert S. Nelson, *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010)

under, War, and the Horses of San Marco

DR. BETH HARRIS and *DR. STEVEN ZUCKER*



deo **13.6.6.14**: *Horses of San Marco* (ancient Greek or Roman, likely Imperial Rome), 4th century B.C.E. to 4th century C.E., copper alloy, 235 x 250 c each (Basilica of San Marco, Venice), an ARCHES video

zantine architecture and the Fourth Crusade

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

riods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine **c. 843 – 1204**

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire **1204 – 1261**

te Byzantine **1261 – 1453**

st-Byzantine **after 1453**



Figure **13.6.6.224**: The route and results of the Fourth Crusade (**Kandi**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

agmentation



Figure **13.6.6.225**: Crusader attacking Constantinople, pavement mosaic, c. 1213, San Giovanni Evangelista, Ravenna (photo: Evan Freeman CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

1204, the Fourth **Crusade** captured the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. The Latins (as the Byzantines often referred to western Europeans duri s period) **looted and occupied** the city until the Byzantines recaptured Constantinople in 1261.

th the fragmentation of the Byzantine state following the Fourth Crusade came a concomitant fragmentation of Byzantine architecture, which beca minated by regional developments. The period of the Latin Empire (1204 – 1261) witnessed little cultural investment in Constantinople, while n zantine successor states emerged: the Empire of Nicaea in northwest Anatolia; the Empire of Trebizond in northeast Anatolia; and the Despotate irus in northwest Greece and Albania, whose capital was Arta.

church architecture, the design of the naos followed planning types established in the **Middle Byzantine period**, while architectural forms increased nplexity, both visually and in plan, with the addition of **porticoes**, **ambulatories**, galleries, annexed chapels, and belfries. A general loosening hitectural rigor is evident in the lack of relationship between interior spaces and exterior articulation, in contrast with **earlier periods**.

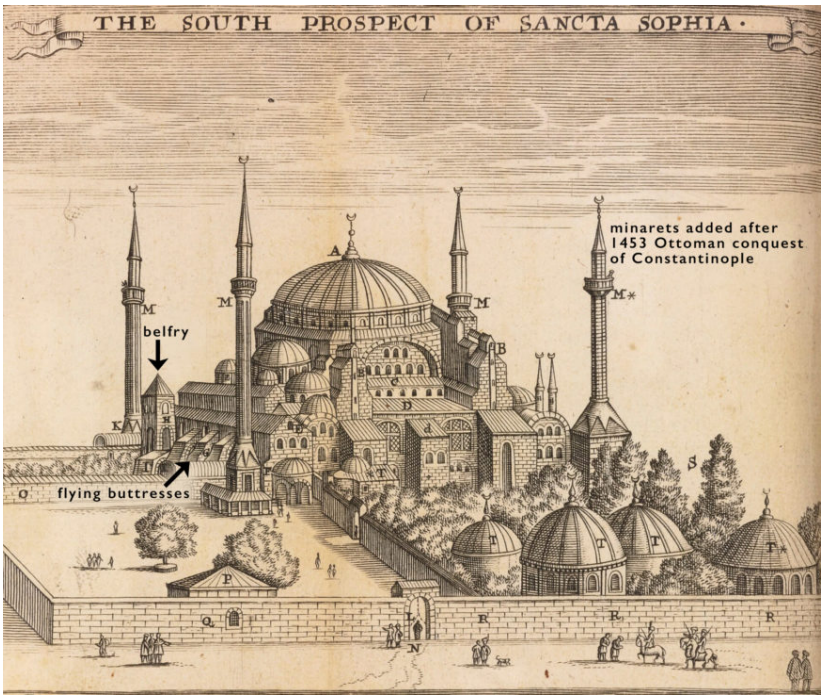


Figure **13.6.6.226**: Hagia Sophia showing the belfry rising above the buttresses, Constantinople, c. 1680, print by F. H. van Hove

ınstantinople

ıgia Sophia

idence of architecture in Constantinople in this period may be limited to the addition of **flying buttresses** and a belfry to the west façade of Ha phia, c. 1230s. Both are new elements in Late Byzantine architecture; belfries and the use of bells became common thereafter (gothic-style buttressi s so).



Figure **13.6.6.227**: Flying buttresses, c. 1230s, west façade, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (photo: Jorge Láscar, CC BY 2.0)



Figure 13.6.6.228: Byzantine successor states following the sack and occupation of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, 1204-1261 (underlying map © Google)

npire of Nicaea

Tryphonos

e lacuna created by the Latin Occupation is difficult to fill, however, although the developments in western Asia Minor during the so-called Empire caea may help to bridge the gap. While the city of Nicaea is best known from texts, the church identified as H. Tryphonos, built under the Laskari es some impression of the construction of the period. Now in ruins, it had an atrophied Greek-cross naos, enveloped by ambulatories, perhaps followi model of the nearby Koimesis church, which was destroyed in 1922 **(read more about the atrophied Greek-cross church type)**.

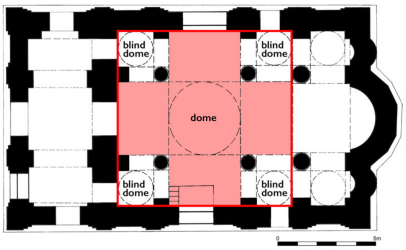


Figure 13.6.6.229: Reconstructed plan of Church E, Sardis, with cross-in-square elements highlighted (adapted from plan © Buchwald, *Churches EA and E at Sardis*, 2015)

urch E at Sardis

urch E at Sardis, a cross-in-square church **(read more about the cross-in-square church type)** known from its excavated remains, is also from t iod. Topped by five domes, with those at the corners blind, the exterior featured a variety of brick patterning.



Figure **13.6.6.230**: Panagia Krina, late 12th century, Chios, Greece (photo: **Stylkontoz64**, CC-BY-SA-4.0)

urches at Latmos and on Chios

urches surviving at Latmos and on the Aegean island of Chios also may belong to this period.

Frescoed interior of Panagia Krina (photo: © <a data-cke-saved-href="https://goo.gl/maps/t6tCGcWqMG9g9fA76" href="https://goo.gl/maps/t6tCGcWqMG9g9fA76" target="_blank" rel="noopener"
Francesca Guandalini and Google)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51277" height="1164" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...M-870x1164.png
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...M-870x1164.png
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...AM-300x401.png
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1148x1536.png
1148w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...1.55.41-AM.png
1158w" style="width: 546px; height: 731px;" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.231**: Frescoed interior of Panagia Krina (photo: © **Francesca Guandalini and Google**)

fortunately for most examples the chronology is not secure: Panagia Krina on Chios (modeled on the Nea Mone) for which a date c. 1225 was genera cepted, now may be placed securely before the end of the twelfth century, throwing the dating of other monuments into question.



Figure **13.6.6.232**: Hagia Sophia, c. 1238–63, Trebizond (Trabzon) (photo: **Julien Lagarde**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure **13.6.6.233**: Hagia Sophia, c. 1238–63, Trebizond (Trabzon) (photo: **İhsan Deniz Kılıçoğlu**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ıpire of Trebizond

Sophia, Trebizond

th the establishment of the **Empire of Trebizond** in northeast Anatolia, the Grand Komnenoi (the title of the emperors of Trebizond) constructed phia in the city of Trebizond, c. 1238-63, to be the mortuary church of the imperial family. Built on a cross-in-square plan, its stone construction a ailing betray its mixed origins, exhibiting both Caucasian and Seljuk features. The origin of its distinctive lateral porches remains unclear **(view plan Sophia, Trebizond)**.



Figure **13.6.6.234**: Exterior and interior views of the Panagia Chrysokephalos (Fatih Mosque), 13th century with 1341 additions, Trebizond (Trabzon) (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

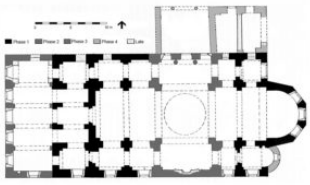


Figure **13.6.6.235**: Plan of the Panagia Chrysephalos (Fatih Mosque), Trebizond (© Robert Ousterhout)

nagia Chrysokephalos

e Panagia Chrysokephalos functioned as the cathedral and coronation church; a galleried basilica of the early 13th century, a dome and transept w
led c. 1341.



Figure 13.6.6.236: Exterior and interior views of St. Eugenios (today Yeni Cuma Mosque), 11th century, remodeled 13th and 14th centuries, Trebizond (Trabzon) (top photo: **NeoRetro**, CC BY-SA 3.0; bottom photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

Eugenios

e major pilgrimage church of St. Eugenios, originally of the 11th century, underwent remodelings in the 13th century but only achieved its present fo he 14th. Significant construction continued at Trebizond into the fifteenth century.



Figure 13.6.6.237: Panagia Vlacherna, transformed c. 1225, Arta (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)



Figure 13.6.6.238: Church of the Paregoretissa, 1282-89, enlarged 1294-96, Arta (photo: Jpmourez, CC BY-SA 4.0)

ta and the Despotate of Epiros

northwest Greece, Arta emerged as the capital of the **Despotate of Epiros** in this period, with numerous Byzantine churches erected or transform der the ruling families, such as the Panagia Vlacherna (transformed c. 1225), **Kato Panagia** (mid 13th c.), **H. Theodora** (enlarged 13th c.), a ntanassa Philippiadas (enlarged c. 1294), now in ruins.

urch of the Paregoretissa

e most important of these is the Paregoretissa in Arta (1282-89; enlarged 1294-96), apparently begun as a cross-in-square church but transformed duri nstruction into an octagon-domed naos enveloped by a pi-shaped ambulatory surmounted by a gallery with four additional domes **(read more about t tagon-domed church type)**.



Figure 13.6.6.239: Church of the Paregoretissa, 1282-89, enlarged 1294-96, Arta (photo: Albert Gößwein, CC BY-NC 2.0)

re and elsewhere in Epiros, the decorative brickwork of the exterior is distinctive. At the Vlacherna, as at Kypseli and Mesopotam (Albania), compl
mmetrical designs developed in multiple building phases. At Kypseli, Kato Panagia and elsewhere, the naoi feature high transverse **barrel vaults** (bar
ılts set at right angles to the main longitudinal direction of the naos) rather than domes.



Figure 13.6.6.240: St. Demetrius, 13th century, Kypseli (left) and St. Nicholas, Mesopotam (Albania) (right) (left photo: © Robert Ousterhout; right photo: **Wolfgang Sauber**, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Figure **13.6.6.241**: Pointed arches in the remains of the sanctuary of the church of St. Sophia, mid 13th century, Andravida, Greece (© Robert Ousterhout)

uthern Greece

southern Greece, part of the Byzantine territory conquered by the Latins in the early thirteenth century, a number of large basilicas were constructed i hic style, to serve the needs of the new, Roman Catholic population, including a variety of mendicant orders, as at Andravida, Stymphalia, Isova, a arenza.

e numerous small, domed churches of the Peloponnese, constructed in a Byzantine style but exhibiting gothic detailing, however, were viewed within thodox Byzantine context and thus belonging to an earlier period, but this interpretation is now in question.



Figure **13.6.6.242**: Church of the Koimesis, late 13th century, Merbaka, Greece (photo: © Robert Ousterhout) **(view annotated photo)**

ıurch of the Koimesis at Merbaka

e church of the Koimesis at Merbaka, a carefully constructed cross-in-square church, was lavishly decorated on the exterior with a combination of br :terning, spolia, carved stone, and glazed proto-maiolica bowls. The last, in combination with some gothic details, place Merbaka into the latter part thirteenth century and within the context of Latin patronage.



Figure **13.6.6.243**: Church of the Panagia Katholike, 1278/79, Gastouni, Greece (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

ıe Panagia Katholike at Gastouni and the Blacherna at Elis

e churches of the Panagia Katholike at Gastouni, the Blacherna at Elis, and churches elsewhere fit into a growing picture of the architecture of south eece during this period as the product of a mixed workforce serving a heterogeneous clientele. These small buildings may have been private rather t titutional foundations, with their outward appearance indicative of social status rather than country of origin.



Figure 13.6.6.244: Church of the Blacherna, probably 13th century, Elis, Greece (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

xt: read about Late Byzantine church architecture

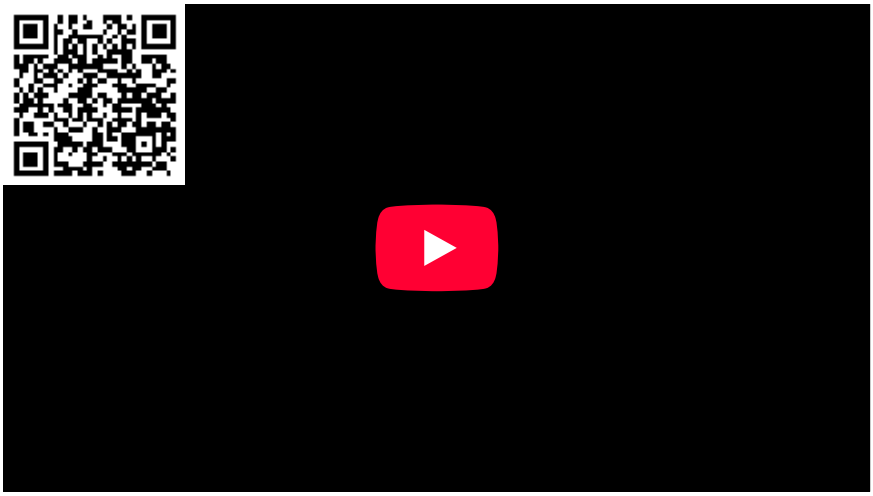
lditional Resources

bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

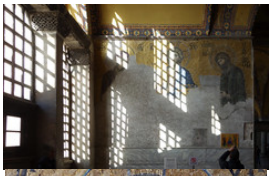
ıte Byzantine

ëësis (Christ with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist), Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

DR. BETH HARRIS and *DR. STEVEN ZUCKER*

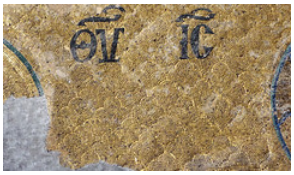


Video 13.6.6.15: *Deësis (Christ with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist)*, c. 1261, mosaic, imperial enclosure, south gallery, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

















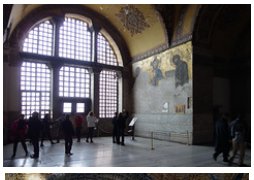






Figure **13.6.6.245**: More Smarthistory images…

zantine Griffin Panel

DR. EVAN FREEMAN and DR. ANNE MCCLANAN

panel with a Griffin (a lion and an eagle — the king of birds and the king of animals — combined).

Video **13.6.6.16**: Evan and Anne discuss *Panel with a Griffin*, 1250–1300, made in Greece or the Balkans (possibly), marble, 59.7 x 52.1 x 6.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

te Byzantine church architecture

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

riods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

te Byzantine 1261 – 1453

st-Byzantine after 1453



Figure 13.6.6.246: Map showing major centers in the Late Byzantine period (underlying map © Google)

ınstantinople reclaimed

1204, **crusaders** of the Fourth Crusade **sacked and occupied** the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, beginning the period of the Latin Empire (
zantines referred to western Europeans—faithful to the pope of Rome—as "Latins" or "Franks" during this period). But in 1261, the **Empire of Nica**
Byzantine successor state, retook Constantinople and crowned Michael VIII Palaiologos as their new emperor, ending the period of the Latin Empire.



Figure 13.6.6.247: Deësis mosaic, probably installed by Michael VIII Palaiologos after retaking Constantinople from the Latins, c. 1261, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.6.6.248: Pantokrator monastery (Zeyrek Mosque), c. 1118-36, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Dismas87, CC BY-SA 4.0) (view plan)

e “Palaiologan Renaissance” in Constantinople

Constantinople, church architecture was revived after the reconquest of the city in 1261.

ost constructions represent additions to existing monastic churches, probably following the model of the triple church at the Pantokrator monastery **(re ore about the Pantokrator monastery)**.

all, there is little attempt at visual integration. An impressive funeral chapel as a setting for privileged burials was a standard feature, along w ditional narthexes or ambulatories, equipped for burials. The building complexes are distinguished by an irregular row of apses along the east faça oped by an asymmetrical array of domes. The parts read individually, with a marked contrast between the Middle and Late Byzantine forms.

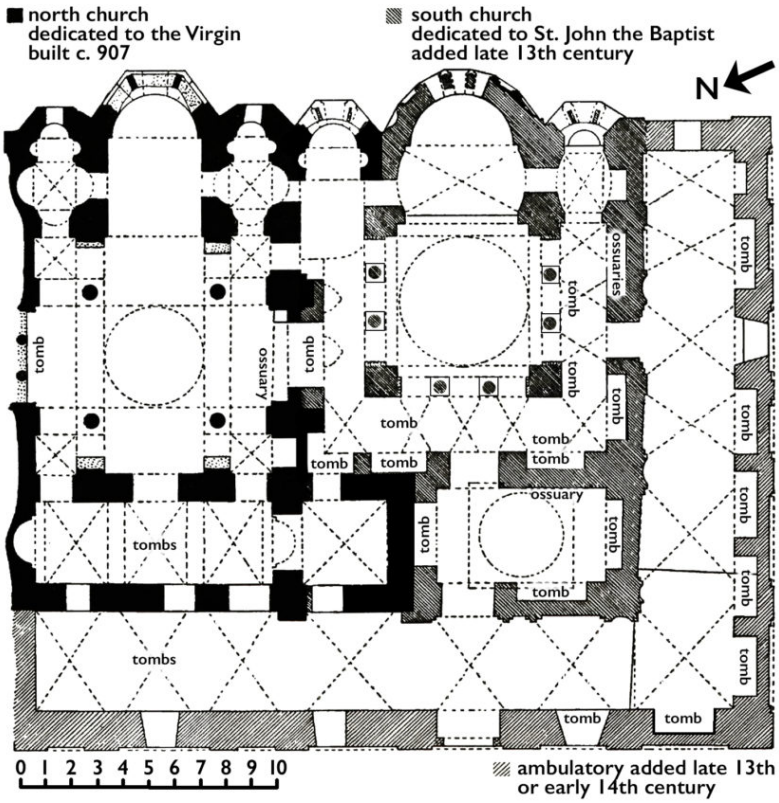


Figure 13.6.6.249: Plan of Mone tou Libos (Fenari İsa Mosque) with tomb locations (adapted from Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*)

arcophagi under the narthex of the North Church in 1937, Mone tou Libos (<a data-cke-saved-href="http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/140" href="http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/140" target="_blank" rel="noopener preferrer"
cholas V. Artamonoff, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51451" height="423" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px"
="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f4-870x921.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f4-870x921.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f4-300x318.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1451x1536.jpg
1451w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...11c06815f4.jpg
1751w" width="400">

Figure **13.6.6.250**: Sarcophagi under the narthex of the North Church in 1937, Mone tou Libos (**Nicholas V. Artamonoff**, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

e Mone tou Libos

e monastic complex known as Mone tou Libos (**first established c. 907**), for which the typikon survives, was expanded c. 1282-1303 by the widow chael VIII with the addition of an ambulatory-planned church equipped with arcosolia, where the early members of the Palaiologos imperial family w ied.

a second, closely related building campaign, an outer ambulatory was added along the south and west of the complex, with numerous additio osolia tombs.

ad more about the ambulatory-plan church type.



Figure **13.6.6.251**: Mone tou Libos (Fenari İsa Mosque), Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks**, CC0 1.0)



Figure **13.6.6.252**: Pammakaristos church, 12th century, parekklesion added c. 1310, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

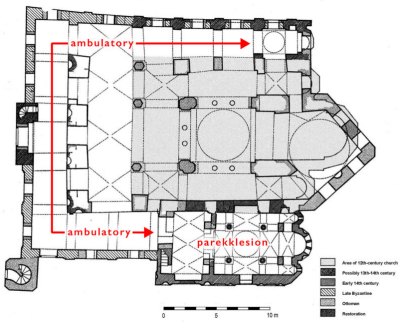


Figure **13.6.6.253**: Theotokos Pammakaristos church, 12th century, parekklesion added c. 1310, Constantinople (Istanbul) (adapted from plan © Robert Ousterhout)

ıe Theotokos Pammakaristos

the Theotokos Pammakaristos, a twelfth-century ambulatory-plan church was expanded in several stages, with chapels, a belfry, and an ou ıbulatory.

ɔst important is the south parekklesion, a tiny but ornate cross-in-square chapel, built c. 1310 to house the tomb of Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes.

ad more about the cross-in-square church type.

Parekklesion, c. 1310, Pammakaristos church, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/25kzVCt" href="https://flic.kr/p/25kzVCt" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
fusion-of-horizons, CC BY 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51737" height="572" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x572.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x572.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x197.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1009.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1346.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.254**: Parekklesion, c. 1310, Pammakaristos church, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **fusion-of-horizons**, CC BY 2.0)

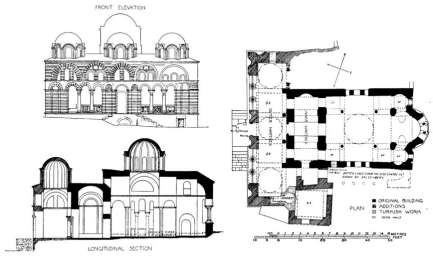


Figure 13.6.6.255: Vefa Kilise Mosque, Middle Byzantine with Late Byzantine additions, Constantinople (Istanbul) (Millingen, Byzantine Churches in Constantinople)

fa Kilise Mosque

e building now known as the Vefa Kilise Mosque was also expanded in several phases, with the addition of a two-stored annex, a belfry, and a thr ned, **porticoed** exonarthex with burial vaults beneath its floor.



Figure 13.6.6.256: Mosaic of Theodore Metochites offering the Chora church to Christ, Chora monastery, Constantinople (Istanbul) c. 1315-21 (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

e Chora Monastery

the Palaiologan monuments in Constantinople, the most important to survive is the Chora Monastery, where the additions uniquely represent a sin ase of construction.



Figure 13.6.6.257: Section and plan of the Chora Monastery (Kariye Mosque), reused portions of twelfth-century naos highlighted (© Robert Ousterhout) **(view annotated plan)**



Figure 13.6.6.258: Chora Monastery (Kariye Mosque) seen from the southeast (© Robert Ousterhout)

stored and **lavishly decorated** by the statesman and scholar Theodore Metochites c. 1316-21, the twelfth-century naos was enveloped with a two-stor
ıex to the north, two broad narthexes to the west—the inner topped by two domes, the outer opened by a portico façade, and a domed funeral chapel
ekklesion to the south, with a belfry at the southwest corner.



Figure 13.6.6.259: Interior of the parekklesion funeral chapel (deocrated with frescos) with arched tombs visible in the side walls (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

all of the Palaiologan complexes, complexity is more important than monumentality in the visual expression, and the new portions may be understood
esponse to history, an attempt to establish a symbolic relationship with the past. By 1330, however, the short-lived “Palaiologan Renaissance” had enc
the capital, at least in terms of major church construction.



Figure 13.6.6.260: H. Panteleimon, late 13th or early 14th century, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: **Mister No**, CC BY 3.0)

essaloniki

essaloniki also saw the construction of numerous churches in the Late Byzantine period.



Figure 13.6.6.261: H. Aikaterini, late 13th or early 14th century, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

nbulatory-plan churches

H. Panteleimon, H. Aikaterini, and H. Apostoloi, all late thirteenth or early fourteenth century in date, an attenuated cross-in-square core was envelop a pi-shaped ambulatory.



Figure 13.6.6.262: H. Apostoloi, late 13th or early 14th century, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

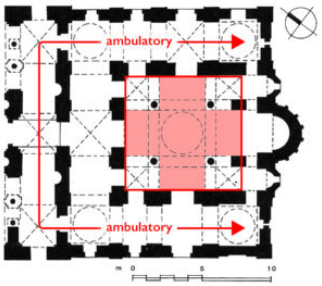


Figure 13.6.6.263: Plan of the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki, higlighting ambulatory and cross-in-square elements

pped by multiple domes and opened by porticoes, the auxiliary spaces included subsidiary chapels.

hough their counterparts in Constantinople clearly served for burials, the functions of the ambulatory in Thessaloniki are less evident. Several simpl vaulted churches survive from the same period.



Figure 13.6.6.264: Profitis Elias, exterior (left) and view of north choros (right), c. 1360, Thessaloniki, Greece (left photo: Herbert Frank, CC BY 2.0; right photo: Evan Freeman CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

ofitis Elias

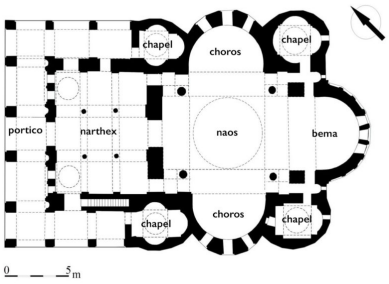


Figure 13.6.6.265: Annotated plan of Profitis Elias, Thessaloniki (adapted from plan: Archaeology Wiki, © Archive of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City)

e Profitis Elias, built c. 1360 on an Athonite plan (with *choroi* and subsidiary chapels), demonstrates the enduring vitality of architecture in the city

ad more about Athonite churches.

ystras

ystras (in the Peloponnese in Greece) emerged as a major Byzantine political center with the expulsion of the Latins in the mid-thirteenth centu llowing their **occupation of the region** since the time of the Fourth Crusade).



Figure 13.6.6.266: Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, Mystras, Greece (photo: © <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/2bkVRya" href="https://flic.kr/p/2bkVRya" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
The Byzantine Legacy)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51315" height="225" sizes="(max-width: 300px) 100vw, 300px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-870x653.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-870x653.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="300">

Figure 13.6.6.267: Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

odegetria Church at Brontochion Monastery

veral churches of the so-called “Mystras type” (named for their location in Mystras, Greece) combine a basilican ground plan with a cross-in-squa e-domed gallery, the whole enveloped by porticoes, a belfry, and additional subsidiary spaces.

e Hodegetria (or Aphentiko) church at the Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, betrays evidence of an ad hoc creation, begun as a simple cross- iare church.

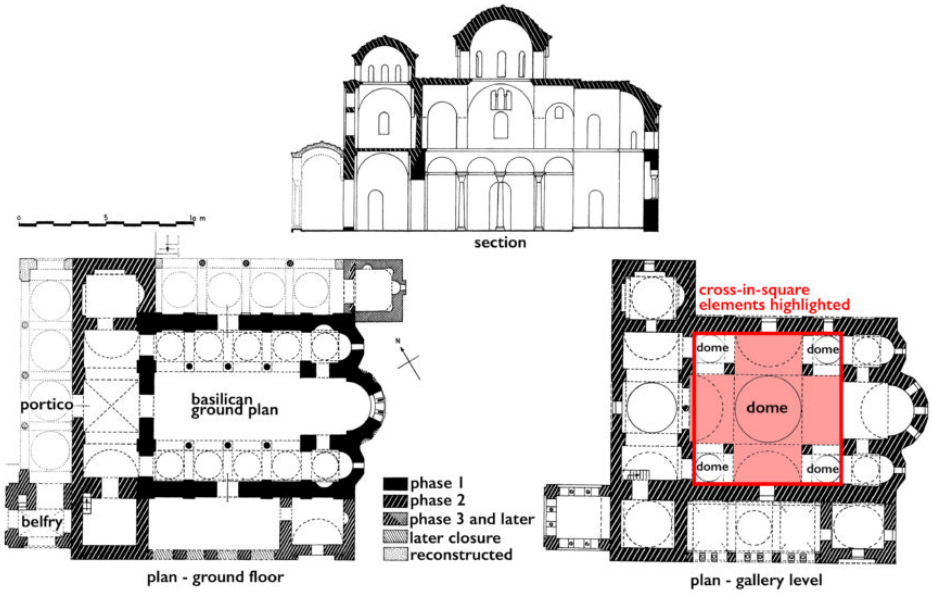


Figure 13.6.6.268: Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery (adapted from Hallensleben, “Untersuchungen zur Genesis und Typologie des ‘Mistratypus’”)

ntanassa monastery

e type is repeated as late as 1428 in the church of the Pantanassa monastery.



Figure 13.6.6.269: Pantanassa monastery, 1428, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

urches of the *octagon-domed church* and cross-in-square types were also constructed in this period (read more about octagon-domed churche chitectural detailing suggests close connections with both Constantinople and Italy.

 ator church, mid-14th century Nesebar, Bulgaria (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_of_Christ_Pantocrator_Nesebar.jpg" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_of_Christ_Pantocrator_Nesebar.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Chrumps, CC BY-SA 4.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51481" height="647" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-870x647.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-870x647.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-300x223.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1143.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1524.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.270**: Pantokrator church, mid-14th century Nesebar, Bulgaria (photo: **Chrumps**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

lgaria

haps most significant in this period is the emergence of neighboring powers as creative centers of architecture. **Bulgaria** remained closest to Byzantiu its architectural developments.



Figure **13.6.6.271**: Sv. Ivan Aliturgetos, mid-14th century, Nesebar, Bulgaria (photo: **MrPanyGoff**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

etail of east façade, Pantokrator church, Nesebar (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunny_Beach_Nesebar_centre_2.jpg" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunny_Beach_Nesebar_centre_2.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Wizzard, CC0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51480" height="238" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-870x518.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-870x518.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-300x179.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-200x120.jpg
200w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...3-1536x914.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...Nesebar-v3.jpg
1633w" width="400">

Figure **13.6.6.272**: Detail of east façade, Pantokrator church, Nesebar (photo: **Wizzard**, CC0)

e Pantokrator and Sv. Ivan Aliturgetos at Nesebar

hough more robust in terms of their surface decoration, the late churches of Nesebar, for example, follow the construction techniques and façı amentation of Constantinople. The coastal town passed repeatedly between Byzantine and Bulgarian control.

e churches of the Pantokrator and Sv. Ivan Aliturgetos date to the mid-fourteenth century and are most distinctive for their colorful exteriors, combini ck and stone decoration with glazed ceramic disks and rosettes.



Figure **13.6.6.273**: Sopoćani Monastery, c. 1265, Serbia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

rbia

edieval **Serbia** experienced some western European influence from the Dalmatian coast in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (as at Sopoćani, c. 126 t as close ties and political rivalry with Byzantium developed in the fourteenth century, Serbian architecture generally followed Byzantine developmer porting both ideas and masons.



Figure **13.6.6.274**: Gračanica Monastery, before 1321, Gračanica (modern Kosovo) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

ıside Gračanica Monastery (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gracanica_Fresco_2.JPG" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gracanica_Fresco_2.JPG" target="_blank" el="noopener"
Julian Nyča, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51496" height="306" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x665.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x665.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-300x229.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1175.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1567.jpg
2048w" width="400">

Figure **13.6.6.275**: Inside Gračanica Monastery (photo: **Julian Nyča**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ačanica Monastery

many ways, King Milutin's church at Gračanica, built before 1321, represents the culmination of Late Byzantine architectural design. Integrating ghly attenuated cross-in-square naos with a pi-shaped ambulatory, the whole is topped by five domes. With simplified façade arcading and a pyrami ssing of forms, the building exhibits an external clarity that belies its complexity.

esnovo Monastery, 1341-47, Lesnovo (modern North Macedonia) (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Св.Архангел_Михаил.JPG" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Св.Архангел_Михаил.JPG" target="_blank" rel="noopener"
Tosee, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51231" height="580" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...BB-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ил-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ил-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1024.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1365.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.276**: Lesnovo Monastery, 1341-47, Lesnovo (modern North Macedonia) (photo: **Tosee**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

snovo

e reigns of both Milutin and Stefan Dušan witnessed a great deal of construction, often similar to developments in northern Greece. The monastic chu Lesnovo (in modern North Macedonia) built 1341-47, for example, is a grand cross-in-square church with a domed narthex. It would not seem out ce in Late Byzantine Thessalonike in its scale, construction technique, or style.



Figure **13.6.6.277**: Ravanica Monastery, 1370s, Serbia (photo: **Petar Milošević**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ıvanica Monastery

ter architecture in Serbia, notably that of the so-called Morava School, is smaller and more decorative, often utilizing the so-called Athonite plan (w
ɔroi and subsidiary chapels), as at Ravanica (1370s), with five domes, or the smaller and simpler Kalenić (after 1407).



Figure **13.6.6.278**: Kalenić Monastery, after 1407, Serbia (photo: **Ванилица**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

ɔmania

ɪmania represents a latecomer to the scene. Wallachia (a historical region in southeastern Romania), liberated from Hungary in 1330, came under t luence of Serbian architecture, while Moldavia (a historical region in northeastern Romania), liberated in 1365, shows a greater originality.



Figure 13.6.6.279: Voroneț Monastery, c. 1488, Moldavia (modern Romania) (photo: Eugen Naiman CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Detail of frescos on exterior of Suceviţa Monastery church (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/22fV8BM" href="https://flic.kr/p/22fV8BM" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Alex Berger, CC BY-NC 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51461" height="267" sizes="(max-width: 401px) 100vw, 401px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1025.jpg
1536w" width="401">

Figure 13.6.6.280: Detail of frescos on exterior of Suceviţa Monastery church (photo: Alex Berger, CC BY-NC 2.0)

teenth-century churches like that at Voroneţ, built c. 1488, or Suceviţa, built c. 1485, have steeply pitched, heavy overhanging roofs and a diminish me above a triconch plan, the walls entirely frescoed on the exterior. The origin of this distinctively hybrid architecture is unclear.



Figure 13.6.6.281: Suceviţa Monastery, 1485, Moldavia (modern Romania) (photo: Ava Babili, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

ıssia was destabilized in the thirteenth century by the invasion of the Mongols, with the notable exceptions of Novgorod and Pskov, where medie
ırches survive from the twelfth century onward.



Figure 13.6.6.282: Saviour-on-the-Ilyina-Street, 1374, Novgorod, Russia (photo: **Ludvig14**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ormition Cathedral, c. 1399, Zvenigorod (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uspensky_Cathedral_-_Zvenigorod,_Russia_-_panoramio.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uspensky_Cathedral_
Zvenigorod,_Russia_-_panoramio.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Sergey Ashmarin, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51465" height="400" sizes="(max-width: 342px) 100vw, 342px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...o-870x1016.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...o-870x1016.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...io-300x350.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._panoramio.jpg
1185w" width="342">

Figure 13.6.6.283: Dormition Cathedral, c. 1399, Zvenigorod (photo: **Sergey Ashmarin**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Novgorod, churches like the Saviour-on-the-Ilyina-Street (1374), are steep-roofed and roughly built.

Russia recovered from the Mongol invasions, Muscovy developed its own distinctive architecture, first seen perhaps in the Dormition Cathedral
enigorod (c. 1399).

ɔscow emerged as the most important center, and following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, it assumed the role of spiritual leader of the Orthod
ırld.



Figure 13.6.6.284: Aristotele Fioravanti, Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin, 1475-79, Moscow (photo: **Don-vip**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

athedral of the Dormition, 1158-60, expanded 1185-89, Vladimir (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Владимир_Успенский_собор_2008.JPG" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Владимир_Успенский_собор_2008.JPG" target="_blank" rel="noopener"

Булатов Даниил, CC0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51466" height="300" sizes="(max-width: 253px) 100vw, 253px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...8-870x1032.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...8-870x1032.jpg

870w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...08-300x356.jpg

300w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1295x1536.jpg

1295w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1726x2048.jpg

1726w" width="253">

Figure 13.6.6.285: Cathedral of the Dormition, 1158-60, expanded 1185-89, Vladimir (photo: **Булатов Даниил**, CC0)

the late fifteenth century, a new architectural impetus arrived from Italy, in the form of imported Italian architects.

e Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin, constructed 1475-79 under the direction of Aristotele Fioravanti, combined details derived from t thedral of Vladimir with an Italian Renaissance modular plan, topped by five domes; it became the coronation church.

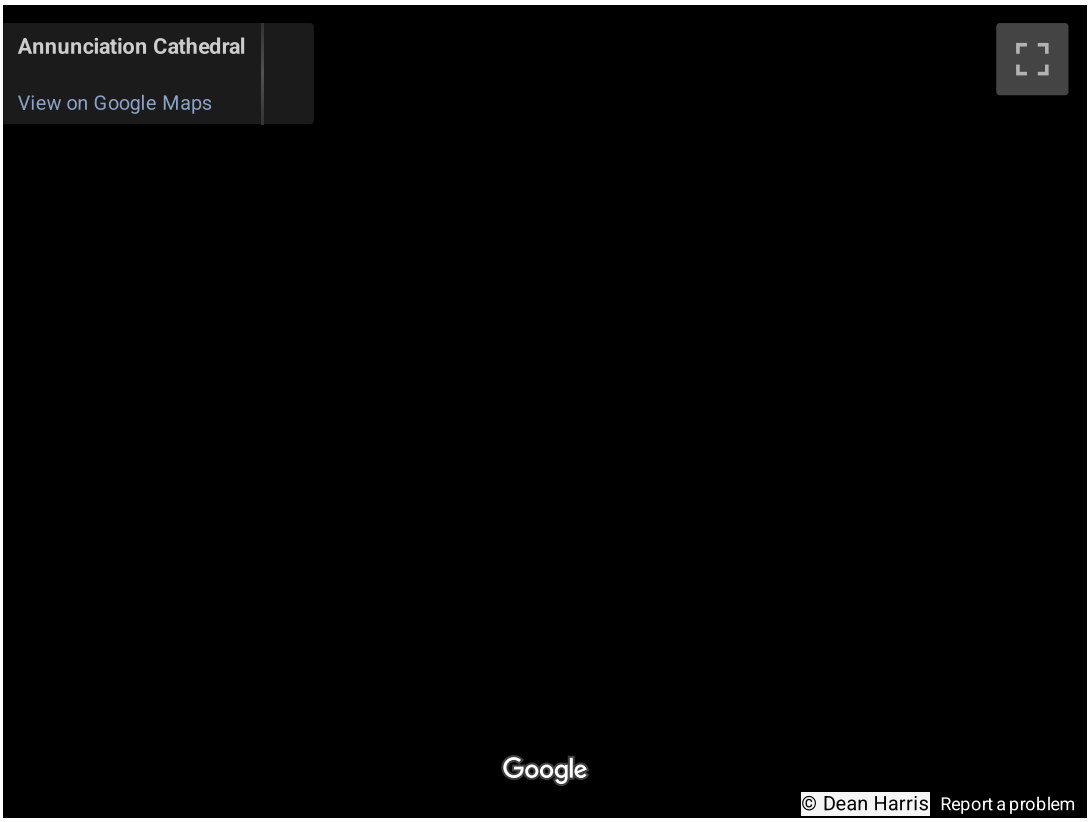


Figure **13.6.6.286**: Interior of the Cathedral of the Annunciation, 1484-89, Moscow (photo: **Wikimedia Commons**, CC0)

thedrals of the Annunciation and of the Archangel were added to the Kremlin shortly thereafter.

Cathedrals of the Annunciation (let) and the Archangel Michael (right) (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/wqaMwz" href="https://flic.kr/p/wqaMwz" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Jorge Láscar, CC BY 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51484" height="580" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1024.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1365.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.287**: Cathedrals of the Annunciation (let) and the Archangel Michael (right) (photo: **Jorge Láscar**, CC BY 2.0)



Cathedral Square facing the Archangel Cathedral (left) and Annunciation Cathedral, Moscow (right) (© Google)

atolia

th the defeat at Manzikirt in 1071, much of **Anatolia** passed into the control of the Seljuks and other Turkic beyliks, but this does not mark the end ristian architecture in the region.



Figure **13.6.6.288**: Tatlarin Kilisesis, Church A, north nave, 13th century, Cappadocia (modern Turkey) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

the thirteenth century, there is evidence of rock-cut architecture in the Christian communities of Cappadocia (in central Anatolia), as for example larin, Gülşehir, and Belisırma.



Figure **13.6.6.289**: Church of St. John (Karşı Kilise), Gülşehir, Cappadocia (modern Turkey) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

the early fourteenth century, the Ottomans emerged as the dominant power in northwest Anatolia, and by the 1320s-1330s, the former nomads w
ively building, and in a manner technically and stylistically following local, Byzantine practices, although plans and vaulting forms may be more clos
gned with the architecture of the Seljuks.

rhan Mosque, late 1330s, Bursa (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bursa_Orhan_Gazi_Mosque.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bursa_Orhan_Gazi_Mosque.jpg"
rget="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Adbar, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51477" height="652" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ue-870x652.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ue-870x652.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ue-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.290**: Orhan Mosque, late 1330s, Bursa (photo: **Adbar**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Church of the Pantobasilissa, late 1330s, Trilye (photo: © <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/216u3d2" href="https://flic.kr/p/216u3d2" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
The Byzantine Legacy)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51522" height="316" sizes="(max-width: 375px) 100vw, 375px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...5k-870x733.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...5k-870x733.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...5k-300x253.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1294.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1725.jpg
2048w" width="375">

Figure **13.6.6.291**: Church of the Pantobasilissa, late 1330s, Trilye (photo: © **The Byzantine Legacy**)

e Orhan Mosque in Bursa of the late 1330s corresponds closely to contemporaneous works of Byzantine architecture in its mixed brick and stone w
ıstruction and its decorative details.

ıny of the same features appear at the church of the Pantobasilissa in nearby Trilye, also from the late 1330s, suggesting that the same workshops w
ıstructing both churches and mosques. At Bursa, the first Ottoman capital (conquered in 1326), two Byzantine churches were appropriated for use as
ıusolea of Osman and Orhan.

onasticism follows **Middle Byzantine models**, as for example at Hilandar on **Mount Athos**, founded by Milutin c. 1303.



Figure **13.6.6.292**: Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos (photo: **Саша Шљукић**, CC BY 3.0)

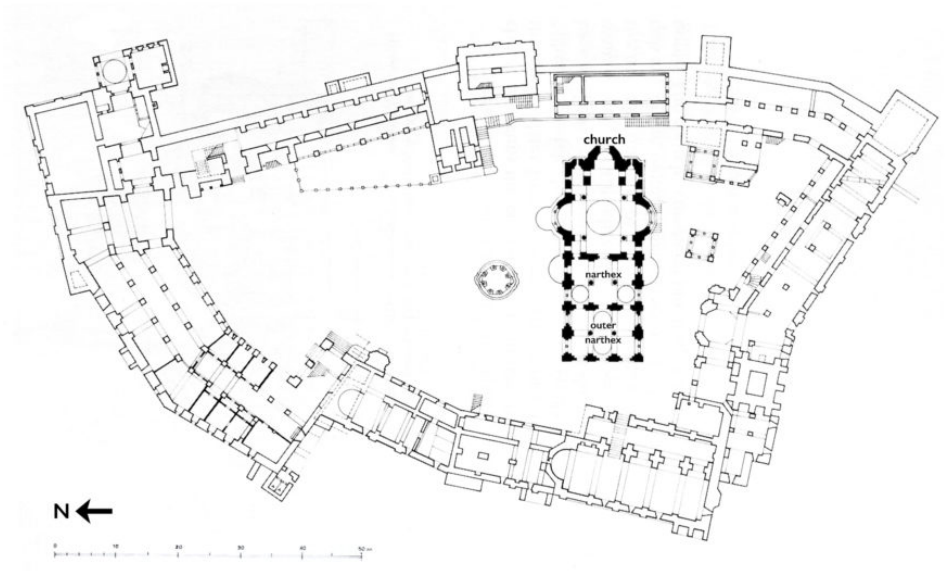


Figure **13.6.6.293**: Plan of Hilandar Monastery (adapted from plan in Ćurčić, "Hilandar Monastery: An Archive")



Figure **13.6.6.294**: Katholikon, Hilander Monastery, c. 1303, Mount Athos (photo: **Zeljkokiss**, CC0)

e freestanding, Athonite-plan katholikon included a large, twin-domed narthex or lite, subsequently expanded with a large, domed outer narthex in t
ter part of the century. Both reflect the increased role of the narthex in monastic worship.

rtified, with the monastic cells lining the wall, the monastery has its refectory set opposite the entrance to the katholikon, with a phiale or holy water f the courtyard to one side. Similarly planned monasteries appear throughout the Balkans.

xt: read about Late Byzantine secular architecture and urban planning

ditional Resources

bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

zantine Griffin Panel

DR. EVAN FREEMAN and DR. ANNE MCCLANAN

panel with a Griffin (a lion and an eagle — the king of birds and the king of animals — combined).



Video **13.6.6.16**: Evan and Anne discuss *Panel with a Griffin*, 1250–1300, made in Greece or the Balkans (possibly), marble, 59.7 x 52.1 x 6.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

te Byzantine church architecture

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

riods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

te Byzantine 1261 – 1453

st-Byzantine after 1453



Figure 13.6.6.246: Map showing major centers in the Late Byzantine period (underlying map © Google)

ınstantinople reclaimed

1204, **crusaders** of the Fourth Crusade **sacked and occupied** the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, beginning the period of the Latin Empire (
zantines referred to western Europeans—faithful to the pope of Rome—as "Latins" or "Franks" during this period). But in 1261, the **Empire of Nica**
Byzantine successor state, retook Constantinople and crowned Michael VIII Palaiologos as their new emperor, ending the period of the Latin Empire.



Figure 13.6.6.247: Deësis mosaic, probably installed by Michael VIII Palaiologos after retaking Constantinople from the Latins, c. 1261, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.6.6.248: Pantokrator monastery (Zeyrek Mosque), c. 1118-36, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Dismas87, CC BY-SA 4.0) **(view plan)**

e “Palaiologan Renaissance” in Constantinople

Constantinople, church architecture was revived after the reconquest of the city in 1261.

ost constructions represent additions to existing monastic churches, probably following the model of the triple church at the Pantokrator monastery **(re ore about the Pantokrator monastery)**.

all, there is little attempt at visual integration. An impressive funeral chapel as a setting for privileged burials was a standard feature, along w ditional narthexes or ambulatories, equipped for burials. The building complexes are distinguished by an irregular row of apses along the east façа ped by an asymmetrical array of domes. The parts read individually, with a marked contrast between the **Middle** and Late Byzantine forms.

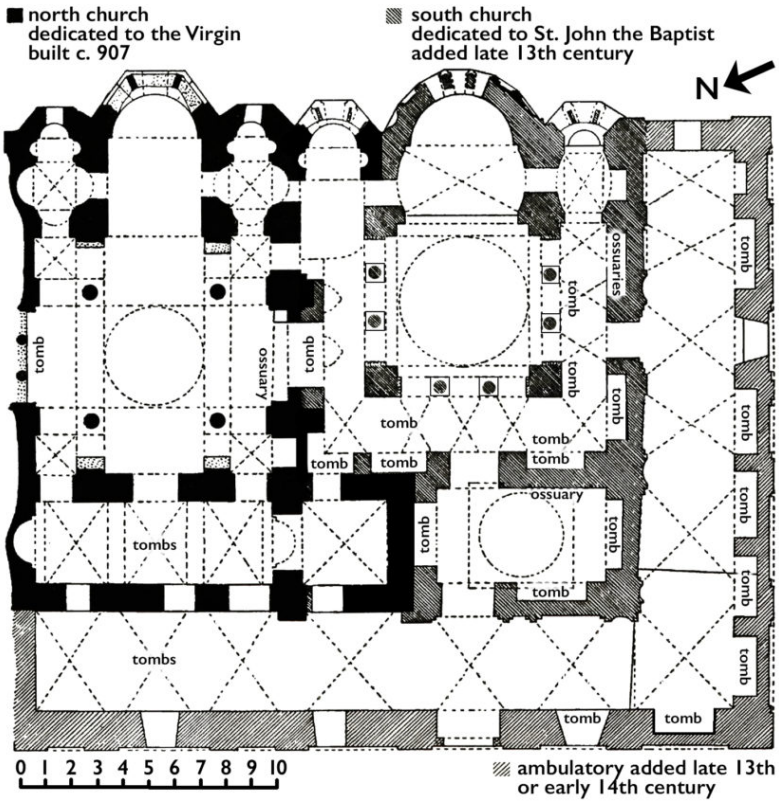


Figure 13.6.6.249: Plan of Mone tou Libos (Fenari İsa Mosque) with tomb locations (adapted from Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*)

arcophagi under the narthex of the North Church in 1937, Mone tou Libos (<a data-cke-saved-href="http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/140" href="http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/140" target="_blank" rel="noopener referrer"
cholas V. Artamonoff, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51451" height="423" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px"
="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f4-870x921.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f4-870x921.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...f4-300x318.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1451x1536.jpg
1451w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...11c06815f4.jpg
1751w" width="400">

Figure **13.6.6.250**: Sarcophagi under the narthex of the North Church in 1937, Mone tou Libos (**Nicholas V. Artamonoff**, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

e Mone tou Libos

e monastic complex known as Mone tou Libos (**first established c. 907**), for which the typikon survives, was expanded c. 1282-1303 by the widow chael VIII with the addition of an ambulatory-planned church equipped with arcosolia, where the early members of the Palaiologos imperial family w ied.

a second, closely related building campaign, an outer ambulatory was added along the south and west of the complex, with numerous additio osolia tombs.

ad more about the ambulatory-plan church type.



Figure **13.6.6.251**: Mone tou Libos (Fenari İsa Mosque), Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks**, CC0 1.0)



Figure **13.6.6.252**: Pammakaristos church, 12th century, parekklesion added c. 1310, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

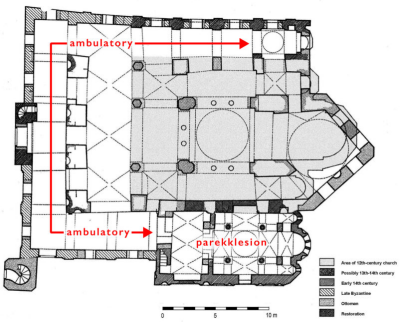


Figure **13.6.6.253**: Theotokos Pammakaristos church, 12th century, parekklesion added c. 1310, Constantinople (Istanbul) (adapted from plan © Robert Ousterhout)

ıe Theotokos Pammakaristos

the Theotokos Pammakaristos, a twelfth-century ambulatory-plan church was expanded in several stages, with chapels, a belfry, and an ou ıbulatory.

ɔst important is the south parekklesion, a tiny but ornate cross-in-square chapel, built c. 1310 to house the tomb of Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes.

ad more about the cross-in-square church type.

Parekklesion, c. 1310, Pammakaristos church, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/25kzVCt" href="https://flic.kr/p/25kzVCt" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
fusion-of-horizons, CC BY 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51737" height="572" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x572.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x572.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x197.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1009.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1346.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.254**: Parekklesion, c. 1310, Pammakaristos church, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: **fusion-of-horizons**, CC BY 2.0)

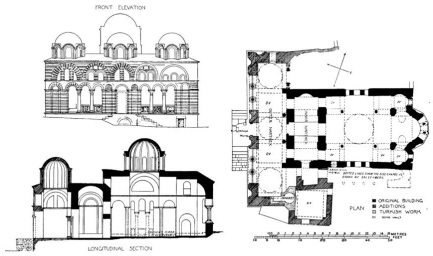


Figure 13.6.6.255: Vefa Kilise Mosque, Middle Byzantine with Late Byzantine additions, Constantinople (Istanbul) (Millingen, Byzantine Churches in Constantinople)

fa Kilise Mosque

e building now known as the Vefa Kilise Mosque was also expanded in several phases, with the addition of a two-stored annex, a belfry, and a thr ned, **porticoed** exonarthex with burial vaults beneath its floor.



Figure 13.6.6.256: Mosaic of Theodore Metochites offering the Chora church to Christ, Chora monastery, Constantinople (Istanbul) c. 1315-21 (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

e Chora Monastery

the Palaiologan monuments in Constantinople, the most important to survive is the Chora Monastery, where the additions uniquely represent a sin ase of construction.



Figure 13.6.6.257: Section and plan of the Chora Monastery (Kariye Mosque), reused portions of twelfth-century naos highlighted (© Robert Ousterhout) **(view annotated plan)**



Figure 13.6.6.258: Chora Monastery (Kariye Mosque) seen from the southeast (© Robert Ousterhout)

stored and **lavishly decorated** by the statesman and scholar Theodore Metochites c. 1316-21, the twelfth-century naos was enveloped with a two-stor
ıex to the north, two broad narthexes to the west—the inner topped by two domes, the outer opened by a portico façade, and a domed funeral chapel
ekklesion to the south, with a belfry at the southwest corner.



Figure 13.6.6.259: Interior of the parekklesion funeral chapel (deocrated with frescos) with arched tombs visible in the side walls (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

all of the Palaiologan complexes, complexity is more important than monumentality in the visual expression, and the new portions may be understood
esponse to history, an attempt to establish a symbolic relationship with the past. By 1330, however, the short-lived “Palaiologan Renaissance” had enc
the capital, at least in terms of major church construction.



Figure 13.6.6.260: H. Panteleimon, late 13th or early 14th century, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: Mister No, CC BY 3.0)

essaloniki

essaloniki also saw the construction of numerous churches in the Late Byzantine period.



Figure 13.6.6.261: H. Aikaterini, late 13th or early 14th century, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

nbulatory-plan churches

H. Panteleimon, H. Aikaterini, and H. Apostoloi, all late thirteenth or early fourteenth century in date, an attenuated cross-in-square core was envelop a pi-shaped ambulatory.



Figure 13.6.6.262: H. Apostoloi, late 13th or early 14th century, Thessaloniki, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

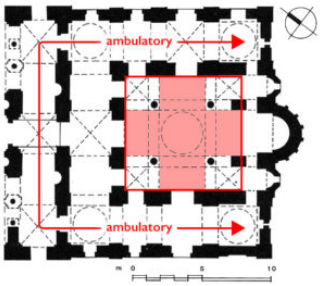


Figure 13.6.6.263: Plan of the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki, higlighting ambulatory and cross-in-square elements

pped by multiple domes and opened by porticoes, the auxiliary spaces included subsidiary chapels.

hough their counterparts in Constantinople clearly served for burials, the functions of the ambulatory in Thessaloniki are less evident. Several simpl vaulted churches survive from the same period.



Figure 13.6.6.264: Profitis Elias, exterior (left) and view of north choros (right), c. 1360, Thessaloniki, Greece (left photo: Herbert Frank, CC BY 2.0; right photo: Evan Freeman CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

ofitis Elias

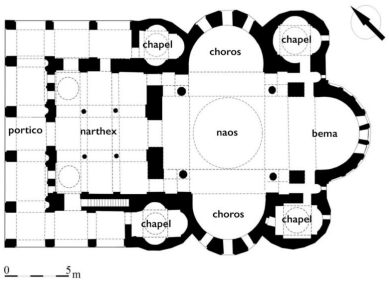


Figure 13.6.6.265: Annotated plan of Profitis Elias, Thessaloniki (adapted from plan: Archaeology Wiki, © Archive of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City)

e Profitis Elias, built c. 1360 on an Athonite plan (with *choroi* and subsidiary chapels), demonstrates the enduring vitality of architecture in the city

ad more about Athonite churches.

ystras

ystras (in the Peloponnese in Greece) emerged as a major Byzantine political center with the expulsion of the Latins in the mid-thirteenth centu llowing their **occupation of the region** since the time of the Fourth Crusade).



Figure 13.6.6.266: Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, Mystras, Greece (photo: © <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/2bkVRya" href="https://flic.kr/p/2bkVRya" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
The Byzantine Legacy)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51315" height="225" sizes="(max-width: 300px) 100vw, 300px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-870x653.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-870x653.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="300">

Figure 13.6.6.267: Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

odegetria Church at Brontochion Monastery

veral churches of the so-called “Mystras type” (named for their location in Mystras, Greece) combine a basilican ground plan with a cross-in-squa e-domed gallery, the whole enveloped by porticoes, a belfry, and additional subsidiary spaces.

e Hodegetria (or Aphentiko) church at the Brontochion monastery, built c. 1310-22, betrays evidence of an ad hoc creation, begun as a simple cross- iare church.

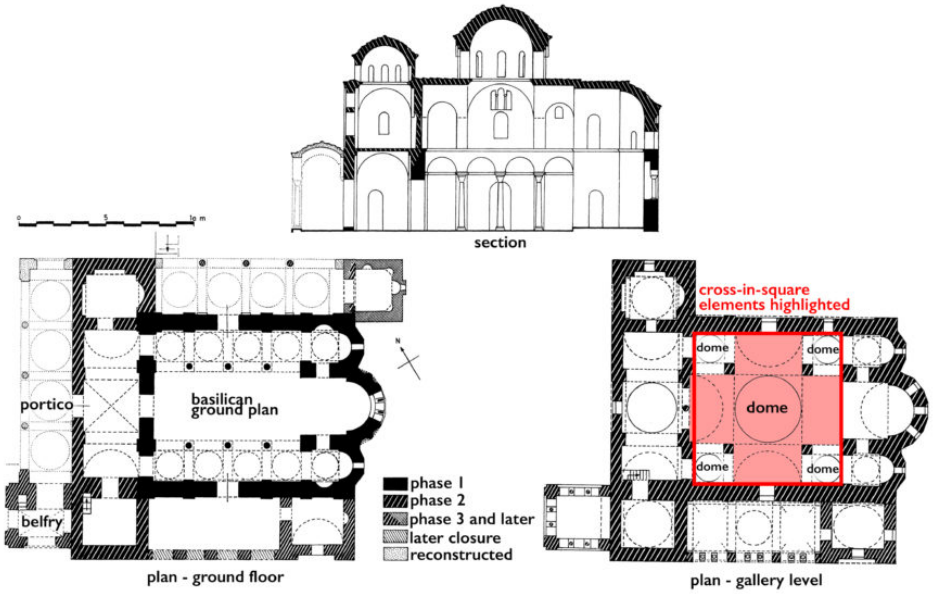


Figure 13.6.6.268: Hodegetria church, Brontochion monastery (adapted from Hallensleben, “Untersuchungen zur Genesis und Typologie des ‘Mistratypus’”)

ntanassa monastery

e type is repeated as late as 1428 in the church of the Pantanassa monastery.



Figure 13.6.6.269: Pantanassa monastery, 1428, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

urches of the *octagon-domed church* and cross-in-square types were also constructed in this period (read more about octagon-domed churche chitectural detailing suggests close connections with both Constantinople and Italy.

 ator church, mid-14th century Nesebar, Bulgaria (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_of_Christ_Pantocrator_Nesebar.jpg" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_of_Christ_Pantocrator_Nesebar.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Chrumps, CC BY-SA 4.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51481" height="647" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-870x647.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-870x647.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-300x223.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1143.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1524.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.270**: Pantokrator church, mid-14th century Nesebar, Bulgaria (photo: **Chrumps**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

lgaria

haps most significant in this period is the emergence of neighboring powers as creative centers of architecture. **Bulgaria** remained closest to Byzantiu its architectural developments.



Figure **13.6.6.271**: Sv. Ivan Aliturgetos, mid-14th century, Nesebar, Bulgaria (photo: **MrPanyGoff**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

etail of east façade, Pantokrator church, Nesebar (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunny_Beach_Nesebar_centre_2.jpg" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunny_Beach_Nesebar_centre_2.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Wizzard, CC0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51480" height="238" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-870x518.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-870x518.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-300x179.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...v3-200x120.jpg
200w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...3-1536x914.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...Nesebar-v3.jpg
1633w" width="400">

Figure **13.6.6.272**: Detail of east façade, Pantokrator church, Nesebar (photo: **Wizzard**, CC0)

e Pantokrator and Sv. Ivan Aliturgetos at Nesebar

hough more robust in terms of their surface decoration, the late churches of Nesebar, for example, follow the construction techniques and façı amentation of Constantinople. The coastal town passed repeatedly between Byzantine and Bulgarian control.

e churches of the Pantokrator and Sv. Ivan Aliturgetos date to the mid-fourteenth century and are most distinctive for their colorful exteriors, combini ck and stone decoration with glazed ceramic disks and rosettes.



Figure **13.6.6.273**: Sopoćani Monastery, c. 1265, Serbia (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

rbia

edieval **Serbia** experienced some western European influence from the Dalmatian coast in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (as at Sopoćani, c. 126 t as close ties and political rivalry with Byzantium developed in the fourteenth century, Serbian architecture generally followed Byzantine developmer porting both ideas and masons.



Figure **13.6.6.274**: Gračanica Monastery, before 1321, Gračanica (modern Kosovo) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

ıside Gračanica Monastery (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gracanica_Fresco_2.JPG" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gracanica_Fresco_2.JPG" target="_blank" el="noopener"
Julian Nyča, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51496" height="306" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x665.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-870x665.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...py-300x229.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1175.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1567.jpg
2048w" width="400">

Figure **13.6.6.275**: Inside Gračanica Monastery (photo: **Julian Nyča**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ačanica Monastery

many ways, King Milutin's church at Gračanica, built before 1321, represents the culmination of Late Byzantine architectural design. Integrating hly attenuated cross-in-square naos with a pi-shaped ambulatory, the whole is topped by five domes. With simplified façade arcading and a pyrami ssing of forms, the building exhibits an external clarity that belies its complexity.

esnovo Monastery, 1341-47, Lesnovo (modern North Macedonia) (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Св.Архангел_Михаил.JPG" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Св.Архангел_Михаил.JPG" target="_blank" rel="noopener"
Tosee, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51231" height="580" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...BB-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ил-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ил-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1024.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1365.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.276**: Lesnovo Monastery, 1341-47, Lesnovo (modern North Macedonia) (photo: **Tosee**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

snovo

e reigns of both Milutin and Stefan Dušan witnessed a great deal of construction, often similar to developments in northern Greece. The monastic chu Lesnovo (in modern North Macedonia) built 1341-47, for example, is a grand cross-in-square church with a domed narthex. It would not seem out ce in Late Byzantine Thessalonike in its scale, construction technique, or style.



Figure **13.6.6.277**: Ravanica Monastery, 1370s, Serbia (photo: **Petar Milošević**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ıvanica Monastery

ter architecture in Serbia, notably that of the so-called Morava School, is smaller and more decorative, often utilizing the so-called Athonite plan (w
ɔroi and subsidiary chapels), as at Ravanica (1370s), with five domes, or the smaller and simpler Kalenić (after 1407).



Figure **13.6.6.278**: Kalenić Monastery, after 1407, Serbia (photo: **Ванилица**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

ɔmania

ɪmania represents a latecomer to the scene. Wallachia (a historical region in southeastern Romania), liberated from Hungary in 1330, came under t luence of Serbian architecture, while Moldavia (a historical region in northeastern Romania), liberated in 1365, shows a greater originality.



Figure 13.6.6.279: Voroneț Monastery, c. 1488, Moldavia (modern Romania) (photo: Eugen Naiman CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Detail of frescos on exterior of Sucevița Monastery church (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/22fV8BM" href="https://flic.kr/p/22fV8BM" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Alex Berger, CC BY-NC 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51461" height="267" sizes="(max-width: 401px) 100vw, 401px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1025.jpg
1536w" width="401">

Figure 13.6.6.280: Detail of frescos on exterior of Sucevița Monastery church (photo: Alex Berger, CC BY-NC 2.0)

teenth-century churches like that at Voroneţ, built c. 1488, or Suceviţa, built c. 1485, have steeply pitched, heavy overhanging roofs and a diminish me above a triconch plan, the walls entirely frescoed on the exterior. The origin of this distinctively hybrid architecture is unclear.



Figure 13.6.6.281: Sucevița Monastery, 1485, Moldavia (modern Romania) (photo: Ava Babili, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

ıssia was destabilized in the thirteenth century by the invasion of the Mongols, with the notable exceptions of Novgorod and Pskov, where medie
ırches survive from the twelfth century onward.



Figure 13.6.6.282: Saviour-on-the-Ilyina-Street, 1374, Novgorod, Russia (photo: **Ludvig14**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

ormition Cathedral, c. 1399, Zvenigorod (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uspensky_Cathedral_-_Zvenigorod,_Russia_-_panoramio.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uspensky_Cathedral_
Zvenigorod,_Russia_-_panoramio.jpg" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Sergey Ashmarin, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51465" height="400" sizes="(max-width: 342px) 100vw, 342px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...o-870x1016.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...o-870x1016.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...io-300x350.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._panoramio.jpg
1185w" width="342">

Figure 13.6.6.283: Dormition Cathedral, c. 1399, Zvenigorod (photo: **Sergey Ashmarin**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Novgorod, churches like the Saviour-on-the-Ilyina-Street (1374), are steep-roofed and roughly built.

Russia recovered from the Mongol invasions, Muscovy developed its own distinctive architecture, first seen perhaps in the Dormition Cathedral
enigorod (c. 1399).

ɔscow emerged as the most important center, and following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, it assumed the role of spiritual leader of the Orthod
ırld.



Figure **13.6.6.284**: Aristotele Fioravanti, Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin, 1475-79, Moscow (photo: **Don-vip**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

athedral of the Dormition, 1158-60, expanded 1185-89, Vladimir (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Владимир_Успенский_собор_2008.JPG" ref="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Владимир_Успенский_собор_2008.JPG" target="_blank" rel="noopener"

Булатов Даниил, CC0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51466" height="300" sizes="(max-width: 253px) 100vw, 253px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...8-870x1032.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...8-870x1032.jpg

870w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...08-300x356.jpg

300w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1295x1536.jpg

1295w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1726x2048.jpg

1726w" width="253">

Figure **13.6.6.285**: Cathedral of the Dormition, 1158-60, expanded 1185-89, Vladimir (photo: **Булатов Даниил**, CC0)

the late fifteenth century, a new architectural impetus arrived from Italy, in the form of imported Italian architects.

e Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin, constructed 1475-79 under the direction of Aristotele Fioravanti, combined details derived from t thedral of Vladimir with an Italian Renaissance modular plan, topped by five domes; it became the coronation church.

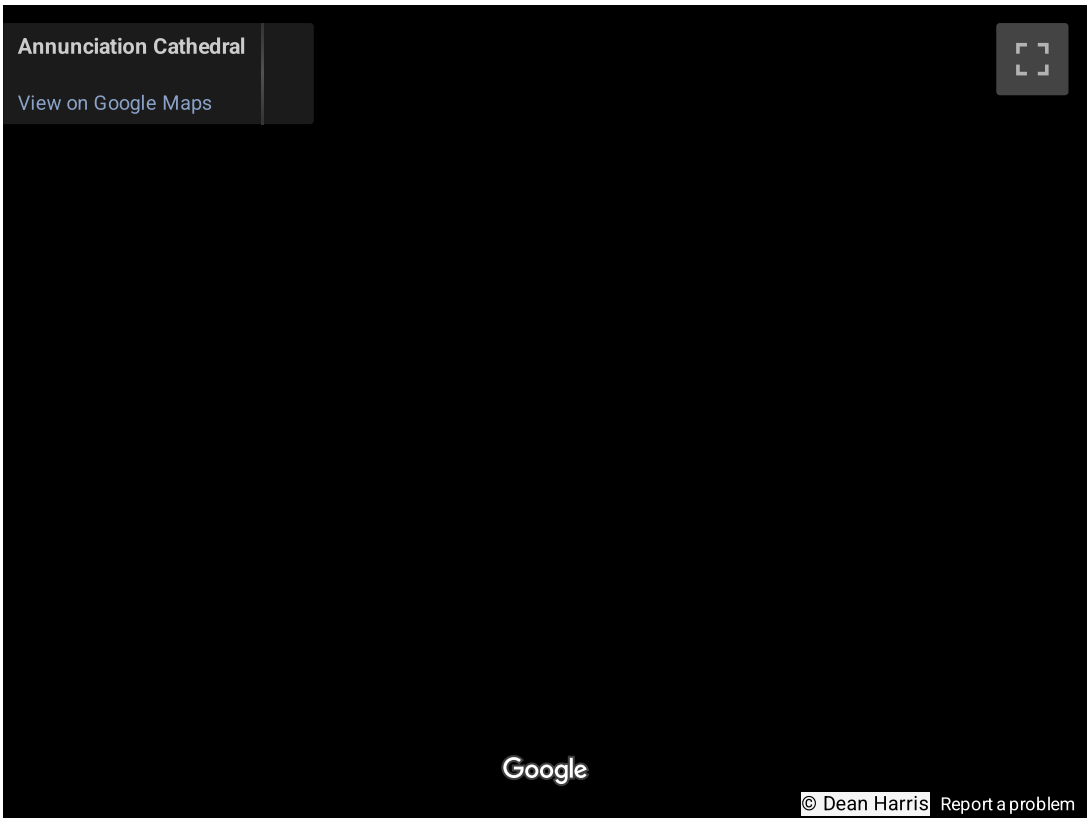


Figure **13.6.6.286**: Interior of the Cathedral of the Annunciation, 1484-89, Moscow (photo: **Wikimedia Commons**, CC0)

thedrals of the Annunciation and of the Archangel were added to the Kremlin shortly thereafter.

Cathedrals of the Annunciation (let) and the Archangel Michael (right) (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/wqaMwz" href="https://flic.kr/p/wqaMwz" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer" Jorge Láscar, CC BY 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51484" height="580" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x580.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x200.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1024.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1365.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.287**: Cathedrals of the Annunciation (let) and the Archangel Michael (right) (photo: **Jorge Láscar**, CC BY 2.0)



Cathedral Square facing the Archangel Cathedral (left) and Annunciation Cathedral, Moscow (right) (© Google)

atolia

th the defeat at Manzikirt in 1071, much of **Anatolia** passed into the control of the Seljuks and other Turkic beyliks, but this does not mark the end ristian architecture in the region.



Figure **13.6.6.288**: Tatlarin Kilisesis, Church A, north nave, 13th century, Cappadocia (modern Turkey) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

the thirteenth century, there is evidence of rock-cut architecture in the Christian communities of Cappadocia (in central Anatolia), as for example larin, Gülşehir, and Belisırma.



Figure **13.6.6.289**: Church of St. John (Karşı Kilise), Gülşehir, Cappadocia (modern Turkey) (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

the early fourteenth century, the Ottomans emerged as the dominant power in northwest Anatolia, and by the 1320s-1330s, the former nomads w ively building, and in a manner technically and stylistically following local, Byzantine practices, although plans and vaulting forms may be more clos gned with the architecture of the Seljuks.

rhan Mosque, late 1330s, Bursa (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bursa_Orhan_Gazi_Mosque.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bursa_Orhan_Gazi_Mosque.jpg" rget="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
Adbar, CC BY-SA 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51477" height="652" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ue-870x652.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ue-870x652.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ue-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="870">

Figure **13.6.6.290**: Orhan Mosque, late 1330s, Bursa (photo: **Adbar**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Church of the Pantobasilissa, late 1330s, Trilye (photo: © <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/216u3d2" href="https://flic.kr/p/216u3d2" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
The Byzantine Legacy)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51522" height="316" sizes="(max-width: 375px) 100vw, 375px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...5k-870x733.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...5k-870x733.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...5k-300x253.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1294.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1725.jpg
2048w" width="375">

Figure **13.6.6.291**: Church of the Pantobasilissa, late 1330s, Trilye (photo: © **The Byzantine Legacy**)

e Orhan Mosque in Bursa of the late 1330s corresponds closely to contemporaneous works of Byzantine architecture in its mixed brick and stone w ıstruction and its decorative details.

ıny of the same features appear at the church of the Pantobasilissa in nearby Trilye, also from the late 1330s, suggesting that the same workshops w ıstructing both churches and mosques. At Bursa, the first Ottoman capital (conquered in 1326), two Byzantine churches were appropriated for use as ı ıusolea of Osman and Orhan.

onasticism follows **Middle Byzantine models**, as for example at Hilandar on **Mount Athos**, founded by Milutin c. 1303.



Figure **13.6.6.292**: Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos (photo: **Саша Шљукић**, CC BY 3.0)

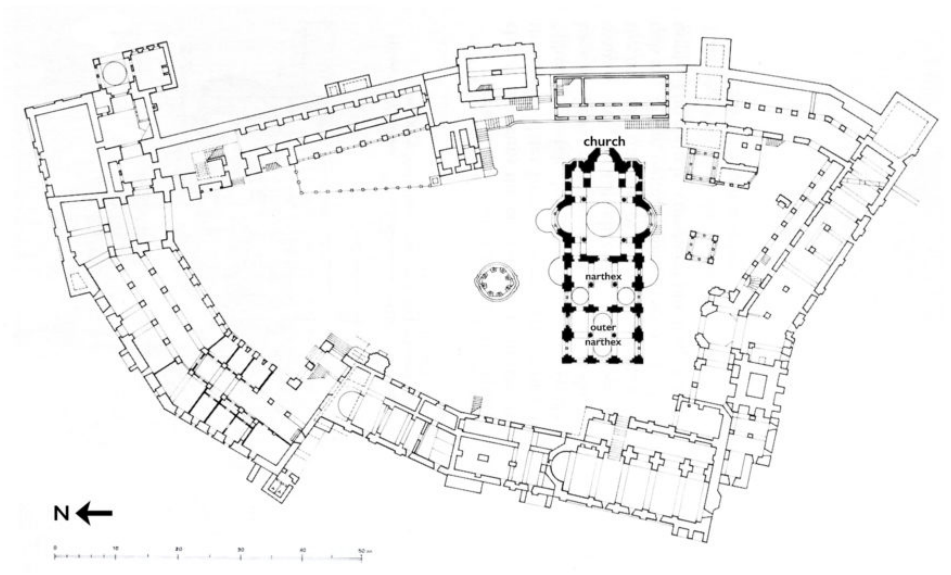


Figure **13.6.6.293**: Plan of Hilandar Monastery (adapted from plan in Ćurčić, "Hilandar Monastery: An Archive")



Figure **13.6.6.294**: Katholikon, Hilander Monastery, c. 1303, Mount Athos (photo: **Zeljkokiss**, CC0)

e freestanding, Athonite-plan katholikon included a large, twin-domed narthex or lite, subsequently expanded with a large, domed outer narthex in t ter part of the century. Both reflect the increased role of the narthex in monastic worship.

rtified, with the monastic cells lining the wall, the monastery has its refectory set opposite the entrance to the katholikon, with a phiale or holy water fo the courtyard to one side. Similarly planned monasteries appear throughout the Balkans.

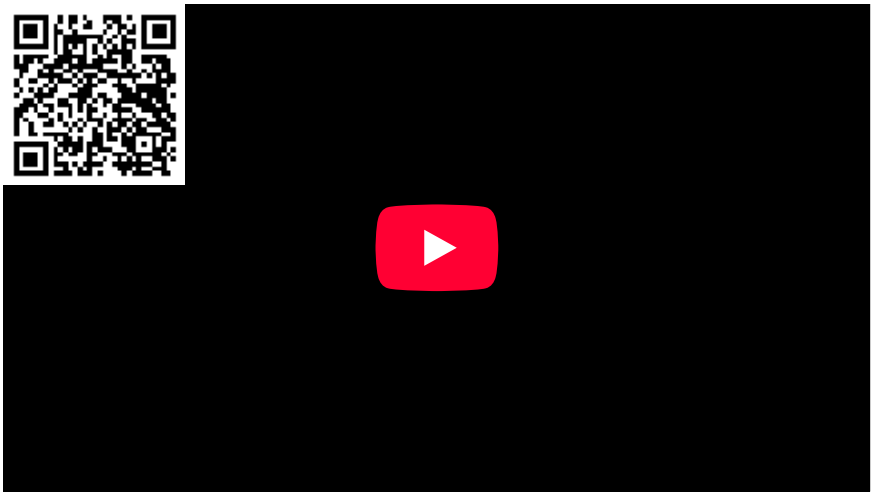
xt: read about Late Byzantine secular architecture and urban planning

ditional Resources

bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

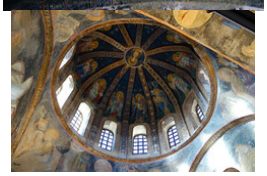
icturing salvation — Chora's brilliant Byzantine mosaics and frescos

DR. BETH HARRIS and *DR. STEVEN ZUCKER*



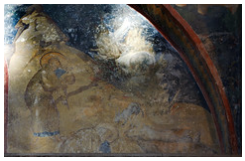
Video **13.6.6.17**: Chora Church (Kariye Müzesi), Istanbul, renovated c. 1315 – 1321

narthistory images for teaching and learning:









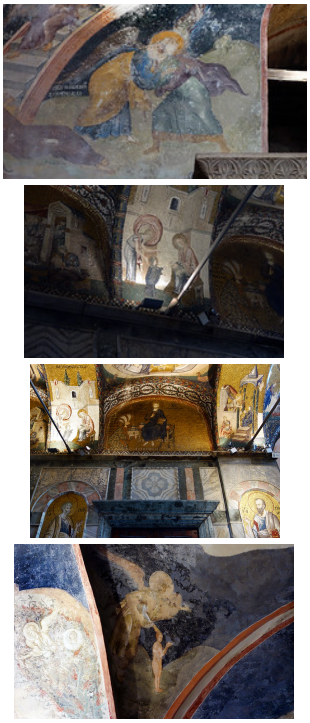


Figure **13.6.6.295**: More Smarthistory images…

te Byzantine secular architecture and urban planning

DR. ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

·riods of Byzantine history

rly Byzantine (including Iconoclasm) **c. 330 – 843**

ddle Byzantine c. 843 – 1204

e Fourth Crusade & Latin Empire 1204 – 1261

te Byzantine 1261 – 1453

st-Byzantine after 1453

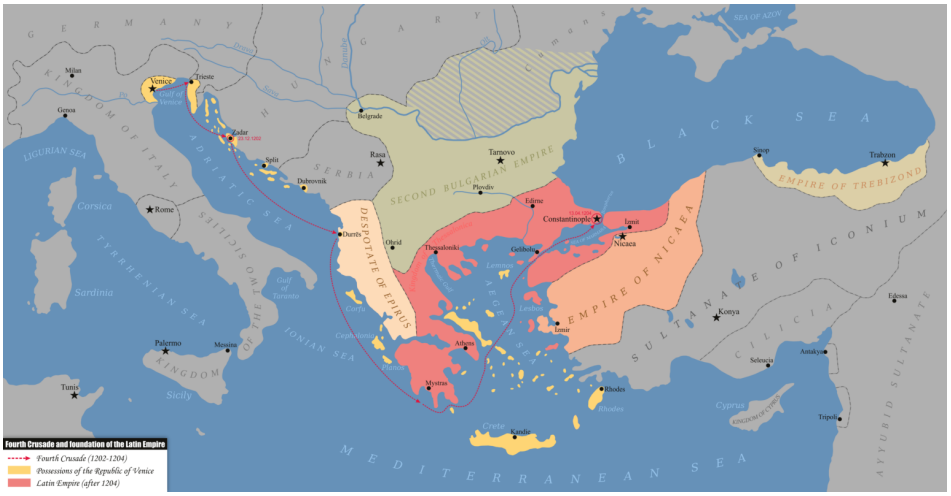


Figure **13.6.6.296**: The route and results of the Fourth Crusade (**Kandi**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

e Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire

1204, the **crusaders** of the Fourth Crusade (western Europeans faithful to the pope in Rome, whom the Byzantines referred to as "Latins" or "Frank **·cked and occupied** the Byzantine Capital of Constantinople. In the years that followed, the crusaders established a "Latin Empire" that also incluc

merly Byzantine regions such as the Pelopponese in southern Greece. In terms of urban developments, the period of Latin control encouraged so nstruction in the Peloponnese, while having an adverse effect on Constantinople. For all, the physical evidence is limited.

ad about the impact of the Fourth Crusade on Byzantine church architecture.

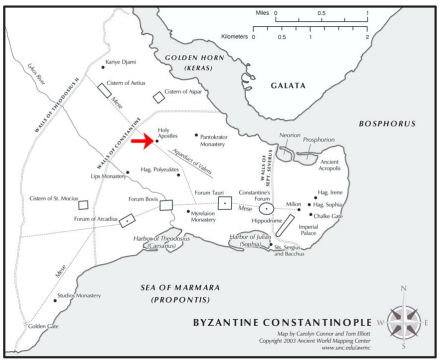


Figure **13.6.6.297**: Location of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople (map: Carolyn Connor and Tom Elliot, Ancient World Mapping Center, CC BY-NC 3.0)

ban planning in Constantinople

ter retaking **Constantinople** for the Byzantines in 1261, emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos's refounding of the capital city may have been m nbolic than actual. It included a unique triumphal column positioned before the Church of the Holy Apostles (one of the great churches of the Byzant pital, which no longer survives), topped by a statue group of the emperor kneeling before St. Michael. Since Constantine (the **founder nstantinople**) was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles, Michael's new column may have represented an attempt to present himself as a "n nstantine" or second founder of the city of Constantinople. Unfortunately, the column does not survive and is only known from historical descriptions.



Figure **13.6.6.298**: Mosaic of Theodore Metochites (left) offering the Chora church to Christ, Chora monastery, Constantinople (Istanbul) c. 1315-21 (photo: Evan Freeman, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

eodore Metochites, a Byzantine statesman who as a young man had written an encomium lauding the city of **Nicaea**, strikes a very different tone in *zantios*, an oration on Constantinople. While recognizing the diminished state of affairs, he attempts to give it a positive spin: Constantinople rene self, so that ancient ruins are woven into the city's fabric to assert their ancient nobility. While the intended message is of unchanging greatness, lities of ruin and desolation are all too apparent.

ad about Theodore Metochites' rebuilding of the Chora Monastery in Constantinople.



Figure 13.6.6.299: Mystras with reconstructed Palace of the Despots (left) and Frankish castle (upper right) (photo: Guillén Pérez, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Frankish castle built by William II of Villehardouin, 1249, Mystras, Greece (photo: © <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/2bpR6vK" href="https://flic.kr/p/2bpR6vK" target="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
The Byzantine Legacy)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51581" height="225" sizes="(max-width: 300px) 100vw, 300px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...as-870x653.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...as-870x653.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...as-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="300">

Figure 13.6.6.300: Frankish castle built by William II of Villehardouin, 1249, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

ban planning in the Peloponnese

ystras, a new city of the period, gives a better picture of urban planning.

ategically situated on a hill above the ancient Greek city of Sparta in the Peloponnese (in souther Greece), Mystras developed beneath a Frankish cas
built by Latin occupiers in 1249 following the Fourth Crusade—which the Byzantines captured in 1262.

e rugged site with its steep slope offered excellent defenses and did not require a complete ring of walls.

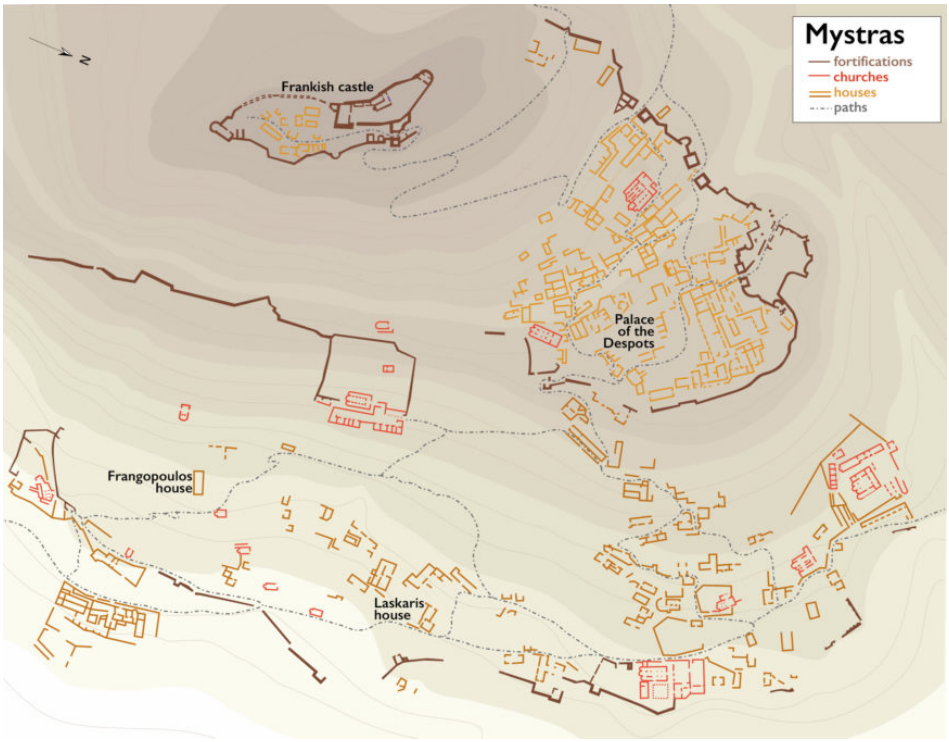


Figure **13.6.6.301**: Plan of Mystras (adapted from **Marsyas**, CC BY 3.0)

bdivided internally into an upper and lower city, the streets are often no more than footpaths and too steep for wheeled vehicles; urban planning was mercy of the topography. Indeed, many areas within the walls were too steep for construction. Houses often required extensive substructures, and ly sizeable terrace within the city was given over to the Palace of the Despots (more on this below). Markets were probably located outside the walls.

e situation at Late Byzantine **Geraki** seems to have been similar. Located southeast of Mystras in the Pelopponese, Geraki developed beneath anotl ankish hilltop fortress, which was ceded to the Byzantines in 1263.



Figure **13.6.6.302**: Geraki, Greece (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

omestic architecture

cavations at Pergamon

e evidence for Late Byzantine domestic architecture is similarly limited. The excavations at **Pergamon** provide some sense of a neighborhc velopment.



Figure 13.6.6.303: Reconstruction of a Byzantine neighborhood, Pergamon (© Klaus Rheidt)

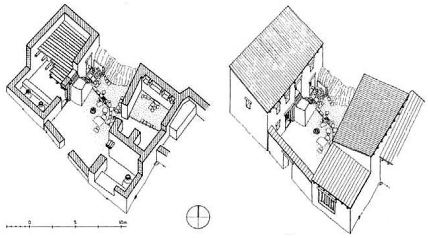


Figure 13.6.6.304: Reconstruction of a Byzantine house, Pergamon (© Klaus Rheidt)

re the houses consist of several rooms, often with a **portico**, arranged around a courtyard set off the irregular pattern of alleys and cul-de-sacs.

nilar house forms have been noted in other urban situations, with the focus of the house away from the street.



Figure 13.6.6.305: The so-called Laskaris House (with the Pantanassa monastery and the Frankish castle in the background), early 15th century, Mystras, Greece (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

ystras

ystras also provides several good examples, such as the so-called Frangopoulos House and Laskaris House (named for those believed to have inhabi m), both probably from the early fifteenth century. Set into the steep slope, both had vaulted substructures of utilitarian function—cistern, stab reroom—to create a level platform for the residence, which consisted of one large room, with a fireplace to the rear and a terrace or balcony facing w.

wer of Apollonia

the countryside, fortified towers often functioned as residences, as at **Apollonia** (near Amphipolis) and elsewhere in mainland Greece.



Figure 13.6.6.306: Tower of Apollonia, 14th century, Greece (photo: **Ggia**, CC BY 3.0)



Figure 13.6.6.307: Location of the Tekfursaray, Constantinople (map: Carolyn Connor and Tom Elliot, Ancient World Mapping Center, CC BY-NC 3.0)

nstantinople

Constantinople, nothing survives of the main imperial residence at the Blachernae Palace, except the so-called Tekfursaray, which may have beer vilion associated with it.

ilt as a three-storied block set between two lines of the land wall, the lowest level was opened to the courtyard by an arcade. The mid level w parently subdivided into apartments, with the upper level functioning as a large audience hall, with appended balcony and a tiny chapel.



Figure 13.6.6.308: Tekfursaray, north façade of the main palace block before restoration, c. 1261–91, Constantinople (Istanbul) (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

alace at Nymphaeon (modern Kemalpaşa, Turkey) (photo: <a class="nolightbox" data-cke-saved-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Laskaris_Palace_05.jpg" href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Laskaris_Palace_05.jpg" rget="_blank" rel="noopener noreferrer"
BSRF, CC BY-SA 4.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51589" height="263" sizes="(max-width: 350px) 100vw, 350px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05-870x653.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05-870x653.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05-300x225.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1152.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1536.jpg
2048w" width="350">

Figure 13.6.6.309: Palace at Nymphaeon (modern Kemalpaşa, Turkey) (photo: **BSRF**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

association with Venetian palaces has been suggested, but the ruined palace at Nymphaeon of c. 1225 provides a useful precedent.

Mystras, the Palace of the Despots grew over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as several adjoining but independent units. Its l
jor addition, the Palaiologos wing, follows a three-storied format like that of the Tekfursaray, with an enormous audience hall on the uppermost lev
h apartments and storerooms below.



Figure 13.6.6.310: Palace of the Despots, probably begun mid-13th century and expanded in the early 15th century, Mystras, Greece (photo: © The Byzantine Legacy)

Double walls of Nicaea (modern İznik, Turkey) (photo: <a data-cke-saved-href="https://flic.kr/p/21zoXG7" href="https://flic.kr/p/21zoXG7" target="_blank" rel="noopener"
Carole Raddato, CC BY-SA 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51593" height="199" sizes="(max-width: 301px) 100vw, 301px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x576.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-870x576.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._o-300x199.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1017.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1357.jpg
2048w" width="301">

Figure 13.6.6.311: Double walls of Nicaea (modern İznik, Turkey) (photo: Carole Raddato, CC BY-SA 2.0)

rtifications

th the increasing insecurity and fragmentation of the empire, defense became a growing concern in the last centuries of the empire.

ty walls

caea was provided with a second line of walls in the thirteenth century, and the Laskarids built a series of visually-connected fortresses in an attempt
ure their Aegean territories.



Figure **13.6.6.312**: Chlemoutsi Castle, Kastro-Kyllini, 1220-23 (photo: **Ronny Siegel**, CC BY 2.0)



Figure **13.6.6.313**: Plan of Chlemoutsi Castle, Kastro-Kyllini, 1220-23, in R. Traquair, "Mediaeval Fortresses in the North-Western Peloponnesus," *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 12 (1906-1907): 274

ankish fortresses in the Peloponnese

llowing the Fourth Crusade, the Franks also constructed fortresses across the Peloponnese in an attempt to secure control of the region, as at **Chlemou** l Glarentza (now in ruins).

zantine fortresses

th the reconquest of Constantinople by the Byzantines, fortresses were either strengthened and expanded (as at **Yoros on the Bosphoros**) or construct ew to protect the city against the rising power of the Ottomans to the east.



Figure **13.6.6.314**: Yoros Castle, expanded during Late Byzantine period, near Anadolu Kavağı (photo: **Moonik**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.6.6.316**: Yoros Castle, expanded during Late Byzantine period, near Anadolu Kavağı (photo: **Guilhem Vellut**, CC BY 2.0)

ıong the smaller fortifications of the period, the **castle at Pythion** in Thrace is noteworthy. Built by John VI Kantakouzenos c. 1331, a large fortif ver quickly expanded with the construction of a second tower and gateway, with inner and outer enceintes. The four-bayed plan of the main tower, w ck vaulting at all levels, and the extensive use of stone **machicolations** (floor openings through which stones or other materials could be dropped ackers) mark Pythion as unique among Byzantine fortifications and at the cutting edge of military technology in the fourteenth century.



Figure **13.6.6.317**: Castle, c. 1331, Pythion, Thrace (photo: © Robert Ousterhout)

ıdditional Resources

bert G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Pre 19)

ɔn with the Triumph of Orthodoxy

PIPPA COUCH and *RACHEL ROPEIK*



Video 13.6.6.18: *Icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy* (Byzantine), c. 1400, tempera and gold on wood, 39 cm x 31 cm (British Museum, London)

narthistory images for teaching and learning:

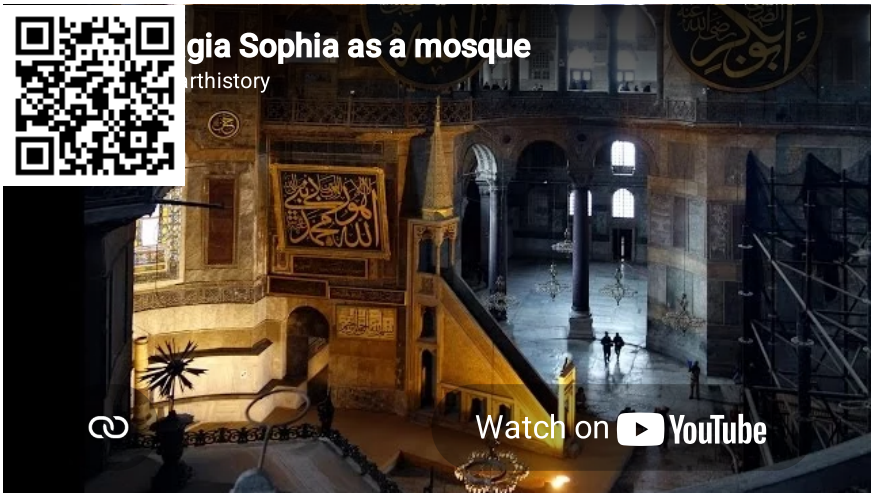


Figure 13.6.6.318: More Smarthistory images…

ost-Byzantine

agia Sophia as a mosque

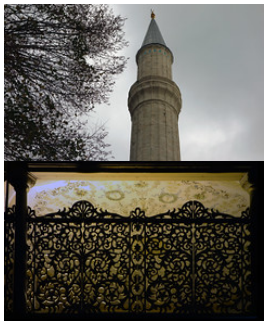
DR. ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

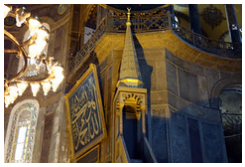


Video 13.6.6.19: Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles (architects), Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532-37

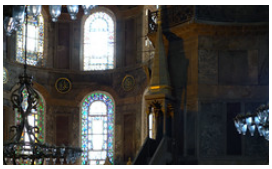
is video focuses on Hagia Sophia after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453.

narthistory images for teaching and learning:



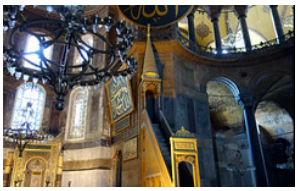


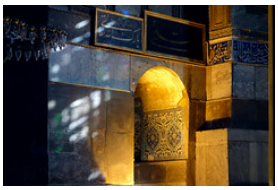














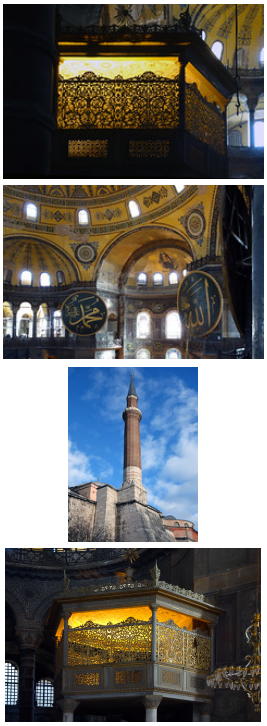


Figure 13.6.6.319: More Smarthistory images…

ıurch of St. Nicholas, Balinesti

DR. VLAD BEDROS

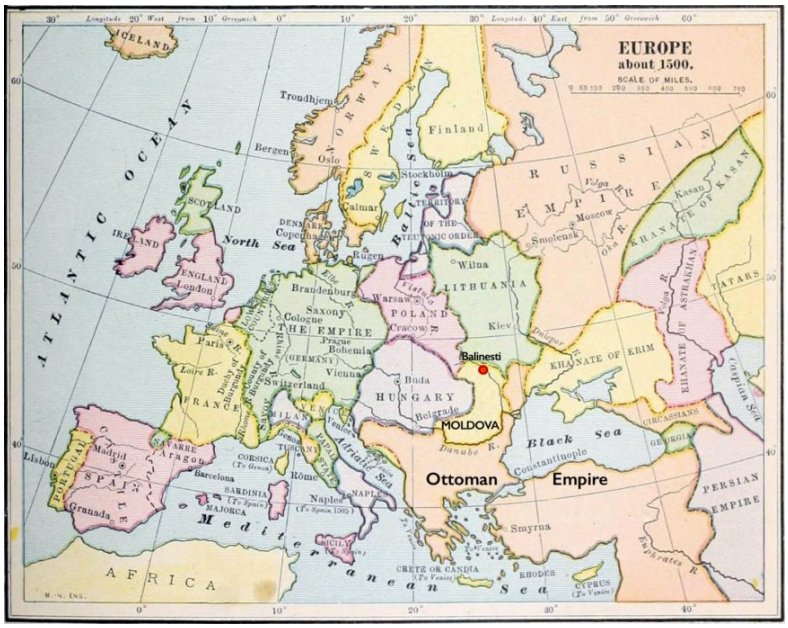


Figure 13.6.6.320: Map of Europe and West Asia, c. 1500

Bălinești (part of the historical region of Moldova, in present-day Romania) stands the bulky silhouette of the private chapel of St. Nicholas.



Figure **13.6.6.321**: Church of St. Nicholas, Balinesti, Romania, built in 1499 (image: Vlad Bedros, 2019)

e chapel was built by a high-level minister in the service of the prince of Moldova — Ioan Tăutu (his official title was “Logothete”). Tautu also served iplomat in negotiations with neighboring powers such as the Ottoman Empire and his high standing is reflected in the lavish character of St. Nicholas.

e chapel stands among the finest examples of Moldavian architectural decoration (carved stone elements and polychrome glazed ceramic fixtures) a ırgical painting.

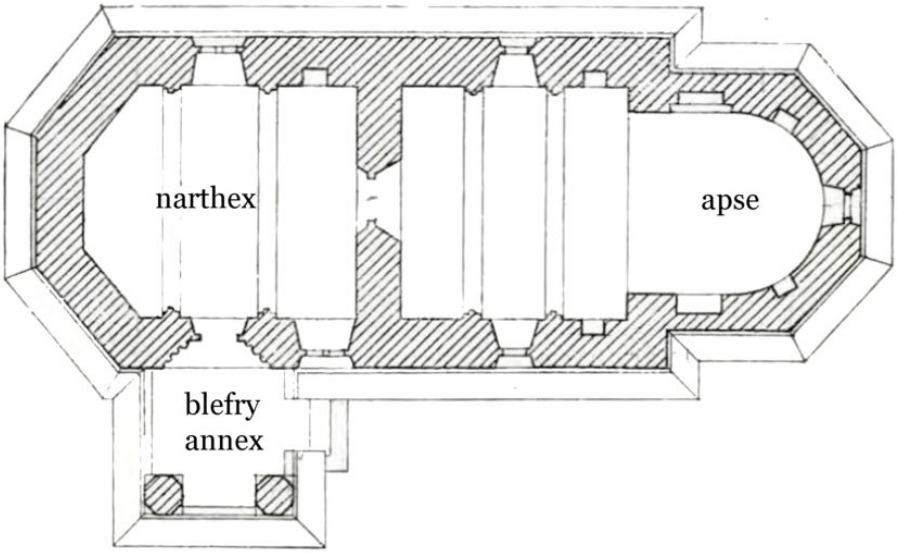


Figure **13.6.6.322**: Annotated plan, Church of St. Nicholas, Balinesti, Romania, built 1499 (image: Vlad Bedros)



Figure **13.6.6.323**: Gothic-style stone carving, St. Nicholas church, 1499 (image: Vlad Bedros)

e chapel has a nave with a protruding horseshoe-shaped apse, balanced by a Western European structure, namely the trapezoid ending of the narthex. (southern wall, a porch surmounted by a belfry marks the entrance and creates a picturesque tower-like annex.

e hybrid nature of this architectural solution — uniting both Eastern (Byzantine) and Western (Gothic) church forms — echoes similar private chapels region.

e carved stone details on the church walls are most telling of the infusion of the elegant Gothic style. These carvings are most clearly seen in quisite vault of the porch and on its railing, adorned with quatrefoils.

e interior architectural details show Gothic features, too, such as the supporting arches for the barrel vaults in the nave and narthex, which rest up ndled pilasters. Such transfers from the Western architectural repertoire into the Post-Byzantine tradition (the Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottomans 53) were typical of local building practices. For this reason, scholars labeled the architecture of 15th- and 16th-century Moldova as “Byzantine edifi cted by Gothic hands.”



Figure **13.6.6.324**: Barrel vaults on fasciculated (bundled) pilasters, Church of St. Nicholas, 1499, Bălinești (image: Vlad Bedros)



Figure 13.6.6.325: Rows of glazed ceramic discs on the outer wall of the church, under the eaves (image: Vlad Bedros)

other marker of hybridity is the use of glazed ceramic discs displayed in rows under the eaves.

e glazed ceramic medium was used to draw attention to the main outlines of the building. This use of glazed ceramic elements was not new in L zantine practices; it could be seen throughout the Byzantine world, from Constantinople to the Balkans. But the generous diameter of the ceramic dis choice of colors (alternating dark green with ochre and grayish brown), and the inclusion of figural decoration (only present, however, during the l cade of the 15th century) are all unique features of Moldavian ceramic decoration.



Figure 13.6.6.326: Close-up of glazed ceramic discs on the church's outer wall



Figure 13.6.6.327: Two-tailed mermaid, glazed ceramic disc, outer wall, St. Nicholas Church, 1499, Balinesti, (image: Vlad Bedros)

e Moldavian glazed ceramic discs depict motifs such as the Mermaid, the Manticore, the Lion Rampant, and Moldova's coat of arms, featuring ochs' head. These motifs helps link this uniquely Moldavian practice to a Late Gothic workshop active in the Moldavian principality at the end of t h century.

equently, the exteriors were decorated with an iconographic program of outer wall paintings (a typical choice for Moldavian churches). Such paintir l the churches' carefully staged stone, brick, and ceramic exterior.



Figure **13.6.6.328**: St. George Church, Voronet Monastery, covered in outer mural painting (image: **Stanislav Dusik**, CC 4.0)

is is the case with logothete Tăutu's church in Bălinești, too, whose entire exterior received a coat of fresco decoration, preserved today only on t uthern sides of the apse, on the belfry, and on the western ending of the narthex.



Figure **13.6.6.329**: Fragments of mural painting on the exterior of the church of St Nicholas, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

avril, monk and priest, wrote this"

the western wall of the nave, to the right, stands the majestic votive portrait of the donor (Tăutu) and his family, introduced by the patron saint cholas) to the enthroned Christ, gleaming in gilded robes and attended by a host of angels.



Figure 13.6.6.330: Interior mural painting, Church of St. Nicholas, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

edievalist scholar Sorin Ulea found an inscription on the painted footstool: *писахь гавриль їрмонах* (*pisah' gavril' irmonah*, lit. *I, Gavril, monk a est, wrote this*). According to this scholar, this inscription is the signature of the master painter.



Figure 13.6.6.331: Signature inscription on mural painting, Church of St. Nicholas, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

holars have long endeavored to identify the names of the church painters and the stylistic changes they engendered. Such painters were Gavril eromonk and Toma from Suceava, both identified by scholar Sorin Ulea, as well as the better-known George from Trikala and Dragoş Coman fr ceava. These painters were agents of artistic development of the so-called "Moldavian school." However, recent methodological approaches are m ıtious of these identifications; they are also skeptical of the concept of the idea of a "national school" such as the "Moldavian school."

e inscription from the church in Bălinești makes use of the verb *nucamu*, *pisati*, i.e. *to write*, unusual for a painter's statement. Using "to write" instead paint" to describe the painter's activity may emphasize the prescribed nature of the depicted images as well as their "official" status, de-emphasizing e of the painter's subjective interpretation. However, placed at the feet of Christ, who is depicted as Rightful Judge of the Second Coming, this bar ible inscription also functions as a perpetual prayer of salvation addressed to Christ by one of the members of the workshop that painted the chapel.



Figure **13.6.6.332**: Post-conservation mural painting of St. Nicholas church, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

e recent restoration of the frescoes (by a team supervised by Professor Oliviu Boldura and led by Geanina Deciu and Cristian Deciu) brought to light t l gamut of stylistic and iconographic refinement of this ensemble of paintings, which had already been praised—since the very beginnings of lo toriography—as one of the most exquisite examples of post-Byzantine wall painting in Moldova. Meticulously restored, the paintings demonstrate ique blend of South-Eastern Late Byzantine tradition and a discrete Late Gothic imprint.



Figure **13.6.6.333**: Paintings of the genealogy of Christ. Upper image showing crowned figures. St. Nicholas Church, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

zantine heritage on the edge of the Orthodox world

the arch that joins the sanctuary to the one-aisled naos, four enigmatic scenes create an autonomous cycle. Each depicts a central character flanked nmetric groups, and one of the four scenes features crowned figures.

is iconography was identified through a comparison with similar scenes from the contemporaneous wall paintings in the church of Voroneț Monaste ere preserved inscriptions reveal that they illustrate the genealogy of Christ.

e actual source of these images came to light only in 1992, when scholar Constanța Costea showed that they copy miniatures from the Gospels of T n Alexander (now in the **British Library**), illustrating the first chapter from the Gospel according to Matthew. The circulation of this manuscript

oldova explains its dissemination as model.

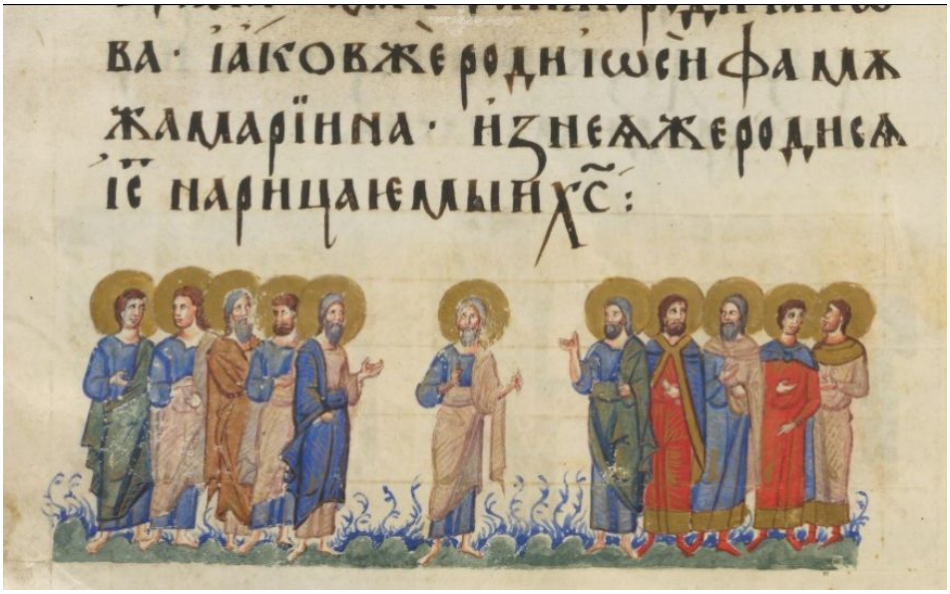


Figure **13.6.6.334**: Miniature from the first chapter from the Gospel according to Matthew, Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, 1355-56 (**British Library**)

stea also showed that the influence of this manuscript was so copiously present in the iconography of the wall paintings that she described the chu nters' reliance on it as a "bookish tendency." In fact, many of the Moldavian wall paintings created in churches between 1490 and 1530 exemplified nsposition of miniatures from Gospel Books into the realm of fresco decoration. This cross-medium iconographic practice echoes the erudite tendency te Byzantine art.

low the belt of images depicting the genealogy of Christ, the lowermost register is dedicated to standing portraits of saints. The section at the eastern e the southern wall features courtly representations of saints George and Demetrius, enthroned together on a bench. They brandish their weapons, wh orge emphatically squeezes a serpent-like monster under his feet—a reference to Psalm 90/91:13, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder." An an pears from above to grant crowns of victory to both martyrs.



Figure **13.6.6.335**: Painting of St. George and St. Demetrius, Church of St. Nicholas, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)



Figure **13.6.6.336**: St. George trampling the monster, double-sided icon, 15th century, Neamt Monastery (image: Vlad Bedros)

e iconography of martyrs enthroned and/ or of martyrs trampling monsters was developed in Late Byzantine art. It first appeared in Moldova in the ea th century, introduced by a double-sided icon at Neamț Monastery. The imagery was soon reiterated in frescoes and embroidery.

similar influence of South-Eastern models is seen in the depiction of the two saints Theodore (Theodore the General and Theodore the Recru resented as a pair of figures in prayer.

is iconography was created at the end of the 13th century in the Balkan area of Kastoria and Ochrid but rarely encountered outside of that perimeter.



Figure **13.6.6.337**: Saints Theodore the General and Theodore the Recruit, shown as a pair in prayer. St. Nicholas Church, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

the same Balkan origin is a peculiar episode from the cycle of the Passions, depicting Pontius Pilate mounted on a horse, assisted by other riders, all om were following the cortege leading Christ to crucifixion. Pilate is shown carrying, in his raised hand, the scroll containing the verdict that w ntually be affixed on top of the cross. In a uniquely Byzantine approach to this biblical narrative, the text is slightly altered: instead of “The king ws,” it reads, “The king of Glory.”

own as the “Cavalcade of Pilatus,” this episode is depicted in almost all Moldavian wall paintings, which provides further evidence for the presence te-Byzantine Balkan-area workshops in Moldova since the late 15th century.



Figure **13.6.6.338**: Pilate following Christ to crucifixion, painting from cycle of the Passions, St. Nicholas Church, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)

spite all these purely Late Byzantine traits, the paintings at Bălinești are not linked solely to the South-Eastern European tradition. They also show t ar influence of the Late Gothic style, which was pervasive in Northern and Western Europe. The golden stars stamped on blue backgrounds in a regu :tern, the ornamental bands of foliage in hues of dark brown, green, and ochre, the imitation of diamond-shaped polychrome stones, the rainbow mc ɛd for the medallions encircling the portraits from the vault—all of these elements point to the lofty and courtly Late Gothic style. At the end of the 1! ıtury, this style was still active in Central and North-Eastern Europe, areas with which Moldova sustained close political and economic ties.



Figure **13.6.6.339**: Elements of Late Gothic style: ornamental foliage bands; imitation of diamond-shaped polychrome stones; and rainbow motif encircling medallion portraits of saints. 1499, Balinesti (images: Vlad Bedros)

is Gothic imprint is also present on a more profound level, subtly altering the Late Byzantine models through the inclusion of Gothic-style details. I ımple, in the conch of the sanctuary, the enthroned Virgin stands on a delicate Gothic-inspired bench that curves so as to follow the concavity of t ılting.



Figure **13.6.6.340**: Gothic-inspired furniture element in painting of enthroned Virgin, St. Nicholas Church, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)



Figure **13.6.6.341**: Saint depicted in contrapposto, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros)



Figure **13.6.6.342**: Scroll of St. Nicholas, 1499, Balinesti (image: Vlad Bedros, detail)

so, the graceful silhouette of the martyr Procopius introduces a Gothic **contrapposto** in the otherwise typically Late-Byzantine portrayal of this saint.

r another example, the scroll held by saint Nicholas in the votive portrait whirls and bends, echoing the taste for whimsical details so strongly present te Gothic art.

ersected traditions

e church of St. Nicholas in Bălinești epitomizes the strength of the "periphery" as agent of cultural innovation. Situated on the frontier between t thodox Post-Byzantine and the Western Late-Medieval worlds, the arts of the principality of Moldova adopted a hybrid visual identity, merging artis ıctices from both sources.

ntinuing research into identifying the agents of these transfers and the processes involved in this cultural hybridity will shed further light onto the visı :anglements so characteristic of Moldavian artistic production at the end of the 15th century and in the first half of the 16th century.

ınslation from Romanian by Dr. Sonia Coman

13.6.6: Byzantine is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.6: Byzantine** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.7: Early Medieval

Early medieval art

Christianity flourished in the early middle ages and this shift dramatically affected the art that was created across Europe.

c. 500 - 800 C.E.

Anglo-Saxon England

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure 13.6.7.1: Ship's figure-head, late 4th – 5th century, oak, 149 cm, (Germanic?/Roman? found Belgium) © The Trustees of the British Museum

In the fifth century C.E., people from tribes called Angles, Saxons, and Jutes left their homelands in northern Europe to look for a new home. They knew that the Romans had recently left the green land of Britain unguarded, so they sailed across the channel in small wooden boats. This warlike dragon figurehead is from a ship of that time.

The Britons did not give in without a fight, but after many years the invaders managed to overcome them, driving them to the west of the country. The Anglo-Saxons were to rule for over 500 years.

Some objects were left behind by the Anglo-Saxons which have given us clues about how they lived. The British Museum is home to the largest and finest Anglo-Saxon collection in the world.



Figure 13.6.7.2: Left: *Æthelwulf Ring*, c. 828-58 C.E., niello, gold, 2.8 cm diameter, and right: *Æthelswith Ring*, c. 853-74 C.E., niello, gold, 2.6 cm in diameter, both England © Trustees of the British Museum



Figure **13.6.7.3**: Map of Anglo-Saxon England

Anglo-Saxon England was divided into the five main kingdoms of Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia, Northumbria and Kent, each with its own king. Kings often died early and violent deaths. As well as fighting against each other for power, they had to keep their own nobles happy, or they might rise up against them. One way that they did this was to give them expensive presents.

The ring on the left was perhaps given to a noble by King Æthelwulf of Wessex. The other ring has AD on it which stands for "Agnus Dei" meaning "Lamb of God" in Latin. On the back the name Æthelswith has been cut. She was Æthelwulf's daughter and the ring might have been a gift she gave to show her favour.



Figure **13.6.7.4**: Æthelwulf Ring, c. 828-58 C.E., niello, gold, 2.8 cm diameter, England © Trustees of the British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Decoding Anglo-Saxon art

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure 13.6.7.5: Silver-gilt square-headed brooch from Grave 22, early 6th century, Chessell Down, Early Anglo-Saxon, Isle of Wight © Trustees of the British Museum

One of the most enjoyable things about working with the British Museum's Anglo-Saxon collection is having the opportunity to study the intricate designs of the many brooches, buckles, and other pieces of decorative metalwork. This is because in Anglo-Saxon art there is always more than meets the eye.

A love of riddles

The objects invite careful contemplation, and you can find yourself spending hours puzzling over their designs, finding new beasts and images. The dense animal patterns that cover many Anglo-Saxon objects are not just pretty decoration; they have multi-layered symbolic meanings and tell stories. Anglo-Saxons, who had a love of riddles and puzzles of all kinds, would have been able to 'read' the stories embedded in the decoration. But for us it is trickier as we are not fluent in the language of Anglo-Saxon art.

Style I

Anglo-Saxon art went through many changes between the 5th and 11th centuries, but puzzles and story-telling remained central. The early art style of the Anglo-Saxon period is known as Style I and was popular in the late 5th and 6th centuries. It is characterized by what seems to be a dizzying jumble of animal limbs and face masks, which has led some scholars to describe the style as an "animal salad." Close scrutiny shows that Style I is not as abstract as first appears, and through carefully following the decoration in stages we can unpick the details and begin to get a sense for what the design might mean.

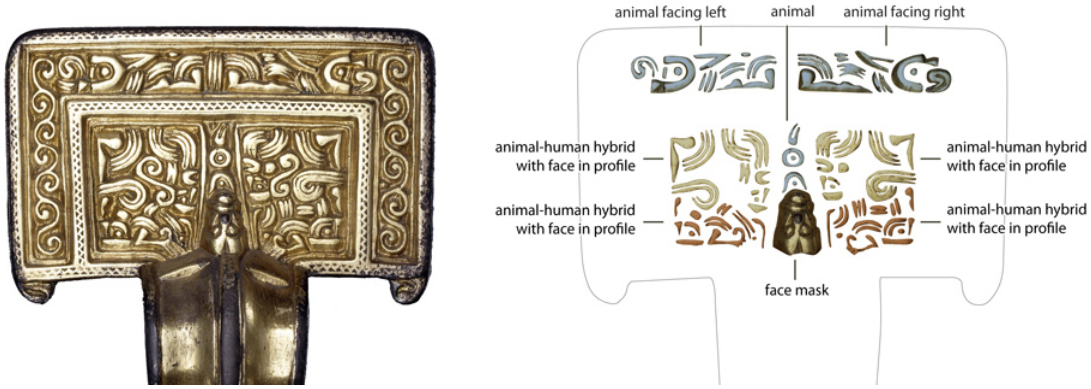


Figure 13.6.7.6: Decoding the square-headed brooch (top) © Trustees of the British Museum

One of the most exquisite examples of Style I animal art is a silver-gilt square-headed brooch from a female grave on the Isle of Wight. Its surface is covered with at least 24 different beasts: a mix of birds' heads, human masks, animals and hybrids. Some of them are quite clear, like the faces in the circular lobes projecting from the bottom of the brooch. Others are harder to spot, such as

the faces in profile that only emerge when the brooch is turned upside-down. Some of the images can be read in multiple ways, and this ambiguity is central to Style I art.

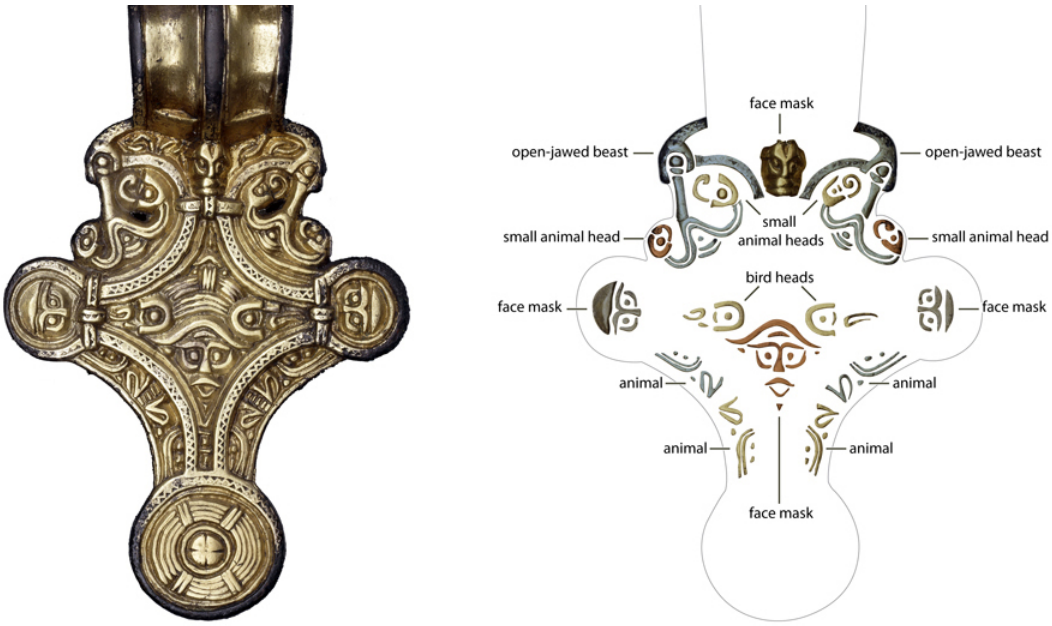


Figure **13.6.7.7**: Decoding the square-headed brooch (bottom) © Trustees of the British Museum

Once we have identified the creatures on the brooch, we can begin to decode its meaning. In the lozenge-shaped field at the foot of the brooch is a bearded face with a helmet underneath two birds that may represent the Germanic god Woden/Odin with his two companion ravens. The image of a god alongside other powerful animals may have offered symbolic protection to the wearer like a talisman or amulet.



Figure **13.6.7.8**: Turning the brooch upside-down (above) reveals four heads in profile on the rectangular head of the brooch, highlighted in purple.

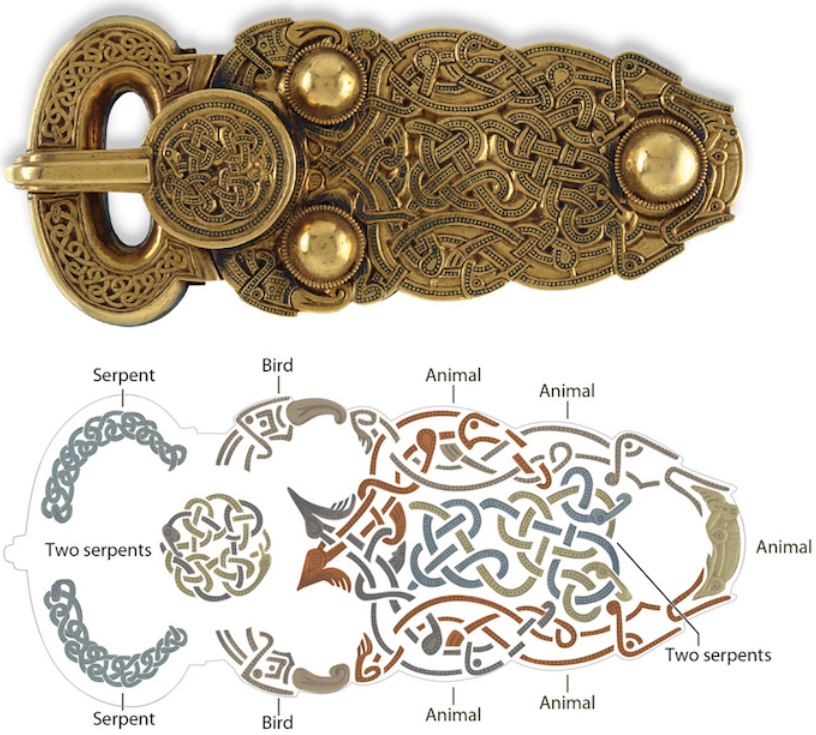


Figure **13.6.7.9**: Decoding the great gold buckle from Sutton Hoo © Trustees of the British Museum

Style II

Style I was superseded by Style II in the late 6th century. This later style has more fluid and graceful animals, but these still writhe and interlace together and require patient untangling. The great gold buckle from Sutton Hoo is decorated in this style. From the thicket of interlace that fills the buckle's surface 13 different animals emerge (above). These animals are easier to spot: the ring-and-dot eyes, the birds' hooked beaks, and the four-toed feet of the animals are good starting points. At the tip of the buckle, two animals grip a small dog-like creature in their jaws and on the circular plate, two snakes intertwine and bite their own bodies. Such designs reveal the importance of the natural world, and it is likely that different animals were thought to hold different properties and characteristics that could be transferred to the objects they decorated. The fearsome snakes, with their shape-shifting qualities, demand respect and confer authority, and were suitable symbols for a buckle that adorned a high-status man, or even an Anglo-Saxon king.

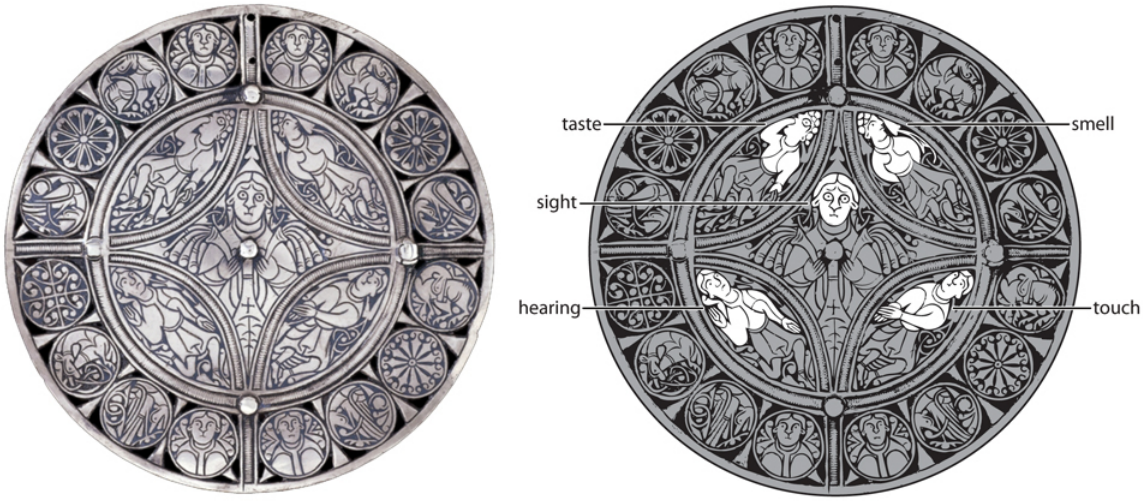


Figure **13.6.7.10**: The five senses on the *Fuller Brooch* © Trustees of the British Museum

Further transformations

Animal art continued to be popular on Anglo-Saxon metalwork throughout the later period, when it went through further transformations into the Mercian Style (defined by sinuous animal interlace) in the 8th century and then into the lively Trewhiddle Style in the 9th century. Trewhiddle-style animals feature in the roundels of the Fuller Brooch (above), but all other aspects of its decoration are unique within Anglo-Saxon art. Again, through a careful unpicking of its complex imagery we can understand its visual messages. At the centre is a man with staring eyes holding two plants. Around him are four other men striking poses: one, with his hands behind his back, sniffs a leaf; another rubs his two hands together; the third holds his hand up to his ear; and the final one has his whole hand inserted into his mouth. Together these strange poses form the earliest personification of the five senses: Sight, Smell, Touch, Hearing, and Taste. Surrounding these central motifs are roundels depicting animals, humans, and plants that perhaps represent God's Creation.

Sight and wisdom

This iconography can best be understood in the context of the scholarly writings of King Alfred the Great (died 899), which emphasized sight and the "mind's eye" as the principal way in which wisdom was acquired along with the other senses. Given this connection, perhaps it was made at Alfred the Great's court workshop and designed to be worn by one of his courtiers?

Throughout the period, the Anglo-Saxons expressed a love of riddles and puzzles in their metalwork. Behind the non-reflective glass in the newly opened Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery of Sutton Hoo and Europe 300-1100, you can do like the Anglo-Saxons and get up close to these and many other objects to decode the messages yourself.

Rosie Weetch, curator and Craig Williams, illustrator, British Museum

Originally published on **The British Museum Blog**

© Trustees of the British Museum

Brooch from Chessell Down

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.6.7.11**: Great square-headed brooch, early 6th century, Early Anglo-Saxon, From Grave 22, Chessell Down, Isle of Wight
© Trustees of the British Museum

Because buttons and zippers hadn't been invented yet, clothes in Anglo-Saxon England were fastened with pins or brooches.

This fine silver-gilt and niello brooch is perhaps the most beautiful of all surviving great square-headed brooches. The casting reveals an artist in complete mastery of his material and current art styles. The brooch was found by George Hillier in 1855 in a woman's grave, together with two stamped pendants, a pair of tweezers, and iron knife and a waist buckle. It was probably made in the first quarter of the sixth century.

The brooch is the best example of a small group of brooches that reflect southern Scandinavian influence. Like its Scandinavian predecessors, it was cast in silver and then gilt on its front surface. The piece has close stylistic parallels with objects found in Kent, although large square-headed brooches are not typical Kentish types.

The outer border of the head-plate is decorated with scrolls on the sides and two Style I quadrupeds with long ears and humanoid feet at the centre. Scrolls and disembodied Style I body parts fill the rest of the headplate field within borders of stamped and nielloed triangles. The bow is plain. The footplate below the bow is decorated with face masks in the side lobes and another larger face mask in the centre below two Style I heads.

Suggested readings:

C.J. Arnold, *The Anglo-Saxon cemeteries on the Isle of Wight* (London, The British Museum Press, 1982).

E.T. Leeds, *A corpus of early Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1949).

J. Hines, *A new corpus of Anglo-Saxon Great Square-Headed Brooches* (Woodbridge, Boydell for the Society of Antiquaries of London, 1997).

R.A. Smith, *A guide to the Anglo-Saxon and Foreign Teutonic Antiquities* (London, British Museum, 1923).
© Trustees of the British Museum

Fibulae

by REBECCA MIR



Figure **13.6.7.12**: Detail, Byzantine Crossbow Brooch (Fibula), c. 430, made in Rome or Constantinople, gold, 11.9 x 5.5 x 4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Medieval jewelry

Fibulae (singular: fibula) are brooches that were made popular by Roman soldiers, who wore them to hold a cloak or cape in place. Bow fibulae all consist of a body, a pin, and a catch — like safety pins. As a historian of the medieval period writes,

> ***A German archaeologist, Herbert Kuhn, first called the bow fibula an early medieval artifact par excellence. Textbooks and art history studies use it to illustrate sections dedicated to the Dark Ages. There are probably thousands and hundreds of thousands***

> ***of bow fibulae in European museum collections. A still greater number of specimens come out of archaeological excavations and their incredible diversity defies any attempts to establish unequivocal typologies. [1]***



Figure **13.6.7.13**: Attendants wearing fibulae, Emperor Justinian Mosaic (detail), San Vitale, Ravenna (Byzantine), c. 546-56 C.E.

Ornate fibulae became all the rage in the early middle ages (c. 500 – 800 C.E.), and are one of the most commonly found objects in barbarian grave sites. The word "barbarian" comes from the Greek word *barbaros*, meaning "foreign," so it is often used as a blanket term for the non-Roman groups who migrated into western Europe in the early middle ages (such as the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, and Lombards). This was the time when Europe was becoming Christianized and the Roman Empire split apart. The Roman Empire ceased to exist in the west, but continued in the east as the Byzantine Empire, with its capital at Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul).

This period is also sometimes referred to as the Migration Period. Sparse written documentation of these people survives, so grave goods like fibulae provide the most concrete cultural information available.



Figure **13.6.7.14**: Three views of a Crossbow Brooch, c. 430, made in Rome or Constantinople, gold, 11.9 x 5.5 x 4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Byzantine fibula



Figure **13.6.7.15**: Crossbow Brooch (detail with floral motif emerging from what may be acanthus leaves), c. 430, made in Rome or Constantinople, gold, 11.9 x 5.5 x 4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This gold fibula was made in Rome or Constantinople in the 5th century and is called a crossbow fibula because of its resemblance to the weapon. Unscrewing the left knob at the end of this "crossbow" would release the pin.

This intricate object is typical of the **Byzantine**/Roman fibulae style. The detailed incising on the body is called pierced openwork. At the top we see a cross, and below that, on either side, floral scrolls that appear to grow out of acanthus leaves and may symbolize paradise and the promise of salvation. In addition, the circular form around the cross is a victory wreath, which, in the Christian tradition, symbolizes victory over death (resurrection). One art historian has remarked that the brooch "evokes one of the most interesting epochs in antiquity, a period marked by the subtle, often elusive transition from Late Roman to Early Byzantine art."[2]

Lombardic Fibula

This Lombardic fibula found in Kranj (modern day Slovenia) provides a good comparison, because it is a stylized variation of the crossbow fibula. It features at one end a semi-circle from which radiate nine rectangular incised forms topped with spheres (this type of fibula is called "radiate-headed" or "digitated"). It is gilded and inlaid with niello, a black metal alloy. The incisions are hatched lines—a popular decoration technique in Lombardic fibulae.



Figure **13.6.7.16**: Lombard silver bow fibula, gilded, with inlaid niello and engraved decoration, mid 6th century C.E., found in Kranj, 11.3 cm. long (**National Museum, Slovenia**). **Photo from the internet archive**.

The Lombards (or Langobards, from the Latin Langobardi) are thought to be of Germanic origin, although their background is still contested. They established their kingdom in Italy in 558 and were defeated by **Charlemagne**, king of the Franks, in 774.

Over the centuries the Lombards assimilated into Roman culture, adopting Christianity, and left their own administrative legal procedures behind. This piece shows the adoption of the crossbow fibula style, but with a small Lombardic "twist." According to one historian, "everything points to the conclusion that 'Slavic' bow fibulae were not simply symbols of social status or gender, but badges of power. This was the power of those able to establish long-distance relations and thus to yield influence." [3]



Figure **13.6.7.17**: Merovingian (Frankish) Looped Fibulae, mid-6th century, silver gilt worked in filigree with inlaid garnet and other stones (Musée des Antiquities Nationales, Saint-Germain-en-Laye)

This pair of Merovingian fibulae is a good example of cloisonné, a technique that was popular in barbarian art. This technique is characterized by inlaid semi-precious stones. The word cloisonné literally means “partitioned” in French. The artisan would solder wires onto a metal base and fill the areas created with polished stones (this is different from cloisonné enamel, which has colored enamel baked within these partitions).

This example also shows a popular motif in barbarian art of the middle ages—eagles. The eagle was a symbol of the Roman empire and was adopted at this time because it still carried connotations of status and power. The top end of these fibulae are in the shape of eagle heads and a series of similarly stylized eagle heads can be seen creating the loops on the opposite end of each pin and on the sides. A small fish decorates the main body of each of the brooches. Garnets were used for the eyes of the eagles, and a wide range of gems were used in the rest of the fibulae. These stunning objects demonstrate the remarkable skill of barbarian metal workers during the early middle ages.



Figure **13.6.7.18**: Visigothic Eagle Fibulae, found at Tierra de Barros (Badajoz, southwest Spain), 6th century, sheet gold over bronze inlaid with garnets, amythysts, and colored glass, 14.2 x 7.1 x 3.2 cm (**The Walters Art Museum**)

This pair of Visigothic fibulae in the form of eagles provide another good example of barbarian metalwork and cloisonné. They are decorated with garnets, amethyst, and colored glass and were found at a Visigothic grave site in Spain. They likely would have fastened a cloak at the shoulders and pendants may have hung from the loops at the bottom.

[1] **Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700* (Cambridge University Press, reissue edition, 2007), p. 247.**

[2] **Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, "A Late Antique Crossbow Fibula in The Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum Journal,* vol. 35, p. 41.**

[3] **Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700* (Cambridge University Press, reissue edition, 2007), p. 274.**

Additional resources:

From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000).

Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700* (Cambridge University Press, reissue edition, 2007).

Pete Dandridge, "Idiomatic and Mainstream: The Technical Vocabulary of a Late Roman Crossbow Fibula": Metropolitan Museum Journal, v. 35 (2000).

Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, "A Late Antique Crossbow Fibula in The MetropolitanMuseum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol. 35, pp. 39-70.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.6.7.19**: More Smarthistory images…

Sutton Hoo Ship Burial

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure **13.6.7.20**: Sutton Hoo and Europe 300–1100 C.E., The Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery © The Trustees of the British Museum

The most famous Anglo-Saxon treasures in the Museum come from the Sutton Hoo burial site in Suffolk. Here mysterious grassy mounds covered a number of ancient graves. In one particular grave, belonging to an important Anglo-Saxon warrior, some astonishing objects were buried, but there is little in the grave to make it clear who was buried there.

Sutton Hoo

On a small hill above the river Deben in Suffolk is a strange-looking field, covered with grassy mounds of different sizes. For several hundred years what lay under them was a mystery.



Figure 13.6.7.21: Left: Painted portrait of Edith Pretty (© British Museum); Right: Basil Brown (photo: Suffolk Archaeological Unit)

In 1939 Mrs Edith Pretty, a landowner at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, asked archaeologist Basil Brown to investigate the largest of several Anglo-Saxon burial mounds on her property. Inside, he made one of the most spectacular archaeological discoveries of all time. Brown started digging under mounds 2, 3 and 4, where he found a few, mostly broken, Anglo-Saxon objects which had been buried alongside their owner's bodies. Sadly, grave robbers had taken most of what was there. With a little more hope he started on the biggest mound, Mound 1. He did not know that the treasures under Mound 1 would turn out to be the most amazing set of Anglo-Saxon objects ever found.



Figure 13.6.7.22: Excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship burial, 1939 (photo: Barbara Wagstaff, © 2019 The Trustees of the British Museum)

Beneath the mound was the imprint of a 27-metre-long ship. At its centre was a ruined burial chamber packed with treasures: **Byzantine silverware**, sumptuous **gold jewelry**, a lavish **feasting set**, and most famously, an ornate **iron helmet**. Dating to the early 600s, this outstanding burial clearly commemorated a leading figure of East Anglia, the local Anglo-Saxon kingdom. It may even have belonged to a king.



Figure **13.6.7.23**: Belt Buckle, Sutton Hoo, early 7th century, gold, 13.2 x 5.6 cm © Trustees of the British Museum



Figure **13.6.7.24**: Gold coins and ingots from the ship burial at Sutton Hoo, early 7th century, Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, England © Trustees of the British Museum.

The burial can only be dated on the basis of the coins that were found there. There was a **purse** among the burial goods, which contained 37 gold coins, 3 coin-shaped blanks, and 2 small gold ingots. The presence of the coin-shaped blanks suggests that the number of coins was deliberately rounded up to 40. The coins cannot be dated closely, but seem to have been deposited at some point between around 610-635. They all come from the kingdom of the Merovingian Franks on the Continent, rather than any English kingdom, although coin production had started in Kent by this time. Sutton Hoo was in the kingdom of East Anglia and the coin dates suggest that it may be the burial of King Raedwald, who died around 625.

The Sutton Hoo ship burial provides remarkable insights into early Anglo-Saxon England. It reveals a place of exquisite craftsmanship and extensive international connections, spanning Europe and beyond. It also shows that the world of great halls, glittering treasures and formidable warriors described in Anglo-Saxon poetry was not a myth.

Mrs Edith Pretty donated the finds to the British Museum in 1939.



Video **13.6.7.1**

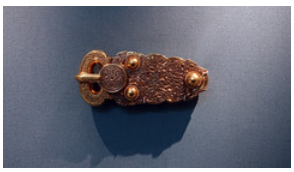
© Trustees of the British Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88712

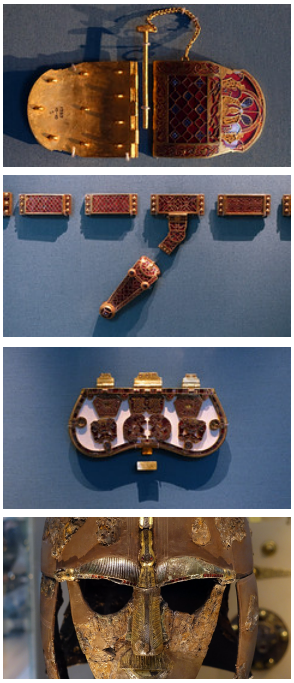


Figure 13.6.7.25: More Smarthistory images…

Sutton Hoo Ship Burial (video)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.7.2: The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial (early Anglo-Saxon) at The British Museum including: Buckles and assorted pieces, Sword belt, Helmet, Great Gold Buckle, Purse Lid, Shoulder-clasps, early 7th century, gold, millefiori, and garnet as well as Bowl and spoons (Byzantine), c. 500-650, Coins (Merovingian Frank), n.d., gold, Drinking-horns, early 7th century, and the Anastasius Platter (Byzantine), c. 491-518, silver. found in Suffolk, England.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

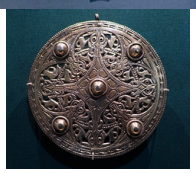













Figure 13.6.7.26: More Smarthistory images…

The Sutton Hoo purse lid

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

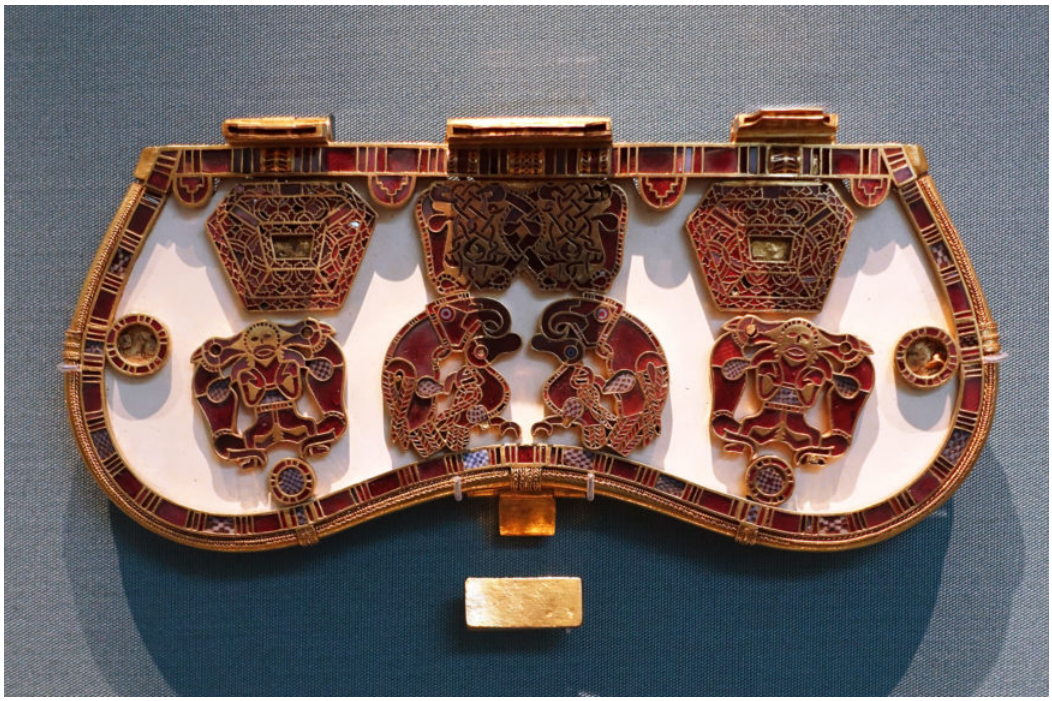


Figure 13.6.7.27: Purse lid from the Sutton Hoo ship burial, early 7th century, gold, garnet and millefiori, 19 x 8.3 cm (excluding hinges) (The British Museum) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Purse lid from the Sutton Hoo ship burial

Wealth, and its public display, was probably used to establish status in early Anglo-Saxon society much as it is today. The purse lid from Sutton Hoo is the richest of its kind yet found.



Figure 13.6.7.28: Sutton Hoo shoulder-clasps (Early Anglo-Saxon), late 6th–early 7th century, gold, millefiori, and garnet, 5.4 x 12.7 x .5 cm (The British Museum) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The lid was made to cover a leather pouch containing gold coins. It hung by three hinged straps from the waist belt, and was fastened by a gold buckle. The lid had totally decayed but was probably made of whalebone—a precious material in early Anglo-Saxon England. Seven gold, garnet cloisonné and millefiori glass plaques were set into it. These are made with a combination of very large garnets and small ones, deliberately used to pick out details of the imagery. This combination could link the purse-lid and the fine shoulder clasps, which were also found in the ship burial, to the workshop of a single master-craftsman. It is possible that he made the entire suite of gold and garnet fittings discovered in Mound 1 as a single commission.



Figure 13.6.7.29: Decorative plaques (detail), Purse lid from the Sutton Hoo ship burial, early 7th century, gold, garnet and millefiori, 19 x 8.3 cm (excluding hinges) (The British Museum) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The plaques include twinned images of a bird-of-prey swooping on a duck-like bird and a man standing heroically between two beasts. These images must have had deep significance for the Anglo-Saxons, but it is impossible for us to interpret them. The fierce creatures are perhaps a powerful evocation of strength and courage, qualities that a successful leader of men must possess. Strikingly similar images of a man between beasts are known from Scandinavia.

Suggested readings:

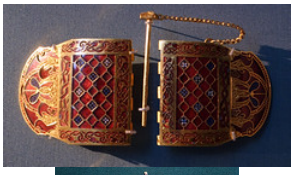
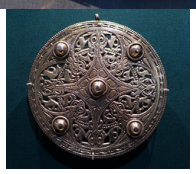
G. Williams, *Treasures from Sutton Hoo*, (London, British Museum Press, 2011).

A.C. Evans, *The Sutton Hoo ship burial*, revised edition (London, The British Museum Press, 1994).

R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo ship burial*, vol. 2: arms, armour and regalia (London, The British Museum Press, 1978).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



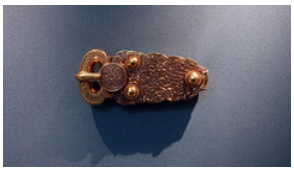








Figure 13.6.7.30: More Smarthistory images…

The Sutton Hoo helmet

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Figure 13.6.7.31: The Sutton Hoo helmet, early 7th century, iron and tinned copper alloy helmet, consisting of many pieces of iron, now built into a reconstruction, 31.8 x 21.5 cm (as restored) (The British Museum) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

This extraordinary helmet is very rare. Only four complete helmets are known from Anglo-Saxon England: at Sutton Hoo, Benty Grange, Wollaston and York.

Archaeologists discovered this helmet lying in the tomb. It was an amazing, rare find. It was also very unusual because it had a face-mask. Look at the nose, eyebrows and holes for the warrior's eyes. Can you see a dragon with outstretched wings, made up by the two bushy eyebrows, nose and mustache?

A reconstruction



Figure **13.6.7.32**: Replica of the helmet made by the Royal Armories (The British Museum) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

When found, the magnificent helmet from the Anglo-Saxon grave at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, was in hundreds of pieces. The burial chamber had collapsed and reduced the helmet to a pile of fragments. Pieces of rusted iron were mixed up with pieces of tinned bronze, all so corroded as to be barely recognizable. By precisely locating the remaining fragments and assembling them as if in a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, conservators have reconstructed the helmet. A complete replica made by the Royal Armories shows how the original would have looked.



Figure **13.6.7.33**: Replica of the helmet made by the Royal Armories (detail) (The British Museum) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The helmet comprised an iron cap, neck guard, cheek pieces and face mask. Its form derives from Late Roman cavalry helmets. The helmet's surfaces were covered with tinned copper alloy panels that gave it a bright, silvery appearance. Many of these panels were decorated with interlacing animal ornament ("Style II") and heroic scenes of warriors. One scene shows two men wearing horned head-gear, holding swords and spears. The other shows a mounted warrior trampling a fallen enemy, who in turn stabs the horse. The rider carries a spear which is supported by a curious small figure, standing on the rump of his horse – perhaps a supernatural helper. Similar scenes were popular in the Germanic world at this time.



Figure **13.6.7.34**: Face mask (detail), The Sutton Hoo helmet, early 7th century, (The British Museum) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The face-mask is the helmet's most remarkable feature. It works as a visual puzzle, with two possible "solutions." The first is of a human face, comprising eye-sockets, eyebrows, mustache, mouth and a nose with two small holes so that the wearer could breathe. The copper alloy eyebrows are inlaid with silver wire and tiny garnets. Each ends in a gilded boar's head – a symbol of strength and courage appropriate for a warrior. The second "solution" is of a bird or dragon flying upwards. Its tail is formed by the mustache, its body by the nose, and its wings by the eyebrows. Its head extends from between the wings, and lays nose-to-nose with another animal head at the end of a low iron crest that runs over the helmet's cap.

An earlier restoration



Figure **13.6.7.35**: First restoration, Restoring the Sutton Hoo helmet © Trustees of the British Museum

The first restoration of the helmet (above) was completed by 1947, but continuing research showed it to be inaccurate and it was dismantled in 1968. The new restoration relied entirely on the evidence of the fragments themselves and not on preconceived ideas – the aim of all modern archaeological conservation. It took the conservator a year of painstaking study and experimentation with more than 500 fragments.

The pieces had to be identified and matched by their thickness, texture and traces of the design in the corrosion. As months passed, vital discoveries were made about the helmet's structure. The cap size and shape were established by joining fragments from the top and one of the sides; a small riveted plate on one piece provided evidence for the attachment of the ear-flaps. The discovery of the position of a third dragon's head completed the dramatic face mask.

A temporary support was made (a plaster dome covered with modeling clay) on which the fragments were held with long pins while they were joined. The missing areas were filled with jute textile, stiffened with adhesive and skimmed with plaster. These infills were colored brown to match the iron.

Though rusted now, the helmet would originally have been a bright silvery color. The tinned bronze panels, the gilding and the garnets would have given it original, the striking appearance we see in the reconstruction.

A precious survival, the Sutton Hoo helmet has become an icon of the early medieval period.



Video **13.6.7.3**

Suggested readings:

G. Williams, *Treasures from Sutton Hoo*, (London, British Museum Press, 2011).

A.C. Evans, *The Sutton Hoo ship burial, revised edition* (London, The British Museum Press, 1994).

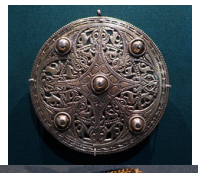
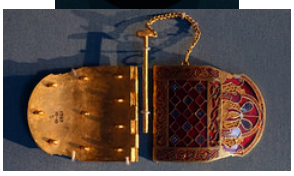
R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo ship burial, vol. 2: arms, armor and regalia* (London, The British Museum Press, 1978).

Sutton Hoo: Anglo-Saxon ship-burial on the Google Cultural Institute

Sutton Hoo at the British Museum

© Trustees of the British Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









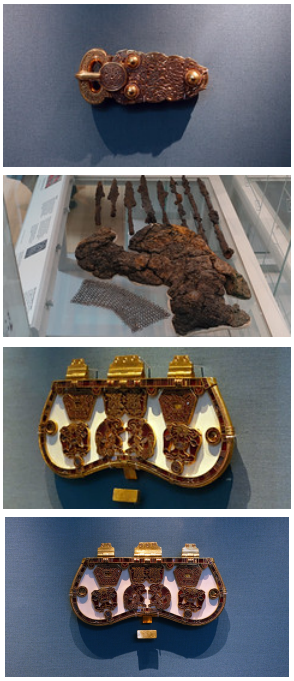
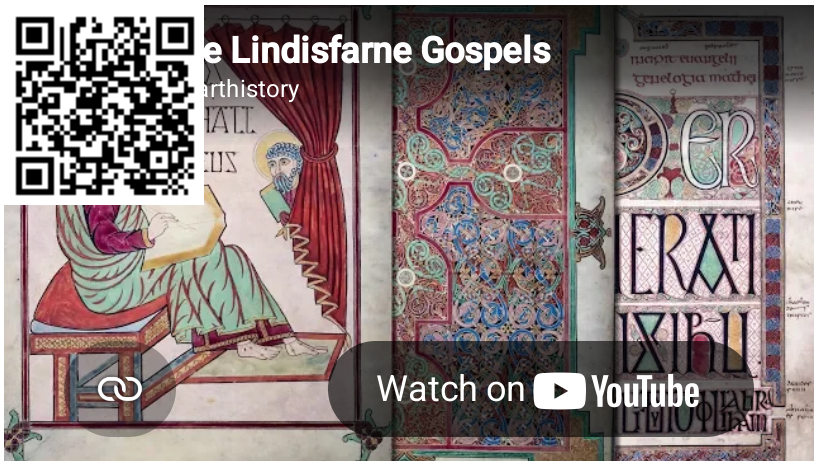


Figure **13.6.7.36**: More Smarthistory images…

The Lindisfarne Gospels

by DR. KATHLEEN DOYLE AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY and LOUISA WOODVILLE



Video **13.6.7.4**: The Lindisfarne Gospels, c. 700 (Northumbria), 340 x 250 mm (British Library, Cotton MS Nero D IV) © 2019 British Library, used by permission Speakers: Dr. Kathleen Doyle, Lead Curator, Illuminated manuscripts, British Library and Dr. Steven Zucker

A medieval monk takes up a quill pen, fashioned from a goose feather, and dips it into a rich, black ink made from soot. Seated on a wooden chair in the scriptorium of Lindisfarne, an island off the coast of Northumberland in England, he stares hard at the words from a manuscript made in Italy. This book is his exemplar, the codex (a bound book, made from sheets of paper or parchment) from which he is to copy the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.



Figure **13.6.7.37**: Lindisfarne Gospels, St. Matthew (detail), Second Initial Page, f.29, early 8th century (British Library)

For about the next six years, he will copy this Latin. He will illuminate the gospel text with a weave of fantastic images— snakes that twist themselves into knots or birds, their curvaceous and overlapping forms creating the illusion of a third dimension into which a viewer can lose him or herself in meditative contemplation.

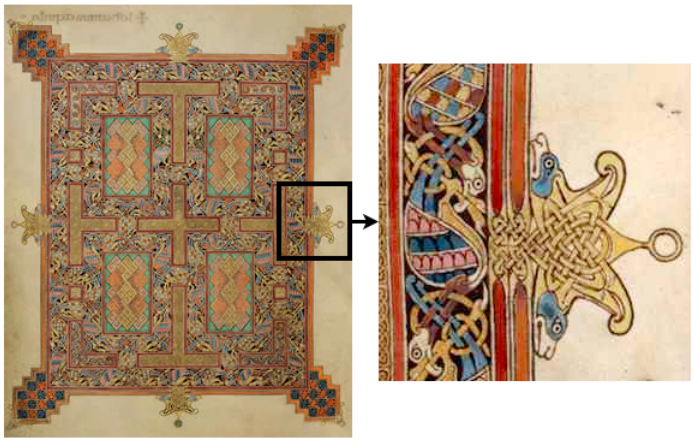


Figure **13.6.7.38**: Lindisfarne Gospels, John cross-carpet page f 210v (British Library)

The book is a spectacular example of Insular or Hiberno-Saxon art—works produced in the British Isles between 500-900 C.E., a time of devastating invasions and political upheavals. Monks read from it during rituals at their Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island, a Christian community that safeguarded the shrine of St Cuthbert, a bishop who died in 687 and whose relics were thought to have curative and miracle-working powers.

A Northumbrian monk, very likely the bishop Eadfrith, illuminated the codex in the early 8th century. Two-hundred and fifty-nine written and recorded leaves include full-page portraits of each evangelist; highly ornamental “cross-carpet” pages, each of which features a large cross set against a background of ordered and yet teeming ornamentation; and the Gospels themselves, each introduced by an historiated initial. The codex also includes sixteen pages of canon tables set in arcades. Here correlating passages from each evangelist are set side-by-side, enabling a reader to compare narrations.

In 635 C.E. Christian monks from the Scottish island of Iona built a priory in Lindisfarne. More than a hundred and fifty years later, in 793, Vikings from the north attacked and pillaged the monastery, but survivors managed to transport the Gospels safely to Durham, a town on the Northumbrian coast about 75 miles west of its original location.

We glean this information from the manuscript itself, thanks to Aldred, a 10th-century priest from a priory at Durham. Aldred’s colophon—an inscription that relays information about the book’s production—informs us that Eadfrith, a bishop of Lindisfarne in 698 who died in 721, created the manuscript to honor God and St. Cuthbert. Aldred also inscribed a vernacular translation between the lines of the Latin text, creating the earliest known Gospels written in a form of English.



Figure **13.6.7.39**: Lindisfarne Gospels, St Matthew, Cross-Carpet page, f.26v (British Library)

Matthew's cross-carpet page exemplifies Eadfrith's exuberance and genius. A mesmerizing series of repetitive knots and spirals is dominated by a centrally-located cross. One can imagine devout monks losing themselves in the swirls and eddies of color during meditative contemplation of its patterns.

Compositionally, Eadfrith stacked wine-glass shapes horizontally and vertically against his intricate weave of knots. On closer inspection many of these knots reveal themselves as snake-like creatures curling in and around tubular forms, mouths clamping down on their bodies. Chameleon-like, their bodies change colors: sapphire blue here, verdigris green there, and sandy gold in between. The sanctity of the cross, outlined in red with arms outstretched and pressing against the page edges, stabilizes the background's gyrating activity and turns the repetitive energy into a meditative force.



Figure **13.6.7.40**: Lindisfarne Gospels, St Luke, incipit page, f.139 (British Library)

Likewise, Luke's incipit (incipit: it begins) page teems with animal life, spiraled forms, and swirling vortexes. In many cases Eadfrith's characteristic knots reveal themselves as snakes that move stealthily along the confines of a letter's boundaries.

Blue pin-wheeled shapes rotate in repetitive circles, caught in the vortex of a large Q that forms Luke's opening sentence—Quoniam quidem multi conati sunt ordinare narrationem. (Translation: As many have taken it in hand to set forth in order.)



Figure 13.6.7.41: Lindisfarne Gospels, St Luke, incipit page, f.139 (British Library)

Birds also abound. One knot enclosed in a tall rectangle on the far right unravels into a blue heron's chest shaped like a large comma. Eadfrith repeats this shape vertically down the column, cleverly twisting the comma into a cat's forepaw at the bottom. The feline, who has just consumed the eight birds that stretch vertically up from its head, presses off this appendage acrobatically to turn its body 90 degrees; it ends up staring at the words RENARRATIONEM (part of the phrase -re narrationem).

Eadfrith also has added a host of tiny red dots that envelop words, except when they don't—the letters "NIAM" of "quoniam" are composed of the vellum itself, the negative space now asserting itself as four letters.



Figure 13.6.7.42: Lindesfarne Gospels, St. Luke, portrait page (137v) (British Library)

Luke's incipit page is in marked contrast to his straightforward portrait page. Here Eadfrith seats the curly-haired, bearded evangelist on a red-cushioned stool against an unornamented background. Luke holds a quill in his right hand, poised to write words on a scroll unfurling from his lap. His feet hover above a tray supported by red legs. He wears a purple robe streaked with red, one that we can easily imagine on a late fourth or fifth century Roman philosopher. The gold halo behind Luke's head indicates his divinity. Above his halo flies a blue-winged calf, its two eyes turned toward the viewer with its body in profile. The bovine clasps a green parallelogram between two forelegs, a reference to the Gospel.

According to the historian Bede from the nearby monastery in Monkwearmouth (d. 735), this calf, or ox, symbolizes Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Bede assigns symbols for the other three evangelists as well, which Eadfrith duly includes in their respective

portraits: Matthew's is a man, suggesting the human aspect of Christ; Mark's the lion, symbolizing the triumphant and divine Christ of the Resurrection; and John's the eagle, referring to Christ's second coming.

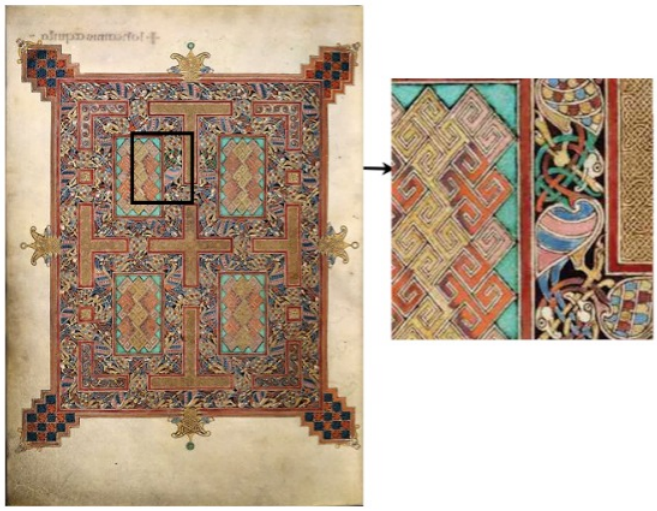


Figure **13.6.7.43**: Lindisfarne Gospels, John's cross-carpet page, folio 210v. (British Library)

A dense interplay of stacked birds teem underneath the crosses of the carpet page that opens John's Gospel. One bird, situated in the upper left-hand quadrant, has blue-and-pink stripes in contrast to others that sport registers of feathers. Stripes had a negative association to the medieval mind, appearing chaotic and disordered. The insane wore stripes, as did prostitutes, criminals, jugglers, sorcerers, and hangmen. Might Eadfrith be warning his viewers that evil lurks hidden in the most unlikely of places? Or was Eadfrith himself practicing humility in avoiding perfection?

All in all, the variety and splendor of the Lindisfarne Gospels are such that even in reproduction, its images astound. Artistic expression and inspired execution make this codex a high point of early medieval art.

Additional resources:

Sacred Texts: the Lindisfarne Gospels at the British Library

Lindisfarne Gospels: an Introduction from the British Library

Lindisfarne Gospels (BBC)

Under the microscope with the Lindisfarne Gospels (British Library Collection Care blog)

Codex Amiatinus, the oldest complete Latin Bible

by DR. CLAIRE BREAY, THE BRITISH LIBRARY and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.7.5**: Codex Amiatinus, before 716, Wearmouth-Jarrow, c. 505 x 340 mm (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, MS Amiatino 1) Speakers: Dr. Claire Breay, Head of Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

This manuscript in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana

This manuscript in the British Library's Anglo-Saxons Kingdoms exhibition

The Codex Amiatinus and the St Cuthbert Gospel, British Library essay

The Utrecht Psalter and its influence

by DR. KATHLEEN DOYLE AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.7.6**: The Utrecht Psalter, c. 825, Hautvilliers, near Reims, France, 380 x 310 mm (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, MS 32, ff. 7v–8r), courtesy Universiteitsbibliothek, Utrecht; The Harley Psalter, early 11th century, Christ Church, Canterbury, 380 x 310 mm (British Library, BL, Harley MS 603, ff. 7v 8r), © 2019 British Library, used by permission; and the The Eadwine Psalter, c. 1150, Christ Church, Canterbury, 460 x 330 mm (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 17.1, ff. 23v–24r) A conversation with Dr. Kathleen Doyle, Lead Curator, Illuminated Manuscripts, British Library and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

This manuscript in the Utrecht University Library

This manuscript in the British Library's Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms exhibition

The Harley Psalter at the British Library

13.6.7: Early Medieval is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.7: Early Medieval** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.8: Carolingian

Carolingian art

Charlemagne, King of the Franks and later Holy Roman Emperor, instigated a cultural revival known as the Carolingian Renaissance.

780 - 900 C.E.

Carolingian art, an introduction

by DR. NANCY ROSS

Charlemagne, King of the Franks and later Holy Roman Emperor, instigated a cultural revival known as the Carolingian Renaissance. This revival used Constantine's Christian empire as its model, which flourished between 306 and 337. Constantine was the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity and left behind an impressive legacy of military strength and artistic patronage.

Charlemagne saw himself as the new Constantine and instigated this revival by writing his Admonitio generalis (789) and Epistola de litteris colendis (c.794-797). In the Admonitio generalis, Charlemagne legislates church reform, which he believes will make his subjects more moral and in the Epistola de litteris colendis, a letter to Abbot Baugulf of Fulda, he outlines his intentions for cultural reform. Most importantly, he invited the greatest scholars from all over Europe to come to court and give advice for his renewal of politics, church, art and literature.



Figure **13.6.8.1**: Odo of Metz, Palatine Chapel Interior, Aachen, 805 (photo: **Holly Hayes**)

Carolingian art survives in manuscripts, sculpture, architecture and other religious artifacts produced during the period 780-900. These artists worked exclusively for the emperor, members of his court, and the bishops and abbots associated with the court. Geographically, the revival extended through present-day France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria.

Charlemagne commissioned the architect Odo of Metz to construct a palace and chapel in Aachen, Germany. The chapel was consecrated in 805 and is known as the Palatine Chapel. This space served as the seat of Charlemagne's power and still houses his throne today.

The Palatine Chapel is octagonal with a dome, recalling the shape of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy (completed in 548), but was built with barrel and groin vaults, which are distinctively late Roman methods of construction. The chapel is perhaps the best surviving example of Carolingian architecture and probably influenced the design of later European palace chapels.

Charlemagne had his own scriptorium, or center for copying and illuminating manuscripts, at Aachen. Under the direction of Alcuin of York, this scriptorium produced a new script known as Carolingian miniscule. Prior to this development, writing styles or scripts in Europe were localized and difficult to read. A book written in one part of Europe could not be easily read in another, even when the scribe and reader were both fluent in Latin. Knowledge of Carolingian miniscule spread from Aachen was universally adopted, allowing for clearer written communication within Charlemagne's empire. Carolingian miniscule was the most widely used script in Europe for about 400 years.

Figurative art from this period is easy to recognize. Unlike the flat, two-dimensional work of Early Christian and Early Byzantine artists, Carolingian artists sought to restore the third dimension. They used classical drawings as their models and tried to create more convincing illusions of space.



Figure **13.6.8.2**: St. Mark from the *Godescalc Gospel Lectionary*, folio 1v., c. 781-83

This development is evident in tracing author portraits in illuminated manuscripts. The Godescalc Gospel Lectionary, commisioned by Charlemagne and his wife Hildegard, was made circa 781-83 during his reign as King of the Franks and before the beginning of the Carolingian Renaissance. In the portrait of St. Mark, the artist employs typical Early Byzantine artistic conventions. The face is heavily modeled in brown, the drapery folds fall in stylized patterns and there is little or no shading. The seated position of the evangelist would be difficult to reproduce in real life, as there are spatial inconsistencies. The left leg is shown in profile and the other leg is show straight on. This author portrait is typical of its time.

The *Ebbo Gospels* were made c. 816-35 in the Benedictine Abbey of Hautvillers for Ebbo, Archbishop of Rheims. The author portrait of St. Mark is characteristic of Carolingian art and the Carolingian Renaissance. The artist used distinctive frenzied lines to create the illusion of the evangelist's body shape and position. The footstool sits at an awkward unrealistic angle, but there are numerous attempts by the artist to show the body as a three-dimensional object in space. The right leg is tucked under the chair and the artist tries to show his viewer, through the use of curved lines and shading, that the leg has form. There is shading and consistency of perspective. The evangelist sitting on the chair strikes a believable pose.

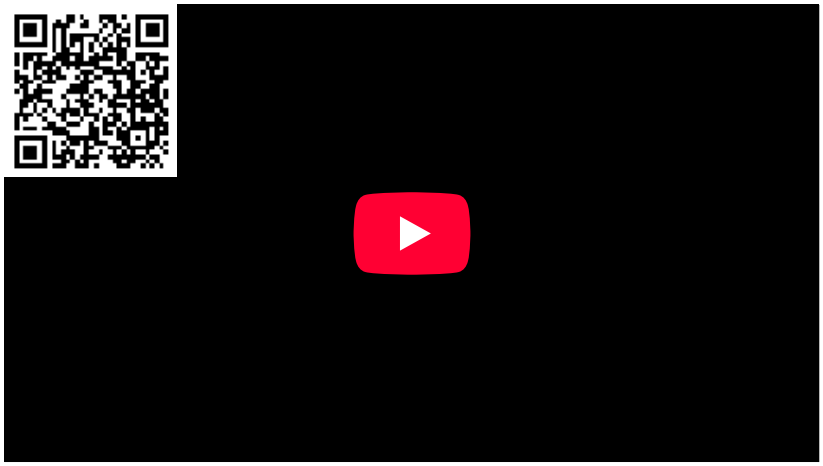


Figure **13.6.8.3**: St. Mark from the Ebbo Gospels, folio 18v., c. 816-35

Charlemagne, like Constantine before him, left behind an almost mythic legacy. The Carolingian Renaissance marked the last great effort to revive classical culture before the Late Middle Ages. Charlemagne's empire was led by his successors until the late ninth century. In early tenth century, the Ottonians rose to power and espoused different artistic ideals.

Charlemagne (part 1 of 2): An introduction

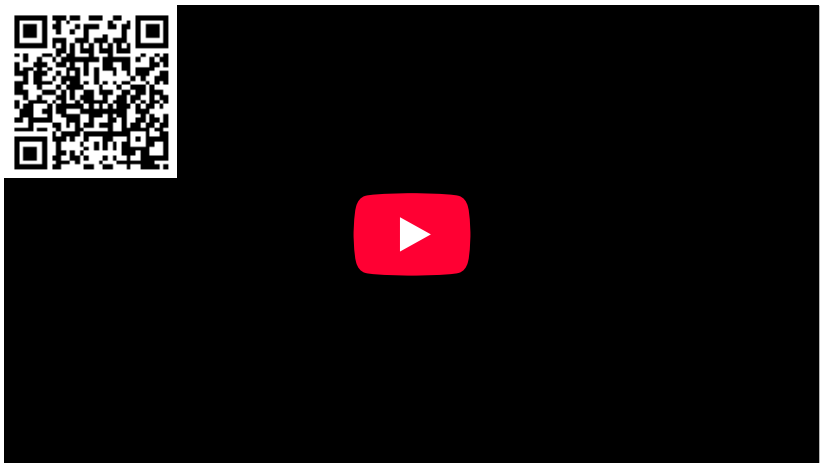
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.8.1**: A brief overview of Charlemagne and his coronation in 800.

Charlemagne (part 2 of 2): The Carolingian revival

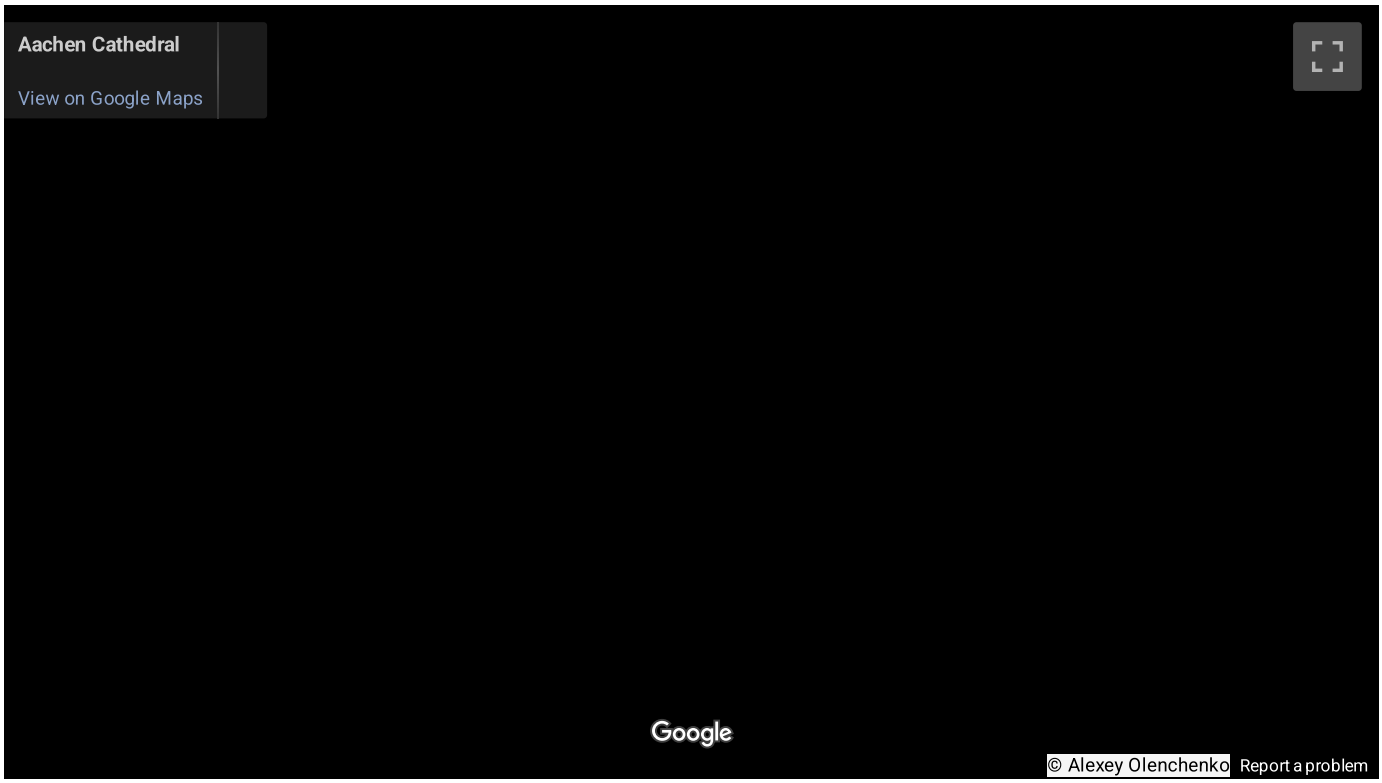
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.8.2**: A brief introduction to Charlemagne's military campaigns and the cultural revival that he supported.

Palatine Chapel, Aachen

by DR. JENNIFER FREEMAN



Carolingian art and the classical revival

The Palatine Chapel at Aachen is the most well-known and best-preserved Carolingian building. It is also an excellent example of the **classical revival style** that characterized the architecture of Charlemagne's reign. The exact dates of the chapel's construction are unclear, but we do know that this palace chapel was dedicated to Christ and the Virgin Mary by Pope Leo III in a ceremony in 805, five years after Leo promoted Charlemagne from king to Holy Roman Emperor. The dedication took place about twenty years after Charlemagne moved the capital of the Frankish kingdom from Ravenna, in what is now Italy, to Aachen, in what is now Germany.



Figure **13.6.8.4**: Map with present-day nations

In the construction of his chapel, Charlemagne made several strategic choices that linked his building to the legacies of ancient Rome and the fourth-century emperor Constantine. The Emperor Constantine was important because he was the first Christian emperor of Rome. The location for the new building was selected because it was an historic Roman site with hot springs that were used for bathing. The materials used for the chapel also invoked

Rome; among them were columns and marble stones that Pope Hadrian permitted Charlemagne to transfer from Rome and Ravenna to Aachen around the year 798. A **relic** of the cloak of St. Martin was installed in the church at its consecration—the choice of a fourth-century Roman soldier who had a vision of Jesus after sharing his cloak with a beggar was another way to reinforce the link of Charlemagne's rule with Rome.

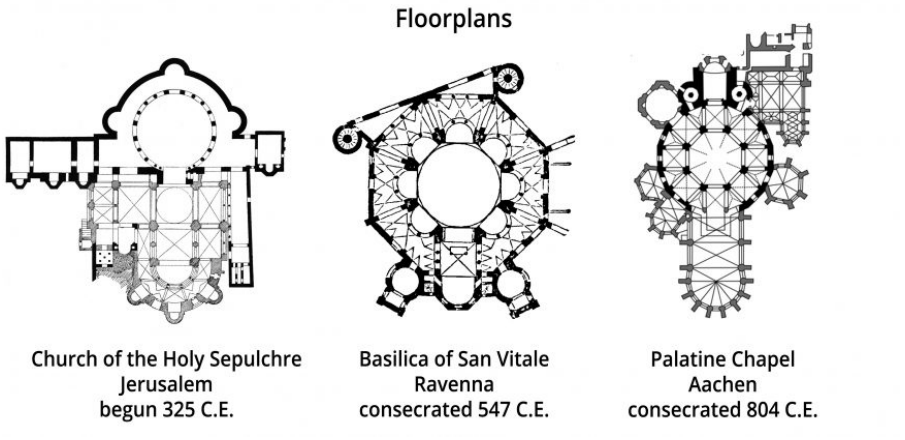


Figure **13.6.8.5**

Two important models (the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and San Vitale in Ravenna)

The chapel's classical style also referenced its Roman imperial lineage, particularly in its imitation of two significant Christian buildings: the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and **San Vitale** in Ravenna. The Holy Sepulchre's building program was started in 325 C.E. by Constantine's mother, Saint Helena, and completed in 335. The centralized plan and surrounding ambulatory and upper gallery is echoed in the plan of the Palatine Chapel. However, the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is composed of two main buildings—in addition to the rotunda that covers the tomb is a similar structure over the traditionally-accepted location of the crucifixion. The Holy Sepulchre may also have been the inspiration for the lion-head knockers of the chapel's bronze doors (below).



Figure **13.6.8.6**: Detail of door, Palatine Chapel, Aachen (photo: **Bojin** CC BY-SA 3.0)

Because it didn't receive extensive additions like the Holy Sepulchre, the San Vitale Chapel at Ravenna is probably the best comparison for what the Palatine Chapel would have looked like before its Gothic renovations. San Vitale is a small octagonal church, with a centralized plan and a two-story ambulatory (below).

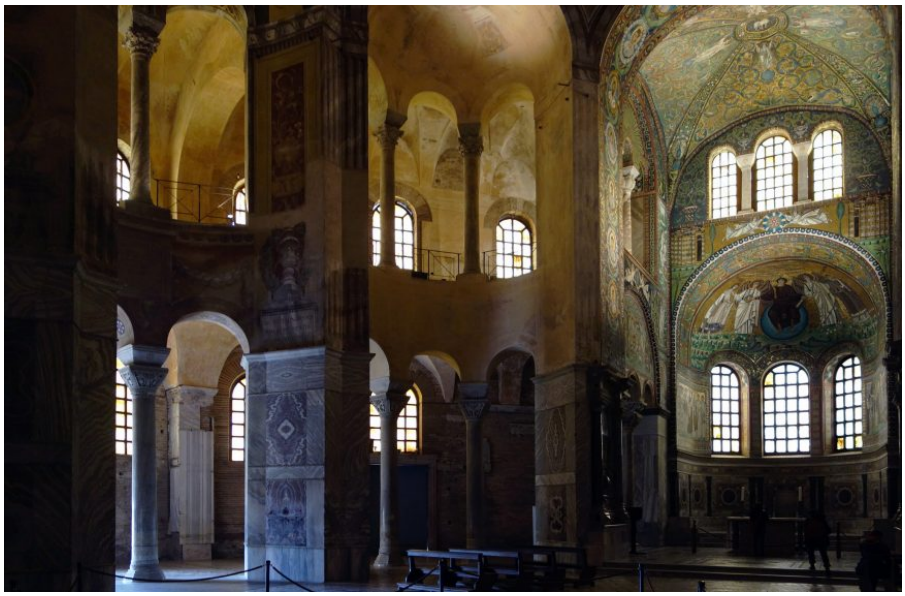


Figure **13.6.8.7**: San Vitale, Ravenna, begun in 526 under Ostrogothic rule, consecrated in 547, completed 548

The octagonal plan of the Palatine Chapel (see plans above) not only recalled that of its two most significant models, but also participated in the tradition of early Christian mausoleums and baptisteries, where the eight sides were understood to be symbolic of regeneration—referencing Christ's resurrection eight days after Palm Sunday. Its original dome was also based on classical models and bore an apocalyptic mosaic program, consisting of the *agnus dei*, or Lamb of God (which is, symbolically, Jesus Christ), surrounded by the tetramorph (symbols of the four Gospel writers) and the twenty-four elders described in Revelation 4:4. The *agnus dei* image was later obstructed by the installation of a chandelier.

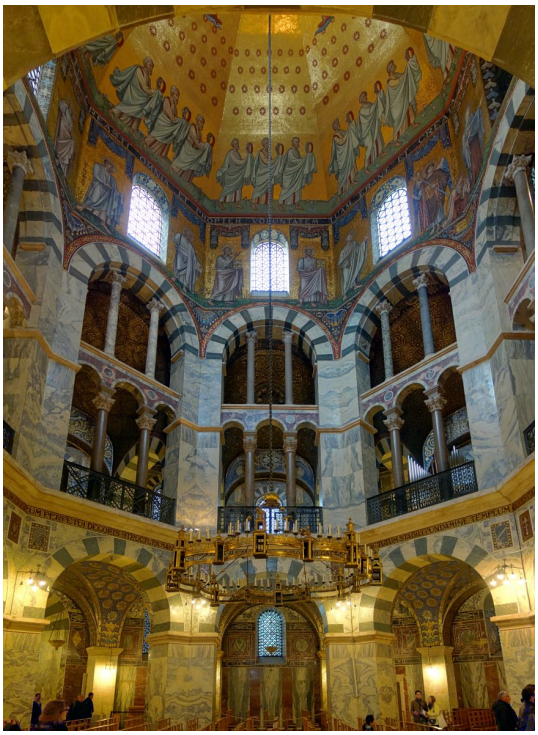


Figure **13.6.8.8**: Palatine Chapel Interior (photo: **Velvet** CC BY-SA 3.0)

The octagonal centralized plan of the Palatine Chapel is unique among Carolingian chapels; this may have been because, unlike a longitudinal plan which created a sense of processional direction toward the apse and altar, a centralized plan did not place special emphasis on the altar (and therefore may not have been as effective liturgically for the purpose of a chapel). That said, it does seem to have established an association of Charlemagne with Christ; some scholars believe that Charlemagne's marble throne (below) was originally located in the center of the octagon on the first floor, that is, directly below the image of the *agnus dei*, thereby creating a kind of visual link between the emperor and the Christ.

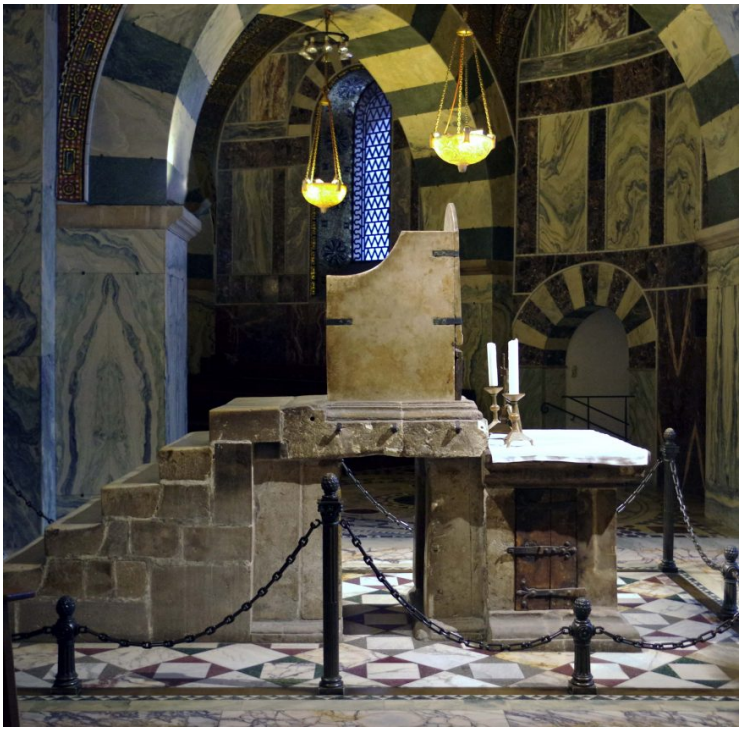


Figure 13.6.8.9: Charlemagne's throne, Palatine Chapel, Aachen (photo: **Berthold Werner** CC BY-SA 3.0)

By presenting his capital at Aachen as a new Rome and himself as a new Constantine through the careful appropriation of late antique artwork and architecture, Charlemagne was not simply making a positive assertion about himself as ruler; he was also implicitly contrasting his reign with that of the Eastern Empire (the Byzantines), a negative stance that was also expressed around the same time in the *Opus Caroli Regis contra Synodum* (i.e., "*The Work of King Charles against the Synod*), a detailed response to the Second Council of Nicaea, written on his behalf by Theodulf of Orléans.

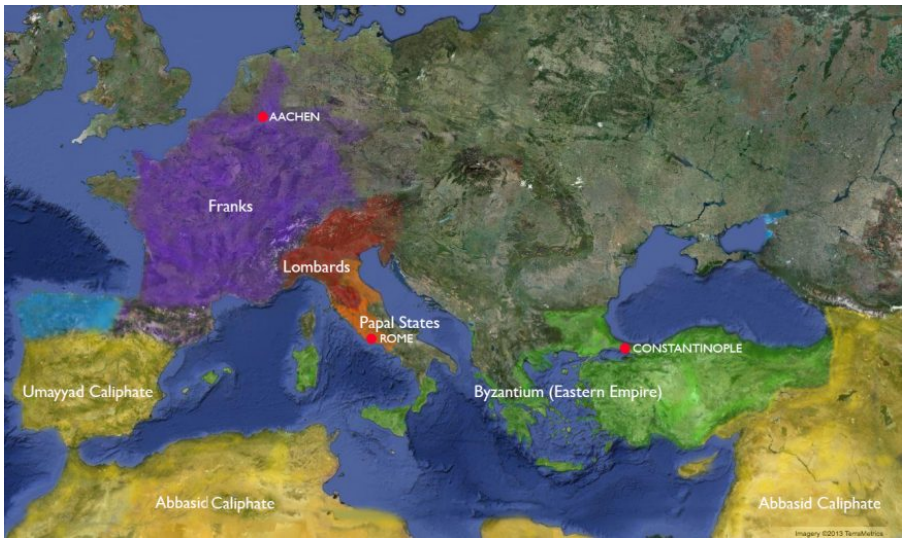


Figure 13.6.8.10: Europe before 774

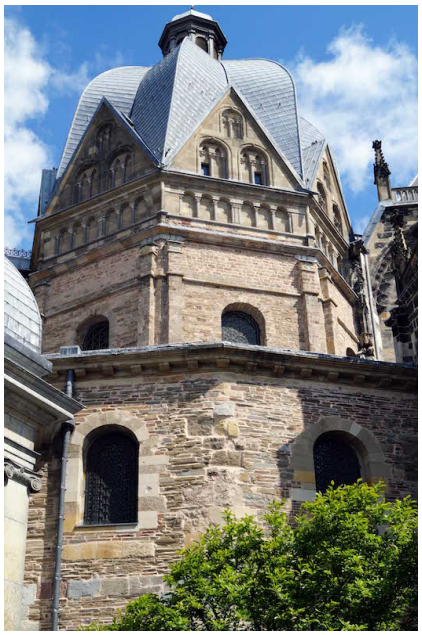


Figure **13.6.8.11**: Palatine Chapel exterior, Aachen, consecrated 805, Carolingian structure visible (lower two stories) (photo: CaS2000, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Charlemagne's body was interred in the Palatine Chapel after his death in 814. The building would continue to be used for coronation ceremonies for another 700 years—well into the sixteenth century.

Major additions to the chapel began in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, significantly changing the building's profile and footprint with exterior chapels. After several fires in the seventeenth century, the dome was rebuilt and heightened.

Additional resources:

Carolingian Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Matthew in the Coronation Gospels and Ebbo Gospels

by DR. JENNIFER FREEMAN

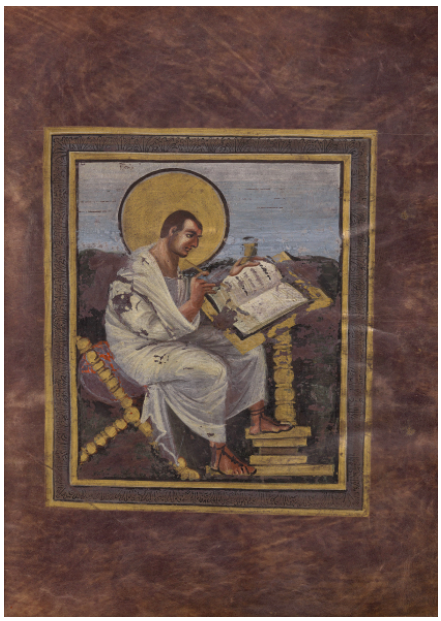


Figure **13.6.8.12**: Saint Matthew, folio 15 recto of the *Coronation Gospels* (Gospel Book of Charlemagne), from Aachen, Germany, c. 800-810, ink and tempera on vellum (Kaiserliche Schatzkammer, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

According to legend, the Vienna *Coronation Gospels* (c. 795) were discovered in Charlemagne's tomb within the Palatine Chapel in the year 1000 by Otto III; the emperor had apparently been buried enthroned, that is, sitting up, with the Gospels in his lap. A gospel book is a book containing the books of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who each offer their story of Christ's life and death.

The manuscript is clearly a luxury object, written in gold ink on purple-dyed vellum. Characteristic of the **Carolingian Renaissance**, the artists of the Coronation Gospels were interested in the revival of classical styles, which effectively linked Charlemagne's rule to that of the 4th century ancient Roman emperor **Constantine**. The classical style is evident in the poses and clothing of the four evangelists, or Gospel writers, who recall images of ancient Roman philosophers (for example, **this one** from The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Charlemagne probably had this Gospel book made before he was crowned emperor. It is such an impressive book that it was used in imperial coronation services from about the twelfth to the sixteenth century.

Following the creation of the Coronation Gospels, the *Ebbo Gospels* (c. 816-35) are most famous for their distinctive style in contrast to contemporary Carolingian illuminated manuscripts. The *Ebbo Gospels* were made for Ebbo the Archbishop of Rheims, which was one of the major sites for manuscript production at the time.



Figure **13.6.8.13**: Saint Matthew, folio 18 verso of the *Ebbo Gospels* (Gospel Book of the Archbishop of Reims) from Hautvillers, France, c. 816-35, ink and tempera on vellum, 10 1/4 x 8 1/4 (Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay)

While the author portraits in the *Ebbo Gospels* (images of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are consistent with the elements of classical revival (e.g., modeling of figures to make them appear three-dimensional, gradation of the sky, the architecture and furnishings), the style in which the images of the *Ebbo Gospels* are executed is a notable departure. The brushwork of the author portraits can be described as energetic, expressionistic, even frenzied. The artist remains attentive to the use of highlighting and shadow to create three-dimensional forms, but does so with textured rather than smooth modeling, which creates an effect of movement.



Figure **13.6.8.14**: Left: Saint Matthew from the *Coronation Gospels* (Gospel Book of Charlemagne), c. 800-810, ink and tempera on vellum (Kaiserliche Schatzkammer, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); right: Saint Matthew from the *Ebbo Gospels* (Gospel Book of the Archbishop of Reims), c. 816-35, ink and tempera on vellum (Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay)

This energy is conveyed not only in the brushwork, but also in the composition itself. In the *Ebbo Gospels*, Matthew is hunched over as if frantically writing on his (still blank) codex, while Matthew's posture in the *Coronation Gospels* is more upright and relaxed; his pen grazes his chin, as if he is pausing in thought.

The furniture of the two portraits is very similar in appearance—though the seat in the Coronation Gospels seems to be a folding chair, while that of the *Ebbo* is a more-sturdy stool. However, the posture of the Coronation Matthew is stable in contrast to that of *Ebbo*. For example, his right foot rests on the frame of the miniature and his left is flat on the base of his book stand. This miniature is composed of several 45- and 90-degree angles that create a sense of stability and balance. In contrast, the lines in the *Ebbo Gospels*' Matthew are dynamic and lack the same sense of equilibrium. For instance, Matthew's right foot in particular is positioned on the steep, almost vertical, angle of his footrest. Furthermore the book stand is tipped at such a drastic angle that it seems his book will slide right into the viewer's lap. The energy is also expressed in Matthew's face, which is drawn up in a furrowed brow. While the *Coronation* Matthew seems to take a peaceful moment of reflection, the *Ebbo* Matthew appears to be in anguish over his writing (image below), which is directed by his evangelist symbol, the winged man, who instructs him from the upper right hand corner of the image.

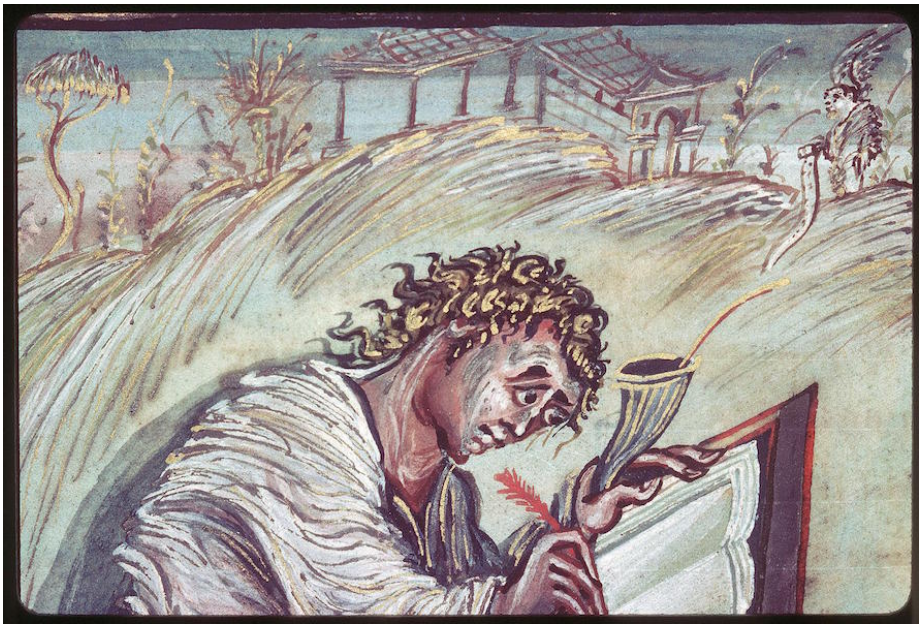


Figure **13.6.8.15**: Detail, Saint Matthew, folio 18 verso of the *Ebbo Gospels* (Gospel Book of the Archbishop of Reims) from Hautvillers, France, c. 816-35, ink and tempera on vellum, 10 1/4 x 8 1/4 (Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay)

Lastly, it should be noted that the *Ebbo Gospels* bear some similarities to the infamous Utrecht Psalter (below), which was also made in Rheims at the Benedictine abbey of Hautvillers around the same time (a psalter is a volume containing the Biblical Book of Psalms, often with other devotional material bound in). The images of the *Utrecht Psalter* are unpainted drawings in brown ink, which are also clearly meant to invoke the style of Late Antiquity. While the sketchy character of the *Utrecht Psalter* is not quite as dramatic as that of the *Ebbo Gospels*, the similarity in style can be seen especially in the classical architecture and the rendering of the winged man at the top of the evangelist's portrait.



Figure **13.6.8.16**: Psalm 44, detail of folio 25 recto of the *Utrecht Psalter*, from Hautviller (near Reims), France, c. 820-835 (University Library, Utrecht)

Additional resources:

Carolingian Art on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

A Carolingian Masterpiece: the Moutier-Grandval Bible from the British Library

Saint Matthew from the Ebbo Gospels

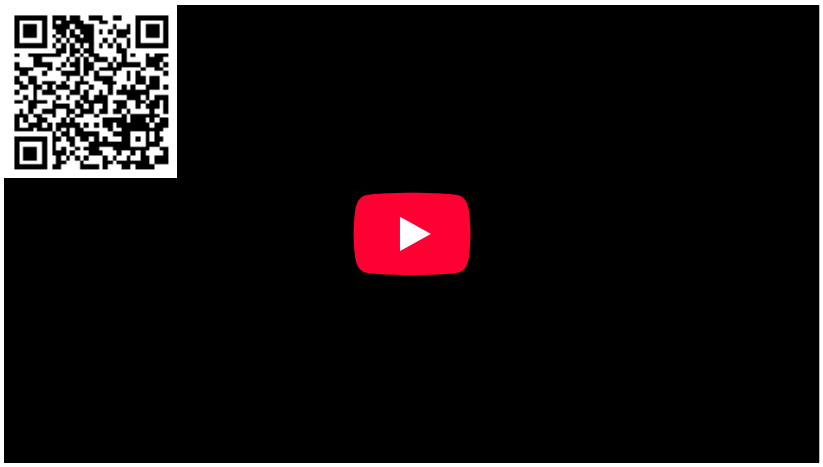
by DR. NANCY ROSS and DR. JENNIFER FREEMAN



Video **13.6.8.3**: *Saint Matthew*, folio 18 verso of the Ebbo Gospels (Gospel Book of the Archbishop of Reims) from Hautvillers (France), c. 816-35, ink and tempera on vellum, 10 1/4″ x 8 1/4″ (Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay)

Lindau Gospels cover

by DR. NANCY ROSS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.8.4**: Jeweled upper cover of the Lindau Gospels, c. 880, Court School of Charles the Bald, 350 x 275 mm, cover may have been made in the Royal Abbey of St. Denis (Morgan Library and Museum, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

No photos

Figure **13.6.8.17**: More Smarthistory images…

Mosaics, Santa Prassede (Praxedes), Rome

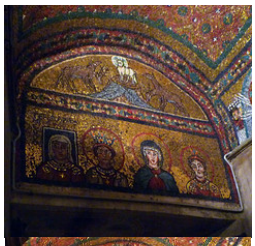
by RICHARD BOWEN, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.8.5**: Mosaics, Santa Prassede, Rome, early 9th century

These mosaics were created during the reign of Pope Paschal. The church is dedicated to Saint Praxedes and her sister Saint Pudentiana, daughters of Saint Pudens. The sisters were martyred because they provided Christian burials for martyrs, against Roman law.

This video was produced in cooperation with our partners at Context Travel.

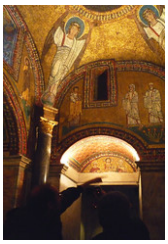


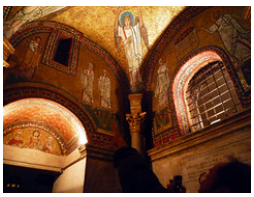












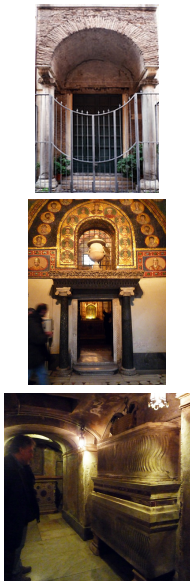


Figure 13.6.8.18: More Smarthistory images…

13.6.8: Carolingian is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.8: Carolingian** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.9: Ottonian

Ottonian art

Otto I lends his name to the “Ottonian” period. The Ottonian kings were determined to define themselves as Roman Emperors in the style of Constantine and Charlemagne.

c. 936 - 1015 C.E.

Ottonian art, an introduction

by VICTORIA VALDES

After Charlemagne’s legacy had begun to die out, the warlike tribes in what is now Germany (then Saxony) banded together to elect a king from among their nobility. In 919 C.E., they chose Henry the Liudolfing, the son of a high-ranking duke, a brilliant military strategist and a well-respected leader. Henry, dubbed “the Fowler” because of his hobby of bird hunting, led the Saxon armies to a number of decisive victories against the Magyars and the Danes. These newly secured borders ushered in a period of immense prosperity anOd artistic productivity for the Saxon empire.



Figure **13.6.9.1**: Detail, *Otto I presenting the Cathedral of Magdeburg*, 962–968, Ottonian, from the Cathedral of Magdeburg, probably made in Milan, northern Italy (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). On this ivory, Otto presents a symbolic model of the church to Christ for his blessing. As a humble servant, Otto is depicted smaller than the company of patron saints.

Henry’s son Otto I (who became emperor in 962) lends his name to the “Ottonian” period. He forged an important alliance with the Pope, which allowed him to be crowned the first official Holy Roman Emperor since 924. This contact with Rome was extremely important to Ottonian artistic development, since each Ottonian king was determined to define himself as a Roman Emperor in the style of Constantine and Charlemagne. This meant perpetuating a highly intellectual court and creating an extensive artistic legacy.

Ottonian art takes a number of traditional medieval forms, including elegantly illuminated manuscripts, lavish metalwork, intricate carving, and Romanesque churches and cathedrals. Perhaps the most famous of the Ottonian artistic innovations is the Saxon Romanesque architecture style, which is marked by a careful attention to balance and mathematical harmony. This focus on geometry is based on the texts de Arithmatica and Ars Geometriae by the 6th century philosopher Boethius. The Ottonians held mathematical sciences in high regard and this is reflected in many of their artistic productions.

The illuminated manuscripts produced by Ottonian “scriptoria,” or monastery painting and writing schools, provide documentation of both Ottonian religious and political customs and the stylistic preferences of the period. Manuscripts were most often produced of religious texts, and usually included a dedication portrait commemorating the book’s creation. The royal or religious donor is usually shown presenting the book to the saint of his or her choice.



Figure 13.6.9.2: Uta Codex (Uta Presents the Codex to Mary), c. 1020, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 13601, f. 2, recto (digitized)

Here we see a powerful abbess, Uta, presenting her codex to St. Mary. Many manuscripts also included a page depicting the artist or scribe of the work, acknowledging that the production of a book required not only money but also artistic labor.



Figure 13.6.9.3: Hillinus Codex (Hillinus Presents the Codex to St. Peter), c.1020, Cologne Dombibliothek, folio 16, verso, manuscript 12 (digitized)

In the Hillinus Codex, a monk presents the codex that he has written or painted (or both!) to St. Peter. The work of the artist and scribe were often one and the same, as can be seen in many of the fantastic decorated initials that begin books or chapters in Ottonian Manuscripts. As you can see from the dedication pictures, the manuscripts in question are often depicted as they were frequently displayed, that is with the text securely enclosed between lavish metal covers.

Ottonian metalwork took many forms, but one of the most common productions was bejeweled book covers for their precious manuscripts. This cover is one of the most expensive that survives; it includes not only numerous jewels, but an ivory carving of the death of the Virgin Mary.



Figure 13.6.9.4: Presentation of Christ, Bronze doors, 1015, commissioned by Bishop Bernward for Saint Michael's, Hildesheim (Germany) (photo: Holly Hayes, by permission)

On a larger scale, clerics like Bernward of Hildesheim cast his 15-foot doors depicting the fall and redemption of mankind out of single pieces of bronze (see the video in this tutorial). This was an enormous undertaking, and the process was so complex that it would not be replicated until the Renaissance.

For a modern viewer, Ottonian art can be a little difficult to understand. The depictions of people and places don't conform to a naturalistic style, and the symbolism is often obscure. When you look at Ottonian art, keep in mind that the aim for these artists was not to create something that looked "realistic," but rather to convey abstract concepts, many of which are deeply philosophical in nature. The focus on symbolism can also be one of the most fascinating aspects of studying Ottonian art, since you can depend on each part of the compositions to mean something specific. The more time you spend on each composition, the more rewarding discoveries emerge.

Additional resources:

Ottonian Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Gospel Book from Bamberg Cathedral (Reichenau Gospel)

Gospel Book of Otto III

by DR. ANDREAS PETZOLD



Figure 13.6.9.5: Double page opening: Provinces Bringing Tribute (f.23v.) and Ruler Portrait of Otto III (f.24) *Gospels of Otto III*, c. 1000, each page 33.4 x 24.2 cm, ink, gold, paint, parchment (Munich, Bayerische Stattsbibliothek, Clm.4453)



Figure 13.6.9.6: St. Luke, *Gospels of Otto III* (Munich, Bayerische Stattsbibliothek, Clm.4453)

The double page opening of the ruler portrait of Otto III (f.24, above right) and the accompanying image of provinces bringing tribute (f.23v, above left) is taken from the *Gospels of Otto III* (Munich, Bayerische Stattsbibliothek, Clm.4453), one of the most magnificent manuscripts to have come down to us from the early medieval period. It is thought to have been made about the year 1000 at the Benedictine monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance where Austria, Switzerland and Germany converge and belongs to a group of stylistically related manuscripts from the monastery known as the Liuthar group. The monk Liuthar is represented in another gospel-book made for Otto III that is now in the cathedral treasury at Aachen (Aachen, Domschatzkammer, G25). Liuthar is now thought to have been a scribe rather than an artist but the scribe was usually the main co-ordinating figure for a manuscript project.

The pages of the *Gospels of Otto III* manuscript measure 334 by 242 millimeters and are made of parchment. The script is written in ink, with gold initials, and the manuscript is extensively illustrated with portraits of the four evangelists (the authors of the four gospels), and scenes from the life of Christ as well as the ruler portrait. The front cover is decorated with precious jewels and inset with a Byzantine ivory representing the dormition or death of the Virgin Mary. The double-page is near the beginning of the manuscript before the gospel texts.



Figure **13.6.9.7**: Charles (detail), Ruler portrait of Charles the Bald, *Codex Aureus of Saint Emmeram*, 9th century (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm.14000, f. 5 v.)

We do not know the name of the artist (as is the case for most of the painters from this period) but he most likely belonged to a team of craftsmen working on the manuscript. In devising the double opening, he appears not to have worked from his imagination but to have followed an earlier source such as the ruler portrait of Charles the Bald in the ninth century manuscript known as the *Codex Aureus of Saint Emmeram* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm.14000, f. 5 v.).

On the right side of the double page, emperor Otto III is shown seated frontally, crowned, and holding a golden orb and a sceptre surmounted by an eagle. Otto III was the Holy Roman Emperor and nominally ruled over territories corresponding to modern day Germany, France and northern Italy. The title Holy Roman Emperor dates back to Charlemagne and like this earlier emperor, Otto III was crowned by the Pope in Rome where Otto III spent most of his reign. Otto III was Holy Roman Emperor from 996 to 1002, when he died at the age of 21.

Otto III looks out at us with hypnotic eyes, and is dressed in green and the imperial purple. He was the son of Otto II, who died when he was three, and a Byzantine Princess called Theophanu, and we know that he was an educated man.



Figure **13.6.9.8**: Ruler portrait of Otto III (f.24), *Gospels of Otto III* (Munich, Bayerische Stattsbibliothek, Clm.4453)

He is flanked on either side by members of his court: on the right by those who fight (two members of the nobility who carry a sword, a lance and shield) and, on the left, by those who pray (two members of the clergy who hold books).

The pendant image depicts four personifications of the territories over which Otto ruled and who are shown bringing him tribute. They are identified as: Sclavinia (Slavic east), Germania (roughly Germany), Gallia (roughly France), and Roma (Rome). The

device of the personification (whereby an abstract idea is represented by a human figure, usually a female one) goes back to classical art. There is a parallel between this scene and that of the adoration of the three magi (represented as crowned kings, a tenth century innovation) bringing gifts to the infant Christ (represented on f.29 of the manuscript), which underlines the quasi-divine nature of the Emperor.



Figure **13.6.9.9**: Provinces Bringing Tribute (f.23v.), *Gospels of Otto III* (Munich, Bayerische Stattsbibliothek, Clm.4453)

This is not a portrait in the conventional sense of a likeness and gives us very little idea of what Otto III must have looked like. Otto III is represented out of proportion with the much smaller figures that flank him—indicating his status. The opening pages probably represent an ideal of Otto III's rule rather than the reality of his situation as his rule was fraught with division. The style of the opening looks back to late antique illusionism (note, for example, the lozenge-shaped ornament in the borders, and the atmospheric backgrounds which recall, for example, such manuscripts as the *Vatican Vergil* made in about 400) but has an extraordinary flatness to it as if the scene has been pressed between two panes of glass.



Figure **13.6.9.10**: Detail of ruler portrait of Otto III (f.24), *Gospels of Otto III* (Munich, Bayerische Stattsbibliothek, Clm.4453)

This style is known as Ottonian, a period style concept that covers both the reigns of the three emperors bearing the name Otto and of their immediate successors through the late eleventh century. It both precedes and anticipates the Romanesque style.

After Otto's death, the manuscript passed to his cousin and heir, Henry II, who gave it to the cathedral of Bamberg which he founded, where it remained until 1803 when during the secularisation of the church it was transferred to the Bavarian State Library. The manuscript is rarely exhibited but a facsimile of it has been made.

Additional resources:

Unesco: Monastic Island of Reichenau

Ottonian Art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

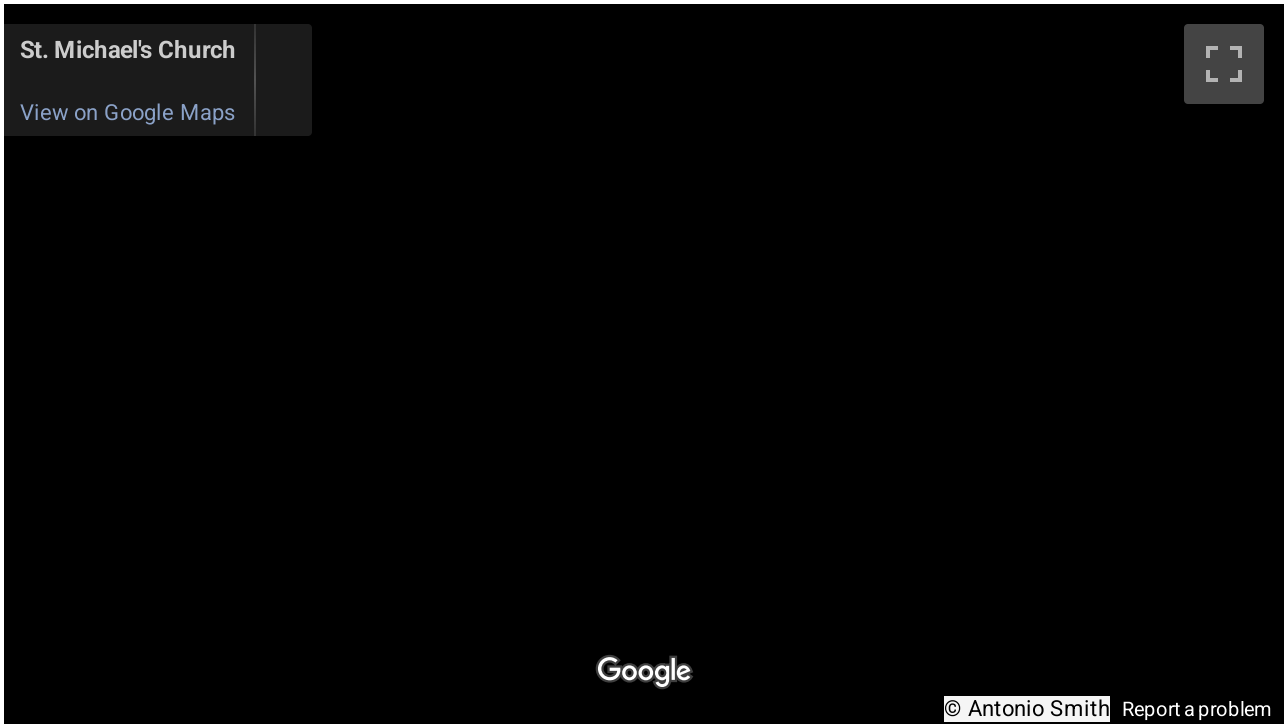
Bronze doors, Saint Michael's, Hildesheim (Germany)

by DR. NANCY ROSS and DR. JENNIFER FREEMAN



Video **13.6.9.1**: Bronze doors, 1015, commissioned by Bishop Bernward for Saint Michael's, Hildesheim (Germany)

Interior of St. Michael's Hildesheim



Additional resources:

St Mary's Cathedral and St Michael's Church at Hildesheim from UNESCO

St. Michael's church at Sacred Destinations

Medieval Treasures from Hildesheim (exhibition catalogue from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

13.6.9: Ottonian is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.9: Ottonian** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.10: Viking Age

Art of the Viking Age

by ANDREA C. SNOW



Figure **13.6.10.1**: Animal head post found in burial mound near Tønsberg (Oseberg ship burial), 9th century, Oseberg style, wood and paint (no longer existing) (The Museum of Cultural History in Oslo; photo: **Kirsten Helgeland**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Modern representations of the Vikings can be fun, but are often limited to sensationalized depictions of violent, raiding warriors. In reality, Vikings were a small group of a larger community of people called the Norse (or Norsemen). Few of these Norsemen raided, and many more were merchants, farmers, and craftsmen. Political and mercenary work were among their enterprises, but exploration, colonization, and mercantilism also fueled their expeditions.



Figure **13.6.10.2**: Areas of early Vikings (underlying map © Google)

What initiated the Viking Age? Scholars typically identify the Viking raid of the wealthy monastery on the island of **Lindisfarne** in 793 (off the coast of England) as its starting point. During the Viking Age, which lasted from the late 8th century through the 11th century, people from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden employed their maritime skills to journey around the globe. In addition to western Europe, they traveled to **Byzantium**, West Asia, China, Russia, Eastern Europe, Northern Africa, Greenland, and even North America. Interacting with many cultures and settling in many geographic regions, the Norse were more cosmopolitan than they receive credit for.

The Norse visual world

The visual world was of great importance to the Norse. Significant resources were devoted to the creation of astonishing objects and the acquisition of foreign goods (through plunder and trade alike), and because of their highly mobile endeavors, Norse-made and Norse-influenced objects have been found across a wide geographic expanse.

An array of sophisticated, meticulously crafted objects survive. Fine imported materials were used, but local materials were also expertly handled by highly skilled craftspeople. Woodworking, for example, was an essential skill, and detailed wood carvings have been uncovered and restored. This material is susceptible to rot and fire, and so we can conclude that what survives today is a small fraction of the woodwork that once existed.

Objects made from more tenacious materials—like metal and stone—comprise the majority of what art historians have left to examine. Metal jewelry, storage vessels, and other utilitarian objects have been uncovered from burials and hoards. Ivory and bone carvings have also been found, as have a limited number of precious textiles and stone carvings.



Figure **13.6.10.3**

The styles of Viking Art

Many objects served practical and symbolic purposes and their complex decorative patterns can be a challenge to untangle. Highly-stylized motifs weave around and flow into one another, so that following a single form from one end to the other can be difficult—if there are end points at all. Imagery was created to communicate ideas about social relations, religious beliefs, and to recall a mythic past. Although many objects served pagan intentions, Christian themes began to intermingle with them as new ideas filtered into the region. Viking art is visually distinct from contemporaneous cultures (as traded objects and integrated customs demonstrate), and represents a unique way of thinking about the world.

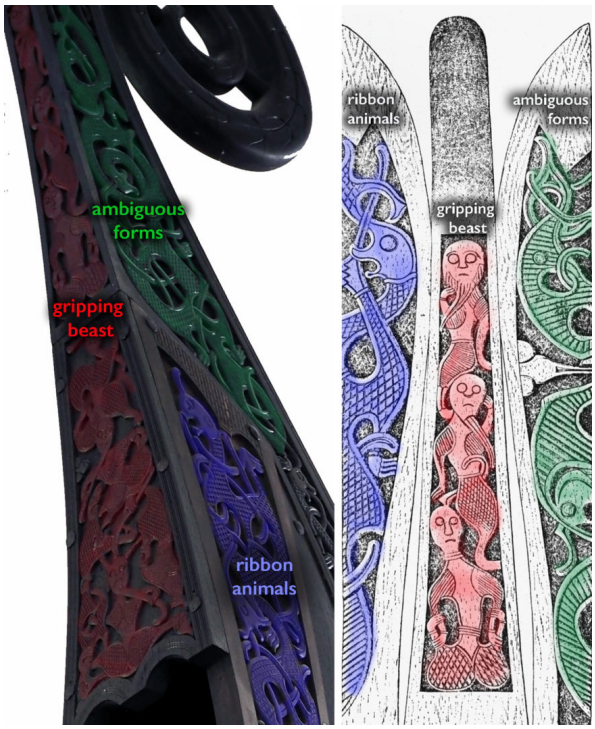


Figure **13.6.10.4**: Various beasts are carved into the Oseberg ship's stern: a ribbon-animal (in blue, also called a streaming-animal); gripping-beasts rendered with humanoid heads (in red); and more ambiguous forms that echo the bodies of creatures seen at the prow (in green). Oseberg oak longship and detail of prow with ribbon-animal and gripping-beast motifs, 9th century, found in burial mound near Tønsberg (Viking ship museum, Oslo; photo: **Chad K**, CC BY 2.0)

The animal motifs that frequently embellished objects are actually a continuation of artistic traditions from previous periods. Two were particularly widespread: the "ribbon-animal" and the "gripping beast." We see both of these on the stern of the Oseberg longship.

The ribbon-animal was typically pictured as a highly abstracted creature with an elongated body and simplified features, appearing individually and in pairs. In contrast, the gripping beast—a fantastical creature with clearly defined limbs—was anchored to the borders of designs and surrounding creatures. Other animal motifs developed throughout the period, and human figures were also present. These elements, which are thought to have had particular assigned meanings, are central to the categorization of Viking Age art styles.

The Viking Art styles are:

• Oseberg	c. 775/800–875 C.E.
• Borre	c. 850–975 C.E.
• Jellinge	c. 900–975 C.E.
• Mammen	c. 960s–1000/1025 C.E.
• Ringerike	c. 990–1050 C.E.
• Urnes	c. 1050–1125 C.E.

Table **13.6.10.1**

Oseberg style

The Oseberg style was popular throughout mainland Scandinavia. Some of the most remarkable wood carving from the Viking Age was created in this style. A spectacular oak longship—found within the burial mound from which the style's name was derived—is one of the most studied works of the period. Featuring carvings of the ribbon-animal and gripping-beast motifs in fluid combinations on its prow, it served as an elite funerary vessel for two women.



Figure **13.6.10.5**: Oseberg oak longship and detail of prow, 9th century, found in burial mound near Tønsberg (Viking ship museum, Oslo; left photo: Petter Ulleland, CC BY-SA 4.0 and right photo: **mararie**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

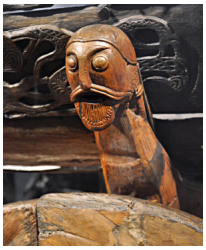


Figure **13.6.10.6**: Bearded man, detail on the cart, before 800, wood, found in the Oseberg burial mound (Museum of Cultural History, photo: Helen Simonsson, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Oseberg style shows a strong interplay between zoomorphic and geometric patterns that continues artistic traditions predating the Viking Age.

In Oseberg art, animal motifs—which included birds, human faces sometimes thought to be masks (such as we see on the Oseberg burial cart), and the gripping beast—appear short and stocky, nearly equal in size, have rounded eyes, and tendril-like limbs. These schematic figures are situated within fields that divide surfaces into clear segments and emphasize the balance and organization of images. With mixtures of high- and low-relief carvings flooding their surfaces in tightly interlacing ornament, very little background is visible.

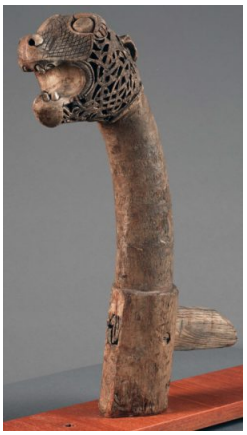


Figure **13.6.10.7**: The “Academician’s” animal head post, 9th century, wood, found in burial mound near Tønsberg (Oseberg ship burial) (Museum of Cultural History, Oslo; photo: **Kirsten Helgeland**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Oseberg ship burial included carved wooden posts, decorated **sleds**, and an **oak wagon** that may have been made by master craftsmen from a nearby workshop. For example, the “Academician’s” animal head post is one of five wooden animal-headed posts found in the Oseberg ship burial. Although the purpose of these objects remain unclear, their detailed carvings demonstrate advanced woodworking skills.

Also included was a set of **tapestries** that, despite their poor condition, are believed to depict battle scenes and a religious procession. They illustrate many objects found in the grave, indicating that material goods were important for performing customs in life and in death.

Borre style

Overlapping with the Oseberg style is the Borre style, which was also popular on the mainland. However, unlike the Oseberg style, Borre artistic conventions spread to the British Isles and the Baltic region as the Norsemen traveled both East and West. Exchanges between local and foreign artistic customs can be seen on objects found in these areas (with less overt characteristics appearing in the British Isles and more emphatic characteristics appearing to the east of the Baltic Sea).



Figure **13.6.10.8**: Animals with their tongues licking their backs, alternating with four human figures who face the object's center, gripping unidentified protrusions from their necks. Silver disc brooch, Borre style, late 9th–10th century, silver, 7.8 cm in diameter, found in Gotland, Sweden (© **The Trustees of the British Museum**)



Figure **13.6.10.9**: Side view: Animal licking its back (detail), silver disc brooch, Borre style, late 9th–10th century, silver, 7.8 cm in diameter, found in Gotland, Sweden (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

Borre objects swarm the viewer with décor. Forms are arranged in closed compositions with tight, knot-like interlacing that almost fully obscures the background. Animal motifs appear comparatively more naturalistic, with squat, relaxed bodies. Spirals are introduced to represent hip joints, and figures may be reduced to decorative heads or appear as fully in-the-round forms.

On a silver disc-brooch from Gotland, a series of animal and human figures protrude outward into space. In a motif rarely seen outside of this style, the animals' heads are oriented backward, their tongues licking their backs. Alternating between them are four human figures who face the object's center, gripping as of yet unidentified protrusions from their necks.



Figure **13.6.10.10**: Gold spur from Verne Kloster in Norway, 10th century, Borre style, gold (The Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo)

The “ring chain” pattern, which combines ribbon shapes to create a continuous band, is another Borre style trend. It is seen on small metal objects, such as the gold spur from Verne Kloster, and seems to have influenced stone carving traditions on the Isle of Man and in northwest England. This gold spur allowed a rider to control the movements of a horse. Featuring granulation and filigree details, along with the “ring chain” pattern, it is far more complicated than what is normally found in the Borre style.



Figure **13.6.10.11**: Silver Cup, 958/959, Jellinge style, found in Jelling, Jutland, Denmark (**National Museum of Denmark**)

Jellinge style

Sitting chronologically between the Borre style and the soon-to-be-discussed Mammen style, the Jellinge style is a malleable one. It appears on a diverse body of objects and can share features with the previous and subsequent styles, leaving it difficult to define as a separate movement. It was named for a cast silver cup that was found in a royal burial mound in Jelling, Jutland, Denmark (an

“e” was accidentally added to the style’s name in the nineteenth century). Despite this mishap, this unique spelling helps art historians differentiate the style from the place.



Figure **13.6.10.12**: Red annotations show the wrist/ankle segments. Silver Cup, 958/959, Jellinge style, found in Jelling, Jutland, Denmark (**National Museum of Denmark**)

We can see this style’s main motif around its belly: a set of interlacing creatures that form a row of fluid, S-shaped forms. Within their bodies are single rows of beading (dot-like metal forms) and their feet resemble mitts. Lappets, the protrusions that look like ponytails, extend from their heads, distinguishing them from creatures of the Borre style.

Compositions in this style open up and expand, with the backgrounds becoming more visible. The anatomy of animal and human figures is simpler, with bodies portrayed as solid masses defined by individual or double contour lines. Hip joints are represented by spirals, while ankles and wrists are defined by small, geometric segments like those seen on the Jellinge cup. Heads have round or almond-shaped eyes and lips are apt to curl, while ribbon-animals are more prominent and the gripping beast fades.



Figure **13.6.10.13**: Grave slab with Jellinge style elements, 10th century, gritstone, 26.8 x 37 cm, from the cemetery beneath York Minster (Image courtesy of **York Museums Trust**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Jellinge style expanded as far as the Volga Bulgars and the Lower Volga River, along the Caspian Sea. It influenced art in western Europe, where stone sculptures from York show its considerable influence. A 10-century grave slab from the cemetery beneath York Minster, for instance, integrates the Jellinge style ornament with the Anglican tradition of marking burials with recumbent monuments.



Figure **13.6.10.14**: Mammen-style axe (side with a possible tree), 970–71, inlaid with silver, from Mammen (**National Museum of Denmark**)

Mammen style

Named for a ceremonial axe head found near the Danish village of Mammen, this innovative style was popularized as the "court" style of King Harald Bluetooth (King of Denmark and Norway who ruled from c. 958–986). Its compositions span elongated waves and terminate in loose tendrils. We also see foliate motifs that were borrowed from other European traditions. A few of the qualities associated with the Jellinge style are exaggerated in it, like geometric shapes that segment the wrists, ankles, and other body parts of animals.

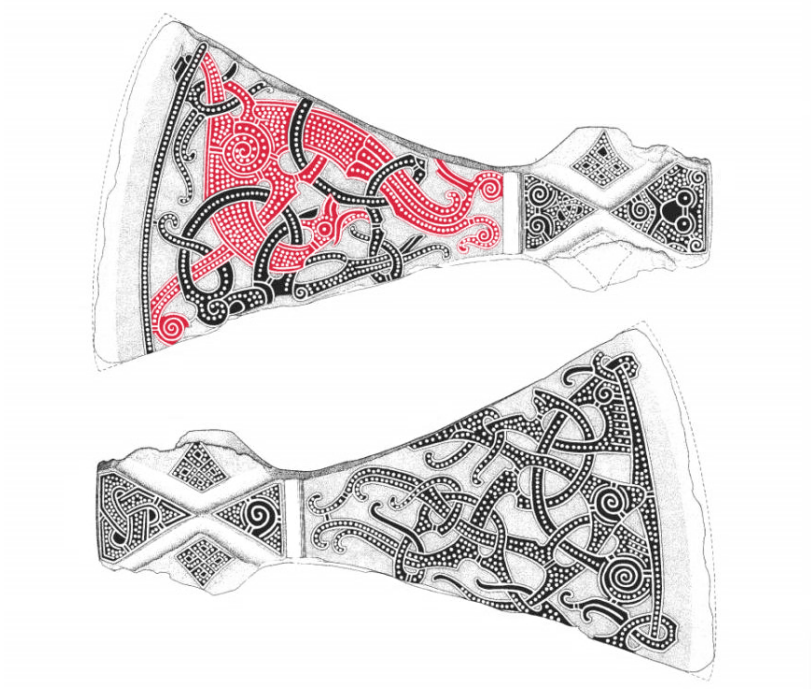


Figure **13.6.10.15**: Top: a bird with a prominent hip joint; bottom: a set of winding tendrils, possibly depicting a tree. Mammen axe head. Diagram from Mette, Iversen, Ulf Näsman, and Jens Vellev, *Mammen. Grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid* (1991).

This can be seen at the base of the bird's neck on the Mammen axe, along with ornamental beading throughout its body. Its limbs and wings are represented as expanding coils. Some background is visible, with glimpses of the underlying surface peeking out from beneath lively, energetic designs.

Each side of the Mammen axe head is inlaid with silver: on one side, a set of winding tendrils; and, on the other, a fabulous bird loops through even more tendrils and has a prominent spiral hip joint. Axes were very important to the Norsemen, who used them for domestic purposes and in battle, but the inlays of the Mammen axe indicate that it was a ceremonial object.



Figure **13.6.10.16**: Jelling stone with traits of the Mammen style, 970 and circa 986, raised by King Bluetooth. Left: side B with Great Beast motif (photo: **Casiopeia**, CC BY-SA 2.0); right: diagram of side B showing Great Beast motif

Often discussed are the runestones at Jelling (in Denmark), which feature traits of the Mammen style. It is in this style that a magnificent motif emerges: the Great Beast. We can see it on one side of the Jelling Stone, standing above a runic inscription that references his conquest of Norway and the religious conversion of Denmark.

The Great Beast is an amalgamation of several animals; it has features that appear similar to horns or antlers protruding from its head, and what appears to be a mane falling from its long neck. Its feet are segmented with claws, and in some representations—like the greater Jelling stone—serpents may wind around its body to create a dynamic interplay between the two motifs. The creature has been interpreted as a symbol of power.



Figure **13.6.10.17**: Jelling stone with traits of the Mammen style, 970 and circa 986, raised by King Bluetooth. Left: side A showing Christ bound in tendrils (photo: **Casiopeia**, CC BY-SA 2.0); right: side A with reconstruction of original polychromy (**National Museum of Denmark**)

Carved with runic inscriptions, these monumental stones were raised by King Bluetooth in memory of his deceased parents. As a Christian convert, Bluetooth was responsible for Denmark's increasing acceptance and adoption of the religion. He had one side of

the larger stone depict Christ bound in tendrils that end in pronounced foliates (leaf forms). With an inscription surrounded by serpentine ornament on its third side (not illustrated), this object is exceptionally detailed for a runestone.



Figure 13.6.10.18: A replica of the Cammin Casket (also called the Cammin shrine), a masterwork of Viking Age art, c. 1000, found in Kamen Pomorski, Poland. The original disappeared during World War II (Hamburg Archaeological Museum)



Figure 13.6.10.19: Bamberg Casket (or so-called Casket of St Kunigunde), c. 1000, oak with mammoth ivory, 13.3 x 25.7 cm (from St. Stephans in Bamberg, now in the **Bavarian National Museum, Munich**)

Three particularly fine examples of the Mammen style survived into the modern era: the Cammin casket found in Kamen Pomorski, Poland, the Bamberg casket of southern Germany (now located in Munich), and the **León reliquary of Spain**, which is the only known Viking object to be found on the Iberian Peninsula. These three examples demonstrate how Mammen-style objects have been found in many regions, attesting yet again to the far reach of Norse visual culture.

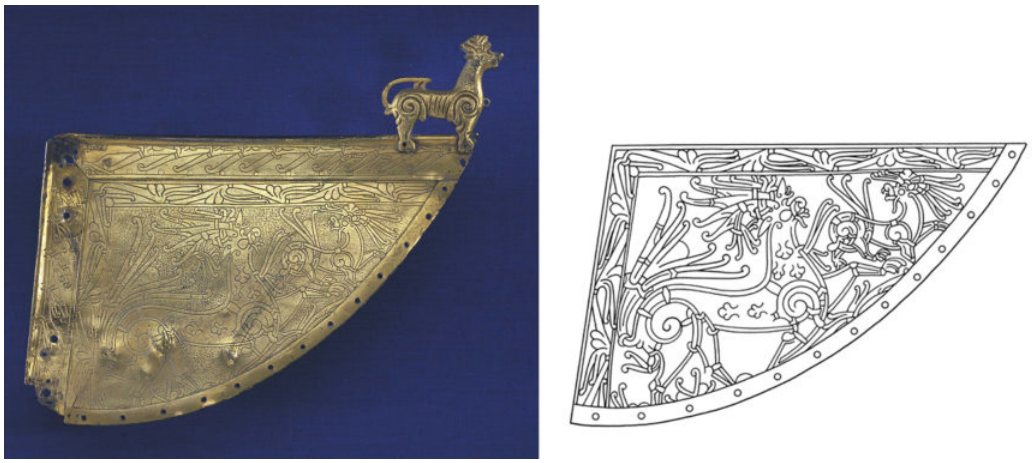


Figure **13.6.10.20**: Heggen weathervane (left) and drawing of the designs which include the Great Beast (right) (**Kulturhistorisk museum, UiO**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Ringerike style

The Mammen style was short-lived, but the subsequent style—called Ringerike—was energized by its ingenuity. Continuing to use the double contour lines and spiral hip joints seen previously, Ringerike ornament is tightly composed. Bird motifs become more common and the Great Beast appears in full force, but neither feature the beaded ornamentation of Jellinge and Mammen creatures.

The adoption of European influences into Norse artistic conventions are visible in the Ringerike style. Diverse uses of foliates and tendrils, for example, are features that were taken from Frankish and British influences and modified to suit Norse sensibilities. Appearing in clusters of varying thicknesses, tendrils grow outward from animal bodies. This can be seen on several weathervanes (such as the Heggen weathervane), which were customarily gilded, fixed to the prows of ships, and later, repositioned on the roofs of churches. Their borders feature friezes of vegetal motifs, and on their plates are beasts—including birds and the Great Beast—tangled within foliates.



Figure **13.6.10.21**: Stone from sarcophagus at St. Paul's churchyard, London (photo: **David Beard MA**)

New variations on the Great Beast appear in the Ringerike style. The Great Beast may be shown with other Great Beasts, with multiple snakes, or with monsters we cannot always identify. A carved stone slab that was found at St. Paul's churchyard in London, for instance, shows the Great Beast with long tendrils that curl at the far end (a variation of the lappets seen in the earlier Jellinge style) forming tendril-like horns and tongue. It also has spiral hip joints. Its body is entwined with a serpent and another,

smaller creature wraps around its forelimb. The carved stone slab comes from the end of a box-tomb. The runic inscription carved into its side suggests that the carver was Swedish.



Figure **13.6.10.22**: Ringerike-style runestones that only feature inscriptions were common. For example, Runestone Sö 130 from Södermanland County, Sweden, has only bands of runic text. These commemorate a man who died in what would be modern-day Russia (photo: **Berig,** CC BY-SA 3.0)

Due to the growing popularity of Christianity, funerary customs shift and there are fewer grave goods in the Ringerike style. Architecture, weapons, and ivory carvings become the more prevalent remains, and runestones—although less detailed than the greater stone raised at Jelling—become more common.



Figure **13.6.10.23**: The Great Beast motif is in blue, a snake-like creature is in green, and a ribbon is in red. The Urnes Stave Church north portal, c. 1132, wood, Ornes, Norway (photo: Micha L. Rieser)

Urnes style

In the last phase of Viking Age art, the Urnes style, there is a turn to elegant, schematic forms. Animals are portrayed with tapered anatomical features and in regal stances.

The Urnes style has three primary motifs: a standing, four-legged animal resembling the Great Beast; a snake-like creature but with a single foreleg and/or hind leg; and a thin ribbon. Perhaps associated with the growth of Christianity, there was an increased

esteem for this style across mainland Scandinavia. Surviving examples of it can be seen on architecture and runestones, each of which could use pagan and Christian iconography simultaneously.



Figure 13.6.10.24: Left: the Urnes Stave Church with a view toward the north portal (photo: Evelina Ander, CC BY-NC 2.0); right: detail from the Urnes Stave Church north portal, c. 1132, wood, Ornes, Norway (photo: **Bjørn Erik Pedersen**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Although its origins are likely Swedish, this style is associated with a stave church in the Norwegian village of Urnes. Its relief carvings, which fully embody the style's characteristics, have been the subject of art-historical interpretation for some time. Their rhythmic compositions have elegant swooping, symmetrical, and interlace designs, and the background is more clearly visible.



Figure 13.6.10.25: The Urnes Stave Church north portal, c. 1132, wood, Ornes, Norway (photo: Micha L. Rieser)

Although the use of spiral hip joints persist, the proportions of creatures' bodies curve and swell in a fashion that differentiates them from previous styles. Eyes are enlarged, nearly filling the heads, and lower jaws are given hook-like extensions. The feet of the Great Beast standing next to the door gracefully end in wisps that rest between delicate vegetal motifs. Although the structure is Christian in function, these decorative forms remain indebted to pre-Christian styles.



Figure **13.6.10.26**: The Pitney disc-brooch, late 11th century, Urnes style, copper alloy and gold, found in Pitney, England (© **The Trustees of the British Museum**); The Bell Shrine of St. Patrick, c. 1100, bronze, silver-gilt frame, 30 gold filigree panels (some now missing), rock crystal (National Museum of Ireland; photo: Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank)

As the Norsemen traveled, traded, and settled across new regions, this style's influences were carried with them. Urnes-styled objects appear in the Baltic, and examples such as the Pitney Brooch demonstrate a localized adaptation of it in England. In Ireland, the Norse re-occupation of Dublin fueled artistic interest in the Urnes style, with metal and stone objects exhibiting its features. When looking at gold filigree ornamenting the bell shrine of St. Patrick, for example, precisely-crafted patterns demonstrate interest in geometry and rhythmic compositions. The style's acceptance there, however, came just as it was dying in Scandinavia.

The Viking Age comes to an end

Prior to the 10th century, Scandinavian regions were considered peripheral to western Europe. It was from the 10th through the 13th centuries that the introduction of Christianity and the introduction of European-style monarchy eventually brought the Viking Age to a close. The Ringerike and Urnes styles described above flourished through this time, until the European **Romanesque style** was popularized, displacing pagan traditions.

There is much more to Norse art than style. While objects were made by skilled workers, they were also situated within a complex society whose endeavors affected a vast geographic expanse. Those discussed here provide only a small window into the Viking Age.

Additional Resources

Susan Braovac, "The Long Soak." *The Museum of Cultural History, The University of Oslo.* November 3rd (2018).

Signe Horn Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike Style: A Phase of 11th-Century Scandinavian Art* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980).

James Graham-Campbell,*Viking Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013).

Neil Price, *The Viking Way: Magic and Mind in Late Iron Age Scandinavia* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2019).

Paul D. Sturtevant, "Schrödinger's Medievalisms." *The Public Medievalist* (blog). December 28 (2017).

Sverre Bagge, *Cross and Scepter: The Rise of the Scandinavian Kingdoms from the Vikings to the Reformation* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Nancy L. Wicker, "The Scandinavian Container at San Isidoro, León, in the Context of Viking Art and Society." *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* vol. 11, no. 2 (2019), pp. 135–156.

David M. Wilson and Ole Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1966).

Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants, and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

13.6.10: Viking Age is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.10: Viking Age** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.11: Romanesque

Romanesque art

Pilgrimages, crusades and the first international style of art since antiquity: the Romanesque.

c. 1000 - 1200 C.E.

Beginner's guide: Romanesque art

One influence, as the name implies, is ancient Roman art.

c. 1000 - 1200

The Romanesque is the first international style in Western Europe since antiquity. The transmission of ideas was facilitated by increased travel along the pilgrimage routes and because of the crusades.

A beginner's guide to Romanesque art

by DR. ANDREAS PETZOLD

The first international style since antiquity

The term "Romanesque," meaning in the manner of the Romans, was first coined in the early nineteenth century. Today it is used to refer to the period of European art from the second half of the eleventh century throughout the twelfth (with the exception of the region around Paris where the Gothic style emerged in the mid-twelfth century). In certain regions, such as central Italy, the Romanesque continued to survive into the thirteenth century. The Romanesque is the first international style in Western Europe since antiquity—extending across the Mediterranean and as far north as Scandinavia. The transmission of ideas was facilitated by increased travel along the pilgrimage routes to shrines such as Santiago de Compostela in Spain (a pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place) or as a consequence of the crusades which passed through the territories of the Byzantine empire. There are, however, distinctive regional variants—Tuscan Romanesque art (in Italy) for example is very different from that produced in northern Europe.

Painting + sculpture + architecture



Figure **13.6.11.1**: Master of Taüll, apse painting, San Clemente in Taüll, c. 1123 (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya – MNAC, Barcelona)

The relation of art to architecture—especially church architecture—is fundamental in this period. For example, wall-paintings may follow the curvature of the apse of a church as in the apse wall-painting from the church of San Clemente in Taüll, and the most important art form to emerge at this period was architectural sculpture—with sculpture used to decorate churches built of stone.

Many sculptors may have begun their career as stone masons, and there is a remarkable coherence between architecture and sculpture in churches at this period. The two most important sculptural forms to emerge at this time were the tympanum (the lunette-shaped space above the entrance to a church), and the historiated capital (a capital incorporating a narrative element usually an episode from the Bible or the life of a saint). One of the most famous tympanums is on the west entrance to Autun Cathedral (below**)** which represents—appropriately for this part of the church—the Last Judgment. An inscription (*Gislebertus hoc fecit*" "Gislebertus made me"), at the base of the giant immobile figure of Christ at the center, records the name of the artist or head of the workshop which produced it, though it has been suggested that it may refer to the original patron who was responsible for bringing the relics of Lazurus to Autun in the Carolingian period.



Figure **13.6.11.2**: Last Judgment Tympanum, c. 1130-46, Central Portal, West Façade, Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, France

The influence of ancient Rome



Figure **13.6.11.3**: Calling of St. Peter and St. Andrew, c. 1160, Sant Pere de Rodes monstery, Spain

One influence on the Romanesque is, as the name implies, ancient Roman art—especially sculpture—which survived in large quantities particularly in southern Europe. This can be seen, for example, in a marble relief representing the calling of St. Peter and St. Andrew from the front frieze of the abbey church of Sant Pere de Rodes on the Catalonian coast. The imprint of the antique can be seen in the deep undercutting in the drapery folds, an effect achieved by the Roman device of the drill, and the individualization of the faces.

Classical influence was also frequently mediated through an intermediary—most importantly Byzantine art (especially textiles and painting), but also through earlier medieval styles which had absorbed elements of the classical tradition such as Ottonian art.



Figure 13.6.11.4: The Bury Bible, c.1130-1135, Bury St Edmunds, England, Corpus Christi College, MS 2, fol. 94

The illustrations in the *Bury Bible* have, for example, been convincingly compared to Byzantine wall-paintings in a church at Asinou in Cyprus which suggests that its artist—a certain Master Hugo (having the name of the artist is unusual during this period) had seen them or a similar source. Monasteries such as that of Bury St. Edmunds in East Anglia in England (where the *Bury Bible* was made) were important centers of production—especially for the writing and decorating of manuscripts. The Bury Bible is a good example of the remarkable achievements of monastic scriptoria in the Romanesque period.

Monasteries were not the only centers of production. Romanesque art is also associated with towns that were revived and expanded during this period—for the first time since the fall of the Roman empire—a consequence of broad economic expansion (examples include Assisi in Umbria with its Romanesque cathedral or the newly founded town of Puente La Reina in northern Spain on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela).



Figure 13.6.11.5: Casket with troubadours, c. 1180, 21 x 15.6 x 11 cm, from the court of Aquitaine, Limoges, France (The British Museum)

Romanesque art is for the most part religious in its imagery, but this is partly a matter of what has survived, and there are examples of secular art from the period. Unusual is a casket in The British Museum, a product of Limoges craftsmanship, which is made of wood with champlevé enamels attached to it (produced by heating powdered glass set into groves hollowed out of bronze plate). This is decorated with scenes to do with courtly love inspired by troubadour poets from Provence.



Figure **13.6.11.6**: Stavelot Triptych, c. 1156-8, gold and enamel, 48 x 66 cm open (The Morgan Library and Museum)

The distinction between the fine and decorative arts is one that emerges only in the Renaissance and does not apply at this earlier period. If anything the most highly valued works of art during the Romanesque period were objects of metalwork made from precious metals that were frequently produced to house relics (characteristically the body part of a saint, or—in the case of Christ who, the faithful believe ascended to heaven—objects associated with him such as fragments of the so-called true cross on which Christ was thought to have been crucified).

An example of this is the reliquary known as the *Stavelot Triptych.* It consists of a central panel flanked by side wings that can be closed, a design format derived from Byzantine art but made at the Benedictine monastery of Stavelot in the Mosan region in present day Belgium in the mid-twelfth century. The triptych was commissioned by the abbot, a man called Wibald, whom we know travelled extensively and who acquired, during a trip to Constantinople, the two Byzantine enamel plaques incorporated into the center of the triptych that contain what were believed to be fragments of the true cross.

A wall painting from San Clemente in Catalonia

The apse wall-painting from the church of San Clemente is a good example of the Romanesque style. The church is situated in a remote valley in northern Catalonia (north-east Spain today) and is typical of the handsome stone-built churches which sprung up in this region in the Romanesque period. The painting would have been painted onto fresh plaster applied to the walls of the church (it was transferred for safekeeping to the Museum of Catalan Art in Barcelona early in the twentieth century). The painting is dominated by the giant figure of Christ in a mandorla (a halo around the body of a sacred person), represented as he will appear at the end of time as described in the Book of Revelation.



Figure 13.6.11.7: Master of Taüll, apse painting, Sant Clement in Taüll, c. 1123 (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya – MNAC, Barcelona)



Figure 13.6.11.8: Mary (detail), Master of Taüll, apse painting, Sant Clement (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya – MNAC, Barcelona)

Christ is represented characteristically out of scale to the other figures to indicate his status. His head is distorted, elongated and highly geometric, and he has piercing hypnotic eyes. To either side of him are written the Greek letters "alpha" and "omega" (the beginning and the end), and with one hand he gestures in blessing, while the other holds an open book with the words *Ego sum lux mundi* (I am the light of the world) inscribed on it. Below him is an equally elongated and distorted figure of the Virgin Mary who holds a chalice with Christ's blood, a representation of the Holy Grail which predates the earliest written description of the subject. Her presence in the scheme is symptomatic of the growing cult of the Virgin Mary at this period.

It would be just as much a mistake to regard the lack of naturalism found in this painting as indicating lack of artistic competence as it would be in a work by Picasso. Rather it indicates that its artist (whose real name we do not know) is not interested in replicating external appearances but rather in conveying a sense of the sacred and communicating the religious teachings of the church. Picasso (who was brought up in Barcelona) greatly admired Catalonian Romanesque, and it is significant that later in his life he kept a poster of this painting in his studio in southern France. We live in a world saturated with images but in the Romanesque period people would rarely encounter them and an image such as this would have made an immense impression.

Additional resources:

Romanesque art on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Romanesque art at the National Museum of Catalan art (video)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:












Figure 13.6.11.9: More Smarthistory images…

A beginner's guide to Romanesque architecture

by VALERIE SPANSWICK

The name gives it away–Romanesque architecture is based on Roman architectural elements. It is the rounded Roman arch that is the literal basis for structures built in this style.

Ancient Roman ruins (with arches)

All through the regions that were part of the ancient Roman Empire are ruins of Roman aqueducts and buildings, most of them exhibiting arches as part of the architecture (you may make the etymological leap that the two words—arch and architecture—are related, but the Oxford English Dictionary shows arch as coming from Latin *arcus*, which defines the shape, while arch—as in architect, archbishop and archenemy—comes from Greek *arkhos*, meaning chief and ekton means builder).



Figure 13.6.11.10: Interior of the Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne, Aachen, Germany, 792-805 (photo: Elena, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

When Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 C.E., Europe began to take its first steps out of the "Dark Ages" since the fall of Rome in the fifth century. The remains of Roman civilization were seen all over the continent, and legends of the great empire would have been passed down through generations. So when Charlemagne wanted to unite his empire and validate his reign, he began building churches in the Roman style–particularly the style of Christian Rome in the days of Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor.

After a gap of around two hundred years with no large building projects, the architects of Charlemagne's day looked to the arched, or arcaded, system seen in Christian Roman edifices as a model. It is a logical system of stresses and buttressing, which was fairly easily engineered for large structures, and it began to be used in gatehouses, chapels, and churches in Europe.

These early examples may be referred to as pre-Romanesque because, after a brief spurt of growth, the development of architecture again lapsed. As a body of knowledge was eventually re-developed, buildings became larger and more imposing. Examples of Romanesque cathedrals from the early Middle Ages (roughly 1000-1200) are solid, massive, impressive churches that are often still the largest structure in many towns.

In Britain, the Romanesque style became known as "Norman" because the major building scheme in the 11th and 12th centuries was instigated by William the Conqueror, who invaded Britain in 1066 from Normandy in northern France. (The Normans were the descendants of Vikings—Norse, or north men—who had invaded this area over a century earlier.) Durham and Gloucester Cathedrals and Southwell Minster are excellent examples of churches in the Norman, or Romanesque style.



Figure 13.6.11.11: Gloucester Cathedral, nave, begun 1089 (ceiling later) (photo: Michael D. Beckwith, CC BY 2.0)

The arches that define the naves of these churches are well modulated and geometrically logical—with one look you can see the repeating shapes, and proportions that make sense for an immense and weighty structure. There is a large arcade on the ground level made up of bulky piers or columns. The piers may have been filled with rubble rather than being solid, carved stone. Above this arcade is a second level of smaller arches, often in pairs with a column between the two. The next higher level was again proportionately smaller, creating a rational diminution of structural elements as the mass of the building is reduced.

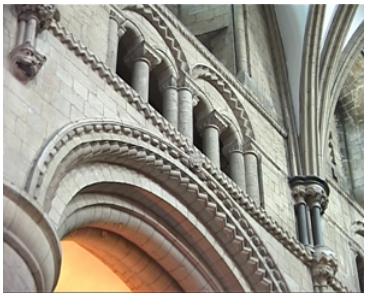


Figure **13.6.11.12**: Gloucester Cathedral, decorative carving on the nave arcade and triforium

The decoration is often quite simple, using geometric shapes rather than floral or curvilinear patterns. Common shapes used include diapers—squares or lozenges—and chevrons, which were zigzag patterns and shapes. Plain circles were also used, which echoed the half-circle shape of the ubiquitous arches.

Early Romanesque ceilings and roofs were often made of wood, as if the architects had not quite understood how to span the two sides of the building using stone, which created outward thrust and stresses on the side walls. This development, of course, didn't take long to manifest, and led from barrel vaulting (simple, semicircular roof vaults) to cross vaulting, which became ever more adventurous and ornate in the Gothic.

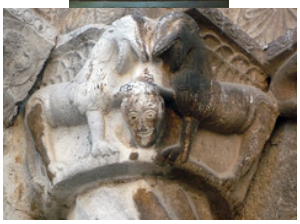
Additional resources:

Romanesque architecture from the Durham World Heritage site

Corpus of Romanesque sculpture in Britain and Ireland

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



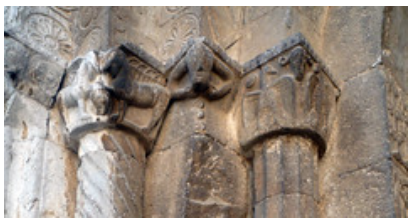


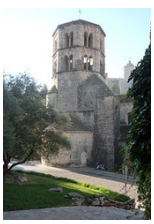






















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88716



Figure **13.6.11.13**: More Smarthistory images…

Medieval churches: sources and forms

by VALERIE SPANSWICK

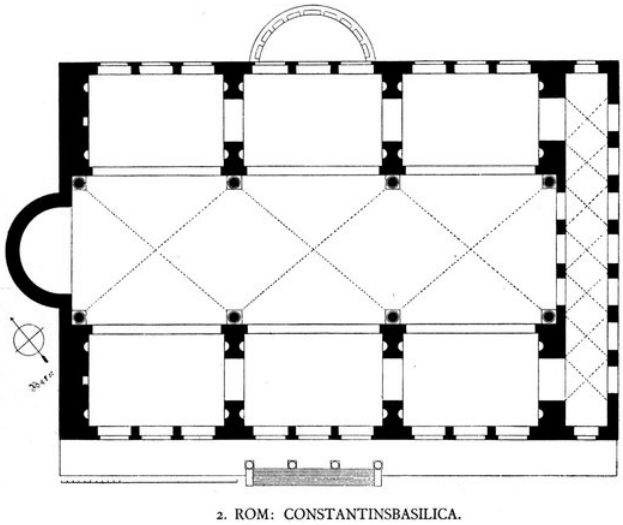


Figure **13.6.11.14**: Floor plan of the Roman Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine, 308-312 C.E. (image: Die kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes by **Dehio and Bezold**)

Many of Europe's medieval cathedrals are museums in their own right, housing fantastic examples of craftsmanship and works of art. Additionally, the buildings themselves are impressive. Although architectural styles varied from place to place, building to building, there are some basic features that were fairly universal in monumental churches built in the Middle Ages, and the prototype for that type of building was the Roman basilica.

Prototype: The ancient Roman basilica

In ancient Rome, the basilica was created as a place for tribunals and other types of business. The building was rectangular in shape, with the long, central portion of the hall made up of the *nave*. Here the interior reached its fullest height. The nave was flanked on either side by a colonnade (a row of columns) that delineated the side aisles, which were of a lower height than the nave. Because these side aisles were lower, the roof over this section was below the roofline of the nave, allowing for windows near the ceiling of the nave. This band of windows was called the *clerestory*. At the far end of the nave, away from the main door, was a semi-circular extension, usually with a half-dome roof. This area was the *apse*, and is where the magistrate or other senior officials would hold court.



Figure **13.6.11.15**: View of the nave, looking toward the apse—the row of windows above the nave arcade is called the clerestory and we see an aisle on either side of the nave. Interior of Santa Sabina, an early Roman Christian church, 422-432 C.E. (photo: **Dnalor 01**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Because this plan allowed for many people to circulate within a large, and awesome, space, the general plan became an obvious choice for early Christian buildings. The religious rituals, masses, and pilgrimages that became commonplace by the Middle Ages were very different from today's services, and to understand the architecture it is necessary to understand how the buildings were used and the components that made up these massive edifices.



Figure **13.6.11.16**: Nave and side aisles, Durham Cathedral, 1093-1133 C.E. (photo: **Oliver-Bonjoch**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The church plan

Although medieval churches are usually oriented with the altar on the east end, they all vary slightly. When a new church was to be built, the patron saint was selected and the altar location laid out. On the saint's day, a line would be surveyed from the position of the rising sun through the altar site and extending in a westerly direction. This was the orientation of the new building.

The entrance foyer at the west end is called the narthex, but this is not found in all medieval churches. Daily access may be through a door on the north or south side. The largest, central, western door may have been reserved for ceremonial purposes.

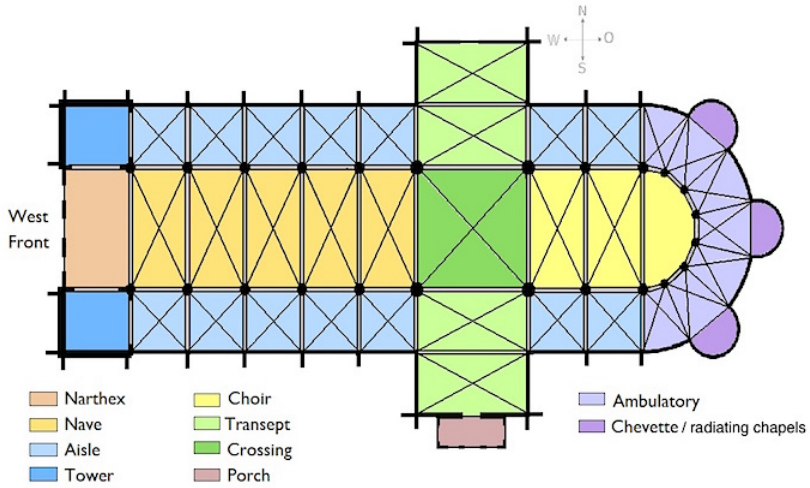


Figure **13.6.11.17**: Church floor plan

Inside, you should imagine the interior space without the chairs or pews that we are used to seeing today. In very extensive buildings there may be two side aisles, with the ceiling of the outer one lower than the one next to the nave. This hierarchy of size and proportion extended to the major units of the plan—the *bays*. The *vault* is the arched roof or ceiling, or a section of it.



Figure **13.6.11.18**: Salisbury Cathedral, top of the nave arcade, above that the gallery, and above that, the windows of the clerestory.

The major arcade (row of arches) at the ground floor level is topped by a second arcade, called the *gallery*, which is topped by the clerestory (the windows). In later Gothic churches, we sometimes see yet another level below the clerestory, called the triforium.

The nave was used for the procession of the clergy to the altar. The main altar was basically in the position of the apse in the ancient Roman basilica, although in some designs it is further forward. The area around the altar—the choir or chancel—was reserved for the clergy or monks, who performed services throughout the day.

The cathedrals and former monastery churches are much larger than needed for the local population. They expected and received numerous pilgrims who came to various shrines and altars within the church where they might pray to a supposed piece of the true cross, or a bone of a martyr, or the tomb of a king. The pilgrims entered the church and found their way to the chapel or altar of their desire—therefore, the side aisles made an efficient path for pilgrims to come and go without disrupting the daily services.



Figure **13.6.11.19**: Transept, Salisbury Cathedral

Development of this plan over time shows that very soon the apse was elongated, adding more room to the choir. Additionally, the ends of the aisles developed into small wings themselves, known as *transepts*. These were also extended, providing room for more tombs, more shrines, and more pilgrims.

The area where the axes of the nave and transepts meet is called, logically, the *crossing*.



Figure 13.6.11.20: Ambulatory, Gloucester Cathedral

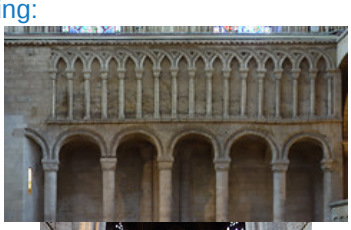
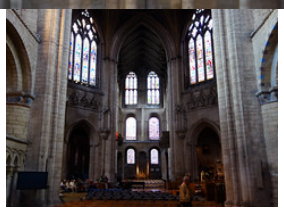
An aisle often surrounds the apse, running behind the altar. Called the *ambulatory*, this aisle accessed additional small chapels, called *radiating chapels* or *chevets*. Of course, there are many variations on these typical building blocks of medieval church design. Different regions had different tastes, greater or lesser financial power, more or less experienced architects and masons, which created the diversity of medieval buildings still standing today.

Additional resources:

Physics of Stone Arches from NOVA

Build an arch (animation) (BBC)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88716

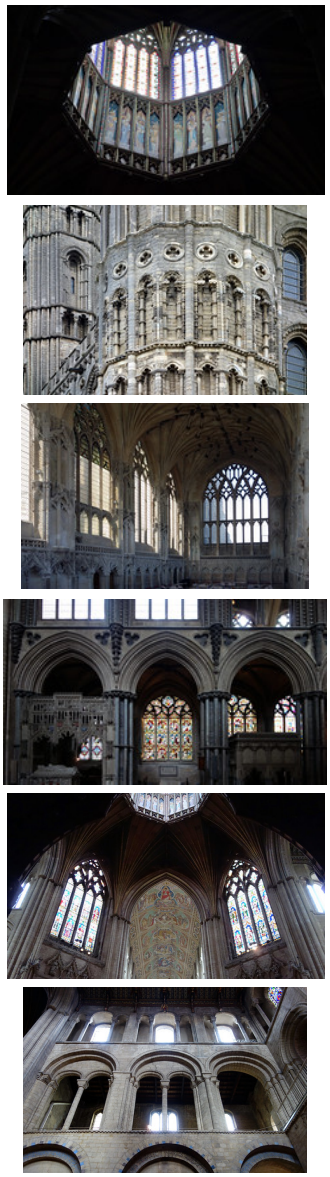


Figure 13.6.11.20: More Smarthistory images…

Pilgrimage routes and the cult of the relic

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI



Figure 13.6.11.21: Basilica Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay, France, dedicated 1104 (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The end of the world

Y2K. The Rapture. 2012. For over a decade, speculation about the end of the world has run rampant—all in conjunction with the arrival of the new millennium. The same was true for our religious European counterparts who, prior to the year 1000, believed the Second Coming of Christ was imminent, and the end was nigh.

When the apocalypse failed to materialize in 1000, it was decided that the correct year must be 1033, a thousand years from the death of Jesus Christ, but then that year also passed without any cataclysmic event.

Just how extreme the millennial panic was, remains debated. It is certain that from the year 950 onwards, there was a significant increase in building activity, particularly of religious structures. There were many reasons for this construction boom beside millennial panic, and the building of monumental religious structures continued even as fears of the immediate end of time faded.

Not surprisingly, this period also witnessed a surge in the popularity of the religious pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place. These are acts of piety and may have been undertaken in gratitude for the fact that doomsday had not arrived, and to ensure salvation, whenever the end did come.



Figure 13.6.11.22: Map of pilgrimage routes (image adapted from: Manfred Zentgraf, Volkach, Germany)



Figure **13.6.11.23**: Pilgrims from the tympanum of Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun (photo: Holly Hayes, Art History Images)

For the average European in the 12th Century, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Jerusalem was out of the question—travel to the Middle East was too far, too dangerous and too expensive. Santiago de Compostela in Spain offered a much more convenient option.

To this day, hundreds of thousands of faithful travel the "Way of Saint James" to the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela. They go on foot across Europe to a holy shrine where bones, believed to belong to Saint James, were unearthed. The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela now stands on this site.

The pious of the Middle Ages wanted to pay homage to holy relics, and pilgrimage churches sprang up along the route to Spain. Pilgrims commonly walked barefoot and wore a scalloped shell, the symbol of Saint James (the shell's grooves symbolize the many roads of the pilgrimage).

In France alone there were four main routes toward Spain. Le Puy, Arles, Paris and Vézelay are the cities on these roads and each contains a church that was an important pilgrimage site in its own right.

Why make a pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was an expression of Christian devotion and it was believed that it could purify the soul and perhaps even produce miraculous healing benefits. A criminal could travel the "Way of Saint James" as an act penance. For the everyday person, a pilgrimage was also one of the only opportunities to travel and see some of the world. It was a chance to meet people, perhaps even those outside one's own class. The purpose of pilgrimage may not have been entirely devotional.



Figure **13.6.11.24**: Reliquary of St. Foy at Conque Abbey (photo: Holly Hayes, Art History images)

Pilgrimage churches can be seen in part as popular desinations, a spiritual tourism of sorts for medieval travelers. Guidebooks, badges and various souvenirs were sold. Pilgrims, though traveling light, would spend money in the towns that possessed important sacred relics.

The cult of relic was at its peak during the Romanesque period (c. 1000 – 1200). Relics are religious objects generally connected to a saint, or some other venerated person. A relic might be a body part, a saint's finger, a cloth worn by the Virgin Mary, or a piece of the True Cross.

Relics are often housed in a protective container called a reliquary. Reliquarys are often quite opulent and can be encrusted with precious metals and gemstones given by the faithful. An example is the Reliquary of Saint Foy, located at Conques abbey on the pilgrimage route. It is said to hold a piece of the child martyr's skull. A large pilgrimage church might be home to one major relic, and dozens of lesser-known relics. Because of their sacred and economic value, every church wanted an important relic and a black market boomed with fake and stolen goods.



Figure **13.6.11.25**: Portal, Cathedral of Saint Lazare, Autun, 12th century

Accommodating crowds

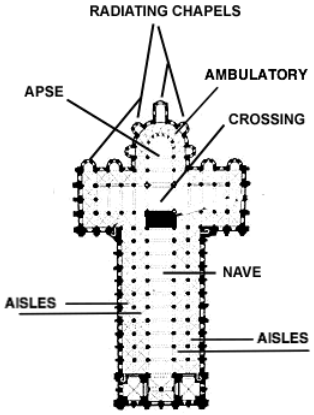


Figure 13.6.11.26: St. Sernin, Toulouse (plan)

Pilgrimage churches were constructed with some special features to make them particularly accessible to visitors. The goal was to get large numbers of people to the relics and out again without disturbing the Mass in the center of the church. A large portal that could accommodate the pious throngs was a prerequisite. Generally, these portals would also have an elaborate sculptural program, often portraying the Second Coming—a good way to remind the weary pilgrim why they made the trip!

A pilgrimage church generally consisted of a double aisle on either side of the nave (the wide hall that runs down the center of a church). In this way, the visitor could move easily around the outer edges of the church until reaching the smaller apsidioles or radiating chapels. These are small rooms generally located off the back of the church behind the altar where relics were often displayed. The faithful would move from chapel to chapel venerating each relic in turn.

Thick walls, small windows

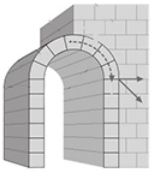


Figure 13.6.11.27: The thrust of a barrel vault

Romanesque churches were dark. This was in large part because of the use of stone barrel-vault construction. This system provided excellent acoustics and reduced fire danger. However, a barrel vault exerts continuous lateral (outward pressure) all along the walls that support the vault.

This meant the outer walls of the church had to be extra thick. It also meant that windows had to be small and few. When builders dared to pierce walls with additional or larger windows they risked structural failure. Churches did collapse.



Figure **13.6.11.28**: Nave, Tournus Cathedral, 11th century

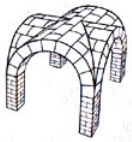
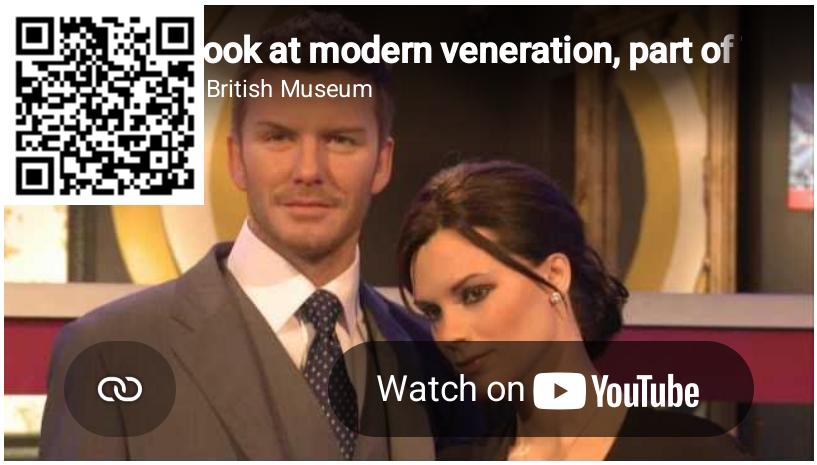


Figure **13.6.11.29**: Groin vault

Later, the masons of the Gothic period replaced the barrel vault with the groin vault which carries weight down to its four corners, concentrating the pressure of the vaulting, and allowing for much larger windows.

A look at modern veneration

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.6.11.1**: Video © Trustees of the British Museum

Romanesque art in France

The creation of enormous monasteries, pilgrimage churches, bejeweled reliquaries, and the delivery of inspiring sermons in favor of the crusades—it all happened here, in France.

c. 1000 - 1200

Cluny Abbey

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI



Figure **13.6.11.30**: The consecration of the main altar of Cluny III by Pope Urban II in 1095, in the presence of abbot St Hugh, from the *Miscellanea secundum usum Ordinis Cluniacensis*, late 12th – early 13th century, folio 91r (Illuminated Manuscript no. 17716, Bibliotheque National de France, Paris)

The largest church in Christendom

The abbey of Cluny III (located **in Southern Burgundy, France**) started modestly enough—the first church being a relatively simple barn like structure. However, Cluny quickly grew to be home to the largest church in Christendom—a title it would hold for over 200 years.



Figure **13.6.11.31**: Surviving Transept, Cluny Abbey (Cluny III), 12th-century, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France

But first things first, what exactly is an abbey? An abbey can refer to a Christian church, but the term generally goes beyond that to refer to the grouping of buildings that constitutes the housing and other necessary buildings for a society of Christian monks or nuns who were all living under a specific religious rule (the rule regulated their lives, specifying behavior and the organization of the monastery). In the case of Cluny, the rule the monks lived under was that of Saint Benedict of Nursia, who had, in the 6th century, advocated a life divided between prayer, rest, study, and work.



Figure **13.6.11.32**: William of Aquitaine addressing two monks of Cluny, historiated initial, from the *Miscellanea secundum usum Ordinis Cluniacensis*, late 12th – early 13th century, folio 85r (Illuminated Manuscript no. 17716, Bibliotheque National de France, Paris)

A gift from William I, Duke of Aquitaine

The site of abbey originally belonged to William I, Duke of Aquitaine and was home to his favorite hunting box (a hunting lodge for use during the hunting season). In the Middle Ages, a duke (the highest ranking member of the nobility) often wielded much more power and authority than a king (this was in part because the dukes held sway over the provinces, and power was decentralized). Dukes were often wealthier than the king (as the ***Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry** demonstrates). While a hunting box may conjure up visions of a one-room cabin, likely it was a large and stately home in its own right—so when, toward the end of his life, William I gave up the home, lands, and hunting rights (and several other parcels of land as well), so that charitable institutions could be built, it was a significant donation. The land that would become Cluny was placed into the hands of a venerable monk named Berno, who would become Saint Berno of Cluny.

Cluny I

Berno was the abbot of the newly founded Cluny from 910 to 925. The monastery was created to be a reform order that strictly adhered to the Rule of Saint Benedict.* Cluny sought to reform monastic life by returning to the Western monastic traditions of previous centuries which focused on peace, solitude, prayer, and work (such as caring for the poor). Importantly, William I of Acquataine (sometimes referred to as William the Pious), endowed the abbey with something more than land—he gave it independence. As a result, the abbey answered directly to the pope and did not have to obey any other dictates, or taxation, from local lords. This would help Cluny to become a wealthy center of the arts.

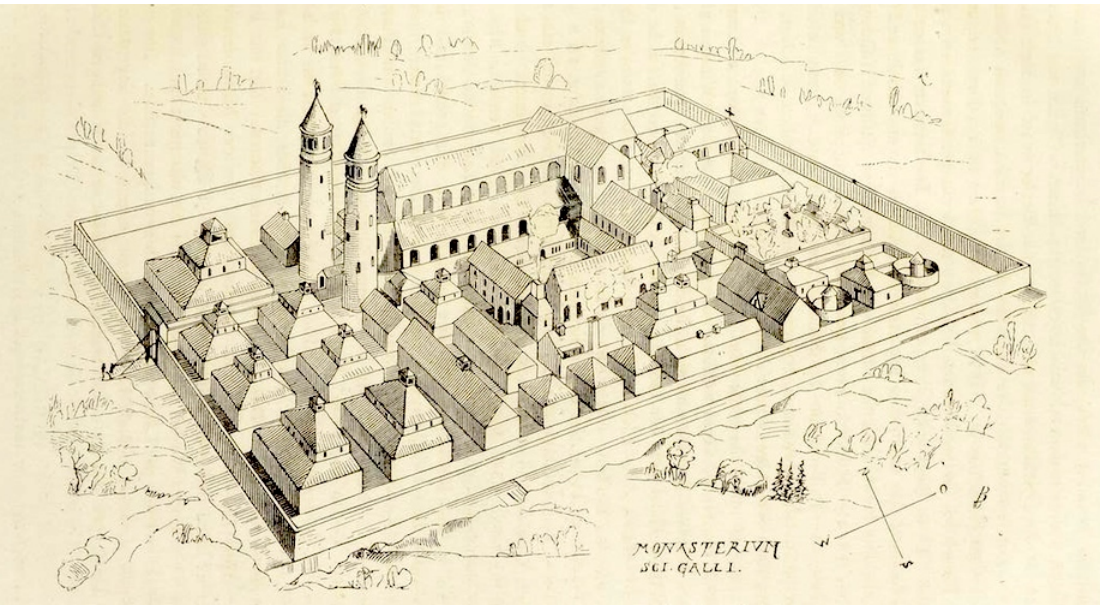


Figure **13.6.11.33**: An artist's rendering of the plan of the Monastery of St. Gall, as illustrated in Johann Rudolf Rahn, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste in der Schweiz: von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Schlusse des Mittelalters* (Zürich, 1876), fig. 12 (Kloster S. Gallen nach dem Grundriss vom Jahre 830).

The first abbey at Cluny (Cluny I, which no longer exists aside from archaeological remains) developed quickly—becoming akin to small town, boasting over 200 monks. It was laid out in the style of the Saint Gall Plan—a large-scale architectural drawing of the "ideal" abbey that was created in Switzerland around 800 C.E. (above and annotated plan **here**). To our knowledge, no such abbey ever actually existed, but many abbeys appear to have been modeled on the plan—Cluny being one of them. The cloister (a quadrangular walkway where monks would stroll in meditation), is generally regarded as the spiritual center of an abbey. The Saint Gall plan places it literally in the center, and the other buildings, for example, workshops, domestic quarters, etc., surround it.

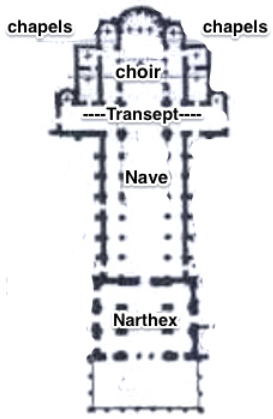


Figure **13.6.11.34**: Plan of Cluny II annotated and adapted from Kenneth John Conant, "A History of Romanesque Cluny as Clarified by Excavation and Comparisons," *Momentum*, vol. 7 (1971)

Cluny II

As mentioned, the first church at Cluny was likely not much more than a simple place of worship. However, as the order prospered, something larger and more illustrious was called for. Soon after the passing of Berno, a monk named Odo took over as his successor and continued to expand the abbey. The second incarnation of the church at Cluny (Cluny II) was begun just decades after the first.

What we know of it is largely speculative—based on written records and excavations. This second iteration (plan, left) sported a narthex (an enclosed area at the entrance of a church) with two towers in the west, a choir (the area between the main body of church and the altar) with a tower and chapels in the east, in addition to the main basilica form (a **basilica** is a church plan

consisting of a rectangular space, often divided into the central area, or nave, with aisles on either side). The choir had chapels in echelon, or stepped out one after the other—one of the first examples of an architectural form that would become extremely popular. It also had a projecting transept (which cuts perpendicularly across the main body of the basilica).



Figure 13.6.11.35: Vaulting in the nave of Saint Philibert, 10th and 11th century, Tournus, France

The church consisted of an illuminated barrel vault, not unlike that still in existence at Saint Philibert at Tournus, Cluny's neighbor (above). That abbey, and a few others in Burgundy, had been experimenting with the barrel vault. It is good to remember that the work of these builders was largely trial and error. From what we are given to understand, this was very much in keeping with the Romanesque style of the region. As Cluny I and II no longer exist, much of what we have to go on comes from extensive excavation studies—particularly those done by Kenneth Conant.

Romanesque architecture is known for its regional styles—the look and feel of Romanesque churches could vary widely from region to region. Burgundy and the **pilgrimage churches** were particularly important influences on the style that would develop into Gothic. Gothic architecture began to take on a more "International," style, sharing characteristics from region to region where Romanesque churches varied largely depending on their location and the local building practices. The only thing that almost all Romanesque churches shared was the use of the rounded stone barrel vault. The nature of a barrel vault, which exerts continual lateral pressure, is not conducive to piercing the supporting walls with windows, so barrel vaulted structures tend to be poorly lit. At Tournus—and likely Cluny II—the builders tried to circumvent this by placing small windows above the arcade. This was the first example of an illuminated vaulted church.



Figure 13.6.11.36: Vaulting, Cluny Abbey (Cluny III), 12th-century, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France

Cluny III

Cluny had a series of strong abbots, and Hugh of Semur was one of that line. He waited until he had been in that position for 40 years before beginning construction on the monumental project that would be Cluny III. It is thought he was intent on observing the latest trends—seeing what worked and what didn't—before embarking on this great building project. Cluny III seems to have been built with the idea of plucking the best attributes from what had been created before and synthesizing them into a grandiose structure worthy of the prestigious order. It was not completed until 1130 (Hugh the Great died in 1109,) and when it was complete it stood as the largest in Europe—with five aisles (rivalling Old Saint Peter's in Rome).



Figure **13.6.11.37**: Tower, Cluny Abbey (Cluny III), 12th-century, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France

The structure was built from a combination of brick and ashlar (stone) which had hitherto been part of two separate traditions. In many ways, the church laid out was the same as its popular **Pilgrimage Route** cousins. In addition to the spacious basilica with five aisles, it had two transepts, an ambulatory, and radiating chapels at the east end. The crossings were surmounted by octagonal towers (above) with additional towers over the transept arms. Only a singular transept arm still survives today (top of page).

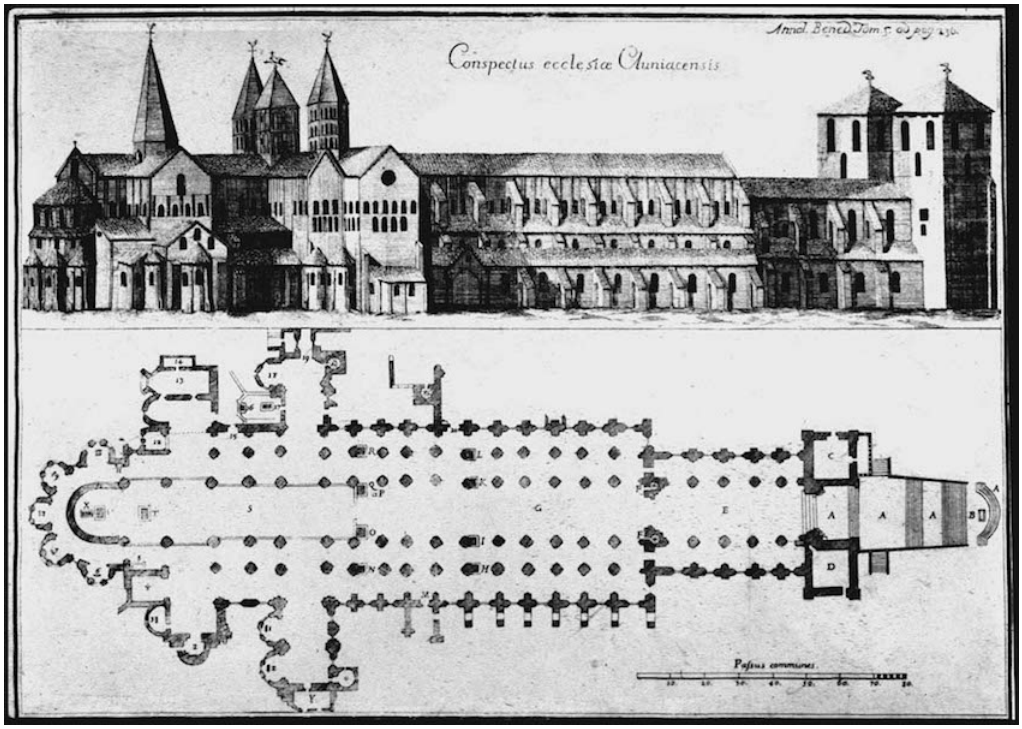


Figure **13.6.11.38**: Plan and elevation of the church of the abbey of Cluny III (Burgundy, France) from an engraving of 1754

While only the foundation and some other bits and pieces remain, scholars have reconstructed what the interior would have looked like as well (below). Composed of a three story elevation consisting of slim aisles with pointed arches, blind arcade with three arches in each bay and a triple clerestory, it would have been a sight to behold. The slightly pointed dome rose to a height of 98 feet. This vaunting ambition may have helped lead to the partial collapse in 1125—though quickly repaired by the time consecration took place in 1130.



Figure **13.6.11.39**: Virtual reality panel, Cluny Abbey (Cluny III), 12th-century, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France

In many ways Cluny III followed, at least in plan, that of a colossal pilgrimage church and there are those who speculate that in fact Cluny was intent upon trying to compete with those medieval moneymakers. The abbey was in fact paid for in large part by money seized from Spanish Muslims who had been conquered by their Christian counterparts.

While William would help found many other monasteries, none would be so prosperous as Cluny. At its height Cluniac congregations numbered at over 1000. Berno was actually given the power to be the abbot of many abbeys, not just Cluny, and his successor, Odo, also began to gather more abbeys under Cluny's rule. As one might imagine, this idea was not popular given these other abbeys were used to their own systems of rule. But the situation did help expand Cluny into the powerful institution it would become; it would be from Cluny that a number of Popes would be plucked. However, despite the Cluniac movement being a reform movement itself, by late 11th century another breakaway group had formed—the Cistercian movement and, like Cluny, it would be highly successful (see article on **Fontenay**.) At the time of the Cistercian schism, the Cluniac order was suffering from corruption and excess (too much interest in things of the material world). A far cry from its devout beginnings!



Figure **13.6.11.40**: Choir Capital, early 12th century, Third Plainsong Tone (photo: **Holly Hayes**)

*The foundation of the physical church of Cluny was the beginning of the Cluniac, or Benedictine Reforms. Theoretically, all Roman Catholic monks were meant to follow three simple rules set out hundreds of years earlier by Saint Benedict of Nursia. Essentially these precepts could be boiled down to peace, prayer and work. Cluniac monks also observed the traditional eight Benedictine hours of the Divine office: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. Some of the most delightful (and still intact), artwork of Cluny III are the capitals representing the tones of the Gregorian chant, or plainsong. Rescued from the rubble of the choir, these marvelous sculptures show tones of the chant personified as small figures standing in their concave almond-shaped mandorlas. Some of the figures are playing instruments, some seem to be contorted into movements of a dance.

Monasticism in Western Medieval Europe on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.6.11.41: More Smarthistory images…

Saint-Pierre, Moissac

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Figure 13.6.11.42: South-side portal (detail), Church of Ste. Pierre, 1115-1130, Moissac, France (photo: Simon, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The church of Ste. Pierre (St. Peter) in Moissac, France, dating from 1115-30, has one of the most impressive and elaborate Romanesque portals of the twelfth century. Carved images occupy the walls of the extended porch leading to the door, the door itself, and even the space over the door.

Pilgrimage routes

The church of Ste. Pierre was on one of the pilgrimage roads through France that led to Santiago de Campostela, in Spain. As it was home to the remains of St. James Major, that Spanish church was one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Western Europe. Ste. Pierre in Moissac was a popular stop for those making the long and arduous journey to Spain.

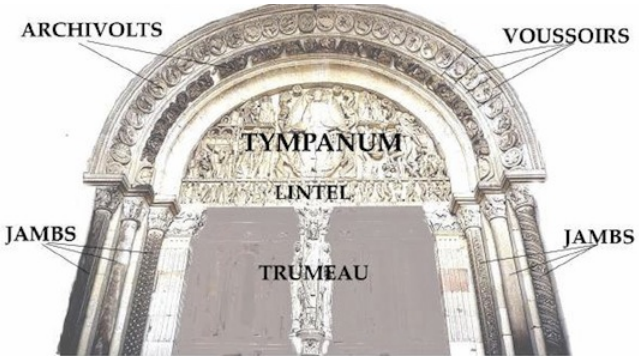


Figure 13.6.11.43: The parts of a Romanesque portal



Figure **13.6.11.44**: Old Testament prophet (Jeremiah or Isaiah?), right side of the trumeau of the south portal of Saint-Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30 (photo: **Nick Thompson**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

In order to understand what is depicted on the main areas surrounding the portal that leads into the church, let's break it down into its constituent parts. The term portal refers to a doorway or entry into a building, and Romanesque portals have distinct architectural elements which were oftentimes carved with a variety of ornament and subject matter.

In the case of Ste. Pierre, the portal is divided in half vertically by the trumeau, which is decorated on three of its four sides. On the front, the viewer is faced with three pairs of intertwined lions and lionesses who are there to symbolically guard the entry into the sacred space of the church. Such symbolism comes from Early Christian imagery where the doors to Christ's tomb are often shown with lion's heads on them. On the east side of the trumeau is a representation of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah (some scholars suggest it is Isaiah), who holds a scroll in his hands. On the west side is a figure identified as St. Paul, from the New Testament.

The placement of these two figures on the sides of the trumeau was no doubt deliberate as they face two other figures on the door jambs (the outer walls of the portal where the doors are attached). Across from St. Paul is a representation of St. Peter, also a New Testament saint (and the namesake of the church), and across from Jeremiah, is the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. The pairing of Old and New Testament figures was common during this period as a means of suggesting the fulfillment of Mosaic law (the law coming Moses) in the new Christian law under Christ.



Figure **13.6.11.45**: Rosettes on the lintel, south portal, Saint-Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30

The trumeau has more than just a decorative function though as it is also supports the horizontal beam of stone above called the lintel. The lintel is decorated with ten rosettes that are bound together by a carved rope and have a repeated floral pattern at both the upper and lower spaces between each rosette. Notice that on both the left and right ends of the lintel, the rope and rosette design is coming from the mouth of a fantastical animal of some sort (image, above)! Details such as these, with imaginative, hybrid animals are a common characteristic in Romanesque art from illuminated manuscripts to sculpture.



Figure **13.6.11.46**: South portal, Saint-Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30 (photo: **Josep Renalias**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Just above the lintel is the lunette-shaped (semi-circular) tympanum, which has the majority of the sculpted decoration (and this is true in most Romanesque and Gothic portals). In this case, the tympanum is surrounded by three decorative archivolts (arches), which have various foliate patterns carved into the individual blocks of stone, known as the voussoirs, which make them up.



Figure **13.6.11.47**: Tympanum from the south portal, Saint-Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30 (photo: **Nick Thompson**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

During the Romanesque and Gothic periods, there were two subjects which were popular for tympanum decoration. One was the subject of the Last Judgment, when Christ sits as judge over those who will be divided into the Saved and the Damned. An example of this can be seen at Autun.

The other oft-represented subject is known as the Maiestas Domini (Christ in Majesty), and here at Moissac we are presented with a very literal depiction of a passage from the Book of Revelation (4:2–7), which reads:

> ***And immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne…And round the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold…And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto a crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts…***

> ***And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.***

The moment described in this passage, and represented here, is not a narrative in the sense that the Last Judgment is, but it is rather a more esoteric concept of the Second Coming of Christ and the End of Time.



Figure **13.6.11.48**: Christ enthroned, Tympanum, south portal, Saint-Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30 (photo: **Nick Thompson**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

In the very center of the composition is the figure of Christ, seated on a throne, with his right hand raised in gesture of blessing. In his left hand he balances a book on his knee, perhaps a reference to the Book of Revelation. His circular halo is inscribed with a cross (known as a cruciform halo), and we can just make out the suggestion of a larger, almond-shaped body halo (called a "mandorla" after the Italian word for almond) just visible as the pointed arch behind Christ's haloed head.

Immediately to the left and right of the seated figure of Christ are the Evangelical Beasts, three animals and one human figure, who represent the four Evangelists who wrote the New Testament Gospels. Matthew, in the upper left, is represented by the winged man, Mark just below is shown as the lion, Luke on the bottom right is seen as the ox, and John the Evangelist is represented as the eagle. The representation of the four Evangelists as a tetramorph was common in sculpture, painting, and illuminated manuscripts.



Figure **13.6.11.49**: Elders, from the south tympanum, Saint Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30 (photo: **Nick Thompson**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

On either side of the Evangelical Beasts are two tall, elegant angels holding scrolls, as well as the twenty-four elders mentioned in the text from Revelations. They are arranged on three levels, two of which are divided by wavy lines, reminding us of the “sea of glass.” Each elder holds a small musical instrument in one hand and a chalice in the other (some of these have broken off over time). Very clearly all of the figures—man and beast—are turned toward the central figure of Christ, who stares serenely out toward the viewer. The twenty-four elders crane their necks and twist their bodies as do the Evangelical beasts. Even the lines of the drapery seem to be directing our attention toward the center.



Figure **13.6.11.50**: Tympanum, Chartres Cathedral Tympanum, Chartres Cathedral, c. 1144-55 (photo: **Guillaume Piolle**, CC BY 3.0)

A brief comparison between the style of the sculptures in this tympanum and that employed on the Early Gothic portal of Chartres Cathedral (above), which is also a Maiestas Domini, clearly illustrates the very lively, almost agitated sense of the figures at Moissac. At Chartres, the twenty-four elders are now the voussoirs in the archivolts and the figure of Christ, seated frontally and surrounded by the mandorla, is flanked by the four evangelical beasts. Here, however, is a sense of clarity and three-dimensionality that is markedly different from the style seen at Moissac.

And as the road weary pilgrims would have approached the portal of the church Saint-Pierre, they were met with spectacular imagery that warned against sin, and reminded them of Christ’s sacrifice and his final coming. The portal at Moissac would have been a veritable feast for the Romanesque viewer’s eyes and souls.

Additional resoures:

Moissac on Mapping Gothic France (Columbia University)

Last Judgment, Tympanum, Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun (France)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.6.11.2: *Last Judgment*, Tympanum, Central Portal on West facade of the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun (France), c. 1130-46

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





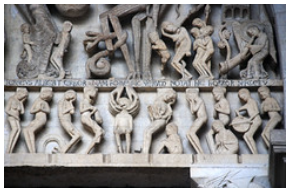












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88716



Figure **13.6.11.51**: More Smarthistory images…

Church and Reliquary of Sainte-Foy, France

by DR. ELISA FOSTER

On the road

Imagine you pack up your belongings in a sack, tie on your cloak, and start off on a months-long journey through treacherous mountains, unpredictable weather and unknown lands. For the medieval pilgrim, life was a spiritual journey. Why did people in the Middle Ages take pilgrimages? There are many reasons, but visiting a holy site meant being closer to God. And if you were closer to God in this life, you would also be closer to God in the next.



Figure **13.6.11.52**: Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, France, c. 1050–1130 (photo: **jean françois bonachera**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Located in Conques, the Church of Saint-Foy (Saint Faith) is an important pilgrimage church on the route to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain. It is also an abbey, meaning that the church was part of a monastery where monks lived, prayed and worked. Only small parts of the monastery have survived but the church remains largely intact. Although smaller churches stood on the site from the seventh century, the Church of Saint-Foy was begun in the eleventh century and completed in the mid-twelfth century. As a Romanesque church, it has a barrel-vaulted nave lined with arches on the interior.



Figure **13.6.11.53**: Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, France, c. 1050–1130 (photo: **Manuel Alende Maceira**, CC BY 2.0)

It is known as a pilgrimage church because many of the large churches along the route to Santiago de Compostela took a similar shape. The main feature of these churches was the cruciform plan. Not only did this plan take the symbolic form of the cross but it also helped control the crowds of pilgrims. In most cases, pilgrims could enter the western portal and then circulate around the church towards the apse at the eastern end. The apse usually contained smaller chapels, known as radiating chapels, where pilgrims could visit saint's shrines, especially the sanctuary of Saint Foy. They could then circulate around the ambulatory and out the transept, or crossing. This design helped to regulate the flow of traffic throughout the church although the intention and effective use of this design has been debated.

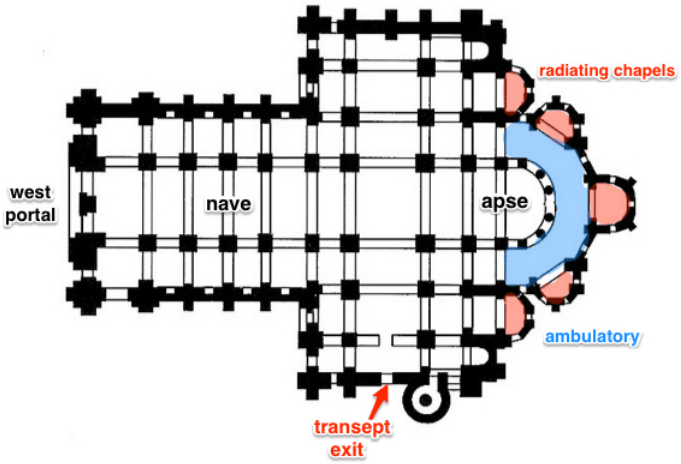


Figure **13.6.11.54**: Plan, Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, France, c. 1050–1130 C.E. (**adapted**)

A warning in stone: The tympanum of the Last Judgment



Figure **13.6.11.55**: Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, France, c. 1050–1130 C.E. (photo: **syvwlch**, CC BY 2.0)

When a pilgrim arrived at Conques, they would probably head for the church to receive blessing. Yet before they got inside, an important message awaited them on the portals: the Last Judgment. This scene is depicted on the tympanum, the central semi-circular relief carving above the central portal.

In the center sits Christ as Judge, and he means business! He sits enthroned with his right hand pointing upwards to the saved while his left hand gestures down to the damned. This scene would have served as a reminder to those entering the Church of Saint-Foy about the joys of heaven and torments of hell. Immediately on Christ's right are Mary, Peter and possibly the founder of the monastery as well as an entourage of other saints.



Figure 13.6.11.56: Last Judgment tympanum, Church of Sainte-Foy, France, Conques, c. 1050–1130 (photo: Òme deu Teishenèir, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Below these saints, a small arcade is covered by a pediment, meant to represent the House of Paradise. These are the blessed, those have been saved by Christ and who will remain in Paradise with him for eternity. At the center, we find Abraham and above him notice the outstretched hand of God, who beckons a kneeling Saint Faith (see image below).



Figure 13.6.11.57: The blessed in paradise, with the hand of God above beckoning Saint Foy (Saint Faith) (detail), Last Judgment tympanum, Church of Sainte-Foy, France, Conques, c. 1050–1130 (photo: Nick Thompson, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

On the other side of the pediment, a row of angels opens the graves of the dead. As the dead rise from their tombs, their souls will be weighed and they will be admitted to heaven or hell. This is the scene that we see right under Christ's feet—you can see the clear division between a large doorway leading to Paradise and a terrifying mouth that leads the way to Hell.



Figure 13.6.11.58: The gates of heaven and the mouth of hell (detail), Last Judgment tympanum, Church of Sainte-Foy, France, Conques, c. 1050–1130 (photo: Nick Thompson, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Inside Hell, things aren't looking very good. It is a chaotic, disorderly scene—notice how different it looks from the right-hand side of the tympanum. There is also a small pediment in the lower register of Hell, where the Devil, just opposite to Abraham, reigns over his terrifying kingdom.



Figure 13.6.11.59: Hell (detail), Last Judgment tympanum, Church of Sainte-Foy, France, Conques, c. 1050–1130 (photo: Nick Thompson, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.6.11.60: A gluttonous man hung by his legs and cloth stripped from the wealthy, Last Judgment tympanum, Church of Sainte-Foy, France, Conques, c. 1050–1130 (detail taken from gigapixel image, Columbia University)

The devil, like Christ, is also an enthroned judge, determining the punishments that await the damned according to the severity of their sins. In particular, to the devil's left is a hanged man. This man is a reference to Judas, who hanged himself after betraying Christ. Just beyond Judas, a knight is tossed into the fires of Hell and above him, a gluttonous man is hung by his legs for his sins. Each of these sinners represents a type of sin to avoid, from adultery, to arrogance, even to the misuse of church offices. Indeed, this portal was not only a warning for pilgrims, but for the clergy who lived in Conques as well.

The reliquary



Figure **13.6.11.61**: Reliquary statue of Sainte-Foy (Saint Faith), late 10th to early 11th century with later additions, gold, silver gilt, jewels, and cameos over a wooden core, 33 1/2 inches (Treasury, Sainte-Foy, Conques) (photo: **Holly Hayes**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Pilgrims arriving in Conques had one thing on their mind: the reliquary of Saint Foy. This reliquary, or container holding the remains of a saint or holy person, was one of the most famous in all of Europe. So famous that it was originally located in a monastery in Agen but the monks at Conques plotted to steal it in order to attract more wealth and visitors. The reliquary at Conques held the remains of Saint Foy, a young Christian convert living in Roman-occupied France during the second century. At the age of twelve, she was condemned to die for her refusal to sacrifice to pagan gods, she is therefore revered as a martyr, as someone who dies for their faith. Saint Foy was a very popular saint in Southern France and her relic was extremely important to the church; bringing pilgrims and wealth to the small, isolated town of Conques.



Figure **13.6.11.63**: Head (detail), Reliquary statue of Sainte-Foy (Saint Faith), late 10th to early 11th century with later additions, gold, silver gilt, jewels, and cameos over a wooden core, 33-1/2 inches (Treasury, Sainte-Foy, Conques) (photo: **Holly Hayes**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

While the date of the reliquary is unknown, Bernard of Angers first spoke it about in 1010. At first, Bernard was frightened that the statue was too beautiful stating, "Brother, what do you think of this idol? Would Jupiter or Mars consider himself unworthy of such a statue?" He was concerned about idolatry—that pilgrims would begin to worship the jewel-encrusted reliquary rather than what that reliquary contained and represented, the holy figure of Saint Foy. Indeed, the gold and gem encrusted statue would been quite a

sight for the pilgrims. Over time, travelers paid homage to Saint Foy by donating gemstones for the reliquary so that her dress is covered with agates, amethysts, crystals, carnelians, emeralds, garnets, hematite, jade, onyx, opals, pearls, rubies, sapphires, topazes, antique cameos and intaglios. Her face, which stares boldly at the viewer, is thought to have originally been the head of a Roman statue of a child. The reuse of older materials in new forms of art is known as spolia. Using spolia was not only practical but it made the object more important by associating it with the past riches of the Roman Empire.

The Church of Saint Foy at Conques provides an excellent example of Romanesque art and architecture. Although the monastery no longer survives, the church and treasury stand as a reminder of the rituals of medieval faith, especially for pilgrims. Even today, people make the long trek to Conques to pay respect to Saint Foy. Every October, a great celebration and procession is held for Saint Foy, continuing a medieval tradition into present day devotion.

Additional resources:

Sainte-Foy at Conques on Mapping Gothic France (Columbia University)

Gigapixel image of the Tympanum on Mapping Gothic France (Columbia University)

Toman, Rolf, and Achim Bednorz, *Romanesque: architecture, sculpture, painting* (Köln: Könemann, 1997).

Pamela Sheingorn, Robert L. A. Clark, and Bernardus, *The Book of Sainte Foy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

Janetta Rebold Benton, *Art of the Middle Ages* (New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson, 2002).

Pentecost and Mission to the Apostles Tympanum, Basilica Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay (France)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.11.3**: Pentecost and Mission to the Apostles Tympanum, central portal of the narthex, Basilica Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay (France), 1120-32

Basilica of Saint-Sernin

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT

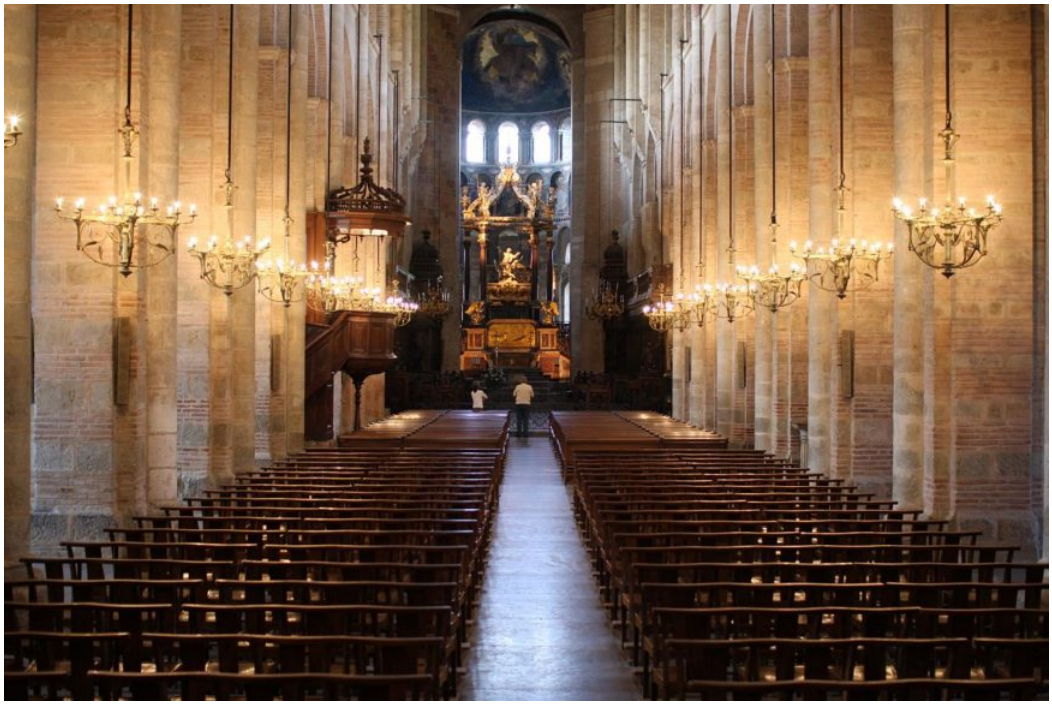


Figure 13.6.11.64: St. Sernin, Toulouse, France, c. 1080-1120 with later additions (photo: Holly Hayes, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The political center of Toulouse, France today is Place du Capitole, an open city square to the east of a beautiful eighteenth-century neoclassical building. Two major north-south roads traverse the western side of this square, and the names of these two thoroughfares have much to say about the history of the city. The street on the southern end of the square — Rue de Sainte-Rome — is named after a long since destroyed thirteenth-century Dominican church, Sainte-Romain. The street that proceeds northwards from the northwest corner of Place du Capitole — Rue du Taur — whispers the smallest of hints as to the most important church in the city, Saint-Sernin.



Figure 13.6.11.64: Place du Capitole, Toulouse, France (photo: **Benh LIEU SONG**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A martyred saint

This imposing Romanesque basilica was constructed in honor of St. Sernin (Saturninus in Latin), the first bishop of Toulouse. He was born in the early third century in Greece, and was one of seven bishops that Pope Fabian sent to different parts of Gaul to actively preach the Christian gospels to the pagans who lived in those areas. Many stories that pertain to the early Christian martyrs are fantastical, and we should take Sernin's own narrative with the proverbial grain of salt.



Figure **13.6.11.65**: Notre Dame du Taur, Toulouse, France, 14th century (photo: **Didier Descouens**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

According to legend, when Sernin entered the city of Toulouse, all of the pagan idols — which hitherto had regularly spoken to their priests — suddenly and disturbingly fell into silence. One day in 257, a great group had gathered around an altar, and a man pointed to Sernin as the cause of this divine silence, exclaiming, "There is the one who preaches everywhere that our temples must be torn down, and who dares to call our gods devils! It is his presence that imposes silence on our oracles!" Sernin was then chained to a nearby bull and drug through the city until his body was broken and skull crushed. His corpse was eventually deposited on a street that since those times has been called the *Rue du Taur*, the Road of the Bull. A church appropriately called Notre Dame du Taur commemorates the spot where the bull finally deposited the lifeless body. About 300 meters further north is Saint-Sernin, the basilica where the martyred saint's bodily remains are purported to reside.

A pilgrimage church

Begun sometime around 1080 (approximately 825 years after the saint's death), Saint-Sernin was formally consecrated as a church about a century later. The opening centuries of the second millennium were a time of great **religious pilgrimages**, and one of the most important pilgrimage sites for the Catholic faithful — then as now — is the cathedral of St. James in Santiago de Compostela, a city in northern Spain. For the pilgrims commencing their journey in Italy, the path they travelled took them through the southern part of France, and one of the major stopping points on this section of the Santiago Trail — the Way of St. James — was the city of Toulouse and the basilica of Saint-Sernin, the church that held the relics of one of the most famous martyred saints of the area.

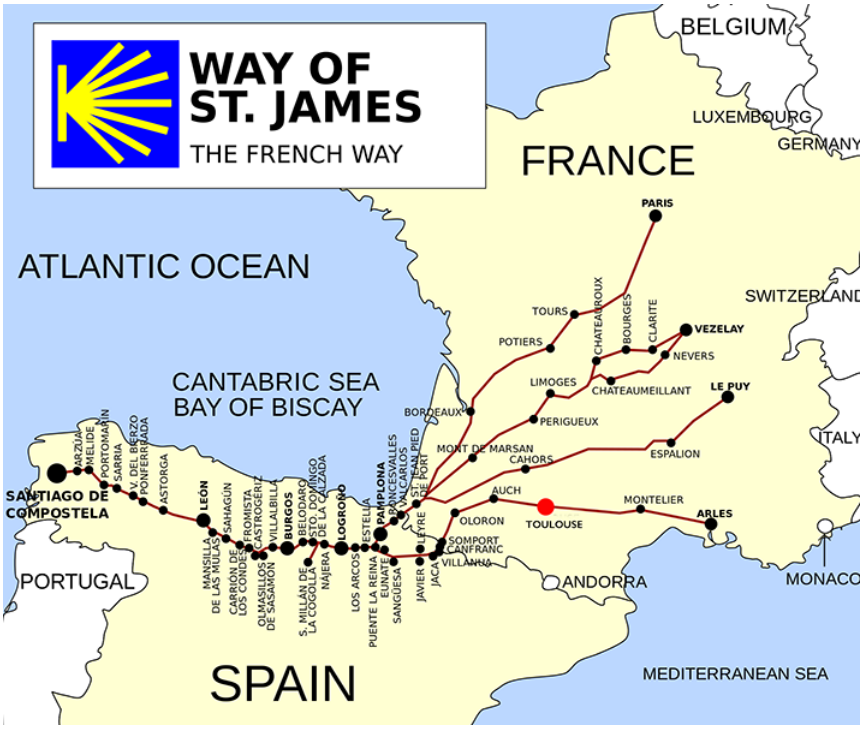


Figure 13.6.11.66: The Way of St. James — routes from France (image: **Vivaelcelta**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Saint-Sernin is an excellent example of a Romanesque pilgrimage church, a building that needed to accomplish two interrelated ends. First, the structure needed to provide a suitably inspiring shrine for the holy relics of the saint it was built to commemorate. Second, it needed to be large enough to accommodate the thousands of pilgrims who would arrive each day to pray before and venerate those relics. Fulfilling these two goals, Saint-Sernin is one of the best-preserved and perhaps the largest Romanesque churches in the world. Even almost 950 years after its construction was begun, it remains a religious structure that awes and inspires the pilgrims who still visit.

The Romanesque style is so called because the medieval architects who designed these buildings used a fundamentally Roman architectural language. Romanesque churches are notable for their thick walls with relatively few windows, Roman arches, barrel vaults, and the use of massive vaulting. In contract to the **Gothic buildings** that would become fashionable a couple of centuries later, Romanesque churches appear heavy and comparatively dark. Saint-Sernin is also an excellent example of a church with a Latin cross plan. A long central east-west nave is intersected by a shorter north-south transept, a shape that mimics the most recognizable symbol of the Christian faith.

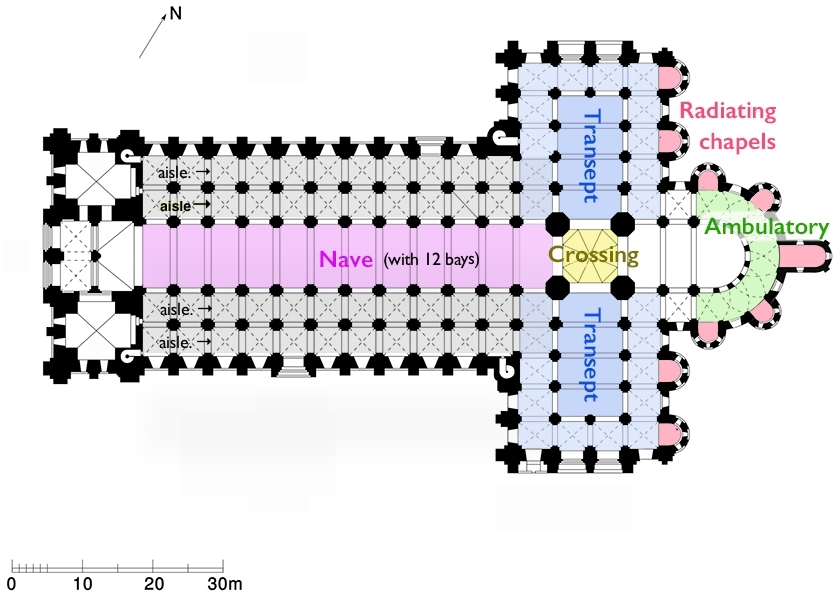


Figure **13.6.11.67**: Plan of St. Sernin, Toulouse

One of the best ways to fully appreciate a medieval church is to stroll around its exterior. Indeed, during this circumnavigation, one is not only transported back in time, but also through time. It often took centuries to construct churches of the size and scale of Saint-Sernin. By walking around the exterior of these churches an observant visitor can clearly see shifting architectural styles and changing sculptural aesthetics. Although construction was begun on Saint-Sernin by about 1080, slight changes in the proportion of brick and stone used during the course of its construction suggest the church went through a number of different building campaigns from its genesis until its ultimate conclusion, perhaps as many as four. Romanesque (and Gothic) churches are often a negotiation between what was dreamed and what came to pass; the final church often looks different from its original architectural plan.



Figure **13.6.11.68**: Basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, France, c. 1080-1120 with later additions (photo: **Guillermo Fdez**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

This is evident when looking at the west façade of the church (in medieval churches, this is commonly referred to as the westwork). Most churches during the late medieval period were constructed with a tower on both the north and south ends of the westwork, and the extensive and massive buttressing on the corners of the west façade of the structure strongly indicate that such towers were part of the original plan of the church. In the absence of these vertical towers, the front of the church is instead dominated by its large central circular window, set into a shallow pointed arch recession. Underneath this window are five small Roman (round) arches that harmoniously frame the two large Roman arch entranceways. This central part of the façade — from the large entrances to the circular window — is framed by the vertical buttresses on the left and right sides.



Figure **13.6.11.69**: Basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, France, bell tower c. 1270-1470 (photo: **Guimsou**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Walking from the front of the church along one of the sides brings into focus the large bell tower over the crossing. The octagonal tower is made of five layered tiers that are capped by a spire. The first three tiers feature Roman arches and were likely begun in the twelfth century. The much later uppermost tiers date from about 1270 — nearly two centuries after construction the church first began — and feature Gothic pointed arches. The spire at the top was finally completed around 1470 and measures 213 feet (65 m) in height. The bell tower alone is a visual lesson in the shifting architectural styles in fashion over the four centuries of a church's construction.



Figure 13.6.11.70: Basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, France, apse and radiating chapels, c. 1080-1120 with later additions (photo: Pierre-Selim, CC BY 2.0)

If the bell tower and its spire are the elements of the church that are most visible around the city of Toulouse, it is the architectural elements on the eastern side of the church — the apse end — that made Saint-Sernin famous. It was common during the medieval era for the apse of the church to have small chapels for the placement of holy relics where pilgrims could come to visit and venerate them. But in Saint-Sernin, the entire eastern end of the church — from the north transept, around the apse, and concluding on the southern transept — is filled with nine radiating chapels. Even from an exterior view, it is clear that one of the primary roles of this structure was to house relics for pilgrims to visit.



Figure **13.6.11.71**: Basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, France, view of the nave toward the apse, c. 1080-1120 (photo: **PierreSelim**, CC BY 3.0)

Chapels, sculptures, and the tomb of a saint

The plan of the interior of the church reinforces this function. The large **barrel-vaulted** central nave is flanked on each side by double side aisles. When standing in the nave the faithful look towards the same high altar that Pope Urban II consecrated on 24 May 1096.

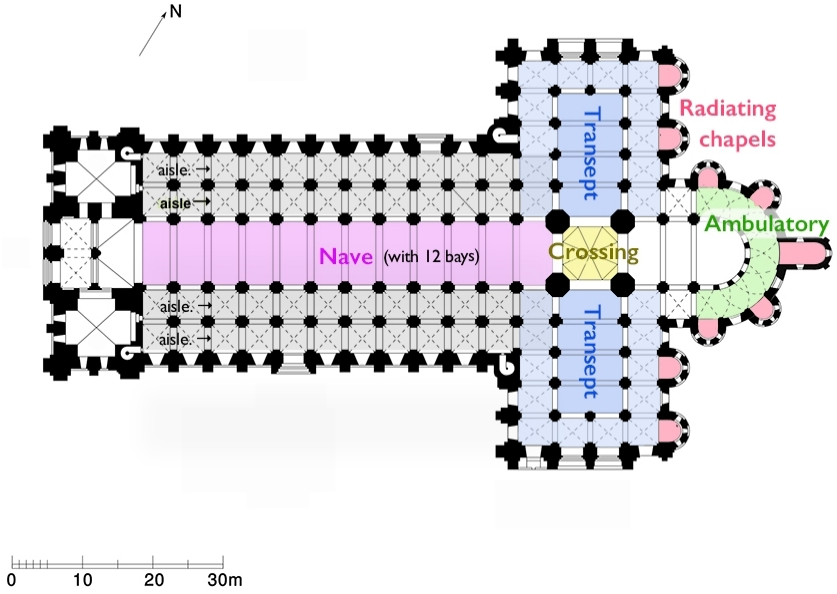


Figure **13.6.11.72**: Plan of St. Sernin, Toulouse

The nave is 69 feet in height and is twelve bays in length from the entrance (the narthex) to the crossing. Each bay is twice as wide as it is long. Harmoniously, these same proportions are mirrored by each of the double side aisles that flank the nave, thus creating a profound architectural unity. This unity is likewise reflected by the arches that separate the nave from the innermost side aisle and the arches in the **triforium** that allow light to flood into the nave.



Figure 13.6.11.73: Elevation, St. Sernin, Toulouse, c. 1080-1120 (photo: kristobalite, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

If the primary function of the nave was for the celebration of the Catholic mass, then the double side aisles allowed the throngs of pilgrims who arrived daily to visit the nine radiating chapels without interrupting any religious service in process. A pilgrim might enter the church, turn to their left, and then proceed down a side aisle and move along the transept. From there, they could worship and venerate at any of the nine radiating chapels and see the works of art located in the ambulatory. Of particular note is a large-scale relief of Christ in Majesty that dates from c. 1096. Jesus sits in a shallow mandorla; he raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing while his left hand holds a gospel with the words *Pax Vobis* — "Peace to You" in Latin — inscribed on the pages. Symbols of the four gospel writers look towards Jesus from the four corners.



Figure 13.6.11.74: Basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, France, Christ in Majesty relief, c. 1096 (photo: Frédéric Neupont, CC BY 2.0)

The main attraction of the basilica, however, is the tomb of Saint Saturnin that is located on the inner part of the ambulatory. To reach this space, a pilgrim would enter through a doorway where the lintel was carved with the head of Christ flanked by two scallop shells, visual symbols for the pilgrimage trail to Santiago de Compostela. Immediately underneath this lintel — on the iron gate that serves as a barrier — are the words *Non Est in Toto Sanctior Orbe Locus*; "There is no holier place on earth."

Saint-Sernin also featured upper and lower crypts that could be visited while in the ambulatory, which contained various shrines and reliquaries. Concluding their visit, the traveling pilgrims would then walk along the side aisle opposite the one they had previously used and then exit the church.



Figure **13.6.11.75**: Basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, France, entrance to the tomb of Saint Saturnin, c. 1080-1120 (photo: Dr. Bryan Zygmont)

Looking to St. James

While the Basilica of Saint-Sernin may have served as a kind of stopping point for pilgrims on the Way of St. James, it became a kind of pilgrimage destination in its own right in the decades after its construction. Indeed, it is a near contemporary with the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (c. 1078), and there is some disagreement about which church is older, as some architectural historians date the groundbreaking for Saint-Sernin to 1077. Regardless of which is older, there is one important note that is generally well accepted: there is clear relationship between the two buildings. Both are Latin cross in plan, and both feature nine radiating chapels on the eastern side of the church. In arriving in Santiago de Compostela, those pilgrims who had traveled together along the southern path of the Way of St. James and had previously visited Saint-Sernin would have encountered a church that familiarly whispered to them.

Fontenay Abbey

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI



Figure **13.6.11.76**: Cloister, Fontenay Abbey, 12th century

The rules

The Romanesque abbey of Fontenay (Abbaye de Fontenay) is located in Burgundy, France and stands today as a prime architectural example of the Cistercian order. Who are the Cistercians, you ask? The Cistercian were (and still are) monks that broke away from the mainstream Benedictines (specifically the Cluniacs), at the end of the 11th century. They are sometimes referred to as the white monks, a reference to their clothing (habit)—a deviation from the Benedictine's black robes—or as Bernardines, after Cistercian superstar Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.



Figure **13.6.11.77**: Illumination with St. Benedict delivering his Rule to St. Maurus, Monastery of St. Gilles, Nimes, 1129

Essentially, the Cistercians felt the Benedictine monks had become too worldly and were no longer staying true to the Rules of Saint Benedict of Nursia. The Cistercians thought that the amount of time being devoted to manual labor was lacking. The goal of the Cistercians was to adhere strictly to the 6th century Rule of Saint Benedict. This Rule pronounced that a monk should divide his day equally between prayer, study and manual labor, as well as live a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Most Cistercian abbeys were built to reflect this dedication to the Rule of Saint Benedict, with manual labor being an integral component. Fontenay, a fairly early addition to the order, and built directly under Bernard of Clairvaux, is no exception. Fontenay was the second "daughter house" of Clairvaux, and one of the four founding houses of the order. Saint Bernard held strong beliefs as to how abbeys should be built and, as Fontenay was built under his auspices, it conforms to Saint Bernard's dictates to a nicety.



Figure 13.6.11.78: Inside the walls, Fontenay Abbey, 12th century

Self-sufficiency

Cistercians chose to locate their abbeys in remote areas, far from any sort of hubbub that might interrupt their spiritual meditations. In Fontenay's case, it was originally founded on the site of an old hermitage. However, due to issues with that site, the abbey was forced to relocate in 1130 to its present location further along the marshy valley. Often Cistercian would take an inhospitable topography and make it livable, such as the marshy site of Fontenay. The Cistercian abbeys focused on complete self-sufficiency, and were akin to mini-towns, rendering the outside world obsolete. Ironically, given the success of the abbeys, they often became the economic hub of the area.



Figure 13.6.11.79: Chapter House, Fontenay Abbey

Cistercian abbeys were similar to those of the Benedictines, possessing a dormitory for sleep, a cloister for strolling, a chapterhouse for the monks' morning meeting, and a caldarium, or warming room where the monks could read and transcribe (also sometimes referred to as a scriptorium). However, an additional feature found at Cistercian abbeys was a wing for lay brothers. Unique to the order, and one of the reasons for its popularity, was the fact they would allow lay men to join. These men were required to adhere to most of the rules of the order but their lives were slightly less strict, and lay brothers could never be ordained or hold office. Fontenay today is remarkably well preserved, though the refectory (cafeteria) was destroyed and the gatehouse restored the 17th century; repairs have also been made to the roof. The abbey still possesses its medieval forge, with its tremendous hydraulic hammer. The forge was an important producer of iron tools and building components in its day.



Figure **13.6.11.80**: View of chapter house (below left), dormatory (above left), and church apse (right)

Harmony and proportion

The Cistercians were known to take an austere tone when it came to ornament. Bernard of Clairvaux felt decoration, whether in the church or in the cloister, would detract from the monks from their heavenly ruminations. With this in mind, Bernard also nixed the crossing tower, which was a common feature in other Romanesque churches, but something Saint Bernard found ostentatious and excessive. A small bell can be found on the roof, as it was a necessity for calling the monks to mass. The Cistercians did, however, lavish acute attention on the construction materials, the stones of the church themselves, generally only using the finest of ashlar masonry.



Figure **13.6.11.81**: West façade of the Church, Fontenay Abbey

One enters the church through a singular portal almost completely devoid of ornament aside from the beautiful pink and brown coloring of the stones. The church is in the form of a Latin cross. The east end consists of a flattened apse flanked by two matching square chapels—a deviation from the more common semi-circular apse. Fontenay was dedicated in 1147, making it one of the oldest Cistercian churches in France.



Figure **13.6.11.82**: Nave, Fontenay Abbey

When a visitor enters the church, they are confronted with the symmetrical beauty that is quintessential to the Cistercian abbey. The harmony of proportions might almost make one think of a Classical Greek temple, or the work of later Renaissance architects such as Alberti. Cistercian architecture did inspire Le Corbusier, pioneer of modern architecture. The eight bay nave is flanked by aisles on either side. There is no clerestory. Light only enters from the side aisles on the right, the windows at the east and west ends, as well as windows that pierce the East wall of the crossing transept. The nave is a rounded barrel vault, ever so slightly pointed and the side aisles are likewise supported by barrel vaults which are perpendicular to the nave. Engaged columns coursed into the nave wall connect to the transverse arches above to produce a quiet visual rhythm. As is the case with a number of Cistercian abbeys, the church at Fontenay anticipates the Gothic aesthetic in the way that the barrel vaults are gently pointed.



Figure 13.6.11.83: Fontenay Abbey seen from the cloister

Into private hands

Like so many abbeys, Fontenay was seized during the French revolution, at which point it ceased to function as a religious center. The property was auctioned off and it became a paper mill in 1791. Later it was be adapted for other industrial purposes until purchased by Edouard Anyard, who restored its structures to their original purity. It remains in the Anyard family to this day, and is open to the public for all to see. It stands as a sober, yet stunning, reminder of the reductive beauty of Cistercian architecture.

Additional resources

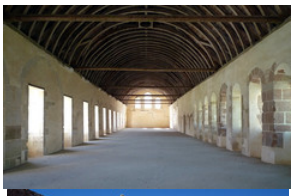
Photos of Fontenay from Smarthistory for teaching and learning (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Fontenay Abbey

Rule of St. Benedict at the Catholic Encyclopedia

Cistercian Abbey of Fontenay at UNESCO

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





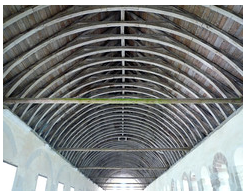














Figure 13.6.11.84: More Smarthistory images…

Saint Trophime, Arles

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI

The Provençal city of Arles in the south of France, is home to the medieval church, Saint Trophime.



Figure 13.6.11.85: Saint Trophime, Arles, 12th – 15th century (photo: Elliot Brown, CC BY 2.0)

First impressions

When I first saw the church, somewhat inconspicuously wedged between two more recent structures, it struck me as rather non-descript. However, that impression only lasted a moment.



Figure 13.6.11.86: Facade, Saint Trophime (photo: Claude Valette, CC BY-ND 2.0)

As I drew nearer, the magnificence of the portal, embellished with an elaborate sculptural program, came into view. Hapless souls, chained and bound, shuffle along to their ultimate doom while Christ in Majesty, surrounded by symbols of his apostles, looks stoically on (the sculptures on the facade depict, in part, the Last Judgment). This is perhaps the finest example of a Romanesque portal to be found in southern France.



Figure 13.6.11.87: Damned on right side of the portal, Saint Trophime (photo: kristobalite, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The exterior of Saint Trophime was cleaned in recent years—for better or for worse. While it is a pleasure to see the sculpture without a thick black film of pollution, some think these sorts of restorations do more harm than good. The entrance to the cathedral consists of a single arched opening reminiscent of ancient triumphal arches. There are a number of triumphal arches that still stand not far from Arles, in nearby Saint Remy and Orange.

The entirety of the main portal projects outward and it is on this portion of the exterior that the bulk of the church's sculpture can be found.



Figure 13.6.11.88: Tympanum and lintel, Saint Trophime (photo: Claude Valette, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Known as the church of Saint Stephen in early Christian times, the church was renamed Saint Trophime when the relics of Saint Trophimus (the first bishop of Arles), in this case a variety of bones, were dug up and reinterred at the church site in 972. Typical for medieval churches, Saint Trophime was constructed over a long period of time and built in a series of campaigns. The structure that is seen today was started in the eleventh century and completed in the twelfth, with a few bits from earlier and later periods thrown in.

A pilgrimage church

The church of Saint Trophime was the first stop on the Via Tolosa, one of the main pilgrimage routes through France leading to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The church was also the episcopal seat, or home to the bishop's chair, from the early fifth century until the early nineteenth century, giving this structure cathedral status.

Saint Trophime is Romanesque in style, as opposed to Gothic, and one way this can be seen is in the tell tale rounded arch of the front portal. Gothic structures tended to favor a tall pointed arch. Likewise, a heavy barrel vault covers the nave, as opposed to a pointed rib vault (which became a hallmark of Gothic architecture). It should be noted that the barrel vault at Saint Trophime is slightly pointed, perhaps hinting at the Gothic age to come.

Inside the church

The interior, though not as decorative as the facade, is just as impressive. When visitors enter Saint Trophime, they are greeted by a high nave (the long central hall). In fact, standing 20 meters/65 feet high, this is the tallest nave in Provence and is equivalent to a six story building.



Figure **13.6.11.89**: Nave, Saint Trophime

The nave is flanked by tall, narrow side aisles, which are covered by half-barrel vaults. Side aisles are fairly unusual in medieval Provençal churches, the tendency being toward single nave buildings. Because Saint Trophime was a cathedral at the time of its construction, it may have warrented a more complex and expansive design (at least in comparison to nearby parish churches).

The nave of Saint Trophime is composed of five bays and communicates with the side aisles via arcades that are slightly pointed like the main barrel vault. The elevation is a straightforward two-story design, consisting of an arcade and a clerestory (the upper portion of the wall pierced by windows).

Despite this, Saint Trophime is still rather dark, perhaps due its large size. The nave and aisles are crossed by a transept, which creates the plan's cruciform shape. There is a crossing tower above the intersection of the nave and trancept supported on squinches (support that help transition from the rectangular form of the bay up to the octagonal form of the tower), a common feature of Provençal churches.



Figure 13.6.11.90: Crossing Tower, Saint Trophime, Arles (Photo: SiefkinDR)

This tower reaches a stately height of roughly 42 meters or 137 feet! The east end terminates in three semi-circular apses. The central apse and ambulatory was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, and therefore reflects a Gothic sensibility in its use of pointed arches and rib vaults. The remainder of the church is a true Romanesque gem.

A regional style

Provence, along with many other regions, developed its own unique Romanesque style. Saint Trophime is a wonderful representation of some of the facets of this Provençal regional style. For example, it is built of finely dressed ashlar masonry, meaning it uses precisely cut stones and little or no mortar. Given the number of stones needed to create this building, this was no small feat! There would have been no speedy stone saws, only a mason's trusty chisel and mallet. Despite the time and labor involved, this was a common building practice in the area.

Many of these stones are emblazoned with prominent markings, often resembling letters of the alphabet. These are called mason's marks and were also common to local masonic practice. Mason's marks were used for a variety of purposes, including payment and placement of the stones.

The sculpture within

The interior of Saint Trophime is much more austere than the portal or cloister, another attribute typical to the Provençal Romanesque style. However, the interior of Saint Trophime is not without ornament.



Figure 13.6.11.91: Cloister Capital with acanthus leaves, Saint Trophime, Arles (Photo: SiefkinDR)

Of special note are the classically inspired Corinthian columns (fluted columns surmounted by a scroll and acanthus leaf capital) that can be found just below the springing of the main nave vault. There is also a stringcourse molding running the length of the nave just above the clerestory carved in an acanthus leaf pattern. Both the Corinthian column and the acanthus leaf molding were

favorites of the ancient Romans.Arles abounds with Roman ruins, including an arena, a theater and the remains of a bath complex. It is easy to see how local medieval builders may have been inspired by the Roman remains they would have seen daily.

The Last Judgment portal

The portal tympanum (illustrated above) displays Christ in Majesty surrounded by the four apostles represented in symbolic form: John (eagle), Matthew (angel), Luke (ox), and Mark (lion). This is also known as the tetramorph. Those chosen for heaven, including bishops and priests, sit at Christ's right. At Christ's left stands an angel brandishing a sword, effectively blocking the damned from paradise. The condemned souls, with hellfire licking at their legs, seem to be taking their damnation in stride (above). The carving, exquisite though it may be, does not convey the same strong emotions present in some contemporaneous churches such as at Moissac.



Figure **13.6.11.92**: The Elect (blessed), Saint Trophime, Arles (Photo: Christine M. Bolli)



Figure **13.6.11.93**: Angel and Damned at the Gates of Heaven, Saint Trophime, Arles (photo: Christine M. Bolli)

The Last Judgment and Second Coming are common subjects for Romanesque portals, particularly for those churches along the pilgrimage routes. The Saint Trophime version is notable in its overall stoicism despite the drama of the subject matter.



Figure **13.6.11.94**: St. John (left) and St. Peter (right), facade, Saint Trophime (photo: **kristobalite**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The portal is jam-packed with sculpture. There are a number of other biblical scenes included in addition to the Last Judgment, particularly from the early life of Christ. For example, if one looks at the lintel just to the right of the doorway, the Adoration of the Magi can be seen. Below those registers a host of saints, including Peter, John, Paul, Stephen and Trophime himself, glare into the middle distance, giving the viewer the sense that they too have been judged and been found wanting! The grand entranceway's symmetrical organization into clear registers gives it an orderly and uniform appearance, everlasting hellfire not withstanding.

Backstory

Saint Trophime was designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage site** in 1981 because of its status as a prime example of Romanesque architecture in France, and its importance as the starting point of one of the millennium-old pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The **World Monuments Fund** (WMF) has been a key supporter of ongoing efforts to preserve and restore the building.

After sponsoring the restoration of the building's facade in the 1990s, the WMF began the project of documenting and restoring the cloister in 2009. Their efforts involved the application of new technologies—in particular, 3-D laser scanning and high-definition photography by the **non-profit organization CyArk** and the engineering firm Christofori and Partners. The resulting **documentation** of the building was used to consult with many international experts who contributed valuable knowledge to the restoration, and it also preserved the building in digital form, making the information available for users around the globe. The WMF then oversaw the cleaning and restoration of the interior stone work, sculptures, terracing, and columns, including a type of laser-cleaning that carefully removes layers of accumulated soiling on the delicate marble.

This project demonstrates not only the importance of continued maintenance for important monuments, but the benefits of digital documentation for both expert planning and research as well as for the wider public. The open accessibility of the 3-D models and photographs online **through CyArk** is a cutting-edge example of how cultural heritage, and its continued importance for everyone, can be emphasized and shared around the world.

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

Saint Trophime UNESCO World Heritage webpage

Saint Trophime on the World Monuments Fund webpage

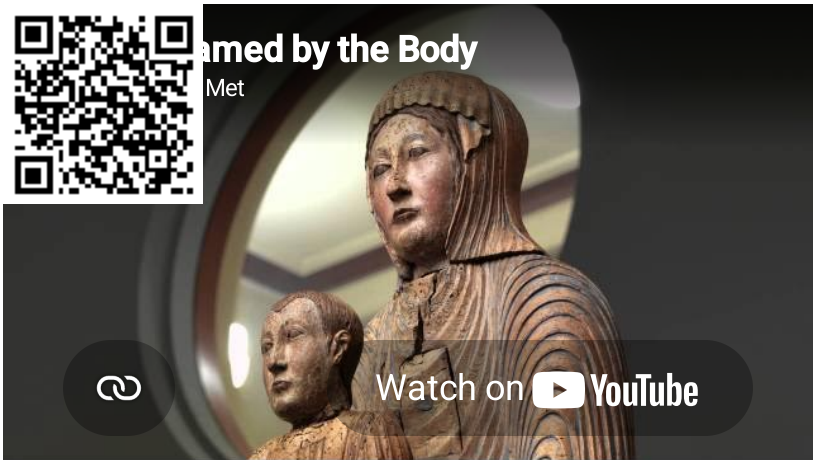
Saint Trophime on CyArk

What is a tympanum?

Glossary of Medieval Art and Architecture

Virgin and Child in Majesty

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.6.11.4**: Virgin and Child in Majesty, c. 1175-1200, made in Auvergne, France, walnut with paint, tin relief on a lead white ground, and linen,
31 5/16 x 12 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches / 79.5 x 31.7 x 29.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**. **View this work in the online collection**.

Italy

The Basilica of San Clemente, Rome

by DR. DIANE REILLY



Figure **13.6.11.95**: The Basilica of San Clemente, Rome, church rebuilt 1099-1119 (mosaic 1130s) with eighteenth-century renovations (photo: **Michael Foley**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

A shrunken Rome

By the twelfth century, the city of Rome was a shadow of its former, imperial Roman self. Pilgrims still flowed into the city from all over Europe in recognition of Rome's status as the home of the pope and the burial place of apostles and the Early Christian martyrs, but the city itself had shrunk dramatically inside the old Roman walls. Rome was regularly sacked by invaders, including the Holy Roman Emperor, a northern noble supposedly appointed to protect Europe's Christians. It was also damaged by battles between the city's most powerful families. For parts of the twelfth century, two popes, each chosen by a rival faction, concurrently claimed to lead the Western Church. Nonetheless, the city was gripped by a spirit of religious renewal that led patrons to rebuild several of its important churches. Romans were so proud of their city's Christian past and current status as the capital of Western Christianity that these new buildings often closely copied the early churches they replaced.

Building on Roman foundations

The Basilica of San Clemente, located in the heart of medieval Rome, is an example of this faithful copying. It was rebuilt in the early twelfth century on the site of an Early Christian house church, using the existing basilica church already on the site as its foundations. The builders mimicked the earlier church in almost every way, copying its nave, aisles, arcades (arches) with columns made from Roman spolia, clerestory windows, a simple apse, and an open wooden roof (now hidden by an ornately decorated ceiling). They departed from the earlier model only by making the new structure slightly narrower and inserting piers halfway down the nave. To a medieval viewer, the ancient Roman heritage of the building would have been obvious, though today it has mostly been obscured by an exuberant eighteenth-century renovation.



Figure 13.6.11.96: The Basilica of San Clemente, Rome, church rebuilt 1099-1119 (mosaic 1130s) with eighteenth-century renovations (photo: **Dnalor 01**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

An old fashioned *schola cantorum*—the choir enclosure where the men or boys who sang the words of the services would sit—is located in the middle of the church. At one time every Roman church would also have had a similar set of raised *ambos* (lecterns), a towering pedestal for the paschal candle, and rows of seats facing each other so that the choir could sing in alternation between each prayer and reading.

Blending Christian and classical

The decoration of the church also looked back to earlier precedents. The artists of the apse mosaic adapted the pagan and Christian motifs found in Late Antique and Early Christian mosaics and sculptures still visible in Rome. On a field of gold, a luxuriant, leafy, flowering scroll springs from a base of acanthus leaves. Naked, winged cherubs ride dolphins or play instruments among the branches, baskets of fruit spring from their ends, and shepherds herd sheep and milk goats in the landscape below. Below the cherubs Early Christian church fathers teach and serve.



Figure 13.6.11.97: Apse mosaic, Basilica of San Clemente, Rome, 1130s (photo: **James Stringer**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Grafted onto this bucolic scene are explicitly Christian themes. Between the shepherds, peacocks, geese, ducks and deer lap up the healing waters from the four rivers of Paradise. At the center, Jesus hangs on a cross studded with twelve doves, symbolizing the apostles. At the base, twelve sheep walk from miniature depictions of the walled cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem towards an

apocalyptic lamb with a crossed nimbus (below). An inscription at the bottom explains, “We liken the Church of Christ to this vine that the law causes to wither and the Cross causes to bloom.”



Figure **13.6.11.98**: Left: Deer drink from the four rivers of paradise; Right: Christ on the cross with doves, Basilica of San Clemente, Rome, mosaic, 1130s (photos: **Darren & Brad**, CC BY-NC 2.0; **Rita1234**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

On the spandrels of the arch, the prophets Saint Clement and Saint Lawrence and the apostles associated with Rome, Peter and Paul, wear the anachronistic uniform found in medieval depictions of holy figures: the chiton, himation and sandals worn by ancient aristocrats.



Figure **13.6.11.99**: Left: Saint Lawrence and Saint Paul; Right: Saint Peter and Saint Clement, Basilica of San Clemente, Rome, mosaic, 1130s (photos: **Rita 1234**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

With the flanking figures, the mosaic argues that the Western Christian church, based in Rome, is more powerful than the secular forces that had recently sought to control it. And like the church of San Clemente itself, it demonstrates that, despite the precarious political situation in Rome during this time, its inhabitants looked to publicly display the city’s status as the center of Western Christianity.

Additional resources:

Basilica of San Clemente on Google Arts and Culture

Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

Michael G. Sundell, *Mosaics in the Eternal City* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007).

by DR. DIANE REILLY



Figure **13.6.11.100**: San Miniato al Monte, Florence, begun 1013 (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.6.11.101**: Map of Roman roads on the Italian peninsula (source: **Eric Gaba, Agamemnus, Flappiefh**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Before the Italian peninsula was unified into a single nation in the nineteenth century, it was divided into numerous separate countries, papal-controlled territories, and city states with constantly shifting boundaries. Unlike regions north of the Alps, in Italy the durable old Roman roads that snaked down the length of the peninsula were preserved by mild weather and continuous use. The former Roman cities along these roads became hubs of trade. These included Florence on the Via Cassia between Rome and the old central Italian heartland, and Pisa, on the Via Aurelia between Rome and what was known as “Roman Gaul” (today France and Belgium).

Roman walls, aqueducts, monuments, and buildings dotted the landscape, and this Roman heritage profoundly impacted the appearance of the region’s churches. During the middle ages, residents of the cities of Tuscany valued their Roman past, particularly as it was associated with the origins of institutional Christianity. Although Tuscany was a duchy and controlled by the Canossa family, in reality the cities of Tuscany soon established their own governments and civic identities.

Florence and Pisa are wonderful examples of this. During the eleventh century, each city’s Roman heritage was still visible in the form of roads and bridges, walls and cemeteries, but each city also took on its own character based on the preferences of its

inhabitants and the sources of their economic strength. The architecture of San Miniato in Florence and the Cathedral of Pisa visibly express both their unique regional and civic qualities, as well as links to the Roman past.

A monastery on a hill

The church of the Benedictine monastery of San Miniato al Monte (above) lies outside the early medieval walls and across the Arno from Florence. It hovers over the city on the crest of a hill, or "*monte*," where Florentines believed the cell of Saint Minias, an Armenian Christian hermit who was allegedly martyred by the Roman Emperor Decius in the third century, once stood. By 1018, the bishop of Florence had ordered the construction of a church and installed a community of Benedictine monks there, following a familiar medieval pattern of locating monasteries outside, but within a short distance of, a city so that the monks could minister to the spiritual needs of the city's inhabitants.



Figure **13.6.11.102**: Crypt (below the high altar), San Miniato al Monte, Florence, begun 1013 (photo: **Rufus46**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A synthesis of forms



Figure **13.6.11.103**: View down the nave toward the raised chancel. Wooden trusses are visible above and diaphram arches can be seen spanning the width of the nave. San Miniato al Monte, Florence, begun 1013 (photo: **Waldstein**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The builders cleverly designed the church so that it could accommodate visitors to the tomb of Minias. Adapting a basilica-style structure with its single apse and a trussed timber roof, the builders incorporated an innovative raised chancel. Central stairways

allow visitors to see and visit the crypt housing Minias's relics, while flanking stairways lead to an elevated platform holding the altar and choir used by the monks.



Figure **13.6.11.104**: Corinthian capital, San Miniato al Monte, Florence, begun 1013 (photo: **Rufus46**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A similar synthesis of ancient, Early Christian, and medieval forms is visible in the church's walls. An arcade of polished stone columns supporting Corinthian capitals march down the nave, above which colorful stone inlay brightens the surface—all reminiscent of Early Christian basilicas like **Santa Sabina** in Rome. Many of the capitals are Roman spolia, noticeable because they are much narrower than the columns they crown.

The roots of Florentine style

Yet onto this traditional framework the builders grafted imposing diaphragm arches that divide the nave into three massive bays, marked on the walls with attached columns and compound piers. The green and white stone inlay familiar from some Early Christian interiors clads the surfaces of the façade and the interior (though in some places, after money ran out, artists imitated the decorative stone in paint). This style of construction, joining modified basilican architecture with colorful, two-dimensional stone inlay, would become typical of the Florentine region.



Figure **13.6.11.105**: San Miniato al Monte, Florence, begun 1013 (photo: **Rufus46**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The façade also references the Roman past. Although the component parts are flattened and rendered in pink, green and white stone, we can still identify an orderly row of columns topped by Corinthian capitals, crowned by a set of four Corinthian pilasters holding a triangular pediment that recalls a Roman temple front. In the fifteenth century, the Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti, would use many of the same elements in crafting the typically Tuscan façade of **Santa Maria Novella**, across town.



Figure **13.6.11.106**: Baptistery, cathedral, and campanile, Piazza dei Miracoli, Pisa, 11th-12th century (photo: **Massimo Catarinella**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Pisa and its “Leaning Tower”



Figure **13.6.11.107**: Campanile (bell tower), Piazza dei Miracoli, Pisa, begun 1173 (photo: **Nikolai Karaneschev**, CC BY 3.0)

The Arno, the river that flows through Florence, eventually reaches the city of Pisa on its way to the Mediterranean Sea. In the Middle Ages, before the river’s silt deposits pushed the sea away, Pisa was located very near the coast. It was an important port city from Roman times onwards, and by the eleventh century it became a maritime republic (a city-state whose economic base was maritime trade), competing with the other Italian naval powerhouses like Genoa, Venice, and Amalfi to dominate Mediterranean trade. Pisa warred constantly with rival maritime powers in Corsica, Sicily, North Africa and on the Italian mainland. The cathedral for which it is now famous was built starting in 1063, in the wake of, and using booty from, Pisa’s naval victory over Palermo.

Like most cathedrals on the Italian peninsula, Pisa’s was built as an assemblage of freestanding buildings, including a baptistery and bell tower (*campanile*) in addition to the church. The Pisa cathedral complex was unusual, however, in that it was situated well outside the city walls in a grassy precinct that incorporated an ancient cemetery. Surrounded by the marshes of the Arno, the

precinct's damp soil contributed to unstable ground under the complex's key structures, most noticeable in the *campanile*, which began to lean even while it was still being built in the twelfth century.

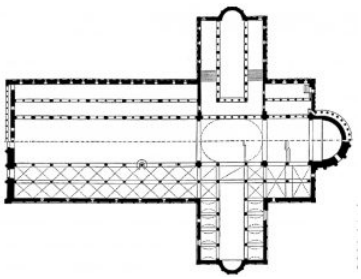


Figure **13.6.11.108**: Plan of Pisa Cathedral, begun 1063, from Georg Dehio, *Die kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes* (1887), plate 68 (**Heidelberg University Library**)

Old meets new

Pisa Cathedral, like San Miniato, borrows heavily from the architectural past. It has a basilica footprint with double aisles separated from the nave by colossal Corinthian columns, a trussed timber roof, and a single semicircular apse, all perhaps intended to recall **Old St. Peter's** in Rome. Each of the arms of the transept repeats this basic formula on a smaller scale, with single aisles flanking a central space that leads to a smaller apse, creating a four-armed groundplan. This and the substantial galleries below clerestory windows recall the basilicas of the early Byzantine east.



Figure **13.6.11.109**: Interior, Pisa Cathedral, begun 1063 (photo: **Tango7174**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The builders also added new features. Above the arcade and galleries and between the clerestory windows one finds expanses of cream and green striped wall. Although the pattern here is different from that found on the walls of San Miniato in Florence, both share the same complexity and conspicuous display of expensive materials.

An unusual dome

Although they probably originally planned a simpler wooden covering for the crossing, by the end of the eleventh century the builders had begun to construct a dome, perhaps to keep pace with contemporary domes built north of Tuscany in Lombardy, or even by Pisa's economic rival, Venice. The unusual and complicated elliptical shape was dictated by the rectangular outline of the crossing created by the meeting of the nave, choir and transepts. The builders bridged the corners of this opening under the dome's base with Byzantine-inspired squinches that resemble those built at **Hosios Loukas** in Greece just a few years before. Above the squinches, subtlely incised blind arcades can be seen. The colorful fresco depicting the Assumption of the Virgin was added in the 17th century.



Figure 13.6.11.110: Pisa Cathedral, begun 1063 (photo: **Stefan Lew**, CC 0)

Most impressive to medieval visitors would have been the exterior. The simple geometry of the façade immediately recalls San Miniato's stack of rectangles and triangles, all resting on a shallow arcade with Corinthian capitals that frame three doors. At Pisa, though, above the ground floor, the façade becomes dramatically three-dimensional, with open arcades that screen a wall decorated with grey and white stripes.



Figure 13.6.11.111: Pisa Cathedral, begun 1063 (photo: © **José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro** / CC BY-SA 3.0)

On the church's sides, transept, and apse, the grey and white stone has been embellished with blind arcades and colonnades (rows of columns). Lozenges, roundels, and rectangles of multicolored stone inlay dot the exterior.

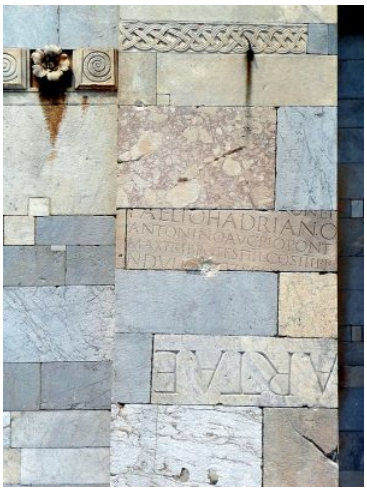


Figure **13.6.11.112**: Spolia on the exterior of Pisa Cathedral (photo: **Lucarelli**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Reused stones covered with inscriptions and sarcophagi imported from Rome are inserted seemingly at random: a testimony to the builders' desire to invent an ancient heritage for the building and demonstrate the wealth and power of Pisa.

The other buildings in the complex, built starting in the twelfth century after the Pisan navy participated in the **First Crusade,** complete this sumptuous display. The centrally-planned, domed baptistery may have been intended to imitate the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It and the leaning campanile are completely encased in stacked arcades, mirroring those on the cathedral. The "Camposanto," an enclosed cemetery, was filled with earth imported from the Holy Land in the holds of Pisan ships. Pisans may have imagined this collection of buildings, with its many references to ancient Christian sites, as a virtual Holy Land, a site they were then trying to reconquer.

Each a product of its particular region, San Miniato and Pisa Cathedral speak to the ways that medieval builders sought to express their cities' unique identities through both ancient allusions and innovative forms.

Additional resources:

San Miniato al Monte on Google Arts and Culture

Plan and elevation of San Miniato al Monte at the Courtauld Institute

Piazza del Duomo, Pisa on the UNESCO World Heritage website

Photos and 3-D models of Piazza del Duomo from CyArk

Diane Cole Ahl, "Camposanto, Terra santa: Picturing the Holy Land in Pisa," *Artibus et Historiae* 24 (2003), pp. 95-122.

Kenneth John Conant, *Carolingian and Renaissance Architecture 800-1200* (New York: Penguin, 1978), pp. 372-382.

Romanesque art in England

The Normans crossed the channel and invaded England in 1066. The works that followed testify to the power of art and architecture as a tool for colonization.

The Art of Conquest in England and Normandy

by DR. DIANE REILLY



Figure **13.6.11.113**: Horses disembarking from Norman longships, Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

The invasion

On September 28, 1066, the tiny community of Pevensey (on the south-east coast of England), huddled inside the ruins of a late Roman fortification. They would soon be overwhelmed with the arrival of William, Duke of Normandy, and an army intent on invasion. Thousands of invaders had crossed the English Channel from Normandy on hundreds of open longships that were big enough to carry cavalry horses and the supplies needed to lay siege to the coastal cities guarding England.



Figure **13.6.11.114**: Map showing the coasts of Normandy (in present-day France) and the location of the Battle of Hastings, in England

William had been preparing for the invasion since the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, Edward the Confessor, had died without a direct heir months earlier.

Edward had been succeeded by a newly appointed ruler, Harold Godwinson, but both William and the King of Norway, Harold Hardrada, also laid claim to the throne. Harold Hardrada had crossed the North Sea to invade near present-day Newcastle in the north of England, arriving at almost exactly the same time as William's army made land further south. Forced to defend two coasts almost three hundred miles apart in quick succession, Harold Godwinson succeeded in defeating the king of Norway, but fell on the field at the Battle of Hastings, just up the coast from Pevensey, shot through the eye with an arrow. Harold's sizeable army was no match for the mounted warriors William had brought from Normandy. His forces quickly marched west, to Dover and Canterbury, then east, leaving devastation in their wake. By Christmas, 1066, William the Conqueror had been crowned king of England, but facing a rebellion, he continued to lay waste to a huge swath of the country before he had all of England firmly within his grasp.



Figure **13.6.11.115**: The death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

Weaving a Norman tale

The works of art and architecture made in the wake of this invasion testify to the power of art as a tool for colonization. Perhaps the most famous of these is the **Bayeux Tapestry**. Within twenty years of the Norman Conquest of England, needle-workers embroidered dozens of scenes describing the invasion onto this 230-foot-long linen strip using wool and linen yarn. Between narrow upper and lower borders populated by animals, people and objects that act as a subtle commentary on the central narrative, a history of the Norman Conquest unscrolls from left to right, ending abruptly with a tattered, incomplete scene of mace-wielding Anglo-Saxon foot soldiers fleeing the victorious Normans. Embroidered Latin titles help to identify people, places and events.



Figure **13.6.11.116**: Wounded soldiers and horses (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

Scholars have never pinned down where or by whom the embroidery was carried out, or where it was meant to be displayed—a mystery compounded by the fact that this is the only storytelling textile strip of this sort preserved from the Middle Ages. In it, William is portrayed ordering his men to build a fleet of longships, stock them with arms and armor, food, wine, and horses, and set sail for England, where they feast, plan, and finally attack. The ensuing slaughter is unflinchingly rendered: in the lower border,

dismembered bodies are stripped by battlefield looters. The style of the tapestry, with its gangly-limbed, beaky-nosed figures, agitated gestures, stolid drapery folds, abrupt changes in scale, and multicolored trees made of rubbery, interlaced fronds, has similarities to other works found on both sides of the Channel. Anglo-Saxon England and the Duchy of Normandy had been exchanging artwork, artists, clergy, and nobles well before the Conquest (their rulers were closely related—King Edward the Confessor's mother, Emma of Normandy, was William the Conqueror's great aunt).



Figure **13.6.11.117**: Normans first meal in England, at the center is Bishop Odo, who gazes out as he offers a blessing over the cup in his hand (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

If we can't use style to judge where the tapestry was made, we can instead turn to the story, which displays an indisputably Norman bias, to identify its intended audience. Many medieval texts retold the events of the invasion from both the Anglo-Saxon and Norman perspectives, but Bishop Odo of Bayeux, William's half brother, figures prominently in the Bayeux tapestry, where he is shown blessing a feast on the eve of battle, advising William, and rallying the troops. It is likely, then, that Odo commissioned the tapestry to celebrate his brother's victory, and the tale that unfolds along its length highlights William's (and Odo's) valor and the supposed wrongdoings of Harold Godwinson, who is depicted swearing an oath to be William's vassal, but then allowing himself to be crowned King of England. The tapestry completely ignores Harold's victory over the Norwegian king, instead focusing on events of interest to Normans.



Figure **13.6.11.118**: Preparations for war, including the building of a motte-and-bailey (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

Motte-and-bailey castles

While the tapestry's renditions of ships, weapons, horses, feasts and buildings have been mined by historians for information about daily life and military campaigns, many details are doubtless the result of artistic license. Still, the tapestry showcases some important Norman innovations. After the feast presided over by Bishop Odo, the invaders are shown shoveling dirt onto a striped mound crowned by a structure labeled "*Hesteng ceastra*" (above). This is the castle of Hastings, one of several such castles (including one at Dover, discussed below, as well as the Tower of London) that William had built during and after his invasion. With these, he imported into England a type of defensive structure that was typical in Normandy and became essential for establishing control over his new English subjects.

The simplest of Norman castles comprised a mound, or *motte*, of alternating layers of earth and stones, topped with a wooden palisade and an enclosed residence, or *keep*, and surrounded by a ditch. Either surrounding this or contiguous with it was an open yard, or *bailey*, ringed with a wooden defensive barrier. Such defenses could be thrown up quickly and made use of existing land features. They provided security for the soldiers, horses, and equipment necessary to subdue the surrounding inhabitants, a vantage point from which to observe potential foes, and a looming presence to intimidate them.

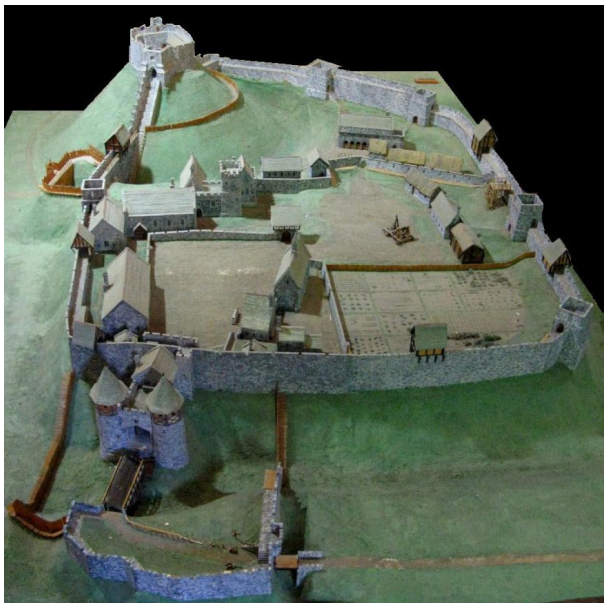


Figure 13.6.11.119: Model of a motte-and-bailey (Carisbrooke Castle, 14th century, England) (photo: **Charles D. P. Miller**)

Lacking a standing professional army that could defend the walls of a city, medieval rulers like William appointed nobles to subdue parcels of the countryside in return for land and goods. If a castle's location proved to be advantageous in the long term, the wooden structure on top was replaced with a masonry keep that provided permanent and more comfortable housing for the governing lord and his family. Round, rectangular, or faceted, these could be hollow shell keeps with buildings clustered against an exterior wall, or solid great towers, like the keep at Dover (below).



Figure 13.6.11.120: Aeriel view of Dover Castle, 12th century (Kent, England) (photo: **Lieven Smits**)

Topping these structures one often sees crenellations, which allowed archers to defend the perimeter while sheltering behind a stone wall. At Dover, as was typical, the wooden palisade surrounding the bailey was over time replaced by multiple concentric stone walls, a moat, and a *barbican* (an outer fortified gate).

With its towering presence, the motte-and-bailey castle combined the practical functions necessary to govern a rural population or the inhabitants of a conquered city with the symbolism of domination.



Figure **13.6.11.121**: Durham Cathedral on the River Wear, Norman construction founded 1093 (Durham, England) (photo: **Domstu**)

A Norman cathedral

William the Conqueror had first visited Durham Cathedral—then an Anglo-Saxon stone church—on its peninsula in a bend of the River Wear (above) on his first northern campaign. Durham Cathedral was an important touchstone of Anglo-Saxon national identity, holding the relics of Cuthbert, their patron saint. Recognizing its strategic importance, William fortified one end of the site with a motte-and-bailey castle, and invited another Norman, William of Saint-Calais (who then became Bishop William), to take over the venerable cathedral and remake it in the image of a Norman church. Bishop William expelled the clergy he found there and replaced them with Benedictine monks. By 1093, he had begun construction on the largest and most technically innovative Norman church of its time.



Figure **13.6.11.122**: Edward the Confessor's body being carried into Westminster Abbey, Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum)

The Anglo-Saxons were already familiar with some Norman building practices and styles. In the Bayeux Tapestry, we see Edward the Confessor's body carried to Westminster Abbey, which had been dedicated just days before his death. The church is depicted as a substantial structure with arcades (here, rows of columns topped with arches), clerestory windows, a transept and multiple towers. Edward had built it to be his own burial church, and excavations show that it probably resembled a Norman abbey near where Edward had spent much of his youth. At the time, observers described Westminster Abbey's style as new and unusual. In the wake of the Conquest, however, major English churches were built or rebuilt only in this style rather than in the then prevalent Anglo-Saxon style, marking Norman control of the Church in starkly visual terms.

William the Conqueror and his wife, Matilda, had already commissioned impressive church buildings in their Norman capital city, Caen, that showcased the key characteristics of the Norman style. We can also see these at Durham, begun after William's death but still part of the legacy of his invasion. A façade with two monumental towers looms over the fortifications and the steep banks of

the Wear surrounding Durham's peninsula. Behind this façade, a broad nave is separated from aisles by massive arches framed with complex decorative stone moldings, sitting on gigantic alternating piers.



Figure **13.6.11.123**: Interior of Durham Cathedral, Norman construction founded 1093 (Durham, England) (photo: **Oliver-Bonjoch**)

Heavy stone, cleverly disguised

The clerestory windows of the nave and transept sit behind an interior passage and yet another arcade that create the effect of a multi-layered wall. Soaring over this multitude of arches are gargantuan ribbed groin vaults that covered the broad main area of the church, were probably the earliest and certainly the widest in Norman architecture. Their lightness and clever variations in curvature and height attest to the technical prowess of the builders. Stonemasons embellished the arches and piers with intricately carved patterns, and incised the outer wall of the aisle with interwoven arches. With these layers and details, the cathedral's builders and masons emphasized the colossal weight of stone that supports the vaults, while at the same time diffusing this effect of weightiness using surface ornamentation. Together the technically demanding vaults and the wealth of hand-carved decoration broadcast the power of the cathedral and its bishop, who had the means to command the materials and artisans necessary to build such a monument.



Figure **13.6.11.124**: Interior of Durham Cathedral, Norman construction founded 1093 (Durham, England) (photo: **Simon Varwell**)

Led by a decisive ruler, the Norman invaders at the beginning of the eleventh century brought with them a rich set of artistic and architectural approaches that helped them display their new power and authority over the Anglo-Saxon population.

The Bayeux Tapestry

by DR. KRISTINE TANTON



Figure 13.6.11.125: Viewing the Bayeux tapestry at the Bayeux Tapestry Museum; Bayeux tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Museum) (photo: **boris does burg**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.6.11.126: Map showing the location of the Battle of Hastings

Measuring twenty inches high and almost 230 feet in length, the Bayeux Tapestry commemorates a struggle for the throne of England between William, the Duke of Normandy, and Harold, the Earl of Wessex (Normandy is a region in northern France). The year was 1066—William invaded and successfully conquered England, becoming the first Norman King of England (he was also known as William the Conqueror).

The Bayeux Tapestry consists of seventy-five scenes with Latin inscriptions (*tituli*) depicting the events leading up to the Norman conquest and culminating in the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The textile's end is now missing, but it most probably showed the coronation of William as King of England.



Figure 13.6.11.127: Falconer (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

Although it is called the Bayeux Tapestry, this commemorative work is not a true tapestry as the images are not woven into the cloth; instead, the imagery and inscriptions are embroidered using wool yarn sewed onto linen cloth.

The tapestry is sometimes viewed as a type of chronicle. However, the inclusion of episodes that do not relate to the historic events of the Norman Conquest complicate this categorization. Nevertheless, it presents a rich representation of a particular historic moment as well as providing an important visual source for eleventh-century textiles that have not survived into the twenty-first century.



Figure 13.6.11.128: Normans with horses on boats, crossing to England, in preparation for battle (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

The Bayeux Tapestry was probably made in Canterbury around 1070. Because the tapestry was made within a generation of the Norman defeat of the Anglo-Saxons, it is considered to be a somewhat accurate representation of events. Based on a few key pieces of evidence, art historians believe the patron was Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. Odo was the half-brother of William, Duke of Normandy. Furthermore, the tapestry favorably depicts the Normans in the events leading up to the battle of Hastings, thus presenting a Norman point of view. Most importantly, Odo appears in several scenes in the tapestry with the inscription ODO EPISCOPUS (abbreviated “EPS” in the image below), although he is only mentioned briefly in textual sources. By the late Middle Ages, the tapestry was displayed at Bayeux Cathedral, which was build by Odo and dedicated in 1077, but its size and secular subject matter suggest that it may have been intended to be a secular hanging, perhaps in Odo’s hall.



Figure **13.6.11.129**: The inscription (partially cut off in the reproduction above) above Odo reads, “Here, Odo the Bishop, with a staff (*baculum*) encourages the young warriors,” Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

We do not know the identity of the artists who produced the tapestry. The high quality of the needlework suggests that Anglo-Saxon embroiderers produced the tapestry. At the time, Anglo-Saxon needlework was prized throughout Europe. This theory is supported by stylistic analysis of the depicted scenes, which draw from Anglo-Saxon drawing techniques. Many of the scenes are believed to have been adapted from images in manuscripts illuminated at Canterbury.



Figure **13.6.11.130**: The death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

The artists skillfully organized the composition of the tapestry to lead the viewer’s eye from one scene to the next and divided the compositional space into three horizontal zones. The main events of the story are contained within the larger middle zone. The upper and lower zones contain images of animals and people, scenes from Aesop’s Fables, and scenes of husbandry and hunting. At times the images in the borders interact with and draw attention to key moments in the narrative (as in the image above of the battle).

The seventy-five episodes depicted present a continuous narrative of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings and the battle itself. A continuous narrative presents multiple scenes of a narrative within a single frame and draws from manuscript traditions such as the scroll form. The subject matter of the tapestry, however, has more in common with ancient monumental decoration such as **Trajan's Column**, which typically focused on mythic and historical references.



Figure **13.6.11.131**: Servants preparing food (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

The embroiderers' attention to specific details provides important sources for scenes of eleventh-century life as well as objects that no longer survive. In one scene of the Normans' first meal after reaching the shores of England, we see dining practices. We also see examples of armor used in the period and battle preparations. To the left of the dining scene, servants prepare food over a fire and bake bread in an outdoor oven (above). Servants serve the food as the tapestry's assumed patron, Bishop Odo, blesses the meal (below).



Figure **13.6.11.132**: Norman's first meal in England, at the center is Bishop Odo, who gazes out as he offers a blessing over the cup in his hand.(detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

Immediately after dining, William and his half-brothers Odo and Robert meet for a war council. Preparations for battle flank both sides of the first meal episode. Here we see visual evidence of eleventh-century battle gear and the construction of a motte-and-bailey to protect the Normans' position. A motte-and-bailey is a fortification with a keep (tower) situated on a raised earthwork (motte), surrounded by an enclosed courtyard (bailey). Images of battle horns, shields, and arrows as crucial ammunition shed light on military provisions and tactics for the time period.



Figure 13.6.11.134: Preparations for war, including the building of a motte-and-bailey (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

William's tactical use of cavalry is displayed in the "Cavalry" scene. The cavalry could advance quickly and easily retreat, which would scatter an opponent's defenses allowing the infantry to invade. It was a strong tactic that was flexible and intimidating. Although foot soldiers are included in the tapestry, the cavalry commands the scene, thus presenting the impression that the Normans were a cavalry-dominant army.



Figure 13.6.11.135: Cavalry and foot soldiers in battle (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

In addition to depicting military tactics used in the Norman Conquest, the scene also provides visual evidence for eleventh-century battle gear. Cavalrymen are shown wearing conical steel helmets with a protective nose plate, mail shirts, and carrying shields and spears whereas the foot soldiers are seen carrying spears and axes. Representations of the cavalry show that the soldiers were armored but the horses were not. The brutality of war is evident in the battle scenes. Figures of mortally wounded men and horses are strewn along the tapestry's lower zone as well as within the main central zone.



Figure **13.6.11.137**: Wounded soldiers and horses (detail), Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070, embroidered wool on linen, 20 inches high (Bayeux Tapestry Museum)

The Bayeux Tapestry provides an excellent example of Anglo-Norman art. It serves as a medieval artifact that operates as art, chronicle, political propaganda, and visual evidence of eleventh-century mundane objects, all at a monumental scale. This astounding work continues to fascinate.

Additional resources:

The Bayeux Museum

A list of "scenes" with corresponding image and caption

Shirley Ann Brown, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, Bayeux, Médiathèque municipale: Ms.1. A Sourcbook (Brepols, 2013).

Shirley Ann Brown, Bayeux Tapestry: history and bibliography (Woodbridge, 1988).

Martin K. Foys, Karen Eileen Overbey, and Dan Terkla, eds., The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations, (Boydell Press, 2009).

Richard Gameson, *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry* (Boydell Press, 1997).

The Bayeux Tapestry, from BBC

by BBC ONE



Video **13.6.11.5**: Video from BBC One

The BBC's David Dimbleby describes the historical significance of the Bayeux Tapestry for his BBC One Series, *Seven Ages of Britain.*

The Animated Bayeux Tapestry

by POTION PICTURES



Video **13.6.11.6**: Animation by David Newton, sound design by Marc Sylvan. Copyright Potion Pictures Limited. Video from Potion Pictures.

The title "Bayeux Tapestry" (1066-82) is a bit of a misnomer — the textile is embroidered wool on linen, and not actually a woven tapestry. The wool was dyed using the plants Woad, Madder, and Rocket. The linen canvas measures 20 inches in height by 230 feet in length (50 cm x 70 m), and supports the narrative embroidery that tells of the Norman invasion of England — though very much from the Norman perspective.

The tapestry depicts Duke William of Normandy's conquest of Harold Godwinson — England's new and ill-fated King. The conquest is portrayed as fully justified, and Harold is represented as an opportunist who broke his oaths to Edward the Confessor, former King of England, and to William himself. Although first known as William the "Bastard" (he was the illegitimate son of Robert the Magnificent and Herleva of Falaise), a name change accompanied his military success: he became known as William the "Conqueror." The Norman conquest is a key turning point in Western history, and the English language still reflects this dominance of French over Saxon culture.

Durham Cathedral

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.6.11.7: Durham Cathedral (Durham, England), begun c. 1093. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

Durham Cathedral website

Durham Castle and Cathedral (UNESCO)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





















Figure **13.6.11.138**: More Smarthistory images…

The Morgan Leaf from The Winchester Bible

by DR. ANDREAS PETZOLD



Figure **13.6.11.139**: Front and back (or recto and verso) of *the Morgan Leaf*, The Winchester Bible, frontispiece for 1 Samuel with scenes from the Life of David (verso), scenes including Hannah, Samuel, and Saul (recto) c. 1150–80 (Winchester, England), tempera and gold on parchment, 58.3 x 39.6 cm (Morgan Library & Museum)

The page above, known as the *Morgan Leaf*, comes from the Winchester Bible, one of the most magnificent illuminated manuscripts to have been made in England in the twelfth century. The *Morgan Leaf*, which is now in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York (hence its name) was originally inserted as a frontispiece to the Book of Samuel in the Winchester Bible.

The Winchester Bible (below) was made at the Cathedral priory of St. Swithun's at Winchester, England and is still at Winchester (where it is normally on display—though without the *Morgan Leaf*).



Figure **13.6.11.140**: The Winchester Bible © 1993 Claire Donovan

The Winchester Bible is an example of a type of book known as a giant bible, a large format manuscript that originated in Italy in the mid-eleventh century and contained the entire text of the Christian bible from the Book of Genesis to Revelation. Giant bibles were deemed to be essential to monastic communities during the Romanesque period. Its importance should be seen within the context of the Gregorian reform movement, named after Pope Gregory VII, who ruled from 1073 until 1085. Gregory initiated reforms in the late eleventh century requiring that monks have access to an accurate version of the entire text of the Bible. Prior to the eleventh century, entire texts of the Bible were relatively rare.



Figure **13.6.11.141**: Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, presenting an altar, before 1171, semi-circular plaque (part of a set of two), copper alloy, champlevé, gilding, 18.2 cm (The British Museum), photo: **Ealdgyth**, CC BY-SA 3.0

The translated inscription reads: *Art comes before gold and gems, the author before everything. Henry, alive in bronze, gives gifts to God. Henry, whose fame commends him to men, whose character commends him to the heavens, a man equal in mind to the Muses and in eloquence higher than Marcus [that is, Cicero]*

It is generally assumed that the patron of the Winchester Bible was Henry of Blois, the bishop of Winchester, and one of the most powerful men in England. There is, however, no conclusive proof of this, and his patronage has recently been questioned with the alternate suggestion that King Henry II may have played a role in supporting production of this lavish manuscript. Royal patronage may explain some of the imagery seen in the *Morgan Leaf*.

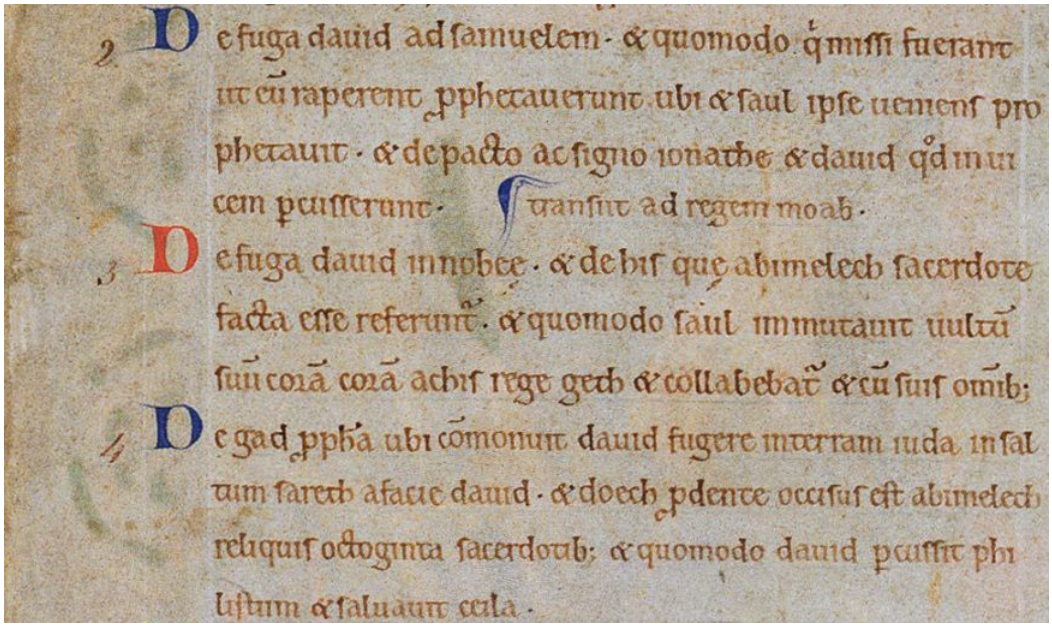


Figure **13.6.11.142**: The *Morgan Leaf*, The Winchester Bible, frontispiece text detail (verso)

The Winchester Bible is written on parchment made from **calf skin**. It has been estimated its production would have required the skin of over 250 calves, and so this would have been an exceptionally expensive book to produce—not even accounting for the skilled labor of the scribe and the illuminators. The entire text of the Bible was written in one beautifully rounded hand (which can be seen on the verso of the *Morgan Leaf*). The writing would have been a formidable task, and it has been estimated that the project would have taken at least four years. The scribe was most probably a monk from the monastic community at St. Swithun's, though lay scribes have also been recorded at work at Winchester.



Figure **13.6.11.143**: Unfinished Historiated Capital (detail), Ecclesiastes, folio 268

Illustrating the Winchester Bible appears to have been a more complicated affair. The intention was to prefix each book of the Bible with an historiated initial (one with a figurative illustration in it), usually related to the text. As an afterthought, full-page frontispieces to three books of the Bible were added (one of which is the *Morgan Leaf*). The illustrations were drawn and painted by at least six different artists, probably working in two separate and consecutive teams, yet in spite of this, the program of illustrations was left incomplete, with many illustrations left half-painted or only under-drawn. The six artists remain anonymous, but names have been invented to distinguish their different styles. The two responsible for the *Morgan Leaf* are know as the Master of the Apocrypha Drawings and the Master of the Morgan Leaf.



Figure **13.6.11.144**: T*Morgan Leaf*, The Winchester Bible, frontispiece for 1 Samuel with scenes from the Life of David, c. 1150–80 (Winchester, England), tempera and gold on parchment, 58.3 x 39.6 cm (Morgan Library & Museum)

The scenes on the *Morgan Leaf* are set against colored, paneled backgrounds that visually project them forward. The artist uses a characteristic narrative device of the period, arranging scenes in pairs, with the first representing the scene before, and the second the scene after. The scene in the top register on the left, for example, represents the diminutive figure of David who is shown slinging the stone at the giant Goliath, while on the right, he cuts off the head of Goliath as the Philistines flee.



Figure **13.6.11.145**: *The Morgan Leaf*, top register, David defeating Goliath (left) and beheading the giant (right)

Notice that David is represented clothed but without armor, conforming to the biblical account, but not, as in **later Renaissance representations**, naked. In the second register, David is represented on the left, playing the harp in front of King Saul, who in a fit of jealousy throws a spear at him. In the pendant image on the right, David is anointed Saul's successor by the priest Samuel, after

Saul commits suicide. In the bottom register on the left, Absalom, the son of David, is put to death, and in the final scene, to the right, David is informed of the death of his son and weeps in grief.



Figure **13.6.11.146**: *The Morgan Leaf*, middle register (detail), David playing harp (left), David anointed (right)

It has been suggested that this event parallels one in the life of King Henry II as his own son and heir, Henry the Young King, revolted against him and in the process lost his life, which caused Henry great grief. One distinctive feature is the striped, chequered, and chevron patterns on the shields. This has been identified as a form of proto-heraldry, which had its origins in the practice of attaching cloth coverings to shields so as to distinguish between combatants dressed in armor who would otherwise not have been easily identifiable.



Figure **13.6.11.147**: *The Morgan Leaf*, bottom register (detail), Absalom is killed (left), David grieves (right)

In its execution, there is a division of labor in the illumination of the leaf, with the underdrawing done by the Master of the Apocrypha Figures, and the painting largely done by the Master of the Morgan Leaf. Of these, the more traditional was the Master of the Aprocrypha drawings, who belonged to the first team of artists, and, it has been suggested, worked earlier at the monastery of St. Albans north of London. The more precocious of the two artists, the Master of the Morgan Leaf, belonged to the second team. The Master of the Morgan Leaf appears to have been a more cosmopolitan artist than his predecessor. The painter was almost certainly a lay professional, an itinerant artist who moved from one international center to another.

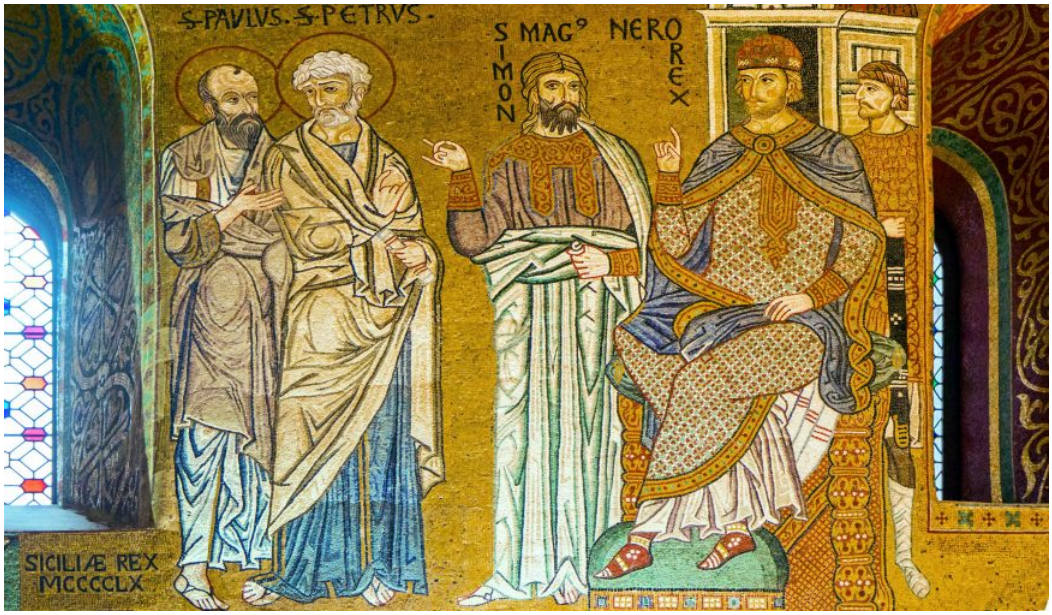


Figure 13.6.11.148: Mosaic, Palatine Chapel, Palermo, photo: Andrea Schaffer, CC BY 2.0

It has been postulated that the Master of the Morgan Leaf had seen the monumental mosaics in Sicily in the Palatine chapel at Palermo and the abbey at nearby Monreale, which had only recently been installed. It is thought that he translated the Byzantine style and imagery he had seen there into the medium of manuscript illumination. His hand has also been identified in the wall-paintings in the royal convent of Sigena in Aragon in northern Spain, which must have been painted after he left Winchester.



Figure 13.6.11.149

During this period, England, Sicily, and Aragon were closely linked through dynastic ties and England was far more open to international influences than in the previous Anglo-Saxon era, with the Angevin empire of Henry II extending as far as the south of France. The painting of the Morgan leaf is unprecedented in English art in its naturalism and representation of human emotions, especially pathos and grief. This artistic expressiveness anticipates, by a century, the work of Duccio in Italy.

The chronology of the Bible's execution has been the subject of dispute. It is generally thought to have been begun about 1160, but its terminal date is more controversial, with some experts favoring a date in the 1170s, corresponding to the death of Henry of Blois in 1171, while others think work may have continued beyond this date into the 1180s. The recto of the *Morgan Leaf* is divided into

three horizontal registers, a format that recalls the great gospel books made at the monastery of Echternach, now in Luxembourg, which in the eleventh century formed part of the Holy Roman Empire. One of these manuscripts may have been in England in the twelfth century and functioned as an exemplar for the page format for the *Morgan Leaf*.

Additional resources:

The *Morgan Leaf* at the Morgan Library & Museum

Claire Donovan, *The Winchester Bible* (British Library: London, 1993)

Christopher Norton, "King Henry II, St Hugh, and the Winchester Bible," in *Romanesque patrons and processes : design and instrumentality in the art and architecture of Romanesque Europe*, edited by Jordi Camps i Sòria, Manuel A. Castiñeiras, John McNeill and Richard Plant (London: Routledge, 2018)

National Manuscripts Conversation Trust regarding the manuscript

Morgan Library & Museum conservation poster regarding the *Morgan Leaf*

The Winchester Bible exhibition blog at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Three lectures on The Winchester Bible (2015) with:

- Charles T. Little, Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Stephen Murray, Columbia University
- Christopher de Hamel, University of Cambridge

Romanesque art in Spain

Some of the most beautiful Romanesque art was created in Catalonia (in northeast Spain), and much of it can be seen today in the National Museum of Catalan Art located in Barcelona.

c. 1000 - 1200

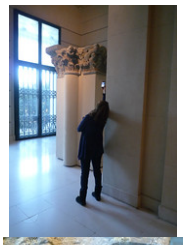
Historiated capitals, Church of Sant Miquel, Camarasa

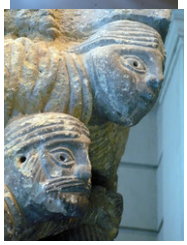
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.11.8: Historiated capitals from the crossing of the Church of Sant Miquel of the castle of Camarasa, Noguera (Spain), early 13th century, stone, 77 x 1.65 x 77.5 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Palau Nacional, Barcelona)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







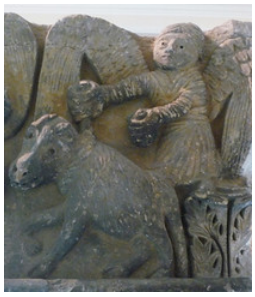












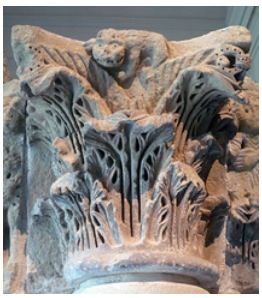


Figure 13.6.11.150: More Smarthistory images…

“Throne of Wisdom” sculptures

by BERFU DURANTAS

The Queen of Heaven

The image of the Virgin and Christ Child was ubiquitous in medieval art. Architectural and portable sculpture, altarpieces, stained glass windows, and other art works featured the Mother of God with her infant son. The Virgin Mary was regarded as the Queen of Heaven, the great intercessor between her Son and the helpless earthly souls who looked to her in time of need. The familiar Gothic depiction of an approachable Virgin as a beautiful young queen, standing in an S curve and delicately balancing the small Christ Child on her hip, was preceded by the more sober, rigid, and hieratic Romanesque depiction of a seated Virgin holding the Christ Child on her lap, a type referred to as a “Throne of Wisdom.” (This Romanesque type can be traced back to Byzantine depictions of Mary as “Theotokos” or the Mother of God).



Figure **13.6.11.151**: Left: *Virgin from Ger*, second half of the 12th century, wood, tempera, and stucco, 51.8 x 20.5 x 15.5 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona) ; right: *Virgin*, c. 1330-40, carved alabaster with remains of polychrome and gold leaf, 42.5 x 112 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona)



Figure **13.6.11.152**: Palmesel (or palm donkey, refers to the statue of Jesus on a donkey), 15th century, German, limewood with paint, 156.2 x 60.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

A number of these sculptures have come down to us from the 12th century, though records indicate that earlier examples did exist. They are true sculptures in the round, made of wood, and usually measuring 3-4 feet in height. They were designed for mobility—carried in the many processions of the Middle Ages in celebration of feast days (a practice which continues in some parts of Europe to this day).

Believed to be a manifestation of the Virgin's presence and authority, the sculpture was paraded around during times of war, famine, disease, or to simply collect money for the church. Like other portable sculpture of the Middle Ages (see the example, left), they were an essential part of communal religious life. We can only imagine the sounds of clashing cymbals-described by one witness in the early 11th century and the many desperate hands trying to touch the sculpture as she passed through the crowds.

Referred to as "Majesties" in contemporary texts, the sculptures are simple compositions in which the Virgin Mary sits on a throne with the Christ Child sitting on her lap. Strictly frontal with expressionless faces, both figures wear simple tunics, the ripples of which fall in perfect, repetitive patterns, resulting in a very stiff and symmetrical quality. Originally, the sculptures would have

been polychromed over linen and gesso then decorated with tin leaf, with the more exquisite examples decorated with gold or silver leaf and adorned with gems.

"Throne of Wisdom" sculptures



Figure **13.6.11.153**: Enthroned Virgin and Child, 1150-1200, Auvergne, France, walnut with gesso, paint, tin leaf, and traces of linen, 27 inches (Cloisters Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

A good example of a "Throne of Wisdom" sculpture which still retains some of its original color is found at the Cloisters Museum, a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The sculpture is made from several pieces of walnut doweled together. Originally, the Virgin wore a red robe covered by a dark blue mantle which was decorated with tin leaf to simulate gold. Christ's tunic was originally a dark green with red lining, covered by a red overgarment known as a himation. This too was originally decorated with tin leaf.

The sculpture puts into visual form the typological tradition of comparing Mary to the Throne of Solomon (typology refers to the idea that events and individuals in the Old Testament prefigured those in the New Testament). King Solomon's famous throne is described in the Book of Kings of the Old Testament as a throne of ivory covered in gold. Christ, like his ancestor King Solomon, embodies wisdom and justice. Thus, Mary is a *Sedes Sapientiae* or Throne of Wisdom—the Mother of God, enthroned herself, who serves as a throne for the son of God turned into human flesh. The Christ Child on her lap represents divine wisdom incarnate, whose wisdom is communicated through his adult features, making him look like a miniature man. The open bible he holds is also a representation of the divine wisdom he embodies.

To the medieval mind, the Throne of Wisdom statues were earthly manifestations of both the presence and the authority of the Virgin Mary. They were seen as a way to communicate with the heavenly court—relaying people's prayers and interceding on their behalf. In fact, the statues were not thought to have been made by sculptors in workshops, but to be miraculous in origin. Stories range from one being discovered by woodcutters enclosed in a tree to one arriving on a ship without sailors or oars and enveloped in a bright light. They were also said to be immune to fire as a number of accounts attest of statues surviving church fires without even being scorched. According to one thirteenth century legend, a Throne of Wisdom statue was able to save itself from a burning church by leaping out of the window and into the arms of a count who was walking by!

The cult of relics

The Throne of Wisdom sculptures also functioned within the broader context of the growing cult of relics in medieval Europe. Relics are the physical remains, such as bones, strands of hair, teeth, etc, or secondary relics associated with Christ, the Virgin, martyrs, and saints. These secondary relics could include clothing, jewelry, instruments of torture, or anything that the saint had come in contact with while alive. As early as the 4th century, these remains and objects were said to possess miraculous powers. Hordes of pilgrims would visit various churches built over the tombs of saints or shrines with relics in hopes of being cured of disease, to atone for their sins, or to simply venerate the saint. Remains of martyrs and saints were frequently moved and divided so that new sites were established in places never associated with the saint.

There is ample evidence suggesting that the Throne of Wisdom sculptures were occasionally used as reliquaries (containers for relics). Our example from the Cloisters has a small circular cavity on the Virgin's left shoulder and x-rays confirm a relic contained within. The relic may not necessarily be associated with the Virgin Mary (parts of her clothing or veil, strands of her hair, and drops of her milk were frequently cited relics), but could be fragments of another holy individual. Whatever the relic, its inclusion would have made the Virgin's perceived intercessory power that much more effective.



Figure **13.6.11.154**: Detail, *Virgin from Gósol*, 2nd half of the 12th century, wood carving with polychrome and remains of varnished metal plate, 39.5 x 32 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona)

Role in medieval theatre

It has been proposed that the sculptures also played an important role in the early days of medieval liturgical drama in which stories from the bible were enacted in a church for the mostly illiterate audience. One of the earliest plays was the Adoration of the Magi in which clerics dressed as the three kings and approached the Throne of Wisdom sculpture bearing gifts for the Christ Child. Explain Adoration of the Magi.

The surviving texts of these plays are very clear about who will play the roles of the three kings, Herod, the midwives, etc. but are silent with regard to the human representations of the Virgin and Child, only referring to them as an image. It seems that the use of human actors to represent Mary and Christ was considered inappropriate until the 15th century when it became acceptable. Thus, the Throne of Wisdom sculptures represented the Virgin and Child in the early days of medieval theatre, receiving the traditional gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh from the clerics dressed as the three kings.

From reliquary to the star of a liturgical play, the Throne of Wisdom sculpture type is a good reminder that medieval religious art had multiple functions, and was didactic and spiritual at the same time.

Additional Resources:

Enthroned Virgin and Child at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

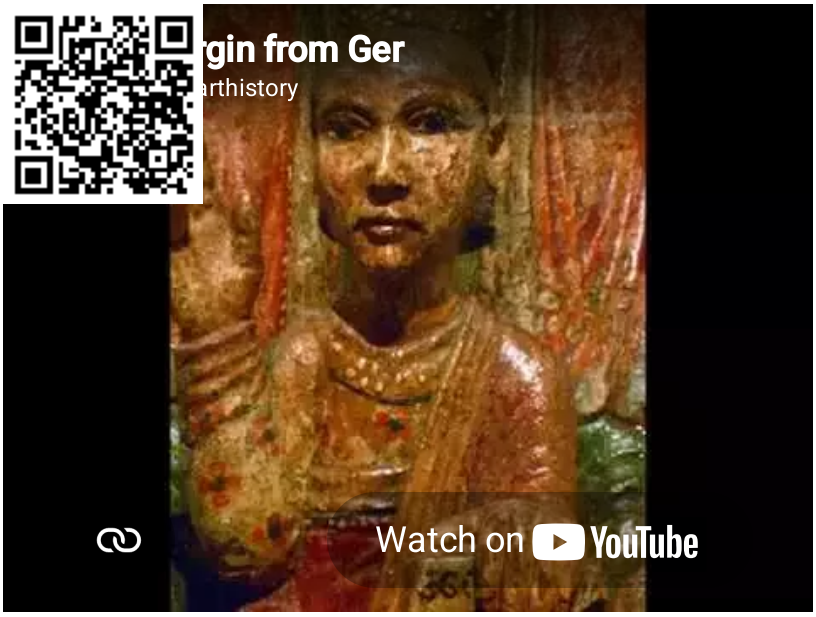
Virgin from Ger, *Virgin from Gósol* and other medieval sculpture from Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, MNAC, Barcelona on the Google Art Project

Pilgrimage Routes and the Cult of the Relic

The Cult of the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ilene H.Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom:Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton University Press, 1972).

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.11.9**: *Virgin from Ger*, second half of the 12th century, from the parish church of Santa Coloma de Ger, Baixa Cerdanya (Spain), wood, tempera, and stucco, 51.8 x 20.5 x 15.5 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Cataunya Palau Nacional, Barcelona)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

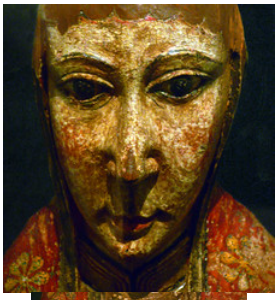
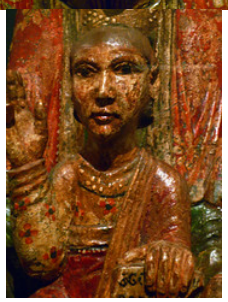






Figure **13.6.11.155:** More Smarthistory images…

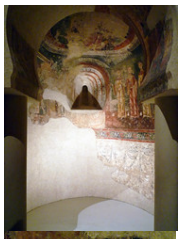
Circle of the Master of Pedret, *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.11.10**: Circle of the Master of Pedret, *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*, south apse of the Epistle, Sant Quirze de Pedret, late 11th century to the beginning of 12th century, fresco transferred to canvas 325 x 315 x 320 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



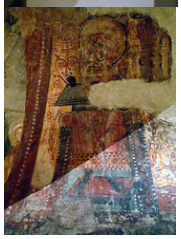


















Figure 13.6.11.156: More Smarthistory images…

Camel from San Baudelio de Berlanga

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.11.11: *Camel*, first half of the 12th century, fresco transferred to canvas, from San Baudelio de Berlanga, Spain (Met Cloisters, New York)

Introduction

The **Romanesque** hermitage of San Baudelio de Berlanga was built in the eleventh century in the border zone of Islamic and Christian territories in what is today Spain. While it may seem isolated today, in the eleventh century it was situated on an old Roman road that came from southern France that bustled with activity. It brought merchants as well as pilgrims going to visit the **relics** of the early Christian martyr St. Baudilus in Nîmes. The hermitage's architectural style is often called mozarabic, a term used to describe Christians living under Muslim rule and who drew from Arabic visual culture.



Figure 13.6.11.157: Map of the Iberian Peninsula, with the location of the Church of San Baudelio de Berlanga

More than a century later, the building's interior was transformed with the addition of brightly painted frescoes. In the upper levels are scenes from the life of Christ. Below, and painted on a larger scale, are more secular scenes of animals, hunting, and illusionistic silk tapestries. Among the animals depicted is a camel seen in profile. The animals suggest the complex history of medieval Spain, because they are based on animals seen on Islamic luxury goods (such as ivories, metal objects, ceramics, and textiles).

Construction of the hermitage and the painting of the murals occurred during an important moment in medieval Spain, one which saw boundaries shifting between faiths and rulers. Since 711, much of the Iberian Peninsula (today, Portugal and Spain), had been ruled by the **Umayyad** caliphate. The Umayyads were heirs to Muhammad, who had initiated the spread of the faith of **Islam** in the 6th century. The Umayyads created a vast empire that spanned much of the eastern and southern Mediterranean world, and eventually they reached the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) in 711. After seven years, they had conquered much of it from the Christian Visigoths. These new Muslim territories were called al-Andalus. Then, in 750, the Umayyads were supplanted by the Abbasids. The last ruler of the Umayyads fled to al-Andalus, creating a new dynasty there with **Córdoba** as its capital. It was called the caliphate of Cordoba. Al-Andalus would develop rich, complex artistic traditions—the result of a diverse population that included Christians, **Jews**, and Muslims.

Still, Christians would try to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula after 711, in what has been called the Spanish Reconquest. The ensuing centuries would mean that the borders between al-Andalus and Christian-ruled Iberia would frequently change. San Baudelio de Berlanga was initially built in a frontier zone, and then when it was painted in Christian-controlled kingdom. A sign that Christians were gaining ground in acquiring territories came in 1085, when King Alfonso VI conquered the important city of Toledo.

Umayyad rule ended in 1031 after Christian forces were finally able to defeat the powerful caliphate. What remained of southern Al-Andalus would be divided into *taifas* (independent principalities). (Despite the downfall of the Umayyads, other Muslim rulers would establish themselves on the Iberian Peninsula until 1492). Still, the murals–which would have been painted when the hermitage was more associated with a Christian kingdom–demonstrate that artists continued to draw on Islamic courtly arts.

Today, most of the hermitage's murals are not in their original location, but were removed from the walls in the 1920s, mounted onto canvas, and acquired by different museums, including the Prado (Madrid), Cloisters (NYC), the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Terms and key ideas

- Al-Andalus, the Umayyads, and Islamic art in Spain
- Spanish Reconquest
- Romanesque murals
- Frontier zone
- Sacred and secular art

Test yourself with a quiz!

START

Additional resources:

Read about the camel fresco on The Metropolitan Museum website

Read more about Romanesque art on Smarthistory

Jerrilynn Dodds, ed., *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992)

Mojmir S. Frinta, "The Frescoes from San Baudelio De Berlanga." *Gesta* 1/2 (1964): 9–13.

Charles T. Little, ed. *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500–1200* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993).

Elías Teres Navarro, *El expolio de las pinturas murales de la ermita mozárabe de San Baudelio de Berlanga* (Goya, 2007).

L. Schrader, "A Medieval Bestiary." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 44, no. 1 (Summer 1986).

For the classroom

Take notes while watching the video, using the **Camel active note-taking activity**.

Discussion questions

1. What does the camel fresco reveal about Romanesque art in Spain?
2. How does the camel fresco compare to other examples of Spanish Romanesque art, such as the frescoes of the Circle of the Master of Pedret or the historiated capitals of Sant Miquel, Camarasa?

3. What similarities are there between the camel fresco and the Pyxis of al-Mughira?
4. How do the camel fresco, synagogues of Toledo, and *Book of Morals of Philosophers* reveal the complex culture of medieval Spain?

Research topics

1. Art created in frontier zones often displays amazing innovations and adaptations as a result of entangled cultural and visual practices. What does studying art made in these so-called frontier zones (including such spaces as San Baudelio de Berlanga and the Church of St. Nicholas, Balinesti in Romania), reveal about the Middle Ages?

13.6.11: Romanesque is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.11: Romanesque** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Gothic art

The Gothic style brought both divine light and soaring height to medieval churches.

c. 1200 - 1400

A beginner's guide

Gothic architecture, an introduction

by VALERIE SPANSWICK



Figure **13.6.12.1**: East end of Salisbury Cathedral.

Forget the association of the word “Gothic” to dark, haunted houses, *Wuthering Heights*, or ghostly pale people wearing black nail polish and ripped fishnets. The original Gothic style was actually developed to bring sunshine into people’s lives, and especially into their churches. To get past the accrued definitions of the centuries, it’s best to go back to the very start of the word Gothic, and to the style that bears the name.

The Goths were a so-called barbaric tribe who held power in various regions of Europe, between the collapse of the Roman Empire and the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire (so, from roughly the fifth to the eighth century). They were not renowned for great achievements in architecture. As with many art historical terms, “Gothic” came to be applied to a certain architectural style after the fact.



Figure **13.6.12.2**: Early Gothic arches, Southwell Minster.

The style represented giant steps away from the previous, relatively basic building systems that had prevailed. The Gothic grew out of the Romanesque architectural style, when both prosperity and relative peace allowed for several centuries of cultural development and great building schemes. From roughly 1000 to 1400, several significant cathedrals and churches were built, particularly in Britain and France, offering architects and masons a chance to work out ever more complex and daring designs.

The most fundamental element of the Gothic style of architecture is the pointed arch, which was likely borrowed from Islamic architecture that would have been seen in Spain at this time. The pointed arch relieved some of the thrust, and therefore, the stress on other structural elements. It then became possible to reduce the size of the columns or piers that supported the arch.



Figure **13.6.12.3**: Nave of Salisbury Cathedral.

So, rather than having massive, drum-like columns as in the Romanesque churches, the new columns could be more slender. This slimness was repeated in the upper levels of the nave, so that the gallery and clerestory would not seem to overpower the lower arcade. In fact, the column basically continued all the way to the roof, and became part of the vault.

In the vault, the pointed arch could be seen in three dimensions where the ribbed vaulting met in the center of the ceiling of each bay. This ribbed vaulting is another distinguishing feature of Gothic architecture. However, it should be noted that prototypes for the pointed arches and ribbed vaulting were seen first in late-Romanesque buildings.



Figure **13.6.12.4**: Open tracery at Southwell Minster.

The new understanding of architecture and design led to more fantastic examples of vaulting and ornamentation, and the Early Gothic or Lancet style (from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) developed into the Decorated or Rayonnant Gothic (roughly fourteenth century). The ornate stonework that held the windows–called *tracery*–became more florid, and other stonework even more exuberant.

The ribbed vaulting became more complicated and was crossed with *lierne* ribs into complex webs, or the addition of cross ribs, called *tierceron*. As the decoration developed further, the Perpendicular or International Gothic took over (fifteenth century). Fan vaulting decorated half-conoid shapes extending from the tops of the columnar ribs.



Figure **13.6.12.5**: Lierne vaults Gloucester Cathedral.

The slender columns and lighter systems of thrust allowed for larger windows and more light. The windows, tracery, carvings, and ribs make up a dizzying display of decoration that one encounters in a Gothic church. In late Gothic buildings, almost every surface is decorated. Although such a building as a whole is ordered and coherent, the profusion of shapes and patterns can make a sense of order difficult to discern at first glance.



Figure **13.6.12.6**: Gothic windows at Gloucester Cathedral.

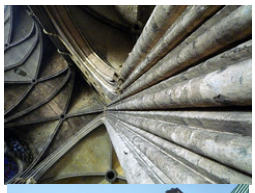
After the great flowering of Gothic style, tastes again shifted back to the neat, straight lines and rational geometry of the Classical era. It was in the Renaissance that the name Gothic came to be applied to this medieval style that seemed vulgar to Renaissance sensibilities. It is still the term we use today, though hopefully without the implied insult, which negates the amazing leaps of imagination and engineering that were required to build such edifices.

Additional resources:

Gloucester Cathedral

Salisbury Cathedral

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

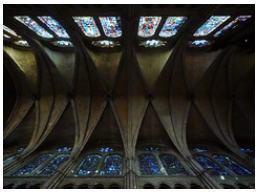


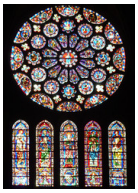








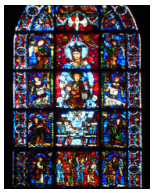
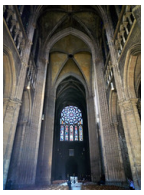








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88717

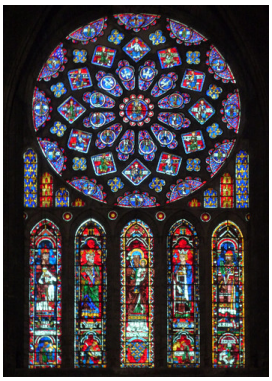
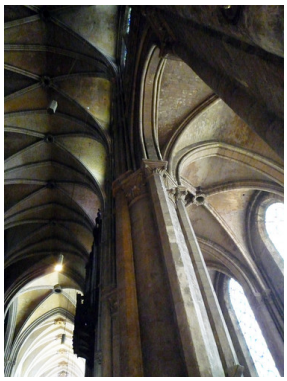



Figure **13.6.12.7**: More Smarthistory images…

Gothic art in France

The walls opened up and light poured in...

c. 1200 - 1400

Birth of the Gothic: Abbot Suger and the ambulatory at St. Denis

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.12.1**: Ambulatory, Basilica of St. Denis, Paris, 1140-44

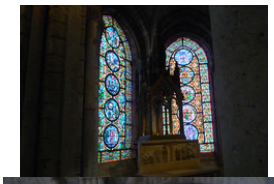
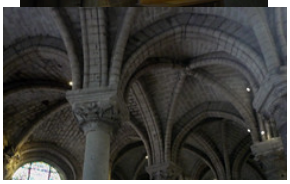
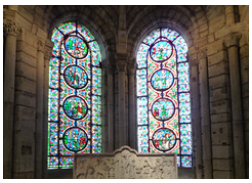












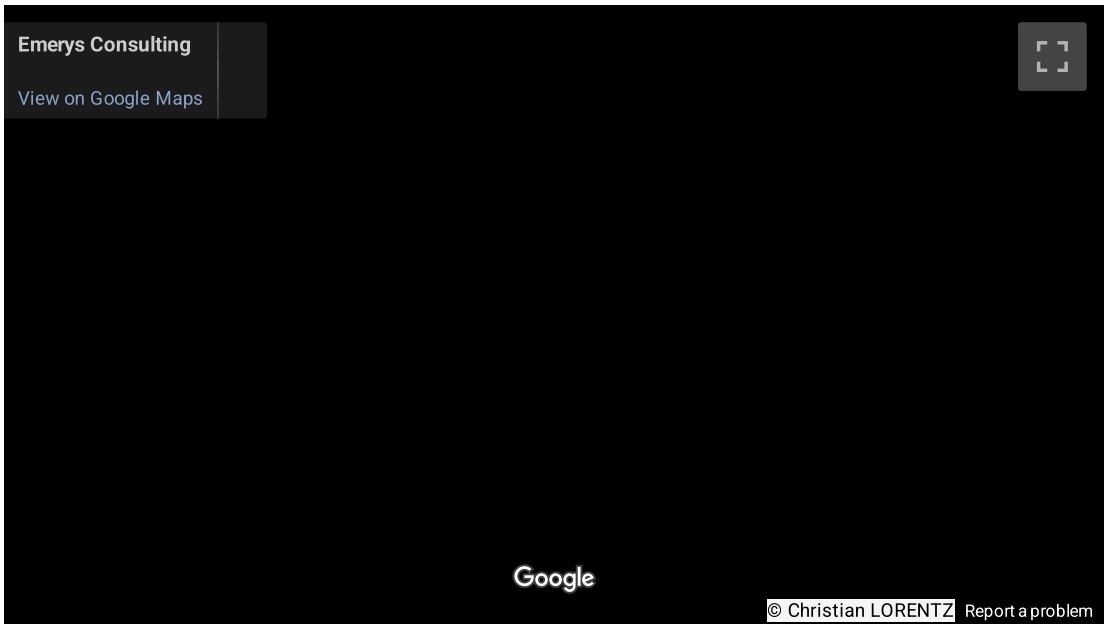

Figure 13.6.12.8: More Smarthistory images…

Cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.12.2: Cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres, c.1145 and 1194-c.1220, Chartres (France)


Emerys Consulting
View on Google Maps
Google
© Christian LORENTZ
Report a problem

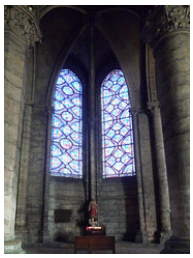
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





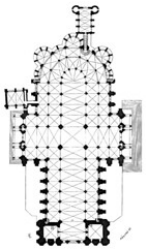




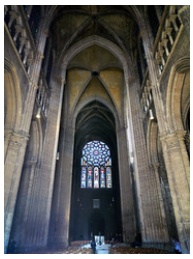




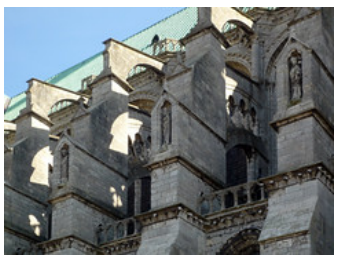


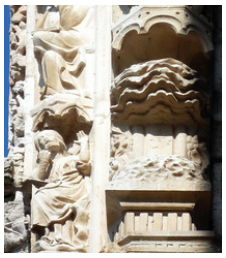












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88717

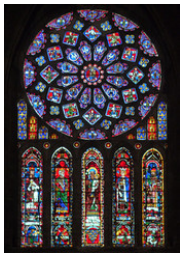
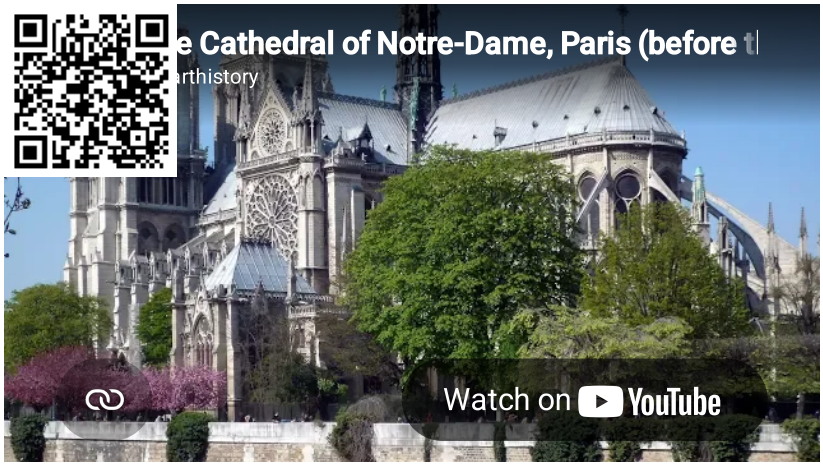


Figure **13.6.12.9**: More Smarthistory images…

The Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.12.3**



Figure **13.6.12.10**: April 2019 fire at Notre Dame de Paris (Photo: **Milliped**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The fire

The blaze that engulfed the Cathedral of Notre Dame on the small Island known as the Île de la Cité in Paris in April 2019 was a terrible tragedy. Though it may not give us much comfort to learn that the total or partial destruction of churches by fire was a fairly common occurrence in medieval Europe, it does provide some perspective. For example, a fire destroyed most of Chartres Cathedral in 1020 (and again in 1194), in the city of Reims, the cathedral was badly damaged in a fire in 1210, and at Beauvais, the cathedral was rebuilt after a fire in the 1180s. The list goes on and on.

During the medieval periods of the Romanesque and the Gothic (c. 1000-1400), church fires were less frequent than they had been previously due to the development of stone vaulting (which began to replace the timber ceilings commonly found in European churches). But even a stone vault, as we saw at Notre Dame in Paris, is itself protected by a timber roof (sometimes rising more than 50 feet above the stone vaulting and pitched to prevent the accumulation of rain and snow), and this is what caught fire.



Figure **13.6.12.10**: Île de la Cité, Paris

Art historian **Caroline Brazelius**, who has worked on the building for years said, "between the vaults and the roof, there is a forest of timber" — old, dry, porous, and highly flammable timber. Still, photographs of the interior show at least some of the stone vaulting survived the recent fire. The builders of Notre Dame used Parisian limestone, but, as Brazelius notes "when it's exposed to fire, stone is damaged. It doesn't actually burn….It becomes friable. It chips, and it's no longer structurally sound."

Built, modified, rebuilt, and restored

Churches are often an amalgamation of architectural styles, the result of building campaigns and modifications undertaken at different times, some due to fire, some due to the desire for what a new style represents, and some due to (often inaccurate) restoration efforts. And on a single site, churches were often built and rebuilt—and this is the case with Notre Dame in Paris. Before the Gothic-style church was built, a Carolingian church occupied the site (it was destroyed during the 9th century Viking invasions), and before that, a 6th century Merovingian Church stood on the site.

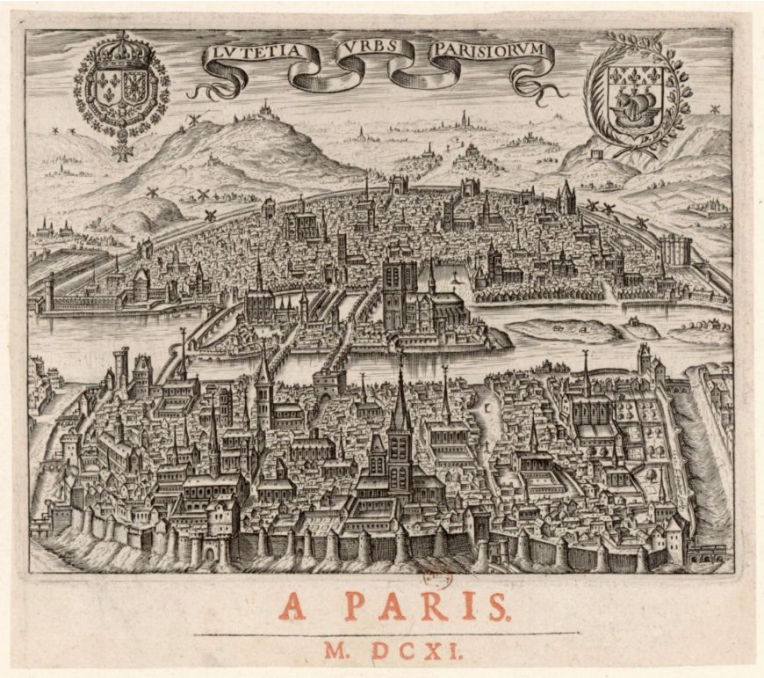


Figure **13.6.12.11**: Léonard Gaultier, View of Paris, 1607, engraving (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**)

If we go back further, to the pre-Christian era, Julius Caesar's armies famously conquered much of what we call France today (Roman Paris dates back to 52 B.C.E.). Archaeological evidence suggests that a pagan temple and then a Christian basilica were built on this site. The ancient Romans also built a palace for the emperor on the Île de la Cité, and after the Roman empire collapsed, Clovis I, King of the Franks (who converted to Christianity)

established his palace there as well. The Île de la Cité would remain the location of a royal residence until the 14th century. As one historian has noted, “Notre Dame…was not only a religious but also a royal monument that displayed the might of the church and the monarchy, each enhancing the power of the other.” [1]

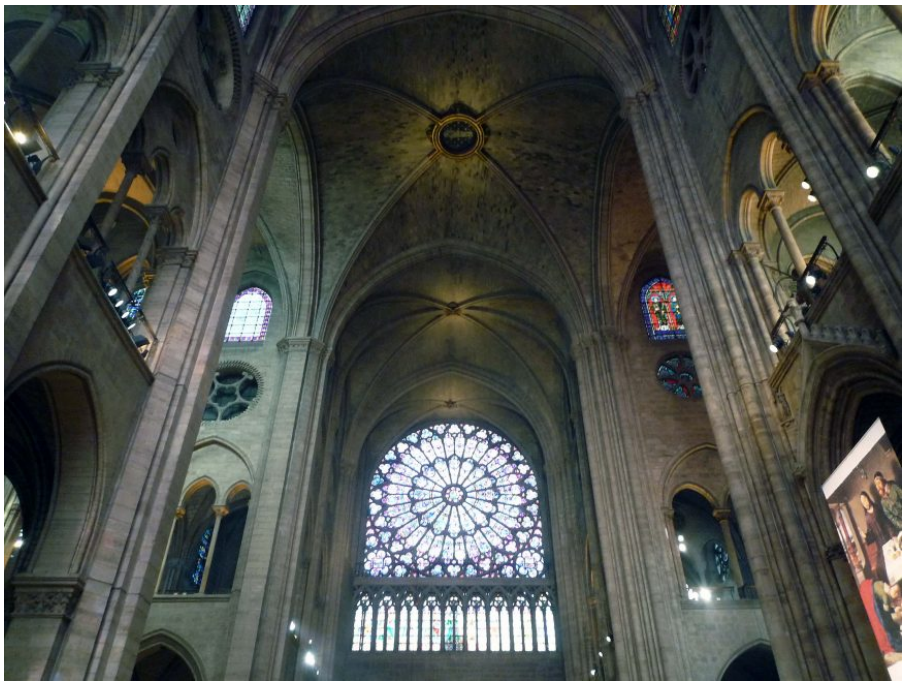


Figure **13.6.12.12**: Crossing, Notre Dame de Paris, c. 1163-1250 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The Gothic Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris took nearly 100 years to complete (c. 1163-1250) and modifications, restorations, and renovations continued for centuries after. The early Gothic style employed at the beginning of the campaign became outdated and the later Gothic style, the Rayonnant, became fashionable and can be seen in the transepts. The crossing spire that the world watched fall while engulfed in flames was a reproduction created during a 19th-century restoration campaign.

In the following centuries, the church (and its sculptural decoration) survived multiple episodes of intentional destruction: during the Protestant Reformation (due to Protestant objection to religious imagery), and during the revolutions of 1789 and 1830 (because of the church’s close association with the monarchy). It remained in a neglected state until Victor Hugo’s novel, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) revived popular interest the building.



Figure **13.6.12.13**: View of Notre Dame de Paris, c. 1163-1250 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

As of this writing, just a few days after the April 15th blaze, evaluation of the damage caused by the fire is only just beginning, but a reported one billion dollars has been already been raised to support the reconstruction of Notre Dame de Paris.

1. Avner Ben-Amos, “Monuments and Memory in French Nationalism.” *History and Memory*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1993, pp. 50–81.

Additional resources

The Cathedral's construction (official website of Notre Dame de Paris)

Avner Ben-Amos, "Monuments and Memory in French Nationalism," *History and Memory*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1993), pp. 50–81.

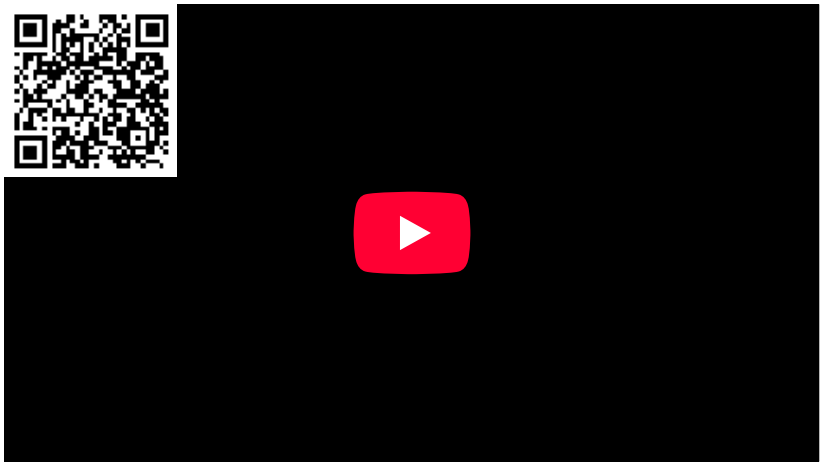
Art Historian (Caroline Bruzelius) Discusses The History Of Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral, April 15, 2019 (NPR)

Caroline Bruzelius, "The Construction of Notre-Dame in Paris," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 69, no. 4 (1987), pp. 540–569.

Stephen Murray, "Notre-Dame of Paris and the Anticipation of Gothic." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 80, no. 2 (1998), pp. 229–253.

Reims Cathedral

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.12.4**: Reims Cathedral (Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Reims), begun 1211, Reims, France

Reims Cathedral and World War I

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI



Figure **13.6.12.14**: Shell bursting on the cathedral at Reims, from *Collier's New Photographic History of the World's War*, 1918

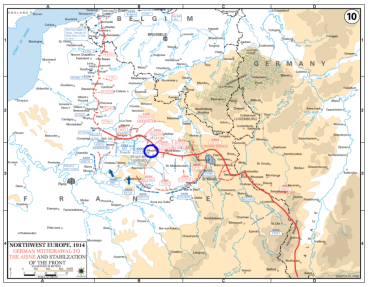


Figure **13.6.12.15**: Map of the Western Front, 1914, with Reims circled in blue (map: **The History Department of the United States Military Academy**, CC0)

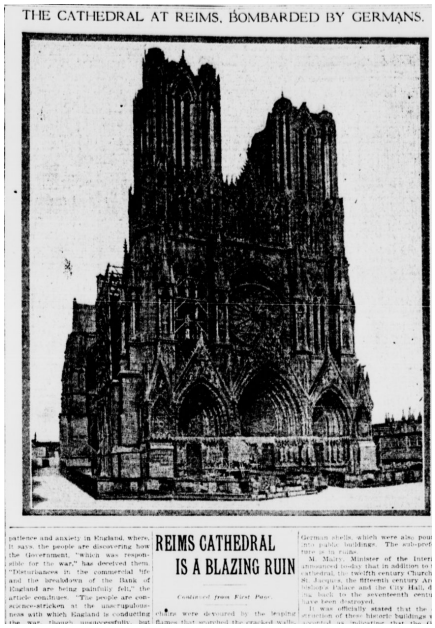
The facts…?

World War I officially started July 28, 1914. Originally it was believed that the “situation” would clear itself up by no later than Christmastime. Instead, it took over four long and grueling years, and resulted in more than 15 million deaths. Early on in the conflict, the German army moved into northeastern French territory. This was the beginning of the Western Front. The expeditious land grab by the Germans included the city of Reims. Reims had a well-established history, from its days as a bustling hub of the Roman Empire, to becoming a center of French culture in the early Middle Ages. Additionally, Reims was the “Coronation Capital,” so to speak, the traditional location for the coronation of French kings. It was also home to a magnificent high Gothic cathedral, **Notre-Dame de Reims**. By early September, the French had forced the Germans to retreat and though the French regained the town, the Germans stayed close by for the entirety of the war.



Figure **13.6.12.16**: View of Reims cathedral over the rooftops of the city in 2014 (photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The city of Reims saw significant destruction, and both civilian and military casualties. But no event ignited indignation as did the bombing of the much-venerated Notre-Dame de Reims. The cathedral was first hit by shell fire on September 19th, 1914. Wooden scaffolding that was in place for ongoing repairs caught fire, and contributed to the damage, as did several smaller fires that resulted from the attack. Though the cathedral would be struck again and again as the war continued, it was this initial shelling that sparked a firestorm of outrage, horror, and prodigious propaganda—surely here was damning proof that the Germans were indeed “barbarians,” so lacking in culture themselves that they were compelled to destroy the beauty of another culture out of sheer spite and jealousy. The propaganda insisted that there was no reason to bomb the church since it had no strategic military value, and was a place of sanctuary. The French and their allies stressed that there was no justification to shell the cathedral especially given that was being used to house the wounded (mainly German soldiers callously left behind by their fleeing brothers-in-arms).


THE CATHEDRAL AT REIMS, BOMBARDED BY GERMANS.

REIMS CATHEDRAL IS A BLAZING RUIN

Figure **13.6.12.17**: "Reims Cathedral is a Blazing Ruin," *The Sun* (New York City), September 21, 1914 (**Library of Congress**)

War crimes

It was acknowledged, even at the time, that the Germans were committing more horrendous acts than the bombardment of Reims Cathedral. So why should a building create more outcry and indignation than the killing of innocent civilians, or other kinds of wartime savagery? Perhaps it was in part that the cathedral, literally meaning the seat of the bishop, could be seen as representing the French nation as a whole, its cruciform shape evoking a sacrificial body. Or, on a more practical note, it was a story that could be easily sensationalized and discussed *ad infinitum*—cultural war damage was far easier to get past the censors. In the words of Maurice Landrieux, a former priest at Reims but later the Bishop of Dijon "…but it was the most ignoble, because it was at once sacrilegious and stupid, and because it reveals, by its uselessness, the blackest depth of German misdoing." There was a pervasive belief that the Germans had come to France with the express intention of destroying the cathedral from the outset of the war.


THE GREAT ARCHES AT NOTRE DAME
The wars of seven centuries had passed over Rheims, and still all armies spared the beautiful cathedral. Is is now but a wonderful ruin

Figure **13.6.12.18**: "The great arches at Notre Dame: The wars of seven centuries had passed over Reims, and still all armies spared the beautiful cathedral. Is is now but a wonderful ruin." from *Collier's Photographic History of the European War*, by Francis J. Reynolds and C. W. Taylor, c. 1917

There are two sides to every story, and so it is here. The Germans did shell the cathedral—that is irrefutable. Their explanation as to why they did so was wildly at odds with the French account, and they claimed to be horrified just as deeply as the French, at the damage done to this architectural masterpiece.

The French story was that is that the Germans, before their hasty retreat, had covered the floors of the cathedral with straw, to make it more combustible and that they intentionally left their wounded knowing they would be brought into the church by the French to be tended. A Red Cross flag was raised, a further signal that the cathedral was off-limits as a military target. However, the Germans later claimed the cathedral was being used for military

intelligence: a signal station, telephone equipment, and an observation post had been espied in one of the towers during a German fly-by—along with a large cache of weapons. If true, according to international law, the cathedral was a viable military target—a wolf wrapped in sheep's clothing.



Figure **13.6.12.19**: "Cathedral before removal of sandbags (upper right); Reims Cathedral; side view of cathedral" (**New York Public Library Digital Collections**)

The church was severely damaged—roofs had burned, statues melted, stonework was no longer viable, and more. Nonetheless, the structure was still essentially in good condition after the attack, all things considered. The local French authorities were actually taken to task by their own administrators for not doing a better job putting out the fire, which caused the majority of the damage. The Germans claimed it pained them to commit such an act, but the cunning French had left them no choice. These claims gained little traction.

The result was that—for the French—the German reputation for philosophical thought and general erudition, were suddenly erased—they were viewed once again as one of the "barbarian hordes" of the migration era. German art historians were quick to point out they had been one of the primogenitors of that discipline, and they highly appreciated art from around the globe. German art historians and professors were even dispatched to the front, joining various army units to help provide protection to valuable art on both sides, but to no avail. The mud would not unstick.



Figure **13.6.12.20**: Harry R. Hopps, *Destroy this mad brute Enlist – U.S. Army*, 1918, color lithograph, 106 x 71 cm (**Library of Congress**)

Culture wars

Reims Cathedral continued to be used as propaganda for the whole of the war. Its burnt image was printed on posters and postcards. German soldiers were depicted gun-wielding and slavering at the jaw to seeking to destroy the next great work of art they saw. Meanwhile, the Germans lampooned the

French, accusing them of using their own great works of art for nefarious ends without compunction. One well-known cartoon read, “The cunning French have used Reims cathedral as a shooting platform—next they’ll be building trenches with the contents of the Louvre.”

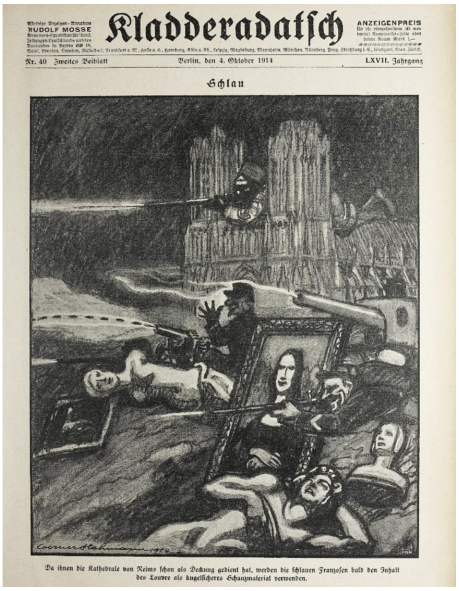


Figure **13.6.12.21**: “The cunning French have used Reims cathedral as a shooting platform—next they’ll be building trenches with the contents of the Louvre,” Werner Hahmann, *Schlau (Sly)*, from Kladderarsch, no. 40 (cover, October 1914)

Beyond the trenches, the battle for cultural superiority was on. The French had the upper hand when it came to the events at Reims that fateful night. They could claim eyewitnesses, and they also photographed the cathedral in ways intended to most incite a viewer.

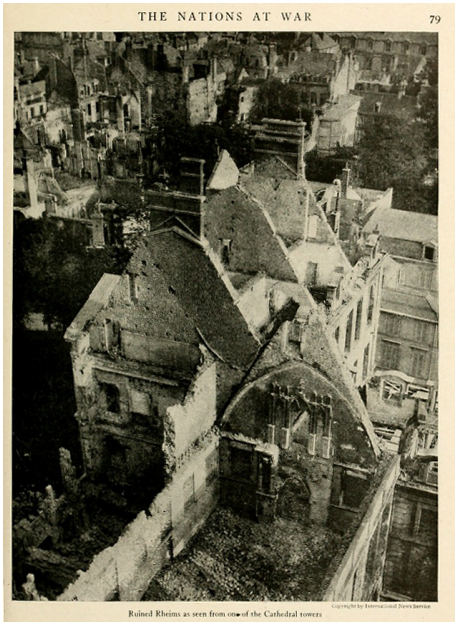


Figure **13.6.12.22**: “Ruined Reims as seen from one of the Cathedral towers,” from *The Nations at War* by Willis John Abbot, 1917

The Germans did try hard though, despite their lack of handy visual evidence, to underscore that they had been the only country to carry out any form of art protection. *Kunstschutz* (the German term for the principle of preserving cultural heritage and artworks during armed conflict) was said to protect art on both sides of the war. It was even said to be endorsed by Kaiser Wilhelm II himself. The Germans emphasized that the bombing of the cathedral at Reims had not been part of a systematic effort, instead, it was one of the many sad byproducts of the war.



Figure **13.6.12.23**: E. Lemielle, *Souvenez-vous! 1914. Rien d'Allemand!!! Des Allemands (Remember! 1914. Nothing German! Nothing from the Germans)*, 1919, color lithograph, 83 x 60 cm (**Library of Congress**)

Neither side held back, each was determined to show that while one was on the side of the angels, the other was ruthlessly attempting to profit by the destruction of art. Meanwhile, the Germans claimed that as they were the creators of the **Gothic** style, and so the cathedral was just as much part of their cultural heritage as it was France's, and they again attempted to remind the world of their integral role in the creation of art history. Again, this gained no traction with the French, nor with most nations.



Figure **13.6.12.24**: "The cathedral of Notre Dame at Reims, after repeated bombardments," from *Collier's Photographic History of the European War*, by Francis J. Reynolds and C. W. Taylor (c. 1917)

By the end of the war Reims, which had been targeted multiple times, was the ruin the French had claimed after the initial attack. The continued attacks on the cathedral called into doubt the veracity of the Germans' initial account. After the first bombardment, it was certain that the cathedral was no longer being used for any military purpose—if it ever had been. Again, a cultural landmark of this kind could only become subject to brute force with good reason, so the continued bombing only furthered the French position of German brutality and outright vandalism. J.W. Garner, in his *International Law and the World War*, states, "Monuments of this stature are not only entitled to respect because of their sanctity but are especially protected because of the Law of Nations" (p. 445).

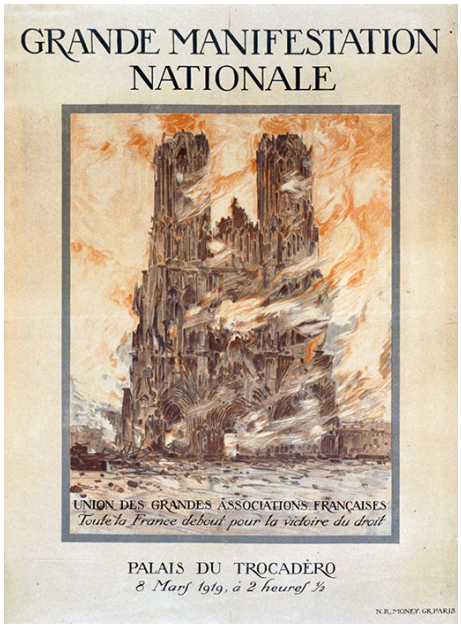


Figure 13.6.12.25: Grande Manifestation Nationale, 1919, color lithograph, 80 x 59 cm (Library of Congress)

Restoration on the cathedral began almost immediately after the end of the war, funded in part by the Rockefeller family. The cathedral reopened in 1938, though work continues to this day. Recently, the world looked on aghast when, in April of 2019, the iconic Notre-Dame de Paris burned. Even more recently, the lesser-known Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Nantes, another Gothic jewel, caught on fire. In these cases there appears to be no terrorism involved, only age and human error. Perhaps then, the. most important take-away from the bombing of Reims Cathedral is that blame is, to a degree, irrelevant, at least after the fact. The real lesson is that we must do better at preserving our cultural heritage the world over.

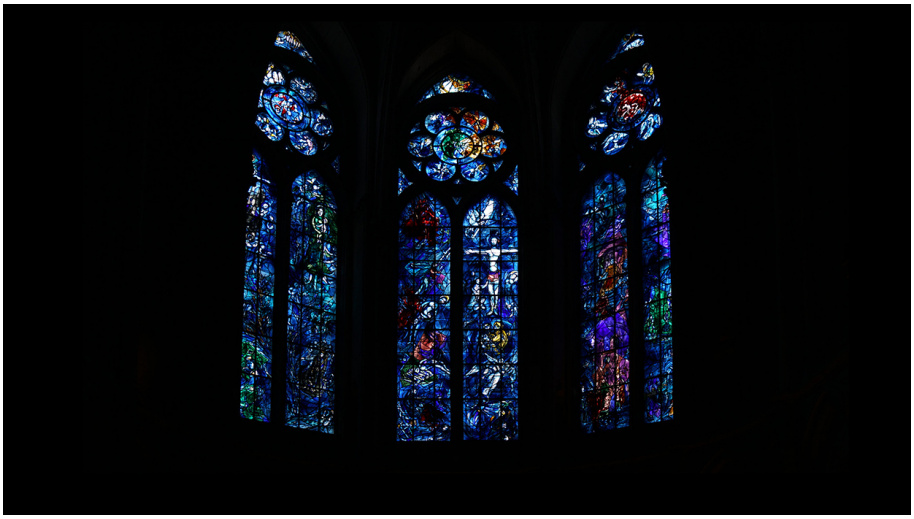


Figure 13.6.12.26: Marc Chagall, stained glass windows replacing war-damaged ones, Reims Cathedral, 1967-1985 (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Additional resources:

The official website of Notre-Dame de Reims

Explore Reims Cathedral at Mapping Gothic France

Amiens Cathedral

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.12.5**: Robert de Luzarches, Thomas de Cormont, and Renaud de Cormont, Amiens Cathedral, Amiens, France, begun 1220

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



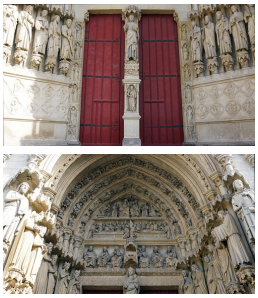


Figure **13.6.12.27**: More Smarthistory images…

Sainte-Chapelle, Paris

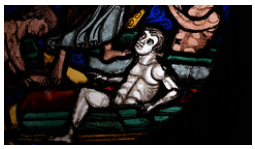
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

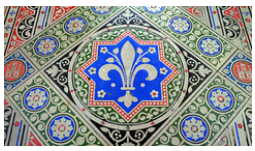


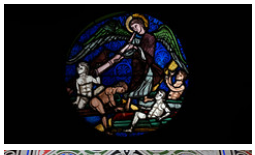
Video **13.6.12.6**: Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, 1248. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:










https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88717



Figure **13.6.12.28**: More Smarthistory images…

Bible moralisée (moralized bibles)

by DR. NANCY ROSS



Figure **13.6.12.29**: Middle left (detail), *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, France, c. 1225-45 (The British Library, Harley MS 1527 fol. 140v)

One book, thousands of illustrations

Imagine a children's illustrated bible. There might be 2-3 illustrations for each story: Adam and Eve in the garden, Noah's ark, Daniel in the lion's den, and others. If you open a regular copy of the bible, each of these stories are covered in several pages of densely-written ancient text. Now imagine that you had a book that contained a separate illustration for every few sentences in the entire bible. Imagine that this super illustrated bible also contained another text that interpreted the bible text and that your book also contained illustrations of that additional text. One book: thousands of illustrations. It is medievally mind-blowing.

The Bible moralisée, or moralized bibles, are a small group of illustrated bibles that were made in thirteenth-century France and Spain. These books are among the most expensive medieval manuscripts ever made because they contain an unusually large number of illustrations. These books were generally commissioned by members of royal families, as no one else would have been able to afford such luxury. Below is a dedication page showing the owners of one Bible moralisée: Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France.



Figure **13.6.12.30**: Top: *Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France* and below: *Priest dictating to a scribe*, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), France, probably Paris, c. 1230, 14 3/4 x 10 1/4″ / 37.5 x 26.2 cm (The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.240, fol. 8)

Biblical text and commentary

Bible moralisée contain two texts: the biblical text and the commentary text, which is sometimes called a gloss. These commentary texts interpreted the biblical text for the thirteenth century reader. Commentary authors often created comparisons between people and events in the biblical world and people and events in the medieval world. In the case of the Bible moralisée, the commentary often draws parallels between the bad guys of the biblical text and those who were perceived as bad guys in the thirteenth century. In France, as in most of western Europe at this time, Jews and corrupt priests were the bad guys and there are anti-semitic themes throughout the commentary and illustrations.

The format of Bible moralisée manuscripts is unusual, as the artist had to create a coherent arrangement for the biblical text, its accompanying commentary text, and an illustration for each. On each page of this manuscript there are eight circles, called roundels, that illustrate biblical scenes and commentary scenes. There are short snippets of text, either from the bible or commentary, that accompany each scene.



Figure **13.6.12.31**: Scenes from the Apocalypse, Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, France, c. 1225-45 (The British Library, Harley MS 1527 fol. 140v)

The example presented here is from the Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, which is broken up into three volumes in three different cities. This page, or folio, is from the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation. The text tells the story of John's vision, where an angel takes him on a tour of heaven and shows

him everything that will happen until the end of time, but in symbols. The gist of the story is that there is an ongoing battle between God and evil and ultimately God and his angels win.

In looking at the page, it breaks down into a number of parts and it is important to identify each part in order to understand how the texts and images work together. The Latin text in the upper left is from Revelation 14:19, which translates as

> ***"And the angel thrust in his sharp sickle into the earth, and gathered the vineyard of the earth, and cast it into the great press of the wrath of God:"***
>
> ***(Douay-Rheims translation)***



Figure **13.6.12.32**: Upper left (detail), *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, France, c. 1225-45 (The British Library, Harley MS 1527 fol. 140v)



Figure **13.6.12.33**: Commentary (detail), *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, France, c. 1225-45 (The British Library, Harley MS 1527 fol. 140v)

The illustration is a visual interpretation of this text, with some extra details added. A figure on the right harvests grapes from the vines on the right and Christ, with his cruciform (cross-shaped) halo, pours the grapes from the basket on his back into the winepress. God and his angels bless the scene from above.

The commentary begins with the red letter "P" below and talks about how the great winepress signifies hell. Note that in the accompanying illustration (very top of this page), there are demons herding the damned into a hellmouth—literally the jaws of hell. Among the damned is a corrupt bishop, identified by his special hat, the mitre. There is also a corrupt king in hell.

This arrangement give the biblical text three interpretations: a visual interpretation, a commentary interpretation, and a visual commentary interpretation. Each interpretation builds on the other. The illustrations are more than simple representations of the text, they are contemporary interpretations of it. The commentary text does not mention bishops or kings, but the illustrator adds those.

The reader then moves on to the right, to the next pairing of images and text.



Figure 13.6.12.34: Upper right (detail), *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, France, c. 1225-45 (The British Library, Harley MS 1527 fol. 140v)

The upper portion of text comes from Revelation 15:1, which translates as

> ***"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful: seven angels having the seven last plagues. For in them is filled up the wrath of God."***
>
> ***(Douay-Rheims translation)***

The accompanying illustration shows Christ on the left and seven angels on the right. The commentary beginning with the blue letter "P", interprets the seven angels as faithful preachers who teach God's people. The illustration shows priests on the left teaching a group of men (below). The illustrator goes further and adds two Jewish men on the right, identified by their conical hats. The faithful priests are contrasted with the Jewish men who literally turn their bodies away from the priests. Illustrations like this tried to convince Christian readers that although Jews were once God's people, as outlined in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, that medieval Jews had turned away from that role. This kind of anti-semitic message promoted hate and violence toward Jews in the later Middle Ages.



Figure 13.6.12.35: Middle right (detail), *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, Paris-Oxford-London Bible moralisée, France, c. 1225-45 (The British Library, Harley MS 1527 fol. 140v)

Additional resources:

Zoomable image of Scenes from the Apocalypse, from the British Library

The Devil is in the Detail: A Thirteenth-Century Bible Moralisée—blog post from the British Library

Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France; Author Dictating to a Scribe, Moralized Bible at The Morgan Library & Museum

Saint Louis Bible (Moralized Bible or Bible moralisée)

by LOUISA WOODVILLE

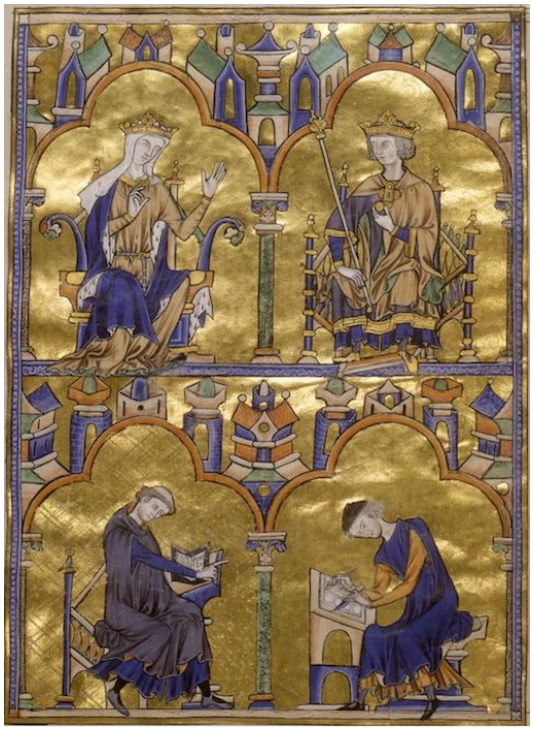


Figure **13.6.12.36**: Top: Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France and below: Author Dictating to a Scribe, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), France, probably Paris, c. 1227-34, 14 3/4 x 10 1/4 inches / 37.5 x 26.2 cm (The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.240, fol. 8)

Blanche of Castile

In 1226 a French king died, leaving his queen to rule his kingdom until their son came of age. The 38-year-old widow, Blanche of Castile, had her work cut out for her. Rebelling barons were eager to win back lands that her husband's father had seized from them. They rallied troops against her, defamed her character, and even accused her of adultery and murder.

Caught in a perilous web of treachery, insurrections, and open warfare, Blanche persuaded, cajoled, negotiated, and fought would-be enemies after her husband, King Louis VIII, died of dysentery after only a three-year reign. When their son Louis IX took the helm in 1234, he inherited a kingdom that was, for a time anyway, at peace.



Figure **13.6.12.37**: Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France (detail), Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), c. 1227-34, ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum (The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 240, fol. 8).

A manuscript illumination

A dazzling illumination in New York's Morgan Library could well depict Blanche of Castile and her son Louis, a beardless youth crowned king. A cleric and a scribe are depicted underneath them (see image at the top of the page). Each figure is set against a ground of burnished gold, seated beneath a

trefoil arch. Stylized and colorful buildings dance above their heads, suggesting a sophisticated, urban setting—perhaps Paris, the capital city of the Capetian kingdom (the Capetians were one of the oldest royal families in France) and home to a renowned school of theology.

A moralized Bible

This last page the New York Morgan Library's manuscript MS M 240 is the last quire (folded page) of a three-volume moralized bible, the majority of which is housed at the Cathedral Treasury in Toledo, Spain. Moralized bibles, made expressedly for the French royal house, include lavishly illustrated abbreviated passages from the Old and New Testaments. Explanatory texts that allude to historical events and tales accompany these literary and visual readings, which—woven together—convey a moral.

Assuming historians are correct in identifying the two rulers, we are looking at the four people intensely involved in the production of this manuscript. As patron and ruler, Queen Blanche of Castile would have financed its production. As ruler-to-be, Louis IX's job was to take its lessons to heart along with those from the other biblical and ancient texts that his tutors read with him.

King and queen



Figure **13.6.12.38**: Blanche of Castile (detail), Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), c. 1227-34, ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum (The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 240, fol. 8).

In the upper register, an enthroned king and queen wear the traditional medieval open crown topped with fleur-de-lys—a stylized iris or lily symbolizing a French monarch's religious, political, and dynastic right to rule. The blue-eyed queen, left, is veiled in a white widow's wimple. An ermine-lined blue mantle drapes over her shoulders. Her pink T-shaped tunic spills over a thin blue edge of paint which visually supports these enthroned figures. A slender green column divides the queen's space from that of her son, King Louis IX, to whom she deliberately gestures across the page, raising her left hand in his direction. Her pose and animated facial expression suggest that she is dedicating this manuscript, with its lessons and morals, to the young king.



Figure **13.6.12.39**: Louis IX (detail), Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), c. 1227-34, ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum (The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 240, fol. 8).

Louis IX, wearing an open crown atop his head, returns his mother's glance. In his right hand he holds a scepter, indicating his kingly status. It is topped by the characteristic fleur-de-lys on which, curiously, a small bird sits. A four-pedaled brooch, dominated by a large square of sapphire blue in the center, secures a pink mantle lined with green that rests on his boyish shoulders.

In his left hand, between his forefinger and thumb, Louis holds a small golden ball or disc. During the mass that followed coronations, French kings and queens would traditionally give the presiding bishop of Reims 13 gold coins (all French kings were crowned in this northern French cathedral town.) This could reference Louis' 1226 coronation, just three weeks after his father's death, suggesting a probable date for this bible's commission. A manuscript this lavish, however, would have taken eight to ten years to complete—perfect timing, because in 1235, the 21-year-old Louis was ready to assume the rule of his Capetian kingdom from his mother.

A link between earth and heaven



Figure **13.6.12.40**: Coronation of the Virgin, tympanum of central portal, north transept, Chartres Cathedral, c. 1204-10

Queen Blanche and her son, the young king, echo a gesture and pose that would have been familiar to many Christians: the Virgin Mary and Christ enthroned side-by-side as celestial rulers of heaven, found in the numerous Coronations of the Virgin carved in ivory, wood, and stone. This scene was especially prevalent in tympana, the top sculpted semi-circle over cathedral portals found throughout France. On beholding the Morgan illumination, viewers would have immediately made the connection between this earthly Queen Blanche and her son, anointed by God with the divine right to rule, and that of Mary, Queen of heaven and her son, divine figures who offer salvation.

A cleric and an artist



Figure **13.6.12.41**: Cleric (detail), Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), c. 1227-34, ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum (The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 240, fol. 8).

The illumination's bottom register depicts a tonsured cleric (churchman with a partly shaved head), left, and an illuminator, right.

The cleric wears a sleeveless cloak appropriate for divine services—this is an educated man—and emphasizes his role as a scholar. He tilts his head forward and points his right forefinger at the artist across from him, as though giving instructions. No clues are given as to this cleric's religious order, as he probably represents the many Parisian theologians responsible for the manuscript's visual and literary content—all of whom were undoubtedly told to spare no expense.

On the right, the artist, donning a blue surcoat and wearing a cap, is seated on cushioned bench.



Figure **13.6.12.42**: Scribe (detail), Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France, Bible of Saint Louis (Moralized Bible), c. 1227-34, ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum (The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 240, fol. 8).

Knife in his left hand and stylus in his right, he looks down at his work: four vertically-stacked circles in a left column, with part of a fifth visible on the right. We know, from the 4887 medallions that precede this illumination, what's next on this artist's agenda: he will apply a thin sheet of gold leaf onto the background, and then paint the medallion's biblical and explanatory scenes in brilliant hues of lapis lazuli, green, red, yellow, grey, orange and sepia.

Advice for a king

Blanche undoubtedly hand-picked the theologians whose job it was to establish this manuscript's guidelines, select biblical passages, write explanations, hire copyists, and oversee the images that the artists should paint. Art and text, mutually dependent, spelled out advice that its readers, Louis IX and perhaps his siblings, could practice in their enlightened rule. The nobles, church officials, and perhaps even common folk who viewed this page could be reassured that their ruler had been well trained to deal with whatever calamities came his way.

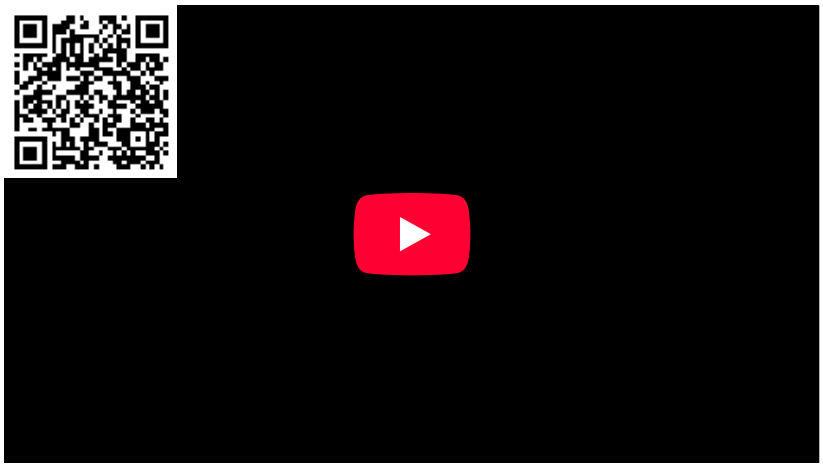
This 13th century illumination, both dazzling and edifying, represents the cutting edge of lavishness in a society that embraced conspicuous consumption. As a pedagogical tool, perhaps it played no small part in helping Louis IX achieve the status of sainthood, awarded by Pope Bonifiace VIII 27 years after the king's death. This and other images in the bible moralisée explain why Parisian illuminators monopolized manuscript production at this time. Look again at the work. Who else could compete against such a resounding image of character and grace?

Additional resources:

This page at The Morgan Library and Museum

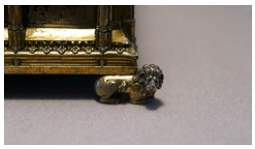
Humanizing Mary: the Virgin of Jeanne d'Evreux

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



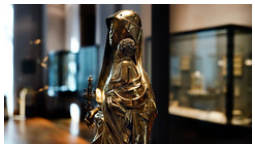
Video **13.6.12.7**: *The Virgin of Jeanne d'Evreux*, 1324-39, gilded silver, basse-taille, enamels on gilded silver, stones, and pearls, 68 cm high (Musée du Louvre)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







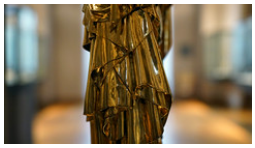
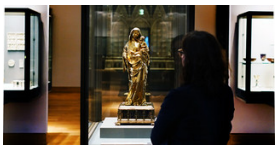





Figure **13.6.12.43**: More Smarthistory images…

Jean le Noir, Bourgot (?), and workshop, Miniature of Christ's Side Wound and Instruments of the Passion from the Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg

by DR. MAEVE K. DOYLE



Figure **13.6.12.44**: Jean le Noir, Bourgot (?), and workshop, Miniature of Christ's Side Wound and Instruments of the Passion, folio 331r, in the *Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg*, before 1349 (**The Cloisters Collection**)

Deluxe medieval devotional books used images and texts together to produce compelling, spiritual experiences for their readers. One particularly dramatic image confronts the reader from the pages of a book made for a woman, Bonne of Luxembourg, in the French royal family. In the center of the **parchment** page, on a blue field teeming with scrolling golden vines, the instruments used to torture Christ during the Passion stand arranged for the viewer's inspection.

In the center, filling the composition from top to bottom, is a gaping, disembodied wound. Framed with an almond-shaped ring of white flesh, the bright orange-red tones of torn flesh deepen in color closer to the irregular, vertical brown gash in the center. This is the spear wound created in Christ's side after his death on the cross, isolated for the pious reader's contemplation. Shown at what medieval Christians believed to be actual size (about 2 inches), the wound dominates the composition while the miniature instruments of torture that surround it seem to fade into the background. Along with the text (a prayer describing Christ's suffering), and the manuscript's lively margins, this graphic painting worked to engage viewers in emotional contemplation of Jesus' sacrifice.



Figure 13.6.12.45: Jean le Noir, Bourgot (?), and workshop, Miniature of Christ's Side Wound and Instruments of the Passion, detail, folio 331r, in the *Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg*, before 1349 (The Cloisters Collection)

In the Middle Ages, this powerful image was meant to orient pious readers' attention to Christ's body and the physical suffering he endured to ensure their salvation. This emphasis on Christ's body is part of a larger trend in late medieval devotion known as affective piety, in which compassion for Christ's suffering held the key to salvation. With its almond shape, vertical orientation, and confrontational placement, the wound of Christ in the *Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg* might remind a modern viewer of the Eye of Sauron (known from J.R.R. Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings*). Medieval viewers likely overlaid other associations onto such images of Christ's wound. The change in the wound's orientation from a diagonal slit to a vertical opening and the isolation of the wound as an almond-shaped device transform it into an image strongly reminiscent of medieval representations of the vulva and the vaginal opening. Similar imagery persists in modern visual culture, such as Judy Chicago's 1979 installation **The Dinner Party**. This association of Christ's side wound with female reproductive organs has connections with mystical writings that eroticized the body of Christ and that emphasized its nurturing and generative qualities.

The Manuscript Context

Although we often think of paintings today as freestanding, portable objects, paintings in **medieval books** were not meant to be isolated from their manuscript context. When closed, Bonne's prayer book measures just over five inches high—smaller than an adult's hand. This small size distinguishes personal prayer books from books sized for display, like the **Winchester Bible**. Deluxe prayer books like Bonne's were status symbols, but they were also intimate, personal objects that facilitated direct communication with God.



Figure **13.6.12.46**: Jean le Noir, Bourgot (?), and workshop, miniature of the Crucifixion with Christ displaying his side wound to Bonne of Luxembourg and John, Duke of Normandy, folio 328r, in the *Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg*, before 1349 (**The Cloisters Collection**)

The image of Christ's side wound is one of fifteen miniatures distributed among the 334 folios of the prayer book. Each miniature introduces and illustrates the themes of the manuscript's most important texts. The miniature of the wound comes in the midst of the final text, focusing on Christ's experience on the cross.



Figure **13.6.12.47**: Jean le Noir, Bourgot (?), and workshop, miniature of the Crucifixion with Christ displaying his side wound to Bonne of Luxembourg and John, Duke of Normandy, detail, folio 328r, in the *Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg*, before 1349 (**The Cloisters Collection**)

This text opens with a miniature of the crucified Christ showing his side wound to two kneeling figures: Bonne and her husband, the future French king John the Good. Viewed in sequence, the miniature with the crucified Christ instructed Bonne (personally!) where to focus her devotional attentions, while the miniature of the wound three folios later provided her direct, visual access to it. The wound provides a dramatic climax to the prayer and the book.

Mysticism and Queer Readings

Devotion to Christ's side wound emerges from late medieval Christian mysticism, writings by monastic men and especially women articulating their personal, visionary, and ecstatic experiences of the divine. In mystical writings, Christ's body often takes on feminine qualities, becoming permeable, generative, and nourishing. Catherine of Siena's biography records a vision in which Christ nourishes the mystic from his side wound, an encounter that is simultaneously maternal and erotic:

> ***With that, he tenderly placed his right hand on her neck, and drew her towards the wound in his side. 'Drink, daughter, from my side,' he said, 'and by that draught your soul shall become enraptured with such delight that your very body, which for my sake you have denied, shall be inundated with its overflowing goodness.' Drawn close in this way, … she fastened her lips upon that sacred wound, … and there she slaked her thirst.[1]***

Images of the side wound and the mystical tradition from which they emerge have provided fertile material for scholars engaged in "queering" the Middle Ages. Queering means questioning assumptions of heterosexual and cisgender normativity in the past, providing a critique of modern scholarship in the process.

The image of the side wound, like Catherine's vision, grants feminine bodily attributes to Christ, destabilizing assumptions about his gender. In mystical images and texts, Christ's capacity to transcend the gender binary, like his capacity to transcend the binary of life and death, underscores his divinity. Christ is not the only figure within medieval culture to transgress the gender binary. Medieval literature—religious and secular alike—is replete with transgender figures, from saints like **Marinos the Monk and, perhaps, Joan of Arc**, to the fictional protagonists of the thirteenth-century romances *Silence* and *Yde et Olive*.

While the voices of actual marginalized people are rarely recorded in medieval documents, Eleanor Rykener is a striking exception. Arrested in late fourteenth-century London for sexual misconduct, and named in court records as John, she identified herself as Eleanor in her testimony. While the gender-ambiguous Christ is a social construction, it can nevertheless call our attention to individuals and groups hidden within or excluded from the historical record and give modern students a means to consider their positions and experiences within their time.



Figure **13.6.12.48**: The Fauvel Master, miniature of the Crucifixion, the wound of Christ, and the instruments of the passion, detail, folio 140v, in *L'Image du monde* of Gossouin of Metz, c. 1320-1325 (**Bibliothèque nationale de France** ms. fr. 574)

Echoing the eroticism of Catherine's vision, medieval readers' interactions with their devotional books could be very intimate, including the touching or kissing of images, and other images of the wound of Christ show paint loss from readers' pious stroking of the paint. Such devotion to Christ's side wound further destabilizes presumptions of heterosexuality in medieval and much modern thought. With its focus on touch and penetration, the devotion of men and women alike to Christ's side wound had the capacity for queer connotations. The ragged, parted lips of Christ's wound carried many meanings for their medieval viewers, from the pleasures of being enveloped in divine love to protections in childbirth.



Figure **13.6.12.49**: Limbourg Brothers, January, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly, fol. 1v)

Bonne, who was married at seventeen to the French royal heir and bore nine children before her death of plague at age 34, may have found these associations with pregnancy particularly meaningful. However, the reproductive and the erotic resonances of the image are not mutually exclusive, and, regardless of Bonne's sexuality, we can see in this imagery a potential model for same-sex desire in the Middle Ages. Such models are crucial for the study of sexualities in a period when homosexual relationships, especially between women, were rarely acknowledged in mainstream texts or conversations. When references to homosexuality do appear in medieval art, it is often framed as a sin, as in the representations of "sodomy" in **moralized bibles**. Still, more subtle, positive references to homosexual identities may be found. Medieval gossip about Bonne's son, Jean, Duke of Berry, implies that he may have been attracted to men. Art historian Michael Camille has suggested that Paul de Limbourg devised several well-dressed young men in the feasting miniature of the ***Très Riches Heures*** for the duke's pleasure.

Artists, Patrons, and Owners

The images and texts of Bonne of Luxembourg's prayer book contained many layered messages for its royal reader. While the content of images and texts alike would have been planned by a devotional adviser, the paintings are attributed to Parisian illuminator Jean le Noir and his workshop, which by 1358 included his daughter, Bourgot, in a prominent role. The commercial book shops of the late Middle Ages were collaborative, often family enterprises, with men and women of different generations working side-by-side. Three artists' hands have been identified within the manuscript, though it is not possible to know which belonged to Jean, Bourgot, or other workshop members.



Figure **13.6.12.50**: Jean Pucelle, opening pages showing the Arrest of Christ, the Annunciation, Queen Jeanne d'Evreux in prayer, and erotic games in the margins, fols. 15v–16r, in the *Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux*, c. 1324-1328 (**The Cloisters Collection**)

Jean le Noir's workshop specialized in the grisaille style of painting first popularized among the royal patrons of France during the previous generation by illuminator Jean Pucelle. The *Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg* looks back both in style and in content to the miniature prayer book Pucelle made for an earlier queen of France, **Jeanne d'Évreux**, between about 1324 and 1328.

While the imagery of Bonne's prayer book brought her into intimate contact with God, its style connected her with the royal French line. These connections were carried forward by Bonne's children, particularly Jean de Berry, who around 1371 commissioned a prayer book with the same Passion texts as his mother's from the now elderly Jean le Noir. These stylistic, thematic, and textual traditions across generations speak to the complex dynamics of transgression and normativity within medieval manuscript patronage at the highest levels.

Notes

1. Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, trans. Conleth Kearns, quoted in Karma Lochrie, "Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies," in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 188.

Additional resources

Read more about Private Devotion in Medieval Christianity on the Met's Heilbrunn Timeline

Roland Betancourt. "Transgender Lives in the Middle Ages through Art, Literature, and Medicine." The Getty Iris (blog), March 6, 2019.

Gabrielle Bychowski. "Were There Transgender People in the Middle Ages?" The Public Medievalist (blog), November 1, 2018.

Kadin Henningsen, "'Calling [herself] Eleanor': Gender Labor and Becoming a Woman in the Rykener Case" *Medieval Feminist Forum* 55:1 (2019): 249–266.

Bryan C. Keene and Rheagan Martin. "Coming Out: Queer Erasure and Censorship from the Middle Ages to Modernity." The Getty Iris (blog), October 11, 2016.

An abstract of Michael Camille's "'For Our Devotion and Pleasure': The Sexual Objects of Jean, Duc de Berry"

Gothic art in England

Crazy vaults, ball flowers, and carved angels that appear to sing...

c. 1200 - 1400

Southwell Minster

by VALERIE SPANSWICK



Figure **13.6.12.51**: Southwell Minster, Nottinghamshire, England (photo: **Steve Cadman**)

Southwell Minster in Nottinghamshire, England, is not as famous as some of Britain's other great medieval churches, and neither is it as large. However, it presents superb examples of both Romanesque or Norman and Gothic architecture in a building that suffered little damage during the turbulent years of the British Reformation, Civil War, and World War II.

Construction of the current church building was begun circa 1108, and was essentially completed around 50 years later. The basic layout for churches at that time was the shape of a cross, with the east end as the top, the transepts making the crossing arm, and the nave as the longer extension at the bottom of the cross. The east end held the altar and choir, or quire, which were used by the clergy during daily masses. The nave was accessible to the lay community. Although medieval British churches are basically oriented east to west, they all vary slightly. When a new church was to be built, the patron saint was selected and the altar location laid out. On the saint's day, a line would be surveyed from the position of the rising sun through the altar site and extending in a westerly direction. This was the orientation of the new building.

In clerical terms, Southwell Minster is a cathedral; but rather than rummage in ecclesiastical definitions, this essay will look at the architectural styles.

Interior order



Figure **13.6.12.52**: Nave of Southwell Minster (photo: **Steve Cadman**)

On entering Southwell Minster, the sense of space feels logical and follows a well-defined and rhythmic order. The nave is in the Norman, or Romanesque, architectural style. It is delineated by simple rounded – Roman – stone arches springing from heavy round stone columns. The arcade on

each side separates the nave from the side aisles, which allow people to move through the church to smaller side chapels. Above the first tier is a second arcade with smaller arches defining the gallery, and above that is another arcade – smaller still – which includes windows and is known as the clerestory. The ceiling of Southwell Minster is a wooden barrel vault.

The arches, column capitals, window surrounds, and portals are decorated with carved patterns that are geometric and straightforward. Although the material is stone, its lack of detailed texture gives it a plastic quality, especially when seen in some lights. The stone, Permian sandstone, has a warm cream color, while the heavy arches and massive walls impart a feeling of strength and permanence. This commanding style represented effective propaganda for William the Conqueror, who had invaded Britain in 1066 and imposed strong organizational systems in both the Church and government.

From Norman to Gothic



Figure **13.6.12.53**: Pulpitum and choir of Southwell Minster (photo: **Necrothesp**)

The transepts are also in the Norman style, severe and blunt. But as you move further east and enter the quire, the uncomplicated architecture and decoration gives way to pointed arches and curlicue embellishments. The sense of moving to a different building and place are somewhat confusing at first, until you are fully inside the east end and find yourself enveloped in the Gothic style.

The original east end of Southwell, and of many other medieval cathedrals, was found to be too small once the building was completed, so the old east end was pulled down and replaced with a larger extension in the latest fashion. Although the new east end was built within roughly one hundred years of the original building, architecture had moved on quickly. Now the arches were pointed at the top, and the decoration was more and more ornate. Structurally, new techniques allowed for larger windows than were possible in the Romanesque idiom.

Prebendary seats of stone



Figure **13.6.12.54**: Foliate carvings at Southwell Minster (photo: **Mattana**)

The Chapter House, begun circa 1300, is accessible from the north transept, and was the meeting hall of the original *prebends* (a clergy member drawing a stipend from Anglican church revenues) associated with the minster. Each prebend, who would have held certain responsibilities for his area of the diocese, had a stone seat on the wall of the chapter house. Each seat alcove is topped with decorated trefoil arches and a variety of leaves. The “Leaves of Southwell” have been documented as some of the best medieval stone carvings in England, and represent oak, ivy, hawthorn, grape, hops, and other flora.



Figure 13.6.12.55: Entrance, Southwell Minster chapter house (photo: **Necrothesp**)

Because the Southwell Chapter House is relatively small, it does not require a center column to support the roof as a larger area would. The octagonal room is topped by a vault carried not only on ribs that reach to the center, but also on cross ribs that span between the main ribs. These intermediate ribs are known as tiercerons, and signify a further development into the more complex and decorated vaults that are an integral part of the English Decorated and Perpendicular Gothic styles.

History and presence

As a whole or in its individual parts, Southwell Minster is a brilliant example of medieval architecture in England and its rapid development over 200 years. The building has suffered relatively little damage or major alteration over its thousand-year life. Indeed, part of its appeal is its architectural integrity, as well as the fact that it is a living (i.e., still in use) building.

As the years have passed, new decoration has been added that reflects a functioning parish community – a baptismal font from 1661, stained glass windows from various centuries, a modern sculpture of Christus Rex from the twentieth century. The church is not overrun with tourists, but is still very much a local parish with an active congregation that continues to use the building, ring the bells, and weave the ties of history into twenty-first century life.

Additional resources:56

Southwell Minster

Cathedrals of Britain from the BBC

Salisbury Cathedral

by VALERIE SPANSWICK, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.12.8: Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, England, begun 1220. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure **13.6.12.56**: Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, England, begun 1220, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The biggest and the highest

There are so many superlatives consorting with the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Salisbury: it has the tallest spire in Britain (404 feet); it houses the best preserved of the four surviving original copies of the **Magna Carta** (1215); it has the **oldest working clock** in Europe (1386); it has the largest cathedral cloisters and cathedral close (grounds) in Britain; the choir (or quire) stalls are the largest and earliest complete set in Britain; the vault is the highest in Britain. Bigger, better, best—and built in a mere 38 years, roughly from 1220 to 1258, which is a pretty short construction schedule for a large stone building made without motorized equipment.

One factor that enabled Salisbury Cathedral to become so extraordinary is that it was the first major cathedral to be built on an unobstructed site. The architect and clerics were able to conceive a design and lay it out exactly as they wanted. Construction was carried out in one campaign, giving the complex a cohesive motif and singular identity. The cloisters were started as a purely decorative feature only five years after the cathedral building was completed, with shapes, patterns, and materials that copy those of the cathedral interior.



Figure **13.6.12.57**: ILooking west from the choir to the nave, Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, England, begun 1220, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.6.12.58: Nave elevation, Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, England, begun 1220, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

It was an ideal opportunity in the development of Early English Gothic architecture, and Salisbury Cathedral made full use of the new techniques of this emerging style. Pointed arches and lancet shapes are everywhere, from the prominent west windows to the painted arches of the east end. The narrow piers of the cathedral were made of cut stone rather than rubble-filled drums, as in earlier buildings, which changed the method of distributing the structure's weight and allowed for more light in the interior.

The piers are decorated with slender columns of dark gray Purbeck marble, which reappear in clusters and as stand-alone supports in the arches of the gallery, clerestory, and cloisters. The gallery and cloisters repeat the same patterns of plate tracery—basically stone cut-out shapes—of quatrefoils, cinquefoils, even hexafoils and octofoils. Proportions are uniform throughout.

One deviation from the typical Gothic style is the way the lower arcade level of the nave is cut off by a string course that runs between it and the gallery. In most churches of this period, the columns or piers stretch upwards in one form or another all the way to the ceiling or vault (see diagram below). Here at Salisbury the arcade is merely an arcade, and the effect is more like a layer cake with the upper tiers sitting on top of rather than extending from the lower level.



Figure 13.6.12.59: Comparison of the nave elevations of Salisbury Cathedral and Amiens Cathedral Nave elevation, photos: Dr. Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The tower and the spire

The original design called for a fairly ordinary square crossing tower of modest height. But in the early part of the 14th century, two stories were added to the tower, and then the pointed spire was added in 1330. The spire is the most readily identified feature of the cathedral and is visible for miles. However, the addition of this landmark tower and spire added over 6,000 tons of weight to the supporting structure. Because the building had not been engineered

to carry the extra weight, additional buttressing was required internally and externally. The transepts now sport masonry girders, or strainer arches, to support the weight. Not surprisingly, the spire has never been straight and now tilts to the southeast by about 27 inches.



Figure **13.6.12.60**: Scissor (strainer) arches in the east transept, Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, England, begun 1220, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Restorations

Over the centuries the cathedral has been subject to well-intentioned, but heavy-handed restorations by later architects such as James Wyatt and Sir George Gilbert Scott, who tried to conform the building to contemporary tastes. Therefore, the interior has lost some of its original decoration and furnishings, including stained glass and small chapels, and new things have been added. This is pretty typical, though, of a building that is several centuries old. Fortunately, the regularity and clean lines of the cathedral have not been tampered with. It is still refined, polished, and generally easy on the eye.



Figure **13.6.12.61**: Purbeck colonettes at the crossing (transept), and to the left, gallery and clerestory moldings that have been repainted, Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, England, begun 1220, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Sunlight

Although it inspires the usual awe felt in such a grand and substantial building, and is as pretty as a wedding cake, it has had some criticism from art historians: Nikolaus Pevsner and Harry Batsford both disliked the west front, with its encrustation of statues and “variegated pettiness” (Batsford). John Ruskin, the Victorian art critic and writer, found the building “profound and gloomy.” Indeed, in gray weather, the monochromatic scheme of Chilmark stone and Purbeck marble is just gray upon gray.

The pictures, however, show the widely changing character of the neutral tones; sunlight transforms the building, and the visitor’s experience of it. This very quality is what made the Gothic style so revolutionary—the ability to get sunlight into a large building with massive stone walls. Windows are

everywhere, and when the light streams through the clerestory arches and the enormous west window, the interior turns from drear gray to transcendent gold.

Additional resources:

Salisbury Cathedral website

The Cathedral of Britain from the BBC

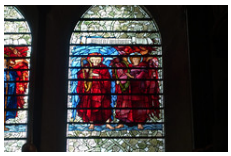
History of Salisbury Cathedral

Salisbury Cathedral Stained Glass

John Constable, Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows (Smarthistory essay)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:










https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88717

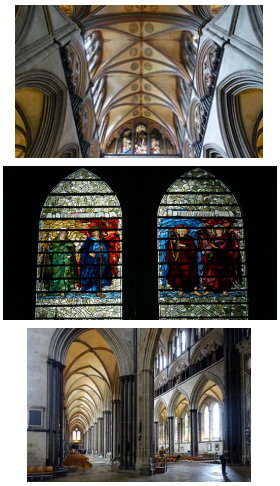


Figure **13.6.12.62**: More Smarthistory images…

Lincoln Cathedral

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



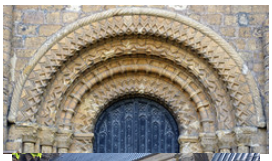
Video **13.6.12.9**: Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lincoln, begun 1088, Lincoln, England
Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

Lincoln Cathedral website

Cathedrals of Britain (BBC)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









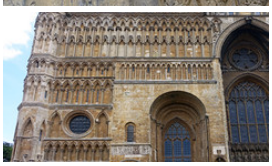
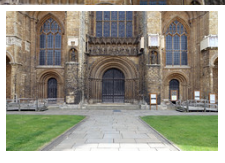
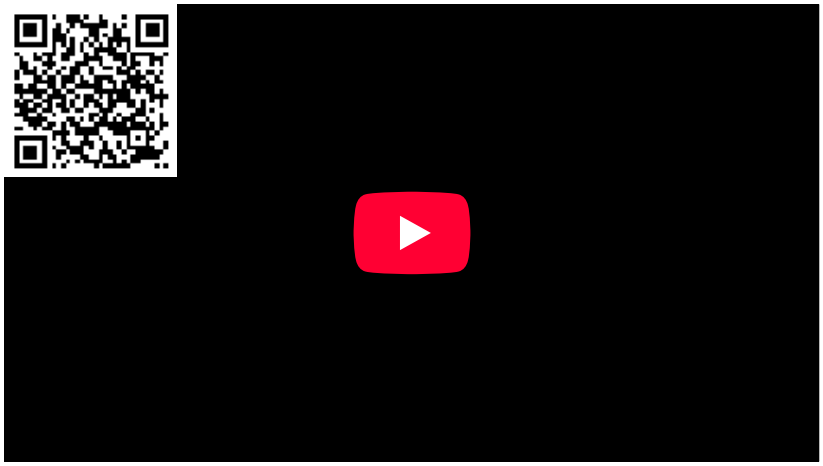






Figure 13.6.12.63: More Smarthistory images…

Wells Cathedral

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.6.12.10: Wells Cathedral, Wells, England, begun c. 1175. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris.

Additional resources:

Wells Cathedral website

Gothic architecture from the V&A

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

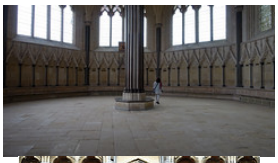














Figure 13.6.12.64: More Smarthistory images…

Four styles of English medieval architecture at Ely Cathedral

by MEG BERNSTEIN



Figure 13.6.12.65: Partial view of Ely Cathedral from the south, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Four styles of English medieval architecture

Ely Cathedral, like nearly all medieval English cathedrals, saw many different phases of construction. Major building projects in the Middle Ages were both expensive and time-consuming, so renovations and additions were made piecemeal rather than all at once.The long period of time means that by looking at Ely, we can get a sense of each of the most important medieval English architectural styles, all in one building: Romanesque (in the nave), Early English (in the presbytery), Decorated (in the tower and Lady Chapel), and Perpendicular (in the eastern chantry chapels). See the plan below.



Figure **13.6.12.66**: View of Ely Cathedral looking east from the Galilee to the Lady Chapel along the north side of the structure, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

A saint in the marshes

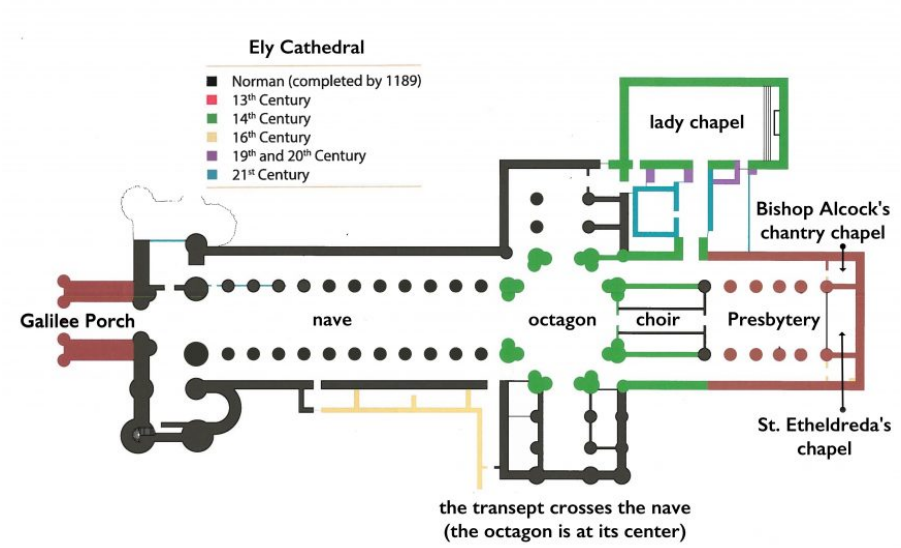
Ely Cathedral, sometimes referred to as "the ship of the Fens," is a massive building rising up from the flat, marshy fenland of East Anglia. It is visible from many miles away like a lone ship on a calm sea. Ely's history began in the seventh century, when an Anglo-Saxon princess named Æthelthryth, or Etheldreda, made a holy vow of virginity. When she was married for political reasons, she fled her husband and founded a nunnery on the Isle of Ely. In Etheldreda's time, Ely was an island surrounded by marshes (drained later, in the seventeenth century), and the place takes its name from the eels that dwelled in these swampy waters.



Figure **13.6.12.67**: Inscribed paving stone marking the original tomb of Saint Etheldreda, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Etheldreda died just seven years after founding her nunnery. When her body was translated (ceremonially moved), from its original location fourteen years later, it was found to be incorrupt and it was put into a "new" sarcophagus—actually a reused one from an old Roman settlement nearby. A cult developed around Etheldreda, who became a saint (the common name for Etheldreda is St. Audrey).

Etheldreda's nunnery was raided by Danish invaders in 870. Whether the relics of Etheldreda survived the raid is an open question, but the author of the twelfth-century text, the *Liber Eliensis* (Book of Ely), detailed stories of the continued power of Etheldreda's relics, possibly intended to suggest that they had not been destroyed. Relics were very important objects in the Middle Ages, lending prestige to the churches where they were held, and drawing pilgrims, who would come seeking miracles. The existence of Etheldreda's relics was therefore very important for the identity of the church at Ely, where in 970, with royal patronage, the church was refounded as a Benedictine monastery.



adapted from: https://www.elycathedral.org/files/pdf/surveyor/cathedral_plan.pdf

Figure **13.6.12.68**: Ely Cathedral plan

The Romanesque (Norman) building

Though it had been the site of Christian worship for hundreds of years prior to 1082, little is known about the architecture of Ely before this date, when the first **Norman** abbot of Ely initiated the construction of a new church for the monastery. The foundations were laid out by a man in his 80s named Abbot Simeon who had previously been prior of the important monastic community of Winchester (in the south of England), where his brother, Walchelin, was bishop. Simeon and his brother had orchestrated a building campaign in Winchester that was still underway when Simeon came to Ely, and that in-progress church served as inspiration for much of the Ely building program.



Figure **13.6.12.69**: East elevation (Romanesque), south east transept, after 1082, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Simeon's building plans at Ely began in the east end with the choir and transepts. This is typical for churches, since their primary liturgical functions commonly take place in the east end of the church, oriented towards Jerusalem. This part of the church exemplifies the Romanesque style brought from Normandy after the Norman Conquest in 1066. It was completed in two different phases, which we can tell from the new decorative forms that appear on some of the capitals of the columns of the transepts, which were built later than the others.

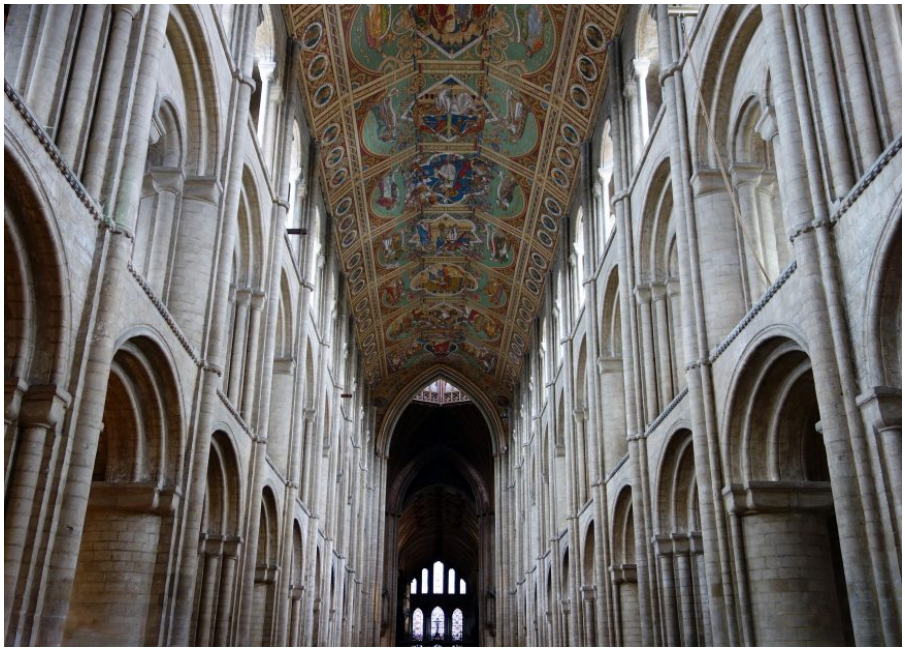


Figure **13.6.12.70**: View down the nave looking east (Romanesque), Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Work on the nave was begun subsequently, and the south side was completed around 1109, when Ely was officially elevated to the status of a cathedral. Ely's nave and transepts were some of the first spaces in England to display alternating forms of compound piers. This alternation adds visual rhythm, and diffuses the heaviness of these massive stone forms.



Figure **13.6.12.71**: Nave Elevation (Romanesque), Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Like most **Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals**, Ely's nave elevation has three stories. The nave arcade with its alternating piers is on the ground floor. Above this is a gallery with double-light openings, or double, windowless arches, each pair set within a larger arch that mirrors the corresponding arch on the lower level. The third level is a clerestory with triplet openings. The tremendous thickness of the walls (a distinguishing feature of the Romanesque) is balanced by the proliferation of openings as one's eyes travel upward. The viewer gets the sense that the building becomes lighter and brighter as it soars heavenward.



Figure **13.6.12.72**: View from the graveyard beside the north east transept to the west tower, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Late Romanesque and Early English Gothic

The west tower that tops the cathedral's main entrance was built at the end of the twelfth century, towards the end of the Romanesque period in England.

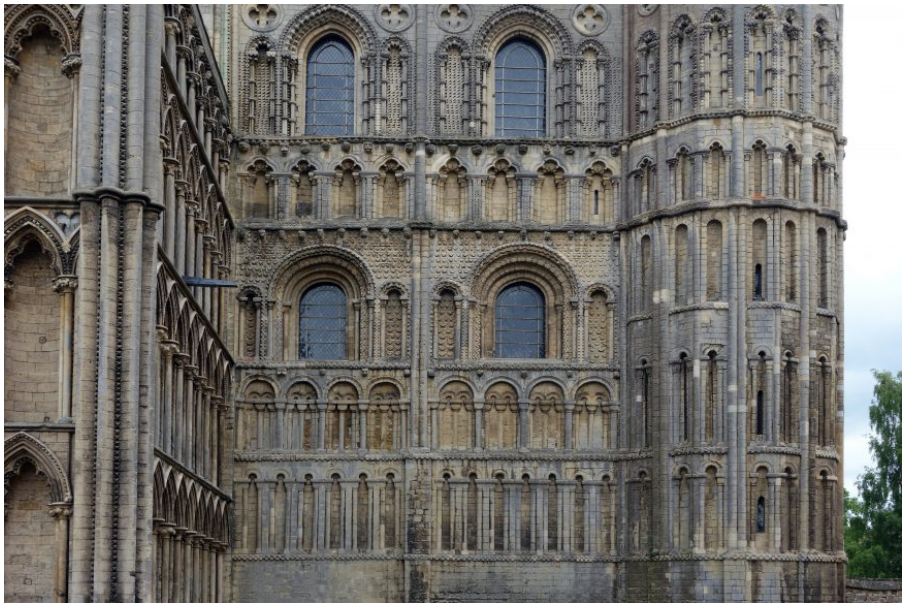


Figure **13.6.12.73**: Decorative façade with blind arcades and rounded arches, south west transept, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Experiments in the **Gothic** style brought over from France had already begun to take hold in England—particularly at Canterbury Cathedral and the northern Cistercian monasteries. At Ely, though, the tower still exhibits round Romanesque arches instead of the pointed arches that are a hallmark of Gothic architecture.



Figure **13.6.12.74**: West entry (Galilee), Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The exterior is covered almost completely in blind arcading, an English speciality that stands in stark contrast to French medieval architecture, which prefers little extra surface decoration. Below the tower, we see a monumental entrance with blind pointed arches, which was added a bit later in the Early English Gothic style, showing how this new style was rapidly spreading across England during this time.



Figure **13.6.12.75**: Stacked blind arcades, south west transept, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

At the other end of the building, the presbytery was extended eastward in the 1230s and 1240s. In style, it draws from the nave of **Lincoln Cathedral**, completed just a decade or so earlier. With engaged colonnettes of Purbeck marble and white limestone, as well as complex rib vaults, it reflected the most fashionable architecture of the time. Then, as now, architectural styles came and went quickly, and the wealthiest and most powerful—such as the Bishop and diplomat Hugh of Northwold, who financed the new presbytery—had the means to stay current.



Figure **13.6.12.76**: Nave arcade with Purbeck colonnettes, presbytery, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Eastern extensions were popular at this time to provide more room for the shrines of saints, like Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, or, at Ely, the shrine of Etheldreda. The presbytery was large enough to accommodate the many pilgrims who came to Ely to venerate the saint (and brought important income to the church and surrounding area). Having a highly-decorated space made this holy destination even more desirable.



Figure **13.6.12.77**: Presbytery vaulting, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Ely Cathedral in the Decorated Style

In 1321, a new chapel was begun north of the presbytery, which would eventually become one of the most beautiful and artistically innovative of the English Gothic period. But in the early morning hours of February 13, 1322, just as the monks were finishing their morning prayers, disaster struck. The crossing tower of the cathedral collapsed, crushing parts of the choir, and construction on the chapel had to stop.



Figure 13.6.12.78: Octagon and lantern, Ely Cathedral (photo: TaleynaFletcher, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Though this collapse was devastating, it made room for one of the most remarkable structures of the English Middle Ages. Alan of Walsingham, sub-prior and sacrist of Ely, quickly initiated the building of a new tower—a tall, octagonal structure (often referred to as "the Octagon") surmounted by a tower made of timber clad with lead. This type of tower is called a lantern because it is pierced to allow light in. Vaults with **tiercerons** spring from the base of the Octagon, creating a star-like effect when one looks up.

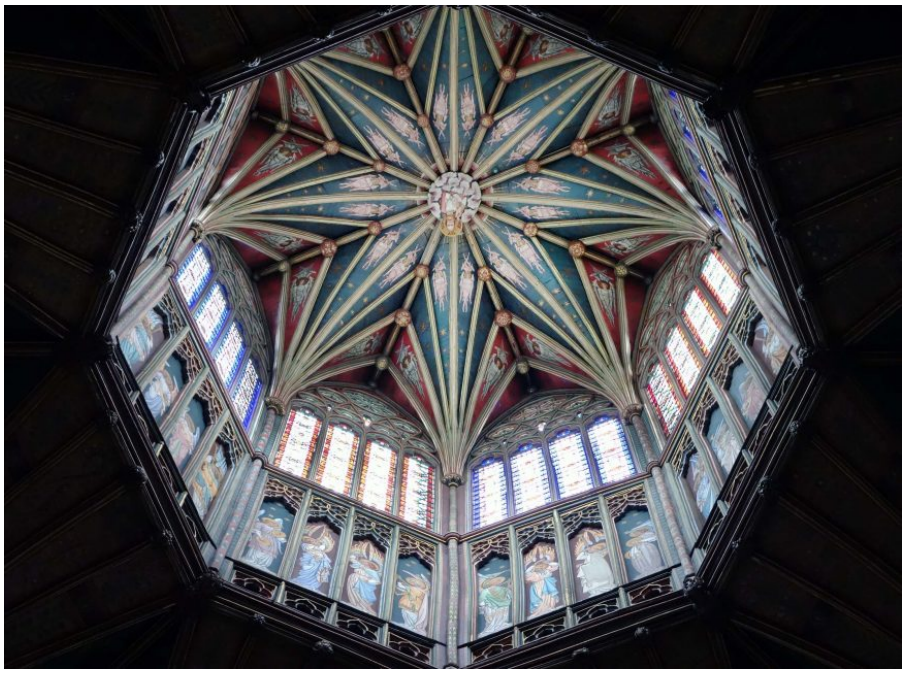


Figure 13.6.12.79: Lantern with central roof boss that incorporates a sculpture of the Risen Christ, Ely Cathedral, photo: Steven Zucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Figure 13.6.12.80: Octagon capital depicting Etheldreda's marriage, Ely Cathedral (photo: James Alexander Cameron)

In the supporting structure below, Etheldreda was commemorated with capitals depicting scenes from her life. These include her marriage to Igfrid, and her rest on the way from Northumberland to Ely. The Octagon, from floor to the central roof boss, is 142 feet tall, the same height as **the Pantheon** in Rome. This correspondence may have been intentional, since the Octagon is like a Gothic version of the Pantheon's incredible dome, and the tower above it delivers light throughout, like the opening of the Roman temple.



Figure **13.6.12.81**: Lady Chapel, Ely (note fragments of original stained glass, upper left) photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Once the Octagon was completed, attention was turned back to the Lady Chapel. A Lady Chapel is a space dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and this one is especially clear in its depiction of her life and miracles. The chapel, built in the Decorated Style, is rectangular, and its elevation is composed of a dado and clerestory. A series of niches encircle the room, forming the dado.



Figure **13.6.12.82**: Niches near altar that form the dado, Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Each niche is protected with a nodding ogee canopy and ornamented with relief sculpture relating to the Virgin. It has been observed that the sculptural niches of the dado have a vulvular shape, perhaps not coincidental given that the chapel celebrates the Virgin Mary, whose chief contribution to Christian history was giving birth to Jesus.



Figure **13.6.12.83**: Ogee, Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral (note that the heads of the figures have been broken off), photo: Steven Zucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The Lady Chapel was interrupted by the collapse of the central tower, and its progress may have been troubled again by the Black Death, which struck England in 1348. On the western side of the chapel, the nodding ogees of the dado flatten, and the diaper-work is halted. The vault fits uneasily on the chapel. Scholars suspect that some of the sculptors and masons at Ely may have fallen victim to the plague, leaving the lavish project to be completed by their less adept colleagues.

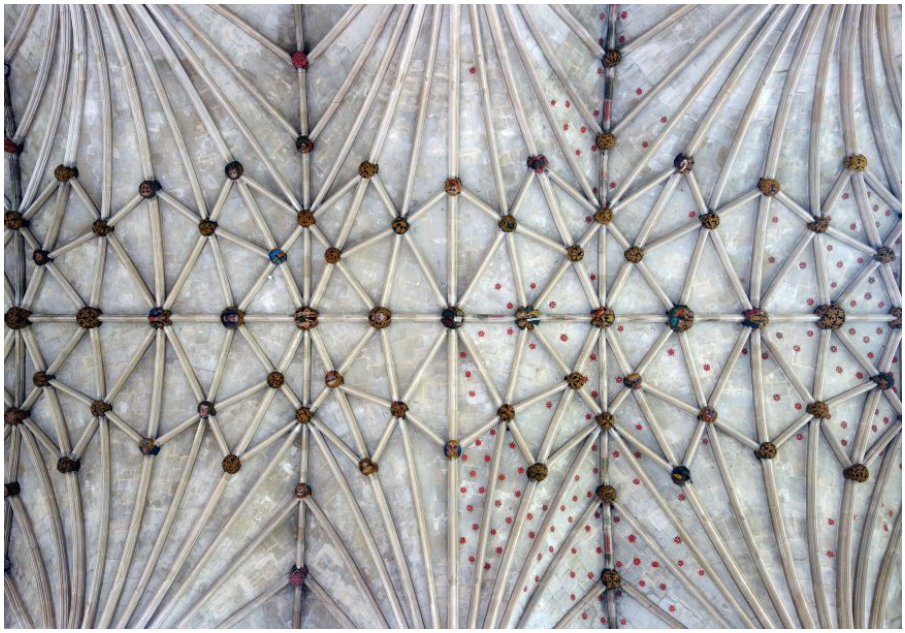


Figure **13.6.12.84**: Vaulting, Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral, photo: Steven Zucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Iconoclasm in the Ely Lady Chapel

Although the Ely Lady Chapel is one of the most beautiful interiors of English medieval art, it's also one of the most heavily destroyed. During the English Reformation, the sculptures were mutilated because religious imagery was thought to be idolatrous. The images were taken from their niches, and the colorful stained glass that would have filled the windows was destroyed. Some sculpture remains in the life of the Virgin series on the dado, but many have been stripped of their heads or more. Traces of polychromy remain, but are but a pale shadow of the formerly brilliant space.



Figure **13.6.12.85**: Surviving fragments of stained glass, Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The end of the Middle Ages

After the Black Death, a final style of the English Middle Ages emerges as the primary mode of building. This is called the Perpendicular Style because, unlike the flowing, undulating curves of the Decorated Style that preceded it, it emphasizes straight lines and vertical projections. The Perpendicular Style took hold in the second half of the fourteenth century, and continued through the remainder of the Middle Ages—almost two hundred years!



Figure **13.6.12.86**: Bishop Alcock's Chantry Chapel, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Phil McIver**, CC BY-NC 2.0



Figure **13.6.12.87**: Souls being led out of Purgatory, from the **Hours of Catherine of Cleves**, folio 107r, c.1440 (The Morgan Library)

Bishop Alcock's chantry chapel was built in the Perpendicular Style between 1488 and 1500. A chantry chapel is a space devoted to praying for an individual or a family in order to shorten their time in purgatory. Purgatory was understood to be a fiery place where souls went after death, but unlike hell, one could eventually leave purgatory after serving the required amount of time necessary for sins committed during life. A reduction of one's sentence in purgatory could be achieved, either during life from the acquisition of indulgences, or in death if one's loved ones or the executors of their wills prayed for them and ensured that masses were said in their honor.

Alcock is likely to have planned the chapel himself—he had been the Controller of the Royal Works and Buildings under **King Henry VII**. The chapel is cordoned off from the north aisle with a microarchitectural screen with statue niches that are now empty. Though this screen is extremely intricate and beautifully carved, it doesn't quite fit in the space allotted for it. Prior to becoming bishop of Ely, Alcock had held the same post at Worcester Cathedral. It is thought that the chapel may have been planned for a large space there, but was instead jammed into tighter accommodations at Ely. Within the chapel is Alcock's tomb, in a niche, and an altar so that Masses could be said for his soul. Alcock's memory was also made explicit with the use of his rebus with a cock (rooster) atop a globe, and his coat of arms, three cocks.



Figure **13.6.12.88**: Crossing tower, Ely Cathedral, photo: **Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

A ship of four styles

The "ship of the Fens" is a wonderful example of the evolution of English architectural style in the Middle Ages: from Romanesque to Early English Gothic, Decorated, and Perpendicular. The people who built churches in the Middle Ages wouldn't have thought of themselves as building in these styles, however—these are names given by historians in the nineteenth century to describe them retrospectively. The builders themselves would have thought of what they were building simply as "current." Although Etheldreda sought refuge her marriage in the quiet, eel-filled marshes of Ely, the Middle Ages saw this site develop into a far more elaborate space than she could possibly have imagined.

Additional resources:

Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland entry on Ely Cathedral

Illustrations for some definitions borrowed from the Glossary of Medieval Art and Architecture.

John Maddison, *Ely Cathedral: Design and Meaning* (Ely: Ely Cathedral Publications, 2000).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









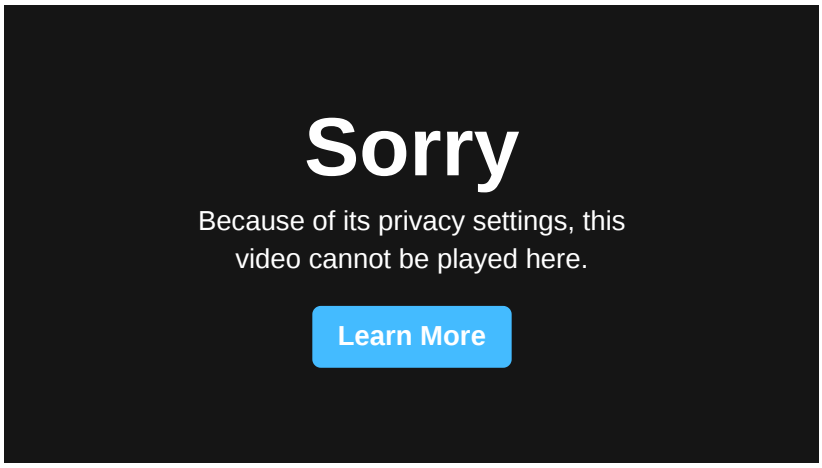





Figure 13.6.12.89: More Smarthistory images…

Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel

by HENI TALKS



Paul Binski - Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel: Devotion and Destruction from HENI Talks on Vimeo.

Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel was one of the most splendid artistic and architectural achievements of medieval England. The Catholic chapel's lavishly painted sculpture and stained glass, devoted to the Virgin Mary, moved pilgrims to a religious frenzy. But when Protestants began to call for a 'purer' vision of the Christian faith in the 16th and 17th centuries, this same quality triggered repulsion. During the hundred years of the English Reformation, the chapel was scraped, scrubbed and smashed of its extravagance.

Art Historian Paul Binski believes it is possible to recover the Lady Chapel's former opulence in the imagination. His talk gives an insight into the psychology behind Ely's splendour, and the idea that art can be so powerful as to provoke violence – something we still see in headlines today.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



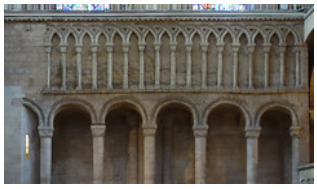











Figure 13.6.12.90: More Smarthistory images…

Henry VII Chapel

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.6.12.11: Henry VII Chapel, Westminster Abbey, London, begun 1503. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

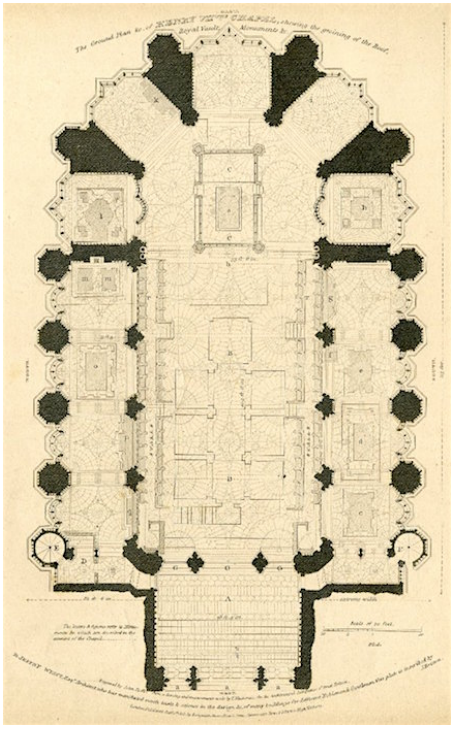
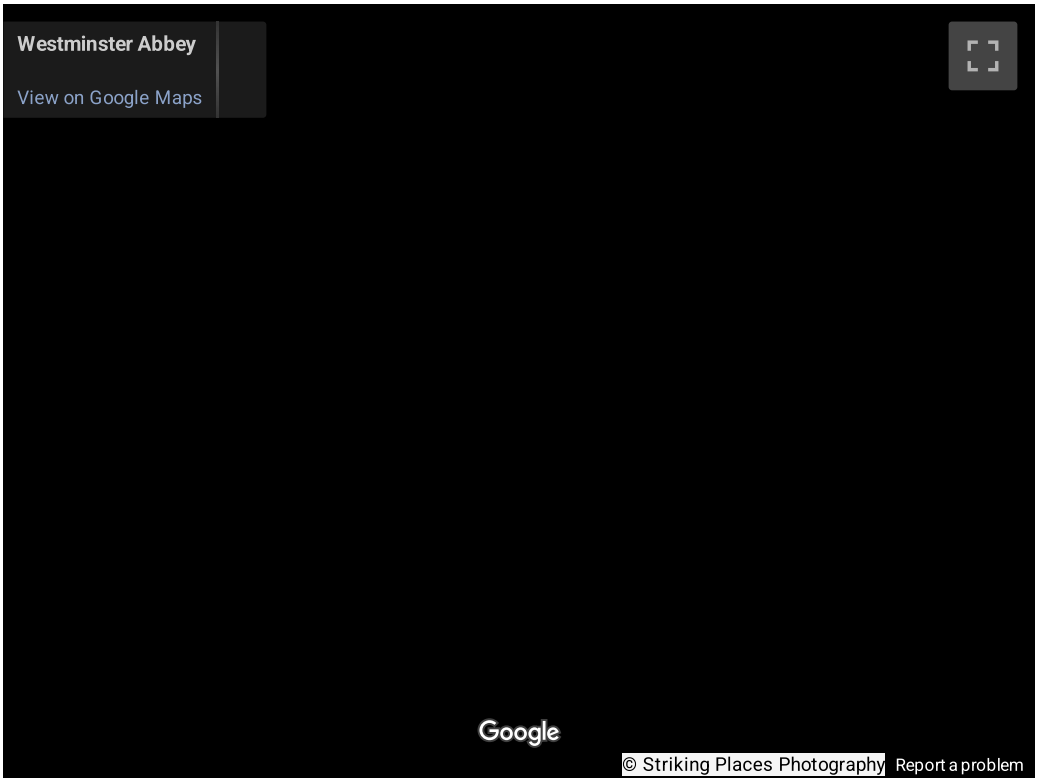


Figure 13.6.12.91: Ground plan of the Henry VII chapel, adjoining Westminster Abbey, with the details of the fan vault superimposed over the plan; illustration to the *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain*, vol II. 1808 (**The British Museum**)



The Wilton Diptych

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.12.12**: *The Wilton Diptych*, c. 1395-99, tempera on oak panel, 53 x 37 cm (The National Gallery, London)

This painting at The National Gallery

Gothic art in Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic

The Gothic style spread across Europe, where artists produced sculpture, painting, and architecture for both Christian and Jewish patrons.

c. 1235 - 1500

Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *Saint Francis Altarpiece*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.12.1**: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *Saint Francis Altarpiece*, c. 1235, tempera on wood, 5′ high (San Francesco, Pescia, Italy)

Inventing the image of Saint Francis

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.6.12.2**: St. Francis and scenes from his life, 1240s-1260s, panel (Bardi Chapel, Basilica of Santa Croce, Florence)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.6.12.1**: More Smarthistory images…

Porta Sant'Alipio Mosaic, c. 1270-75, Basilica San Marco, Venice

by STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.6.12.3**: The Porta Sant'Alipio Mosaic, c. 1270-75, Basilica San Marco, Venice, an ARCHES video speakers: Dr. Elizabeth Rodini, Andrew Heiskell Arts Director at American Academy in Rome and Dr. Steven Zucker

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

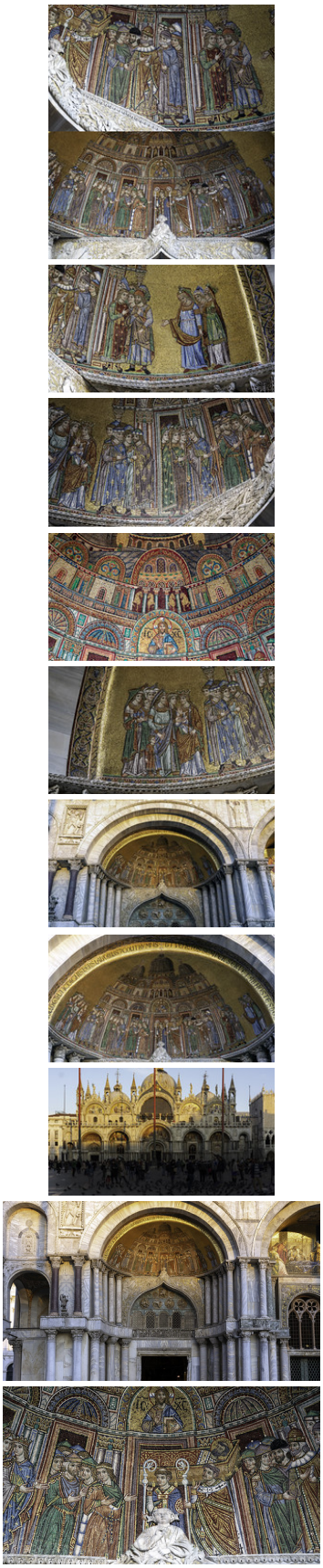
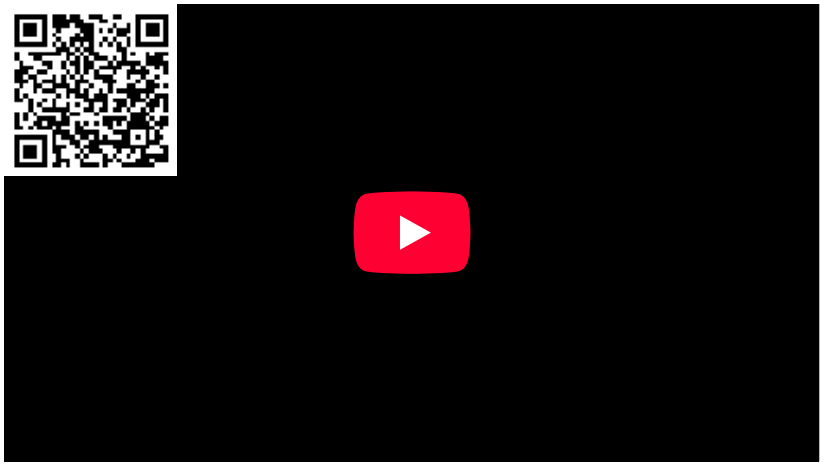


Figure **13.6.12.2**: More Smarthistory images…

by DR. NANCY ROSS



Video **13.6.12.4**: *Röttgen Pietà*, c. 1300-25, painted wood, 34 1/2″ high (LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn)

An emotional response

It is hard to look at the *Röttgen Pietà* and not feel something—perhaps revulsion, horror, or distaste. It is terrifying and the more you look at it, the more intriguing it becomes. This is part of the beauty and drama of Gothic art, which aimed to create an emotional response in medieval viewers.



Figure **13.6.12.3**: Röttgen Pietà, c. 1300-25, painted wood, 34 1/2″ high (LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn) (photo: **Ralf Heinz**, with permission)

Earlier medieval representations of Christ focused on his divinity (left). In these works of art, Christ is on the cross, but never suffers. These types of crucifixion images are a type called *Christus triumphans* or the triumphant Christ. His divinity overcomes all human elements and so Christ stands proud and alert on the cross, immune to human suffering.

Triumphant Christ / Patient Christ

In the later Middle Ages, a number of preachers and writers discussed a different type of Christ who suffered in the way that humans suffered. This was different from Catholic writers of earlier ages, who emphasized Christ's divinity and distance from humanity.



Figure **13.6.12.4**: An example of a Christus triumphans (triumphant Christ), Berlinghiero Berlinghieri, *Crucifix*, c. 1220 (Museo nazionale di Villa Guinigi, Lucca)

Late medieval devotional writing (from the 13th-15th centuries) leaned toward mysticism and many of these writers had visions of Christ's suffering. Francis of Assisi stressed Christ's humanity and poverty. Several writers, such as St. Bonaventure, St. Bridget of Sweden , and St. Bernardino of Siena, imagined Mary's thoughts as she held her dead son. It wasn't long before artists began to visualize these new devotional trends. Crucifixion images influenced by this body of devotional literature are called *Christus patiens*, the patient Christ.



Figure **13.6.12.5**: Segna di Buonaventura, *The Crucifixion*, c. 1315, tempera on panel, 38.4 x 27 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The effects of this new devotional style, which emphasized the humanity of Christ, quickly spread throughout western Europe through the rise of new religious orders (the Franciscans, for example) and the popularity of their preaching. It isn't hard to see the appeal of the idea that God understands the pain and difficulty of being human. In the *Röttgen Pietà*, Christ clearly died from the horrific ordeal of crucifixion, but his skin is taut around his ribs, showing that he also led a life of hunger and suffering.



Figure 13.6.12.6: Röttgen Pietà, c. 1300-25, painted wood, 34 1/2 inches high (LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn)

Pietà statues appeared in Germany in the late 1200s and were made in this region throughout the Middle Ages. Many examples of Pietàs survive today. Many of those that survive today are made of marble or stone but the *Röttgen Pietà* is made of wood and retains some of its original paint. The *Röttgen Pietà* is the most gruesome of these extant examples.



Figure 13.6.12.7: Pietà, c. 1420, polychromed poplar wood, 92 cm high, Austrian (Harvard Art Museums, © President and Fellows of Harvard College)

Many of the other Pietàs also show a reclining dead Christ with three dimensional wounds and a skeletal abdomen. One of the unique elements of the *Röttgen Pietà* is Mary's response to her dead son. She is youthful and draped in heavy robes like many of the other Marys, but her facial expression is different. In Catholic tradition, Mary had a special foreknowledge of the resurrection of Christ and so to her, Christ's death is not only tragic. Images that reflect Mary's divine knowledge show her at peace while holding her dead son. Mary in the *Röttgen Pietà* appears to be angry and confused. She doesn't seem to know that her son will live again. She shows strong negative emotions that emphasize her humanity, just as the representation of Christ emphasizes his.

All of these Pietàs were devotional images and were intended as a focal point for contemplation and prayer. Even though the statues are horrific, the intent was to show that God and Mary, divine figures, were sympathetic to human suffering, and to the pain, and loss experienced by medieval viewers. By looking at the *Röttgen Pietà*, medieval viewers may have felt a closer personal connection to God by viewing this representation of death and pain.

Additional resources:

The Pietà at Harvard Art Museums

Images of the Röttgen Pietà

Altneushul, Prague

by DR. CAROL HERSELLE KRINSKY



Figure **13.6.12.8**: Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Øyvind Holmstad**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In architecture, there is often a dominant mode of design in a given country or region at a particular moment in history. In central and western Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was customary to use Gothic elements such as pointed arches, rib vaults, and thin walls filled with stained glass.

But what about minority groups? Did they follow the trends of the majority or were they told what and how to build by the majority culture? Did the minorities have architects of their own on whom to rely, or were the minority members excluded from certain professions? We know about exclusion and discrimination from modern history. But what happened in the later middle ages?

Jews in Medieval Europe

For centuries, Jews were the most noticeable minority in Europe. They lived only in certain regions, and were excluded from others. Their numbers were usually restricted, even in places where they were allowed to live. Nevertheless, Jews were useful members of society, in part because most Jewish men were literate—they were, and still are, expected to read their prayers (poor Roman Catholics had no schools and relied on priests to read on their behalf). Literate people could be useful in commerce and in keeping records, so some rulers allowed Jews to live in their cities. Often, there was a district designated for Jews, perhaps near the commercial district of a city, near the city walls, or near the palace of the ruler whom they served, (there were formal walled ghettoes only from the mid-sixteenth century onward).



Figure **13.6.12.9**: Křižovnický plán (Map of Prague), 1665. **Archiv hlavního města Prahy** showing Josefov (Prague's Jewish quarter) in blue

Synagogue architecture

Every Jewish community had to have a place of worship, called a synagogue (from a Greek word related to assembling). Only a few rules governed the design of a synagogue; these rules were found in the Talmud. Later congregations of Jews adhered to these rules as best they could, despite the restrictions on their residence and use of land. Ideally, a synagogue's focal point, the end of the building's central axis, would face Jerusalem (to the southeast from the city of Prague).

The synagogue would contain carefully hand-written scrolls of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible that were held in chest known as a Torah ark when not in use. The ark was located at the building's focal point. When the scrolls were removed from their storage chest, they would be carried ceremoniously to the center of the synagogue where the elders of the congregation would mount a low platform (*bimah*) and place the scrolls on a reading table. It would be an honor to be called to read to the congregation. In addition, no one was allowed to live above the synagogue; religious activity was to have pride of place and women would not occupy the same part of the building as men in order to avoid distracting the men from their prayers. Animals and other unclean things were not be allowed to defile the synagogue interior.

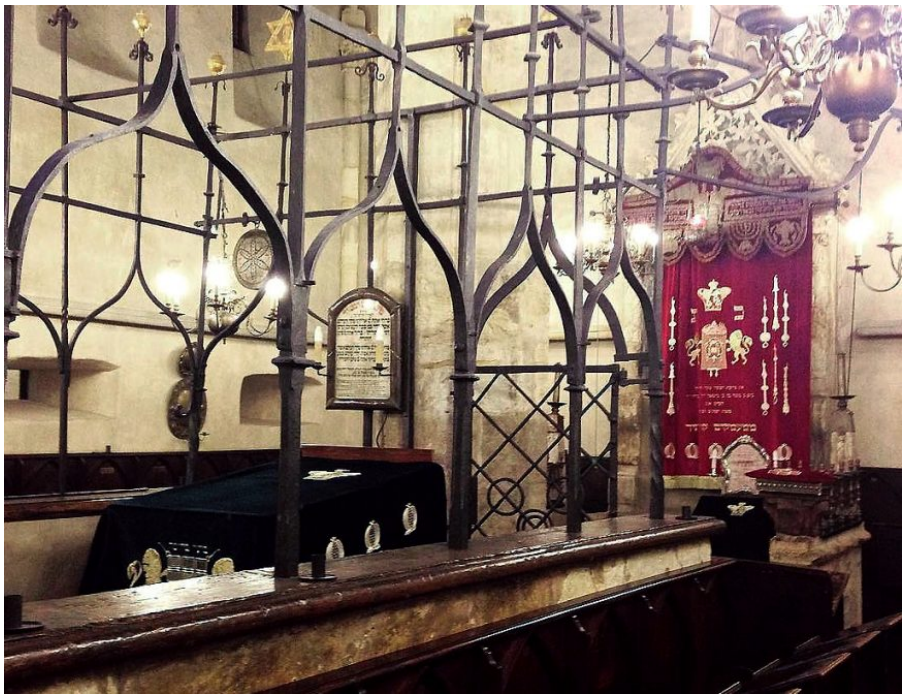


Figure **13.6.12.10**: View with *bimah* at left, Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Chajm Guski**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The Altneushul: a Gothic synagogue

An important late medieval synagogue in Prague is called the Old New Synagogue because the city later gained a newer New Synagogue. It is generally known as the Altneushul in Yiddish. It seems to have originally been a small rectangular building erected in the thirteenth century, but late in that century or in the next one, the original synagogue was enlarged. Both stages of construction were apparently designed and built by Christians, because Jews were either formally or tacitly excluded from the guilds (trade associations) of the building crafts. An architect who at other times worked on churches seems to have been in charge because ornamental details are similar to those of a local church; the architect was therefore almost certainly Roman Catholic.

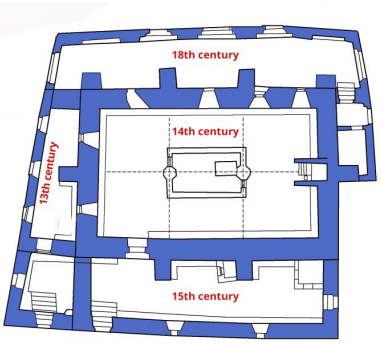


Figure **13.6.12.11**: Altneushul plan

The synagogue stands in what was once the heart of the Jewish quarter. Its floor is lower than the level of the street in order to allow the congregation to utter the words of Psalm 130:1, "Out of the depths, I cry to Thee, O Lord." The location has become all the more noticeable over time as the level of

nearby streets has risen with re-paving, and as Pařížská (Paris Street), just to the east, was built in the nineteenth century to clear part of the old, crowded Jewish neighborhood.



Figure **13.6.12.12**: Rib vaulting, Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Peco~commonswiki** (?), CC BY-SA 2.5)

The Altneushul, beyond the vestibule, is a rectangle about 26 feet wide and 45 feet long. It is composed of six bays arranged in two aisles, each with three bays. On the long east-west axis in the center of the building, two slender octagonal pillars allow the interior to be wider than it would have been without these supports. Leaf forms adorn the capitals.

Rib vaults cover each bay, but unlike the four-part, X-shaped ribs found in many Gothic-style vaults, those at the Altneushul have an extra, fifth rib, probably to help ensure stability; the same design can be seen in some secular and Christian buildings of the time. The *bimah* stands between the octagonal pillars in the center of the synagogue, and the ark on the eastern wall terminates the principal axis of the interior.



Figure **13.6.12.13**: Interior view, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A place for prayer and study

This is clearly not the plan of a church. Jews had no need for a church plan with a nave, side aisles, chapels, and a transept because their rituals and customs differed from those of Roman Catholics. Instead, the plan of the Altneushul is more similar to the plan of certain secular buildings, as well as to some chapter houses. The plan of a meeting room was useful for a synagogue in which men meet to read and discuss religious doctrine. When possible, Jews and the Christians would not have wanted to imitate each other's religious architecture, although in some of the simplest churches, chapels, and synagogues, a single room had to suffice for the congregation. Nevertheless, because members of both religions used the same builders, the individual components or ornamental details of the various buildings often resemble each other in design. The Altneushul has only plant decoration, because at that time, Jews would not allow images of human beings within a religious context.



Figure 13.6.12.14: Tympanum, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble, CC BY 2.0)

Seats and desks are distinctive features of a medieval synagogue; medieval churches had no seats and there was no need for desks since most Christians were not literate. Seats are necessary in synagogues because Jews spend hours there, reading their own prayers—in the middle ages, each man did so at his own pace—and discussing religious doctrine. Books were placed on the desks during the reading, and were later stored inside the desks for the next day's prayer and study meetings, along with the prayer shawls worn during religious services. In the Altneushul, the seats either face the *bimah*, or are arranged around the *bimah* platform; the ones we see today are neo-Gothic but reflect the original arrangement. This disposition assures that everyone is close to the *bimah* where the Torah portion is read each day. Members of the congregation faced each other during prayer, and that practice enhanced the sense of community. This is different from the practice in churches of that time, where the clergymen led Roman Catholics who stood one behind another and listened to a single authoritative voice.



Figure 13.6.12.15: Desks, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble, CC BY 2.0)

Lighting fixtures are important in synagogues because each man must read the essential texts. In this building, the windows are small, either for customary or structural reasons or to prevent vandals from breaking large and expensive windows. Therefore, artificial lighting was needed and was provided by candlesticks but also by hanging lamps and other devices; the ones in place today are post-medieval.

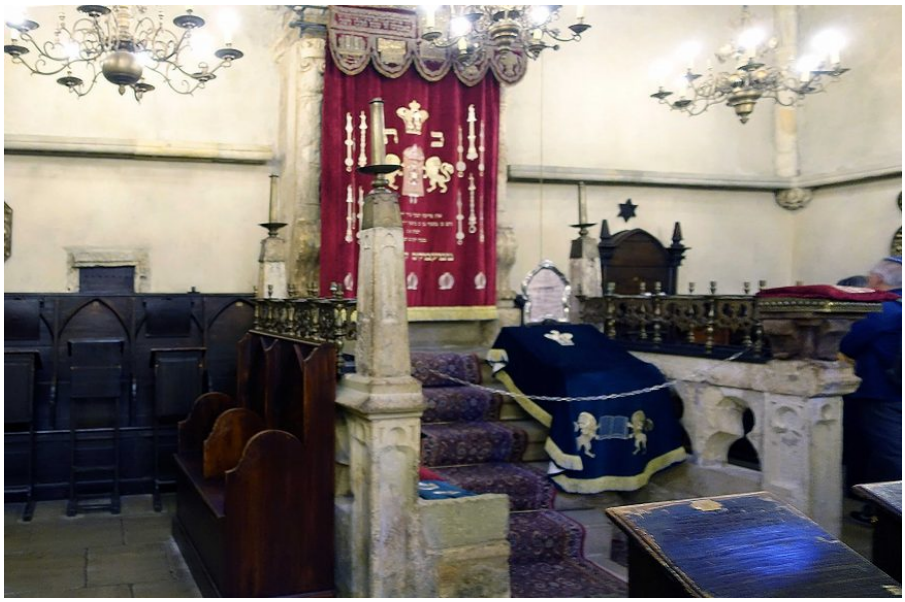


Figure **13.6.12.16**: Interior view with Torah ark, Altneushul, Prague (photo: Steven Zucker)

Often, the *bimah* was made of wood, with a railing around it. The reading desk on the *bimah* faced the ark. In the Altneushul, the *bimah* is a delicate metal construction from the late fifteenth century that allows members of the congregation to easily see the reader. Both the entrance door and the pointed gable over the ark have carved decoration showing vines and fruits, though the ark is often concealed by a handsome curtain placed over it.



Figure **13.6.12.17**: Opening to women's area, Altneushul, Prague (photo: **Chajm Guski**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

And the women?

So far, this essay has mentioned only men. Where were the women if they were not permitted in the main room of the synagogue? Evidence suggests that in early centuries, they were either excluded from synagogue activity or were accommodated in annexes. By the fourteenth century, a first women's annex was built at the Altneushul with small windows that opened to the main room where the men gathered. This allowed women to hear the prayers but not to see the men or be seen by them. In the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the congregation built additional annexes to accommodate the increasing numbers of women who elected to, or were allowed to, attend religious services. In the late middle ages, too, the high saddle roof and the brick gable were added, making the synagogue more prominent in the neighborhood.



Figure **13.6.12.18**: Josef Niklas and Vojtěch Ignác Ullmann, Spanish Synagogue, Prague, 1886 (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

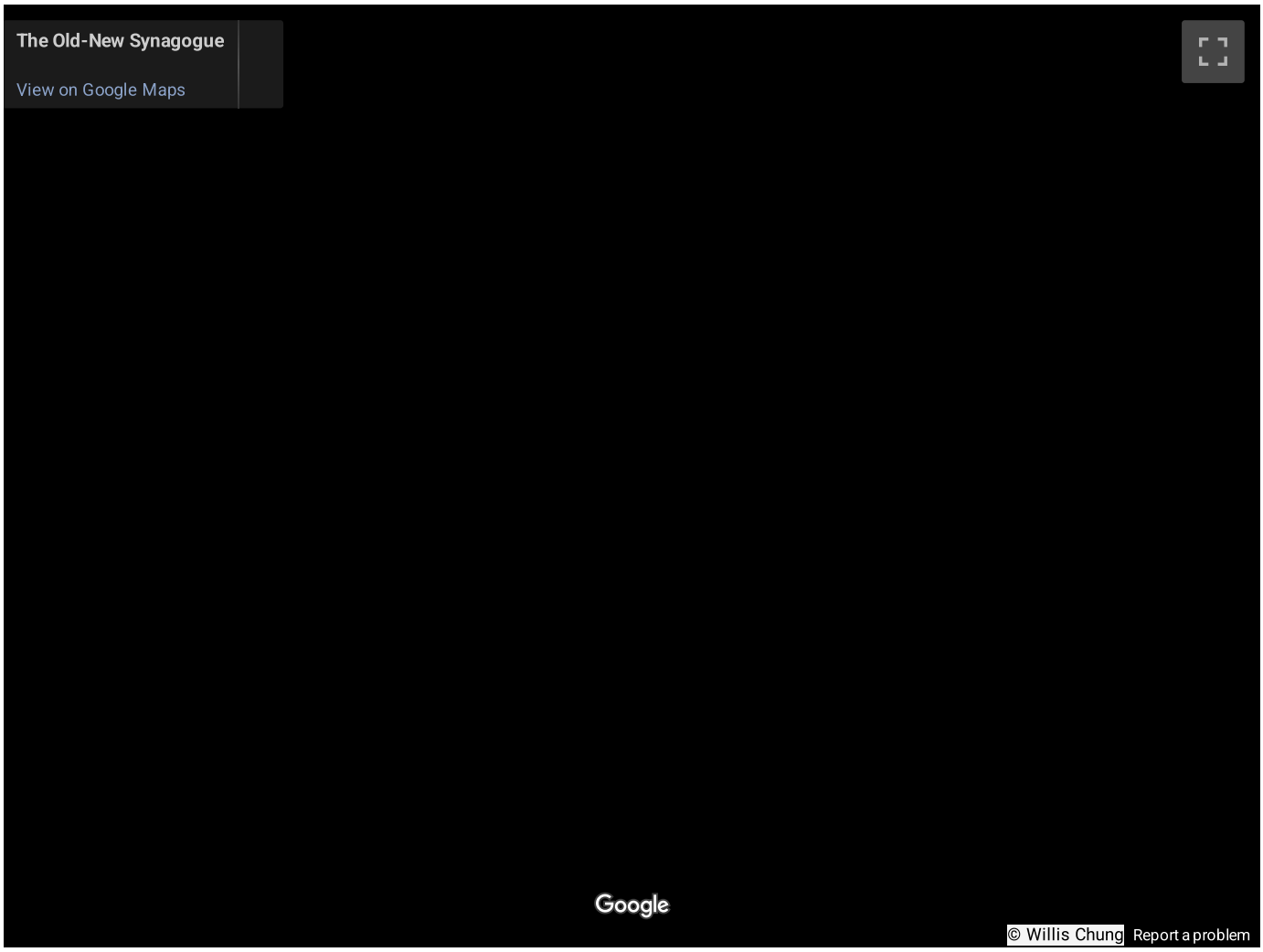
Loss and survival

Given the horrors perpetrated against European Jews during the Second World War, it may seem surprising that this building and several later synagogues in Prague have survived. The Pinkas Synagogue from the late fifteenth century is now a memorial; its walls are painted with the names of over 77,000 Czech Jews who were deported and murdered.



Figure **13.6.12.19**: Pinkas Synagogue Memorial, detail of names written on the walls (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Perversely, the Nazis and their collaborators left these buildings standing in order to provide the setting for a museum of a vanished people that was to contain artifacts collected from the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia and material from an early twentieth-century Jewish museum. These objects are now displayed in several of the other surviving synagogues in Prague, but the Altneushul, as the oldest survivor, has been left to illustrate the appearance of an unusually distinctive medieval synagogue.



Additional Resources:

Arno Pařik, Dana Cabanova, Petr Kliment, *Prague Synagogues*, Prague, Jewish Museum, 2000

YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe

Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning*, New York, Architectural History Foundation, rev. ed., 1988

13.6.12: Gothic is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.12: Gothic** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.6.13: The Crusades

The Crusades

Crusades were religious wars undertaken by Christians.
Their goal was to capture Jerusalem from Muslims.

c. 1095 – 1291

What were the crusades?

by DR. SUSANNA THROOP



Figure **13.6.13.1**: Crusader, Psalter, with litany, prayers and Easter tables (The "Westminster Psalter"), c. 1200, f. 220 (**British Library**)

What comes to mind when you think of the crusades? Earnest and alarmingly buff knights (in shining armor, of course) engaged in against-the-odds quests to accomplish godly deeds in an evil world? Red crosses on pure white backgrounds? Orlando Bloom?

This is not surprising. A quick look at our pop culture and politics in the West reveals a continued fascination with the crusades. Compared with popular representations, the historical reality is more complicated and often less heroic.

How do we define the crusades?

Imagine a man-at-arms in the French city of Clermont in 1095. He is listening to Pope Urban II—the only pope he has ever seen in person!—speak passionately about the need to fight in the Holy Land. His lord is persuaded, and gathers his men and resources. The man-at-arms says goodbye to his family, and departs in 1096 on years of painful journeying and military campaigns. He dies of starvation at Antioch, never seeing Jerusalem. His family never knows his fate. This was crusading.

Now imagine Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily. Frederick regains Jerusalem from the Muslims without waging war—it helps that he knows Arabic. He is crowned the King of Jerusalem in 1229, but returns to Europe to find the pope waging war on his lands. This, too, was crusading—at least it was for some, though others, like the pope, disagreed.

Finally, imagine an English knight in 1370. He plans to travel to northeastern Europe to fight non-Christians and help Christians there expand their territory. He will go for a season, enjoy feasting and knightly camaraderie, then return home and go back to his regular life, with his reputation enhanced by his trip. You guessed it: this was also crusading.

Crusading took many different forms, and attempting to precisely define crusading has engaged historians in intense debates for more than 150 years.

Scholarly debates

Most of the debates among scholars are concerned with identifying the key characteristics of a crusade. Some, for example, consider only expeditions aimed at Jerusalem or the Holy Land to be crusades. This approach is responsible for the traditional, numbered crusades (i.e., First Crusade, Second Crusade, etc.).

Others downplay the importance of a specific target, and emphasize instead characteristics related to authorization and procedure. These scholars would ask, did a pope authorize the expedition? Did participants take vows and receive certain legal and spiritual privileges? Taking this approach yields a larger number of crusades, spread over a larger geographical area and chronological range. At the same time, some question whether the role of authorities (i.e, the pope) determined a crusade as much as grassroots enthusiasm among ordinary people. These scholars would look, instead, for signs of mass popular support for an expedition. Still others assert that the characteristics of crusading were so diffuse throughout medieval culture that it is impossible and ultimately misleading to attempt to define what was or was not a crusade.

It is also fair to say that many scholars recognize that one can spend too much time seeking a meticulous definition, in essence missing the forest for the trees!

Outward signs

If crusading was so nebulous, how did potential participants know what a crusade was? Remember our man-at-arms in Clermont in 1095? He (and his lord) noticed preaching for a new expedition (perhaps emphasizing a papal proclamation, perhaps not), or heard people around him discussing it. Perhaps he also saw others taking public vows and wearing the sign of the cross on their garments. He may have learned of certain legal privileges designed to encourage participation and help protect property and families in the crusader's absence. Or perhaps he heard of a papal promise of an indulgence ("indulgence" in this context simply means a spiritual benefit of some kind—the precise kind of indulgence offered for crusading changed over time).

Finally, our man-at-arms was interested in crusading, but for others, someone with authority over them (or someone they loved), may simply have told them it was happening or that they were going. Much like today, some people may have simply paid attention to their taxes; at times, especially in the later Middle Ages, both the Church and secular authorities levied funds for new expeditions. Any or all of these factors may have caught people's attention, especially if they came from a family or region with a tradition of crusade participation. Meanwhile, for those who were the targets of crusader violence, presumably the only sign needed was the sight of an approaching army bedecked with crosses.

Different points of view

While it's valuable to seek to understand the crusades from the perspective of participants, it's equally important to seek out different points of view. Internal criticism of the crusading movement was more limited than many today might expect. What criticisms existed were usually leveled at specific expeditions or participants, rather than at the idea of crusading in general or the underlying attitudes towards religion and violence that made crusading possible.

Muslim voices, whether in the Iberian Peninsula (what is now Spain and Portugal), the Levant (the eastern Mediterranean), or further afield, described the crusades in different ways—often as simple territorial expansion, religious warfare, or a combination of the two. Descriptions of the "Franks" themselves (as the crusaders were called) ranged from respect to ridicule to hostility.

Records from Jewish communities around the Mediterranean sometimes described an undiscriminating ferocity and zealous fervor held by many crusaders, a theme also underlined by Christians within Europe who did not conform to Church teachings, and thus were called "heretics." Some accounts of the crusades from the Byzantine Empire (a medieval state based on the remains of the classical Roman Empire) emphasized the purported "barbarity" and relative naivete of the crusaders.

Additional resources

Dr. Susanna A. Throop, *The Crusades: An Epitome* (Leeds: Kismet Press, 2018), an open access book

How was crusading justified?

by DR. SUSANNA THROOP



Figure **13.6.13.2**: Christ leading crusaders into battle, detail from an Apocalypse, with commentary (The "Queen Mary Apocalypse"), early 14th century, f. 37 (British Library)

Just warfare

Crusades were wars—that is firm ground. More specifically, crusading was represented as just warfare, according to the idea of just war established by St. Augustine of Hippo.

Augustine wrote that warfare was sometimes a necessary and lesser evil in certain conditions. Specifically, a war could be just if there was:

> ***a) just cause,***
> ***b) legitimate authority, and***
> ***c) right intention.***

A just cause was a previous injury or act of aggression. As a result, crusading was described as defensive.

A legitimate authority was just that: an authority who held the power—granted by God, from Augustine's perspective—to invoke war. Crusading, it was argued, was authorized by popes and legitimate secular leaders.

Participants had the right intention if they believed war was completely unavoidable and sought only to use minimal force to check aggression against them. In theological terms, participants were supposed to be motivated by Christian love, (i.e. charity), rather than by anger, hatred, or fear. Crusade supporters stressed that participants were driven by the desire to help liberate purportedly oppressed Christians and save them from purported atrocities and slavery, and the desire to do the same for the personified Church or even Christ himself, both supposedly injured by the enemies of the crusaders.

But participating in a just war could still be sinful. For example, Duke William I of Normandy's invasion of England was considered just, but Norman participants had to do penance afterwards. So saying that crusading was a just war wasn't enough. Many writers communicated that crusading was holy warfare, meaning that it was a just war that was not only authorized but also realized by God himself. In theological terms, then, God was the one taking action; God was the one waging war. Crusaders were divine tools, rather than moral agents in their own right. It was this belief that led one monk, Guibert of Nogent, to title his account of the First Crusade "The Deeds of God done through the Franks" (he was not-so-subtly revising an earlier, and in his opinion theologically crude account, titled "The Deeds of the Franks"). Of course, if a crusade was a holy war, then the enemies of crusading were enemies of God and the whole Christian faith, not just enemies of particular Christians—and that was precisely how Muslims and other crusader targets were depicted in many pro-crusade accounts.

Penitential warfare

Finally, crusading was also represented as penitential warfare. This means that crusading was believed to be an act of penance—a way to make amends to God for sins one had committed, so that an individual could achieve salvation. It means that crusading was

not simply seen as a necessary evil—it was seen as a positive spiritual good for those who participated. Participants were not merely excused for their involvement; they actively acquired spiritual merit. In the simplest terms, crusading was presented as a good deed, even though it involved killing people.

To make sense of this, we need to recognize that violence was often perceived to be much more morally neutral in medieval Europe than it is today. Violence acquired its moral value from intentions and context, like who was performing the violence and to whom it was done (this should remind you of Augustine's just war theory: cause, authority, and intentions). Thus, the same action—let's say, hitting someone in the face—could be immoral and unchristian in one context, and moral and Christian in another.

Given the penitential element in crusading and the number of expeditions that involved long journeys to holy places, it is not surprising that crusading was often described as a pilgrimage, a journey to a holy location like a shrine, a church, or even an entire city, like Jerusalem. Those who went on pilgrimage frequently sought spiritual advantages, like forgiveness of sins or a closer relationship with God or a saint; they also sometimes hoped for more earthly advantages, like healing. Pilgrimage was a sacred act for medieval Christians, and was itself often an act of penance (sometimes voluntary, sometimes assigned by a priest in confession). Crusading borrowed some of the language, rituals, and symbols of pilgrimage, and shared its penitential nature.

Changing definitions

It's important to emphasize again that people didn't write a theory of crusading in advance. There wasn't even a specific word for "crusade" until more than 100 years after the First Crusade. In addition, the nature of crusading seems to have operated differently and meant different things depending on time, place, and participants.

Additional resources

Dr. Susanna A. Throop, *The Crusades: An Epitome* (Leeds: Kismet Press, 2018), an open access book

The when, where and who (of crusading)

by DR. SUSANNA THROOP

Setting a timeline

In some ways, setting a beginning date for the crusading movement is relatively easy. The First Crusade was preached by Pope Urban II in 1095. Several different expeditions responded to this appeal, but the general dates for the First Crusade are 1096-1099, when the city of Jerusalem was conquered. Keep in mind though that crusading didn't emerge from a vacuum, and many of the elements of crusading were circulating before 1095.

However, finding an end date for the crusades is quite difficult indeed. Scholars used to stress that the heyday of crusading was before 1300. But we now know that crusading continued to flourish—as an ideal even when not in practice—for many centuries after that. Some place the end date at 1571, when the rising Ottoman Empire defeated the Kingdom of Cyprus at the city of Famagusta. Others place it in the late nineteenth century, when the last attempt at a military order (i.e., a Catholic armed religious order, like the medieval Knights Templar) ended. The argument can be made—and is in fact made by some groups around the world—that the crusades never ended at all.



Figure **13.6.13.3**

The First Crusade was launched at the Levant (the region at the end of the eastern Mediterranean) with the stated purpose of rescuing Christians and bringing the Christian holy places—specifically Jerusalem—back into (European) Christian hands.

Of all the crusades to the region, the First was the most successful (from the perspective of European participants), and led to the creation of small polities in the Levant, known as the crusader states. European nobles first governed these small states, which were inhabited by some settlers from western Europe as well as native Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

By the time the Second Crusade rolled around (1146-1149) crusading had already expanded dramatically. The Second Crusade took place on three fronts: against Muslims in the Levant, against pagans in northern Europe, and against Muslims on the Iberian peninsula (modern day Spain and Portugal). This does not mean that all three fronts were coordinated, as in a modern war. Rather, it means that contemporaries believed that the wars on all three fronts together constituted a larger endeavor.

We should also remember that the Levant and Iberia contained any number of local Christians, Jews, and other religious groups, and they were not always exempted from crusader violence, even though it was held to be wrong to persecute or kill fellow Christians and Jews.

After the Second Crusade, crusading continued to expand and evolve. Muslims (or areas under Muslim governance) continued to be targets, especially when they threatened or reconquered portions of the crusader states, but other targets included Christian “heretics” (for example, in southern France), the Christian Byzantine Empire, and political opponents of the papacy within Europe.

Crusading also developed local traditions. In northern Europe, crusading became a festive seasonal rite of passage for western European knights, complete with honorary feasts and prizes. In other places, crusading interacted with pre-existing factors, for example in Iberia, where both ideas of crusading and of the “Reconquest” were influential. In still other places, again in northern Europe but also Malta, the military orders—armed religious orders (most famously the Knights Templar)—set up independent, or virtually independent states dedicated to perpetual crusading.



Figure **13.6.13.4**: A departing or returning crusader being embraced by his wife, from the Belval Priory, Lorraine, late 12th century (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy)

Who went on crusade? From the beginning, popes and other leaders sought to encourage only professional men of war, whether kings, lords, knights, or simple men-at-arms, to go on crusade. And from the beginning, individuals of almost every other social class, age, and gender ignored this and wanted to go, too. The only people explicitly forbidden from going on crusade were those who had taken religious vows (like priests and monks), and even then, many tried to find a way to go—and, indeed, many went.

This doesn't mean that everyone in Europe was pulled inexorably into crusading like water down a drain. Crusading was expensive, and it was very risky. To go on crusade meant leaving your loved ones and your property (if you had any) vulnerable for at least several years and possibly forever. Going on crusade was not an "easy out" for younger sons (as used to be thought) nor was it a reliable treasure-hunting expedition; it impoverished many more people than it profited. Nonetheless, because of the spiritual and social rewards on offer for crusading, crusade leaders were never able to fully stop people of both genders and all classes from accompanying armed parties on crusade, and it is fair to say that many expeditions, especially those to the Levant, included a wide range of age, social classes, and military experience.

Additional resources

Dr. Susanna A. Throop, *The Crusades: An Epitome* (Leeds: Kismet Press, 2018), an open access book

The impact of the crusades

by DR. SUSANNA THROOP

It is hard to summarize the impact of a movement that spanned centuries and continents, crossed social lines, and affected all levels of culture. However, there are a few central effects that can be highlighted.

Military orders

First, the earliest military orders originated in Jerusalem in the wake of the First Crusade. A miltary order is a religious order in which members take traditional monastic vows—communal poverty, chastity, and obedience—but also commit to violence on behalf of the Christian faith. Well-known examples include the Knights Templar (officially endorsed in 1129), the Knights Hospitaller (confirmed by papal bull in 1113), and the Teutonic Knights (originated in the late twelfth century).

The military orders represented a major theological and military development, and went on to play central roles in the formation of key political units that still exist today as nation-states.



Figure **13.6.13.5**: Wall plaque, Ascalon, mid-twelfth to mid-thirteenth century. The Arabic inscription commemorates the wall built as defense against crusaders. The arms of Sir Hugh Wake (Lincoln, England) were later carved over that, confirming the 1241 crusader reconquest of the city.

Territorial expansion

Second, crusading played a major role in European territorial expansion. The First Crusade resulted in the formation of the crusader states in the Levant (the eastern Mediterranean), which were initially governed, and in small part populated, by settlers from Europe.

Crusading in northern and eastern Europe led to the expansion of kingdoms like Denmark and Sweden, as well as the creation of brand-new political units, for example in Prussia. As areas around the Baltic Sea were taken by the crusaders, traders and settlers—mostly German—moved in and profited economically.

In the Mediterranean Sea, crusading led to the conquest and colonization of many islands, which arguably helped ensure Christian control of Mediterranean trade routes (at least for as long as the islands were held). Crusading also played a role in the conquest of the Iberian peninsula (now Spain and Portugal). This was finally completed in 1492, when the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella I conquered the last Muslim community on the peninsula—the city of Granada. They expelled Jews from the country in the same year. And of course, they also authorized and supported the expeditions of Christopher Columbus, who—like many European explorers of his day—believed that the expansion of the Christian faith was one of his duties.

Impact in Europe (religious and secular)

Third, the crusading movement impacted internal European development in a few important ways. The movement helped both to militarize the medieval western Church and to sustain criticism of that militarization. It arguably helped solidify the pope's control over the Church and made certain financial innovations central to Church operations. And it both reflected and influenced devotional trends. For example, while there was some dedication to St. George from the early Middle Ages, the intensity of that devotion soared in Europe after he reportedly intervened miraculously at the Battle of Antioch in 1098, during the First Crusade.

Secular political theories were influenced by crusading, especially in France and the Iberian peninsula, and government institutions evolved in part to meet the logistical needs of crusading. Credit infrastructures within Europe rose to meet similar needs, and some locales—Venice, in particular—benefitted significantly in economic terms.

It goes without saying that the crusades also had a highly negative effect on interfaith relations.

Impact world-wide

Fourth, the crusading movement has left an imprint on the world as a whole. For example, many of the national flags of Europe incorporate a cross. In addition, many images of crusaders in our popular culture are indebted to the nineteenth century. Some in that century, like the novelist Sir Walter Scott, portrayed crusaders as brave and glamorous yet backward and unenlightened; simultaneously, they depicted Muslims as heroic, intelligent, and liberal. Others more wholeheartedly romanticized crusading.



Figure **13.6.13.6**: George Inness, *Classical Landscape (March of the Crusaders)*, 1850, oil on canvas (Fruitlands Museum, Harvard, Massachusetts)

These trends in nineteenth-century European culture impacted the Islamic world. Sometimes this influence was quite direct. In 1898 German Emperor Wilhelm II visited the grave of Saladin (Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, a Muslim leader who led the recapture of Jerusalem in 1187) and was appalled at its state of disrepair. He paid to have it rebuilt, thus helping encourage modern Islamic appreciation of Saladin.



Figure **13.6.13.7**: Kaiser Wilhelm II, visit to Jerusalem, 1898

Sometimes the European influence was more diffuse. Modern crusading histories in the Islamic world began to be written in the 1890s, when the Ottoman Empire was in crisis. After the Ottomans, some Arab Nationalists interpreted nineteenth-century imperialism as crusading, and thus linked their efforts to end imperial rule with the efforts of Muslims to resist crusading in previous centuries.

It would be reassuring to believe that nobody in the West has provided grounds for such beliefs, but it would not be true. Sadly, the effects of the crusading movement—at least, as it is now remembered and reimagined—seem to be still unfolding.

Additional resources

Dr. Susanna A. Throop, *The Crusades: An Epitome* (Leeds: Kismet Press, 2018), an open access book

13.6.13: The Crusades is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **6.13: The Crusades** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.7: Europe 1300 - 1800

Europe 1300 – 1800

From the Renaissance to the French Revolution.

1300 - 1800

13.7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance

13.7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic

13.7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400–1800

13.7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I)

13.7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II)

13.7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I)

13.7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II)

13.7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance

13.7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism

13.7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance

13.7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation

13.7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I)

13.7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II)

13.7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo

13.7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism

13.7.16: Britain in the 18th century

Thumbnail: Louis XIV of France (Public Domain; Hyacinthe Rigaud via Wikipedia)

13.7: Europe 1300 - 1800 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance

Expanding the Renaissance: a new Smarthistory initiative

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK

If you google the word “Renaissance,” on the image tab, you’ll find yourself exclusively in Italy. Smarthistory would like to do something about that.

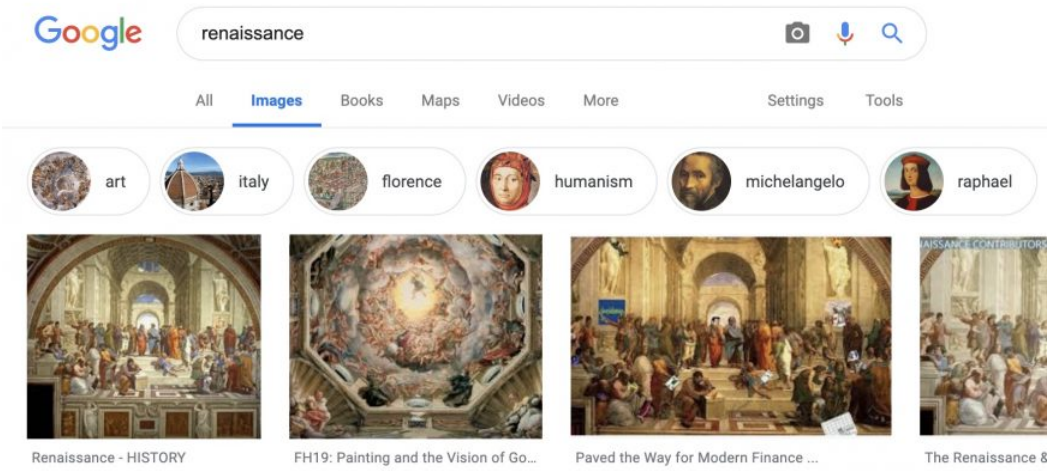


Figure **13.7.1.1**: Google image search results for the term “Renaissance”

The Expanding Renaissance Initiative (ERI), is a new Andrew W. Mellon-funded project from Smarthistory to expand the boundaries of art history in the classroom—in this case specifically the early modern period. Our plan is to work towards art histories that do not present European art as superior and help to weaken the binary western/non-western paradigm. The ERI is aligned with recent scholarship on what has been called “the global renaissance,” and while we embrace the term “global,” the ERI aims to do more than simply globalize, but to highlight overlooked subjects, materials, artists, groups, and locales.

Disrupting the narrative

The most common narrative of the renaissance in art history focuses mainly on three periods of Florentine art in Italy as presented by Giorgio Vasari, who wrote the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (first published in 1550). Vasari lived in Florence and so naturally celebrated Florentine artists as the best artists of that time. The problem is that many of the artists he praised are the very same artists that continue to receive the most attention in art history today (for example, Giotto, Masaccio, Michelangelo, Raphael). We too often neglect other artists, places, stories, and trends that can reveal a more complex and nuanced era.

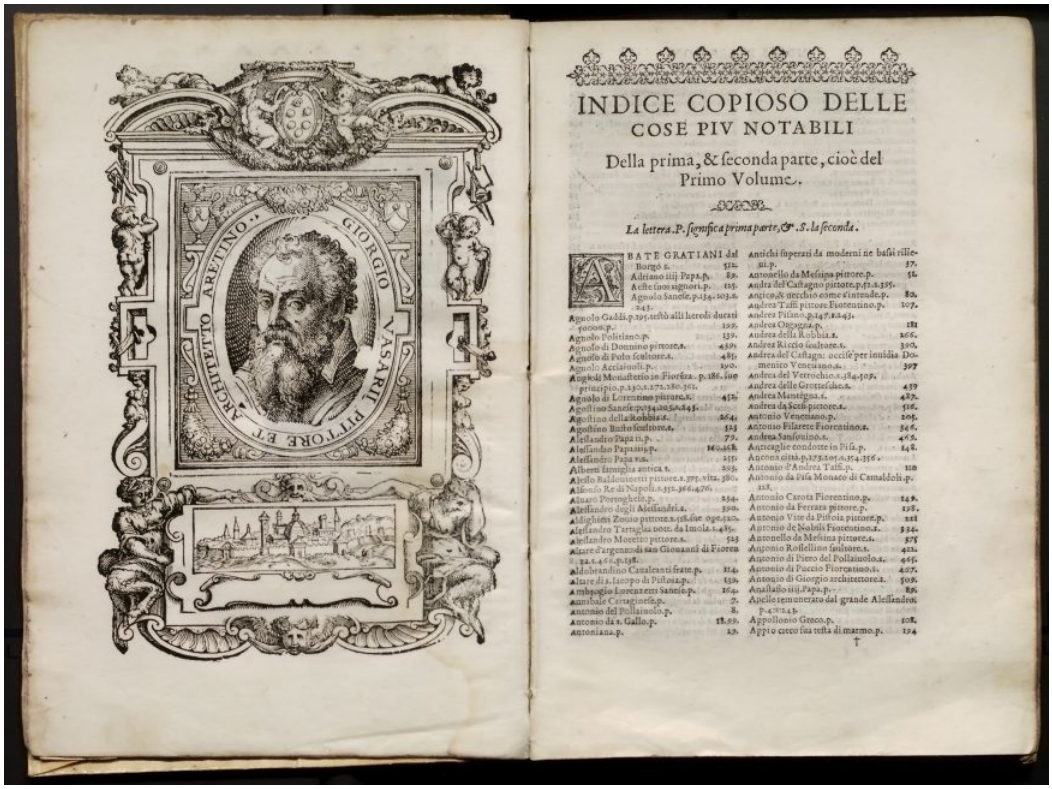


Figure 13.7.1.2: Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori* (Florence, 1568) (National Gallery of Art)

While one of our goals is to decenter Italy as the area with the most important artists and art, we are not saying that there isn't important and remarkable art from the Italian Peninsula that speaks to a relationship to the broader world. The point here is simply to note that even as we attempt to shift conversations in the classroom about the renaissance to account for greater cultural pluralism and interactions, it seems important to be mindful of, and examine, other areas as well.

The canon of renaissance art is slow to change. As of 2019, there exists no single textbook that addresses all of European renaissance art. Curiously, the Iberian peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and Ibero-American world remain entirely absent from any current textbook centered on the renaissance era. Even textbooks aimed at "The General Survey" include either nothing or very little about the Iberian Peninsula in chapters on the renaissance—ironically, **El Greco** (the Greek), has served to represent all of Spain.

The ERI foregrounds an expanded renaissance world, examining issues of global trade, cultural entanglements, colonization, itinerancy, empire, and gender and racial dynamics between roughly 1330 and 1650, in part to recognize the visual cultures and peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas as vital contributors (both willing and unwilling) to renaissance art and culture.

Women artists, indigenous artists, artwork made of understudied materials such as cochineal, carved gemstones, ceramics, painted alabaster, textiles, featherworks, ceramics, and sculpture made of terracotta, wood, and corn-pith — all speak to the vibrancy and challenges of this broader renaissance. Rather than focusing primarily on only "high art," new content will highlight "key players in this new, globally connected practice of art history."[1] The majority of such works are non-canonical, often forms that belong to large, influential genres and so are critically important to our understanding of the global renaissance. These works reveal fascinating stories about the renaissance world that would otherwise be lost to us.

The global renaissance?

Since the 2002 publication of Jerry Brotton's *The Renaissance Bazaar* spurred greater interest in "The Global Renaissance," there have been scholarly disputes about the usefulness of the idea of a global renaissance, and the best ways to approach it. Scholars have argued the extent to which cross-cultural contact occurred and the extent to which it transformed people's lives and artistic production. However, even as interest in the global renaissance has grown, publications and exhibitions have, for the most part, remained Italo-centric, favoring especially Venice's relationship with "the East."

Recently, art historian Lia Markey has found that the global renaissance has not "significantly affect[ed] or alter[ed] teaching, the conception of the canon, or the permanent museum display."[2] Still, many scholars continue to push the limits of the renaissance to "decenter the insularity of the Vasarian Renaissance," as a way to challenge traditional narratives, ask new questions, and confront entrenched biases about renaissance art, and the field of art history more broadly.

A number of questions need to be asked: must all renaissance art history trumpet the achievements of famed artists such as **Masaccio**, **Donatello**, **Leonardo**, **Michelangelo**, **Raphael**, and **Titian**; or the Northern artists **van Eyck**, **Dürer**, **Holbein**, etc.? Can scholars allow themselves the freedom to center other narratives that reveal important facets of this period without always celebrating European male artistic genius? In what ways can a globalized renaissance art history directly confront ongoing issues of bias, discrimination, or racism in the field of art history? In the words of Claire Farago, "the geographical, cultural, chronological, and conceptual boundaries of the Renaissance as it is usually defined need to be redrawn" [3]. And not just in scholarship, museums, or renaissance art courses, but in general survey classes and beyond the borders of the Academy as well.

Visual entanglements

In 1604, the poet Bernardo de Balbuena wrote about Mexico City that "In thee Spain and China meet, Italy is linked with Japan, and now, finally, a world united in order and agreement."[4] He wrote that Mexico City, capital of the viceroyalty of **New Spain**, had become a cosmopolitan linchpin between Asia and Europe, prospering as a result of a global trade system. Recent museum exhibitions (Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia (MFA, Boston), Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World (LACMA) and Painted in Mexico, 1700–90: Pinxit Mexici (LACMA, The Met)) have focused on this transcultural exchange, offering visually captivating objects that attest to the impact of cultural interchange.



Figure **13.7.1.3**: Folding Screen with the Siege of Belgrade (front) and Hunting Scene (reverse), c. 1697-1701, Mexico, oil on wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, 229.9 x 275.8 cm (Brooklyn Museum)

Clearly, global trade had made Mexico City a cosmopolitan center, but at what cost? Many publications and exhibitions use the words "exchange" and "cross-cultural exchange," in a celebratory sense that seeks to unseat the idea that global travel and communication belong only to the 20th and 21st centuries, but can these terms adequately encapsulate the impact on the many peoples and cultures then coming into contact? Exchanges were not necessarily mutually beneficial, many were forced and fraught with violence. How then do we treat objects that result from violence? How do we discuss and categorize them? Should we use the stylistic categories we use for European art such as the renaissance, even if it marginalizes work that often exists in-between such

categories? How do we not merely westernize world art history? We believe that the ERI has the potential to address some of these questions, to ignite conversations, and offer a model for how we can shift problematic, yet deeply ingrained classroom narratives.

Our aim is to reframe the renaissance to help students to discover that there is more that is important than **Michelangelo's *David*** and **Leonardo's *Mona Lisa***. We hope to prompt further reflection on Sanjay Subrahmanyan's suggestion that it is "good to think globally in order to redefine the possible objects of historical study."[5] We also hope to prompt consideration of what is at stake in such a reframing, and what it means to decolonize renaissance art history, addressing the issue of not only content coverage, but also who gets to stand "behind the podium" to advance our knowledge of what is or isn't renaissance art (this issue has been raised by Dr. Ananda Cohen-Aponte (@drnandico) on Twitter, in a discussion of #pocarthistory).

Many of the objects we intend to focus on speak to the mobility of things, people, and ideas in the early modern period, while also demonstrating the visual entanglements occurring as a result of globalization, colonization, and more. Networks of trade-connected ports, and markets functioned as nodes where objects were gathered, stored, and dispersed. Much of this globalization was the result of European colonization. And so armies were often followed by Christian missionaries who brought with them objects that played an important role in the development of transcultural art forms.

There were, of course, also countless artists who worked in these newly colonized regions, though their names often remain unknown to us. These artists drew on their own artistic traditions and cultural ideas while producing art and architecture. Some objects have visible artistic entanglements, while others do not. It is important that we address how colonized peoples borrowed, adapted, and rejected European forms, subject matter, and ideas (often forced on them), and what these choices might mean for our understanding of renaissance art. The black-and-white murals at the **convento of San Agustín, Acolman, Mexico** (c. 1560–90), painted by currently unknown indigenous artists, demonstrate a visual entanglement of artistic traditions from Central Mexico, Flanders, Italy, and Spain. They speak to the flexibility and the mobility of forms as they infiltrated colonized regions around the world. The murals of Acolman complicate the narrow definition of renaissance art we have clung to for too long.



Figure **13.7.1.4**: Virgin Mary (detail), *Crucifixion*, San Agustín de Acolman murals, c. 1560-90, large cloister of the Ex Convento of San Agustín de Acolman, Mexico (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The words we use

Intercultural objects like the murals at Acolman encourage us to critique commonly used terminology. We frequently hear phrases and terms like "Old World" and "New World" to describe Europe and the Americas, or the "Age of Discovery" or "Age of Exploration" to describe the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But who do these terms privilege? To say "the New World" privileges the perspective of Europeans—after all, the Americas were only "new" to them. "Old World" suggests a place more ancient, with more history, and it ignores the complex, unique, and varied histories of many indigenous peoples across the Americas, as if they only really matter once Europe arrives to make them "new." Similarly, it may have been an era of discovery for Europeans, but it was often a period of trauma for the many peoples around the globe who were "discovered." The essays or videos created for the

ERI speak to these issues and offer different objects for study, such as a Nahua featherwork or a Philippine ivory sculpture, as well as different perspectives about the renaissance more generally.



Figure 13.7.1.5: The Mass of St. Gregory (detail), 1539, feathers on wood with touches of paint, 26 1/4 x 22 inches / 68 x 56 cm (Musee des Jacobins)

What's coming with the ERI

This initiative will unfold over several years and will include essays about cabinets of curiosities and **collecting practices of the Medici family**, Theodore de Bry's **early engravings of the Americas**, portraits of the female author **Christine de Pizan**, and the relationship between **Spanish and Flemish painters** in the fifteenth century.

We will also offer materials that reframe canonical artworks, examining them from different vantage points. For example, we are planning an essay that examines Hans Holbein's ***The Ambassadors***, specifically considering what the painting tells us about the globalized world at the time of its creation. Another essay will examine Gentile da Fabriano's ***Adoration of the Magi*** through a similar lens, investigating what the psuedo-Arabic, painted silks and brocades, lapis lazuli, turbaned figures, and non-European animals tell us about this era.

An art history survey class could foreground how the period between 1400 and 1650 "was intensely, often violently, cross-cultural."[6] Using materials largely drawn from Smarthistory, students could engage with and contextualize Netherlandish painter Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece* and Florentine artists responses to it, Dürer's Rhinoceros woodcut, a Medici blue-and-white porcelain, a **Mexican featherwork** and **convento mural program**, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's **1200-page illustrated letter to the Spanish king**, a **Benin brass plaque of an oba**, or a **Sapi ivory salt-cellar** sold to the Portuguese. Teachers will find materials that help introduce these materials into existing curriculum. Our hope is that the ERI will energize discussions of what renaissance art is, making it more relevant to our twenty-first century students.

1. **Claire Farago, "Understanding Visuality," in *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, edited by Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2012), p. 249**.

2. Lia Markey, "Global Renaissance Art: Classroom, Academy, Museum, Canon," in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, edited by Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill), p. 260.

3. Claire Farago, "The Concept of the Renaissance Today: What is at Stake?" in *Renaissance Theory*, edited by James Elkins, Robert Williams (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 71.

4. Bernardo de Balbuena: *La grandeza mexicana y compendio apologético en alabanza de la poesía* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1975).

5. **Sanjay Subrahmanyan, "Historicizing the Global, or Labouring for Invention?" *History Workshop Journal*, issue 64 (2007), pp. 329-334**.

6. Dana Leibsohn, "Introduction: Geographies of Sight," in *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, ed. Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 2.

Additional resources:

Check out the expanded renaissance world short course on Smarthistory

Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

Jeanette Peterson, "Renaissance: A Kaleidoscopic View from the Spanish Americas," in *Renaissance Theory*, ed. James Elkins and Robert Williams (New York & London: Routledge, 2008)

Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes," in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill, 2017)

Dana Leibsohn, "Introduction: Geographies of Sight," in *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, ed. Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson (London: Routledge, 2012)

The Medieval and Renaissance Altarpiece

by DR. DONNA L. SADLER



Figure **13.7.1.6**: Michael Pacher, ***Sankt Wolfgang Altarpiece***, 1471-81, polychrome pine, linden, gilding, oil, over 40 feet high and more than 20 feet wide (Parish Church, Sankt Wolfgang, Austria)

The altar and the sacrament of the Eucharist

Every architectural space has a gravitational center, one that may be spatial or symbolic or both; for the medieval church, the altar fulfilled that role. This essay will explore what transpired at the altar during this period as well as its decoration, which was intended to edify and illuminate the worshippers gathered in the church.

The Christian religion centers upon **Jesus Christ**, who is believed to be the incarnation of the son of God born to the Virgin Mary.

During his ministry, Christ performed miracles and attracted a large following, which ultimately led to his persecution and crucifixion by the Romans. Upon his death, he was resurrected, promising redemption for humankind at the end of time.

The mystery of Christ's death and resurrection are symbolically recreated during the Mass (the central act of worship) with the celebration of the Eucharist — a reminder of Christ's sacrifice where bread and wine wielded by the priest miraculously embodies the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the Christian Savior.



Figure **13.7.1.7**: Rogier van der Weyden, *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, 1445–50, oil on panel, 200 cm × 223 cm (**Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp**)



Figure **13.7.1.8**: Detail of the Eucharist, Rogier van der Weyden, *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, 1445-50 (**Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp**)

The altar came to symbolize the tomb of Christ. It became the stage for the sacrament of the Eucharist, and gradually over the course of the **Early Christian period** began to be ornamented by a cross, candles, a cloth (representing the shroud that covered the

body of Christ), and eventually, an altarpiece (a work of art set above and behind an altar).

In Rogier van der Weyden's *Altarpiece of the Seven Sacraments*, one sees Christ's sacrifice and the contemporary celebration of the Mass joined. The Crucifixion of Christ is in the foreground of the central panel of the triptych with St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross, while directly behind, a priest celebrates the Eucharist before a decorated altarpiece upon an altar.

Though altarpieces were not necessary for the Mass, they became a standard feature of altars throughout Europe from the thirteenth century, if not earlier. One of the factors that may have influenced the creation of altarpieces at that time was the shift from a more cube-shaped altar to a wider format, a change that invited the display of works of art upon the rectangular altar table.

Though the shape and medium of the altarpiece varied from country to country, the sensual experience of viewing it during the medieval period did not: chanting, the ringing of bells, burning candles, wafting incense, the mesmerizing sound of the incantation of the liturgy, and the sight of the colorful, carved story of Christ's last days on earth and his resurrection would have stimulated all the senses of the worshipers. In a way, to see an altarpiece was to touch it—faith was experiential in that the boundaries between the five senses were not so rigorously drawn in the Middle Ages. For example, worshipers were expected to visually consume the Host (the bread symbolizing Christ's body) during Mass, as full communion was reserved for Easter only.

Saints and relics



Figure **13.7.1.9**: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *St. Francis of Assisi*, c. 1235, tempera on wood (Church of San Francesco, Pescia)

Since the fifth century, saints' **relics** (fragments of venerated holy persons) were embedded in the altar, so it is not surprising that altarpieces were often dedicated to saints and the miracles they performed. Italy in particular favored portraits of saints flanked by scenes from their lives, as seen, for example, in the image of St. Francis of Assisi by **Bonaventura Berlinghieri** in the Church of San Francesco in Pescia.

The Virgin Mary and the Incarnation of Christ were also frequently portrayed, though the Passion of Christ (and his resurrection) most frequently provided the backdrop for the mystery of Transubstantiation celebrated on the altar. The image could be painted or sculpted out of wood, metal, stone, or marble; relief sculpture was typically painted in bright colors and often gilded.

Germany, the Low Countries, and Scandinavia were most often associated with **polyptychs** (many-paneled works) that have several stages of closing and opening, in which a hierarchy of different media from painting to sculpture engaged the worshiper in a dance of concealment and revelation that culminated in a vision of the divine.



Figure **13.7.1.10**: Rhenish Master, Altenberger Altar, c. 1330 (wings are in the collection of the Städel Museum, Frankfurt)

For example, the altarpiece from Altenberg contained a statue of the Virgin and Christ Child which was flanked by double-hinged wings that were opened in stages so that the first opening revealed painted panels of the Annunciation, Nativity, Death and Coronation of the Virgin (image above). The second opening disclosed the Visitation, Adoration of the Magi, and the patron saints of the Altenberg cloister, Michael and Elizabeth of Hungary. When the wings were fully closed, the Madonna and Child were hidden and painted scenes from the Passion were visible.

Variations



Figure **13.7.1.11**: Rood screen of St. Andrew Church, Cherry Hinton, England (photo: **Oxfordian Kissuth**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

English parish churches had a predilection for rood screens, which were a type of carved barrier separating the nave (the main, central space of the church) from the chancel. Altarpieces carved out of alabaster became common in fourteenth-century England, featuring scenes from the life of Christ; these were often imported by other European countries.



Figure **13.7.1.12**: Altarpiece of Saint Eustache, Saint-Denis, Paris, 1250-1260 (Musée de Cluny, Paris)

The abbey of St.-Denis in France boasted a series of rectangular stone altarpieces that featured the lives of saints interwoven with the most important episodes of Christ's life and death. For example, the life of St. Eustache unfolds to either side of the Crucifixion on one of the altarpieces, the latter of which participated in the liturgical activities of the church and often reflected the stained-glass subject matter of the individual chapels in which they were found.

Gothic beauty

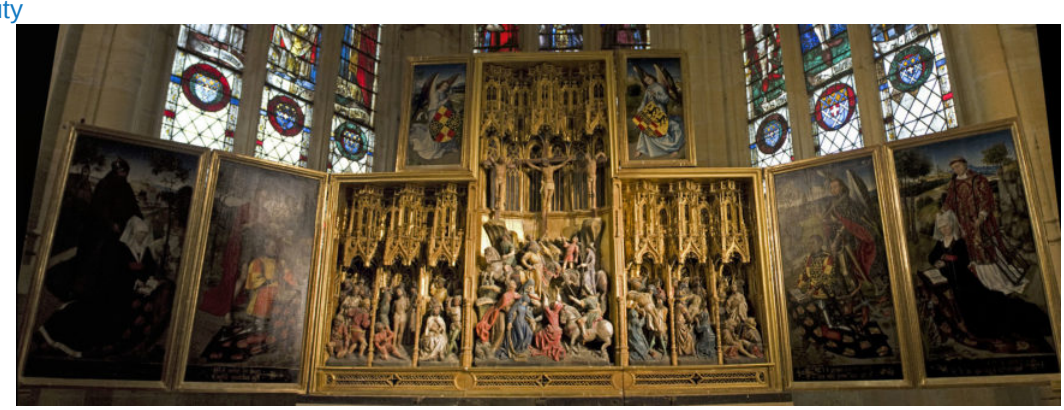


Figure **13.7.1.13**: The altarpiece of the Church of St. Martin, Ambierle, 1466 (photo: **D Villafruela**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.7.1.14**: Detail of a donor with St. John the Baptist, Altarpiece of the Church of St. Martin, (photo: **D Villafruela**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In the later medieval period in France (15th–16th centuries), elaborate polyptychs with spiky pinnacles and late Gothic tracery formed the backdrop for densely populated narratives of the Passion and resurrection of Christ. In the seven-paneled altarpiece from the church of St.-Martin in Ambierle, the painted outer wings represent the patrons with their respective patron saints and above, the Annunciation to the Virgin by the archangel Gabriel of the birth of Christ. On the outer sides of these wings, painted in *grisaille* are the donors' coats of arms.

Turrets (towers) crowned by triangular gables and divided by vertical pinnacles with spiky crockets create the framework of the polychromed and gilded wood carving of the inner three panels that house the story of Christ's torture and triumph over death against tracery patterns that mimic stained glass windows found in Gothic churches.



Figure **13.7.1.15**: The altarpiece of the Church of St. Martin, detail of the Passion (photo: **D Villafruela**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

To the left, one finds the Betrayal of Christ, the Flagellation, and the Crowning with the Crown of Thorns — scenes that led up to the death of Christ. The Crucifixion occupies the elevated central portion of the altarpiece, and the Descent from the Cross, the Entombment, and Resurrection are represented on the right side of the altarpiece.

There is an immediacy to the treatment of the narrative that invites the worshiper's immersion in the story: anecdotal detail abounds, the small scale and large number of the figures encourage the eye to consume and possess what it sees in a fashion similar to a child's absorption before a dollhouse. The scenes on the altarpiece are made imminently accessible by the use of contemporary garb, highly detailed architectural settings, and exaggerated gestures and facial expressions.

One feels compelled to enter into the drama of the story in a visceral way—feeling the sorrow of the Virgin as she swoons at her son's death. This palpable quality of empathy that propels the viewer into the Passion of Christ makes the historical past fall away: we experience the pathos of Christ's death in the present moment.

According to medieval theories of vision, memory was a physical process based on embodied visions. According to one twelfth-century thinker, they imprinted themselves upon the eyes of the heart. The altarpiece guided the faithful to a state of mind conducive to prayer, promoted communication with the saints, and served as a mnemonic device for meditation, and could even assist in achieving communion with the divine.



Figure **13.7.1.16**: Chalice, mid-15th century, possibly from Hungary (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The altar had evolved into a table that was alive with color, often with precious stones, with relics, the chalice (which held the wine) and paten (which held the Host) consecrated to the blood and body of Christ, and finally, a carved and/or painted retable: this was the spectacle of the holy.



Figure **13.7.1.17**: Paten, c. 1230-50, German (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

As Jean-Claude Schmitt put it:

> ***this was an ensemble of sacred objects, engaged in a dialectic movement of revealing and concealing that encouraged individual piety and collective adherence to the***

> ***mystery of the ritual.J.-C. Schmitt , "Les reliques et les images," in Les reliques: Objets, cultes, symbols (Turnhout: 1999)***

The story embodied on the altarpiece offered an object lesson in the human suffering experienced by Christ. The worshiper's immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ was also an engagement with the tenets of Christianity, poignantly transcribed upon the sculpted, polychromed altarpieces.

Additional resources

Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmond Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Paul Binski, "The 13th-Century English Altarpiece," in *Norwegian Medieval Altar Frontals and Related Materials*. Institutum Romanum Norvegiae, Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia 11, pp. 47–57 (Rome: Bretschneider, 1995).

Shirley Neilsen Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs: A Study in Patronage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

Marco Ciatti, "The Typology, Meaning, and Use of Some Panel Paintings from the Duecento and Trecento," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor M. Schmidt, 15–29. Studies in the History of Art 61. Center for the Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. Symposium Papers 38 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

Donald L. Ehresmann, "Some Observations on the Role of Liturgy in the Early Winged Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 64/3 (1982), pp. 359–69.

Julian Gardner, "Altars, Altarpieces, and Art History: Legislation and Usage," in *Italian Altarpieces 1250–1500: Function and Design*, ed. Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, 5–39 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp, eds., *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Lynn F. Jacobs, "The Inverted 'T'-Shape in Early Netherlandish Altarpieces: Studies in the Relation between Painting and Sculpture" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 54/1 (1991), pp. 33–65.

Lynn F. Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380–1550: Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Justin E.A. Kroesen and Victor M. Schmidt, eds., *The Altar and its Environment, 1150–1400* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

Barbara G. Lane, *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).

Henning Laugerud, "To See with the Eyes of the Soul, Memory and Visual Culture in Medieval Europe," in *ARV, Nordic Yearbook of Folklore Studies* 66 (Uppsala: Swedish Science Press, 2010), pp. 43–68.

Éric Palazzo, "Art and the Senses: Art and Liturgy in the Middle Ages," in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser, pp. 175–94 (London, New Delhi, Sidney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

Donna L. Sadler, *Touching the Passion—Seeing Late Medieval Altarpieces through the Eyes of Faith* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Beth Williamson, "Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion," *Speculum* 79 (2004): 341–406.

Beth Williamson, "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence," *Speculum* 88 1 (2013), pp. 1–43.

Kim Woods, "The Netherlandish Carved Altarpiece c. 1500: Type and Function," in Humfrey and Kemp, *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance*, pp. 76–89.

Kim Woods, "Some Sixteenth-Century Antwerp Carved Wooden Altar-Pieces in England," *Burlington Magazine* 141/1152 (1999), pp.144–55.

Do you speak Renaissance? Carlo Crivelli, Madonna and Child

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.1.1**: Carlo Crivelli, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1480, tempera and gold on wood, 37.8 x 25.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art).

A conversation between Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank and Dr. Steven Zucker.

Test yourself with a quiz!

QUIZ NEEDED HERE

Additional resources:

This painting at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Paintings by Crivelli at The National Gallery

Ronald Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli* (Yale University Press, 2004)

Ornament and Illusion: Carlo Crivelli of Venice (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, 2015)

Why commission artwork during the renaissance?

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. HEATHER GRAHAM



Figure **13.7.1.17**: Leon Battista Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai, c. 1446–51, Florence, Italy (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

What's in it for me?

Why would someone patronize art in the renaissance? Giovanni Rucellai, a major patron of art and architecture in fifteenth-century Florence, paid Leon Battista Alberti to construct the **Palazzo Rucellai** and the façade of **Santa Maria Novella**, both high–profile and extremely costly undertakings. In his personal memoir, he talks about his motivations for these and other commissions, noting that "All the above-mentioned things have given and give me the greatest satisfaction and pleasure, because in part they serve the honor of God as well as the honor of the city and the commemoration of myself." [1]



Figure **13.7.1.18**: Leon Battista Alberti, Façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1470 (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Aside from bringing honor to one's faith, city, and self, patronizing art was also fun. Earning and spending money felt good, especially the spending part. As Rucellai goes on, "I really think that it is even more pleasurable to spend than to earn…." [2]

The ancient Roman world (with which much of renaissance Europe was endlessly fascinated) also provided motivation for patronage. The liberal expenditure on art and architecture by ancient Roman patricians was celebrated in the literature of antiquity and survived—even if in fragmentary form—to dazzle the eyes of renaissance viewers. The Roman Emperor Augustus, who so famously said that he found Rome a city of brick and transformed it into a city of marble, provided the ultimate noble model of patronage.

Bronzino, <em
Portrait of a Young Man, 1530s, oil on wood panel, 95.6 x 74.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48059" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 471px) 100vw, 471px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...t-870x1108.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...t-870x1108.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...et-300x382.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1206x1536.jpg
1206w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1608x2048.jpg
1608w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...met-scaled.jpg
2010w" width="471">

Figure **13.7.1.19**: Bronzino, *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1530s, oil on wood panel, 95.6 x 74.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Self-fashioning

Commissioning an artwork often meant giving detailed directions to the artist, even what to include in the work, and this helped patrons fashion their identities. While the identity of Bronzino's Florentine sitter in a *Portrait of a Young Man* is unknown, the artist shows him standing confidently in the composition's center, looking out at us while dressed in expensive black satin, slashed sleeves, and a codpiece complete with golden aglets. He holds his fingers between the pages of a poetry book, which rests atop a table carved with grotesque faces. The book and the table were undoubtedly intended to convey the man's sophistication and learning while his clothing and upright posture showed his wealth and nobility.



Figure **13.7.1.20**: Left: Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0); right: Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Carthusian*, 1446 (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The renaissance was also a time when increasingly wealthy middle-class merchants and others aspired to increase their social recognition and began to commission portraits, as we see in double portraits like Jan van Eyck's ***The Arnolfini Portrait*** showing the Italian merchant Giovanni de Nicolao di Arnolfini with his wife in Bruges (in present-day Belgium). Petrus Christus's ***Portrait of a Carthusian*** reveals the increasing prominence of religious figures, with clergy, monks, and nuns sitting for portraits, many of which were likely made to celebrate the entry of wealthy individuals into religious orders.

Ottavio Vannini, <em
Michelangelo Presenting Lorenzo the Magnificent de' Medici with his Sculpture of a Faun, 17th century, fresco, Palazzo Pitti, Florence" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48060" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 754px) 100vw, 754px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ze-870x692.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ze-870x692.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ze-300x239.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/..._-_Firenze.jpg
1257w" width="754">

Figure 13.7.1.21: Ottavio Vannini, *Michelangelo Presenting Lorenzo the Magnificent de' Medici with his Sculpture of a Faun*, 17th century, fresco, Palazzo Pitti, Florence

Wealth, power, and status

In a seventeenth-century fresco by the artist Ottavio Vannini, Michelangelo, the artist, is shown presenting the powerful Florentine, Lorenzo the Magnificent de' Medici, with a sculpture of a faun. Lorenzo sits at the center of the image, facing frontally like a ruler, while Michelangelo stands off to the side, bowing respectfully towards him. While today the name Michelangelo is better known, in the fresco the Medici patron is shown as more important than the artist.




Figure 13.7.1.22: Left: Leon Battista Alberti, Basilica of Sant'Andrea, 1472–90, Mantua (Italy) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC: BY-NC-SA 3.0); right: El Escorial, begun 1563, near Madrid, Spain (photo: Turismo Madrid Consorcio Turístico, CC BY 2.0)

Paying for something lavish and monumental, such as **Sant'Andrea in Mantua** (commissioned by Ludovico Gonzaga, ruler of the Italian city-state of Mantua and built by Alberti) or **El Escorial** (commissioned by Philip II, King of Spain, outside of Madrid), was a powerful statement about a patron's wealth and status. Philip II was deeply involved in the planning of the massive complex that became El Escorial (a monastery, palace, and church). The complex was built in an austere, classicizing style that was intended to showcase Philip's imperial power by looking to ancient Roman architectural forms.




Figure 13.7.1.23: Left: Matthias Grünewald, Isenheim Altarpiece, view in the chapel of the Hospital of Saint Anthony, Isenheim, c. 1510-15, oil on wood, 9′ 9 1/2″ x 10′ 9″ (closed) (Unterlinden Museum, Colmar, France); right: Jan van Eyck, Ghent Altarpiece (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium. Note: Just Judges panel on the lower left is a modern copy (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

Spiritual comfort and salvation

Some patrons paid for art to serve a larger purpose, perhaps to fulfill a devotional or religious need, as the **Isenheim Altarpiece** did for people suffering from the painful disease of ergotism. Others commissioned art to expiate the patron's sins for such things as usury, as Jodocus Vijd desired when he paid a large sum of money for the **Ghent Altarpiece**.



Figure **13.7.1.24**: Gentile Bellini, *Procession in St Mark's Square*, 1496, tempera on canvas, 347 x 770 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

Inspiring civic duty and responsibility

Commissioning artworks also helped to inspire civic responsibility or to demonstrate that members of a particular community performed their duties properly. The **Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista**, one of many Venetian devotional confraternities, paid Gentile Bellini to depict the procession of the relic of the True Cross through St. Mark's square. This commission highlights the importance of the miraculous object as well as the civic duty of the city's citizens, who are shown in the painting's foreground, with the Scuola members carrying a canopy above the relic.



Figure **13.7.1.25**: Lluís Dalmau, *Virgin of the "Consellers"*, 1443–1445, oil on oak wood, 316 x 312.5 x 32.5 cm (**Museums Nacional d'Art Catalunya**)

Patrons in art

Patrons often had themselves incorporated into paintings and sculptures to remind viewers of who had paid for the work of art as well as to show themselves participating in the narrative. We call these “donor portraits.” Lluis Dalmau’s *Virgin of the Councillors*, for instance, shows the Virgin Mary enthroned, holding the baby Jesus and surrounded by saints in a luxurious Gothic interior. Kneeling before the saints, at the edge of the throne, are five men, all of whom were members of the Barcelona City Council (Casa de la Ciutat), who had paid Dalmau to create the painting to hang in the chapel at the council palace. The portrait collapses sacred and secular time, placing the men as perpetually revering Mary and showcasing their piety to anyone observing the painting.

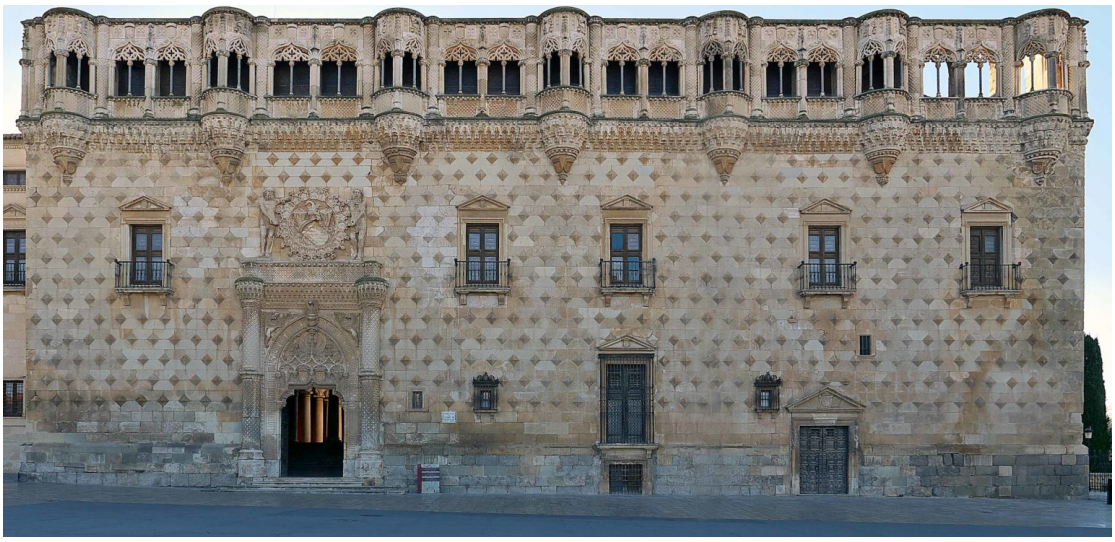


Figure **13.7.1.26**: Juan Guas, Palacio del Infantado, 1480, Guadalajara, Spain (photo: **José Luis Filpo Cabana**, CC BY 3.0). The patron was Íñigo López de Mendoza y Luna.

Even in instances where patrons were not overtly depicted in artworks, artists would sometimes be directed to include heraldic symbols, visual puns, or other motifs to allude to the patron. The coat of arms of the wealthy Mendoza family rests above main entrance to the Palacio del Infantado (in Guadalajara, Spain) amidst the decorative plateresque elements, and advertising to any passersby who had paid for and lived in the striking palace.



Figure 13.7.1.27: The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal in front of the altar of the church of the Carthusian Monastery of Miraflores (photo: Ecelan, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Patrons as influencers

Patrons also set fashions for style and subject matter. Importing artists and artworks from distant lands could show off one's sophistication and introduce new styles, techniques, and subjects to local audiences. Artists and art traveled widely during this period, and exchanges across Europe and beyond were common. Because of the wealth and glamour of northern European court culture, it was fashionable for the wealthy elite of Italy and Spain to import both Netherlandish art and artists. Queen Isabel of Castile, whose father had favored Flemish painters such as Rogier van der Weyden, had a number of artists, including Juan de Flandes, Michel Sittow, and Gil de Siloe, at her court to create lavish works that would speak to her power and magnificence.



Figure 13.7.1.28: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, 1476 and 1470, oil on panel, 253 cm x 586 cm (Uffizi Gallery)

Likewise, Tomasso Portinari, who worked for the Medici bank in Bruges, hired the northern artist Hugo van der Goes to paint a massive altarpiece of the Nativity for his home town of Florence, Italy. When put on display in the hospital church of Santa Maria Nuova in 1483, it created a sensation. Italian artists, in awe of the accomplishments of the northern master, quickly responded to what they saw. Portinari not only showcased his own cosmopolitan sophistication, he also helped shape the direction of Florentine art by introducing this spectacular image to local artists.

Why patrons matter

Art communicated ideas about patrons. Status, wealth, social, and religious identities all played out across paintings, prints, sculptures, and buildings. At the same time, the careers of artists were shaped with the aid of powerful patrons. Likewise, artistic styles emerged or developed as a result of patrons hiring artists or buying artworks and by transporting them to new locations. The history of art has been shaped not only by artists, but also by the patrons whose choices in sponsorship determined what art was created, who created it, who saw it, and what art was made of. Until the modern era, the stories that have been told in art are the stories that reflect the interests of the rich and powerful, the privileged few—mostly men—who were in positions to patronize art. In a nutshell, patronage mattered.

Notes:

[1] Giovanni Rucellai, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone*, ed. Alessandro Perosa. 2 vols. (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1960), 1:121

[2] Rucellai, *Zibaldone*, 1:121

Additional resources

Read more about Isabella d'Este and her patronage

Learn more about patronage in fifteenth-century Burgundy

Explore renaissance Spain further, and learn more about the patronage of Queen Isabel of Castile

Learn more about Patrons and Artists in Late 15th-Century Florence from the National Gallery of Art

Read about patronage at the later Valois court on the Heilbrunn Timeline

Art from the Court of Burgundy: The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless 1364–1419 (Dijon, 2004)

Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Rafael Domínguez Casas, "The Artistic Patronage of Isabel the Catholic: Medieval or Modern?," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, edited by Barbara F. Weissberger (Boydell & Brewer, 2008), pp. 123–48

Alison Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence: Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1995)

Tracy E. Cooper, "*Mecenatismo* or *Clientelismo*? The Character of Renaissance Patronage," in *The Search for a Patron in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by David G. Wilkins and Rebecca L. Wilkins (Medieval and Renaissance Studies 12. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1996), pp. 19–32

Mary Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy: From 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Thistle, 2014)

Robrecht Janssen, Jan van der Stock, and Daan van Heesch, *Netherlandish Art and Luxury Goods in Renaissance Spain: Studies in Honor of Professor Jan Karel Steppe (1918–2009)* (Belgium: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2018)

Dale Kent, *Cosimo De' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000)

Catherine E. King and Margaret L King, *Renaissance Women Patrons: Wives and Widows in Italy, C. 1300–1550* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998)

Sherry C. M. Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society and the Charterhouse of Champmol* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2008)

Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005)

Sheryl Reiss, "A Taxonomy of Art Patronage in Renaissance Italy," in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, ed. Babette Bohn and James M. Saslow (Chichester, West Sussex UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 23–43

Hugo Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, 2000)

Jessica Weiss, "Juan de Flandes and His Financial Success in Castile," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 11:1 (Winter 2019) DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2019.11.1.2

Types of renaissance patronage

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. HEATHER GRAHAM



St. Matthew, bronze, completed c. 1423, h. 254 cm, Orsanmichele, Florence (photo: Dan Philpott, CC BY 2.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48053" height="725" sizes="(max-width: 391px) 100vw, 391px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...S-870x1613.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...S-870x1613.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...PS-300x556.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...S-828x1536.jpg
828w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1105x2048.jpg
1105w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-PS-scaled.jpg
1381w" width="391">

Figure **13.7.1.29**: Lorenzo Ghiberti, *St. Matthew*, bronze, completed c. 1423, 254 cm, Orsanmichele, Florence (photo: **Dan Philpott**, CC BY 2.0)

When the banker's guild of Florence commissioned a massive bronze statue of St. Matthew for **Orsanmichele**—a former grain house turned shrine at the heart of the city—they clearly had their own magnificence in mind. Not only did they hire the highly in-demand sculptor, **Lorenzo Ghiberti**, to create it, but they also stipulated in the work's contract that it must be as big or bigger than the sculptor's creation for a rival guild in the same location. They also wanted it to be cast from no more than two pieces (a difficult feat!). Ghiberti's fame, the statue's scale, and the technical proficiency required to cast it were all reflections of the banker's guild's own status.

Why is it important to know about patrons?

While today we often focus on the artist who made an artwork, in the renaissance it was the patron—the person or group of people paying for the image—who was considered the primary force behind a work's creation. We often forget that for most of history artists did not simply create art for art's sake. Information about patrons provides a window into the complex process involved in the production of art and architecture. Patrons often dictated the cost, materials, size, location, and subject matter of works of art.



Figure **13.7.1.30**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, 1489–93, alabaster, in the Carthusian Monastery of Miraflores, near Burgos, Spain (photo: **Ecelan**, CC BY-SA 4.0). Commissioned by Queen Isabel of Castile to honor her parents, Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal.

Knowing about patronage also demonstrates the various ways that people used art to communicate ideas about themselves, how styles or subjects were popularized, and how artists' careers were fostered. Patrons were far more socially and economically powerful than the artists who served them. A work of art was considered a reflection of the patron's status, and much of the credit for the ingenuity or skill with which an art object was created was given to the savvy patron who hired well. Still, an artist's social status and reputation could also benefit from the support of a powerful patron.

Defining our terms

A closer look at terminology helps us to understand how patronage was understood in the renaissance. The English term "patron" comes from the Latin word *patronus*, meaning protector of clients or dependents, specifically freedmen. The term *patronus*, in turn, is related to *pater*, meaning father. Like the father of a family, or the protector of dependents, a patron was responsible for the conception and realization of a work of art. The relationship of patronage of art and architecture to ideas about fatherhood reflects the patriarchal order of renaissance society. As the wealthy Florentine banker Giovanni Rucellai once noted: "Men have two roles to perform in life: to procreate and to build." [1] Just as men held primary social and political power, attitudes towards artistic patronage also saw it as a masculine pursuit.



Figure **13.7.1.31**: Leon Battista Alberti, Façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1470 (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0). Commissioned by the Florentine banker Giovanni Rucellai.

While both men and women commissioned art, the cost and public nature of the art market meant that most women were not in a social or financial position to act as patrons. Not only did men commission far more art than women, but also they tended to commission art that was more expensive, like sculpture and architecture, and more daring in subject matter, like mythological scenes and nudes. While laws pertaining to women's financial independence varied across Europe, the vast majority of women had limited funds at their disposal for freely commissioning art.



Figure **13.7.1.32**: Andrea Mantegna, *Mars and Venus* (or *Parnassus*), 1497, tempera and gold on canvas, 159 cm × 192 cm (**Musée du Louvre, Paris**)

Even women at the top of the social hierarchy, like the Marchioness of Mantua, **Isabella d'Este**, who was one of the most prolific female patrons of the renaissance, commanded far smaller sums than their male peers. With few exceptions, women's patronage, in keeping with their primarily domestic and maternal roles in society, was often limited to religious painting and imagery that celebrated their husbands and sons.

How do we study patronage?

To study patronage we have to consider the broader context for the creation of art. Economics, politics, social and cultural formations, and psychology—these areas (among others) all inform the way we understand why people hired artists to make specific types of images and structures. To study these choices we look at two main types of evidence: written and visual. Written documents might include contracts, letters, diary entries, and inventories. Visual documentation includes donor portraits (images where the features of the patron are included in the work), inscriptions, coats of arms, and other imagery that represents the family or the community of the person or people paying.



Figure **13.7.1.33**: Rogier van der Weyden, *Deposition*, c. 1435 (**Prado, Madrid**)

Rogier van der Weyden's famous ***Deposition***, painted for the archer's guild of Leuven for a public setting, includes miniature crossbows at the upper corners of the composition as a direct allusion to the patrons. This inclusion helps us to understand the multiple motivations for commissioning this work—it was intended both to honor God and to commemorate those who paid for it.

Ghiberti's *St Matthew* and van der Weyden's *Deposition* are both public works of art commissioned by groups of patrons. We can roughly break renaissance patronage into two main categories:

- **Public**: Although the boundaries between public and private were fluid, in general a public work of art was intended for display outside the home to a broad, public audience. This includes art in churches, town squares, and public buildings, and imagery like prints that circulated in multiples.
- **Private**: "Private" art was limited in audience and generally displayed in the home. Of course, some homes were more private than others. The home of a wealthy merchant or a ruler might serve (as the U.S. White House does today) as a semi-public space where business was conducted and a wider audience was reached.

The works discussed above are also both examples of religious imagery. There are two main types of renaissance art that one might pay for:

- **Religious**: This includes imagery for both public and private use that relates to a particular faith. Christianity was the predominant faith throughout Europe during the renaissance.
- **Secular**: This means non-religious imagery and includes portraiture, scenes taken from history or literature, and mythological subjects.

Michelangelo, <em
Tomb of Pope Julius II, completed 1545, marble, in San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48944" height="489" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...es-870x489.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...es-870x489.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...es-300x169.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...s-1536x864.jpg
1536w" width="870">

Figure **13.7.1.34**: Michelangelo, *Tomb of Pope Julius II*, completed 1545, marble, in San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Of course, like the difference between public and private, there was much overlap between religious and secular. Funerary or memorial imagery is a good example: a portrait (secular) of the deceased might be placed within a tomb monument that includes the Virgin and Christ Child (religious) as well as forms and figures borrowed from ancient (secular) art. Michelangelo's tomb for Pope Julis II (completed 1545), for example, includes a full body portrait of the deceased and numerous religious figures, all placed within a sculpted framework borrowing forms from ancient Roman sarcophagi and buildings.

While all renaissance patrons of art enjoyed a certain amount of wealth and social privilege, patronage could be a personal or a collective endeavour. Both the *St. Matthew* and the *Deposition* were commissioned by groups of men who were members of powerful guilds, or the corporate entities that dominated renaissance public life. Other types of patrons included rulers, nobles, members of the clergy, merchants, confraternities, nuns, and monks. It is important for us to keep in mind these different types of patronage because they help us understand the motivations of the patron as well as the possible functions of the artwork itself.

Notes:

[1] Giovanni Rucellai, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone*, ed. Alessandro Perosa. 2 vols. (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1960), 2:13

Additional resources

Why commission artwork during the Renaissance

Learn more about patronage in fifteenth-century Burgundy

Explore renaissance Spain further, and learn more about the patronage of Queen Isabel of Castile

Learn more about Patrons and Artists in Late 15th-Century Florence from the National Gallery of Art

Read about patronage at the later Valois court on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Art from the Court of Burgundy: The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless 1364–1419 (Dijon, 2004)

Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Rafael Domínguez Casas, "The Artistic Patronage of Isabel the Catholic: Medieval or Modern?," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, edited by Barbara F. Weissberger (Boydell & Brewer, 2008), pp. 123–48

Alison Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence: Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1995)

Tracy E. Cooper, "*Mecenatismo* or *Clientelismo*? The Character of Renaissance Patronage," in *The Search for a Patron in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by David G. Wilkins and Rebecca L. Wilkins (Medieval and Renaissance Studies 12. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1996), pp. 19–32

Mary Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy: From 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Thistle, 2014)

Robrecht Janssen, Jan van der Stock, and Daan van Heesch, *Netherlandish Art and Luxury Goods in Renaissance Spain: Studies in Honor of Professor Jan Karel Steppe (1918–2009)* (Belgium: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2018)

Dale Kent, *Cosimo De' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000)

Catherine E. King and Margaret L King, *Renaissance Women Patrons: Wives and Widows in Italy, C. 1300–1550* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998)

Sherry C. M. Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society and the Charterhouse of Champmol* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2008)

Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005)

Sheryl Reiss, "A Taxonomy of Art Patronage in Renaissance Italy," in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, ed. Babette Bohn and James M. Saslow (Chichester, West Sussex UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 23–43

Hugo Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, 2000)

Jessica Weiss, “Juan de Flandes and His Financial Success in Castile,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Winter 2019)

Female artists in the renaissance

by DR. DEANNA MACDONALD

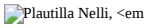


Figure 13.7.1.35: Plautilla Nelli, *Bust of a Young Woman*, 16th century, black chalk (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv 6863F)

Recovering forgotten “masters”

When Renaissance painter Plautilla Nelli got her first solo **exhibit at Florence’s Uffizi Gallery** in 2017, some art historians asked . . . Plautilla who??

Despite being a celebrated artist in sixteenth-century Florence, Nelli had been forgotten by art history to the point that even scholars of Renaissance art knew nothing of her. How was this possible?

In a word, gender.

Nelli’s obscurity was the cumulative effect of historical gender imbalances that limited women in the Renaissance and modern art worlds. While the past cannot be changed, gender balance in contemporary scholarship and curatorial practice is bringing women Renaissance artists to light.

The Renaissance glass ceiling: then and now

As the **Guerrilla Girls** have highlighted, the art world has been male dominated. Nevertheless, women have always been artists, even famed artists. So why were many forgotten?



Figure 13.7.1.36: Plautilla Nelli, detail of *The Last Supper*, c.1570s, 6.7 m long, made for her Convent of Santa Caterina, Florence (Museo di Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

The brief answer is: many reasons. For instance, the academic study of art history evolved through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the men who wrote it developed a canon of great artists and narratives that connected great art and masculinity. Male artists were the subjects of most books and research, and museums highlighted these well-known male artists. Art by women was often overlooked or considered as exceptions, and thus was more likely to fall into obscurity, disrepair, or museum storage. In some cases, art by an under-appreciated female artist was attributed to a better-known male artist.

Scholars are now pulling Renaissance women artists from obscurity, discovering how they succeeded in the gendered societies in which they worked.

Education was a key point. Much of Renaissance art revolves around learning – about classical antiquity, philosophy, anatomy, or mathematics, not to mention the skills learned as an apprentice in a professional art studio. But gender norms of the time meant women's education rarely exceeded what was needed to be wives and mothers. With almost no opportunities for apprenticeships with master/male artists, women were at a disadvantage.

Yet, talented women did become artists under certain circumstances, such as:

1. **nuns in learned monasteries** (e.g., Sister Plautilla Nelli is unusually well-documented. Though nuns were manuscript illuminators and painters since the middle ages, only a few names (e.g. Herard of Landsburg, St. Catherina of Bologna, Guda) are recorded.
2. **noble women with exceptional educations** (e.g., **Sofonisba Anguissola**, Lucia Anguissola, but also most of the nuns above); or
3. **most commonly, women born into a family of artists** (e.g., Levina Teerlinc, Catarina van Hemessen, **Artemisia Gentileschi**, Elisabetta Sirani, Lavinia Fontana)

In all cases, the public personae of women artists were closely tied to gendered ideas that expected a respectable woman to be virtuous, pious, and obedient to God and her father/husband. If an artist failed to meet these standards, it could mean the end of her career (such as the brief career of sculptor **Properzia de'Rossi**).

The nun artist: Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588)

"Nun Art" was considered to be exceptionally spiritual and the holy images of Sister Plautilla Nelli's studio, such as this image of "St. Catherine with Lily," were especially sought after by the Florentine elite. Nelli's contemporary Giorgio Vasari notes that, "in the houses of gentlemen throughout Florence, there are so many [of Nelli's] pictures, that it would be tedious to attempt to speak of them all."



Figure **13.7.1.37**: Plautilla Nelli (and workshop?), *St. Catherine with Lily*, c.1550s–1560s, oil on canvas. 38 x 37.5 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) One of several known copies from Nelli's workshop.

So how did this nun learn to paint like an angel? Like many daughters of wealthy families, 14-year-old Plautilla Nelli was placed in a convent. This was a cost-saving choice, as a convent dowry was less than a marriage dowry. Luckily for Nelli, her convent, Santa Caterina da Siena in Florence, encouraged its nuns not only to pray but also to learn and draw.

It is unclear how she learned to paint but Nelli became a prolific artist, overseeing a convent studio with perhaps as many as eight female nun followers. Her success was such that Vasari included Nelli as one of only four women among over 100 artists in his

1550 *Lives of the Artists*. Vasari notes that she is a “nun and now Prioress” who is “beginning little by little to draw and imitate in colour pictures and painting by excellent masters.” Vasari also notes that she could have been one of the greatest painters in the world if only she could have studied mathematics and anatomy as male artists did (something forbidden to women and especially a nun). [1]

Despite these gendered limitations, Nelli produced large-scale devotional paintings and manuscript illuminations for church and private commissions. Today, about twenty extant paintings by Nelli are known, including the largest and earliest known painting of the Last Supper by a woman.



Figure **13.7.1.38**: Plautilla Nelli, *The Last Supper*, c.1570s, 6.7 m long, made for her Convent of Santa Caterina, Florence. (Museo di Santa Maria Novella, Florence). This is the only signed artwork of Nelli’s to survive.

Forgotten in storage for much of the twentieth century, Nelli’s *Last Supper* was restored with the help of the **Advancing Women in the Arts Foundation** (AWA) and in 2019 became part of the permanent display in the **Museo di Santa Maria Novella** in Florence.

Educated lady: Sofonisba Anguissola **(1532–1625)**

Sofonisba Anguissola’s self-portraits display the often contradictory virtues expected of a young noblewoman and of an artist. She presents herself as both modest maiden and virtuoso artist, as in this miniature portrait, probably made for a prospective patron. The medallion is inscribed in Latin: “The maiden Sofonisba Anguissola, depicted by her own hand, from a mirror, at Cremona.”



Figure **13.7.1.39**: Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1556, varnished watercolor on parchment, 8.3 x 6.4 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts**, Boston)

It was this talent, along with a spotless reputation and an exceptional education (facilitated by her impoverished but forward-thinking, nobleman father), that would help Anguissola become a painter at the court of King Philip II of Spain. Yet as men were court painters and Anguissola was a woman, she was given a title more appropriate to her gender: lady-in-waiting to Philip's queen, Elizabeth of Valois.

Sofonisba Anguissola, <em

Philip II, 1565, oil on canvas 72 x 88 cm (Prado Museum Madrid)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-47957" height="601" sizes="(max-width: 489px) 100vw, 489px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...b-870x1070.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...b-870x1070.jpg

870w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...2b-300x369.jpg

300w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ola_-_002b.jpg

1200w" width="489">

Figure **13.7.1.40**: Sofonisba Anguissola, *Philip II*, 1565, oil on canvas 72 x 88 cm (**Prado Museum**, Madrid)

These types of gendered adjustments allowed the Cremona-born artist to work at the highest level in the male world of court art. But these same adjustments may also have contributed to misattributions of Anguissola's works. For instance, Anguissola's 1565 *Portrait of Philip II* was mistakenly attributed to "court artist" Juan Pantoja de la Cruz from at least the seventeenth century, despite the fact that it strongly resembled her other known works. Only after scientific examinations in the 1990s was the work reattributed to Anguissola. Today the number of known works by Anguissola continues to rise, helped in part by a **major exhibit** at the Museo del Prado in 2019.

Artist's daughter: Levina Teerlinc (1510?–1576)

Bruges-born artist Levina Teerlinc was among the highest paid and most prolific artists at the Tudor court in England for about thirty years but today only five or six works can tentatively be attributed to her hand. These all measure under a few centimeters.



Figure **13.7.1.41**: Levina Teerlinc, *Portrait Miniature of Lady Katherine Grey, Countess of Herford*, c. 1555–1560, about 36mm wide (**Victoria & Albert Museum**, London)

Miniatures, or tiny detailed portraits, were a popular format made and given as keepsakes and gifts that could be viewed privately or worn as a pendant or brooch. In a pre-photography world, miniature portraits allowed individuals to distribute their own image to other people in an intimate format. And few wanted more portraits than the nobles of the Tudor court, in part because portraits offered highly curated images reflecting contemporary styles and status. The *Portrait Miniature of Lady Katherine Grey* is typical of Teerlinc's work. With meticulous and flattering detail, she paints the fashionable cousin of, and once a possible successor to, Queen Elizabeth I.

Teerlinc was a master miniaturist and manuscript illuminator. She was trained in the studio of her father, celebrated Flemish painter Simon Bening. When she arrived in England with her husband around 1546, Levina Teerlinc took up the role of "royal paintrix," first at the court of Henry VIII and successively for Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. Part of the royal household, she painted not only aristocratic portraits but numerous other works today only known from court inventories. Her high status at court is reflected in her annual salary: a remarkable forty pounds a year, which was four times the average annual earnings for a skilled tradesman and ten pounds more than the salary of her male predecessor as court artist, **Hans Holbein**.

A 21st-century renaissance

Michelangelo, Leonardo, and the famed male artists of the Renaissance deservedly remain central figures in art history. But they are only half the story. Despite obstacles, women were exceptional artists in the Renaissance. Today's task is to continue to recover them from the dusty back shelves, storage rooms, and the past indifference of art history.

Notes:

1. Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (London: Oxford University Press, 1991), 342.

Additional resources:

Read more about Plautilla Nelli on **Advancing Women Artists**

Watch a video about the **restoration of Nelli's *Last Supper***

Learn more about **Sofonisba Anguissola's *Boy at the Spanish Court* at the San Diego Museum of Art**

Fausta Navarro, *Plautilla Nelli: arte e devozione sulle orme di Savonarola = Plautilla Nelli: Art and Devotion in Savonarola's Footsteps* (Livorno : Sillabe, 2017)

Sheila Barker, *Women Artists in Early Modern Italy: Careers, Fame, and Collectors* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, an imprint of Brepols Publishers, 2016)

Leticia Ruiz Gómez, *A Tale of Two Women Painters: Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana* (Madrid: Museo del Prado exhibit catalogue, 2019)

The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC. n.d. "**Artist profiles**."

Images of African Kingship, Real and Imagined

by DR. KRISTEN COLLINS and DR. BRYAN C. KEENE



Figure **13.7.1.42**: Heinrich Bünting's Map of Africa from *Travel through Sacred Scripture*, Magdeburg, Germany, 1597 (Courtesy of Dr. Oscar I. Norwich Collection of Maps of Africa and its Islands, 1486 – ca. 1865, **David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries**).

The exhibition **Balthazar: A Black African King in Medieval and Renaissance Art** examines the figure of the Black king, an artistic invention arrived at by Europeans painting during the 1400s.

Nativity (or *crèche*) scenes from the Middle Ages to today often include three kings (or magi) bringing gifts to the infant Jesus. Often, these scenes include a Black king, sometimes referred to by the name Balthazar (his two traveling companions are known as Caspar and Melchior).

European Christian tradition often referred to Balthazar as coming from Africa, and maps from the time reveal a combination of fantasy, desire, and lived encounters with Africa and African people.

In 1597, German Protestant scholar and cartographer Heinrich Bünting designed a map of Africa marked by both real and imagined kingdoms. In West Africa, we encounter the realm of the Muslim king Mansa Musa of Mali, who was famous for wealth and piety.

Mediterranean North Africa features numerous cultures, including kingdoms in Tunis and Egypt (visible on the map above). In East Africa, near the horn of the continent, we read the name of the legendary Christian king Prester John, who was said to reign in Ethiopia or India—reflecting Europeans' imprecise understanding of world geography at the time. Beginning in the 1440s, Portuguese sailors embarked on searches for Prester John and his mythical kingdom, violently enslaving non-Christian Black Africans along the way.

The mythical Prester John and images of Balthazar reveal European fantasies about Africa and the wealth of kingdoms there. Below we look at three rulers from premodern Africa, each of whom had a major impact on the politics, economy, religion, and culture of the time. We also wish to acknowledge the presence of free Africans living in Europe during this period.

The continent of Africa is vast and was home to more kingdoms than premodern Europeans imagined, and to more than we're exploring here. While histories of Afro-European contact have traditionally focused on the three faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Africa was home to many other literate and oral religions and traditions.

Mansa Musa: The Wealthiest Person in the History of the World

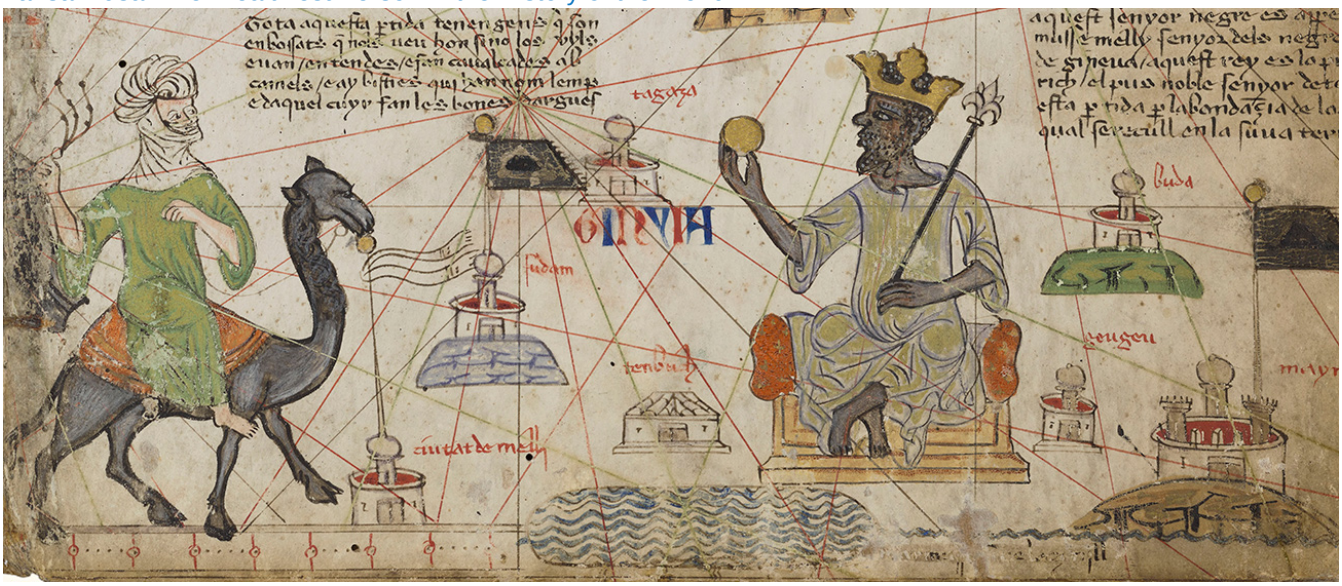


Figure 13.7.1.43: Mansa Musa and the Sahara Desert in the Catalan Atlas of Abraham Cresques, 1375, made in Majorca, Spain (**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Espagnol 30, fol. 5v.**)

The map of Africa, Europe, and Asia above was created by the Spanish Jewish cartographer Abraham Cresques. It contains a rare medieval depiction of Mansa Musa, who ruled the West African Mali Empire, a territory the covered parts of present-day Mauritania and Mali, from 1312 to 1337. **Mansa Musa's holdings in gold were so great** that to this day he is unsurpassed in personal wealth.

A pious Muslim who embraced charitable almsgiving as one of the five pillars of Islam, Mansa Musa made the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca with an entourage reportedly consisting of 60,000 subjects, 80 camels, and thousands of pounds of gold dust. His donations to the poor and diplomatic gifts along the way pumped so much gold into the economy of the Mediterranean that it devalued gold currency in the wealthy European mercantile cities such as Florence for decades.

The 14th-century Arab scholar Ibn Fadl Allah al-Umari lived in Cairo at the time and later reported on the ruler in his encyclopedia: "This man flooded Cairo with his gifts. He left no court emir nor holder of a royal office without the gift of a load of gold. The people here profited greatly from him and from his entourage in buying, selling, giving, and taking. They traded gold until these lessened its value in Egypt, making its price fall…"



Figure 13.7.1.44: Reception of a Venetian delegation in Damascus, 1511, Venice, Italy, oil on canvas (Louvre)

Italian artists from Florence to Venice traveled frequently throughout the Mediterranean to broker political, religious, and mercantile partnerships with their Muslim neighbors. One powerful individual in the 1400s was the Mamluk sultan of Egypt called Qaitbay, who reigned from 1468 to 1496.

An anonymous Venetian painter depicted a reception scene in Damascus, Syria, between Europeans and representatives of the sultan, whose escutcheon is emblazoned on the gates of the city in the painting. “Glory to our Sultan, the master, the king of kings, the wise, the ruler, the just al-Ashraf Abu al-Nasr Qaitbay, the Sultan of Islam,” reads the gilded inscription, proclaiming the sovereignty of Qaitbay. His dominions stretched from the Nile basin of the southeastern Mediterranean to Israel, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.



Figure **13.7.1.45**: Shirt of Mail and Plate of Qaitbay, probably Egyptian, about 1468–96 (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, 2016.99).

Like Mansa Musa, Qaitay made a pilgrimage to Mecca and as an act of piety, he commissioned **brass candlesticks for the shrine of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina**. Architectural monuments built under his reign are still major destinations for curious travelers and the faithful alike.

Qaitbay's diplomatic relationships included the wealthy Medici merchants in Florence, who received rare and valuable gifts from the Sultan. The most notorious gift that the sultan sent to the Tuscan city-state was a giraffe, which was memorialized in works of art, including **a fresco of *The Adoration of the Magi* by Ghirlandaio** in the church of **Santa Maria Novella**. The arrival of the giraffe with a retinue of Egyptian delegates may have evoked the pageantry of gift-giving reenacted in the annual magi processions in Florence, commemorated each January 6 on epiphany day.



Figure 13.7.1.46: Qaitbay's Mausoleum, Cairo, Egypt (photo: Casual Builder, CC BY-SA 3.0).

For Qaitbay, such relationships with the Italian courts could lead to financial and military support against their shared rival in the northeastern Mediterranean: the Ottoman Turks. European princes and popes also feared Ottoman expansion and thus maintained ties with the Mamluks. Trade goods from Egypt—including metalwork, manuscripts (from Coptic Christian and Muslim communities), and glassware—had a great impact on European art at the time.

Zar'a Ya'eqob and the Medieval Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia



Figure 13.7.1.47: Bete Giyorgis (Church of Saint George), Lalibela, Ethiopia (photo: Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Ethiopia has a long history as a powerful Christian kingdom, as an empire, and later, as a nation. By the end of the third century, the four great powers of the ancient world were considered to be Rome, Persia, China, and the African kingdom of Axum—which occupied parts of present-day Eritrea and northern Ethiopia.

The later kingdom of Ethiopia, an early adopter of Christianity, developed a vibrant artistic tradition that included rock-hewn churches, illuminated manuscripts, and liturgical crosses. In the 15th century, **successive Ethiopian *nägäst* (rulers) sent church delegations to Italy** in an attempt to forge alliances, both religious and military, with Rome.



Figure **13.7.1.48**: The Virgin and Child with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in a Gospel book, about 1504–5, made in Ethiopia, probably Gunda Gunde (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, Ms. 102 (2008.15), fol. 19v).

The 15th-century Ethiopian emperor Zar'a Ya'eqob was known for his strength and diplomacy. Zar'a Ya'eqob, who reigned from 1434 to 1468, resolved a major internal theological strife, a debate over the observance of the Sabbath (holy day of worship) that had been waged for over a century prior to his rule. It was also during his reign that the 1441 delegation joined the Council of Florence, one of the great church gatherings of that century. In Florence, his subjects were perplexed at Europeans' continued identification of Zar'a Ya'eqob with the legendary priest-king Prester John.



Figure **13.7.1.49**: Cross, about 1200–1400, Ethiopia, Zagwe or Solomonic dynasty (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art**, M.2015.18.1).

At home, Zar'a Ya'eqob reportedly had an honor guard that stood to either side of his throne, holding drawn swords. The opening image of a Gospel book made at the Gunda Gunde monastery shows the Virgin Mary and Christ child similarly flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel. The Ethiopian kingdom had been Christian since the fourth century, but Zar'a Ya'eqob had Muslim subjects as well. The emperor's wife, Eleni, was a Muslim convert and she continued to rule and exert significant influence after Zar'a Ya'eqob's death.

Servant or King? Constructing Balthazar



Figure **13.7.1.50**: Peter Paul Rubens, *Head Study for Balthazar*, about 1609–11 (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, 2018.48).

This study for Balthazar helped Peter Paul Rubens refine the figure of the king for a large painting of ***The Adoration of the Magi***, commissioned by the town council of Antwerp, in Flanders (northern Belgium). The biblical story of three kings traveling from afar with gifts for the Christ child resonated in Catholic Antwerp, Rubens's home city and a center of international commerce. The cult of the magi so captured the imagination of local inhabitants that many children were named Balthazar, Melchior, or Caspar after the kings. This oil sketch was painted on repurposed ledger paper; the marks of mercantile transactions are visible through the figure's robe, face, and turban.

The immediacy and vibrancy of Rubens's figure, with his parted mouth and gaze directed to the side, suggest an individual captured in a moment of speech and motion. Was this depiction inspired by an actual person, and if so, whom?

Rubens often drew from life (a practice used by other artists, including **Andrea Mantegna, whose Adoration of the Magi was featured in the exhibition** together with the oil study). One of Rubens's patrons in Antwerp had Black African servants in his household, and Rubens made other studies using them as models. The Flemish city of Antwerp was a major center for the slave trade. Much research remains to be done on the status of forcibly Christianized Black Africans living there, specifically their positions and rights within domestic settings.



Figure **13.7.1.51**: Jan Cornelisa. Vermeyen, *Mulay Ahmad*, about 1535–36 (**Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen**).

We also know that Rubens used an earlier print of Mulay Ahmad, the Hafsid Muslim ruler of Tunis, as inspiration for other works, such as ***The Three Magi Reunited***. The Tunisian turban in Rubens's head study casts the biblical character of Balthazar as a sixteenth-century North African king.



Figure **13.7.1.52**: Peter Paul Rubens, *Mulay Ahmad*, about 1609 (**Boston, Museum of Fine Arts**, M. Theresa B. Hopkins Fund, 40.2.)

Thus Rubens's Balthazar may be an amalgam of an unidentified sitter, likely a servant or enslaved person, and a nearly contemporary ruler. The artist's image speaks to the intersections of power, faith, and race in commercial Antwerp at the height of its global reach.

African Europeans in the Courts of Europe

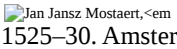


Figure **13.7.1.53**: Jan Jansz Mostaert, *Portrait of an African Man* (Christophle le More?), about 1525–30 (Amsterdam, **Rijksmuseum**).

Europeans came to know African people in many different ways. While rulers made their way into the imagination of European artists, Africans living in Europe also became part of the art being produced at the time.

A significant number of Africans or members of the African diaspora in Europe occupied positions in the courts or noble households. Little documented, their histories can be guessed at from the evidence in archival documents and in art. ***Portrait of an African Man*** was long speculated to have been a painting of Christophle le More, a Black man, formerly a slave and groom, who went on to become an archer for the bodyguard of Emperor Charles V.

This painting by Jan Jansz Mostaert has long been celebrated as the only surviving European portrait of a Black man during this early period. Unlike images of Balthazar or other biblical figures, he wears the attire of a Flemish courtier. Moreover, he does not appear as a member of an entourage, but in the context of an individualized portrait. Who was this man?

Unlike the institution of slavery that became codified in the Americas at the time, it was possible for enslaved people in Europe to gain their freedom and to possess social mobility, working in positions as disparate as the elite bodyguard of the Holy Roman Emperor or as gondaliers in Venice.

Recent research has discouraged the identification of this sitter with Christophle, which leaves us only with the frustrating hints provided by his costume, such as the pilgrimage badge in his cap (to Our Lady of Halle, near Brussels), his gloves appropriate for a court setting, or for the embroidered bag at his waist, perhaps a gift from a wealthy patron.

Although his identity is unknown, he nevertheless offers a potent reminder of the lived experiences of Africans in medieval and Renaissance Europe.

This essay first appeared in ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0)

Additional resources

Read Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe (PDF).

Introduction to gender in renaissance Italy

by DR. HEATHER GRAHAM

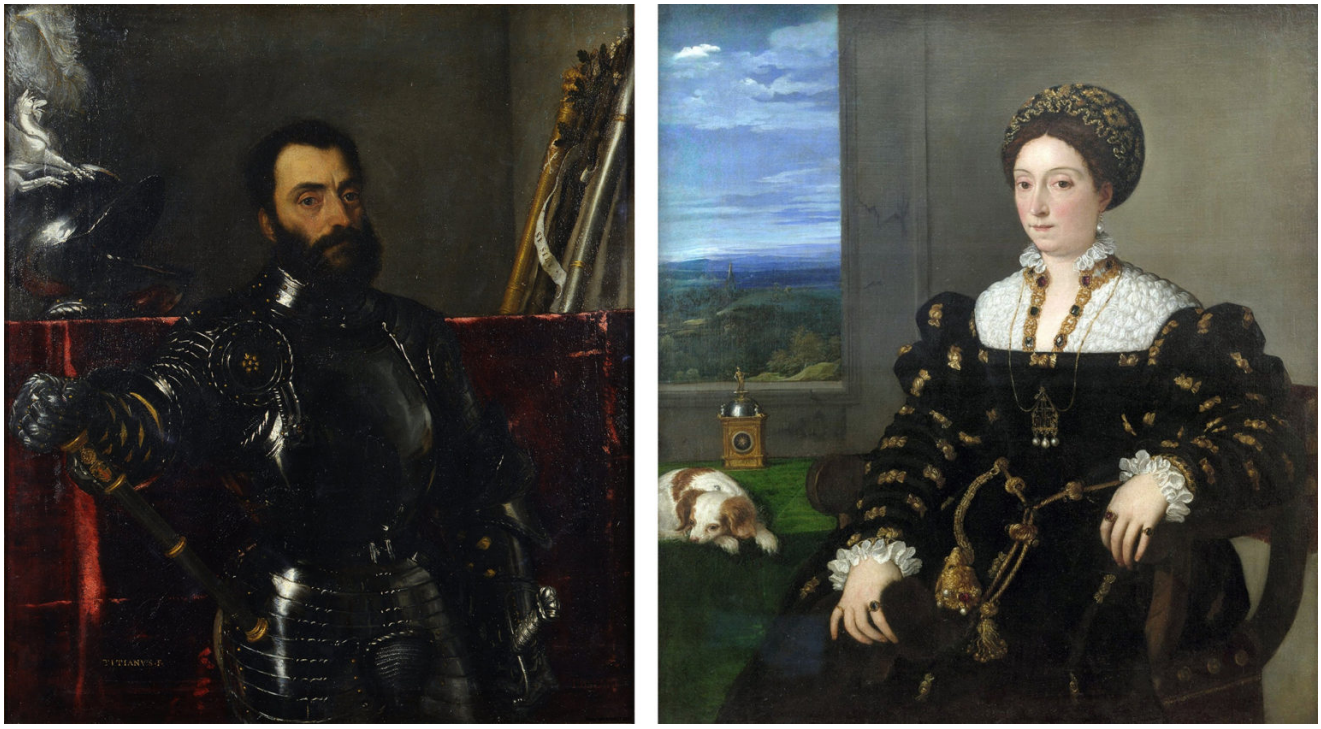


Figure **13.7.1.54**: Left: Titian, *Portrait of Francesco Maria Della Rovere*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 114 x 103 cm (**Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy**); right: Titian, *Portrait of Eleonora Gonzaga*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 114 x 103 cm (**Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy**)



Figure 13.7.1.55: Batons (detail), Titian, *Portrait of Francesco Maria Della Rovere*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 114 x 103 cm (**Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy**)

Ideal representatives of masculinity and femininity

In a pair of portraits painted by the **Venetian** artist Titian, the Duke and Duchess of Urbino are presented as ideal representatives of their sexes. Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere, the great mercenary captain, stands upright, his body encased in shining armor. His right arm juts outward from his body, seemingly breaking through the picture plane, as his hand rests upon the war baton he carries as a reminder of his military authority as commander of Venetian troops. Francesco Maria's prominent codpiece and piercing stare emphasize his aggressive masculinity, while his dark beard and ruddy complexion mark him as a mature man of action. The objects behind him communicate his valor and political commitments: two other war batons bearing the Papal Keys and the Florentine lily lean against a wall (the lily has faded over time) next to an oak branch marking his della Rovere lineage (the della Roveres were a powerful noble family of Italy).

His wife, the Duchess Eleonora Gonzaga, makes the perfect, demure counterpoint to her virile husband. While he stands erect and linear, she sits, swathed in copious folds of costly fabric that suggest the rounded forms of her body. While he is active, she is passive, her containment within the domestic sphere affirmed by the window to her right. Eleonora's bodily comportment is a far remove from her husband's thrusting fist that intrudes upon the audience's space. The small dog and the costly clock that rests upon the table beside her remind us of her loyalty and patience in reservedly awaiting her husband whose military pursuits often kept him abroad.

Internal virtues, including gender characteristics, were believed to be communicated through outward appearance. The author **Pietro Aretino** noted in sonnets dedicated to Titian's portraits that Francesco Maria's "place between his eyebrows inspires terror, his spirit in his eyes, his pride in his forehead, in which place honor and wise counsel sit. In his armored chest and ready arm valor burns…." For Eleonora, "Prudence guards her honor and counsels in beautiful silence: the internal virtues adorn her brow with every wonder." [1] Like the portraits, Aretino's sonnets highlight Francesco Maria's active and awe-inspiring masculinity and Eleanora's passive feminine charms.

Titian's portraits help us to understand ideas that people in the past had about gender. While sex is determined by biological markers such as genitalia and other genetic differences between male or female, gender refers to the social role that a person plays based upon individual and collective ideas about identity as it relates to being a man or a woman. Different cultures define masculinity and femininity differently. These social roles are constructed by multiple factors including medical understandings of the body and mind, as well as cultural and religious ideas about the sexes.



Figure **13.7.1.56**: Simone Martini, *The Annunciation*, 1333, tempera on panel, 184 x 210 cm (**Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence**)

The feminine ideal

> ***Have you seen that [Virgin] Annunciation that is in the cathedral, at the altar of Sant' Ansano, next to the sacristy?…She seems to me to strike the most beautiful attitude, the most reverent and modest imaginable. Notice that she does not look at the angel but is almost frightened. She knew that it was an angel…What would she have done had it been a man! Take this as an example you maidens!—Bernardino de Siena [2]***

When the popular fifteenth-century preacher, Bernardino da Siena, wanted to impress upon his female listeners the importance of proper feminine behavior, he pointed them to the model of the Virgin Mary as painted by the Sienese artist, **Simone Martini**. At the moment the archangel Gabriel announces to Mary that she would bear the son of God, Mary's reaction is exemplary: she pulls her cloak tightly around her and recoils from the angelic intrusion in her private space. So important in this patriarchal world was the regulation of women to the domestic sphere, that even an emissary of God should be considered with caution. A **renaissance** woman's primary virtues were chastity and motherhood; her domain was the private world of the home. As noted by the scholar and artistic theorist **Leon Battista Alberti** in his treatise *On the Family* (1435), "It would hardly win us respect if our wife busied herself among the men in the marketplace, out in the public eye." [3]

While gender roles were nuanced across European cultures, throughout the continent women's relegation to the domestic sphere was rooted in **Christian** tradition that placed blame for humanity's fall from grace upon Eve, the first woman. Eve was the temptress who led the first man, Adam, into breaking God's law, sentencing humankind to toil and death. Every woman thereafter was thought to live in the shadow of Eve's sin, justly sentenced to the pains of childbirth, the labors of motherhood, and submission to her husband.



Figure 13.7.1.57: Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg, Zodiacal man, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly). The image is divided by quadrants marked by Latin inscriptions describing the properties of each sign according to the four humors.

The four humors

Women's subordinate role in renaissance culture was also tied to medical understanding of the human body inherited from ancient Greek and Roman traditions. Perhaps most influential was the ancient theory of the four humors. Originating in **ancient Greece**, humoral theory was thoroughly developed by the **Roman** doctor, Galen, whose writings were important to the **medieval** and renaissance world. According to Galen, it was the proper balance of four fluids called humors—blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile—generated through the processes of digestion that determined physical and psychological health. Each humor was associated with particular mental characteristics, making a person's psychobiology a product of his or her unique humoral composition, a model further nuanced by qualities of temperature and moisture also assigned to the various humors.



Figure **13.7.1.58**: Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, engraving, 25.1 x 20cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

German artist Albrecht Dürer's engraving of ***Adam and Eve*** includes numerous symbols associated with the four humors: a rabbit (blood), an ox (phlegm), a cat (yellow bile), and an elk (black bile). This image captures the moment just before the first man and woman broke God's law. All of the animals—all of the humors—are shown at rest, symbolizing humanity's perfect internal balance before the Fall from Grace.

Generally speaking, men and women were understood to be humoral opposites. Men were physiologically characterized by superior humors associated with heat and dryness, women by inferior humors associated with cold and wetness. These perceived differences were used to justify men's and women's social roles: a man's hot-dryness gave him the constancy necessary for public social and political life; a women's cold-wetness made her inconstant, accounted for her timidity, and explained menstruation and the pains of childbirth. As Alberti also noted in his writings on the family, "Women are almost all timid by nature, soft, slow, and therefore more useful when they sit still and watch over things." [4]



Figure **13.7.1.59**: Guido Mazzoni, *Lamentation*, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

Women's assumed physiological inferiority to men also contributed to how they were thought to experience emotions. Women's cold-wet humoral nature made them more susceptible to emotions and less capable of managing their emotional behaviors in socially appropriate ways. In works of art like **Guido Mazzoni's terracotta *Lamentation* tableau** created for the Duke of Ferrara, biblical characters perform their sorrow over Christ's death in ways that reflect expectations for gendered emotional experience: the women are collectively far more violent than the men in their expressions of grief.



Figure **13.7.1.60**: Titian, *Portrait of Eleonora Gonzaga*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 114 x 103 cm (**Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy**)

Titian's composed and contained Duchess Eleonora perfectly reflects the gendered ideal for a renaissance woman. Her youthful beauty, her curvaceous form suggesting the fertility of motherhood, and her careful containment within the domestic realm all communicate renaissance expectations of and ideals for femininity. It is rare in renaissance art to encounter women whose features do not reflect standards of youthful beauty and the relationship to women's primarily maternal role that they embody.



Figure **13.7.1.61**: Titian, *Portrait of Francesco Maria Della Rovere*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 114 x 103 cm (**Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy**)

The masculine ideal

> ***Fortune is a woman and if you wish to keep her under it is necessary to beat and ill use her; and it is seen she allows herself to be mastered by the adventurous rather than by those who go to work more coldly. She is, therefore, always woman-like, a lover of young men, because they are less cautious, more violent, and with more audacity to command her.***
>
> ***Machiavelli, The Prince [5]***

Men, who in renaissance Christian thought were created in the image of a male God, were believed to have a natural superiority over their female counterparts. Niccolo Machiavelli's famous text on statecraft, *The Prince* (1513), reflects the way gender roles were tied to notions of power: fortune is feminized, desirous of subjugation, while the worthy ruler is one who uses masculine aggressive force to subdue her. While not every man was expected to project the level of audacious dominance that bolstered princely authority, the masculine ideal was nonetheless one of forceful mastery.



Figure **13.7.1.62**: Antonio Rosselino, *Portrait of Giovanni di Antonio Chellini da San Miniato*, 1456, marble, H: 51.1 cm, W: 57.6 cm, D: 29.6 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**, London)

While female virtue was tied primarily to sexual control and motherhood, male virtue was much more broadly defined. Men were expected to participate in all aspects of public life, to excel in learning, in their trade, in governance, and to do so with the aggressive and assertive behavior particular to their superior biological construction. Such qualities were communicated in art through figure types, costume, and movements that suggested these masculine ideals. As Alberti advised in his work on the family:

> ***The beauty of a man accustomed to arms . . . lies in his having a presence betokening pride . . . limbs full of strength, and the gestures of one who is skilled and adept in all forms of exercise. The beauty of an old man . . . lies in his prudence, his amiability, and the reasoned judgment which permeates all his words and counsel.***
>
> ***Leon Battista Alberti, The Family in Renaissance Florence [6]***

While Titian's portrait of Francesco Maria might be said to embody the ideal vigorous military man, Antonio Rossellino's marble portrait bust of the aged physician, Giovanni Chellini, presents the ideal sage elder. With his hollowed cheeks and sagging flesh, Chellini is shown aged and worn, yet the delicate veins at his temple seem to pulse with life and his posture is erect and his body robust beneath his robes. If Francesco Maria is the man of action, the venerable physician represents the contemplative man still virile in flesh.

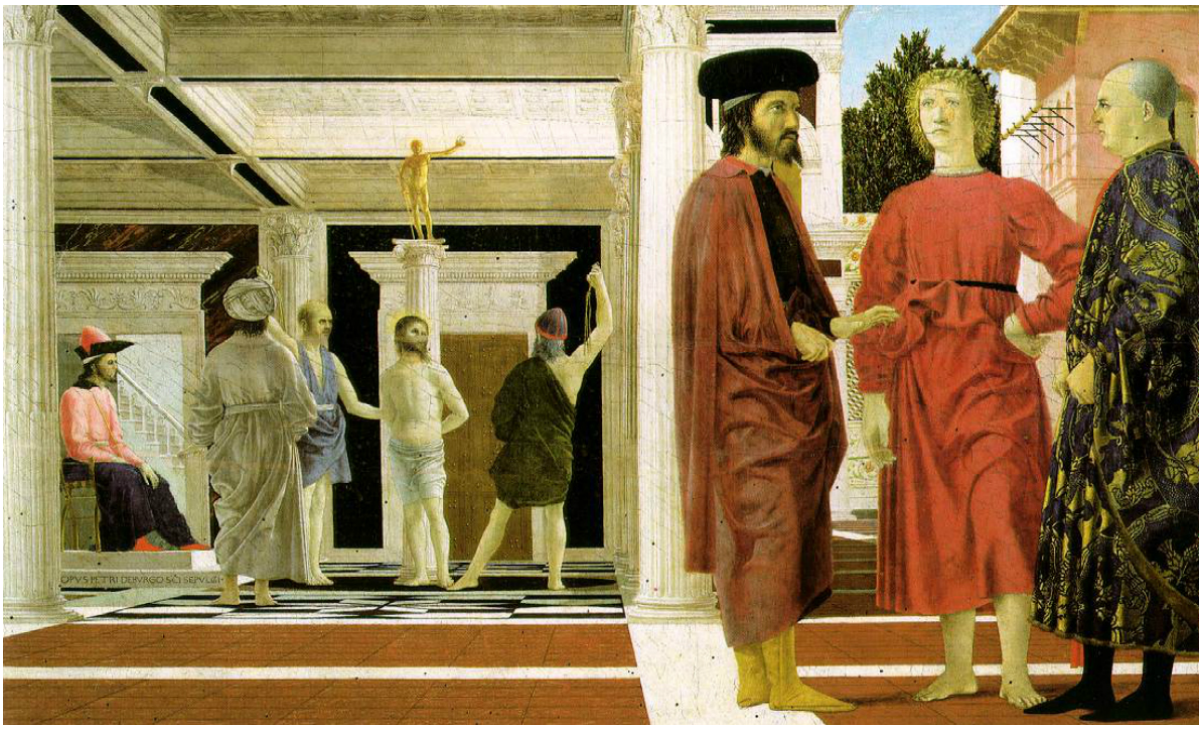


Figure 13.7.1.63: Piero della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*, c. 1455-65, oil and tempera on wood, 58.4 × 81.5 cm (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino)

Jesus Christ himself, whose own life-giving flesh had important associations with femininity, was overwhelmingly depicted in art in ways that emphasized his male sex and his masculine capacity to nobly endure physical and psychological pain. The stoic grace with which Christ endures the whips and torments of his torturers in Piero della Francesca's ***Flagellation*** was a worthy model of noble, masculine strength. Indeed, even for women, the Christian imperative to model one's life after that of Christ meant adopting qualities of temperance, constancy, and endurance that were understood to be fundamentally masculine in quality.



Figure 13.7.1.64: Raphael, *Portrait of Pope Julius II*, 1511, oil on poplar, 108.7 x 81 cm (**The National Gallery, London**)

Gender roles constructed in and by art

Images helped to communicate ideas about gender roles and to model appropriate—or expected—gendered behavior. One's performance of femininity or masculinity was expected to conform with their age and social rank, as we see with Titian's portraits of Francesco Maria and Eleonora. At times art could mask realities of character that were inconsistent with social ideals. Raphael's sensitive portrait of the stooped, aged, and bearded **Pope Julius II** della Rovere conveys a quiet solemnity. The pontiff is shown as thoughtful, introspective, and serene. In reality, Julius was famously aggressive, nicknamed the "Warrior Pope" for his penchant for warfare. Julius was formidable in temperament, notoriously impetuous, indomitable and resolute. While these are certainly appropriate masculine qualities for some (a man in the position of his nephew duke Francesco Maria perhaps), they do not reflect characteristics expected of a pope who embodied the living image of Christ on earth.

The gender roles we encounter in renaissance art reflect ideas and ideals, not necessarily the reality of lived experience. Many women did indeed participate in public life, as the duchess Eleonora often did as ruler of Urbino during her mercenary husband's many travels. Both Titian's and Raphael's portraits remind us that gender is a carefully constructed performance.

Notes:

1. James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*, vol. 3 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851), appendix XI, p. 437.
2. Quoted in Ronald Rainey, "Dressing Down the Dressed-Up: Reproving Feminine Attire in Renaissance Florence," in *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Eugene F. Rice, Jr.*, ed. J. Monfasani and R.G. Musto (New York, 1991), p. 237 .
3. Leon Battista Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, trans. Renée Neu Watkins (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), p. 20.
4. Ibid., 207.
5. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. W. K. Marriott (London, 1958), p. 143.
6. Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, p. 115.

Additional resources:

For more on gender and emotions in Renaissance art, read about Guido Mazzoni's *Lamentation* on Smarthistory

A short annotated bibliography on gender and art in the Renaissance from Oxford Bibliographies

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

Margaret Carroll, "The Erotics of Absolutism: Rubens and the Mystification of Sexual Violence," in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, 140–59 (New York: Icon Editions, 1992).

Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society*. 5th edition (New York:Thames & Hudson, 2012).

Margaret Ferguson et al., eds., *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

Heather Graham, "Compassionate Lament: Somatic Selfhood and Gendered Affect in Italian Lamentation Imagery," in *Visualizing Sensuous Suffering and Affective Pain in Early Modern Europe and the Spanish Americas*, Heather Graham and Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 82–115.

Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1991).

Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).

Lisa Rosenthal, "Manhood and Statehood: Rubens's Construction of Heroic Virtue," *Oxford Art Journal* 16 (1993), 92–111.

Patricia Simons, "Homosociality and Erotics in Italian Renaissance portraiture," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, 29–47, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).

Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).

Joanna Woods-Marsden, “One Artist, Two Sitters, One Role: Raphael’s Papal Portraits,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Raphael*, pp. 120–140, ed. Marcia Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005).

Sex, Power, and Violence in the Renaissance Nude

by DR. JILL BURKE



Figure **13.7.1.65**: Correggio (Antonio Allegri), *Danaë*, 1530. Oil on canvas, 74 3/16 × 86 13/16 × 4 1/2 in. (Galleria Borghese)

The relationship between art, gender, and power goes back centuries; it **didn’t start with #MeToo**. Cultural production, such as novels, paintings, or films, does not merely reflect the ideas of a single artist or a patron—it articulates and reflects the norms of a society. Art affects how people construct ideas about themselves, about their relationships with others, and about masculinity and femininity.

Take a painting from the exhibition *The Renaissance Nude*, Correggio’s *Danaë*. Set against a background of sumptuous embossed velvet drapery, a naked young woman reclines on two plump pillows, her head tilted as she winsomely observes her genital area, barely covered by a sheet. She is holding the edge of this fabric alongside the naked youthful Cupid. In his other hand, Cupid has caught two nuggets of gold, solidified droplets from the cloud that hovers over the center of the scene. Meanwhile, on the floor by the head of the bed, two little boys, whose wings allow us to identify them as *amorini* (little love spirits), concentrate on testing the tip of an arrow by rubbing it against a stone.

The focus of Danaë’s gaze is linked by the gold embroidery at the edge of the cloud that hovers at the top of the panel. Viewers with a knowledge of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* would understand that we are witnessing Zeus, the king of the Olympian gods, rape Danaë in the guise of a shower of gold. The story goes that Danaë’s father, the king of Argus, was told by a prophecy that his daughter would have a child who would kill him, and so locks her up in a tall tower. As towers were no barrier to Zeus, **Danaë gave birth to the hero Perseus nine months later**.

A scene like this might be familiar, or even overly familiar, to viewers today—female nudes in mythological guises became very common in European art from the early sixteenth century onwards, and the naked bodies of goddesses like Venus, Diana, and the three Graces are common sights in major art museums globally.

However, in the Renaissance, these large-scale images of erotic female nudes were a new fashion, one that had to be carefully justified and kept away from the wrong kind of eyes. Diane Wolfthal pointed out in her important book ***Images of Rape: The Heroic Tradition and Its Alternatives*** that underlying these beautiful images of lissom goddesses, stretched out on the culture for our visual enjoyment, were disturbing ideas about sexual violence that reflected a profoundly misogynistic culture.

In fact, visual access to real women's bodies was strictly policed in the Renaissance, particularly in Italy. Even during marital sex, women were enjoined to always wear their undershirts: "What you are permitted to touch, you are not permitted to see," explained the Franciscan preacher San Bernardino of Siena in a sermon of 1427.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, erotic writing of the period often emphasizes voyeurism—peering at naked women, or sexual activity, through holes in floorboards, chinks in walls, or keyholes. Looking at the naked body, especially the female body, was deemed an erotic act in itself. In a bawdy tale by Pietro Aretino from around 1520, the hero and heroine finally take their undershirts off after already having consummated their relationship several times. "We stripped naked, we kissed each other, and looked at each other all over."

As far as we can tell from the scant evidence surrounding the origins of Correggio's painting of Danaë, it was most likely commissioned by a military leader, Federico II Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua. It was one of a series of four canvases showing the rape of beautiful mortals by Zeus. All four of these paintings by Correggio are extant: Ganymede, looking at the audience as he soars upward, **clinging on to Zeus as an eagle**; Io, swooning in the embrace of **the god as a soft grey cloud**; and Leda, **who holds the god as a swan between her legs, his long neck nestled between her breasts**.

Probably made as a gift for the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V, these images call to mind the bawdy male bonding familiar in letters between male aristocrats of this period, letters that discuss sexual exploits and the subjugation of beautiful young women. More than this, in an era when vanquished cities were often personified as yielding women, it also aligns the sexual conquests of Zeus with the actual conquests of Charles V, who, by 1520, was head of the largest empire ever known.

Powerful men expressing their power through sexuality is a story we still recognize. In fact, the idea of the "male gaze," first articulated by film historian Laura Mulvey, is useful for articulating the unstated gender dynamics in this type of image. This idea is not just about reflecting masculine views of the world, but also about outlining the perimeters of ideal behavior for women. Feminine beauty is equated in this image (and others like it) with passivity, submissiveness, and being a willing accomplice to one's own oppression.



Figure **13.7.1.66**: Jean Bourdichon, Bathsheba Bathing from the *Hours of Louis XII*, 1498–99. Tempera colors and gold on parchment, 9 9/16 x 6 11/16 in. (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**, Ms. 79, recto)

In much of Europe in the Renaissance and early modern period, it was understood that one of the best outcomes for a victim of rape was to marry her attacker. It was also believed by many that female orgasm was necessary for conception, so pregnancy resulting from rape was at some level a sign of female acquiescence. These ideas have not gone away.

Danaë, locked in a tower by her father, escapes through being raped by Zeus; this could be a metaphor for the lived experience of many Renaissance women, whose choices were largely dependent on the men they were associated with.



Figure **13.7.1.67**: Hans Baldung Grien, *Two Witches*, 1523. Oil on bass wood, 30 13/16 × 23 11/16 in. (**Städel Museum**, Frankfurt am Main)

Not all paintings in the ***Renaissance Nude*** exhibition show women as the docile recipients of male predation. There are images of beautiful, passive young men, and dominant naked women too. Culture is not simple, and the reading of imagery is always complex. However, this exhibition does not merely expect us to bask in the beauty of images by old masters, but prompts audiences to look, and look again, at objects that may seem familiar to us, and to ask difficult questions about how culture feeds into stereotypes that can be profoundly harmful. Above all, it seeks to challenge long-held assumptions about the Renaissance nude.

This essay first appeared on ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0)

Additional resources

Learn more about the Getty Museum's exhibition about the renaissance nude

Read more about the nude in the Middles Ages and Renaissance on the Heilbrunn Timeline

The Renaissance Nude, ed. Thomas Kren, Jill Burke, and Stephen J. Campbell (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2018)

Confronting power and violence in the renaissance nude

by DR. SHERRY LINDQUIST



Figure 13.7.1.68: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Pictures of nude women confront us in art museums, advertisements, movies—seemingly everywhere. And yet when women's bodies are unclothed in situations not intentionally designed for the visual pleasure of heterosexual male onlookers—while feeding an infant, or during a quick change to provide relief to an athlete during a match—social disapproval is more likely to follow. The special space geared to the "male gaze" carved out for certain kinds of erotic imagery in Western culture is well over 500 years old: it was explicitly theorized and codified in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Renaissance artist **Titian**, for example, played a major role in popularizing a type of female nude that has become familiar to us, the centerfold. A woman is shown naked, with soft, almost boneless, flesh, splayed out across the front of the picture plane, luxurious tresses contrasting with a complete lack of body hair. The centerfold either invites the viewer with a come-hither look or averts her gaze so that the viewer can indulge in the voyeuristic pleasure of seeing without being seen.

Male nudes in the Renaissance, by contrast, were muscled, active, confident, athletic. Michelangelesque male nudes personify masculine power in the world, as exemplified by this bronze sculpture of the Greek hero Hercules and the giant Antaeus, which appears in the exhibition **The Renaissance Nude**.



Figure **13.7.1.69**: Antico, *Hercules and Antaeus*, c. 1519, bronze, 17 inches high (KHM-Museumsverband / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

This exhibition asks us to think about the cultural implications and real-world consequences of representing and displaying the unclothed body and offers an opportunity to have much-needed discussions about the complicated, difficult legacy of the European convention of representing the nude. The #MeToo movement is forcing us to reassess many aspects of our cultural heritage that, upon second look, do not seem as harmless, as acceptable, as admirable, as beautiful, or as "cultured" as they did before.

This post offers four lenses through which twenty-first-century viewers might critically examine the nude in Renaissance art.

The nude and the objectification of women

Just as the first readers of *Playboy* claimed to read it for the articles, the men promoting Humanism in the Renaissance attempted to intellectualize the genre of the pliant female nude. Well into our era, male art historians such as Erwin Panofsky still encouraged us to see the female nudes of the Renaissance as Humanist meditations on Neoplatonic philosophy, to think of them principally as Ideas that are only incidentally shown enfleshed in smoking-hot bods.

Take the *Venus Anadyomene* by Titian. It shows the "foam-born" goddess rising from the waves as a woman at her bath, coyly glancing to the side as she wrings her hair away from her body so as to expose her fleshy breasts and pubis. By taking on this subject, Titian compares himself to Apelles, the Greek artist lauded by Ovid and others for his famous painting of Venus rising naked from the sea. She may be an erudite reference to ancient sources and learned discourses about fame, nature, divinity, and immortality, but she is also Titian's erotic ideal.



Figure **13.7.1.70**: Titian, *Venus Rising from the Sea (Venus Anadyomene)*, c. 1520, oil on canvas, 29 13/16 × 22 11/16 inches (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh)

By men and for men, such imagery was not designed for the female gaze; rare exceptions notwithstanding, the Renaissance nude did not intentionally engage female agency, subjectivity, desire, and sexuality. Born to stimulate homosocial philosophizing, the Renaissance nude shaped notions of masculinity, forcing male viewers to contend with complex feelings like lust, and uneasiness about that lust.

The nude and violence against women

Masculine anxieties embodied in the Renaissance nude had terrifying consequences for real-life women. Images of bewitching Venuses were not too distant in the minds of the men who commissioned and created them from women they thought to be actual witches—they believed them to be in league with the devil to tempt, emasculate, and damn Christian men.

The overlap between idealized female nudes and demonic temptresses is illustrated by Hans Baldung Grien's *Two Witches*. There's nothing in particular about the bodies themselves—posed to provide titillating front and back views of fleshy females—that distinguish them from the idealized nudes that spiced up the scholarly conversations taking place in male-dominated Humanist circles. A few strategic embellishments suggest that women are easily changed into dangerous creatures: a shift in palette towards unnatural fiery hues; the addition of animal and supernatural familiars (goat and *putto*); a nasty creature housed in an alchemical vessel; a storm symbolically brewing in the background.



Figure **13.7.1.71**: Hans Baldung Grien, *Two Witches*, 1523, oil on bass wood, 30 13/16 × 23 11/16 inches (Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main)

Not only were witches a familiar subject among the Humanists in early-sixteenth-century Strasbourg, where Baldung Grien worked, but the artist's father was also a jurist who worked for the bishop of the surrounding diocese. In this diocese 5,000 women were burned for witchcraft between 1515 and 1535. Art historian Joseph Koerner draws the conclusion that by confirming "the misogynist double fantasy that all witches are women and all women are potentially witches," [1] Baldung Grien's nudes exacerbated the misogynist atmosphere that resulted in the massacre of thousands of women.

The exhibition *The Renaissance Nude* provides examples of a whole range of subjects favored in the Renaissance that blamed and vilified women while simultaneously putting their beauty on display for the male gaze: not only witches, but Eve, Bathsheba, pagan goddesses, and personifications of Vanity and Lust. The not-so-subtle subtext is this: when confronting such sexy, tempting beauty, how can men be expected to resist?

"Heroic rape" was a common motif in the Renaissance and beyond, depicting women as vulnerable, even coyly receptive, to nonconsensual sex. [2] In Correggio's painting of *Danaë* in the exhibition, the princess reclines naked in her luxurious bed, eyes cast down modestly as Jupiter's acolyte, Eros, exposes her languid body to the god, who descends in the form of a golden cloud to ravish her. Such images sanitized and normalized rape. They functioned for the powerful men who commissioned them as a way to assert dominance in various social, political, and personal contexts.



Figure **13.7.1.72**: Correggio, *Danaë*, 1530, oil on canvas, 62 3/16 × 74 7/16 inches (Galleria Borghese)

The nude and white, male power

To understand how the Renaissance nude reinforced the power of white European men—to the detriment of others—let's look more closely at what "the nude" really is. In this essay I have been using the words "naked," "nude," and "unclothed" as more or less interchangeable, but they are not exactly the same. "The nude" is a certain type of **idealized** body that does not exist in reality.

The most influential modern apologist for the nude was Sir Kenneth Clark, the famed National Gallery director, Oxford professor, and host of the BBC series *Civilisation*. Clark's book *The Nude* has never gone out of print, and in 2016 was **#27** on the *Guardian*'s list of best nonfiction books. According to Clark, the nude is "the body re-formed." As he wrote, "in the greatest age of painting, the nude inspired the greatest works." [3]

Female artists do not appear in Clark's book, or in his concept of great art. Why not? Art historian Linda Nochlin pointed out that in most of modern European history women were barred from the kind of training that enabled them to make art considered by contemporaries to be great. [4] They were not permitted to draw from live models, and thus lacked opportunity to be trained to create the paintings most valued—and likely to be recognized as "great"—by academics and patrons: historical, mythological, and religious subjects demanding artistic mastery of the human body. Nochlin's feminist reading resists the dominant narrative of the great artist, the "genius" who is gendered male in patriarchal societies. She gives many examples of exceptional female artists not recognized as "great" during their lifetimes due to structural inequalities, but whose work deserves reappraisal.

Neither does the Renaissance nude as a construct acknowledge the agency and personhood of people of color. When subjects of color were represented without clothes in European art of this era, it was typically to emphasize European ideas about their superiority over non-European savages (including "noble" savages). Tellingly, the very first paragraph of Clark's book, *The Nude*, sets up a contrast between the "great" art of colonial powers and the "artless" visual traditions of "islanders"—in other words, of non-European cultures.

Art historian Jill Burke **has suggested** that Antonio Pollaiuolo's famous *Battle of the Nudes* from the 1470s was inspired by an account of hand-to-hand combat among Senegalese nobles written by the Venetian explorer and slave trader Alvise Cadamosto. The men in Pollauiolo's print brandish the short, curved Moorish swords described by Cadamosto, and their fierce expressions and violent actions seem to conform to Cadamosto's characterization of them as "daring and bestial."



Figure **13.7.1.73**: Antonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of the Nudes*, 1470–75, engraving, 16 7/8 × 24 5/16 inches (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

The Renaissance nude as a category is potentially harmful as traditionally understood because it privileges the heterosexual European male viewer and promotes a narrow range of what type of body is to be considered desirable: youthful, healthy, able-bodied, light-skinned. *The Renaissance Nude*—the exhibition—is conceived more broadly, and offers a valuable opportunity to reassess.

The nude and transgressive viewing

We can create new meanings for the Renaissance nude by acknowledging that such imagery could have been, and might still be, read in ways that were not necessarily intended.

For example, although European societies in the early modern period outlawed and punished homosexual acts, art could nevertheless serve same-sex attraction. It is well documented that prominent Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo engaged in passionate same-sex relationships—even though we cannot always know whether such relationships were consummated sexually.

Certain Renaissance nudes, while ostensibly reinforcing public heteronormativity, offered opportunities for a queer, or transgressive, visual experience. The half-nude flagellants that the Limbourg Brothers painted in the Duke of Berry's personal prayer book in the exhibition enable viewers to admire handsome youths in vulnerable positions; at the time the duke was criticized for inappropriate relationships with young men—possibly the Limbourg Brothers themselves. [5]

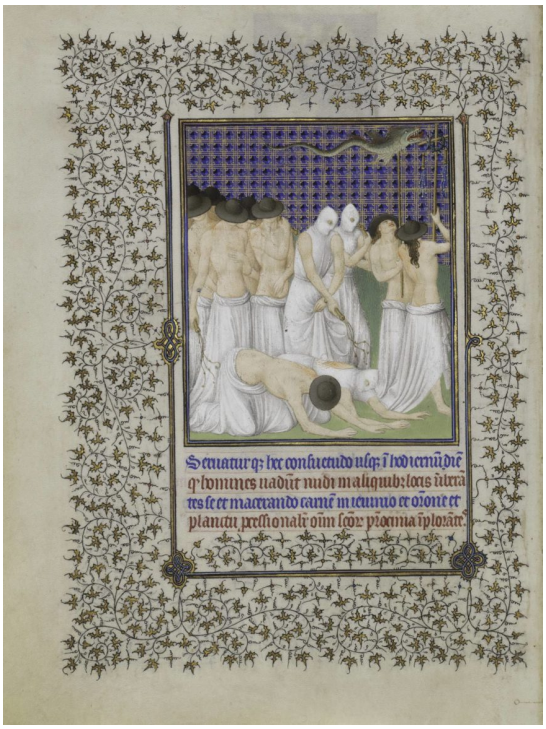


Figure **13.7.1.74**: The Limbourg Brothers, *Procession of Flagellants* in *The Belles Heures of Jean de France, duc de Berry*, 1405–1408/1409, tempera, gold, and ink on vellum, 9 3/8 x 6 11/16 inches (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection)

John Berger, the author of the influential book and BBC series *Ways of Seeing*, thought it possible to recognize in some imagery of naked bodies "the element of banality…which distinguishes between voyeur and lover." [6] A revelation of a woman at her daily prayer by Albrecht Dürer might qualify. Certain details are moving precisely because of their ordinariness: her loosely joined fingers, the folds of skin behind her knees, the uneven contours of her ample hips and thighs.



Figure **13.7.1.75**: Albrecht Dürer, *Female Nude Praying*, c. 1500, pen and brown ink on laid paper; 21.5 × 13.6 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

As the exhibition shows in numerous works, Renaissance artists explored the meanings of aging, suffering, pregnant, and ascetic bodies, imbuing the human body with an emotional power very different from that evoked by nudes of muscular heroes or erotic goddesses.

An alternative approach to the Renaissance nude

We need not enter museums ready to celebrate products of artistic "geniuses" as torchbearers for idealized "civilizations."

Should we not evaluate masterpieces in the history of art with an informed critical eye?

Should we not experiment with seeing artworks against the grain—to enjoy them, perhaps, in ways their creators did not intend and might not have approved of?

Should we not form fresh insights about a seductive and destructive aesthetic and use them in new creative works that shape more expansive, accepting, diverse, generous, inclusive, and egalitarian notions of what is beautiful and erotic, poignant and moving, about human bodies?

Yes. We should.

This essay first appeared in ***the iris*** (CC BY 4.0).

Notes:

1. Joseph Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (1993), pp. 328–9.
2. Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The "Heroic" Tradition and Its Alternatives* (1999).
3. *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, 1984; reprint 1956, p. 3.
4. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," Linda Nochlin, 1973.
5. Sherry C. M. Lindquist, "Masculinist Devotion: Flaying and Flagellation in the Belles Heures," in *Flaying in the Premodern World* (2017).
6. *Ways of Seeing* (1972), p. 61.

13.7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic

Italy: 14th century

A new naturalism appears in the art of this period.

1300s

Beginner's guide: Italy in the 14th century

A new naturalism appears in this period, known as the Late Gothic.

1300 - 1400

This period sees beautiful gold-filled paintings, but also the horror of the Black Death, which arrived on European shores in 1348. The pandemic ended up killing approximately half of Europe's population. The Black Death radically disrupted society, but did the social, political and religious upheaval created by the plague contribute to the Renaissance?

Introduction to Late Gothic art

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.7.2.1**: Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear-Bearer)* or *The Canon*, c. 450-40 B.C.E., ancient Roman marble copy of a lost Greek bronze, 211 cm, found in Pompeii (Archaeological Museum, Naples)

The human body

We have bodies that exist in space, and this has been a fundamental challenge for artists through history.

The figure

In ancient Greece and Rome, artists embraced the realities of the human body and the way that our bodies move in space (naturalism). For the next thousand years though, after Europe transitioned from a pagan culture to a Christian one in the middle ages, the physical was largely ignored in favor of the heavenly, spiritual realm. Medieval human figures were still rendered, but they were elongated, flattened and static—in other words, they were made to function symbolically.

Space



Figure **13.7.2.2**: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, Altarpiece of St. Francis, c. 1235 (Church of San Francesco, Pescia, Italy)

Instead of earthly settings, we often see flat, gold backgrounds. There were some exceptions along the way, but it's not until the end of the 13th century in Italy that artists began to (re)explore the physical realities of the human figure in space. Here, they begin the long process of figuring out how space can become a rational, measurable environment in which their newly naturalistic figures can sit, stand and move.

Florence & Siena

In Italy, there were two city-states where we can see this renewed interest in the human figure and space: Florence and Siena. The primary artists in Siena were Duccio, the Lorenzetti Brothers, and Simone Martini. And in Florence, we look to the art of Cimabue and Giotto.



Figure **13.7.2.3**: Giotto, *Lamentation*, c. 1305, fresco (Scrovegni Chapel, Padua)

Whereas medieval artists often preferred a flat, gold background, these artists began to construct earthly environments for their figures to inhabit. We see landscapes and architecture in their paintings, though these are often represented schematically. These Florentine and Sienese artists employed diagonal lines that appear to recede and in this way convey a simple illusion of space, though that space is far from rational to our eyes. When we look closely, we can see that the space would be impossible to move through, and that the scale of the architecture often doesn't match the size of the figures.

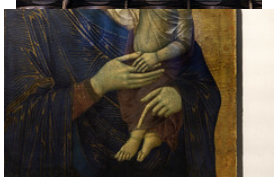
A word of caution

Be careful here! While it is tempting to think of this movement toward naturalism as "progress" it is important to remember that this art is not less good, nor even less "advanced" than what comes later in the Renaissance (you might think of Leonardo or Michelangelo). Art is always a response to the needs of the moment and for the late 13th and early 14th century, symbols of the spiritual remained potent systems for understanding.

Additional resources:

For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

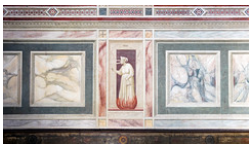
















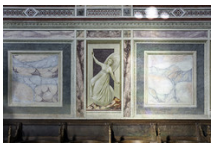








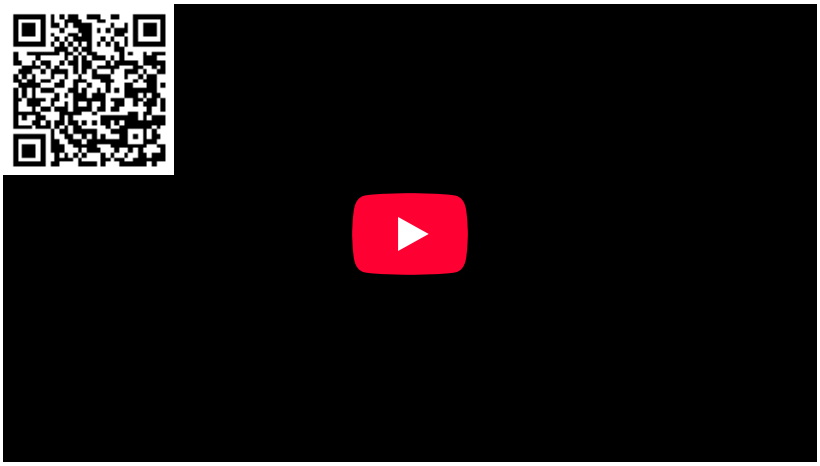




Figure 13.7.2.4: More Smarthistory images…

Distorting the Madonna in Medieval art

by TED-ED



Video 13.7.2.1: Video from TED-Ed. Speaker: James Earle.

The Black Death

by LOUISA WOODVILLE



Figure 13.7.2.5: Fresco in the former Abbey of Saint-André-de-Lavaudieu, France, 14th century, depicting the plague personified as a woman, she "carries arrows that strike those around her, often in the neck and armpits—in other words, places where the buboes commonly appeared" (Franco Mormando, *Piety and Plague: from Byzantium to the Baroque*, Truman State University Press, 2007).

1348

The Black Death arrived on European shores in 1348. By 1350, the year it retreated, it had felled a quarter to half of the region's population. In 1362, 1368, and 1381, it struck again—as it would periodically well into the 18th century.

The contemporary Sienese chronicler, Agnolo di Tura del Grasso, described its terror. A victim first experiences flu-like symptoms, and then sees a "swell beneath their armpits and in their groins." Agnolo himself buried his five children with his own hands. He also lost his wife.

> ***The plague hit hard and fast. People lay ill little more than two or three days and died suddenly….He who was well one day was dead the next and being carried to his grave," writes the Carmelite friar Jean de Venette in his 14th century French chronicle. From his native Picardy, Jean witnessed the disease's impact in northern France; Normandy, for example, lost 70 to 80 percent of its population. Italy was equally devastated. The Florentine author Boccaccio recounts how that city's citizens "dug for each graveyard a huge trench, in which they laid the corpses as they arrived by hundreds at a time, piling them up tier upon tier as merchandise is stowed on a ship.***

Trade was to blame

Growing stability in Europe in the late middle ages made possible extensive trade between East and West and within Europe itself. Italian city-states such as Venice and Genoa had trading ports in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black sea—trade that made these cities among the wealthiest cities in Europe. Most historians today generally agree that the plague was likely spread through Eurasia via these trade routes by parasites carried on the backs of rodents. The bacterium Yersinia pestis (and not all historians agree this was the culprit) likely traveled from China to the northwestern shores of the Caspian Sea, then part of the Mongol Empire and by the spring of 1346, Italian merchants in the Crimea, specifically the Genoese-dominated city of Kaffa (today Feodosiya in the Ukraine) brought the disease west. Rats carrying infected fleas boarded ships bound for Constantinople (today Istanbul in Turkey), capital of the Byzantine Empire. Inhabitants there were sickened by the plague by early July.

From these Greek-speaking lands, the plague spread to North Africa and the Middle East with terrible consequences; by autumn 1347, it had reached the French port of Marseilles and progressed both north and west. By early November, the Italian city-states of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice—commercial hubs for European trade—had been struck.

Most of the rest of Europe followed in short order. The disease spread along the active trade routes that northern Italian and Flemish merchants had developed. London and Bruges then communicated the disease via busy shipping lanes to the Nordic countries and the Baltic region (aided by a trading partnership known as the Hanseatic League). Western crusaders seeking to attack the Holy Land prompted innovations in shipbuilding and these larger and faster ships carried large quantities of goods over extensive trade networks— but they also carried the deadly pathogen.

"God is deaf nowadays and will not hear us"

The pandemic ended up killing approximately half of Europe's population, indiscriminate of people's wealth, social standing, or religious piety. Survivors "were like persons distraught and almost without feeling," writes Agnolo, a despair echoed throughout Europe. "God is deaf nowadays and will not hear us. And for our guilt he grinds good men to dust," wrote the late 14th century English cleric, William Langland, in his epic poem "Piers Plowman."

With so many dead and dying, patterns that had kept medieval society stable were replaced by hostility, confusion, greed, remorse, abuse—and, at times, genuine caring. Contemporary chronicles tell of eruptions of violence, "Christians massacred Jews in Germany and other parts of the world where Jews lived, and many thousands were burned everywhere, indiscriminately," wrote Jean de Venette, describing a ritualized attacks against Jews who became scapegoats.

Some Christians became more pious, believing that their piety might endear them to a God who they believed had sent the plague to punish them for their sins. Texts from this time describe Penitent pilgrims, at times flagellating themselves with whips, crowding the roads. Others reacted by assuming a no-holds-barred attitude toward life, giving "themselves over to pleasures: monks, priests, nuns and lay men and women all enjoyed themselves….Everyone thought themselves rich because he had escaped and regained the world," according to Agnolo.

Economic impact

The Black Death turned the economy upside-down. It disrupted trade and put manufacturing on hold as skilled artisans and merchants died by the thousands—not to mention the customers who bought their wares. Workers' wages skyrocketed as arable land lay fallow; landlords, desperate for people to work their land, were forced to renegotiate farmers' wages. Famine followed. Widespread death eroded the strict hereditary class divisions that had, for centuries, bound peasants to land owned by local lords.

People struggled to understand what was happening. In Western Europe a terrified populace often turned to their Christian faith. As a result, the Church became wealthier as many of those stricken, in an effort to assure a place in heaven, willed their property to the Church. But the authority of the Church also suffered. as some pointed to the "astrological skies that revealed Saturn in the house of Jupiter" as the cause of the tragedy.

Did the Black Death contribute to the Renaissance?

The Black Death radically disrupted society, but did the social, political and religious upheaval created by the plague contribute to the Renaissance? Some historians say yes. With so much land readily available to survivors, the rigid hierarchical structure that marked pre-plague society became more fluid. The Medici family, important patrons of Italian Renaissance culture, originated in the rural area of Mugello in Tuscany and moved to Florence soon after the plague. They initially established their fortune in the wool trade and then branched out into banking. As the family achieved wealth and power, they promoted such artists as Filippo Lippi, Sandro Botticelli, and Michelangelo—not to mention producing four popes and two regent queens of France. Would such mobility have been possible without the social and economic upheaval caused by the Black Death? Historians will likely debate this question for many years.

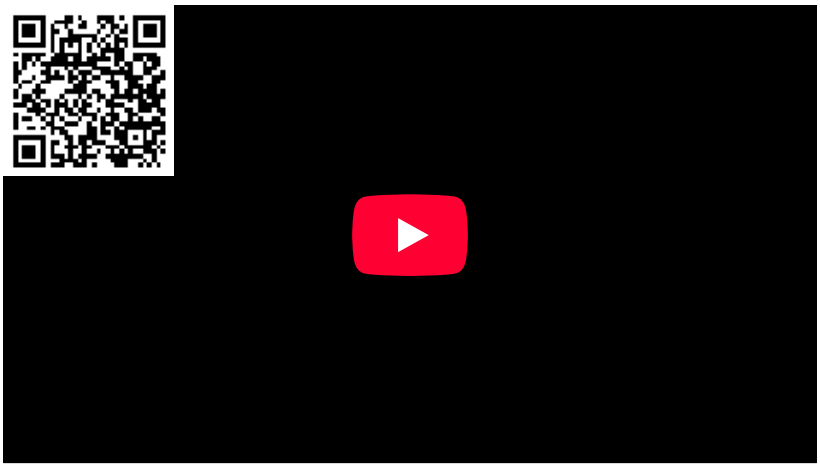
Additional resources:

Secrets of the Black Death (Nature video)

Primary documents on the plague including Agnolo di Turo del Grasso and Jean de Venette

The conservator's eye: Taddeo Gaddi, Saint Julian

by COREY D'AUGUSTINE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.2.2**: Taddeo Gaddi, *Saint Julian*, 1340, tempera on wood, gold ground, 54 x 36.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

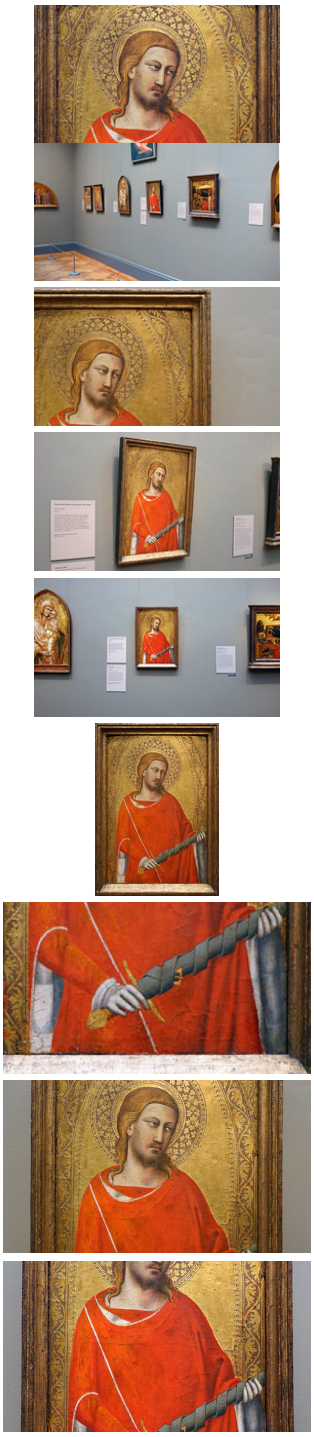
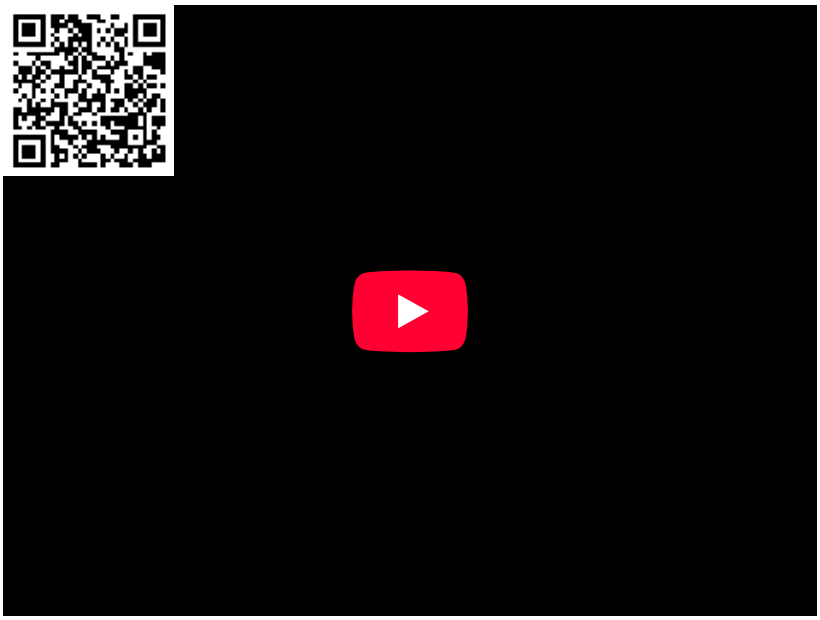


Figure **13.7.2.6**: More Smarthistory images…

Gold-ground panel painting

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video **13.7.2.3**: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Wood panel was the support most often used for painting before canvas replaced it at the end of the 1500s. Artists applied gold ground and expensive pigments to the most splendid panel paintings.

Remaking a fourteenth-century triptych

by KRISTIN HOLDER

Today art supplies are available at the touch of a finger: swipe left to choose from a rainbow of paint colors, swipe right to see precut, primed canvas or boards, and click to add brushes in a dizzying array of shapes and sizes to your basket. But imagine having to make everything from scratch! Until just before the Industrial Revolution, artists and their apprentices just about did it all: they made their own glue, extracted colors from discarded dyed clothing, fashioned their own brushes and drawing tools, and ground pigments in fresh binding media to make paint.



Figure **13.7.2.7**: Joannes Stradanus, “Color Olivi” (or The Invention of Oil Painting), engraved and published by Philips Galle in *Nova Reperta* (“Modern Inventions”), c. 1600, engraving on paper, 20.3 × 27 cm (**Art Institute of Chicago**)

Today, concern about the potential loss of this kind of practical knowledge makes the reconstruction of paintings using traditional methods an important exercise for students of painting conservation. It helps us better understand how paintings were made in the past, as well as why they appear the way that they do now. Most importantly, having a hands-on understanding of artists’ materials informs the decisions that we make when conserving paintings for future generations.

What follows is a step-by-step description of my attempt to re-make a small portable triptych. I was able to study the original painting, *Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion* by a follower of **Duccio** that was in the Conservation Center for treatment. By following a fourteenth century handbook for artists, Cennino Cennini’s *Libro dell’arte*, I learned the various stages of making the triptych using traditional methods, including carving the wood, making gesso, water gilding, burnishing, punchwork, and egg **tempera** painting.



Figure **13.7.2.8**: Follower of Duccio, *Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion*, c. 1300–1325, tempera on wood panel, 26.4 x 42.5 cm (**Kress Collection, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art**)

Making the wood panels



Figure **13.7.2.9**: Reconstruction drawing after fresco of a woodworker's workshop. Piero di Paccio, *Noah and his Sons building the Ark*, 1389–91, fresco (Composanto Monumentale, Pisa) engraving by Giovanni Paolo Losinio, *Pitture a Fresco del Camposanto di Pisa disegnate da Giuseppe Rossi ed incise dal Prof. Cav. G. P. Lasinio figlio*, plate 20, 1832 (**Victoria & Albert Museum**)

In early **Renaissance Italy**, specialized artisans such as woodworkers, stone carvers, and painters were members of separate guilds, which regulated their activities. Members of the *Arte di Maestri del Legname*, or Woodworkers Guild, prepared panels for painters, but they also made *cassone*, boxes, and cabinets. Painters are known to have joined the Woodworkers Guild in order to have the right to carve their own panels. Because the *Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion* comprises three panels and was joined with specialized hinges, it was probably carved in the workshop of a carpenter.

I chose to carve the three panels out of cottonwood (*Populus tremulus*) because it is in the same family as the most commonly found wood in Italian paintings, poplar (*Populus alba*), and shares many of the same properties. The panels are rectangular and flat, and the central panel has a recessed, or carved out, simple frame. It was a fun challenge only using hand tools, some of which I bought in Florence and others that were handed down to me by my father, who was also a woodworker.



Figure **13.7.2.10**: Left: shaping the three poplar panels for reconstruction; right: central panel with the carved-out frame (photographs by author)



Figure 13.7.2.11: Tools used to shape wood (left to right): block plane, sole plane, ruler, mallet, flat chisel, straight gouge, curved gouge, awl, rasp, and cabinet scraper (photograph by author)



Figure 13.7.2.12: Splayed hinges on the back of the original triptych (left) and reconstruction (right). Photographs by author

The back of the original triptych was bare of paint and showed how the *gangherrelle* hinges that joined the panels had been drawn through them, bent, and hammered into the back of the wood. I was able to obtain traditional hinges made in Florence for my triptych and quickly realized that seeing this type of hardware in early Italian paintings signifies important characteristics, such as the triptych's function as a portable devotional object that could be closed and transported. Two candle burns on the back of the left wing confirmed that this triptych was likely used as a private **altar**.

The X-radiograph of the *Madonna and Child* triptych revealed the woven pattern of a textile, probably linen, layered between the wood and the gesso on each of the three panels (gesso is a layer of gypsum and glue that seals the wood and provides a smooth, bright white surface for drawing and painting on). This is just as Cennini instructed artists to do in *Il libro dell'arte*. So, a couple of days before I was ready to apply the gesso, I dipped three pieces of linen in warm glue and used my fingers to smooth them over the front of the panels. The textile helps to protect the paint layers from the wood when the wood expands or shrinks due to changes in humidity, but it also results in a specific craquelure (a network of fine cracks) pattern on the front: straight lines that are perpendicular to the grain of the wood.

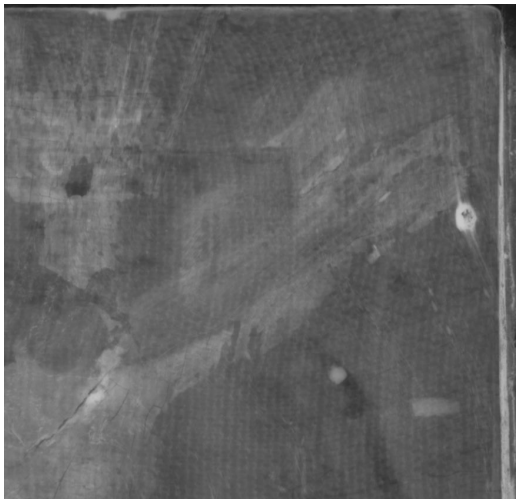


Figure **13.7.2.13**: Detail of X-radiograph of the left panel showing the pattern of a woven textile



Figure **13.7.2.14**: Reconstruction with one wing closed showing the linen glued onto the flat areas. Photograph by author

Gesso

Gesso is a layer of gypsum and glue that seals the wood and provides a smooth, bright white surface for drawing and painting on. It can take months to make: soaking the gypsum in water hydrates the molecules, making it into a moldable material that hardens, but does not shrink, upon drying.



Figure **13.7.2.15**: Left: making gesso, slaking and filtering the gypsum; center: scraping the gesso into a cake; right: the dried gesso cakes (photographs by author)

I mulled the dried gesso cakes with warm glue, so that the consistency was like that of a thin pancake batter. Then I applied a total of twelve coats of gesso, allowing each to dry until they felt cool to the touch, and making sure to sand and scrape the surface smooth between each coat. It was hard to resist touching the silky smooth surface, but I had to! The grease from my fingers would have made gilding and painting more difficult later on.



Figure **13.7.2.16**: Smoothing the dried gesso on the central panel with a cabinet scraper (photograph by author)

Transferring the drawing



Figure **13.7.2.17**: Left: detail of the Christ child in a visible photograph; right: infrared reflectograph showing changes to the position of the child's legs, drapery, and possibly the foot

Some drawing was visible under the paint by looking at the painting with a specialized infrared camera. The artist probably drew the image directly onto the prepared panel with a brush in a liquid medium, such as ink, without a preparatory drawing. Changes in the position of the Christ child's leg and drapery, or *pentimenti*, are further evidence of an improvisational drawing. A closer look reveals broad strokes of ink wash in the Madonna's drapery. This type of drawing had an important function: the colors applied over wash appeared darker without mixing large amounts of dark pigments into the colors.

For my triptych, I adapted a method of transferring drawings to canvas, walls, and copper plates for painting and engraving that has been used by artists for centuries. But rather than using a drawing, I printed out an image of the painting that was the exact size as the triptych. I rubbed charcoal on the back of the printer paper, and laid it gently down so that the charcoal side was on top of the gesso. I then used a sharp tool to outline the composition, and the pressure transferred the charcoal to the panels. I fixed the loose charcoal powder by going over it again with diluted black ink and gum arabic.

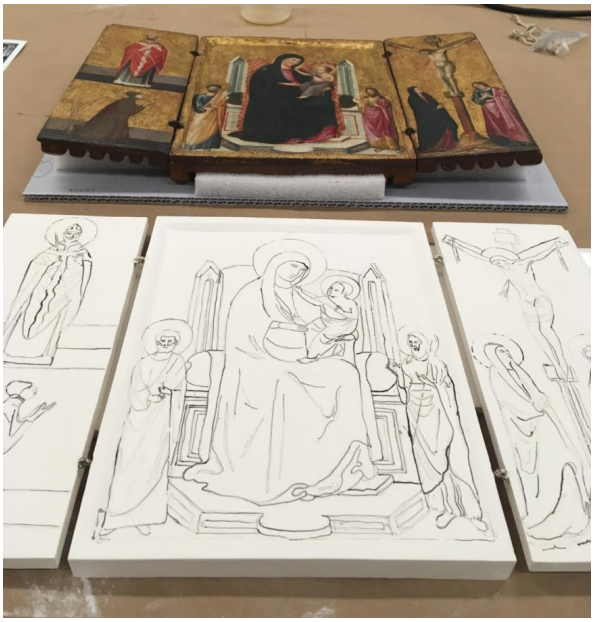


Figure 13.7.2.18: Front: reconstruction with the transferred drawing; back: the original triptych (photograph by author)

Gilding and punchwork

Many **Late Gothic Italian** paintings are instantly recognizable by their richly gilded and incised surfaces. This appearance connects them to their Byzantine precursors, icons. The brightly colored paint and gold leaf mimic the solid gold, silver, jewels, and other precious metals and stones described by Paul the Silentiary in 563 C.E. in his **poem** about the liturgical furnishings of **Hagia Sophia** in Constantinople (today Istanbul).

After I prepared the areas that I wanted to gild with clay bole, I brushed the bole with water and laid the sheets of gold leaf down with a gilder's tip (a type of brush) and knife. The sheets are usually all about the same size and slightly overlap each other so that no bole shows through. Sometimes you can see this overlap in paintings from the early Renaissance and can estimate the size of the gold leaf sheet that was originally used.



Figure 13.7.2.19: The reconstruction at three stages: with the drawing (center panel), with the bole (right), and after gilding (left). Photograph by author



Figure 13.7.2.20: Gilder's punches. Photo by author

One of the tricky parts of gilding is the ambient temperature and humidity in your workspace—Cennini advises that gilding should take place when it is "damp and rainy." Humidity increases the working time because the bole (after gilded) dries more slowly and allows extra time for burnishing, as well as incising and punching the gilt surface. When you try to punch into a gilt bole that is too wet, the gold can break, and if it's too dry the bole can flake off.

The only punchwork on my triptych was a simple round shape, but the other tooling in the haloes and borders was all hand-drawn, which requires a lot of time to execute. And I happened to be working on my reconstruction indoors in the summer, which means air conditioning and dry air (not the damp atmosphere advised by Cennini): not a lot of time to work! So I experimented with incising the decorations in the bole *prior* to gilding to see if they would still be visible. Fortunately this worked and I was able to incise first, lay down the gold leaf, and then burnish the gold to a high polish.



Figure **13.7.2.21**: Left: detail of the halo of Mary on the Crucifixion panel in the original; center: detail of halo incised in bole; right: halo after gilding in the reconstruction (photos by author)

Preparing and applying paint

Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion is painted in egg tempera, a water-based paint medium that has a durable, opaque finish with a slight sheen. Because it dries quickly, the paint must be applied in quick, short strokes and built up for coverage. These hatch marks of overlapping color are characteristic of tempera paintings developed during the Late Gothic and into the Italian Renaissance.



Figure **13.7.2.22**: Punchwork visible in the halo, and hatchmarks visible in Christ's face (detail), Taddeo Gaddi, *Saint Julian*, 1340s, tempera on wood, gold ground, 54 x 36.2 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Egg tempera is prepared by first grinding powdered pigments (azurite, earth colors, red lead, vermilion, red lake, and lead white) in a small amount of water. This paste is then scooped into a small sea shell and tempered with the egg yolk.



Figure **13.7.2.23**: Painting the triptych with traditional pigments while looking at the original in the background as a guide for the choice of pigments and their application. Photograph by author

Working quickly in small batches of color, I followed Cennini's instruction for painting, first laying in mid-tones of color followed by highlights (mixing color with white) and shadows (mixing with small amounts of black or brown). This surprisingly simple method was complicated by the artist's use of pure red lake glazes (pigment made from from organic dyestuffs, instead of minerals) in areas of deep shadow, such as the blue drapery of the Cardinal saint and the Christ child's drapery. Instead of mixing colors to achieve a darker color (which would have resulted in a muddy mess), red paint was glazed over blue to add depth and intensity.



Figure **13.7.2.24**: Glazes of red lake paint in areas of shadow in the blues make them appear more vivid and the forms more sculptural. Photo by author

Conclusion

Having worked with these materials translates to better understanding why this painting looks the ways it does now, and also how to care for it in the future. One of the most obvious differences to me is the brilliance of the colors in the reconstruction. Because I was able to study the original and chose the same pigments, I have a new appreciation for the range of colors that might have been desired in the fourteenth century. The intensity of color and brilliance of the gold must have been dazzling when surrounded by candles. Above all, I have come away in awe of the skill and knowledge required to make the *Madonna and Child* triptych.



Figure **13.7.2.25**: Reconstruction (left) of the Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion (right). Photo by author

Additional resources

Art in the Making – Italian painting before 1400

The Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Cennino Cennini, *Il libro dell'arte*, trans. Daniel V. Thompson (New York: Dover Publications, 1933)

Looking at Paintings: A Guide to Technical Terms / eds. Tiarna Doherty and Anne T Woollett (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2009)

Jo Kirby and David Bomford, *Italian Painting before 1400* (London: The National Gallery, 1989)

Skaug, Erling. *Punch Marks from Giotto to Fra Angelico: Attribution, Chronology, and Workshop Relationships in Tuscan Panel Painting: with Particular Consideration to Florence, c.1330–1430* (Oslo: IIC, Nordic Group, the Norwegian section, 1994)

Florence

Florence in the Late Gothic Period (1300s)

In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Florence's population doubled. Bankers and merchants replaced the old noble families as the center of power.

1300s

Beginner's guide

The city-state of Florence in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was a city on the rise (until the black death).

Florence in the Late Gothic period, an introduction

by DR. JOANNA MILK MAC FARLAND



Figure **13.7.2.26**: View of Florence (detail), Unknown Artist, *Madonna della Misericordia*, 1342 (Museo del Bigallo, Florence)

Boom times in Florence

The city-state of Florence in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was a city on the rise. Urbanization was experienced by all Italian cities at this time and Florence's population doubled in size. But more than almost any other town, Florence saw an explosion in international trade and innovations in finance. A new class of bankers and merchants replaced the old noble families as the center of power, developing a complex, barely democratic social structure that hung in a careful balance.



Figure 13.7.2.27: View of the Palazzo Vecchio, 1299-1310, designed by Arnolfo di Cambio

Art and architecture helped define the relationships between individuals and the bewildering array of civic, professional, and religious institutions that made up the fabric of Florentine society. Thanks to the city's newfound wealth, impressive communal building projects were undertaken, like the building of a new seat of government, the Palazzo della Signoria.

Church and state

During this building boom, church and state were anything but separate. Public funds were used to erect many of the religious centers, including the cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore. Subsidies were even given over to the large new churches needed to accommodate growing audiences for the sermons of the mendicant orders (monks that had forsaken worldly possessions and that lived and preached in the cities). The largest of these mendicant behemoths were the Franciscan church of Santa Croce and the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella.



Figure 13.7.2.28: View of the nave of the church of Santa Croce in Florence

Guilds and private patrons, too

Happily, the decoration of buildings throughout the city fell to a widening range of patrons. Professional guilds (somewhat like our trade unions) were often in charge of decorating public spaces with painting and, increasingly, architectural sculpture. Groups of priests, nuns, and confraternities (organizations of laypeople that gathered to perform acts of charity or sing hymns) hired artists to create devotional images and lavish books of hymns. For the first time, wealthy individuals and families could even purchase the rights to use and decorate chapels within a church.

A more personal spirituality

But art was not all about public displays of wealth or works of communal beautification. Faith and spirituality became more deeply personal even as they became more public. More than in previous centuries, images played an important role in focusing a person's devotion to Christ, Mary and the saints—in imagining their lives or picturing how they might appear in all their heavenly glory. In fact, images didn't just maintain relationships within Florentine society, they built imagined relationships between viewers and the sacred figures they portrayed. This affected more than just the amount of art people needed; it affected what they wanted it to look like. And in the course of the fourteenth century, what they wanted it to look like would change dramatically.

The Italo-Byzantine style



Figure **13.7.2.29**: Coppo di Marcovaldo and his son Salerno, *Crucifixion*, 1274 (Pistoia Cathedral)

Like the art of most Italian cities at the time, thirteenth-century art in Florence was heavily influenced by Byzantine art (the art of the Byzantine Empire). Images from this period are in fact often described as "Italo-Byzantine," a label that reflects how artists such as Coppo di Marcovaldo (and many more artists whose names we don't know) adapted the foreign style into something altogether Italian.

In painting, this meant emulating the way figures were strongly outlined against glittering gold backgrounds like those seen in Byzantine icons and mosaics. These ornate images seem to directly engage the viewer by pressing whatever is being depicted by the artist to the surface of the painting or mosaic. Figures are formed out of abstract but expressive shapes designed to identify various body parts or items of clothing while creating beautiful patterns. In narrative images, each story plays out across the field of representation instead of within it, eliminating the need for a sense of depth.

A new style emerges



Figure **13.7.2.30**: Cimabue, *Santa Trinita Madonna (Madonna and Child Enthroned)*, 1280-90, tempera on panel (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

During the late thirteenth century, artists in a handful of Italian cities began to move away from the Italo-Byzantine style. The Roman artist Pietro Cavallini created frescoes and mosaics featuring solid, monumentalizing figures; the sculptor Nicola Pisano studied ancient Roman sculpture; Sienese artists seem to have broken new ground in exploring perspective.

Meanwhile, back in Florence, Cimabue's paintings showed more interest in depicting space and modeling figures with gradations of light and shade. These ideas spread as artists travelled throughout Italy and southern France in search of work, creating a network of artistic centers that all exerted influence on one another.

Giotto

As the new century opened, the painter Giotto di Bondone observed many of these currents and forged them into something distinctively Florentine and enormously influential.



Figure **13.7.2.31**: Giotto di Bondone, *The Ognissanti Madonna*, 1306-10, tempera on panel, 128 x 80 1/4″ or 325 x 204 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Where earlier works of art engage us with the embellished splendor of the heavenly, Giotto's paintings capture our attention by representing holy figures and stories as if in a majestic but earthly realm. Bold modeling of draperies and the bodies beneath them gives his figures greater volume and a sense of sculptural relief. Clever kinds of perspective create the illusion that a space is opening up in front of the viewer, as if we might be peering onto a stage.



Figure **13.7.2.32**: Giotto, *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, c. 1305 (Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua)

Perhaps just as importantly, Giotto was a master of visual storytelling—a skill evident in his most important surviving project, the frescoes in the Arena Chapel in Padua (c. 1305). Here the monumentality of the figures, the quiet dignity of their movements, and the way architectural and landscape settings seem to echo the action all conjure up a solemn aura of the sacred. Like many of the narrative paintings attributed to Giotto, the scenes use closely observed human gestures and careful composition to enhance the drama and emotion of the moment depicted.



Figure **13.7.2.33**: Maso di Banco, *Pope Sylvester's Miracle*, c. 1340 (Bardi Chape, Santa Croce, Florence)

Art after Giotto

Giotto had an enormous workshop full of students and assistants, making it hard to tell which works he painted and which were by his pupils. Even more confusingly, his style was so immediately influential that it is still difficult to say who his formal students were. What we do know is that, in the years immediately after his death, the artists who were the most "Giottesque" received the lion's share of the important commissions for new projects. The success of artists like Bernardo Daddi, Maso di Banco, and Taddeo Gaddi demonstrates that wealthy patrons were on board with Giotto's new vision for art.

Sometime around mid-century, though, certain artists began to drift from the clear, spare art of Giotto's school. Many experimented with visually crowded compositions or with complex subjects represented through elaborate symbols and schemes. Some even seem to have purposefully echoed the ornamental, formal art of the Italo-Byzantine period. This has led art historians to wonder whether these changes in style were caused by Florence's collective despair after the outbreak of the bubonic plague—a sickness that wiped out over half the city's population in one year alone (1348).



Figure **13.7.2.34**: Andrea Bonaiuti, *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*, c. 1365-67, Guidalotti Chapel (Spanish Chapel) (Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

Most scholars now think the situation was more mixed than this theory might lead us to believe. In fact, late fourteenth-century art is hard to generalize. This is partly because no single workshop dominated the art of Florence as much as Giotto and his school had in previous decades. But it is also because artists of the time were skilled at adapting their own style to the specific tastes of each patron and to the context and function of each image.

Overall, however, Florentine art from 1348 to 1400 did not experience the same kind of major stylistic shift that characterized Giotto's years on the scene. Rather, the fundamental influence of Giotto continued into the early 1400s. In the end, the long fourteenth-century was Giotto's century.

Additional resources:

Italian Painting of the Later Middle Ages on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilrbunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721



Figure 13.7.2.35: More Smarthistory images…

Dante's *Divine Comedy* in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance art

by MATT COLLINS



Figure 13.7.2.36: Domenico di Michelino, Dante holding the Divine Comedy, 1465 (Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence)

When you think of Hell, what images fill your imagination? Your mind might first conjure up a monstrous satanic figure, and then you may further fill in the picture with other beastly devils that roam around torturing damned sinners, who in turn cry out with pain and regret.

And how about the better parts of the Christian afterlife; how do you imagine them? Perhaps the saved are singing songs of joy, angels are fluttering about, and throngs of holy men and women converse and worship God. To some degree, such imaginings have their origins in the Bible. However, in the Christian West, conceptions of the afterlife evolved quite a bit over the centuries. One important late medieval figure who played a key role in shaping the cultural concepts of life after death—even to the present day—is Dante Alighieri, the Florentine poet who was born in the 1260s and died in 1321.

In his epic poem known as the *Divine Comedy*, Dante creates a fictional version of himself who travels through the farthest reaches of hell *(Inferno)*, purgatory *(Purgatorio)* and paradise *(Paradiso)*. Many details that he describes along this journey have left a lasting impression on the Western imagination for more than half a millennium. In fact, the rather stereotypical images of the afterlife I described earlier are all represented in his work. But Dante also found novel ways to portray already well-formed concepts, thus further solidifying them while also reshaping them into new guises that would become familiar to countless generations that followed.

Because of Dante's image-driven descriptions, many artists have sought to illustrate his text through a wide variety of media. Almost immediately after his work was completed, illuminators created images to accompany manuscripts of his masterpiece. More than forty illuminated manuscripts of the *Divine Comedy* were created before the advent of the printing press (in the late 15th century). When the potential for faster reproductions of books—including illustrated books—became a reality, Dante's imagination, sometimes intertwined with the imagination of an artist rendering a visual interpretation of his words, reached an even larger audience than before. We will look here at two outstanding examples of how Dante's words fed the creative imagination of visual artists before and shortly after the invention of the printing press.



Figure **13.7.2.38**: Florence Baptistry (Battistero di San Giovanni), 1059-1128

The influence of art on Dante's world

Before looking at Dante's influence on the visual arts, however, we need take a little step back in time. The relationship between Dante and the arts was a reciprocal one; images he had seen also greatly influenced his literary vision. Were there any sights, sounds or works of art you saw as a child that you can still easily call to mind today? If you were writing a fictional story that relied heavily on your own imagination, could you see yourself drawing from these vivid sensorial experiences and making them a part of that story? This was the case for Dante.



Figure **13.7.2.39**: Mosaic (detail) of the Satan in the Last Judgment on the ceiling of the Florence Baptistry, 13th c.

Florence was full of artistic marvels well before the Renaissance. Incredible works of art and architecture filled the city well before Dante's birth in late medieval times. The Florence Baptistery (illustrated above), which Dante fondly referred to in his *Comedy* as his "bel (beautiful) San Giovanni," is one such example, which the poet would have known well, even from the days of his youth. The ceiling inside the baptistery is covered with mosaic images that still dazzle visitors today. There are many indications that Dante too was dazzled by the sight. Quite a few correspondences can be discerned between certain descriptions in the *Comedy* and particular images within this baptistery—indeed, too many to be mere coincidence. For example, at the end of the *Inferno*, when Dante's fictional self reaches the deepest part of Hell and encounters "the emperor of the dolorous kingdom" (Satan), Dante's description is strikingly specific. Satan has three mouths, and "In each of his mouths he was breaking a sinner/ with his teeth in the manner of a scutch, so that he made the three suffer at once" (translation by Durling and Martinez)—just like the image of Satan inside the Florence Baptistery. The link to this mosaic image is just one example of how the visual arts passed from Dante's memory through his imagination and onto the pages of his epic poem.

After a childhood and adolescence no doubt filled with sights of Florentine artistic wonders, Dante's familiarity with the visual arts matured. In *Purgatorio* XI his understanding of various forms of visual arts and artists is especially evident. Through a conversation between his fictional self and the manuscript illuminator Oderisi da Gubbio, Dante discusses the fading glory of artists, always eclipsed by another's greatness. He writes that just as Franco Bolognese surpassed his master Oderisi in illumination, and Giotto surpassed Cimabue in painting—in poetry, a certain unnamed poet (that is, Dante) just may have outdone Guido Cavalcanti and Guido Guinizelli.

Dante implies that there are similarities between the written word and the painted picture, as he directly associates these mediums and their practitioners with one another. Certainly, poets like Dante learned from and were influenced by artists, and as we will now see, visual artists were also greatly affected by poets such as this great Florentine.

The Yates-Thompson Codex

Among the dozens of illuminated manuscripts of the *Divine Comedy*, one of the most outstanding is known as the Yates-Thompson Codex, which is located in the British Library. It was originally carried out for Alfonso V, the king of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, either as a gift or under his commission. The manuscript was produced in Siena in the 1440s, and two illuminators worked on the 112 framed miniatures.



Figure 13.7.2.40: Priamo della Quercia or Vecchietta (?), illustration of Dante, *Inferno*, Yates Thompson MS 36, f. 10r, 1444-c. 1450 (The British Museum)

In the illumination from the fifth canto (in epic poetry, a canto is a division similar to a chapter) of the *Inferno* pictured here, Dante (in blue) and his guide, the ancient Roman poet Virgil (in red), pass through the circle of the lustful. The artist captures three distinct moments from this canto in one image. The first moment is shown in the upper left corner in the form of the snarling beast. This is Minos, who determines where in Hell a sinner will be sent, and who briefly impedes Dante's journey until Virgil rebukes him and the two move onward.



Figure 13.7.2.41: Detail of a miniature of the lustful being carried about by a wind with Paolo and Francesca on the far right, in illustration of Canto V, Yates Thompson 36, f. 10, 1444-c. 1450 (The British Museum)

Next, just to the right of Minos, Virgil explains the mysterious group of people who are tossed about by a whirlwind, and he identifies individual figures among them. Third, on the far right, a couple facing left converses with the Dante and Virgil. They are there as a visual reference to the extended dialogue between Dante and one pair of lustful sinners, Paolo and Francesca. At the end of the canto Dante faints with pity, and in the center of this image he is shown on his knee—preparing, it seems, to fully lose consciousness.

In a number of illustrated accompaniments to the *Divine Comedy*, there are no images to complement Paradiso, and for understandable reasons. While *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* describe physically tangible experiences, the *Paradiso* is elusive and philosophical. The very spaces through which Dante and his paradisiacal guide Beatrice travel defy physical properties. The illuminator for these scenes, Giovanni di Paolo, however, was well up for this task and executed a masterful set of images to accompany this most difficult part of the *Comedy*. Rejecting natural physical laws, Dante and Beatrice are shown throughout these illustrations as if they are hovering above the ground, as they are in this image, which illustrates the second canto.



Figure 13.7.2.42: Priamo della Quercia or Vecchietta (?), illustration of Dante, *Inferno*, Yates Thompson MS 36, f. 132r, 1444-c. 1450 (The British Museum)



Figure **13.7.2.43**: Detail, cosmic symbol, Yates Thompson, MS 36, f. 132r

In this image, located directly beneath Dante and Beatrice on the far left is the representation of a simile Beatrice uses to explain the workings and shaping of the universe by divine intelligence, which she compares to a coppersmith using his hammer to mold his product. In the center is a reference to a question Dante poses about why there are spots on the moon. Beatrice explains that it is not due to lesser degrees of light among the the planets and stars in the heavens but to the casting of shadows onto the earth, which are reflected back upon the moon. She suggests an experiment with three specifically arranged mirrors and a light to prove the point, which is likewise illustrated. To the right of light is an illustration of a third simile that Beatrice uses in this same canto; she compares the stripping of Dante's intellect through higher reasoning to the stripping of the color and coldness of snow beneath warm rays. Thus the three similes run along the lower half of the illumination. On the upper right is a cosmic symbol that represents the circles within the celestial sphere through which Dante will pass during his journey toward God in the ultimate paradise.

Botticelli's drawings

In his *Lives of the Artists*, Giorgio Vasari wrote; "since Sandro was also a learned man, he wrote a commentary on part of Dante's poem, and after illustrating the *Inferno*, he printed the work." Either Vasari was a bit misinformed, or he was implying something regarding the profound interrelations between the texts and images when he said that Sandro Botticelli "wrote a commentary." In fact, in the 1480s—the same decade when he painted his most infamous works, *Primavera* and *The Birth of Venus*—Botticelli undertook the task of drawing not only the *Inferno* but the entire *Divine Comedy*.



Figure **13.7.2.44**: Sandro Botticelli, *Drawing for Dante's Divine Comedy*, 1480-95, gouache, brown ink over metal point on parchment (Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

His delicate handling of line, so well known in his paintings, is also evident in these drawings, which had originally accompanied the text, but have since been broken up and are now located in the Vatican and the Museum of Prints and Drawings in Berlin. Many of the earliest printed sets of illustrated editions of Dante's *Divine Comedy* followed Botticelli's drawings, and it is possible that the prints attributed to Baccio Baldini were planned and intended as a mass-produced extension of the master's work.



Figure **13.7.2.45**: Detail, Sandro Botticelli, *Inferno, Canto XXXIV*, 1480s, silverpoint on parchment, completed in pen and ink (Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

From the beasts of Hell—such as the now familiar three-headed Satan chewing sinners—to the journey through paradise, Botticelli proves himself a careful reader and a thoughtful illustrator. The horrors of the dark underworld are truly horrifying, and the wonders of the celestial realm, wonderful. Botticelli's approach in picturing the mysterious spheres of the heavens is especially memorable. He deliberately chose not to illustrate the intangible elements that surround Dante and Beatrice, a choice that in fact furthers one's sense of the journey's ineffability. Principally featuring these two characters

within a perfectly rounded circle, we see the unseeable through the gestures and expressions of these two figures. For example in the image pictured here, an illustration of canto seventeen, we see Dante's reaction to a prophecy that he will be exiled from his hometown—as, in fact, he already had been at the time of his writing.



Figure **13.7.2.46**: Sandro Botticelli, *Fifth planetary sphere (heaven of Mars); Cacciaguida prophesies Dante's exile, but also his eternal fame*, drawing, c.1480-95

There is no right approach to illustrating Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and in the first two centuries of the book's history alone, there were a good number of excellent reader-illustrators. Of course, in the centuries to follow, and up to the present day, many more artists can be added to this list. No doubt this masterpiece of writing has played an important role in the creation of a great many outstanding works of art.

Cimabue

Cimabue, Maestà

by DR. HOLLY FLORA



Figure **13.7.2.47**: Cimabue, *Maestà* or *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1280-90, tempera on panel, 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

The Virgin Mary with the Christ Child seated on a throne

By the late 1200s, large paintings featuring the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child seated on a throne were a common sight in Italian churches. Larger-than-life panels with this theme, a kind of image that came to be known as a Maestà (meaning "majesty"), were adaptations of traditional **Byzantine** icons for use in devotion in Western Europe.



Figure **13.7.2.48**: Gallery view with Duccio's *Rucellai Madonna* (left) and Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna* (right), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Among the most famous examples are Duccio's *Rucellai Madonna* and Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna*. Such paintings may have adorned altars, but they could also have been placed on a beam or wall in the center of a church, perhaps like the painting shown in a fresco depicting the *Verification of the Stigmata* in the nave of the Upper Church at Assisi.



Figure **13.7.2.49**: Left: *The Verification of the Stigmata*, 1288-1297, Assisi, Upper Church, Basilica of San Francesco; right: detail of the painting displayed on a beam.

Displayed in this way, large Marian images (images of the Virgin Mary) would have been seen by the crowds gathered to hear Mass. Monumental Maestà panels could also be commissioned by lay confraternities—organizations of laypeople who performed acts of piety and service, and gathered to sing hymns of praise to the Virgin. Wherever they might be placed within a church, these imposing, gilded paintings were objects of intense devotion.



Figure **13.7.2.50**: View of Cimabue's *Maestà* with viewers.



Figure **13.7.2.51**: Enthroned Madonna and Child, c. 1250/1275 tempera on panel,124.8 x 70.8 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Santa Trinita Madonna

At an unknown date, probably around 1280, the Florentine artist Cimabue painted a celebrated Maestà for the church of Santa Trinita in Florence. Now housed in the city's Uffizi Gallery, this massive painting—over twelve feet tall and seven feet wide (12'8'' x 7'4'')—features Mary gazing out at the viewer. She gestures toward the child with her right hand, while Christ raises his hand in a priestly pose of blessing, an adaptation of the ancient Byzantine icon type (known as the "Hodegetria") in which the Virgin Mary points to Christ as the way to heaven.The Byzantine icons that inspired Cimabue and other artists of his day also often included angels posed on either side of the throne, usually shown in much smaller scale than Mary to emphasize her importance (a good example is the painting of the *Enthroned Madonna and Child* in the National Gallery of Art).

In the *Santa Trinita Madonna* and other Maestà panels he painted, however, Cimabue makes the angels much larger, and stacks them around the throne so that they seem to be occupying the same space as Mary and Christ. The angels also become interlocutors between the viewer and the holy figures; six of the angels look out toward us directly, while the two in the center gaze at Christ, modeling the pious focus a viewer would imitate.



Figure **13.7.2.52**: Cimabue, *Maestà* or *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned* (detail), 1280-90, tempera on panel, 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Set against a gleaming gold leaf background, Mary and Christ sit on a monumental throne fashioned of intricately carved wood and studded with gems. This throne has often been celebrated by art historians as an example of how Cimabue experimented with perspectival effects. The curved steps of the throne lead the eye back into the fictional space Cimabue creates, making it seem as though the figures occupy real space. The large throne also allows Cimabue to place the Virgin and the eight angels that surround her at the top of the composition, **foreshortening** the front parts of the throne and bringing them closer to the viewer, creating the illusion of depth on the painting's flat surface.

The four figures below

But Cimabue's most striking and novel element is the inclusion of four bust-length, haloed figures beneath Mary and Christ, enclosed within the arches of the throne's base. This arrangement foreshadows a trend seen in later altarpieces called a **predella**—a lateral band of smaller images placed below a larger image. Placed in the foreground, these figures seem to be closer to the viewer than Mary and Christ, further enhancing the sense of three-dimensionality within the painting.



Figure **13.7.2.53**: Cimabue, *Maestà* or *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned* (detail), 1280-90, tempera on panel, 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)



Figure **13.7.2.54**: Cimabue, Jeremiah (detail), *Maestà* or *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1280-90, tempera on panel, 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

In the *Santa Trinita Madonna*, the men at the base of Mary's throne are the heroes and prophets Jeremiah, Abraham, David and Isaiah, identified by the scrolls they hold displaying biblical texts associated with each of them (from Jeremiah 31:22; Genesis 22:18; Psalms 131:11; Isaiah 7:14). These figures from the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) are included because they each—according to Christian theology—foretold or made possible the coming of Christ (Jeremiah and Isaiah prophesized the coming of the Messiah via a virgin, and Abraham and David were believed to be direct ancestors of the Virgin and Christ). Isaiah and Jeremiah look upwards towards Mary, and each holds an open palm towards the viewer. David gestures similarly, looking towards Abraham, who holds his scroll with both hands and gazes outward from the picture plane. The inclusion of these four men below Mary's throne glorifies the prophetic heritage and priestly genealogy of Mary and her son.



Figure **13.7.2.54**: Santa Trinita, Florence

The Vallombrosans at Santa Trinita

By including these specific figures, Cimabue was perhaps responding to a request from the painting's commissioners. The church of Santa Trinita was built by a religious reform order called the Vallombrosans, men who lived in community and practiced strict acts of fasting and penance. Founded in the eleventh century by the Florentine knight Giovanni Gualberto, the Vallombrosans sought to bring monastic life back in line with the values of Saint Benedict of Nursia, the founder of western Christian monasticism. In celebrating Saint Benedict, members of the order he founded (the Benedictines), emphasized Old Testament prophets in their literary and artistic traditions. A sixth century text, the *Dialogues of Gregory the Great*, which includes a biography of Saint Benedict, highlights Saint Benedict's own prophetic gifts. In the Dialogues, Benedict is compared specifically to King David, legendary author of the Psalms. David is also important in the life of Giovanni Gualberto; his biographers describe how on his deathbed, the saint repeated unceasingly the famous prayer words "of David" from Psalm 23. In Cimabue's painting, David is the most prominent of the figures below Mary; in contrast to the subdued colors worn by Jeremiah, Isaiah and Abraham, David wears a bright red mantle and a crown. David's clothing echoes the slightly paler scarlet robes worn by Mary and Christ, and his kinship to Christ himself is reinforced by his position directly beneath the Christ Child.



Figure **13.7.2.55**: Cimabue, Abraham and David (detail), *Maestà* or *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1280-90, tempera on panel, 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Cimabue's placement of David and the other figures at the base of Mary's throne was a completely original visual element, and may have been part of the artist's efforts to create a new spin on the Maestà in celebration of the Vallombrosans, creating their own "signature" Madonna. Painted at an unknown date in the late thirteenth century, the *Santa Trinita Madonna* was commissioned at a time when many different religious orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans were competing for the loyalty of Florence's wealthy citizens and their offerings. The building of lavish and spacious churches embellished with paintings commissioned by renowned artists were part of these groups' efforts to keep ahead in the rivalries. The spectacular and innovative Maestà that Cimabue created would certainly have brought new attention and prestige to the Vallombrosans at Santa Trinita.

Additional resources

This painting at the Uffizi in Florence

Holly Flora, *Cimabue and the Franciscans* (Brepols, 2018), pp. 164-169.

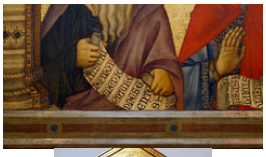
Luciano Bellosi, *Cimabue* (Motta, 1998), pp. 249-256, 282-283.

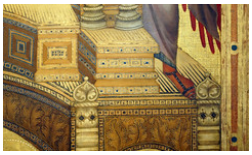
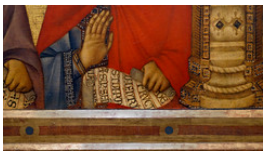
Myth and Miraculous Performance: The Virgin Hodegetria

Icons and Iconoclasm in Byzantium

Myth and Miraculous Performance: The Virgin Hodegetria

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:










https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

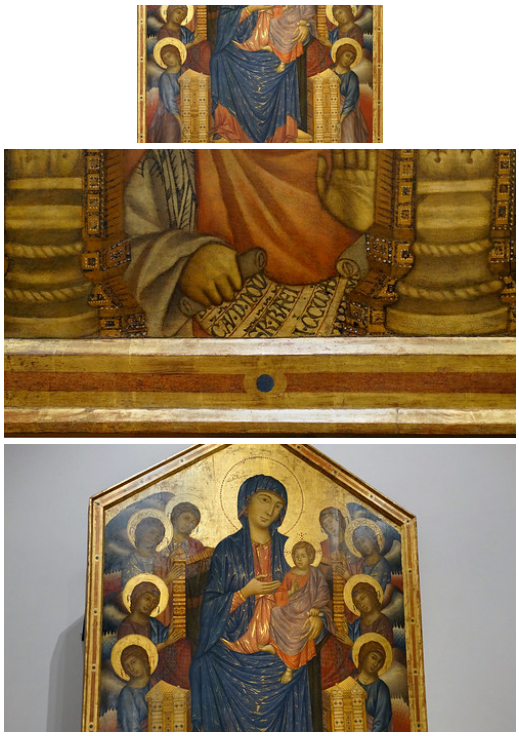
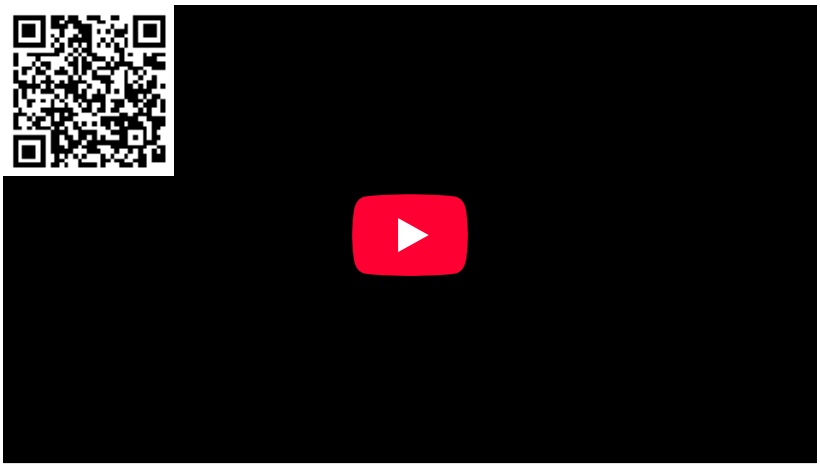


Figure **13.7.2.56**: More Smarthistory images…

Cimabue, *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned*

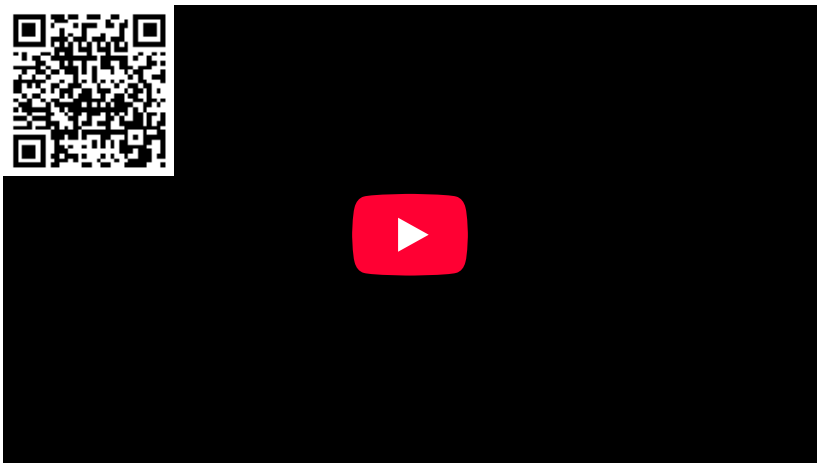
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.2.4**: Cimabue, *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1280-90, tempera on panel, 151 1/2 x 87 3/4″ / 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Cimabue and Giotto compared

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

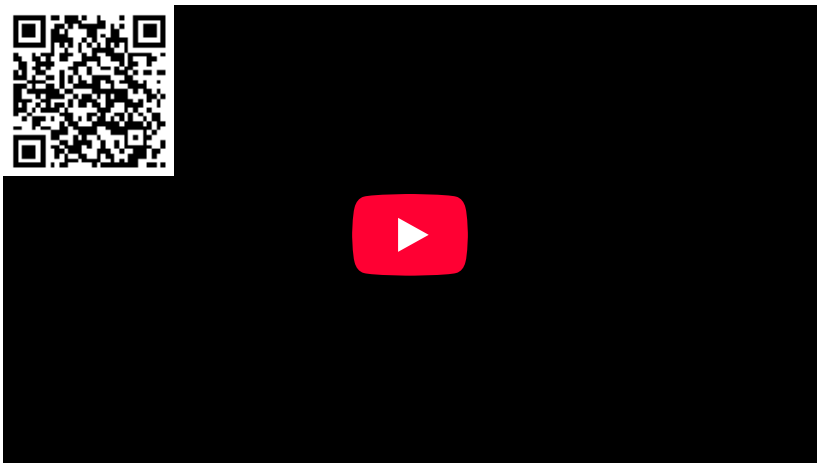


Video 13.7.2.5: Cimabue, *Santa Trinita Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1280-1290, tempera on panel, 151 1/2 x 87 3/4″ / 385 x 223 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence); Giotto, *The Ognissanti Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1306-10, tempera on panel, 128 x 80 1/4″ / 325 x 204 cm, painted for the Church of Ognissanti, Florence (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Giotto

Giotto, *The Ognissanti Madonna and Child Enthroned*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.2.6: Giotto, *The Ognissanti Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1306-10, tempera on panel, 128 x 80 1/4″ / 325 x 204 cm (Uffizi, Florence), painted for the Church of Ognissanti, Florence

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

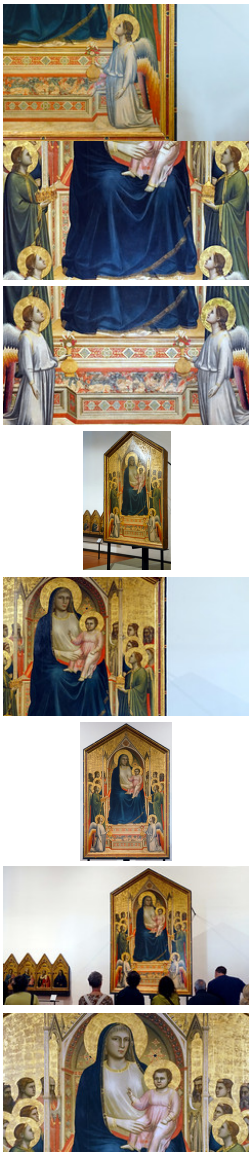
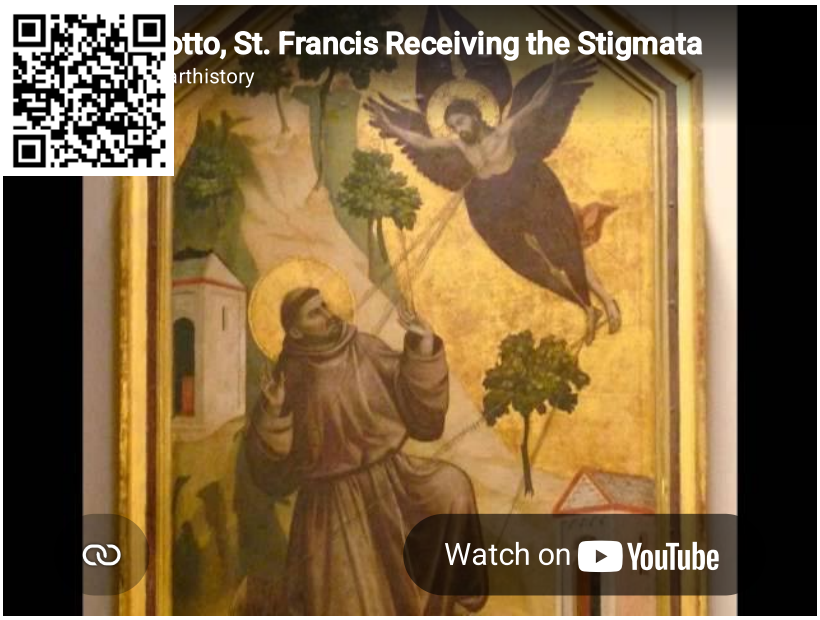


Figure **13.7.2.57**: More Smarthistory images…

Giotto, *St. Francis of Assisi Receiving the Stigmata*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.2.7**: Giotto di Bondone, *St. Francis of Assisi Receiving the Stigmata* with predella scenes of the *Dream of Innocent III, The Pope Approving the Rule of the Order*, and *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds*, c. 1295-1300, tempera and gold on panel, 3.13 x 1.63 m (originally in the Church of San Francesco, Pisa), original frame inscribed: “OPUS IOCTI FIORETINI.”

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





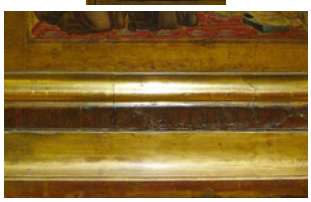












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721



Figure 13.7.2.58: More Smarthistory images…

Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure 13.7.2.59: Fresco cycle by Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua, c. 1305 (photo: © 1996 philg@mit.edu)

Late Medieval or Proto-Renaissance?

The Renaissance does not have a start date. Its origins are often located around 1400 but as early as the late 1200s we see changes in painting and sculpture that lay the foundation for what we will come to recognize as the Renaissance. Some scholars call this early period the "Late Gothic"—a term which refers to the late Middle Ages, while other people call it the "Proto-Renaissance"—the beginnings of the Renaissance. In any case, a revolution is beginning to

take place in Italy the early 1300s in the way people think about the world, the way they think about the past, and the way they think about themselves and their relationship with God.

Giotto

The artist who takes the biggest step away from the Medieval style of spiritual representation in painting in the early 14th century is Giotto.

Giotto is perhaps best known for the frescoes he painted in the Arena (or Scrovegni) Chapel. They were commissioned by a wealthy man named Enrico Scrovegni, the son of a well-known banker (and a banker himself). According to the Church, usury (charging interest for a loan) was a sin, and so perhaps one of Enrico's motivations for building the chapel and having it decorated by Giotto was to atone for the sin of usury. The chapel is known as the Arena Chapel since it is on the site of an ancient Roman arena (or amphitheater) that later became the property of Scrovegni, whose palace abutted the chapel (the palace was torn down in the nineteenth century, though parts of the arena remain).



Figure **13.7.2.60**: Enrico Scrovegni assisted by a priest, presents the chapel to the Virgin Mary and two other figures (detail), Giotto, *Last Judgment*, c. 1305, fresco cycle (Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua, Italy)

Commissioning works of art for churches was a common way of doing "good works" which could help you earn your way into Heaven. We can see Enrico himself in the fresco of the *Last Judgment* on the west wall of the Arena Chapel—he is shown on the side of the blessed (or the elect, those whom Christ has chosen to go to Heaven). He is depicted kneeling, presenting the chapel to the Virgin Mary and two other figures (variously identified).[1]

The photo at the top of the page gives us a sense of what it feels like to be a tourist visiting the Arena Chapel. Because frescoes are painted directly on the wall, they can't easily be moved and put in a museum. Most frescoes are therefore still in the spaces that the artists created them in and that the patrons commissioned them for. Having the work of art in its original context helps us to understand its meaning for the people of the 14th century.

Looking at the photo, you can see that there are numerous separate images in the chapel. The frescoes tell the story of the lives of Mary (beginning with her parents, Joachim and Anna) and Christ on the long walls. By the altar, Giotto painted the *Annunciation*, and at the other end, on the entrance wall, the *Last Judgment*.

Rather like a comic book without words, Giotto tells the story of Christ and his parents through pictures. Most of the population of Europe was illiterate at this time and so couldn't read the bible for themselves (Bibles were rare and expensive in any case—there was no printing press and so each was copied by hand). People learned the stories of the Bible—stories that would help them get to heaven—by hearing the words of the priest in the church, and by looking at paintings and sculptures.

[1]In **one interpretation**, the nearest figure is the Annunciate Virgin, the middle figure Saint Mary of Charity (so the two important roles Mary plays in the chapel), and the last figure is the Angel Gabriel. **Another source** identifies these additional figures as St. John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene. These figures have also been identified as the Virgin Mary, the Virgin of Charity and the Virgin Annunciate.

Additional resources:

Dr. Allen Farber's site on the Arena Chapel

Offical site of the Arena Chapel

Smarthistory video on the Arena Chapel (Part 1 of 4)

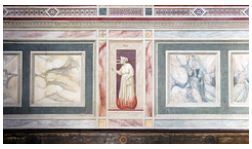
Smarthistory video on the Arena Chapel (Part 2 of 4)

Smarthistory video on the Arena Chapel (Part 3 of 4)

Smarthistory video on the Arena Chapel (Part 4 of 4)

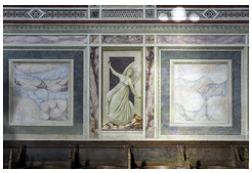
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

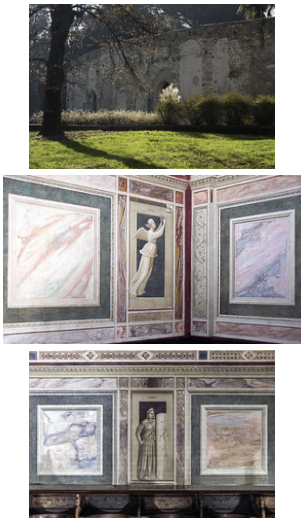
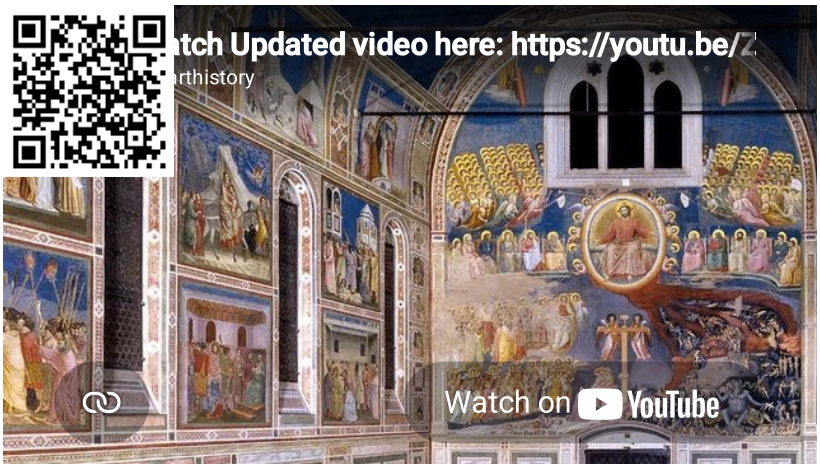


Figure 13.7.2.61: More Smarthistory images…

Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel (part 1 of 4)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

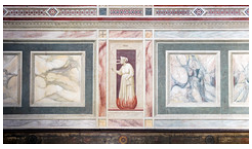


Video 13.7.2.8: Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua, c. 1305

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

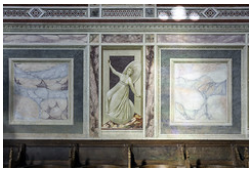












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

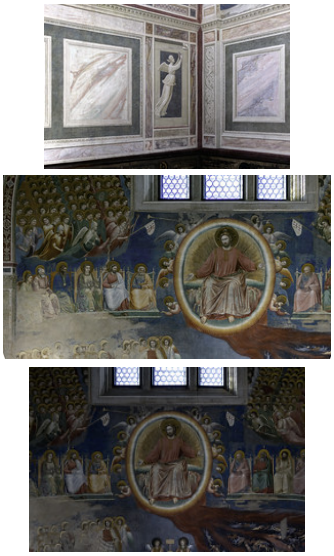
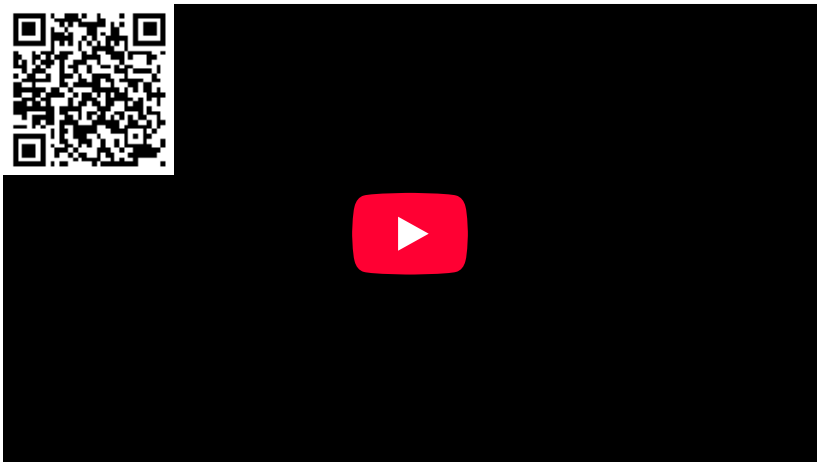


Figure **13.7.2.62**: More Smarthistory images…

Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel (part 2 of 4)

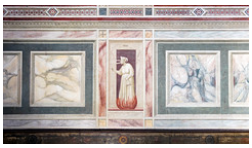
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.2.9**: Giotto, Narrative Cycle, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua, c. 1305

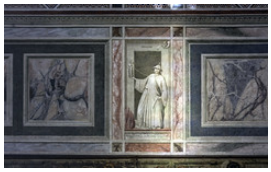
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

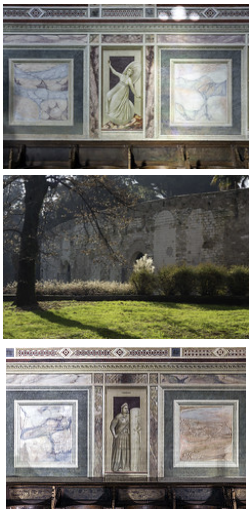
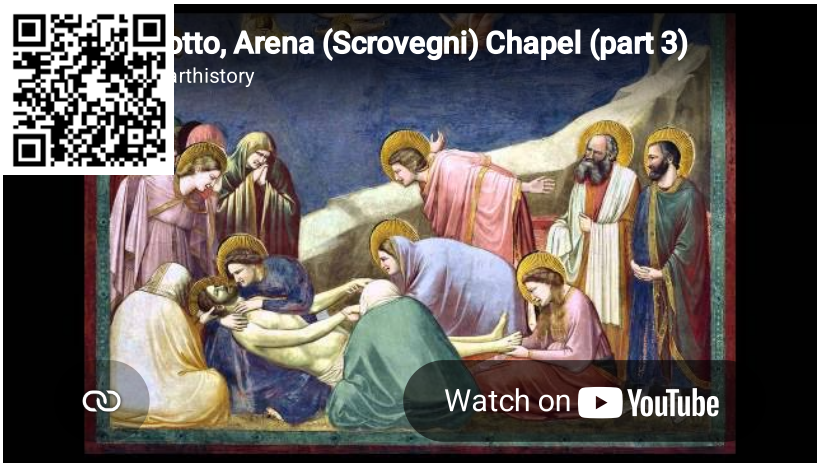


Figure 13.7.2.63: More Smarthistory images…

Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel (part 3 of 4)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



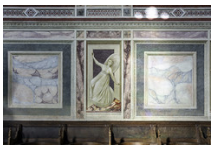
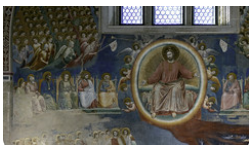
Video 13.7.2.10: Giotto, *The Lamentation*, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua, c. 1305

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









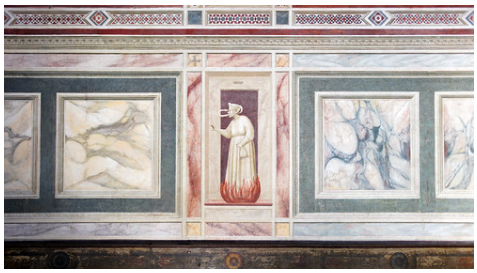
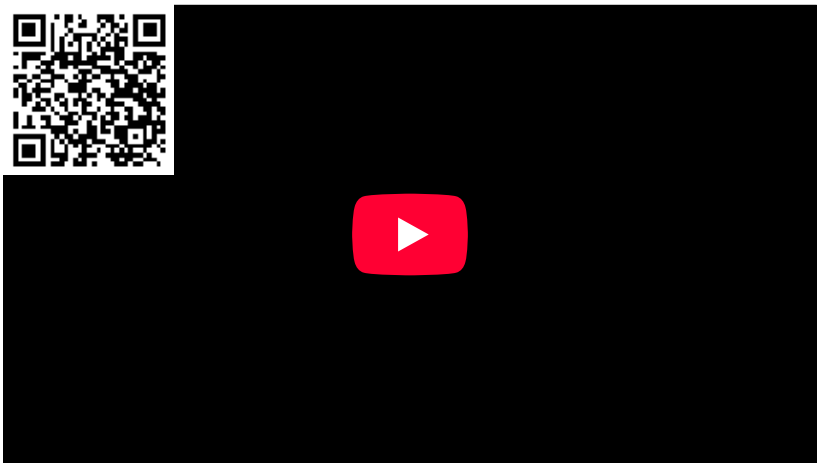





Figure **13.7.2.64**: More Smarthistory images…

Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel (part 4 of 4)

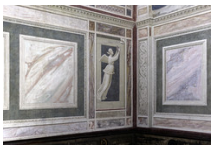
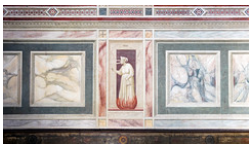
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.2.11**: Giotto, *The Last Judgment*, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel, Padua, c. 1305

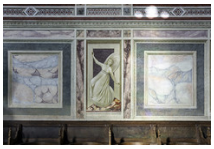
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







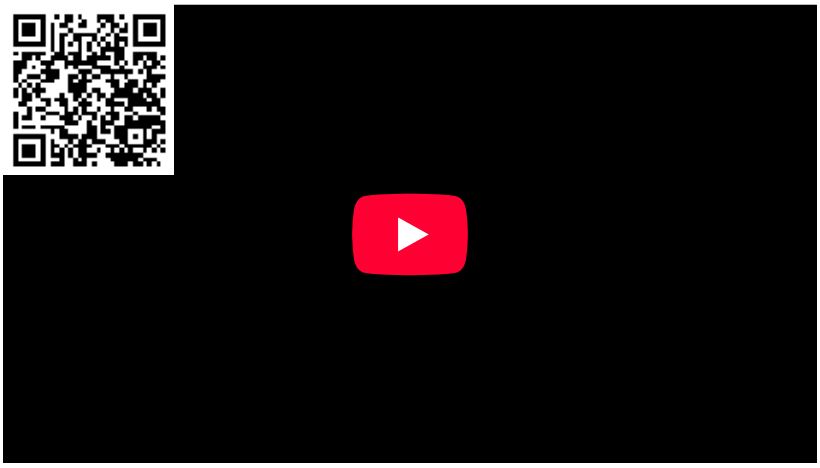

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721



Figure 13.7.2.65: More Smarthistory images…

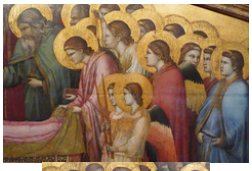
Giotto, *The Entombment of Mary*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.2.12: Giotto, *The Entombment of Mary*, 1310, tempera on poplar, 75 x 179 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Kaiser Friedrich-Museums-Verein, Berlin)

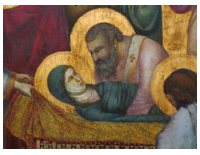
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721



Figure **13.7.2.66**: More Smarthistory images…

Andrea Pisano, Reliefs for the Florence Campanile

by DR. DAVID DROGIN and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.2.11**: Andrea Pisano, Reliefs for the Campanile in Florence, c. 1336

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.2.67**: More Smarthistory images…

Siena in the Late Gothic (1300s)

By the early fourteenth century, Siena was a wealthy and cosmopolitan city.

1300s

Siena in the Late Gothic, an introduction

by DR. JOANNA MILK MAC FARLAND



Figure **13.7.2.68**: View of the Piazza del Campo, Siena

Siena: A city overlooked?

For centuries, Siena's role in the history of European art was underappreciated. This is partly because its moment of greatest influence occurred just before the Renaissance, a period commonly associated with the nearby city of Florence (both Florence and Siena were independent city-states in Italy at this time —**see this map**). But history—even art history—is written by the victors. So when Siena's position of power faded while Florence remained one of the financial and artistic centers of Europe, the achievements of Sienese artists slid slowly into the background.

Art historians now know that the development of style in these two city-states was closely intertwined. The artists of one inevitably influenced the other, even in later periods. It is not an exaggeration to say that, at the height of its artistic flourishing, Siena was unsurpassed in its fame for producing celebrated painters.



Figure **13.7.2.69**: Siena Cathedral

An international city

By the early fourteenth century, Siena was a wealthy and cosmopolitan city. Several large international banks were run by wealthy Sienese families. Merchants based in Siena traded goods in several foreign countries, particularly France. The city's location on the Via Francigena, the main pilgrimage route to Rome, meant that pilgrims from all over Europe streamed through its streets. These pilgrims would have been greeted by one of the most impressive cityscapes in Italy at the time. Spread out over three hills, the skyline was dominated by the enormous cathedral and by the central seat of government, the Palazzo Pubblico.



Figure **13.7.2.70**: Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. The representatives of the Sienese government, "The Nine," met here.

Communal oversight of the arts

Like many cities today, the Sienese were acutely aware of how art and architecture shaped the city's identity in the eyes of both natives and visitors. The communal government was controlled by the "Nove," or the Nine, a rotating group of representatives chosen from the city's leading families. The Nove dominated art patronage during the period, helping to decide the layout of the city and its largest buildings, selecting committees to oversee large public projects, and subsidizing the decoration of churches.

Sienese art of the period was communally oriented in a few other ways. The central government and various churches hired local Sienese artists, almost exclusively, to produce the most important paintings. Such a preference for native sons hints at a general pride in the city's painters, known throughout Italy for the quality of their work (this was not the case with sculpture). There were also a few examples of large works of art created for private individuals. Compare this to Florence at the time, where rich citizens often bought the right to decorate family chapels in large churches and where painters from other cities were sometimes awarded prestigious commissions.



Figure **13.7.2.71**: Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Rucellai Madonna*, 1285-86, tempera on panel, 177 x 114″ / 450 x 290 cm (Uffizi, Florence)

In fact, the most famous Sienese artist of the fourteenth century may have first made a name for himself in Florence. The earliest recorded work by Duccio, an artist who is often called the father of Sienese painting, was commissioned for the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

This nearly fifteen-foot tall altarpiece depicting the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child introduced Duccio's innovative style to a wider audience. Like previous artists, Duccio was interested in creating beautiful patterns and shapes. We can see the love of surface decoration in the undulating arrangements of fabric or even in the faces of his figures. Yet he also used soft modeling with light and shade to give a sense of mass in the figures' delicate but real bodies. Duccio's ability to combine elegant lines and patterns with a fragile naturalism became a hallmark of Sienese painting.



Figure **13.7.2.72**: Duccio, *Maestà* (front, central panel), 1308-11 (Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana del Duomo, Siena)

The *Maestà*

The Santa Maria Novella altarpiece must have won Duccio fame in his own city of Siena, for he soon became a favorite painter of the commune. In 1308, he was asked to create a massive painting for the main altar in the middle of the Cathedral. The front of the altarpiece depicted the Madonna and Child sitting on a throne and surrounded by saints and angels, a subject known in Italian as a *Maestà*. Originally, the main scene was at the center of a set of stories and figures, all united in an elaborate wooden structure of frames covered in gold leaf. The back of the altarpiece was painted with a series of scenes from the life of Christ. Unfortunately, these panels are now dispersed in many museums. In these panels, Duccio demonstrated his unsurpassed skills of visual storytelling, capturing the imagination of contemporary viewers with his vivid depictions of the gospel stories that were so central to the faith of Siena and its visitors.



Figure **13.7.2.73**: Duccio, *Maestà* (reconstruction of back), 1308-11 (Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana del Duomo, Siena)

Cathedral altarpieces

It is hard to overestimate how important Duccio's altarpiece was for the citizens who worshiped in front of it and for the artists who studied it. The city had long ago dedicated itself to the Virgin Mary, believing her to be their special protector. In an age where painted images gave faithful viewers a channel of access to celestial figures, the Maestà became the central representation of Siena's powerful patron as the queen of heaven.

The work's role as a devotional and artistic well for the city was most eloquently honored in four altarpieces painted for the chapels surrounding Duccio's painting. Each altarpiece depicted a scene involving Mary, so that the story of her life would have unfolded as your eye travelled along the chapels. Over the course of two decades, one altarpiece was commissioned from each of the leading Sienese painters of the day, transforming the heart of the Cathedral into something like a gallery of the great Sienese artists. This is a perfect illustration of the city's tendency to blend devotional piety and civic pride in large artistic projects.



Figure **13.7.2.74**: Simone Martini, *The Annunciation*, 1333, tempera on panel, 72 1/2 x 82 5/8″ or 184 x 210 cm. (Uffizi, Florence)

Simone Martini

Perhaps the best known of these four altarpieces is the *Annunciation* by Simone Martini. Building on the legacy of Duccio, Simone was also influenced by the elongated, swaying figures and elaborate architectural forms of northern European art. On the other hand, his paintings show a bit more of the kind of careful observation of the world around him that we might associate with Giotto, the leading Florentine artist at the time. Thanks to this eclectic but refined mixing of new styles, Simone's reputation and influence spread throughout Europe, a legacy carried on by a large workshop of assistants and students.

The Lorenzetti brothers

Two of the other three artists hired to paint altarpieces behind the *Maestà* were actually brothers: Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti. While the Lorenzetti brothers worked in the Sienese style, they absorbed the art of Giotto more fully than Simone Martini and his followers did. Weighty, massive figures covered in heavy drapery populate their works, a sure sign of their familiarity with Florentine painting. Even more than Giotto and his school, both Ambrogio and Pietro experimented with using different kinds of perspective to give an illusion of depth in the spaces their figures occupy.



Figure **13.7.2.75**: Detail, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good Government, Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country*, c. 1337-40, fresco, Sala della Pace (Hall of Peace) also known as the Sala dei Nove (the Hall of the Nine), 7.7 x 14.4 meters (room), Palazzo Pubblico, Siena

Good and bad government

Ambrogio Lorenzetti's artistic innovation is best captured in one of the most groundbreaking works of the late medieval period: his wall paintings in the Palazzo Pubblico. The elaborate murals were designed to remind the Nove of the consequences of good and bad governance. The scenes are particularly known for their large, sensitively depicted landscapes and cityscapes. No other monumental celebration of everyday urban and rural life survives from the period, making these scenes a turning point in the history of art.

After the Black Death

As in Florence, perhaps half of Siena's population died of the plague in 1348. Scholars think the Lorenzetti brothers were two of the Black Death's victims. Since Simone Martini had died a few years earlier in Avignon, this meant all four of Siena's greatest artists were now dead.

Art continued to lie at the center of the city's image of itself and its religious life. For the remainder of the century, artists such as **Bartolomeo Bulgarini** worked in the style forged by their forbears, though with less international acclaim. As scholars have emphasized in recent decades, Sienese art was later reinvigorated during the Renaissance, incorporating an array of new artistic styles into their own strong traditions. Still, to this day the city looks back to the early fourteenth century as a golden age for Sienese art.

Additional resources:

Useful map of Italy c. 1300

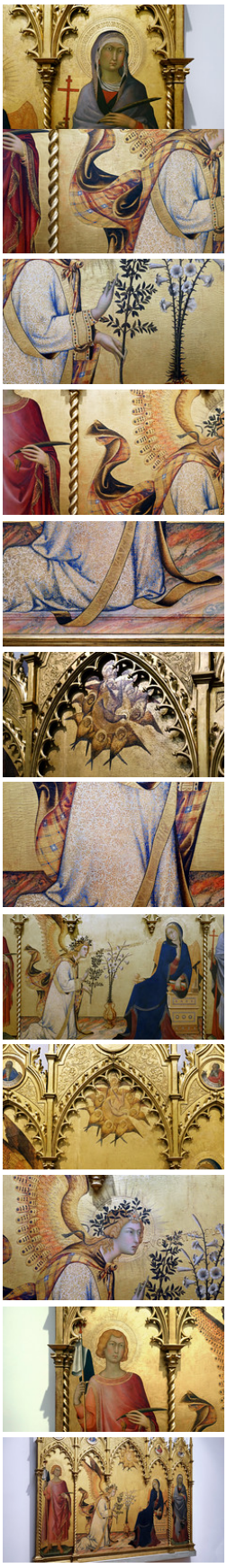
Italian Painting of the Later Middle Ages on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Sienese Painting on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Historic Center of Siena from the Google Cultural Institute

Foundation of Sienese Museums on the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

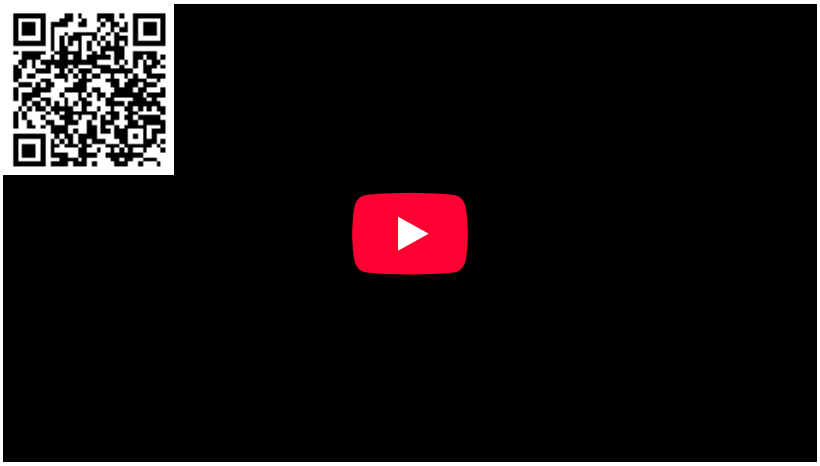


Figure 13.7.2.76: More Smarthistory images…

Duccio

Duccio, *Maesta*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



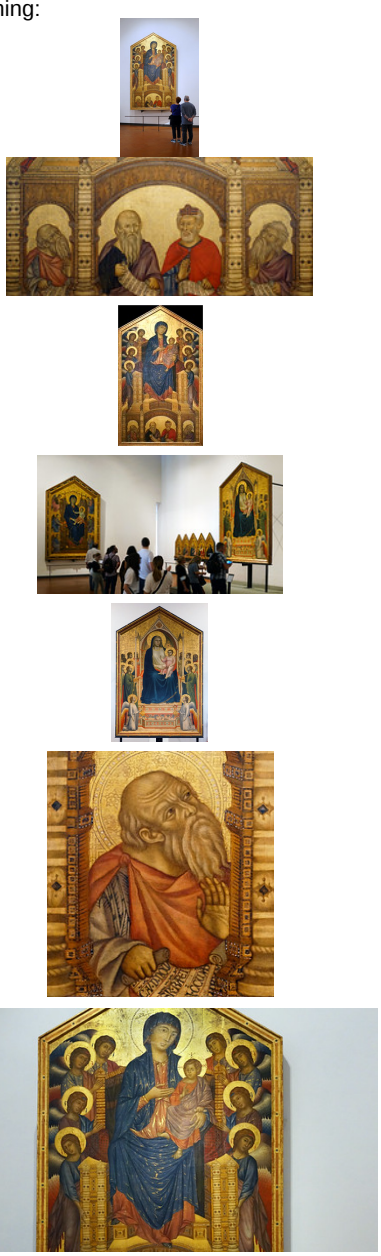




Here is a contemporaneous description of the procession that brought this painting to Siena Cathedral (or Duomo):

> ***At this time the altarpiece for the high altar was finished and the picture which was called the "Madonna with the large eyes" or Our Lady of Grace, that now hangs over the altar of St. Boniface, was taken down. Now this Our Lady was she who had hearkened to the people of Siena when the Florentines were routed at Monte Aperto, and her place was changed because the new one was made, which is far more beautiful and devout and larger, and is painted on the back with the stories of the Old and New Testaments. And on the day that it was carried to the Duomo the shops were shut, and the bishop conducted a great and devout company of priests and friars in solemn procession, accompanied by the nine signiors, and all the officers of the commune, and all the people, and one after another the worthiest with lighted candles in their hands took places near the picture, and behind came the women and children with great devotion. And they accompanied the said picture up to the Duomo, making the procession around the Campo, as is the custom, all the bells ringing joyously, out of reverence for so noble a picture as this. And this picture Duccio di Niccolò the painter made, and it was made in the house of the Muciatti outside the gate aStalloreggi. And all that day persons, praying God and His Mother, who is our advocate, to defend us by their infinite mercy from every adversity and all evil, and keep us from the hands of traitors and of the enemies of Siena.***
>
> *English translation: Charles Eliot Norton, Historical Studies of Church-Buildings in the Middle Ages: Venice, Siena, Florence (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880), 144-45; Italian text: G. Milanesi, Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese (Siena: 1854, I), 169.*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Maesta

Figure **13.7.2.77***: More Smarthistory images…*

Duccio, *The Rucellai Madonna*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.2.14*: Duccio, The Rucellai Madonna, 1285-86, tempera on panel, 177 x 114" or 450 x 290 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

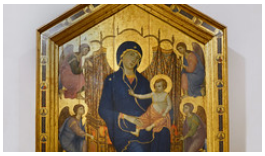






Figure **13.7.2.78***: More Smarthistory images…*

Duccio, *The Virgin and Child with Saints Dominic and Aurea*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



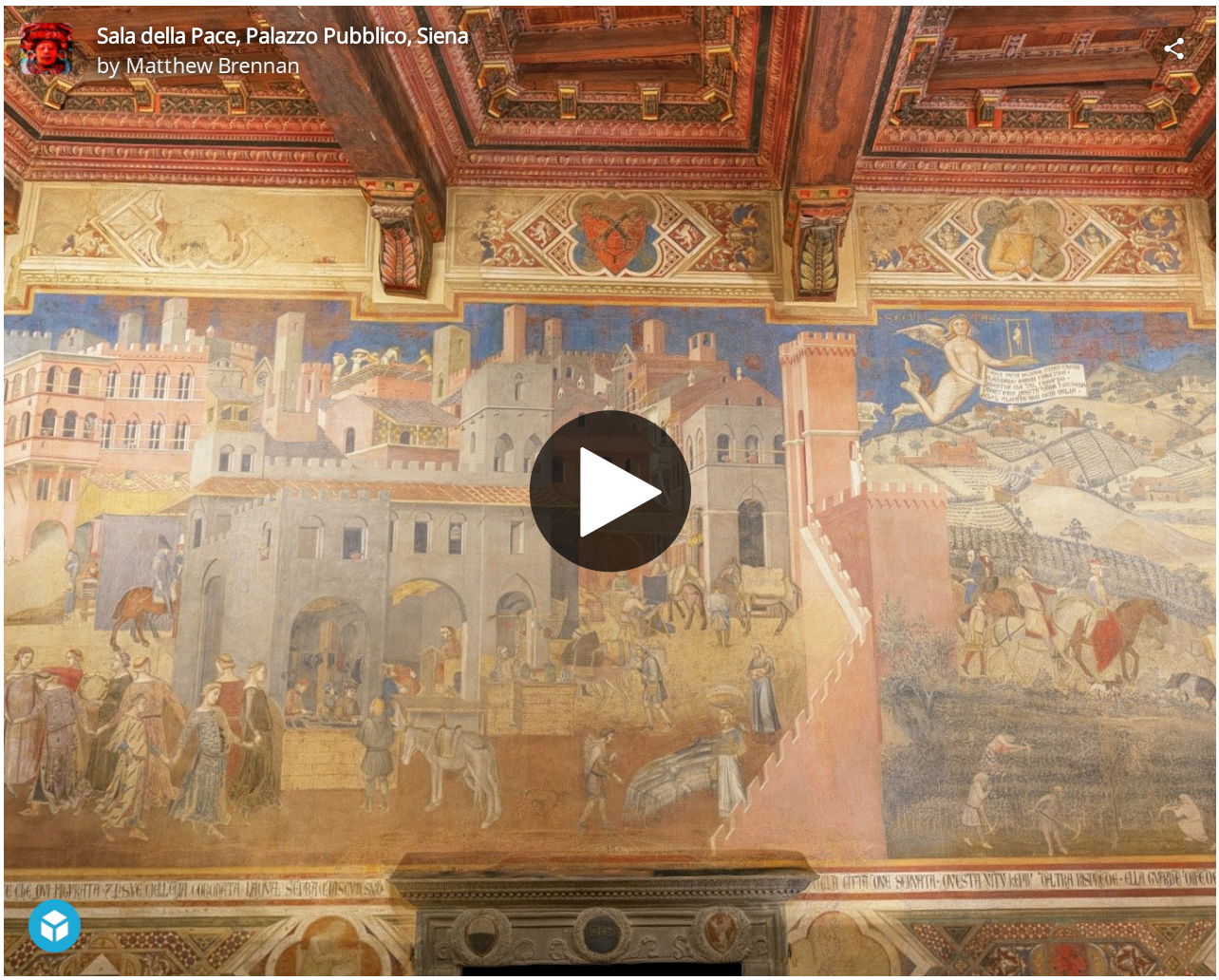
Video **13.7.2.15***: Duccio di Buoninsegna, The Virgin and Child with Saints Dominic and Aurea, c. 1315, tempera on wood, 42.5 x 34.5 cm (National Gallery, London)*

Ambrogio Lorenzetti

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

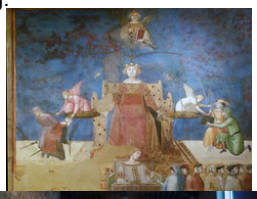


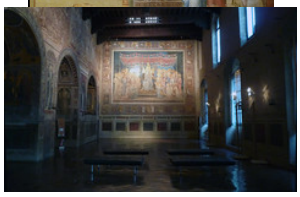
Video **13.7.2.16***: Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Allegory of Good Government, Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country, and Allegory and Effects of Bad Government in the City and the Country, c. 1337-40, fresco, Sala della Pace (Hall of Peace) also known as the Sala dei Nove (the Hall of the Nine), 7.7 x 14.4m (room), Palazzo Pubblico, Siena*



Video **13.7.2.17***: Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (Matthew Brennan, on Sketchfab)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

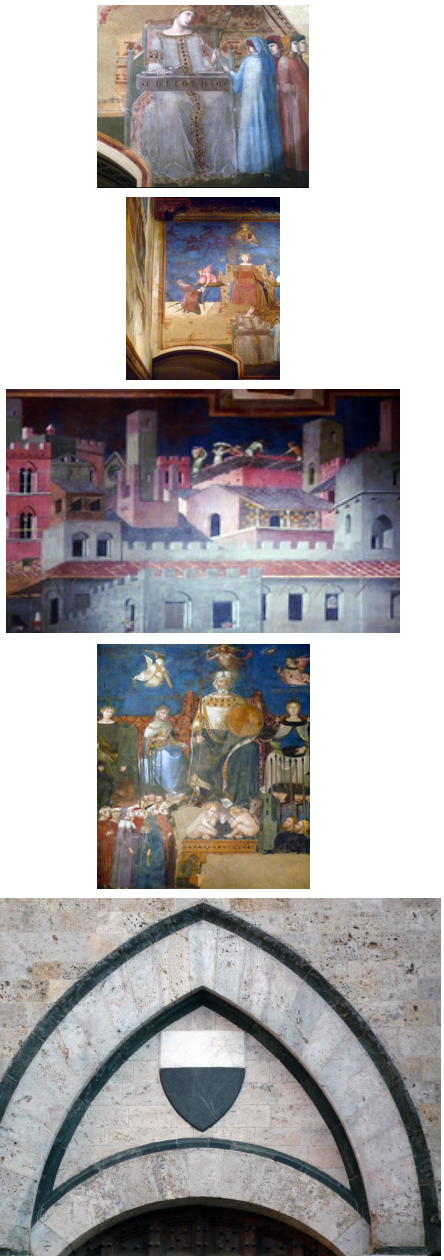


Figure **13.7.2.79***: More Smarthistory images…*

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

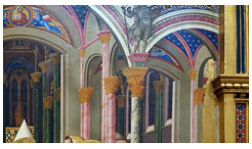


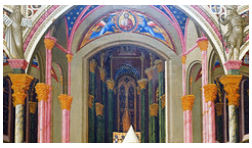
Video 13.7.2.18*: Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, 1342, tempera on panel, 257 x 168 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)*

Additional resources

This painting at the Uffizi

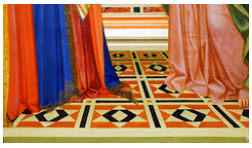
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:










https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88721

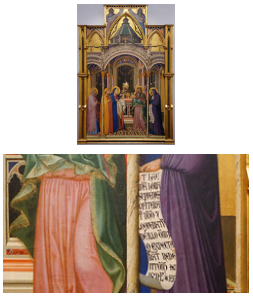


Figure 13.7.2.80*: More Smarthistory images…*

Pietro Lorenzetti, *Birth of the Virgin*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.2.19*: Pietro Lorenzetti, Birth of the Virgin, c. 1342, tempera on panel, 6' 1" x 5' 11", for the altar of St. Savinus, Siena Cathedral (now in Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena)*

Simone Martini

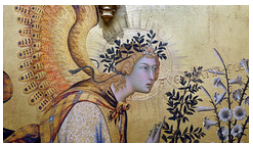
Simone Martini, *Annunciation*

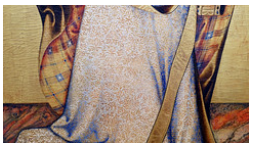
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.2.20*: Simone Martini, Annunciation, 1333, tempera on panel, 72 1/2 x 82 5/8" (184 x 210 cm) (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

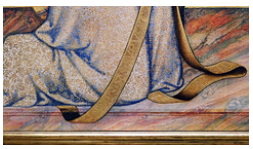
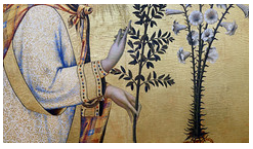








Figure **13.7.2.81***: More Smarthistory images…*

Simone Martini, *Saint Louis of Toulouse*

by CLAIRE JENSEN



Figure **13.7.2.82***: Simone Martini, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*

The youthful and determined gaze of Saint Louis of Toulouse, a famous Franciscan saint, stares out from the shimmering gold background of a ten-foot tall altarpiece by Simone Martini. The painting is the most famous work surviving from the vibrant Angevin court of Naples and is currently located in the city's Museo di Capodimonte. This royal panel preserves a fascinating history of dynastic succession and a connected world in fourteenth-century Southern Italy.

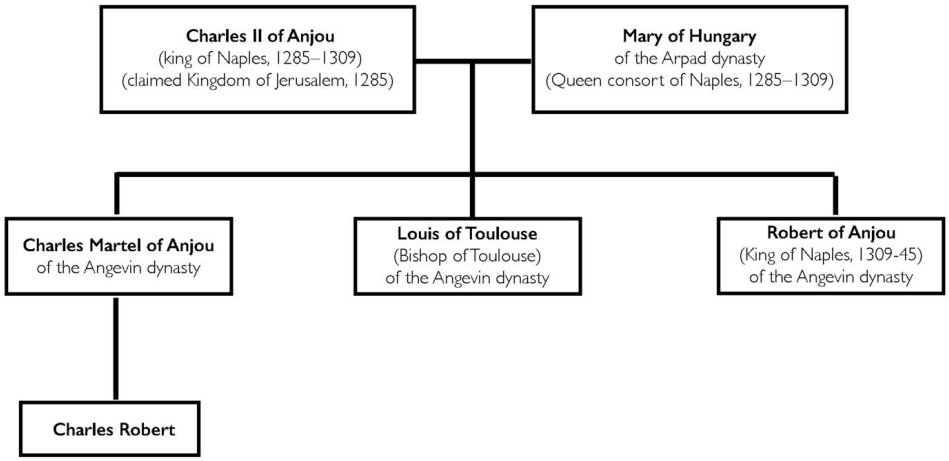


Figure **13.7.2.83***: Family Tree of Louis of Toulouse*



Figure **13.7.2.84***: Map of Italy, 1300–1360 C.E.*

A reluctant prince turned bishop

Louis was born a prince. He was the second son of Charles II of Anjou, the heir to the Kingdom of Naples. After his father became King in 1285, Louis and two of his brothers were held hostage under the Spanish King Ferdinand III of Aragon for seven years. While in captivity in Catalonia, the Angevin princes were tutored by Franciscans friars and Louis realized that it was his destiny to become a monk. This plan was derailed, however, when his older brother (Charles Martel) died unexpectedly and Louis found himself the next in line to inherit the throne of Naples (and become titular King of Jerusalem—a formal title without any real authority). Determined to live a spiritual rather than royal life, he negotiated with his father to become Bishop of Toulouse and elected to pass inheritance rights to his younger brother Robert.

The main panel of Simone Martini's altarpiece depicts this story of succession. It shows a double coronation —two angels hold an ornate crown above Saint Louis's head while Louis extends a nearly identical crown over the head of his brother, who kneels submissively to his right.



Figure **13.7.2.85***: Simone Martini, Saint Louis of Toulouse (detail), c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*

In the painting, Saint Louis wears a silvery miter (the pointed headdress of a bishop). His heavily decorated gloves, cope, and crozier further indicate his status as Bishop of Toulouse. Under his magnificent church gear, he wears a far less luxurious garment: the rough wool habit of a Franciscan monk (worn by Franciscan monks and nuns as a sign of their vow of poverty). This detail demonstrates that Louis's early ambition to join the order was successful. The young prince professed his Franciscan vows just a few days before he was ordained as Bishop of Toulouse in 1296. Although he went to France to assume official ecclesiastical duties, he ultimately chose to step down from his position after only six months and died on his return trip to Rome to resign before the Pope. Reports that his remains could perform miracles began to circulate almost immediately after his death, and his family campaigned heavily for his sainthood. He was canonized (officially recognized as a saint) in 1317 by Pope John XXII.



Figure **13.7.2.86***: St. Francis and scenes from his life, 1240s–1260s, panel (Bardi Chapel, Basilica of Santa Croce, Florence)*

A Franciscan Saint

The Franciscans were a popular mendicant order following the teachings of Saint Francis, the order's founder. Francis inspired a large number of monastic houses across Europe and many works of art were made to commemorate his faith and miracles, such as the scenes we find in the ***Bardi Chapel*** *in the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence. Simone Martini's painting of Saint Louis parallels early paintings of Saint Francis, depicting him specifically as a Franciscan saint. Positioned frontally and wearing a Franciscan habit, the Angevin prince's waist is belted with a simple chord tied in three knots to symbolize his monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.*

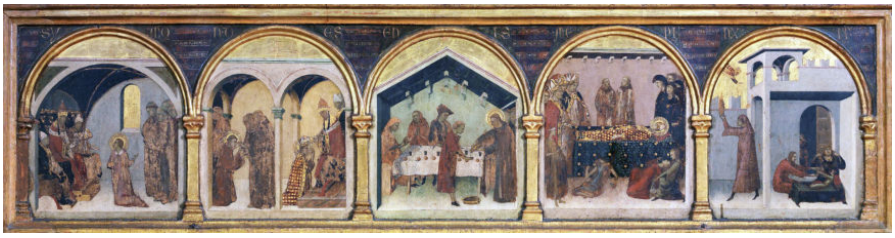


Figure **13.7.2.87***: Simone Martini, predella of Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples). From left to right: 1. Meeting with Pope Boniface VIII; 2. Double scene of Louis's ordination as Bishop of Toulouse and his profession of Franciscan vows; 3. Louis serves a meal to the poor at the Franciscan convent of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome; 4. Louis's funeral in Marseilles in 1297; 5. A posthumous miracle in which Louis revived a stillborn infant.*

The similarities with Franciscan altarpieces do not end at Louis's clothing. On the predella are episodes from Louis's saintly life. Although paintings of Francis included anywhere from four to twenty apron scenes, Louis here only has five. They show (from left to right) his deal with the Pope to allow him entry into the Franciscan Order, his vow profession and ordination, an act of charity, his funeral in 1297, and a posthumous miracle in which he resurrected a stillborn infant. This small number of scenes indicates that he was probably a new saint when the panel was made. In fact, Simone Martini is often credited with inventing the iconography for the stories himself. This means the work was likely created around 1317 when Louis was canonized.



Figure **13.7.2.88***: Simone Martini, detail of fleur-de-lis, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*

Angevin Heraldry



Figure **13.7.2.89***: Simone Martini, detail of fleur-de-lis on the back, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples; photo: Claire Jensen)*

The exact circumstances of Simone Martini's altarpiece creation are unknown, but it seems that it was paid for by Louis's family. The frame, which is original to the work, serves as a monumental Angevin crest. Decorated with gilded plaster fleur-de-lis (a stylized lily composed of three petals bound together at the base) on a textured blue background, the frame perfectly reproduces the coat of arms of the French Kings who controlled Naples in the later Middle Ages. The blue and gold lily motif is found throughout the work: embroidered in crests on Louis and Robert's clothing, delicately punched into the border of the ***gilded background****, and even painted on the reverse side of the frame.*



Figure **13.7.2.90***: Simone Martini, detail of morse in wood, glass and tempera paint, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples; photo: Claire Jensen)*

The morse (an ornate broach used to fasten a cope) made out of painted wood and glass on Louis's chest is an ingenious addition by Simone Martin. It resembles actual objects but it is also seen here as a political symbol.



Figure **13.7.2.91***: Left: Simone Martini, detail of morse in wood, glass and tempera paint, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples; right: Morse with Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata, mid-14th century, made in Siena, Italy, gilded copper, translucent enamel, silver, parchment, glass gems, 12.9 x 12.9 x 4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)*

Look closely and you'll see the signature French lilies on the right and the cross of Jerusalem on the left—projecting Louis's dual status as heir to the throne of Naples and titular King of Jerusalem in the later Middle Ages. The same divided crest appears on Robert's blue robes, signaling that he inherited both titles when his brother renounced his right to rule.



Figure **13.7.2.92***: The same crest worn by Saint Louis of Toulouse and Robert of Anjou. Simone Martini, detail of Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*



Figure **13.7.2.93***: Simone Martini, detail of Arpad family crest, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*

The gold border of Louis's cope curiously includes another crest not represented on Robert's vestments: the horizontal red and gold stripes of his mother Margaret's Arpad family of Hungary. The omission of the Hungarian crest for Robert makes sense. When the third brother inherited the Kingdom of Naples, the title King of Jerusalem, and the Angevin holdings in France in 1309, he did not gain any of his mother's territories. The Hungarian crown passed instead to his nephew, Charles Robert, the son of the original Angevin heir and Louis and Robert's older brother, Charles Martel.

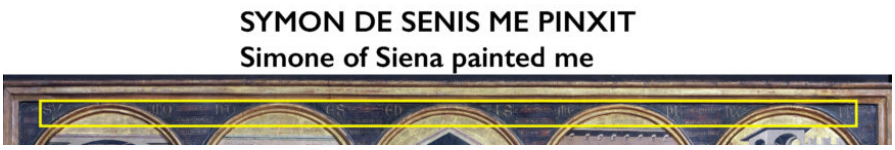


Figure **13.7.2.94***: Simone Martini, detail of Simone's signature, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*

Simone Martini and International Objects in Naples

Political alliances between Naples and Tuscany made it possible for one of the most famous artists from ***Siena*** *to create the work. Although it was surely meant to be displayed in Naples, Simone Martini included his own origins in the composition. In the spandrels of the predella are divided letters that read, "SYMON DE SENIS ME PINXIT" (translation: Simone of Siena painted me). This sense of foreign presence was important for the Angevins because Naples was a wealthy center of global trade thanks to its Mediterranean coastal location. The royal family enhanced their capital's cosmopolitan legacy by commissioning famous artists from elsewhere—like Simone Martini, Giotto, and Pietro Cavallini—to work for them. They also accumulated an impressive collection of objects from far-flung places, expressed by the decorative items we see in the Saint Louis painting.*

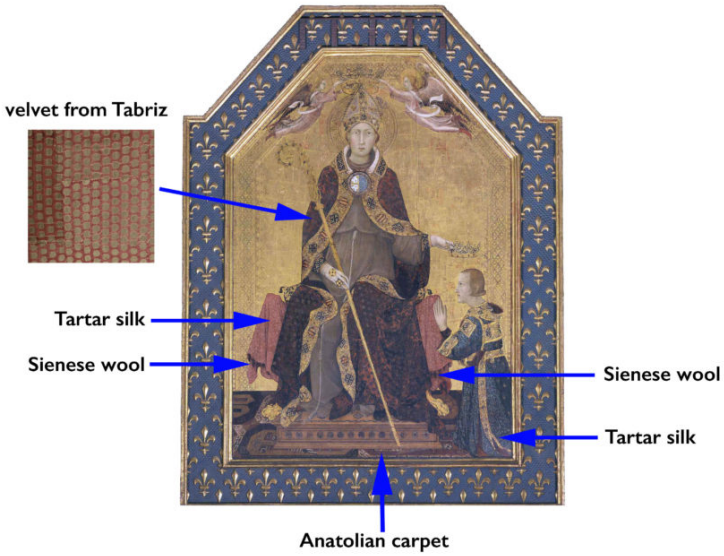


Figure **13.7.2.95***: Decorative items. Simone Martini, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples). The crimson velvet with gold octagons is 13th-14th century, Iranian, probably Tabriz, silk and metal thread (****The Metropolitan Museum of Art****)*

Using his famous talent for capturing ***realistic detail****, Simone Martini painted Louis's cope as crimson velvet patterned with gold octagons from the Persian city of Tabriz. Draped over the lion-headed throne is another luxurious red cloth; one side in a red and black checked Sienese wool and the other in shiny Tartar silk imported from Mongol-held lands in Central Asia. Robert's blue garment is also made of Tartar silk, an accurate choice given the Anjou family's documented collection of Mongolian textiles. The floor is additionally covered by an* ***Anatolian carpet****, a knotted wool rug with geometric patterns from western Turkey. All of these international objects would have been available in the Mediterranean port city of Naples, making the painting an impressive record of Angevin wealth and mercantile connections.*

In spite of its many innovations, the coronation subject is not unique. In fact, the closest art historical precedents are mosaics depicting the Norman Kings from the eleventh and twelfth centuries on the nearby island of Sicily. Perhaps the Angevins specifically chose this model to promote their power in a way that was recognizable in Southern Italy. They lost control of the island in a war known as the ***Sicilian Vespers*** *in 1282 and subsequently made many failed attempts to regain it.*



Figure **13.7.2.96***: King William II crowned by Christ, c. 1180–90, mosaic on the north wall of sanctuary, Cathedral of Monreale, Sicily (photo:* ***SNappa2006****, CC BY 2.0)*

By commissioning an altarpiece from Simone Martini that depicts a divine coronation on a gold background, the Angevin family projected a sense of historical continuity with their Norman predecessors in southern Italy. In a mosaic in the Cathedral of Monreale (Sicily), Christ is enthroned like Louis and places a crown on the head of King William II as two angels fly around him. For the Angevins, the sacred nature of their rule was even more personalized. Embodying a concept known as beata stirps (Latin for blessed lineage), God, acting through Louis, approved Robert's rule of southern Italy. Robert reinforced his blessed lineage by counting multiple saints in his extended family—including his father's uncle, Saint Louis IX of France, and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary on his mother's side. When Robert died in 1343 without a male heir, he went against the tradition of only male succession and insisted that the throne be passed to his granddaughter Joanna, so as to preserve the sacred bloodline of the Angevin rulers in Naples.



Figure **13.7.2.97***: Simone Martini, detail of Robert of Anjou, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317, tempera, gold, and gems (lost) on panel, 121.6 × 74.2 inches (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples)*

This depiction of Robert looks like other portraits of him, indicating that artists followed a specific prototype. We do not know whether these portraits were based on first-hand observation though. His slim face, long nose, downturned mouth, and pointed chin is repeated in nearly every royal image of Robert from the fourteenth century.

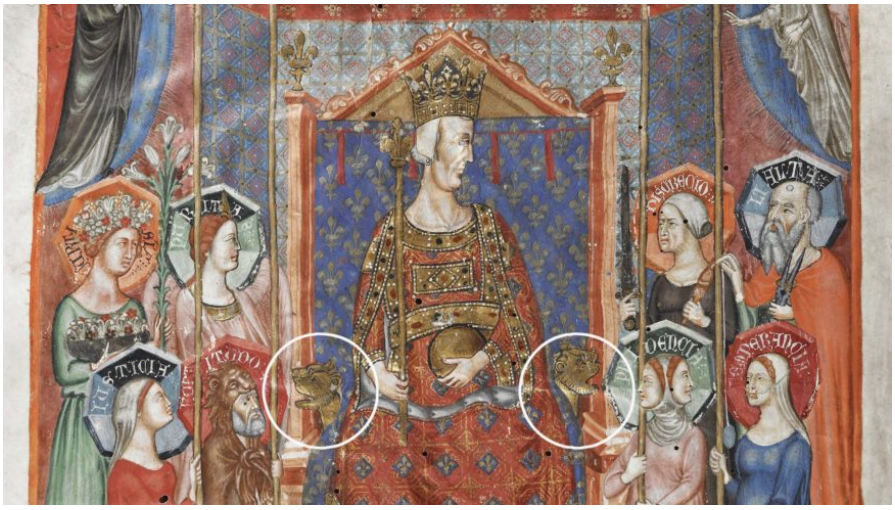


Figure **13.7.2.98***: King Robert enthroned with Virtues and Vices (detail), Anjou Bible, folio 3v, made in Naples c. 1340 (KU Leuven Maurits Sabbe Library, Belgium)*



Figure **13.7.2.99***: Gigliato of Robert the Wise, minted in Naples c. 1309–1345, billon (copper alloy containing gold and silver), 3.94 grams, 12 x 26.9 millimeters (**Yale University Art Gallery**)*

A prominent example is found in a page from the Anjou Bible made in Naples. In the illuminated manuscript, Robert appears older, but with identical features and similarly framed in a monumental Angevin crest. He is also enthroned on the lion-headed (and clawed) throne that his brother occupies in the Simone Martini panel. The lion throne is used again in the image stamped on the gigliato (pronounced jil-yato), the official coin of the Kingdom of Naples during Robert's rule. Maybe the King specifically repeated these elements to reinforce his legitimacy as Louis's divinely sanctioned replacement.

Regardless of Robert's motives, at least one thing is certain: Simone Martini's magnificent altarpiece of Saint Louis of Toulouse projects a legacy of sacred Angevin succession, a record of international exchange, and the story of a Franciscan saint who gave up his right to rule the Kingdom of Naples.

Additional resources:

Met Timeline of Art History: Italian Peninsula, 1000 to 1400

A Capodimonte blog post "L'Italia chiamò" about the Louis of Toulouse altarpiece by Sarah Kozlowski (available in English if you scroll down).

Julian Gardner, "Saint Louis of Toulouse, Robert of Anjou and Simone Martini," Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 39. Bd., H. 1 (1976), pp. 12–33.

Diana Norman, "Politics and Piety: Locating Simone Martini's St Louis of Toulouse Altarpiece," Art History 33, no. 4 (2010), pp. 596–619.

Diana Norman, "The Sicilian Connection: Imperial Themes in Simone Martini's St. Louis of Toulouse Altarpiece," Gesta 53, no. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 25–45.

Katharina Weiger, "The portraits of Robert of Anjou: self-presentation as political instrument?" Journal of Art Historiography, no. 17 (2017).

Pisa, Pistoia and Rome

1300 - 1400

Nicola Pisano, Pulpit, Pisa Baptistery, and Giovanni Pisano, Pulpit, Sant'Andrea church, Pistoia

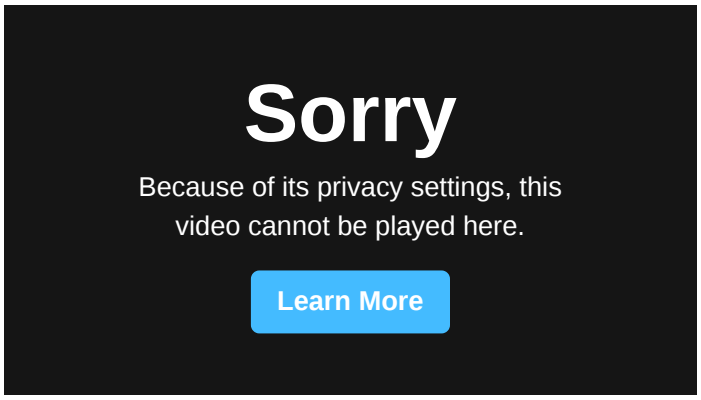
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. DAVID DROGIN



Video 13.7.2.21*: Nicola Pisano, Pulpit, Pisa Baptistery, 1260, Pisa (Italy) and Giovanni Pisano, Slaughter of the Innocents,1301, Marble, Pulpit, Sant'Andrea church, Pistoia (Italy)*

Giovanni Pisano, Pisa Pulpit

by HENI TALKS



Jules Lubbock - Pisa Pulpit: 'Judge by the correct law!' from HENI Talks on Vimeo.

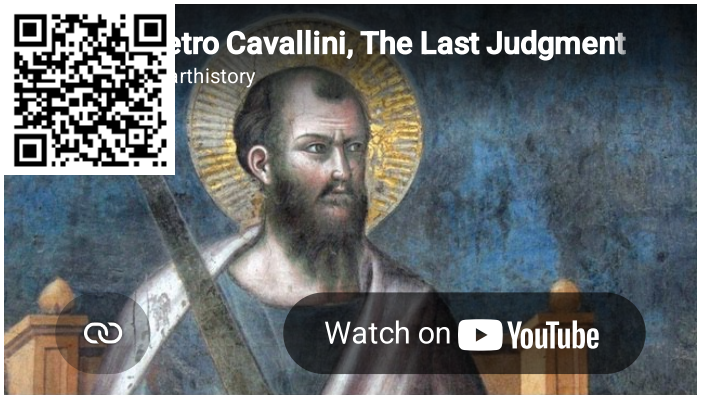
It is now over seven hundred years since the Italian Gothic sculptor Giovanni Pisano set chisel to stone. Though long regarded as his masterpiece, the Pisa Pulpit fell out of favour in the 20th century.

The rise of photography had given a new generation of historians outside of Italy access to the work, but photos failed to convey the pulpit's complexity. Basing their opinions on two-dimensional reproductions, critics thought the carvings to be distorted and the narrative scenes grossly cluttered.

Art Historian Jules Lubbock examines a plaster cast of the pulpit in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collections and argues that it was the critics who were ill-judged. As an inscription on the pulpit implores: 'You who marvel, judge by the correct law!'

Pietro Cavallini, *The Last Judgment*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.2.22***: Pietro Cavallini, The Last Judgment, c.1293, fresco, Santa Cecilia, Rome*

Spain

Ferrer Bassa and the murals of Pedralbes

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.2.100***: View from the cloister of Santa María of Pedralbes, founded 1326, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain (photo:* ***julie corsi****, CC BY 2.0)*

In the hubbub of Barcelona, just outside the city center, the delightful late Gothic monastery (or monestir in Catalan) of Santa María of Pedralbes offers a cool, calm respite—especially in the summer. While the overall space itself is impressive, one of the most spectacular is a chapel filled with brilliantly colored frescoes that present narrative scenes from the life of Jesus and Mary, accompanied by saints and angels. The murals demonstrate Bassa's engagement and adaptation of Tuscan artists like ***Giotto*** *and* ***Simone Martini****, and so speak to the dynamic networks of cultural exchange happening throughout the Mediterranean at the time.*

Why are these murals here and who paid for them?

Elisenda de Moncada i de Pinós, Queen of Aragon between 1322 and 1327, established the Franciscan nunnery for Poor Clares at Pedralbes in 1326. Both Queen Elisonda and King Jaume II were important patrons of art and architecture. After King Jaume II's death, Elisonda dressed in the Clarissan habit but took no official vows, and lived near Pedralbes in a new palace. Like other queens on the Iberian Peninsula, Elisonda had vast funds at her disposal (the result of matrimonial law). Her mother came from the wealthy Pinos family, while her father was an important administrator of the area who had worked under Jaume II. When she died, she was buried at Pedralbes, and her tomb is adorned with an effigy sculpture of her. She left her remaining matrimonial wealth to the nuns.



Figure **13.7.2.101***: Ferrer Bassa, frescoes of the Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348 (**public domain**)*

At one point, the monastery of Pedralbes had many murals animating its interior after its construction. Unfortunately, many of them have suffered the ravages of time and are now faded, fragmentary, or destroyed. The chapel of Saint Michael is an exception. Its murals remain largely intact, testifying to the former glory of the other murals in the monastery's space. They were created by the Catalan artist, Ferrer Bassa. He was hired in 1343 by Francesca de Saportella i de Pinos, the abbess of the monastery, who also happened to be the queen's niece, to produce the chapel's murals. At some point he stopped working, but picked up the work again in March 1346. [1]

The contracts detail what Bassa was supposed to include in the murals. One explicitly details the chapel's iconography, as well as materials.

> ***It is agreed between the lady abbess of Pedralbes and Ferrer Bassa that the said Ferrer shall paint in fine colours, with oil, the Chapel of St. Michael, which belongs to the lady abbess, and here portray the Seven Joys of Mary, Mother of Jesus, amply and with all the figures that are necessary. He will also portray Seven Stories of the Passion of Jesus Christ. . . . The first, when Jesus was arrested; the second, when he was judged before Pilate, veiled, scourged and taunted; the third, when he was nailed to the cross; the fourth, when he died on the cross, with the two thieves, Mary and the other Marys, John, and the centurion with the other Jews; the fifth, when he was brought down from the cross; the sixth, when he was laid in the Monument; the seventh, the lamentation with Mary and John.***
>
> ***St. Michael, St. John the Baptist, St. James, St. Francis, St. Mary(sic) Clare, St. Eulalia, St. Catherine and the deacon St. Antoninus of Pamiers must also appear. Also a Majesty with two angels over the door,***

> ***inside the chapel. And all the images must have diadems and embellishments in fine gold.***
>
> ***And beneath the aforesaid stories and images, there will be curtains by way of drapery on the walls. [2]***

The contract indicates that the abbess of Pedralbes played an important role in determining the materials Bassa should use and what should be depicted on the chapel's walls. Saportella's desire for Bassa to "paint in fine colours, with oil" indicates that she wanted a high-quality mural painting. In reality, however, the mural is a mixture of techniques (oil, fresco secco, and buon fresco).

The life of Mary and Jesus

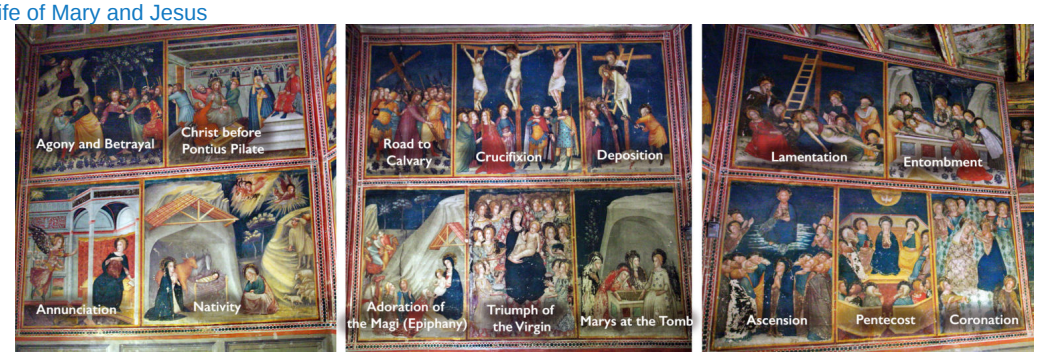


Figure **13.7.2.102***: Ferrer Bassa, frescoes of the Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348 (**public domain**)*

But do the stipulations of the contract match what we see in the chapel? Indeed, Bassa did paint the scenes requested from the life of Mary and Jesus.



Figure **13.7.2.103***: Ferrer Bassa, Pietà, fresco, Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348*

In each scene, Bassa varied the poses of his figures and their expressions to add drama and emotion. In the Pietà, at the base of the cross, Mary stoops to cradle Jesus' face, touching her cheek to his. Mary Magdalen kisses Christ's bloodied hand. Saint John raises his right hand to his teary face as he looks down at Christ. Others in the scene wring their hands, turn away in sadness, or tear at their hair. All the figures are positioned around the diagonal, prone body of the deceased Jesus. Bassa ***modeled*** *all the figures with light and shadow to create convincing three-dimensional bodies, and they appear to have weight and stand or sit firmly on the ground. Bassa also attempted to show convincing human anatomy (look, for example, at Christ's chest and abdomen), adding to his figures' naturalism and increasing the emotional resonances of the unfolding narratives.*

The figures appear crowded, and the compressed composition adds to the drama by focusing on the essential figures and elements. There is no deep recession into space. Instead, Bassa placed all the figures in the foreground, and the bodies overlap to suggest spatial depth. There are few extraneous motifs. The landscape is indicated by scattered plants in the immediate foreground, a rocky outcropping on which the drama unfolds, and a darkened background. It appears more like a stage setting than Golgotha (the hill atop which Jesus was crucified).



Figure **13.7.2.104***: Ferrer Bassa, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, fresco, Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348 (****public domain****)*

Besides the narrative scenes revolving around Jesus and Mary, we see a variety of standing saints and angels. To the right of the Triumph of the Virgin, Saint Francis and Saint Clare stand in their coarse-hair habits, which Franciscan monks and nuns wore as a sign of their vow of poverty. Their presence in the chapel makes sense, because after all this was a space for Franciscan nuns. Saint Francis founded the religious order in 1209, and Clare was the first female Franciscan nun. Franciscans arrived early on the Iberian Peninsula, and Franciscanism spread rapidly throughout the peninsula in the thirteenth century.



Figure **13.7.2.105***: Ferrer Bassa, saints, fresco, Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348 (**public domain**)*



Figure **13.7.2.106***: Ferrer Bassa, St. Barbara, fresco, Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348 (**public domain**)*

*Many other saints stand with their respective **attributes** on the walls, such as Saint Barbara who holds a tower. She was an early Christian martyr who lived as a chaste virgin (which would have appealed to nuns who had taken similar vows). Barbara was locked in a tower by her father to protect her, but he ultimately killed her for practicing Christianity. The inclusion of saints like Barbara also undoubtedly reflects the increasing popularity of stories about the lives and miracles of saints, most famously collected in the Golden Legend (compiled around 1260 by Jacobus de Voragine).*

Bassa's figures resonate with a heightened emotionality, a choice that was likely due to the influence of Franciscanism. The Franciscans, more so than other religious orders, wanted people to identify with Jesus' and Mary's humanity by encouraging Christian devotees to appeal to their emotions. The Franciscan Pseudo-Bonaventure's Meditations on the Life of Christ encapsulates this new approach to religious experiences, asking readers to visualize Christ's life as if they were there, and to engage in a more physical type of prayer involving kneeling, praying, crying, reading, looking, and touching.

A Catalan artist in a global era

*Bassa's frescoes share a number of similarities with **late Gothic** Tuscan artists in Italy. Giotto's earlier fourteenth-century **Scrovegni chapel** presents a similar narrative cycle to Bassa's chapel, albeit on a larger*

*scale for the wealthy **patron** who commissioned it. We see scenes from the life of the Virgin and Jesus, divided into narrative vignettes. Giotto's figures are also modeled with light and shadow, and their expressions and poses add emotion and drama to his scenes as well. Bassa's perspectival systems and figures like his kneeling angels look similar to paintings by Sienese painters, such as **Simone Martini**, **Duccio di Buoninsegna**, and **Pietro Lorenzetti**. Simone's kneeling angels in his Maestà look similar to Bassa's, and **Lorenzetti's Crucifixion in S. Francesco in Siena** also provides a parallel to Bassa's Chapel of St. Michael.*



Figure 13.7.2.107: Left: Simone Martini, Maestà, fresco, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy, 1315–1321; right: Ferrer Bassa, Maestà, fresco, Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/134–1348

But what do these similarities mean? What do they tell us?

*The Iberian Peninsula was a dynamic place in the fourteenth century, with artists from what is today France and Italy arriving in the area, as well as Catalan artists traveling elsewhere. **The Kingdom of Aragon** (especially in the areas of Barcelona and Valencia), had early connections with Italy, which might explain the desire for Italianate influences at Pedralbes. Still, the circumstances under which Bassa would have encountered Giotto's Arena Chapel or Sienese paintings remains unclear.*



Figure 13.7.2.108: Left: Giotto, Pietà, fresco, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Italy, c. 1305; Right: Ferrer Bassa, Pietà, fresco, Chapel of Saint Michael, Santa María of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 1343/1346–1348

Some scholars feel that he must have traveled to the Italian Peninsula to see them first hand. Even if this were the case, we still have more questions: did he simply recall these artworks from memory? Did he carry a sketchbook? Simone Martini also worked at the papal court at Avignon (in southern France), so perhaps Bassa viewed the Sienese artist's frescoes there. Other documentary evidence indicates that King Peter IV of

Aragon (known as "the Ceremonious") commissioned Bassa to create an altarpiece for the Ciutat of Mallorca in the mid-fourteenth century. [3] The Kingdom of Mallorca had connections to Italy, and this is especially clear in some of the art that remains from this time like altarpieces as well as illuminated manuscripts. We know of several Italian artists who worked on the island, including the Sienese stained-glass maker Matteo di Giovanni. Perhaps Bassa studied artworks found on the island? No matter the circumstances, Bassa's adaptation and selective borrowing from Tuscan artists more generally suggests an inventive artist who combined different ideas and practices that he came into contact with during his life.

Ferrer Bassa

*Bassa is known to have illuminated manuscripts, and painted altarpieces and frescoes. He worked for kings, queens, and nobles. In Barcelona, he had a thriving workshop. He likely died after contracting the bubonic plague (also known as **the Black Death**) that broke out in 1348, and which killed about 40–60% of the population in Europe.*



*Figure 13.7.2.109: Circle of Ferrer Bassa, Virgin and Child, with the Crucifixion and the Annunciation, and the Coronation of the Virgin and the Presentation in the Temple, c. 1340–48, tempera and gold leaf on panel, 127.6 x 184 x 4 cm (**The Walters Art Museum**)*

While the murals of the Chapel of St. Michael have documentation, most of Bassa's works do not. Some of the works currently attributed to Ferrer Bassa could possibly be those of his son, Arnau Bassa, because the two collaborated. The legacy of Ferrer Bassa's Italianate adaptations lived on among other artists associated with his workshop, including his son. Even though most of the murals at Pedralbes have not survived well, we are fortunate to have his murals in the monastery because they powerfully demonstrate the ongoing, dynamic processes of cultural and visual exchange occurring on the Iberian Peninsula.

Notes:

1. *Recently, some scholars have suggested that the murals might not belong to Ferrer Bassa, or the very least the authorship of the murals might be researched further.*
2. *AHMP. MANUAL NOTARIAL DE GUILLEM TURELL (1342-1348), FOL. 70 V., http://www.bcn.cat/museuhistoria/Murals-sota-la-lupa-Monestir-Pedralbes/en/2-obra-Ferrer-Bassa.html*
3. *Peter IV of Aragon had a number of different titles, including Count of Barcelona (where he was known as Peter III) and King of Valencia (where he was known as Peter II).*

Additional resources:

Reopening of the chapel of Sant Miquel: Divine Murals Exhibition

Murals in the Spotlight, The Conservation of the Paintings in Saint Michael's Chapel Monastery of Pedralbes

Rosa Alcoy, "Clarisse, monarchia e mondo francescano nella Capella di San Michele nel Monastero de Pedralbes ed oltre," Ikon 3 (2010), pp. 81–94

Rosa Alcoy, "Gothic painting in the Catalan-speaking lands between the 14th and 15th centuries," Catalan Historical Review 8 (2015), pp. 29–44

Arcadi Espada, Un Experto Descarta Que El Mural Gótico De Pedralbes Sea De Ferrer Bassa (Spain, 1996)

Sagué i Guarro Mariàngela, Ferrer Bassa : Les Pintures De La Capella De Sant Miquel Al Monestir De Pedralbes (Barcelona: Montserrat Mateu Taller Editorial, 1993)

Núria Sabaté, Monasterio De Santa María De Pedralbes: Pinturas Murales (Barcelona: Laia Libros, 2003)

Tanya Adele Szrajber, "The Murals of Ferrer Bassa in the Chapel of St. Miquel at Pedralbes" (PhD Dissertation, 1984)

13.7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400−1800

Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400−1800

by DR. KYLIE FISHER



Figure **13.7.3.1**: Book printing was a collaborative effort, as we see here with different people preparing a book for the printing press. Jan Collaert I after Joannes Stradanus, "The Invention of Book Printing," in *New Inventions of Modern Times (Nova Reperta)*, plate 4, c. 1600, engraving on paper, 27 x 20 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The printing press was arguably one of the most revolutionary inventions in the history of the early modern world. While the fifteenth-century German goldsmith and publisher, Johannes Gutenberg, is heralded for his creation of a mechanical printing press that allowed for the mass-production of images and texts, the technology of movable type was first pioneered much earlier in East Asia. In early eleventh-century **China**, the artisan Bi Sheng discovered that he could make individual Chinese characters from baked clay to create a system of movable type. Later, in thirteenth-century **Korea**, the first known metal movable type was produced.



Figure 13.7.3.2: Pages from the world's oldest extant book printed with movable metal type, *Anthology of Great Buddhist Priests' Zen Teachings*, 1377, 24. 5 x 17 cm (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**)

Increased contact and exchange between cultures in East Asia and Europe by way of the Silk Road, starting in the thirteenth century, led to the spread of such printing innovations. Indeed, by the mid-1400s, Gutenberg was in a prime position to devise his mechanical process for printing multiples of the same textual sources and visual representations, which, thanks to the portable and more affordable paper support, meant they could be circulated widely, serving as an early mode of mass communication in the pre-digital age. The publication of prints coupled with the introduction of movable type offered unprecedented possibilities for the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge and ideas, as well as artistic styles and designs.



Figure **13.7.3.3**: This illustration comes from a book published by Erhard Ratdolt, an early German printer from Augsburg, and is illustrated with seventy-three woodcuts. Here we see "Sol" or "Sun," in Albumasar, *Flores astrologiae* (Augsburg: Erhard Ratdolt, November 18, 1488), image 22 (Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, **Library of Congress**)

The democratization of art

Prior to the fifteenth century, works of art like **altarpieces**, portraits, and other luxury items were primarily found in the residences of wealthy patrons and in churches because it was the social elite and religious leaders in the community who had the financial resources to commission these exquisite objects. The reproducible format of print and the increasing availability of paper afforded the growing middle class, who may have not had the means to purchase paintings or statues, the opportunity to collect artistic representations. While large-scale projects were still funded by affluent **patrons**, the majority of prints were bought on speculation. As a result, we see a range of subject matter depicted in print that would have appealed to diverse collectors. For instance, the desire to study the past, literature, and science in cities across early modern Europe encouraged printmakers to supply the art market with representations of ancient history, classical mythology, and the natural world.



Figure **13.7.3.4**: Diamond Sutra, 868, woodblock-printed scroll, found in the Mogao (or "Peerless") Caves or the "Caves of a Thousand Buddhas," which was a major Buddhist center from the 4th to 14th centuries along the Silk Road (**British Library**)

Woodcut

The oldest form of printmaking is the woodcut. As early as the Tang Dynasty (beginning in the seventh century) in China, woodblocks were used for printing text onto pieces of textile, and later paper. By the eighth century, woodblock printing had taken hold in Korea and Japan. Although the practice of printing written sources is part of a much older tradition in East Asia, the production of printed imagery using woodblocks was a more common phenomenon in Europe, starting in late fourteenth-century Germany and subsequently spreading to the Netherlands and south of the Swiss Alps to areas of northern Italy.



Figure **13.7.3.5**: Early woodcuts often show religious subject matter. Here we see the Virgin Mary cradling her dead son, Jesus. Southern Germany, Swabia, *Pietà*, c. 1460, woodcut, hand colored with watercolor, 38.7 x 28.8 cm (**Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland**)



Figure **13.7.3.6**: Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a female donor* kneeling before a book with a print hanging on the wall behind her (detail), c. 1455, oil on panel, 41.8 x 21.6 cm (**National Gallery of Art**)

During the second half of the fifteenth century after Gutenberg invented his printing press, woodcuts became the most effective method of illustrating texts made with movable type. As a result, cities in Europe—namely Mainz, Germany and **Venice**, Italy—where printmaking initially took hold developed into important centers for book production. The European method of making printed images on paper using a mechanical press made its way to East Asia by the sixteenth century, but it was not widely adopted for artistic purposes until a couple centuries later during the Edo period in Japan when colored woodcuts (**ukiyo-e prints**) were produced in great numbers.

The earliest European loose-sheet woodcuts depict predominately Christian subjects, serving as relatively inexpensive devotional images. While museums today preserve prints in climate-controlled boxes to ensure that they last for future generations to enjoy, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were folded up and carried by pilgrims on their travels, cut and pasted into the interior covers of books, or tacked up onto walls of a home. Consequently, few early woodcuts survive because they were often destroyed through continual use. Yet, key extant woodcuts reveal the stylistic character of this early type of print.



Figure **13.7.3.7**: This woodcut survived a fire. It shows Mary holding the infant Jesus, surrounded by saints and scenes from the life of Mary. Unknown 15th–century printmaker, *Madonna of the Fire*, before 1428, woodcut, hand colored with paint, dimensions unknown (Cathedral of Santa Croce, Forlì, Italy)

For example, two woodcuts (the *Pietà* made in southern Germany and the early fifteenth-century Italian *Madonna of the Fire* that allegedly survived a fire that destroyed the building in which it was housed) both exhibit figures and other scenic elements that are rendered with thick outlines. These images feature minimal shading and patterning, resembling stenciled designs to which a collector often applied paint by hand to enhance the emotional appeal of the composition. This is seen with the incorporation of red streaks of paint that represent blood dripping from Christ's wounds in the *Pietà* print.

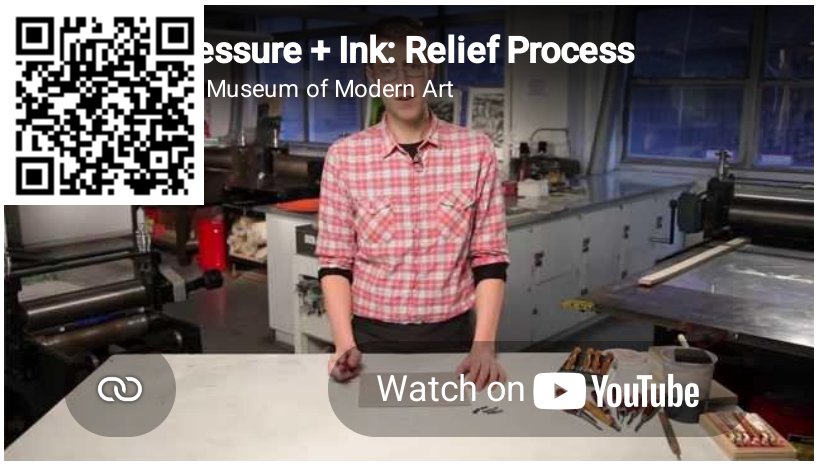


Figure 13.7.3.8: Left: Albrecht Dürer, woodblock for *Samson and the Lion*, c. 1497–1498, pear wood, 39.1 x 27.9 x 2.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); right: Albrecht Dürer, *Samson and the Lion*, c. 1497–1498, woodcut, 40.6 x 30.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.7.3.9: A contemporary artist uses a handheld gouger to cut a woodcut design into Japanese plywood. The design has been sketched in chalk on a painted face of the plywood (photo: Zephyris, CC BY-SA 3.0)

A type of **relief process**, a woodcut is produced by inking the raised surface of the matrix, which will result in a mirror impression of the composition when the block is pressed onto a sheet of paper using manual or mechanical (a printing press) pressure. The rubber stamp is a modern example of relief printing. To create the design on the block of wood, an artist uses a knife or gouge to cut away sections of the wood in between the lines and shapes that are to be printed. When cutting out the areas of wood, one has to be careful not to make the raised lines too thin or else they may break when pressure is added to produce an impression, which is why early woodcuts feature designs with bold contours.



Video **13.7.3.1**:The relief process is one of the main types of printmaking. To make a woodcut, an artist inks the raised surface of the matrix, which creates a mirror impression of the composition when the block is pressed onto a sheet of paper using manual or mechanical (a printing press) pressure (video from The Museum of Modern Art).

By the late fifteenth century, the German artist **Albrecht Dürer** found a way to portray impressive textural and tonal subtleties in his prints. By carving a series of thin lines close together in his *Samson and the Lion*, he convincingly represented shadows on the hillside.



Figure **13.7.3.10**: The white areas in this print are uninked, acting as highlights in the scene. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Saint Christopher*, c. 1509, chiaroscuro woodcut (**Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland**)

Chiaroscuro woodcut

As indicated by the production of hand-colored woodcuts like the *Pietà* and *Madonna of the Fire*, some collectors preferred the aesthetic and emotional intrigue of colored prints. In the sixteenth century, printmakers in northern Europe and Italy capitalized on that interest by making colored woodblock prints known as **chiaroscuro** woodcuts because they imitate the appearance of chiaroscuro drawings. In this type of drawing, the colored paper serves as the middle tone to which an artist adds white pigment to produce light (*chiaro*) tones and renders darker (*scuro*) values by incorporating hatch marks with a pen or areas of dark wash with a brush. The same concept applies to chiaroscuro woodcuts. **Lucas Cranach**'s *Saint Christopher*, for example, was made with two different woodblocks. One woodblock, referred to as the tone block, created the orange mid-tone. The second woodblock, called the line block, produced the black lines, that is the base design and hatching. The unprinted areas of the paper act as highlights.



Figure 13.7.3.11: An example of *niello* plaques, with incised linear designs on a metal surface which were inlaid with a dark paste-like substance. Devotional Diptych with the *Nativity* and *Adoration*, c. 1500, Paris, France, silver, niello, gilt copper alloy, 13.9 x 20.8 x 0.7 cm (The Cloisters Collection, **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Engraving

Not long after the first woodcuts were made, the **intaglio** process of engraving emerged in Germany in the 1430s and was used throughout other areas of northern and southern Europe by the second half of the fifteenth century (intaglio is a category of printmaking that includes engraving, drypoint and etching). Engraving remained a common method for printmaking through the end of the eighteenth century until the invention of planographic techniques like lithography. Engraving has its roots in the tradition of gold- and silversmith workshops where ***niello*** plaques—small plates of gold or silver—were made by incising a linear design into the metal surface and inlaying those carved grooves with a dark paste-like substance to render a clear representation.



Video 13.7.3.2: Artists scratched and etched metal plates to create fine surface detail (video from The Museum of Modern Art).



Figure **13.7.3.12**: Burins used in the engraving process (photo: Manfred Brückels, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Unlike the relief process of woodcut, an **engraving** is produced by sculpting into a copper plate using a tool with a lozenge-shaped tip called a burin, which leaves behind a V-shaped groove. Once the design has been fully incised, the entire surface of the plate is inked. Next, the plate will be wiped clean so that only the ink deposited into the incised lines will remain. Now the matrix is ready to be run through the printing press with a damp sheet of paper. The pressure from the press pushes the paper into those grooves and picks up the ink, resulting in a mirror impression of the image engraved on the copper plate.



Figure **13.7.3.13**: Even though this is one of Schongauer's earliest engravings, it was wildly influential. Michelangelo even copied it. Martin Schongauer, *Saint Anthony Tormented by Demons*, c. 1475, engraving, 30.0 x 21.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In comparison to the difficulty of carving a relief design into a woodblock, the technique of engraving allowed skilled artists to create magnificently detailed and stylistically varied compositions without the fear of producing too narrow of lines that would break under the pressure of a mechanical press. One of the greatest engravers in renaissance Europe was Martin Schongauer. His *St. Anthony Tormented by Demons* shows off his versatile engraving technique.



Figure **13.7.3.14**: Martin Schongauer, details of *Saint Anthony Tormented by Demons*, c. 1475, engraving, 30.0 x 21.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

To produce different textures, Schongauer used a variety of marks, such as long, curling lines to render the soft fur on the demon brandishing a club short U-shaped lines to create the scales of the creature grabbing Anthony's left arm. By incorporating passages of dense cross-hatching across Anthony's body, Schongauer also gave his figure a three-dimensional presence on the flat paper surface.



Figure **13.7.3.15**: Etching likely developed in the workshop of Daniel Hopfer, who created ornamental designs in the surface of metal armor. Attributed to Kolman Helmschmid, etching attributed to Daniel Hopfer, *Cuirass and Tassets* (Torso and Hip Defense), with detail of Virgin and Child on the center of the breastplate, c. 1510–20, steel, leather, 105.4 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Etching

Another **intaglio process** that developed in Germany around 1500 and remained popular throughout the early modern period was etching. While engraving originated from the craft of gold- and silversmithing, etching was closely related to the armorer's trade.

Etching likely developed in the workshop of Daniel Hopfer in Augsburg, a city in southern Germany. Hopfer discovered that through etching he was able to create ornamental designs in the surface of metal armor.

To etch an iron or copper printing plate, an acid-resistant substance (usually a varnish or wax) called a ground is applied to its surface. With a stylus or needle an artist draws a design into the ground, removing some of the coating each time a mark is made. After the design is complete, the plate is submerged into an acid bath and a chemical reaction takes place. The acid bites into the exposed metal, creating linear grooves. Once the plate is taken out of the bath and the ground is removed, the incised matrix is ready to be inked and printed in the same way as an engraving. Whereas engraving takes considerable manual labor because the printmaker has to carve into the metal plate, in the etching process, the acid does all of that work, and so it was considered an easier alternative to engraving. Artists who were adept at drawing, but not necessarily trained to engrave plates, found etching to be a suitable medium to make prints, since realizing a design in the ground with a needle was akin to drawing with a pen on paper.



Figure **13.7.3.16**: Parmigianino, *Entombment*, 1529−1530, etching, 27.1 x 20.4 cm (**Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland**)

Just like engraving, which had originated in Germany but quickly became popular among artists in other parts of Europe like Italy, etching also spread throughout the continent soon after its development. **Parmigianino** was one early sixteenth-century Italian painter and draftsman who tried his hand at etching. His *Entombment* shows off his expressive line work. It appears “sketch-like,” resembling a pen-and-ink drawing rather than an engraving, which is usually characterized by regularized lines and marks of equidistant spacing and length.



Figure **13.7.3.17**: First state, Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Presented to the People*, 1655, drypoint i/viii, 38.3 x 45.1 cm (**British Museum, London**)

Drypoint

Drypoint is perhaps the simplest method for creating an intaglio print. It developed at the same time as engraving in early fifteenth-century Germany, and like other related processes, drypoint attracted printmakers working across Europe. The technique involves using a stylus or needle to scratch into the surface of the copper matrix to throw up a burr. Just as the sides of a furrow or trench dug into the ground will hold drifts of snow, the raised edges of a drypoint line will retain ink. When making an engraving, the printmaker scrapes away the burr in order to achieve clean lines when the plate is printed. In a drypoint, however, the burr is left so that when the plate is printed, it produces a rich, velvety line. Unlike engraving, which can yield hundreds of decent impressions, the delicate drypoint burr wears quickly each time a plate is run through the press. For this reason, drypoint was most often used to add finishing touches to compositions after the primary design had been engraved or etched. Yet, some printmakers like the seventeenth-century Dutch master, **Rembrandt**, preferred to work entirely in this technique.



Figure **13.7.3.18**: Detail, first state, Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Presented to the People*, 1655, drypoint i/viii, 38.3 x 45.1 cm (British Museum, London)

In *Christ Presented to the People*, the contours of Pontius Pilate, Christ, and the surrounding soldiers reveal the dense, blurred character of the drypoint burr. Because drypoint created few quality impressions, Rembrandt often reworked his plates, making different states of the same image in order to produce more legible representations. The first state was printed early on in the plate's lifetime before the burr began to wear. In the fourth state, the once-strong velvety lines have all but disappeared and changes to the architecture are visible. Most noticeably, the balustrade depicted near the upper right does not appear in the first state.



Figure **13.7.3.19**: Fourth state, Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Presented to the People*, 1655, drypoint iv/viii, 35.8 x 45.4 cm (**British Museum, London**)



Figure 13.7.3.20: Mezzotint rockers (photo: Toni Pecoraro)

The term mezzotint is a compound of the Italian words *mezzo* ("half") and *tinta* ("tone"), and describes a type of intaglio print made through gradations of light and shade rather than line. To produce a mezzotint, an artist roughens the entire surface of a copper plate with a tool called a "rocker," a chisel-like implement with a semi-circular serrated edge. This tool is rocked back and forth across the plate until it has been completely worked, creating a surface full of burr that will hold ink. If you were to print an impression at this stage, it would appear as a field of rich black. To create a legible image, the printmaker must work from darkness to light with the aid of a scraper—a triangular-shaped blade fixed in a knife handle—and a burnisher—a blunt instrument with a hard, rounded end. By removing or smoothing out the burr, the artist weakens the plate's capability to hold ink when the plate is wiped, and those areas will print a lighter tone.



Figure 13.7.3.21: Left: Richard Earlom after Joseph Wright of Derby, *The Blacksmith Shop*, 1771, mezzotint ii/ii (Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland); right: Joseph Wright of Derby, *The Blacksmith Shop*, 1771, oil on canvas, 128.3 x 104.1 cm (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven)

Although mezzotint originated in Amsterdam during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, it found particular appeal in eighteenth-century London, so much so that the medium was even nicknamed "the English manner." When the Dutch-born sovereign William III became King of England in the late 1600s, numerous printmakers from the northern provinces of the Netherlands relocated to London in hopes of achieving royal patronage. During successive decades, native English artists learned from their Dutch contemporaries about how to make mezzotints and several technical manuals on the subject were also published locally. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, England had earned the reputation as a prolific center for mezzotint production. Richard Earlom was one English printmaker who had a successful career making mezzotint reproductions of oil paintings. *The*

Blacksmith Shop from 1771 is based on **Joseph Wright of Derby**'s painting of the same subject. Wright's pictures, which exhibit dramatic lighting effects, were ideally suited to be translated into mezzotint because the medium could capture the subtle tonal variations and lustrous appearance of his oil paintings.

Aquatint

Aquatint is a variant of the etching process that produces broad areas of tone that resemble the visual effects of watercolor. It involves the use of a powdered resin that is adhered to the plate through controlled heating. As the resin bonds to the plate, it creates a network of linear channels of exposed metal (think of how a cake of mud that is dried in the sun has a web of cracks). Once the plate is bitten by acid, the areas of exposed metal form deep grooves that are capable of holding ink.



Figure **13.7.3.22**: Francisco de Goya is famous for his artworks using aquatint. Goya, *Los Caprichos: The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 1799, etching and aquatint, 21.2 x 15.0 cm (**British Museum, London**)

Aquatint was first introduced in the mid-seventeenth century in Amsterdam. Yet, unlike other printmaking techniques that found immediate attraction, it would take some time before aquatint became more widely used. By the late eighteenth century, several English etchers had become drawn to the more painterly qualities of aquatint, but the medium arguably achieved its greatest acclaim under the Spanish artist, Francisco de Goya. To make ***The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters***, Goya first etched his sleeping artist, the bats, and haunting cat with quick lines. From there, he switched to aquatint to render the ominous shadow that envelops the entire composition and the white letters on the front of the artist's desk.

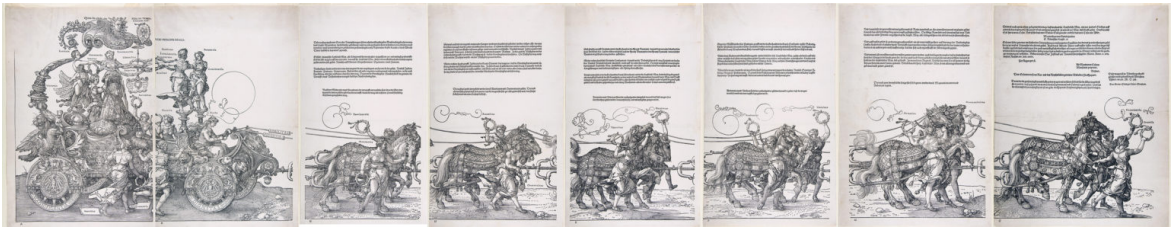


Figure **13.7.3.23**: An example of a multi-sheet composition. Albrecht Dürer, *Large Triumphal Carriage*, c. 1518–1522, woodcut (**Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York**)

The business of printmaking

Printmaking in early modern Europe was a complex enterprise that involved a number of different agents. It was not always the case that the individual responsible for carving the woodblock or incising the metal plate was the designer of the composition.

When Dürer was commissioned by Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I to design a complex, multi-sheet composition of the *Large Triumphal Carriage*, he teamed up with a talented workshop of block carvers to help him execute that grand-scale project. In some workshops, the figure who undertook the physical process of printing the blocks and plates may have only done that job. Additionally, there may have been a separate position dedicated to print publishing, that is selling and distributing the prints. Depending on the size of a workshop and the equipment available, some printmakers or publishers had to contract out some of those tasks. For example, if a publishing shop did not own a press, it had to collaborate with another local shop to produce its prints. Early printmaking revolved around a sophisticated network of artists and businessmen, and this legacy is still seen today. Many contemporary printmakers partner with a printing shop to create their work and/or a commercial gallery to exhibit and sell their art.

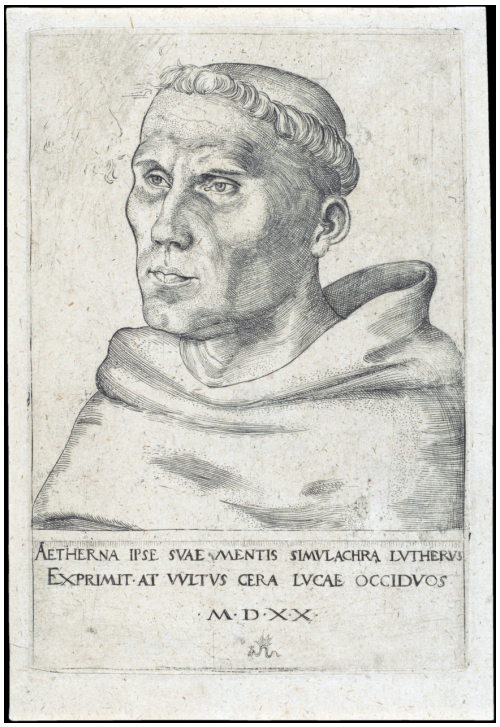


Figure **13.7.3.24**: Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk and professor of theology in Wittenberg. He posted his 95 Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg—at least, this is how the tradition tells the story—that took issue with the way in which the Catholic Church thought about salvation, and it specifically took issue with the selling of indulgences. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Martin Luther as an Augustinian Monk*, 1520, engraving, 15.8 x 10.7 cm (**Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The advent of print not only transformed how images were made, but it created new possibilities for art collecting and mass communication. Scholars have long recognized how the mass distribution of printed pamphlets criticizing the Roman Church's sale of indulgences and the pope's supremacy along with printed portraits of Martin Luther, such as Cranach's *Martin Luther as an Augustinian Monk*, spurred on a religious revolution in northern Europe by promoting the agenda of **Protestant Reformers**.



Figure **13.7.3.25**: Books made in early colonial Mexico often stressed the importance of images in the process of converting Indigenous peoples. Juan Bautista, *Confessionario en lengua mexicana y castellana* [Preparation of the penitents in Nahuatl and Spanish] (Santiago Tlatelolco: Melchor Ocharte, 1599), 1v–2r (**John Carter Brown Library**)

The portability, reproducibility, and affordability of printed compositions contributed to the exchange of information and ideas between cultures of distant geographies. European missionaries who journeyed to the Americas beginning in the sixteenth century brought with them prints of biblical figures that were subsequently disseminated among Indigenous populations in an effort to convert those local communities to Christianity. This kind of imagery also introduced Indigenous artists to new iconographies, visual traditions, and technologies that greatly impacted the artistic production in the Americas. In fact, during the mid-sixteenth century, the first printing shop was established in modern-day **Mexico City** and a few decades later Peru transformed into another important center for printmaking in the southern hemisphere. What we consider to be “mass media” today, certainly has its origins in the early modern world of printmaking.

Additional resources:

Giulia Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints, 1490−1550* (London: British Museum Press, 1995)

Michael Bury, *The Print in Italy, 1550−1620* (London: The British Museum Press, 2001)

Kelly Donahue-Wallace, “Picturing Prints in Early Modern New Spain,” *The Americas* 64, no. 3 (January 2008): 325−349

Antony Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550−1820* (London: The British Museum, 2016)

The Printed Image in the West: Aquatint at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Printed Image in the West: Drypoint at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Printed Image in the West: Engraving at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Printed Image in the West: Etching at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Printed Image in the West: Mezzotint at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Printed Image in the West: Woodcut at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

William M. Ivins Jr., *How Prints Look: Photographs with Commentary*, rev. ed. Marjorie B. Cohn (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987)

David Landau and Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470−1550* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1994)

Peter Parshall and Rainer Schoch, eds., *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Their Public* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Nuremberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 2005)

Ad Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching 1400−2000: A History of the Development of Manual Intaglio Printmaking Processes* (Houten, Netherlands: HES & De Graaf, 2012)

13.7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400−1800 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400−1800** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I)

Italy: 15th century

The Italian city-states were filled with art—all powered by thriving merchant economies.

1400 - 1500 (Early Renaissance)

Beginner's guide: Italy in the 15th century

This period is often called the Early Renaissance.

1400 - 1500

Carefully observing the natural world, relying on scientific and mathematical tools, and imitating aspects of ancient Greek and Roman art are the cornerstones of the Italian Renaissance.

How to recognize Italian Renaissance art

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.4.1**: A brief introduction to Italian Renaissance art

Illustrating a Fifteenth-Century Italian Altarpiece

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.7.4.2**: Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**.

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Picking up from the ancients

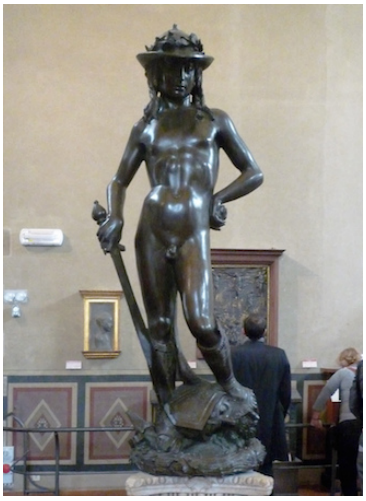


Figure **13.7.4.1**: Donatello, *David*, 1440s, bronze, 158 cm (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence)

We can see from Donatello's sculpture of *David*—with its careful depiction of bones and muscles and a nude figure—that the study of human anatomy was enormously important for Renaissance artists. They continued where the ancient Greeks and Romans had left off, with an interest in creating images of the human beings where bodies moved in natural ways—in correct proportion and feeling the pull of gravity.

Sculptures from ancient Greece and Rome reveal that classical artists closely observed the human body. Ancient Greek and Roman artists focused their attention on youthful bodies in the prime of life. Ancient sources indicate these artists used models to help them study the details of the body in the way that it looked and moved. These artists tried to show their viewers that they understood systems of muscles beneath the skin.



Figure **13.7.4.2**: An interest in human anatomy and ideal bodies can be seen in this ancient Greek sarcophagus. Hunting scene (detail), *The Alexander Sarcophagus*, c. 312 B.C.E., Pentelic marble and polychromy, found in Sidon, 195 x 318 x 167 cm (İstanbul Archaeological Museums).

In the Middle Ages, there was very little interest in the human body, which was seen as only a temporary vessel for the soul. The body was seen as sinful, the cause of temptation. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve eat the apple from the tree of knowledge, realize their nakedness, and cover themselves. Due to the nudity in this important story, Christians associated nudity with sin and the fall of humankind. Medieval images of naked bodies do not reflect close observation from real life or an understanding of the inner workings of bodies.



Figure 13.7.4.3: The medieval approach to the human body can be seen in this manuscript illumination. Artist unknown, Adam and Eve from the *Escorial Beatus*, c. 950, tempera on parchment (Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial)



Figure 13.7.4.4: Leonardo da Vinci, *Écorché (A Dead or Moribund Man in Bust Length)*, c. 1487, pen and ink over metalpoint on prepared paper (Royal Collection, London)

Dissection

The best way to learn human anatomy is not just to look at the outside of the body, but to study anatomy through dissection. Even though the Catholic Church prohibited dissection, artists and scientists performed dissection to better understand the body. Renaissance artists were anxious to gain specialized knowledge of the inner workings of the human body, which would allow them to paint and sculpt the body in many different positions.

The artists of the Early Renaissance used scientific tools (like linear perspective and the study of anatomy and geometry) to make their art more naturalistic, more like real life. The term “naturalism” describes this effort.

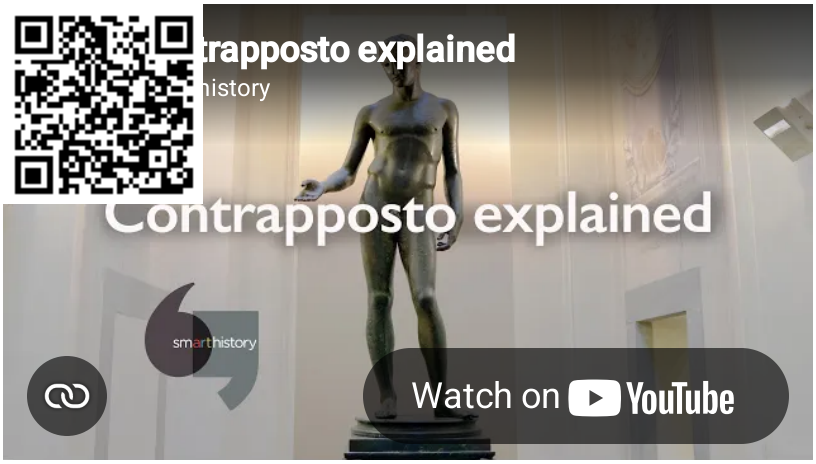
Scientific naturalism allowed artists in the Early Renaissance to begin to demand that society think of them as more than just skilled manual laborers. They argued that their work—which was based on science and math—was a product of their intellect just as much as their hands. They wanted artists to have the same status as intellectuals and philosophers, unlike the medieval craftsmen that came before them.

Additional resources:

Anatomy in the Renaissance from The Metropolitan Humseum of Art’s Timeline of Art History

Contrapposto explained

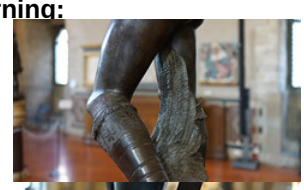
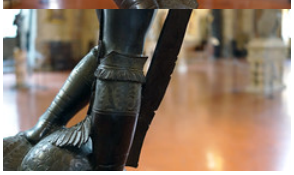
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.4.3: A discussion about contrapposto while looking at "Idolino" from Pesaro, (Roman), c. 30 B.C.E., bronze, 158 cm (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze), speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

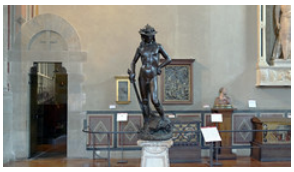
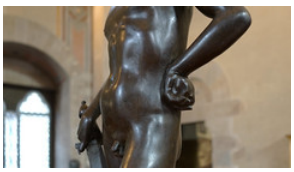
Although these particular objects may not have been known in the Renaissance, the ideas and form of contrapposto were revived in the Italian Renaissance.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





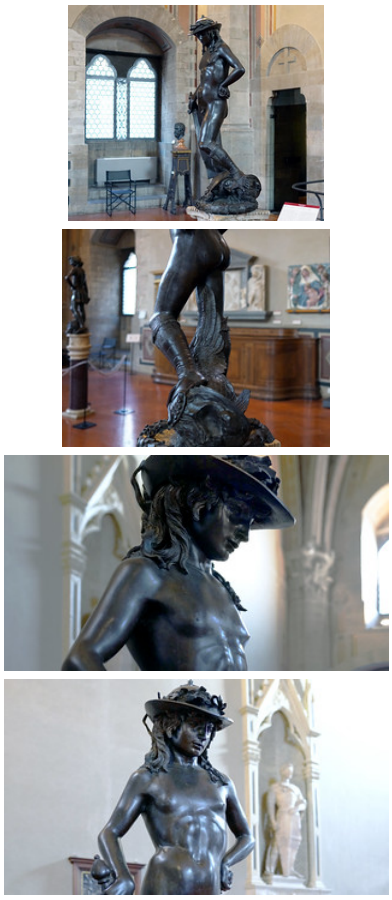



Figure **13.7.4.5**: More Smarthistory images…

Florence in the Early Renaissance

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The Renaissance really gets going in the early years of the fifteenth century in Florence. In this period, which we call the Early Renaissance, Florence is not a city in the unified country of Italy, as it is now. Instead, Italy was divided into many city-states (Florence, Milan, Venice etc.), each with its own government (some were ruled by despots, and others were republics).



Figure **13.7.4.6**: Italy in 1494

The Florentine Republic

We normally think of a Republic as a government where everyone votes for representatives who will represent their interests to the government (think of the United States pledge of allegiance: “and to the republic for which it stands…”). However, Florence was a Republic in the sense that there was a constitution which limited the power of the nobility (as well as laborers) and ensured that no one person or group could have complete political control (so it was far from our ideal of everyone voting, in fact a very small percentage of the population had the vote). Political power resided in the hands of middle-class merchants, a few wealthy families (such as the Medici, important art patrons who would later rule Florence) and the powerful guilds.

Why did the Renaissance begin in Florence?

There are several answers to that question: Extraordinary wealth accumulated in Florence during this period among a growing middle and upper class of merchants and bankers. With the accumulation of wealth often comes a desire to use it to enjoy the pleasures of life—and not an exclusive focus on the hereafter.

Florence saw itself as the ideal city state, a place where the freedom of the individual was guaranteed, and where many citizens had the right to participate in the government (this must have been very different than living in the Duchy of Milan, for example, which was ruled by a succession of Dukes with absolute power). In 1400 Florence was engaged in a struggle with the Duke of Milan. The Florentine people feared the loss of liberty and respect for individuals that was the pride of their Republic.

Luckily for Florence, the Duke of Milan caught the plague and died in 1402. Then, between 1408 and 1414 Florence was threatened once again, this time by the King of Naples, who also died before he could successfully conquer Florence. And in 1423 the Florentine people prepared for war against the son of the Duke of Milan who had threatened them earlier. Again, luckily for Florence, the Duke was defeated in 1425. The Florentine citizens interpreted these military “victories” as signs of God’s favor and protection. They imagined themselves as the “New Rome” — in other words, as the heirs to the Ancient Roman Republic, prepared to sacrifice for the cause of freedom and liberty.

The Florentine people were very proud of their form of government in the early fifteenth century. A republic is, after all, a place that respects the opinions of individuals, individualism was a critical part of the Humanism that thrived in Florence in the fifteenth century.

Additional resources:

Tour: The Early Renaissance in Florence (from the National Gallery of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

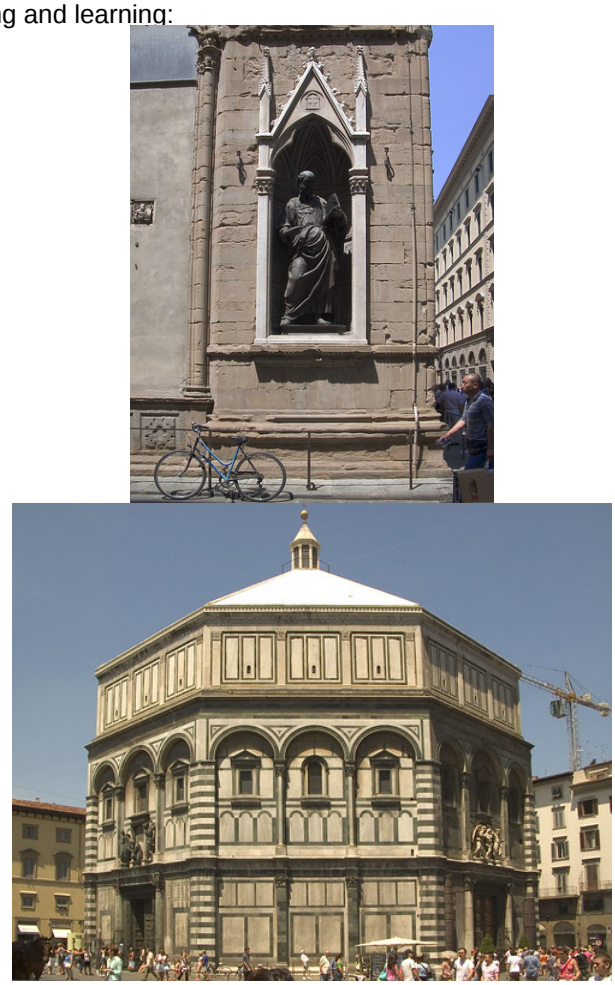


Figure 13.7.4.7: More Smarthistory images…

Alberti's revolution in painting

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. HEATHER GRAHAM



Figure 13.7.4.8: Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481–83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)

In a fresco high on one wall of the Sistine Chapel, the aged Saint Peter kneels as he humbly accepts the keys of heaven from Jesus Christ standing before him. These two central figures are joined in the immediate foreground by a group of men to either side, some dressed in ancient styles, others in cutting-edge fifteenth-century fashion. They all have volumetric bodies that suggest gentle movement and expressions of solemn concentration. A wide piazza opens behind them, with figures and the piazza's paving stones receding in scale to suggest a deep space. Forms on the distant horizon fade into an atmospheric haze. A massive building and two triumphal arches, set at even intervals in the background, convey a sense of balance and geometric solidarity.

Pietro Perugino's **biblical** scene displays many of the key elements identified as necessary for a successful painting by Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise about painting, including:

1. Convincing three-dimensional space
2. Light and shadow to create bodies that look three-dimensional
3. Figures in varied poses to create a compelling narrative

Alberti's *De Pictura* (*On Painting*, 1435) is the first theoretical text written about art in Europe. Originally written in Latin, but published a year later in the Italian vernacular as *Della Pittura* (1436), this was the first artistic treatise to describe **linear perspective** and is the first known text in Europe to discuss the purpose of painting. **Filippo Brunelleschi's experiments in linear perspective** had occurred earlier in the 1420s, but Alberti codified these ideas in writing. It was during his time living in Florence that Alberti developed his thoughts on painting as he interacted with artists such as **Brunelleschi**, **Donatello**, **Lorenzo Ghiberti**, **Masaccio**, and others.



Figure 13.7.4.9: Masaccio, frescoes for the Brancacci Chapel, 1427 (Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence; photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

These artists experimented with linear perspective before Alberti wrote his text, as we see in Masaccio's frescoes in the **Brancacci Chapel** or Donatello's bronze ***The Feast of Herod***. Alberti encountered first-hand works like Masaccio's fresco cycle on the life of Saint Peter where biblical characters are convincingly three-dimensional, walk upon solid ground casting shadows, and interact emotionally to tell a story. He dedicated the Italian version of *On Painting* to the artists from whom he had learned his practical ideas. Alberti's treatise was more ambitious than simply telling painters how to construct convincing three-dimensional space though. For him, painting "contains a divine force which not only makes absent men present . . . but moreover makes the dead seem almost alive." [1]

Creating three-dimensional space

> ***Know that a painted thing can never appear truthful where there is not a definite distance for seeing it.***
>
> ***Alberti, On Painting, book 1:46***

Alberti believed that good and praiseworthy paintings need to have convincing three-dimensional space, such as we see in Perugino's fresco. In the first section of *On Painting*, he explains how to construct logical, rational space based on mathematical principles. It is here that he writes about linear perspective and how to construct a geometrically calculated vanishing point around which a painting's composition is centered.

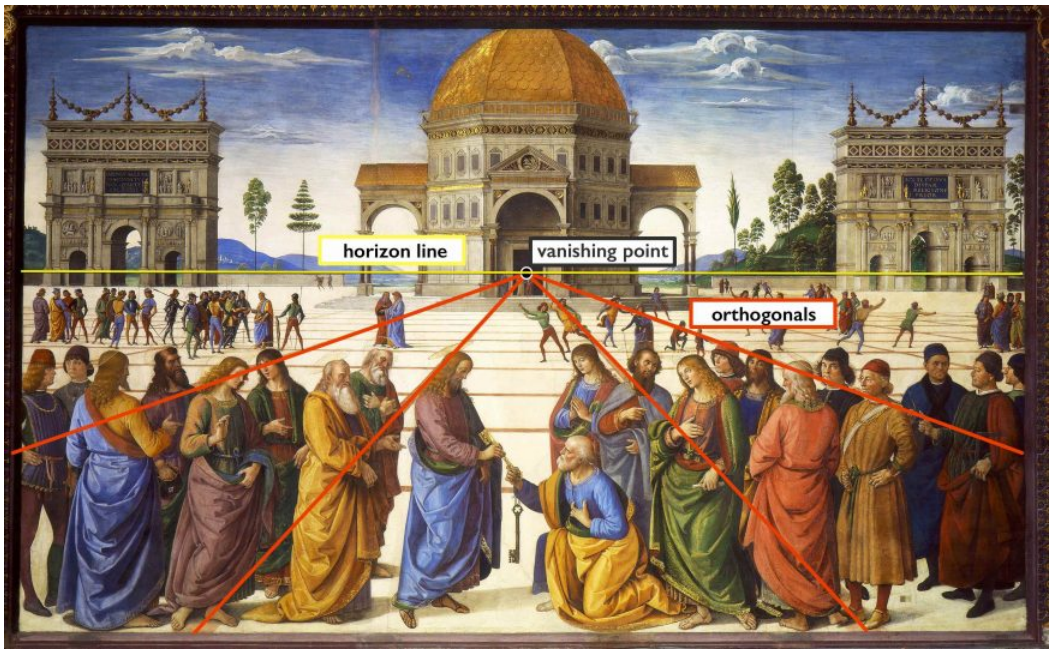


Figure **13.7.4.10**: Perspective diagram, Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)

A painting attributed to Luciano Laurana of an ideal city envisions Alberti's ideas. The painting shows a perfectly symmetrical and mathematically defined cityscape. All of the forms within the painting appear to recede away from the viewer and converge at a single point at the center of the horizon line. By having a single vanishing point, Alberti was instructing viewers to look at a painting like *The Ideal City* as if it were viewed through a window frame.



Figure **13.7.4.11**: Luciano Laurana (attributed), *View of an Ideal City*, c. 1475, oil on panel (Galleria Nazionale della Marche)

Making figures look real

> ***There are some who use much gold in their istoria. They think it gives majesty. I do not praise it. Even though one should paint Virgil's Dido whose quiver was of gold, her golden hair knotted with gold, and her purple robe girdled with pure gold, the reins of the horse and everything of gold, I should not wish gold to be used, for there is more admiration and praise for the painter who imitates the rays of gold with colors.***
>
> ***Alberti, On Painting, book 2:83***



Figure **13.7.4.12**: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of the Virgin*, c. 1485-90, fresco, 24′ 4″ x 14′ 9″ (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

For Alberti, the ultimate artistic goal of painting was to rival Nature in the depiction of visual reality. Forms within a painting should be modeled with light and shade to appear sculptural, as though they stand out from the two-dimensional surface like the forms in ancient relief sculpture. **Domenico Ghirlandaio's fresco depicting the birth of the Virgin Mary** includes precisely the kind of convincing naturalism Alberti desired. In the scene, women cast shadows, and the deep folds and pleats in their dresses give the impression that their bodies take up space in the two-dimensional fresco.



Figure **13.7.4.13**: Pietro Lorenzetti, *Birth of the Virgin*, c. 1342, tempera on panel, 6′ 1″ x 5′ 11″, for the altar of St. Savinus, Siena Cathedral (now in Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena)

Alberti also wanted human bodies to appear anatomically correct, and the movements and facial expressions of figures to suggest their emotions. The second part of Alberti's treatise lays out these ideals, advising painters on how to most effectively tell a story (what he calls an *istoria*, or narrative) in their art using variety in figure types and gestures. Alberti wanted viewers to be able to relate to the stories portrayed in art and to empathize with painted characters, but he also wanted paintings to present an idealized vision of human behavior. In Ghirlandaio's scene, women stand, kneel, or sit. Two women in the background lean toward one another to embrace. We also see how Ghirlandaio paints women looking in different directions to create a sense that they are interacting with one another, offering viewers a more compelling narrative than simply showing Saint Anne reclining in bed.

Painting as a liberal art

> ***For their own enjoyment artists should associate with poets and orators who have many embellishments in common with painters and who have a broad knowledge of many things whose greatest praise consists in the invention.***

Why would Alberti go to such great lengths to talk about painting and its purpose? He wished for painting to be viewed as a liberal art, one similar to mathematics or music, rather than as manual labor. His goal was to elevate the status of painting, and painters along with it. One of the ways that he tried to prove that painting was an intellectual endeavor was to look to sources from antiquity. [2] He draws on the ideas of Roman authors such as Pliny the Elder, Quintillian, Cicero, Plutarch, and Lucian, turning to them for their discussions of ancient forms of painting and the artists who made them. He cites Pliny when talking about how artists like **Praxiteles** or **Phidias** were so skilled at painting that any work made by the Greek artists was valued more than costly materials like gold and silver. This inclusion and assumed familiarity with classical authors demonstrated his humanist learning and helped to initiate the formal transformation of the visual arts from manual skill to intellectual endeavor.

De Pictura encapsulates many of Alberti's life pursuits. During his lifetime, he was a humanist, the author of an important architectural treatise, and a literary author who wrote plays, philosophical dialogues, and poetry in addition to working as a practicing architect and artist.

The reception of Alberti's ideas

Despite the fame of Alberti's ideas on painting today, this was not the case in his lifetime. Initially, *On Painting* was not printed—the European printing press wasn't invented until around 1450. This means that Alberti's ideas did not have a wide reception until later. Furthermore, renaissance artists would not have been able to read the 1435 Latin version of *On Painting*. Latin was the language of the educated elite, the language of the class of people who patronized art, not those who made it. It is likely that his initial intent was to share his ideas with a privileged audience, a reminder to us that artists worked at the pleasure of their **wealthy employers**. When he translated the text, he made it accessible to the people who might actually use his ideas directly.

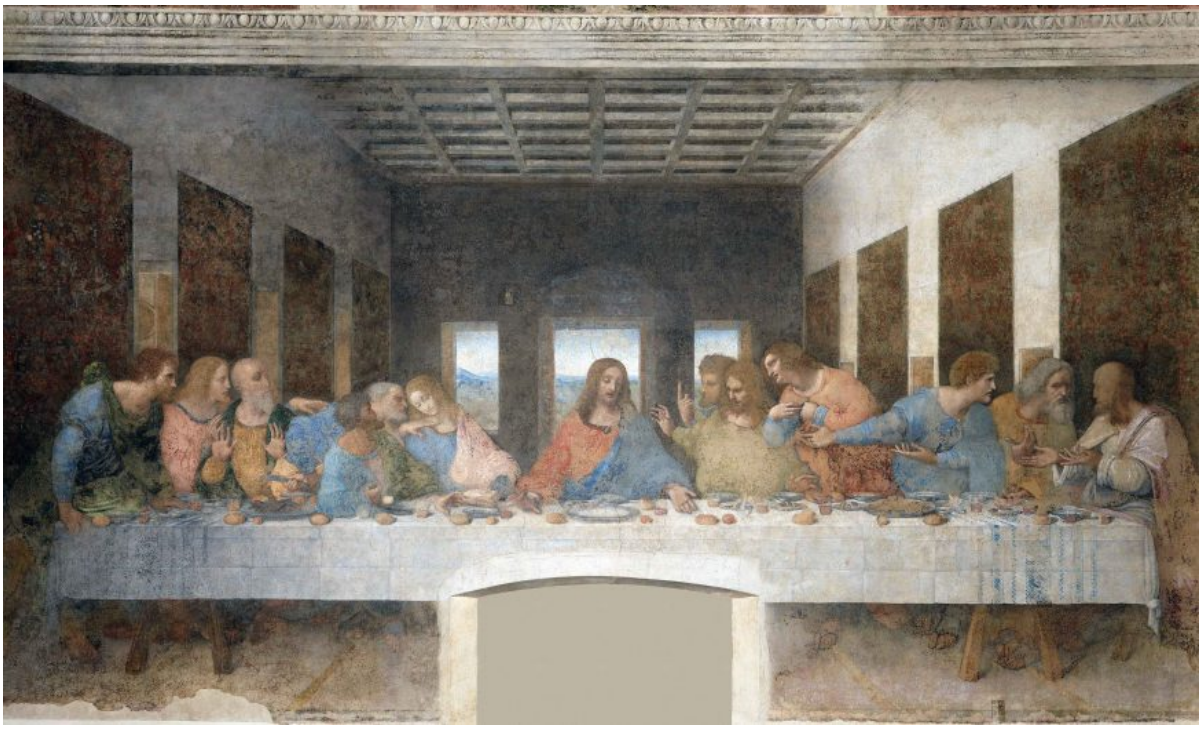


Figure **13.7.4.14**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Last Supper*, oil, tempera, fresco, 1495-98 (Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan)

Alberti's ideas about painting influenced later generations of artists, including the giants of high renaissance art, **Leonardo da Vinci**, **Michelangelo**, and **Raphael**. Even those who disagreed with Alberti's ideas such as northern renaissance artist **Albrecht Dürer**, proceeded to write down their own ideas about perspective and painting.



Figure **13.7.4.15**: René Magritte, *The Human Condition*, 1933, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 x 1.6 cm (The National Gallery of Art)

Alberti's ideas would go on to have lasting influence on the history of art. Works of art by many early twentieth-century modern painters, such as Pablo Picasso's ***Demoiselles d'Avignon***, purposefully reject the illusion of deep space. They were avant-garde precisely because they challenged traditions of painting set in place since the time of Alberti. A painting like René Magritte's *The Human Condition* also playfully engages with Alberti's notion of a painting as a window through which a viewer perceives the world.

Notes:

[1] Alberti, trans. John R. Spencer, rev. ed. (1966), II:62

[2] While the Italian version differs in some respects from the Latin text, the translated work retains the classical references found throughout the Latin version.

Additional resources

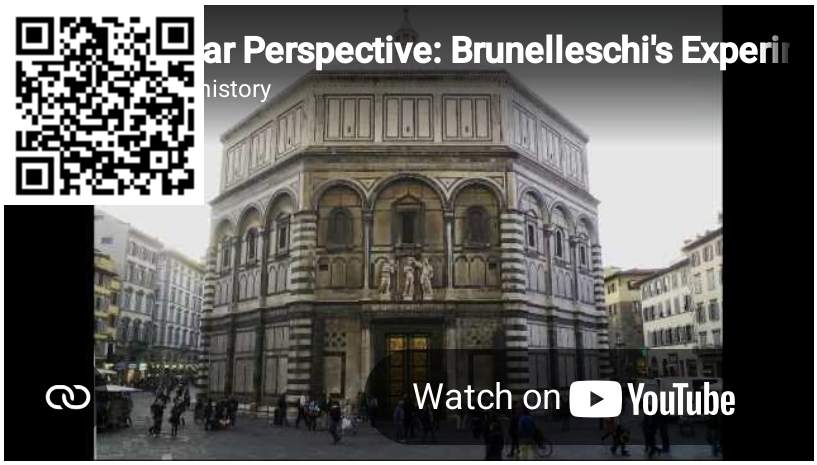
Learn more about Alberti as an architect

Virtually explore the Papal Palace and the Sistine Chapel with Smarthistory as your guide

Check out Alberti's *On Painting*

Linear Perspective: Brunelleschi's Experiment

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.4.4**: An introduction to Filippo Brunelleschi's experiment regarding linear perspective, c. 1420, in front of the Baptistry in Florence

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:






Detail of Table and Floor, Donatello, Feast of Herod

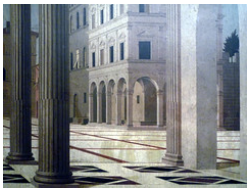



Figure **13.7.4.16**: More Smarthistory images…

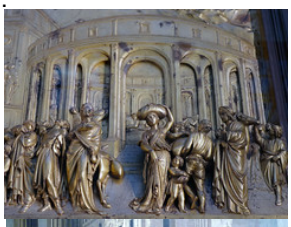
How one-point linear perspective works

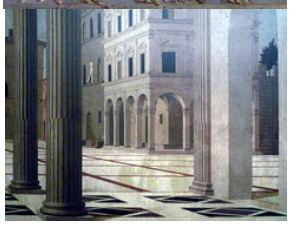
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.4.5**

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







Detail of Table and Floor, Donatello, Feast of Herod











Figure 13.7.4.17: More Smarthistory images…

Early applications of linear perspective

by DR. JOSEPH DAUBEN

Representing the body

What Renaissance artists had clearly achieved through the careful observation of nature, including studies of anatomical dissections, was the means to recreate the three-dimensional physical reality of the human form on two-dimensional surfaces. In part, the key to this achievement lay in understanding the underlying, hidden structure of the human body, which enabled artists to reproduce what it was they saw in the real world on the flat surface of a wall (in the case of frescoes), or that of a wooden panel or paper (in the case of drawings and paintings).

Artists in the early fifteenth century had learned to portray the human form with faithful accuracy through careful observation and anatomical dissection. In 1420, Brunelleschi's experiment with perspective provided a correspondingly accurate representation of physical space.

Representing space

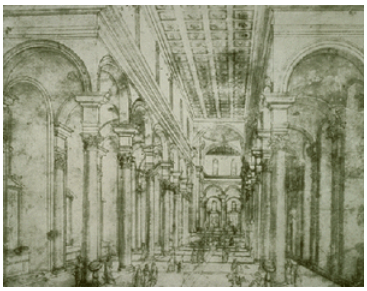


Figure 13.7.4.18: Brunelleschi, elevation of Santo Spirito, 1434-83, Florence (Italy)

Antonio Manetti, Brunelleschi's biographer, writing a century later, describes the experiment based on careful mathematical calculation. It seems reasonable to assume that Brunelleschi devised the method of perspective for architectural purposes—he is said by Manetti to have made a ground plan for the Church of Santo Spirito in Florence (1434-82) on the basis of which he produced a perspective drawing to show his clients how the church would look once built. We can compare this drawing (left) with a modern photo of the actual church (below). It is clear how effective the new technique of mathematical perspective was in depicting spatial reality.



Figure 13.7.4.19: Brunelleschi, elevation of Santo Spirito, 1434-83, Florence (Italy) (photo: Randy Connolly, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The body in space

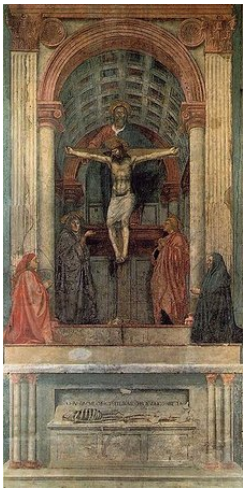


Figure 13.7.4.20: Masaccio, Holy Trinity, c. 1427, fresco (Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

But this was just the beginning. Ten years later, the painter Masaccio applied the new method of mathematical perspective even more spectacularly in his fresco *The Holy Trinity*. The barrel-vaulted ceiling is incredible in its complex, mathematical use of perspective. In this diagram, lines overlay Masaccio's actual geometric framework to make clear the structure of the perspective system itself.



Figure 13.7.4.21: Perspective diagram of Masaccio's Holy Trinity

From the geometry it is actually possible to work backwards to accurately measure and reconstruct the full three-dimensional space that Masaccio depicts—illustrating Brunelleschi's interest in being able to translate schemata directly between two- and three-dimensional spaces.

It was not long before a decisive step was taken by Leon Battista Alberti, who published a treatise on perspective, *Della Pitture* (or *On Painting*), in 1435. Once Alberti's treatise was published, knowledge of perspective no longer had to be passed on by word of mouth. Newly codified, perspective became not just a matter of artistic interest but a philosophical concern as well.

Additional resources:

The arrow in the eye: The Psychology of Perspective and Renaissance art

Central Italy

A new realism appears in the art of central Italy in the 15th century.

1400 - 1500 (Early Renaissance)

Painting

Gentile da Fabriano

Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*

by DR. JOANNA MILK MAC FARLAND



Video 13.7.4.6: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)



Figure 13.7.4.22: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

When looking at Gentile da Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi*, imagine yourself in front of it. Not standing in front of the painting in the bright Uffizi gallery, but in front of an altar in a dark sacristy, watching flickering candlelight dance on layers of silver, gold and paint that have been molded, incised, and glazed into glittering textures. The effect would be overwhelming. Only after this visual shock would you begin to look more closely, wondering what the painting is actually about, who could have painted such a thing, and—perhaps just as importantly for the Renaissance viewer—who could have possibly afforded it. The answers to these questions are complex and intertwined. Yet, with a little historical context, they can be found in the painting itself.



Figure 13.7.4.23: The three magi presenting gifts to the Christ child (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

An altarpiece fit for kings

The altarpiece depicts several Gospel stories surrounding the birth of Christ as they were retold in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In the main panel, three Magi (wise men and kings believed to come from unknown, eastern lands) offer gifts to the newly born Christ child. Their adventure begins in the background: smaller scenes of the Magi fill an extraordinary landscape in the three arches above, allowing us to follow their journey in a cartoon-like, continuous narrative.



Figure 13.7.4.24: The magi entering Jerusalem (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)



Figure 13.7.4.25: Magi (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence

At far left, they climb a mountain in search of the star they believed would fulfill an ancient prophecy telling of a great king. Following this star, the magi lead their impressive retinue to Jerusalem, shown at the top center of the painting (see image above), and then to the smaller town of Bethlehem at the upper right corner.

The main action of the panel then unfolds in the foreground, where the Magi finally arrive at the small cave where Joseph and Mary have been forced to take shelter with their newborn child. Haloed and resplendent, each king takes his turn offering a gift of gold, frankincense, or myrrh, removing his crown, and kissing the foot of the tiny baby.

As in earlier images of the Magi, they are accompanied by large numbers of courtiers and attendants on horseback as if they were emissaries from a foreign country. More than previous artists, Gentile used the journey of the Magi as an opportunity to flaunt his visual imagination and technical skill. The ‘kings’ do not wear ancient clothing, as one might expect from a biblical story, but imaginative costumes designed to look luxurious and vaguely exotic. The royal retinue is bursting with varied figure types, intricately patterned brocades, and rare animals. Foreground figures are almost stacked on top of one another, as if the ground is tilted forward in order to fill a limited space with a maximum number of figures. Such decorative opulence is continued in the ornate, three-arched frame.



Figure 13.7.4.26: Right foreground (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

The altarpiece is not just visually busy, but also rich with narrative detail. The dog in the right foreground looks up in fear toward a horse that is about to carelessly step on him. At far left, two female attendants curiously (and somewhat rudely) inspect the precious gift the elderly king has already presented to the holy family.

Even the background includes stories-within-stories. Look for a lonely traveler being accosted by thieves, or for a leopard preparing to pounce toward a local deer he has just spotted from his seat on the back of a horse. These anecdotal, even humorous incidents invite the viewer to inspect each area of the painting carefully, discovering something new at each turn.

From Fabriano to Florence

This was the sort of visual abundance at which Gentile da Fabriano excelled. The artist's impressive skills were nurtured during his travels to artistic centers throughout Italy. As his name suggests, Gentile was from the town of Fabriano, over a hundred miles southeast of Florence. Years spent in the northern towns of Venice and Brescia in particular encouraged his love of courtly ornamentation and an interest in the close observation of plants and animals. These sojourns also helped build his reputation, and his arrival in Florence by 1422 at the height of his powers would have caused quite the tizzy among the city's artists and the elite families who patronized them.



Figure 13.7.4.27: Lorenzo Monaco, *Madonna Enthroned* (from a ten-part altarpiece), 1390-1400, 61 x 123.7 cm (The Toledo Museum of Art)

At the time, Florence was awash with creativity—a crucible of varying artistic styles. In the works of Lorenzo Monaco, the most successful Florentine painter in these years, an infusion of curving, northern European forms enlivened the inherited tradition of the previous century.

New directions were being pioneered in the practice of sculpture and architecture: Brunelleschi had just conducted his now famous experiment in perspective and the sculptor Donatello helped to revive a taste for classicizing figures and illusionistic depictions of space. The young Masaccio was a scant few years away from changing the history of art by exploring these innovations through the medium of painting.

Palla Strozzi

Into this moment of visual experimentation and change stepped Gentile da Fabriano, a virtual artistic celebrity throughout Italy and beyond. He soon received a prime opportunity to demonstrate his abilities to the city: a prestigious commission from Florence's wealthiest citizen, Palla Strozzi. Strozzi spent an unprecedented sum on the building and decoration of his family's chapel in the sacristy of the church of Santa Trinità. Sometime before 1423, the banker turned to Gentile for an altarpiece as part of this project. The Adoration of the Magi represents the result of this commission, showing us that Gentile knew just how to dazzle an expectant audience.



Figure **13.7.4.28**: The patron, Palla Strozzi (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Although we are not sure why a scene of the Adoration was chosen for the painting, it seems likely that Palla saw the subject as an opportunity to display his status in other ways.

The courtly retinue of Gentile's painting reminded viewers of Palla's diplomatic credentials: the banker had travelled as a member of official Florentine visits to various cities throughout Italy. He even had himself depicted as one the Magi's courtiers. Just behind the third king, he stands holding a falcon—a reference to his family, since strozzieri was the Tuscan word for "falconer" (left).

Other personalized symbols are cleverly included in the painting. The bridle on the white horse to the far right, for example, is decorated with a crescent moon, the central feature on the Strozzi coat-of-arms.



Figure **13.7.4.29**: Right edge with frame (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

A different kind of naturalism



Figure **13.7.4.30**: Two attendants, the Madonna and Christ Child and St. Joseph (detail), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Gentile's altarpiece visually announced the amount of gold his patron could purchase and the caliber of artist he could afford to hire. But it also displayed Palla's cultivated taste for the new and daring. For all of its apparent preoccupation with wealth and worldly status, the *Adoration* celebrated nature in a way that few paintings had before. People, animals and their movements are carefully observed. Flowers seem to burst forth from the pillars that bracket the frame (see detail above). The subtle modeling of figures' faces is quite different from the stark contours seen in paintings by popular Florentine artists such as Lorenzo Monaco. And Florentine viewers would surely have noted how fur and fabric were depicted using softer brush strokes than those they were used to seeing. More remarkably, the scenes within this complex structure create a sort of visual dissertation on different kinds of light and shadow. In the main scene, the famous star of Bethlehem illuminates surrounding trees, gilding the edges of their leaves and casting intricate shadows behind the heads of the maids at left.

The small panels below the main scene (a supporting structure known as a predella) are even more experimental in their depiction of different kinds of lighting. The Nativity (image below) is imagined as a night scene with multiple sources of light: the supernatural radiance emanating from the small Christ Child, the brightness of the angel appearing to shepherds in the background, and the much softer glow of the moon at top left.



Figure **13.7.4.31**: Nativity (predella), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

In the middle predella panel, the new family flees to Egypt against a landscape bathed in the blazing midday sun – a raised golden orb amid a blue sky showering the nearest hillsides in gold. The last panel shows Christ's presentation in the temple, the building's dark interior warmly lit by a wall lamp at its center.



Figure **13.7.4.32**: The Flight into Egypt (predella), Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Gentile used real gold to achieve many of these subtle lighting effects, demonstrating his ability to combine intricate manipulation of precious materials with an interest in naturalism. Perfecting a technique that would be copied by many other artists, he layered gold leaf underneath layers of paint to lend brightly lit surfaces an added glow—an effect that would be more readily apparent in candlelight. This means precious metals are woven underneath the surface, on the surface, and protruding from the surface, like a tapestry made of paint and gold.

Looking again

To the modern viewer, Gentile's *Adoration* may seem too busy, too ornate and too crowded. Even art historians have sometimes had difficulties looking past its emphasis on patterning and flattened space to see how this painting and other works by Gentile contributed to the flowering of the arts in Early Renaissance Florence. Yet the altarpiece's very richness helped to insure its influence, allowing artists to draw different lessons from Gentile's painting techniques and visual interests. These contemporary viewers likely understood what present-day visitors to the Uffizi might forget: that the *Adoration* was not designed to be taken in at a single glance. If we remember this and try to look at the image the way it was meant to be looked at—again and again—it will reward each viewing.

Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (reframed)

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.4.33**: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

> ***After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." […] 10***

> ***When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.***
>
> ***Matthew 2:1-2, 10-11, NIV***

The journey of the wise men

Brilliant golden brocades. Psuedo-Arabic. Turbans. Leopards and lions. Gentile da Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi* creates a dynamic visual narrative of the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem recounted in the Gospel of Matthew. The painting uses continuous narrative to show us the moment the Magi first see the star announcing Jesus' birth, their journey to Jerusalem, and then subsequent arrival in Bethlehem where they meet the infant Jesus. Three golden arches (forming part of the elaborate frame) differentiate the three narrative moments, although the final moment—when they arrive at the cave in Bethlehem where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus rest—spills across the foreground.

Here the Magi take turns kneeling before Jesus and presenting him with gifts (of gold, frankincense, and myrrh). In Gentile's painting, the oldest Magi (eventually known as Melchior) is kissing Jesus' foot, as the Christian messiah (Jesus) touches his head. The other two Magi (Caspar, middle aged; and Balthazar, young) prepare to do the same, holding their gifts aloft. All three Magi are elaborately dressed, and each one has a golden crown.



Figure **13.7.4.34**: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (detail with the Virgin Mary in blue, Joseph in yellow behind her, Jesus on her lap being kissed by the king Melchior, with kings Casper stooping, and Balthazar standing), 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The Magi were thought to be from east of Europe (though the specific origins of each Magi are not noted in the Bible). By the later Middle Ages, the Magi were understood as standing in for the world, with each of them coming from Asia, Africa, and even Europe. By the fifteenth century, when Gentile was working, this image of a more globalized array of Magi had been widely adopted. It provided a lavish sense of different places, and allowed artists to show a variety of exotic luxury goods. It also helped to give the impression of a united world under God.



Figure 13.7.4.35: Interior of Santa Trinità, Florence (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Commissioned by Palla Strozzi, a wealthy banker and merchant, for his family's chapel for the Florentine church of Santa Trinità, the *Adoration of the Magi* speaks to the global flow of goods at this time, visual transculturation, as well as the European conceptualization of non-European places and peoples.

Psuedo-Arabic

The haloes around the Madonna and Joseph are a brilliant gold, emphasizing their holiness. If we look closely at them, we notice the haloes also include what appears to be writing. This script is actually psuedo-Arabic—a script that approximates Arabic writing, but is not entirely correct. It suggests that the artist could not actually read Arabic; that said, he does include Arabic words as well. The haloes also include decorative rosettes separating each word. Psuedo-Arabic script doesn't only appear on Mary's and Joseph's haloes either. The young page, standing next to the white horse in the foreground, wears a sash written in the script. One of the female figures behind Mary, whose back is turned to us, wears a white shawl decorated with pseudo-Arabic writing. The sleeves of the youngest Magi suggest the script as well, written at the elbow. Here Gentile seems to write the word *al-ʿādilī* (The Just).[1]



Figure 13.7.4.36: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (detail with psuedo-Arabic script seen in Mary's halo and cloth at left), 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

But why would the artist include psuedo-Arabic in one of the holiest scenes from the life of Jesus? One possible reason is that other Italian artists similarly included psuedo-Arabic into their paintings—often on haloes or textiles—and Gentile was continuing this tradition. We find examples in the paintings of Duccio, Giotto, and Masaccio, and in sculptures like Verocchio's *David* and Filarete's doors for the Vatican. Gentile incorporated pseudo-Arabic into other paintings, such as his ***Madonna of the Humility*** (c. 1420) and ***Coronation of the Virgin*** (c.1420). It is likely more complicated than Gentile solely copying other artists however.



Figure **13.7.4.37**: Bowl (Mamluk, Syria), 14th century, brass, incised and engraved, with traces of silver inlay, 7.62 x 16.51 cm (**LACMA**)

It seems that artists like Gentile borrowed motifs and stylistic patterns from Ayyubid or **Mamluk** metalwork and textiles that they encountered first hand. These were highly coveted luxury objects and materials, and wealthy families—like the Strozzi—often owned examples. The city of Florence also had made several diplomatic missions to important Muslim trade areas, including one in 1421 to Tunis and another in 1422–23 to Cairo. They established a commercial treaty with the Mamluk sultan in Egypt, and opened a direct trade route to Alexandria via Pisa (which Florence captured in 1406) and Livorno (controlled by Florence after 1421). It has been suggested that these commercial ties may have stimulated even greater interest in luxury objects, like Mamluk brass objects, and the decorative schema found on them.

A third possible reason is that pseudo-Arabic connoted sacredness in some way. The city of Jerusalem (and the Holy Lands more generally) is in the eastern Mediterranean and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these areas were controlled by Muslim rulers. Perhaps the use of Arabic script was a way for artists like Giotto and Gentile da Fabriano to reference the Holy Lands within their paintings, or even to suggest the common heritage of Islam and Christianity.



Figure **13.7.4.38**: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (detail), 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Wearing signs of "the east"

Besides the use of psuedo-Arabic, other elements of the painting point to Gentile's desire to call to mind "the east" and the exotic sense of the Holy Lands. Multiple figures in the painting wear turbans, a common visual sign that indicated someone from outside Christian Europe, typically someone of Middle Eastern descent. Caspar, the second Magi, wears one. They are used here to suggest the Holy Lands once again, as well as the eastern or non-European origins of some of the Magi. After all, the journey of the Magi takes them to Jerusalem and onto Bethlehem, and so the turban here communicates that the scene is outside of Christian territory, in a more exotic location.

Besides turbans, we also find figures, such as the Magi, wearing elaborate brocades, damasks, other silks, and velvets. Melchior wears a patterned garment of pearlescent white with golden accents, and above that a mantle of burnt siena accented with gold and silver. On both, rosettes and other floral designs animate the surface. Caspar wears a long tunic in black decorated with golden pomegranates.

While the pomegranate was a prominent Christian symbol of rebirth, it was also common as a symbol of its eastern origins and it was a popular motif in Muslim textiles as well. Gentile also includes pomegranate trees in the painting to connote Jerusalem's and Bethlehem's eastern locales. Balthazar's outfit is similarly elaborate. His abdomen is covered in golden designs that almost mimic peacock feathers. His long and elaborate sleeves extend to his knees, and are enlivened by reddish flowers scrolling across the surface. Golden and silver fringe can be found on the edges of his entire outfit.

The exact origins of these textiles is difficult to pinpoint but they all evoke "eastern" patterns and textiles. They could have been acquired by trade from Muslim merchants, or produced in Italy. Cities like Venice, Genoa, and Florence became skilled centers of silk production, and their designs often mimic Muslim textile patterns. Such clothing (whether acquired from afar or made in Italy), was expensive, and was highly sought after by elites. The ornate appearance of the Magi's clothes in Gentile's painting does seem to suggest that they are men "from the east."



Figure 13.7.4.39: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (detail with page in the center and a leopard or cheetah in upper right. Note the use of *pastiglia* seen especially in the tack), 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

An exotic menagerie

As if the painting wasn't already a feast for the eyes, Gentile has also included a number of non-European or exotic animals into the riotous scene. Two monkeys sit atop a camel. We also find a lion eyeing two birds, and further below a leopard (or possible cheetah) amidst the tightly packed group of men. Animals from outside Europe (Asia, Africa, and eventually the Americas after 1492) were a constant source of interest for Europeans. They were collected, given as gifts, and sometimes even trained to join in courtly hunting expeditions.

Falcons were not necessarily an exotic predatory bird, but falconry had been heavily influenced by Arabian/Muslim traditions. Falcons were especially associated with Persian culture. New falcons acquired from distant lands also appealed to Italian elites. The man holding the falcon is possible a member of the Strozzi family (possibly Palla, the patron) because the Italian word for falconer is *strozziere*.



Figure 13.7.4.40: Gentile da Fabriano, Adoration of the Magi (detail with animals), 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Wealthy individuals sometimes acquired exotic animals as a sign of their wealth and their interest in the natural world. Monkeys and apes were popular collectibles, and here they wear collars so as not to escape. Large cats, like the leopard and lion, were sometimes kept and trained for hunting, especially among the northern Italian courts. Exotic animals like camels were popular gifts.

The non-European animals in the painting also help to set the scene in a more exoticized eastern location. The horses are likely Arabian horses, acquired from Muslim trading partners. The camel's associations with the Holy Lands are mentioned in the Bible.

While there is no peacock displayed in the painting, one man does wear a hat/headdress made of its feathers. The peacock, as a symbol of resurrection, dated back to antiquity. Peafowl came from Asia, namely India, and the man's headgear helps to further associate his eastern origins.

And of course, some of these exotic animals had symbolic meaning that played a role in the painting. Matthew 19:24 famously notes that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Here, it might symbolically remind wealthy viewers, like the Strozzi, of this warning.



Figure **13.7.4.41**: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (detail with Jesus and Melchior), 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Material brilliance

The two most expensive materials used in this painting are lapis lazuli and gold. The Virgin Mary's robe is ultramarine, or a brilliant blue color derived from lapis lazuli. It came from mines in Afghanistan. It could only be mined five months out of the year too, increasing its monetary worth. At this time in the Renaissance, it was more valuable than gold. This is why artists like Gentile often reserved it for Mary's mantle, using other blue pigments throughout the remainder of the painting.

Gold was also expensive, and Gentile has used a lot of it here. Palla Strozzi, wanting to advertise his wealth, would surely have been thrilled by the lavish use of the gold across the surface. Most gold came from west Africa, traded along caravan routes. Mali, which at one point had been ruled by the powerful and wealthy Musa Keita I (known as Mansa Musa in Europe) reputedly had an enormous amount of gold. When Musa Keita I traveled to Mecca on the hajj between 1324 and 1325 he flooded the market with gold and caused an economic collapse because the price of gold fell steeply.

Gentile doesn't just incorporate gold into his painting, he uses a technique to suggest an even greater abundance of the precious metal. He uses *pastiglia*, or raised gilt ornament, which we see on the crowns, swords, spurs, and even on some textiles. It gives these golden areas a three-dimensional quality because they are raised from the flat surface of the painting. Imagine the shimmering quality of all this gold and other material magnificence in the flickering candlelight of the Strozzi chapel!

[1] Ennio G. Napolitano, *Arabic Inscriptions and Pseudo-Inscriptions in Italian Art* (PhD dissertation, Otto-Friedrich-Universität, Bamberg), p. 99.

Additional resources

Anna Contadini, "Sharing a Taste? Material Culture and Intellectual Curiosity around the Mediterranean, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century," in The Renaissance and Ottoman World, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (London: Ashgate, 2013), 24–61.

Maria Vittoria Fontana, “The influence of Islamic art in Italy,” Annali dell’Università degli studi di Napoli “L’Orientale,” *Rivista del Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici e del Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi*, vol. 55,no. 3 (1995).

Rosamund E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

Alexander Nagel, “Twenty-five notes on pseudoscript in Italian art,” *RES: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics*, vol. 59/60 (Spring/Autumn 2011), pp. 229–248.

Patricia Lee Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-century Florence* (New Haven and London:Yale University Press, 2007).

Masaccio

Masaccio, *Virgin and Child Enthroned*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.7: Masaccio (Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone), *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, 1426, tempera on panel (National Gallery, London)

Ser Giuliano degli Scarsi, a notary from Pisa, commissioned this altarpiece for the chapel of Saint Julian in Santa Maria del Carmine, Pisa.

Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.4.8: Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, fresco, 667 x 317 cm, Santa Maria Novella, Florence

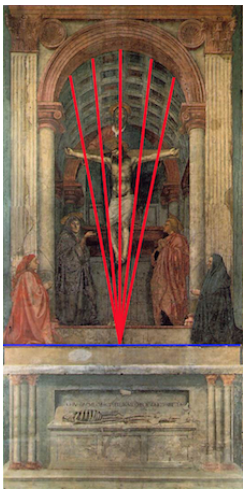


Figure **13.7.4.42**: Perspective diagram of *Holy Trinity*, Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, Fresco, 667 x 317 cm, (Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy)

Masaccio was the first painter in the Renaissance to incorporate Brunelleschi's discovery, linear perspective, in his art. He did this in his fresco the *Holy Trinity*, in Santa Maria Novella, in Florence.

Have a close look at the painting and at this perspective diagram. The orthogonals can be seen in the edges of the coffers in the ceiling (look for diagonal lines that appear to recede into the distance). Because Masaccio painted from a low viewpoint, as though we were looking up at Christ, we see the orthogonals in the ceiling, and if we traced all of the orthogonals, we would see that the vanishing point is on the ledge that the donors kneel on.

God's feet

Our favorite part of this fresco is God's feet. Actually, you can only really see one of them.



Figure **13.7.4.42**: Left: Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, fresco, 667 x 317 cm (Santa Maria Novella, Florence); right: Masaccio's *Holy Trinity* with the figures labeled

God is standing in this painting. This may not strike you all that much when you first think about it because our idea of God, our picture of God in our minds eye—as an old man with a beard—is very much based on Renaissance images of God. So, here Masaccio imagines God as a man. Not a force or a power, or something abstract, but as a man. A man who stands—his feet are foreshortened, and he weighs something and is capable of walking. In medieval art, God was often represented by a hand, as

though God was an abstract force or power in our lives—but here he seems so much like a flesh and blood man. This is a good indication of Humanism in the Renaissance.



Figure **13.7.4.43**: View of nave of Santa Maria Novella, Florence with Masaccio's fresco on the left wall (photo: **Trevor Huxham**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Masaccio's contemporaries were struck by the palpable realism of this fresco, as was Vasari who lived over one hundred years later. Vasari wrote that "the most beautiful thing, apart from the figures, is a barrel-shaped vaulting, drawn in perspective and divided into squares filled with rosettes, which are foreshortened and made to diminish so well that the wall appears to be pierced."[1]

The architecture

One of the other remarkable things about this fresco is the use of the forms of classical architecture (from ancient Greece and Rome). Masaccio borrowed much of what we see from ancient Roman architecture, and may have been helped by the great Renaissance architect Brunelleschi.

> ***Coffers*** *– the indented squares on the ceiling*
>
> ***Column*** *– a round, supporting element in architecture. In this fresco by Masaccio we see an attached column*
>
> ***Pilasters*** *– a shallow, flattened out column attached to a wall—it is only decorative, and has no supporting function*
>
> ***Barrel Vault*** *– vault means ceiling, and a barrel vault is a ceiling in the shape of a round arch*
>
> ***Ionic and Corinthian Capitals*** *– a capital is the decorated top of a column or pilaster. An ionic capital has a scroll shape (like the ones on the attached columns in the painting), and a Corinthian capital has leaf shapes.*
>
> ***Fluting*** *– the vertical, indented lines or grooves that decorated the pilasters in the painting—fluting can also be applied to a column*

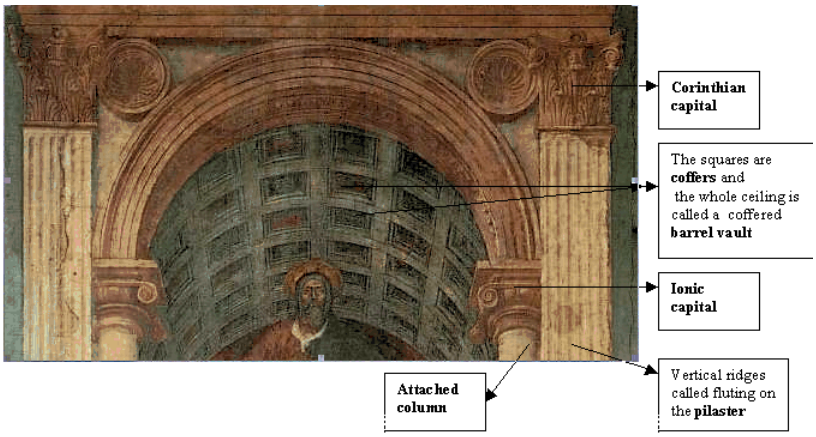


Figure **13.7.4.44**: *Holy Trinity* with architectural elements labeled (detail) Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, fresco, 667 x 317 cm (Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy)

1. Vasari, "Masaccio" in ***Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects the Artists*** (first published in 1550 in Italian)



Video **13.7.4.9**

Additional resources:

360-degree tours of Santa Maria Novella

Masaccio, *The Tribute Money* in the Brancacci Chapel
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.4.10: Masaccio, *The Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)



Figure 13.7.4.45: Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence (Italy) (left); Brancacci Chapel, with frescoes by Masaccio and Masolino, c. 1424-7, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence (Italy) (right)

The *Tribute Money* is one of many frescoes painted by Masaccio (and another artist named Masolino) in the Brancacci chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence—when you walk into the chapel, the fresco is on your upper left. All of the frescoes in the chapel tell the story of the life of St. Peter. The story of the *Tribute Money* is told in three separate scenes within the same fresco. This way of telling an entire story in one painting is called a continuous narrative.

A story unfolds and a miracle is performed

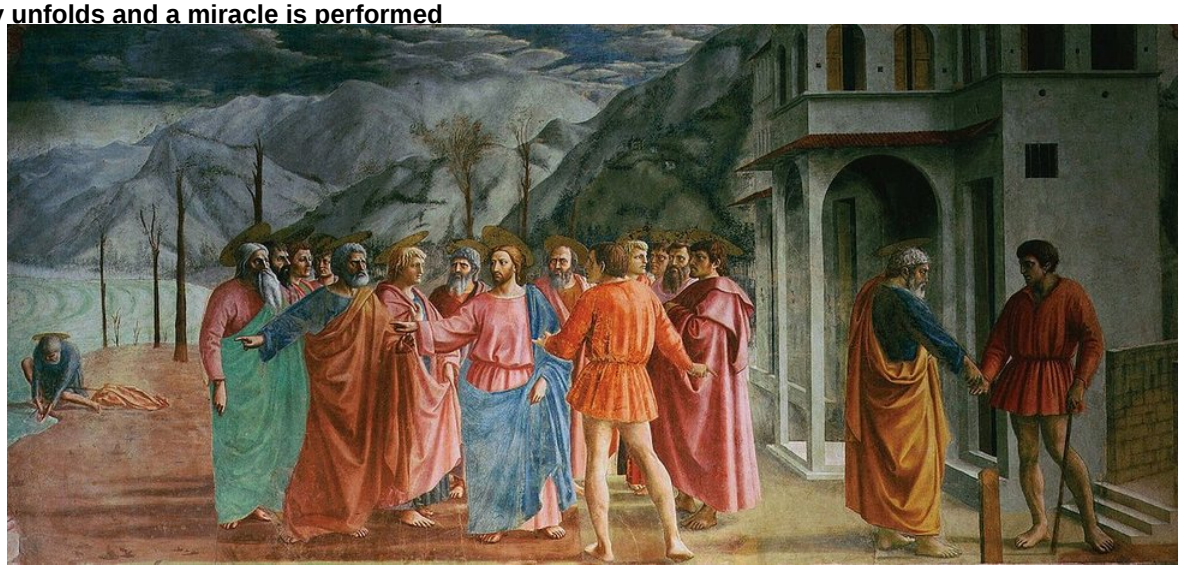


Figure **13.7.4.46**: Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)



Figure **13.7.4.47**: Christ and apostles (detail), Masaccio, Tribute Money, c. 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

In the *Tribute Money*, a Roman tax collector (the figure in the foreground in a short orange tunic and no halo) demands tax money from Christ and the twelve apostles who don't have the money to pay.

Christ (in the center, wearing a pinkish robe gathered in at the waist, with a blue toga-like wrap) points to the left, and says to Peter "so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours" (Matthew 17:27). Christ performed a miracle—and the apostles have the money to pay the tax collector. In the center of the fresco (scene 1), we see the tax collector demanding the money, and Christ instructing Peter. On the far left (scene 2), we see Peter kneeling down and retrieving the money from the mouth of a fish, and on the far right (scene 3), St. Peter pays the tax collector. In the fresco, the tax collector appears twice, and St. Peter appears three times (you can find them easily if you look for their clothing).

We are so used to one moment appearing in one frame (think of a comic book, for example) that the unfolding of the story within one image (and out of order!) seems very strange to us. But with this technique (a continuous narrative)—which was also used by the ancient Romans—Masaccio is able to make an entire drama unfold on the wall of the Brancacci chapel.

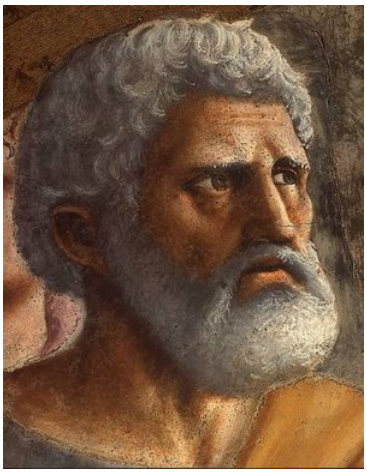


Figure **13.7.4.48**: Peter (detail), Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

In the central, first scene, the tax collector points down with his right hand, and holds his left palm open, impatiently insisting on the money from Christ and the apostles. He stands with his back to us, which helps to create an illusion of three dimensional space in the image (a goal which was clearly important to Masaccio as he also employed both linear and atmospheric perspective to create an illusion of space). Like Donatello's *St. Mark* from Orsanmichele in Florence, he stands naturally, in contrapposto, with his weight on his left leg, and his right knee bent. The apostles (Christ's followers) look worried and anxiously watch to see what will happen. St. Peter (wearing a large deep orange colored toga draped over a blue shirt) is confused, as he seems to be questioning Christ and pointing over to the river, but he also looks like he is willing to believe Christ.



Figure **13.7.4.49**: Linear perspective diagram, Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, c.1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence). Christ is the vanishing point. Note too, the use of atmospheric (aerial) perspective in the mountains in the distance.

The gestures and expressions help to tell the story. Peter seems confused and points to the lake—mirroring Christ's gesture; the tax collector looks upset, and has his hand out insistently asking for the money—he stands in contrapposto with his back turned to us (contrapposto is a standing position, where the figure's weight is shifted to one leg). Only Christ is completely calm because he is performing a miracle.



Figure **13.7.4.50**: Feet (detail), Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, c. 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

Look down at the feet—how the light travels through the figures, and is stopped when it encounters the figures. The figures cast shadows—Masaccio is perhaps the first artist since classical antiquity to paint cast shadows. What this does is make the fresco so much more real—it is as if the figures are truly standing out in a landscape, with the light coming from one direction, and the sun in the sky, hitting all the figures from the same side and casting shadows on the ground. For the first time since antiquity, there is almost a sense of weather.

Additional resources:

Masaccio, the Old Master who died young (The Guardian)

The Magic of Illusion: Masaccio's Holy Trinity, from the National Gallery of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

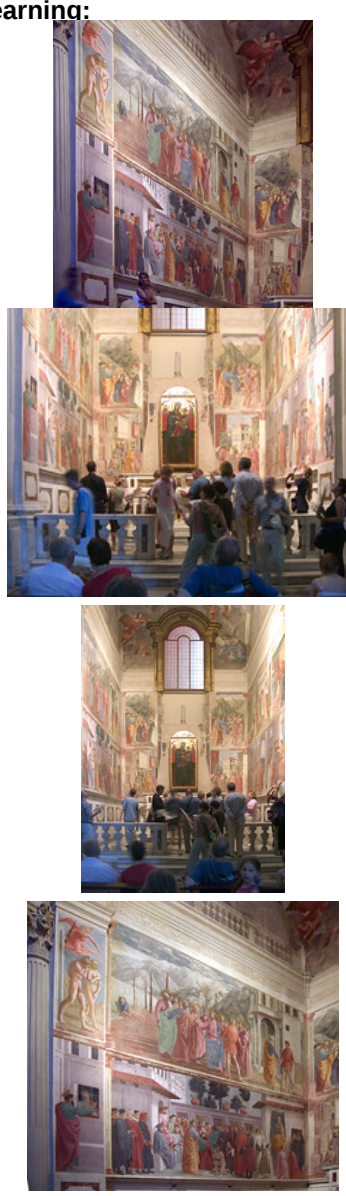


Figure 13.7.4.51: More Smarthistory images…

Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.4.8: Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, fresco, 667 x 317 cm, Santa Maria Novella, Florence

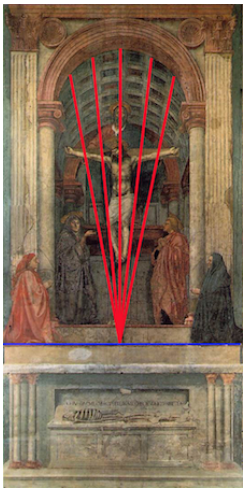


Figure 13.7.4.42: Perspective diagram of *Holy Trinity*, Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, Fresco, 667 x 317 cm, (Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy)

Masaccio was the first painter in the Renaissance to incorporate Brunelleschi's discovery, linear perspective, in his art. He did this in his fresco the *Holy Trinity*, in Santa Maria Novella, in Florence.

Have a close look at the painting and at this perspective diagram. The orthogonals can be seen in the edges of the coffers in the ceiling (look for diagonal lines that appear to recede into the distance). Because Masaccio painted from a low viewpoint, as though we were looking up at Christ, we see the orthogonals in the ceiling, and if we traced all of the orthogonals, we would see that the vanishing point is on the ledge that the donors kneel on.

God's feet

Our favorite part of this fresco is God's feet. Actually, you can only really see one of them.



Figure 13.7.4.42: Left: Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, fresco, 667 x 317 cm (Santa Maria Novella, Florence); right: Masaccio's *Holy Trinity* with the figures labeled

God is standing in this painting. This may not strike you all that much when you first think about it because our idea of God, our picture of God in our minds eye—as an old man with a beard—is very much based on Renaissance images of God. So, here Masaccio imagines God as a man. Not a force or a power, or something abstract, but as a man. A man who stands—his feet are foreshortened, and he weighs something and is capable of walking. In medieval art, God was often represented by a hand, as though God was an abstract force or power in our lives—but here he seems so much like a flesh and blood man. This is a good indication of Humanism in the Renaissance.



Figure 13.7.4.43: View of nave of Santa Maria Novella, Florence with Masaccio's fresco on the left wall (photo: Trevor Huxham, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Masaccio's contemporaries were struck by the palpable realism of this fresco, as was Vasari who lived over one hundred years later. Vasari wrote that "the most beautiful thing, apart from the figures, is a barrel-shaped vaulting, drawn in perspective and divided into squares filled with rosettes, which are foreshortened and made to diminish so well that the wall appears to be pierced."[1]

The architecture

One of the other remarkable things about this fresco is the use of the forms of classical architecture (from ancient Greece and Rome). Masaccio borrowed much of what we see from ancient Roman architecture, and may have been helped by the great

Renaissance architect Brunelleschi.

Coffers *– the indented squares on the ceiling*

Column *– a round, supporting element in architecture. In this fresco by Masaccio we see an attached column*

Pilasters *– a shallow, flattened out column attached to a wall—it is only decorative, and has no supporting function*

Barrel Vault *– vault means ceiling, and a barrel vault is a ceiling in the shape of a round arch*

Ionic and Corinthian Capitals *– a capital is the decorated top of a column or pilaster. An ionic capital has a scroll shape (like the ones on the attached columns in the painting), and a Corinthian capital has leaf shapes.*

Fluting *– the vertical, indented lines or grooves that decorated the pilasters in the painting—fluting can also be applied to a column*

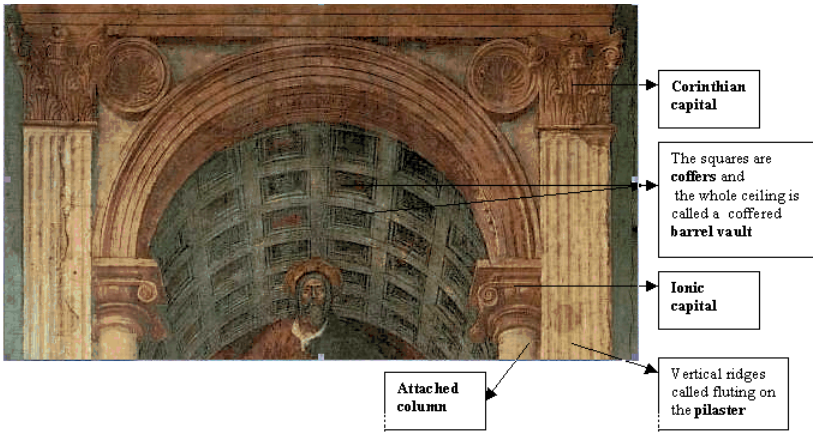


Figure 13.7.4.44: *Holy Trinity* with architectural elements labeled (detail) Masaccio, *Holy Trinity*, c. 1427, fresco, 667 x 317 cm (Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy)

1. Vasari, “Masaccio” in ***Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects the Artists*** (first published in 1550 in Italian)



Video **13.7.4.9**

Additional resources:

360-degree tours of Santa Maria Novella

Masaccio, *The Tribute Money* in the Brancacci Chapel
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.4.10**: Masaccio, *The Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)



Figure **13.7.4.45**: Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence (Italy) (left); Brancacci Chapel, with frescoes by Masaccio and Masolino, c. 1424-7, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence (Italy) (right)

The *Tribute Money* is one of many frescoes painted by Masaccio (and another artist named Masolino) in the Brancacci chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence—when you walk into the chapel, the fresco is on your upper left. All of the frescoes in the chapel tell the story of the life of St. Peter. The story of the *Tribute Money* is told in three separate scenes within the same fresco. This way of telling an entire story in one painting is called a continuous narrative.

A story unfolds and a miracle is performed



Figure **13.7.4.46**: Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)



Figure **13.7.4.47**: Christ and apostles (detail), Masaccio, Tribute Money, c. 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

In the *Tribute Money*, a Roman tax collector (the figure in the foreground in a short orange tunic and no halo) demands tax money from Christ and the twelve apostles who don't have the money to pay.

Christ (in the center, wearing a pinkish robe gathered in at the waist, with a blue toga-like wrap) points to the left, and says to Peter "so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours" (Matthew 17:27). Christ performed a miracle—and the apostles have the money to pay the tax collector. In the center of the fresco (scene 1), we see the tax collector demanding the money, and Christ instructing Peter. On the far left (scene 2), we see Peter kneeling down and retrieving the money from the mouth of a fish, and on the far right (scene 3), St. Peter pays the tax collector. In the fresco, the tax collector appears twice, and St. Peter appears three times (you can find them easily if you look for their clothing).

We are so used to one moment appearing in one frame (think of a comic book, for example) that the unfolding of the story within one image (and out of order!) seems very strange to us. But with this technique (a continuous narrative)—which was also used by the ancient Romans—Masaccio is able to make an entire drama unfold on the wall of the Brancacci chapel.

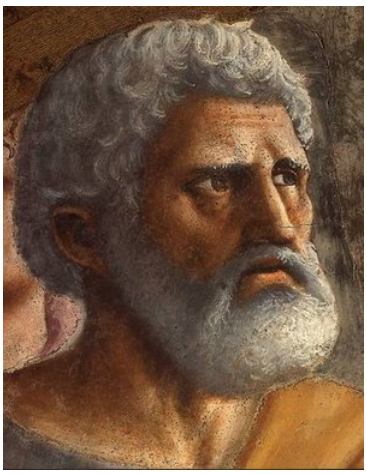


Figure **13.7.4.48**: Peter (detail), Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

In the central, first scene, the tax collector points down with his right hand, and holds his left palm open, impatiently insisting on the money from Christ and the apostles. He stands with his back to us, which helps to create an illusion of three dimensional space in the image (a goal which was clearly important to Masaccio as he also employed both linear and atmospheric perspective to create an illusion of space). Like Donatello's *St. Mark* from Orsanmichele in Florence, he stands naturally, in contrapposto, with his weight on his left leg, and his right knee bent. The apostles (Christ's followers) look worried and anxiously watch to see what will

happen. St. Peter (wearing a large deep orange colored toga draped over a blue shirt) is confused, as he seems to be questioning Christ and pointing over to the river, but he also looks like he is willing to believe Christ.



Figure **13.7.4.49**: Linear perspective diagram, Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, c.1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence). Christ is the vanishing point. Note too, the use of atmospheric (aerial) perspective in the mountains in the distance.

The gestures and expressions help to tell the story. Peter seems confused and points to the lake—mirroring Christ's gesture; the tax collector looks upset, and has his hand out insistently asking for the money—he stands in contrapposto with his back turned to us (contrapposto is a standing position, where the figure's weight is shifted to one leg). Only Christ is completely calm because he is performing a miracle.



Figure **13.7.4.50**: Feet (detail), Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, c. 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

Look down at the feet—how the light travels through the figures, and is stopped when it encounters the figures. The figures cast shadows—Masaccio is perhaps the first artist since classical antiquity to paint cast shadows. What this does is make the fresco so much more real—it is as if the figures are truly standing out in a landscape, with the light coming from one direction, and the sun in the sky, hitting all the figures from the same side and casting shadows on the ground. For the first time since antiquity, there is almost a sense of weather.

Additional resources:

Masaccio, the Old Master who died young (The Guardian)

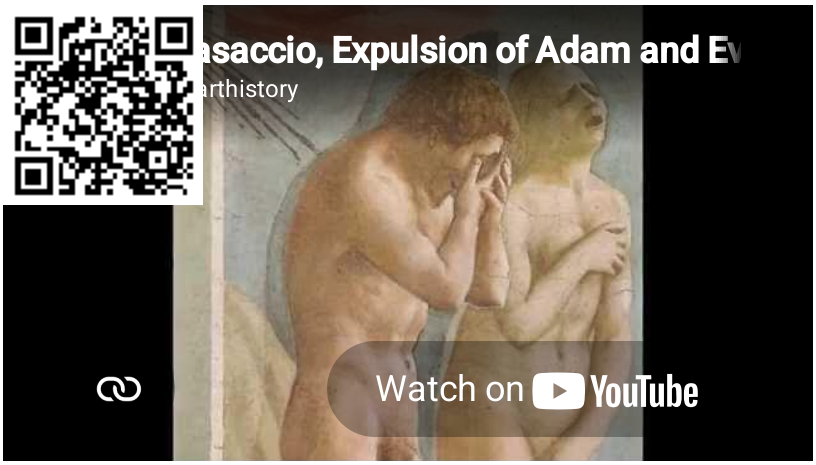
The Magic of Illusion: Masaccio's Holy Trinity, from the National Gallery of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.4.51: More Smarthistory images…

Masaccio, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden* in the Brancacci Chapel
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.4.11: Masaccio, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden*, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence, Italy, c. 1424-27, fresco, 7 feet x 2 feet 11 inches

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









Figure 13.7.4.52: More Smarthistory images…

Fra Angelico

Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation and Life of the Virgin* (c. 1426)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.4.12**: Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation and Life of the Virgin* (in the predella), c. 1426, tempera on wood, 194 x 194 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

The Annunciation is described in the Gospel According to Luke 1:26 – 38. Here is the King James translation:

> ***And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name [was] Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, [thou that art] highly favoured, the Lord [is] with thee: blessed [art] thou among women. And when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.***

Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation* (c. 1438-47)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.13: Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation*, c. 1438-47, fresco, 230 x 321 cm (Convent of San Marco, Florence)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Fra Angelico, Annunciation at the top of the stairs, San Marco

Figure 13.7.4.53: More Smarthistory images…

Paolo Uccello, *Battle of San Romano*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.14: Paolo Uccello, *Battle of San Romano*, probably c. 1438-40, (National Gallery, London)

Fra Filippo Lippi

Domenico Veneziano, *Saint Lucy Altarpiece*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

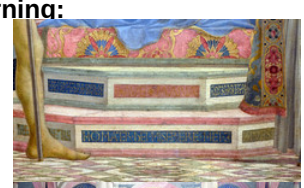


Video 13.7.4.15: Domenico Veneziano, *Saint Lucy Altarpiece*, 1445-47, tempera on wood panel, 82 1/4 x 85″ or 209 x 216 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Additional resources

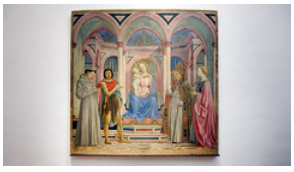
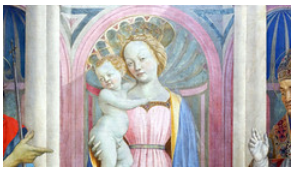
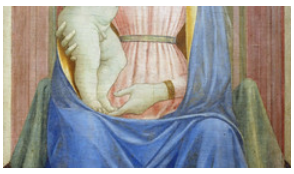
This painting at the Uffizi

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88723



Figure **13.7.4.54**: More Smarthistory images…

Antonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of Ten Nudes* or (*Battle of Nude Men*)

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA

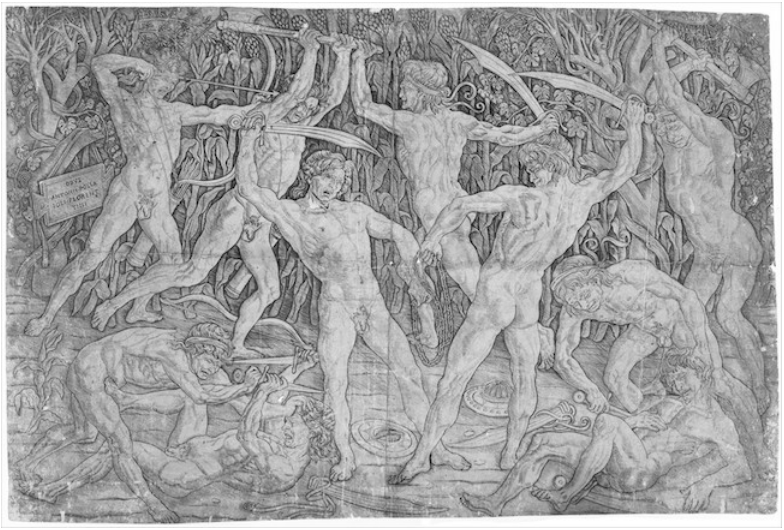


Figure **13.7.4.55**: Antonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of Ten Nudes* (or *Battle of Nude Men*), c. 1465, engraving, 15-1/8 x 23-3/16″ / 38.4 x 58.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Antonio Pollaiuolo's *Battle of Ten Nudes* has been called the single most important engraving in European history. Clearly based on classical antiquity (the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome), the print is monumental in size (approximately 15 x 23 inches) and, because of its shallow space, resembles ancient Roman relief sculpture. In the picture, five men wearing headbands fight against an equal number of men without headbands. The battle is set in front of a wall of lush vegetation.

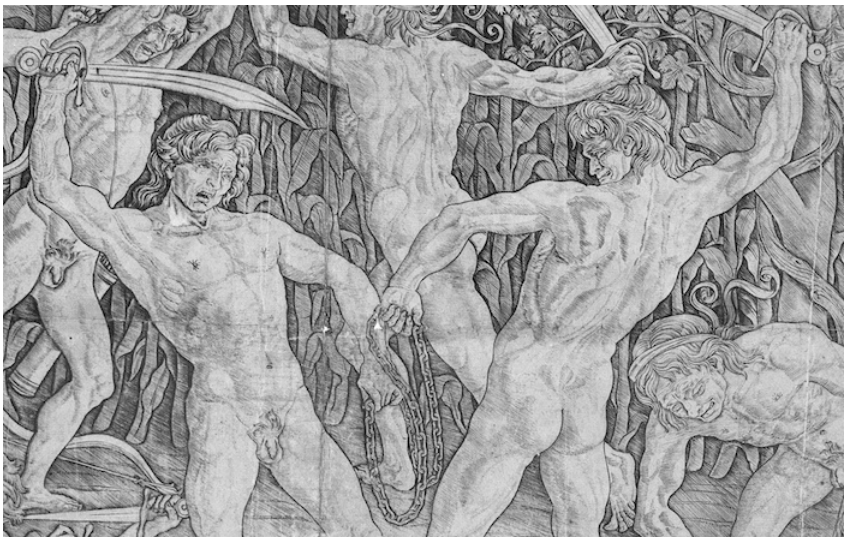


Figure 13.7.4.56: Detail, Antonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of Ten Nudes* (or *Battle of Nude Men*), c. 1465, engraving, 15-1/8 x 23-3/16″ / 38.4 x 58.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Art historians disagree about whether the print depicts a particular scene from mythology or classical history, but some have suggested that it simply shows gladiators. This is because in the central pair, the men are gripping a chain, a common weapon of gladiatorial combat.



Figure 13.7.4.57: Detail, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Battle of Ten Nudes, c. 1465, engraving, 15-1/8 x 23-3/16″ / 38.4 x 58.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The print is exceptional for many reasons. To begin with, over fifty copies of it exist, an extraordinarily high number for a work of art over 500 years old. Additionally, it is believed that Pollaiuolo engraved the print completely by his own hand, and for this reason, the sign set in the far left of the vegetation bears his name (most often the artist's composition would be engraved by a printmaker).

Pollaiuolo's print is, however, important mostly because it shows a new conception of the human body. As many art historians have noted, the Renaissance started much earlier in the fields of sculpture and architecture than it did in painting and drawing. So although Donatello had created his nude *David* decades earlier, the nude had yet to be mastered in a two-dimensional form. Not everyone was taken with Pollaiuolo's print, and it is believed that Leonardo da Vinci criticized it, saying that the bodies looked like "bags of nuts." Pollaiuolo's nudes may be overly muscular, but they were probably the most naturalistic human bodies created in Italy up to that point.



Figure 13.7.4.58: Attributed to Michelangelo, *Crucifix*, polychrome wood, 1492, 142 x 25 cm (Santo Spirito, Florence)

Vasari, the great sixteenth-century Florentine artist and art historian, wrote that Pollaiuolo's understanding of the nude body resulted from his dissection of cadavers. This became a common practice in Florence, and it is reported that a sculpture of the crucified Christ in Santo Spirito was a gift from a very young Michelangelo to the priest there, who basically let him rob graves for the purpose of dissection.

Pollaiuolo's bodies are also derivative of ancient Roman art, an indication that he was looking at the classical past for inspiration, an essential hallmark of the Renaissance.

Because Pollaiuolo was trained as a goldsmith (this was true of many artists of the Renaissance including Ghiberti and Brunelleschi), he was very skilled in working with metal. Apart from its conception of the nude, the print also showcases the artist's technical ability, especially in the modeling, or contouring of light and dark, used to create volume in the men's bodies.

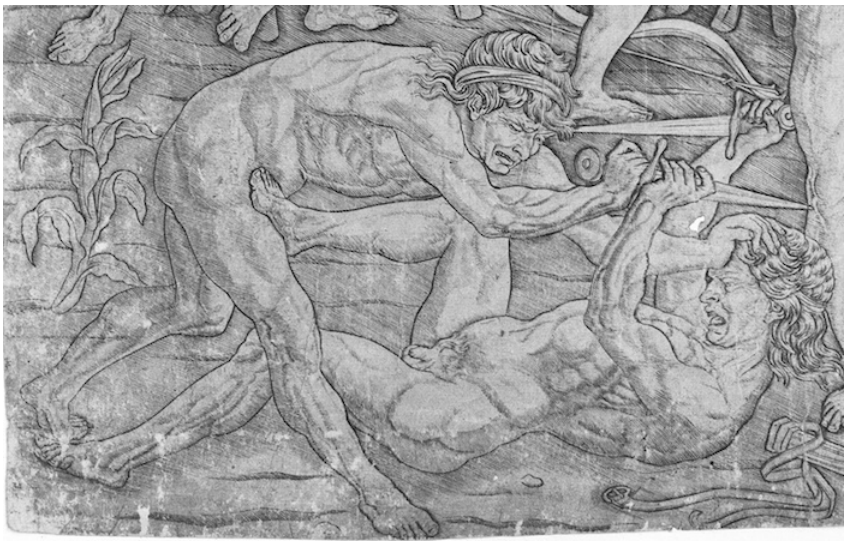


Figure 13.7.4.59: Detail, Antonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of Ten Nudes* (or *Battle of Nude Men*), c. 1465, engraving, 15-1/8 x 23-3/16″ / 38.4 x 58.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Although to the modern viewer, the fight between the ten men may look stiff and posed (although, a particularly vivacious passage can be found in the bottom left hand corner, where the man on the ground fiercely strains against the man pressing his head into the ground), later works by Michelangelo and Leonardo owe much to it. It is impossible to think that either Michelangelo's *Battle of the Centaurs* (below) and *Battle of Cascina* or Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* could have existed without the prototype of Pollaiuolo's *Battle of Ten Nudes*.



Figure **13.7.4.60**: Detail, Michelangelo, *Battle of the Centaurs*, c. 1492, marble, 84.5 x 90.5 cm (Casa Bunarroti)

This print is an engraving. That means that with a sharp tool, Pollaiuolo scratched the drawing into a sheet of metal. Ink was then applied to the metal surface and subsequently wiped off, leaving only the incised lines filled in. A piece of moist paper was then set over the plate, which was sent through rollers so that the wet paper could "suck up" the ink. At the end, the sheet of paper was peeled off, and the image that resulted was the mirror image of what Pollaiuolo drew.

In fact, art historians have identified that two stages of the print actually exist. This means that at some point, the metal plate wore down, and the artist had to recarve some of the details back into the plate. The result is that, over time, two different images were pulled from Pollaiuolo's one plate.

Because prints were collected like modern day baseball cards, engravings of *The Battle of Ten Nudes* ended up all over Europe, and many other artists copied it. Although people in other parts of Europe might read about the great sculptures and buildings being constructed in Florence, Pollaiuolo's print was an actual piece of the Florentine Renaissance that they could hold in their hands. Prints like this did much in helping to spread the Renaissance throughout Italy and to the rest of the world.

Additional resources:

This print at the British Museum

This print at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

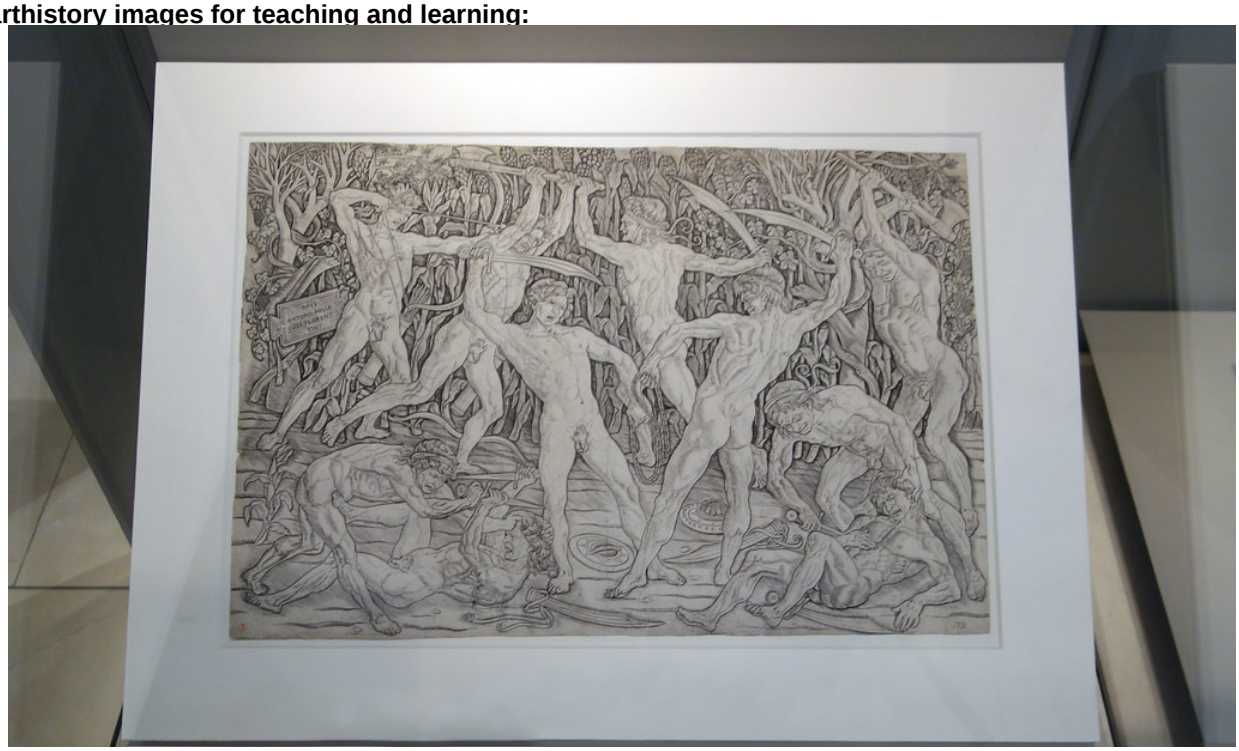


Figure **13.7.4.61**: More Smarthistory images…

Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Figure **13.7.4.62**: View of the north wall of the Sistine Chapel with Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter* outlined in red, 1481-83, fresco, 10′ 10″ x 18′ (Vatican, Rome) (photo: **Clayton Tang**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

St. Peter—keeper of the keys

Pietro Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter* is an exemplar of Italian Renaissance painting. The work was part of a large decorative program commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV in 1481 for the walls of the Sistine Chapel (the name "Sistine" being derived from Sixtus' own name), which was then, as it is today, the pope's private chapel in the Vatican, in Rome. This large scale fresco, measuring 10'10" x 18', is part of the New Testament narrative cycle depicting events from the life of Christ on the north wall of the chapel (the south wall illustrates the Old Testament life of Moses).



Figure 13.7.4.63: Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome) (**view large public domain image**)

The painting shows the moment when Christ, standing in the center dressed purple and blue garments, gives the keys of the heavenly kingdom to the kneeling St. Peter. This episode comes from the Gospel of Matthew (16:18-19) as Christ said to Peter: "And I tell you that you are Peter (*Petros*), and on this rock (*petra*) I will build my church… I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven…." The pair of gold and silver keys became Saint Peter's attribute (an attribute, in this sense, is an object associated with a saint that aids the viewer in identifying the saint). More about Peter

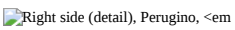
The Renaissance ideal

The figures

Perugino pulled out every pictorial device in his painter's arsenal to construct an image that is reflective of Renaissance ideals: figures, balance, harmony, and three-dimensional space. To begin with, see that the pictorial field has been clearly delineated into three distinct planes: foreground, middle-ground and background. In the foreground, on either side of Christ and St. Peter—are the other eleven Apostles. Who are the Apostles?

You can identify them easily since they are the figures dressed in classicizing tunics and robes. Each has been carefully rendered as a distinct individual. Perugino harmonizes the figures through repeating colors and postures. Notice how blue, yellow, and green are repeated throughout the group in a way that draws the viewer's eye back and forth across the foreground.

Let's also look at the postures of our Apostles. At the left and right edge of the Apostolic group is a figure with his back to the viewer, looking toward the central action. This effectively draws our eye to the center as well. The next figure over on both sides, faces out towards us, and their poses are mirror reflections of one another. Perugino's harmoniously balanced grouping of historical figures provides visual interest for the viewer.



Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)" data-reactid=".2.$0.$11.$11.$container=2image 4.0.1.1:0" height="500" src="

https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...733a36838d.jpg

" width="819">

Figure 13.7.4.64: Right side (detail), Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)

However, there is one element that is incongruous with the rest, which is the addition of contemporary Roman and Florentine men at the far edges of the groups on either side of Peter and Christ. These figures are clearly not part of the biblical figures based on their dress— and there is even a portrait of the artist himself, who looks directly out to the viewer on the right hand side (the fifth figure from the right edge—see the image above) ! The inclusion of the artist and / or contemporary people associated with the project was common during the Italian Renaissance, and in this case, Perugino's presence acts as his visual signature to his work.



Figure 13.7.4.65: Left side (detail), Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)

In the middle-ground, the figures are much smaller than those in the foreground, suggestive of their spatial distance. Not merely passersby, these figures are part of two additional stories from the life of Christ. On the left is the Tribute Money from the Gospel of Matthew (17:24-27) where the Roman tax collector demands Christ pay the Emperor's tax. (This scene was famously represented by **Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel in Florence**). On the right is the Stoning of Christ from the Gospel of John (8:48-59). The addition of these two scenes creates a pictorial device known as a continuous narrative, where two or more related events are shown occurring simultaneously in one composition.

The space

The background is comprised of three architectural structures at the edge of the open piazza (plaza), with an ideal landscape extending far into the distance behind. In order to create such a believable sense of three-dimensional space, Perugino utilized two types of perspective.

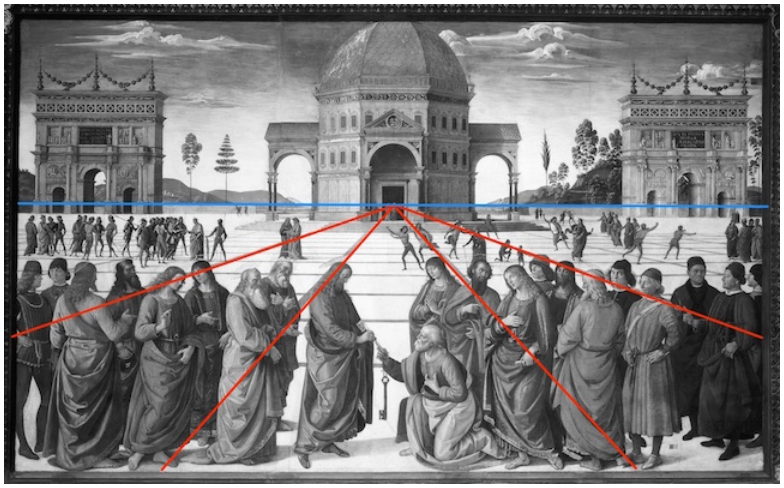


Figure 13.7.4.66: Perspective diagram, Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)

The first, one-point linear perspective, creates a believable three-dimensional space using a system of orthogonals (diagonal lines seen on the pavement—in red in the diagram above) that recede into space, converging at one point known as the "vanishing point" (which in this case is in the doorway of the central building)."

The vanishing point is located along a horizontal line, the "horizon line," which establishes the boundary between land and sky (the blue line in the diagram above). Notice how all of the figures maintain a proportional relationship to each other as they recede into this space.

The second type of perspective Perugino used is atmospheric perspective, which is literally the effect of the atmosphere on objects observed in the distance, causing them to diminish in appearance through a bluish-gray haze, as seen in the mountains in this case.

The influence of classical antiquity

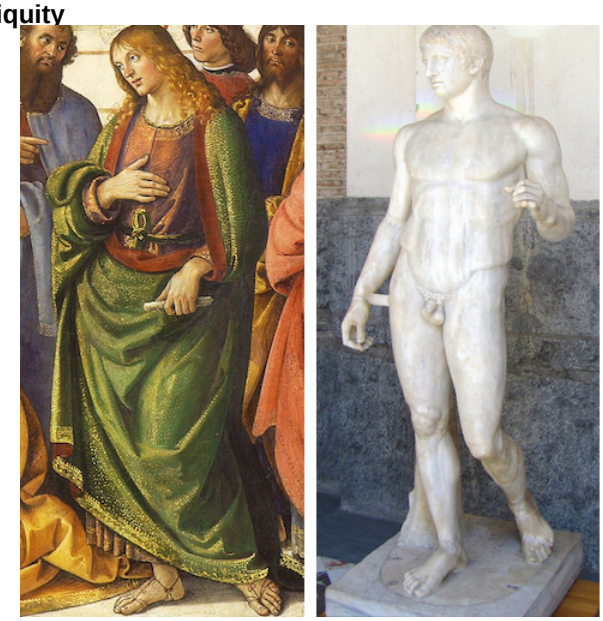


Figure **13.7.4.67**: Left: Apostle standing in contrapposto (detail) Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, Rome and right: Roman copy of Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear-Bearer)*, c. 450-40 B.C.E.

Contrapposto

One of the defining characteristics of the Italian Renaissance was the interest in all aspects of classical antiquity (ancient Greece and Rome), especially its art and architecture. That interest in manifested in Perugino's fresco in two different ways. One is his use of contrapposto (Italian meaning "counter-pose") for some of the foreground figures.

This pose (seen in the figure above) was known in the Renaissance through copies of the ancient Greek sculpture, the *Doryphoros* (above right). When standing in contrapposto, one leg bears all of the person's weight while remains relaxed at the knee, producing a very natural stance (notice how often you stand in contrapposto every day!).



Figure 13.7.4.67: Left: Arch (detail), Perugino, *Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter*, Sistine Chapel, 1481-83, (Vatican, Rome); right: Arch of Constantine, 315 C.E., Rome (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Architecture

The second nod to antiquity is in the architecture. The central "temple" in the background of Perugino's fresco is based on the **Florence Baptistery**, which was believed at the time to have been an ancient Roman temple.

And at either side of the piazza are representations of the Arch of Constantine (in Rome). The arch commemorates Constantine the Great, the Roman emperor who legalized Christianity in 314. Famously converting to Christianity on his deathbed in 336, he effectively became the first Christian Roman emperor. Moreover, Constantine founded St. Peter's Basilica, the site of Peter's burial and the location of Perugino's fresco. Thus, the inclusion of the Arch of Constantine was an important reference to the history of Rome, and St. Peter and the basilica.

Additional resources:

Perugino from The National Gallery in London

Perugino from The National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

Peter in Christian Tradition from Bible Odyssey

Smarthistory video on How One-Point Perspective Works

Smarthistory video on Contrapposto

Smarthistory video on the Arch of Constantine

Ghirlandaio, *Life of the Virgin*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON

A treasure house of Renaissance art

The Church of Santa Maria Novella, adjacent to the train station of the same name, is a treasure-house of Florentine art of the Renaissance.



Figure 13.7.4.68: Santa Maria Novella (Leon Battista Alberti was responsible for the façade, completed in 1470)

So much so, that visitors to the church—seeking the great Renaissance artists Uccello and Masaccio and the wondrous frescoes in the "Spanish Chapel"—are sometimes prone to overlook the magnificence of its main altar chapel (or chancel), painted by the absolute master of Florentine fresco, Domenico Ghirlandaio and his workshop. Known as the Tornabuoni chapel (for the family that commissioned the paintings), the frescoes were once the culmination of the pilgrim's journey down the central nave and through a large wooden choir (an area for seating for the clergy and choir), which funneled the traveler through the final third of the journey to deliver them at the doorstep of Ghirlandaio's glorious vision (the painter and author Vasari tore the choir down in the sixteenth century—as it turns out, he wasn't much one for preserving material culture).



Figure 13.7.4.69: View down the nave of Santa Maria Novella, looking toward the Tornabuoni Chapel (photo: Maneesh Sinha, by permission)

A banker's commission



Figure **13.7.4.70**: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Portrait of the Donor Francesca Pitti-Tornabuoni*, c. 1485-90, fresco (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

At the time of this commission, the Tornabuoni were the chief Florentine banking rivals of the Medici. Like the Medici, they employed this kind of sacred patronage to expiate themselves against charges of immoral luxuriousness and wealth, as well as to quell suspicions of usury (charging interest, which was considered a sin). The irony, of course, is that a fresco insurance policy as grand as this one was only obtained at great cost, and was intended to attract maximum public attention. The extravagant "humility" of rich patrons (the Medici, the Tornabuoni and others), adorning the city with thinly-veiled monuments to themselves, came to be considered a demonstration of virtuous public service, celebrated as civic *magnificenza*. I suppose Donald Drumpf may see himself in the much the same way, scattering his showy, shiny monuments across America.

The Bible in Florence

Ghirlandaio loved Florence and fresco, and he adored the world and all of its charms. In contrast to the solid, stoic and severe formal classicism of the earlier generation of Alberti, Brunelleschi and Masaccio, Ghirlandaio loved form, color, variety, narrative and the quotidian (everyday) details of Florentine daily life. Although the primary narratives depicted in the Tornabuoni Chapel are scenes from the Life of John the Baptist and from the Life of the Virgin, these biblical scenes unfold in the streets of Florence, often staged in what appear to be temporary stage-sets, theatrical triumphal arches and temples, strewn with various bits of ancient Roman bric-a-brac, hastily assembled for the biblical actors. When you peer through the arches of these Lego-land wonders, you see the solid, sturdy, stone medieval façades of Florence—no matter where he goes in his imagination, for Ghirlandaio, Florence is the whole world. The conflation of time past and time present in the frescoes is also underscored by the inclusion, in many scenes, of late-fifteenth-century members of the Tornabuoni family in the biblical subjects, floating across the stage like ghostly apparitions. For over 500 years these vivid frescoes have played across the walls of the chapel like a continuously looping documentary film, chronicling the living history of Florence.

The painter

Domenico Ghirlandaio is often given rather short shrift by art historians existing, as he did, suspended between the austere Albertian mathematical rationalism of the fifteenth century and the agonized, self-flagellant extravagances of Michelangelo, to whom he served as painting master before he took up residence in the Medici garden. Trained in the family workshop, Ghirlandaio was an acknowledged fresco expert, and while his style is sometimes dismissed as "prosaic," I find it happily idiomatic, clearly reveling in the quotidian joys of observing the world around him—which is not to say that he lacked imagination. He had a distinct penchant for embellishing severe classical architectural settings with fanciful, fluid and flirtatious decorative flourishes and then peopling them with the most extraordinarily vivid and lively figures.

Every picture tells a story: The narratives

The overall narrative program of the chapel is relatively simple, covering the two lateral walls, and part of the rear wall (around and above the magnificent stained-glass windows) in superimposed registers, culminating in frescoes of the Four Evangelists on the

ceiling.

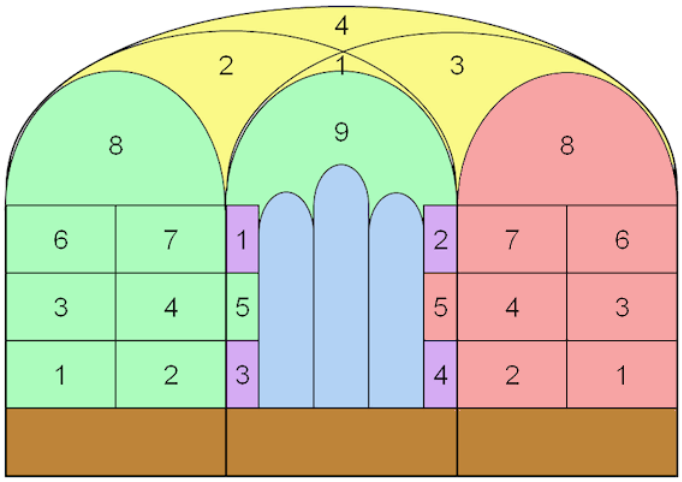


Figure **13.7.4.71**: Tornabuoni Chapel, in green: stories of the Virgin Mary; in red: stories of St. John of the Baptist; and in violet: episodes of the Lives of Dominican Saints and the two patrons. In yellow on the ceiling: the four evangelists. (Photo: Sailko, CC BY 2.5)

Facing into the chapel, the frescoes to the viewer's left tell the story of the life of the Virgin, to whom the church is dedicated, and those on the right, the story of the Life of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence. Both of these narratives feature birth scenes; the birth of John the Baptist, the Birth of the Virgin, the Nativity of Christ. The message is clear—three mothers, two sons, two dispensations. John's fate, as the last Prophet of the Old Testament and first Apostle of the New Testament, is to recognize Jesus as the Messiah—this translation from old to new is the lynchpin that holds the cycles together.



Figure **13.7.4.72**: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni*, 1489-90, mixed technique on panel, 77 x 49 cm (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid)

The fact that some of these biblical births are attended by prominent and highly recognizable female members of the Tornabuoni family reveals at least two subtexts behind this natal cycle—in the first instance, it's about dynasty, continuity, and the perpetuation of the Tornabuoni family. But there is a sad and ironic touch to this dynastic documentary; in the birth scenes of St. John and of the Virgin, a cortege of court ladies is led into the scene by the wife of Lorenzo Tornabuoni, the solemnly beautiful Giovanna who sadly died In childbirth while Ghirlandaio was painting this cycle (a lovely portrait of Giovanna by Ghirlandaio, left). The frescoes are, therefore, touching commemorative tributes to Giovanna, mingling the joys of birth with the sadness of death and the hope for eternal salvation.

The life of the Virgin

Among the many lovely aspects of the life of the Virgin, the loveliest is the story of her conception, born of a kiss between the aged Joachim and the long-barren Saint Ann, as they linger by the city gate. Ghirlandaio places this close encounter of the biblical kind

at the top of a staircase inside what appears to be a contemporary Florentine palace, where it gives way seamlessly to the contiguous *Birth of the Virgin*, easily the best-known scene from the chapel.



Figure **13.7.4.73**: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of the Virgin*, c. 1485-90 fresco, 24′ 4″ x 14′ 9″ (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

St. Anne props herself up in her fifteenth-century platform bed, in a luxuriously paneled room topped by a continuous frieze of illusionistically "carved" chubby, churning dancing putti. Midwives in the foreground pour water from an elegant pewter jug into a pewter basin, preparing baby's bath. The baby is a wriggling delight, held by a midwife and facing toward the still-floating Giovanna Tornabuoni, accompanied by her usual female entourage, all sumptuously dressed in high fifteenth-century Florentine style. Their presence is a reminder of the customary visits made by women of aristocratic families on the occasion of a birth.



Figure **13.7.4.74**: Left to right: Giovanna Tornabuoni, midwives with baby, St. Anne (detail), Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of the Virgin*, c. 1485-90, fresco, 24′ 4″ x 14′ 9″ (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

We next proceed through the *Presentation of the Virgin*, fluttering up the stairs to the high priest, her marriage to Joseph, the *Nativity* and, on a different note, the *Massacre of the Innocents* (image below—showing the execution of all young male children in the vicinity of Bethlehem ordered by King Herod to avoid the loss of his throne to a newborn King of the Jews whose birth had been announced to him by the Magi). But even here, in a scene of violent infanticide, Ghirlandaio can't shed his delight in fluttering, colorful sinuous draperies and an over-abundance of happy detail, which tends to highlight the ghoulishness of the dismembered baby parts strewn across the foreground, as though the putti of the Virgin's chamber (see the *Birth of the Virgin* above) had crumbled from the walls.



Figure 13.7.4.76: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Massacre of the Innocents*, c. 1485-90, fresco (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

The life of Saint John the Baptist

There are a number of frescoes depicting standard scenes associated with the life of the Baptist—chiefly his wanderings in the desert, during which he realizes his avocation, and his subsequent Baptism of Christ. But people sometimes forget that John, like Christ, was the result of a miraculous pregnancy. His parents, Zachariah and Elizabeth, had no children, but God heard Zachariah's prayers and the elderly Elizabeth found herself pregnant, three months in advance of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary (the moment when Mary conceives Christ). The cycle therefore features the lovely moment of the *Visitation*, when Elizabeth and Mary encounter each other while pregnant and the unborn John "leaps up" in his mother's womb in recognition of the presence of Christ (Luke 1: 39-45).



Figure 13.7.4.77: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *The Visitation*, c. 1485-90, fresco (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

In his typical fashion, Ghirlandaio sets this encounter in a hybrid city setting; the women stand just inside a medieval wall and the Virgin faces toward the gliding and omniscient presence of Giovanna Tornabuoni.



Figure 13.7.4.78: Left to right: Mary, Elizabeth, two attendants, Giovanna Tornabuoni, and two more attendants (detail), Domenico Ghirlandaio, *The Visitation*, c. 1485-90, fresco (Cappella Maggiore,Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

On the far right is the profile of a gleefully festooned triumphal arch. In this confrontation of architectural styles, medieval and Renaissance, the old medieval world gives way to the newly reborn "Roman" present, a trope Ghirlandaio borrowed from contemporary Netherlandish art. St. John the Baptist has his own lovingly detailed birth scene, complete with a rushing female figure carrying a birth tray of fresh fruits and replenishing foods to the new mother, the ever-watchful Giovanna Tornabuoni in the foreground.



Figure 13.7.4.79: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Zaccariah Writes the Name of John*, c. 1485-90, fresco (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

Among the other scenes here, the one in which *Zaccariah Writes the Name of John* is the most unusual. At the moment of the angel Gabriel's announcement of Elizabeth's pregnancy, Zaccariah asked for a sign as proof; because he had spoken doubtfully, he lost the power of speech, regaining it only after writing on a tablet, at Elizabeth's urging, "His name is John" (Luke 1:18-22). The emphasis in this scene on written evidence is, perhaps, an allusion to the world of documents and contracts that characterized the Tornabuoni banking world.



Figure **13.7.4.80**: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Annunciation*, c. 1485-90, fresco (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

On the lowest register, the altar wall features kneeling portraits of the donors, Giovanni Tornabuoni and his wife Francesca Pitti. In the upper registers, around and above the triple-mullioned stained-glass windows, we see the *Annunciation* and *St. John in the Desert*, then scenes from the lives of two prominent Dominican saints, appropriate in a Dominican church. In one, Saint Dominic Tests Books in Fire and in the other we see the Death of Saint Peter Martyr. The cycle on this wall culminates in a *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*.

Again, for Ghirlandaio, God is clearly always in the details. The Saint Dominic scene depicts a moment in the saint's fight against the Cathars (who professed a belief in the dualistic principles of good and evil, God and Satan, in opposition to the monotheism of the Catholic faith), in which only his books survived a test of fire when thrown into the flames alongside the Cathar's "heretical" texts.



Figure **13.7.4.81**: Death of Peter Martyr (left), *Saint Dominic Tests Books in Fire* (right), fresco, c. 1485-90 (Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence)

This is interesting because of its juxtaposition with the *Death of Peter Martyr*; a preacher from Verona whose family was sympathetic to the Cathar cause. He returned to orthodoxy when he met Saint Dominic. As Shakespeare says, "the truth will out." I have no idea why late-fifteenth-century Dominicans were concerned with the Cathars, but it's possible that the reference to Catharism here was intended by the Tornabuoni to "out" rival merchant families in Florence, like the Pulci, whose ancestors were

associated with the Cathars. Thus the personal is intertwined with the political, all interwoven into the marvelous textures of Ghirlandaio's Florence.

Additional resources:

Civic architecture: Tornabuoni Chapel

Ghirlandaio at The National Gallery

Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond

by ELAINE HOYSTED



Figure **13.7.4.82**: Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

All the items a bride would need

As one of the few cassoni (marriage chests) to survive intact from the fifteenth century, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond provides us with the opportunity to understand Renaissance Florentine social and political ideals and attitudes. Cassoni (also called forzieri in Florence) were expensive, lavishly decorated chests which accompanied a bride to her new marital home. These chests were given to the bride by her parents as their contribution to the wedding. Carrying precious textiles and goods such as expensive clothing, jewelry and accessories, the chests contained many of the items the bride would need and use in her new home. The cassone was carried alongside the bride accompanied by her father and family through the streets of Florence, an important part of the ritual of marriage. It served to demonstrate the wealth of the family to the city's citizens, displaying their power and influence.



Figure **13.7.4.83**: Side panel with the family emblem (*imprese*) of the Strozzi family, Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Each of the main surfaces of the chest were decorated, often with painted horizontal panels depicting narratives (*istorie*) taken from such sources as Greek and Roman mythology, the Old Testament and fourteenth-century literature (for example the work of Boccaccio and Petrarch were particularly popular). The Metropolitan's Cassone stands out due to the choice of subject matter on the front panel (above)—depicted a contemporary historical event, the Conquest of Trebizond (in present-day Turkey) as well as for the two artists involved—Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso.

Emblazoned on each of the side panels of the chest (left) is the family emblem (*imprese*) of the Strozzi, an ancient and noble Florentine family with strong political influence. The emblem, comprised of a falcon/hawk perched on a caltrop (a spiked metal device that when scattered on the ground in battle, caused the enemy's horses to trip and fall), would have been immediately identifiable to those on the streets of Florence. This symbol therefore served to identify the family involved and the conspicuous expenditure of the Strozzi, reinforced by their numerous artistic and architectural projects in the city such as Gentile da Fabriano's ***Adoration of the Magi.***



Figure 13.7.4.84: View showing the decoration of the interior, Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The inside of the cassone provides insight into the role of women in Florentine society and the expectation that they bear children. Often the inner lid of cassoni were decorated with the representation of an erotic and sensuously nude reclining male or female figure. It was believed at this time that in order to conceive a beautiful (preferably male) child, women should surround themselves with beautiful and stimulating art works. In the case of the Metropolitan Cassone, the inside of the lid and the back panel (above) are decorated with painted imitations of textile designs—pomegranate-style velvets with metal-thread brocading and two heights of silk pile. The extravagance of the decoration mirrors the expensive nature of the objects which it housed. Of particular interest is the pomegranate motif and its relationship to the bride's role as a wife and mother. In Renaissance society pomegranates were recognized as symbols of fertility. Each time the newly-married woman opened up the cassone, she saw this symbol, reminding her of her prescribed role in marriage.



Figure 13.7.4.85: Back view, Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The back view of the cassone appears to be unfinished. The reason for this becomes apparent when the location of the piece is taken into consideration. The chest was placed in the private bedchambers of the wife—usually at the foot of the bed. As it was placed in this manner, the back panel was not on display and therefore the finish was not seen as a priority by the workshop, certainly not to the same extent as the rest of the piece. This demonstrates that both the patron and artists attempted to reduce the cost of the work where possible, preferring to concentrate the lavish decoration and finish to the areas which would be visible to the public when carried through the city and to the eyes of the couple when installed in their home.



Figure 13.7.4.86: Front Panel depicting the Conquest of Trebizond, Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The front panel of the cassone was originally thought to present a contemporary historical event—the fall of the city of Trebizond (modern-day Trabzon in Turkey) at the hands of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in 1461. Located on the southern coast of the Black Sea, Trebizond was considered at the time as the last outpost of the Byzantine Empire and its surrender signaled the end of that Empire. The victory of the Ottoman Turks (Muslims) signified the serious threat they now posed to Europe. Therefore this event was of particular relevance to contemporary Florentines, especially those from the elite class such as the Strozzi.



Figure Runaway argument for \eatSpaces?: Constantinople (detail of front panel), Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

In the top left corner of the painted panel, the walled city of Constantinople is represented (above). In the top right (below), dominating a hill is the city of Trebizond. In the middle and foreground, a battle scene is portrayed. Opulently-dressed soldiers whose costumes are decorated in the expensive medium of gold leaf fight on foot and on horseback.

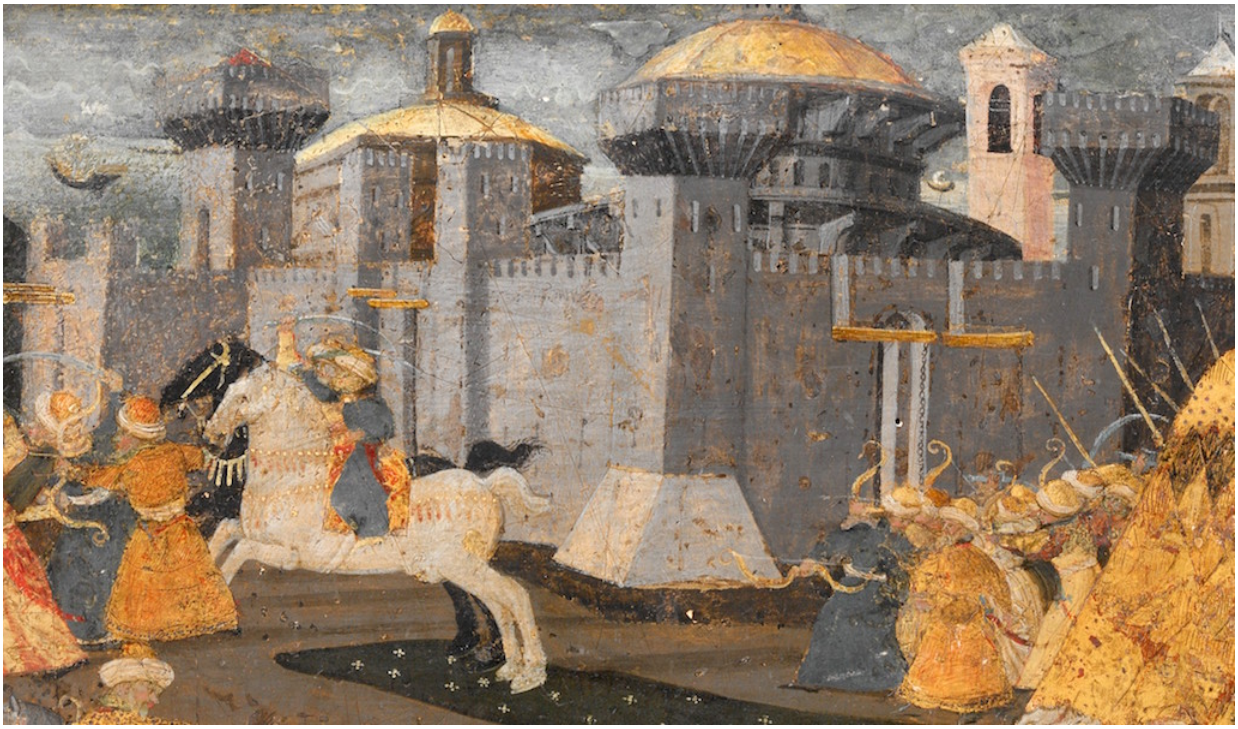


Figure **13.7.4.88**: City of Trebizond (detail of front panel), Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Outside Trebizond's walls, the Ottoman encampment and the copious amount of gold leaf utilized to depict it, stands out from the rest of the scene. Mehmed II is seated on a triumphal chariot pulled by two white horses in the bottom right, demonstrating his importance in the scene as the victorious leader. The abundant use of gold leaf shows the patron's wealth and recalls the similar treatment of the theme of opulence as seen in Da Fabriano's Strozzi Altarpiece.

New interpretation



Figure **13.7.4.89**: Mehmed II seated on a triumphal chariot pulled by two white horses (detail of front panel), Marco del Buono Giamberti and Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond*, 1460s, tempera, gold and silver on wood, 9 1/2 x 77 x 32 7/8 inches / 100.3 x 195.6 x 83.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Recent analysis of the cassone and particularly the costumes of those depicted in this panel revealed that it is in fact the Ottoman forces who are being vanquished. It is now believed that the artists deliberately conflated two historical events within the one scene: the fall of Trebizond in 1461 and a battle which took place in 1402, when the Ottomans were defeated at the hands of the famous Mongol Emperor Bayezid I and his troops at Ankara. By conflating these two events in this manner, the artists visualized the idea that the Ottomans were not invincible and although they had brought about the fall of the Byzantine Empire, they could be defeated once again. The panel therefore reinforced the belief that the Ottomans were no match for the might of the armies of mainland Europe.

Although an object destined for the private bedchambers of a newly-married couple, the *Cassone with the Conquest of Trebizond* brings together successfully the prescribed domestic duties and political concerns of fifteenth-century Florentines.

The Cassone at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Nuptial Furnishings in the Italian Renaissance on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Cassone at the Minneapolis Institute of Art

The conservation of a Renaissance Cassone at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

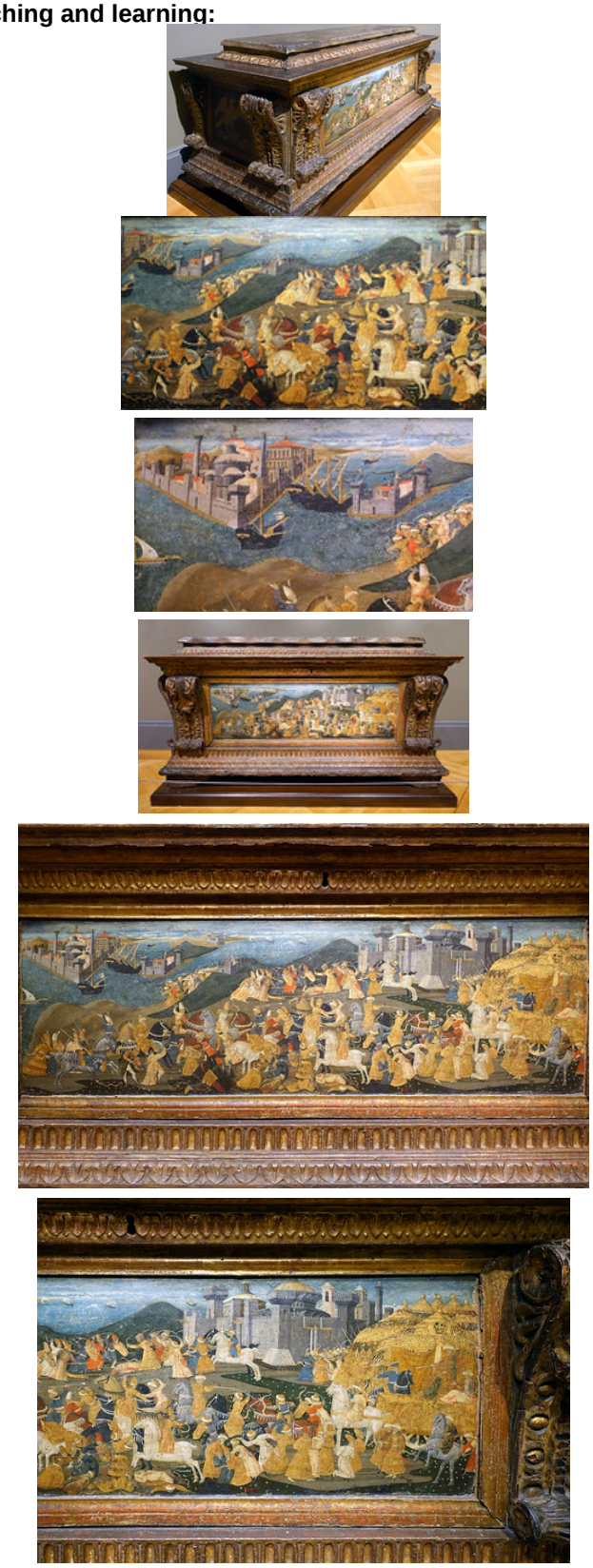


Figure **13.7.4.90**: More Smarthistory images…

Sandro Botticelli

Sandro Botticelli, *La Primavera (Spring)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.4.16**: Sandro Botticelli, *La Primavera (Spring)*, 1481-82, tempera on panel, 80 x 123 1/2″ (203 x 314), (Uffizi, Florence)

Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.4.17**: Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, 1483-85, tempera on panel, 68 x 109 5/8″ (172.5 x 278.5 cm) (Galeria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Additional resources:

This painting at the Uffizi

Jane C. Long, "Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' as Wedding Painting," *Aurora: The Journal of the History of Art*, 9 (2008), pp. 1-27.

Paintings of Love and Marriage in the Italian Renaissance on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Botticelli, *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici*

by DR. REBECCA HOWARD

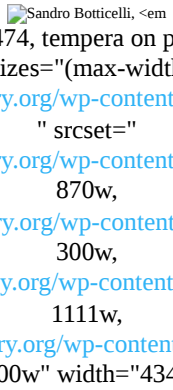


Figure **13.7.4.91**: Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici*, c. 1474, tempera on panel, 57.5 x 44 cm (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence)

When browsing a museum, I'm sure we've all experienced the strong desire to touch a work of art (we know we shouldn't, but I think we can admit we've all wanted to). Well, Sandro Botticelli's *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici* was *made* to incite touch, or at least to make viewers think about touch and physical experience.

Seeing Botticelli's *Portrait of a Man* reproduced online, in the pages of a book, or even when walking past it in Florence's Galleria degli Uffizi, where it is protected by a layer of glass, modern viewers may miss a key aspect of the painting. However, the typical fifteenth-century viewer of this portrait likely would have been able to touch the object itself, and at the very least could easily draw from memory the experience of handling an object much like the medallion held by the portrait sitter, as portrait medallions were frequently dispersed and collected among the upper classes.

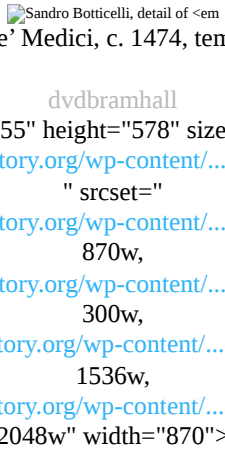


Figure **13.7.4.92**: Sandro Botticelli, detail of *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici*, c. 1474, tempera on panel, 57.5 x 44 cm (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence; photo: **dvdbramhall**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Upon closer inspection, you'll notice that this isn't a two-dimensional portrait painting, but a multimedia work. The sitter is indeed painted quite naturalistically, so he looks three-dimensional, as though he could potentially exist in our world. The medallion that he holds, however, *actually is three-dimensional*. This portrait, like many paintings in fifteenth-century Italy, is painted with **tempera** on a wood panel. In this case, a hole has been cut in the panel, where the sitter appears to be holding the medallion, and a copy of a real portrait medallion has been inserted into that space.

This pseudo-medallion is not actually made of metal, as a true medallion is, but it is instead built of *pastiglia*, a paste or plaster, made with gesso and built in low relief. In this portrait, the *pastiglia* medallion has also been gilded, or covered in a thin layer of gold leaf, to mimic the appearance of a gilded bronze medallion. Because the image and text on this pseudo-medallion exactly mimic the orientation of Cosimo's portrait on real medallions from this period, it is possible that Botticelli used the impression of an existing medallion to make a mold, or had access to a mold used to create such medallions.



Figure **13.7.4.93**: Cosimo de' Medici, c. 1480–1500, bronze medal, made in Florence (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Who is this man?

Well, we don't know, despite much scholarly speculation over the years. We can discern that he is certainly intending to associate himself with one of the most powerful families in Italy at this time, the Medici. He does so by holding a large *copy* of a real, existing portrait medallion—an object that would have been made in multiples, circulated, traded, and collected by humanists and upper-class members of Renaissance society.

The young man in Botticelli's portrait looks directly out at the viewer and appears proud of his connection to the object that he holds. He displays the large medallion right over his heart, an organ that was associated with the creation of lasting memories and the storage of sense impressions. The sitter is dressed as a humanist, a learned member of Florentine society.



Figure **13.7.4.94**: Left: Cosimo de' Medici, c. 1480–1500, bronze medal, made in Florence (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London); right: Trajan Denarius, Roman Dacia, 107 C.E. (Roman Numismatics Collection; photo: courtesy of James Grout/Encyclopedia Romana)

The medallion, as a copy of a real object, shows the profile view of Cosimo il Vecchio (the Elder), with Latin text arching above his portrait. The text makes reference to Cosimo il Vecchio as *pater patriae*, or "Father of the Fatherland." This phrase indicated the political power of the Medici, which began during Cosimo's lifetime. The format of the pseudo-medallion is drawn from coins and

medals of Greek and Roman antiquity, thereby effectively associating Cosimo with great rulers of a learned past, a past that Renaissance humanists hoped to emulate.

Who were the Medici?

Why would someone in Renaissance Italy want to be associated with the Medici family? And why Cosimo il Vecchio, in particular? The Medici were the most powerful family in Florence, and remained one of the most influential families in Italy—and Western Europe more broadly—throughout the Renaissance. Even though Cosimo il Vecchio was deceased by the time of this portrait, he was remembered as the de-facto "father" of the wealthy banking, mercantile, and political family. Beginning with Cosimo and his political rule, the Medici helped to make Florence the cradle and birthplace of the **Italian Renaissance**, as they were responsible for financially supporting many advances in the arts and humanities. By 1475, when this portrait was painted, the grandsons of Cosimo, Lorenzo and Giuliano, were co-rulers of Florence. Just a few years later, in 1478, Giuliano was killed in the Florentine Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore (the *Duomo*) during the assassination plot known as the Pazzi Conspiracy. At this time, Lorenzo il Magnifico (the Magnificent) de' Medici became head of the family and the Medici rule in Florence.

Lorenzo, in particular, surrounded himself and filled his court with artists, architects, writers, and other humanist scholars. Sandro Botticelli was one of these, looked upon quite favorably by Lorenzo and given numerous commissions during his time as a court painter for the Medici. This portrait was thus created during one of the great heights of Medici Renaissance power and influence. In just a few decades, in fact, two members of the family would become popes—Pope Leo X (Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici) and Pope Clement VII (Giulio di Giuliano de' Medici). In short, if one had the ability to claim even a tangential connection to the Medici family, it would only make sense to document that connection for eternity in a work of art, such as our *Man with a Medal*.

Sandro Botticelli, <em
Adoration of the Magi, c. 1475–76, tempera on panel, 111 x 134 cm (
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence
). A self-portrait of Botticelli appears on the far-right side; he is the man looking out at viewers and dressed in golden robes." aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49258" height="601" sizes="(max-width: 748px) 100vw, 748px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...on-870x699.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...on-870x699.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...on-300x241.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-adoration.jpg
1135w" width="748">

Figure **13.7.4.95**: Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1475–76, tempera on panel, 111 x 134 cm (**Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence**). A self-portrait of Botticelli appears on the far-right side; he is the man looking out at viewers and dressed in golden robes.

Botticelli, the Medici, and Renaissance portraiture

And, again, Botticelli was able to claim just such a connection himself. In fact, the artist famously includes his self-portrait in an image of the ***Adoration of the Magi***, also painted around 1475. The Medici were known to frequently associate themselves with the three kings as a way of showing their loyalty to the Christian faith and their will to also gift expensive things to Christ (carried out in the Renaissance by way of commissioning religious works of art and architecture). As such, many recognizable portraits of Medici family members can be found in the *Adoration of the Magi*. Botticelli perpetually commemorates his connection to this powerful family by adding his own portrait to the group.

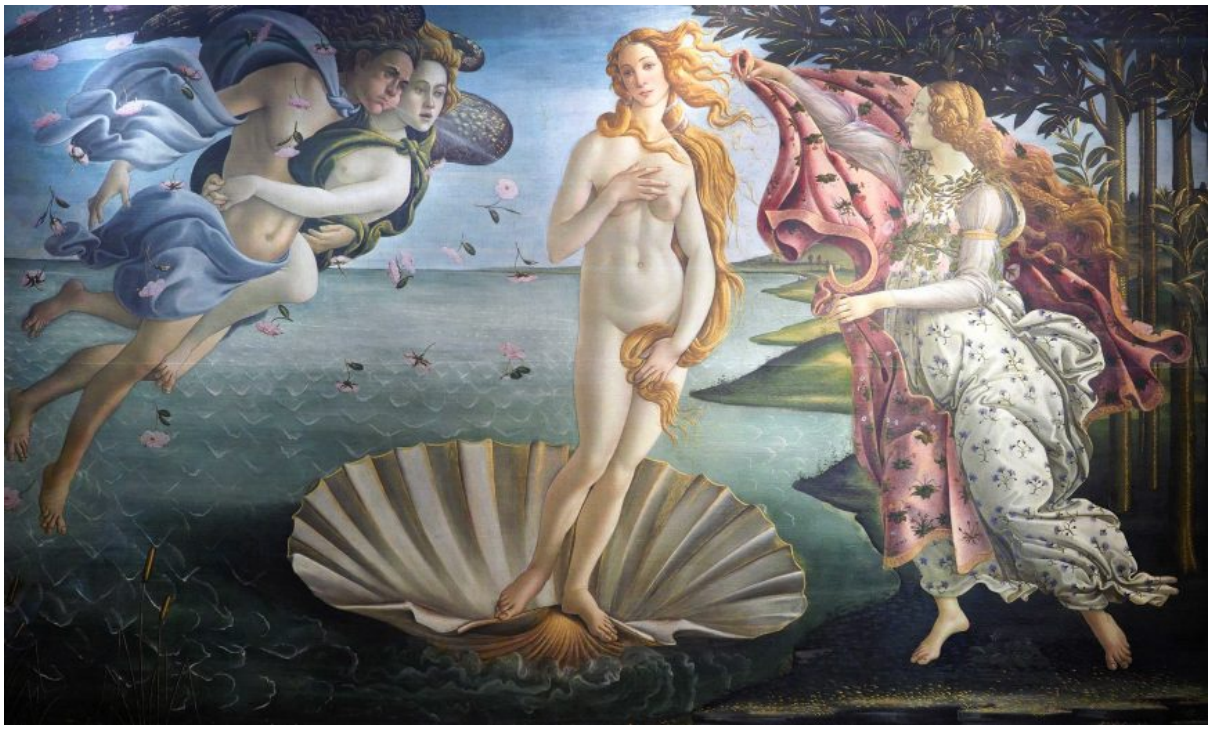


Figure **13.7.4.96**: Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, 1483-85, tempera on panel, 68 x 109 5/8″ (172.5 x 278.5 cm) (**Gallerie degli Uffizi**, Florence; photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The best-known works by Botticelli are religious and mythological scenes, such as his ***Birth of Venus***, which can also be found in the Uffizi Gallery. However, Botticelli was also widely celebrated for his technical abilities in the genre of portraiture. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, artists were continually working towards creating ever more communicative and naturalistic portraits.



Figure **13.7.4.97**: Two examples of northern renaissance portraits. Left: Jan Van Eyck, ***The Arnolfini Portrait***, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0); right: Petrus Christus, ***Portrait of a Carthusian***, 1446 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Moving away from the classically-inspired strict profile format and turning to a three-quarter twist of the body inspired by Flemish portraiture, artists like Botticelli, **Leonardo da Vinci**, and Antonello da Messina were revolutionizing the entire genre of portraiture.

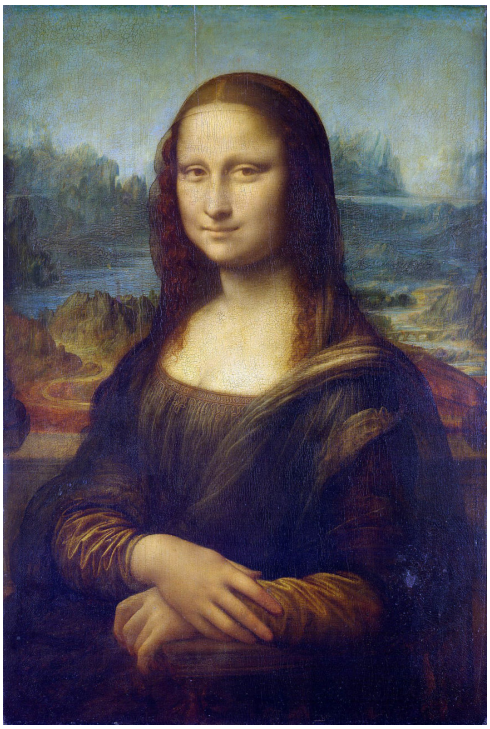


Figure **13.7.4.98**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Portrait of Lisa Gherardini* (*Mona Lisa*), c. 1503–05, oil on panel, 30-1/4″ x 21″ (**Musée du Louvre**)

Painters from regions north of the Alps created portrait likenesses that turned toward their viewers and appeared to make eye contact, ultimately inspiring Italian artists, already heavily invested in naturalism, to do the same. In addition, Leonardo da Vinci's portraits, as well as many of Botticelli's, also began to incorporate more of the body (consider, for example, how a viewer sees the entire turn of the *Mona Lisa*'s upper body, even the placement of her hands), thereby adding an even greater sense of physical presence to the sitters.



Figure **13.7.4.99**: Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici*, c. 1474, tempera on panel, 57.5 x 44 cm (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence)

A truly unique portrait

Botticelli's *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici* is particularly special because it incorporates the "old" format of portraits in its medallion—those in strict profile, meant to reference similar objects from antiquity—along with the newly popularized approach that captured more lively and communicative sitters, sitters that make eye contact with their viewers. Here, Botticelli's young man looks directly out at us, capturing our attention and thereby directing it to what he holds. We feel as though he is speaking to us, asking us to touch this three-dimensional medallion and to remember his status, amplified by his ties to this important family. The artwork combines old and new, painting and sculpture, to create one of the most unique and enthralling portraits of its time.

Additional Resources:

This portrait on the Gallerie degli Uffizi website

Read more about the presentation of self in the Italian renaissance via Italian renaissance learning resources

Why commission artwork during the renaissance?

Types of renaissance patronage

View another Italian renaissance artwork that uses pastiglia on Smarthistory

Read more about the Medici as collectors

Francis Ames-Lewis, ed., *The Early Medici and Their Artists* (London: Birbeck College, 1995).

Allison M. Brown, "The Humanist Portrait of Cosimo de Medici, Pater Patriae," *Journal of the Warburg and the Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 24, no. 3/4 (1961), pp. 186–221.

Rebecca M. Howard, "A Mnemonic Reading of Botticelli's *Portrait of a Man with a Medal*," *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, vol. 38, no. 4 (2019), pp. 196–205.

Richard Stapleford, "Botticelli's Portrait of a Young Man Holding a Trecento Medallion," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 129, no. 1012 (1987), pp. 428–436.



Figure **13.7.4.100**: Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, c. 1485, tempera on wood, 61 x 40.5 cm (Pitti Palace)



Figure **13.7.4.101**: Piero del Pollaiuolo, *Portrait of a Woman*, c. 1480, tempera on wood, 48.9 c 35.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Portraits and fashion

Sandro Botticelli is best known for his masterpieces ***The Birth of Venus*** and ***Primavera,*** but during his prolific career, Botticelli also painted several portraits of contemporary Renaissance Florentines — including *Portrait of a Young Woman*, currently held in Florence's Pitti Palace.

Portraits of early modern women are especially important art historical survivals, because less information is known about women's lives in this period. Although the figure in Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Woman* lacks flashing jewels and eye-catching brocades (as featured in this portrait by Pollaiuolo), likenesses such as this one elucidate upper-class women's daily lived experience. While Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Woman* may strike modern viewers as simple, the picture showcases early modern Florentine gender roles through its depiction of dress.

Dressing down

Depicted clothing provides key iconographic clues for art and fashion historians. During the Renaissance, clothing signaled social rank, marital status, and gender differentiation. Public dress for the upper classes was ostentatious, expensive, and designed to be attention grabbing, with intricately patterned and brightly dyed silks. However, indoor clothing was much simpler, especially for women.



Figure **13.7.4.102**: Men conducting business (detail), in Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Good Government in the City* , fresco, 1338 (Palazzo Pubblico, Siena)



Figure **13.7.4.103**: Detail, Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, c. 1485, tempera on wood, 61 x 40.5 cm (Pitti Palace)

Florentine Renaissance women and men lived in very different worlds. Generally, men supervised the public-facing business domain, while women oversaw the management of the domestic sphere. While there were many exceptions to this dichotomy, upper-class wives usually oversaw the daily running of the household.

Indeed, it is safe to assume the woman in Botticelli's painting is married, based on her dressed-down, indoor style. Her bound-up hair, for example, was a typical hairstyle for married women (unmarried women commonly wore their hair down). Further, this figure is doubtless an upper-class woman, based on the sturdiness of her gown and its fine details (and, of course, because her family was wealthy enough to commission a portrait from a famous painter).

Clothing and status

While the dress in *Portrait of a Young Woman* is unassuming, it is not cheap. The overgown—the outermost dress layer—is tailored from a plain brown material, possibly cotton. Using a heartier textile assured the gown would last for years of indoor wear. This dress was designed for supervising the home, including tasks like instructing servants and overseeing deliveries. It was meant to be moved in. The figure's waist is encased in deep pleats. Her skirts push forward, and are so full with extra fabric that she has shoved her hands into their depths via pockets. Her brown locks are swept up in a simple cotton cap.



Figure 13.7.4.104: Detail, Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, c. 1485, tempera on wood, 61 x 40.5 cm (Pitti Palace)

Clues confirming the figure's high status embellish the plain outfit. A black ribbon necklace, possibly ending in an unseen **cross pendant**, (a popular accessory at the time), hangs from her neck. This woman wears at least one undergown, which can be seen peeking from the edges of her neckline, beneath the frontal laces. The undergarment has also been pulled out from sleeve gaps at the arm seam and elbow. A sheer lace partlet modestly covers her shoulders, and a translucent material, possibly silk or more lace, completes the bonnet to shield her hair, a symbol of wifely rejection of vanity.

The woman stands before a frame, possibly to a door or a window, a device which confirms the figure is pictured indoors — adhering to cultural norms. Although married Renaissance women were generally associated with indoor spaces, upper-class wives still led vibrant social lives. This plain brown dress, as typical private daywear, would have been appropriate garb for hosting friends and relatives at home. While much subdued as opposed to the type of costume an upper-class woman would adopt for public outings, the outfit worn by *Portrait of a Young Woman* provides viewers with an intimate glimpse into the Renaissance home.

"I Could Not See Her to My Satisfaction"

It is possible the woman pictured in Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Woman* is Clarice Orsini, a daughter of the noble Roman Orsini family. In June of 1469, at the age of nineteen, Clarice Orsini married the *de facto* prince of Florence, Lorenzo the Magnificent de'Medici. The Medici were merchant bankers and the most powerful family in Florence, so a marriage into a prominent and aristocratic Roman family served to further solidify their planned dominance of Tuscany. If the figure in *Portrait of a Young Woman* is indeed Clarice Orsini, Botticelli, as a Medici court painter, was tasked with creating a humble portrait of Lorenzo de'Medici's virtuous wife assuming appropriate, indoor female gentility.



Figure 13.7.4.105: Bust of Lorenzo de' Medici, 15th-16th century (National Gallery of Art)

As with most political marriages, Clarice and Lorenzo's bond was arranged by the couple's parents. Lucrezia de'Medici, Lorenzo's mother and the matriarch of the Medici family, wrote letters to her Florentine kin when she visited Rome to meet with Clarice's parents and assess the girl's aptitude towards a union with her son. In March 1467, Lucrezia reported back to her husband Piero de'Medici about the potential alliance between the Medici and Orsini. In the letter, Lucrezia segments the shy Clarice to her smallest attributes, describing her hair color, hands, and posture to Piero. Lucrezia wished to know whether the prospective adolescent bride seemed physically qualified for childbearing and furthering of Medicean lineage. Indeed, Lucrezia complains *twice* in the same letter that she could not get a clear look at Clarice's body during her visit.

The Medici mother grumbles that her intense parental vision was impeded by a Roman *lenzuolo* (a long, breezy cloak) Clarice wore, objecting:

> ***in this dress she seemed to me handsome, fair, tall, but being covered up I could not see her to my satisfaction.Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Cesare Guasti, Tre lettere di Lucrezia Tornabuoni a Piero de' Medici ed altre lettere di vari concernenti al matrimonio di Lorenzo il Magnifico con Clarice Orsini ricordo di Nozze nel gennaio 1859, ([Cesare Guasti] per Felice Le Monnier, 1859), p. 9.***

A few lines later, Lucrezia continues to decry her inability to speculate on the girl's form, lamenting "her bosom I could not see, as here the women are entirely covered up, but it appeared to me of good proportions." Lucrezia's letters clarify how important clothing and beauty was to the political and social movements of the Renaissance world. The Medici matriarch's concern proved needless, as Clarice gave birth to ten children, six of whom survived into adulthood. One of Clarice's sons even grew up to be **Pope Leo X**.

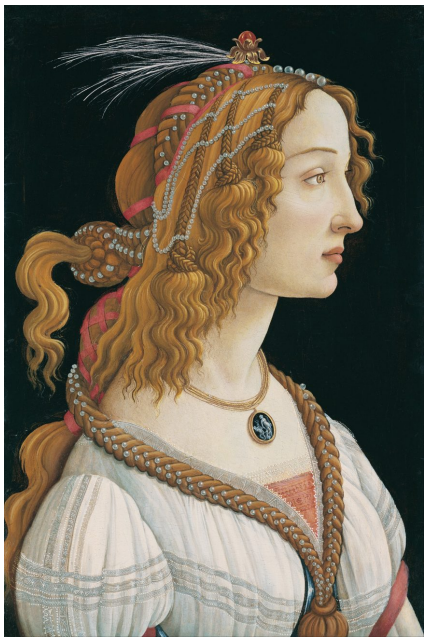


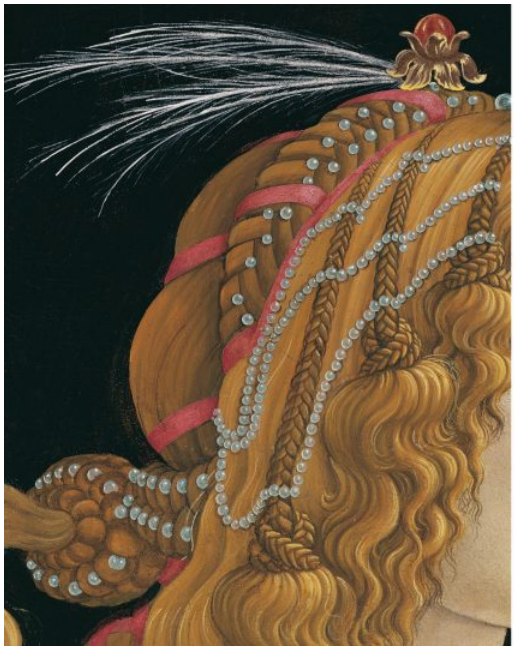
Figure **13.7.4.106**: Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1480–1485, tempera on wood, 82 cm × 54 cm (Städel Museum)

Fantastical Beauty

The intimacy displayed by the figure's dress is rare for the period, and offers a unique glimpse into how public and private notions of Renaissance womanhood diverged. Comparing Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Woman* (possibly Clarice Orsini) with another, slightly earlier painting, also entitled *Portrait of a Young Woman*, clarifies the wide range of female beauty standards in Renaissance Florence.

While Botticelli depicts Clarice Orsini in indoor garb, this young lady, in stark contrast, is portrayed in fantastical dress. Fantastical dress is an imagined clothing style, depicted in images as even more ostentatious than common public wear. Some scholars have linked fantastical dress to Florentine public processions, which often included a costume element called "disguisement."[1]

In this *Portrait of a Young Woman*, Botticelli has broken with strict profile to give the viewer a hint of the sitter's left hazel eye. Lace detailing enlivens her white gown with its pink undergarment. The figure's neck is long and slender, and her forehead is elongated with thinly-plucked eyebrows, both of which were considered attractive physical attributes at the time.





Details, Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1480–1485

Her hair is blonde, the shade considered most beautiful for women in the period, which is why many Renaissance depictions of Mary show the Mother of God with golden-colored hair. Sprays of feathers spring from the broach in the figure's hair, and pearls (symbols of chastity and sometimes pregnancy) dot the hairstyle. With its braids, ribbons, curls, and intricate knotting, it is unlikely this coiffure could have been achieved in reality.

A fabled beauty

Some scholars believe the woman pictured in this image is Simonetta Vespucci, another contemporary Florentine woman associated with the Medici family. Simonetta Vespucci was the "it-girl" of Quattrocento Florence, considered one of the most beautiful women in the city. Both Medici male heirs, Lorenzo de'Medici the Magnificent and his younger brother Giuliano de'Medici, publicly declared their admiration for Simonetta.

Signs identifying Simonetta's connection with the Medici are found in the figure's jewelry; the cameo hanging from her neck depicts a scene of the Greek god Apollo flaying Marsyas for displeasing him. The Medici, possibly Lorenzo himself, owned a very similar cameo.

In 1476, Simonetta Vespucci died tragically young at the age of twenty-two, likely of tuberculosis. The entire city of Florence mourned her loss. Botticelli, therefore, may have created this likeness posthumously. After her death, Botticelli created many similar portraits of fantastically beautiful young women, which also may or may not portray Simonetta Vespucci.



Figure **13.7.4.106**: Sandro Botticelli, *Profile Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1475-80 (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)

Indeed, some scholars even believe Venus and Flora in the *Birth of Venus* and *Primavera*, respectively, were also inspired by the real-life Florentine beauty queen. When creating his compositions such as the iconic *Birth of Venus*, Botticelli often collaborated with the Medici court poet, Poliziano, who wrote many versus praising Simonetta Vespucci's beauty.

Types of beauty

Both of the Botticelli portraits discussed in this essay — of young, Florentine women — showcase wildly different visual conceptions of Renaissance female beauty. Together, the images tell a story about legacy, patriarchy, and two women deeply connected to and beloved by one of the most powerful and influential dynasties in early modern Europe.

Notes:

1. Charles Dempsey, "The End of the Masquerade," *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001), 203-208.

Additional resources:

Charles Dempsey, "The End of the Masquerade," *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001).

Claudia Wedepohl, "Why Botticelli?: Aby Warburg's Search for a New Approach to Quattrocento Italian Art." In *Botticelli Past and Present*, edited by Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam (UCL Press, 2019), pp. 83–202.

Idealised Portrait of a Lady (Portrait of Simonetta Vespucci as Nymph)

Janet Ross, *Lives of the Early Medici: As Told in Their Correspondence*, (R.G. Badger, 1911).

Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Cesare Guasti, *Tre lettere di Lucrezia Tornabuoni a Piero de' Medici ed altre lettere di vari concernenti al matrimonio di Lorenzo il Magnifico con Clarice Orsini ricordo di Nozze nel gennaio 1859, ([Cesare Guasti]* per Felice Le Monnier, 1859).

Patricia Simons, "Women in Frames, the Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *History Workshop Journal* 25, no. 1 (1988), pp. 4–30.

Dissecting Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*

by TED-ED

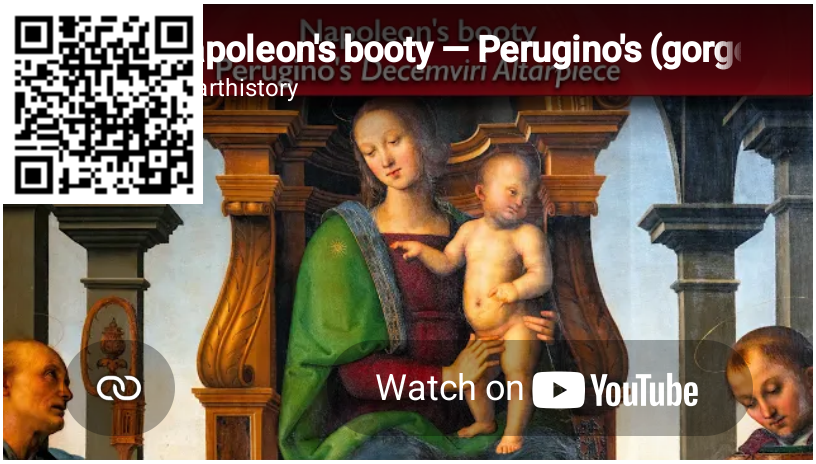


Video **13.7.4.18**: Video from TED-Ed. Speaker: James Earle.

Perugino, *Decemviri Altarpiece*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Napoleon's confiscation of thousands of works of art forever changed the cultural landscape of Europe.



Video **13.7.4.19**: A conversation with Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris in front of Perugino, *Madonna and Child with Sts Laurence, Louis of Toulouse, Ercolanus and Constance (Decemviri Altarpiece)*, 1495–96, tempera on wood, 193 x 165 cm (Vatican Museums)

Piero della Francesca

Piero della Francesca, *The Baptism of Christ*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

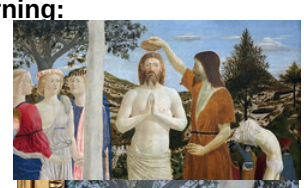


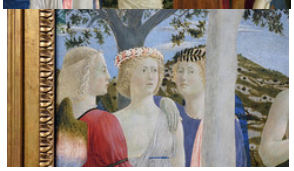
Video **13.7.4.19**: Piero della Francesca, *The Baptism of Christ*, 1450s, tempera on wood, 167 x 116 cm (National Gallery, London)

Additional resources

This painting at the National Gallery (London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88723



Figure **13.7.4.107**: More Smarthistory images…

Piero della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Figure **13.7.4.108**: Piero della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*, c. 1455-65, oil and tempera on wood, 58.4 × 81.5 cm (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino, Italy)

The subject of the *Flagellation*

Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation of Christ* is proof that, sometimes, good things really do come in small packages. Despite the panel's size (only 58.4 cm × 81.5 cm), the painting has been a mainstay in the last century in discussions of Quattrocento (fifteenth century) painting. An early example of the use of oil paint—though Piero used both tempera and oil in its execution—the work depicts the moment in Christ's Passion when he was whipped before Pontius Pilate. Though the New Testament says very little about this moment, mentioning only that Pilate ordered Christ to be flogged, later Christian writers wrote much about the event and even speculated about the number of lashes Christ received. Though the New Testament does not say that Christ was tied to a column while being whipped, during the fifteenth century this became a convention in depictions of the scene, which Piero here follows.

A masterpiece of the early Renaissance

This painting is a masterpiece of the Early Renaissance. The figures are expressive; especially noteworthy is the face of the bearded man in the foreground. They are also given real volume through the use of modeling (the passage from light to dark over the surface of an object). True to Humanism, the painting shows a preoccupation with the classical world, as seen especially in the architecture and inclusion of the golden statue in the background. Above all, Piero's obsession with perspective (the naturalistic

recession in to space), is evident. In fact, the artist was the author of a treatise on perspective, entitled *De Prospectiva Pingendi* (*On the Perspective of Painting*) and was also known as a mathematician and geometer.



Figure **13.7.4.109**: Three men in foreground (detail), Piero della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*, c. 1455-65, oil and tempera on wood, 58.4 × 81.5 cm (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino)

Who are the men in the foreground?

But Piero della Francesca's picture is also highly unusual. The flagellation, which is the gruesome main event, takes place in the background, while three extraneous men are painted prominently in the foreground. Piero uses two main devices to further emphasize the division of subjects. The first is setting. While the flagellation takes place inside of a covered courtyard with dramatic black and white checked tiles, the men are outdoors standing on the reddish tiles that pervade the scene. The second is the use of the orthogonal lines of the perspective, which divide the painting in half, and also delineate the interior and exterior space.

Not only is the painting strange because Piero marginalized the primary subject, relegating it to the back of the painting, but also because art historians cannot agree on who the three men in the foreground are. Theories abound.

The traditional identification of these three men is that the young man in the center is Oddantanio da Montefeltro, ruler of Urbino, flanked on either side by his advisors. All three of these men were killed in a conspiracy. In this case, it is suggested that the patron of the painting was Federigo da Montefeltro (who was later immortalized in a famous diptych by Piero) to commemorate his brother's death and compare his innocence to that of Christ.

Art historian Marilyn Lavin offered another notable interpretation of the painting. She suggested that the two older men are Ludovico Gonzaga and a friend, who had both recently lost their sons, symbolized by the young man in the center. The painting in this case would compare the pain that the two fathers felt to that of Christ during his Passion.

Other art historians have suggested that the painting is an allegory for the suffering of Constantinople after its fall to the Muslims in 1453. In this view, the two men watching the flagellation are Murad II (the Islamic sultan who waged a decades-long war against Christianity), and Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos (against whom that war was waged). The emperor had gone to the 1438 Council of Florence to ask for protection from the Muslims, but received no aid. The three enigmatic men, then, represent nobles who stood by and let the Christian nation be destroyed.

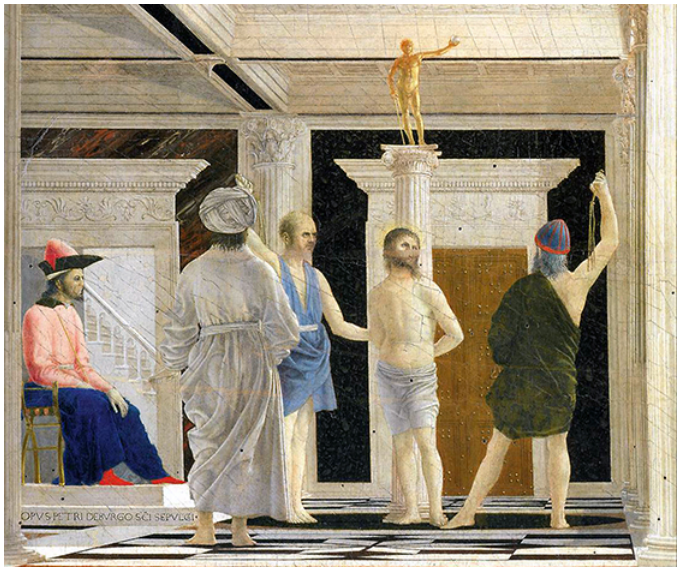


Figure **13.7.4.110**: Christ tied to a column, being flogged by two men (detail), Piero della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*, c. 1455-65, oil and tempera on wood, 58.4 × 81.5 cm (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino)

Still another interpretation suggests that the key to understanding the painting lay in the lost inscription on the frame, which putatively said, "Convenerunt in unum," or "They come into one." This is a line from the Bible that was traditionally read each year on Good Friday, the day that commemorates Christ's Passion. "They" would refer then to the Sanhedrinists, or councilmen of Israel, who were present during Christ's suffering. In this way of looking at the panel, Piero did not include a contemporary political message, but rather painted a narrative that is true to the text, and depicts exactly what it purports to, the flagellation of Christ.

No definitive interpretation

The enigmatic nature of Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation* underscores the fact that works of art, regardless of their age, continue to engender interesting art historical research. In the case of this painting, it is unlikely that a definitive interpretation will ever be accepted, as there is little documentation to support a single argument. Perhaps this ambiguity is partially why the painting continues to intrigue, and, almost 600 years later, grants multiple entry points to the viewer, drawing him into Piero's fictional world.

Additional resources:

R. Wittkower and B. A. R. Carter, "The Perspective of Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 16, no. 3/4 (1953), pp. 292-302.

Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation*: The Triumph of Christian Glory, *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Dec., 1968), pp. 321-342.

Ludovico Borgo, "Piero della Francesca's Flagellation: The Figures in the Foreground" *The Burlington Magazine*,vol. 121, no. 918 (Sep., 1979), pp. 546-553+557.

Ludovico Borgo, New Questions for Piero's *Flagellation*, The Burlington Magazine, vol. 121, no. 918 (Sep., 1979), pp. 546-553+557.

Joseph Hoffman, Piero della Francesca's "*Flagellation*". A Reading from Jewish History, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 44. Bd., H. 4 (1981), pp. 340-357.

Piero della Francesca, *Resurrection*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Figure **13.7.4.111**: Piero della Francesca, *The Resurrection*, c. 1463-65, fresco, 225 x 200 cm (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy)

Saved from destruction

Although Da Vinci's *Last Supper* is perhaps the most famous fresco that was nearly destroyed during World War II, the people of the Italian town Sansepolcro in Tuscany contend that they, in fact, hold the most important work spared in the war. For this, they can thank commanding British artillery officer and great appreciator of art, Tony Clarke, who was supposed to raze the city, but defied orders—having read Aldous Huxley's comment that Sansepolcro was home to the best painting in the world. Huxley, of course, was referring to Piero della Francesca's famed fresco, *The Resurrection*.

A relic of the holy sepulcher

Piero painted this fresco around 1463 in the civic hall of Sansepolcro, which had been occupied by the Florentines but was recently returned (the Italian city-states were often at war). The subject matter then—the triumphant Christ arising from his tomb the third day after his death—may be a reference to the triumph of the town itself, which was named after the Holy Sepulcher (Sansepolcro in Italian, and the Holy Sepulcher is the tomb that Christ was buried in). The presence of the large stone in the lower right hand corner of the fresco supports this, as it possibly represents the relic of the sepulcher (the burial place, in this case of Christ) putatively brought to Sansepolcro by the saints who founded the town, Arcano and Egidio.



Figure 13.7.4.112: Piero della Francesca, *The Resurrection*, c. 1463-65, fresco, 225 x 200 cm (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy)

An interest in more than naturalism

Unlike other paintings by Piero (*The Flagellation* for example), *The Resurrection* is less interesting iconologically than it is formally; that is, art historians are less concerned about what it might mean than what it actually looks like. Although *The Resurrection* is often depicted by having Christ emerge from a cave from which a boulder has been "rolled away," Piero instead chose to show Jesus stepping out of a Roman sarcophagus. In the foreground of the painting, the Roman soldiers ordered to guard the tomb have all fallen asleep. The position of their bodies is quite interesting. The reclining soldier certainly could never actually maintain that pose while sleeping in real life, and his comrade next to him, holding the lance, doesn't even have legs. These two details show that Piero was more concerned about achieving a pleasing composition than being true to life.

Also noteworthy is that, although we know that Piero was the author of a major treatise on perspective and was also a mathematician and geometer, the painting contains two vanishing points (the point at which all the lines of the painting should converge). On one hand, we see the faces of the soldiers from below, but on the other hand, the face of Christ is painted straight on. If the perspective were consistent throughout the painting, we would see all the faces from the same vantage point. Again, Piero has sacrificed realism for effect.



Figure **13.7.4.113**: Piero della Francesca, soldiers (detail), *The Resurrection*, c. 1463-65, fresco, 225 x 200 cm (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy)

A self-portrait?

Perhaps the most striking feature of Piero's fresco is the physical reality of the people he paints. Piero has been lauded as one of the first painters of the Renaissance to capture realistic faces that show emotion. In fact, Giorgio Vasari, the great sixteenth-century art historian and painter, reported that the face of the soldier in brown armor was a self-portrait of Piero. Although there is no way of knowing if this is true—and Vasari is known for not always being accurate—his inclusion of this detail underscores the fact that Piero's human figures are not just made-up "types," but contain a spark of individuality that makes them feel like they are based on observations from real life. This is one of the major differences between Renaissance and Medieval art, and is partly why Piero is considered one of the great early Renaissance painters.



Figure **13.7.4.114**: Piero della Francesca, Christ (detail), *The Resurrection*, c. 1463-65, fresco, 225 x 200 cm (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy)

Geometry and mass

Piero has organized the figures so that an isosceles triangle is formed from the top of Christ's head, through the soldiers, to the lower corners of the paintings. In addition, a tree is placed almost-symmetrically on either side of Jesus. This emphasis on geometric order and harmony is typical of the Renaissance, as best exemplified by paintings such as Raphael's *School of Athens*, and Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

Also characteristic of Piero's work is the mass of the bodies, an effect achieved in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most obvious is the stalwart pose of Christ, who appears anchored to the tomb by both his left leg and the flag in his right hand. At the same time, he seems to actively be using the flagpole and the hand on his knee to raise his other leg out of the tomb. The flexed muscles of his abdomen also emphasize the reality of Christ's body, which is physically engaged despite the serenity of his face.

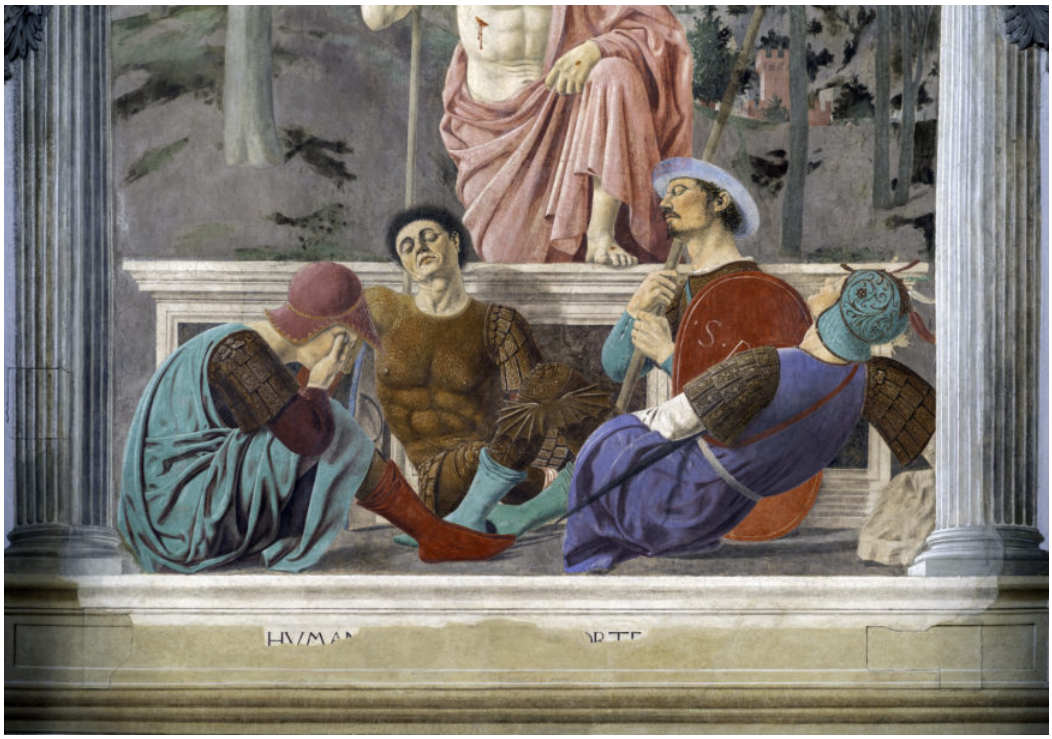


Figure **13.7.4.115**: Piero della Francesca, soldiers (detail), *The Resurrection*, c. 1463-65, fresco, 225 x 200 cm (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy)



Figure **13.7.4.116**: Mary and Christ (detail), Giotto, *Lamentation*, c. 1305, fresco (Arena Chapel, Padua)

The complex positioning of the soldiers' bodies also adds to this feeling of mass. Piero overlaps the men, intertwining their feet, so that they appear to exist in real space. The abdomen of the soldier in brown also echoes that of Christ, lending him an even greater sense of realism. The soldier all the way to the left, whose body is curled almost into a ball and whose face is hidden, is reminiscent of a similar figure in Giotto's *Lamentation*, who is also used at the corner of the painting to anchor the eye and add weight to the composition.

Thanks, Tony

Not many of Piero's paintings have survived, and those that have are scattered around the globe; few are in major museums. However, it is certainly worth the train ride from Florence to see this gem of the early Renaissance. And when you do, be sure to remember to thank Tony Clarke, without whom this painting would have become a pile of dust.

Additional resources:

The Man who Saved the Resurrection from BBC News

James Elkins, "Piero della Francesca and the Renaissance Proof of Perspective," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (June, 1987) , pages. p. 220-230.

Piero's polyhedra

Polyhedra and plagiarism in the Renaissance

Piero della Francesca, *The Resurrection*

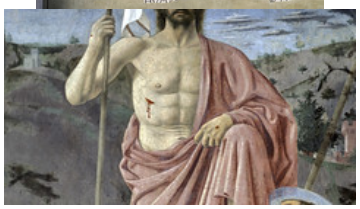
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.4.20**: Piero della Francesca, *The Resurrection*, c. 1470 (fresco, 225 x 200 cm (Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





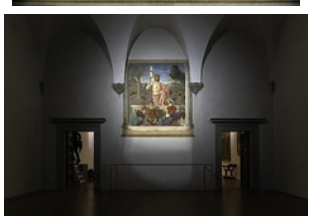














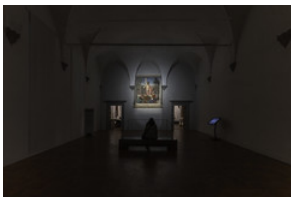





Figure **13.7.4.117**: More Smarthistory images…

Piero della Francesca, *Portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.4.21: Piero della Francesca, *Portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino (Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza)*, 1467-72, tempera on panel, 47 x 33 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Figure 13.7.4.118: Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499-1504, fresco, 23′ wide (San Brizio chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy)

Imagine being confronted by this scene—men and women screaming, their nude bodies contorted in pain as they are tortured by garishly colored demons.



Figure **13.7.4.119**: Naked men and women screaming while being attacked by demons (detail), Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499-1504, fresco, 23′ wide (San Brizio chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy)

Off to the side, a fiery pit awaits these unfortunate souls. Fragmented bodies of those already consigned to the flames are visible through the acrid smoke.



Figure **13.7.4.120**: Three archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, clad in armor, observe as humans and demons tumble through the sky (detail), Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499-1504, fresco, 23′ wide (San Brizio chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy)

Above, demons and humans tumble through the sky. Standing next to them on small clouds are the three archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, fully clad in suits of armors, drawing the swords at their sides. Although you might be wondering, what on earth is going on here—to a fifteenth century viewer it would have been quite obvious.



Figure 13.7.4.121: View into the San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto Cathedral (Italy) (photo: Thomas-Photography, CC BY 2.0)

Painted by Luca Signorelli from 1499 to 1503 in the San Brizio Chapel in the Cathedral in Orvieto, Italy, the fresco represents one part of the End of Days narrative, when Christ returns to judge mankind—and to separate those who will go to heaven (the blessed) from those who will go to hell (the damned). An account of this event is found in the Gospel of Matthew (25:31-46), which reads in part:

> ***But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left; Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world… Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels;…These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.***

In this passage the sheep are the faithful who have followed Christ in a sin-free life and the goats were those who did not. This subject was a popular visual means of illustrating the rewards and punishments that awaited the lay person at the end of time. It was most often depicted in a single composition, such as in Giotto's *Last Judgment* fresco in the Arena Chapel.



Figure **13.7.4.122**: Giotto, *Last Judgment*, c. 1305, fresco, 1000 x 840 cm (Arena Chapel, Padua, Italy)

Here we see Christ enthroned in the top center, flanked by the Apostles on either side. In the lower portion of the composition are representations of the two sides—the "sheep" and the "goats." On Christ's right hand side (the left side of the viewer) are the Elect, those who have been chosen to go to Heaven, some of whom are still emerging from their tombs, while on his left hand side, we see the Damned, those who have been consigned to the fiery pits of Hell and are being tortured by demons. Giotto's *Last Judgment* was placed over the door into the chapel, thus providing visitors who were leaving a clear visual message.



Figure **13.7.4.123**: The damned being carried across the river to the underworld (detail), Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499-1504, fresco, 23′ wide (San Brizio chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy)

In the case of the San Brizio Chapel, the entire chapel was used to represent this subject, not just one wall, and this was a rather unique situation. The subject was divided into six large, individual scenes including *The Elect being called to Heaven*, the *Resurrection*, the *Deeds of the Antichrist* and the *Apocalypse*. The *Damned* is located next to the altar wall—where we see another fresco, those consigned to Hell being carried across the river to the underworld (above).



Figure **13.7.4.124**: Humans being tortured by demons in the foreground (detail), Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499-1504, fresco, 23′ wide (San Brizio chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy)

One of the most striking aspects of Signorelli's fresco is his representation of the nude figure. In fact, the *Damned*, along with its companion scene of the *Elect* (directly across the chapel on the opposite wall) seem to have been a means for Signorelli to explore the multitude of attitudes and positions possible in the human body. In the *Damned*, the brightly colored demons are pushing, pulling, tying up, and exacting all manner of physical torture on the sinners whose bodies are equally contorted, struggling to break free. The figures are all quite muscular, even hyper-muscular in some cases.

The interest artists had during this period in the study of the human figure was certainly driven, at least in part, by their interest in the classical past. As the Renaissance is the period of the "rebirth" of classical antiquity, artists looked to those exemplars of the past as ideals. For example the contropposto stance of the famous *Doryphorus* statue from Greece influenced most painters and sculptors of the period. There was also a general desire to understand the workings of the human body, and we can definitely perceive such interest in other similar works.

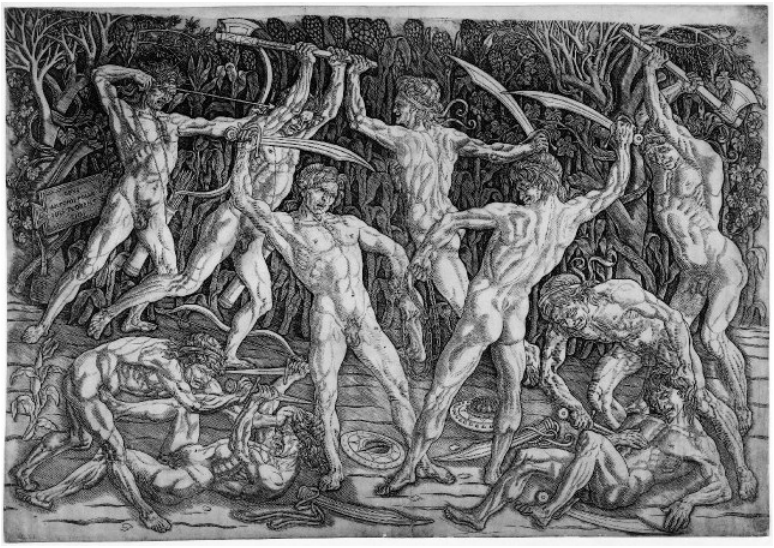


Figure **13.7.4.125**: Antonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of the Nudes*, c. 1470-95, engraving, 41.6 x 59.4 cm (The British Museum)

For example, Antonio Pollaiuolo's large engraving, *The Battle of the Nudes*, is one of the most important works of the period. In it, Pollaiuolo shows ten nude, male figures battling each other in a fantastical landscape. Notice the two men in the foreground are in the same pose, but reversed. This way Pollaiuolo could show both the front and back side of the same position. The other figures in the background assume equally exaggerated poses and dynamic movements, illustrating the flexing of muscles as the body engages in battle. This if very much in line with what Signorelli achieved in his fresco.



Figure **13.7.4.126**: Aristotele da Sangalla, *Battle of Cascina* (after a lost Michelangelo), 1504-06, oil on panel (Holkham Hall, England)

Perhaps the artist most associated with the study of the male nude figure is Michelangelo and it has been suggested by scholars that he may have been influenced by Signorelli's figures in some of his works. And indeed shortly after the completion of the San Brizio chapel, Michelangelo produced one of the most influential works of the period, *The Battle of Cascina*, 1504-06. In this large scale cartoon (a preparatory design for a fresco), which only survives in copies, we see many of the same interests as in Signorelli's *Damned*. Michelangelo presented figures from a variety of different angles and complex positions as the soldiers rise to put on their armor and fight the oncoming enemy. And in both Signorelli's and Michelangelo's works, the artists were also interested in rendering various states of emotion. In both we see several figures with mouths open in exclamation along with general expressions of anxiety and fear.



Figure **13.7.4.127**: Expressions of anguish and fear (detail), Luca Signorelli, *The Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499-1504, fresco, 23′ wide (San Brizio chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy)

In the end, when looking at Signorelli's fresco, it is hard not to be amazed by the sheer volume and mass he was able to achieve in representing the figures three-dimensionally. The acidic coloration of the demons adds to the sense of complete chaos and upheaval. And in the midst of all of this action, we may even see the artist himself. If you look closely at the center of the composition, there is blue demon with a white horn who grabs a woman around her waist, and we see her struggle against her captor. That this is the artist's self-portrait has generally been accepted. What remains unknown is the identity of the woman he grabs although she appears twice more in the fresco…can you find her?

Additional resources:

Ingrid D. Rowland, "When the Antichrist Came to Orvieto," *The New York Review of Books*

Roderick Conway Morris, “The Soaring Legacy of Luca Signorelli,” *NY Times*

Sculpture and architecture

Filippo Brunelleschi and Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Sacrifice of Isaac*

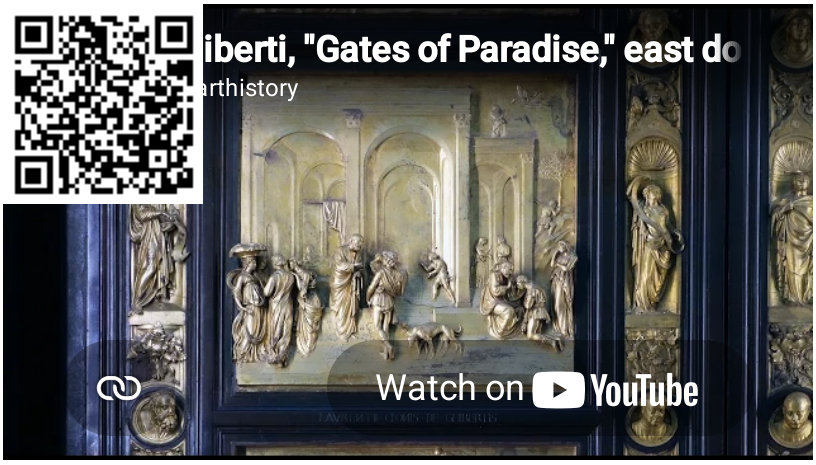
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.4.22**: Filippo Brunelleschi and Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, competition panels for the second set of bronze doors for the Florence Baptistery, 1401-2

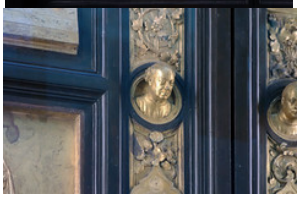
Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Gates of Paradise*, East Doors of the Florence Baptistery

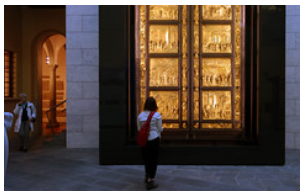
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

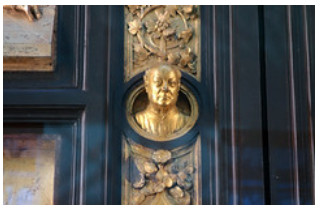
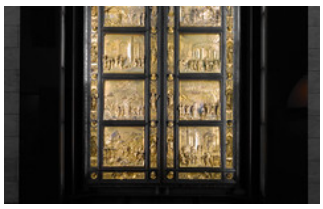


Video **13.7.4.23**: Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Gates of Paradise*, East Doors of the Florence Baptistery, bronze, 1425-52

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88723

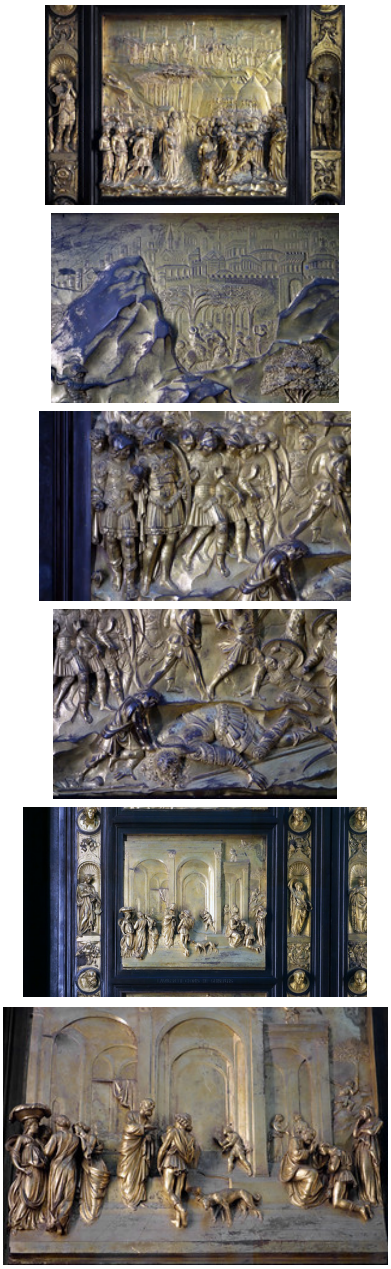


Figure 13.7.4.128: More Smarthistory images…

Filippo Brunelleschi

Brunelleschi, Old Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence

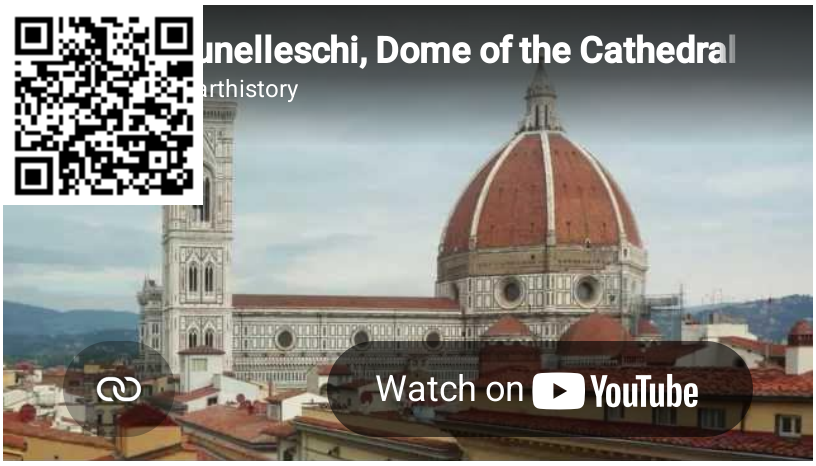
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.24: Brunelleschi, Old Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence, begun c. 1421

Filippo Brunelleschi, Dome of the Cathedral of Florence

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.25: Filippo Brunelleschi, Dome of the Cathedral of Florence, 1420-36

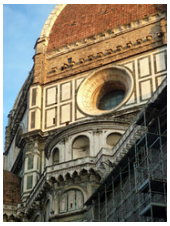
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88723





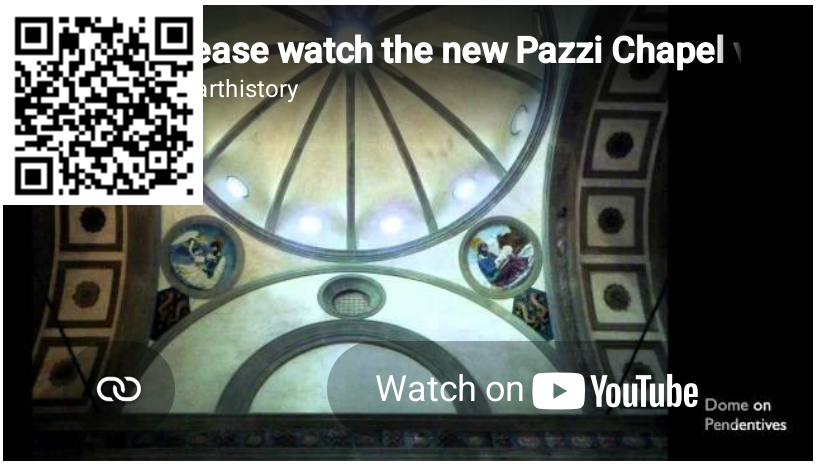




Figure 13.7.4.129: More Smarthistory images…

Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Florence

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.26: Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence, begun 1420s, completed 1460s

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







Dome over Altar, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Pendentive, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Beth on Bench, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Dome and Arches, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Beth by Windows, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Walker: Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Dome, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Reader, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Dome, Filippo Brunelleschi, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

Figure **13.7.4.130**: More Smarthistory images…

Filippo Brunelleschi, Santo Spirito, Florence

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.4.27: Filippo Brunelleschi, Santo Spirito, Florence, 1428-81

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.4.130: More Smarthistory images…

Orsanmichele and Donatello's *Saint Mark*, Florence

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88723



Figure **13.7.4.131**: More Smarthistory images…

Nanni di Banco, *Four Crowned Saints*
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.4.29**: Nanni di Banco, *Four Crowned Saints*, c. 1410-16, marble, figures 6′ high, Orsanmichele, Florence (Italy)

13.7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88723

13.7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II)

Central Italy

Sculpture and architecture

Donatello, *St. Mark*

by DR. DAVID BOFFA



Video **13.7.5.1**: Donatello, *St. Mark*, 1411-13, marble, 93″ (236 cm) (Orsanmichele, Florence). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure **13.7.5.1**: Donatello, *Saint Mark*, 1411-13, marble, 93″ (236 cm) Orsanmichele, Florence (**photo**)

A humorous anecdote

The sixteenth-century artist and art historian Giorgio Vasari gives us a humorous anecdote about Donatello's *Saint Mark*. Supposedly, when the patrons first saw the statue standing on the ground they were displeased with it, but Donatello convinced them to let him install it in its niche, where he would finish working on it. The patrons agreed, the statue was installed, and Donatello covered it up for fourteen days—pretending to work on it but in reality not touching it. When it was finally uncovered, everyone viewed the statue with wonder. The only difference was the installation of the work in its proper context. The artist had included distortions to account for the sculpture being seen from below (in its original location its base would be just above the height of an average person—see image at the bottom of this page). Some of these distortions include a torso and neck that are slightly longer than expected, which would be visually corrected when viewed from below (and the neck is hidden by a flowing beard).

Although Vasari's story is apocryphal, the visual evidence does suggest that Donatello—in this work and others—was keenly interested in viewer perception. This sensitivity to audience and the ability to manipulate his viewers through his works in stone and bronze are part of what makes him such a distinctive figure—and part of why his *Saint Mark* still has the ability to astound us with its power and expressiveness.

This over-life-size marble, carved from a single, shallow block of stone, portrays the evangelist Saint Mark standing on a pillow, holding a book in his left hand, staring intently into the distance. Rendering a convincingly soft pillow in marble is a testament to the sculptor's mastery of the material (and perhaps a reference to the patrons, which we'll get to later).

Apart from this gaze, his face is defined by a long, intricately carved beard whose wavy curves reach down to the base of his neck. The rich folds of the toga he wears convey the expressiveness of fabric—bunching up at his waist, for instance, and falling

dramatically around his legs—while also responding to and suggesting the body underneath. Note, for example, how his left knee—slightly forward—pulls at the garment, and how even when the fabric is piled up, as it is on his hip, it manages to convey the body's physicality. Consider the extraordinary skill in turning hard stone into something that looks like soft, malleable fabric.



Figure 13.7.5.2: Donatello, *Saint Mark*, 1411-13, marble, 93 inches / 236 cm (Orsanmichele, Florence) (photo: courtesy Dr. Sarah Wilkins)

Contrapposto

Saint Mark's stance is classic **contrapposto**—an Italian word loosely translated as "contrasted" or "opposed" and that refers to a naturalistic way of portraying the human form that originated in ancient Greece. Saint Mark supports his weight primarily on his right leg, a point emphasized by the strong vertical lines of the toga over that leg—lines that seem to mimic the fluting on Greek and Roman columns. The saint's hips are at a slight angle and his left leg, bent at the knee as though about to step forward, is far more relaxed. His upper body is the opposite: the left arm is engaged in holding his book—a reference to his status as one of the authors of the Gospels—while his right arm hangs loosely at his side. The slight curve to the body, and the use of both active and relaxed elements, gives the figure an easy, natural gracefulness that reflects how a human would actually stand, and makes it appear as though the saint is caught in the act of stepping out of his niche.

All of these formal elements—the scale, the expressive carving, the interest in the body, the contrapposto—are aspects we have come to associate as new developments in the art of the Early Italian Renaissance.

The commission and setting



Figure **13.7.5.3**: Reproduction of Donatello's *St. Mark* (1411-13, the original is now in the museum inside) in its original location in a niche at Orsanmichele, Florence, 1349 loggia (1380-1404 upper stories) (photo: **Shirley de Jong**, CC BY-NC 2.0)



Figure **13.7.5.4**: Face (detail), Donatello, *Saint Mark*, 1411-13, marble, 93 inches / 236 cm (Orsanmichele, Florence) (photo: courtesy Dr. Sarah Wilkins)

Donatello's commission for *Saint Mark* was part of a broader campaign to adorn the exterior of **Orsanmichele** in Florence, Italy. Orsanmichele is and was a building with both civic and religious importance for Florentine citizens. Though constructed in part as a grain warehouse and used as such for decades, Orsanmichele was also a significant site of pilgrimage and religious devotion, due to the presence of a miracle-working image of the Virgin and Child. Plans to decorate the exterior of the building date back to 1339, when the Silk Guild (the *Arte della Seta*, then known as the *Arte di Por Santa Maria*) proposed that they and the other major guilds of Florence adorn the external piers of the building with tabernacles (or niches) and life-sized (or bigger) sculptures of saints. The project was slow to get off the ground—only a few works were completed before it came to a stop—but it was revived in the early

fifteenth century. At this point, the city government legislated that the guilds had to decorate their tabernacles within ten years or give up their rights to do so.



Figure **13.7.5.5**: St, Mark (reproduction), in his original location, Orsanmichele, Florence, 1349 loggia (1380-1404 upper stories) (photo: **Stefan Bauer**, CC BY-SA 2.5)

Orsanmichele was so important to the city that a guild's ability to commission an artwork for it was considered an honor—if an expensive one. Although the legislation wasn't strictly enforced, it did inspire a flurry of activity and commissions around Orsanmichele—of which Donatello's *Saint Mark* was one example, commissioned by the Linen Weavers' Guild (the *Arte dei Linaiuoli*). Other noteworthy sculptures from this period include Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Saint John the Baptist*, c. 1414 and Saint Matthew, c. 1420, **Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Saints***, c. 1415, and Donatello's *Saint George*, c. 1415.

The Orsanmichele projects provided an opportunity for the guilds to compete with each other, each one commissioning a more luxurious or impressive sculpture. Competition of all sorts—between patrons, artists, even art forms themselves—is a consistent theme of the Renaissance, and in the opening years of the fifteenth century this was on display as guilds vied for public attention and praise via their Orsanmichele commissions. For example, the Cloth Merchants' Guild (the *Arte di Calimala*) commissioned Ghiberti's *Saint John the Baptist* in bronze rather than marble—a far more costly decision intended to show off the guild's wealth and outdo its rivals.

Unfortunately, all of the original statues on Orsanmichele—fourteen works—have been placed in either the building's museum or the Bargello museum. The sculptures in the niches are copies. The result is that we can now view Donatello's *Saint Mark* at ground level—exactly as he did not intend it to be viewed!

The artist

Donatello—whose full name was Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi—was born around 1386 in Florence to a middle-class family. He probably trained as a goldsmith as a young man, and eventually spent some time with two of the most important artists of the fifteenth century: Filippo Brunelleschi and Lorenzo Ghiberti. He went with the former to Rome in the opening years of the century, and he spent time in Ghiberti's workshop from about 1404 to 1407.

By the time of the *Saint Mark* commission, Donatello had already completed or was at work on several other notable public sculptures, including his marble ***David*** (1408-9), *Saint John the Baptist* (1408-15), and *Saint George* (c. 1410-15, also for Orsanmichele). These early works—especially *Saint John*—already exhibit some of the hallmarks of Donatello's style, including a realism informed by Classical (ancient Greek and Roman) art and a certain psychological intensity. In subsequent decades he

would execute original monuments that later generations have come to view as landmarks in Renaissance art: these include the bronze relief of the ***Feast of Herod*** for the baptismal font in Siena's baptistery (c. 1425); the ***Equestrian Monument of Gattamelata*** in Padua (c. 1450, the earliest surviving Renaissance equestrian monument); and the *Judith and Holofernes* (c. 1460), now in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. These works had an impact not only on his peers but on later sculptors, as well—including on Michelangelo, who can be considered the High Renaissance artistic heir to Donatello. Thanks to a career that spanned over sixty years of activity (Donatello lived until 1466) and that resulted in radical works for major cultural and artistic centers—including Florence, Siena, Padua, and Rome—Donatello became an artist whose fame and impact equaled if not surpassed that of his teachers.

Additional resources:

Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (1550) on Donatello

Donatello on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Donatello, *Saint George*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.5.2**: Donatello, *Saint George*, c. 1416–17, marble (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, commissioned by the armorers and sword makers guild for the exterior of Orsanmichele)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

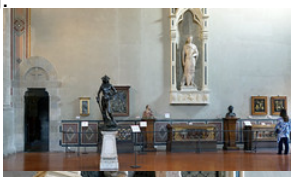













Figure **13.7.5.6**: More Smarthistory images…

Donatello, *Feast of Herod*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.5.3**: Donatello, *Feast of Herod*, panel on the baptismal font of Siena Cathedral, Siena, Italy, Gilded bronze, 1423-27

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

Detail of Herod and Head Of John, Donatello, Feast of Herod











Detail of Salome, Donatello, Feast of Herod



Detail of Table and Floor, Donatello, Feast of Herod



Detail of Architecture, Donatello, Feast of Herod



Figure **13.7.5.7**: More Smarthistory images…

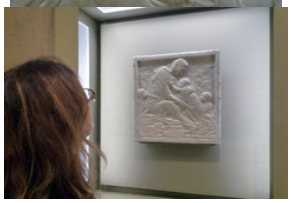
Donatello, *Madonna of the Clouds*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.5.4**: Donatello, *Madonna of the Clouds*, c. 1425–35, marble, 33.1 x 32 cm / 13 1/16 x 12 5/8 inches (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure **13.7.5.8**: More Smarthistory images…

Donatello, *David*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.5.5**: Donatello, *David*, bronze, late 1420s to the 1460s, likely the 1440s (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence)

The following is a conversation about Donatello's *David* between Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker:

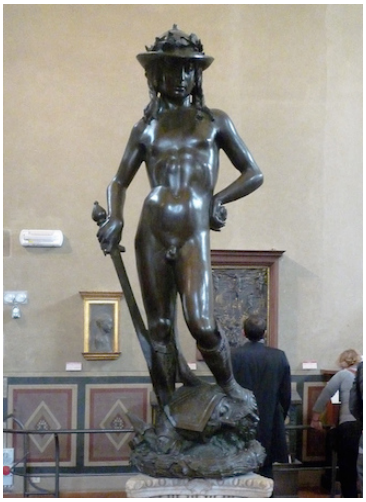


Figure **13.7.5.9**: Donatello, *David*, c. 1440, bronze, 158 cm (Museo Nazionale de Bargello, Florence)

SZ: Seeing Donatello's David in the Bargello in Florence makes me realize just how different it is from the later, more famous version of *David* by Michelangelo. It feels so much more intimate and so much less public.

BH: Well, it is MUCH smaller! After all, this one is only about five feet tall—that's a few inches shorter than me. And Michelangelo's *David* is more than three times this size!

SZ: Because of the small size, and perhaps also because of the warm tones of the bronze, this sculpture seems so immediate and beautiful and vulnerable.

BH: Yes, and of course, Michelangelo's marble sculpture WAS a public sculpture—it was meant to go in a niche high up in one of the buttresses of the Cathedral of Florence, commissioned by the Office of Works for the Cathedral. We don't know who

commissioned Donatello's *David*, but we do know that it was seen in the courtyard of the Medici Palace in Florence, a much more private and intimate setting.

SZ: This intimacy is not simply a result of the nudity, but also of the emotional experience Donatello renders through the face and even the stance of the body—and it's so unexpected in the telling of the story of David and Goliath! I would expect rather a triumphal victorious figure, maybe holding the sword and the enemy's severed head aloft… Instead, here is a thoughtful, quiet, contemplative face.

BH: I don't know, he doesn't look so contemplative to me—instead he seems proud of his victory over the giant Goliath—which is strange since the story is very much about how David defeats Goliath because he has God's help—he doesn't do it on his own!

SZ: Really? Look at his calm, downcast eyes… the lids are half closed. That is not the usual expression of victory. Note that the facial muscles are totally relaxed, the mouth is lightly closed though there is the slightest hint of a smile—and yes, that is subtle pride, but to me this is the face of interior thought not exterior boasting. It's as if he is coming to terms with the events that have taken place, including God's intervention, here Donatello foreshadows the wisdom that will define his later reign as king.



Figure **13.7.5.10**: Goliath's head (detail), Donatello, *David*, c. 1440, bronze, 158 cm (Museo Nazionale de Bargello, Florence)

BH: Fair enough, perhaps it's primarily his pose that speaks of pride to me. The relaxed contrapposto and the placement of his left hand nonchalantly on his hip feels to me like confidence and pride. His right hand holds the sword that he used to cut off Goliath's head, which we see below, resting on a victory wreath. The gruesome head seems to conflict with the sensuality and beauty of the young David.

SZ: Agreed. There is a certain swagger in that stance and the horrific contrast to the head of Goliath is wild and unnerving. But the contrapposto is also Donatello's swagger, the sculptor's rendering of David offers the most complete expression of this natural stance since antiquity. We know he was studying ancient Roman art with his friends, Masaccio and Brunelleschi and it's worth noting that he reclaims more than just the classical knowledge of contrapposto, he has also reclaimed the large-scale bronze casting of the ancient world. It must have been such an extraordinary revelavation for a culture that until this moment, had not seen human-scaled bronze figures.

BH: It IS amazing how Donatello, after a thousand years, reclaims the ancient Greek and Roman interest in the nude human body. Of course, artists in the middle ages, a period when the focus was on God and the soul, rarely represented the nude. Donatello does so here with amazing confidence, you're right. In fact, this is the first free-standing nude figure since classical antiquity, and when you consider that, this achievement is even more remarkable! But let's face it, there's an undeniable sensuality here that almost makes us forget that we're looking at an old testament subject.

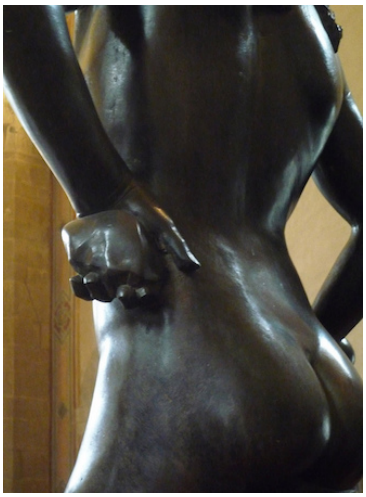


Figure **13.7.5.11**: Torso and left hand (detail), Donatello, *David*, c. 1440, bronze, 158 cm (Museo Nazionale de Bargello, Florence)

SZ: Right, Donatello's figure of David is almost too sensuous for the subject being represented. In some sense this isn't really a Biblical representation at all; Donatello seems to have used the excuse of the boy who eschews armor in order to represent not the Judaic tradition but instead the ancient Greek and Roman regard for the beauty of the human body and he uses the classical technique of lost wax to cast the form. Then, just like the Greeks and Romans, he worked the bronze to smooth the seams and the surface and to cut in details such as in the hair.

BH: I think it's important to stress that this figure is free-standing. Sculpted figures have finally been detached from architecture and are once again independent in the way they were in ancient Greece and Rome. And because he's free-standing, he is more human, more real. He seems able to move in the world, and of course the contrapposto does that too. It's easy to imagine this figure in the Medici palace garden, surrounded by the ancient Greek and Roman sculpture that they were also collecting. I wish I could go back in time to Florence in the 1400s, to this remarkable moment, to witness the rebirth of Humanism.

SZ: I'd love to meet the artists and thinkers of the era but am not at all sure that I would find their world hospitable. Disease, want, cruelty, and a permanent hierarchy among social strata defined the period—not to mention the terrible position women found themselves in. You can go, I'll stay here in the 21st century thank you!

BH: Like David, Florence was the underdog that withstood repeated attacks from Milan and yet, like young David, thanks to God's favor, Florence was victorious (or at least that's how the Florentines interpreted these events!). And as a result, many Florentine artists will tackle this subject.

SZ: True, and each one will have to grapple with Donatello's great achievement.

David and Goliath



Figure **13.7.5.12**: Donatello, David, c. 1440, bronze, 158 cm (Museo Nazionale de Bargello, Florence)

The subject of this sculpture is David and Goliath, from the Old Testament. According to the story, Israel (the descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) is threatened by Goliath, a "giant of a man, measuring over nine feet tall. He wore a bronze helmet and

a coat of mail that weighed 125 pounds." Goliath threatened the Israelites and demanded that they send someone brave enough to fight him. But the entire Israelite army is frightened of him. David, a young shepherd boy, asserts that he is going to fight the giant, but his father says, "There is no way you can go against this Philistine. You are only a boy, and he has been in the army since he was a boy!" But David insists that he can face Goliath and claims he has killed many wild animals who have tried to attack his flock, "The LORD who saved me from the claws of the lion and the bear will save me from this Philistine!" They try to put armor on David for the fight, but he takes it off. David faces Goliath and says to him,"You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD Almighty—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." David kills Goliath with one stone thrown from his sling into Goliath's forehead. Then he beheads Goliath.

The people of Florence identified themselves with David—they believed that (like him) they defeated their enemy (the Duke of Milan) with the help of God.

Additional resources:

David by Donatello, Palazzo Medici

Monumental Sculpture from Renaissance Florence: Ghiberti, Nanni di Banco, and Verrocchio at Orsanmichele, National Gallery of Art

Donatello's *David*, Dr. Allen Farber

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

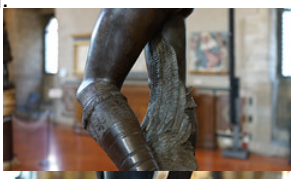
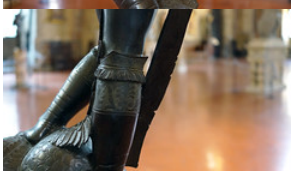













Figure **13.7.5.13**: More Smarthistory images…

Donatello, *Equestrian Monument of Gattamelata*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.5.6**: Donatello, *Equestrian Monument of Gattamelata (Erasmo da Narni)*, 1445-53, bronze, 12′ 2″ high, Piazza del Santo, Padua

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

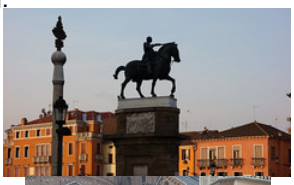
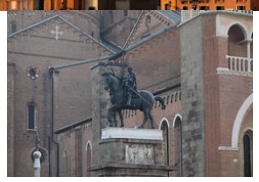












Figure **13.7.5.14**: More Smarthistory images…

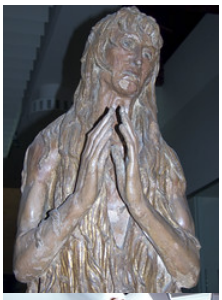
Donatello, *Mary Magdalene*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

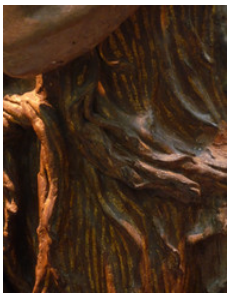


Video **13.7.5.7**: Donatello, *Mary Magdalene*, c. 1455, wood, 188 cm (Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724

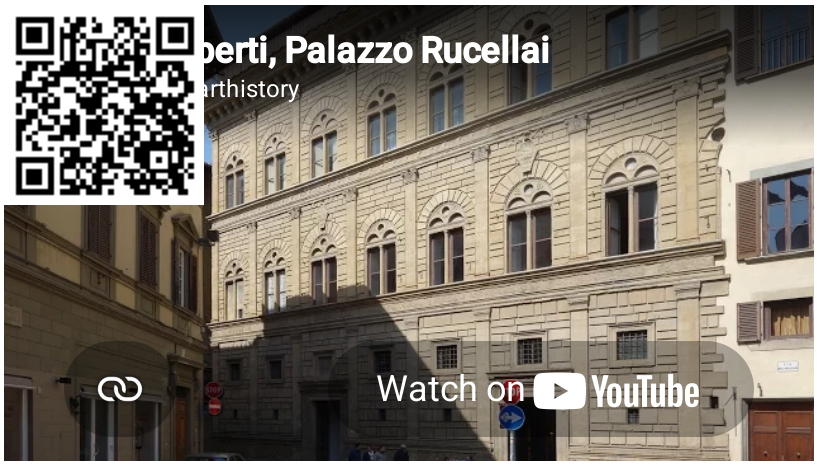


Figure 13.7.5.15: More Smarthistory images…

Leon Battista Alberti

Leon Battista Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Video 13.7.5.8: Leon Battista Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai, c. 1446-51, Florence (Italy)

Humanist architecture for a private home



Figure 13.7.5.16: Leon Battista Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai, c. 1446-5, Florence (Italy)

By 1450, the skyline of Florence was dominated by Brunelleschi's dome. Although Brunelleschi had created a new model for church architecture based on the Renaissance's pervasive philosophy, Humanism, no equivalent existed for private dwellings.

In 1446, Leon Battista Alberti, whose texts *On Painting* and *On Architecture* established the guidelines for the creation of paintings and buildings that would be followed for centuries, designed a façade that was truly divorced from the medieval style, and could finally be considered quintessentially Renaissance: the Palazzo Rucellai. Alberti constructed the façade of the Palazzo over a period

of five years, from 1446-1451; the home was just one of many important commissions that Alberti completed for the Rucellais—a wealthy merchant family.



Figure 13.7.5.17: Leon Battista Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai, c. 1446-51, Florence (Italy) (photo: John Galanti, CC BY 2.0)

Three tiers

Like traditional Florentine palazzi, the façade is divided into three tiers. But Alberti divided these with the horizontal entablatures that run across the facade (an entablature is the horizontal space above columns or pliasters). The first tier grounds the building, giving it a sense of strength. This is achieved by the use of cross-hatched, or rusticated stone that runs across the very bottom of the building, as well as large stone blocks, square windows, and portals of post and lintel construction in place of arches.

The overall horizontality of this façade is called “trabeated” architecture, which Alberti thought was most fitting for the homes of nobility. Each tier also decreases in height from the bottom to top. On each tier, Alberti used pilasters, or flattened engaged columns, to visually support the entablature. On the first tier, they are of the Tuscan order. On the second and third tiers, Alberti used smaller stones to give the feeling of lightness, which is enhanced by the rounded arches of the windows, a typically Roman feature. Both of these tiers also have pilasters, although on the second tier they are of the Ionic order, and on the third they are Corinthian. The building is also wrapped by benches that served, as they do now, to provide rest for weary visitors to Florence.

The Palazzo Rucellai actually had four floors: the first was where the family conducted their business; the second floor, or piano nobile, was where they received guests; the third floor contained the family’s private apartments; and a hidden fourth floor, which had few windows and is invisible from the street, was where the servants lived.



Figure 13.7.5.18: Alberti (?), Loggia Rucellai (now glassed in), Florence (Italy) (photo: Sailko)

The loggia

In addition to the façade, Alberti may have also designed an adjacent loggia (a covered colonnaded space) where festivities were held. The loggia may have been specifically built for an extravagant 1461 wedding that joined the Rucellai and Medici families. It repeats the motif of the pilasters and arches found on the top two tiers of the palazzo. The loggia joins the building at an irregularly placed, not central, courtyard, which was probably based on Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti.

The influence of ancient Rome



Figure **13.7.5.19**: Arnolfo di Cambio (initial design), Palazzo Vecchio, 13th and 14th centuries, Florence (Italy)

In many ways, this building is very similar to the Colosseum, which Alberti saw in Rome during his travels in the 1430s. The great Roman amphitheater is also divided into tiers. More importantly, it uses architectural features for decorative purposes rather than structural support; like the engaged columns on the Colosseum, the pilasters on the façade of the Rucellai do nothing to actually hold the building up. Also, on both of these buildings, the order of the columns changes, going from least to most decorative as they acend from the lowest to highest tier.

The Palazzo Rucellai has many features in common with the Palazzo Medici (below), which was constructed a few years before, not far from Alberti's building. The Palazzo Medici is also divided into three horizontal planes that decrease in heaviness from bottom to top.

But there are subtle differences that betray the intents of the patrons. The bottom tier of the Palazzo Medici, built for Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici by Michelozzo, resembles the stone of the Palazzo Vecchio (left), the seat of political power of Florence, with which Cosimo intentionally wanted to associate himself. It also employs the same type of windows.



Figure **13.7.5.20**: Michelozzo, Palazzo Medici, 1445-60, Florence (Italy)

Because Michelozzo used this medieval building as a model, whereas Alberti looked to ancient Rome, the Palazzo Medici is not truly Humanist in its conception and lacks the geometric proportion, grace, and order of the Palazzo Rucellai. The top tier of the Palazzo Medici is almost entirely plain, whereas Alberti continued to use architectural features for ornamentation throughout his design.

The main difference between the Palazzo Rucellai and other palazzi was Alberti's reliance on ancient Rome. This may have reflected Giovanni Rucellai's pretensions for his family. Rome was the seat of the papacy, and though Rucellai was not a cleric, he claimed to have descended from a Templar. The Palazzo Rucellai went on to influence the design for the homes of many clerics, such as the famous Palazzo Piccolomini that was built for Pope Pius II in Pienza by Bernardo Rossellino.

Text by Christine Zappella

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure **13.7.5.21**: More Smarthistory images…

Alberti, Façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

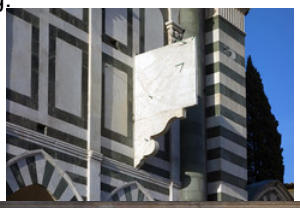


Video **13.7.5.9**: Alberti, Façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1470.
Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

Architecture in Renaissance Italy on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure 13.7.5.22: More Smarthistory images…

Leon Battista Alberti, Sant'Andrea in Mantua

by DR. HEATHER HORTON



Figure 13.7.5.23: Leon Battista Alberti, Basilica of Sant'Andrea, 1472-90, Mantua (Italy) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC: BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Mantua's relic

In the fifteenth century, pilgrims flocked to the Basilica of Sant'Andrea to venerate the most famous relic in the city of Mantua: drops of Christ's blood collected at the Crucifixion, or so the faithful believed. In fact, the church Sant'Andrea was erected to accommodate the huge crowds that arrived on holy days and who, in turn, helped fund its construction. Today, art historians admire Sant'Andrea's Early Renaissance design for elegantly bringing the grandeur of ancient architecture into a Christian context.

Who built that?

Sant'Andrea is built of bricks, though they are mostly concealed by painted stucco. The patron, Ludovico Gonzaga, estimated that at least two million bricks were needed. The bricks were baked in onsite kilns, making the church far less expensive and faster to erect than a building made with stone, which had to be quarried, transported, and finished.



Figure 13.7.5.24: Andrea Mantegna, detail of Ludovico Gonzaga, Camera degli Sposi, 1465-74, fresco, Ducal Palace, Mantua

Gonzaga was the Marquis of Mantua—and in addition to employing Alberti, he appointed Andrea Mantega as court artist. His portrait is featured in the frescos Mantegna painted in the Camera degli Sposi (also known as the Camera Picta), in the Marquis' palace.

The sections of the building constructed in the Fifteenth Century, including the Western façade and the nave up to the transept, are usually attributed to the humanist and architect Leon Battista Alberti, even though he died in Rome a few months before construction began in June 1472. Alberti was an expert on all things ancient and he wrote the first Renaissance architectural treatise.

Alberti probably made a model to explain his design and he definitely sent Gonzaga a drawing (now lost), and a short description of his plan in a letter dated 1470. Despite this, it is uncertain how much of the building follows Alberti's design, how much comes from the Florentine architect Luca Fancelli who directed construction, and how much should be credited to Gonzaga, who closely supervised the project.

Ancient models

Questions of Sant'Andrea's attribution are important because it is such an ingenious, unified combination of three ancient Roman forms: temple front, triumphal arch, and basilica.



Figure **13.7.5.25**: Photo adapted from **David Nicholls**.

On the façade, four giant pilasters with Corinthian capitals support an entablature and pediment.

Together these elements recall the front of ancient temples, such as the Pantheon in Rome. There is also a grand arch in the center of the façade that is supported, at least visually, by two shorter fluted pilasters. Taken together, the lower façade, with its tall central arch and flanking side doors evoke ancient triumphal arches such as the Arch of Constantine.

Ancient rituals

The center arch extends deep into the facade itself, creating a recessed barrel vault that frames the main entrance to the church. The arch and its coffered barrel vault form a perfect setting for processions of the holy relic and the celebration of Christ's triumph over death. Such spectacles would recall ancient processions where victorious warriors paraded through Rome's triumphal arches.



Figure **13.7.5.26**: Leon Battista Alberti, Basilica of Sant'Andrea, 1472-90, Mantua (Italy) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC: BY-NC-SA 3.0)

When pilgrims pass under the arch and into the nave (the long interior hall), after their eyes adjusted to the purposefully dim, mystical light, they would look up and see a second, much more massive barrel vault, the largest constructed since ancient Rome.



Figure 13.7.5.27: Alberti, barrel vault with painted coffers, Basilica of Sant'Andrea, 1472-90, Mantua (Italy) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC: BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Then, on both sides of the nave they would find three chapels with lower barrel vaults. Surprisingly, there are no side aisles or rows of columns, as at the old St. Peter's in Rome or other early churches like Santa Sabina.



Figure 13.7.5.28: Nave looking west, Alberti, Basilica of Sant'Andrea, 1472-90, Mantua

Sant'Andrea's huge central space and buttressing side chapels strongly resemble the layout of the ancient Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine in the Roman forum (below). The basilica plan is perfectly suited to large churches since it could accommodate massive crowds. But unlike earlier basilica-plan churches, Sant'Andrea's plan seems to return more strictly to the ancient forms.



Figure **13.7.5.29**: Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine, 308-312 C.E., Roman Forum, Rome

It's even possible that Sant'Andrea's unusual plan and all'antica ("after the antique") façade impacted the new St. Peter's and the Church of the Gesù in Rome.

Additional resources:

Architecture in Renaissance Italy on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Northern Italy: Venice, Ferrara, and the Marches

Venetian painting is characterized by deep, rich colors and a strong interest in the effects of light.

1400 - 1500

Beginner's guide: Venice in the 15th century

Venice is a cluster of islands, connected by bridges and canals.

1400 - 1500

Venice was a very wealthy city, with a strong merchant class that helped shape its culture. Ships from the East brought luxurious, exotic pigments, while traders from Northern Europe imported the new technique of oil painting. Since oil dries slowly, the colors could be blended together to achieve subtle gradations.

Venetian art, an introduction

by DR. HEATHER HORTON



Figure 13.7.5.30: Saint Mark's Square and the Doge's Palace seen from the water, Venice (Italy) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Venice – another world

Petrarch, the fourteenth-century Tuscan poet, called Venice a "mundus alter" or "another world," and the city of canals really is different from other Renaissance centers like Florence or Rome.

Venice is a cluster of islands, connected by bridges and canals, and until the mid ninteenth century the only way to reach the city was by boat. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Venice suffered numerous outbreaks of the plague and engaged in major wars, such as the War of the League of Cambrai. But it also boasted a stable republican government led by a Doge (meaning "Duke" in the local dialect), wealth from trade, and a unique location as a gateway between Europe and Byzantium.

The Venetian Style



Figure 13.7.5.31: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16′ 5-1/2″ x 7′ 9″ (San Zaccaria, Venice) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Painting in Early and High Renaissance Venice is largely grouped around the Bellini family: Jacopo, the father, Giovanni and Gentile, his sons, and Andrea Mantegna, a brother-in-law. Giorgione may have trained in the Bellini workshop and Titian was apprenticed there as a boy.

The Bellinis and their peers developed a particularly Venetian style of painting characterized by deep, rich colors, an emphasis on patterns and surfaces, and a strong interest in the effects of light.



Figure 13.7.5.32: Saint Mark's Basilica, Venice, begun 1063, Middle Byzantine

While Venetian painters knew about linear perspective and used the technique in their paintings, depth is just as often suggested by gradually shifting colors and the play of light and shadow. Maybe Venetian painters were inspired by the glittering gold mosaics and atmospheric light in the grand Cathedral of San Marco, founded in the 11th century? Or maybe they looked to the watery cityscape and the shifting reflections on the surfaces of the canals?

Oil paint

The Venetian trade networks helped to shape local painting practices. Ships from the East brought luxurious, exotic pigments, while traders from Northern Europe imported the new technique of oil painting. Giovanni Bellini combined the two by the 1460's-70's. In the next few decades, oil paint largely supplanted tempera, a quick-drying paint bound by egg yolk that produced a flat, opaque surface. (Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* is one example of tempera paint, which you can **learn more about here**).



Figure 13.7.5.33: Giorgione, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1505/1510, oil on panel, 35 3/4 x 43 1/2″ / 90.8 x 110.5 cm (National Gallery of Art)

To achieve deep tones, Venetian painters would prepare a panel with a smooth white ground and then slowly build up layer-upon-layer of oil paint. Since oil dries slowly, the colors could be blended together to achieve subtle gradations. (See this effect in the rosy flush of the *Venus of Urbino's* cheeks by Titian or in the blue-orange clouds in Giorgione's *Adoration of the Shepherds*—above). Plus, when oil paint dries it stays somewhat translucent. As a result, all of those thin layers reflect light and the surface shines. Painting conservators have even found that Bellini, Giorgione, and Titian added ground-up glass to their pigments to better reflect light.



Figure **13.7.5.34**: Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*, c. 1570, oil on canvas, 197.5 x 115.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Over the next century Venetian painters pursued innovative compositional approaches, like asymmetry, and they introduced new subjects, such as landscapes and female nudes. The increasing use of pliable canvas over solid wood panels encouraged looser brushstrokes. Painters also experimented more with the textural differences produced by thick versus thin application of paint.

In the Late Renaissance Titian's mastery was rivaled by Tintoretto and Veronese. Each attempted to out-paint the other with increasingly dynamic and sensual subjects for local churches and international patrons. (Phillip II of Spain was particularly enamored with Titian's mythological nudes.) The trio transformed saintly stories into relatable human drama (Veronese's ***The Dream of St. Helena***), captured the wit and wealth of portrait subjects (Titian's *Portrait of a Man*), and interpreted nature through mythological tales (Tintoretto's ***The Origin of the Milky Way***).

Additional resources:

Sacra Conversatione from The National Gallery

Titian on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Madonna of the Pesaro Family from the University of Mary Washington

Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.5.35: More Smarthistory images…

Oil paint in Venice

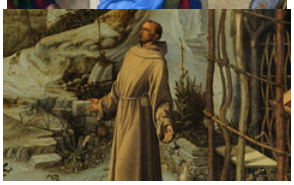
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.5.10: A review of fresco and tempera and the development of the use of oil paint by artists in Venice.

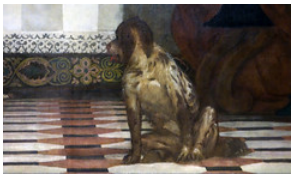
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure **13.7.5.36**: More Smarthistory images…

Ca' d'Oro

by DR. ELLEN HURST



Figure **13.7.5.37**: View of a Venetian canal

Venice, an outlier

When we think of the Italian Renaissance, we think of cities like Florence, Siena, and Milan where artists took an interest in reviving the traditions of classical antiquity. Venice, in contrast, remained something of an outlier. Whereas Florence, Siena, and Milan recalled their Greco-Roman past, Venice looked to its Byzantine history (as part of the eastern Roman Empire), which extended from the classical period up through the more recent medieval era.

Other Italian cities were also embroiled with political unrest even well into the High Renaissance (beginning in the late fifteenth century); rivaling families vied for power, warring for control, and killing or imprisoning their enemies. Venice's more stable political climate and defensible island setting made it different from the other major cities in fifteenth-century Italy.



Figure **13.7.5.38**: Ca' d'Oro, 1422-1440, Venice

Venice's unique position also made for a unique architecture. By the fifteenth century, it was a very wealthy city, with a strong merchant class that helped shape its culture. The city's wealthiest families had the means and desire to build impressive palaces for themselves in the tradition of prominent civic architecture such as the fourteenth-century Palazzo Ducale on St. Mark's Square. These powerful patrons constructed buildings as a way to express their wealth and importance and the Ca' d'Oro (above) is a perfect example.



Figure **13.7.5.39**: Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace), Venice, 1424

House of gold

Bartolomeo and Giovanni Bon are credited with the decoration for the Ca' d'Oro, built for Marin Contarini, of the prominent Contarini family. The building borrows its style from the Palazzo Ducale (the palace of the elected ruler of Venice), albeit on a

smaller scale, but what it loses in size it makes up for in ornamentation. The building was known as the Ca' d'Oro—"House of Gold"—because its façade originally shimmered with gold leaf, which has since faded away. You can't get much more opulent than a golden house! Even with the gold leaf no longer in place, it is still possible to get a good sense of the richness of this gem of a building.

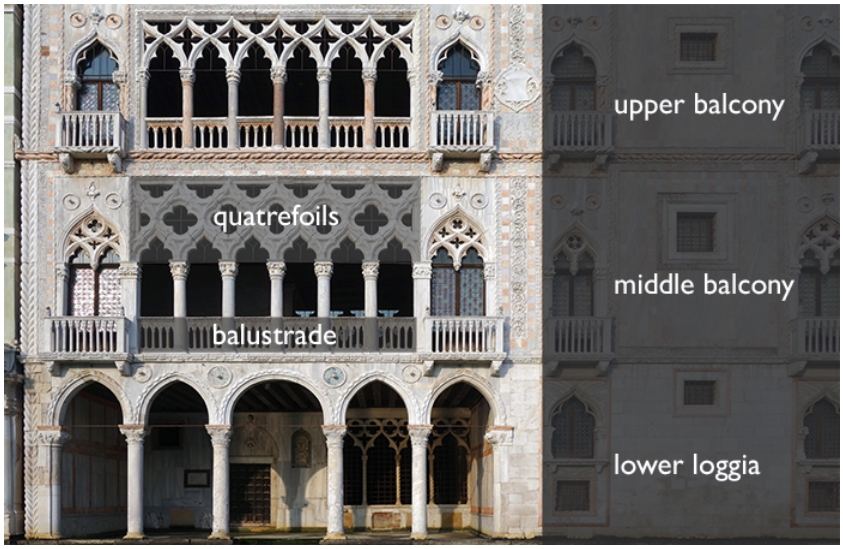


Figure **13.7.5.40**: Ca' d'Oro façade diagram



Figure **13.7.5.41**: Michelozzo, Palazzo Medici, Florence, 1445-60



Figure **13.7.5.42**: Lower loggia, middle and upper balconies, Ca' d'Oro, 1422-1440, Venice

Like the Palazzo Ducale, the Ca' d'Oro is much more open than many of the palaces built in other parts of Italy at this time. Unlike the Palazzo Medici in Florence, for example, the Ca' d'Oro is not fortress-like structure built with massive rusticated stones.

Also like the Palazzo Ducale, it is divided into three distinct stories: a lower loggia (covered corridor) of pointed arches open to the water, a middle balcony with a balustrade (railing) and quatrefoils (four-lobed cutout), and a top balcony with another balustrade and fine stone openwork.

The result is a delicate, ornate building that seems almost like a work of sculpture. Each level of the façade is increasingly ornate and intricate towards the top. The increased ornamentation on each story creates a vertical emphasis; however, that verticality is matched by the equally strong horizontal emphasis provided by the two balustrades on the upper balconies and the large cornice at the roofline.

We also see a precise harmony to the division of space. The lower loggia has a wide arch at its center, which is symmetrically flanked by narrower arches. In the balcony above, two arches fit in the space directly above the wide central arch of the lower loggia.

The arrangement of columns and arches in the upper two balconies perfectly corresponds with one another: column over column, arch over arch. The façade's harmonious arrangement suggests the architects in Venice had similar interests to those of the classicizing architects working in Florence.

Uniquely Venetian

Yet, we cannot describe the Ca' d'Oro simply in terms of Renaissance palace architecture. It is a distinctly Venetian building in its incorporation of Byzantine, Islamic, and Gothic elements. This blending together of architectural styles in a uniquely Venetian style had already occurred in the Palazzo Ducale, but this is perhaps an even better example of that phenomenon.



Figure 13.7.5.43: View from middle balcony, Ca' d'Oro, 1422-1440, Venice

Patterned colored stones, in the tradition of Byzantine architecture, fill the flat wall space of the façade. As in the Palazzo Ducale, the ornamental details on the arcade and balconies combine Islamic and Gothic elements. In the Ca' d'Oro, though, the ornamentation pops because of its intense detail, set within the patterned stone walls. All of the different forms of ornament are combined within the same area of the façade.



Figure 13.7.5.44: Gothic quatrefoils atop columns on second story balcony, Ca' d'Oro, 1422-1440, Venice



Figure **13.7.5.45**: Ca' d'Oro, 1422-1440, Venice

The five Gothic quatrefoils of the second story balcony stand atop slender columns. They stand out as distinct sculptural elements carved on all sides. In the upper balcony, pointed arches borrow from Islamic architecture in their distinct horseshoe shape and from Gothic architecture in their elongated, pointed form. Tracery connects every other column, creating an elegant interwoven effect. Within that interweaving, smaller pointed arches connect neighboring columns to one another, and these arches are multi-lobed, also in the tradition of Islamic architecture. Above each column there is a delicate cutout that mimics the quatrefoils in the level below. The open carving of the upper balconies in fact resembles the ornate screens common in Islamic architecture. This is repeated in the ornamentation of the windows to either side of the balcony on the second story.

In spite of its complexity and its many sources of inspiration, the building is unified and neither over-the-top nor visually chaotic. The Ca' d'Oro's varied elements come together in spectacularly unique fashion. The building embodies a distinct architecture all its own in early Renaissance Venice, one not merely imitative of Byzantium, the Gothic North, or Islam. Venetian architects brought these different elements together in new and surprising ways, making a building such as the Ca' d'Oro tremendously important.

Additional resources:

The Ca' d'Oro Gallery website

This building at the Venetian Ministry of Cultural Heritage

Palazzo Ducale

by DR. ELLEN HURST



Figure **13.7.5.46**: View of St Mark's campanile (left) and Palazzo Ducale (right) from the lagoon, Venice

Venice in the 14th century

Today, we think of Italy as a unified country. But in the fourteenth century, the major urban centers of Italy were largely unstable. Wars were common. Rivaling families sought to oust their opponents—often by violent means—and seize power for themselves. This is why so much civic architecture of the Renaissance period is imposing and fortress-like. Buildings like Florence's Palazzo Vecchio (below)—with its thick, tall walls and defensive crenellations (gaps at the top of the wall for shooting)—were the standard for civic buildings in Italy well into the fifteenth century.



Figure **13.7.5.47**: Arnolfo di Cambio, Palazzo Vecchio, 1299-early 1300s, Florence

Things were different in Venice. The city was politically more stable than other Italian centers, and it was also naturally protected from invasion by its favorable setting in a lagoon on the Adriatic Sea. As a result, Venice's architecture did not need to be as defensive as the architecture of neighboring regions. This allowed for greater experimentation in architectural form evident in the Palazzo Ducale, constructed beginning in 1340, for the elected ruler of Venice.

A new palace for the doge

Fourteenth-century Venice was an oligarchy, meaning that it was ruled by a select group of elite Venetian merchants. The main elected ruler was called the "doge," and his residence was—much like the White House in the United States—a private residence and also a place for official business. Although there was already a residence for Doge Gradenigo in the 1340s, the system of government changed afterwards so that more people were involved in governmental activities. This required more space than was available in the existing palace, the great council (a political body consisting of the nobility) voted to extend the palace. Workers began construction in 1340 and continued into the early part of the fifteenth century.



Figure 13.7.5.48: Palazzo Ducale, 1340 and after, Venice

The Palazzo Ducale sits in a prominent location. It is adjacent to the Basilica of St. Mark (Venice's cathedral church), on St. Mark's Square. The Ducale also overlooks the lagoon, which was a major point of entry into the city. Its prominent location made it (and continues to make it) an important symbol of Venetian architecture. It offered visitors one of their first impressions of the city.

Delightfully open



Figure 13.7.5.50: Lower loggia, second level balcony, and third level, Palazzo Ducale, 1340 and after, Venice

The building appears delightfully open and ornamental precisely because it is able to forego many elements of defensive architecture. The façade includes three levels: a ground-level loggia (covered corridor) defined by an arcade of pointed arches. The second level contains an open balcony which features a prominent balustrade (railing) that divides the first and second stories.
Like the lower loggia, the balcony features pointed arches, though here with the addition of delicate quatrefoils (four-lobed cutouts) just above them.
A stone wall completely encloses the third and uppermost level of the façade and is punctuated by a row of large, pointed windows.

In many respects—especially in its horizontal emphasis and three-story façade—the exterior of the Palazzo Ducale exhibits features that emerged in the Renaissance architecture of Florence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One could argue that this building anticipates those trends. Undoubtedly, in the Palazzo Ducale, we see a degree of the harmony and rhythm that we associate with later Italian Renaissance architecture.



Figure 13.7.5.51: Third level Byzantine patterned stone and second level balcony quatrefoils atop columns, Palazzo Ducale, 1340 and after, Venice

Crossroads of Byzantium, Islam, and Gothic Europe

However, the Palazzo Ducale is actually more representative of the unique position of Venice in the fourteenth century. Venice occupied a geographical location that was inherently defensible, and the city was uniquely situated in terms of its proximity to other cultures. Venice once belonged to the Byzantine Empire (the eastern part of the Roman Empire), but by the fourteenth century, it was an independent republic. Yet, it still had strong cultural and artistic links to Byzantium, partially because Venice was a robust center of trade with the East. The city absorbed many of the traditions of Islamic art and culture by virtue of contact with Islamic traders, artisans, and goods. Similarly, Venice's location at the northern edge of the Italian peninsula meant that it was closer to the Gothic centers of northern Europe than Italian cities farther to the south, such as Florence. It took longer to shake the Gothic habit, so to speak.



Figure 13.7.5.52: Lower loggia pointed arches and second level balcony tripartite lobes and columns, Palazzo Ducale, 1340 and after, Venice

We see the architectural heritage of each of these distinct cultures in the Palazzo Ducale. The upper story of the façade features a diamond pattern of colored stone, a technique that was a hallmark of late Byzantine architecture. The openwork (lattice-like carving) and arcades of the bottom two levels combine Islamic and Gothic influences. Pointed arches and quatrefoils were typical features on Gothic buildings, but the pointed arches bow out beneath their peaks, in the manner of Islamic horseshoe arches. We also see tripartite lobes within the arches of the balcony that resemble a similar trend in Islamic architecture. As a result of its unique cultural and geographic position, fourteenth-century Venetian architecture—as exemplified by the Palazzo Ducale—is a

beautiful hybrid of Byzantine, Islamic, and Gothic cultures, which are all bound together within a blossoming Venetian Renaissance architectural tradition.

Additional resources:

The Palazzo Ducale Museum

A video about the Palazzo Ducale

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.5.53**: More Smarthistory images…

Devotional confraternities (scuole) in Renaissance Venice

by DR. LORENZA SMITH



Figure **13.7.5.54**: Scuola grande di S. Marco e chiesa SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, photo: Mark Edward Smith, by permission © Mark Edward Smith

Venetian Society and the *scuole*

The Republic of Venice lasted for almost one thousand years (from the eighth to the eighteenth century). Its exceptional stability was due not only to its geographical position (in the middle of a protective lagoon) and its effective political system, but also to its social structure and the stabilizing presence of the *scuole*.

The *scuole* were confraternities, or brotherhoods, founded as devotional (religious) institutions, that were set up with the purpose of providing mutual assistance. They provided an important guarantee against poverty and played a crucial role in protecting individuals and families in need. The *scuole* were supported by a tax levied on each member and on the bequests of wealthy brothers. These donations and earnings were then used to help all the members and their families. The *scuole* also depended on the state, which exercised a protective and supervisory role. Each *scuola* had a patron saint and a statute with its own symbols and emblems.

In the fifteenth century, more than two hundred such *scuole* existed, among which six were *scuole grandi* (large *scuole*). By then the initial religious role had shifted to a more civic purpose. The *scuole grandi* included individuals who had diverse occupations and could afford spectacular meeting-houses, while the *scuole piccole* (small *scuole*), could be purely corporate. Even foreigners, in order to overcome the lack of protection by the State, and to strengthen their national or religious identity, founded several *scuole piccole*. These were all dissolved (but one) with the Napoleonic invasion in 1797—the year that marked the end of the Venetian Republic.



Figure **13.7.5.55**: Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (with paintings by Vittore Carpaccio), Venice, photo: Mark Edward Smith, by permission © Mark Edward Smith

Social structure

In Venice there were three distinct social classes:

Patricians

The patricians were drawn from the nobility and were the ruling class. They represented about 5 percent of the population and were the only ones eligible to hold positions at a high political level.

Citizens

The next 5 percent were known as citizens. Citizens were divided into two categories: those who were Venetian by birth and those who became citizens after a lengthy process of naturalization (similar to green card status in the United States). Professionals, employees of the bureaucracy and merchants usually qualified as citizens. Though Citizens did not hold political power, they could exert some influence through the *scuole*, where the most distinguished members held significant positions.

Working class

The working class included artisans, small traders, other workers, and seamen. These people were not necessarily poor, just as the patricians were not necessarily rich. The working class also had their own *scuole*.

The *Teleri*

The *scuole* served an important role in the patronage of Venetian art. Along with altarpieces, they commissioned large narrative painting cycles (*teleri*). The subject matter of the *teleri* (*telero* — singular) was always religious but they also carried secular and civic connotations. The charm of these large paintings lies in the fact that they tell stories that unfold step by step. Because the imagination of the artists and their narrative skill was combined with their patron's instructions—and there are even instances when members of a *scuola* required they were included in the paintings, *teleri* provide a fascinating visual journey that allows us to appreciate and understand Renaissance Venice. What follows are a few outstanding examples with brief descriptions.



Figure **13.7.5.56**: Gentile Bellini, *Procession in St Mark's Square*, 1496, tempera on canvas, 347 x 770 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

Gentile Bellini, *Procession in St Mark's Square*, 1496

The Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista (a large *scuola* dedicated to St. John the Evangelist) commissioned paintings that narrate the miracles made by the relic of the True Cross that was in its possession. This sacred fragment was carried through the streets of the city each year on April 25 for the feast of St. Mark (patron saint of the city). In Venice, processions had great civic and religious meaning; creating continuity season after season, virtually unchanged over time.

This painting, by the great Venetian artist Gentile Bellini, depicts a miracle. In the midst of the procession, in the foreground, is a man in prayer. He is a merchant from Brescia who, having arrived in Venice for business, received the terrible news that his beloved son was in critical condition from a blow to his head. The next day, the man, aware of the powers of the True Cross, went to attend the ceremony, and when the famous relic passed in front of him, he knelt before it as a sign of devotion. When he returned home, he found his child miraculously healed.

The protagonists of the procession are in the foreground: the *scuola's* brothers (members) are dressed in white; the procurators (the office of procurator of St Mark's was the second most prestigious appointment in the Venetian government after that of Doge) and senators of the Republic wear red gowns. The patricians and the citizens wear black. The members of the *scuola* carry a canopy to protect the reliquary that holds the sacred relic as it is carried through St. Mark's Square (the religious and political heart of the city).



Figure **13.7.5.57**: Reliquary (detail), Gentile Bellini, *Procession in St Mark's Square*, 1496, tempera on canvas, 347 x 770 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

St. Mark's Square is reproduced in Bellini's painting with a wide-angle view in striking detail, providing a remarkable visual document of the square at the end of the fifteenth century. To open up the scene, the artist moved the bell tower to the right. **St. Mark's Basilica**, sparkling with its Byzantine gold (gold also lights up the reliquary in the foreground), functions as a backdrop. The square is populated by a cosmopolitan mix of people elegantly dressed in the fashion of the time: some young people in multicolored stockings, a group of Jews, a number of Turks wearing turbans, as well as merchants and children. On the left, women look out from the windows and colorful carpets are displayed from balconies as a sign of celebration.



Figure **13.7.5.58**: Vittore Carpaccio, *The Healing of the Madman*, 1496, tempera on canvas, 365 x 389 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

Vittore Carpaccio, *The Healing of the Madman*, 1496

Carpaccio portrayed another miracle of the True Cross for the *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista*. The artist presents the passage of the miracle from the procession on the bridge (whose members are in white) to the main event that takes place in the Patriarch of Grado's palace on the upper left. The Patriarch is seen raising the relic before a possessed man who fixes a glassy-eyed stare on it, and who will be miraculously cured. The miracle is in progress, a dramatic moment made even more authentic by the fact that the scene takes place in a marginal position within the composition. The white tunics of the procession members surround the scene, while all around life unfolds quietly, and it seems that few are aware of what is happening. Here Venice itself is not just the background but a dominant theme of the painting.

One can see the Rialto Bridge (the financial heart of the city) as it was then, constructed in wood, with a row of shops on each side, while below the Grand Canal (the main waterway of the city) is animated by gondolas and their gondoliers. In the distance, among the colorful palaces and the characteristic chimneys, daily life is in full swing. A woman beats a carpet, another hangs the laundry, a mason fixes a roof. In the lower section several men in turbans confirm the diversity of those who visited the Rialto market.



Figure **13.7.5.59**: Gentile Bellini and Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Mark Preaching in a Square of Alexandria in Egypt*, 1504-07, oil on canvas, 347 x 770 cm (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)

Gentile Bellini, *St Mark Preaching in Alexandria, Egypt*, 1504-07

The Scuola Grande di San Marco commissioned Gentile Bellini to paint *St. Mark Preaching in Alexandria, Egypt*, but the artist died before the painting was completed, so it was finished by his brother Giovanni Bellini (who, like Gentile, had never been to Alexandria). For the costumes and architectural details, Gentile drew inspiration from his stay in Constantinople and from travelers' accounts. The layout of the painting is reminiscent of *Procession in St. Mark's Square*, where the figures in the foreground are represented in profile.



Figure **13.7.5.60**: Saint Mark (detail), Gentile Bellini and Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Mark Preaching in a Square of Alexandria in Egypt*, 1504-07, oil on canvas, 347 x 770 cm, (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)

The saint, who will become the patron saint of Venice, preaches from a small podium placed between the *scuola* brothers and the Arabs, while in the background stands a great temple whose façade, divided into three parts, brings to mind the meeting house of the Scuola Grande di San Marco, the **Basilica of San Mark** and the **Hagia Sophia in Constantinople**. Nearby is an obelisk engraved with hieroglyphics and several minarets. In the square, alongside the inhabitants, a number of exotic animals stroll by, including camels and giraffes.



Figure **13.7.5.61**: Vittore Carpaccio, *Arrival of the Ambassadors* from the Saint Ursula cycle, 1490-96, tempera on canvas, 278 x 589 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

Vittore Carpaccio, *Arrival of the Ambassadors*, 1490-96

At the end of the fifteenth century, Vittore Carpaccio was commissioned by the Scuola Piccola di Sant'Orsola (a small *scuola* dedicated to Saint Ursula) to paint a cycle of nine paintings on the Life of Saint Ursula, taken from the popular medieval book, the *Golden Legend* by Jacopo da Varagine. With his vivid imagination he had no difficulty creating a northern scene (Brittany and Germany) set in the fourth century, often with elements drawn from an imaginary city reminiscent of fifteenth-century Venice. In the story, the ambassadors approached the father of Ursula in Brittany asking for the hand of his daughter on behalf of the English prince Ereo. After consulting her father, the girl accepted, on the condition that Ereo be baptized at the end of a long pilgrimage to Rome. After the baptism, on the way back to Cologne, the married couple ran into the king of the Huns who fell in love with Ursula. She rejected the proposals of the bloodthirsty ruler, preferring death instead.

The story begins with the *Arrival of the English Ambassador*s, where we see a large room represented with no front walls, while in the background we see buildings in the Venetian style and details of city life. Carpaccio skillfully employs perspective while maintaining the frieze-like structure typical of Venetian narrative paintings. The *telero* includes two consecutive moments. The first episode displays the ambassadors approaching the king; this scene unfolds behind a railing left accessible by an open gate. The following episode takes place in Ursula's bedroom where she receives the message from her father. The room is simple but includes a devotional painting testifying to the pious character of the young girl.



Figure **13.7.5.62**: Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint George and the Dragon* from the cycle: *Episodes from the Life of Saints Jerome, George and Triphun*, 1502, tempera on canvas, 141 x 360 cm (Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice)

Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1502

Carpaccio was also summoned by the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Dalmatians) to depict the cycles of Saint George and Saint Jerome, still in-situ today. The cycle of Saint George is also taken from the *Golden Legend*. In the narrative, Selene, a city in

Libya, was oppressed by a terrible dragon that fed off the meat of boys and girls and terrorized the town with threats of death and destruction. When it was the king's daughter's turn to be devoured, Saint George, on his steed, intervened swiftly, injured the dragon and then led it into the town before killing it in front of everyone. Thanks to the surprising liberation from the dragon, the knight persuaded the king and his people to be baptized.

In the combat scene with the dragon, the background is delineated to the left by a city, represented by several minarets, an obelisk, an equestrian statue, exotic palm trees and a castle typical of the Veneto (the region in northern Italy that was ruled by the city of Venice). On the other side we see the African princess, with a fair complexion and elegantly dressed in European-style clothing, looking on calmly, with her hands folded. In the foreground, the scene runs along the diagonal of the lance of Saint George who struggles valiantly with the dragon on a ground strewn with the remains of tortured bodies.

Conclusion

The complex narratives depicted in these paintings represent important religious events and miracles—yet directly or indirectly, they are simultaneously preoccupied with the complexity, diversity, and beauty of Renaissance Venice. They also point us to the critical role played by the *scuole* in both the life and art in the Most Sererene Republic of Venice.

Additional resources

Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Gallerie dell'Accademia

Augusto Gentili, *Le storie di Carpaccio* (Venice: Marsilio,1996).

Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State to 1620* (Oxford, 1971).

Brian Pullan, "The Scuole Grandi of Venice: Some Further Thoughts," in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, ed. T. Verdon and J. Henderson (Syracuse, NY, 1990), pp. 272–301.

Scuola Grande di San Marco

Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni

Lorenza Smith, *Venice: Art and History* (Verona: Arsenale, 2011).

Aldo Manuzio (Aldus Manutius): inventor of the modern book

by DR. LORENZA SMITH



Figure **13.7.5.63**: Map of Venice, 1486, from Bernhard of Breidenbach, *Sanctae peregrinationes*, printed in Mainz by Erhard Reuwich (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**)

Venice as a center of print culture

For centuries, Venice served as one of Europe's main cultural and commercial centers and as the most important intermediary between Europe and the East. The city's political stability and wealth, combined with its extensive international relationships and rich cultural and artistic life, proved to be fertile ground for the establishment of the printing press.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, when printed books gradually began to substitute for handwritten **manuscripts**, Venice was the European capital of the printing press. The invention of movable type in Germany in the mid-1400s ushered in a sea change, placing Venice on a par with modern-day Silicon Valley. Both of these creative environments resulted from a powerful combination of invention, technology and economic power. According to the scholar Vittore Branca, at the end of fifteenth century, an estimated 150 typographers operated in Venice, far more than the 50 or so that were active in Paris at that time. In the last five years of the century, Branca estimates that one-third of the volumes printed in the world originated from Venice.



Figure **13.7.5.64**: Plate showing the operation of a printing press, from *Chants royaux sur la Conception, couronnés au puy de Rouen de 1519 à 1528*, 16th century (Bibliotheque nationale de France)

Unsurprisingly, this flourishing industry generated wealth, cultural interest, and the diffusion of a new trend known as "bibliomania"—defined as a passionate enthusiasm for collecting and owning books. Readers and collectors from all over the world sought out the books of Venetian printers, who skillfully adapted production to demand. These printers created an inventory that was extraordinary in its variety, thanks also to the freedom of press granted by the government. It was in Venice that the first printed edition of the Koran was published, along with the first printed Talmud.

Books, booksellers, and bookstores

Anyone strolling through the bustling streets of Venice in the late 15th century would encounter bookstores whose windows displayed beautiful book frontispieces while catalogues of the books available either hung from the jamb of the door, or were available inside, on the counter. It was common practice for the bookseller to offer the loose pages of a book in a package which the buyer would subsequently arrange to have bound in accordance with his or her taste and financial means.

Bookstores soon became places where scholars, intellectuals, collectors, and book lovers gathered to discuss new editions, exchange information, and converse with the bookseller who often was also the publisher and the printer. The invention of movable type spawned an industry that led to the creation of a new professional figure, the printer-publisher, and a new business, the publishing house. The publishing house developed its own structure, investors, and also required legal advisors, due to the emergence of copyright issues.



Figure 13.7.5.65: Portrait of Aldo Manuzio, n.d., print, 105 x 81 mm (Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek Leipzig)

Aldo Manuzio

“Venice is a place that is more similar to the rest of the world than to a city,” Aldo Manuzio wrote in a preface to one of his books. He arrived in Venice in 1490, driven by his profession as a Greek and Latin tutor. Manuzio was a humanist from a small town in central Italy, and it was probably his interest in books that brought him closer to the world of the printing press.

Manuzio was one of the first publishers in a modern sense. In a short time, he transformed the concept of the book in Europe thanks to his typographical innovations and to his unique editorial vision. He did this by founding and overseeing the Aldine Press, with the help of technicians, scholars, investors, as well as with political support. Aldine Press books were marked by a famous emblem depicting an anchor and dolphin and were known throughout the world for their accuracy, beauty, the superior quality of the materials employed, and their cutting-edge design.

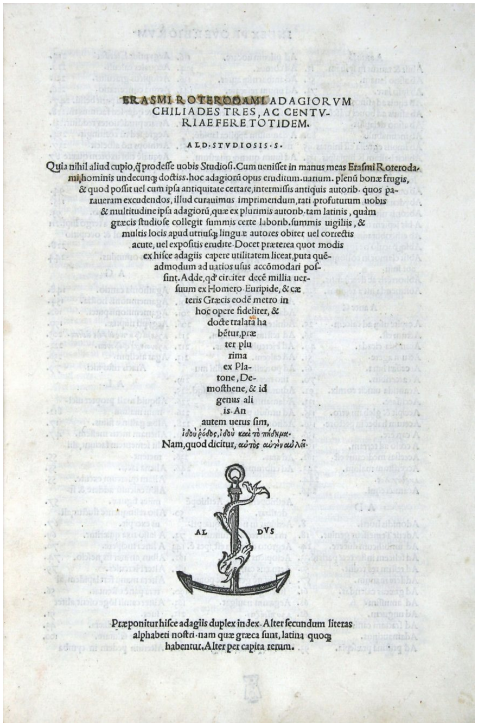


Figure 13.7.5.66: Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Adagiorum chiliades*, Aldine Press, 1508 (Bibliothèque Municipale, Tours, France). The Aldine Press emblem is visible at the bottom of the page.

Manuzio's original intention was to spread Greek language and philosophy to a wider public. He subsequently produced books in Latin and Italian, publishing famous editions of Dante and Petrarch, as well as work by of some of his contemporaries, such as Erasmus. Over two decades Manuzio published 130 editions, 30 of which were first editions of Greek writers and philosophers.

Aldine editions stood out: from the first pages, Manuzio impressed the reader through the use of prefaces discussing his editorial work, his intentions and projects. In the preface, he would occasionally invite the reader to find and to report any errors in the text, thus actively engaging the reading public.

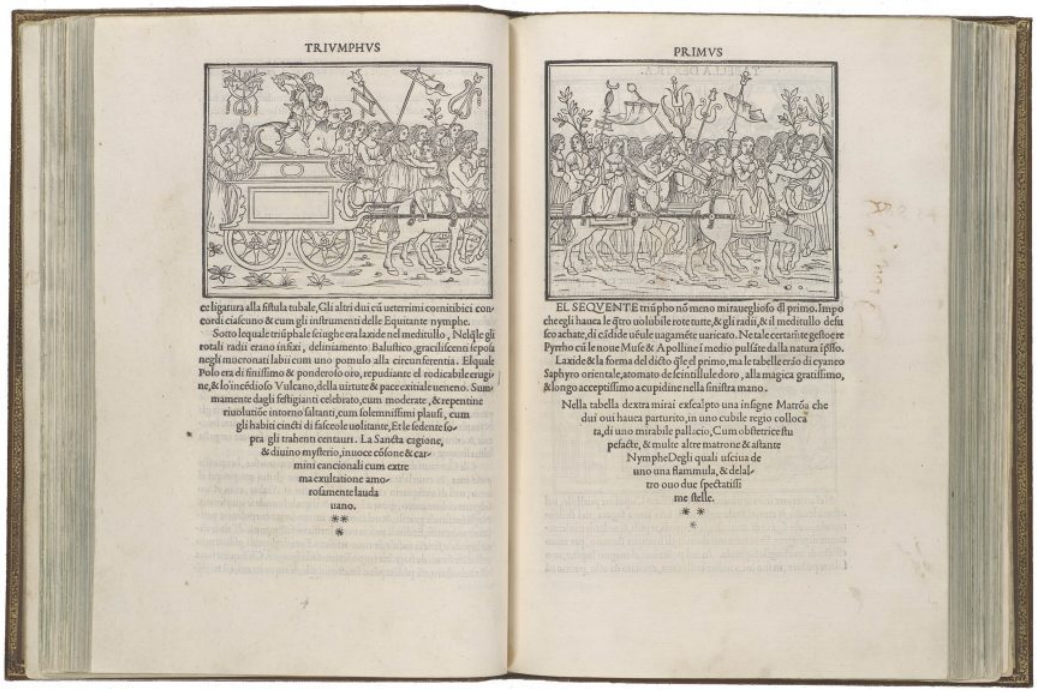


Figure 13.7.5.67: Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published by Aldo Manuzio, 1499, book with woodcut illustrations, 29.5 × 22 × 4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The inventor of the modern book

Many of the elements that Manuzio introduced, or eliminated, in the conception of his editions are innovations that have become embedded in today's books. Notably, he gave a new look to the printed page: the pages of Manuzio's books featured harmonic proportions between the size of the fonts, the printed section, and the white border, according to precise mathematical principles—reflecting a major theme in Renaissance culture.

Manuzio also introduced page numbers and made reading more fluid by clarifying the disorganized punctuation that prevailed at the time. He added a period at the end of the sentence and was among the first to adopt the use of the comma, apostrophe, accent, and semicolon in the ways they continue to be used today. In order to recreate the familiar effect of handwriting, he also invented what is now known in English as the "italic font," named after it's Italian provenance.



Figure **13.7.5.68**: Epistole di santa Caterina da Siena, published by Aldo Manuzio, 1500 (Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna). This is the first example of italic type (printed within the book on the left), which was developed for Manuzio by the typographer Francesco Griffo.

One of Manuzio's most striking inventions was the printing of small-format books, the ancestors of our modern pocket-sized publications. Small religious volumes were already in circulation, but Manuzio's revolutionary idea was to publish both classics and modern works in the small format.

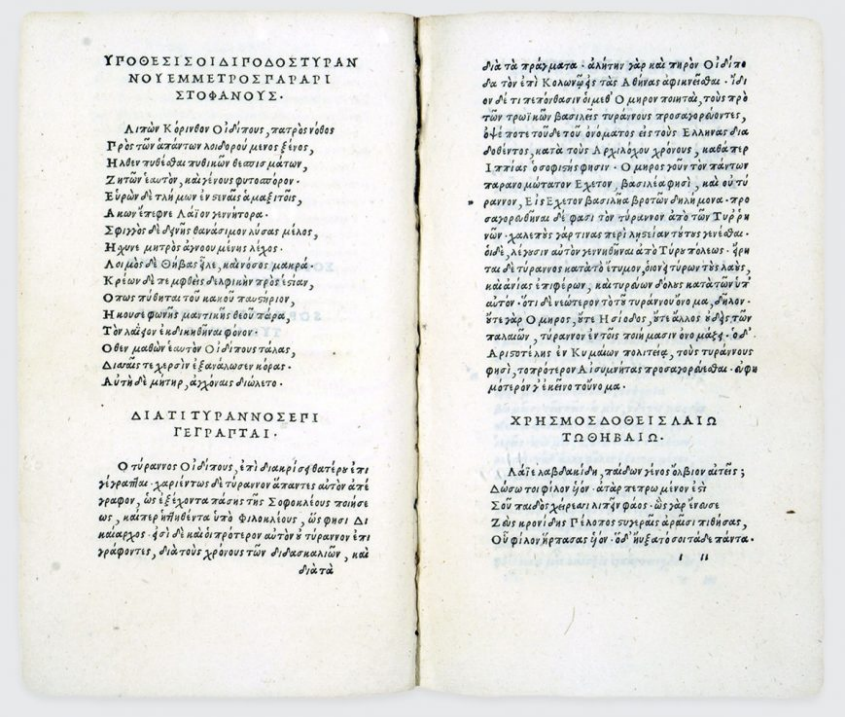


Figure 13.7.5.69: Sophocles, *Tragaediae septem cum commentariis*, 1502, published by Aldo Manuzio (Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna).

It can be argued that through this innovation Manuzio also invented a new audience. With pocket-sized books, reading became an intimate moment, an activity that could be enjoyed while traveling, lying in bed, or sitting on a garden bench. For the first time, the book became a manageable, easy to carry, and relatively inexpensive object, therefore it became accessible to a larger audience comprised not only of scholars, but also of aristocrats and members of the upper middle class. The small books immediately became very fashionable and conferred a certain status, as we can see in many portraits of the time.



Figure 13.7.5.70: Left: Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Laura da Pola*, 1543-44, oil on canvas, 90 x 75 cm (Pinacoteca di Brera); Right: Titian, *Portrait of Jacopo Sannazaro*, c. 1514-18, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 72.7 cm (Picture Gallery, Buckingham Palace, The Royal Collection Trust)

Sweeping away barbarism with books

The Aldine editions had a significant impact in Europe, imparting new momentum to the book market and creating a larger audience, that in turn stimulated culture and led to the spread of ideas. Erasmus praised Manuzio's objective to "build a library that

would have no boundary but the world itself." Indeed, the power of a book is that it enables its readers to live many lives and to deepen their understanding of the entire world without ever needing to leave their homes. By reviving the classics and publishing modern works with rigor and beauty, Aldo Manuzio wished—in what has proven to be a timeless quote—that "it could be possible to defeat weapons with ideas and to sweep away barbarism with books."

Additional resources:

Digital catalog for the Aldo Manuzio exhibition at the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia

Guido Beltramini, *Aldo Manuzio: il Rinascimento di Venezia* (Marsilio, 2016)

Lodovica Braida, *Stampa e cultura in Europa* (Laterza, 2003)

Mario Brunetti, *L'Accademia Aldina*, in *Rivista di Venezia*, VIII, 1921

Carlo Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio umanista e editore* (Edizioni il Polifilo, 1995)

Gian Arturo Ferrari, *Libro* (Bollati Bolingheri, 2014)

Leonardas Vytautas Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth-Century Venice* (American Library Association, 1976)

Paul Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)

Mario Infelise, *Aldo Manuzio: La costruzione del mito* (Marsilio, 2016)

Mario Infelise, *Manuzio, Aldo, il Vecchio*, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani – Volume 69*, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana Treccani, 2007

Jill Kraye, *The Afterlife of Aldus: Posthumous Fame, Collectors and the Book Trade* (Warburg Institute, 2018)

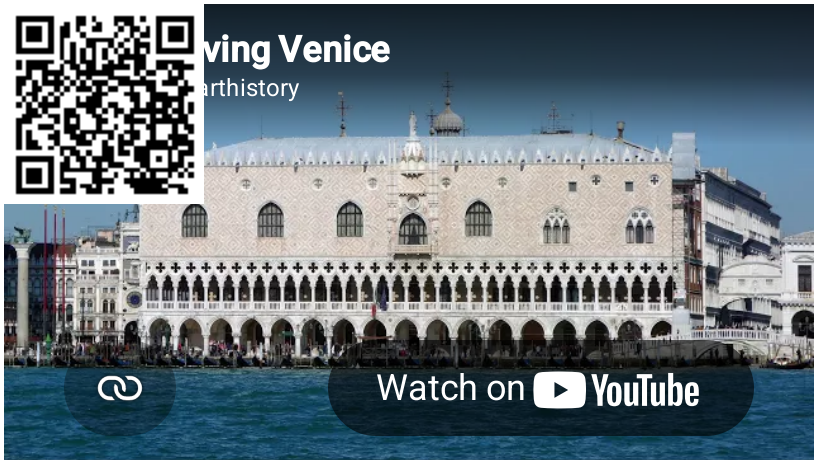
Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Cornell University Press, 1979)

Aldo Manuzio, *Humanism and the Latin Classics*, edited and translated by John N. Grant (Harvard University Press, 2017)

Giovanni Mardersteig, *Aldo Manuzio e i caratteri di Francesco Griffo da Bologna*, in *Studi di bibliografia e storia in onore di Tammaro De Marinis* (1964)

Saving Venice

by LISA ACKERMAN and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.5.11: A conversation about the issues facing Venice and efforts to save the historic city, with Lisa Ackerman, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, World Monuments Fund and Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

Venice (from the World Monuments Fund)

Marcello Rossi, "Will a Huge New Flood Barrier Save Venice?" *Wired Magazine*, April 5, 2018

As Tourists Crowd Out Locals, Venice Faces 'Endangered' List (from NPR)

Robert C. Davis, Garry R. Marvin, *Venice, the Tourist Maze: A Cultural Critique of the World's Most Touristed City* (University of California Press, 2004)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

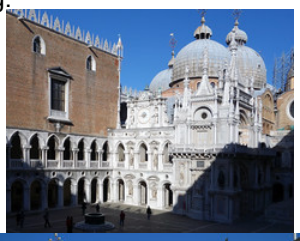
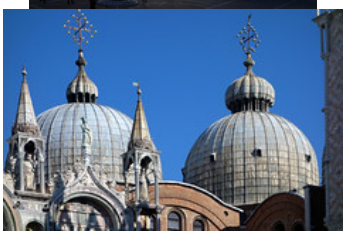



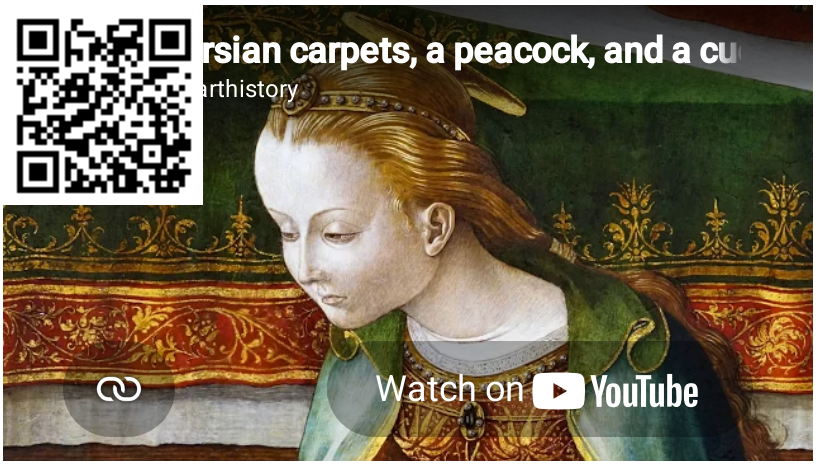





Figure **13.7.5.71**: More Smarthistory images…

Carlo Crivelli, *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON



Video **13.7.5.12**: Carlo Crivelli, *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)



Figure **13.7.5.72**: Carlo Crivelli, *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Aside from Cosimo Tura, **Carlo Crivelli** was the most delightfully odd late Gothic painter in Italy. Born in **Venice**, he absorbed the influences of the Vivarini, the Bellini, and **Andrea Mantegna** to create an elegant, profuse, effusive, and extreme style, dominated by strong outlines and clear, crisp colors—perhaps incorporating just a whiff of early **Netherlandish** manuscript style. By 1458 he had left Venice to work in the Marches (the fertile plains south of the Appenines) in and around the port city of Ancona on the Adriatic. As a seaside painter, he could be credited with inventing a second Adriatic style that stands in stark contrast to the soft, suffused colors and gentle contours of **Giovanni Bellini**.



Figure **13.7.5.73**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

The subject matter

This **Annunciation** is signed and dated 1486, so it was an early commission in his adopted territory. The narrative is deceptively simple; the angel Gabriel interrupts the Virgin, engaged in reading and prayer, to announce that she will become the mother of the son of God. The actual event, the incarnation, occurs through words rather than actions, and to be recognizable as a dramatic encounter there are a variety of poses that the Virgin assumes to signify her reaction, from **humble acceptance** to visible consternation. Crivelli's version rather peculiarly places Gabriel outside the Virgin's home, accompanied, in another unusual variation on the theme, by St. Emidius.



Figure **13.7.5.74**: Gabriel and St. Emidius (detail), Carlo Crivelli, *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Emidius is the patron saint of the town of Ascoli Piceno, and Crivelli painted this altarpiece for the city's church of the Santissima Annunciazione (the Holy Annunciation). A proud citizen, Emidius seems to have hurried to catch up to Gabriel to proudly show off his detailed model of the town, which he holds rather gingerly, as though the paint hasn't quite dried.

The fact that Gabriel and the Virgin do not share the same space is unusual, but doesn't seem to disrupt the delivery of the message. We see the descent of the Holy Spirit has penetrated the frieze of the building, through a conveniently placed arched aperture, into the room where Mary kneels receptively. The inclusion of Emidius brings the miracle of the incarnation home, and this corner of the city is depicted in the kind of deep perspective of contiguous spaces that one sees later in Dutch Baroque domestic scenes, such as Pieter de Hooch's ***At the Linen Closet***.



Figure **13.7.5.75**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

The variety of figures in the background on the left of the painting lend an atmosphere of spontaneity and the hubbub of everyday life; at the top of the staircase a little girl peeks around a column, a group of clerics are engaged in conversation and, in the upper mid-ground, two figures stand on the footbridge above the arch, one reading a just-delivered message (echoing the Annunciation).



Figure **13.7.5.76**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

The inscription along the base of the painting reads “Libertas Ecclesiastica” (church liberty), and refers to Ascoli’s right to self-government, free from the interference of the Pope, a right granted to the town by Sixtus IV in 1482. The news reached Ascoli on 25 March, the Feast of the Annunciation, which is probably the message the official in black is reading.



Figure **13.7.5.77**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)



Figure **13.7.5.78**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

To the right of the two figures on the bridge, the bases of a crate and a potted plant extend out over the wall just far enough to suggest they could, with a little nudge, topple onto the head of a figure below who, oblivious, shades his eyes to better see the penetrating irradiation of the Holy Spirit entering the wall. He is the witness inside the painting, we are the witnesses outside the painting.



Figure **13.7.5.79**: Piero della Francesca, *Annunciation*, 1452–66, fresco, 329 x 193 cm (San Francesco, Arezzo)

The spatial composition of the overall painting is actually quite traditional, hearkening back to the *Annunciation* fresco of Piero della Francesca at the church of San Francesco in Arezzo; in both the surface of the painting is essentially vertically bisected by the architecture, while the right half is squared by the horizontal division between the lower room and upper balconies of the Virgin’s dwelling. What is spectacularly different here is Crivelli’s architectural articulation, which consists of an entire dictionary of *all’antica* elements, made more dramatic by the profusion of materials from which the buildings are made.

The white columns carry gilded capitals, the entablature is elaborated by a red marble frieze, both are illusionistically “carved” with running reliefs of floral, vegetal, and acanthus decoration, springing from beautiful vases, and the frieze is further punctuated

with *putto* heads, lending a sense of animation to the scene. Adding to the ornamentation are **egg-and-dart** and curious floral dentils, varied marbles, a carved imperial profile relief encircled by a wreath, and crenellations along the farthest wall.



Figure **13.7.5.80**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Luxurious costumes

All the major characters wear luxurious costumes, painted to resemble gold and silver embroidered brocades. Gabriel wears a large gold medallion, on a heavy chain, studded with cabochon jewels. Emidius wears a bishop's mitre similarly jeweled, with a large jeweled clasp on his golden cope. The Virgin wears a jeweled head-band and a dress modestly trimmed with pearls along the top of the bodice. Gabriel's feathered epaulettes echo his glorious wings, which deserve an essay of their own. The elegant delicacy of Crivelli's linear style can be seen best in the elongated, pale hands of the Virgin, floating at the ends of her arms, lightly folded across her breast in supplication.

A splendid interior

Rather than occupying a sparsely furnished monastic cell, the Virgin is depicted in a splendidly arrayed interior that echoes the magnificence of the palace exterior. Red and green pillows and blankets embroidered with gold thread cover her bed, with its sweep of red silk curtain, similarly embroidered in gold.



Figure **13.7.5.81**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

The objects on the shelf above the bed are made of a variety of materials, from the gold candle holder to the barely fluted glass carafe which holds clear water, a sign of Mary's purity. The grain of the wood in the *prie-dieu* runs vertically, in contrast to the horizontal grain of the base of the bed, which helps to create the shallow recession in which the Virgin kneels on a splendid carpet.

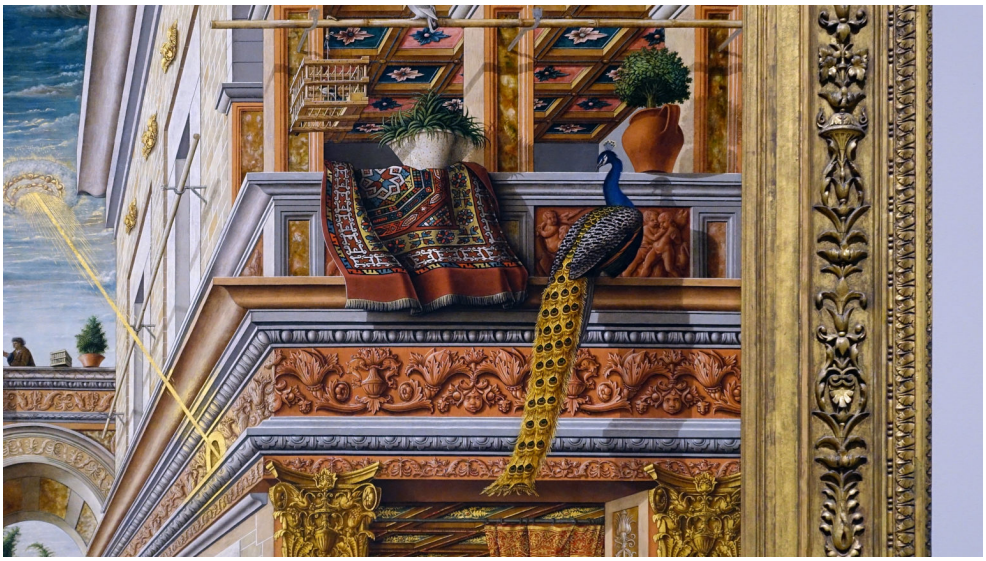


Figure **13.7.5.82**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

A sense of cosmopolitanism

At the level of the balcony, Crivelli draws our eye to another carpet, this one displayed draped over the balustrade, and yet another is draped above the arch in the background. Carpets such as these were a major Italian import from the eastern Mediterranean, and used here they lend a cosmopolitan air to the city. The presence of a splendidly feathered peacock, another exotic import, reminds us that carpets from the eastern Mediterranean were coveted luxury items brought in through trade, and they lend an air of cosmopolitanism to the overall scene.



Figure **13.7.5.83**: Carlo Crivelli, detail of *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*, 1486, egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm (The National Gallery, London)

A pickle and an apple?

Of course, the objects that attract the most attention in this painting are the cucumber and apple, placed right in the center foreground of the painting, above the inscription. The cucumber, in fact, seems to project out of the painting and teeter into our space, breaking the fictive wall and blurring the line between a space of miracles and our everyday world. The apple can be taken to symbolize original sin, the source of our fall, the forbidden bite setting into motion the whole reason for the Annunciation. In all fairness, the National Gallery calls the cucumber a gourd (which does sound more Biblical), since cucumbers are part of the gourd family, and leaves it at that, there being neither a Holy Cucumber nor a Holy Gourd. Alas, here we enter the realm of speculation. One school of thought, absent any evidence, is that apples symbolize female sin and cucumbers symbolize male sin. I'll leave it to you to work out why. Could it be a marrow? Marrows do appear in the Bible, as in Psalm 63:5: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." That seems rather appropriate. The controversy rages on.

Additional resources:

This painting at The National Gallery

Stephen John Campbell, C. Jean Campbell, Francesco De Carolis, *Ornament and Illusion: Carlo Crivelli of Venice* (Paul Holberton Publishing, 2015)

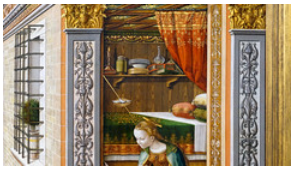
Ronald Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli* (Yale University Press; 1st Edition edition, 2004)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure **13.7.5.84**: More Smarthistory images…

Gentile Bellini, *Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II*

by DR. ELIZABETH RODINI



Figure **13.7.5.85**: Gentile Bellini, *Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II*, 1480, oil on canvas, 69.9 x 52.1 cm, The National Gallery London. Layard Bequest, 1916. Currently on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The afterlife of a painting

In a portrait attributed to the Italian artist Gentile Bellini, we see Sultan Mehmed II surrounded by a classicizing arcade, with a luxurious embroidered tapestry draped over the ledge in front of him. Gentile, already an accomplished portraitist from Venice, painted the sultan's likeness when he spent 15 months in Constantinople at the court of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II around 1480 on behalf of the Venetian Republic.

Today this famous portrait belongs to the National Gallery of Art, London. It has had many "afterlives," that is, many ways it has been re-interpreted and understood since it was produced nearly 550 years ago.



Figure **13.7.5.86**: Circle of Gentile Bellini (?), *Portrait of Sultan Mehmet II with a Young Man*, c. 1500?, oil on panel, 33.4 x 45.4 cm (purchased at Christie's London by the Municipality of Istanbul in June 2020)

For example, in June of 2020, the Municipality of Istanbul spent over a million dollars at auction for a double portrait featuring the face of Sultan Mehmed II and a young man. The painting is mysterious: it is uncertain who painted it, when, or where, and the identity of the second figure is unknown. The image of the sultan, however, is based on Bellini's well-known London picture, and the reputation of the mystery painting—as well as Istanbul's risky purchase—depends on its fame. This is just the most recent, and ongoing, of the London portrait's "afterlives," which are the subject of this essay. Before exploring them, however, we must begin with the original painting and its production.



Figure **13.7.5.87**

A Venetian travels to paint Sultan Mehmed II

When the London portrait was created, Mehmed was sultan of the Ottoman empire, and ruled from Constantinople (now Istanbul), the city that had been the capital of the **Byzantine** empire until Mehmed conquered it in 1453. (The Ottomans were Muslim, the Byzantines were Orthodox Christians, and European rulers were faithful to the Church in Rome, or to what we now call Catholicism—and these divergent creeds were no small matter.) Even today, Mehmed is known in Turkish as "Fatih," or "conqueror." In addition to being a warrior and politician, he was a great patron, bringing artists and architects together to write, paint, and build. When he petitioned the Venetians to send him artists skilled in portraiture, they sent Gentile Bellini, who seems to have had rare access to the private spaces of Mehmed's palace. The London portrait is believed to have been produced there, and was probably transported to Italy soon after Mehmed's death in 1481—by whom is unclear.

The painting resembles many other European portraits of the day, and is dramatically different from contemporary Ottoman portraiture. A single figure, bust-length and life-sized, poses in elaborate dress that reveals his rank and wealth. He is not quite in profile but turned ever so slightly forward, a visual strategy that, along with the carved stone arcade, gives a sense of depth and creates the illusion that the sultan actually sits before us. That illusion is disrupted by the flat, black background and six crowns that seem to float behind him, symbols either of his territorial rule or his place in the chronology of Ottoman sultans. Gentile signed the architectural plinth with his name and date, as a kind of painterly proof of his status as an eyewitness to the sultan (who was often hidden from view) and of the truthfulness of this image.

Why would Mehmed commission such a picture? The answer likely lies in his general curiosity as a patron. We know he studied classical languages, was fascinated by maps, and followed the latest advancements in military architecture. He collected coins and medals, and was aware of their power to glorify a ruler through the circulation of his image. In addition, Mehmed's interest in portraiture suggests he was up-to-date on some of the most revolutionary things that were happening in Italian painting—in particular, new attempts to depict the world as if it were seen through a window, to paraphrase the contemporary art theorist **Leon Battista Alberti.** Commissioning a skilled Venetian artist to paint a life-sized, illusionistic portrait might have been a test of just what, exactly, this new form of image making could do.



Figure **13.7.5.88**: Gentile Bellini, *Mehmet II*, c.1480 (later casting), bronze, 9.38 cm (**Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.**)



Figure **13.7.5.89**: Master of the Vienna Passion (attributed), *El Gran Turco (The Great Turk)*, c.1470, engraving (Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Two points need to be clarified before we move on. First, the London portrait is sometimes considered the first "realistic" representation of a Turk to arrive in Europe (most images of the time were demonizing stereotypes, like "The Great Turk" engraving in Berlin). Yet it is misguided to assume Mehmed was focused on advancing European knowledge of foreigners. If, as is possible, he intended to circulate his image through copies of Gentile's portrait, his goals were fame and power, not ethnographic instruction. Second, the equally misguided notion that **Islam** forbids naturalistic imagery also needs correcting: such imagery had a long tradition, especially in illuminated manuscripts, and was often acceptable outside religious contexts. Moreover, for sultans, rules and norms did not apply.

Mehmed's portrait in Italy

How and when Gentile's portrait of Mehmed arrived in Italy is another of its mysteries. In all probability, it landed in Venice shortly after the sultan's death in 1481, and this is what the Ottomans thought—they even sent a delegate there to recover lost portraits of the sultans one hundred years after Gentile's trip east (they failed, returning with modern works instead, including the one by an artist in the circle of Veronese). But the painting now in London did not come to light until hundreds of years later, in 1865, when it was purchased from an impoverished nobleman by the British explorer, collector, and eventual ambassador to Constantinople, Austen Henry Layard. Layard's own circumstances offer an excellent introduction to the reception of Gentile's painting in the modern era.



Figure **13.7.5.90**: Circle of Paolo Veronese, *Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II*, 1578 or later, oil on canvas, 69 x 54 cm (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich)

Like Gentile, Layard traveled to the Ottoman court in a diplomatic position, meeting privately at the palace with the reigning sultan, Abdülhamid II. As a young man, Layard had excavated, published, and sent back to London a trove of **Assyrian** artifacts from Nineveh (in modern Iraq), and had authored several illustrated volumes about his experiences.

In these roles, Layard was an archetypal "**Orientalist**," someone whose status, power, and actions depended on a colonial imbalance between Europe and the Near East. On occasion, Layard even played at "Oriental," donning headscarves and swords. As a collector, he was particularly proud of his portrait of Mehmed, which he immediately recognized as the famous lost work by Gentile Bellini. But what did he see when he looked at it, hanging in his Venetian palace among assorted fragments of Assyrian architecture? Might he have seen his own experiences as ambassador reflected back at him? One journalist of the period suggested as much, but we can only speculate—recognizing at the very least how different Layard's interactions with the picture were from that of Mehmed.

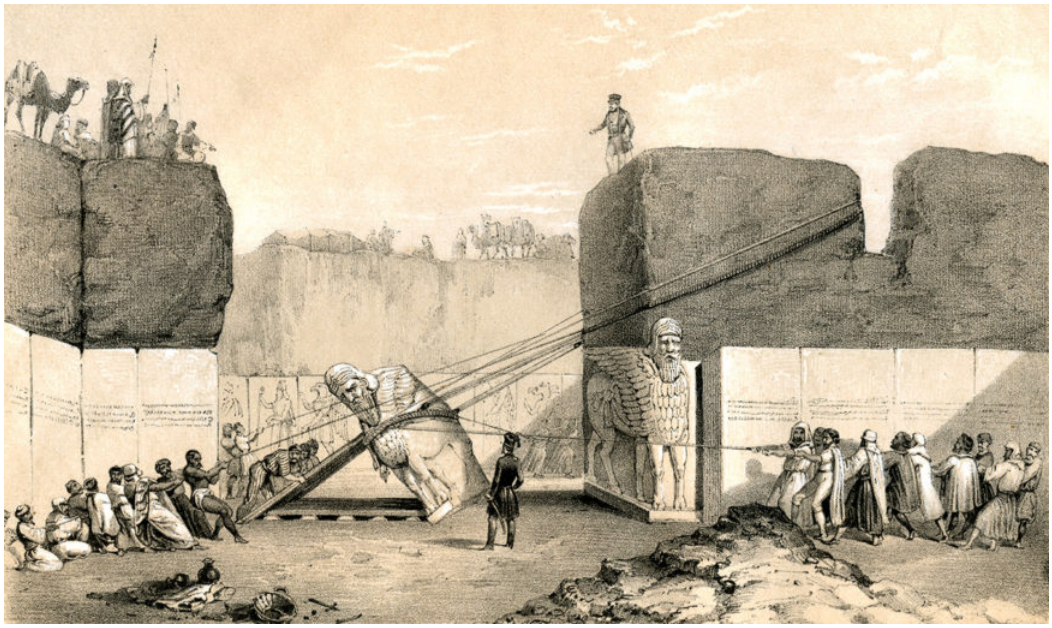


Figure **13.7.5.91**: Lowering the Great Winged Bull, lithograph, frontispiece to Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains* (London, 1849)

By 1915, Gentile's portrait had been at the center of two other conversations that again reframe its meaning. The first has to do with definitions of national patrimony, a topic that is very much in the news today. Layard had willed his collection, which hung in Venice, to the National Gallery in London. But on the death of his widow, Enid, in 1912, the Gallery found itself up against several recent Italian laws that aimed to keep the greatest "Italian paintings" in Italy. Gentile's portrait of Mehmed was among them: it

"was regarded [by the Italians] somewhat as the Athenians regarded the **Elgin Marbles**," wrote the British ambassador to Italy, making reference to the Greek sculptures that are still at the center of patrimony controversies. That the portrait was painted in Constantinople for an Ottoman patron by a traveling Venetian, that it was an inherently **global** object, was not mentioned. But these claims offer another way of thinking about Gentile's picture—and presented a significant obstacle to its transport to London as well. (How the painting got out of Italy and into England in 1916 lay in the legal fine print.)

The second, equally philosophical controversy involved its status as a portrait. Layard left his collection to the National Gallery, but, in a clumsy turn of phrase, his will opened the door for his nephew to claim rights to all of his portraits. Both sides took legal action, bringing in experts to decide just what, exactly, constitutes a portrait. The surviving dossier reads like art theory crossed with intellectual property law and the observations of a private eye. Debate centered on questions of intent, interpretation, and continuity ("once a portrait, always a portrait"?); on whether there is a distinction between historical portraits and family portraits; and on how Layard organized, wrote about, and displayed his collection. Gentile's image of Mehmed was the star witness, the one painting the antagonists consistently tussled over.

Again the National Gallery won, and hung the portrait prominently in its entrance hall. Over the next century, however, its fortunes swung dramatically, along with shifting understandings of conservation and authenticity (problematic, since only an estimated 10% of the paint is original to Gentile—over time, the canvas was damaged and was on several occasions repainted), as well as evolving attitudes within museums about how and why certain paintings are valued over others. After being one of the museum's prize acquisitions, Gentile's picture spent decades in the lower level galleries for "problem works." In 2009, it was moved across London to the Victoria and Albert Museum where, along with carpets, ceramics, and metalwork, it is now part of a gallery dedicated to art and trade in the early modern Mediterranean. These shifting appraisals say more about the frames of interpretation than they do about the painting itself that, aside from the abrasions of time, has not changed.

The portrait today

In 1999, Gentile's portrait of Mehmed traveled to Istanbul to star in a one-painting show that drew huge audiences and attention. "We have seen this picture so many times, in so many schoolbooks and on so many walls over so many years that it's really imprinted on our brains," one Turkish viewer told an American reporter. For many, aware of Mehmed's broad patronage and support of a Venetian painter, the image signified a tight bond to Europe. Notably, it was also in 1999 that Turkey made its first petition for membership in the European Union.



Figure **13.7.5.92**: Entry to the Panorama Museum, Istanbul, September 2018 (photo © the author)

In the two decades since, however, relations between Turkey and the West have soured, and Ottoman imagery, including that of Mehmed II, has been coopted in Turkey by more conservative political forces to stand for a separatist, nationalistic identity. In this "neo-Ottoman" framework, Gentile's picture takes on new meaning, with emphasis on the sultan as "Fatih," conqueror—thus it is this face that welcomes visitors to Istanbul's new Panorama 1453 Conquest Museum, which celebrates the Ottoman taking of the city from the Byzantines centuries ago. The same face also appears on magnets, notebooks, tote bags, and countless internet memes, in a thoroughly contemporary stew of humor, nationalism, and entrepreneurship.

Is this painting exceptional in the many permutations of meaning we give to it? Probably not. Gentile Bellini's portrait of Sultan Mehmed II is more likely an object lesson in how many lives a single artwork can take on, and of the value to be found in deep looking and extended research.

Additional resources:

This essay is based on Elizabeth Rodini, *Gentile Bellini's Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II: Lives and Afterlives of an Iconic Image* (I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2020). An extensive bibliography and notes can be found there (and see the publisher's site).

This painting is in the collection of the National Gallery, London but presently on long-term loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Read more about the expanded renaissance world

Giovanni Bellini

Giovanni Bellini, *St. Francis in the Desert* (or *St. Francis in Ecstasy*)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.5.13**: Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Francis in the Desert* (or *Saint Francis in Ecstasy*), oil on panel, c. 1480 (Frick Collection, New York City)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.5.93**: More Smarthistory images…

Giovanni Bellini, *San Giobbe Altarpiece*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.5.14: Giovanni Bellini, *San Giobbe Altarpiece*, c. 1485, oil on panel, 471 cm × 258 cm / 185″ × 102″ (Accademia, Venice)

Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON



Video 13.7.5.15: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16′ 5-1/2″ x 7′ 9″ inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)



Figure 13.7.5.94: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)



Figure 13.7.5.95: Antonio Gambello and Mauro Codussi, San Zaccaria, 1458-1515, Venice

San Zaccaria, in Venice

We are fortunate that Bellini's famous altarpiece can be seen in the church it was made for, San Zaccaria, in Venice.

San Zaccaria (Saint Zachary) is not a common name for a church — it is among a handful of Venetian churches named after Old Testament saints (more typically saints come from the New Testament and early Christian history). So how did Old Testament figures become saints?

According to Byzantine tradition, Christ spent three days in the underworld, breaking open the gates of hell to release the souls of the pre-Christian righteous who would otherwise not be able to share in the eternal life made possible by his crucifixion. Adam and Eve were the first to emerge, followed by other Old Testament people like Moses, Job and Zachary, all three of whom have

churches named after them in Venice. This “harrowing of hell,” as it is known, was largely rejected in evolving Christian doctrine because of a lack of Biblical evidence, which explains why we don’t often encounter St. Moses or St. Zachary in paintings. Perhaps that disagreement about the doctrinal soundness of the harrowing of hell (also called Anastasis in the Byzantine tradition) explains why there is no depiction of St Zachary in the altarpiece by Bellini named for his church.

The fact that such an altarpiece was commissioned from Bellini, who was the official civic painter of Venice, is a testament to the importance of the group of nuns who occupied the church monastery, many of them the daughters of prominent patrician families.

A sacred conversation — a new kind of altarpiece

The subject of the altarpiece is a sacred conversation (*sacra conversazione*), a type of painting that developed first in Florence and then in Venice. The sacred conversation describes a subject of the enthroned Virgin, holding the infant Christ, surrounded by standing saints of differing eras, accompanied by angels. All of the figures are united in a single space.



Figure 13.7.5.96: Perhaps the earliest true *sacra conversazione* — Domenico Veneziano, *Saint Lucy Altarpiece (Madonna and Child enthroned with St. Francis, John the Baptist, St. Zenobius and St. Lucy)*, c. 1445, tempera on wood, 209 x 213 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence). Other early paintings that reduce the framing elements include Piero della Francesca’s **Brera Altarpiece** (1472-74) and Fra Filippo Lippi’s *Barbadori Altarpiece* (1438).

Earlier altarpieces tended to be polyptychs or triptychs (altarpieces made up of several different panels), each of them containing one or more saints, arranged around a separate central panel often depicting the enthroned Virgin and Child. The s*acra conversazione* removes those barriers to create a single assembly of figures who share a literal (as well as a psychological) space.



Figure **13.7.5.97**: An example of an earlier triptych (three-panels): Agnolo Gaddi, *Madonna and Child with Saints Andrew, Benedict, Bernard, and Catherine of Alexandria with Angels*, shortly before 1387, tempera on poplar panel (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.).

In the *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* by Bellini, the individuals depicted are all aware of one another, and the viewer outside the painting shares this common space as well as this idea of inclusion and belonging. The Virgin, the saints, and the viewer are all from different times, but the artist has created a common space in which they can all assemble. The physical unity helps to promote a kind of silent communication, which is the essence of the sacred (and silent) conversation. The angels signify that, although this space looks real, it is of a different, transcendent order. They sometimes play instruments and appear to be singing; the music is a symbol of harmony.



Figure **13.7.5.98**: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* (detail), 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)



Figure **13.7.5.99**: Mary and the Christ Child (detail), Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* (detail), 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

The Virgin and Child (and an angel)

We recognize the Virgin and Child at the center of the composition. The Virgin does not wear a crown and is depicted as a simple young mother. Christ stands on her lap, in that strangely teetering but confident way that babies can stand when they're completely protected by their mother's body and steadied by her hand. In this case, the Virgin's right hand lightly supports Christ from the front. He appears to have just lifted his left foot from her left hand, which is cupped below his toes. Babies really do this when they briefly find themselves in a standing position – they randomly lift their feet. The infant holds his right hand up in a blessing gesture directed to the worshipper at the altar; and while both he and the Virgin look down and gaze to the left— toward anyone who might be kneeling in prayer before the altarpiece. An angel sits on the steps of the throne, below the Virgin and Child, playing what looks like a very large violin-like instrument (of course, she's a very little angel).

Identifying the Saints

There are paired figures to the left and right of the Virgin, each pair consisting of a female and a male saint. To Mary's left, we see St. Catherine of Alexandria and, in front of her, St Peter. On the right we see St. Lucy and, in his red cardinal's robe, St. Jerome. The women are depicted in profile, each turned toward the Virgin, like parentheses enclosing the Virgin and Child. The male saints,

who stand at the front of the picture plane and are closest to the viewer, are both facing forward. How do we identify these saints? And what are they doing here?

The two female saints are virgin martyrs, that is, they were put to death for choosing faith over forced sex; that's why they each hold a palm frond, a symbol of martyrdom. Each is shown with their instrument of torture; St. Catherine rests her hand on a broken wheel (it's broken because God's protection proved stronger than the wheel) and St. Lucy holds what looks like a kind of weedy flower, but is actually her two eyes, hanging on visceral stems, which she gouged out so she would no longer tempt unwanted sexual advances. St. Lucy was martyred in Syracuse in the 4th century but her remains were sent to Constantinople in the 8th century and looted by the Venetians in the Fourth Crusade of 1204, after which they were installed, and still remain, in the church of San Geremia. She is probably included here because she was adopted as a Venetian saint. St. Catherine has no direct relationship with Venice, but she inspired a hugely popular cult following throughout the Middle Ages as an exemplar for female Christian virtue. She was undoubtedly intended to serve as an example to the nuns of San Zaccaria, who were, by all accounts, notoriously debauched.



Figure 13.7.5.100: Saint Lucy and Jerome (detail), Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

We also see St. Jerome dressed anachronistically as a cardinal of the church. St Jerome was considered one of the four Doctors of the Church, so he exemplified ecclesiastical authority. He was important for translating the Bible from Hebrew into Latin, making it more accessible to educated lay readers, and Bellini, who painted Jerome often, depicts him reading a book. Across from Jerome stands Peter, who was the rock of Christ's church (Peter derives from "petrus" which means rock) and the first Pope, and **holds the keys to the kingdom of Heaven**. He stands for spiritual authority, and the controlling oversight of the church over religious communities.



Figure 13.7.5.101: Giovanni Bellini, San Zaccaria Altarpiece, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

The Architecture and the light

The *sacra conversazione* takes place in a perfectly depicted little chapel that, because of the accuracy of the linear perspective (reinforced by the receding squares of the painted floor), the scale of the painting (which allows the figures to be the right size in terms of where they're standing in relation to a viewer) and the integration of the real architecture of the frame with painted *trompe l'oeil* architecture in the painting, looks like it opens out from the architectural space of the church.

The painting is framed by a marble triumphal arch supported on pilasters decorated with running, floral scroll work. Inside the painting, we see two identical lateral arches, and another identical rear arch… There is virtually no break between the real architecture of the frame and the completely illusionistic, vaulted chapel in the painting — one exists on a continuum with the other. As Alberti prescribed in his book *Della PIttura* (*On Painting*), it feels as though we're looking through a window. Any separation between the church and the world inside the painting disappears.



Figure 13.7.5.102: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

There's another reason for this. As you enter the church, the painting is on the left wall of the church. Today, the interior of San Zaccaria is crowded with large-scale (mostly Baroque) paintings, hung in double registers along the walls. Bellini's altarpiece stands out immediately because of its architectural frame, but also because it responds precisely to the natural light that enters the

church from a window in the façade. Knowing the precise location of the altar, Bellini calculated the composition of the painting in accordance with this light. When the sun shines, and the light hits the painting, all the shadows cast by the painted figures and the architecture in Bellini's fictional world fall in accordance to the real light in the church.This seamlessness of light and shadow increases the "reality" of the painting; we see the figures as solid, three-dimensional beings who are sharing our space.



Figure **13.7.5.103**: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

Disegno and *colore*

Of course, a modern viewer can increase the light by dropping a couple of euros into the coin box to turn on lamps that flood the painting with artificial illumination. And that's fun, because it makes the colors pulsate with light and Bellini, as a painter, was fundamentally a colorist. There was a great debate in the Renaissance, and beyond, between the fundamental importance of *disegno* (drawing) and *colore* (color) in painting. The idea is that the Florentines thought *disegno* (composition, but also contour and clarity in drawing) was the most important thing, while the Venetians said that painting is nothing without *colore*; by which they meant not just the choice of colors, but the tonalities, contrasts, harmonies, and application of paint.

Look at how Bellini uses color in the figures. Peter wears blue and yellow, which are the characteristic colors of his robes; Jerome wears a glorious red. The two figures together are an essay in primary colors, but softened by Bellini's application, which incorporates a lot of Leonardo's gentle transitions in the areas of shadow. This is the glory of oil paint, which can be coaxed into the subtlest transitions in a single shade.

The female figures — the Virgin, St. Catherine and St. Lucy — wear primaries as well, but there's also green which blends green and yellow and therefore adds a new harmony. The music-making angel alerts us to these harmonies, wearing green and the gentlest of pinks. If you look carefully, the same tones are found in the architecture, the mosaic, the landscape — Bellini writes music in paint.



Figure **13.7.5.104**: Angel (detail), Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

The mosaic

Once you hear the music, you study the details. The rear arch frames the throne of the Virgin, sitting at the center of the space (not against the rear wall). The wall itself curves to form an apse-like space, crowned with a glittering half vault, painted to look like mosaic.

By the sixteenth century (even well before), mosaic work would have seemed anachronistic anywhere except Venice, which retained the Byzantine taste and expertise for mosaic. Frescoes are a near impossibility in Venice because the whole city sits in water that creeps up the masonry and seeps into the plaster, turning frescoes into sodden, salt-bloomed, indecipherable messes. Mosaics, set into proper mortar, are more durable. Plus, Venice was the European center for glassmaking, and produced quantities of gold glass that characterize Byzantine-style mosaic work.

The simulated glasswork in Bellini's paintings is always astonishing, he was a master of the pictorial representation of gold-glass. The surface shimmers and shines, capturing and reflecting dancing shards of light. Below the mosaic, there is an elegant, curved entablature, echoed by a black marble band , which sets off the relief of the carving.



Figure **13.7.5.105**: Apse dome (detail), Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

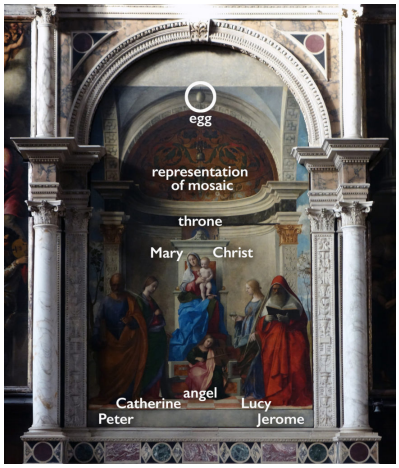


Figure **13.7.5.106**: Diagram for Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

The egg

A lantern, suspended from a large, perfect, oval ostrich egg, is located above the Virgin's throne. We've seen this egg before, in the *Montefeltro Altarpiece* (c. 1474) of Piero della Francesca, made for the Duke of Urbino. The egg seems strange to modern eyes but is both symbolic and historically accurate. Ostrich eggs were often suspended in Coptic churches in Egypt (as well as in mosques) — apparently, something about the odor repelled spiders, which would be the practical aspect (in case you're wondering, humans can't detect the smell). More importantly, however, ostrich eggs also have Christological significance because they are hatched by the heat of the sun. The analogy is to the miraculous conception and birth of Christ. Pearls carry the same symbolism because they are spontaneously born from oyster shells. Miracles in nature are used an analogies for the miracle of Christ.

The throne

Finally, the Virgin's throne is a simple, stepped, rectangular structure of white and yellow marbles, punctuated by globed, gold finials on the arms, and topped by the carved head of a king. This is Solomon, renowned for his wisdom and mercy, reinforcing the importance of learning both in theory and in practice. Behind him there is an elegant, woven Persian-motif carpet, suspended from an iron crosstie, a reference to the Virgin's cloth of honor. Miraculously, the little illusionistic chapel is not completely enclosed. The lateral arches are open to provide an outdoor view. The two slivers of landscape include a glimpse of blue sky and slim, elegant

trees springing up from a green lawn. The landscape admits painted “natural” light into the chapel, which helps to illuminate the figures. It also transports us out of Venice and into the world of the painting, making the illusion complete.



Figure **13.7.5.107**: Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 16 feet 5-1/2 inches x 7 feet 9 inches (San Zaccaria, Venice)

About Bellini

Bellini was 74 years old when he completed the *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*. Having grown up in his father’s workshop, he was a painter from the moment he was born. Almost all his work was made for Venice, and most of his paintings are devotional works depicting the Madonna and Child in various iconographical permutations rooted in Byzantine tradition. In its monumentality, classically inspired architecture, and treatment of color and light, this altarpiece is his most perfect synthesis of that tradition with the new values of Renaissance art.

Note: Centuries later, the *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* was considered such a masterpiece that in 1787, when Napoleon ransacked the city, he had his troops steal it, cutting it from its frame. This explains the missing area at the top of the painting, just below the frame of the crowning arch. During its time in France, the painting was subjected to a radical new form of conservation intervention; the supporting panel was stripped down so that the paint surface could be removed and then it was glued to a canvas support (it has since been transferred back to panel — long story). At the time, it was thought that paintings should be on canvas, and presumably the change of support also made the works lighter and easier to hang and frame in Napoleon’s new museum. The return of the painting to its rightful place in Venice brought it back to life, allowing it to be experienced as Bellini intended.

Additional resources:

A short biography of the artist from The National Gallery, London

Renaissance Paragone: *Disegno and Colore* (Oxford Art Online)

Disegno e colore (Italian Renaissance Learning Resources)

Venetian Color and Florentine Design on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure **13.7.5.108**: More Smarthistory images…

Giovanni Bellini and Titian,*The Feast of the Gods*

by DR. SUSAN NALEZYTY

Lotis and Priapas (detail), Giovanni Bellini and Titian, <em
The Feast of the Gods, 1514/29, oil on canvas, 170.2 x 188 cm (National Gallery of Art)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-15241" height="650" width="943" src="/smarthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/bellini-nude.jpg">

Figure **13.7.5.109**: Lotis? and Priapas (detail), Giovanni Bellini and Titian, *The Feast of the Gods*, 1514/29, oil on canvas, 170.2 x 188 cm (National Gallery of Art)

A Divine Party

Finished just two years before Giovanni Bellini's death, *The Feast of the Gods* was an unlikely subject for this Venetian master (he typically painted Christian themes and portraits). But Bellini continued to challenge himself by creating a raucous scene of 17 classical gods and goddesses eating and drinking in a lush forest clearing, painted in brilliantly rich, blended colors typical of the Venetian school of painting. Nymphs and satyrs serve wine to these classical deities. Some figures tipsily raise glasses to their lips,

while others suffer the effects of having imbibed too much, staring with unfixed gazes or even passing out altogether. And the one responsible for this uninhibited celebration kneels in the left-hand foreground—the ancient Roman god of wine—Bacchus, who draws yet more of his gift from a barrel.



Figure **13.7.5.110**: Giovanni Bellini and Titian, *The Feast of the Gods*, 1514/29, oil on canvas, 170.2 x 188 cm (National Gallery of Art)



Figure **13.7.5.111**: Copy after Titian, *Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara*, oil on canvas, 127 x 98.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Changes to *The Feast* by Dosso Dossi and Titian

Bellini sent this large work from Venice to Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, who intended it to hang in his *camerino*, his little room, as he called it, a private study modeled after an ancient painting gallery. After the canvas's arrival in Ferrara in 1514 though,

something must have gone wrong. Canvases are typically rolled for shipping and later varnished, but the painting's surface might have been damaged in the varnishing process. Alfonso asked a local painter, Dosso Dossi (who also contributed paintings to his camerino), to repaint the left-hand background with a hill and amend the tree foliage at upper right.

Bellini had originally composed a shallow stage for his figures, behind which was a continuous line of tree trunks illuminated by warm sunlight (the only passage of which survives at the far right). But the painting today is the result of yet another change. Since Bellini died in 1516, Alfonso commissioned one of his students, the ambitious young Titian, to provide three works for his camerino, and it is Titian who painted out Dosso's landscape with a striking mountainous backdrop, leaving only Dosso's foliage and the pheasant in the right-hand tree.

The Feast's subject

A consensus on the painting's subject has yet to be reached because a number of the figures' identities have been hotly debated. Some scholars argue a theme of marriage for the *Feast's* subject. The bird, a kingfisher, in the foreground could point to the winter solstice for Alfonso's December wedding, though it took place a decade prior to the commission. Bellini painted Bacchus unusually as a child, a guise that comes from the ancient writer Macrobius, whose book, *The Saturnalia*, discusses feast days, wherein Bacchus appears at four stages of life at the solstices and equinoxes of the calendar year. Bellini's child Bacchus appears with his gluttonous teacher, Silenus, who leans on his attribute (identifying symbol), his loyal donkey.

Behind them could be the god of beginnings, Janus (sometimes identified as Sylvanus), because his hand touches his attribute, the heads of 2 snakes on the winged staff of Mercury's attribute, the caduceus. Also in the background playing his flute is a nude Pan (or Faunus?). Jupiter with his eagle (the eagle is also an Este family symbol), appear in the center, and to the right, may be the queen of the underworld, Proserpina (or Amphitrite?). She holds a quince, a symbol of marriage to the god of the underworld, Pluto (or Neptune?), who amorously squeezes her upper thigh, while his pitchfork rests on the ground nearby. Next to him is the goddess of the harvest, Ceres (or Cybele?), wearing her wheat crown, and next to her, the god of poetry, Apollo, who with his laurel crown holds his lyre, painted as a sixteenth-century instrument, a ***lira da braccio***.



Figure **13.7.5.112**: Annotated detail, Giovanni Bellini and Titian, *The Feast of the Gods*, 1514/29, oil on canvas, 170.2 x 188 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Bellini consulted a text by the ancient writer Ovid titled the *Fasti* (Book of Days) that discusses Roman holidays in 6 books, one for each month—January through June. Bellini's deities could, therefore, represent calendar months.

January could be represented by Janus. February is Pan. March is the child Bacchus for the spring equinox. April is Ovid's story of the birth of spring, and the characters in the story are lined up in the foreground. Pluto had abducted Ceres' daughter, Proserpina and Jupiter decreed that she would return to the world of the living for only half the year. As the goddess of agriculture, Ceres annually mourned her daughter's absence, ushering in winter, halting plant growth when Proserpina resided in the underworld. Following Bellini's sequence and Ovid's text, then, the month of May could be for Maia, Mercury's mother, who appears in gold.

June is the fertility god Priapus at right, with his bulging phallus and scythe hanging in the tree above. Bellini here represents a story Ovid tells twice—with different victims: a nymph, Lotis (in January) or the goddess of the hearth, Vesta (in June). In both versions, Silenus' donkey brays, awakening the sleeping lady, and foils Priapus' erotic plot to take advantage of her.



Figure **13.7.5.113**: Titian, *The Worship of Venus*, 1518-19, oil on canvas, 172 x 175 cm (Museo del Prado)

Other works in the duke's camerino

Characters from ancient stories seem to leap from the pages of classical books onto Alfonso's camerino walls. He enlisted a well-read advisor to help devise later paintings' subjects, and he tried to commission the best artists. Alfonso once climbed the Sistine Chapel scaffolding to ask Michelangelo for a painting, and he negotiated with Raphael, but both declined.



Figure **13.7.5.114**: Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1520-23, oil on canvas, 176.5 x 191 cm (The National Gallery)

He found Titian to be more accommodating. In 1519, Titian contributed his *The Worship of Venus* (above), and in 1523, his *Bacchus and Ariadne* (above). In 1525, Titian painted his *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (below), a scene described in an ancient text about the island of Andros, where a stream sacred to Bacchus flowed with wine. Titian inserted details deliberately invoking comparison to his teacher's *Feast*. Both feature a reclining female figure at right and an overturned wine glass in the foreground. Both have barebacked male figures carrying vessels exiting at left, and nearby, plump, inebriated fellows imbibing yet more wine. And later in 1529, Titian would repaint Bellini's background to stylistically unite it with others of his hanging in Alfonso's camerino, a Renaissance space dedicated to the rebirth of classical art.



Figure **13.7.5.115**: Titian, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, 1523, oil on canvas, 175 x 193 cm (Museo del Prado)

Additional Resources:

Titian and Bellini, Feast of the Gods at the National Gallery of Art (high resolution available for download here)

Titian and Bellini, *Feast of the Gods* from Webexhibits

Titian, *Bacchanal of the Andrians* at the Prado

Titian, *The Worship of Venus* at the Prado

Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne* at The National Gallery

Dosso Dossi, *Aeneas and Aches on the Libyan Coast* at the National Gallery of Art (also painted for the camerino)

Sixteenth Century Painting in Venice and the Veneto on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Andrea Mantegna

Mantegna, St. James Led to his Execution

by STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.5.16: Mantegna, *St. James Led to his Execution* and the Ovetari Chapel cycle frescoes, 1447–58, Church of the Eremitani (Padua, Italy) reconstructed with photographs, original fragments, and inpainting after American bombs hit the church on March 11, 1944, an ARCHES video

A conversation with Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker in the Ovetari Chapel

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:























Figure **13.7.5.116**: More Smarthistory images…

Andrea Mantegna, *San Zeno Altarpiece*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



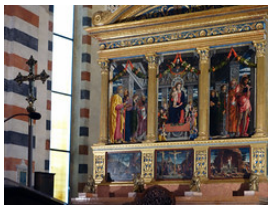
Video **13.7.5.17**: Andrea Mantegna, *San Zeno Altarpiece*, 1456-59, oil on panel, 212 x 460 cm / 83 x 180″, commissioned by the Benedictine Abbot, Gregorio Correr (Basilica of San Zeno, Verona)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















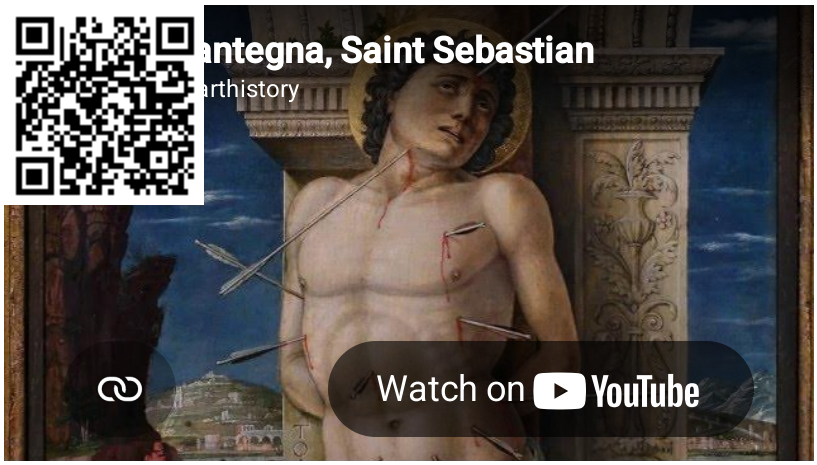
https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724



Figure **13.7.5.117**: More Smarthistory images…

Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Sebastian*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







Figure **13.7.5.118:** More Smarthistory images…

Andrea Mantegna, *Dormition (or Death) of the Virgin*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.5.19**: Andrea Mantegna, *Dormition (or Death) of the Virgin*, c. 1462, tempera on panel, 21.26 × 16.54″ / 54 × 42 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Andrea Mantegna, Camera Picta (Camera degli Sposi)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. DAVID DROGIN



Video **13.7.5.20**: Andrea Mantegna, Camera Picta (Camera degli Sposi), frescos in the ducal palace in Mantua, 1465-74

Andrea Mantegna, *Dead Christ*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.5.21**: Andrea Mantegna, *Dead Christ*, tempera on canvas, c. 1480 – 1500 (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)

Guido Mazzoni

Guido Mazzoni, *Lamentation* in Ferrara

by DR. HEATHER GRAHAM



Figure **13.7.5.119**: Guido Mazzoni, *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) Italy (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

Modeling Magnificent Woe

In the early 1480s, Duke Ercole d'Este, ruler of the North Italian city-state of Ferrara, hired the artist Guido Mazzoni to create a life-size, terracotta sculpture group of seven biblical figures gathered around the dead body of Jesus Christ. The characters are those associated in religious texts with the final phase of Christ's human life: the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalen, Mary Cleofas, Mary Salome, John the Evangelist, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. Painted in naturalistic polychrome and modeled with great physical realism, these figures demonstrate deep emotional reactions to the death of Christ whose corpse, modeled with equal naturalism, lies at their feet.



Figure **13.7.5.120**: Guido Mazzoni, the dead Christ, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

Among the biblical mourners are two figures local audiences would have immediately recognized: Duke Ercole and his wife, the Duchess Eleonora of Aragon. Both rulers are presented as active participants in the drama of Christ's death.The duke is put in the role of Joseph of Arimathea, the wealthy donor of Christ's tomb, while the duchess is cast as Mary Salome.



Figure 13.7.5.121: Guido Mazzoni, the Duchess Eleanora of Aragon as Mary Salome and Duke Ercole d'Este as Joseph of Arimathea, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

The sculpture group was placed in a public church, Santa Maria della Rosa (now destroyed), in a new quarter of the city of Ferrara that the duke was actively developing. Through humble clay, Mazzoni created a work that reflected his patrons' deep Christian faith, their privileged place within the political and spiritual hierarchy, as well as their noble generosity.

Art and Magnificence

In the princely courts of **renaissance Italy**, the display of magnificence through art and architecture made from rare and costly materials—marble, gold, silver, precious gems, silk thread and the like—was one of the ways a ruler might demonstrate his power. The more marvelous the objects that a ruler collected or spectacular the buildings that he sponsored, the more noble and learned he (and occasionally she) was understood to be.



Figure **13.7.5.122**: Commissioned by or the wealthy Florentine banker, Palla Strozzi, Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on panel, 283 x 300 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence; photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This display of magnificent nobility was important to a ruler; it justified his position of authority over his subjects. Sculptures in bronze or marble, silk tapestries with silver and gold thread, paintings encrusted with precious gold-leaf and inlaid with gemstones—such works of art made from materials themselves thought to be "noble" helped a ruler to craft a persona of rightful authority. This performance of nobility through patronage was replicated by the wealthy elite of republican states, like that of Florence, where members of the rising merchant class sought to elevate their own social positions by emulating the patronage practices of traditional aristocrats. An example of this is the opulent—and expensive—altarpiece of the ***Adoration of the Magi*** created by Gentile da Fabriano for the wealthy Florentine banker, Palla Strozzi. With its extensive gold-leaf, elaborate gilded frame, and heavy use of expensive pigments such as ultramarine blue, the image spoke to the material wealth and fine taste of its illustrious patron.



Figure **13.7.5.123**: Guido Mazzoni, Mary Magdalen, the Virgin Mary, and Mary Cleofas, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: **Nicola Quirico**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Over the course of the early renaissance (usually designated in Italy as the fifteenth century), this emphasis on materiality began to shift. While the importance of the monetary value of artistic and architectural media was never fully eclipsed (people still wanted objects made from costly materials) new value was placed on the skill of the artist. New artistic theories were developing in the early 1400s, most famously recorded in Leon Battista Alberti's treatise, ***On Painting*** (1435/6). In this text, one of the first theoretical discussions of art in the European tradition, the Florentine scholar explicitly advises against the use of gold or other costly media, calling upon the artist to ennoble his work with skill and ingenuity over raw materiality. Artists were tasked with rivaling or even surpassing Nature in their treatments of the visible world. Alberti further advised artists to appeal to the emotions of their audiences by creating figures that displayed believable feelings. The artist at the cutting-edge of early renaissance art was one who could suggest both physical and psychological reality.

The Artist



Figure **13.7.5.124**: Guido Mazzoni, Mary Cleofas, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

Guido Mazzoni came of age as an artist during this period of shifting visual interests and new appreciation for visual artists' creations as intellectual output. While little is known of his personal life, Mazzoni was fortunate in coming from a well-connected family (his grandfather was a member of the rural gentry and his father was a notary) and had close ties to the glamorous Este court. His privileged social position undoubtedly helped him to navigate courtly circles as an artist. Mazzoni worked for and was awarded marks of favor from Duke Ercole I d'Este of Ferrara, Duke Alfonso of Calabria (King Alfonso II of Naples), and the French monarchs Charles VIII and Louis XII. By all accounts, the sculptor enjoyed a highly successful career and was able to capitalize on the rising social status of visual art-making. He was well-paid for his work and well-recognized for the nobility of his profession, even being awarded a knighthood by Charles VIII of France in 1496.

Clay becomes Flesh



Figure **13.7.5.125**: Guido Mazzoni, St. John the Evangelist from the *Lamentation*, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: Heather Graham)

Terracotta was a popular sculptural material throughout the early renaissance. It offered unique mimetic and technical possibilities to artists and was known to have been used as an architectural and sculptural medium by the ancient Etruscans, lending it ancient authority.

Mazzoni's sculpture group created for Duke Ercole was one of several terracotta groups the artist made in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. He created numerous lamentation groups, such as the one in the Church of St. John the Baptist in the crypt in Modena, as well as other subjects including the Adoration of the Madonna and Child in the crypt of the the Modena Cathedral. Although the figures are made from humble clay (a material far more readily available in the region of Ferrara than stone), through

the artist's skillful manipulation this lowly material was transformed into a virtuoso display of artistic ingenuity and refined, courtly taste.



Figure **13.7.5.126**: Rogier van der Weyden, *Francesco d'Este*, c. 1460, oil on wood panel, 29.8 x 20.3 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Each figure is modeled with careful attention to physical and anatomical realism. The bodies are accurately proportioned, the gestures are graceful and naturalistic, and facial features and expressions are exquisitely precise. As the sixteenth-century author, Giorgio Vasari, made note, Mazzoni's figures were "truly more than alive" (*veramente più che vivo*). [1]

The extreme realism of his figures and the superfluity of details in sculpted flesh, cloth, and gestures reflected not only the ultimate early renaissance artistic goal of surpassing nature but also the sophisticated taste of the Italian courts. At the Ferrarese court in particular, northern European art was highly valued.

The Este family had long collected the work of **Flemish painters** known throughout Europe for their extreme naturalism and emotionally charged imagery. Mazzoni's richly colored terracotta sculpture group superbly captures the precise detail and provocative emotional displays of Flemish painting in three dimensions while also reflecting the latest Italian trends in bodily and emotional realism.

Art historians have often dismissed Mazzoni's work as "popular art," preferring the stoic idealism of the high renaissance to his emotionally charged and highly naturalistic imagery. This designation implies a lack of sophistication that does an injustice to the artist's skill in manifesting renaissance artistic goals. Thankfully, recent interest on the topics of patronage, the history of the body, and the history of the emotions has prompted a new appreciation for Mazzoni's accomplishments.

Notes:

[1] Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite*, eds. Bettarini and Barocchi (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1966), 4.1, p. 423

Additional resources

Read more about expanding our understanding of the renaissance on Smarthistory

Read more about Italian terracotta sculpture from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Read about another famous sculptor, the Florentine Luca della Robbia, who who worked in terracotta

Bruce Boucher, ed. *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002)

Alison Cole, *Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts: Virtue and Magnificence* (London: Orion Publishing Group, 1995)

Heather Graham, "Compassionate Lament: Somatic Selfhood and Gendered Affect in Italian Lamentation Imagery," in *Visualizing Sensuous Suffering and Affective Pain in Early Modern Europe and the Spanish Americas*, Heather Graham and Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 82–115

Heather Graham, "Artifice and Interiority: The Image of Grief in the Age of Reform," in *Vanishing Boundaries: Scientific Knowledge and Art Production in the Early Modern Era*, ed. A. Victor Coonin and Lilian H. Zirpolo, (Ramsey, NJ: Women Art Patrons and Collectors Conference Organization, 2015), pp. 25–50

Timothy Verdon, *The Art of Guido Mazzoni*. Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978)

by DR. HEATHER GRAHAM



Figure 13.7.5.127: Guido Mazzoni, *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: Sailko, CC BY 3.0)

Why Mourning Matters

A life-size, terracotta sculpture group shows seven biblical figures gathered around the dead body of Jesus Christ. Created in the 1480s for Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara, Guido Mazzoni's **sculpture group** also includes the duke and his wife, the Duchess Eleanora of Aragon, cast in the roles of Joseph of Arimathea and Mary Salome. All of the figures express a range of emotional responses to the death of Jesus. These emotional displays in Mazzoni's Ferrarese sculpture group are key to understanding the work's function as a display of the patron's nobility and piety. Emotions are inherent to humanity, but they are not universal and unchanging. Emotions vary across time and culture. They are nurtured or suppressed, constructed and understood according to people's ideas about the human body, the human psyche, and humanity's place within the universe.



Figure **13.7.5.128**: Guido Mazzoni, the Duchess Eleanora of Aragon as Mary Salome and Duke Ercole d'Este as Joseph of Arimathea, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

In renaissance Italy, displays of grief were expected to be moderated by Christian viewers' faith in their salvation through Jesus Christ. Although sorrow at the death of a loved one was expected and valued as a display of personal affection, there were definite limits to how extreme the public display of grief was supposed to be. Saint Paul, one of the leaders of the early Christian church, had explicitly prohibited excessive mourning: "I would not have you grieve as others do without hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13–14). Emotional moderation was so important that in various parts of Italy throughout the renaissance period laws were passed prohibiting excessive mourning behaviors at funerals. Works of art that showed people in mourning situations (as in the scene of grieving over the dead body of Christ created by Mazzoni) were one way to help guide Christian audiences in appropriate behavior. While each of Mazzoni's figures displays a believable sorrow, none of them tear their hair, shred their clothes, gesture wildly, or perform other expressions of what would have been considered socially inappropriate levels of grief.



Figure **13.7.5.128**: Guido Mazzoni, Mary Magdalen, the Virgin Mary, and Mary Cleofas, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: **Nicola Quirico**, CC BY 3.0)

Gender and Emotions

While we may never truly know the inner emotional experiences of people living in the distant past, we may use works of art, like Mazzoni's grieving figures, to understand how people were expected to behave in emotionally charged situations. Works like this may provide clues into how men and women were expected to behave differently, as were people of different social classes. In Mazzoni's work, it is the women who display their sorrow most forcefully. This is in keeping with renaissance understanding of women as more naturally emotional creatures, who were thought to be generally unable to moderate their behavior as well as men. We also see how emotional control was nuanced across social class. Of the women displayed, the aristocratic Duchess Eleonora as Mary Salome is the most restrained in her sorrow.

Left: Guido Mazzoni, the Duchess Eleanora of Aragon as Mary Salome and Duke Ercole d'Este as Joseph of Arimathea, detail of the <em
Lamentation, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: Sailko, CC BY 3.0); right: Guido Mazzoni, detail of Mary Magdalene from the
Lamentation
, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: Heather Graham)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48177" height="507" sizes="(max-width: 643px) 100vw, 643px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...en-870x686.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...en-870x686.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...en-300x236.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1210.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1614.jpg
2048w" width="643">

Figure **13.7.5.129**: Left: Guido Mazzoni, the Duchess Eleanora of Aragon as Mary Salome, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0); right: Guido Mazzoni, Mary Magdalen, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: Heather Graham)

A comparison between her figure and that of Mary Magdalen—the supreme example of an emotional woman in the Christian tradition—shows the duchess to be sorrowful, yet nobly restrained.

Left: Guido Mazzoni, St. John the Evangelist from the <em
Lamentation, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: Heather Graham); right: Guido Mazzoni, detail of Duke Ercole d'Este as Joseph of Arimathea, detail of the
Lamentation
, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: Sailko, CC BY 3.0)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48178" height="470" sizes="(max-width: 676px) 100vw, 676px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...oe-870x605.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...oe-870x605.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...oe-300x209.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...hn-and-joe.jpg
1151w" width="676">

Figure **13.7.5.130**: Left: Guido Mazzoni, St. John the Evangelist, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, Ferrara, Italy (photo: Heather Graham); right: Guido Mazzoni, Duke Ercole d'Este as Joseph of Arimathea, detail of the *Lamentation*, 1480s, created for the no longer extant church of Santa Maria della Rosa, today in the Church of the Gesù (Ferrara, Italy) (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

Similarly, John the Evangelist is the most emotionally demonstrative of the men displayed. However, while the women beside him open their arms and mouths in expressions of sorrow, his hands are tightly woven together and his face in contorted into a tightly closed grimace. As a man, renaissance viewers would have understood John to be more capable of controlling his emotions than his female counterparts. Most restrained in his expression of feeling is Duke Ercole as Joseph of Arimathea. His head is softly tilted and his features are lightly strained in dignified grief.

Model Mourners

As rulers, Ercole and Eleonora were expected to embody the nobility of their princely status and also be models of Christian piety. A Renaissance prince lived at the political and spiritual center of his community. He was both secular governor and spiritual shepherd for his people. In Ferrara, this closeness was reinforced by the direct physical relationship between the Este castle and the city's cathedral located in close proximity to one another.



Figure **13.7.5.131**: The Este Palace and Ferrara Cathedral were at one point in the same city square with one another. Over time, buildings have obscured the sight-line between the two.

Duke Ercole and the Duchess Eleonora are restrained and gender-appropriate models of grief in Mazzoni's sculpture group. They embody fifteenth-century emotional behavioral ideals for their Christian community. Not only do they demonstrate rational emotional responses appropriate to the death of Christ, but their noble behavior served as a broader example of appropriate grieving for their subjects. They are models of moderation, soberly dressed in fine clothing, but not overtly magnificent; emotionally expressive, but not excessive in their demonstrations of sorrow. In Mazzoni's skillful hands, Ercole as Joseph and Eleonora as Mary Salome are presented as ideal models of tasteful nobility and moderate emotion.

The history of emotions is a new and expanding field. Works of art populated by emoting human figures offer us one way to explore the emotional worlds of the past and, by doing so, may help us better understand our own emotional world. For many in the present-day, death is often sanitized and grief compartmentalized. Guido Mazzoni's *Lamentation* reminds us that our mortality is a burden shared by all, that great sorrow—like great joy or great beauty—is a precious part of our humanity.

Additional resources

Read more about expanding our understanding of the renaissance on Smarthistory

Read more about Italian terracotta sculpture from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Read about another famous sculptor, the Florentine Luca della Robbia, who who worked in terracotta

Bruce Boucher, ed. *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002)

Alison Cole, *Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts: Virtue and Magnificence* (London: Orion Publishing Group, 1995)

Heather Graham, "Compassionate Lament: Somatic Selfhood and Gendered Affect in Italian Lamentation Imagery," in *Visualizing Sensuous Suffering and Affective Pain in Early Modern Europe and the Spanish Americas*, Heather Graham and Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 82–115

Heather Graham, "Artifice and Interiority: The Image of Grief in the Age of Reform," in *Vanishing Boundaries: Scientific Knowledge and Art Production in the Early Modern Era*, ed. A. Victor Coonin and Lilian H. Zirpolo, (Ramsey, NJ: Women Art Patrons and Collectors Conference Organization, 2015), pp. 25–50

Timothy Verdon, *The Art of Guido Mazzoni*. Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978)

13.7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88724

13.7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I)

Italy: 16th century

One of the most tumultuous periods in Western culture—primarily due to the Protestant Reformation.

1500 - 1600 (The High Renaissance and Mannerism)

A beginner's guide

Toward the High Renaissance, an introduction

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.6.1: Andrea del Verrocchio (with Leonardo), *Baptism of Christ*, 1470-75, oil and tempera on panel, 70 3/4 x 59 3/4 inches or 180 x 152 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence); Andrea del Verrocchio (with Leonardo), *Baptism of Christ*, 1470-75, oil and tempera on panel, 70 3/4 x 59 3/4 inches or 180 x 152 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

When you think of the Renaissance, the names that come to mind are probably the artists of this period (the High Renaissance): Leonardo and Michelangelo, for instance. And when you think of the greatest work of art in the western world, Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling might come to mind. This is a period of big, ambitious projects.

How is the High Renaissance different from the Early Renaissance?

Fra Filippo Lippi, <em

Madonna and Child with Two Angels, ca. 1455 - 1466, tempera on wood (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)" height="450" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...bb1a8d5e62.jpg
" width="299">

Figure 13.7.6.1: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Madonna and Child with Two Angels*, ca. 1455 – 1466, tempera on wood (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

As the Humanism of the Early Renaissance develops, a problem arises. Have a look at Fra Filippo Lippi's *Madonna and Child with Angels*. We see a Madonna and Christ Child that have become so real—the figures appear so human—that in some ways we can hardly tell that these are divine figures (except perhaps for the faint outline of a halo, and Mary's sorrowful expression and hands clasped in prayer). On the other hand, in the Middle Ages, the need to create transcendent spiritual figures, meant a move toward abstraction—toward flatness and elongation.

In the Early Renaissance then, a tension arises. To create spiritual figures, your image can't look very real, and if you want your image to appear real, then you sacrifice some spirituality. In the late 15th century though, Leonardo da Vinci creates figures who are physical and real (just as real as Lippi's or Masaccio's figures) and yet they have an undeniable and intense spirituality. We could say that Leonardo unites the real and spiritual, or soul and substance.



Figure 13.7.6.2: Andrea del Verrocchio (with Leonardo), *Baptism of Christ*, 1470-75, oil and tempera on panel, 70 3/4 x 59 3/4″ / 180 x 152 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

The best way to see this is in this painting by Verrocchio—an important Early Renaissance artist who Leonardo was apprenticed to when he was young. Verocchio asked Leonardo to paint one of the angels in his painting of the *Baptism of Christ* (above).



Figure 13.7.6.3: Andrea del Verrocchio (with Leonardo), *Baptism of Christ*, 1470-75, oil and tempera on panel, 70 3/4 x 59 3/4″ / 180 x 152 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Can you tell which angel is Leonardo's? One angel should look more like a boy—that's the Early Renaissance angel (the one painted by Verrocchio) and the other angel should look like truly divine, sent by God from heaven (that's Leonardo's angel).

The angel on the left is Leonardo's.

Leonardo's angel is ideally beautiful and moves in a graceful and complex way, twisting her upper body to the left but raising her head up and to the right. Figures that move elegantly and that are ideally beautiful are typical of the High Renaissance.

Additional resources:

Explore Leonardo from The National Gallery

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











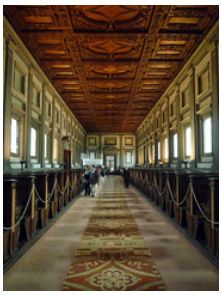










Figure **13.7.6.4**: More Smarthistory images…

Mannerism, an introduction

by Dr. Heather Graham and Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank

What is mannerism, and why did it develop in the 16th century?

Parasitic. Original. Derogatory. Refined. Hyper-decorative. Courtly. Anti-classical. Classicizing. All of these words (and many more!) have been used to describe mannerist art, which begins in the 16th century. But what *is* it, and how could it possibly prompt so many contradictory descriptors?



Figure **13.7.6.5**: Parmigianino, *Madonna of the Long Neck*, 1530–33, 73 x 60 cm (Uffizi, Florence)

What is mannerism?

Parmigianino's ***Madonna of the Long Neck*** is a famous example of mannerist art. It was painted for the funerary chapel of an Italian noblewoman. In the center, the Virgin's lower body seems to swell, her impossibly long legs swathed in billowing fabric that then clings sensuously to her rapidly tapering torso, revealing her navel and a protruding nipple. Her head, seeming too small for her body, is precariously balanced upon an elongated neck rising from narrow, sloping shoulders. Christ's spindly, bare body stretches across her lap. Pressed closely to her right are sensuous yet bizarrely proportioned angels, compressed into the foreground. One angelic figure, showing a long bare leg, holds an elegant antique vase with the tips of his impossibly long fingers. On the right side, a diminutive figure in the lower corner mysteriously holds up a scroll, while the background recedes dramatically into a deep, unfinished space. The architectural space is designed to appear illogical (though it can be reconciled) and the within it figures are mis-proportioned, yet the overall impression is one of elegance and carefully contrived artifice. This effect is enhanced by the use of rich jewel tones and the absence of visible brush marks.



Figure **13.7.6.6**: Raphael, *Madonna of the Meadow*, 1505–06, oil on panel, 885 x 1130 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Parmigianino takes us to an otherworldly realm in which the laws of proportion, naturalism, and mathematics do not apply. It is a far cry from the rational classicism of earlier works like **Raphael's** *Madonna of the Meadow* (from what is traditionally called the "**high renaissance**"). Here, the Virgin and Christ child, accompanied by the infant John the Baptist, are rendered in classical proportions and occupy an idealized though believable space. The Virgin's body is demurely clothed and the children's plump forms suggest playful vitality. Nowhere do we find the sensuous ambiguity or the irrational geometry of Parmigianino's creation. Something new is happening in the mannerist image.

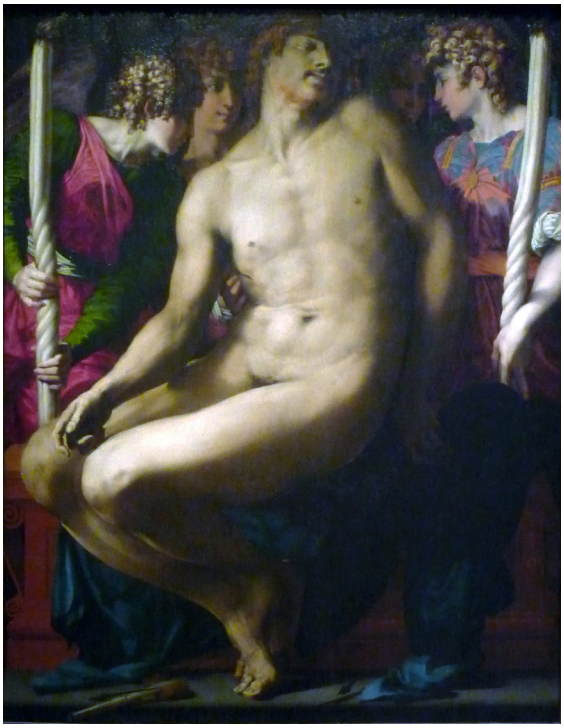


Figure **13.7.6.7**: Rosso Fiorentino, ***The Dead Christ with Angels***, c. 1524–27, oil on panel, 133.4 x 104.1 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Towards a definition of mannerism

The term “mannerism” is not easily defined. It has been used to designate art that is overtly artificial, often ambiguous, and conspicuously sophisticated. However, these are by no means the only stylistic traits associated with this designation. Mannerist imagery frequently pushes the boundaries of fantasy and imagination with artists looking to art, rather than nature, as a model, as Parmigianino was clearly doing in his painting. Mannerism is therefore a confusing term, subject to radically different interpretations. When the term was first widely used in the 17th century, it was intended as a pejorative label. It was used to negatively characterize Italian renaissance art created between 1520 and 1600 that was seen by these later audiences as overly stylized and tasteless, a debased departure from the classicism of Raphael and the high renaissance. With the rise of **expressionism** and **abstraction** in the 20th century, such negative views of this generation of artists subsided. Today, the English term “mannerism” is used to broadly designate 16th-century art throughout Europe (and even in places like the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries) that is conspicuously artificial, often emotionally provocative, and designed to impress.

In sixteenth-century Italy, where what we now call mannerism is first evident, the term “mannerism” did not exist. What we do find is “*maniera*,” a term rooted in the word *mano* (hand). It was used in a straight forward way by contemporaries to simply designate style. The styles that the word *maniera* was used to describe were as varied as way the word style might be used today. Audrey Hepburn had style. So did David Bowie.

Maniera was also used in the 16th century to suggest “stylishness” itself, a self-conscious, artificial artistry that at times privileged fantasy over reality. Artists displaying *maniera* may consciously exploit their technical skill but ideally did so with seeming effortlessness, like we see in Parmigianino’s *Madonna of the Long Neck*. Artistic departures from visual reality were intended to demonstrate invention and refinement, learning and grace. One way to understand mannerism, popularized by late 20th-century scholars, is to think of it as the “stylish-style.”



Figure **13.7.6.8**: Left: Alonso Berruguete, *Abraham and Isaac*, 1526–1532, polychromed wood, (89 x 46 x 32 cm) (Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid; photo: **Iglesia en Valladolid**, CC BY-SA 2.0); right: Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and His Sons*, early first century C.E., marble, 7’10 1/2″ high (Vatican Museums; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Rather than seeing such images as breaking with renaissance visual developments, scholars now recognize mannerist imagery as continuing those explorations in new ways. While the artworks might seem to diverge from classical forms, these artists did actually invent new ways of engaging with the ancient past. One of the most influential artworks for mannerist artists was the Hellenistic sculpture of **Laocoön and his sons**, whose twisting, contorted bodies appealed to a variety of artists of this time, including the Burgundian artist Juan de Juni (who worked in Spain), Domenicos Theotokopoulos (known as El Greco), Alonso

Berruguete, and Francesco Primaticcio. Berruguete frequently adapted aspects of the *Laocoön* in his sculpture to heighten the emotional expressiveness of his saintly figures, such as we find in his ***Abraham and Isaac***.

Why mannerism?

Why do these elegant explorations take place after 1520? While there is no easy answer for the style's emergence at this time, historical and religious developments, the tastes of powerful **patrons**, and the rising social status of the artist may all be key factors. Mannerism first developed in central Italy in the cities of Rome and Florence and it quickly spread. The reasons are many. The early and mid-16th century was a period of enormous social, economic, and political change witnessing the spread of **Protestantism** and the wars of religion that followed. The rise of capitalism and absolutism, colonization and exploitation of new lands and peoples, and new developments in the science of anatomy and optics also add to the era's complexity. Some have attributed the new stylistic explorations of the period to a general neurosis resulting from this shifting context. The new contorted and exaggerated forms are deliberately unbalanced like the 16th century itself.



Figure **13.7.6.9**: Agnolo di Cosimo Bronzino, *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid*, c. 1545, oil on panel, 146.1 x 116.2cm (**National Gallery, London**)

While mannerist qualities are found in secular works, like Bronzino's ***Allegory with Venus and Cupid***, this otherworldly, fantastical stylishness may have served a particular function for sacred subjects. The distortion, ambiguity, and supernatural beauty of many mannerist works may have heightened their emotional appeal to Christian audiences, inspiring a deeply personal devotional experience appropriate to this era of religious upheaval. On the **Iberian Peninsula**, mannerist artists like Berruguete or the painter Luis de Morales forged an expressive visual language that encouraged profoundly emotional and ecstatic religious devotion.



Figure 13.7.6.10: Luis de Morales, *Piedad*, 1565 oil on panel, 1.25 x .96 m (Louvre, Paris; photo: MOSSOT, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Mannerist art has been associated with the tastes of aristocratic patrons, particularly those within court circles where displays of wealth and appreciation for beautiful things helped cultivate an elite persona. The self-conscious artifice and deliberate complexity of these works would have appealed to patrons who were familiar with recent artistic developments and eager to show off their knowledge and good taste. The general rise in the status of the artist—particularly in central Italy where mannerism first developed over the course of the renaissance, may also have contributed to a rising taste in art that reflected an artist's individual style. Previously, artists were regarded as humble craftsmen, practitioners of the "mechanical arts." By the 1520s—thanks in part to high renaissance artists like **Michelangelo**, **Raphael**, **Albrecht Dürer** and others—visual artists could claim status as practitioners of a "liberal art," placing them alongside scholars, poets, and other humanists. The stylistically specific creations of individual visual artists were increasingly valued as precious records of their individual ingenuity and intellect, it meant something to own a "Dürer" or a "Titian." The pronounced stylishness of mannerist imagery unmistakably marked these works as creations of a unique maker.



Figure 13.7.6.11: Left: Giulio Romano, Wall and partial ceiling of the *Sala dei Giganti*, 1528–30, Palazzo Tè, Mantua (photo: Web Gallery of Art); right: Giulio Romano, Ceiling of the *Sala dei Giganti*, 1528–30, Palazzo Tè, Mantua (photo: Livioandronico2013, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The first mannerist artists

Mannerist visual strategies have local beginnings (from what we can tell) in Central Italy, although they begin to spread rapidly after their introduction. We find elements of the *maniera* among Raphael's followers, such as in the work of Giulio Romano, who, along with Gian Francesco Penni, took over Raphael's workshop in Rome upon the master's untimely death. His work at Palazzo Tè (the pleasure villa of Federico II Gonzaga of Mantua), like the frescoes in the *Sala dei Giganti* (Hall of the Giants), is a creative interpretation of and playful riff upon the classical tradition, continuing renaissance fascination with the ancient past. Powerful, elongated figures writhe across painted walls and ceiling that are reminiscent of ancient **sarcophagi**. At the Palazzo, Romano even developed architectural spaces that appear to dissolve in place like ancient ruins.



Figure **13.7.6.12**: Michelangelo, *Last Judgment*, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome) (photo: **Ramon Stoppelenburg** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

While Michelangelo is typically associated with what is called high renaissance art, he also helped to shape the powerful visual language of what we now call the *maniera*. Michelangelo's ***Last Judgement***, painted upon the altar wall of the **Sistine Chapel**, is a complicated and intentionally terrifying vision of the end of time. With disconcerting jumps in scale, nude figures in contorted poses are spread across a blue sky, their souls and bodies bared before God as they either rise in glory or are crushed in despair. Michelangelo's figures are heavy, their musculature overemphasized—these are the bodies of the afterlife, rooted in the artist's imagination and the brawny nudes of antiquity rather than reality. His *maniera* is unmistakable.



Figure **13.7.6.13**: Pontormo, *Entombment* (or Deposition from the Cross), oil on panel, 1525–28, Capponi Chapel, Santa Felicità, Florence (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure **13.7.6.14**: Fra Angelico, Descent from the Cross, 1432–34, tempera on panel, 69 in × 73 in (National Museum of San Marco, Florence: photo: **Sailko,** CC BY 3.0)

Early mannerist qualities are found in the work of Florentine painter Andrea del Sarto, and his followers Jacopo Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino. Pontormo's ***Deposition (or Entombment)***, created for the Capponi Chapel, has figures swirling across the picture plane, dislocated in time and space. No narrative elements, like the cross and concrete environment of Fra Angelico's 1432 *Deposition*, serve to ground and clarify the image. The contorted figures and bizarre use of color recall more the work of Michelangelo than they do visual reality.

Ambiguous compositions, like Pontormo's *Deposition*, seem to require sophisticated audiences already familiar with both visual and spiritual traditions. At the same time, a case may be made for the broader public appeal of such imagery. While the references to and departures from artistic tradition may not have been readily appreciated by non-elites, the disorienting effect of the image may have indeed spoken to any viewer familiar with the unsettling effects of grief.

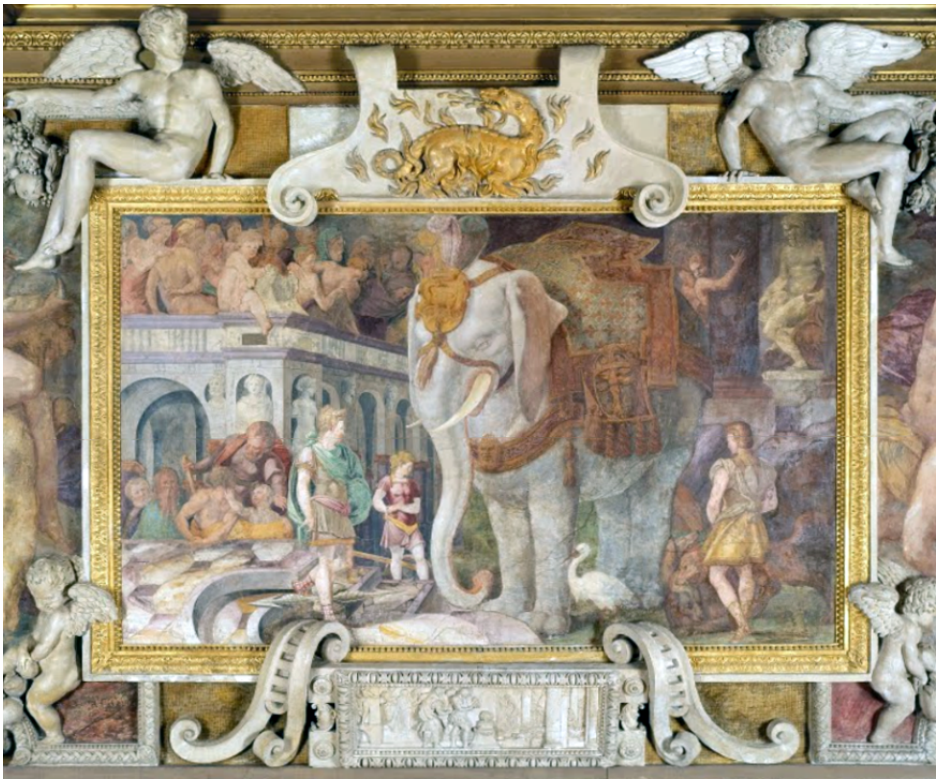


Figure **13.7.6.15**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, *The Royal Elephant*, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540, fresco (photo: **cea +**, CC BY 2.0)

Mannerism on the move

The forms explored by mannerist artists spread rapidly to other parts of Italy and to parts of northern Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, the Americas, and even Asia. In each area, mannerism developed differently, reflecting regional visual traditions, as well as cultural, political, and religious formations.



Figure **13.7.6.16**: Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo: **Mbzt** , CC BY-SA 4.0)

After the sack of Rome in 1527, the French King, Francis I, brought mannerist art to France by importing the Florentine artists Rosso Fiorentino and Benvenuto Cellini, as well as Francesco Primaticcio (who had trained with Giulio Romano). Under Francis's patronage, these artists helped transform a rugged hunting lodge into the spectacular **palace of Fontainebleau**, and where a new form of mannerism would influence generations of French artists. The Italian Jesuit artist **Bernardo Bitti** would emigrate to Lima in the **Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru**, and paint large-scale paintings with the classicizing visual language of the *maniera*.



Figure **13.7.6.17**: Luis de Vargas, *The Purification in the Temple*, c. 1560, oil on wood, Church of Santa Cruz, Seville (Museo de Bellas Artes, Sevilla; photo: **Paul Hermans**)

Artists from other European regions also trained in Italy, absorbing mannerist tendencies. Spanish artist Luis de Vargas spent time in Italy with artists like Sebastiano del Piombo and Giorgio Vasari (among others), bringing back what he learned and adapted to the Iberian Peninsula. Vargas would create elaborate retablos (altarpieces) filled with painting and sculpture, for the Cathedral and the Church of Santa Cruz in Seville.

Adrian Collaert (engraver) after Maarten de Vos (drawing), Sight (Visus) from the Five Senses, 16th century, engraving, 21.3 x 26 cm (<a href="https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/383751"
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-51111" height="602" sizes="(max-width: 729px) 100vw, 729px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...nt-870x718.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...nt-870x718.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...nt-300x248.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1267.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1690.jpg
2048w" width="729">

Figure **13.7.6.18**: Adrian Collaert (engraver) after Maarten de Vos (drawing), *Sight (Visus) from the Five Senss*, 16th century, engraving, 21.3 x 26 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Likewise, the Flemish painter Maarten de Vos, who is thought to have spent time in the workshop of **Tintoretto** (a Venetian mannerist artist), created images infused with rich color, elegant elongated figures, and an overtly decorative style. Engravings of De Vos's works circulated across Europe, and eventually found their way across the Atlantic Ocean to the Spanish viceroyalties.



Figure **13.7.6.19**: Hendrik Goltzius, *Apollo*, 1588, engraving, 26.4 x 34.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In Prague, under the patronage of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, the Dutch printmaker Hendrik Goltzius produced numerous engravings, such as *Apollo*, 1588, notable for their dramatic gestures, flamboyant figure treatment, and conspicuous display of artistic virtuosity. Goltzius would become one of the most influential mannerist printmakers of his day. Goltzius borrowed mannerist strategies from Bartholomaeus Spranger, a Flemish artist who studied and traveled in Italy, and brought drawings and ideas back to Rudolph II's court.

Simply put, the spread of mannerism was global.

Why mannerism matters

The ambiguity of mannerism and often sensuous treatment of figures proved problematic for some. The Reformation brought with it a new scrutiny of religious images. The Augustinian monk Martin Luther and other Protestant leaders were concerned that images could mislead or be treated as idols. While the Catholic Church never wavered in its commitment to the validity of images as tools for religious practice, the style of religious art did become an issue. At the Council of Trent (1545–1563), a series of meetings intended to solidify Catholic doctrine and strengthen the threatened church, it was declared that religious images must be clear, unambiguous, and lead viewers to faithful contemplation. Art should be for celebrating and instructing in the faith, not for showcasing artistic skill. The sensuosity, ambiguity, and conspicuous artistry of mannerism was not to be tolerated in sacred art.



Figure **13.7.6.20**: El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), *Adoration of the Shepherds*, c. 1612–1614, oil on canvas, 126 x 71″ / 319 x 180 cm (**Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid**)

This call for conservatism in art on the part of the Catholic **Counter Reformation**, the movement behind the Council of Trent, did not bring an end to mannerist explorations. The style continued in new ways and across the global Catholic landscape. Devout Catholics, such as the Duke of Florence, Cosimo I de'Medici (who was eager to garner the Pope's approval in his quest to become Grand Duke of Tuscany), continued to patronize mannerist forms in paint and stone—and even tapestries. El Greco, an artist who is thought to almost perfectly embody the Counter-Reformation Church's desire to produce emotionally affective religious works, borrowed a great deal from mannerism. In fact, El Greco's work demonstrates that mannerism extends beyond the sixteenth century, attesting once again to the ways in which visual strategies ebbed and flowed differently in various parts of the world.

Later artists are indebted to the mannerists. The dynamic compositions, rich color choices, and dramatic brushwork of later **Baroque** traditions all owe a debt to mannerist experimentation.

Additional resources

Lynette M. F. Bosch, *Mannerism, Spirituality and Cognition: The Art of Enargeia* (Routledge, 2020).

Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain 1500–1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Stephen J. Campbell, "Counter Reformation Polemic and Mannerist Counter-Aesthetics: Bronzino's 'Martyrdom of St. Lawrence' in San Lorenzo," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 46, Polemical Objects (Autumn, 2004), pp. 98–119.

Liana De Girolami Cheney, ed., *Readings in Italian Mannerism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

Arnold Hauser, *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

Donna Pierce et al., eds. *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life, 1521–1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press and Denver Art Museum, 2004).

Franklin W. Robinson and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., eds., *The Meaning of Mannerism* (Hanover: University of New England Press, 1972).

John Shearman, *Mannerism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

Craig Hugh Smyth, *Mannerism and Maniera*, revised edition with an introduction by Elizabeth Cropper (Vienna: IRSA, 1992).

Edward Sullivan, “European Painting and the Art of the New World colonies,” in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, ed. Diana Fance, ehxh. cat. Brooklyn Museum, 28–41 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996).

Renaissance woman: Isabella d’Este

by DR. LISA BOUTIN VITELA



Figure **13.7.6.21**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Portrait of Isabella d’Este*, c. 1499-1500, chalk on paper, 61 x 46.5 cm (**Musée du Louvre, Paris**)

In European history classes, we often hear about renaissance men: Cosimo de’ Medici, Leonardo da Vinci, and Niccolò Machiavelli. Where were the women? The most famous female patron of the Italian renaissance was Isabella d’Este Gonzaga (1474–1539), marchioness of a territory in northern Italy called Mantua. Despite the restrictions women faced, her art collections demonstrate important renaissance themes: possessing the ancient world through the collection of antiquities, demonstrating erudition through the acquisition of classical narratives, and fashioning an identity through portraiture and symbols.

A desire for antiquities

Isabella’s letters reveal a longing for ancient art objects and sculptures. A bust of the Roman emperor Octavian, an onyx vase, a Venus given by Cesare Borgia (the possible illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI), and a Cupid attributed to the ancient Greek sculptor Praxiteles were documented in her collection. Isabella displayed the Praxitelean *Cupid* next to a *Sleeping Cupid* by the renaissance artist Michelangelo in order to compare these ancient and modern sculptures.



Figure **13.7.6.22**: Antico, *Hercules and Antaeus*, 1519, bronze, 43.2 cm high (**Kunsthistorisches Museum**)

When Isabella d'Este could not acquire an ancient sculpture, she turned to the sculptor known as Antico to create statuettes in gold and bronze in an antique style. One bronze sculpture depicted the Greco-Roman hero Hercules lifting and crushing the giant Antaeus in a nude wrestling contest. Cast in 1519, Isabella's *Hercules and Antaeus* is noteworthy for its depiction of musculature. The bronze sculpture was marked with an inscription of ownership, D / ISABEL / LA / M E MAR (Divine Isabella, Marchioness of Mantua). Isabella's *Hercules and Antaeus* measures about 15 inches tall. Scholars have considered how these small sculptures could be examined closely and demonstrate the interactive nature of early modern art reception.



Figure **13.7.6.23**: Giancristoforo Romano, *Portrait medal of Isabella d'Este* [obverse], 1507, bronze, .039 cm diameter (National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection)

A careful patron of portraits

Surviving portraits of Isabella d'Este and accounts of her commissions indicate her careful control of representations of her physical appearance. The sculptor and medallist Gian Cristoforo Romano cast bronze medals featuring an idealized Isabella in profile on the obverse and zodiac symbols on the reverse. The profile portrait shows Isabella wearing a substantial necklace framed by a low, angular neckline and her hair tied back in braids and looped locks surrounded by her name and title. The **reverse** features a personification of a figure in sheer drapery and contrapposto stance, who has been interpreted as Virgo, Astrology, Hygeia, or Victory, with the sign of Sagittarius above surrounded by the inscription BENEMERENTIUM ERGO (variously translated as "On

account of great merit”[1], “Because of merit” [2], “Because of the deserving [stars]”[3]). Isabella distributed bronze versions of the medal to those she favored and retained one medal created in gold and embellished with diamonds and enamel.



Figure **13.7.6.24**: Giancristoforo Romano, *Portrait medal of Isabella d’Este* [obverse], 1495 – 1498, gold with diamonds and enamel, 7 cm diameter (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Leonardo da Vinci also drew an idealized version of Isabella d’Este’s likeness (top of page). While never completed as a painting, Leonardo’s drawing of Isabella (c. 1499–1500) provides a detailed depiction of the marchioness with a profile view of her face and frontal view of her shoulders. Leonardo disguised Isabella’s substantial figure in her billowing sleeves. The attention to her garment reveals Isabella’s interest in fashion, which was a frequent subject of her letters. A drawing after Leonardo’s original reveals that both of Isabella’s hands may have been visible and that one hand gestured toward a book, an attribute of erudition, before Leonardo’s original drawing was cropped along the bottom edge.



Figure 13.7.6.25: View to the Corte Vecchia, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, Italy (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Spaces for Collecting

Soon after Isabella's marriage to Francesco II Gonzaga, the marchioness developed a space for a painting gallery – her *studiolo* – and a room to display her growing collections – the *grotta*. Isabella's original *studiolo* and *grotta* were constructed within the Castello di San Giorgio, the medieval castle that forms part of the Ducal Palace in Mantua. Later, these rooms were moved to the Corte Vecchia of the Ducal Palace. The ground-floor location of these later rooms allowed for the addition of a secret garden and easier access for Isabella, who struggled with mobility as she aged.



Figure 13.7.6.26: Andrea Mantegna, *Mars and Venus (or Parnassus)*, 1497, tempera and gold on canvas, 159 cm × 192 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Isabella sought paintings with mythological themes from significant renaissance artists for her *studiolo*. The program, which scholars continue to debate, was developed in consultation with the humanist scholar Paride da Ceresara. While seven paintings have been interpreted as allegories of virtue conquering vice, another interpretation emphasizes the paintings' roles within the space of the *studiolo* and within the context of humanist literature at the Mantuan court.[4] The painter Andrea Mantegna delivered the first two paintings *Mars and Venus* (or *Parnassus*) in 1497 and ***Pallas expelling the Vices*** in 1502. After much correspondence with Isabella, in 1505, the painter Pietro Perugino delivered the third painting for the studiolo *The Combat of Love and Chastity* (or *Battle between Lasciviousness and Chastity*) featuring Pallas and Diana fighting Venus and Cupid. Perugino's painting did not please Isabella; she wrote that it appeared deficient in comparison to Mantegna's canvases.



Figure **13.7.6.27**: Pietro Perugino, *The Combat of Love and Chastity (or Battle between Lasciviousness and Chastity)*, 1505, oil on canvas, 160 x 191 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Following Mantegna's death, the new Gonzaga court painter, Lorenzo Costa, created a coronation scene, variously titled *Coronation of a Woman Poet* or *Allegory of Isabella d'Este's Coronation* (c. 1504–06), and a second painting entitled ***The Reign of Comus*** (c. 1507–11). Antonio da Correggio contributed *Allegory of Virtue* and *Allegory of Vice* (c. 1528–30) once the *studiolo* was established in the Corte Vecchia. The paintings feature mythological goddesses, especially Pallas Athena, Diana, and Venus, demonstrating Isabella's humanist knowledge and her preference for female figures who exemplified desirable characteristics for the marchioness.



Figure **13.7.6.28**: Antonio da Correggio, *Allegory of Virtue* (left), 1528-30, tempera on canvas, 142 x 86 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris); *Allegory of Vice* (right), 1528-30, tempera on canvas, 149 x 88 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

In her later rooms in the Corte Vecchia, Isabella's *studiolo* was connected to her *grotta* through a carved marble doorway attributed to Gian Cristoforo Romano. The *grotta* also featured Isabella's personal symbols or *imprese* (emblems) ornamenting the ceiling. Gian Cristoforo Romano's gold medal and Antico's *Hercules and Antaeus* (mentioned above) were also on display in the *grotta*. The inventory conducted after Isabella's death revealed the extensive collections acquired over her lifetime.

Beyond the Ducal Palace

While the Ducal Palace provided spaces to display her collections, Isabella looked forward to leaving its dark, damp environment. Her suburban villa, the Palazzo di Porto, provided an opportunity for escape with its gardens, fruit trees, and loggia. This environment was ideal for displaying and possibly using Isabella's maiolica service, as earthenware dishes were preferred to silver in country villas. Decorated with mythological and **Old Testament** narratives, as well as her coat-of-arms and emblems, the twenty-three surviving dishes of the maiolica service used classical imagery to emphasize Isabella's personal virtue in a manner that echoed her collections in the Ducal Palace.



Figure **13.7.6.29**: Nicola da Urbino, Armorial Plate (tondino): The story of King Midas, c. 1520–25, maiolica (tin-glazed earthenware), 27.5 cm diameter (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

While often identified as the most significant female collector of the renaissance, Isabella d'Este is notable among *all* early modern patrons, both male and female, due to the variety of her collections, which span a broad range of materials, iconographic sources, and historical periods. Although Isabella's paintings and art objects have long been dispersed from their original locations, the marchioness's rooms in the Corte Vecchia remain in Mantua, Italy and allow us to imagine the original splendor of this collection.

Notes

[1] Stephen Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 333.

[2] Eleonora Luciano, "Isabella d'Este," cat. 92 in *The Renaissance Portrait: From Donatello to Bellini*, ed. Keith Christiansen and Stefan Weppelmann (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), pp. 139-141.

[3] J. Graham Pollard, "Text and Image" in *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal*, ed. Stephen Scher, pp. 149-164.

[4] Stephen Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

Essay based on Lisa Boutin Vitela, "Isabella d'Este and Art," in IDEA: Isabella d'Este Archive, November 2017, http://ideaart.web.unc.edu/isabella-deste-art/

Additional Resources:

Isabella d'Este Archive: Virtual Studiolo project

Isabella d'Este Archive: The Illustrated Credenza

Louvre: Portrait of Isabella d'Este

Louvre: Isabella d'Este's Studiolo

National Gallery of Art and the Oxford University Press: Isabella Collects

Francis Ames-Lewis, *Isabella and Leonardo: The Artistic Relationship between Isabella d'Este and Leonardo da Vinci, 1500-1506* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Clifford Brown, *Isabella d'Este in the Ducal Palace in Mantua: An overview of her rooms in the Castello di San Giorgio and the Corte Vecchia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2005).

Stephen Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

Barbara Furlotti and Guido Rebecchini, *The Art of Mantua: Power and Patronage in the Renaissance*, translated by A. Lawrence Jenkins (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008).

The Medici collect the Americas

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.6.30**: Woodcut of the Wunderkammer room, from Ferrante Imperato, "Dell'historia naturale…" Libri XXVIII (Naples, 1599) (photo: **Wellcome Collection**, CC BY 4.0)

Americana and cabinets of curiosities

After Christopher Columbus landed on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola in 1492 and the subsequent **Spanish invasion and colonization** of much of the Americas, material objects, flora, and fauna from these faraway lands were shipped back to Europe where many people perceived them as exotic items of wonder and fascination. Americana—objects sent from the Americas—were found in numerous cabinets of curiosities (also known as ***Wunderkammern***). Cabinets of curiosities first appeared in sixteenth-century Europe as a way to display items perceived as exotic, curious, and wondrous. The strategy of collecting Americana and displaying it in cabinets of curiosities offered a way to engage with the Americas for those who might never undertake the voyage. In a sense, we might even say that this allowed Europeans to take possession of these distant lands.

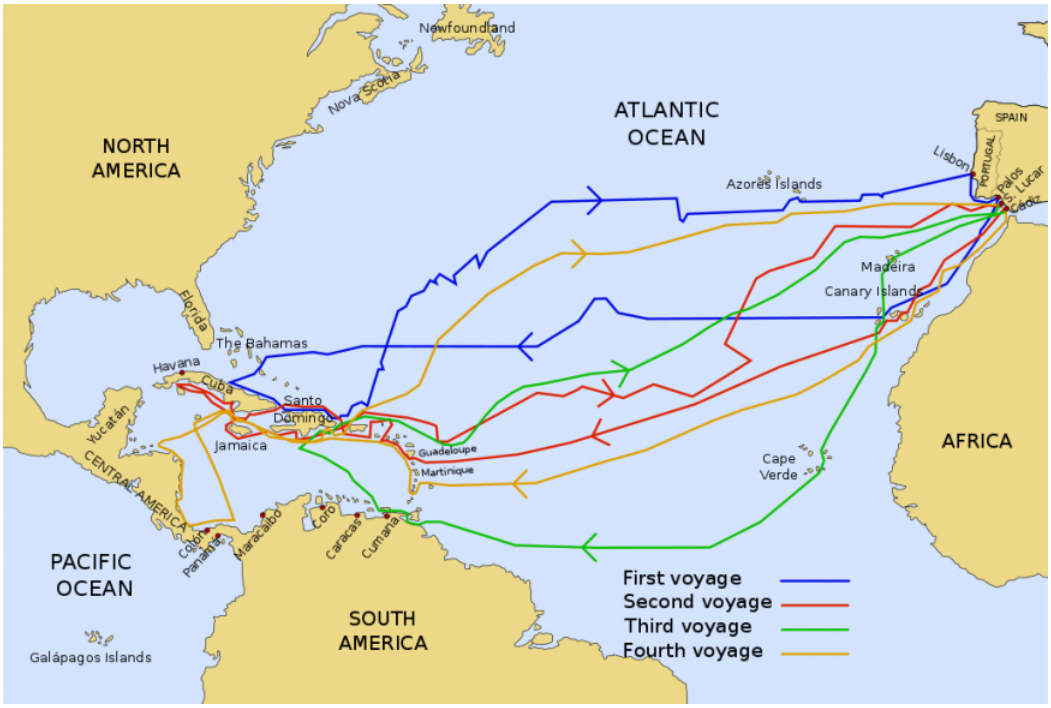


Figure **13.7.6.31**: Map of Christopher Columbus's voyages to the Americas

The origin of cabinets of curiosities in the sixteenth century coincides with the discovery, by Europeans, that the world was much larger than they previously believed. It also coincides with the invasion and the **colonization** of the Americas and the millions of people who lived there. Technological and scientific advancements in mapping and navigation spurred interest in collecting items from around the globe, as well as the instruments needed to create maps and sail the seas.

Cabinets of curiosity created a microcosm of a world that could be studied, ordered, and understood, but they were not spaces in which just anyone could encounter and study such objects, these were personal spaces for the elite (and anyone they invited). They often combined human-made (*artificialia*), natural elements (*naturalia*), and scientific objects and instruments (*scientifica*), as we see in Ferrante Imperato's 1599 illustration of a *Wunderkammern*.

Of the *naturalia* sent from the Americas, living animals—especially birds—were among the most popular. Turkeys, parrots, and macaws were among the birds that arrived in Europe. The armored appearance of armadillos were also a continuous source of wonder; and their shell retained its shape, even if they died on the transatlantic voyage. Apparently, some were even gilded and displayed on pillars in Europe.

Among the human-made items from the Americas found in Renaissance curiosity cabinets are **Olmec masks**, Mesoamerican codices (such as the ***Codex Vaticanus A***), **New Spanish featherworks**, Brazilian hammocks, Taíno objects, and more. Among the most exceptional objects to first enter European *Wunderkammern* were those sent by Hernán Cortés in 1519, as gifts to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Turquoise masks, golden figurines, featherworks, and more were met with excitement and amazement by people in Toledo, Valladolid, and eventually Brussels. Albrecht Dürer even remarked that "In all my life I have seen nothing that made my heart rejoice so much as these things. Here I have found wonderful, costly things and I have marveled at the subtle ingenuity of people in strange lands."[1]

The Medici Popes

Among the most avid collectors of Americana were members of the powerful Florentine Medici family. Medici popes Leo X (Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici, who reigned as Pope from 1513–21) and Clement VII (Giulio di Giuliano de' Medici, who reigned from 1523–34) collected Americana—and in fact were some of the earliest to do so. They never traveled across the Atlantic, yet their desire to understand these lands increased, especially with ongoing evangelization attempts. **Leo X** commissioned frescoes filled with American flora and fauna. For instance, he commissioned the artist Giovanni di Udine to paint maize (also known as corn and first domesticated by indigenous peoples in southern Mexico about 10,000 years ago) in festoons in the Loggias (designed by **Raphael**) in the Vatican palace.



Figure 13.7.6.32: Giovanni da Udine, Loggia of Cupid and Psyche, Villa Farnesina, Rome (with detail of festoon showing maize), 1506-10, built for Agostino Chigi, treasurer for Pope Julius II (photo: Jean-Pierre Dalbéra, CC BY 2.0)

Udine had, though, painted the first known depictions of maize earlier, between 1515–17, in the festoons around frescoes by Raphael in the Loggia of Psyche within the Villa Farnesina in Rome, which belonged to the wealthy Sienese banker Agostino Chigi. Pope Clement VII was likewise among the earliest patrons to commission artworks that depicted subjects related to this foreign world which he had never seen with his own eyes. In his Villa Madama (Sala di Giulio Romano, c. 1520) in Rome, he had Udine paint a naturalistic turkey along with other birds like peacocks.

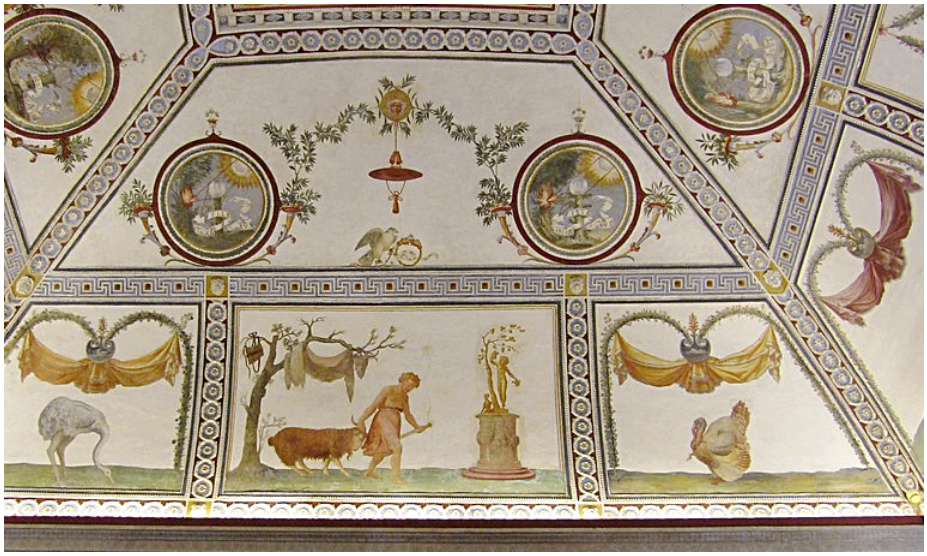


Figure 13.7.6.33: Giovanni da Udine, Villa Madama, Rome, 1523-27

Popes Leo X and Clement VII also actively acquired Americana as well. In 1514, the Portuguese king, Manuel I, sent Leo X a gift of flora and fauna from the Americas and India. It is likely that part of this gift included plants like maize and beans from the Americas, as well as the special gift of an elephant, called Hanno, from India, of whom Leo was extremely fond.

The Ñudzavui (Mixtec) *Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus I*, one of the few surviving pre-conquest Mesoamerican screenfold codices, was owned by Clement VII. The King of Portugal reportedly sent it to Clement VII, along with other gifts from the Americas, sometime before 1523. A decade later, the Medici pope received another gift of objects from the Spanish Dominican friar, Domingo de Betanzos, who had traveled to New Spain to aid in evangelizing the indigenous populations. The Dominican friar apparently gifted the pope featherworks, Ñudzavui turquoise masks, and codices.



Figure **13.7.6.34**: Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1, image from a **facsimile edition** (original in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Austria)

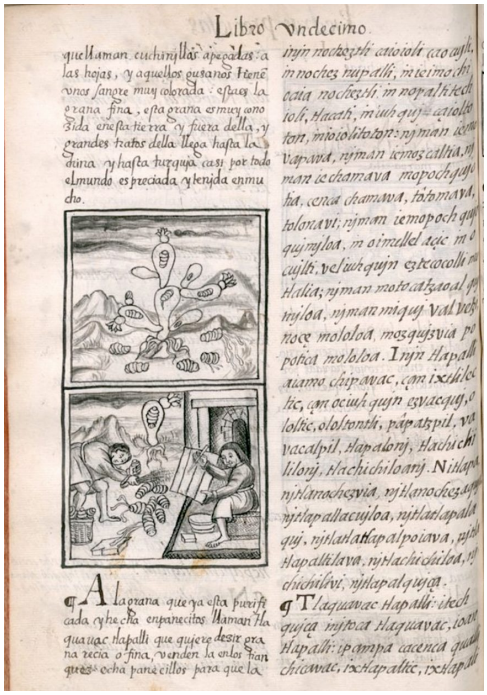


Figure **13.7.6.35**: Bernardino de Sahagún, General History of the Things of New Spain: *The Florentine Codex*, Book 11, volume 3, p. 748.

The First Grand Duke: Cosimo I de' Medici

Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (who reigned from 1537–1574) and his wife, Duchess Eleanora di Toledo, like their Medici family members, never traveled to the Americas. But they too continued to acquire plants, animals, and other objects from these far-away lands. They also commissioned artworks that made visual reference to the Americas, possibly as a way to participate in a vicarious conquest of these foreign peoples and places. Cosimo was partly able to collect Americana because of his marriage to Eleanora, a noblewoman of the Spanish court. Their marriage in 1539 helped to cement a Medici alliance with Spain, which would aid Cosimo in his collecting practices. The two grew maize, and apparently even started to cultivate tomatoes and medicinal plants (also introduced from the Americas). Cosimo had live birds, including turkeys, at Medici estates. Beyond their interest in living flora and fauna, the Medici Duke and Duchess also had also obtained a number of objects from the Americas, including **mosaic masks**, objects made of jade, and feather cloaks.

How items such as these were listed in Medici inventories reveals the challenges that Europeans faced when classifying Amerindian objects. In a 1553 inventory, Aztec masks were listed under 'jewelry' (*goia*), but not long thereafter in another inventory they were listed as "theatrical masks" (*maschera*) in an attempt to compare them with recognizable European forms with clear functions. At this time there was also an interest in Greco-Roman theatrical masks, so perhaps the Aztec masks were

eventually believed to function in a similar capacity. This reframing of Mesoamerican masks—from jewelry to masks—could also relate to broader ways in which Europeans were trying to understand and reconcile American objects, many of which were unfamiliar to them. [2]

Grand Dukes Francesco I (1574 to 87) and Ferdinando I (1587 to 1609)



Figure **13.7.6.36**: Jacopo Ligozzi, *Psittacus Ararauna* (Blue and Gold Macaw), c. 1580-1600, 67 x 45.6 cm (Uffizi)

Cosimo and Eleanora's eldest son, Francesco, was similarly drawn to the *naturalia* and *artificialia* of the Americas, sharing his father's keen interest in birds and plants. At one point, he commissioned Jacopo Ligozzi to create naturalistic drawings of local and exotic plants and animals, some of which came from the Americas. Among the most remarkable are his depictions of a pineapple, a macaw, and the American century plant (*Agave americana*), all drawn circa 1570.



Figure **13.7.6.37**: Jacopo Ligozzi, Pineapple (*Bromelia ananas*) and *Agave americana*, c. 1570

Ligozzi had live models on which to base his clearly articulated images, and his almost microscopic details were praised. Francesco's interest in the American *naturalia* extended to his experiments as well. In the Casino di San Marco in Florence which had workshops, including the Medici porcelain factory, Francesco conducted experiments and studied his collection of plants and animals. Like his father, he continued to grow plants, some of them from the Americas, in a nearby botanical garden. He would use some in his alchemical experiments, creating medicines and other distillations. Francesco often gifted objects and *naturalia* from the Americas to other high-ranking individuals who were similarly fascinated with items from distant lands. One sumptuous gift was given to Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria in 1572, and it included featherworks, gold and silver figurines, parrots, food items, and more.

Francesco's younger brother, Ferdinando, also had a desire to collect Americana. As a cardinal in Rome, he acquired numerous objects, such as multiple featherworks, one of which was a bishop's mitre. He also came into ownership of the **Florentine Codex**, an encyclopedia produced between 1575 and 1577 under the direction of the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagun along with indigenous collaborators. This twelve volume text included discussion of cochineal, which produced a highly coveted red dye, along with other types of resources from the Americas. One can imagine Ferdinando's interest in possibly learning from the Florentine Codex how to manufacture cochineal.



Figure **13.7.6.38**: Jacopo Ligozzi, *Passiflora coerulea*

When Francesco died in 1587, and Ferdinando became Grand Duke of Florence, he moved from Rome to Florence with his collection. Ligozzi, who had remained in the employ of the Medici court even after Francesco's death, would then paint, at the request of Ferdinando, one of his most well-known and final botanical images: the *Passiflora coerulea*, or the passion flower (or Granadilla or maracot originally). Previously unknown to Europeans, it had only recently become known, and sent across the Atlantic to Europe. The plant sparked immense curiosity because of the manner in which it visually evoked the crown of thorns, and so became a powerful Christian symbol.

Knowing the unknown

Medici fascination with Americana in the sixteenth century was certainly not unique. Across Europe, many powerful individuals sought to acquire objects taken from the Americas, as a way to know the unknown, to exert some control over the colonial processes underway, and to possess exotic and rare things. The Medici popes and three grand dukes provide a more focused example of the ways in which Americana intersected with European interests in conquest and colonization, science and alchemy, and collecting and visual culture in the sixteenth century.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Lydia Parker.

Footnotes

[1] Adriana Turpin, “The New World collections of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici and their role in the creation of a Kunst- and Wunderkammer in the Palazzo Vecchio,” *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr (London: Ashgate, 2006), p. 64.

[2] Isabel Yaya, “Wonders of America: The Curiosity Cabinet as a Site of Representation and Knowledge,” *Journal of the History of Collections* (2008), pp. 1–16.; Turpin, p. 73.

Additional resources

The Medici Collections of the Museo Galileo, on Google Arts and Culture

Collecting for the Kunstkammer on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Christian F. Feest, “The Collecting of American Indian Artifacts in Europe, 1493–1750,” in America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 324–60.

J. Janick and G. Caneva, “The First Images of Maize in Europe,” *Maydica* 50 (2005), pp. 71–80.

Eloise Quiñones Keber, “Collecting Cultures: A Mexican Manuscript in the Vatican Library,” in *Reframing the Renaissance*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 229–42.

Lia Markey, *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence* (Penn State University Press, 2016).

Peter Mason, “From Presentation to Representation: Americana in Europe,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 6 (1994), pp. 1–20.

Larry Silver, “Europe’s Global Vision,” in *Blackwell Companions to Art History: A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, ed. Babette Bohn and James M. Saslow (Wiley, 2013).

Adriana Turpin, “The New World collections of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici and their role in the creation of a Kunst- and Wunderkammer in the Palazzo Vecchio,” *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr (London: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 63–85.

Isabel Yaya, “Wonders of America: The Curiosity Cabinet as a Site of Representation and Knowledge,” *Journal of the History of Collections* (2008), pp. 1–16.

Galileo Galilei

by DR. JOSEPH DAUBEN



Figure **13.7.6.39**: Ottavio Leoni, *Portrait of Galileo*, 1624, engraving and etching (Fitzwilliam Museum)

Renaissance artists—painters, sculptors and architects—had been observing nature with a special interest in depicting it faithfully and realistically from the early 15th century on. In fact, by turning to the problem of art and science in the Renaissance, it is possible to find the roots for Galileo's own peculiarly realistic—and idealistic—approach to nature. The values and attitudes Galileo held were ones he shared with Italian humanists, including philosophers, artisans, and even musicians.

The experiment at Pisa

Galileo Galilei was born near Pisa in 1564—the same year in which Shakespeare was born and the year in which Michelangelo and Calvin died. After studying at the University of Pisa, he was appointed to the chair of mathematics—and as the photograph below reminds us, it was in Pisa that the famous leaning tower might well have suggested Galileo's most famous experiment.



Figure **13.7.6.40**: Bell tower, Pisa (photo: **bombman**, CC BY 2.0)

First of all, the theory that virtually everyone accepted at the time, was the traditional theory of Aristotle—who believed that heavier objects fall more quickly than lighter ones. Consider, for example, two objects—one twice as heavy as the other. Imagine Aristotle at the top of the leaning tower of Pisa, dropping off two cannonballs, one twice as heavy as the other. According to Aristotle, it should fall twice as fast. If it were four times heavier, it should fall four times faster.

But in fact, what the leaning tower of Pisa type of experiment demonstrates, when actually performed, is that Aristotle was wrong, that no matter what the difference in weight, two heavy objects will fall simultaneously at virtually the same speed. If Aristotle were right, this could only happen if the larger stones were dropped from a higher point in the clouds—but at virtually the same time—or that the lighter ones started falling earlier than the heavier ones—neither of which seemed very probable to Galileo. Instead, the simplest explanation was simply that heavy or light, all stones fell simultaneously with the same speed.

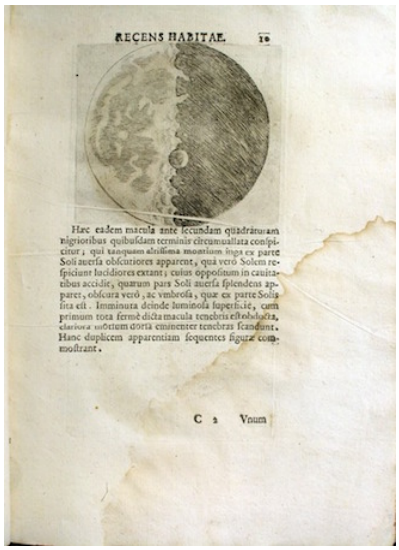


Figure **13.7.6.41**: Image of the moon, from Galileo's presentation copy of the *Sidereus nuncius* (1610) (image: courtesy History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries)

In any case, Galileo's interest soon turned from falling bodies to astronomy. Rumors of an invention made by a Dutch spectacle-maker reached Venice, and these led Galileo to construct his first telescope in July of 1609. It wasn't long before Galileo began to make a series of startling observations, including the discovery of innumerable stars never seen before, mountains on the moon, the movements of which he carefully plotted from day to day.

He was soon to publish these discoveries in a book, the *Siderius Nuncius (Starry Messenger)* which caused an overnight sensation. Galileo named the moons of Jupiter the "medicean planets"—in honor of his former student Cosmo and the famous Medici family—thanks to which he was shortly thereafter appointed Chief Mathematician and Philosopher to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Florence.

The heavens are imperfect

All of these discoveries—and others—posed yet more direct challenges to Aristotle's idea of the perfection of the heavens (namely that the heavens were perfect, immutable, unchanging). Some Aristotelian astronomers refused to look through Galileo's telescope, others tried to deny what he had seen. The Roman Catholic Church, however, was becoming increasingly concerned—and a young Dominican, Tommaso Caccini, was the first to denounce Galileo officially and the Copernican theory his observations seemed to support from the pulpit during a sermon in Santa Maria Novella.

Arrest and trial

A few years later, as concerns mounted, Galileo was officially advised by Cardinal Bellarmino on the Pope's behalf to proceed cautiously and speak only hypothetically about the Copernican theory, but not as if it were actually real.

Galileo returned to Florence and continued work on his book, but now he gave more emphasis to mathematical arguments rather than to experimental or physical arguments—as the Pope wished. But when the book finally appeared in 1632, it raised an immediate storm of protest leading immediately to Galileo's arrest and famous trial by the Inquisition in Rome that found him guilty of having published a heretical book. In the end, Galileo had no choice but to repent and confess that he had gone too far.



Figure **13.7.6.42**: Bust of Galileo (detail), Giambattosta Foggini, *Tomb of Galileo*, 1727, Santa Croce, Florence, Italy

He was sentenced to life imprisonment, which he spent, for the most part, at his own villa at Arcetri near Florence, under the surveillance of the Inquisition. Even so, Galileo, in his last years, now undertook his last and perhaps greatest work, his *Discourses on the Two New Sciences*, which has been described as "the cornerstone of modern physics." When Galileo died in 1642, totally blind and almost 78 years old, Pope Urban VIII did not forget his feud with Galileo, and refused to permit his burial with a suitable monument—instead, Galileo was buried unceremoniously in the Church of Santa Croce, in Florence. A few hundred years later were his remains moved to their present magnificent tomb, opposite that of Michelangelo, near the entrance to the church.

Nature is mathematical

Galileo believed that nature was inherently mathematical, that mathematics was the language of nature—that mathematics was the key to understanding the reality behind the appearance of natural phenomena (for example, accelerated and parabolic motions). What Galileo achieved in revolutionizing physics was to show how observation, careful measurement, and attention to the structure of a given event—all led to an appreciation of hidden causes that ultimately expressed the pervasive mathematical unity of all nature.

Galileo and Renaissance art

by DR. JOSEPH DAUBEN

Renaissance artists had contributed greatly to man's knowledge by the time Galileo was doing his first work at Pisa. The humanist artists of the Italian renaissance had performed their own dissections to promote the study of anatomy, they had invented mathematical perspective to make possible the accurate, realistic portrayal of physical space. The literary humanists had managed to revive all sorts of classics, in particular the works of Plato. Christopher Columbus had directly challenged the limits to the finite European world of Ptolemy's geography. In short, the bounds of human knowledge were expanding at a rapid rate.



Figure **13.7.6.43**: Virgin Mary (detail) "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet" (Apocalypse 12:1), Ludovico Cigoli, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1612, fresco (Pauline Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Italy)

Thus it comes as no surprise that Italian artists of Galileo's day responded favorably, even enthusiastically, to the new discoveries that science itself was making. It was Galileo's friend, Lodovico Cigoli, who incorporated the latest discoveries of his telescope, hot off the press in Galileo's *Siderius Nuncius* (1610) in his own version of the *Assumption of the Virgin* painted just two years later in 1612. In Cigoli's painting, notice the treatment of the moon at the Virgin's feet—rendered as though it were seen though the telescope, exactly as Galileo had recorded it in his own pen and ink drawing only a few years earlier.[1]

Mathematics is the language of nature

In closing, how can we draw together all of the diverse strands of renaissance artistic realism, especially Brunelleschi's discovery of perspective, with Galileo's experiments on acceleration and his analysis of projectile motion?

It is clear that renaissance artists were seeking a new world, thanks in part to mathematics and the new perspective, literally, that mathematics provided. Galileo not only inherited this perspective, but a philosophical sense as well that had been inspired by renaissance philosophers (especially Neoplatonists), namely that the underlying reality of the world we perceive is essentially mathematical.

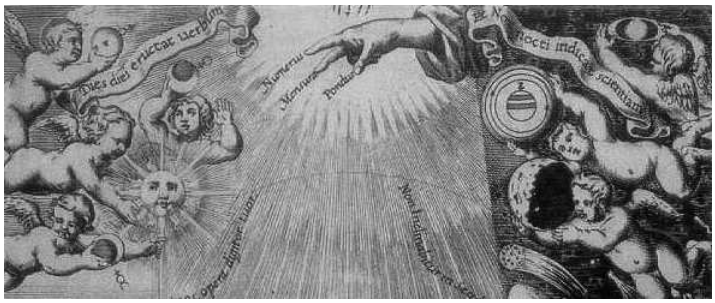


Figure **13.7.6.44**: Hand of God (detail), G.B. Riccioli, frontispiece, *Almagestum Novum* (1651)

This was exactly the point made in Riccioli's dramatic depiction of the hand of God, creating the world according to mathematical principles, number and weight and measure written clearly on his fingers to make no mistake about the inherent, essential mathematical character of the physical world.

Renaissance artists and architects had already succeeded in translating physical space into the mathematical terms of proportion and perspective to produce works that tricked the eye and rivaled nature.

Galileo used mathematics with equal skill to reveal the underlying structure of physical space and motion to show that these, too, could be reduced to mathematical analysis. In connecting physical space and real motion—which could be observed experimentally—with the ideal and uniform change of his neo-platonic, mathematical world, Galileo also serves to bridge the early stages of the

scientific revolution in Europe—and figures like Copernicus and Kepler—with the later unifying achievements of Descartes, Newton and Leibniz.

Thus in a very direct way, it was mathematics that not only facilitated the art of renaissance perspective, but provided the key as well to Galileo's new science of nature. In both cases, the essence of physical reality was understood in terms that could be reduced to basic mathematical principles.

1. See Steven F. Ostrow, "Cigoli's Immacolata and Galileo's Moon: Astronomy and the Virgin in early seicento Rome," *Art Bulletin*, vol. LXXVIII, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 218-235 (**online here**). Ostrow writes:

> ***Edgerton has argued that Cigoli's moon was 'no doubt inspired by one of Galileo's original drawings, but a comparison between them immediately reveals that the painter did not, in fact, faithfully copy any of the drawings or, for that matter, any of the engravings published in the Sidereus nuncius.' In light of Cigoli`s professed difficulty with Latin, it is also unlikely that he relied on Galileo's written description. We do know, however, that by early 1612 Cigoli was in possession of a telescope, through which, as he proudly informed Galileo, he saw the moon 'very well.' He may, therefore, have made his own drawings of the moon in conjunction with his work on the fresco, inspired by what he had learned from Galileo and perhaps, too, in an effort to corroborate his friend`s discoveries in the face of mounting criticism in Rome.***

Additional resources:

David L. Butts, "Galileo and the Telescope: Naturalistic Representations in Visual Astronomy," *Journal of Art History*, vol. 1 (2006).

The Partnership of Art and Science: The Moon of Cigoli and Galileo

See Steven F. Ostrow, "Cigoli's Immacolata and Galileo's Moon: Astronomy and the Virgin in early seicento Rome," *Art Bulletin*, vol. LXXVIII, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 218-235 (online here).

Central and Northern Italy in the 16th century

This is a period of ambitious commissions—the Sistine Chapel ceiling, the Tomb of Pope Julius II...

1500 - 1600

Leonardo da Vinci

About Leonardo

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

> ***The heavens often rain down the richest gifts on human beings, but sometimes they bestow with lavish abundance upon a single individual beauty, grace and ability, so that whatever he does, every action is so divine that he distances all other men, and clearly displays how his greatness is a gift of God and not an acquirement of human art. Men saw this in Leonardo. (Vasari, Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects)***

Leonardo: From Florence to Milan

Leonardo was born illegitimate to a prominent Tuscan family of potters and notaries. He may have traveled from Vinci to Florence where his father worked for several powerful families including the Medici. At age seventeen, Leonardo reportedly apprenticed with the Florentine artist Verrocchio. Here, Leonardo gained an appreciation for the achievements of Giotto and Masaccio and in 1472 he joined the artists' guild, Compagnia di San Luca.



Figure **13.7.6.45**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Head of Leda*, c. 1504-06, pen and ink over black chalk, 14.7 x 17.7 cm (Royal Collection trust, UK)

Because of his family's ties, Leonardo benefited when Lorenzo de' Medici (the Magnificent) ruled Florence. By 1478 Leonardo was completely independent of Verrocchio and may have then met the exiled Ludovico Sforza, the future Duke of Milan (Ludovico ruled as regent from 1481-94, before becoming Duke). In 1482, Leonardo arrived in Milan bearing a silver lyre (which he may have been able to play), a gift for Ludovico Sforza from the Florentine ruler, Lorenzo the Magnificent. Ludovico sought to transform Milan into a center of humanist learning to rival Florence.



Figure **13.7.6.46**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Superficial anatomy of the shoulder and neck*, c. 1510, pen and ink over black chalk, 29.2 x 19.8 cm (Royal Collection trust, UK)

Leonardo flourished in this intellectual environment. He opened a studio, received numerous commissions, instructed students, and began to systematically record his scientific and artistic investigations in a series of notebooks. The archetypal "renaissance man," Leonardo was an unrivaled painter, an accomplished architect, an engineer, cartographer, and scientist (he was particularly interested in biology and physics). He was influenced by a variety of ancient texts including Plato's *Timaeus*, Ptolemy's *Cosmography*, and Vitruvius's *On Architecture*. Leonardo is credited with having assisted Luca Pacioli with his treatise, *Divina Proportione* (1509). Joining the practical and the theoretical, Leonardo designed numerous mechanical devices for battle, including a submarine, and even experimented with designs for flight.

In a now famous letter (likely written in the early 1480s), Leonardo listed his talents to the future Duke, focusing mostly on his abilities as a military engineer. The letter begins:

> ***Having until now sufficiently studied and examined the experiments of all those who claim to be experts and inventors of war machines, and having found that their machines do not differ in the least from those ordinarily in use, I shall make so bold, without wanting to cause harm to anyone, as to address myself to Your Excellency to divulge my secrets to him, and offer to demonstrate to him, at his pleasure, all the things briefly enumerated below.***

In ten short paragraphs, Leonardo enumerated the service he could perform—he said (among other things) that he could build bridges, tunnels, fortresses, and "make siege guns, mortars and other machines, of beautiful and practical shape, completely different from what is generally in use." What might seem amazing to us is that it is not until the very last paragraph that Leonardo mentions art, and he mentions it so modestly! Here is what he wrote:

> ***In time of peace, I believe I am capable of giving you as much satisfaction as anyone, whether it be in architecture, for the construction of public or private buildings, or in bringing water from one place to another. Item, I can sculpt in marble, bronze or terracotta; while in painting, my work is the equal of anyone's.***

Return to Florence, then France

In 1489, Leonardo secured a long awaited contract with Ludovico and was honored with the title, "The Florentine Apelles," a reference to an ancient Greek painter revered for his great naturalism. Leonardo returned to Florence when Ludovico was deposed by the French King, Charles VII. While there, Leonardo would meet the Niccolò Machiavelli, author of *The Prince* and his future patron, François I (who ruled France from 1515-47). In 1516, after numerous invitations, Leonardo traveled to France and joined the royal court. Leonardo died on May 2, 1519 in the king's chateau at Cloux.

Leonardo's death and the changing status of the artist

Vasari, who wrote *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550), had this to say about Leonardo's death:

> ***Finally, having grown old, he remained ill many months, and, feeling himself near to death, asked to have himself diligently informed of the teaching of the Catholic faith, and of the good way and holy Christian religion; and then, with many moans, he confessed and was penitent; and although he could not raise himself well on his feet, supporting himself on the arms of his friends and servants, he was pleased to take devoutly the most holy Sacrament, out of his bed. The King, who was wont often and lovingly to visit him, then came into the room; wherefore he, out of reverence, having raised himself to sit upon the bed, giving him an account of his sickness and the circumstances of it, showed withal how much he had offended God and mankind in not having worked at his art as he should have done. Thereupon he was seized by a paroxysm, the messenger of death; for which reason the King having risen and having taken his head, in order to assist him and show him favour, to then end that he might alleviate his pain, his spirit, which was divine, knowing that it could not have any greater honour, expired in the arms of the King.***

This story is a good indication of the changing status of the artist—Leonardo, who spent the last years of his life in France working for King Francis I, was often visited by the King (remember that the artist was considered only a skilled artisan in the Middle Ages and for much of the Early Renaissance). In the High Renaissance, in contrast, we find that artists are considered intellectuals, and that they keep company with the highest levels of society. Quite a change! All of this has to do with Humanism in the Renaissance of course, and the growing recognition of the achievement of great individuals. Artists in the Early Renaissance insisted that they should be considered intellectuals because they worked with their minds as well as with their hands. They defended this position by

pointing to the scientific tools that they used to make their work more naturalistic—the study of human anatomy, of mathematics and geometry, of linear perspective. These were clearly all intellectual pursuits.



Figure **13.7.6.47**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Portrait of a man in red chalk (self-portrait)*, c. 1512, red chalk on paper (Biblioteca Reale, Turin)

Look closely at this self-portrait. Isn't it clear that Leonardo thought of himself as a thinker, a philosopher, an intellectual?

Leonardo's naturalism

Ancient Greek physicians dissected cadavers. The early church's rejection of the science of the classical world, along with the possibility of bodily resurrection led to prohibitions against dissection. Both Leonardo and Michelangelo performed them—probably exclusively on the bodies of executed criminals. According to his own count, Leonardo dissected 30 corpses during his lifetime.

Additional resources:

Universal Leonardo

Vitruvian Man from Stanford University

Leonardo, Letter to the Duke of Milan

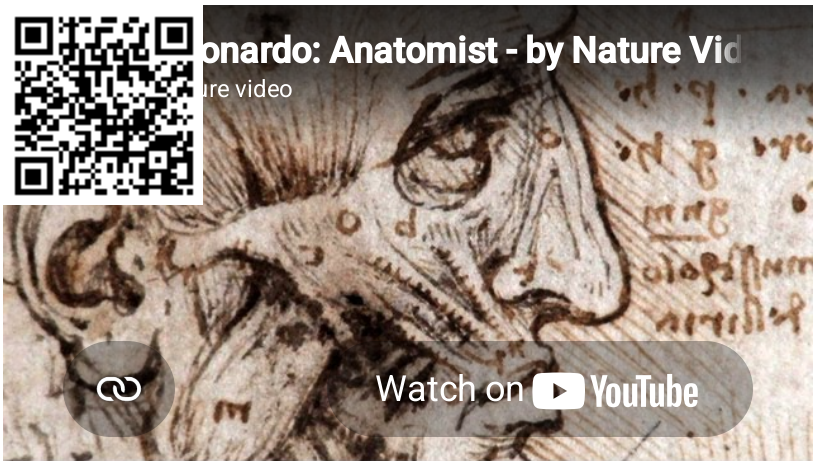
by DR. DAVID DROGIN



Video **13.7.6.2**: Leonardo da Vinci, Letter to the Duke of Milan

Leonardo: Anatomist

by NATURE VIDEO



Video **13.7.6.3**: Video from Nature Video

Leonardo and his drawings

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Born near the town of Vinci in 1452, Leonardo trained in the Florentine workshop of Andrea Verrocchio (1435-88). His first masterpiece was the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* (1481, Uffizi, Florence). In 1481-2 he travelled to Milan to work for the Duke, where he painted the ***Virgin of the Rocks*** (Musée du Louvre, Paris-a later version exists in the National Gallery, London) and the ***Last Supper*** (1495-7; Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie (Refectory), Milan). In 1499 he travelled to Mantua and Venice, arriving back in Florence in 1500.



Figure **13.7.6.48**: Leonardo da Vinci, Studies of horsemen for the *Battle of Anghiari*, pen and brown ink, c. 1503, 8.2 x 12 cm, Italy
© Trustees of the British Museum.

In 1503 he began the cartoon of the *Battle of Anghiari* with its scenes of ferocious fighting for the wall in the Great Council Chamber of the Palazzo Vecchio, but this work was never completed. He returned to Milan in 1506 for seven years and in 1513 he moved to Rome. The French king, Francis I, invited him to his court and about 1516, Leonardo settled in the manor of Cloux, near Amboise in the Loire valley. Leonardo died there in 1519.

Leonardo is arguably the greatest draughtsman in Western art. He was technically superb in whichever medium he used: silverpoint, pen and ink, black and particularly red chalks. Driven by his scientific curiosity, he studied the world around him in minutest detail, making botanical and anatomical studies. In his drawings and paintings he created figures which lived, breathed, moved and gave expression to their emotions.

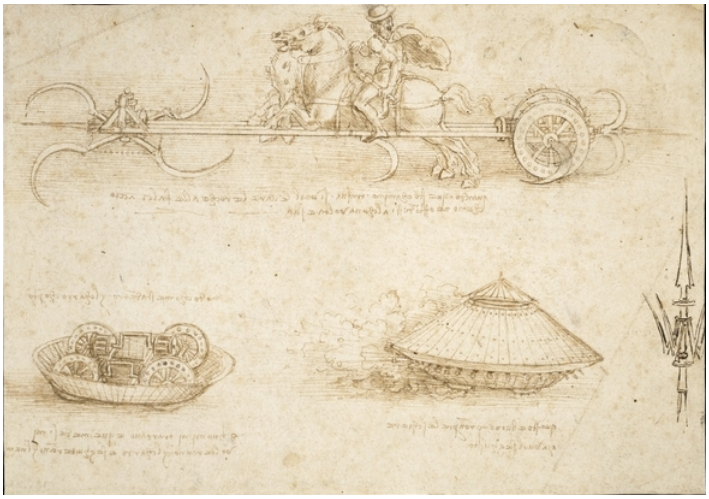


Figure **13.7.6.49**: Leonardo da Vinci, *Military Machines*, drawing from a notebook, c. 1487, 173 x 245 cm, Italy © Trustees of the British Museum

This is one of a number of sheets of drawings by Leonardo in which he designed instruments of war. He drew them while working for Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan (1494–99). Under each drawing in ink and brown wash, Leonardo has written words of explanation in his characteristic reversed writing (that is it needs to be read in a mirror).

At the top of the sheet is a chariot with scythes on all sides. Below it Leonardo has written: “when this travels through your men, you will wish to raise the shafts of the scythes so that you will not injure anyone on your side.” At lower left is an upturned armored car without its roof, showing “the way the car is arranged inside” with the line “eight men operate it and the same men turn the car and pursue the enemy.” At lower right, the same tank-like vehicle is shown moving and firing its guns, with the line below: “this is good for breaking the ranks, but you will want to follow it up.” At the far right is a more conventional weapon of the time, a large pike or halberd, perhaps more ceremonial than practical.

Leonardo’s fertile imagination and scientific knowledge are here combined in the creation of war machines for his warlike patron. It is highly unlikely, however, that any of these machines were ever made or used in contemporary warfare. Indeed, as Leonardo himself wrote in his Notebooks, such new weapons were often as dangerous to their users as to the enemy.

Suggested readings:

M. Kemp and J. Roberts, *Leonardo da Vinci* (Hayward Gallery, London, 1989).

A.E. Popham and P. Pouncey, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Raphael and His Circle* (London, The British Museum Press, 1950).

M. Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci* (London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1981).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Leonardo, *Adoration of the Magi*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.6.4: Leonardo da Vinci, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1481, oil on panel (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Leonardo, *The Virgin of the Rocks*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.6.5: Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*, c. 1491-1508, oil on panel, 189.5 x 120 cm (The National Gallery, London)



Figure **13.7.6.50**: Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*, c. 1483-86, oil on panel, 199 x 122 cm (Louvre, Paris)

There are two versions of Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks* (the version in the Louvre was painted first). These two paintings are a good place to start to define the qualities of the new style of the High Renaissance. Leonardo painted both in Milan, where he had moved from Florence.

Normally when we have seen Mary and Christ (in, for example, paintings by Lippi and Giotto), Mary has been enthroned as the queen of heaven. Here, in contrast, we see Mary seated on the ground. This type of representation of Mary is referred to as the Madonna of Humility.



Figure **13.7.6.51**: Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*, c. 1491-1508, 189.5 x 120 cm, oil on panel, (National Gallery, London)

Mary has her right arm around the infant Saint John the Baptist who is making a gesture of prayer to the Christ child. The Christ child in turn blesses St. John. Mary's left hand hovers protectively over the head of her son while an angel looks out and points to St. John. The figures are all located in a fabulous and mystical landscape with rivers that seem to lead nowhere and bizarre rock formations that recall the Dolomite mountains of northeastern Italy. In the foreground we see carefully observed and precisely rendered plants and flowers.



Figure **13.7.6.52**: Mary, St. John, Christ and an angel (detail), Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*, c. 1483-86, oil on panel, 199 x 122 cm (Louvre, Paris)

We immediately notice Mary's ideal beauty and the graceful way in which she moves, features typical of the High Renaissance.



Figure **13.7.6.53**: Filippo Lippi, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1465, tempera on panel, 92 x 63.5 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

This is the first time that an Italian Renaissance artist has completely abandoned halos. Fra Filippo Lippi reduced the halo to a narrow ring around Mary's head. Clearly the unreal, symbolic nature of the halo was antithetical to the realism of the Renaissance. It was, in a way, a necessary holdover from the Middle Ages: how else to indicate a figure's divinity?

But Leonardo found another way to indicate divinity—by giving the figures ideal beauty and grace. After all, we would never mistake Leonardo's group of figures for an ordinary picnic—the way the Lippi's painting of the *Madonna and Child with Angels* almost looks like a family portrait. With Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks*, we are clearly looking at a mystical vision of Mary, Christ, John the Baptist and an angel in heaven.

The unified composition

We can see that Leonardo grouped the figures together within a geometric shape of a pyramid (a pyramid instead of triangle because Leonardo is very concerned with creating an illusion of space—and a pyramid is three dimensional). He also has the figures gesturing and looking at each other. Both of these innovations serve to unify the composition. This is an important difference from paintings of the Early Renaissance where the figures often looked more separate from one another.



Figure **13.7.6.54**: Andrea del Verroccio and Leonardo da Vinci, *Baptism of Christ*, 1472-1475, oil on wood, 177 x 151 cm (Uffizi, Florence)

Another way to think about this is to look at the angel that Leonardo painted in this work by his teacher Verocchio. Leonardo's angel has a more complex pose. Things that artists were just learning how to do in the Early Renaissance (like contrapposto) are now easy for the artists of the High Renaissance.



Figure **13.7.6.55**: Leonardo's angel (detail), Andrea del Verroccio and Leonardo da Vinci, *Baptism of Christ*, 1472-1475, oil on wood, 177 x 151 cm (Uffizi, Florence)

As a result, artists of the High Renaissance can do more with the body—make it more complex, more elegant and more graceful. Similarly, the compositions of the paintings of the High Renaissance are more complex and sophisticated than the compositions of the Early Renaissance—figures interact with gestures and glances, and are often interwoven and set within the shape of a pyramid.

Additional resources:

This painting at the National Gallery

This painting at the Louvre

Videos on Leonardo (from The National Gallery, London)

National Gallery page on the conservation of the painting in London

National Gallery video on the restoration of the painting in London

National Gallery video/podcast on the two versions of this painting

Coline Milliard, "Analyzing 5 Differences Between Da Vinci's Twin "Virgin of the Rocks" Masterpieces" from *Artinfo* 22/08/2011.

Leonardo, The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist (Burlington House Cartoon)

by BETH HARRIS and STEVEN ZUCKER



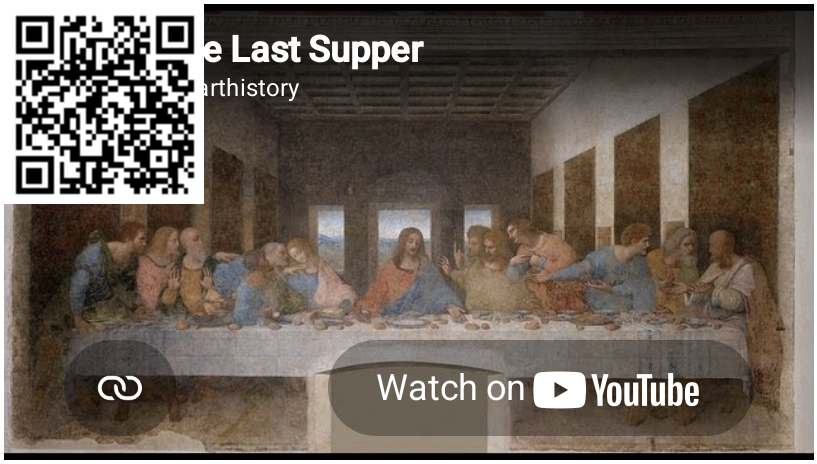
Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Jasmine Keane
Sep 23, 2020, 9:27 AM

Cite this page as: Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, "Leonardo, The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist (Burlington House Cartoon)," in *Smarthistory*, November 18, 2015, accessed September 23, 2020, **smarthistory.org/leonardo-virgin-and-child-st-anne-st-john-the-baptist-cartoon/**.

Leonardo, *Last Supper*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



> ***"Leonardo imagined, and has succeeded in expressing, the desire that has entered the minds of the apostles to know who is betraying their Master. So in the face of each one may be seen love, fear, indignation, or grief at not being able to understand the meaning of Christ; and this excites no less astonishment than the obstinate hatred and treachery to be seen in Judas."***
>
> ***(Georgio Vasari, Lives of the Artists, 1568; translated by George Bull)***

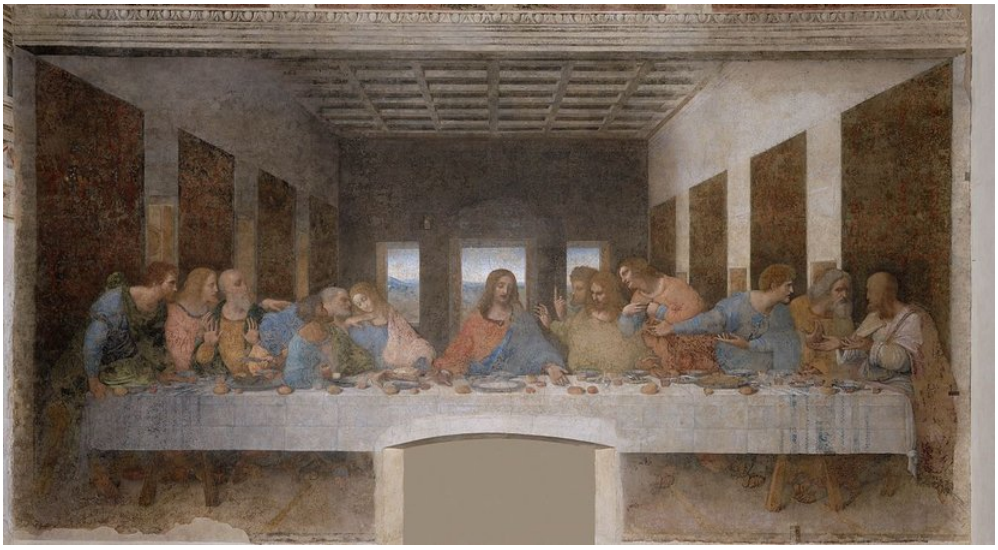


Figure **13.7.6.56***: Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan) (photo: public domain)*

Subject

The subject of the Last Supper is Christ's final meal with his apostles before Judas identifies Christ to the authorities who arrest him. The Last Supper (a Passover Seder) is remembered for two events:



Figure **13.7.6.57***: Philip (detail), Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan)*

Christ says to his apostles, "One of you will betray me," and the apostles react, each according to his own personality. Referring to the Gospels, Leonardo depicts Philip asking, "Lord, is it I?" Christ replies, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me" (Matthew 26). We see Christ and Judas simultaneously reaching toward a plate that lies between them, even as Judas defensively backs away.

Leonardo also simultaneously depicts Christ blessing the bread and saying to the apostles, "Take, eat; this is my body" and blessing the wine and saying "Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26). These words are the founding moment of the sacrament of the

Eucharist (the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ).

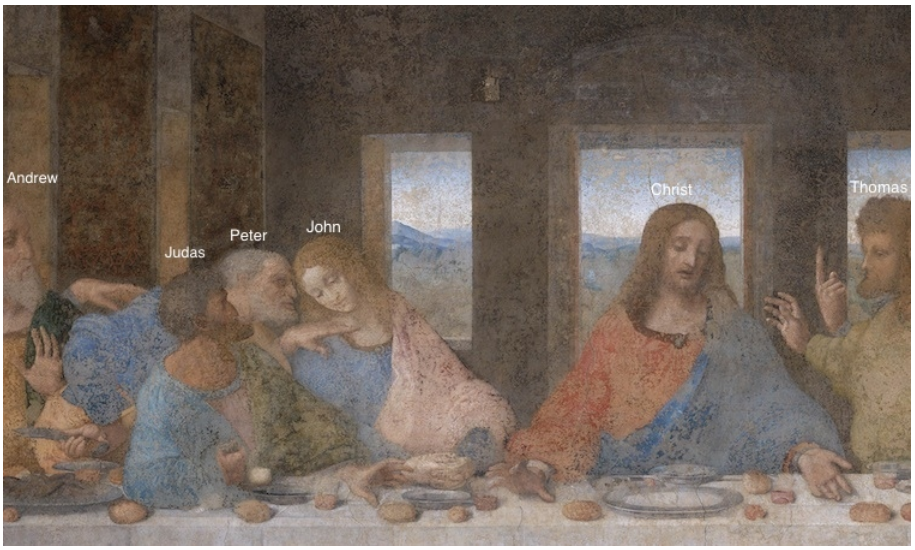


Figure 13.7.6.58*: Detail, Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan)*

Apostles identified

Leonardo's Last Supper is dense with symbolic references. Attributes identify each apostle. For example, Judas Iscariot is recognized both as he reaches toward a plate beside Christ (Matthew 26) and because he clutches a purse containing his reward for identifying Christ to the authorities the following day. Peter, who sits beside Judas, holds a knife in his right hand, foreshadowing that Peter will sever the ear of a soldier as he attempts to protect Christ from arrest.



Figure 13.7.6.59*: Christ (detail), Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan)*

Suggestions of the heavenly

The balanced composition is anchored by an equilateral triangle formed by Christ's body. He sits below an arching pediment that, if completed, traces a circle. These ideal geometric forms refer to the renaissance interest in Neo-Platonism (an element of the humanist revival that reconciles aspects of Greek philosophy with Christian theology). In his allegory, "The Cave," the Ancient Greek philosopher Plato emphasized the imperfection of the earthly realm. Geometry, used by the Greeks to express heavenly perfection, has been used by Leonardo to celebrate Christ as the embodiment of heaven on earth.

Leonardo rendered a verdant landscape beyond the windows. Often interpreted as paradise, it has been suggested that this heavenly sanctuary can only be reached through Christ.

The twelve apostles are arranged as four groups of three and there are also three windows. The number three is often a reference to the Holy Trinity in Catholic art. In contrast, the number four is important in the classical tradition (e.g. Plato's four virtues).

The Last Supper in the Early Renaissance

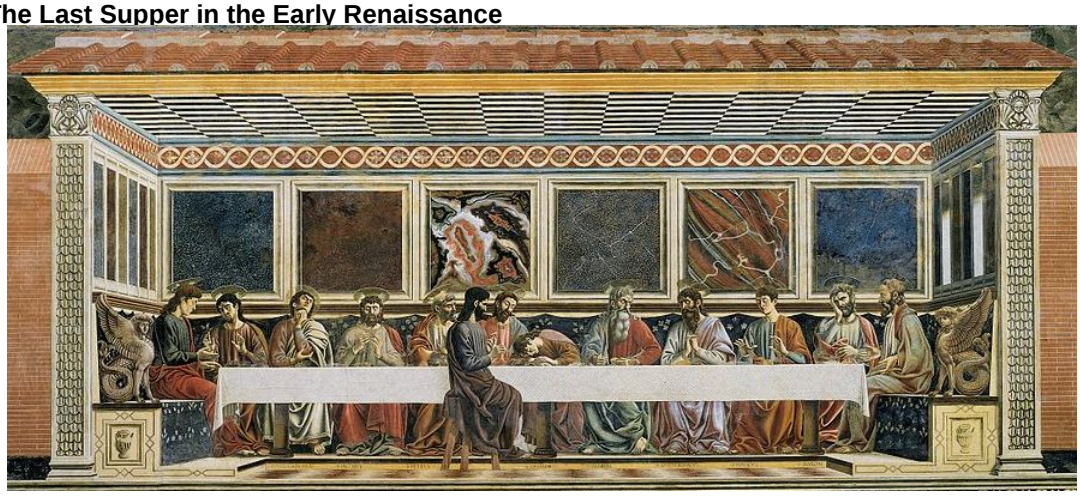


Figure **13.7.6.60***: Andrea del Castagno, Last Supper, 1447, tempera on plaster (Sant'Apollonia, Florence)*

Andrea del Castagno's Last Supper (1447) is typical of the Early Renaissance. The use of linear perspective in combination with ornate forms such as the sphinxes on the ends of the bench and the marble paneling tend to detract from the spirituality of the event. In contrast, Leonardo simplified the architecture, eliminating unnecessary and distracting details so that the architecture can instead amplify the spirituality. The window and arching pediment even suggest a halo. By crowding all of the figures together, Leonardo uses the table as a barrier to separate the spiritual realm from the viewer's earthly world. Paradoxically, Leonardo's emphasis on spirituality results in a painting that is more naturalistic than Castagno's.

Backstory

During World War II, in August of 1943, the Allies launched a massive bombing campaign on Milan and its outskirts. The explosions and the ensuing fires killed over 700 people and destroyed many of the city's most important buildings and monuments, including a significant portion of Santa Maria delle Grazie. Miraculously, the wall with the painting survived, probably because it had been shored up with sandbags and mattresses, but the roof of the refectory was blown off and the other walls were decimated. For several months, the Last Supper remained exposed to the elements, covered only with a tarp, until the refectory (the dining room of the monastery where the Last Supper was painted) was rebuilt and a team of restorers began working to preserve and restore the painting.

But Leonardo's work was already in a sad state well before bombs threatened to destroy it completely. Soon after it was completed on February 9, 1498, it began to deteriorate. Because Leonardo sought greater detail and luminosity than could be achieved with traditional fresco, he covered the wall with a double layer of dried plaster. Then, borrowing from panel painting, he added an undercoat of lead white to enhance the brightness of the oil and tempera that was applied on top. This experimental technique allowed for chromatic brilliance and extraordinary precision but because the painting is on a thin exterior wall, it amplified the effects of humidity, and the paint failed to properly adhere to the wall. Mold grew between the paint and the surface, and the presence of moisture caused constant peeling. By the second half of the sixteenth century, Giovanni Paulo Lomazzo stated that "the painting is all ruined." The first restoration efforts took place beginning in 1726, and over the centuries they were followed by several more.

Over the past five hundred years the painting's condition has been seriously compromised by these early restoration efforts, as well as by its location (the church is in an area prone to severe flooding); the materials and techniques Leonardo used; occupation by Napoleon's army (who stabled horses in the refectory and reportedly lobbed bricks at the apostles' heads); humidity, dust, and air pollution; and, most recently, the cumulative effect of crowding tourists.

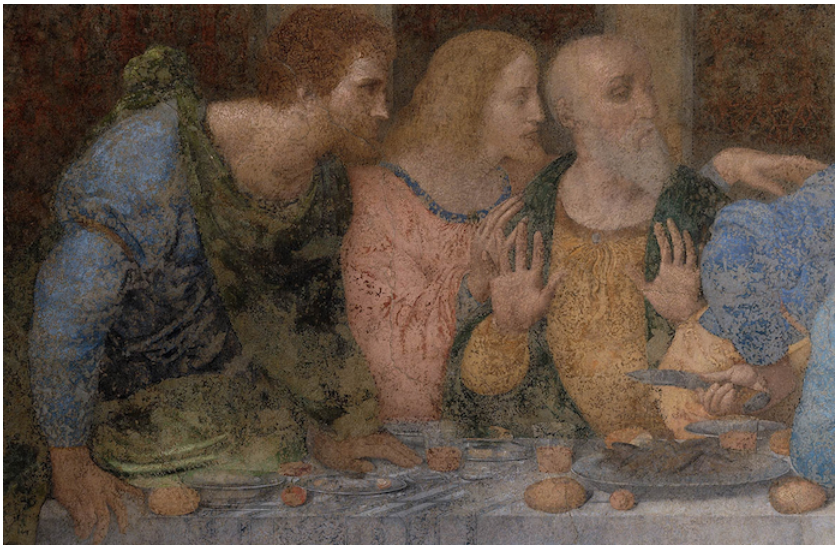


Figure **13.7.6.61***: Bartholomew, James Minor, and Andrew (detail), Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan)*

After the destruction wrought by the bombing in World War II, restorers covered the painting with a thick layer of shellac (a kind of resin) in order to combat the moisture problems and keep the paint from peeling. They then began scraping away some of the layers of paint that had been applied over the years, uncovering what they believed to be Leonardo's original brushstrokes. Finally, in 1977, the Italian government teamed with private corporations to fund a massive project to fully uncover the original painting. It took head restorer Pinin Brambilla Barcilon over twenty years to complete the effort, meticulously scraping away at the painting's surface centimeter by centimeter with surgical tools and microscope. In 1999, when the fully restored painting—in its new, climate-controlled environment—was officially unveiled, critics around the globe ***argued*** *as to whether it is now true to the original, or irrevocably deformed, as only about 42.5% of the present surface is Leonardo's work, 17.5% is lost, and the remaining 40% was added by previous restorers. (Most of this repainting can be found in the painting's wall hangings and ceiling).*

The Last Supper is a prime example of how public and professional attitudes toward restoration efforts are not only often contentious, but change over time. Whereas in the nineteenth century and earlier, restorations focused on overpainting in order to present the illusion of a perfectly finished work, modern approaches tend to favor the exposure of missing pieces, and to make all additions visible and explicit. The current version of the Last Supper resembles little of what Leonardo created in 1498, but it makes visible the painting's miraculous and tortured history.

Condition statistics

> ***Number of years after its completion that deterioration was noted: 18***

Number of bombs that have hit the refectory: 1
Number of years needed to complete the recent conservation project: 22
Number of years that Leonardo needed to complete the painting: 4
Number of research studies produced during conservation project: 60
Number of hours spent on the conservation project: 50,000
Percentage of the surface that is lost: 17.5
Percentage of the surface painted during the seven previous restorations: 40
Percentage of the surface that was painted by Leonardo: 42.5

Backstory by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

Ross King, Leonardo and the Last Supper (Walker & Company, 2012)

Critical assessment of the restoration from ArtWatchUK

"After a 20-Year Cleanup, a Brighter, Clearer 'Last Supper' Emerges," The New York Times, May 27, 1999

UNESCO page for Santa Maria delle Grazie

UNESCO-sponsored video about the most recent restoration

Last Supper from Universal Leonardo

The Crucifixion and Passion of Christ in Italian Painting from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

360-degree panorama of the refectory in Santa Maria della Grazie

Leonardo, *Mona Lisa*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.6.8*: Leonardo da Vinci, Portrait of Lisa Gherardini (known as the Mona Lisa), c. 1503–19, oil on poplar panel, 77 x 53 cm (Musée du Louvre)*

Portraits were once rare

We live in a culture that is so saturated with images, it may be difficult to imagine a time when only the wealthiest people had their likeness captured. The wealthy merchants of Renaissance Florence could commission a portrait, but even they would likely only have a single portrait painted during their lifetime. A portrait was about more than likeness, it spoke to status and position. In addition, portraits generally took a long time to paint, and the subject would commonly have to sit for hours or days, while the artist captured their likeness.

The most recognized painting in the world



Figure 13.7.6.62*: Leonardo da Vinci, Portrait of Lisa Gherardini (known as the Mona Lisa), c. 1503–19, oil on poplar panel, 77 x 53 cm (Musée du Louvre)*

The Mona Lisa was originally this type of portrait, but over time its meaning has shifted and it has become an icon of the Renaissance—perhaps the most recognized painting in the world. The Mona Lisa is a likely a portrait of the wife of a Florentine merchant. For some reason however, the portrait was never delivered to its patron, and Leonardo kept it with him when he went to work for Francis I, the King of France.

The Mona Lisa's mysterious smile has inspired many writers, singers, and painters. Here's a passage about the Mona Lisa, written by the Victorian-era writer Walter Pater:

> ***We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that circle of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least. The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all "the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed!***



Figure **13.7.6.63***: Piero della Francesca, Portrait of Battista Sforza, c. 1465-66, tempera on panel, (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) (photo: public domain)*

Piero della Francesca's Portrait of Battista Sforza (c. 1465-66) is typical of portraits during the Early Renaissance (before Leonardo); figures were often painted in strict profile, and cut off at the bust. Often the figure was posed in front of a birds-eye view of a landscape.

A new formula

With Leonardo's portrait, the face is nearly frontal, the shoulders are turned three-quarters toward the viewer, and the hands are included in the image.

Leonardo uses his characteristic sfumato—a smokey haziness, to soften outlines and create an atmospheric effect around the figure. When a figure is in profile, we have no real sense of who she is, and there is no sense of engagement. With the face turned toward us, however, we get a sense of the personality of the sitter.



Figure **13.7.6.64***: Hans Memling, Portrait of a Young Man at Prayer, c. 1485-1494, oil on oak panel (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid)*

Northern Renaissance artists such as Hans Memling (see the Portrait of a Young Man at Prayer, c. 1485-1494, left) had already created portraits of figures in positions similar to the Mona Lisa. Memling had even located them in believable spaces. Leonardo combined these Northern innovations with Italian painting's understanding of the three dimensionality of the body and the perspectival treatment of the surrounding space.

A recent discovery

An important copy of the Mona Lisa was recently discovered in the collection of the Prado in Madrid. The background had been painted over, but when the painting was cleaned, scientific analysis revealed that the copy was likely painted by another artist who sat beside Leonardo and copied his work, brush-stroke by brush-stroke. The copy gives us an idea of what the Mona Lisa might look like if layers of yellowed varnish were removed.



Figure **13.7.6.65***: Left: Unknown, Mona Lisa, c. 1503-05, oil on panel (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid); right: Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa, c. 1503-19, oil on panel 30-1/4 x 21" (Musée du Louvre)*

Additional resources:

This painting at the Louvre

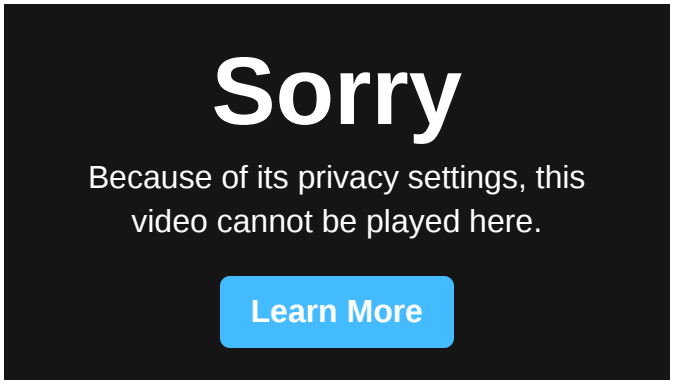
Louvre Feature: A Closer Look at the Mona Lisa

Not Just Another Fake Mona Lisa from New York Times Interactive

Mona Lisa at Universal Leonardo

Leonardo, *The Mona Lisa*

by ***HENI TALKS***



Martin Kemp - The Mona Lisa: Painting beyond Portraiture from HENI Talks on Vimeo.

The Mona Lisa is an extraordinary painting; so much so that the small portrait of a bourgeois Florentine woman has been the subject of many myths and conspiracy theories. But Leonardo da Vinci expert Martin Kemp is keen to emphasise the very ordinary circumstances of the portrait's commission and the sitter's life.

Over the course of his career, Kemp has debunked many of the myths the iconic painting has given rise to and has helped to identify the people instrumental to its creation. But he also argues that the painting became more than 'just a small portrait' for Leonardo: the

artist poured all he knew about science and the poetry of painting into the commission. How did this work change the way artists painted portraits for centuries afterwards?

Michelangelo

Michelangelo was known as il divino, (in English, "the divine one") and it is easy for us to see why.

About Michelangelo

"Who was Michelangelo?"

by DR. TAMARA SMITHERS



Figure **13.7.6.66***: Attributed to Daniele da Volterra, Michelangelo Buonarroti, c. 1545, oil on wood, 88.3 x 64.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)*

*Michelangelo Buonarotti—the Italian **Renaissance** painter, sculptor, architect, and poet—was called "Il Divino" (The Divine One) by his contemporaries because they perceived his artworks to be otherworldly. His art was in high demand, and thought to have terribilità, poorly translated as "terribleness" and better described as powerfulness. He was mythologized by followers, emulated by artists, celebrated by humanists, and **patronized** by a total of nine popes. As commemorations, over one hundred portraits of him were created during the sixteenth century alone, far more than any other artist at the time. Despite three biographies written about the artist during his own lifetime, we know the most about the sometimes-generous and often-humorous perfectionist through his letters. Not only do we have more primary sources on Michelangelo than any other historical artist, he is one of the most written-about artists of all time. In today's terms, Michelangelo was a workaholic homebody whose cats missed him when he was away. He did not like to debate art, waste time, or show his work before he was ready. Despite a few*

mid-career collaborations, Michelangelo was careful and guarded, never running a typical workshop, locking his studio, and burning drawings. He also complained a lot, and, at times, could be overconfident, curt, and blunt, once resulting in a punch in the nose.

Better late than never

Although he became an artistic superstar, Michelangelo's start was different from most artists of his time. His initial success can be credited to his family's connections to the powerful, noble Florentine family, the Medici. In the early 1490s, he learned carving under the tutelage of a student of ***Donatello****, Bertoldo di Giovanni, at the Medici sculpture garden. Upon entering the workshop of the painter* ***Domenico Ghirlandaio****, Michelangelo began his official professional training at the age of thirteen, several years later than usual (and unlike typical apprentices who had to pay to study under a master, Michelangelo was paid, perhaps due to his family's relations to the Medici or his innate talent). However, he desired to sculpt instead, stating that he drank in his love of stone carving from his wet nurse, who came from a family of simple pastoral stonecutters.[1] To emphasize this aspect of himself for the first few decades of his career, he signed his letters "Michelangelo Sculptor." Also important to his formative years was the dissection of cadavers to learn anatomy. The challenging conditions—after hours by candlelight and without refrigeration—called to only the most dedicated artists.*



Figure **13.7.6.67***: Michelangelo, Pietà, marble, 1498–1500 (Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome. Photo:* ***Stanislav Traykov****, CC BY 2.5)*

At twenty-three years old, Michelangelo accepted his first large-scale public project: to carve two full-scale figures within one piece of stone, a very difficult task. St. Peter's

Pietà, commissioned for the tomb of Cardinal Bilhères de Lagraulas, initiated his rise to fame. The pressure was on: the contract stated that the sculpture was to be the most beautiful work in Rome. After six months at the quarries to find the perfect marble, Michelangelo began carving the Pietà. When the sculpture was put on display in Old St. Peter's Basilica (before the rebuilding initiated by Pope Julius II), pilgrims questioned who had made such a beautiful work. As the story goes, the sculptor overheard a group incorrectly attribute the work to another sculptor. Michelangelo snuck back in late that night with a lantern, hammer, and chisel to carve his name on the Virgin's sash. It is the only work he ever signed, and he later regretted this act of excessive pride.

Already famous



Figure 13.7.6.68*: Michelangelo, David, marble, 1501–04 (Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence)*

Soon after, Michelangelo received an important commission in Florence. A figure of David was desired for up high on an outside buttress of the Duomo. He was tasked to re-use a nearly twenty-foot tall piece of marble nicknamed "The White Giant" that another artist had attempted but failed to carve forty years prior. Michelangelo stepped up to the challenge, completing the colossal statue in two years. In the end, the sculpture was placed outside the Palazzo Signoria.

The success of David led to a large-scale civic commission inside the palazzo to paint a battle scene for the Florentine government, the Battle of Cascina. This arrangement placed him in direct competition with Leonardo, who was already at work on the Battle of Anghiari on the opposite wall. While neither painting was ever finished, copies of both survive. Michelangelo's cartoon (a full-scale preparatory drawing for the fresco), served as a sort of art school for younger artists who came to copy his figures. His drawings from this period are some of his most superbly rendered figures, with a distinct cross-hatching chiaroscuro technique. Disegno, or drawing, was considered both a manual

pursuit and an intellectual endeavor and was the most important part of his practice. Sketching from the male nude was central to his art making.



Figure 13.7.6.69*: Michelangelo, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (detail), 1508–12 (Vatican, Rome)*

In his next major fresco project, the ceiling of the ***Sistine Chapel*** *commissioned by* ***Pope Julius II****, the main narrative represents nine stories of the Book of Genesis, such as the Creation of Adam. Michelangelo's bulky, muscular figures were inspired by the ancient* ***Laocoön****, which he witnessed being unearthed in Rome in 1506. The study for the* ***Libyan Sibyl*** *is an exquisite preparatory drawing from this time, revealing his use of a male model for a female figure.*



Figure **13.7.6.70***: Michelangelo Buonarroti, Studies for the Libyan Sibyl (recto), c. 1510–11, red chalk, with small accents of white chalk on the left shoulder of the figure in the main study, 28.9 × 21.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)*

Michelangelo began painting the ceiling with the traditional method of using cartoons to transfer the design onto the wet plaster, but he became so proficient towards the end, he worked freehand. He also claimed to work without assistants (despite evidence otherwise), and preferred to keep his work private until finished. One story relays that he threw planks at Pope Julius II from the scaffolding, mistaking him for a spy![2]

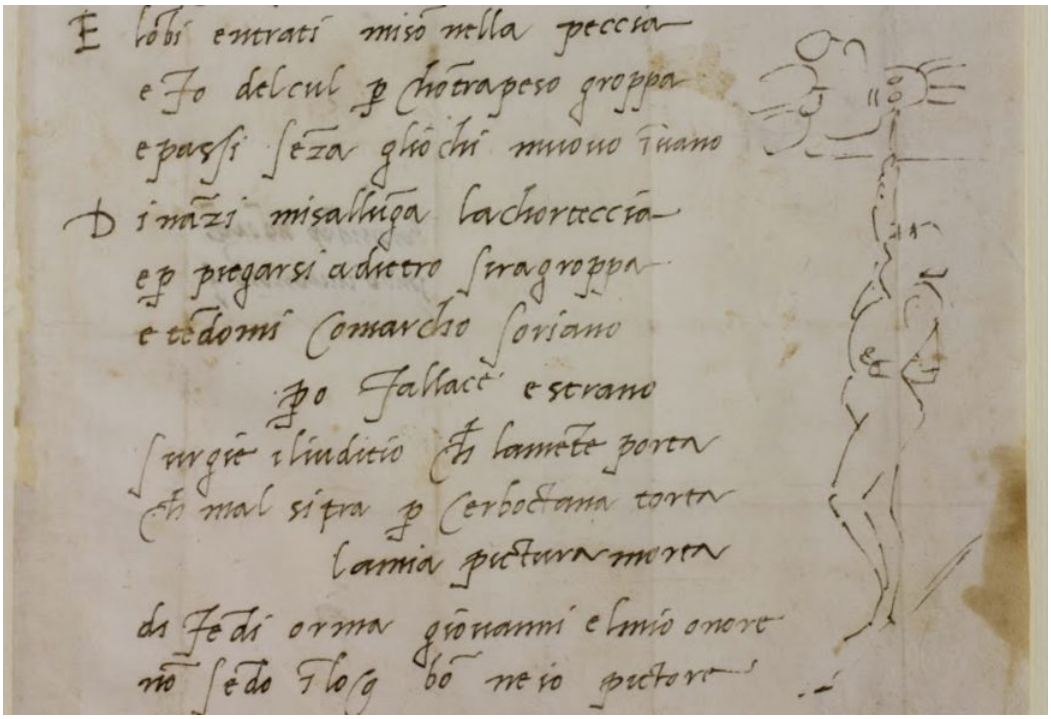


Figure **13.7.6.71***: Michelangelo, AB XIII, 111 Sonnet and self-portrait, 1509/1512 (Casa Buonarotti, Florence)*

The ceiling took Michelangelo over four years to paint. Initially, he did not want the commission, claiming that painting was not his art. He wrote a satirical poem about his personal struggle paired with a caricature of himself standing to paint: "With my beard towards heaven… I am bent like a Syrian bow…."[3]

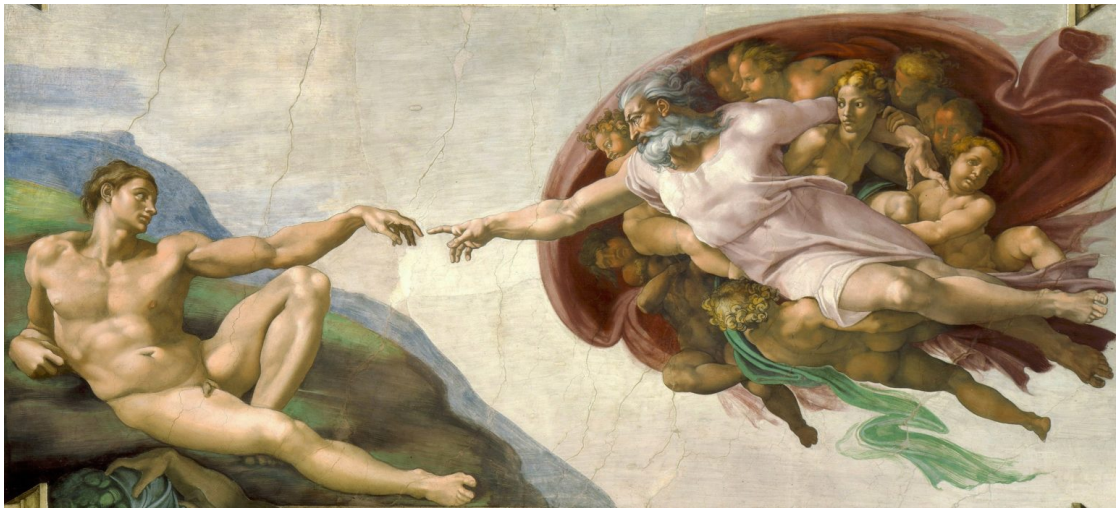


Figure **13.7.6.72***: Michelangelo, Creation of Adam, ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (detail), 1508–12, Vatican, Rome*

Mid-Career but not middle of the pack

Michelangelo was initially called to Rome in 1505 to carve the tomb of Julius II intended for the center of ***New St. Peter's Basilica****, soon to be under construction. If fully realized, the monument would have contained over forty life-size figures, impossible for*

Michelangelo to ever have finished. The memorial was finally erected, in a reduced form in 1545, as a wall tomb in S. Pietro in Vincoli in Rome.



Figure **13.7.6.73***: Michelangelo Buonarroti, Moses, 1513–15, Carrara marble, 254 cm (8 feet, 3 inches) high, Tomb of Pope Julius II (della Rovere), 1505–45, San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome (photo: **Jörg Bittner Unna**, CC BY 3.0)*

*The monumental **Moses**, intended for an upper corner, is now featured as the main figure. Two series of figures were never placed in the final arrangement: two bound "**slaves**" in the Louvre Museum in Paris and four struggling "captives" in the Accademia Museum in Florence. The Captives, likely carved in the 1520s, are bulky, block-like, and rough, where one can see the artist's cross-hatching marks made with the gradina, a multi–toothed **chisel**. His preferred tool, the cane, a dog-toothed chisel, left distinct groove lines on the surface of the marble. Because of the roughness, these, and other sculptures, have been labeled non-finito, or unfinished, a topic much debated in scholarship.*



Figure 13.7.6.74*: From left to right: Michelangelo, Slaves (commonly referred to as the Dying Slave and the Rebellious Slave), 1513–15, marble, 2.09 m high (Musée du Louvre, Paris, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0); Captives (commonly referred to as the Atlas Captive and the Bearded Captive), c. 1530–34, marble, 2.77 m and 2.63 m high (Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)*

Michelangelo traveled back and forth from Rome and Florence during the late 1510s and 20s. In Florence, he worked for Julius' successor, Pope Leo X de' Medici, on the façade of the family's church, San Lorenzo, which was never completed. It was here, though, where he honed his entrepreneurial skills, managing hundreds of workers under his direction. Michelangelo continued Medici employment under Pope Clement VII, designing the ***Laurentian Library*** *and the* ***New Sacristy****.*



Figure **13.7.6.75***: Michelangelo, Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, 1526-33, marble, 630 x 420 cm (New Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)*

In 1527, during a period of political turmoil, the Florentine Republic took back control from the Medici. Two years later, the city came under siege by troops of Holy Roman Empire and the Medici were reinstalled. Despite his longtime connections to the family, Michelangelo, a republican at heart, left Florence forever in 1534.



Figure **13.7.6.76***: Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534–1541 (Vatican City, Rome) (photo: Richard Mortel, CC BY 2.0)*

Late life in the Eternal City

Michelangelo's second fresco in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, the ***Last Judgment****, was commissioned by Pope Paul III and was painted between 1535 and 1541. It also functioned as a study tool for artists. Giorgio Vasari, the* ***sixteenth-century*** *artist and biographer, claimed that artists no longer needed to study live models from nature since every conceivable human position was represented in Michelangelo's fresco. To*

accomplish this, Michelangelo positioned tiny wax models to help develop the complex, large-scale composition. Reliance on Michelangelo's contorted figures by later artists resulted in a sense of artificiality, a prized characteristic of ***Mannerism****. The artist was constantly developing new working practices. For example, in order to extend working hours, Michelangelo made a headlamp with a special wax candle so he could paint into the late hours of the night, often forgetting to eat. Long days proved dangerous though, and he took a bad fall off the scaffolding, nearly breaking his leg.*



Figure **13.7.6.77***: Left: Michelangelo, Piazza and palazzi of the Capitoline Hill, Rome, 1536–1546 (photo:* ***Lawrence OP****, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0); Right: Michelangelo, Dome of St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome, 1546–1564 (photo:* ***Steven Zucker****, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)*

Michelangelo became a Roman citizen in 1537, and it was here that he established his legacy as an architect. During the last two decades of his long life, Michelangelo focused on architectural commissions, sculpting only for himself. His major projects included renovating the Capitoline Hill and overseeing the construction of St. Peter's (without pay for not only the salvation of his soul but also to retain complete creative control). As a devout Christian, Michelangelo made pilgrimage to all of Rome's seven martyr churches during his old age. As he aged, he became more and more stubborn, riding his horse in the rain, for example. Owning horses was seen as an aristocratic endeavor, a status the artist became increasingly concerned with over the years. In his 1553 biography by Ascanio Condivi written with the artist's consultation, Michelangelo emphasized his family's nobility as a descendent of the counts of Canossa.



Figure 13.7.6.78*: Michelangelo, Pietà for Vittoria Colonna, c. 1538–44, black chalk on paper, 28.9 x 18.9 cm (**Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**, Boston)*

The artist never had children (he claimed his artworks were his children), or even proper students. Instead, he sought to groom his nephew Lionardo as the sole Buonarotti heir. Michelangelo also established many great friendships such as that with Vittoria Colonna, whom he gifted a devotional Pietà drawing. He turned to this theme for his own tomb memorial, now known as the Florentine Pietà. Michelangelo attempted to carve four figures out of one marble block, a nearly impossible task. This act was in direct competition with the famed ancient Laocoön, which, despite legend, was discovered by the artist to have been made of several pieces of stone. Here, Mary holds the dead Christ with Mary Magdalene on the left and Nicodemus behind them, figures who each witnessed the death of Christ. Michelangelo carved his self-portrait in the face of Nicodemus, placing himself over Christ in a last wish for salvation. In the end, this image did not adorn his tomb. However, he continued to carve almost daily up until his death in 1564; an onlooker described the eighty-something year old's blows with a hammer as incredible.



Figure **13.7.6.79***: Michelangelo, Deposition (The Florentine Pietà), c. 1547–55, marble, 2.26 m high (Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, photo:* ***Marie-Lan Nguyen****, CC-BY 2.5)*

The Florentine Art Academy, founded under the leadership of Vasari a year before Michelangelo died, erected the largest funerary memorial for an artist to date, naming him the father of the arts. Artists throughout the ages—from ***Caravaggio*** *to* ***Bernini,*** *to* ***Reynolds*** *to* ***Rodin****, to* ***Picasso*** *to Hockney—looked to the art of Michelangelo as the founder of a forceful, new figural style. Michelangelo elevated the status of the artist more than any other artist of his time. He valued artistic freedom and personal expression, making art his way. Only with this in mind, can his creative vision and legend truly be appreciated.*



Figure **13.7.6.80***: Michelangelo's tomb, Basilica of Santa Croce, Florence (photo:* ***Walwyn****, CC BY-NC 2.0)*

Notes:

1. *Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects, vol. IX, translated by Gaston du C. de Vere (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1912, p. 4–5).*
2. *Ibid, p. 25.*
3. *James Saslow, trans. The Poetry of Michelangelo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 70.*

Additional resources:

Vasari's Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects in English translation at Project Gutenberg

Second edition of Vasari's Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects in Italian at Archive.org

Virtual tour of the Sistine Chapel

Michelangelo's design for the Tomb of Pope Julius II della Rovere at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

See more pictures of the Medici Chapel (New Sacristy)

James Ackerman, The Architecture of Michelangelo (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1986)

Francis Ames-Lewis and Paul Joannides, eds. Reactions to the Master: Michelangelo's Effect on Art and Artists in the Sixteenth Century (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2003)

Umberto Baldini and Perugi Liberto, The Complete Sculpture of Michelangelo (London. Thames and Hudson, 1982)

Carmen C Bambach, et. al, eds., Michelangelo: Divine Draftsman & Designer (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017)

Leonard Barkan, Michelangelo: A Life on Paper (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)

Bernadine Barnes, Michelangelo and the Viewer in his Time (London: Reaction Books, 2017)

Paul Barolsky, Michelangelo's Nose: A Myth and its Maker (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997)

_____, The Faun in the Garden: Michelangelo and the Poetic Origins of Italian Renaissance Art (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994)

Anscanio Condivi, The Life of Michelangelo. Edited by Hellmut Wohl. Translated by Alice Sedgwick Wohl. 2nd ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999)

Robert J. Clements, Michelangelo: A Self-Portrait (New York: New York University Press, 1968)

Charles De Tolnay, Michelangelo: Sculptor, Painter, Architect (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975)

Rona Goffen. Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

Marcia B. Hall, ed. Michelangelo's 'Last Judgment' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Howard Hibbard, Michelangelo. 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974)

Deborah Parker, Michelangelo and the Art of Letter Writing (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Lisa Pon, "Michelangelo's Lives: Sixteenth-Century Books by Vasari, Condivi, and Others." The Sixteenth Century Journal 27 (1997): 1015–1037.

Pina Ragionieri and Gary M. Radke, Michelangelo: The Man and the Myth, exhibition catalogue. Translated by Christian and Silvia DuPont (Syracuse, NY: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

James M. Saslow, The Poetry of Michelangelo: An Annotated Translation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991)

Tamara Smithers, ed., Michelangelo in the New Millennium (Boston: Brill, 2016)

David Summers, Michelangelo and the Language of Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects. 10 vols. Translated by Gaston du C. De Vere (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1912)

_____, Lives of the Artists. 2. vols. Translated by George Bull (London: Penguin, 1965)

William E. Wallace, Michelangelo, God's Architect: The Story of his Final Years and Greatest Masterpiece. Princeton: Princeton University, 2019.

_____, Michelangelo: The Artist, the Man and His Times (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

_____, Michelangelo: The Complete Sculpture, Painting, Architecture (New York: Universe, 2009)

_____, ed. Michelangelo, Selected Scholarship in English: Life and Early Works. 5 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995)

Michelangelo, *Pietà*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



The Pietà was a popular subject among northern european artists. It means "Pity" or "Compassion," and represents Mary sorrowfully contemplating the dead body of her son which she holds on her lap. This sculpture was commissioned by a French Cardinal living in Rome.

Look closely and see how Michelangelo made marble seem like flesh, and look at those complicated folds of drapery. It is important here to remember how sculpture is made. It was a messy, rather loud process (which is one of the reasons that Leonardo claimed that painting was superior to sculpture!). Just like painters often mixed their own paint, Michelangelo forged many of his own tools, and often participated in the quarrying of his marble — a dangerous job.

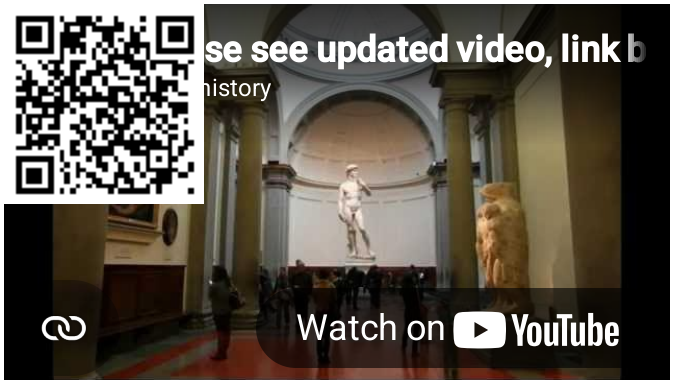
When we look at the extraordinary representation of the human body here we remember that Michelangelo, like Leonardo before him, had dissected cadavers to understand how the body worked.

Jasmine Keane
Sep 23, 2020, 9:46 AM

*Cite this page as: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker, "Michelangelo, Pietà," in Smarthistory, November 18, 2015, accessed September 23, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-pieta/**.*

Michelangelo, *David*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Jasmine Keane
Sep 23, 2020, 9:51 AM

*Cite this page as: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris, "Michelangelo, David," in Smarthistory, December 5, 2015, accessed September 23, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-david/**.*

The many meanings of Michelangelo's *David*

by TED-ED



Video **13.7.6.11***: Video from TED-Ed. Speaker: James Earle.*

Michelangelo, *Moses*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.6.12*: Michelangelo Buonarroti, Moses, 1513-15, Carrara marble, 254 cm (8 feet, 3 inches) high, Tomb of Pope Julius II (della Rovere), 1505-45, San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome*

The Tomb of Pope Julius II

When Michelangelo finished sculpting David, it was clear that this was quite possibly the most beautiful figure ever created—exceeding the beauty even of Ancient Greek and Roman sculptures. Word of David reached Pope Julius II in Rome, and he asked Michelangelo to come to Rome to work for him. The first work Pope Julius II commissioned from Michelangelo was a tomb for the pope.

This may seem a bit strange to us today, but great rulers throughout history have planned fabulous tombs for themselves while they were still alive—they hoped to ensure that they would be remembered forever.

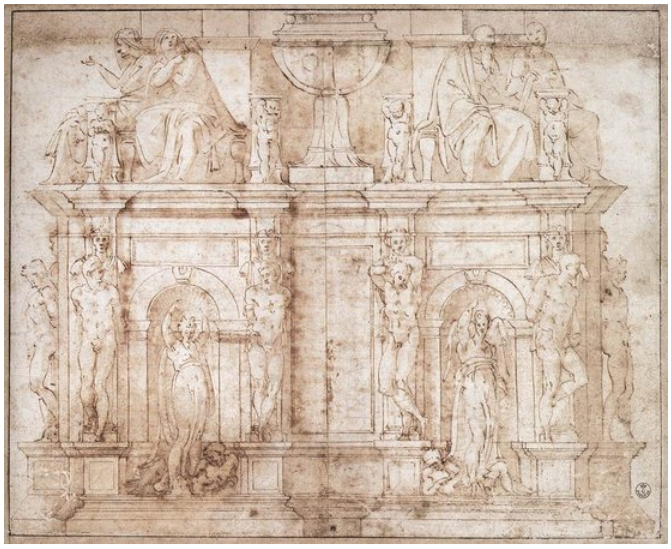


Figure 13.7.6.81*: Michelangelo, drawing for the Tomb of Pope Julius II, c. 1505, pen and ink (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)*

When Michelangelo began the Tomb of Pope Julius II, his ideas were quite ambitious. He planned a two-story structure decorated with more than 20 sculptures—each of these life sized. This was more than one person could do in a lifetime.



Figure **13.7.6.82***: Michelangelo, Tomb of Pope Julius II, 1505-1545, marble (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome (photo: **Jean-Christophe BENOIST**, CC BY 3.0)*

Pope Julius II asked Michelangelo to pause his work on the tomb to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and he was never able to complete his plan for the tomb. After experiencing trouble with Julius' heirs, Michelangelo eventually completed a much scaled-down version of the tomb, which was installed in San Pietro in Vincoli (and not in St. Peter's Basilica as planned).

Moses

Moses is an imposing figure—he is nearly eight feet high sitting down! He has enormous muscular arms and an angry, intense look in his eyes. Under his arms he carries the tablets of the law—the stones inscribed with the Ten Commandments that he has just received from God on Mt. Sinai. You might marvel at Moses' horns. This comes from a mistranslation of a Hebrew word that described Moses as having rays of light coming from his head.

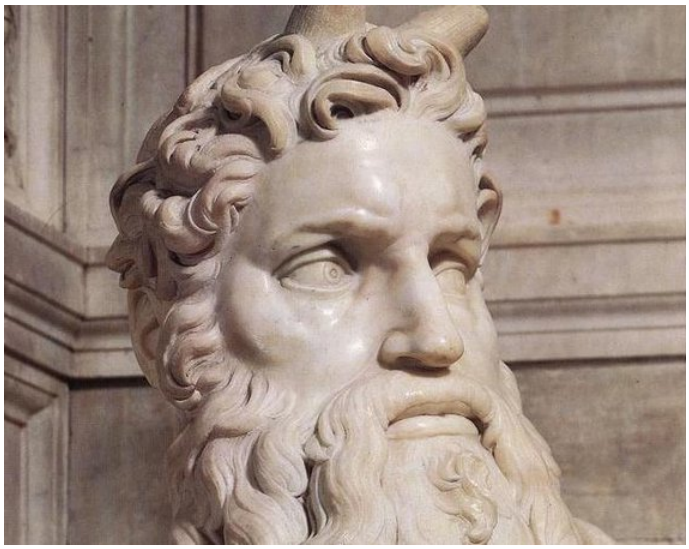


Figure **13.7.6.83***: Moses (detail), Michelangelo, Tomb of Pope Julius II, c. 1513-1515, marble, 235 cm (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome)*

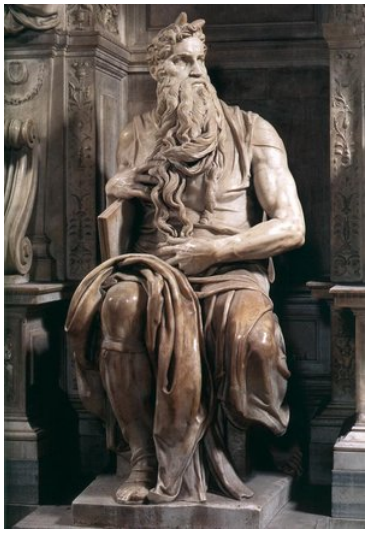


Figure 13.7.6.84*: Michelangelo, Moses from the Tomb of Pope Julius II, c. 1513-1515, marble, 235 cm (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome)*

In this story from the Old Testament book of Exodus, Moses leaves the Israelites, who he has just delivered from slavery in Egypt, to go to the top of Mt. Sinai. When he returns, he finds that the Israelites have constructed a golden calf to worship and make sacrifices to. They have, in other words, been acting like the Egyptians and worshipping a pagan idol.

One of the commandments Moses received is "Thou shalt not make any graven images," so when Moses sees the Israelites worshipping this idol and betraying the one and only God who has just delivered them from slavery, he throws down the tablets and breaks them. Here is the passage from the Hebrew Bible:

> ***Then Moses turned and went down the mountain. He held in his hands the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. These stone tablets were God's work; the words on them were written by God himself. When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting below them, he exclaimed to Moses, "It sounds as if there is a war in the camp!" But Moses replied, "No, it's neither a cry of victory nor a cry of defeat. It is the sound of a celebration." When they came near the camp, Moses saw the calf and the dancing. In terrible anger, he threw the stone tablets to the ground, smashing them at the foot of the mountain.***
>
> ***(Exodus 32: 15-19)***

We can see the figure's pent-up energy. The entire figure is charged with thought and energy. It is not entirely clear what moment of the story Michelangelo shows us. Moses sits with the tables of the ten commandments under his right arm. Is he about to rise in anger after seeing the Israelites worshiping the golden calf?

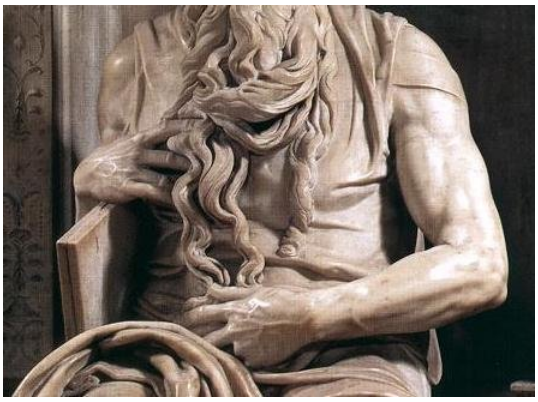


Figure **13.7.6.85***: Michelangelo, Moses from the Tomb of Pope Julius II, c. 1513-1515, marble, 235 cm (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome)*

Moses is not simply sitting down; his left leg is pulled back to the side of his chair as though he is about to rise. And because this leg is pulled back, his hips also face left. Michelangelo, to create an interesting, energetic figure—where the forces of life are pulsing throughout the body—pulls the torso in the opposite direction. And so his torso faces to his right. And because the torso faces to the right, Moses turns his head to the left, and then pulls his beard to the right.

Michelangelo managed to create an intense, energetic figure even though Moses is seated. While the marble itself is still, it seems as though his beard is moving and flowing and that his muscular arms and torso are about to shift.



Figure **13.7.6.86***: Donatello, St. John, c. 1408-15, marble (Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence)*

In comparing Michelangelo's Moses to an Early Renaissance sculpture by Donatello, it is easy to see the difference between the Early and High Renaissance ideals. Donatello's relaxed figure St. John really lacks the power and life of Michelangelo's sculpture. Think about how you're sitting right now at the computer. Perhaps your legs are crossed, as mine are as I write this. What about if you were not at the computer? And what to do with the hands? You can see that this could be a rather uninteresting position. Yet Michelangelo has given the entire figure energy and movement, even in a sitting position.

In Michelangelo's dynamic figure of Moses we have a clear sense of the prophet and his duty to fulfill God's wishes. Moses is not a passive figure from the distant biblical past, but a living, breathing, present figure that reflects the will and might of God.

Additional resources:

Another drawing for the Tomb of Pope Julius II in the British Museum

Another drawing for the Tomb of Pope Julius II in The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.6.87*: More Smarthistory images…*

Michelangelo, *Slaves*

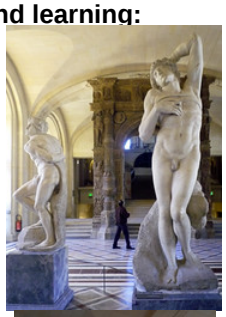
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

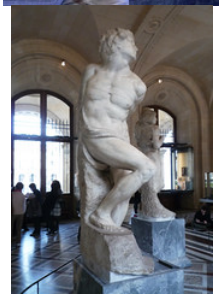


Video **13.7.6.13***: Michelangelo, Slaves (commonly referred to as the Dying Slave and the Rebellious Slave), 1513-15, marble, 2.09 m high, (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*

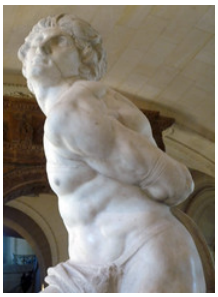
Usually considered unfinished, these sculptures were originally intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II. According to the Louvre, the artist gave the marbles to Roberto Strozzi who presented them to the King of France.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



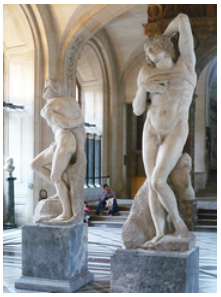


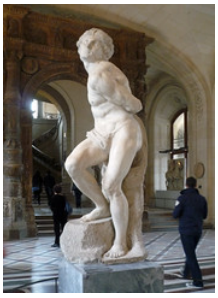


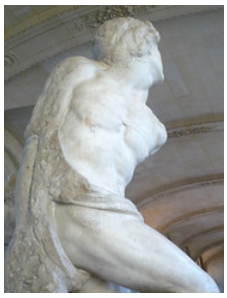


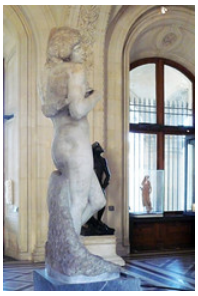


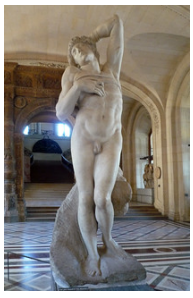
https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

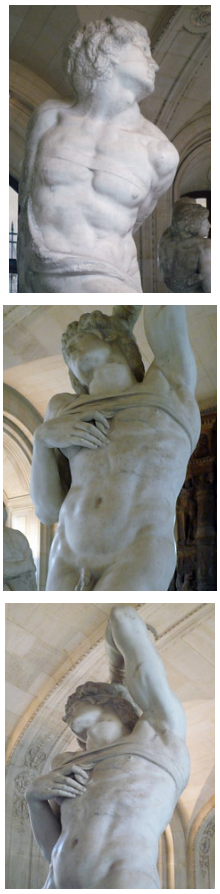


Figure **13.7.6.89***: More Smarthistory images…*

Quarrying and carving marble

by BETH HARRIS and DR. DAVID DROGIN



Video **13.7.6.14***: Michelangelo, The Awakening Slave (unfinished), c. 1530, marble, 263 cm high (Accademia di Belle Arti, Florence)*

Carving marble with traditional tools

by THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM



Video 13.7.6.15*: Video from the J. Paul Getty Museum.*

Watch a sculptor demonstrate the use of traditional tools—such as the tooth chisel, the point chisel, the drill, and the rasp—as he creates a finished figure from a block of marble.

Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Video 13.7.6.16*: Michelangelo, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-12, fresco (Vatican, Rome)*

Visiting the Chapel



Figure 13.7.6.90*: Michelangelo, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-1512, fresco (Vatican City, Rome) (photo: Scott Sherrill-Mix, CC BY-NC 2.0)*

To any visitor of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, two features become immediately and undeniably apparent: 1) the ceiling is really high up, and 2) there are a lot of paintings up there. Because of this, the centuries have handed down to us an image of Michelangelo lying on his back, wiping sweat and plaster from his eyes as he toiled away year after year, suspended hundreds of feet in the air, begrudgingly completing a commission that he never wanted to accept in the first place.

Fortunately for Michelangelo, this is probably not true. But that does nothing to lessen the fact that the frescoes, which take up the entirety of the vault, are among the most important paintings in the world.



Figure 13.7.6.91*: Michelangelo, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-1512, fresco (Vatican City, Rome)*

For Pope Julius II

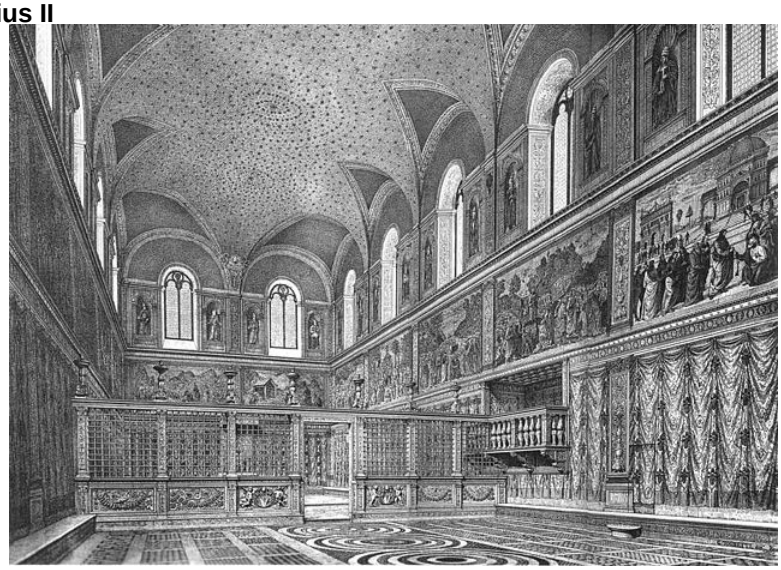


Figure 13.7.6.92*: Reconstruction of the Sistine Chapel prior to Michelangelo's frescoes (photo: public domain)*

Michelangelo began to work on the frescoes for Pope Julius II in 1508, replacing a blue ceiling dotted with stars. Originally, the pope asked Michelangelo to paint the ceiling with a geometric ornament, and place the twelve apostles in spandrels around the decoration. Michelangelo proposed instead to paint the Old Testament scenes now found on the vault, divided by the fictive architecture that he uses to organize the composition.

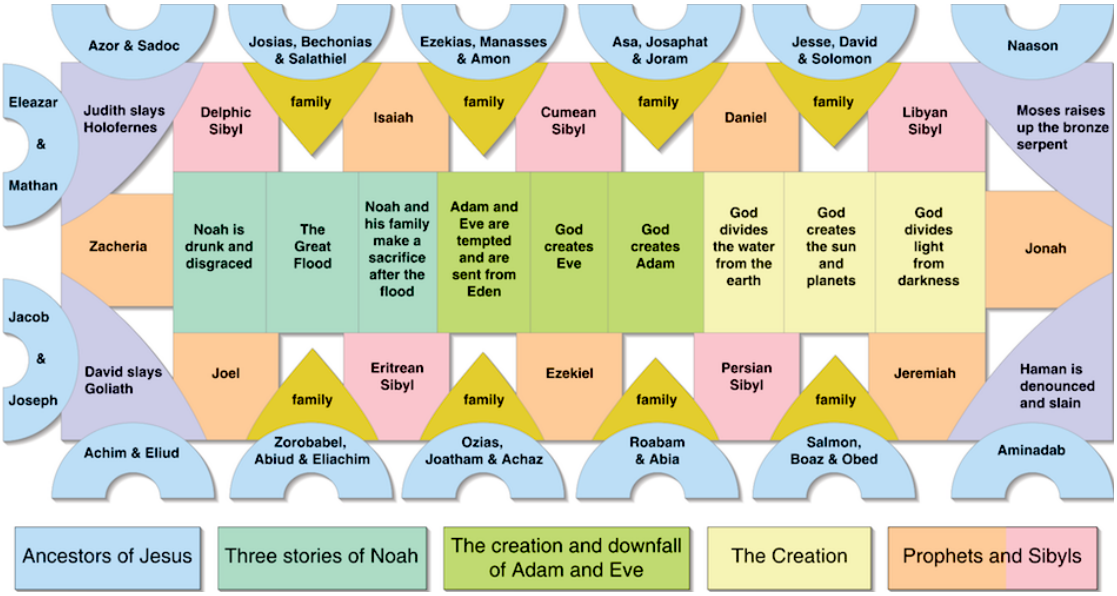


Figure 13.7.6.93*: Diagram of the subjects of the Sistine Chapel*[1]

The subject of the frescoes

The narrative begins at the altar and is divided into three sections. In the first three paintings, Michelangelo tells the story of The Creation of the Heavens and Earth; this is followed by The Creation of Adam and Eve and the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden; finally is the story of Noah and the Great Flood.

Ignudi, or nude youths, sit in fictive architecture around these frescoes, and they are accompanied by prophets and sibyls (ancient seers who, according to tradition, foretold the coming of Christ) in the spandrels. In the four corners of the room, in the pendentives, one finds scenes depicting the Salvation of Israel.

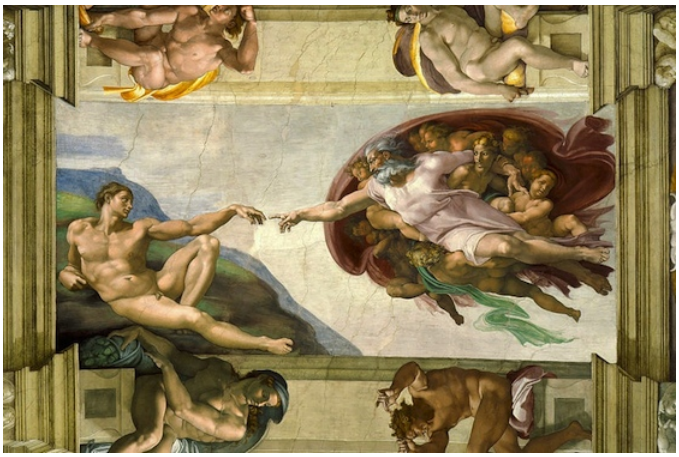


Figure **13.7.6.94***: Michelangelo, The Creation of Adam, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-1512, fresco (Vatican City, Rome)*

The Deluge

Although the most famous of these frescoes is without a doubt, The Creation of Adam, reproductions of which have become ubiquitous in modern culture for its dramatic positioning of the two monumental figures reaching towards each other, not all of the frescoes are painted in this style. In fact, the first frescoes Michelangelo painted contain multiple figures, much smaller in size, engaged in complex narratives. This can best be exemplified by his painting of The Deluge.



Figure **13.7.6.95***: Michelangelo, The Deluge, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-1512, fresco (Vatican City, Rome)*



Figure **13.7.6.96***: Detail, Michelangelo, The Deluge, Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-1512, fresco (Vatican City, Rome)*

In this fresco, Michelangelo has used the physical space of the water and the sky to separate four distinct parts of the narrative. On the right side of the painting, a cluster of people seeks sanctuary from the rain under a makeshift shelter. On the left, even more people climb up the side of a mountain to escape the rising water. Centrally, a small boat is about to capsize because of the unending downpour. And in the background, a team of men work on building the arc—the only hope of salvation.



Figure **13.7.6.97***: Michelangelo, Creation scenes, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, 1508-12, fresco (Vatican City, Rome) (photo: **Dennis Jarvis**)*

Up close, this painting confronts the viewer with the desperation of those about to perish in the flood and makes one question God's justice in wiping out the entire population of the earth, save Noah and his family, because of the sins of the wicked. Unfortunately, from the floor of the chapel, the use of small, tightly grouped figures undermines the emotional content and makes the story harder to follow.

A shift in style

In 1510, Michelangelo took a yearlong break from painting the Sistine Chapel. The frescoes painted after this break are characteristically different from the ones he painted before it, and are emblematic of what we think of when we envision the Sistine Chapel

paintings. These are the paintings, like The Creation of Adam, where the narratives have been pared down to only the essential figures depicted on a monumental scale. Because of these changes, Michelangelo is able to convey a strong sense of emotionality that can be perceived from the floor of the chapel. Indeed, the imposing figure of God in the three frescoes illustrating the separation of darkness from light and the creation of the heavens and the earth radiates power throughout his body, and his dramatic gesticulations help to tell the story of Genesis without the addition of extraneous detail.

The Sibyls



Figure 13.7.6.98*: Michelangelo, Delphic Sibyl, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, 1508-12, fresco (Vatican City, Rome)*

This new monumentality can also be felt in the figures of the sibyls and prophets in the spandrels surrounding the vault, which some believe are all based on the Belvedere Torso, an ancient sculpture that was then, and remains, in the Vatican's collection. One of the most celebrated of these figures is the Delphic Sibyl (left).

The overall circular composition of the body, which echoes the contours of her fictive architectural setting, adds to the sense of the sculptural weight of the figure.

Her arms are powerful, the heft of her body imposing, and both her left elbow and knee come into the viewer's space. At the same time, Michelangelo imbued the Delphic Sibyl with grace and harmony of proportion, and her watchful expression, as well as the position of the left arm and right hand, is reminiscent of the artist's David.



Figure 13.7.6.99*: Michelangelo, Libyan Sibyl, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, 1508-12, fresco (Vatican City, Rome)*

The Libyan Sibyl (left) is also exemplary. Although she is in a contorted position that would be nearly impossible for an actual person to hold, Michelangelo nonetheless executes her with a sprezzatura (a deceptive ease) that will become typical of the Mannerists who closely modelled their work on his.



Figure 13.7.6.100*: Heraclitus, whose features are based on Michelangelo's and his seated pose is based on the prophets and sibyls from Michelangelo's frescoes on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling (detail), Raphael, School of Athens, 1509-11, Stanza della Segnatura (Vatican City, Rome)*

It is no wonder that Raphael, struck by the genius of the Sistine Chapel, rushed back to his School of Athens in the Vatican Stanze and inserted Michelangelo's weighty, monumental likeness sitting at the bottom of the steps of the school.

Legacy

Michelangelo completed the Sistine Chapel in 1512. Its importance in the history of art cannot be overstated. It turned into a veritable academy for young painters, a position that was cemented when Michelangelo returned to the chapel twenty years later to execute the Last Judgment fresco on the altar wall.

The chapel recently underwent a controversial cleaning, which has once again brought to light Michelangelo's jewel-like palette, his mastery of chiaroscuro, and additional

iconological details which continue to captivate modern viewers even five hundred years after the frescoes' original completion. Not bad for an artist who insisted he was not a painter.

1.The diagram neglects the subject of the four corner paintings indicated in lavender. The four scenes represent the salvation of the Jewish people.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Vatican Museums

Panorama of the Sistine Chapel from the Vatican

Michelangelo, Studies for the *Libyan Sibyl* (recto); Studies for the *Libyan Sibyl* and a small *Sketch for a Seated Figure* (verso)

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.7.6.17***: Michelangelo Buonarroti, Studies for the Libyan Sibyl (recto); Studies for the Libyan Sibyl and a small Sketch for a Seated Figure (verso), ca. 1510–11, chalk, 11 3/8 x 8 7/16" / 28.9 x 21.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

This is the most magnificent drawing by Michelangelo in the United States. A male studio assistant posed for the anatomical study, which was preparatory for the Libyan Sibyl, one of the female seers frescoed on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (Vatican Palace) in 1508-12. In the fresco, the figure is clothed except for her powerful shoulders and arms, and has an elaborately braided coiffure. Michelangelo used the present sheet to explore the elements that were crucial in the elegant resolution of the figure's pose, especially the counterpoint twist of shoulders and hips and the manner of weight-bearing on her toe. Recent research shows that this sheet of studies was owned by the Buonarroti family soon after Michelangelo's death. The "no. 21" inscribed on the verso of the sheet (at lower center) fits precisely into a numerical sequence found on many other drawings by the artist that have this early Buonarroti family provenance.

Michelangelo, *Last Judgment*, Sistine Chapel

by DR. ESPERANÇA CAMARA



Figure **13.7.6.101***: Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534–1541 (Vatican City, Rome) (photo: Ramon Stoppelenburg CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)*

> ***"He will come to judge the living and the dead"***
>
> ***(from the Apostle's Creed, an early statement of Christian belief)***

This is it. The moment all Christians await with both hope and dread. This is the end of time, the beginning of eternity when the mortal becomes immortal, when the elect join Christ in his heavenly kingdom and the damned are cast into the unending torments of hell. What a daunting task: to visualize the endgame of earthly existence – and furthermore, to do so in the Sistine Chapel, the private chapel of the papal court, where the leaders of the Church gathered to celebrate feast day liturgies, where the pope's body was laid in state before his funeral, and where—to this day—the College of Cardinals meets to elect the next pope.

No artist in sixteenth-century Italy was better positioned for this task than Michelangelo, whose completion of the chapel's ceiling in 1512 had sealed his reputation as the greatest master of the human figure—especially the male nude. Pope Paul III was well aware of this when he charged Michelangelo with repainting the chapel's altar wall with the Last Judgment. With its focus on the resurrection of the body, this was the perfect subject for Michelangelo.

Historical & pictorial contexts



Figure 13.7.6.102*: Titian, Portrait of Pope Paul III, c. 1543, oil on canvas, 113.3 x 88.8 cm (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples)*

The Last Judgment was one of the first art works Paul III commissioned upon his election to the papacy in 1534. The church he inherited was in crisis; the Sack of Rome (1527) was still a recent memory. Paul sought to address not only the many abuses that had sparked the Protestant Reformation, but also to affirm the legitimacy of the Catholic Church and the orthodoxy of its doctrines (including the institution of the papacy). The visual arts would play a key role in his agenda, beginning with the message he directed to his inner circle by commissioning the Last Judgment.

The decorative program of the Sistine Chapel encapsulates the history of salvation. It begins with God's creation of the world and his covenant with the people of Israel (represented in the Old Testament scenes on the ceiling and south wall), and continues with the earthly life of Christ (on the north wall). The addition of the Last Judgment completed the narrative. The papal court, representatives of the earthly church, participated in this narrative; it filled the gap between Christ's life and his Second Coming.

The composition

Michelangelo's Last Judgment is among the most powerful renditions of this moment in the history of Christian art. Over 300 muscular figures, in an infinite variety of dynamic poses, fill the wall to its edges. Unlike the scenes on the walls and the ceiling, the Last Judgment is not bound by a painted border. It is all encompassing and expands beyond the viewer's field of vision. Unlike other sacred narratives, which portray events of the past, this one implicates the viewer. It has yet to happen and when it does, the viewer will be among those whose fate is determined.



Figure **13.7.6.102***: Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

Despite the density of figures, the composition is clearly organized into tiers and quadrants, with subgroups and meaningful pairings that facilitate the fresco's legibility. As a whole, it rises on the left and descends on the right, recalling the scales used for the weighing of souls in many depictions of the Last Judgment.



Figure **13.7.6.103***: Christ, Mary, and Saints (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*



Figure 13.7.6.104*: Angels (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

Christ is the fulcrum of this complex composition. A powerful, muscular figure, he steps forward in a twisting gesture that sets in motion the final sorting of souls (the damned on his left, and the blessed on his right). Nestled under his raised arm is the Virgin Mary. Michelangelo changed her pose from one of open-armed pleading on humanity's behalf ***seen in a preparatory drawing****, to one of acquiescence to Christ's judgment. The time for intercession is over. Judgment has been passed.*

Directly below Christ a group of wingless angels (left), their cheeks puffed with effort, sound the trumpets that call the dead to rise, while two others hold open the books recording the deeds of the resurrected. The angel with the book of the damned emphatically angles its down to show the damned that their fate is justly based on their misdeeds.

The elect (those going to heaven)

On the lower left of the composition (Christ's right), the dead emerge from their graves, shedding their burial shrouds. Some rise up effortlessly, drawn by a invisible force, while others are assisted by herculean angels, one of whom lifts a pair of souls that cling to a strand of rosary beads. This detail reaffirms a doctrine contested by the Protestants: that prayer and good works, and not just faith and divine grace, play a role in determining one's fate in the afterlife. Directly below, a risen body is caught in violent tug of war, pulled on one end by two angels and on the other by a horned demon who has escaped through a crevice in the central mound. This breach in the earth provides a glimpse of the fires of hell.



Figure **13.7.6.105***: The dead rise from their graves and float to heaven, some assisted by angels. In the upper right, a couple is pulled to heaven on rosary beads, and just below that a risen body is caught in violent tug of war (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome) fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

The damned (those going to hell)

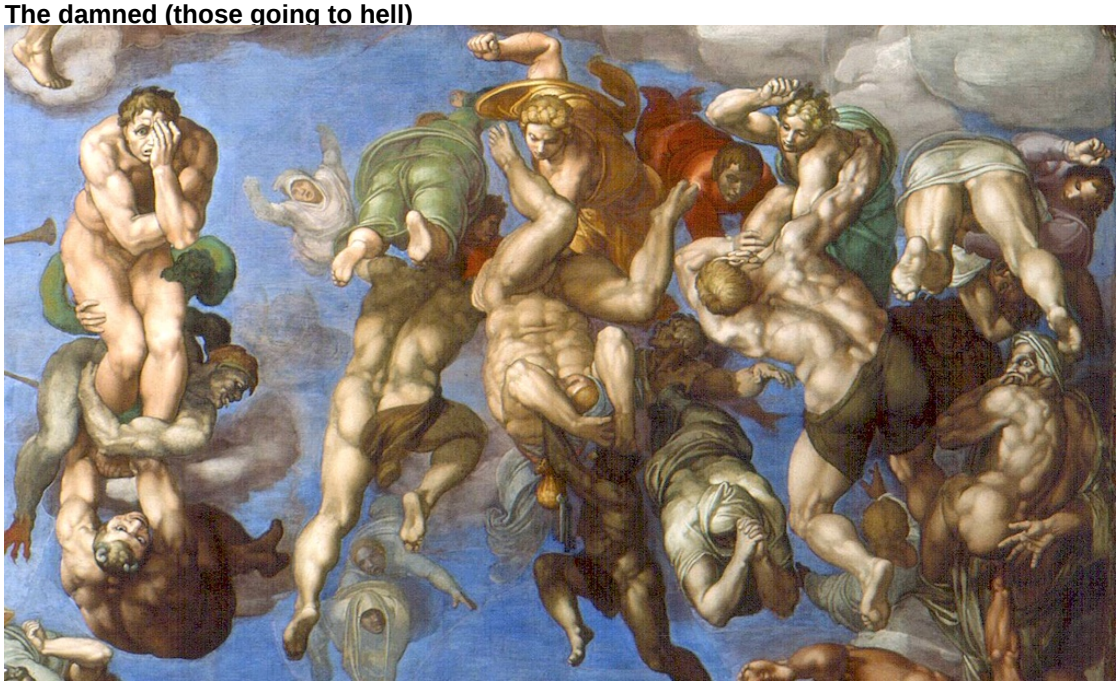


Figure 13.7.6.106*: Demons drag the damned to hell, while angels beat down those who struggle to escape their fate (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

On the right of the composition (Christ's left), demons drag the damned to hell, while angels beat down those who struggle to escape their fate (image above). One soul is both pummeled by an angel and dragged by a demon, head first; a money bag and two keys dangles from his chest. His is the sin of avarice. Another soul—exemplifying the sin of pride—dares to fight back, arrogantly contesting divine judgment, while a third (at the far right) is pulled by his scrotum (his sin was lust). These sins were specifically singled out in sermons delivered to the papal court.



Figure **13.7.6.107***: Charon drives the damned onto hell's shores and in the lower right corner stands the ass-eared Minos (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, altar wall, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

In the lower right corner, Charon—the ferryman from Greek mythology who transports souls to the underworld—swings his oar as he drives the damned onto hell's shores (image above). In the lower right corner stands another mythological character, the ass-eared Minos, his own carnal sinfulness indicated by the snake that bites his genitals. He stands at the very edge of hell, judging the new-comers to determine their eternal punishment.

In the company of Christ

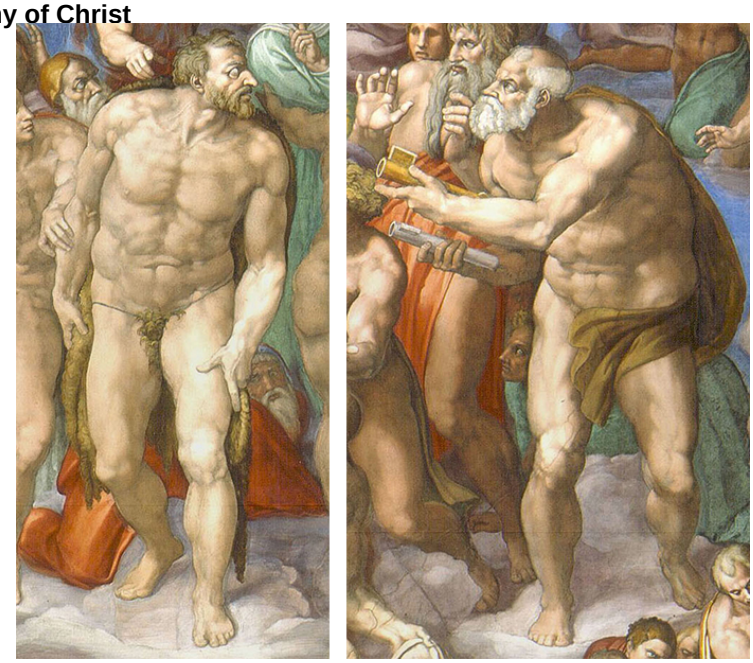


Figure **13.7.6.108***: Left: St. John the Baptist; right: St. Peter (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, altar wall, Sistine Chapel, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

While such details were meant to provoke terror in the viewer, Michelangelo's painting is primarily about the triumph of Christ. The realm of heaven dominates. The elect encircle Christ; they loom large in the foreground and extend far into the depth of the painting, dissolving the boundary of the picture plane. Some hold the instruments of their martyrdom: Andrew the X-shaped cross, Lawrence the gridiron, St. Sebastian a bundle of arrows, to name only a few.

Especially prominent are St. John Baptist and St. Peter who flank Christ to the left and right and share his massive proportions (above). John, the last prophet, is identifiable by the camel pelt that covers his groin and dangles behind his legs; and, Peter, the first pope, is identified by the keys he returns to Christ. His role as the keeper of the keys to the kingdom of heaven has ended. This gesture was a vivid reminder to the pope that his reign as Christ's vicar was temporary—in the end, he too will to answer to Christ.

In the lunettes (semi-circular spaces) at the top right and left, angels display the instruments of Christ's Passion, thus connecting this triumphal moment to Christ's sacrificial death. This portion of the wall projects one foot forward, making it visible to the priest at the altar below as he commemorates Christ's sacrifice in the liturgy of the Eucharist.

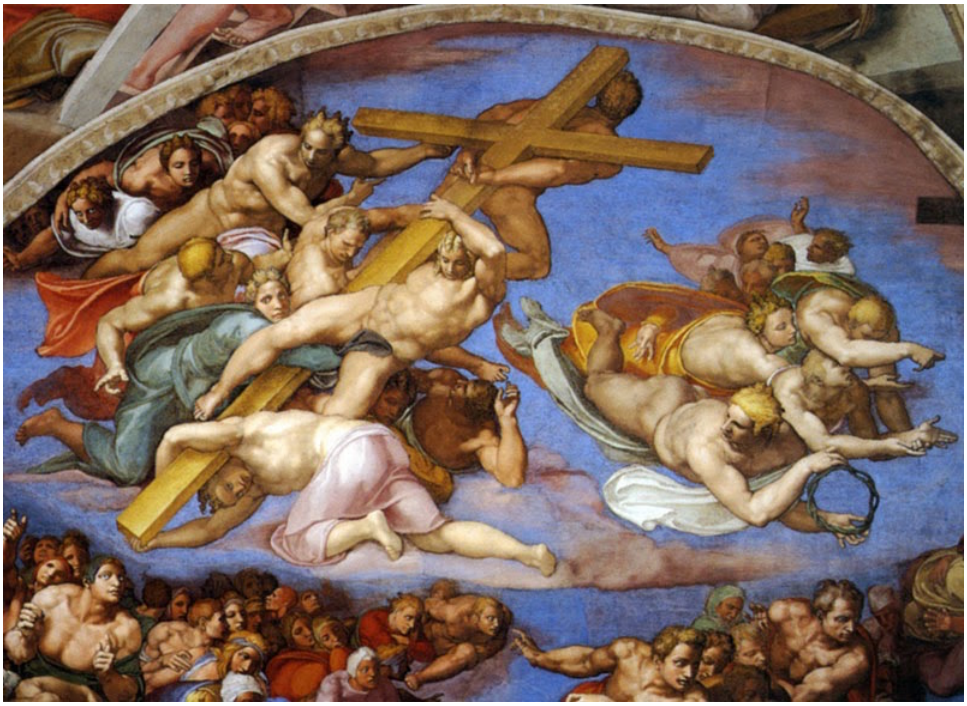


Figure 13.7.6.109*: Lunette with angels carrying the instruments of the Passion of Christ, (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

Critical response: masterpiece or scandal?

Shortly after its unveiling in 1541, the Roman agent of Cardinal Gonzaga of Mantua reported: "The work is of such beauty that your excellency can imagine that there is no

lack of those who condemn it. . . . [T]o my mind it is a work unlike any other to be seen anywhere." Many praised the work as a masterpiece. They saw Michelangelo's distinct figural style, with its complex poses, extreme foreshortening, and powerful (some might say excessive) musculature, as worthy of both the subject matter and the location. The sheer physicality of these muscular nudes affirmed the Catholic doctrine of bodily resurrection (that on the day of judgment, the dead would rise in their bodies, not as incorporeal souls).

Others were scandalized—above all by the nudity—despite its theological accuracy, for the resurrected would enter heaven not clothed but nude, as created by God. Critics also objected to the contorted poses (some resulting in the indecorous presentation of buttocks), the breaks with pictorial tradition (the beardless Christ, the wingless angels), and the appearance of mythology (the figures of Charon and Minos) in a scene portraying sacred history. Critics saw these embellishments as distractions from the fresco's spiritual message. They accused Michelangelo of caring more about showing off his creative abilities than portraying sacred truth with clarity and decorum. Religious art was the "book of the illiterate" and as such should be easy to understand.



Figure **13.7.6.110***: Left: Apollo Belvedere, Right: Christ (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

Michelangelo's Last Judgment, however, was not painted for an unlearned, lay audience. To the contrary, it was designed for a very specific, elite and erudite audience. This audience would understand and appreciate his figural style and iconographic innovations. They would recognize, for example, that his inclusion of Charon and Minos was inspired by Dante's Inferno, a text Michelangelo greatly admired. They would see in

the youthful face of Christ his reference to the Apollo Belvedere, an ancient Greek Hellenistic sculpture in the papal collection lauded for its ideal beauty. Thus, Michelangelo glosses the identity of Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness" (Malachi 4:2).

A self-portrait



Figure **13.7.6.111***: St. Bartholomew (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

Even more poignant is Michelangelo's insertion of himself into the fresco. His is the face on the flayed skin held by St. Bartholomew, an empty shell that hangs precariously between heaven and hell. To his learned audience, the flayed skin would bring to mind not only the circumstances of the saint's martyrdom but also the flaying of Marsyas by Apollo. In his foolish arrogance, Marsyas challenged Apollo to a musical contest, believing his skill could surpass that of the god of music himself. His punishment for such hubris was to be flayed alive. That Michelangelo should identify with Marsyas is not surprising. His contemporaries had dubbed him the "divine" Michelangelo for his ability to rival God himself in giving form to the ideal body. Often he lamented his youthful pride, which had led him to focus on the beauty of art rather than the salvation of his soul. So, here, in a work done in his mid sixties, he acknowledges his sin and expresses his hope that Christ, unlike Apollo, will have mercy upon him and welcome him into the company of the elect.

An epic painting

Like Dante in his great epic poem, The Divine Comedy, Michelangelo sought to create an epic painting, worthy of the grandeur of the moment. He used metaphor and allusion to ornament his subject. His educated audience would delight in his visual and literary references.

Originally intended for a restricted audience, reproductive engravings of the fresco quickly spread it far and wide, placing it at the center of lively debates on the merits and abuses of religious art. While some hailed it as the pinnacle of artistic accomplishment, others deemed it the epitome of all that could go wrong with religious art and called for its destruction. In the end, a compromise was reached. Shortly after the artist's death in 1564, Daniele Da Volterra was hired to cover bare buttocks and groins with bits of drapery and repaint Saint Catherine of Alexandria, originally portrayed unclothed, and St. Blaise, who hovered menacingly over her with his steel combs.



Figure **13.7.6.112***: Clockwise: Saint Blaise, Saint Catherine and Saint Sebastian (detail), Michelangelo, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, fresco, 1534-1541 (Vatican City, Rome)*

In contrast to its limited audience in the sixteenth century, now the Last Judgment is see by thousands of tourists daily. However, during papal conclaves it becomes once again a powerful reminder to the College of Cardinals of their place in the story of salvation, ***as they gather to elect Christ's earthly vicar (the next Pope)****—the person who will be responsible for shepherding the faithful into the community of the elect.*

Additional resources:

The Last Judgment from the Vatican Museums

Michelangelo's Last Judgment—uncensored

Video series on the Reformation and Counter-Reformation

Bernardine Barnes, Michelangelo's Last Judgment: The Renaissance Response (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Marcia Hall, ed., Michelangelo's Last Judgment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Loren Partridge, Michelangelo The Last Judgment: A Glorious Restoration (New York: Abrams, 1997).

Michelangelo, Medici Chapel (New Sacristy)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.6.19***: Michelangelo, Medici Chapel (New Sacristy), 1519-34, San Lorenzo, Florence*

Michelangelo, Laurentian Library

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.6.20***: Michelangelo, Laurentian Library (vestibule and reading room), begun 1524, opened 1571, San Lorenzo, Florence*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



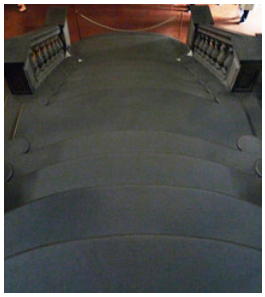


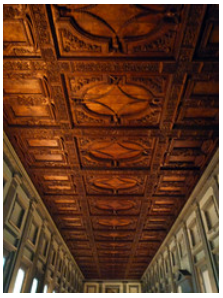




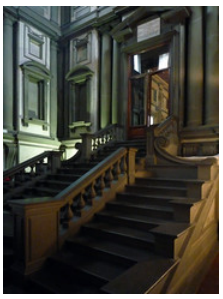


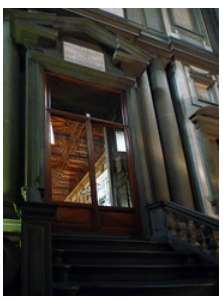
https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725





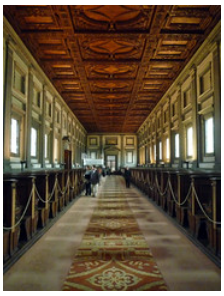






https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725





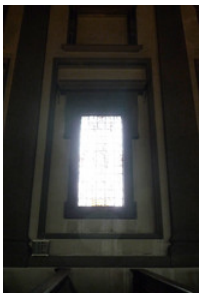




Figure **13.7.6.113***: More Smarthistory images…*

Raphael

Raphael, an introduction

by DR. HEATHER GRAHAM



Figure **13.7.6.114**: *Raphael, Self Portrait, 1504–05, oil on panel, 47.3 x 34.8 cm (Uffizi)*

Raffaello Sanzio, better known simply as Raphael, enjoyed a meteoric career. An impeccable professional artist and a consummate courtier, Raphael was famed both for his artistic skill and his charismatic personality. From his beginnings as a local painter in his native Marche and later Florence, Raphael skyrocketed to fame in Rome, ultimately becoming the city's most sought-after artist. Raphael's untimely death at the age of 37 (in 1520) while at the height of his visual powers only solidified the legend of his extraordinary talent.

His visual accomplishments range from paintings of all sizes and drawings in chalk and ink—some intended to be translated to print—to elaborate fresco cycles, tapestry designs, and architecture. He was shrewd and meticulous, and his work is notable for its elegance and poise, for the ease with which he translated nature into idealized artifice. How does one paint divine grace or the very concept of philosophy? Raphael did such things with apparent ease. He embodied the ideal of sprezzatura (the appearance of nonchalant effortlessness in his creative process), a notion popularized by Raphael's good friend, Baldassare Castiglione, in his Book of the Courtier (1528).



Figure **13.7.6.115***: Portrait of Raphael, from Giorgio Vasari, Le Vite De' Piu Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori, E Architettori, 1791 [1568]*

How do we know about him?

> ***"For in truth we have from him art, colouring, and invention harmonized and brought to such a pitch of perfection as could scarcely be hoped for; nor may any intellect ever think to surpass him. And in addition to this benefit that he conferred on art, like a true friend to her, as long as he lived he never ceased to show how one could deal with great men, with those of middle station, and with the lowest."***
>
> ***Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects [1]***

Information about Raphael's life comes from relatively few surviving contemporary documents that refer to him, and two biographies written in the sixteenth century. Paolo Giovio, who knew Raphael personally, wrote an essay on the artist's life shortly after his death in 1520. In 1550, Giorgio Vasari wrote an extended biography of Raphael for his Lives of the Artists, published in 1550 (expanded in 1568). Despite Raphael's very public career, we have scant evidence of his personal life, private correspondence, and other writings to reveal the man behind the public persona.

Early career



Figure 13.7.6.116*: Map showing the location of Urbino*

Raphael was born in Urbino into the circle of one of the most sophisticated and intellectually oriented courts in Italy. Following the tradition of family craft, Raphael was initially trained by his father, Giovanni Sanzio, who was court painter to the ruling Montefeltro family and ran a thriving workshop. Vasari tells us that Raphael was sent by his father to continue his training under ***Pietro Perugino****, presumably because the precocious youth had learned all he could at home. Perugino was a leading artist in both Florence and his native Perugia and his influence on Raphael's early paintings is unmistakable. Recent scholarship however, suggests that Raphael's associations with Perugino came a bit later, his early training continuing in the family workshop even after his father's death in 1494.*



Figure 13.7.6.117*: Left: Perugino, Marriage of the Virgin, 1500–1504, oil on wood, 234 x*

185 cm (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen); right: Raphael, Marriage of the Virgin, 1504, oil on panel, 174 × 121 cm / 69 × 48" (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)

*An altarpiece depicting the **Marriage of the Virgin** (1504) shows Raphael's indebtedness to Perugino's approach as well as his departure from the master's style. A comparison with a contemporaneous work on the same subject by Perugino is telling. The compositions are similar, with ready parallels evident between the placement of figures and the use of architecture. Yet Raphael's space is more pronounced, his architecture more monumental, and his figures are imbued with a greater vitality. The younger man created a work that simultaneously met and surpassed the expectations of a market shaped by the older master. This ability to synthesize from and innovate upon the visual sources that he encountered—from his contemporaries or from the ancient world—was a definitive aspect of Raphael's career.*



Figure **13.7.6.118***: Raphael, Madonna of the Meadow, 1505–06, oil on panel, 885 x 1130 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)*

*In 1504, at the age of twenty-one, Raphael arrived in Florence. There, the young artist found a flourishing art market. He was able to gaze upon the powerfully expressive works of the **early Florentine renaissance**, and also encountered first-hand the work of local artists, including that of **Leonardo da Vinci**, whose influence is evident in several of Raphael's Florentine paintings. The two portraits below recall Leonardo's **Mona Lisa**.*



Figure **13.7.6.119***: Raphael, Portraits of Agnolo and Maddalena Doni, c. 1504–07, oil on panel, 63.5 x 45 cm (Uffizi)*

In Florence, Raphael's commissions were primarily for smaller, private paintings, such as the Madonna of the Meadow (1505) or his dual portraits of Agnolo and Maddalena Doni (1506). Local commissions for large-scale altarpieces—more desirable projects both for the higher prices they commanded and the public exposure they brought—eluded Raphael during these years. He did, however, continue to fulfil more prestigious projects for ***patrons*** *outside of Florence, including in Siena, Urbino, and Perugia.*



Figure **13.7.6.120***: Raphael, Entombment, created for Atalanta Baglioni's chapel, S. Francesco al Prato, Perugia, 1507, oil on panel, 184 x 176 cm (Galleria Borghese)*

Raphael's 1507 altarpiece for the Perugian widow, Atalanta Baglioni, is among the most groundbreaking works of his early career. The central panel depicting the Entombment of Christ is characterized by a forceful dynamism: figures' bodies move and strain with tension created by strongly opposing diagonal lines. Raphael rejected the mood of quiet contemplation that usually characterizes altarpiece imagery in favor of energetic fervor. This daring departure from the altarpiece tradition anticipates the artist's innovative work soon to come in Rome.



Figure **13.7.6.121***: Raphael, Portrait of Pope Julius II, 1511, oil on poplar, 108.7 x 81 cm (National Gallery, London)*

Raphael in Rome

Having never completed a large-scale project in Florence, Raphael left for Rome in 1508. He was drawn to the Eternal City by the powerful Warrior Pope, ***Julius II****, who was in the process of re-vitalizing Rome. Julius was an astute patron. He recognized the potential of art and architecture to give material form to his vision for Rome as a new center of the Christian empire—one that would rival antiquity.*



Figure **13.7.6.122***: Raphael, School of Athens (left) and Disputà (right), fresco, 1509–1511 (Stanza della Segnatura, Papal Palace, Vatican)*

Raphael was initially one of a number of artists hired by Julius to decorate his personal suite of rooms in the ***Vatican*** *palace, a semi-public space where the pope's interests were to be materialized in art. The first room he painted, the Stanza della Segnatura (Stanza means "room" in Italian), so perfectly aligned with Julius's vision that the entire suite*

was given over to him. The two frescos known as the ***School of Athens*** *and Disputà (1509–1510) on the opposing largest walls of the Stanza represent Philosophy and Theology respectively. Raphael infused non-narrative scenes with dramatic force. His figures engage in active dialogue and interact emotionally—no artist before him had presented immaterial concepts with such ingenuity.*



Figure **13.7.6.123***: Raphael,* ***Galatea****, c. 1513, fresco, Villa Farnesina, Rome, 9 feet 8 inches x 7 feet 5 inches*

Raphael's success in the papal suites lead to a flourishing Roman career informed by all he saw there. He studied with equal attentiveness the art and architecture of antiquity and the Roman work of his contemporaries, including ***Michelangelo****, who was working on the Sistine Chapel ceiling while Raphael was undertaking the frescoes in the papal suites. Raphael worked for merchants and bankers, for popes and mighty statesmen.*

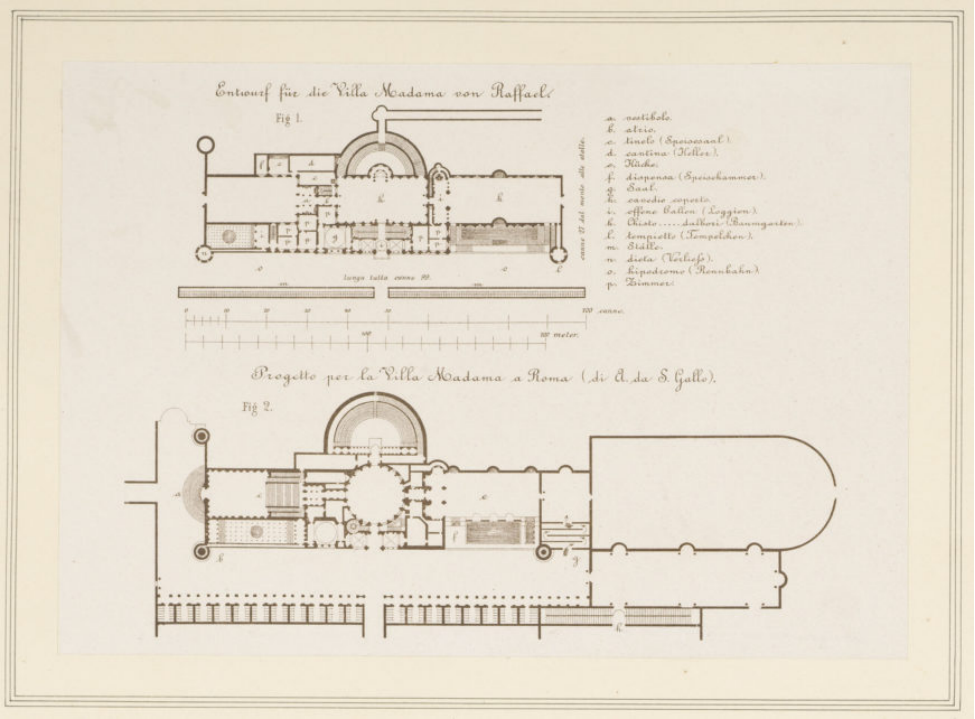


Figure **13.7.6.124**: *Plans of Villa Madama, after the original plan drawing in the Uffizi Galleries, Florence. Rudolph Redtenbacher, lithograph, published 1876, 18.7 x 26.9 cm (**Prince Albert Royal Collections**)*

*His enormous output included the spectacular mythological fresco cycle for the Roman pleasure villa of Agostino Chigi (the Villa Farnesina) and an elaborate series of tapestry designs on the life of St. Peter for the Sistine Chapel. He designed numerous buildings, such as the sumptuous Villa Madama (1518) just north of the Vatican, and was named lead architect of the new St. Peter's in 1516. Partnering with the Bolognese engraver, Marcantonio Raimondi, Raphael provided drawings to be circulated as prints enabling his visual inventions to reach the widest possible audience. Religious or secular, private or public, Raphael's work seamlessly reflected his synthesis of visual **naturalism** and classical idealism.*



Figure **13.7.6.125***: Raphael, tapestry cartoon for The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, 320 x 390 cm (**Victoria and Albert Museum**)*

Working method

Raphael worked well with others. He ran a large and complex workshop comprised of skilled collaborators who enabled him to realize numerous projects simultaneously. A shrewd manager and skilled teacher, Raphael provided highly detailed preliminary drawings for projects that could then be realized by his extensive and trusted workshop all under his meticulous eye. Raphael knew how to delegate to his team, capitalizing upon the strengths of those who worked for him.



Figure 13.7.6.126*: Raphael, Transfiguration, 1518–1520, tempera on wood, 405 x 278 cm (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City)*

Gone too soon

On April 6, 1520—Good Friday that year—Raphael died. While Vasari attributes his early demise to an excess of amorous pursuits, the artist likely succumbed to sudden illness. The shock of his death reverberated throughout Rome. His corpse lay in state in his studio under his final finished work, the Transfiguration, before being interred in no less an exalted site than the ***Pantheon****. His workshop and many projects underway passed into the capable hands of his assistants, Gianfrancesco Penni and Giulio Romano, who continued his legacy and fostered further the cult of Raphaelism. His death was universally understood as marking the end of an era. As lamented by his friend, Castiglione:*

> ***you rouse the envy of the gods above and death is outraged***
> ***that you can return the breath of life to things long dead, and***
> ***that what the long day had gradually effaced, this you were***
> ***preparing anew, spurning mortal law. Thus you fall, alas! [1]***

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

Notes:

1. *Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects, Translated by Gaston du C. de Vere. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1912, p. 746.*
2. *Baldassare Castiglione, poem on the death of Raphael, c. 1520. Translated by Shearman, 2003, p. 52. Raphael in the Early Modern Sources, ed. John Shearman, 2003.*

Additional resources:

Read more about The Book of the Courtier at the British Library

James Beck, Raphael before Rome, Studies in the History of Art, vol. 17 (Washington DC, 1986)

Kim Butler, "Rethinking Early Raphael," Atti del Convegno internazionale su Raffaello – pluralità e unità, Bibliotheca Hertziana, 2-4.5.2002, Rome 2004.

Hugo Chapman, Tom Henry, and Carol Plazzotta, eds., Raphael: From Urbino to Rome (London: National Gallery Company, 2004)

Paolo Giovio, "Raphaelis Urbinatis Vita," in Raphael in Early Modern Sources (1483–1602), 2 vols. Edited by John Shearman (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003)

Marcia B. Hall, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Raphael (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005)

Christian Kleinbub, Vision and the Visionary in Raphael (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2011)

Paul Joannides, The Drawings of Raphael with a Complete Catalogue (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983)

Roger Jones and Nichols Penny, Raphael (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987)

Claudia la Malfa, Raphael and the Antique (London: Reaktion Books, 2020)

Jürg Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael: A Critical Catalogue of His Paintings (Arcos Verlag, 2005)

John Shearman and Marcia B. Hall, eds., The Princeton Raphael Symposium: Science in the Service of Art History (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990)

John Shearman, Raphael in Early Modern Sources, 1483–1602 (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003)

Bette Talvacchia, Raphael (New York: Phaidon, 2007)

Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1912)

Raphael, *Marriage of the Virgin*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.6.21*: Raphael, Marriage of the Virgin, 1504, oil on panel, 174 × 121 cm / 69 × 48" (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)*

Raphael, *Madonna of the Goldfinch*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.6.22*: Raphael, Madonna of the Goldfinch, 1505-6, oil on panel, 42" x 30" (107 x 77 cm) (Uffizi, Florence)*

Raphael, *La belle jardinière (Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.6.23*: Raphael, La belle jardinière (Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist), 1507, oil on panel, 48 × 31½" / 122 × 80 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

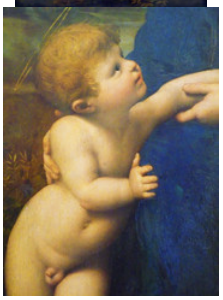
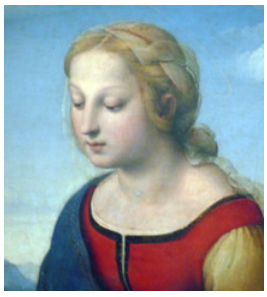






Figure 13.7.6.127*: More Smarthistory images…*

Raphael, *School of Athens*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

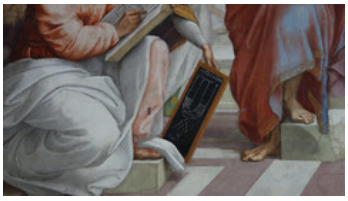
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















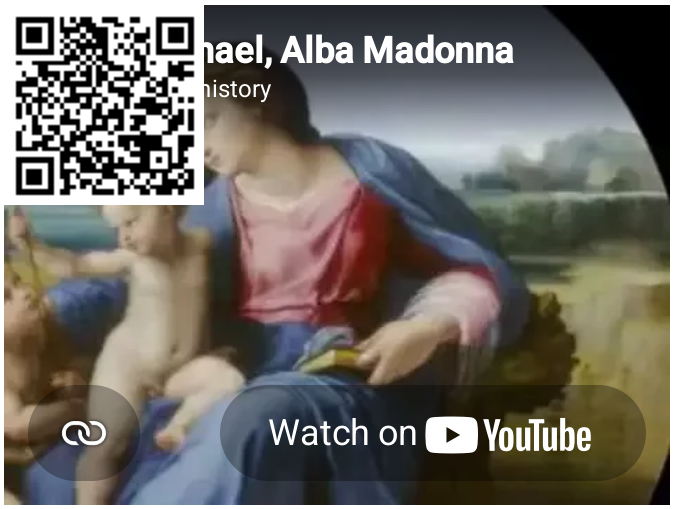
https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725



Figure 13.7.6.128*: More Smarthistory images…*

Raphael, *The Alba Madonna*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.6.25***: Raphael, The Alba Madonna, c. 1510, oil on panel transferred to canvas (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)*

Raphael, Portrait of Pope Julius II

by BETH HARRIS and STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.6.26***: Raphael, Portrait of Pope Julius II, 1511, oil on poplar, 108.7 x 81 cm (National Gallery, London)*
Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Raphael, *Galatea*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.6.27*: Raphael, Galatea, c. 1513, fresco, Villa Farnesina, Rome, 9 feet 8 inches x 7 feet 5 inches*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











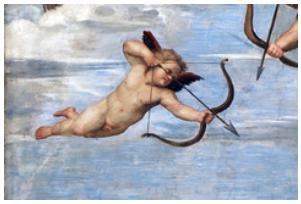













Figure **13.7.6.129***: More Smarthistory images…*

Raphael, *Pope Leo X*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Figure **13.7.6.130***: Raphael, Portrait of Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de'Medici and Luigi de'Rossi, c. 1518, oil on panel, 119.5 x 155.5 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

No hint of chaos

Pope Leo X, son of Lorenzo de' Medici, is best known for his wasteful habits, lecherous activities, and hedonistic quote, "Since God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it." But, judging from his portrayal in Raphael's 1518 Portrait of Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi, one would never guess that Leo's policies were ripping Christendom apart and would directly lead to the Protestant Reformation. Rather, Leo and his two illegitimate relatives—on the left, his nephew Giulio de' Medici (later Pope Clement VII, who was responsible for the disastrous 1527 Sack of Rome) and on the right, his cousin Cardinal Luigi de' Rossi—are presented as dignified, stalwart men, giving no hint of the chaos into which they were throwing Italy and the entire Christian world.



Figure **13.7.6.131***: Detail, Raphael, Portrait of Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de'Medici and Luigi de'Rossi, c. 1518 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

Leo, Giulio and Luigi

The painting is dominated by Leo, whose corpulent body and sumptuous dress are the only indications of the pope's penchant for excess. He looks off into the distance, beyond the edge of the painting, and holds a magnifying glass while turning the page of his Bible. This gives the impression that he is reacting to someone who has just entered the room. The poses of both other men indicate their relationships with Leo. Giulio stands on the left of the painting, looking out to the other direction; his posture and gaze mirror Leo's. Giulio was considered a man of great authority, and was called by a Vatican chronicler, "Leo's other self." Luigi de' Rossi, the pope's cousin and best friend, is the only person who looks at the viewer, and his hands are touching the pope's chair. The two had been raised together, and Leo was said to have been devastated after Luigi's 1519 death of gout (an affliction that habitually plagued the Medici). The painting is dominated by red paint, the color of the papacy.



Figure **13.7.6.132***: Sebastiano del Piombo, Cardinal Bandinello Sauli, His Secretary, and Two Geographers, 1516, oil on panel, 121.8 x 150.4 cm / 47 15/16 x 59 3/16" (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)*



Figure **13.7.6.133***: Raphael, Portrait of Pope Julius II, 1511, oil on panel, 108.7 x 81 cm (The National Gallery, London)*

Although the composition of Raphael's painting has been considered revolutionary, it actually has several precedents, such as Sebastiano del Piombo's 1516 Cardinal Bandinello Sauli, His Secretary, and Two Geographers. But because this painting is so different from other portraits by Raphael, such as his Portrait of Julius II, and because infrared x-rays of the work show that Raphael originally conceived the composition to show only Leo, like Julius, in front of a green background, many people have wondered what to make of this very odd portrait.

Significantly, the painting was sent to Florence from Rome. This has led many people to believe that the portrait was made for the wedding of his nephew, which Leo knew he could not attend. That way, the three Medici relatives could still be "present" at the event. However, the men are shown in their winter clothes, indicating that Raphael painted it a long time before the wedding; it is unlikely that Leo knew he would not be able to attend that far in advance. More importantly, Luigi de' Rossi was at the wedding, further evidence that although the painting was set up at the event, it was probably originally intended for other purposes.

Some art historians have interpreted it as a dynastic portrait. Leo was the first Medici to attain the papacy, one of the most important offices in the entire world, and he quickly elevated his family members to high ranks within the Vatican. The Bible shown with Leo has been identified as a copy of the Hamilton Bible owned by Leo's father, Lorenzo the Magnificent, indicating his Medici lineage. The bell on the table is a symbol of power, as it was used to summon servants, and is covered with Medici insignia, such as feathers, diamonds, and the Medici palle, or "balls," which were the most recognizable symbols of the family. Some have suggested that the globe on Leo's chair is also meant to recall the palle.



Figure **13.7.6.134***: Detail, Raphael, Portrait of Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de'Medici and Luigi de'Rossi, c. 1518 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

Most convincing is the suggestion that the portrait was made for religious purposes. In 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses condemning the abuses of the church, among which were the selling of indulgences, which Leo had used to fund the construction of Saint Peter's Basilica. Although Luther would not split from the church for many years, the threat to the church was palpable. Art historians have noted that Leo is turning the page of his Bible from the last passage of the Book of Luke to the first of the Book of John. In Luke, Jesus is exhorting the Apostles to pray often in the Temple. This has been interpreted as a direct rebuke to Luther's opposition to the building of Saint Peter's Basilica. The Book of John begins, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him." Since Leo's birth name was Giovanni (the Italian version of "John"), this scriptural passage can be understood to assert that it is only through the obedience to the pope, Giovanni de' Medici, and official Vatican doctrines that one can achieve salvation. This is in direct contrast to Luther's belief that salvation could be achieved through faith in God alone.



Figure **13.7.6.135***: Detail, Raphael, Portrait of Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de'Medici and Luigi de'Rossi, c. 1518 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

Overall, Raphael's portrait has been lauded as a masterful piece of realism. The unflattering likeness of Leo, along with intricate details, such as the reflection of the interior of the room on the metal surface of the ball on the chair, show a complete mastery of the art of painting and a conception of naturalism entirely in keeping with the goals of the High Renaissance. It is ironic that modern viewers can look at Raphael's painting, meant to glorify the Medici and the authority of the pope, as a portrait of two of the worst popes in history: Leo X saw the Christian church cleaved in half, and Clement VII hid in safety as the city of Rome was destroyed around him.

Donato Bramante

Donato Bramante, Tempietto, Rome

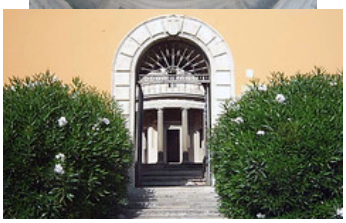
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.6.28*: Donato Bramante, Tempietto, c. 1502, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





















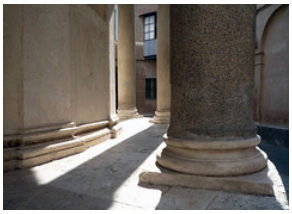



Figure **13.7.6.136**: *More Smarthistory images…*



Video **13.7.6.29***: Saint Peter's Basilica (Basilica Sancti Petri), begun 1506, completed 1626, Vatican City*

Architects and designers included: Donato Bramante (whose design won Julius II's competition); Antonio da Sangallo, a student of Bramante (the Pauline Chapel); Fra Giocondo (strengthening of the foundation); Raphael and Fra Giocondo (whose redesigned building plan was not executed); Michelangelo (design of the dome, crossing, and exterior excluding the nave and facade); Giacomo della Porta (design of the cupola); Carlo Maderno (extension of Michelangelo's plan, adding a nave and grand facade); Gian Lorenzo Bernini (addition of the piazza, the Cathedra Petri, and the Baldacchino).



Figure **13.7.6.137***: H.W. Brewer, Drawing of Old St. Peter's Basilica as it appeared between 1475 and 1483, 1891*

Pope Julius II commissioned Bramante to build a new basilica—this involved demolishing the Old St Peter's Basilica that had been erected by Constantine in the fourth century. This ancient church was in disrepair. But tearing it down was a bold maneuver that gives us a sense of the enormous ambition of Pope Julius II, both for the papacy as well as for himself.



Figure **13.7.6.138***: Numerous architects (see below), Saint Peter's Basilica, begun 1506 completed 1626 (Vatican City) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)*

Burial site of St. Peter

The site is a very holy one—it is (according to the Church) the site of the burial of St. Peter. Bramante did the first plan for the new church. He proposed an enormous centrally planned church in the shape of a Greek cross enclosed within a square with an enormous dome over the center, and smaller domes and half-domes radiating out. When Bramante died, Raphael took over as chief architect for St. Peter's, and when Raphael died, Michelangelo took over. Both Michelangelo and Raphael made substantial changes to Bramante's original plan. Nevertheless, the experience of being inside St. Peter's is awe-inspiring.

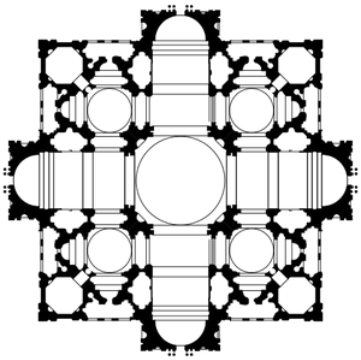


Figure **13.7.6.139***: Bramante, plan for St. Peter's Basilica, 1506*

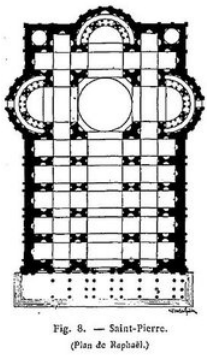


Figure 13.7.6.140*: Raphael, plan for St. Peter's Basilica, 1513*

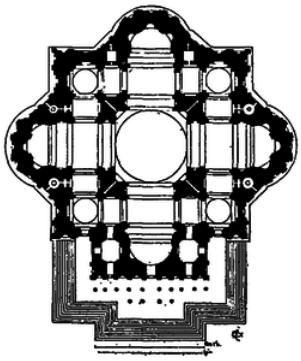


Figure 13.7.6.141*: Michelangelo, plan for St. Peter's Basilica, 1547*

Basilica and central plan

The two basic types of Church are the basilica and the central plan. The basilica, with its long axis that focuses attention on the altar, has been the most popular type of church plan because of its practicality.

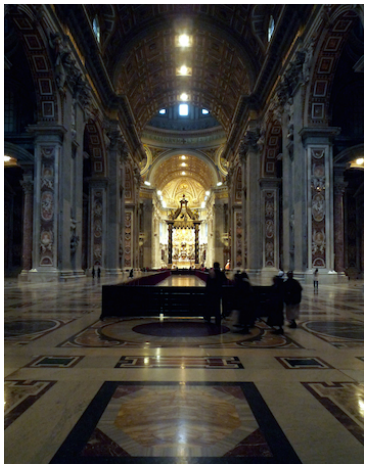


Figure 13.7.6.142*: Numerous architects (see below), Nave, Saint Peter's Basilica, begun 1506 completed 1626 (Vatican City)*

The other popular type of church plan is a central plan that is usually based either on the shape of a circle, or on a Greek cross (a cross with equal arms). These are called central plans because the measurements are all equidistant from a center. This type of Church, influenced by Classical architecture (think of the Pantheon), was very popular among

High Renaissance architects. Besides the influence of ancient Roman architecture, the circle had spiritual associations. The circle, which has no beginning and no end, symbolized the perfection and eternal nature of God. For some thinkers in antiquity and the Renaissance the universe itself was constructed in the form of concentric circles with the sun, moon and stars moving in circular orbits around the earth.

Bramante's original design was for a central plan, however—as built—the church combines elements of a central plan with the longer nave of a basilica.

Architectural contributors to St. Peter's Basilica include:

> ***Donato Bramante, whose design won Julius II's competition***
> ***Antonio da Sangallo, a student of Bramante, who designed the Pauline Chapel***
> ***Fra Giocondo, who strengthened the foundation***
> ***Raphael worked with Fra Giocondo, whose redesigned building plan was not executed***
> ***Michelangelo designed the dome, crossing, and exterior excluding the nave and facade***
> ***Giacomo della Porta designed the cupola***
> ***Carlo Maderno, extended Michelangelo's plan adding a nave and grand facade***
> ***Gian Lorenzo Bernini added the piazza, the Cathedra Petri, and the Baldacchino***

Additional resources:

Designing St. Peter's from Columbia University

Vatican tour of the necropolis believed to contain the tomb of Saint Peter – *Please note: to reach the interactive tour of the necropolis, proceed beyond the introduction and the brief lecture offered by Cardinal Comastri*

St. Peter's Basilica at Sacred Destinations

Google Satellite image

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















Figure 13.7.6.143*: More Smarthistory images…*

Mannerism

Jacopo Pontormo, *Entombment* (or *Deposition from the Cross*)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

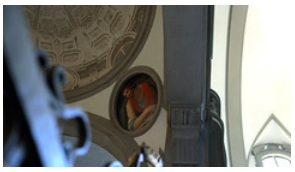
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

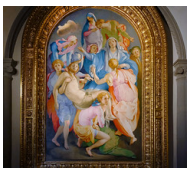




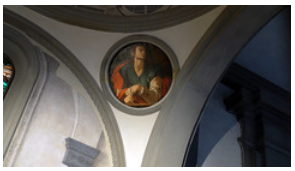


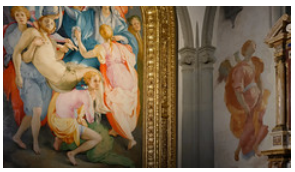














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

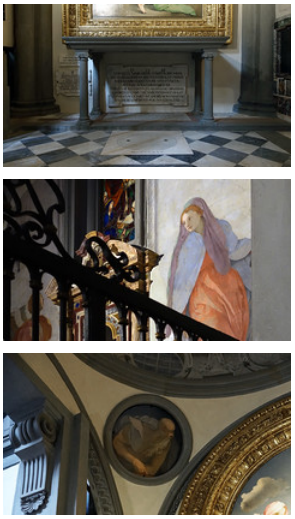


Figure 13.7.6.144*: More Smarthistory images…*

Parmigianino

Parmigianino, *Madonna of the Long Neck*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.6.31*: Parmigianino, Madonna of the Long Neck, 1530-33, 28 3/4 x 23 1/2" (73 x 60) (Uffizi, Florence)*

Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



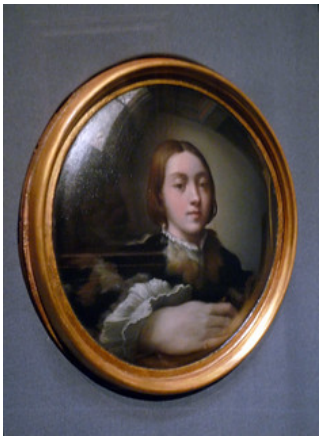


Figure **13.7.6.145***: More Smarthistory images…*

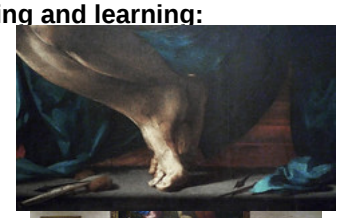
Rosso Fiorentino, *The Dead Christ with Angels*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.6.33***: Rosso Fiorentino, The Dead Christ with Angels, c. 1524-7, oil on panel, 133.4 x 104.1 cm (52-1/2 x 41 inches) (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



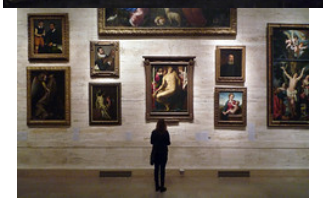






Figure 13.7.6.146*: More Smarthistory images…*

Bronzino

Bronzino, *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.6.34*: Agnolo di Cosimo Bronzino, An Allegory with Venus and Cupid, c. 1545, oil on panel, 146.1 x 116.2cm (National Gallery, London)*

This passage by Vasari is most likely related to this canvas:

> ***And he painted a picture of singular beauty that was sent to King Francis in France, wherein was a nude Venus, with a Cupid who was kissing her, and Pleasure***

> ***on one side with Play and other Loves, and on the other side Fraud and Jealousy and other passions of love.***

Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the most Eminent Painters Sculptors and Architects, volume 10, trans: Gaston du C. De Vere (London: Medici Society, 1912-15)

Bronzino, *Portrait of Eleonora di Toledo with her son Giovanni*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.6.35***: Bronzino, Portrait of Eleonora di Toledo with her son Giovanni, 1544-1545, oil on panel, 115 x 96 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)*

Bronzino and the Mannerist Portrait

by DR. DAVID DROGIN and DR. BETH HARRIS



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Video **13.7.6.147***: More Smarthistory images…*

Sofonisba Anguissola

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Self-Portrait, c. 1556, varnished watercolor on parchment, 8.3 x 6.4 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). The medallion is inscribed in Latin: “The maiden Sofonisba Anguissola, depicted by her own hand, from a mirror, at Cremona.”" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-13092" height="667" sizes="(max-width: 503px) 100vw, 503px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05/sc81958.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...05/sc81958.jpg

503w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...58-300x398.jpg

300w" width="503">

Figure 13.7.6.148*: Sofonisba Anguissola, Self-Portrait, c. 1556, varnished watercolor on parchment, 8.3 x 6.4 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). The medallion is inscribed in Latin: “The maiden Sofonisba Anguissola, depicted by her own hand, from a mirror, at Cremona.”*

The 16th-century painter and author of Lives of the Artists, Giorgio Vasari, praised the work of Sofonisba Anguissola. Vasari wrote that Sofonisba,

> ***has laboured at the difficulties of design with greater study and better grace than any other woman of our time, and she has not only succeeded in drawing, colouring, and copying from nature, and in making excellent copies of works by other hands, but has also executed by herself alone some very choice and beautiful works of painting.”[1]***

Sofonisba Anguissola was an artist who came from a noble family in Cremona (northern Italy). She is well known for the paintings she made of herself and her family (she was the oldest of seven children). In 1559, she became a lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Spain, Elisabeth de Valois, and continued to produce works while at the court of King Philip II until 1573. Interestingly, Sofonisba painted at least twelve self-portraits at a time when this was not a particularly common subject for artists (in the next century, Rembrandt would be the first artist to make the self-portrait a major part of his oeuvre).



Figure **13.7.6.149***: Sir Anthony Van Dyck, Sofonisba Anguissola, 1624, oil on panel, 41.6 x 33.7 cm (Knole, Kent)*

Women in Renaissance Italy were generally barred from becoming apprentices to master artists (the standard way in which artists were trained during the Renaissance). Female artists tended to come from families where a father (or sometimes a brother) was an artist. In this way they could receive training and bypass the apprenticeship system. Sofonisba is atypical in this respect—her father was not an artist. Instead, she studied with other artists—with Bernardino Campi as well as Bernardino Gatti (Il Sojaro)—who exposed Anguissola to the fundamentals of painting, such as the importance of disegno (drawing or design).

We have a letter from the artist's father dated 7 May 1557 thanking the great Italian Renaissance painter, sculptor, and architect, Michelangelo, for the "honourable and thoughtful affection that you have shown to Sofonisba, my daughter, to whom you introduced to practice the most honourable art of painting."[2] While it is clear from this note that Sofonisba met the famous Renaissance artist, it has also been suggested that she may have even studied with Michelangelo. Certainly the renown she gained in Italy helped to secure her position as lady-in-waiting at the Spanish court.

Sofonisba's international renown grew throughout her lifetime. Later in her life, the great Baroque painter Anthony van Dyck visited her in Sicily and painted her portrait (above). Centuries later, with the feminist movement of the 1970s, Sofonisba's fame and significance have been once again "rediscovered" and she is now counted among ranks of other important painters of the early modern period, a revival of interest similar to that accorded to artists such as Artemisia Genitleschi.

Self-Portrait, 1556



Figure 13.7.6.150*: Sofonisba Anguissola, Self-Portrait at the Easel, 1556, oil on canvas, 66 x 57 cm (Łańcut Castle)*

In the 1556 self-portrait (above), Sofonisba shows herself in the act of painting, applying mixed pigments to a canvas that depicts the Virgin and Christ Child tenderly kissing. She gazes outward—as if we have just interrupted her in mid-stroke. Her expression is calm and reserved. A maulstick (a common device used to support the artist's hand) held in her left hand supports her right hand as she touches the brush to the canvas.



Figure **13.7.6.151***: Sofonisba Anguissola, Self-Portrait, 1554, oil on poplar wood, 19.5 x 12.5 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)*

The artist wears a simple black dress—possibly to connote modesty and virtue. Her simple fashion embodies the woman of court, as outlined by Baldassare Castiglione in his Book of the Courtier (1528):

> ***I wish this [Court] Lady to have knowledge of letters, music, painting, and to know how to dance and make merry; accompanying the other precepts that have been taught the Courtier with discreet modesty and with the giving of a good impression of herself. And thus, in her talk, her laughter, her play, her jesting, in short, in everything, she will be very graceful, and will entertain appropriately, and with witticisms and pleasantries befitting her, everyone who shall come before her. [3]***

Some of Sofonisba's other self-portraits, such as one where she holds a small book (left), even include inscriptions like "Sophonisba Angusola virgo seipsam fecit 1554" (The virgin Sofonisba Anguissola made this herself in 1554) to identify herself as a chaste, virtuous woman.

The inclusion of a painting of the Virgin Mary and Christ child in the 1556 self-portrait further reflects on Sofonisba's virginity. While Mary feeding, kissing, or embracing Christ as a child were common subjects of this era, it is likely that Sofonisba incorporated this intimate scene between mother and son here to fashion herself as a virtuous woman—one who identifies with the ultimate virtuous woman, the Virgin Mary.



Figure **13.7.6.152***: Catharina van Hemessen, Self-Portrait at the Easel, 1548, oil on panel, 32.2 x 25.2 cm (Kumstmuseum, Basel)*

Displaying herself in the act of painting associated her with an established tradition of artists depicting themselves—not all of them men. While contemporaneous artists like Titian and Albrecht Dürer painted self-portraits, those that included a painter's tools of the trade—a canvas, palette, and maulstick—were less common. Examples do exist, however, from the sixteenth century, and artists showing themselves with their tools became increasingly popular over time. Like Sofonisba, Caterina van Hemessen fashions herself at a canvas, holding a maulstick while she paints. A ***self-portrait by the Dutch artist Joachim Wtewael*** *also shows the artist holding his painter's tools, most likely applying paint to a canvas outside the picture plane.*

Other Portraits

Beyond painting self-portraits, Sofonisba also produced miniatures and group portraits. Many of those completed before her departure for Spain, such as The Chess Game, exhibit members of her family. Sofonisba would not have had access to male models, and drew inspiration from those people she encountered in her daily life like her family.



Figure **13.7.6.153**: *Sofonisba Anguissola, The Chess Game (Portrait of the artist's sisters playing chess), 1555, oil on canvas, 72 x 97 cm (National Museum in Poznań)*

This painting shows the artist's three sisters (Lucia, Europa, and Minerva) playing chess —an intellectual pursuit—with their governess looking over them. Sofonisba shows an intimate setting with her sisters. The sister to the left, thought to be Lucia, looks out at the viewer after winning the game. Sofonisba displays her virtuosity as a painter here by positioning her figures in a variety of poses. Their gazes also lead our eye around the canvas and eventually back to the artist herself, who occupies the position outside of the canvas. Sofonisba also demonstrates her skill by painting a variety of textures in her sisters' clothes and the imported carpet under the chessboard.



Figure 13.7.6.154*: Sofonisba Anguissola, Self-Portrait, c. 1610 (Gottfried Keller Collection, Bern)*

Sofonisba continued painting portraits throughout her life, including self-portraits of her in advanced age. One, dated to 1610 (left, when the artist was 78) shows the artist seated on a chair, holding a book and a piece of paper. Her dress is not altogether different from the outfit in her 1556 painting: black, modest, and reserved. Upon her death at age 93 (in 1625), her second husband, Orazio Lomellino, had her tomb inscribed, "To Sofonisba, my wife, who is recorded among the illustrious women of the world, outstanding in portraying the images of man."

Notes

[1] Giorgio Vasari, The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (London: Philip Lee Warner, 1912–4), pp. 127–8.

[2] Buonarroti Archives, Florence. From Ilya Sandrea Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance (New York: NY, Rizzoli, 1992), p. 67.

[3] "Third Book of the Courtier," from Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. Leonard Eckstein Opdycke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 180.

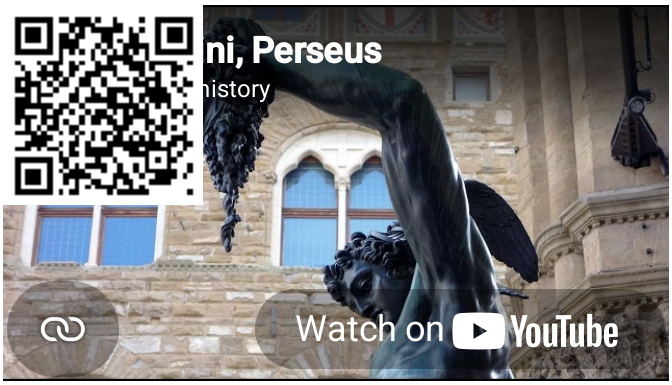
Additional resources:

Sofonisba Anguissola by Alan Farber

Woman's Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba Anguissola

Benvenuto Cellini, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. DAVID DROGIN



Video 13.7.6.37*: Benvenuto Cellini, Perseus with the Head of Medusa, c. 1554, bronze (Loggia dei Lanzi, Piazza della Signoria, Florence)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.6.155***: More Smarthistory images…*

Giambologna, *Abduction of a Sabine Woman*

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Figure **13.7.6.156***: Giambologna, Abduction of a Sabine Woman, 1581-83, marble, 410 cm high (Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)*

One of the most recognized works by one of the least well-known artists

Giambologna's Abduction of a Sabine Woman is one of the most recognized works of sixteenth-century Italian art by one of the least well-known artists of the period. And while Giambologna may not be a household name like Michelangelo, his influence on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth- century European art was extensive and long lasting. The Abduction of a Sabine Woman is located in a spot few tourists miss—the Loggia dei Lanzi, just outside of the Palazzo Vecchio, in Florence.



Figure **13.7.6.157***: Giambologna, Mercury, c. 1586, bronze, 72cm high (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)*

The story of how Giambologna came to create the Sabine sculpture is almost as interesting as the historical tale it represents. Giambologna (born Jean du Boulogne in Douai in Flanders), arrived in Florence sometime around 1552, and within a few short years was court sculptor to the Medici and running his own large and productive workshop. Giambologna was highly regarded for his small to mid-size works in marble and bronze which were collected by connoisseurs and sent as Medicean diplomatic gifts all across Europe.

Giambologna and Mannerism

Giambologna's works exemplified the characteristics of the Mannerist period, a time in which artists exploited the idea of beauty for beauty's sake in works that showcased their artistic talent with figures composed of sinuous lines, graceful curves, exaggerated poses, and a hyper-elegance and preciousness that delighted viewers. His figure of Mercury (above) is an example of what made his work so popular.

While Giambologna's fame and workshop flourished, there was one area in which he was not active, and that was in monumental sculpture. And in Florence, just taking the short walk from the Cathedral to the Palazzo Vecchio becomes a demonstration of the long history of life-size or larger public sculpture that dominated the cityscape. There were marble sculptures by such famous fifteenth-century sculptors as ***Donatello****,* ***Nanni di Banco****, and* ***Lorenzo Ghiberti*** *on the façade of the cathedral, in the niches on the campanile (the belltower), and encircling the exterior of* ***Orsanmichele****, and in the Piazza della Signoria—the center of Florentine life and politics—were the truly monumental*

*sculptures, including Michelangelo's **David** (1504), Baccio Bandinelli's **Hercules and Cacus** (1525-32), and Bartolommeo Ammanati's **Neptune Fountain** (1565).*



Figure 13.7.6.158*: Giambologna, Abduction of a Sabine Woman, 1581-83, marble, 410 cm high (Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)*

A sculptor of monumental works too

Thus, Giambologna also wanted to prove himself as a sculptor of monumental works. And as the story is told, Giambologna undertook the Sabine project without any specific subject in mind with the only goal being to produce a complex multi-figural group.[1] When the work was nearly complete and placed in the Loggia dei Lanzi in August of 1582, it was referred to simply as "group of three statues," as no one knew what the subject was.[2] However, just a short time later, the work was interpreted as representing an ancient Roman event, and Giambologna produced a bronze narrative relief to be inserted into the base of the sculpture to help clarify the content of the three figures above.[3]



Figure **13.7.6.159***: Giambologna, Abduction of a Sabine Woman, 1581-83, marble, 410 cm high (Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)*

The subject

The subject is a dramatic one from ancient Roman history. According to the accounts of both Livy and Plutarch, after the city of Rome was founded in 750 B.C.E., the male population of the city was in need of women to ensure both the success of the city and the propagation of Roman lineage. After failed negotiations with the neighboring town of Sabine for their women, the Roman men devised a scheme to abduct the Sabine women (which they did during a summer festival).

What we see in Giambologna's sculpture is the moment when a Roman successfully captures a Sabine woman as he marches over a Sabine male who crouches down in defeat. (As a note, the sculpture is also referred to as the Rape of a Sabine Woman, which can lead to confusion over the subject. In Latin, the word rapito means "abduction" (and in Italian, the verb rapire means "to abduct," thus the title Abduction of a Sabine Woman is technically more correct than the Rape of a Sabine Woman, which has explicit connotations of sexual violence. And indeed, in Livy's account of the episode, he claims there was not sexual violence, rather a variety of enticements by the Roman for how the women would be treated as their wives.)[4])

A triumph

The Sabine was indeed a triumph for Giambologna. According to one account, when the work was officially unveiled to the Florentine public, not one person could find fault with

it.[5] And if we compare the Sabine with another multi-figure group, such as Bandinelli's two-figure ***Hercules and Cacus****, it is immediately apparent how Giambologna dramatically altered the conception of a sculpture involving more than two figures. Bandinelli's Hercules stands over a defeated Cacus, both men trapped in stony stillness. Neither figure expresses emotion or seems to possess the potential for movement.*



Figure **13.7.6.160***: Giambologna, Abduction of a Sabine Woman, 1581-83, marble, 410 cm high (Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)*

In contrast, Giambologna built his figures up from the bottom, beginning with the cowering Sabine male (above), whose body twists and contorts in reaction to what is happening above him. The man's straining muscles are evident as he raising his left hand up in despair as the triumphant Roman literally straddles his body, as he strides forward, carrying the Sabine woman away. If you look closely where he grabs her left hip, his fingers actually press into her flesh (below), thus amplifying the effect of these figures being more than marble statues. The woman herself, arms outstretched, twists back and over the Roman's shoulder as she is hoisted into the air. These figures convey movement, aggression, fear, and struggle, as they move upward in a flame-like or twisting pattern known as figura serpentinata (serpentine figure), popular with Mannerist artists of the period. And to enhance the sense of frenetic energy, Giambologna did not provide a single or primary viewpoint for the work so the viewer must engage with the sculpture in 360 degrees in order to see the entirety of the drama unfold.

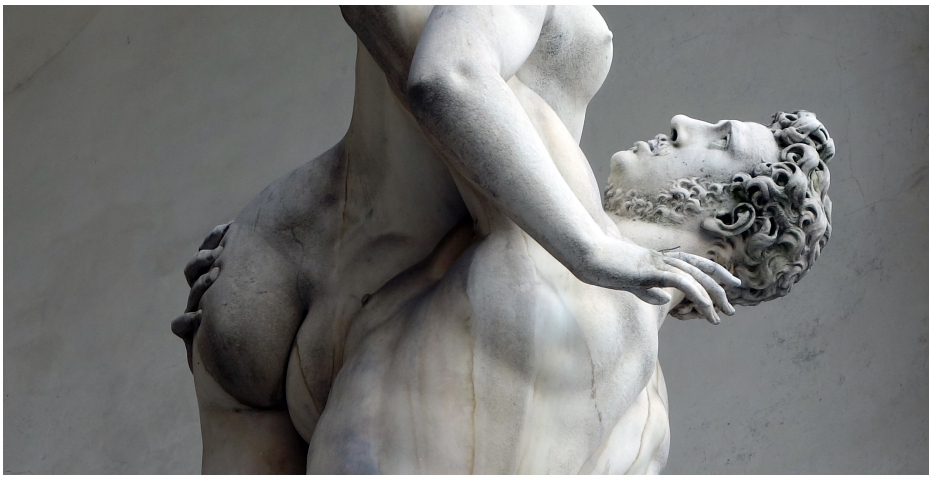


Figure 13.7.6.161*: Giambologna, Abduction of a Sabine Woman, 1581-83, marble, 410 cm high (Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)*

The Abduction of the Sabine Woman proved to be Giambologna's entrée into the Florentine world of monumental sculpture. From this point forward he went on to create numerous other works that occupy principal sites in Florence, including the Cosimo I de'Medici Equestrian Monument in the Piazza della Signoria, St. Luke for a niche at Orsanmichele, and a brilliant Hercules Battling the Centaur, which is situated just a few feet from his Sabine group in the Loggia dei Lanzi.



Figure 13.7.6.162*: Giambologna, Abduction of a Sabine Woman, 1581-83, marble, 410 cm high (Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)*

Influence

The influence of what Giambologna accomplished with the Sabine group was seen through the next several decades. For example, in Gianlorenzo Bernini's ***Aeneas, Anchises, and Ascanius*** *we can most certainly begin to see the influence of Giambologna on the man who would become the face of Baroque sculpture in Italy. In Bernini's Pluto and Proserpina, the forward stride of Pluto, the elevation of Proserpina above his head, his fingers pressing into the flesh of her thigh, and her outstretch arms and anguished face all point directly to the influence of Giambologna's Sabine group. And it wasn't only*

other sculptors who were responsive to Giambologna's sculpture. Painters such as Nicolas Poussin and Pietro da Cortona both executed paintings of the same subject and clearly borrowed from both Giambologna's Sabine figural group, but also his bronze narrative relief as well.

[1] Charles Avery, Giambologna. The Complete Sculpture (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1993), 111.

[2] Ibid, 112.

[3] Ibid.

*[4] **Titus Livius, The History of Rome (Ab Urbe Condia Libri, c. 27-25 B.C.E.), Book 1, chapters 9-10.***

[5] Avery, pp. 112-114.

Additional resources:

Bronze sculpture in the Renaissance on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mannerism: Bronzino and his Contemporaries on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Giambologna at the Google Cultural Institute

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

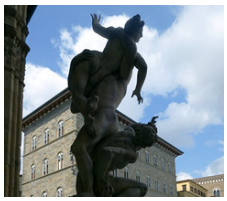


Figure 13.7.6.163*: More Smarthistory images…*

13.7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88725

13.7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II)

Venice in the 16th century

Painting at its most poetic.

1500 - 1600

Three synagogues in the Venetian Ghetto

by DR. DAVID LANDAU, DR. MARCELLA ANSALDI and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

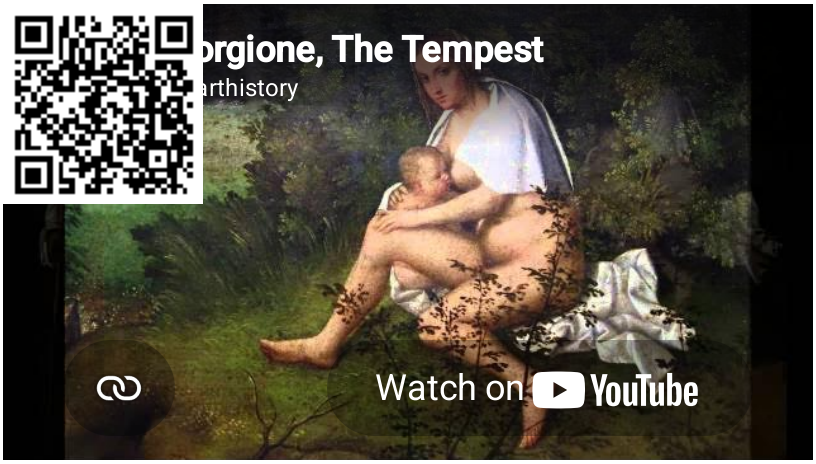


Video 13.7.7.1: German Synagogue (founded 1528), the Italian Synagogue (founded 1575), the Canton Synagogue (1532), and the Jewish Museum, Venice, This is an ARCHES video with Dr. David Landau, Dr. Marcella Ansaldi, Director of the Jewish Museum of Venice, and Dr. Steven Zucker

Giorgione

Giorgione, *The Tempest*

by DR. JAMES R. JEWITT



Video 13.7.7.2: Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1505-1508, oil with traces of tempera on canvas, 82 x 73 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure **13.7.7.1**: Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1505-1508, oil with traces of tempera on canvas, 82 x 73 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

What is so tempting?



Figure **13.7.7.2**: Lightning (detail), Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1505-1508, oil with traces of tempera on canvas, 82 x 73 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

A burst of lightning illuminates a countryside engulfed in a thunderstorm. Its sudden flash reveals a curious scene: a fashionably dressed man standing on a riverbank eyeing a nearly nude woman seated on the opposite shore nursing an infant. The figures are alone in an otherwise lush landscape that glows turquoise in the storm's humid air. Groves of tall trees flank a deep view extending backwards along a central waterway to a rural town on the horizon. The breastfeeding woman gazes outward as if questioning our intrusion upon the secluded rustic scene.

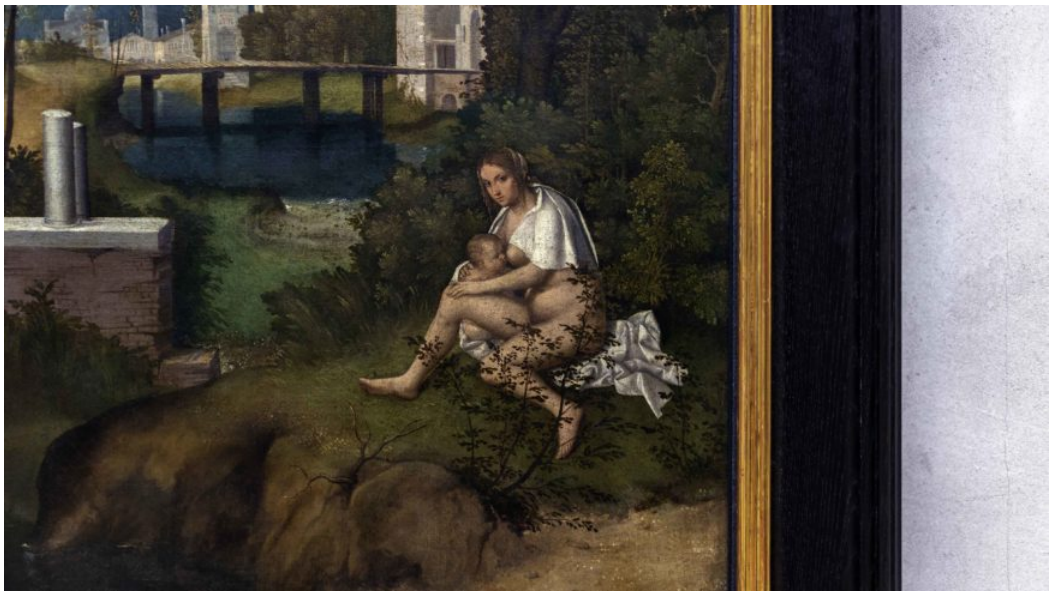


Figure **13.7.7.3**: Woman nursing an infant (detail), Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1505-1508, oil with traces of tempera on canvas, 82 x 73 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

Few paintings, if any, in the history of European art vex art historians as much as Giorgione's *Tempest*. Painted in Venice sometime between 1505 and 1508, it has generated a steady flood of conflicting interpretations bent upon discovering its precise meaning. No consensus has been reached that fully explains its ambiguous imagery. Studying Giorgione presents a conundrum since little is securely known about his artworks, patrons, or life (cut short by his death from the plague in 1510)—yet he exerted considerable influence on the subsequent history of Venetian painting. Innovations evident in *The Tempest* showcase Giorgione's technical experimentation and increasingly novel subjects that reshaped European easel painting.



Figure **13.7.7.4**: Giorgione, *Self-Portrait as David*, c. 1510, oil on canvas, 52 x 43 cm (Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig)

A downpour of interpretations

One of the central controversies viewers of *The Tempest* must face is making sense of its subject matter and meaning. Even sophisticated art connoisseurs in the sixteenth century puzzled over its imagery. The first recorded viewer in 1530 identified its

figures but not any overarching narrative or theme. One of Giorgione's earliest biographers, Giorgio Vasari, lamented in annoyance that he could not understand the meaning of the artist's public paintings, nor supposedly could other learned viewers around Venice. Inventories likewise only vaguely identify the *Tempest*'s male figure as a "soldier" or "shepherd," and the female figure as a "gypsy" or even more generically as a "woman."

Many commentators, insisting Giorgione intended a preconceived theme in *The Tempest*, have been lured to resolve such enigmatic details. The painting has generated an enormous modern scholarly literature, with over 100 proposals for its imagery—nearly all of them different. Despite this, most interpretations tend to cluster around four main strategies. The first approach seeks to decode the picture's iconography (its presumed textual or literary sources) to unveil a hidden symbolic narrative. Stories from mythology, classical history, religion, bucolic poetry, and humanist texts have all been linked to it. A second approach connects its prominent outdoor setting to landscape painting's emerging popularity within aesthetic tastes and Italian art theory in the early sixteenth century.



Figure **13.7.7.5**: Male figure (detail), Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1505-1508, oil with traces of tempera on canvas, 82 x 73 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)



Figure **13.7.7.6**: Anton Maria Zanetti II, 1760, engraving with watercolor, after Giorgione's Compagno della Calza fresco from the façade of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi on the Grand Canal in Venice

Yet a third approach interprets Giorgione's landscape as a socio-political allegory of the Veneto region. *The Tempest*, according to these hypotheses, represents a deeply nostalgic vision of Venetian territory as a peaceful Golden Age Arcadia during a period when the Veneto region was in fact under siege from foreign armies during the War of the League of Cambrai (1508–17). For other art historians, the male figure's multicolored hosiery and fancy jacket correspond to theatrical costumes of Venetian *Compagnie della Calza* (Confraternities of the Sock), who often staged plays with rustic countryside settings resembling Giorgione's landscape.

In sharp contrast is a final interpretive approach proposing that Giorgione's *Tempest* lacks any primary subject matter or theme whatsoever. Instead, some art historians argue it exists as a *capriccio* (an imaginary topographical scene) or *fantasia* (fantasy) whose meaning is intentionally left open. In this line of reasoning, with *The Tempest* Giorgione invents the Renaissance genre of *poesia* (pl. *poesie*). This mode of painting aspires to the highly lyrical and musical qualities of verse, and resembles visual poetry meant to generate multi-layered responses.

Audiences for landscape painting

The Tempest is among the first paintings to be labeled a "landscape" in Western art history. Giorgione thus plays a key role in the rising status of landscape painting during the early sixteenth century in Italy and northern Europe. Particularly in Venice, relatively small cabinet pictures such as *The Tempest* depicting scenes with prominent outdoor settings were actively sought by a new generation of innovative patrons and collectors.



Figure **13.7.7.7**: Giorgione, *Three Philosophers*, c. 1506–08, oil on canvas, 123 x 146 cm (**Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna**)

The first known owner of *The Tempest* was the wealthy Venetian nobleman and soap merchant Gabriele Vendramin. Displayed alongside antiquities and other works by Giorgione in the Vendramin palace, *The Tempest* likely expressed its owner's personal magnificence, cultured taste, and intellectual acumen. Vivid effects of weather and light are signature artistic devices for the artist. For example, his *Three Philosophers* and so-called *Sunset* colorfully portray ephemeral lighting conditions that likely captivated original audiences as much as modern viewers. However, the present title of *La tempesta* (the storm) is a modern invention coined in 1894.



Figure **13.7.7.8**: Giorgione, *Sunset ("Il Tramonto")*, c. 1506–10 (with 20th-century restorations), oil on canvas, 73.3 x 91.4 cm (**National Gallery of Art, London**)

The painting dispenses with fifteenth-century hierarchies dictating figures be given central importance in scale and composition over the landscape. Giorgione empties out the narrative core of the picture. His working method in *The Tempest* indicates the primary importance he designated for landscape in the overall composition. It is laid down first without any portions left reserved for figures, who are painted last and overtop the finished countryside. This unconventional choice subordinates the usual narrative elements—in this case man, woman, and infant—to the periphery. Instead, virtuoso depiction of land and atmosphere possibly stand as the true subjects of *The Tempest*—eclipsing any human drama.

Technical innovation

What distinguishes *The Tempest* from earlier small easel pictures produced in Venice is Giorgione's exploitation of newly available painting technologies. The medium of oil paint applied to a canvas support was typically reserved for large-scale civic projects in Venice, such as those completed by the workshops of Giovanni Bellini and Vittore Carpaccio. Giorgione's much smaller scale and format helped introduce works in this medium to private Venetian homes.



Figure **13.7.7.9**: Landscape (detail), Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1505-1508, oil with traces of tempera on canvas, 82 x 73 cm (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

More specifically, *The Tempest* inaugurates the long Venetian tradition of painterly *colore* (color) as the dominant expressive element in painting, eventually embodied by Giorgione's colleague Titian. Opposed to the Tuscan tradition of *disegno* (design) based on rigorous preliminary drawings for finished paintings, technical examinations of *The Tempest*'s canvas reveal only minimal sketches. Giorgione employed a largely improvisational approach.

In the finished work, deftly blended gradations of color, light, and tonal contrasts create an atmosphere unifying the composition. Pigment analysis reveals another unconventional choice: Giorgione's use of mineral-based pigments (yellow orpiment and orange realgar) to achieve deep and rich colors. Touches of much drier tempera paint also occur, demonstrating his tendency toward experimentation. This textural variation results in sensuous details of flesh, thick humidity, and foliage sparkling with moisture.



Figure **13.7.7.10**: X-radiography completed 1939 reconstructing prior presence of nude female figure in left foreground

Additionally, numerous *pentimenti* (original elements painted out in the final version) are evident. These include portions of the trees, several architectural features in the middle ground and background, parts of the male figure, and a nude woman once seated in the left foreground but omitted in the final version. This latter figure, revealed when the painting was first X-rayed in 1939, demonstrates how Giorgione might have originally intended an alternate subject matter but freely adjusted the content as the work progressed.

Modern reception and influence

The English poet Lord Byron rhapsodized about *The Tempest* in letters and his poem *Beppo* (1817), as did the Swiss cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt. Its impact is evident for Realist painters such as Edouard Manet, whose ***Le dèjeuner sur l'herbe*** (1863) was likely inspired by its pastoral setting. The American collector Isabella Stewart Gardner tried unsuccessfully to acquire "that beautiful plum" in 1896 for her future museum in Boston. [1]

The continual flood of proposals seeking to decode *The Tempest* tend to reveal more about the erudition of art historians than Giorgione. Nineteenth-century readings of the painting, guided by Romantic notions of creativity as the expression of individual genius, have exerted an enormous yet problematic influence over scholarship on the painting. Many theories remain dubious since they tend to over-intellectualize the artist and his intentions. There is no evidence Giorgione possessed an advanced education or university training. In this way, *The Tempest* serves as a fascinating barometer of art historical methodologies and trends, as successive generations grapple with its absorbing and notoriously volatile imagery.

Notes:

1. Letter from Isabella Stewart Gardner to Bernard Berenson, Oct. 21, 1896, in R. van N. Hadley, ed., *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Isabella Stewart Gardner*, 1887–1924 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), p. 69.

Additional Resources:

This work at the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice

Venetian Color and Florentine Design from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Read more about technical analysis of Giorgione's *Il Tramonto* at the National Gallery of Art, London

Discover Giorgione's paintings on Google Arts & Culture

Jaynie Anderson, *Giorgione: The painter of 'Poetic Brevity,' including catalogue raisonné* (New York: Flammarion, 1997)

Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Giovanna Nepi Scirè, eds., *Giorgione: Myth and Enigma* (Milan: Skira, 2004)

Deborah Howard, "Giorgione's *Tempesta* and Titian's *Assunta* in the Context of the Cambrai Wars," *Art History* 8, no. 3 (Sept., 1985), 271-89

Salvatore Settis, *Giorgione's Tempest: Interpreting the Hidden Subject*, trans. Ellen Bianchini (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

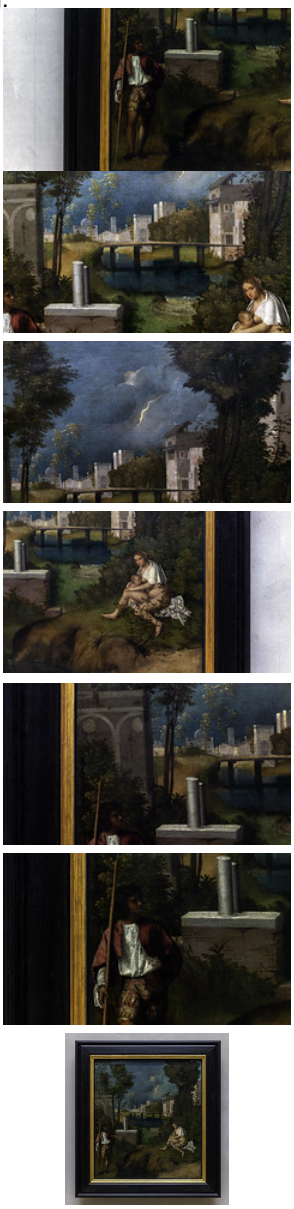


Figure **13.7.7.11**: More Smarthistory images…

Giorgione, *Three Philosophers*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.7.3: Giorgione, *Three Philosophers*, c. 1506 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Giorgione, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*

by DR. HEATHER HORTON and DR. MARK TROWBRIDGE



Video 13.7.7.4: Giorgione, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1505/1, oil on panel, 90.8 x 110.5 cm (35 3/4 x 43 1/2 in.) (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

Titian

Titian, *Pastoral Concert*

by DR. ESPERANÇA CAMARA

> ***Farewell, peoples and cities. The countryside will offer delightful displays for my eyes.***
>
> ***—Jacopo Sannazaro, Elegies, Book 1, Poem II, line 24***
>
> ***I know that then my verses will appear/ unpolished and dark, but I hope that even so/ they will be praised by the shepherds in these woods./ . . . And that which I sing now the springs and streams will recite along the valleys, murmuring/ with their far-shining crystal waters. / And the trees that I now consecrate here and plant/ whispering will make answer to the wind.***

An intimate moment

On a shady hillside overlooking sunny glens and a distant mountain vista sits a fashionably dressed young man with long, dark locks, a full-sleeved red and black garment, and bi-colored stockings. As he plays his lute, he turns attentively to his companion, a

young man with unruly hair and bare feet wearing a simple garment of coarse, brown fabric. Though their faces are in shadow, the intimacy of this moment is palpable. The two lean toward each other, their heads almost touching. The lute-player gazes toward his companion who looks down, listening to the music that resonates in the air between them. They are the center of the composition, oblivious to all else around them.

Figure **13.7.7.12**: Titian, *Pastoral Concert*, c. 1509, 105 x 137 cm (Louvre)

But they are not alone. Seated close by and forming part of their intimate group is a nude woman holding a wooden flute, her back turned toward the viewer. To the far left stands another nude woman. This one turns away from the group in an elegant contrapposto as she prepares to pour water into a stone well, perhaps fed by the sparkling stream visible in the middle distance, just behind her to the right. Bright, impasto dabs of white paint describe both the small waterfall created by this stream and the reflections on her glass pitcher.

The *Pastoral Concert* (also known by its French titles, *Fête champêtre* or *Concert Champetre*) has long been recognized as a masterpiece of Venetian Renaissance painting; it has also sparked much debate regarding both its authorship and its subject matter. Often attributed to Giorgione, most scholars now favor an attribution to Titian. This fluctuation of attribution is not surprising given Giorgione's influence on the young Titian, who worked closely with Giorgione early in his career and even completed Giorgione's ***Sleeping Venus*** upon the latter's untimely death in 1510.

Giorgione laid the groundwork for Titian both in terms of subject matter and technical innovations. Giorgione was the first Venetian to move away from the highly polished application of oil glazes of his teacher, Giovanni Bellini (see the image below). Giorgione, and Titian after him, embraced the tactile potential of oil painting, applying it with varied densities, at times allowing the weave of the canvas to show through and at others building up the surface with thick impasto.



Figure **13.7.7.13**: Giovanni Bellini, *Young Woman at her Toilette*, 1515, oil on wood, 78.3 x 62.9 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

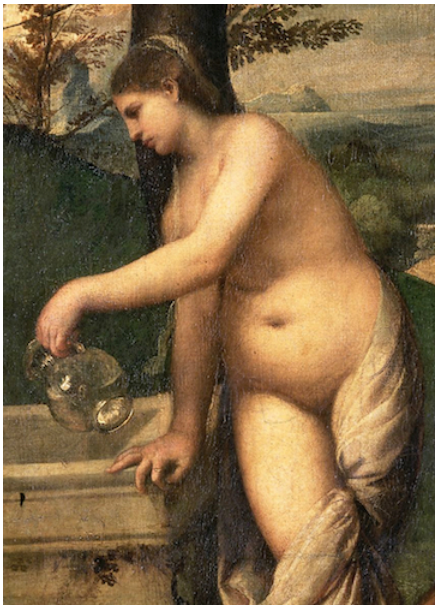


Figure **13.7.7.14**: Standing nude (detail), Titian, *Pastoral Concert*, c. 1509, 105 x 137 cm (Louvre)

The rougher texture created by this technique endows the forms in the Pastoral Concert (see the nude at the left for example) with a certain haziness or sfumato which has the effect of softening forms and thus effectively conveying both the tactile softness of the nudes' flesh and the ephemeral, soft light of late afternoon.

Debates about the subject matter

The debates about the painting's authorship, however, pale in comparison to the debates about its subject matter. Who are these figures? Why are the men clothed and the women nude? Why do the young men not acknowledge their female counterparts, despite their proximity and their nudity? What circumstances brings them together in this manner? These questions have puzzled art historians for centuries and have resulted in many attempts to secure specific identities for the figures. These attempts consistently disappoint and serve ultimately to highlight the painting's ambiguities and its resistance to a single fixed interpretation. The most successful interpretations are not those that attempt to identify a particular narrative or specific characters, but those that see the painting as the visual equivalent of a pastoral poem.

Painted poetry

Pastoral poetry (which originated with the *Idylls* of the ancient Greek poet Theocritus) extols the rustic world of the simple shepherd. It celebrates the physical, sensory beauty of the natural world—it speaks of shady forests, gurgling brooks, lowing herds, and gentle breezes. Musical contests between shepherds are a common motif in pastoral poetry, which is often tinged with melancholy as the contestants sing of lost loves and deceased comrades. The contestants frequently call upon the Muses for inspiration and, when blessed by them, create music of such power and beauty that even the woodland nymphs emerge to listen.

Like so many aspects of ancient culture, pastoral poetry also witnessed a revival during the Renaissance as poets vied to emulate their ancient Greek and Roman predecessors. A key figure in this revival was the poet Jacopo Sannazaro (quoted at the top of the page), whose popular poem *Arcadia* was published in Venice in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Its narrator is a poet from the city who sets aside his lofty aspirations of writing heroic epics and achieving success among cultured city dwellers in order to enjoy the purity and simplicity of the shepherds' rural existence. He listens to their songs of love and loss, and is inspired to create his own pastoral poetry. Titian's painting alludes to this hierarchy of poetic genres by juxtaposing the lute—a sophisticated instrument capable of producing complex harmonies, with the primitive pipe—the shepherd's favored instrument.

Rather than illustrate a particular scene from a pastoral poem, Titian visualizes the mood and motifs of this genre. As in Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, the lute-player is a cultured city dweller, perhaps even a member of the *Compagni delle Calze* (the Companions of the Stockings)—a fraternity of wealthy Venetian youth known for their fashionable attire and for organizing

elaborate entertainment (including music and poetry) for aristocratic weddings. Here he has retreated beyond the city visible in the background to the idyllic world of the pastoral poet.



Figure **13.7.7.15**: Left: Poetry, right: Music, Tarocchi, c. 1465 (from the area of Ferrara), engraving with traces of gilding (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

In this imaginary world, each woodland locale, each stream and cave has its own spirit, or nymph. Perhaps the women are the nymphs who embody the spirit of the place, or the muses who inspire the poet, or personifications of Poetry and Music. In a north Italian set of *Tarocchi* (Tarot) cards, the personification of music (above right) holds a musical pipe, as does the personification of poetry (above left). The latter, notably, also pours water from a pitcher, presumably from the fountain into the stream in front of her. This fountain represents the waters of inspiration that originate on Mount Parnassus, the realm of Apollo, god of music and poetry, and his nine Muses. The women may not be visible to the young men, but their presence is felt in the beauty of the poet's song.



Figure **13.7.7.16**: Seated figures (detail), Titian, *Pastoral Concert*, c. 1509, 105 x 137 cm (Louvre)

A Venetian genre

The *Pastoral Concert* exemplifies a distinctly Venetian invention focused on the idyllic landscape populated by gods and goddess, nymphs and satyrs, shepherds and peasants. Introduced by Giorgione and developed in the works of Titian and other Venetian artists, this genre became one of the most important artistic contributions of Renaissance Venice—its impact lasting far into the nineteenth century. In its conception, it reflects the dictum "ut picture poesis" (as is poetry so is painting)—a central principle in Renaissance art theory, upheld by artists as evidence of the intellectual status of their art. The comparison with poetry placed emphasis not on painting's manual production, but on the conceptual activity of the artist's mind. The creation of the visual equivalent of poetry—in which the artist draws on a variety of sources but ultimately creates something original—was one of the reasons Titian attained international fame later in his career. His *poesie* (as he called them) were coveted by patrons near and far, including the king of Spain.

Such paintings were produced for the private collections of discerning and educated patrons who understood the evocative, poetic subject matter. The *Pastoral Concert* was familiar enough in theme to be identified with a particular poetic genre, but elusive enough in details to invite contemplation and conversation. It thus provided a form of recreation that served as a visual and mental retreat for the patron—much like the one experienced by the painting's fashionable lute player. By looking at the painting and reflecting on the poetry it called to mind, the patron could—at least momentarily—escape to the countryside to enjoy the sights and sounds of the shepherd's world.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Louvre

Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting: Allegories and Mythologies

Robert C. Cafritz, Lawrence Gowing, and David Rosand, *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: Phillips Collection, 1988).

Patricia Egan, "Poesia and the Fete Champêtre," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 41, no. 4 (Dec., 1959), pp. 303-313.

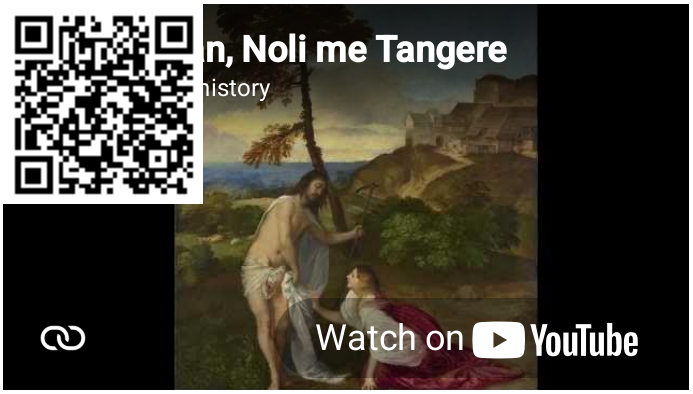
Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Paul Joannides, *Titian to 1518: The Assumption of Genius* (Yale, 2001).

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. *Bellini, Giorgione, and Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting* (2006).

Titian, *Noli me Tangere*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.7.5**: Titian, *Noli me Tangere*, c. 1514, oil on canvas, 110.5 x 91.9 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Titian, *Assumption of the Virgin*

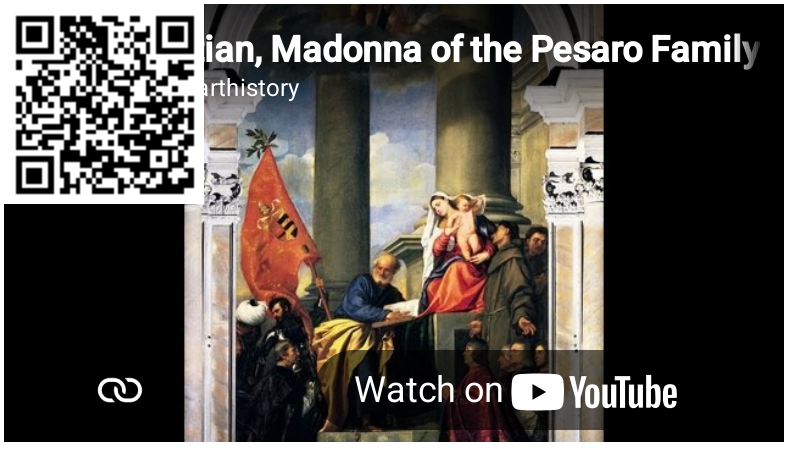
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.7.6**: Titian, *Assumption of the Virgin*, c. 1516-18, oil on wood, 22′ 6″ x 11′ 10″ (Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice)

Titian, *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.7.7**: Titian, *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*, 1519-26, oil on canvas, 16′ x 9′ (Santa Maria Gloriosa die Frari, Venice)

Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.7.8**: Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1523-24, oil on canvas now atop board, 69-1/2 x 75″ (National Gallery, London)

This is part of a mythological cycle painted by Titian and Giovanni Bellini and commissioned by Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara that includes *The Feast of the Gods* and *The Bacchanal of the Andrians*. It originally hung in the studiolo or Camerini d'Alabastro (Alabaster Chamber) of the Duke's Ferranese castle.

Titian, two portraits of Pietro Aretino

by DR. LORENZA SMITH



Figure **13.7.7.17**: Titian, two portraits of Pietro Aretino, left: c. 1537, oil on canvas, 101.9 x 85.7 cm (The Frick Collection, New York), right: 1545, oil on canvas, 96.7 × 77.6 cm (Palazzo Pitti, Florence)

Titian was one of the most celebrated portraitists of the sixteenth century. He enjoyed a high degree of international fame which brought him portrait commissions from the most prestigious families and powerful rulers of Europe. Giorgio Vasari, his contemporary and the renowned author of biographies of Italian artists, wrote that "there is hardly any nobleman of repute, nor prince, nor great lady, who has not been portrayed by Titian." Titian gave a new twist to portraiture. His portraits have a spark—something special and distinctive. A movement of the hand, a detail in the clothes, or a light in the eyes subtly discloses the inner layers of the sitter's soul in a way never done before. Titian also had a talent for combining a convincing likeness with a certain amount of flattery.



Figure **13.7.7.18**: Titian, Detail of bust, *Portrait of Pietro Aretino*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 101.9 x 85.7 cm (The Frick Collection, New York)

A lasting friendship

Pietro Aretino was a Tuscan writer, critic, and satirical poet, as well as an international publicist, an art agent, and a collector. He liked to call himself the "scourge of princes." After some traveling he established himself in Venice where he met Titian, with whom he started a deep friendship that lasted for 30 years.



Figure **13.7.7.19**: Titian, *Portrait of Pietro Aretino*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 101.9 x 85.7 cm (The Frick Collection, New York)

Aretino was known for his brash style, brilliant wit, bold impudence, and licentiousness. He was a controversial character, but through his charm and persuasiveness he managed to enjoy prominent international friends and patrons throughout his life. Titian's rapid ascent was also due to the help of Aretino, who assiduously promoted his work as his agent and publicist. Aretino introduced Titian to the nobles of Europe, and in return he acquired a reputation as an arbiter of taste and was admired for being close to such a celebrated artist. Titian is mentioned in many of Aretino's letters, while Aretino was painted by Titian on a few occasions, two of which are discussed in this essay.

Portrait of Pietro Aretino in the Frick Collection, New York

In this portrait, Aretino occupies the entire canvas with his large, imposing presence. The neutral background allows the sitter to forcefully stand out, while the limited palette vibrates with touches of light on the sleeves and the wriggling golden chain infuses the composition with a touch of life.

With confident and visible brushstrokes, Titian presents his friend in a bust length, three-quarter view. His body and face are turned in the same direction, suggesting assertiveness and determination. His face, in fully illuminated against the shadowy background, becomes the focus of the composition. Through his composition, Titian highlights the centrality of Aretino's bold and brazen intelligence.



Figure **13.7.7.20**: Titian, Detail of sleeve, *Portrait of Pietro Aretino*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 101.9 x 85.7 cm (The Frick Collection, New York)

Aretino was the son of a cobbler and was making a living as a writer, but Titian has portrayed him wearing patrician clothing. Aretino's fur coat displays voluminous sleeves of precious fabric, gloves, and a golden chain, a gift from one of his powerful friends. Aretino's strong-willed face and bulky chest lends the portrait a degree of conventionality which is contradicted by the roughly-sketched gloved hand that is casually holding his pelisse closed.

Portrait of Pietro Aretino in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence



Figure **13.7.7.21**: Titian, *Portrait of Pietro Aretino*, 1545, oil on canvas, 96.7 × 77.6 cm (Palazzo Pitti, Florence)

Like the portrait in the Frick Collection, the sitter's massive body takes up the whole canvas here. Rough brushstrokes give the painting an unfinished, pulsating effect. The source of illumination coming from the left creates a gleam on the velvet of the coat, depicted in a variety of pinkish-red shades, while part of Aretino's face and the background are left in shadow. The thinning hair and the disheveled beard are the same as those depicted eight years before, but Aretino's face appears more deeply creased and expresses a new intensity that was well known to his contemporaries.

As in the previous portrait, Aretino wears the characteristic accessories of the upper classes, including gloves and a heavy golden chain (probably a gift of Francis I, king of France), but here the view of the body is frontal, while his head is in a three-quarter view. With this twist, Titian freezes a moment in time in the life of the writer. The movement, the flickering light, and the sharply focused eyes charge the image with a psychological power. The Venetian artist again communicates his friend's provocative intelligence and self-assertiveness.

An unsuccessful gift



Figure **13.7.7.22**: Bronzino, *Cosimo de Medici in Armor*, c. 1545, oil on panel, 76.5 x 59 cm (**Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid**)

Aretino sent his portrait to Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in a failed attempt to obtain patronage for himself and Titian. It is possible that the painting was not appreciated, at least initially, as it was a far cry from the taste of the Florentine court, whose favorite portraitist at the time was Bronzino. Bronzino's sitters are characterized by impassive faces, their bodies outlined by crisp contours and presented in static positions amidst a timeless, almost crystalline atmosphere. Bronzino's approach diverged fundamentally from Titian's passionate, quick hand and his preference for color over line.

Aretino was aware of this and, maybe jokingly, in the letter accompanying the portrait wrote: "to be sure, it breathes, its pulse beats, and its spirit moves just as I am in life. And if I had paid more *scudi*, the materials would indeed have become glowing, soft, or stiff like silk and brocade."

We don't know what Titian thought about these words, but we do know that Aretino loved the portrait, referring to it as "an awesome marvel" and as a "continuous mirror of my very self."

Bucking tradition together

These two portraits tell us about the long friendship between the celebrated Venetian painter and Aretino, one of the most insolent writers of his times. Together, they also express Titian's talent for rendering human psychology through dense strokes of color.

Additional Resources:

Portrait of Pietro Aretino in the Frick Collection

Portrait of Pietro Aretino from the Palazzo Pitti (at The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Cecil Gould, *Grove Art Essentials: Titian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press Ink, 2016)

Sheila Hale, *Titian His Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012)

Pietro Aretino: *Lettere* (Paris, 1609); rev., abridged as *Lettere sull'arte*, (Milan, 1956–7)

Luba Freedman, *Titian's Portraits Through Aretino's Lens* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995)

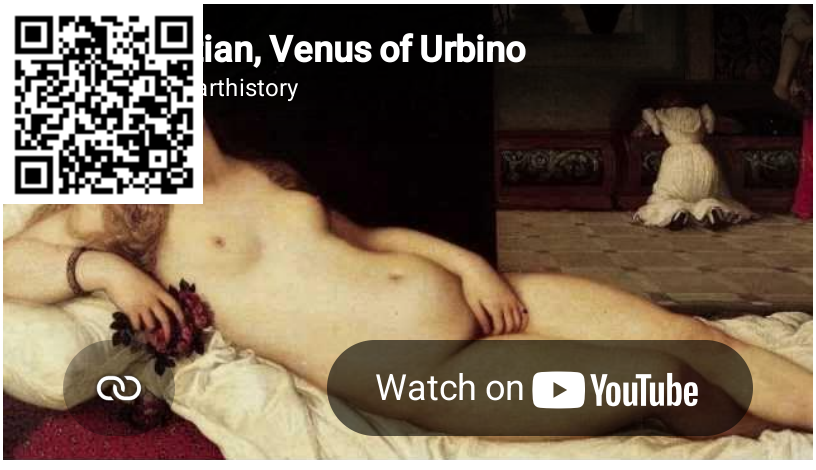
Paul Larivaille, *Pietro Aretino* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1997)

Francesco Mozzetti: *Ritratto di Pietro Aretino* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini 1996)

David Rosand, Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto **(**Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Titian, *Venus of Urbino*

by DR. JAMES R. JEWITT



Video **13.7.7.9**: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence); speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker



Figure **13.7.7.23**: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A highly naturalistic, visual seduction

Who is she? Art historians cannot agree. Numerous identities are proposed for this **nude** woman seductively reclining in bed as she stares outward from an elegant bedroom. Interpretations of the figure in Titian's oil painting on canvas, now referred to as the *Venus of Urbino*, range from the divine to the vulgar. She might be the goddess Venus, a young bride, or an idealized female beauty. Others see her as a courtesan or mistress. Still, she might be intended simply as a generic image of a sexy **nude woman**. In reality, Titian's picture likely blends many of these rather limited identities available for women at the time, which tend to overlap within the visual culture of sixteenth-century Italy.

From the 1530s onward, Titian worked for increasingly prestigious clients that included popes, kings, the Emperor Charles V, and rulers of northern Italian court cities. Many of the hallmarks distinguishing Titian as the preeminent painter active in sixteenth-century Italy are evident in the *Venus of Urbino*. His expressive brushwork, dynamic composition, and brilliant coloring produce an image of pronounced sensuality. The effect is a highly naturalistic, visual seduction—in theme and technical execution—that endures as an influential prototype for depictions of the female nude in European art. Additionally, the *Venus of Urbino* affords rich insight into the complex social practices intertwining marriage, sexuality, and female beauty in Renaissance Italy.



Figure **13.7.7.24**: Titian, detail of *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Painterly seduction

An innuendo of sexual arousal pervades the picture, which Titian emphasizes through several formal devices. The woman's curvaceous physique is set against a matrix of rectilinear forms: bed, wall partition, window, column, chest, wall hangings, and gridded pavement. Their rigid lines contrast with her body, rendered in fluid brushstrokes that blur at the edges. Titian's virtuosity with the technique of oil on canvas is evident in her flesh, modeled through subtle gradations in tone and color overlaid with translucent glazes. This simulates ivory skin of exceptional suppleness that flushes pink at her cheeks, hands, knees, and feet.

Set against pearly sheets, her bed cushions are rendered in crimson as if also signaling her passion and inflamed desire, presumably from the entrance of her lover for whom the viewer acts as surrogate. Sadly, much of the original impasto is lost, which once enhanced the tactile qualities of fabric and flesh. The brightly-lit figure and bed project into the foreground and tilt toward the picture plane in slightly foreshortened perspective, enhancing the sense of invitation to viewers.

Intimate viewing



Figure **13.7.7.25**: Left: Titian, *The Penitent Magdalene*, c. 1531–35, oil on canvas, 85.8 x 69.5 cm (Palazzo Pitti, Florence); right: Sebastiano del Piombo, *Martyrdom of St. Agath*a, 1520, oil on wood, 132 x 178 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

No indication of the subject, meaning, or use of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* is given when it is first mentioned in a 1538 letter written by its **patron**, Guidobaldo II della Rovere, duke of Urbino. He merely refers to it as "the nude woman" ("*la donna nuda*"). Its present title stems from Titian's early biographer, Giorgio Vasari, who describes the picture in the duke's *guardaroba* (wardrobe

suite) at his palace in Pesaro as: “a young recumbent Venus with flowers and certain fine draperies about her, very beautiful and well finished.”[1]

The installation of the *Venus of Urbino* in the ducal *guardaroba* meant it was intended for private viewing. It hung alongside other highly sexualized paintings showcasing nude female bodies arranged in classicizing poses: Titian’s *Penitent Magdalene* and Sebastiano del Piombo’s large *Martyrdom of St. Agatha.* The prominent green curtain flung back in the *Venus of Urbino* mimics the custom of keeping portraits with explicit or illicit content—such as courtesans—covered with silk cloths. Titian evidently used the same model appearing in the *Venus* for several other portraits for the dukes of Urbino, suggesting she might be Guidobaldo’s mistress.

Rather than a specific person, however, Titian’s *Venus* more likely represents a generic and idealized female beauty. She corresponds to the image type known as *belle donne* (beautiful women) he helped popularize in **Venice**. Women appear in such pictures, sometimes in the guise of ancient heroines, according to a standard formula: fair skin; loose blonde hair; flirtatious glance; provocative clothing or nude; a floral offering; and expensive jewelry. Contemporary love poetry provided the inspiration for these canons of beauty, grounded in lustful male fantasy, celebrating the beloved’s duality as a chaste yet erotic companion.



Figure **13.7.7.26**: Giorgione, *Sleeping Venus*, c. 1508–1510, oil on canvas, 108.5 x 175 cm (Staatsliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden)

Venus and Renaissance marriage

Titian based his composition for the *Venus of Urbino* on his colleague Giorgione’s *Sleeping Venus*, featuring a naked woman reclining as if asleep in a sunny meadow. The overt sensuality of the imagery relates to the special role of Venus as goddess of love, sexuality, fertility, and beauty. Because of this, she also served as the patroness of marriage. The subject of the sleeping Venus was central to *epithalamia* (songs or poems celebrating marriage) popular in Greek and Roman antiquity, and revived in Renaissance Italy.



Figure **13.7.7.27**: Paolo Uccello, cassone, with scenes of the Battle of Greeks and Amazons before the Walls of Troy; Allegories of Faith and Justice; and Reclining Nude, c. 1460, tempera on panel, 88.9 × 196.9 × 73.7 cm (**Yale University Art Gallery**, New Haven)

One of Titian's innovations involves the liberation of the nude, once hidden inside furniture, to a subject for an independent easel painting. Given her connection to marriage, Venus became a fashionable subject for artists to paint on *cassoni*, the large wedding chests containing *trousseau* and stored in a newly-wed couple's nuptial chamber.



Figure **13.7.7.28**: Titian, *Sacred and Profane Love*, 1514, oil on canvas, 118 x 279 cm (Galleria Borghese; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

This may explain the oblong horizontal format of the *Venus of Urbino*, which resembles earlier fifteenth-century panels found on the underside lid of Florentine *cassoni*. This is the format of Titian's earlier painting, *Sacred and Profane Love*, which more certainly commemorates a marriage and also depicts Venus disrobed alongside a bride.



Figure **13.7.7.29**: Titian, detail of the sleeping dog, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Why Titian was asked to paint the *Venus of Urbino* is unclear, though it possibly commemorates the 1534 wedding of duke Guidobaldo to Giulia da Varano (then merely ten years old). Numerous elements of the painting allude to marriage. The device of a sleeping dog (here a toy spaniel) often symbolizes marital fidelity. The bouquet of roses, also embroidered on the bed cushions, are associated with Venus and the constancy of love, as is the myrtle plant prominently silhouetted in the background window. Titian's *Venus* may have been commissioned on the occasion of Giulia's sexual maturity, when she and Guidobaldo could rightfully consummate their marriage occurring four years prior.

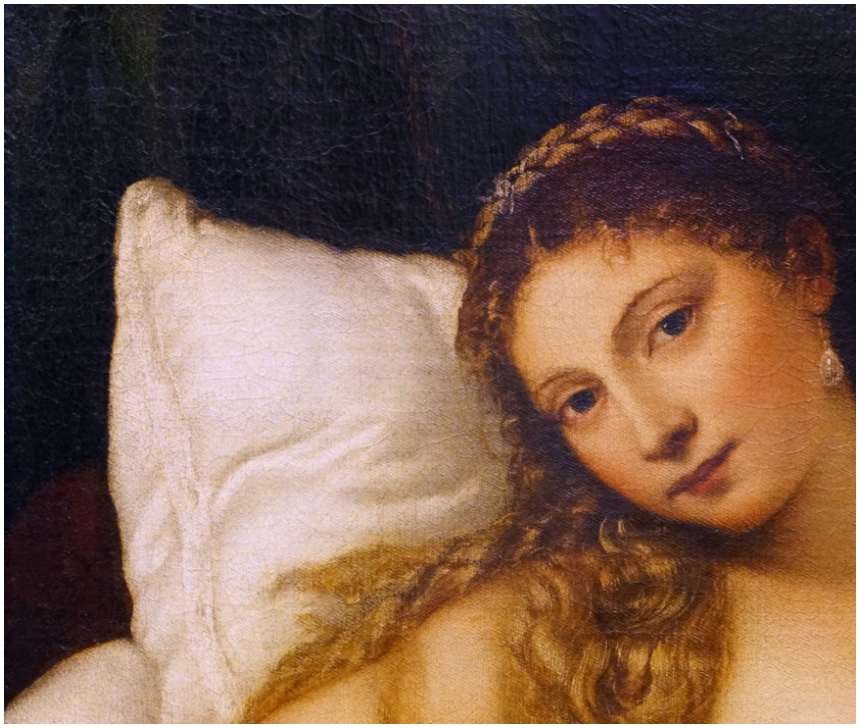


Figure **13.7.7.30**: Titian, detail *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Audiences would have recognized the woman's distinctive hairstyle in the *Venus of Urbino* as the type for engaged young women. Brides sported blonde hair (often dyed) spread loosely over the shoulders and interlaced with golden filaments and fitted with a fancy tiara. In this case, the braids atop her head correspond to such an item and are styled to mimic it. Her expensive pearl

earrings, ring, and bracelet may relate to the practice of bestowing such jewelry on brides. Attendants gather a lavish blue and gold dress from two large *cassoni* in the background, alluding to dowry goods but also Venetian engagement ceremonies when fancy gowns were worn.



Figure **13.7.7.31**: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Focal point of the composition



Figure **13.7.7.32**: Medici Venus, late 2nd to early 1st century B.C.E. marble, 153 cm (Hellenistic copy after Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos, 4th century B.C.E.; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Titian leaves no doubt that the woman's pelvis is the focal point of the composition. The geometry and spatial construction pull our attention directly to it. The actual lines of the middleground partition wall and rear edge of the bed intersect at her genitals, practically forming a bull's-eye. Though some hesitate to address it, her groin, along with the action she performs there, is the visual and thematic axis upon which the narrative turns.

At one level, Venus's covering of her genitals with her hand involves an erudite allusion to ancient Greek and Roman sculptures of the Venus pudica ("modest Venus"), known in Titian's time through dozens of copies in various sizes and media. Like her classical model, the pose of Titian's figure ironically emphasizes rather than conceals her sexual organs. Yet unlike the Venus pudica, Titian's nude appears to be contracting her fingers in a caress—instead of merely hiding her genitalia from view. Titian playfully accentuates this action by balancing the twist of her left hand with the knotted draperies in the upper left corner— a visual rhyme lending a further erotic charge.

Some modern scholars see the *Venus of Urbino* as nothing more than a sexy pinup for elite clientele. Others reason that such a label unfairly judges the image according to modern sexual paradigms. For social historians of art, dismissing the picture as mere pornography ignores its more complex functions as a marriage picture rooted in sixteenth-century customs for Italian brides and grooms.

Art historian Rona Goffen convincingly argues that this matrimonial context explains the woman's seductive glance and gesture of masturbation, both of which anticipate the husband in the bridal chamber and consummation of marriage. Renaissance medical theories advised married couples that simultaneous orgasm during intercourse, as well as the woman's positioning on her right side, increased probability of conceiving children. Women were encouraged to self-stimulate if needed to achieve this outcome.



Figure **13.7.7.33**: Diego Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus* (also known as *The Rokeby Venus*), 1647–51, oil on canvas, 122.5 x 177 cm (The National Gallery, London; photo: **Diego Delso**, CC BY-SA)

Female nudes and the gaze

Numerous variations of the *Venus of Urbino* attest to its notoriety in Renaissance Europe. It has also profoundly shaped subsequent formulas for representing the nude female body in the western canon. Initially construed as a private matrimonial image, this theme evolved from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries as a conventional academic subject-matter for artists. Its influence can be measured in works by renowned painters such as Diego Velázquez, Peter Paul Rubens, Rembrandt, Francisco de Goya, and Jacques-Louis David.



Figure **13.7.7.34**: Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772–1777, oil on canvas, 123.5 x 155 cm (**Royal Collections, Windsor Castle, Windsor**, Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020)

The visual traditions of the female nude have been challenged by feminist interventions in the history of art. Art historians increasingly see works such as the *Venus of Urbino* as symptomatic of sexist social structures that reduce women—real or painted—to passive sex objects displayed for visual consumption. This phenomenon, now referred to as the male gaze, is problematic since it recognizes that women are represented in visual culture from an assumed male heterosexual viewpoint.



Figure **13.7.7.35**: Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

By the eighteenth century, the erotic spectacle of the *Venus of Urbino* for male audiences is clear. It forms the centerpiece of Johan Zoffany's depiction of the Uffizi galleries, where over twenty men have gathered to scrutinize esteemed artworks throughout the history of art—their gratification seemingly sexual as well as aesthetic. Perhaps most notorious is Édouard Manet's reinterpretation of the *Venus of Urbino* in his painting of ***Olympia***, which replaces Venus with a prostitute. This choice shocked the nineteenth-century French public and has since, somewhat unjustly, distorted readings of Titian's picture as a similarly vulgar episode of illicit seduction.

Notes:

[1] Quoted in Rona Goffen, "Sex, Space, and Social History in Titian's *Venus of Urbino*," in *Titian's Venus of Urbino*, ed. Rona Goffen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 72–73

Additional resources:

Read about gender in renaissance Italy

This work at the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence

Paintings of Love and Marriage in the Italian Renaissance from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Nude in the Middle Ages and Renaissance from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Discover Titian's *Venus of Urbino* on Google Arts & Culture

The art of lying: reclining figures through history from Art UK

Andrea Bayer, ed., *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008)

Omar Calabrese, ed., *Venere Svelata: La Venere di Urbino di Tiziano* (Milan: Silvana, 2003)

Rona Goffen, *Titian's Venus of Urbino* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

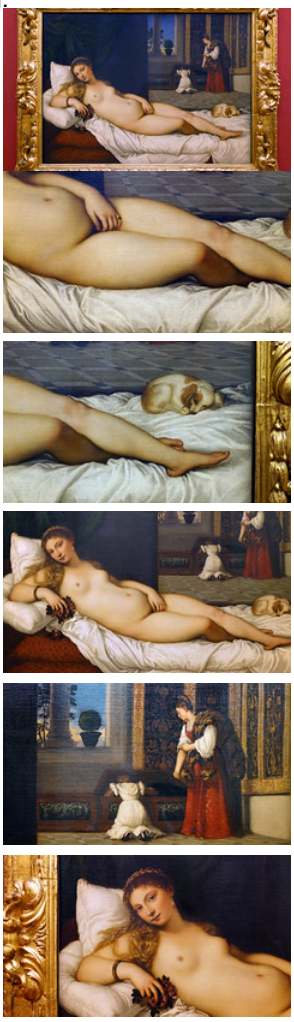


Figure 13.7.7.36: More Smarthistory images…

Titian, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.7.10: Titian, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, ca. 1570-76, oil on canvas, 280 × 182 cm (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

Titian and Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *Pietà*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.7.11**: Titian and Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *Pietà*, c. 1570-76, oil on canvas, 11’6″ x 12’9″ (Galleria Dell’Accademia, Venice)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

No photos

Figure **13.7.7.37**: More Smarthistory images…

Correggio

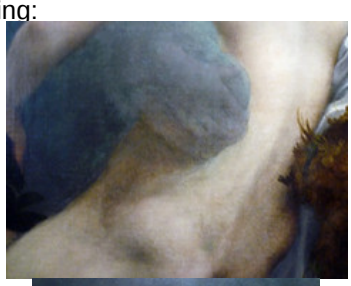
Correggio, *Jupiter and Io*

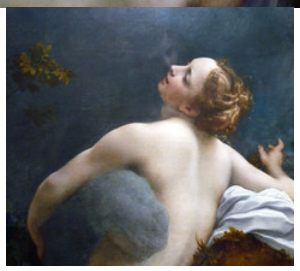
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



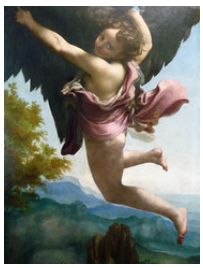
Video **13.7.7.12**: Correggio, *Jupiter and Io*, 1532-33, oil on canvas, 163.5 x 70.5 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

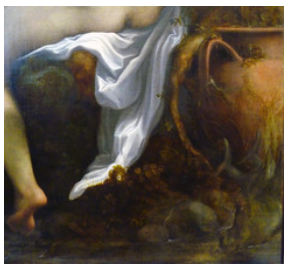




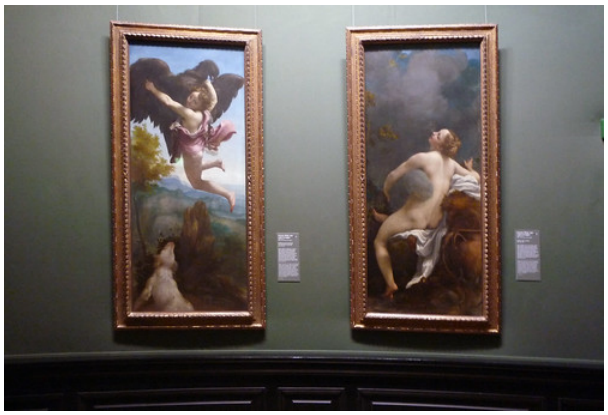








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88726



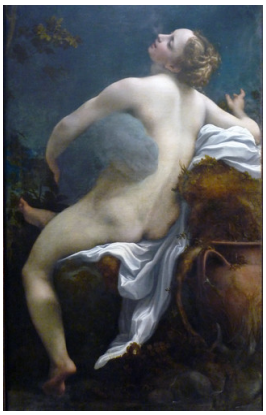


Figure **13.7.7.38**: More Smarthistory images…

Correggio, *Assumption of the Virgin*

by DR. ESPERANÇA CAMARA



Figure **13.7.7.39**: Correggio, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1526-30, fresco, 35′ 10″ x 37′ 11″ (Parma Cathedral, Parma, Italy)

Fluttering drapery and naked limbs

"Frog leg stew" grumbled Girolomo Tiraboschi as he glanced up into the dome of the cathedral of Parma, where he served as a priest in the late 18th century. Correggio's *Assumption of the Virgin*, a vortex of fluttering drapery and naked limbs, rose above him. Parma's leading citizens had commissioned the fresco in 1522, shortly after the papacy liberated the city from the French king's occupying forces. Crowning Parma's most important sacred space, the fresco not only illustrates the Virgin Mary's joyful reunion

with her son, it also visualizes key Catholic doctrines, celebrates the city's return to the Papal States (lands ruled by the Pope), and symbolizes the final union of the faithful with the divine at the end of time.

Numerous medieval texts recount the story of Virgin Mary's final days. According to the popular *Golden Legend*, the Apostles were miraculously transported to the Virgin's home at the time of her death. They performed the Last Rites and placed her body in a tomb, only to learn three days later that she, like Christ, had been bodily assumed into heaven.



Figure **13.7.7.40**: Parma Cathedral Looking East (photo: **sailko**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Experiencing the fresco

In the cathedral of Parma, the narrative of the Assumption unfolds as the devotee moves from the main entrance, down the central aisle (the nave), toward the main altar located directly below the dome. From the entrance, the nave's ceiling obstructs the view of the dome. Only St John the Baptist and St. Hilary of Poiters, the patron saints of Parma, are visible in the triangular niches (squinches) that support the dome. St. John embraces the Lamb, symbol of Christ, while St. Hilary gestures with one arm toward the nave and with the other points down to the altar, both directing the viewer to the liturgical focus of the cathedral.



Figure **13.7.7.41**: The apostles with wingless angels (detail), Correggio, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1526-30, fresco, 35′ 10″ x 37′ 11″ (Parma Cathedral, Parma, Italy)

Next, the Apostles come into view. These robust figures stand on a ledge executed in striking *trompe l'oeil* ("deceive the eye") perspective around the octagonal base of the dome. Some shield their eyes from the brilliance of the divine light; others gesticulate excitedly, their draperies agitated not only by the energy of their gestures but also by the otherworldly force that pulls the Virgin upward. On the low wall behind the Apostles, wingless angels busy themselves with a variety of funerary rituals; some tend to the flames of oil lamps shaped like golden candelabra, others fill censors or burn fragrant branches of cypress.

The devotee moves forward to see what so astonishes the Apostles. The Virgin Mary appears seated upon a cloud that floats in the space defined by the dome. Frolicking angels, ranging in age from infants to adolescents, populate concentric bands of clouds that extend into the apex of the dome. Mary twists her body and opens her arms as she rises toward the golden light of heaven.



Figure **13.7.7.42**: Adam and Eve with the Virgin Mary (detail), Correggio, A*ssumption of the Virgin*, 1526-30, fresco, 35′ 10″ x 37′ 11″ (Parma Cathedral, Parma, Italy)

Adam and Eve appear on the Virgin's right and left. Eve extends the apple, a symbol of her disobedience, toward the Virgin Mary; Adam touches his chest as if acknowledging his fault. This view of Mary, framed by Adam and Eve and rising toward the light, was the last seen by the lay viewer. Its message is clear: the Virgin Mary repairs the bond between the human and divine broken by the sinfulness of Adam and Eve. Her obedience to God's will made her the chosen vessel of the Incarnation and earned her a place by Christ's side in heaven.

Reserved for priests

At the time of the fresco's creation, the faithful received the Eucharist (bread that has been consecrated, or ritually transformed, into the body of Christ, according to the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation) at the foot of the staircase leading to the main altar, precisely where Mary appears rising toward the light of heaven. The beardless figure of Christ becomes visible only further up the staircase, in the area reserved for the clergy. Christ hovers directly above the altar where the bread is consecrated. His white garment rises up as he descends to meet his mother, his arms raised in a powerful gesture that opens the heavens and raises the dead. This same divine power also turns the bread on the altar below into his body.

When the fresco is viewed from the main altar, directly below the dome's apex, Tiraboschi's disparaging comment have some validity. The viewer struggles to sort out the many limbs that hover above in extreme foreshortening, obscuring the narrative's legibility. The narrative is clearest from the oblique viewpoint of the laity who approached the fresco from the cathedral's nave. The clergy, who gazed up from the main altar or their seats in the choir, saw primarily the realm of heaven.

Extreme foreshortening

Correggio's unusual and seemingly indecorous portrayal of Christ in extreme foreshortening, with his youthful legs exposed, draws attention to Christ's physicality, and thus both to his Incarnation through the Virgin Mary and his bodily presence in the Eucharist. Painted during the first decade of the Protestant Reformation, Correggio's fresco visually reaffirmed Catholic doctrines that had come under attack, in particular the doctrines of Transubstantiation, of Mary's status as intercessor, and of the Church's role in human redemption.



Figure **13.7.7.43**: Portrayal of Christ in extreme foreshortening (detail), Correggio, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1526-30, fresco, 35′ 10″ x 37′ 11″ (Parma Cathedral, Parma)

An illusion of heaven

In the sacred architecture of the Roman and Byzantine empires, domes were viewed as symbols of heaven. Correggio merged this symbolism with the Renaissance's fascination for three-dimensional illusion. He transformed the dome from a solid surface into heaven itself. The dramatic *di sotto in su* (from below to above) perspective heightens the reality of the illusion. As the first follower of Christ, the Virgin Mary personifies the Church, the community of the believers. Through the Assumption's daring foreshortening, Correggio reassured Parma's citizens of the palpable reality of eternal salvation.

Additional resources:

Northern Italian Renaissance Painting on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Correggio at The National Gallery, London

Correggio at the National Gallery of Art

Correggio and Parmigianino, 2001 exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Paolo Veronese

Paolo Veronese, *The Family of Darius before Alexander*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.7.13**: Paolo Veronese, *The Family of Darius before Alexander*, 1565-67, oil on canvas, 236.2 x 474.9 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*

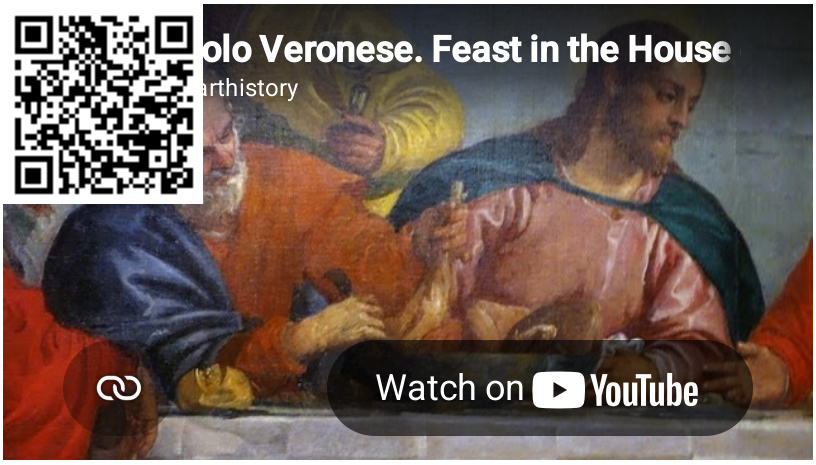
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.7.14**: Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*, c. 1570, oil on canvas, 197.5 x 115.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Paolo Veronese, *Feast in the House of Levi*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.7.15**: Paolo Veronese, *Feast in the House of Levi*, 1573, oil on canvas, 18′ 3″ x 42′ (Accademia, Venice)

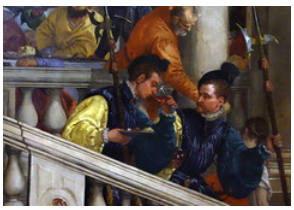
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

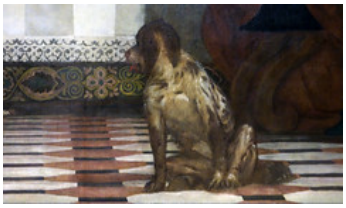
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88726



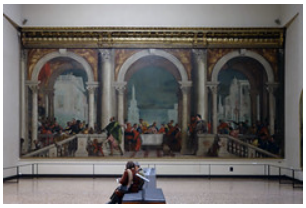





Figure **13.7.7.44**: More Smarthistory images…

Transcript of the trial of Veronese

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure 13.7.7.45: Paolo Veronese, *Feast in the House of Levi*, 1573, oil on canvas, 18′ 3″ x 42′ (Accademia, Venice, Italy)

Transcript of the trial: On Saturday, July 18, 1573, Paolo Caliari Veronese who lives in the parish of San Samuele, Venice was summoned to appear before the Holy Tribunal by the Holy Office [the inquisition], there he stated his name when asked. When asked what he did for a living, he responded, "I paint and make figures."

Inquisition: Do you know why you are summoned here?
Veronese: No your honors.
Inquisition: Can you imagine what the reason is?
Veronese: I can.
Inquisition: Tell us.
Veronese: I was told by the priests, or rather by the Prior of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, whose name I don't know, told me that he had visited here and that Your Great Lordships had commanded the Mary Magdalene replace the dog. I responded that that I would have happily done this and anything else for my and the sake of the painting, except that I did not believe that the figure of the Magdalene would look good there, for a variety of reasons, which I can speak to if I am given the chance.



Figure 13.7.7.46: Dog (detail), Paolo Veronese, *Feast in the House of Levi*, 1573, oil on canvas, 18′ 3″ x 42′ (Accademia, Venice)

Inquisition: What is the subject of the picture you are speaking of?
Veronese: It is a painting of the Last Supper, with Jesus Christ with his Apostles in the house of Simon.
Inquisition: Where is this picture?
Veronese: It is in the refectory of the Monastery of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.
Inquisition: Is it painted on the wall, on wood, or on canvas?
Veronese: Canvas.

Inquisition: How tall is it?
Veronese: Perhaps seventeen feet.
Inquisition: How wide is it?
Veronese: About thirty-nine feet.
Inquisition: Have you painted servants at the Lord's Supper?
Veronese: Yes.
Inquisition: Tell us how many people there are, and each one's activities.
Veronese: Below the owner of the inn, Simon, I put a carver, He came, I guess, for his own amusement, to observe the goings-on at the table. There are many other figures but I cannot remember, its been a long time since I finished the painting.
Inquisition: What was your intent regarding the man whose nose is bleeding?
Veronese: I intended him to be a servant, whose nose was bloody because of some accident.
Inquisition: And what did you mean by the armed man, clothed like a German, holding a halberd?
Veronese: That will take longer to explain.
Inquisition: Tell us.
Veronese: Painters take the same poetic license that poets and madmen take, and this is how I made these two soldiers, one drinking the other eating, at the foot of the stairs, though both ready for prompt action. It seemed appropriate to me that the wealthy owner of this house, a noble I understand, would have hired security such as these men.
Inquisition: And the figure dressed as a jester with a parrot perched on his hand, why did you represent him?
Veronese: He is decorative, as is customary.
Inquisition: Who are those at the Lord's table?
Veronese: The twelve Apostles.
Inquisition: What is St. Peter doing, the first one?
Veronese: He is carving lamb, to pass it to the other side of the table.
Inquisition: And who is the other man, next to him?
Veronese: He holds a plate for St. Peter to fill.
Inquisition: What is he doing.
Veronese: He is picking his teeth with a fork.
Inquisition: Who do you believe was at the Last Supper?
Veronese: Christ was there with his Apostles. But there was more space, so I included other figures that I created.
Inquisition: Did anyone tell you to paint Germans, jesters, or buffoons in this picture?
Veronese: No. I was told to create the painting as I thought fit, it was large and could accommodate numerous figures.
Inquisition: Shouldn't painters only add figures in keeping with the subject and the most important people portrayed? Do you freely follow your imagination without restraint, without good judgment?
Veronese: My paintings are made with all the consideration I can bring to bear on them.
Inquisition: Do you think it is appropriate that the Last Supper of Our Lord includes jesters, drunks, Germans, midgets, and the like?
Veronese: No, your honor.
Inquisition: Do you not know that Germany and other places are infested with heresy and that in such place they commonly fill their paintings with sacrilegious images, that denigrate the Holy Church and spread evil to the ignorant?
Veronese: Your Honor, that would be evil. I can only repeat what I previously stated, That I have followed what others, better than me, have done.
Inquisition: What has been done by those better than you? Which things?
Veronese: In the Pope's chapel in Rome, Michelangelo rendered Our Lord, Jesus Christ, his Mother, Saint John and Saint Peter, and the court of heaven, all nude, including the Virgin Mary, in the midst movements without decorum.



Figure 13.7.7.47: Christ, Mary, and the Apostles (detail), Michelangelo, *Last Judgment*, 1536-1541, fresco, 1370 x 1200 cm (Sistine Chapel, Vatican City)

Inquisition: Don't you understand that in a painting of the Last Judgment, clothing would not be worn, that there is no reason to paint clothes? Among those figures there is nothing except what befits the spiritual—there are no jesters, no dogs, no weapons, or any such silliness. Do you think this comparison, or any other that this example or any other justifies the way you painted your picture, and are you still certain that the painting appropriate to its subject?

Veronese: Your honor, I do not mean to defend it, but my intent was only good. I did not consider these issues enough, thinking that since the buffoons were outside the place where Our Lord sits, it was proper.

In the end, the judges decreed that the artist must correct his painting within three months from the day of the reprimand, in accordance with the judgment of the Holy Tribunal, and that the additional costs would be paid by Veronese.

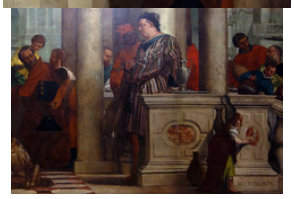
Additional resources:

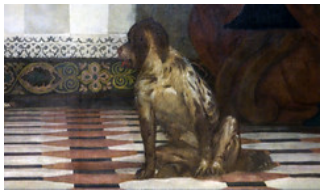
This painting at the Accademia

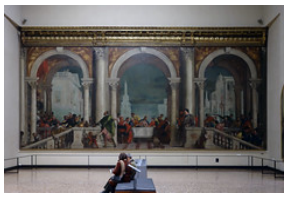
Veronese from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

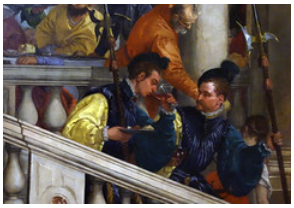
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88726

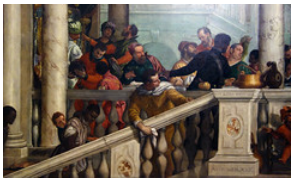
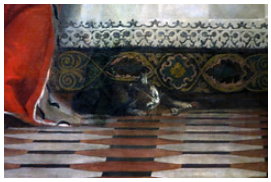







Figure **13.7.7.48**: More Smarthistory images…

Jacopo Tintoretto

Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Miracle of the Slave*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.7.16**: Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Miracle of the Slave*, 1548, oil on canvas, 415 x 541 cm (Accademia, Venice)

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88726

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88726



Figure **13.7.7.49**: More Smarthistory images…

Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Finding of the Body of Saint Mark*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.7.17**: Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Finding of the Body of Saint Mark*, c. 1562-66, oil on canvas, 396 x 400 cm (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)

Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Origin of the Milky Way*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.7.18**: Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Origin of the Milky Way*, c. 1575, oil on canvas, 149.4 x 168 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Jacopo Tintoretto, *Last Supper*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.7.19**: Jacopo Tintoretto, *Last Supper*, 1594, oil on canvas, 12′ x 18′ 8″ (San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice)

Andrea Palladio

Palladio, La Rotonda

by DR. JAVIER BERZAL DE DIOS



Figure **13.7.7.49**: Andrea Palladio with modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi, Villa Rotonda (formerly Villa Capra), 1566-1590s, near Vicenza, Italy (photo: **Nico Brooks**)

Looking back and looking forward

At the top of a hill in northern Italy, not far from Venice, stands a majestic villa. Designed by Andrea Palladio, the Villa Almerico-Capra, commonly known as La Rotonda, would become one of the most recognizable buildings of the Renaissance. It is a building that consciously recalls ancient Roman classical models but its innovative design had a lasting impact for future generations of architects in Italy and abroad.

A building with four façades

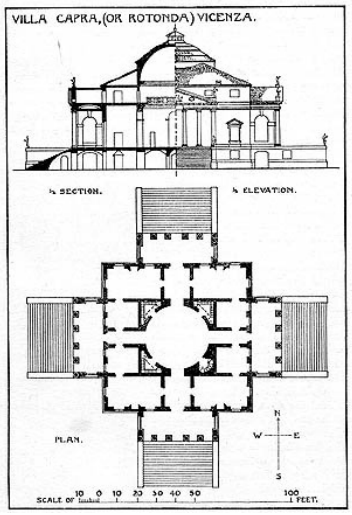


Figure 13.7.7.50: Andrea Palladio, plan of the Villa Rotonda (formerly Villa Capra), 1566-1590s, near Vicenza, Italy, (photo: Penn State University Library)

As an architect, Palladio was acutely interested in engaging viewers, something he often accomplished by making use of striking façades. What makes La Rotonda extremely unique is that it displays not one, but four of them. Idiosyncratic choices do not always result in groundbreaking creations; a building with four façades could have easily ended up being bizarre, but Palladio was able to design a serene, sophisticated construction by emphasizing balance, visual clarity, and uniformity. The design of the building is completely symmetrical; it presents a square plan with identical porticoes projecting from each of the façades. At the center of the building, a dome emerges over a central, circular hall. Palladio was concerned with harmony and mathematical consonance and used the square and the circle as essential, yet elegant forms.

The importance of site

The picturesque qualities of the villa in relation to its environment are not coincidental. Palladio himself reflected on the landscape surrounding La Rotonda: “The loveliest hills are arranged around it, which afford a view into an immense theater.” In this way, La Rotonda presents four unique views: each of the porticoes is itself a place from which to contemplate the ever-changing spectacle of nature. At the same time, the villa also becomes a stage that can be contemplated from its surroundings. Because of its unique design, a façade is almost always visible: the viewer who walks around the villa never encounters a non-favorable angle.



Figure 13.7.7.51: Andrea Palladio with modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi, Villa Rotonda (formerly Villa Capra), 1566-1590s, near Vicenza, Italy (photo: Stefan Bauer, CC BY-SA 2.5)

A palazzo in the countryside

La Rotonda is perhaps the best known of the many country houses built in the Veneto in the sixteenth century. The popularity of villas at the time has to do with the changing Venetian economy. The Spanish and Portuguese voyages to America and Asia, along

with Turkish military advances in the eastern Mediterranean, signified the demise of the Italian trade routes—which had been the primary source of wealth for the city-state of Venice. As a result, Venetians looked to the *Terra Firma* (their territories on the Italian mainland) to support their economy. It is at this time that agriculture became, for the first time, a significant economic source for the Venetian Republic. And yet, unlike other villas in the Veneto, Palladio designed La Rotonda without adjacent farm fields, or service buildings such as barns or warehouses.

A unique commission for a timeless edifice



Figure **13.7.7.52**: Andrea Palladio with modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi, interior of Villa Rotonda (formerly Villa Capra), 1566-1590s, near Vicenza, Italy (photo: **Hans A. Rosbach**, CC BY-SA 3.0))

La Rotonda was commissioned by Paolo Almerico, a retired prelate who returned to Vicenza after a career in the Vatican Court. Almerico sold his house in the city to retire in the countryside. For this reason, La Rotonda was not technically designed as a villa as much as an urban residence placed in the countryside. Almerico never thought of this space as an agricultural production facility, and Palladio himself classified the building as a Palazzo. The ecclesiastical career of Almerico had a definite impact on the building. The religious connotations of La Rotonda are palpable in the vibrant interior, which contrasts with the sober exterior. Inside, La Rotonda is a colorful and vivid space that looks more like a church than a household. In fact, many of the paintings make explicit connections to the religious life of Almerico, celebrating religious values and Christian virtues, such as temperance and chastity.

The exterior of La Rotonda also suggests the sacred. The edifice was influenced by ancient Roman temples (such as the Pantheon) and sacred complexes (such as the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia). By using ancient Roman temples as a model, Palladio incorporates religious overtones into an otherwise secular space. At the same time, La Rontonda has a perennial quality to it; Palladio's use of classical elements emphasizes a universal architectural language.

Additional resources:

Villa Rotonda on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Architecture in Renaissance Italy on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Palladio, Teatro Olimpico

by DR. JAVIER BERZAL DE DIOS



Figure **13.7.7.53**: Andrea Palladio (with scenographic modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi), Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, Italy, 1580-85 (photo: **philip-brown**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

A spectacular space

In Vicenza, a town near Venice, a unique Renaissance theater has miraculously survived for over four centuries. A hidden gem built inside an abandoned fortress and prison, Teatro Olimpico gives form to the period's knowledge of classical Roman architecture and puts into practice contemporary artistic developments like linear perspective.

The humanist theater and the new Renaissance stage



Figure **13.7.7.54**: Cover page, Marcus Pollio Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, translated and commentary, illustrations designed in part by Andrea Palladio (published in Venice by Francesco Marconi da Forli, 1556)

Italy of the sixteenth century witnessed the rising popularity of the theater as a cultural form and as a mode of entertainment. Theatrical productions had existed throughout the Middle Ages, but consisted mostly of religious enactments staged on temporary platforms in outdoor spaces, like town squares.

With the emergence of humanist culture in fifteenth-century Italy, developments in theatrical architecture and design went hand-in-hand with literary models that sought to reinstate the comedies and tragedies of ancient Rome. But architects interested in studying Roman art faced a problem: the celebrated theaters of ancient Rome had been dismantled or transformed into utilitarian spaces throughout the Middle Ages. Luckily, Renaissance architects were able to study the writings of the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius, whose *Ten Books on Architecture* explained how to construct a theater and described set decoration. A widely influential text, Andrea Palladio himself illustrated the first Italian translation of Vitruvius' architectural treatise. From these books and the study of ancient ruins, Renaissance architects were able to form an image of classical Roman theaters. These theaters had a semicircular seating section, or auditorium, and an elaborate stage background called a *scaenae frons*.

At the same time that Renaissance artists were studying classical architecture, pictorial developments like linear perspective made their way into the theatrical stage of the sixteenth century—often in the form of painted backdrops displaying a city view. This innovation introduced a departure from the medieval stage, which had featured a row of scenographic houses representing Biblical locations. Whereas classical and medieval theatrical productions were free, popular events, the Italian Renaissance theater was a sheltered space of enclosure constructed for courtly elites and associations of erudite intellectuals.

A classically-inspired auditorium

Palladio was the most influential Renaissance architect. He was also a founding member of the Academia Olimpica—a group of scholars in Vicenza who sought to recreate the theatrical productions of classical antiquity. Though the Teatro Olimpico is the oldest surviving Renaissance theater, it was not the first permanent theater of the period. It was also not the first built by Palladio, who had previously designed theaters in Venice and Vicenza. The Olimpico was, nonetheless, his most ambitious theatrical project, and one that would put into practice his knowledge of classical architecture and contemporary art.



Figure 13.7.7.55: Columnated portico with classically-inspired sculptures, Andrea Palladio (with scenographic modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi), Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, Italy, 1580-85 (photo: Neil, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The Olimpico was not a theater built anew. Palladio designed his Roman-inspired auditorium inside an abandoned fortress. Refashioning an existing building forced the architect to adjust his plans. As a result, and unlike Roman theaters, Palladio's seating area forms an elliptical curve rather than a semicircle. A highly decorated space, the curved auditorium is crowned by a columnated portico that is adorned with classically-inspired sculptures.



Figure 13.7.7.56: Andrea Palladio (with scenographic modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi), Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, Italy, 1580-85 (photo: Terry Clinton, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Teatro Olimpico's stage features a magnificent three-tier façade or *scaenae frons*. Profusely decorated with classical columns, pediments, sculptures, and reliefs, the façade has five openings, of which the central one evokes a triumphal arch. Palladio and Vicenzo Scamozzi worked with limited materials—using wood, plaster, and stucco to create the effect of white, polished marble. The openings grant visual access to projected avenues, conveying the appearance of a city. Constructed using linear perspective, the passageways heighten the illusion by using forced perspective, which increases a fictional sense of depth—so an actor walking into the receding scenography would look like a giant in relationship to the buildings.



Figure 13.7.7.57: Perspectival passageway, Andrea Palladio (with scenographic modifications by Vicenzo Scamozzi), Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, Italy, 1580-85 (photo: Patrick Denker, CC BY 2.0)

The perspectival passageways are a hallmark of the Olimpico, but their origins are unclear. Palladio died years before the grand opening of the theater, at a time when the inaugural performance was expected to be a pastoral comedy written by Fabio Pace. It was not until 1583, three years after Palladio's death, that the Academia made the decision to perform the tragedy *Oedipus King* instead. This change required scenography depicting a cityscape instead of a landscape, and it is at this time that the Academia purchased the additional real estate required for the projected avenues. Scamozzi completed the construction of the auditorium and added the stage design, though perhaps following drawings produced by Silla, Palladio's son and assistant. Whether they were the product of Palladio's designs or simply inspired by him, Scamozzi's stage constructions are extremely innovative—actually constructing in three-dimensions what had traditionally been a painted backdrop.

After the Olimpico

The result of Palladio and Scamozzi's antiquarian knowledge and artistic innovation is a splendid and alluring space. Yet despite its enthralling qualities, the Teatro Olimpico quickly fell into disuse after its first production. Its influence is palpable, nonetheless, in two northern Italian theaters built shortly after the Olimpico: the 1590 Teatro all'antica in Sabbioneta, also built by Scamozzi, and the 1618 Teatro Farnese in Parma.

Additional resources:

Empire of the Eye: The Magic of Illusion (video from The National Gallery of Art)

Teatro Olimpico

13.7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance

Northern Europe: 15th century

The Renaissance north of the Alps.

1400 - 1500 (Renaissance)

Beginner's guide: Northern Europe in the 15th century

Much changed in northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

1400 - 1500

Some of the most important changes in northern Europe include the invention of the printing press, the formation of a merchant class of art patrons that purchased works in oil on panel, the Protestant Reformation and the translation of the Bible from the original languages into the vernacular or common languages such as German and French, and international trade in urban centers.

The Medieval and Renaissance Altarpiece

by DR. DONNA L. SADLER



Figure **13.7.8.1**: Michael Pacher, ***Sankt Wolfgang Altarpiece***, 1471-81, polychrome pine, linden, gilding, oil, over 40 feet high and more than 20 feet wide (Parish Church, Sankt Wolfgang, Austria)

The altar and the sacrament of the Eucharist

Every architectural space has a gravitational center, one that may be spatial or symbolic or both; for the medieval church, the altar fulfilled that role. This essay will explore what transpired at the altar during this period as well as its decoration, which was intended to edify and illuminate the worshippers gathered in the church.

The Christian religion centers upon **Jesus Christ**, who is believed to be the incarnation of the son of God born to the Virgin Mary.

During his ministry, Christ performed miracles and attracted a large following, which ultimately led to his persecution and crucifixion by the Romans. Upon his death, he was resurrected, promising redemption for humankind at the end of time.

The mystery of Christ's death and resurrection are symbolically recreated during the Mass (the central act of worship) with the celebration of the Eucharist — a reminder of Christ's sacrifice where bread and wine wielded by the priest miraculously embodies the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the Christian Savior.



Figure 13.7.8.2: Rogier van der Weyden, *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, 1445–50, oil on panel, 200 cm × 223 cm (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp)



Figure 13.7.8.3: Detail of the Eucharist, Rogier van der Weyden, *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, 1445-50 (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp)

The altar came to symbolize the tomb of Christ. It became the stage for the sacrament of the Eucharist, and gradually over the course of the Early Christian period began to be ornamented by a cross, candles, a cloth (representing the shroud that covered the body of Christ), and eventually, an altarpiece (a work of art set above and behind an altar).

In Rogier van der Weyden's *Altarpiece of the Seven Sacraments*, one sees Christ's sacrifice and the contemporary celebration of the Mass joined. The Crucifixion of Christ is in the foreground of the central panel of the triptych with St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross, while directly behind, a priest celebrates the Eucharist before a decorated altarpiece upon an altar.

Though altarpieces were not necessary for the Mass, they became a standard feature of altars throughout Europe from the thirteenth century, if not earlier. One of the factors that may have influenced the creation of altarpieces at that time was the shift from a more cube-shaped altar to a wider format, a change that invited the display of works of art upon the rectangular altar table.

Though the shape and medium of the altarpiece varied from country to country, the sensual experience of viewing it during the medieval period did not: chanting, the ringing of bells, burning candles, wafting incense, the mesmerizing sound of the incantation of the liturgy, and the sight of the colorful, carved story of Christ's last days on earth and his resurrection would have stimulated all the senses of the worshipers. In a way, to see an altarpiece was to touch it—faith was experiential in that the boundaries between the five senses were not so rigorously drawn in the Middle Ages. For example, worshipers were expected to visually consume the Host (the bread symbolizing Christ's body) during Mass, as full communion was reserved for Easter only.

Saints and relics



Figure **13.7.8.4**: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *St. Francis of Assisi*, c. 1235, tempera on wood (Church of San Francesco, Pescia)

Since the fifth century, saints' **relics** (fragments of venerated holy persons) were embedded in the altar, so it is not surprising that altarpieces were often dedicated to saints and the miracles they performed. Italy in particular favored portraits of saints flanked by scenes from their lives, as seen, for example, in the image of St. Francis of Assisi by **Bonaventura Berlinghieri** in the Church of San Francesco in Pescia.

The Virgin Mary and the Incarnation of Christ were also frequently portrayed, though the Passion of Christ (and his resurrection) most frequently provided the backdrop for the mystery of Transubstantiation celebrated on the altar. The image could be painted or sculpted out of wood, metal, stone, or marble; relief sculpture was typically painted in bright colors and often gilded.

Germany, the Low Countries, and Scandinavia were most often associated with **polyptychs** (many-paneled works) that have several stages of closing and opening, in which a hierarchy of different media from painting to sculpture engaged the worshiper in a dance of concealment and revelation that culminated in a vision of the divine.



Figure **13.7.8.5**: Rhenish Master, Altenberger Altar, c. 1330 (wings are in the collection of the Städel Museum, Frankfurt)

For example, the altarpiece from Altenberg contained a statue of the Virgin and Christ Child which was flanked by double-hinged wings that were opened in stages so that the first opening revealed painted panels of the Annunciation, Nativity, Death and Coronation of the Virgin (image above). The second opening disclosed the Visitation, Adoration of the Magi, and the patron saints of the Altenberg cloister, Michael and Elizabeth of Hungary. When the wings were fully closed, the Madonna and Child were hidden and painted scenes from the Passion were visible.

Variations



Figure **13.7.8.6**: Rood screen of St. Andrew Church, Cherry Hinton, England (photo: **Oxfordian Kissuth**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

English parish churches had a predilection for rood screens, which were a type of carved barrier separating the nave (the main, central space of the church) from the chancel. Altarpieces carved out of alabaster became common in fourteenth-century England, featuring scenes from the life of Christ; these were often imported by other European countries.



Figure **13.7.8.7**: Altarpiece of Saint Eustache, Saint-Denis, Paris, 1250-1260 (Musée de Cluny, Paris)

The abbey of St.-Denis in France boasted a series of rectangular stone altarpieces that featured the lives of saints interwoven with the most important episodes of Christ's life and death. For example, the life of St. Eustache unfolds to either side of the Crucifixion on one of the altarpieces, the latter of which participated in the liturgical activities of the church and often reflected the stained-glass subject matter of the individual chapels in which they were found.

Gothic beauty

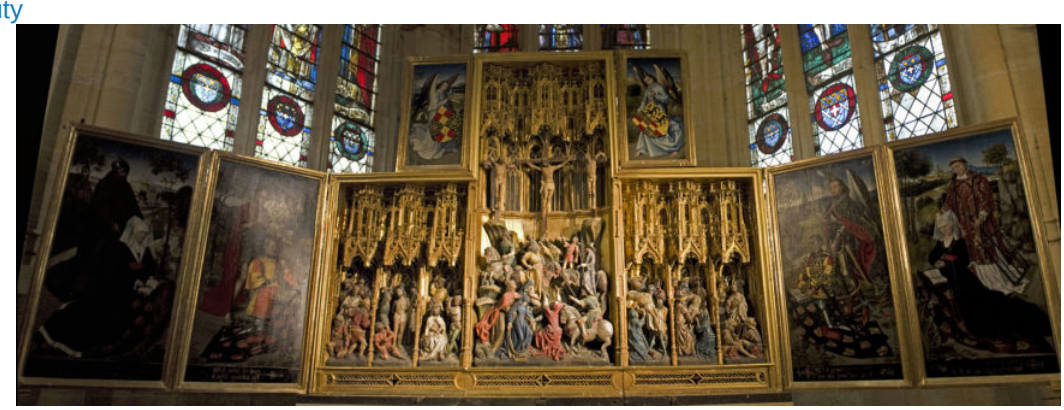


Figure **13.7.8.8**: The altarpiece of the Church of St. Martin, Ambierle, 1466 (photo: **D Villafruela**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.7.8.9**: Detail of a donor with St. John the Baptist, Altarpiece of the Church of St. Martin, (photo: **D Villafruela**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In the later medieval period in France (15th–16th centuries), elaborate polyptychs with spiky pinnacles and late Gothic tracery formed the backdrop for densely populated narratives of the Passion and resurrection of Christ. In the seven-paneled altarpiece from the church of St.-Martin in Ambierle, the painted outer wings represent the patrons with their respective patron saints and above, the Annunciation to the Virgin by the archangel Gabriel of the birth of Christ. On the outer sides of these wings, painted in *grisaille* are the donors' coats of arms.

Turrets (towers) crowned by triangular gables and divided by vertical pinnacles with spiky crockets create the framework of the polychromed and gilded wood carving of the inner three panels that house the story of Christ's torture and triumph over death against tracery patterns that mimic stained glass windows found in Gothic churches.



Figure 13.7.8.10: The altarpiece of the Church of St. Martin, detail of the Passion (photo: D Villafruela, CC BY-SA 3.0)

To the left, one finds the Betrayal of Christ, the Flagellation, and the Crowning with the Crown of Thorns — scenes that led up to the death of Christ. The Crucifixion occupies the elevated central portion of the altarpiece, and the Descent from the Cross, the Entombment, and Resurrection are represented on the right side of the altarpiece.

There is an immediacy to the treatment of the narrative that invites the worshiper's immersion in the story: anecdotal detail abounds, the small scale and large number of the figures encourage the eye to consume and possess what it sees in a fashion similar to a child's absorption before a dollhouse. The scenes on the altarpiece are made imminently accessible by the use of contemporary garb, highly detailed architectural settings, and exaggerated gestures and facial expressions.

One feels compelled to enter into the drama of the story in a visceral way—feeling the sorrow of the Virgin as she swoons at her son's death. This palpable quality of empathy that propels the viewer into the Passion of Christ makes the historical past fall away: we experience the pathos of Christ's death in the present moment.

According to medieval theories of vision, memory was a physical process based on embodied visions. According to one twelfth-century thinker, they imprinted themselves upon the eyes of the heart. The altarpiece guided the faithful to a state of mind conducive to prayer, promoted communication with the saints, and served as a mnemonic device for meditation, and could even assist in achieving communion with the divine.



Figure **13.7.8.11**: Chalice, mid-15th century, possibly from Hungary (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The altar had evolved into a table that was alive with color, often with precious stones, with relics, the chalice (which held the wine) and paten (which held the Host) consecrated to the blood and body of Christ, and finally, a carved and/or painted retable: this was the spectacle of the holy.



Figure **13.7.8.12**: Paten, c. 1230-50, German (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

As Jean-Claude Schmitt put it:

> ***this was an ensemble of sacred objects, engaged in a dialectic movement of revealing and concealing that encouraged individual piety and collective adherence to the***

> ***mystery of the ritual.J.-C. Schmitt , "Les reliques et les images," in Les reliques: Objets, cultes, symbols***
>
> ***(Turnhout: 1999)***

The story embodied on the altarpiece offered an object lesson in the human suffering experienced by Christ. The worshiper's immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ was also an engagement with the tenets of Christianity, poignantly transcribed upon the sculpted, polychromed altarpieces.

Additional resources

Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmond Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Paul Binski, "The 13th-Century English Altarpiece," in *Norwegian Medieval Altar Frontals and Related Materials*. Institutum Romanum Norvegiae, Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia 11, pp. 47–57 (Rome: Bretschneider, 1995).

Shirley Neilsen Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs: A Study in Patronage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

Marco Ciatti, "The Typology, Meaning, and Use of Some Panel Paintings from the Duecento and Trecento," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor M. Schmidt, 15–29. Studies in the History of Art 61. Center for the Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. Symposium Papers 38 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

Donald L. Ehresmann, "Some Observations on the Role of Liturgy in the Early Winged Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 64/3 (1982), pp. 359–69.

Julian Gardner, "Altars, Altarpieces, and Art History: Legislation and Usage," in *Italian Altarpieces 1250–1500: Function and Design*, ed. Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, 5–39 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp, eds., *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Lynn F. Jacobs, "The Inverted 'T'-Shape in Early Netherlandish Altarpieces: Studies in the Relation between Painting and Sculpture" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 54/1 (1991), pp. 33–65.

Lynn F. Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380–1550: Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Justin E.A. Kroesen and Victor M. Schmidt, eds., *The Altar and its Environment, 1150–1400* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

Barbara G. Lane, *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).

Henning Laugerud, "To See with the Eyes of the Soul, Memory and Visual Culture in Medieval Europe," in *ARV, Nordic Yearbook of Folklore Studies* 66 (Uppsala: Swedish Science Press, 2010), pp. 43–68.

Éric Palazzo, "Art and the Senses: Art and Liturgy in the Middle Ages," in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser, pp. 175–94 (London, New Delhi, Sidney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

Donna L. Sadler, *Touching the Passion—Seeing Late Medieval Altarpieces through the Eyes of Faith* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Beth Williamson, "Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion," *Speculum* 79 (2004): 341–406.

Beth Williamson, "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence," *Speculum* 88 1 (2013), pp. 1–43.

Kim Woods, "The Netherlandish Carved Altarpiece c. 1500: Type and Function," in Humfrey and Kemp, *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance*, pp. 76–89.

Kim Woods, "Some Sixteenth-Century Antwerp Carved Wooden Altar-Pieces in England," *Burlington Magazine* 141/1152 (1999), pp.144–55.

An introduction to the Northern Renaissance in the fifteenth century

by DR. BONNIE NOBLE

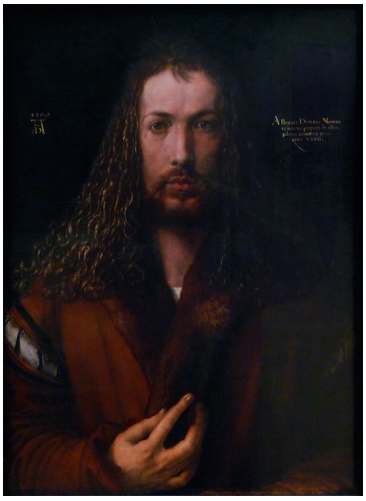


Figure **13.7.8.13**: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

What was the Renaissance and where did it happen?

The word Renaissance is generally defined as the rebirth of classical antiquity in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Seems simple enough, but the word “Renaissance” is actually fraught with complexity.

Scholars argue about exactly when the Renaissance happened, where it took place, how long it lasted, or if it even happened at all. Scholars also disagree about whether the Renaissance is a “rebirth” of classical antiquity (ancient Greece and Rome) or simply a continuation of classical traditions but with different emphases.

Traditional accounts of the Renaissance favor a narrative that places the birth of the Renaissance in Florence, Italy. In this narrative, Italian art and ideas migrate North from Italy (largely because of the travels of the great German artist Albrecht Dürer who studied, admired, and was inspired by Italy, and he carried his Italian experiences back to Germany).

The Renaissance in Northern Europe

However, so much changed in northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the era deserves to be evaluated on its own terms. So we use the term “Northern Renaissance” to refer to the Renaissance that occurred in Europe north of the Alps.

Some of the most important changes in northern Europe include the:

- – invention of the printing press, c. 1450
- – advent of mechanically reproducible media such as woodcuts and engravings
- – formation of a merchant class of art patrons that purchased works in oil on panel
- – Protestant Reformation and the translation of the Bible from the original languages into the vernacular or common languages such as German and French
- – international trade in urban centers



Figure **13.7.8.14**: Jan (and Hubert?) Van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece or The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, 1432, tempera and oil on panel, 11′ 5″ x 7′ 3″ (open) (Cathedral of Saint Bavo, Ghent, Belgium)



Figure **13.7.8.15**: Jan (and Hubert?) Van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece or The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, 1432, tempera and oil on panel, 11′ 5″ x 7′ 3″ (closed) (Cathedral of Saint Bavo, Ghent, Belgium)

In the fifteenth century, northern artists such as Jan van Eyck introduced powerful and influential changes, such as the perfection of oil paint and almost impossible representation of minute detail, practices that clearly distinguish Northern art from Italian art as well as art from the preceding centuries. Jan and Hubert van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432 (Church of Saint Bavo, Ghent) exemplifies the grand scale and minute detail of Northern painting.

This public, religious picture has an opened and closed position. On the interior (above) we see such holy figures as the Virgin, Christ, saints and angels. It also showcases the largesse of the donors (left), depicted kneeling on the lowest corners of the exterior, who employed the van Eyck brothers to immortalize them in this very public work of art.



Figure 13.7.8.16: Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, tempera and oil on wood, 1434, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London)

Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Double Portrait* (1434) shows a well-to-do couple in a tasteful, bourgeois interior. The text in the back of the image identifies the date and Jan van Eyck as the artist. Art historians disagree about what is actually happening in the image, whether this is a betrothal or a marriage, or perhaps something else entirely. One of the most important aspects of this painting is the symbolic meanings of the objects, for instance that the dog may symbolize fidelity ("Fido") or that the fruit on the windowsill may signify either wealth or temptation. This painting is a touchstone for the study of iconography, a method of interpreting works of art by deciphering symbolic meaning.

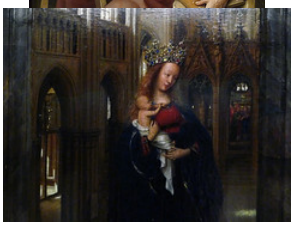
Though Jan van Eyck did not invent oil paint, he used the medium to greater effect than any other artist to date. Oil would become a predominant medium for painting for centuries, favored in art academies into the nineteenth century and beyond. The Arnolfinis counted as middle class because their wealth came from trade rather than inherited titles and land. The power of the merchant-class patrons of northern Europe cultivated a taste for art made for domestic display. Decorating one's home is still a powerful motivation for art patrons. Museum visitors repeatedly comment, "well, I wouldn't want it in my living room."

Additional resources:

Jan van Eyck on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







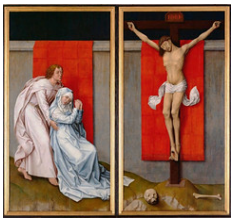








Figure **13.7.8.17**: More Smarthistory images…

Introduction to Fifteenth-century Flanders

by DR. ANDREW MURRAY



Figure **13.7.8.18**: Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, oil on panel, c. 1430-35, 66 x 62 cm (Louvre)

Material splendor

Jan van Eyck's *Rolin Madonna* presents a series of objects and surfaces: a fur-lined damask robe, ceramic tiles, a golden crown, stone columns, warm flesh, flowers, translucent glass, and a reflective body of water. Even the air above the distant river seems palpable. The painting is a careful study of how light reacts to the varying textures. But the scene is an imagined one. Before a kneeling man the Virgin presents on her lap the Christ child, and an angel holds a crown above her. No eye contact is made. It is as if we are seeing what the man has in his mind's eye as he prays from the book in front of him. While the sumptuousness of the surroundings belie the otherworldliness of the Mother and Child, at the same time they seem to augment rather than diminish their divinity. For Nicolas Rolin, the man in this image, it seems that attention to the magnificence and splendor of valuable arts and materials can provide a vision of the sacred, rather than distract from it.

Although Jan van Eyck's painting is an exceptional artwork, it is typical of fifteenth-century Flemish art in the value it attributes to material splendor. The area of the southern Low Countries was one of the major contributors to what is often referred to as the

Northern Renaissance—the efflorescence of artistic production that took place north of the Alps in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Flemish art



Figure **13.7.8.19**: Map of major Flemish-speaking cities during the Northern Renaissance within the outline of modern Belgium

"Flemish art" is a difficult term: medieval Flanders does not have the same borders as it does today. It is used by art historians loosely to refer to artistic production in Flemish speaking towns—particularly Bruges, Ghent, Brussels and Tournai. The term is also most often associated with painting. Painters like Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, and Hugo van der Goes were as internationally famous in their time as they are now, finding patrons not only in the Low Countries (today Netherlands, Belgium and northern Germany), but in Italy also, where their oil-paint technique had a considerable influence.



Figure **13.7.8.20**: Gérard Loyet, Reliquary of Charles the Bold (with St. George), 1467-71, gold, vermeil and enamel, 53 x 17.5 x 32 cm (Cathedral of Liège)

However, just as van Eyck was attentive to the range of crafted objects in the Rolin Madonna, we too should be observant of the many arts practiced in fifteenth-century Flanders. There were workshops across the major towns of Flanders for goldsmiths, ceramicists, cabinet-makers, manuscript illuminators, tapestry weavers, and sculptors in wood and stone.

More than paintings

The most expensive artworks were tapestries and goldwork and nobles would commission these as gifts for their allies and relatives. The prominence painting is given today is partly because our culture values painting as a "fine art" alongside sculpture and architecture, and thus one distinct from the "decorative" or "applied" arts of other media. It is important to understand that these distinctions did not exist in the fifteenth-century Low Countries. Therefore, when visiting collections in search of Netherlandish art, also take time to seek out the rare surviving goldwork, tapestries, and sculpture. Singular pieces include the

Liège statuette (a reliquary with images of Charles the Bold and St George in the Cathedral of Liège), the Burgundian tapestries at Bern Historical Museum, and the tombs of Mary of Burgundy and Charles the Bold in the Church of our Lady in Bruges.

A major trading center

To understand why Flanders became the site of such intensive artistic production in the fifteenth century, it is useful to consider its place within the wider western European economy. Flanders was the most urbanized region of northern Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Between c. 1000 and 1300, its town and ports grew in size and number as it became the major center for trade in northern Europe, acting as a nodal point for merchants from England, the Baltic, Italy, and France. For this reason, its cities, particularly Bruges and Ghent, became centers of artistic production.



Figure **13.7.8.21**: Tombs of Mary of Burgundy and Charles the Bold in the Church of our Lady in Bruges (photo: **Alexey Yakovlev**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Craftsmen of all types—including painters, tapestry manufacturers, manuscript illuminators, goldsmiths, and sculpture in wood and stone—could rely on the trade networks that brought raw materials to these cities. Painters and sculptors established their own workshops and joined guilds that regulated the quality of their products, the prices for which they could be sold, as well as license those allowed to practice these crafts. The towns themselves often acted as a patrons, often commissioning sculpture and coats-of-arms for their municipal buildings. Particularly wealthy citizens also acted as patrons for some of the most famous Flemish paintings: Hubert and Jan van Eyck's famous ***Ghent Altarpiece***, made in 1432 for Ghent's cathedral of Saint Bavo, was financed by the Ghent merchant Jodocus Vijd; the Italian banker and Bruges resident Tommaso Portinari was the patron of van der Goes's ***Portinari Altarpiece***; whereas the guild of archers of Leuven commissioned van der Weyden's ***Descent from the Cross***.

The Flemish towns therefore functioned as a crucible for both the highly specialized workshop labor needed to produce high-quality paintings, goldwork, textiles, and sculptures, and for the wealthy patrons that the craftsmen relied on. The fifteenth-century efflorescence of art in Flanders also coincided with the demographic recovery after the shock of the **Black plague** in the mid-fourteenth century. In addition, the wars between France and England, which had slowed the Flemish economy, gradually subsided during this period. But these were not the only factors in the development of Flemish visual art. Another major source of patronage came from the **Burgundian court**.



Figure **13.7.8.22**: Detail showing a street in Ghent, Jan van Eyck, from the Annunciation scene in the *Ghent Altarpiece* (closed) after restoration, 1432 (Saint Bavo's cathedral, Ghent)



Figure **13.7.8.23**: Map of Burgundy (**source)**

Part of the Burgundian court

In 1384 the count of Flanders, Louis II, died, and he was succeeded by his son-in-law, **Philip the Bold**, the fourth son of King John II of France and the Duke of Burgundy. Flanders was from then ruled by a series of **Burgundian dukes**, and many craftsmen from the Flemish towns were enlisted by the Burgundian court where they would work for the duke and his courtiers. To return to where we began, Nicolas Rolin, the man depicted in Van Eyck's *Rolin Madonna* and the patron of that painting, was a high-ranking Burgundian courtier. In addition to being a patron of van Eyck, he also commissioned van der Weyden to make a **large altarpiece** for the hospice he endowed in Beaune (where it can still be seen).

After the death of Duke Charles the Bold in 1477, the Burgundian lands were partitioned between France and the Holy Roman Empire, and many Netherlandish artists lost the court's patronage as a result. Furthermore, the towns of Bruges and Brussels were losing their economic importance to Antwerp, and the painters there favored a quicker method of painting suited for widespread sale on that city's international markets, rather than the slower, more layered and labored technique of their forebears. However, the influence of fifteenth-century Netherlandish painting would continue into the next century, particularly in the closely observed still life and portrait paintings by court artists such as Hans Holbein the Younger and Albrecht Dürer.

Additional resources:

Northern European Painting of the 15th-16th centuries from the National Gallery of Art

Burgundian Netherlands on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Jan van Eyck on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Early Netherlandish Painting on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Guy Delmarcel, *Flemish Tapestry from the 15th to the 18th Century*, trans. Alastair Weir (Tielt, 1999)

Craig Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in its Historical Context* (New York, 1995)

Craig Harbison, *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism* (2nd ed.; London, 2012)

Susie Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art* (Oxford, 2008)

James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575* (2nd ed.;New York, 2005)

Hugo Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, 2000)

Introduction to Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century

by DR. ANDREW MURRAY



Figure **13.7.8.24**: Dukes of Burgundy (from left to right): *Philip the Bold*, 16th century, oil on panel, 41 × 30 cm (Hospice Comtesse, Lille); After Rogier van der Weyden, *John the Fearless*, 16th century, oil on panel, 41 × 30 cm (Hospice Comtesse, Lille); After Rogier van der Weyden, *Philip the Good*, c. 1450, 29.6 x 21.3 cm (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon); Rogier van der Weyden, *Charles the Bold*, c. 1454, oil on panel, 49 x 32 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)

> ***"The unlimited arrogance of Burgundy! The whole history of that family, from the deeds of knightly bravado, in which the fast-rising fortunes of the first Philip take root, to the bitter jealousy of John the Fearless and the black lust for revenge in the years after his death, through the long summer of that other magnifico, Philip the Good, to the deranged stubbornness with which the ambitious Charles the Bold met his ruin – is this not a poem of heroic pride? Burgundy, as dark with power as with wine…greedy, rich Flanders. These are the same lands in which the splendour of painting, sculpture, and music flower, and where the most violent code of revenge ruled and the most brutal barbarism spread among the aristocracy."***
>
> ***—Johan Huizinga, The Autumn of the Middle Ages, 1919 (1996 english ed.)***



Figure **13.7.8.25**: Burgundy and the Burgundian Netherlands: territories inherited by Charles the Bold in 1467 (map: **National Gallery of Art**)

This remarkable passage from Johan Huizinga's early twentieth-century classic *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* anticipated how the history of Burgundy has been written by many later historians: that is, as a series of successive dukes (Philip the Bold, John the Fearless, Philip the Good, and Charles the Bold).

The first of these, Philip the Bold, became one of the wealthiest individuals in western Europe after he inherited the county of Flanders from his father-in-law in 1384, adding to his lands in Burgundy. His successors expanded on these holdings to create a territorial power located between France and the Habsburg Empire.

From the beginning, the dukes of Burgundy aspired to rival kings in their magnificence and authority. Their wealth and access to Flemish craftsmen enabled the dukes to produce one of the most visually splendorous court cultures in western Europe, one that in turn influenced royal patronage and ceremony in Spain, France, England, and the Habsburg Empire.



Figure **13.7.8.26**: Claus Sluter workshop, Portal of the Charterhouse of Champmol, c. 1385-93 (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)

Monastery as monument

The first major project undertaken by a Burgundian duke was the construction of a Carthusian monastery outside Dijon, the Charterhouse of Champmol (1383—c. 1410), eventually served as a mausoleum for Philip the Bold and many of his descendants. The monastery was destroyed during the French Revolution and the site is now a psychiatric hospital, but some monuments from it survive, including the tombs of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless.



Figure **13.7.8.27**: Claus Sluter, Tomb of Philip the Bold, 1390-1406, alabaster, 243 cm high (Musée Archéologique, Dijon) (photo: Dr. Andrew Murray)

Other monuments include the so-called ***Well of Moses***, which sits above a well in the main cloister of the monastery, and which includes life-size statues of Old Testament prophets below a crucifixion scene (that does not survive). The base with the prophets can still be visited in its original place, as can the portal to the church of the Charterhouse, which still has life-size statues in deep relief of Philip and his wife Margaret praying to the Virgin and Child and supported by donor saints. The Charterhouse of Champmol was intended to secure Philip's memory and prayers for his soul after he died, but it was also a political monument, serving to remind his family and peers of his wealth and power.



Figure **13.7.8.28**: Claus Sluter (with Claus de Werve), *Well of Moses*, 1395-1405 (prophets 1402-05, painted by Jean Malouel), Asnières stone with gilding and polychromy, slightly less than 7 meters high, originally close to 13 meters with cross (photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**)

A turn towards Flanders

During the fifteenth century the main site of ducal patronage moved towards the Burgundian territories in the Low Countries. After the assassination of John the Fearless in the presence of the French king in 1419, the third duke, Philip the Good, shifted his attention away from the intrigues of Paris and France, focusing instead on consolidating and expanding his territories in the

Netherlands. The most famous artworks made in the court of Philip the Good are the paintings of **Jan van Eyck**, who Philip retained in his services.

Unfortunately, although we know van Eyck made portraits of Philip and his wife, Isabella of Portugal, there is no surviving work known to be commisssioned by Philip. As the art historian Craig Harbison has suggested, van Eyck might have been most often enlisted by the duke to decorate the courtly environment, either by painting walls or even designing stages and centerpieces for courtly ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and tournaments. One of the most spectacular types of ceremonies would have been "Joyous Entries": civic processions in which the duke and his entourage were guided through and around a town lined with pageantry, plays, and *tableaux vivants*. These events marked a town's acceptance of their new or current ruler.



Figure **13.7.8.29**: Necklace of the Order of the Golden Fleece, mid-15th century, gold and enamel, 39 cm long (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Weltliche Schatzkammer)

Knights of the Golden Fleece

Philip the Good and Charles the Bold knew their titles (Dukes) were inferior to those of their neighbors (including the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France), and they both sought crowns from the Holy Roman Emperor. Both also had ambitions to launch **crusades** against the Ottoman Empire. Even though these later two dukes never went on crusade, they often publicly fashioned themselves as defenders of Christendom. These two rulers therefore favored tapestries and manuscripts that depicted the lives and actions of chivalric heroes, particularly those of Alexander the Great (who conquered the east) and Saint George (a Christian warrior). In 1454, Philip the Good even hosted a grand banquet, the famous "Feast of the Pheasant." This spectacle was intended to encourage the members of the chivalric order Philip founded, the Knights of the Golden Fleece, to vow to support a crusade. The tables were decorated with statues, and automata (moving statues), and accompanied by music. An elephant (most probably a mechanical one) with an actor dressed as a woman personifying the church was led before the guests, and the Knights had to make their oath before a live pheasant decorated with pearls and a gold necklace (perhaps like that worn by members of the Golden Fleece).

<em
Vow of the Pheasant (Philip the Good and Isabella at the Feast of the Pheasant in Lille in 1454), 16th century, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 85 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-20683" height="296" sizes="(max-width: 650px) 100vw, 650px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-300x137.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-300x137.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...er-870x397.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed_smaller.jpg
2000w" width="650">

Figure **13.7.8.30**: Vow of the Pheasant (Philip the Good and Isabella at the Feast of the Pheasant in Lille in 1454), 16th century, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 85 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Splendor and ambition

Not everyone in Burgundy shared these chivalric values. The refusal of the Netherlandish towns to fully support and fund Charles's wars played a major part in his downfall and death at the Battle of Nancy in 1477. This event marked the beginning of the end for the Burgundian state, but its art and ceremony would remain a strong influence on the Habsburg dynasty that subsequently took control over the Burgundian Netherlands. The towns that had provided the crafts, stages, hosts, and audience for the Burgundian courts would also continue to develop their own civic visual and ceremonial cultures. The remarkable splendor and influence of the short-lived Burgundian court stemmed from its feverish and often violent ambition as a wealthy but precarious power in western Europe.

Additional resources:

Burgundian Netherlands: Private Life, and Burgundian Netherlands: Court Life and Patronage from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Patronage at the Early Valois Courts (1328–1461) from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Art from the Court of Burgundy: The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless 1364-1419, Dijon, 2004.

Karl der Kühne (1433-1477). Kunst, Krieg und Hofkultur, Susan Marti, Gabriele Keck, Till H. Borchert (eds.), Bern, 2008.

Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries Under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530*, Elizabeth Fackelman and Edward Peters (trans.), Philadelphia, 1999 (*This is the shortest and most easily assessable introduction to the period*).

Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Burgundian Netherlands*, Cambridge, 1986.

Sherry C. M. Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society and the Charterhouse of Champmol*, Aldershot and Burlington, 2008

Biblical Storytelling: Illustrating a Fifteenth-Century Netherlandish Altarpiece

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video 13.7.8.1: Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Norfolk Triptych and how it was made

by MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN



Video 13.7.8.2: *The Norfolk Triptych*, c. 1415-20, oil on panel, 33.1 x 16.35 x 2.85 cm (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam).



Video 13.7.8.3: *Layer By Layer*, reconstruction by art historian and painting restorer Charlotte Caspers. Produced by Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Video from ARTtube.

Burgundian and adjacent territories

Ruled by a succession of very wealthy Dukes, Burgundy (today parts of France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands) produced some of the most important art of the 15th century.

1400 - 1500 (Northern Renaissance)

Fit for a duke: Broederlam's *Crucifixion Altarpiece*

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Figure **13.7.8.31**: Melchior Broederlam, exterior panels for the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* for the Chartreuse de Champmol, commissioned by Philip the Bold for the Chartreuse de Champmol, 1398, tempera on wood, (left panel) 166.5 x 125 cm, (right panel) 167 cm x 130 cm (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image adapted from: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

An altarpiece fit for a duke

The two beautiful paintings above, by Melchior Broederlam, were made for the exterior of an altarpiece. Inside was an elaborately carved wooden triptych (below).



Video **13.7.8.4**

The interior was sculpted by Jacques de Baerze (it was common to combine sculpture and painting in a single altarpiece — see **this later example** by Rogier van der Weyden). Together, the paintings (by Broederlam) and sculpture (by de Baerze) are known as the

Crucifixion Altarpiece.



Figure **13.7.8.32**: Jacques de Baerze, interior of the *Crucifixion Altarpiece*, made for the chapel of the Chartreuse de Champmol, 1393-99, gilded and painted wood, 167 cm high, width of the center: 252 cm; width of each shutter: 125 cm (**Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon**) (photo: **François de Dijon**, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Figure **13.7.8.33**: Burgundy and the Burgundian Netherlands in 1467 (map: National Gallery of Art)

The *Crucifixion Altarpiece of Champmol* was commissioned by the Duke of Burgundy, **Philip the Bold**, for the monastery he founded known as the Chartreuse de Champmol (charterhouse/monastery of Champmol), outside of Dijon, France.[1] At the time, Dijon was the capital of the Duchy of Burgundy and the Duke — Philip the Bold — was one of the wealthiest individuals in western Europe.

The **richly decorated monastery at Champmol** was intended to be the final resting place for the duke and his family and so it housed the **tomb carved for him**.

The *Crucifixion Altarpiece* illustrates the life of Christ from the time of his immaculate conception to that of his burial. (While Christ's conception was immaculate — free from sin — the term Immaculate Conception is usually used to refer to Mary's conception by her mother, Anne, rendering Mary the suitable mother for the child of God). The story begins on the exterior with Broederlam's imagery which shows the early life of Christ: the *Annunciation*, the *Visitation*, the *Presentation in the Temple*, and the *Flight into Egypt*. The narrative continues when the altarpiece is open, beginning with the *Adoration of the Magi*, then the *Crucifixion of Christ* (the central and largest of the scenes), and the final representation of *Christ's Entombment*.

International Gothic

Broederlam's two painted panels are an exquisite example of the International Gothic style which developed in the courts of Europe in the 15th century. The International Gothic style often features rich colors, gold, and carefully observed naturalistic details placed within a somewhat illogical space. The figures and architecture of the International Gothic style are commonly given a delicacy and elegance that can be seen here.

The visual delight of Broederlam's panels



Figure **13.7.8.34**: Melchior Broederlam, *Crucifixion Altarpiece*, panel depicting the Annunciation and Visitation, for the chapel of the Chartreuse de Champmol (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

It is safe to say that Broederlam's two panels are visually complex. Not only did he delight in the International Gothic style of the period, but he also painted with an eye toward naturalism and capturing of minute detail.

Broederlam balanced the pictorial elements in each panel, arranging architecture, landscape, and figures so they are in visual harmony with one another. For example, in both panels, the architectural structures are placed to the left, while the landscape occupies the right side of the composition. As a result, when the panels are side by side, there is an alteration of architecture and landscape.

Similarly, in both panels, the landscape rises to the right with rocky, undulating hills, each surmounted by a walled town. Also in both panels, an angel fills the space in the panel's rectangular projection. Tying all these elements together is Broederlam's repeated use of red, blue, and pink, keeping the viewer's eye moving from one scene to the next and creating continuity amongst the individual events.



Figure **13.7.8.35**: Melchior Broederlam, *Crucifixion Altarpiece*, panel depicting the Presentation in the Temple and the Flight into Egypt, for the chapel of the Chartreuse de Champmol (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Annunciation and Visitation

At the left side of the left panel, the Annunciation to the Virgin depicts the moment when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will bear the son of God (Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-22). The event takes place within an elaborate architectural space. To

the right, Mary, dressed in her traditional blue robe, sits in her chamber before a lectern on which we see a book of hours.

However, Mary is not reading the book. instead, she turns her head to the right, as if caught by surprise, and raises her hand in acknowledgement of the angel Gabriel who has just alighted in the left foreground. Gabriel's banderole pronounces Mary's new role as mother of the Savior. The Holy Spirit enters Mary through the golden rays that issue from God the Father's mouth in the upper left corner. Two elements emphasize that the conception of Christ was immaculate (without sin): the vase of white lilies in front of Gabriel is a traditional symbol of the Virgin's purity as is the walled garden behind Gabriel, known as the *hortus conclusus*.



Figure **13.7.8.36**: Annunciation (detail), Melchior Broederlam, *Crucifixion Altarpiece* (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image adapted from: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Figure **13.7.8.37**: Repeated depiction of the Virgin Mary in traditional blue garment, Melchior Broederlam, *Crucifixion Altarpiece* (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image adapted from: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The next event, the *Visitation*, depicts the moment when the Virgin Mary, again dressed in blue, encounters Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. According to tradition, both women were pregnant when they encountered each other. As John the Baptist recognized Christ as the Savior, he "leapt with joy" in his mother's womb (Luke 1:42-45). The two women stand before a rocky landscape crowned by a fortified town. Small trees and bushes dot the landscape and a solitary bird flies through the sky, silhouetted against the gold leaf background.

Within this panel, color ties the two events together. Mary is seen twice in her traditional blue garment, the red of Elizabeth's dress corresponds with that of Gabriel's robe, and both relate to the red and blue that surround God the Father in the upper left corner.

The Presentation in the Temple and the Flight into Egypt

On the right-side panel, the *Presentation in the Temple* illustrates the moment when Christ is presented to the priest (Luke 2:22-40). The Virgin Mary presents the Christ Child by holding him above a golden altar inside an elegant temple that combines elements of Romanesque and Gothic architecture.



Figure **13.7.8.38**: Diagram of Romanesque and Gothic architectural elements, Melchior Broederlam, *Crucifixion Altarpiece*, right panel (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image adapted from: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Here, the Romanesque rounded arches contrast with the ribbed groin vault and pointed arch windows, both of which are characteristic of Gothic architecture. Broederlam also used this combination in the Annunciation, where the pink Romanesque church is juxtaposed against the more Gothic structure of the open loggia where the Virgin Mary sits. This pairing of the two styles of architecture has been interpreted as representing the Old and New Testaments. [2] Like the inclusion of a book of hours in the *Annunciation* scene, the style of the architecture dates to the period of the painting (not to biblical times) — possibly a deliberate choice to make the narratives feel more relevant and relatable.

In both scenes, Broederlam used intuitive perspective, where the buildings recede at opposite angles away from the front of the picture plane and the floors tilt forward, rather than recede back into space. By using this method, Broederlam created relatively three-dimensional spaces for his figures to inhabit. [3]



Figure **13.7.8.39**: Flight into Egypt (detail), Melchior Broederlam, *Crucifixion Altarpiece* (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, image adapted from: **Jean-Louis Mazieres**)

The final event represented on the panels is the *Flight into Egypt*—a journey undertaken by the Holy Family to flee the murderous intentions of King Herod (Matthew 2:13-23). In this scene, the Virgin and Christ Child sit on the back of a donkey as they undertake their arduous journey. The Virgin's blue mantle is wrapped around the young infant in a gesture of motherly protection.

Leading the way is Joseph, Mary's husband, and as if to emphasize the difficulty of the journey, Joseph drinks heavily from a water bag. The rocky path on which they are about to embark leads up to a fortified city. Halfway up the path, a golden idol falls from a pink column, signaling the transition to the new Christian era brought about by the birth of Christ.

The eternal resting place of the duke

Filled with brilliant color, elegant figures, and charming detail, Melchior Broederlam's panels for the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* are visual delights in the purest sense. The style of these painted panels matches that of the carved, gilded interior and together they created a stylistically unified narrative of the life of Christ. The devotional content and lavish representation are perfectly suited for the Duke and his eternal resting place in Dijon.

Notes

[1] Charles Minott, "The Meaning of the Baerze-Broederlam Altarpiece," in *A Tribute to Robert A. Koch. Studies in the Northern Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 132.

[2] James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art. Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2005), p. 54; Minott, p. 138.

[3] Anne Hagopian van Buren, "Broederlam, Melchior." Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press, accessed September 28, 2017. Comparison has long been made between Broederlam's composition and that of the Italian artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti, who painted the same subject for the Cathedral in Siena in 1342.

Additional resources:

Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon

Original Corpus of Christ from the Crucifixion Altarpiece, removed during the French Revolution (Art Institute of Chicago)

Hagopian van Buren, Anne. "Broederlam, Melchior." Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press.

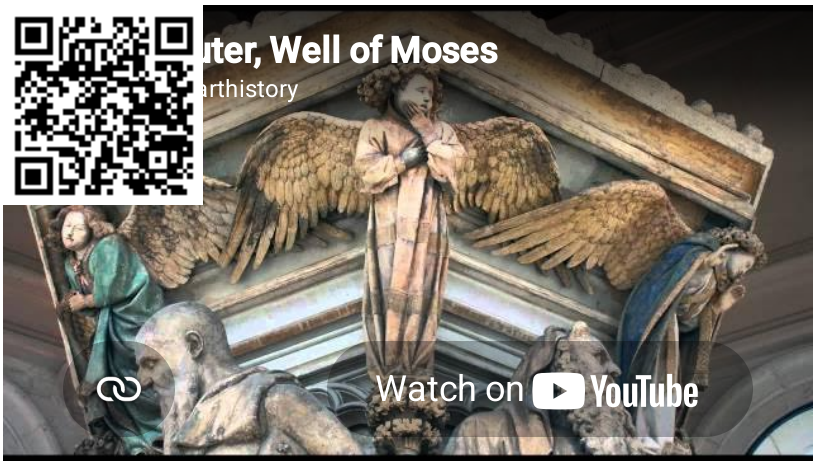
Minott, Charles. "The Meaning of the Baerze-Broederlam Altarpiece." In *A Tribute to Robert A. Koch. Studies in the Northern Renaissance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 131-141.

Snyder, James. *Northern Renaissance Art. Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2005.

Claus Sluter and Claus de Werve

Claus Sluter (with Claus de Werwe), *The Well of Moses*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



This work is located on the grounds of the former Chartreuse de Champmol, a Carthusian monastery in Dijon, France, established by Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. The prophets depicted include: Moses, David, Jeremiah, Zachariah, Daniel, and Isaiah.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727

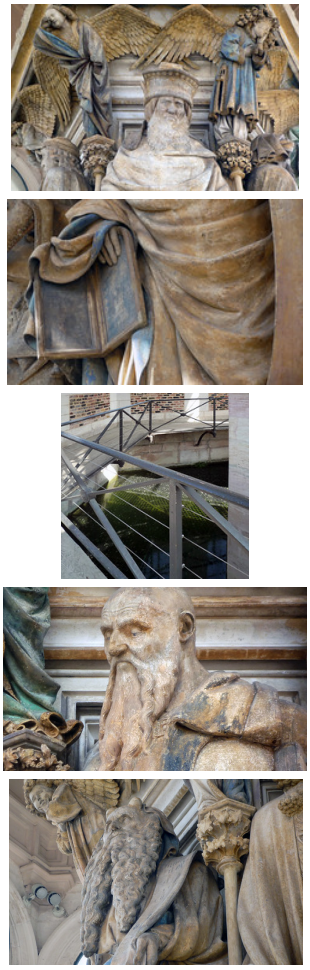


Figure 13.7.8.40: More Smarthistory images…

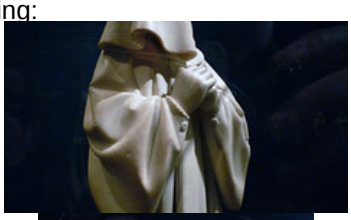
Claus Sluter (with Claus de Werve), *Mourners*

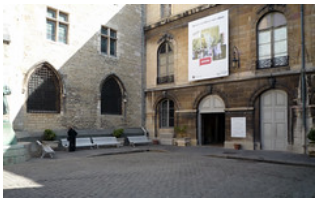
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.8.6: Claus Sluter (with Claus de Werve), *Mourners*, Tomb of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, 1410 (Museum of Fine Arts, Dijon)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727



Figure 13.7.8.41: More Smarthistory images…

Herman, Paul, and Jean de Limbourg

Limbourg brothers, Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI



Figure 13.7.8.42: Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg, January, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly). The figure in a blue robe on the opposite side of the table is a portrait of the patron, Jean de France, duc de Berry.

Some background: the Limbourg Brothers

Known collectively as the Limbourg brothers, Paul, Jean and Herman de Limbourg were all highly skilled miniature painters active at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of 15th century. Together, they created some of the most beautiful illuminated books of the Late Gothic period.

The brothers hailed from the city of Nijmegen, currently part of the Netherlands. They came from an artistic family—their father was a wood sculptor, and their maternal uncle was an established painter who worked for Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. From the mid-1400s until the mid-1800s, the brothers' legacy was lost in the mists of time until a dedicated bibliophile, Henri d'Orleans, duke of Amale, acquired one of their works, the *Très Riches Heures*, in 1856. This set off a flurry of study around the manuscript and its creators.

Though the exact birth years of the brothers are not known, it is believed that all three died in a wave of plague that hit Europe in 1416. All were likely under 30 years of age, which, though young to the contemporary mind, was a pretty standard life expectancy in the middle ages. Regardless, during their relatively brief lives, they were able to produce a number of complex and remarkable works.

The artistic lives of these brothers (at least Jean and Herman), began when they were sent at a young age to apprentice at a Parisian goldsmith. Apprenticeships—typical for craftsman in the middle ages—generally lasted around seven years. However, these were turbulent times and after only two years the boys were sent back home when a plague epidemic hit Paris in 1399. En route to return home to Nijmegen, they were captured in Brussels, which was experiencing conflict during this period. Jean and Herman were held in a prison for ransom. As their newly widowed mother did not have the funds to pay the ransom, the boys were held for approximately six months. Eventually Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy—patron of their uncle Jean—paid half the ransom. Painters and goldsmiths from their hometown contributed the other half. Some scholars believe that upon their release the young men traveled to Italy (though this is highly speculative).

A Moralized Bible

After their release, Philip the Bold commissioned the three brothers to create a miniature bible over a four-year period. Scholars assume this is the Bible Moralisée (Moralized Bible) which currently resides in the Bibliothèque National de France (Ms Fr166)—though this is a matter of some debate.

Bible moralisée, or moralized bibles, are a small group of illustrated bibles that were made in thirteenth-century France and Spain. These books are among the most expensive medieval manuscripts ever made because they contain an unusually large number of illustrations. They books were generally commissioned by members of royal families, as no one else would have been able to afford such luxury. Bible moralisée contain two texts: the biblical text and the commentary text, which is sometimes called a gloss. These commentary texts interpreted the biblical text for the thirteenth century reader. Commentary authors often created comparisons between people and events in the biblical world and people and events in the medieval world.

Their patron: the Duke of Berry

When Philip the Bold died in 1404, the future was uncertain for both the brothers and their uncle, but eventually Philip's brother—Jean de France, duc de Berry (John, Duke of Berry)—took on the still teenaged boys. They would go on to create the *Belles Heures de Jean de France, Duc de Berry*, or the "Beautiful Hours of the Duke of Berry," for him. The story of the Limbourg Brothers is integrally tied to the wealthy and powerful Duke of Berry—a major patron of the arts and avid collector, and the manuscripts they produced for him.

The *Belles Heures*

The *Belles Heures* is a Book of Hours— a very popular book to possess during the late medieval period. A Book of Hours is essentially a prayer book (with prayers and readings for set times throughout a day), and it they typically featured the "Hours of the Virgin" (a set of psalms with lessons and prayers), a calendar, a standard series of readings from the Gospels, the Office for the Dead, the Penitential Psalms, and hymns (or some variation thereof). They were miniature works of art made for private use, and generally contained a number of intricate illuminations painstakingly created on vellum (calfskin). A book of hours was for personal, devotional use—it was not an official liturgical volume. Typically, these books of hours were quite petite.



Figure 13.7.8.43: Detail of Folio 223v, “The Duke on a Journey,” Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg, *The Belles Heures of Jean de France, duc de Berry*, 1405-8/1409, tempera, gold and ink on vellum, single leaf: 23.8 x 17 cm (The Cloisters Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Limbourg brothers finished work on the “Belles Heures” around 1409—this was to be their only complete work. The Duke of Berry then commissioned another devotional book in 1411 or 1412, which would become the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (*The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry*)—probably the best-known example of Gothic illumination.

Though the two manuscripts (the *Belles Heures* and the *Très Riches Heures)* were created in fairly close succession, stylistic differences are apparent, and it seems clear that at least one of the brothers (likely Paul as he was the eldest and the master of the workshop), spent some time in Italy studying Renaissance masters such as Pietro Lorenzetti. Whatever the case, there is a change in style—particularly in the way landscapes are depicted and in the decorative borders. This, along with its fine, extant condition, is part of what makes the *Très Riches Heures* one of the finest examples of Gothic illumination and the International Gothic Style.



Figure **13.7.8.44**: Detail, Herman, Paul and Jean de Limburg, January, from Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly)

In the *Très Riches Heures*, there are a number of full-page images—including calendar pages. The calendar pages often show agricultural scenes where happy peasants till the fields and harvest. In the background are castles and landscapes that were specific holdings of the Duke of Berry. Likewise we also see the inside the palace. For example, in January (in full at the top of the page, and detail above) we see an image of the Duke himself, sitting at the head of the table while all around presents are exchanged. Likely, the Limbourgs themselves would have been part of this ritual exchange—the man in the mid-ground with the gray floppy cap may be a self-portrait of Paul. The table, resplendent in damask and laden with expensive goods, represents the wealth and taste of the Duke. A variety of heraldic motifs relating to the Duke can also be found, such as the gold fleur-de-lys (in the blue circles above the Duke for example). In the background we see tapestries with a scene of knights emerging from a castle ready to go into battle.



Figure **13.7.8.45**: Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg, February, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly)

Meanwhile, the February page takes us outside into the frigid winter air. Wan light falls across a snow covered landscape where in the background we see a town blanketed in snow, along with a peasant and a donkey gamely taking the road towards it. In the middle ground we see another peasant diligently chopping wood, while another hurries towards shelter. In the foreground we see the farm as well peasants warming themselves in a small wooden house. he tunics of both the men are pulled so high, assumedly in an effort to warm their chilled legs, that their nether regions are exposed—something that might strike modern viewers as incongruous to a religious book. At least the lady of the house decorously only warms her ankles! However, nudity in medieval manuscripts, while not prolific, was also not unusual. In fact, there are several other examples that can be found in the "Très Riches Heures."



Figure **13.7.8.46**: Limbourg Brothers, May, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly)

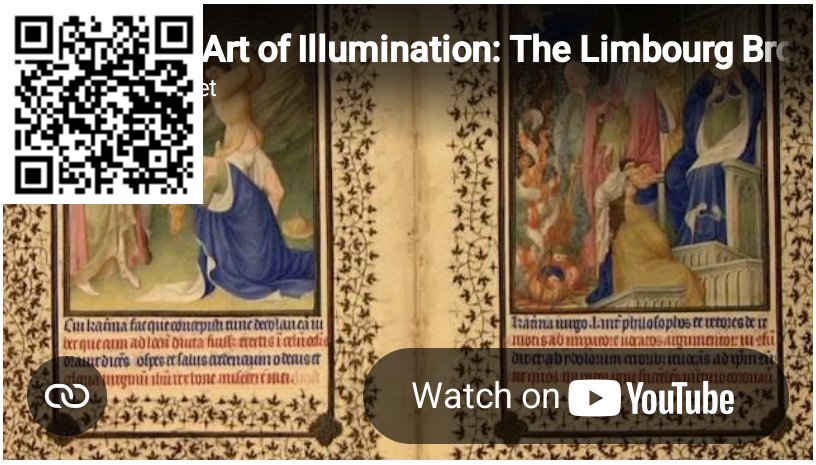


Figure **13.7.8.47**: Limbourg Brothers, May, from Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly)

Something else that might strike the modern viewer as curious is the incorporation of the zodiac into this book of hours. For every calendar page, the corresponding astrological sign is shown at the top of the page in a lunette or tympanum. This is in part because the stars were integrally tied to the agricultural calendar. Also, medieval medical practioners believed that people's health issues were related to what constellation they were born under. Even the church calendar used the Zodiac to calculate feast days. For the month of May (below), we see the astrological signs of the bull and the twins, accompanying the chariot of the sun.

The International Gothic style

The International Gothic style emphasized decorative patterns. This is obvious on the clothing worn by the figures, but even natural forms—like trees—create decorative patterns. Gold leaf, always popular in manuscripts, was also used in abundance. Figures are elegant and elongated. These images are also highly detailed and show an abundant interest in accurately portraying plants and animals. Though the *Très Riches Heures*, is incomplete, it remains a shining example of the International Gothic style, along with such art works as **The Annunciation** by Simone Martini and Gentile Fabriano's **Adoration of the Magi**.



Video **13.7.8.7**

Additional resources:

About the Limbourg Brothers on The Metropolitan Museum of Art blog for "The Art of Illumination"

The Belles Heures of Jean de France, duc de Berry at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Patronage of Jean de Berry (1340–1416) on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"The Patron: Jean de France, Duc de Berry" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art blog for "The Art of Illumination"

"The Penitential Psalms" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art blog for "The Art of Illumination" (see the last paragraph on the Limbourg Brothers and the Bible Moralisée)

Works by the Limbourg Brothers on the Google Art Project

Herman, Paul, and Jean de Limbourg, *The Belles Heures* of Jean de France, Duc de Berry

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video 13.7.8.8: Herman, Paul, and Jean de Limbourg, *The Belles Heures* of Jean de France, Duc de Berry, 1405–1408/1409, tempera, gold, and ink on vellum, 9 3/8 x 13 7/16″ / 23.8 x 34.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**.

Campin and his workshop

Robert Campin, *Christ and the Virgin*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.9: Robert Campin (also called the Master of Flémalle), *Christ and the Virgin*, c. 1430-35, oil and gold on panel, 11-1/4 x 17-15/16 inches (28.6 x 45.6 cm) (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

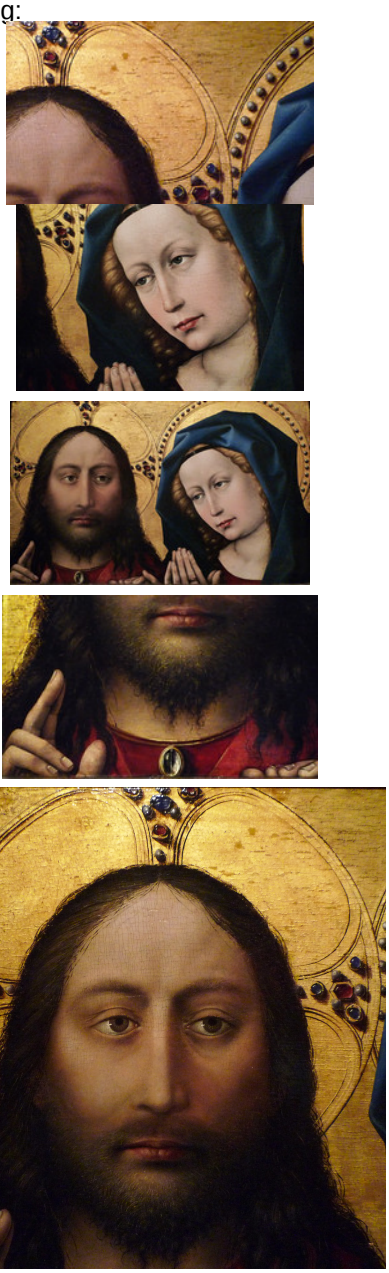


Figure **13.7.8.48**: More Smarthistory images…

Workshop of Robert Campin, *Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.8.10: Workshop of Robert Campin, *Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)*, 1425-28, tempera and oil on panel (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Additional resources:

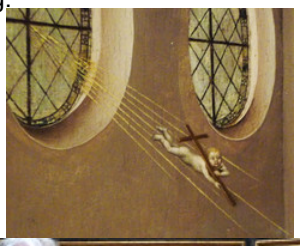
This painting at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

More on this painting from Dr. Allen Farber

This painting on the Google Art Project (zoomable)

Works by Campin and his workshop on the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





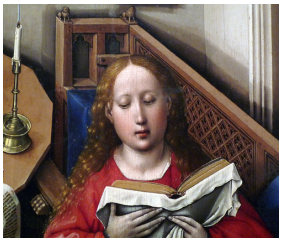




Figure 13.7.8.49: More Smarthistory images…

Jan Van Eyck, *The Ghent Altarpiece*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON



Video **13.7.8.11**: Jan van Eyck, *The Ghent Altarpiece* (closed), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11’ 5” x 7’ 6” (Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium)



Video **13.7.8.12**: Jan van Eyck, *The Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11’ 5” x 7’ 6” (Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium)



Figure 13.7.8.50: Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium. Note: Just Judges panel on the lower left is a modern copy (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

> ***"All art constantly aspires to the condition of music"***
> ***– Walter Pater***

A troubled past

When he wrote that statement, I doubt that Walter Pater had in mind the veritable rock opera that is the *Ghent Altarpiece*, now housed in the Cathedral of St. Bavo, Ghent (in present-day Belgium). From its singing, costumed, organ-pumping chorister angels to its gospel-choir legions of saints, soldiers, prophets and martyrs, to its central panel depicting the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb —is there any other fifteenth-century altarpiece that even comes close in spirit to the 1970s theatrical excesses of rock operas like Jesus Christ Superstar?

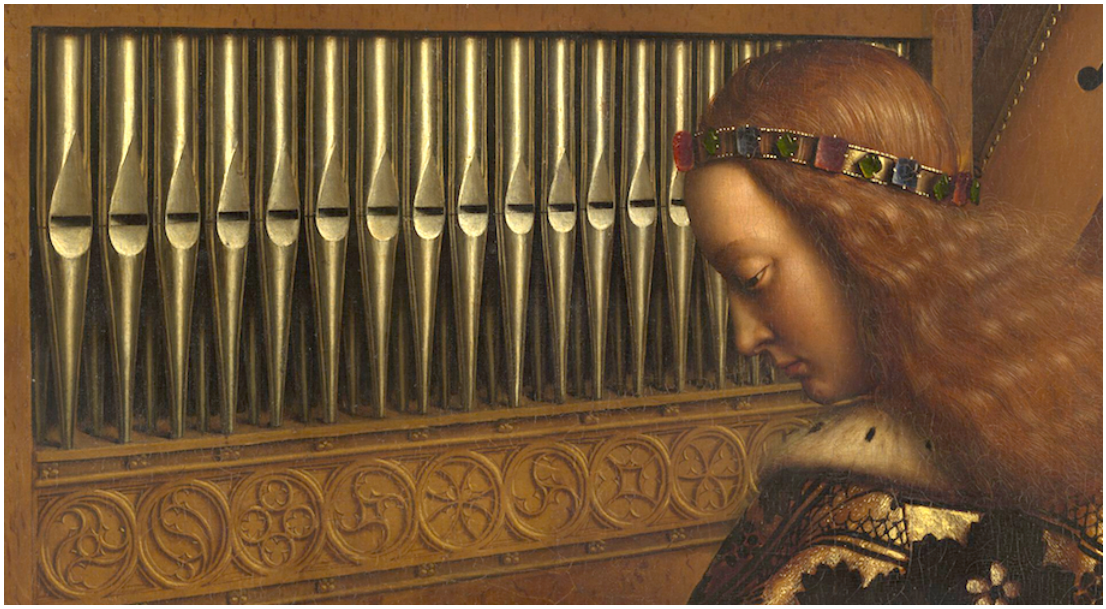


Figure 13.7.8.51: Angel playing an organ (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**) In the film *The Monuments Men*, George Clooney solemnly pronounces the *Ghent Altarpiece* to be the most important work of art in the Western tradition. As humbug as that may sound, it *is* certainly important, as much for its unparalleled technique as for what the painting has meant historically. Removed from its place in the Cathedral of Ghent by Napoleon (well, the main panels, anyway) and then by German occupying forces during World War I, the panels were returned and reassembled, only to be taken again by the Nazis in 1942 and stored carelessly in a salt mine for the duration of the Second World War. The altarpiece was rescued by Allied art experts in 1945 (below) who reassembled, cleaned and restored the panels, which had lost much of their varnish and suffered some surface abrasion.



Figure 13.7.8.52: Lt. Daniel J. Kern and German conservator Karl Sieber examining Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece (Thomas Carr Howe papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Since that time, the altarpiece has seldom failed to be in some process of constant condition monitoring (as T.S. Eliot would say "like a patient etherized upon a table") or some kind of reconstruction or conservation—a kind of cultural-historical exercise in trying to perfect the past. The latest campaign of study, restoration and renewal has gone on since 2009, much of it carried out in front of the crowds at Saint Bavo's Cathedral.



Video **13.7.8.13**

Astonishingly, given its many trials and tribulations, the altarpiece has weathered well. Only one of the original 12 panels (8 of which are part of the hinged shutter apparatus, and therefore painted on both sides), has been lost. In 1934 the panels depicting St. John the Baptist, and another depicting the Just Judges were stolen from the church. The John the Baptist panel was recovered. The Just Judges panel (on the lower left when the altarpiece is open—see image at the top of the page) was replaced with a modern copy during the 1945 restoration. The other panels have all survived, although there is some lingering disagreement about whether they are now reassembled in their original configuration, given the many times the altarpiece has been taken apart.



Figure **13.7.8.53**: Conservation of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, begun in 2012 (photo: **Flemish Primitives**)

A pixilated present

The Getty Foundation in Los Angeles has funded the recent campaign to conserve the Ghent Altarpiece, an effort being led by Belgium's Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage. A painstaking photographic enlargement is captured in 100 million pixels on the **"Closer to Van Eyck" website**. There, one can probe the impenetrably gorgeous enamel-like surface of van Eyck's greatest masterpiece, and gaze astonished at his virtuosic accomplishments.



Video **13.7.8.14**

The altarpiece itself is a visual "moveable feast," made up of 12 panels that fold against themselves (see the video above). It is like frozen theatre, and when open, reveals a spiritual guidebook to divine revelation.



Figure **13.7.8.54**: Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (closed), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 7 feet 6 inches (closed), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

In its basic configuration, the rather austere, largely monochromatic outer panels (above)—which show the kneeling patrons and statues of prophets and glimpses into orderly rooms; are grounded in the material and sensible terrestrial world, in which Gabriel appears to Mary at the moment of the Annunciation. But when the altarpiece is opened, we travel, accompanied by prophets on foot and princes on horseback, saints and martyrs and more angels, to the brilliantly-colored heart of the scene depicting the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb (below). It is as if the makers of the Wizard of Oz derived their inspiration for a black-and-white Kansas and a technicolor Oz, from Ghent.

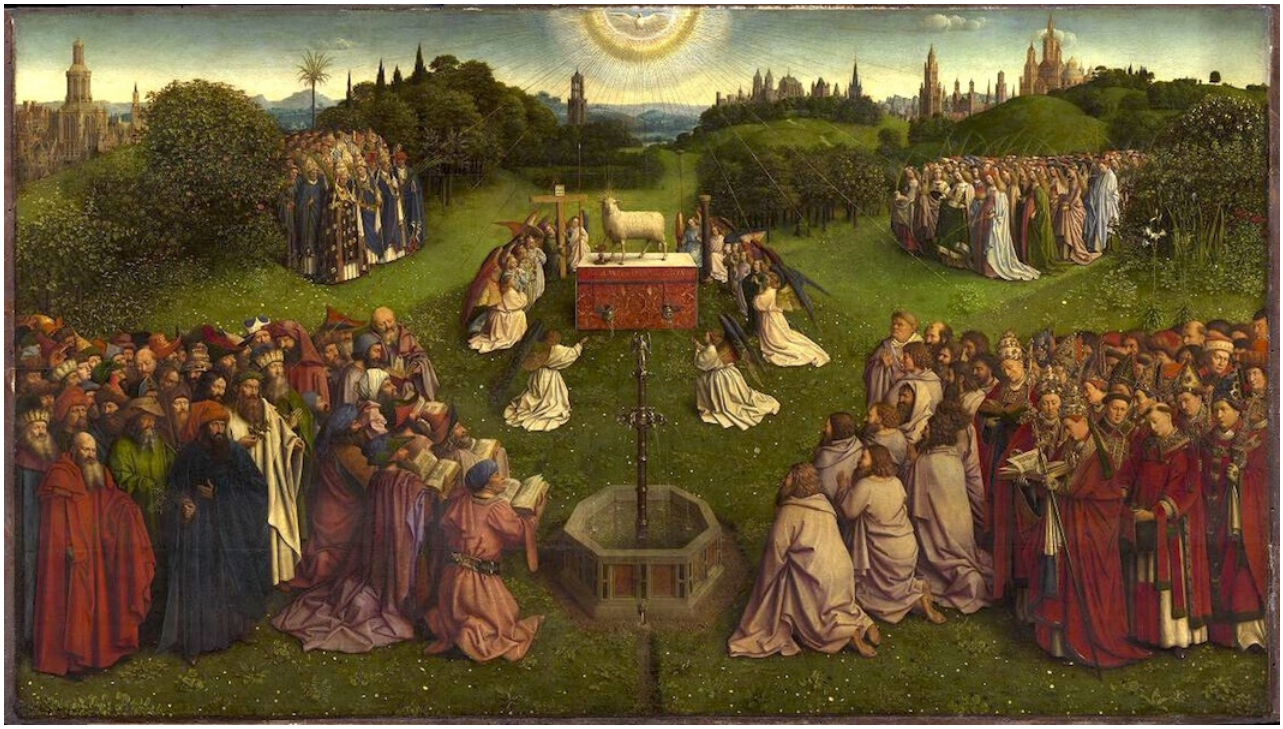


Figure 13.7.8.55: Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, bottom center panel, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

Byzantine influences

The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb (above) is presided over by the figure of God (the bearded Jesus with crown and scepter, below).* This figure can also be read as Christ Pantokrator (one of the many names for God in the Jewish tradition and, in the Bible, an appellation used only by John the Baptist to describe God), flanked by separate panels of John the Baptist to the right and the Virgin Mary to the left (below). The combination of these three figures reminds us of a Byzantine image type—the Deësis (from the Greek, "prayer"), which shows the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist for the salvation of our souls, the heavenly interview at the moment of the Last Judgement (**an example of a Byzantine Deësis**, Byzantine art refers to art from the Byzantine or Eastern Roman empire).



Figure 13.7.8.56: The Virgin Mary, God the Father/Christ,* and St. John the Baptist, top center panels, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)



Figure 13.7.8.57: Lamb (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, bottom center panel, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

In The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb (left detail), the sacrifice of the lamb, symbol of Christ's slaughter for our salvation, is similarly Byzantine in origin.

The inner panels are painted in the bold and dynamic naturalistic style for which the artist Jan van Eyck is justifiably famous. In all of its positions, the Ghent Altarpiece is a vision of the visionary. It alludes not only to sight but to sound—musical angels accompanying the elaborate orchestration of the whole. Its appeal to the senses threatens to overwhelm the intellectual apprehension of its content.

The artists

According to an inscription, written on two silver strips mounted on the rear of the two donor panels, and only discovered in 1823, the altarpiece was painted by the brothers Jan and Hubert van Eyck:

> ***The painter Hubert van Eyck, than whom none was greater, began this work. Jan [his brother], second in art, completed it at the request of Joos [Jodocus] Vijd on the sixth of May [1432]. He begs you by means of this verse to take care of what came into being.***

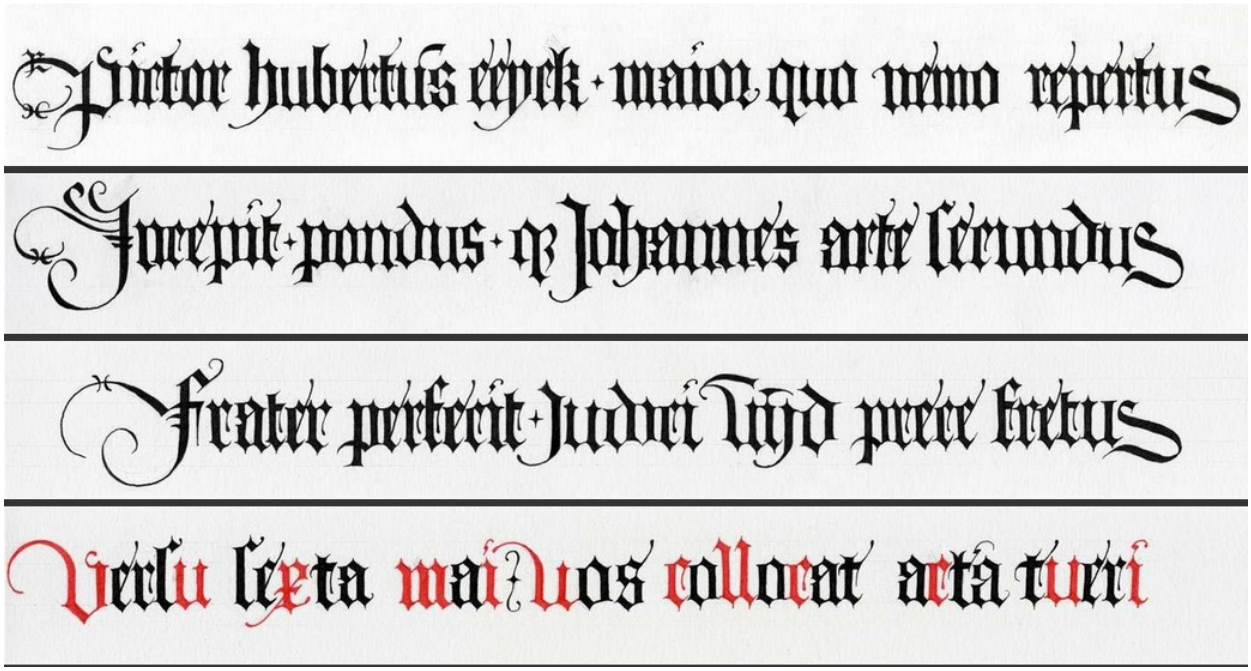


Figure **13.7.8.58**: A transcription (from Hugo van der Velden, 2012) of the quatrain using the original script. “It is generally accepted that the red letters in the last line form a chronogram that reveals the date of the polyptych’s completion: when these are read as roman numerals and added up, the result is 1432.” (From **Closer to Van Eyck**)

Because Jan van Eyck is seen as the far more famous of the two brothers, the reference to Jan as “second in art” has raised a few eyebrows among art historians, eager to assign the lion’s share of the work to young Jan. My own undergraduate professor postulated that what the inscription means is that Hubert was responsible for the actual construction of the altarpiece, which was later largely painted by Jan—a not unusual sequence of events in a fifteenth-century workshop (building polyptych, or many-paneled, altarpieces required construction knowledge, and painting them required an entirely different expertise). Hubert died in 1426, and the altarpiece was finished in 1432, so Jan probably took over the contract Hubert signed with the patron of the work, Judocos Vijd (sometimes spelled “Vijdt”), which also would have made Jan literally “second in art.”



Figure **13.7.8.59**: God the Father/Christ* (detail), Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

We know Jan to have been an exquisite painter of miniatures who worked for the Dukes of Burgundy, and there are many aspects of the work here consistent with the detailed work of a manuscript illuminator, but there are also some important differences, particularly in scale. The relatively large size of the panels pushed Jan to new heights of virtuosity as a master of light; directional light, saturation, the softest scale of illuminations in the gradation of shadow, the construction of space through light and shade,

symphonies of reflection and refraction alive in a world of textured surfaces—literally, the light of the world. Here, for the first time on such a scale, is a picture of the completely natural world saturated by the light of God—the perfect intermingling of divine illumination with the created world—and all described in paint. Van Eyck creates a world within the painting as substantial and real as the world outside the painting. Say what you will about Brunelleschi and Masaccio and linear perspective in Florence, without the subtlety of oil paint, their works look like mathematical equations beside the painted world of the Ghent Altarpiece.

The patrons



Figure **13.7.8.60**: The patron, Jodocus Vijd (detail), Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 7 feet 6 inches (closed), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photos: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

Like most Renaissance patrons, Jodocus Vijd was a wealthy merchant who sought to expiate the sin of being too fond of money by spending some of it on creating a monument to God. An influential citizen of Ghent, Vijd commissioned the altarpiece for the Church dedicated to St. John the Baptist (now the Cathedral of St. Bavo) in his home city as a means of saving his soul while simultaneously celebrating his wealth. Vijd was warden of the Church of St. John and assistant Burgomeister of Ghent, and he had a rich aristocratic wife, so he had plenty of money to commission the van Eyck brothers. It is uncertain the extent to which he influenced the iconography of the overall work, but he obviously spared no expense.

The distinctive faces of Jodocus Vijd and Elizabeth Borluut (the husband and wife patrons) are each shown in three-quarter view (left and below). They kneel in the traditional donor positions, with their hands clasped in prayer, facing each other and gazing vaguely toward the central panels. Undoubtedly, contemporaries would have recognized them taking pride of place in such an important civic church, and although the immediacy of their presence would fade with time, their identities as the donors of the work remain intact.

The altarpiece, closed



Figure **13.7.8.61**: From left to write, Jodocus Vijd, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and Vijd's wife, Elizabeth Borluut (detail), Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

It is best to start in the smallest and most constricted stage of the altarpiece in its closed position. The kneeling donors are depicted on the outer extremes, separated by simulated statues of two standing saints painted in grisaille (shades of grey)—St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist (above).



Figure **13.7.8.62**: Annunciation, with sibyls and prophets above, detail, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 7 feet 6 inches (closed), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)



Figure **13.7.8.63**: View of Ghent through the window in one of the panels between the Mary and Gabriel (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, bottom center panel, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 7 feet 6 inches (closed), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

In the register above is a depiction of the Annunciation—this is the moment when the archangel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will be the mother of Christ (above). Figures of the angel and Mary are found on the outer edges of the panels. The Holy Spirit hovers over Mary. The two contiguous scenes between them are pure genre scenes (scenes of everyday life). Beside Gabriel, a window opens onto a view of buildings in Ghent (left), beside the Virgin, a recessed niche holds a silver tray, a small hanging silver pitcher and a linen towel neatly hanging from a rack (below). These items are consistent with iconography of the period that uses domestic objects as a means of expressing the purity of the Virgin. We are drawn most deeply into the center of the altarpiece (achieved without mathematically calculated perspective—you can tell because the floor appears to tilt upward), toward the mystery within.



Figure 13.7.8.64: Niche with silver tray and pitcher, in one of the panels between the Mary and Gabriel (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, bottom center panel, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 7 feet 6 inches (closed), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

At the top of the Gabriel panel, beneath a shallow rounded arch, is the Old Testament prophet Zacharias, father of John the Baptist; and above the Virgin, we see the Old Testament prophet Micah, who predicted the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem. The two central panels in this upper register depict the Erythraean and Cumaean Sibyls (sibyls are female figures from ancient Greece and Rome who prophesied the future). These four figures are all messengers of the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ (Michelangelo painted these prophets and sibyls in the Sistine Chapel, and more).

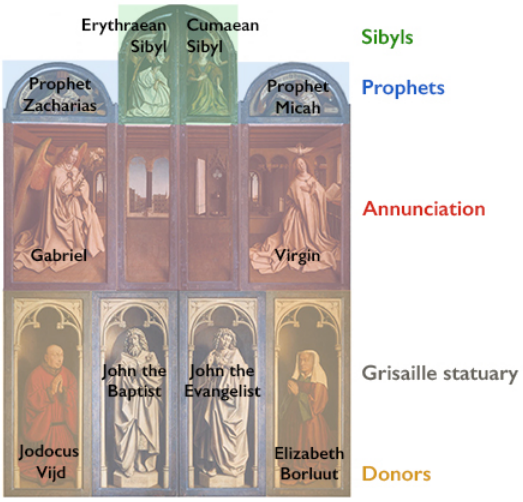


Figure 13.7.8.65: Diagram: Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (closed)

The altarpiece, open

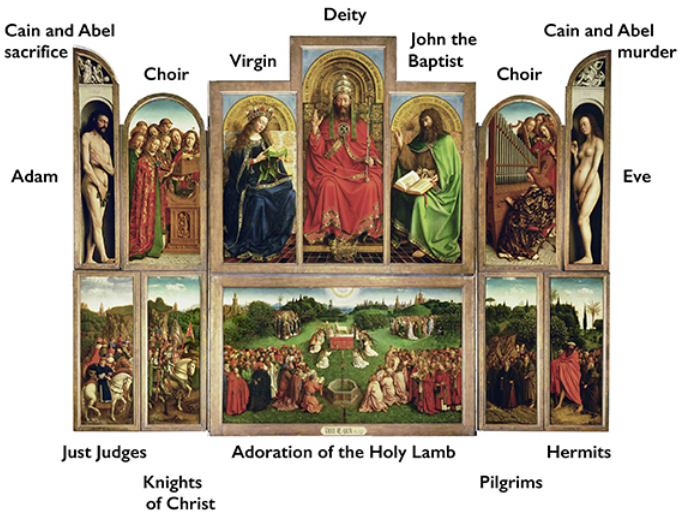


Figure **13.7.8.66**: Diagram, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open)



Figure **13.7.8.67**: Adam, detail, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

Opened, the altarpiece is divided into two horizontal registers. The Deësis (the Virgin Mary, Christ/God,* and St. John the Baptist) panels are flanked on either side by choirs of heavenly angels and, on the outermost panels at each side, Adam and Eve. God's first human creatures are therefore the parenthetical figures of this upper register and the figures that necessitate the salvation scene below). Their literal marginalization—at the edges of the altarpiece—is indicative of their state of sin. Eve holds the forbidden fruit and covers her genitals. Opposite her, Adam assumes the classical pose of the so-called "**modest Venus**," one arm across his chest, the other covering his genitals (a rather peculiar pose for a male figure to assume).

Adam and Eve's sin in the garden of Eden (the Fall of Man) is, of course, the reason for all that occurs below in the panel known as the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb—the full salvation play, complete with sacrificial lamb, a symbolic representation of Christ (from Gospel of John: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"—John 1:29).

From the outer edges of the lower panels, crowds converge towards the altar in the center, presenting a unified field across the five panels, overcoming the Gothic division of the frame. From the left come figures known as the Just Judges and the Soldiers of Christ, on horseback, arrayed in glittering armor and armed with swords of Justice, followed by the Judges wearing opulent and various finery.



Figure **13.7.8.68**: Saint, prophets and others approach the mystic lamb (detail), Jan van Eyck, Ghent Altarpiece, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

From the right come the saints and the prophets, chief among them the giant (and apocryphal) St. Christopher (below), the male saints suitably dressed in simple tunics and robes in sober earth tones. These crowds approach the central panel. Where are they all going? They're going to witness the sacrifice of the Mystic Lamb.



Figure **13.7.8.69**: St. Christopher, detail, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)



Figure **13.7.8.70**: Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, detail, Jan van Eyck, Ghent Altarpiece, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)



Figure **13.7.8.71**: Distant landscape (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, bottom center panel, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

The key panel of the altarpiece, the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb (detail above), depicts a large meadow, dotted with flowers, at the center of which are two key structures—in the foreground is a lovely octagonal stone fountain, with a tall central pedestal from which spring multiple cascades of water. In the background, on a direct axis with the fountain, is an altar with a lamb standing on it. The head of the strangely alert lamb is surrounded by a glowing nimbus (a halo, here depicted as golden rays). In the sky above, the dove of the Holy Spirit descends in its own pulsating nimbus of light from which radiate long, golden spires that touch the angels and the ground. Behind the altar, in the distance, are trees and one tall tower, punctuated by windows (left). Still further back on the blue horizon are distant mountains; the setting is a paradisaical landscape for the re-enactment of the sacrifice of Christ. What is the relationship between the altar, the sacrifice of the lamb, and the foreground fountain?



Figure 13.7.8.72: Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, detail, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch, Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

The Mystic Lamb is the Lamb of God—the sacrificial lamb—a symbol of Christ and Christ's death. The lamb on the altar is equivalent to the crucifixion of Christ, made explicit by the juxtaposition of the lamb with the cross held by the angel. Other angels behind the altar hold the instruments of the Passion (the events surrounding Christ's death): the column to which Christ was tied during the flagellation, the sponge on a stick used to touch his lips with vinegar (increasing his thirst), the nails and the lance that pierced his flesh. Angels in front of the altar swing censors containing incense (below). This is also a reference to the sacrament of the Eucharist, where the bread and wine, offered by the priest during Mass, become the body and blood of Christ.



Figure 13.7.8.73: Chalice (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, bottom center panel, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

The Lamb bleeds from a wound in his side, and this stream of blood flows directly into a chalice set on the altar cloth (the full inscription on the altar cloth reads, "*Ecce Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis,*" which translates, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world"). The flowing of the blood, visually linked to the spouts of water in the foreground fountain, is probably an allusion to Christ as the "living water" of God.

The fountain is therefore the Fountain of Life—a reference to the promise of eternal life made possible by Christ's sacrifice. This reference to Christ as the "living water" occurs in the Gospel of John. In that story, Christ meets the Woman of Samaria at the well. When the woman questions Christ's presence there, "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John 4:14).



Figure 13.7.8.74: Fountain (detail) Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

Inscribed on the fountain, in Latin (below), we see a verse from the Book of Revelation, “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Revelation, 22:1). In the symbolic context of the Lamb, the fountain is therefore the wellspring of eternal life and salvation.



Figure 13.7.8.75: Fountain and inscription (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: Closer to Van Eyck)

Clustered around the fountain are yet more distinct processional groups worshiping the Lamb. These are commonly identified as patriarchs and prophets from the Old Testament and male and female saints and church figures. If you’re wondering what the Old Testament figures are doing in paradise, in the Byzantine tradition, Christ’s death is followed by his Harrowing of Hell (which takes place during the three days before his resurrection). In this episode (while “dead” to the world), Christ breaks open the doors of Hell. He frees and saves pagan writers (like Homer), prophets of the Old Testament (like Moses), and Adam and Eve—all of whose deaths preceded Christ’s birth and who could not otherwise have experienced eternal salvation through his resurrection.



Figure **13.7.8.76**: In the foreground right, Saint Livinius of Ghent who was martyred by having his tongue cut out and then his head cut off (detail), Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium (photo: **Closer to Van Eyck**)

Together, these scenes, which relate to the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, invite the viewer to share in the promise of salvation. These days, of course, we are invited to contemplate the altarpiece itself as a material survivor of time, war, reparation and restoration, and the painting has its own cult of dedicatees who worship it as an iconic work of art.

The sum of its parts (some thoughts on van Eyck's sources and influences)

The iconography of the *Ghent Altarpiece* may be read in a myriad of ways, and it would be impossible to do justice to all of them here. But there is one more message that is, I think, important. The central panels of the open position may be read downward vertically; through the seated Christ/God* figure, to the descent of the dove of the Holy Spirit, to the Lamb on the altar. The symbolism of the Trinity (in Christian theology, God, the Holy Spirit and Christ are manifestations of one being) is important because it was a doctrine that was frequently challenged in the western Church. Again, the Gospel of John is often cited as most strongly defending and defining the divine nature of Jesus, and supporting the Trinitarian belief that the Holy Spirit shares the same being as Jesus and God. In the thirteenth century, a philosopher named Henry of Ghent, from Ghent of course, waded into the Trinitarian question through his work on the metaphysics of Being, and his work on the Metaphysics of the Trinity. It was not unusual for works of fifteenth-century art to engage with contemporary theological and philosophical debate.



Figure 13.7.8.77: God/Christ (detail), Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed 1432, oil on wood, 11 feet 5 inches x 15 feet 1 inch (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium

The iconography of the *Ghent Altarpiece* suggests that the artists (or patron) drew on very particular sources, perhaps even Henry of Ghent, although this is merely speculation. Certainly, aspects of the iconography of the Ghent Altarpiece are peculiarly indebted to Byzantine art, which we know Jan van Eyck had studied. His genius was in the commingling of the timelessly iconic with the naturalistic play of light across the temporal textures of the world, transforming the material into the miraculous.

*The central figure of the top register of the open altarpiece has been identified as both Christ and God the Father. Some scholars has asserted that this ambiguity may have been purposeful.

Additional resources:

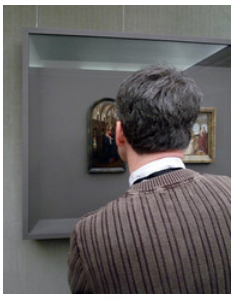
Getty Foundation Ghent Altarpiece initiative

A Smarthistory video on a Byzantine Deësis mosaic from Hagia Sophia

The Ghent Altarpiece from the Web Gallery of Art

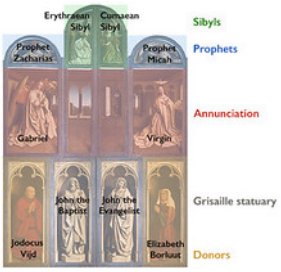
The Ghent Altarpiece from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

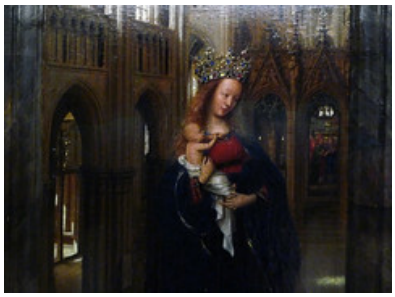
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727



Figure 13.7.8.78: More Smarthistory images…

Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of a Man in a Red Turban (Self-Portrait?)*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.15: Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of a Man in a Red Turban (Self-Portrait?)*, 1433, oil on oak panel, 26 x 19 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna in the Church*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.16: Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna in the Church*, c. 1438, oil on oak, 31 x 14 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



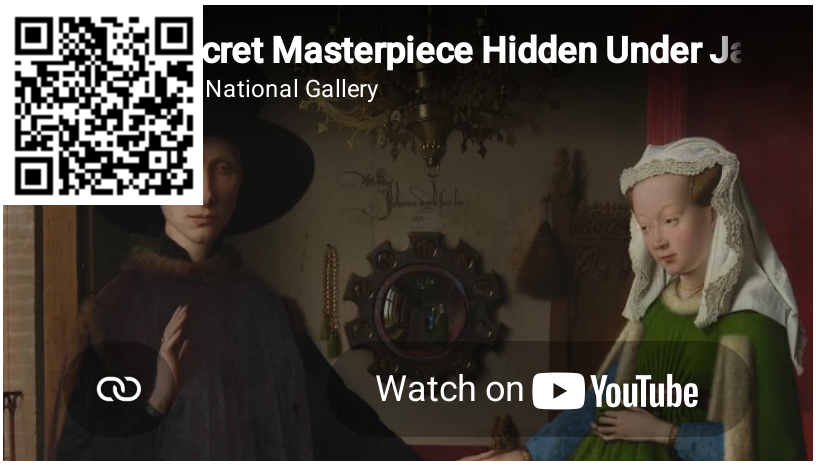
Figure 13.7.8.79: More Smarthistory images…

Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.8.17: Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*,1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London)



Video 13.7.8.18

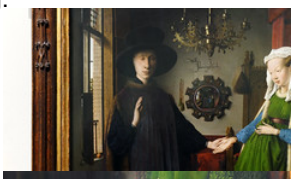
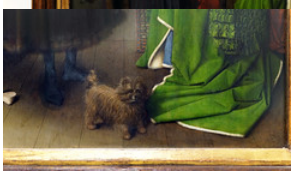
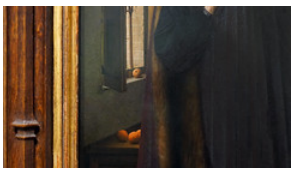
Using infrared reflectography, Rachel Billinge explains aspects of the artist's meticulous underdrawing for the work and some of the fascinating secrets it reveals.

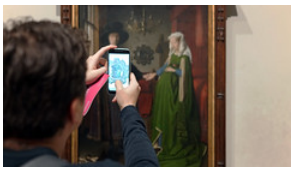
Additional resources:

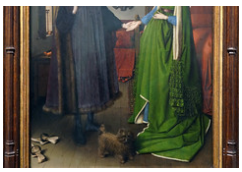
This painting at The National Gallery

The many questions surrounding Jan Van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait (from ARTstor)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:


https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727



Figure 13.7.8.80: More Smarthistory images…

The question of pregnancy in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*

by DR. LANE EAGLES



Figure **13.7.8.81**: Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London), photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

But is she pregnant?

Jan van Eyck's equally enigmatic and iconic *Arnolfini Portrait* often prompts art history newcomers and experts alike to ask: is the female figure pregnant? Questions about the presence of pregnancy in the portrait are so common that the **London National Gallery's website** addresses the issue on the second line of the painting's official explanatory text.



Figure **13.7.8.82**: Jan Van Eyck, Dress (detail), *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London), photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Is the woman in the *Arnolfini Portrait* pregnant? The short answer is no. The illusion is caused because the figure collects her extensive skirts and presses the excess fabric to her abdomen where it springs outwards and creates a domelike silhouette. Her hand position is regularly read by modern viewers as a universal acknowledgment of pregnancy, but in the Renaissance this gesture would have been understood instead as a sign of adherence to female decorum. Young Renaissance women were encouraged to keep their hands demurely clasped around their girdles when in public, as this was seen as polite and unobtrusive.

The issue of pregnancy in the *Arnolfini Portrait* is a complex one: the figure is not literally pregnant, because painting or sculpting pregnancy violated the period's artistic customs—yet pregnancy is nevertheless present in the picture. Both pregnancy symbolism and expectation are at play within the painting.



Figure **13.7.8.83**: Jan Van Eyck, Oranges (detail left) and carved bedpost depicting Saint Margaret atop a dragon (circled in red, detail right), *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London), photos: **Dr. Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Objects alluding to future pregnancy pepper the composition, from the ripened fruit arranged on the windowsill, to the wooden statuette of Saint Margaret, the patron saint of childbirth, who is shown overcoming the dragon of heresy on the bedframe. Though it's impossible to sever the question concerning pregnancy from this painting, we can answer it by examining both Renaissance pregnancy and dress practices.

Renaissance pregnancy

The highly-gendered Renaissance world produced widely disparate male and female lived experiences. While a man generally married in his third or fourth decade, allowing him ample time to grow his business or estate, women became brides ideally between the ages of thirteen and seventeen. Women, therefore, were expected to and did spend the majority of their married lives with child.



Figure **13.7.8.84**: Jan Van Eyck, Hands (detail), *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London), photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Arnolfini's wife is not pregnant in the picture, but period norms assumed she soon would be. Art historian Diane Wolfthal agrees that although the woman is not pictured pregnant, "the panel alludes to the proper goal of sexual relations through the wife's protruding belly…her gesture…brings attention to her womb,"[1] and argues that the few period viewers who came into contact with the *Arnolfini Portrait* would have understood and recognized this signaling.



Figure 13.7.8.85: Raphael, *La Donna Gravida (Portrait of a Woman)*, c. 1505-06, oil on panel, 66 x 52 cm (Palazzo Pitti, Florence)

Although married Renaissance women spent the majority of their premenopausal lives with child, pregnancy itself was rarely represented. Artists working across a myriad of media shied away from depicting pregnancy, most likely because the condition was thought to be indecorous.

During the Renaissance, when a woman entered into her third trimester, she generally remained at home in a ritual called confinement. Further, depicting pregnancy admitted a direct link to human sexuality. Though procreative intercourse between heterosexual married couples was the only church-sanctioned form of sexuality in the Renaissance, to portray a married woman pregnant was generally seen as improper.

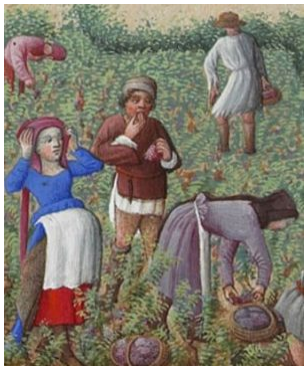


Figure 13.7.8.86: Detail, Limburg Brothers, September from *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*, f. 9, c. 1412-16 (Musée Condé)

Rare exceptions exist, such as Raphael's inscrutable *Donna Gravida*, or ***Portrait of an Unknown Lady*** attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts II, or the peasant woman toiling away in the fields in the September page of the Limbourg brothers' ***Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry***.

But even paintings depicting the Visitation—a moment in the Gospel of Luke when Mary and Elizabeth meet and both are pregnant (Mary with Christ, and Elizabeth with St. John the Baptist)—the two biblical heroines are rarely depicted as obviously gestational, though again, there are a few exceptions (for example, Rogier van der Weyden's ***Visitation***).

Another medium that offers a glimpse into Renaissance pregnancy and childbirth are birth trays, which were popular gifts for new mothers that would include jars and bowls containing soup and sweets.



Figure **13.7.8.87**: Francseco Xanto (painter), Cup (for broth) from a birth tray c. 1530, tin glazed earthenware, 16.5 cm diameter (**Victoria & Albert Museum**)

Renaissance dress and gender norms

While the *Arnolfini Portrait* foregrounds many domestic objects, dress takes center stage. Both outfits in the portrait are ludicrously expensive and detailed, but the woman's clothing outshines her husband's. This excessive disparity in color and yardage is perfectly in line with Renaissance fashion and gender difference. Men's outfits tended to be tailored from darker fabrics to signal the wearer's sobriety and lack of vanity. In contrast, Renaissance women's bodies in both images and reality were potent sites of material display. An exemplary upper-class wife was required to demonstrate her husband's wealth (through his ability to keep her adorned in the latest fashion trends) as well as the couple's potential fertility.



Figure **13.7.8.88**: Unknown artist, *A Bridal Couple*, c. 1470, oil on panel, 77.5 x 51 x 8.1 cm (**The Cleveland Museum of Art**)

The woman in the *Arnolfini Portrait* holds her dress in a way that styles her body as seemingly pregnant. This pose is not uncommon in depictions of Renaissance women, especially in the Northern Renaissance context (see, for example, *A Bridal Couple* in The Cleveland Museum of Art, left). The odd pose was adopted for practical purposes: full Renaissance skirting forced women to pick up their gowns when they walked. The gesture likewise illuminates the wearer's moneyed status.

According to costume historian Ann Hollander, the notorious, seemingly pregnant silhouette touted by the woman in *The Arnolfini Portrait* (and countless other images of women created throughout the early modern period) connoted elegance and luxury on the part of the wearer and her male keeper (for the man it was a swelled midsection). The more dramatic a woman's curves, the more real estate to show off exquisitely tailored fabrics. The lifting of skirts likewise provided a chance to further showcase wealth by revealing contrasting undergarments (such as the blue undergown worn by the woman in the *Arnolfini Portrait*).

While the woman's gown does not display an actual pregnancy, it is possible that the controversial dress is coded with pregnancy and may be read as symbolic of women's roles in the Renaissance, including motherhood. The woman's ample costume does not conceal or describe a pregnancy; however, it is roomy enough to easily host a future one without the need for tailoring. Its green hue could also connote fecundity, as the color was widely associated with springtime and therefore fertility and fruitfulness in the period. Additionally, the gown is lined with ermine. Art historian Jacqueline Musacchio has argued that martins and weasels in portraits (either alive or skinned) may be symbolic of pregnancy or the hope for future pregnancy. It is no accident, therefore, that mid-fifteenth century Flemish *haute couture* (high fashion) suggests pregnancy.



Figure **13.7.8.89**: Jan Van Eyck, Cloth gathered on the floor (detail), *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, tempera and oil on oak panel, 82.2 x 60 cm (National Gallery, London), photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker** CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

A new question

Perhaps the question we should be asking when considering the Arnolfini Portrait is not "is the female figure pregnant?" Instead, we can consider *why* the female figure *appears* to be pregnant. The persistent illusion asks us to consider Renaissance gender roles, as well as our own beliefs concerning depictions of women in pre-modern art. The woman in the green dress is not meant to be read as actually pregnant, yet—more significantly—she lived and died in a culture that expected near-constant pregnancy from women.

Notes:

[1] Diane Wolfthal, *In and out of the Marital Bed: Seeing Sex in Renaissance Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 40-41.

Additional Resources:

This painting at The National Gallery

Renaissance Childbirth from the Victoria & Albert Museum

Jacqueline Marie Musaccio, "The Medici-Tornabuoni Desco da Parto in Context," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 33 (1998), pp. 137-51.

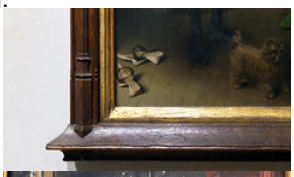
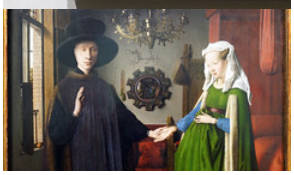
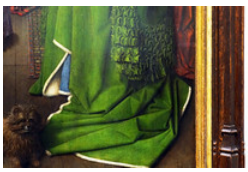
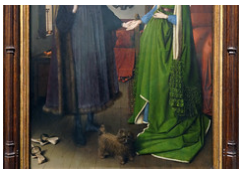
Victoria Finlay, *Color: A Natural History of the Palette* (1st Ballantine Books ed. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003).

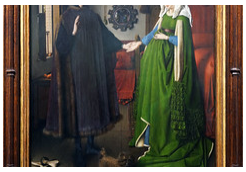
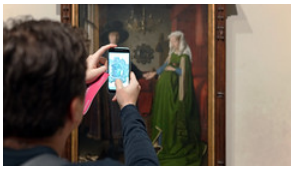
Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

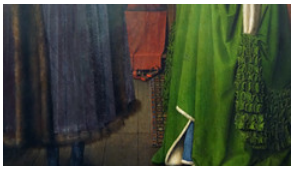
Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, "Weasels and Pregnancy in Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Studies* 15, no. 2 (2001), pp. 172–87.

Diane Wolfthal, *In and out of the Marital Bed: Seeing Sex in Renaissance Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727

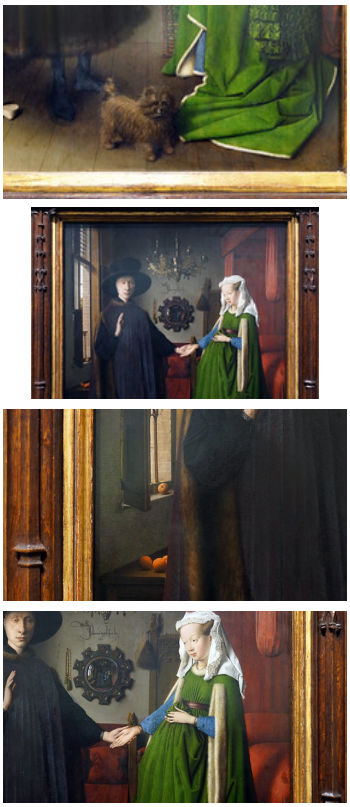


Figure 13.7.8.90: More Smarthistory images…

Petrus Christus

Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Carthusian*

by DR. DAVID DROGIN and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.19: Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Carthusian*, 1446 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

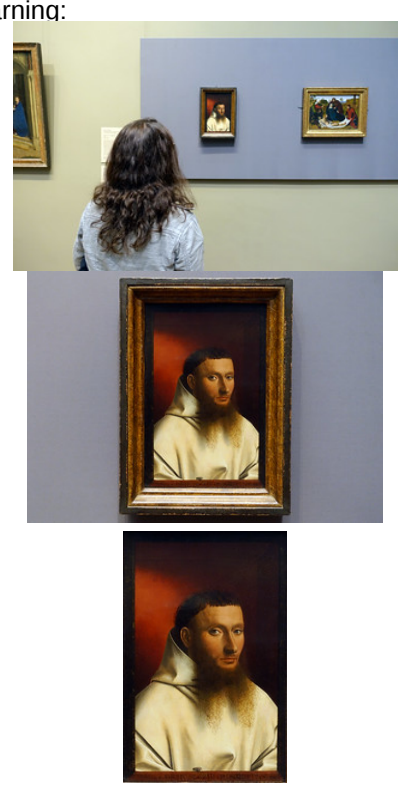


Figure 13.7.8.91: More Smarthistory images…

Petrus Christus, *A Goldsmith in his Shop*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Figure 13.7.8.92: Petrus Christus, *A Goldsmith in his Shop*, 1449, oil on oak panel, 39 3/8 x 33 3/4 inches / 100.1 x 85.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) **zoomable image**

Out shopping

Like many Northern Renaissance paintings, Petrus Christus' *Goldsmith in his Shop* reveals its complexities to the viewer over time. At first, one sees a group of three people inside a room filled with trinkets. The two standing figures—a male and a female in dressed in rich, expensive-looking clothing—appear to be a couple, as the man has his arm wrapped around the back of the woman. This woman gestures with her left hand towards the seated man, who, clad in a plain, red garment with a matching hat, looks up at the woman. In his left hand, he holds a small balance which supports a gold ring (fans of northern art will recognize this as a small scale—much like the one that appears in Vermeer's much later ***Woman Weighing Gold*** from 1662-1663). In fact, the figures are inside a gold shop, and the man is a goldsmith. The baubles on display—objects made from precious metal, stones, glass, and coral —are his wares, and the standing couple is probably about to make a purchase.

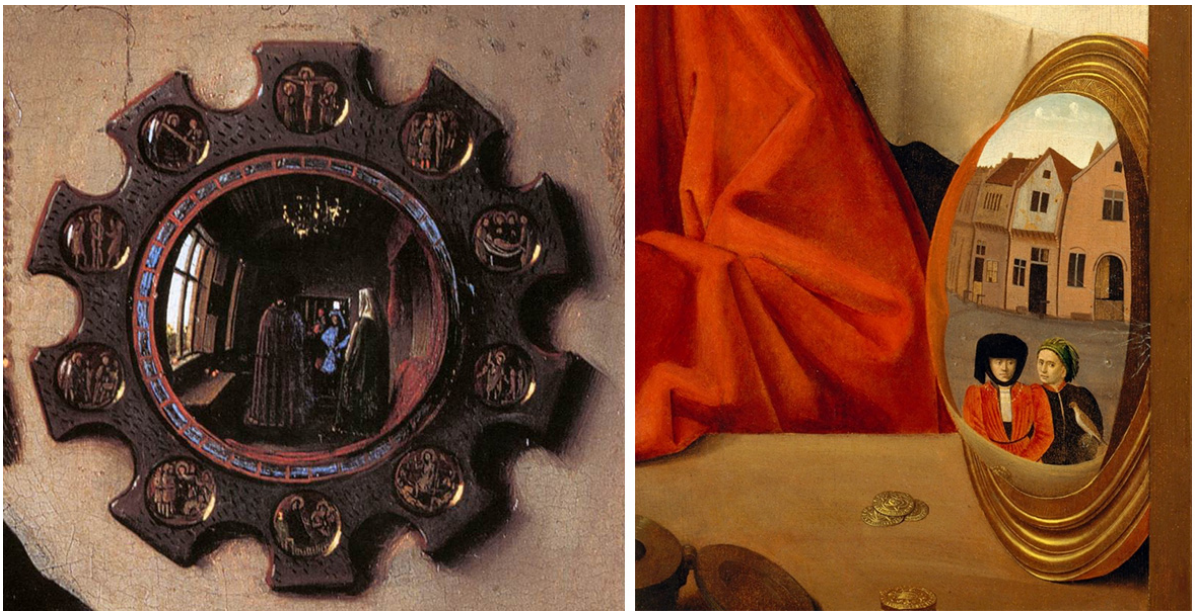


Figure **13.7.8.93**: Left: Mirror, Jan Van Eyck, ***Arnolfini Portrait***, 1434 (detail); right: Mirror and still-life (detail), Petrus Christus, *A Goldsmith in his Shop*, 1449

However, there is much more to this story. The smith appears to be seated at a work desk, but in fact, the front of the desk is visible, and a length of fabric hangs over it, into our space. Most importantly, a convex mirror resting on the smith's desk (in the lower right hand corner of the painting) reveals a cityscape. What we see is not a mere desk however. It is, in fact, the front of the smith's shop, which opens on a street in Bruges (in present-day Belgium, and the city where Christus lived and worked). The two young men captured in the mirror hold a falcon and approach the smith's shop. The mirror situates us, the viewer, on the street in Bruges with that couple, looking into the smith's shop at the artisan and the rich patrons behind him.

A gift for a royal wedding

Although genre scenes, or images of every day life, became popular in the North later ("the North" meaning all of the countries above Italy), Christus' creation of illusionistic and complex space implies that the painting also carries a complex meaning. Since the painting is signed and dated by the artist in white paint in the center foreground, it can firmly be placed in the year 1449. This is the year that King James II of Scotland married Mary of Guelders. The duke of Burgundy, Phillip the Good, who was also a renowned patron of the arts in Bruges, commissioned the goldsmith Willem van Bleuten to make the couple a gift for their wedding. Thus, the painting is believed to depict van Bleuten as he is about to give the royal couple a gift of golden rings, made for their marriage.

This interpretation also explains the very expensive brocaded and bejeweled clothes—well out of the budget of the average man—worn by the standing couple. The piece of fabric on the desk is believed to be a wedding girdle (belt), and also supports this interpretation.

The two men in the convex mirror may not only be a device used to demonstrate the artist's virtuoso skill in this tour de force of illusionistic painting. The falcon held by the men is a symbol of greed and pride. Since the scale in the hand of the goldsmith, along

with the illusions to marriage and purity, represent perfection and balance, the presence of the two figures with their ill-associated bird creates a contrast between the perfect world of the royals and the imperfect world of the viewer. The royal couple is morally superior to the common man.



Figure **13.7.8.95**: Couple (detail), Petrus Christus, *A Goldsmith in his Shop*, 1449, oil on oak panel, 39 3/8 x 33 3/4 inches / 100.1 x 85.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Oil paint

Petrus Christus' artistic concerns are typical of painters of his time. The minute detail of the trinkets in the shop, as well as the luminosity of the painting, are only possible because of the use of oil paint, which was not common in Italy until many years later (indeed, the technique is commonly believed to have come to Italy from the North). The use of convex mirrors was a device exploited by northern painters, such as in Jan van Eyck's ***Arnolfini Portrait*** (1434)—another oil on oak panel painting. In that painting, a convex mirror hanging in the back of the room reflects the artist himself, whose self-portrait con be discerned in the glass. In Christus's painting, the round surfaces of the jewels and goblets echo the convex mirror, and the white highlights that are used to create both light and volume betray an interest in still-life painting which would come to dominate northern painting hundreds of years later.



Figure 13.7.8.96: Still life and Mirror (detail), Petrus Christus, *A Goldsmith in his Shop*, 1449, oil on oak panel, 39 3/8 x 33 3/4 inches / 100.1 x 85.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Although northern art of this period is often compared to Italian art (and often unfavorably at that), paintings such as Petrus Christus' *Goldsmith in his Shop* demonstrate that, although the concerns of the northern artist were different, they were no less talented, their paintings no less beautiful and complex. Indeed, northern paintings from this period (by Petrus Christus himself, along with his contemporaries Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling) were often bought by Italians and made their way into Italy and helped shape the style of the Italian High Renaissance, as well as the Mannerist period that followed. Still, these paintings deserve to be appreciated in their own right as examples of the rapid artistic changes that occurred in the early 1400s, as the world was on the precipice of great political, historic, and cultural revolutions that would end the Middle Ages and bring us into the Modern World.

Additional resources:

This painting at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Pertrus Christus from the Flemish Primitives site

Petrus Christus on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Painting in Oil in the Low Countries and Its Spread to Southern Europe

Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Young Woman*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.20: Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, c. 1470, oil on oak, 29 x 22.50 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

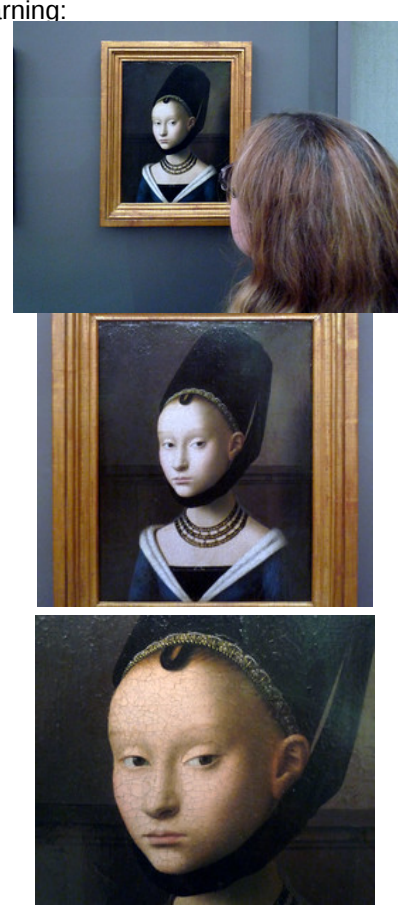


Figure 13.7.8.97: More Smarthistory images…

Rogier van der Weyden

Rogier van der Weyden, *Deposition*

by DR. DAVID DROGIN and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.8.21**: Rogier van der Weyden, *Deposition*, c. 1435 (Prado, Madrid)

Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion Triptych*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.8.22**: Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion Triptych*, c. 1445, oil on oak, center panel: 101 x 70 cm, each wing: 101 x 35 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727



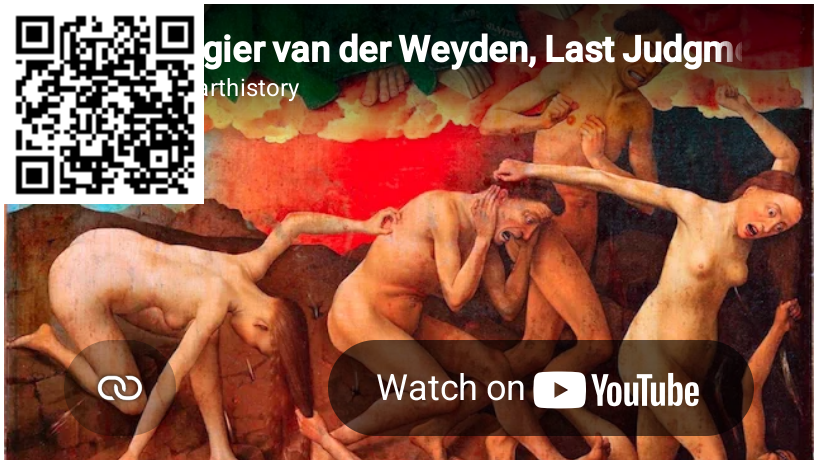




Figure 13.7.8.98: More Smarthistory images…

Rogier van der Weyden, *The Last Judgment*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.8.23: Rogier van der Weyden, Last Judgment, 1443-51, oil on panel, 215 x 560 cm (Musée de l'Hôtel-Dieu, Beaune)

Additional resources:

Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych

About the artist and a work in the collection of the National Gallery of Art (from the National Gallery of Art)

Burgundian Netherlands: Court Life and Patronage on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

An introduction to Valois Burgundy

Barbara G. Lane, "'Requiem aeternam dona eis': The Beaune Last Judgment and the Mass of the Dead"

Rogier van der Weyden, *The Crucifixion, with the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist Mourning*

by DR. CHRISTOPHER D.M. ATKINS and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.24: Rogier van der Weyden, *The Crucifixion, with the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist Mourning* (companion paintings), c. 1460, oil on panel, left panel 180.3 × 92.2 cm, right panel 180.3 × 92.5 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art). Speakers: Dr. Christopher D.M. Atkins, Associate Curator of European Painting and Sculpture before 1900, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Dr. Beth Harris.

Additional resources:

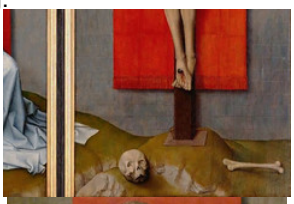
This painting at the museum

Stephan Kemperdick and Jochen Sander, eds. *The Master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden* (Frankfurt am Main: Städel Museumand Berlin: Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, 2008).

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Handbook (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2014), p. 98.

Griet Steyaert and Mark S. Tucker, "The Philadelphia Crucifixion, Dijon Annunciation, and Washington Apparition: A carved altarpiece's painted wings from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden," *Boletín del Museo del Prado*, Tomo XXXII, Número 50, (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2014), pp. 50-65.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727

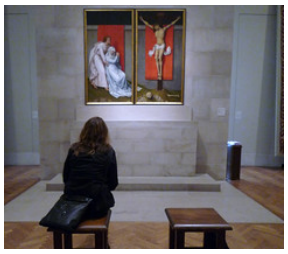


Figure **13.7.8.99**: More Smarthistory images…

Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*

by DR. REBECCA HOWARD



Figure **13.7.8.100**: Hugo van der Goes, Portinari Altarpiece, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi) (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Artworks are powerful things. Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece* caused quite a stir when it arrived in Florence—the city that was to become its permanent home. Van der Goes, master of light and minute descriptive details, is considered one of the greatest Netherlandish painters of the second half of the fifteenth century. The *Portinari Altarpiece* is a large triptych that was commissioned by an Italian named Tommaso Portinari, who was living in the Netherlands.



Figure **13.7.8.101**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (**Uffizi**)

An Italian family in the North

Just as today, people in the renaissance often traveled extensively or even moved permanently for work. Portinari, his wife Maria Maddalena Baroncelli, and their children were living in Bruges at the time of this painting's creation. Tommaso worked as a high-ranking agent of the **Medici** banking industry, helping to run a branch of the bank in Bruges. The Medici were one of the most powerful families in western Europe, and their lineage had developed an extremely wealthy banking, mercantile, and political family. Agents throughout Europe managed branches of their banking empire.

The Portinari family and Florence's Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova



Figure **13.7.8.102**: Façade of the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova (photo: **Mongolo1984**, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Figure **13.7.8.103**: Interior of the church of Sant'Egidio (photo: **Mongolo1984**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

While Tommaso had made a name for himself in Bruges, his family remained important to the history of Florence. In 1288, Tommaso's ancestor, Folco Portinari, founded the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, today the oldest functioning hospital in Florence. In the 1420s, the Portinari family supported further renovations to the hospital, which, by the fifteenth century had around 200 beds (up from 12). As with many hospitals today, Santa Maria Nuova had a connected church, Sant'Egidio.

The *Portinari Altarpiece* was commissioned for the main altar of this church, and was simultaneously a way for Tommaso to perpetuate his family's name and importance in conjunction with the city of Florence and the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.

The *Portinari Altarpiece* stands as a highlight of Tommaso's career and the public image he hoped for his family name to retain. Unfortunately, the Portinari family fell on difficult financial times not long after this painting's creation, as Tommaso lost the Medici family a great deal of money through loans to Charles the Bold, the Duke of Burgundy, which were never paid back in full.

Hugo van der Goes and north-south exchange

Portinari's choice of a Netherlandish artist to complete this great altarpiece to be sent back to Florence helped to effectively change aspects of Italian art. The latter half of the fifteenth century was characterized by increased artistic exchange between northern European and Italian artists. Italian artists were enthralled by Northern artists' careful attention to individual details and still-life minutiae incorporated in architectural settings and landscapes. Hugo van der Goes was considered a master of such careful, minute details and his talent was often compared to that of **Jan van Eyck**, considered one of the greatest painters of the early fifteenth century. Look closely, for example, at van der Goes's rendering of the foreground angels' garments. It appears as though we can physically touch the gold brocade of the fabric. And the clear vessel in the foreground also flawlessly seems to capture, reflect, and refract light.

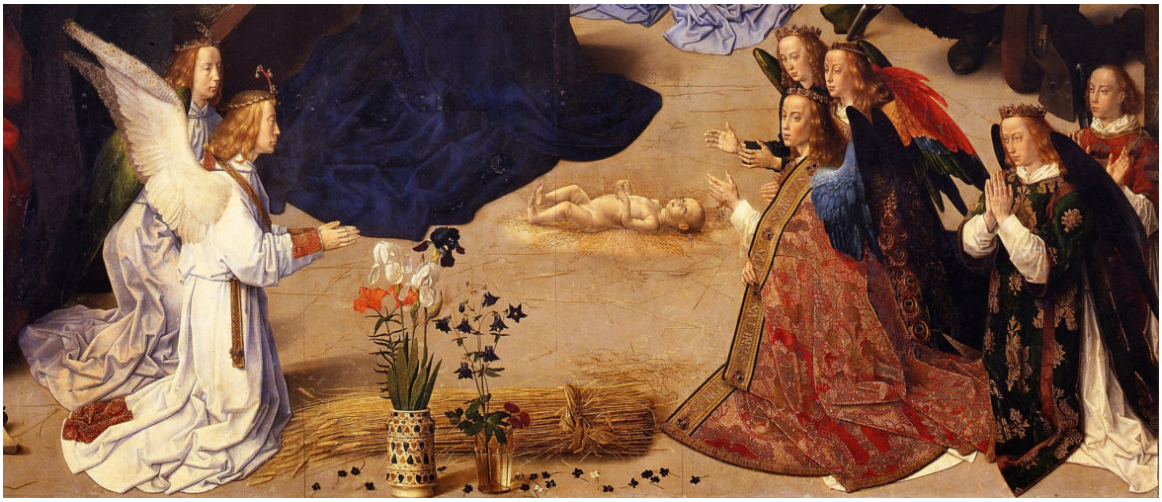


Figure **13.7.8.104**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, detail of the center panel foreground, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Such tiny details are found throughout the *Portinari Altarpiece*, and nearly all of them hold some iconographic meaning. When this painting finally arrived in Florence in 1483 for its installation in the church of Sant'Egidio, it had a direct, visible effect on artistic production in Italy. A particularly famous painting that clearly recalls the *Portinari Altarpiece* is Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, painted in 1485—only two years after the *Portinari Altarpiece* arrived in Florence. In Ghirlandaio's painting, one can see that the shepherds adoring the Christ child are rendered with such individualized detail that they feel like portraits, as in the *Portinari Altarpiece*. The group also takes the exact same formation as the three shepherds pictured in van der Goes's work.



Figure **13.7.8.105**: Left: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1485, tempera and oil on panel, 167 x 167 cm (Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinità, Florence); right, Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, center panel, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Layered iconography

Iconography, commonly used in the field of art history, is the study of the symbolic meaning of things found in works of art. In northern renaissance art, artists frequently used certain figures, objects, and even depictions of biblical or historical events to symbolize something more to period viewers than what was seen on the surface. The iconography throughout the *Portinari Altarpiece* is extensive and quite complex.



Figure **13.7.8.106**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, closed, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Triptych altarpieces like the *Portinari Altarpiece* would have been kept closed, except on holidays and special feast days. Therefore, the exterior of the folding side wings of such artworks were typically painted. The *Portinari Altarpiece*'s exterior is decorated with a depiction of the Annunciation, the biblical event when the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to tell her that she had been chosen to carry the son of God. This moment is understood in the Christian faith as the beginning of mankind's salvation. Here, we see it essentially frozen in time, as the artist has chosen to paint these figures in *grisaille*. These faux sculptural figures are located in shallow architectural niches and reveal van der Goes's incredible artistic talent in their believable naturalism.



Figure **13.7.8.107**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Upon seeing the *Portinari Altarpiece* opened, one can imagine that any period viewer would have been stunned by the elaborate details and bright colors contained on the three panels within. In the center panel, we are privy to the quiet, magical moment just after Christ's birth, the Nativity. Angels surround the kneeling Virgin Mary and newborn Christ child, and the three shepherds have

rushed in from the countryside to bear witness to the miracle. This scene would have been instantly recognizable to any period viewer, and most would have noticed the iconographic details—certain objects and scenes that held multiple meanings.



Figure **13.7.8.108**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, detail of shepherds, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Far in the distance, behind the heads of the shepherds, we see those very same shepherds attending to their flock on the hillside. These tiny figures make gestures of surprise as an angel appears above them. This is the moment of the Annunciation of the Shepherds, when they were told that Christ had been born. In the repetition of these shepherds in the background and again in the foreground, the artist has used what is called continuous narrative, wherein figures are repeated within the same frame of an artwork to show more than one moment of a story.



Figure 13.7.8.109: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, center panel, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Moving to the left side of the central panel, we see Joseph, Mary's husband, clothed in a rich red drapery. His hands are together in a gesture of prayer or supplication, as he honors the newly born Christ child. Just in front of him is a clog that has been removed. This detail symbolizes that this scene is taking place on holy ground. Above Joseph are two angels. Note that many angels in this work are dressed in elaborate liturgical, priestly garments (such as the one immediately above Joseph's head and those on the right side of the image). This would have reminded viewers of the important sacrament that took place at the altar, in front of this altarpiece—the sacrament of communion (where the bread and wine miraculously transform into the body and blood of Christ). One angel, however, who hovers just above the ox and the ass (and is barely visible), has a somewhat dark, foreboding countenance. This is believed by some art historians to represent the lingering threat of Lucifer (Satan).



Figure **13.7.8.110**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, detail of center panel, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

In the center are the most important figures in the scene, the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. It may seem strange that Christ is laying naked on the bare, hard ground, and that rays of light appear to emit directly from his body. However, this imagery is drawn from the writings of a medieval visionary named St. Bridget of Sweden. By the fifteenth century St. Bridget's vision of the Nativity had become the inspiration for many depictions of this moment. Mary kneels beside Christ on the ground, a position meant to emphasize her humility, and bends over in somber adoration of her child. And her solemn nature, in this case, is meant to foretell what is to come—that she will have to sacrifice her son for the salvation of humanity.

Perhaps the most striking detail in the central panel is the group of objects in the foreground. Imagine this altarpiece in its original location, just above the altar of Sant'Egidio. The two vases would appear almost as though they were sitting on the altar itself. Notice, too, that the sheaf of wheat behind them is quite similar in color to and situated directly parallel with Christ's body. At Mass, a priest would consecrate the Eucharist—the bread and wine—thereby turning it into the body and blood of Christ (according to Catholic tradition), which would be consumed in remembrance of his sacrifice. The hem of the red and gold brocaded vestment worn by the angel foregrounded on the right is embroidered with the repeated word "sanctus," or holy, referencing the moment of the consecration of the Eucharist. The positioning of Christ's body parallel to the sheaf of wheat, which in turn would be parallel to the physical bread on the altar, functioned as a stark reminder of what really took place at communion. The image masterfully creates a visual equation between the bread, the wheat, and Christ's body.

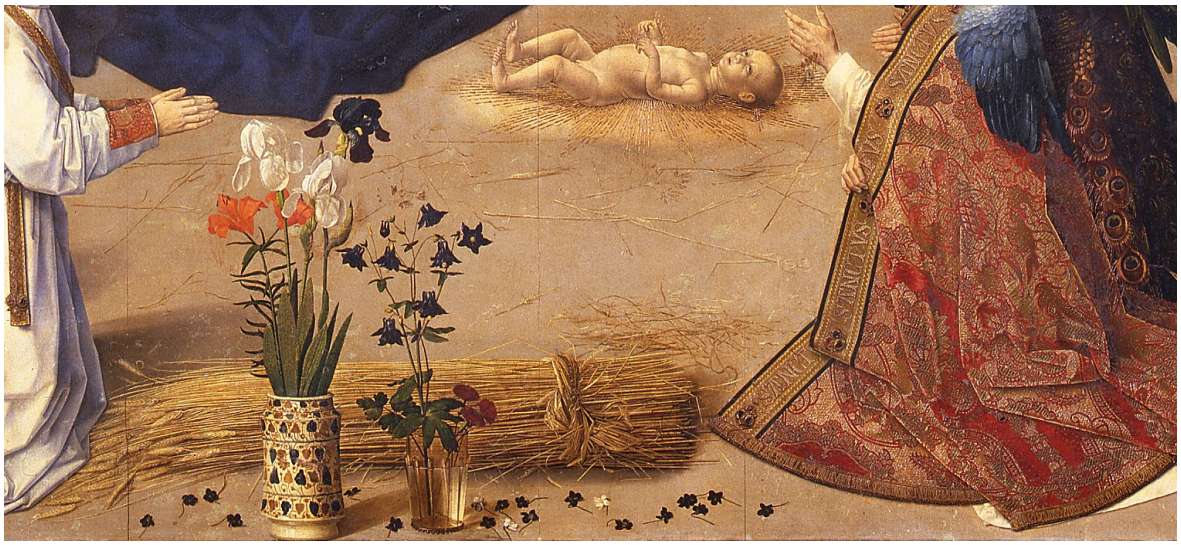


Figure 13.7.8.111: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, detail of center panel foreground, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)



Figure 13.7.8.112: Pharmacy jar, 1435–75, tin-glazed earthenware, made in probably Manises, Valencia, Spain, 29.7 x 14.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The vases and flowers just in front of the wheat are carefully studied depictions of recognizable flowers that each held symbolic meaning for period viewers. The Spanish *albarello* vase on the left is a type of vessel that traditionally held herbs and ointments used by apothecaries, an artistic choice which was almost certainly meant to comment on the altarpiece's location in a hospital's church. The *albarello* vase holds two white and one purple iris, along with a scarlet lily. These flowers represent the purity (white), royalty (purple), and Passion, or tortures, (red) of Christ. This vessel is also decorated with an ivy leaf motif that resembles a grape vine, alluding to wine, and therefore, to the blood of Christ, consumed with His body during Mass. The presence of this vase also reminds us that Valencia (in Spain), Italy, and northern Europe were engaged in extensive trade during this time, and expanding their trade across the globe. Spanish lusterware, like this vase, was a popular luxury trade item in the fifteenth century, admired for its reflective surface. The luster technique derives from Islamic pottery, and it is important to keep in mind that the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) had a large Muslim population.

The clear vessel to the right holds three red carnations and seven blue columbines. The seven columbines are symbolic of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, while the three red carnations make reference to the three bloodied nails at Christ's Crucifixion. As you can see, many of these flowers were meant to remind viewers of what was to come for Christ.

The story grows, and so does the Portinari family

Having discussed the details of the central panel, let's take a look at the two side panels. In the backgrounds of each of the side panels, we find scenes that occurred before, after, and during the primary scene of the Nativity in the center. And just as the story is expanded in the side panels, we see that Tommaso and Maria have expanded their lineage, as well. Van der Goes, a master of detailed portraiture, depicted Tommaso Portinari in the left panel, kneeling in prayer as he faces the miraculous scene in the center. Because he paid for this elaborate gift, his family's inclusion in the altarpiece essentially guarantees that they will forever be

included in the daily prayers carried out in the church. Tommaso is accompanied by their two sons (as of the creation of this painting c. 1476), Antonio and Pigello, who kneel behind him. Note that, even if Tommaso were standing, he would still be noticeably smaller than the two figures who stand behind him. This is known as hierarchy of scale, where a visible difference in size between figures indicates that larger figures are of higher status. In this case, the larger figures are saints. St. Thomas, the name saint of Tommaso, works as his intercessor, effectively "introducing" him to the scene in the center and helping to convey his prayers to heaven. Behind St. Thomas is St. Anthony, the name saint of Antonio, as well as a "plague saint" who was frequently invoked by the sick, suffering, and dying. His presence makes yet another connection to the altarpiece's original hospital location.



Figure **13.7.8.113**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, side panels, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

In the right panel, Maria Maddalena Baroncelli kneels in a position that mirrors her husband's, accompanied by their daughter Margarita. These two figures are joined by their name saints, Mary Magdalene and St. Margaret. Interestingly, however, it is St. Margaret who stands behind Maria, not her name saint Mary Magdalene. St. Margaret is the patron saint of childbirth, and is evoked by pregnant women and those in labor in hopes of a successful process and outcome. St. Margaret is typically depicted as emerging from the mouth of or standing atop a dragon, as seen here (her legend explains that she survived being consumed by Satan, disguised as a dragon, whose stomach then rejected her and she emerged unharmed). As such, it is speculated that this may have been a deliberate choice, as Maria's primary role as a wife in the fifteenth century was to bear children and continue the Portinari lineage, so she felt a stronger connection to St. Margaret at this point in her life.



Figure **13.7.8.114**: Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, details of the Holy Family and the Magi, c. 1476, oil on wood, 274 x 652 cm when open (Uffizi)

Just as in the central panel, the side panels also include small scenes in the background. In fact, the left panel continues the theme of childbirth already indicated by the Nativity in the center and the presence of St. Margaret in the right panel. Far in the distance behind St. Anthony's head, we see Joseph attending to a pregnant Virgin Mary who has decided to walk rather than ride her donkey. This is a precursor to the miraculous birth that will soon occur, the Nativity. In the right panel, the landscape is populated by scenes of the three kings, the Magi, on their journey from far parts of the world to visit the newborn Christ.

What the northern painters did best

Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece* encompasses the numerous aspects of northern renaissance painting that enthralled those in other parts of the world. This particular artwork perfectly embodies all the things that northern European painters were thought to do best—the rendering of complex landscapes that stretch far into the distance, skies that seem to capture light at different times of the day or under different circumstances, faces that appear highly individualized, even when they are not intended to be recognizable portraits, and carefully rendered, incredibly minute details throughout. Considering this triumph of artistic virtuosity, along with the work's fascinating layers of symbolism, the direct and immediate impact of the *Portinari Altarpiece* on the art world of late-fifteenth-century Florence comes as no surprise. It is after this moment that we see, in particular, increased individualism in Italian faces and, perhaps even more importantly, a swift rise in the use of oil paint in Italian city-states.

Additional resources:

Read about this painting on the Uffizi website

Victor Coonin, "Altered Identities in the *Portinari Altarpiece*," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 36, no. 1 (2016), pp. 4–15.

Roger J. Crum, "Facing the Closed Doors to Reception? Speculations on Foreign Exchange, Liturgical Diversity, and the 'Failure' of the *Portinari Altarpiece*," *Art Journal* 57, no. 1 (1998), pp. 5–13.

Margaret L. Koster, *Hugo van der Goes and the Procedures of Art and Salvation* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, Harvey Miller Publishers, 2008).

Julia Miller, "Miraculous Childbirth and the *Portinari Altarpiece*," *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 2 (1995), pp. 249–261.

Paula Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting, 1400–1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Robert M. Walker, “The Demon of the *Portinari Altarpiece*,” *The Art Bulletin* 42, no. 3 (1960), pp. 218–219.

The Holy Thorn Reliquary of Jean, duc de Berry

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Video **13.7.8.25**: The Holy Thorn Reliquary houses one of the most important relics of all time – a thorn from the Crown of Thorns that was put on Christ’s head during the Crucifixion. Video © Trustees of the British Museum.

England, France, and Tyrol

Souls saved from the jaws of hell, a tame unicorn, and more.

1400 - 1500 (Renaissance)

England

The Harrowing of Hell

by DR. NANCY ROSS and DR. PAUL BINSKI



Video **13.7.8.26**: *The Harrowing of Hell*, c. 1440-70, carved painted and gilt alabaster, 58.3 x 31.5 cm (Victoria and Albert Museum)

France

Portraits of Christine de Pizan in *The Queen’s Manuscript*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK

Christine de Pizan in her study (detail), for The Queen's Manuscript, c. 1410–1414, f. 4r (Harley MS 4431, <a data-cke-saved-href="http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_4431" href="http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_4431"
British Library)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-44071" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 425px) 100vw, 425px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...n-870x1228.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...n-870x1228.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...an-300x423.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...9/09/pizan.jpg
1294w" width="425">

Figure **13.7.8.115**: Christine de Pizan in her study (detail), for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 4r (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

One of the thirty-nine women who gets a seat at the table in Judy Chicago's iconic feminist artwork ***The Dinner Party***, from 1979, is Christine de Pizan. As the first professional author and an important female role model from the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, she is certainly worth celebrating. A number of portraits that accompany her written works survive that show her in the act of writing. Since she often played a role in directing artists (sometimes other women) in how to depict her, we can conclude that these portraits reveal a great deal about Christine and how she wanted to be represented and understood within her lifetime.



Figure **13.7.8.116**: Christine de Pizan in her study, for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 4r (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

Christine in Her Study

In one of the most recognizable portraits of Christine de Pizan, she wears a simple but brilliant blue dress, called a *cotehardie*, with her hair tucked back and covered with a double horned headdress covered by a transparent white veil. This distinctive headdress looks like one called the *Attor de Gibet*, or horned *hennin* (or possibly even the butterfly hennin), which originated in Burgundy and France.

Aristocratic or royal women typically wear them. The horns would be made to stand with wire to hold up cloth, and then often the veil draped over them. Christine communicates her noble status with her headdress, and dress. The saturated, luminous blue of the dress is painted with ultramarine, which comes from the semi-precious stone lapis lazuli which is mined in Afghanistan and was extraordinarily costly at this time. Throughout *The Queen's Manuscript*, she wears the same blue *cotehardie*, with the expensive material undoubtedly conveying her status and a sense of luxury.

In the portrait, Christine sits within a study, framed by a rounded arch, which belongs to a larger architectural setting. She holds a pen as she writes in a book. Accompanying her in the study is a small white dog, loyally seated next to her chair. While we might wonder if Christine's portrait is a fiction, Pizan actually did have a study with a desk, writing tools, and various books. The portrait imagines what it would have looked like. It is within her study that Pizan wrote her poems and prose texts, as well as studied the literary works of other authors–both her contemporaries and those who preceded her.

Christine gave *The Queen's Manuscript* to Isabeau de Bavière, Queen of France and wife of Charles VI. The portrait of Christine writing appears early on in the manuscript, accompanying the *One Hundred Ballades of a Lover and His Lady* (*Cent Ballades*

d'amant et de dame, virelyas, rondeaux), which Christine wrote around 1402.

Christine's portrait is remarkable for a number of reasons, including that it shows a known late medieval/early renaissance woman writing in a study. She was not, however, the first woman to be depicted in the art of writing or engaged in intellectual activities. Several centuries earlier, we find images of Hildegard of Bingen recording some of her mystical experiences (as in the *Liber Scivias*).



Figure **13.7.8.117**: Hildegard of Bingen experiencing a mystical vision and recounting it to the monk Volmar, from the *Liber Scivias*, completed 1151 or 1152 (photo: Manfred Brückels)

We know of other medieval women, such as Diemund of the Cloister of Wessobrun in Bavaria or the painter Ende, who wrote or illuminated manuscripts. Still, it was uncommon to show women in the act of writing since this was not understood to be their domain. Christine's portrait is also noteworthy because it is not the sole portrait portraying her engaged in intellectual pursuits. There are a number of others within *The Queen's Manuscript*, as well as in many other manuscripts as well.

Christine as author and intellectual

The portrait of Christine seated at a desk in her study while writing is a familiar type that dates back to antiquity. There are numerous examples of the solitary thinker and scholar, writing and engaged in deep thinking and other intellectual pursuits. Christine's portraits likely called to mind portraits of the four evangelists who are often shown seated and in the act of writing, such as portrait of St. Luke from the **Lindisfarne Gospels** from c. 700 or St. Matthew in the **Ebbo Gospels** from the ninth century. Medieval scribes, such as **Eadwine**, were frequently displayed similarly, seated and writing in their studies or scriptoria. Christine's portrait draws on this long heritage of images of educated authors.



Figure **13.7.8.118**: Saint Matthew, folio 18 verso of the *Ebbo Gospels* (Gospel Book of the Archbishop of Reims) from Hautvillers, France, c. 816-35, ink and tempera on vellum, 10 1/4 x 8 1/4 (Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay)

Christine's life

Christine was born in Venice, Italy, but at a young age her father (Tommaso di Benvenuto da Pizzano, or Thomas de Pizan) joined the French court in Paris as an astrologer and secretary to the king, Charles V. She had a humanist education, learning history, classical languages, and literature (among other subjects). She was married at fifteen to the royal secretary and notary, Etienne du Castel, with whom she had three children. Historical records, and even Christine herself, indicate that they got along well, which was certainly not always the case in arranged marriages.

Etienne supported Christine's continuing education and literary endeavors. He died suddenly in 1390, when Christine was only 25, and her father died shortly thereafter, leaving Christine to support her children and mother. She turned to writing full time to make a living, and she was the first person in France to earn a living as a professional author. Later in her life, she entered a convent where she remained until her death in 1431. One of her final works was a poem celebrating Joan of Arc, likely written shortly before Joan was burned at the stake for her supposed heresy during the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453). The War pitted England and France against one another, and Christine had witnessed the chaos and devastation the ongoing conflict wrought on the people of France.



Figure 13.7.8.119: Christine de Pizan talking with her son (detail), for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 261v (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

Throughout her literary career, Christine wrote on a number of topics, ranging from religion and political theory to courtly love poetry and military tactics. She also wrote in different genres, including poetry and prose texts. Many of her writings refer or allude to the upheavals that she experienced in her lifetime, including lingering deaths from the **plague**, an unstable crown, civil wars, and foreign occupation.

She produced many manuscripts in her own scriptorium, of which about 50 survive. There are many others (about 150) that include some of her work. Of those that she completed, we know that she determined how they would be arranged, what would be included or excluded, including the types of images. She had a direct hand in their entire composition, which is all the more remarkable as a female professional author at a time when women were not expected or encouraged to work—particularly not noble ladies—and most were not well educated.

Christine's manuscripts, and the images she determined would be included within them, help us to learn what types of messages and ideas she hoped to convey to her readers. While she herself did not draw and paint the illustrations, it seems that she did employ female artists to produce them. She even mentions this fact in her *Book of the City of Ladies* (c. 1405), naming the artist Anastaise whom she said was "so good at painting decorative borders and background landscapes for miniatures that there is no craftsman who can match her in the whole of Paris, even though that's where the finest in the world can be found…. [S]he is so well regarded that she is entrusted with finishing off even the most expensive and priceless of books." [1]

Christine presents her manuscript to the Queen of France



Figure **13.7.8.120**: Christine de Pizan presents her manuscript to the Queen of France (detail), for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 3r (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

Christine's other portraits within *The Queen's Manuscript* are easily identifiable because the artist (under the direction of Christine herself) consistently portrays her wearing the brilliant blue dress and horned white headdress. In the first image of the manuscript we see her kneeling and presenting a book before the Queen, who sits on a lounger within her royal chamber with a small white dog. Other ladies in waiting sit in the room. Another white dog rests at the foot of the bed, set to the right in the room. Blue textiles decorated with the royal golden fleur-de-lis adorn the walls.

The Queen and many of her ladies in waiting wear more elaborate clothes than Christine and have more intricate headdresses. The book that Christine offers is supposed to represent the very manuscript from which the image comes. This portrait was based on a type called presentation images, which typically showed a male author presenting a book to a king. Christine, and the artist she employed, modeled the image on established artistic conventions so that she could establish her position as legitimate author.

Christine in the act of disputation



Figure **13.7.8.121**: Christine instructs four men (detail), for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 259v (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

In another portrait Christine appears at the beginning her *Moral Proverbs* (Proverbes moraux). She sits on what looks like a throne, once again dressed in a brilliant blue dress with a white headdress. The chair is similar to a *cathedra*, or a bishop's chair, which was associated more generally with ecclesiastics but was also commonly associated with authors or men of intellectual regard in the medieval era. She has a book, open on a stand, that rests on a desk.

To the side of the desk are four men, three of whom look in her direction. The five of them seem to be engaged in conversation. Some have suggested that Christine and these four men are engaged in a debate, known as a disputation (*disputa*) in the Middle Ages. Disputations were common at universities, where students and professors would engage in intellectual debates to prove their wisdom. Women were not permitted at universities, so Christine's seat in a position of authority and engaged in debate with four men communicates her intellectual abilities and elevates her to a position of authority.

This portrait, along with all of Christine's portraits in *The Queen's Manuscript*, highlight her important status. Still today, works like Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* recognize Christine's significant contribution.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Lydia Parker.

Notes

[1] Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Rosalind Brown-Grant (London: Penguin, 1999), part 1, p. 41.

Additional Resources:

View the entire *Queen's Manuscript* at the British Library

The Making of *The Queen's Manuscript* project

Susan Groag Bell, "Christine de Pizan in Her Study," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* [En ligne], Études christiniennes, mis en ligne le 10 juin 2008, consulté le 18 juillet 2019

Susan Groag Bell, *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies: Christine de Pizan's Renaissance Legacy (*Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004)

Charlotte E. Cooper, "Ambiguous Author Portraits in Harley MS 4431," In *Performing Medieval Text*, ed. Ardis Butterfield, Henry Hope, and Pauline Souleau (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017), pp. 89–107

Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pizan's 'Epitre Othea': Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Wetteren: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986)

Nadia Margolis, *An Introduction to Christine de Pizan*, New Perspectives on Medieval Literature: Authors and Traditions (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012)

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000)

Christine Sciacca, *Illuminating Women in the Medieval World* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2017)

Christine de Pizan and a City of Ladies

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.8.122**: "The walled garden," in the *Roman de la Rose*, c. 1490–1500, f. 12v (Harley MS 4425, **British Library**)

The woman question

In the late Middle Ages, one of the most popular books was the *Romance of the Rose* (*Roman de la Rose*), begun in 1237 by Guillaume de Lorris and expanded by Jean de Meun some decades later. The lengthy medieval poem describes a dream vision about romantic love or the art of love. At the center of the poem is a young man who, while asleep, encounters a garden of love. While there, he sees a rose with which he falls in love. During his dream journey he meets various allegorical figures or personifications. Eventually the young man will acquire the rose, deflowering it. The book was a bestseller, with many manuscripts illustrating the story, but it was also controversial for its descriptions of courtly love, women, and marriage.

In the early fifteenth century, a major debate about the *Romance of the Rose* ensued, as did the nature and role of women. It was called the *querelle de femmes*, or "the woman question." It pitted important thinkers against one another.

One of the most active participants in this debate was **Christine de Pizan**, the first professional author and a woman to boot, and she, along with Jean Gerson (chancellor of the University of Paris) and others, challenged the misogynistic text's ideas as well as broader societal notions of womanhood. She disagreed with the negative, misogynistic attitudes toward women that she felt the book promoted and penned numerous letters to defend women. Her participation in the quarrel is a reason that Christine is often called one of the first feminists. In her poems and prose texts, she would also argue for the rights of women and found opportunities to celebrate women's achievements.



Figure **13.7.8.123**: Christine de Pizan in her study (detail), for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 4r (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

The Book of the City of Ladies

Pizan's most famous text, called *The Book of the City of Ladies*, written around 1404–05, is probably the best expression of her views on women. The text begins with Christine describing how she was sitting in her study, reading. She likely had in mind a space similar to the one we see in her **portrait in the Queen's Manuscript**, in which the artist—possibly even a female manuscript painter—depicts Christine seated at a desk in her study, with writing implements and accompanied by a dog.

In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, she reads a book about women that she finds unpleasant and shocking. She feels sad and depleted after reading it, especially because the book complained about women, and especially marriage. At this moment of sadness, she is visited by three ladies, Rectitude, Justice, and Reason, who represent different virtues. They tell Christine to build a city of ladies, and to fill it with women worthy of recognition for their intellect, compassion, and strength.



Figure 13.7.8.124: Christine de Pizan meets the three ladies and lays the foundation of the city of ladies, for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 290r (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

The book proceeds to catalogue important women (historical, biblical, and mythological), and includes individuals such as Judith, the Amazons, **Blanche of Castile**, saint Cecilia, and Sappho. Her extensive catalogue of women is indebted to Boccaccio's ***On Famous Women***, from 1361–62, which included short biographies of famous women (mythological and historical). Still, Christine's text has many more women in it, and the text passionately defends them, especially their education.

The education of women

At one point in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine discusses women's education with Lady Rectitude, extending her arguments of the "querelle" and providing another opportunity to defend women and their right to be educated.

> ***Christine, said, 'My lady, I can clearly see that much good has been brought into the world by women. Even if some wicked women have done evil things, it still seems to me that this is far outweighed by all the good that other women have done and continue to do. This is particularly true of those who are wise and well educated in either the arts or sciences, whom we mentioned before. That's why I'm all the more amazed at the opinion of some men who state that they are completely opposed to their daughters, wives or other female relatives engaging in study, for fear that their morals will be corrupted.'***
>
> ***Rectitude replied, 'This should prove to you that not all men's arguments are based on reason, and that these men in particular are wrong. There are absolutely no grounds***

> ***for assuming that knowledge of moral disciplines, which actually inculcate virtue, would have a morally corrupting effect. Indeed, there's no doubt whatsoever that such forms of knowledge correct one's vices and improve one's morals."***
>
> ***Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies, trans. Rosalind Brown-Grant (London: Penguin, 1999), part 2:36.***



Figure 13.7.8.125: Christine instructs four men (detail), for *The Queen's Manuscript*, c. 1410–1414, f. 259v (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

Christine's defense of women's education underscored her own education and her work as a writer. Other painted portraits of Christine, including those within the Queen's Manuscript, portray her engaged in writing or disputation as visual arguments to support women and their education.



Figure **13.7.8.126**: Christine de Pizan meets the three ladies and lays the foundation of the city of ladies, for The Queen's Manuscript, c. 1410–1414, f. 290r (Harley MS 4431, **British Library**)

In another image from *The Queen's Manuscript*, the artist depicts Christine in her study as she is visited by the three allegorical ladies and as she begins to construct the city. Christine once again dons her blue dress and white horned headdress, and she rises from her chair to speak with her three visitors.

The three crowned ladies all hold attributes that relate to who they personify, as Christine describes in the text itself. Reason holds a mirror (symbolizing wisdom), Rectitude a ruler (symbolizing judgment), and Justice a golden container (symbolizing justice and salvation). Reason holds the mirror up to Christine so that she can see herself for who she is and not in the way that men have negatively addressed women. Rectitude's ruler is to help Christine measure the materials needed to build the city and to separate good from bad, right from wrong. God gave Justice the golden container, and it is a reminder to live morally and justly in order to achieve salvation because Justice will dole out "the rightful portion" according to how each person lives.

In the right portion of the image, Christine is shown actively engaged in the building of the city, holding a trowel as she plasters stones one by one to construct the outer wall of the city. Reason assists her, carrying a brick to Christine. In a single image, Christine is an author, an intellectual, an individual graced with divine presence, and an architect at work.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Lydia Parker.

Additional resources

View the entire Queen's Manuscript at the British Library

The Making of the Queen's Manuscript project

Read about the Roman de la Rose on the British Library website

View a copy of the Roman de la Rose in its entirety on the World Digital Library

Susan Groag Bell, "Christine de Pizan in Her Study," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* [En ligne], Études christiniennes, mis en ligne le 10 juin 2008, consulté le 18 juillet 2019.

Susan Groag Bell, *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies: Christine de Pizan's Renaissance Legacy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).

Charlotte E. Cooper, “Ambiguous Author Portraits in Harley MS 4431,” in *Performing Medieval Text*, ed. Ardis Butterfield, Henry Hope, and Pauline Souleau, 89–107 (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017).

Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pizan’s ‘Epitre Othea’: Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Wetteren: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986).

Nadia Margolis, *An Introduction to Christine de Pizan*, New Perspectives on Medieval Literature: Authors and Traditions (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Frances Horgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000).

Christine Sciacca, *Illuminating Women in the Medieval World* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2017),

Enguerrand Quarton(?), *Pietà of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.8.27**: Enguerrand Quarton(?), *Pietà of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon*, c. 1455, oil on wood, 163 x 219 cm (Musée du Louvre)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:
No photos

Figure **13.7.8.127**: More Smarthistory images…

The Unicorn in Captivity

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.8.28: *The Unicorn in Captivity* (one of seven woven hangings popularly known as the *Unicorn Tapestries* or the *Hunt of the Unicorn*), 1495-1505, wool, silk, silver, and gilt (The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

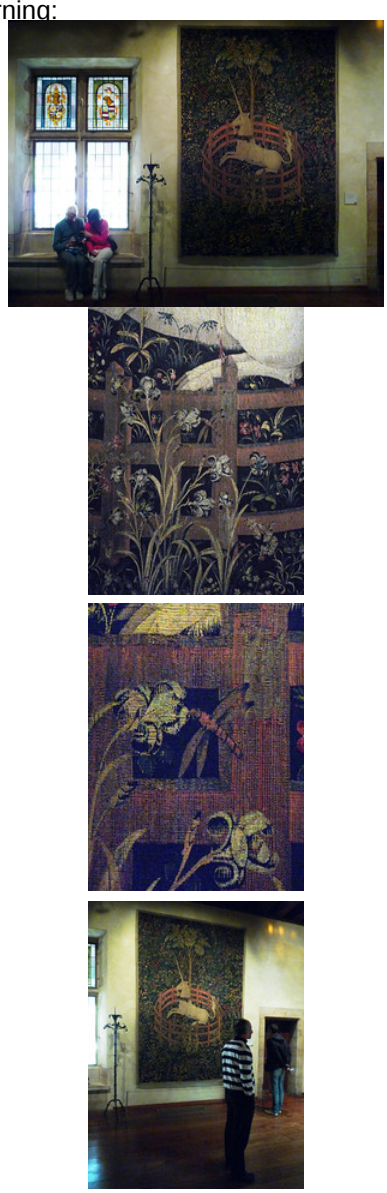


Figure 13.7.8.128: More Smarthistory images…

Tyrol

Michael Pacher, *St. Wolfgang Altarpiece*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



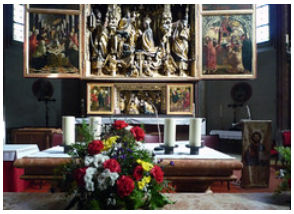
https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88727

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















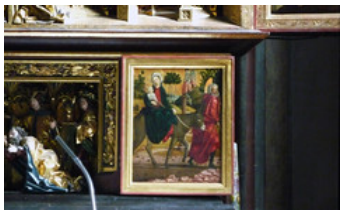








Figure 13.7.8.129: More Smarthistory images…

13.7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism

Northern Europe: 16th century

The Renaissance north of the Alps.

1500 - 1600 (Northern Renaissance and after)

An introduction to the Northern Renaissance in the sixteenth century

by DR. BONNIE NOBLE



Figure **13.7.9.1**: Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, engraving, fourth state, 25.1 x 20 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

While the Renaissance was happening in Italy, great artistic and social changes occurred in Germany and the Low Countries.

A bias in favor of Italian art among earlier generalizations of scholars made Italy the focus of artistic invention and the Northern Renaissance a less sophisticated imitation of the real thing. One might debate whether the North experienced a Renaissance, but the artistic, institutional, and intellectual changes are evident.

The 16th century: Dürer

Albrecht Dürer is the indisputable rock star of the German Renaissance. In addition to being a successful painter, Dürer built his reputation on his prints, both woodcut and engravings. Because prints can be made in multiples, he had an unusually broad audience. Mechanically reproducible media such as woodcuts and engraving not only helped Dürer disperse his ideas, they also made it possible for Northern artists to see Italian art without traveling.

Dürer likely had his first exposure to Italian art in Germany, in woodcut or engraved copies of Italian works. Looking at an Italian work of art in Germany may seem unremarkable to us. However, until prints were available all works of art were one of a kind, and the only way to see a new work of art was to travel. Prints were typically far less expensive than paintings and much lighter and therefore more portable. The switch from one-of-a-kind works of art to prints is in some ways comparable to the switch from buying or borrowing picture books to searching for images on Google.

Dürer, *Melencholia I*



Figure **13.7.9.2**: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514, engraving, 24 x 18.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Among Dürer's best-loved works is the engraving *Melencholia I*, 1514, which depicts the personification of melancholy, the temperament associated with artistic inspiration. The picture of the brooding figure, whose face resembles Dürer's famous self portraits, may be male or female. Some scholars believe Dürer's self portraits are androgenous. Though the face may be Dürer's, the garment looks feminine.

Whatever the gender, the figure experiences the dreadful feeling of writer's block. Surrounded by all the tools needed to create—a compass, a plane, nails—s/he sits still, head in hand, and does nothing. The wings are a painful reminder of our limitations. Gifted with intelligence, imagination, and the desire to soar, the figure's small wings cannot lift such a weighty and substantial body. Bound up with the idea of frustrated creativity is the notion of creativity itself—which took on its present meaning during the Renaissance.

The space is like a fun house, never offering the viewer an opportunity to become oriented. Are we inside or outside? Where does the ladder start? Where does it lead to? The rhombohedron blocks the horizon, and all of the edges point out of the image, a seeming play of the logical system of horizon and orthogonal that create a unified space.

The printing press (images + text)

Perhaps the most influential aspect of the Northern Renaissance is the combination of printed image with text together in books. The printing press was invented in Germany around 1450. Until the printing press, books were laboriously copied and illustrated by hand, one at a time.

The combination of printed words and images created an explosion of information (rather like the change from typewriters to computers). The printing of books such as Luther's translation of scripture and illustrated polemical pamphlets accelerated the **Protestant Reformation**, a movement that re-aligned religious and national boundaries, and ultimately would motivate migration to the **New World**.

Additional resources:

For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

Pieter Bruegel, Harvesters with detail of wagon

Pieter Bruegel, Harvesters with detail of peasant meal

Pieter Bruegel, Harvesters with detail of laboring men

Pieter Bruegel, Harvesters

Pieter Bruegel, Harvesters with visitors

Figure **13.7.9.3**: More Smarthistory images…

Inventing "America" for Europe: Theodore de Bry

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK

Theodore de Bry's *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies*

In the center of this image we see a finely-dressed Christopher Columbus with two soldiers. Columbus stands confidently, his left foot forward with his pike planted firmly in the ground, signaling his claim over the land. Behind him to the left, three Spaniards raise a cross in the landscape, symbolizing a declaration of the land for both the Spanish monarchs and for the Christian God.



Figure 13.7.9.4: Theodore de Bry, Christopher Columbus arrives in America, 1594, engraving, 18.6 c 19.6 cm, from *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies (Collectiones peregrinationum in Indiam occidentalem)*, vol. 4: Girolamo Benzoni, *Americae pars quarta. Sive, Insignis & admiranda historia de primera occidentali India à Christophoro Columbo* (Frankfurt am Main: T. de Bry, 1594) (**Rijksmuseum**)

Unclothed Taínos, the indigenous peoples of Hispaniola, walk toward Columbus bringing gifts of necklaces and other precious objects. Further in the background, on the right side of the print, other Taínos, with arms raised and twisting bodies, flee in fear from the Spanish ships anchored offshore.

This print from 1592, by the engraver Theodore de Bry, presents Columbus and his men as the harbingers of European civilization and faith, and juxtaposes them with Tainos, who are presented as uncivilized, unclothed, and pagan. This print, along with hundreds of others de Bry made for his 27 volume series, published over more than forty years, *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* (1590–1634), affirm and assert a sense of European superiority, as well as invent for Europeans what America—both its land and its people—was like.

Though de Bry is most famous for his engravings of European voyages to the Americas (and Africa, and Asia), he never actually traveled across the Atlantic. It is not surprising then that de Bry's depiction of the indigenous peoples of the Americas was a combination of the work of other artists who had accompanied Europeans to the Americas (artists were often brought on journeys in order to document the lands and peoples of the Americas for a European audience) as well as his own artistic inventions. For instance, he adapted (without credit) some of the images created by Johannes Stradanus, a well-known illustrator who created early images of the Americas. In his *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies*, de Bry republished (and translated into multiple languages) the accounts of others who had spent time traveling around the globe, and created more than 600 engravings to illustrate the volumes. The engraving above of Columbus and the Taínos comes from volume 4 of the *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies*. This volume reprinted the accounts of the Milanese traveler Girolamo Benzoni, who himself had drawn on the accounts of Columbus in his own writings.

The volumes of the *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* that treat the voyages across the Atlantic to the Americas are known as the *Grands Voyages*, while the *Petit Voyages* (small voyages), were those to Africa and Asia.

Documenting America

De Bry's **copperplate engravings** were among the first images that Europeans encountered about the peoples, places, and things of the Americas, even if he began making them almost a century after Columbus's initial voyage. In the engraving with Columbus on the shoreline, the barely clothed Taínos resemble Greco-Roman sculptures, especially their poses and musculature. De Bry apparently had no interest in documenting the actual appearance of the Taínos.



Figure **13.7.9.5**: Left: Apollo Belvedere, c. 150 C.E., Roman copy of an original bronze statue of 330-320 B.C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Tetraktys, CC BY-SA 3.0); right: detail. Theodore de Bry, *Christopher Columbus arrives in America*, 1594, etching and text in letterpress, 18.6 c 19.6 cm (Rijksmuseum)

De Bry's *Collected travels* belongs to the genre of travel literature, which had been popular since the Middle Ages. Accounts of the Americas became wildly popular after Columbus's first voyage. For example, **Columbus's 1493 letter** to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel (who had helped finance the voyage) was published in seventeen editions by 1497, and often included woodcuts depicting select moments of his voyage.

De Bry and his audiences

De Bry was a Protestant, and fled Liège (today in Belgium) where he was born to avoid persecution. He made his way to Frankfurt, which is where he started work on *Grands Voyages*. After his death in 1598, his family continued his work and finished the remaining volumes in 1634. Interestingly, different versions of the *Grands Voyages* catered to different Christian confessional groups. The volumes in German were geared towards Protestants, while those in Latin appealed to Catholics. De Bry created images that he could market to either audience, but he made changes to the texts to appeal more to either Catholics or Protestants. Psalms that Calvinists felt encapsulated their beliefs or longer passages criticizing Catholic beliefs or colonial practices were omitted from Latin versions, which were often filled in with more engravings duplicated from other parts of the text.



Figure **13.7.9.6**: Theodore de Bry, Indians pour liquid gold into the mouth of a Spaniard, 1594, from *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies (Collectiones peregrinationum in Indiam occidentalem)*

While some of de Bry's prints in *Grands Voyages* focus on the exploits of famed European navigators like Columbus, others show indigenous groups and their customs. Some of these images display the atrocities that occurred in the wake of Europeans' arrival, violent conquest, and colonization. Indigenous peoples are fed to dogs, hanged, or butchered. Still others depict native responses to the European invasion, such as drowning Spaniards in the ocean or pouring liquid gold into invaders' mouths.



Figure **13.7.9.7**: John White, *The town of Secoton* (bird's-eye view of town with houses, lake at the top, fire, fields and ceremony), 1585-1593, watercolour over graphite, heightened with white (**British Museum**)

Travels to Virginia

The *Grands Voyages* (the section on cross-Atlantic voyages) begins with a reprint of an earlier text by the English colonist Thomas Hariot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590). It also includes translations of this text into Latin, German, and French. De Bry's accompanying engravings were based on watercolors by John White, who had settled on Roanoke Island, North Carolina in 1585 and who had created paintings while there. His watercolors document clothing, dwellings, and rituals of the eastern Algonquian peoples.

Even though Virginia and North Carolina were colonized by Europeans after they had seized other areas in the Americas, de Bry placed them in the first volume of his *Grands Voyages*. This may be because he had visited London just after Hariot's book was published in 1588, and was given both

that text and the watercolors of White. De Bry was clearly not interested in a providing a chronological account of European exploration and colonization.

One of White's paintings represents the town of Secoton, with people going about their daily life activities. In the right foreground people dance in a circle. Corn grows in neat rows. Dwellings line a road. In his engraving, de Bry made several changes to White's watercolor. He expanded the village and removed the textual inscriptions that identified important features of the village (instead incorporating a separate key).



Figure **13.7.9.8**: Theodore de Bry, Bird's-eye view of a native American village (Secoton), 1590, engraving (after the watercolor by John White above) for volume 1 of *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* which reprinted Thomas Hariot, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia, of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants* (**British Library**)

For his engravings, de Bry also transformed watercolors White had created of Scottish Picts (an ancient pagan indigenous peoples of Scotland who lived in a loose confederation of groups and who painted their bodies). But why include a discussion of Picts in a book on the Americas?

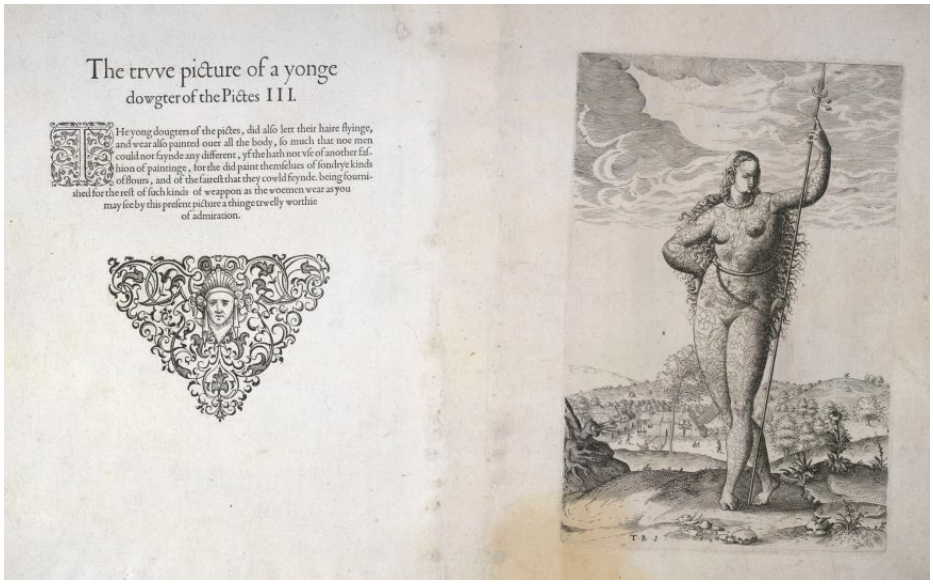


Figure **13.7.9.9**: Theodore de Bry, *A Young Daughter of the Picts*, 1590, engraving (after **a watercolor by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues** — originally attributed to John White) for *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* which reprints Thomas Hariot, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia, of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants* (**British Library**)

Hariot's text states that "Some picture of the Picts which in the old time did inhabit one part of the great Britain," which according to him "show how that the inhabitants of the great Britain have been in times past as savage as those of Virginia."[1] White compares them to the Algonquian

peoples to suggest that Europe has its own history of uncivilized, pagan people. Despite attempting to reconcile the Algonquian peoples with the Picts in Europe, the manner in which he compares them—as savages—speaks to a presumed European superiority.



Figure 13.7.9.10: Theodore de Bry, Indians worship the column in honor of the French king, 1591, engraving for *Collectiones peregrinationum in Indiam occidentalem*, vol. 2: René de Laudonnière, *Brevis narratio eorum quae in Florida Americae provincia Gallis acciderunt* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Wechelus, 1591) (**Rijksmuseum**)



Figure 13.7.9.11: Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, *Laudonnierus et rex athore ante columnam a praefecto prima navigatione locatam quamque venerantur floridenses*, gouache (**New York Public Library**)

Travels to Florida

Volume 2, published in 1591, focused on French voyages to Florida, and was based on the accounts of the French colonist René Goulaine de Laudonnière. De Bry created engravings based on the watercolors of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, who was part of the French expeditions to Florida that were headed by Jean Ribault in 1562 and Laudonnière in 1564. One of the engravings adapted from Le Moyne's watercolors shows the Timucua worshipping a column that had supposedly been erected by Ribault. The most prominent figure, identified as chief Athore, stands next to Laudonnière, who has followed him to see the sight. The other Timucua kneel, while raising their arms in gestures of reverence in the direction of the column, itself decorated with garlands. Before it, offerings of food and vegetables abound. De Bry made several notable changes to the print, such as adjusting Athore's features to look more European, with raised cheekbones and an aquiline nose. Le Moyne's earlier watercolor had also Europeanized the Timucua peoples: he paints them with the same complexion as Laudonnière, but with even blonder hair.



Figure 13.7.9.12: Theodore de Bry, engraving depicting cannibalism in Brazil for volume 3 of *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* which reprinted Hans Staden's account of his experiences in Brazil, 1594 (British Library)

Cannibalism was (and remains) commonly associated with certain indigenous peoples of the Americas. In de Bry's series, his third volume recounted Hans Staden's experiences of cannibalism in Brazil. De Bry's engravings for this volume were among the most well-known in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, in large part because of their gruesome and sensationalistic character. Note that de Bry's print, "Indians pour liquid gold into the mouth of a Spaniard," may also depict cannibalism among the figures shown in the background.



Figure 13.7.9.13: Theodore de Bry, engraving depicting cannibalism in Brazil for volume 3 of *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies* which reprinted Hans Staden's account of his experiences in Brazil, 1594 (British Library)

Staden, a German soldier who traveled to South America, had been captured in 1553 by the Tupinambá, an indigenous group in Brazil. After his return to Europe in 1557, he wrote about Tupinambá customs, family life, and cannibalism, describing how the Tupinambá practiced it ceremonially, especially eating their enemies. Staden's initial book included simple woodcuts, but de Bry's updated engravings proved far more popular and enduring in the European cultural imagination. Perceptions of indigenous Brazilians were shaped by these images, and reinforced the notion that the Tupinambá, and others like them, were depraved, primitive, and sinful.

One of his images depicts naked adults and children drinking a broth made from a human head and intestines, visible on plates amidst the gathering of people. Another depiction of the Tupinamba shows a fire below a grill, upon which body parts are roasted. Figures surround the grill, eating. In the back is a bearded figure, most likely intended to be Staden. Hand-colored versions of de Bry's prints emphasize the disturbing subject of the images even more.

Cannibalism would come to be closely associated with peoples of the Americas. De Bry would even use images of cannibals to serve as the engraved frontispiece to volume 3. Showing the Tupinambá eating human flesh exoticized them, and justified European control.

Other volumes and the legacy of de Bry

The fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of the set focus on Girolamo Benzoni's accounts, such as *Historia Mondo Nuovo*, with part 6 discussing the atrocities committed against the indigenous population of Peru. Parts 7 to 12 incorporated the travel accounts of Ulricus Faber, Sir Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh, José de Acosta, Amerigo Vespucci, John Smith, and Antonio de Herrera among others. Like the volumes that came before them, de Bry provided numerous images to increase readers understanding of the narratives.

The *Grands Voyages*, and the entire *Collected Travels*, relate more generally to the forms of knowledge and collecting popular at the time. Like a **cabinet of curiosity**, de Bry's project organized information in text and images so that readers could come to know the Americas. The volumes seek to provide encyclopedic knowledge about the Americas, much as the objects did in a curiosity cabinet. De Bry's many prints were important resources for Europeans who sought to better understand the Americas. It allowed readers to take possession of these distant lands and peoples, where they could become participants in the colonial projects then underway, allowing them to feel a sense of dominance over the peoples and lands across the Atlantic—lands which many in Europe would never see firsthand. These often inaccurate images and narratives supported a sense of superiority, with Europeans positioned as more civilized and advanced, and the American "others" as less so. De Bry's images of America would cement for Europeans a vision of what America was like for centuries to come.

[1] "Some Pictvre of the Pictes which in the olde tyme dyd habite one part of the great Bretainne," which according to him "showe how that the inhabitants of the great Bretainne haue been in times past as sauuage as those of Virginia." 67. Thomas Hariot, with illustrations by John White, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590).

Additional resources:

Early Images of Virginia Indians: The William W. Cole Collection at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture

Picturing the New World: The Hand-Colored de Bry Engravings of 1590

White Watercolors and de Bry engravings, on Virtual Jamestown

De Bry engravings of the Timucua, on Florida Memory

Columbus reports on his first voyage, 1493

Kim Sloan, ed., *European Visions, American Voices*, British Museum Research Publication 172 (2009).

Bernadette Bucher, *Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1981).

Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1991).

Michiel van Groesen, "The de Bry Collection of Voyages (1590–1634): Early America reconsidered," *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008), pp. 1–24.

Michael van Groesen, *Representations of the Overseas World in the de Bry Collection of Voyages (1590–1634)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Maureen Quilligan, "Theodore de Bry's Voyages to the New and Old Worlds," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 1–12.

Johannes Stradanus and Theodoor Galle, "The Discovery of America"

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK

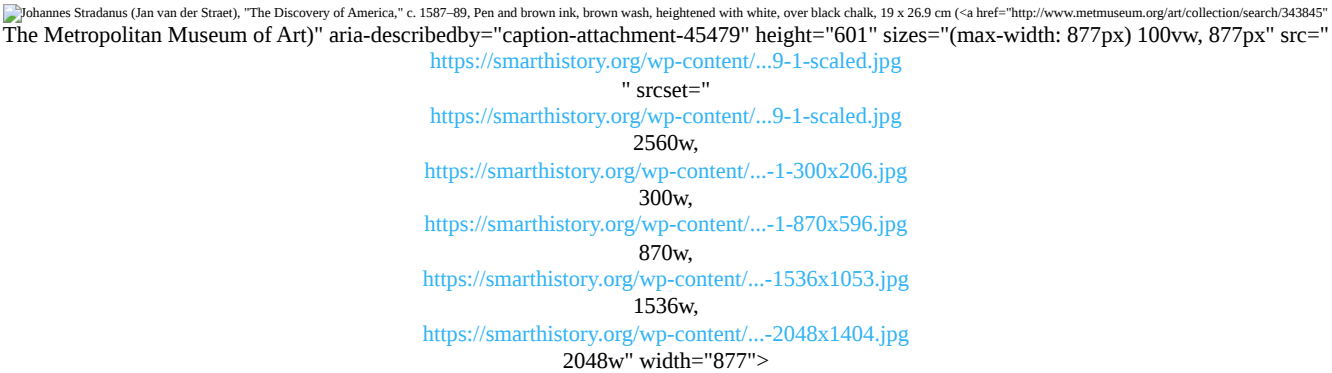


Figure **13.7.9.14**: Johannes Stradanus (Jan van der Straet), "The Discovery of America," c. 1587–89, Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white, over black chalk, 19 x 26.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In an engraving from around 1600, a nude woman reclines on a hammock while a standing, dressed man approaches her. She is a personification of America, while he is Amerigo Vespucci, the Florentine navigator who would give his name to the Americas. The scene, called "Discovery of

America," was first drawn by Netherlandish artist Johannes Stradanus in the 1580s. It was then transformed into a print series that formed part of *Nova Reperta*, or *New Inventions and Discoveries of Modern Times* (c. 1600). This scene is the most famous of that series, appearing first among twenty engraved plates.

Vespucci and a Personification of America



Figure **13.7.9.15**: Theodoor Galle (after Johannes Stradanus) "The Discovery of America," from *Nova Reperta*, c. 1600, engraving, published by Philips Galle, 27 x 20 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In the print, as the original ink, Vespucci wears a cape over his armor. A sword hangs at his side. In one hand he holds a navigational instrument (an astrolabe) while in the other he holds a banner with a crucifix at the top. To his left are the ships he commands, one ashore and the other sailing towards the Brazilian coastline. His presence seems to wake or perhaps startle the woman. While she is nude, she does wear an array of accessories, including a feathered cap and loincloth, and metal anklets (likely made of gold). A weapon, perhaps a club, rests against a nearby tree.



Figure **13.7.9.16**: Theodoor Galle (after Johannes Stradanus) "The Discovery of America," detail of America, from *Nova Reperta*, c. 1600, engraving, published by Philips Galle, 27 x 20 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)



Figure **13.7.9.17**: Theodoor Galle (after Johannes Stradanus) “The Discovery of America,” detail of anteater and pineapples, from *Nova Reperta*, c. 1600, engraving, published by Philips Galle, 27 x 20 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Surrounding her in the fore- and middle ground are animals, such as a sloth hanging from a tree, an anteater beside her club, and a tapir behind her shoulder, while in the background naked people roast human body parts over a fire. Pineapples grow on stalks just behind the anteater, appearing more like pinecones than fruit. It is clear that Stradanus never actually saw these plants or animals firsthand.

Stradanus contrasts the European and American figures and the worlds they signify. Vespucci is clothed, while America is not. He stands, she sits. He holds his banner upright, while her club is set aside. He comes from the sea, she comes from the land. His world has ships and navigational instruments, hers wild animals and cannibals. His body is obscured, while hers is available and sexualized.

These juxtapositions encourage viewers to make particular associations. Vespucci represents order and those that are civilized, while America symbolizes disorder and the uncivilized. His ships, sword, and astrolabe are also the instruments of exploration and conquest, used to subdue those people perceived as inferior. Stradanus portrays America and the cannibals behind her in the nude to underscore their primitive nature.

Who made this engraving?

Theodoor Galle (after Johannes Stradanus) "The Discovery of America," detail, from <em
Nova Reperta, c. 1600, engraving, published by Philips Galle, 27 x 20 cm (
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-45487" height="168" sizes="(max-width: 1078px) 100vw, 1078px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...Signatures.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...Signatures.jpg
783w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...res-300x47.jpg
300w" width="1078">

Figure **13.7.9.18**: Theodoor Galle (after Johannes Stradanus) “The Discovery of America,” detail, from *Nova Reperta*, c. 1600, engraving, published by Philips Galle, 27 x 20 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

An inscription is included that tells us who participated in making made the engraving. “Ioan. Stradanus inuent. / Theodor. Galle sculp. / Ph[i]l[ip]s Galle execud.” This means that Johannes Stradanus designed the image, Theodoor Galle engraved it, and Philips Galle distributed it.

Stradanus, originally Jan van der Straet, was born in Bruges (now in Belgium), in 1523. He eventually moved to Florence where he died in 1605. More than eighty years after Vespucci’s *Mundus Novus* (*New World*) was first published in 1503, Stradanus produced his drawing, which was then engraved in Antwerp by Theodoor Galle at the workshop of Philips Galle. This collaborative practice was common among printmakers in the early modern period.

Stradanus and new inventions

Jan Collaert I (after Stradanus), "Color Olivi" (or The invention of oil painting), c. 1600, engraving, in <em
Nova Reperta, published by Philips Galle (
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-45476" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 792px) 100vw, 792px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...119-scaled.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...119-scaled.jpg
2560w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...19-300x227.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...19-870x659.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1164.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-2048x1552.jpg
2048w" width="792">

Figure **13.7.9.19**: Jan Collaert I (after Stradanus), “Color Olivi” (or The invention of oil painting), c. 1600, engraving, in *Nova Reperta*, published by Philips Galle (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Besides the “Discovery of America,” Stradanus illustrated a number of other inventions and discoveries that were then transformed into engravings for *Nova Reperta*. In one, called “Color Olivi” (“Oil Paint”), he included the famous netherlandish artist **Jan van Eyck** in his workshop, preparing and using oil paint. Other plates credit Europeans with inventing printing, the compass, and gunpowder (despite their having all come from China originally). We can understand these engravings as participating in a broader message tying together European colonization, invention, and superiority.

The inscriptions in the engraving of America also reference these same ideas. The title is written as “America,” and more Latin text that says “Americen Americus retexit, et Semel vocauit inde semper excitam.” The first part translates as “Americus rediscovers America,” implying that Amerigo Vespucci has discovered America with fresh eyes after Christopher Columbus, who believed he had found Asia.

The “new world”

Vespucci had originally explored the Americas in two separate voyages, between 1499 and 1501, and *Mundus Novus* included the correspondence he supposedly wrote with Lorenzo Pietro di Medici, his patron. This correspondence might have been somewhat fictionalized. Nevertheless, it was in these letters that Vespucci first refers to the Americas as *mundus novus*, or “new world,” one that was not part of Asia as Christopher Columbus had claimed. This name, “new world,” has, unfortunately, stuck, privileging the European viewpoint over that of the millions of indigenous peoples who already lived on the American continents.

Inventing the “Indio” and “America”

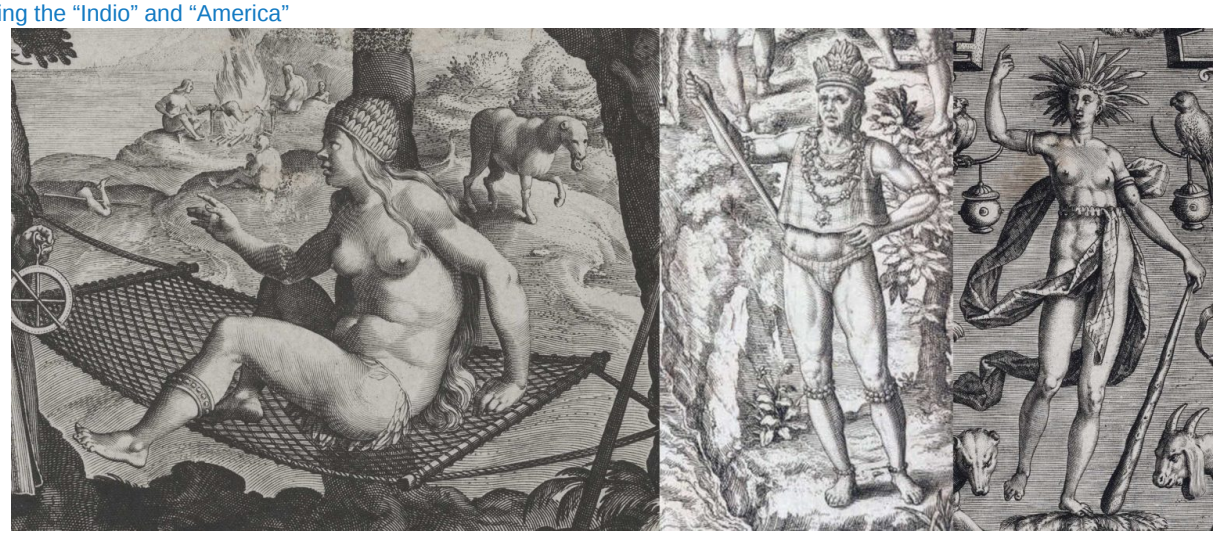


Figure 13.7.9.20: Images of “America.” Left: Theodoor Galle (after Johannes Stradanus) “The Discovery of America,” detail of America, from *Nova Reperta*, c. 1600, engraving, published by Philips Galle, 27 x 20 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). Center: Theodor de Bry, Title page for “Historia del Mondo Nuovo,” title page (text by Girolamo Benzoni), engraving. Courtesy of the Yale Collection of Western Americana, **Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library**, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Right: Marcus Gheeraerts (the elder), “America,” c. 1575–1610, engraving, published by Philips Galle (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

When Christopher Columbus accidentally bumped into the Caribbean in 1492, he believed he had reached the Indies (India and Southeast Asia). As a result, the lands he encountered were named the ‘Indies’ and the peoples, *indios*. This misnomer of *indio* (Indian) wrongfully labeled the incredibly diverse groups of people not only of the Caribbean, but throughout all of what would come to be called the Americas. The name of *indio* aided in a process of homogenization of the peoples of this land. The term *indio*, at least early on, also served to differentiate those who were Christian from those who were not. Stradanus’s print participates in this homogenization. America is represented by a female personification, not specific individuals.

Earlier publications about the Americas had few illustrations, so printmakers like Stradanus felt free to invent imagery within their engravings and to borrow figures and motifs from other artists. We find many of the same visual motifs associated with America in prints by Stradanus and the artists **Theodor de Bry** and Marcus Gheeraerts (among others).

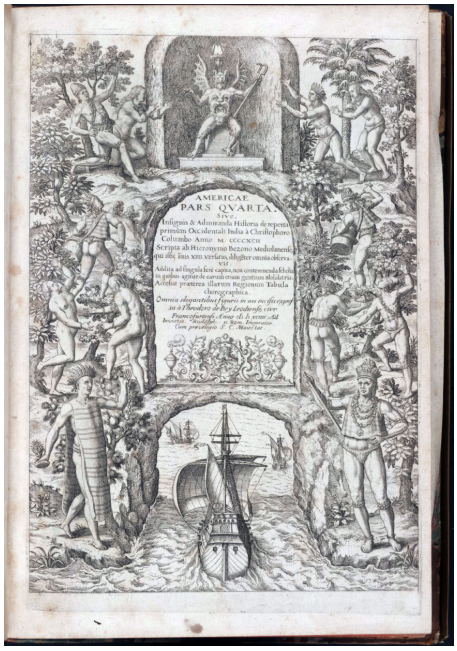


Figure 13.7.9.21: Theodor de Bry, Title page for "Historia del Mondo Nuovo," title page (text by Girolamo Benzoni), engraving. Courtesy of the Yale Collection of Western Americana, **Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library**, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

On the title page to volume four, called *Americae*, of his *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies*, de Bry places the title in the center of a rounded-arch doorway. Above it, a demonic idol, complete with bat wings, mask-like face, and monstrous visage on its abdomen, sits on a throne. This purports to represent one of the deities of Amerindians. Below the title is a ship, sailing through a similarly shaped archway to join two other smaller ships. They represent the ships of Columbus, and we can read their passage through the arch as their departure from Europe as they embark on their voyage to the Americas. Flanking the center register are a variety of indigenous peoples of the Americas, identifiable by what they do (or don't) wear. Many of them are unclothed, while others wear simple loincloths and feathered headdresses. The two largest figures stand flanking the ships. One wears a long tunic and feathered headdress, while the other wears a crown, cropped tunic, large chains around his neck, and a loincloth. He holds a staff (or club) on his hip while standing in **contrapposto**. All the figures are idealized, with well-defined musculature that makes them look like Greco-Roman sculptures. We also find palm trees and other flora that help to locate the scenes in an American context.

Marcus Gheeraerts (the elder), "America," c. 1575–1610, engraving, published by Philips Galle (<a href="http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/370639"
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-45488" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 389px) 100vw, 389px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...0-1-scaled.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...0-1-scaled.jpg
1659w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1-300x463.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...1-870x1342.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...1-996x1536.jpg
996w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1327x2048.jpg
1327w" width="389">

Figure 13.7.9.22: Marcus Gheeraerts (the elder), "America," c. 1575–1610, engraving, published by Philips Galle (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

In Marcus Gheeraerts's engraving of America, we see a barely dressed woman standing in contrapposto in the center of the composition. An elaborate feathered headdress rests on her head and she holds a club. Surrounding her are other be-feathered individuals, along with parrots, mammals like a tapir, two Inuits at the lower corners (based on drawings by John White), and even fantastical creatures–all of which draw from the same symbol set to portray the Americas.

As is clear from looking at these engravings, printed media played a crucial role in providing Europeans with information about the Americas in the early modern period. Stradanus's print attests to the important role that iconography played in creating a defined set of symbols that would communicate to European viewers specific perceptions about America as exotic and primitive for centuries to come.

Additional resources

Read more about Stradanus's "Discovery of America"

Read more about Collaert's "Invention of Oil Painting"

Daniela Bleichmar, *Visual Voyages: Images of Latin American Nature from Columbus to Darwin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017)

Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Jose Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993)

Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008)

Lia Markey, "Stradano's Allegorical invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2012): pp. 385–442

Netherlands

"Netherlands" means "low countries," and refers to the area's low elevation, largely at or below sea level.

1500 - 1600

Hieronymus Bosch

Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON

> ***"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.***
> ***"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."***
> ***"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.***
> ***"You must be," said the Cat, or you wouldn't have come here."***
>
> ***—Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland***

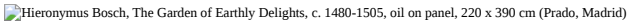

Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado, Madrid)

Figure **13.7.9.23**: Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado, Madrid)

Deciphering the indecipherable

To write about Hieronymus Bosch's triptych, known to the modern age as *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, is to attempt to describe the indescribable and to decipher the indecipherable—an exercise in madness. Nonetheless, there are a few points that can be made with certainty before it all unravels.

The painting was first described in 1517 by the Italian chronicler Antonio de Beatis, who saw it in the palace of the counts of Nassau in Brussels. It can therefore be considered a commissioned work. The fact that the counts were powerful political players in the Burgundian Netherlands made the palace a stage for important diplomatic receptions and the work must have caused something of a sensation with its viewing audience, since it was copied, both in painting and tapestry, after Bosch's death in 1516.



Figure 13.7.9.24: Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights (outer panels), c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado, Madrid)

We can assume, therefore, that Bosch's bizarre lexicon of human congress must have held some appeal, or some meaning, for a contemporary audience. In a period marked by religious decline in Europe and, in the Netherlands, the first blush of capitalism following the abolition of the guilds, the work has often been interpreted as an admonition against fleshly and worldly indulgence, but that seems a rather prosaic purpose to assign to a highly idiosyncratic and expressively detailed tour-de-force. And, indeed, there is very little agreement as to the precise meaning of the work. It is a creation and damnation triptych, starting with Adam and Eve and ending with a highly imaginative through-the-looking glass kind of Hell. No one really knows why Bosch imagined the world in this particular way.

Here's what I think. What concerned Bosch, in his triptych of creation, human futility and damnation (the *Garden of Earthly Delights* is a modern misnomer for the work), was the essentially comic ephemerality of human life. Allow me to explain.

The outer panels



Figure 13.7.9.25: God (detail of outer panels), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

When the triptych is in the closed position (above), the outer panels, painted in grisaille (monochrome), join to form a perfect sphere—a vision of a planet-shaped clear glass vessel half-filled with water, interpreted to be either the depiction of the Flood, or day three of God's creation of the world (which has to do with the springing forth of flowers, plants and trees, in which case he's guilty of heedless over-watering).

A tiny figure of God, holding an open book, is found in the uppermost left corner of the left panel, and the inscription that runs along the top of both panels can be translated to read "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm," which is from Psalm 33.9. If one thinks of the outside panels as the end of the entire pictorial cycle, rather than its beginning, then this image could easily be a depiction of the Flood, sent by God to cleanse the earth after it was consumed by vice.



Figure **13.7.9.26**: Outer panels (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

This path towards vice is mapped in the inner panels of the triptych. The outer panels are therefore intended to provoke meditative purgation, a cleansing of the mind. It should be pointed out that this work, like Bosch's *Hay Wain* triptych (also framed by a creation and damnation scene), is a triptych only in form; neither depict the conventional arrangement of a tripartite altarpiece because their center panels do not include religious figures or even religious scenes. What Bosch seems to have invented is an entirely new form of secular triptych, one that functioned kind of like a Renaissance home theater package for wealthy patrons.

The first panel: God Introduces Eve to Adam (and all hell breaks loose)

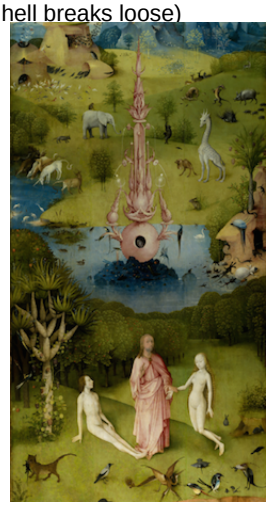


Figure **13.7.9.27**: Detail, Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

The first panel depicts God, looking like a mad scientist in a landscape animated by vaguely alchemical vials and beakers, presiding over the introduction of Eve to Adam (which, in itself, is a rather rare subject). Although they are precisely located in the center foreground, in scale Adam and Eve—as well as God—are precisely as important as the other creatures in this paradisiacal garden, including an elephant, a giraffe (straight out of Piero de' Cosimo) a unicorn and other more hybrid and less recognizable animals, along with birds, fish, other aquatic creations, snakes and insects.

The introduction of woman to man, in this setting, is clearly intended to highlight not only God's creativity but human procreative capacity. In the hierarchy of God's handiwork, Adam and Eve represent his most daring achievement, as though after he'd made everything else he thought he needed to leave a signature on the world in which he could recognize himself. It's a matter of conjecture, when one proceeds to the central panel, as to whether Bosch is saying that the creation of man, on whom God conferred free will, might have been a divine mistake.

The central panel: People nakedly cavort (and all hell breaks loose)

This is the panel from which the title *Garden of Earthly Delights* was derived. Here Bosch's humans, the offspring of Adam and Eve, gambol freely in a surrealistic paradisiacal garden, appearing as mad manifestations of a whimsical creator—sensate cogs of nature alive in a larger, animate machine. It is a matter of divided opinion as to what, exactly, the humans are actually doing in this delightful, dense and nonsensical landscape, alive with a dizzying array of some of Bosch's most delectable creatures and dotted with his alembic architecture. It is almost as though he imagined the world of creation as a terrific Willy Wonka series of machines with humans as their product.

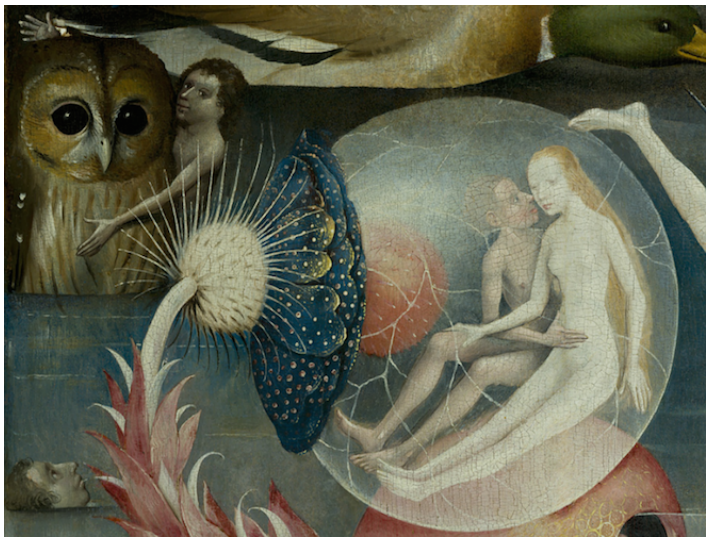


Figure 13.7.9.28: Detail, Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

Given Bosch's emphasis on nude figures, some of which are engaged in amorous activities —although none *in flagrante*—this central scene has often been interpreted as a warning against lust, particularly in conjunction with the third panel, depicting Hell (the Spanish Hapsburgs, in fact, referred to the work as "*La Lujuria*" — lust). I wonder though. Bosch's depiction of humans cavorting in the elemental world of God's creation, seems, to me, less inculpatory than simply a commentary on the fact that there's little to differentiate man from animals from plants.



Figure 13.7.9.29: Central panel (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

Many figures appear in all sorts of chrysalis states, or inside eggs or shells, and are fed ripe berries by birds or strange hybrid creatures; in the middle-ground some kind of procession of men, riding on various animals and accompanied by birds, circles a small lake of bathing maidens. It's true that some unlikely human orifices are stuffed with flowers, but there is no explicit sex in this panel—just a gluttonous consumption of varieties of berries that have, by some, been linked to the pervasively hallucinogenic atmosphere (magic berries instead of magic mushrooms). In the end, there is folly and there is much that is visceral, but there's no real vice.



Figure 13.7.9.30: Detail, Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

Instead, what Bosch appears to be doing is contemplating man's place in the greater divine machine of nature. Maybe he's saying, as Lucretius did, that all matter is made of atoms that come together for a time to form a sensible thing and, when that thing dies, those atoms return to their origins to reconfigure in some other form. This breaking and becoming is the nature of nature, and man in nature, is not differentiated by anything OTHER than his free will, his concern for his own behavior. Our reason is our undoing. Every man's hell is only what he can imagine, and Bosch was more imaginative than most. His was a highly singular and idiosyncratic talent, and Bosch was really no more a product of his own time than he would have been of any other time. However, his ability to visualize hallucinatory landscapes made him extremely popular, three centuries later, with surrealists like Salvador Dali, who was also a virtuoso imagineer of nightmarish other-worldly worlds. I would venture to guess that Lewis Carroll must also have been a fan.

The third panel: Finally, all hell breaks loose



Figure 13.7.9.31: Panel of hell (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

Bosch saves the best for last. Earlier visions of Hell, if indeed that's what Bosch intended here, are pretty tame in comparison to this. Against a backdrop of blackness, prison-like city walls are etched in inky silhouette against areas of flame and everywhere human bodies huddle in groups, amass in armies or are subject to strange tortures at the hands of oddly-clad executioners and animal-demons.



Figure **13.7.9.32**: Panel of hell (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

Dotted about are more crazy machine-like structures that seem designed to process human flesh. Some of these are strikingly disturbing. Near the center, a bird-like creature seated in a latrine chair, like a king on a throne, ingests humans and excretes them out again; nearby a wretched human is encouraged to vomit into a well in which other human faces swirl beneath the water.

In general, the bodies purge themselves or are purged of demons, black birds, vomitus fluids, blood; as in any good Boschian world, bottoms continue to be prodded with various instruments. But the general emphasis is on purgation.

Overall, there is a marked emphasis on musical instruments as symbols of evil distraction, the siren call of self-indulgence, and the large ears, which scuttle along the ground although pierced with a knife, are a powerful allusion to the deceptive lure of the senses. In fact, many of the symbols and the tortures here are pretty standard in the catalogue of the Seven Deadly Sins, in which our senses deceive our thoughts into self-indulgent over-consumption.



Figure **13.7.9.33**: Panel of hell (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

One key element here, however, requires some explication—the central, Humpty-Dumpty-ish figure who gazes out of the scene, his cracked-shell body impaled on the limbs of a dead tree. The art historian Hans Belting thought this was a self-portrait of Bosch, and a lot of people believe this, but it's impossible to verify. Still, it quite strikingly illustrates the presence of a controlling, human consciousness in the centre of all this tortured imagining. And this is where my interpretation parts ways with those who have come before.



Figure **13.7.9.34**: Panel of hell (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)



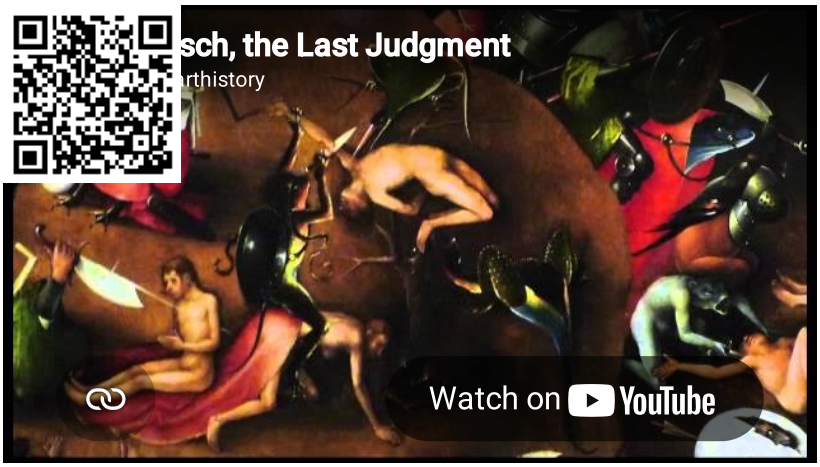
Figure **13.7.9.35**: Detail, Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1480-1505, oil on panel, 220 x 390 cm (Prado)

Because, while "Bosch's" mind (if it is a self-portrait) might be distracted with thoughts of lust, symbolized by the bagpipe-like instrument balanced on his head (standard phallic stand-in), within the hollow of his body, a tiny trio of figures sit at a table as though dining. To me, these three figures are reminiscent of Genesis 18.2, in which God arrives at the door of Abraham, accompanied by two angels (all disguised as ordinary men) and Abraham, without question, offers them his humble hospitality. As his reward, God bestows a miraculous pregnancy on the aged Abraham and Sarah, declaring that, through this act, Abraham will father God's chosen tribe on earth. This would also be consistent with Psalm 33.12: " Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance." God then sends his angels (who are kind of early incarnations of FBI agents) to investigate matters in Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham uses this opportunity to intervene with God on behalf of the wickedness of the people there: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" he asks.

It seems to me that this is the question the whole triptych asks—whether God, having made the world and having conferred on man both the blessing and the curse of free will, would destroy all of his creation in the face of human failing. This is the fundamental connection between these inner panels and the destructive flood depicted on the outer wings. Bosch's lesson, if there is one, seems to be that we can choose good over evil or we can be swept away. Man proposes, God disposes.

Hieronymus Bosch, *Last Judgment Triptych*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.9.1: Hieronymus Bosch, *Last Judgment Triptych*, 1504-08, overall dimensions 163 x 250 cm, central panel 163 x 128 cm, wings 163 x 60 cm (Akademie für bildenden Künste, Vienna)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









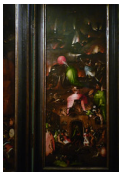





Figure 13.7.9.36: More Smarthistory images…

Gerard David, *The Virgin and Child with Saints and Donor*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.9.2: Gerard David, *The Virgin and Child with Saints and Donor*, c. 1510, oil on oak, 105.80 x 144.40 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Jan Gossaert, *Saint Luke Painting the Madonna*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

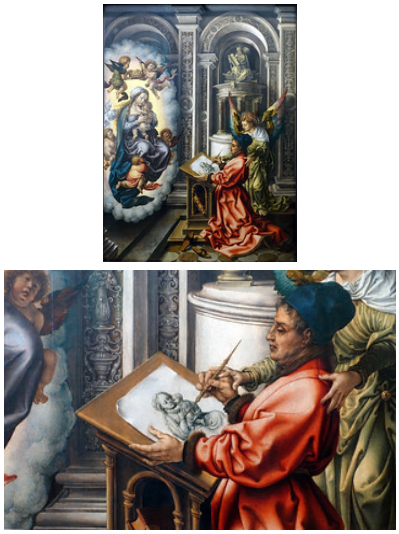


Figure 13.7.9.37: More Smarthistory images…

Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Dutch Proverbs*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.9.4: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Dutch Proverbs*, 1559, oil on oak, 117 x 163 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

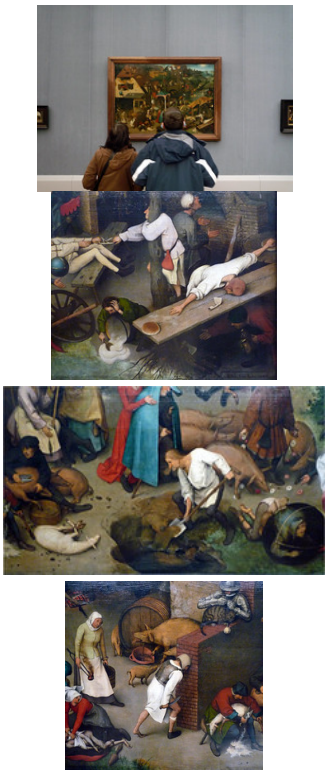


Figure 13.7.9.38: More Smarthistory images…

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Tower of Babel*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.9.5: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Tower of Babel*, 1563, oil on panel, 114 × 155 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

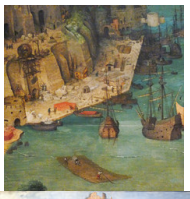
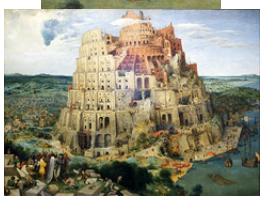










Figure 13.7.9.39: More Smarthistory images…

by DR. DAVID BOFFA



Video **13.7.9.6**: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 118 x 161 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Pieter Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* offers a bird's eye view of a world locked in winter that is nevertheless teeming with life, with hunters and their dogs and ice skating peasants and a wheeling crow and the busied preparations for the cold weather.



Figure **13.7.9.40**: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 162 x 117 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

The painting, usually interpreted as a genre scene (an image of daily life), features a snow-covered landscape that recedes dramatically to a row of jagged mountains in the distance, all under a blue-grey sky. In the lower left corner a trio of hunters and their pack of dogs return from a hunt. Beside them is an inn, and its rust-colored bricks and the bright yellow fire in front of it are a striking contrast to the whites and grays and ashy blues that dominate the painting.



Figure **13.7.9.41**: Hunters and inn (detail), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 162 x 117 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

The branches of three large trees in the foreground fan out like black capillaries against the sky and a few crows keep watch over the scene. From the left side of the painting the land slopes down and to the right, and beyond the foreground the landscape drops away sharply. The extensive middle ground and background, rendered in minute detail, depicts the natural and manmade world: a person carrying a load of sticks over a bridge, figures ice skating on a frozen pond, the snow-covered roofs of houses, innumerable tiny bare trees, and—far in the distance on the right side—the grey and snowy mountains, whose rough peaks seem to scratch at the sky. The right side of the painting is thus an uninterrupted view across the snowy valley. We see everything so clearly—even way into the distance it's possible to make out individual trees and rooftops—and so we sense the crisp and clear air of a winter day. Yet this is not at all an image from reality: there is no such landscape in the Netherlands (which is mostly flat and below sea level in some areas). Rather, Bruegel combined images from his surroundings—the inns and farmhouses and frozen ponds of Northern Europe—with a chain of jagged mountains reminiscent of the Alps, which he saw on a journey to Italy in the 1550s. The painting is thus a carefully constructed scene, drawn as much from the artist's imagination as from his surroundings.



Figure **13.7.9.42**: A person carrying a load of sticks over a bridge (detail), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 162 x 117 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Close looking: searching for the details

Bruegel's paintings reward close viewing, and in some instances—like his ***Fall of Icarus***, in which the figure of Icarus is nearly hidden in the background—careful looking is the only way to fully appreciate the complexity of the scene. This painting offers similar rewards: the longer and more attentively we examine the details the more we can draw from this image of a winter day.

The hunters and their dogs are the largest figures in the painting and their group takes up much of the lower left quarter of the image. But rather than a scene of triumph, Bruegel is showing us a rather unsuccessful hunt. The men trudge through the snow wearily; note, for example, how the figure closest to us leans forward slightly, as though using his own body to keep his momentum—and his spirits—going. Each man also has his head cast downward, in a pose reminiscent of defeat. Even the dogs appear downtrodden, as several in the extreme lower left hang their heads—a point exaggerated by their drooping ears.



Figure 13.7.9.43: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 162 x 117 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)



Figure 13.7.9.44: Limbourg Brothers, December, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly)

The group's low spirits can be explained by the fact that only one of them carries back a trophy: a rather small fox. Furthermore, a trail of rabbit tracks in front of the foremost hunter suggests that more prey have recently escaped them.

Hunting rights and specially-bred hunting dogs were often associated with the aristocracy in the Northern Renaissance, and we see examples of such imagery in works like the **Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry** (left), a prayer book painted by the Limbourg Brothers for the Duke of Berry, the brother of the King of France.

Yet in Bruegel's painting, the identity of the hunters is not so clear, as the rest of the painting's inhabitants are peasants, most of whom seem to be enjoying the winter day. The figures in front of the inn are preparing a fire for the singeing of a pig—a traditional December activity—and in the distance people take pleasure in the frozen lake: ice skating, playing hockey or a form of curling, and pulling companions on sleds.

There is thus a certain idyllic quality to Bruegel's portrayal of peasant life, and it may be that the hunters—whose bodies point us to the center of the painting—are more a means of guiding us into the painting rather than its primary focus (despite the title art historians have given the work).

The painting's commission and sources

Bruegel's painting, with its bare trees and people bundled against the cold and hard-packed snow, is part of a long tradition in Northern European art of portraying the months of the year and the activities that occurred during each month. Among the most famous examples is the cycle found in the

previously mentioned **Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry** (above). In that manuscript's small but incredibly detailed paintings, each month is represented in a full-page miniature with an outdoor landscape scene (except January, which shows an indoor feasting scene) and either a courtly or peasant activity, such as hunting one month and working the land in another.

In Bruegel's case the paintings were commissioned by a wealthy Antwerp banker named Niclaes Jongelinck. Rather than twelve paintings, Bruegel's cycle divided the year into six seasons (paintings for five survive—the other four are **The Harvesters**, **Return of the Herd**, **The Gloomy Day**, and **Haymaking**). He has also chosen to give as much or more emphasis to the landscapes than to the activities depicted, with particular attention paid to the shifting colors of the times of year, from dark brown to blues and greens to yellows. This image—of winter—is the last in the series, dominated by whites and pale blues. If we imagine how they might have been displayed together in a room in Jongelinck's house the effect would have been a chromatic progression through the seasons.

Bruegel: the artist and his enduring fame



Figure **13.7.9.45**: Ice-skating and other winter activities (detail), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 162 x 117 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Bruegel's focus on peasant activities in this cycle is something we might expect from him, as he is best known for his intimate, sensitive, and sometimes comical scenes of **peasant life**. Yet he was also a well-traveled and worldly artist who could craft complex scenes out of seemingly mundane activities. The painting's distant mountains (below), drawn from his travels south of the Alps and so clearly a construction of the artist's mind, are key to understanding how Bruegel has constructed the entire painting.



Figure **13.7.9.46**: Crow with distant mountains (detail), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Hunters in the Snow (Winter)*, 1565, oil on wood, 162 x 117 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

What appears to be a candid snapshot of daily life—a cold and overcast winter day—is in fact a finely orchestrated and panoramic vision of the world. The sloping diagonals on the left—the roofs and the ground—lead our eyes into the scene, and their rhythm is countered by a series of horizontal elements—bridges and land—and the diagonals of hills and mountains on the right.

The high horizon line suggests that we, the viewer, experience this scene from high above, the same perspective as might be enjoyed by the crows in the foreground trees' branches. This type of complex view—which combines an interest in human activity with the expansive and commanding vista of a map—defines much of Bruegel's work. His masterful ability to blend sweeping vistas with intimate portrayals of the human condition, and the mundane with the fantastical, is part of what makes his paintings—including *Hunters in the Snow*—so enduring. In replicating the world on a scale both large and small he seems to present a mirror to the human condition itself: continuously locked to life's day to day activities, yet often striving to see the world in all its glory in an instant.

The five extant paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in this series include:

Hunters in the Snow (Winter), 1565 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

The Gloomy Day, 1565 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Haymaking, 1565 (National Museum, Lobkowicz Palace, Prague)

The Harvesters, 1565 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

The Return of the Herd, 1565 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Additional resources:

This painting at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

This painting at the Google Cultural Institute

Pieter Bruegel the Elder on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn TImeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.9.47: More Smarthistory images…

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Peasant Wedding*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.9.7: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Peasant Wedding*, oil on canvas, 114 x 164 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.9.48: More Smarthistory images…

Pieter Aertsen, *Meat Stall*

by DR. IRENE SCHAUDIES



Figure 13.7.9.49: Pieter Aertsen, A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms, 1551, oil on panel, 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)



Figure 13.7.9.50: Ox head (detail), Pieter Aertsen, *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551, oil on panel, 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)

Even if you are not a vegetarian, this painting is bound to come as something of a shock. Anyone accustomed to purchasing meat in the clean, cold corridors of the supermarket—safely wrapped in plastic and utterly divorced from the living animal it once was—may feel the urge to shrink back from the vivid, frontal display of so much raw flesh, much of it with eyes, ears, mouths and tongues still attached.

The partially skinned ox head, in particular, seems to eye the viewer balefully, as if he or she were responsible for its death. You can almost hear the flies buzzing in the air…

Even more surprising, if you look in the background on the left, is a small scene depicting the Flight into Egypt (when Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus flee to Egypt because they learn that King Herod intends to kill the male infants in the area of Bethlehem). We see the Virgin Mary on her donkey reaching back to offer bread to a young beggar. Saint Joseph follows closely at her side. This charitable scene stands in stark contrast to the bloody abundance of meat in the foreground.



Figure 13.7.9.51: Flight into Egypt (detail), Pieter Aertsen, *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551, oil on panel, 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)



Figure 13.7.9.52: Tavern scene (detail), Pieter Aertsen, A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms, 1551, oil on panel, 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)

If we look closely though, in the right background, we see tavern scene that is more in keeping with this feeling of excess in the foreground. Here we see people eating mussels by a snug fire. A great carcass hangs in the same room, and a butcher (we recognize him as such thanks to his red coat, which in Antwerp could only be worn by guild members) appears to be adding water to the wine for his guests. But why would an artist depict meat at all, let alone in such an unsavory way and in combination with a religious scene?

The way of the flesh and the way of the spirit

The Dutch painter Pieter Aertsen, who worked for many years in Antwerp, was later renowned for his life-size market scenes with exuberant still life elements. Many scholars have commented on the bold originality of Aertsen's compositions, and rightly so. In the sixteenth century, religious or mythological scenes usually occupied pride of place in works of art, while everyday objects were considered mere accessories. In this and other roughly contemporary works like *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* (below), Aertsen has deliberately reversed this formula. He gave all the attention to the accessories, which seem to spill out of the picture and into the viewer's own space.



Figure 13.7.9.53: Pieter Aertsen, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, 1552, 101.5 x 60 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Aertsen certainly seems to have been the first to foreground meat in a prestigious, costly oil painting on a monumental size. However, he may also have been inspired to upend traditional hierarchies of subject matter (giving most of the attention to the still-life elements) by the painter and printmaker Lucas van Leyden's *Ecce homo* scene (*Ecce homo* means "behold the man" and refers to Pontius Pilate presenting the beaten Christ crowned with thorns before his crucifixion). Leyden, in *Christ Presented the People* (below), shows a great market square with a crowd in the foreground, while Christ himself has been relegated to the background.



Figure 13.7.9.54: Lucas van Leyden, *Christ Presented to the People*, c. 1510, copperplate engraving, 28.8 x 45.2 cm (The British Museum)



Figure 13.7.9.55: Crossed herring (detail), Pieter Aertsen, *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551, oil on panel 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)

This may be a comment on the arduous nature of spirituality: those who truly seek enlightenment must look hard, and turn their attention away from the things of this world. And indeed, in Aertsen's picture, the crossed herring on a pewter plate just above the ox's head—fish was associated with Lent, a period when the faithful abstained from meat—seem to point in the direction of the holy scene in the background, beyond the meat.

Other scholars have suggested that Aertsen's inversion of traditional hierarchies was inspired by sources from classical antiquity—though perhaps equally moralizing. The Roman satirist Juvenal, for example, chastised the lovers of lavish meals in his eleventh satire, lambasting their fondness for "stinking meat shops" instead of plain, wholesome food. Closer to Aertsen's own time, the philosopher Desiderius Erasmus used irony to make a

point: undesirable behavior is heaped with praise to throw its negative aspects into sharp relief, while the reader is treated to a good laugh. Erasmus does this to great effect in *In Praise of Folly* (1511), a book that Aertsen and his contemporaries may very well have read.

The art of rendering well



Figure **13.7.9.56**: Pieter Aertsen, *Market Woman with Vegetable Stall*, 1567, oil on wood (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)



Figure **13.7.9.57**: Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Flowers in a Wooden Vessel*, 1568, oil on wood, 98 x 73 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Aertsen's bold move can also be seen in light of his artistic context. Antwerp in the mid-sixteenth century was one of the greatest centers of mercantile trade at the time: populous, prosperous, and booming. It was the second largest city in northern Europe—smaller than Paris but bigger than London—and arguably also the wealthiest. Merchants came from around the world to deal in spices, staple goods, finance, and especially luxury goods like glass, fine textiles, precious furnishings, and works of art. The number of artists attracted to this concentration of wealth was considerable, and this in turn encouraged specialization, a situation that may also have encouraged Aertsen to flaunt his skill in painting lifelike elements such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, and meat in the market scenes for which he is now famous (see the image above).

Like so many other specialties we take for granted today: landscapes, flower pieces, scenes from everyday life, etc. market scenes were just beginning to emerge as subjects in their own right, independent of paintings that depicted mythological or religious scenes—which, by the way, Aertsen also painted in considerable numbers (see below), though not all of them survived the waves of iconoclasm (the destruction of images) that swept across northern Europe in the wake of the Protestant Reformation.



Figure 13.7.9.58: Pieter Aertsen, *The Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1560, oil on panel, 167.5 x 180 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Topical concerns



Figure 13.7.9.59: Two hands—symbol of Antwerp (detail), Pieter Aertsen, *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551, oil on panel 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)

Aertsen's originality and painterly skill would have been sufficient to charm an international connoisseur among Antwerp's wealthy merchant community, who came from countries as diverse as Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Poland, Germany, and of course Italy.

But for those familiar with Antwerp's tangled local politics, there are some highly specific messages embedded in this composition that would have been legible only to them. In the upper left-hand corner is a small representation of two hands—the symbol of the city of Antwerp—and chalked on the post next to it are symbols typical of guild marks belonging to specific individuals, though their identity remains a mystery.



Figure 13.7.9.60: Present-day view of the *Vleeshuis*, or Butchers' Hall, Antwerp, Belgium (photo: Ckiki Iwai, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Butchers' Guild in Antwerp was a very powerful institution that enjoyed the support of Emperor Charles V himself. It was one of the few guilds with a written charter, and succeeded in having its profession closed to outsiders: there could only be sixty-two officially recognized butchers in the city at any given time, and when a butcher passed away his post would go to his son or other close male relative. Anyone who wanted to buy meat in Antwerp had to buy it from the *Vleeshuis*, or "Meat Hall," an imposing building near the banks of the River Scheldt that was rivaled as a landmark only by the Church of Our Lady (now the cathedral of Antwerp), truly a sign of the guild's power. Nevertheless, the butchers' influence was coming

under increasing attack in 1551: butchers from outside the city had banded together to fight what they perceived as an unfair trade monopoly. They filed a lawsuit that was first overturned, then upheld, then appealed by the Butchers' Guild in the imperial courts—and the results were still pending when Aertsen painted his striking panel. Meat was a hot item indeed!



Figure **13.7.9.61**: Sign (detail), Pieter Aertsen, *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551, oil on panel 45 1/2 x 66 1/2″ / 115.6 x 168.9 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)

But there is more. At the upper right, posted on top of the meat stall, is a small sign in Dutch that, when translated, reads: "Land for sale out back: 154 rods, either by the piece or all at once." This text refers to an actual sale of land that took place in 1551, and a controversial one at that. It must have been important to the picture's original meaning, because the sign appears in all four, almost identical versions of the *Meat Stall* that Aertsen painted. To make a long story short, the city of Antwerp decided to develop what was then the southeast side of town. Land being in short supply, the city council forced the prestigious order of Augustinian nuns who ran the St. Elisabeth's hospital to sell their property at a loss. But the city bought too much acreage, so the surplus was sold to one Gillis van Schoonbeke, a notorious real estate developer whose activities were so unpopular that they even caused riots. At one point imperial troops had to be called in to stop the violence.



Figure **13.7.9.62**: Present-day view of the Gasthuis St Elisabeth (photo: **Himetop**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Given this background, the painting with its layered messages—all of which warn against greed and excess—must have seemed emblematic of the rapid social changes overtaking the city, which experienced unprecedented growth thanks to its booming international trade. Traditional groups and values, such as the charitable nuns and their inviolable property, or the venerable butchers and their hereditary rights, were under fire from powerful, wealthy entrepreneurs and the city's desire for economic growth, a matter of concern for all citizens.

Additional resources:

Works by Aertsen on the Google Art Project

Food and drink in European Painting, 1400-1800 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Still-life Painting in Northern Europe on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Kenneth M. Craig, "Pars Ergo Marthae Transit: Pieter Aertsen's 'Inverted' Paintings of 'Christ in the House of Martha and Mary,'" *Oud Holland*, vol. 97 (1983), pp. 25–39.

Elizabeth Alice Honig, *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Charlotte Houghton, "This Was Tomorrow: Pieter Aertsen's Meat Stall as Contemporary Art," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 86 (June 2004), pp. 278–300.

Ethan Matt Kavaler, "Pieter Aertsen's Meat Stall: Divers Aspects of the Market Piece." *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, volume 40. 1989, pp. 67–92.

Keith Moxey, "Interpreting Pieter Aertsen: The Problem of 'Hidden Symbolism," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, vol. 40 (1989), pp. 29–40.

Keith Moxey, *Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer and the Rise of Secular Painting in the Context of the Reformation* (New York: Garland, 1977).

Margaret A. Sullivan, “Bruegel the Elder, Aertsen, and the Beginnings of Genre,” *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 93 (June 2011), pp. 127–49.

Bernard van Orley and Pieter de Pannemaker, *The Last Supper*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.7.9.8**: Bernard van Orley and Pieter de Pannemaker, *The Last Supper*, ca. 1524–46 (design), ca. 1525–28 (woven), wool, silk, silver-gilt thread, 131 7/8 x 137 13/16″ / 335 x 350 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Additional resources:

View this work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s website

Germany and England

Cranach, Dürer, and Holbein—and all other artists after 1517—lived in a world forever changed by the Protestant Reformation.

1500 - 1600

Albrecht Dürer

Who was Albrecht Dürer?

by MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART



Figure **13.7.9.63**: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514, engraving, 23.81 x 18.57 cm (Mia)

Albrecht Dürer was born in Nuremberg on May 21, 1471. His father, a talented goldsmith, taught him the basics of drawing and metalworking, including the skill of engraving. The boy's aptitude led to his being apprenticed from 1486 to 1489 to Nuremberg's leading painter, Michael Wolgemut.

In addition to being a painter, Wolgemut was a prolific designer of woodcut prints, primarily used for book illustrations. His principal client was Anton Koberger, one of the leading publishers in Europe, as well as Dürer's godfather.



Figure **13.7.9.64**: Michael Wolgemut, *View of the City of Nuremberg*, 1493, from *The Nuremberg Chronicle* (Nuremburg: Anton Koberger) (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Following his apprenticeship, Dürer set out as a journeyman, traveling to great art centers in Germany and the Netherlands. His tour lasted four years. He had hoped to go to Colmar to meet Martin Schongauer, a famous painter and the leading engraver in Germany, but by the time Dürer arrived in Colmar, Schongauer had died. Fortunately, Schongauer's brothers gave Dürer access to the prints and drawings in his studio. Dürer went on to work with another of the brothers, a goldsmith in Basel.



Figure **13.7.9.64**: Martin Schongauer, German, about 1450-91, *Saint Sebastian*, c. 1480-90, engraving (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Dürer returned to Nuremberg in 1494. Within six months he had married and set off again, this time for Italy. During a sojourn of several months, he came into direct contact with the art and artists of the burgeoning Italian Renaissance. His studies of the works of Antonio Pollaiuolo, **Andrea Mantegna**, **Giovanni Bellini**, and others brought changes to his own art. He began to combine the structure and corporeality of Italian art with the profuse detail and emotive narration of northern European art.

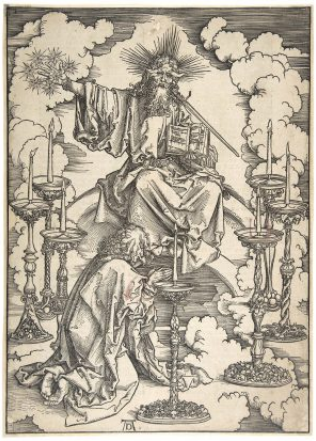


Figure 13.7.9.65: Albrecht Dürer, *The Seven Golden Candlesticks and the Seven Stars* from *The Apocalypse*, 1511, originally published 1498, woodcut, 39.53 x 28.26 cm (Minneapolis Institute of Art)

During the later 1490s his most remarkable project was an illustrated edition of *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, the Bible's *Book of Revelations*. The book, with its visionary, full-page woodcut prints, made Dürer one of the most famous men in Europe.

At the same time, Dürer perfected his skills in other disciplines, including both oil and watercolor painting, drawing, and above all, engraving. By his 30th birthday, Dürer was an engraver without peer, and remains so today. His studies of nature, proportion, and perspective, reaching their apogee in his studies of human anatomy, laid the foundation for brilliant engravings such as *Adam and Eve*, his self-conscious masterpiece of 1504.



Figure 13.7.9.66: Albrecht Dürer, Adam and Eve, 1504, engraving, 24.92 x 19.21 cm (Minneapolis Institute of Art)

Dürer traveled to Italy again from 1505 to 1507, possibly in an attempt to shut down copyists who were stealing his ideas. His renewed contact with Italian artists deepened his fascination with art theory, and he soon began intensive studies that would lead to the publication of detailed treatises on human proportion, applied geometry, and military fortification. Though the geometry treatise would not appear until 1525, he was working on it in the early 1510s, while also studying nature and preparing ***Melencolia I***. The wings of the angel in *Melencolia I* bring to mind his famous watercolor of a bird's wing (below), which he drew in 1512. *Melencolia I* is sometimes called Dürer's "summa" because it brings together so many of his interests and ideas.

Dürer's patrons included the uppermost reaches of society, including Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, who awarded Dürer's annual pension. Yet Dürer avoided becoming exclusively a court artist, preferring entrepreneurship. He continued to paint, but he clearly realized that the printing press was a more reliable source of income. As early as 1508, he wrote to a patron, "I shall stick to my engraving, and if I had done so before I should today be a richer man by 1,000 florins." Dürer employed agents, including his wife, Agnes, to sell his prints, thus freeing him to work on time-consuming projects.

In July 1520, not long after the death of the emperor, Dürer departed for a year-long trip to the Netherlands. He hoped to persuade the new Emperor Charles V to renew his pension. Along the way he basked in the great celebrity accorded him in city after city. He met other great artists, royals, and intellectuals. His diary from this trip reveals that he often gave prints, occasionally including *Melancolj* (as he called it) as gifts.



Figure 13.7.9.67: Albrecht Dürer, German, 1471-1528, *Wing of a Blue Roller*, 1512, watercolor (The Albertina Museum, Vienna)

After his return to Nuremberg, Dürer complained of his failing eyesight and stiffening hands. In later years, his productivity as an engraver slowed, but he continued to publish his prints. His earlier engravings have been found printed on papers from the 1520s. He died in 1528, leaving Agnes an estate of 6,874 florins, more than ten times the annual salary of the mayor of Nuremberg. The reprinting of Dürer's engraved plates and woodblocks continued for centuries, though they became increasingly incapable of producing such beautiful impressions as the one on display here.

Additional resources:

Works by Albrecht Dürer at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia)

Essay on Albrecht Dürer from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Essay on Albrecht Dürer from the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

"The Strange World of Albrecht Dürer" from the Clark Institute

Albrecht Dürer, *The Triumphal Arch*

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

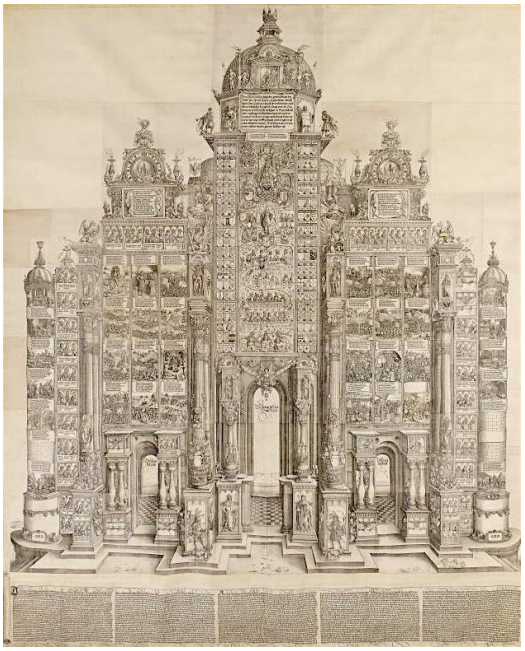


Figure **13.7.9.68**: Albrecht Dürer and others, *The Triumphal Arch*, c. 1515, woodcut printed from 192 individual blocks, 357 x 295 cm, Germany © Trustees of the British Museum.

The Triumphal Arch is one of the largest prints ever produced. It was commissioned by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519). The program was devised by the court historian and mathematician, Johann Stabius, who explains underneath that it was constructed after the model of "the ancient triumphal arches of the Roman Emperors."



Figure of Sicambria—Maximilian's genealogical tree is traced back to the first King of France, Clovis I, and the three female representations of the nations of Troy, Sicambia (in the lower Rhine) and Francia), detail, Albrecht Dürer and others, The Triumphal Arch, c. 1515, woodcut printed from 192 individual blocks, 357 x 295 cm, Germany © Trustees of the British Museum.

Above the central arch, entitled "Honor and Might," is a genealogy of Maximilian in the form of a family tree (above). Above the left arch, "Praise," and the right arch, "Nobility," are represented events from his life. These are flanked by busts of emperors and kings on the left (image, left), and a column of Maximilian's ancestors on the right. The outermost towers on either side show scenes from the private life of Maximilian.



Figure \(\PageIndex{70}\): Rudolf I (1217-1291) was the first Habsburg to be crowned King of the Romans. He played a key role in raising the status of the Habsburg family among the German feudal dynasties of central Europe (detail), Albrecht Dürer and others, The Triumphal Arch, c. 1515, woodcut printed from 192 individual blocks, 357 x 295 cm, Germany © Trustees of the British Museum (detail), Albrecht Dürer and others, The Triumphal Arch, c. 1515, woodcut printed from 192 individual blocks, 357 x 295 cm, Germany © Trustees of the British Museum.

The architect and painter Jörg Kölderer designed the overall appearance of the structure, and Dürer designed the individual scenes and architectural elements, some of which he sub-contracted to his pupils Hans Springinklee and Wolf Traut, and Albrecht Altdorfer of Regensburg.

The date 1515, which appears on the *Arch*, refers to the completion of the designs; the blocks were cut by Hieronymus Andreae of Nuremberg between 1515 and 1517. This impression belongs to the first edition of 1517-18 when about seven hundred sets were printed, but they are today very rare. It is undecorated apart from the word Halt in the German Halt Mass ("Keep to moderation") which is gilded.

Additional resources:

View details on the British Museum website

G. Bartrum (ed.), *Albrecht Dürer and his legacy* (London and N.J., The British Museum Press and Princeton University Press, 2002).

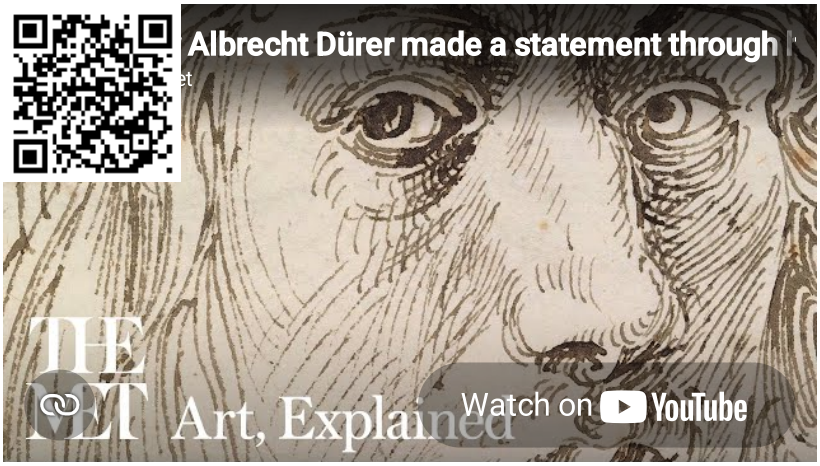
E. Panofsky, *The life and art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton University Press, 1945, 1971).

G. Bartrum, *German Renaissance prints* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

© Trustees of the British Museum

Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait, Study of a Hand and a Pillow* (recto); *Six Studies of Pillows* (verso)

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.7.9.9**: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait, Study of a Hand and a Pillow* (recto); *Six Studies of Pillows* (verso), 1493, pen and brown ink, 10 15/16 x 7 15/16″ / 27.8 x 20.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait* (1498)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.9.10**: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1498, oil on panel, 52 x 41 cm (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid)

Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait* (1500)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.9.11**: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait*, 1500, 67.1 x 48.9cm (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

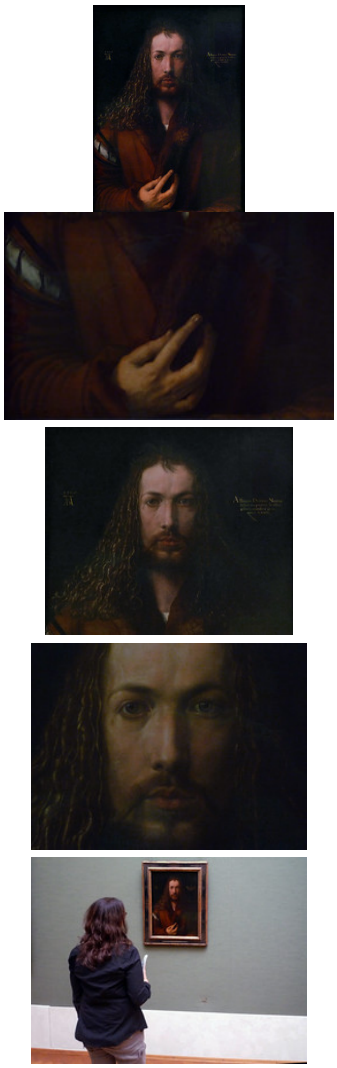


Figure **13.7.9.71**: More Smarthistory images…

Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON



Figure **13.7.9.72**: Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1498, woodcut, 15-1/4 x 11-7/16″ / 38.8 x 29.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Cowboy movies

Albrecht Dürer's woodcut, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, always reminds me of my lifelong love of Hollywood cowboy movies. American westerns are almost all predicated on Christian themes, and riddled with simple symbolic numbers. Maybe you are familiar with the 1960 Western *The Magnificent Seven* and their connection to the Seven Virtues? And in terms of the Seven Vices, in the 2007 remake of *3.10 to Yuma*, the 'villain,' Ben Wade, is trailed by six members of his outfit who try to free him from his captors—his release would restore their numbers to seven (and need I point out that ten minus three—the 3.10 of the title— is seven?). In the original poster for *High Noon*, Gary Cooper confronts four villains. This is why, for me, Durer's *Four Horsemen*, drawn from the *Book of Revelation* (the last book of the New Testament which tells of the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom of God), have always been the sinister apocalyptic cowboys of world-ending destruction; Conquest, War, Pestilence (or Famine) and Death itself.

Of course, that's not at all what Dürer intended. The image was made as one of a series of fifteen illustrations for a 1498 edition of the *Apocalypse*, a subject of popular interest at the brink of any new millennium. In 1511, after the world had failed to end, the plates were republished and further cemented Dürer's enduring fame as a print-maker.



Figure **13.7.9.73**: Detail, Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1498

The horsemen

In the text of *Revelation*, the main distinguishing feature of the four horses is their color; white for conquest, red for war, black for pestilence and/or famine, and pale (from 'pallor') for death (Clint Eastwood, *Pale Rider*, anyone?). The riders each arrive armed with a rather obvious attribute; conquest with a bow, war with a sword, and a set of balances for pestilence/famine. Dürer's pale rider carries a sort of pitchfork or trident, despite the fact that he's given no weapon in the Biblical account; he simply unleashes hell.

Here's the text from *Revelation*, chapter 6:

The First Seal—Rider on White Horse

Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

The Second Seal—War

When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

The Third Seal—Famine

When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand…"

The Fourth Seal—Death

When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The quality of Dürer's woodcut is breathtaking; one hears and feels the furor of the clattering hooves and the details, shading and purity of form are astonishing. Dürer's unique genius as a woodcut artist was his ability to conceive such complex and finely detailed images in the negative—woodcut is a relief process in which one must cut away the substance of the design to preserve the outlines. Before Dürer it was often a rather crude affair. No one could draw woodblocks with the finesse of Dürer (much of the cutting was done by skilled craftsmen following Dürer's complex outlines). The images are astonishingly detailed and textural, as finely tuned as drawings. So influential was Dürer's graphic output, in both woodcut and engraving, that his prints became popular models for succeeding generations of painters. He was no mean painter himself, producing a varied and articulate array of self-portraits, as well as religious works, and turning his mind and his hand to the production of an influential book on perspective. He was a humanist, painter, print-maker, theorist and keen observer of nature and is therefore often referred to in popular discourse as the 'Leonardo of the North'—although his actual output was considerably greater than that Italian Renaissance master.



Figure **13.7.9.74**: Detail, Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1498

Dürer's particular genius here is the translation of the distinctive colors of the horses into a black-and-white medium, which he achieves by very distinctly drawing their various weapons and by placing them in order from background to foreground, slightly overlapping, so that they ride across the composition in the same order as they appear in the text. This places the apparition of Death, a skeletal monster on a skeletal horse, in the foreground, trampling the figures in his path.



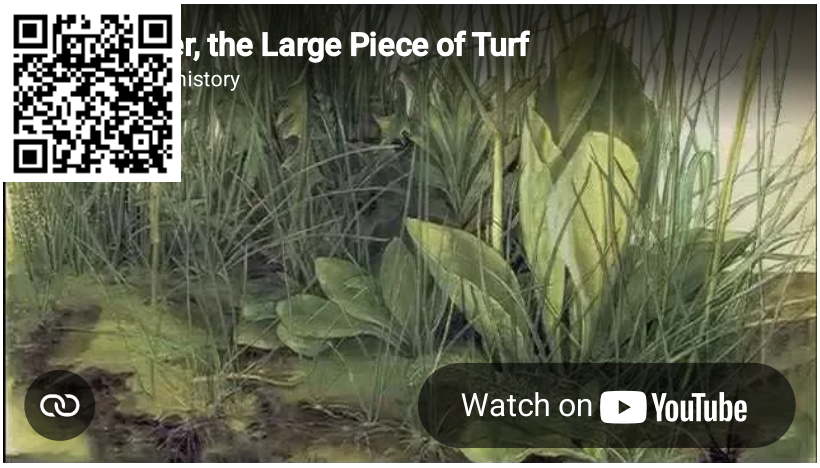
Figure **13.7.9.75**: Detail, Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1498

In the wake of Death's trampling hooves, a monstrous, fanged reptilian creature noshes on the mitre of a Bishop, a prefiguration, perhaps, of the imminence of the Protestant Reformation that would sweep across northern Europe in opposition to the excesses of the church and papacy.

In this context, the thundering hooves of the horses could presage religious reform (Dürer's *Four Apostles*, painted for Nuremberg's town hall, bears inscriptions from the texts of Martin Luther), although Luther himself did not approve of the visionary nature of *Revelation*, declaring it, "neither apostolic nor prophetic."

Albrecht Dürer, *The Large Piece of Turf*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.9.12**: Albrecht Dürer, *The Large Piece of Turf*, 1503, watercolor and gouache on paper, 16-1/8 x 12-5/8 inches (41 x 32 cm) (Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna)

Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*

by DR. BONNIE NOBLE

Is there anything left to say about Adam and Eve, quite literally the oldest story in the book? The engraving of *Adam and Eve* of 1504 by the German renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer recasts this familiar story with nuances of meaning and artistic innovation. In the picture, Adam and Eve stand together in a dense, dark forest. Far from the garden evoked in Genesis, this forest is distinctly German, the dark woods of the devils and spooks of Grimm's fairy tales. Foreign and unexpected motifs intrude into this German wood.



Figure **13.7.9.76**: Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, engraving (fourth state), 25.1 x 20 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

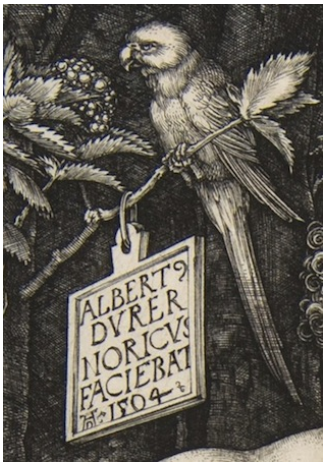


Figure **13.7.9.77**: Tropical bird and sign announcing artist's name (detail), Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, engraving (fourth state), 25.1 x 20 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The figures

Despite the chill of the forest, the two human figures appear nude. Their bodies are frontal, and they stand in a classical contrapposto, or counterpoise, where the weight of the body is shifted onto one foot. The corresponding shift in hips and shoulders creating a convincing illusion of a body capable of movement but temporarily at rest. Despite this apparent naturalism, their heads are turned to the side as they gaze at one another. This twisting configuration of head and body is distinctly artificial. The naturalizing contrapposto clashing with the artificiality of the rest of the pose establishes a pattern of contradictions that run throughout the picture. A seemingly astutely observed tree becomes distinctly odd, as we recognize that Eve is plucking an apple from a tree with fig leaves. A parrot, a tropical bird, perches on a branch to the viewer's left. Six other animals stroll disinterestedly through or stand about—an elk, ox, cat, rabbit, mouse, and goat.



Figure **13.7.9.78**: Graphic identifying the placement of animals (detail), Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, engraving (fourth state), 25.1 x 20 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The cartelino or small sign hanging from branch Adam grasps contains its own contradiction. It proudly identifies the artist as a citizen of the Franconian city of Nuremberg (Noricus), but does so in Latin, the language of the Mediterranean, of the Roman Empire and of the Italian Renaissance. How does this curious blend of motifs further the story of Adam and Eve?

A departure from Genesis

The answer is that the picture tells us primarily about the Renaissance, about Germany, and about Dürer himself rather than the text of Genesis, from which it departs most strikingly. The poses of the two human figures are contrived to show off this German artist's knowledge of classical (Greco-Roman) proportions. Based on the ideals of the Roman architect Vitruvius, the proportions of the face—for instance the distance from forehead to chin—determine the ideal proportions of the rest of the body. Dürer sacrifices naturalism to showcase his mastery of Vitruvian ideals.

Symbols

Colorful, tropical parrots were collectors items in Germany, and they were also symbols in art. The call of the parrot was believed to sound like "Eva-Ave" —Eve and Ave Maria ("Hail Mary"—the name of a prayer in honor of the Virgin Mary). This word play underpins the Christian interpretation of the story of the Fall of Humanity by characterizing the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, as the antidote for Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. The other animals bear other symbolic meanings. The elk, ox, rabbit, and cat exemplify the four humors or human personality types, all of which correlate with specific fluids in the body.

- Melancholic: elk, black bile
- Phlegmatic: ox, phlegm
- Sanguine: rabbit, blood
- Choleric: cat, yellow bile

Only Adam and Eve are in perfect balance internally. After the Fall, one humor predominates in everyone, throwing our temperaments into imbalance. Dürer's placid animals signify that in this moment of perfection in the garden, the human figures are still in a state of equilibrium. The cat does not yet chase the mouse, and the goat (a reference to the scapegoat of the bible) is still standing on his mountain perch.

A German enthralled by the classical tradition

The print allows Dürer to express his personal and cultural concerns. Proud of his German identity (Albert Dvrer Noricvs or "Albert Dürer of Nuremberg"), the artist is nonetheless enthralled by Italian and classical tradition. The German forest is ennobled by classically proportioned figures who actually reference Greek sculptures of Venus and Apollo, and anchored in tradition with the symbolism of the humors. In Renaissance fashion, the perfect physical proportions of the body correlate with the interior harmony of the humors.

Mechanical reproduction

The advent of mechanically reproducible media, both woodcuts and intaglio prints, was a revelation for Dürer and his entire world. Into a world where each image was handmade, one of a kind, and destined for one location, mechanical reproducibility offered something entirely different. Pictures made in multiples, such as the *Adam and Eve* engraving, meant that the ideas and designs of a German artist could be known in other regions and countries by large numbers of people. German artists could learn about classical art without traveling to Italy. More kinds of people could afford more pictures, because prints are easier to produce and typically less expensive than paintings. The traditional, direct contract between artist and patron, where one object was hand-produced for one patron and one place, gave way to a situation where multiple images could be seen by unknown viewers under an infinite variety of circumstances.

A scientific mind

Like his older contemporary Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer had a curious intellect and scientific mind in addition to being an artist. Also like Leonardo, Dürer's surpassing skill and inspiration made him a leading artist of the Renaissance. After his trips to Venice and his encounter with the Italian Renaissance, Dürer embraced the ideals of the Renaissance that he experienced first hand while continuing to celebrate his German heritage. Dürer was to master painting and surpass all others in printmaking, both relief and intaglio. Ultimately he would rely on his prints for profit and recognition. Dürer not only experienced the transformation from Gothic to Renaissance, he was an agent of that change.

Additional resources:

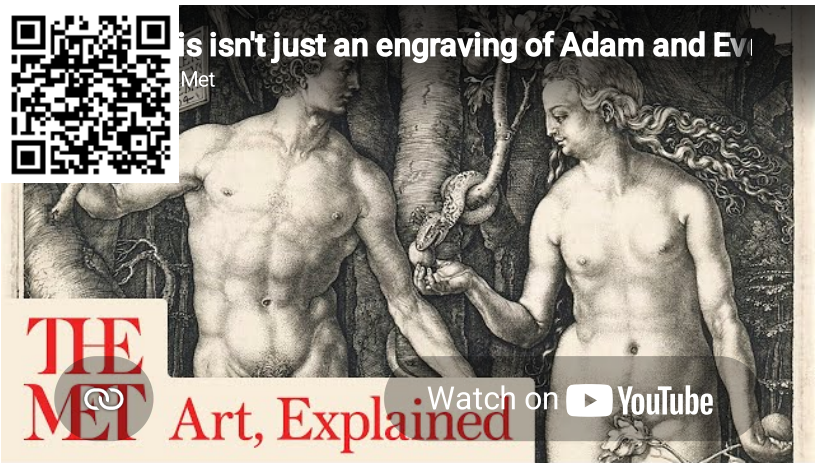
This print in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

A short video on this print from the Clark Art Institute

This work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video 13.7.9.13: Albrecht Dürer, Adam and Eve, 1504, engraving, 9 7/8 x 7 7/8″ / 25.1 x 20 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Additional resources:

View this work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website

Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia*

by DR. BONNIE NOBLE



Figure 13.7.9.79: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*,1514, engraving, 24 x 18.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Albrecht Dürer is the rare artist who truly deserves to be called genius. Genius, however, is tricky business. Dürer's intellect, introspection, and unrelenting perfectionism may have driven him to a state of melancholia—what is now known as depression. Dürer's famed Melencolia engraving of 1514 has been called the artist's psychological self-portrait, and indeed the image does convey the terrible struggle of high expectations and debilitating inertia, when excessive introspection paralyzes the imagination.

Sunken in despair

This personification of melancholy is strong and capable yet immobile, chin in hand, the figure appears sunken in despair. Building tools are scattered about—compass, saw, nails, plane—yet the figure leaves them there untouched.

The figure is androgynous; the female pronoun is used here in keeping with the gender of the word melancholia, but some art historians believe the figure to be male. Her strong, muscular, substantial body and delicate wings epitomize her dilemma. She aspires to flight, yet is too heavy for her tiny wings to lift. Perhaps this is an allegory of hubris—the dangerous conceit that a mere human may become like a god. Flight is only for gods—as the unfortunate Icarus learned when he flew too close to the sun and the wax in his self-fashioned wings melted. The limits of mass and volume, of being a person in the world, prevent Melencolia's flight—physical or creative. In a more prosaic fashion, this situation is familiar to anyone facing a demanding project. The desk is clear, the computer is on, books are in arm's reach…and nothing happens.

Melencolia's inertia has created chaos and neglect. Her creative frustration renders her unable to accomplish the simplest of tasks, such as feeding the malnourished dog who has grown thin from neglect. The image exudes physical and intellectual vertigo. Like the artist, we cannot quite figure out what to do, or where to look, or where we are. Are we indoors or out? Where does the ladder start? And where does it stop?



Figure 13.7.9.80: Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Jerome in His Study*, 1514, engraving, 24.6 x 18.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Order and confusion

If we compare the Melencolia to another of Dürer 's master engravings, *Saint Jerome in his Study*, the chaos of Melancholy's predicament comes into high relief. Jerome's well appointed study glows with light, peace and calm. The saint works in the pleasant warmth of his study on his translation of the Bible from the original languages into Latin. Objects are orderly, though not rigidly so. The saint's work is meditative rather than burdensome. He is unhurried—indeed the skull and hourglass, reminders of death and the passage of time—create no urgency or fear. Jerome has come to accept mortality and without fuss or worry, and he occupies himself exclusively with the matter at hand.



Figure **13.7.9.81**: Detail, Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*,1514, engraving, 24 x 18.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Compare the order of Jerome's study to the scattered tools and scattered mind of *Melencolia*. Space itself is thrown into confusion. The polyhedron in the center of the composition turns the picture into a parody of a neatly organized Renaissance picture constructed according to the laws of one-point **linear perspective**. The polyhedron conceals the horizon, the starting point for linear perspective, a subject Dürer wrote about and used with aplomb. Rather than tidy orthogonals converging in vanishing point, the lines implied by the edges of the polyhedron zoom in all directions like scattering mercury.

One can imagine Melencolia tripping should she try to stand up because the space itself is in turmoil. Jerome's contented lion and Melencolia's neglected dog exemplify the contrast of productive calm and agitated disfunction. (Legend says that Jerome plucked a thorn from the lion's paw and the he became Jerome's trusty companion forever after.)

Melancholy and artists



Figure **13.7.9.82**: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait or Portrait of the Artist Holding a Thistle*, oil on parchment pasted on canvas, 56 x 44 cm (Louvre)

Melencolia is a flagship picture for Renaissance melancholy, a temperament that was increasingly tied to creativity and the construction of the artistic personality. During this period, Melancholy was divided up into three types; the Roman number I in this print likely refers to the category associated with artists.

While melancholy was seen purely as illness in the Middle Ages, the result of too much black bile, Renaissance thinkers began to see it as a badge of honor—the mark and burden of genius. This evolving notion of melancholy and its implications for the "artistic temperament" are evident in Dürer's growth as an artist. His early self-portrait of 1494 bears the inscription "My affairs must go as ordained on high" ("1493 (D.H.); MIN SACH DIE, GAT ALS ES OBEN SCHTAT").

This phrase, emphasizing fate and duty, perfectly expresses the late Gothic mentality of fulfilling divine and parental obligations rather than seeking fulfillment as an individual person. Individuality becomes particularly poignant for Dürer after his encounter with the Italian Renaissance in Italy.

Dürer's diaries tell of his fascination not only with Italian art but with the status of the Italian artist. Italian artists were conceded expressive identities and rewarded with status and regard as intellectuals, while in Germany artists often remained respectable but anonymous artisans.

Additional resources:

Dürer, *Melencolia* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

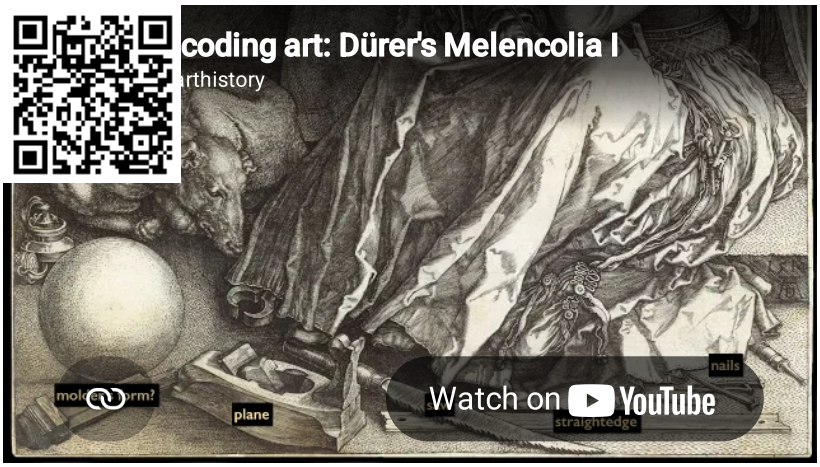
Dürer, *St. Jerome in his Study* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dürer, *Self-Portrait of the Artist Holding a Thistle* at the Louvre

Dürer on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Decoding art: Dürer's *Melencolia I*

by THOMAS E. RASSIEUR, MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART and DR. NARAELLE HOHENSEE



Video **13.7.9.14**: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514, engraving, 24.45 x 19.37 cm (Minneapolis Institute of Art). Based on research generously provided by Thomas E. Rassieur at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and narrated by Dr. Naraelle Hohensee

Additional resources:

This artwork with additional digital resources at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia)

What is Melencolia?

by MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

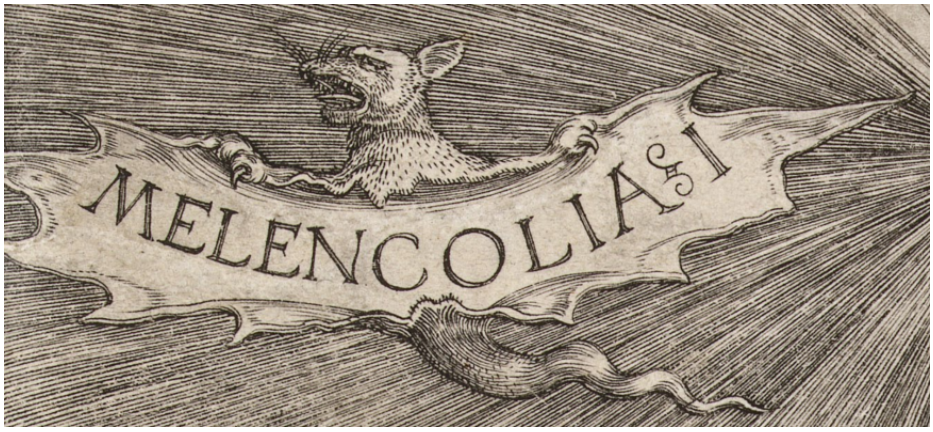


Figure **13.7.9.83**: Detail from Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514 (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**)

What is Melencolia?

Melencolia is a variant spelling of "melancholy," which means sadness. It was seen as one of the four humors, or temperaments, determining one's personality or mental state. The four include choleric (quick to anger), phlegmatic (calm), sanguine (cheerful), and melancholy. Melancholy was

believed to result from an excess of a bodily fluid known as “black bile.” Though understanding of the underlying mechanism has changed, today’s physicians have come to accept chemistry’s role in mental illness.



Figure **13.7.9.84**: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514, engraving, 23.81 x 18.57 cm (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**)

Dürer drew his understanding of melancholy from the writings of Marsilio Ficino, a prominent Italian philosopher. A melancholic himself, Ficino saw both pluses and minuses to the condition’s tendency to stimulate thought and emotion. Melancholy could drive one mad, yet it also produced the sensitivity required for creativity. Ficino wrote, “All truly outstanding men, whether distinguished in philosophy, in statecraft, in poetry or in the arts, are melancholics.”

In his print, Dürer specified Melencolia I, or the first form of melancholy. He must have had access to treatises by German author Cornelius Agrippa. Agrippa, who explored the realm of esoteric knowledge (including astrology, the occult, and magic), divided melancholy into three levels. Level One, the lowest, governed the imagination and pertained to artists. Level Two controlled the reason of scientists and physicians. Level Three governed the spirit or intuitive thought of theologians (and certainly Agrippa himself). Ficino further related melancholy to Saturn—both the planet and the god. Even today, we might call a gloomy person “saturnine.”



Figure 13.7.9.85: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1491-92, pen and ink (Graphische Sammlung der Universität, Erlangen)

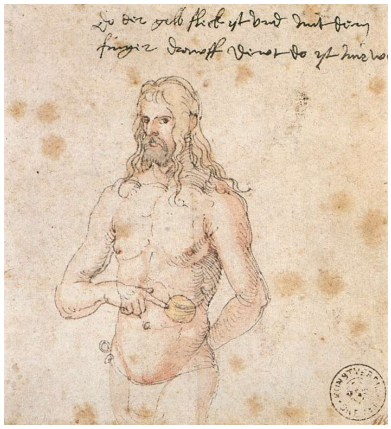


Figure 13.7.9.86: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait when Ill*, c. 1520, pen and ink (Kunsthalle Bremen)

Was Dürer Melancholic?

At times, yes.

Even as a young artist he drew a remarkably expressive self-portrait in which his mood is evident. Though the dating is uncertain, another drawing is often placed around 1520–21. In the spring of 1521, during his trip to the Netherlands, Dürer became very ill, and the illness lingered:

In the third week after Easter I was seized by a hot fever, great weakness, nausea, and headache. And before, when I was in Zeeland, a strange sickness came over me, such as I have never heard of from any man, and I still have this sickness.

Presumably he made this drawing to show a doctor the nature of his ailment. The inscription reads, “There, where the yellow spot is located, and where I point my finger, there it hurts.” He points to his spleen. He may have contracted malaria, which can cause that organ to swell and brings on the other symptoms he described. The spleen used to be considered the source of “black bile.” The association was so close that an archaic definition of the English word “splenetic” is “melancholy.

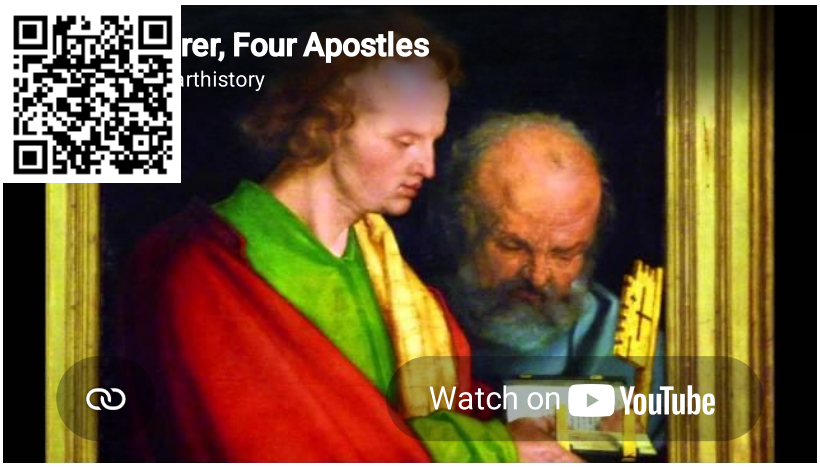
Additional resources:

Melencolia I at The Minneapolis Institute of Art

Mitchell B. Merback, *Perfection’s Therapy: An Essay on Albrecht Dürer’s Melencolia I* (MIT Press, 2018)

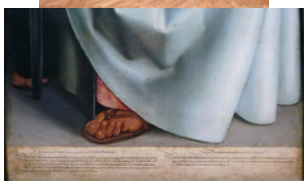
Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Apostles*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

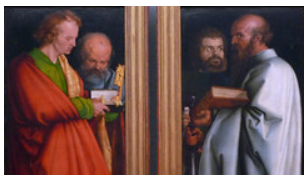


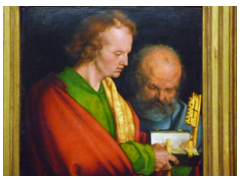
Video 13.7.9.15: Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Apostles*, 1526, oil on wood, 7′ 1″ x 2′ 6″ (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:






https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88728

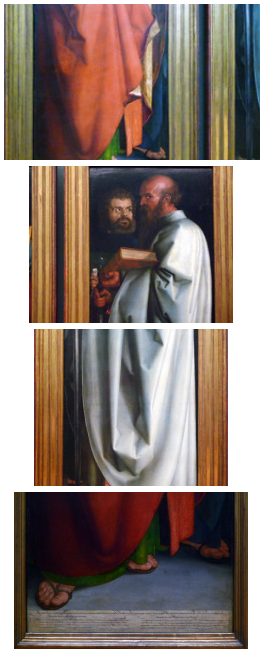


Figure 13.7.9.87: More Smarthistory images…

Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts and engravings

by DR. DAVID DROGIN and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.9.16: Albrecht Dürer, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, ca. 1497-98, and *St. Jerome in his Study*, 1514

Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON



Figure **13.7.9.88**: Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, view in the chapel of the Hospital of Saint Anthony, Isenheim, c. 1510-15, oil on wood, 9′ 9 1/2″ x 10′ 9″ (center panel) (Unterlinden Museum, Colmar, France) (Photo: Lars Nilse, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Object of devotion

If one were to compile a list of the most fantastically weird artistic productions of Renaissance Christianity, top honors might well go to Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece.

Constructed and painted between 1512 and 1516, the enormous moveable altarpiece, essentially a box of statues covered by folding wings, was created to serve as the central object of devotion in an Isenheim hospital built by the Brothers of St. Anthony. St. Anthony was a patron saint of those suffering from skin diseases. The pig who usually accompanies him in art is a reference to the use of pork fat to heal skin infections, but it also led to Anthony's adoption as a patron saint of swineherds, totally unrelated to his reputation for healing and as the patron of basket-weavers, brush-makers and gravediggers (he first lived as an anchorite, a type of religious hermit, in an empty sepulcher).

At the Isenheim hospital, the Antonine monks devoted themselves to the care of sick and dying peasants, many of them suffering from the effects of ergotism, a disease caused by consuming rye grain infected with fungus. Ergotism, popularly known as St. Anthony's fire, caused hallucinations, skin infection and attacked the central nervous system, eventually leading to death. It is perhaps not incidental to Grünewald's vision for his altarpiece that the hallucinogen LSD was eventually isolated from the same strain of fungus.



Figure **13.7.9.89**: Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece* (fully open position, sculptures by Nicolas of Hagenau), 1510-15

Sculpted altar

Sculpted wooden altars were popular in Germany at the time. At the heart of the altarpiece, Nicolas of Hagenau's central carved and gilded ensemble consists of rather staid, solid and unimaginative representations of three saints important to the Antonine order; a bearded and enthroned St. Anthony flanked by standing figures of St. Jerome and St. Augustine. Below, in the carved predella, usually covered by a painted panel, a carved Christ stands at the center of seated apostles, six to each side, grouped in separate groups of three. Hagenau's interior ensemble is therefore symmetrical, rational, mathematical and replete with numerical perfections – one, three, four and twelve.



Figure **13.7.9.90**: Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece* (closed), 1510-15

Painted panels

Grünewald's painted panels come from a different world; visions of hell on earth, in which the physical and psychological torments that afflicted Christ and a host of saints are rendered as visions wrought in dissonant psychedelic color, and played out by distorted figures—men, women, angels and demons—lit by streaking strident light and placed in eerie other-worldly landscapes. The painted panels fold out to reveal three distinct ensembles. In its common, closed position the central panels close to depict a horrific, night-time Crucifixion.



Figure **13.7.9.91**: Crucifixion (detail), Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, 1510-15

The macabre and distorted Christ is splayed on the cross, his hands writhing in agony, his body marked with livid spots of pox. The Virgin swoons into the waiting arms of the young St. John the Evangelist while John the Baptist, on the other side (not commonly depicted at the Crucifixion), gestures towards the suffering body at the center and holds a scroll which reads "he must increase, but I must decrease." The emphatic physical suffering was intended to be thaumaturgic (miracle performing), a point of identification for the denizens of the hospital. The flanking panels depict St. Sebastian, long known as a plague saint because of his body pocked by arrows, and St. Anthony Abbot.



Figure **13.7.9.92**: Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece* (second position), 1510-15

The second position emphasizes this promise of resurrection. Its panels depict the Annunciation, the Virgin and Child with a host of musical angels, and the Resurrection. The progression from left to right is a highlight reel of Christ's life.



Figure 13.7.9.93: Detail of the Lamentation (predella), Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*,1510-15

In the predella panel is a Lamentation, the sprawling and horrifyingly punctured dead body of Christ is presented as an invitation to contemplate mortality and resurrection.

Idiosyncratic visions



Figure 13.7.9.94: Virgin and child (detail), Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, 1510-15

All three scenes are, however, highly idiosyncratic and personal visions of Biblical exegesis; the musical angels, in their Gothic bandstand, are lit by an eerie orange-yellow light while the adjacent Madonna of Humility sits in a twilight landscape lit by flickering, fiery atmospheric clouds.



Figure 13.7.9.95: Resurrection and Annunciation panels , Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, 1510-15

The Resurrection panel is the strangest of these inner visions. Christ is wreathed in orange, red and yellow body halos and rises like a streaking fireball, hovering over the sepulcher and the bodies of the sleeping soldiers, a combination of Transfiguration, Resurrection and Ascension.



Figure **13.7.9.96**: Far left and far right panels seen when altarpiece is fully open (here illustrated sided-by-side). The Temptations of Saint Anthony (left), Anthony visited by Saint Paul (right), Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, 1510-15

Hybrid demons

Grünewald saves his most esoteric visions for the fully open position of the altar, in the two inner panels that flank the central sculptures. On the left, St. Anthony is visited in the blasted-out wilderness by St. Paul (the first hermit of the desert)— the two are about to be fed by the raven in the tree above, and Anthony will later be called upon to bury St. Paul. The meeting cured St. Anthony of the misperception that he was the first desert hermit, and was therefore a lesson in humility.



Figure **13.7.9.97**: Temptations of Saint Anthony panel (detail), Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, 1510-15

In the final panel, Grünewald lets his imagination run riot in the depiction of St. Anthony's temptations in the desert; sublime hybrid demons, like Daliesque dreams, torment Anthony's waking and sleeping hours, bringing to life the saint's torment and mirroring the physical and psychic suffering of the hospital patients.

Grünewald's mastery of medieval monstrosity echoes and evokes Hieronymus Bosch and has inspired artists ever since. The entire altarpiece is a paean to human suffering and an essay on faith and the hope for heaven in the troubled years before the Reformation.

We couldn't verify the security of your connection.

Access to this content has been restricted. Contact your internet service provider for help.

Musée Unterlinden from Musée Unterlinden on Vimeo.

Lucas Cranach the Elder

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Law and Gospel (Law and Grace)*

by DR. BONNIE NOBLE

How to get to heaven?



Figure 13.7.9.98: St. John the Baptist directs naked man to Christ (detail), Lucas Cranach, *The Law and the Gospel*, c. 1529, oil on wood, 82.2 × 118 cm / 32.4 × 46.5 in (Schlossmuseum, Gotha, Germany)

How exactly do you get to heaven? Good deeds? Can you get yourself to heaven on your own merit or do you have to sit back and let God do the work? These questions caused international controversy, mass looting, vandalism, and killing in the sixteenth century. One casualty of the violence and chaos was the destruction of thousands of works of religious art. Iconoclasts (breakers of likenesses/images) stormed through churches, destroying every work of art they could get their hands on. How did heaven get to be so controversial?

The most influential image of the Lutheran Reformation

These questions are answered in a surprising kind of picture called *The Law and the Gospel* (full image below, detail above), originally painted by the artist Lucas Cranach the Elder in 1529. *The Law and the Gospel* is the single most influential image of the Lutheran Reformation. The

Reformation, initiated by Martin Luther in 1517, was originally an attempt to reform the Catholic Church. However, reform quickly became rebellion, as people began to question the power and practices of the Catholic Church, which had been the only church in western Europe up until Luther.

The role of art

A decisive difference between Catholics and followers of Luther was the question of how to get to heaven, and what role, if any, religious art could play. The Catholic Church insisted that believers could take action to vouchsafe their salvation by doing good deeds, including making financial donations and paying for elaborate art to decorate Christian churches. Luther, however, insisted that salvation was in God's hands, and all the believer had to do was to open up and have faith. As people became disillusioned with Catholic teaching, they grew angry about the ways the Catholic Church became rich in money, art, and power. When reform became impossible and rebellion the only course of action, furious, frustrated believers directed their anger at works of art, an easy and powerful target.

Other reformers followed Luther's example and staged rebellions against the Catholic Church. Some reformers took a strong position against religious art, forbidding it entirely. Luther however was more moderate, and believed that some religious art was acceptable provided it taught the right lessons, and this is where The Law and the Gospel comes in.

Luther's ideas in visual form

In consultation with Martin Luther, Lucas Cranach the Elder produced *The Law and the Gospel* (below). All of Cranach's Lutheran painting rests upon this pictorial type, which also influenced other artists. *The Law and the Gospel* explains Luther's ideas in visual form, most basically the notion that heaven is reached through faith and God's grace. Luther despised and rejected the Catholic idea that good deeds, what he called "good works," could play any role in salvation.

In The Law and the Gospel (below), two nude male figures appear on either side of a tree that is green and living on the "Gospel" side to the viewer's right, but barren and dying on the "law" side to the viewer's left. Six columns of Bible citations appear at the bottom of the panel.

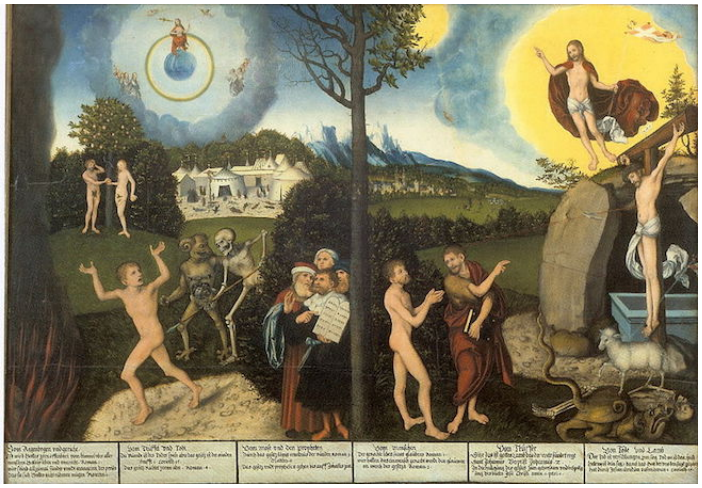


Figure **13.7.9.99**: Lucas Cranach, *The Law and the Gospel*, c. 1529, oil on wood, 82.2 × 118 cm / 32.4 × 46.5″ (Schlossmuseum, Gotha, Germany)

Right ("gospel") side

On the "gospel" side of the image (the right side), John the Baptist directs a naked man to both Christ on the cross in front of the tomb and to the risen Christ who appears on top of the tomb (see detail at top of page). The risen Christ stands triumphant above the empty tomb, acting out the miracle of the Resurrection. This nude figure is not vainly hoping to follow the law or to present a tally of his good deeds on the judgment day. He stands passively, stripped down to his soul, submitting to God's mercy.

Left (“law”) side



Figure 13.7.9.100: Left, Skeleton and demon pursue desperate man and right, Moses with other figures point to the tablets of the law—the Ten Commandments (detail), Lucas Cranach, *The Law and Gospel*, c. 1529, oil on wood, 72 × 88.5 cm / 28.3 × 34.8″ (National Gallery, Prague)

In the left foreground a skeleton and a demon force a frightened naked man into hell, as a group of prophets, including Moses, point to the tablets of the law. The motifs on the left side of the composition are meant to exemplify the idea that law alone, without gospel, can never get you to heaven. Christ sits in Judgment as Adam and Eve (in the background) eat the fruit and fall from grace. Moses beholds these events from his vantage point toward the center of the picture, his white tablets standing out against the saturated orange robe and the deep green tree behind him, literally highlighting the association of law, death, and damnation.

Taken together, these motifs demonstrate that law leads inescapably to hell when mistaken for a path to salvation, as the damned naked man demonstrates.

God judges and God shows mercy

The Law and the Gospel is concerned with two roles that God plays, to judge and to show mercy. On the one hand, God judges and condemns human sin; but on the other hand, God also shows mercy and forgiveness, granting unearned salvation to sinful believers. As Reformation scholar Bernhard Lohse explains:

> ***The Word of God encounters people as law and as gospel, as a word of judgment and as a word of grace…. It is certainly true that there is more law than gospel in the Old Testament and more gospel than law in the New Testament. Luther’s distinction between law and gospel, however, referred to something other than the division of biblical statements into the two parts of the biblical canon. This distinction rather describes the fact that God both judges and is merciful.***[1]

Luther’s idea of law is multifaceted, and bears a complex relationship to his idea of gospel. Though law alone will never make salvation possible, it remains indispensable as the way the believer recognizes sin and the need for grace. Law paves the way to salvation by preparing the way for grace.

Although *The Law and the Gospel* includes events from both the New and the Old Testaments, it is not a simple contrast of Christianity and Judaism. If *The Law and the Gospel* simply distinguished between the Old and New Testaments—or even more broadly between Judaism and Christianity—then it would not be specifically Lutheran or new, art historically or theologically. Instead, *The Law and Gospel* concerns two aspects of the relationship between humanity and God, a relationship based on human action on the one hand, and divine power on the other. *The Law and Gospel* describes events throughout the Bible which reveal the dual aspect of God’s relationship to people.

The Law and the Gospel is Lutheran because it represents Cranach’s pictorial translation of Luther’s unique understanding of salvation. The painting interprets the roles of law, good works, faith, and grace in the human relationship to God.

Note: *The Law and the Gospel* is frequently called *Law and Grace*, a title which derives from a version of the painting in Prague (above), where the terms “Gesecz” (Law) and “Gnad” (Grace) are boldly painted and plainly visible.

1. Bernard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, Fortress Press, 1986.

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Adam and Eve*

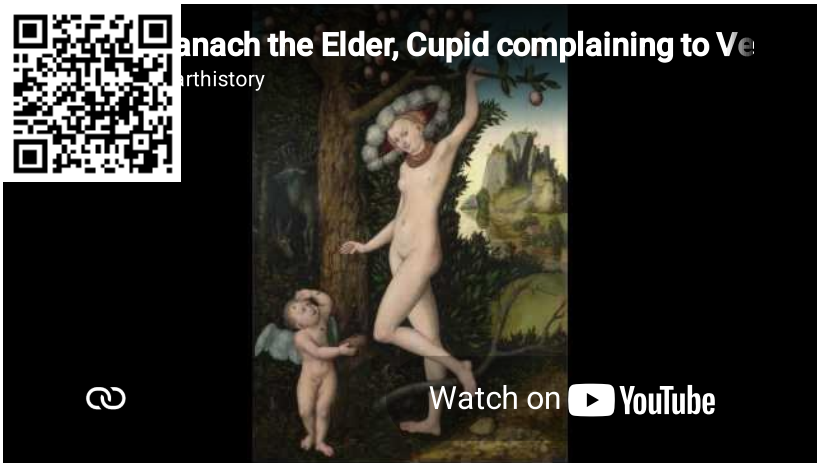
by RACHEL ROPEIK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.9.17: Lucus Cranach the Elder, *Adam and Eve*, 1526, oil on panel (Courtauld Gallery, London)

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Cupid complaining to Venus*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.9.18: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Cupid complaining to Venus*, c. 1525, oil on wood, 81.3 x 54.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.9.19**: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1530 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)



Video **13.7.9.20**: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c. 1530 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Hans Holbein the Younger

About Hans Holbein the Younger

by THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Born in Augsburg, Bavaria, Holbein trained with his father, Hans Holbein the Elder, who operated a successful workshop. In 1515, he moved to Basel, where he worked for a circle of intellectuals and their printers. His first major paintings were the portraits of the mayor of Basel, **Jacob Meyer and his wife** in 1516, and in 1521/2 he painted the famous ***Dead Christ*** (all in the Kunstmuseum, Basel).

An atmosphere of religious crisis

Social and religious conflict caused by the **Protestant Reformation** in Switzerland made Holbein seek elsewhere for patronage. After an unsuccessful visit to France in 1524, he travelled to England in 1526 with an introduction to Sir Thomas More from the scholar Erasmus, whose portrait he had painted in 1523. He stayed for two years producing portraits at the court of Henry VIII, before returning to Basel where his wife and two children lived. A particularly violent burst of iconoclasm in Basel in 1529 amid an atmosphere of religious crisis made Holbein decide to return to England in 1532. Henry VIII commissioned a mural for Whitehall Palace glorifying the Tudor dynasty (destroyed by fire in 1698), which is recorded in **Holbein's preparatory cartoon** (National Portrait Gallery, London). The famous image of Henry, hands on his hips and legs astride, derives from this mural.

Holbein died suddenly in London in 1543 of the plague. His fame rests on his superlative painted portraits, such as the dazzling *Ambassadors* and the*Unknown Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling* (both National Gallery, London) and his vivid yet informal portrait drawings (many in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle).

From the series Dance of Death



Figure **13.7.9.101**: Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Rich Man*, proof print before 1526, woodcut, 74 x 56 cm, Germany © Trustees of the British Museum.

The Dance of Death is the most celebrated series of woodcuts designed by Hans Holbein the Younger. The set in The British Museum is one of a number of good-quality impressions issued without text. The woodcut was cut by Hans Lützelburger, one of the most distinguished specialists (*formschneiders*) of the time, in the years immediately before his death in 1526.

The images show Death escorting people from all walks of life to their final destiny. These include, for example, a ploughman, the Emperor, a child, a noblewoman, a bride and bridegroom, an abbot and a jester. At the time, images were often used to teach moral principles. The implied message is that we must live our lives virtuously and always be prepared, since Death visits without warning. Here, Death takes first what the rich man loves most – his money. Iron bars, stone walls and strongboxes are no defense. His candle has burnt down, and the hourglass indicates that his time has run out.

The theme "Dance of Death:" (*Totentanz* in German) appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in mural paintings, stained glass windows, wooden carvings, metalwork, woodcuts, engravings, and printed books. It was also a subject of literary tracts. The preoccupation with mortality was partly due to the highly visible nature of death, especially in the years following the Black Death. Holbein's version was very influential, and often copied.

Suggested readings:

G. Bartrum, *German Renaissance prints* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995).

D. Landau and P. Parshall, *The Renaissance print 1470-155* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1994).

© Trustees of the British Museum

The carpet and the globe: Holbein's *The Ambassadors* reframed

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Video **13.7.9.21**: Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London)

One of the most famous portraits of the Renaissance is without question Hans Holbein the Younger's ***The Ambassadors*** from 1533. Even today, it is a favored portrait to parody, mimic, or cite in art, TV, film, and social media, and it remains an important source for contemporary artists.



Figure **13.7.9.102**: Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This double portrait depicts two men standing beside a high table covered in objects. On the left is Jean de Dinteville, age 29, a French ambassador sent by the French king, Francis I to the English court of Henry VIII. On the right is Georges de Selve, age 25, the bishop of Lavaur, France. They stand on an elaborate abstract pavement, which has been identified as belonging to the sanctuary in Westminster Abbey—the same space where Anne Boylen, second wife of Henry VIII, had been crowned and more recently, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were married.



Figure **13.7.9.103**: Cosmati paving, Westminster Abbey (left), marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at Westminster Abbey (right)

The painting is filled with carefully rendered details, in a clear style that we have come to identify with Renaissance **naturalism** of the sixteenth century. The anamorphic skull in the foreground continues to delight and surprise viewers, and to inspire artists.



Figure 13.7.9.104: Anamorphic skull (detail), Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

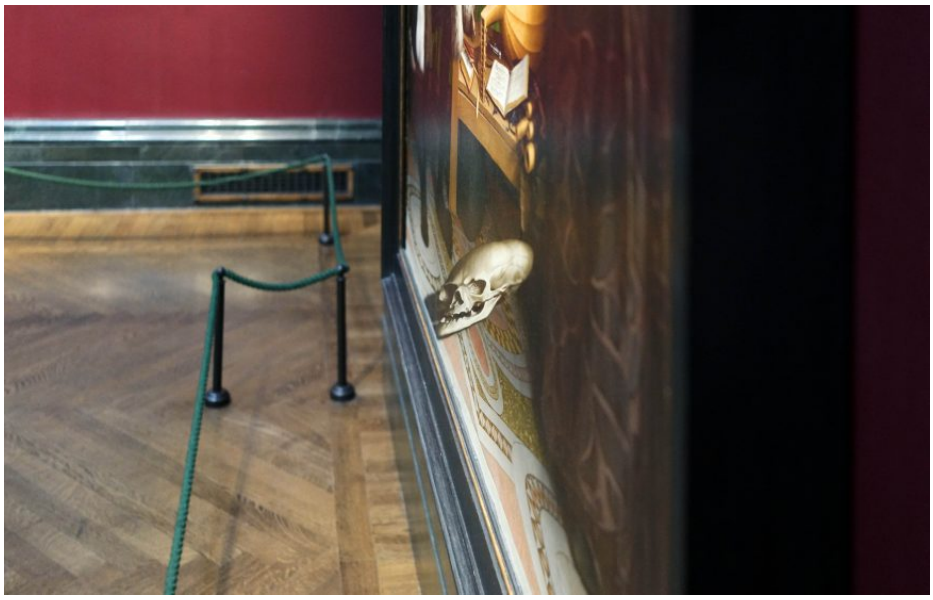


Figure 13.7.9.105: Anamorphic skull seen at angle, Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This essay focuses on two details—the carpet and the globe—that speak about the globalized trade of the sixteenth century, and specifically European imperial ambitions and colonization.

The Anatolian carpet

Draped over the top level of the table between the two men is a carpet, usually referred to as a "Holbein Carpet" because of the artist's fondness for painting this type of textile. This name, though, would not have been used in the sixteenth century. Instead, the carpet would have reminded observers of the place from where it was produced—in this case Turkey—which was controlled, in the sixteenth century, by the **Ottomans**. Anatolian carpets were popular luxury objects in Europe from the fifteenth century onward. Textiles from Turkey, as well as other parts of the eastern Mediterranean were highly sought after because of their extraordinary craftsmanship and beauty.

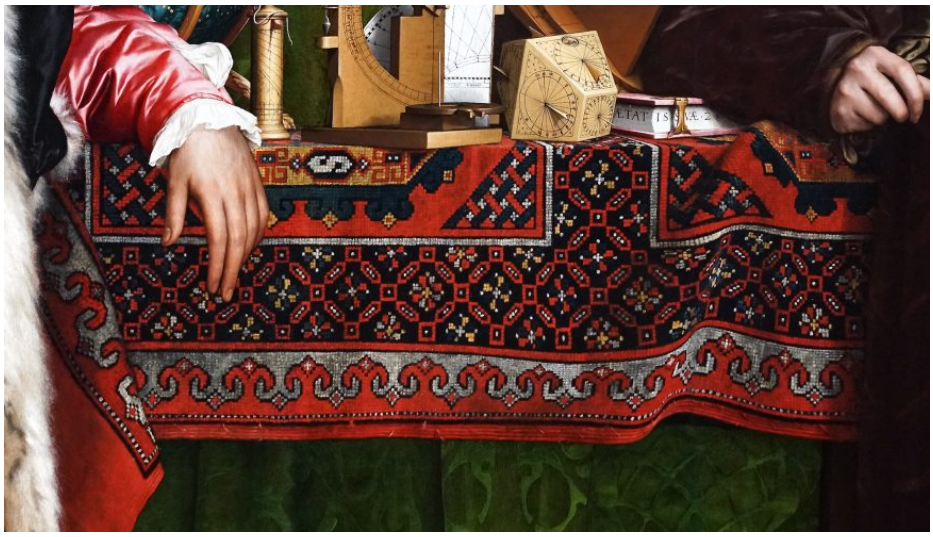


Figure 13.7.9.105: Carpet (detail), Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Often, so-called "Holbein carpets" display octagonal medallions, other stylized patterns, and sometimes borders with Kufic, a type of Arabic calligraphic script (which the one in *The Ambassadors* does not). This type of carpet became so popular in Europe, that other textile makers began to try to copy it, often with pseudo-Kufic designs intended to mimic the script.

Carpets like the one in Holbein's painting were expensive. They figured prominently in elite European homes, and often cost as much as paintings and sculptures. Unlike today, a carpet of such expense would not be placed on the floor. It would be draped over a table, as shown in *The Ambassadors*, to be displayed as a beautiful object to observe and delight in. We can find similar carpets In **other Renaissance paintings**, often draped over parapets or tables. Occasionally such carpets are shown on the floor underneath the Virgin Mary to convey her **elevated status as a holy figure**.



Figure 13.7.9.106: "Holbein carpet," 15th–16th century, wool, from Turkey (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

So why is a carpet in Holbein's painting? The carpet is a luxury object meant to elevate the two men's status. It also reminds us of the power and prestige of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The Ottomans were considered a threat to the European powers, even as Europeans desired Ottoman luxuries, such as carpets.

There is also likely another reason for the carpet's appearance in the painting. Francis I, the French King, had recently aligned with King Henry VIII of England in an attempt to reduce the power of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor who controlled much of mainland Europe. Charles V was a powerful ruler, and Francis I and Henry VIII were concerned that he might try to wrest control away from them. Francis I also tried to cultivate

relationships with the Papal States and the Ottomans, and he reached out to **Süleyman the Magnificent**, the Ottoman ruler. The carpet in Holbein's painting may refer to the French ruler's attempts to strengthen political ties to the Ottomans. Francis I no doubt coveted such a relationship as it would bolster his commercial ties, strengthening his ability to acquire Ottoman commodities and giving him greater access to goods from China and India that were also highly desirable.

The carpet has multiple meanings: politically, it speaks to Francis's attempts to forge a political connection with the Ottoman ruler, and culturally, as an expensive, imported textile from the Anatolian peninsula. The carpet is a reminder that the Ottomans were an important part of European Renaissance culture.



Figure **13.7.9.107**: Globe (detail), Anamorphic skull seen at angle, Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The globe

On the shelf below the carpet, there are a number of intriguing objects, including a lute with a broken string, a hymn book, and a globe. The lute's broken string is thought to reference the discord that resulted from the **Protestant Reformation**, which the hymn book also calls to mind. Martin Luther, who initiated the Reformation, composed the hymns shown.



Figure **13.7.9.108**: Luther's Hymn Book (detail), Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The globe, however, does not refer to the upheaval that resulted from the Reformation, but it does call to mind other types of transformations then taking place. The map on the globe is displayed upside down from a globe's common orientation. Despite this, many parts of Europe have legibly written inscriptions. Holbein positioned Europe closest to the picture plane and painted it in a golden color to draw our eyes to it. We see Africa above, and beyond that parts of the Americas.

Interestingly, one of the legible inscriptions on the globe is “Brisillici R.” for Brazil. The visual clarity and reference to Brazil is important. The French crown made a claim to Brazil after it had sponsored an expedition the the Americas in 1522. Heading the expedition was Giovanni da Verrazano, who returned in 1524, helping France to stake a claim to lands across the Atlantic. Verrazano would return to Brazil in 1527 to collect Brazilwood, a valuable resource. The French crown attempted to establish trading posts in Brazil in order to claim control over this rich foreign land, an action that pit France against its colonial rival Portugal.



Figure 13.7.9.109: Globe (detail), Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Several red lines also run through parts of the globe in Holbein’s portrait. One, which runs through Brazil and divides the Atlantic, was the line agreed to with the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. This treaty resulted in much of **the Americas being granted to Spain, while Brazil was granted to the Portuguese**. Another line, one that resulted from the Treaty of Saragossa in 1529 (once again between Spain and Portugal), divided the map in the other direction, giving the Portuguese the Moluccas, or Spice Islands. The inclusion of these lines reveals the importance of the competition between colonial powers for land, resources, and people, and the far-reaching implications that European maritime voyages and colonial expeditions would have across the globe.



Figure 13.7.9.110: 19th-century facsimile of a 16th-century globe of the type depicted in Holbein’s *The Ambassadors*, 12 paper gores mounted on solid wood sphere, 54 cm (**Beinecke Library**, Yale)

What makes Holbein’s globe even more fascinating is that it replicates an actual globe from the sixteenth century. Holbein copied a globe such as the replica in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, from around 1526. The original was a printed globe, made possible by the revolution in print technology that had transformed Europe since the middle of the 15th century. The globe was likely printed in Nuremberg, and was popular in the 1520s and 30s. On the printed globe, there are clear references to Ferdinand Magellan’s circumnavigation of the globe which was completed in 1522. The globe then alludes to Habsburg dominance, since Charles V, a Habsburg, had sponsored Magellan. Despite Holbein’s

borrowing from the printed globe, he omits the Magellan route. It has been suggested that this was an effort by Holbein, who was aware that his patron was a subject of Francis I, to downplay Habsburg power.



Figure **13.7.9.111**: Peter Apian, *A New and Well-grounded Instruction in All Merchants' Arithmetic* (detail), Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm (The National Gallery, London, photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Like the globe and the Turkish carpet, the book that rests on the table just in front of the globe also alludes to the importance of trade. Holbein's precise manner of painting the book allows us to identify it as an arithmetic text, specifically the German astronomer Peter Apian's *A New and Well-grounded Instruction in All Merchants' Arithmetic* (*Eyn Newe unnd wolgegruündte underweysun aller Kauffmannss Rechnung*). The book discusses profits and losses—an important aspect of mercantilism and trade in this period. The navigational instruments on the upper shelf also point to commercial activities that sponsored travel and exchange, but also imperialist expansion and colonization. Each is an important theme in this complex painting.

Additional resources

David Carrier, *A World Art History and Its Objects* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008).

Suraiya Faroqhi, *A Cultural History of the Ottomans: The Imperial Elite and its Artefacts* (I.B. Tauris, 2016).

Rosamund E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West* (London: Reaktion, 2000).

Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.9.112: More Smarthistory images…

Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Merchant Georg Gisze*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.9.22**: Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Merchant Georg Gisze*, 1532, oil on oak, 97.5 x 86.2 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.9.113**: More Smarthistory images…

Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.9.23: Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan*, 1538, oil on oak, 179.1 x 82.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Albrecht Altdorfer, *The Battle of Issus*

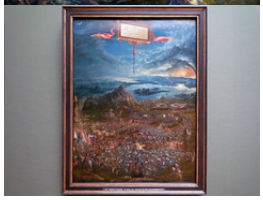
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

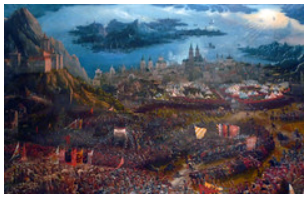


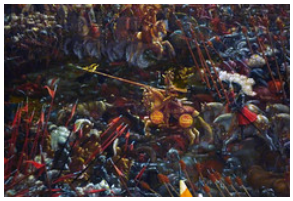
Video 13.7.9.25: Albrecht Altdorfer, *The Battle of Issus*, 1529, oil on panel, 158.4 × 120.3 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

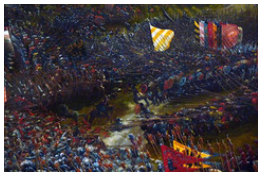
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88728

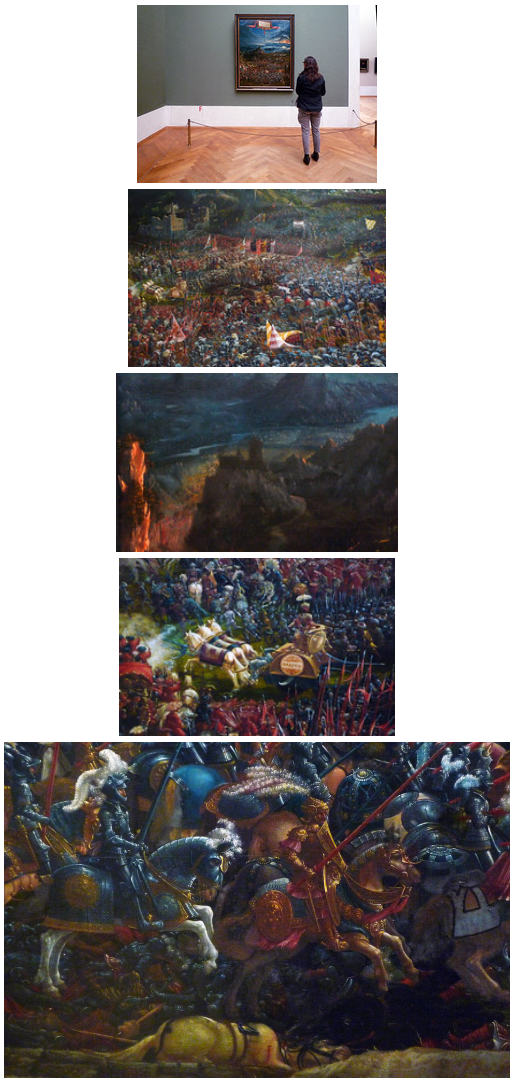


Figure **13.7.9.114**: More Smarthistory images…

Portraits of Elizabeth I: Fashioning the Virgin Queen

by DR. CHRISTINA FARADAY



Figure **13.7.9.115**: William Scrots, *Elizabeth I as a Princess*, c.1546, oil on panel, 108.5 x 81.8 cm (**Royal Collection Trust**)

An Accident of Birth

Elizabeth I was meant to be a boy. In the letters announcing her birth on 7th September 1553, optimistically prepared in advance, we can see where the writer had to squeeze an ‘s’ onto the end of “prince.” [1] As a woman, nobody expected Elizabeth to become queen. Like her older half-sister Mary I, Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and excluded from the succession for a time following Henry VIII’s third marriage and the birth of Edward VI. Yet, when she did take the throne in 1558, following the deaths of her childless siblings, the androgynous spectre of Elizabeth the Prince[ss] loomed large as courtiers and artists attempted to represent and define this unprecedented monarch.

As a female, unmarried, Protestant ruler there was no established iconography on which Elizabeth’s portraits could draw. [2] She rarely commissioned artists herself, so the portraits we have of her were generally commissioned by courtiers with their own agendas. This was part of a strategy by Elizabeth to keep her nobles in line by forcing them to compete for her favor, but it also produced what Susan Frye has referred to as the “competition for representation”: the struggle between the Queen and her court to control her image. [3] The iconic vision that we now have of the “Virgin Queen” was a long time coming, and far from inevitable or obvious when she took the throne in 1558.



Figure **13.7.9.116**: William Scrots, detail of *Elizabeth I as a Princess*, c.1546, oil on panel, 108.5 x 81.8 cm (**Royal Collection Trust**)

Elizabeth as a Prince[ss]

The earliest surviving image of Elizabeth I was painted when she was a princess, about a year before her father died. This portrait shows the fair-haired, dark-eyed girl, about thirteen years old, gazing spookily out at the viewer. At this point her expected role was to marry and form alliances for the good of the dynasty. Her crimson dress and exquisite jewelry reveal her royal status. The books in her hands and propped open behind her advertise her learning and piety, while her neat figure and self-possessed stance allude to her potential as an attractive bride.

Elizabeth's femininity, which made her a suitable pawn in marriage negotiations, posed a problem when she became queen. In Tudor society women were deemed weaker than men: destined not to rule, but to *be ruled* by their fathers, brothers and husbands. But what if a woman became monarch? Some of these problems had already been addressed in the previous reign: Mary I's government issued the 1554 Act Concerning Regal Power, which effectively declared that monarchy trumped gender. A woman on the throne was both king and queen, or as Archbishop of York Nicholas Heath put it in 1559, Elizabeth was "our sovaraigne lord and ladie, our kinge and quene, our emperor and empresse." [4]



Figure **13.7.9.117**: The Clopton Portrait, c.1558, oil on oak panel, 67.5 x 48.9 cm (private collection, previously with Philip Mould)

The earliest surviving portraits of Elizabeth I as queen register this androgyny. Images such as the Clopton Portrait often show Elizabeth with a book to indicate her erudition and dedication to the **Protestant** faith, recalling the image of her as a princess. [5] Yet in contrast to that earlier image the line of her body is hidden under her black clothing. Shoulders square, hair tucked away, Elizabeth is made to appear almost masculine: a conscious strategy to legitimize her as ruler.



Figure 13.7.9.118: Steven van Herwijk (attributed), *The Hampden Portrait*, c.1563, oil on panel, 196 x 140 cm (private collection, previously with Philip Mould)

Entering the Marriage Market

In 1562 Elizabeth caught smallpox and nearly died. The threat this posed to the political and religious situation in England terrified her courtiers, and they pressured her to marry and produce an heir. In 1563 a Draft Proclamation—never enacted—expressed the desire for a better image of Elizabeth, probably partly for use in marriage negotiations, as "hitherto none hath sufficiently expressed the natural representation of her majesty's person, favor, or grace, but that most have so far erred therein as thereof daily are heard complaints amongst her loving subjects." The Draft Proclamation indicates more generally that poor-quality images were felt to undermine Elizabeth's authority. It concludes with an ambition "to forbid and prohibit the showing or publication of such [images] as are apparently deformed" until an approved image could be created. [6]



Figure 13.7.9.119: Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Simon George of Cornwall*, c. 1535–40, mixed technique on oak, 31 cm in diameter (**Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

This approved image may have taken the form of the Hampden Portrait, the first full-length image of Elizabeth. Elizabeth rests her hand on an x-frame chair under a cloth-of-gold canopy of state—emblems of her authority. She is wearing the red-and-white colors of the Tudor dynasty, and holding a carnation, a common symbol of courtship (as we see in a portrait of Simon George of Cornwall). To the right a verdant band of flowers, foliage and fruits—frequently in pairs—evokes fertility: Elizabeth was entering the marriage market. For two decades she toyed with marriage negotiations, but in the late 1570s finally seemed to have met her match in Francis, Duke of Anjou, brother and heir presumptive of the French king. Unfortunately by now Elizabeth was in her mid-forties: her courtiers felt that childbirth was too risky, and if she died childless while married to Anjou, England could become French property. They advised against the marriage, and negotiations were finally broken off in 1581.



Figure 13.7.9.120: Quentin Metsys II, *The Sieve Portrait*, c. 1583, oil on canvas, 124.5 x 91.5 cm (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena)

The Virgin Queen

Not coincidentally, around this time portraits of Elizabeth make increasingly overt reference to Elizabeth as the "Virgin Queen." Unmarried women were expected to remain virgins, as Christianity only permitted sex within marriage. Around 1580 several "sieve portraits" were painted, alluding to the ancient **Roman** Vestal Virgin Tuccia, who proved her chastity by carrying water in a sieve from the Tiber to the temple. In the version painted by Quentin Metsys the Younger, the sieve also becomes an emblem of discernment, labelled with the motto "a terra ilben / al dimora in sella" (the good falls to the ground while the bad remains in the saddle).



Figure 13.7.9.121: Quentin Metsys II, detail of the column, *The Sieve Portrait*, c. 1583, oil on canvas, 124.5 x 91.5 cm (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena)

Much of the symbolism in this painting is standard in Elizabeth's portraiture, in particular the column and globe, which refer to England's imperial ambitions, but the column also reinforces the message of Elizabeth's virginity and independence: studded with allegorical scenes referencing the classical story of Dido and Aeneas, it pointedly reminds the viewer of the love affair which temporarily distracted Aeneas from his destiny as founder of the Roman Empire. Here again androgyny lurks under the surface, as Elizabeth is identified not with the doomed lover Dido, but the masculine founder of Rome, Aeneas.



Figure **13.7.9.122**: Quentin Metsys II, detail of the possible patron, *The Sieve Portrait*, c. 1583, oil on canvas, 124.5 x 91.5 cm (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena)

In the background we catch sight of the person who probably commissioned this portrait, Sir Christopher Hatton, identifiable by the golden hind on his cloak, a symbol taken from his heraldic crest. Hatton was a major opponent of the Anjou match: whether this portrait was intended to put pressure on Elizabeth by emphasizing her identity as the "Virgin Queen," or to celebrate Hatton's successful counsel after the fact, it demonstrates how portraits which on the surface seem to promote Elizabeth's authority could also put forward an agenda that conflicted with, and even undermined, her own desires.

As Elizabeth's reign wore on, her status as "Virgin Queen" became an increasingly important symbol of her devotion to her kingdom, and of the security of the realm. We see this in the iconic Armada Portrait which survives in three near-identical versions.



Figure **13.7.9.123**: George Gower (attributed), *The Armada Portrait*, c.1588, oil on oak panel, 110.5 x 125 cm (**Woburn Abbey**)

The portrait was painted to celebrate the defeat of the invading Spanish navy. Elizabeth rests her hand on the globe, and either side of her head are two windows: through the left the Armada approaches; to the right the fleet is scattered and sinking under stormy skies. In an age when the body of the monarch was inextricably linked with the body politic, the successful defeat of an attempted invasion was personified in the impenetrable body of the Virgin Queen herself. Tightly encased in her bodice, sleeves and ruff, her costume is studded with pearls: sea-grown emblems of virginity and of the Roman goddess Diana. Famously chaste, Diana was also goddess of the moon, so controller of the tides—an appropriate attribute for a queen who had just seen off an Armada.



Figure **13.7.9.124**: Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *The Ditchley Portrait*, c.1592, oil on canvas, 241.3 x 152.4cm (**National Portrait Gallery, London**)

Elizabeth the Goddess?

In the final decade of her reign, Elizabeth's portraiture transforms her into England's quasi-divine protectress. In the Ditchley Portrait, Elizabeth is represented at roughly life-size, but within the realm of the portrait she is a giantess, standing astride the globe. Her costume, with its huge sleeves and farthingale, all but eliminates the human quality of sex in favor of a more divine representation. Around her the sky changes from pale blue to stormy navy, as if she could control the elements with a flick of her fan. The (partly destroyed) inscription in the cartouche underlines these cosmic themes, referring to Elizabeth as "The prince of light, The Sun." [7]



Figure **13.7.9.125**: The Rainbow Portrait, c.1600, oil on panel, 127 × 99.1 cm (Hatfield House, UK; photo: **Kotomi_**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Ditchley Portrait is unusual in that it shows Elizabeth as naturalistically aged. Most late images of Elizabeth, such as the Rainbow Portrait, show the queen as improbably youthful, a deliberate tactic designed to allay fears about the succession. Painted at the very end of her reign, the Rainbow Portrait seems to look back to the earliest images of Elizabeth as a princess: her body is feminized and the cut of her bodice is lower.



Figure **13.7.9.126**: The Coronation Portrait, c.1600, oil on panel, 127.3 x 99.7cm (**National Portrait Gallery**, London)

Her hair flows down behind her head and strands fall across her elaborate ruff, evoking the Coronation Portrait, which was copied around this time from a lost original. Here at last, artists seem to have found a way of reconciling Elizabeth the woman with Elizabeth the divinely-ordained ruler. She retains emblems of divinity: eyes and ears speckle her cloak, symbolizing omniscience (and the networks of spies controlled by the Cecil family, probable patrons of this portrait) and in her hand she holds a rainbow, alluding to God's promise to his people after the Flood, here evoking Elizabeth's commitment to her kingdom. Now, at the end of a more than forty-year rule, artists and courtiers had finally solved the problem of how to represent Elizabeth. For artists, her successor James I would be altogether more straightforward, but far less iconic.

Notes:

[1] British Library, MS Harley 283

[2] In the sixteenth century, Christianity in England experienced enormous upheaval, known as the Reformation. Pro-reform groups, called Protestants, criticized Catholic practices such as following the Pope, venerating saints, going on pilgrimages and using images in worship. The different reigns witnessed huge variation in religious policy: where Edward VI was an extreme Protestant, Mary I was a Catholic.

[3] Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

[4] John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, volume I, part ii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1824) pp. 399, 406, cited in Levin (2013), p. 121

[5] To aid identification portraits are often given names referring to the collection or family they once belonged to. *The Clopton Portrait* was passed down through the Clopton family in Stratford-upon-Avon until the eighteenth century

[6] J Nichols, *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources*, Vol. 1, ed. E. Goldring, F. Eales, E. Clarke, J. E. Archer, G. Heaton, & S. Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014), pp. 370–371, transcribed from NA, SP 12/31/25, f. 46

[7] R Strong, 'Elizabethan Painting: An Approach Through Inscriptions – III Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 105, no.721 (April 1963), pp. 149–150+152–157+159, at p.157

Additional resources

"The Queen's Likeness: Portraits of Elizabeth I," *Making Art In Tudor Britain* at the National Portrait Gallery

"Elizabeth I's Monarchy: Rule of a 'Weak and Feeble' Woman?", *The National Archives*

Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, "Portraits of Elizabeth I," in Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (eds.), *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540–1660* (London: University of Chicago, 1990), pp. 11–35

Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford, 1993)

Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013)

Louis A. Montrose 'Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I', *Representations*, vol. 68 (1999), pp. 108–61

Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963)

The conservator's eye: a stained glass Adoration of the Magi

by SARAH BARACK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.9.26: Circle of Peter Hemmel von Andlau (Strassburger Werkstattgemeinschaft), *Adoration of the Magi*, 1507 or earlier (Munich), pot metal and colorless glass, vitreous paint, and silver stain, 72.4 x 45.7 x 1 cm (The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

France

The Gallery of Francis I at Fontainebleau (and French Mannerism)

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure 13.7.9.127: Château de Fontainebleau, initial design by Gilles Le Breton, 1528–1540, with additions until the 18th century (photo: Corinne Moncelli, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure 13.7.9.128

For centuries, the Forest of Fontainebleau has delighted visitors and inspired artists (like those affiliated with the nineteenth-century Barbizon School). At the heart of the forest is a spectacular palace—the Château de Fontainebleau—built initially under the King of France, Francis I (r. 1515–47). About 40 miles outside of Paris, the impressive renaissance space had been a modest hunting lodge until Francis reimagined it as a glorious palace to dazzle visitors with his power and magnificence.

Francis had great reason to emphasize his wealth and magnanimity. For years he had been at war with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, a gamble that continued to go poorly for the French king. The rulers battled over control of lands such as Flanders and northern Italy. Francis was even held captive for two years after a defeat, and when he was released he was forced to give Charles his two sons as hostages. When Francis returned to France to rule in 1527, he needed to find a way to reestablish himself as a powerful leader, even claiming that he was heir to the Roman empire. The creation of the Château de Fontainebleau was one way in which Francis made his power visible. In 1528, Francis hired Gilles Le Breton to construct the château's buildings (finished in 1540). Fontainebleau was not Francis's only large architectural project (he also had palaces and hunting lodges at Chambord, in the Bois du Boulogne, and Saint-German-en-Laye), but it is one of the most spectacular.



Figure 13.7.9.129: Château de Fontainebleau, initial design by Gilles Le Breton, 1528–1540, with additions until the 18th century (photo: nanabcn19, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

At first glance, the exterior of the château is relatively simple. Although it is surrounded by the forest, glorious gardens, and a moat, it is an inviting place. Once inside, it is a feast for the eyes. In particular, the Gallery of Francis I encapsulates the abundant ornamental style that became famously associated with Fontainebleau and French renaissance art.

Video 13.7.9.130: Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo: Mbzt , CC BY-SA 4.0)

Collecting artists

Among the artists most important for the development of the palace's interior decoration are the Italian Mannerist artists Rosso Fiorentino (who arrived in 1530) and Francesco Primaticcio (who arrived in 1532). They and many other artists transformed Fontainebleau into a resplendent palace, whose interior still overwhelms visitors with its ornamentation.

Francis attracted many artists to work at his various palaces. He was an avid collector of art, and had in his possession works by some of the most famous artists of the era—**Leonardo**, **Raphael**, Titian, **Perugino**, Cellini, Andrea del Sarto, Giulio Romano, Michelangelo, Bronzino, Rosso, and Primaticcio. These works are at the Louvre today.

Similar to his collecting impulses, Francis also invited artists from the Italian peninsula and northern Europe to work for him. After his conquest of Milan in 1515, Francis hired Leonardo da Vinci who died in France in the employ of the French king. Apparently the **Mona Lisa** used to hang above Francis's bathtub (at another palace), eventually being moved to the **Palace of Versailles** by Louis XIV. Sebastian Serlio (famous for his Greco-Roman, classicizing architectural treatises) came to consult on the construction of Fontainebleau, where he remained until his death.

Under Francis and his successors, Fontainebleau became a magnet for artists around Europe, like Rosso and Primaticcio. This was especially true after the Sack of Rome in 1527. Artists fled the city and found work elsewhere. This dispersal of artists allowed prominent European courtiers and rulers to attract artists.

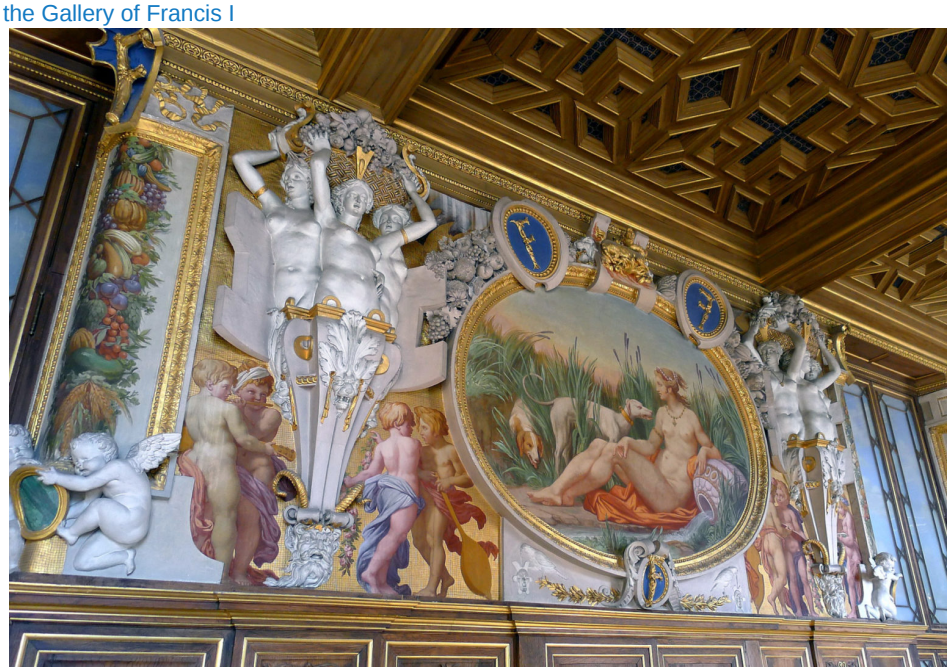


Figure **13.7.9.131**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo: **Corinne Moncelli**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Between 1533 and 1540, Rosso directed work on the Gallery of Francis I, which was at the time the most important part of the château. The space was created in 1528 to connect the royal apartments to a Trinitarian monastery (destroyed soon thereafter), and Rosso was hired—along with his sizeable team of French, Italian, and Flemish artists—to decorate the space. It is filled with frescoes, elaborate stucco decorations, woodwork, and gilding. The figures and ornamentation are considered some of the best expressions of a style called "**mannerism**," or better yet a "classicizing 'modern' Italian renaissance style." [1]

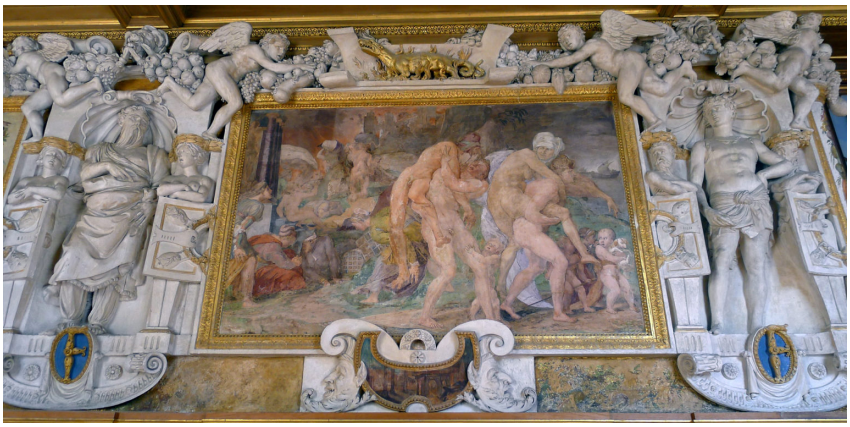


Figure **13.7.9.132**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo:**Corinne Moncelli**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Twelve rectangular frescoes, surrounded by stucco frames (*inquadrature*), line the gallery walls. The short ends of the gallery also had frescoes, although only one remains (of Danae). The frames are a riot of ornament, with nymphs, putti, herms, garlands, scrolls, baskets, fruit, bucrania, masks, Michelangelesque nudes, hieroglyphic emblems, and strapwork. They also have narrative medallions and friezes in *bas* relief. Elongated, graceful bodies appear in paint and stucco. The impression is one of abundance and excess. All the stucco work curves and bends off the wall, as if alive.



Figure **13.7.9.133**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, detail of salamander, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo: **cea +**, CC BY 2.0)

Centered above the frescoes are golden, enflamed salamanders, which were the royal emblem of Francis I. It signified his Latin motto "I feed and I extinguish" (*nutrisco et extinguo*). Salamanders were thought to be able to walk through fire, here they suggest Francis's strength.



Figure **13.7.9.134**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, detail of *lambris*, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo: **Tom Blackie**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

As if the frescoes and stucco work weren't enough, there is also decorative wood paneling (or *boiserie*). Similar to the stucco work, the *lambris* (the *boiserie* on the bottom portion of the wall) displays decorative strapwork and cartouches, along with the "F" for Francis and other emblems of the king.

It is truly a space fit for royalty.

What does it all mean?

The gallery's meanings have been debated since their creation. The overall subject matter of the frescoes is odd—or at least oddly specific—and art historians don't really know or agree on what the overall program is supposed to convey. The subjects are drawn from history, allegory, and myth. Some of the scenes were rarely depicted at the time. It is believed that Francis played a large role in determining the subjects and symbolism of the frescoes, and likely chose them because they helped to craft his persona. While some, such as Venus, the Death of Adonis, or the Lapiths and Centaurs, were more commonly depicted in the renaissance, others like the Education of Achilles and the Revenge of Nauplius were not.



Figure 13.7.9.135: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, *Revenge of Nauplius*, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540, fresco (photo: Corinne Moncelli, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The sources for the imagery included Homer, Ovid, and other classical authors popular among learned humanists of the time. Moreover, some of the imagery derives from Andrea Alciati's famous emblems, and Rosso knew Alciati during his time in Venice. The humanist themes would have delighted learned visitors and showcased Francis's erudition and imperial aspirations. Clearly, the entire process was collaborative, with Francis heavily involved in planning the iconography along with other humanists, Rosso, other artists like Primaticcio, and courtiers. Likewise, the physical transformation of the Gallery was a collaboration between painters, stucco workers, woodworkers, and more.

The Royal Elephant



Figure 13.7.9.136: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, *The Royal Elephant*, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540, fresco (photo: cea +, CC BY 2.0)

One compelling fresco is the Royal Elephant, which presents a likely allusion to the king and **patron** himself. Elephants were symbols of power, wisdom, and royalty. Here, the large animal stretches from top to bottom of the composition. It wears feathers on its head and *fleur-de-lis* decorate it. A stork also rests at its feet. The elephant stands on Greco-Roman gods, including Neptune (with a dolphin and trident), Jupiter (with a lightning bolt), and Pluto (with a three-headed dog), all of whom are dressed *all'antica* (or in an antique, classicizing manner). They represent three of the

elements: fire, water, and earth. A crowd gathers on a rooftop in the upper left, almost unaware of the large animal down below, although one little boy looks at the sizable animal. The red-headed man on the left is thought to possibly be Rosso, the painter himself.

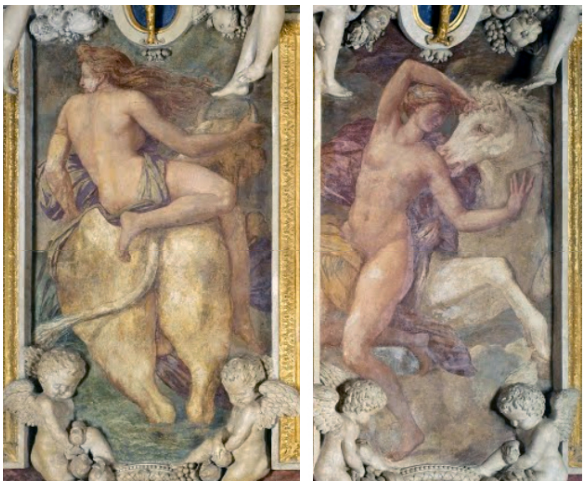


Figure **13.7.9.137**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, scenes flanking *The Royal Elephant*: Zeus and Europa (left) and Saturn and Phylira (right), Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540, fresco (photo: **cea +**, CC BY 2.0)

Flanking the central fresco are scenes of Jupiter (as a bull) abducting Europa and Saturn (as a horse) approaching Philyra. These scenes of lust and rape offer a contrast to the central scene, especially because elephants were also symbols of chastity. It has been suggested that this scene of the Royal Elephant symbolizes Francis's ability to control his emotions and the elements, and to act wisely, thereby making him a fitting ruler of France. This theory is supported by the small stucco scene underneath the fresco, which seems to show Francis as a new Alexander the Great (the famous Macedonian ruler who built a vast empire).

The French renaissance and the Fontainebleau School

Characteristics of French renaissance art include the abundance of decorative fruits and vegetables, paired with *grotteschi* (or grotesques, which are motifs inspired by ancient Roman frescoes such as those found in Nero's Domus Aurea), such as we see in the stucco work. Some scholars do not believe this was just ornamentation, but communicated a deeper meaning. Art historian Rebecca Zorach, for instance, notes that Mannerism was aligned with the rebirth of Rome in the Renaissance and was considered a new form of classicizing and antiquarianism. The incorporation of the grotesques and the elongated, graceful bodies would have transformed the Gallery into a new Rome.



Figure **13.7.9.138**: Workshop of Rosso Fiorentino, stucco work, Gallery of Francis I, Château de Fontainebleau, 1528–1540 (photo: **Thesupermat**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Rosso Fiorentino and Primaticcio were the two artists most closely identified with what became known as the School of Fontainebleau, and the Gallery of Francis I embodied this new French renaissance style. Their mannerist artistic tendencies transformed further during their time in France, lending a particular stamp to this style. Rosso's earlier mannerist works, from his time in Florence when he worked with Andrea del Sarto and **Pontormo**, reveal how his visual strategies developed by the time he came to Fontainebleau. Rosso had started to include influences from Michelangelo during his time in Rome starting in 1524, which we see also in the Gallery. His visual strategies, in particular those in the stucco frames, would continue to be influential after his early death, especially on French artists. Engravings and etchings made of his works and designs were created in abundance and circulated widely. Francis supported the printed reproductions of Rosso's work, in part because it made this space more widely available to a larger audience—thereby emphasizing Francis's own magnificence.

Notes:

[1] Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 36.

Additional resources:

Read more about types of renaissance patronage

Read more about the School of Fontainebleau at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"The Triumph of Mannerism, Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino in Florence" at the British Library

Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlof, *Fate, Glory, and Love in Early Modern Gallery Decoration: Visualizing Supreme Power* (London: Ashgate, 2013)

Henri Zerner, "Fontainebleau School" at the Grove Dictionary of Art

Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Follower of Bernard Palissy, rustic platter

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.9.27**: Follower of Bernard Palissy, platter, last quarter of the 16th century, lead-glazed earthenware, 52.1 x 39.7 x 7.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), an Expanded Renaissance Initiative video

Additional resources:

This platter at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Noam Andrews, "The space of knowledge: artisanal epistemology and Bernard Palissy," *Res: Anthropology and aesthetics* 65-66 (2014/2015): pp. 275–288

Juliette Ferdinand, *Bernard Palissy: artisan des réformes entre art, science et foi* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019)

Hannah Rose Shell, "Bernard Palissy's Occupation between Maker and Nature," *Configurations* 12 (2004): pp. 1–40

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





Figure **13.7.9.139**: More Smarthistory images…

13.7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance

Spain: 15th – 16th century

Expeditions to the Americas, and the often destructive colonization and evangelization that followed, helped the Spanish monarchs to amass a great fortune based on indigenous labor and natural resources.

1400–1600

The Renaissance in Spain

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure 13.7.10.1: The “Plus Ultra” motto of the Spanish Empire in the emblem of Charles V of Spain, Town Hall of Seville, begun 1526 (photo: Ignacio Gavira, CC BY-SA 3.0)

We often think of globalization as a modern phenomenon, but the confluence of cultures we see today was already growing in the Spanish Empire during the 15th and 16th centuries. For instance, dividing screens from Japan were imported to Mexico, where they were used in colonial Spanish homes. Chocolate and tomatoes from Mexico and Central America made their way to Spain, where they enlivened the cooking of royal chefs. Spain, with its territory reaching from Europe to the Philippines, soon amassed a huge amount of wealth, and consequently became not only a center for art patronage (the commissioning of artworks), but also a place where imported materials, goods and ideas fostered new approaches to art.

Diversity and dominance

For much of the Middle Ages, Spain had been home to three dominant religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The *convivencia*, or coexistence, of these groups characterized Spain during this period. The coexistence ultimately ended in 1492, when the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile toppled the last Muslim stronghold in Granada and expelled the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. However, many Muslims and Jews remained and were converted (some forcibly) to Christianity, at which point they became known as *moriscos* and *conversos*.

Ferdinand and Isabella also established the Inquisition, a Catholic institution whose job it was to root out heresy. The officials responsible were highly suspicious of the newly converted, and numerous records attest to the persecutions, imprisonments, and occasional burnings undertaken by the Inquisition. A painting by Pedro Berruguete shows an *auto-da-fe* (“act of faith”): a ceremony in which someone was accused and then punished by inquisitors. Despite these persecutions, *moriscos* and *conversos* retained elements of their previous practices and continued to contribute to the cosmopolitan nature of Spanish society.

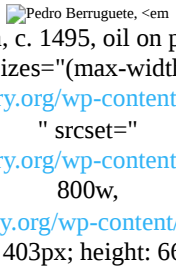


Figure **13.7.10.2**: Pedro Berruguete, *Auto da Fe Presided Over by Santo Domingo de Guzman*, c. 1495, oil on panel, 154 x 92 cm (Museo del Prado, Spain)

1492 was also a remarkable year because it was the moment that Christopher Columbus discovered that the world was much larger than Europeans had previously believed. His expeditions to the Americas, and the often destructive colonization and evangelization that followed, helped the Spanish monarchs to amass a great fortune based on indigenous labor and natural resources. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Spanish controlled an impressive amount of land throughout the Americas, and large urban centers had been established in Peru, Mexico, and Hispaniola (today the Dominican Republic)—to name few—all the result of the conquest of local indigenous populations like the Inka and the Aztec. The Spanish viceroyalties eventually grew to encompass much of the Americas as well as the Philippines, making for a truly diverse and global empire.

Itinerant artists, traveling ideas

During the Renaissance, the Spanish empire also extended throughout Western Europe. The dominant ruling family during this time was that of the Hapsburgs, including the powerful Charles V, who became Holy Roman Emperor after the death of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1516, and was succeeded by his equally influential son Philip II in 1556. Given Spain's political reach in Europe, it is not surprising that Spanish Renaissance art displays influences from Flanders and Italy. Artists from around Europe traveled to the Iberian Peninsula to seek favor with the Spanish court, and artworks flowing in from other parts of the empire influenced artists already working in Spain.

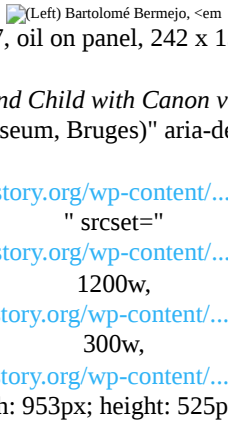


Figure **13.7.10.3**: Left: Bartolomé Bermejo, *Saint Dominic of Silos enthroned as a Bishop*, 1474-77, oil on panel, 242 x 130 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid); right: Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*, 1434-36, oil on wood, 141 x 176.5 cm (Groeningemuseum, Bruges)

During the fifteenth century, prior to and during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the influence of Flanders was felt most strongly. Artists like Bartolmé Bermejo and Fernando Gallego exemplify what is referred to as the Hispano-Flemish style, or the combination of Spanish and Flemish elements. In Bermejo's *Santo Domingo de Silos*, for instance, the saint sits on an elaborate throne wearing golden robes executed in great detail. Like many Flemish paintings of this period, the work is a feast for the eyes with its ornateness, opulence, and attention to detail. The saint's crumpled drapery also reveals Flemish influences.



Figure **13.7.10.4**: Pedro Berruguete, *Beheading of the Baptist*, 1450-1504 (Santa María del Campo, Burgos)

Northern Renaissance paintings, tapestries, and other kinds of artworks bought by wealthy Spanish collectors also influenced art in Spain. Prints (for instance, engravings by Northern Renaissance artists such as Albrecht Dürer or Martin Schonguaer) circulated throughout Spain and influenced artists like Bermejo. Some of the most famous Flemish painters traveled to Spain or had their works collected by Spanish patrons. Jan van Eyck journeyed to the Iberian Peninsula in 1428-29. He and Rogier van der Weyden, and many other Flemish painters also regularly sent paintings to patrons in Spain. Spanish royalty collected many well-known paintings at this time (many of which are now on view in the Museo del Prado in Madrid), including **Hieronymous Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights***, **Dürer's 1498 *Self Portrait***, and Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, which also influenced courtly tastes and the direction of Spanish art.

Italian artistic ideas and motifs are also noticeable in Spanish painting and sculpture. These influences can be seen in works like Berruguete's *Beheading of the Baptist* from c. 1490 in the parish church of Santa Maria del Campo, in which the black-and-white tiled floor recedes into the background, creating illusionistic sense of space, complete with classicizing architectural elements—all of which are hallmarks of the Italian Renaissance. Nevertheless, the complex nature of Spanish art is simultaneously revealed in this painting, because it also includes "Hispano-Flemish" characteristics like the stylized drapery.

Left: Joan de Joanes, <em
The Burial of Saint Stephen, c. 1562, oil on panel, 160 x 123 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid); right: Raphael,
The Entombment
, 1507, oil on wood, 184 × 176 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17268" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 1044px) 100vw, 1044px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-composite.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-composite.jpg
1044w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...te-300x172.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...te-870x500.jpg
870w" width="1044">

Figure **13.7.10.5**: Left: Joan de Joanes, *The Burial of Saint Stephen*, c. 1562, oil on panel, 160 x 123 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid); right: Raphael, *The Entombment*, 1507, oil on wood, 184 × 176 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Luis de Morales, <em
The Virgin Nursing the Child, 1560-65, oil on panel, 38 x 28 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17258" height="266" sizes="(max-width: 200px) 100vw, 200px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...01-300x399.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...01-300x399.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...orales_001.jpg
800w" width="200">

Figure **13.7.10.6**: Luis de Morales, *The Virgin Nursing the Child*, 1560-65, oil on panel, 38 x 28 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Other Italianate influences on Spanish art appear in the paintings of Joan de Joanes and Luis de Morales. Joanes was inspired by Raphael's lyricism and gracefulness, and sometimes directly quoted from Raphael's artworks. Luis de Morales painted multiple devotional paintings of Christ and the Virgin Mary, many of which show the artist's adaptation of Leonardo da Vinci's *sfumato* and **Mannerist** elements, including elongated bodies and faces. Spanish artists like the sculptor Alonso Berruguete (son of Pedro Berruguete) sometimes traveled to Italy for training, but many only encountered Italian art that was displayed in Spain or through prints or copies of Italian artworks.



Figure **13.7.10.7**: Juan Bautista de Toledo (architect), El Escorial, 1563-84 (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain) (photo: **Monasterio Escorial**, CC BY 2.0)

The Court of Philip II



Figure **13.7.10.8**: Pompeo Leoni, Retablo Mayor, Basilica de El Escorial, 1579-88 (photo: **José Luis Filpo Cabana**, CC BY 3.0)

During the reign of Philip II in the later sixteenth century, Spanish art shifted away from the Hispano-Flemish mode that had been popular earlier. Philip II favored several artists, among them the revered Titian, who sent portraits of the Hapsburg ruler from his studio in Venice. Other court artists, including Alonso Sánchez de Coello and **Sofonisba Anguissola**, painted portraits of court members, fulfilling Philip II's desire to visually represent the power of his imperial court. Philip II also sponsored the construction of the Escorial, an immense complex that comprises royal burials (including the body of Charles V), a royal chapel, and a seminary. The plan is rigidly geometrical, and is defined by a giant, symmetrically subdivided square. The classical entrance bay is drawn from Italian Renaissance architecture, and the tower-flanked façade borrows from the French chateau style. The overall impression

is austere and foreboding—an expression of Philip II's fervent religiosity and imperial power. On the interior, numerous artists, some hailing from Italy, were commissioned to produce paintings, frescoes, sculptures, and tapestries to adorn this monumental space.



Figure **13.7.10.9**: Juan de Juni, *Burial of Christ*, c. 1541-44, polychromed wood (Museo Nacional de Escultura, Spain)

Drama in wood

We typically associate materials like marble and bronze with Renaissance sculpture—not polychromed (multicolored) wood. Yet in Spain, painted and gilded (gold-covered) wooden sculpture was immensely popular, and sculptors who worked in wood, like Juan de Juni, Alonso Berruguete, and Diego de Pesquera, were well-known in their heyday. After the sculptor crafted the figures, typically another artist would paint the sculpture. This was often done using the time-consuming *estofado* technique, which involved layering gold or silver leaf onto the wood, then painting over it to create a brilliant surface. Sometimes the artist would remove layers of paint to reveal the metallic materials beneath.

In 1544, Juni completed his *Burial of Christ* for the lower level of an altarpiece. It is a large figural grouping, carved from wood and painted, and portraying six life-sized individuals grieving over Christ's dead body on a sepulcher. These figures include Christ's mother, John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalene, Mary Cleophas, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. Though Juni originally hailed from Burgundy, France, here he created classicizing, naturalistic bodies that reflect the adaptation of Italian artistic trends.

A clash of beliefs

Even as Humanist ideas spread throughout Charles V's Spain, the sixteenth century was also a time of religious controversy and reform. Catholicism found itself threatened by Protestantism, which had been taking hold in northern Europe since Martin Luther's Reformation in the early decades of the century. In Spain, the Inquisition investigated groups thought to be unorthodox or subversive (such as the *moriscos* and *conversos*), including ones too closely aligned with Lutheran thinking.

Many of the artworks during the reign of Philip II responded to the Council of Trent, where Catholic officials re-emphasized the significant role that art could play in moving the faithful to piety—particularly in response to Protestant criticisms. Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known as El Greco, is a key example of an artist who understood the power that images could have to move souls, and his emphatic religious work was welcomed in Spain.



Figure **13.7.10.10**: El Greco, *The Savior*, 1608-14, oil paint, 100.4 x 80.2 cm (Museo del Greco, Toledo)

El Greco was trained on the Greek island of Crete, where he painted icons in the Byzantine tradition. He then traveled to Italy, where he absorbed the influences of Tintoretto and others before finding work in Toledo, Spain. El Greco's *The Savior* provides a fitting end to this short essay on the artistic influences that shaped visual culture in Renaissance Spain. The painting not only displays the mannerist, mystical tendencies in Spanish art that were absorbed by this Cretan artist, but also speaks to the globalized

Spanish Empire: the red glaze on Christ's tunic comes from the crushed cochineal bug, acquired from Spain's American colonies and exported to the Iberian Peninsula to be traded around the world. Renaissance Spain was truly eclectic.

Additional Resources:

Iberian Peninsula, 1600–1800 A.D. on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Pedro Berruguete's *Auto da Fe Presided Over by Santo Domingo de Guzman* at the Museo del Prado

Bartolomé Bermejo's *Saint Dominic of Silos enthroned as a Bishop* at the Museo del Prado

Images of a Burgundian cope (cape worn by a priest)

Joan de Joanes's *The Burial of St. Stephen* at the Museo del Prado

Luis de Morales, *The Virgin Nursing the Child* at the Museo del Prado

Juan de Juni's *Burial of Christ* on Europeana

El Greco's *The Savior* on Europeana

15th century

Fifteenth-century Spanish painting, an introduction

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.10.11**: Fernando Gallego, *Piedad*, 1465–70, mixed method, 118 x 111 cm (**Prado Museum**)

Mary sorrowfully embraces her dead son, his broken body resting across her lap. The cross rises behind them. In this *piedad* (often referred to with the Italian word *Pietà* — an image of Mary cradling the dead body of Christ), painted by the Spanish artist Fernando Gallego, the scene of mourning is set against a vast landscape filled with rocky crags rising from the earth, rolling hills, and a fortified medieval town that is supposed to be Jerusalem in the background. To the left of Mary and Jesus, two smaller figures kneel, most likely the painting's patrons.



Figure **13.7.10.12**: Map of the Kingdoms/Crowns of Spain in 1492 (historians sometimes refer to the larger "kingdoms" that encompass other "kingdoms" as "crowns")

Trends in Spanish painting: looking to Northern Europe

Gallego was a Spanish artist who worked largely in the Kingdom of Castile in the latter half of the fifteenth century, and his painting is representative of important trends in fifteenth-century Spanish painting. It reveals Gallego's interest in the Netherlandish (**Northern Renaissance**) visual idiom, which a great deal of Spanish artists did in the second half of the fifteenth century. His use of realistic details, crumpled drapery, angular bodies, and detailed landscape all parallel Netherlandish artists. Also, Gallego's treatment of space, especially the empirical perspective we notice throughout the composition, suggests he drew upon northern visual modes.



Figure **13.7.10.13**: Left: Fernando Gallego, *Piedad*, 1465–70, mixed method, 118 x 111 cm (**Prado Museum**); right: detail, Rogier van der Weyden, *Miraflores Altar*, c. 1440, 213 x 43 cm (**Gemäldegalerie, Berlin**)

Gallego likely adapted Rogier van der Weyden's *Pietà* from the *Miraflores Altar*, which had belonged to King Juan II of Castile and then given to the Miraflores Charterhouse (near Burgos). However, Gallego did not slavishly copy van der Weyden's painting (or another artist's replica of it) nor Netherlandish painting techniques more generally. His color palette is more distinctly Spanish, with a greater use of yellows and browns. The less saturated and brilliant color palette is due to omitting the glazing so typical of

northern painting. Gallego absorbed northern techniques and paired them with his own native ones, and was one of many Spanish artists who found inspiration and models in Netherlandish painting.

An increased internationalization occurred in the second half of the fifteenth century in the Spanish Kingdoms. Trade routes, political exchanges, and merchant activity all helped to foster greater dialogue among artists, among them Lluís Dalmau, Fernando Gallego, Bartolome Bermejo, Jacomart, Jaume Huguet, and Joan Reixac. In particular, many artists across the Spanish Kingdoms began to demonstrate a marked interest in the Netherlandish mode, revealing the influence of the *ars nova* (the new art — often used to describe the emerging naturalism of Renaissance art) on Spanish art.



Figure **13.7.10.14**: In the fifteenth century, the northern European countries we know today as Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg were controlled by the enormously wealthy Dukes of Burgundy (Burgundy is a region in France). This is often referred to, today, as the Burgundian Netherlands.



Figure **13.7.10.15**: Bartolomé Bermejo, Saint Michael triumphant over the Devil with the Donor Antoni Joan, 1468, oil and gold on wood, 179.7 x 81.9 cm (**National Gallery, London**)

Several reasons for this increased interest exist. First, there was a great influx of paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and other goods to Spain from Flanders. Such items were collected and displayed in homes or included in prominent collections. The second is the rapid spread of northern woodcuts and engravings, such as those by Martin Schongauer, after 1450. One of the first indications that Netherlandish art was transforming Spanish painting is found in contracts, where we find patrons asking for grisaille to be included in paintings (grisaille, or painting in grayscale, was common in Flanders).

In particular, the Kingdom of Castile and the Kingdom of Aragon borrowed models and styles from their northern counterparts, or had Netherlandish artists travel south to work in the Iberian Peninsula. Until the end of the fifteenth century, there were few classicizing influences and little visual interest in ***all'antica*** decoration, such as what we find throughout much of the Italian peninsula.

Trends in the Kingdom/Crown of Aragon

The taste for the Netherlandish visual mode was strong in the second half of the fifteenth century, although it had started earlier. King Alfonso the Magnanimous (King of Aragon, Valencia, Sicily, Majorca, Naples, Corsica, and Sardinia, and Count of Barcelona) displayed an early taste for northern art. In 1434, while in the Kingdom of Sicily, he requested Flemish tapestries from Flanders, and he owned paintings by **Jan van Eyck** and **Rogier van der Weyden**.

In the Kingdom of Aragon, beginning in the 1440s, painters turned more towards northern influences, moving away from the International Gothic style. Few painters, if any, seemed to travel to Flanders, although it is possible that undiscovered archival records will unearth some. One of the first artists from here who did travel north was Bartolome Bermejo in 1474. Netherlandish artists also settled in the Kingdom of Aragon, although not so many as to suggest they were the ones solely responsible for the popularity of a northern visual idiom.



Figure 13.7.10.16: Lluís Dalmau, *Virgin of the Councillors*, 1443-1445, oil on oak wood, 316 x 312.5 x 32.5 cm (**Museu Nacional d'Art Catalunya**)

The Kingdom of Valencia (within the Kingdom/Crown of Aragon) was an especially important place for the Netherlandish visual idiom to take root and grow with Spanish artistic preferences. Some artists traveled north to Flanders. One of the earliest to do so was Lluís Dalmau, who was sent in 1431 by King Alfonso. Born and raised in Valencia, Dalmau had been trained in the International Style. In Flanders, he became acquainted with Netherlandish painting techniques and inventions, and he likely observed well-known artworks like the **Ghent Altarpiece** in St. Bavo's Cathedral.

Dalmau returned to Spain, settling in Barcelona. One of the first paintings he completed upon his return was his famous *Virgin of the Councillors* in Barcelona (Catalonia was at this time part of the Crown of Aragon), which is one of the earliest paintings to exhibit the influences of Netherlandish painting. The painting was commissioned by the Barcelona City Council (Casa de la Ciutat) to hang in the chapel at the council palace.



Figure **13.7.10.17**: Detail, Lluís Dalmau, *Virgin of the "Consellers"*, Lluís Dalmau, 1443-1445, oil on oak wood, 316 x 312.5 x 32.5 cm (**Museu Nacional d'Art Catalunya**)

It displays the Virgin and Child seated on an elaborate wooden throne, around whom are members of the city council, kneeling before her. Saints and angels stand behind them. Naturalistic details fill the entire painting. The council members are all portraits taken from life, and here they are shown on the same scale as the Virgin Mary. We also observe other characteristics of northern painting, such as elongated bodies and empirical perspective. Dalmau's painting also clearly indicates the influence of Jan van Eyck, especially his *Madonna and Child with Canon van der Paele* and the angels from the Ghent Altarpiece in the **Adoration of the Lamb panel**.



Figure **13.7.10.18**: Jan van Eyck, *Madonna and Child with Canon van der Paele*, 1436, oil on panel, 160 x 124.5 cm (Groeninge Museum Bruges)

Besides Dalmau, other Valencian artists, like **Joan Pons** and the **Master of the Porciùncula**, show a keen interest in northern techniques and visual idiom. As we see in the work of Van Eyck and other artists in Northern Europe, paintings are filled with a great deal of ornamentation, including gemstones and brocades.

Northern Renaissance artists also traveled to Spain, producing paintings for important Spanish patrons. Jan van Eyck traveled to the Crown of Aragon in 1427. Many Netherlandish artists would even make careers living and working in Spain. Flemish artists like Luis Alimbrot (Louis Allincbrood or Lodewijk Allyncbrood/Hallincbrood), who was in Bruges 1432–37, was active in Valencia 1439–60. His son, Jordi Alimbrot (Joris Allyncbrood), who was born in and worked in Bruges, also settled and worked in Valencia from 1463 onward.

Not all kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon displayed an early and heightened interest in northern visual modes. Majorca was late to illustrate such influences, only beginning to incorporate them in the 1480s (versus the 1440s in Valencia and 1450s in Catalonia).

The Crown of Castile and the patronage of Isabel of Castile

Netherlandish influence was perhaps strongest in the Kingdom of Castile. However, there is no individual artist, like Dalmau, to whom we credit the origins of such influences. In general, there are fewer named and signed works here, which makes it more challenging to assign this role to a specific artist. Still, we tend to think a Spanish painter with first-hand knowledge of Flemish painting worked in Castile, or perhaps even a Netherlandish artist who relocated there.



Figure **13.7.10.19**: Juan de Flandes, *The Marriage Feast at Cana*, c. 1500–1504, oil on wood, 21 x 15.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)



Figure **13.7.10.20**: Paolo da San Leocadio, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, 1485, oil on panel, 43.5 x 23.3 cm (**National Gallery, London**)

By the end of the fifteenth century, many prominent Netherlandish artists lived and worked in Castile, brought there by Queen Isabel of Castile, who adored Netherlandish-style paintings. Michael Sittow, Juan de Flandes, and Antonio Inglés were all foreign artists who came to work for Isabel, who also collected Flemish paintings by Deiric Bouts, Hans Memling, and van der Weyden. Among the immigrant artists at her court, the most famous was Juan de Flandes. He was even made court painter. Concurrently with Isabel's strong interest in northern influenced artwork, we see other areas of Spain developing an interest in stylistic ideas

from the Italian peninsula. While Isabel's court had a strong interest in Italian humanism and philosophy, it had little interest in its visual aesthetics.

The introduction of Italianizing influences

In the final third of the fifteenth century, especially in Valencia, we begin to see Italian influences. Italian artists also began to arrive and work in Spain, among them Nicola Fiorentino, Francesco Pagano, and Paolo da San Leocadio. These Italianate influences are visible in artworks by Spanish artists like Bermejo. Valencia would become important as a crossroads of Spanish, Netherlandish, and Italian painting. Some have credited the interest in Italian art with the arrival of cardinal Rodrigo de Borja, bishop of Valencia and vice-chancellor of the church of Rome. He came to Valencia accompanied by Paolo da San Leocadio and Francesco Pagano.

The term "Hispano-Flemish"

Paintings like Gallego's and Dalmau's are often described as "Hispano-Flemish," which is intended to highlight their indebtedness to Netherlandish painting though they were painted in Spain with Spanish influences as well. The term is ambiguous though, and for this reason, some people prefer the term "late Gothic" or even "final Gothic," though these too are somewhat inaccurate. Still others will omit the use of stylistic terminology altogether and simply locate these paintings as being done in the Hispanic Kingdoms between the 1440s and early sixteenth century, and under the influence of Campin, van Eyck, and van der Weyden.

Additional resources:

Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain 1500–1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

John F. Moffit, *The Arts in Spain* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

Judith Berg Sobreé, *The Artistic Splendor of the Spanish Kingdoms: The Art of Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1996).

Alberto Velasco and Francesc Fité, eds., *Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and Hispanic Kingdoms* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

St. Michael defeats the devil in Renaissance Spain

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.10.1**: Master of Belmonte, *St Michael Defeating the Devil*, 1450-1500, oil and tempera on wood (The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Dr. Lauren Kilroy Ewbank and Dr. Steven Zucker

The Renaissance in Spain, The Morata Master

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.10.2: The Morata Master, *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Scenes from the Life of the Virgin*, late fifteenth century, tempera and gold on wood, central panel, below 132.1 x 87.9 cm; central panel, above, 111.1 x 87.6 cm; each side panel 214.6 x 57.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), this video is part of Smarthistory's Expanded Renaissance Initiative Speakers: Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank and Dr. Beth Harris

Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure 13.7.10.21: Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*, 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

Piedad (in Italian: *Pietà* — the Virgin Mary cradling the dead body of Jesus)

Butterflies flutter beside a lion that sleeps peacefully. Flowers and other greenery spring from the reddish-brown earth, all painted with naturalistic precision. In the center foreground, the Virgin Mary mourns her dead son, holding him. Jesus' broken body arcs across her lap, blood streaming from his wounds. On the left side, St. Jerome, dressed in red and white, kneels while paging through a book. At his feet we see a lion — a reference to the legend that St. Jerome tamed a lion in the wilderness by healing its paw.



Figure 13.7.10.22: Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà* (detail), 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)



Figure 13.7.10.23: Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà* (detail), 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

To the right is the Canon Desplà, who lived in Barcelona, Spain during the fifteenth century, dressed in heavy black robes.

The landscape

While our attention is focused on the figures in the foreground who take up half of the composition, behind them is a vast and detailed landscape. It is filled with cities, windmills, mountains, rocky crags, pathways, waterfalls, rivers, and weather phenomena in the sky.

The artist, Bartolomé Bermejo, renders the landscape with exquisite details and a lush color palette, inviting viewers to delight in his naturalistic effects. It is clear that the artist has studied plants, animals, and insects, as he attempts to capture them faithfully. He uses the relatively new medium of oil paint to build up details and textures.



Figure **13.7.10.24**: Jerusalem (detail), Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*, 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

Bermejo's careful observation of the natural world is paired with his imaginative depiction of Jerusalem in the background where the ancient city looks more like fifteenth-century Europe with its Gothic architecture (note the tall spires, delicate tracery, and rose windows) than an eastern Mediterranean city. Some buildings though, do have small domes, likely the artist's attempt to reference Jerusalem's famous domed spaces (such as the **Dome of the Rock** and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Pairing convincing naturalism with creative invention made Bermejo one of the most original artists of his day. *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà* is Bermejo's last known completed work before he mysteriously stopped producing art.

The auburn artist on the move



Figure **13.7.10.25**: Map of the Iberian Peninsula in 1492

Bartolomé de Cárdenas, often called el Bermejo (which means "auburn" in Spanish), was likely born in the city of Córdoba on the Iberian peninsula around 1440. For much of his career he painted within the Kingdom of Aragón. We have artworks from cities like Valencia, Daroca, Zaragoza, and Barcelona, as well as some textual records that describe aspects of his time in these places. Unfortunately, many details of Bermejo's life are currently unknown to us.

Bermejo is an example of an itinerant artist — someone who moved around a great deal during his lifetime. He never stayed anywhere for more than ten years. He had a reputation for not completing his work, and was even excommunicated at one point while in Daroca. It is likely that Bermejo was a *converso*, someone who converted from Judaism to Christianity. While in Daroca, Bermejo married a *conversa* named Gracia de Palaciano. At this time in Spain, many *conversos* were suspected of still practicing Judaism. At one point Gracia was called before the Inquisition for not knowing the Nicene Creed (a statement of belief widely used in Christian liturgy). Bermejo's itinerancy might partially be explained by his being a *converso*.

Throughout his journeys, Bermejo absorbed and adapted different artistic strategies, including Flemish (**Northern Renaissance**) ones. It has been suggested that between the 1450s and 1460s, he may have apprenticed in **Flanders**, today primarily Belgium and the Netherlands, but we have no specific evidence that Bermejo ever traveled there as some other artists of his time did. It is more likely that he was coming into contact with Flemish art through Flemish artists who moved to the Iberian peninsula (Spain and Portugal), and Spanish artists who themselves had also absorbed Flemish artistic ideas. Valencia was well-known as an international and cosmopolitan city, complete with artists from northern Europe as well as merchants selling artworks acquired from there.

Naturalism and observation

Earlier fifteenth century depictions of the Piedad, such as Fernando Gallego's painting of this subject, reveal a similar interest in panoramic landscapes, and are similarly influenced by Flemish painting.

Scenes of the Pietà or Lamentation by Dieric Bouts and **Petrus Christus** reveal that Spanish artists like Gallego and Bermejo adapted elements from these Netherlandish painters. However, few artists (Flemish or Spanish) display the same keen observational interest in botanical elements or fauna as Bermejo does.

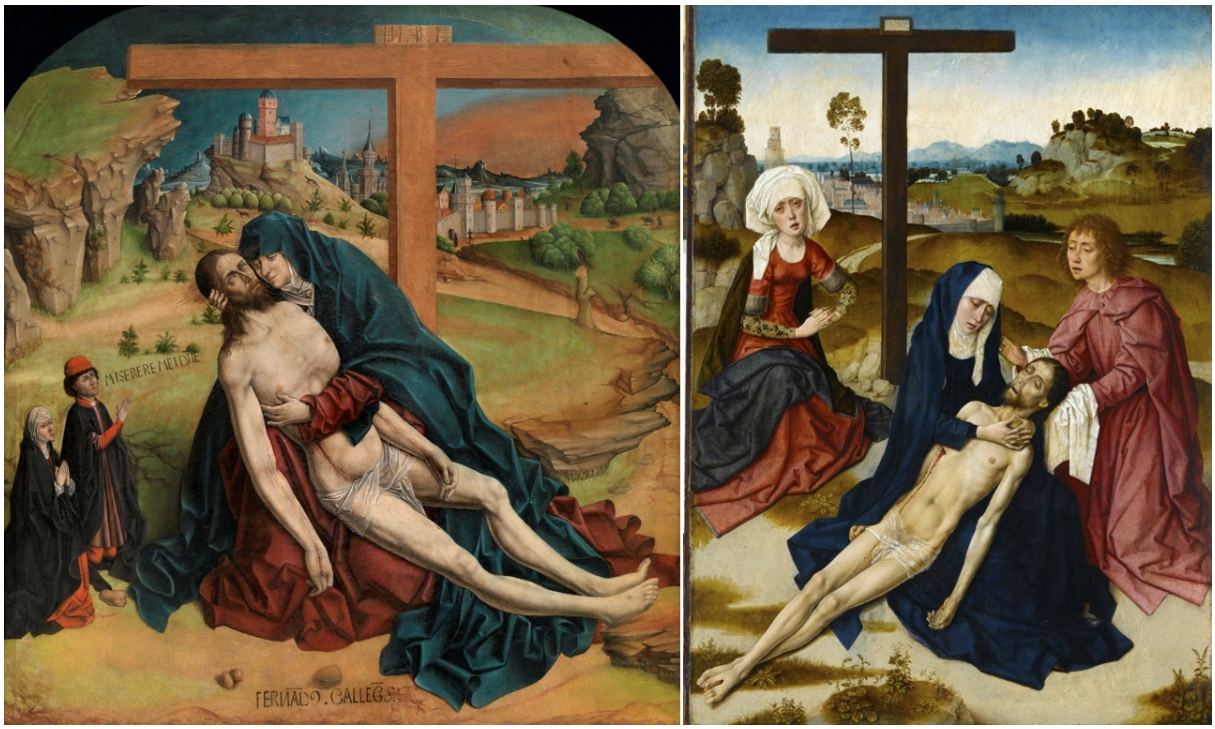


Figure **13.7.10.26**: Fernando Gallego, *Piedad*, 1465–70, mixed method, 118 x 111 cm (Prado Museum); right: Dieric Bouts, *Lamentation*, c. 1460, oil on oak panel, 69 x 49 cm (Louvre Museum)



Figure 13.7.10.27: Mary's mantle (detail), Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*, 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

If we take a close look at the Virgin Mary's blue mantle for example, we can see Bermejo's extraordinary technical skills. The edge of the mantle is decorated with complex golden patterns, and he reveals the green lining as a way to portray the different angles and textures of the textile.

The artist also shows more naturalistic folds in the mantle than the more stylized, angular drapery characteristic of Flemish and **Spanish painting** of the time (this is especially evident in Gallego's *Piedad*). The oil glazing that Bermejo uses also permits him to pay close attention to details. There are more than forty types of plants in the painting, providing viewers with great botanical variety.

More than meets the eye

While Bermejo's observational skills are on full display in this painting, many of the animals and plants also have deeper symbolic meaning. Small red and white blossoms dot the landscape, symbolizing purity (white) and passion (red). White and orange butterflies flutter around the composition, likely symbolizing resurrection. On the right side of the painting are several European goldfinches (symbols of the Passion and Resurrection). A snake slithers away between the rocks, and a mouse flees into the grass. Both are associated with Satan or evil, and the idea here is that evil is being driven away.

A pile of exposed bones rests behind Mary and her son. It is common to see a human skull and crossbones at the base of the cross in images of the **Crucifixion, Lamentation, and Pietà**. The bones are Adam's, and it locates the Crucifixion at Golgotha (Calvary), the "place of the skull," in Jerusalem. Bermejo also uses them to signal his skill, by depicting more bones than we might normally observe in a such a scene, but also including more difficult bones to paint, such as vertebrae.



Figure 13.7.10.28: Sky (detail), Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*, 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

Different types of weather phenomena take place across the sky, with Bermejo creating various atmospheric effects. On the left, we see thick cumulus clouds and rain pouring down. A blackened sky fills the top portion of the sky, partially obscuring the moon. Closer to the earth in the center of the landscape the clouds begin to clear, and birds fly in straight formation off to the right side of the sky. The rightmost section of the sky is red and golden, and the sun is likely further off to the right. The storms and dark threatening sky refers to the passage in the Gospels about the darkness following Jesus' death and a possible eclipse. Where the sun should be in the composition, if it were paired with the moon, is the top most portion of the cross. Bermejo may be substituting the top of the cross for the sun to convey the idea that Jesus is the light of the world (the *lux mundi*), and his death and resurrection allow for entry into the heavenly Jerusalem.



Figure 13.7.10.29: Halo (detail), Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*, 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

Haloes

Jesus, Mary, and Jerome's haloes look more like golden metal crowns or additions that we see on late medieval and renaissance Spanish sculpture. They differ from painted haloes that we tend to think of in the late fifteenth century in other areas of Europe, often golden disks surrounding the head. Earlier Spanish artists, like Gallego, similarly include the halo as rays of light.

Canon Desplà and Renaissance Humanism

The *Piedad* described here was completed in 1490 for a chapel belonging to Canon Lluís Desplà i d'Oms in Barcelona Cathedral. Canon Desplà was an archdeacon, and a learned classical humanist. He had Bermejo include his portrait in the painting likely to both advertise his position and demonstrate his piety and contrition as he kneels forever next to Mary and Jesus. The portrait displays great realism. It shows Desplà in three-quarter profile, bearded and with a contemporary haircut. He wears clothes of his time. Bermejo does not idealize his patron, instead painting the canon with sagging skin under his eyes, and other imperfections around the mouth.

While Bermejo's depiction of St. Jerome is not a portrait, it has portrait-like qualities. Jerome pages through an open book, the written words legible to the viewer, seeming to read about the Piedad as it occurs before him. Bermejo likely included the scholarly Jerome, with his accompanying feline friend, because of the saint's association with learning, which would have appealed to humanists such as Desplà.



Figure 13.7.10.30: Signature (detail), Bartolomé Bermejo, *Piedad with Canon Lluís Desplà*, 1490, tempera on wood (Barcelona Cathedral)

Bermejo signed his painting on the frame with the words, "Opus.Bartolomei.Vermeio.Cordubensis" (Work of Bartolome Bermejo of Córdoba).[1] The all capital letter inscription is done in a classicizing manner, evoking antique Latin inscriptions. This may reveal Bermejo's interest in ancient Roman culture, perhaps studying first-hand the Roman monuments found in Iberia. Because Bermejo's patron was also a humanist antiquarian, the artist's choice could have been Desplà's.

Bermejo's *Piedad* is an exceptional painting that embodies much of the artistic transformation and innovation taking place across different parts of Europe. His empirical approach to the representation of plants and animals was one shared by other artists of this time, like **Leonardo da Vinci**, and which he uses to create powerful symbolic messages about Christ's sacrifice and the hope of salvation.

Notes:

[1] OPVS. BARTHOLOMEI. VERMEIO. CORDVBENSIS. IMPENSA. LODOVICI. DE. SPLA. BARCINONENSIS. ARCHIDIACONI. ABSOLUTUM. XXIII. APRILIS. ANNO. SALVTIS. CHRISTIANA (E). MCCCC. LXXXX

Additional resources:

Read more about Renaissance art in Spain

Read more about fifteenth-century Spanish painting

Prado's short video on Bermejo, and a series of brief essays related to the exhibition (Spanish and English)

John F. Moffit, *The Arts in Spain* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999)

Letizia Treves, et. al. *Bartolomé Bermejo*, exh. cat. (London and New Haven: National Gallery Company and Yale University Press, 2019)

Alberto Velasco and Francesc Fité, eds., *Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and Hispanic Kingdoms* (Leiden: Brill, 2018)

Gil de Siloé

A Renaissance St. James as pilgrim

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.10.3**: Gil de Siloé (Burgos, Castile-León, Spain), *Saint James the Greater*, c. 1489–93, alabaster with traces of paint and gilding, 45.9 x 17.4 x 12.5 cm (The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), an Expanded Renaissance Initiative video, speakers: Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources

This sculpture at The Cloisters

Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.10.31**: The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal in front of the altar of the church of the Carthusian Monastery of Miraflores (photo: **Ecelan**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

If you suddenly found yourself heir to a throne, one that your family members felt belonged to them, what steps would you take to advertise that you are indeed the rightful inheritor? In 1486, Queen Isabel of Castile found herself in just this position. And she needed to communicate to her subjects that she was the rightful heir to the royal throne. One way she did this was to commission the sculptor Gil de Siloé to create an elaborate star-shaped tomb in honor of her parents, to be placed before the main altar in the Carthusian Monastery of Miraflores (near Burgos) in Spain.



Figure **13.7.10.32**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: **Ecelan**, CC BY-SA 4.0)



Figure **13.7.10.33**: Map of the Iberian Peninsula (today Spain and Portugal) in 1492

The impressive and ornate tomb is made entirely of alabaster, which was admired for its translucency and desired for the ease with which one could carve it. The elaborate tomb was not created solely as a commemorative monument though. Isabel also intended to make a political statement about her right to rule from the throne of Castile, which some of her family members wanted for themselves.

The elaborate tomb tells us a great deal about art and artists in fifteenth-century Spain, political power struggles, patronage concerns, and the importance of alabaster as a medium in the renaissance.



Figure **13.7.10.34**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, detail of Juan II of Castile, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: **Rowanwindwhistler**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The tomb

The ambitious tomb was a massive monument that was arranged as an eight-pointed, star-shaped platform. On top of the platform rested two life-sized effigies of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, the parents of Queen Isabel. Lions rest at their feet. These felines are commonly found on royal or noble tombs of this time. As strong animals, lions symbolized power and also served as protectors. Isabel holds a prayer book, a sign of her piety. Juan II raises his right hand, while his left hand pulls on his robe, allowing Gil de Siloé to flaunt his skill at creating naturalistic folds in clothing. Above them are elaborate canopies and to their side are slim colonnettes, both of which make the two figures appear as if they are on a church facade rather than reclining on a tomb.



Figure 13.7.10.35: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, detail of St. Mark, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: Ángel M. Felicísimo, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure 13.7.10.36: Gil de Siloé, St. James the Greater, from the Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, 1489–93, alabaster (The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Surrounding the royal couple are smaller figures of the four Evangelists, seated at the four cardinal directions. The twelve apostles of Jesus are also atop the platform. One of the original apostles was removed, and is now in the Cloisters Museum of Art in New York City, with a replica on the tomb itself. It is an important reminder that artworks are often modified over time, attesting to their ongoing lives after their moment of creation.

Below the royal effigies are Old Testament figures (no longer in their original arrangement), who literally support the figures above them. Lions also adorn the sides, protecting the Castilian coats of arms. Many of the figures here also rest between delicate colonettes, adding to the architectural quality of the tomb.

The monument is a visual feast for the eyes. The sculptor created a complex surface design with an abundance of details, all done with a delicacy that makes the tomb appear more like a work done in metal than in stone. Elaborate tracery (ornamental stone openwork) animates much of the tomb. The clothing of the life-sized figures has a rich surface design and naturalistic texture, as if Gil de Siloé wanted to capture the sense of silks and brocades in stone.

Other naturalistic details can be found throughout the monument, such as the faces and hair of the royal couple, and the way that fabrics hang on the bodies of the figures. Juan II's skin shows signs of aging, with slightly sagging jowls, which adds to the portrait-like quality of the effigies. The interest in detailed surface texture and naturalistic details parallels what we find in Spanish and Flemish painting of the time.

Flemish art and artists (in Northern Europe), among them Gil de Siloé, found a home on the Iberian peninsula in the fifteenth century, adding to the complex visual culture we find there. The tomb's appearance has also been compared to Mudéjar art (Christian art heavily influenced by Islamic art), specifically for its heavy patterning and rhythmic repetition of complex forms.



Figure **13.7.10.37**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, detail of Joseph and Samson, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: **Rowanwindwhistler**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Stylistically, scholars have labeled this tomb as late Gothic or as Isabelline, although it falls within the era of the early renaissance in northern Europe and Italy—places where we still find the influence of Gothic art as well. The term Isabelline is one more frequently attached to architecture created during the reign of Isabel and Ferdinand of Aragon, her husband. The so-called Isabelline style is one that borrows from Islamic or Mudéjar traditions, northern European styles, some classicizing forms, and even complex silverwork designs. The many ways that we might label the tomb's style speaks to some of the challenges that art historians face when naming things, especially when these terms were created to describe art in other places.



Figure **13.7.10.38**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, detail of Isabel of Portugal, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: **Jose Luis Filpo Cabana**, CC BY 3.0)

The material

Often when we think of sculpture from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, we think of marble and bronze sculptures, or perhaps wooden ones. Alabaster was also a common medium in which many sculptors created dazzling objects, such as the tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal. Alabaster became popular as a material for altars and tombs beginning in the late Middle Ages in Spain, the Burgundian Netherlands, and **England**. It was frequently painted and gilded, and there are traces of paint and gold on Siloé's sculpture. Unpainted, alabaster can range in color from white to pink to yellow, and can have streaks in it as well, as we can clearly see in the figure of St. Luke on the tomb.



Figure **13.7.10.39**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, detail of St. Luke, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: **Concierge.2C**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Alabaster sculpture has been ignored in art historical scholarship, with preference given to marble sculpture in the renaissance. Marble was the favored stone in Italy, but not as much in other places. Alabaster appealed to people because of the ease with which one could cut and polish it, its greater luster and translucency, and its ability to take paint well with a generous coating of gesso (a mix of an animal glue binder, chalk, and white pigment), although it did not fare well outdoors. It was soft enough that sculptors could use woodworking tools to carve it. Spain has abundant alabaster reserves, which is a main reason for the stone's popularity in the medieval and renaissance eras. In the fifteenth century, there was no sense that alabaster was inferior to marble.



Figure **13.7.10.40**: Alabaster (photo: **James Petts**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The artist

Gil de Siloé originally came from northern Europe, most likely the Netherlands. Like some other artists of the fifteenth century, he traveled to Castile, presumably to find work. While in Spain, he was one of the best sculptors of his day. While he sculpted in

various media, his alabaster works are among the finest. His skill with the tools of his trade did not go unnoticed; he had a number of important patrons, including Isabel.



Figure **13.7.10.40**: Gil de Siloé, The Tomb of Juan II of Castile and Isabel of Portugal, detail of Juan II of Castile, 1489–93, alabaster (photo: **Pylaryx**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

The patron and the commission

For this tomb, Gil de Siloé found himself a royal patron in the figure of Queen Isabel of Castile. Isabel had a fondness for northern art, likely due to her father's interest in it as well. Her official court painter in the late fifteenth century was Juan de Flandes, or John of Flanders, and she had a number of other northern artists work for her during her life, including Gil de Siloé.

After Isabel commissioned her parents' tomb from Gil de Siloé, he sculpted it between 1489 and 1493. Isabel had good reason to want to showcase her parents in such an elaborate tomb. It commemorates Juan and his second wife (Isabel's mother), which was important because Isabel's accession to the throne depended on her legitimate royal lineage. The tomb functions like a large advertisement noting her dynastic claims to the throne for anyone who called them into doubt. Juan II of Castile had also donated his hunting lodge to the Carthusians in 1442, at which point it was transformed into a monastery. Having Gil de Siloé place a tomb in this location reminded people of Juan II's donation, which Isabel felt would aid her in further legitimizing her rule.

This singular monument reveals so much to us about late fifteenth-century Spanish art and the important role that it could play in political maneuverings. It also helps us to think beyond the borders of what we traditionally think of as "renaissance sculpture."

Additional resources:

Gil de Siloé's sculpture of St. James the Greater at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Read more about fifteenth-century Spanish painting on Smarthistory

John F. Moffit, *The Arts in Spain* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

Judith Berg Sobreé, *The Artistic Splendor of the Spanish Kingdoms: The Art of Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1996).

Alberto Velasco and Francesc Fité, eds., *Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and Hispanic Kingdoms* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

16th century

Juan de Flandes

A miraculous appearance for a queen: Juan de Flandes, *Christ Appearing to His Mother*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.10.4**: Juan de Flandes, *Christ Appearing to His Mother*, c. 1496, oil on wood, 62.2 x 37.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Test yourself with a quiz!

START

Additional resources

This painting at The Met

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

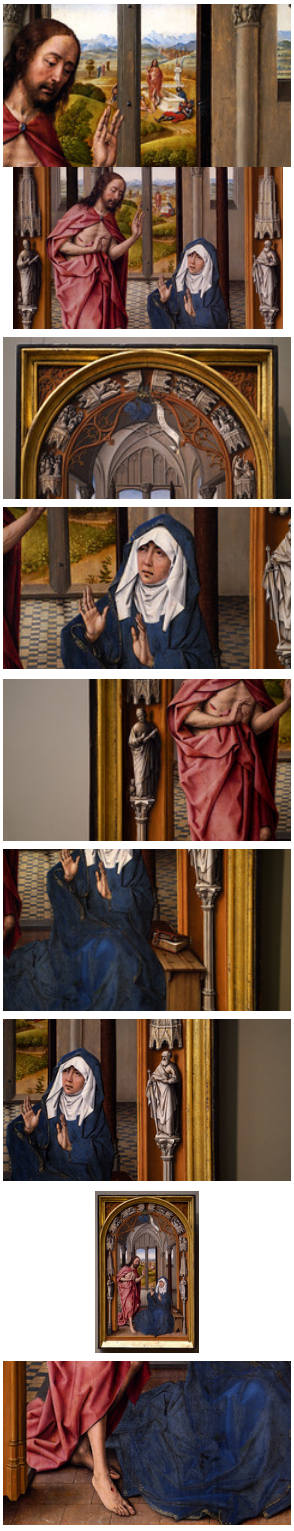


Figure 13.7.10.41: More Smarthistory images…

A wedding and a miracle for the queen of Spain

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.10.5: Juan de Flandes, *Marriage at Cana*, c. 1500–04, oil on wood panel, 21 x 15.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Additional Resources

This painting at The Met

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

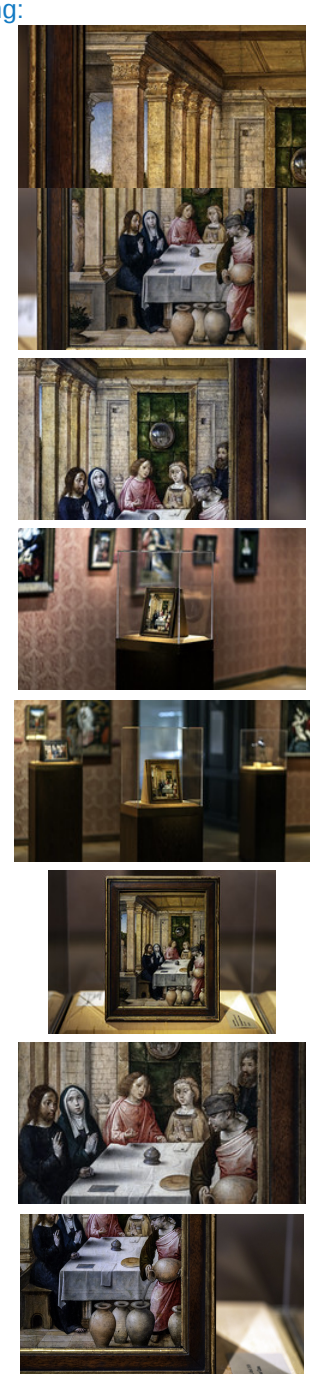
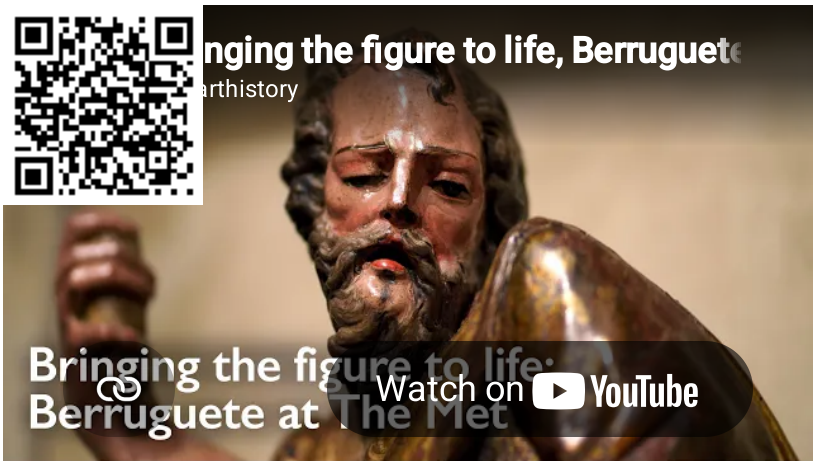


Figure 13.7.10.42: More Smarthistory images…

Alonso Berruguete

Bringing the figure to life

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.10.6: Alonso Berruguete, Apostle or Saint, c. 1520s, polychrome and gilded walnut, 103 x 37 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), part of Smarthistory's Expanded Renaissance Initiative

Introduction

Alonso Berruguete was one of the most important artists of **renaissance Spain**, excelling at painting and sculpture among other things. Today he is well-known for his sculptures, which testify to his remarkable ability to carve marble, alabaster, or wood. This sculpture is polychromed (painted) wood.

As a young artist he traveled to Italy in 1504, where he came into contact with Michelangelo and engaged with his art while in Rome. He spent most of his time in Florence, painting in the mannerist style (**Mannerism** is a late renaissance style). After his return to Spain in 1518, he was made the king's court artist, but primarily turned to sculpture for the remainder of his life. He and his workshop made elaborate *retablos* (altarpieces), which often took up the entirety of the apse of a church and required carpenters, gilders, painters, and sculptors to create such towering and impressive religious artworks.



Figure 13.7.10.43

While we do not know exactly who is depicted in this sculpture of the saint at The Metropolitan Museum of art, it offers a powerful example of Berruguete's mannerist tendencies, his skill at carving in wood, and his work on religious retablos. It is most likely a sculpture that once rested on the corner of a retablo, indicated by the uncarved and unpainted back.

Berruguete's life as an artist also reminds us of the mobility of artists in the sixteenth century. They moved around — to train, to study, and to find work. Today we tend to associate artists with a specific region or modern-day nation, but in the sixteenth century (and earlier) artists were often on the move.

Terms and key ideas

- Renaissance Spanish art
- Polychromed wooden sculpture
- Artists on the move
- Mannerist sculpture

Test yourself with a quiz!

START

Additional resources:

This sculpture at The Met

Learn more about making a Spanish polychrome sculpture

Read more about the medieval and renaissance altarpiece

Read more about mannerism

See one of Berruguete's paintings at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence

Watch a video made by the National Gallery of Art about Berruguete

Read about the process of creating one of Berruguete's retablos

C. D. Dickerson III, Mark P. McDonald, eds., *Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance Spain*, exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019)

For the classroom

Take notes while watching the video, using the **Berruguete Active Video Note-Taking**

Discussion questions 13.7.10.1

1. Compare Berruguete's sculpture with **Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco's *Christ of Clemency***. What does this comparison tell us about polychromed wood sculpture in Spain?
2. Compare Berruguete's sculpture with **Giambologna's *Abduction of a Sabine Woman***. How are they both mannerist? In what ways do they differ?
3. Consider the role of Berruguete's sculpture as a **cultural artifact**. Without being able to identify the specific identification of the sculpted figure, what other methods can we use to understand the sculpture's role in renaissance Spain? Is something lost by not being able to identify the specific individual?

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



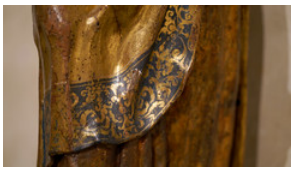










Figure 13.7.10.44: More Smarthistory images…

Alonso Berruguete, *Abraham and Isaac*

by JULIA M. VÁZQUEZ



Figure 13.7.10.45: Alonso Berruguete, *Abraham and Isaac*, 1526–1532, polychromed wood, 89 x 46 x 32 cm (Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid; photo: **Iglesia en Valladolid**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Alonso Berruguete is possibly the most famous sculptor that you have never heard of. He began his life in Paredes de Nava, a small town in northern Castile, which was by no means a major artistic center. From these remote beginnings, Berruguete rose to extraordinary success, courting some of the wealthiest and most powerful patrons on the Iberian Peninsula (what is today Spain and Portugal). After his death, Berruguete was eulogized by his peers as among the greatest artists of his time, and sculptures like his

Abraham and Isaac were among the works of art for which he was most enthusiastically celebrated. Indeed, *Abraham and Isaac* was part of the larger-scale sculptural work that cemented Berruguete's reputation as one of the most exciting sculptors in **renaissance Spain**.

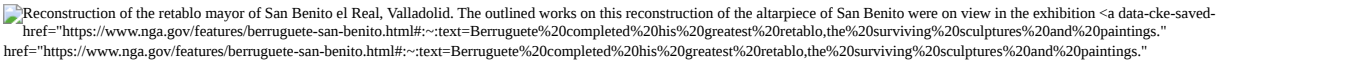

Reconstruction of the retablo mayor of San Benito el Real, Valladolid. The outlined works on this reconstruction of the altarpiece of San Benito were on view in the exhibition <a data-cke-saved-href="https://www.nga.gov/features/berruguete-san-benito.html#:~:text=Berruguete%20completed%20his%20greatest%20retablo,the%20surviving%20sculptures%20and%20paintings." href="https://www.nga.gov/features/berruguete-san-benito.html#:~:text=Berruguete%20completed%20his%20greatest%20retablo,the%20surviving%20sculptures%20and%20paintings."
Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance from October 13, 2019 to February 17, 2020. Areas in gray have been lost. (Photo: Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid) " aria-describedby="caption-attachment-50137" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 476px) 100vw, 476px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...fCredulity.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...fCredulity.jpg
700w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ty-300x378.jpg
300w" width="476">

Figure **13.7.10.46**: Reconstruction of the *Retablo Mayor* of San Benito el Real, 1526–32, Valladolid. The outlined works on this reconstruction of the altarpiece of San Benito were on view in the exhibition **Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance** from October 13, 2019 to February 17, 2020 at the National Gallery of Art. Areas in gray have been lost. (Photo: Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid)

The *Retablo* of San Benito el Real

Abraham and Isaac is one small piece of a commission that Berruguete received in 1526 from the Monastery of San Benito el Real in Valladolid, the cultural capital of the region of Castile and León. The commission was for a *retablo* (a large and elaborate wooden altarpiece) of the kind that was installed in churches all over Spain. Berruguete was at a crucial turning point in his career, having already finished his artistic training and gone to work, however briefly, for King Charles I of Spain (later Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor). By then, Berruguete commanded an impressive workshop of assistants and was ready to take on his most ambitious project yet.



Figure **13.7.10.47**: San Benito (in the central niche) on the *Retablo Mayor* de Benito, 1526–32, Valladolid, Spain (photo: **José Luis Filpo Cabana**, CC BY 4.0)

Like other *retablos* of the period, the Retablo of San Benito el Real is a visually dazzling combination of sculpted, painted, and architectural elements (although it was at one point split apart and no longer exists in its finished state). Scenes from the Christian

Bible—some fully painted, others carved in relief and then polychromed—appear framed by richly ornamented columns and pedestals. The life-sized figure of Saint Benedict (San Benito in Spanish) towers at the center of the composition, his hand lifted in blessing. At the top of the *retablo* is an enormous gilded shell with the Crucifixion rising above it. At the bottom is a series of architectural niches (many of which do not survive), each of which contained biblical figures sculpted in the round. *Abraham and Isaac* originally stood in one of these niches.

The subject and iconography

The subject of *Abraham and Isaac* derives from a story in the Old Testament. In the Book of Genesis, God tells Abraham, a shepherd and the first of the patriarchs of Judaism, to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to Him. Following God's instructions, Abraham takes Isaac to a mountaintop, where he prepares an altar with firewood. He binds his son and lays him on the altar, lifting a knife to kill him. Before Abraham can do so however, an angel appears from Heaven and stops him, replacing Isaac with a lamb for the sacrifice. In Abraham's willingness to take His commands over and against his love for his only child, God sees an expression of Abraham's faith and rewards that faith with the promise of more sons to come.



Figure **13.7.10.48**: Titian, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1542–44, oil on canvas, 328 x 285 cm (Santa Maria della Salute, Venice)

Depictions of this scene in renaissance art are overwhelmingly focused on the dramatic actions that drive this story forward: Abraham's swinging of the knife into the air, or God's angel tumbling down from the sky in a moment of literal divine intervention. This is the approach taken by contemporaries like Titian, Paolo Veronese, and Andrea del Sarto.



Figure 13.7.10.49: Alonso Berruguete, detail of Abraham in *Abraham and Isaac*, 1526–1532, polychromed wood, 89 x 46 x 32 cm (Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid; photo: Iglesia en Valladolid, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Berruguete's approach suggests a different set of priorities, heightening instead the intensity of emotions expressed by Abraham and Isaac. The sculpture represents a moment of despair, the faces of both father and son distorted into screams. They do not yet know that salvation is coming. They only know the deed that is to be done—and the tremendous cost of it.

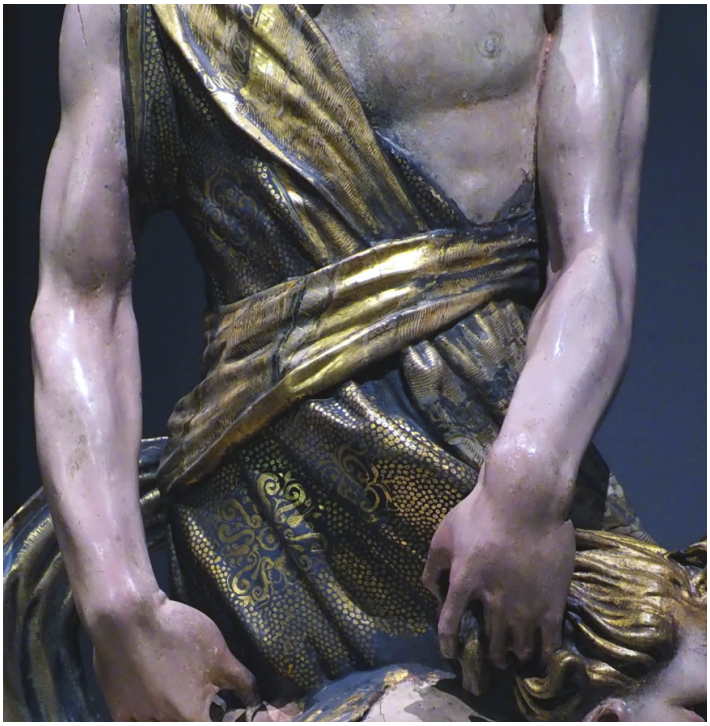


Figure 13.7.10.50: Alonso Berruguete, detail of Abraham's clothes showing the *estofado* technique, *Abraham and Isaac*, 1526–1532, polychromed wood, 89 x 46 x 32 cm (Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid; photo: Iglesia en Valladolid, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Techniques in polychrome

The affective power of Berruguete's wooden sculpture is thanks in part to its brilliant polychrome. The draperies that wrap around the body of Abraham and swirl across Isaac's torso were made using the Spanish *estofado* technique. Berruguete and his assistants would have begun by covering the finished wooden figures first in gesso (glue mixed with plaster), then in bole (largely made of clay). After dampening the surface with water, gold-leaf was carefully applied, let dry, and polished. Finally, a layer of tempera was painted over the gilding. Once dry, the paint was scratched away to reveal the gold layer underneath, resulting in glittering geometric and floral designs.

But the sculpture gets its lifelikeness especially from the technique used to paint the faces and bodies of Abraham and Isaac, called *encarnación*. These parts of the sculpture, once covered in gesso, were then coated in lead white paint. From there, the details of skin tone and hair were carefully painted in, with pink glazes used to give the sculpture the warmth and vitality of human life. Each stage of the production of a polychrome sculpture—from carving to *estofado* and *encarnación*—would have required a particular skill set. Berruguete's workshop employed carpenters, gilders, painters, woodcarvers, and other specialists who worked together under his guidance to realize his grand designs.



Figure **13.7.10.51**: Left: Alonso Berruguete, *Abraham and Isaac*, 1526–1532, polychromed wood, 89 x 46 x 32 cm (Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid; photo: Iglesia en Valladolid, CC BY-SA 2.0); right: Michelangelo, Ignudo, c. 1511, fresco, part of the Sistine Chapel ceiling (Vatican Museums)

Michelangelo's *Laocoön*

Abraham and Isaac also owes much to Berruguete's training in Italy. Sometime between around 1506 and 1518, Berruguete travelled between Florence, Rome, and other major centers to study art. While there, he came into the orbit of Michelangelo, who at the time was occupied with the painting of the **Sistine Chapel ceiling**. It was a transformative phase for Berruguete. In these years, he made several drawings and paintings that reflect his careful study of Michelangelo's work. This study paid off when Berruguete returned to Spain and got to work on sculptural commissions like the *Retablo* of San Benito el Real. Several of the figures on the *retablo* owe their poses to the **sibyls** and prophets on Michelangelo's ceiling, including those depicted in *Abraham and Isaac*. With his torso bent over and his arms twisted behind his back, Berruguete's Isaac is a close copy of one of the many nudes in Michelangelo's famous fresco.



Figure **13.7.10.52**: Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and his Sons*, early first century C.E., marble, 7’10 1/2″ high (Vatican Museums) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Berruguete’s travels in Italy also coincided with an important moment in the history of renaissance art. In 1506, an ancient marble was excavated in Rome: ***Laocoön***, a Hellenistic work depicting a scene from Virgil’s *Aeneid*. In this scene, a Trojan priest and his two sons are consumed by giant snakes that emerged from the sea. As a striking portrayal of human agony, the sculpture was a sensation. None other than Michelangelo was tasked with its restoration.

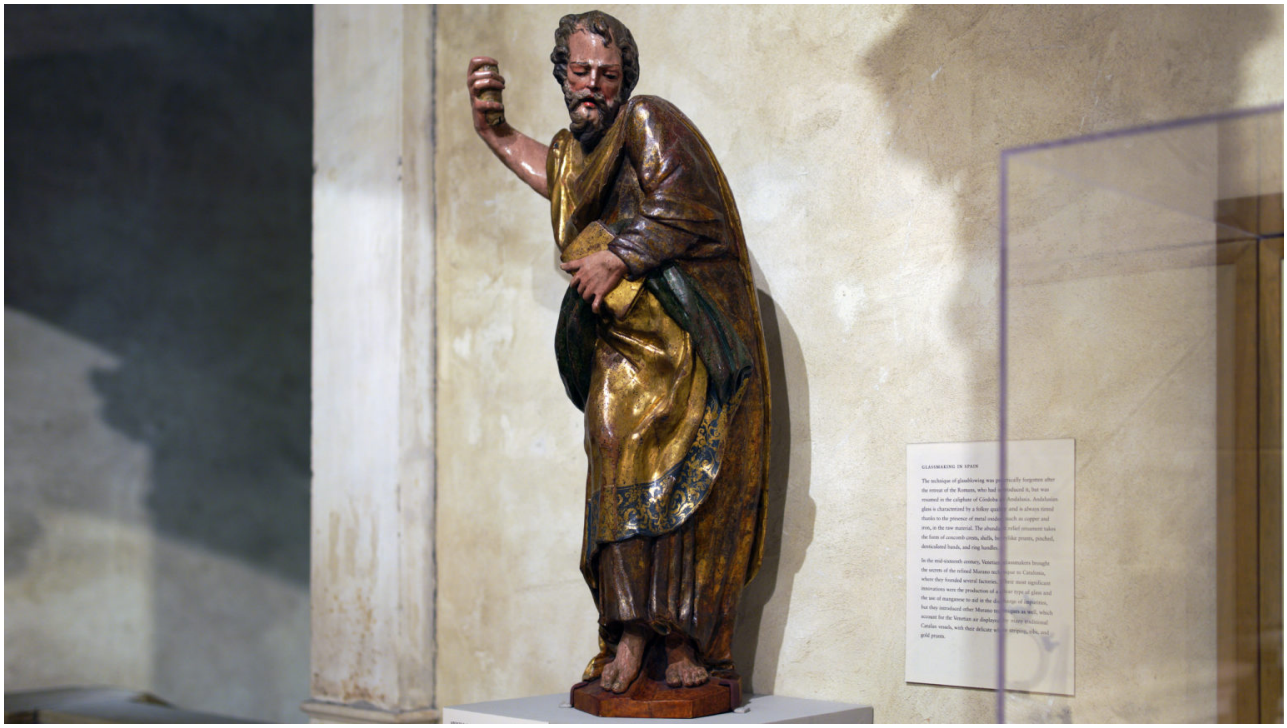


Figure **13.7.10.53**: Alonso Berruguete, *Apostle or Saint*, c. 1520s, polychrome and gilded walnut, 103 x 37 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

There can be no doubt that Berruguete saw this sculpture and appreciated what it could teach him about the expressive power of art. In its basic composition, Berruguete’s *Abraham and Isaac* perhaps more closely resembles a sculpture like Donatello’s take on the same subject, made for the Florentine Duomo in 1421, but its extreme pathos was drawn from *Laöcoon*, a work whose

influence can be felt all over the twisting bodies and contorted faces that came to characterize Berruguete's sculpted output, such as the **saint or apostle** now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Berruguete's *Tomb of Cardinal Juan Pardo de Tavera* and El Greco's *Laocoön*



Figure 13.7.10.54: Alonso Berruguete, *Tomb of Cardinal Juan de Tavera*, 1554-61 (for the Hospital de San Juan Bautista, Toledo, photo: **Factum Foundation, and view the 3d reconstruction)**

Berruguete's ability to convey intense emotion in his sculptures remained one of the hallmarks of his oeuvre through the end of his life. His last great work was a marble tomb of the Cardinal Juan Pardo de Tavera, the archbishop of Toledo, for the Hospital de San Juan Bautista. Even here Berruguete demonstrates his ability to capture the depth of human feeling. The tomb depicts the cardinal at the moment of his death. His eyelids fall heavily over his eyes, and his cheeks appear sunken and hollow. Nestled against this fading face is another one—a shrieking figure on the crozier tucked against the cardinal's cheek. Here, we see the echoes of Abraham and Isaac's screaming visages.



Figure 13.7.10.55: Doménikos Theotokópoulos (El Greco), *Laocoön*, c. 1610/14, oil on canvas, 137.5 x 172.5 cm (**The National Gallery of Art**)

Tavera's marble tomb remains in Toledo, where Berruguete spent the final decades of his life and career. He cannot have known that less than twenty years later Toledo would nurture another luminary of Spanish art: Doménikos Theotokópoulos (an artist who was originally from Crete), now best known as "El Greco." Berruguete's brilliance was not lost on the rising painter. In marginal notes that he made in his copy of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, El Greco praised Berruguete's accomplishments in painting, sculpture, and architecture. Almost exactly a century after Berruguete saw *Laocoön* in Italy, El Greco made a painting of the very same subject. It is hard to imagine that he did so without the legacy of the Spanish renaissance master in mind.

Notes:

1. D. Dickerson III and Mark McDonald, eds., *Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance Spain* (Washington: National Gallery of Art; Dallas: Meadows Museum, SMU; Madrid and New York: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica/Center for Spain in America; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019)

Additional resources

Watch a short video about **Berruguete** from the National Gallery of Art's exhibition, *Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance Spain*

Read "**Berruguete in Process: The *Retablo* of San Benito**" from the National Gallery of Art

Learn more about **how to make a Spanish polychrome sculpture** from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Watch a short **video in ASL about El Greco's *Laocoön*** from the National Gallery of Art

Manuel Arias Martínez, ed., *Son of the Laocoön. Alonso Berruguete and Pagan Antiquity* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2018)

Lynn Catterson, "Michelangelo's 'Laocoön?'," *Artibus et Historiae* 26, no. 52 (2005), pp. 29–56

Sepulchre of Cardenal Tavera by Factum Foundation

Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK

Floating on a cloud above a harbor, the Virgin Mary's graceful figure stretches upwards. Her resplendent brocade dress, blond curls, and the golden rays encircling her head transform her into a beacon of light. The pink rays of dawn cut through the clouds at the top, suggesting Mary is like the sun rising to light another day. Though she towers over the diminutive figures kneeling around her, she opens her arms in a welcoming gesture.



Figure **13.7.10.56**: Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*, 1531–36, oil on panel (Reales Alcázares, Seville)

Mary tips her head downward, looking demurely toward her mortal companions and the sea below. As if the breeze from the sea could reach the clouds, her blue pallium (or cloak) billows outward, enveloping the faithful kneeling below her as though to offer comfort and protection. The artist, Spanish painter Alejo Fernández, shows Mary in hieratic scale (larger than the worshippers below) to denote her importance as the holy mother of Jesus and as a co-redeemer (or co-redemtrix) in the salvation of humankind.

Fernández made only the central panel with the Virgin Mary; other artists made the smaller flanking panels showing saints.



Figure **13.7.10.57**: Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*, 1531–36, oil on panel (Reales Alcázares, Seville)

If we read *The Virgin of the Navigators* (or *The Virgin of the Seafarers*) closely, we can learn an enormous amount about Spain's role in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century exploration, trade and commerce, conquest and colonization, and slavery.

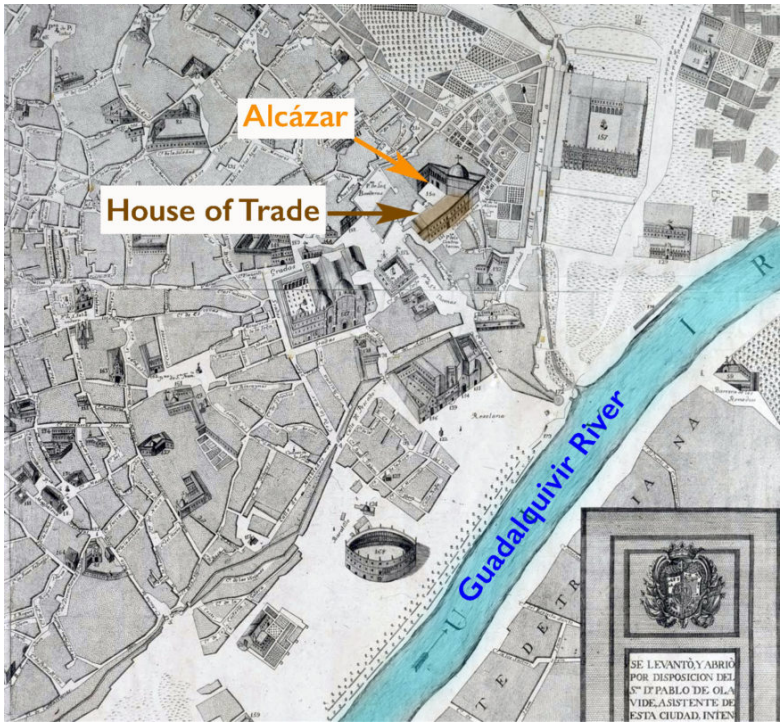


Figure **13.7.10.58**: Francisco Manuel Coelho (designer) and José Amat (engraver), *Topographical map of Seville* (detail), commissioned by Pablo de Olavide, 1771, engraving and etching, 93.5 x 137 cm (**Biblioteca Digital Hispánica**)

Seville as a port city and the House of Trade



Figure **13.7.10.59**: Iberian Peninsula

To understand the painting's complex subject matter, it is important to know who commissioned it (the **patrons**) and where it was originally located.

The Virgin of the Navigators is the central panel of an altarpiece designed for a chapel in Seville's House of Trade (in the Alcázar, a royal palace). The House of Trade (*Casa de Contratación* in Spanish) was established in 1503 by the Spanish Catholic monarchs, Isabel and Ferdinand, and played an important role in commercial activities between Spain and the Americas. Anything imported from—or exported to—Spain's new **American colonies** passed through the House of Trade. Ships sailing to the Americas left from and returned to Seville (by way of the Guadalquivir, a navigable river), making the city an important hub of mercantile activity and international trade.

Members of the House of Trade commissioned the painting from Fernández, a renowned artist of the time who was highly regarded for his portraits and religious canvases. Fernández's painting highlights the roles that Spanish rulers and the Catholic Church played in acquiring new territories, resources, and people, as well as their role in conquest, colonization, and commerce. The Virgin blesses these exploits, acting as a protectress to individuals associated with the House of Trade. Her luxurious dress—a brocade made of silk fabric and gold thread—also points to the Casa's commercial activities. Brocades were costly import items, most likely imported from Italy (possibly Florence) or even further abroad. Clothing Mary in a costly dress emphasizes her importance and connects her to the commercial activities of the painting's patrons.



Figure **13.7.10.60**: Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*, 1531–36, oil on panel (Reales Alcázares, Seville)

The Virgin of Mercy in 1492

We see Mary with her arms open wide and her mantle wrapped around devotees. She is the Virgin of Mercy (in Spanish, *Virgen de la Merced*; in Italian, *Madonna della Misericordia*)—a subject that originated in the thirteenth century. Appearing this way, Mary is a symbol of protection, and images often include portraits of specific individuals or groups sheltered within her mantle (so wonderfully captured by the German name for this subject, *Schutzmantelmadonna*—"sheltering-cloak Madonna"). To have oneself portrayed alongside the merciful Mary was an effective way to demonstrate one's piety and importance while garnering hope for her protection.



Figure **13.7.10.61**: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Madonna of Mercy*, c. 1472, fresco (Ognissanti, Florence)

Some Marian subjects, including the Virgin of Mercy, increasingly communicated the idea that the holy mother (Mary) defends Christians from enemies. Mary had already developed these associations on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal today) as Christian rulers tried to take territory from Muslim rulers (who had controlled regions of the Peninsula beginning in 711 C.E.). In 1492, Isabel and Ferdinand defeated the last Muslim stronghold on the Peninsula, in Granada. Muslims who were unwilling to convert were expelled, as were Jews. Campaigns against Muslims (in the Maghreb in North Africa and Ottoman Turks who ruled from Constantinople) continued into the sixteenth century. Stories of Mary's divine intervention on behalf of Christians on and off the battlefield flourished.

1492 was also the year that Christopher Columbus, the Genovese explorer funded by Isabel and Ferdinand, journeyed across the Atlantic in search of a route to India. He would eventually land in the Caribbean, and his voyages would initiate the invasion and colonization of the Americas. The European discovery that millions of non-Christian Amerindian peoples lived in lands previously unknown to them also increased the fervent Christian belief that Christ's Second Coming and the end of days was imminent.

Adding to the urgent need to prepare for the end of days were the religious transformations that resulted from the Protestant Reformation. According to tradition, in 1517, Augustinian monk Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to a church door in Wittenberg, demanding the reform of the Catholic Church. His action sparked a violent rift between Catholics and those who became **Protestants**, and theological and military battles ensued. Adding further chaos to this moment, King Henry VIII broke from the Catholic Church to form the Church of England after the pope refused to grant him a marriage annulment from his first wife (a Spanish Catholic). With these events in mind, Fernández's *Virgin of Mercy* had special appeal as a protectress at a time when the Catholic faith was under threat.



Figures on the right (detail), Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*

Men (and women) of empire

In the painting, Mary offers solace and protection to those individuals directly involved in colonization and evangelization of the Americas. Many of them would have been in Seville, where Fernández worked, and it is possible that, as a well-known portraitist, he was able to paint some of their likenesses based on his observations of them in the city.

Let's look first at the three men kneeling on the cloud in the foreground on the right side. The man at the right, who wears light leggings and a brilliant red cape, and is thought to be **Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés** whose actions led to the overthrow of the **Mexica Empire** in Central Mexico. The man at the left of this group, who wears a beige military-style outfit, is not firmly identified, but is almost certainly another conquistador. The man at the center, and slightly behind, with red hair and a longer beard, is likely King Charles I of Spain (who became the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V). These three men were directly involved in the conquest and colonization of the Americas (Charles was also actively fighting Protestants in northern Europe).



Figures on the left (detail), Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*

If we turn to the group in the foreground on Mary's other side (our left), we see seven men and two women (these women remain unidentified, but likely represent members of the Spanish court).[1] The man with a cane is often identified as Amerigo Vespucci, the Florentine explorer who also gave his name to the Americas.[2]

The young man in red is likely Martín Alonso Pinzón, who along with his brother had accompanied Columbus on his first voyage and continued to participate in Spain's imperial exploratory enterprises. The white-haired man on the left with the luxurious fur-trimmed gold colored robe has been identified as Columbus.

For a man known to have dressed very simply, Columbus's expensive clothes seem out of character. Some scholars have suggested this finery explicitly connected him to the magus-king (one of the Magi—the kings who traveled from afar to offer gifts to the newborn Christ). In many images of the **Adoration of the Magi**, the magus-king wears similarly expensive clothing. The Magi also symbolized the extension of Christianity to all peoples because they journeyed from a far corner of the world. By the 1530s, this expansion of Christianity into new lands was actively occurring. Columbus himself was a *Cristo ferens*, or Christ bearer, bringing the gospel across the Atlantic (in fact his Spanish name—Cristóbal—echoes the Cristo in *Cristo ferens*).

Justifying conquest and evangelization



Figure **13.7.10.64**: Indigenous peoples in the background (detail), Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*, 1531–36, oil on panel (Reales Alcázares, Seville)

Behind the men and women associated with carrying out Spain's imperial mission are smaller figures, who fade into the recesses of Mary's cloak. Fernández painted them with darker skin, and did not differentiate their appearance—despite his being a celebrated portraitist. We can just make out that men kneel on the left, women on the right. They all wear simple white cloaks draped across their torsos. With the Spanish colonial mission in full swing by the 1530s, these figures undoubtedly represent the huge number of Amerindian peoples actively being converted to Christianity. Fernández has homogenized the diverse groups of Indigenous

peoples, choosing not to differentiate them; the group symbolizes all Native peoples. The impression is that they have been brought under the protective mantle of Christianity (figuratively and literally), justifying the violence of conquest and colonization.

The Native people's clothing also relates to Spain's evangelization efforts. The simple white cloths are similar to those worn during baptism, the Christian purification rite that initiates someone into the faith. From a Christian perspective, millions of Native peoples in the Americas needed to be converted to prepare and save their souls before Christ's Second Coming.



Figure **13.7.10.65**: Detail, Alejo Fernández, *The Virgin of the Navigators*, 1531–36, oil on panel (Reales Alcázares, Seville)

Navigating the empire

In the bottom third of the painting, we leave the divine realm and wade into the earthly realm. A windy harbor is filled with the ships that made overseas exploration and expansion possible. Fernández has painted exquisite details that allow us to identify the types of ships. In the center is a *nao* (or carrack), with a wide, deep hull that could carry lots of people and cargo. Its size and maneuverability made it an ideal vessel for exploration and navigating wide-ranging trade routes. In the 1530s, you would have observed them leaving Seville as they embarked on journeys along the African coast to Asia or across the Atlantic. Columbus's ship, the Santa María, was a *nao*, as were the ships of other famous European explorers such as Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan.

Also in the harbor are caravels, a galley, and other boats. Caravels were smaller and swifter than *nao*. Galleys, or the many oared ships that had a long history in the Mediterranean, were used as battleships and trade vessels in the Mediterranean and around the coast of Europe and Africa. All these ships would have been frequently observed in the Seville harbor because of the city's key role in maritime trade, exploration, and colonial expansion. The *Virgin of the Navigators* makes good on her name: she protects those whose lifeblood is the sea.



Figure **13.7.10.66**: Alonso Sánchez Coello (attributed to), *View of the city of Seville*, end of the 16th century, oil on canvas, 146 x 295 cm. (Prado, Madrid)

Seville and the history of slavery

As Fernández began painting *The Virgin of the Navigators*, conquistador Francisco Pizarro and his men were making advances on the **Inka Empire** in South America, which was fragile at that moment because rival brothers desired the throne. News from the Americas—such as Pizarro's eventual defeat of the Inka ruler Atahualpa—passed through Seville, with much of it filtered directly through the House of Trade.

Seville and the House of Trade also played an important role in the history of slavery. As the Portuguese explored the west African coast in the 15th century, they started to enslave people and bring them back to Iberia. By 1462, Portuguese slave traders had established themselves in Seville, and the city became a central location in the selling and distribution of enslaved Africans, and had a sizable enslaved population itself. The House of Trade was directly involved in the slave trade, managing the ships and money generated from it. Fernández himself had at least several enslaved Black and Native individuals who were involved in his workshop.

The transatlantic slave trade began shortly before Fernández created *The Virgin of the Navigators*. In the **Spanish and Portuguese Americas**, in areas of extensive or total depopulation of Indigenous people (their numbers were greatly reduced by diseases introduced by Europeans from which they were not immune, and by cruel labor practices) enslaved Africans were brought in and forced to harvest precious resources, develop the land, and build. In 1526, the first Portuguese ship brought enslaved Africans to Brazil, initiating four centuries of slavery in the Americas. The Portuguese were quickly joined by the Spanish, French, British, and Dutch (among others) who participated in the horrifying brutality of the **transatlantic slave trade**.

Connecting seas

Ocean travel is what connects these far-off places and peoples together. The ability to navigate the ocean made Columbus's fateful voyage possible, and led to the construction of ships that would carry enslaved peoples to the Americas. Navigation of the seas allowed certain European kingdoms, polities, and regions to amass impressive wealth, to develop trade relationships across vast distances, and to come into contact with cultures very different from their own (often with devastating consequences). Accurate cartography and navigation had become essential, and great advances were made by the 1530s. The House of Trade—members of which had commissioned Fernández's painting—also established a school devoted to the vital skills needed by those individuals called to sea. It is perhaps fitting then that Fernández would transform his Madonna into a Virgin of the Navigators, offering those individuals who worked in the House of Trade a holy protectress, someone to champion their livelihood, along with Spain's imperial ambitions and colonial desires.

Notes:

[1] It is possible that one of the women is Isabel of Portugal, Charles's wife.

[2] This figure has also been identified as Doctor Sancho de Matienzo, the initial head of the House of Trade (who had died by 1521).

Additional resources

Slave voyages

1619 Project

The Portuguese in Africa on the Metropolitan's Heilbrunn Timeline

Visual Culture of the Atlantic World on the Metropolitan's Heilbrunn Timeline

Herman L. Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain 1500–1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Linda B. Hall, Teresa Eckmann, *Mary, Mother and Warrior: The Virgin in Spain and the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

John F. Moffit, *The Arts in Spain* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

Carla Rahn Phillips, "Visualizing Imperium: The Virgin of the Seafarers and Spain's Self-Image in the Early Sixteenth Century," *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005), pp. 815–856.

Amy G. Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Enriqueta Vila Vilar, Adolfo Luis González Rodríguez, Antonio Acosta Rodríguez, *La Casa de la Contratación y la navegación entre España y las Indias* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2003).

El Escorial, Spain

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.10.67**: El Escorial, begun 1563, near Madrid, Spain (photo: **Vvlacenko**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure **13.7.10.68**: Titian, *Portrait of Philip II*, 1551, oil on canvas, 193 x 111 cm (Museo del Prado)

Located near Madrid, San Lorenzo de El Escorial is an imposing architectural complex that is arguably the most ambitious monument constructed during the **Renaissance in Spain**. Construction started in 1563 after King Philip II of Spain decided to commission a funerary monument for his father, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. But Philip II desired an even more complicated structure that would also function as a palace and monastery. By the time construction ended in 1584, the complex included not only these, but a church and college as well. A library was also added in 1592. The project was so complex that it took more than a decade to complete, and approximately a thousand people worked on it during its peak construction period.

A new Spanish severity

El Escorial is often described as severe or somber in appearance, with a symmetrically organized plan and a largely unornamented exterior. In its day, this was remarkable because it broke with architectural styles popular on the Iberian Peninsula, including the highly decorative Platereresque style, which was influenced by the ornate designs of silverwork.



Figure **13.7.10.69**: Platereresque style, University of Salamanca, façade, begun c. 1415 (photo: **Zarateman**, public domain)

The facade of the University of Salamanca, for instance, is a veritable feast for the eyes, with floral imagery, twisting vines, and medallions decorating the surface. El Escorial has none of this elaborate ornamentation.

The massive complex has four storeys, with large, rectangular towers at each corner. There are eleven courtyards, as well as three smaller “service” courts, and several gardens. **Classical orders** of columns punctuate the exterior, with massive, simple Doric columns on the façade. While there is little decorative or figural ornamentation, the west façade that marks the entrance to the Courtyard of the Kings (Patio de los Reyes) displays St. Lawrence (San Lorenzo) above the royal coat of arms, and the basilica’s facade includes six Old Testament kings towering above the first level.



Figure 13.7.10.70: El Escorial, begun 1563. Left: west façade with St. Lawrence (San Lorenzo) and the royal coat of arms (photo: Jebulon, public domain); Right: basilica façade with six Old Testament kings (photo: J. B. Monegro, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The grid plan

The original layout of the complex was on a grid (sometimes referred to as a gridiron) plan laid out by Juan Bautista de Toledo, a student of Michelangelo who aided in the construction of **St. Peter's Basilica** in Rome. A grid plan suggests order and balance, clarity and unity. At El Escorial, some suggest that the grid plan possibly relates to the grill upon which St. Lawrence (San Lorenzo in Spanish) was martyred. Most Spanish cities on the Iberian Peninsula did not use the grid plan, in large part because they were older cities whose streets were already laid out. However, Philip II issued edicts in the sixteenth century that affected the construction of towns and cities in the Spanish viceroyalties that specified grid plans. This suggests a broader trend in Spain and its territories during the Renaissance of a return to cities laid out clearly and consistently—a nod to ancient Roman building practices.

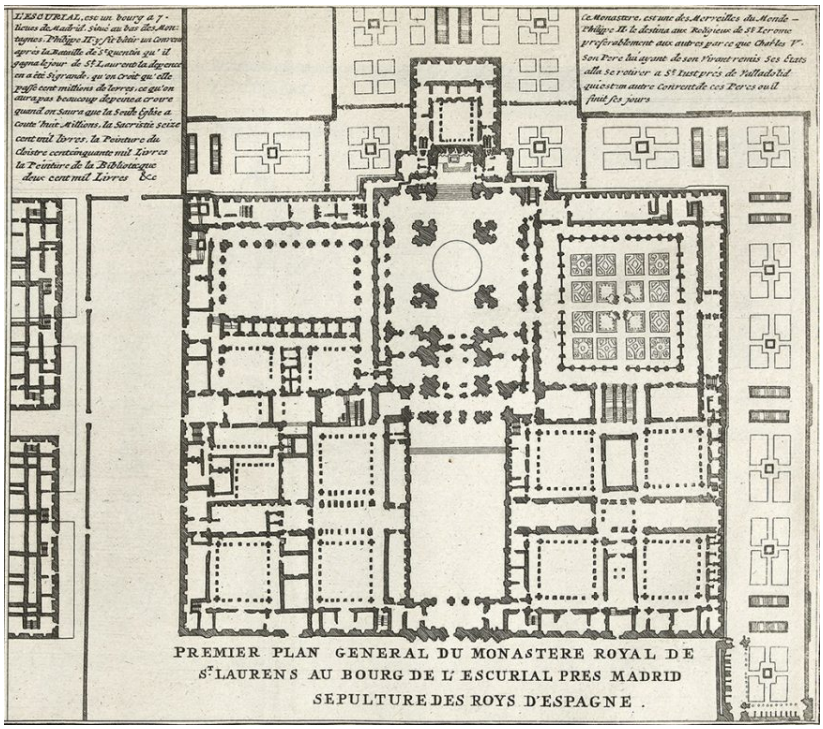


Figure 13.7.10.71: Ground plan of El Escorial, 1726, etching, 22.7 x 33.2 cm (Rijksmuseum)

A second architect, Juan de Herrera, completed the project after Toledo's death in 1567. Herrera reportedly met with Philip II often to consult on the project, and the king appointed him as his royal architect towards the end of the 1570s. Herrera is known for his "severe" classicism, which was influenced by the Italian architectural forms of architects such as Sebastiano Serlio, Giacomo da Vignola, and Giulio Romano, whose work he observed on his travels to Italy. His design for El Escorial may have been especially influenced by Romano's Palazzo Te in Mantua, which also incorporated classicizing architectural elements. El Escorial's severe style is sometimes referred to as "Herreresque" in honor of Herrera.



Figure 13.7.10.72: Library, El Escorial (photo: photongatherer, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Art at El Escorial



Figure 13.7.10.73: Basilica of El Escorial (photo: photogatherer, CC BY-NC 2.0)

While the exterior is restrained in its decoration, many areas of the interior are elaborately decorated. Inside the basilica, more depictions of kings and saints await visitors. Frescoes adorn many of the surfaces, such as the walls of the library. Despite its highly decorative qualities, El Escorial's interior is harmonious, with the ornamentation carefully planned to create a visually unified space.



Figure **13.7.10.74**: Pellegrino Tibaldi, *The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence*, 1592, oil on canvas, 419 x 315 cm (Basilica El Escorial)

Artists from different parts of Europe were hired to adorn the interior. Federico Zuccaro and Pellegrino Tibaldi were two Italian painters paid to complete frescoes and other paintings. Tibaldi's *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* on the main altarpiece in the basilica showcases the influence of Michelangelo, with its grandiose figures displaying well-defined musculature. We also find works by Claudio Coello, Luca Giordano, and **El Greco**. The latter produced *The Martyrdom of St. Maurice* for El Escorial in 1582, but Philip II apparently rejected it on claims that the the foreground figures were the focus of the composition.

During Philip II's reign, El Escorial came to house many artworks, including some by Titian and others by Flemish painters like Hieronymous Bosch. The king eventually owned roughly twenty-six paintings by Bosch, many of which hung in El Escorial, including the artist's famous ***Garden of Earthly Delights***. Works that formed part of the royal collection at El Escorial eventually entered the Prado Museum's collection.



Figure **13.7.10.75**: El Escorial, begun 1563, near Madrid, Spain (photo: **Turismo Madrid Consorcio Turístico**, CC BY 2.0)

A symbol of Imperial Spain

Philip encouraged those visiting him at court to journey to El Escorial. One particularly fascinating example dates to 1584 when Japanese nobles and their Portuguese Jesuit guide visited Philip II in Madrid, at which point the Spanish king brought them to El Escorial to delight in his project and hopefully impress them with its magnificence. Apparently it worked, as one record states that the Japanese nobles claimed it was "so magnificent a thing, whose like we have never seen or expected to see."[1] One can imagine that the severe classicizing style combined with a grid plan helped to establish Philip II as akin to the great Roman emperors of the past, as well as a formidable imperial ruler with refined taste during the Renaissance.

[1] Henry Kamen, *The Escorial: Art and Power in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 84).

Additional resources:

Unesco website on El Escorial

El Greco

El Greco, *Burial of the Count Orgaz*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **13.7.10.76**: El Greco, *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, 1586–88, oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)

A miracle at a burial

Don Gonzalo Ruíz, who died in 1323 (and was later known by the title, Count of Orgaz), is not likely someone you know. Ruíz, who was the Señor (Lord or ruler) of the town of Orgaz, donated money to the church of Santo Tomé in Toledo, Spain upon his death. Local stories circulated about the Count of Orgaz in the fourteenth century, including a miraculous story of the circumstances of his burial: that after he died Saints Augustine and Stephen lowered him into his tomb to honor him for his good deeds. This story continued to be popular in the city of Toledo, serving as the source of inspiration for one of the city's most famous paintings: El Greco's *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. The painting was made for the burial chapel of the Count of Orgaz at Santo Tomé between 1586 and 1588. While you may not know Don Gonzalo Ruíz, chances are you've seen a reproduction of El Greco's painting—it is one of the world's most recognizable and often reproduced paintings.

"The Greek"

El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), or The Greek, is known for numerous paintings where malleable and elongated figures are lit from sources that can't readily be discerned. Born and raised in Crete, El Greco was trained as a Byzantine icon painter. He left for Venice at age twenty-six, where he worked in Titian's workshop and was influenced by Tintoretto. He then traveled to Rome before settling in Toledo, Spain in 1577 to work for the Spanish King Philip II. He lived there until his death in 1614. Some of his contemporaries, like Friar Hortensio Félix Paravicino, commented on how his time in Toledo gave him his remarkable artistic abilities, "Crete gave him life, and Toledo his brushes …."[1] After his death, El Greco continued to inspire artists, including twentieth-century avant-garde artists like Pablo Picasso, who found inspiration in El Greco's fluid distortions of the body.

The painting

El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* is monumental—more than 15 feet high—and depicts numerous figures in addition to the miraculous circumstances surrounding the burial of Don Gonzalo Ruíz.



Figure **13.7.10.77**: Burial (detail), El Greco, *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, 1586–88, oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)

At the bottom center, Saint Augustine (on the left) and Saint Stephen (on the right) hold the Count of Orgaz, who is dressed in armor. As they lower him into his tomb, we get the impression that they place his body into the physical tomb that exists in front of the painting in the burial chapel. This act is reminiscent of paintings showing the entombment of Christ, such as versions by Raphael or Titian (below), where Christ's body is lowered into its grave. Perhaps El Greco adapted this subject for his painting to emphasize the solemn moment and the miraculous nature of the burial itself.



Figure **13.7.10.78**: Titian, *The Entombment of Christ*, c. 1520, oil on canvas, 148 x 212 cm (Louvre, Paris)

Here on earth

Other religious figures in the lower scene include Franciscan, Augustinian, and Dominican friars. The parish priest of Santo Tomé, Andrés Núñez de Madrid (shown reading, far right), and other individuals who lived in late sixteenth-century Toledo are visible. The men in dressed in black and decorated with red crosses belonged to the Order of Santiago (St. James the Greater), an elite military-religious order.



Figure **13.7.10.79**: Earthly scene (detail), El Greco, *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, 1586–88, oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)



Figure **13.7.10.80**: El Greco, *Fray Hortensio Félix Paravicino*, 1609, oil on canvas, 112.1 x 86.1 cm (The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

A young boy, Jorge Manuel, El Greco's son stands to the left of St. Stephen and points towards the saints lowering Orgaz's body, leading our eye to the main subject. The figure directly behind and above Saint Stephen who looks out at viewer is a self-portrait. While El Greco was an accomplished portrait painter, as evidence by his painting of Friar Hortensio Félix Paravicino, the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* is remarkable for the number of portraits included within such a complex composition.

It was customary for elite men to come to the burial of other nobles in Spain at this time, but why would El Greco include so many of his contemporaries in a painting ostensibly focused on a miraculous story about the Count of Orgaz? The answer can be found in the painting's 1586 contract that stipulated that portraits be included to suggest that they witnessed the miracle. El Greco brilliantly combines portraits with saintly figures—the spiritual with the historical. Santo Tomé was El Greco's parish church, so he likely included people he knew in the painting as a sign of respect.



Figure **13.7.10.81**: St. Stephen's clothing (detail), El Greco, *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, 1586–88, oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)

To help people feel like they were among their contemporaries, El Greco emphasized the naturalistic textures of the clothing, the reflective shine highlighting the metal armor, and even the faces and skin of the individuals in the earthly realm. Saint Stephen's vestments are so detailed that we can see a scene of his martyrdom on the lower edge. Yet for all the naturalistic elements of this lower scene, it still seems mysterious. Are we outside at night? Are we inside the chapel? It is unclear. Nevertheless, the dark atmosphere heightens the sense of mourning and drama of the painting.

Just like heaven

The heavenly realm covers the upper half of the composition. We see many figures here as well, including both angels and saints—David with his harp, Peter with his keys, John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, and Christ. The Spanish King Philip II and Pope Sixtus V are also visible in this celestial realm.

Between Mary and Christ, an angel guides the Count of Orgaz's small soul (what looks like a baby) upwards (a gesture common in Byzantine icons generally). The Count's soul will be judged by Christ in Heaven, who presides over the entire scene. Anyone looking at the painting was reminded that judgment awaits them too.



Figure **13.7.10.82**: Heaven (detail), El Greco, *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, 1586–88, oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)

Heaven and earth

El Greco's style differs between the two realms. In the upper heavenly realm, the artist used looser brushwork to give the figures a more ethereal and dynamic quality. He also chose cooler colors, including silvers and lilacs, that appear to shimmer and reflect light. The lower half of the canvas has a darker, more earth-tone palette (except saints Stephen and Augustine), giving it a more naturalistic appearance. Differences also exist between the way the figures in each realm are painted. Christ, Mary, and John the Baptist are more angular and elongated than those below. These figures are often described as dematerialized—less material or solid. We certainly get this impression from some of the wispy, insubstantial figures among the clouds.

We get the sense of a solid group surrounding the burial of Orgaz. The figures are arranged as a frieze that moves across the bottom half of the painting with the heads forming a straight horizontal line, giving an impression of stability. This differs from the heavenly realm, where the clouds arc upwards to creates a sense of motion and flux. These clouds and the way that El Greco uses them to define clusters of figures at differing heights helps to remove the heavenly realm from reality and to provide a sense of motion that contrasts with the more static scene below.



Figure **13.7.10.83**: Heaven (detail), El Greco, *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, 1586–88, oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)

Even though the celestial and earthly realms are divided, El Greco links them to create a unified painting. Staffs and torches held by men on earth rise upwards, crossing the pictorial threshold between heaven and earth. Figures gaze upwards to heaven, encouraging us to lift our eyes as well. Certain figures also echo one another across the threshold of the two spheres. Mary and John the Baptist gather at Christ's feet, leaning inwards—not unlike saints Stephen and Augustine holding the Count of Orgaz's body.

Counter-Reformation artist

The mid-to-late sixteenth century was the era of the Counter Reformation, with Toledo as a staunch bastion of Catholic Christendom. At the Council of Trent (1545–63), the importance saints as intercessors was defended in the wake of Protestant attacks. El Greco's painting, made only two decades later, with its depiction of saints in both the earthly and heavenly realms, strongly reaffirms the spirit of the Counter Reformation and beautifully captures El Greco's ability to pair the mystical and the spiritual with the life around him.

1. Fray Hortensio Félix Paravicino y Arteaga, *Obras posthumas, divines y humans* (1641)

Additional resources:

Church of Santo Tome, Toledo (includes video in Spanish)

El Greco on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Xavier Bray, *El Greco* (New Haven: Yale University Press and National Gallery Company, London, 2003).

El Greco, *View of Toledo*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Figure **13.7.10.84**: El Greco, *View of Toledo*, 1598-99, oil on canvas, 47-3/4 x 42-3/4″ / 121.3 x 108.6 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Not just any sky

Landscape paintings are often meant to document the look of a particular time in a particular place, to freeze a single moment and preserve it for eternity. *El Greco's View of Toledo* does not do that. Although the large church is placed in the correct place in the city, El Greco changed the locations of several other buildings, proving that documentation was not the artist's primary concern. Rather than telling us what Toledo looked like, here, El Greco communicates what the city feels like. Toledo becomes the means through which the artist expresses an interior psychological state, and perhaps, a view about the nature of man's relationship with the divine.



Figure **13.7.10.85**: Detail, El Greco, *View of Toledo*, 1596-1600

Using typically dark, moody colors, El Greco presented the Spanish city of Toledo at the top of a rolling hill. The city itself takes up only a little space in the center of the painting. The landscape and sky dominate. This is not just any sky. El Greco's clouds are about to crack open and unleash a storm on the city. The buildings themselves seem to crawl across the painting, and curving lines throughout the hill give the impression that the vista is moving, that it might actually be alive.

In El Greco's Toledo, something is about to happen, and it probably isn't going to be good.

Something new: A cityscape

To understand how radical this painting is, we have to weigh a few historical circumstances. First, El Greco was painting in Counter Reformation Spain, where religious dictates based on the Council of Trent (which ended in 1563), banned the landscape as

a suitable subject for painting. Although the church was his primary patron, the artist broke with that convention, and because of this, *View of Toledo* has been called the first Spanish landscape. More impressively, cityscapes never existed anywhere in the sixteenth century. El Greco may literally have invented the genre. Some art historians found this so unsettling that they had suggested that, because El Greco often included views of Toledo in the backgrounds of his religious paintings and portraits, *View of Toledo* may have actually been cut from the background of a larger painting. However, we now know that this is not true.

The city of Toledo

Although El Greco, "the Greek," is most usually known as a Spanish painter, he was born Domenikos Theotokopouolos in Crete in 1541, and spent much of his life in Italy. He was trained in the tradition of Byzantine icon paintings in either Crete or Venice, where many Cretans had settled, and by the 1560s was painting in Titian's workshop. In the 1570s he went to Rome. Although El Greco was well reputed in Italy, he failed to secure any commissions in the city, and was convinced by a Spaniard to move to Toledo, where he spent the next forty years of his life, and where he died in 1614.

Why did the city of Toledo inspired El Greco to paint such a powerful picture of the city? In Spain, El Greco failed to find favor with the king, and instead worked for the Catholic Church. If he was not raised in the faith, he almost certainly would have had to convert to Catholicism. In the 1500s, Spain's Catholic Church had undergone huge transformations. The century started with the Spanish Inquisition, in which non-Catholics were hunted out, tried, tortured, and often, killed. At the same time, people, like Saint Theresa of Avilla and Saint Ignatius of Loyola (both Spanish), were preaching that, through prayer, one could be directly inspired by God, and they claimed to have frequent visions in which God spoke to them. Because of their beliefs, even these saints came under the scrutiny of the Inquisition, although they were eventually acquitted. Spain's brand of Catholicism, compared to Italy's, was mystical and based on personal experience.

Mysticism and inner conflict

This mysticism is reflected in El Greco's *View of Toledo*. Almost entirely subsumed by the landscape, the city seems to be at the direct mercy of God. This is not a forgiving God, but rather a wrathful one, as in the Old Testament. Toledo is undergoing a reckoning. At the same time, the landscape transcends this religious reading. It becomes reflective of the inner conflict of each human being, the feeling that making one's way in the world is a harrowing endeavor.



Figure 13.7.10.86: Left: El Greco, *View of Toledo*, 1596-1600; right: Van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889



Figure **13.7.10.87**: Giorgione, *The Tempest*, c. 1506-8 (Accademia, Venice)

View of Toledo was centuries ahead of its time, and probably can best be compared to Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night*, 1889, which contains many of the same compositional elements (a swirling sky, overwhelming nature, a skyline dominated by a church). But whereas van Gogh evokes the calm of a little sleeping town, El Greco's painting captures the violence of the exterior world against an interior one.

In this way, *View of Toledo* has much in common with Giorgione's *The Tempest*, in which a crack of lightning and oncoming storm threaten a woman and child seated in the landscape. El Greco reminds us that there is an unfriendly world outside of us and that we are all subject to forces beyond our control. He leaves it up to us to decide whether we will succumb or prevail.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

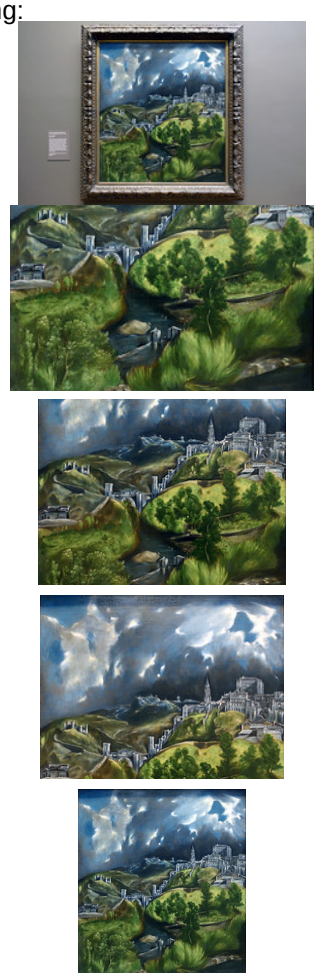


Figure 13.7.10.88: More Smarthistory images…

El Greco, *Adoration of the Shepherds*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.10.7**: El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), *Adoration of the Shepherds*, ca. 1612 – 1614, oil on canvas, 126 x 71″ / 319 x 180 cm (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid)

13.7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation

Reformation and Counter-Reformation

How do you get to heaven? Does religious art lead to idolatry?
The Reformation asked these and other good questions.

1517 and after

The Protestant Reformation

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Figure **13.7.11.1**: Wittenberg, 1725, engraving, 18 x 15 cm (**State and University Library, Dresden**)

A challenge to the Church in Rome

In art history, the sixteenth century sees the styles we call the High Renaissance followed by **Mannerism**, and—at the end of the century—**the emergence of the Baroque style**. Naturally, these styles are all shaped by historical forces, the most significant being the Protestant Reformation's successful challenge to the spiritual and political power of the Church in Rome. For the history of art this has particular significance since the use (and abuse) of images was the topic of debate. In fact, many images were attacked and destroyed during this period, a phenomenon called iconoclasm.

The Protestant Reformation

Today there are many types of Protestant Churches. For example, Baptist is currently the largest denomination in the United States but there are many dozens more. How did this happen? Where did they all begin? To understand the Protestant Reform movement, we need to go back in history to the early sixteenth century when there was only one church in Western Europe – what we would now call the Roman Catholic Church – under the leadership of the Pope in Rome. Today, we call this "Roman Catholic" because there are so many other types of churches (ie Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican – you get the idea).

The Church and the state

So, if we go back to the year 1500, the Church (what we now call the Roman Catholic Church) was very powerful (politically and spiritually) in Western Europe (and in fact ruled over significant territory in Italy called the Papal States). But there were other political forces at work too. There was the Holy Roman Empire (largely made up of German speaking regions ruled by princes, dukes and electors), the Italian city-states, England, as well as the increasingly unified nation states of France and Spain (among others). The power of the rulers of these areas had increased in the previous century and many were anxious to take the opportunity offered by the Reformation to weaken the power of the papacy (the office of the Pope) and increase their own power in relation to the Church in Rome and other rulers.

Keep in mind too, that for some time the Church had been seen as an institution plagued by internal power struggles (at one point in the late 1300s and 1400s church was ruled by three Popes simultaneously). Popes and Cardinals often lived more like kings than spiritual leaders. Popes claimed temporal (political) as well as spiritual power. They commanded armies, made political alliances and enemies, and, sometimes, even waged war. Simony (the selling of Church offices) and nepotism (favoritism based on family relationships) were rampant. Clearly, if the Pope was concentrating on these worldly issues, there wasn't as much time left for caring for the souls of the faithful. The corruption of the Church was well known, and several attempts had been made to reform the Church (notably by John Wyclif and Jan Hus), but none of these efforts successfully challenged Church practice until Martin Luther's actions in the early 1500s.



Figure **13.7.11.2**: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Martin Luther, Bust in Three-Quarter View*, 1520, engraving, 10 x 14.4 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston)

Martin Luther

Martin Luther was a German monk and Professor of Theology at the University of Wittenberg. Luther sparked the Reformation in 1517 by posting, at least according to tradition, his "95 Theses" on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany – these theses were a list of statements that expressed Luther's concerns about certain Church practices – largely the sale of indulgences, but they were based on Luther's deeper concerns with Church doctrine. Before we go on, notice that the word Protestant contains the word "protest" and that reformation contains the word "reform" – this was an effort, at least at first, to protest some practices of the Catholic Church and to reform that Church,

Indulgences

The sale of indulgences was a practice where the church acknowledged a donation or other charitable work with a piece of paper (an indulgence), that certified that your soul would enter heaven more quickly by reducing your time in purgatory. If you committed no serious sins that guaranteed your place in hell, and you died before repenting and atoning for all of your sins, then your soul went to Purgatory – a kind of way-station where you finished atoning for your sins before being allowed to enter heaven.

Pope Leo X had granted indulgences to raise money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. These indulgences were being sold by Johann Tetzel not far from Wittenberg, where Luther was Professor of Theology. Luther was gravely concerned about the way in which getting into heaven was connected with a financial transaction. But the sale of indulgences was not Luther's only disagreement with the institution of the Church.

Faith alone

Martin Luther was very devout and had experienced a spiritual crisis. He concluded that no matter how "good" he tried to be, no matter how he tried to stay away from sin, he still found himself having sinful thoughts. He was fearful that no matter how many good works he did, he could never do enough to earn his place in heaven (remember that, according to the Catholic Church, doing

good works, for example commissioning works of art for the Church, helped one gain entrance to heaven). This was a profound recognition of the inescapable sinfulness of the human condition. After all, no matter how kind and good we try to be, we all find ourselves having thoughts which are unkind and sometimes much worse. Luther found a way out of this problem when he read St. Paul, who wrote "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Luther understood this to mean that those who go to heaven (the just) will get there by faith alone – not by doing good works. In other words, God's grace is something freely given to human beings, not something we can earn. For the Catholic Church on the other hand, human beings, through good works, had some agency in their salvation.

Scripture alone

Luther (and other reformers) turned to the Bible as the only reliable source of instruction (as opposed to the teachings of the Church). The invention of the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century (by Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany) together with the translation of the Bible into the vernacular (the common languages of French, Italian, German, English, etc.) meant that it was possible for those that could read to learn directly from Bible without having to rely on a priest or other church officials. Before this time, the Bible was available in Latin, the ancient language of Rome spoken chiefly by the clergy. Before the printing press, books were handmade and extremely expensive. The invention of the printing press and the translation of the bible into the vernacular meant that for the first time in history, the Bible was available to those outside of the Church. And now, a direct relationship to God, unmediated by the institution of the Catholic Church, was possible.

When Luther and other reformers looked to the words of the Bible (and there were efforts at improving the accuracy of these new translations based on early Greek manuscripts), they found that many of the practices and teachings of the Church about how we achieve salvation didn't match Christ's teaching. This included many of the Sacraments, including Holy Communion (also known as the Eucharist). According to the Catholic Church, the miracle of Communion is transubstantiation – when the priest administers the bread and wine, they change (the prefix "trans" means to change) their substance into the body and blood of Christ. Luther denied that anything changed during Holy Communion. Luther thereby challenged one of the central sacraments of the Catholic Church, one of its central miracles, and thereby one of the ways that human beings can achieve grace with God, or salvation.

The Counter-Reformation

The Church initially ignored Martin Luther, but Luther's ideas (and variations of them, including Calvinism) quickly spread throughout Europe. He was asked to recant (to disavow) his writings at the Diet of Worms (an unfortunate name for a council held by the Holy Roman Emperor in the German city of Worms). When Luther refused, he was excommunicated (in other words, expelled from the church). The Church's response to the threat from Luther and others during this period is called the Counter-Reformation ("counter" — against).

The Council of Trent

In 1545 the Church opened the Council of Trent to deal with the issues raised by Luther. The Council of Trent was an assembly of high officials in the Church who met (on and off for eighteen years) principally in the Northern Italian town of Trent for 25 sessions.

Selected Outcomes of the Council of Trent:

1. The Council denied the Lutheran idea of justification by faith. They affirmed, in other words, their Doctrine of Merit, which allows human beings to redeem themselves through Good Works, and through the sacraments.
2. They affirmed the existence of Purgatory and the usefulness of prayer and indulgences in shortening a person's stay in Purgatory.
3. They reaffirmed the belief in transubstantiation and the importance of all seven sacraments
4. They reaffirmed the authority of both scripture the teachings and traditions of the Church
5. They reaffirmed the necessity and correctness of religious art (see below)

The Council of Trent on religious art

At the Council of Trent, the Church also **reaffirmed the usefulness of images**—but indicated that church officials should be careful to promote the correct use of images and guard against the possibility of idolatry. The council decreed that images are useful "because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent" (in other words,

through the images we honor the holy figures depicted). And they listed another reason images were useful, “because the miracles which God has performed by means of the saints, and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful; that so they may give God thanks for those things; may order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints; and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety.”

Violence

The Reformation was a very violent period in Europe, even family members were often pitted against one another in the wars of religion. Each side, both Catholics and Protestants, were often absolutely certain that they were in the right and that the other side was doing the devil’s work.

The artists of this period – Michelangelo in Rome, Titian in Venice, Durer in Nuremberg, Cranach in Saxony – were impacted by these changes since the Church had been the single largest patron for artists. And art was now being scrutinized in an entirely new way. The Catholic Church was looking to see if art communicated the stories of the Bible effectively and clearly (see Veronese’s Feast in the House of Levi for more on this). Protestants on the other hand, for the most part lost the patronage of the Church and religious images (sculptures, paintings, stained glass windows etc) were destroyed in iconoclastic riots.

Other developments

It is also during this period that the Scientific Revolution gained momentum and observation of the natural world replaced religious doctrine as the source of our understanding of the universe and our place in it. Copernicus up-ended the ancient Greek model of the heavens by suggesting that the Sun was at the center of the solar system and that the planets orbited around it.

At the same time, exploration, colonization and (the often forced) Christianization of what Europe called the “new world” continued. By the end of the century, the world of the Europeans was a lot bigger and opinions about that world were more varied and more uncertain than they had been for centuries.

Please note, this tutorial focuses on Western Europe. There are other forms of Christianity in other parts of the world including for example the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Additional resources:

Baroque art, an introduction

An Overview of the Reformation (BBC)

Smarthistory video, Introduction to the Protestant Reformation: Setting the stage

Smarthistory video about Martin Luther

Smarthistory video about the varieties of Protestantism

Smarthistory video on the Counter-Reformation

Introduction to the Protestant Reformation (part 1 of 4): Setting the stage

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.11.1**

Introduction to the Protestant Reformation (part 2 of 4): Martin Luther

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.11.2**

Introduction to the Protestant Reformation (part 3 of 4): Varieties of Protestantism

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.11.3**

Introduction to the Protestant Reformation (part 4 of 4): The Counter-Reformation

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.11.4**

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Law and Gospel (Law and Grace)*

by DR. BONNIE NOBLE

How to get to heaven?



Figure **13.7.11.3**: St. John the Baptist directs naked man to Christ (detail), Lucas Cranach, *The Law and the Gospel*, c. 1529, oil on wood, 82.2 × 118 cm / 32.4 × 46.5 in (Schlossmuseum, Gotha, Germany)

How exactly do you get to heaven? Good deeds? Can you get yourself to heaven on your own merit or do you have to sit back and let God do the work? These questions caused international controversy, mass looting, vandalism, and killing in the sixteenth century. One casualty of the violence and chaos was the destruction of thousands of works of religious art. Iconoclasts (breakers of likenesses/images) stormed through churches, destroying every work of art they could get their hands on. How did heaven get to be so controversial?

The most influential image of the Lutheran Reformation

These questions are answered in a surprising kind of picture called *The Law and the Gospel* (full image below, detail above), originally painted by the artist Lucas Cranach the Elder in 1529. *The Law and the Gospel* is the single most influential image of the Lutheran Reformation. The Reformation, initiated by Martin Luther in 1517, was originally an attempt to reform the Catholic Church. However, reform quickly became rebellion, as people began to question the power and practices of the Catholic Church, which had been the only church in western Europe up until Luther.

The role of art

A decisive difference between Catholics and followers of Luther was the question of how to get to heaven, and what role, if any, religious art could play. The Catholic Church insisted that believers could take action to vouchsafe their salvation by doing good deeds, including making financial donations and paying for elaborate art to decorate Christian churches. Luther, however, insisted that salvation was in God's hands, and all the believer had to do was to open up and have faith. As people became disillusioned with Catholic teaching, they grew angry about the ways the Catholic Church became rich in money, art, and power. When reform became impossible and rebellion the only course of action, furious, frustrated believers directed their anger at works of art, an easy and powerful target.

Other reformers followed Luther's example and staged rebellions against the Catholic Church. Some reformers took a strong position against religious art, forbidding it entirely. Luther however was more moderate, and believed that some religious art was acceptable provided it taught the right lessons, and this is where The Law and the Gospel comes in.

Luther's ideas in visual form

In consultation with Martin Luther, Lucas Cranach the Elder produced *The Law and the Gospel* (below). All of Cranach's Lutheran painting rests upon this pictorial type, which also influenced other artists. *The Law and the Gospel* explains Luther's ideas in visual form, most basically the notion that heaven is reached through faith and God's grace. Luther despised and rejected the Catholic idea that good deeds, what he called "good works," could play any role in salvation.

In The Law and the Gospel (below), two nude male figures appear on either side of a tree that is green and living on the "Gospel" side to the viewer's right, but barren and dying on the "law" side to the viewer's left. Six columns of Bible citations appear at the bottom of the panel.

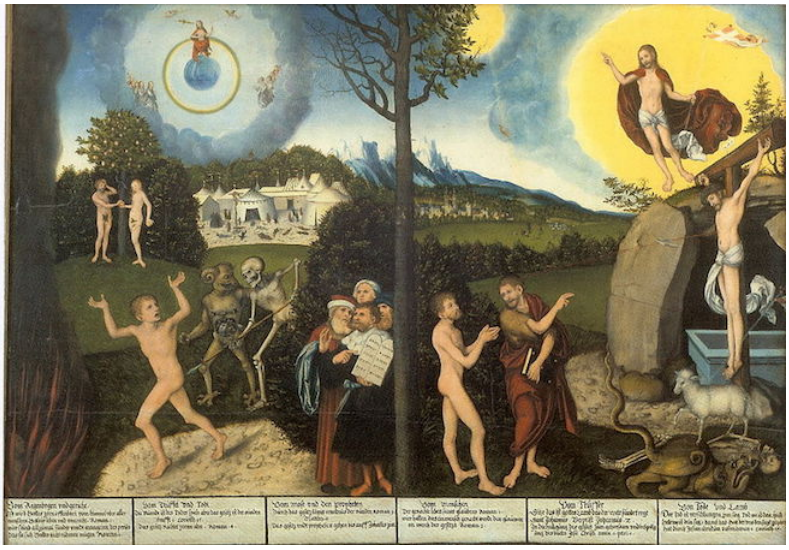


Figure **13.7.11.4**: Lucas Cranach, *The Law and the Gospel*, c. 1529, oil on wood, 82.2 × 118 cm / 32.4 × 46.5″ (Schlossmuseum, Gotha, Germany)

Right ("gospel") side

On the "gospel" side of the image (the right side), John the Baptist directs a naked man to both Christ on the cross in front of the tomb and to the risen Christ who appears on top of the tomb (see detail at top of page). The risen Christ stands triumphant above the empty tomb, acting out the miracle of the Resurrection. This nude figure is not vainly hoping to follow the law or to present a tally of his good deeds on the judgment day. He stands passively, stripped down to his soul, submitting to God's mercy.

Left (“law”) side



Figure **13.7.11.5**: Left, Skeleton and demon pursue desperate man and right, Moses with other figures point to the tablets of the law —the Ten Commandments (detail), Lucas Cranach, *The Law and Gospel*, c. 1529, oil on wood, 72 × 88.5 cm / 28.3 × 34.8″ (National Gallery, Prague)

In the left foreground a skeleton and a demon force a frightened naked man into hell, as a group of prophets, including Moses, point to the tablets of the law. The motifs on the left side of the composition are meant to exemplify the idea that law alone, without gospel, can never get you to heaven. Christ sits in Judgment as Adam and Eve (in the background) eat the fruit and fall from grace. Moses beholds these events from his vantage point toward the center of the picture, his white tablets standing out against the saturated orange robe and the deep green tree behind him, literally highlighting the association of law, death, and damnation.

Taken together, these motifs demonstrate that law leads inescapably to hell when mistaken for a path to salvation, as the damned naked man demonstrates.

God judges and God shows mercy

The Law and the Gospel is concerned with two roles that God plays, to judge and to show mercy. On the one hand, God judges and condemns human sin; but on the other hand, God also shows mercy and forgiveness, granting unearned salvation to sinful believers. As Reformation scholar Bernhard Lohse explains:

> ***The Word of God encounters people as law and as gospel, as a word of judgment and as a word of grace…. It is certainly true that there is more law than gospel in the Old Testament and more gospel than law in the New Testament. Luther’s distinction between law and gospel, however, referred to something other than the division of biblical statements into the two parts of the biblical canon. This distinction rather describes the fact that God both judges and is merciful.[1]***

Luther’s idea of law is multifaceted, and bears a complex relationship to his idea of gospel. Though law alone will never make salvation possible, it remains indispensable as the way the believer recognizes sin and the need for grace. Law paves the way to salvation by preparing the way for grace.

Although *The Law and the Gospel* includes events from both the New and the Old Testaments, it is not a simple contrast of Christianity and Judaism. If *The Law and the Gospel* simply distinguished between the Old and New Testaments—or even more broadly between Judaism and Christianity—then it would not be specifically Lutheran or new, art historically or theologically. Instead, *The Law and Gospel* concerns two aspects of the relationship between humanity and God, a relationship based on human action on the one hand, and divine power on the other. *The Law and Gospel* describes events throughout the Bible which reveal the dual aspect of God’s relationship to people.

The Law and the Gospel is Lutheran because it represents Cranach's pictorial translation of Luther's unique understanding of salvation. The painting interprets the roles of law, good works, faith, and grace in the human relationship to God.

Note: *The Law and the Gospel* is frequently called *Law and Grace*, a title which derives from a version of the painting in Prague (above), where the terms "Gesecz" (Law) and "Gnad" (Grace) are boldly painted and plainly visible.

1. Bernard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, Fortress Press, 1986.

Iconoclasm in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure **13.7.11.6**: Pieter Jansz. Saenredam, *Interior of Saint Bavo, Haarlem*, 1631, oil on panel, 82.9 x 110.5 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Different church interiors — Calvinist (Protestant) and Catholic

In paintings by seventeenth-century Dutch artist **Pieter Saenredam**, the interiors of Calvinist churches often appear as blank, sterile spaces with white walls, clear glass windows, and a notable lack of decoration. We know from his meticulous preparatory drawings that Saenredam was a precise artist, and although he sometimes did make changes to the interiors he represented, they were by and large emblematic of what Dutch Calvinist sacred space was like. By contrast, Pieter Neefs's contemporary paintings of Flemish Catholic religious spaces — which contain a profusion of small altars and devotional artwork — reflect a distinctly different attitude about decoration, materiality, and piety. The difference between Calvinist and Catholic churches persists to this day.



Figure **13.7.11.7**: Pieter Neefs, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, 1606, oil on copper, 38 x 56 cm

Breaking idols

Some of these differences can be attributed to two intertwined events of the sixteenth century that transformed the Low Countries (a lowland region in northern Europe that includes Belgium and the Netherlands): the prioritization of the written word in the theological reforms of the **Protestant Reformation** and the Iconoclasm (or *Beeldenstorm*) of 1566. The word "iconoclasm" refers to any deliberate destruction of images. Instances of iconoclasm can be found from the ancient world to contemporary events, such as the 2015 destruction of **Palmyra** in Syria by ISIS or the elimination of the **Bamiyan Buddhas** by the Taliban in 2001.



Figure **13.7.11.8**: Workshop of Adam Dircksz, *Prayer nut with The Nativity and The Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1500 – 30, boxwood, silver, and gold, diameter 4.8cm (**Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam**)

Here, iconoclasm specifically refers to the events of 1566 in an area that we now know as Belgium and the Netherlands. Prior to 1566, most churches in this region would have been largely encrusted with ornament: guilds commissioned altarpieces for their chapels while private patrons donated memorial paintings, endowed tomb sites, and donated elaborate shrines or ritual vessels. Piety was made visible in the material culture of the church, paralleling a northern European explosion in personal devotional artwork in the form of manuscripts, woodcut prints, carved boxwood shrines and prayer beads, and small paintings.

Protestant change

The sixteenth century was a time of significant religious change. According to legend, in 1516, Luther nailed his 95 Theses to a church door in Wittenberg and criticized what he perceived as corrupt practices within the Catholic Church. Following Luther, numerous other Northern European reformers shifted away from the Catholic Church centered in Rome. Among other more systemic and doctrinal issues, the reformers also had complicated relationships with religious imagery.

Controversy over the nature of religious images was not new in the sixteenth century. The same tension had rocked the **Byzantine Empire** in the eighth and ninth centuries. Like the earlier Byzantine case, strict reformers believed images were inherently sinful.

The northern humanist Desiderius Erasmus noted that the physical veneration of an object made it an active agent and turned it into an idol, pushing the objects and images traditionally at the heart of northern European piety into the zone of the idolatrous. Therefore, to use an image as part of your prayers creates idols — the very sin explicitly condemned in the Second Commandment, which reads:

> ***You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:3***



Figure **13.7.11.9**: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of Martin Luther as an Augustinian monk*, 1520 engraving, 14.4cm × 9.7cm (**Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam**)

Luther himself was not entirely anti-image, stating that if there was no sin in the heart, there was no risk in seeing images with your eyes. However, the faithful needed to remove the roots of sin in themselves; they needed to worship God and not a material object which takes the place of God. Luther later clarified that what the second commandment prohibited was images of God; images of saints or crucifixes were not condemned by him as they serve as memorials.

By 1566, the debate about the line between “an image of a religious figure or story that aided in devotional practice” and “an idolatrous object which took the place of God in the sinful heart of the viewer” had been heavily contested for close to fifty years. The precise nature of the debate varied widely based on location, and violence against images erupted at different times in different cities throughout Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Belgium, and England.

The debate about the nature of images seems abstract and it is impossible to know to what extent the theological details were the motivations of any specific iconoclast. In the case of the *Beeldenstorm* of 1566, we can focus on a few factors to more closely examine one particular case and the intersection of tensions that led to violence. Studying the *Beeldenstorm* is complicated by the

fact that it took many different forms depending on the local conditions and the range of responses to both religious and political circumstance.



Figure **13.7.11.10**: European territories under the rule of the Philip II of Spain around 1580, with the Spanish Netherlands in light green (**public domain**)

Church, state, and other complex issues

Debates over religious imagery occurred at the same time as other complex disputes. Political tensions were running high. At the time, most of the land that now constitutes The Netherlands and Belgium was the Spanish Netherlands — an assortment of territories brought together through marriages and dynastic alliances and owing fealty to the King of Spain.

Through the abdication of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V, in 1556 and the ascension of Philip II to the throne of Spain, Netherlanders were becoming increasingly unhappy. The Spanish Crown supported an aggressive Catholic identity and agenda and vigorously pursued heretics (anyone not practicing Catholicism in line with the teachings of the Church in Rome).

The Spanish Inquisition existed specifically to root out those who were not Catholic enough. Though we tend to think of the Inquisition as something confined to the Iberian peninsula (Spain and Portugal), it also had a significant impact on Northern Europe. A branch of the Inquisition operated there which was overseen by Margaret of Parma (the illegitimate daughter of Philip II who had been appointed regent and reported to her father). In response to petitions filed by the local nobility, Margaret ended the Inquisition in 1564 in an attempt to broker peace and avoid outright rebellion. A group who came to be called the *Gueux* brought further petitions in 1566 to try to end ongoing persecution. The tensions surrounding religious persecution were made worse by several bad harvests, prolonged and widespread famine, particularly harsh winters, and new taxes.

“Hedge preachers” as rebellious leaders

Religious, political, and economic issues were closely intertwined. To a Flemish Protestant, the Spanish Catholic Crown represented religious and political oppression. This was made worse by the widening cultural and linguistic gap between the Spanish Crown and its Flemish subjects. These tensions were brought to a boil by *hagenprekers*, or “hedge preachers,” wandering figures who whipped up anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic sentiment in sermons held outdoors, and usually outside of city walls and therefore beyond easy jurisdiction.



Figure **13.7.11.11**: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566, 95 × 160.5 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest**)

Several scholars have argued that Pieter Bruegel's painting, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, represents this biblical event as if it were happening in the current political climate. John the Baptist, here cast as a hedge preacher, almost disappears into the crowd; Jesus, who he is introducing, is even less noticeable. Typically for Bruegel, the crowd of people gathered to listen to the speaker are from all walks of life and dressed in contemporary Flemish clothing.



Figure **13.7.11.12**: Detail, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566 (**Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest**)



Figure 13.7.11.13: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566, detail (**Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest**)

One face stands out in the crowd because he unexpectedly faces the viewer: a man in a black hat having his palm read in the foreground. He would have been identifiable to contemporary viewers as dressed in a Spanish mode, and fortune telling would have been seen as corrupt and popish.

The Spaniard alone ignores the humble John the Baptist in favor of giving in to superstitious practices, while two monks in the front right look on with expressions that could be interpreted as jeers and skepticism. As a result, Bruegel's painting possibly functions simultaneously as a biblical scene and a contemporary political polemic, containing just enough ambiguity to not ruffle Inquisitorial feathers.

Iconoclastic riots

The hedge preachers were at least partially responsible for the ignition of the *Beeldenstorm*, the sudden outbreak of violence against religious images that began in the summer of 1566 and spread throughout the Low Countries. In response to their anti-Catholic preaching, violence began in West Flanders and radiated outward.

In some towns, it was outright mob violence: groups of people burst into churches, smashing windows and sculptures. In other cities, the destruction of religious images was systematic and either openly or covertly supported by the local government. In some cases, the iconoclasts and the local Catholic Church officials negotiated for the survival of certain artworks.



Figure 13.7.11.14: Altar retable of the Jan van Arkel chapel, Utrecht Cathedral (Domkerk). Found behind a false plaster wall during restoration activities in 1919. Dated 15th century, defaced during the Beeldenstorm (photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

It was a fever that spread throughout the Low Countries, leaving few towns untouched by the sudden explosion of anti-image sentiment. According to Alistair Duke, the destruction of images functioned as a ritualistic act intended to prove to both Catholics and Protestants that the images were powerless. If images were indeed sacred conduits that connected the faithful to God, they

would defend themselves; since it was possible to destroy them, they were therefore earthly vanity and merely distractions from truth.

To destroy the objects and ritually humiliate them was to reject the broader political and religious structures they represented, as well. Sculptures were torn down from their niches, windows were smashed, and altars and shrines were disassembled and burned.

When the sculptures were part of the fabric of the building and could not be easily removed, the heads of the figures were hacked off. Examples reflecting this kind of violence remain visible in churches throughout the Northern Low Countries inside previously Catholic, now Protestant churches.



Figure **13.7.11.15**: Jan Luyken, *Beeldenstorm*, 1566, etching, 27cm × w 34.8cm (**Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam**)

Iconoclasm in 1566 was not just the result of doctrinal disagreement about the nature of religious imagery and the interpretation of biblical text. It was instead a response to intertwined issues of politics, religious oppression, and economic factors. It was one spark that helped ignite the flames of the Eighty Years War, a war that ultimately resulted in the split between the northern Calvinist provinces of the Dutch Republic and the southern Catholic province that remained connected to Spain. As much as the violence of the *Beeldenstorm* itself may have been short-lived, the broader cultural and historical changes that cascaded as a result had permanent and far-reaching consequences.

Additional resources:

Read more about the *Beeldenstorm* in the *Low Countries Historical Review*

David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

Alistair Duke, “Calvinists and Papist Idolatry: the Mentality of the Image-breakers in 1566,” in *Dissident identities in the early modern Low Countries*, ed. Pollman and Spicer (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009).

13.7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I)

Baroque

While the Protestants criticized the cult of images, the Catholic Church ardently embraced them.

1600 - 1700

Beginner's guide: Baroque art

Bernini, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Ruben, Velázquez and more.

1600 - 1700

Though there are some commonalities, what we call "Baroque art" in Catholic Italy, Spain and Flanders is different from what we see in the Protestant Dutch republic.

Baroque art, an introduction

by DR. ESPERANÇA CAMARA



Figure 13.7.12.1: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, View to Cathedra Petri (or Chair of St. Peter), 1647-53, gilded bronze, gold, wood, stained glass (Apse of Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Rome: From the "Whore of Babylon" to the resplendent bride of Christ

When Martin Luther tacked his 95 theses to the doors of Wittenberg Cathedral in 1517 protesting the Catholic Church's corruption, he initiated a movement that would transform the religious, political, and artistic landscape of Europe. For the next century, Europe would be in turmoil as new political and religious boundaries were determined, often through bloody military conflicts. Only in 1648, with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, did the conflicts between Protestants and Catholics subside in continental Europe.

Martin Luther focused his critique on what he saw as the Church's greed and abuse of power. He called Rome, the seat of papal power, "the whore of Babylon" decked out in finery of expensive art, grand architecture, and sumptuous banquets. The Church responded to the crisis in two ways: by internally addressing issues of corruption and by defending the doctrines rejected by the Protestants. Thus, while the first two decades of the 16th century were a period of lavish spending for the Papacy, the middle decades were a period of austerity. As one visitor to Rome noted in the 1560s, the entire city had become a convent. Piety and asceticism ruled the day.



Figure **13.7.12.2**: View of the Cerasi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome with Annibale Carracci's altarpiece, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, 1600-01, oil on canvas, 96 × 61″, and paintings by Caravaggio on the side walls (*The Crucifixion of St. Peter* on the left, and *The Conversion of Paul* on the right)

By the end of the 16th century, the Catholic Church was once again feeling optimistic, even triumphant. It had emerged from the crisis with renewed vigor and clarity of purpose. Shepherding the faithful—instructing them on Catholic doctrines and inspiring virtuous behavior—took center stage. Keen to rebuild Rome's reputation as a holy city, the Papacy embarked on extensive building and decoration campaigns aimed at highlighting its ancient origins, its beliefs, and its divinely-sanctioned authority. In the eyes of faithful Catholics, Rome was not an unfaithful whore, but a pure bride, beautifully adorned for her union with her divine spouse.

The art of persuasion: To instruct, to delight, to move

While the Protestants harshly criticized the cult of images, the Catholic Church ardently embraced the religious power of art. The visual arts, the Church argued, played a key role in guiding the faithful. They were certainly as important as the written and spoken word, and perhaps even more important, since they were accessible to the learned and the unlearned alike. In order to be effective in its pastoral role, religious art had to be clear, persuasive, and powerful. Not only did it have to instruct, it had to inspire. It had to move the faithful to feel the reality of Christ's sacrifice, the suffering of the martyrs, the visions of the saints.



Figure **13.7.12.4**: Caravaggio, *The Crowning with Thorns*, 1602-04, oil on canvas, 165.5 x 127 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

The Church's emphasis on art's pastoral role prompted artists to experiment with new and more direct means of engaging the viewer. Artists like Caravaggio turned to a powerful and dramatic realism, accentuated by bold contrasts of light and dark, and tightly-cropped compositions that enhance the physical and emotional immediacy of the depicted narrative.

Other artists, like **Annibale Carracc**i (who also experimented with realism), ultimately settled on a more classical visual language, inspired by the vibrant palette, idealized forms, and balanced compositions of the High Renaissance (see image above). Still others, like **Giovanni Battista Gaulli**, turned to daring feats of illusionism that blurred not only the boundaries between painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also those between the real and depicted worlds. In so doing, the divine was made physically present and palpable. Whether through shocking realism, dynamic movement, or exuberant ornamentation, seventeenth-century art is meant to impress. It aims to convince the viewer of the truth of its message by impacting the senses, awakening the emotions, and activating, even sharing the viewer's space.

Giovanni Battista Gaulli, also known as il Baciccio, <em
The Triumph of the Name of Jesus, 1672-1685, Il Gesù ceiling fresco (Rome, Italy)" height="500" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...763cd079fa.jpg
" width="833">

Figure **13.7.12.5**: Giovanni Battista Gaulli, also known as il Baciccio, *The Triumph of the Name of Jesus*, 1672-1685, Il Gesù ceiling fresco (Rome, Italy)

The Catholic monarchs and their territories

The monarchs of Spain, Portugal, and France also embraced the more ornate elements of seventeenth century art to celebrate Catholicism. In Spain and its colonies, rulers invested vast resources on elaborate church facades, stunning, gold-covered chapels and tabernacles, and strikingly-realistic polychrome sculpture.

In the Spanish Netherlands, where sacred art had suffered terribly as a result of the **Protestant iconoclasm** (the destruction of art), civic and religious leaders prioritized the adornment of churches as the region reclaimed its Catholic identity. Refurnishing the altars of Antwerp's churches kept **Peter Paul Rubens'** workshop busy for many years. Europe's monarchs also adopted this artistic vocabulary to proclaim their own power and status. Louis XIV, for example, commissioned the splendid buildings and gardens of Versailles as a visual expression of his divine right to rule.



Figure **13.7.12.6**: Peter Paul Rubens, *Elevation of the Cross*, 1610, oil on wood, 15′ 1-7/8″ x 11′ 1-1/2″ (originally for Saint Walpurgis, Antwerp (destroyed), now in Antwerp Cathedral)

The Protestant North

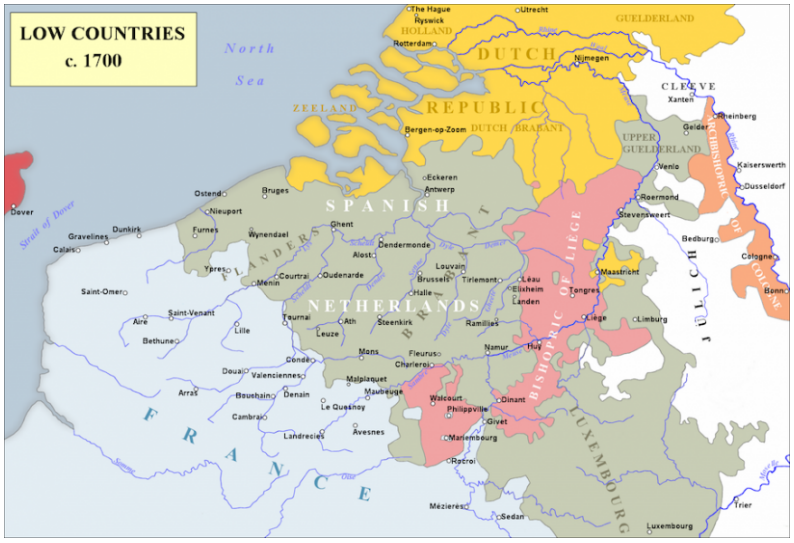


Figure **13.7.12.7**

In the Protestant countries, and especially in the newly-independent Dutch Republic (modern-day Holland), the artistic climate changed radically in the aftermath of the Reformation. Two of the wealthiest sources of patronage—the monarchy and the Church—were now gone. In their stead arose an increasingly prosperous middle class eager to express its status, and its new sense of national pride, through the purchase of art.

By the middle of the 17th century a new market had emerged to meet the artistic tastes of this class. The demand was now for smaller scale paintings suitable for display in private homes. These paintings included religious subjects for private contemplation, as seen in Rembrandt's poignant paintings

and prints of biblical narratives, as well as portraits documenting individual likenesses.



Figure **13.7.12.8**: Judith Leyster, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 651 x 746 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington)

But, the greatest change in the market was the dramatic increase in the popularity of landscapes, still-lifes, and scenes of everyday life (known as genre painting). Indeed, the proliferation of these subjects as independent artistic genres was one of the 17th century's most significant contributions to the history of Western art.

In all of these genres, artists revealed a keen interest in replicating observed reality—whether it be the light on the Dutch landscape, the momentary expression on a face, or the varied textures and materials of the objects the Dutch collected as they reaped the benefits of their expanding mercantile empire. These works demonstrated as much artistic virtuosity and physical immediacy as the grand decorations of the palaces and churches of Catholic Europe.

In the context of European history, the period from c. 1585 to c. 1700/1730 is often called the Baroque era. The word "baroque" derives from the Portuguese and Spanish words for a large, irregularly-shaped pearl ("barroco" and "barrueco," respectively). Eighteenth century critics were the first to apply the term to the art of the 17th century. It was not a term of praise. To the eyes of these critics, who favored the restraint and order of Neoclassicism, the works of Bernini, Borromini, and Pietro da Cortona appeared bizarre, absurd, even diseased—in other words, misshapen, like an imperfect pearl.



Figure **13.7.12.9**: Francisco de Zurbarán, *Saint Francis of Assisi According to Pope Nicholas V's Vision*, c. 1640, oil on canvas, 110.5 x 180.5 cm (Museum Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain)

"Baroque" – the word, the style, the period

By the middle of the 19th century, the word had lost its pejorative implications and was used to describe the ornate and complex qualities present in many examples of 17th-century art, music and literature. Eventually, the term came to designate the historical period as a whole.

In the context of the painting, for example, the stark realism of Zurbaran's altarpieces, the quiet intimacy of Vermeer's domestic interiors, and restrained classicism of Poussin's landscapes are all "Baroque" (now with a capital "B" to indicate the historical period), regardless of the absence of the stylistic traits originally associated with the term.

Scholars continue to debate the validity of this label, admitting the usefulness of having a label for this distinct historical period, while also acknowledging its limitations in characterizing the variety of artistic styles present in the 17th century.

Additional resources:

Baroque Rome on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Annibale Carracci on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

For instructors: related lesson plan on Art History Teaching Resources

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.12.10**: More Smarthistory images…

How to recognize Baroque art

by BETH HARRIS and STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.12.1**

Francis Bacon and the Scientific Revolution

by DR. KATHRYN WOLFORD

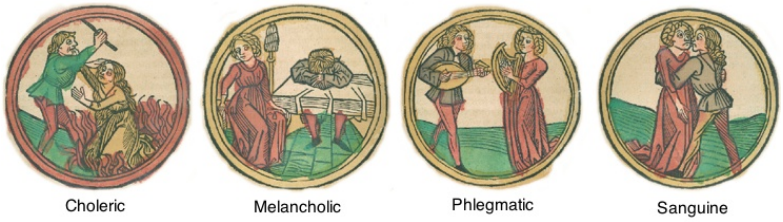


Figure **13.7.12.11**: The Four Humors, from Deutche Kalendar, 1498 (Pierpont Morgan Library)

How do we know that something is true?

The word science comes from the latin root *scientia*, meaning knowledge. But where does the knowledge that makes up science come from? How do you ever really know that something is true?

For instance, modern science tell us that some types of disease spread through tiny organisms. Medieval people believed instead that sickness arose from an imbalance of the body's four humors. How do we know with certainty that modern science is correct? Microscopes enable us to see the germs that cause sickness, but when we look through microscopic lenses to examine microbes, how do we know our understanding of what they are and what they are doing is true? Of course, medieval philosophers did not have microscopic lenses—but if they did, they very likely would have disagreed with our modern understanding of disease. Believing in the inaccuracy of the human senses, and moreover of the human mind's inability to correctly judge anything, medieval knowledge instead privileged ancient texts as the best way of making sense of the world.

Sir Francis Bacon



Figure **13.7.12.12**: Francis Bacon, c. 1622, oil on canvas, 470 x 610 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery)

In 1620, around the time that people first began to look through microscopes, an English politician named Sir Francis Bacon developed a method for philosophers to use in weighing the truthfulness of knowledge. While Bacon agreed with medieval thinkers that humans too often erred in interpreting what their five senses perceived, he also realized that people's sensory experiences provided the best possible means of making sense of the world.

Because humans could incorrectly interpret anything they saw, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt, Bacon insisted that they must doubt everything before assuming its truth.

Testing hypotheses

In order to test potential truths, or hypotheses, Bacon devised a method whereby scientists set up experiments to manipulate nature, and attempt to prove their hypotheses wrong. For example, in order to test the idea that sickness came from external causes, Bacon argued that scientists should expose healthy people to outside influences such as coldness, wetness, or other sick people to discover if any of these external variables resulted in more people getting sick. Knowing that many different causes for sickness might be missed by humans who are unable or unwilling to perceive them, Bacon insisted that experiments must be consistently repeated before truth can be known: a scientist must show that patients exposed to a specific variable more frequently got sick again, and again, and again.



Figure **13.7.12.13**: Frontispiece for the *Opere di Galileo Galilei*, 1656, etching, 17.8 x 24.9 (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston). Galileo is shown kneeling before personifications of mathematics (holding a compass), astronomy (with the crown of stars) and optics.

Although modern scientists have revised many of the truths subsequently adopted by Bacon and his contemporaries, we still utilize the method of proving knowledge to be true via doubt and experimentation that Bacon laid out in 1620. Bacon's philosophical work marks a very significant breakthrough for the study of the world around us, but it is important to stress that this method of investigation was not completed in a vacuum. Rather, Bacon's work should be seen as a part of a widespread cultural revolution accelerated by the rise of the printing press in the fifteenth century.

Importance of the printing press

Advances in the ability to disseminate new ideas by making standardized letters, numbers, and diagrams repeatable allowed for an unprecedented level of cooperation among philosophers who could now build on each other's ideas over long periods of time. It would be difficult to overstate the effect of the print revolution. Astronomers such as Copernicus and Galileo began to share and build upon their experiments, and religious reformers began to publicize new (and increasingly radical) Protestant ideas. In a mutually beneficial relationship the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution encouraged philosophers to discover all they could about nature as a way to learn more about God, an undertaking that promoted a break with past authorities.

A direct engagement with nature

Artisans and craftspeople soon began engaging in the new "natural philosophy," exemplifying the fact that a monumental shift in what constituted evidence for truth was under way. Not only did renaissance artisans create lenses to see, tools to measure, and artworks to replicate the natural world, but by the sixteenth century, they began to publish philosophical treatises asserting that through the imitation and reproduction of nature in their arts, they were able to achieve a state of direct engagement with nature. Rather than taking knowledge from ancient sources, they argued that true knowledge came from direct experience. Alchemists likewise prioritized direct engagement with nature. In using fire to divide elements into their "smallest" components (and discovering that there were more than four of them), alchemists promoted the revolutionary idea that observation of nature itself, rather than reliance on ancient authorities, provided the best foundation for knowledge.



Figure 13.7.12.14: Attributed to Bernard Palissy, *Oval Basin*, c. 1550, lead-glazed earthenware, 18 7/8 x 14 1/2″ (The J. Paul Getty Museum)

The Royal Society

These new ideas crystallized with the work of Francis Bacon. In his work as a politician he called for the development of an institution that would promote and regulate the acquisition of knowledge derived from observation. After considerable delay, caused by a civil war and the execution of King Charles I, the Royal Society for Improving Natural Knowledge was founded in 1660. A gentleman's club composed of tinkering aristocrats, the Royal Society promoted Bacon's principles of exact observation and measurement of experiments in its periodical Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, generally credited as being the first scientific journal.



Figure 13.7.12.15: Frontispiece to Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal-Society of London*, etching by Winceslaus Hollar, after John Evelyn, 1667. "The book was a manifesto of the Society's aims and methods….primarily aimed at the king in the (unrealised) hope that he would fund their future activities. The frontispiece flatters Charles II by presenting him as a classical bust being wreathed by an allegorical figure of Fame. The Society President, Viscount Brouncker, points to the Latin inscription 'Charles II founder and Patron of the Royal Society.' Francis Bacon, gesturing towards an array of scientific instruments, is indentified as the 'Renewer of Arts'." (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Once Bacon's philosophies regarding experimentation and observation came to be accepted, people began using them to harness nature for profit. The study of nature came to be less about changing traditional attitudes and beliefs, and more about stimulating the economy. By the end of the following century, the Scientific Revolution had given birth to an Industrial Revolution which dramatically transformed the daily lives of people around the world. Western society has been moving forward on Bacon's model for the past three hundred years. Perhaps though, we are in danger of forgetting the vital role doubt played in Bacon's philosophy. Even with powerful microscopes, there is still a lot that human senses miss.

Additional resources:

In Our Time podcast on Baconian Science

Baroque art in Italy

Dramatic lighting, movement, art that activate the viewer's space.

1600 - 1700

Restoring ancient sculpture in Baroque Rome

by LAURIE PORSTNER



Figure **13.7.12.16**: In this drawing, both the *Apollo Belvedere* (on the left) and the *Laocoön* on the right, are depicted with their 16th-century "restorations." Federico Zuccaro, *Taddeo in the Belvedere Court in the Vatican Drawing the Laocoön*, c. 1595, pen and brown ink, brush with brown wash, over black chalk and touches of red chalk, 17.5 x 42.5 cm (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**)

Early Modern fascination with the "Antique"

In this late 16th-century drawing by Federico Zuccaro, we see the artist's older brother, Taddeo, surrounded by Greek and Roman sculptures in the Vatican's Belvedere courtyard in Rome. Taddeo is seated on a cloth spread upon the ground, hunched slightly forward, with his sketchpad resting on his thighs, concentrating on drawing the famous ancient sculpture, the *Laocoön*. His back is to yet another very famous ancient sculpture, the *Apollo Belvedere*. Both of these sculptures were unearthed during the Renaissance, and of course, given that more than 1,000 years had passed, they were discovered buried and broken. Both were restored by Renaissance and Baroque artists. While today's museums contain limbless torsos, solitary hands and feet, and disembodied heads, in the 16th and 17th centuries, it was fashionable to present sculptures with fully formed bodies, whether or not the work of art was actually preserved that way. Restoration was the process by which ancient Greek and Roman fragments of sculpture were provided with new components to make them "whole" once again.

The *Laocoön* is an interesting case in point. It was discovered early in the 16th century (according to one source, Michelangelo was called to be present for its excavation) and depicts the priest Laocoön and his sons being strangled by snakes. The sculpture—which was very important for Renaissance and Baroque artists—was found in pieces, and when reconstructed, the most important missing component was an arm belonging to the priest.



Figure **13.7.12.17**: Left: Photograph of the *Laocoön* with reconstructed arm raised upward, and right, the *Laocoön* with its original arm bent backward as it appears today. Left: James Anderson, *Laocoön*, c. 1845–55, albumen silver print, 39 x 29.5 cm (**The J. Paul Getty Museum**); right: Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and his Sons*, early first century C.E., marble, 7'10 1/2″ high (Vatican Museums)

Pope Julius II, who brought the sculpture to the Vatican's Belvedere courtyard, was not content to display the sculpture as it had been found. He first commissioned Jacopo Sansovino, followed by Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli (a student of Michelangelo), to create the missing arm. These additions (or restorations), to the *Laocoön* each consisted of a dramatically upraised arm, visible in many reproductions of the sculpture (and in the drawing by Zuccaro above). It was only in the beginning of the 20th century when the sculpture's real missing arm was discovered. It turns out this arm was not upraised at all, but was bent backward. This proved that Montorsoli's original restoration, as well as a later 18th-century restoration (also with an upraised arm), were incorrect. It is the original, bent arm that is visible on the *Laocoön* today.



Figure **13.7.12.18**: Apollo Belvedere in the Vatican Museums today, shown with a detail of the drawing above by Federico Zuccaro where we can see a restored bow in Apollo's left hand. Apollo Belvedere (Roman copy of a Greek(?) original), original late 4th century B.C.E. marble, 2.3 m high (Vatican Museums, Rome)

Going back to Zuccaro's drawing, we see the Apollo Belvedere holding a bow—yet another of Montorsoli's reconstructions (you won't see this when you visit the sculpture in the Vatican today). Restoration became a steady source of employment for sculptors, especially for those who could not always attract wealthy patrons. Even the greatest of Baroque sculptors, such as **Gianlorenzo Bernini** and Alessandro Algardi, received commissions for restorations, although this was usually at earlier stages in their careers and with much less frequency than other, less successful sculptors. Restorations in the Renaissance and Baroque periods might not always have produced sculptures that were "correct" in terms of classical (Greco-Roman) iconography. But even when carried out correctly, restorations have added a new level of meaning to the works that was not present in antiquity.

Not every artist in Renaissance and Baroque Rome had access to ancient Greek and Roman statues. Drawings depicting artists with antiquities—like the one by Federico Zuccaro—are testaments to the status of a particular artist. It was a privilege to be allowed to view works of art in the papal or other princely collections face-to-face. In later periods, artists would come into contact with famous antiquities mainly through prints, or less commonly, plaster casts made in Rome and shipped throughout Europe. But these were poor replacements for the prestige of owning actual antiquities. While popes, cardinals, and princes had been the owners of collections of ancient statuary since the Renaissance, as more and more wealthy non-Italians came to Rome on the Grand Tour, they desired collections of their own. The allure of the classical, in sculptural fragments or architectural ruins, continued into the 18th century and **helped give shape to the modern world**. This passion for collecting encouraged the growth of the restoration industry, resulting in Rome, Florence, Paris, and London becoming centers for the buying and selling of ancient sculpture.

A treatise on restoration

The most complete primary source for restoration in the 17th century is *Observations Concerning Ancient Sculpture* by Orfeo Boselli. This treatise emphasized classical sculpture's place as the starting point in the education of a Baroque sculptor. According to Boselli, since many ancient sculptural figures were found lacking their identifying attributes (often the item that they carried; for example, Apollo often holds a lyre or a bow), it was important for restorers to learn the attributes of each pagan god in order to make correct restorations. Just as a sculpture lacking attributes sometimes made it difficult for a restorer to accurately determine the identity of some mythological figures, adding an incorrect attribute could change the identity of the figure in the sculpture. Baroque restorers also needed to study the proportions of the surviving ancient fragments so the new pieces they were making would match. Pins (sometimes made of lead) and clamps held blocks of marble together; these bits of hardware had to be concealed to keep up the illusion that the sculpture was anything less than "complete."



Figure 13.7.12.19: Ludovisi Ares, Pentelic marble, Roman copy after a Greek original from c. 320 B.C.E. with some restorations in Cararra marble by Gianlorenzo Bernini, 1622 (Museo Nazionale Romano di Palazzo Altemps; photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 13.7.12.20: Ludovisi Ares (detail), Pentelic marble, Roman copy after a Greek original from c. 320 B.C.E. with some restorations in Cararra marble by Gianlorenzo Bernini, 1622 (Museo Nazionale Romano di Palazzo Altemps; photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Restoration was a serious subject according to Boselli, and it was not for second-rate artists. But Boselli's ideal restorer was largely a fantasy—restoration was a way for Baroque sculptors to make ends meet, whether or not they had the talent to carry out the work as carefully as Boselli outlined.

Boselli's praise for a restoration by Bernini, the *Ludovisi Ares*, is surprising. Boselli generally disliked the famous sculptor as well as the type of overtly Baroque elements that Bernini inserted in the *Ludovisi Ares*: the head and arm of the small Eros (Cupid) who playfully peeks out from behind Ares' outstretched leg; and the hilt of the sword, with a human-like face with a wide open mouth that recalls Bernini's bust of a *Damned Soul*, one of Bernini's own self-portraits.

The ancient portions of the *Ludovisi Ares* were made from Pentelic marble from Greece, while Bernini's restorations used Carrara marble from Italy. These marbles are different colors, which makes it easy to tell where repairs were made. Bernini was a highly skilled sculptor, and this was no accident. It was a choice.

Bernini brought an ancient work into his era with the clear intention of updating it for his own generation. He was quite capable of restoring in a conservative manner had he, or his patron, wished. Boselli's praise for Bernini's restoration of the *Ludovisi Ares* suggests that even a staunch advocate for more conservative restorations could be impressed with the fusion of both the classical and the Baroque. Although Boselli was in favor of authenticity, not all Baroque sculptors agreed.



Figure 13.7.12.21: Nicolas Cordier, *The Gypsy Girl (La Zingarella)*, early 17th century, marble and bronze, 140 cm high (Galleria Borghese)

Some of the most dramatic restorations undertaken in the 17th century were made for Cardinal Scipione Borghese by Nicolas Cordier. Look closely at the *The Gypsy Girl (La Zingarella)*. The exotic elements—colored marbles and gilded bronze accessories—are restorations that hide a fragment of a draped woman (probably something like the **Roman Herculaneum Women**). *The Gypsy Girl (La Zingarella)* is clearly an early modern invention. Cordier's restorations exhibit a taste that stands in opposition to Boselli's view that restoration should complement the original sculpture.

In another restoration for Cardinal Borghese, Bernini added a pillow and mattress to the classical *Sleeping Hermaphrodite*, which depicts a figure with both masculine and feminine sexual characteristics reclining horizontally. Bernini's restoration for Cardinal Borghese did not make drastic changes to the pose or figure. As seen in the *Ludovisi Ares*; Bernini's restorations are something neither wholly classicizing nor wholly Baroque.



Figure 13.7.12.22: Sleeping Hermaphroditos, Roman copy of a Greek original from the 2nd century C.E. (Louvre) (photo: **Dennis Jarvis**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Bernini's restoration received mixed reviews in the following century. French writer Charles de Brosses noted that to "pass one's hand over it [the mattress], it is no longer marble, it is a real mattress of white leather or of satin which has lost its sheen." For de Brosses, the mattress was a positive addition, encouraging someone to want to reach out and touch it. Yet, Francesco Milizia was appalled; he thought the mattress looked as if it had been filled with rocks.



Figure **13.7.12.23**: Rondanini Faun, torso and right thigh antique; extensively restored or "completed" during the Baroque by François Duquesnoy, c. 1625–30 (**The British Museum**)

To De-Restore or Re-Restore?

In the early 20th century, many ancient sculptures that had been restored in early modern times (such as the *Apollo Belvedere*), had their restorations removed. Beginning in the late 20th century, there has been a growing awareness of the impact that restorations had upon the understanding of a particular work of art. In some cases, restorations that were removed in the early 20th century for the sake of greater "accuracy" have been returned.

One of the most interesting examples of de-restoration occurred early on: when the "real" ancient legs of the ***Farnese Hercules*** were discovered, and the replacement legs made by Guglielmo della Porta, a student of Michelangelo, were removed. Today, della Porta's legs can still be seen in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, no longer on the sculpture, but mounted in a case nearby.

While many 20th century art historians and conservators did not look fondly upon restoration efforts, the start of the 21st sees a renewed interest in the interactions between the early modern period and classical antiquity.

The British Museum's *Rondanini Faun* consists of an antique torso and right thigh, while the remaining sculpture was created in the early 17th century by François Duquesnoy. The sculpture underwent conservation in 2004 and was then displayed as a product of the 18th century, rather than in the rooms allotted to the Greek and Roman collection. This acknowledges both the classical inspiration for the artwork, as well as the new meaning given by its restorer.

Additional resources:

The Roman Forum: Part 2, Ruins in modern imagination (The Renaissance and after)

Biography of Jacopo Sansovino from The J. Paul Getty Museum

Essay about the Grand Tour from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

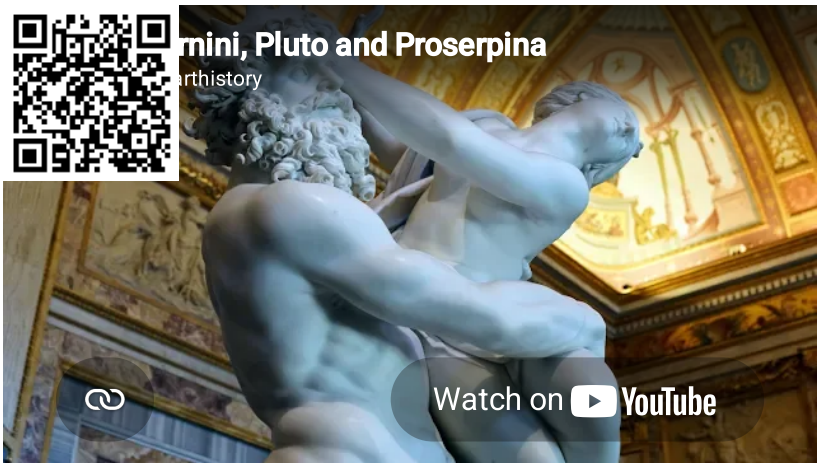
Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982)

Jennifer Montagu, *Roman Baroque Sculpture: The Industry of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989)

Gian Lorenzo Bernini

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Pluto and Proserpina* (or *The Rape of Proserpina*)

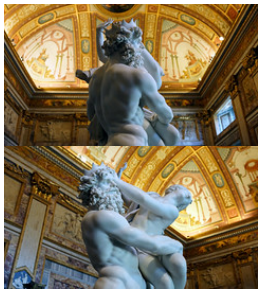
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

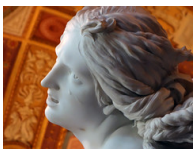


Video 13.7.12.2: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Pluto and Proserpina* (or *The Rape of Proserpina*), 1621-22, marble (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Proserpina is the Latin variant of the mythic Greek Persephone.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





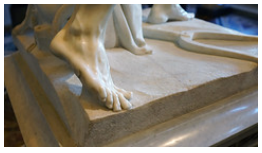


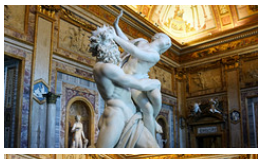












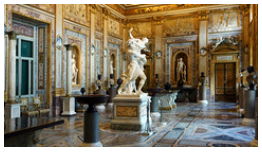




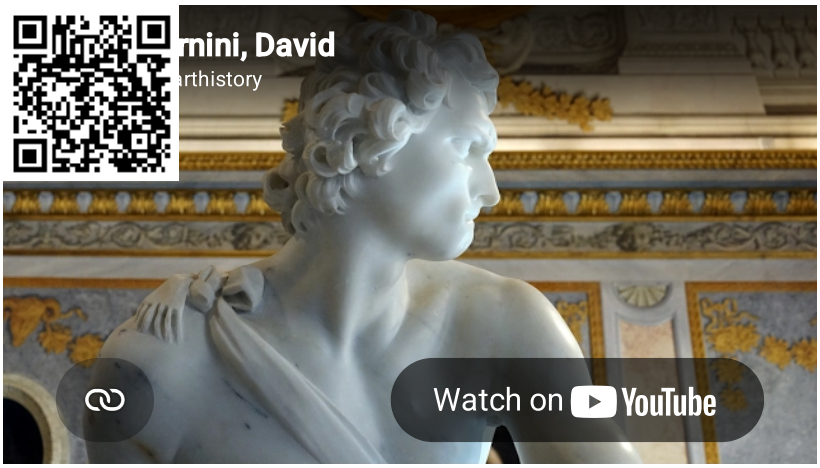




Figure **13.7.12.24**: More Smarthistory images…

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *David*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.12.3**: Gianlorenzo Bernini, *David*, 1623, marble, 5 feet, 7 inches high (Galleria Borghese, Rome)



Figure **13.7.12.25**: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *David*, 1623-24, marble, 170 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome) (photo: Salvador Fornell CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Empathy

Bernini's *David* is like a major league pitcher winding up to throw a 95 miles an hour fastball. The pitcher gathers all of his strength for each pitch and puts everything he has into it.

Baroque art wants us to be able to relate to the image in our bodies, not just in our minds. Bernini's *David* uses the space around it—reaching out into the space of the viewer. Bernini's *David* is not content—the way Michelangelo's *David* is—to remain separate from us. When looking at Bernini's *David*, we immediately start to feel what David is feeling. This empathy is very important to Baroque art.

Diagonals

In the High Renaissance we saw the composition in the form of a pyramid—a very stable shape. But in the Baroque era we see compositions in the shape of diagonal lines, as in Bernini's *David*.The diagonal line immediately suggests movement and energy and drama—very different from the immobility of the pyramid shape.

Three Davids

Donatello shows us an early moment in the Renaissance—the beginnings of Humanism when artists were first discovering contrapposto and the beauty of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. His young figure of David symbolizes the Republic of Florence, which saw itself—like David—as blessed by God. Donatello shows David victorious standing on the head of Goliath.

Michelangelo's *David* is ideally beautiful. David contemplates his upcoming fight with Goliath, staring at his foe. While Bernini shows us a less ideal, and more real David—one who, with God's help, is actively fighting Goliath (perhaps the way the church itself felt as they were battling against Luther).

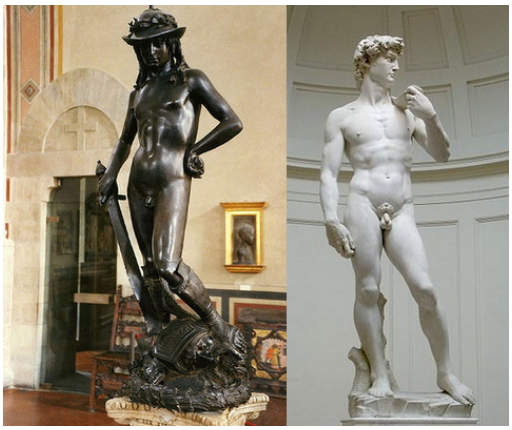


Figure **13.7.12.26**: Left: Donatello, *David*, c. 1440s, bronze, 158 cm (Bargello, Florence) (photo: Patrick CC BY-SA 2.0); right: Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-04, marble, 518 cm (Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence) (photo: **Rico Heil**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The path to God

Michelangelo seems to be asking us to contemplate the incredible beauty of David, and through contemplating beauty (the beauty of man, God's greatest creation), we come to know God. On the other hand, there is no time for contemplation with Bernini's *David*, there is only time for ducking out of the way—our reaction is in our bodies, not in our minds.



Figure **13.7.12.27**: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, three views of *David*, 1623-24, marble, 170 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

The path to God in the Baroque era is more direct, more emotional, more bodily, and that of course relates to the embattled position of the Church, which wanted to appeal directly to the faithful.

Additional resources:

This sculpture at the Galleria Borghese

Bernini at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

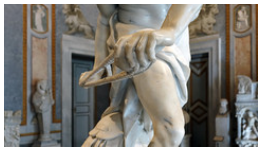
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











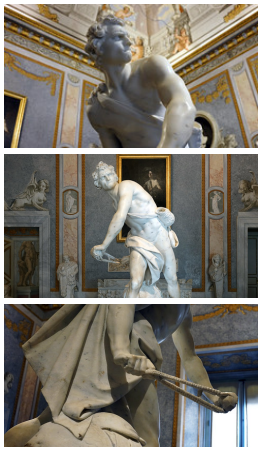
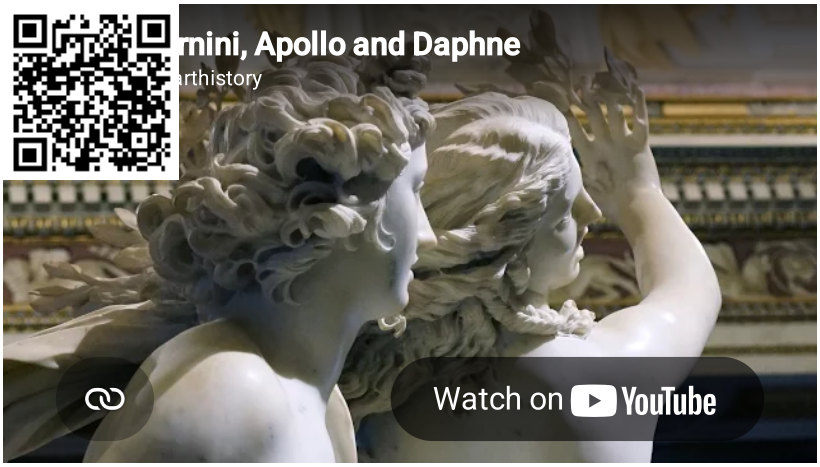



Figure **13.7.12.28**: More Smarthistory images…

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.12.4**: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1622-25, Carrera marble, 243 cm high (Galleria Borghese, Rome) A conversation with Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









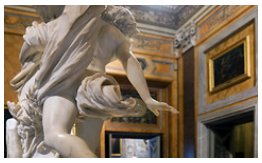
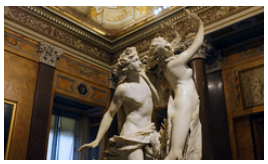
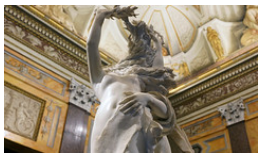






Figure 13.7.12.29: More Smarthistory images…

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baldacchino, Saint Peter's

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.5: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baldacchino, 1624-33, 100′ high, gilded bronze (Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome)

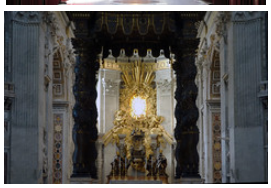
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731

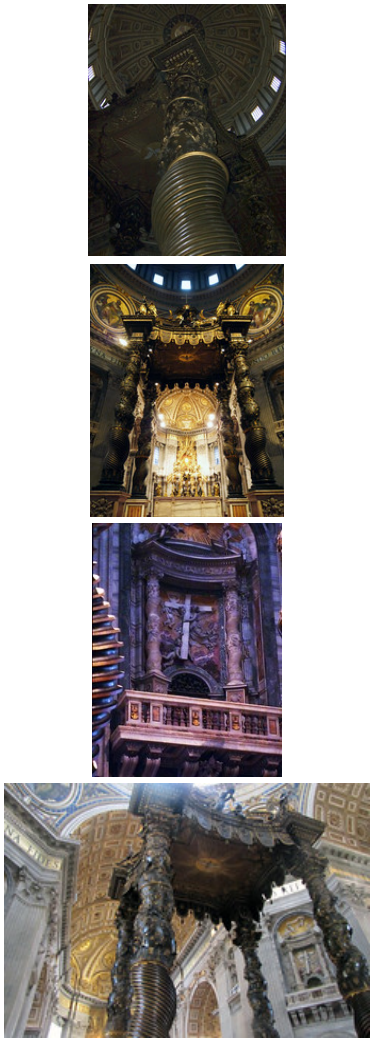


Figure **13.7.12.30**: More Smarthistory images…

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Medusa*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731

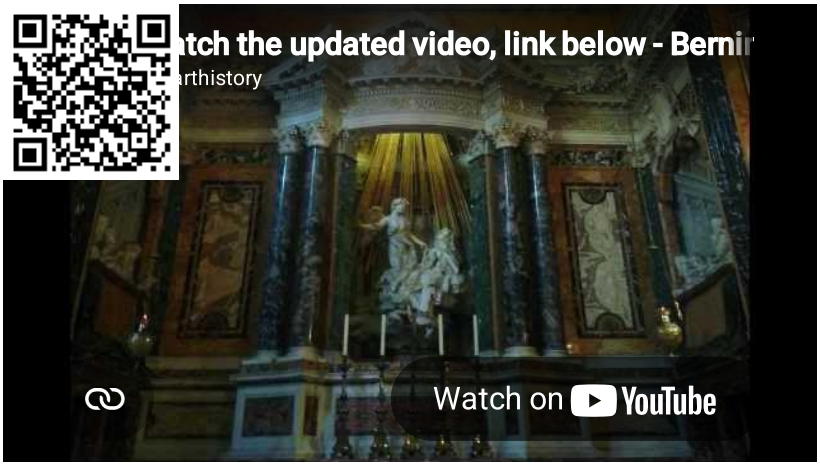
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.12.31: More Smarthistory images…

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



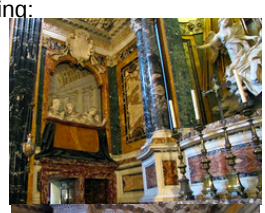
This is Saint Teresa's description of the event that Bernini depicts:

> ***Beside me, on the left, appeared an angel in bodily form…. He was not tall but short, and very beautiful; and his face was so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest rank of angels, who***

seem to be all on fire…. In his hands I saw a great golden spear, and at the iron tip there appeared to be a point of fire. This he plunged into my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he pulled it out I felt that he took them with it, and left me utterly consumed by the great love of God. The pain was so severe that it made me utter several moans. The sweetness caused by this intense pain is so extreme that one cannot possibly wish it to cease, nor is one's soul content with anything but God. This is not a physical but a spiritual pain, though the body has some share in it—even a considerable share.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731



Figure **13.7.12.32**: *More Smarthistory images…*

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Cathedra Petri (Chair of St. Peter)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



According to tradition, St. Peter himself, the founder of the institution of the Church and considered the first pope, sat on the ancient wooden chair that is encased within this larger bronze and gold chair.

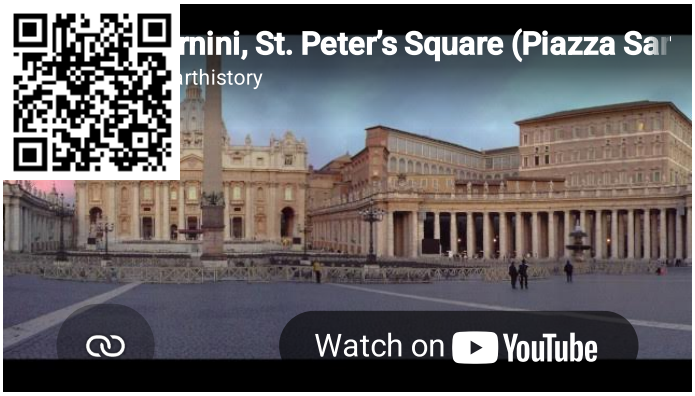
Jasmine Keane

Sep 27, 2020, 4:42 PM

*Cite this page as: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker, "Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Cathedra Petri (Chair of St. Peter)," in Smarthistory, November 18, 2015, accessed September 27, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/bernini-cathedra-petri-chair-of-st-peter/**.*

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, St. Peter's Square

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.9*: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, St. Peter's Piazza (Piazza San Pietro), Vatican City, Rome, 1656-67*

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, Rome

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.12.10*: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, 1658-70, Rome; commissioned by Cardinal Camillo Francesco Maria Pamphili for the nearby Jesuit seminary*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731

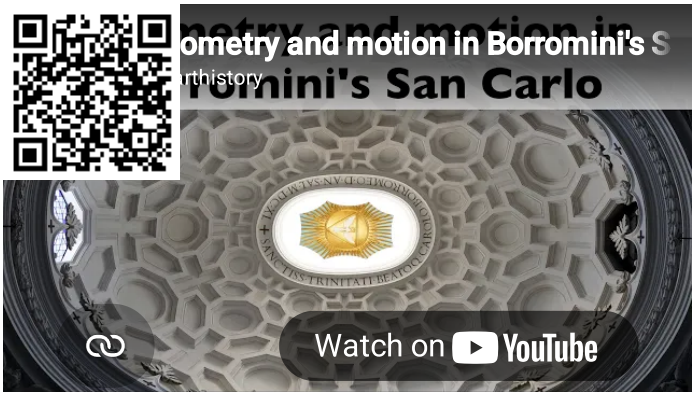


Figure 13.7.12.33*: More Smarthistory images…*

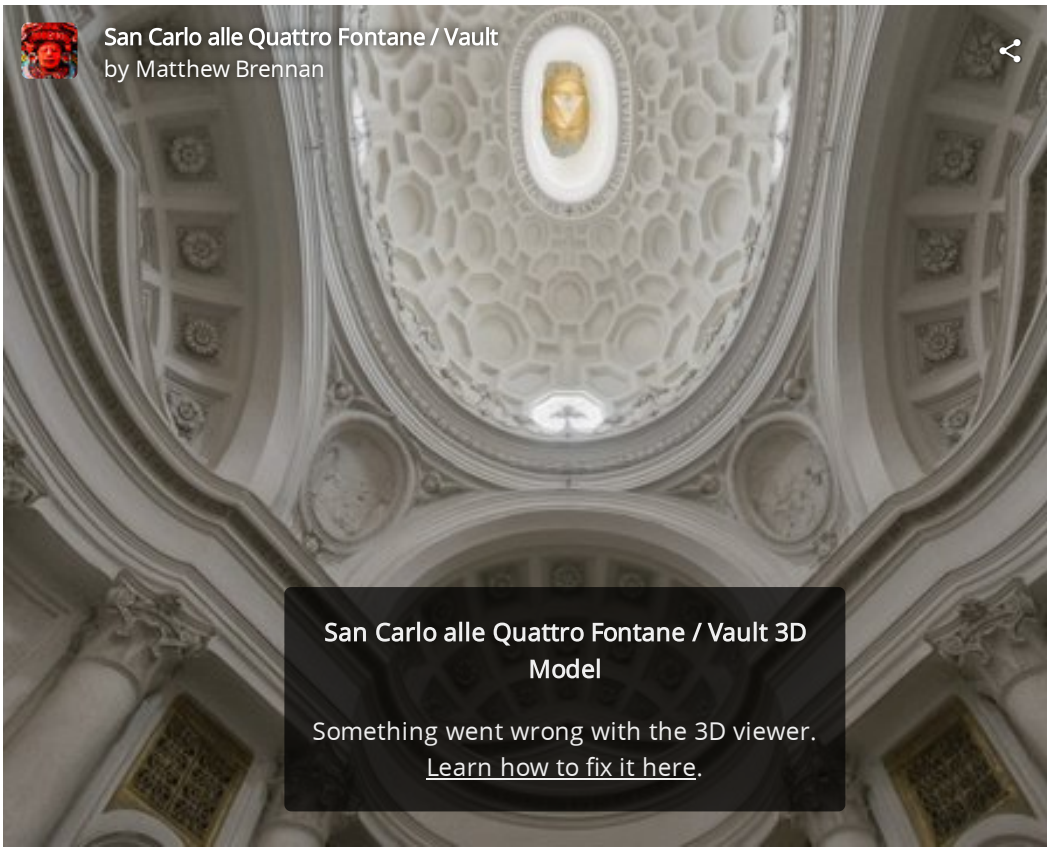
Francesco Borromini, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Geometry and motion in Borromini's San Carlo



Video 13.7.12.10*: Francesco Borromini, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane ("Carlino"), Rome. Commissioned by Cardinal Francesco Barberini in 1634 for the Holy Order of the Trinity; construction began in 1638 and the church was consecrated in 1646.*



San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane / Vault by *Matthew Brennan* on *Sketchfab*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

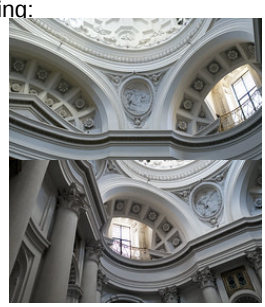






















Figure **13.7.12.34**: *More Smarthistory images…*

Annibale Carracci, *Christ Appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way*

by DR. MELISA PALERMO



Figure **13.7.12.35**: *Annibale Carracci, Christ Appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way (also known as Domine quo vadis), 1601-02, oil on wood, 77.4 x 56.3 cm (The National Gallery)*

Baroque beginnings and Renaissance ideals

The Carracci—Annibale, his brother Agostino, and their cousin Ludovico—are often credited with initiating the first phase of Baroque art. In reaction to the artificiality of Mannerism, the style that dominated central Italian art during the mid-sixteenth century, the Carracci advocated a return to greater naturalism. They founded a painting academy (Accademia degli Incamminati) in Bologna, Italy around

1580 that focused both on the study of the best artistic models of the Renaissance and on the direct study of nature.

The Carracci developed a new style that blended the rich color, soft chiaroscuro, and warm lighting seen in the art of Northern Italian artists, like Titian and Correggio with the balanced compositions, firm drawing, and idealized forms that characterize the art of central Italian artists like Raphael and Michelangelo. Annibale further developed this style in Rome, where, with Christ Appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way, he created a work whose emotional immediacy signals the emergence of Baroque art.

Domine, Quo Vadis? (Lord, where are you going?)

According to Catholic tradition, St. Peter and St. Paul were both executed in Rome around the year 67 C.E. during the reign of the infamous emperor Nero. The story (found in early Christian writings but not in the New Testament), states that Peter was freed from prison in Rome after he and Paul converted their jailers. Peter was then persuaded by fellow Christians who were concerned for his safety, to flee Rome. As he left, Peter encountered the resurrected Jesus. Astonished, Peter asked "Domine quo vadis?" (Lord, where are you going?). Jesus replied "I go to Rome to be crucified anew." When he heard these words, Peter understood that his actions were cowardly and that he must return to Rome. There, he was arrested and crucified upside down at his request because he did not feel worthy of dying as Jesus had.

Drama and gesture

In Christ Appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way, the two principle figures are set against the muted earth tones of the landscape, dotted with delicate trees and Roman architecture. Initially Peter stood more erect and closer to Jesus, but Annibale modified his pose in order to more dramatically express his emotional reaction. Jesus appears in his resurrected body; it is muscular but bears the wounds of the crucifixion. He wears a white loin cloth and a red mantle over his shoulder (red symbolizes his humanity and the blood shed at his Passion). Other references to the passion are the crown of thorns on his head and the cross that he carries over his left shoulder. Peter is identified by his traditional blue and yellow robes, gray hair and beard, and the keys that hang at his waist (see below on why keys are Peter's attribute). He is taken aback by the muscular figure of Jesus. Peter's hands are up in a protective mode as he recoils in astonishment.



Figure **13.7.12.36***: Detail, Annibale Carracci, Christ Appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way (also known as Domine quo vadis), 1601-02, oil on wood, 77.4 x 56.3 cm (The National Gallery)*

While the Carracci advocated a return to Renaissance ideals of clarity and the direct study of nature (which they felt the Mannerist artists had rejected), this work is distinguished from the Renaissance in its psychological involvement of the viewer. Although Jesus turns his head to address Peter, he steps boldly forward toward the viewer as he points to his destination, which lies implicitly in front of the picture. Even the placement of the cross is expressive; one arm of the cross pierces the clear blue sky while the lower part projects out to the viewer. In these ways Annibale places the viewer directly in Jesus's path and breaks the boundary between the painting and viewer's space—engaging the viewer with an immediacy typical of Baroque art.

Christ Appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way also depicts the most dramatic and expressive moment of the encounter. Peter is shocked and ashamed and Jesus' physical strength reflects his moral strength as he strides forward confidently. The gestures and body language of the figures are posed at their most expressive—also anticipating the drama of Baroque art. The artistic renewal begun by the Carracci coincided with the spiritual renewal of the Catholic Church, known as the Counter-Reformation.

Peter and the papacy



Figure **13.7.12.37***: Perugino, Christ Giving the Keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter, 1481-83, fresco, 10 feet 10 inches x 18 feet (Vatican, Rome)*

This depiction of Jesus and St. Peter would call to mind for contemporary viewers Jesus's earlier conversations with Peter, in particular, the Gospel of John, 13:36-37, where Peter asks Jesus, "Lord, where art thou going?" and Jesus replies, "I am going where thou canst not follow me now, but shalt follow me afterwards." Then Peter said to him, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I am ready to lay down my life for thy sake."

And in the Gospel of Matthew 16: 18-19, Jesus says to Peter,

> ***thou art Peter, and it is upon this rock that I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.***

With the metaphor of the keys, Jesus was understood to have bestowed upon Peter the office of the Papacy and the authority to lead the Church. The Catholic Church considers St. Peter to be first bishop of Rome and, as such, the first pope.

Annibale's painting can be interpreted as a commentary on the authority of the papacy and the centrality of Rome as the headquarters of the Catholic Church. Many early Christians were martyred in Rome and St. Peter's basilica was itself built over a crypt believed to contain the tomb of St. Peter.

The painting was commissioned by Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (whose name saint was Saint Peter) when the Church was still heavily invested in affirming doctrines contested by the Protestants. With its emphasis on Jesus, Peter, and Rome, the painting reinforced the idea that Jesus himself had instituted the office of the Papacy (an idea refuted by Protestants) and that Peter was willing to die for the faith.

Additional resources:

Video on the history of the Church of Domine, Quo Vadis

Mannerism: Bronzino (1503–1572) and his Contemporaries on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Annibale Carracci: on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Protestant Reformation

Caravaggio

Caravaggio, *Narcissus at the Source*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





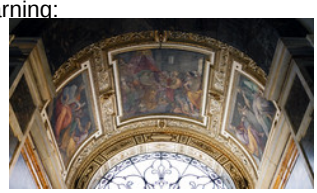
Figure **13.7.12.38***: More Smarthistory images…*

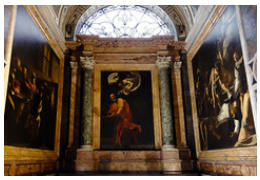
Caravaggio, *Calling of St. Matthew*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





















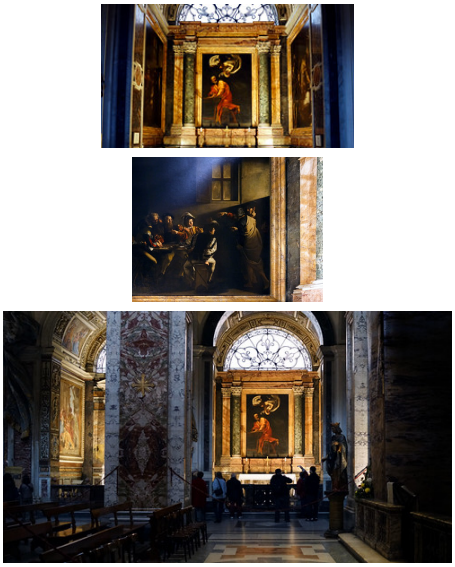


Figure 13.7.12.39*: More Smarthistory images…*

Caravaggio, *The Conversion of St. Paul* (or *The Conversion of Saul)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.13*: Caravaggio, The Conversion of St. Paul (also known as The Conversion of Saul), c. 1601, oil on canvas, 230 x 175 cm (Cerasi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome)*

Caravaggio, *Crucifixion of St. Peter*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.14*: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Crucifixion of St. Peter, 1601, oil on canvas (Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

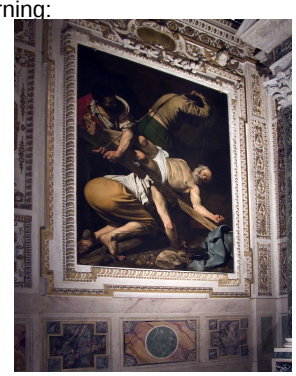


Figure 13.7.12.40*: More Smarthistory images…*

Caravaggio, *The Supper at Emmaus*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.15*: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, The Supper at Emmaus, 1601, oil on canvas, 55 x 77" / 141 x 196.2 cm (National Gallery, London)*

Caravaggio, *Deposition* (or *Entombment*)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure 13.7.12.41*: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Deposition (or Entombment), c. 1600-04, oil on canvas, 300 x 203 cm (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City)*

A police record

With most artists we know about their lives and personalities from biographies that friends or contemporaries wrote about them. In the case of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, however, we know about his life primarily from police records! From these accounts, we learn that he had a bad temper and could be violent, and that he was frequently arrested and imprisoned for assault. He appears on the police records for mild offenses like carrying weapons without permission, as well as more serious ones where he is involved in violent fights. He was even questioned once because he "gave offense" to a woman and her daughter—one wonders what that could mean! Ultimately, he killed a man over a bet and spent the last few years of his life on the run from the police.

The subject

After the crucifixion, some of Christ's followers (Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene) along with his Mother, remove Christ's body from the cross and place it in the tomb.

The darkness (and the light)

One of the first things you might notice about Caravaggio's style, and we see it here in his painting of The Entombment, is the darkness. There's actually a word for it: tenebroso, which means dark or gloomy. Caravaggio painted this scene as though it was happening in the black of night with almost a spot-light effect on the figures (doesn't it look like a dark stage that has been illuminated with a spotlight?).

There are several things that are important about this. There is no background—only darkness. No architecture, no landscape, and so as a result, we focus on the figures who are all located in the foreground of the painting. The spotlight effect of the lighting is very dramatic, and so we have very stark contrasts of light and dark. In other words, where modeling is usually a slow movement from light to dark, here we have very dark shadows right next to areas of bright illumination. The effect is very dramatic.



Figure **13.7.12.42***: Detail, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Deposition (or Entombment), c. 1600-04, oil on canvas, 300 x 203 cm (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City)*

The space

Everything is located very much in the foreground of the painting, very close to us in fact. Look at Christ's body—its so close we feel like we can touch it. And look at the ledge of the tomb, it is foreshortened and so it juts out into our space. And look at the elbow of the figure in orange carrying Christ's legs—it is foreshortened, too, and so it pops into our space. One of the main characteristics of Baroque art is the breaking down of the barrier between our space and the space of the painting, so we feel like we're part of it. Baroque artists use foreshortening frequently.

The composition

Baroque artists were also interested in movement. Here we see the moment when Christ is being lowered into his tomb. It's a process happening before our eyes—so we have a caught moment in time. We see that the figures form a diagonal line—another very common feature of Baroque art. In the High Renaissance, we saw compositions in the shape of a pyramid—a very stable shape. Here in Baroque art we see diagonals, or sometimes interlocking diagonals in the shape of an X.

Caravaggio organized the composition so that it looks like the body of Christ is being lowered right into our space, as though we were standing in the tomb. One of the most important goals of Baroque art is to involve the viewer.

Realism

Baroque art also tends to be very real—not only do the figures look "regular," but the artist is giving us a very real sense of this moment. The body of Christ looks truly dead, the figures struggle to hold the dead weight of his body and ease him down gently into his tomb.



Figure **13.7.12.43***: Christ's torso (detail), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Deposition (Entombment), c. 1600-04, oil on canvas, 300 x 203 cm (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City)*

The figures are all very ordinary looking, they are not idealized at all, like the figures of the High Renaissance. Look at the figure holding Christ's legs. He almost looks like a homeless person. Look at his feet and legs—they are so ordinary looking—you can almost imagine the bottom of his feet being dirty. Even Christ looks rather like an ordinary man. They are figures we can relate to more —unlike the perfect figures of the High Renaissance.

One of my favorite things about this painting is the figure who carries Christ's shoulders. He has his arm under Christ's torso and his fingers, as they reached around Christ, slipped into the wound that he received when he was on the cross (Christ was stabbed by a Roman soldier in the ribs). This may cause us to feel squeamish—but that's the idea. Baroque art wants to get to you in your body—so you really feel it. When you know something in your mind it is one thing—but when you experience it with your body it is really different. Baroque art often wants you to have an experience that's located in your body.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Vatican Museums

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

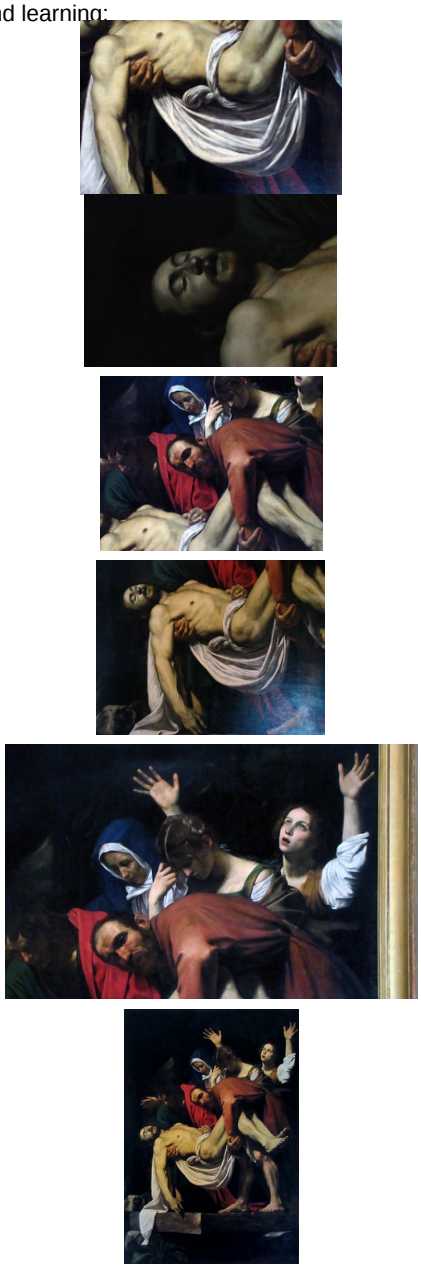


Figure 13.7.12.44*: More Smarthistory images…*

Caravaggio, *Death of the Virgin*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.12.16***: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Death of the Virgin, 1605-06, oil on canvas, 12' 10" x 8' / 369 x 245 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*

This was painted for the altar of a family chapel in the church of Santa Maria della Scala del Trastevere, Rome.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





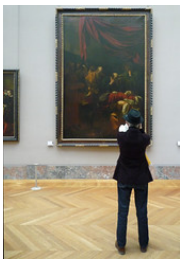



Figure 13.7.12.45*: More Smarthistory images…*

Caravaggio and Caravaggisti in 17th-century Europe

by OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS and DR. ERIN BENAY



Figure 13.7.12.46*: Caravaggio, Concert of Youths (or The Musicians), oil on canvas, c. 1595, 92.1 x 118.4 cm (Metropolitan Museum of Art)*

One of the most widely imitated artists

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was famously sensitive when it came to matters of artistic originality: he threatened both the painter Guido Reni and artist and biographer Giovanni Baglione for copying his style. Despite his best efforts to protect his singular style, however, Caravaggio became one of the most widely imitated artists in the history of Western art.

After his untimely death in 1610, many Italian and non-Italian artists alike came to be considered his "followers," even though they had never met the artist or worked alongside him. Unlike the typical Renaissance master-follower relationship, these artists could claim no direct descent from the studio of Caravaggio (since he did not have one), and in some cases they had not even seen his paintings first-hand. Some artists imitated Caravaggio for only a brief phase of their careers – Baglione, Carlo Saraceni, and Guercino for example – while others remained committed to Caravaggio's stylistic model for the duration of their lives.

Nevertheless, these painters, often labeled Caravaggisti, emulated aspects of Caravaggio's style, technique, and choice of subjects and were responsible for the dissemination of Caravaggism across the European continent.

A distinctive style

These followers, whether Italian, Spanish, French, or Netherlandish, were especially attracted to Caravaggio's tenebrism—the use of dark shadows to obscure parts of the composition. Caravaggio's employment of tenebrism and chiaroscuro, the strong contrast of light and dark, lends his paintings a dramatic effect that has been likened to a spotlit stage.

By combining this theatrical dynamism with careful observation from life, Caravaggio achieved a gritty naturalism in both genre and religious scenes. His subdued palette, half-length figures, and magnification of the picture-plane to create intimate, relatable compositions contributed to Caravaggio's widespread appeal during the first three decades of the seventeenth century in Europe.

The unusual darkness and life-like realism of Caravaggio's paintings accounted in part for his popularity. On the other hand, the types of subject matter and revision of traditional iconographies popularized by Caravaggio had a significant impact on the development of international Caravaggism.



Figure **13.7.12.47***: Georges de La Tour, The Fortune Teller, probably 1630s, oil on canvas, 101.9 x 123.5 cm (Metropolitan Museum of Art)*

New themes: Rogues and revelers

During his early years in Rome, Caravaggio worked as an assistant in the illustrious workshop of the Cavaliere d'Arpino, but he also completed some of his best-known easel paintings (independent, portable canvases) and sold them on the open market. These paintings included depictions of themes that were uncommon in Roman art at the time and became ubiquitous with the help of the Caravaggisti.

These followers were particularly interested in Caravaggio's renderings of the seedy underbelly of Roman street-life in the form of The Cardsharps and The Fortune Teller, two of Caravaggio's most copied paintings, or in the artist's depiction of music-making as in the Musicians (above) and The Lute Player. Italian artists like Bartolomeo Manfredi, and Antiveduto Grammatica, French painters such as Valentin de Boulogne, Georges de La Tour, Nicolas Régnier, and Simon Vouet and Dutchmen Hendrick Ter Brugghen and Gerrit van Honthorst all replicated these subjects or similar themes in obvious admiration of Caravaggio's original paintings.



Figure **13.7.12.48***: Caravaggio, The Cardsharps, c. 1595, oil on canvas, 94.2 x 130.9 cm (Kimbell Art Museum, Texas)*

These followers were undoubtedly struck by Caravaggio's ability to enliven such subjects with a dignity not necessarily befitting the lowly actions depicted. In The Cardsharps, for instance, a fresh-faced boy is tricked by two professional cheats. The viewer is privy to the deception—the figure at the far right of the composition exposes the stolen cards behind his back—and we are brought close to the ruse and the precariously balanced backgammon board, teetering on the edge of an ornate, brocade-covered table. In

versions of the theme by Boulogne, Manfredi, or Nicholas Tournier, earthy scenes of revelry might replace cardplaying.

These sometimes-elaborate compositions do not seek to reproduce the quiet intimacy of Caravaggio's paintings, but they succeed in transposing the artist's tenebristic backgrounds and embolden the disenfranchised populations they depict. In Pietro Paolini's rendering of drinkers and revelers in his Allegory of the Senses, he superimposes the dark, somber tonality of Caravaggio's later religious paintings on the themes Caravaggio painted in his youth. The combination is striking: the levity of gambling or musical merriment is sobered by the reddish ground and stronger chiaroscuro common in the second half of Caravaggio's career, when he had long since left such subjects behind.



Figure **13.7.12.49***: Pietro Paolini, Allegory of the Five Senses, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 125.1 x 173 cm (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore)*

Selective adoptions

Since followers of Caravaggio had no formal indoctrination by the master himself (unlike painters in the school of the Carracci for instance), they were free to take from Caravaggio whatever aspects of the painter's style and method they were most interested in. Painters like Cecco del Caravaggio, Orazio Gentileschi and his daughter, Artemisia Gentileschi, or Grammatica, who knew Caravaggio personally, did have the benefit of direct contact with the source of their inspiration, but their work retains a character all its own.

The Gentileschi—both father and daughter—produced more lyrical paintings than did Caravaggio. Incorporating the cold blues, yellows, and violets that were notably absent from Caravaggio's palette, their paintings, particularly those of Orazio, often reflected local influences. Nevertheless—and crucial to the discussion of Caravaggism in Europe—their work reveals an absorption not only of Caravaggio's tenebrism, but of his approach to religious iconography.



Figure **13.7.12.50***: Orazio Gentileschi, Saint Francis in Ecstasy, c. 1607, oil on canvas, 126 x 98 cm (Prado, Madrid)*

In his depictions of St. Francis in Ecstasy (painted in 1607 and again 1612–13), Orazio favors the intimate saint-angel relationship first struck by Caravaggio in his Hartford St. Francis. In her gory Judith Beheading Holofernes, Artemisia Gentileschi further highlights the violent struggle of decapitation emphasized in Caravaggio's painting of 1599. In both cases, the mixed horror and conviction apparent in Judith's face humanizes her violent yet selfless act, all while blood drips mercilessly into the viewer's space.

A new kind of religious imagery

Other Caravaggisti were also influenced by Caravaggio's humanizing depictions of devotional subjects. In their representations of the Doubting Thomas, for instance, Ter Brugghen, Honthorst, and Mattias Stomer reproduced the extraordinary half-length figures in semi-circular groupings and visceral depiction of Thomas's finger in Christ's side from Caravaggio's c. 1602 painting for Benedetto Giustiniani. In fact, these Northern artists were likely responsible for the sudden surge in popularity of Doubting Thomas imagery in the Netherlandish city of Utrecht during the first half of the seventeenth century.

Similarly, Jusepe de Ribera is credited with the spread of the Caravaggesque style to Spain, where it in turn may have influenced the work of Diego Velázquez. Ribera's paintings of half-length saints, such as the St. Jerome and Sts. Peter and Paul, and large-scale devotional paintings such as the Lamentation over the Dead Christ reflect his years spent in Rome and Naples, where the art of Caravaggio fostered Ribera's tenebrism and intimate portrayal of hallowed religious subjects.



Figure **13.7.12.51***: Jusepe de Ribera, St Paul the Hermit, c. 1638, oil on canvas,132.7 x 106.7 cm (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore)*

In 1612, two years after Caravaggio's death, a young Ribera asked his Roman landlord for permission to cut a hole in his roof. Allowing natural light to illuminate models in Ribera's studio, this makeshift

skylight stands as unusual evidence of the lengths Caravaggisti might go to achieve the first-hand observation, dramatic lighting, and incisive realism that characterized this new approach to art.

This content was first developed for Oxford Art Online and appears courtesy of Oxford University Press.

Additional resources:

Caravaggio in the Google Art Project

Caravaggio and His Followers in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Biography of the artist from the National Gallery

Caravaggisti in Wikipedia

Guido Reni, *Aurora*

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Figure **13.7.12.52***: Guido Reni, Aurora, 1613-14, ceiling fresco (Casino dell'Aurora, Rome)*

Paintings on ceilings

The period known as the Baroque (the 1600s) produced many new and innovative pictorial modes of expression and none more so than the painted ceiling. Patrons and artists began turning their eyes upward, and came up with inventive ways of decorating ceilings with a variety of motifs—from the classical gods and goddesses to the apotheosis of saints and the glorification of family lineage. Who says paintings are just for walls!



Figure **13.7.12.53***: Aurora, goddess of the dawn, bringing forth a new day (detail), Guido Reni, Aurora, 1613-14, ceiling fresco (Casino dell'Aurora, Rome)*

A painting for a summer house

One of the most beautiful and elegant of these ceilings is Guido Reni's Aurora, painted in 1614 for the Roman Cardinal Scipione Borghese for the ceiling of his small summer house known as the Casino dell'Aurora. This casino (not the gambling sort) was part of the Cardinal's larger palace residence located on the Quirinal Hill in Rome. The fresco represents Aurora (left), goddess of the dawn, bringing forth a new day as she leads the way for Apollo (below), god of light (among many other things), who follows behind in his golden quadriga (a four-horse chariot). That Aurora is bringing the dawn is evident through the change in the sky we see between the two gods: a darkish silvery gray before Aurora that turns into a bright, golden light filled sky before Apollo.

Below the edges of the clouds is a distant landscape slowly being illuminated by the dawn, with small sailboats barely visible out on the sea beyond. Aurora's gauzy drapery flutters around her figure as she seems to be preparing to drop the sprays of flowers she carries in her hands onto the landscape below.



Figure **13.7.12.54***: Apollo in his chariot surrounded by female figures, The Hours (detail), Guido Reni, Aurora, 1613-14, ceiling fresco (Casino dell'Aurora, Rome)*

Apollo, clothed only in a light purple wrap, is enveloped in a warm, golden halo of light. Hovering between Aurora and Apollo is a torch bearing putto (a winged child similar in appearance to Cupid, but not Cupid), identified as Phosphorus, an ancient personification of the Morning Star (detail, below). Elegant female figures, known as Hours, dance alongside the chariot, representing the passage of time, with their diaphanous draperies blown gently by the wind.

The figures are represented in an ideal manner as their physiognomies and physiques are flawless and perfect in their beauty. They are timeless and ageless, never to be marred by old age and decrepitude. Moreover, Reni's soft pastel color palette lends an idyllic, mythic quality to the scene.



Figure **13.7.12.55***: Borghese Dancers, c. 2nd- 3rd centuries, marble, 72 x 188 cm (Louvre)*



Figure **13.7.12.56***: Torch-bearing putto (detail), Guido Reni, Aurora, 1613-14, ceiling fresco (Casino dell'Aurora, Rome)*

Baroque classicism

As the Aurora is an exemplar of Baroque classicism, a style within the Baroque period that purposefully recalls art from ancient Greece and Rome, it is not surprising to find that Reni's fresco makes many references to actual works of art from Classical Antiquity. For example, the figures of the Hours bear close resemblance to the female figures in a Roman relief known today as the Borghese Dancers (above), which was originally part of Cardinal Borghese's collection of antiquities. Similarly, the figure of Phosphorus may have been influenced by a tondo (circular form) on the east side of the ancient Roman Arch of Constantine, which represents Sol, the sun god, similarly being led by a torch bearing putto (below).



Figure **13.7.12.57***: Tondo with Sun God, c. 315 C.E., marble frieze (Arch of Constantine, Rome)*

Quadro riportato—painting taken elsewhere

Let us now consider the experience of viewing the Aurora in the Casino dell'Aurora. The fresco is a singular scene, isolated in the center of the ceiling, surrounded by a physical (not simply painted) frame of molded stucco that is decorated with gold leaf (a process known as gilding). Reni's use of a frame around his fresco is a pictorial device known as quadro riportato, or "painting taken elsewhere." The idea was to the trick the viewer into thinking that an easel painting, a framed painting we would normally expect to find hanging on a wall, had actually been placed on the ceiling (keep in mind that Aurora is a fresco, painted right on the ceiling).



Figure **13.7.12.58***: Annibale Carracci, Farnese Gallery Ceiling, 1597-1608, fresco (Palazzo Farnese, Rome)*

Reni was not the first to do this, as there was already another famous ceiling in Rome that also used quadro riportato—the Farnese Gallery Ceiling painted by Annibale Carracci (above). In the case of the Farnese ceiling, however, the frames are not physical frames, but were painted illusions—a technique

known as trompe l'oeil (literally to "trick the eye"). Thus, in comparison, we might say that Reni's use of an actual frame was a very direct interpretation of quadro riportato!



Figure **13.7.12.59***: Guercino, Aurora, c. 1621, fresco (Casino di Villa Boncompagni Ludovisi, Rome)*

Illusionism

In addition to the "framing" of paintings on ceilings, artists used another illusionistic technique of visually breaking the ceiling so the image appears to be in the sky above, not inside the room. An example of this is another painting with the subject of Aurora, this one by the artist Guercino (above). Painted just a few years after Reni's Aurora, Guercino extended the architecture of the room onto the vaulted ceiling and then "opened" it up so the viewer would see Aurora and her entourage racing by in the sky above. The painted illusionistic architecture, known as quadrattura, was also a popular illusionistic pictorial device used in several other Roman ceilings in the seventeenth century (including Pozzo's Glorification of Saint Ignatius—a ceiling fresco in the church of Sant'Ignazio in Rome).



Figure **13.7.12.60***: Giorgio Vasanzio and Carlo Maderno, Casino dell'Aurora Pallavicini, the façade, 1611–16 (Rome)*

The classical past

In the end, Guido Reni's fresco, classicizing in both style and subject, with its golden stucco frame, was a perfect choice for the Casino dell'Aurora. Set in the gardens of Cardinal Borghese's estate, the summer house was specifically intended to allude to, if not actually recreate, elements of the Classical past. Its façade was (and still is) decorated with ancient Roman sarcophagi and reliefs further enhancing its intended atmosphere. Perhaps we can imagine Cardinal Borghese looking up at Aurora bringing in the new day as he escaped the hot Roman summer sun in his own personal version of arcadia.

Additional resources:

Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome

Short biography of the artist from the Getty Museum

Reni at The National Gallery

Guido Reni on the Google Art Project

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*

by DR. ESPERANÇA CAMARA



Video **13.7.12.17***: Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Slaying Holofernes, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris*

> ***Lord God, to whom all strength belongs, prosper what my hands are now to do for the greater glory of Jerusalem; for now is the time to recover your heritage and to further my plans to crush the enemies arrayed against us.***
>
> ***— Judith's prayer before beheading Holofernes (Judith 13:4-5)***



Figure **13.7.12.61***: Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Slaying Holofernes, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy)*

The story of Judith

Rivulets of blood run down the white sheets, as Judith, a pious young widow from the Jewish city of Bethulia, beheads Holofernes, general of the Assyrian army that had besieged her city. Moved by the

plight of her people and filled with trust in God, Judith took matters into her own hands. She coiffed her hair, donned her finest garments and entered the enemy camp under the pretense of bringing Holofernes information that would ensure his victory. Struck by her beauty, he invited her to dine, planning later to seduce her. As the biblical text recounts, "Holofernes was so enchanted with her that he drank far more wine than he had drunk on any other day in his life" (Judith 12:20). Judith saw her opportunity; with a prayer on her lips and a sword in her hand, she saved her people from destruction.

The story of Judith and Holofernes is recounted in the Book of Judith, a 2nd century text deemed apocryphal by the Jewish and Protestant traditions, but included in Catholic editions of the Bible. Like the story of David and Goliath, it was a popular subject of art in the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Artemisia and Caravaggio

This particular painting, executed by Artemisia Gentileschi in Florence c. 1620 and now in the Uffizi, is one of the bloodiest and most vivid depictions of the scene, surpassing the version by Caravaggio, arch-realist of Baroque Rome, in its immediacy and shocking realism. Artemisia was certainly familiar with Caravaggio's painting of the subject; her father Orazio, who was responsible for her artistic training, was Caravaggio's friend and artistic follower. Caravaggio's painting inspired, and perhaps even challenged, the young Artemisia.

A comparison between the two reveals not only her debt to the older artist, but also a series of pointed modifications that heighten the intensity of the physical struggle, the quantity of blood spilled, and the physical and psychological strength of Judith and her maidservant, Abra. In Artemisia's painting (below, right) the bloody sheets are in the immediate foreground, close to the viewer's space. Holofernes's muscular body projects dynamically into the depicted space as bold areas of light and dark draw attention to his powerful limbs.



Figure **13.7.12.62***: Left: Caravaggio, Judith beheading Holofernes, 1598-99, oil on canvas, 145 x 195 cm (Palazzo Barberini, Rome); and right: Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith and Holofernes, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

And, most importantly, whereas Caravaggio (above, left) pairs his delicate Judith with a haggard attendant who merely looks on, her eyes wide with disbelief, Artemisia depicts two strong, young women working in unison, their sleeves rolled up, their gazes focused, their grips firm. Caravaggio's Judith gracefully recoils from her gruesome task; Artemisia's Judith does not flinch. Instead, she braces herself on the bed, as she presses Holofernes's head down with one hand and pulls a large sword through his neck with the other. The creases at her wrists clearly show the physical strength required. Holofernes struggles in vain, the thrust of his arms countered by the more forceful movement of Abra, Judith's accomplice in this grisly act.

A composition perfected

The Uffizi Judith Slaying Holofernes is Artemisia's second telling of this narrative. The first, executed in Rome c. 1611-12 and now in the Capodimonte Museum in Naples (below, left), introduced the dynamic composition centered on the thrust and counter thrust of extended limbs. Artemisia refined the composition in the second (Uffizi) version. Small but significant adjustments reveal her growth in technical skill, her awareness of the local Florentine taste for sumptuous fabrics, and her thoughtful consideration of the expressive potential of each detail. Awkward passages of anatomy and proportion (such as Holofernes' head) have been corrected, the colors and textures of the fabrics are now richer (notice the red velvet draped over Holofernes and the golden damask of Artemisia's Judith's dress), and Judith's hair is more elaborately curled, in keeping with the biblical text's emphasis on her self-adornment.



Figure 13.7.12.64*: Left: Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith beheading Holofernes, 1611-12, oil on canvas, 159 x 126 cm (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples); and right: Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith and Holofernes, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

Most striking, however, is the portrayal of the blood. The Capodimonte version (above, left) omits the blood that violently spurts from the neck of Holofernes. Like Caravaggio's, the Uffizi painting places particular emphasis on this detail, and does so with even greater realism.



Figure **13.7.12.65***: Beheading (detail), Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Slaying Holofernes, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

Framed by Judith's arms, jets of blood now arc and descend in droplets that bespeckle her arms and dress. The pattern described by the spurting blood suggests Artemisia may have been familiar with her friend Galileo Galilei's research on parabolic trajectories. Artemisia also modified the sword in the Uffizi version. The sword, here longer and held more vertically, prominently marks the painting's central axis which extends from Abra's arm to the blood that runs down the edge of the bed. This powerful visual axis reinforces the strength of the women and the violence of the deed. It is no accident that Judith's sword-clenching fist is at the very center of the composition; imbued with divine strength, this widow's hand is now the hand of God protecting the Israelites from their enemies.



Figure **13.7.12.66***: Bracelet (detail), Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Slaying Holofernes, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)*

Judith—Artemisia's alter ego?

Artemisia's unique portrayal of Judith and Abra has prompted scholars to argue that Artemisia identified with the protagonist of the story in a way her male counterparts did not. This association stems not only from their shared gender, but also from Artemisia's own traumatic experience. Artemisia was raped at the age of 17 by the artist Agostino Tassi, a close friend of her father. When Tassi failed to marry her, as the social dictates of the time demanded, her father sought recourse in court. During the trial, Artemisia describes her struggle against Tassi and her attempt to attack him with a knife. She also recalls the sense of betrayal she felt when she realized her female chaperone had colluded with Tassi and arranged to leave the two alone.

The first version of Judith Slaying Holofernes dates to this difficult period in the artist's life. The memory of this event likely colored Artemisia's engagement with the story of Judith. Especially significant is Artemisia's portrayal of Abra as youthful, strong and fully engaged in the assisting Judith, in striking contrast to the chaperone who purposefully abandoned Artemisia in her hour of need. In the Uffizi

painting Artemisia adds a small detail that supports her identification with Judith. One of the cameos on Judith's bracelet appears to depict Artemis, the ancient goddess of both chastity and the hunt.

Judith—A symbol of the Church Militant

While the story of Judith likely held personal significance for Artemisia, it is important to note its broader cultural valence. The story of Judith was especially popular in the Baroque period, not only in the visual arts but also in literature, theater, and music. An example of the victory of virtue over vice, of God's protection of his chosen people from their enemies, Judith was also seen as an Old Testament antetype of the Virgin Mary and, by extension, as a symbol of the Church. This association partly explains the increase in portrayals of Judith in late 16th through the 17th centuries, when the Catholic Church was engaged in conflicts with both the Protestants and the Ottoman Turks, whose eastern origins facilitated their identification with Holofernes. Artemisia and her contemporaries capitalized on this popularity, frequently portraying not only the moment of the beheading itself, but also the moment right after it, when Judith and her maidservant escape from the enemy camp. The dramatic potential of the story made it as ideal subject for the powerful theatricality of Baroque art.



Figure **13.7.12.67***: Donatello, Judith and Holofernes, 1460, bronze, 236 cm (Palazzo Vecchio, Florence)*

A horrifying masterpiece

The Uffizi Judith was likely either commissioned by or gifted to the Medici, Florence's ruling family, the same family that commissioned Donatello's famous bronze sculpture of Judith and Holofernes in the late 15th century (left).

Artemisia Gentileschi was clearly proud of the Uffizi Judith Slaying Holofernes, signing it in the lower right corner. In it she demonstrated her mastery of the language of Baroque realism, exploiting its emphasis on proximity to the picture plane, strong chiaroscuro, and realistic details to create an especially potent depiction of the story's dramatic climax.

The bold immediacy of this finely-tuned composition succeeded all too well, for in the late 18th century, disgusted by the horror of the scene, the Medici duchess banished this masterpiece to a dark corner of the Uffizi, where it remained until the late twentieth century. To this day, it strikes its viewers with both revulsion and awe at the skill of the artist who so convincingly transformed paint into blood.

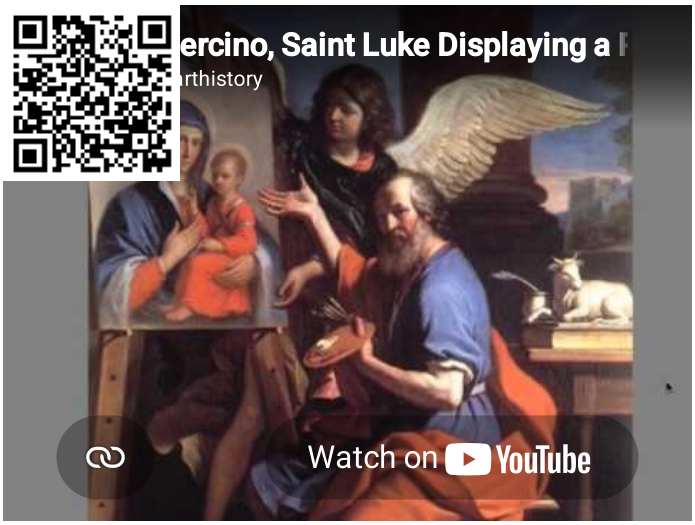
Additional resources:

Gentileschi's Judith Slaying Holofernes (Uffizi) at the Google Art Project

Violence and Virtue: Artemisia Gentileschi's Judith Slaying Holofernes (from the Art Institute of Chicago)

Guercino, *St. Luke Displaying a Painting of the Virgin*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. DAVID DROGIN



Jasmine Keane
Sep 27, 2020, 5:39 PM

*Cite this page as: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. David Drogin, "Guercino, St. Luke Displaying a Painting of the Virgin," in Smarthistory, November 13, 2015, accessed September 27, 2020, **https://smarthistory.org/guercino-st-luke-displaying-a-painting-of-the-virgin/**.*

Il Gesù, Rome

by FRANK DABELL, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.19: Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola and Giacomo della Porta, Church of Il Gesù, Rome (consecrated 1584, ceiling fresco, The Triumph of the Name of Jesus, by il Baciccio, also known as Giovanni Battista Gaulli, 1672-1685). This video was produced in cooperation with our partners at Context Travel.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

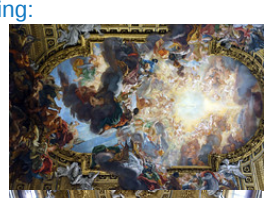















Figure 13.7.12.68*: More Smarthistory images…*

Andrea Pozzo

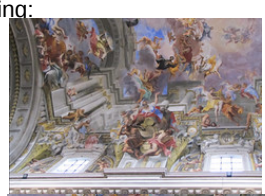
Andrea Pozzo, *Glorification of Saint Ignatius*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



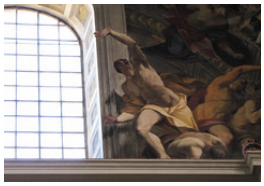
Video 13.7.12.20*: Fra Andrea Pozzo, Glorification of Saint Ignatius, ceiling fresco in the nave of Sant'Ignazio, Rome, 1691-94*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

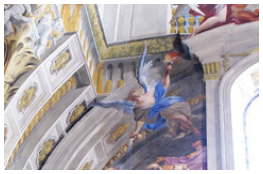






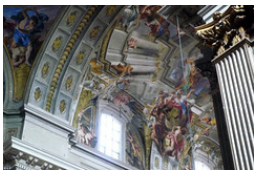












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731

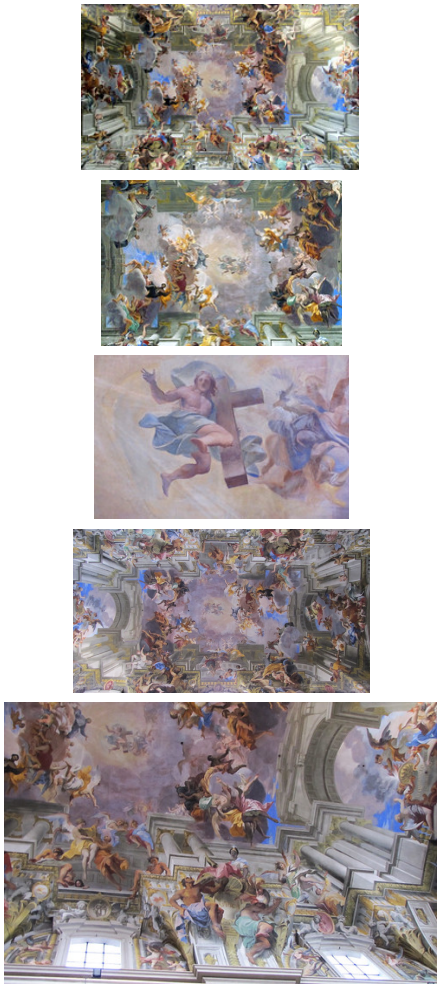


Figure **13.7.12.69***: More Smarthistory images…*

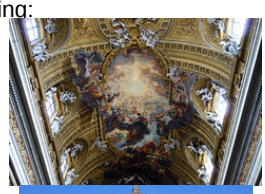
Andrea Pozzo, St. Ignatius Chapel, Il Gesù, Rome

by FRANK DABELL, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.12.21***: Andrea Pozzo, Saint Ignatius Chapel in the left transept of the church, Il Gesù, Rome (commissioned in 1695). Many artists contributed, including Alessandro Algardi, Pierre Legros, Bernardino Ludovisi, Il Lorenzone and Jean-Baptiste Théodon. Materials include bronze, gold, silver, and many semiprecious stones, most notably lapis lazuli. This video was produced in cooperation with our partners at Context Travel.*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731

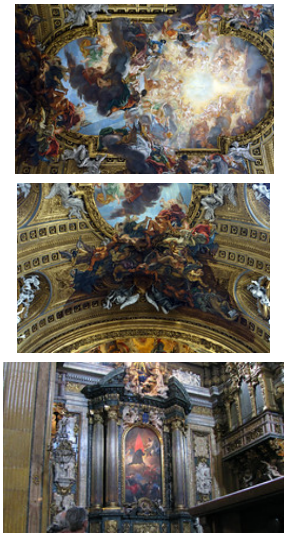


Figure 13.7.12.70: *More Smarthistory images…*

Pierre Le Gros the Younger, *Stanislas Kostka on His Deathbed*

by FRANK DABELL, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.22: *Pierre Le Gros the Younger, Stanislas Kostka on His Deathbed, 1703, upstairs at Bernini's Sant'Andrea al Quirinale. Frank Dabell appears in this video courtesy of Context Travel.*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

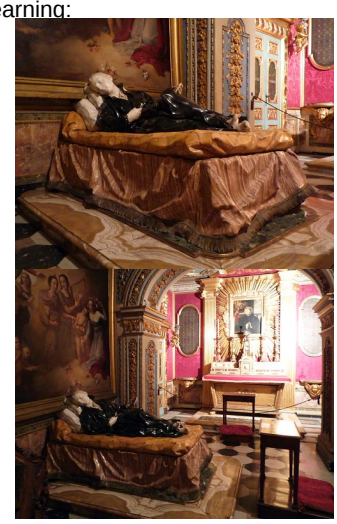


Figure **13.7.12.71***: More Smarthistory images…*

Baroque art in Flanders

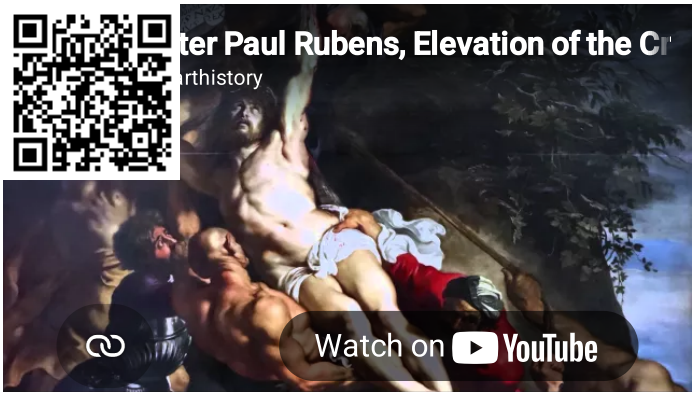
Rubens—a painter to Europe's most wealthy and powerful—is the star.

1600 - 1700

Peter Paul Rubens

Peter Paul Rubens, *Elevation of the Cross*

by DR. SHANNON PRITCHARD



Video **13.7.12.22***: Peter Paul Rubens, Elevation of the Cross, from Saint Walburga, 1610, oil on wood, center panel: 15' 1-7/8" x 11' 1-1/2" (now in Antwerp Cathedral)*



Figure **13.7.12.72***: Peter Paul Rubens, Elevation of the Cross, from Saint Walburga, 1610, oil on wood, center panel: 15 feet 1-7/8 inches x 11 feet 1-1/2 inches (now in Antwerp Cathedral)*

An enormous triptych

The Elevation of the Cross altarpiece is a masterpiece of Baroque painting by the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens. The work was originally installed on the high altar of the Church of St. Walburga in Antwerp (since destroyed), and is now located in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp.

This triptych (a painting—usually an altarpiece—comprised of two outer "wings" and a central panel) is impressive in its size, measuring 15 feet in height and 21 feet wide when open. The original frame, unfortunately lost, would have made the painting even more impressive in size! Due to its very size, Rubens actually painted it on-site behind a curtain. Four saints associated with the church of St. Walburga can be found on the exterior of the wings (visible when the altarpiece is closed): Saints Amandus and Walburga on the left and Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Eligius on the right.

Baroque dynamism

Rubens was one of the most prolific and sought after painters of the Baroque period, generally (although not always) defined in painting and sculpture by the representation of action and emotion in ways meant to inspire the Catholic faithful (this triptych was painted less than a century after Martin Luther's challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church).

In the central panel, we see the dramatic moment when the cross of Christ's crucifixion is being raised to its upright position. Rubens created a strong diagonal emphasis by placing the base of the cross at the far lower right of the composition and the top of the cross in the upper left—making Christ's body the focal point. This strong diagonal reinforces the notion that this is an event unfolding before the viewer, as the men struggle to lift the weight of their burden.



Figures raising the cross (detail), Peter Paul Rubens, Elevation of the Cross, from Saint Walburga, 1610, oil on wood, center panel: 15 feet 1-7/8 inches x 11 feet 1-1/2 inches (now in Antwerp Cathedral)

Adding to this dynamic tension is the visual sensation that the two men in the lower right are about to burst into the viewer's space as they work to pull the cross upward (see image above). The viewer is caught in a moment of anxiety, waiting for the action to be complete.

In the left panel (below, left) are St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary, who, standing in the shadow of the rocky outcrop above them, look to their left at what unfolds before their eyes. Shown in quiet resignation and grief over the fate of Christ, the group of women below is a stark contrast of overwrought emotion. Here too Rubens uses a diagonal along the line of the women from the lower right to the mid-left, setting John and Mary apart, allowing the viewer to focus on their reaction.



Figure **13.7.12.75***: Side panels, Peter Paul Rubens, Elevation of the Cross, from Saint Walburga, 1610, oil on wood, center panel: 15 feet 1-7/8 inches x 11 feet 1-1/2 inches (now in Antwerp Cathedral)*

The right panel (above, right) continues the narrative event as Roman soldiers prepare the two thieves for their fate as they will be crucified alongside Christ. One thief—already being nailed to the cross on the ground—is foreshortened back into space, while the other—just behind him with his hands bound—is being forcefully led away by his hair. The diagonal Rubens created here runs the opposite direction as that in the left panel, moving from the lower left to the upper right along the line created by the leg and neck of the gray horse. These opposing diagonals further create tension across the composition, heightening the viewer's sense of drama and chaotic action.

A unified narrative and biblical accuracy

In addition to the powerful figural composition, the three panels are visually unified through the landscape and sky. The left and central panels share a rocky outcropping covered with oak trees and vines (both of which have Christological significance). Notice that St. John, the Virgin Mary and the Roman soldiers just to the left of the cross are standing on the same ground-line.



Figure **13.7.12.74***: Peter Paul Rubens, Elevation of the Cross, from Saint Walburga, 1610, oil on wood, center panel: 15 feet 1-7/8 inches x 11 feet 1-1/2 inches (now in Antwerp Cathedral)*

The unification of the central and right panels is accomplished through the sky, which begins to darken in the central panel, moving to the impending eclipse of the sun on the right, an event recounted in the Gospel of Matthew (27:45): "From noon on, darkness came over the whole land…." This attention to biblical accuracy is also seen in the text on the scroll at the top of the cross, which reads: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," written in Greek, Latin, and Aramaic, as told in the Gospel of John (19:19-21). In both cases, Rubens was adhering to one of the primary mandates of the Council of Trent (1545-63), which called for historical accuracy in the representation of sacred events (at the Council of Trent, church authorities essentially decided theological questions raised by Martin Luther and the Protestants, the period following the Council is known as the Counter-Reformation—the Catholic Church's response to Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation).



Figure **13.7.12.75***: Caravaggio, Crucifixion of St. Peter, oil on canvas, 1601 (Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome)*

The Elevation of the Cross altarpiece was the first commission Rubens received after returning to Antwerp from his Italian sojourn from 1600 to 1608/9 where he worked in the cities of Mantua, Genoa, and Rome.

Given his extended time in Italy, it is not surprising that we see a number of Italian influences in this work. The richness of the coloration (notice the blues and reds throughout the composition) and Rubens' painterly technique recalls that of the Venetian master Titian, while the dramatic contrasts of light and dark bring to mind Caravaggio's tenebrism (darkness) in his Roman compositions, such as the Crucifixion of St. Peter (left). And indeed, we can clearly see Rubens' interest in his Italian counterpart in the sense of physical exertion, the use of foreshortening—where figures push past the boundaries of the picture plane into the space of the viewer, and in the use of the diagonal.

In terms of the muscularity and physicality of Ruben's male figures, a clear connection can be drawn to Michelangelo's nude males (the ignudi) on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. In addition to looking at the works of past and contemporary masters, we know Rubens was also interested in the study of classical antiquity (ancient Greece and Rome). In fact, the figure of Christ seems to have been based on one of the most famous works of antiquity, the Laocoön, which ***Rubens made drawings*** *of during his time in Rome.*



Figure **13.7.12.75***: Christ (detail), Peter Paul Rubens, Elevation of the Cross, from Saint Walburga, 1610, oil on wood, center panel: 15 feet 1-7/8 inches x 11 feet 1-1/2 inches (now in Antwerp Cathedral)*

Elevation: altarpiece and high altar

When the Elevation of the Cross altarpiece was placed on the high altar, there was a specific connection being forged between the subject of the painting and the function of the altar. The act of raising an object up is known in Latin as elevatio. During the Mass performed by the priest at the high altar, there is a moment when the Eucharistic wafer (miraculously transformed into the body of Christ) is elevated. Thus, when the congregation faced the high altar, they not only saw the elevatio of Christ's cross but the elevation of the wafer, and thus the altarpiece and the ritual of the mass performed in front of it visually reinforced the message of Christ's sacrifice on behalf of mankind.

Additional resources:

Photographs of the triptych

A study for the figure of Christ in the Harvard Art Museums

Biography of the artist from The National Gallery

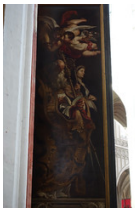
Rubens on the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















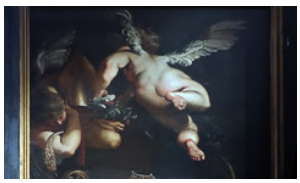





Figure **13.7.12.76**: *More Smarthistory images…*

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.12.23**: *Peter Paul Rubens, The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus, 1617-18, oil on canvas, 224 x 210.5 cm (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)*

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

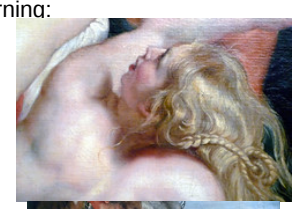









Figure **13.7.12.77***: More Smarthistory images…*

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Presentation of the Portrait of Marie de' Medici*

by DR. ESPERANÇA CAMARA



Video 13.7.12.24*: Peter Paul Rubens, The Presentation of the Portrait of Marie de' Medici, c. 1622-1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*



Figure 13.7.12.78*: Peter Paul Rubens, The Presentation of the Portrait of Marie de' Medici, c. 1622–1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm (Musée du Louvre)*

Cupid's arrow hits its mark

A young woman in a bejeweled dress with a stiff lace collar gazes confidently out of a simply-framed, bust-length portrait placed at the very center of a large canvas. Her name is Marie de' Medici, daughter of the Grandduke of Tuscany.

The ancient gods of marriage and love—Hymen and Amor (Cupid), to the left and right, respectively—hover in midair as they present this portrait to Henry IV, the king of France. Hymen holds in his left hand a flaming torch, symbolizing the ardor of love, while Cupid extols the virtues of the Medici princess. Cupid's arrow has hit its mark; the king is smitten. He gazes up in gratitude, his left hand extended as he expresses his delight in his bride-to-be.

From the heavens above, Jupiter and Juno, the king and queen of the Olympian gods, look down with approval, their own hands touching in a tender gesture of marital union. Jupiter's fierce eagle, seen in the top left corner, looks away from the couple and clenches its lightening bolts in its talons. In contrast, Juno's tamed peacock looks at the divine couple, while his mate cranes her neck to look at the portrait. A pink silk ribbon binds them together. The peahen perches on Juno's chariot, directly above a golden relief of Cupid who balances a yoke-shaped garland (a symbol of marriage) on his shoulders as he playfully dances on the wings of a proud eagle. The message is clear: even the king of the gods can be subdued by love. Following Jupiter's lead, Henry must also turn his attention to marriage.



Figure **13.7.12.79***: Jupiter and Juno (detail), Peter Paul Rubens, The Presentation of the Portrait of Marie de' Medici, c. 1622–1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm (Musée du Louvre)*

However, this match is about politics as well as love. Behind Henry stands the personification of France, wearing a blue silk garment embroidered with gold fleur-de-lys (the coat of arms of the French monarchy) and an elaborate plumed helmet encircled by a gold crown. She gently touches Henry's shoulder and whispers in his ear, assuring him that a match with the Medici princess is indeed good for the kingdom. France urges Henry to turn away from the field of battle, the aftermath of which is visible in the burning town in the background, and attend to hearth and home, for domestic matters are no less important to the survival of the monarchy than military exploits. Henry obliges; his helmet and shield—now the playthings of two tender cherubs—lie at his feet.



Figure **13.7.12.80***: View of the Marie de Medici cycle by Peter Paul Rubens in the Louvre (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-SA 2.0)*

This canvas is the sixth in a series of twenty-four paintings on the life of Marie de' Medici commissioned by the queen herself from Peter Paul Rubens in 1622 to adorn one of the two galleries in the Luxembourg Palace, her newly-built home in Paris. In both scale and subject matter, this cycle is unprecedented. Not only is it unique in its dedication to the major life events of a queen, but it also includes events that were both quite recent and quite humiliating. After Henry was assassinated in 1610, Marie—acting as regent for their young son, Louis XIII—ruled the kingdom of France for seven years. The position suited her; but many French nobles begrudged her power. Divisions in the court, including tensions with her own son, led to Marie's exile from the Paris in 1617. The commission of the biographical cycle marked her reconciliation with Louis and her return to the capital city in 1620. It vindicated her reign as the queen of France.



Figure **13.7.12.81***: Presentation of the Portrait of Marie de' Medici (at left), Marie de Medici cycle in the Louvre*

The cycle idealizes and allegorizes Marie's life in light of the peace and prosperity she brought to the kingdom, not through military victories but through wisdom, devotion to her husband and her adopted country, and strategic marriage alliances—her own as well as the ones she brokered for her children. This, at least, is the message she wished to convey and she worked closely with her advisors and Rubens to ensure her story was told as she saw fit.

The Presentation of the Portrait forms part of this agenda; it is an idealized portrayal of the conclusion in April of 1600 of marriage negotiations that were two years in the making. The painting presents Henry's bethrothal to Marie de Medici as a union ordained by the gods, counseled by France, and inspired by Marie's beauty and virtues. In reality, the merits of the union were extolled not by a soft-haired, fleshy Cupid but by the alliance's French and Italian proponents, one of whom reported that the portrait presented by the Florentine negotiators "pleased His Majesty exceedingly." Henry, for his part, was distracted from the negotiations by his new mistress, whom he had promised to marry. Nevertheless, he recognized the political and financial necessity of the Medici marriage. When his advisor announced the finalization of the marriage contract, Henry exclaimed: "By God, let it be; there is nothing to be done about it, because for the good of my kingdom and my peoples, you say that I must be married, so I simply must be."



Figure **13.7.12.82***: Cupid and King Henry discussing the portrait of Marie de Medici (detail), Peter Paul Rubens, The Presentation of the Portrait of Marie de' Medici, c. 1622-1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm (Musée du Louvre)*

For Henry, a Protestant who had converted to Catholicism upon ascending to the throne in 1593, a Catholic wife would assuage any concerns about his loyalty to the Catholic Church in France. Additionally, Marie's hefty dowry eased Henry's large debt to the Medici, major financial backers of his military activities. And, perhaps most importantly, Henry was nearing the age of 50 and had yet to father an heir, putting France's future stability in danger. A fruitful union with Marie was key to this stability. In this matter, the 27-year old Marie did not disappoint, giving birth to a son one year after the wedding, and five additional children, four of whom survived to adulthood. Rubens asserts Marie's successful role

as wife and mother by establishing a dominant vertical axis through the center of the composition from Juno, with her exposed, full breasts, through Marie's portrait to the chubby cherub directly below. Of all of the figures in the painting, Marie and the cherub are the only ones who look out at the viewer, pointedly reaffirming the centrality of Marie de' Medici and of her royal progeny to the future of France.

The theme of peace, which runs throughout the cycle, was indeed furthered not only in France but in Europe by the marriage alliances brokered by Marie for her children: Louis XIII married a daughter of the Spanish king, her daughter Elisabeth married the heir to the Spanish throne (the future King Philip IV), and her daughter Henrietta married Charles I of England.



Figure **13.7.12.83***: Luxembourg Palace (garden façade), Paris (France)*

The pictorial cycle was installed in the Luxembourg Palace by 1625, in time for the Henrietta's wedding festivities, thus enabling Marie to showcase her accomplishments to her many guests. Marie's truce with her son Louis however was short lived and she died in exile in 1631. Despite the challenges of her life as she struggled to regain the power and influence she once had, Marie de' Medici lived to hear herself proclaimed mother of three sovereigns, certainly an impressive legacy for the orphaned daughter of the Grandduke of Tuscany.

Additional resources:

Key moment in the Medici cycle from the Louvre

Sarah R. Cohen, "Rubens's France: Gender and Personification in the Marie de Médicis Cycle," The Art Bulletin, Vol. 85, No. 3 (Sept 2003), p. 490-522.

The paintings of Rubens and Van Dyck on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images of Rubens's work

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.12.84*: More Smarthistory images…*

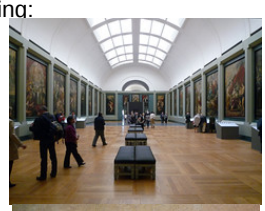
Peter Paul Rubens, *Arrival (or Disembarkation) of Marie de Medici at Marseilles*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

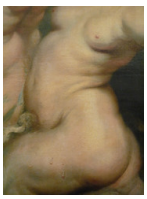


Video **13.7.12.25***: Peter Paul Rubens, Arrival (or Disembarkation) of Marie de Medici at Marseilles, 1621-25, oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*

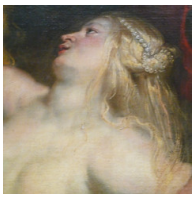
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88731







Figure **13.7.12.85***: More Smarthistory images…*

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici*

by MATTHEW WILSON



Figure **13.7.12.86***: Peter Paul Rubens, The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici, c. 1622–25, oil on canvas, 394 x 727 cm (**Musée du Louvre**, Paris)*

This is a painting about the events of a single day: May 14th, 1610. That date witnessed two seismic incidents in French history: a cold-blooded political assassination, and the investiture of one of the seventeenth century's most powerful women. Rubens's vast canvas turns the day's news into an epic Baroque dramatization, and a persuasive piece of propaganda.

Death and destiny

*On that fateful May morning in 1610, King Henry IV of France was murdered in broad daylight on the streets of Paris by a Catholic zealot named François Ravaillac. France was plunged into a dilemma of succession: Henry's eldest son Louis was too young to take the throne, and his wife Marie de' Medici couldn't rule as Queen, since French **Salic Law** forbade women to be monarchs. The solution was decided*

within just two hours of the assassination: Marie was appointed regent and therefore de facto ruler of France. This positioned her in a seat of power previously only ever held by men.

*Twelve years after these momentous affairs, Marie commissioned one of Europe's most renowned artists, **Peter Paul Rubens**, to paint a series of 24 paintings about her life (today we refer to these as the Medici Cycle). These were designed to decorate the Luxembourg Palace—her enormous new residence in Paris. The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici is the middle image in the cycle. It is more than twice the width of the other paintings and it concerns the events of May 14th, 1610. But there's no attempt to show either the murder or Marie's royal promotion realistically. Instead the artist has translated them into a large-scale drama, radically simplifying and the events and turning them into a grand spectacle.*



Figure 13.7.12.87*: Salomon de Brosse, Luxembourg Palace, 1615–1645 (photo: **Luis Miguel Bugallo Sánchez**, CC BY_SA 4.0)*

The power of allegory

One aspect of this non-realistic approach is the painting's use of symbols. For example, a snake at the bottom left hand corner — synonymous with evil in Christian iconography—stands in for the murderer Ravaillac. Above it, Henry is shown rising to heaven flanked by the Roman deities Jupiter (with his attribute an eagle) and Saturn (who holds a sickle) and ascending towards other gods in the heavens above.



Figure 13.7.12.88*: Peter Paul Rubens, The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici, detail, c. 1622-1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 727 cm (**Musée du Louvre, Paris**)*

The center of the composition is filled with the Roman deities Victoria (goddess of Victory) in gold drapery who holds a palm leaf to symbolize martyrdom, and an unarmed and nude Bellona (goddess of war) who despairs at the death of the peace-bringing Henry. The dogs just behind Bellona are symbols of faithfulness in marriage.



Figure 13.7.12.89*: Peter Paul Rubens, The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici, detail, c. 1622–1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 727 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*

On the right side of the composition Marie is shown in the black attire of a widow, with the nobility of France shown gathering around her dais, imploring her to accept the gifts being offered to her. These are

being proffered by several allegorical and mythological characters such as a kneeling personification of France holding up an orb of leadership, and a flying allegory of Divine Providence giving her a ship's rudder to signify her duty to steer the nation in a moment of crisis. Prudence stands beside Marie advising her to accept the symbols of authority, and behind the throne is the Roman goddess of wisdom Minerva. Even the architecture is symbolic: the columns around Marie are twisting Solomonic columns that are reputed to have flanked the throne of the legendary King Solomon of the Bible. A ***triumphal arch*** *(signifying success) in the background perfectly frames Marie's body.*

Rubens would have learned how to depict such allegories from textbooks on symbolism published at the time. The most famous was the recently released Iconologia by Cesare Ripa, but there were many other emblem books, or emblemata, available for consultation.

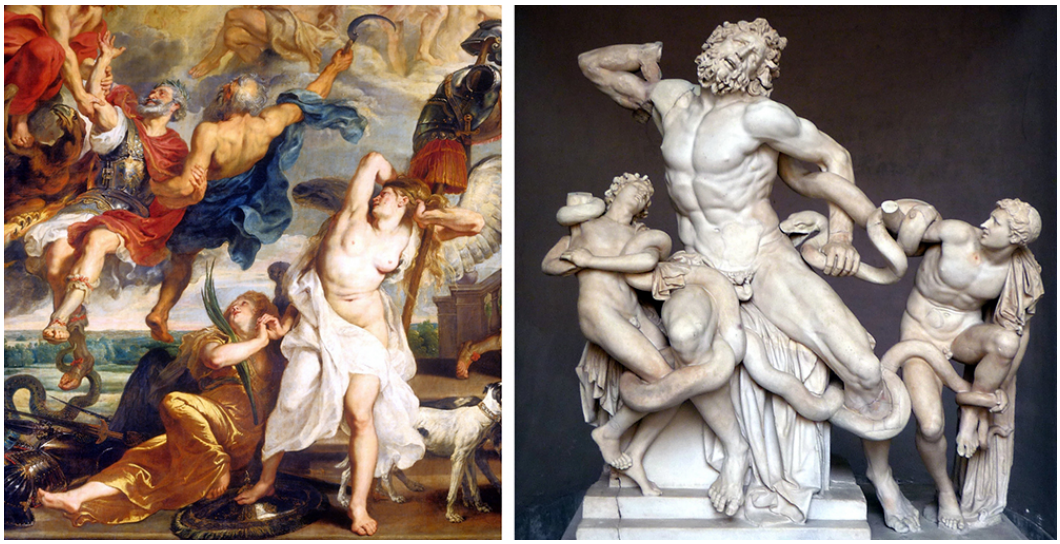


Figure **13.7.12.90***: Left: Peter Paul Rubens, The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici, detail of Henry IV and Bellona, c. 1622–1625, oil on canvas, 394 x 727 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris); Right: Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, Laocoön and his Sons, early first century C.E., marble, 7'10 1/2" high (Vatican Museums)*

As you may have also noticed the language of allegory and many of the figures that Rubens used are all connected with ***ancient Rome****. By making such associations, Rubens was aiming to connect French royalty with what was considered to be the greatest civilization of the past. There are also sly stylistic references to classical art. The poses of Bellona and Henry, for example, recall* ***Laocoön and his sons****, perhaps the most famous and well-respected sculptural group from antiquity.*



Figure **13.7.12.91***: Caravaggio, Madonna of the Rosary, 1607, oil on canvas, 364.5 cm × 249.5 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)*

But the painting also betrays influence from more modern developments in art: the right-hand section, for example bears a very similar composition to Caravaggio's Madonna of the Rosary. In commissioning Rubens, Marie de' Medici was probably getting the most intellectual and artistically knowledgeable artist in Europe to enshrine her legacy.

The language of allegory and allusions to ancient Rome were characteristic tactics used by artists of the early seventeenth century. What makes the painting unusual for its time is the predominance of powerful women (real and allegorical) among the cast of characters.

Propaganda

As was previously mentioned, the real events of May 14, 1610 (from Henry's undignified stabbing in a constricted carriage to Marie's hasty inauguration as regent) were not the concern of Rubens, who shows us an ideal—a concept, rather than a reality. This fits the painting's intentions perfectly. The Medici Cycle, after all, was conceived by Marie de' Medici, and therefore designed to reassure her of her own right to rule, and to persuade others of it too. More than this—it was principally commissioned to compensate for Marie's own flaws and unpopularity.

Marie suffered the hatred of the French aristocracy not only because she was a woman, but because she was Italian and surrounded herself with foreign advisers. She was no doubt the victim of inherent misogyny and jingoism, but she was also guilty of various intrigues and political misjudgments. Marie unscrupulously maintained political control in France even after her son Louis's coming of age in 1614. She mismanaged the nation's revenues and undermined aspects of her deceased husband's foreign policy. Louis eventually gained his rightful rule of France by force in 1617, exiling his mother from court and having her two favored advisers killed.

Thus, the whole Medici Cycle was an attempt to justify Marie's original right to rule and persuade us of her pure intentions. This may be why she is shown as a loyal, grieving wife who has to be implored by a chorus of supporters to take the regency, despite her reluctance. To put it simply, the painting is an overwhelming and learned piece of artistic propaganda.



Figure **13.7.12.92***: The Medici Cycle paintings in the Musée du Louvre (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)*

Afterlife

The 24 paintings of the Medici Cycle are now in the Louvre in Paris, in a special gallery where The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de' Médici hold pride of place. It has influenced many later artists, most famously Eugène Delacroix who adapted Rubens's Bellona for the central female figure in ***Liberty Leading the People*** *(1830). Delacroix was clearly smitten by this vision of powerful, commanding and righteous femininity, albeit for entirely contrary political purpose.* ***Paul Cézanne*** *was also infatuated with the painting and repeatedly studied it in the Louvre, also re-using the pose and statuesque qualities of Bellona in his own nude studies. In the twentieth century, Rubens's epic allegorical approach to current affairs can even be seen as influencing works of art like Pablo Picasso's* ***Guernica*** *(1937).*

Additional resources:

The Medici Cycle at the Louvre

Download a copy of Iconologia by Cesare Ripa

Peter Paul Rubens, *Venus, Mars and Cupid*

by HELEN HILLYARD



Figure **13.7.12.93***: Peter Paul Rubens, Venus, Mars and Cupid, c.1630-1635, oil on canvas, 195.2 x 133 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, DPG285)*

The defeat of war by love

The goddess Venus is shown in her boudoir feeding her son Cupid, who clings to his mother's arm while clutching at her drapery. The pair is watched by Venus's lover, Cupid's father, Mars (the god of War). His expression is one of tenderness as he is quite literally disarmed, he has removed his helmet and his shield lies abandoned on the floor. Cupid's own bow and arrows also lie on the ground. The painting can be interpreted symbolically as the defeat of war by love, a reading that is further underlined by the presence of ***the ghostly putti*** *who play beside Mars's head.*

Venus, Mars and Cupid was painted in the early 1630s and the composition is closely related to Rubens' large-scale Peace and War (below). This is particularly evident in the figure of Peace who takes a similar pose and, like Venus, feeds milk to her child. The figures' hair is also similarly dressed. Because of these broad similarities, it has been proposed that the histories of the two works might be interconnected.

Peace and War was executed in England in 1629-30, illustrating Rubens's hopes for the peace he was trying to negotiate between England and Spain in his role as diplomatic envoy on behalf of Philip IV of Spain. Rubens eventually presented the finished work to Charles I of England as a gift.

Given these similarities as well as the theme of the subject matter—the triumph of love over war—it has been proposed that the Dulwich painting was likewise a diplomatic gift. In fact, a work fitting the description of the Dulwich painting is recorded in the inventory of Spanish nobleman Juan Gaspar de Cabrera, 10th Admiral of Castile; which might indicate the paintings were given to both England and Spain to commemorate the peace talks.



Figure **13.7.12.94***: Peter Paul Rubens, Minerva Protects Pax from Mars ("Peace and War"), 1629–30, oil on canvas, 203.5 × 298 cm (The National Gallery, London, presented by the Duke of Sutherland, NG46)*

What a technical analysis and an X-ray reveals

Recent technical analysis has shown that the materials used by Rubens were commonly found in Antwerp, indicating that the Dulwich painting was likely made after Peace and War, once the artist had returned from England, before being sent onward to Spain. Rubens frequently revised his works during the course of painting, and these changes are revealed in an X-ray of the work. X-rays can pass through most solid objects but are obstructed by certain materials, including lead-based pigments. This means that changes made by Rubens using lead white paint are made visible, allowing us to trace the development of the painting, and gain an invaluable insight into his thought processes and working methods. In the X-ray we can see that the position of Venus's head was changed and the red curtain made larger, so as to cover more of the sky. Cupid's left leg was bent so that his foot rested behind Venus's knee; his right leg has also been altered slightly and his head raised. Venus's left leg originally stretched out from the knee towards the right of the picture.



Figure **13.7.12.95***: Left: Peter Paul Rubens, Venus, Mars and Cupid, c.1630-1635, oil on canvas, 195.2 x 133 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, DPG285) and rIght: X-Ray of the same painting.*

The X-ray also reveals that the drapery was once more taut, an effect now disguised by the degraded condition of the blue pigment. This would have counteracted the impression that Cupid was falling backwards and he would instead appear to be pulling himself upward.

Rubens and his workshop

Although the painting is today attributed to Rubens, it is unclear to what extent his studio was involved in its production. Rubens managed a large workshop with many assistants, which enabled the artist to meet the immense demand for his work. It is often difficult to decipher where the studio's involvement ends and where the work of the master begins. For instance, Rubens would frequently retouch and "finish" studio versions of a painting in order to ensure that they were of a sufficiently high standard and works would certainly not leave the workshop without his approval. Such works are regarded as being "by Rubens" even if not entirely by his own hand. In the case of Venus, Mars and Cupid, it is tempting to think that the assistants might have sketched in the majority of the painting with Rubens himself applying those crucial finishing touches.

*This essay was produced in conjunction with the "**Making Discoveries**" display series at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. The displays coincide with the release of the Gallery's Dutch and Flemish Schools Catalogue, to be published fall 2016, and aims to disseminate important findings from this major research project.*

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Consequences of War*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.12.26*: Peter Paul Rubens, The Consequences of War, 1638-39, oil on canvas (Palatine Gallery, Palazzo Pitti, Florence)*

Rubens, explaining his painting, The Consequences of War (from a letter to Justus Sustermans, translated by Kristin Lohse Belin, in Rubens, Phaidon, 1998):

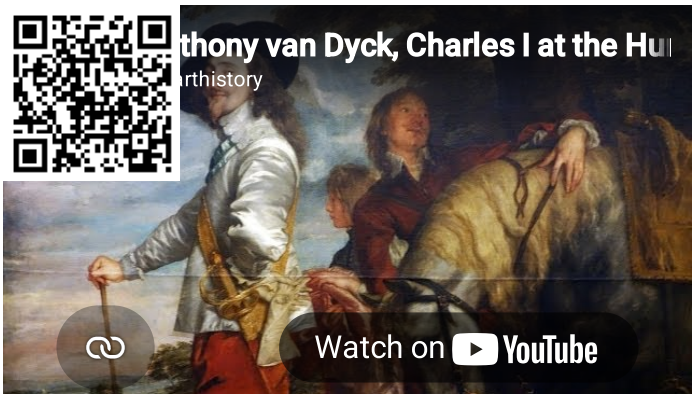
> ***The principal figure is Mars, who has left open the temple of Janus (which in time of peace, according to Roman custom, remained closed) and rushes forth with shield and blood-stained sword, threatening the people with great disaster. He pays little heed to Venus, his mistress, who, accompanied by Amors and Cupids, strives with caresses and emraces to hold him. From the other side, Mars is dragged forward by the Fury Alekto, with a torch in her hand. Near by are monsters personifying Pestilence and Famine, those inseparable partners of War. On the ground, turning her back, lies a woman with a broken lute, representing Harmony, which is incompatible with the discord of War. There is also a mother with her child in her arms, indicating that fecundity, procreation and charity are thwarted by War, which corrupts and destroys everything. In addition, one sees an architect thrown on his back, with his instruments in his hand, to show that which in time of peace is constructed for the use and ornamentation of the City, is hurled to the ground by the force of arms and falls to ruin. I believe, if I remember rightly, that you will find on the ground, under the feet of Mars, a book and a drawing on paper, to imply that he treads underfoot all the arts and letters. There ought also to be a bundle of darts or arrows, with the band which held them together undone; these when bound form the symbol of Concord. Beside them is the caduceus and an olive branch, attribute of Peace; these are also cast aside. That grief-stricken woman clothed in black, with torn veil, robbed of all her jewels and other ornaments, is the unfortunate Europe who, for so many years now, has suffered plunder, outrage,***

> ***and misery, which are so injurious to everyone, that it is unnecessary to go into detail. Europe's attribute is the globe, borne by a small angel or genius, and surmounted by the cross, to symbolize the Christian world.***

Anthony van Dyck

Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I at the Hunt*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.12.27*: Anthony van Dyck, Charles I at the Hunt, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 2.66 x 2.07 m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)*

The inscription reads: "Carolus.I.REX Magnae Britanniae" ("Charles I rules Great Britain").

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

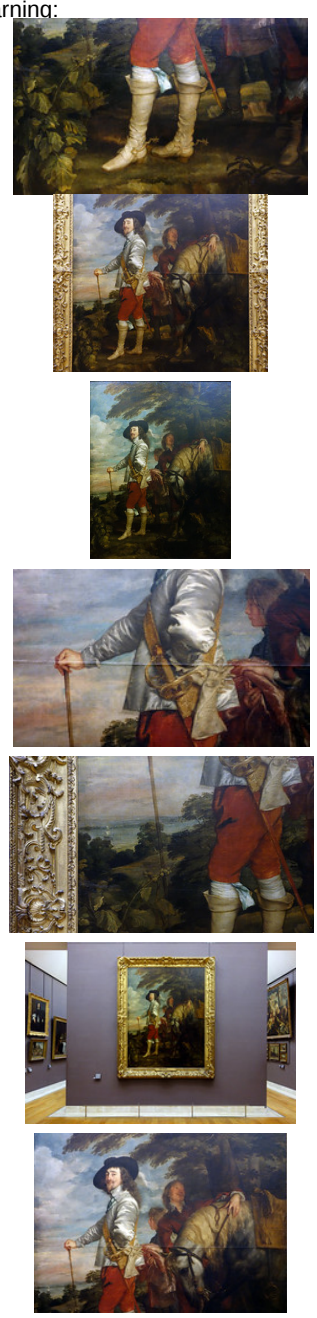


Figure **13.7.12.96**: *More Smarthistory images…*

Anthony Van Dyck, *Samson and Delilah*

by HELEN HILLYARD

A calm before a storm

In his painting Samson and Delilah, Anthony van Dyck presents a moment filled with tension—a calm before a storm. Instead of depicting the climax of this Old Testament story, he represented the moment immediately before the action takes place. The heroic Samson is about to have his hair cut—removing the source of his superhuman strength. Lulled to sleep by his lover Delilah, the Philistine guards lie in wait ready to capture and imprison him as soon as the deed is done.



Figure **13.7.12.97***: Anthony van Dyck, Samson and Delilah, c. 1618-20, oil on canvas, 152.3 x 232 cm. (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London)*

In Van Dyck's scene, however, the focus is not the hero—Samson—but Delilah. The light within the painting is focused on her, while the edges of the canvas recede into darkness. She is shown bejewelled and in a state of undress, draped in luxurious silk and lounging on a bed covered with rich, brocaded fabric. Delilah's soft and milky-white skin is in complete contrast to the swarthy Samson, who is covered with only a fur loincloth. All the action within the scene appears to rest on her as she raises a silencing finger, both to hush the guards and to command them into action.

The two women behind Delilah look on with interest and apprehension, waiting to see whether Samson will wake from his slumber. The guards, too, watch with anxiety, knowing that even their combined strength would be no match for the superhuman Samson. Van Dyck heightens the drama further by giving the barber what appear to be giant sheep shears, when normal scissors would do the same job.

Van Dyck and Rubens

Samson and Delilah was painted early in Van Dyck's career, around 1618-21. During this time, Van Dyck was active in the Antwerp studio of the Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens, 22 years his senior. It is not known exactly when or under what terms Van Dyck entered Rubens' studio, whether he was a pupil (or student) or rather an associate, contracted to work on specific commissions. In any case, Rubens had a definite impact upon Van Dyck's work, revealed most clearly through Samson and Delilah.



Figure **13.7.12.98***: Peter Paul Rubens, Samson and Delilah, c. 1609-1610, oil on panel, 185 x 205 cm. (The National Gallery, London)*

Samson and Delilah appears to be a response to Rubens earlier version of the same subject (above). Van Dyck takes a number of elements directly from Rubens—most notably the composition: the side-on-view, with the muscular Samson slumped in a heap on Delilah's lap. However, Van Dyck reverses the grouping, perhaps indicating that he based his own painting on prints after the painting—where the composition is always reversed—rather than the original.



Figure **13.7.12.99***: Jacob Maltham (printmaker), after Peter Paul Rubens, Samson and Delilah, c. 1612, engraving (The British Museum, London)*

Van Dyck also borrows from Rubens in more stylistic terms, for example, in the portrayal of flesh and musculature. This is particularly evident in Delilah's décolletage and Samson's muscled back. A fascination with textures and textiles is shared by both Rubens and Van Dyck, and the gold-brocaded

*fabric appears to have been a studio prop, appearing in other paintings by both Rubens and Van Dyck, including Rubens' **St. Ambrose and the Emperor Theodosius** (Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna) and Van Dyck's **The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine of Alexandria** (Museo del Prado, Madrid).*

Greater drama

Yet, Van Dyck's Samson and Delilah also departs from Rubens' model in a number of important ways and, as such, can be considered a challenge to the master's example with Van Dyck asserting his position as the foremost painter of his generation.



Figure 13.7.12.100: Left: Detail, Peter Paul Rubens, Samson and Delilah, c. 1609-1610, oil on panel, 185 x 205 cm. (The National Gallery, London); right: detail, Anthony van Dyck, Samson and Delilah, c. 1618-20, oil on canvas, 152.3 x 232 cm. (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London)

Rubens sets his version of the story in a bed chamber at night. In complete contrast, Van Dyck chooses to set his scene outside and in bright daylight. Van Dyck's decision to depict the moment before Samson's hair is cut is also an important divergence, since in Rubens' painting the action is already underway. Van Dyck's aim is seemingly to exploit this moment of tension to create a greater sense of drama within the picture. Van Dyck gives greater agency to the figure of Delilah who, with her raised finger, orchestrates the entire company of characters. Within this context, he is also able to include the exaggerated and theatrical reactions of the supporting cast—especially that of the younger woman who stands behind Delilah. This was evidently something Van Dyck gave considerable thought to and to which he returned at various stages during the course of painting, as evidenced by an X-ray of the work (below), which shows that Van Dyck adjusted the fingers of the woman, splaying them out further so as to create a more dramatic silhouette against the blue sky.



Figure **13.7.12.101***: X-ray, Anthony van Dyck, Samson and Delilah, c. 1618-20, oil on canvas, 152.3 x 232 cm. (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London)*

Provenance and attribution

Little is known about the early history of ownership of Samson and Delilah: either who owned it or where it was displayed. Yet, the position of the figures—peering down—might suggest that it was hung high. Moreover, the presence of a ledge at the bottom of a painting could have an architectural significance, indicating perhaps that the work was hung over a mantel. By the early 18th century the painting was recorded in Amsterdam, and was later bought by Noel Desenfans (the founder of Dulwich Picture Gallery) at a London sale in 1783. The painting formed part of the core collection of Dulwich Picture Gallery, when it opened in 1811. Yet, until 1880, it was considered to be the work of Peter Paul Rubens. Today, the painting's attribution is restored to Van Dyck and stands as an important example of the artist's early work and the influence of Rubens on his career.

Special thanks to the ***Dulwich Picture Gallery, London***

This essay was produced in conjunction with the ["Making Discoveries"] (http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org...veries-lineup/) display series at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. The displays coincide with the release of the Gallery's Dutch and Flemish Schools Catalogue, to be published fall 2016, and aims to disseminate important findings from this major research project.

13.7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II)

Dutch Republic

A prosperous middle class eager to express its status and its new sense of national pride, replaced the church and monarchy as the primary patrons of art.

1600 - 1700

Frans Hals

Frans Hals, *Singing Boy with Flute*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.1**: Frans Hals, *Singing Boy with Flute*, c. 1623, oil on canvas, 68.8 x 55.2 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

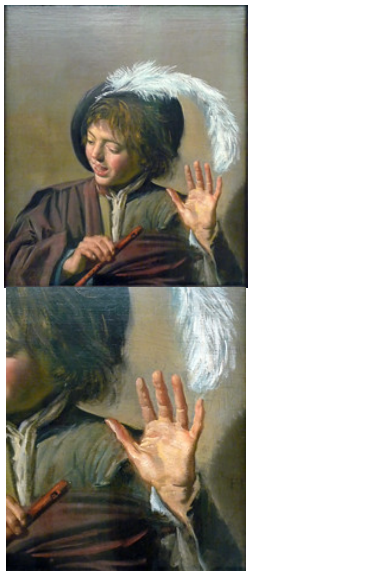




Figure \PageIndex{1}\): More Smarthistory images…

Frans Hals, *Malle Babbe*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.2**: Frans Hals, *Malle Babbe*, c. 1633, oil on canvas, 78.50 x 66.20 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

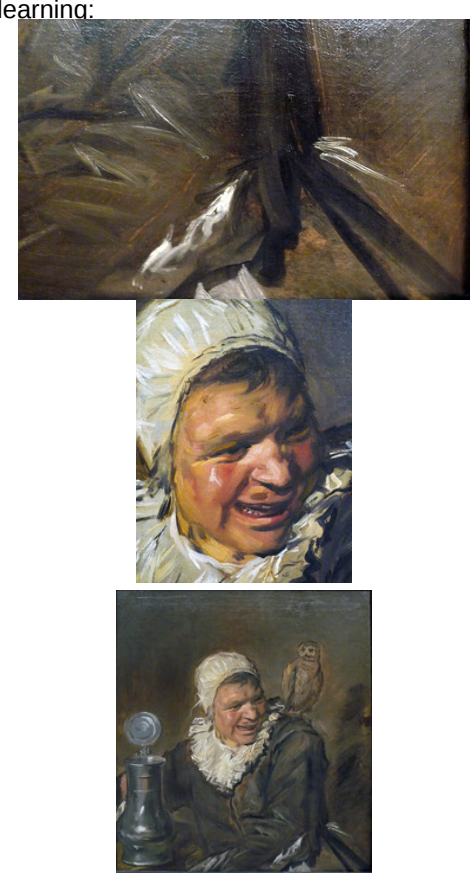


Figure 13.7.13.2: More Smarthistory images…

Frans Hals, *The Women Regents*

by OLIVIA NICOLE MILLER



Figure 13.7.13.3: Frans Hals, *The Woman Regents*, c. 1664, oil on canvas, 170.5 x 249.5 cm (Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem)

"[He] excels almost everyone with the superb and uncommon manner of painting which is uniquely his …. [His portraits] are colored in such a way that they seem to live and breathe."—Theodor Schrevelius (1572-1649)



Figure **13.7.13.4**: Frans Hals, *The Rommel-Pot Player*, c. 1618-22, oil on canvas, 106 x 80.3 cm (Kimbell Art Museum)

Haarlem was a prominent city in the seventeenth-century Netherlands and a leading center for the Golden Age of Dutch art. Still life, landscape, and genre painting were wildly popular, but there was also a surge in portrait commissions due to the newfound wealth of the many merchants who flocked to this area. As one of the foremost painters of this period, Frans Hals received many portrait commissions—especially from the Haarlem elite who sought to preserve their likeness and demonstrate their status. Hals's painterly approach to art set him apart from his contemporaries; there is a looseness in his brushwork and liveliness in his sitters that is unique.

For the open market (in other words, not commissioned works), Hals created portraits of the common members of society including children, drunkards, and **musicians**—most are depicted smiling or laughing (far removed from the more reserved representations of the elite).

Depicting these marginal figures allowed Hals the freedom to experiment with facial expressions while still maintaining each figure's individuality (above and below left). Hals received many commissions from wealthy individuals, but also made a name for himself with his group portraits. Some of these prestigious commissions were for guilds (associations of craftsmen or merchants) or civic guards, while others, such as *The Women Regents* (top of page) were for charitable groups.



Figure **13.7.13.5**: Frans Hals, *A Militiaman Holding a Berkemeyer (The Merry Drinker)*, c. 1628-30, oil of canvas, 81× 66.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Group portraits such as these were typically displayed in a public space where the sitters' status and good deeds could be recognized. Founded in 1609, the Old Men's Almshouse (*Oude Mannenhuis*) was governed by a board of regents and provided shelter and care for elderly single men. This portrait, along with its companion painting depicting the male regents (below), was likely made in 1664, when Hals was 81 or 82 years old. In *The Women Regents* five women are clustered around a table in the immediate foreground. The painting is somber—dominated by blacks and grays that are punctuated by the white collars of the women's clothes. Depicted in traditional Calvinist clothing, the women are not only representing their caretaking profession, but also the dominant religion of the Dutch Republic.

The women are quiet and austere. Perhaps they are weary from their responsibility in caring for the elderly poor, or perhaps they are simply serious about their task of governing the almshouse. Regardless, there is a dignity in the figures and a clear intention to individualize them, both through their likenesses and different poses.



Figure **13.7.13.5**: Frans Hals, *Regents of the Old Men's Alms House*, c. 1664, oil on canvas, 172.3 x 256 cm (Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem)

The background is simple; a landscape painting hangs on the wall behind the women and a large swath of drapery sweeps across the upper left corner. Although it is a stark contrast from Hals's jovial militia banquet group portraits (below), there is still a sense of a captured moment in time. The women are posed and arranged so that the viewer has a full view of each of them. A few of them are in mid-pose—one even appears to have just entered the scene from the right. Only three stare out at the viewer. Textured brushwork combined with the repetitive triangular shapes of the women's bodies and their collars provide a sense of movement. While this painting is a stark contrast from his earlier jovial portraits of individuals, *The Women Regents* still embodies Hals' penchant for expressive and textured brushwork. This technique is especially evident in the cuffs of the central standing figure where the brushstrokes simultaneously retain their painterly quality and give the illusion of texture. The cuffs are rendered with a series of quick lines encircling the woman's wrists, yet from afar the paint strokes blend together, alluding to the qualities of a stiff, pleated fabric. Overall, the scene is still; however, through his virtuosity in brushwork, Hals has bestowed it with a sense of life, as if this painting represents these women in a specific moment in time.



Figure **13.7.13.5**: Frans Hals, *Meeting of the Officers and Sergeants of the Civic Cavalry Guard*, 1633, oil on canvas, 207 x 337 cm (Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem)

There is scant information about Hals's early life and upbringing. He was born in Antwerp, but moved to Haarlem as a child where he spent the entirety of this life. The first significant recorded moment of his artistic career is when he joined the painters' guild of St. Luke in Haarlem in 1610, however there is little reliable information regarding his artistic training. Unfortunately he suffered financial obstacles throughout his life and was forced to sell many of his paintings and personal goods in order to repay debts and care for his many children. Although Hals died in relative poverty, his influence was significant. **Judith Leyster** employed Hal's loose handling of paint and sense of the moment in her own portraits, and centuries later the Impressionists admired his brushwork.



Figure **13.7.13.6**: Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem

Today visitors can see *The Women Regents* and many other Hals paintings at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem (above), which just so happens to be in the building of the former Old Men's Almshouse.

Additional Resources:

Frans Hals Museum

Hals on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Christopher Atkins, *The Signature Style of Frans Hals: Painting, Subjectivity, and the Market in Early Modernity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age. Edited by R. Po-Chia Hsia and Henk F. K. van Nierop. (New York: Cambridge University Press. 2002).

Walter Liedtke, *Frans Hals: Style and Substance* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011).

Rembrandt

Rembrandt, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT



Video **13.7.13.3**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632, oil on canvas, 169.5 x 216.5 cm, (Mauritshuis, Den Haag)

A prolific career



Figure **13.7.13.7**: Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait Drawing at a Window*, 1648, etching, drypoint and burin on ivory laid paper, 15.6 x 13 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn within the history of Western art. Indeed, Rembrandt is considered one of the foremost artists of the Dutch Baroque period, and even if he had never picked up a paintbrush, he would have been famous both in his day and ours as a printmaker of particular brilliance and as a prolific teacher. In a career that lasted nearly forty years, Rembrandt completed approximately 400 paintings, more than 1,000 drawings, and nearly 300 engravings. Although he spent his entire life north of the alps, had he been Italian and lived a century or so earlier, he likely would have joined his Italian brethren—Donatello, Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as a member of the famed cartoon *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Patrons: A wealthy, Protestant, and expanding middle class

But as time and place would have it, Rembrandt was neither Italian nor a part of the Renaissance. Instead, Rembrandt was born in Leiden in 1606. This place and time—Holland during the height of the expansion of the wealthy mercantile class during the middle

half of the seventeenth century—served Rembrandt well through his long career. The Catholic Church often commissioned Italian artists at this time to undertake large-scale projects to promote religious ideology in support of the Counter-Reformation. Without the Catholic Church in Holland to commission art, Rembrandt and his fellow Dutch artists were lavishly supported by a wealthy, Protestant, and expanding middle class. This group of patrons enthusiastically commissioned works of art with their increasing discretionary income.

New subjects (including group portraits)

Many different types of art became popular during the Dutch Baroque period. Genre paintings—small paintings of everyday life—were exceptionally popular with a middle-class clientele, as were still lifes, landscapes, and prints. The majority of these kinds of art were both affordable and small enough to be easily displayed within an average home. Larger and more compositionally complicated, group portraiture also became popular in Holland during the seventeenth century. This was a mode of painting that was often placed in a public space so that the image could promote a particular organization.



Figure **13.7.13.8**: Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds*, c. 1670–75, oil on canvas, 55.5 x 62.0 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague, Netherlands)

Relocating to Amsterdam

Although several of Rembrandt's most well-known paintings are group portraits—*The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* among others—his early education in Leiden, first at a Latin school and then later at the university, suggest that he was destined for a vocation other than art. However, by the time he was sixteen he decided he wanted to be a painter and a draughtsman. After finding quick success in Leiden during the 1620s, Rembrandt relocated to Amsterdam in 1631, a wise professional decision, as this was then one of the wealthiest and largest cities in Europe.



Figure 13.7.13.9: Thomas de Keyser, *Syndics of the Amsterdam Golsmiths Guild*, 1627, oil on canvas, 127.2 x 152.4 cm (Toledo Museum of Art)

A group portrait for the Amsterdam Surgeon's Guild



Figure 13.7.13.10: Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, 1632, oil on canvas, 169.5 x 216.5 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

Just a year after his arrival, Rembrandt was offered the commission to complete a group portrait of the Amsterdam Surgeon's Guild, an image that in time has come to be known rather simply as *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*. It is remarkable that Rembrandt received this commission as a newcomer to Amsterdam when there were other native-born artists available. Thomas de Keyser (above) and Nicolaes Pickenoy (below), for example, were older and more experienced in the realm of group portraiture. Whereas another artist may have simply recreated a previous group image—inserting new heads in place of old ones—Rembrandt created something new, and in doing so, completed one of the most recognizable images in the history of painting.

Dr. Nicolaes Tulp

Dr. Nicolaes Tulp was appointed praelector (like a professor or lecturer) of the Amsterdam Anatomy Guild in 1628. One of the responsibilities of this position was to deliver a yearly public lecture on some aspect of human anatomy. The lecture in 1632 occurred on 16 January, and this is the scene that Rembrandt depicts in paint in *The Anatomy of Lesson of Dr. Tulp*.



Figure **13.7.13.11**: Dr. Tulp displaying the flexors in a cadaver's arm (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, 1632, oil on canvas, 169.5 x 216.5 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

This is a more complicated composition than it at first appears. Understandably, the focal point of the image is Dr. Tulp, the doctor who is shown displaying the flexors of the cadaver's left arm. Rembrandt notes the doctor's significance by showing him as the only person who wears a hat. Seven colleagues surround Dr. Tulp, and they look in a variety of directions—some gaze at the cadaver, some stare at the lecturer, and some peek directly at the viewer. Each face displays a facial expression that is deeply personal and psychological. The cadaver—a recently executed thief named Adriaen Adriaenszoon—lies nearly parallel to the picture plane. Viewing the illuminated body from his head to his feet brings into focus a book—likely Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (*Fabric of the Human Body*, 1543)—propped up in the lower right corner. In all, Rembrandt shows nine distinct figures, but does so as if they are a unified group.



Figure **13.7.13.12**: Thomas de Keyser or Nicolaes Eliaszoon Pickenoy, *The Osteology Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz*, 1619, oil on canvas, 135 x 186 cm (Amsterdam Historical Museum)

A comparison

Comparing The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp to a somewhat similar example, *The Osteology Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertszoon*, shows just how different and novel Rembrandt's composition was at the time. The *Sebastiaen Erbertszoon* painting is a series of six portraits that surround a single human skeleton; but neither the heads nor the bodies seem to interact with one another in a real or coherent way. In contrast, the figures in Rembrandt's *Tulp* seem to truly be a group, one collection of nine rather than nine individuals.

If the composition is different from what Rembrandt might have seen in Amsterdam, the choice of subject is different than what would have been expected in the parts of Europe that were Catholic. The Catholic tenet of resurrection necessitated that dead bodies be interred in a state of wholeness, and this fact explains why Leonardo was forced to dissect human bodies in secret. In Protestant Holland but 113 years after Leonardo's death, however, human dissections were not only common practice, they were often public spectacles, complete with food and wine, music and conversation.



Figure **13.7.13.13**: View of Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* hanging in the Mauritshuis in The Hague (Netherlands)

Artistic license

If Rembrandt was able to create a truly group portrait—one of a single group rather than a collection of individuals—it is important to note that the artist took some understandable artistic license with some parts of the composition. As any anatomy and physiology student today can attest, a dissection of the human body almost always commences with an exploration of the chest and abdominal areas, parts of the human body most likely to decompose first, and only later does the procedure move onwards to the limbs. Moreover, it would have been unlikely that a doctor of Tulp's importance would have actually dissected the body; instead, he would have lectured while the menial task of exposing the inner workings of the body would have been left to others. But in paint, a format without sound, Rembrandt put Tulp in charge not only in costume, but also in action.



Figure **13.7.13.14**: Rembrandt's signature prominently displayed (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, 1632, oil on canvas, 169.5 x 216.5 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

As the prominent signature in the upper part of the painting indicates, Rembrandt was justifiably proud of this large painting.

Whereas he had previously signed his works with his monogram RHL (Rembrandt Harmenszoon of Leiden), *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* contains Rembrant. f[ecit] 1632. This painting and the Latin announcement that "Rembrandt made it" marks the beginning of the painter's mature career.

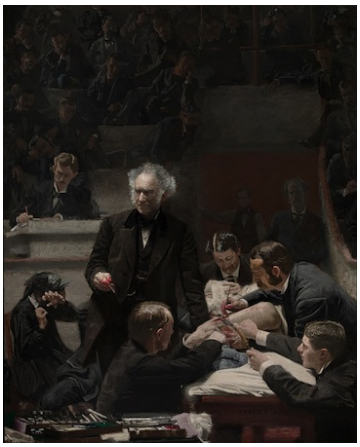


Figure **13.7.13.16**: Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross (The Gross Clinic)*, 1875, oil on canvas, 244 x 198.2 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Daring, compositionally innovative, and deeply psychological, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* launched Rembrandt to fame and wealth and influenced generations of artists to come. Indeed, without Tulp, it seems impossible for Thomas Eakins to have painted *The Gross Clinic*, 1876 almost two and a half centuries later.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Mauritshuis

Dolores Mitchell. “Rembrandt’s “The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp”: A Sinner among the Righteous,” *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 15, No. 30 (Nov 1994), p. 145 – 156

Aloïs Riegl and Benjamin Binstock. “Excertps from “The Dutch Group Portrait”,” *October*, Vol. 74, (Autumn 1995), p. 3 – 35

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.13.17: More Smarthistory images…

Rembrandt, *The Night Watch*

by DR. WENDY SCHALLER



Video 13.7.13.4: Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Night Watch (Militia Company of District II under the Command of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq)*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

A night watch?

Would it surprise you to find that the title that Rembrandt's most famous painting is known by is actually incorrect? The so-called *Night Watch* is not a night scene at all; it actually takes place during the day. This title, which was not given by the artist, was first applied at the end of the eighteenth century. By that time the painting had darkened considerably through the accumulation of many layers of dirt and varnish, giving the appearance that the event takes place at night.



Figure 13.7.13.18: Rembrandt, *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhelm van Ruytenburgh*, known as the *Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands) A more accurate title, one that is in keeping with the naming of other contemporary portraits of this type is the "Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhelm van Ruytenburgh."



Figure 13.7.13.19: A view to Rembrandt's Night Watch at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (photo: Henk Bekker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Dutch civic guard

Rembrandt's *Night Watch* is an example of a very specific type of painting that was exclusive to the Northern Netherlands, with the majority being commissioned in the city of Amsterdam. It is a group portrait of a company of civic guardsmen. The primary purpose of these guardsmen was to serve as defenders of their cities. As such, they were tasked with guarding gates, policing streets, putting out fires, and generally maintaining order throughout the city. Additionally, they were an important presence at parades held for visiting royalty as well and other festive occasions.

Each company had its own guild hall as well as a shooting range where they could practice with the specific weapon associated with their group, either a longbow, a crossbow, or a firearm. According to tradition, these assembly halls were decorated with group portraits of its most distinguished members, which served not only to record the likenesses of these citizens, but more importantly to assert the power and individuality of the city that they defended. In short, these images helped promote a sense of pride and civic duty.



Figure 13.7.13.20: Captain and Lieutenant (detail), Rembrandt, *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhelm van Ruytenburgh*, known as the *Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Rembrandt was at the height of his career when he received the commission to paint the *Night Watch* for the *Kloveniersdoelen*, the guild hall that housed the Amsterdam civic guard company of arquebusiers, or musketeers.

This company was under the command of Captain Frans Banning Cocq, who holds a prominent position in the center foreground of the image (above left). He wears the formal black attire and white lace collar of the upper class, accented by a bold red sash across his

chest. At his waist is a rapier and in his hand a baton, the latter of which identifies his military rank. Striding forward, he turns his head to the left and emphatically extends his free hand as he addresses his lieutenant, Willem van Ruytenburgh, who turns to acknowledge his orders. He is also fancifully dressed, but in bright yellow, his military role referenced by the steel gorget he wears around his neck and the strongly foreshortened ceremonial partisan that he carries.

Sixteen additional portraits of members of this company are also included, with the names of all inscribed on a framed shield in the archway. As was common practice at the time, sitters paid a fee that was based on their prominence within the painting.



Figure **13.7.13.21**: Nicolaes Eliasz. Pickenoy, *Civic guards from the company of captain Jacob Backer and lieutenant Jacob Rogh*, 1632 (Amsterdam Historical Museum)



Figure **13.7.13.22**: Drummer (detail), Rembrandt, *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhelm van Ruytenburgh*, known as the *Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

A unique approach

Compared to other civic guard portraits, Rembrandt's *Night Watch* stands out significantly in terms of its originality. Rather than replicating the typical arrangement of boring rows of figures (see above), Rembrandt animates his portrait. Sitters perform specific actions that define their roles as militiamen.

A great deal of energy is generated as these citizens spring to action in response to their captain's command. Indeed, the scene has the appearance of an actual historical event taking place although what we are truly witnessing is the creative genius of Rembrandt at work.

Men wearing bits of armor and varied helmets, arm themselves with an array of weapons before a massive, but imaginary archway that acts as a symbol of the city gate to be defended. On the left, the standard bearer raises the troop banner while on the far right a group of men hold their pikes high.

In the left foreground, a young boy carrying a powder horn dashes off to collect more powder for the musketeers. Opposite him, a drummer taps out a cadence while a dog barks enthusiastically at his feet.

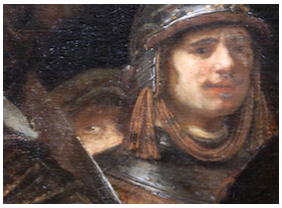


Figure 13.7.13.23: Rembrandt's self-portrait—just one eye and a beret? (detail), Rembrandt, *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhelm van Ruytenburgh*, known as the *Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

In addition to the eighteen paid portraits, Rembrandt introduced a number of extras to further animate the scene and allude to the much larger makeup of the company as a whole. Most of these figures are relegated to the background with their faces obscured or only partly visible. One, wearing a beret and peering up from behind the helmeted figure standing next to the standard bearer has even been identified as Rembrandt himself.

Three musketeers

While a number of different weapons are included in the painting, the most prominent weapon is the musket, the official weapon of the Kloveniers. Three of the five musketeers are given a place of significance just behind the captain and lieutenant where they carry out in sequential order the basic steps involved in properly handling a musket. First, on the left, a musketeer dressed all in red, charges his weapon by pouring powder into the muzzle. Next, a rather small figure wearing a helmet adorned with oak leaves fires his weapon to the right. Finally, the man behind the lieutenant clears the pan by blowing off the residual powder (both the figure in a helmet with oak leaves and the man blowing off the powder are visible in the detail of the central figures above). In his rendering of these steps, it seems that Rembrandt was influenced by weapons manuals of the period.



Figure 13.7.13.24: Personification of the Kloveniers (detail), Rembrandt, *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhelm van Ruytenburgh*, known as the *Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

A golden girl

Probably the most unusual feature is the mysterious girl who emerges from the darkness just behind the musketeer in red. With flowing blond hair and a fanciful gold dress, the young girl in all her brilliance draws considerable attention. Her most curious attribute, however, is the large white chicken that hangs upside down from her waistband.

The significance of this bird, particularly its claws, lies in its direct reference to the Kloveniers. Each guild had its own emblem and for the Kloveniers it was a golden claw on a blue field. The girl then is not a real person, but acts as a personification of the company.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Rembrandt's paintings on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

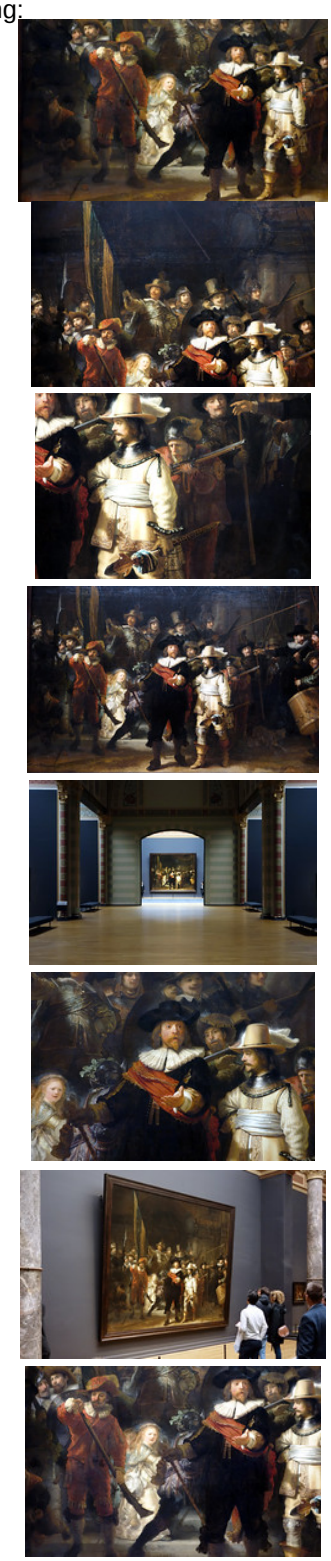


Figure **13.7.13.25**: More Smarthistory images…

Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*

by DR. WENDY SCHALLER



Figure **13.7.13.26**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, 1636, etching, 10.4 x 9.5 cm (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England)

A theatrical flair

In an age of cinematic super heroes and role-playing games, who hasn't imagined themselves at one time in their life as something other than what they were? The seventeenth-century Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn certainly did. In his 1636 etching, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, both he and his wife are shown wearing historical clothing. Rembrandt wears a fanciful 16th-century style plumed beret tilted at a jaunty angle and a fur-trimmed overcoat, while Saskia wears an old-fashioned veil. Such play-acting was not unusual for Rembrandt who only twice represented himself in the manner that was most popular at the time, as a contemporary Amsterdam gentleman.

Whether painting, etching or drawing, Rembrandt, who produced more self-portraits than any artist before him (roughly 75), preferred to show himself in a variety of different imagined roles. You can see him as a soldier in old-fashioned armor, a ragged beggar, a stylish Renaissance courtier, an exotically clad Oriental leader and even Saint Paul.

More than a self-portrait

In addition to serving as one of many self-portraits, this small etching can also be regarded as an example of a marriage portrait. The young woman shown seated at the table with the 30 year old Rembrandt is his wife, Saskia van Uylenburgh. Rembrandt most likely met Saskia while working for her cousin, Hendrick Uylenburgh, an art dealer who had a workshop in Amsterdam. The two married on June 22, 1634 and remained together for thirteen years until Saskia's untimely death at the age of 30. Surprisingly, it is the only etching that Rembrandt ever made of Saskia and himself together.

The two figures are presented in half-length, seated around a table before a plain background. Rembrandt dominates the image as he engages the viewer with a serious expression. The brim of his hat casts a dark shadow over his eyes, which adds an air of mystery to his countenance. Saskia, rendered on a smaller scale and appearing rather self-absorbed, sits behind him. It's almost as if we have interrupted the couple as they enjoy a quiet moment in their daily life.



Figure **13.7.13.27**: Rembrandt's hand holding a port-crayon (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, 1636, etching, 10.4 x 9.5 cm (Fitzwilliam Museum)

Rembrandt, however, has transformed the traditional marriage portrait into something more inventive. This etching marks the first time that Rembrandt has presented himself as an artist at work. In his left hand he holds a porte-crayon (a two-ended chalk holder)

and appears to have been drawing on the sheet of paper before him. By identifying himself as a draftsman, Rembrandt draws attention to his mastery of what was regarded as the most important basic skill of an artist.

Is he drawing Saskia or is she simply there to support and inspire her husband as he works? While the marks on his paper don't provide conclusive evidence of his subject, it certainly was not unusual for Rembrandt to use his wife as a model. In the years that they were married, she would sit for her husband on numerous occasions.

The etching process

Etching is a printmaking process in which a metal plate (usually copper) is coated with a waxy, acid-resistant material. The artist draws through this ground with an etching needle to expose the metal. The plate is then dipped in acid, which "bites" into the exposed metal leaving behind lines in the plate. By controlling the amount of time the acid stays on the plate, the artist can make shallow, fine lines or deep, heavy ones. After the coating is removed, the plate is inked then put through a high-pressure printing press together with a sheet of paper to make the print. Typically, an artist can produce about 100 excellent impressions from a single plate.

Rembrandt as etcher

Rembrandt is regarded as the greatest practitioner of etching in the history of art and the first to popularize this technique as a major form of artistic expression. His work in this medium spans nearly his entire career with nearly 300 etchings to his name. We see a lot of variety in these works as he renders all manner of subjects popular at the time including history, landscapes, still life, nudes, and everyday life, in addition to portraits.

Typically, Rembrandt used a soft ground that would allow him to "draw" freely on his plate (most early etchers used a hard ground), and many of his early etchings have the immediacy and spontaneity of a rapid sketch. In fact, most evidence suggests that he worked directly on the plate, most likely with a preparatory drawing in front of him to serve as a guide. As with his painted works, he developed a very individualized style that clearly set him apart from his contemporaries. His highly experimental nature led him to explore the effects of using different types, weights, and colors of paper for printing his works.



Figure **13.7.13.28**: Lightly etched figure of Saskia (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, 1636, etching, 10.4 x 9.5 cm (Fitzwilliam Museum)

Rembrandt is also known for his practice of varying the degree to which he etched a plate, an approach seen here. The figure of Rembrandt is more deeply bitten than that of Saskia, a technique that not only suggests that the artist is closer to us, but also places greater emphasis on him. The figure of Saskia, on the other hand, is more lightly etched, with the effect that she is seated farther away and plays a less important role. These differences have led some to suggest that Rembrandt may have etched Saskia first, and then added himself in the front. This notion is supported by the lines of her dress which appear to continue under his overcoat.

Another thing that makes Rembrandt stand out among his contemporaries is that he often created multiple states of a single image. This etching, for example, exists in three states. By reworking his plates he was able to experiment with ways to improve and extend the expressive power of his images.

Additional resources:

This print at the Fitzwilliam Museum

Rembrandt: Prints on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Introduction to intaglio printmaking (MoMA video)

Intaglio process (MoMA video)



Figure **13.7.13.29**: Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *Girl at a Window*, 1645, oil on canvas, 81.8 x 66.2 cm (Dulwich Picture Galley, London)

A Trick of the Eye

In *Girl at a Window* we see a young woman, possibly a servant girl, leaning on a stone ledge. She wears a loose-fitting white blouse, fastened with gold braid, her flowing curls crowned by a red cap. She has a rosy complexion, and the paint has been applied with thickly impastoed (thickly applied) paint. She inhabits a dark, ambiguous space, and it is unclear where she is located. What is most striking about the picture, however, is her very direct gaze. She looks straight at the viewer, drawing them into the picture; a fact underlined by the gesture she makes with her left hand, pointing towards herself.

Rembrandt's painting belongs to a type of picture made popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, in which the sitter appears to be entering the realm of the viewer—by leaning out of a window, reaching out a hand, leaning on a picture frame, drawing aside a curtain or stepping forward. Rembrandt and his pupils became particularly intrigued by the possibilities of *trompe l'oeil* (literally meaning to "deceive the eye") in the 1640s (*Girl at a Window* is dated 1645). Another particularly arresting example of this technique is his *Girl in a Picture Frame* (below), in which Rembrandt plays on the division between reality and the illusion of the painting.



Figure 13.7.13.30: Rembrandt, *Girl in a Picture Frame*, 1641, oil on canvas, 105.5 x 76 cm (The Lanckoroński Collection, Royal Castle Museum, Warsaw)

According to the 18th century French art theorist Roger de Piles, who was also an early owner of *Girl at a Window*, Rembrandt placed the Dulwich painting behind one of the windows in his house and for a few days passers-by mistook her for a real girl. This anecdote has since been disproven; however, its message echoes the story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius—two Greek painters who staged a contest to determine who was the greater artist. Zeuxis painted a picture of a child carrying grapes and the picture was so realistic that birds were fooled into eating the grapes. Yet, when Parrhasius asked Zeuxis to draw back a curtain to reveal his own painting he realized to his humiliation that the curtain was an illusion; at this point Zeuxis conceded that Parrhasius was the better painter. The significance of this story is to suggest that a good artist can paint realistic animals or objects but only a great artist, like Parrhasius or Rembrandt, can deceive people (or indeed other artists).

Numerous attempts have been made to interpret the subject of *Girl at a Window* and the identity of its sitter. Hendrickje Stoffels, Rembrandt's longtime lover after the death of his first wife Saskia has been suggested as a possible model. Yet Hendrickje would have been 19 in 1645—perhaps too old to be the girl depicted. It has been suggested that the girl may represent a biblical or allegorical figure, perhaps an Old Testament heroine. Her white blouse, with its gold braid, is not the typical attire for a servant and is more likely a kind of fantasy clothing, similar to that worn by other figures in Rembrandt's history paintings. This type of clothing gives the figure a romantic and timeless quality, suggestive of the past (even if not historically accurate).

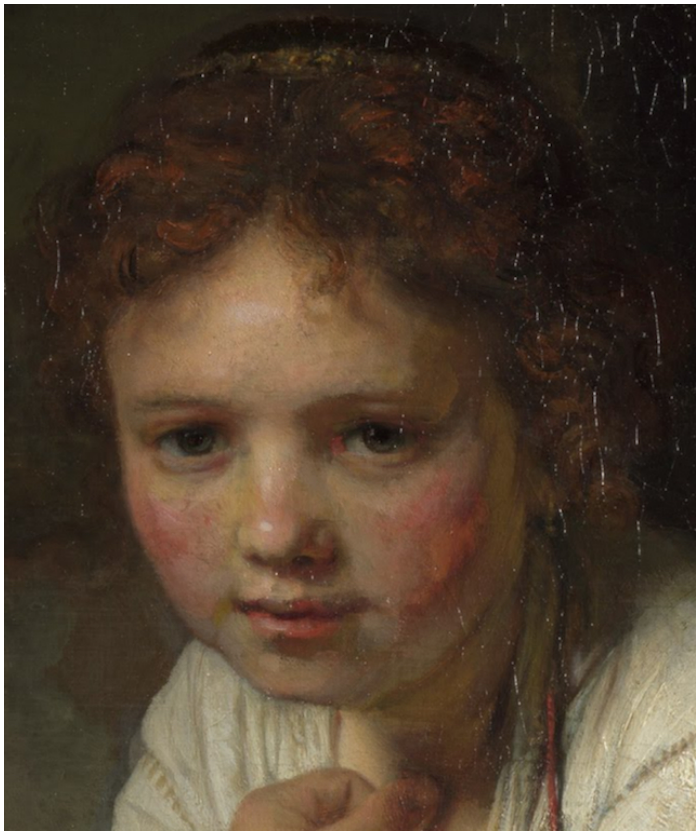


Figure **13.7.13.31**: Face (detail), Rembrandt, *Girl at a Window*, 1645, oil on canvas, 81.8 x 66.2 cm (Dulwich Picture Galley, London)

During the recent conservation of this painting, the discolored varnish was carefully removed, revealing a bold mixture of colors in the model's face. Rembrandt often applied his paint with palette knives as well as his fingers. The only surviving drawing for *Girl at a Window* (below) is drawn from life and sketched confidently using just a few expressive strokes of graphite. The differing position of the girl's arms in the drawing indicates that the study does not derive from the painting but was in fact produced during its development.



Figure 13.7.13.32: Rembrandt, *Study for the painting "Girl at a Window,"* 1645 (The Courtauld Gallery, London, Antoine Seilern Bequest)

Essay by Helen Hillyard, Assistant Curator at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.

This essay was produced in conjunction with the **Making Discoveries** display series at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. The displays coincide with the release of the Gallery's Dutch and Flemish Schools Catalogue, published 2016, and aims to disseminate important findings from this major research project.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

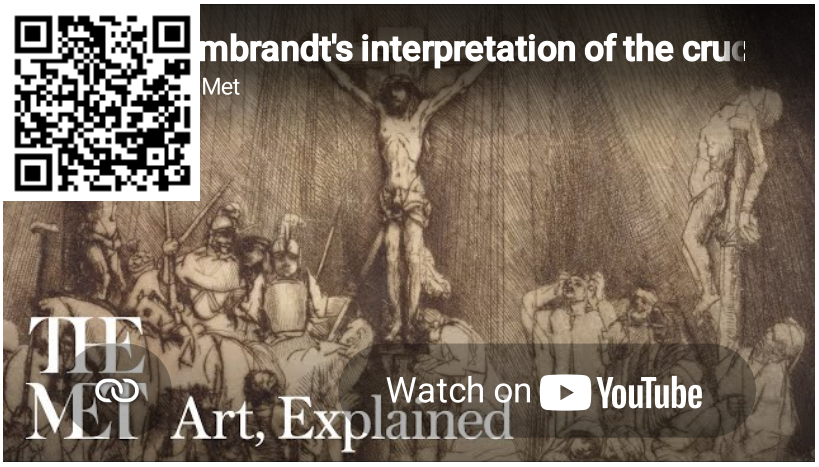
The study for *Girl at a Window* at the Courtauld Gallery

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *A Woman bathing in a Stream (Hendrickje Stoffels?)*, 1654 (National Gallery, London)

Rembrandt biography from The National Gallery

Rembrandt on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Rembrandt, *Christ Crucified between the Two Thieves: The Three Crosses*



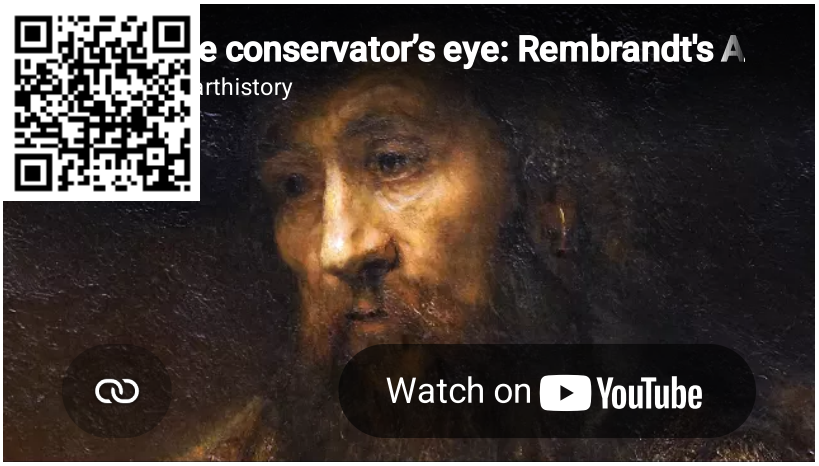
Video 13.7.13.5: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Crucified between the Two Thieves: The Three Crosses*, 1653, drypoint printed on vellum, sheet: 15 1/8 x 17 7/16 in. (38.4 x 44.3 cm) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Additional resources:

View this work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website

Rembrandt, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Video 13.7.13.6: The conservator's eye, Rembrandt van Rijn's *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 56 1/2 x 53 3/4″ / 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Jim Coddington and Beth Harris



Figure **13.7.13.33**: Center image: Rembrandt, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

What makes this painting so captivating?

In 1961, the Metropolitan Museum paid a staggering 2.3 million dollars to obtain a late work by Rembrandt van Rijn, the painting now called *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*. At the time, it was the most money ever paid for an artwork. The painting had taken a circuitous route: from Rembrandt's studio in Amsterdam to Sicily to London before crossing the Atlantic and finding its home in several private collections prior to auction. Its early travels are well documented, thanks to the survival of shipping manifests and correspondence. The painting now captivates visitors to The Met, as it has captivated generations of art historians who have argued over almost every aspect of the painting. What is it that makes this painting so compelling?

Identifying the subject

The most commonly accepted identification of the subject was first convincingly argued in 1969 by Julius Held and refined in the 2007 Metropolitan Museum catalog of Dutch paintings by Walter Liedtke. Based on a suggestion made by the Dutch art historian Abraham Bredius in the 1930s, Held argued persuasively for the identification of the subject as Aristotle contemplating a bust of the blind ancient Greek poet Homer (who lived some 400 years prior to Aristotle and who is credited as the author of the of the epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*).



Figure 13.7.13.34: Rembrandt, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The identification as Aristotle is based on the facial features, long hair and beard, jewelry and elaborate dress. They are all comparable with other images of Aristotle produced in both paint and print in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in both northern and southern Europe. Aristotle was held in high regard not only as a poet and philosopher but also as an important commenter on Homer and the teacher of **Alexander the Great**. Alexander is said to have counted a volume of Homer's works as one of his prized possessions.

At the time of The Met's purchase, the subject of the painting was tentatively identified as Aristotle, but was not yet firmly established. This reflects the confusion also recorded in seventeenth-century sources. The painting was originally purchased (and possibly commissioned) by the Sicilian prince Don Antonio Ruffo for the hefty sum of 500 florins. Whether it was a commission or a purchase is unclear, as is exactly what Rembrandt was asked to provide. If it was a commission, the choice of subject must have been left to the painter since when it joined Don Ruffo's collection it was described as Aristotle or Albertus Magnus (a thirteenth-century German philosopher). This suggests that even the first owner was uncertain of the subject and that decisions about content must have been made exclusively by Rembrandt.

The painting continued to be documented in numerous family inventories until the late eighteenth century. Over the years, it has been (mis)identified as "a philosopher," Albertus Magnus, Tasso, Ariosto, Virgil and even the seventeenth-century Dutch poet Pieter Cornelisz Hooft.



Figure 13.7.13.35: Left: Rembrandt, bust of Homer (detail) *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); right: Rembrandt, *Homer*, 1663, oil n canvas, 107 x 82 cm (Mauritshuis)

The identity of the sculpted bust in the composition was similarly unclear. It was sometimes vaguely identified as representing antiquity, and as an attribute of the central figure. That it was intended to represent Homer can be supported in several ways.

Almost ten years after his purchase of this painting, Ruffo would go on to commission two more paintings from Rembrandt: a representation of Homer (remnants now in the Mauritshuis) and one of Alexander (now lost). The Mauritshuis *Homer* fragment (above) shows the blind poet isolated, though in its original format it would have included the students to whom he was speaking. The living poet in this painting is virtually identical to the bust in *Aristotle*. The shape of the face, the framing of the sightless eyes, and the thin band across his forehead correspond with numerous prototypes and support the firm identification of the bust as Homer. Held has even related it to a specific Hellenistic bust type represented by **an example in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts**. Rembrandt himself owned a bust of Homer, as it appears in his 1656 bankruptcy inventory.



Figure 13.7.13.36: Detail, Rembrandt, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure **13.7.13.37**: Aristotle (detail), Raphael, *School of Athens*, fresco, 1509-1511 (Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican)

Aristotle

In the painting's current state, Aristotle is depicted in three-quarter length. His right hand extends to rest on the sculpted bust placed on a table in front of a mountain of books partially hidden by a curtain, but he is not looking at the bust. His eyes are fixed on an invisible point outside the frame of the painting, his dark eyes and absent gaze contributing to a feeling of melancholy and detached reflection.

Held associated this melancholy with a passage from Plutarch which recounts that Aristotle had fallen out of favor with Alexander; Liedtke sees the melancholy as an appropriate attribute of a man of learning in the seventeenth century.

Aristotle's clothes seem to belong to no particular period, and Rembrandt has eschewed a more traditional, toga-clad approach such as that found in **Raphael's *School of Athens***. Aristotle instead seems to wear an odd combination of a wide-brimmed hat, a white tunic, and a dark apron-like garment, adorned not only with a gold chain but earrings and a pinky ring. The bust itself is painted in such a warm tone that it seems almost more like flesh than stone, putting the venerable poet almost within reach. The two thinkers, living and sculpted, are linked not only by Aristotle's gesture, but by the repeated arcs created by their clothing and accoutrements.

The brushwork

Like much of Rembrandt's work from the last third of his life, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* uses the rich darkness of the background to set off the central figure, who is gently picked out from the darkness almost as if under a spotlight. Quick, vigorous brushwork creates the voluminous folds of Aristotle's left sleeve; bright spots of white and light yellow crest to form the shimmering surfaces of the chain draped across his torso.



Figure 13.7.13.38: Detail, Rembrandt, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Though the crux of the painting is the interaction between bust and man, the highlights and surface texture carry our attention across Aristotle's body to his left hand which, accented by a ring, rests on the chain at his hip. The background, by contrast, dissolves into obscure and ambiguous darkness, possibly enhanced over time.

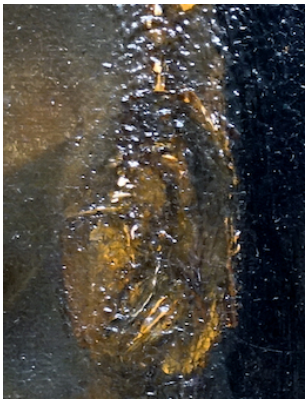


Figure 13.7.13.39: Medallion (detail), Rembrandt, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Interpretations

Held proposed that here Aristotle ponders the temporality of worldly success as represented by the golden chain versus the more profound and lasting benefit of wisdom gained from art and literature embodied by Homer's bust. In this sense, the formal repetition of the arc created by Aristotle's chain and Homer's sculpted clothing establishes the two figures as counterpoints.

Aristotle's chain bears a medallion featuring a portrait of a man, possibly Alexander the Great. The gifting of gold chains was an ancient practice to recognize excellence and service, and had been revived in the early modern period. It is thus both an historical attribute of the figure and an easily recognizable token of honor for the contemporary viewer. The significance of the chain—both for the subject and in compositional terms—is further made evident through the care with which it was painted.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle addresses, among other topics, how poetry, theater, and the arts are processes of mimesis, or imitation of the world. Through imitating the world in a new format, the poet or painter presents a new vision to the viewer and a new way of

knowing the world. In selecting Aristotle as a subject, Rembrandt commemorated the role of vision—of painting itself—as a noble art.

Perhaps the appeal of the painting derives partly from the way the viewer is invited to participate and asked to contemplate a subject who, as Walter Liedtke wrote, is shown "not as a sage from whom wisdom emanates, but as a man who contemplates ethical problems and puzzles them out for himself."

By enabling the viewer to take on the Aristotelian role of the one learning by looking, Rembrandt allows the viewer to engage, like Aristotle, in profound thought. In that regard, it was a perfect piece for an educated, thoughtful collector in the Early Modern period and remains an invitation to look and to learn for future generations of visitors to The Met.



Video **13.7.13.7**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 56 1/2 x 53 3/4″ / 143.5 x 136.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art).
Video by The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Additional resources:

This painting at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jonathan Bikker, "Contemplation" in Late Rembrandt, Bikker, Jonathan and Gregor J. M. Weber, eds. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2015, pp. 215-233.

Walter Liedtke, Aristotle with a Bust of Homer, in *Dutch Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 2007, pp. 629-654).

Julius Held, *Rembrandt's Aristotle and other Rembrandt Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

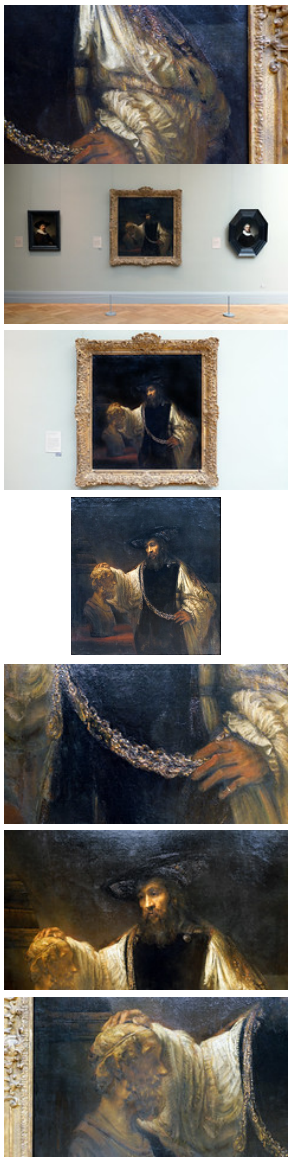


Figure 13.7.13.40: More Smarthistory images…

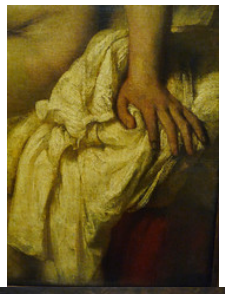
Rembrandt, *Bathsheba at Her Bath*

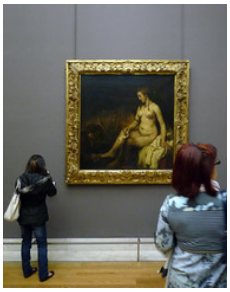
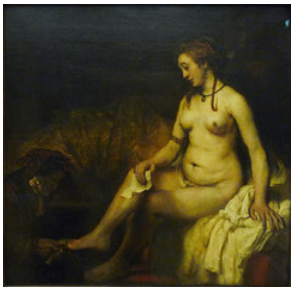
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.8**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Bathsheba at Her Bath*, 1654, oil on canvas, 56 x 56″ / 142 x 142 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



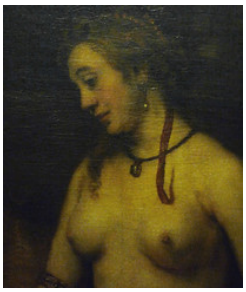


Figure 13.7.13.41: More Smarthistory images…

Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait* (1659)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.9**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait*, 1659, oil on canvas, 84.5 x 66 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

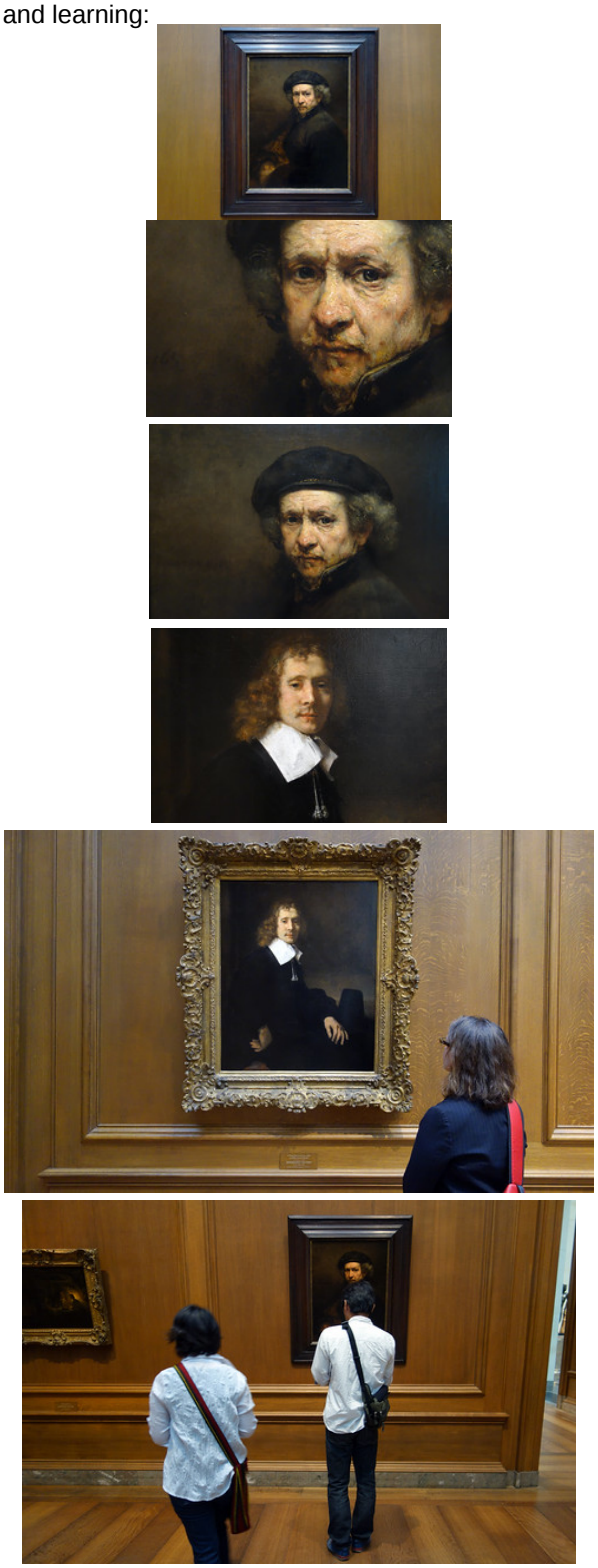


Figure **13.7.13.42**: More Smarthistory images…

Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with Two Circles*

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure **13.7.13.43**: Rembrandt, *Self-portrait with Two Circles*, c. 1665 – 69, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 94 cm (Kenwood House)

The painter and the painted

An old man in a white cap stares out at the viewer with a penetrating gaze. His left hand holds his hastily painted palette, brushes and maulstick, while his right hand seems to disappear in an unresolved blur into his thigh or the folds of his coat. He wears a red bib over a white shirt, with a fur lined coat on his shoulders. Some viewers perceive a gold chain, usually a mark of high honor, tucked into the folds of his garments.

The right edge of the canvas reveals the edge of the painting the artist is working on, while the back wall is adorned with two enigmatic arcing lines. The painting is not signed and is most likely unfinished. Technical studies suggest that it may have originally been slightly larger, which would have made the painting within the painting more prominent.

This is Rembrandt in the early 1660s —late in his career and during a period when he used thick impasto and dark colors to build up complex and engaging works of art. Scholars have regarded this particular self-portrait, one of many from the last decade of his life, as perhaps the most enigmatic and masterful of them all. It stands out from approximately 80 other self-portraits because of its light-toned background, which emphasizes the strangeness of the two circles that arc across the wall.



Figure 13.7.13.44: Rembrandt, *Self-portrait with Shaded Eyes*, 1634, oil on panel, 71.1 x 56 cm (The Leiden Collection).

Approximately ten percent of Rembrandt's output of paintings and prints consisted of self-portraits. This surprisingly high number is even more impressive when you take into account that each print would have existed in numerous copies — perhaps reaching into the hundreds per image.

Why was Rembrandt so captivated with reproducing his own image? Scholars have approached the self-portraits in a variety of ways: as reflections on Rembrandt's own psychological state, as evidence of the artist's stylistic and technical development through his life, as a sophisticated technique of self-promotion, and as a means of theorizing about how Rembrandt perceived the role of the artist in society. Fortunately, many of these interpretations can coexist and overlap.



Figure 13.7.13.45: Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with Eyes Wide Open*, 1630, etching and drypoint, 5.2 x 4.5 cm (The William M. Ladd Collection Gift of Herschel V. Jones, The Minneapolis Institute of Art)

Rembrandt's almost obsessive relationship with his own visage could be viewed as a process of self-exploration, a way he took stock of who he was at different points in his career. In some ways, this might seem consistent with the seventeenth-century Calvinist mindset within which Rembrandt would have been raised, a mindset that advocated intense personal responsibility for the state of one's own soul.

Surely, if Calvinist artists were used to routinely scrutinizing their own actions and motives, then also scrutinizing their own faces makes a certain sense (Calvinism became the official religion of the Dutch Republic in 1648). In that regard, many scholars (for example, Perry Chapman) have perceived the self-portraits as deeply personal. This feels very appealing to us as viewers, because we want to try to humanize artists from the past. However, many leading Rembrandt scholars approach autobiographical psychologizing with skepticism because they argue that it is based in an understanding of the self that is rooted in twentieth-century psychological practices.

Rembrandt's early self-portraits and the many small engraved and etched ones can perhaps be fruitfully interpreted through the application of early modern art theory and ideas about artistic training. As Marjorie Wiesman has noted, when writing didactic texts for painters in the early modern period, authors such as Franciscus Junius (1637) and Karel van Mander (1604) advised artists to

examine their own inner emotions so that they would know how to project those emotions into the scenes that they created. Studying the impact of different emotions on bodies and faces was recommended as a means to make a painter a stronger artist. Many of Rembrandt's early etched and engraved portraits (such as *Self-Portrait with Eyes Wide Open*) do exactly this, and yet the painted self-portraits (such as *Self-portrait with Shaded Eyes* primarily) seem to represent him calmly regarding the viewer. We can therefore conclude that he created different self-portraits for different reasons.

The economics of (self) portraiture

Since the work of John Michael Montias on the economics surrounding Johannes Vermeer and the city of Delft, market forces and economic theory have been fruitfully applied to Dutch art of the seventeenth century. In the case of Rembrandt's self-portraits, we might ask: who was buying all of these self-portraits? If a self-portrait is regarded not as an internally reflective meditation on self and identity as an end in itself, but as a commodity, different avenues of analysis emerge. A self-portrait not only represents the painter visually, but also does so by quite literally showing the technique of the painter. In that regard, they functioned as advertisements that opened the door to future commissions.

During Rembrandt's own lifetime, eminent figures such as King Charles I of England, **Cosimo de' Medici**, and the art dealer Johannes Renialme were known to have owned self-portraits by the artist. At some points in his career, self-portraits clearly sold briskly. And yet a group of several paintings of generic men in moustaches and hats from the studio of Rembrandt reveal, when x-rayed, that they were self-portraits by Rembrandt to which his students later added accessories in order to convert them to character studies. This implies that the self-portraits were no longer selling and were therefore converted into something that would. The fact that there was not a single self-portrait listed among the art and objects inventoried at the time of Rembrandt's bankruptcy in 1656 furthers our interpretation of the self-portrait as commodity. If they were primarily intended as personal explorations of the internal life of the artist, surely he would have kept at least one.



Figure **13.7.13.45**: Rembrandt, *Self-portrait* (left), 1640, oil on canvas, 102 x 80 cm (**National Gallery**, London) and *Self-Portrait, Leaning on a Stone Wall* (right),1639, etching, 16 x 16 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**). Images in public domain.

Recently, Marjorie Wiesman has approached Rembrandt's self-portraits chronologically, separating them into earlier, brasher paintings where he appears youthful and passionate, mid-career works where he acknowledges and advances his rise to fame, and later, mature works that ruminate on the nature of old age and art as a profession. Portraits of the late 1630s and 1640s (mid-career) seem to chronicle his rise to the peaks of artistic accomplishment, particularly the famous **painted portrait** of 1640 and the **companion print** from 1639 (see above).



Figure 13.7.13.46: Titian, *Portrait of a Man – Gerolam Barbarigo?*, c. 1510, oil on canvas, 81.2 x 66.3 cm (National Gallery, London)

In both painted and printed versions of this portrait composition, Rembrandt dresses himself in a gaudy jacket, and chains and brooches adorn his feathered beret. Moreover, he leans on a windowsill with one elbow, inserting himself into a tradition of portraiture used by artists such as Titian and Raphael. He had seen Raphael's portrait of **Baldassare Castiglione** at auction in Amsterdam, even noting on his sketch how much it sold for. He was also familiar with Titian's *Portrait of a Man – Gerolam Barbarigo?* By mimicking these two great masters in his own self-portrait, Rembrandt's posture and attire underline that — like Titian and Raphael — he is a man of means and talent. His self-portrait became a tool for advertising to potential investors and securing a place for himself in Amsterdam society and art history.

Self-portrait with Two Circles at Kenwood House

By the 1660s, however, Rembrandt was no longer presenting himself in the same way, perhaps because he was no longer seeking the same kind of audience he had in the earlier parts of his life. Nearing the end of a long and tempestuous career, the late self-portraits take a different, more somber tone. The *Self Portrait with Two Circles* at Kenwood House is one of the great examples of the last decade of the artist's life. It has enticed generations of scholars because of the two incomplete circles on the back wall. A definitive explanation for those circles has yet to be agreed upon, but several compelling suggestions have been made.

One interpretation identifies the circles as the two hemispheres shown on a world map of the time. It would not be unusual for a large wall map to be hanging as a backdrop for a painting; wall maps were commonly depicted in the background of seventeenth-century genre scenes by artists like **Johannes Vermeer**. The problem with this interpretation, according to the detractors (who include Ernst van de Wetering and the **Rembrandt Research Project** is that the circles are too far apart to represent the two circles of a map, and that the wrinkling and curling of maps on walls seen in other paintings is not present here.

A more philosophical interpretation, proposed by Jan Emmens, suggests that all artists needed to have *ingenium* (inborn genius), *ars* (theory or learned knowledge), and *exercitatio* (or skill gained through practice). In this interpretation, the figure of Rembrandt stands in for *Ingenium*, while the circles behind indicate theory (*ars*) and the canvas at the edge of the picture plane speaks to *exercitatio*.



Figure **13.7.13.47**: Rembrandt, Detail from *Self-portrait with Two Circles*, c. 1665 – 69, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 94 cm (Kenwood House)

Perfect circles and artistic greatness

Several other scholars, including B. P. J. Broos and Jeanne Porter, connect the drawing of circles with ideas about art theory expressed in contemporary sources. In *Het Schilderboek (The Painting Book)* (1604), Karel van Mander repeats a famous story from Vasari — that Giotto could draw a perfect circle freehand at a young age. It is a demonstration of an innate skill, the height of perfection. This type of story, that is, about creating the perfect line, can be traced to classical antiquity where the great artist Apelles was also known for drawing the perfect line. Yet in the Kenwood portrait, Rembrandt's circles are not perfect circles made with single, fluid lines; they are made up of his more characteristic short, interrupted strokes and they are themselves interrupted by the boundaries of the image.

Ben Broos has suggested that the painting reveals "perfection" in a particularly Rembrandt-esque manner. Rembrandt's late work is defined by heavy impasto and choppy brushwork. By using that technique to create a perfect circle, the artist appropriates a motif from the tradition of artistic biographies and the legends of artistic greatness but makes it fully his own, both in how it is painted and in using it as a backdrop for a self-portrait. The Kenwood self-portrait could be making a claim for the artist as the pinnacle of greatness, situating himself alongside other masters in the long history of art.

A definitive interpretation of the circles remains elusive, and every generation of Rembrandt scholars proposes a new reading of the motif. What's yours?

Additional resources:

Nederlands Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis (Netherlands Institute for Art History)

The Iconic Art at Kenwood House

Rembrandt: king of the selfie

P. J. Broos, "The O of Rembrandt," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1971), pp. 150-184.

Perry Chapman, *Rembrant's Self Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Jeanne C. Porter, "Rembrandt and his Circles: Self Portrait at Kenwood House," in *The Age of Rembrandt: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, ed. Roland E. Fleischer, et al. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), pp. 188–213.

Ernst van de Wetering, "The Multiple Functions of Rembrandt's Self Portraits," in *Rembrandt by Himself*, ed. Christopher White and Quentin Buvelot (London: National Gallery, 1999), pp. 8 – 37.

Ernst van de Wetering et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings, vol. 4: The Self-Portraits* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

Marjorie Wiesman, "The Late Self Portraits" in *The Late Rembrandt*, ed. Jonathan Bikker (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2015).

Rembrandt, *The Jewish Bride*

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure **13.7.13.48**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca*, known as *The Jewish Bride*, 1665-69, oil on canvas, 121.5 x 166.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca, commonly known as *The Jewish Bride*, is a painter's painting. According to his letters, Vincent van Gogh was reduced to tears in front of it, writing that he would gladly give up ten years of his life to sit in front of the painting for two weeks, eating only a stale crust of bread. Though modern viewers may require slightly more sustenance, the power of the image remains.

In the center of a horizontally-oriented canvas, a woman in a luxurious red dress stands with her wrists and neck draped in pearls. Her companion stands to her right, one arm reaching behind her, the other reaching out to lay a hand at her breast. He is equally richly dressed in a vertically pleated garment over a shirt in shades of gold and brown. The fingers of her left hand gently rest on his in a touching, protective gesture. The two figures, despite the intimacy of their gesture, do not look at each other, nor do they look at the viewer. They are alone in this moment, set beside an arch and a potted plant barely indicated in shades of dark, mottled brown.

Late in Rembrandt's career

Rembrandt van Rijn painted this canvas very late in his career. Though born in the Dutch city of Leiden, Rembrandt worked primarily in Amsterdam. There, he built up an impressive local clientele who were eager for his expressive portraits and, later, for his psychologically complex history paintings. His late paintings were intended for a smaller, more selective audience who would appreciate the idiosyncrasies of both the painter and his work. Some scholars have seen the last decade of Rembrandt's life as a period of decline, yet it is also the decade that yielded many of his most cherished, complex, and psychologically-nuanced works. Paintings from this period are characterized by rich earth tones, in some areas thinly painted and in others applied in a thick impasto.

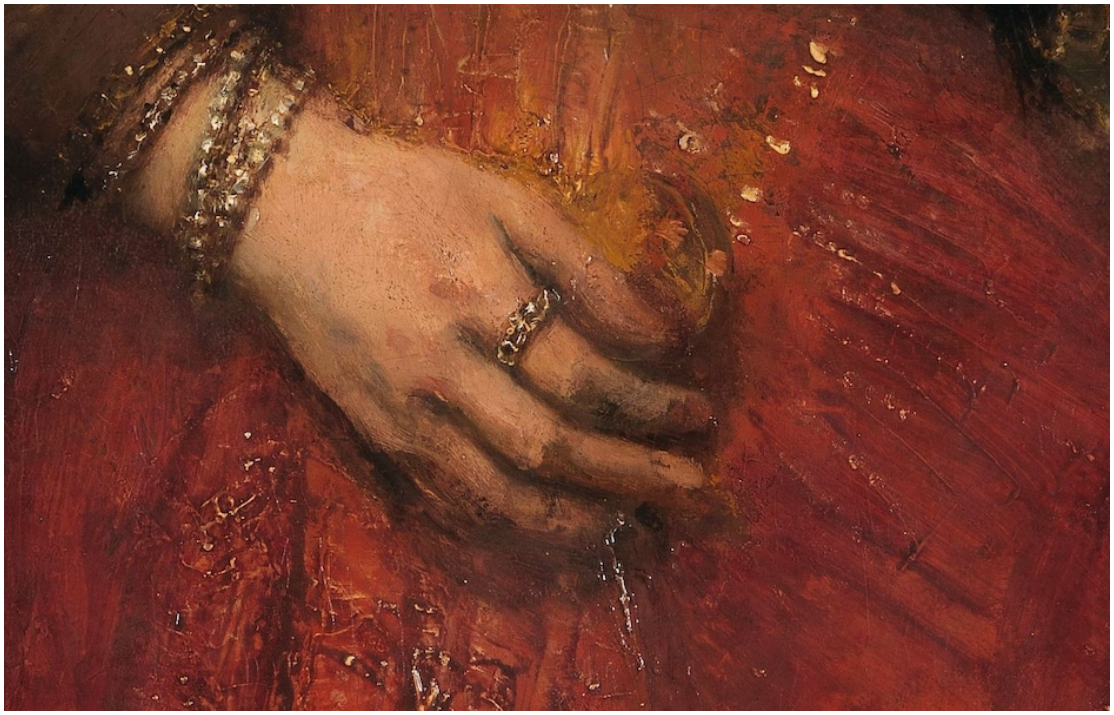


Figure 13.7.13.49: Hand and skirt (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca*, known as *The Jewish Bride*, 1665-69, oil on canvas, 121.5 x 166.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

For example, in *The Jewish Bride* clearly visible heavy slashes of paint create the texture of the folds of the woman's skirt, while smaller and more delicate highlights of white and gold pick out the rings on her fingers, the pearls at her neck and wrist, and the decoration of her dress.



Figure 13.7.13.50: Sleeve (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn, detail of *Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca*, known as *The Jewish Bride*, 1665-69, oil on canvas, 121.5 x 166.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

The almost sculptural quality of the paint is repeated in the man's clothes as well. The small, square brushstrokes that form the man's voluminous right sleeve work almost like tesserae in a mosaic to create a shimmering golden texture. Even the treatment of their faces reveals the hand of the artist moving over the canvas, building up the skin tones from a range of colors. Rembrandt uses the depiction

of surfaces and the surface texture of the paint itself to direct our attention, allowing everything less important to literally dissolve into darkness and obscurity.

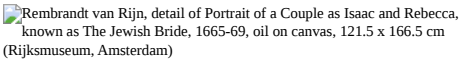

Rembrandt van Rijn, detail of Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca, known as The Jewish Bride, 1665-69, oil on canvas, 121.5 x 166.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Figure **13.7.13.51**: Detail, Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca*, known as *The Jewish Bride*, 1665-69, oil on canvas, 121.5 x 166.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Who are the sitters?

Portrait of a Couple as Isaac and Rebecca has attracted more than its fair share of theories over the years, with ambiguity on every level. Who is represented? Is this a double portrait or a scene from a narrative? Who commissioned it and where was it hung? Was the canvas cut down at some point, or is this the whole composition? Despite substantial scholarship, many of these questions evade firm answers.

Like Rembrandt's famous ***Night Watch***, this painting is most commonly called by its nickname, *The Jewish Bride*. The nickname was a nineteenth-century addition, as there is no evidence for such a title in any seventeenth-century literature. The identification of the subject has generated a great deal of debate. At one point, it was maintained that this was a portrait of Rembrandt's son Titus and his wife, though other theories have included a father-daughter identification.

Most commonly accepted, however, is the identification of the figures as the Biblical couple Isaac and Rebecca. There are many textual and visual sources that support this identification. The story of this couple is found in the Old Testament in the book of Genesis: Isaac and Rebecca were seeking refuge in the lands of the king Abimelech. Fearing that the locals might kill him because of his wife's beauty, Isaac claimed that Rebecca was his sister, not his wife. They were, however, caught in a moment of intimacy by Abimelech, revealing their true relationship. Abimelech reprimanded them for their deceit, but also commanded that no one harm them. Isaac and Rebecca are the model married couple: she is modest, beautiful, and obedient while he is faithful, steadfast, and strong in his faith.

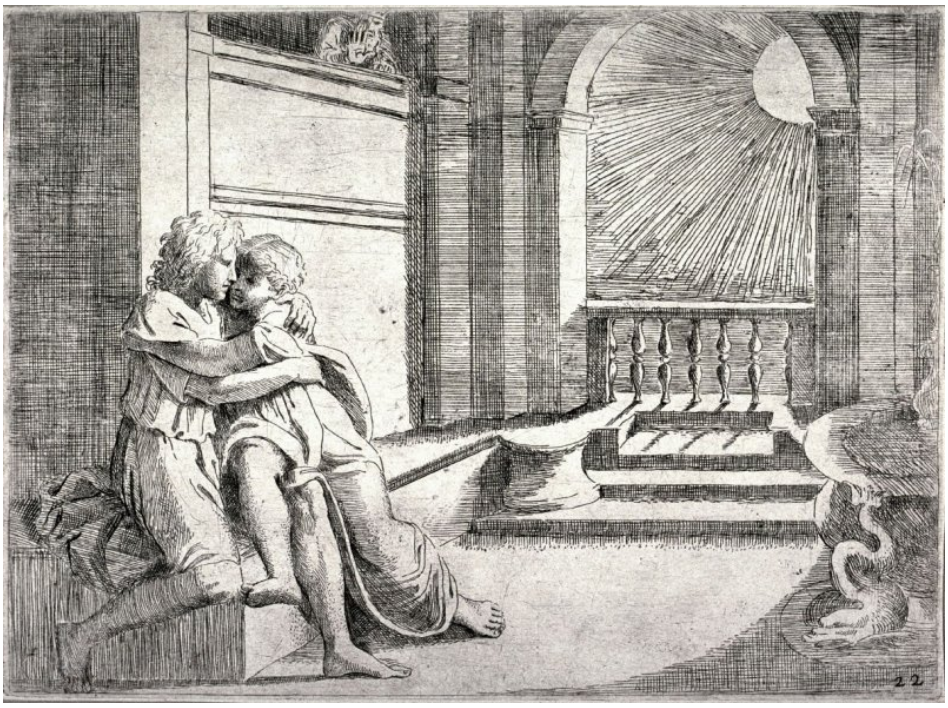


Figure **13.7.13.52**: Sisto Badalocchio, *Isaac and Rebecca Spied upon by Abimelech*, from a series of etchings of Biblical scenes, after frescoes by Raphael in the Vatican Loggia, 1607, etching, 13.1 x 17.9 cm (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco)



Figure **13.7.13.53**: Rembrandt, *Isaac and Rebecca*, c. 1662 (private collection)

An intimate moment

Earlier works by Rembrandt and other artists support the identification of the subject and reveal how Rembrandt evoked and manipulated earlier compositions. A drawing, now in a private collection in the United States, reveals the characteristic and instantly recognizable gesture of the man reaching out to place a caressing hand on the breast of the woman. The earlier drawing differs, though, in that the spying Abimelech is just visible in a window in the top right corner, barely sketched in. In turn, this composition seems to be based on an earlier print by Sisto Badolocchio (above) after a Raphael fresco in the Vatican. Rembrandt's subject matter therefore has an eminent pedigree.

By altering the composition between the drawing and the painting, Rembrandt has made an important shift in focus. In leaving out Abimelech, he has chosen to focus the attention of the viewer not on the larger narrative, but instead on a moment of intimacy between the two figures. In addition, as Jonathan Bikker has recently pointed out, leaving Abimelech out of the image casts us, the viewer, in the role of the spying king. This directly involves us in the scene, blurring the boundary between painting and life; we, too, are spying on an intimate moment.

A popular type of portrait



Figure **13.7.13.54**: Jan de Bray, *The Banquet of Cleopatra*, 1652, oil on canvas, 170.7 x 165.8 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

The size, lack of scenery, and intimate focus on two figures supports the idea that this was intended as a particular type of portrait: a *portrait historié* or historiated portrait, where two real people "dressed up" for their portrait.

Having one's portrait painted in the guise of an historical or biblical figure may seem strange to us now, but the *portrait historié* was surprisingly common in the Dutch Golden Age (17th century). Whether the patrons were dressing up as biblical figures (and thereby hoping to lay claim to their virtues), or as mythological figures (demonstrating erudition or theatrical ties), historiated portraits existed comfortably alongside the more typical portraits of stern-faced people wearing black.

Jan de Bray depicted his family as figures in the banquet of Antony and Cleopatra, while the children of the exiled king and queen of Bohemia were depicted **by Gerrit van Honthorst in the guises of Roman gods**. In the case of *The Jewish Bride*, by choosing to be depicted as Isaac and Rebecca, the sitters were choosing to emphasize their fidelity and piety as well as suggesting to any viewer that their marriage was a happy and virtuous one.

The Jewish Bride is an example of the aging Rembrandt at his finest. He is both perfectly in step with broader trends in Dutch painting such as the *portrait historié* while also maintaining the distinctive artistic identity that his late patrons appreciated.

Additional resources:

This work at the Rijksmuseum

This work in the Rembrandt database

Eclipses in Art › Isaac and Rebecca Spied upon by Abimelech

Bikker, Jonathan and Gregor J. M. Weber, eds. *Late Rembrandt.* Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2015.

Van de Wetering, Ernst. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings VI*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014.

Judith Leyster

Judith Leyster, *The Proposition*

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure 13.7.13.55: Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Woman (The Proposition)*, 1631, oil on panel, 11-3/8 × 9-1/2 inches (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

A soberly dressed woman sits in a darkened room, working diligently on her sewing. The only light comes from a lamp on the table, filling the room with deep, ominous shadow. An older man in a fur hat touches her shoulder with one hand and with the other presents a fistful of coins. The sparsely lit and furnished room and the man's leering countenance generate a sense of unease; the suspended moment leaves the viewer uncomfortable with what has happened—or what is about to transpire. But who are these people? What will the woman choose: to do her work and ignore the man, or to put down her sewing to take the money? Virtue or vice?

Judith Leyster's painting, called *Man Offering Money to a Woman* by the Mauritshuis Museum but often referred to as *The Proposition*, is an enigmatic painting with an ambiguous subject. Painted by one of the few well-known female artists working in the Dutch Republic, its subject matter is unusual in Dutch art, though it has strong ties to several visual and symbolic traditions. Its diminutive size—a mere 30.8 by 24.2 centimeters—invites the viewer to examine it carefully and intimately.



Figure 13.7.13.56: Detail, Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Woman (The Proposition)*, 1631, oil on panel, 11-3/8 × 9-1/2 inches (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

Leyster, Haarlem, and Caravaggio

Judith Leyster lived and worked primarily in the Dutch city of Haarlem, one of the centers of artistic innovation in the first half of the seventeenth century. The city had benefitted from an influx of artists and artisans who fled Antwerp in the Spanish Netherlands (now Belgium) during the 80 Years War. Leyster was a member of the Guild of St. Luke (the guild for painters and several other trades), which was unusual for a woman. Like many of her colleagues including Frans Hals, Dirck Hals, and Pieter Codde, she primarily painted scenes of everyday people doing everyday things (otherwise known as genre scenes). Her work is distinctive for the flat background that gives little sense of an illusionistic interior space. Some scholars have attributed this to her possible contact with the "Utrecht School"—artists in the Dutch city of Utrecht who were influenced by Caravaggio whose early genre scenes such as *The Cardsharps* (below) display similarly flat backgrounds with figures close to the viewer. The sharp contrasts of light and dark on the woman's blouse and face are also reminiscent of Caravaggio. There are just two visible light sources, the lamp on the table and the glowing foot warmer under the woman's feet. The flame in the lamp is a form of illumination often seen in Caravaggio's northern followers (and not in Caravaggio's own work).



Figure **13.7.13.57**: Caravaggio, *The Cardsharps*, c. 1595, oil on canvas, 37 1/16 x 51 9/16 inches / 94.2 x 130.9 cm (Kimbell Art Museum)

Instilling morality

On the surface, the painting shows an awkward interaction between a man and a woman. Dutch art often seems to reflect everyday life. Yet there are reasons to interpret these images symbolically, and not just as a reflection of life as it was lived. Some scholars (including Wayne Franits and Simon Schama), have interpreted the immense volume of imagery of women as indicative of a general anxiety about women's education and what it meant to be a good Calvinist housewife. Since religious art was not being produced for the church in this **Protestant country**, morality had to be instilled in other ways. Secular genre scenes are often perceived as having a role to play in the moral education of the populace, either in presenting an image of ideal behavior or the consequences of bad behavior. Scenes of pious, moral women on the one hand and brothel scenes with lascivious women on the other may have flourished for just these reasons.



Figure **13.7.13.58**: Hands (detail), Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Woman (The Proposition)*, 1631, oil on panel, 11-3/8 × 9-1/2 inches (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

One commonly accepted interpretation of this painting—and the one from which the painting takes its most common nickname—was proposed by a leading scholar who sees the painting as representing a sexual proposition—one which the woman is staunchly ignoring.[1] This is a novel take on a traditional subject—brothel scenes where men interact with prostitutes or men and women drink and make merry in mixed company were among the most common subjects for genre paintings of the early seventeenth century. This type of scene has a long history in northern art (by artists such as Quentin Metsys, Lucas Cranach, Albrecht Durer, and others) and the actions of the participants was presented as unwise, unrestrained, and sinful, and women are usually presented as seductresses and thieves. These paintings therefore are models of how *not* to behave. By contrast, Leyster's composition draws on another type of imagery that showed women hard at work—the very model of virtue.

Emblem books

A common component of visual culture in the seventeenth century was a type of book called an emblem book. On one page, the book might contain an image, a motto, and a poem, all explaining one moral lesson the reader was expected to learn. Books of this sort proliferated and some scholars have noted that there were more copies of emblem books circulating in seventeenth century Holland than bibles. Many scholars have tried to use this shared visual language to "decode" the components of genre paintings, with mixed success. Emblem literature was often targeted at specific audiences: for example, Jacob Cats, *Houwelijk* (*Marriage*) outlined all the proper stages of life for a woman. In one emblem, he presents needlework as one of the skills most valued and emblematic of domestic virtue.



Figure **13.7.13.59**: Foot warmer (detail), Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Woman (The Proposition)*, 1631, oil on panel, 11-3/8 × 9-1/2 inches (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

In Leyster's painting, the woman becomes an icon of domesticity, working diligently in the cold, unlit room. Even the foot warmer on which the woman rests her feet to combat the cold has been connected to emblem books—as a symbol of the woman's refusal of the man. One emblem book frames the foot warmer as a woman's best friend since a man would have to be truly enticing to get a woman to step away from her foot warmer on a cold night. The woman's firmly planted foot does not indicate a tendency towards a sexual liaison. Leyster's composition has been seen as an important fore-runner of later genre painters such as Gerard Ter Borch, and, most famously, Johannes Vermeer. In Leyster's painting, the viewer is left wondering to which tradition the woman belongs. Like much of Dutch art of the Golden Age (the 17th century), this painting is about choices: the choices of the subjects and by extension, the choices of the viewer. The woman is in a suspended state, a moment of decision. Will she virtuously continue her work, or arise, take the money, and go with the man? Will she choose virtue or vice?

[1] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco Publishers, 1989)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

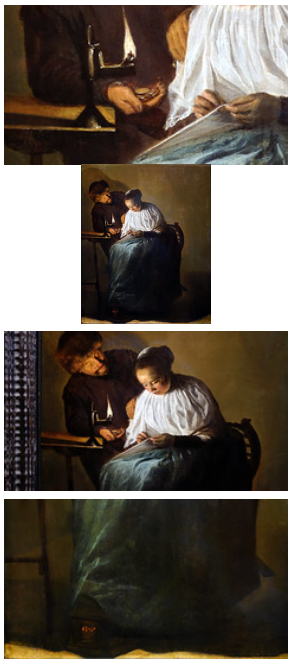


Figure **13.7.13.60**: More Smarthistory images…

Additional resources:

This painting at the Mauritshuis

Judith Leyster at the National Gallery of Art

Leyster on the Google Art Project

Wayne Fronts, *Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco Publishers, 1989).

Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Vintage, 1997).

Peter Schjeldahl, "A Woman's Work: The brief career of Judith Leyster," *The New Yorker*, June 29, 2009.

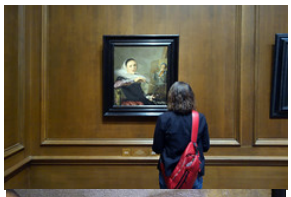
Judith Leyster, *Self-Portrait*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.10**: Judith Leyster, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1633, oil on canvas, 74.6 x 65.1 cm / 29-3/8 x 25-5/8″ (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









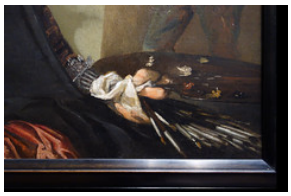












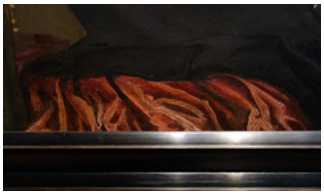




Figure **13.7.13.61**: More Smarthistory images…

Willem Kalf, *Still Life with a Silver Ewer*

by STEVEN ZUCKER and BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.11**: Willem Kalf, *Still Life with a Silver Ewer and a Porcelain Bowl*, 1660, oil on canvas, 73.8 x 65.2 cm (Rijksmuseum)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





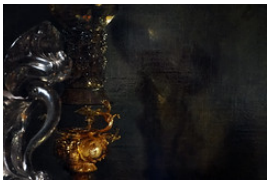








Figure 13.7.13.62: More Smarthistory images

Gerrit Dou, *A Woman Playing a Clavichord*

by HELEN HILLYARD



Figure 13.7.13.63: Gerrit Dou, *A Woman Playing a Clavichord*, c. 1665, oil on panel, 37.7 x 29.9 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery)

A Harmonious Composition

A tapestry is drawn back to reveal a young woman sitting alone in an unlit room. She plays a clavichord, a portable and fairly quiet keyboard instrument, with a decorated lid. Sunlight enters the room through a window to the left, illuminating the figure of the woman and touching on the different still life elements dispersed across the space: an empty birdcage hanging from the ceiling, a velvet cushion on a carved wooden stool, a ewer and basin encircled by a vine, a *viol da gamba* (the large stringed instrument) and a table with an open music book, flute, platter and wine glass. They are illustrated so realistically that there is a temptation for the viewer to reach out and caress them. The woman looks out towards us as though we have intruded: a momentary interruption of her intimate solo concert. Perhaps, she is awaiting the return of her lover, who will play the viol and join her in a duet. Maybe it is we, the onlooker, who is meant to take her partner's place.



Figure **13.7.13.64**: Viol da gamba, music book, wine glass, flute, ewer and basin (detail), Gerrit Dou, *A Woman Playing a Clavichord*, c. 1665, oil on panel, 37.7 x 29.9 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery)

A Woman Playing a Clavichord was painted by Gerrit Dou around 1665. Dou was the most famous of the group of painters active in the city of Leiden, in the Dutch Republic, who were known as the *fijnschilders* (literally "fine" painters), who specialized in small-scale paintings full of minute detail and which concentrated on the faithful depiction of different surfaces and textures—a talent that is clearly evident in the Dulwich painting. Dou was the youngest son of a glass-engraver and from an early age trained in his father's profession. It was this background that doubtless enabled the young Dou to develop his meticulous technique. He began his formal training as a painter in 1628 when he was sent to the studio of Rembrandt, remaining with the master for three years before completing his apprenticeship.



Figure 13.7.13.65: Gerrit Dou, *Young Lady playing the Virginal*, c. 1665, oil on panel (private collection)

A Woman Playing a Clavichord is regarded as one of Dou's finest works, and is one of only two paintings that take this musical theme as its subject. The other is *A Young Lady Playing the Virginal*, c. 1665 (above), and the early histories of the two works have been frequently confused. Indeed, the paintings were first displayed together in 1665, when they were shown in an exhibition organized by Dou's patron Johan de Bye in Leiden; possibly the first ever monographic exhibition of a living artist.

The paintings show how Dou was able to approach this subject in remarkably different ways. Dou still uses the device of the drawn back tapestry-curtain, delicate rendering of fabrics and textures, and the figure of the woman looking up from her playing (although this is definitely not a portrait of the same woman). However, our eye is drawn to the presence of other figures in a room beyond. Wine is flowing and the woman's lover already sits waiting with glass in hand whilst another couple sing from songbooks, meanwhile a young serving boy tops up their drinks. The woman in the foreground plays a virginal: significantly louder than a clavichord and presumably intended to accompany the singers. In this way, the *Young Lady Playing the Virginal* is definitely a noisier and more hedonistic scene than *A Woman Playing a Clavichord*. In contrast to the intimate affair of the Dulwich painting, here the emphasis is very much on the pleasures of life. Whilst *Woman Playing a Clavichord* may have alluded to the possibility of a male lover, *Young Lady Playing the Virginal* makes more explicit the woman's position as a courtesan-type figure whose role is to entertain men.

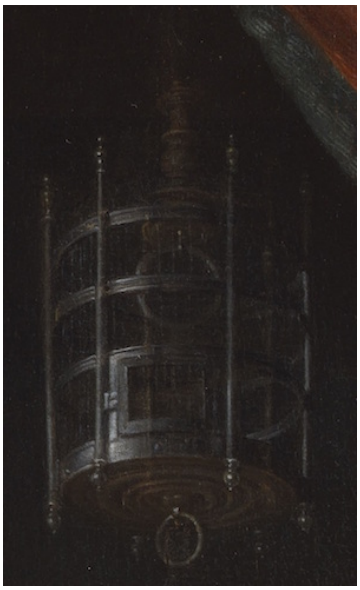


Figure **13.7.13.66**: Birdcage (detail), Gerrit Dou, *A Woman Playing a Clavichord*, c. 1665, oil on panel, 37.7 x 29.9 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery)

Nevertheless, interpreting the intricate layers of meaning in Dou's paintings is far from straight forward. On the one hand the various still life details can be taken at face value—as a testament to Dou's meticulous technique when it came to representing the world around him. On the other, each element can be seen as symbolic, and the painting full of hidden meanings. Many of these meanings would underline the idea that the missing "partner" in the Dulwich painting is the woman's lover, and that the painting has various erotic or sexual connotations.

The latter interpretation, which developed with art historical theory of the 1960s, cites the prevalence of emblem books as a reference point for artists; a kind of book popular in medieval and Renaissance Europe that contained drawings accompanied by allegorical interpretations. In this light, the flute, ewer and bow become symbolic of the male sex; whilst the basin and viol become representative of the female. Likewise, the closed birdcage represents the woman's virginity which may have already been taken. Critically, the argument against seeing this in such a way is that there are no contemporary sources that confirm such an interpretation for this genre of painting.

Dou's meticulous style of painting was incredibly influential for both the Leiden painters and the renowned artist Johannes Vermeer, who soon after began to paint his own interior scenes showing women playing keyboard instruments, most notably ***A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal***, c. 1670-2 (The National Gallery, London).

Essay by Helen Hillyard, Assistant Curator at **Dulwich Picture Gallery, London**.

This essay was produced in conjunction with the **Making Discoveries** display series at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. The displays coincide with the release of the Gallery's Dutch and Flemish Schools Catalogue, published 2016, and aims to disseminate important findings from this major research project.

Johannes Vermeer

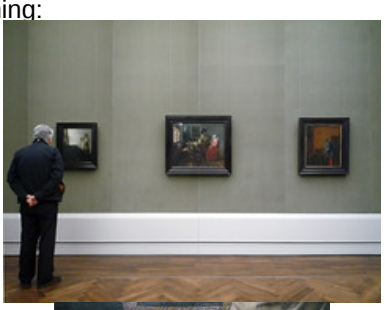
Johannes Vermeer, *The Glass of Wine*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.12**: Johannes Vermeer, *The Glass of Wine*, c. 1661, oil on canvas, 67.7 x 79.6 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





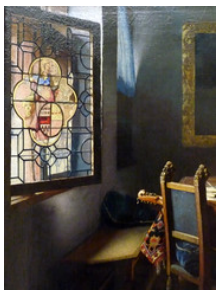




Figure **13.7.13.67**: More Smarthistory images…

Johannes Vermeer, *Young Woman with a Water Pitcher*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.13**: Johannes Vermeer, *Young Woman with a Water Pitcher*, oil on canvas, c. 1662 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.13.68**: More Smarthistory images…

Johannes Vermeer, *Woman Holding a Balance*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.13.14: Johannes Vermeer, *Woman Holding a Balance*, 1664, oil on canvas, 42.5 cm × 38 cm / 16.7″ × 15″ (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.13.15: Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, c. 1665, oil on canvas, 44.5 x 39 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

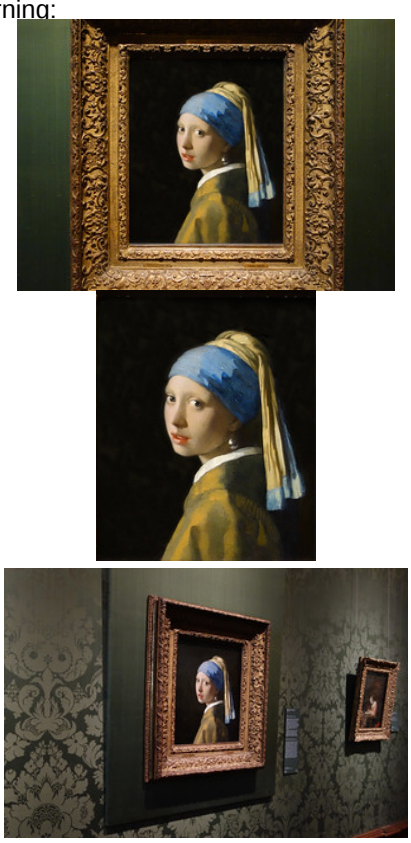
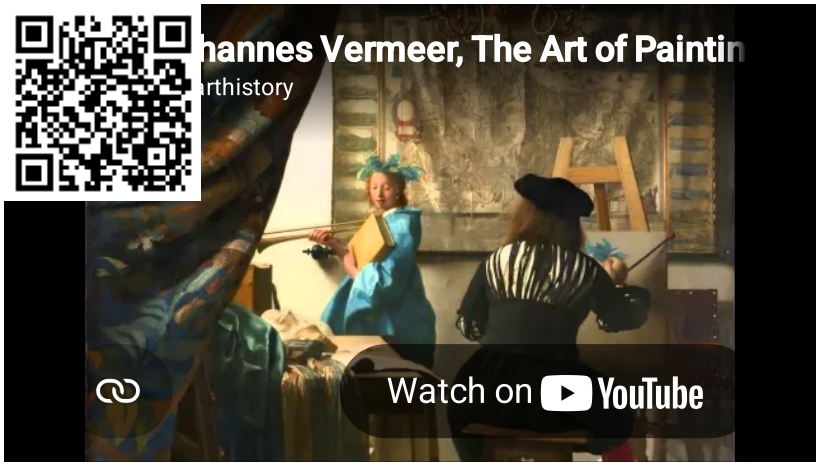


Figure 13.7.13.69: More Smarthistory images…

Johannes Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.7.13.16: Johannes Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*, 1666-69, oil on canvas, 130 x 110 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Saenredam, *Interior of Saint Bavo, Haarlem*

by DR. CHRISTOPHER D.M. ATKINS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.17**: Pieter Jansz. Saenredam, *Interior of Saint Bavo, Haarlem*, 1631, oil on panel, 82.9 x 110.5 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art) Speakers: Dr. Christopher D. M. Atkins, Agnes and Jack Mulroney Associate Curator of European Painting and Sculpture, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Dr. Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

This painting at The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Saenredam on ArtUK

Saenredam at the Rijksmuseum

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Handbook (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2014, p.136).

Catalogue Raisonné of the works by Pieter Jansz. Saenredam (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 1961), p. 74.

Jeroen Giltaij, "Review: Gary Schwartz and Marten Jan Bok, *Pieter Saenredam: The Painter and his Time, 1990*," *Simiolus* 20, no. 1 (1990/1991), pp. 87-90.

Rob Ruurs, *Saenredam: The Art of Perspective* (Amsterdam: Benjamins / Forsten Publishers, 1987).

Gary Schwartz and Maarten Jan Bok, *Pieter Saenredam: the Painter and his Time* (New York: Abbeville, 1990).

Rob Rurrs, "Review: Gary Schwartz and Marten Jan Bok, Pieter Saenredam: De Schilder in zijn tijd, 1989," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 2 (June 1990), pp. 332-336.

Jan Steen, *Feast of St. Nicholas*

by DR. WENDY SCHALLER



Figure 13.7.13.70: Looking at Jan Steen's The Feast of St Nicholas in the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam)

A holiday for children



Figure 13.7.13.71: Jan Havicksz Steen, *The Feast of St Nicholas*, 1665-68, oil on canvas, 82 × 70.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

In this delightful scene, Jan Steen beautifully captures the joys of a family gathering together in their home to celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas, still one of the most important holidays on the Dutch calendar. The holiday falls on December 6th and is especially devoted to children. In the Netherlands, on the night before the feast, St. Nicholas travels on horseback over rooftops accompanied by his helper, *Zwarte Piet* ("Black Peter"), whose name comes from his being covered in soot from the chimneys used to access Dutch homes. Children place their shoes on the hearth and hope to find them the next morning filled with presents and other delectable treats. Families sing songs in honor of the saint and share an abundance of candies, specially baked breads, and sweet biscuits. It is a day full of fun and surprises and even a bit of mischief.

A master visual storyteller, Steen incorporates many of these traditions in his painting while also expertly representing the actions and expressions of the children in this middle class family as they react to the morning's events.



Figure **13.7.13.72**: Mother (detail), Jan Havicksz Steen, *The Feast of St Nicholas*, 1665-68, oil on canvas, 82 × 70.5 cm (Rijksmuseum) A smiling mother reaches out to her daughter who clings possessively to the gift she has received: a doll clad in white fur with a halo and holding a cross-shaped staff, which represents St. John the Baptist. On the child's arm, a pail hangs full of goodies including an orange, a gingerbread figure, and a sugar candy chicken on a stick.



Figure **13.7.13.73**: Daughter (detail), Jan Havicksz Steen, *The Feast of St Nicholas*, 1665-68, oil on canvas, 82 × 70.5 cm (Rijksmuseum) The girl's brother, behind her to the right (see image above), also seems quite pleased with his gift, a *kolf* club and ball. A game analogous to modern hockey, *kolf* was played on frozen canals in the winter and on level land in summer. Players both young and old enjoyed propelling a small wooden ball toward a goal post using sticks that were curved at the end like the one we see here. In fact, this popular game often appears in seventeenth-century Dutch winter scenes by artists such as Hendrick Averkamp (see below).



Figure 13.7.13.74: Hendrick Avercamp, *Winter Landscape with Ice Skaters*, 1608, oil on panel, 77.3 x 131.9 cm (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

The boy laughs and points to a shoe held by a young maidservant. The shoe contains birch switches that were used to punish naughty children. Clearly, a tearful boy, to the maidservant's right, received the shoe as a not-so-desirable gift for his poor behavior.



Figure 13.7.13.75: Family (detail), Jan Havicksz Steen, *The Feast of St Nicholas*, 1665-68, oil on canvas, 82 × 70.5 cm (Rijksmuseum)

His grandmother, however, beckons him toward the bed in the back of the room, where it appears that she has discovered a better gift hidden behind the bed curtains. On the right side of the scene, three additional children gaze with wide-eyed amazement toward the chimney through which their presents were delivered. An older brother holds up a toddler for a better view. The toddler hugs a gingerbread version of St. Nicholas, a reminder of who is being honored on this joyous occasion.

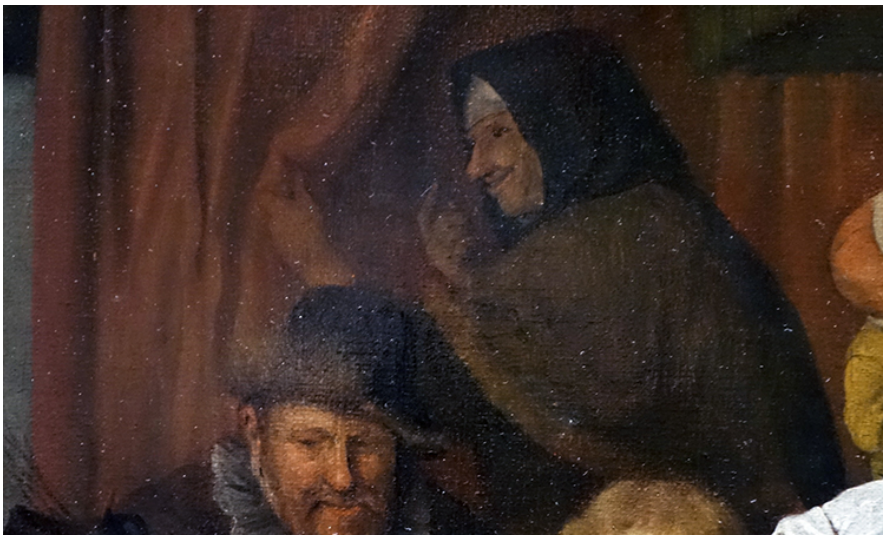


Figure 13.7.13.76: Grandmother (detail), Jan Havicksz Steen, *The Feast of St Nicholas*, 1665-68, oil on canvas, 82 × 70.5 cm (Rijksmuseum)

In the foreground of this domestic interior, Steen tempts us with an assortment of treats piled high in a woven basket and strewn across the seat of an ornately carved chair. Here we see apples, nuts, sugared candies, waffles and other baked delights of various shapes and sizes. Particularly impressive is the large, richly decorated diamond-shaped loaf that leans against the chair. This sweet white bread, called a *duivekater*, was traditionally enjoyed at the Feast of St. Nicholas, as well as at Christmas, and on the Dutch New Year.

Saint Nicholas

The Christian Saint Nicholas, or as the Dutch call him, *Sinterklaas*, was a fourth-century Bishop of Myra (a town located in modern day Turkey) who was known for his generosity and kindness especially to children. He died on December 6th in 343 C.E., and it is this day that is commemorated. Although traditionally a Catholic holiday, the Feast of St. Nicholas survived in the Protestant Netherlands, although in a secularized form to be celebrated by all.

Nevertheless, *Sinterklaas* continues to be shown wearing his customary bishop's garb: a tall, pointed red mitre (hat) and long red robes. In the eighteenth century, when Dutch immigrants brought their traditions to America, the well-loved Saint Nicholas eventually developed into the figure known today as Santa Claus.



Figure 13.7.13.77: Detail, Jan Havicksz Steen, *The Feast of St Nicholas*, 1665-68, oil on canvas, 82 × 70.5 cm (Rijksmuseum)

A comic genius

This charming scene of family is a fine example of the type of painting that Jan Steen is best known for. In addition to holiday gatherings such as this, his other works include representations of school life, rowdy taverns, love-sick women, and dissolute households. Steen fills his scenes of everyday life with engaging details, presenting them in a direct and amusing way. While he finds some inspiration in the theater, Steen relies as well on his keen wit and narrative ability to capture, and in some cases, even ridicule human nature in a good humored and entertaining manner. An especially versatile artist, Steen was also a talented painter of biblical and mythological subjects as well as portraits. With some 300 paintings to his credit, Steen leaves a legacy as a comic genius and one of the most prolific Dutch painters of the seventeenth century.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Rijksmuseum

Genre painting in Northern Europe on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Jan Steen on the BBC's Your Paintings

Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.18**: Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds*, c. 1670–75, oil on canvas, 55.5 x 62 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.13.78**: More Smarthistory images…

Rachel Ruysch

Rachel Ruysch, *Fruit and Insects*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.19**: Rachel Ruysch, *Fruit and Insects*, 1711, oil on wood, 44 x 60 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.13.79**: More Smarthistory images…

Rachel Ruysch, *Flower Still-Life*

by LYNN ROBINSON

What would you consider today's most coveted status symbols? A Mercedes or a Ferrari, a diamond Rolex or a designer handbag? A European villa? In Rachel Ruysch's day it was a simple tulip. Looking at her floral still life paintings can reveal an entire hidden world—of wealth, status, even the economics of the world's first financial crises.



Figure **13.7.13.80**: Godfried Schalcken, Portrait of the artist Rachel Ruysch, c. 1643-1706, oil on canvas, 71.8 x 62. 2 cm (Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum)

Rachel Ruysch grew up in Amsterdam, into a wealthy and prominent family of Dutch artists, architects and scientists. Her father, Frederik Ruysch, was an eminent scientist and professor of anatomy and botany. He possessed a well-known collection of rare natural history specimens, which Rachel helped catalogue and record. He encouraged her artistic talents, careful observation of the natural world and scientifically accurate renderings of plants and flowers. At age fifteen, Ruysch began an apprenticeship with famous still life painter Willem van Aelst. By eighteen, she was already producing her first still life paintings and starting to establish her long and successful career.

A working mother

At twenty nine, Rusch married portrait painter Juriaen Pool, with whom she had ten children. Despite her enormous domestic responsibilities, she was remarkably prolific, producing more than 250 paintings over seven decades. Her works were in great demand, and she achieved widespread fame and international recognition. Considered one of the most successful artists of her day, contemporary Dutch writers called her “Holland’s art prodigy” and “our subtle art heroine.”

Consumer society

In 1648, the Netherlands became independent from Spain, ushering in a period of great economic prosperity. Flourishing international trade and a thriving capitalistic economy resulted in a newly affluent middle class. Wealthy merchants created a new kind of patronage and art market. Without a powerful monarchy or the Catholic Church to commission artworks (the Dutch were Protestants), artists produced directly for buyers. Like today, buyers purchased art either from professional dealers or from the artist in their studios. Subjects like big historical, mythological or religious paintings were no longer desired; buyers wanted portraits, still lifes, landscapes and genre paintings (scenes of everyday life) to decorate their homes. Proud of their newly independent country and trade wealth, they desired artworks that would reflect their success. In a competitive open market, artists began to specialize. Rachel Ruysch became known as one of the greatest flower painters of her time.

Flowers: A national passion



Figure **13.7.13.81**: Great Tulip Book: Semper Augustus, 1600-1699, gouache on paper, 12-1/8 x 7-7/8″ / 30.8 x 20.0 cm (Norton Simon Museum)

Ruysch's career paralleled the growth of the Dutch horticultural industry and the science of botany. The Netherlands became the largest importers of new and exotic plants and flowers from around the world. Once valued primarily for their use as herbs or medicine, flowers became newly appreciated simply for their beauty and fragrance. They became prized luxuries and desirable status symbols for the wealthy. Botanists and gardeners sought the rarest specimens imported from overseas trade. The tulip, like the one featured prominently in Ruysch's painting below, was the most exotic.

"Tulip mania"

Coveted for their intense and unusually varied colors, tulips were introduced into the Netherlands from Turkey in the late sixteenth century. The Dutch fell madly in love with them. Because it takes so long for a tulip to be grown from seed, demand far outpaced supply. The rarest and most valuable tulips were the variegated or "flamed" tulips, those with feathers of contrasting color on their petals. This exotic coloration was actually caused by a virus that infected the tulip, shortening its life span and making it even more sought after and valuable. The stage was set for a buying craze.

Buyer beware: A cautionary tale?



Figure **13.7.13.82**: Bruegel suggests the economic folly of tulip mania by depicting speculators as brainless monkeys in contemporary upper class dress (detail), Brueghel the Younger, *Satire on Tulip Mania*, c. 1640 (Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem)

The word tulip mania is often used today to refer to certain types of economic crises. It describes a financial bubble caused by large numbers of people speculating on unproved commodities or companies. Tulip bulbs were so avidly desired in the seventeenth-century Netherlands that a "futures market" was born. Buyers bought bulbs still in the ground, speculating that they would be worth more in

the future and could then be sold for a large profit. Prices rose steadily and irrationally. At the peak of tulip speculation in 1636, some bulbs sold for more than a skilled craftsman earned in ten years. A nursery catalog of the time notes that at the height of the madness, a rare “Semper Augustus” tulip sold for 5,200 guiders, more than the price of a fine house, a ship or twelve acres of land.

In February, 1637, investors suddenly decided that tulip bulbs were grossly overpriced, and began to sell. Within days, panic ensued. With more sellers than buyers, demand for tulips evaporated. Prices plummeted, tulip bulbs lost 90% of their earlier value, and the market crashed. The world had just experienced its first financial bubble.

Look closely: Microscopic detail



Figure **13.7.13.83**: Rachel Ruysch, Flower Still Life, c. 1726, oil on canvas, 75.6 x 60.6 cm (Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio)

A successful Dutch still life painting was highly valued for its degree of skillful realism. *Flowers Still Life* depicts a profusion of scientifically accurate floral details. Each petal, stem, and leaf is minutely and precisely rendered. Textures are remarkably realistic, from the delicate paper thin poppy petals to the crinkly, brittle leaves. Looking closer still, we see that Ruysch has also meticulously depicted tiny insects: a caterpillar crawls on a stem, a bee gathers pollen from the center of a poppy, a white butterfly alights on a marigold.

Mixed bouquet



Figure **13.7.13.84**: A drooping marigold and other flowers spilling out of the vase (detail), Rachel Ruysch, *Flower Still Life*, c. 1726, oil on canvas, 75.6 x 60.6 cm (Toledo Museum of Art)

Flower Still Life depicts a lush variety of different flowers, from popular common European blooms to rare overseas species. Ruysch combines a complex and intricate arrangement of poppies, snapdragons, roses, carnations, hollyhocks, marigolds, morning glories and a single red and white flamed tulip. Flowers lavishly spill out of the vase, filling the entire picture space. Some are in full bloom,

others droop and wilt, as leaves and curving stems entwine throughout. While many of her contemporary flower painters used more symmetrical and formal compositions, Ruysch was known for these lively and informal looking arrangements. The flowers are asymmetrically arranged, leading the eye diagonally from the lower left drooping marigold to the upper right red poppy. Our eye is first attracted to the lightest flowers in the center, then to the brightly colored surrounding flowers, and finally out to the small darker flowers at the edges of the bouquet. Complementary colors create harmony, as warm yellows and rose balance cool blues and greens. Light alternates with shadow, enlivening the flowers as they stand out dramatically against the darker background.

"Vanitas": Hidden meanings?

Some scholars believe there is another way to view Ruysch's flower paintings. One common interpretation is to understand them in light of *vanitas*, a moral message common at the time. Taken from a passage in the Christian bible, it was a reminder that beauty fades and all living things must die. While still life paintings celebrated the beauty and luxury of fine food or voluptuous flowers, *vanitas* was a warning about the fleeting nature of these material things and the shortness of life. In *Flowers Still Life*, some flowers wilt and die while insects have eaten holes in the leaves. Wealthy Dutch consumers were being reminded to not become too attached to their material possessions and worldly pleasures; eternal salvation came only through devotion to God.

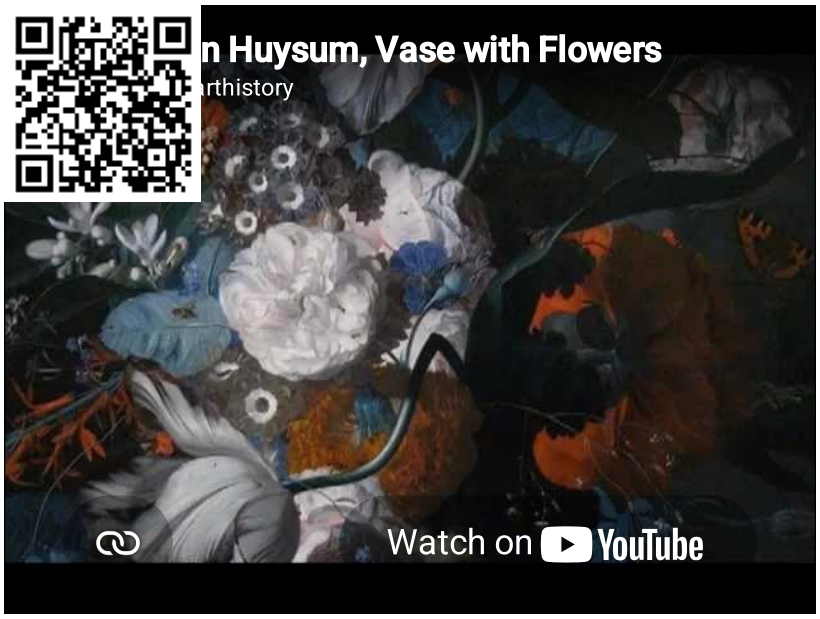
Additional resources:

Flower Still Life in the Toledo Museum of Art

Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe 1600-1800 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Jan van Huysum, *Vase with Flowers*

by PIPPA COUCH and RACHEL ROPEIK



Video **13.7.13.20**: Jan van Huysum, *Vase with Flowers*, c. 1718-20, oil on canvas, 24 x 31″ / 61 x 79 cm (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London)

Huis ten Bosch (House in the Woods)

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure 13.7.13.85: Huis ten Bosch, The Hague, Netherlands, begun 1645 (photo: Gerard Dukker, **Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed**)

Situated in a wooded area just outside The Hague sits a small brick palace called Huis ten Bosch (House in the Woods). Designed, decorated, and built between 1645 and 1652 for the Princess of Orange, Amalia van Solms, Huis ten Bosch contains the best preserved decorative interior of the Dutch Golden Age: a lavish tribute to the role of the House of Orange in shaping the nation's independence and success.

The building has had a complex history, and is one of very few surviving palaces built by the seventeenth-century Dutch nobility. In the 18th century, wings were added and its façade was replaced, and later it served as the first national art gallery, housed political prisoners, and was partially destroyed by bombs during World War II. These days, it is surrounded by tall fences and the apparatus of modern security, since it has resumed one of its original functions: to serve as the chief residence of the House of Orange, now the Dutch royal family. Through it all, the central room, called the *Oranjezaal*, has survived intact and its cycle of baroque canvases live to tell of the glories of the House of Orange.

The Patron



Figure 13.7.13.86: Workshop of Gerard van Honthorst, *Portrait of Amalia van Solms*, 1650, oil on canvas, 125.2 x 102.2 cm (**Rijksmuseum**)

The House of Orange played an unusual—yet essential—role in the formation of the Dutch Republic. Since the time of William of Orange in the late 16th century, male members of the family traditionally held the position of *stadtholder*: head of the military as well

as symbolic figurehead of the Republic. The *stadtholder* was not a king and was subject to the ruling body, the States General. Therefore, the House of Orange, who always sought to elevate their status to compete with landed nobility elsewhere in Europe, were frequently at odds with the republican nature of Dutch politics.

Amalia van Solms was a German princess who married the Prince of Orange, Frederik Hendrik, in 1625. In the years following her marriage, she raised five children, worked to create a glittering court culture, and collected art and decorative objects, including porcelain and gemstones. She was also politically very adept, trying to arrange the best possible marriages for her children and promoting her favorites at court to situate them to their (and her!) advantage.

By 1645, as the Dutch Republic approached independence and her husband's health was failing, she was granted land on which to build a palace for her own personal use. She used this building as a venue to showcase the virtues of her husband and her family and to create a dynastic mythology that placed the House of Orange at the very heart of Dutch identity. In this way, she sought to preserve her husband's legacy and her own social and political status.

Dutch classicism refined

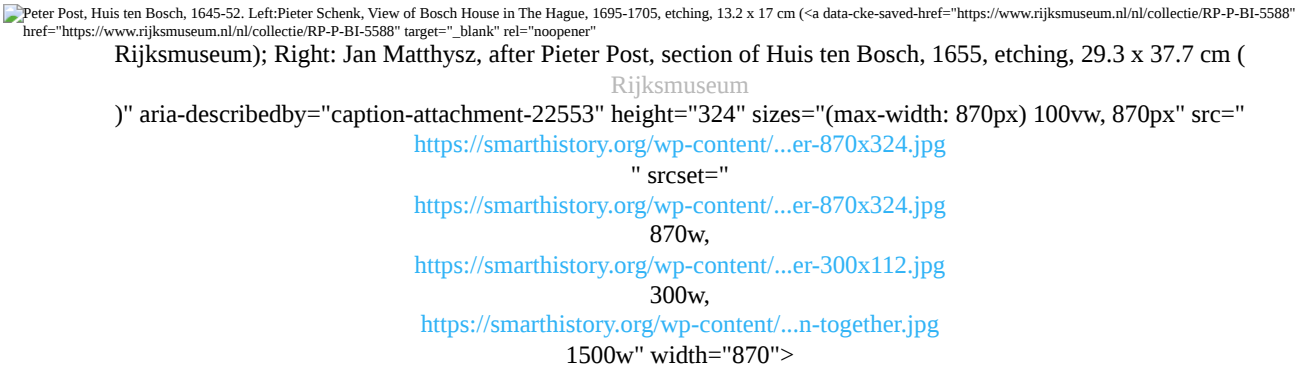


Figure **13.7.13.87**: Peter Post, Huis ten Bosch, 1645-52. Left: Pieter Schenk, View of Bosch House in The Hague, 1695-1705, etching, 13.2 x 17 cm (**Rijksmuseum**); Right: Jan Matthysz, after Pieter Post, section of Huis ten Bosch, 1655, etching, 29.3 x 37.7 cm (**Rijksmuseum**)

Like the **Amsterdam Town Hall**, which was built around the same time, Huis ten Bosch was built in the Dutch Classicist style, which uses components derived from Italian architectural treatises by architects and writers such as Serlio, **Scamozzi**, and Palladio. The architect was Pieter Post, who had previously worked alongside the architect of the town hall, Jacob van Campen, on commissions like the Mauritshuis.

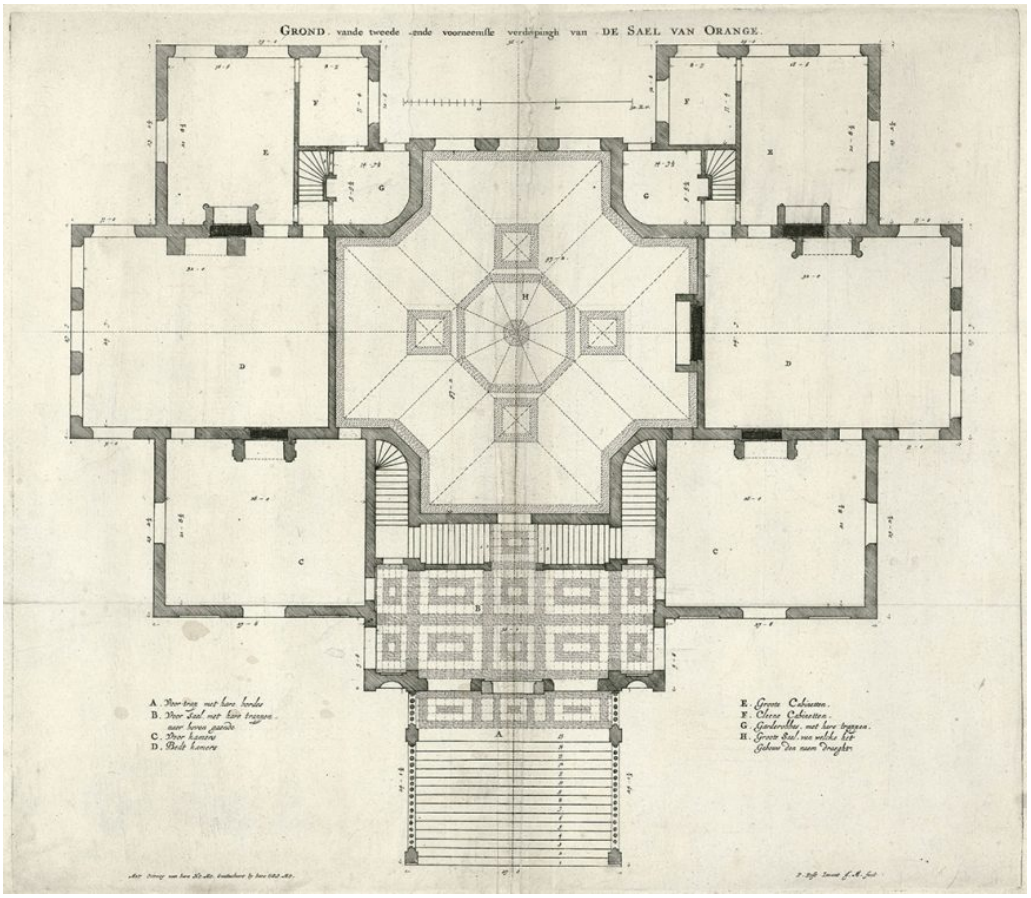
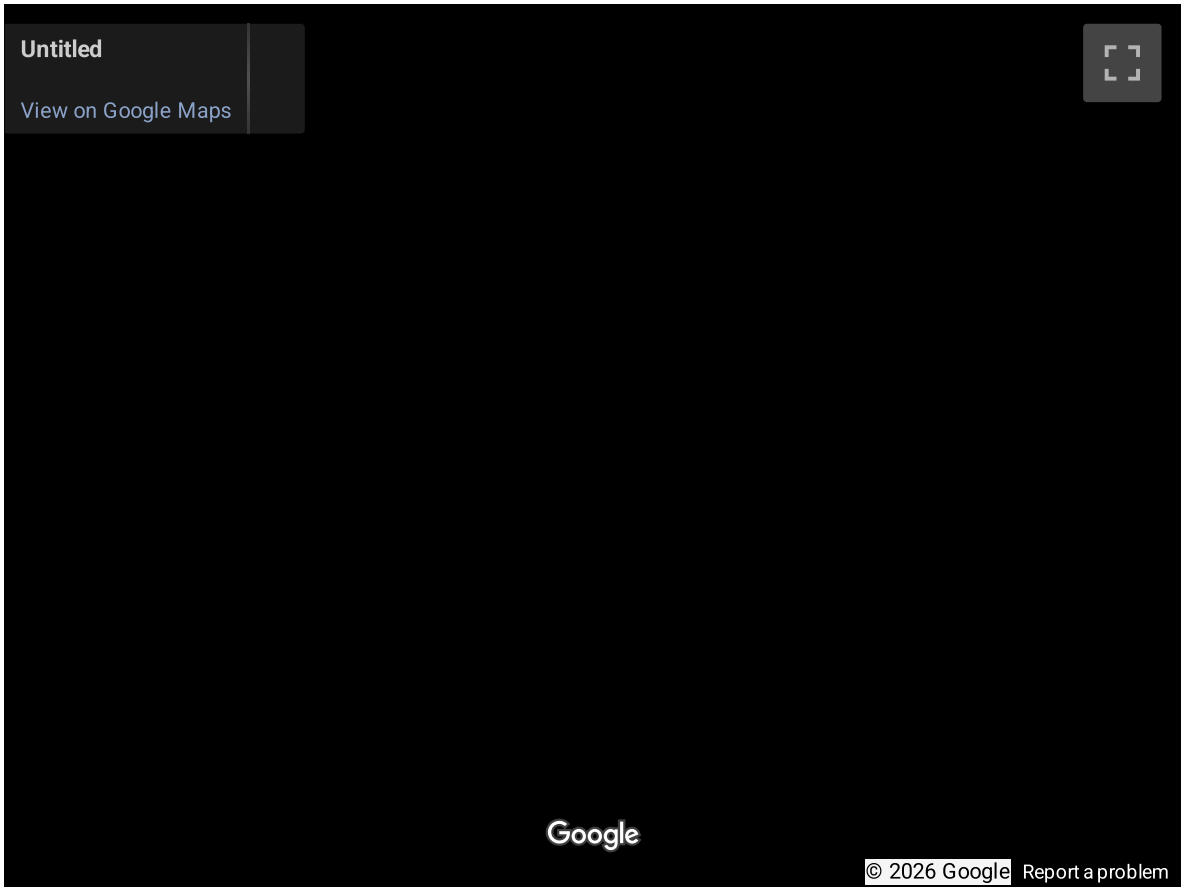


Figure 13.7.13.88: Jan Matthysz, after Pieter Post, floorplan of Huis ten Bosch, 1655, etching, 34.5 x 39.6 cm (Rijksmuseum)

The floorplan of the Huis ten Bosch is structured around a cross-shaped hall—a distinctive and unusual feature which may have been based on villas designed by Palladio. On either side of the hall is a five-room apartment with a salon, a bedchamber, a study, and two smaller dressing rooms. Arranged in order from public to private, these spaces enforced social etiquette by controlling access to the resident. Amalia would have occupied the rooms to the east of the central hall; it is not clear who would have used the other apartment.



The central room, known as the *Oranjezaal*, has received the most attention over the years because it is well preserved and is such a remarkable monument of the Dutch Baroque. The room contains a multi-story cycle of canvases and ceiling paintings that glorify the House of Orange. The cycle was coordinated by Jacob van Campen, but a team of a dozen artists from the northern and southern Netherlandish provinces did the actual painting.



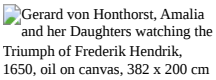
Figure **13.7.13.89**: Oranjezaal, northeast corner and west wall (photo: Paul van Galen and Gerard Dukker, **Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed**)

These artists included some who may be familiar, such as Jan Lievens and Jacob Jordaens, but also some less well-known painters like Pieter de Grebber or Gonzales Coques. The design committee selected these artists not only because they represented the best of Netherlandish art, both Flemish and Dutch, but also because they could paint in a Rubenesque style that would best suit the lofty nature of the commission.

The room tells the story of the Prince of Orange, including allegories of his birth, education, and military victories. Biographical scenes circle the room, unifying the space horizontally, while each major wall depicts a theme. The biographical scenes are situated above a fanciful triumphal procession that weaves through the room. Painted triumphal arches contain scenes of a parade of trophies including captives and material goods. These two levels of canvases are topped by thematically related scenes of classical mythology and surmounted by a domed roof and cupola painted with putti. The room has been compared to the **Medici cycle** painted by Peter Paul Rubens 25 years earlier: both are large, allegorical cycles commissioned by politically active widows who traded on their husband's memory for dynastic advancement.



Figure **13.7.13.90**: Gerard van Honthorst, *The Marriage of Frederik Hendrik and Amalia van Solms*, 1651, oil on canvas, 318 x 755 cm (**Rijksbureau v. Kunsthistorische Dokumentatie**)



Gerard von Honthorst, Amalia and her Daughters watching the Triumph of Frederik Hendrik, 1650, oil on canvas, 382 x 200 cm

Figure **13.7.13.91**: Gerard von Honthorst, *Amalia and her Daughters watching the Triumph of Frederik Hendrik*, 1650, oil on canvas, 382 x 200 cm

The first painting visible to a visitor entering the *Oranjezaal* from the foyer would have been an allegory of the marriage of Frederik Hendrik and Amalia. It was painted by Amalia's favorite portrait painter, Gerard van Honthorst. The Prince and Princess stand with their hands clasped, in front of emblems of marriage drawn from Cesare Ripa's iconographic handbook, *Iconologia*.

They are flanked by representatives of the sea on one side and the fruitful land on the other, the two sources of local pride and prosperity: the Dutch depended economically on overseas trade and a large maritime empire, while the land had particular significance for the newly independent region. The group of frolicking putti likely represent the different provinces of the Dutch Republic, dancing in unison because of this fortunate marriage.

Amalia herself is also represented in the *Oranjezaal* in two additional paintings by Honthorst: a portrait with her daughters (which concealed a secret door connecting to her rooms) and an octagonal bust-length portrait in the apex of the dome, through which she literally becomes the keystone of the house.



Figure 13.7.13.92: Jacob Jordaens, *The Triumph of Frederik Hendrik*, 1652, oil on canvas, 728 x 755 cm (**Rijksbureau v. Kunsthistorische Dokumentatie**)

The cycle is dominated by the massive canvas on the east wall by the Flemish painter Jacob Jordaens, *The Triumph of Frederik Hendrik*. At 19 meters tall, it is possibly the largest single canvas produced during the seventeenth century in the Netherlands and shows a bombastic scene glorifying the recently-deceased prince. Draped in a red robe, he is seated in a chariot drawn by four white horses that trample his adversaries, while the flying allegory of Fame uses one of his trumpets to keep the specter of Death at bay. A statue crowns the Prince with golden laurels. His son and successor, Willem II, rides behind him in the triumphal procession. All of this is framed within tumbling garlands and groups of putti. It is a masterpiece of Baroque drama, glorifying—in the most grandiose visual terms—the role played by Frederik Hendrik in securing independence for the Dutch Republic from Spain in 1648.

The “New Artemisia”



Figure 13.7.13.93: Gerard van Honthorst, *Artemisia*, c. 1635, oil on canvas 170.0 x 147.5 cm (Princeton University Art Museum)

The building is simultaneously a house for the Dowager Princess and a mausoleum for the deceased Prince. One of Amalia’s private rooms was decorated entirely in ash grey satin. A painting by Honthorst of the ancient Greek figure of Artemisia of Caria was displayed in another room. According to Herodotus, Artemisia had cremated her husband Mausolus, mixed his ashes with wine, and drank them, becoming a living memorial to her deceased husband.



Figure \(\PageIndex{94\): Govert Flinck, *Hope Comes to Amalia van Solms at the Tomb of Frederik Hendrik*, 1654, oil on canvas, 307 x 189 cm (Mauritshuis, The Hague)

This theme of the vigilant, hopeful widow resonated with Amalia van Solms: for her cabinet, a room that would have been relatively private, she commissioned a painting by Govert Flinck that represents her in front of a fantastical tomb of her husband and son while a phoenix rises from the ashes in the background. Huis ten Bosch became the perfect site for Amalia to present herself as the grieving widow enshrining the memory of her husband, like a "New Artemisia": a similarity consciously emphasized not only through imagery but also in texts by the architect and Princess Amalia's private secretary.

While the memory of the Prince is ever present at Huis ten Bosch, so are representations of his descendants. Flinck's painting emphasizes hope for the future as much as mourning for the past. Further, family portraits are prominently displayed in almost every room, balancing the past and the future and creating the perfect monument to the enduring role played not only by Frederik Hendrik and Amalia but by the entire House of Orange in shaping national history.

Additional resources:

Virtual tour of Huis ten Bosch

Maarten Loonstra, *The Royal Palace Huis ten Bosch in a Historical View* (Zutphen, 1985).

Margriet van Eikema Hommes. "'As Though It Had Been Done by Just One Master':Unity and Diversity in the Oranjezaal, Huis Ten Bosch." In *Aemulatio. Imitation, Emulation and Invention in Netherlandish Art from 1500 to 1800. Essays in Honor of Eric Jan Sluijter*, edited by Anton W.A. Boschloo, Jacquelyn N. Coutré, Stephanie Dickey and Nicolette Sluijter-Seiffert (Zwolle: Waanders, 2011).

Koen Ottenheym, "Possessed by Such a Passion for Building. Frederik Hendrik and Architecture" in *Princely display : the court of Frederik Hendrik of Orange and Amalia van Solms*, compiled and edited by Marika Keblusek and Jori Zijlmans (Zwolle : Waanders Publishers, 1997).

The Town Hall of Amsterdam

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure 13.7.13.95: Jacob van Campen, Koninklijk Paleis Amsterdam (Royal Palace of Amsterdam, formerly the Town Hall of Amsterdam), 1648-65 (photo: Mihnea Stanciu, CC BY 2.0)



Figure 13.7.13.96: Map of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands in the 18th century (source)

The Eighth Wonder of the World

The year was 1648. The United Provinces of the Netherlands had just been granted independence from Spain, marking the end of eighty years of war. Amsterdam, a hub of finance and trade, was positioned to take its place on the world stage as a great modern city.

However, its town hall, on the square facing the thirteenth-century dam on the Amstel River, was a dilapidated warren of cramped late-medieval buildings. The burgomasters of Amsterdam had already planned to erect a new town hall that would be the “eighth wonder of the world” and appropriately represent the city’s prosperity and status as a center for trade, but this project took on new significance with the declaration of peace and independence.

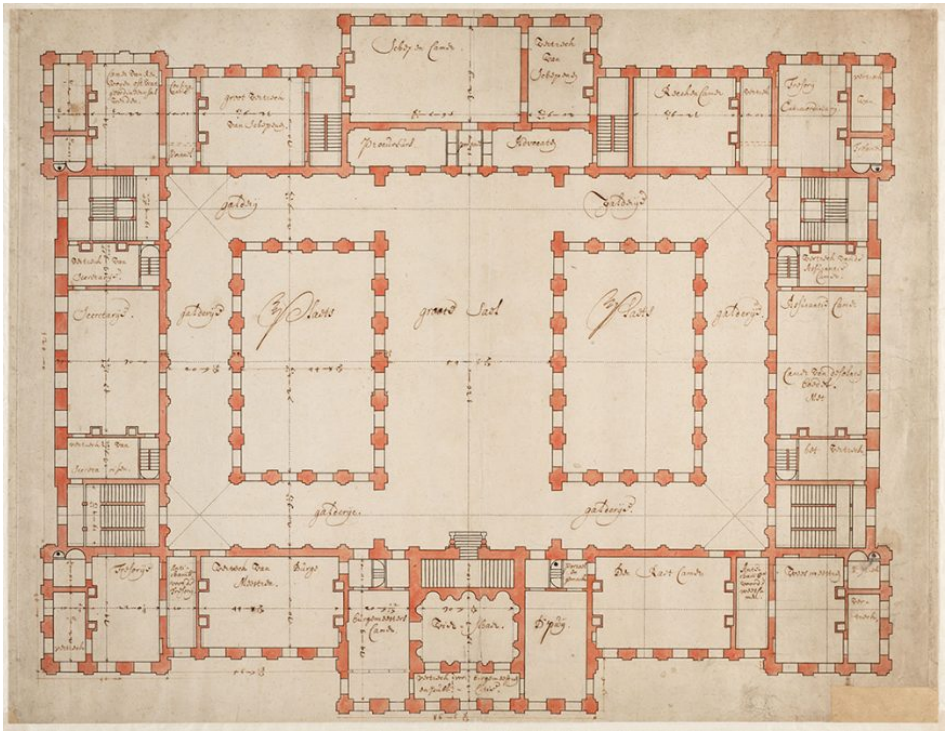


Figure 13.7.13.97: Jacob van Campen and Daniël Stalpaert, plan of the Town Hall of Amsterdam, 1648 (Amsterdam Stadsarchief)

The winning design was submitted by the architect Jacob van Campen, and took over a decade to complete. The new town hall housed all of the administrative functions of the city of Amsterdam—serving as criminal court, magistrate, police office, city bank, armory, prison, tax office, mayor's office, marketplace, and the center of political activity. It remained in use at the heart of the city until it was converted to a royal palace in 1806, when Napoleon Bonaparte installed his brother on the Dutch throne. Today the building still functions as a palace, but also serves as a museum and a monument to two important eras in Dutch history.



Figure 13.7.13.98: Abraham Bloteling (after Jacob van Ruisdael), view of the Blauwbrug over the Amstel River, 1664 (Amsterdam Stadsarchief, Atlas Splitgerber)

Dutch Classicism

Because the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century had no monarchy and a much smaller aristocracy than other countries in Europe, there were fewer people commissioning monumental architecture. The marshiness of land upon which Amsterdam was built required driving piles deep into the ground to support construction and limited the scale of projects. Land for building plots tended to be thin and long, with narrow façades oriented toward the street. The local scarcity of stone also meant that brick architecture dominated.

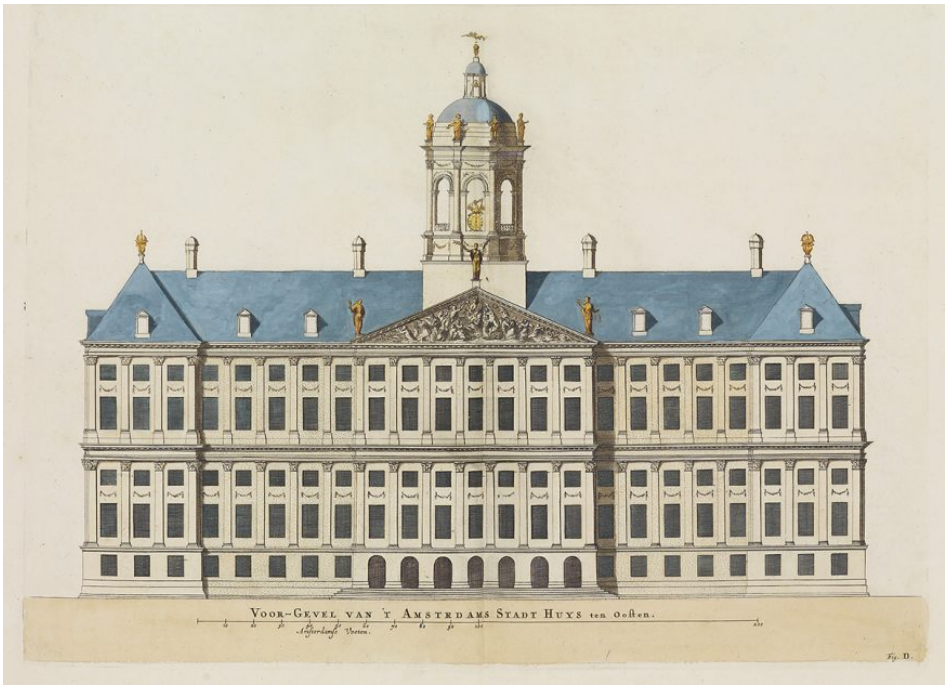


Figure 13.7.13.99: Frederik de Wit, Amsterdam Town Hall from the *Stedenboek*, c. 1698, hand-colored print (**KB, National Library of the Netherlands**)



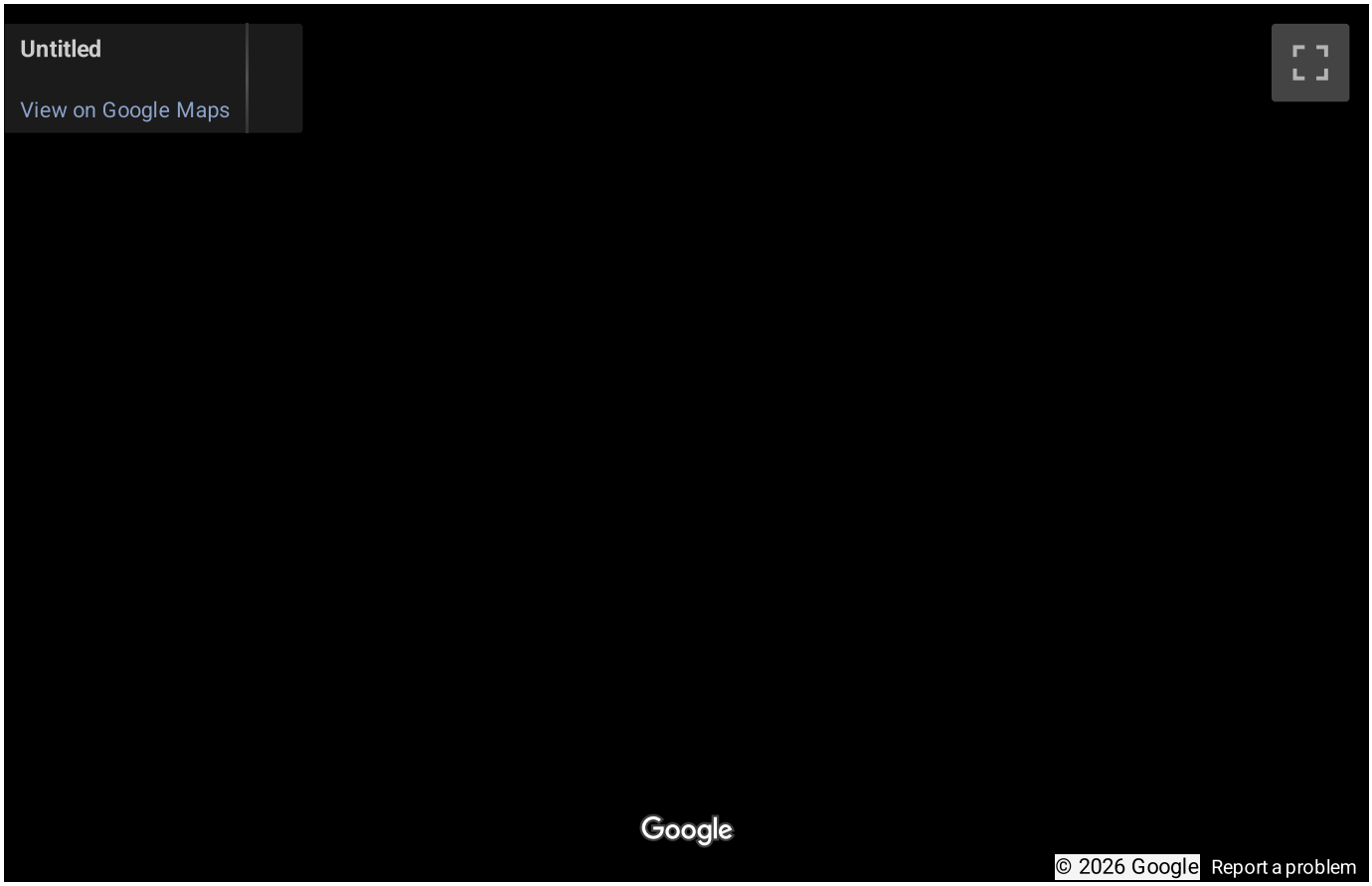
Figure 13.7.13.100: Andrea Palladio, elevation and section of Bramante's Tempietto from *The Four Books of Architecture*, originally published 1570, vol. 4, plate 55 (**Bibliotheken Universität Heidelburg**)

However, for large sites such as the town hall, architects like van Campen chose to build in stone and in a new style: Dutch Classicism. Architectural texts circulated widely in early modern Europe, and the writings of Italian Renaissance and Mannerist architects like Palladio, Serlio, and Scamozzi, in particular, resonated with Dutch architects. Dutch Classicism used the rules of symmetry and ideal ratios drawn from these Italian authors as well as classical sources like Vitruvius. The new style also incorporated surface application of pilasters, classicizing festoons, and allegorical sculpture. Compared to the typical local, small-scale brick architecture of Amsterdam, Dutch Classicism would have appeared striking and impressive.

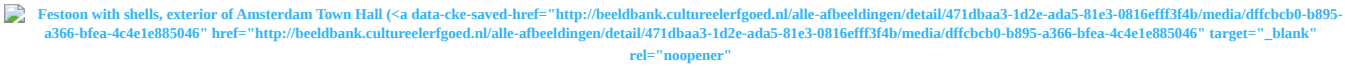
For the town hall, van Campen designed a massive, symmetrical, orderly universe in miniature. Corinthian pilasters rhythmically divide the surface, while flanking pavilions subtly add bulk to anchor the corners of the composition and balance the larger central

one. A cupola housing a bell salvaged from the old town hall dominates the roofline. The cupola, an otherwise jarring addition to the sober classicism of the rest of the exterior, may have been based on **Bramante's Tempietto**, as illustrated by Palladio.

The interior is structured around the 120-foot-long barrel-vaulted *Burgerzaal* (Citizens' Hall) that bisects the building on an east-west axis. This room is the same size as the central space of a basilica designed by Vitruvius, the only one for which he recorded dimensions. Two interior courts break up the mass, creating light wells that flank the *Burgerzaal* and provide light and airflow for both the central hall and the galleries. Offices were arranged around the exterior perimeter of the building.



A Wealth of Decoration



Festoon with shells, exterior of Amsterdam Town Hall (**Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed**)

Dutch Classicism was not purely derivative. While van Campen carefully copied architectural components from prints after the Italians, his collaborator Artus Quellinus designed a universe of decorative sculptural festoons for the exterior. Rather than repeating one stock design across the entire façade, the festoons are varied and include the forms of fruit, flowers, sea creatures, ships' instruments, and other symbolic representations.

The building instantly asserts through its exterior decoration that it is a temple to the newfound peace and prosperity of Amsterdam in the wake of independence. Both the east and west façades have a central projecting block with a pediment topped by sculpture. An 8,000-pound sculpture of Peace, accompanied by allegorical figures representing Prudence and Justice, surmounts the eastern pediment. The pediment itself contains a sculpture group representing the Maid of Amsterdam and the bounties of the sea. Meanwhile,

the west façade supports Atlas, accompanied by Fortitude and Temperance. The western pediment contains allegories of the four continents and the benefits of global trade. The two façades balance each other: male and female, land and sea.

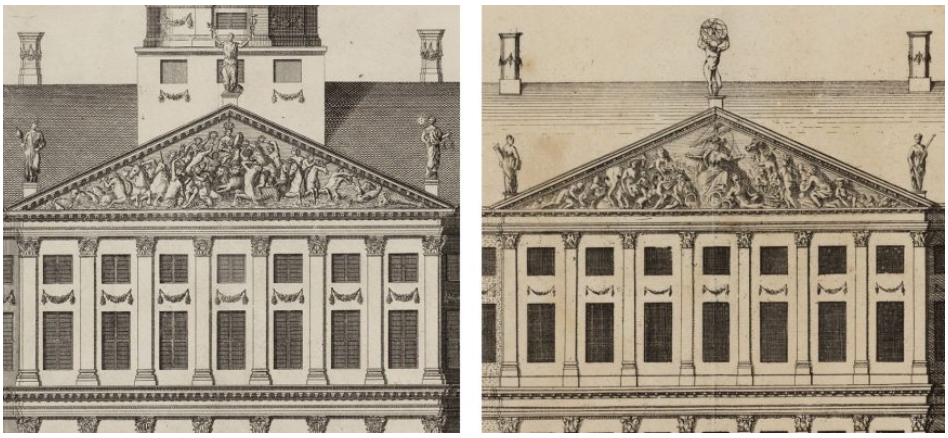


Figure 13.7.13.101: **Amsterdam Town Hall, left:** drawing of the east elevation (detail), by A. de Putter and Gerard Valck, 1719: a sculpture of Peace, accompanied by allegorical figures representing Prudence and Justice surmount the eastern pediment which contains a sculpture group representing the Maid of Amsterdam and the bounties of the sea (Amsterdam Stadsarchief); **right:** drawing of the west elevation (detail), by Pieter Schenk, c. 1710: allegories of the four continents and the benefits of global trade (Amsterdam Stadsarchief). The two façades balance each other: male and female, land and sea.



Figure 13.7.13.102: Amsterdam Town Hall, map of the world and sky of the northern hemisphere, floor of the *Burgerzaal* (Google Art Project)

Microcosm of the World

Once inside, a visitor walks up a grand staircase into the *Burgerzaal*, which contains the universe in miniature: maps of the world are embedded in the floor flanking a representation of the skies of the northern hemisphere.

The southern hemisphere was initially intended to adorn the massive 90-foot barrel vault above. A viewer standing in the center of the room stood at the symbolic center of the world—watched over by sculptures of Atlas and the Maid of Amsterdam.

The entire interior is a unified decorative cycle carried out in expensive imported stone. Allegories representing the four elements, planets, virtues, and the bounties of land and sea act as wall decoration.



Figure of Temperance, Amsterdam Town Hall; right: Cesare Ripa, detail from ***Iconologia*** (London, 1709)

This imagery stems from Cesare Ripa's ***Iconologia***, an influential Italian iconographic manual originally published in 1593. It circulated widely throughout Europe and even appeared in a Dutch translation in 1644, and the dual representations of each element in the *Burgerzaal* closely correspond to Ripa's descriptions. The times of day, sunrise and sunset, and the zodiac signs are also present. Representations of the planets lined the corridors, and were located closest to the offices with which they were symbolically associated.



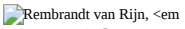
Figure **13.7.13.103**: Govert Flinck, *The incorruptible Consul Marcus Curius Dentatus*, 1656, oil on canvas, 377 x 485 cm **(Royal Palace Amsterdam)**

Rembrandt's Failure?

Various media all worked together to emphasize personal and civic virtue throughout the offices. The mantelpieces in the larger offices emphasized the character traits city officials were intended to exhibit: humility, frugality, and responsibility. For example, Govert Flinck painted *The incorruptible Consul Marcus Curius Dentatus*, who, according to classical sources, preferred his humble turnips to the large, glittering bribe being presented to him. Each room's mantelpiece consisted of a sculpted marble frieze and a poem relating directly to the subject of the painting.

In the galleries, the scope was even greater. Initially, Flinck was commissioned to produce a cycle of twelve monumental paintings illustrating the story of the Batavian uprising. In the *Histories*, Tacitus recounts the tale of the Batavians, a Germanic people who rebelled against Rome, gaining their independence. Since the late sixteenth century, the Batavians had been adopted not only as the mythical but as the as actual ancestors of the Dutch, who similarly refused to succumb to an empire. Flinck had worked as an assistant in Rembrandt's workshop, but by the time of the Town Hall commission was a well-established independent master. The cycle was

intended to illustrate the whole story of the rebellion as an allegory of the war against Spain. Unfortunately, he died before completing any of the cycle. The project was reduced in scale and split between a series of painters, including Jacob Jordaens, Jan Lievens, and Rembrandt van Rijn. Rembrandt's contribution, *The Oath of Claudius Civilis*, was removed from the town hall for unknown reasons less than a year after its installation; a fragment survives in Stockholm, presenting one of the great puzzles of the Dutch Golden Age.



The Conspiracy of the Batavians under Claudius Civilis, 1661-62 (The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Sweden)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-22074" height="503" sizes="(max-width: 800px) 100vw, 800px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x189.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x189.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-870x547.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...lis-edited.jpg
1200w" width="800">

Figure **13.7.13.104**: Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Conspiracy of the Batavians under Claudius Civilis*, 1661-62, 309 x 196 cm (The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Sweden)

Splendor and symbolism

The interior and exterior decorative schemes function on several levels: they celebrate the peace and bounty of Amsterdam, provide visual models of virtuous classical and biblical leaders, and chronicle the mythic history of the Dutch. All of this is contained within a mathematically ideal and symbolically rich microcosm. It is designed to impress new visitors with the splendor and wealth of the Dutch Republic as well as to provide ongoing moral instruction to those who do business there every day.

Additional resources:

This building on the Google Art Project

Katherine Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam* (Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1959)

Eymert-Jan Goosens, *The Palace of Amsterdam: Treasure Wrought by Chisel and Brush* (Amsterdam: Waanders, 2010)

Baroque art in Spain

Spain was the dominant power in Europe for much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

1600 - 1700

A Still Life of Global Dimensions: Antonio de Pereda's *Still Life with Ebony Chest*

by DR. CARMEN RIPOLLÉS



Figure **13.7.13.105**: Antonio de Pereda, *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, 1652, oil on canvas, 80 x 94 cm (**The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg**)

Obsessed with chocolate

In her *Memoirs* written in 1680, a person who went by Madame d'Aulnoy—presumably a French noblewoman visiting the Spanish court—wrote with dismay that Spanish ladies drank "six cups (of chocolate) one after another, and this they do very often twice or thrice a day."[1] The vogue for this (at the time) exotic beverage is depicted in Antonio de Pereda's *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, one of a series of still lifes he painted in the second half of the seventeenth century in Madrid.

The picture represents a group of objects related to the preparation, display, and consumption of chocolate. But why should we care about a bunch of painted vessels and other mundane things? In *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, Pereda visually elevates these seemingly insignificant objects, arranging them on a slightly tilted table so that they appear to tower over the viewer, while theatrical lighting adds drama to the scene. The table is covered with a red velvet cloth, a color associated with the monarchy and a staple of royal portraiture at the Spanish court. All of this contributes to the visual glorification of these objects—and by implication, of the social custom they illustrate.

The painting in fact represents what you would find if you were invited to a *merienda* (or afternoon snack) at a well-appointed home in seventeenth-century Madrid: one or more cups of chocolate made from cocoa from Mexico—which at the time was **under Spanish control**—and pastries served in wares from all over the world. The painting thus stands as a document of one of the most popular social rituals of the Spanish nobility, as well as the global dimensions of its rich material culture in the seventeenth century.



Figure 13.7.13.106: Clara Peeters, *Still Life with Flowers, a Silver-Gilt Goblet, Almonds, Dried Fruit, Sweetmeats, Bread Sticks, Wine and a Pewter Pitcher*, 1611, oil on panel, 52 x 73 cm (**Museo del Prado, Madrid**)

Still life in the seventeenth century



Figure 13.7.13.107: Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Still Life with Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber*, c. 1602, oil on canvas, 68.9 cm x 84.46 cm (**The San Diego Museum of Art**)

Some people today may think that still lifes are dull and meaningless, but in the seventeenth century they were among the most exciting genres of painting. Known to have existed in antiquity only through written descriptions, the painting of fruits, vegetables, and other inanimate objects appeared new and fresh to artists and audiences of the seventeenth century, accustomed, as they were, to paintings that portrayed edifying narratives based on the human figure. We don't know exactly where the first independent still life was painted, but a number of examples with similar characteristics seem to have appeared simultaneously in Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands at the turn of the 17th century.



Figure **13.7.13.108**: Fede Galizia, *Still Life*, c. 1610, oil on panel, 31 x 43 cm (**Silvano Lodi Collection, Campione**)

Juan Sánchez Cotán in Spain, Fede Galizia in Italy, and Clara Peeters in the Netherlands are among the first artists who established the conventions of the new genre: a few objects set against a neutral background painted with unprecedented naturalism and meticulous detail. Although for much of the twentieth century scholarship was concerned with stylistic evolution and religious symbolism in these paintings, today there is a growing interest in approaching them from the perspective of material culture. This means not only asking questions about how the pictures functioned in their original contexts, but also examining the cultural significance of the objects they represent.



Figure **13.7.13.110**: Detail, Antonio de Pereda, *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, 1652, oil on canvas, 80 x 94 cm (**The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg**)

Pereda's picture probably hung on the walls of a well-to-do Madrilenian household in which *meriendas* involving chocolate must have been common. It presents a rich collection of objects of different provenance. Starting on the left, you'll notice a pear-shaped copper vessel with a wooden handle. This is a *chocolatera* or chocolate pot, and next to it there is a wooden whisk to stir the chocolate and make it frothy. In the seventeenth century, chocolate was still an exotic product, although it had been introduced to Spain from Mexico during the century before. The Aztecs—who considered the beverage precious and used it in religious rituals—drank the cocoa unsweetened, but once it was brought to Europe, it was substantially transformed. Spaniards added sugar and spices and made it the center of elite social gatherings.

In his picture, Pereda alludes to these get-togethers with the inclusion of a wide array of wares. In front of the *chocolatera* you can see a silver tray with three cups and a spoon. The three cups—called *jícaras*, from the Nahuatl *xicalli*—were used specifically to drink chocolate, and according to some scholars, each of them has a different origin: the blue cup is probably from Delft in the Netherlands (although imitating Chinese porcelain), the small lusterware (a technique used in Muslim Spain) bowl is from Manises in eastern Spain, and the larger one in the back is from China. Next to the tray there is a plate full of pastries, probably for dipping in the chocolate, and next to this are several wooden boxes containing cocoa paste. Behind the boxes there is a vase with two handles from Talavera in central Spain, and in the foreground on the lower right there is a piece of cheese or sugar to complement the chocolate (in Colombia people still drink their chocolate with cheese today).



Figure **13.7.13.111**: Detail, Antonio de Pereda, *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, 1652, oil on canvas, 80 x 94 cm (**The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg**)

The small piece of furniture that centers the composition is an ebony chest decorated with ivory: a luxury object used to keep treasured belongings such as chocolate. It is made of exotic materials— ebony, likely from India, Angola, Gabon, or Indonesia, and the ivory, made of the tusks of African or Indian elephants. Notice the set of keys hanging from the first slightly open drawer, and the intricately woven cloth. The latter—perhaps produced in Guatemala, Mexico, or even China—was known as *paño de chocolate* ("chocolate cloth") and was used to wipe chocolate foam from one's mouth or the spoon before drinking.



Figure **13.7.13.112**: Detail, Antonio de Pereda, *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, 1652, oil on canvas, 80 x 94 cm (**The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg**)



Figure **13.7.13.113**: Detail, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, c. 1656, oil on canvas, 318 x 276 cm (**Museo del Prado, Madrid**)

The reds in this cloth lead us toward two bright red vessels resting on the chest. These pots are two types of so-called *búcaros*, earthenware vessels used to cool water and appreciated for their aroma and taste. Spanish women (and sometimes men) ate little pieces of these wares as if they were candies, and some believed they had special properties, such as the ability to whiten the skin or prevent pregnancies. Although they were originally from Portugal, by the seventeenth century *búcaros* were also produced in several Spanish American colonies. In Diego Velázquez's celebrated ***Las Meninas***, the infanta Margarita is portrayed receiving a small *búcaro*. Scholars have identified the shorter, simpler *búcaro* in Pereda's painting as being from Guadalajara, Mexico, and the larger one—called *enchinado* because it is decorated with small fragments of quartz—as likely being from Chile.

Additionally, we find a black vessel with silver mounting that is probably of European origin, a transparent glass vessel with water or *aloja* (an aromatic wine from Southern Spain), and a lacquered (a Japanese technique) gourd cup decorated with flowers and winged figures of Mexican or Italian origin.

Showing off skill



Figure **13.7.13.114**: Antonio de Pereda, *Still Life with Ebony Chest*, 1652, oil on canvas, 80 x 94 cm (**The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg**)

These objects exemplify how people in the seventeenth century interacted with a global world in their daily lives and, more specifically, how elite Spaniards enjoyed the fruits of the large Spanish empire. Some of these connections were quite complex and are wonderfully illustrated here: The Delft *jícara*, for instance, is a ceramic cup made in the Netherlands, imitating Chinese designs, and used to drink chocolate from Mexico in a Spanish household.

The owner of this painting must have been proud to have such an array of worldly goods represented in a painting that was itself a precious possession. The painter's task, in turn, was to represent these objects as faithfully as possible: on the one hand, so that the viewer could identify the objects; on the other, to show that painting can imitate all the other crafts. Notice how carefully Pereda imitates other materials and how he shows off his skill by depicting the way these materials are reflected on various surfaces. Red and black are reflected on the glass vessel and the whisk is visible in the surface of the silver tray. If you look closely, you can see Pereda's signature in one of the boxes. From the perspective of the artist, the painting seems to be a celebration of global craftsmanship as much as his own.

Notes:

1. Madame D'Aulnoy, *Travels into Spain*, edited by R. Foulché-Delbosc (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 212.

Additional Resources:

This work at the Hermitage Museum

Essay on still-life painting in Southern Europe, 1600-1800 from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Essay on Antonio de Pereda y Salgado from the Museo del Prado (in Spanish)

"A Brief History of Chocolate" from Smithsonian Magazine

Essays on bodegones (still life genre) from the Guggenheim and Oxford Bibliographies

Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "The Global Lives of Things: Material Culture in the First Global Age." In Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello eds., *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (Routledge, 2015), pp. 1-28.

Byron Hamman, "Interventions: The Mirrors of Las Meninas: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay." *The Art Bulletin* vol. 92, issues 1/2 (2010), pp. 6-35.

William Jordan ed., *Spanish Still Life in the Golden Age, 1600–1650* (Kimbell Art Museum, 1985).

William Jordan and Peter Cherry, *Spanish Still Life from Velázquez to Goya* (National Gallery, 1995).

Cinta Krahe, *Chinese Porcelain in Habsburg Spain* (Centro de Estudios Europa Hispanica, 2016).

Marcy Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics." *The American Historical Review* , vol 111, issue 3 (2006), pp. 660–691.

Marcy Norton, "Foreword." In Stacey Schwartzkopf and Kathryn E. Sampeck eds., *Substance and Seduction: Ingested Commodities in Early Modern Mesoamerica* (University of Texas Press, 2017).

Natacha Seseña, *El vicio del barro (*Ediciones El Viso, 2009).

Juan Sanchez de Cotán, *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber*

by DR. SALLY HICKSON



Figure **13.7.13.115**: Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber*, 1602, oil on canvas, 68.9 cm x 84.5 cm (San Diego Museum of Art)

Stark, spare, meticulous

This starkly simple still life by Juan Sánchez de Cotán is the kind of life-long puzzle that makes for great contemplative fodder on long plane rides and sleepless summer nights. What could a cabbage, a cucumber, a melon and quince mean? Is there some underlying universal truth at the heart of their stark, spare, meticulous arrangement within the window's inky, impenetrable darkness? Completely different from the voluptuous *pronkstilleven*, the ostentatious seventeenth-century still lifes of Dutch art—with their luscious lobsters, silver chargers and glass vessels strewn in careless abandon (as in the example below), Cotán's pristine austerity is akin to a vegetal altar.



Figure **13.7.13.116**: Jan Davidszoon de Heem, *Still Life with Ham, Lobster and Fruit*, c. 1653, 75 x 105 cm (Boijmans Museum, Rotterdam)

Cotan was a pioneer of the Spanish still life *bodegón*, an arrangement of simple foodstuffs. Some historians have suggested he drew his inspiration from his own ascetic Carthusian piety (the Carthusians are an order of monks that live in seclusion and devote themselves to prayer). Born in Orgaz, his art developed in completely the opposite direction from El Greco, whose profuse and luxurious altarpiece of the *Burial of Count Orgaz* is located in the Cathedral of San Tomé, Toledo, where Cotán had a studio. His still lifes, however, belong to his secular period before entering the monastery, after which he took up religious painting, later electing to leave the monastery and dying as a lay brother in Granada.



Figure **13.7.13.117**: El Greco, *Burial of Count Orgaz*, 1586, oil on canvas, 460 × 360 cm (Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain)

Archimedes' hyperbola

If these still lifes are not ascetic deliberations, or early meditations on vegetarianism, what could they possibly mean? What of the quince and cabbage, suspended, as was typically done in country kitchens, to keep them from spoiling? Why a sectioned melon, seeds exposed, a quivering sliver sitting on the sill beside the cut fruit? The final member of the quartet is the intact cucumber, pushed over the edge of the sill toward the viewer, completing a sequence of gradual emergence from the window's depths. In fact, the gradual, emergent curvilinear plane has been compared to Archimedes' hyperbola, suggesting that such paintings, which were generally made for an educated, secular clientele, were perhaps understood as geometric meditations (Archimedes was a third-century B.C.E. Greek mathematician and astronomer).

Archimedes was first translated and published by Federico Commandino in 1565 (*Archimedis De iis quae vehuntur in aqua libri duo/ a Frederico Commandino restituti et commentariis illustrate*), at approximately the same time that he published his own *De Centro Gravitatis*. Commandino's work was followed by Luca Valerio's *De Centro Gravitatis* in 1604—confirming a strong contemporary interest in spherical bodies that might be related to Cotán's still-life experiments.



Figure **13.7.13.118**: Detail, Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber*, 1602, oil on canvas, 68.9 cm x 84.5 cm (San Diego Museum of Art) (photo: **Mary Harrsch**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Empire and conversion

Others have suggested that the arrangement of spheres and sectioned semi-spherical fruits and vegetables is to be understood in terms of astronomy, a representation of celestial bodies moving against the night sky, possibly in relation to celestial navigation. Spain was, of course, at the forefront of exploration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Or, they could represent specific celestial bodies in their various phases, although Galileo did not turn his telescope toward the moon until 1609. Finally, all four of the items here were introduced from Europe for cultivation in the New World, perhaps alluding, however obliquely, to Empire and conversion.

Diego Velázquez

Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*

by OLIVIA NICOLE MILLER



Figure 13.7.13.119: Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*, 1618-22, oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm (Apsley House, London, England)

Diego Velázquez was originally from the southern Spanish city of Seville. Though he began his career painting genre scenes (images of everyday life) that were often redolent with religious undertones, in 1623 he was ordered to paint a portrait of King Philip IV. Although unfortunately now lost, that portrait secured his future and he was named official painter to the king, a position he served until his death. Although he created many portraits of members of the royal family, *Las Meninas* is by far his most famous and technically brilliant work.

Just one year before his death in 1659, he received the Knighthood of Santiago, an honor he yearned for his entire life (during this time artists were generally not permitted to ascend to noble rank by the mere fact that they worked with their hands).



Figure 13.7.13.120: View of Sevilla, c. 1660, oil on canvas, 163 x 274 cm (**Focus-Abengoa Foundation**, Seville, Spain)

Seville in the sixteenth century

Seville was once the largest city in Spain, with a population of around 130,000 people—quite a large population for early modern Europe. It was also the most culturally diverse city in Spain. As a port city (see the image above) Seville was the main hub for trade between Europe and the Americas. Merchants from across the continent frequented the city, bringing with them artworks and other fine commodities. Wealth poured into Seville and some even remarked that the city was so wealthy that the streets could be paved with silver and precious gems.



Figure **13.7.13.121**: Map showing the location of Seville in Spain.

While on the surface there was much to admire about this cosmopolitan city, there were also the common realities that come with large cities. Harsh distinctions in social class left a minority of wealthy people surrounded by a desperate group of impoverished citizens. In addition, Seville was a stop along the slave trade route and most middle and upper-class citizens in Seville owned slaves.

Bodegones

The painting, *The Waterseller of Seville* is often labeled as a *bodegón*. Derived from the word *bodega*, which means tavern in Spanish, *bodegón* was a term used to describe artistic representations of daily life, and particularly those associated with food. Essentially these are genre scenes with still life objects.



Figure **13.7.13.122**: An example of a *bodegón*. Diego Velázquez, *Old Woman Cooking Eggs*, 1618, oil on canvas, 100.5 x 119.5 cm (National Galleries, Scotland)

Velázquez certainly was not the first artist to paint *bodegones*. By the time he painted *The Waterseller of Seville*, Netherlandish artists such as Pieter Aertsen had already established themselves as masters of still life and genre painting (see below). The movement was also gaining momentum in Italy where Caravaggio and others explored ordinary people in ordinary places. There were even some Spanish painters whose still lifes and kitchen scenes had tremendous influence on Velázquez. Velázquez departed from these other works by making his compositions more simple—pared down to only a few figures and objects.



Figure 13.7.13.123: Pieter Aertsen, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, 1553, oil on panel, 2000 x 1620 cm (Museum Bojmans Van Beuningen). “The observer’s eye, seeking the narrative biblical scene, is drawn to the alluring still life in the foreground. But to discover the true meaning we must follow Mary’s example and not succumb to the temptations of the material world.” (Museum text from the **Google Art Project**)

As a fairly new genre relatively speaking, Velázquez’s bodegones were not well-received by some traditional artists. Despite these reservations, there were many other artists and patrons who were fascinated with genre scenes and Velázquez found a market for his works. With their earthly color palettes, dramatic lighting and understated backgrounds, these works reveal the influence of Caravaggio. Set in kitchens or taverns, the bodegones portray the simple nature of daily life and demonstrate a naturalism and verisimilitude that was unparalleled by Velázquez’s contemporaries.



Figure 13.7.13.124: Detail with figures, Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*, 1618-22, oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm (Apsley House, London)

The Waterseller of Seville

In the center of the compacted composition stands the monumental profile figure of the Waterseller, aged from the hot sun and donned in a humble brown cloak. He offers a boy a glass of water, freshened by a fig, which he has just poured from the large clay vessel in the immediate foreground. Although they are physically connected to one another as they both hold the glass, the boy and old man do not make eye contact but instead stare past one another. Perhaps their difference in age prevents a connection between the two, or perhaps it is their difference in social status. The face of a young man emerges from the shadows of the background between the old Waterseller and the boy. He stares out at the viewer while drinking from his mug. Within this painting we see three ages of man represented.



Figure 13.7.13.125: Detail with jugs, Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*, 1618-22, oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm (Apsley House, London)

While Velázquez has dismissed any background details in favor of the figures in the foreground, we can assume by the objects that this scene is taking place inside or near a tavern. The light coming from the left not only illuminates the face of the young boy, but also draws attention to the beads of water trickling down the slightly misshapen curve of the water vessel. This painting is a tour de force of naturalism; the textures of the clothes, jugs, glass, and even the waterseller's face are meticulously rendered using a combination of thick and tiny dabs of paint. The naturalism is as much the subject of the work as the Waterseller himself.



Figure 13.7.13.126: Detail with glass, Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*, 1618-22, oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm (Apsley House, London)



Figure 13.7.13.127: Detail with Waterseller, Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*, 1618-22, oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm (Apsley House, London)

Although watersellers were a common feature in any urban landscape of early modern Europe, they were especially prevalent in Seville, known for its long and brutal summers. As marginalized figures, contemporary literature and imagery often represented watersellers as beggars or cheats who routinely fought with their customers.

However, in Velázquez's depiction, there is nothing of the scoundrel type that one would expect from a waterseller. Some have argued that this is an idealized representation that does not depict the true nature of this impoverished class—a class that was growing ever larger during this time. Others argue that this painting is not concealing the harsh realities of poverty, but rather imbues this waterseller with both monumentality and dignity.

Additional resources:

Jonathan Brown, *Collected Writings on Velázquez (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Jonathan Brown and Carmen Garrido, *Velázquez: The Technique of Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Tanya J. Diego Tiffany, *Velázquez's Early Paintings and the Culture of Seventeenth-Century Seville* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Univesrity Press, 2012).

Barry Wind, V*elázquez's Bodegones: A Study in Seventeenth-century Spanish Genre Painting* (Fairfax: The George Mason University Press, 1987).

Diego Velázquez, *Los Borrachos (The Drunks),* or *The Triumph of Bacchus*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.21**: Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Los Borrachos (The Drunks)*, also known as *The Triumph of Bacchus*, 1628-1629, 165 x 225 cm (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid)

Diego Velázquez, *Vulcan's Forge*

by BETH HARRIS and STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.22**: Diego Velázquez, *Vulcan's Forge*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 223 cm x 290 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)
Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Diego Velázquez, *The Surrender of Breda*

by DR. JAVIER BERZAL DE DIOS



Figure **13.7.13.128**: Diego Velázquez, The Surrender of Breda, 1634-35, oil on canvas, 307 cm × 367 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain)

What defines a great leader

How military leaders treat their vanquished enemies conveys much of their character. In early modern Europe, paintings of military victories usually followed a preconceived structure: the victorious commander appeared seated high on his horse, or on a throne, while the capitulating general would kneel on the ground. Degraded and humiliated, the conquered army leader would prostrate himself in submission to the contempt of the triumphant general. But what happens if these dynamics are shifted? What would an image of an honorable commander showing respect for a conquered army communicate? Would a magnanimous leader be seen as weak? And how could abstract concepts such as honor or magnanimity be represented? Velazquez's *The Surrender of Breda* revolutionized the genre of military painting precisely by emphasizing that to win with elegance and magnanimity is what defines a great leader, and not merely the ferocious capacity to triumph in combat.

A commission from the King of Spain

Between 1630 and 1635 the Spanish king Philip IV commissioned the construction of a royal palace just outside of Madrid. *The Surrender of Breda* was one of the paintings that decorated the most lavish room in that palace, the Hall of Realms. This multipurpose room had two important functions; it was a throne room, and it was a place for music and theatrical performances. As such, the Hall of Realms was the space where emissaries and ambassadors were received and entertained. When visitors entered the room, they encountered a highly ornate space decorated with large paintings that celebrated the Spanish king's military victories. *The Surrender of Breda* is one of these paintings. It commemorates the capture of the city of Breda during the Eighty Years' War, a conflict between Spain, which controlled the Low Countries, and the Dutch, who were fighting for political independence.



Figure **13.7.13.129**: Youthful Dutch soldier (detail), Diego Velázquez, *The Surrender of Breda*, 1634-35, oil on canvas, 307 cm × 367 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

The aftermath of battle

Though the painting depicts a military victory, Velázquez removed the bloody and violent aspects of the battle from the canvas. Instead, he chose to present the aftermath of the battle: the capitulation of the Dutch to the Spanish troops. It is important to notice how Velázquez established the difference between these two groups. The Dutch, on the left, appear disorganized, youthful, and few in number. This contrasts with the Spanish troops located on the right, which are presented as a large, well-organized, and seasoned group. Velázquez's depiction of the spears, vertically rising over the horizon, has received much attention, to the point that the painting is also known as *The Lances*. The numerous spears create a sense that there are more Spanish troops than we can actually see and, because of their ordered arrangement, they emphasize the military competence of the Spanish soldiers.



Figure **13.7.13.130**: Exchange of keys from the Dutch to the Spanish captain (detail), Diego Velázquez, *The Surrender of Breda*, 1634-35, oil on canvas, 307 cm × 367 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

A painting about magnanimity

The center of the painting is dominated by the exchange of the keys. Ambrogio Spinola, the captain of the Spanish troops, receives the keys of the city from Justinus van Nassau. Having descended from his horse, and looking at the Dutch commander eye-to-eye, Spinola places his hand over Justinus' shoulder, most likely in order to stop him from kneeling. This respectful gesture separates *The Surrender of Breda* from typical surrender scenes. In *The Surrender of Breda*, the battle remains in the distance, only noticeable because of the smoke columns rising in the background. It is the human encounter, in the foreground, that Velázquez emphasized. Hence, it is a painting about magnanimity as much, if not more, than a painting about military prowess.

Not a document of the event

Some aspects of the painting correspond to the historical reality of the event. After the siege, Spinola granted the Dutch army very generous terms of surrender; he ordered the Spanish army to respect the Dutch, who were allowed to leave Breda in military formation and carrying their ensigns. However, we should not let Velázquez's naturalistic style deceive us. *The Surrender of Breda* is not a faithful reproduction of the event. It is highly unlikely that the encounter between the two commanders took place as depicted. The painter, who was not present at the siege of Breda, carefully constructed the scene to commemorate Spinola's magnanimous character, not to document an event. Velázquez has subtly emphasized the figure of Spinola who, holding a baton of command, wears a distinct, splendid armor and a vivid magenta sash. At the same time, Velázquez's astonishing skill is precisely shown in the easiness with which he transforms the viewers into eyewitness to an impromptu encounter. The muted earth tones and a soft light give the painting a naturalistic character. Without blatant symbols, allegorical figures, or even idealized figures, the viewer is invited to encounter the scene as if they had been there.

The painting presents a humane encounter in the midst of the chaos and cruelty of war. But we should not think that there are no ulterior motives for the presentation of this seemingly virtuous moment. Spinola, the Spanish troops, and by extension Philip IV, are presented as powerful and honorable. Thus the painting operates at multiple levels: it is a rhetorical exaltation of Spanish national identity, a symbol of Philip IV and his army, and a tribute to Spinola, a personal friend of Velázquez who had died a few years before the commission of the painting.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Prado

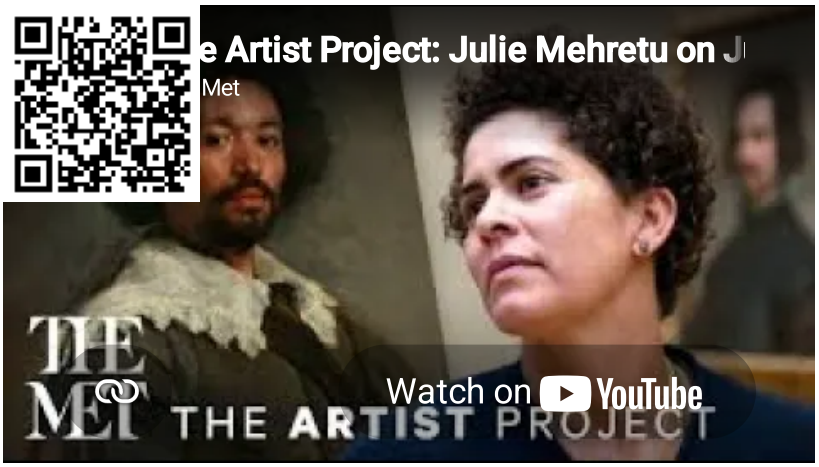
This painting discussed on "Art Through Time"

About the Hall of Realms

This painting on Wikipedia

Diego Velázquez, *Juan de Pareja*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.7.13.23**: Julie Mehretu on Velázquez's Juan de Pareja (1650). "Looking at his expression I'm moved, almost to tears. That's not often that a painting can do that."

Additional resources:

Velázquez, *Juan de Pareja* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Velázquez on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Portraiture in Renaissance and Baroque Europe on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.24**: Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, c. 1656, oil on canvas, 125 1/4 x 108 5/8″ / 318 x 276 cm (Museo Nacional Del Prado, Madrid)

Francisco de Zurbarán, *The Martyrdom of Saint Serapion*

by DR. MELISA PALERMO

Soldier, friar, hostage, martyr, saint

St. Serapion's life reads much like a medieval action-adventure drama, but it's his death that we are left to meditate on.



Figure **13.7.13.131**: Francisco de Zurbarán, *The Martyrdom of Saint Serapion*, 1628, 120 × 103 cm, oil on canvas (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut)

Accounts conflict about Serapion's origins—some say that he was born in England, others in Ireland or Scotland. What is known is that he was a soldier in the army of King Richard I (the Lionheart) and later that of Leopold VI, Duke of Austria. He then went to Spain to participate in the Reconquista (the Christian "reconquest" of parts of the Iberian penninsula—today Spain and Portugal—that had been under Islamic rule) before becoming a friar in the Mercedarian Order. This order was founded in Spain to ransom Christians who had been captured by Muslims. There are several conflicting accounts of Serapion's martyrdom—one story has him martyred by pirates off the British coast, another says he was left for dead, recovered and then was killed in Algiers. According to the

Mercedarians, Serapion made several successful hostage rescues. During the last captive exchange the ransom money took too long to reach Algiers and Serapion was killed. The saint was nailed on an X-shaped cross like the Apostle St. Andrew, and dismembered or disemboweled.

Tenebrist drama

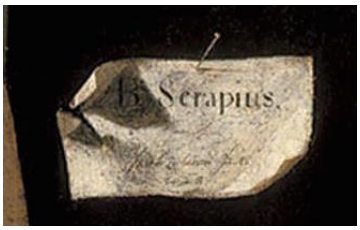


Figure **13.7.13.132**: Identification and signature (detail), Francisco de Zurbarán, *The Martyrdom of Saint Serapion*, 1628, 120 × 103 cm, oil on canvas (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut)

This horrific martyrdom is the subject of this seventeenth-century painting by the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán. None of the grisly details are evident in this painting—Zurbarán chose to convey this event as a still and contemplative scene. The three-quarter-length figure of Serapion takes up most of the composition; his lifeless body robed in his beige habit emerges from a dark background. The tenebrism (the intense contrast between light and dark) provides a dramatic illumination of the saint's body and is characteristic of Baroque art in the style of Caravaggio. One can imagine that in a dimly lit room the intensely realistic figure would appear to be emerging from the darkness into the viewer's space. The only reminder that this is indeed a painting is the small piece of paper where Zurbarán identified Serapion and signed and dated the work.

Monastic patrons

Zurbarán's primary patrons were monks. He and his workshop sometimes lived in the monasteries they worked for and thus were able to experience and understand the lifestyle of the Order. Monastery life varied from order to order but monks generally woke early to pray and prayed several times a day while also tending to their work around the monastery—writing, copying books, studying scripture, and/or physical labor. Most observed long periods of silence which was meant to free the mind and soul to contemplate God.

Zurbarán's realism and austere, spiritual aesthetic made for a style that was well-suited for the quiet and contemplative monastic environment. This particular painting was displayed in a room where deceased monks were laid out before their burial—so in this sense it was a funerary image. Monks reflecting on death would be confronted by this image of martyrdom and all its spiritual connotations.



Figure **13.7.13.133**: Saint Serapion (detail), Francisco de Zurbarán, *The Martyrdom of Saint Serapion*, 1628, 120 × 103 cm, oil on canvas (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut)

The Mercedarian Order was founded on the notion of self-sacrifice, ransoming and taking the place of captive Christians. Many in the Order met bloody deaths like Serapion and this element of their origin was ever-present. Zurbarán depicted Serapion with his arms

stretched up and tied to a faintly visible tree. His pose is reminiscent of Christ on the cross, and the fact that Serapion willingly risked his life (as did many Mercedarians) echoes Christ's own sacrifice. Zurbarán favored a largely monochrome color scheme that adds to the subdued tone of the work. The muted browns and cream colors are pierced only by the small yet prominent red and yellow Mercedarian badge on the saint's torso.

Martyrdom in the 17th century



Figure **13.7.13.134**: Francisco Zurbarán, *St. John Houghton*, 17th century (Museo de Bellas Artes de Cádiz, Spain)

Scenes of martyrdom enjoyed particular popularity in seventeenth-century Spain where the Counter-Reformation spirit was strong (the Counter-Reformation was the Catholic Church's response to the Protestant Reformation). In England, King Henry VIII's of Act of Supremacy (which made the King the head of the Church of England) resulted in the persecution of Catholics, especially between 1534 and 1680. The reign of Queen Elizabeth was particularly bloody with many of the martyrs killed by being hanged, drawn, and quartered. St. Serapion was painted in 1628, right in the midst of that persecution. Zurbarán was also commissioned by the Carthusian Order to paint the martyr St. John Houghton who was killed in England by being hung, drawn, and quartered. It is worth noting that Serapion is associated with Britain, whether he was born there or not, he is said to have spent time preaching and recruiting for the Order in London.

Serapion was beatified (the third in four steps to becoming a saint) in 1625 by Pope Urban VIII and by doing so he was symbolically recalling England's tradition of martyrs for the faith and providing a model for those who were suffering persecution and the threat of a similar death. In the painting of St. John Houghton, Zurbarán also omitted any bloody details, instead showing the saint holding out his heart and wearing a noose around his neck. Similarly, St. Serapion's copious garments conceal any violence done to his body, though his open habit is a reference to his body being cut open. Except for a small welt on his forehead, Zurbarán has omitted any obvious signs of trauma.



Figure 13.7.13.135: José (Jusepe) de Ribera, *Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew*, 1640-50, oil on canvas (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid)

Compare these images by Zurbarán to the *Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew*, by his contemporary, José de Ribera, which details the torturous peeling off of the saint's skin, revealing his blood and muscles. In bypassing the horror of the method of death and conveying a peaceful scene, Zurbarán has emphasized the eternal reward of heaven.

Additional resources:

Biography of Zurbarán and works in The National Gallery

Online catalogue on Zurbarán from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Monasticism in Western Medieval Europe on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Jusepe de Ribera, *The Martyrdom of Saint Philip*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.13.25: Jusepe (José) de Ribera, *The Martyrdom of Saint Philip*, 1639, oil on canvas, 92 x 92″ / 234 x 234 cm (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid)

The English Romantic poet, Lord Byron, wrote that the artist, "Spagnoletto [the little Spaniard] tainted / His brush with all the blood of all the sainted" (Don Juan , xiii. 71).

Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco, *Christ of Clemency*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK

Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco, <em
Christ of Clemency, c. 1603–1605, polychromed wood (Seville Cathedral)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-25383" height="700" sizes="(max-width: 470px) 100vw, 470px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ces-edited.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ces-edited.jpg
739w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x447.jpg
300w" width="470">

Figure **13.7.13.136**: Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco, *Christ of Clemency*, c. 1603–05, polychromed wood (Seville Cathedral) (photo: **Anual**, CC BY 3.0)

> ***"The Lord Christ crucified must be [portrayed] alive, before having expired, with his head inclined to the right side, looking toward whatever person might be praying at his feet, as though Christ himself were speaking to him or her, and as though complaining that what he is suffering is for the sake of the one praying. And so the eyes and face of Christ should have a certain severity, and the eyes should be completely open."***

So says an early seventeenth-century contract stipulating the appearance of a sculpture of Christ on the cross for Seville Cathedral. The crucifix's patron, Mateo Vázquez de Leca, the archdeacon of Carmona (a position at the Seville Cathedral), went to great length to instruct the artists on how he wanted this sculpture to appear. Today, it is known as the *Cristo de la Clemencia*, or *Christ of Clemency*, and it was sculpted by Juan Martínez Montañés and painted by Francisco Pacheco likely between 1603 and 1605.

The God of Wood

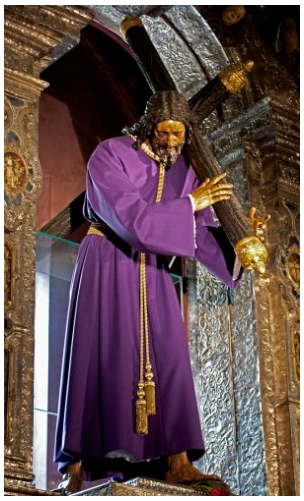


Figure **13.7.13.137**: Juan Martínez Montañés, *Nuestro Padre Jesús de la Pasión*, 1618 (Iglesia del Salvador, Seville) (photo: **Anual**, CC BY 3.0)

Juan Martínez Montañés was a Spanish Baroque sculptor who was sometimes called the "God of Wood," or "*Dios de la Madera*," for his skill working this material. He was known for the subtle naturalism of his sculptures. Sculpting in wood allowed him to create graceful bodies that, unlike the work of some of his Baroque contemporaries, were never flashy or overly distorted. He made many sculptures in Seville, including *Jesus of the Passion (Jesús de las Pasión)* from 1618. His renown was international, and some of his works were even shipped to the Spanish Americas.

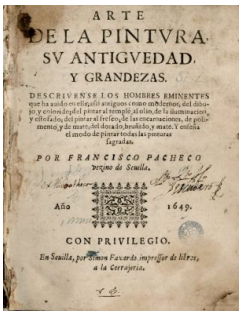
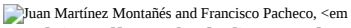

ARTE
DE LA PINTVRA.
SV ANTIGVEDAD,
Y GRANDEZAS.
DESCRIVENSE LOS HOMBRES EMINENTES
POR FRANCISCO PACHECO
Año 1649.
CON PRIVILEGIO.

Figure 13.7.13.138: Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, 1649 (Barcelona Athenaeum Library)

Francisco Pacheco was a painter, but is perhaps more famous today for his artistic treatise, *The Art of Painting* (*Arte de la pintura*, written in 1638 and published in 1649). The treatise discusses many topics, among them how to paint a wooden sculpture in order to achieve the greatest sense of naturalism. He desired artworks that followed Christian orthodoxy, and in 1618, he became an Inquisition censor for artworks (someone who evaluated artworks for their adherence to Catholic beliefs).

Iconography


Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco, <em

Christ of Clemency, c. 1603–1605, polychromed wood (Seville Cathedral)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-25383" height="372" sizes="(max-width: 250px) 100vw, 250px" src="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x447.jpg

" srcset="

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x447.jpg

300w,

https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ces-edited.jpg

739w" width="250">

Figure 13.7.13.139: Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco, *Christ of Clemency*, c. 1603–1605, polychromed wood (Seville Cathedral) (photo: **Anual**, CC BY 3.0)

The *Christ of Clemency* depicts the Crucifixion. Christ's lifelike body displays the artist's interest in anatomy, with the ribcage pressed up against his stretched skin, arms sagging under his weight, and carefully rendered leg muscles, all of which serve to highlight his humanity. Tiny rivulets of blood run down around Christ's shoulders from the crown of thorns on his head, and, as stipulated in the archdeacon's instructions, his head is turned down and to the right, with open eyes. His mouth is also open, as if he might be speaking to the viewer.

The four nails that pin Christ to the cross, one for each hand and foot, were also stipulated in the contract for the sculpture. This particular point addressed a long-standing debate within the church over how many nails—three or four—pierced Christ's flesh.



Figure 13.7.13.140: Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco, *Christ of Clemency* (detail), c. 1603–1605, polychromed wood (Seville Cathedral) (photo: **Anual**, CC BY 3.0)

At the twenty-fifth session of the **Council of Trent** in 1563, the ecclesiastics in attendance stressed the need for imagery that was free of confusion and would not lead anyone astray. Artists were expected to model their figures on canonical sources, like the Bible. Pacheco composed his treatise in part to provide painters with instructions on the "correct" way to produce their works in accordance with the decrees of the Council of Trent.

Based on their reading of Christian sources, artists like Pacheco decided that including four nails was the proper way to represent the Crucifixion. Even though Pacheco's treatise dates to after the *Christ of Clemency*, its discussion of four nails relates to the general cultural climate of Seville at this time. Sculptors such as Martínez Montañés followed the decrees and included four nails. Painters like Pacheco, Diego Velázquez, and Francisco de Zurbarán also depicted the Crucifixion in this way, and they may have looked to sculpture made by Martínez Montañés as a model.

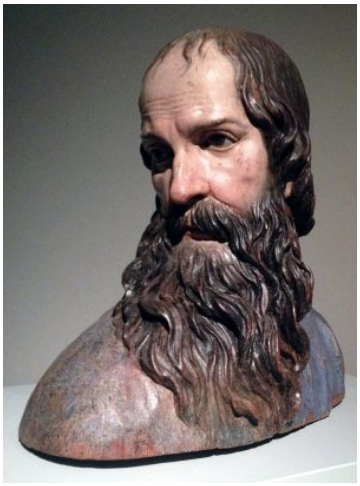


Figure **13.7.13.141**: Alonso Cano, *Bust of Saint Paul*, c. 1660-65, polychrome wood, 47 × 52.5 × 28 cm (Granada Cathedral) (photo: **Marsupium**, CC 0)

There was a long tradition of polychromed wooden sculptures in Spain. In the seventeenth century, artists such as Alonso Cano and Juan de Mesa became famous for their polychrome sculpure. However, while we may think of a sculpture as the work of an individual, Spanish polychrome sculptures was almost always the result of collaboration among artists who specialized in wood carving and painting. In fact, there were strict rules prohibiting sculptors from painting their own work. After the sculptor modeled and gessoed the figure, a *pintor de imaginería* (a painter of religious images), would produce the flesh tones and clothing. This was known as the process of "incarnation" (in Spanish, "*encarnación*"): painting flesh onto the sculpture in order to "bring it alive."

One motivation for commissioning and creating naturalistic polychromed wooden sculptures was to provoke an emotional or spiritual response in the viewer. Even though polychromed wooden sculpture existed prior to the seventeenth century (and outside Spain), those produced during the Baroque era achieved a new level of naturalism that was considered desirable in the wake of the Council of Trent.

Individuals like Teresa of Ávila and Ignatius of Loyola ushered in a new way of engaging with the divine, one that asked devotees to use their senses to insert themselves into sacred narratives and spaces. Artists like Martínez Montañés and Pacheco responded to the need for artworks that would move viewers emotionally and inspire them to atone for their sins.



Figure **13.7.13.142**: Virgin of Macarena, 17th century, polychromed wood (Basilica of Macarena, Cathedral of Seville)

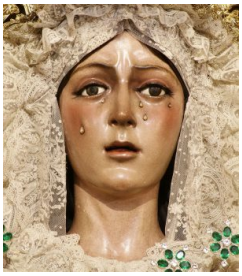


Figure **13.7.13.143**: Virgin of Macarena (detail), 17th century, polychromed wood (Basilica of Macarena, Cathedral of Seville)

Polychromed sculptures encouraged those who saw them to identify, for example, with the sorrows of the Virgin Mary, whose tears streamed down her grief-stricken face, or with Jesus, whose sorrows and torture were marked onto his body in the form of wounds. To achieve greater realism, sculptors would sometimes add cork, which was then painted, to replicate mutilated flesh and coagulated blood. Other additions, like clothes, wigs, teeth (wooden, ivory, or even real human teeth), leather, and resin added to the impression of living sculpture. Some sculptures even had articulated limbs that allowed them to be placed into different poses, endowing them with even more lifelike qualities. When they were (or are still today) carried through the streets during religious processions, their limbs could move gently, giving the impression of life.



Figure **13.7.13.144**: A float in a procession during Holy Week in Seville (photo: **Leonardo Moreno**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Sculptures like the *Christ of Clemency* were often used during Holy Week, a time during which Catholics meditate on the sufferings and martyrdom of Christ.[1] During Holy Week processions, confraternity members would carry floats on which the sculptures would rest, arranged to portray specific moments in the Passion narrative. The floats were also commonly adorned with canopies, textiles, candles, and metal objects, making them quite heavy. Confraternity members would pause frequently to rest and to allow people to gaze at the sculptures. Some confraternity members also engaged in flagellation as they processed, whipping their backs in imitation of Christ, represented before their eyes in wood.

Many of these polychromed wooden sculptures are still used today during Holy Week, and Seville is famous for its elaborate processions. A song from 1927, written by José Muñoz San Roman, captures the experience beautifully:

> ***"the Montañés Christ,***
>
> ***the Virgin of Hope***
>
> ***. . . pass by***
>
> ***on flower-strewn calvaries***
>
> ***beneath fine embroidered canopies***
>
> ***of velvet and precious stones."***

[1] It should be noted, however, that the *Christ of Clemency* was not used in processions.

Additional resources:

Polychrome Sculpture in Spanish America on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Making a Spanish Polychrome Sculpture, from the Getty Museum

The Making of a 17th-century Polychrome Sculpture, from the National Gallery of Art

Smarthistory video of *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa* by Bernini

The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture, 1600–1700 from the National Gallery of Art

The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture, 1600–1700, ed. Xavier Bray (London: National Gallery, 2009).

Susan Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Jerónimo de Balbás, *Altar of the Kings (Altar de los Reyes)*

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.13.26: Jerónimo de Balbás, *Altar of the Kings (Altar de los Reyes)*, 1718-37, Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary (Mexico City)

Google

502. That's an error.

The server encountered a temporary error and could not complete your request.

Please try again in 30 seconds. That's all we know.



Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

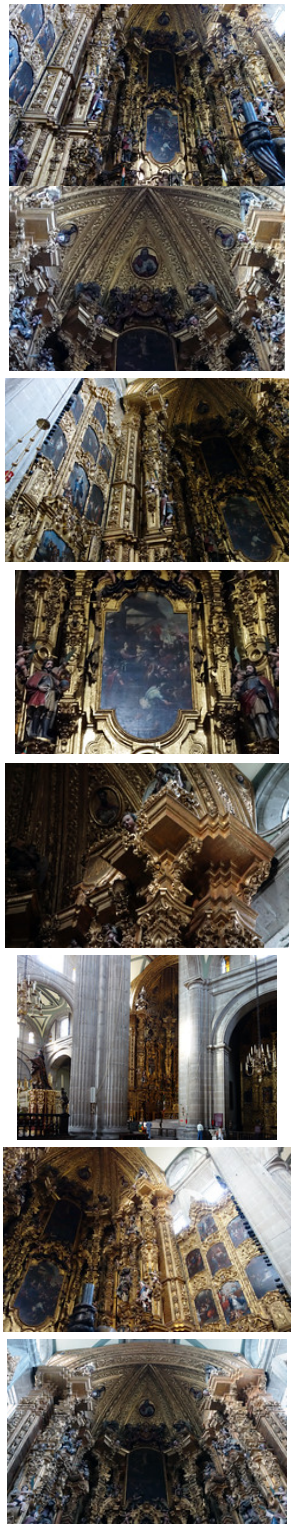


Figure 13.7.13.145: More Smarthistory images…

Baroque art in France and England

France and England looked to southern Europe for inspiration, but made the Baroque their own.

1600 - 1700

France

Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego*

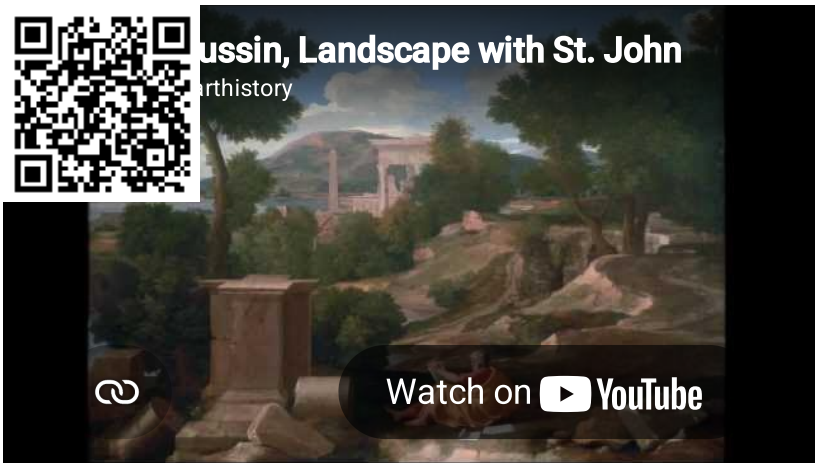
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.27**: Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 1637-38, oil on canvas, 87 x 120 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Saint John on Patmos*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.13.28**: Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Saint John on Patmos*, 1640, oil on canvas, 100.3 x 136.4 cm (39-1/2 x 53-5/8 inches) (Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

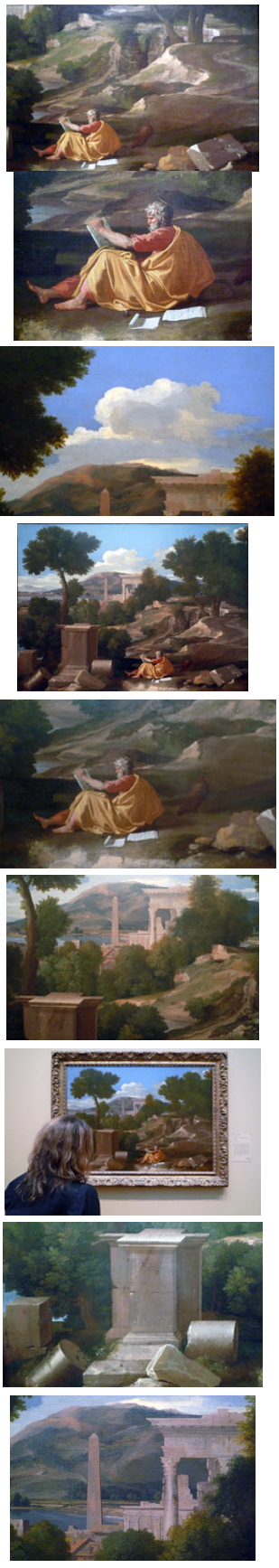


Figure 13.7.13.146: More Smarthistory images…

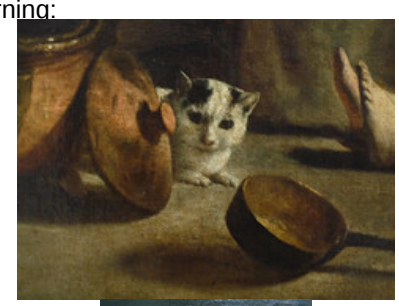
Antoine or Louis Le Nain, *Peasant Family in an Interior*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.13.28**: Antoine or Louis Le Nain, *Peasant Family in an Interior*, 2nd quarter of the 17th century, oil on canvas, 1.13 x 1.59 m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







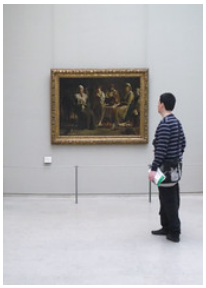




Figure 13.7.13.147: More Smarthistory images…

Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*

by TESSA FLEMING



Figure 13.7.13.148: Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 9’2” x 6’3” (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France)

The early seventeenth century was marked by unrest and near constant warfare; however, by the mid seventeenth century, France had emerged as Europe’s largest and most powerful country. France, under Louis XIV, was an absolute monarchy where full power resided with the king. As an absolute monarch, Louis was not subject to any constitutional limitations, leading him to declare “l’etat, c’est moi” (“I am the state”). Louis ruled by divine right, receiving his authority directly from God. The concept of divine right allowed Louis to quash emerging rebellions while establishing legitimacy. Louis became known as *le Roi Soleil*, the Sun King, furthering his claim of divine lineage by recalling the ancient Greek god Apollo and declaring himself, in his usual modest manner, to be the center of the universe.

Recognizing the importance of propaganda, Louis and his advisors embarked on many large-scale projects, most memorably the expansion of Versailles from a rather unassuming (by royal standards, at least) hunting lodge to an enormous, gilded (and mirrored) palace. Versailles reinforced the image of the Sun King and infused the Baroque style with classical elements, visually linking Louis’ rule to the might of Imperial Rome. As the leading patron of the era, Louis XIV employed a workshop of artists and architects; Hyacinthe Rigaud became the principal painter to the king.



Figure 13.7.13.149: Left: Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 9’2” x 6’3” (Musée du Louvre, Paris); right: Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I at the Hunt*, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 2.66 x 2.07 m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

“L’etat, c’est moi”



Figure **13.7.13.150**: Face (detail), Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 9’2” x 6’3” (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Rigaud’s monumental portrait displays a life-size, full-body depiction of Louis XIV. The composition recalls Anthony Van Dyck’s 1635 *Charles I Dismounted*. Louis, as the focal point, stands in the center of the canvas, his body angled slightly while his face is turned to meet the viewer with the confidence and directness expected from a king.

Billowing embroidered silk curtains form an honorific canopy over the King’s head while the lavish carpeting creates an opulent environment worthy of the king’s presence. To the left, a marble column sits atop a gilded base, symbolizing the strength of the monarch while again recalling the classical era.

Louis’ pose, like Charles’ before him, allows him to literally look down on the viewer, despite both monarchs being quite short. As royal portrait painters, both Rigaud and Van Dyck were able to assert the dominance of the monarch by carefully creating the illusion of height; to please their patron, royal painters often opted for idealized elements at the expense of realism. Despite the similarities in their portraits, Louis met a happier (or at least far less grisly) end than Charles I who was beheaded in 1649.

Accessories make the man



Figure **13.7.13.151**: Fleur-de-lis and ermine (detail), Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 9’2” x 6’3” (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Like Versailles, nothing in Louis XIV is understated; every detail was intended to remind the viewer of the supremacy of the monarch and his divine authority. Louis, dressed to the nines, is bedecked in his coronation robe. Even the materials of the robe reinforce the image of the monarch; the black-and-white ermine fur and the blue-and-gold fleur-de-lis, a stylized lily, are symbolic of the French monarchy.

Rigaud paints Louis with a royal sword fastened to his hip, the precious materials contributing to the extravagant atmosphere while also symbolizing his military might. In his right hand, Louis holds the royal scepter while the crown rests on the table below, just in case there were any lingering doubts that this Louis was a pretty important fellow.



Figure **13.7.13.152**: The king (detail), Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 9'2" x 6'3" (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Louis' hair is also worth noting (and not just because it's amazing). To modern eyes, the king's hair seems more appropriate for a member of KISS than for a sixty-three year old absolute monarch; however, Louis' hair cascades down his royal robes—representing a still youthful and robust king. In official royal portraits, there was constant negotiation between historical accuracy and the ideal form. How exactly to render Louis' hair sparked an intense debate on more than one occasion: should the hairstyle be accurate, the king presented as he actually looks, or should concessions be made so that the regal qualities of the king might be more readily apparent? Like with Louis' (lack of) height, royal painters had to strike a balance between an identifiable and recognizable portrait and one that idealized the sitter to meet the patron's desired result.



Figure **13.7.13.153**: The king's legs (detail), Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 9'2" x 6'3" (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Similarly, Louis' legs, which Rigaud has cleverly and prominently displayed, are rather well defined for an aging king. Louis' advancing age (he would die fourteen years after this portrait) is betrayed by his lined face, slight jowls, and double chin; the king was reportedly in ill health and had to have several teeth extracted due to infection. It is no coincidence that Louis is posed with his majestic robe draped over his shoulder to reveal his lower limbs: Louis had been a ballet dancer in his youth and prided himself on his dancer's legs. The legs, while in contrast to his aged face, suggest a vital and vigorous man, still in the prime of his power. Rigaud tempers the monarch's timeworn face by reminding the viewer of Louis' athletic past; the heeled shoes are not only flattering but add several precious inches onto Louis' height. Here, Louis is identifiable—clearly the portrait is of the king in the later years of his life—yet also idealized, his well-toned legs and lustrous hair preternaturally preserved.

Success

Rigaud's portrait, originally commissioned as a gift for Louis' grandson, Philip V of Spain, was so well received that Louis ultimately chose to keep it and sent a copy in its place. Rigaud so successfully captured power of Louis XIV that the image was placed over the throne and in the king's absence, the painting served as his proxy and courtiers were forbidden to turn their backs on the painting.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Louvre

Art through Time: Louis XIV

Louis le Vau, André le Nôtre, and Charles le Brun, Château de Versailles

by RACHEL ROPEIK



Figure **13.7.13.154**: Vue du château de Versailles depuis le par, 1664-1710 (photo: **Marc Vassal**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

When the King of France, Louis XIV, first decided to build a new palace and move his court out of Paris, there was nothing on his chosen site at Versailles but a smallish hunting lodge. Today, the palace stands as a prime example of the over-the-top excesses of the French nobility that led to the French Revolution.



Figure **13.7.13.155**: Aerial view of the Palace of Versailles, 1664-1710 (photo: **ToucanWings**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Huge, but oh so stylish

Thanks to the team of Louis le Vau (architect to the aristocracy), André le Nôtre (landscape designer extraordinaire), and Charles le Brun (über-fashionable interior decorator and painter), Louis XIV's enormous and stylish palace was completed 21 years after it was begun in 1661 allowing Louis (and his closest friends, family, courtiers, servants and soldiers—all 20,000 of them) to officially set up court there (by that point, the next superstar architect, Jules Hardouin Mansart, had taken up the design reins). Enormous is no joke. The place has 700 rooms, 2,153 windows, and takes up 67,000 square meters of floor space (for those of you keeping track at home, that's over 12 American football fields or a bit more than 9 soccer pitches).

Over and above anything else, Versailles was meant to emphasize Louis's importance. After all, this is the guy that called himself The Sun King; as in, everything revolves around me. "L'état, c'est moi" (I am the state), he said, famously and oh-so-modestly. By building Versailles, Louis shifted the seat of French government away from the feuding, gossiping, trouble-making noble families in Paris. He had the whole palace and its massive gardens built along an East/West axis so the sun would rise and set in alignment with his home. And he filled both the palace and its gardens with sculpture, painting, and fountains that all focused on…you guessed it… himself.



Figure 13.7.13.156: Queen's bed chamber, Versailles (photo: Scott SM, CC BY-NC 2.0)

When you walk through the palace at Versailles, you're bombarded with room after room of marble and gold and paintings: ceilings painted to place Louis in the company of the Greek gods, busts of him in a huge formal curly wig staring at you wherever you go, and gold gold gold, so you never lose sight of how wealthy the King of France was. To give you just a hint, we're talking about a man who spent the equivalent of $5,000,000 on buttons over the 54 years of his reign. That's an average of almost $100,000 a year. On buttons.

Of the 700 rooms inside the palace, there are a few notable ones that served very particular functions. The king's official state bedroom is one, where the incredibly detailed lever (rising) and coucher (going to sleep) rituals would be performed each day. Both involved a whole host of courtiers waiting on the king while he got up or went to bed, following strict rules of position and rank to determine who got to perform which parts of the ceremony.

The queens of France who lived at Versailles were the focus of a similar ritual (the Toilette) in the queen's main bedchamber, a room where they also gave birth in public. The symmetrical Salon of War and Salon of Peace are decorated with paintings highlighting, unsurprisingly, France's military might and the benefits of living calmly under a tranquil ruling government. And the Cabinet des Chiens (literally, the Study for Dogs) was a room that Louis XV's valets shared with his dogs, who also got to sleep in a room full of gilding and painted decoration.

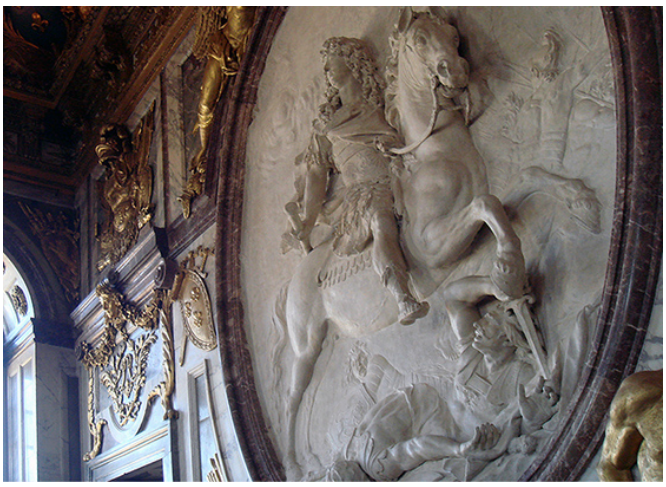


Figure 13.7.13.157: Antoine Coysevox, Equestrian Relief of King Louis XIV as a Roman Emperor, Salon de la guerre, 1715 (photo: Anna Carol, CC BY 2.0 – corrected)

Hall of Mirrors

The most famous room is the Hall of Mirrors, which runs along the entire length of the central building. One wall contains a row of giant windows looking out over the gardens (almost 2,000 acres of manicured lawns, fountains and paths arranged in the formal

garden style that André le Nôtre was known for), and the other wall is covered with 357 mirrors that catch the rising sun's rays inside the palace and remind us yet again (as if we could forget) of Louis XIV's power.



Figure **13.7.13.157**: Galerie des Glaces (Hall of Mirrors) in the Palace of Versailles, Versailles, France (photo: **Myrabella**, CC BY-SA-3.0)

Though the room is over the top in its grandeur, it was mainly used as a passageway. After the king got up for the day, he proceeded through this mirrored hall to his private chapel, and as many courtiers as could fit would squeeze in, waiting for their chance to beg a favor of the king as he passed by them. Since Louis XIV's day, the room has also been used for parties (the masked ball for the wedding of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette) and military agreements (the Treaty of Versailles that officially ended World War I was signed here in 1919).

Classical restraint

The palace's outside isn't as ornate as its inside. Sure it's still huge, and sure it's still got plenty of gold and statues and embellishments, but the basic structure is classical; it's symmetrical, repetitive, and based on simple elements that are directly borrowed from ancient Greek temples. The façade that faces the gardens looks remarkably similar to the White House in Washington, DC, albeit much bigger and not so white.



Figure **13.7.13.158**: Versailles, 1664-1710 (photo: **Susan Ware**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 – adjusted)

Before you go thinking that this is a sign of Louis XIV's hidden modesty, keep in mind that classical architecture was intended to remind people of the greatness of the antique Greek and Roman past (Greek and Roman civilization were often lumped together and called classical). When Versailles was being built, this ancient past was seen as the root of the intellectual and aesthetic superiority they believed had descended to the French nation. Classical architecture was the name of the game at Versailles, and although it wasn't as complicated as some of Louis XIV's other choices, he was making a direct link from himself all the way back to the great thinkers and builders of the ancient, classical, past.

Sun King or Sun God

Louis, ever modest, especially liked linking himself directly to the Greek god Apollo (Sun King = Sun God… subtle wasn't Louis's middle name). The Apollo Fountain and Apollo Salon remain two of the major highlights of a visit to Versailles. Not content with the

restraint of pure classical design, he had his team create a palace that used classical structures to contain the elaborate grandeur of the Baroque style that was all the rage in the mid-seventeenth century. He wanted to make the biggest possible statement and what he ended up with was Versailles: a palace designed to glorify the French monarch by incorporating both ornate Baroque decoration that amply demonstrates his wealth and glory and the stricter rules of classicism that express his intellectual and cultural stature.

Additional resources:

Versailles website

Versailles at UNESCO World Heritage Site

360 degree view of Versailles

Claude Perrault, East façade of the Louvre

by DR. PAUL A. RANOGAJEC



Figure **13.7.13.159**: La colonnade du Louvre à Paris (photo: **Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, CC BY 2.0)

It is not immediately obvious why the eastern façade of the Louvre Museum, originally a royal palace, was considered among the most important architectural works in France at the end of the seventeenth century. There is an incongruity today between the grandeur of the building and the ordinariness—and smallness—of the space in front of it, the Place du Louvre. Originally designed to be the main, ceremonial entrance to the palace, the façade repays close attention, despite its unexalted position today. It is a premier example of the rigorous design tradition in French classicism, a revered model for subsequent palace design, and a monument associated with the origins of modernity in architecture.

The Louvre through the centuries

The Louvre as we know it today resulted from a series of expansions over 800 years. It should be remembered that, while the Louvre is now in the very center of Paris, until the eighteenth century it was at the city's western edge.



Figure **13.7.13.160**: Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg, October (detail with Louvre), from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, 1413-16, ink on vellum (Musée Condé, Chantilly)

Starting around 1190, King Philippe II constructed a fortified arsenal on the right bank of the Seine River. In the fourteenth century, Charles V transformed it into a royal residence. The October illustration from the famous ***Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry***, a beautifully decorated Book of Hours (a collection of daily prayers for the laity) by the Limbourg Brothers (above), suggests what the fortress-palace looked like just after Charles' interventions.

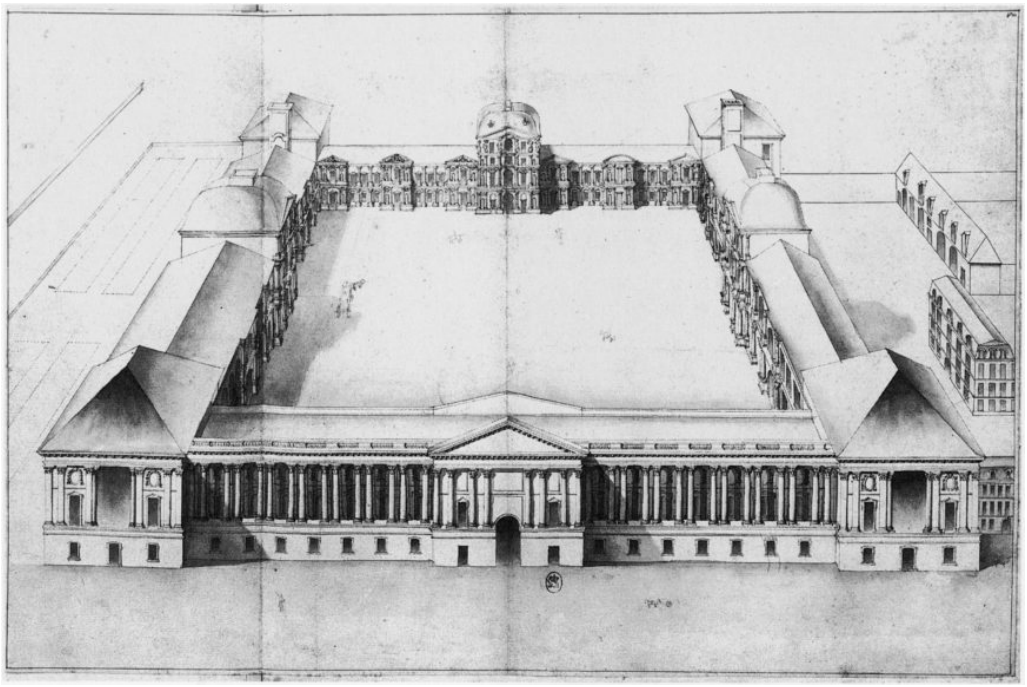


Figure **13.7.13.161**: Claude Perrault, perspective bird's-eye view of the Cour Carrée (Louvre), from the east, 1663

In the early sixteenth century, Francis I's architects planned to expand the palace into a more spacious Renaissance building. His successors, especially Kings Henri IV, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV, continued making ever grander plans—turning the palace into a sprawling structure along the river. Louis XIII initiated construction of the eastern block known as the Cour Carrée (square courtyard) in the seventeenth century—a symbolic gesture of reaching out toward the city's center from its periphery (above). Its façades were meant to suggest the connection of the king to his capital city. By the middle of the seventeenth century, nothing above ground was left of the medieval fortress or the fifteenth-century palace. Finally, during the 1660s, the east wing was reimagined as a grandiose royal entrance to the whole structure.

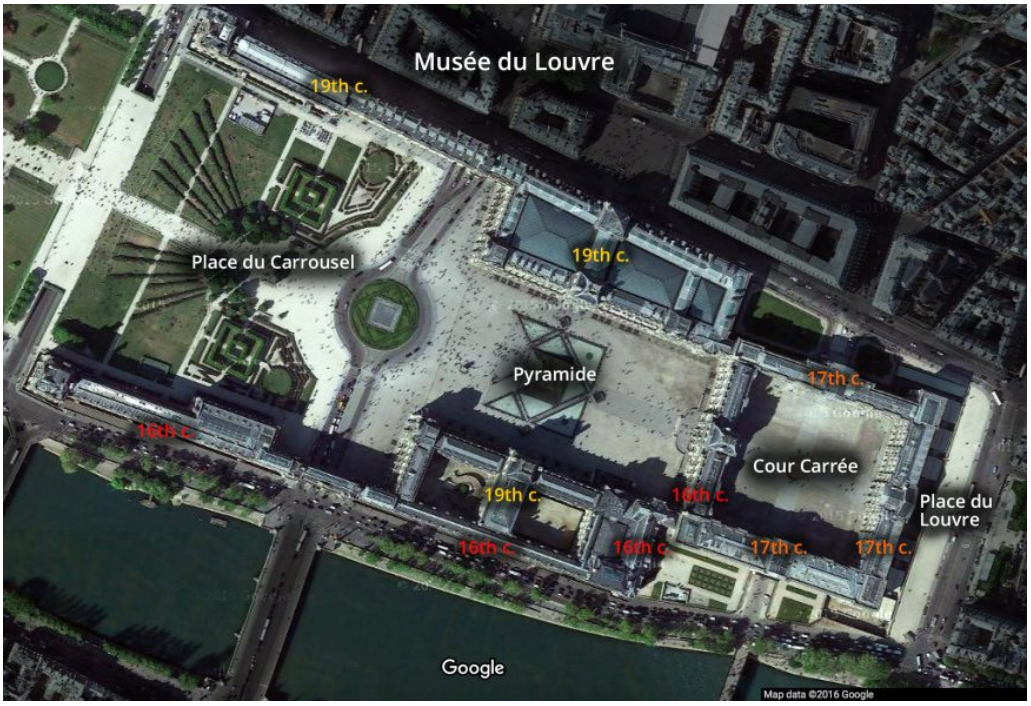


Figure **13.7.13.162**: photo © Google Earth

However, by 1680 Louis XIV had directed his full attention—and brought his whole court—to the new palace at Versailles. Work at the Louvre stopped, and the abandoned Cour Carrée languished unroofed for about a century. Ironically, then, what had been intended by its patron and architects as one of Paris' most prominent symbols of royal dominion over the city became instead a sign of the king's absence.

Colbert, Le Vau, and Bernini

In 1664, the completion of the Cour Carrée with new eastern and southern wings became the responsibility of Louis XIV's finance minister, superintendent of buildings, and leader of royal cultural patronage, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. The king's *Premier architecte* (Chief Architect), Louis Le Vau, had already completed the south wing in 1663. As part of his plan to finish the Cour Carrée, he also began construction of the east wing with a design comprising a colossal order (taller than one story) of columns along its length and a central pavilion (a section that projects forward). This had similarities to Le Vau's Collège des Quatre Nations (below), being built at the same time directly across the river from the south wing of the Cour Carrée.



Figure **13.7.13.163**: Louis Le Vau, Collège des Quatre Nations, 1662-70 (photo: **Tales of a Wanderer**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

For seemingly political reasons, all work on Le Vau's Louvre designs was halted by Colbert when he assumed his post as building superintendent on January 1, 1664. Le Vau had recently designed a spectacular chateau, **Vaux-le-Vicomte**, for Nicolas Fouquet (finance minister before Colbert). In 1661, Louis XIV had Fouquet imprisoned for life on exaggerated charges of mishandling the treasury. Colbert stopped Le Vau's Louvre work, perhaps wishing to bolster the king's claim to absolute power, and to assert his own exclusive prerogative to decide on artistic matters. Then Colbert solicited designs from other French architects, and in March he invited a proposal from Gianlorenzo Bernini, easily the most famous artist in Europe at the time. Bernini was Italian and worked primarily for papal patrons in Rome.

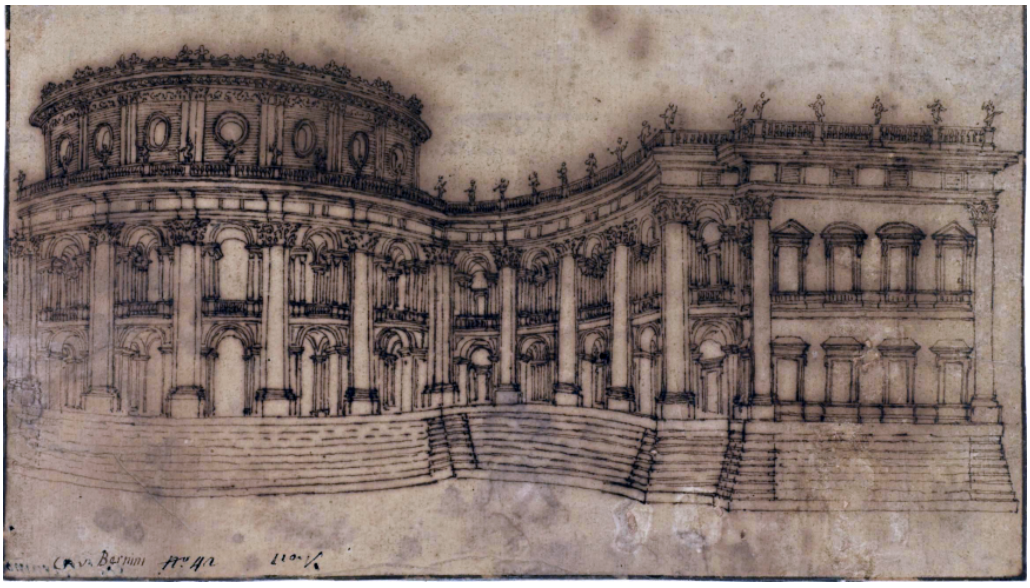


Figure **13.7.13.164**: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Louvre, east façade (study for the First Project)*, brown ink on laid paper, 16.3 x 27.8 cm (The Courtauld Gallery, London)

Bernini's first designs for the east façade of the Louvre (above) were remarkably vibrant, articulated by colossal engaged columns ("engaged" here means attached to a wall). His walls were enlivened by contrasts of light and shadow, solid and void, curved and straight lines. Colbert disapproved of these designs as being too far from French traditions, but, intent on having so esteemed an artist build for the king (and disregarding the affront French architects would feel at being snubbed for a foreigner), he invited Bernini to Paris to try yet again. Bernini stayed in Paris from June to October 1665. The project he produced (below) was a massive block, raised up on a heavily rusticated base and again articulated by a colossal order of engaged columns and pilasters (pilasters are flat engaged

columns). Although its end and central pavilions were a nod to the traditional form of French palaces, it seemed more at home in Rome than Paris. Construction began just before Bernini left Paris, but Colbert soon halted this work, too.

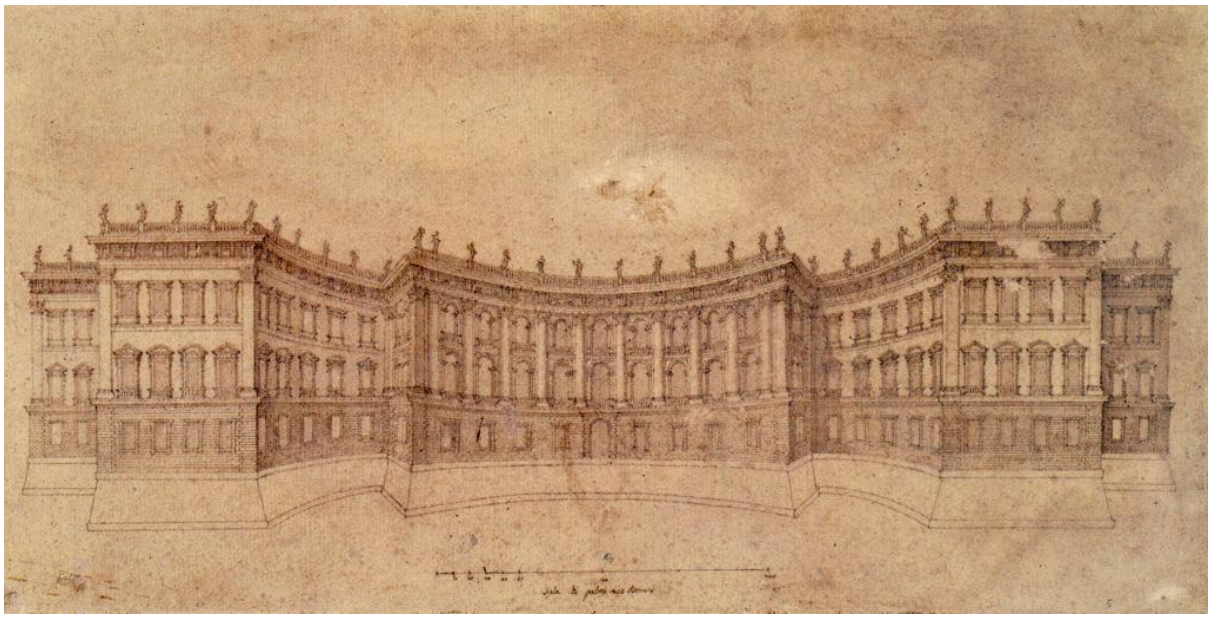


Figure **13.7.13.165**: Gianlorenzo Bernini, third and final design for the east façade of the Louvre of 1665, drawn by Mattia De Rossi

The *petite conseil* and the final design

To move forward with work on the east wing, Colbert appointed a *petite conseil* (small council) in early 1667, consisting originally of three members: Louis Le Vau (still the *Premier architecte* despite his Fouquet connection), the *Premier peintre* (Chief Painter to the King) Charles Le Brun, and the physician-turned-scientist-and-architect Claude Perrault. Claude was the brother of Charles Perrault, a writer best known for his fairy tales, a prominent member of the *Académie française* (French Academy), and a close associate of Colbert's. Charles probably influenced Colbert to give his brother Claude a place on the *petite conseil*. In his favor, Charles could point to his brother's recent pursuits in architecture, which included a 1666 commission from Colbert himself to translate into French the treatise of the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius.

By May 1667, the council had produced a new design. The three members were joined by a fourth, the architect Roland Fréart de Chambray in 1668; he seems to have contributed to the final design of the pavilions. Because of the committee structure, debate about authorship of the east wing has continued from the beginning to the present. Undoubtedly all four members of the council—each a forceful personality—contributed to the design. However, the relative importance of Le Vau's and Perrault's contributions has remained contentious.

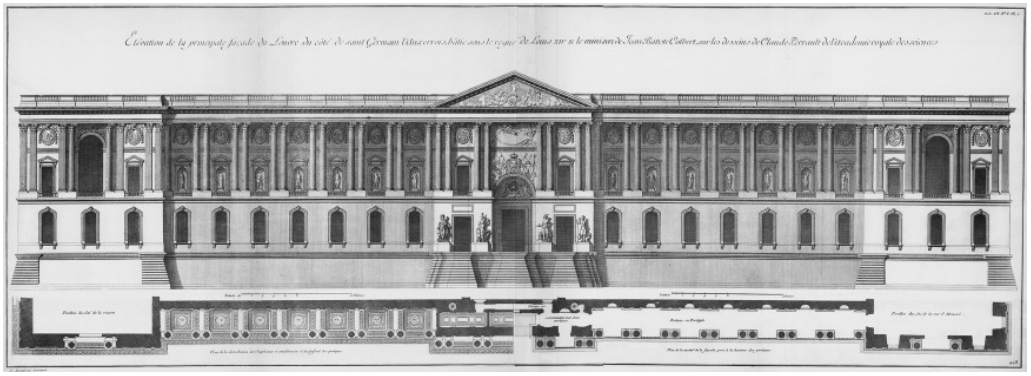


Figure **13.7.13.166**: Plate 7. The Louvre in Paris: elevation of the principal façade facing Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois from Jacques-François Blondel, *Architecture françoise*, Tome 4, Livre 6, 1756

The council's design is a study in unity. The long façade follows the five-part pattern of French palaces: two pavilions, one on each end, with recessed wings and a central entrance topped with a pediment. However, the pavilions only slightly project forward from the wings, and they do not rise higher than them, as was traditional. Only the low triangular form of the central pavilion's pediment

breaks the strict horizontality of the roofline, emphasized and softened with a balustrade (a continuous railing), which was a favorite motif of Le Vau's. The end pavilions, elegantly detailed with low-relief sculpture, recall **Roman triumphal arches**. Designed as a solid base, the lower story uses windows similar to earlier ones at the Louvre, creating visual continuity with the older sections and providing a visually strong support for the colonnades above.

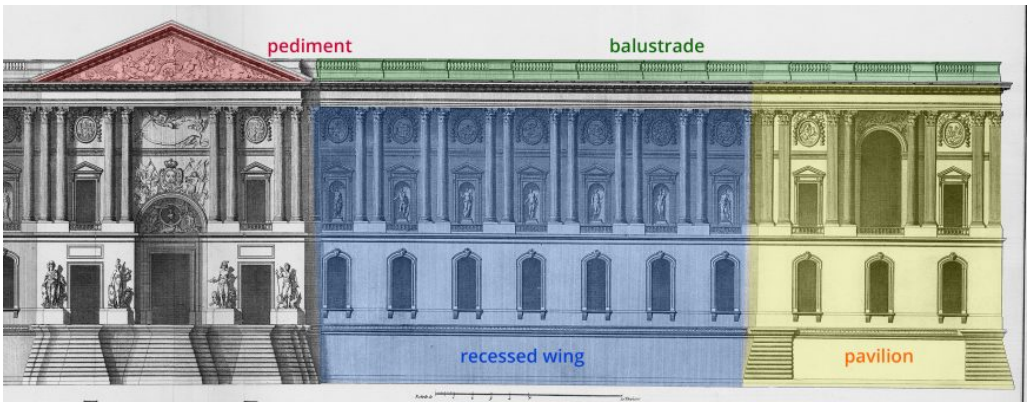


Figure **13.7.13.167**

The classical orders

Along with the horizontality of the façade, the doubled columns of the twin porticos (covered walkways or porches, here along the colonnades, or recessed wings), mark a departure from earlier royal buildings in France. The **Corinthian columns** impart a continuous, steady rhythm to the whole façade. Set in front of the deep porticos, the light and shadow of the columns create visual enrichment. And there is variety in the use of the columns: at the center pavilion and in the colonnades they are free-standing, but at the end pavilions they turn into engaged columns around the central windows and into pilasters at the outer edges. Their slightly slimmer proportion compared to most Corinthian columns compensates for the wider proportion one perceives in the coupled motif.



Figure **13.7.13.168**: Claude Perrault, east façade of the Louvre, Paris (photo: **BikerNormand**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

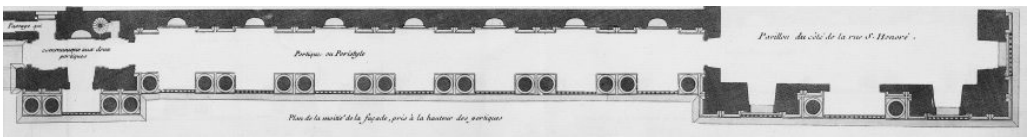


Figure **13.7.13.169**: Plan (view from above) showing recessed portico (the open walkway or porch behind paired columns)

At the time, the paired columns were the most startling aspect of the design. The issue of the spacing of columns (called intercolumniation), was one on which Vitruvius and Renaissance architectural writers had spent much time. A small diagram published in Claude Perrault's translation of Vitruvius, *Les dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve*, explains how the colonnades were designed. Perrault shows a series of four columns spaced evenly in a row. This is the typical intercolumniation of an ancient temple,

for instance. To achieve the Louvre's colonnade design, Perrault shows how every other column is displaced toward its neighbor to the left.

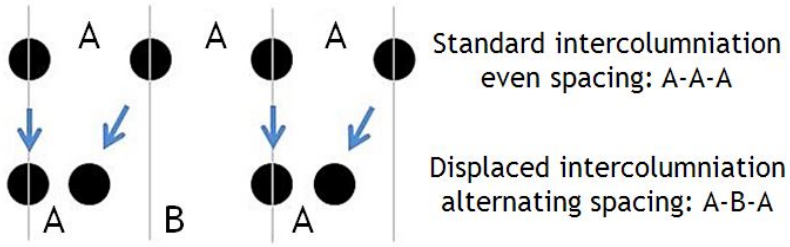


Figure **13.7.13.170**: Diagram based on original in Claude Perrault, Les dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve, Paris: Coignard, 1673. Drawn by Paul A. Ranogajec

By displacing half of the columns to create the double-column pattern, greater emphasis is put on the spaces between the columns: that is, the large space between each pair of columns (B) and the narrow space between the columns of each pair (A). This creates the dynamic visual rhythm, A-B-A, instead of the more static A-A-A.

According to Perrault, this arrangement, resulting in wider-than-usual spacing (*dégagement*), is a legitimate invention of a sixth type of classical intercolumniation. The ancient Roman architectural authority, Vitruvius, had discussed five ideal types of column spacing; Perrault claimed the Louvre was a new type appropriate to modern French taste. He argued that while the ancients preferred closely spaced columns—due in part to the structural limits of building in stone—the French, with their tradition of lighter, more open structure deriving from the Gothic cathedrals of the late Middle Ages, prefer wider spacing. Perrault, however, never discusses the fact that the façade uses a large quantity of iron reinforcement, without which structural forces would tend to push the columns outward.

Perrault's theory of beauty and the quarrel of the ancients and moderns

Although the *conseil's* collective authorship of the façade is now established, Perrault's later architectural theory has long been read as an explanation of the design and a confirmation of its inherent modernity. Perrault's fundamental challenge to traditional architectural ideas was the assertion that beauty was not a natural or universal quality; it did not depend on precise, immutable laws of proportion or on mathematical harmony. Beauty, Perrault argued, was contingent, based in imagination and customary usage. To overcome the possibility of completely subjective judgment regarding architectural beauty, reason had to govern the architect's approach. Architects had to discover beauty for themselves through the process of design.

Perrault's own attempt to apply a modern approach to beauty is found in his architectural treatise, *Ordonnance des cinq espèces de colonnes selon la méthode des Anciens*. He posits two types of beauty available to architecture: positive and arbitrary. Positive beauty is,

> ***based on convincing reasons … whose presence in works is bound to please everyone, so easily apprehended are their value and quality. They include the richness of the materials, the size and magnificence of the building, the precision and cleanness of the execution, and symmetry … [which] consists in the relationship the parts have collectively ….” By contrast, arbitrary beauty is “determined by our wish to give a definite proportion, shape, or form to things that might well have a different form without being misshapen and that appear agreeable not by reasons within everyone's grasp but merely by custom ….***

Proportion was a second area where Perrault offered something new to architectural theory. Up to his time, writers on architecture had usually assigned proportion a determining role in the perception of beauty. By contrast, Perrault writes on the first page of the *Ordonnance* that “the beauty of a building, like that of the human body, lies less in the exactitude of unvarying proportion and the relative size of constituent parts than in the grace of its form.” Nevertheless, Perrault recognized that certain ranges of acceptable proportions could be extracted from both the existing monuments of antiquity and the proportional schemes developed by Vitruvius and famous Renaissance architectural writers. He admits that there exists “detailed rules from which one cannot deviate without robbing an edifice of much of its grace and elegance,” but he quickly asserts that there is still “enough latitude to leave architects free to increase or decrease the dimensions of different elements according to the requirements occasioned by varying circumstances.” He criticizes the proportioning systems of earlier writers, and then offers his own: a mean taken from the extremes found in esteemed

buildings from history. Although he leaves room for invention, he is nonetheless careful to justify his proportional system based on examples from the past.

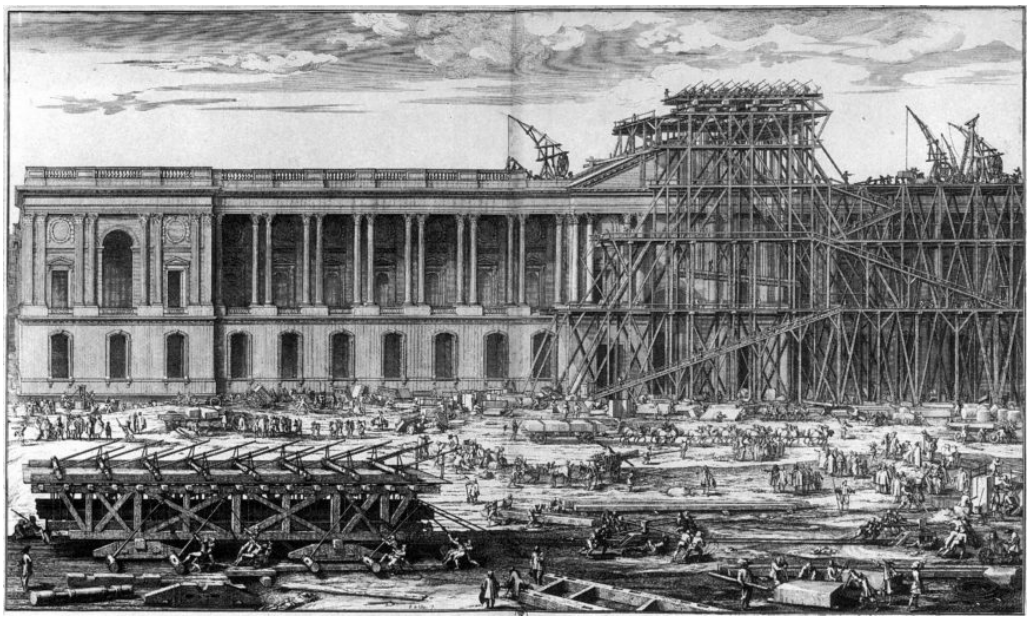


Figure **13.7.13.170**: Sébastien Leclerc, Lifting the Louvre pediment stones into place in 1674, 1677, engraving

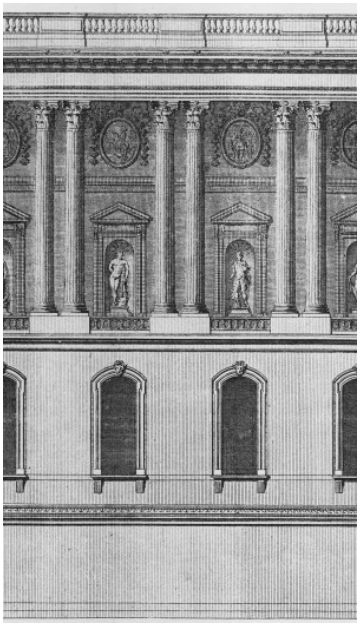


Figure **13.7.13.171**: Detail with paired columns, Plate 7. The Louvre in Paris: elevation of the principal façade facing Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois (detail) from Jacques-François Blondel, *Architecture françoise*, Tome 4, Livre 6, 1756

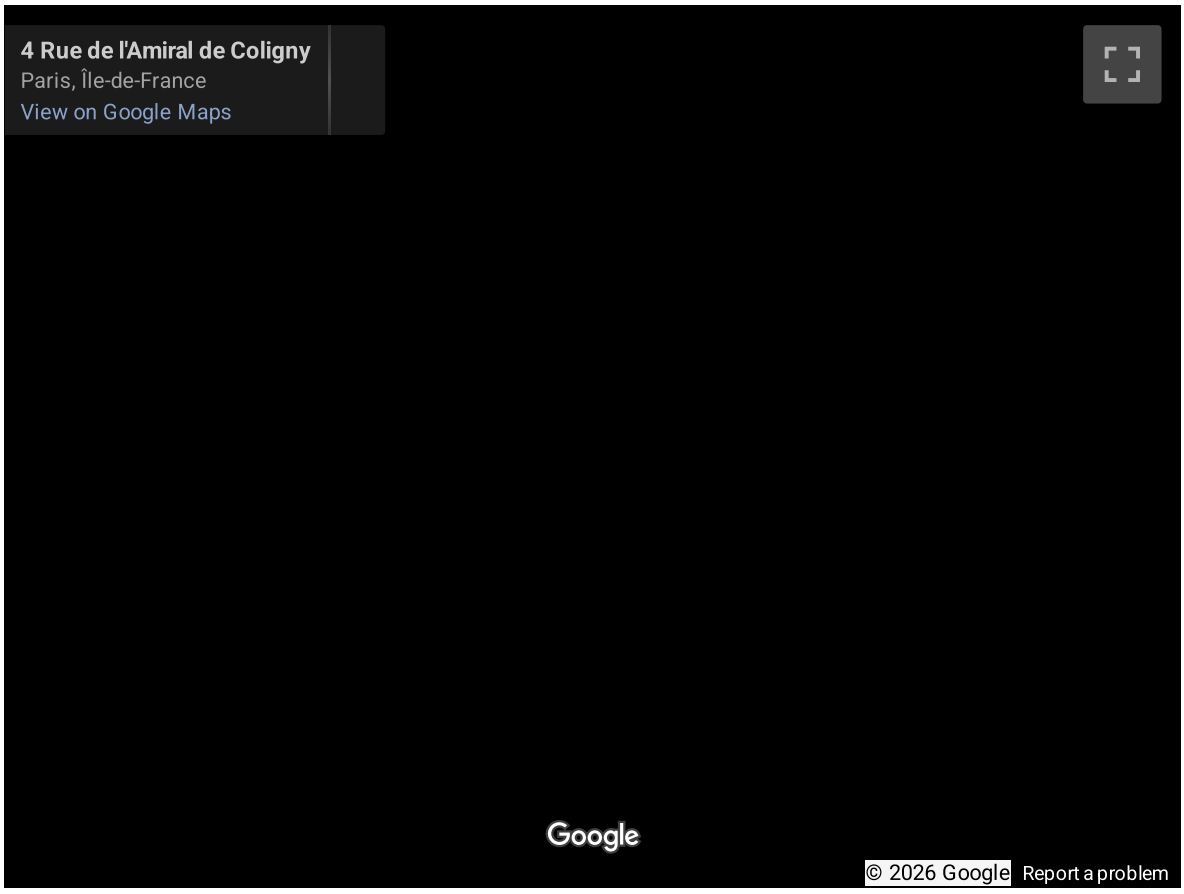
In the *Ordonnance* Perrault excoriates traditionalists who have an "exaggerated respect for antiquity" and who "genuinely believe that the glory of their beloved antiquity rests on its being considered infallible, inimitable, and incomparable." This placed him in the modern camp in the elite cultural debate that became known as the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns. This debate centered on questions about the relative merits of literary and artistic achievements in the modern age (particularly the time of Louis XIV, but also of his immediate predecessors) and antiquity. The Moderns, led by Claude Perrault's brother Charles, whose serial book *Parallel of the Ancients and Moderns* was a touchstone for the debate, believed in the ever greater perfectibility and supremacy of the modern age. The Ancients, on the other hand, found certain things from the antique past to be so exceptional and incomparable that they could not be surpassed by anything in the modern age. Because of his innovative ideas about beauty, proportion, and invention, Claude Perrault has always been identified as a proponent of the Moderns. And the Louvre façade has always been connected to his theory, making the building an early monument of modern architecture.

But Perrault, as we have seen, also relied on the authority of antiquity, and he accepted the classical orders as the primary elements in architectural design. As an innovator rather than a radical, he took great pains to emphasize that he was not contradicting tradition so much as extending, even perfecting it. He wrote,

> ***I also contend that whatever innovations I introduce are intended not so much to correct what is ancient as to return it to its original perfection. I do this not on my own authority, following only my own insight, but always in reference to some example taken from ancient works or from reputable writers. … I am proposing nothing without precedent in example or in the work of illustrious authors. … I would say that my purpose is simply to extend change a little further than before.***

A masterpiece hidden in plain sight

The east façade of the Louvre remains one of the most impressive examples of French classical design. Whether we see it pointing to the future or building upon tradition, it is a touchstone in debates about classicism in modern architecture. Studied by architects since the time it was built, it became a precedent, a model exuding authority, for prominent buildings in later times, including Charles Garnier's renowned Paris Opéra in the 19th century, which adopted the coupled-columns motif. The fact that today the Louvre façade is effectively the rear of the museum may detract from its prominence but cannot erase its importance.



Additional Resources:

Robert W. Berger, *The Palace of the Sun: The Louvre of Louis XIV* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press), 1993.

Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Modern Architectural Theory: A Historical Survey, 1673-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-9.

Claude Perrault, *Ordonnance for the Five Kinds of Columns after the Method of the Ancients*, translated by Indra Kagis McEwen, introduction by Alberto Perez-Gomez, Santa Monica (The Getty Center, 1993).

Claude Perrault, *Les dix livres d'Architecture de Vitruve*, second ed. (Paris, J.-B. Coignard, 1684).

England

Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*

by MATTHEW WILSON



Figure **13.7.13.172**: Detail, Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*, 1633, oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (**Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle**)

Horsepower

Equestrian portraits (a figure on a horse) are usually reserved for military and political leaders, following an ancient tradition going back at least as far as **Alexander the Great** and the Roman Emperor **Marcus Aurelius**. A horse is essentially a pedestal upon which leaders can elevate themselves above the common people, but the equestrian format is also a metaphor for taming and training nature: an indication of the potential of the rider to guide the populace and subdue external enemies.

Charles I, King of England was particularly in need of these kind of symbolic associations as he was not physically prepossessing (his adult height was just 163cm (5 feet 4 inches) and he suffered from a speech impediment), nor was his rule glorious (he was eventually beheaded after a long and costly civil war). *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine* was the first equestrian portrait ever painted of this king, and **Anthony van Dyck** purposefully chose this format to enhance Charles's status at a particularly unstable moment in British history.



Figure **13.7.13.173**: Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*, 1633, oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (**Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle**)

A clear message

Charles I is riding a white horse towards us, through a **triumphal arch**. Van Dyck has used the architecture to provide compositional structure, splitting the scene into three vertical sections, and positioning a key element in each: a coat of arms, the king, and a figure dressed in red. Together they create a roughly pyramidal form with the king's head at the apex. However, the simplicity of layout has been animated with the addition of some billowing green drapery, and the movement of the human and animal figures — especially the **foreshortened** body of the horse as it steps forwards, its front hoof touching the edge of the picture plane.



Figure **13.7.13.174**: Coat of arms and foreshortened horse (detail), Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*, detail, 1633, Oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (**Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle**)

Authority to rule and a supreme military leader

Each of the ancillary elements of the painting contains additional information that contributes to the overall message of Charles's authority to rule. The royal coat of arms, for example, contains the insignia of England (three lions), Scotland (lion rampant) and Ireland (harp), to show the unification of the nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) under the rule of Charles's father James I.



Figure **13.7.13.175**: Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*, detail, 1633, Oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (**Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle**)

The figure dressed in red is Pierre Antoine Bourdin, Seigneur de St. Antoine, an expert riding master who had been sent to Charles by the King of France as a diplomatic gift, along with six thoroughbred horses. St. Antoine's reverential and subservient gaze further enhances the King's mystique in our eyes, but perhaps also symbolizes England's longed-for pre-eminence over her European neighbor.



Figure **13.7.13.176**: Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*, detail, 1633, Oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (**Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle**)

However van Dyck's most significant message about Charles is his supremacy as a military leader. The presence of a **triumphal arch** – a structure built to celebrate and commemorate victories in ancient Rome – implies that this English King is the natural heir to the triumphant emperors of the classical past.

Charles's highly polished armor and baton of command compound this message, as does the blue sash around his chest and medallion at his hip, which shows him to be a member of the Order of the Garter, the most prestigious knighthood in England. Thus, Charles is appropriating the iconography of medieval knights-errant, as well as classical rulers, in order to appeal to his audience's sense of history.

The Baroque arrives in England

King Charles I was a great lover of the arts, and during his reign he amassed an unrivaled collection of European Renaissance paintings and sculptures. He was just as much a fan of the more up-to-date Baroque style, with its dynamic compositions and psychological intensity, and so he acquired works by **Caravaggio**, **Peter Paul Rubens,** and **Gianlorenzo Bernini** among many other Baroque artists.

Charles's main coup was employing the Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck as his official court painter in 1632. *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine* was commissioned to be hung in the King's gallery at St. James's Palace in London, and it was certainly intended to compete with the other Renaissance and Baroque paintings on display. Its scale is vast — the dimensions more usually associated with **tapestries** — and it was probably hung at the end of a long corridor, creating the illusion of an aperture in the palace walls and a view onto a vista beyond.



Figure 13.7.13.177: Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I, formerly attributed to George Gower, 1588, oil on oak panel (**Woburn Abbey**)

In comparison to previous portraits of English monarchs such as Elizabeth I's *Armada Portrait*, van Dyck's work is rich in color, replete with observed detail, and possesses a Baroque sense of movement and grandeur. It shows that Charles I was on-trend, learning from other European images of power, such as Peter Paul Rubens's 1603 *Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Lerma*, and aiming to lead English artistic tastes along continental lines.

Left: Anthony van Dyck, <em
Charles I with M. de St Antoine, 1633, oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (
Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle
); right: Peter Paul Rubens,
Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Lerma
, 1603, oil on canvas, 290.5 x 207.5 cm (
Museo del Prado
)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-48852" height="598" sizes="(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...sm-870x598.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...sm-870x598.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...sm-300x206.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-1536x1055.jpg
1536w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...-rubens-sm.jpg
2000w" width="870">

Figure 13.7.13.178: Left: Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I with M. de St Antoine*, 1633, oil on canvas, 370 x 270 cm (**Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle**); right: Peter Paul Rubens, *Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Lerma*, 1603, oil on canvas, 290.5 x 207.5 cm (**Museo del Prado**)

A political statement

This progressive attitude to the arts came at a political cost. Charles's critics in England saw the king's interest in foreign styles as evidence of his softening attitudes to Catholic sensibilities (England had broken from the Catholic church a hundred years earlier during the **Protestant Reformation**), and his court's ideological detachment from the rest of the nation. These clashes contributed to Parliament's animosity towards the crown, which in turn led to the English Civil War (1642–51).

In the years leading up to the civil war, Parliament frustrated the king's military ambitions by curbing his ability to raise money through taxation. In 1629 Charles retaliated by dissolving Parliament and governing the nation independently in an eleven-year period of "personal rule." *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine*, painted during this period of autocracy, encapsulates the King's notion of independent authority, and his belief in the divine right of kings (the notion that God had sanctioned his right to rule). Indeed, there is something saintly about the depiction of Charles in this painting, judging by his pristine white horse and the awed expression of the Seigneur de St. Antoine. Perhaps the courtly audience of this painting may have seen Charles as a modern embodiment of St. George — the dragon-slaying patron saint of England who was typically represented as a valorous knight.

Legacy



Figure **13.7.13.179**: Nicolas-Gabriel Dupuis, *The King siezed by Joyce at Holmby house June the 4th, 1647*, c.1728, engraving, 41.2 x 49.4 cm (**Royal Collection Trust**)

After the Parliamentarians won the English Civil War, Charles I was put on trial, found guilty of treason, and condemned to be beheaded. In the aftermath England became a republic and many of Charles's possessions (including his extraordinary art collection), was sold off to raise funds for the new political regime. *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine* went to an Englishman named Hugh Pope for £150. However the royal family was re-instated in England later in the seventeenth century and they quickly bought back the painting. It remains in the royal collection to this day.

Meanwhile, van Dyck's fluid, sensuous style of portraiture has had a lasting effect on English art, emulated by many of the nation's greatest portrait painters including **Thomas Gainsborough**, Thomas Lawrence, and the American expatriate **John Singer Sargent**.

Additional resources

This painting at the Royal Collection Trust

Read more about Rubens and van Dyck at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Read more about *The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I*

Anthony van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I*

by MICHAEL JOHN PARTINGTON



Figure 13.7.13.180: Anthony van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I*, c. 1637–8, oil on canvas, 367 x 292.1 cm (National Gallery, London)

Royalty writ large

There is no more majestic painting in the National Gallery, London, than Anthony van Dyck's equestrian portrait (with the subject on horseback) of the cultivated, but deeply flawed, politically inept, and unlucky King Charles I, who ended his days beheaded on a scaffold erected outside the Banqueting House in Whitehall, having been found guilty by the English Parliament of being a "tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of the nation."

Painted before the bloody troubles of the English Civil Wars ensued, when the king governed without Parliament, a period known as the Personal Rule (1629–40), this monumental painting calls on us to admire and respect the armored monarch seated atop his stately steed.

Positioned at the level of his stirrup, the spectator is forced to look up to the king, who was, in reality, only 5 foot 4 inches tall. On closer inspection, his face, in three-quarter view, is a pale complexion of dignified restraint. He wears his hair long on the left side (called a "lovelock") and has a large pearl earring in his left ear, both of which reflect the court fashion of the day.



Figure **13.7.13.181**: Anthony van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I*, detail, c. 1637–8, oil on canvas, 367 x 292.1 cm (**National Gallery, London**)

From the right side of his body armor protrudes a lance-rest, indicating his involvement in tilting tournaments. Despite suffering from rickets in his childhood, Charles developed into a most accomplished and confident horseman. The king grasps the reins in his left hand and holds an imperial baton in his right hand, which he rests almost nonchalantly on the right withers of his dun horse.



Figure **13.7.13.182**: Anthony van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I*, detail, c. 1637–8, oil on canvas, 367 x 292.1 cm (**National Gallery, London**)

Around the neck of the king hangs a gold locket or medallion which bears the likeness of Saint George and the Dragon, known as the Lesser George. Saint George, the archetypal Christian knight, is the patron of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, which was a medieval order of chivalry (a society of knights or equestrian order which had originally been founded by King Edward III in 1348).

The monarch was—and still is—the so-called Garter Sovereign. The locket, which contained a portrait of Charles's devoted French wife, Queen Henrietta Maria, remained on his person on the freezing cold January day in 1649 when he was executed.

Behind the monarch is an equerry who carries the king's red-and-white plumed helmet in readiness for him to participate in a tournament—or perhaps to take up arms in war if there be a need?

Above the equerry, tied to an oak tree, is a tablet on which is inscribed in Latin the title CAROLUS REX MAGNAE BRITANIAE ("King Charles of Great Britain"), a reminder of the fact that Charles, like his father James VI of Scotland and I of England before him, was sovereign of the so-called multiple kingdoms of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. All is situated in a calming, imagined, wooded landscape of muted colors.

Charles is depicted not only as king, but also as emperor of the Britons and a Christian warrior, who commands all that he surveys. He is master of his horse, champion tilter, leader of a group of chivalrous knights, governor of nature, and the serene and silent ruler of a seemingly peaceful and bountiful kingdom. These are some of the key messages which the principal court painter, **Anthony van Dyck**, wished to convey on behalf of his exalted patron.

The artist Anthony van Dyck



Figure 13.7.13.183: Anthony van Dyck, *Anthony van Dyck*, c. 1640, oil on canvas, 56 x 46 cm (National Portrait Gallery, London)

It is no understatement to assert that the Flemish artist Sir Anthony van Dyck virtually single-handedly brought about a revolution in portrait painting in early seventeenth-century England. This revolution would fashion British portrait painting for centuries to come, influencing the likes of Sir Peter Lely, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir Thomas Lawrence.

With his first arrival in England in 1620, the eventual 'principalle Paynter in Ordenarie to their Majesties' (King Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria) brought with him the Italian tradition of painting as filtered through the studio of the Flemish master Rubens, of whom van Dyck was a disciple. A tireless worker who died, exhausted, at the age of 42, van Dyck painted almost exclusively portraits at the Caroline court, around 400 in total, including some 40 images of King Charles. Van Dyck was buried in Old St. Paul's Cathedral with the epitaph, "Anthony van Dyck—who, while he lived, gave to many immortal life."

The precise origins of the portraits of Charles I painted by van Dyck remain shrouded in mystery. It seems highly likely that the two collaborated closely to propagate the royal image because of the artistic sensibilities and clearly defined political outlook of Charles I. The conversations they had to these ends must have been truly fascinating.



Figure **13.7.13.184**: Titian, *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*, 1548, oil on canvas, 335 x 283 cm (**Prado Museum, Madrid**)

The major pictorial inspiration for van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles I was certainly Titian's magnificent equestrian portrait of the Habsburg *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*, housed in the Prado, Madrid, a painting which Charles I would have seen during his six-month stay at the Spanish Habsburg court of Philip IV. Van Dyck also had a passion for Venetian art, most especially the mighty Titian.

In this seminal painting, which celebrates his victory over the Schmalkaldic League, Charles V, the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor, king of Spain and archduke of Austria, unquestionably the most powerful leader in sixteenth-century Europe, is shown seated on his horse in woodland surroundings. Fully armored, wearing a red-plumed helmet, he charges forth into battle. Virgin and Child on his breastplate, he announces his Christian credentials as in fact a universal emperor who rules over a mosaic of states and different religions—Catholic and Protestant. The lance in his right hand invokes the figure of Saint George, the model Christian knight. All is set beneath a brooding sky which is laced with gold light.



Figure **13.7.13.185**: Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius, c. 173–76 C.E., bronze (Capitoline Museums, Rome) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The painting recalls the famous equestrian bronze of the Roman philosopher-emperor **Marcus Aurelius**, to be found in the Campidoglio in Rome, and is also influenced by Dürer's engraving *Knight, Death, and the Devil*, whose horseman embodies moral virtue as per the medieval tradition. Titian's *Charles V* channels both ancient Roman imperial rule and the idea and ideal of the virtuous Christian knight.



Figure **13.7.13.186**: Albrecht Dürer, *Knight, Death, and the Devil*, 1513, print after engraving, 25 x 19.6 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

A reputation redeemed

In basing the *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I* on that of Titian's *Charles V at Mühlberg*, van Dyck was tracing an imperial lineage running back not only to the Holy Roman emperors but also to the Roman emperors of antiquity, as well as making a claim for Charles I as a virtuous Christian knight. This was a line of rulership and a religious iconography which was entirely appropriate for Saint George's Garter Sovereign of Great Britain, who purported to govern all that he surveyed as king and emperor of the Britons and a Christian cavalryman personified. Alas, for Charles I, he was not able to convert his vision of an imperial, virtuous, and divinely-inspired majesty to which he adhered so resolutely, so defiantly, so eloquently, into successful and pacific governorship of his troubled multiple kingdoms. For this failure, he paid with his life, as well as with his historical reputation.

Additional resources:

Susan. J. Barnes, Nora De Poorter, Oliver Millar and Horst Vey, *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings* (The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

Christopher Brown, *Van Dyck* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982).

Christopher Brown and Hans Vlieghe, *Van Dyck 1599-1641* (London: Royal Academy Publications; Antwerp: Antwerpen Open, 1999).

David Cressy, *Charles I and the People of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

Karen Hearn (ed), *Van Dyck and Britain* (London: Tate Britain, 2009).

Mark Kishlansky, *Charles I: An Abbreviated Life* (Penguin Monarchs) (London: Penguin, 2014).

Mark A. Kishlansky and John Morrill, "Charles I (1600–1649)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn.

Oliver Millar, *The Age of Charles I: Painting in England 1620-1649* (London: Tate, 1972).

Oliver Millar, *Van Dyck in England* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1982).

Alexander Samson (ed.), *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles' Journey to Madrid, 1623* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006).

Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

Desmond Shawe-Taylor and Per Rumberg (eds.) *Charles I: King and Collector* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2018).

Roy C. Strong, *Van Dyck: Charles I on Horseback* (London: Viking Press, 1972).

Jeremy Wood, "Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn.

Leanda de Lisle, *White King: Charles I, Traitor, Murderer, Martyr* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2018).

Charles I as art collector

by MICHAEL JOHN PARTINGTON



Figure 13.7.13.187: Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I*, before 1635, oil on canvas, 84.4 x 99.4 cm (Royal Collection Trust, London)

The patron Charles I and his circle

Whatever his character failings and political misdeeds as monarch might have been, King Charles I was undoubtedly a refined individual and a great collector and connoisseur of art. The Flemish painter Sir Peter Paul Rubens famously called him: "The greatest lover of paintings among the princes in the world." He was the connoisseur-king who amassed the largest collection of art of any British monarch in history (around 1,500 paintings and 500 sculptures of the very highest quality), replete with stellar Renaissance names such as **Andrea Mantegna**, **Leonardo da Vinci**, **Giorgione**, **Raphael**, **Correggio**, **Titian**, **Holbein**, and **Dürer**, as well as two outstanding contemporary artists, **Rubens** and **van Dyck**.

Charles's interests and tastes were shaped from an early age by his family. He was the son of the scholar-king James VI and I and his cultured Danish wife, Queen Anne, who was an important patron of art, architecture, and music, and the brother of Henry, prince of Wales (a true Renaissance prince if ever there was one, a major collector of **mannerist** paintings of northern Italian and Netherlandish artists, who died of typhoid fever at the young age of 18, much to Charles's heartache).



Figure **13.7.13.188**: Peter Paul Rubens, *George Villiers, 1st duke of Buckingham*, 1620s, oil on canvas, 60.9 x 47.3 cm (Glasgow Museums, Pollok House)

There was also the tutelage of the dashing and dangerous George Villiers, 1st duke of Buckingham, James VI and I's favorite (and most likely lover), a savvy collector of art who favored Italian painters, most especially the Venetian artist Titian. He owned, for example, Titian's stunning *Ecce Homo* ('behold the man'), which shows Christ bloodied and bowed, wearing a crown of thorns, being led out of the Praetorium ("judgment hall" or "governor's house'") by Pontius Pilate, governor of Judaea, to the shouting crowd. Buckingham became Charles's inseparable companion and mentor until the duke's untimely death at the point of an assassin's dagger in 1628.



Figure **13.7.13.189**: Titian, *Ecce Homo*, 1543, oil on canvas, 242 cm x 361 cm (**Kunsthistoriches Museum**, Vienna)

In stark contrast to Buckingham, there was the figure of the austere and high-minded Thomas Howard, 14th earl of Arundel, who did much to foster Charles's enthusiasm for and taste in Italian art, though at a distance. An admirer of continental European cultures, Arundel was one of the richest aristocrats in England; some 600 paintings, including 37 works by Titian, were accounted for at the earl's death.

And, finally, there was James, 3rd marquess, later 1st duke of Hamilton, who served as the Master of the Horse and Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the king, both distinguished and powerful offices of the sovereign's household, which brought him into regular and close contact with Charles. In avaricious competition with Buckingham and Arundel, Hamilton amassed a huge collection of Italian Renaissance art which included works by Raphael and Correggio and the celebrated Venetian artists Giorgione, **Veronese**, **Tintoretto**, and, yet again, betraying the Caroline English court's predilection, over 36 works by Titian, who was also an artist beloved of the court of Habsburg Spain.



Figure **13.7.13.190**: Titian, *Jupiter and Antiope (The Pardo Venus)*, 1535–40, reworked c. 1560, oil on canvas, 196 x 385 cm (Musée du Louvre)

A stay at the Spanish Habsburg court

By far the most important single experience in developing Charles's artistic appetite when still prince of Wales, was the six-month stay, in 1623, alongside his confidant, Buckingham, at the court of the Spanish Habsburg king, Philip IV, in Madrid, a court renowned for its rigid formality and complicated protocols, as well as for housing the greatest collection of paintings in Europe. This took place at the time of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), a religious conflict between Catholic and Protestant states in central Europe.

Charles and Buckingham traveled incognito—in wigs and false beards—as "Jack and Tom Smith" and caused something of a stir at the court. The visit was intended to negotiate for the hand of the Spanish Infanta Maria Anna (sister of Philip IV) to help cement peace between the Catholics and Protestants. In the end, it came to nothing, much to the relief of the Protestant Parliament and people in England who had feared a marriage between their Protestant prince and a Catholic princess, who was, after all, progeny of their traditional enemy Spain.



Figure **13.7.13.191**: Paolo Veronese, *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, c. 1580, oil on canvas, 165.20 x 126.50 cm (**National Gallery of Scotland**)

Instead, here, Charles feasted his hungry eyes on many works by European masters, including Titian (who had been court painter to the imperial Habsburg court in the sixteenth century), Correggio, **Hieronymus Bosch**, and **Diego Velázquez**, court painter to Philip IV. Charles was nothing short of over-awed by what he saw and left the court gifted with two splendid paintings by Venetian artists. One was by Titian, the so-called *Pardo Venus* (Titian's largest mythological painting) in which Jupiter, father of the gods, disguised as a satyr, moves towards Antiope, who is in the form of nymph, to impregnate her, after which she gives birth to twins, Amphion and Zethus (a story told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*). The other was Veronese's sensual masterpiece *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, in which Venus rests on the knee of Mars, god of war, with Cupid and a lapdog playing at her side.



Figure 13.7.13.192: Andrea Mantegna, *The Triumphs of Caesar: 9. Caesar on his Chariot*, c.1484–92, tempera on canvas, 270.4 x 280.7 x 4 cm (**Royal Collection Trust**, Hampton Court Palace, London)

The consequence of the visit was that Charles set his heart on a comparable collection of art for his own court when king. His wish was granted in 1628, when the collection of the Gonzaga dukes of Mantua came up for sale. Charles purchased it at a colossal cost (it took him two years to pay what he owed). The jewels in the crown of the collection were without question Titian's eleven half-length portraits of Roman emperors (1536–40; destroyed by fire in 1734) which were inspired by the Roman historian Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* and the nine canvases of Italian renaissance painter Andrea Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*, which celebrated the victories of Julius Caesar and have resided in Hampton Court Palace for nearly 400 years. One cannot underestimate the impact of this collection on Caroline court culture—it was nothing less than transformative. Charles was pivotal in bequeathing an incomparable artistic legacy to the history of the visual arts in Great Britain. For this, we should be thankful.

Additional resources:

Read more about Anthony van Dyck's life at the National Gallery of Art

The Lost Collection of Charles I from the Royal Collection Trust

Susan. J. Barnes, Nora De Poorter, Oliver Millar and Horst Vey, *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings* (The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

Christopher Brown, *Van Dyck* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982).

Christopher Brown and Hans Vlieghe, *Van Dyck 1599-1641* (London: Royal Academy Publications; Antwerp: Antwerpen Open, 1999).

David Cressy, *Charles I and the People of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

Karen Hearn (ed), *Van Dyck and Britain* (London: Tate Britain, 2009).

Mark Kishlansky, *Charles I: An Abbreviated Life* (Penguin Monarchs) (London: Penguin, 2014).

Mark A. Kishlansky and John Morrill, "Charles I (1600–1649)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn.

Oliver Millar, *The Age of Charles I: Painting in England 1620-1649* (London: Tate, 1972).

Oliver Millar, *Van Dyck in England* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1982).

Alexander Samson (ed.), *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles' Journey to Madrid, 1623* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006).

Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

Desmond Shawe-Taylor and Per Rumberg (eds.) *Charles I: King and Collector* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2018).

Roy C. Strong, *Van Dyck: Charles I on Horseback* (London: Viking Press, 1972).

Jeremy Wood, "Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn.

Leanda de Lisle, *White King: Charles I, Traitor, Murderer, Martyr* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2018).

John Michael Wright, The Coronation Portrait of Charles II

by DR. INGRID E. MIDA



Figure **13.7.13.193**: John Michael Wright, *Portrait of Charles II*, c. 1671-1676, oil on canvas, 281 x 239.2 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

In this portrait of Charles II, his extravagant attire not only reflects his power and status as the King of England but the masculine ideal of the period. His curly wig is long, his clothing is heavily ornamented with lace, embroidery, and ribbons, and he wears white hose and high heeled shoes — elements of dress that are today considered markers of femininity. It is such details that are often linked to gender (the cultural construction of identity that marks bodies as male, female or gender neutral). Given that these markers change over time and from place to place, a reading of the clues embodied in a sitter's dress in a portrait must take into account the cultural norms of the period as well as the place in which the artwork was created. This oil portrait of one of the most beloved kings of England tells an interesting story of how markers of masculinity and femininity change over time.

What is Charles II wearing?



Figure **13.7.13.194**: Scepter in his right hand, and orb in his left (detail), John Michael Wright, *Portrait of Charles II*, c. 1671-1676, oil on canvas, 281 x 239.2 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

The King of England wears the Crown of State on his head and holds in his hands the orb and scepter — symbols of his power. He is dressed in a costly and theatrical outfit suitable for a coronation. His Order of the Garter (the most senior order of knighthood in the British honors system) costume is made of cloth of silver and is topped with luxurious crimson red silk velvet robes lined with ermine that surround his body and pool to the floor. The sleeves of his white shirt are full and expansive with deep double cuffs of sumptuous lace. His fashionably wide petticoat breeches envelop his thighs in a mass of balloon-like folds and are ornamented with multiple rows of ribbon loops. His white stockings are held up with garters that explode in bunches of ribbon loops. His red heeled shoes are made of the finest kid leather and finished with buckles decorated with jewels.

Although this work by British artist John Michael Wright depicts the King's coronation in 1661, scholars believe that it may have been painted several years later. Whether or not this portrait precisely reflects how Charles II looked that day, each element of his dress not only conveys his status and wealth, but also reflects the masculine ideal within England and France at that moment in history.

Men in heels



Figure **13.7.13.195**: High-heeled shoes (detail), John Michael Wright, *Portrait of Charles II*, c. 1671-1676, oil on canvas, 281 x 239.2 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

In this portrait, Charles II wears high-heeled shoes. Although such footwear is typically associated with women's attire today, it was actually men that first adopted the style in Europe at the turn of the seventeenth century as a fashionable symbol of power and prestige. According to Elizabeth Semmelhack, Senior Curator at the Bata Shoe Museum, "Even after they fell from men's fashion in the 1730s, there were pockets of time when heels were reintegrated into the male wardrobe not as a way of challenging masculinity but rather as a means of proclaiming it." [1]

The fashion for petticoat breeches



Figure **13.7.13.196**: Breeches (detail), John Michael Wright, *Portrait of Charles II*, c. 1671-1676, oil on canvas, 281 x 239.2 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

The voluminous skirt-like silhouette created by petticoat breeches (also known as "rhinegraves" in continental Europe) were fashionable for men for a brief period in the mid-seventeenth century. The width of this style of breeches made them somewhat impractical, since the wearer had to alter their gait and swing their legs out as they walked to avoid entangling their legs in the folds of fabric and the ribbons.

According to the April 6, 1661 entry in the diary of Samuel Pepys, a Member of British Parliament, his friend, a Mr. Townsend, admitted to having one day accidentally put both his legs through one of his knees of his petticoat breeches, and worn them that way

for the entire day. In spite of the practical difficulties, petticoat breeches were highly fashionable for elite men until October 1666 when Charles II introduced a new fashion for men by wearing a closer fitting style of breeches that accommodated a longer style of coat.



Figures à la Mode no. 9, Man Wearing Rhinegrave Breeches, 1670-1685, engraving, 16.6 x 12.3 cm, (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Reading the clues of dress

The way that a person is dressed in a portrait often conveys clues as to the sitter's identity or status. Although the artist may have taken liberties in rendering their sitter more attractive than they were in real life or in dressing them in clothing that differed from what actually was worn, the manner in which the body is fashioned reveals something about the culture from which the work originated. In the coronation portrait of Charles II, he is dressed in a manner that today would be considered feminine. And yet, as this analysis has shown, his petticoat breeches, the ornate embellishment on his clothing, high heels and long hair were instead markers of power and status in his time. This reminds us that any particular item of clothing is not inherently masculine or feminine, instead it is culture that defines it thus.

Notes:

1. Elizabeth Semmelhack, *Standing Tall: The Curious History of Men in Heels* (Toronto: Bata Shoe Museum, 2015), p. 9.

Additional resources:

This painting in the Royal Collection Trust

Rufus Bird and Martin Clayton (eds.) *Charles II, Art & Power* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2017).

Ingrid E. Mida. *Reading Fashion in Art* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

Samuel Pepys. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, edited with Additions by Henry B. Wheatley (London: George Bell & Sons, 1893).

Anna Reynolds. *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion*. (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013).

Elizabeth Semmelhack. *Standing Tall: The Curious History of Men in Heels*. (Toronto: Bata Shoe Museum, 2015).

The Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace

by MICHAEL JOHN PARTINGTON



Figure 13.7.13.198: Broadside depicting the execution of Charles I, from *History of the birth, life and death of Charles Stuart*, 1649 (British Library)

Paul van Somer, <em
James I/VI (with the unfinished Banqueting House in the background), c. 1620, oil on canvas, 227 x 149.5 cm (The Royal Collection, London)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-21551" height="461" sizes="(max-width: 300px) 100vw, 300px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x461.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x461.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...940-edited.jpg
347w" width="300">

Figure 13.7.13.199: Paul van Somer, *James I/VI (with the unfinished Banqueting House in the background)*, c. 1620, oil on canvas, 227 x 149.5 cm (The Royal Collection, London)

On January 30th, 1649, King Charles I was beheaded on a scaffold in front of the Banqueting House of Whitehall Palace in London for raising taxes without due authority and waging wars against his own people. It was an ironic backdrop for his death, as the Banqueting House was created to glorify his reign and that of his father, King James I of England. Designed by the architect Inigo Jones and decorated with paintings by the Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens, this building symbolized the newly vibrant, lavish, and European-influenced court culture that the two monarchs fostered.

A new era for Shakespearean England

James VI of Scotland assumed the English throne upon the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, becoming James I and ushering in what is known as the Jacobean era. Upon his accession, the Britain of multiple kingdoms (England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland), was born.



Figure **13.7.13.200**: Robert van Voerst, Portrait of Inigo Jones, after Anthony van Dyck, from *Icones Principum Virorum*, before 1636, 24.5 x 17.5 cm (The British Museum)

James I was widely criticized by his contemporaries, not only for his near-catastrophic financial mismanagement, but also for his publicly embarrassing over-indulgences. However, despite these shortcomings, James was a monarch with a great interest in the arts and a serious scholarly mind: his reign witnessed the production of some of William Shakespeare's most brooding tales of kingship, such as *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, as well as the publication of the King James Bible. James himself also published many works, including treatises that set forth his views on kingship (encapsulated in the famous phrase "God's lieutenant upon earth"—i.e. God's direct representative). Jacobean Britain was a politically charged, intellectually stimulating age with a luxurious court culture. It was in this context that the classical architectural tradition was brought from continental Europe, under the direction of Britain's first classical architect, Inigo Jones.

Surveyor-General of the King's Works

Inigo Jones was the foremost architect and theatre designer of the first half of the seventeenth century. Of humble origins and largely self-taught, Jones acquired his matchless understanding of classical architecture by studying the writings of Italian renaissance architects, including Sebastiano Serlio, Andrea Palladio, and an Italian translation of the work of the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius. He also had first-hand experience of these ideas from his travels to Italy and France and conversations with Palladio's pupil Vincenzo Scammozzi.

Pages from Inigo Jones's copy of Andrea Palladio's <em
I Quattri libri dell'architettura,1601, with annotations by Inigo Jones (Oxford, Worcester College)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-21552" height="448" sizes="(max-width: 640px) 100vw, 640px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...dio-edited.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...dio-edited.jpg
640w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x210.jpg
300w" width="640">

Figure **13.7.13.200**: Pages from Inigo Jones's copy of Andrea Palladio's *I Quattri libri dell'architettura*, 1601, with annotations by Inigo Jones (Worcester College, Oxford)

On his return to England in 1615, Jones assumed the title of "Surveyor-General of the King's Works," under which he oversaw the maintenance of existing buildings and the construction of new ones. This signaled a fundamental change in the architectural landscape of London and its environs, initiated through the construction of one of Britain's first truly classical buildings, the Banqueting House at Whitehall Palace.



Figure **13.7.13.201**: Inigo Jones, The Banqueting House, Whitehall, 1619–22 (photo: **Steve Cadman**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The Banqueting House

In the Jacobean era, Whitehall Palace was the principal royal residence, and the Banqueting House was regarded as the "Presence Chamber," where the king would receive visiting ambassadors and hold ceremonies such as masques and state banquets. When the first iteration of the hall burned down in 1619, "Surveyor" Inigo Jones swiftly began work on the new building. Based loosely on a palace in Vicenza, Italy, Jones's building testifies to his understanding of classical architecture as it had been revived in Renaissance Italy.

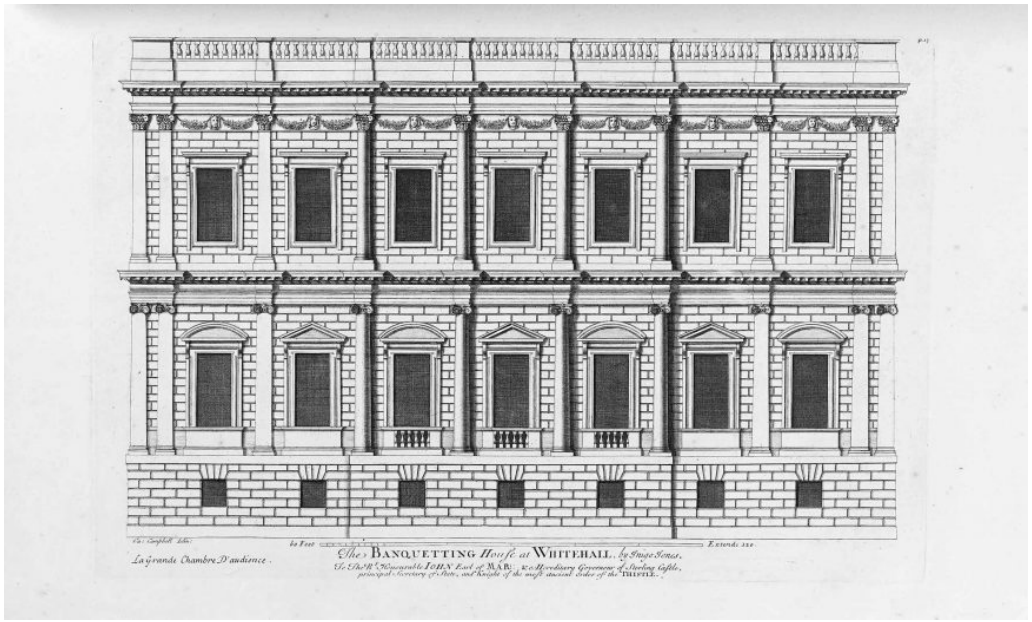


Figure **13.7.13.202**: Inigo Jones, The Banqueting Hall, Whitehall, 1619–1622, from Vitruvius Britannicus, 1715, ed. Colen Campbell (Getty Research Institute)

Seven windows wide, with three central bays, the exterior is a virtuoso exercise in balance, proportion and restrained decoration. The largely rusticated front was originally a mix of Oxfordshire (honey-coloured), Northamptonshire (pinkish), and Portland (white-grey) stone, though the façade we see today was re-faced in the early nineteenth century.

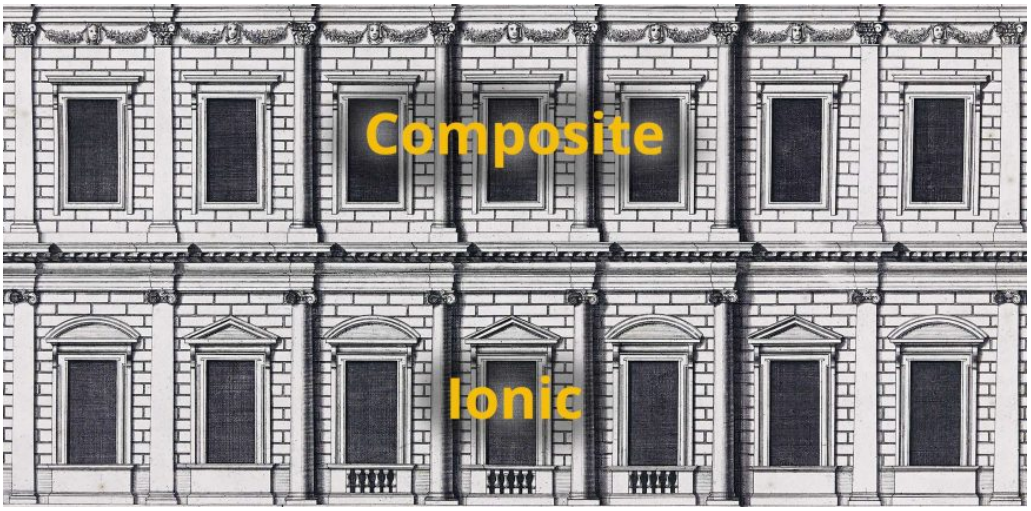


Figure **13.7.13.203**: Inigo Jones, The Banqueting Hall, Whitehall (detail), 1619–22, from *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 1715, ed. Colen Campbell (Getty Research Institute)

The façade is made up of two different classical orders (Ionic and Composite) on successive storeys. The three central bays are defined by engaged columns (half-embedded in the structure), with double pilasters at the ends of each storey of the façade. The windows of the lower storey are capped by alternating triangular and segmental (curved top) pediments, while there are straight lintels (horizontal beams that span openings) on the windows of the upper storey.



Figure **13.7.13.204**: Inigo Jones, The Banqueting Hall, Whitehall (detail), 1619–22, from *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 1715, ed. Colen Campbell (Getty Research Institute)

The only decorative extravagance on the whole façade is a garland frieze of female masks and swags of fruit that runs across the upper storey and ties the capitals together, above which stands a balustrade (a row of decorated uprights supporting a rail).



Figure 13.7.13.206: Inigo Jones, The Banqueting House, Whitehall (interior), 1619–22 (photo: Grahampurse, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Following principles set down by Palladio and Vitruvius, the interior of the Banqueting House is a single space—a double cube in volume, measuring 110 x 55 feet—and is the height of the two main storeys of the exterior façade. The interior walls parallel the exterior in their use of the classical orders, with superimposed Ionic half-columns below and Corinthian pilasters above.

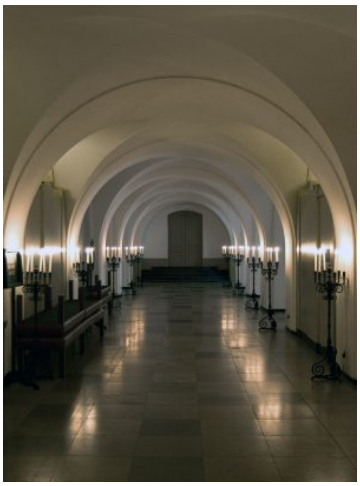


Figure 13.7.13.207: Undercroft of The Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace as it appears today (photo: v1ctory_1s_m1ne, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Below this room is the basement or "Undercroft," which once housed the "King's Privy Cellar," a rock- and shell-decorated grotto that was used as a drinking den by James and his favorites.

Paintings fit for a king

On the flat-beamed, compartmentalized ceiling are the canvases by the Flemish artist Sir Peter Paul Rubens, the only such cycle by Rubens to survive *in situ* (the other monumental cycle he executed being the life of Marie de' Medici at the Palais du Luxembourg, now on display in the Louvre, Paris). James had asked Rubens to decorate the ceiling; however, it was not until the reign of James's son, Charles I, that the commission came about. The nine canvases were produced in the artist's Antwerp studio with the help of a team of assistants, and installed at a height of 50 feet (15.3 meters) in 1636, after which time—on the express orders of the king—no more court masques took place, in order to protect Rubens's panels from smoke damage from lighted candles. Visitors today can view the paintings with the aid of mirrors and from the comfort of body-sized beanbags (see image above).



Figure 13.7.13.208: Peter Paul Rubens, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34

The canvases should be viewed as a propagandistic commemoration and celebration of the reign of Charles's father, as well as a forceful representation of the political ideology of the divine right of kings and James's notion of himself as "God's lieutenant upon earth."



Figure 13.7.13.209: Peter Paul Rubens, *The Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England*, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34, oil on canvas

The Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England at the north end portrays the union between the crowns of Scotland and England through the accession of James VI of Scotland to the throne of England as King James I. Wearing an imperial crown and attired in parliamentary robes, an enthroned James leans forward, his left hand resting on an orb, while in his right hand he points with his scepter, commanding the goddess Minerva to join the crowns of the two kingdoms held by the personifications of Scotland and England over the head of an infant, who may represent the Prince of Great Britain, the future King Charles I, or possibly Cupid.

Peter Paul Rubens, oval panels on either side of <em
The Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–1634, oil on canvas" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-21575" height="452" sizes="(max-width: 400px) 100vw, 400px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x339.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ed-300x339.jpg
300w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...883-edited.jpg
796w" width="400">

Figure **13.7.13.210**: Peter Paul Rubens, oval panels, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34, oil on canvas. Left: Hercules slaying Envy; right: Minerva spearing Ignorance

The oval panels to either side depict the triumph of the Virtues over the Vices: on the left, Hercules (Heroic Virtue) slays Envy (or Rebellion) with a club, while on the right Minerva (or Wisdom) spears Ignorance.



Figure **13.7.13.211**: Sir Peter Paul Rubens, *The Apotheosis of James I*, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34, oil on canvas

The central oval panel of *The Apotheosis of James I* is a flurry-some swirl of figures in which an airborne James, scepter in his right hand, his left foot resting on an imperial globe, is heralded heavenwards as “King of Great Britain” on the wings of Jupiter’s great eagle, accompanied by the yellow-garbed figure of Justice. To the left are the female figures of Piety or Zeal and Religion, while above the triumphal crown is carried by the goddess Minerva and a figure representing Victory or Peace.



Figure 13.7.13.212: Peter Paul Rubens, rectangular panels, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34, oil on canvas. Top: Genii loading a chariot with fruit; bottom: Genii driving a chariot driven by a ram and a wolf

On either side are long rectangular panels that celebrate the peacefulness and bountifulness of the Jacobean reign: on the left (the west side), frolicking Genii or Putti load a cornucopia of fruit onto a chariot led by a lion and a bear; and on the right (the east side), a procession of Genii or Putti (cherubs) with a fruit-laden chariot driven by a ram and a wolf are depicted.



Figure 13.7.13.213: Simon Gribelinca, engraving (1720) after Sir Peter Paul Rubens, *The Peaceful Reign of James I*, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34 (Yale Center for British Art)

In *The Peaceful Reign of James I* at the south end, above the dais where the monarch would sit, James is depicted as a latter-day King Solomon (the king of Israel who is traditionally associated with virtue and wisdom) seated within a biblically-inspired architectural setting of two large Solomonic "barley sugar" columns. James is presented with the laurels of victory by two winged figures descending from the heavens. To the left, the personifications of Peace and Plenty embrace one another, while to the right, Minerva, wearing a helmet and holding a shield and the thunderbolts of Jupiter, puts down the red-caped figure of Mars. In the left foreground, Mercury holds out his caduceus around which two snakes entwine, symbolizing peace.

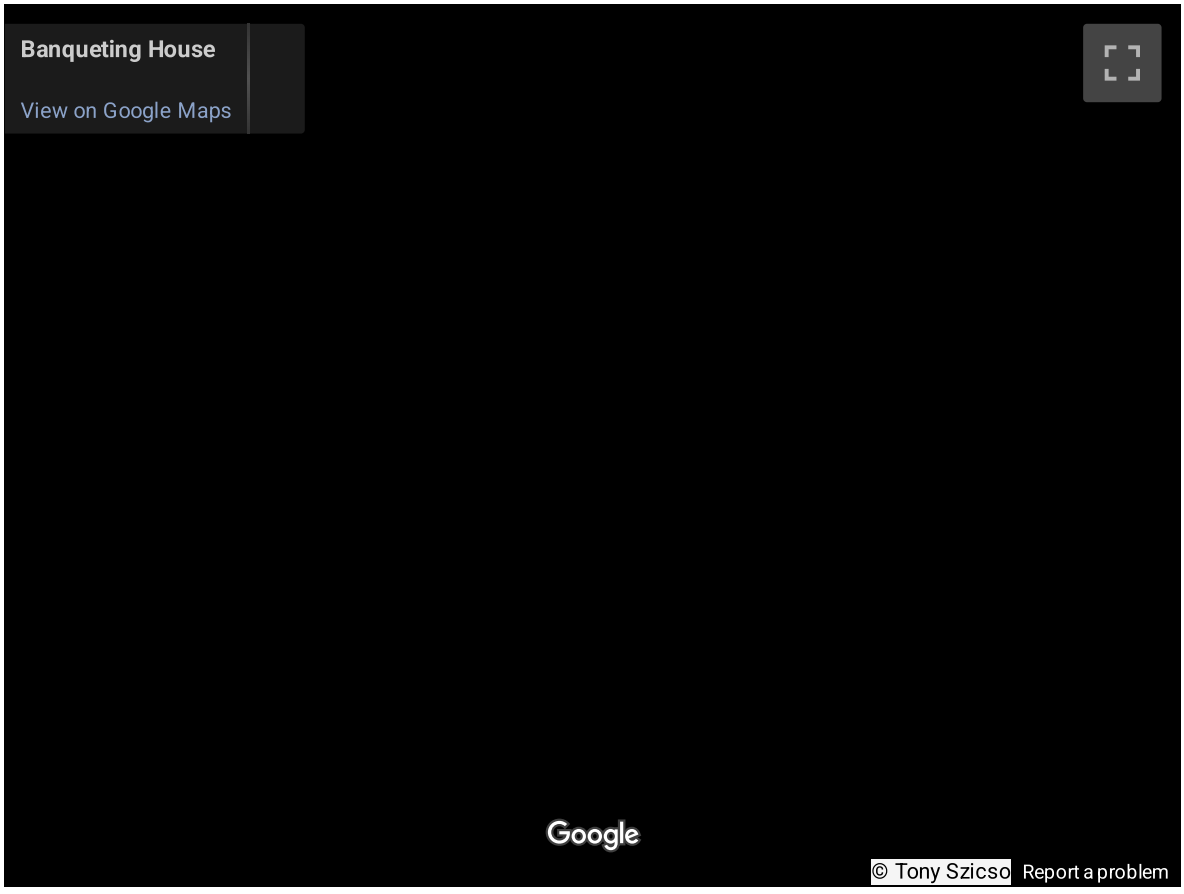


Figure **13.7.13.214**: Peter Paul Rubens, oval panels, ceiling of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, c. 1632–34, oil on canvas. Left: Reason bridling Intemperance; right: Abundance triumphing over Avarice

The oval canvas to the left of this painting portrays Reason (or Wise Government), who bridles Intemperance, while the canvas on the right depicts Abundance (or Royal Bounty), holding a cornucopia, who triumphs over Avarice (Greed).

Spectacle on the scaffold

It is no small dramatic irony that the building presenting James VI of Scotland and James I of England as "God's lieutenant upon earth" served as the backdrop to the stage for the execution of his son. The spilling of the blood of Charles I significantly stunted the development of the European-influenced court culture that the Jacobean age had done so much to usher in. It would not be until the early eighteenth century that classical architecture would again take hold in Britain.



Additional Resources

The Banqueting House on ArtUK

The Banqueting House on Historic Royal Palaces

Drawing of Rubens's ceiling paintings by Simon Gribelin, 1720, on the Google Art Project

Drawings of Rubens's ceiling paintings from the Royal Collection, UK

Christy Anderson, *Inigo Jones and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus: The Classic of Eighteenth-Century British Architecture* (London: Dover, 2007 [1715–1725]).

Fiona Donovan, "Rubens, Sir Peter Paul (1577–1640)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn.)

Fiona Donovan, *Rubens and England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

Vaughn Hart, *Inigo Jones: The Architect of Kings (Studies in British Art*) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2011).

Linda Levy Peck, *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Gregory Martin,, "The Banqueting House ceiling: two newly discovered projects," *Apollo*, vol. 139 (February 1994), pp. 29–43.

Gregory Martin, *The Ceiling Decorations of the Banqueting Hall (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard)*, Part XV, 2 vols (London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller/Brepols Publishers, 2005).

Gregory Martin, *Rubens in London: Art and Diplomacy* (London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller/Brepols Publishers).

Oliver Millar, "Rubens's Whitehall Ceiling," *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 149, no. 1247, Flemish and Dutch Art, (February 2007), pp. 101–104.

Oliver Millar, "The Whitehall Ceiling," *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 98, 1956, pp. 258–257.

John Newman, "Jones, Inigo (1573–1652)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; on-line edn).

Pier Palma, *Triumph of Peace: A Study of the Whitehall Banqueting House* (Stockholm: Almqvist, 1956).

Roy Strong, *Britannia Triumphans: Inigo Jones, Rubens and Whitehall Palace (Walter Neurath Memorial Lecture)* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1981).

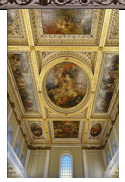
John Summerson, *Inigo Jones*, with a foreward by Howard Colvin, New Haven and London: Yale University Press for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2000.

Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: an architectural history of the royal apartments, 1240–1698* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).

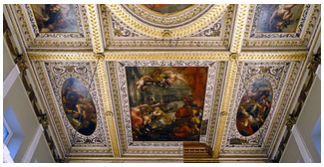
Jenny Wormald, "James VI and I (1566–1625)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; on-line edn.)

Giles Worsley, *Inigo Jones and the European Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88732



Figure 13.7.13.215: More Smarthistory images…

Wooldridge, *Indians of Virginia*

by DR. MINDY BESAW, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.13.29: James Wooldridge, *Indians of Virginia*, c. 1675, oil on linen, 75.6 x 108.6 cm (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art), a Seeing America video Speakers: Dr. Mindy Besaw, Curator of American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and Dr. Steven Zucker

Additional resources

This painting at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Smarthistory essay on the engravings of de Bry

13.7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II) is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

LibreTexts

13.7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo

Rococo

A style favored by the aristocracy — particularly in France.

c. 1700 - 1775

A beginner's guide to Rococo art

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

The beginnings of Rococo



Figure **13.7.14.1**: Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 114 x 62 5/8 in (The J. Paul Getty Museum)

In the early years of the 1700s, at the end of the reign of Louis XIV (who dies in 1715), there was a shift away from the classicism and "Grand Manner" (based on the art of Poussin) that had governed the art of the preceding 50 years in France, toward a new style that we call Rococo. The Palace of Versailles (a royal chateau that was the center of political power) was abandoned by the aristocracy, who once again took up residence in Paris. A shift away from the monarchy, toward the aristocracy characterizes the art of this period.

What kind of lifestyle did the aristocracy lead? Remember that the aristocracy had enormous political power as well as enormous wealth. Many chose leisure as a pursuit and became involved themselves in romantic intrigues. Indeed, they created a culture of luxury and excess that formed a stark contrast to the lives of most people in France. The aristocracy—only a small percentage of the population of France—owned over 90% of its wealth. A small, but growing middle class will not sit still with this for long (remember the French Revolution of 1789).

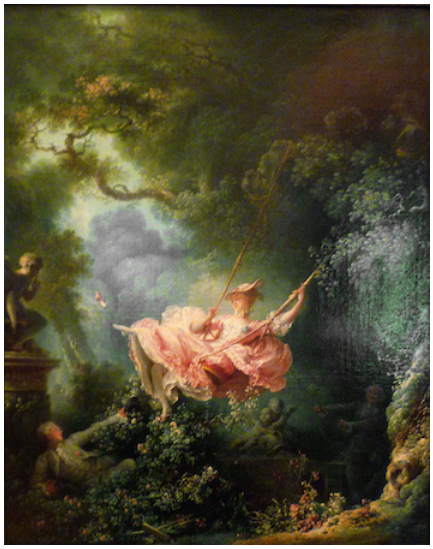


Figure **13.7.14.2**: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, 1767, oil on canvas, 81 x 64.2 cm (Wallace Collection, London)

As with most Rococo paintings, the subject of Fragonard's The Swing is not very complicated. Two lovers have conspired to get an older fellow to push the young lady in the swing while her lover hides in the bushes. Their idea is that—as she goes up in the swing, she can part her legs, and her lover can get a tantalizing view up her skirt.



Figure **13.7.14.3**: Female figure (detail), Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, 1767, oil on canvas, 81 x 64.2 cm (Wallace Collection, London)

The figures are surrounded by a lush, overgrown garden. A sculptured figure to the left puts his fingers to his mouth, as though saying "hush," while another sculpture in the background shows two cupid figures cuddled together. The colors are pastel pale pinks and greens, and although we have a sense of movement and a prominent diagonal line—the painting lacks the seriousness of a baroque painting.

If you look closely you can see the loose brushstrokes in the pink silk dress—and as she opens her legs, we get a glimpse of her stockings and garter belt. It was precisely this kind of painting that the philosophers of the Enlightenment were soon to condemn. They demanded a new style of art, one that showed an example of moral behavior, of human beings at their most noble.

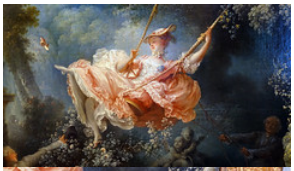
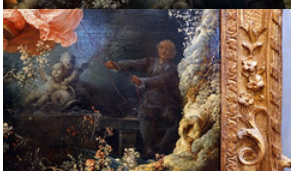
Additional resources:

The Swing at the Wallace Collection

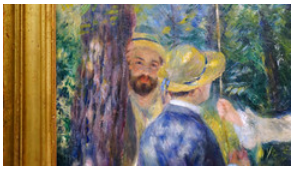
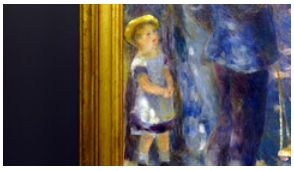
Fragonard on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

18th century European dress on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





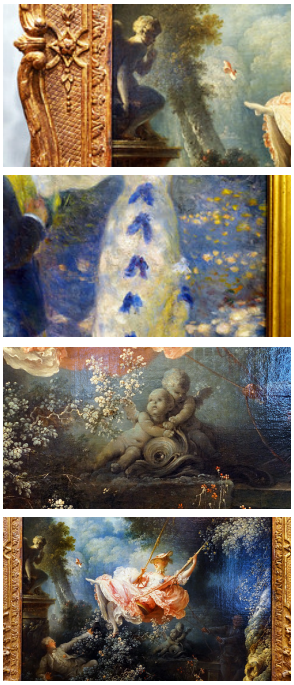


Figure 13.7.14.4: More Smarthistory images…

The Formation of a French School: the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture

by DANIELLA BERMAN



Figure 13.7.14.5: Jean-Baptiste Martin, *A Meeting of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture at the Louvre*, c. 1712–21, oil on canvas, 30 x 43 cm (**Louvre**)

In a room filled to the brim with painting and sculpture, well-dressed men in powdered wigs assemble around a desk while stragglers chat with their neighbors. Jean-Baptiste Martin's small painting depicts a meeting of the distinguished French art academy without an artist's tool in sight—only the ornate room situates the scene in the Louvre palace. The choice to not show the artists at work, but rather as fashionable gentlemen engaged in sociable intellectual exchange speaks directly to the early history of the French Royal Academy.

The *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture) was established in 1648. It oversaw —and held a monopoly over—the arts in France until 1793. The institution provided indispensable training for artists through both hands-on instruction and lectures, access to prestigious commissions, and the opportunity to exhibit their work. Significantly, it also controlled the arts by privileging certain subjects and by establishing a hierarchy among its members. This hierarchical structure ultimately led to the *Académie*'s dissolution during the French Revolution. However, the *Académie* in Paris became the model for many art academies across Europe and in the colonial Americas.

Foundation

This preeminent training organization for painters and sculptors was founded in response to two related concerns: a nationalistic desire to establish a decidedly French artistic tradition, and the need for a large number of well-trained artists to fulfill important commissions for the royal circle. Previous monarchs had imported artists (primarily from Flanders and Italy), to execute major projects. In contrast, King Louis XIV sought to cultivate and support French artists as part of his grander project of self-fashioning, with art playing a vital role in the construction of the royal image.

The *Académie* quickly rose to prominence, in conjunction with the Ministry of Arts (responsible for construction, decoration, and upkeep of the king's buildings) and the First Painter to the King—the most prestigious title an artist could achieve. Two men were integral to the institution's early history: Jean-Baptiste Colbert, an increasingly influential statesman who acted as the institution's protector, and the artist Charles Le Brun, who would go on to be both First Painter and the *Académie*'s Director. Both men sought to elevate the status of artists by emphasizing their intellectual and creative capacities, and both sought to differentiate members of the *Académie*—academicians— from guild members (guilds were a medieval system that strictly regulated artisans). The *Académie*, whose members were financially supported by the King, moved into its permanent location at the Louvre Palace in 1692, further reinforcing the institution's status. Given such institutional preoccupations, Martin's decision to show artists as gentlemen socializing rather than as artisans laboring takes on new significance.

Hierarchies

From its inception, the *Académie* was structured around hierarchy. There were distinct levels of membership that an artist could advance through over time. In art, too, there was a hierarchy: painting was prioritized over sculpture, and certain subjects were considered more noble than others. To become a member, artists submitted work for evaluation by academicians, who accepted them at a certain level, based on the kind of subjects they aspired to paint. If they passed this first phase, applicants would execute a "reception piece" depicting a subject chosen by the academicians.

The *Académie* divided paintings into five categories, or genres, ranked in terms of difficulty and prestige:

1. **History Painting**—encompassing highbrow subjects taken from the classical tradition, the bible, or allegories, this type of painting was considered the highest genre because it required proficiency in depicting the human body, as well as imagination and intellect to depict what could not be seen. These were often large-scale multi-figure paintings.
2. **Portraiture**—focusing on capturing likeness, this genre was prestigious, and certainly lucrative, but less so than history painting. Portraitists were derided for "merely" copying nature rather than inventing (an oversimplification as few portraits were executed entirely from life).
3. **Genre Painting**—depicting scenes of everyday life, this genre included the human figure but ostensibly did not represent grand ideas, although many genre paintings had moralizing undertones. Genre paintings were smaller in size than history paintings, further detracting from their prestige.
4. **Landscapes**—consisting of all representations of rural or urban topography, real or imagined, this genre became especially popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
5. **Still Life Painting**—often indulging in the juxtaposition of colors and textures, these paintings represented inanimate (often luxury) objects and drew heavily on the seventeenth-century **Dutch tradition** of such subjects. While at times other moralizing symbols such as *memento mori* (reminders of human mortality) were included, these were not an intrinsic part of the genre, which was considered to require no invention on the part of the artist (since, they were painting what they could see).



Figure 13.7.14.6: Benoît-Louis Prévost, after Charles-Nicolas Cochin, "The School of Art" ("Ecole de dessein"), planche I. *Recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts libéraux, et les arts mécaniques, avec leur explications*, volume 3 (Paris, 1763)

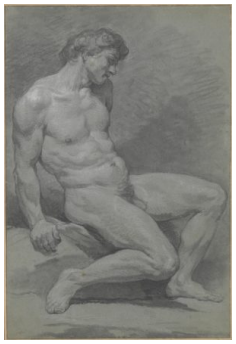


Figure 13.7.14.7: Nicolas Bernard Lépicié, *Seated Male Nude Facing Right*, mid-18th century, charcoal, stumped, black chalk heightened with white on gray-green paper, 50.7 x 34 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Academic instruction was centered on drawing (following the precedent of Italian drawing schools established in the sixteenth century). The *Académie* maintained a rigid curriculum to instruct artists, as recorded in contemporary accounts and depictions. An etching illustrating a 1763 description of the "school of art" shows how students first learned to draw by copying drawings and engravings (seen on the left) before moving on to drawing plaster casts to learn how to translate the three-dimensional form into two dimensions (seen at center). Students would then copy large-scale sculpture (as seen at the right-most edge) before being allowed to draw the live nude model (as seen in the middle-right portion, slightly set back from the foreground). Drawing the male nude form was the bedrock of the *Académie*'s curriculum, an essential building block for painters, particularly those destined to produce history paintings. Students produced many single-figure nude studies, known as *académies*, such as this example from Nicolas Bernard Lépicié. Props could be added subsequently to transform the posed bodies into identifiable figures, as Bernard Picart has done with the drawing *Male Nude with a Lamp*, where the figure, with the addition of a lamp, becomes the philosopher Diogenes.



Figure 13.7.14.8: Bernard Picart, *Male Nude with a Lamp (Diogenes)*, 1724, red chalk on laid paper,30.9 x 45.7 cm (National Gallery of Art)

In a lively drawing, Charles Natoire depicts himself in a red cape in the left foreground, providing feedback on students' drawings. The majority of students work independently, focused on the two nude models in an intertwined pose selected by the supervising professor. The opportunity to study two interacting male bodies was a rarer and more challenging exercise.



Figure 13.7.14.9: Charles Joseph Natoire, *Life Class at the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture*, 1746, pen, black & brown ink, grey wash & watercolour & traces of pencil over black chalk on laid paper, 45.3 x 32.2 cm (**The Courtauld Gallery**)

Outside of the *Académie*'s official spaces, academicians would provide advanced students opportunities to draw nude female models. In addition to supervising drawing education, each professor selected students to be part of his studio. This is where artists actually learned to paint or sculpt by emulating their teacher, often contributing to his large-scale commissions. Studio practices varied, and not all studio members were necessarily enrolled *Académie* students.

Both academicians and students attended lectures addressing theoretical and practical aspects of artistic practice, such as the importance of expressions or how to apply paint to ensure longevity. These were offered by professors and so-called *amateurs*. These honorary *Académie* members were not professional artists but art lovers and "friends of artists"—often from the nobility—who advised artists on questions of composition, aesthetics, and iconography and often championed certain artists, sometimes as patrons or collectors.

The draw of Rome

The classical tradition was central to the *Académie*'s curriculum. In 1666, the *Académie* opened a satellite in Rome to facilitate students' study of antiquity. In 1674, the *Académie* established the *Prix de Rome* (Rome Prize), a prestigious award that allowed its most promising artists to study in Rome for three to five years. While the focus of the French Academy in Rome was facilitating the study of classical antiquity, students also drew after important Renaissance and Baroque artworks, as seen in Hubert Robert's red chalk drawing depicting an artist copying Domenichino's fresco in a Roman church.



Figure 13.7.14.10: Hubert Robert, *Draftsman in the Oratory of S. Andrea, S. Gregorio al Celio*, 1763, red chalk, 32.9 x 44.8 cm (Morgan Library & Museum)

While in Rome, these *Académie* students—called *pensionnaires*—studied canonical artworks and regularly sent their drawings and copies after important works back to Paris to demonstrate their progress. Although not part of the formal curriculum, most artists explored the Roman environs, taking inspiration from the rich landscape, diverse topography, and colorful scenes of peasant life. Important connections were forged in Rome with other artists, patrons, and supporters.

Salons and the rise of public opinion

Beginning in 1667, the *Académie* established exhibitions to provide members with the crucial opportunity to display their work to a wider audience, thereby cultivating potential patrons and critical attention. Held annually and, later, biannually, these exhibitions came to be known as Salons, after the Louvre's *salon carré* where they took place after 1725. The Salon became a significant space of artistic exchange and an important opportunity to view art prior to the formation of the public art museum.



Figure 13.7.14.11: Pietro Antonio Martini, *View of the Salon of 1785*, 1785, etching, 27.6 x 48.6 cm (image), 36.2 x 52.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Artworks in the Salon were selected by a jury of academicians. Paintings were displayed according to size and genre, with larger works (history painting and portraiture) occupying the more prestigious higher levels, as can be seen in an engraving of the Salon of 1785 where Jacques-Louis David's ***Oath of the Horatii*** features prominently in the center. With the 1737 introduction of a

broader public to the Salon came the advent of public opinion and the emergence of art criticism. The *Académie* published a booklet that listed the displayed works, organized by the artist's rank, called the *livret*. Art collectors and learned Salon-goers penned opinions analyzing the artistic and intellectual merit of the exhibited artworks; some of these, like those written by philosopher Denis Diderot, were meant for a small community of like-minded individuals both in France and beyond, but increasingly art criticism was printed in newspapers for access by a broader public.

Genders and genres

The *Académie* was a male space, for the most part; some painters accepted female students in their studios, particularly in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Women artists were barred by propriety from studying the male nude figure, a core aspect of Academic training. This rendered them unable to become officially recognized history painters, and they were therefore restricted to genres considered to be less intellectually rigorous. During its 150-year long history, the *Académie* only welcomed four women as full members: Marie-Thérèse Reboul was admitted in 1757; Anne Vallayer-Coster was admitted in 1770; Adélaïde Labille-Guiard and Elisabeth Vigée-LeBrun were both admitted in 1783.



Figure **13.7.14.12**: This was the artist's reception piece for the Académie. Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le-Brun, *Peace Bringing Back Abundance*, 1780, oil on canvas, 103 x 133 cm (Louvre)

Despite their acceptance to the *Académie*, these women had limited options. Painting primarily still-lifes (like Reboul), Vallayer-Coster elevated that genre with large-scale ornate compositions. Labille-Guiard led a large studio of female students and was well-known as a prominent portraitist. So too did Vigée-LeBrun, who pushed the boundaries of genre and her gender by occasionally painting allegories, including her reception piece for the *Académie.* Familial connections (in the case of Reboul, Labille-Guiard, and Vigée-LeBrun) or royal protectors (in the case of Vallayer-Coster, Labille-Guiard, and Vigée-LeBrun) played vital roles in their success. Without such champions, female artists were unable to penetrate the patriarchal institution of the *Académie*. Still, their work and personal lives were subjected to undue public scrutiny and their achievements were often maligned.

Abolition and afterlives

In the 1780s, the *Académie* came under attack by members and outsiders for politicizing the distribution of prizes and honors. Its rigid hierarchies, inequitable structures, and rampant nepotism were incompatible with the Revolution's core values of Liberty and Equality. Major artists who had benefited from the institution lobbied for its dissolution. With the overthrow of the monarchy and

Louis XVI's execution, institutions with indelible royal connections were scrutinized and deemed irrelevant. The *Académie* was abolished on August 8, 1793 by order of the National Convention.

After several years of hardship for artists brought about by the erosion of royal, noble, and ecclesiastical patronage during the Revolution, the Directory government revived many of the structures of the *Académie* in establishing a National Institute of Sciences and Arts (*Institut nationale des sciences et des arts*, subsequently *Institut de France*) in 1795. The new organization's membership included many former academicians, who reinstated certain aspects of the now-defunct *Académie*, such as the Rome Prize in 1797. The hierarchy of genres, inculcated in the *Académie*'s members and audiences, remained central to understanding the arts throughout the nineteenth century.

Additional resources

Institut de France

Académie des beaux-arts

Denis Diderot, *Salons* (tome I – III), Paris: J.L.J Briere Libraire, 1821

The Salon and the Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century

Laura Auricchio, Melissa Lee Hyde, Mary Sheriff, and Jordana Pomeroy, *Royalists to Romantics: Women Artists from the Louvre, Versailles, and Other French National Collections* (Scala Arts Publishers, Inc., 2012).

Colin B Bailey, "'Artists Drawing Everywhere': The Rococo and Enlightenment in France," in Jennifer Tonkovich et al., *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection* (New York: Morgan Library & Museum, 2017).

Albert Boime, "Cultural Politics of the Art Academy," *The Eighteenth Century* vol. 35, no 3 (1994), pp. 203–22.

Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Yale University Press, 1985).

Christian Michel, *The Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture: The Birth of the French School, 1648–1793*, translation by Chris Miller (The Getty Research Institute, 2018).

Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism: from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*

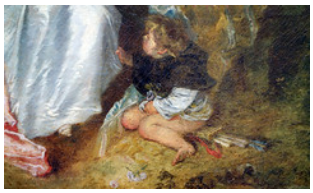
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.14.1**: Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, 1717, oil on canvas, 4′ 3″ x 6′ 4 1/2″ (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







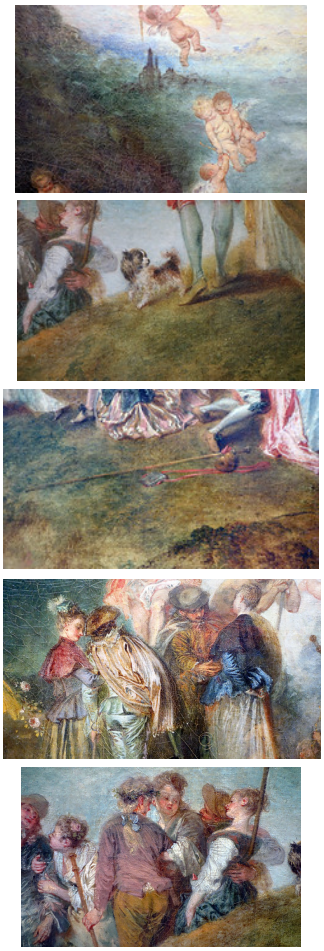
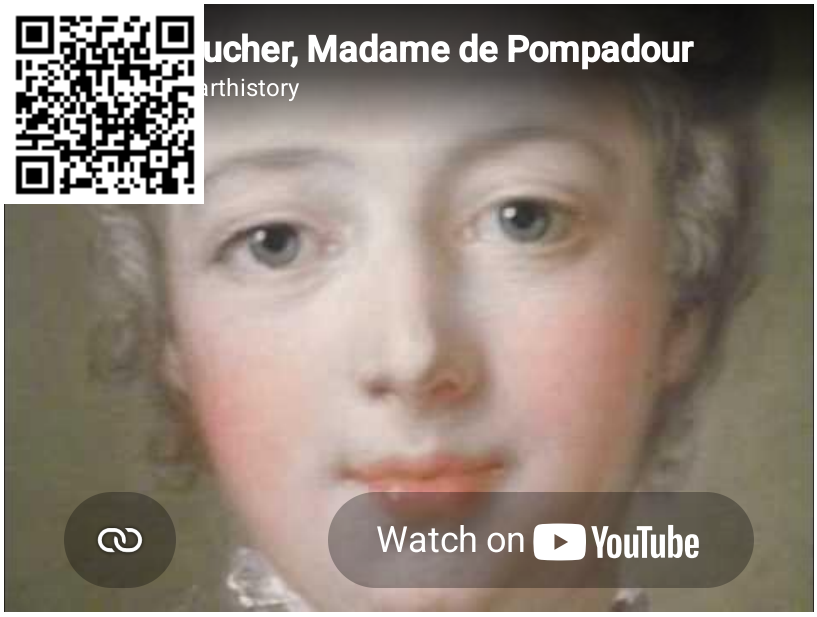



Figure 13.7.14.13: More Smarthistory images…

François Boucher, *Madame de Pompadour*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.14.2**: François Boucher, *Madame de Pompadour*, oil on canvas, 1750 (extension of canvas and additional painting likely added by Boucher later) (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.14.14**: More Smarthistory images…

The Tiepolo Family

by JEREMY MILLER

Eighteenth-century Venice was dominated by the Tiepolo family of artists. Venice had lost influence as an artistic center since the sixteenth-century, the era of Titian and Veronese. Exciting new artists such as Caravaggio and the Carracci brothers were working primarily in central Italy, Rome in particular. By adopting the tradition of grand, allegorical ceiling painting for the aristocratic elite, the father-son team of Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo brought Venice once again into the center of artistic life. The Tiepolo family also helped define many of the qualities we think of as Rococo.



Figure 13.7.14.15: Apollo (detail), Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo, *Apollo and the Continents*, 1752, oil on canvas, 73 x 54 7/8 inches / 185.4 x 139.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

What most people notice first about Tiepolo paintings are the colors. Pastels in complimentary schemes lend a soft, often romantic quality to otherwise active scenes. The use of dramatic poses and simultaneous narrative are reinforced by the tension inherent in the color schemes, keeping the pictures lively and engaging. This combination of precision, apparent ease, and liveliness was referred to as *sprezzatura*, and the Tiepolo family came to define it as an artistic trait.

The Residenz

Between 1750 and 1753 Domenico and his father lived and worked in Würzburg, Germany. Giambattista Tiepolo had been commissioned to decorate certain areas of the Residenz, or royal residence, and he brought Domenico along to assist him with this work. The frescoes they produced are generally considered to be the greatest masterpieces of the Tiepolo family workshop. The two artists worked so well together that it is in fact impossible to differentiate exactly which passages were painted by which artist.



Figure 13.7.14.16: Ceiling (detail), Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo, *Apollo and the Continents*, Residenz Staircase, completed in 1744 (Residenz Palace, Würzburg, Germany) (photo: **Maria**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure 13.7.14.17: Johann Balthasar Neumann (designer), a view of *Apollo and the Continents* by the Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo, Residenz Staircase, completed in 1744 (Residenz Palace, Würzburg, Germany) (photo: **paula soler-moya**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The ceiling above the grand staircase of the Residenz contains an allegorical depiction of Apollo presiding over the planets and continents. At each edge of the curved ceiling, just above each wall, are symbolic representations of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. Giambattista and Domenico designed each section to be viewed from specific “stopping points” specified by the patron. Here visitors climbing the staircase could pause to admire the work, and appreciate how the perspective of the fresco seemed to adjust to their position in the room. This imaginative use of perspective helps the allegorical image come alive for viewers, but can make this three-dimensional painting look awkward in two-dimensional photographs.



Figure **13.7.14.18**: Domenico Tiepolo, *Departure from Jerusalem* from the series *Picturesque Ideas on the Flight Into Egypt*, 1753, etching

The Tiepolo family also explored new media and artistic subjects, particularly Domenico. In 1753 he published a series of twenty-four etchings titled *Picturesque Ideas on the Flight into Egypt* which were executed during the breaks in activity at the Residenz. These sheets were produced in a cinematic way, much like modern storyboards. The story unfolds page by page, and the viewer is brought into the scenes through the way the images are composed. In the fourth image, we see the backs of the onlookers at the right side of the composition as the holy family departs on their journey. The architectural framing of the image encourages the viewer to imagine being one of the citizens of Jerusalem, witnessing the departure of Mary, Joseph, and their newly born son. The strong diagonals that make up most of the image enhance the sense of movement, and help to place the viewer in relation to the image's protagonists.

Despite Domenico's attempts to bring his family's artistic practice into the age of Enlightenment, the Tiepolo style was viewed as passé before 1800. After Austrian troops annexed Venice under direction from Napoleon in 1796, Domenico retired to his country villa, and the Venetian painting tradition, like the republic itself, came to an end.

Additional resources:

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's Frescoes at the Wurzburg Residenz from artdaily.org

Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun

Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait*

by DR. APRIL RENÉE LYNCH



Figure **13.7.14.19**: Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, *Archduchess Marie Antoinette, Queen of France*, 1778, oil on canvas, 273 x 193.5 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

There is an oft-quoted saying misattributed to Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France, during a famine suffered by her subjects: If they have no bread, “then let them eat cake.”

In fact, this statement (which showed flagrant disregard for the suffering of the people) was never uttered by the Queen that we know from so many sumptuous portraits. These portraits are largely the work of Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, a celebrated French artist known especially for her lavish portraits of Marie-Antoinette and other European monarchs and nobles as well as for her many self-portraits.

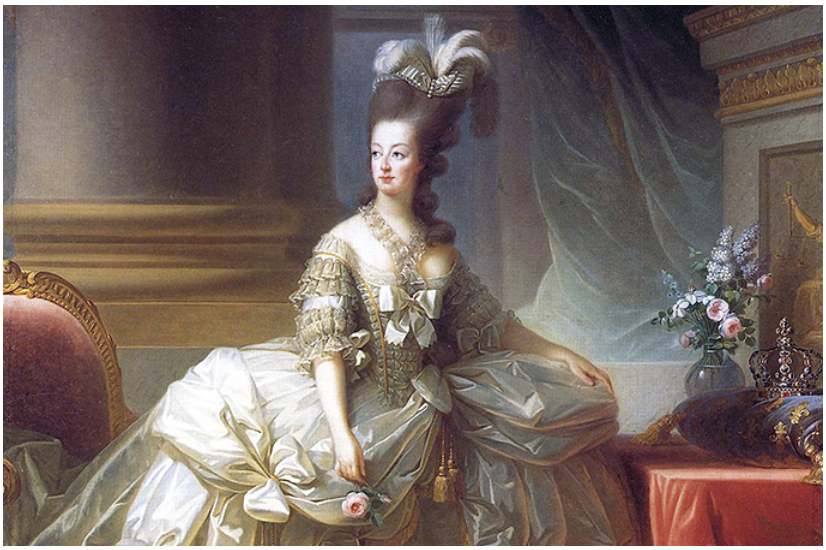


Figure **13.7.14.20**: Detail, Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, *Archduchess Marie Antoinette, Queen of France*, 1778, oil on canvas, 273 x 193.5 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Patron Queen

Vigée-LeBrun first met Queen Marie-Antoinette at the royal palace at Versailles in 1778. The Queen had heard of the young painter’s successes and had her own likeness painted *en robe a paniers* (in a hoopskirt). The painting is a majestic full-length display of power. Marie-Antoinette stands facing the viewer, with the exception of her head, which is turned slightly to the viewer’s left so that she looks past us.The Queen is dressed in an elaborate golden white dress. Her hair is piled high and she wears a feathery headdress. All around her are the accoutrements of her station: huge columns, a marble bust of her husband, Louis XVI, displayed high atop a pedestal and behind a table on which sits a crown. The painting was originally meant for the queen’s brother, Emperor Joseph II of Austria, but Marie-Antoinette was so pleased with it that she ordered copies made for Catherine the Great of Russia and her own apartments at Versailles.



Figure **13.7.14.21**: Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, *Self-Portrait*, 1790, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

The artist who created this opulent showpiece became famous and wealthy as Queen Marie-Antoinette's official court painter. She was born to Louis Vigée and Jeanne Maissin in a bustling section of Paris. In her autobiography *Souvenirs* written towards the end of her life, Vigée-LeBrun wrote that her father, a minor portraitist, doted on her, wishing his daughter fame and good fortune; and that he cherished her early efforts at drawing. Vigée-LeBrun wrote that her mother thought her awkward and ugly. Nevertheless, she grew up to be intelligent, beautiful, rich, and talented, characteristics on display in her *Self-Portrait* of 1790.

Created soon after her swift departure from France at the onset of the French Revolution, Vigée-LeBrun's *Self-Portrait* in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence, is one of her best-known pictures. It is a late example of the Rococo style. Rococo epitomized a fashionable ideal, wherein perpetual youth was libertine and pleasure-loving, its sexual gratification taken without guilt or consequence. Despite this, the artist, like her royal patron, was extremely conservative in her politics.



Figure **13.7.14.22**: Detail, Elizabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait*, 1790, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi).

This self-portrait was painted in Rome; one of the first cities in which Vigée-LeBrun stayed during her decade-long exile from France. The artist sits in a relaxed pose at her easel and is positioned slightly off center. She wears a white turban and a dark dress —in the free-flowing style that Marie-Antoinette had made popular at the French court—with a soft, white, ruffled collar of the same material as her headdress. Her belt is a wide red ribbon. Vigée-LeBrun holds a brush to a partially finished work; the subject is probably Marie-Antoinette—perhaps intended as a tribute to her favorite sitter. Slightly used brushes are at the ready along with a palette, she has everything cradled in her arm close to the viewer.

The painting expresses an alert intelligence, vibrancy, and freedom from care. This, despite the fact that Vigée-LeBrun had been forced to flee France in disguise and under cover of darkness during the early stages of the Revolution. As she painted this portrait, her Queen was being driven from power by revolutionaries who hated the profligate lifestyle of the nobility and would later execute both Marie-Antoinette and her husband, King Louis XVI. Given these circumstances, Vigée-LeBrun—a working painter, wife, and mother—displays an extraordinarily sanguine persona.



Figure **13.7.14.23**: Detail with palette and brushes, Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, *Self-Portrait*, 1790, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

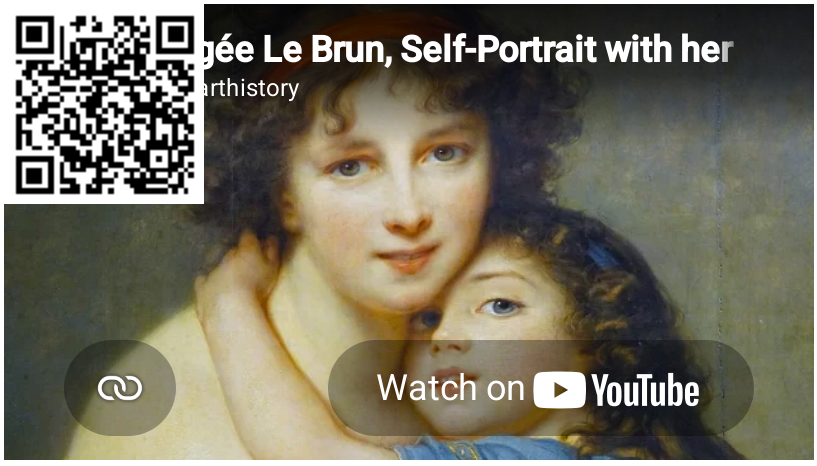
Additional resources:

Eighteenth-Century Women Painters in France on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Gita May, *Elisabeth Vigée-LeBrun: The Odyssey of an Artist in an Age of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait with her Daughter*

by DR. INGRID E. MIDA



Video **13.7.14.3**: Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait with her Daughter, Julie*, 1789, oil on canvas, 130 x 94 cm (Musée du Louvre). Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker



Figure **13.7.14.24**: Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait with Her Daughter Julie (à l'Antique)*, 1789, oil on wood, 130 x 94 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

During the course of her lifetime, **Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun** painted many self-portraits, including her 1789 *Self-Portrait with Her Daughter Julie (à l'Antique)*. In this intimate painting, she is seated on a bench as her daughter Julie leans into her body, and the arms of mother and daughter circle around each other. What differentiates this work from other self-portraits is her choice of attire. In this work, she appears to be wearing a one-shouldered dress that resembles the ancient Greek *chiton*, a garment not worn since antiquity. Why would the artist dress this way?

What is she wearing?



Figure **13.7.14.25**: Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, *Self-Portrait*, 1790, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

While other self-portraits by Vigée Le Brun show her wearing fashionable but modest dress (see for example her self-portrait from 1790), this garment exposes one shoulder and the upper chest area of her body. Although Vigée Le Brun wrote in her memoirs that she often "wore white dresses in muslin or linen lawn," [1] she is not wearing an actual dress in this self-portrait, but one that has been formed from a length of white cloth wrapped over one shoulder and around her body. The cloth is held in place with a red scarf that is bound twice around her torso and fastened underneath her bust. A length of green silk is draped across her legs and a red ribbon is tied around her unpowdered hair. The artist's considerable skill in rendering cloth is evident but there is another message intended by her choice of dress in this work.

Why would she dress this way for her self-portrait?

As a woman artist in eighteenth century France, Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun had to work harder to gain access to the profession than a man with comparable skills, especially since women were not permitted access to life drawing classes. At the time, the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture) governed the profession of art in France, such that only members of the Academy had the right to publicly exhibit their work in the official salons. Although Vigée Le Brun was initially denied membership to the Academy, in 1783 the king of France ordered an exception be made and the artist became one of four female members.



Figure **13.7.14.26**: Raphael, *The Small Cowper Madonna*, c. 1505, oil on panel, 59.5 x 44 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

An artist's self-portrait is a form of calling card that not only demonstrates skills in achieving a likeness but may also be designed to convey messages about the artist's identity and inner life. Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun's design of her 1789 self-portrait with her daughter echoes that of the Renaissance painter Raphael, a much-admired artist in eighteenth century France. Vigée Le Brun's pose with her daughter creates a triangular composition that is reminiscent of Raphael's Madonna and Child in *The Small Cowper Madonna*. In Raphael's work, the arms of baby Jesus encircle his mother's neck and the colours red, blue and green predominate. In addition, the manner in which the drapery falls across the lap in Le Brun's work also seems to emulate Raphael.

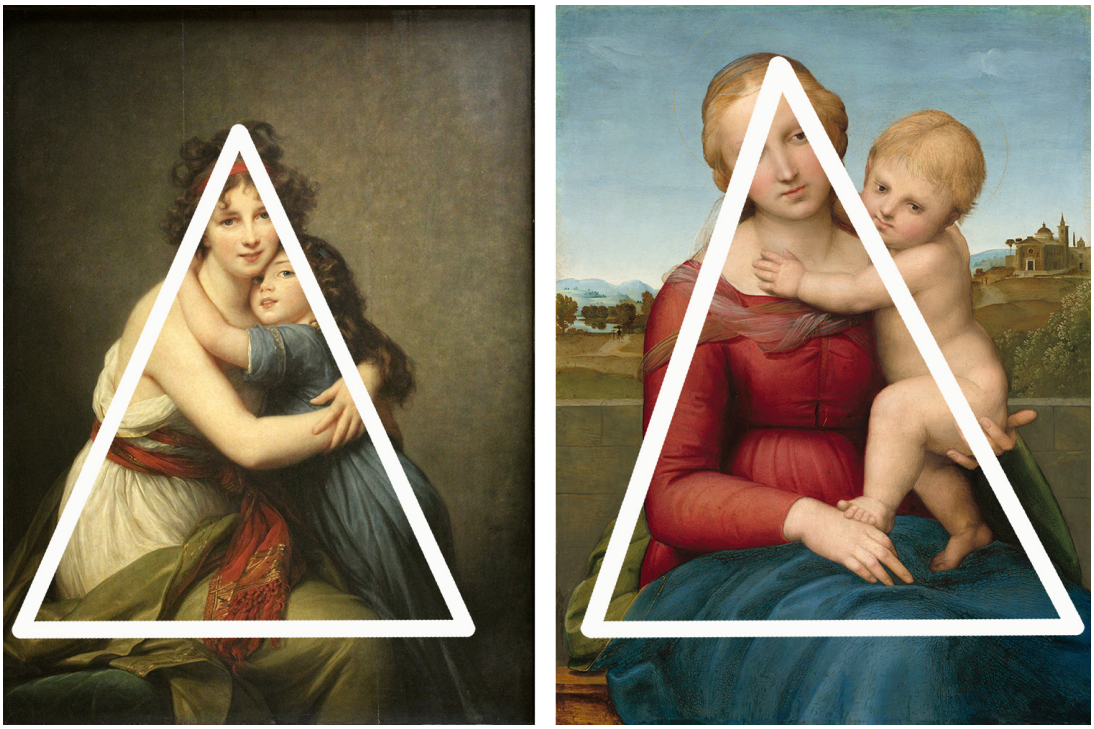


Figure 13.7.14.27: Comparison of the compositions of Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun's *Self-Portrait with Her Daughter Julie (à l'Antique)*, left and Raphael's *Small Cowper Madonna*, right

Aside from the reference to Raphael, the draped cloth worn by Vigée Le Brun also creates a timeless quality that harkens back to the classical period. Although a more informal and lightweight type of long-sleeved dress was worn in the 1780s by women including the artist and her clients, the dress worn by the artist in this particular self-portrait is quite different from the the *chemise á la reine*. The garment worn by Vigée Le Brun in this work bares one shoulder and, in this way, closely resembles a chiton, a sleeveless and form-fitting dress created from draped cloth. Many examples of the chiton can be seen ancient Greek sculpture, including a marble statue of Aphrodite from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

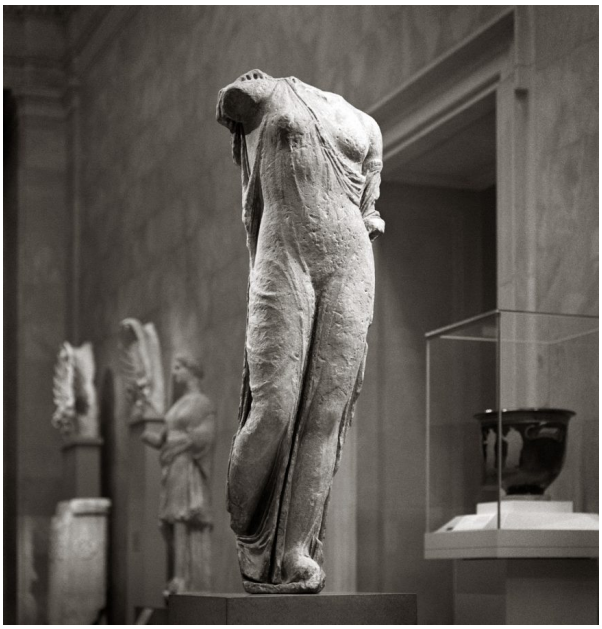


Figure 13.7.14.28: Marble statue of Aphrodite, the so-called Venus Genetrix, 1st-2nd century C.E., marble , height 151.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

In creating a visual link to the classical era (ancient Greece and Rome) through her choice of dress, Elizabeth Vigée Le Brun may have wanted to reference legendary figures from that time. According to a Greek myth recounted by Pliny the Elder, the Corinthian

maiden Dibutadis created the first drawing when she traced the shadow of her lover on a wall; this tale, in which the origin of drawing was linked to a desire to remember, was well known to artists in the eighteenth century. By wearing a form of dress linked to that time, Elizabeth Vigée Le Brun suggests that she is equally worthy of being remembered. Or she may have wanted the viewer to link her to the renowned painter Apelles of Kos from the fourth century B.C.E who Pliny the Elder considered superior to all other artists of the time. Either way, in dressing herself in a manner that is suggestive of classical antiquity, the artist invites viewers to equate her artwork to that of the artistic legends of the past.

Reading the clues of dress in a self-portrait



Figure **13.7.14.29**: Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait with Her Daughter Julie (à l'Antique)*, 1789, oil on wood, 130 x 94 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

When an artist creates a self-portrait, they can choose to wear whatever they feel best reflects their identity. In reading such works, it is important to consider the fact that the artist's choice of attire may or may not reflect what was actually worn at the time but instead be a deliberate reference to another artist and/or another time period. Such is the case in Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun's *Self-Portrait with Her Daughter Julie (à l'Antique)* in which she references the classical period in her manner of dress in order to cast herself as equal to legendary masters from the past.

Notes:

1. Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Memoirs of Madame Vigée-Lebrun*, translated by Lionel Strachey, 1903 (London: Dodo Press, 2017), p. 42

Additional resources:

Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

See a portrait by Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun of Marie Antoinette wearing a *chemise á la reine* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Read about "The Chiton, Peplos, and Himation in Modern Dress" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Joseph Baillio, Katharine Baetjer, Paul Lang, *Vigée Le Brun* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016).

Ingrid E. Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

Mary D. Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Memoirs of Madame Vigée-Lebrun*, Translated by Lionel Strachey, 1903. (London: Dodo Press, 2017).

Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Madame Perregaux*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.7.14.4**: Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Madame Perregaux*, 1789, oil on oak panel, 99.6 x 78.5 cm (Wallace Collection, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.7.14.30: More Smarthistory images…

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.14.5: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, 1767, oil on canvas (Wallace Collection, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

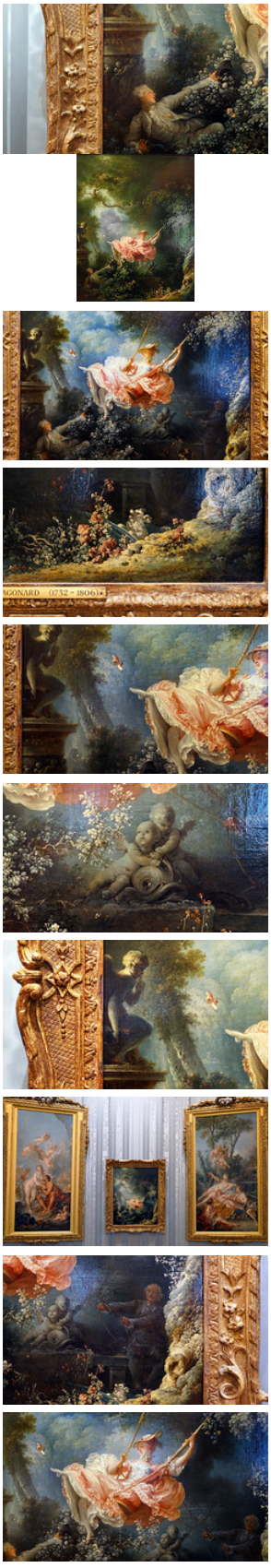


Figure 13.7.14.31: More Smarthistory images…

Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Progress of Love: The Meeting*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

Video **13.7.14.6**: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Progress of Love: The Meeting*, 1771-1773, oil on canvas, 317.5 x 243.8 cm (The Frick Collection, New York)

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Village Bride*

by DANA MARTIN



Figure **13.7.14.32**: Jean-Baptiste Greuze, The Village Bride (slightly cropped), 1761, oil on canvas, 36 x 46 1/2 inches / 91.4 x 118.1 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

A story of love

It is a simple story of love. We are transported to a rural country village to attend a wedding. The happy couple is in the center, their arms entwined in an obvious symbol of their love. The bride's father, seated on the right, extends his arms in congratulations—he has just handed his new son-in-law his dowry.

The bride's mother and younger sister caress her arm, sad to see her leave the family but very happy that she has found love. On the other hand, the older sister leans over her father's shoulder to look on enviously and perhaps somewhat judgmentally, at her sister who has beaten her to the altar. The rest of the younger family members play nearby, accompanied by a few barnyard guests. With only a notary in attendance to make the marriage official, the ceremony can only be described as spare, and the French bourgeois public (or middle class) enthusiastically accepted Jean-Baptiste Greuze's composition of humble simplicity.



Figure **13.7.14.33**: Groom, father in law and sister-in-law (detail), Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Village Bride*, 1761, oil on canvas, 36 x 46 1/2 inches / 91.4 x 118.1 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

A "natural" art



Figure **13.7.14.34**: Bride with her mother and younger sister (detail), Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Village Bride*, 1761, oil on canvas, 36 x 46 1/2 inches / 91.4 x 118.1 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

The Enlightenment is arguably one of the most radical moments in Western philosophical history, and while *The Village Bride*—a painting of a rural wedding—does not initially seem philosophical in subject, the age of the Enlightenment provides an important context for understanding the painting. Scholars questioned the traditions of Western culture, including the authority of the church and the arbitrary rule of the monarchy. Figures such as Denis Diderot attempted to compile all human knowledge into the first *Encyclopédie*. François Marie Arouet, who went by the name Voltaire, advocated for the advancement of science and technology. Yet none of these thinkers were as widely read as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (even the Queen Marie Antoinette was a fan). The famous introduction to his 1762 work *The Social Contract*, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains," clearly states his philosophical concern. According to Rousseau, the customs of modern society—even its arts, sciences, and laws—have corrupted the inherent virtue and moral character of "natural" man. If we could throw off these self-imposed chains and return to a more natural state where emotion was respected, then compassion would replace tyranny and the alienation of the individual.

This idea of "natural" man led to a focus on an idealized view of rural, peasant life. Peasants, according to this line of reasoning, lived more simply, were closer to the earth and had not been corrupted by the forces of elite society. Further "natural" man was not ruled entirely by reason and logic—important signifiers of the modern world. Rousseau wrote, "To exist is to feel; our feeling is undoubtedly earlier than our intelligence, and we had feelings before we had ideas." [1] With its depiction of a simple rural interior

and the emotions of love, sadness, and joy, Greuze's *Village Bride* encapsulates Enlightenment ideas of man—natural and uncorrupted.

Not a fête galante



Figure **13.7.14.35**: Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, 1717, oil on canvas, 4′ 3″ x 6′ 4 1/2″ (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Interest in the natural world had been central to the Rococo style since its inception earlier in the eighteenth century. We can see it, for example in the popular Rococo subject, the fête galante (typically a depicted the outdoor amusements of French upper-class society). Artists like Antoine Watteau created dreamy, romantic depictions like those of the young couples who have journeyed to the mythical island of love, Cythera (below).

Other Rococo artists like François Boucher and Jean-Honoré Fragonard were favorites of King Louis XV's mistresses Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry, respectively. Each commissioned scenes of voluptuous, rosy-bottomed cupids and young lovers. These paintings were about pleasure and indulgence, and when compared to Greuze's composition, *The Village Bride* becomes a commentary on aristocratic life. These fête galante love affairs are frivolous and lustful, while the actual marriages between various aristocrats was typically understood as a match made for political power, money, or convenience. In contrast, the couple that Greuze has given us is clearly the result of love. Here is a hard-working family with no power and little money, nevertheless rewarded for their virtuous love with happiness.

Professional success

Jean-Baptiste Greuze first achieved professional success in the Salon of 1755. His sentimental scenes found admirers among the upper middle-class public. At this time the art market had expanded beyond the wealthiest aristocracy, and a painting such a *The Village Bride* would have been a delight to the upper middle-class. It is easy to imagine the French public crowding around this painting, and discussing each pose and facial expression in detail. Greuze even found a fan in the philosopher, Denis Diderot, who remarked how difficult it was to even get close to the canvas because of the crowds. Greuze's art would eventually fall out of style with the advent of Neoclassicism, but his paintings will always stand as a testament to the movement of natural man and moral philosophy.

1. Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *Emile*, J.M. Dent and Sons: London, 1911, page 303.

Additional resources:

Greuze and his followers from The National Gallery of Art

Greuze on Your Paintings

Bernard II van Risenburgh, Writing table

by DIANNE PIERCE



Figure **13.7.14.36**: Bernard II van Risenburgh, Writing table (Table à écrire), c. 1755, oak veneered with tulipwood, kingwood, amaranth, mahogany, ebony, mother-of-pearl, stained horn; gilt-bronze mounts and modern velvet, 78.1 x 96.5 x 57.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The style of the French nobility

Encased in the curving frame and delicate decorative scheme of this writing table are clever innovations, technological and artistic brilliance, and a representation of completely new ways of living in the period beginning c. 1755.

After the formality and grandeur of Louis XIV's Versailles, French aristocrats, including the king himself, were ready for spaces, furniture, clothing, and etiquette that allowed them to turn to matters other than the glorification of France. Beginning before the turn of the eighteenth century, but accelerated by the opportunity opened by the death of the Sun King in 1715, nobles set up their own homes after decades of living under the king's enormous roof at Versailles, and created a radically different domestic life. Although it was only seven years until Louis XIV's great-grandson was old enough to take the throne to reign as Louis XV, by 1722 new ideas of privacy, comfort, and intimate home life led to a new design language, the Rococo. All of the elements that are the basis for domesticity as we know it today were developed in this period.

A move away from Baroque grandeur and classicism



Figure **13.7.14.37**: Cabriole legs (detail), Bernard II van Risenburgh, Writing table (Table à écrire), c. 1755, oak veneered with tulipwood, kingwood, amaranth, mahogany, ebony, mother-of-pearl, stained horn; gilt-bronze mounts and modern velvet, 78.1 x 96.5 x 57.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Louis XIV, during his long reign, had established France as a major European economic and political power, not least by the use of design as a strategic propaganda tool. Where the grandeur, drama, and theatricality of the Baroque, as Louis imported it from Rome, had been the perfect tool for portraying the King and his country as supremely powerful, by the early eighteenth century, the Baroque was starting to seem exhaustingly sumptuous. Baroque design was based on the classical language, which the earlier Renaissance artists had delighted in rediscovering, augmenting, and modifying. But by the early decades of the eighteenth century, designers were increasingly turning away from bombastic classicism to other sources, notably the natural world. They began playing with un-classical ideas like asymmetry, movement, linearity, sinuous curves, and realistic natural ornament. The Rococo, as it developed in design, was a sharp turn away from everything the Baroque had become.



Figure **13.7.14.38**: Jean François de Troy, *Reading from Molière*, around 1728, oil on canvas, 72.4 x 90.8 cm (Collection of late Marchioness of Cholmondeley, Houghton)

Elegance, intimacy, delicacy and curves

Where Baroque spaces had been opulent, Rococo rooms were elegant. Grandeur became intimate delicacy. No less carefully designed or meticulously crafted, Rococo was light, fresh, and whimsical, to replace the heavy, fleshy Baroque. The lines of this writing table, as well as its applied ornament and its iconography, all express perfectly the Rococo sensibility. The piece is all curves, more vital and organic than architectural, with cabriole legs (with two curves) that seem to dance, and marquetry of ribbons, leaves and flowers. There's no message here, no story told or idea conveyed, only pleasure and delight in an object for its own sake. Louis XV's reign, like the man himself, was a time of lighthearted pursuit of beauty and sensual *joie de vivre*.

The artist

This table was designed by Bernard II van Risenburgh, one of a group of furniture makers working for Louis XV and his nobles. They produced new types of objects for new lifestyles, in the new Rococo design language, and using new technologies. Everything about this table is a fresh approach. Van Risenburgh was part of a relatively new guild of furniture specialists called ébénistes, who were responsible for the veneered skin of the piece only; the frame was built by a menusier. While many of the finest craftsmen of the eighteenth century worked only in the royal workshops, Van Risenburgh was unusual in having his own enterprise and selling primarily through retail middle-men known as marchand-merciers, a new-fangled concept. Furthermore, he signed his pieces (BVRB). In keeping with Enlightenment ideas of the eighteenth century which celebrated individuality and personal achievement, increasingly craftsmen were identifying themselves with their work. Van Risenburgh also designed his own gilt-bronze mounts, which created a distinct personal style and help to identify his work.



Figure **13.7.14.39**: Ornate decoration and compartment (detail), Bernard II van Risenburgh, Writing table (Table à écrire), c. 1755, oak veneered with tulipwood, kingwood, amaranth, mahogany, ebony, mother-of-pearl, stained horn; gilt-bronze mounts and modern velvet, 78.1 x 96.5 x 57.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Tables were "in" (especially for women)

Tables were the delight of the new Rococo interior. Tiny moveable tables for ladies' sewing, tables for playing cards, exquisite tables (bonheurs du jour) with porcelain plaques from the royal Sevres factory: an explosion of types and expressions. Writing, playing cards, correspondence were all fashionable amusements for the new world of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, small, highly detailed tables served as props for a particular kind of intimate domestic theater. Women especially used these objects in their expressions of themselves as cultured and sophisticated, skilled in the arts of polite society and seduction. A slender lace-clad wrist, lightly touching a hidden spring in a table, could reveal a drawer or a secret compartment, a book-rest, or in some pieces, all of these—in a series of carefully orchestrated steps. In the intimate aristocratic world of the early eighteenth century, women were the gatekeepers to the rooms where important men gathered, and thereby exercised great social and political power. For the first time, women chose and controlled their interiors, had their own objects, and interacted with them in a most self-conscious but seemingly insouciant way.

How it was used

This writing table gives the user some clues about how to employ it: first, there is an opening in the gilt-bronze (or ormolu) gallery (the little fence around the edge of the top) that tells where to sit. In accord with this positioning, one finds a pull-out flat writing surface with a leather inset, just below the table top. A drawer for storage slides out of one short end, and another flat surface pulls out of the other to create a place to put accessories such as ink and paper.

Not merely a piece of furniture, this writing table from the golden era of French design, is an indicator of great social changes, including changing women's roles, stylistic shifts, and a personal relationship with objects that presaged the modern world as we know it today.

Additional resources:

DeJean, Joan E. *The Age of Comfort: When Paris Discovered Casual–and the Modern Home Began*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2009.

Thornton, Peter. *Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior*, 1620-1920. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Viking, 1984.

Whitehead, John. *The French Interior: In the Eighteenth Century*. London: L. King, 1992.

This table at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

A short biography of the artist at the J. Paul Getty Museum

13.7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism

Neoclassicism

France was on the brink of its first revolution in 1789.

late 1700s

Neoclassicism, an introduction

by DR. BETH GERSH-NESIC



Figure 13.7.15.1: Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 1637-38, oil on canvas, 185 cm × 121 cm (72.8 in × 47.6 in) (Louvre)

In opposition to the frivolous sensuality of Rococo painters like Jean-Honoré Fragonard and François Boucher, the Neoclassicists looked back to the French painter Nicolas Poussin for their inspiration (Poussin's work exemplifies the interest in classicism in French art of the seventeenth century). The decision to promote "Poussiniste" painting became an ethical consideration—they believed that strong drawing was rational, therefore morally better. They believed that art should be cerebral, not sensual.

The Neoclassicists, such as Jacques-Louis David (pronounced Da-VEED), preferred the well-delineated form—clear drawing and modeling (shading). Drawing was considered more important than painting. The Neoclassical surface had to look perfectly smooth—no evidence of brush-strokes should be discernible to the naked eye.

France was on the brink of its first revolution in 1789, and the Neoclassicists wanted to express a rationality and seriousness that was fitting for their times. Artists like David supported the rebels through an art that asked for clear-headed thinking, self-sacrifice to the State (as in *Oath of the Horatii*) and an austerity reminiscent of Republican Rome.



Figure 13.7.15.2: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784 (salon of 1785) oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25m (Louvre)

Neoclassicism was a child of the Age of Reason (the Enlightenment), when philosophers believed that we would be able to control our destinies by learning from and following the laws of nature (the United States was founded on Enlightenment philosophy). Scientific inquiry attracted more attention. Therefore, Neoclassicism continued the connection to the Classical tradition because it signified moderation and rational thinking but in a new and more politically-charged spirit ("neo" means "new," or in the case of art, an existing style reiterated with a new twist.)

Neoclassicism is characterized by clarity of form, sober colors, shallow space, strong horizontal and verticals that render that subject matter timeless (instead of temporal as in the dynamic Baroque works), and Classical subject matter (or classicizing contemporary subject matter).

Additional resources:

Neoclassicism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Nicolas Poussin on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.7.15.3**: More Smarthistory images…

The Age of Enlightenment, an introduction

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Figure **13.7.15.4**: Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving A Lecture at the Orrery*, c. 1765, oil on canvas, 147 x 203 cm (Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Derby, England)

In the painting above by Joseph Wright of Derby, we see an orrery— a mechanical model of the solar system. In the center is a gas light which represents the sun (though the child who stands in the foreground with his back to us block this from our view); the arcs represent the orbits of the planets. Wright concentrates on the faces of the figures to create a compelling narrative.

With paintings like these, Wright invented a new subject: scenes of experiments and new machinery. This was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution (think cities, railroads, steam power, gas and then electric light, factories, and machines). Wright's fascination with light, strange shadows, and darkness, reveals the influence of Baroque art.

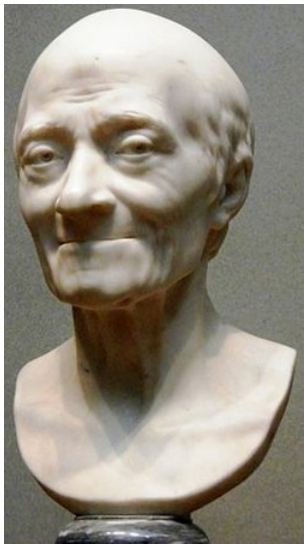


Figure **13.7.15.5**: Jean-Antoine Houdon, Voltaire, 1778, marble (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) (photo: **Sara Stierch**, CC BY 2.0)

Enlightenment

Toward the middle of the eighteenth century a shift in thinking occurred. This shift is known as the Enlightenment. You have probably already heard of some important Enlightenment figures, like Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire. It is helpful I think to think about the word "enlighten" here—the idea of shedding light on something, illuminating it, making it clear.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment, influenced by the scientific revolutions of the previous century, believed in shedding the light of science and reason on the world in order to question traditional ideas and ways of doing things. The scientific revolution (based on empirical observation, and not on metaphysics or spirituality) gave the impression that the universe behaved according to universal and unchanging laws (think of Newton here). This provided a model for looking rationally on human institutions as well as nature.

Reason and equality

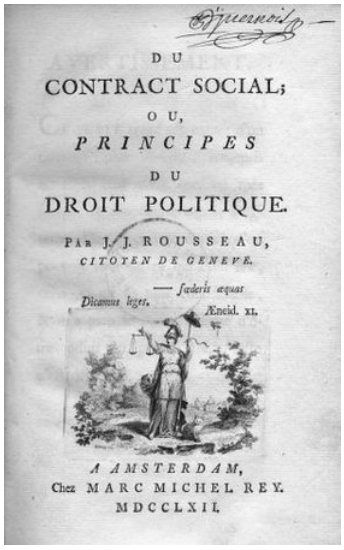


Figure **13.7.15.6**: Jean-Jaques Roussaeu, *Du contrat social ou Principes du droit politique* (or *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right*), 1762, France

Rousseau, for example, began to question the idea of the divine right of Kings. In *The Social Contract*, he wrote that the King does not, in fact, receive his power from God, but rather from the general will of the people. This, of course, implies that "the people" can also take away that power.

The Enlightenment thinkers also discussed other ideas that are the founding principles of any democracy—the idea of the importance of the individual who can reason for himself, the idea of equality under the law, and the idea of natural rights. The Enlightenment was a period of profound optimism, a sense that with science and reason—and the consequent shedding of old superstitions—human beings and human society would improve.

You can probably tell already that the Enlightenment was anti-clerical; it was, for the most part, opposed to traditional Catholicism. Instead, the Enlightenment thinkers developed a way of understanding the universe called Deism—the idea, more or less, is that there is a God, but that this God is not the figure of the Old and New Testaments, actively involved in human affairs. He is more like a watchmaker who, once he makes the watch and winds it, has nothing more to do with it.

The Enlightenment, the monarchy, and the French Revolution

The Enlightenment encouraged criticism of the corruption of the monarchy (at this point King Louis XVI), and the aristocracy. Enlightenment thinkers condemned Rococo art for being immoral and indecent, and called for a new kind of art that would be moral instead of immoral, and teach people right and wrong.



Figure **13.7.15.7**: Louis-Michel van Loo, *Diderot*, 1767, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm (Louvre)

Denis Diderot, Enlightenment philosopher, writer and art critic, wrote that the aim of art was “to make virtue attractive, vice odious, ridicule forceful; that is the aim of every honest man who takes up the pen, the brush or the chisel” (*Essai sur la peinture*).

These new ways of thinking, combined with a financial crisis (the country was bankrupt) and poor harvests left many ordinary French people both angry and hungry. In 1789, the French Revolution began. In its initial stage, the revolutionaries asked only for a constitution that would limit the power of the king.

Ultimately the idea of a constitution failed, and the revolution entered a more radical stage. In 1792 King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette were deposed and ultimately beheaded along with thousands of other aristocrats believed to be loyal to the monarchy.

Additional resources:

The Enlightenment from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

The Enlightenment from Professor Paul Brian at Washington State University

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

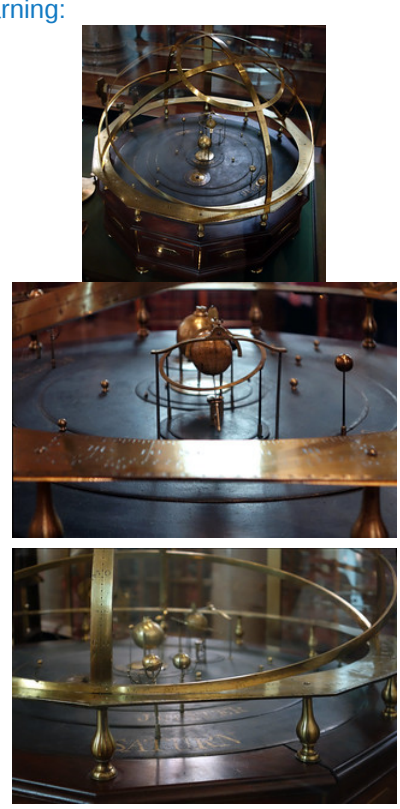


Figure 13.7.15.8: More Smarthistory images…

Jacques-Louis David

Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*

by DR. CLAIRE BLACK MCCOY



Video 13.7.15.1: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

No one had seen a painting like it

In 1785 visitors to the Paris Salon were transfixed by one painting, Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii*. It depicts three men, brothers, saluting toward three swords held up by their father as the women behind him grieve—no one had ever seen a painting like it. Similar subjects had always been seen in the Salons before but the physicality and intense emotion of the painting was new

and undeniable. The revolutionary painting changed French art but was David also calling for another kind of revolution—a real one?



Figure **13.7.15.9**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

Conquer or die

The story of *Oath of the Horatii* came from a Roman legend first recounted by the Roman historian Livy involving a conflict between the Romans and a rival group from nearby Alba. Rather than continue a full-scale war, they elect representative combatants to settle their dispute. The Romans select the Horatii and the Albans choose another trio of brothers, the Curatii. In the painting we witness the Horatii taking an oath to defend Rome.



Figure **13.7.15.10**: Detail, Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

The women know that they will also bear the consequence of the battle because the two families are united by marriage. One of the wives in the painting is a daughter of the Curatii and the other, Camilla, is engaged to one of the Curatii brothers. At the end of the legend the sole surviving Horatii brother kills Camilla, who condemned his murder of her beloved, accusing Camilla of putting her sentiment above her duty to Rome. The moment David chose to represent was, in his reported words, "the moment which must have preceded the battle, when the elder Horatius, gathering his sons in their family home, makes them swear to conquer or die."



Figure **13.7.15.11**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

A rigorously organized painting

To tell the story of the oath, David created a rigorously organized painting with a scene set in what might be a Roman atrium dominated by three arches at the back that keep our attention focused on the main action in the foreground. There we see a group of three young men framed by the first arch, the Horatii brothers, bound together with their muscled arms raised in a rigid salute toward their father framed by the central arch. He holds three swords aloft in his left hand and raises his right hand signifying a promise or sacrifice. The male figures create tense, geometric forms that contrast markedly with the softly curved, flowing poses of

the women seated behind the father. David lit the figures with a stark, clinical light that contrasts sharply with the heightened drama of the scene as if he were requiring the viewer to respond to the scene with a mixture of passion and rationality.



Figure **13.7.15.12**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

An example of Neoclassicism

In beginning art history courses, the painting is typically presented as a prime example of Neoclassical history painting. It tells a story derived from the Classical world that provides an example of virtuous behavior (*exemplum vertutis*). The dramatic, rhetorical gestures of the male figures easily convey the idea of oath-taking and the clear, even light makes every aspect of the story legible. Instead of creating an illusionistic extension of space into a deep background, David radically cuts off the space with the arches and pushes the action to the foreground in the manner of Roman relief sculpture.



Figure **13.7.15.13**: Pierre Peyron, *The Death of Alcestis*, 1794, oil on canvas, 97.2 x 95.7 cm (North Carolina Museum of Art)

Before *Oath of the Horatii*, French history paintings in a more Rococo style such as Jean-François-Pierre Peyron's *Death of Alcestis* (1785) involved the viewer by appealing to sentiment and presenting softly modeled graceful figures. David acknowledged that old approach in the figures of the women in *Oath of the Horatii*, but challenged it with the starkly athletic figures and resolute poses of the men.

Going back to Poussin



Figure **13.7.15.14**: Nicolas Poussin, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, c. 1637-38, oil on canvas, 159 x 206 cm (Musée du Louvre)

Before composing *Oath of the Horatii*, David went to see Poussin's *Rape of the Sabine Women* and employed the lictor, the caped man, on the far left as the basis for the *Horatii* and he directly quoted other figures from Poussin as well. Even though Poussin was his model, David knew that he was creating a new type of painting and wrote, "I do not know whether I shall ever paint another like it," as he developed the austere composition and powerful physiques.



Figure **13.7.15.15**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

Personal sacrifice for an ideal

Today the painting is typically interpreted in the context of the French Revolution and David's own direct involvement as a revolutionary. The exact source of the scene that inspired David is in doubt but it is important to art historians because it can offer clues as to David's intentions for the picture.

In the nineteenth century a former student of David identified the source as the 1640 play *Les Horaces* by Corneille that David had seen in Paris in 1782. The difficulty is that no scene of an oath occurs in Corneille's script. However, toward the end of the play, a minor character comes on stage bearing the three swords of the defeated Curatii. This stage direction as well as other contemporary productions and images related to the story of Horatii in particular—and oath-taking in general—may provide the background for

David's decision to paint the moment when the brothers take their oath to defend Rome—an act of personal sacrifice for a political ideal.



Figure **13.7.15.16**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

Revolutionary or not?

With this in mind, we can understand how one might read *Oath of the Horatii* as a painting designed to rally republicans (those who believed in the ideals of a republic, and not a monarchy, for France) by telling them that their cause will require the dedication and sacrifice of the Horatii. Those who support this view cite some of the rousing lines from Corneille's tragedy such as, "Before I am yours, I belong to my country," as well as the response of contemporary left-wing writers who praised David's republican sentiments. Those who disagree with this interpretation argue that David was enmeshed in the system of royal patronage, that the painting was accepted into the Salon with no negative response from official quarters and later royal commissions followed.

In the succeeding decades French painters responded again and again to David's transformative painting. Paintings such as Gros' *Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken* (1804), Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1819), Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), and even Courbet's *Burial at Ornans* (1849) confront the *Oath of Horatii* as they embrace or reject David's aesthetic and, perhaps, political revolution.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Louvre

This painting on the Google Art Project

Anita Brookner, *Jacques-Louis David* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).

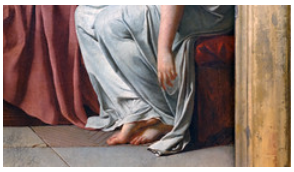
Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-century Paris* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1985).

Dorothy Johnson, "Corporality and Communication: The Gestural Revolution of Diderot, David, and the Oath of the Horatii." *Art Bulletin* 71 (March 1989), pp. 92-113.

Andrew Stewart, "David's Oath of the Horatii and the Tyrannicides." *The Burlington Magazine* 143, no. 1177 (April 2001), pp. 212-219.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









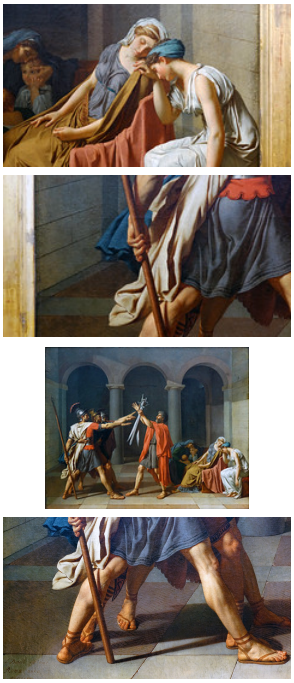


Figure 13.7.15.17: More Smarthistory images…

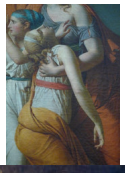
David, *The Lictors Returning to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*

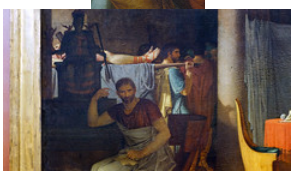
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

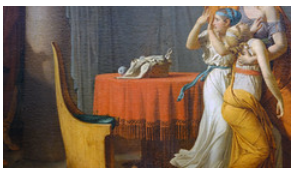


Video 13.7.15.2: Jacques-Louis David, *The Lictors Returning to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*, 1789, oil on canvas, 10′ 7-1/8″ x 13′ 10-1/8″ / 3.23 x 4.22m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















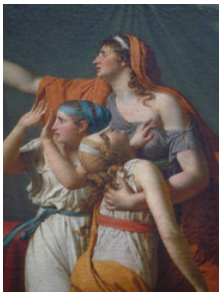




Figure 13.7.15.18: More Smarthistory images…

David, *Study for The Lictors Bringing Brutus the Bodies of his Sons*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

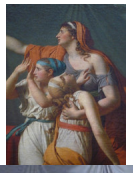


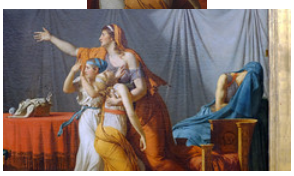
Video 13.7.15.3: Jacques-Louis David, *Study for The Lictors Bringing Brutus the Bodies of his Sons*, 1787, black chalk, pen and black and brown ink, brush and gray and brown wash, heightened with white gouache, 13 1/16 x 16 9/16″ / 33.2 x 42.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

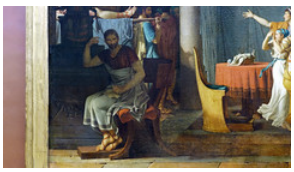
Additional resources:

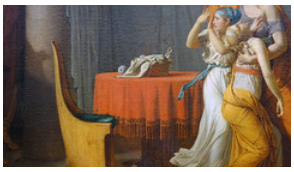
View this work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







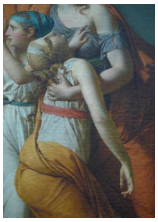












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88734



Figure **13.7.15.19:** More Smarthistory images…

Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Marat*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.15.4: Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Marat*, 1793, oil on canvas, 65 x 50-1/2″ (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels)

David and the Jacobins

By 1793, the violence of the Revolution dramatically increased until the beheadings at the Place de la Concorde in Paris became a constant, leading a certain Dr. Joseph Guillotine to invent a machine that would improve the efficiency of the ax and block and therefore make executions more humane. David was in thick of it. Early in the Revolution he had joined the Jacobins, a political club that would in time become the most rabid of the various rebel factions. Led by the ill-fated Georges Danton and the infamous Maximilien Robespierre, the Jacobins (including David) would eventually vote to execute Louis XVI and his Queen Marie Antoinette who were caught attempting to escape across the border to the Austrian Empire.

Marat and Christ



Figure 13.7.15.20: Jacques-Louis David, Death of Marat, 1793, oil on canvas, 165 x 128 cm (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels)



Figure 13.7.15.21: Detail, Jacques-Louis David, Death of Marat, 1793, oil on canvas, 165 x 128 cm (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels)

At the height of the Reign of Terror in 1793, David painted a memorial to his great friend, the murdered publisher, Jean Marat. As in his *Death of Socrates*, David substitutes the iconography (symbolic forms) of Christian art for more contemporary issues. In *Death of Marat*, 1793, an idealized image of David's slain friend, Marat, is shown holding his murderess's (Charlotte Corday) letter of introduction. The bloodied knife lays on the floor having opened a fatal gash that functions, as does the painting's very composition, as a reference to the entombment of Christ and a sort of secularized stigmata (reference to the wounds Christ is said to have received in his hands, feet and side while on the cross). Is David attempting now to find revolutionary martyrs to replace the saints of Catholicism (which had been outlawed)?

David and Napoleon

By 1794 the Reign of Terror had run its course. The Jacobins had begun to execute not only captured aristocrats but fellow revolutionaries as well. Eventually, Robespierre himself would die and the remaining Jacobins were likewise executed or imprisoned. David escaped death by renouncing his activities and was locked in a cell in the former palace, the Louvre, until his

eventual release by France's brilliant new ruler, Napoleon Bonaparte. This diminutive Corsican had been the youngest general in the French army and during the Revolution had become a national hero by waging a seemingly endless string of victorious military campaigns against the Austrians in Belgium and Italy. Eventually, Napoleon would control most of Europe, crown himself emperor, and would release David in recognition that the artist's talent could serve the ruler's purposes.

Additional resources:

This painting on *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century Art*

*T*he Legacy of Jacques Louis David on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

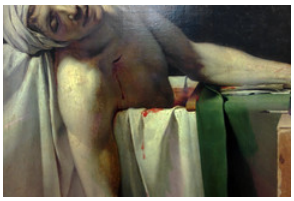
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

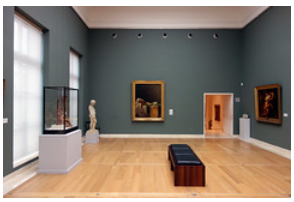
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88734

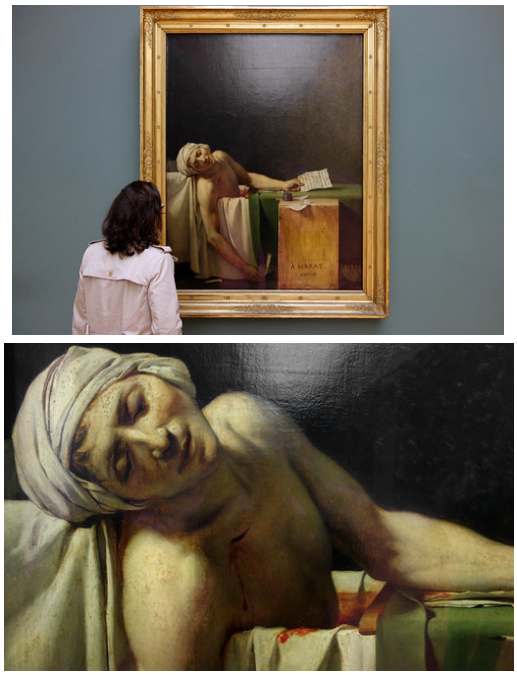


Figure **13.7.15.22**: More Smarthistory images…

Jacques-Louis David, *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

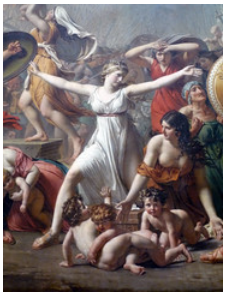


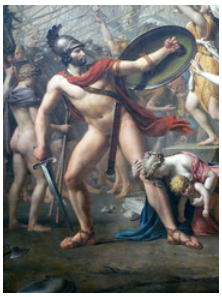
Video **13.7.15.5**: Jacques-Louis David, *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*, 1799, oil on canvas, 12’8″ x 17’3/4″ / 3.85 x 5.22 m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

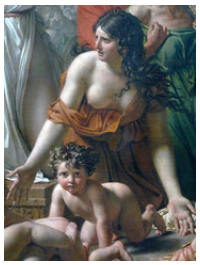








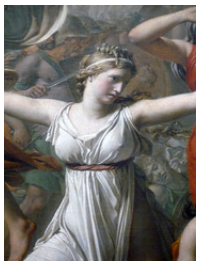


















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88734

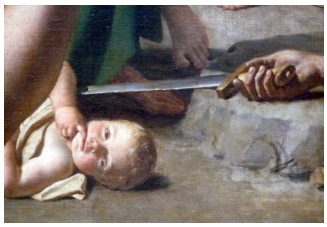


Figure **13.7.15.23**: More Smarthistory images…

Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.7.15.24**: Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* or *Bonaparte at the St Bernard Pass*, 1800-1, oil on canvas, 261 x 221 cm (Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison)

Some find it stiff and lifeless, proof of David's ineptness at capturing movement. Some see it not as art, but propaganda, pure and simple. Some snigger at its overblown, action-packed, cliff-hanging momentousness, with shades of "Hi ho Silver, away!" Some have it down as a sort of beginning of the end moment in David's career, before he officially became Napoleon's artist-lackey. Whatever one might say, though (and a lot has been said about *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*), it is still arguably the most successful portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte that was ever made. Personally, I love it.

Background

Completed in four months, from October 1800 to January 1801, it signals the dawning of a new century. After a decade of terror and uncertainty following the Revolution, France was emerging as a great power once more. At the heart of this revival, of course, was General Napoleon Bonaparte who, in 1799, had staged an uprising against the revolutionary government (a coup d'état), installed himself as First Consul, and effectively become the most powerful man in France (a few years later he will declare himself emperor).

In May 1800 he led his troops across the Alps in a military campaign against the Austrians which ended in their defeat in June at the Battle of Marengo. It is this achievement the painting commemorates. The portrait was commissioned by Charles IV, then King of Spain, to be hung in a gallery of paintings of other great military leaders housed in the Royal Palace in Madrid.

Napoleon and the portrait

Famously, Napoleon offered David little support in executing the painting. Refusing to sit for it, he argued that: "Nobody knows if the portraits of the great men resemble them, it is enough that their genius lives there." All David had to work from was an earlier portrait and the uniform Napoleon had worn at Marengo. One of David's sons stood in for him, dressed up in the uniform and perched on top of a ladder. This probably accounts for the youthful physique of the figure.

Napoleon, however, was not entirely divorced from the process. He was the one who settled on the idea of an equestrian portrait: “calme sur un cheval fougueux” (calm on a fiery horse), were his instructions to the artist. And David duly obliged. What better way, after all, to demonstrate Napoleon’s ability to wield power with sound judgment and composure. The fact that Napoleon did not actually lead his troops over the Alps but followed a couple of days after them, traveling on a narrow path on the back of a mule is not the point!

Description

Like many equestrian portraits, a genre favored by royalty, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* is a portrait of authority. Napoleon is pictured astride a rearing Arabian stallion. Before him to his left we see a mountain, while in the background, largely obscured by rocks, French troops haul along a large canon and further down the line fly the tricolore (the national flag of France) .



Figure 13.7.15.25: Napoleon (detail), Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* or *Bonaparte at the St Bernard Pass*, 1800-1, oil on canvas, 261 x 221 cm (Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison)

Bonaparte’s gloveless right hand points up towards the invisible summit, more for us to follow, one feels, than the soldiers in the distance. Raised arms are often found in David’s work, though this one is physically connected with the setting, echoing the slope of the mountain ridge. Together with the line of his cloak, these create a series of diagonals that are counterbalanced by the clouds to the right. The overall effect is to stabilize the figure of Napoleon.

The landscape is treated as a setting for the hero, not as a subject in itself. On the rock to the bottom left (below), for instance, the name of Napoleon is carved beside the names of Hannibal and Charlemagne—two other notable figures who led their troops over the Alps. David uses the landscape then to reinforce what he wishes to convey about his subject. In terms of scale alone, Napoleon and his horse dominate the pictorial plane. Taking the point further, if with that outstretched arm and billowing cloak, his body seems to echo the landscape, the reverse might equally hold true, that it is the landscape that echoes him, and is ultimately mastered by his will. David seems to suggest that this man, whose achievements will be celebrated for centuries to come, can do just about anything.



Figure 13.7.15.26: Inscriptions reading “Bonaparte,” “Hannibal,” and “Karolus Magnus”(detail), Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* or *Bonaparte at the St Bernard Pass*, 1800-1, oil on canvas, 261 x 221 cm (Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison)

Napoleon was obviously flattered. He ordered three more versions to be painted; a fifth was also produced which stayed in David’s studio. Reflecting the breadth of Napoleon’s European conquests, one was hung in Madrid, two in Paris, and one in Milan.

Conclusion

In 1801 David was awarded the position of Premier Peintre (First Painter) to Napoleon. One may wonder how he felt about this new role. Certainly David idolized the man. *Voilà mon héros* (here is my hero), he said to his students when the general first visited him in his studio. And perhaps it was a source of pride for him to help secure Napoleon’s public image. Significantly, he signs and dates *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* on the horse’s breastplate, a device used to hold the saddle firmly in place. The breastplate also serves as a constraint, though, and given his later huge commissions, such as *The Coronation of Napoleon*, one wonders if David’s creative genius was inhibited as a result of his hero’s patronage.

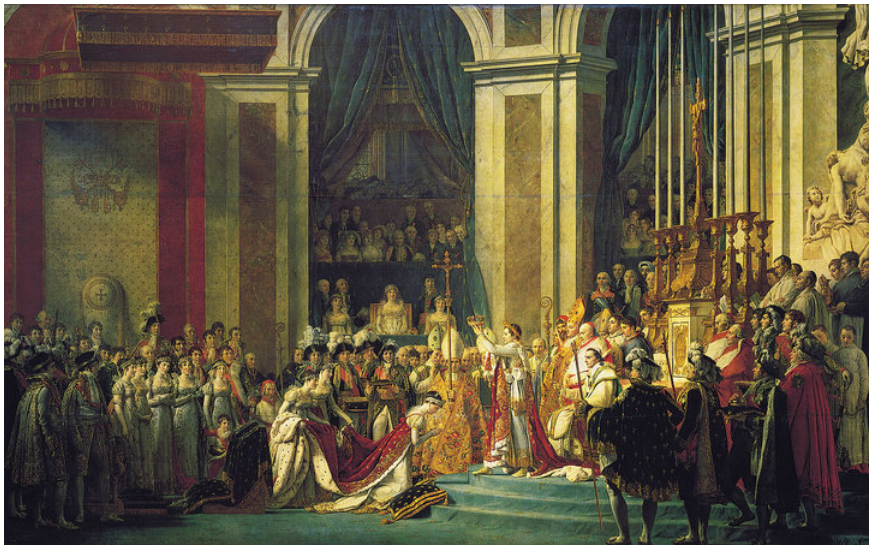


Figure 13.7.15.27: Jacques-Louis David, *The Coronation of Napoleon*, 1805-07, oil on canvas, 621 x 979 cm (Louvre)

In *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, however, the spark is still undeniably there. Very much in accord with the direction his art was taking at the time, "a return to the pure Greek" as he put it. In it he molds the image of an archetype, the sort one finds on medals and coins, instantly recognizable and infinitely reproducible, a hero for all time.

Additional resources:

Key Paintings from the First Empire from The Fondation Napoléon

The Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon and the Coronation of Empress Joséphine on December 2, 1804 at the Louvre

Dan Cruickshank, "Napoleon, Nelson and the French Threat," BBC History (2011)

Napoleon Bonaparte on BBC History

David, *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study in the Tuileries*

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT

At the beginning of the movie The Godfather, Michael Corleone (played by Al Pacino) wants nothing to do with his family's involvement in organized crime. When telling a family story to his girlfriend, he concludes, "That's my family, Kay, That's not me." As the film progresses, however, Michael's father and older brother are the focus of violent attacks and Michael becomes more active in the family business until—at the end of the film—he has assumed the leadership of the Corleone crime syndicate by killing all of his enemies. Fictional characters—both in film and in novels—have arcs. They change through time. The same is true of real characters from history. They often have a rise, but just as often there is a precipitous fall. Napoleon Bonaparte is but one example.



Figure **13.7.15.28**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Napoleon I on his Imperial Throne*, 1806, oil on canvas, 259 x 162 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, Paris)

A visual starting point could be Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's 1806 painting, *Napoleon on His Imperial Throne* (above). In this work, Ingres painted Napoleon as if he were an omnipotent ruler—rather than a mere mortal. But six years later, Jacques-Louis David (Ingres's former teacher), painted *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study in the Tulieries* (1812). These two portraits—painted just six years apart—show a significant arc in the life and career of Napoleon.



Figure 13.7.15.29: Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, oil on canvas, 203.9 x 125.1 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Alexander Hamilton, the Tenth Duke of Hamilton (and sadly, of no relationship to the de facto leader of the Federalist Party in the United States with whom he shares a name) commissioned David to paint *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study in the Tulieries* in 1811.

Finished the following year, it shows a standing Napoleon, about three-quarters life-sized. He slightly turns his face to look at the viewer, and his right hand is tucked into his uniform jacket (to this day, some jackets often have a vertically zippered pocket on the left side; this is called a Napoleon pocket).

The blue jacket with the white facing and red upturned cuffs and the gold epaulettes identify him as a colonel in the Imperial Guard Foot Grenadiers—a group of elite soldiers that Napoleon personally commanded. The two medals pinned to Napoleon's left breast speak to the scope of his rule. The leftmost of the two is the Order of the Iron Crown, an organization Napoleon founded in 1805 as the King of Italy. The second medal is that of the French Legion of Honor.

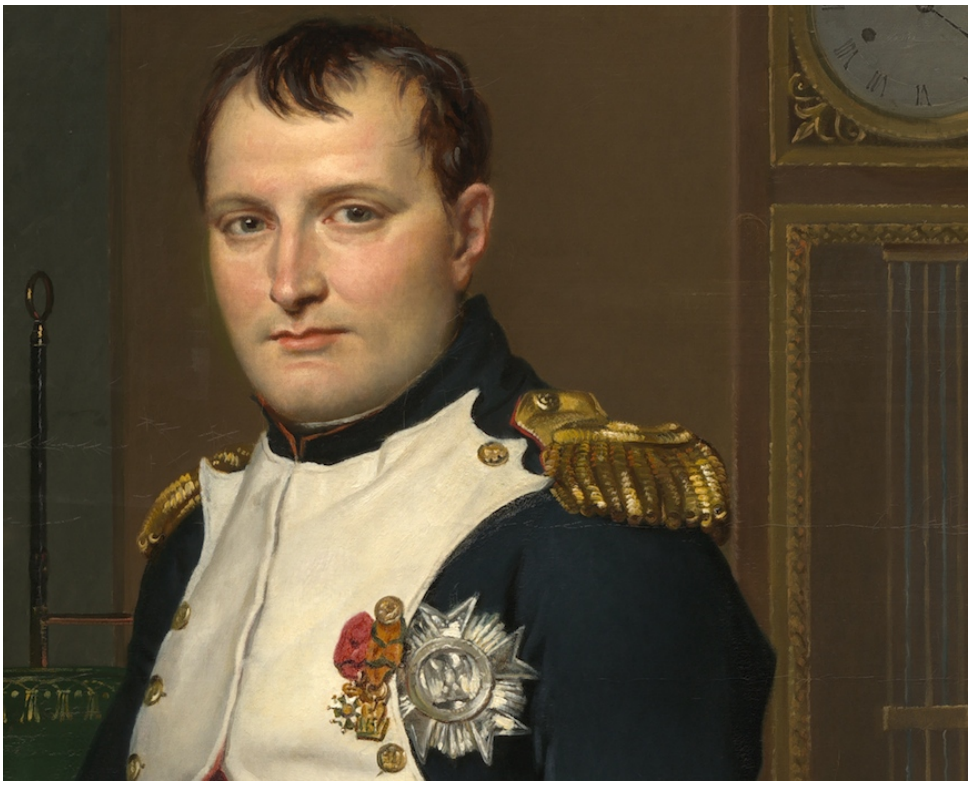


Figure **13.7.15.30**: Napoleon (detail), Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, oil on canvas, 203.9 x 125.1 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Napoleon's uniform is completed with white knee breeches and stockings, and black shoes with gold buckles. Although he wears a military uniform, this is hardly a military portrait. He has discarded his officer's sword—it rests on the chair on the right side of the painting—and Napoleon is shown doing the administrative work of a civic leader. He stands between the high-backed red velvet chair on the right and in front of the Empire-styled desk behind him. A gilded regal lion serves as the visible leg of the desk, and an ink-stained quill, candle-lit lamp, and various papers can be seen atop his writing table.



Figure **13.7.15.31**: Desk and chair (detail), Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, oil on canvas, 203.9 x 125.1 cm (National Gallery of Art)



Figure **13.7.15.32**: Fleur de lis (left) and the bee

A rolled up sheet of paper with the letters COD can be seen on the right side of the desk. This detail alludes to the Napoleonic Code—the French civil law code Napoleon established in 1804. The bees, which resemble an upside-down fleurs-de-lys, can be seen in the velvet that covers the chair (both the bee and the *fleur de lys* were symbols of the French monarchy).

David has signed and dated the portrait on a rolled up map to the side of the table, a leather-bound volume of Plutarch (in French: *Plutarque*) is beside it. Plutarch was an ancient Roman biographer and historian, most famous in the nineteenth century as the author of *The Parallel Lives*, a text that explores the virtues and vices of Greek and Roman rulers, men such as Alexander the Great, Themistocles, Julius Caesar, and Cicero. The inclusion of this book was a way to visually tie Napoleon to the great rulers of the classical past who he so admired. And yet, not everything is perfect within this space.



Figure **13.7.15.33**: Signature and book by Plutarch (detail), Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, oil on canvas, 203.9 x 125.1 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Although Napoleon stands and looks out towards the viewer, he looks more disheveled than not. His hair—complete with the gray typical of a man in his 50s—appears unkempt and tousled. In addition, his uniform would hardly pass muster. A cuff button has been undone, and his silken stockings and trousers appear wrinkled from being worn for an exceptionally long working day. This fact is alluded to by two time-bearing details. The grandfather clock displays the time as 4:12. And the candles of his desk lamp—one nearly burned to its completing, another recently extinguished, several others seemingly expired—make it clear that it is not the late afternoon, but rather the very early morning. Clearly, time was running short.



Figure **13.7.15.34**: Left: undone cuff; right: candles (details), Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, oil on canvas, 203.9 x 125.1 cm (National Gallery of Art)



Figure **13.7.15.35**: Glykon, *Weary Hercules*, bronze, 3rd century B.C.E. or later Roman copy (Louvre)

This portrait seems to suggest that Napoleon was working too late and too hard at the time it was commissioned, and indeed, Napoleon's time as a world ruler was coming to a climactic finale. The year the painting was completed—1812—was a particularly calamitous one for Napoleon, as he was in the middle of the disastrous invasion of Russia. Less than two years later, on 4 April 1814, Napoleon abdicated his throne and was exiled to the island of Elba. David skillfully and subtly depicts Napoleon's transition from omnipotent ruler to fallible commander. In this regards, David's portrait can be seen as a painted contemporary version of the Greek sculptor Glykon's statue, *The Weary Hercules*, a small bronze copy that David likely saw in the Louvre. Like the mighty Hercules, Napoleon had once been an all-powerful leader. But as Hercules had his downfall at the hands of his jealous wife Deianara, so too did Napoleon have his downfall at the hands of the Duke of Wellington. A failed return to power in 1815 caused Napoleon's permanent banishment to the island of Saint Helena where he died in 1821. David's portrait of the ruler in his study, thus constitutes one of the last formal portraits of the great French ruler.

Additional resources:

This painting at the National Gallery of Art

Interactive feature on this painting from the National Gallery of Art

Angelica Kauffmann, *Cornelia Pointing to her Children as Her Treasures*

by DANA MARTIN

A moment of moralizing

To the artists of eighteenth-century Europe, it was not enough to simply paint a beautiful painting. Yes one could marvel at your use of colors, proportions, and how masterfully you draped the fabric on your figures, but this was just not enough. The story that is represented must also improve the viewer and impart a moralizing message. This was a common theme even before the emergence of the Neoclassical trend (for example, Chardin's canvases of simple French country life or Hogarth's painted commentaries on the wealthy classes of England). When interest in the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean—more specifically Rome—arose in the mid eighteenth century the moralizing theme segued to also include stories from classical antiquity.



Figure 13.7.15.36: Angelica Kauffmann, *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to her Children as Her Treasures*, c. 1785, oil on canvas, 40 x 50″ (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)

The Swiss-born painter Angelica Kauffmann is just one artist to contribute to this genre. Painted in 1785, *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to Her Children as Her Treasures*, is her subject. Roman architectural influences frame two women portrayed wearing what one can imagine is typical of ancient Roman dress, along with three children, also wearing masterfully draped togas with thin leather sandals. They look like they might have stepped directly off a temple's pediment.



Figure 13.7.15.37: Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (detail), Angelica Kauffmann, *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to her Children as Her Treasures*, c. 1785, oil on canvas, 40 x 50″ (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)

An example of virtue

If you compare Kauffmann's simple presentation to the previous Rococo genre, with the lush landscapes, frothy pastel pink frocks, and chubby frolicking cherubs, it is clear that art is going in a different direction. This painting is an exemplum virtutis, or a model of virtue. The story that Kauffmann painted is that of Cornelia, an ancient Roman woman who was the mother of the future political leaders Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. The brothers Gracchi were politicians in second-century B.C.E. Rome. They sought social reform and were seen as friends to the average Roman citizen. So where did these benefactors of the people learn their exemplary ethics? That would be their mother, Cornelia.



Figure 13.7.15.38: Detail, Angelica Kauffmann, *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to her Children as Her Treasures*, c. 1785, oil on canvas, 40 x 50″ (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)

The scene that we see in Kauffmann's painting illustrates one such example of Cornelia's teachings. A visitor has come to her home to show off a wonderful array of jewelry and precious gems, what one might call treasures. To her visitor's chagrin, when she asks Cornelia to reveal her treasures she humbly brings her children forward, instead of running to get her own jewelry box. The message is clear; the most precious treasures of any woman are not material possessions, but the children who are our future. You can almost feel the embarrassment when you look at the face of the visitor, who Kauffmann has smartly painted with a furrowed brow and slightly gaped mouth.

The lure of ancient Rome



Figure **13.7.15.39**: Angelica Kauffmann, *Angelica Kauffmann*, c. 1770-75, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 61 cm (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Born in 1740, Angelica Kauffmann received a first-rate artistic education from her father, who was a Swiss muralist. She traveled through her native Switzerland, Austria, and eventually Italy where she was able to see the work of the ancient artists with her own eyes. She was following in the tradition of the Grand Tour, the educational excursion that many wealthy Europeans took to marvel and study the art, architecture, and history of ancient Rome.

The interest in ancient Mediterranean cultures was fueled not just by the cultural productions of Rome, but also by the newly discovered remains of the ancient Roman cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, which were excavated beginning in 1738 and 1748, respectively. Covered by the volcanic ash of Mount Vesuvius in August 79 CE, an almost perfect scene of typical ancient life was preserved. These findings did not just spark a renewed interest in classical antiquity in eighteenth-century art and architecture, but also inspired new fashions, interior design, and even gardens and tableware. This was a find that one must see in person, and Angelica Kauffman was lucky enough to take the Grand Tour like so many of her fellow artists.

Enlightenment ideals

While the geometric symmetry and simplicity of the arts in antiquity might have greatly inspired the work of Kauffman and other Neoclassical artists, these ancient societies also aligned with Enlightenment ideals, which were often seen as the zenith of human civilization. Greece and Rome—it was felt—were the cultures that gave us the enlightened political systems of democracy and republicanism, as opposed to the modern monarchies, which would be increasingly criticized as corrupt and arbitrary in the mid and late eighteenth century. The ancients could instruct modern audiences in patriotism, civic virtue, and ethics, and Kauffmann's moralizing message is a wonderful example of this trend.

This revival of classical antiquity was a cultural phenomenon that affected not just artistic practices, but also shaped the modern mind. Angelica Kauffman would eventually settle in England where she enjoyed great success as a portrait artist and history painter. In an age that can be described as patriarchal at its best and chauvinistic at its worst, Kauffmann played a major role in the British art scene. She was a regular exhibitor at the prestigious Royal Academy and had many aristocratic and even royal patrons. *Cornelia Pointing to Her Children as Her Treasures* is truly one of Kauffmann's most famous treasures, and permanently positioned her as a pioneer of the Neoclassical movement.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Anne-Louis Girodet, *The Sleep of Endymion*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.7.15.6**: Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791, oil on canvas, 6′ 5-¾" x 8′ 6-¾" / 1.98 x 2.61 m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88734



Figure 13.7.15.40: More Smarthistory images…

Marie-Guillemine Benoist, *Portrait of Madeleine*

by DR. SUSAN WALLER



Figure 13.7.15.41: Marie-Guillemine Benoist, *Portrait of Madeleine* (formerly known as *Portrait of a Negress*), 1800, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm (**Musée du Louvre**)

Marie-Guillemine Benoist's *Portrait of Madeleine* (formerly known as *Portrait of a Negress*) hangs today in the Louvre in a gallery devoted to paintings by Jacques-Louis David and his students. It is placed at the center of a wall displaying seven portraits, a location that asserts its importance. In 1800 the work was exhibited in the Louvre for the first time, at the Salon—the state-sponsored presentation of works by contemporary artists. It hung in the Salon Carré, one smallish work on a wall of paintings hung

frame to frame, floor to ceiling, as was customary at the time. Contemporary art critics picked it out, but not all were impressed. The critic for a conservative paper derided it as a "*noirceur*" or "black stain." Why did this work provoke such a negative response when first exhibited?

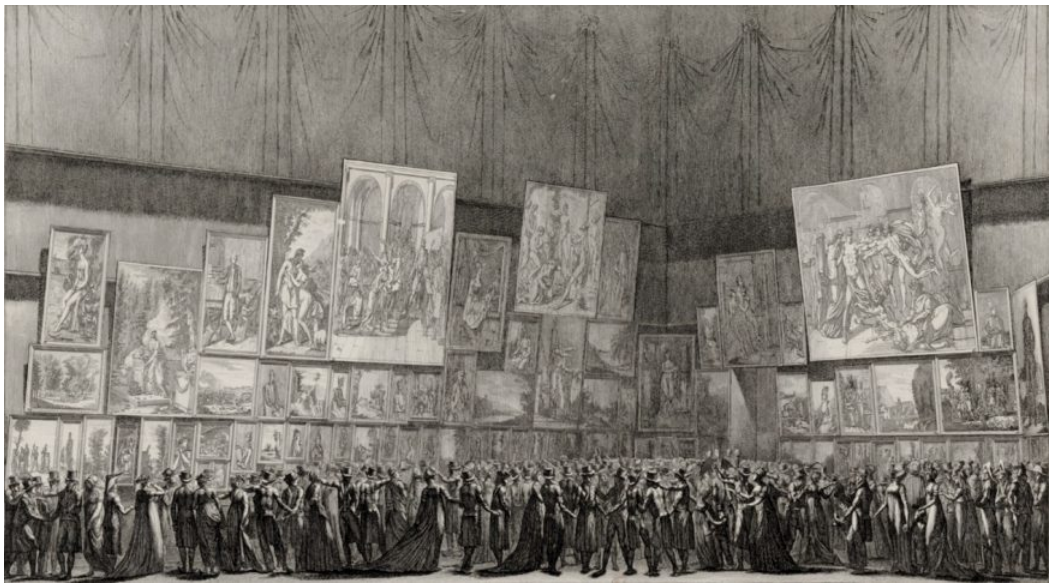


Figure **13.7.15.41**: Antoine Maxime Monsaldy, "View of the paintings exhibited at the Museum Centrale des Arts in the Year VIII," 1800, print (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**). Benoist's painting can be seen at the center left.

A portrait or an allegory?



Figure **13.7.15.42**: Detail, Marie-Guillemine Benoist, *Portrait of Madeleine* (formerly known as *Portrait of a Negress*), 1800, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm (Musée du Louvre)



Figure **13.7.15.43**: Jacques Louis David, *Madame Raymond de Verninac*, 1799, oil on canvas, 145 x 112 cm (Louvre)

The painting shows a young black woman seated in an armchair. Her body is oriented to her left, but she turns to face the viewer with a sober and self-possessed expression. The treatment of her face suggests this is a likeness of a particular individual. Most of her hair is covered in an elaborate white headwrap, and she wears a brilliant white garment that slips from her shoulders to reveal the warm dark skin of her right breast. The background is a plain beige field, but the trim on her chair suggests that she is sitting in a well-furnished interior. The only bright colors in this largely monochromatic work are the red of a ribbon holding the white cloth beneath her breasts and the blue of a shawl draped over the back of her chair.

Benoist's painting is consistent with the conventions of portraiture and the Neoclassical aesthetic prevailing in France in 1800. The woman's costume recalls the fashionable dress of the period, and her pose is similar to those seen in Jacques-Louis David's portraits, such as *Madame Raymond de Verninac*. The bared breast underlines the contrast of skin and fabric: in portraits, a convincing rendering of flesh tones was crucial, and in the European tradition, as far back as the sixteenth century, the skin of "Ethiopians"—as Africans were commonly called—was considered especially challenging to paint. Benoist's work is a striking demonstration of her capabilities as a portraitist.



Figure **13.7.15.44**: Alcide Dessalines d' Orbigny, "A Slave Auction, Martinique, c. 1826," from *Voyage pittoresque dans les deux Amériques* (Paris, 1836), facing p. 14 (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**)

A respectable woman, however, would have been unlikely to agree to be represented with her breast exposed. The revealing costume of Laville-Leroulx's black sitter might have recalled, for some viewers, the slave markets in French colonies, where the

bodies of black women were inspected by potential buyers. A bared breast was also, however, a motif frequently used in allegories. **Elisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun**, for example, had incorporated a bare breast in her painting *Peace Bringing Back Abundance* to evoke the generous riches that are the product of political concord. Other viewers, therefore, might have seen Benoist's figure as an allegory, especially as her costume included the blue, white, and red colors of the *tricoleur* flag that had been adopted by the French Revolutionary Government in 1789.



Figure **13.7.15.45**: Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Peace Bringing Back Abundance*, 1780, oil on canvas, 103 x 133 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Who was the sitter?



Figure **13.7.15.46**: Marie-Guillemine Benoist, *Portrait of Madeleine* (formerly known as *Portrait of a Negress*), 1800, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm (**Musée du Louvre**)

Benoist did not provide her sitter's name, but it was customary to protect sitters' privacy by using titles such as "Portrait of a Lady" when exhibiting works at the Salon. In this case we know something of the woman's status and background, if not her identity. Prior to the Revolution, slavery was not authorized on the French mainland. As early as the fourteenth century, King Louis X had decreed that "France signifies freedom" and that slaves setting foot on French soil should be freed. For this reason, when Thomas Jefferson was appointed ambassador to France from the new United States of America, the two slaves he brought with him—Sarah or "Sally" and James Hemings—were legally free while on French soil. Jefferson paid them a wage during their years in Paris, and

when he prepared to return home, they renegotiated their status. Happily, recent scholarship has provided the sitter's first name, Madeleine.



DÉCRET N.° 2262.

DE LA

CONVENTION NATIONALE,

Du 16. jour de Pluviôse, an second de la République Françoise, une & indivisible,

Qui abolit l'Esclavage des Nègres dans les Colonies.

LA CONVENTION NATIONALE déclare que l'esclavage des Nègres dans toutes les Colonies est aboli; en conséquence elle décrète que tous les hommes, sans distinction de couleur, domiciliés dans les colonies, sont citoyens Français, & jouiront de tous les droits assurés par la constitution.

Elle renvoie au comité de salut public, pour lui faire incessamment un rapport sur les mesures à prendre pour assurer l'exécution du présent décret.

Visé par les inspecteurs. Signé AUGER, CORDIER & S. E. MONNEL.

Collationné à l'original, par nous président & secrétaires de la Convention nationale. A Paris, le 21 Germinal, an second de la République Françoise, une & indivisible. *Signé* AMAR, *président*; A. M. BALDOT, MONNOT, CH. POUTIER & PEYSSARD, *secrétaires*.

AU NOM DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE, le Conseil exécutif provisoire

Figure **13.7.15.47**: Official decree of 1794, which abolished slavery in the French colonies, from *La Révolution française et l'abolition de l'esclavage*, vol. 12, p. 55 (**Bibliothèque nationale de France**)

In 1794, the radical revolutionary government led by the Jacobins and Maxmilien Robespierre extended the domain of liberty by abolishing slavery in French colonies as well as the mainland. French merchants would continue to profit from the slave trade, however, and monarchists in some French territories ignored the regulation, seeking to turn their allegiance to Britain.

Madeleine is thought to have been brought to France from the island of Guadeloupe by the artist's brother-in-law, a ship's purser and civil servant. She was likely born a slave in the colony and freed by the decree of 1794, but her actual status may have been ambiguous. Whether she was brought to France as a slave or a servant, she—unlike fashionable women who commissioned their portraits—would have had little influence on how Benoist represented her.

Who was the artist?

We know a good deal more about the artist than the sitter. Marie-Guillemine Laville-Leroulx (Benoist was her married name) was born into a middle-class family. Her father was a civil servant who had failed in business. He believed firmly that his two daughters should be educated to earn their own way—an unusual attitude in the eighteenth century. Marie-Guillemine and her sister first studied painting with Vigée Le Brun and later were among three women whom David took into his studio in the Louvre, challenging concerns about propriety raised by the government minister in charge of the palace.

Laville-Leroulx made her debut at the Salon of 1791, when the revolutionary government opened the exhibition to all artists for the first time. She was ambitious, exhibiting history paintings, which were widely considered beyond women's capacities. She listed herself as a student of David, even though the artist was a firm supporter of the Revolution, while her family remained loyal to the king. Two years later, she married Pierre Vincent Benoist, who was, like her family, a monarchist. During the Reign of Terror the couple's life was difficult. By 1800, however, Napoleon I had staged a *coup d'etat* and installed himself as First Consul of the Directory. With the change in government, Mme Benoist, as she was now known, was ready to take up her public career as an artist.



Figure **13.7.15.48**: Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *Portrait of Citizen Jean-Baptiste Belley, Ex-Representative of the Colonies*, 1797, oil on canvas, 159 x 113 cm (Palace of Versailles)

In choosing to paint a woman of color, Benoist selected an unusual subject for a portrait and engaged a politically contentious issue. The only other likeness of an African to be exhibited at the Salon during these years was Anne-Louis Girodet's *Portrait of Citizen Jean-Baptiste Belley, Ex-Representative of the Colonies*. Girodet, like Benoist, was a student of David. Belley, who was born in Senegal and enslaved in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, had been freed because of his military service in the French army and was elected one of the colony's three representatives to the French revolutionary government. Serving from 1793 to 1797, he became well-known as an advocate for racial equality. Girodet's painting, which juxtaposes Belley's head with a marble bust of the abolitionist philosopher Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, was understood by visitors to the Salon in 1798 as an argument for emancipation.

Two years later, however, Napoleon I was consolidating his power and began to lay the groundwork for reviving the institution of slavery. He recognized that the Revolutionary government's decision to free slaves in French territories had not only antagonized citizens of these colonies and other nations, but also had jeopardized the immense profits from the cultivation of sugar that were important to France's economy. His move was contentious, but it was supported by many who had a vested interest in the economics of slavery, including Benoist's husband.



Figure **13.7.15.49**: Marie-Guillemine Benoist, *Portrait of Pauline Bonaparte, Princess Borghese*, 1808, oil on canvas, 200 x 142 cm (Musée national du Château de Fontainebleau)

The Salon critic who in 1800 dubbed Benoist's painting a "black stain" was surely influenced by arguments in favor of reinstating slavery. Twenty-first century viewers are more likely to sympathize with the situation of the woman who sat for Benoist. What was

Benoist's purpose in exhibiting *Portrait of Madeleine*? In conveying the beauty and humanity of her sitter, was she suggesting that this anonymous woman and others of African descent should be free citizens of the French nation? Or was she simply trying to promote her considerable skills as a portraitist in the tradition of David and Girodet? Since Benoist left no statement to explain her work, we can only infer her intentions on the basis of the painting itself and the historical circumstances surrounding its creation.

In 1802 Napoleon reinstated slavery in France's overseas colonies. Benoist went on to receive commissions for portraits from Napoleon and several members of his family. After Napoleon was defeated, her husband was awarded an important post in the Restoration government of King Louis XVIII. Marie-Guillemine Laville-Leroulx Benoist—much to her dismay—was forced to relinquish her painting career, which was considered inappropriate for a woman of her position in the increasingly conservative political climate.

Additional Resources:

This work at the Musée du Louvre

Essay on 18th-century women painters in France from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mechthild Fend, "Marie-Guillemine Benoist's *Portrait d'une Négresse* and the visibility of skin colour," in *Probing the Skin: Cultural Representations of Our Contact Zone*, edited by Caroline Rosenthal and Dirk Vanderbeke (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

Mechthild Fend, *Fleshing Out Surfaces: Skin in French Art and Medicine, 1650-1850* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2017).

Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (London: Yale University Press, 2002).

Janell Hobson, "Portraits of Black Womanhood," in *Black Perspectives*, AAIHS, December 14, 2017.

Margaret A.Oppenheimer, "Three Newly Identified Paintings by Marie-Guillemine Benoist," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 31 (1996), pp. 143-50.

Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminine Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (NY: Routledge, 1999).

Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenho, "Who is the subject? Marie-Guilhemine Benoist's *Portrait d'une négresse*," in *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, edited by Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

James Smalls, "Slavery is a woman: "Race," Gender, and Visuality in Marie Benoist's Portrait d'une Negresse (1800)," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 3 (Spring 2004).

Helen Weston, "The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover: La Ville-Leroulx's *Portrait de Négresse* and the signs of Misrecognition," in *Work and the Image I*, edited by Valerie Mainz and Griselda Pollock (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2000).

Antonio Canova

Antonio Canova, *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorious*

by BEN POLLITT

A beauty queen

And the winner of "Miss Arte Italiana" is—drum roll please—Antonio Canova's *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorious*! Or so, at least, is what a recent poll carried out for the Marilena Ferrari Foundation decided.



Figure 13.7.15.50: Antonio Canova, *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorious*, 1804-08, white marble, 160 x 192 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

"Miss Italian Art," a cringeworthy epithet perhaps, but one which, given the strength of the competition, is nothing to sneeze at—works by Botticelli, Leonardo and Titian were also in contention. Certainly, the semi-nude, life-size portrait of Napoleon's wayward sister is a sumptuous work of art. Four years in the making, it was commissioned by Paolina's second husband, the Italian prince, Camillo Borghese, shortly after their marriage in 1804, a union designed to help Napoleon realize his dreams of establishing a pan-European dynasty and legitimize his claims to the Kingdom of Italy.

Canova and Neoclassicism

Anotonio Canova was a leading light of the Neoclassical movement. The style, influenced by the archeological discoveries in Pompeii and Herculaneum as well as the theories of the art historian Johann Wincklemann, looked back to the artistic achievements of the Greeks and Romans with renewed interest, informed by the spirit of rational inquiry that characterized the Age of Enlightenment.

As Inspector General of Antiquities and Fine Art of the Papal States and responsible for acquiring works for the Vatican museums, Canova would have known his Phidias from his Praxiteles. However, he was no slavish imitator. Instead he wished to emulate the works of these earlier artists.



Figure 13.7.15.51: Nineteenth century French engraving of Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1802-1806, 325 cm (Wellington Museum, Apsley House, London)

The methods he used demanded absolute precision. Working from numerous preparatory sketches he modeled the form into a life-size clay version. He then cast a plaster model of this which he marked up with points that were transferred on to the marble block. His assistants would carve the marble into shape and only then, for "the last hand," did Canova raise his chisel, sculpting the form and crucially polishing the marble, using wax, to a fine, glistening finish.

Many of his models were great personalities of the age. Canova would portray them in antique costume. This classicizing of contemporary figures verged sometimes on the ridiculous, as in the colossal nude sculpture of *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker.* His portrait of Paolina Borghese is more successful

A modern day Venus

Paolina is shown reclining on a pillowed couch in a pose of studied grace, both concentrated and relaxed. The modelling of the nude body is extraordinarily lifelike, while Canova's treatment of the surface of the marble captures the soft texture of skin. The tactile quality of the piece is brought out particularly in the way the sitter's own hands are occupied, the fingers of her right connecting ever so lightly with the nape of her neck, offer a gesture charged with seductive promise. The head is raised slightly suggesting that something or someone has suddenly entered her line of vision. The apple she holds in her left hand, her fingers wrapped around it suggestive of erotic touch, identifies her as Venus Victorious, the goddess awarded the Golden Apple of Discord in perhaps the first beauty competition in the history of Western culture. The story comes from ancient Greece. Paris the Trojan prince judged Venus more beautiful than either of her rivals, Minerva and Juno. In return Venus introduced him to a Greek girl called Helen and the rest of course is the stuff of epic poetry.



Figure 13.7.15.52: Detail, Antonio Canova, *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorious*, 1804-08, white marble, 160 x 192 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Originally, Canova was to depict her as Diana, the chaste goddess of the moon and the hunt, a role that more would have require her to have been clothed. Paolina insisted on Venus, though. A bit of a loose cannon with a reputation for promiscuity, the Emperor's sister enjoyed courting controversy and posing naked would certainly have raised a few eyebrows in polite society. But there was more to it than that. Apparently, the Borghese family believed themselves to be descended from the heroic founder of Rome, Aeneas, who according to Virgil was the son of Venus. The choice then not only suited Paolina's flirtatious character, but also would have been met with approval by the Borghese family, suggesting continuity between the ancient and modern worlds. Her hair, a mass of curls bound in a Psyche knot, serves as a visual connector between the two, being worn in imitation of ancient Greek styles as was the fashion of the day. Its careful articulation offsets the smooth shallow planes of her torso.



Figure 13.7.15.53: Detail, Antonio Canova, *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorious*, 1804-08, white marble, 160 x 192 cm (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Creating a contrast of another sort, the couch Paolina lies on is carved from a different type of marble, the base part of which is covered in rhythmically flowing drapery, much like on a catafalque, a raised platform used to bear coffins. The allusion to mortuary art is not that surprising; in Greek and Roman art the reclining female figure is frequently found on sarcophagus lids. So conspicuous an allusion demands further explanation, though, and I suppose if one were forced to read for a meaning here it would have to be the defeat of death by beauty – as expressed through art – that is being celebrated in the image.



Figure **13.7.15.55**: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 165.5 x 119.2 cm (Uffizi, Florence, Italy)

Canova's extraordinary capacity to breathe life into his sculptures was noted by his contemporaries. Literally animated, the sculpture would have been on a revolving mechanism, allowing the static viewer to see the work in the round. It would also have been viewed by candlelight. The finely polished waxy surface would have reflected light brilliantly, creating chiaroscuoro, a more painterly than sculptural effect, perhaps, but then Canova was a painterly sculptor. Paolina owes more to the likes of Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* and Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and of course David's *Madame Recamier* than antique sculpture, a point not lost on the Neoclassical purists of the day who condemned the work as out of keeping with their austere classical theories.



Figure **13.7.15.56**: Jacques-Louis David, *Madame Récamier*, c. 1800, oil on canvas, 173 x 243 cm (Louvre)

Inevitably the sculpture was going to cause a scandal. While intended for a private audience sophisticated enough to appreciate the classical allusions, given Paolina's infidelities, the sculpture also served to confirm the rumors about her. If anything, though, Paolina enjoyed the attention. Asked if she minded having to pose nude, she replied: "Why should I? The studio was heated." Camillo refused to allow the sculpture to leave his residence. Napoleon agreed.

John Gibson, <em

The Tinted Venus, c. 1851-56, marble, 175 cm (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England)" height="360" src="

https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...a07010a995.jpg

" width="178">

Figure **13.7.15.57**: John Gibson, *The Tinted Venus*, c. 1851-56, marble, 175 cm (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England)

From Ingres to Renoir, from Proudhon to Puvis de Chavannes, *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorious* had an enormous impact on nineteenth century French artists. It is in the works of the English sculptor John Gibson, though, who Canova took under his wing later on in life, that we find her most faithful devotee. Animating the figure with pools of reflected light, the glistening waxy surface of his most celebrated work *The Tinted Venus* owes much to *Venus Victorious*; together with his own innovative use of polychromy the sculpture provoked outrage among its Victorian audience for whom it appeared a little too real: "a naked, impudent English woman" as one review put her. Canova's own naked, impudent French woman would have been proud.

Additional resources:

This sculpture at the Galleria Borghese

Antonio Canova, *Penitent Magdalene*

by BEN POLLITT

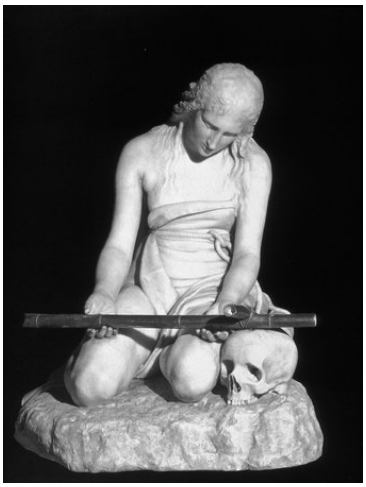


Figure **13.7.15.58**: Antonio Canova, *Penitent Magdalene*, c. 1794-96, marble and gilt bronze, height 94 cm, (Museo di Sant'Agostino, Genoa)

A salon sensation

Antonio Canova (1757-1822), the great Neoclassical sculptor, left a truly prodigious body of work, much of it portraiture or mythological in subject matter or, not infrequently, as in *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victorix* and *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, a mixture of the two. Religious works by him are comparatively rare, though, the most celebrated being *The Penitent Magdalene*. The first version, completed for a private patron between 1794-6, is in the Museo di Sant'Agostino in Genoa, the second, dated 1809, is housed in St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum. Heralded as Canova's greatest work at the time, indeed "the greatest work of modern times" according to the novelist Stendhal, the sculpture obviously struck a chord with contemporary audiences. Though undoubtedly a very moving work of art, a modern viewer might be tempted to ask why such gushing praise?

Commission and Reception

The subject was commissioned by a Venetian churchman, Guiseppi Pruili, presumably for devotional purposes. In 1798 the work was sold and passed into the hands of Giovanni Sommariva, a flamboyant Italian politician who enjoyed a close relationship with Napoleon. Having made the purchase, he converted a room in his Parisian house specifically to accommodate the sculpture, "half chapel, half boudoir, furnished in violet and lit by an alabaster lamp hanging from the cupola," as one contemporary, Francis Haskell, described it. In 1808, Sommariva had the sculpture exhibited at the Salon in the Musée Napoleon, today's Louvre, where it created a 'miraculous' effect on all who saw it.

A large part of its huge appeal, which bordered on mania, must have been due to the political and religious sensitivities of the time. In terms of the latter, since the Revolution of 1789, France had effectively been a de-christianized state: church land was confiscated, religious images destroyed and tens of thousands of priests forced to abdicate. In 1801, however, Napoleon as First Consul signed a Concordat (an agreement between the Pope and a sovereign state on religious matters), which largely, though not wholly, restored the Catholic Churchs's pre-Revolution status. That a contemporary religious work by so celebrated a sculptor was being shown in a Salon organized by the French state would have served as a powerful visual reminder of the new role of religion in public affairs.

Just as important, one suspects, is the figure herself, Mary Magdalene mourning the loss of her beloved Jesus. It is a stark and striking image of grief, the painful reality of which in the early 1800's most households across France were no doubt all too familiar. For decades the country had been at war, first in those turbulent Revolutionary years and then under the leadership of Napoleon, whose military campaigns cost the lives of millions. Having paid such a heavy toll, one imagines that by 1808 the

country had had its fill of neoclassical allegories that glamorized war. They knew the true horrors of it well enough and so it is hardly surprising then that Canova's gentler, more consoling image was met with such enthusiasm.

The legend of Mary Magdalene



Figure 13.7.15.59: Detail, Antonio Canova, *The Penitent Magdalene*, c. 1794-96, marble and gilt bronze, height 94 cm, (Museo di Sant'Agostino, Genoa)

A witness to the Entombment and the first to see Christ after the Resurrection, early theologians present Magdalene as the most devout of all of Christ's followers and an important early Christian leader. In later years, although nowhere in the Bible does it say so, in art and literature she has conventionally been depicted as a repentant prostitute. To atone for her sins, legend has it that after Christ's death she left the Holy Land and spent thirty years in a desert in Provence, hence the widespread veneration of the saint in France. Canova was obviously well versed in the story, showing Magdalene as a beautiful young woman dressed like a hermit, sitting on a rock and accompanied by the requisite crucifix and skull.

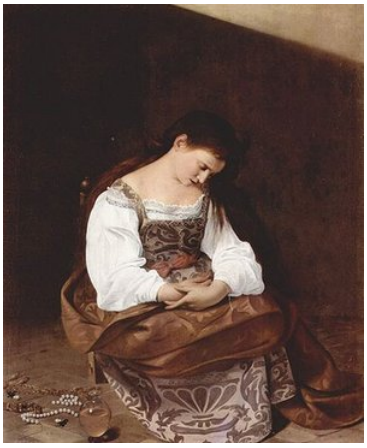


Figure 13.7.15.60: Caravaggio, Penitent Magdalene, 1597, oil on canvas, 122.5 x 98.5 cm (Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome)

Her downcast, kneeling figure has drawn comparisons with Caravaggio's *Penitent Magdalene*, which Canova would have seen in Rome. In both, her kneeling posture emphasises humility, a word originating from the Latin *humus* or 'ground.' The same cradling gesture is also invoked, as though spiritually she is there on Golgotha, cradling the body of Christ as the other Mary is shown cradling her dead Son in the *pietà*.

Like Caravaggio, also, in the helpless, grief-stricken figure that leans to one side, to the point almost of collapse, we see here not a Classical ideal of beauty but an emotionally and dramatically expressive image, reflecting a highly refined naturalism.

The Hermitage version

The sculpture proved so popular that a copy was commissioned, now in the Hermitage collection. For whatever reason, the gilt bronze cross is missing in this version and perhaps benefits from the omission, the upturned, empty palms evoking both Magdalene's submission to the will of God and her sense of spiritual abandonment, aware that these hands, the same that had anointed the feet of Christ with perfumed oil, will never touch Him again.



Figure 13.7.15.61: Antonio Canova, *The Penitent Magdalene* (Hermitage Version), 1809, marble, 94 cm (State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia) (photo: **Brian Cathcart**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure 13.7.15.62: Étienne-Maurice Falconet (modeler), The Repentant Magalene with an Angel, Sèvres (manufacturer), 1766-73, soft-paste biscuit porcelain (Victoria and Albert Museum, (London)

For all its popularity, however, Canova himself thought little of the work, its tumultuous reception in Paris reaffirming his low opinion of French taste, still contaminated in his mind at least by the weak sensuality of the Rococo. A generation earlier, perhaps the greatest of all Rococo sculptors, Étienne-Maurice Falconet, had presented a more fantastical version of the penitent saint in his porcelain *Fainting Magdalene* who swoons extravagantly into the arms of an angel.

Though Canova's work is far less cluttered and both formally and psychologically exhibits more restraint, we find a similar hint of eroticism in the depiction of the female form, her garment on the point of slipping down to reveal her breasts, indeed when viewed from behind, has slipped entirely to reveal the round of her back with those thick locks of hair spilling down it. Here that submissiveness noted earlier takes on a sexualized character, which, as with so many celebrated depictions of women at this period, in servicing male fantasies of power, not only reflected but arguably helped maintain those gender inequalities.

Legacy

Whether attributable to the beauty of the thing or to its historical importance, Canova's *Magdalene* resonated with the French public for years to come. Three decades on, for instance, we find her interceding for the souls of the damned in Henri Lemaire's pediment sculpture for the Church of La Madeleine. Distinguished from the 'saved' whose bodies are modestly concealed, except for the suckling mother to the far right, Magdalene, kneeling at the foot of Christ, is half undressed, like the 'damned' themselves,

who are mostly male. The contrast between feminine virtue (clothed) and feminine vice (naked) is all too evident; and so too, perhaps, the Madonna/Whore complex that underpins the image, a psychological condition in which men perceive women as either madonnas to be protected or whores to be punished, a somewhat hellish situation as Freud explained, “Where such men love they have no desire and where they desire they cannot love”. The prevalence of this unfortunate habit of mind might also account, to some extent at least, for the popularity of Canova’s work in the early nineteenth century and, indeed, for our continued fascination with Magdalene herself.



Figure 13.7.15.63: Henri Lemaire, *Last Judgement* (detail of pediment), 1828-9, (Church of La Madeleine, Paris)

Additional resources:

The various lives of Mary Magdelene from the BBC

Falconet’s *Repentent Magdalene with an Angel* at the V&A

Canova on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Vignon, Church of La Madeleine

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.7.15.64: Pierre-Alexandre Barthélémy Vignon, completed by Jacques-Marie Huvé, Church of La Madeleine, 1807-45, 108m long x 43 m, Place de la Madeleine (Paris, France)

Background

The Place de la Madeleine had been consecrated as a site devoted to Mary Magdalene in 1182. During the period known as the First Republic (1792-1804), following the French Revolution, the foundations of earlier sacred buildings were removed and discussions were had as to what to do with the space. As France had been de-Christianized during the Revolution a civic rather than a religious function for the building was decided upon; various suggestions were put forward including a new site for the Bank of France.

Considerations were brought to a halt, however, when in 1804 Napoleon crowned himself Emperor. What followed was one of the most ambitious propaganda programs of the nineteenth century. As well as looting works from the world’s finest collections to

display in the newly refurbished Louvre, renamed the Musée Napoleon, some of the greatest artists and sculptors of the age were recruited to exalt the new emperor. It was only fitting that Napoleon would turn to architects, too, to realize his vision of an imperial capital city. Three monuments of particular note were constructed with this end in view: the Arc de Triomphe, the Vendôme Column and the church at the Place de la Madeleine.

It was never Napoleon's intention to build a church for Mary Magdalene, though. For him the new building would stand as a Temple to the Glory of the Army, and by that, of course, he meant his own imperial army, that well-organized band of marauders who, having defeated the Austrians in the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805, had managed to supplicate a great swathe of Europe. To celebrate their achievement, a competition to select the best design for the Temple was established in 1806 to be judged by to a jury selected from the Imperial Academy. As it turned out, the jury proved academic in more ways than one, their opinions counting for little as, despite their disapproval, Napoleon opted for the designs of one Pierre-Alexandre Vignon (1763-1828).



Figure 13.7.15.65: Maison Carrée, c. 16 B.C.E (Nîmes, Provence)

Vignon, who had trained under the great Neoclassical architect Claude Ledoux, envisioned a peripteral temple (a temple surrounded by a single row of columns). Lacking Ledoux's more visionary character, however, Vignon's design for the exterior was basically a scaled up version of the *Maison Carrée* in Nîmes.

The exterior

Unlike the *Maison Carrée* though, the portico of La Madeleine has eight columns rather than six. These fluted Roman Corinthian columns – there are fifty-two of them in all – rise up to a staggering twenty meters and encompass the entire structure. The entablature they support is embellished with a bipartite architrave surmounted by a frieze with a decoration of garlands and putti.

While not quite so ornate, the features, in the main, reproduce those found on the Roman temple. The dentils, those repeated teeth-like blocks that ornament the cornice, seem bulkier, however, lending the façade a somewhat more austere character.

Figure 13.7.15.67: Entablature (detail), Maison Carrée c. 16 B.C.E (Nîmes, Provence)

While the exterior bears the hallmarks of Napoleonic propaganda, evoking the grandeur of Imperial Rome, after his fall, the Bourbon Restoration (1814-30) sought to revive the relationship between church and state. For this reason it was decided, as the temple was still incomplete, to return to the pre-Revolution purpose of the building project, namely to construct a church dedicated to Mary Magdalene.

The pediment frieze

In contrast to the Napoleonic design of the temple, the pediment frieze, designed by Philippe Joseph Henri Lemaire in 1829, is a masterpiece of Bourbon Restoration propaganda. The subject is *The Last Judgment*, a centuries-old motif found on relief sculptures above the doors of countless churches and cathedrals. While Lemaire largely follows iconographical convention, depicting Christ the Judge at the center of the composition and on His right the archangel Gabriel with his horn announcing the Day of Judgment and on His left the archangel Michael wielding the sword of justice, it is in the figure of Mary Magdalene kneeling at the foot of Christ that the underlying message of the sculpture is revealed.

Mary Magdalene has very strong connections with France. According to tradition she was among the first Christian proselytizers: after the crucifixion she journeyed to Provence from the Holy Land converting the French to Christianity. She is also, of course—albeit wrongly—often portrayed in art and in literature as a repentant prostitute, as indeed she is here; notice, for example the contrast between the virtuous female figures to the right whose bodies are concealed and her own state of semi-nakedness.



Figure 13.7.15.68: Henri Lemaire, *Last Judgment* pediment, Church of La Madeleine, 1829-42, Place de la Madeleine (Paris)

As well as a straightforward Last Judgment, the inclusion of the repentant Magdalene figure has led some to read the frieze as a political allegory in which the damned stand for those who had been involved in the Revolution and who, in the eyes of the restored monarchist regime, were effectively traitors. Given that such a large portion of the French people fell into this category, rather than condemn and punish them, they were called upon to repent of their sins, as Magdalene had done, before being embraced back into the arms of the ruling establishment.

Unlike in England or America say, where public building programs such as the British Museum or the Capitol exhibit a single-minded confidence, state architecture in France at this period reflects the country's complex and conflicted political landscape, made up of republicans who had fought for the Revolution, of imperialists who had followed Napoleon and of monarchists who were loyal to the king. The unsettled look and feel of *La Madeleine* is a prime example of this tendency, particularly so in the striking contrast between the outside of the building and its interior.

Interior



Figure 13.7.15.69: Pierre-Alexandre Barthélémy Vignon, completed by Jacques-Marie Huvé, interior (narthex) of the Church of La Madeleine, 1807-45, 108m long x 43 m, Place de la Madeleine (Paris)

On entering the church we are faced with a surprisingly opulent spectacle, especially given the severity of its exterior. Standing in the narthex (porch) of the church, we look up to see a coffered barrel vault, lavishly gilded like the rest of the interior. Above the door is the famous pipe organ on which such composers as Camille Saint-Saëns and Gabriel Fauré played.

Turning around and walking down the long nave, one passes under three large domes, supported by pendentives (triangular sections of vaulting between the rim of a dome and the arches that support it), decorated with colossal relief figures. Each dome is coffered and has a glazed oculus allowing in light, features that obviously recall the Pantheon.



Figure **13.7.15.70**: Interior of the Church of La Madeleine, 1807-45 (Paris) (photo: **wagner51**, CC BY-SA 2.0 FR)



Figure **13.7.15.71**: Reconstruction of the Baths of Caracalla (reconstructive drawing from 1899)

Three pairs of wide bays are thus created, each with pedimented niches supported by ionic columns that serve to form side altars. Far from the classical temple type the exterior would lead us to expect, architectural historians have compared the interior of the church to that of Roman baths; the triple cross-vaults of the Baths of Caracalla, for instance, may well have been in Vignon's mind when designing those domes.

At the north end is the semi-dome of the apse, under which sits the altar and behind it a wonderfully theatrical statue by Carlo Marochetti of Magdalene being lifted up by angels, a fine example of Romantic sculpture.



Figure **13.7.15.72**: Carlo Marochetti, *Mary Magdalene Exalted by Angels*, 1841, 449 cm, marble, Church of La Madeleine (Paris)

Above it, in the cupola of the choir, is Ziegler's mural entitled *The History of Christianity*, showing Magdalene ascending into heaven borne by three angels.



Figure **13.7.15.73**: Jules-Claude Ziegler, *The History of Christianity*, 1835-38, mural, Church of La Madeleine (Paris)

Beneath her is Napoleon in his coronation robes, positioned center stage, his figure directly aligned with Christ's. Facing him is Pope Pius VII, with whom he signed the Concordat of 1801, a document which reestablished the authority of the Catholic church in France after the Revolution and which is alluded to on the scroll the cardinal who stands behind Napoleon carries in his left hand.

It is a curious painting, completed during the July Monarchy (1830-48) when the liberal king, Louis-Philippe, struggled to reconcile those contending political factions. That Napoleon had in fact a very low opinion of the church and sought to limit its powers in France is, of course, neither here nor there.

In this world the revolutionaries, like Magdalene, have repented, Napoleon is shown to have saved the day and the church and by association the Catholic monarchy are restored to their rightful place in the natural order of things. Sadly, for Louis-Philippe, it is a wildly optimistic reimagining of history, one that in the end – as the violent events of 1848, the Year of Revolutions, demonstrated – would prove ill founded.

Additional resources:

Church website (French)

Sculptor Carlo Marochetti from the Victorian Web

La Madeleine on Sacred Destinations

Soufflot, The Panthéon (Church of Ste-Geneviève), Paris

by DR. PAUL A. RANOGAJEC



Figure 13.7.15.74: Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris (France)

An imposing portico and dome

As you leave the Luxembourg Gardens and head east along the Rue Soufflot in Paris's dense Latin Quarter, the imposing portico and dome of the Panthéon draws you forward. It is an irresistible sight. One of the most impressive buildings of the Neoclassical period, the Panthéon, originally built as the Church of Ste-Geneviève, was conceived as a monument to Paris and the French nation as much as it was the church of Paris's patron saint.

Jacques-Germain Soufflot, its architect, was highly praised for the design—although a few of his contemporaries thought he went too far in defying tradition and structural necessity. Soufflot was heralded during his life as the restorer of greatness in French architecture and the building was lauded, even before it was completed, as one of the finest in the country.

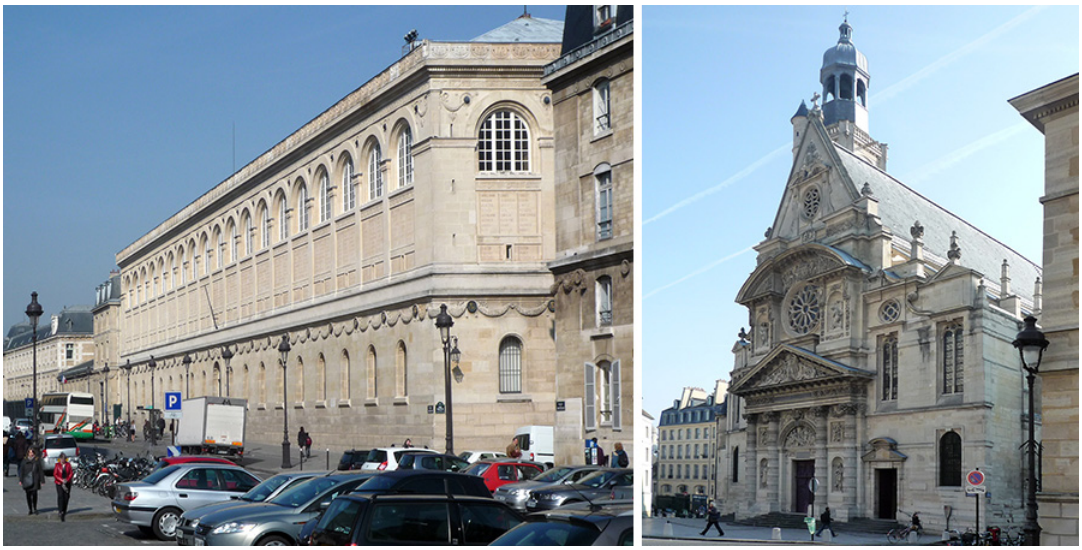


Figure 13.7.15.75: Left: Henri Labrouste, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève , 1838-50 (across from the Panthéon's north side); right: Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, dedicated 1626 (to the northeast of the Panthéon)

Encountering it today as its lofty dome rises far above surrounding buildings—including two of its most important neighbors: the small but influential Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (1838-50) by Henri Labrouste, and the enchanting late-medieval and Renaissance church of St-Étienne-du-Mont (both, above)—it remains as awe-inspiring as it must have been in the late eighteenth century, despite some important changes since its opening. A century and a half of French political history can be tracked with unusual precision in the original design and subsequent changes in the Panthéon's function and title.

150 years of French history

Soufflot's Ste-Geneviève was built to replace a decrepit medieval abbey, an idea first proposed during the time of King Louis XIV. The project fit, however, with Louis XV's program to aggressively promote his role as avatar of the nation's greatness. The king

saw the church's rebuilding as a token of his munificence and as material confirmation of the French Catholic Church's quasi-independence from the pope. And more specifically, the church was the fulfillment of Louis XV's pious vow, made in 1744 to his mistress, Madame de Pompadour, to rebuild the church if he recovered from a fever and illness so severe that he had been administered the Last Rites (a Catholic ritual of prayer for those considered close to death). Soufflot's Ste-Geneviève, then, was meant to focus the nation's piety on an unmistakable symbol of national and royal significance.

The church's dedication to Saint Genevieve was important to its original political significance. She had become one of France's most important historical religious figures well before the eighteenth century. According to legend, she had been instrumental in repelling Attila's Huns before they reached Paris in 451, and her relics were said to have miraculously helped Odo, the ruler of Paris, resist a Viking attack in 885. A monastery was eventually formed around the site of her burial in a church built originally in the early sixth century by Clovis, the first king of the French territory, although it underwent many changes through the twelfth century. The site, then, was the spot of an ancient and venerable shrine—and vitally important to the identity of Paris through many centuries.

The purity of Greek architecture and the daring of Gothic

Thanks to the Marquis de Marigny, the Director of Royal Buildings, Louis XV appointed Soufflot architect of the new church in 1755. By that time, Soufflot had achieved high standing in the French architectural profession, having recently completed a number of important buildings in Lyon, France, as the city's municipal architect. Soufflot had earlier established close ties to the French court when he accompanied Marigny as an architectural tutor on a journey through Italy. Marigny and the king calculated that Soufflot was the best candidate to give them the kind of memorable and forward-looking building that they wanted for their interconnected political and religious purposes.



Figure **13.7.15.76**: Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris

Soufflot's pupil Maximilien Brébion stated that the church's design was meant "to unite … the purity and magnificence of Greek architecture with the lightness and daring of Gothic construction." He was referring to the way in which its classical forms, such as the tall Corinthian columns and the dome, were joined with a Gothic type of structure that included the use of concealed flying buttresses and relatively light stone vaulting.



Figure 13.7.15.77: Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris (photo: Velual, CC BY 3.0)

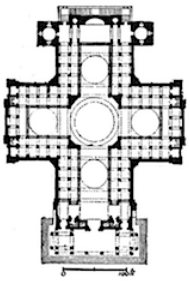


Figure 13.7.15.78: Plan, Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris, France, from A.D.F. Hamlin, *A Text-Book of the History of Architecture*, 1909

Inside, the unusually abundant rows of free-standing columns support a series of Roman vaults and the central dome in a remarkably clear and logical expression of space and structure—one of the artistic goals of Soufflot and certain other French architects of his generation. Ste-Geneviève is a Greek cross in plan (nave, north and south transepts, and choir are of equal dimensions), and originally the walls were pierced with windows in each bay between the columns. This structure created a Gothic sense of openness out of the classical columns and round-arched (as opposed to Gothic pointed-arch) vaults. Together these elements endowed Soufflot's building with stark order and light-filled spaciousness. The relative lack of decorative adornment contributed greatly to the sense of spatial clarity and austere grandeur.

Looking to the past to solve modern problems

Inspired by both recent archaeological excavations of ancient architecture and a new-found concern for the medieval heritage of France—primarily the great Gothic cathedrals—Soufflot and other architects, including the influential theorist Julien-David Leroy, sought to update French architecture by incorporating lessons from the most impressive and authoritative models of the past. In particular, Soufflot modeled aspects of Ste-Geneviève on three earlier, highly-esteemed churches: St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (especially its dome by Michelangelo); St. Paul's Cathedral in London; and, in Paris, the church of the Invalides Hospital.



Figure 13.7.15.79: Right: Numerous architects, Saint Peter's Basilica, begun 1506, Vatican City; center: Christopher Wren, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, begun 1675; Left: South facade, Hôtel National des Invalides, Paris, begun 1671 (photo)

Architectural historians have interpreted this approach to historical models as stemming from the Enlightenment's view of history, which saw the past as an unfolding, linear progression of events that could be studied in a rigorous, almost scientific way to extract lessons or models useful to the present generation. Older buildings were not to be copied directly—Ste-Geneviève is no mere facsimile—but were to be measured, drawn, and closely examined for the lessons they might hold for solving modern problems.

Moving away from the Baroque



Figure 13.7.15.80: Basilica of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, Paris, consecrated 1666

Ste-Geneviève updated architectural traditions in more specific ways, too. Other recent churches in Paris, such as Notre-Dame-des-Victoires and Saint-Roch, had used a Baroque formula borrowed from well-known seventeenth-century churches in Rome. These churches had tripartite fronts that rose up in the center, all usually articulated with profuse sculptural decoration. Their facades played sophisticated formal design games with engaged columns and flat pilasters, creating varied and dynamic surfaces that Neoclassical architects regarded as bizarre and licentious. With the neoclassical focus on the supposedly purer or more "natural" architectural forms of antiquity—a view exemplified, for instance, in Marc-Antoine Laugier's radically reductive *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753)—free-standing and orderly rows of columns, centralized plans, and restrained ornament were favored over the Baroque models. Soufflot's rejection of these models put him at the forefront of Neoclassicism and also symbolically supported the king's antagonism toward the Roman Catholic Church. Ste-Geneviève thus marked a new direction for both religious and state buildings in France.



Figure **13.7.15.81**: Inscription, "To the Great Men [from] a Grateful Fatherland" (Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante), Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris, France

Shortly after Ste-Geneviève's completion, the tumultuous politics of the French Revolution in 1789 and its repercussions throughout the nineteenth century led to alterations in the building's form and meaning. In 1791, at the height of the Revolution, the country's National Constituent Assembly decreed that Soufflot's church be converted to a secular Temple to Great Men. The original inscription on the portico's frieze (a dedication to the patron saint by Louis XV), was replaced with the one still visible today (above): "To the Great Men [from] a Grateful Fatherland" (*Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante*). The church became a pantheon—Le Panthéon— honoring illustrious modern French citizens, starting with the widely influential Enlightenment philosophers Rousseau and Voltaire.



Figure **13.7.15.82**: Pierre Puvis de Chavannes murals, begun 1874, for Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris, France

The architect and theorist Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy was charged with transforming the luminous church into a solemn mausoleum for the celebrated dead; instead of a reliquary for the remains of Saint Genevieve, it was to be a receptacle for "the ashes of the Great Men," according to the Assembly's decree. In fact, in 1793 the Revolutionary government put the saint's relics on trial—she stood accused of having spread religious error—and symbolically exorcised her from the building. Quatremère de Quincy removed all the symbols of the building's church identity, including the bell towers at the east end. Most dramatically, he bricked up the lower windows, turning the exterior walls into expansive stone slabs and rendering the interior darker. This had the side-effect of providing extensive interior wall surfaces for eye-level decoration, which eventually included the famous late-nineteenth-century murals by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes illustrating the life of Saint Genevieve (above). The other major post-Soufflot change to the building fabric was the strengthening of the crossing piers that support the dome, carried out in 1806 by Soufflot's former collaborator, Jean-Baptiste Rondelet.



Figure 13.7.15.83: Antoine-Jean Gros, The Apotheosis of Saint Genevieve, 1811, dome, Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon) 1755-90, Paris, France (**photo**)



Figure 13.7.15.84: Dome, Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of Ste-Geneviève (now Le Panthéon), 1755-90, Paris, France

The building's dedication swung back and forth between church and secular temple throughout the nineteenth century. After Quatremère de Quincy's Revolutionary transformation of 1791, it was reconsecrated as a church under Napoleon in 1806, the occasion for the addition of Antoine-Jean Gros' painting of *The Apotheosis of Saint Genevieve* on the dome. It was then changed back to the secular Panthéon following the July Revolution of 1830; turned into a remarkably idealistic Temple to Humanity after the revolution of 1848; remade once more as Saint Genevieve's church in 1851 under Louis Napoleon; and, finally, conclusively secularized yet again in 1885. These successive changes were marked especially by the building's decoration, above all the sculpture in its pediment, which was recarved four times. The final and still visible pediment sculptures are the allegorical representations of the Fatherland, History, and Liberty by Pierre-Jean David d'Angers, completed in the 1830s during the July Monarchy. As revolutions, kings, and emperors came and went over the course of the nineteenth century, the Panthéon was there as a silent but attentive witness.

The ultimate transformation of the church into a secular temple of Enlightenment was confirmed in spirit, if not by final writ, when, in 1851, the scientist Léon Foucault hooked a cable to the center of the dome, creating a huge pendulum that he used to experimentally demonstrate the earth's axial rotation. Since 1995, a replica of "Foucault's Pendulum" has been in place under the Panthéon's dome, an unusual but appropriate coda to the history of a building which from the start had broad significance extending beyond its place and time.

Additional resources:

Avner Ben-Amos, “Monuments and Memory in French Nationalism,” *History and Memory* vol. 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1993), pp. 50-81.

Barry Bergdoll, ed., *Le Panthéon: Symbole des révolutions: De l’Église de la Nation au Temple des grands hommes* (Paris: Picard, 1989).

Allan Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

13.7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.7.16: Britain in the 18th century

British art: 18th century

The British avoid a revolution, engage in the slave trade, build a global empire, and begin the industrial revolution.

1700 - 1800

Wren, Saint Paul's Cathedral

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.7.16.1: Christopher Wren, Saint Paul's Cathedral, begun 1675, completed 1711, London

Additional resources:

Saint Paul's Cathedral

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





















Figure 13.7.16.1: More Smarthistory images…

William Hogarth

William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*

by SOPHIE HARLAND

Sex, booze and 18th-century Britain

If you ever needed proof that the sex, booze and a rock'n'roll lifestyle was not a twentieth century invention, you need look no further than the satirical prints of William Hogarth. He held up a moralizing mirror to eighteenth-century Britain; the harlots, the womanizers—even the clergy could not escape. Hogarth's prints play out the sins of eighteenth-century London in a kind of visual theater that was entirely new and novel in their day.



Figure 13.7.16.2: William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress*, plate 1, 1732, etching with engraving on paper, 31.4 x 38 cm

The first example of these prints, which Hogarth himself termed 'modern moral subjects', was *A Harlot's Progress*. In this series, we meet the fresh faced Moll Hackabout as she arrives for the first time in London. Moll is soon preyed upon by a brothel keeper and she descends into prostitution. The tale ends with her premature death from a sexually transmitted disease, aged just twenty-

three. Despite its dark subject matter *A Harlot's Progress* was a huge success. These prints reference characters types who were well known to their contemporary London audience. For example Moll's madam was the real-life Elizabeth Needham, keeper of an exclusive London brothel and her first patron, the renowned love-rat and convicted rapist, Colonel Francis Charteris.

A Rake's Progress

These sly nods to the bad guys of the day not only made the prints hugely relevant and enjoyable to their target audience but it also made them incredibly popular. *A Rake's Progress* (1735) was Hogarth's second series and proved to be just as well loved. The main character is Tom Rakewell—a rake being a old fashioned term for a man of loose morals or a womanizer. Tom's name is intentionally general and in a modern equivalent, he might be called 'Mr. Immoral.' Tom is not unique, he could be any number of people in eighteenth-century Britain.

The series opens with a chaotic scene: Tom's father, who was a rich merchant, has died and Tom has returned from Oxford University to collect and spend his late father's wealth. He also wastes no time in rejecting his pregnant fiance, Sarah Young, by attempting to pay her off. Hogarth laces all his prints with clues to help us decode the scene. Here we can see Sarah sobbing into a hankie whilst holding her engagement ring in her hand. Her mother stands behind her angrily clutching the love letters Tom once wrote to her daughter and he holds out a handful of coins in an attempt to get rid of them. Sarah pops up throughout these prints representing a more wholesome life that he could have had.



Figure **13.7.16.3**: William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, plate 2, "Surrounded by Artists and Professors," 1735, engraving on paper, 35.5 x 31 cm

A fashionable life

By the next scene (*"Surrounded by Artists and Professors,"* above) Tom has already moved from his cozy, if slightly shabby family home into his new bachelor pad surrounded by a dance master, a music teacher, a poet, a tailor, a landscape gardener, a body guard and a jockey all offering their services to help Tom complete his fashionable lifestyle. He is dressed in his nightclothes indicating that he has just woken: those who wish to exploit his new found wealth are wasting no time.

Tom's fashionable life also comes with fashionable vices and soon we see him in the Rose Tavern with a group of prostitutes (see *"The Tavern Scene,"* below). He sits on the lap of one who caresses him with one hand whilst robbing him of his watch with the other. Portraits of Roman Emperors hang on the wall behind them but the only one that has not been defaced is Nero's. This is perhaps hard for a modern audience to identify but there would have been a significant number of Hogarth's classically educated audience who got the gag: Nero was a corrupt womanizer who fiercely persecuted Christians. To the very classically aware Georgians (George II was then King) the message was clear, Christian morals are not to be found here.



Figure **13.7.16.4**: William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, plate 3, "The Tavern Scene," 1735, engraving on paper, 35.5 x 31 cm

A decadent decline

Tom's decadent lifestyle does not last for long and by the third scene his sedan chair is intercepted by bailiffs as he is en route to the Queen's birthday party. It is at this point that our heroine Sarah Young comes to the rescue. She is now working as a milliner and kindly pays Tom's bail. Although Sarah has saved Tom from the bailiffs, she cannot save him from himself. By the next scene he is marrying a wealthy old hag. The old woman's eyes lust eagerly towards the ring and Tom's towards her maid. In the background Sarah Young and her mother struggle to voice their objections but are held back by some of the guests.

Tom is wealthy again but he is no better with his money now than he was last time and soon he is on his knees in a gambling den having just squandered the lot (see "*The Gaming House*," below). Excessive gambling was a real problem in the eighteenth century and whole family fortunes could be lost in one evening. Later in the century, George III's son, who later became George IV, had to ask Parliament for money to help him pay off his gambling debts. It was given to him but it was not long before he needed even more.



Figure **13.7.16.5**: William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, plate 6, "The Gaming House," 1735, engraving on paper, 35.5 x 31 cm

Debtors' prison

Like so many others in eighteenth-century Britain, Tom finds himself in debtors' prison, quickly coming to the end of his tether. On the one side his wife derides him for squandering their fortune, on the other the beer-boy and the jailer harass him to settle his

weekly bill. Sarah Young, who has come to visit Tom with their child, has fainted on seeing him in this hopeless situation. This must have been very personally relevant for Hogarth as his father spent much of his childhood in a debtors' prison.

My favorite part of the series is played out in the background of this scene. Tom's fellow inmates are trying various schemes to get enough money to buy their freedom. However, their choice of projects cleverly illustrate just how impossible it was to get out of debt in Georgian Britain. One man is attempting to turn lead into gold while the other is working on solving the national debt crisis. Even Tom has written a play, though we can clearly see a rejection letter for it lying on the table.



Figure **13.7.16.6**: William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, plate 8, "The Madhouse," 1735, engraving on paper, 35.5 x 31 cm

Bedlam

The stresses of the previous scene have proven to be more than Tom can bear and in the final scene he is found languishing in bedlam—London's notorious mental hospital (see *"The Madhouse,"* above). The mark on his chest suggests that he has stabbed himself in a failed suicide attempt. Fashionable young women, the likes of which Tom would have socialized with just a short while ago, observe the scene in amusement. All that he has left is the company and care of the faithful Sarah Young.

Why so popular?

One answer is that it appealed to the contemporary concern about people from the middle classes who tried to live like aristocrats. This was a popular issue at this time as the merchant trade was creating social mobility on a scale never seen before. However if we scratch the surface of *A Rake's Progress* we can see that a number of different types of people implicated. For example, Tom was on his way to the Queen's birthday party when he was stopped by bailiffs and therefore his lifestyle is actually being encouraged and supported by aristocrats. In *A Rake's Progress*, everyone from the Queen to the priest that performs his marriage of convenience, to common prostitutes, are part of the problem.

But it is not just Hogarth's 'take no prisoners' approach to social commentary that made him so popular. Printed satire was actually already very common place and central London was full of bookshops and print sellers that displayed this kind of work. What Hogarth did do that was so completely novel was to tell a story through pictures, *A Rake's Progress* is like a story board for a play. In fact, Hogarth's series were adapted into plays and pantomimes during his lifetime. His visual drama offered his audience a new way to enjoy satire. It is for this reason that to find comparisons and inspirations we should be looking at authors such as Hogarth's friend and fellow moralizer, Henry Fielding or Jonathan Swift—author of *Gulliver's Travels*, rather than contemporary artists. The title *A Rake's Progress* was referencing John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress*. We can be quite sure that most people would have gotten this reference as it is thought that, at this time, this was the most read book in Britain after the Bible. Hogarth successfully borrows from popular culture in order to express complicated ideas through an enjoyable and totally accessible story. Of course Hogarth wasn't the first to do this, but he did it so well, he is celebrated to this day.

Additional resources:

The original painted series from 1733 at Sir John Soane's Museum

Hogarth Exhibition at Tate Britain

A short biography of the artist from The National Gallery

William Hogarth, *Marriage A-la-Mode*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.7.16.2**: William Hogarth, *Marriage A-la-Mode*, c. 1743, series of six paintings, oil on canvas, 69.9 x 90.8 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Hogarth's series consists of six paintings which served as models for the engravings: 1. *The Marriage Settlement*, 2. *The Tête à Tête*, 3. *The Inspection*, 4. *The Toilette*, 5. *The Bagnio*, 6. *The Lady's Death*.

Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*

by DR. ABRAM FOX



Figure **13.7.16.7**: Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Money. Possessions. Power.

The same materialistic ideals which drive many men and women today have performed the same function throughout history. Those in positions of power often chose to commemorate their status through images. Some purchase works of art by famous

artists to demonstrate their wealth, while others commission portraits of themselves as reminders of their prestige.

A young couple in the middle of the eighteenth century, Robert Andrews and Frances Andrews, opted for the second option to celebrate their marriage and subsequent combination of their families' fortune. To depict their increased status, the Andrews' commissioned a relatively unknown painter named Thomas Gainsborough to paint their portraits. Little could they anticipate that within a few decades it would be the artist, and not the subjects, that would make their portrait famous.

A conversation on canvas

Gainsborough's portrait of the newly-married Robert and Frances Andrews is typical of the genre of "conversation pieces;" informal group portraits which gained popularity in the middle of the eighteenth century in England. Unlike the formal, straightforward portraits which characterized earlier periods and locations, the "conversation piece" usually presented a small group of individuals in an outdoor space, engaged in discussion and unaware of the viewer's presence. Mr. and Mrs. Andrews diverts from that tradition, as its sitters are clearly reacting to Gainsborough's presence, but their relaxed poses and location in the English countryside connects them to the "conversation piece" tradition.

At the time Gainsborough executed this painting, he was a 23-year-old emerging artist working in city of Ipswich in the rural English county of Suffolk. As a teenager he served an apprenticeship in London and also received instruction from Hubert-François Gravelot, a popular Rococo engraver working in England's capital city. In 1749 Gainsborough moved with his wife to Ipswich, 70 miles from London and just 20 miles from his birthplace of Sudbury, in Suffolk County. Robert Andrews and his future wife, then known as Frances Carter, also grew up in Sudbury, in much wealthier families. In his portrait of the pair, Gainsborough captures the barely-veiled disdain in Frances Andrews' eyes and her wry smile. She and her husband are well aware that the portraitist, whom they would have known since childhood, is well below them on the social ladder.



Figure **13.7.16.8**: Landscape (detail), Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Love of landscape

Following the "conversation piece" tradition, Gainsborough includes a landscape in his painting. However, he provides a much greater view of rural England than might be expected from such a work. Mr. and Mrs. Andrews pose on the left half of the canvas, rather than directly in the middle as was typical in a straightforward portrait. On the right side, Gainsborough gives equal attention to the grounds of The Auberies, the Andrews' estate in Sudbury.

The couple is located on the edge of a field of wheat, and fenced in cattle populate the middle ground to the left while sheep graze to the right of the pair. Through the implementation of modern agricultural techniques and technology, Mr. Andrews has brought the land under his control. His pose is meant to suggest that his work is done and he can now relax and hunt with his dog, although he doesn't look very comfortable holding his rifle.

The attention Gainsborough lavishes on the rolling English countryside reflects his lifelong love for nature. Although he became famous as a portrait painter, Gainsborough insisted throughout his life that landscape painting was his true calling, and he considered himself a landscape painter rather than a portraitist. He spent most of his career outside of London, the center of the English art world. After leaving Ipswich a decade after painting Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, Gainsborough set up shop in the resort city of Bath, where his delicate and sensual portraits defined the Rococo fashion in England in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Rococo in England

The Rococo was a French style, imported by foreign artists like Hubert-François Gravelot and by English collectors. In the early 1700s England did not have a strong painting tradition, and its most famous artists were international painters who traveled to London to take advantage of that fact. Gainsborough looked to the frivolous, playful paintings being commissioned by French aristocrats, and applied their delicate style to slightly more reserved and contained subjects.

Mrs. Andrews' dress possesses the pastel colors and delicate lace of more erotic French works like Jean-Honoré Fragonard's The Swing. Her dress and Mr. Andrews' shirt glimmer in sunlight, despite the overcast sky. Mrs. Andrews sits on a bench that is entirely too elaborate to sit exposed in the middle of a wheat field. Both figures are pale and lithe, reflecting the upper class privilege of not having to work for a living. Their expansive estate functions as an ostentatious demonstration of their wealth: it continues as far as the eye can see.

A mysterious absence



Figure 13.7.16.9: Landscape (detail), Thomas Gainsborough, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, c. 1750, oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Although the Andrews purchased their conversation portrait from Gainsborough, something is missing from the work. Bare canvas surrounds Mrs. Andrews' hands, folded in her lap. No one knows exactly what Gainsborough intended to paint in that space, if he intended to paint anything at all. Some scholars have suggested that Mrs. Andrews was meant to hold a dead game bird, the result of a successful hunting trip by her husband. Such an inclusion would emphasize the couple's control over their land, but a bloody animal would ruin Mrs. Andrews' elaborate dress, and therefore seems unlikely.

Another possibility for Mrs. Andrews' lap is that the blank space was intended for a baby. Regardless of what was meant to go in that spot, Gainsborough never added it in. Modern scholars consider the painting to be "unfinished," but we'll never know what the original finished work was to look like, or if its current state was as "finished" as Gainsborough and the Andrews wanted.

Additional resources:

This painting in The National Gallery

Gainsborough on the BBC's Your Paintings

Gainsborough's Show Box at the V&A

Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving a Lecture at the Orrery*

by DR. ABRAM FOX



Figure **13.7.16.10**: Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving a Lecture at the Orrery (in which a lamp is put in place of the sun)*, c. 1763-65, oil on canvas, 4′ 10″ x 6′ 8″ (Derby Museums and Art Gallery, Derby)

Two young boys, gazing over the edge of the contraption in playful wonder. A teenaged girl, her arms resting on the machine, in quiet contemplation. A young man shielding his eyes from the brilliance of the light emanating from the center, and a young woman staring unblinkingly. A standing man taking copious notes on the proceedings. Another man leaning back in his seat, listening intently to the gray-haired lecturer, captivating his audience like a magician.

A key idea of the Age of Enlightenment—that empirical observation grounded in science and reason could best advance society—is expressed by the faces of the individuals in Joseph Wright of Derby's *A Philosopher Lecturing on the Orrery*.

The Age of Enlightenment

Wright's painting encapsulates in one moment the Enlightenment, a philosophical shift in the eighteenth century away from traditional religious models of the universe and toward an empirical, scientific approach. It is important to note the term given this new way of thinking. "Enlightenment" indicates an active process, undertaken by an individual by group.

The age of Enlightenment is most closely associated with scientists and inventors, but writers and artists also played major roles. They helped spread enlightenment concepts via the written word and printed image, and inspired others to think rationally about the world in which they lived. The provincial English painter Joseph Wright of Derby became the unofficial artist of the Enlightenment, depicting scientists and philosophers in ways previously reserved for Biblical heroes and Greek gods.

Joseph Wright of Derby

Joseph Wright of Derby was born in the town of Derby in central England, and save for short stints in Liverpool and London, lived in that city his entire life. He was known even during his lifetime as Joseph Wright of Derby, to distinguish him from another artist of the same name. Even though Wright of Derby was the more talented of the two, he was stuck with the geographical identifier on his name.

Other than Thomas Gainsborough, who spent much of his career in the high-society resort town of Bath, Wright was the most prominent English painter of the eighteenth century to spend the majority of his career outside of London. Operating without the constraints of the mainstream London art world, Wright was free to explore a general interest in science with his friends, a group

that included Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles) and other members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham, an informal learned society which met to discuss scientific topics of the day.

Wright was known for his deft depiction of the contrasts between light and dark, also known as chiaroscuro, and his unflinching portrayal of the true personalities of his subjects. This trait caused his downfall when he attempted to work as a portraitist—few wanted a portrait, warts and all.

The intensity of scientific discovery

In the 1760s Wright began to explore the traditional boundaries of various genres of painting. According to the French academies of art, the highest genre of painting was history painting, which depicted Biblical or classical subjects to demonstrate a moral lesson. This high regard for history panting was adopted by the British—Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe* is a prominent example.

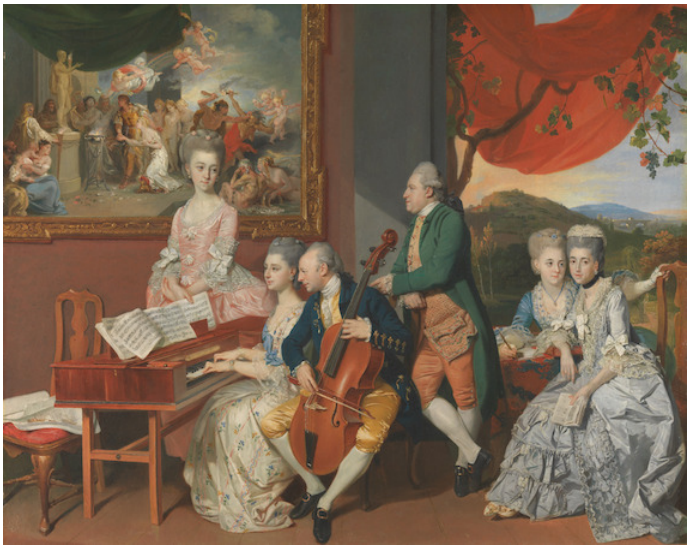


Figure **13.7.16.11**: Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Gore Family with George, third Earl Cowper*, c. 1775, oil on canvas (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection)

Wright took this noble, aggrandizing method of portraying events and applied it to a composition showing a contemporary subject in *A Philosopher Lecturing at the Orrery*. Rather than a moral of leadership or heroism, this painting's "moral" is the pursuit of scientific knowledge. With its collection of non-idealized men, women, boys, and girls informally arranged in a small physical space around a central organizing point, Wright's painting mimics the compositional structure of a conversation piece (an informal group portrait) like Zoffany's *Gore Family* (above), but with the dramatic lighting and scale expected from a major religious scene.

In effect, *A Philosopher Lecturing at the Orrery* does depict a moment of religious epiphany. Much like the central figure in Caravaggio's *Calling of Saint Matthew* (below), the figures listening to the philosopher's lecture in Wright's painting are experiencing conversion…to science.



Figure **13.7.16.12**: Orrery, c. 1750 (British Museum)

An orrery is a mechanical model of the solar system, a miniature, clockwork planetarium. Each planet, with its moons, is a sphere attached to a swing arm which allows it to rotate around the sun when cranked by hand. When in motion, the orrery depicts the orbits of each planet, as well as their relative relationship to each other. The orrery depicted by Wright has large metal rings which can simulate eclipses, and give the model a striking and exciting three-dimensionality.



Figure **13.7.16.13**: Orrery, c. 1750 (British Museum)

Although each of the figures in the painting is clearly modeled on a specific person, Wright's work was not meant to be a conversation piece in the eighteenth century sense of the word, and so we can only guess at the identities of each person. Most likely the man standing and taking notes is Wright's friend Peter Perez Burdett, and the man seated at the far right may be Washington Shirley, 5th Earl Ferrers, the initial owner of the work.

Several identities have been proposed for the philosopher delivering the lecture. The most tempting theory is that his face is modeled on that of Sir Isaac Newton, the great English scientist whose work helped herald in the Enlightenment. Another possibility is that it is a member of the Lunar Society of Birmingham.



Figure 13.7.16.14: Jesus beckoning to Matthew (detail), Caravaggio, *Calling of Saint Matthew*, c. 1599-1600, oil on canvas, 322 cm × 340 cm (San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome)

The events depicted, although exciting, do not give *A Philosopher Lecturing at the Orrery* its high dramatic impact. That responsibility falls on the paintings strong internal light source, the lamp that takes the role of the sun. Wright mimics Baroque artists like Caravaggio, who inserted strong light sources in otherwise dark compositions to create dramatic effect. Most of these earlier works were Christian subjects, and the light sources were often simple candles. Wright flips the script with his scientific subject matter. The gas lamp which acts as the sun pulls double duty in the painting. It illuminates the scene, allowing the viewer to clearly see the figures within, and it symbolizes the active enlightenment in which those figures are participating.

Additional resources:

"Restoration of Joseph Wright of Derby paintings reveals hidden details" in The Guardian

Biography of Joseph Wright of Derby from The Getty Museum

Joseph Wright of Derby at The National Gallery, London

Joseph Wright of Derby at the Tate

This painting in Wikipedia

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

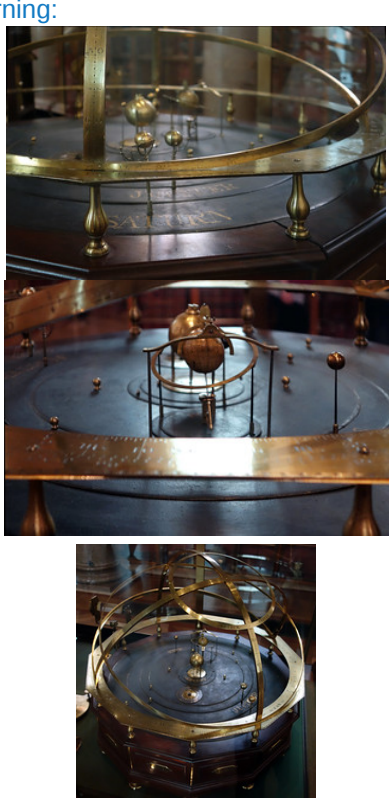
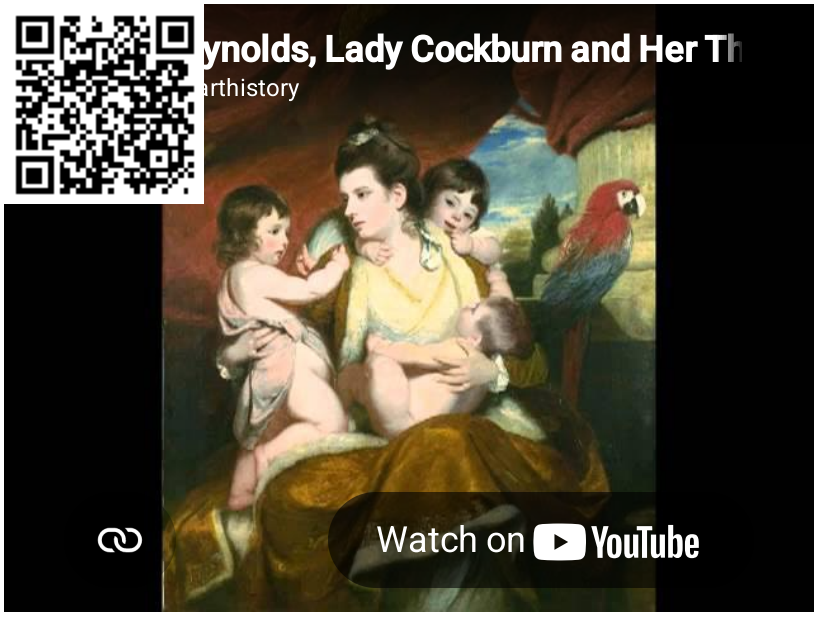


Figure **13.7.16.15**: More Smarthistory images…

Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Cockburn and Her Three Eldest Sons*

by PIPPA COUCH and RACHEL ROPEIK



Video **13.7.16.3**: Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Cockburn and Her Three Eldest Sons*, 1773, oil on canvas, 55-3/4 x 44-1/2″ / 141.5 x 113 cm (National Gallery, London)

13.7.16: Britain in the 18th century is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **7.16: Britain in the 18th century** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.8: Europe 1800 - 1900

Europe: 19th century

Science, industry and the growth of cities transformed art forever.

1800 - 1900

13.8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction

13.8.2: Romanticism

13.8.3: Early photography

13.8.4: Victorian art

13.8.5: Realism

13.8.6: Second Empire

13.8.7: Impressionism

13.8.8: Post-Impressionism

13.8.9: Sculpture

13.8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau

13.8.11: Peredvizhniki

13.8: Europe 1800 - 1900 is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction

Becoming Modern, an introduction

by DR. PARME GIUNTINI

People use the term “modern” in a variety of ways, often very loosely, with a lot of implied associations of new, contemporary, up-to-date, and technological. We know the difference between a modern society and one that remains tied to the past and it usually has less to do with art and more to do with technology and industrial progress, things like indoor plumbing, easy access to consumer goods, freedom of expression, and voting rights. In the 19th century, however, modernity and its connection with art had certain specific associations that people began recognizing and using as barometers to distinguish themselves and their culture from earlier nineteenth century ways and attitudes.



Figure **13.8.1.1**: Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, oil on canvas, 1882 (Courtauld Gallery, London)

Chronologically, Modernism refers to the period from 1850 to 1960. It begins with the Realist movement and ends with Abstract Expressionism. That’s just a little over one hundred years. During that period the western world experienced some significant changes that transformed Europe and the United States from traditional societies that were agriculturally based into modern ones with cities and factories and mass transportation.

Here are some important features that all modern societies share.

Capitalism

Capitalism replaced landed fortunes and became the economic system of modernity in which people exchanged labor for a fixed wage and used their wages to buy ever more consumer items rather than produce such items themselves. This economic change dramatically affected class relations because it offered opportunities for great wealth through individual initiative, industrialization and technology—somewhat like the technological and dot.com explosion of the late 20th and early 21st century. The industrial revolution which began in England in the late 18th century and rapidly swept across Europe (hit the U.S. immediately following the Civil War) transformed economic and social relationships, offered an ever increasing number of cheaper consumer goods, and changed notions of education. Who needed the classics when a commercial/technically oriented education was the key to financial success? The industrial revolution also fostered a sense of competition and progress that continues to influence us today.



Figure 13.8.1.2: Claude Monet, *Le Boulevard des Capucines*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 80.3 x 60.3 cm (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art)

Urban culture replaced agrarian culture as industrialization and cities grew. Cities were the sites of new wealth and opportunity with their factories and manufacturing potential. People moving from small farms, towns to large cities helped to breakdown traditional culture and values. There were also new complications such as growing urban crime, prostitution, alienation, and depersonalization.

In a small town you probably knew the cobbler who made your shoes and such a personal relationship often expanded into everyday economics—you might be able to barter food or labor for a new pair of shoes or delay payments. These kinds of accommodations that formed a substructure to agrarian life were swept away with urbanization. City dwellers bought shoes that were manufactured, transported by railroads, displayed in shop windows, and purchased only for cash. Assembly lines, anonymous labor, and advertising created more consumer items but also a growing sense of depersonalization. The gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" increased and were more visible in the city.

Technology



Figure 13.8.1.3: "The omnibus – a horse-drawn carriage that picked up and deposited people along an established route – was introduced into London on 4 July 1829 and quickly became a popular mode of transport" (Tate). William Maw Egley, *Omnibus Life in London*, 1859, oil on canvas, 44.8 x 41.9 cm (Tate, London)

Technological advances such as industrialization, railroads, gas lighting, streetcars, factory systems, indoor plumbing, appliances, and scientific advances were rapidly made and these changes dramatically affected the way people lived and thought about

themselves. One consequence was that people in industrialized areas thought of themselves as progressive and modern and considered undeveloped cultures in undeveloped countries as primitive and backward.

Secularism

Modernity is characterized by increasing secularism and diminished religious authority. People did not abandon religion but they paid less attention to it. Organized religions were increasingly less able to dictate standards, values, and subject matter. Fine art moved from representing human experience and its relationship to God's creation, to a focus on personal emotions and individual spiritual experiences that were not based in any organized and institutionalized religion.

Optimism



Figure **13.8.1.4**: Joseph Stella, *The Brooklyn Bridge: Variation on an Old Theme*, 1939, oil on canvas, 70 × 42 inches / 177.8 × 106.7 cm (Whitney Museum of American Art)

The modern world was extremely optimistic—people saw these changes as positive. They welcomed innovation and championed progress. Change became a signifier of modernity. Anything that was traditional and static signaled outmoded, old-fashioned, conservative and was to be avoided by the new modern public. Modern Europe and the U.S. internalized these positions and used modernity as a way of determining and validating their superiority. The nineteenth century was also a period of tremendous colonial growth and expansion, in the name of progress and social benefit and all of these activities were spearheaded by newly industrialized western countries.

Many artists closely identified with modernity and embraced the new techniques and innovations, the spirit of progress, invention, discovery, creativity and change. They wanted to participate in creating the modern world and they were anxious to try out new ideas rather than following the more conservative guidelines of Academic art. This is not to say that these mid-nineteenth century artists were the first to challenge an older generation or set of ideas. Many academic artists had argued over formal issues, styles and subject matter but this was much like a good natured agreement within a club; everyone in the group agreed to disagree.

A middle-class audience



Figure **13.8.1.5**: Winslow Homer, *Croquet Scene*, 1866, oil on canvas, 40.3 x 66.2 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

By the mid-1850's polite academic disagreements were being taken out of the Academy and onto the street. Artists were looking increasingly to the private sector for patronage, tapping into that growing group of bourgeois or middle class collectors with money to spend and houses to fill with paintings. This new middle class audience that made its money through industrialization and manufacturing had lots of "disposable income", and they wanted pictures that they could understand, that were easy to look at, fit into their homes, addressed subjects they liked. Not for them the historical cycles of gods, saints and heroes with their complex intellectual associations and references; instead, they wanted landscapes, genre scenes, and still life. They were not less educated than earlier buyers, but educated with a different focus and set of priorities. Reality was here and now, progress was inevitable, and the new hero of modern life was the modern man.

Modernity is then a composite of contexts: a time, a space, and an attitude. What makes a place or an object "modern" depends on these conditions.

The avant garde

Throughout the 19th century there were artists who produced pictures that we do not label "modern art" generally because the techniques or subjects were associated with the conservative academic styles, techniques and approaches. On the other hand, modern artists were often called the "avant garde." This was originally a military term that described the point man (the first soldier out)—the one to take the most risk. The French socialist Henri de Saint-Simon first used the term in the early 1820's to describe an artist whose work would serve the needs of the people, of a socialist society rather than the ruling classes.

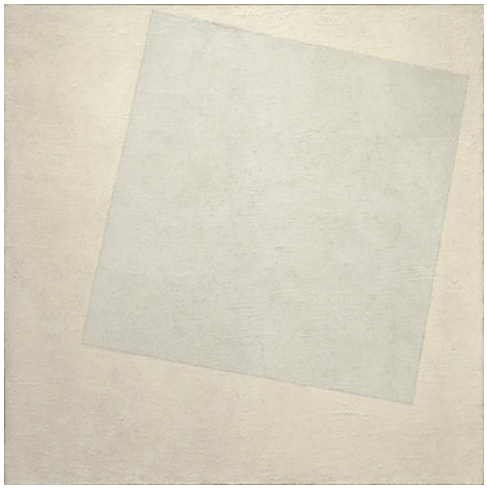


Figure 13.8.1.6: Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Composition: White on White*, 1918, oil on canvas, 31 1/4 x 31 1/4 inches / 79.4 x 79.4 cm (The Museum of Modern Art). Malevich "viewed the Russian Revolution as having paved the way for a new society in which materialism would eventually lead to spiritual freedom." **MoMA**

The avant garde is also used to identify artists whose painting subjects and techniques were radical, marking them off from the more traditional or academic styles, but not with any particular political ideology in mind. Avant garde became a kind of generic term for a number of art movements centered on the idea of artistic autonomy and independence. In some cases the avant garde was closely associated with political activism, especially socialist or communist movements; in other cases, the avant garde was pointedly removed from politics and focused primarily on aesthetics. The avant garde was never a cohesive group of artists and what was avant garde in one nation was not necessarily the same in others.

Finally, although modern artists were working throughout many countries in Europe and the United States, most 19th art and much 20th century modern art is centered in France and produced by French artists. Unlike England which was politically stable in the 19th century, France went through a variety of governments and insurrections all of which provided a unique political and cultural environment that fostered what we know as modern art.

Additional resources:

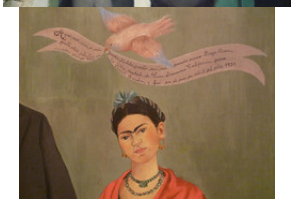
Modernism from Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe

Impressionism: Art and Modernity on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Modern Art from MoMA Learning

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88737







Figure **13.8.1.7**: More Smarthistory images…

13.8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.2: Romanticism

Romanticism

In Romanticism, humanity confronted its fears and proclivity for violence.

c. 1800 - 1848

A beginner's guide

A beginner’s guide to Romanticism

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

19th century stylistic developments



Figure **13.8.2.1**: Caspar David Friedrich, *The Abbey in the Oakwood*, 1809-10, oil on canvas, 110 x 171 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin)

As is fairly common with stylistic rubrics, the word “Romanticism” was not developed to describe the visual arts but was first used in relation to new literary and musical schools in the beginning of the 19th century. Art came under this heading only later. Think of the Romantic literature and musical compositions of the early 19th century: the poetry of Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and William Wordsworth and the scores of Beethoven, Richard Strauss, and Chopin—these Romantic poets and musicians associated with visual artists. A good example of this is the friendship between composer and pianist Frederic Chopin and painter Eugene Delacroix. Romantic artists were concerned with the spectrum and intensity of human emotion.



Figure 13.8.2.2: Eugene Delacroix, *Liberty leading the People*, 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Louvre, Paris)



Figure 13.8.2.3: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *Saturn Devouring One Of His Sons*, 1821-1823, 143.5 x 81.4 cm (Prado, Madrid)

Even if you do not regularly listen to classical music, you've heard plenty of music by these composers. In his epic film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the late director Stanley Kubrick used Strauss's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (written in 1896, Strauss based his composition on Friedrich Nietzsche's book of the same name, **listen to it here**). Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* similarly uses the sweeping ecstasy and drama of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in this case to intensify the cinematic violence of the film.

Romantic music expressed the powerful drama of human emotion: anger and passion, but also quiet passages of pleasure and joy. So too, the French painter Eugene Delacroix and the Spanish artist Francisco Goya broke with the cool, cerebral idealism of David and Ingres' Neo-Classicism. They sought instead to respond to the cataclysmic upheavals that characterized their era with line, color, and brushwork that was more physically direct, more emotionally expressive.

Additional resources:

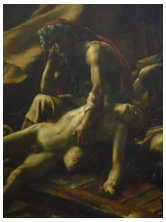
Romanticism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Romanticism as a literary movement from Mount Holyoke College

From NPR: The 'Ode To Joy' [Beethoven's Ninth Symphony] As A Call To Action

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











Gros, Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken in Jaffa with viewers



Figure **13.8.2.4**: More Smarthistory images…

Orientalism

by DR. NANCY DEMERDASH

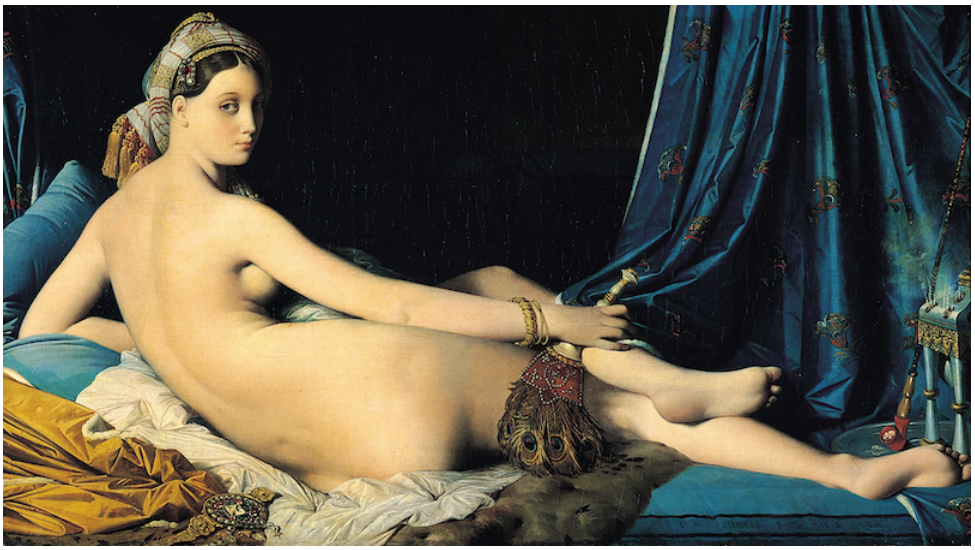


Figure **13.8.2.5**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Grand Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas (Louvre, Paris)

The origins of Orientalism

Snake charmers, carpet vendors, and veiled women may conjure up ideas of the Middle East, North Africa, and West Asia, but they are also partially indebted to Orientalist fantasies. To understand these images, we have to understand the concept of Orientalism, beginning with the word "Orient" itself. In its original medieval usage, the "Orient" referred to the "East," but whose "East" did this Orient represent? East of where?



Figure **13.8.2.6**: Gentile Bellini, *Sultan Mehmed II*, 1480, oil on canvas (National Gallery, London)

We understand now that this designation reflects a Western European view of the "East," and not necessarily the views of the inhabitants of these areas. We also realize today that the label of the "Orient" hardly captures the wide swath of territory to which it originally referred: the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. These are at once distinct, contrasting, and yet interconnected regions.

Scholars often link visual examples of Orientalism alongside the Romantic literature and music of the early nineteenth century, a period of rising imperialism and tourism when Western artists traveled widely to the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. We now understand that the world has been interconnected for much longer than we initially acknowledged and we can see elements of Orientalist representation much earlier—for example, in religious objects of the Crusades, or Gentile Bellini's painting of the Ottoman sultan (ruler) Mehmed II (above), or in the arabesques (flowing s-shaped ornamental forms) of early modern textiles.

The politics of Orientalism

In his groundbreaking 1978 text *Orientalism*, the late cultural critic and theorist Edward Saïd argued that a dominant European political ideology created the notion of the Orient in order to subjugate and control it. Saïd explained that the concept embodied distinctions between "East" (the Orient) and "West" (the Occident) precisely so the "West" could control and authorize views of the "East." For Saïd, this nexus of power and knowledge enabled the "West" to generalize and misrepresent North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Though his text has itself received considerable criticism, the book nevertheless remains a pioneering intervention. Saïd continues to influence many disciplines of cultural study, including the history of art.

Representing the "Orient"

As art historian Linda Nochlin argued in her widely read essay, "The Imaginary Orient," from 1983, the task of critical art history is to assess the power structures behind any work of art or artist.[1] Following Nochlin's lead, art historians have questioned underlying power dynamics at play in the artistic representations of the "Orient," many of them from the nineteenth century. In doing so, these scholars challenged not only the ways that the "West" represented the "East," but they also complicate the long held misconception of a unidirectional westward influence. Similarly, these scholars questioned how artists have represented people of the Orient as passive or licentious subjects.



Figure **13.8.2.7**: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Snake Charmer and His Audience*, c. 1879, oil on canvas (Sterling Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts)

For example, in the painting *The Snake Charmer and His Audience*, c. 1879, the French artist Jean-Léon Gérôme's depicts a naked youth holding a serpent as an older man plays the flute—charming both the snake and their audience. Gérôme constructs a scene out of his imagination, but he utilizes a highly refined and naturalistic style to suggest that he himself observed the scene. In doing so, Gérôme suggests such nudity was a regular and public occurrence in the "East." In contrast, artists like Henriette Browne and Osman Hamdi Bey created works that provide a counter-narrative to the image of the "East" as passive, licentious or decrepit. In *A Visit: Harem Interior, Constantinople*, 1860, the French painter Browne represents women fully clothed in harem scenes. Likewise, the École des Beaux Arts-trained Ottoman painter Osman Hamdi Bey depicts Islamic scholarship and learnedness in *A Young Emir Studying*, 1878.



Figure 13.8.2.8: Henriette Browne, A Visit: Harem Interior, Constantinople, 1860, oil on canvas (Private collection)

Orientalism: fact or fiction?

Orientalist paintings and other forms of material culture operate on two registers. First, they depict an "exotic" and therefore racialized, feminized, and often sexualized culture from a distant land. Second, they simultaneously claim to be a document, an authentic glimpse of a location and its inhabitants, as we see with Gérôme's detailed and naturalistic style. In *The Snake Charmer and His Audience*, Gérôme constructs this layer of exotic "truth" by including illegible, faux-Arabic tilework in the background. Nochlin pointed out that many of Gérôme's paintings worked to convince their audiences by carefully mimicking a "preexisting Oriental reality."[2]

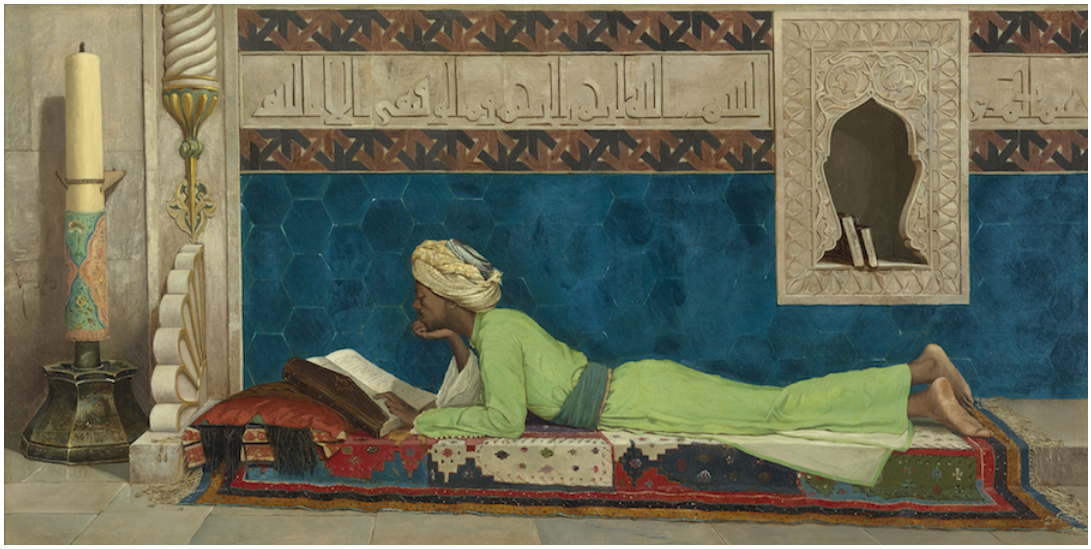


Figure 13.8.2.9: Osman Hamdi Bey, *A Young Emir Studying*, 1878, oil on canvas (Louvre Abu Dhabi)

Surprisingly, the invention of photography in 1839 did little to contribute to a greater authenticity of painterly and photographic representations of the "Orient" by artists, Western military officials, technocrats, and travelers. Instead, photographs were frequently staged and embellished to appeal to the Western imagination. For instance, the French Bonfils family, in studio photographs, situated sitters in poses with handheld props against elaborate backdrops to create a fictitious world of the photographer's making.



Figure 13.8.2.9: Bonfils Family, *Young Woman from Lebanon in Party Dress*, undated, albumen print

In Orientalist secular history paintings (narrative moments from history), Western artists portrayed disorderly and often violent battle scenes, creating a conception of an "Orient" that was rooted in incivility. The common figures and locations of Orientalist genre paintings (scenes of everyday life)—including the angry despot, licentious harem, chaotic medina, slave market, or the decadent palace—demonstrate a blend of pseudo-ethnography based on descriptions of first-hand observation and outright invention. These paintings created visions of a decaying mythic "East" inhabited by a controllable people without regard to geographic specificity. Artists operating in this vein include Jean-Léon Gérôme, Eugène Delacroix, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and others. In the visual discourses of Orientalism, we must systematically question any claim to objectivity or authenticity.

Global imperialism and consumerism

We also must consider the creation of an "Orient" as a result of imperialism, industrial capitalism, mass consumption, tourism, and settler colonialism in the nineteenth century. In Europe, trends of cultural appropriation included a consumerist "taste" for materials and objects, like porcelain, textiles, fashion, and carpets, from the Middle East and Asia. For instance, *Japonisme* was a trend of Japanese-inspired decorative arts, as were *Chinoiserie* (Chinese-inspired) and *Turquerie* (Turkish-inspired). The ability of Europeans to purchase and own these materials, to some extent confirmed imperial influence in those areas.

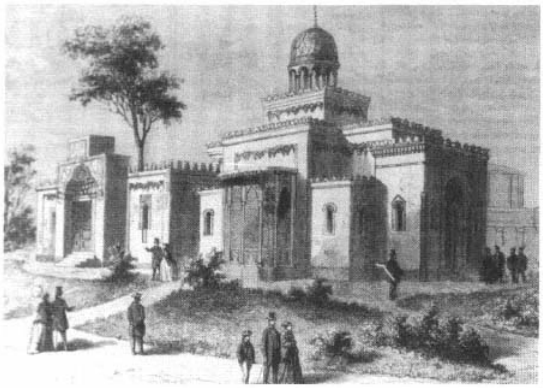


Figure 13.8.2.10: Palace of the khedive, *L'Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée*, Paris

The phenomenon of World's Fairs and cultural-national pavilions (beginning with the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 and continuing into the twentieth century) also supported the goals of colonial expansion. Like the decorative arts, they fostered the notion of the "Orient" as an entity to be consumed through its varied pre-industrial craft traditions.

We see this continually in the architectural imitations built on the grounds of these fairs, that sought to provide both spectacle and authenticity to the fair goer. For instance, at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, the designers of the Egyptian section Jacques Drévet and E. Schmitz topped what was supposed to represent the residential khedival (Ottoman Empire ruler's) palace with a dome typical of mosque architecture.[3] Yet, they also attached to this building a barn (not typical of a khedival palace) that housed

imported donkeys brought in to give visitors the impression of reality.[4] The fairs objectified the otherness of non-Western peoples, cultures, and practices.

Orientalism constructs cultural, spatial, and visual mythologies and stereotypes that are often connected to the geopolitical ideologies of governments and institutions. The influence of these mythologies has impacted the formation of knowledge and the process of knowledge production. In this light, as Saïd and Nochlin remind us, when we see Orientalist works like Gérôme's *Snake Charmer*, we should ask what idea of the "Orient" we see, and why?

1. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *Art in America*, vol. IXXI, no. 5 (1983), pp. 118–31.
2. Ibid., 37.
3. Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
4. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Additional resources:

Roger Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa 1880–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Zeynep Çelik, "Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon" *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (June 1996): pp. 202-205.

Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Oleg Grabar, "Europe and the Orient: An Ideologically Charged Exhibition." *Muqarnas* VII (1990): pp. 1-11.

Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2006).

J.M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester, NY: Manchester University Press, 1995).

Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *A. America*, IXXI/5 (1983): pp. 118–31.

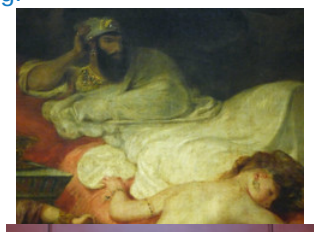
Edward Saïd, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

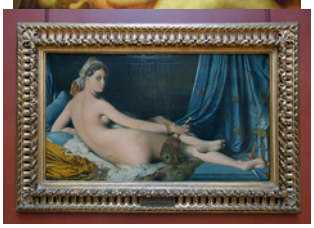
Edward Saïd, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Race & Class* 27, no. 2 (Autumn 1985): pp. 1-15.

Nicholas Tromans, ed. *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting* (London: Tate, 2008).

Stephen Vernoit and D. Behrens-Abouseif, eds. *Islamic Art in the Nineteenth Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill Publishers, 2006).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





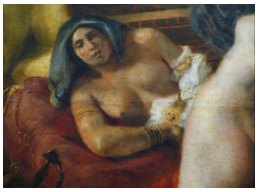


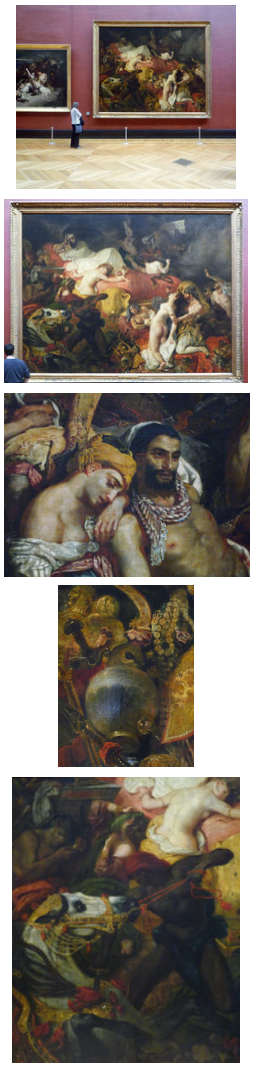












Ingres, La Grande Odalisque (detail), 1814

Figure 13.8.2.11: More Smarthistory images…

Romanticism in France

“Romanticism lies neither in the subjects that an artist chooses nor in his exact copying of truth, but in the way he feels…."
—Charles Baudelaire

Romanticism in France

by DR. CLAIRE BLACK MCCOY

In the decades following the French Revolution and Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo (1815) a new movement called Romanticism began to flourish in France. If you read about Romanticism in general, you will find that it was a pan-European movement that had its roots in England in the mid-eighteenth century. Initially associated with literature and music, it was in part a response to the rationality of the Enlightenment and the transformation of everyday life brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Like most forms of Romantic art, nineteenth-century French Romanticism defies easy definitions. Artists explored diverse subjects and worked in varied styles so there is no single form of French Romanticism.

Intimacy, spirituality, color, yearning for the infinite

Even when Charles Baudelaire wrote about French Romanticism in the middle of the nineteenth century, he found it difficult to concretely define. Writing in his Salon of 1846, he affirmed that “romanticism lies neither in the subjects that an artist chooses nor

in his exact copying of truth, but in the way he feels…. Romanticism and modern art are one and the same thing, in other words: intimacy, spirituality, color, yearning for the infinite, expressed by all the means the arts possess."



Figure **13.8.2.12**: Jacques-Louis David, *Death of Marat*, 1793, oil on canvas, 165 x 64.96 cm (Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium)

One might trace the emergence of this new Romantic art to the painting of Jacques-Louis David who expressed passion and a very personal connection to his subject in Neoclassical paintings like *Oath of the Horatii* and *Death of Marat*. If David's work reveals the Romantic impulse in French art early on, French Romanticism was more thoroughly developed later in the work of painters and sculptors such as Theodore Gericault, Eugène Delacroix and François Rude.

In 1810, Germaine de Staël introduced the new Romantic movement to France when she published *Germany* (*De l'Allemagne*). Her book explored the concept that while Italian art might draw from its roots in the rational, orderly Classical (ancient Greek and Roman) heritage of the Mediterranean, the northern European countries were quite different. She held that her native culture of Germany—and perhaps France—was not Classical but Gothic and therefore privileged emotion, spirituality, and naturalness over Classical reason. Another French writer Stendhal (Henri Beyle) had a different take on Romanticism. Like Baudelaire later in the century, Stendhal equated Romanticism with modernity. In 1817 he published his *History of Painting in Italy* and called for a modern art that would reflect the "turbulent passions" of the new century. The book influenced many younger artists in France and was so well-known that the conservative critic Étienne Jean Delécluze mockingly called it "the Koran of the so-called Romantic artists."

The direct expression of the artist's persona

The first marker of a French Romantic painting may be the facture, meaning the way the paint is handled or laid on to the canvas. Viewed as a means of making the presence of the artist's thoughts and emotions apparent, French Romantic paintings are often characterized by loose, flowing brushstrokes and brilliant colors in a manner that was often equated with the painterly style of the Baroque artist Rubens. In sculpture artists often used exaggerated, almost operatic, poses and groupings that implied great emotion. This approach to art, interpreted as a direct expression of the artist's persona—or "genius"—reflected the French Romantic emphasis on unregulated passions. The artists employed a widely varied group of subjects including the natural world, the irrational realm of instinct and emotion, the exotic world of the "Orient" and contemporary politics.



Figure 13.8.2.13: Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, oil on canvas, 193 x 282″, 1818-19 (Louvre, Paris)

Man and nature

The theme of man and nature found its way into Romantic art across Europe. While often interpreted as a political painting, Théodore Géricault's remarkable *Raft of the Medusa* (1819) confronted its audience with a scene of struggle against the sea. In the ultimate shipwreck scene, the veneer of civilization is stripped away as the victims fight to survive on the open sea. Some artists, including Gericault and Delacroix, depicted nature directly in their images of animals. For example, the animalier (animal sculptor) Antoine-Louis Barye brought the tension and drama of "nature red in tooth and claw" to the exhibition floor in *Lion and Serpent* (1835.)



Figure 13.8.2.15: Antoine Louis Barye, *Lion and Serpent*, cast in 1835, 135 x 178 x 96 cm (Louvre, Paris) (photo: Yann Caradec, CC BY-SA 2.0)



Figure **13.8.2.17**: Théodore Géricault, *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy*, also known as *The Hyena of the Salpêtrière*, c. 1819-20, 72 x 58 cm (Musee des Beaux-Arts de Lyon)

Another interest of Romantic artists and writers in many parts of Europe was the concept that people, like animals, were not solely rational beings but were governed by instinct and emotion. Gericault explored the condition of those with mental illness in his carefully observed portraits of the insane such as *Portait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy (The Hyena)*, 1822. On other occasions artists would employ literature that explored extreme emotions and violence as the basis for their paintings, as Delacroix did in *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827-28.)

Eugène Delacroix, who once wrote in his diary "I dislike reasonable painting," took up the English Romantic poet Lord Byron's play Sardanapalus as the basis for his epic work *Death of Sardanapalus* (below) depicting an Assyrian ruler presiding over the murder of his concubines and destruction of his palace. Delacroix's swirling composition reflected the Romantic artists' fascination with the "Orient," meaning North Africa and the Near East—a very exotic, foreign, Islamic world ruled by untamed desires. Curiously, Delacroix preferred to be called a Classicist and rejected the title of Romantic artist.



Figure **13.8.2.18**: Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus*, 1827, oil on canvas, 12′ 10″ x 16′ 3″ / 3.92 x 4.96m (Louvre, Paris)

Whatever he thought of being called a Romantic artist, Delacroix brought his intense fervor to political subjects as well. Responding to the overthrow of the Bourbon rulers in 1830, Delacroix produced *Liberty Leading the People* (below, 1830). Brilliant colors and deep shadows punctuate the canvas as the powerful allegorical figure of Liberty surges forward over the hopeful and despairing figures at the barricade.



Figure 13.8.2.19: Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, oil on canvas, 2.6 x 3.25m, 1830 (Louvre, Paris)



Figure 13.8.2.20: François Rude, La Marseillaise (The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792), 1833-6, limestone, c. 12.8 m high, Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, Paris (photo: **Storm Crypt**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

That intensity of emotion, so characteristic of French Romantic art, would be echoed if not amplified by the sculptor François Rude's D*eparture of the Volunteers of 1792 (La Marseillaise)* (1833-6). Its energetic winged figure of France/Liberty, a modern Nike, seems to scream out as she leads the native French forward to victory in one of the very few Romantic public monuments.

Today, French Romanticism remains difficult to define because it is so diverse. Baudelaire's comments from the Salon of 1846 may still apply: "romanticism lies neither in the subjects that an artist chooses nor in his exact copying of truth, but in the way he feels."

Additional resources:

Romanticism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

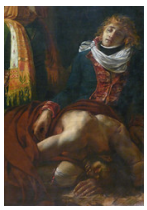
The Legacy of Jacques Louis David

Romantic Circles (University of Maryland)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











Gros, Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken in Jaffa







Figure 13.8.2.21: More Smarthistory images…

Baron Antoine-Jean Gros, *Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Pest House in Jaffa*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.2.1: Baron Antoine-Jean Gros, *Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Pest House in Jaffa*, 1804, oil on canvas, 209 x 280″ (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Gros was a student of the Neo-Classical painter Jacques-Louis David. However, this painting, sometimes also titled *Napoleon Visiting the Pest House in Jaffa*, is a proto-Romantic painting that points to the later style of Gericault and Delacroix. Gros was trained in David's studio between 1785-1792, and is most well known for recording Napoleon's military campaigns, which proved

to be ideal subjects for exploring the exotic, violent, and heroic. In this painting, which measures more than 17 feet high and 23 feet wide, Gros depicted a legendary episode from Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt (1798-1801).

On March 21, 1799, in a make-shift hospital in Jaffa, Napoleon visited his troops who were stricken with the Bubonic Plague. Gros depicts Napoleon attempting to calm the growing panic about contagion by fearlessly touching the sores of one of the plague victims. Like earlier neoclassical paintings such as David's *Death of Marat*, Gros combines Christian iconography, in this case Christ healing the sick, with a contemporary subject. He also draws on the art of classical antiquity, by depicting Napoleon in the same position as the ancient Greek sculpture, the *Apollo Belvedere*. In this way, he imbues Napoleon with divine qualities while simultaneously showing him as a military hero. But in contrast to David, Gros uses warm, sensual colors and focuses on the dead and dying who occupy the foreground of the painting. We see the same approach later in Delacroix's painting of *Liberty Leading the People* (1830).

Napoleon was a master at using art to manipulate his public image. In reality he had ordered the death of the prisoners whom he could not afford to house or feed, and poisoned his troops who were dying from the plague as he retreated from Jaffa.

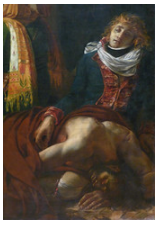
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Gros, Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken in Jaffa

Gros, Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken in Jaffa with detail of nude







Gros, Napoleon Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken in Jaffa with viewers

Figure **13.8.2.22**: More Smarthistory images…

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of Madame Rivière*

by BEN POLLITT

Not to Invent but to continue…

"Everything has been done before" Ingres once wrote. "Our task is not to invent but to continue what has already been achieved." Hardly any wonder then, being so suspicious of innovation, that his work is often set against the more radical painting styles of his age.



Figure **13.8.2.23**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of Madame Rivière*, 1805-6, oil on canvas, 115.5 x 90.2cm (Louvre, Paris)

The conflict between Ingres and Delacroix, master of the nouvelle école (new school), is the stuff of art historical legend; in one corner, Ingres the Neoclassicist, all finesse, the consummate draughtsman, upholding the primacy of line; in the other, Delacroix the Romantic, all passion, a master of the virtuosic brushstroke, whose work abounds with expressive color.

And yet, to polarize them in this way, does an injustice to both artists. Certainly, as this painting demonstrates, Ingres was more than capable of bending the rules of academic practice and as such perhaps has more in common with his great rival than one might at first suspect.

Wealth and status

The subject of the painting is Madame Philibert Rivière, the wife of a high-ranking government official in the Napoleonic Empire. Framed within an oval, the sitter reclines on a divan, her left arm resting on a velvet cushion. She looks out, her gaze meeting us, though obliquely, as if lost in her own thoughts. Comfortable with her beauty, surrounded by ample evidence of her wealth and high social standing, she does not need to seek our approval.

Her clothes signal her status. Dressed in a white satin dress, around her shoulder is draped a voluminous cashmere shawl which swirls rhythmically around her shoulders and right arm. Gold links shimmer on her neck and wrists. Even her carefully coifed raven black hair, bound in curls, as was the fashion, attests to her affluence, being held in place by the application of huile antique, an extremely expensive scented oil that only the rich could afford.

Textures

As with so many of his portraits, Ingres delights in capturing surface textures: the plush velvet; the crisp brightness of the silk, tanning the flesh; the twisted tassel of the cushion; the polished finish on the wood grain, all weave around and animate the figure. Note the way, for example, the shawl directs us to her face or the white muslin frames her hair, billowing off to the right so as to counterbalance the thrust of her left arm. Note too, the relationship between her corkscrew curls and the tendril decorations on the wooden base of the divan. Everything, it would appear, seems designed to harmonize the figure within the setting.

Contemporary critics, reflecting the taste of the time, thought that Ingres had taken things too far, describing the sitter as "so enveloped in draperies that one spends a long time in guesswork before recognizing anything." In Ingres' defense, though, despite the richness of surface the figure still dominates the canvas. This is achieved, among other things, by that central vertical axis, running down from her right eye to the ring on her right hand. The imagined line is bisected by a pool of light – the brightest

passage of the painting and one that also marks its central axis—reflected off the ribbon sash on her Empire Line dress. These subtle interplays of color and line create harmonious forms which some critics have likened to music.

The oval frame

The carefully worked out substructure is a response to the challenges created by the oval shaped frame. In order not to have the figure topple one way or another, the picture's dimensions need to be accommodated to ensure the parts relate to the whole. Ingres manages this repeatedly in the painting. The supple arabesques formed by her shawl, for example, echo the pictorial space, as of course does the oval of her face. This is also true of the treatment of the body itself; most dramatically, Madame Rivière's right arm has been deliberately elongated so as to rhyme with the curve of the frame.

At home in her imperial finery

In the end, we are left with the impression of an individual who is very much at home in her surroundings. So much so, in fact, as to be almost fortified by them. They compliment and flatter her too. Notice, for example, the way that muslin serves to veil her left shoulder, concealing any awkwardness in the passage between her arm and her torso kindly negating any signs of aging. In her mid-thirties, she looks ageless, a woman in the prime of her life secure in her Imperial finery. We are reminded of those Roman and Etruscan matrons reclining on their sarcophagi, unaffected by the ravishes of time, death and decay.

Additional resources:

Biography of the artist from the National Gallery of Art

Portraits by Ingres: Image of an Epoch (Met publication—online)

Ingres, Comtesse d'Haussonville (video from The Frick Collection)

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Napoleon on His Imperial Throne*

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT



Figure **13.8.2.24**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Napoleon on his Imperial Throne, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



Figure **13.8.2.25**: Napoleon (detail), Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* or *Bonaparte at the St Bernard Pass*, 1800-1, oil on canvas, 261 x 221 cm (Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison)

Few world leaders have had a better understanding of the ways in which visual art can do political work on their behalf than did Napoleon Bonaparte. From the time he ascended to power during the French Revolution until his ultimate removal from office in 1815, Napoleon utilized art (and artists) to speak to his political (and sometimes his military) might. One of the best-known images that serves this exact end is Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's 1806 painting *Napoleon on His Imperial Throne*. In this painting, Ingres shows Napoleon not only as a emperor of the French, but almost as if he were a divine ruler.

Shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, Ingres was one of the rising stars and fresh voices of the French neoclassical movement, an artistic style that was in part founded by Ingres's prestigious teacher, Jacques-Louis David. By 1806, David had painted Napoleon many times. Two of the most famous of these works are ***Napoleon Crossing the Alps*** (1801) and ***The Coronation of Napoleon*** (1805-1807), the latter, a painting that is contemporary with Ingres's portrait. In both of these images, David went out of his way to glorify his patron. This too was one of Ingres's primary goals, and the portraitist utilized furniture, attire, and setting to transform Napoleon from mere mortal to powerful god.

Transforming Napoleon



Figure **13.8.2.26**: Left: God the Father (detail), Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), completed 1432, oil on wood (Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent); right: Napoleon (detail), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Napoleon on his Imperial Throne*, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



Figure 13.8.2.27: Armrest with eagle and ivory sphere (detail), Ingres, Napoleon on his Imperial Throne, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)

Throne and armrest

Napoleon sits on an imposing, round-backed and gilded throne, one that is similar to those that God sits upon in Jan van Eyck's Flemish masterwork, the *Ghent Altarpiece* (1430-32) (comparison above). Its worth noting that, as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, the central panels of the Ghent Altarpiece that include the image of God upon a throne, were in the Musée Napoléon (now the Louvre) when Ingres painted this portrait. The armrests in Ingres's portrait are made from pilasters that are topped with carved imperial eagles and highly polished ivory spheres (left).

Rug

A similarly spread-winged imperial eagle appears on the rug in the foreground. Two cartouches can be seen on the left-hand side of the rug (below). The uppermost is the scales of justice (some have interpreted this as a symbol for the zodiac sign for Libra), and the second is a representation of Raphael's ***Madonna della Seggiola*** (1513-14), an artist and painting Ingres particularly admired.



Figure 13.8.2.28: Rug (detail), Ingres, Napoleon on his Imperial Throne, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)

Crest



Figure 13.8.2.29: Crest (detail), Ingres, Napoleon on his Imperial Throne, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)

One final ancillary element should be mentioned. On the back wall over Napoleon's left shoulder is a partially visible heraldic shield. The iconography for this crest, however, is not that of France, but is instead Italy and the Papal States. This visually ties the Emperor of the French to his position—since 1805—as the King of Italy.

Robes and accessories

It is not only the throne that speaks to rulership. He unblinkingly faces the viewer. In addition, Napoleon is bedazzled in attire and accouterments of his authority. He wears a gilded laurel wreath on his head, a sign of rule (and more broadly, victory) since classical times.

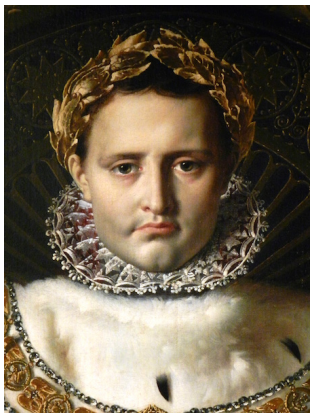


Figure **13.8.2.30**: Napoleon (detail) Ingres, Napoleon on his Imperial Throne, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)

In his left hand Napoleon supports a rod topped with the hand of justice, while with his right hand he grasps the scepter of Charlemagne. Indeed, Charlemagne was one of the rulers Napoleon most sought to emulate (one may recall that Charlemagne's name was incised on a rock in David's earlier ***Napoleon Crossing the Alps***). An extravagant medal from the *Légion d'honneur* (like the one below, right) hangs from the Emperor's shoulders by an intricate gold and jewel-encrusted chain.



Figure **13.8.2.31**: Necklace of the Grand Master of the Order of the Legion of Honor, owned by Napoleon I (Musée de l'Armée)

Although not immediately visible, a jewel-encrusted coronation sword hangs from his left hip (image below). The reason why the sword—one of the most recognizable symbols of rulership—can hardly be seen is because of the extravagant nature of Napoleon's coronation robes. An immense ermine collar is under Napoleon's *Légion d'honneur* medal. Ermine—a kind of short-tailed weasel—have been used for ceremonial attire for centuries and are notable for their white winter coats that are accented with a black tip on their tail. Thus, each black tip on Napoleon's garments represents a separate animal. Clearly, then, Napoleon's ermine collar—and the ermine lining under his gold-embroidered purple velvet robes—has been made with dozens of pelts, a certain sign of opulence. The purple color of the garment was a deliberate choice, and has a long tradition as a hue restricted for imperial use. Indeed, Roman emperors had exclusive right to wear purple, and it was through this tradition that Jesus also came to wear violet robes. All these elements—throne, scepters, sword, wreath, ermine, purple, and velvet—speak to Napoleon's position as Emperor.



Figure 13.8.2.32: Sword (detail), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Napoleon on his Imperial Throne*, 1806, oil on canvas, 260 x 163 cm (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



Figure 13.8.2.33: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Jupiter and Thetis*, 1811, oil on canvas, 32.7 x 26 cm (Musée Granet)

Position

But it is not only what Napoleon wears. It is also how the emperor sits. In painting this portrait, Ingres borrowed from other well-known images of powerful male figures. Perhaps the most notable was a long-since-destroyed but still well known image of Zeus (the ancient Greek God, king of the gods of Mount Olympus) that Phidias, one of the most famous of Greek sculptors, made around 435 B.C.E. This 'type' showed Zeus seated, frontal, and with one arm raised while the other was more at rest. Indeed, this is the posture Jupiter takes in a slightly later Ingres painting, *Jupiter and Thetis* (1811). Thus, Ingres is working in yet another rich visual tradition, and in doing so, seems to remove Napoleon Bonaparte from the ranks of the mortals of the earth and transforms him into a Greek or Roman god of Mt. Olympus. Never once accused of modesty, there is no doubt that Napoleon approved of such a comparison.

Looking at Ingres's *Napoleon on His Imperial Throne* is a visually overwhelming experience. Its colossal size (it measures 8'6" x 5'4") and neoclassical precision eloquently speak to Napoleon's political authority and military power. The low eye level—about that of Napoleon's knees—also indicates that the viewer is looking up at the seated ruler, as if kneeling before him. The sum total of this painting is not just the coronation of Napoleon, but almost his divine apotheosis. Ingres shows him not just as a ruler, but as omnipotent immortal.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Musée de l'Armée, Paris

The Legacy of Jacques Louis David on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Ingres, *Napoleon on His Imperial Throne* from learner.org

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Apotheosis of Homer*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.2.34**: Ingres, *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827, oil on canvas, 3.86 x 5.12 meters (Louvre, Paris)

A student of the past

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (pronounced: aah-n Gr-ah) was Jacque-Louis David's most famous student. And while this prolific and successful artist was indebted to his teacher, Ingres quickly turned away from him. For his inspiration, Ingres, like David in his youth, rejected the accepted formulas of his day and sought instead to learn directly from the ancient Greek as well as the Italian Renaissance interpretation of this antique ideal.

Ingres exhibited *Apotheosis of Homer* (1827) in the annual Salon. His grandest expression of the classical ideal, this nearly seventeen foot long canvas reworks Raphael's Vatican fresco, *The School of Athens* (1509-1511) and thus pays tribute to the genius Ingres most admired.



Figure **13.8.2.35**: Raphael, *School of Athens*, 1509-1511, fresco (Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican)

As Raphael had done three hundred years earlier, Ingres brought together a pantheon of luminaries. Like secular sacra-conversaziones, the Raphael and the Ingres bring together figures that lived in different eras and places.

But while Raphael celebrated the Roman Church's High Renaissance embrace of Greek intellectuals (philosophers, scientists, etc.), Ingres also includes artists (visual and literary).

Homage to artists



Figure **13.8.2.36**: Homer crowned by Nike (detail), Ingres, *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827, oil on canvas, 3.86 x 5.12 meters (Louvre, Paris)

Set on a pedestal at the center of the *Apotheosis of Homer*, the archaic Greek poet is conceived of as the wellspring from which the later Western artistic tradition flows. The entire composition functions somewhat like a family tree. Homer is framed by both historical and allegorical figures and an Ionic temple that enforces the classical ideals of rational measure and balance. Nike, the winged Greek goddess of the running shoe (ahem, of victory) crowns Homer with a wreath of laurel, while below him sit personifications of his two epic poems, *The Odyssey* (in green and holding an oar) and *The Illiad* (in red and seated beside her sword).

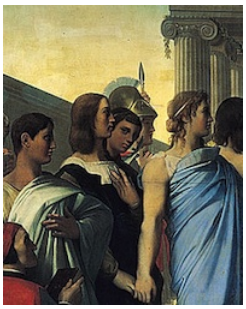


Figure **13.8.2.37**: Portraits of Raphael and Ingres (detail), Ingres, *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827, oil on canvas, 3.86 x 5.12 meters (Louvre, Paris)

Note the following figures (please consider their implied importance according to their placement relative to Homer):

- Dante, the Medieval poet and humanist stands at the extreme left wearing a red scull cap and cape;
- Phidias, the greatest of ancient sculptors is standing to the right of Homer, in red, holding a mallet;
- Raphael, third from the left edge, top row, is in profile and wears Renaissance garb; Ingres (he's put himself in rather good company don't you think?) is the young face looking out at us beside Raphael;
- Poussin, points us toward Homer from the lower left of the canvas; and
- Michelangelo is the bearded figure at lower right.

Additional resources:

This painting in the Louvre

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

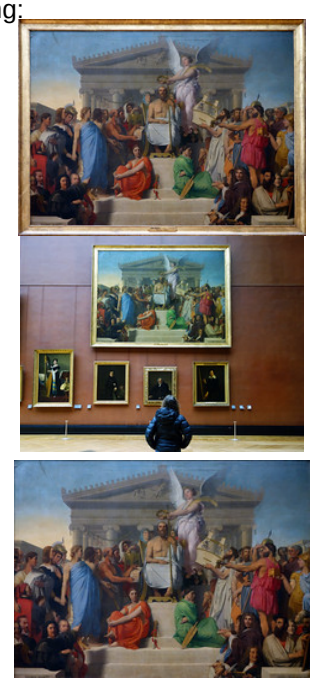


Figure 13.8.2.38: More Smarthistory images…

Between Neoclassicism and Romanticism: Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT

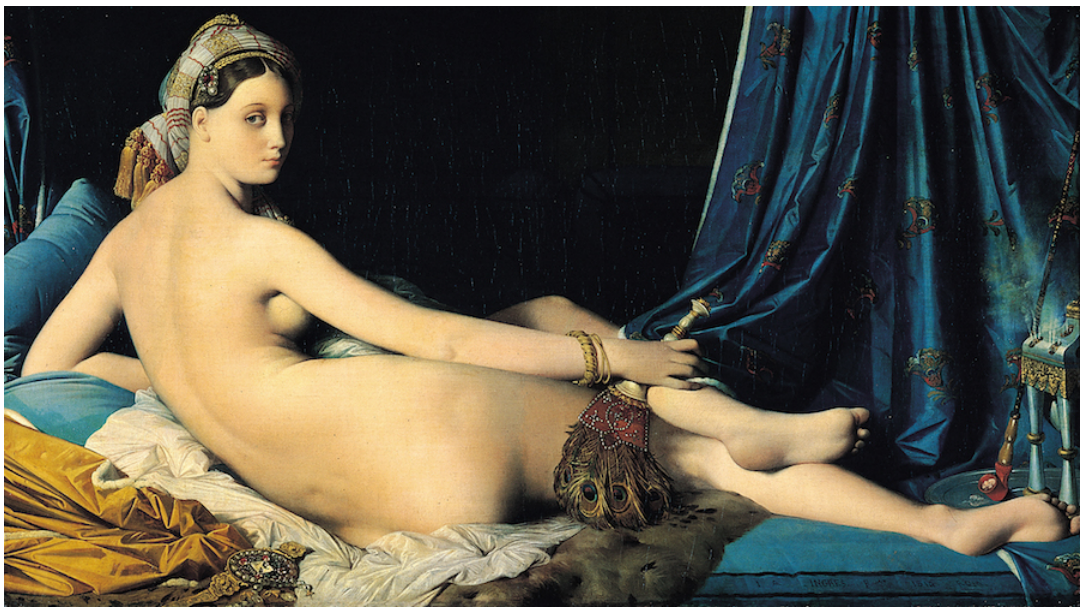


Figure 13.8.2.39: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)

A quick study



Figure **13.8.2.40**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Self-Portrait at age 24*, oil on canvas, 61 x 77 cm (Château de Chantilly)

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was an artist of immense importance during the first half of the nineteenth century. His father, Jean-Marie-Joseph Ingres was a decorative artist of only minor influence who instructed his young son in the basics of drawing by allowing him to copy the family's extensive print collection that included reproductions from artists such as Boucher, Correggio, Raphael, and Rubens. In 1791, at just 11 years of age, Ingres the Younger began his formal artistic education at the Académie Royale de Peinture, Sculpture et Architecture in Toulouse, just 35 miles from his hometown of Montauban.

Ingres was a quick study. In 1797—at the tender age of 16 years—he won the Académie's first prize in drawing. Clearly destined for great things, Ingres packed his trunks less than six months later and moved to Paris to begin his instruction in the studio of Jacques-Louis David, the most strident representative of the Neoclassical style. David stressed to those he instructed the importance of drawing and studying from the nude model. In the years that followed, Ingres not only benefitted from David's instruction—and the prestige and caché that such an honor bestowed—but also learned from many of David's past students who frequented their former teacher's studio. These artists comprise a "who's who" of late-eighteenth-century French neoclassical art and include painters such as Jean-Germain Droais, Anne-Louis Girodet, and Antoine Jean-Gros.

The Rome Prize—a bright future



Figure **13.8.2.41**: Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *The Ambassadors of Agamemnon in the Tent of Achilles*, oil on canvas, 44 1/2 x 57 1/2″ (École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris)

The Prix de Rome—the Rome Prize—was the most prestigious fellowship that the French government awarded to a student at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts), the leading art school in France from its founding in 1663 until it was finally

dissolved in 1968. The recipient of the Prix de Rome was provided with a living stipend, studio space at the French Academy in Rome, and the opportunity to immerse themselves in Rome's classical ruins and the works of Renaissance and Baroque masters. It promised to be a great five years for any aspiring artist. Joseph-Marie Vien, David's own teacher, had won the award in 1743. David won the award in 1774—after four unsuccessful attempts. Ingres was formally admitted to the painting department of the École des Beaux-Arts in October 1799. The following year—in only his first attempt—Ingres tied for second place. In 1801, his painting of *The Ambassadors of Agamemnon in the Tent of Achilles* won him the Prix de Rome. He turned 21 years old that August. Ingres had a bright future indeed.

Hierarchy of subjects

The Prix de Rome—to say nothing of the instruction Ingres received within David's studio and at the École des Beaux-Arts—reinforced the hierarchy of the subjects of painting that had been a foundational element of French art instruction for more than a century. Artists with the greatest skill aspired to complete grand manner history paintings. These were immense compositions often depicting narratives from the classical past or from the Jewish and Christian Bibles. In addition to being large—and expensive—these works allowed the most accomplished and intellectually engaged artists to provide the art-viewing public with an important moral message—an *exemplum virtutis* (an example of virtue). David's 1784 masterwork *Oath of the Horatii* is one such example.



Figure **13.8.2.42**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 10′ 8″ x 13′ 9″ (Louvre)



Figure **13.8.2.43**: Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *The Valpinçon Bather*, 1808. oil on canvas, 57 x 38.4 cm (Louvre, Paris)

The nude (and not the classical past)

Due to the financial woes of the French government in the first years of the nineteenth century, Ingres's Prix de Rome—which he won in 1801—was delayed until 1806. Two years later, Ingres sent to the École three compositions—intended to demonstrate his

artistic growth while studying at the French Academy in Rome. Interestingly, all three of these works—*The Valpinçon Bather*, the so-called ***Sleeper of Naples***, and ***Oedipus and the Sphinx***—depict elements of the female nude (to be fair, however, the sphinx is not human). The first two, however, do not depict a story from the classical past. Instead, nearly the entire focus of each composition is on the female form. While Ingres has retained the formal elements that were so much a part of his neoclassical training—extreme linearity and a cool, "licked' surface" (where brushwork is nearly invisible)—he had begun to reject neoclassical subject matter and the idea that art should be morally instructive. Indeed, by 1808, Ingres was beginning to walk on both sides of the neoclassical/romantic divide. In few works is a Neoclassical style fused with a romantic subject matter more clearly than in Ingres's 1814 painting *La Grande Odalisque*.

Ingres completed his time at the French Academy in Rome in 1810. Rather than immediately return to Paris however, he remained in the Eternal City and completed several large-scale history paintings. In 1814 he traveled to Naples and was employed by Caroline Murat, the Queen of Naples (who also happened to be Napoleon Bonaparte's sister). She commissioned *La Grande Odalisque*, a composition that was intended to be a pendant to his earlier composition, *Sleeper of Naples*.



Figure 13.8.2.44: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)

At first glance, Ingres's subject matter is of the most traditional sort. Certainly, the reclining female nude had been a common subject matter for centuries. Ingres was working within a visual tradition that included artists such as Giorgione (*Sleeping Venus*, 1510), Titian (***Venus of Urbino***, 1538) and Velazquez (*Rokeby Venus*, 1647-51). But the titles for all three of those paintings have one word in common: Venus. Indeed, it was common to cloak paintings of the female nude in the disguise of classical mythology.



Figure 13.8.2.45: Giorgione, *Sleeping Venus*, c. 1510, oil on canvas, 108.5 x 175 cm (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden)

Ingres (and Goya, who was working within a similar vein with his *La Maja Desnuda*—see below) refused to disguise who and what his female figure was. She was not the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Instead, she was an odalisque, a concubine who lived in a harem and existed for the sexual pleasure of the sultan.



Figure 13.8.2.46: Francisco Goya, *La maja desnuda (Naked Maja)*, c. 1797–1800, oil on canvas, 98 x 191 cm (Prado, Madrid)

In his painting *La Grande Odalisque* (below), Ingres transports the viewer to the Orient, a far-away land for a Parisian audience in the second decade of the nineteenth century (in this context, "Orient" means Near East more so than the Far East). The woman—who wears nothing other than jewelry and a turban—lies on a divan, her back to the viewer. She seemingly peeks over her shoulder, as if to look at someone who has just entered her room, a space that is luxuriously appointed with fine damask and satin fabrics. She wears what appears to be a ruby and pearl encrusted broach in her hair and a gold bracelet on her right wrist. In her right hand she holds a peacock fan, another symbol of affluence, and another piece of metalwork—a facedown bejeweled mirror, perhaps?—can be seen along the lower left edge of the painting.

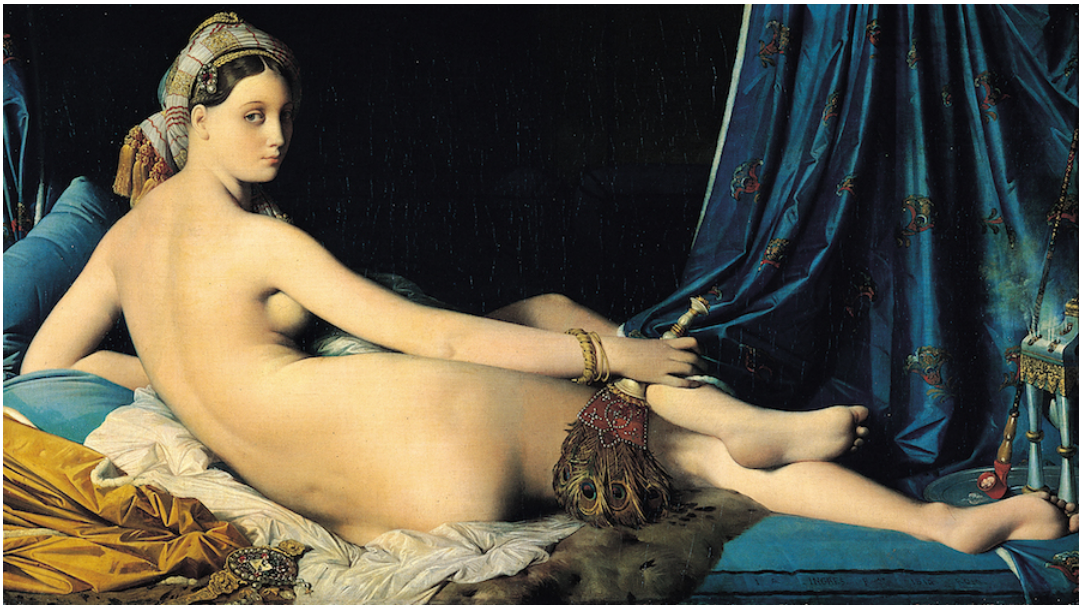


Figure 13.8.2.47: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)

Along the right side of the composition we see a hookah, a kind of pipe that was used for smoking tobacco, hashish and opium. All of these Oriental elements—fabric, turban, fan, hookah—did the same thing for Ingres's odalisque as Titian's Venetian courtesan being labeled "Venus"—that is, it provided a distance that allowed the (male) viewer to safely gaze at the female nude who primarily existed for his enjoyment.

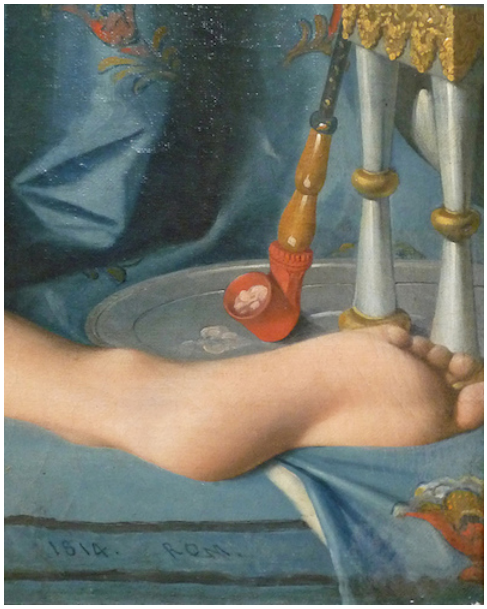


Figure 13.8.2.48: Hookah (detail), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)



Figure 13.8.2.49: Jacques Louis David, *The Jeu de Paume Oath (or Oath of the Tennis Court)*, 1790-92, pen, ink, wash, and white highlights on pencil strokes, 660 x 400 cm (Palace of Versailles)

And what a nude it is. When glancing at the painting, one can immediately see the linearity that was so important to David in particular, and the French neoclassical style more broadly. But when looking at the odalisque's body, the same viewer can also immediately notice how far Ingres has strayed from David's particular style of rendering the human form—look for instance at her elongated back and right arm. David was largely interest in idealizing the human body, rendering it not as it existed, but as he wished it did, in an anatomically perfect state. David's commitment to the idealizing the human form can clearly be seen in his preparatory drawings for his never completed *Oath of the Tennis Court*(left). There can be no doubt that this is how David taught Ingres to render the body.

Students often stray from their teacher's instruction, however. In *La Grande Odalisque*, Ingres rendered the female body in an exaggerated, almost unbelievable way. Much like the Mannerists centuries earlier—Parmigianino's ***Madonna of the Long Neck*** (c. 1535) immediately comes to mind—Ingres distorted the female form in order to make her body more sinuous and elegant. Her back seems to have two or three more vertebrae than are necessary, and it is anatomically unlikely that her lower left leg could meet with the knee in the middle of the painting, or that her left thigh attached to this knee could reach her hip. Clearly, this is not the female body as it really exists. It is the female body, perhaps, as Ingres wished it to be, at least for the composition of this painting. And in this regard, David and his student Ingres have attempted to achieve the same end—idealization of the human form—though each strove to do so in markedly different ways.

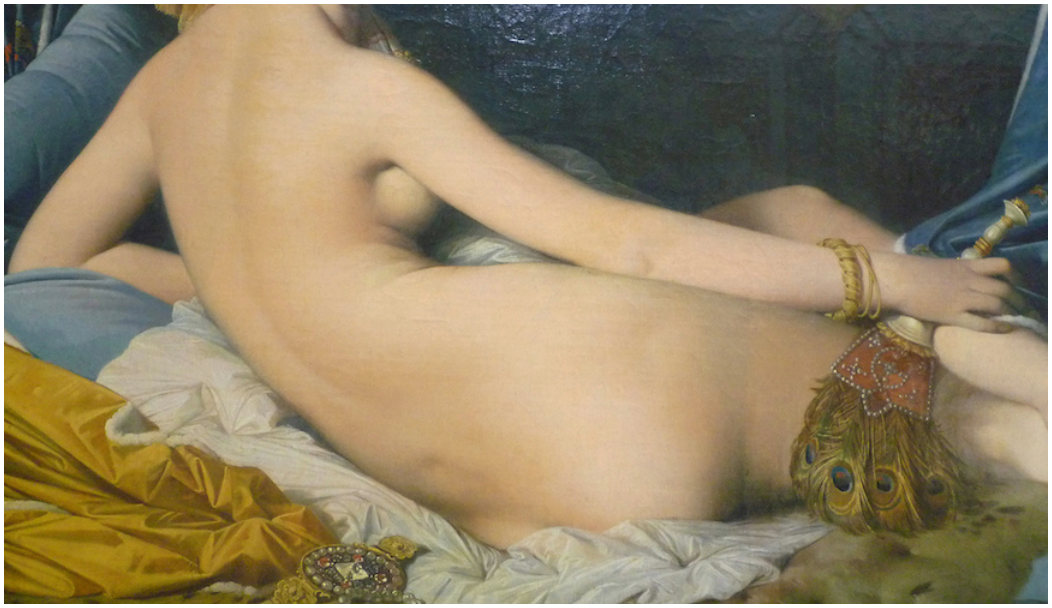


Figure 13.8.2.50: Torso (detail), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris

A brief comparison between teacher and student makes clear how far Ingres had strayed from the neoclassical path David had laid. In some ways, *La Grande Odalisque* is based upon David's 1800 portrait of *Madame Récamier*.



Figure 13.8.2.51: Jacques Louis David, *Portrait of Madame Récamier*, 1800, oil on canvas, 174 x 224 cm (Louvre, Paris)

Both images show a recumbent woman who peers over her shoulder to look at the viewer. David and Ingres utilize line in a similar way. However, David depicts Récamier at the height of neoclassical fashion, wearing an Empire waistline dress and an *à la grecque* hairstyle. One gets the sense that there is real a body underneath that dress. In contrast, Ingres's odalisque is a naked "other" from the Orient, and no clothing could disguise the elongations and anatomical inaccuracies of her body. David remained a committed neoclassicist, while his former student retained his neoclassical line to embrace, in this case, a geographically distant and romantic subject. This tension between Neoclassicism and Romanticism will continue throughout the first half of the nineteenth century as painters will tend to side with either Ingres and his precise linearity or the painterly style of the younger painter Eugène Delacroix.

Additional resources:

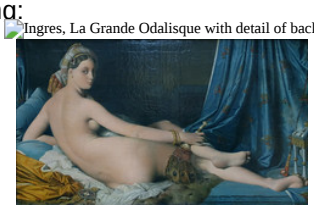
This painting at the Louvre

The French Academy in Rome on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Legacy of Jacques Louis David on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Prix de Rome

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



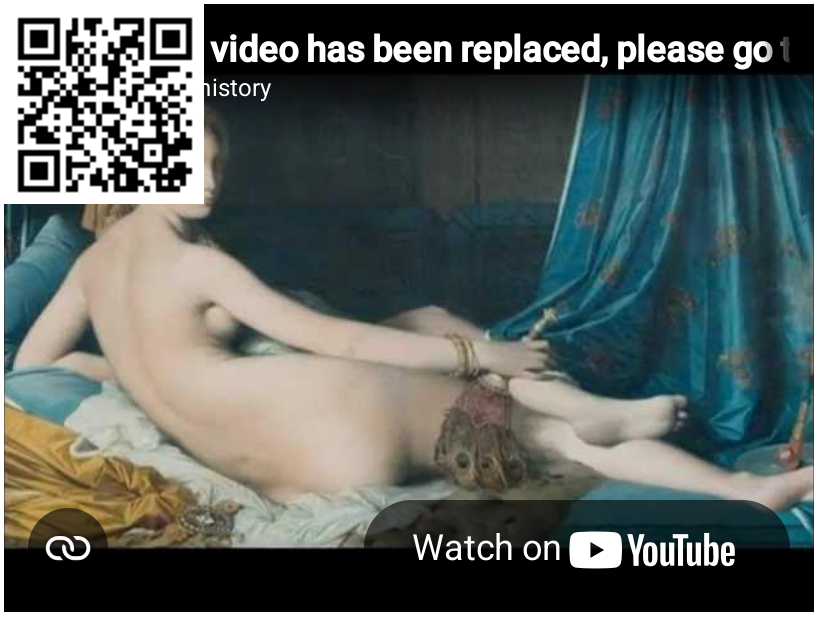
Ingres, La Grande Odalisquewith detail of fan

Ingres, La Grande Odalisque on the wall

Ingres, La Grande Odalisque with detail of pearls

Ingres, La Grande Odalisque with detail of foot and pipe

Figure 13.8.2.52: More Smarthistory images…



Video **13.8.2.2**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, Oil on canvas, 36″ x 63″ (91 x 162 cm), (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

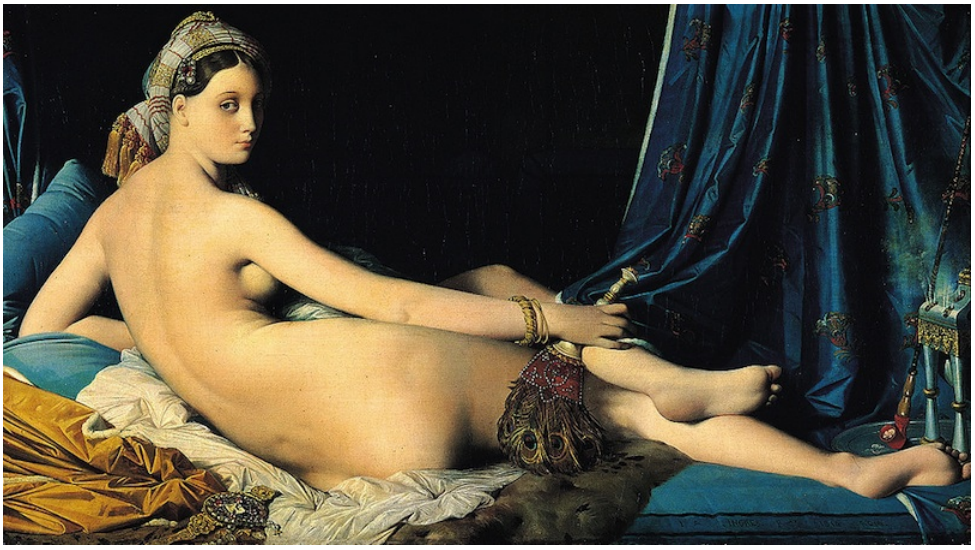


Figure **13.8.2.53**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, Oil on canvas, 36″ x 63″ / 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)

Early Romantic tendencies

It would be easy to characterize Ingres as a consistent defender of the Neoclassical style from his time in Jacques Louis David's studio into the middle of the 19th century. But the truth is more interesting than that.

Ingres actually returned to Neoclassicism after having first rejected the lessons of his teacher David. He could even be said to have laid the foundation for the emotive expressiveness of Romanticism (the new style of Gericault and the young Delacroix that Ingres would later hold the line against). Ingres's early Romantic tendencies can be seen most famously in his painting *La Grande Odalisque* of 1814.



Figure 13.8.2.54: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

La Grande Odalisque

Here a languid nude is set in a sumptuous interior. At first glance this nude seems to follow in the tradition of the Great Venetian masters, see for instance, Titian's *Venus of Urbino* of 1538 (left). But upon closer examination, it becomes clear that this is no classical setting. Instead, Ingres has created a cool aloof eroticism accentuated by its exotic context. The peacock fan, the turban, the enormous pearls, the hookah (a pipe for hashish or perhaps opium), and of course, the title of the painting, all refer us to the French conception of the Orient. Careful—the word "Orient" does not refer here to the Far East so much as the Near East or even North Africa.

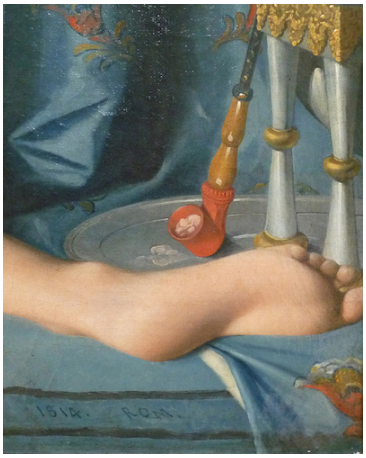


Figure 13.8.2.55: Hookah (detail), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)

In the mind of an early 19th century French male viewer, the sort of person for whom this image was made, the odalisque would have conjured up not just a harem slave—itself a misconception—but a set of fears and desires linked to the long history of aggression between Christian Europe and Islamic Asia (see the essay on **Orientalism**). Indeed, Ingres' porcelain sexuality is made acceptable even to an increasingly prudish French culture because of the subject's geographic distance. Where, for instance, the Renaissance painter Titian had veiled his eroticism in myth (Venus), Ingres covered his object of desire in a misty, distant exoticism.

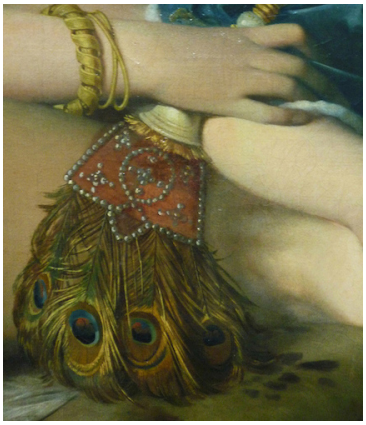


Figure **13.8.2.56**: Peacock fan (detail), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Louvre, Paris)

Some art historians have suggested that colonial politics also played a role. France was at this time expanding its African and Near Eastern possessions, often brutally. Might the myth of the barbarian have served the French who could then claim a moral imperative? By the way, has anyone noticed anything "wrong" with the figure's anatomy?

Additional resources:

This painting at the Louvre

Extra vertebrae in Ingres' *La Grande Odalisque*, Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine

Orientalism at the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

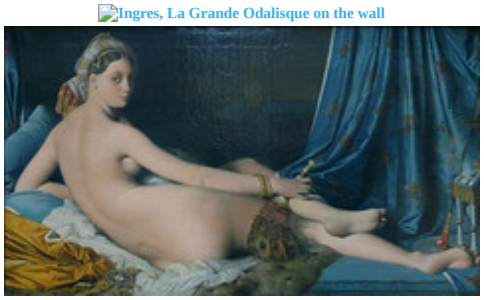
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

Ingres, La Grande Odalisque with detail of foot and pipe

Ingres, La Grande Odalisquewith detail of fan

Ingres, La Grande Odalisque with detail of back

Ingres, La Grande Odalisque on the wall



Ingres, La Grande Odalisque with detail of pearls

Figure **13.8.2.57**: More Smarthistory images…

Théodore Géricault

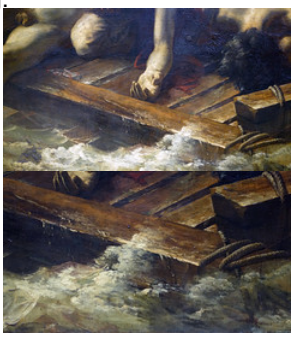
Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.2.3: Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818-19, oil on canvas, 4.91 x 7.16m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

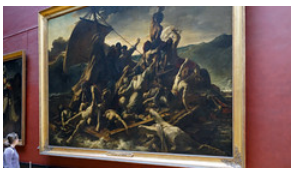
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











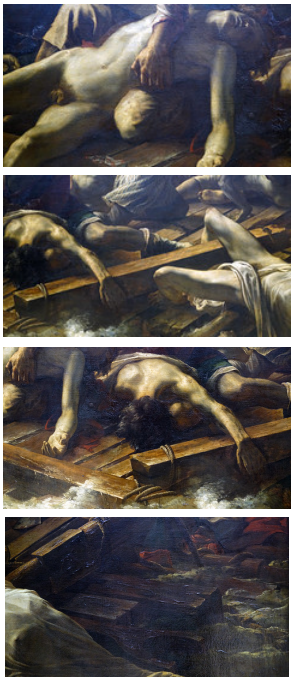



Figure 13.8.2.58: More Smarthistory images…

Théodore Géricault, Portraits of the Insane

by BEN POLLITT

After *The Raft of the Medusa*

At the end of 1821 the leading Romantic painter in France, Théodore Géricault, returned from a year-long stay in England where crowds had flocked to see his masterpiece *The Raft of the Medusa* displayed in the Egyptian Hall in Pall Mall, London. Despite the success of the exhibition, the French government still refused to buy the painting and his own prodigious spending meant that he was strapped for cash and in no position to embark on another ambitious and expensive large scale project like *The Raft*. His health too was soon to suffer. On his return to France, a riding accident led to complications, causing a tumor to develop on the spine that proved fatal. He died, aged 32, in January 1824.



Figure 13.8.2.59: Théodore Géricault, *A Woman Addicted to Gambling*, 1822, oil on canvas, 77 x 64 cm (Louvre, Paris)

Perhaps the greatest achievement of his last years were his portraits of the insane. There were ten of them originally. Only five have survived: *A Woman Addicted to Gambling*, *A Child Snatcher*, *A Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy*, *A Kleptomaniac*; and *A Man Suffering from Delusions of Military Command*.

No information is available for those that have been lost. According to the artist's first biographer, Charles Clément, Géricault painted them after returning from England for Étienne-Jean Georget (1795-1828), the chief physician of the Salpêtrière, the

women's asylum in Paris. The paintings were certainly in Georget's possession when he died.

Three theories for the commission

How the two men met is not known for sure. Possibly Georget treated Géricault as a patient, or perhaps they met in the Beaujon Hospital, from whose morgue Géricault had taken home dissected limbs to serve as studies for his figures in *The Raft*. What is more debated though, is Georget's role in the production of the paintings. There are three main theories. The first two link the portraits to the psychological toll taken out of Géricault whilst producing his great masterpiece and the nervous breakdown he is believed to have suffered in the autumn following its completion in 1819. The first theory runs that Georget helped him to recover from this episode and that the portraits were produced for and given to the doctor as a gesture of thanks; the second puts forward that Georget, as the artist's physician, encouraged Géricault to paint them as an early form of art therapy; and the third is that Géricault painted them for Georget after his return from England to assist his studies in mental illness.

It is this last that is generally held to be the most likely. Stylistically, they belong to the period after his stay in England, two years after his breakdown. Also, the unified nature of the series, in terms of their scale, composition and color scheme suggest a clearly defined commission, while the medical concept of "monomania" shapes the whole design.

Early modern psychiatry



Figure **13.8.2.60**: Théodore Géricault, *Portait of a Child Snatcher*, 1822, oil on canvas, 65 x 54 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts)

A key figure in early modern psychiatry in France was Jean-Etienne-Dominique Esquirol (1772-1840), whose main area of interest was "monomania," a term no longer in clinical use, which described a particular fixation leading sufferers to exhibit delusional behavior, imagining themselves to be a king, for example. Esquirol, who shared a house with his friend and protégé Georget, was a great believer in the now largely discredited science of physiognomy, holding that physical appearances could be used to diagnose mental disorders. With this in mind, he had over 200 drawings made of his patients, a group of which, executed by Georges-Francoise Gabriel, were exhibited at the Salon of 1814. As an exhibitor himself that year, it seems highly likely that Géricault would have seen them there.

Georget's work developed on Esquirol's. An Enlightenment figure, Esquirol rejected moral or theological explanations for mental illness, seeing insanity, neither as the workings of the devil nor as the outcome of moral decrepitude, but as an organic affliction, one that, like any other disease, can be identified by observable physical symptoms. In his book *On Madness*, published in 1820, following Esquirol, Georget turns to physiognomy to support this theory:

> ***In general the idiot's face is stupid, without meaning; the face of the manic patient is as agitated as his spirit, often distorted and cramped; the moron's facial characteristics are dejected and without expression; the facial characteristics of the melancholic are pinched, marked by pain or extreme agitation; the monomaniacal king has a proud, inflated expression; the religious fanatic is mild, he exhorts by casting his eyes at the heavens or fixing them on the earth; the anxious patient pleads, glancing sideways, etc.***

The clumsy language here—"the idiot's face is stupid"—seems a world away from Géricault's extraordinarily sensitive paintings, a point that begs the question whether Géricault was doing more than simply following the good doctor's orders in producing the series, but instead making his own independent inquiries.



Figure **13.8.2.61**: Théodore Géricault, *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy (The Hyena)*, 1822, oil on canvas, 72 x 58 cm (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons)

Géricault had many reasons to be interested in psychiatry, starting with his own family: his grandfather and one of his uncles had died insane. His experiences while painting *The Raft* must also have left their mark. The Medusa's surgeon, J.B. Henry Savigny, at the time Géricault interviewed him, was writing an account of the psychological impact the experience had had on his fellow passengers and, of course, there was Géricault's own mental breakdown in 1819. It seems only natural then that he would be drawn to this new and exciting area of scientific study.

Alternatively, some critics argue that Géricault's work is a propaganda exercise for Georget, designed to demonstrate the importance of psychiatrists in detecting signs of mental illness. In their very subtleties they show just how difficult this can be, requiring a trained eye such as Georget's to come to the correct diagnosis. According to Albert Boime, the paintings were also used to demonstrate the curative effects of psychiatric treatment. If the five missing paintings were ever found, he argues, they would depict the same characters—but after treatment—showing their improved state, much like 'before and after' photographs in modern day advertising.

This, of course, is impossible to prove or disprove. What is more challenging is Boime's general criticisms of early psychiatry which, he argues, by classifying, containing and observing people was effective only in silencing the voices of the mentally ill, rendering them invisible and therefore subject to abuse. The fact that the sitters of the paintings are given no names, but are defined only by their illnesses would seem to confirm this view and, for that reason, many modern viewers of the paintings do feel disconcerted when looking at them.



Figure **13.8.2.62**: Théodore Géricault, *Portrait of a Kleptomaniac*, 1822, oil on canvas, 61 x 50 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium)

The five surviving portraits are bust length and in front view, without hands. The canvases vary in dimensions but the heads are all close to life-size. The viewpoint is at eye level for the three men but from above for the women, indicating that the paintings were executed in different places. It seems likely that the women were painted in the women's hospital Salpêtrière, while the men were selected from among the inmates of Charenton and Bicêtre. None of the sitters is named; they are identified by their malady. None look directly at the viewer, contributing to an uneasy sense of distractedness in their gazes that can be read as stillness, as though they are lost in their own thoughts, or as disconnectedness from the process in which they are involved. These are not patrons and have had no say in how they are depicted.

Each is shown in three-quarter profile, some to the left, some to the right. The pose is typical of formal, honorific portraits, effecting a restrained composition that does not make it apparent that they are confined in asylums. There is no evidence of the setting in the backgrounds either, which are cast in shadow, as are most of their bodies, drawing the focus largely on their faces.



Figure **13.8.2.63**: Théodore Géricault, *Portrait of a Man Suffering from Delusions of Military Command*, 1822, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm (Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur, Switzerland)

The dark coloring creates a sombre atmosphere, evocative of brooding introspection. Their clothing lends them a degree of personal dignity, giving no indication as to the nature of their conditions, the one exception being the man suffering from delusions of military grandeur who wears a medallion on his chest, a tasseled hat and a cloak over one shoulder, which point to his delusions. The medallion has no shine to it and the string that it hangs from looks makeshift and worn.

The paintings were executed with great speed, entirely from life and probably in one sitting. Critics often remark on the painterly quality of the work, the extraordinary fluency of brushwork, in contrast with Géricault's early more sculptural style, suggesting that

the erratic brushwork is used to mirror the disordered thoughts of the patients. In places it is applied in almost translucent layers, while in others it is thicker creating highly expressive contrasts in textures.

Romantic scientists

What perhaps strikes one most about the portraits is the extraordinary empathy we are made to feel for these poor souls, who might not strike us immediately as insane, but who certainly exhibit outward signs of inward suffering.



Figure **13.8.2.64**: John Constable, *Cloud Study*, 1822, oil on paper laid on board, 47.6 x 57.5 cm (Tate Britain)

In bringing the sensitivity of a great artist to assist scientific inquiry, Géricault was not alone among Romantic painters. John Constable's cloud studies, for example, were exactly contemporary with the portraits and provide an interesting parallel.

Both artists capture brilliantly the fleeting moment, the shifting movements in Constable's cumulus, stratus, cirrus and nimbus, in Géricault the complex play of emotions on the faces of the insane.

Not since the Renaissance has art illustrated so beautifully the concerns of the scientific domain; in Géricault's case teaching those early psychiatrists, we might be tempted to think, to look on their patients with a more human gaze.

Additional resources:

The Woman with Gambling Mania at the Louvre

Portrait of a Kleptomaniac at the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent

"Portraying Monomaniacs to Service the Alienist's Monomania: Géricault and Georget" by Albert Boime

Man with the 'Monomania' of Child Kidnapping, Théodore Géricault in *The Guardian*

Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* at the Louvre

Géricault in the Google Art Project

Eugène Delacroix

Eugène Delacroix, an introduction

by DR. CLAIRE BLACK MCCOY



Figure **13.8.2.65**: Eugène Delacroix, *Women of Algiers*, c. 1832–34, oil on canvas, 46 x 37.8 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Born in 1798, the French **Romantic** painter Eugène Delacroix began life as child of privilege and grew up during the age of Napoleon. The funny thing is, he didn't like being called a Romantic artist. Instead, Delacroix saw himself as a painter who carried on the tradition of French painting at its best, not as someone who wanted to overturn it. "Glory is not a vain word for me," [1] he once wrote, and Delacroix imagined his name spoken in the same breath with the other "great" French painters such as Charles Lebrun and **Jacques-Louis David**. For nineteenth-century viewers, Delacroix seemed fearless in his ability to create dramatic images painted with an intensity of color and expression that no one else could match.

A young man in Paris

As a young man, Delacroix was at the heart of creative life in Paris and later became a hero of progressive artists and writers such as Baudelaire, **Manet**, and **Monet**, but he retained all of the elegance and ambition of his family's aristocratic background. His father, Charles, found great success as a landowner and government official before his death in 1803. Delacroix's brothers and other relatives served as soldiers and ambassadors in the Napoleonic government. Delacroix's mother Victoire died in 1814, when Eugène was just sixteen. Although his father had left a fortune to his family, it had been poorly managed, and by 1822 there was nothing left. Delacroix would have to make his way in the world with just his talent and a few family connections.

Delacroix's art owed much to his education and the company he kept as a young man in Paris. He attended the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, a prestigious school that is still associated with the French elite. There, and later in the company of his friends, he came to love Greek drama, Shakespeare, and modern literature. When he was seventeen, Delacroix entered the studio of the conservative painter Pierre-Narcisse Guérin and, as importantly, he began to study in the Louvre, copying the paintings of **Veronese**, **Titian**, and **Rubens** with other young painters.



Figure **13.8.2.65**: Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818-19, oil on canvas, 4.91 x 7.16m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

In Guérin's studio, Delacroix met the painter Théodore Géricault, who would have an important influence on Delacroix's first major canvas (*The Barque of Dante*). Géricault's dramatic brushwork and daring compositions made a deep impression on young Delacroix. In 1818, Géricault began to work independently on ***The Raft of the Medusa***, in a studio rented specifically for that purpose. There Delacroix watched Géricault work quickly and expressively on the massive canvas. We know that Delacroix served as a model for one of the figures in the foreground, and he vividly recalled feeling completely overwhelmed with admiration and emotion when he saw the near-finished painting.

A dramatic debut



Figure **13.8.2.66**: Eugène Delacroix, *The Barque of Dante*, 1822, oil on canvas, 189 x 241 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Delacroix's first painting presented in the annual Paris Salon exhibition, *The Barque of Dante* (1822), reflected Géricault's dramatic approach and all of Delacroix's studies in the Louvre. Drawn from the Italian Renaissance poet Dante's Divine Comedy, the painting depicts Dante guided into Hell by the Roman poet Virgil as stormy seas and demonic figures attack their boat. The figures and drama, recalling **Michelangelo** and **Rubens**, marked the artist as part of the new modern style that would soon be called **Romantic**.

The big three

After his debut painting, Delacroix followed up with three of his best-known works, all drawn from contemporary events and literature. These paintings marked Delacroix as the leader of the modern, Romantic movement. In the public imagination, the term Romantic pitted Delacroix against the more conservative painter **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres**, who embodied a conservative, classic approach to painting based on the primacy of line, while Delacroix represented a more expressive, modern painterly style focused on color. While Delacroix never liked being labeled a Romantic, he valued all the recognition that came from presenting sensational Salon paintings.



Figure **13.8.2.67**: Eugène Delacroix, *Massacre at Chios*, 1824, oil on canvas, 419 × 354 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Massacre at Chios depicts the Greeks of the island of Chios after a defeat by the Ottoman Turks during the Greek Wars of Independence. The French saw themselves reflected in the Greek struggle for freedom, and the Turkish cavalryman on the right added drama and foreign glamour. There was always a crowd in front of the painting at the Salon exhibition. Delacroix offered the viewers a bit of tradition and, also, painterly innovation. The frieze-like composition of figures across the canvas recalled the Neoclassical paintings of **Jacques-Louis David**, and conservative critics liked the reclining, bearded male figure. Those with a taste for a more progressive, Romantic style responded to the fluidity of the painting and intense color contrasts that seemed drawn from Rubens and expressed the passionate nature of the artist.



Figure **13.8.2.68**: Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus*, 1827, oil on canvas, 12 ft 10 in x 16 ft 3 in. (3.92 x 4.96m) (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Next came the epic ***Death of Sardanapalus*** (1827), a massive canvas depicting the last Assyrian king watching his concubines and horses being slaughtered as he burns his palace down around him. The subject is taken from a play by the Romantic English poet Byron, and the painting is a swirling, violent scene dominated by a red that permeates the canvas. Audiences were shocked and dazzled. The painting reflected contemporaneous French ideas of the people of the East as hedonistic, violent and fatalistic. This worldview, associated with the term **Orientalism** in art history, was part of an overall colonialist attitude that defined Western Europe as a model of reason and moderation in contrast to the excesses associated with the so-called Orient. As such, the audience could revel in the violence, eroticism and glamour because it depicted a world defined as completely different and removed from modern Paris. But, for most viewers, Delacroix had gone too far. The painting broke too many rules. Even his supporters discerned no underlying structure to the painting's composition and saw only an indulgent use of color.



Figure **13.8.2.69**: Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People (July 28, 1830)*, September – December 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

One of the most famous paintings in France completes the trio: ***Liberty Leading the People*** (1830). It commemorates the Revolution of 1830 that deposed Charles X (brother of Louis XVI) and brought an end to the Bourbon Restoration that had

followed Napoleon. The events of 1830, unlike the conflict in Greece or the violent fantasy of Sardanapalus, unfolded on Delacroix's doorstep. Rather than taking part in the conflict, he stayed off the streets and out of danger. Only after order was restored did he take a stand. He wrote, "I have undertaken a modern subject, a barricade, and although I may not have fought for my country, at least I shall have painted for her."[2] While many saw a call to revolution in *Liberty Leading the People*, Delacroix saw a classic history painting with an allegorical figure, bare-breasted Liberty, carrying the tricolor flag of the French republic over the barricade.

For the official world of French painting, *Liberty Leading the People* posed a problem. In a country so rocked by revolutions and violence in the previous decades, was it prudent to have a painting celebrating rebellion on public view? This question dogged the French state for decades. After its first exhibition in the Paris Salon, Delacroix was awarded the cross of the Legion of Honor, and the painting was purchased by the state and put on view in Paris' gallery of contemporary art in the Luxembourg Palace. But by 1832 the monarchy removed the painting, and it was not exhibited again until 1848. It was removed again in 1850 and not put on permanent display until 1862. Today, it is an iconic image of the ideals of the French republic.

In the years after *Liberty Leading the People*, Delacroix shifted his focus from large-scale canvases for the Salon to new subjects. Through his association with members of the government, he was invited to North Africa as part of a diplomatic mission and produced work from that voyage. Later he received commissions to create wall and ceiling paintings for important government buildings and churches in Paris. This was not his only work, but these projects shaped his professional life. During these years, his friends were well-known bohemian artists, writers and composers, such as the novelist George Sand and her lover, the composer Frédéric Chopin. With the Romantic sculptor Antoine Barye, he visited the Paris zoo to draw and paint the exotic tigers and other animals. He also worked as a printmaker, producing etchings and lithographs that included images of animals, depictions of North Africa and illustrations from literature.



Figure **13.8.2.70**: Eugène Delacroix, *Royal Tiger*, 1829, lithograph, 33.2 x 47.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

A voyage to Morocco

In January 1832, Delacroix, who had not traveled outside of France before, took part in a diplomatic mission to Morocco. Before the trip, he had only known the world of North Africa and the Middle East from literature and images. After his arrival in Tangier, he wrote a friend, "I have just walked through the city. I am dizzy with what I have seen."[3] One of the earliest French painters to depict the people and cultures of North Africa, Delacroix filled his notebooks with ink sketches and watercolors.



Figure **13.8.2.71**: Eugène Delacroix, *Women of Algiers*, c. 1832–34, oil on canvas, 46 x 37.8 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

When he returned to Paris, Delacroix began to exhibit work drawn from his voyage, beginning with ***A Street in Meknes*** (1832). Most significant was *The Women of Algiers* (1834) exhibited to great acclaim in the Paris Salon. According to contemporary writer Philippe Burty, Delacroix had received special permission to enter an Algerian harem — part of a home off-limits to men — and sketched two women he encountered there. He used the visit and his sketches as the basis for the two principal figures in *The Women of Algiers*. While this account is in doubt today (after all, he created the painting in Paris using models in the studio), the Salon audience was entranced, embracing the quiet intimacy of the scene, its exotic aura, and beautiful intense colors. Delacroix returned to the subject fifteen years later with *The Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1847-1849) and other artists, such as **Pablo Picasso**, closely studied and rendered their own versions of the painting.



Figure **13.8.2.72**: Eugène Delacroix, *The Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*, 1847-1849, oil on canvas, 85 × 112 cm (Musée Fabre, Montpelier, France)



Figure **13.8.2.73**: Galerie d'Apollon, Louvre (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Delacroix also found success creating decorations for important public buildings and churches in Paris. In 1833, he began work on government commissions with paintings for important rooms in the Assemblée Nationale, and followed up with decorations for the library of the Senate (1840–1851). Between 1851 and 1854, he also painted the Salon de la Paix in the Paris City Hall, although his work was unfortunately lost in the fire of 1871. Visitors to the Louvre can see some of Delacroix's decorative paintings in the Galerie d'Apollon, including *Apollo Slays Python*, from Ovid's Metamorphoses. Before beginning the painting, Delacroix had visited Belgium and his journals record admiration for the freedom, drama, and sublime nature of Rubens' work that found its way into the swirling colors, dramatic composition, and ethereal light of *Apollo Slays Python*.



Figure 13.8.2.74: Eugène Delacroix, *Apollo Slays Python*, 1848-1851, oil on canvas, 85 × 112 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris, photo: Slices of Light, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The monumental paintings created after 1830, during the July Monarchy, were followed by a commission to decorate the **Chapelle des Anges** in the Church of St. Sulpice. He received the commission in 1849, but other work delayed the start on the paintings until 1854. In the Chapelle he depicted three stories that revolved around the biblical Archangel Michael and stories from the Old Testament. This would be his last major project.



Figure 13.8.2.75: Eugène Delacroix, *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple*, part of a mural cycle in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, completed 1861, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The end of an era

As he completed major Salon paintings and public commissions, Delacroix also continued to create smaller easel paintings. Throughout his career he drew, printed, and painted dramatic subjects drawn from history and literature, tales from mythology and

Christian subjects that reflected compassion and empathy, as well as animal and still-life images. At his funeral in 1863, people said that his death marked the end of an era in French art and the definitive passing of the “Generation of 1830.” Yet even as Delacroix passed into history, a new generation of rebellious painters led by Édouard Manet had begun to follow in his footsteps by creating art that engaged with the past while pushing toward an entirely new approach to painting.

Notes:

1. Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, April 29, 1824.
2. Barthélémy Jobert, *Delacroix* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), 130.
3. Ibid., 83.

Additional resources:

Musée Delacroix

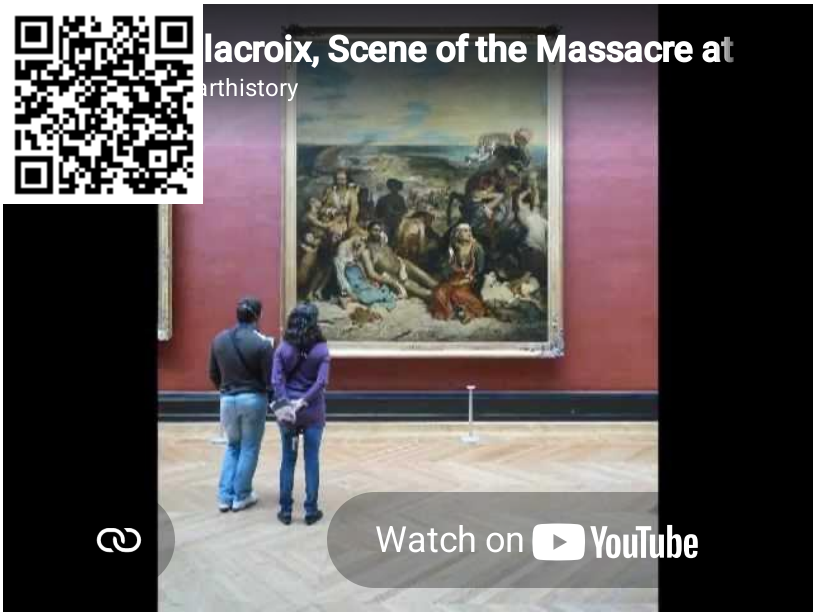
Eugène Delacroix at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Take a virtual tour of the Galerie d’Apollon at the Louvre

Works by Pierre-Narcisse Guérin at the Harvard Art Museums

Eugène Delacroix, *Scene of the Massacre at Chios*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.2.4**: Eugène Delacroix, *Scene of the Massacre at Chios; Greek Families Awaiting Death or Slavery*, 1824, oil on canvas, 164″ × 139″ / 419 cm × 354 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

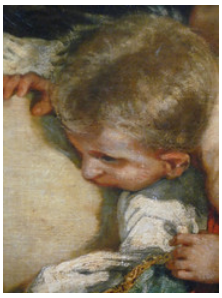
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88738







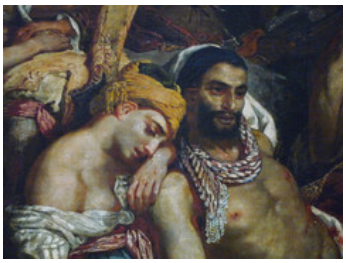




Figure **13.8.2.76**: More Smarthistory images…

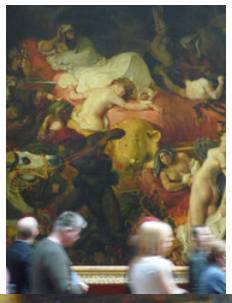
Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus*

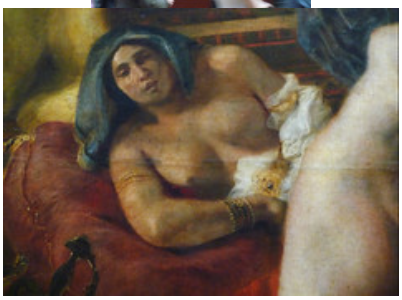
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.2.5**: Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus*, 1827, oil on canvas, 12′ 10″ x 16′ 3″ / 3.92 x 4.96 m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88738



Figure **13.8.2.77**: More Smarthistory images…

Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*

by DR. BRYAN ZYGMONT



Video **13.8.2.6**: Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People* (July 28, 1830), September – December 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Poussinists vs. Rubenists

If Jacques-Louis David is the most perfect example of French Neoclassicism, and his most accomplished pupil Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, represents a transitional figure between Neoclassicism and Romanticism, then Eugène Delacroix stands (with, perhaps, Theodore Gericault) as the most representative painter of French romanticism.



Figure **13.8.2.78**: Left: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Self Portrait at the age of 24*, 1804 (Musée Condé); right: Eugène Delacroix, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1837 (Musée du Louvre)

French artists in early nineteenth century could be broadly placed into one of two different camps. The Neoclassically trained Ingres led the first group, a collection of artists called the Poussinists (named after the French baroque painter Nicolas Poussin). These artists relied on drawing and line for their compositions. The second group, the Rubenists (named in honor of the Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens), instead elevated color over line. By the time Delacroix was in his mid-20s—that is, by 1823—he was one of the leaders of the ascending French romantic movement.



Figure 13.8.2.79: Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People (July 28, 1830)*, September – December 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

From an early age, Delacroix had received an exceptional education. He attended the Lycée Imperial in Paris, an institution noted for instruction in the Classics. While a student there, Delacroix was recognized for excellence in both drawing and Classics. In 1815—at the age of only 17—he began his formal art education in the studio of Pierre Guérin, a former winner of the prestigious *Prix de Rome* (Rome Prize) whose Parisian studio was considered a particular hotbed for romantic aesthetics. In fact, Theodore Gericault, who would soon become a romantic superstar with his *Raft of the Medusa* (1818-19), was still in Guérin's studio when Delacroix arrived in 1815. The young artist's innate skill and his teacher's able instruction were an excellent match and prepared Delacroix for his formal admission to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (the School of Fine Arts) in 1816.

Massacre at Chios: Ripped from the headlines



Figure **13.8.2.80**: Eugène Delacroix, *Scene of the massacre at Chios; Greek families awaiting death or slavery*, 1824 Salon, oil on canvas, 164 × 139 inches (419 cm × 354 cm) (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Less than a decade later, Delacroix's career was clearly on the rise. In 1824, for example, Delacroix exhibited his monumental *Massacres at Chios* at the annual French Salon. This painting serves as an excellent example of what what Delacroix hoped romanticism could become. Rather than look to the examples of the classical past for a narrative, Delacroix instead looked to contemporary world events for his subject. This "ripped from the headlines" approach was common for many romantic painters.



Figure **13.8.2.81**: Left: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25m, commissioned by Louis XVI, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre); right: Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814-15, oil on canvas, 8′ 9″ x 13′ 4″ (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

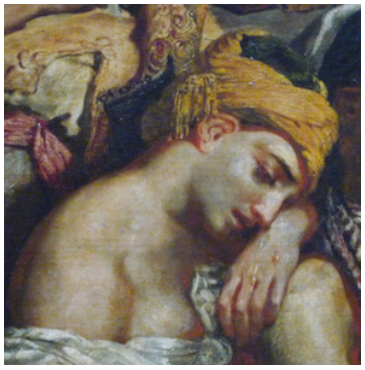


Figure 13.8.2.82: Female figure (detail), Eugène Delacroix, *Scene of the massacre at Chios; Greek families awaiting death or slavery*, 1824 Salon, oil on canvas, 164 × 139 inches (419 cm × 354 cm) (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Comparing David's *Oath of the Horatii* (above, left) with Francisco Goya's *The Third of May, 1808* (above, right) is instructive. Whereas David mined a story from more than 2,500 years ago, Goya instead completed a history painting from the recent past. This chronological immediacy only increased the pathos of Goya's painting.

Delacroix has upped Goya's ante in *Scene of the massacre at Chios*, however, by not only depicting Greek families awaiting death or slavery, but, by also chronicling a catastrophic event from the Greek War of Independence (from the Ottoman Empire) from a far-off location (the small island of Chios is located just off the coast of Turkey). About the Greek War of Independence

When the monumental canvas the *Massacre at Chios* is viewed from a short distance, it is clear that the artist placed more effort on his use of color, and employed a fluid open brushwork rather than relying on line and a carefully polished painting surface (as the Poussinists were doing). In sum, *Massacres at Chios* is an eloquent painting to explore when it comes to Delacroix's commitment to romanticism. The subject was topical and exotic, and the artist used color and brushwork to elicit an emotional response from the viewer.



Figure 13.8.2.83: Selfie before Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People (July 28, 1830)*, September – December 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Liberty Leading the People

Many of these same concepts can be seen in what many regard as Delacroix's masterpiece, Liberty Leading the People (1830). Although Delacroix completed this painting during same year in which the event occurred, it is, at its core, a history painting. Indeed, Delacroix depicts an event from the July Revolution of 1830, an event that replaced the abdicated King Charles X (r. 1824-30)—a member of the Bourbon family and the younger brother of the guillotined King Louis XVI (r. 1774-1792)—with Louis Philippe I (r. 1830-48), the so-called Citizen King. This uprising of 1830 was the historical prelude to the June Rebellion of 1832, an event featured in Victor Hugo's famous novel, Les Misérables (1862), and the musical (1980) and films that followed. Anyone

familiar with Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil's musical can look at Delacroix's Liberty Leading the People and hear the lyrics of the song that serves as a call to revolution:

> ***Do you hear the people sing? Singing a song of angry men? It is the music of a people. Who will not be slaves again.***



Figure **13.8.2.84**: Liberty (detail), Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People (July 28, 1830)*, September – December 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Liberty

Delacroix's painting, *Liberty Leading the People*, at first seems to be overpowered by chaos, but on closer inspection, it is a composition filled with subtle order. The first thing a viewer may notice is the monumental—and nude to the waist—female figure. Her yellow dress has fallen from her shoulders, as she holds a bayonetted musket in her left hand and raises the tricolor—the French national flag—with her right. This red, white, and blue arrangement of the flag is mimicked by the attire worn by the man looking up at her. She powerfully strides forward and looks back over her right shoulder as if to ensure those who she leads are following. Her head is shown in profile—like a ruler on a classical coin—and she wears atop her head a Phrygian cap, a classical signifier of freedom. This is an important bit of costuming—in ancient Rome, freed slaves were given one to wear to indicate their newly liberated status, and this headwear became a symbol of freedom and liberty on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Clearly, this figure is not meant to be a portrait of a specific individual, and Delacroix did not mean to suggest that there was a half-naked woman running around carrying a loaded firearm and a flag during the *Trois Glorieuses*—the Three Glorious Days as it came to be known—of the July Revolution. Instead, she serves as an allegory—in this instance, a pictorial device intended to reveal a moral or political idea—of Liberty. In this, she is similar to an example familiar to those in the United States, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi's *Statue of Liberty* (1886). Clearly, this monumental statue is not a portrait of a woman named Liberty who wears a Roman toga, carries a torch, and an inscribed tablet. Instead, she represents an idea. The same is true of Delacroix's painted Liberty.



Figures at left (detail), Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People (July 28, 1830)*, September – December 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

A revolution for everyone

But if the female figure represents an allegory, those who surround her represent different types of people. The man on the far left holds a briquet (an infantry saber commonly used during the Napoleonic Wars). His clothing—apron, working shirt, and sailor's trousers—identify him as a factory worker, a person in the lower end of the economic ladder. His other attire identifies his revolutionary leanings. The handkerchief around his waist, that secures a pistol, has a pattern similar to that of the Cholet handkerchief, a symbol used by François Athannase de Charette de la Contrie, a Royalist solider who led an ill-fated uprising against the First Republic, the government established as a result of the French Revolution. The white cockade and red ribbon secured to his beret also identify his revolutionary sensibilities.

This factory worker provides a counterpoint to the younger man beside him who is clearly of a different economic status. He wears a black top hat, an open-collared white shirt and cravat, and an elegantly tailored black coat. Rather than hold a military weapon like his older brother-in-arms, he instead grasps a hunting shotgun. These two figures make clear that this revolution is not just for the economically downtrodden, but for those of affluence, too.



Figure 13.8.2.86: Left: fallen adolescent, and right, Boy wielding two pistols (detail), Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, oil on canvas, September – December, 1830 (exhibited and purchased by the state from the Salon of 1831) 2.6 x 3.25m (Louvre, Paris)

This revolution is not only for the adults—two young boys can be identified among the insurgents. On the left, a fallen adolescent who wears a light infantry *bicorne* and holds a short saber, struggles to regain his footing amongst the piled cobblestones that make up a barricade. The more famous of the pair, however, is on the right side of the painting (image, right). Often thought to be the visual inspiration for Hugo's character of Gavroche in *Les Misérables*, this boy wildly wields two pistols. He wears a *faluche*—a black velvet beret common to students—and carries what appears to be a school or cartridge satchel (with a crest that may be embroidered) across his body.

A modern subject



Figure 13.8.2.87: Paris (detail), Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, oil on canvas, September – December, 1830 (exhibited and purchased by the state from the Salon of 1831) 2.6 x 3.25m (Louvre, Paris)

With no less than five guns and three blades among these six primary figures, it is not surprising that the ground is littered with the dead. Some are members of the military, note the uniform decorated with shoulder epaulettes on the figure in the lower right, while others are likely revolutionaries. In total, the painting accurately renders the fervor and chaos of urban conflict. And it is, of course, an urban conflict. Notre Dame, perhaps the defining architectural monument of Paris (at least until the Eiffel Tower arrived at the end of the nineteenth century) can be clearly seen on the right side of the painting. Importantly, Delacroix signed and dated his painting immediately underneath this monument.

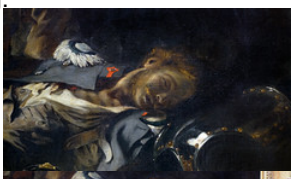
Although not everyone can pick up a weapon and stand a post in a war, Delacroix would have us believe that everyone can be a revolutionary. When corresponding with his brother on 28 October 1830—less than three months after the July Revolution, Delacroix wrote, "I have undertaken a modern subject, a barricade, and although I may not have fought for my country, at least I shall have painted for her. It has restored my good spirits." In doing so, Delacroix completed what has become both a defining image of French romanticism and one of the most enduring modern images of revolution. It has even been appropriated—although slightly altered—by the British rock band Coldplay as an album cover for their 2006 release *Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends.*

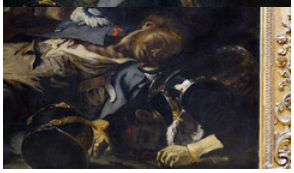
Additional resources:

This painting at the Louvre

Yvonne Korshak, "The Liberty Cap as a Revolutionary Symbol in America and France," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* (Autumn 1987), pp. 52-69 (available online)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





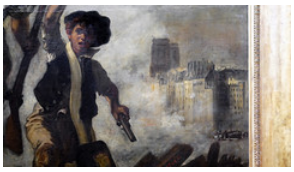
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88738



Figure 13.8.2.88: More Smarthistory images…

Eugène Delacroix, Murals in the Chapel of The Holy Angels, Saint-Sulpice

by DR. JOYCE C. POLISTENA



Figure 13.8.2.89: Three angels (details), Eugène Delacroix, mural cycle in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, completed 1861, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photos: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Three angels in a mural program

Possibly the most important and best-known mural paintings in all of Paris are the three works by the **Romantic** artist Eugène Delacroix, completed in 1861. This mural program was to decorate the Chapel of the Holy Angels in the magnificent late baroque-style church of Saint-Sulpice. In this rather narrow space, Delacroix portrayed biblical subjects in two enormous wall paintings, each more than 23 feet high, and one nearly as large on the ceiling at more than 16 feet across.



Figure **13.8.2.90**: Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, begun 1646, completed 1870 (photo: **photomanthe2nd**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Technique and technology

The murals were created not only with paint but with a mixture of pigments, linseed oil, and a small amount of wax. This combination was mixed together on the artist's palette as he colored the surface. Careful preparation included many pencil and oil sketches, tests of complementary color relationships as well as technical preparations of the wall surface. Before he began, Delacroix had his assistants soak the walls with boiling oil because he feared the humidity might damage the works over time.



Figure **13.8.2.91**: Eugène Delacroix, mural cycle in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Cleaned and **conserved** in 2015, the colors are vibrant as the oil gives a brilliant sheen to the wall surface, looking as if the colors were newly applied and the paint still wet. Far more details can be readily seen: for example, the bejeweled earrings worn by the embattled figure of Heliodorus (below). For the ceiling preparation, Delacroix's assistants fastened canvas with an adhesive of white lead paint ground in oil (known as *maroulflage*).



Figure **13.8.2.92**: Heliodorus (detail), Eugène Delacroix, *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple* (detail), completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Eugène Delacroix, <i
Jacob Wrestling with the Angel
, completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-29534" height="600" sizes="(max-width: 363px) 100vw, 363px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...l-870x1440.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...l-870x1440.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ll-300x496.jpg
300w" width="363">

Figure **13.8.2.93**: Eugène Delacroix, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, 23-½ x 15-½ feet, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Unusual angel subjects

The excitement of these paintings is due in part to the artist's decision to paint two subjects from the Jewish Bible (Old Testament), *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* and *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple*, and one subject found in the New Testament's Book of Revelation, *Saint Michael Vanquishing the Demon* (though, as explained below, Michael appears in both the Old and New Testaments). These visionary scenes of angels are far from traditional or familiar images of angels such as those in paintings of the **Annunciation**.

The unexpected trio of subjects—full of robust action and even violence—bewildered critics for a century or more, with two scenes with good battling evil (Saint Michael and Heliodorus), and one in which good (Jacob) is wrestling with greater Good (an angel — "one like God.") However, if we examine scriptural sources in conjunction with the theology of divine intervention, the three subjects easily become unified and express a cohesive history: one that follows a chronological sequence of the Jewish people from the patriarchal period (from Abraham onward) to Christian salvific history at the end of time.

Delacroix has often been characterized as a religious sceptic or an unbeliever. Yet many of his most important religious works were not commissions, but were motivated by his own inspiration. His now famous *Journal* writings show that he approached Catholic rites and biblical themes with sympathy and respect. Additionally, the angel subjects chosen for Saint Sulpice were inherently suited to his romantic style which is full of feeling expressed through vibrant colors, swift movements, dynamic line, and the power of the body.



Figure 13.8.2.94: Eugène Delacroix, *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple* (detail), completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, 23-½ x 15-½ feet, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Scriptural Sources for Delacroix

Taking each scene in chronological order, Jacob's strenuous tussle with an angel symbolizes a pivotal moment in Israel's history, marking the continuation of the covenant between God and his chosen people. The figure of Jacob, once a man of selfishness and a liar, is tested, humbled, and forgiven by the divine messenger. His encounter is transformative and he is made worthy of inheriting the status of patriarch of the Hebrew people.

Eugène Delacroix, <em
Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple, completed 1861, mural in
the Chapel of the Holy Angels,
Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-29533" height="600" sizes="
(max-width: 375px) 100vw, 375px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...e-870x1392.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...e-870x1392.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...le-300x480.jpg
300w" width="375">

Figure 13.8.2.95: Eugène Delacroix, *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple*, completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, 23-½ x 15-½ feet, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In the second scene, Heliodorus is sent by the King to rob the Jewish temple in Jerusalem of its supposed riches, but in response to the active prayers of the high priest Onais and the Jewish faithful, divine beings interrupt the sacrilege and swoop in to strike Heliodorus.

In a richly decorated interior, a majestic looking rider on horseback rushes in from the left, the hoof of his gray dappled steed striking the prone figure of Heliodorus into a position of submission. At the same time, two figures float above, energetically whipping him with reeds.

Finally, the third subject, Michael the archangel defeats Satan at the "End Time." Michael is understood both as the guardian of the Israelites in the Old Testament Book of Daniel and *also* as the personification the Church triumphant in the New Testament. In each book of the Bible then, Michael represents a theology of salvation and resurrection.

The archangel Michael unites the three stories in Delacroix's program as three from the Old Testament about salvation history for the Israelites. Simultaneously, Michael in the New Testament Book of Revelation suggests the continuity between the Old and New

Testaments as a continuous narration of this history. In each of the mural subjects there are distinct and quite specific references to verses in the Bible.

Eugène Delacroix, <i
Saint Michael Vanquishing the Demon
, completed 1861, mural in
the Chapel of the Holy Angels,
Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-29535" height="490" sizes="
(max-width: 870px) 100vw, 870px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...el-870x490.jpg
" srcset="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...el-870x490.jpg
870w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...el-300x169.jpg
300w" width="870">

Figure **13.8.2.96**: Eugène Delacroix, *Saint Michael Vanquishing the Demon*, completed 1861,16-2/5 x 12-1/2 feet, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

At the time of Delacroix's unveiling of the murals, at least three of his contemporaries recognized and wrote about this dual ascription of the figure of Michael the Archangel. One was the writer, Charles Baudelaire, in 1861.[1] In 1868, Abbé Alphonse Hurel was the first clergyman to praise Delacroix's mural program at Saint-Sulpice as a biblical history. Hurel challenged the critics of the program, believing that Delacroix's paintings had broken with traditional nineteenth-century iconography and shaken up religious art.

For a period of time, Delacroix's romantic style of painting identified religious subject matter with modern art. Hurel claimed that the scenes of struggle (Jacob), of chastisement (Heliodorus), and of combat (Michael) were precisely the three subjects necessary to explain divine power, both for justice and for revenge in the battle of Good over Evil.[2] Hurel reminded audiences that for superior talents, there was no need to sacrifice art for theology, nor theology for art.



Figure **13.8.2.97**: Raphael, *The Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple*, 1511-13, fresco, 750 cm wide (Stanza di Eliodoro, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City)



Figure 13.8.2.98: Raphael, *Saint Michael Vanquishing Satan*, 1518, oil transferred from wood to canvas, 268 x 160 cm (Musée du Louvre)

Formal sources for Delacroix

Two of the murals were inspired by the Renaissance artist Raphael's *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple* and *Archangel Michael Vanquishing the Demon*. The model for the third subject remained unknown for a long time. Yet, it, too, is inspired by Raphael's work. The figure of Jacob is found in a number of Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican *loggia* that were later reproduced as engravings. Delacroix studied engravings of Raphael paintings in books located at the national library in Paris. Delacroix could read English texts and these designs by Raphael had been published in both French and English since the 1830s.

Delacroix made many pencil or ink sketches of these poses by Raphael, combining them to create the wrestling figure of Jacob. Moreover, Delacroix had published an essay about Raphael years earlier and knew the work of this esteemed artist. Strained poses and rapid movements characterize the action-oriented figures that Delacroix admired and copied from Raphael's designs through the engravings made by Marcantonio Raimondi. In *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple*, Delacroix represents energetic forms with suppleness and grace and expressions of calm on the part of the divine intervenors.



Figure 13.8.2.99: Eugène Delacroix, *Study for Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, 1850, graphite, 24.5 x 32.5 cm (Musée du Louvre)

Literary sources for Delacroix

Delacroix found sources of inspiration for the murals at St. Sulpice from both poetry and prose, and he recorded some of these sources in his *Journal*. Specifically, he mentions the inspiration of his contemporary Alphonse Lamartine. One of Lamartine's poem meditations, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, offered verses from which Delacroix imaginatively translated the figures of the poem into pictorial form: "suddenly one rushes the other, the threatening arms, their legs press, their knees entwined." Many of Delacroix's preliminary drawings for this painting show clearly how the poses and forms correspond to the verses.



Figure 13.8.2.100: Eugène Delacroix, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* (detail), completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

What is Delacroix's meaning?

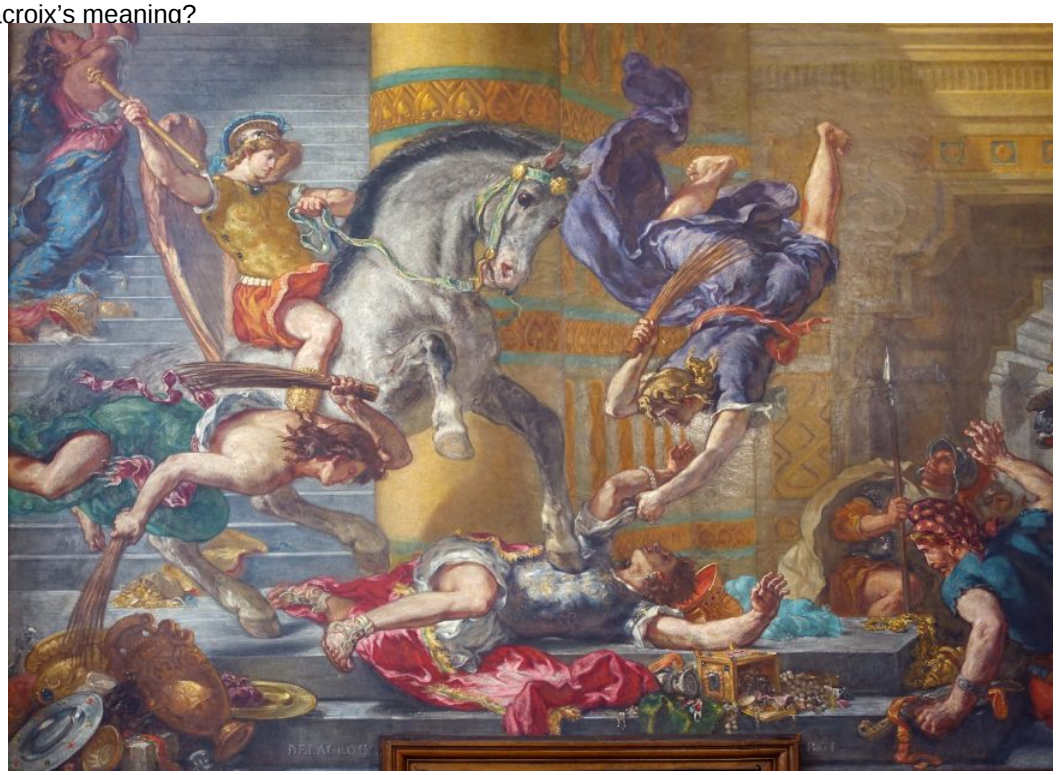


Figure 13.8.2.101: Eugène Delacroix, *Heliodorus Vanquished from the Temple* (detail), completed 1861, mural in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, 23-½ x 15-½ feet, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In this mural program, one scene is linked to another in a sequence that unifies the cycle of salvation history. The mural program recalls the narrative of the encounter between God, his angels, and his people, and their experience of being rescued by him.

In this chronological design of the salvific theme, Jacob's struggle is the first event in the cycle and signifies his decision to believe; next, the Heliodorus story describes an historical event that tells of the protective action by God's messengers; and finally, the archangel Michael personifies the belief of the ultimate victory of Good. Yet the critical connections to biblical sources, their religious meanings, and even the contemporary commentaries were either ignored or forgotten until 2008. [3]



Figure **13.8.2.102**: Oblique View of the Chapel of the Holy Angels, Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The program at Saint-Sulpice does not necessarily compromise Delacroix's skeptical stance toward faith: rather, it prods us to consider his keen understanding of religious teachings. The artist who, by his own account, desired to sit in churches from time to time for "a good long meditation." [4]

Notes:

1. Additional reviews appeared in the journal *Le Triboulet* (1861) and the magazine *La Revue chrétienne* (1862).
2. Hurel, *L'Art religieux contemporaine* (Paris: Didier, 1869), p. 372.
3. Joyce C. Polistena, *The Religious Paintings of Eugène Delacroix*, (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2008) and "Nouvelles sources pour le cycle des peintures murales de Delacroix à Saint-Sulpice" in *Bulletin de la Société des Amis du musée de Delacroix*, 2009, no. 7, pages 25-38.
4. Entry from August 29, 1857 in Eugène Delacroix, *Journal 1822-1863* (Paris: Librairie Plon, Collections Les Mémorables, 1996), page 676. There are several English language editions of the *Journal*. See *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix*, reprint (London: Phaidon, 2004).

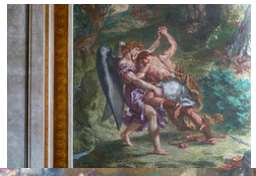
Additional Resources

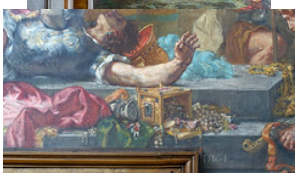
Musée National Eugène Delacroix

Putting a Delacroix puzzle back together, National Gallery of Denmark, SMK

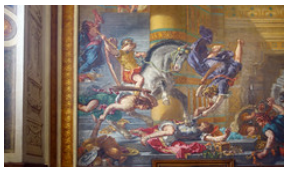
Undressing and cleaning Eugène Delacroix murals at Saint-Sulpice church with gels and silicone solvents

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





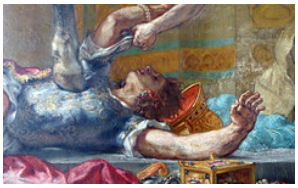














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88738

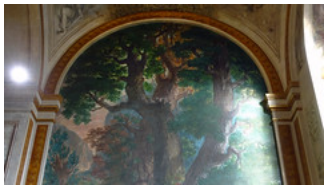
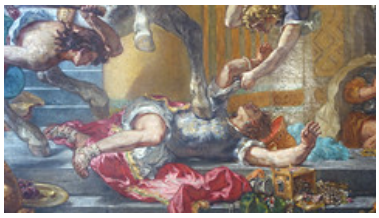






Figure 13.8.2.103: More Smarthistory images…

François Rude, *La Marseillaise*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.2.104: François Rude, *La Marseillaise (The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792)*, 1833-6, limestone, c. 12.8 m high, Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, Paris (photo: Storm Crypt, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Rude before *The Departure*

François Rude had revolution in his blood. At eight years-old, he watched his father, a stovemaker, join the volunteer army to defend the new French Republic (this is shortly after the French Revolution) from the threat of foreign invasion. Fiercely loyal himself, as a young man he was a Bonapartist (a follower of the emperor Napoleon Bonaparte). His support for the Emperor during the *Cent Jours* of 1814, when Napoleon returned to France from exile and tried to seize power from the newly restored monarch Louis XVIII, meant that Rude was forced to leave the country when Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815. Like the painter David, another ardent Bonapartist, he lived for some years in Belgium, returning to his native country in 1827.



Figure **13.8.2.105**: François Rude, *Neapolitan Fisherboy*, 1831-3, Marble, 77.5 cm high (Louvre, Paris)

His reputation grew over the next ten years, reaching its peak with the justly famous *La Marseillaise (The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792)* (above). Rude was awarded the commission on the strength of his hugely popular work, *Neapolitan Fisherboy*, a disarmingly cheerful and down-to-earth nude figure which was exhibited in plaster in the Salon of 1831. The sculpture seemed to conjure up the carefree lifestyles of humble Italian folk; a complete fiction, of course, but a dose of escapism was just what the French felt they needed following the turmoil of the July Revolution of 1830. An early, if somewhat toothless example of Romantic sculpture, it was bought by the state and for his efforts Rude was awarded the cross of the Legion of Honour.

The Arc de Triomphe

The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792, also known as *La Marseillaise*, is a different work entirely, more in keeping with what one now thinks of as Romantic; like a Beethoven symphony: intense, rousing, full of drama and movement.



Figure **13.8.2.106**: Jean Chalgrin, Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, 1806-1836, h. 50 x w. 45 x d. 22 m, Paris

It is Rude's masterpiece and one of the best-known sculptures in the world. Its location has obviously contributed to its fame, attached as a bas-relief to the right foot of the façade of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris—on the Champs-Elysées facing side. An enormous fifty meters high structure, designed to celebrate France's military achievements in 1806 by Jean Chalgrin, the arch's construction was begun under Napoleon's orders but remained unfinished when finally he was defeated in 1815.



Figure 13.8.2.107: Jean-Pierre Cortot, *The Apotheosis of Napoleon I (The Triumph of 1810)*, 1833–1836, limestone, Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, Paris (photo: falling_angel, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The project was picked up again during the Constitutional Monarchy of Louis-Philippe (1830-48). The arch's sculptural programme, seen by the king and his ministers as an ideal opportunity to promote national reconciliation, aimed to offer something that would please every segment of the French political spectrum. If Rude's work flattered the Republicans (those who wanted to create a Republic in France), to the left of it, Cortot's *The Apotheosis of Napoleon I*, or *The Triumph of 1810* was pitched to the Bonapartists.

On the opposite side of the arch is Antoine Étex's war and peace pendant group, *The Resistance of 1814* and *Peace*—the former a stirring image of Napoleon's supporters who continued to fight after his return from exile, the latter, appealing to the monarchists, an allegorical depiction of the Treaty of Paris that saw the restoration of the Bourbon royal dynasty.

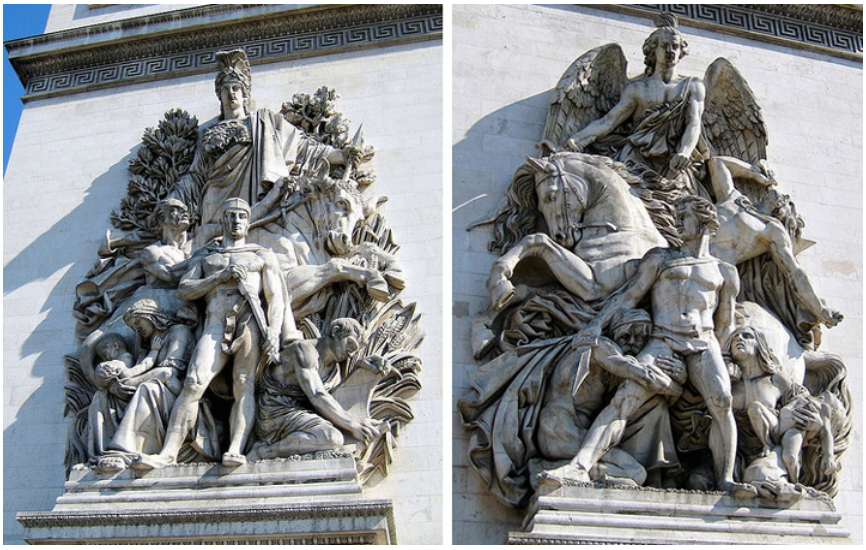


Figure 13.8.2.108: Left: Antoine Étex, *Peace*, 1833–36, Limestone, Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, Paris; Right: Antoine Étex, *The Resistance*, 1833–36, Limestone, Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, Paris (photos: Wally Gobetz, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

When the arch was officially unveiled in 1836, there was unanimous agreement that Rude's group made the other three pale into insignificance.

The sculpture and the song

The subject of Rude's *La Marseillaise (The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792)* commemorates the Battle of Valmy when the French defended the Republic against an attack from the Austro-Prussian army. The popular title for the work, *La Marseillaise*, is the name of the French national anthem, which was written in 1792 by the army officer Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle as part of a

recruitment campaign. It was sung by a young volunteer, later to become a general under Napoleon, at a patriotic gathering in Marseille, the city from which the song gets its name, and was subsequently adopted as the army's rallying cry.

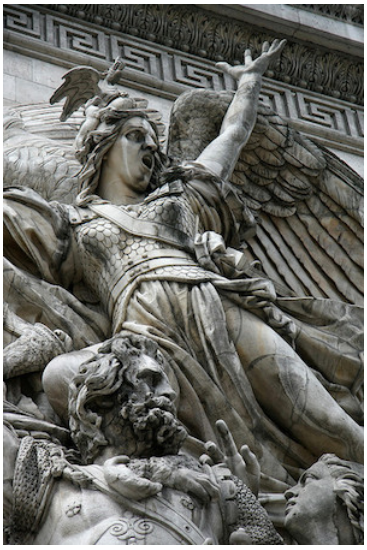


Figure **13.8.2.109**: Genius of Liberty (detail), François Rude, *La Marseillaise (The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792)*, 1833-6, limestone, c. 12.8 m high, Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, Paris

Banned under the Bourbon administration, it was sounded by the crowds on the barricades in the July Revolution of 1830 and in the following years grew in popularity, the Romantic composer Hector Berlioz, for instance, giving it an orchestral arrangement. Having lodged itself so deeply in the public consciousness, evoking the spirit of republican defiance in the face of tyranny, the song must surely have been in Rude's mind when drawing his designs for the sculpture.

The surge of the volunteers, inspired by the great sweeping movement of the Genius of Liberty above them, effectively illustrates in limestone the penultimate verse of the song:

> ***Sacred love of the Fatherland,***
> ***Lead, support our avenging arms***
> ***Liberty, cherished Liberty,***
> ***Fight with thy defenders!***
> ***Under our flags, shall victory***
> ***Hurry to thy manly accents,***
> ***See thy triumph and our glory!***



Figure **13.8.2.110**: Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830, oil on canvas, 260 cm x 325 cm (Louvre, Paris)



Figure 13.8.2.111: Nike (Winged Victory) of Samothrace, Lartos marble (ship) and Parian marble (figure), c. 190 B.C.E. 3.28m high (Louvre, Paris)

Like other great works of the period, Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, for instance, Rude's sculpture effectively captures the energy of the new republic, more so perhaps than anything to be found in the art of the 1792 generation. It was their children, it seems, imbued with tales of heroic sacrifice, who, employing this epic, revolutionary style, known as Romanticism, brought to light the passion and the glory and, in the case of Delacroix, the hideous spectacle of death, too, that went into forging the new France.

This is not to say that Rude rejected neoclassicism, the treatment of the figures, some nude, some dressed in classic armor, draws heavily from antiquity, while the allegorical figure of Liberty recalls the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* in the Louvre.

The composition

Also, in the composition Rude uses the classical device of bilateral symmetry, positioning the figures along two axes: a horizontal axis that divides the frieze of soldiers in the lower half from the winged figure that fills the upper register; and a vertical axis that runs from the head of the Genius of Liberty through the vertical juncture between the two central soldiers. One suspects, in its vortex-like structure, Rude had studied in some detail Rubens's copy of Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* in the Louvre.



Figure 13.8.2.112: Peter Paul Rubens, *Copy after Leonardo's 'Battle of Anghiari,'* c. 1604, Black chalk, pen and ink, highlights in grey and white, 45.2 x 63.7cm (Louvre, Paris)

As with Leonardo, forms overlap, notably in the bottom register in which we find the head of a horse and two other soldiers positioned behind the five frontal figures, strengthening the group as a whole, which, when viewed from below, forms a semi-circular mass, packed tightly onto the plinth, at the point of spilling off it. Unlike Leonardo's Battle, however, whose composition spirals inwards to a point of internal collapse, in *The Departure*, the bodies move like a wave, cresting at the point where the bearded soldier's head overlaps with the leg of the Genius of Liberty, as though inspired by her to rally his troops to victory.

Mixed messages

For Rude and his fellow republicans, this was stirring stuff. As it happened, it was also the cause of celebration for the present government. The king, Louis-Philippe, was an Orleans, a member of that branch of the French royal family that, though related to the Bourbons, had been treated as subordinates by them.

For this reason, as a young man, he had shown support for the Revolution, even taking up arms in the Battle of Valmy, where he commanded his own division and exhibited some bravery. *The Departure* is therefore in its way a curious and rather paradoxical piece of propaganda, for in eulogizing the Revolutionary army who fought against the threat of an invasion that sought to restore the monarchy, the work also helps to lend credibility to Louis-Philippe, the ruling monarch.

This contradictory state of affairs would not have been lost on Rude who, despite the acclaim won by *The Departure*, over the coming years found himself more and more in opposition to the regime, nor for that matter was it lost on the French people themselves who having once and for all grown tired of monarchs, forced the abdication of their last one, Louis-Philippe, in the Revolution of 1848. Rude's great call for the Liberty and the Republic, it would seem, was the one that triumphed in the end.

Additional resources:

François Rude's *Neopolitan Fisherboy* at the Louvre

Listen to the *La Marseillaise*, the French national anthem

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.2.113**: More Smarthistory images…

Romanticism in Spain

Goya depicted the demons that arise when reason sleeps.

c. 1800 - 1848

Francisco Goya

Francisco Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*

by SARAH C. SCHAEFER



Figure **13.8.2.114**: Francisco Goya, Plate 43, *The sleep of reason produces monsters* from *Los Caprichos*, 1799, etching, aquatint, drypoint, and burin, plate: 21.2 x 15.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

A dark vision

In this ominous image, we see the dark vision of humanity that characterizes Goya's work for the rest of his life.

A man sleeps, apparently peacefully, even as bats and owls threaten from all sides and a lynx lays quiet, but wide-eyed and alert. Another creature sits at the center of the composition, staring not at the sleeping figure, but at us. Goya forces the viewer to become an active participant in the image—the monsters of his dreams even threaten us.

Los Caprichos

On 6 February 1799, Francisco Goya put an advertisement in the *Diario de Madrid*. "A Collection of Prints of Capricious Subjects," he tells the reader, "Invented and Etched by Don Francisco Goya," is available through subscription. We know this series of eighty prints as *Los Caprichos* (caprices, or follies).

Los Caprichos was a significant departure from the subjects that had occupied Goya up to that point—tapestry cartoons for the Spanish royal residences, portraits of monarchs and aristocrats, and a few commissions for church ceilings and altars.

Many of the prints in the *Caprichos* series express disdain for the pre-Enlightenment practices still popular in Spain at the end of the Eighteenth century (a powerful clergy, arranged marriages, superstition, etc.). Goya uses the series to critique contemporary Spanish society. As he explained in the advertisement, he chose subjects "from the multitude of follies and blunders common in every civil society, as well as from the vulgar prejudices and lies authorized by custom, ignorance or interest, those that he has thought most suitable matter for ridicule."

The *Caprichos* was Goya's most biting critique to date, and would eventually be censored. Of the eighty aquatints, number 43, "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," can essentially be seen as Goya's manifesto and it should be noted that many observers believe he intended it as a self-portrait.

Imagination united with reason

In the image, an artist, asleep at his drawing table, is besieged by creatures associated in Spanish folk tradition with mystery and evil. The title of the print, emblazoned on the front of the desk, is often read as a proclamation of Goya's adherence to the values of the Enlightenment—without Reason, evil and corruption prevail.

However, Goya wrote a caption for the print that complicates its message, "Imagination abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters; united with her, she is the mother of the arts and source of their wonders."

In other words, Goya believed that imagination should never be completely renounced in favor of the strictly rational. For Goya, art is the child of reason in combination with imagination.



Figure asleep (detail), Francisco Goya, Plate 43, *The sleep of reason produces monsters* from *Los Caprichos*, 1799, etching, aquatint, drypoint, and burin, plate: 21.2 x 15.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The beginnings of Romanticism

With this print, Goya is revealed as a transitional figure between the end of the Enlightenment and the emergence of Romanticism. The artist had spent the early part of his career working in the court of King Carlos III who adhered to many of the principles of the Enlightenment that were then spreading across Europe—social reform, the advancement of knowledge and science, and the creation of secular states. In Spain, Carlos reduced the power of the clergy and established strong support for the arts and sciences.

However, by the time Goya published the *Caprichos*, the promise of the Enlightenment had dimmed. Carlos III was dead and his less respected brother assumed the throne. Even in France, the political revolution inspired by the Enlightenment had devolved into violence during an episode known as the Reign of Terror. Soon after, Napoleon became Emperor of France.

Goya's caption for "The Sleep of Reason," warns that we should not be governed by reason alone—an idea central to Romanticism's reaction against Enlightenment doctrine. Romantic artists and writers valued nature which was closely associated with emotion and imagination in opposition to the rationalism of Enlightenment philosophy. But "The Sleep of Reason" also anticipates the dark and haunting art Goya later created in reaction to the atrocities he witnessed—and carried out by the standard-bearers of the Enlightenment—the Napoleonic Guard.

Goya brilliantly exploited the atmospheric quality of aquatint to create this fantastical image. This printing process creates the grainy, dream-like tonality visible in the background of "The Sleep of Reason."

Aquatint



Figure **13.8.2.116**: Birds (detail), Francisco Goya, Plate 43, *The sleep of reason produces monsters* from *Los Caprichos*, 1799, etching, aquatint, drypoint, and burin, plate: 21.2 x 15.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Although the aquatint process was invented in 17th century by the Dutch printmaker, Jan van de Velde, many consider the *Caprichos* to be the first prints to fully exploit this process.

Aquatint is a variation of etching. Like etching, it uses a metal plate (often copper or zinc) that is covered with a waxy, acid-resistant resin. The artist draws an image directly into the resin with a needle so that the wax is removed exposing the metal plate below. When the scratch drawing is complete, the plate is submerged in an acid bath. The acid eats into the metal where lines have been etched. When the acid has bitten deeply enough, the plate is removed, rinsed and heated so that the remaining resin can be wiped away.

Aquatint requires an additional process, the artist sprinkles layers of powdery resin on the surface of the plate, heats it to harden the powder and dips it in an acid bath.

The acid eats around the resin powder creating a rich and varied surface. Ink is then pressed into the pits and linear recesses created by the acid and the flat surface of the plate is once again wiped clean. Finally, a piece of paper is pressed firmly against the inked plate and then pulled away, resulting in the finished image.

Additional resources:

Goya and the Spanish Enlightenment on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Goya on Times Topics

Francisco Goya, *The Family of Charles IV*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.2.7**: Francisco Goya, *The Family of Charles IV*, c. 1800, Prado Museum, 280 cm x 336 cm (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid)

Francisco Goya, *And there's nothing to be done* from *The Disasters of War*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Figure **13.8.2.117**: Francisco Goya, *And there's nothing to be done (Y no hai remedio)*, plate 15 from *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)*, 1810, etching, drypoint, burin and burnisher, 14 x 16.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

And there's nothing to be done

A man, blind-folded, head downcast, stands bound to a wooden pole. His white clothes, despite tears and rips, seem to emit light; although the man's off-kilter posture signifies defeat, he is yet heroic, an *Alter Christus*—another Christ. On the ground in front of him is a corpse, contorted, the spine twisted, arms and legs sprawled in opposite directions. His grotesque face looks out at us through obscured eyes as blood and brain matter ooze out of his skull and pool around his head. Seconds ago this man was alive. Further off, to our hero's left, other men, doubled over and on their knees, are similarly secured to wooden stakes. To his right we see the cause of the carnage: a neat line of soldiers aim rifles at the men, the muzzle of their weapons disappearing behind our hero's hip. But the rest of the gun is not left to our imagination. Suddenly—and in such an obvious position that we wonder how

we did not see them before—the barrel of three rifles appear from the right edge of the picture, aimed at our messianic hero. Not only is he about to die, but his executioners are everywhere. As the caption of the picture tells us, “Y no hay remedio” (And there’s nothing to be done).



Figure **13.8.2.118**: Dead figure (detail), Francisco Goya, *And there’s nothing to be done (Y no hai remedio)*, plate 15 from *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)*, 1810, etching, drypoint, burin and burnisher, 14 x 16.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Francisco Goya created the aquatint series *The Disasters of War* from 1810 to 1820. The eighty-two images add up to a visual indictment of and protest against the French occupation of Spain by Napoleon Bonaparte. The French Emperor had seized control of the country in 1807 after he tricked the king of Spain, Charles IV, into allowing Napoleon’s troops to pass its border, under the pretext of helping Charles invade Portugal. He did not. Instead, he usurped the throne and installed his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as ruler of Spain. Soon, a bloody uprising occurred, in which countless Spaniards were slaughtered in Spain’s cities and countryside. Although Spain eventually expelled the French in 1814 following the Peninsular War (1807-1814), the military conflict was a long and gruesome ordeal for both nations. Throughout the entire time, Goya worked as a court artist for Joseph Bonaparte, though he would later deny any involvement with the French “intruder king.”

Process

Goya created his *Disasters of War* series by using the techniques of etching and drypoint. Goya was able to use this technique to create nuanced shades of light and dark that capture the powerful emotional intensity of the horrific scenes in the *Disasters of War*.

The first step was to etch the plate. This was done by covering a copper plate with wax and then scratching lines into the wax with a stylus (a sharp needle-like implement), which thus exposed the metal. The plate was then placed in an acid bath. The acid bit into the metal where it was exposed (the rest of the plate was protected by the wax). Next the acid was washed from the plate and the plate was heated so the wax softened and could be wiped away. The plate then had soft, even, recessed lines etched by the acid where Goya had drawn into the wax.

The next step, drypoint, created lines by a different method. Here Goya scratched directly into the surface of the plate with a stylus. This resulted in a less even line since each scratch left a small ragged ridge on either side of the line. These minute ridges catch the ink and create a soft distinctive line when printed. However, because these ridges are delicate and are crushed by repeatedly being run through a press, the earliest prints in a series are generally more highly valued.

Finally, the artist inked the plate and wiped away any excess so that ink remained only in the areas where the acid bit into the metal plate or where the stylus had scratched the surface. The plate and moist paper were then placed atop one another and run through a press. The paper, now a print, drew the ink from the metal, and became a mirror of the plate.



Figure 13.8.2.119: Bound figure and soldiers (detail), Francisco Goya, A*nd there's nothing to be done (Y no hai remedio)*, plate 15 from *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)*, 1810, etching, drypoint, burin and burnisher, 14 x 16.7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

War as disaster

The first group of prints, to which "Y no hay remedio" belongs, shows the sobering consequences of conflict between French troops and Spanish civilians. The second group documents the effects of a famine that hit Spain in 1811-1812, at the end of French rule. The final set of pictures depicts the disappointment and demoralization of the Spanish rebels, who, after finally defeating the French, found that their reinstated monarchy would not accept any political reforms. Although they had expelled Bonaparte, the throne of Spain was still occupied by a tyrant. And this time, they had fought to put him there.



Figure 13.8.2.120: Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, 266 x 345.1 cm (Prado. Madrid)

The *Disasters of War* were Goya's second series, made after his earlier *Los Caprichos*. This set of images was also a critique of the contemporary world, satirizing the socio-economic system in Spain that caused most people to live in poverty and forced them to act immorally just to survive. Goya condemned all levels of society, from prostitutes to clergy. But *The Disasters of War* was not the last time that Goya would take on the subject of the horrors of the Peninsular War. In 1814, after completing The *Disasters of War*, Goya created his masterpiece *The Third of May, 1808* which portrays the ramifications of the initial uprising of Spanish against the French, right after Napoleon's takeover. Sometimes called "The first modern painting," its resemblance to "Y no hai

remedio" is undeniable. In this painting, a Christ-like figure stands in front of a firing squad, waiting to die. This line of soldiers is nearly identical to the murderers in the aquatint. In *The Third of May, 1808* the number of assassins and victims is countless, indicating, once again, that "there is nothing to be done." Although it is impossible to say whether the print or the painting came first, the repetition of the imagery is evidence that this theme—the inexorable cruelty of one group of people towards another—was a preoccupation of the artist, whose imagery would only become darker as he became older.



Figure 13.8.2.121: Goya, *This is worse (Esto es peor)*, plate 37 from *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de La Guerra)*, 1810, etching, lavish and drypoint, plate: 15.3 x 20.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

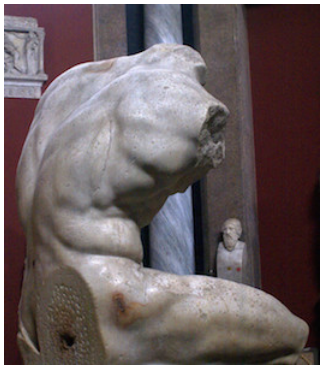


Figure 13.8.2.122: Belvedere Torso, marble copy of a Greek bronze original, probably from the 2nd century B.C.E. (Vatican Museums) (photo: Giovanni, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Although "And There's Nothing to Be Done" may have crystallized the theme of *The Disasters of War*, it is not the most gruesome. This honor may belong to the print "Esto es peor (This is Worse)," which captures the real-life massacre of Spanish civilians by the French army in 1808. In the macabre image, Goya copied a famous Hellenistic Greek fragment, the *Belvedere Torso* (left), to create the body of the dead victim. Like the ancient fragment, he is armless, but this is because the French have mutilated his body, which is impaled on a tree through his anus and shoulder. As in "There is Nothing to be Done," the corpse face stares out at the viewer, who must confront his own culpability in allowing the massacre to take place. "There is Nothing to be Done," can also be compared to the plate "No se puede mirar (One cannot look)," in which the same faceless line of executioners points their weapons at a group of women and men, who are about to die.



Figure **13.8.2.123**: Francisco Goya, *One can't look. (No se puede mirar.)*, plate 26 from *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)*, 1810-20, etching, burnished lavish, drypoint and burin, plate: 14.5 x 21 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Goya's *Disasters of War* series was not printed until thirty-five years after the artist's death, when it was finally safe for the artist's political views to be known. The images remain shocking today, and even influenced the novel of famous American author Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a book about the violence and inhumanity in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Hemingway shared Goya's belief, expressed in *The Disasters of War*, that war, even if justified, brings out the inhumane in man, and causes us to act like beasts. And for both artists, the consumer, who examines the dismembered corpses of the aquatints or reads the gruesome descriptions of murder but does nothing to stop the assassin, is complicit in the violence with the murderer.

Additional resources:

Goya, plate 15 from The Disasters of War (*Los Desastres de la Guerra*): And there is nothing to be done (*Y no hai remedio*) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Goya, plate 37 from The Disasters of War (*Los Desastres de La Guerra*): This is worse (*Esto es peor*) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Goya, plate 26 from *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)*, One can't look. (*No se puede mirar*) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Goya, "And there is Nothing to be done" from Art Through Time

Francisco de Goya and the Spanish Enlightenment on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Goya at the Getty Museum

Goya at the Norton Simon Museum

Goya at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*

by CHRISTINE ZAPPELLA



Video **13.8.2.8**

Napoleon puts his brother on the throne of Spain

In 1807, Napoleon, bent on conquering the world, brought Spain's king, Charles IV, into alliance with him in order to conquer Portugal. Napoleon's troops poured into Spain, supposedly just passing through. But Napoleon's real intentions soon became clear: the alliance was a trick. The French were taking over. Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, was the new king of Spain.



Figure **13.8.2.124**: Francisco Goya, *The Second of May, 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, 104.7 x 135.8″ (Museo del Prado)

The 2nd and 3rd of May, 1808

On May 2, 1808, hundreds of Spaniards rebelled. On May 3, these Spanish freedom fighters were rounded up and massacred by the French. Their blood literally ran through the streets of Madrid. Even though Goya had shown French sympathies in the past, the slaughter of his countrymen and the horrors of war made a profound impression on the artist. He commemorated both days of this gruesome uprising in paintings. Although Goya's *Second of May* (above) is a tour de force of twisting bodies and charging horses reminiscent of Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*, his *The Third of May, 1808 in Madrid* is acclaimed as one of the great paintings of all time, and has even been called the world's first modern painting.



Figure **13.8.2.125**: Detail, Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814-15, oil on canvas, (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Death awaits

We see row of French soldiers aiming their guns at a Spanish man, who stretches out his arms in submission both to the men and to his fate. A country hill behind him takes the place of an executioner's wall. A pile of dead bodies lies at his feet, streaming blood. To his other side, a line of Spanish rebels stretches endlessly into the landscape. They cover their eyes to avoid watching the death that they know awaits them. The city and civilization is far behind them. Even a monk, bowed in prayer, will soon be among the dead.



Figure **13.8.2.126**: Detail, Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814-15, oil on canvas (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Transforming Christian iconography

Goya's painting has been lauded for its brilliant transformation of Christian iconography and its poignant portrayal of man's inhumanity to man. The central figure of the painting, who is clearly a poor laborer, takes the place of the crucified Christ; he is sacrificing himself for the good of his nation. The lantern that sits between him and the firing squad is the only source of light in the painting, and dazzlingly illuminates his body, bathing him in what can be perceived as spiritual light. His expressive face, which shows an emotion of anguish that is more sad than terrified, echoes Christ's prayer on the cross, "Forgive them Father, they know not what they do." Close inspection of the victim's right hand also shows stigmata, referencing the marks made on Christ's body during the Crucifixion.



Figure 13.8.2.127: Detail, Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814-15, oil on canvas (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

The man's pose not only equates him with Christ, but also acts as an assertion of his humanity. The French soldiers, by contrast, become mechanical or insect-like. They merge into one faceless, many-legged creature incapable of feeling human emotion. Nothing is going to stop them from murdering this man. The deep recession into space seems to imply that this type of brutality will never end.

Not heroism in battle

This depiction of warfare was a drastic departure from convention. In 18th century art, battle and death was represented as a bloodless affair with little emotional impact. Even the great French Romanticists were more concerned with producing a beautiful canvas in the tradition of history paintings, showing the hero in the heroic act, than with creating emotional impact. Goya's painting, by contrast, presents us with an anti-hero, imbued with true pathos that had not been seen since, perhaps, the ancient Roman sculpture of *The Dying Gaul*. Goya's central figure is not perishing heroically in battle, but rather being killed on the side of the road like an animal. Both the landscape and the dress of the men are nondescript, making the painting timeless. This is certainly why the work remains emotionally charged today.



Figure 13.8.2.128: Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808 in Madrid, 1808*, 1814-15, oil on canvas, 8′ 9″ x 13′ 4″ (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Legacy

Future artists also admired *The Third of May, 1808 in Madrid*, and both Manet and Picasso used it for inspiration in their own portrayals of political murders (Manet's *Execution of Emperor Maximilian* and Picasso's *Massacre in Korea*). Along with Picasso's *Guernica*, Goya's *Third of May* remains one of the most chilling images ever created of the atrocities of war, and it is difficult to imagine how much more powerful it must have been in the pre-photographic era, before people were bombarded with images of warfare in the media. A powerful anti-war statement, Goya is not only criticizing the nations that wage war on one another, but is also admonishing us, the viewers, for being complicit in acts of violence, which occur not between abstract entities like "countries," but between human beings standing a few feet away from one another.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Prado Museum

Goya and the Spanish Enlightenment at the Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art

A brief biography of the artist at the Getty Museum

This painting on Art Through Time

Francisco Goya, *Saturn Devouring One Of His Sons*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.2.9**: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *Saturn Devouring One Of His Sons*, 1821-1823, 143.5 x 81.4 cm (Prado, Madrid)

One of the “Black Paintings” that Goya painted on the walls of his house outside Madrid, this image was originally located on the lower floor of the house known as “la Quinta del Sordo.” Goya painted on the walls using several materials including oil paint. The “Black Paintings” had suffered significant damage and loss in their original location and when they were removed from the walls and transferred to canvas by Baron Émile d’Erlanger shortly after he aquired the house in 1873. Please note that Saturn is also known as Cronus or Kronus.

Romanticism in England

Artists in early nineteenth century England celebrated nature at its most humble, and its most grand.

c. 1780 - 1848

Henry Fuseli

Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*

by DR. NOELLE PAULSON



Figure **13.8.2.129**: Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas, 180 × 250 cm (Detroit Institute of Arts)

Shocked, titillated, and frightened

Working during the height of the Enlightenment, the so-called "Age of Reason," the Swiss-English painter Henry Fuseli (born Johann Heinrich Füssli) instead chose to depict darker, irrational forces in his famous painting *The Nightmare*. In Fuseli's startling composition, a woman bathed in white light stretches across a bed, her arms, neck, and head hanging off the end of the mattress. An apelike figure crouches on her chest while a horse with glowing eyes and flared nostrils emerges from the shadowy background.

The painting was first displayed at the annual Royal Academy exhibition in London in 1782, where it shocked, titillated, and frightened exhibition visitors and critics. Unlike many of the paintings that were then popular and successful at the Royal Academy exhibitions, Fuseli's *The Nightmare* has no moralizing subject. The scene is an invented one, a product of Fuseli's imagination. It certainly has a literary character and the various figures demonstrate Fuseli's broad knowledge of art history, but *The Nightmare*'s subject is not drawn from history, the Bible, or literature. The painting has yielded many interpretations and is seen as prefiguring late nineteenth-century psychoanalytic theories regarding dreams and the unconscious (Sigmund Freud allegedly kept a reproduction of the painting on the wall of his apartment in Vienna).

Incubus or mara

The figure that sits upon the woman's chest is often described as an imp or an incubus, a type of spirit said to lie atop people in their sleep or even to have sexual intercourse with sleeping women. Fuseli's painting is suggestive but not explicit, leaving open the possibility that the woman is simply dreaming. Yet, her dream appears to take frightening, physical form in the shapes of the incubus and the horse. According to Fuseli's friend and biographer John Knowles, who saw the first drawing Fuseli made for the composition in 1781, the horse was not present in the drawing but added to the painting later.

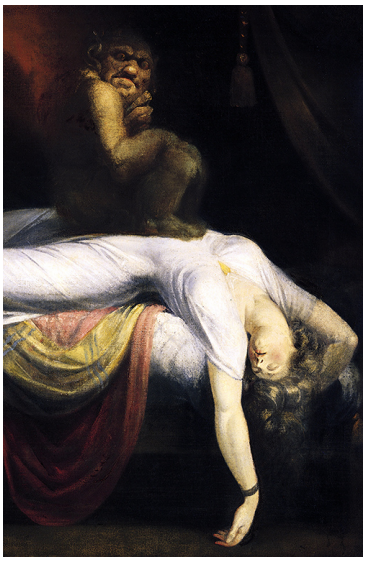


Figure 13.8.2.130: Incubus (detail), Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas, 180 × 250 cm (Detroit Institute of Arts)

Although it is tempting to understand the painting's title as a punning reference to the horse, the word "nightmare" does not refer to horses. Rather, in the now obsolete definition of the term, a mare is an evil spirit that tortures humans while they sleep. As Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) defined it, a mare or "mara, [is] a spirit that, in heathen mythology, was related to torment or to suffocate sleepers. A morbid oppression in the night resembling the pressure of weight upon the breast." Thus, Fuseli's painting may in fact be understood as embodying the physical experience of chest pressure felt during a dream-state.

Dark themes

Through his use of composition and chiaroscuro – the strategic juxtaposition of sharply contrasting light and shadow—Fuseli heightened the drama and uncertainty of his scene. However, unlike the slightly earlier painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Lecturing on the Orrery*, which utilized chiaroscuro to symbolize the enlightening power of rational observation, Fuseli's *The Nightmare* instead shows the futility of light to penetrate or explain the darker realms of the unconscious.



Figure 13.8.2.131: Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving a Lecture at the Orrery (in which a lamp is put in place of the sun)*, c. 1763-65, oil on canvas, 4′ 10″ x 6′ 8″ (Derby Museums and Art Gallery, Derby)

In *The Nightmare*, the single light source coming in from the right, the curtains and tassels in the background, and the shortened, stage-like foreground also add to the work's theatricality. The red drapery falling off the edge of the bed even suggests a river of blood as it might be symbolically enacted on stage in a play or an opera, adding morbid undertones to the painting's already dark themes. Throughout his career, Fuseli painted and illustrated scenes from Shakespeare and Milton, and his art has a consistent sense of literary, at times even erudite drama that reveals his classical education (after completing his studies, Fuseli had been ordained as

a pastor in the Swiss Evangelical Reformed Church before his political activities in Zürich effectively forced him into exile in 1761).



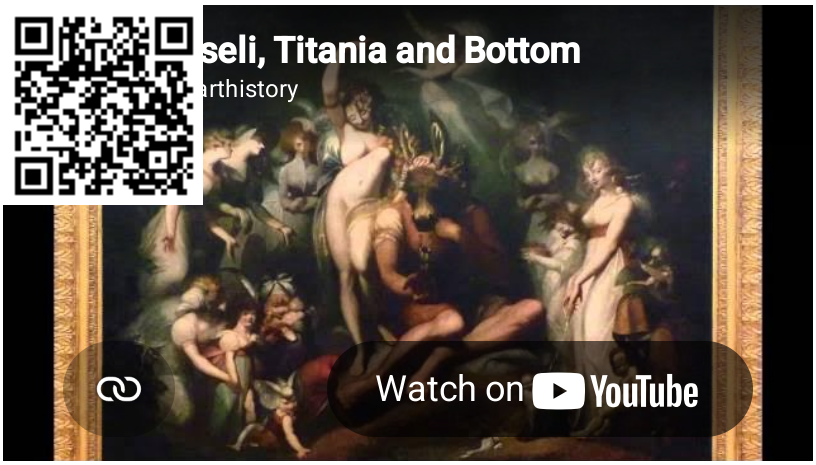
Figure 13.8.2.132: Thomas Burke, *The night mare after Fuseli*, published in London by R. J. Smith, 1783, stipple engraving in sepia ; plate mark 228 x 254 mm, on sheet 24 x 27 cm (Walpole Library, Yale University)

The Nightmare's stark mixture of horror, sexuality, and morbidity has insured its enduring notoriety. In January 1783, *The Nightmare* was engraved by Thomas Burke and distributed by the publisher John Raphael Smith. The relatively low price of this reproduction following on the heels of the attention the work received at the Royal Academy helped to distribute the image to a wider audience. Fuseli later painted at least three more variations with the same title and subject.

The Nightmare became an icon of Romanticism and a defining image of Gothic horror, inspiring the poet Erasmus Darwin (Charles Darwin's grandfather) and the writers Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe among many others. From the start, caricaturists also adopted Fuseli's composition, and political figures from Napoleon Bonaparte to President George W. Bush and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have all been lampooned in satirical versions of Fuseli's painting.

Henry Fuseli, *Titania and Bottom*

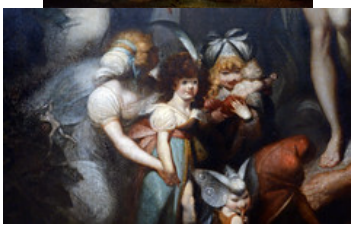
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



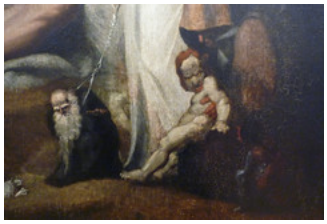
Video 13.8.2.10: Henry Fuseli, *Titania and Bottom*, c. 1790, oil on canvas, 2172 x 2756 mm (Tate Britain, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88738



Figure 13.8.2.133: More Smarthistory images…

William Blake

William Blake, *The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan*

by BEN POLLITT

William Blake, <em
The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan, in whose wreathings are infolded the Nations of the Earth, c. 1805-9, tempera on canvas 30" x 24" / 76.2 x 62.5 cm (Tate Britain, London)" height="450" src="
https://ka-perseus-images.s3.amazona...f266f89ab8.jpg
" width="372">

Figure 13.8.2.134: William Blake, *The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan, in whose wreathings are infolded the Nations of the Earth*, c. 1805-9, tempera on canvas 30″ x 24″ / 76.2 x 62.5 cm (Tate Britain, London)

William Blake occupies a unique position in art history in that he was both a major artist and a major poet. Often the two went hand-in-hand, his art illustrating his poetry, or if not his, the poetry of others. I suppose, then, for me, what makes this such an intriguing example of his work is the fact that here, unusually for Blake, the subject is not drawn from any literary source, but from contemporary history.

The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan was first shown in his solo exhibition of 1809, held at his brother's house in London's Soho; a site, incidentally, that also served as the family shop, selling women's stockings. The reviews were mostly negative, one famously describing the paintings as "the wild effusions of a distempered brain." Not everyone hated it, though, and some of the paintings did sell, including this portrait of Admiral Nelson.

Admiral Nelson



Figure 13.8.2.135: Benjamin West, *The Death of Nelson*, 1806, oil on canvas, 71.9″ × 97.4″ (182.5 × 247.5 cm (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool)

Nelson was the hero of one of the greatest events of this period, the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. You might know him as the figure atop the column in Trafalgar Square. At the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson led a great victory over Napoleon's navy, but was fatally wounded. The outpourings of patriotic feeling that followed these events and the artistic opportunities they offered, were quickly exploited by many artists.

Blake's Nelson, however, is a world away from those melodramatic scenes of the dying hero that were so current at the time like the above example by Benjamin West.

A spiritual likeness?

Instead of a lifelike portrait, Blake paints Nelson's "Spiritual" likeness. He stands on top of the Biblical sea creature, Leviathan, whose body encircles him. Nelson controls the beast with a bridle, attached to its neck, which he holds loosely in his left hand. Trapped in, crushed under, or in one case, half-consumed within Leviathan's coiled body, ten figures, male and female, are arranged around the figure of Nelson; these represent the European nations defeated by the British during the Napoleonic Wars. Under his feet is a black body, whose wrists are fettered. The head and arms of the figure to the bottom left appear to be submerged under water, which occupies the lowest portion of the painting. Nelson stands in the center of a graphic explosion of color, creating a corona of light around him.

West, *Immortality of Nelson*



Figure **13.8.2.136**: Benjamin West, *The Immortality of Nelson*, 1807, oil on canvas, 90.8 x 76.2 cm (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

The visual coupling of explosion and water may bring to mind naval conflicts, but clearly this is no illusionistic representation of any specific battle. The painting should rather be viewed as an allegory, a representation of an abstract idea in material form.

Benjamin West's *The Immortality of Nelson* of 1807 is similarly allegorical. Here Neptune delivers the soul of Nelson into the arms of Brittania (an allegorical figure of Great Britain). West draws on Christian art in the composition, recalling Rubens' *Descent from the Cross.*

Classical, Biblical and Hindu References

Like West, Blake also uses classical and Christian references: the nude Nelson in contrapposto is modeled on the *Apollo Belvedere*, for instance. Similarly, Nelson is shown with Christ-like attributes: the halo and the loincloth. What distinguishes Blake's image is the unusual composition that critics have noted owes more to Indian than Graeco-Roman or Christian art, specifically statues of Nataraja (the Dancing Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction, who dances within an aureole of fire, standing on Apasmara, the Dwarf of Ignorance, who is killed during the dance).



Figure 13.8.2.137: Bronze figure of Nataraja, from Tamil Nadu, Southern India, around AD 1100,89.5 cm high (British Museum, London)

Blake highlights this connection in the Descriptive Catalog he wrote for the exhibition. Here, he claims to have been "taken in vision" and shown works of art from "Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian Antiquity…some of them one hundred feet in height." Drawing on these visionary works he wished to create similarly grand images of national heroes. Though modestly proportioned, Blake hoped this preparatory work would gain him a commission to create a massive fresco. It was for this reason he painted using tempera, only on canvas rather than plaster, which sadly accounts for the sorry state of the painting.

For all his talk of visions, though, Blake would have seen Hindu art in his waking hours, too, as Britain's growing colonial presence in India meant that translations of Hindu scriptures and engravings of its artworks were in wide circulation. Among educated circles these works were discussed with avid interest, many holding the view that in India could be found the source for all the world religions. Blake draws on these ideas in the painting, which is exceptionally eclectic in its scriptural references. Leviathan comes from the Old Testament, and like Shiva, is said to represent the forces of destruction in the world. It is difficult to know what Blake is implying here though, for while Shiva destroys in order to transform and so is seen as a positive force, in Christian tradition at least, Leviathan is generally held to be an agent of Satan.

Certainly, there is something confusing, if not downright disconcerting, in this alliance of a national hero with a diabolical monster. Similarly, the contorted figures and agonized expressions of the defeated nations contrasts uncomfortably with the calm, classical elegance of Nelson; while compositionally, the claustrophobic treatment of the space lends the painting a nightmarish quality giving one the distinct impression that this is more a critique than a celebration of Britain's naval supremacy, a view supported in the fact that Blake himself was a pacifist.

An anti-slavery message?

Blake was also a fierce opponent of slavery. The black body in the painting may act as a reference to the Slave Trade Act of 1807, which abolished the trade of slaves in the British Empire. This figure is situated, much as Apasmara the dwarf is to the Dancing Shiva, directly beneath Nelson's feet. It could be argued that, just as the one stands for ignorance, the figure here represents not an individual slave as such, but slavery itself, which is in the process of being destroyed.



Figure **13.8.2.138**: Black figure at Nelson's feet (detail), William Blake, *The spiritual form of Nelson guiding Leviathan, in whose wreathings are infolded the Nations of the Earth*, c. 1805-9, tempera on canvas 30″ x 24″ / 76.2 x 62.5cm (Tate Britain, London)

Whatever Blake's intentions may have been in depicting the figure thus, we are struck most by his individual suffering, prostrate and wretched, if anything he serves to remind us that though the trade had been criminalized, slavery itself would continue to be legal for many years to come.

Wildly ambitious and devilishly ambiguous, *The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding Leviathan* is a work that for all its oddities and contradictions speaks directly to us in our postcolonial age. Undoubtedly the British Imperial project, made possible by its naval strength, enriched Britain financially through the appropriation of immense natural resources, as well as culturally through the influx of new ideas and new artistic languages. The question remains though as to what rights and responsibilities metropolitan artists, like Blake, have when adopting the intellectual, cultural and artistic resources of other, less dominant, cultures.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate Britain

William Blake, the artist (Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History)

William Blake, the Poet

Benjamin West, Death of Nelson at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Benjamin West, The Immortality of Nelson at the National Maritime Museum

Nelson: The Hero and the Man (BBC site)

Bronze Figure of Nataraja at the British Museum

William Blake, *The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video **13.8.2.11**: William Blake, *The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*, ca. 1799–1800, watercolor, pen and black ink over graphite, 14 3/16 × 13 1/16″ / 36 × 33.2 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Additional resources:

View this work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website

John Constable

Constable and the English landscape

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.2.139**: John Constable, *The Hay Wain*, 1821, oil on canvas, 51-1/4 x 73″ (National Gallery of Art, London)

Reviving landscape painting

Studying the English painter John Constable is helpful in understanding the changing meaning of nature during the industrial revolution. He is, in fact, largely responsible for reviving the importance of landscape painting in the 19th century. A key event, when it is remembered that landscape would become the primary subject of the Impressionists later in the century.

Landscape had had a brief moment of glory amongst the Dutch masters of the 17th century. Ruisdael and others had devoted large canvases to the depiction of the low countries. But in the 18th century hierarchy of subject matter, landscape was nearly the lowest type of painting. Only the still-life was considered less important. This would change in the first decades of the 19th century when Constable began to depict his father's farm on oversized six-foot long canvases. These "six-footers" as they are called, challenged the status quo. Here landscape was presented on the scale of history painting.

Why would Constable take such a bold step, and perhaps more to the point, why were his canvases celebrated (and they were, by no less important a figure than Eugène Delacroix, when Constable's *The Hay Wain* was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1824)?

Painted in the studio, from sketches done out-of-doors

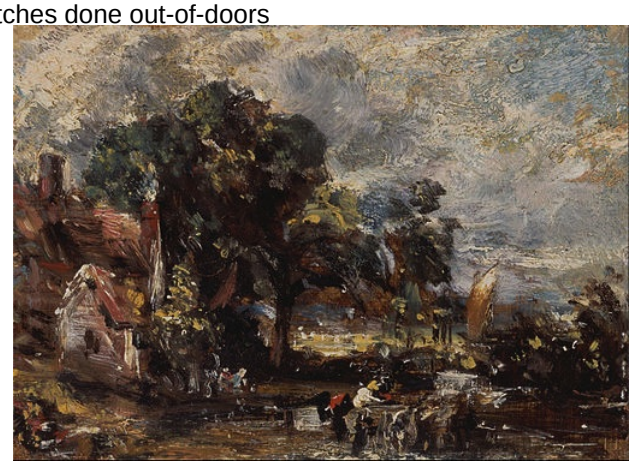


Figure **13.8.2.140**: John Constable, *Sketch for "The Hay Wain,"* c. 1820, oil on canvas laid to paper, 4 7/8 × 7″ (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection)

The Hay Wain does include an element of genre (the depiction of a common scene), that is the farm hand taking his horse and wagon (or wain) across the stream. But this action is minor and seems to offer the viewer the barest of pretenses for what is virtually a pure landscape. Unlike the later Impressionists, Constable's large polished canvases were painted in his studio.
He did, however, sketch outside, directly before his subject. This was necessary for Constable as he sought a high degree of accuracy in many specifics. For instance, the wagon and tack (harness, etc.) are all clearly and specifically depicted, The trees are identifiable by species, and Constable was the first artist we know of who studied meteorology so that the clouds and the atmospheric conditions that he rendered were scientifically precise.

Constable was clearly the product of the Age of Enlightenment and its increasing confidence in science. But Constable was also deeply influenced by the social and economic impact of the industrial revolution.

From farming to factories, from country to city

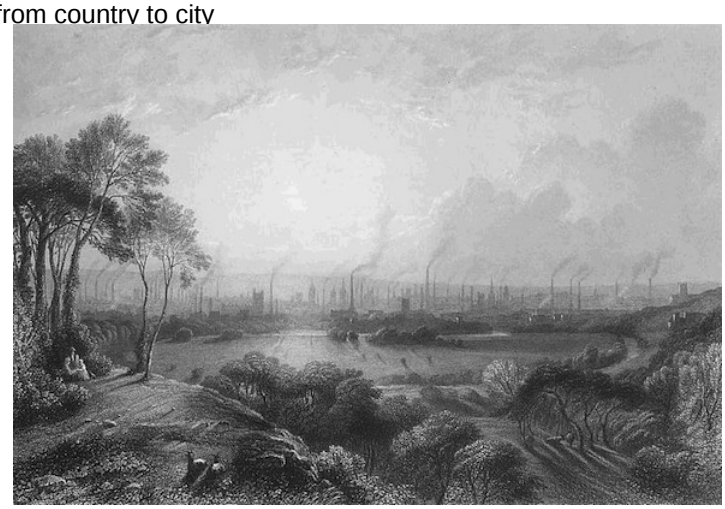


Figure **13.8.2.141**: Manchester, England, pictured in 1840 showing the mass of factory chimneys, engraving by Edward Goodall, original title *Manchester, from Kersal Moor after a painting of W. Wylde*

Prior to the 19th century, even the largest European cities counted their populations only in the hundreds of thousands. These were mere towns by today's standards. But this would change rapidly. The world's economies had always been based largely on agriculture. Farming was a labor intensive enterprise and the result was that the vast majority of the population lived in rural communities. The industrial revolution would reverse this ancient pattern of population distribution. Industrial efficiencies meant widespread unemployment in the country and the great migration to the cities began. The cities of London, Manchester, Paris, and New York doubled and doubled again in the 19th century. Imagine the stresses on a modern day New York if we had even a modest increase in population and the stresses of the 19th century become clear.

Industrialization remade virtually every aspect of society. Based on the political, technological and scientific advances of the Age of Enlightenment, blessed with a bountiful supply of the inexpensive albeit filthy fuel, coal, and advances in metallurgy and steam power, the northwestern nations of Europe invented the world that we now know in the West. Urban culture, expectations of leisure, and middle class affluence in general all resulted from these changes. But the transition was brutal for the poor. Housing was miserable, unventilated and often dangerously hot in the summer. Unclean water spread disease rapidly and there was minimal health care. Corruption was high, pay was low and hours inhumane.

Child labor, long hours & calls for revolution

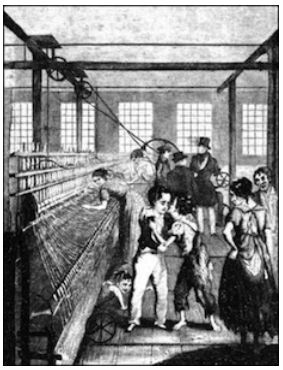


Figure **13.8.2.142**: A cotton mill scene, from Frances Trollope's *Michael Armstrong: Factory Boy* (1840)

As is still true in too much of the world today, families would depend on the labor of even very young children. Working long days with only Sunday off was normal. The contemporaneous author Charles Dickens famously chronicled the depravity of laissez-faire or pure market capitalism that characterized this era. There were no laws to soften this harsh new world. No unemployment insurance, no health insurance, no unions, no benefits, no vacations, no retirement, few safety regulations, no child labor nor bankruptcy protections. If you couldn't pay a debt because you had been sick and lost your job, you, and sometimes your family, were sent to prison. The wealth created by the rich (the return on risked capital) was largely theirs to keep as a permanent national income tax would not become law until 1874 (U.K.) and 1913 (U.S.).

Such terrible abuses were answered by both calls for reform and revolution. Radicals and bourgeois reformers slowly forced change. In 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels co-authored a pamphlet that would become enormously influential, The Communist Manifesto while revolts raged in England, France and to a lesser extent in Germany. It is no surprise that France and England were particularly hard hit as they were amongst the most industrialized of nations.

Rural landscape as a lost Eden

What effect did these changes have on the ways in which the countryside was understood? Can these changes be linked to Constable's attention to the countryside? Some art historians have suggested that Constable was indeed responding to such shifts. As the cities and their problems grew, the urban elite, those that had grown rich from an industrial economy, began to look to the countryside not as a place so wretched with poverty that thousands were fleeing for an uncertain future in the city, but rather as an idealized vision.

The rural landscape became a lost Eden, a place of one's childhood, where the good air and water, the open spaces and hard and honest work of farm labor created a moral open space that contrasted sharply with the perceived evils of modern urban life. Constable's art then functions as an expression of the increasing importance of rural life, at least from the perspective of the wealthy urban elite for whom these canvases were intended. *The Hay Wain* is a celebration of a simpler time, a precious and moral place lost to the city dweller.

Additional resources:

John Constable on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Romanticism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.2.143**: More Smarthistory images…

John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*

by DR. ABRAM FOX

When we think about a portrait, we think about a person. A man or woman, boy or girl. Maybe on occasion a favored pet, but always a living being. The portrait serves as a record of his or her appearance, characteristics, and interests.

Does a portrait have to be of a person, though? People often ascribe human characteristics to inanimate objects. A car that is having trouble starting might be "stubborn," or a powerful storm might be "angry." What if the attributes shown in a landscape were supposed to be ascribed to the person who owned that land?



Figure **13.8.2.144**: John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

With *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, landscape painter John Constable depicted an English country estate in order to make a broader statement about its owner and his relationship with nature in the early nineteenth century.

Wivenhoe Park

Major-General Francis Slater Reboe owned Wivenhoe Park, a quiet countryside estate located approximately seventy miles northeast of London. Rebow was friends with corn merchant Golding Constable, whose son John insisted on pursuing the career of an artist rather than take up his father's business. The wealthy officer was one of John Constable's first patrons.

The 200-acre estate at Wivenhoe was the pride of Major-General Rebow's father-in-law, Colonel Isaac Martin Rebow (interestingly, the Major-General took his wife's last name after marriage), who purchased the land in the 1730s and commissioned the construction of Wivenhoe House in 1759, and then massive alterations in the 1770s to the surrounding parkland, designed by the landscape architect Richard Woods.



Figure **13.8.2.145**: Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Saint John on Patmos*, 1640, oil on canvas, 100.3 x 136.4 cm (The Art Institute of Chicago)

Wivenhoe Park's grounds were redesigned along the lines of the picturesque, an aesthetic concept which combined elements of the philosophy of the awe-inspiring Sublime and the serene Beautiful—categories of landscape painting in the eighteenth century. An example of the picturesque is Nicolas Poussin's *Landscape with St. John* (above), which combines rocky hills and architectural ruins with lush greenery and a peaceful summer's day.



Figure **13.8.2.146**: Arch and bridge (detail), John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

In order to evoke a sense of the picturesque the architect Woods introduced an arch and bridge specifically designed to look old, multiple curving roads lined with trees, and two new lakes for fishing and boating. Rebow's estate was a prime example of the picturesque in England, and a source of pride for the entire family.

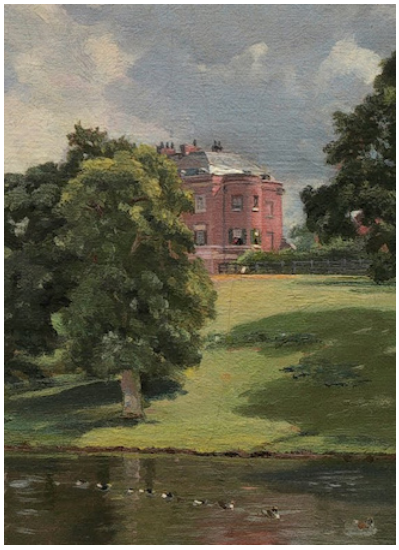


Figure **13.8.2.147**: Country home (detail), John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

The gorgeous estate of Wivenhoe Park is evident in Constable's painting. Filled with rolling hills populated by people and livestock, lit by soft sunlight streaming through low-hanging clouds, and highlighted by a large lake in the foreground and a country home peeking from behind a stand of trees in the background, the landscape of Wivenhoe Park entices viewers with a vision of rural beauty, simplicity, and harmony.

Constable's connection to nature

Today John Constable is regarded as one of the two great British landscape artists of the nineteenth century, alongside his contemporary J.M.W. Turner. During his lifetime, however, Constable was afforded little respect. He almost exclusively painted landscapes—avoiding the far more popular genres of history painting and portraiture. Most of his artistic output is comprised of images of the rural countryside of England's Suffolk and Essex counties, where Wivenhoe Park was located. Whereas most artists would sketch scenes in nature before returning to the studio to paint, beginning in 1814 Constable began to bring his canvases outside and paint directly from nature, adding a sense of veracity and immediacy to his paintings and inspiring future artists like those that would form the Barbizon School (French artists who painted landscapes in a forest near Paris, beginning in the 1830s) as well as the later Impressionists (beginning in the 1860s).



Figure 13.8.2.148: John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Constable was deeply invested in the physical experience of nature. His paintings possess a strong sense of the particular, and demonstrate a keen artist's eye turned to the environment. The artist famously studied weather reports and spent countless hours sketching clouds, which he rendered with precise meteorological detail in *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*. Similarly, the play of light and shadow across the right foreground, and the glimmers of light reflected off the pond in the middle of the composition, enhance the sense of a real, observed landscape. Constable believed that an artist could encourage positive and negative emotions in the viewer through the depiction of nature—particularly through the play of light and dark on the landscape and skyscape.



Figure 13.8.2.149: Light and shadow on the water, John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

The present past

The emotions Constable intended to stir up in his viewers were, much like in his later *View on the Stour near Dedham* (below), those of a nostalgia for the past, and a desire to recapture the English connection to nature that was disappearing during the early decades of the Industrial Revolution (among other things, the shift from producing many objects by hand to mass-produced, factory-made objects using machinery and steam power).



Figure 13.8.2.150: John Constable, *View on the Stour near Dedham*, 1822, oil on canvas, 51 x 74 inches (The Huntington Library)

Wivenhoe Park, Essex depicts an idyllic England that still physically existed in some locations, but was barely holding on, ideologically speaking. Much like Turner's ***The Fighting Temeraire***, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex* celebrates its subject while mourning the end of the era in which it was created. In this sense, the painting functions as a portrait: of eighteenth-century England; of the English countryside; and of the estate's owner, Major-General Rebow, and the values he attempted to uphold. Considering the fact that much of the picturesque estate of Wivenhoe Park was designed by an architect, the foregrounded presence of the manmade lake also speaks to Rebow's dominion over the lands he owned.



Figure 13.8.2.151: Mary Rebow (detail), John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

There is one member of the Rebow family included in the composition: Mary Rebow, the 11-year-old daughter of Major-General Rebow, who can be seen on the left side of the canvas driving the donkey cart. Her red scarf, one of the girl's favorite accessories, is a brief flash of color in a composition otherwise dominated by greens, blues, and browns. Constable, then in his 40th year, seems to have doted on the little girl, perhaps hoping to have a child like her one day with the woman he was then courting, longtime friend Maria Bicknell. Constable's biographer wrote that Constable's "fondness for children exceeded, indeed, that of any man I ever knew."[1] In a letter to Maria dated August 21, 1816, Constable describes his visit to Wivenhoe Park and notes that Major-General Rebow had in fact commissioned two paintings, one of the estate and one of a small building on the estate grounds, both of which were to include references to Mary Rebow: "…the heroine of all these scenes."[2] The commissions were essentially early marriage gifts to Constable, as the Rebows were well aware that he was saving money to pay for his wedding to Maria, whose grandfather had threatened to disinherit her if she insisted on marrying the financially unstable artist. The two were married on October 2, 1816, less than a month after Constable completed Wivenhoe Park, Essex.

With impending fatherhood on his mind, Constable was aware of the stakes for Major-General Rebow and his daughter. Rebow wanted to secure his legacy and ensure future security for his daughter, yet in this transitional period of history he had no idea what young Mary Rebow's future would look like, only that her life could not resemble his. Asking Constable to include her in his painting was one way for the Major-General to ensure that Mary was always present in the bucolic landscape she grew up in,

regardless of what might come of that landscape in the future. Furthermore, with the inclusion of such small details like the young girl's scarf, the canvas rewards those viewers who actually knew the family and the estate, and could recognize those references, creating a deeper meaning for the Rebow family and their intimates.



Figure **13.8.2.152**: Seam where the artist added additional canvas, visible in white shirt (detail), John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, 1816, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 101.2 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Wivenhoe Park, Essex is a record of a particular location at a particular moment in time, but also a nostalgic image of the English past, a past that never quite existed. Humans tend to remember the past as far more positive or negative than it may have actually been and *Wivenhoe Park, Essex* is no exception. The artist rearranged the landscape to create a more harmonious image. For example, the lake and house would not have been visible in the same view in real life. Additionally, at some point during his painting process Constable extended the canvas on both sides to include additional details, such as a hunting lodge on the far right. The seams created where the new pieces of canvas were stitched onto the existing fabric are visible running through the figure of the young boy wearing a white shirt in the boat on the right side of the painting, and on the left through the neck of the black cow in the left foreground.

Prelude to six-footers

Less than two years after completing *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*, Constable embarked on the process of painting a series of monumental landscape paintings of the Stour River Valley, known as his "six-footers," a name which referred to the width of the canvases. At 40 years of age when he married Maria Bicknell in 1816, Constable was still seeking the honor of election to the Royal Academy—the surest indicator of professional success for an artist working in England. *Wivenhoe Park, Essex* serves as a precursor to those massive canvases, allowing the artist to practice organizing a series of complex landscape details, vignettes of daily life, and a visceral depiction of elements, like sun and wind, into one coherent composition.

The "six-footers" vaulted Constable to greater popular acclaim, and eventually he was elected to the Royal Academy in 1829. *Wivenhoe Park, Essex* remained in possesion of the Rebow family until 1906, and Wivenhoe Park itself until 1902. Perhaps ironicly, considering Major-General Rebow's apprehension of the forthcoming industrial age and the nostalgia radiating from Constable's canvas, Wivenhoe Park is now owned by the University of Essex, and the stately Wivenhoe House featured in the center of the painting is now a four-star luxury hotel, used to train university students studying for a career in hospitality.

1. Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, esq., RA* (Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845), p. 77.

2. Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, esq., RA* (Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845), p. 73.

Additional resources:

Constable's *Wivenhoe Park, Essex* at the National Gallery of Art

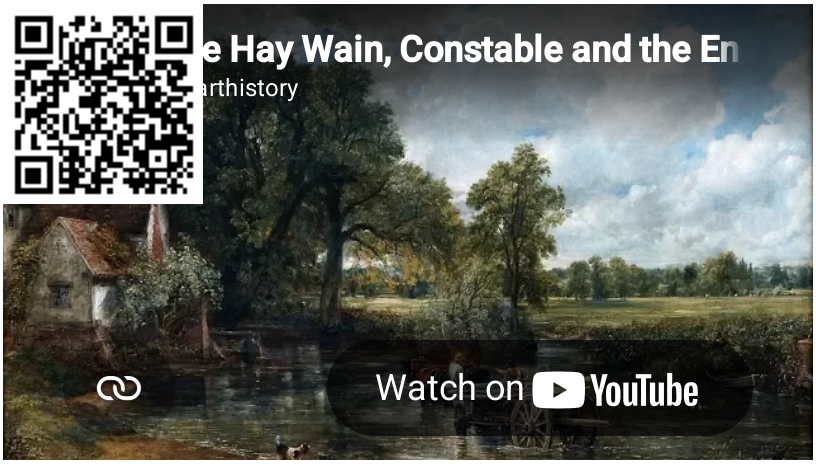
View this work up close on the Google Art Project

Video from The National Gallery of Art about Constable's *Wivenhoe Park, Essex*

John Constable on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

John Constable, *The Hay Wain*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.2.12**: John Constable, *The Hay Wain (Landscape: Noon)*, 1821, oil on canvas, 130.2 x 185.4 cm (The National Gallery, London). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

This painting at The National Gallery

John Constable at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Graham Reynolds, *Constable's England* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



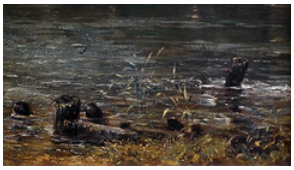




















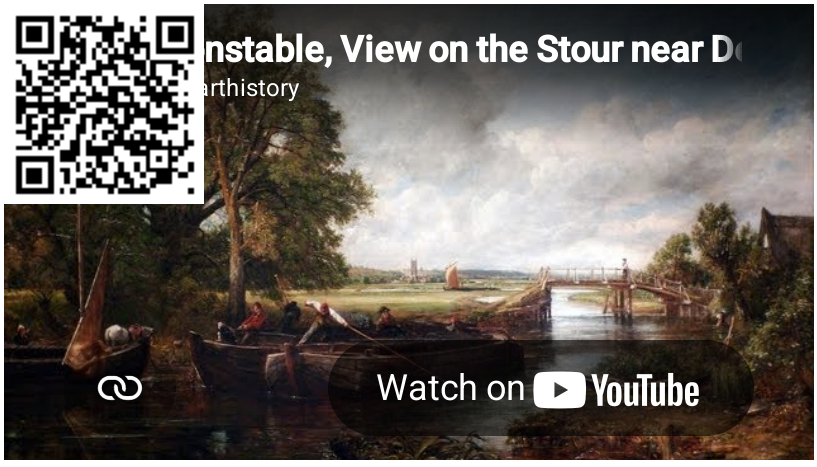




Figure 13.8.2.153: More Smarthistory images…

John Constable, *View on the Stour near Dedham*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.2.13: John Constable, *View on the Stour near Dedham*, 1822, oil on canvas, 51 x 74″ (The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

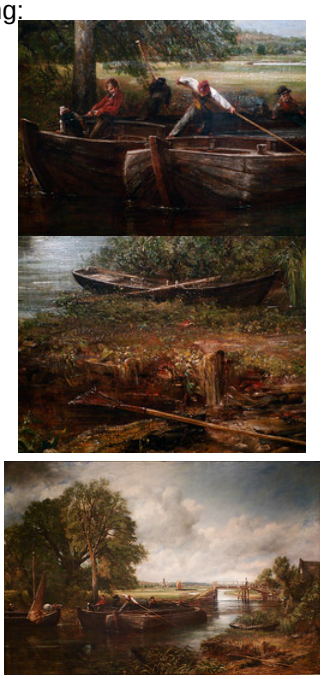


Figure 13.8.2.154: More Smarthistory images…

John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*

by BEN POLLITT

A Romantic scientist

For Constable "Truth (in all things)" was what mattered. Not for him Turner's clash of elemental forces – land, sea, sun and sky – creating those highly dramatic, almost abstract fields of color. Constable instead pursued an art that was, in his own words, "legitimate, scientific, mechanical."

That the same artist could declare, without fear of contradiction, that "painting is but another word for feeling" should not surprise us. For what we might see as a conflict between the scientific and the emotional was for the Romantics nothing of the kind. For them reason and emotion informed and enhanced each other, so that truth gained through the filter of personal experience was considered of a higher order than that got by slavish reference to universal laws.



Figure 13.8.2.155: John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831, oil on canvas, 151.8 x 189.9 cm (National Gallery, London, on loan from a private collection)

The sky

In this sense, Constable was a great empiricist, scrupulous in his recordings of natural phenomena but artistically aware enough to appreciate that these recordings were deeply informed by his own emotional being. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his

treatment of the sky. “The sky is the source of light in Nature,” he wrote, “and it governs everything.” Certainly it is one of the most intriguing features in *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*. Before getting on to that, though, the first question to ask is why Salisbury?

Constable and Salisbury

“I should paint my own places best,” Constable once said, referring to the Suffolk landscape he grew up in and which he painted with an almost religious devotion. Yet in the course of his life, Salisbury too became one his “own places”.



Figure **13.8.2.156**: John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop’s Garden*, 1826, oil on canvas, 88.9 x 112.4 cm (Frick Collection, New York)

He first visited this small city in the west of England in 1811 on the invitation of the Bishop, one of his first and most important patrons, for whom he painted *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop’s Gardens*, a version of which can be found in New York’s Frick Collection. Over the years he made many more trips producing over 300 paintings and watercolors of the area.

It was in Salisbury, too, that the painter formed his closest friendship with the Bishop’s nephew John Fisher: “we loved each other,” Constable wrote towards the end of his life, “and confided in each other entirely.”

“Church under a cloud”

It was to Fisher that he turned after the great shock of losing his wife in the autumn of 1828, making the trip west in the spring of 1829. It was Fisher, too, who suggested the title for his next painting: “Church under a cloud,” a title which, though in the end was rejected, is still helpful in understanding Constable’s motivations.



Figure **13.8.2.157**: William Heath, *Protestant Descendency – a Pull at the Church*, 1829, hand-colored etching on paper, 26.1 x 36.9 cm (The British Museum, London)

A caricature by William Heath from 1829 hints at what Fisher was getting at. In it we find the Prime Minister, Lord Wellington, and others pulling down the steeple of a church (here representing the Anglican Church, or the Church of England), while a Catholic monk holds a lighted candle in one hand and trails gunpowder from his other, with the intent of blowing the rest of it up.

The image refers to the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, which allowed Catholics to sit in Parliament; a just and reasonable decision one might think, yet as the caricature shows not everyone agreed, including Fisher and Constable, who saw it as an assault on the fabric of the British establishment, the latter describing it as the 'greatest mischief' of Wellington's government. Perhaps this is why Constable painted the sky as he did, bearing ominously down on that masterpiece of English religious architecture., the very embodiment of the Church of England.

So what are we to make of it? – that Constable was a religiously intolerant, political reactionary, doggedly opposed to reform and the granting of rights to what had for centuries been an oppressed minority? Most probably that is true. But then having abandoned Fisher's suggested title in favour of the less politically charged *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, it seems equally likely that Constable was keen to avoid such a narrow reading of his work.

Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows

Turning back to the painting itself, the scene depicts Salisbury Cathedral across the River Avon. The vantage point was well-considered. For many months Constable produced pencil and oil sketches from different viewpoints in preparation for the final design. In the end, we are presented with a sort of a composite construction based on these, with topographical features artfully maneuvered into position, such as Leadenhall where the rainbow ends and the church of St Thomas to the left, neither of which are visible from this viewpoint.

Yet for all its contrivances, the painting still retains an extraordinary sense of vitality, more so than the Frick painting, for example, with its meticulously observed topography and those picturesque recessional markers such as the framing foliage or the three neatly placed cows. In *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadow* the viewer is instead guided sinuously backwards and forwards in the picture space through a stimulating interplay of line and curve.

Up close Constable's painterly method is even more impressive. Using palette knife and brush, the effects are truly breathtaking. Indeed, few artists have shown such an extraordinary facility for capturing the textures of the natural world.

"I mean more than the rainbow itself"

It is the rainbow though that captivates, the first in any of Constable's paintings. It came as an afterthought, as x-rays of the painting show. But what an afterthought! In one masterstroke Constable negotiates a multitude of difficulties. Compositionally it unites the various elements of the painting, softening the horizon and creating rich echoes with the curve of the river and the undulating line of the large tree to the right that is carried through the cart and horses.



Figure **13.8.2.158**: John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831, oil on canvas, 151.8 x 189.9 cm (National Gallery, London, on loan from a private collection)

But that is not all. In 1834 he gave a series of lectures on the history of landscape painting. Alluding to rainbows painted by the Baroque artist Peter Paul Rubens, he stated: "I mean more than the rainbow itself, I mean dewy light and freshness, the departing

shower, with the exhilaration of the returning sun." The rainbow then generates feelings of "freshness" and "exhilaration", as well as capturing that ceaseless mutability of the forces of nature, that like the tide, depart and return.

That the base of the rainbow is situated at Leadenhall where John Fisher lived and Constable had stayed, reveals also something of its personal significance, made all the more poignant in that a year after the painting was exhibited Fisher died at the age of forty-four.

Lastly, one senses that with the rainbow bounding the cathedral as boldly as it does, Constable invites us to consider traditional Christian iconography. The storm has passed and whatever it may stand for: the Papist (Catholic) threat to the Church of England, the artist's own religious uncertainty or, as many have argued, his deep sense of desolation at the loss of his wife, the rainbow that marks its passing carries with it more benign associations: God's pardon and reconciliation with man (as in after the Flood) or the promise of peace after the storm of life (as in the Resurrection).

Conclusion

If for Turner the sun was god, for Constable it was the sky; a sort of sustained autobiography written in the clouds. They are also beautifully observed. As for the rainbow, containing the colors of the spectrum in a single stroke, what better summation of Constable's powers as an artist, the ultimate painterly gesture, conveying the fullest expression of the compass of his art?

Additional resources:

A Preliminary Sketch of *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* in the Tate Britain, London

Short biography of the artist from The National Gallery, London

Frick Collection video: *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden*

John Constable on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

New York Times Topics on John Constable

J. M. W. Turner

J. M. W. Turner, *The Harbor of Dieppe*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.8.2.159**: J.M.W. Turner, *The Harbor of Dieppe*, c. 1826, oil on canvas, 173.7 x 225.4 cm (Frick Collection, New York)

Visually audacious

A compulsive experimenter, Turner was a thorny devil; a painter whose work ranks among the most visually audacious that any British artist has ever produced and yet, across the age groups, across the social divides, he is still the country's most celebrated and indeed most cherished artist. We love him because he challenges us, dares us even, to keep looking; and the more he does so, the more we look; and the more we look, the more deeply we fall in love.

And then of course there is the sheer volume of his output. In scope and in scale he managed to churn out a seemingly endless stream of dazzlingly beautiful paintings, treating an equally dazzling range of subjects: battle scenes, shipwrecks, avalanches and snow storms. This painting, though, is quieter, more subdued, which is partly what draws me to it. In many ways, the story it tells is less about a place, the Harbor of Dieppe, than it is about Turner's increasing fascination with the dramatic effects of sunlight.

The harbor of Dieppe

Turner completed the painting in 1826, a year after exhibiting it in the Royal Academy, along with its companion piece *Cologne: The Arrival of a Packet Boat: Evening*, the one set at dawn, the other at dusk. As with most of his paintings, the composition was drawn from sketches made in situ, these dating back to his 1821 trip to France.



Figure **13.8.2.160**: Waterfront (detail), J.M.W. Turner, *The Harbor of Dieppe*, c. 1826, oil on canvas, 173.7 x 225.4 cm (Frick Collection, New York)

Dieppe Harbor (on the coast of Northern France) at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a bustling commercial hub. Turner delights in capturing the throng, populating the waterfront with crowds of people going about their daily business, some industrious, others less so. To the right, a sluice flows into the sea through an outlet on the harbor's wall reminding us of the polluting effects of the crowd's activities, a point intensified by the numerous empty bottles of alcohol littered on the harbor's edge.

That marvelous sun

These references to the mundane and the sordid are not, however, what first strikes us about the painting, rather it is that marvelous sun, creating a great ball of light in the sky which spreads out like a sheet of gold across the surface of the water. Art historians argue that Turner's fascination with light during this period was inspired by a visit to Italy he made in 1819. Turner's contemporaries noted this as well. Some in fact criticized him for transposing a Mediterranean light onto a Northern European setting, a criticism that reveals a tendency to idealize the Italian countryside as some kind of pastoral idyll in contrast to the more industrialized landscape of the north.

Turner himself was probably sympathetic to this view and the painting can be read as a Romantic response to the expansion of international commerce that followed the Napoleonic wars. While the water facilitates trade, allowing the free flow of capital, the gloriously sublime quality of the sun serves to remind us that we are not the ones in control. The light overwhelms us, short-circuits our powers of visual deduction so that we are constantly distracted from the bevy of everyday activity that it is actually taking place and are forced to experience the scene in an emotional and very personal way.

Turner and Claude

In its composition, Turner draws heavily on the work of the seventeenth century French painter Claude Lorrain, an influence that was not lost on some of the more sympathetic contemporary reviewers:



Figure 13.8.2.161: Claude Lorrain, *Port Scene with the Villa Medici*, 1638, oil on canvas, 102 x 133 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

"Not even Claude in his happiest efforts, has exceeded the brilliant composition before us," wrote one. As in Claude's Port Scene with the Villa Medici, a painting Turner makes reference to frequently in his own work, the shadows cast by the boats to the right in *The Harbor of Dieppe* act to draw the viewer's eye into the painting, a technique known as repoussoir.

Like the Claude, the diminishing scale of the sails adds to the illusion of depth. And as with Claude's treatment of the villa, Turner has carefully worked out architectural features such as the steps at the harbor's edge and the row of houses on the right of the canvas. These create tidy orthogonals that guide us into the painting and enhance the illusion of space. Another Claudian device is the use of light to create aerial perspective, in which under the glare of the sun, objects in the distance lose their local color and merge into a pale bluish grey. This is particularly noticeable in the treatment of the church tower at Dieppe whose soft, hazy outline juxtaposes the harshness of that of the sail in the foreground to the left. This too serves to take us away, to transport us from the seedy details of life in a nineteenth century port town to something that touches the divine.

Light reigns supreme

Again and again then we come back to light, the single unifying feature that both inspires and shapes the composition. Some of Turner's contemporary commentators took exception to this and what they took to be Turner's excessive use of yellow, one even joking that he must have contracted yellow fever.



Figure 13.8.2.162: J.M.W. Turner, *Regulus*, 1828, reworked 1836, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 123.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Not one to be put off so easily, though, over the coming years he continued to experiment with dramatic light effects in his large-scale landscapes. In *Regulus* of 1828, for instance, the use of yellow has become almost blinding, shattering the horizon and carving out a singular, shimmering vertical axis into the composition.

This elemental collision in which light reigns supreme becomes an increasingly important motif in Turner's later works and whether or not his last words were indeed, as legend has it, "The sun is God," it hardly seems to matter, for in summing up Turner, no other words would seem to do.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Frick Collection

This painting in the Google Art Project

A video on this painting from the Frick Collection

NY Times Article: Homage to the Discreet Charm of Dieppe

J. M. W. Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire*

by DR. ABRAM FOX



Figure **13.8.2.163**: Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire*, 1839, oil on canvas, 90.7 x 121.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Imagine that you were born in 1950. How much has the world changed since when you were a kid? There was no internet, and no personal computers. Your parents didn't own a minivan or SUV—those didn't exist yet. Commercial airplanes were brand new. The world was still recovering from World War II, and if you lived in the United States you likely lived in mortal fear of a nuclear attack from the USSR. Life in 2013 may resemble life in 1950 in some ways, but there's no question the world is a different place, a more advanced, stranger place.

The Industrial Revolution changed everything

That was the point of view of British artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (commonly known by his initials J.M.W.) in 1839. J.M.W. Turner was born in 1775, less than a month after the start of the American Revolutionary War. He grew up in a United Kingdom whose empire stretched across the globe under the watchful eye of its navy, and whose military prowess was encouraged by a booming economy driven by the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution, between roughly 1760 and 1830, brought great positive change to Great Britain. Steam power heralded a machine age filled with factories and mechanical processes. Innovations in textile machinery increased industrial output thousands of times, iron became cheap and strong enough to become an everyday building material, and gas lamps meant people could be active at all hours of the day and night. Populations increased, consumer goods became more affordable, and the middle class exploded. There was a palpable understanding that the world was changing forever.

However, not all things improved. Even though the average income grew during the industrial age, standards of living plummeted for most, as did conditions in urban housing and in the new factories. Child labor was not only legal, it was expected. Despite its economic successes, the Industrial Revolution was not without serious problems.

Brave historical legacy



Figure **13.8.2.164**: Clarkson Frederick Stanfield, *Sketch for "The Battle of Trafalgar, and the Victory of Lord Nelson over the Combined French and Spanish Fleets," 1805*, 1833 (Tate, London). Stanfield may have depicted the Temeraire, illuminated in the foreground and flying the British flag.

Ambiguity was on Turner's mind when he began work on his painting, whose full title is *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up, 1838*. He was familiar with the namesake ship, HMS Temeraire, as were all Britons of the day. Temeraire was the hero of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, where Napoleon's forces were defeated, and which secured British naval dominance for the next century.

By the late 1830s, however, Temeraire was no longer relevant. After retiring from service in 1812 she was converted into a hulk, a ship that can float but not actually sail. She spent time as a prison ship, housing ship, and storage depot before she was finally decommissioned in 1838 and sent up the River Thames to a shipyard in London to be broken into scrap materials. That trip on the Thames was witnessed by Turner, who used it as inspiration for his famous painting.

Clash of technology

For many Britons, Temeraire was a powerful reminder of their nation's long history of military success and a living connection to the heroes of the Napoleonic Wars. Its disassembly signaled the end of an historical era. Turner celebrates Temeraire's heroic past, and he also depicts a technological change which had already begun to affect modern-day life in a more profound way than any battle.

Rather than placing Temeraire in the middle of his canvas, Turner paints the warship near the left edge of the canvas. He uses shades of white, grey, and brown for the boat, making it look almost like a ghost ship. The mighty warship is being pulled along by a tiny black tugboat, whose steam engine is more than strong enough to control its larger counterpart. Turner transforms the scene into an allegory about how the new steam power of the Industrial Revolution quickly replaced history and tradition.

Believe it or not, tugboats were so new that there wasn't even a word for what the little ship was doing to Temeraire. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Turner's title for his painting is the first ever recorded use of the word "tugged" to describe a steamship pulling another boat.

In addition to the inventive title, Turner included in the exhibition catalog the following lines of text, which he modified from a poem by Thomas Campbell's "Ye Mariners of England":

> ***The flag which braved the battle and the breeze***
> ***No long owns her***

This was literally true: Temeraire flies a white flag instead of the British flag, indicating it has been sold by the military to a private company. Furthermore, the poem acknowledges that the ship now has a different function. Temeraire used to be a warship, but no more.

Creative adaptation

In 1838 Temeraire was towed approximately 55 miles from its coastal dock to a London shipyard, and untold numbers of Britons would have witnessed the ship's final journey. However, the Temeraire they saw only lightly resembled the mighty warship depicted by Turner. In reality her masts had already been removed, as had all other ornamentation and everything else of value on the ship's exterior and interior. Only her barren shell was tugged to London.

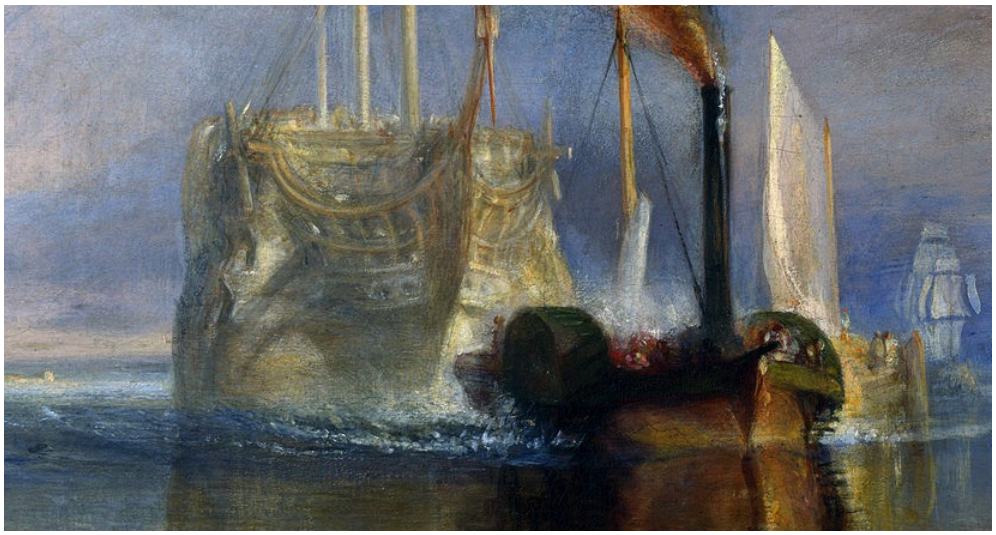


Figure **13.8.2.165**: Temeraire and tugboat (detail), Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire*, 1839, oil on canvas, 90.7 x 121.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Turner's painting doesn't show the reality of the event. He instead chose to depict Temeraire as she would have looked in the prime of her service, with all of its masts and rigging. This creates a dramatic juxtaposition between the warship and the tiny, black tugboat which controls its movements.

In fact there would have been two steamships moving Temeraire, but Turner exercised his artistic creativity to capture the emotional impact of the sight. Contemporary viewers recognized that *The Fighting Temeraire* depicts an ideal image of the ship, rather than reality.



Figure **13.8.2.166**: Accumulated paint visible in the sky (detail), Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire*, 1839, oil on canvas, 90.7 x 121.6 cm (The National Gallery, London)



Figure **13.8.2.167**: Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway*, oil on canvas, 1844 (National Gallery, London)

Strong contrast is also visible in the way Turner applied paint to the various portions of his canvas. Temeraire is highly detailed. If you were to stand inches away from the painting, you would clearly see minuscule things like individual windows, hanging ropes, and decorative designs on the exterior of the ship. However, if you looked over to the sun and clouds you would see a heavy accumulation of paint clumped on the canvas, giving it a sense of chaos and spontaneity.

Many works by Turner in this period of his life, like *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)* and *Rain Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway* (left), use the same effect, but *The Fighting Temeraire* stands out because of the naturalistic portrayal of the ship compared to the rest of the work.

The artist as a warship

Turner thought *The Fighting Temeraire* was one of his more important works. He never sold it, instead keeping it in his studio along with many of his other canvases. When he died in 1851 he bequeathed it and the rest of the paintings he owned to the nation. It quickly became seen as an image of Britain's relationship to industrialization. Steam power has proved itself to be much stronger and more efficient than old technology, but that efficiency came with the cost of centuries of proud tradition.

Beyond its national importance, *The Fighting Temeraire* is also a personal reflection by the artist on his own career. Turner was 64 when he painted it. He'd been exhibiting at the Royal Academy of Arts since he was 15, and became a member at age 24, later taking a position as Professor of Painting. However, the year before he painted *The Fighting Temeraire* Turner resigned his professorship, and largely lived in secrecy and seclusion.

Although Turner remained one of the most famous artists in England until his death, by the late 1830s he may have thought he was being superseded by younger artists working in drastically different styles. He may have become nostalgic for the country he grew up in, compared to the one in which he then lived. *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway* would reflect a similar interest in the changing British landscape several years later, focusing on the dynamic nature of technology. *The Fighting Temeraire* presents a mournful vision of what technology had replaced, for better or for worse.

Additional resources:

Turner's Fighting Temeraire feature "Painting in Depth" at The National Gallery

This painting in the collection of The National Gallery (includes audio)

"Turner's Fighting Temeraire sinks the opposition" (article in The Telegraph)

The Victorian writer, Thackeray, on this painting

J. M. W. Turner, *Slave Ship*

by LORI LANDAY and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.2.13**: Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)*, 1840 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.2.168: More Smarthistory images…

J.M.W. Turner, *Snow Storm*

by MATTHEW WILSON



Figure **13.8.2.169**: James Mallord William Turner, *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the "Ariel" left Harwich)*, 1842, oil on canvas, 91 cm × 122 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A perfect storm

From the midst of a fierce snowstorm a 200-ton paddle steamer and its human cargo dips below a cresting wave as it battles to reach shore. Our view — which could be from another boat, perhaps, or even dry land — is blurred by a miasma of snow, wind and brine. Meanwhile the boat's storm-agitated movements are evoked by a coil of black coal smoke spiraling into the sky, a mast bent by the gale, and a white vertical streak — a futile distress flare — which has been repeated several times as if its afterimage has burnt itself onto our retinas.



Figure 13.8.2.170: James Mallord William Turner, detail, *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the "Ariel" left Harwich)*, 1842, oil on canvas, 91 cm × 122 cm (Tate Britain, London)

It is a startling, aggressive, thoroughly unconventional painting, and viewers at the British Royal Academy exhibition of 1842 — where it was first displayed — were bewildered and infuriated by its modern approach to a standard genre. We may empathize with the outrage if we compare *Snow Storm* to other nineteenth-century paintings of disasters at sea, like Théodore Gericault's ***The Raft of the Medusa*** (1819).

In the Turner, clarity is exchanged for an expressive, almost abstract painterly execution. The painting's visual structure is based around a swirling vortex rather than a stable pyramidal composition. It is also a virtually monochromatic image where sea and sky merge and spatial depth is hard to gauge. And rather than maintaining a consistent technique across the painting, Turner chopped and changed his approach — underpainting with oils mixed with turpentine to achieve a hazy watercolor effect, then using thick paint applied with a hog's-hair brush and palette knife to generate rapid, gestural and broken slashes of color over the top. In other paintings he swiped, smeared and scratched at the surfaces he worked on, sometimes even spitting at them in an energetic frenzy. Turner's violent techniques are well matched to the turbulent subject matter of this painting.



Figure **13.8.2.171**: Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818-19, oil on canvas, 4.91 x 7.16m (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

The relationship between title and image is also instructive. The painting's name is extended and highly detailed, suggesting a record of a very particular maritime event, witnessed by the artist. Turner's aim appears to be to show us that this is not merely artistic free-styling or an example of "art for art's sake" (as Théophile Gautier had put it in 1835), rather it is a serious attempt to see nature truly and transcribe it afresh. At the same time its focus on a moment of high jeopardy in the face of nature's wrath invites us to contemplate broader themes such as humanity's struggle for rationality and sensory certainty in a world underwritten by chaos.

A painting of revolutions

Turner was knowledgeable about art history and throughout his career aimed to honor and emulate famous artists from the past such as **Claude**, **Titian**, and **Rubens**. At the same time, he also sought novel visual experiences, leading him to take an interest in contemporary events and modern technology. One such novelty were coal-powered steamboats, like the one depicted in *Snow Storm*, which came into widespread use in 1812, supplanting the use of sails and oars which had been used for the previous 4000 years of human history.

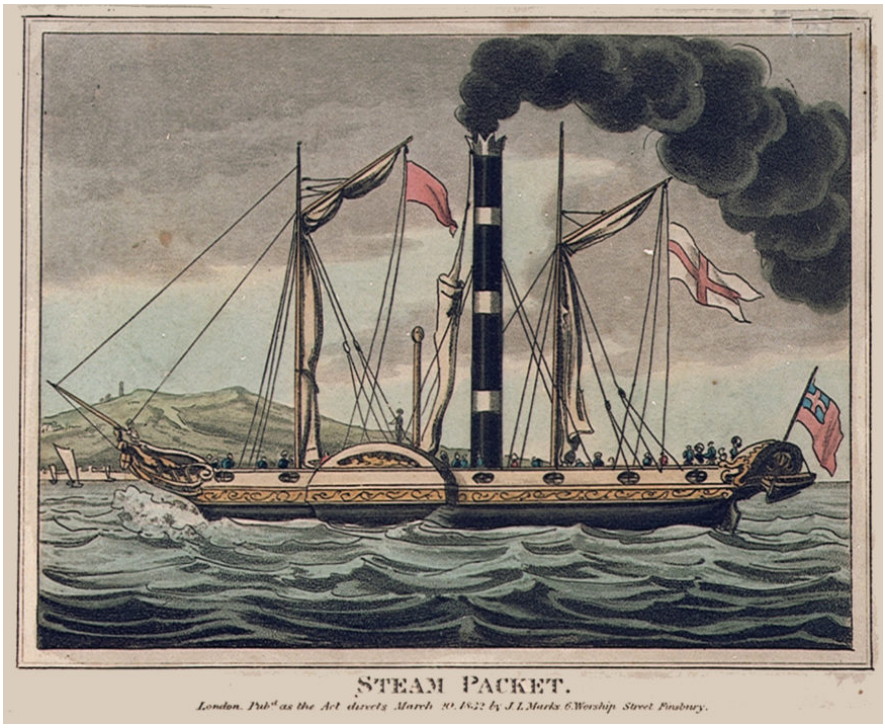


Figure 13.8.2.172: Steam Packet, 1832, aquatint, 15.4 x 18.9 cm (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London)

This change was just one that had defined the Industrial Revolution, a historical event which marked a pivotal change in society and humanity's relationship with nature. One revelation was that nature was filled with energy, stored in matter such as coal and water, which could be unleashed and controlled to further human aspirations. Thus *Snow Storm* shows a modern appreciation of the landscape, in which all matter is surging with dynamic but untapped forces. This is not a triumph though: Turner has belittled the Industrial Revolution's newest technology by subjecting it to the far greater might of nature.

The philosophy of fear

Like a disaster movie, Turner's painting transforms a natural catastrophe — with death a near-certainty — into entertainment. "When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible" Edmund Burke had written in 1757, "but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful." [1] This morbid delight was given a name by Burke: the "sublime," a condition of controlled terror, produced by a confrontation with nature's overwhelming power. The reason that "sublime" art is appealing is probably because it contextualizes the audience's own small stresses and anxieties by showing them the magnitude of the "bigger picture." Turner was well aware of Burke's theory of aesthetics and has become one of the most renowned advocates of the "sublime" in painting.



Figure **13.8.2.173**: James Mallord William Turner, *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the "Ariel" left Harwich)*, 1842, Oil on canvas, 91 cm × 122 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Turner later claimed in conversation that before painting *Snow Storm* he strapped himself to the mast of a ship and asked the owner to sail into a storm for four hours. This, and the claim to first-hand experience made in the title, urge us to regard Turner as a swashbuckling figure who fearlessly confronted the sublime in the name of art. However, as Barry Venning has pointed out, Turner was 65 in 1842, and according to historical records no ship called the Ariel sailed from Harwich at this time.

Fake though his story may have been, Turner's self-mythologizing is still of interest, as it connects him to a broader cultural movement: **Romanticism**. This loose-knit intellectual phase in art, literature and music rebelled against **Neoclassicism** (which had been more focused on the intellect, collective responsibility, and controlled emotions) and instead put the focus on emotive responses, individual feelings and the overwhelming power of nature. Turner's tall tale situates him as a prime exemplar of this self-oriented and expressive artistic tendency.

Legacy

This painting, like many others by Turner, split contemporary opinions. It certainly came under attack from many critics, one of whom called Snow Storm mere "soapsuds and whitewash" (i.e. dishwater and house-paint). On the other hand, English art critic John Ruskin called the painting "one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light, that has ever been put on canvas." [2] Ruskin later famously called Turner "the father of modern art."

A positive consensus about Turner's reputation has grown and strengthened significantly since the mid-nineteenth century: the artist has been dedicated an entire separate section in Tate Britain known as the Clore Gallery. Britain's most prestigious contemporary art prize — the "Turner Prize" is also named in his honor, and in February 2020 he was commemorated on the reverse of the new £20 banknote.



Figure **13.8.2.174**: 2020 £20 banknote honoring J.M.W. Turner

Turner's bold, expressive techniques influenced French more than British art in the nineteenth century, with Claude Monet and the Impressionists especially admiring his pioneering and experimental techniques and representation of light. In the twentieth century, Abstract Expressionists like **Mark Rothko**, **Jackson Pollock**, and **Barnett Newman** were influenced directly or indirectly by Turner's handling of paint and his engagement with "sublime" subject matter.

Notes:

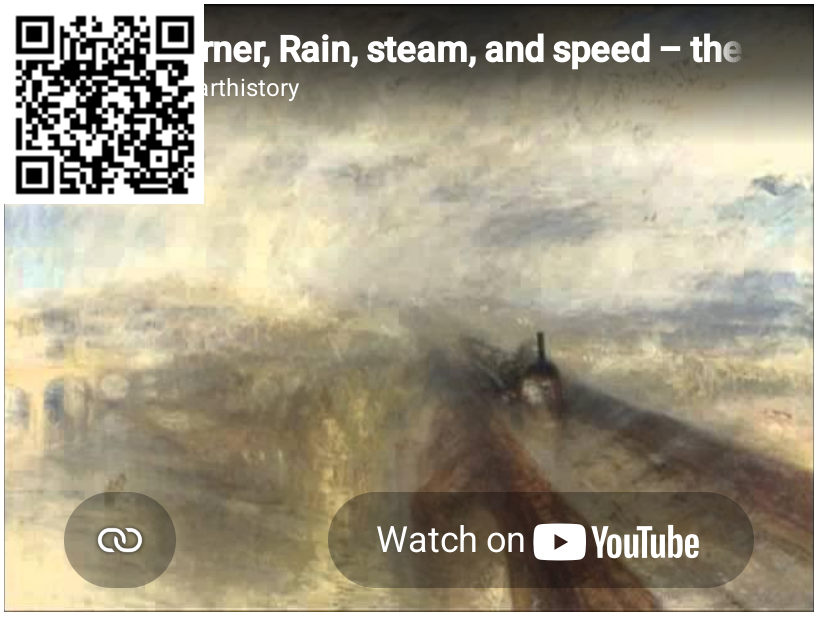
1. Burke, Edmund, *Burke's philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful: with an introductory discourse concerning taste* (London: J.F. Dove, 1827), p. 34.
2. Ruskin, John., *Modern painters. Volume I. containing Parts I. and II. Of general principles, and Of truth* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1867), p. 359.

Additional resources:

J.M.W. Turner at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

J. M. W. Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed — The Great Western Railway*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.2.14**: Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed — The Great Western Railway*, oil on canvas, 1844 (National Gallery, London)

Rain, Steam, and Speed — The Great Western Railway was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844. It depicts the Maidenhead Railway Bridge (completed 1838) looking east, across the River Thames between Taplow and Maidenhead.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

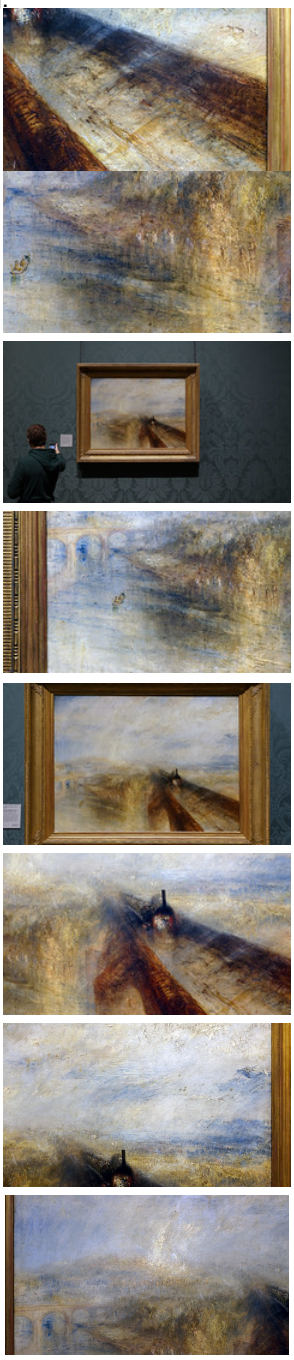
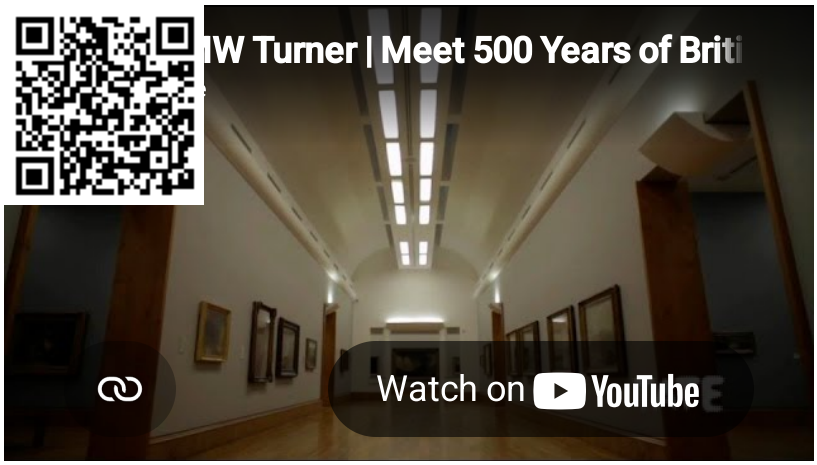


Figure 13.8.2.175: More Smarthistory images…

J.M.W. Turner at Tate Britain

by TATE



Video 13.8.2.15: Video from Tate.

John Martin, *The Great Day of His Wrath*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.2.176: John Martin, *The Great Day of His Wrath*, 1851-53, oil on canvas, 197 x 303 cm (Tate Britain)

From the sublime to the ridiculous?

For some critics, in the hands of John Martin, the sublime (see note at the bottom of the page) in British landscape painting had slipped irrevocably into the ridiculous. For others, his work is innovative and exciting, a masterful re-energising of the landscape genre, and for evidence, they point to perhaps his most famous work, *The Great Day of His Wrath.*



Figure 13.8.2.177: 2012 (Columbia Pictures, 2009)

Whatever one's aesthetic judgement of Martin's work, it is hard to ignore the echoes it finds in today's popular culture—think of all the big-budget apocalyptic films with their over-the-top special effects. Like the once popular sermons invoking hellfire and brimstone, there has always been a popular appetite for doomsday scenarios and the more vividly brought to life the better.

What Martin added to these old religious formulas was a new and distinctly scientific dimension. He also utilized the traditional formulas of landscape painting—in the same way as films such as *2012* use cinematic conventions to address contemporary anxieties about the changing environment and the effect that man has on it.



Figure 13.8.2.178: Detail. John Martin, The Great Day of His Wrath, 1851-53, oil on canvas, 197 x 303 cm (Tate Britain)

Part of a triptych of 'judgement pictures' inspired by the description of the Last Judgement in the Book of Revelation, *The Great Day of His Wrath* depicts this terrifying passage: "there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became as blood. And the heaven departed as a scroll… and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

That Martin also worked as a theatre set designer is hardly surprising; in its large scale, its dynamic composition and its dramatic use of light and dark the painting is nothing if not spectacular. But then that was the idea.



Figure **13.8.2.179**: John Martin, *The Plains of Heaven*, 1851-3, oil on canvas, 198.8 x 306.7 cm (Tate Britain)



Figure **13.8.2.180**: John Martin, *The Last Judgement*, 1853, oil on canvas, 196.8 x 325.8 cm (Tate Britain)

A Victorian audience would have paid to see this painting together with its two companion pieces, *The Plains of Heaven* (1851-3) and *The Last Judgement* (1853). Seated in rows of chairs, just like in a theatre, they would have waited in darkness for the performance to begin. Then the lights would go up, and using the latest technical gadgetry, forms in each of the paintings would be spotlighted: the lightning flash, the rolling mountain top with the ancient temple falling, the Whore of Babylon (a figure of evil mentioned in the Book of Revelation) lurching toward Hell's Mouth. Accompanying this visual spectacle were sound effects and a blood-and-thunder script that would be read out by voices offstage.

It is hard to imagine when looking at the painting in the context of a modern picture gallery or on the Internet, but originally it would have been experienced more like a piece of theatre than a work of art. Such immersive spectacles were common in England at the time. In the early 1820's, Gericault's exhibited *The Raft of the Medusa* in London where it was similarly sold to the public as a visual spectacle rather than a revolutionary work of art. With no buyer for the painting in Paris, it was a shrewd financial move on Gericault's part to have it shipped over.

As for Martin's works, the exhibition was a triumph and went on with continuing success to tour across Europe and America. Sadly, though, Martin suffered a stroke after finishing the last of the three paintings, and he died soon afterwards.

Dark satanic mills?

Recently critics have tended to read *The Great Day of His Wrath* as a comment on the impact of industrialization, a point supported by the testimony of Martin's son, who said that his father was inspired to paint the scene after making a journey at night through the "Black Country," one of the most intensely industrialized areas in England at the time. A Londoner himself, the sorry state of the capital was also probably on Martin's mind. In the middle of the nineteenth century, London was a pretty hellish place to live.

The "dark satanic mills" that the poet William Blake wrote of and the new factories and machinery of the industrial age had replaced farms and wrecked rural communities. Meanwhile, the population of cities across Western Europe and American exploded at a terrifying rate, causing slum dwellings, extreme poverty, and poor sanitation.



Figure **13.8.2.181**: John Martin, *Pandemonium*, 1841, oil on canvas, 123 x 184 cm (Private Collection)

The Thames itself, the source of London's water supply, also caused the deaths of hundreds every week from cholera during periods of epidemic. Something had to done and in the late 1820s Martin took it upon himself to do it, submitting a proposal to parliament which provided a detailed plan for the construction of a sewage system that would help remedy the crisis. His plans were rejected.



Figure **13.8.2.182**: Charles Barry and A. Welby Pugin, Houses of Parliament, Begun 1836, London (England)

As a belated repost, perhaps, in 1841, he painted *Pandemonium* in which Milton's Satan stands before his diabolical city, a river of lava running past it. The design of the building bears an uncanny resemblance to that of the as yet uncompleted Houses of Parliament situated right on the banks of the foul and pestilential Thames.

Painting in the age of Darwin

In addition to civil engineering, Martin was preoccupied with new and emerging branches of scientific inquiry, including geology and paleontology. As an illustrator of natural history (typically Victorian, he liked to keep himself busy), he created imaginative reconstructions of dinosaur species based on fossil remains. In *The Great Day of His Wrath* the earth assumes a monstrous aspect, the tumbling boulders like the colossal jaws of a giant primordial beast devouring itself.



Figure **13.8.2.183**: Detail, John Martin, *The Great Day of His Wrath*, 1851-53, oil on canvas, 197 x 303 cm (Tate Britain)

For Martin, this new vision of a dynamic, pre-historic Earth, constantly shifting and evolving, was a spur to the artistic imagination. Painting in the age of Darwin, his biblical/scientific works, like *The Great Day of His Wrath*, serve also to illustrate contemporary debates among theologians and scientists concerning the historical accuracy of Biblical sources. Geological studies in rock strata challenged theologians who used the Bible to calculate that the world was a mere six thousand years old. The notion that strange and unknown species might once have walked the earth would have been shocking to those that believed that the natural world reflected a divine and unchangeable model.

A note on the sublime

The "sublime" is a key concept in the history of art. The word itself dates back to the ancient Greek writer Longinus, who put forward the idea that art should not just be well formed but also sublime, that is to say capable of moving or transporting us emotionally. For examples of this he points to the epic poetry of Homer and Virgil.

The modern meaning of the word, used to describe that which inspires awe and terror gained currency in the middle of the Eighteenth Century and was defined first by the Irish philosopher and politician, Edmund Burke. Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) is a crucial text in establishing notions of the Sublime. The Beautiful, according to Burke, is what is well-formed and aesthetically pleasing, whereas the Sublime is what has the power to compel and destroy us. The preference for the Sublime over the Beautiful was to mark the transition from the Neoclassical to the Romantic era.

Other philosophers sought to define the meaning of the sublime including Immanuel Kant and later, Arthur Schopenhauer. In his book *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), Schopenhauer outlined the difference between Beauty and the Sublime as follows:

Feeling of Beauty – Light is reflected off a flower. (Pleasure from a mere perception of an object that cannot hurt observer).

Weakest Feeling of Sublime – Light reflected off stones. (Pleasure from beholding objects that pose no threat, yet themselves are devoid of life).

Weaker Feeling of Sublime – Endless desert with no movement. (Pleasure from seeing objects that could not sustain the life of the observer).

Sublime – Turbulent Nature. (Pleasure from perceiving objects that threaten to hurt or destroy observer).

Full Feeling of Sublime – Overpowering turbulent Nature. (Pleasure from beholding very violent, destructive objects).

Fullest Feeling of Sublime – Immensity of Universe's extent or duration. (Pleasure from knowledge of observer's nothingness and oneness with Nature).

Additional resources:

This painting in the Tate Britain

The two works that, together with this one, form the triptych: *The Last Judgment* and *The Plains of Heaven*

Derided Painter John Martin makes a Dramatic Comeback (The Guardian)

Biography of the artist at Tate Britain

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

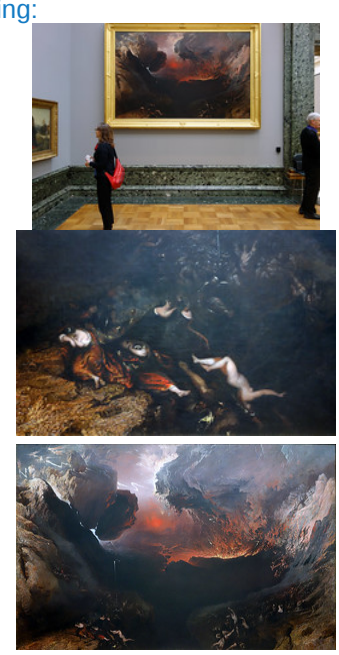


Figure 13.8.2.184: More Smarthistory images…

John Nash, Royal Pavilion, Brighton

by MICHAEL JOHN PARTINGTON



Figure 13.8.2.185: John Nash, Royal Pavilion, Brighton (England), 1815-23 (photo: **Xgkkp**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

"How can one describe such a piece of architecture?"

> ***"How can one describe such a piece of architecture? The style is a mixture of Moorish, Tartar, Gothic, and Chinese and all in stone and iron. It is a whim which has already cost £700,000, and it is still not fit to live in."[1]***

Such was the verdict of the Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich on the eclectic, exotic and sensuous Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

While not all the contemporary reactions to the Pavilion were critical, John Evans, for example, admired it for both its "beauty" and "grandeur,"[2] it was a building which provoked a predominantly critical response in Regency England (in political terms the period from 1811 to 1820 when George, Prince of Wales—future George IV—ruled in place of his ailing father George III; and in cultural terms up until the death of George IV in 1830). *The New Brighton Guide* called it a "masterpiece of bad taste" while the Comtesse de Boigne declared it a "mad-house."[3] And when Queen Victoria first visited the Royal Pavilion in 1837, she noted, "The Pavilion is a strange, odd, Chinese looking place, both outside and inside. Most of the rooms are low, and I can see a morsel of the sea, from one of my sitting room windows."[4]



Figure 13.8.2.186: John Nash, Royal Pavilion, Brighton, 1815-23 (photo (edited): Jim Linwood, CC BY 2.0)

The patron: The Prince Regent

The ostensible aesthetic randomness of the Pavilion is best comprehended as the material expression of the profligate and rebellious life of its extraordinary benefactor, the Prince Regent, the future George IV, undoubtedly the greatest royal patron of the arts since King Charles I. A man of easy wit and charm, as well as political indolence and questionable morals, the Prince was the touchstone of style for the fashion-conscious Georgian elite of the day. He first visited the seaside resort of Brighton in 1783 to benefit from its reputedly medicinal waters. Captivated by the picturesque promise of the area, the Prince purchased a "superior farmhouse" in 1786 and engaged the royal architect Henry Holland to convert this modest building into a Neo-Classical "marine pavilion" fit for a royal personage at play. Under the influence of the Prince Regent, William Porden, Nash's assistant, added a large stables and riding school in the Indian style which would be the decorative prototype for the "Oriental" incarnation of the Royal Pavilion by its principal architect, John Nash.

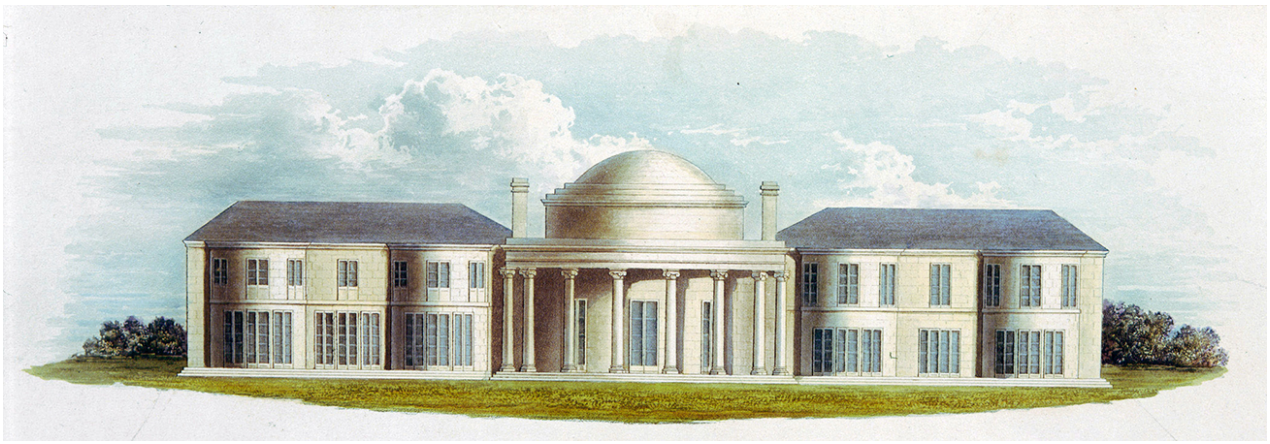


Figure 13.8.2.187: Undated print of Henry Holland's Brighton Marine Pavilion of 1786-87

The architect: John Nash

John Nash was the perfect professional partner for the Pavilion's colorful patron. Subsequently criticized for an overly fashionable and reckless approach to architectural practice, and a resultant lack of purity in the finished product, Nash had planned Regent's Street and Regent's Park in London as a celebration of the rise of the new consumer classes.

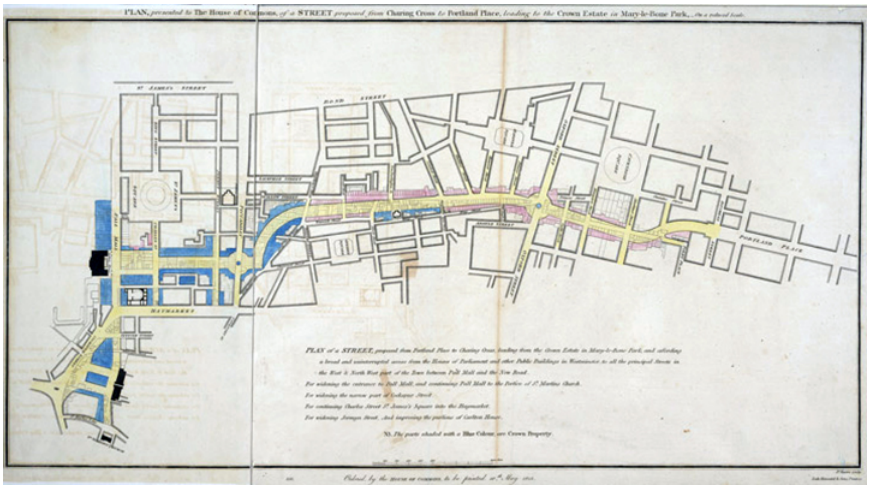


Figure **13.8.2.188**: John Nash, PLAN, presented to the House of Commons, of a STREET proposed from CHARING CROSS to PORTLAND PLACE, leading to the Crown Estate in Marylebone Park," 1813.

Nash's vision for Brighton was informed by the Prince's aesthetic sensibilities and colorful personality and the architect's own experiences of the Picturesque (the beauty inherent in unspoiled nature, as first outlined by the artist William Gilpin), as well as the aquatints of "hindoo" architecture which appeared in the six-volume *Oriental Scenery* by the landscape painters Thomas and William Daniell at the end of the 18th century. The result was the so-called "Eastern" style, comprised of an assortment of architectural and design forms and motifs taken from Britain's colonial experience of the "Orient."

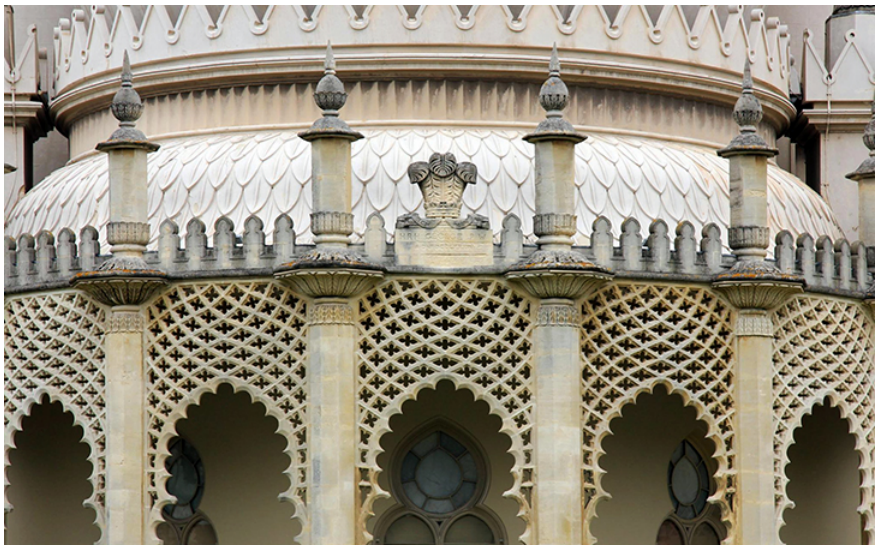


Figure **13.8.2.189**: John Nash, Royal Pavilion, Brighton, 1815-23 (photo (edited): **Karen Roe**, CC BY 2.0)

The "Eastern" style

Without denying the central agency of both the bold-thinking Nash and fashion-conscious Prince Regent in the design of the Royal Pavilion, the range and variety of architectural styles should be viewed within the context of a wider cultural tradition just then emerging. This exotic mad-house was a response to the early British Empire and its East India Company (a trading company established in 1600 with a fleet of ships and an army 200,000 strong) that facilitated the rule of the Indian sub-continent for some two hundred years and which shaped the British Empire. Here was trade from the East, a rich complex of cultural interchange, and

a fascination for the “Orient” in its widest, and loosest, colonial meaning. As the architectural historian Ian Sutton has written, in the nineteenth century, “Both [architects] and their patrons were assailed by new temptations which they found difficult to resist.”[5]



Figure 13.8.2.190: William Chambers, Great Pagoda, 1762, Kew Gardens, London (photo: Targeman, public domain)

The Pavilion was not in fact the first building in England to respond to the exotic world of the nabobs (officials who had acquired great wealth) of the East India Company (see for example William Chambers’ Great Pagoda, 1762, at Kew Gardens above, and C.P. Cockerell’s Sezincote, 1810 in Gloucestershire below).



Figure 13.8.2.191: C.P. Cockerell, Sezincote, 1810 (photo (edited): Pradeep Sanders, CC BY 2.0)

Both buildings predate the Pavilion. Moreover, juxtaposing a culturally alien interior to the exterior was not a new idea, and was in some sense a colonial interpretation of the cultures of the lands of Empire. Henry Holland’s French Neo-Classical Carlton House, 1783–96 in London, for example, boasted a fine Chinese drawing room. As such, Brighton Pavilion could be seen as the culmination of years of experimentation, rather than a one-off, stand-alone enterprise.



Figure 13.8.2.192: John Nash, Royal Pavilion, Brighton, 1815-23 (photo (edited): Tony Hisgett, CC BY 2.0)

What does mark Brighton Pavilion out from the above examples, however, is its fundamental expression of Regency England Romanticism derived from the world of letters. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's opium-fueled poem "Kubla Khan," a classic of Romantic literature, published in 1816, famously speaks of the "stately pleasure-dome" of the Mongol ruler. One of the confidants of the Prince Regent was William Beckford, notorious hedonist and author of *Vathek: An Arabian Tale* (1786), whose earlier story of the outrageous ninth Caliph of Abassides was inspired by both *The Arabian Nights* and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Oltranto* (1764), the latter being the novel that ushered in the Gothic genre in English literature. Indeed, the only true architectural precursor to the Pavilion in this Romantic Gothic tradition is probably Walpole's own *Strawberry Hill* (see image below), an early example of Gothic Revival architecture, which applies "Gothick" forms and motifs in a similarly imaginative way as the Pavilion.



Figure 13.8.2.193: Strawberry Hill House from garden in 2012 after restoration (photo: Chiswick Chap, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The "Indian" exterior

Architecturally, the "Indian" exterior owes much to C.P. Cockerell's Sezincote; however, there is in reality a significant difference which speaks of the changing fashions and the further development of exotic eclecticism in this period. Sezincote is hybridic: it retains a Neo-Classical facade (the windows and bays), whilst sporting a turquoise onion-shaped Mughul dome and minarets, typical of Islamic architecture of the Indian sub-continent, such as the Taj Mahal, and features a Hindu-inspired garden, including a temple.

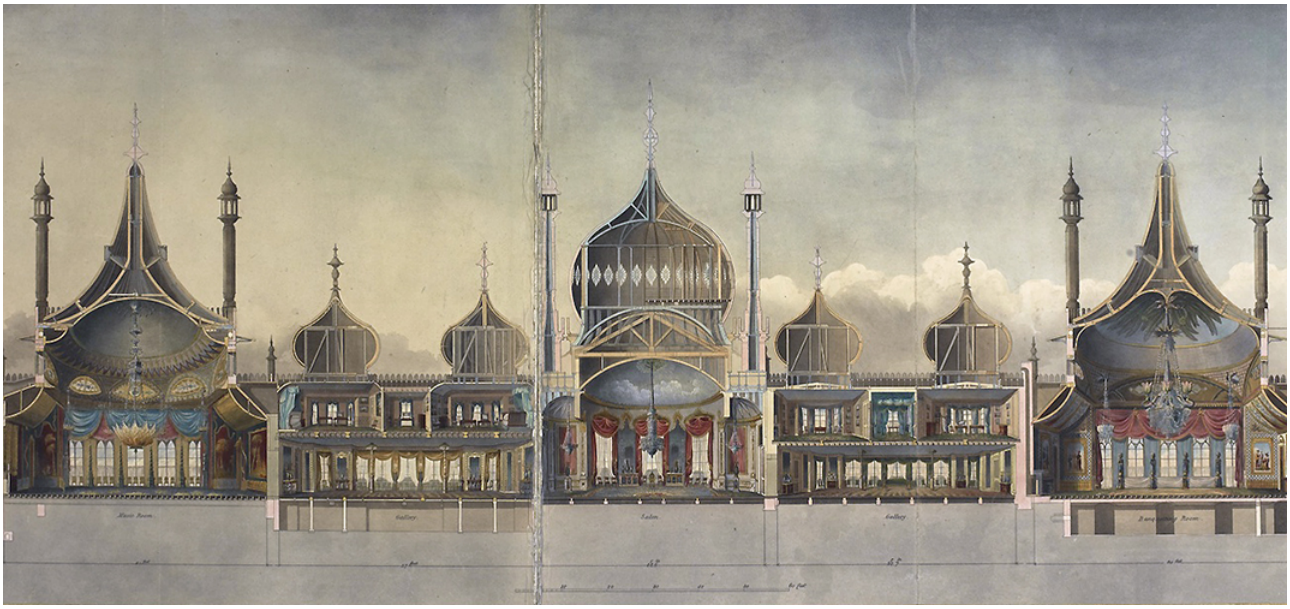


Figure 13.8.2.194: John Nash. The Royal Pavilion at Brighton (detail), 1827 © British Library Board

The Pavilion's exterior, on the other hand, is more uniformly Mughal-flavored, albeit shot through with a generic sense of the "Orient": namely the arabesque profusion of ten domes and ten minarets, supported by a cast iron frame, and the vertical thrust of the building, giving it a sense of lightness and airiness, an almost dream-like temporary tent-like quality, in opposition to the permanent horizontal-axised stout square-blockedness of Sezincote.

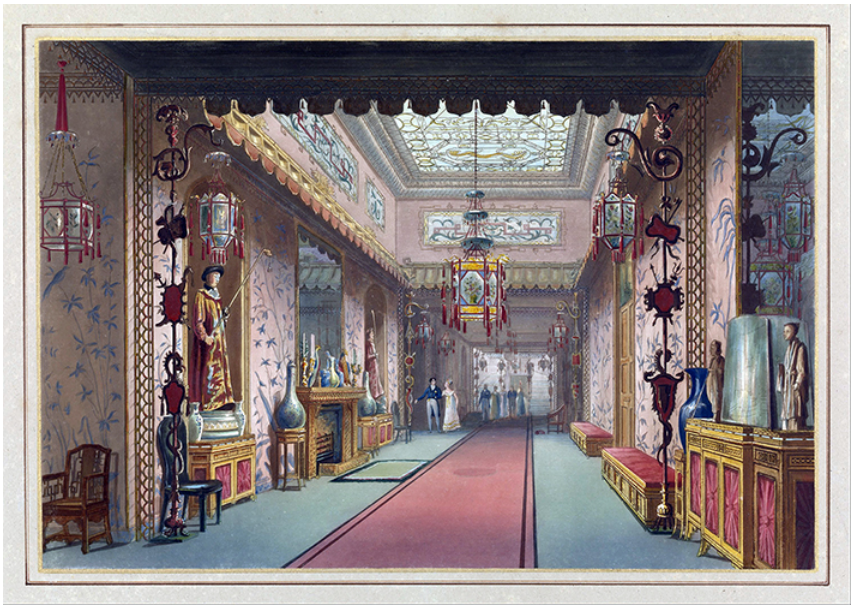


Figure 13.8.2.195: John Nash, "Chinese Gallery As It Was [Long Gallery]," Plate XV in *Illustrations of Her Majesty's Palace at Brighton*, J. B. Nichols and Son, London, 1838, etching and aquatint, brush and watercolor, letterpress on white wove paper mounted on heavy tan board, ruled lines in color and gold paint (Cooper–Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum)

The "Chinese" interior

As for the interior of the Pavilion, while England's curiosity for Chinese culture predates that of its interest in Indian civilization by almost a century, the former's application to the inside of Nash's building is complex, for we have in fact the Neo-Classical, Chinese and Gothic at work together. The Entrance Hall (see image below), for instance, is symmetrically arranged, as per the Neo-Classical; while the Long Gallery (see image above) contains a multitude of generic Chinese/Asian features ("Chinoiserie"), including the hexagonal lanterns, the silk tassels and the motif of bamboo and birds on the wallpaper, the work of interior decorator Frederick Crace.



Figure 13.8.2.196: John Nash, "Entrance Hall," *Illustrations of Her Majesty's Palace at Brighton*, J. B. Nichols and Son, London, 1838

Finally, the decoration along the cornice in the Entrance Hall, and in the Banqueting Room Gallery, is clearly related to fan-vaulting found in English medieval churches.



Figure 13.8.2.197: Music Room, Brighton Pavilion (photo (edited): **Richard Rutter**, CC BY 2.0)

Making sense of a 'mad-house'

The Royal Pavilion at Brighton in all its apparent kaleidoscopic silliness, brashness, vitality, phantasmagoric contradictions and oppositions, references, and tries—though not always succeeds—to respond to the tastes of a new fashionable elite at home and to make sense (or not) of a new world of empire abroad. Indeed, in all its range and variety, as well as in its playful eccentricities, it is quite possibly the ultimate architectural manifestation of early nineteenth-century eclecticism, as well as being the material personification of a powerful Regency personality and his private architect. The history of architecture in Britain is all the richer as a result.

1. Clifford Musgrave, *Life in Brighton*, London: Faber and Faber, 1970, p. 183.

2. John Evans, *Recreation for the Young and the Old. An Excursion to Brighton, with an Account of the Royal Pavilion […]*, Chiswick: Whittingham, 1821.

3. Anthony Pasquin, *The New Brighton Guide*, 6th Edition, 1796 and Comtesse de Boigne, *Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne*, ed. Charles Nicolland, 1907, II, (1815-19).

4. *Victoriana Magazine*, <http://www.victoriana.com/Travel/royalpavilion.htm> (1996 – 2013) [accessed 20 November 2013].

5. Ian Sutton, *Western Architecture: A Survey from Ancient Greece to the Present* (World of Art), (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000)

Additional resources:

Victoriana Magazine, "Discover the Royal Pavilion – Brighton"

De Boigne,Comtesse, *Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne*, ed. Charles Nicolland, (London: Heinemann, 1907), II, (1815-19).

Evans, John, *Recreation for the Young and the Old. An Excursion to Brighton, with an Account of the Royal Pavilion*, Chiswick: C. Whittingham, 1821.

MacKenzie, John. M, *Orientalism: history, theory and the arts* (Manchester University Press 1995).

Musgrave, Clifford, *Life in Brighton*, London, Faber and Faber, 1970.

Pasquin, Anthony, *The New Brighton Guide*, 6th Edition, (London: H.D. Symonds and T. Bellamy, 1796).

Sutton, Ian, *Western Architecture: A Survey from Ancient Greece to the Present* (World of Art), (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

Tyack, Geoffrey, "Nash, John (1752–1835)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; on-line edn.

Romanticism in Germany

Germany was home to some of Romanticism's greatest artists — Beethoven, Goethe and Friedrich.

c. 1800 - 1848

Caspar David Friedrich

Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea*

by BEN POLLITT



Video **13.8.2.16**: Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea*, 1808 or 1810, oil on canvas, 110 x 171.5 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Friedrich the modern

It seems strange now but for a while the art world turned its back on the German painter Caspar David Friedrich. Aside from being cursed with the label of Hitler's favorite artist, for much of the twentieth century the Impressionists, with their loose, painterly style, were held to be the fathers of modern art. Friedrich's work in comparison was considered too meticulous, too precise, too finely detailed to warrant serious critical attention.



Figure 13.8.2.198: Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea*, c. 1809, oil on canvas, 43″ x 67 1/2″ / 110 x 171.5 cm (Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

Over the last few decades though the tide of opinion has turned. Now it is generally accepted that both in his technical brilliance and theoretically in his views of what the purpose of art should be, Friedrich was as radical as they come. But if proof were ever needed again of his credentials as one of the great forerunners of modern art, then *The Monk by the Sea* would have to be it.

A new departure



Figure 13.8.2.199: Friedrich, *Abbey in the Oak Forest*, 1809 or 1810, oil on canvas, 110.4 x 171 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin)

Exhibited in the Academy in Berlin in 1810 along with its companion piece *Abbey in the Oak Forest*, it depicts a monk standing on the shore looking out to sea. The location has been identified as Rügen, an island off the north-east coast of Germany, a site he frequently painted.

The monk is positioned a little over a third of the way into the painting from the left, to a ratio of around 1:1.6. The same ratio can be found frequently in Western art and is known variously as the golden ration, rule or section. Aside from this nod to tradition however there is little else about this painting that can be described as conventional.

The horizon line is unusually low and stretches uninterrupted from one end of the canvas to the other. The dark blue sea is flecked with white suggesting the threat of a storm. Above it in that turbulent middle section blue-grey clouds gather giving way in the highest part to a clearer, calmer blue. The transition from one to the other is achieved subtly through a technique called scumbling in which one colour is applied in thin layers on top of another to create an ill-defined, hazy effect.

The composition could not be further from typical German landscape paintings of the time. These generally followed the principles of a style imported from England known as the picturesque which tended to employ well-established perspectival techniques

designed to draw the viewer into the picture; devices such as trees situated in the foreground or rivers winding their course, snake-like, into the distance. Friedrich however deliberately shunned such tricks. Such willfully unconventional decisions in a painting of this size provoked consternation among contemporary viewers, as his friend Heinrich von Kleist famously wrote: “Since it has, in its uniformity and boundlessness, no foreground but the frame, it is as if one’s eyelids had been cut off.”

The monk



Figure **13.8.2.200**: Monk (detail), Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea*, c. 1809

There is some debate as to who that strange figure, curved like a question mark, actually is. Some think it Friedrich himself, others the poet and theological Gotthard Ludwig Kosegarten who served as a pastor on Rügen and was known to give sermons on the shore. Kosegarten’s writings certainly influenced the painting. Von Kleist, for example, refers to its “Kosegarten effect”. According to this pastor-poet nature, like the Bible, is a book through which God reveals Himself.

Similarly, stripping it of any literal Christian symbolism, Friedrich instead concentrates on the power of the natural climate and so charges the landscape with a divine authority, one which seems to all but subsume the figure of the monk. With nothing but land, sea and sky to measure him by, his physical presence is rendered fragile and hauntingly ambiguous.

The rückenfigur



Figure **13.8.2.201**: Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, 1818, oil on canvas, 37.3 × 29.4″ / 98.4 cm × 74.8 cm (Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany)

Originally the figure was looking to the right. His feet still point in that direction. Friedrich altered this at some point, having him look out to sea. The technique of positioning a figure with their back towards the viewer is often found in Friedrich’s art; the German word for it is the rückenfigur.

Monk by the Sea, the first instance of it in his work, is somewhat atypical in that the monk being so small and situated so low on the horizon does not ‘oversee’ the landscape the way Friedrich’s ruckënfiguren generally do.

The technique is much more complex and intellectually challenging than those found in the picturesque. Acting as a visual cue, the figure draws us into the painting, prompting us, challenging us even, to follow its example and simply look. And so we do. Yet its presence also obscures our line of vision and rather than enhancing the view in the end disrupts it. In this sense, the ruckënfigur while reminding us of the infinite beauty of the world also points to our inability to experience it fully, a contradiction that we often find expressed in German Romantic art and literature.

A political statement

Napoleon's army was occupying Prussia when the painting was completed and art historians have naturally looked to read the painting and its companion, which depicts of a funeral procession in a ruined abbey, as a comment on the French occupation. It would have been dangerous to be openly critical of Napoleon's forces so the paintings' political messages are subtly coded.

Both paintings were purchased by the young Crown Prince, Frederick William, whose mother, Queen Louise, had died a few months earlier at the age of 34. An extremely popular figure, she had pleaded with Napoleon after his victory to treat the Prussian people fairly. Her death surely would have been fresh in people's minds when they saw the paintings, a tragic loss which was very much associated with the country's own defeat by the French.

The presence of death is certainly felt in *The Monk by the Sea*, though in the monk's resolute figure we also find a source of spiritual strength, defiance even, standing, like that gothic abbey and those German oaks in its pendant, as much perhaps a symbol of the resolve of the nation against the foreign military rule, as of the individual faced with his mortality.

The Romantic

Like Constable, Friedrich drew on the natural world around him, often returning to the same area again and again. Unlike the English painter's more scientific or naturalist approach, though, Friedrich condensed the image so as to communicate an exact emotion. As he put it, "a painter should paint not only what he sees before him, but also what he sees within himself." It is this inward reaching project, using color and form to reveal emotional truths, that singles him out as one of the greatest and most innovative painters of his age: a true Romantic.

Additional resources:

Friedrich in the Google Art Project

The Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

The Whispering Zeitgeist, Beat Wyss on Caspar David Friedrich (Tate Etc. Magazine)

The Casper David Friedrich Foundation

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.2.202: More Smarthistory images…

Caspar David Friedrich, *Abbey in the Oak Forest*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.2.17: Caspar David Friedrich, *Abbey in the Oak Forest*, 1809 or 1810, oil on canvas, 110.4 x 171 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin)

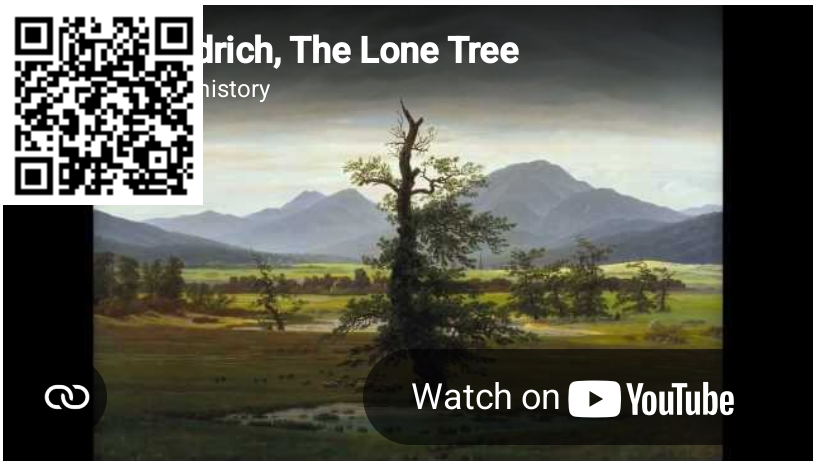
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.2.203: More Smarthistory images…

Caspar David Friedrich, *Solitary Tree* (or *Lone Tree*)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.2.18: Caspar David Friedrich, *Solitary Tree* (or *Lone Tree*), 1822, oil on canvas, 55 x 71 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

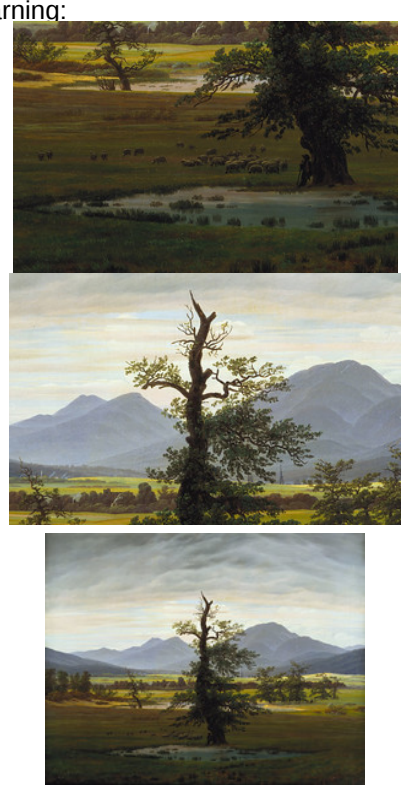
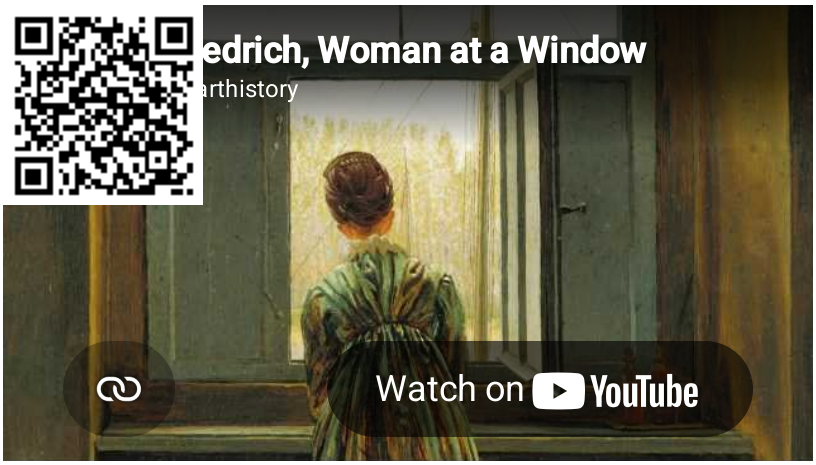


Figure 13.8.2.204: More Smarthistory images…

Caspar David Friedrich, *Woman at a Window*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.2.19: Caspar David Friedrich, *Woman at a Window*, 1822, oil on canvas, 44 x 73 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.2.205: More Smarthistory images…

13.8.2: Romanticism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.2: Romanticism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88738

13.8.3: Early photography

Early photography

Photography has always been a controversial medium—is it an art or a science?

1826 - c. 1870

Early Photography: Niépce, Talbot and Muybridge

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY

By modern standards, nineteenth-century photography can appear rather primitive. While the stark black and white landscapes and unsmiling people have their own austere beauty, these images also challenge our notions of what defines a work of art.

Photography is a controversial fine art medium, simply because it is difficult to classify—is it an art or a science? Nineteenth century photographers struggled with this distinction, trying to reconcile aesthetics with improvements in technology.

The birth of photography



Figure **13.8.3.1**: Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, *View from the Window at Gras* (1826)

Although the principle of the camera was known in antiquity, the actual chemistry needed to register an image was not available until the nineteenth century.

Artists from the Renaissance onwards used a camera obscura (Latin for dark chamber), or a small hole in the wall of a darkened box that would pass light through the hole and project an upside down image of whatever was outside the box. However, it was not until the invention of a light sensitive surface by Frenchman Joseph Nicéphore Niépce that the basic principle of photography was born.

From this point the development of photography largely related to technological improvements in three areas, speed, resolution and permanence. The first photographs, such as Niépce's famous *View from the Window at Gras* (1826) required a very slow speed (a long exposure period), in this case about 8 hours, obviously making many subjects difficult, if not impossible, to photograph. Taken using a camera obscura to expose a copper plate coated in silver and pewter, Niépce's image looks out of an upstairs window, and part of the blurry quality is due to changing conditions during the long exposure time, causing the resolution, or clarity of the image, to be grainy and hard to read. An additional challenge was the issue of permanence, or how to successfully stop any further reaction of the light sensitive surface once the desired exposure had been achieved. Many of Niépce's early images simply turned black over time due to continued exposure to light. This problem was largely solved in 1839 by the invention of hypo, a chemical that reversed the light sensitivity of paper.



Figure 13.8.3.2: Louis Daguerre, *The Artist's Studio*, 1837, daguerreotype

Technological improvements

Photographers after Niépce experimented with a variety of techniques. Louis Daguerre invented a new process he dubbed a daguerreotype in 1839, which significantly reduced exposure time and created a lasting result, but only produced a single image.

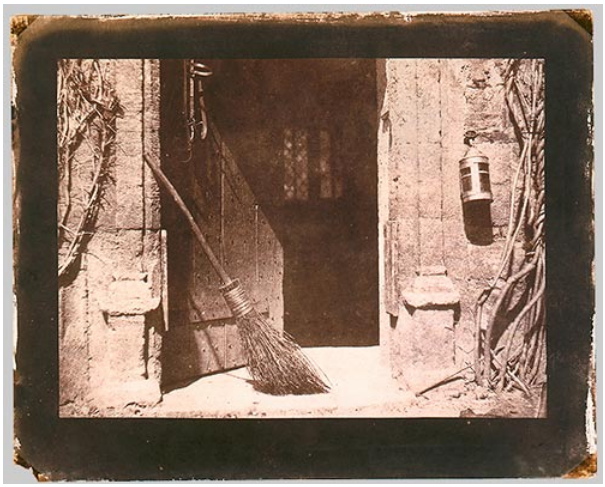


Figure 13.8.3.3: William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Open Door*, 1844, salted paper print from paper negative

At the same time, Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot was experimenting with his what would eventually become his calotype method, patented in February 1841. Talbot's innovations included the creation of a paper negative, and new technology that involved the transformation of the negative to a positive image, allowing for more that one copy of the picture. The remarkable detail of Talbot's method can be seen in his famous photograph, *The Open Door* (1844) which captures the view through a medieval-looking entrance. The texture of the rough stones surrounding the door, the vines growing up the walls and the rustic broom that leans in the doorway demonstrate the minute details captured by Talbot's photographic improvements.



Figure 13.8.3.4: Honoré Daumier, *Nadar élevant la Photographie à la hauteur de l'Art (Nadar elevating Photography to Art)*, lithograph from *Le Boulevard*, May 25, 1863

The collodion method was introduced in 1851. This process involved fixing a substance known as gun cotton onto a glass plate, allowing for an even shorter exposure time (3-5 minutes), as well as a clearer image.

The big disadvantage of the collodion process was that it needed to be exposed and developed while the chemical coating was still wet, meaning that photographers had to carry portable darkrooms to develop images immediately after exposure. Both the difficulties of the method and uncertain but growing status of photography were lampooned by Honoré Daumier in his *Nadar Elevating Photography to the Height of Art* (1862). Nadar, one of the most prominent photographers in Paris at the time, was known for capturing the first aerial photographs from the basket of a hot air balloon. Obviously, the difficulties in developing a glass negative under these circumstances must have been considerable.

Further advances in technology continued to make photography less labor intensive. By 1867 a dry glass plate was invented, reducing the inconvenience of the wet collodion method.

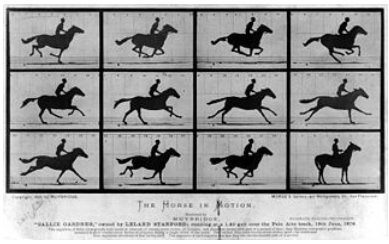


Figure 13.8.3.5: Eadweard Muybridge, *The Horse in Motion ("Sallie Gardner," owned by Leland Stanford; running at a 1:40 gait over the Palo Alto track, 19th June 1878)*, 1878

Prepared glass plates could be purchased, eliminating the need to fool with chemicals. In 1878, new advances decreased the exposure time to 1/25th of a second, allowing moving objects to be photographed and lessening the need for a tripod. This new development is celebrated in Eadweard Muybridge's sequence of photographs called *Galloping Horse* (1878). Designed to settle the question of whether or not a horse ever takes all four legs completely off the ground during a gallop, the series of photographs also demonstrated the new photographic methods that were capable of nearly instantaneous exposure.

Finally in 1888 George Eastman developed the dry gelatin roll film, making it easier for film to be carried. Eastman also produced the first small inexpensive cameras, allowing more people access to the technology.

Photographers in the 19th century were pioneers in a new artistic endeavor, blurring the lines between art and technology. Frequently using traditional methods of composition and marrying these with innovative techniques, photographers created a new vision of the material world. Despite the struggles early photographers must have had with the limitations of their technology, their artistry is also obvious.

Additional resources:

The First Photograph from the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

Daguerre and the Invention of Photography on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Industrialization of French Photography on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Rise of Paper Photography in France in the 1850s on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Daguerreian Age in France: 1839-1855 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

A Thumbnail History of the Daguerreotype

Niépce: The Reference Website about the Inventor of Photography

Eadweard Muybridge's Photography of Motion

William Henry Fox Talbot and the Invention of Photography on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Wizard of Photography: The Story of George Eastman and how he Transformed Photography

Louis Daguerre, *Paris Boulevard*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY

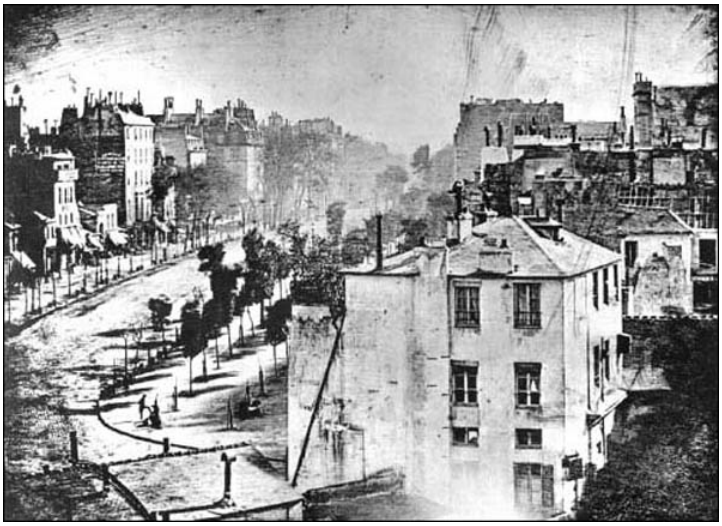


Figure **13.8.3.6**: Louis Daguerre, *Paris Boulevard*, 1839, daguerreotype

The daguerreotype

An early example of a "daguerreotype." *Paris Boulevard* is a significant step in the development of photography. Taken in 1839 by Louis-Jacques Mande Daguerre, the photograph depicts a seemingly empty street in Paris. The elevated viewpoint emphasizes the wide avenues, tree-lined sidewalks, and charming buildings of the French capital. However, the obvious day light of the photograph begs the question – where are all the people in this normally busy city?



Figure **13.8.3.7**: Enhanced version of Joseph Nicephore Niépce, *View from the Window at Gras*, 1826 or 1827, oil-treated bitumen, 20 x 25 cm

The answer to this question lies in the daguerreotype technique. The first photographs, such as Joseph Nicephore Niépce's famous *View from the Window at Gras*, took about 8 hours to expose, creating indistinct, grainy images. Daguerre was intrigued by these

experiments and formed a partnership with Niépce from 1828 until the latter's death in 1833. Daguerre continued to refine the photographic method until he developed his new process.

Chemistry

His technique consisted of exposing a copper plate coated in silver and sensitized with iodine to light in a camera, and then developed it in darkness by holding it over a pan of heated vaporizing mercury. He also developed a method of creating a permanent image by using a solution of ordinary table salt. Daguerre's technique significantly reduced exposure time and created a lasting result that would not dim with further exposure to light, but only produced a single image. It would be up to others to produce the negatives that allowed for the production of multiple copies of an image.

A shoe shine



Figure **13.8.3.8**: Detail, Louis Daguerre, *Paris Boulevard*, 1839, daguerreotype

Daguerre's *Paris Boulevard* shows the advantages of the new technique. There is far more detail than in earlier photographs. We can clearly see the panes in the windows and the sharp corners of the building in the front of the image. The objects are no longer blurry masses of light and dark, but defined and separate structures. In fact, the only thing missing are the people, except for the small figure of a man having his shoes shined at a sidewalk stand.

The remaining problem of the daguerreotype, at least by modern standards, was the long exposure time, between 10 and 15 minutes. This meant that the people hurrying along those spacious sidewalks did not register on the photograph. The man having his shoes shined, possibly the first photographic image of a person, obviously stayed still long enough to register on the image. The haunting empty, yet evocative, image of *Paris Boulevard* shows both how far photography had come in a short time and how much farther the technology still had to advance.

Additional resources:

Early Photography: Making Daguerreotypes (video) from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Daguerre and the Invention of Photography from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

The Daguerreian Age in France: 1839-1855 from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Lady Clementina Hawarden, *Clementina and Florence Elizabeth Maude*

by LEILA ANNE HARRIS



Figure **13.8.3.9**: Lady Clementina Hawarden, *Clementina and Florence Elizabeth Maude*, 5 Princes Gardens, albumen print photo, c. 1861

5 Princes Gardens, London, England is an address that no longer exists today, yet its interior rooms become familiar after looking through Clementina Hawarden's photographs. In Hawarden's pictures, we often see the same sun drenched spaces, and can even trace the growth of her children over the years.

Hawarden, born Clementina Elphinstone Fleeming, was one of the first female photographers in Britain. Most of her work was made while she was living in the Kensington neighborhood of London, near the present-day Victoria & Albert Museum that currently holds the collection of her photographs.

Who was Clementina Hawarden?

Hawarden was born on June 1st 1822 and grew up outside Glasgow, Scotland. Her father was an admiral in the navy and her mother was a Spaniard renowned for her beauty. Hawarden married Cornwallis Maude, 4th Viscount Hawarden, in 1845. Together they had ten children, eight of whom lived to be adults. Because Hawarden did not keep a diary, and few of her letters remain, most of what we know about her is based on these brief biographical details and her numerous photographs. Accordingly, Hawarden is often written about as both a maternal figure and a prolific photographer. The majority of her images depict her children, posed before the camera, within their familiar domestic setting.

In the image above we see two of the photographer's daughters situated in front of a large window that lead out on to the upper story balcony. The standing figure, Florence Elizabeth, looks to be in the act of drawing the curtain, and we see small houses in the background. Many of Hawarden's photographs feature these same windows. In a practical sense, the windows provided ample light into the interior space and allowed Hawarden to make her pictures. This double image is a stereographic print—a popular medium in the 1860s. When this image was viewed through a stereoscope it created an illusion of depth, making it look as if the two girls have are popping out in three-dimensional space.



Figure **13.8.3.10**: Lady Clementina Hawarden, *Clementina and Florence Elizabeth Maude*, 1863-64, albumen print photograph

Here, the same sisters pose again in front of the large French windows. This time they are in costume, which is a common element in Hawarden's later photographs. Clementina is reclined on the floor, wearing classical dress and a star headband. She is an ancient prophetess or muse. Florence Elizabeth stands above her, dressed as a nun or saint. The dramatic shaft of light coming in from the window creates diagonal shadows and highlights on the wall, emphasizing the dramatic quality of the photograph. Hawarden used the most popular printing process at the time; her photographs are albumen prints made from wet collodion plates.

What did it mean to be a female photographer in nineteenth century England?

For a woman of Hawarden's elite class it would not have been considered appropriate for her to sell her photographs. She did, however, exhibit her pictures with the Photographic Society of London in 1863 and 1864. The Photographic Society of London, of which Hawarden was a member, later became the Royal Photographic Society and is the oldest national photographic society. Hawarden was a well-regarded photographer who was celebrated by the photography community. In both years that Hawarden exhibited her work the society awarded her a silver medal.

Why are the photographs an irregular shape?

When you look at Hawarden's photographs today, you might notice that the corners of the images are either cut or torn. They are typically displayed showing the piece of paper on which they are mounted (the light green or gray solid color that borders the photographic image). Some scholars, such as Carol Mavor, choose to take the jagged edges of the images into account while writing about Hawarden's work. Indeed, it is interesting how the edges of the pictures often echo the shapes seen in the photograph, and create a repeating rhythm that is now part of viewing Hawarden's work. One must keep in mind, though, that this would not have been how the photographer saw them, or conceived of them, in the 1860s.

When Hawarden made her photographs she pasted them in to albums, many of which served as gifts. The tears that we see today are a result of the images being removed from these albums. Hawarden's daughter, Isabella, stored the photographs in a closet for safe keeping for many years. In 1939 the Victoria & Albert Museum in London had a special exhibition in honor of the first 100 years of photography. Much to Hawarden's granddaughter's disappointment, the exhibition did not include any of her grandmother's work. After this, her granddaughter, Lady Clementina Tottenham, donated 775 photographs to the museum. Thanks to this generous donation, much has been learned about both Hawarden and nineteenth-century photography.

Additional resources:

The wet collodion process

Articles on Clementina Hawarden from the V&A

Clementina Hawarden on Flickr

Julia Margaret Cameron, *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure 13.8.3.11: Julia Margaret Cameron, *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth*, 1867, albumen silver print from glass negative (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The artist's niece

Staring out over her left shoulder, neck muscles strained by the severity of her pose, Julia Margaret Cameron's photograph *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth* is a striking portrait of the artist's niece. The deep shadows emphasize the curves of her cheek and neck, throwing a large portion of the photograph into semi-darkness, while the light that shines down from the left side of the picture emphasizes the sitter's downcast eyes, nose and mouth.

Mrs. Herbert Duckworth, one of Cameron's most famous images, is an enduring portrait of a Victorian woman.

Only 21 at the time of the photograph, Julia Prinsep Jackson had just recently become Mrs. Duckworth when the picture was taken. A scant three years later, Mrs. Duckworth was a widow with two young children and a third on the way. Later, in 1878 she married Sir Leslie Stephen, a prominent Victorian journalist and mountaineer. Four more children were born, including daughters Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf who would become famous as members of the Edwardian artistic circle known as the Bloomsbury Group.

A severe portrait

The close-up focus on the face is typical of Cameron's portrait style and can be seen in many images of the sitter by her aunt. The strong contrast of dark background and dark dress against the pale face is similarly common in Cameron's photographs. Mrs. Duckworth's severe, unsmiling features are also typical of the Victorian era since the exposure time then required for a photograph was several minutes, much too long to hold a smile.

Julia Margaret Pattle Cameron was born in India and married Charles Cameron in 1838. The couple returned to England in 1848 and became actively involved with an intellectual group of artists and writers that included Alfred Lord Tennyson and George Frederick Watts.

Wet collodion photography

At the age of 48, Cameron began to experiment with the collodion method of photography after receiving her first camera as a present from her daughter. Creating a collodion print was an extremely difficult and hazardous process that required working with combustible materials in almost total darkness. The collodion process involved pouring chemicals onto a glass plate negative. The plate was then inserted into the camera, and the plate exposed for three to eight minutes. After exposure, the plate was removed and immediately developed in a darkroom. It was important for the plate to remain "wet" throughout the entire process.

Cameron recorded in her memoir *Annals of My Glass House* (1874) that she ruined many household items running through the house carrying dripping photographic plates. Nevetheless, the collodion process was a great improvement over previous photographic methods due to the sharper images and the fact that multiple prints could be made from a single plate.

Victorian womanhood

Cameron's artistry, skill and knowledge of the science of photography is obvious in a portrait like *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth*. The clear focus and dramatic pose combine with the manipulation of light and dark to create an image that is at once strong and feminine. It is a photograph that not only captures a moment in time, but also provides the viewer with an evocative image of Victorian womanhood.

Additional resources:

This photograph at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Wet Collodion Process (video)

Julia Margaret Cameron on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

---

13.8.3: Early photography is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.3: Early photography** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.4: Victorian art

Victorian art

Artists responded to the wealth generated by empire and industry—and its moral consequences.

1837 - 1901

Early Victorian

Sir Edwin Landseer, *Windsor Castle in Modern Times*

by AMY ROBSON



Figure **13.8.4.1**: Sir Edwin Landseer, *Windsor Castle in Modern Times; Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and Victoria, Princess Royal*, 1840-43, oil on canvas, 113.3 x 144.5 cm (The Royal Collection)

A tribute to home, hearth and hounds

When one thinks of Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, RA, many accomplishments come to mind. An English animal painter of mainly horses, dogs, stags and lions, Landseer's works became commonplace in the homes of Victorian audiences, and his Lion sculptures sit proudly in Trafalgar Square to this very day.

However, perhaps the most relatable Landseer artworks to our modern eye are those which depict the enduring relationship between the royal family and their dogs, a love affair which many modern pet owners can relate to. *Windsor Castle in Modern Times* presents such a scene and, as such, acts as a window into which we can explore both our love of Landseer and of dogs.

A conversation piece

Windsor Castle in Modern Times was modelled off a type of painting known as a 'Conversation piece'—in which a group of people (normally family) would be positioned in an informal setting engaged in conversation, or a similar activity—and this painting by Landseer was certainly a discussion point among its royal patrons. Begun in 1840 and not finished until 1845, multiple sittings and bouts of time when Landseer appeared not to work on the painting at all meant that Queen Victoria was far from amused.

Despite this, when the painting was finally hung up in her sitting room in Windsor Castle, Queen Victoria determined with no hesitancy that the painting was a "very beautiful picture, & altogether very cheerful & pleasing." And, when looking at the painting, it's not hard to see why the final result was received so positively.

Regal but relatable

The painting depicts an encounter between Victoria and Albert, in a drawing room at Windsor Castle (a medieval castle at Windsor that Queen Victoria used as the principle royal residence), just after Albert has come back from a day out hunting. Triumphant in his endeavours, as can be seen from the game that is sprawled out across the room, Victoria greets Albert with the presentation of a small bouquet of flowers (known as a nosegay), whist their eldest child, Victoria, can be seen playing with a dead kingfisher. The scene is, of course, entirely manufactured for the conversation piece—game would not be spread out with such compositional intent in the drawing room, or spread out in the drawing room at all for that matter!—but this is a large part of the painting's charm and success.



Figure 13.8.4.2: Prince Albert and Queen Victoria (detail), Sir Edwin Landseer, *Windsor Castle in Modern Times; Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and Victoria, Princess Royal*, 1840-43, oil on canvas, 113.3 x 144.5 cm (The Royal Collection)

Shown in the traditional role of royal huntsman, Prince Albert appears as an appropriately masculine figure in the home, at the same time as also representing the virtues that came with embracing a countryside life in Industrial Britain. Meanwhile Queen Victoria is depicted as a loving and caring wife and the epitome of feminine virtue—greeting her husband when he comes home in the most delicate of manner; with a bouquet of flowers—but, her position, standing in front of Albert, also makes it clear that she is the ruling monarch.

All of these elements demonstrate the effectiveness of Landseer's artwork—making the royal family look both regal, but also relatable in the eyes of the aspiring middle-class, who found themselves eager to emulate royal examples in this era. Completing the painting (and no doubt, a prevalent reason as to why Landseer was chosen to produce the work) is the inclusion of four dogs in the painting. Beloved family pets, each with their own story, the dogs in this painting add an additional level to Windsor Castle in Modern Times and, at the same time, also work to showcase Landseer's reputation as the leading animal painter of the period.

Canine conversations

It was no secret that Queen Victoria was a lover of animals, and dogs in particular. When Landseer was given his first royal commission it was to paint Victoria's beloved spaniel, Dash, when she was a Princess, for her Birthday. *Windsor Castle in Modern Times* follows Landseer's transition into royal pet painter, and the animals in the painting are afforded as much detail as the royal family themselves.



Figure 13.8.4.3: Princess Royal with Cairnach and Islay (detail) Sir Edwin Landseer, Windsor Castle in Modern Times; Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and Victoria, Princess Royal, 1840-43, oil on canvas, 113.3 x 144.5 cm (The Royal Collection)

The dog at the far bottom left of the painting, nearest to the young Victoria, was a Skye terrier (a breed the Queen favored) called Cairnach—who would also go on to be painted by Landseer in 1842 as a Christmas present from Albert to Victoria. If he wasn't well known when *Windsor Castle in Modern Times* was finished then he would become so over time, as Albert's Christmas present to Victoria was reproduced and made available to the public as an engraving. To the right of Cairnach, begging eagerly as he looks up to Albert, Islay can been seen; another Skye terrier and one of the Queen's favorite dogs. He was, in fact, popular enough that he had been painted in a previous pet portrait by Landseer, titled *Islay and Tico with a Red Macaw and two Love Birds* (1839), in the exact same begging pose no less!

Meanwhile the ironically named Skye terrier, Dandy Dinmont, can be seen in the painting at Albert's side, licking his hand in a faithful greeting. Dandy's faithful depiction in this painting would not be the last either, as, in 1843, he would be painted by Landseer at the side of the new born Princess Alice, in a painting by the same name, as her faithful guardian.

The most well-known dog in this painting, however, would certainly be Eos, the Greyhound being stroked by Prince Albert. Eos was Albert's favorite dog and belonged exclusively to him, rather than being a family dog.



Figure **13.8.4.4**: Sir Edwin Landseer, *Eos, A Favorite Greyhound, the property of H.R.H. Prince Albert*, 1841, oil on canvas, 111.8 x 142.9 cm cm (The Royal Collection)

This notable companion is best known for being the subject matter of the often reproduced *Eos, A Favourite Greyhound, the property of H.R.H. Prince Albert* (1841) by Landseer—an artwork which popularized the format of pet portraiture which followed (in pose, composition and the items included).

In the same year Landseer also painted Eos with the young Princess Victoria (titled Victoria, Princess Royal, with Eos), as a birthday present to Albert. Lying faithfully with the Princess, Eos is seen here as the loyal and endearing pet that she was received as by her master.

By the time this painting was finished, in 1845, both Eos and Islay had passed away, making their presence in this painting not just a dedication to man's best friend, but also a tribute to two beloved family pets.

What does this tell us?

Victorian Britain saw a notable boom in both dog ownership and dog portraiture, as dogs shifted from working and sporting animals to family pet, and this boom was certainly influenced by the royal family's love of dogs. With both more time and money at their disposal, the newly developing middle-class found a hobby in both the owning and showing of dogs, with the Queen's love of the animal enabling a feeling of distinction in the act, which (on the other side of the coin) also served to make the royal family seem more relatable.

As such we can see how Windsor Castle in Modern Times was truly a tribute to home, hearth and hounds—effectively presenting the royal family to those who wished to follow in their example, both in moral values and in animal preferences, but also giving Queen Victoria a memorable image of her family as she wished to see it; dogs and all.

Additional resources:

This painting in the Royal Collection

This painting on the website for Michelle Facos's *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century Art*

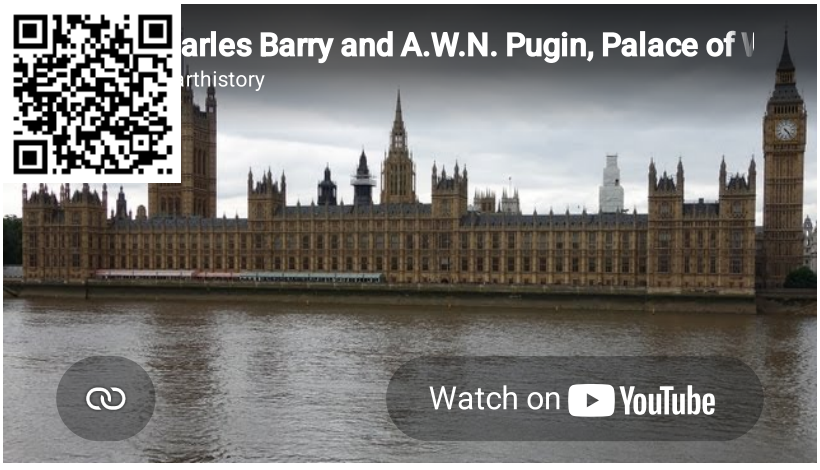
The Conversation Piece: Scenes of Fashionable Life, the Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh (review in *The Telegraph)*

Biography and Bibliography on Landseer on the Victorian Web

Landseer on the BBC's Your Paintings

Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin, Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.4.1**: Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin, Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament), 1840-70, London

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88740

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:




















Figure 13.8.4.5: More Smarthistory images…

Robert Smirke, The British Museum

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.4.6: Robert Smirke, South Portico, built 1846-47, The British Museum, 1823-57 (London)

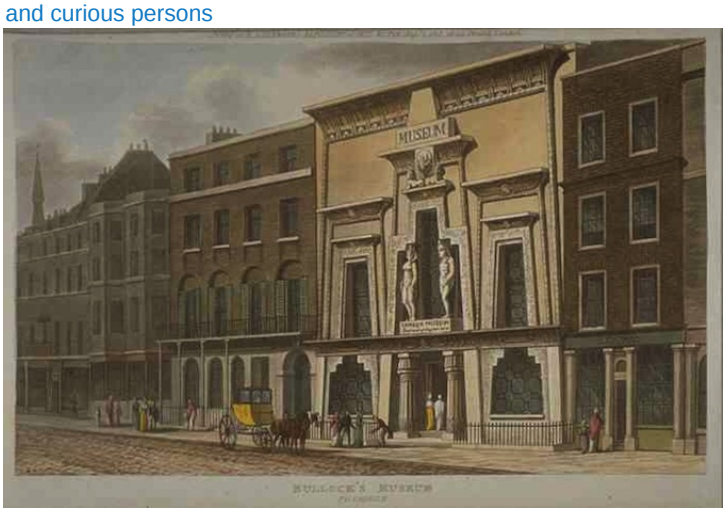


Figure **13.8.4.7**: Peter Frederick Robertson, Egyptian Hall, 1812, (London (destroyed))

In terms of painting, Europe was most definitely leading the way, the Louvre first opening its doors to the public in 1793, granting access to the French royal family's former collection of art. In England, on the other hand, public access to works of art was largely a private enterprise. The Egyptian Hall in London's Pall Mall being a good example. With its evocative neo-Egyptian façade, it was here Géricault exhibited his *The Raft of the Medusa* in 1820 and at other times large-scale works by important British painters such as Turner were on display, always to a paying audience (a shilling). It was not until the opening of the National Gallery in 1824, over thirty years after the Louvre, that the British had an art collection that belonged to the public and which they were free to visit.

While lagging behind in some ways, in others London was somewhat ahead of the rest. It was here, for example, that the first public museum in the world was opened. The British Museum, was established in 1753 and open, free of charge "to all studious and curious Persons." Well, in actual fact, there were quite stringent conditions for entry, being closed four days a week and all of August and September too. Then when it was open, visitors needed to apply for a ticket and present a letter of recommendation, while women, for propriety's sake, were only admitted in pairs.



Figure **13.8.4.8**: Gray's Inn Lane Hand Axe, c. 350,000 BCE, flint, 165mm long, The British Museum (London)

The Museum, in its first incarnation, was located in a grand mansion on Montague Street, the site of the present building. Along with books and manuscripts, its collection held some 80,000 objects of natural history and "man-made curiosities," all of which were bequeathed to the nation by the Royal Physician and chocolatier Hans Sloane, among them a very old flint hand axe found near the bones of a massive elephant buried in the gravel on Gray's Inn Lane. While it is very doubtful those first curious and studious persons who entered the museum could conceivably have guessed its true date at 350,000 years or that massive elephants roamed the country back in the Stone Age, the questions such objects raised were absolutely fundamental to the emergence of new sciences in the nineteenth century, such as archaeology, anthropology, geology and paleontology.

Two other acquisitions that helped secure the Museum's international reputation were the Rosetta Stone (1802) and the Parthenon sculptures (1816). By 1823, when George IV gifted a library of 60,000 books he had inherited from his father, the Montague House site was no longer large enough to hold it all.



Figure 13.8.4.9: Robert Smirke, The King's Library, The British Museum, 1823-7 (London)

The commission for the new building was given to Robert Smirke, a well-established neoclassical architect. The building took around thirty years to complete, its elevation mirroring the expanse of the British Empire itself. He started with the east wing, built to house the King's Library. It survives complete today and is considered one of the greatest neoclassical interiors in London.

In 1827 construction on the remaining wings was begun, creating the famous quadrangle with its impressive colonnaded portico and two acre courtyard. The antique sourcing of the façade is predictable enough. Neoclassicism had been the prevailing fashion in European architecture since the 1750s and would have seemed an appropriate choice, especially given the number and quality of classical sculptures in the Museum (particularly the Parthenon sculptures).

These must surely have influenced Smirke's design of the main entrance, which is modeled on Greek temple design and shares the same number of eight columns as the Parthenon itself. In scale though it is almost double the size, while the austere Doric order is replaced by the based and slender columns and scrolled capitals of the ionic order, which, with all its connotations of wisdom and learning, must have been thought best suited for the building's purpose.



Figure 13.8.4.10: Entablature (detail) Robert Smirke, The British Museum, 1823-57 (London)

The entablature (the entire horizontal area carried by the columns) is composed of a tripartite architrave (the lowest part of the entablature) with a blind frieze above (without sculptural decoration) and a dentilated cornice (dentils are the repeated blocks forming a pattern at the base of the cornice)—all running in an unbroken chain around the whole length of the south portico.

The building is topped with a flat roof, the pediment therefore being false, in the sense that its function is decorative rather than structural, its pinnacle creating a vertical axis that bisects the main entrance way. The projecting wings, like the skene or scenic backdrop in an ancient Greek theatre, add a dramatic sweep to the façade, channeling the eye of the viewer to the main entrance.

The conscious reworking of the classical language of architecture, drawing on a period which, according to enlightened tastes, marked the greatest flowering of art and culture in European history, obviously served to elevate the status of the building, expressing something of the pride and confidence of the British at the very heyday of their empire. While not necessarily equating Britain with Rome or Greece, the building did seem to suggest, firstly, that the British were carrying the torch of civilization and, secondly, that they, like the Romans and the Greeks before them, were up to the task.

This explicit nationalist message is illustrated in the pediment sculptures, designed by Richard Westmacott and given the grandiose name, *The Rise of Civilisation*. Here we see a female Britannia-like figure representing Enlightenment, surrounded by other allegorical figures standing for various artistic and scientific disciplines.



Figure 13.8.4.11: Richard Westmacott, The Rise of Civilisation, Pediment of British Museum, 1845-51 (London)

To the far left, however, we find a different story. Here early man emerges, crawling from rubble to be handed the Lamp of Knowledge by the Angel of Enlightenment, behind him is a dog-like animal and behind that a crocodile. Though hard to pick out from ground level, that crocodile's snout is one of the most telling details in the whole sculpture, offering a foretaste of the debates that were soon to rage between religious and scientific communities. Though Darwin had yet to publish his On the Origin of Species, with the type of fossil and geological evidence that the Museum was amassing, the case for evolution was certainly mounting.



Figure 13.8.4.12: The emergence of early man (detail), Richard Westmacott, The Rise of Civilisation, Pediment of British Museum, 1845-51 (London)

New technologies

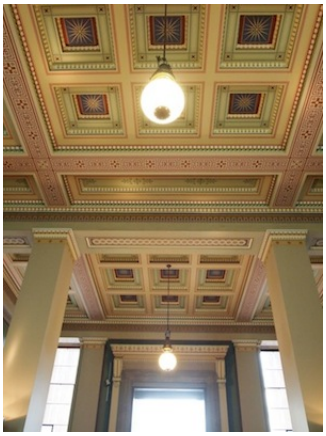


Figure 13.8.4.13: Sydney Smirke, The Weston Hall, 1845-47, The British Museum (London)

Although on the face of it, the Museum might seem to be a very conservative building, the manner in which it was constructed was anything but. Smirke, for instance, was one of the first architects to make extensive use of concrete, laying it as a base for the cast iron frame that underpins the entire structure, a frame that was then filled with London stock brick and covered in a facing of Portland stone, brought all the way from Dorset.

In the design of the interior, too, which was overseen by Smirke's brother, Sydney from 1845 onwards, British materials were used throughout, the floor of the entrance hall—the Weston Hall—being paved with York stone, the staircase balustrade and ornamental vases carved from Huddlestone stone and the sides of the Grand Staircase lined with red Aberdeen granite. While, the fact that these materials were all sourced from the British Isles reinforced the nationalist message, the vivid colours of the stones themselves created a luminous interior that was further adorned with colorful designs based on those found on classical buildings, which by the nineteenth century were known to be polychromatic. The original stonework has all survived to this day, while the 1847 painting and gilding was restored in 2000. The electric lamps in the hall are also replicas of the original, installed in 1879, making the Museum one of the first public buildings in London to be electrically lit.

The Reading Room

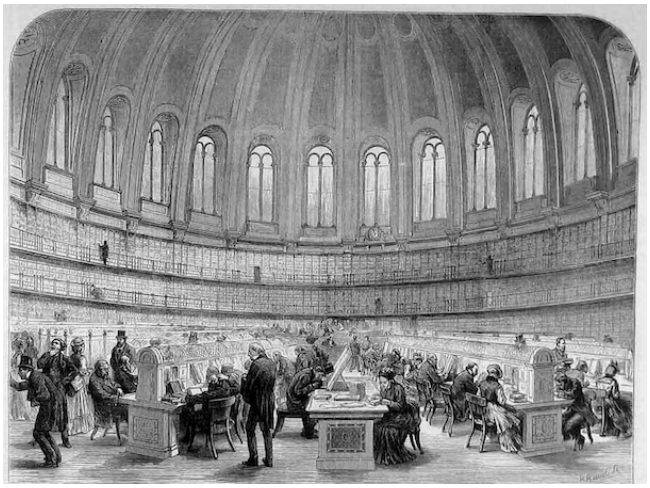


Figure **13.8.4.14**: Sydney Smirke, The Reading Room, 1854-7, The British Museum (London)

By the 1850s, with the collection continuing to expand, the site needed a yet larger library, the idea this time being to construct a round room in the central courtyard. Designed by Sydney Smirke, the Reading Room was built between 1854-1857. Given the size of it, 42.6m in diameter, the speed of construction, even assisted by modern building techniques, was astounding. Using cast iron, concrete and glass, it was a masterpiece of nineteenth-century technology, inspired as much by Paxton's ferrovitreous Crystal Palace as by the Pantheon in Rome; the airy and graceful internal dome disguising the complex fretwork of cast iron that supported it from without. Even the bookshelves were state-of-the-art, built of iron to carry the weight of the books and making up a staggering three miles of cases and twenty-five miles of shelving.

Recent times



Figure **13.8.4.15**: Foster and Partners, Queen Elizabeth II Great Court, 1997

This was not the end of the story, though. In 1997, the books were relocated yet again to the newly built British Library on Euston Road and the old Reading Room transformed into an exhibition space, a move that provided the catalyst to revitalize the old courtyard. In 2000, Foster and Partner's Queen Elizabeth II Great Court was opened and the two buildings, the Museum and the Reading Room, were now connected with a huge glazed canopy spanning the two acres of the courtyard. And the story still continues, for even more recently yet more changes have been made, with the new World Conservation and Exhibitions Centres, designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners, open in 2014.That the site is a constantly evolving one is only to be expected, given the ever-changing nature of the collection itself. An astonishing compendium of 260 years of human discoveries, the British Museum is indeed a house filled with many mansions, the outside of which, in the last analysis, however brilliant and varied in its construction it may be, will never come close to matching the glories within.

Additional resources:

General history of the British Museum

History of the British Museum collection

The Grey's Inn handaxe and the birth of archaeology

More on the Egyptian Hall

Diagram showing a column, with an entablature above, including a frieze and cornice

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.4.16**: More Smarthistory images…

The Pre-Raphaelites and mid-Victorian art

The era of Darwin, Tennyson, Dickens, labor laws, the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement.

c. 1848 - 1870

A beginner's guide

A beginner's guide to the Pre-Raphaelites

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure **13.8.4.17**: William Holman Hunt, *The flight of Madeline and Porphyro during the drunkenness attending the revelry (The Eve of St. Agnes)*, smaller version of the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy, begun as a sketch, 1847-57, oil on panel, 355 x 252 cm (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool)

At first they were three

During a visit to the Royal Academy exhibition of 1848, the young artist and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti was drawn to a painting entitled *The Eve of Saint Agnes* by William Holman Hunt. As a subject taken from the poetry of John Keats was a rarity at the time, Rossetti sought out Hunt, and the two quickly became friends. Hunt then introduced Rossetti to his friend John Everett Millais, and the rest, as they say, is history. The trio went on to form the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group determined to reform the artistic establishment of Victorian England.

Looking back to look forward

The name "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" (PRB) hints at the vaguely medieval subject matter for which the group is known. The young artists appreciated the simplicity of line and large flat areas of brilliant color found in the early Italian painters before Raphael, as well as in 15th century Flemish art. These were not qualities favored by the more academic approach taught at the Royal Academy during the mid 19th century, which stressed the strong light and dark shading of the Old Masters. Another source of inspiration for the young artists was the writing of art critic John Ruskin, particularly the famous passage from Modern Painters telling artists "to go to nature in all singleness of heart . . . rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing." This combination of influences contributed to the group's extreme attention to detail, and the development of the wet white ground technique that produced the brilliant color for which they are known. The artists even became some of the first to complete sections of their canvases outdoors in an effort to capture the minute detail of every leaf and blade of grass.

And then they were seven

It was decided that seven was the appropriate number for a rebellious group and four others were added to form the initial Brotherhood. The selection of additional members has long mystified art historians. James Collinson, a painter, seems to have been added due to his short-lived

engagement to Rossetti's sister Christina rather than his sympathy with the cause. Another member, Thomas Woolner, was a sculptor rather than a painter. The final two members, William Michael Rossetti and Frederic George Stephens, both of whom went on to become art critics, were not practicing artists. However, other young artists such as Walter Howell Deverell and Charles Collins embraced the ideals of the PRB even though they were never formally elected as members.



Figure **13.8.4.18**: John Everett Millais, Isabella, 1848-49, oil on canvas, 103 x 142.8 cm (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool)

The P.R.B. goes public

The Pre-Raphaelites decided to make their debut by sending a group of paintings, all bearing the initials "PRB", to the Royal Academy in 1849. However, Rossetti, who was nervous about the reception of his painting *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, changed his mind and instead sent his painting to the earlier Free Exhibition (meaning there was no jury as there was at the Royal Academy). At the Royal Academy, Hunt exhibited *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes*, a scene from an historical novel of the same name by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Millais exhibited *Isabella*, another subject from Keats, created with such attention to detail that one can actually see the beheading scene on the plate nearest the edge of the table, which echoes the ultimate fate of the young lover Lorenzo in the story. In both paintings, the accurately designed medieval costumes, bright colors and attention to detail produced criticism that the paintings mimicked a "mediaeval illumination of the chronicle or the romance" (*Athenaeum*, 2 June 1849, p. 575). Interestingly, no mention was made of the mysterious "PRB" inscription.

Critical reaction

In 1850, however, the reaction to the PRB was very different. By this time, many people knew about the existence of the supposedly secret society, in part because the group had published many of their ideas in a short-lived literary magazine entitled *The Germ*. Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini* appeared at the Free Exhibition along with a painting by his friend Deverell entitled *Twelfth Night*. At the Royal Academy, Hunt's *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids* and Millais's *Christ in the House of his Parents*, famously abused by Charles Dickens, received the brunt of the criticism. In the aftermath of the humiliating reception of their work, Collinson resigned from the group and Rossetti decided never again to exhibit publicly.

Ruskin to the rescue



Figure **13.8.4.19**: Charles Allston Collins, *Convent Thoughts*, 1851, oil on canvas, 84 x 59 cm (Ashmolean Museum of Art)

Undeterred, Millais and Hunt again continued to exhibit paintings demonstrating the beautiful colors and detail orientation of the mature style of the PRB. The Royal Academy of 1851 included Hunt's *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia*, and three pictures by Millais, *Mariana*, *The Woodman's Daughter*, and *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* as well as *Convent Thoughts* by Millais's friend Charles Collins. Although many were still dubious about the new style, the critic John Ruskin came to the rescue of the group, publishing two letters in *The Times* newspaper in which he praised the relationship of the PRB to early Italian art. Although Ruskin was suspicious of what he termed the group's "Catholic tendencies," he liked the attention to detail and the color of the PRB paintings. Ruskin's praise helped catapult the young artists to a new level.

The dissolution of the PRB

The Brotherhood, however, was slowly dissolving. Woolner emigrated to Australia in 1852. Hunt decided in January 1854 to visit the Holy Land in order to better paint religious pictures. And, in an event Rossetti described as the formal end of the PRB, Millais was elected as an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1853, joining the art establishment he had fought hard to change.

Lasting impact



Figure **13.8.4.20**: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Bocca Baciata (Lips That Have Been Kissed)*, 1859, oil on panel, 32.1 x 27 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Despite the fact that the Brotherhood lasted only a few short years, its impact was immense. Millais and Hunt both went on to establish important places for themselves in the Victorian art world. Millais was to go on to become an extremely popular artist, selling his art works for vast sums of money, and ultimately being elected as the President of the Royal Academy. Hunt, who perhaps stayed most true to the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic, became a well-known artist and wrote many articles and books on the formation of the Brotherhood.

Rossetti became a mentor to a group of younger artists including Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Rossetti's paintings of beautiful women also helped inaugurate the new Aesthetic Movement, or the taste for Art for Art's Sake, in the later Victorian era.



Figure **13.8.4.20**: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Adoration of the Magi*, 1904, tapestry, 101.57 x 148.42″ (Musée d'Orsay)

To a contemporary audience, the Pre-Raphaelites may appear less than modern. However, in their own time the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood accomplished something revolutionary. They were one of the first groups to value painting out-of-doors for its "truth to nature," and their concept of banding together to take on the art establishment helped to pave the way for later groups. The distinctive elements of their paintings, such as the extreme attention to detail, the brilliant colors and the beautiful rendition of literary subjects set them apart from other Victorian painters.

Additional resources:

Alison Smith, “Were the Pre-Raphaelites Britain’s First Modern Artists?” Tate website, August 23, 2012.

The Pre-Raphaelites on The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

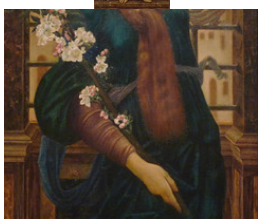
Series of videos on the Pre-Raphaelites from the Tate

William Holman Hunt’s The Eve of St. Agnes from the Google Art Project

Pre-Raphaelite gallery from the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

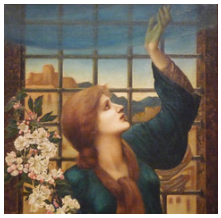




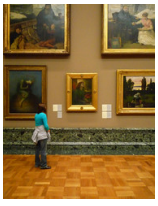












https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88740








Figure **13.8.4.21**: More Smarthistory images…

The Aesthetic Movement

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure 13.8.4.22: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Monna Vanna*, 1866, oil on canvas, 88.9 x 86.4 cm (Tate) (photo: Tate, CC-BY-NC-ND (3.0 Unported)

Art for the sake of art

The Aesthetic Movement, also known as "art for art's sake," permeated British culture during the latter part of the 19th century, as well as spreading to other countries such as the United States. Based on the idea that beauty was the most important element in life, writers, artists and designers sought to create works that were admired simply for their beauty rather than any narrative or moral function. This was, of course, a slap in the face to the tradition of art, which held that art needed to teach a lesson or provide a morally uplifting message. The movement blossomed into a cult devoted to the creation of beauty in all avenues of life from art and literature, to home decorating, to fashion, and embracing a new simplicity of style.



Figure 13.8.4.23: "The Six-Mark Tea-Pot" in *Punch*, October 30, 1880 (caption reads: Aesthetic Bridegroom. "It is quite consummate, is it not?" Intense Bride. "It is, indeed! Oh, Algernon, let us live up to it!")

In literature

In literature, aestheticism was championed by Oscar Wilde and the poet Algernon Swinburne. Skepticism about their ideas can be seen in the vast amount of satirical material related to the two authors that appeared during the time. Gilbert and Sullivan, masters of the comic operetta, unfavorably critiqued aesthetic sensibilities in *Patience* (1881). The magazine *Punch* was filled with cartoons depicting languishing young men and swooning maidens wearing aesthetic clothing. One of the most famous of these, *The Six-Mark Tea-Pot* by George Du Maurier (left) published in 1880, was supposedly based on a comment made by Wilde. In it, a young couple dressed in the height of aesthetic fashion and standing in an interior filled with items popularized by the Aesthetes—an Asian screen, peacock feathers, and oriental blue and white porcelain—comically vow to "live up" to their latest acquisition.

In the visual arts

In the visual arts, the concept of art for art's sake was widely influential. Many of the later paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, such as *Monna Vanna* (above), are simply portraits of beautiful women that are pleasing to the eye, rather than related to some literary story as in earlier Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

A similar approach can be seen in much of the work of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, whose ***The Golden Stairs*** (1880) captures the aesthetic mood in its presentation of a long line of beautiful women walking down a staircase, devoid of any specific narrative content. The designer William Morris, another disciple of Rossetti, created beautiful designs for household textiles, wallpaper, and furniture to surround his clients with beauty.



Figure **13.8.4.24**: Morris & Company, Carpet, c. 1884, hand-knotted wool pile, 315 x 656 cm (Art Gallery of South Australia)



Figure 13.8.4.25: James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1862, oil on canvas 213 x 107.9 cm (National Gallery of Art)

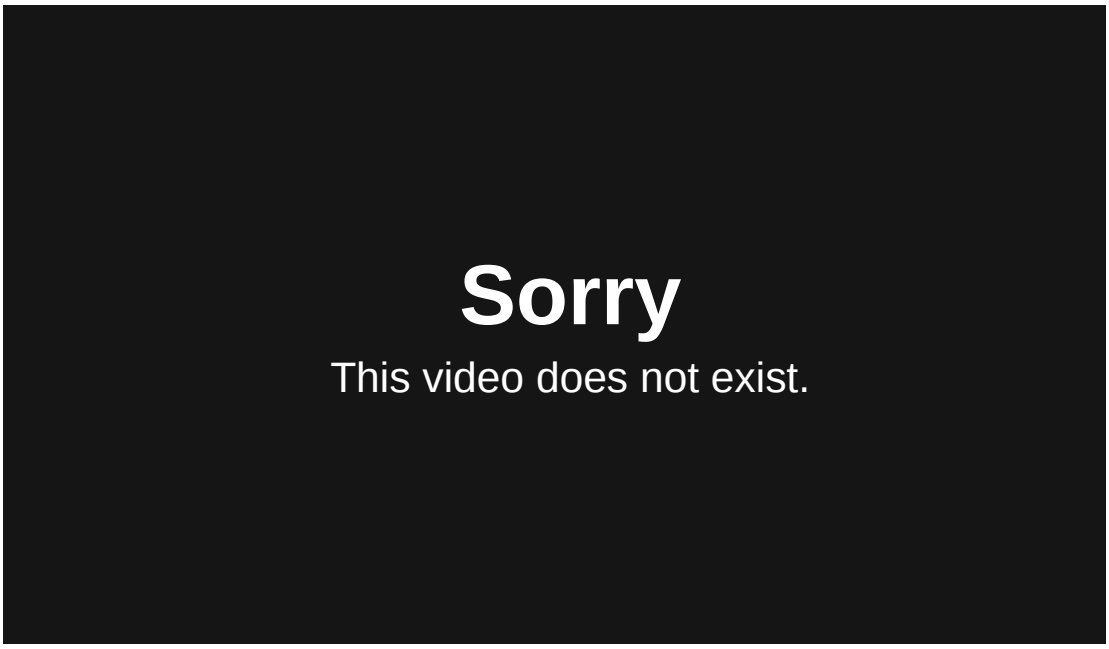
"flinging a pot of paint in the public's face"

Most famous of the aesthetic artists was the American James Abbott McNeill Whistler. His early painting *Symphony in White #1: The White Girl* (left) caused a sensation when it was exhibited after being rejected from both the Salon in Paris (the official annual exhibition) and the annual exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. The simplistic representation of a woman in a white dress, standing in front of a white curtain was too unique for Victorian audiences, who tried desperately to connect the painting to some literary source—a connection Whistler himself always denied. The artist went on to create a series of paintings, the titles of which generally have some musical connection, which were simply intended to create a sense of mood and beauty. The most infamous of these, ***Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*** (1875, Detroit Institute of Arts), appeared in an exhibition at London's Grovesnor Gallery, a venue for avant garde art, in 1877 and provoked the famous accusation from the critic John Ruskin that the artist was "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."

The ensuing libel trial between Whistler and Ruskin in 1878 was really a referendum on the question of whether or not art required more substance than just beauty. Finding in favor of Whistler, the jury upheld the basic principles of the Aesthetic Movement, but ultimately caused the artist's bankruptcy by awarding him only one farthing in damages. In *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, a collection of essays published in 1890, Whistler himself pointed out the biggest problem for the aesthetic artist was that "the vast majority of English folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell."

No story or moral message

The Aesthetic Movement provided a challenge to the Victorian public when it declared that art was divorced from any moral or narrative content. In an era when art was supposed to tell a story, the idea that a simple expression of mood or something merely beautiful to look at could be considered a work of art was a radical idea. However, in its assertion that a work of art can be divorced from narrative, the ideas of the Aesthetic Movement are an important stepping-stone in the road towards Modern Art.



The Aesthetic Movement 1860–1900 from Victoria and Albert Museum on Vimeo.

Additional resources:

Aesthetic Movement at the V&A

William Morris at the V&A

The Aesthetic Movement" from *The Guardian*

Julie Codell, "On the Grosvener Gallery, 1877-90"

Aesthetic Movement and Decadence from the British Library

John Everett Millais

Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.2**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 864 x 1397 mm (Tate Britain, London)

A serious departure

When it appeared at the Royal Academy annual exhibition of 1850 *Christ in the House of his Parents* must have seemed a serious departure from standard religious imagery. Painted by the young John Everett Millais, a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P.R.B.), *Christ in the House of his Parents* focuses on the ideal of truth to nature that was to become the hallmark of the Brotherhood.



Figure 13.8.4.26: Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)



Figure 13.8.4.27: Detail, Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The picture centers on the young Christ whose hand has been injured, being cared for by the Virgin, his mother. Christ's wound, a perforation in his palm, foreshadows his ultimate end on the cross. A young St. John the Baptist carefully brings a bowl of water to clean the wound, symbolic of Christ washing the feet of his disciples. Joseph, St Anne (the Virgin's mother) and a carpenter's assistant also react to Christ's accident. At a time when most religious paintings of the Holy Family were calm and tranquil groupings, this active event in the young life of the Savior must have seemed extremely radical.



Figure 13.8.4.28: Detail, Sir John Everett Millais, C*hrist in the House of His Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The same can be said for Millais' handling of the figures and the setting in the painting. Mary's wrinkled brow and the less than clean feet of some of the figures are certainly not idealized. According to the principles of the P.R.B., the attention to detail is incredible. Each individual wood shaving on the floor is exquisitely painted, and the rough-hewn table is more functional than beautiful. The tools of the carpenters trade are evident hanging on the wall behind, while stacks of wood line the walls. The setting is a place of work, not a sacred spot.

Painted in a carpenter's shop



Figure 13.8.4.29: Detail, Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

William Michael Rossetti recorded in *The P.R.B. Journal* that Millais started to work on the subject in November 1849 and began the actual painting at the end of December. We know from Rossetti and the reminiscences of fellow Brotherhood member William Holman Hunt that Millais worked on location in a carpenter's shop on Oxford Street, catching cold while working there in January. Millais' son tells us that his father purchased sheep heads from a butcher to use as models for the sheep in the upper left of the canvas. He did not show the finished canvas to his friends until April of 1850.

Scathing reviews

Although Millais' exhibit at the Royal Academy in 1849, Isabella, had been well received, the critics blasted *Christ in the House of his Parents*. The most infamous review, however, was the one by Charles Dickens that appeared in his magazine Household Words in June 1850. In it he described Christ as:

> ***a hideous, wry-necked, blubbering, red-haired boy in a nightgown, who appears to have received a poke playing in an adjacent gutter, and to be holding it up for the contemplation of a kneeling woman, so horrible in her ugliness that (supposing it were possible for any human creature to exist for a moment with that dislocated throat) she would stand out from the rest of the company as a monster in the vilest cabaret in France or in the lowest gin-shop in England.***

The commentary in *The Times* was equally unfavorable, stating that Millais' "attempt to associate the Holy Family with the meanest details of a carpenter's shop, with no conceivable omission of misery, of dirt, of even disease, all finished with loathsome minuteness, is disgusting." The painting proved to be so controversial that Queen Victoria asked that it be removed from the exhibition and brought to her so she could examine it.

At the Royal Academy

The attacks on Millais' painting were undoubtedly unsettling for the young artist. Millais had been born in 1829 on the island of Jersey, but his parents eventually moved to London to benefit their son's artistic education. When Millais began at the Royal Academy school in 1840 he had the distinction of being the youngest person ever to have been admitted.

At the Royal Academy, Millais became friendly with the young William Holman Hunt, who in turn introduced Millais to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and the idea for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was born. The young artists exhibited their first set of paintings in 1849, all of which were well received, but the paintings shown in 1850 were universally criticized, although none with as much fervor as *Christ in the House of his Parents*.



Figure **13.8.4.30**: Detail, Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Millais' *Christ in the House of his Parents* is a remarkable religious painting for its time. It presents the Holy Family in a realistic manner, emphasizing the small details that bring the tableau to life. It is a scene we can easily imagine happening, but it is still laced with the symbolism expected of a Christian subject. It is Millais' marriage of these two ideas that makes *Christ in the House of his Parents* such a compelling image, and at the same time, made it so reprehensible to Millais' contemporaries.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

Millais on The Victorian Web

Sir John Everett Millais in the Google Art Project

Albert Boime, "Sources for Sit John Everett Millais's Christ in the House of his Parents," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, pp. 71-83.

Sir John Everett Millais, *Mariana*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.3**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Mariana*, 1851, oil on wood, 597 x 495 mm (Tate Britain)



Figure **13.8.4.31**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Mariana*, 1851, oil on mahogany 59.7 49.5 cm (Tate)

The Victorian idea of a medieval woman

Rising up to stretch after a long session of embroidery, Millais' *Mariana* is the epitome of the Victorian idea of a medieval woman. Set in a vaguely Gothic interior with pointed arches and stained glass windows, the painting has an air of mystery and melancholy that is typical in Victorian depictions of the Middle Ages. The 1830s-50s saw an interest in the Middle Ages which appeared to offer an alternative to the problems of industrial capitalism of the Victorian era.

Also typical of the time, is the emphasis on the isolated female figure. The dark colors and straining posture of the woman lead us to wonder about her story, and the Victorian painter always has a story to tell.

An illustration for a poem by Tennyson

Mariana is an illustration to Tennyson's poem, lines from which were included in the catalog when the painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851:

> ***She only said, 'My life is dreary,***
> ***He cometh not,' she said:***
> ***She said, "I am aweary, aweary,***
> ***I would that I were dead!'***

The inspiration for the poem was taken from the character of Mariana in Shakespeare's play *Measure for Measure*, who was locked in a moated grange (an estate with a moat around it) for years after her dowry was lost at sea in a storm, causing her to be rejected by her lover Angelo. However, the happily ever after ending found in Shakespeare's play is not even hinted at in either Tennyson's poem or the painting by Millais. Instead the young woman is totally enclosed and isolated by her surroundings, with even the garden visible outside the window bordered by a high brick wall. The visual imagery does not seem to suggest a happy ending for Millais' heroine.

Pre-Raphaelite details

As is typical with the Pre-Raphaelites, Millais' painting shows his mastery of the minute detail. The viewer can almost reach out and touch the softness of her velvet dress, and the jewels in her belt glitter against the dark blue fabric. The beautiful stained glass windows depicting an Annunciation scene were adapted from the windows in the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford. Even the smallest details such as the small mouse that

runs across the floor and the light of the lamp by the prie dieu in the corner are painted with the same attention to truth to nature found in the more prominent elements of the painting.



Figure **13.8.4.32**: Mariana and the stained glass windows (detail), Sir John Everett Millais, *Mariana*, 1851, oil on mahogany 59.7 49.5 cm (Tate)

A turning point

Mariana was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851. Although Millais and his fellow Pre-Raphaelite artists were not well received by the critics, the attacks were not as savage as Millais had endured the previous year over his *Christ in the House of his Parents*. In fact, the young but influential critic John Ruskin was persuaded to send two letters to *The Times* praising the new style for its skill in drawing, intense color and truthfulness to nature. This was a turning point, both for the future of the Pre-Raphaelites and for Millais, whose future association with Ruskin was to be so eventful.

In *Mariana*, Millais has created both an essay in Pre-Raphaelite execution and an evocative literary female portrait. The viewer feels the release of her aching muscles as she leans backward, however we are also palpably aware of her isolation. It is a work that is at once vibrant and colorful, but also cold and forbidding.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate

This painting on the Google Art Project

Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.4**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 762 x 1118 mm (Tate Britain, London)

A Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece

Ophelia is considered to be one of the great masterpieces of the Pre-Raphaelite style. Combining his interest in Shakespearean subjects with intense attention to natural detail, Millais created a powerful and memorable image. His selection of the moment in the play Hamlet when Ophelia, driven

mad by Hamlet's murder of her father, drowns herself was very unusual for the time. However, it allowed Millais to show off both his technical skill and artistic vision.



Figure **13.8.4.33**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 762 x 111.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The figure of Ophelia floats in the water, her mid section slowly beginning to sink. Clothed in an antique dress that the artist purchased specially for the painting, the viewer can clearly see the weight of the fabric as it floats, but also helps to pull her down. Her hands are in the pose of submission, accepting of her fate.



Figure **13.8.4.34**: Ophelia (detail), Sir John Everett Millais, Ophelia, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 762 x 111.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

She is surrounded by a variety of summer flowers and other botanicals, some of which were explicitly described in Shakespeare's text, while others are included for their symbolic meaning. For example, the ring of violets around Ophelia's neck is a symbol of faithfulness, but can also refer to chastity and death.

The hazards of painting outdoors

Painted outdoors near Ewell in Surrey, Millais began the background of the painting in July of 1851. He reported that he got up everyday at 6 am, began work at 8, and did not return to his lodgings until 7 in the evening. He also recounted the problems of working outdoors in letters to his friend Mrs. Combe, later published in the biography of Millais by his son J.G. Millais.

> ***"I sit tailor-fashion under an umbrella throwing a shadow scarcely larger than a halfpenny for eleven hours, with a child's mug within reach to satisfy my thirst from the running stream beside me. I am threatened with a notice to appear before a magistrate for trespassing in a field and destroying the hay."***

The hazards of being an artist's model



Figure **13.8.4.35**: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Elizabeth Siddal painting at an easel*, pencil on paper, 1850s, 25 x 20.3 cm (private collection)

His problems did not end when he returned to his studio in mid-October to paint the figure of Ophelia. His model was Elizabeth Siddal who the Pre-Raphaelite artists met through their friend Walter Howell Deverell, who had been impressed by her appearance and asked her to model for him.

When she met the Pre-Raphaelites Siddal was working in a hat shop, but she later became a painter and poet in her own right. She also become the wife and muse of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Millais had Siddal floating in a bath of warm water kept hot with lamps under the tub. However, one day the lamps went out without being noticed by the engrossed Millais. Siddal caught cold, and her father threatened legal action for damages until Millais agreed to pay the doctor's bills.

Millais becomes a success



Figure **13.8.4.36**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of his Parents*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 139.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Ophelia proved to be a more successful painting for Millais than some of his earlier works, such as *Christ in the House of his Parents*. It had already been purchased when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1852. Critical opinion, under the influence of John Ruskin, was also beginning to swing in the direction of the PRB (the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood). The following year, Millais was elected to be an Associate of the Royal Academy, an event that Rossetti considered to be the end of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.



Figure **13.8.4.37**: Ophelia (detail), Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 762 x 111.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The execution of *Ophelia* shows the Pre-Raphaelite style at its best. Each reed swaying in the water, every leaf and flower are the product of direct and exacting observation of nature. As we watch the drowning woman slowly sink into the murky water, we experience the tinge of melancholy so common in Victorian art. It is in his ability to combine the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites with Victorian sensibilities that Millais excels. His depiction of Ophelia is as unforgettable as the character herself.

Additional resources:

This painting in Tate Britain

This painting in the Google Art Project

Sir John Everett Millais in the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

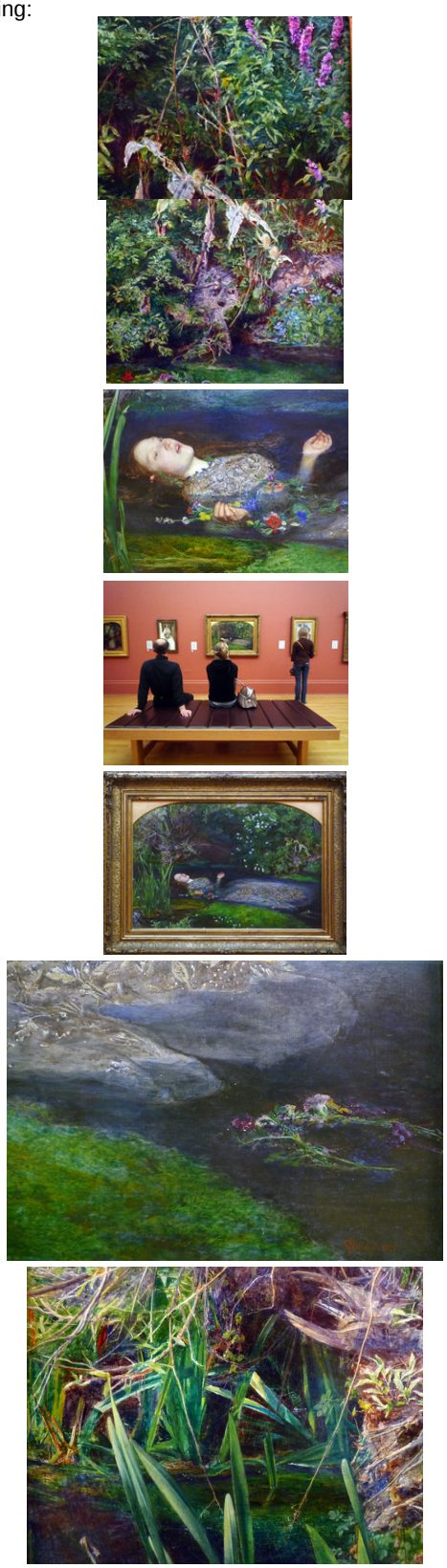


Figure 13.8.4.38: More Smarthistory images…

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88740

Curator's choice – Millais's *Isabella*

by TATE



Video **13.8.4.5**: Video from **Tate**.

Sir John Everett Millais, *Portrait of John Ruskin*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure **13.8.4.39**: John Everett Millais, *Portrait of John Ruskin*, 1853-4, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 68 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

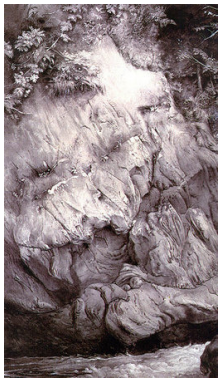


Figure **13.8.4.40**: John Ruskin, *Study of Gneiss Rock, Glenfinlas*, 1853, pen and ink, 47.7 x 32.7 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

"Go to nature…"

Millais's *Portrait of John Ruskin* depicts one of the most influential art critics of the Victorian era. Shown in front of a waterfall in Glenfinlas Scotland, Ruskin is surrounded by the wild, rocky landscape, an observer of the beauty of the natural world.

The image is in keeping with Ruskin's own writings which recommended that artists "go to nature in all singleness of heart," as well as his personal interests as an amateur artist and dabbler in the burgeoning science of geology.

Ruskin also completed several drawings of the area, including *Study of Gneiss Rock, Glenfinlas* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) at the same spot as the background of Millais's painting. In his own work, Ruskin shows the same meticulous attention to natural details.



Figure **13.8.4.41**: Sir John Everett Millais, *The Order of Release*, 1746, 1852-53, oil on canvas, 102.9 x 73.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A controlling mentor

The relationship between the young artist and the established critic began when Ruskin wrote two letters to *The Times* defending the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1851. Millais wrote to thank Ruskin, and Ruskin discovered a young artist he thought worthy of molding. In the summer of 1853, Millais was invited to visit Scotland with Ruskin and his wife Effie, who had previously posed for Millais's painting *The Order of Release 1746* (1852-3). Work began on the portrait almost immediately. Millais found the experience difficult, as Ruskin was an extremely controlling mentor, directing much of the production of the painting. Millais reported that he completed most of the background in Scotland, during July and August, although work on the picture was slow. In January of 1854 Ruskin sat for Millais in his studio and by April the face was completed. The painting was not finished until December 1854 when Ruskin's father paid for the picture.

The end of a marriage

The painting was not the only thing to come out of the vacation, however. Effie was extremely unhappy in her marriage to the staid and conservative Ruskin, and she and Millais fell in love. She was ultimately to leave Ruskin and have their marriage annulled on the grounds of non-consummation. Effie married Millais in 1855 and the two eventually had eight children. Unfortunately, her reputation was considered tarnished because of the rigid Victorian social code and many people, including Queen Victoria, refused to receive her. Millais, who was created a baronet in 1885 and eventually elected as the President of the Royal Academy shortly before his death in August 1896, became more and more a part of the artistic establishment, and Effie's exclusion from society was a source of unhappiness. It was only towards the end of Millais's life, largely through the intervention of Princess Louise, that Effie was received in polite society.



Figure **13.8.4.42**: Detail, John Everett Millais, *Portrait of John Ruskin*, 1853-4, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 68 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

Millais's *Portrait of Ruskin* is an intimate glimpse at one of the most important figures in the Victorian art world. The painstaking attention to the details of the rocks and fast moving water shows the Pre-Raphaelite style at its finest, while the upright, serious figure of Ruskin hints at the sitter's personality. The portrait is a rare meeting of art, science, and personal drama.

Additional resources:

Press release from the Ashmolean Museum on the acquisition of this painting

Alastair Grieve, "Ruskin and Millais at Glenfinlas," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 138 (1996), pp. 228-234. (JSTOR)

A Portrait of John Ruskin and Masculine Ideals of Dress in the Nineteenth Century

by DR. INGRID E. MIDA



Figure **13.8.4.43**: John Everett Millais, *John Ruskin*, c. 1853-54, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 68 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

While the skill of a portrait artist is often judged by whether or not the work resembles the sitter, a portrait may also reveal something about the sitter as well as fashionable norms of the time. What does John Ruskin reveal about himself in his choice of attire for his commissioned portrait by John Everett Millais? In this life-size oil painting, Millais depicts the art critic and polymath standing on a narrow rocky ledge looking downstream as the river rushes behind him. He is dressed in formal daywear suitable for a gentleman — a dark-colored wool double-breasted frock coat that comes to his knees worn over a crisp white shirt, and gray trousers.

Masculine dress in the nineteenth century



Figure **13.8.4.44**: John Everett Millais, *John Ruskin*, detail, c. 1853-54, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 68 cm (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

During the nineteenth century, the dress of men differed markedly from that of the previous century. They cast aside the flamboyant, colorful and decorative looks worn by men like **Charles II** in the eighteenth century. Instead, the elegant gentleman of the Victorian era was often seen wearing relatively dark and sober attire. In dressing this way, men seemed to have rejected fashion, a phenomenon historians often refer to as "The Great Male Renunciation of Fashion." The contrast between the seemingly dark and sober menswear and the ornate and decorative dress worn by women aligned with traditional gender roles that cast women as ornamental accessories of their fathers or husbands in the nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, a closer look at menswear of the nineteenth century shows that fashion was indeed present and can be found in small and subtle details, such as the quality of the cloth, the length of the coat, the style of the necktie, the height of the collar, and the fit of the trousers. In fact, it was just these types of details that conveyed a man's status, wealth and identity.

Reading the clues of dress

Ruskin is wearing an ensemble that was considered formal urban daywear. This type of dark and sober costume was the uniform of respectability, worn by members of Parliament, bankers, judges, doctors and gentleman. He wears this elegant attire even though he is deep in the wilderness in a hard-to-reach ravine in Scotland, communicating the idea that he is an educated gentleman.

Ruskin's crisp white collared shirt emerges at the neckline and cuffs to show that he has the financial means to have his clothing laundered. The black or dark blue stock or necktie, wrapped smoothly around his neck, also denotes his social class. The dark long-waisted wool frock coat that comes to his knees creates a smooth line over his slender body and exemplifies the work of a skilled tailor.

It is interesting that Ruskin did not select a looser-fitting hunting jacket for his portrait but instead chose clothing that he might have worn to give a lecture on architecture and painting. Millais' initial sketches for this portrait made on site in Glen Finglas (Scotland) show Ruskin wearing this or a similar formal daywear ensemble even though the painting was later finished in the artist's studio in London.



Figure **13.8.4.45**: Man's Frock Coat and Trousers, circa 1852 (**Los Angeles County Museum of Art**)

A comparable ensemble dated to 1852 from the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art reveals the waistcoat or vest typically worn under the frock coat. The key difference is that this ensemble is accessorized with two items found in every gentleman's wardrobe from that time — a silk top hat and a walking stick.



Figure **13.8.4.46**: John Everett Millais, *John Ruskin*, detail, c. 1853-54, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 68 cm (© Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

Ruskin's walking stick

Ruskin chose more casual versions of these accessories for his portrait by Millais. In the painting, he holds a brown felt hat in his left hand and a walking stick fashioned from a tree branch in the other. He is a gentleman, but with these choices he reveals his affinity for and love of nature, a topic that he also lectured on. He once wrote: "I would rather teach drawing that my pupils learn to love nature, than teach the looking at nature that they may love to draw."

In subsequent decades, Ruskin would be described as a slightly stooped figure who was somewhat old-fashioned in his dress. In 1884, the young Beatrix Potter recorded seeing Ruskin at the Royal Academy in her diary noting that he was "one of the most ridiculous figures" she had ever seen,

and she observed that he wore “a very old hat, much necktie and aged coat buttoned up to his neck.” Nonetheless, in 1853-1854 when Millais painted his portrait, Ruskin emulated the ideal attire worn by an elegant gentleman, albeit with his own unique touch.

Details of men’s attire are often less visible than women’s dress, especially since men’s suits are one of the most ubiquitous and enduring symbols of masculinity. Nonetheless, small details, such as the choice of accessories or the cut and quality of a suit, may reveal important clues to a sitter’s identity.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Read more about this portrait of John Ruskin

Christopher Breward, *The Suit: Form, Function & Style* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016)

James S. Dearden, *John Ruskin: A Life in Pictures* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999)

Ingrid E. Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020)

Sir John Everett Millais, *The Vale of Rest*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.6**: Sir John Everett Millais, *The Vale of Rest: where the weary find repose*, 1858 (partially repainted 1862)

Inspired by the sunset

An October sunset was the inspiration for the evocative *The Vale of Rest* by John Everett Millais. In the foreground, two nuns in the graveyard, one digging and one looking out at the viewer, serve as a counterpoint to the colorful display of nature in the background. The scene is peaceful, tranquil, and without the explicit narrative often found in Victorian paintings (think about **Hunt’s Awakening Conscience** for example), but it is nonetheless rich in symbolism. The artist himself stated that this was his favorite painting.



Figure 13.8.4.47: Sir John Everett Millais, *The Vale of Rest: where the weary find repose*, 1858 (partially repainted 1862), oil on canvas, 102.9 x 172.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Mortality & the cycles of nature



Figure 13.8.4.48: Sir John Everett Millais, *Spring (Apple Blossoms)*, 1859-9, oil on canvas, 110.5 x 172.7 (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool)

Millais apparently thought of the painting as a companion to his painting *Spring* (1856-9), also first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1859. Both together and separately, the two pictures relate to the traditional theme of mortality and the cycles of nature. The autumn setting of *The Vale of Rest* emphasizes the annual reminder of death in the falling foliage and shortened hours of daylight. This feeling is emphasized by the two nuns, one vigorously digging a grave and the other who prominently wears a rosary attached to a skull. The quiet of the scene is marred only by the sound of the shovel as it hits the dirt.



Figure **13.8.4.49**: Nun (detail), Sir John Everett Millais, *The Vale of Rest: where the weary find repose*, 1858 (partially repainted 1862), oil on canvas, 102.9 x 172.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Although we often associate artists painting outdoors to capture the effects of light with Monet, Renoir and the Impressionist group, the Pre-Raphaelites also painted outdoors. The background of this painting is the garden of Millais' in-laws home in Perth, Scotland, except, of course, for the gravestones, which were painted in Kinnoull churchyard, Perth. According to a long description of the production of the painting by his wife, Effie and recorded by their son J.G. Millais, "the sunsets were lovely for two or three nights . . . the effect lasted so short a time that he had to paint like lightning." In a letter to William Holman Hunt, Millais tells his friend that he was painting the picture, figures and all, outdoors, despite the fact that it was extremely cold.

Growing success

In many of the paintings completed after *The Vale of Rest*, Millais began to move towards more saleable pictures. Although he had moved to Scotland after his marriage in July 1855, Millais and family returned to London in 1861, and many have argued that the change in his work reflects the need to support his growing family. He was to be increasingly successful, being elected RA (Royal Academician) in 1863 and ultimately serving as the President of the Royal Academy, although briefly, from early 1896 until his death in August of that year. In 1885 Millais also had the distinction of being the first artist to be created a baronet.

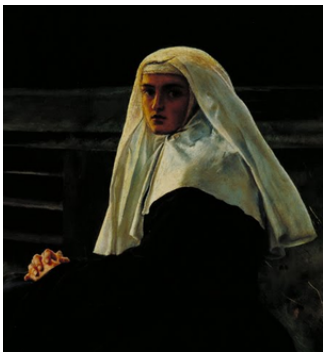


Figure **13.8.4.50**: Seated nun (detail), Sir John Everett Millais, *The Vale of Rest: where the weary find repose*, 1858 (partially repainted 1862), oil on canvas, 102.9 x 172.7 cm (Tate Britain, London)

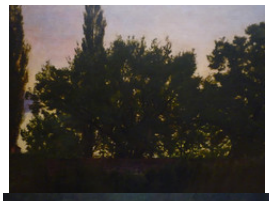
The Vale of Rest is a transitional work in Victorian art. The attention to detail and truth to nature are firmly rooted in Pre-Raphaelitism, while the lack of a clear subject relates to the new ideas of the Aesthetic Movement and the concept of art for arts sake, which was to become so prominent in the 1860s and 70s. The quiet and contemplative mood of the painting encourages the viewer to enjoy the beauty of nature, while, perhaps, also pondering our own mortality.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

Spring (Apple Blossoms) at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88740



Figure 13.8.4.51: More Smarthistory images…

William Holman Hunt

William Holman Hunt, *Claudio and Isabella*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video 13.8.4.7: William Holman Hunt, *Claudio and Isabella*, 1850, oil on mahogany, 758 x 426 x 10 mm (Tate Britain)

From William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Act III, scene 1 (a room in a prison):

> ***ISABELLA What says my brother?***
> ***CLAUDIO Death is a fearful thing.***
> ***ISABELLA And shamed life a hateful.***
> ***CLAUDIO Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;***
> ***To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;***
> ***This sensible warm motion to become***
> ***A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit***
> ***To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside***
> ***In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;***
> ***To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,***
> ***And blown with restless violence round about***
> ***The pendent world; or to be worse than worst***
> ***Of those that lawless and incertain thought***
> ***Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!***

The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.
ISABELLA Alas, alas!



Figure **13.8.4.52**: William Holman Hunt, *Claudio and Isabella*, oil on canvas, 1850, 30 x 16-3/4 inches (Tate Britain, London). Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1853.

A moral dilemma

William Holman Hunt's *Claudio and Isabella* illustrates not only the Pre-Raphaelite fascination with William Shakespeare, but also the artist's particular attraction to subjects dealing with issues of morality. Taken from the play *Measure for Measure*, which tells the story of Claudio, who has been sentenced to death by Lord Angelo (the temporary ruler of Vienna) for impregnating his fiancée.



Figure **13.8.4.53**: Claudio and Isabella (detail), William Holman Hunt, *Claudio and Isabella*, 1850, oil on mahogany, 75.8 x 42.6 cm (Tate Britain, London)



Figure **13.8.4.54**: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 76 x 56 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Claudio's sister Isabella, a nun, goes to Angelo to plead for clemency for her brother and is shocked that he suggests that she trade sex for her brother's life. Of course, she refuses, and Claudio initially agrees with her decision, but later changes his mind. Hunt depicts the moment when the imprisoned Claudio suggests that Isabella sacrifice her virginity to gain his freedom.

It was the type of subject that appealed to Hunt, who liked themes to do with questions of guilt and sinful behavior, such as his well known painting *The Awakening Conscience* (1853).

Claudio and Isabella

Claudio's face, which is partly in shadow, looks down and away from his sister. His slouching posture, the rich texture of his dark, yet colorful clothes and pointed medieval-looking shoes are a sharp contrast to the stark white of the nun's habit, her upright posture and unwavering gaze. Sunlight from the prison window lights Isabella's face and permits a glimpse of apple blossoms and a church in the distance.

The interior of the scene was painted at Lollard Prison at Lambeth Palace, and the crumbling masonry around the windows and the rusty metal of the shackle that bind Claudio's leg detail the less than desirable conditions.



Figure **13.8.4.55**: Shackle (detail), William Holman Hunt, *Claudio and Isabella*, 1850, oil on mahogany, 75.8 x 42.6 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Hunt also painted the lute hanging in the window while at the prison. The lute with its red string is symbolic of lust, but the fact that it is placed in the sunshine rather than the gloom of the cell lessens the negative impact. The petals of apple blossom scattered on Claudio's cloak on the floor, although not added until 1879, are intended to show that Claudio is willing to compromise his sister to save himself.

Financial difficulties

Claudio and Isabella was begun in 1850 after Hunt received a small advance from the painter Augustus Egg. Poor reviews of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the Royal Academy of 1850 had created financial difficulties for Hunt. He continued to work on the painting for the next several years, finally exhibiting the picture at the Royal Academy of 1853.

"Death is a fearful thing"

The painting appeared with a quotation from the play carved into the frame, a devise Hunt was to explore in many of his paintings, as a way of reinforcing his message. The short notation "Claudio: Death is a fearful thing. Isabella: And shamed life a hateful," serves not only to point to the exact moment in the play, but also as a reminder of the underlying moral dilemma of the subject. The ability to bring to life these moments of ambiguity was one of Hunt's greatest achievements.

Additional resources

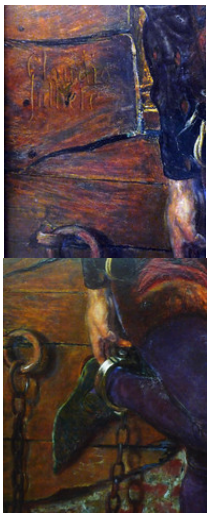
This painting at Tate Britain

Professor Rusche on this painting

Pre-Raphaelite Online Resource from Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

This painting on the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:













https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88740

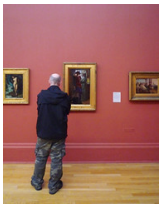


Figure 13.8.4.56: More Smarthistory images…

William Holman Hunt, *Our English Coasts (Strayed Sheep)*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video 13.8.4.8: William Holman Hunt, *Our English Coasts ("Strayed Sheep")*, 1852, oil on canvas, 432 x 584 mm (Tate Britain, London)

A daring composition



Figure 13.8.4.57: View from cliffs, Covehurst Bay

William Holman Hunt's *Our English Coasts* (*Strayed Sheep*) is a remarkably original work of art for 1852. Painted largely out of doors at the "Lover's Seat" (a scenic outlook) above Covehurst Bay near Hastings on the south coast of England, the scene captures a tranquil spot inhabited only by a flock of sheep. The rather daring composition and the attention to natural detail make this painting unique.



Figure 13.8.4.58: William Holman Hunt, *Our English Coasts (Strayed Sheep)*, 1852, oil on canvas, 43.2 x 58.4 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Hunt captures the beauty of an English summer day. The brightness of the sunlight is interrupted only by the shadows of the clouds they move across the landscape. The sea glitters in the distance on the far left. The cliffs are pushed up to the top of the picture frame, leaving little room for the sky. Most daring, however, is the massing of the sheep on the edge of the cliff on the right side of the painting, creating an asymmetry to the composition.



Figure **13.8.4.59**: Detail, William Holman Hunt, *Our English Coasts (Strayed Sheep)*, 1852, oil on canvas, 43.2 x 58.4 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Although there are no people in the landscape, the sheep take on very human characteristics, for example the two sheep at the very edge of the canvas, one of whom lovingly rests his head on the back of the his companion. In the corner just underneath, a black sheep stares malevolently out at the viewer.

Pre-Raphaelite truth to nature

True to the ideals of Pre-Raphaelitism, Hunt painted every flower, bramble and blade of grass with extreme attention to detail. The texture gives the impression that you could reach out feel the uneven clumps of wool on the sheep, and Hunt even pays attention to the red marking, used to differentiate ownership, on each member of the flock. Hunt, who had introduced the Pre-Raphaelites to the ideas of John Ruskin, was perhaps the most faithful follower of Ruskin's advice to "go to Nature in all singleness of heart."

Political and Moral Content

Also following in the tradition of Ruskin is the fact that the painting carries a moral content. The title *Our English Coasts* related to the fact that at the time of the unguarded state of the many miles of English coastline was a serious topic of discussion at the time. The European revolutions of 1848 had made Britons nervous, and it was as yet unclear what the relationship was to be with France's new ruler Napoleon III.



Figure **13.8.4.60**: William Holman Hunt, *The Hireling Shepherd*, 1851, oil on canvas, 76.4 × 109.5 cm (Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester)

The selection of a location near Hastings, the landing site of the Norman Invasion of 1066, possibly relates to the last successful invasion of the island in British history. The painting's subtitle, *Strayed Sheep*, relates to the more Biblical message of the painting. There is no shepherd tending the flock, some of which are perched perilously close to the edge of the cliff. In this the message relates to the moral of Hunt's *The Hireling Shepherd*, in which a beautiful woman distracts the shepherd while the flock behind him gets into all kinds of trouble. Interestingly, when Hunt exhibited the painting in France in 1855, the *Our English Coasts* part of the title was dropped.

Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelites

Hunt was born in London in 1827 and became a student at the Royal Academy School in 1844, where he met Millais. He also became a close friend of Dante Gabriel Rossetti when the two bonded over a mutual regard for the work of the poet Keats. He was an important force in the early years of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and the subjects and moral content of his paintings frequently reflect his own deeply religious nature.

The English countryside

The realism of *Our English Coasts* (*Strayed Sheep*) transports the viewer to the spot. One can feel the breeze off the English Channel, and the heat of the summer sun. The picturesque blend of sheep and landscape typically found in the English countryside are here seamlessly intertwined with the moral message. Hunt has in no way created a replica of an earlier painting (which was the original commission), but a wholly original work of art.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

This painting at the Google Art Project

William Holman Hunt at the Google Art Project

Pre-Raphaelite Online Resource from the Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

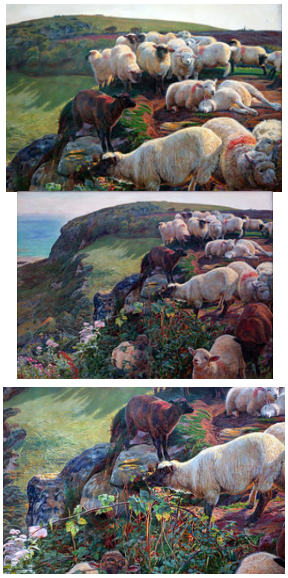
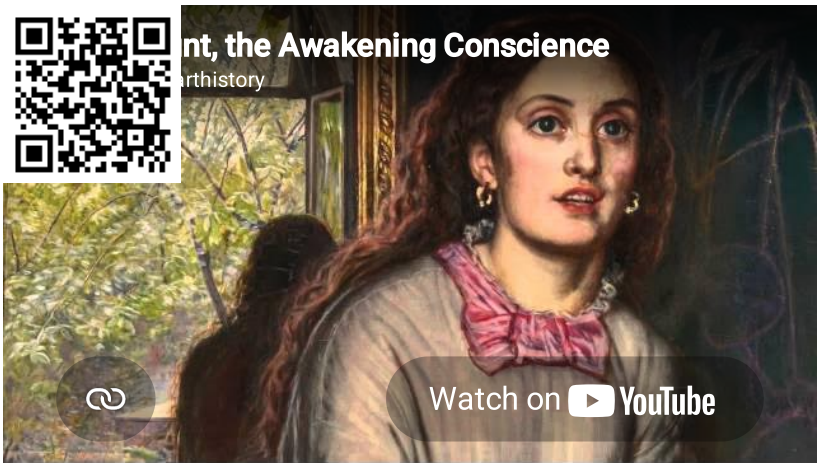


Figure **13.8.4.61**: More Smarthistory images…

William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.9**: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 762 x 559 mm (Tate Britain, London)



Figure **13.8.4.62**: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 55.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A Fallen Woman (with a New Twist)

William Holman Hunt's painting, *The Awakening Conscience*, addresses the common Victorian narrative of the fallen woman (for more about this subject, see **Stanhope's Thoughts of the Past**). Trapped in a newly decorated interior, Hunt's heroine at first appears to be a stereotype of the age, a young unmarried woman engaged in an illicit liaison with her lover. This is made clear by the fact that she is partially undressed in the presence of a clothed man and wears no wedding ring.



Figure **13.8.4.63**: Detail, William Holman Hunt, detail The Awakening Conscience, 1853, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 55.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

However, Hunt offers a new twist on this story. The young woman springs up from her lover's lap. She is reminded of her country roots by the music the man plays (the sheet music to Thomas Moore's *Oft in the Stilly Night* sits on the piano), causing her to have an awakening prick of conscience.



Figure **13.8.4.64**: Cat (detail), William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 55.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The symbolism of the picture makes her situation as a kept woman clear—the enclosed interior, the cat playing with a bird under the chair, and the man's one discarded glove on the floor all speak to the precarious position the woman has found herself in. However, as she stands up, a ray of light illuminates her from behind, almost like a halo, offering the viewer hope that she may yet find the strength to redeem herself.



Figure **13.8.4.65**: Richard Redgrave, *The Outcast*, 1851, oil on canvas, 31x 41 in (Royal Academy, London)

The theme of the fallen woman was popular in Victorian art, echoing the prevalence of prostitution in Victorian society. Hunt's redemptive message is unusual when compared to other examples of this theme. For example, Richard Redgrave's *The Outcast* (1851), which shows a young unwed mother and her baby being cast out into the snow by her disgraced father, while the rest of her family pleads for mercy. Countless other paintings of the period emphasize the perils of stepping outside the bounds of acceptable morality with the typical conclusion to the story being that the woman is ostracized, and inevitably, suffers a premature death. By contrast, Hunt offers the viewer the hope that the young woman in his painting is truly repentant and can ultimately reclaim her life.

Pre-Raphaelite in style



Figure **13.8.4.66**: Woman and reflection in the mirror (detail), William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 55.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The Awakening Conscience is one of the few Pre-Raphaelite paintings to deal with a subject from contemporary life, but it still retains the truth to nature and attention to detail common to the style. The texture of the carpet, the reflection in the mirror behind the girl and the carvings of the furniture all speak to to Hunt's unwavering belief that the artist should recreate the scene as closely as possible, and paint from direct observation. To do that, he hired a room in the neighborhood of St. John's Wood. The picture was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854, and unfortunately for Hunt, met with a mixed reception. While Ruskin praised the attention to detail, many critics disliked the subject of the painting and ignored the more positive spiritual message.

A deeply religious man

For Hunt, the moral of the story was an important element in any of his subjects. He was a deeply religious man and committed to the principles of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and John Ruskin. In fact, shortly after this painting was completed, Hunt embarked on a journey to the Holy Land, convinced that in order to paint religious subjects, he had to go to the actual source for inspiration. The fact that a trip to the Holy Land was a difficult, expensive and dangerous journey at the time was immaterial to him.

The Awakening Conscience is an unconventional approach to a common subject. Hunt's work reflects the ideal of Christian charity espoused in theory by many Victorians, but not exactly put into practice when dealing with the issue of the fallen woman. While others emphasized the consequences of one's actions as a way of discouraging inappropriate behavior, Hunt maintained that the truly repentant can change their lives.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

This painting at the Google Art Project

William Holman Hunt in the Google Art Project

The Pre-Raphaelites at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Pre-Raphaelite Online Resource at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

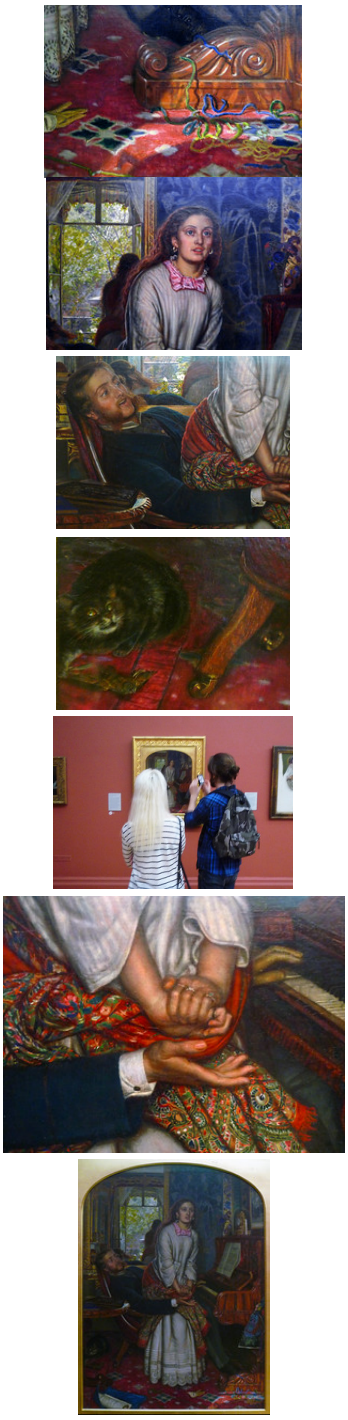


Figure 13.8.4.67: More Smarthistory images…

William Holman Hunt, *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY

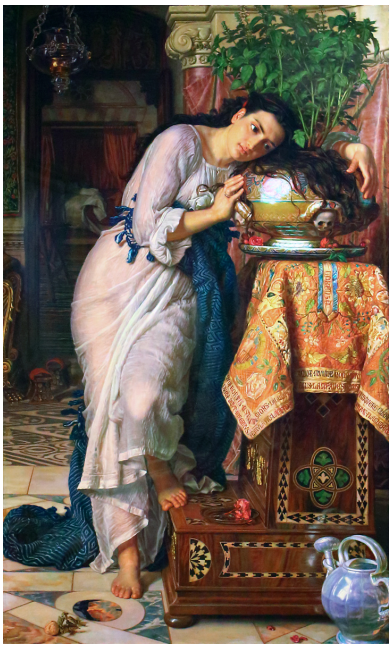


Figure 13.8.4.68: William Holman Hunt, *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*, 1866-8, retouched 1886, oil on canvas, 187 x 116.5 cm (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne)

One of the things that initially drew the **Pre-Raphaelites** together was a shared admiration for the writings of John Keats. Throughout their careers, subjects from Keats' poems frequently supplied the narratives for the paintings done by the members of the PRB (Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood), but William Holman Hunt's *Isabella or the Pot of Basil* (1866-8) is an innovative interpretation of the subject.

Keats' *Isabella or the Pot of Basil* (published in 1820) is based on a story from the Renaissance author Boccaccio's *Decameron.* It explores the traditional theme of star-crossed lovers. The poem tells the tragic tale of Isabella and Lorenzo, who is employed by Isabella's brothers. Unhappy with the blossoming love between the pair, the brothers send Lorenzo on a trip and have him killed, but Lorenzo appears to Isabella as a ghost and tells her where to find his body. Isabella digs up the body, cuts off Lorenzo's head and buries it in a pot of basil, which she waters with her tears. Eventually her brothers become suspicious, steal the pot, and flee. Isabella goes mad with grief and dies. Like the narratives of so many Victorian paintings, the course of true love does not run smoothly.



Figure 13.8.4.69: John Everett Millais, *Isabella*, 1848-9, oil on canvas, 142.8 x 103 cm (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool)

The subject had been treated by John Everett Millais in 1848-9 in one of his first forays into Pre-Raphaelite painting. Millais' painting shows the lovers, oblivious to the others around them as Lorenzo shyly offers Isabella a blood orange on a plate. Isabella looks demurely downward while one

of her brothers kicks a dog in fury over their obvious regard for each other. Millais' Isabella is a stunning example of the mastery of the medieval detail for which the Pre-Raphaelites are known, and the pale, thin face of Isabella is reminiscent of a Renaissance Madonna.



Figure 13.8.4.70: William Holman Hunt, *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*, 1866-8, retouched 1886, detail, oil on canvas, 187 x 116.5 cm (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne)

In contrast, Hunt's image of an exotic, dark-haired Mediterranean-looking woman is at odds both with the earlier painting and the description in Keats' poem. Here Isabella stares into space, her arms tenderly embracing a pot decorated with skulls, which Hunt based on examples he had seen in Florence. She is clad in a gauzy, clinging nightdress emphasizing her curves, and her feet are bare, creating a far more sensual version of the subject. Hunt's Isabella also appears to be a more robust woman than the typical pale, fragile looking women often found in Victorian art. Ever practical, Hunt said that he wanted her to look as if she was actually capable of cutting off a head.



Figure 13.8.4.71: Frederic Lord Leighton, *Flaming June*, oil on canvas, 120 x 120 cm (Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico)

Although the attention to detail found in Hunt's earlier Pre-Raphaelite paintings remains, his inclusion of vaguely foreign elements such as the inlay of the furniture, the elaborate tapestry on which the pot sits and the richly designed tile floor come more from the interest in the exotic found in paintings of the **Aesthetic Movement**. His approach to *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* has as much in common with later Victorian artists such as Frederic Lord Leighton and his paintings of classically dressed single female figures, as it does with his Pre-Raphaelite roots.



Figure 13.8.4.72: William Holman Hunt, *Fanny Waugh Hunt*, oil on canvas, 104 x 73 cm (**Toledo Museum of Art**)

The painting was begun in Florence, where Hunt and his new wife, Fanny Waugh, were stopped while traveling in 1866. In October Fanny gave birth to a son but contracted a fever and died in December. Hunt used Fanny's likeness as the model for his Isabella and her mournful gaze may be an expression of his own grief. After working on the painting for some time, Hunt finally exhibited the work in 1868 at the showroom of the art dealer Ernest Gambart, where it was generally well received by critics.



Figure 13.8.4.73: William Holman Hunt, *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*, 1866-8, retouched 1886, detail, oil on canvas, 187 x 116.5 cm (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne)

Throughout his career, Hunt stayed closest to the aesthetic of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in his attention to detail and his insistence on narrative content. His use of the Keats poem and his masterful treatment of small things, such as the minutia of the stitching on the beautiful tapestry, point to his continuing adherence to the ideals of the PRB, while his re-interpretation of the heroine shows his continued growth as an artist.

Additional resources:

Read John Keats' poem *Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil*

William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure 13.8.4.74: William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*, c. 1888–1905, oil on canvas, 74 1/8 X 57 5/8 inches (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art)

A Lady Cursed

In the 1880s, William Holman Hunt turned to the poetry of Sir Alfred, Lord Tennyson, a favorite Victorian literary source, in his painting *The Lady of Shalott*. Hunt's painting is a virtuoso performance, using the meticulous detail of **Pre-Raphaelitism** to capture the most dramatic moment in the story. The painting was based on a drawing for a lavish edition of Tennyson published in 1857 known as the Moxon Tennyson (after the publisher).

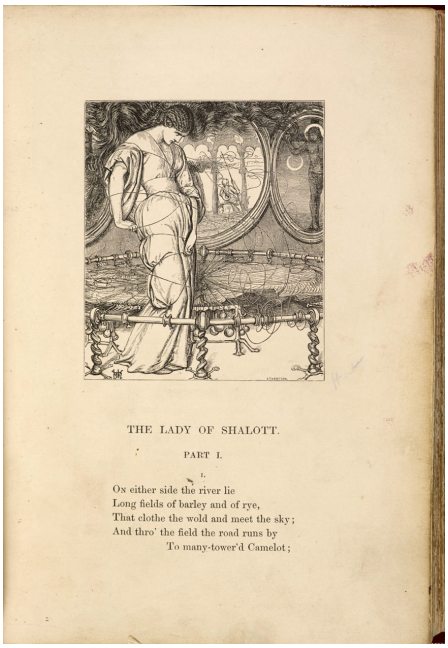


Figure 13.8.4.75: William Holman Hunt's illustration of *The Lady of Shallot*, Moxon edition of Tennyson's Poems, 1857 (The British Library)

The Victorians loved nothing better than a beautiful, tragic heroine, preferably one in medieval clothing, which explains their enduring fascination with Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*. One of his many poems based on the legends of King Arthur, Tennyson tells the story of a lovely lady confined to "Four gray walls, and four gray towers," and cursed to constantly weave scenes that she can only observe through a mirror. As the poem explains:

> ***No time hath she to sport and play:***
> ***A charmed web she weaves alway.***
> ***A curse is on her, if she stay***
> ***Her weaving either night or day,***

To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

Unfortunately for the lady, her routine of constantly weaving reflections is quite literally shattered when she observes Sir Lancelot riding by and actually looks out the window rather than at the shadowy images in the mirror.

She left the web, she left the loom
She made three paces thro' the room
She saw the water-flower bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Knowing that the end is near, the final part of the poem recounts how the lady writes a message for those that will find her body, gets into a boat, and floats down the river to Camelot. In this, Tennyson's poem ends as did many, many other stories popularized during the era, with the untimely demise of the lovely heroine.



Figure 13.8.4.76: John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott*, 1888, oil on canvas, 153 × 200 cm (Tate Britain)

The subject was frequently illustrated, the most familiar example being John William Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott*, which depicts a beautiful but stricken looking lady dying as she slowly floats down the river. In selecting this of the part of the story, Waterhouse was not alone, as the vast majority of renditions of this subject focused on the trip down river, with the lady either already dead or about to die.

In contrast, Hunt illustrated the most active part of the poem, when the lady actually looks out the window, causing the mirror to crack. According to the text, "she made three paces thro' the room," and in Hunt's figure, the swinging arms and the wild, wind-blown look of her flowing hair create the sensation of a slow rhythmic dance. The lady struggles to remove threads of her tapestry, which "out flew the web and floated wide," creating long colored strings that bind the figure. Much of this can also be seen in the original drawing and were elements not appreciated by Tennyson himself who complained that her hair was like a "tornado" and that the threads encircling her body were an addition to the actual text of the poem.



Figure 13.8.4.77: Mirror (detai;), William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*, c. 1888–1905, oil on canvas, 74 1/8 X 57 5/8 inches (**Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**)



Figure 13.8.4.78: Hercules, shoes and irises (detail), William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*, c. 1888–1905, oil on canvas, 74 1/8 X 57 5/8 inches (**Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**)

Symbols and Meanings

In the painting, Hunt added many symbolic references. The cracked mirror behind the lady's head shows Lancelot on his way to Camelot and the river that will take her on her final journey. The subject of the tapestry she weaves, Sir Galahad delivering the Holy Grail to King Arthur, provides a virtuous counterpoint to Lancelot, whose adultery with Queen Guinevere ultimately brings down Camelot. To one side of the mirror, a decorative panel depicting Hercules trying to pluck a golden fruit in the Garden of Hesperides is reminiscent of Renaissance relief sculpture, something Hunt saw much of during an earlier stay in Florence. The same can be said for the decorative tile floor, which is similar to that used by Hunt in his earlier painting ***Isabella or the Pot of Basil*** begun during his stay in Florence.

Hunt was a religious man, and included elements that may be interpreted as Christian symbolism—a pair of empty shoes and two purple irises. In the Bible shoes are often removed before walking on sacred ground. For example, a similar device is used in the famous Northern Renaissance painting by Jan Van Eyck, ***The Arnolfini Portrait***, which was a favorite of the Pre-Raphaelites. The delicately painted irises are associated with faith, hope, and wisdom, and for a Victorian audience intimately aware of the language of flowers, this inclusion may have had special meaning for the tragic lady who was "half sick of shadows," and in the throes of making a life-changing decision.

Feminist scholars have noted that the story can be seen as a cautionary tale of what happens to women who flout the rules; in this case it is the lady's obvious sexual desire for Lancelot that drives her decision to actually look out the window and bring the curse upon herself. And although a moralistic meaning would certainly have appealed to Hunt, his depiction of the lady is not unsympathetic. The reflection of the bright sunshine in the mirror is in sharp contrast to the darkness around the lady's face and upper torso, while her lower half is bathed in light. His lack of overt condemnation of her actions is reminiscent of his more charitable approach towards what Victorians saw as the sin of prostitution in his earlier painting ***The Awakening Conscience***. Although as a reader one must wonder how she ended up cursed in a tower in the first place, we are forced to admire her decision to free herself from her prison.



Figure **13.8.4.79**: William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*, c. 1888–1905, oil on canvas, 74 1/8 X 57 5/8 inches (**Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**)

The *Lady of Shalott* is a powerful example of later Pre-Raphaelitism. At a time when many artists were moving towards the ideas of **Aestheticism** where beauty is more important than subject, Hunt's picture exhibits his meticulous attention to detail combined with his desire to include a narrative. His focus on the climatic action of the story, rather than the passivity of the lady's death, grips his viewer with the moment of decision that will change the course of her life. Although Victorian painting abounds with images of women who, by the end of the story, will end up dead, Hunt's portrayal of his subject shows a woman unwilling to accept the drudgery of her life and ready to make a change, no matter what the cost.

Additional resources

The Moxon Tennyson (from The British Library)

Ford Madox Brown

Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure 13.8.4.80: Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England*, 1852-55, oil on panel, 82.5 x 75 cm (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, UK)

Ford Madox Brown's great modern life study *The Last of England* (1852-55) captures a familiar scene in England during the 1850s. A man and woman aboard a crowded ship gaze out at the viewer. A brisk wind blows the woman's bonnet ties and turns the sea into a mass of white caps, suggesting the potential for a rough passage. The deck behind them is packed with people also making the journey, while green cabbages hanging on the rope railings hint at the long voyage ahead. The predominately somber color scheme, the chilly look of the sea and the sky, and the mournful expressions of the main figures tell the story.



Figure 13.8.4.81: Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England*, 1852-55, oil on panel, 82.5 x 75 cm (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, UK)

The painting is dominated by the two figures, based on the artist and his wife, Emma. Their close proximity and clasped hands identify them as a couple, yet they both stare straight ahead, each locked in their own silent reflections. Barely noticed at first glance is the small hand emerging out of the woman's cloak, the unseen child that is potentially a nod to the future. The umbrella propped up to shield them from the spray of the sea also blocks their view of the iconic white cliffs of Dover receding in the distance, representing what is left behind. The unusual circular format of the painting acts almost like a telescope, adding a voyeuristic quality to the scene, as if the viewer is spying on this moment of personal grief and introspection. In a catalogue of his paintings written in 1865, Brown described *The Last of England* as "the parting scene in its fullest tragic development." He also alludes to the superior class status of the couple compared to most of those in the background as "a couple from the middle class, high enough, through education and refinement, to appreciate all they are now giving up."

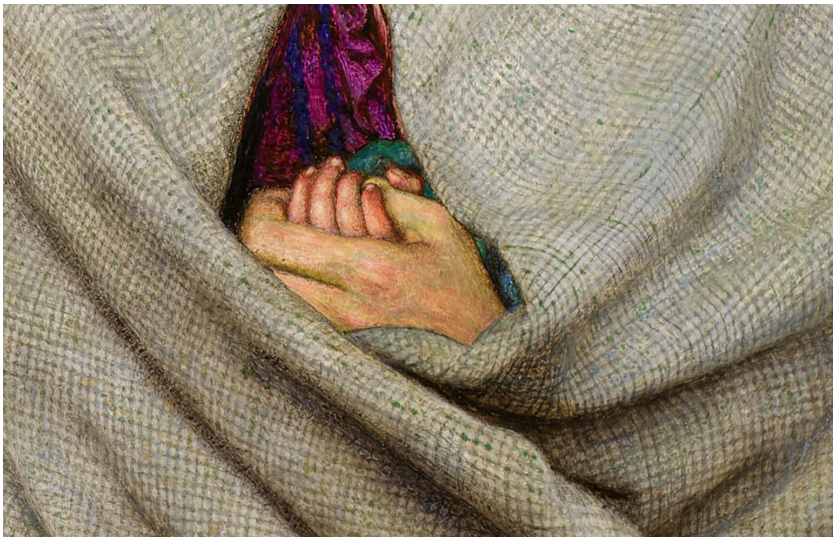


Figure 13.8.4.82: Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England*, detail of child's hand inside cloak, 1852-55, oil on panel, 82.5 x 75 cm (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, UK)

Inspiration for the painting came from the departure of the sculptor Thomas Woolner, an original member of the **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**, who joined the exodus to dig for gold in Australia in 1852. This came during a period of massive emigration from Britain—between circa 1815 and 1914 approximately ten million people sailed away, primarily to the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, hoping to improve their personal prospects. Unlike Woolner, who returned (without gold) to England in 1854, many of these people never saw their homeland again. Nor were they expected to return, which explains the couple's mournful expressions. Other painters of the day addressed the subject of emigration, most notably Richard Redgrave in his *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home* (1858). However, Redgrave's depiction of a family leaving a small village to begin their long journey is far more optimistic. In Redgrave's work, the sunny sky, vivid green landscape, and the father's theatrical wave of his hat as a final gesture of farewell create a feeling of hope largely missing from Brown's painting.



Figure 13.8.4.83: Richard Redgrave, *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home*, 1858, oil on canvas, 67.9 x 98.4 cm (Tate, London)

Brown worked on this image over a period of years. Painted for the most part in his backyard, the artist worked on cold days using his family and local people as models. For example, when the painting was nearing completion, he recorded in his diary "it was the weather for my picture & made my hand look blue with the cold as I require in the work, so I painted all day out in the garden." The minute detail of the purplish flesh on the exposed hands of the man in the foreground attests to Brown's attention to detail. The glowering expression on the man's face may also relate to Brown's own emotions, as at the time he was struggling to achieve commercial success and himself entertained the idea of emigration.



Figure 13.8.4.84: Left: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ford Madox Brown*, 1852, pencil on wove paper, 17.1 x 11.4 cm (National Portrait Gallery, London); right Ford Madox Brown, *Emma Hill*, 1852, chalk on paper, 17.7 x 16.1 cm (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, UK)

The Last of England is a poignant reminder of the journey made by millions of people during the 19th century. At a time when many people are interested in genealogy and learning where they came from, it is a visual reminder of the hope and despair that these emigrants must have felt as they left their homes and families behind in search of a better life.

Additional resources:

A watercolor version of *The Last of England* at the Tate

Ford Madox Brown, *Work*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure 13.8.4.85: Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1852-65, oil on canvas, 137 x 197.3 cm (Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester)

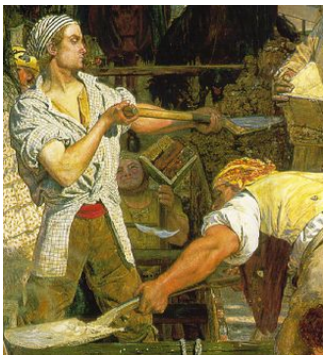


Figure 13.8.4.86: Detail, Ford Madox Brown, Work, 1852-65, oil on canvas, 137 x 197.3 cm (Manchester City Art Galleries)

Construction projects have always been a part of city life, and Victorian London was no exception. Ford Madox Brown's painting *Work* is a fascinating glimpse of just this. Our eye is immediately drawn to the young man in a striped hat effortlessly lifting a shovel high in the air, and the well-muscled forearms of the other workers.

Our eye then moves through the large canvas to the other figures, some more finely dressed and obviously of a different social class than the workers. But it is clear that *Work* is about more than just men digging. While the painting might appear to be a random view of a street, it is a carefully composed snapshot of the new way that different classes and professions encountered one another on the streets of Victorian London

Brown and the Pre-Raphaelites

Ford Madox Brown is associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of British artists noted for their attention to detail, vibrant colors, and interest in scenes from literature. Although Brown himself was never an official member of the PRB, he was friendly with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and others in the group. The two got to know each other when Rossetti appeared on Brown's doorstep in 1848 asking for art lessons. Although the lessons were short-lived, the two developed a lasting friendship. Through his association with the PRB, Brown adopted many of their stylistic tendencies, particularly the use of bright colors and attention to detail.

Modern life

However, Brown's paintings show a much greater interest in subjects of modern life than many of the other artists associated with the PRB. Brown recalled that he got the idea for *Work* from seeing navvies, or construction workers, excavating sewers in Hampstead, North London. The painting was begun in the summer of 1852. Brown traveled to the same spot in Hampstead every day, transporting his canvas back and forth by means of a special cart. The background landscape of the painting was completed right on the street in Hampstead so that Brown could capture the precise details of light, color and form. This interest in direct observation and specificity were hallmarks of the Pre-Raphaelite style.

Victorian ideas of class

The painting centers on a group of working-class navvies. These figures represent the noble "working man," as they are neatly dressed and diligently going about their tasks. In contrast to the workers, there is a group of ragged children in the foreground, representing the lowest of the lower classes. In the catalog of his 1865 one-man exhibition, Brown tells us that the children's mother is dead, and that the oldest, a girl of ten, is in charge of the rest of the children. She wears a tattered dress and is holding an infant over one shoulder.



Figure 13.8.4.87: Children (detail), Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1852-65, oil on canvas, 137 x 197.3 cm (Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester)

Also representative of the lowest class is the ragged and barefoot plant seller on the left side, a figure whom Brown described as a "ragged wretch who has never been taught to work." This hunched figure represents a stark contrast to the industrious and athletic navvies. shoveling away. Both the workers and the ragged children form another contrast, this time to the upper class figures depicted in the painting. On the left hand side, two ladies skirt the edge of the picture. The first, lady carrying a parasol, is a portrait of the artist's Brown's wife Emma. Following along behind is another well-dressed woman who offers a religious tract to one of the navvies. Seeing to the religious education of the lower classes was a type of "work" engaged in by many evangelical middle-class women.

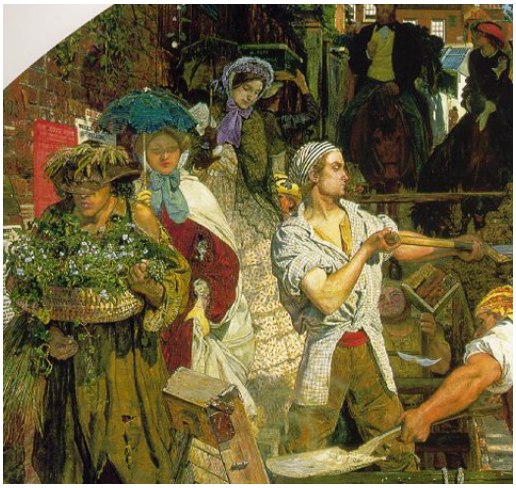


Figure 13.8.4.88: Plant seller (foreground), followed by two women, one, the artists wife, the other, distributing religions tracts (detail), Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1852-65, oil on canvas, 137 x 197.3 cm (Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester)



Figure 13.8.4.89: Detail, Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1852-65, oil on canvas, 137 x 197.3 cm (Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester)

In the background we see two riders on horseback, illustrating the landed upper classes, who by virtue of their wealth and place in society, have no need to work. These class distinctions are even carried over into the pets in the foreground of the painting. The mongrel dog with a frayed rope collar stands with the group of children and stares at his more pampered counterpart, a small dog with a red coat

Maurice and Carlyle



Figure 13.8.4.90: Caryle and Maurice (detail), Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1852-65, oil on canvas, 137 x 197.3 cm (Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester)

On the right side of the painting, two well-dressed men watch the navvies work. These figures are portraits of two prominent men of the day, Frederick Denison Maurice and Thomas Carlyle, whom Brown dubbed “brainworkers.” Carlyle, the figure with the hat and stick, was the author of *Past and Present*, a book advocating social reform that Brown had read with interest. Maurice was a leading Christian Socialist and founder of the Working Men’s College, where Brown was recruited as an instructor along with Rossetti and the art critic John Ruskin. One of the posters visible on the far left side on the canvas is an advertisement for the Working Men’s College.

At first glance Brown’s painting *Work* may appear to be an illustration of the stratification of social class in Victorian England. However, a deeper look reveals both a stunning example of the colorful and detailed Pre-Raphaelite style of painting as well as a commentary on the role of “work,”

and its relationship to Victorian class structure. *Work* is at once a vivid reminder of both the class-consciousness of the Victorian age and the reforming spirit of that time which ultimately led to reforms like the ten-hour work day, and regulations restricting child labor.

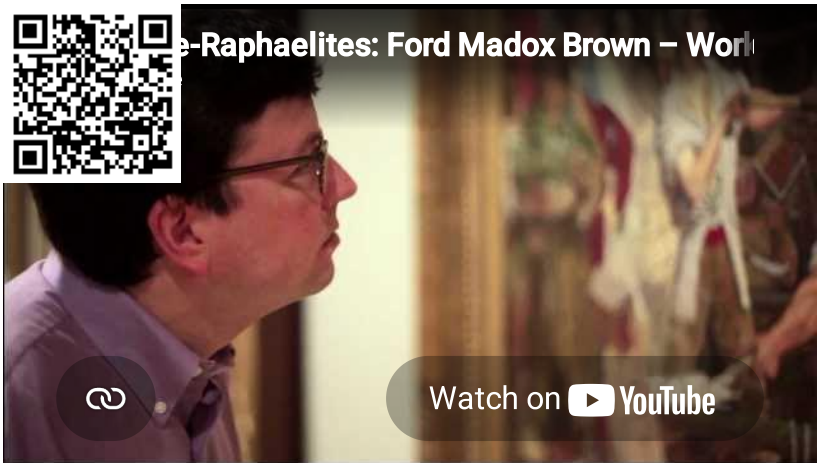
Additional resources:

Interactive on this painting at Manchester City Art Gallery

Reforming Acts from the BBC

Curator's choice – Ford Madox Brown's *Work*

by TATE



Video **13.8.4.10**: Video from **Tate**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ecce Ancilla Domini*

by BEN POLLITT

An age of revolutions



Figure **13.8.4.91**: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ecce Ancilla Domini*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 73 cm x 42 cm (Tate Britain, London)

It was an age of revolutions. Across Europe old regimes were toppling. Marx and Engels had published *The Communist Manifesto*, Darwin was fine tuning his famous theory and the invention of photography was beginning to change the face of art. It seems curious then, anachronistic even, that one of the most radical paintings of the time should draw so heavily on the past, taking as its theme the Annunciation, of all things. But the relationship between the past and the present lies at the very heart of Rossetti's artistic program.

Ecce Ancilla Domini was first exhibited in April 1850 in the National Institution of Fine Arts at the Old Portland Gallery on Regent Street. It provoked critical disapproval and failed to sell. Eventually the painting was purchased by the Pre-Raphaelite patron, Francis McCracken, in 1853.

The subject of the Annunciation

The scene, an Annunciation, is one that was commonly represented in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It depicts Mary with the archangel Gabriel delivering the news that she will give birth to the Son of God. Ecce Ancilla Domini, “Behold the Handmaid of the Lord”, was Mary’s response to this pronouncement. The choice of subject in part reflects Rossetti’s upbringing, which even by nineteenth-century standards, was extremely religious. His elder sister, Maria, later became a nun, and following a nervous breakdown at fourteen, his younger sister Christina left school to devote herself to her own spiritual calling. Initially Christina, then eighteen, and their brother, William, sat as models for the painting. Later, though, Rossetti hired professionals for the Virgin’s hair and for the figure of the angel.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB)

The recently founded Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) was another important influence. Formed in 1848, the PRB, of which Rossetti was a founding member, believed that European art had been in decline since the High Renaissance. They took particular exception to the florid, “sloshy” classicism taught in institutions such as the Royal Academy, where significantly the chief members of the Brotherhood met and where they felt technical effects were valued more than truthfulness of expression. To set British art on the right course they looked instead to Early Renaissance artists, those that had preceded the academic followers of Raphael, or “Raphaelites”, for inspiration, particularly those working in Northern Europe, such as the Flemish artist Jan van Eyck whose *Arnolfini Portrait* of 1434 had been bought by the National Gallery in 1848. The depiction of the Annunciation within a domestic setting is one often associated with the “Flemish Primitives” and would have seemed an appropriate subject through which to express the ideals of the PRB.

Looking back in art history

In autumn 1849, Rossetti traveled with his Pre-Raphaelite brother William Holman Hunt to France and Belgium. A highpoint of the trip came in Bruges where they saw works by van Eyck and Memling. Of all Rossetti’s paintings, *Ecce Ancilla Domini*, begun immediately on his return to London, draws most heavily on these earlier artists, not just in its subject but also in how it was painted. Following van Eyck, Rossetti prepared the canvas with a white ground instead of the toned or dark ground favoured by the Academies. He also avoided mixing his colors, choosing only the purest and brightest pigments. As for the actual painting, it was a painstaking process, the brushes being so fine, it took Rossetti all of five months to complete. Iconographically, the painting is pretty conventional. The lily Gabriel holds symbolizes purity and is repeated on the embroidery at the foot of the bed. The flame from the oil lamp reminds us of the presence of the Holy Spirit, here portrayed as a haloed dove. Less conventionally, however, Gabriel’s angelic status is shown not with wings, but by the flames around his feet, which appear to make him float. His head is framed by a window looking onto a blue sky, suggesting the kingdom of Heaven. Blue is also used for the screen behind the Virgin, and so, though in white, she is still set against that color most often associated with her in art. Despite the wealth of symbolism, compositionally Rossetti has kept things simple. Much like the Early Italian Renaissance fresco painter, Fra Angelico, the palette is limited, dominated by shades of white, which set off carefully situated primaries: the blues of the screen and the sky, the red of the embroidery and the yellows of the haloes and the flames. This pared down, economical style avoids academic techniques, such as chiaroscuro, used to create pictorial drama and signal spatial recession.

Criticism at the time

The painting’s use of perspective, or rather lack of it, attracted most criticism at the time. Even the PRBs were unsettled. Both Millais and Hunt offered to lend a hand correcting it. Rossetti refused though. With his innovative use of empirical rather than scientific perspective, like true Pre-Raphaelite ohe was paying homage to those “Flemish Primitive” he so admired, such as Rogier van der Weyden, whose own Annunciation he had recently seen in the Louvre. For a modern viewer it is hard to see what the problem was. The claustrophobic atmosphere makes sense to us. We accept the liberties Rossetti has taken, the way the setting threatens to encroach upon the figures, particularly Mary, as part of the overall design, aimed at heightening the sense of her disquiet. Instead it is the treatment of the figures that seems to us more shocking. While many artists have explored Mary’s fear and apprehension when painting the Annunication, stricken transfixed almost on her own bed, none had treated as explicitly as Rossetti does here the psychosexual nature of the Virgin’s anxiety, exposed and vulnerable in the company of an angel whose lily, phallic in shape, points suggestively to her womb. The muscles, sinews and veins on Gabriel’s bare arm alert us to his corporeal presence, while visible between the edges of his cloak, the line from his waist down the length of his thigh renders his nakedness apparent.

Ahead of its time?



Figure **13.8.4.92**: James Abbot McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1862, oil on canvas, 213 x 107.9 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Though subtle, these pyschosexual undertones anticipate later developments in Rossetti's art and with her long auburn hair and "love-fretted", cupid bow lips perhaps we see in the head of Mary the prototype of future Rossettian beauties. But the painting offers more than that. Ultimately, despite its debt to artists of the past, it is a painting that is ahead of its time, introducing formal innovations, the way the close color tonalities, for example, create a sense of harmony, that would influence many artists to come, not least James McNeill Whistler whose justly famous *The White Girl* owes much to *Ecce Ancilla Domini*.

Additional resources:

Were the Pre-Raphaelites Britain's First Modern Artists?

This painting at the Tate Britain

George P. Landow. "Pre-Raphaelites: An Introduction." *Victorian Web*, 2007.

Abigail Newman. "Drastic Innovations on a Traditional Theme: Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini*" *Victorian Web*, 2004.

Whistler's Symphony in White at the National Gallery

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY

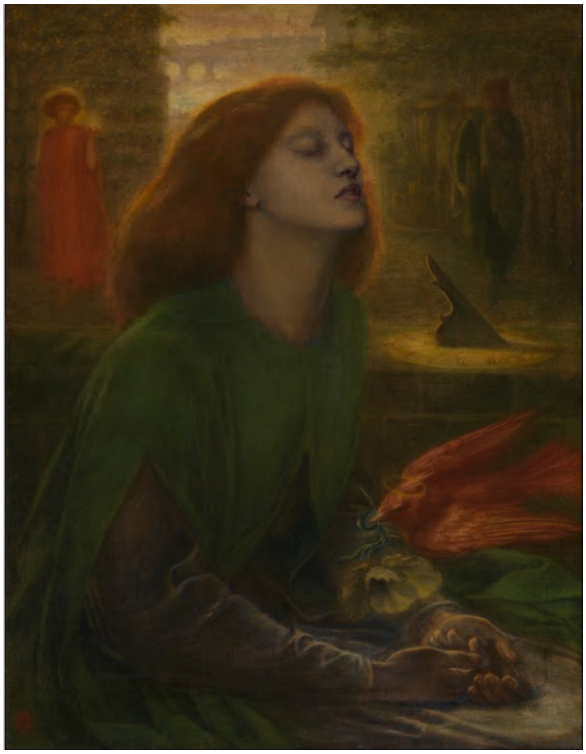


Figure 13.8.4.93: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix*, c. 1864-70, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 66 cm (Tate)

Beata Beatrix is one of many portraits of beautiful women painted by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the last two decades of his life. During this time, Rossetti created many pictures of his favorite models luxuriously dressed in Renaissance-looking costumes and jewelry, often without the story or content associated with his earlier paintings, such as ***Ecce Ancilla Domini***. *Beata Beatrix* is unique, however, due to the intensely personal symbolism and atmospheric quality of the sitter and her surroundings.



Figure 13.8.4.94: Viola (detail), Walter Howell Deverell, *Twelfth Night Act II, Scene IV*, oil on canvas, 40 x 52 inches

Beata Beatrix is a portrait of Rossetti's wife Elizabeth Siddal, an important model in the early years of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Siddal was working in a hat shop when she met the artist Walter Howell Deverell. She posed as Viola in Deverell's painting *Twelfth Night* (left). Taken with her lovely face and beautiful red hair, Deverell invited all his friends to come and see his new "stunner." Others in the Brotherhood were also enthusiastic, and Siddal became a favorite model in many now famous early Pre-Raphaelite paintings, including **Millais's *Ophelia*** (image below).

Rossetti and Siddal soon became a couple, spending the next decade in a tempestuous relationship. It was during this period that Siddal developed into an artist in her own right. By the time of their marriage in 1860, however, Siddal was in ill health and had to be carried to church. After a miscarriage, Siddal became depressed and, at some point, addicted to laudanum.

In February 1862 Rossetti returned home from a dinner to find his wife dead. Although her death was declared accidental by the coroner, Rossetti was distraught, and in a grand romantic gesture, placed his only copy of some recently written poems in Siddal's coffin, nestled in her red hair. Several years later, however, Rossetti had her body exhumed and his poems retrieved by his friend and agent, Charles Howell, who reported that Siddal's hair was still beautiful and red and had continued growing until it filled the coffin.

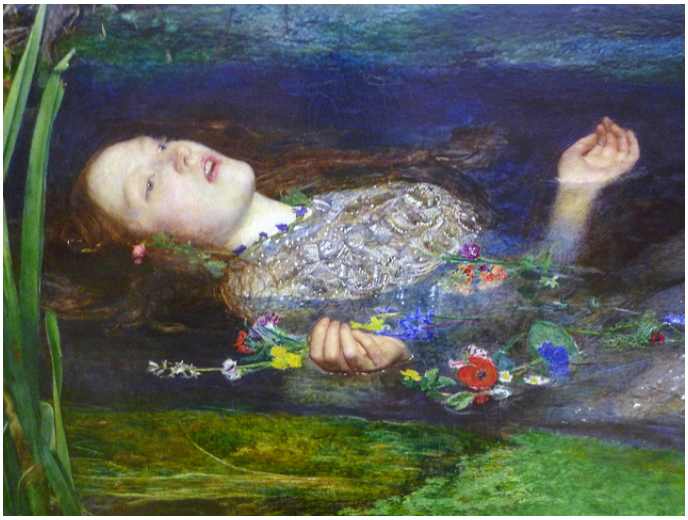


Figure 13.8.4.95: Detail, Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 762 x 1118 mm (Tate Britain, London)

*Beata Beatrix*is filled with symbolism. Rossetti identified with the Italian poet Dante Alighieri and the title is reminiscent of Dante's account of his own love, Beatrice. Behind Siddal are the figures of Dante and Love, with the Florentine landmark the Ponte Vecchio in the distance. The figure of Siddal, which was done from sketches completed before her death, looks towards heaven with her eyes closed. A bird, the messenger of death, swoops in and drops a poppy, symbolic of Siddal's laudanum addiction, into her upturned hands. The fuzzy, atmospheric quality of the painting creates a dream-like intensity about the subject, and differs greatly from the crisp details found in many of Rossetti's other famous pictures of beautiful women from this period, such as ***Monna Vanna*** (1866).

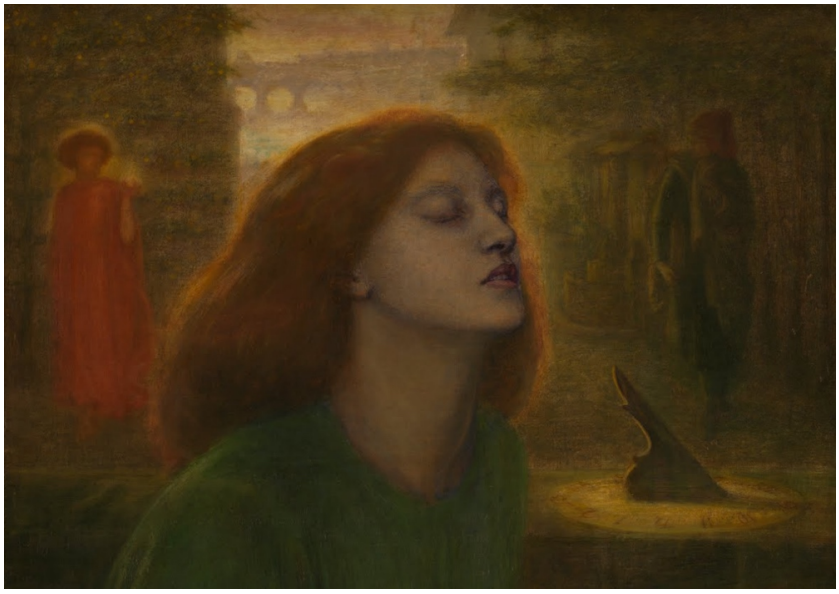


Figure 13.8.4.96: Detail, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix*, c. 1864-70, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 66 cm (Tate)

After the death of his wife, Rossetti's own health began to decline. He experienced depression, became addicted to drugs and alcohol, and in 1872 suffered a mental breakdown. He also became increasingly paranoid and even destroyed a section of the manuscript journal kept by his brother William Michael Rossetti during the early days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The missing section included the period when Elizabeth Siddal was first introduced to the members of the Brotherhood.

In her final appearance as a model for the Pre-Raphaelites, Siddal is immortalized as a tragic and romantic heroine. The soft dream-like setting and tragic beauty of the central figure give *Beata Beatrix* an otherworldly quality, evoking an air of melancholy and loss that everyone can relate to, and making it, justifiably, one of Rossetti's most famous pictures.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

This painting on the Rossetti archive

This painting on the Google Art Project

by STEPHANIE ROBERTS



Figure **13.8.4.97**: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Proserpine*, 1874, oil on canvas, 125.1 x 61 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Fatal fruit

Just one bite. Surely that can't hurt. Or can it? It took less than one bite to destroy the mythological goddess Proserpine's life. This tragic maiden was gathering flowers when she was abducted by Pluto, carried off to his underground palace in Hades – the land of the dead, and forced to marry him. Distraught, her mother Ceres pleaded for her return. The god Jupiter agreed, on condition that Proserpine had not tasted any of the fruits of Hades. But she had—a single pomegranate seed—and as punishment she was destined to remain captive for six months of each year for the rest of her life in her bleak underground prison.

The English painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti produced at least eight paintings of Proserpine trapped in her subterranean world, the fatal pomegranate in her hand. He also wrote a sonnet to accompany the painting, which is inscribed in Italian on the painting itself and in English on the frame, cited below. This is the seventh version of the painting. It was produced for the wealthy ship-owner and art collector Frederick Leyland from Liverpool and is now in the Tate collection, London. The original idea was to paint Eve holding the forbidden apple, a scene from Genesis; and in fact the two stories are almost directly comparable. Eve and Proserpine both represent females banished for their sin of tasting a forbidden fruit. Their yielding to temptation has often been seen as a sign of feminine weakness or lack of restraint.



Figure **13.8.4.98**: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Proserpine, 1874, oil on canvas, 125.1 x 61 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Twists and turns

At first glance the painting appears still, subdued—muted like the colour scheme. Proserpine is motionless, absorbed in thought, and the only sign of movement is the wisp of smoke furling from the incense burner, the attribute of the goddess. But look closely, and the painting appears to bristle with a tortuous, pent-up energy. It is full of peculiar twists and turns. Take Proserpine's neck: it bulges unnaturally at the back, and looks as though it is slowly being screwed or twisted like rubber. Her hands too are set in an awkward grip. Try mimicking this yourself—it is difficult to hold this pose for long. This is a painting of almost tortured stillness: a body under strain.

This underlying unease is also apparent in the lines and creases of Proserpine's dress. Notice how it does not form natural-looking folds. Instead it looks like the fabric is covered in clinging, creeping ridges that seem to slowly wind their way around the goddess, ensnaring and rooting her to the spot. These ridges could be compared to the tendril of ivy in the background, which appears to sprout directly from her head. Ivy is a plant with dark connotations—an invasive vine, it has a tendency to grip, cover and choke other plant-life. It is often associated with death, and is a common feature in graveyards. Rossetti wrote that the ivy in this painting symbolises 'clinging memory.' But what are these memories that cling so tightly?

Personal torment and morbid melancholy

As many have pointed out, this painting of Proserpine strikes a chord with Rossetti's personal life. The writer Theodore Watts-Dunton, Rossetti's close friend, wrote that "the public… Has determined to find in all Rossetti's work the traces of a morbid melancholy… Because Proserpine's expression is sad, it is assumed that the artist must have been suffering from a painful degree of mental depression while producing it." Rossetti had, in fact, suffered a nervous breakdown just two years before he produced this painting. He suffered from acute paranoia, and was becoming increasingly reliant on alcohol and chloral for relief. There are doubtless many reasons for this, one of which was the death—or perhaps suicide—of his wife Lizzie Siddal in 1862, of a laudanum overdose. Rossetti and Lizzie's relationship had been fraught and unstable. He was haunted by memories of her for the rest of his life.



Figure 13.8.4.99: Mrs. William Morris (Jane Burden), from an album of portraits of Mrs. William Morris (Jane Burden), posed by Rossetti, 1865 (Gordon Bottomley, 1933, available on the rossettiarchive.org)

But the plot thickens. When he painted *Proserpine*, Rossetti was entangled in a complicated love triangle. He was completely infatuated with the model for this painting, Jane Morris, easily recognizable by her thick raven hair, striking features and slender, elongated figure—though here they have been molded into the typical Rossettian type. Rossetti called her a "stunner." The problem was that this stunner happened to be the wife of his good friend William Morris. When this was painted, the three were living together at Kelmscott Manor (Oxfordshire). Morris appeared either to tolerate or ignore the intimacy that cleaved Rossetti and his beloved Jane together. Many have noted the similarity between *Proserpine* and Jane's personal predicaments: both were young women trapped in unhappy marriages, longing for freedom. But perhaps it is also a meditation on Rossetti's own situation. Unable to contain his feelings for Jane, he had given in to temptation and for this was destined to live part of his life in secrecy and withdrawal. Rossetti himself had tasted the fatal fruit and was living with the consequences.

The problematic pleasures of taste



Figure 13.8.4.100: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Bocca Baciata* (Lips that have been Kissed), oil on panel, 32.1 x 27 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

In this painting, a clear correspondence is set up between Proserpine's improbably large lips and the pomegranate in her hand. While the rest of the painting has been completed in cool, sometimes murky colors—Rossetti called it a "study of greys" —the lips and pomegranate are vivid and intense, painted in warm orange and red tones. It is significant that these features—the mouth and the fruit—have strong associations with the pleasures of taste. It is as though Rossetti is presenting both as objects ripe for consumption, tempting the viewer to take a taste. This is not as

improbable as it first sounds: one of Rossetti's earlier paintings, *Bocca Baciata* (left), which also shows a single female figure with a fruit (an apple in this case) was considered capable of stirring an erotic, physical response in viewers. The artist Arthur Hughes, a contemporary of Rossetti's, said that the owner of this painting would probably try to 'kiss the dear thing's lips away.' In fact, the title of the painting itself translates as "the mouth that has been kissed."

This sensual, carnal side of Rossetti's work caused controversy during his lifetime—for a Victorian artist, he was venturing into dangerous territory. Even today some find his sexualized vision of feminine beauty difficult to stomach. Rossetti argued however that work was not just a study of the sensual in life. He insisted that his art was an attempt to synthesize the sensual and the spiritual. His fried Theodore Watts-Dunton defended this in an article "The Truth about Rossetti." To Rossetti he wrote, "the human body, like everything in nature, was rich in symbol… To him the mouth really represented the sensuous part of the face no less certainly than the eyes represented the spiritualized part." adding that if the lips of Rossetti's women appear overly full and sensual, this is always counter-balanced by the spiritual depth invested in their eyes. It is true that in this painting there does appear to be a haunting melancholy in Proserpine's eyes, but whether Rossetti fully achieves this synthesis of the sensual with the spiritual is still up for debate.

> ***Afar away the light that brings cold cheer***
> ***Unto this wall, – one instant and no more***
> ***Admitted at my distant palace-door.***
> ***Afar the flowers of Enna from this drear***
> ***Dire fruit, which, tasted once, must thrall me here.***
> ***Afar those skies from this Tartarean grey***
> ***That chills me: and afar, how far away,***
> ***The nights that shall be from the days that were.***
> ***Afar from mine own self I seem, and wing***
> ***Strange ways in thought, and listen for a sign:***
> ***And still some heart unto some soul doth pine,***
> ***(Whose sounds mine inner sense is fain to bring,***
> ***Continually together murmuring,) –***
> ***"Woe's me for thee, unhappy Proserpine!"***
>
> ***—Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Proserpina (For a Picture)"(1880)***

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate

Another painting on this subject at the Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

This painting and subject on the *Victorian Web*

Proserpine on the Rossetti Archive

Bocca Baciata at Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video 13.8.4.11: Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*, 1856, oil on canvas, 622 x 933 cm (Tate Britain, London).

A tragic suicide

Chatterton by Henry Wallis is an example of the Victorian approach to history painting. The picture illustrates the suicide of the poet Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770). Despairing over his lack of literary success, the young poet tore up his manuscripts and took a lethal dose of arsenic.



Figure 13.8.4.101: Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*, 1856, oil on canvas, 622 x 933 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Wallis's shows the pale, still body of Chatterton lying on a bed, his head and right arm dangling loosely over the edge, his tattered papers and the poison vial beside him. His white shirt and stockings help to silhouette the figure against the darker background, while the vivid purple of Chatterton's knee breeches and his reddish hair grab the viewer's attention.



Figure 13.8.4.102: Tattered papers (detail), Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*, 1856, oil on canvas, 622 x 933 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Above the body, an attic dormer window looks out at the sunrise across the city of London, with St. Paul's Cathedral in the distance. Both the vivid colors of Chatterton's pants and hair and the attention to detail in areas such as in coverlet on the bed and the clothing carelessly strewn off to one side, point to Wallis's interest in the ideas of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. His greatest deviation from "truth to nature" was in his choice of model. George Meredith, another struggling author, was depicted as the dead Chatterton, since no actual portraits of the poet were available to copy. This collaboration was not to be repeated, however, as Wallis later eloped with Meredith's wife.



Figure **13.8.4.103**: View of the city (detail), Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*, 1856, oil on canvas, 622 x 933 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A Victorian approach to history painting

Chatterton is typical of the Victorian interest in historical subjects. The Victorians were voracious readers, and history of all types—from scholarly tomes to sentimental historical novels—were frequently "best sellers."

The goal of all types of history was to bring the past to life for the audience. To quote the *Art Union* from 1843

> ***to make the past present…to place our ancestors before us, in all their peculiarities of their dress and time, until they seem not part of a personified allegory, but beings of flesh and blood; such are the duties which belong to the artist as well as the historian.***

The almost sculptural beauty of the body of Chatterton and the aura of tragedy over the squandered potential of this youthful talent was clearly calculated to appeal to the sentimental Victorian public.

The work of Henry Wallis was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Born in London, Wallis was a student at the Royal Academy schools beginning in March 1848. He also studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the studio of Gleyre in Paris, which set him apart from many of the other PRB artists. He began to exhibit in 1853 and his best know canvases come from early in his career as he spent much of his time traveling after his elopement.



Figure **13.8.4.104**: Poison vial (detail), Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*, 1856, oil on canvas, 622 x 933 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Chatterton created a sensation when it was first exhibited in 1856 and again when it appeared at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. John Ruskin called the painting "faultless and wonderful," but for others it was a cautionary tale. The Victorian public could not fail to understand the moral message of a talented life tragically cut short. Wallis's *Chatterton* is a brilliant combination of history, romanticism, and truth to nature.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

This painting up close at the Google Art Project

Another version of this painting from the Yale Center for British Art in the Google Art Project

Gallery of Pre-Raphaelite works in the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

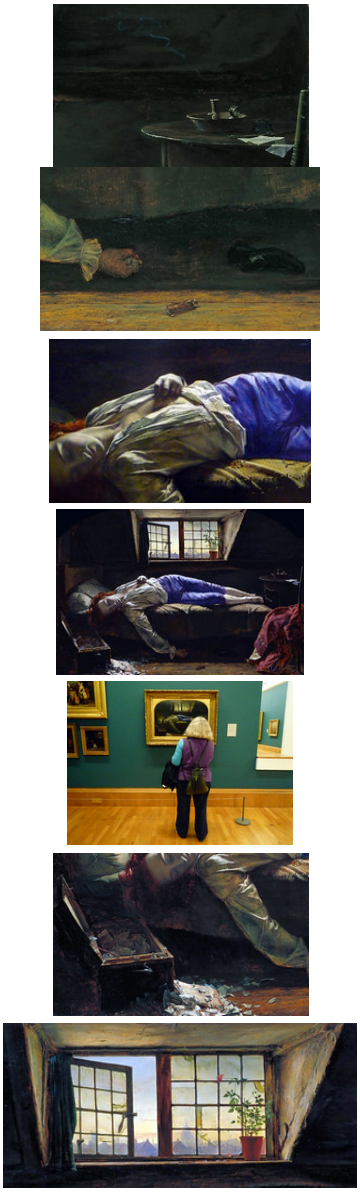


Figure 13.8.4.106: More Smarthistory images…

William Powell Frith, *Derby Day*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Figure 13.8.4.107: William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–58, oil on canvas, 101.6 × 223.5 cm (Tate Britain)

A Day at the Races

The Derby Day by William Powell Frith captures the excitement of one of the premier events in British horse racing, The Derby (pronounced "dar-bee") held annually at Epsom Downs in Surrey. His large-scale canvas illustrates the event during the Victorian era, capturing the milling crowd, festive atmosphere, and general excitement of the day. The horse race in the background takes a decided back seat to the many personalities in the congested throng of people in the foreground. The crowd, which presents a cross-section of Victorian society, is what captures the attention of the viewer.



Figure **13.8.4.108**: Thimble rigger (detail), William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–58, oil on canvas, 101.6 × 223.5 cm (Tate Britain)

The large painting contains representatives from all social classes. On the left side, a well-dressed group of men make bets on the sleight-of-hand tricks of a thimble rigger at a makeshift table. Nearby a ruddy-faced young man in a country drover's smock has his hand in his pocket, while an anxious woman tries to stop him from making an unwise bet on the swindler's game. To the other side of the trickster's table, a young man stands checking his empty pockets, the victim of a pickpocket.



Figure **13.8.4.109**: Right side (detail), William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, detail of the scene around the thimble rigger, 1856–58, oil on canvas, 101.6 × 223.5 cm (Tate Britain)

On the far right, an unhappy-looking young woman seated in a carriage tries her best to ignore both the advances of a fortune-teller and her equally bored male companion, who leans against the vehicle assessing a barefoot girl selling flowers with a predatory gaze.



Figure **13.8.4.110**: Center (detail), William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–58, oil on canvas, 101.6 × 223.5 cm (Tate Britain)

In the center of the painting, children sprawl on the ground. The top-hatted men mix not only with well-dressed women, but also with a woman holding a baby begging coins from the more affluent people in the carriages. The viewer's eye is attracted to a pair of tumblers dressed in white. While the older of the two holds out his arms to "catch" the other, the child's attention is distracted by the picnic being spread in front of the carriages by a footman. It is a stark reminder of the differences in diet between rich and poor during the period. It is also an indication of the Victorian preoccupation with the issue of class mixing, a reality of modern life, but one of which many Victorians were wary.



Figure **13.8.4.111**: Earthenware phrenological bust, areas are marked off with an impressed line, by J. De Ville, London, 1821 (**Wellcome Collection**, CC BY 4.0)

The Social Spectrum

Another element employed by Frith to create identifiable "types" was the Victorian interest in phrenology, or the study of the shape of the skull. Developed in the late 18th century, phrenologists took detailed measurements of the head and looked for variations such as bumps or indentations to determine particular character traits. Although largely discredited as a "science" as early as the 1840s, phrenology was a popular topic in Victorian lecture halls, and even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert invited a phrenologist to "read" the heads of their children.

Another popular idea was that of physiognomy or the idea that one's character or personal characteristics can be seen in the body, particularly in the face. Scholars have pointed out that Frith used these ideas in his paintings to distinguish between, for example, a decent working man and a shopworker mimicking the middle class he aspires to join. For Frith, this was another way, besides dress, to categorize the individuals in his modern life ensemble. And for the Victorian audience, these pseudo-sciences were a quick, although completely inaccurate, way to classify the wide variety of people they came into contact with in the new industrial society.



Figure 13.8.4.112: William Powell Frith, *Ramsgate Sands (Life at the Seaside)*, 1851–54 , oil on canvas, 77.0 x 155.1 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

It was this attention to the social spectrum that enthralled Victorian viewers. Frith began his career painting literary scenes and portraits, but he is best known as a commentator on modern life. The first of his great modern life subjects, *Life at the Seaside: Ramsgate Sands*, was painted in 1854 after a family holiday to the seaside. The picture was immediately purchased by Queen Victoria. Another of his well-known paintings, *The Railway Station* of 1862, depicts the interior of Paddington Station. Again, Frith captured modern Victorian life, not only in the mixing of social classes, but in the still fairly new mode of transportation (the first railway opened in Britain in 1825) and the state-of-the-art train station designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Such pictures showed the Victorians as they liked to see themselves, as a prosperous, progressive, and technologically advanced society.



Figure 13.8.4.113: William Powell Frith, *The Railway Station*, c.1862–1909, oil on canvas, 54.1 x 114.0 cm (Royal Collection Trust)

When *Derby Day* was displayed at the Royal Academy, so many people flocked to see it that a police constable was stationed by the canvas to keep it from being damaged by the jostling crowds. The *Art Journal* in October 1858 described the painting as "a popular subject with a large section of the English people, having its upper extremity in the drawing-rooms of Belgravia, and its lower in the darkest nooks of Whitechapel; and within these lie diversely-charactered and many-shaded varieties of society." (p. 296) Everyone wanted to have a look at the cast of characters Frith created. Today their variety is equally compelling and provides the modern viewer with a fascinating glimpse into Victorian life.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

William Powell Frith at Tate Britain

Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Pamela Fletcher, "Happiness Lost: William Powell Frith and the Painting of Modern Life," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, vol. 33, no. 2, (2011) , pp. 147-160.

William Powell Frith at ArtUK

Phrenology on the Victorian Web

T. M. Parssinen, “Popular Science and Society: The Phrenology Movement in Early Victorian Britain,” *Journal of Social History* 8, no. 1 (1974), pp. 1-20.

Mark Bills and Vivien, eds, *William Powell Frith: Painting in the Victorian Age* (Yale University Press, 2007).

William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th 1858*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.12**: William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th 1858*, 1858-60, oil on canvas, 25 x 35″ (Tate Britain, London)

A comet in the sky

William Dyce’s *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th, 1858* captures an historical moment with remarkable clarity. The painting shows the artist’s wife, his wife’s two sisters, and his son on a lonely stretch of beach near Ramsgate on the south coast of England. The day is particularly important as one can see Donati’s Comet in the sky. Discovered by Giovanni Donati on June 2, 1858, it was one of the brightest comets to appear during the 19th century. The comet had reached its perihelion, or the point where it is closest to the sun, just a few days prior to the date recorded in the painting.



Figure **13.8.4.114**: William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th, 1858*, 1858-60, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 88.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Pre-Raphaelite attention to detail

What is most incredible about the painting, however, is the minute attention to detail. A true Pre-Raphaelite in his approach, Dyce illustrated the intense "truth to nature" that characterizes much of the art of the period. This attention to detail had been championed by the critic John Ruskin in the first volume of his famous *Modern Painters*, published in 1843. In it, Ruskin advised artists to,

> ***go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth.***

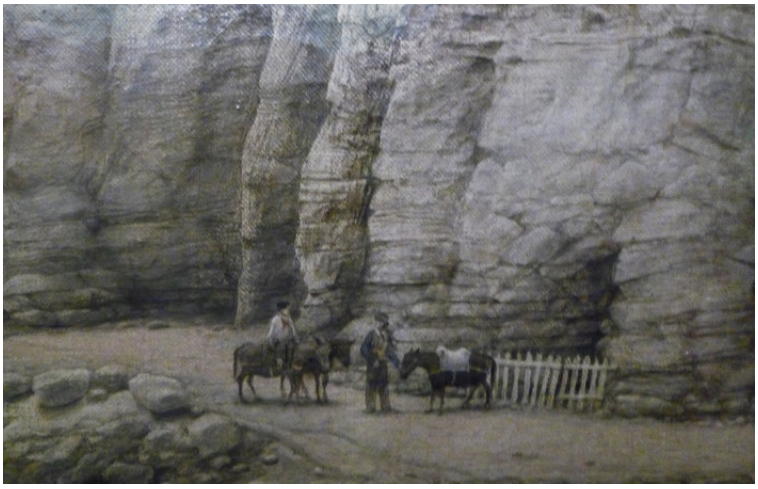
Many young artists of the day, including John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt, were influenced by Ruskin's ideas and worked to bring as much naturalistic detail as possible into their paintings.



Figures in the distance (detail), William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th, 1858*, 1858-60, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 88.9 cm (Tate Britain, London) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Art and science

The observations of nature exhibited by artists like Dyce were also present in another Victorian preoccupation, science, and in particular, the burgeoning study of geology. Charles Lyell had published his *Principles of Geology* in three volumes between 1830 and 1833, and the entire scientific community was interested in the controversial attempt to reconcile the implications of geological time with the Bible.



Figures and horses (detail), William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th, 1858*, 1858-60, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 88.9 cm (Tate Britain, London) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A little more than a year after the day captured in Dyce's painting, *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin was published, opening a floodgate of debate over the issue of religion versus scientific observation. The geologically unstable cliffs along much of England's south coast were (and still are) a paradise for those in search of fossils, including the famous fossil hunter Mary Anning (1799-1847) of Lyme Regis, who is credited with the discovery of the first plesiosaur skeleton. The preserved remnants of geological time evident in places like Pegwell Bay provided the Victorians with much to think about.

The light

In Dyce's painting the angled light of the late afternoon setting sun emphasizes the striations in the towering cliffs above the shore. The detail delineates every variation in the rock. Pools of water, algae covered rocks and stretches of sand exposed by the low tide create opportunity for discovery at every turn. The figures are also extremely detailed. Two of the women in the foreground have their attention focused on collecting the shells left by the receding water, while the other woman and the child stare off in the distance.



Figure **13.8.4.117**: Child in the foreground (detail), William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th, 1858*, 1858-60, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 88.9 cm (Tate Britain, London) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

William Dyce was born in Aberdeen, Scotland. After studying at the Royal Academy Schools in London and in Rome, Dyce became well known for his paintings, and between 1837 and 1843 was Superintendent of the Government School of Design. He later won a competition to complete fresco paintings for the newly rebuilt Houses of Parliament, a project that occupied him almost until his death. However, Dyce was also interested in intellectual and scientific pursuits, for example, writing a prize-winning essay on electro-magnetism in 1830.

Dyce's *Pegwell Bay, Kent* is a painting that evokes many time-honored themes. The variety of ages in the figures may represent the passage of time, while the setting sun and the autumnal chill in the air serve as a reminder of death. However, this lonely stretch of beach is also a metaphor for many of the new issues that concerned the Victorians, such as the implications of scientific discovery. It is an image as timeless as the tide itself.

Additional resources:

This painting at Tate Britain

A video on this painting from the University of Cambridge

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail with bottom of cliffs

William Dyce, Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail of boy

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail of cliff house

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail of standing woman

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail of women

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail of comet

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858, detail of bay at low tide

Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858

Figure **13.8.4.118**: More Smarthistory images…

Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.4.119: Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty" (Proverbs: 10:15)*, 1857, oil on canvas, 82 x 104 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A studio of one's own

Emily Mary Osborn was among the most successful Victorian women artists. Far from the well-trodden academic route followed by her male contemporaries, Osborn pursued her training with resourcefulness and tenacity, taking evening classes and persuading one of the teachers to give her private lessons, and then going on to study and work in his gallery.

Though success did follow, with regular exhibitions of her work at the Royal Academy and sales enabling her to set up a studio of her own, as a woman in the male-dominated world of the art market, Osborn must have been only too aware of the obstacles facing women artists. As a woman she was never granted membership of the Academy and could not study in the Royal Academy schools (women were admitted in small numbers after 1860). More generally, though, Osborn, like many of her contemporaries was deeply concerned with the issue of educational and employment opportunities for women. It is a recurrent theme in her work and is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in her most famous painting, *Nameless and Friendless*.

The primal eye

A woman stands in a print-seller's shop, beside her a boy, her brother, stands carrying a portfolio under his arm. The black dress and hood she wears tell of a recent loss. She is not wearing a mourning ring though, so she and her brother are probably orphans. Behind the counter to the right is the print- seller, a portly gentlemen, inspecting a small painting, a still life perhaps—the genre that, through lack of access to the life model, tended to be favored by women artists.



Figure 13.8.4.120: Woman toying with string (detail), Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty" (Proverbs: 10:15)*, 1857, oil on canvas, 82 x 104cm (Tate Britain, London)

The anxious pose of the woman, her downcast eyes, her left shoulder coiled inwards as though guarding herself against the dealer's critical gaze and the way, too, her hands toy nervously with a length of string, may lead us to assume that the painting is her own work. Her defensiveness is justified. The chair to the right is empty, the dealer having made no attempt at courtesy by offering her a seat. In the doorway another woman and boy make their way out, some rolled up sheets under the arm of the latter, while outside in the rain a woman is just visible walking along the pavement sheltering herself with an umbrella.

What the future holds

Like a continuous narrative (where we see more than one moment of time within a single canvas), do these peripheral figures hint at what awaits the woman and her brother, who, failing to sell her work, will soon be back walking the street? The orthogonal lines in the painting would seem to support this view, pointing conspicuously to the door as they do. So too, of course, does the title of the work, *Nameless and Friendless*, suggesting that without the necessary connections, a woman artist stands little chance of finding professional success.

A possible literary source for the painting is Mary Brunton's novel *Self-Control*, first printed in 1810 and re-published in the 1850s, which tells the story of Laura Montreville who tries unsuccessfully to sell her paintings in order to help save her father from financial ruin. In one chapter of the novel Laura visits a number of print-sellers in the hope of selling her work, but each time is disappointed. On her fourth attempt, a young man, a former artist himself, admires her painting and agrees to hold it in his shop on a sale or return basis. Perhaps, if the book was indeed the source of the painting, Osborn had this fellow in mind when painting the man on the step ladder. The way his face echoes the woman's hints at a certain sympathy between the two, while his elevated level suggests that his vision extends beyond the myopia of his colleagues, one of whom sits wearing glasses scratching away with a pen at a ledger.



Figure **13.8.4.121**: Men surrounding the woman in the print seller shop (detail), Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless*, *"The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty" (Proverbs: 10:15)*, 1857, oil on canvas, 82 x 104cm (Tate Britain, London)

Everywhere we look in fact men are engaged in looking. Outside the shopfront a man peers at one of the prints displayed in the window. The boy too levels his eyes at the print-seller in a challenging attitude, the red of his scarf suggestive of his fervor to champion his sister's talents. This interplay of gazes is made still more complex with the two men seated to the left, customers who seem very much at home inspecting the prints. The seated figure holds a print of a dancing-girl, a ballerina, with her arms lifted above her head and her bare legs exposed. It is not the print however that they are looking at, but this young woman, vulnerable and distressed; the conspiratorial intimacy and the intentness of their gazes renders almost tangible the transference of their fantasies of the dancing girl onto this perhaps soon-to-be-fallen woman, whose part in all this seems almost unbearably passive. Her eyes cast down, as though, as Linda Nochlin puts it, the artist had now become the model to be looked at and judged.*

The rich man's wealth is his strong city…



Figure **13.8.4.122**: Young boy looking up with expectation (detail), Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless*, *"The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty" (Proverbs: 10:15)*, 1857, oil on canvas, 82 x 104 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The title carries a quotation from the Biblical Book of Proverbs: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty" (10:15). The passage goes on to develop the theme of the spiritual poverty of the rich, who complaisantly forget about God, a sentiment with which the Victorians would have been very familiar.

The "strong city" of London was witnessing an extraordinary expansion as a result of the Industrial Revolution. For some this was an enormously prosperous time, for the working class and for those on the margins of society, however, living conditions had never been worse and without any form of welfare a change in fortune could easily see you ending up not just nameless and friendless, but homeless and penniless. Without adequate opportunities for gainful employment, single, middle-class women were among the most vulnerable.

By quoting scripture, Osborn perhaps is encouraging us to read the painting more universally than as the depiction of a struggling woman artist: the point being that the great divides operating in Victorian society between the haves and the have-nots (what the Victorians called the “two nations”), as well as men and women, make us all the poorer. The quotation might also tempt us to a religious reading of the painting. The woman herself, though clearly outnumbered and surrounded by men on all sides, still dominates the composition—the implication being that though meek and mild, spiritually she is the strongest.

An image of its time

For some, the problem with Osborn’s painting is that the woman is presented as too passive, too willingly accepting of rejection, too much of a martyr to male prejudices and male desires. Rather than breaking down the gender divide, then, the painting instead seems to perpetuate it. As valid as this argument is, as an early or proto-feminist painting Nameless and Friendless offers one of the most forceful examples of a women artist making a clearly articulated stand on one of the central social issues of the day. The painting is an image of its time, one that expresses the contradictions within Victorian society as well as its appetite for the mawkish. Like a character from a Dickens novel, the distressed woman artist is indeed sentimentalized, but like Dickens, Osborn does this not simply for effect, but to awaken her audience to the real and urgent need for social change.

Additional resources:

*Linda Nochlin, “Why are there no Great Women Artists,” as published in *ARTnews*, January 1971.

This painting at Tate Britain

The Governess by Emily Mary Osborne – another painting on the subject of women and work

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

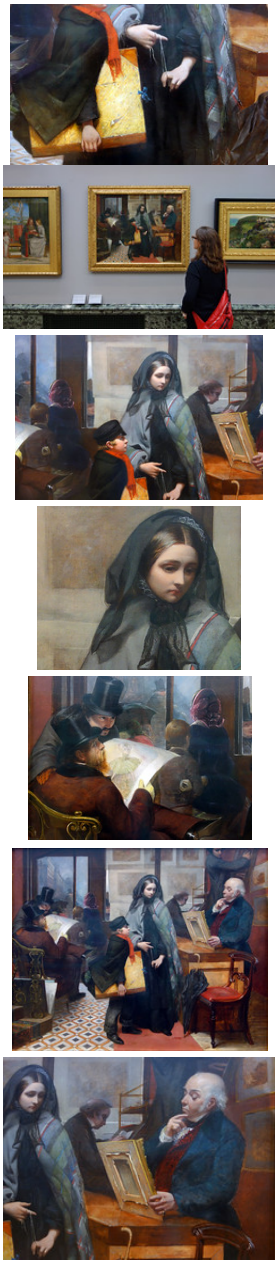


Figure **13.8.4.123**: More Smarthistory images…

John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, *Thoughts of the Past*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.13**: John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, *Thoughts of the Past*, exhibited 1859, oil on canvas, 864 x 508 mm (Tate Britain, London)



Figure **13.8.4.124**: John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, *Thoughts of the Past*, 1859, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 50.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A “fallen woman”

In the 1840s and 1850s, Victorian artists and writers increasingly turned their attention to modern life, including topics they considered to be social problems such as prostitution and the limited employment opportunities for women.

These were decades when the costs of the industrial revolution came to the attention of the Victorian public. Parliamentary Reports and newspapers chronicled low-wage and child labor, long hours in factories and mines, crowded cities, and, perhaps most painful to the Victorians, the increased autonomy of women in a world of wage labor and economic insecurity. Writers such as Harriet Martineau wrote about the need for increased employment opportunities for middle-class women (becoming a governess or dressmaker were virtually the only options at that time).

A common trope in the literature of the period is the “fallen woman”—a woman who became a prostitute, usually due to dire economic circumstances. *Thoughts of the Past* is an example of this familiar theme.



Figure 13.8.4.125: Woman and view of the Thames (detail), John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, *Thoughts of the Past*, 1859, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 50.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

The artist places his figure in front of the window looking out onto the Thames River crowded with boat traffic. Waterloo Bridge can be seen in the distance and not far away is The Strand, a bustling London thoroughfare, popular with prostitutes during the Victorian period. The woman stares not at the busy scene, but soulfully out at the viewer, her eyes focused somewhere in the distance. She pauses from brushing her hair, perhaps, as suggested by the title, to remember some episode from her past.

Visual clues

Visual clues in the painting implicate her as a prostitute. The showy purple dressing gown, her untended plants, the man's glove and walking stick on the floor, and the money and jewelry on the table beside her (perhaps payment from the owner of the glove) all provide the viewer with evidence of her status as a "fallen woman."

Her red hair, a popular feature with Pre-Raphaelite painters, also relates to traditional images of the prostitute Mary Magdalene, who is often shown with red hair. On the floor beside her feet is a small bunch of violets. In the language of flowers, something all Victorians were familiar with, violets were a symbol of faithfulness, and the fact that they have been cast aside to wither and die may speak to the multiple liaisons that is the reality of prostitution.

The river in the background adds to the symbolism of the picture. During the Victorian period the problem of the prostitute was often discussed in terms of the threat to public health from disease. The river too was a public health issue, most notably during the "the Big Stink" in the summer of 1858 when central London was permeated with the smell of raw sewage rising from the river.



Figure 13.8.4.126: George Frederic Watts RA, *Found Drowned*, oil on canvas, c. 1848-50 (Watts Gallery, Guildford, Surrey)

Stanhope, who had a studio on the river on Chatham Place at Blackfriars just below one occupied by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, would have been intimately aware of both the picturesque quality of the Thames and its sanitation issues. It is also the case, that in the narratives of Victorian art and literature, women forced into prostitution often committed suicide, usually by drowning (see for example, George Frederick Watts's famous painting, *Found Drowned*, of 1848-50). The end suggested for the young girl in the painting is bleak indeed.

It is critical to remember that these paintings (and works of literature) do not represent the true lives these women lived. Nevertheless, these narratives allow us to see the Victorians trying to come to terms with the dire problems and profound changes wrought by urbanization and industrialization.

Stanhope and the Pre-Raphaelites

John Rodham Spencer Stanhope was born in Yorkshire and was educated at Rugby and Oxford. In 1850 he worked with the artist Watts and was introduced to the artistic circle of Little Holland House, where he met Rossetti and other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. In 1857 he was asked by Rossetti to participate in a project to paint frescoes on the walls of the Oxford Union. During the project he became friends with Edward Burne-Jones, who was to become an important influence in his art.

Thoughts of the Past provides the viewer with much to think about. Rossetti tells us that the painting was originally conceived as part of a diptych, showing an "unfortunate" in two separate phases of her life. It would be fascinating to know what the artist intended for the other panel. Perhaps it would have shown the viewer just how the young woman came to find herself in this situation. As is typical with Victorian paintings, the detailed symbolism helps us understand the narrative. Stanhope has given us a haunting image of a young woman remembering the innocence of youth rather than confronting the bleakness of her future.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate

Spencer Stanhope in the Google Art Project

This painting on the Victorian Web

This painting in the Google Art Project

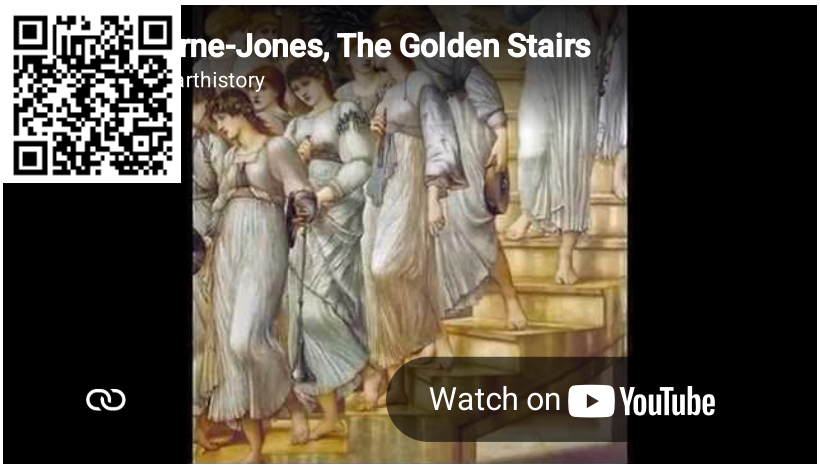


Figure 13.8.4.127: More Smarthistory images…

Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones

Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Golden Stairs*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.14**: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880, oil on canvas 2692 x 1168 mm (Tate Britain, London)



Figure **13.8.4.128**: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880, oil on canvas, 269.2 x 116.8 cm (Tate Britain)

No specific subject

A seemingly endless stream of young women descending a spiral staircase is the subject of Sir Edward Burne-Jones painting *The Golden Stairs*. The passive beauty of their faces is typical of the artist, and a quality that can also be found in many of the paintings of his early mentor Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Clothed in vaguely Renaissance costumes, the women are painted in a monochromatic palette designed to create a sense of mood and timelessness. One of the artist's first attempts at working on such a large scale, the very vertical structure of the canvas draws the viewer's eye downward through the long parade of nearly identical women.



Figure 13.8.4.129: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, The Golden Stairs, 1880, oil on canvas, 269.2 x 116.8 cm (Tate Britain)

A painting that has no specific subject matter, The Golden Stairs, shows the growing influence of the Aesthetic Movement, a style that demanded beauty, but not a direct link to a source. Instead it is the aesthetic quality of the picture and the mood it created that are important. F.G. Stephens commented in The Athenaeum (May 8, 1880) that the women move "like spirits in an enchanted dream, each moving gracefully, freely, and in unison with her neighbors."

Painting and music

More frequently commented on is the association between the painting and music. Many of the women hold musical instruments, and several of the titles initially proposed by Burne-Jones for the painting were musically related. The power of music to evoke a mood without a particular story is something celebrated by many in the Aesthetic Movement, such as the painter James Whistler. In the words of the Aesthetic critic Walter Pater in his *Renaissance* (1873) "all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music."

Burne-Jones and the Pre-Raphaelites

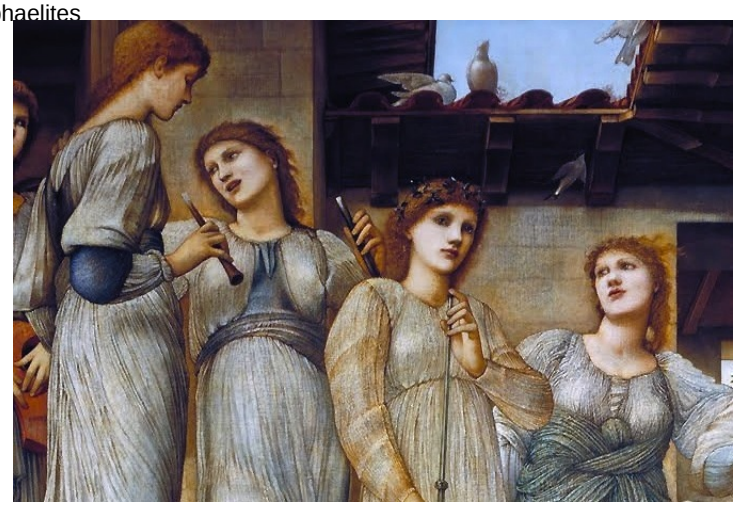


Figure 13.8.4.130: The figures at the top of the stairs (detail), Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880, oil on canvas, 269.2 x 116.8 cm (Tate Britain)

Born in Birmingham in 1833, Burne-Jones went to Exeter College, Oxford in 1853, intending to enter the church. At Oxford he met William Morris, and the writings of Ruskin and the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites inspired the pair. They both decided to devote themselves to art, eventually meeting Rossetti and working with him on a scheme to paint murals in the Oxford Union on the subject of King Arthur. Burne-Jones and others helped Morris to found Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. in 1861, for which Burne-Jones provided designs for stained glass, tapestries and other

decorative elements. From the 1860s onward, Burne-Jones began to develop his distinctive style of painting, a fusion of the Pre-Raphaelite style with the developing Aesthetic Movement.

A new way of exhibiting art



Figure **13.8.4.131**: The Grosvenor Gallery of Fine Art, May 5 1877, engraving, from the *Illustrated London News*

Burne-Jones was one of the first artists to exhibit at the Grosvenor Gallery, contributing 8 paintings to the opening exhibition in 1877. The vision of Sir Coutts Lindsay and his wife Blanche, the Grosvenor Gallery was an alternative to the Royal Academy, and many of the more avant-garde artists of the day exhibited there.

One of the innovations of the Grosvenor was a new style of hanging the works of art. Instead of a floor to ceiling riot of art with frames virtually touching as was seen at the Royal Academy, the Grosvenor hung each painting with space around it, allowing the viewer space to contemplate each individual work of art.

Paintings such as *The Golden Stairs* firmly established Burne-Jones' image of the slender, pale, and vaguely wistful young woman as the aesthetic standard of beauty. So popular was this picture that apparently one of Burne-Jones' patrons suggested to W.S. Gilbert that he base an opera on *The Golden Stairs*. In April 1881 *Patience* by Gilbert and Sullivan, a comic operetta satirizing the Aesthetic Movement, opened in London. The curtain rises to reveal a stage full of young women in aesthetic dress playing musical instruments and singing, much like the women in the painting. In *The Golden Stairs*, Burne-Jones captured an image that resonated with the Victorians, but his evocation of mood and vision of beauty are timeless.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate Britain

Burne-Jones in the Google Art Project

Greer Gehler, "Vagueness in the Golden Stairs," *Victorian Web* (2004)

Erin Frauenhofer, "Descending Burne-Jones's Golden Stairs," *Victorian Web* (2006)

Aestheticism Wikipedia entry

How paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

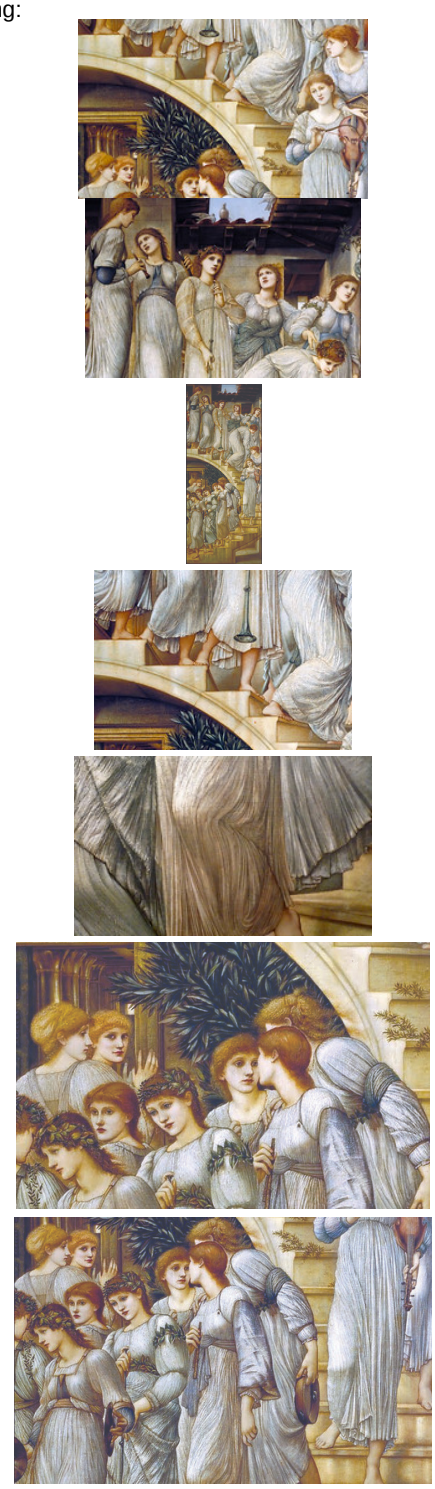


Figure 13.8.4.132: More Smarthistory images…

Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video 13.8.4.15: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, 1884, oil on canvas (Tate Britain, London)

Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day".
As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien:
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

—The Beggar Maid (written 1833, published 1842) by Alfred, Lord Tennyson



Figure **13.8.4.133**: King and Beggar Maid (detail), Edward Burne-Jones, *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, oil on canvas, 1884, 293.4 x 135.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

In *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, Edward Burne-Jones depicts the moment when, according to legend, an African king noted for his lack of interest in women, finally falls in love. The object of his affections is a beautiful beggar, and in a fairy-tale happy ending, King Cophetua marries the young woman, making her his queen. It is a story about the power of love and its ability to transcend more practical considerations such as social class.



Figure **13.8.4.134**: Edward Burne-Jones, *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, oil on canvas, 1884, 293.4 x 135.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

As in many of his other paintings, Burne-Jones used an extremely vertical canvas. The beautiful beggar maid sits in the middle of the composition, above the king himself, a very visual reminder of the obvious elevation in her social status. Her pale skin contrasts with the darker tones in the rest of the painting, helping to focus our attention on the slim, ethereal figure that is so typical of Burne-Jones's women.

Scholars have noted the resemblance of the beggar maid to Burne-Jones's wife Georgina, whom he married in 1860. One of the four celebrated MacDonald sisters, Georgina would later become the artist's biographer. Theirs was not always a match made in heaven, however. Burne-Jones's affair with his model Maria Zambuco caused a scandal when Zambuco, distraught over the end of their relationship, made a public scene outside the house of the poet Robert Browning when she threatened to commit suicide by throwing herself into the Regent Canal.

Interestingly, one of the flowers found in King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid is the anemone, the symbol of rejected love, a sentiment obviously not in line with the story of the painting, but perhaps more meaningful to the artist himself. Scholars have also pointed out that the theme of love winning out over considerations of class and money was in keeping with the ideas expressed by William Morris, a Socialist, and one of Burne-Jones's closest friends.



Figures at the top (detail), Edward Burne-Jones, King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, oil on canvas, 1884, 293.4 x 135.9 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Literary source

The subject was inspired by a reprint of “A Song of a Beggar and a King” by Richard Johnson (1612) published in 1842 by the Percy Society, and by Lord Alfred Tennyson’s poem “The Beggar Maid,” which appeared in the same year. Tennyson, who became Poet Laureate in 1850 and received a peerage in 1884, was extremely popular with the Victorians, including Queen Victoria herself. Many of his poems were a source of inspiration for artists of the day. Burne-Jones’ interpretation of the subject was well received when it was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in the spring of 1884, and when it was exhibited in 1889 at the Paris Universal Exhibition, Burne-Jones received a Cross of the Legion of Honour from the French government.

The sentimentality of the subject undoubtedly appealed to a 19th century audience. In Victorian painting, where so many of the stories behind the pictures end badly, the happily ever after narrative of King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid is a refreshingly upbeat subject. The combination of the romantic theme and the brilliant execution make this one of Burne-Jones’s most celebrated paintings.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate Britain

Short article in the Victorian Web

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

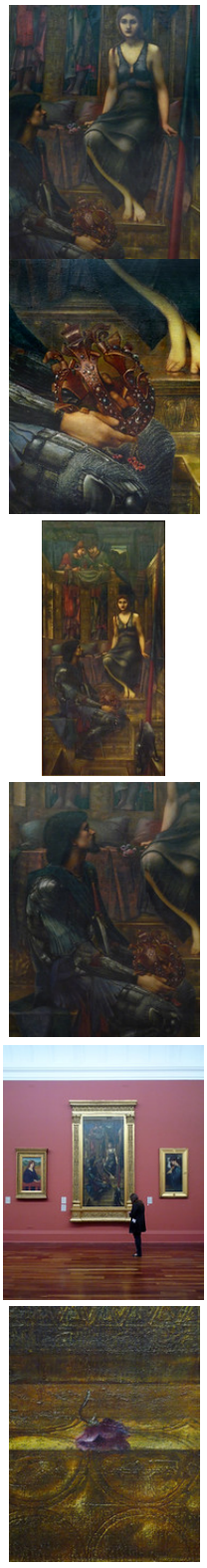


Figure **13.8.4.136**: More Smarthistory images…

Sleeping Beauty — but without the Kiss: Burne-Jones and the Briar Rose series

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.4.16: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Briar Rose* (*The Briar Rose*, *The Council Chamber*, *The Garden Court*, and *The Rose Bower*), c. 1890, oil on canvas (Buscot Park). Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

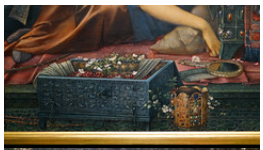
This series at Buscot Park

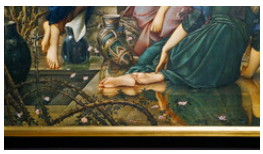
Peter Faulkner, "The Briar Rose," *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, Winter 2009

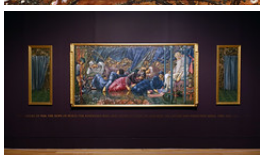
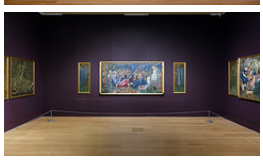
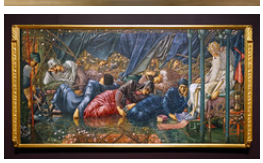
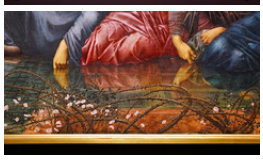
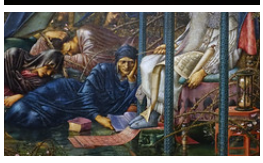
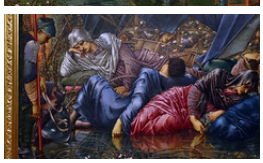
Alison Smith, *Edward Burne-Jones* (Tate Publishing, 2019)

Andrea Wolk Rager, "'Smite this Sleeping World Awake': Edward Burne-Jones and The Legend of the Briar Rose," *Victorian Studies*, vol. 51, no. 3 (Spring 2009), pp. 438-450.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88740

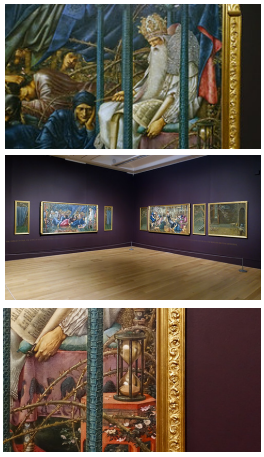


Figure **13.8.4.137**: More Smarthistory images…

Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Depths of the Sea*

by STEPHANIE ROBERTS



Figure **13.8.4.138**: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Depths of the Sea*, 1887, watercolor and gouache on wove paper mounted on panel, 197 x 76 cm (Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum)

Strange seaways

A smiling mermaid hauls the dead body of a naked young man to the bottom of the sea in this painting by British artist Edward Burne-Jones. With its warped forms, wavering lights and monochrome dimness, the painting is evocative of the strange seaways of underwater life. In fact, Burne-Jones was so determined to get these underwater effects right that he borrowed a large glass tank from another artist, Henry Holiday, filled it with tinted water, and used it as a prop to paint from in his studio. But this painting is more than just an eerie scene of mermaid mythology or a demonstration of the artist's technical skill; it can also be seen as a psychological exploration of fear, desire, and fatal attraction.

This painting, in watercolour and gouache, is a copy of an oil painting (now in a private collection) which Burne-Jones exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1886—his first and last time to exhibit at the prestigious London venue. Burne-Jones usually exhibited his work at the Grosvenor Gallery, a younger and more radical exhibition space which was set up as to rival the conservative Royal Academy.

Hidden meanings

When first displayed, the painting left many perplexed. 'It sets one beating one's brains to find some hidden meaning,' wrote one critic in *The National Review*. Even today it is easy to understand why. There is neither a clear-cut narrative to help us understand the painting, nor a straightforward indication of how we should feel towards the two figures. Did the young man submit to the mermaid willingly, or was he dragged to his death? What does she plan to do with his body? Does she know that she has caused his death, or is she yet to find out? Perhaps the most perplexing feature of this painting is the Mona Lisa smile on the mermaid's face—how do we read it? We can only speculate—and this in fact was part of Burne-Jones' intention. He described the painting as 'indefinite' and 'suggestive.' In this sense, it can be associated with the Symbolist movement of the late 19th century—an approach to art which favoured ambiguity, mood and suggestion over certainty or definite meanings.

The figures themselves are decidedly ambiguous. The mermaid is not only half-human, half-fish, but with her elfin features, thick torso, and defined muscles (with even a hint of a six-pack) she also appears half-male, half-female—an androgynous look which was common in the work of Burne-

Jones. She clings like a limpet to her victim's body. The deadly grip of her arm around his torso is reinforced by the serpent twist of her hair around his shoulder; and the two bodies are so tightly interlocked that they almost appear as one. Notice how the legs and feet of the drowned sailor are so firmly compressed that they begin to resemble the tail and flippers of the mermaid herself.

Mermaids and sirens

Mermaids haunted the 19th century imagination; the *femmes fatales* (seductive and dangerous women) of the deep, they sparked fear and fascination in equal measure. They are closely related to the figure of the Siren in classical mythology. Sirens were seductive but dangerous sea nymphs who would use their voices to lure sailors to their death. According to Burne-Jones' wife, Georgiana, the artist associated the face of the mermaid in this painting with the high-class Victorian beauty Laura Lyttelton, also known as 'the Siren'—her ability to charm and captivate those she met was legendary.

Mermaids can also be linked to concepts of womanhood and femininity. As many feminist writers have observed, women have often been linked symbolically to water. The goddess Venus for example, the ultimate symbol of feminine charm and sexuality, was born of the sea; and women, like water, are considered the source and sustenance of life. But there is also a dark side to this comparison: water is a dangerous element, which can contaminate or even kill. Mermaids and sirens were often used by 19th-century moralists to demonstrate the dangers of lustful living—those who allow themselves to be seduced by the charms of these creatures invariably meet a bad end.

Dangers of the deep

As many art historians have pointed out, many of Burne-Jones' works, despite their dreamlike, otherworldly qualities, appear to hold deep psychological resonance. If so, what might this painting mean? A close reading of the image itself may give us some clues. The lack of space, and the way in which the figures are crammed into the foreground close to the picture plane suggests entrapment. There appears to be no way out—the background is closed off; the stone pillars crowd in either side; and the sand at the bottom of the sea appears to tilt up towards the picture plane, suggesting compression rather than depth. Even the stream of bubbles and the little shoal of fish at the top right of the painting appear to struggle to escape. The painting is also imbued with a sense of the unobtainable: the way that the two naked bodies are entwined is sexually suggestive, but sex itself is a physical impossibility. The mermaid may be physically incapable of human copulation; and the man lies limp and impotent in her arms.

The painting, perhaps, may be seen as a meditation on the trappings of lust, unattainable desire, and the hazards of straying out of your depth. Let us be warned.

> ***Yea, draw him gently through the strange seaways***
> ***Down through the dim, green, water whispering.***
> ***Thy cold lips have not kissed so fair a thing***
> ***As this young mariner for many days.***
> ***So well he sleeps, he will not wake to praise***
> ***Thy wan bright loveliness, nor feel thee cling***
> ***Around him, neither smile to hear thee sing,***
> ***Though thou dids't lure him hither with thy lays.***
> ***The bubbles sigh and sparkle overhead,***
> ***How white thou art! But he is paler still,***
> ***Pale with despair of young days forfeited.***
> ***Smiling thou bear'st him to thy chill green bed.***
> ***Of brightest, bitterest triumph take thy fill,***
> ***Thou hast his body, but the soul has fled.***
>
> ***—R. Armytage (Rosamund Marriott Watson), "The Depths of the Sea: after Burne Jones," Academy (22 May 1886)***

Additional resources:

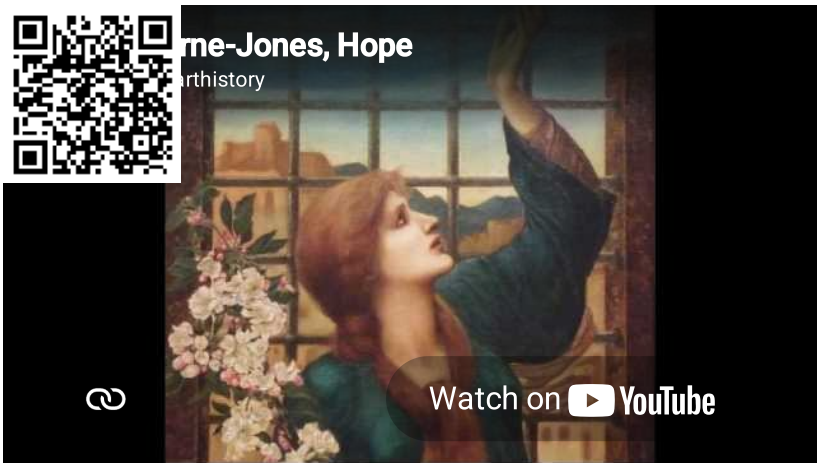
This painting at the Harvard Art Museums

Another mermaid by the artist with commentary (Christie's)

Femme Fatale in Wikipedia

Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *Hope*

by DR. REBECCA JEFFREY EASBY



Video **13.8.4.17**: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *Hope*, 1896, 179 x 63.5 cm, oil on canvas (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

One of the artist's last works

One of the last large paintings created by Edward Burne-Jones before his death in 1898, *Hope* is an allegorical painting in the Renaissance tradition. The lone female figure is reminiscent of the graceful women of Botticelli, while the symbolic message of the painting is subtly, yet effectively conveyed. The slender figure is confined within a narrow space, a shackle around her ankle chaining her to the ground, while she reaches for the sky above and beyond the cage-like bars behind her. In her arms is a branch of apple blossoms, the symbol of hope.



Figure reaching (detail), Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Hope, 1896, 179 x 63.5 cm, oil on canvas (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Figure **13.8.4.140**: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Hope, 1896, 179 x 63.5 cm, oil on canvas (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Hope was commissioned by Mrs. George Maston Whitin of Whitinville, Massachusetts, also a patron of John Singer Sargent. Mrs. Whitin originally requested a figure of a dancing girl, but Burne-Jones, upset over the recent death of his friend and collaborator William Morris, asked if he could

produce a figure of “hope” instead.

Friendship with William Morris

Burne-Jones and Morris had been friends since they met at Exeter College, Oxford in 1853. Together the two had come under the influence of Gabriel Dante Rossetti when they participated in the scheme to paint murals on the subject of King Arthur in the Oxford Union. In 1861 Morris co-founded Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., also know as “The Firm,” which created decorative elements inspired by a love of medieval imagery and a determination to move away from the mass production of industrial society. When the original company dissolved, Morris founded Morris and Co. in 1875, which carried on the work of creating textiles, carpets, wallpaper, furniture, stained glass and other decorative items. Many of the artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood contributed designs for stained glass windows, tapestries and other items, while Morris himself specialized in designs for wallpaper and fabrics.

A member of the Socialist movement from the early 1880s, Morris believed in the power of art to transform society, and the importance of creating beauty in the home as a way of uplifting the spirit. His often quoted advice to “have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful,” is typical of his attitude that people should surround themselves with beautiful things as a buffer against the squalor of industrial society. Morris was also convinced of the superiority of handmade objects over things that were mass-produced. Unfortunately, his egalitarian principles were thwarted as the meticulous processes used to create his goods also made his products too expensive for most people.

Stained glass

Burne-Jones frequently designed stained glass for Morris, and Hope bears a strong resemblance to many of his designs. The vertical organization of the composition, fairly typical in the work of the artist, resembles an elongated church window. The bars behind her head form a grid similar to the iron bars that support the glass in a stained glass window. In fact, the painting bares a strong resemblance to the figure of Hope in an earlier stained glass window of Faith, Hope and Charity that Burne-Jones designed for Christ Church Oxford in 1871.

A beautiful romantic dream

Burne-Jones once wrote “I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be—in a light better than any light ever shone—in a land no one can define or remember, only desire—and the forms divinely beautiful.” In his painting *Hope* the artist puts on canvas what he earlier put into words, and at the end of a long career still shows his lasting dedication to the creation of beauty.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston

Burne-Jones in the Google Art Project

Bill Waters, “Burne-Jones – A Quest for Love,” *The Victorian Web* (1993)

Elizabeth Cvitan. “Art in Evolution: The Association of Burne-Jones, Morris, and Rossetti in the Second Generation of Pre-Raphaelitism,” *The Victorian Web* (2006)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

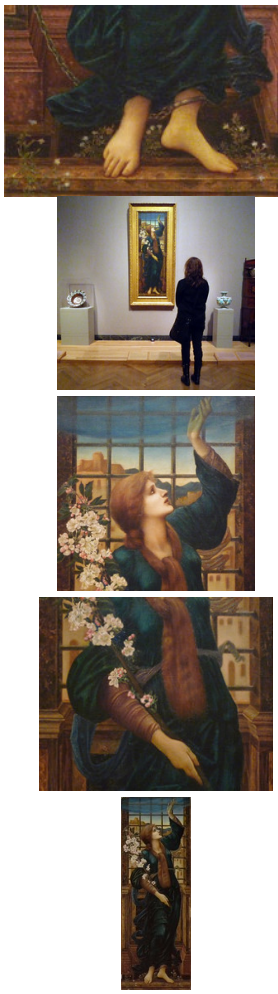


Figure **13.8.4.141**: More Smarthistory images…

John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott*

by DR. CHLOE PORTUGEIS



Figure **13.8.4.142**: John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott*, 1888, oil on canvas, 153 x 200 cm (Tate Britain, London)

A Pre-Raphaelite revival

In many ways, Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott*, painted in 1888, transports viewers back forty years—to 1848, when the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) was formed. Indeed, one commenter from *Art Journal* noted, "The type he [Waterhouse] chose for the spell-controlled lady, her action, and the garments in which he has arrayed her, bring his work into kinship with that of the "Pre-Raphaelites" of the middle of the century."

The subject of a vulnerable young red-haired woman in white gown, adrift in a riverine setting, is reminiscent of John Everett Millais's *Ophelia* of 1852. Millais, one of the founding members of the PRB, had a much-acclaimed retrospective at London's Grosvenor Gallery in 1886, which Waterhouse attended.



Figure **13.8.4.143**: Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 111.8 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Lord Alfred Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*

Waterhouse's chosen subject, the Lady of Shalott, comes from Lord Alfred Tennyson's Arthurian poem of the same name (he actually wrote two versions, one in 1833, the other in 1842). Tennyson was a favorite among the Pre-Raphaelites. In the poems, the Lady of Shalott lives isolated in a castle upon a river that flows to Camelot. Because of a curse, she is fated to spend her days weaving images of the world onto her loom, but on pain of death, she is forbidden from looking out her window. Instead, she has to look at images of the outside world as reflected in a mirror. One day she sees a reflection of the knight Lancelot and is instantly smitten, so she breaks her prohibition and looks directly at him through the window. Desiring to meet him, she leaves her castle and rides a boat down to Camelot. The horrible conditions of the curse set in, and she dies before reaching the shore.



Figure **13.8.4.144**: William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*, c. 1890-1905, oil on canvas (Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT)

The Lady of Shalott was a prominent subject in the Pre-Raphaelite repertoire, the most notable example being William Holman Hunt's illustration for an edition of Tennyson's works published in 1857 by Moxon, which the artist reworked into a painting in the 1880s. Whereas Hunt highlights the moment of transgression, right after the Lady looks at Lancelot through the window, Waterhouse shows her on the boat to Camelot, her death foreshadowed by the lone candle that remains lit on the prow.

Pre-Raphaelite subject, but impressionist Technique

Nonetheless, as the *Art Journal* commenter went on to observe, there is a significant difference between Waterhouse's work and that of the original PRB, specifically, in the technique: "[T]he almost impressionary delicacy of the rendering of willows weeds, and water is such as claims harmony with French work rather than what was so intensely English." The early works of the PRB showed an extreme attention to detail, reflecting John Ruskin's principle of "truth to nature," which advocated a faithful transcription of landscapes and objects. But Waterhouse's technique is notably looser, revealing his experimentation with French Impressionism. Impressionism offered a different conception of "truth to nature," one that was based more in optical truth, that is, how an object or scene appears to the eye in a fleeting moment, given the time of day and atmospheric conditions.



Figure 13.8.4.145: Convincing illusionism in reeds (detail, left), Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, 762 x 1118 mm (Tate Britain, London) and more evident brushstrokes in reeds (detail, right) John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott*, 1888, oil on canvas, 153 x 200 cm (Tate Britain, London)

We can see the difference if we compare the reeds of Millais's *Ophelia* (left) with that of Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott* (right), positioned in analogous parts of the composition. Whereas Millais's reeds maintain their physical integrity and rich detail when viewed up close, Waterhouse's reeds lose some of their convincing illusionism and dissolve into obvious brushstrokes (even more apparent when you see the paintings in person!). The Lady's tapestry, which drapes over the boat, seems to further highlight the difference between Waterhouse and the PRB. Whereas the early PRB were inspired by the bright jewel tones and minute details of medieval illustrated manuscripts and tapestries, Waterhouse took his inspiration from the plein air (open air) methods of the Impressionists, replacing jewel tones for the atmospheric silvers and greens of a cool English day. Like the Lady herself, Waterhouse turns away from an art of the cloistered life and towards an art that engages with optical effects.

Artistic nationalism: English vs. French

Although the original PRB openly declared their allegiance to continental "Old Masters" such as Jan Van Eyck and the early Raphael, by the end of the nineteenth century Pre-Raphaelitism was cast as a specifically English phenomenon. As such, it was regularly pitted against the Impressionist trend, which solidified into a movement in Britain with the founding of the New English Art Club (NEAC) in 1886. Many figures in the art world were worried about the "Frenchification" of British artists. Marion Spielmann, editor of the *Magazine of Art*, noted with consternation at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1888: "that they [younger painters] are most of them imbued with the French spirit . . . is a fact that the Royal Academy cannot afford to overlook." He then addresses the Council: "the future of the English 'School' is in their hands, and upon them devolves the responsibility of moulding it to the proper form."



Figure 13.8.4.146: Peter Henry Emerson, "Ricking the Reed," photograph from *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* by P.H. Emerson and T.F. Goodall. London : Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1886

Spielmann also noted the "French flatness" of Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott*. However, the painting's debts to early Pre-Raphaelitism and that most "English" of poets, Tennyson, remained undeniable. The setting, moreover, suggested a thoroughly English landscape, evoking not only the Surrey of Millais's *Ophelia*, but also bearing resemblance to the sort of marshy, reedy scenery that could be seen in Peter Henry Emerson's photographs of English landscapes, as in this image, "Ricking the Reed," from his album, *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886). Despite initial remarks as to the "Frenchness" of its technique, *The Lady of Shalott* was ultimately accepted by the establishment as an "English" painting, and was acquired by Henry Tate for his museum of national art, where it still enjoys pride of place today as one of their most popular works.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Tate

Alfred Lord Tennyson. "The Lady of Shallot". *The Victorian Web.*

Elizabeth Nelson. "Pictorial Interpretations of "The Lady of Shalott": The Lady in her Boat." Adapted from the author's "Tennyson and the Ladies of Shalott, Ladies of Shalott: A Victorian Masterpiece and its Contexts", *Victorian Web* (1979)

by DR. AYLA LEPINE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



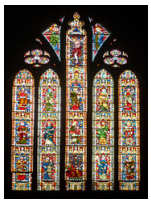
Video **13.8.4.18**: William Butterfield, All Saints Church, 7 Margaret Street, London, designed 1849, consecrated 1859, primary patrons: Alexander Beresford Hope and Henry Tritton, cornerstone laid by Edward Bouverie Pusey, 1850

William Butterfield had little more than 100 square feet of real estate to work with, but designed perhaps the greatest example of High Victorian Gothic architecture. The spire soars 227 feet above London and its interior is a kaleidoscope of color and pattern that expresses the vision of the Oxford Movement and the Ecclesiological Society. In 1841, the Society announced its intentions for their model church:

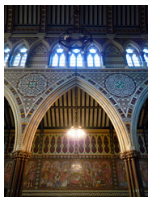
> ***It must be in a Gothic Style.***
> ***It must be built of solid materials.***
> ***Its ornament should decorate its construction.***
> ***Its artist should be 'a single pious and laborious artist alone, pondering deeply over his duty to do his best for the service of God's Holy Religion'.***
> ***Above all the church must be built so that the "Rubricks and Canons of the Church of England may be Consistently observed, and the Sacraments rubrically and decently administered."***

















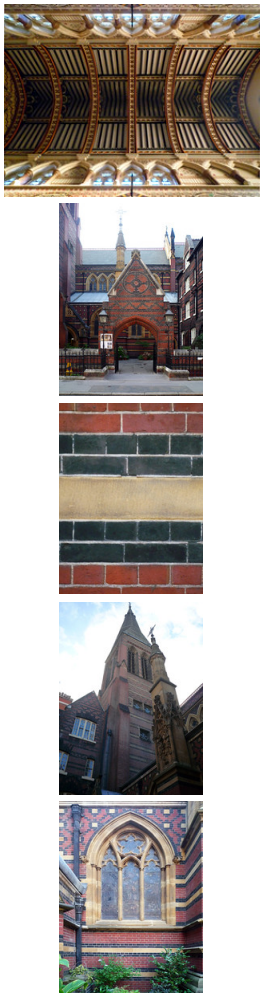


Figure 13.8.4.147: More Smarthistory images…

William Morris and Philip Webb, Red House

by DR. KRISTEN M. HARKNESS



Figure 13.8.4.148: William Morris and Philip Webb, Red House (garden with well), 1860, Bexleyheath, England (photo: Steve Cadman, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Cult of domesticity

By the mid-nineteenth century, many people were troubled by the effects that the Industrial Revolution was having on the environment, society at large, and workers employed in factories, concerns that are echoed in today's environmental movement. The English art critic John Ruskin argued

that the inexpensive, factory-made goods flooding the markets had a negative effect on both those who made them and those who consumed them.

Ruskin and others believed that mechanized factory production deprived workers of the personal satisfaction and creativity involved in designing and making an object entirely with one's own hands. They also believed that people who bought these goods were surrounding themselves with soulless objects that lacked aesthetic value. Thus, their domestic environments were missing the elements of spirituality and refinement that produce healthy, well-rounded citizens.

This was a particular concern in the age of the Victorian "cult of domesticity," which emphasized the home as a morally uplifting respite from the negative influences of city life. Ruskin and his followers advocated a return to the medieval guild model in which artisans were responsible for handcrafting their works from beginning to end. This produced a sense of pride in the worker and guaranteed quality products for the consumer. William Morris was strongly influenced by Ruskin's writing and also dedicated to social reform.



Figure **13.8.4.149**: William Morris and Philip Webb, Red House (side), 1860, Bexleyheath, England (photo: **Steve Cadman**, CC-BY-SA 2.0)

Craftsmanship and community

Red House was the home he designed in Bexleyheath, a southeastern suburb of London, England, for his family with the assistance of Philip Webb. Webb and Morris met while working in London for the architect G. E. Street. Webb would go on to be one of the major architects of the Gothic Revival movement in England.

Morris wanted the house to be a place that reflected his ideals and celebrated art, craftsmanship, and community. Morris and Webb collaborated to make the house's architecture and interior design merge into a unified whole. This would provide the appropriate atmosphere to foster domestic harmony and instill creative energy in its inhabitants and visitors. It was the first home built according to the principles of fine artistry and utility that became the hallmark of the design firm Morris founded with Webb in 1861, as well as the emerging Arts and Crafts movement.

Morris and Webb designed the house in a simplified Tudor Gothic style. The features of this style include historicizing elements such as steep roofs, prominent chimneys, cross gables, and exposed-beam ceilings, all present in Red House. Morris was influenced by Ruskin and other theorists who saw the Gothic as a time of perfection in the craft and building trades, as well as a period of great faith and belief in human dignity. They also viewed the Gothic as a more suitable style for Northern Europe because it originated in France, a northern country, as opposed to the classical forms of ancient Greece and Rome. For Morris and Webb, the adoption of a specifically English form of Gothic architecture seemed natural and appropriate to the site.

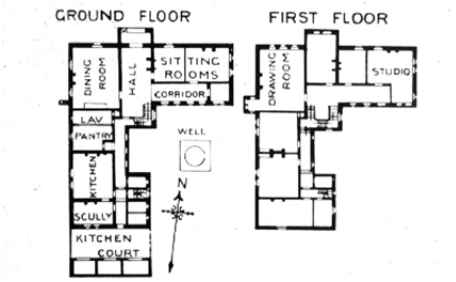


Figure **13.8.4.150**: William Morris and Philip Webb, plan of Red House, 1860, Bexleyheath, England

A medieval ideal

The use of exposed red brick for the exterior both gave the house its name and reveals the innate beauty of the construction materials. Morris and Webb valued the specific beauty of natural materials, which they saw as far superior to and healthier than industrially produced materials. Red House is L-shaped, with the rooms laid out for maximum efficiency and clarity. The L-shaped plan also allows the house to embrace the gardens as a

part of the domestic sphere, as well as creates an asymmetry that is typical of traditional Gothic structures that were built over long periods of time. The concept of an integral whole extended to the interior design as well. Webb, Morris, his wife, Jane, and the painter Edward Burne-Jones all worked together to design everything in the home, from the wallpaper to the stained-glass windows to the built-in cabinets and furniture, so that all celebrated the beauty of nature and the medieval guild ideal.



Figure **13.8.4.151**: William Morris, Niebelungenlied Settle, c. 1860, painted wood



Figure **13.8.4.152**: William Morris and Philip Webb, front hall of Red House, 1860, Bexleyheath, England (photo: Tony Hisgett, CC BY 2.0)

The house is entered through a large wooden door that leads to a rectangular hallway. A settle Morris decorated with illustrations from the medieval German epic *Niebelungenlied* is to the right. The hallway is filled with light from the stained-glass windows. The dining room to the right contains the original hutch designed by Philip Webb, which has Gothic trefoil motifs and is painted in “dragon’s blood” (a deep red-brown favored by Arts and Crafts practitioners). The original rustic dining room table remains, along with the decorative arch in the brickwork around the fireplace.



Figure 13.8.4.153: William Morris and Philip Webb, kitchen hutch in Red House, 1860, Bexleyheath, England (photo: Tony Hisgett, CC BY 2.0)



Figure 13.8.4.154: William Morris and Philip Webb, living room fireplace in Red House, 1860, Bexleyheath, England (photo: Badly Drawn Dad, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Other original built-in furniture is present in the main living room on the second floor, notably a fireplace painted with Morris's motto: "*Ars Longa, Vita Brevis*" (Life is short, art is forever). This room also has paintings by Edward Burne-Jones. Stained glass decorated by Morris, his family and their friends is found throughout the house.

Unfortunately Morris had to sell Red House in 1865 due to financial difficulties. It remained a private residence until 2003, when it was acquired by the National Trust of Great Britain. The architecture of Red House has not been significantly altered, but most of the original furniture is gone and some of the original wall paintings have been covered with modern reproductions of wallpaper Morris produced after he established his design company with Webb and like-minded colleagues. Red House now functions as a museum and is open to the public.

Additional resources:

Red House at the National Trust

Arts and Crafts at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Late Victorian art

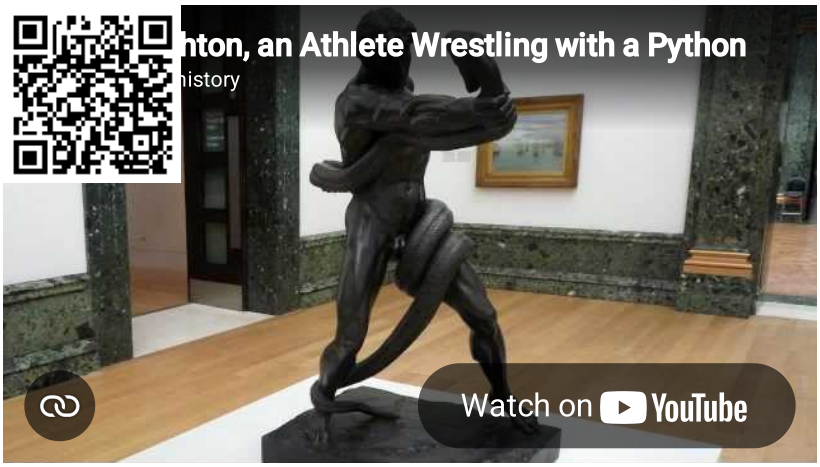
Though this period sees a continuing interest in art for art's sake, Victorian artists never entirely give up their interest in moralizing.

c. 1880 - 1901

Sir Frederic Leighton

Sir Frederic Leighton, *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.4.20: Sir Frederic Leighton, *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1877, bronze, 1746 x 984 x 1099 mm (Tate Britain, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

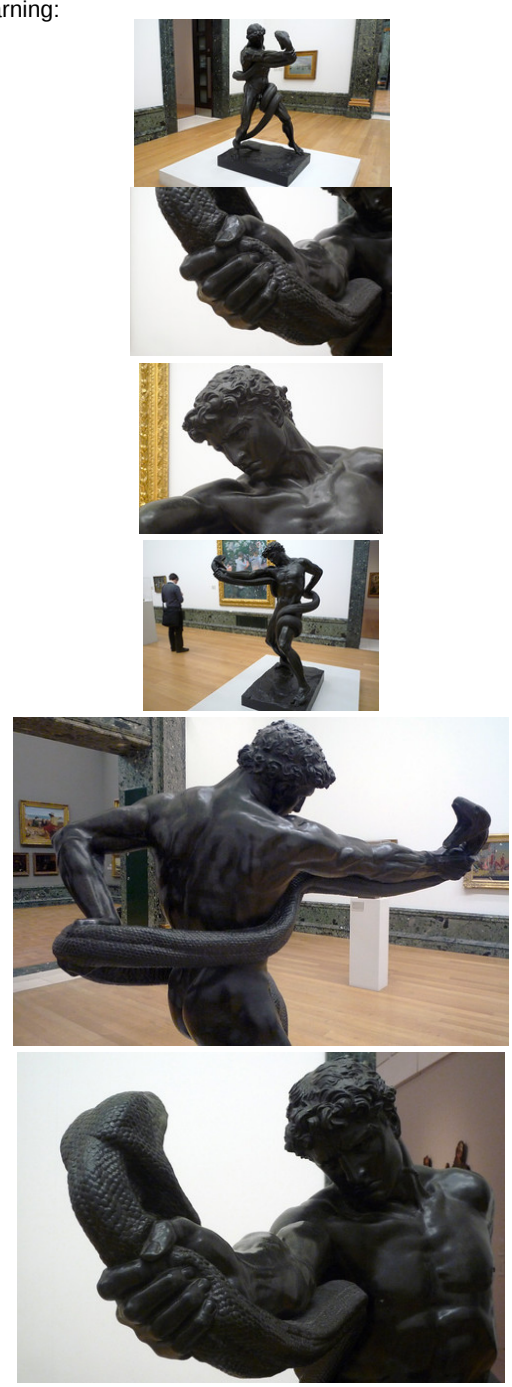


Figure 13.8.4.155: More Smarthistory images…

Sir Frederic Leighton, *Bath of Psyche*

by DR. CHLOE PORTUGEIS



Figure 13.8.4.156: Frederic Leighton, *Bath of Psyche*, 1890, oil on canvas, 189.2 x 622 cm (Tate, London)

At first glance, Frederic Leighton's *Bath of Psyche*, painted at the end of the nineteenth century by the President of the British Royal Academy, seems like the epitome of a conservative academicism. While contemporary painters like Walter Sickert were painting the lurid interiors of London's music halls and tenement housing, here Leighton presents us with a female nude, skin polished to marmoreal perfection, absorbed in her own reflection.

Moreover, this figure has a pedigree including both classical statuary and nineteenth-century French academic painting. Based in part on a famous statue from antiquity, the *Venus Kallypogos* ("Nice Buttocks," in the Archaeological Museum in Naples), Leighton muted the racy overtones of that ancient statue by turning the figure around to present a more modest three-quarter view of Psyche's flank.

He also drew from French academic nudes like Ingres's *La Source* of 1856, evident in the almost identical pose involving contrapposto and one arm raised overhead; the white drapery falling behind Leighton's *Psyche*, painted in a frothy manner evocative of cascading water, replaces the urn with streaming water held by Ingres's figure.

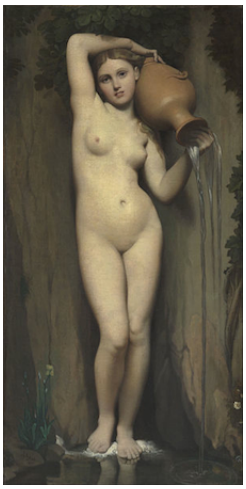


Figure 13.8.4.157: Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, La Source, 1856, oil on canvas, 163 x 80 cm (Musée D'Orsay, Paris)

However, Leighton was a complex figure who challenges any neat division between the academic and avant-garde. In the 1860s, Leighton revived the genre of the nude in Victorian Britain, which had been languishing since the death of William Etty in 1849.

Whereas Etty's nudes were voluptuous and his painterly technique was richly coloristic in the manner of Titian and Rubens, Leighton adopted a cool classicism. Instead of warm, dimpled flesh, Psyche's skin is pale, smooth and flawless, like the chill surface of marble. Leighton further subordinates sensuality by privileging line over color. Rather than building up forms through color, like Etty, Leighton emphasizes the contours of Psyche's figure and uses muted tones, giving an impression of precision and control rather than spontaneity and bravura.



Figure 13.8.4.158: William Etty, Candaules, King of Lydia Shews his Wife by Stealth to Gyges, One of his Ministers, As She Goes to Bed, 1830, oil on canvas, 45.1 x 55.9 cm (Tate, London)



Figure 13.8.4.159: James Abbot McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White No. 1: The White Girl*, 1861-62, oil on canvas, 213 x 107.9 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

In fact, *Psyche* can be seen as an exercise in tones akin to Whistler's versions of *Symphony in White*. Just as Whistler's compositions consist primarily of different shades of white, *Psyche's* reduced palette of colors juxtaposes different shades of white, from the milky tone of the drapery to the buff pallor of her skin and the honeyed off-whites of the marble architectural setting.

Leighton, like Whistler, was a key proponent of the avant-garde Aesthetic movement in Britain, which engaged with artworks primarily in terms of their visual properties—that is, in the relation of forms and colors in the service of beauty, rather than as a vehicle for narrative or conveying conventional morals. While the title of Leighton's painting, *Bath of Psyche*, alludes to the story of Cupid and Psyche as told in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, very little in the painting itself suggests this specific narrative. Leighton chose a moment in the story devoid of dramatic action—Psyche preparing her bath while she awaits her lover, Cupid, in his palace—a moment that is generic in its theme of woman gazing at her reflection.



Figure 13.8.4.160: Berthe Morisot, *The Psyche Mirror*, 1876, oil on canvas, (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid)

This theme was represented in more modern terms by artists like Berthe Morisot, whose *Before a Psyche Mirror* depicts a contemporary woman looking at herself in a mirror while adjusting her clothing (here, "psyche" is a type of mirror). The identity of Leighton's figure is suggested in the reflective pool before her feet, which serves as her mirror. The figure of Psyche and her association with mirrors and reflections underscore the emphasis on vision in Aestheticism and the appreciation of beauty for its own sake.



Figure 13.8.4.161: Frederic Leighton, *The Sluggard*, 1885, bronze, 191.1 x 90.2 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Although Leighton's vision of beauty subdued overt sensuality, this is not to say his nudes exhibit prudishness or reactionary tastes. In the context of his time, Leighton's nudes had a certain radical quality even as they reflected traditional sources. Rejecting the voluptuousness of Etty's nudes, Leighton's *Psyche* is somewhat androgynous with her small breasts and restrained curves. As if emphasizing her androgyny, Leighton has Psyche twist her upper torso so as to open it up from a side view to a near frontal one, and he raises her arms upward and outward, the sum effect of which gives her upper body the more masculine proportions of a triangle. In fact, Psyche's general form and position resembles those of Leighton's male nudes in his painting *Daedalus and Icarus* of 1867 and his bronze sculpture of 1886, *The Sluggard*.

Leighton's personal life and sexual orientation has been the subject of much scholarly speculation, with his artistic production read in terms of homoeroticism. With regard to Psyche's androgyny, though, Leighton may have just wished to temper the eroticism associated with more conventional female nudes so that the viewer may apprehend the beauty of the body at the highest artistic level, as pure form. In a letter to art critic Joseph Comyns Carr of 1873, Leighton wrote, ' . . . my growing love for Form made me intolerant of the restraint and exigencies of costume, and led me more and more, and finally, to a class of subjects . . . in which supreme scope is left to pure artistic qualities . . . These conditions classic subjects afford . . . as vehicles . . . of abstract form . . .' For Leighton, in other words, the classical nude was a means to express his love of form in and of itself, as an abstraction. Although he never went so far as to completely reject representation in art, his explicit appreciation of the purely visual, abstract qualities of form presaged the modernists of the next century.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

No photos

Figure 13.8.4.162: More Smarthistory images…

by DR. CHLOE PORTUGEIS



Video **13.8.4.21**: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Reading from Homer*, 1885, oil on canvas, 36-1/8 x 72-1/4 inches (91.8 x 183.5 cm) (Philadelphia Museum of Art)



Figure **13.8.4.163**: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Reading from Homer*, 1885, oil on canvas, 1836.67 x 918.72 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Reading?

The title is *A Reading from Homer*. And yet, we see no indications of anyone reading (either to themselves privately or aloud to others). In fact, the storyteller at right, crowned in a wreath of laurel leaves and gesticulating with his left arm, is decidedly looking away from the scroll that unfurls on his lap. Moreover, this painting does not even illustrate a specific scene from Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.

Despite the title, then, Alma-Tadema's painting showcases the oral transmission of culture across the ages. Unlike the Victorian (male) elite, who spent long hours studying ancient Latin and Greek texts in pedantic exercises at grammar schools and at university, Alma-Tadema favored a vision of the ancient world that was anything but dry. His paintings were accessible to those outside academia and thus more democratic in their appeal. In *A Reading from Homer*, the marble bench even seems to curve towards the viewer's space, as if offering us an invitation to participate in this gathering.

Too populist?

In fact, at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1885, art critic Claude Phillips perceived the populist element of this painting, although he interpreted it negatively. While acknowledging that the painting demonstrates Alma-Tadema's "usual mastery . . . of light, color, texture, and drawing," Phillips nonetheless disapproved of the figures themselves: "The facial types, though they have an air of realistic truth, are of a low order, and not such as should have been selected for such a subject."[1] Here Phillips draws upon the contemporary pseudo-scientific discourse of phrenology and physiognomy, which argued that an individual's character was legible through the shape of the head and facial features. For Phillips, the supposedly "low" nature of the figures' faces was corroborated by their lethargic attitudes, and he preferred paintings with classical themes that elevated the viewer by featuring noble people doing noble deeds.



Figures listening (detail), Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Reading from Homer*, 1885, oil on canvas, 1836.67 x 918.72 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

A different kind of Classicism

Alma-Tadema's vision of antiquity was decidedly different than that. He was a key figure in the mid- to late-Victorian Classical Revival. We can think back to the Neo-classical movement of a century before. A product of the Enlightenment, Neoclassical art favored the cerebral over the sensual and themes that promoted reason, civic virtue, and heroism. Think of Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1784), which shows three brothers who vow to go to war and sacrifice their lives for Rome. By contrast, in *A Reading from Homer*, Alma-Tadema shows a group of languorous figures enjoying the sensory delights of a warm Mediterranean day by the sea, withdrawing into private worlds of reverie rather than being urged into collective, public action.



Figure **13.8.4.165**: Albert Joseph Moore, *A Musician*, c. 1867, oil on canvas, 8.7 x 28.6 cm (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT)



Figure **13.8.4.166**: Lyre (detail), Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Reading from Homer*, 1885, oil on canvas, 1836.67 x 918.72 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Here Alma-Tadema's classicism also engages with the mid-Victorian Aesthetic movement (which emphasized the aesthetic qualities of art over the narrative), and *A Reading from Homer* resembles Albert Moore's *A Musician* of c.1867. The lyres in both Moore and Alma-Tadema's paintings underscore the Aesthetes' "musical" approach to painting, encouraging the viewer to look at painting in terms of harmonies, rhythms, and contrasts rather than offering any specific narrative moment or moral meaning. In *A Reading from Homer*, the viewer can appreciate a series of visual contrasts that offer a pleasing sense of balance and harmony: the angular geometries of the marble architecture at left, which transforms into the sweeping curve of the bench at right; the figures resting in cool shadow against the bright, glowing marble and sun-lit water; the palette of whites, blues, and browns punctuated by the loud accents of the red tambourine and fuschia roses.

An archaeological approach

Alma-Tadema delighted in the day-to-day materiality of the past. In *A Reading from Homer* we can see the skill with which he depicted the translucency of the marble, tinged blue by the light from the sky and water; the soft fur tunic worn by the reclining man; and the lyre with all strings carefully delineated.

Alma-Tadema's attention to artifacts and architecture represents an archaeological approach. The second half of the nineteenth century was a great age of archaeological study and excavation, with discoveries being made in Mediterranean and Near Eastern sites such as Knossos, Mycenae, and even the famed Homeric city of Troy. Alma-Tadema himself regularly visited Pompeii, the Museo Nazionale in Naples, the Vatican Museum, and Rome for archaeological inspiration; at home in London he also had a great resource in the British Museum.

An instance of Commercial Materialism?

Because of Alma-Tadema's pleasure in depicting the material objects and structures of the past, critics have sometimes been unkind in their view of him. Critic and curator Roger Fry, who helped introduce Post-Impressionism to Britain, denounced Alma-Tadema as representing "an extreme instance of the commercial materialism of our civilization."[2]

This view was further cemented by the fact that his art was collected by the wealthy capitalists of his day. *A Reading from Homer* was purchased by American financier Henry Marquand, then President of the Metropolitan Museum, to go in the music room of his New York mansion. Marquand also commissioned Alma-Tadema to design a suite of furniture for this room, most notably a grand piano made of exotic wood, ivory, and mother-of-pearl.

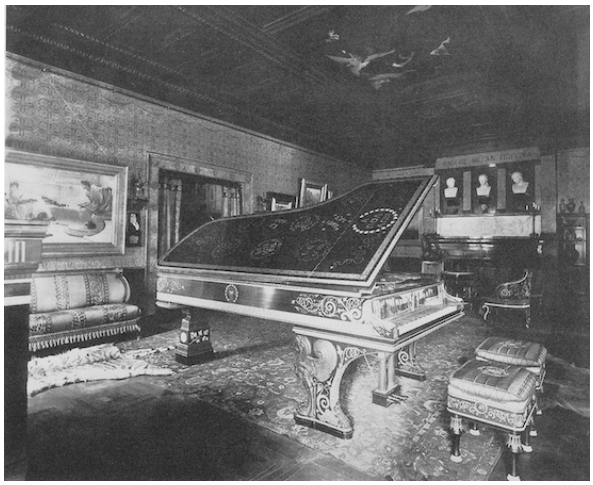


Figure **13.8.4.167**: Music Room in the mansion of Henry Marquand

A Reading from Homer offered visitors to Marquand's home a sort of mirror for their own behavior. Like the figures in the painting, these Gilded Age elite would gather in the music room to listen to a performance or recital. They would also witness Alma-Tadema's artistic performance by proxy, in the form of this painting. Inscribed on the seat beneath the storyteller is Alma-Tadema's signature, suggesting the artist's identification with this figure. Like the Homeric storyteller, Alma-Tadema captivates his audience through his artistic performance, bringing visions of the ancient world to life.

1. Claude Phillips, "The Royal Academy," *The Academy* 679 (9 May 1885), p.336.
2. *Roger Fry Reader*, "The Case of the Late Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, O.M." (reprinted from The Nation, 18 January 1913, 666-67) p.149.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

This painting up close in the Google Art Project

Alma-Tadema in the Google Art Project

The Aesthetic Movement from the Victoria and Albert Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.4.168**: More Smarthistory images…

George Frederic Watts, *The Minotaur*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.8.4.169**: George Frederic Watts, *The Minotaur*, 1885, oil on canvas, 118 x 94.5 cm (Tate Britain, London)

George Frederic Watts was a colossus of the Victorian art world. The first living artist to have a solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, in his heyday Watts was the most celebrated painter in the country, and that at a time when the status of the artist in Britain had never been higher.

The Minotaur myth

The Minotaur belongs to his later, symbolic works and illustrates a scene from the famous ancient Greek myth.

After her defeat by the Cretans, the story goes, the city of Athens was forced every nine years to send as tribute seven youths and seven maidens. A ship, bearing a black sail, ferried the victims across the Aegean Sea to the land of their subjugators. Once on shore they were sent to the fabled Labyrinth of Daedalus, an impossibly complex maze-like structure, as large as a town. It was here the Minotaur lived; half-human and half-bull, conceived through the preternatural coupling of Pasiphaë, the wife of King Minos, and the Cretan Bull.

One by one the beast would pick them off, wandering, half-starved and utterly disorientated, searching desperately for a way out, only to meet their gruesome end with a savage business of goring, pummeling and devouring.

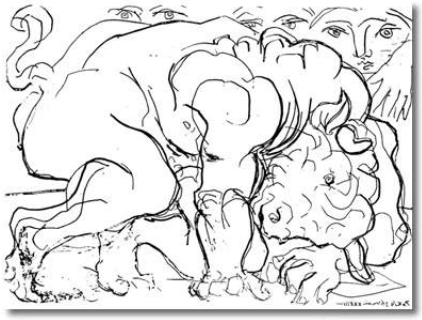


Figure **13.8.4.170**: Pablo Picasso, Dying Minotaur, Plate from the Vollard Suite, 1933, etching

A monstrous aberration of nature in western art and literature, the Minotaur came to embody the violent, bestial impulses of man. In the twentieth century however, in Picasso's etchings and the writings of Jorge Luis Borges, for example, the creature has been viewed more sympathetically.

In Borges, he is a prisoner, painfully unaware of the crime he has committed, who longs for nothing but to be killed. For Picasso, the Minotaur is a tragic figure, dying a pitiful death in his *Vollard Suite*. For the Victorians, though, the Minotaur was just plain evil, the embodiment of violence and depravity, an association that was dramatically exploited in one of the most effective journalistic campaigns of the nineteenth century.

"The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon"

In 1885 the *Pall Mall Gazette* published a series of articles by William Thomas Stead that proved a milestone in the history of modern journalism. At the time Parliament was delaying pushing through a bill that would raise the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen. In a bid to force through this piece of legislation, Stead's articles set about exposing the widespread practice of child prostitution, particularly in London. The analogy with the Minotaur myth, comparing these young girls with Athenian virgins, was a powerful trope, but far more compelling were Stead's investigative journalistic tactics, the most controversial involving the purchase for £5 of a thirteen year-old girl, bought from her own parents.

The articles were instrumental in pushing the bill through, ensuring the age of consent was raised, as well as making it a criminal offence to procure girls for prostitution by the administering of drugs, intimidation or fraud. Not all the reforms were progressive, though. Equating child abuse with other forms of sexual behavior, the new laws also criminalized acts of homosexuality, now punishable with a two-year prison sentence, with or without hard labor. Over the months that followed, however, many cases of child abuse were successfully brought to trial, thanks in no small part to Stead's widely circulated articles.

Reading them prompted Watts to take up his brush, "to hold up to detestation the bestial and brutal," as he put it, and paint *The Minotaur*.

The beast

Viewed obliquely, his neck twisted, his face in *profil perdu* (the figure is viewed from behind, with the face only partially visible), the Minotaur stands on the ramparts of the Labyrinth, gazing, almost longingly, out to sea. On closer inspection one sees to the left the white sail of the ship bearing the seven fair youths and seven maidens from Athens. It is this that has caught his eye. Gripped by destructive impulses he crushes a small bird in his hand. The sail lies on the orthogonal created by his arm emphasizing the fact that they are heading towards a similar fate as the bird's.

Painted with startling rapidity in a single morning, Watts rejects the academic finish of his Victorian counterparts, applying the paint with agitated brushstrokes. The form of the figure is built up with layers of red and yellow creating expressive muscular striations, bringing to mind Turner's incarnadine sunsets or perhaps the industrial processes—the steelworks and blast furnaces—that have forged this modern Babylon, London.

The angle of the body rhymes visually with the masonry that constrains it, creating a dynamic interplay of curve and line, of raw animal energy set against the geometric exactitude of Daedalus's structure. The frame, too, constrains the figure, emphasizing the verticality of the composition and suggesting at first glance that he is standing on two legs and not four. We soon realize, though, following the musculature of the neck, the curvature of the back and the modeling of the lower-half of the body that it is a bull-headed, centaur-like creature that we are looking at, the human torso emerging from the bulk of a bull's body.



Figure **13.8.4.171**: William Blake, *The Minotaur (Canto XII)*, Illustrations to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, 1826, watercolor, black ink, graphite and black chalk on paper, 37 x 52 cm (Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Mass.)

This rather unusual amalgamation of parts can also be found in Blake's 1826 illustration of Dante's *Inferno*, where, both bull-headed and quadrupedal, a Minotaur rampant signals Dante and Virgil's descent into the Seventh Circle of Hell.

A more likely visual source, however, given Watts's training as a sculptor, are those famous scenes from the Centauromachy, the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths, illustrated on the metopes from the Parthenon, works which profoundly informed his early training as a sculptor.



Figure **13.8.4.172**: Centaur and Lapth in Combat, Metope from the Parthenon, c. 447-438 B.C., Marble, H. 172 cm, (British Museum, London)

In contrast to both Blake and the metope marble, Watts's *Minotaur* is surprisingly subdued. For all his muscly strength, his Michelangelesque physicality, he seems strangely to evoke feelings of pity more than terror. The use of the *profil perdu* is instrumental here, although clearly bestial, though more canine than bovine-looking from this angle, the wrinkled folds of the forehead, the exposed eyeball and the delicate lashes suggest vulnerability rather than brutality and if anything a certain wistfulness rather than the lecherousness suggested by Stead's analogy.



Figure 13.8.4.173: Profile of the minotaur (detail), George Frederic Watts, *The Minotaur*, 1885, oil on canvas, 118 x 94.5 cm (Tate Britain)

To read the painting exclusively as an illustration of Stead's article, then, runs the risk of overlooking the experience of many of its viewers. To argue that his vulnerability is deceptive, designed to beguile us as it were seems an inadequate explanation and certainly out of keeping with the Minotaur myth.

Dream/painting

One way of tackling the problem is to look at the immediate context of its production. As mentioned, the painting was executed swiftly, Watts's friend Mrs Russell Barrington recording how it was composed early one morning in response to "a painful subject" that "had filled one of the evening papers." The earliness, the urgency and the likelihood that he had read Stead's article the previous evening are all interesting clues, leading one to the possible conclusion that it is not the text that Watts is illustrating, but the dream he had dreamt after reading it.

There is certainly a dreamlike quality to the painting, the symbols used all being highly charged with meaning: the sail, the labyrinth, the Minotaur, the crushed bird, the looping tail. If only Freud were around, we may be tempted to say. But then, of course, he was around and in the years following *The Minotaur*, was busy penning *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in which he proposed that the unconscious mind is structured like a language, the mechanisms of which serve to hide from the dreamer their disturbing thoughts. With this in mind, while the symbolism of the dream/painting purports to illustrate Watts's support for Stead's campaign, the visual contradictions of the image seem out of step with the moral certitudes of the articles, allowing a reading of the painting as a sort of dream displacement in which, while borrowing the symbols of Stead, who himself had borrowed them from the ancient Greeks, Watts is actually saying something entirely different and entirely personal. Whatever meanings or interpretations the painting generates are for the individual viewer to construct. The art historian, Andrew Graham-Dixon, suggests this is a characteristic feature of Watts's later works which whether consciously or otherwise anticipate Modernism, giving form to "the troubled subjectivity and anxious relativism of a new era."[1]

1. Andrew Graham Dixon, "GF Watts: is the Victorian visionary back in fashion?" *The Telegraph* (June 2011)

Additional resources:

Watts's *The Minotaur* at the Tate Britain

The Victorian Web's entry on Watts's *The Minotaur*

Watts on Andrew Graham-Dixon archive

W.T. Stead. "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon I: the Report of our Secret Commission." *The Pall Mall Gazette*, July 6, 1885.

13.8.4: Victorian art is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.4: Victorian art** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.5: Realism

Realism

As people moved to the cities in search of work, the countryside took on new meaning.

c. 1840 - 1900

A beginner's guide to Realism

by DR. BETH GERSH-NESIC

Realism and the painting of modern life



Figure **13.8.5.1**: Charles Albert d'Arnoux Bertall, in *Le Journal Amusant*, no. 595 (May 25, 1867) (The Research Library, The Getty Research Institute)

The Royal Academy supported the age-old belief that art should be instructive, morally uplifting, refined, inspired by the classical tradition, a good reflection of the national culture, and, above all, about beauty.

But trying to keep young nineteenth-century artists' eyes on the past became an issue!

The world was changing rapidly and some artists wanted their work to be about their contemporary environment—about themselves and their own perceptions of life. In short, they believed that the modern era deserved to have a modern art.

The Modern Era begins with the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century. Clothing, food, heat, light and sanitation are a few of the basic areas that "modernized" the nineteenth century. Transportation was faster, getting things done got easier, shopping in the new department stores became an adventure, and people developed a sense of "leisure time"—thus the entertainment businesses grew.

Paris transformed

In Paris, the city was transformed from a medieval warren of streets to a grand urban center with wide boulevards, parks, shopping districts and multi-class dwellings (so that the division of class might be from floor to floor—the rich on the lower floors and the poor on the upper floors in one building—instead by neighborhood).

Therefore, modern life was about social mixing, social mobility, frequent journeys from the city to the country and back, and a generally faster pace which has accelerated ever since.



Figure 13.8.5.2: Gustave Courbet, *Les Demoiselles du bord de la Seine (Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine)*, 1856, oil on canvas, 174 x 206 cm (Musée du Petit, Palais)

How could paintings and sculptures about classical gods and biblical stories relate to a population enchanted with this progress?

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the young artists decided that it couldn't and shouldn't. In 1863 the poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire published an essay entitled "The Painter of Modern Life," which declared that the artist must be of his/her own time.

Courbet



Figure 13.8.5.3: Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans*, 1849-50, oil on canvas, 314 x 663 cm (Musee d'Orsay, Paris)

Gustave Courbet, a young fellow from the Franche-Comté, a province outside of Paris, came to the "big city" with a large ego and a sense of mission. He met Baudelaire and other progressive thinkers within the first years of making Paris his home. Then, he set himself up as the leader for a new art: Realism—"history painting" about real life. He believed that if he could not see something, he should not paint it. He also decided that his art should have a social consciousness that would awaken the self-involved Parisian to contemporary concerns: the good, the bad and the ugly.

Additional resources:

Nineteenth-Century French Realism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Courbet Exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Comic Art: The Paris Salon in Caricature from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:








Figure 13.8.5.4: More Smarthistory images…

Daumier, *Rue Transnonain*

by DR. CLAIRE BLACK MCCOY



Figure **13.8.5.5**: Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain, le 15 Avril 1834*, published in La Association Mensuelle", no. 24, August-September 1834, lithograph, 33.9 x 46.5 cm (**Yale University Art Gallery**)

The massacre

Everyone in Paris knew what had happened in the apartment building. It was on the corner of two streets—rue Transnonain and rue de Montmorency. On the night of April 13, 1834, soldiers of the civil guard entered the building going from apartment to apartment. Workers in the neighborhood had protested against the repression of a silk workers' revolt in the city of Lyon. The soldiers then entered the apartment building in response to shots fired from the top floor during the protest. Years later, survivors recalled hearing pounding on the apartment doors as the soldiers made their way in shooting, bayonetting, and clubbing the hapless residents.

Monsieur Thierry was killed while still in his bedclothes, Monsieur Guettard and Monsieur Robichet met the same fate. A recipient of the French Legion of Honor, Monsieur Bon was killed while trying to hide under a table. They killed Monsieur Daubigny, a paralyzed man, in his bed and left his wife and child for dead. Monsieur Bréfort was killed as soon as he opened his door and Monsieur Hue and his four-year old child met the same fate. The conservative papers talked of a nest of assassins firing on soldiers, the more liberal papers offered detailed accounts of the victims.

Parisians had lived with political repression enforced by the police and civil guard for years and street battles were nothing new. The Revolution of 1830, inspiration for Delacroix's painting ***Liberty Leading the People***, had overthrown the repressive monarchy that followed Napoleon's rule. The new ruler, Louis-Philippe called himself the King of the French and was supposed to be more liberal. Instead, he clamped down on public dissent and the press much like his predecessors. Those who wanted the freedoms promised by the French Revolution of 1789 attempted another rebellion in June 1832. The writer, Victor Hugo, memorialized that insurrection which left over 100 dead on the streets of central Paris, in his book *Les Miserables*. Somehow, what happened on rue Transnonain was different.

Soldiers had entered people's homes.

Today, such an event would still be covered by newspapers, but also on social media and on cell phone cameras, but in 1834 it fell to Paris's renowned printmaker, Honoré Daumier, to show the Parisians just what had happened. But how? How do you show a massacre? And what would be the risk of publishing a print that challenged the government so directly?

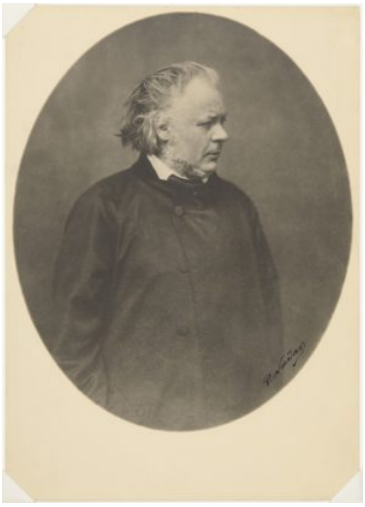


Figure **13.8.5.6**: Nadar, Portrait of Honoré Daumier, c. 1856-58, gelatin silver print (Princeton University Art Museum)

Working class artist

Honoré Daumier came to Paris as a child when his father, a glazier and frame maker, moved his family to pursue his literary ambitions. The family was never well-off and Daumier worked from the age of twelve for booksellers and as an errand boy for a law firm to help support them. A friend of the family, the antiquarian and archeologist Alexandre Lenoir, gave young Daumier informal drawing lessons because the family could not afford any formal training for the gifted young artist.

Daumier continued to draw and study on his own, visiting the Louvre to draw sculpture and the Académie Suisse, an inexpensive studio without an instructor, where he could draw from the nude. Although he became a widely respected artist in Paris, Daumier never stepped away from his working-class origins, and perhaps this gave him the immense empathy found in his portrayal of those who perished on rue Transnonain.

The print is a **lithograph**—it used limestone and oil-based inks to create light and shadow similar to drawing or painting. Daumier experimented with this technique as a young teenager and later held a job working for a printmaker. By 1834, he had established himself as a caricaturist and political cartoonist, working for the publisher Charles Philipon by creating lithographs for his satirical, illustrated journals *La Caricature* and, after 1835, *Le Charivari*. Over his career, Daumier published well over 3,000 lithographs.

How to show a massacre

Among these many lithographs, *Rue Transnonain* stands alone for its brutal tone and unflinching commentary on what had only recently occurred. Daumier brings together a group of four bodies in one space, and extreme areas of light and darkness, to give the viewer one image that summed up the violence of that night.



Figure 13.8.5.7: Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain*, le 15 Avril 1834, published in La Association Mensuelle", no. 24, August-September 1834, lithograph, 33.9 x 46.5 cm (Yale University Art Gallery)

A dead man in his bloody nightshirt, just roused out of the rumpled bed, lies prone across the composition with his body resting atop a bludgeoned child. The child's head and chubby hands just emerge from beneath the man. Perhaps these bodies, **foreshortened** and moving toward the viewer, allude to Monsieur Hue and his child. To the left of the man and the child, an older man's head enters the scene from the edge of the paper, in front of a toppled chair. These bodies, lit with a dramatic light, complement the darker portion of the composition on the other side of the sheet where a woman's dead body moves away from the viewer into the darkness at the back of the apartment. Dark marks, likely smears of blood, litter the floor. The print is not a documentary image but one designed to evoke the brutality of the event in the starkest terms. There is no action or drama here; instead, Daumier leaves the viewer with only the stillness and silence of death.

Daumier knew the risk

In the years surrounding the publication of *Rue Transnonain*, journalists, publishers, and printmakers could face criminal charges, fines, and even imprisonment for their publications. In 1831, Daumier had created a print titled *Gargantua* depicting Louis-Philippe, the King of the French, as a corpulent blob with an oversized conveyor belt tongue consuming money provided by the laborers of France (Gargantua is also the name of a giant in a series of novels written in the 16th century by Rabelais). For this work, Daumier and his publisher Philipon were charged, tried, and sentenced to six months in prison. As he began work on the print, Rue Transnonain, Daumier understood the risk he was taking.



Figure **13.8.5.8**: Honoré Daumier,*Gargantua*, 1831, lithograph, 23/5 x 30.6 cm (**Yale University Art Gallery**)

Daumier created *Rue Transnonain* for the print subscription, *L'Association Mensuelle Lithographique* and published it in August 1834. Founded by Philipon, while he was serving time in prison for the publication of *Gargantua*, *L'Association Mensuelle* distributed caricatures to subscribers on a monthly basis and the funds raised supported freedom of the press and helped to pay off Philipon's government fines.

Rue Transnonain was the last lithograph published in that series. Although government censors had approved the print, when it was exhibited in the window of a print seller, the police took note and quickly attempted to track down as many copies as they could. The police also confiscated the lithographic stone so that no more prints could be made. The remaining original prints of Daumier's *Rue Transnonain* are among the most valued of Daumier's works. After they published *Rue Transnonain*, Daumier and Philipon avoided prosecution but the ultimate cost was high. The government passed a new law restricting freedom of the press and proscribed political caricature. As a result, Daumier changed his subject matter, turning his eye away from direct political critique and toward social commentary.

Additional Resources:

This print at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Interactive web exhibit from the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Bruce Laughton, *Honoré Daumier* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996).

Lilian and Dieter Noack, The Daumier Register

Biography of Daumier from the National Gallery of Art

Gustave Courbet

Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.5.1: Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans*, begun late summer 1849, completed 1850, 124 x 260″, oil on canvas (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.5.9: More Smarthistory images…

Gustave Courbet, *The Stonebreakers*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.5.10**: Gustave Courbet, The Stonebreakers, 1849, Oil on canvas, 165 x 257 cm (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden (destroyed))

Realism and reality

If we look closely at Courbet's painting The *Stonebreakers* of 1849 (painted only one year after Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote their influential pamphlet, *The Communist Manifesto*) the artist's concern for the plight of the poor is evident. Here, two figures labor to break and remove stone from a road that is being built. In our age of powerful jackhammers and bulldozers, such work is reserved as punishment for chain-gangs.



Figure **13.8.5.11**: Jean-François Millet, The Gleaners, 1857 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Unlike Millet, who, in paintings like *The Gleaners*, was known for depicting hard-working, but idealized peasants, Courbet depicts figures who wear ripped and tattered clothing. And unlike the aerial perspective Millet used in *The Gleaners* to bring our eye deep into the French countryside during the harvest, the two stone breakers in Courbet's painting are set against a low hill of the sort common in the rural French town of Ornans, where the artist had been raised and continued to spend a much of his time. The hill reaches to the top of the canvas everywhere but the upper right corner, where a tiny patch of bright blue sky appears. The effect is to isolate these laborers, and to suggest that they are physically and economically trapped. In Millet's painting, the gleaners' rounded backs echo one another, creating a composition that feels unified, where Courbet's figures seem disjointed. Millet's painting, for all its sympathy for these poor figures, could still be read as "art" by viewers at an exhibition in Paris.

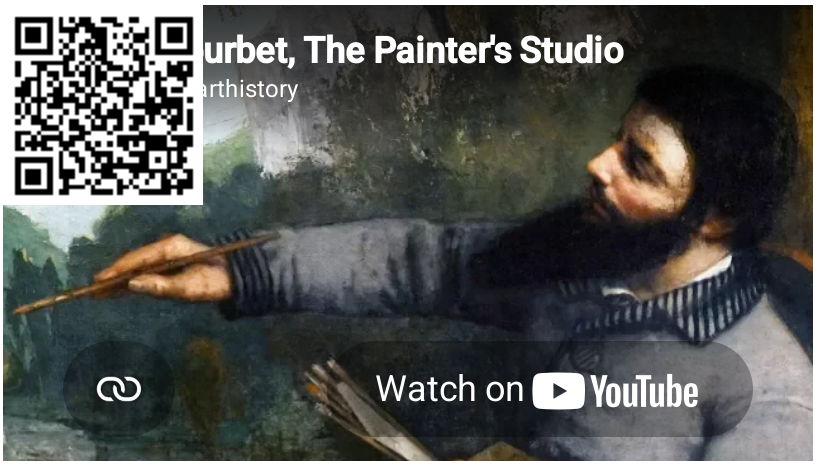
Courbet wants to show what is "real," and so he has depicted a man that seems too old and a boy that seems still too young for such back-breaking labor. This is not meant to be heroic: it is meant to be an accurate account of the abuse and deprivation that was a common feature of mid-century French rural life. And as with so many great works of art, there is a close affiliation between the narrative and the formal choices made by the painter, meaning elements such as brushwork, composition, line, and color.

Like the stones themselves, Courbet's brushwork is rough—more so than might be expected during the mid-nineteenth century. This suggests that the way the artist painted his canvas was in part a conscious rejection of the highly polished, refined Neoclassicist style that still dominated French art in 1848.

Perhaps most characteristic of Courbet's style is his refusal to focus on the parts of the image that would usually receive the most attention. Traditionally, an artist would spend the most time on the hands, faces, and foregrounds. Not Courbet. If you look carefully, you will notice that he attempts to be even-handed, attending to faces and rock equally. In these ways, *The Stonebreakers* seems to lack the basics of art (things like a composition that selects and organizes, aerial perspective and finish) and as a result, it feels more "real."

Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.5.2: Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist*, 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

A real allegory? Courbet's contradiction

The title of Courbet's painting contains a contradiction: the words "real" and "allegory" have opposing meanings. In Courbet's earlier work, "real" could be seen as a rejection of the heroic and ideal in favor of the actual. Courbet's "real" might also be a coarse and unpleasant truth, tied to economic injustice. The "real" might also point to shifting notions of morality.

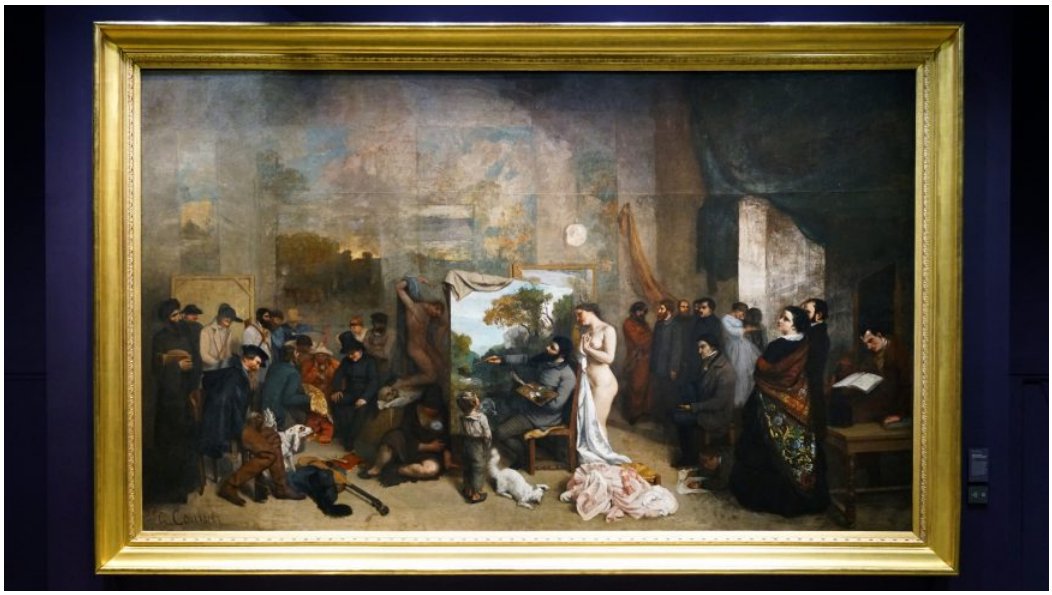


Figure 13.8.5.12: Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist*, 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

In contrast, an "allegory" is a story or an idea expressed with symbols. Is it possible that Courbet is using his title to alert the viewer to contradictions and double meanings in the image? Look, for instance, at the dim paintings that hangs on the rear wall of his Paris studio. These large landscapes seem to form a continuous horizon line from panel to panel. They dissolve enough so that we are not sure if they are paintings, or if they are perhaps windows that frame the landscape beyond. Is it "real" or is it a representation? Courbet seems to muddy the distinction and allow for both possibilities.



Figure 13.8.5.13: Gustave Courbet, *La rencontre (Bonjour Monsieur Courbet)*, 1854, oil on canvas, 129 x 149 cm (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

The artist

The artist is immediately recognizable in the center of the canvas. His head is cocked back and his absurd beard is thrust forward at the same haughty angle seen in *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*. But here he is assessing and just possibly admiring the landscape that he is in the process of painting. The central composition is a trinity of figures (four, if you count the cat).



Figure 13.8.5.14: Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (detail), 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Model as muse

To Courbet's right stands a nude model. Note that her dress is strewn at her feet. There is nothing exceptional here; after all, this is an artist's studio, and models are often nude. However, Courbet does not look in her direction, as he would if she were actually posing for him. He doesn't need to. He is, after all, painting an unpopulated landscape. Oddly, the direction of the gaze is reversed. The model directs her attention to align with Courbet's, not vice-versa. She gazes at the landscape he paints. In the realm of the "real," she functions as the model, but as "allegory," she may be truth or liberty according to the political readings of some scholars and she may be the muse of ancient Greek myth, a symbol of Courbet's inspiration.



Figure **13.8.5.15**: Gustave Courbet,*The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (detail with dress), 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Youth as innocence

The boy to the left of the artist is also a reference. The smallest of the three central figures, he looks up (literally) to Courbet's creation with admiration. The boy is unsullied by the illusions of adulthood—he sees the truth of the world—and he represented an important goal for Courbet—to un-learn the lessons of the art academy. The sophistication of urban industrial life, he believed, distanced artists from the truth of nature. Above all, Courbet sought to return to the pure, direct sight of a child. The cat, by the way is often read as a reference to independence or liberty.



Figure **13.8.5.16**: Gustave Courbet,*The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (detail), 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Cast of characters

The entire, rather crowded canvas, is divided into two large groups of people. In the group on the left, we see fairly rough types described. They are a cast of stock characters: a woodsman, the village idiot, a Jew, and others. There are several other allusions, such as the inclusion of the current ruler of France, Louis-Napoléon, but let's focus on the larger theme at hand. Here then, are the country folk whom Courbet faces.



Figure **13.8.5.17**: Gustave Courbet,*The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (detail), 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

On the opposite side of the canvas are, in contrast, a far more handsome and well-dressed party. Gathered at the right lower corner of the painting are Courbet's wealthy private collectors and his urbane friends. At the canvas's extreme right sits Charles Baudelaire, the influential poet who was a close friend of the painter.



Figure **13.8.5.18**: Gustave Courbet,*The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (detail), 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Is this composition familiar? Courbet is engaged in the act of painting, or as we might say, he is creating a landscape. Could the reference be to God the creator? The composition seems directly related to the traditional composition of the New Testament story, the Last Judgment. Think of Giotto's *Last Judgment* fresco on the back wall of the Arena Chapel in Padua (1305-06), or Michelanglo's *Last Judgment* painted on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel (1534-42). In those paintings, the blessed (those that were on their way to heaven) were on the right side of Christ (our left), and the damned (those on their way to Hell) were shown on Christ's left (our right).

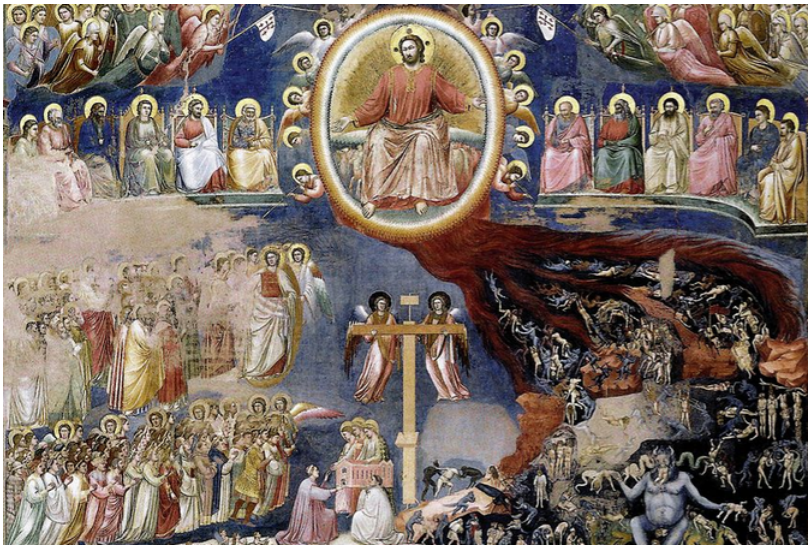


Figure 13.8.5.19: Giotto, Last Judgment on the west wall, c. 1305, fresco (Arena/Scrovegni Chapel, Padua)

Courbet the creator

Courbet has placed himself in the position of creator. But does he want us to use a capital "C"? What then of the model/muse? In the place of the blessed on the left are the country folk, a reference to the morality of nature? On the right side in place of the damned are the urban sophisticates—the notion of the corruption of the city. And in the bottom right corner, where Michelangelo placed Satan himself, we find, amusingly, Courbet's close friend, the poet Baudelaire, author of *The Flowers of Evil*.

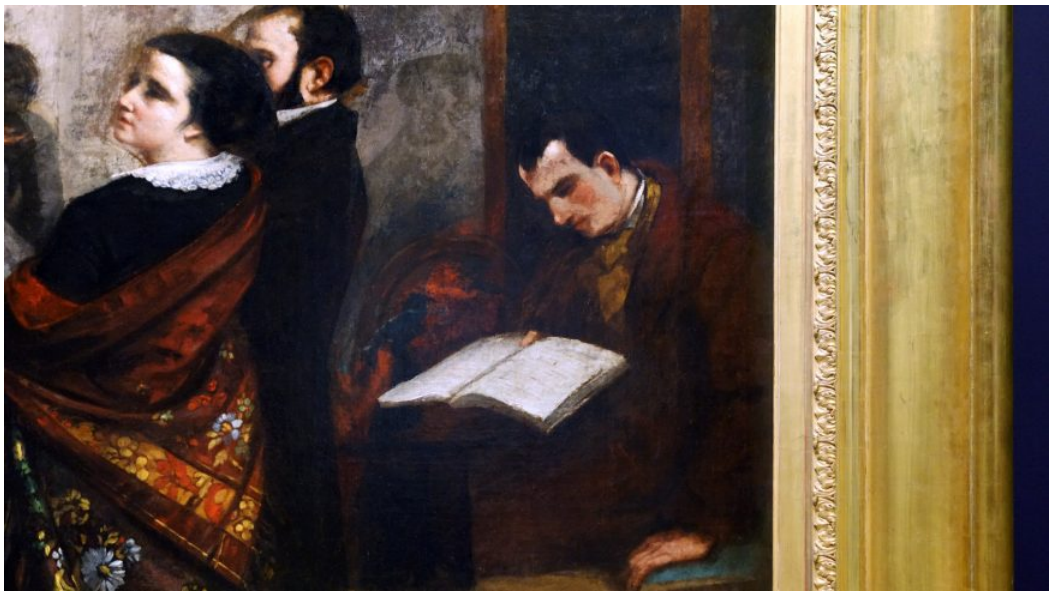


Figure 13.8.5.20: Gustave Courbet,*The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (detail with Charles Baudelaire), 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Finally, note the crucified figure partly hidden behind the easel. Indeed, Courbet referred to himself as a kind of martyr (look at such paintings as *Self-portrait as Wounded Man*). He created these satirical portrayals of himself as a martyred saint perhaps because of his metaphorical "suffering" at the hands of the French art critics.



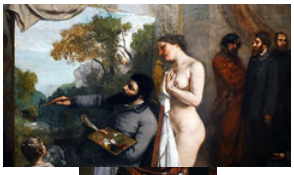
Figure **13.8.5.21**: Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist*, 1854-5, oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Additional resources

This painting at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Demonstration of Gustave Courbet's Painting Techniques at The J. Paul Getty Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



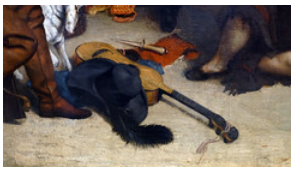











Figure **13.8.5.22**: More Smarthistory images…

Gustave Courbet, *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.5.23**: Gustave Courbet, *The Meeting (Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*), 1854, oil on canvas, 129 x 149 cm (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

Arguably the most influential artist of nineteenth century French Realism, Gustave Courbet (goos-tav core-bay), is the first major figure that we can identify as avant-garde (ahh-vahhnt guard). This was originally a French military term subsequently adopted for certain radical artists and thinkers. “Avant” means advance or forward, and “garde” is similar to the English guard or soldier, so the original phrase referred to the vanguard or the troops that pushed ahead of the main battalions at great personal risk. In the art world, avant-garde refers to those artists willing to risk their reputations in search of new methods of visual expression that break down old, ineffective approaches to art-making. The avant-garde is always ahead of the pack, but their new ideas, if ultimately successful, are often adopted by the masses.



Figure **13.8.5.24**: Courbet (detail), Courbet, *The Meeting (Bonjour Monsieur Courbet)*, 1854, oil on canvas, 129 x 149 cm (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

In his canvas *The Meeting* or, *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*, of 1854, Courbet has painted himself on the right side. This self-portrait offers a number of significant clues as to how the artist thought of himself or perhaps how he wished to be seen. Rather like dressing in the morning or applying makeup (if you do), a self-portrait allows for a degree of control over the way that others perceive you.

Courbet, then, is announcing who he is. Our job is to read the clues that this image offers. Looking closely at the painting, *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*, what visual cues help identify each person? Before you say to yourself, "I don't know how to do this," remember that you are in fact an expert in reading the clues given by the people around you. Everyday you respond to body language, types and styles of clothing, facial expression, hand gesture, and environmental context. Those judgments are based upon your quick, and quite sophisticated assessment of these sorts of clues. So look at these figures as actors on a stage or, as Courbet has suggested, people that you've run across as you stroll a country road. What do the costumes, the props, and the interactions express?

Clothing as costume

The man in the green jacket beside the dog is very well dressed indeed. But is the man in brown next to him? He wears a suit, but it is worn and ill-fitting. His name is Calas and he serves the man beside him. The rich man in the center is flanked by both his servent Calas and his dog. Is Courbet trying to draw a connection between this man and the dog as well as a distinction between himself and the group of three? Do you see this as a chance meeting? And what of the angle of the heads?



Figure **13.8.5.25**: Bruyas and Calas (detail), Courbet, *The Meeting (Bonjour Monsieur Courbet)*, 1854, oil on canvas, 129 x 149 cm (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

Look closely at the angle of Courbet's head in relation to the angle of the servant. The fellow in green is the son of a banker, an industrialist named Alfred Bruyas who is one of Courbet's patrons and had himself been a painter. Bruyas has also removed his right glove, presumably to shake Courbet's hand, Courbet has not returned the gesture. The patron and artist, though, are unfairly matched, since Bruyas is on Courbet's turf.

We know that Courbet came from Ornans in eastern France, quite outside of the orbit of Paris where he had moved. But here, Courbet is self-sufficient, and carries on his back a folding easel that contains everything he needs (paint, canvas, palette, oil, turpentine, and rags) to paint directly from nature. Bruyas, on the other hand, must be trailed by a servant and carries only a small cane. One can imagine that Bruyas and his servant had been transported by the carriage in the background, ill-prepared as they are for the countryside, while Courbet had evidently been making his way on foot.



Figure **13.8.5.26**: Landscape with cart (detail), Courbet, *The Meeting (Bonjour Monsieur Courbet)*, 1854, oil on canvas, 129 x 149 cm (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

The meeting between the two men represents the vitality of the countryside in contrast to the mannered style of the city. Even the different treatment of Bruyas and Courbet's beards, though related to each man's true likeness, further underscores the contrast of the stuffy aesthete to the "worker-artist." The issue we've discussed before–the exaltation of the countryside as the Industrial Revolution progressed–sees its full expression in this work. This, then, really is Courbet's manifesto. Here is the artist, a man of the country who goes his own way.

Courbet's politics

Unlike the other great painters of rural life and labor, such as the French Realist Jean-François Millet, the artist Gustave Courbet was very politically active. In 1848, he witnessed and read about a series of unsuccessful uprisings in France, England, and Germany. These revolts had been inspired by earlier enlightenment thinking. Unlike the American and French Revolutions of the eighteenth century, however, these more modern actions were fueled by the depravations and mass dislocations caused by the industrialization of Western Europe. Laissez-faire capitalism of the nineteenth century built both massive fortunes and the slums of the wretchedly poor. And life was indeed wretched for most.

When we think of the economic system currently employed in the United States, we think of modern capitalism. After all, the planned socialist economies of the "Iron Curtain" (the Soviet Union and its allies), have been discredited. However, before we come to feel too smug, we should remember that our system is actually is a highly socialized capitalism, which is a very good thing. As stated earlier, pure capitalism is brutal. This period saw young children chiseling coal from tunnels too narrow for adults and the common use of poisonous substances without even rudimentary safeguards required for workers. There was no safety net beyond one's family and church. Many died of neglect, starvation, and disease.

Additional resources:

Courbet at the Musée d'Orsay

Gustave Courbet at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Rosa Bonheur

Rosa Bonheur, *Plowing in the Nivernais* (or *The First Dressing*)

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.5.3**: Rosa Bonheur, *Plowing in the Nivernais* (or *The First Dressing*), 1849, oil on canvas (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.5.27**: More Smarthistory images…

Rosa Bonheur, *Sheep in the Highlands*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.5.4**: Rosa Bonheur, *Sheep in the Highlands*, 1857, oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm (Wallace Collection, London)

The Wallace Collection suggests that this painting is likely the result of a trip that the artist made to Scotland the previous year.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

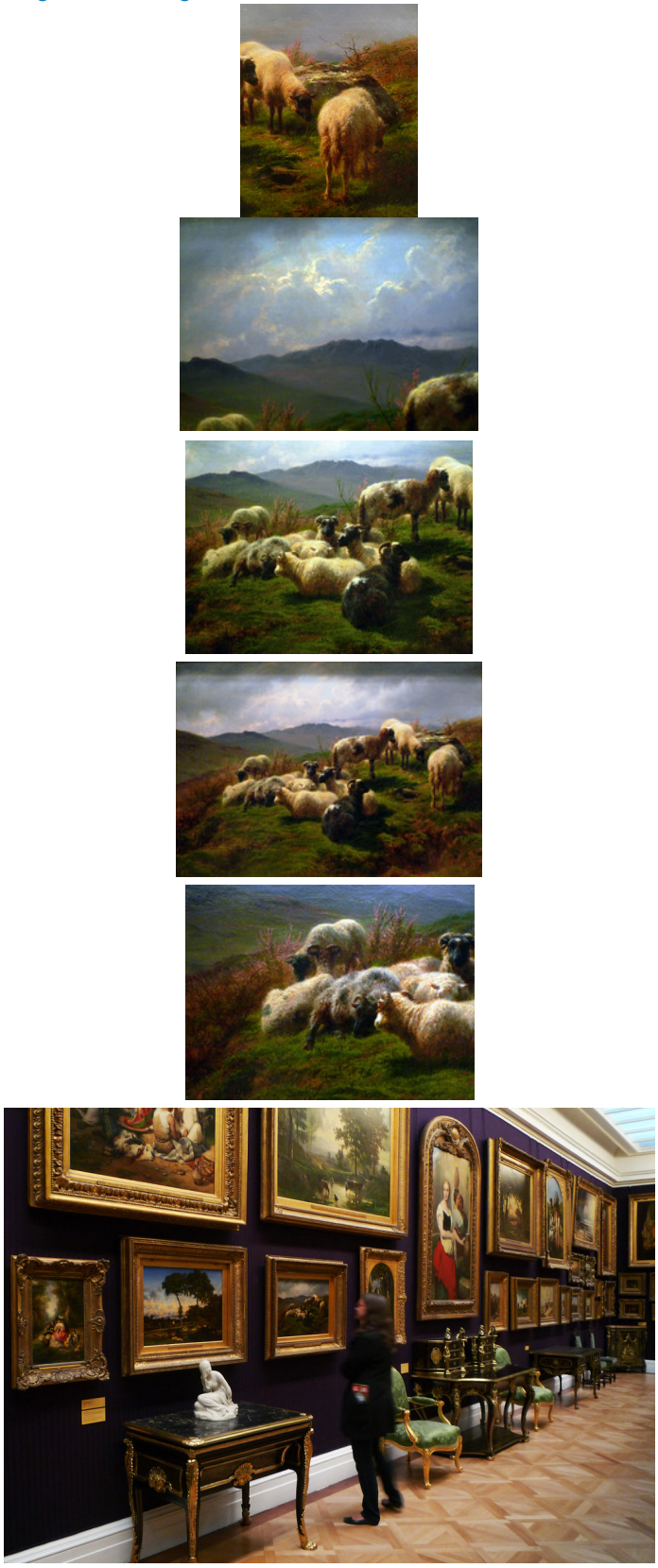


Figure 13.8.5.28: More Smarthistory images…

Jean-François Millet

Jean-François Millet, *L'Angélus*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Video **13.8.5.5**: Jean-François Millet, *L'Angélus*, c. 1857-1859, oil on canvas, 21 x 26 (53.3 × 66.0 cm) (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

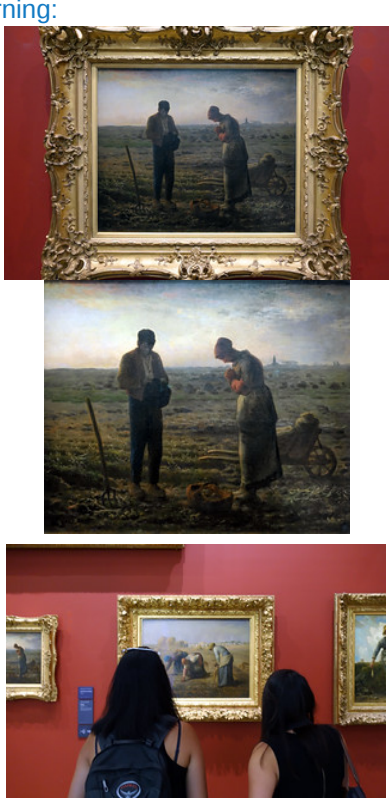


Figure **13.8.5.29**: More Smarthistory images…

Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.5.6**: Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857, oil on canvas, 33 x 43″ / 83.5 x 110 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

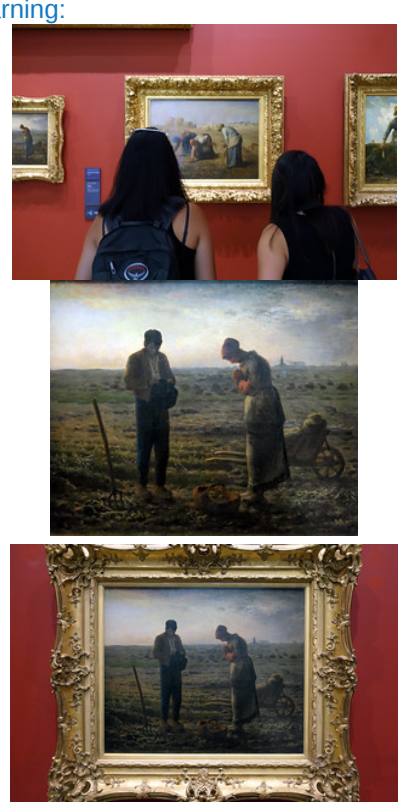


Figure **13.8.5.30**: More Smarthistory images…

Édouard Manet

Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.8.5.31**: Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, 1862, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 118.1 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Music in the Tuileries

The writer Emile Zola described Manet as "an analytic painter" and rarely are his powers of analysis displayed more dazzlingly than in *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*.

First exhibited in 1862 at Manet's one-man show in the Galerie Martinet, the chorus of gibes it was met with was to set the tone for the later drubbings he received for those larger Salon submissions, *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* in 1863 and *Olympia* in 1865 (the Salon was the official art exhibition).

For the modern viewer, perhaps, it is difficult to see at first what all the fuss was about. The painting, a medium-sized group portrait. It depicts a crowd of music-lovers in the Tuileries Gardens and might seem to us quaint—old-fashioned even, evoking a fine day spent near the Louvre where concerts were performed twice weekly, and attracted the fashionable elite of the Second Empire.



Figure **13.8.5.32**: Édouard Manet, *The Little Cavaliers*, 1859-60, oil on canvas, 145.7 x 75.6 cm (The Crysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia)

After Velazquez

Shortly before *Music*, Manet made a copy after a painting then attributed to Velazquez, entitled *Les Petits Cavaliers*, depicting a meeting of Seventeenth-Century Spanish artists. The parallels with *Music in the Tuileries Gardens* are intriguing. Manet too surrounds himself with the great and the good of the contemporary art scene; including the composer Offenbach (seated to the right with top hat, moustache and glasses), the novelist and critic Champfleury (seated to the left), and the painter Bazille (standing centre left with the round grey hat).

Also, like Velazquez, Manet situates himself to the far left of the painting, prompting comparisons between himself and the man famous for bringing a greater psychological complexity to art, for scrutinising in paintings such as his masterpiece, *Las Meninas*, the relationship between the observer and the observed. The suggestion perhaps is that Manet's own work plays with similar concerns. As in *Las Meninas* where the viewer stands in the place of the King and Queen whose portraits Velazquez is painting, here we occupy a similarly fictionalised space, seemingly where the musicians in the orchestra should be. Where else is the music of the title coming from if not us? It is a pleasing conceit, one which Velazquez himself might have been proud.



Figure **13.8.5.33**: Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, oil on canvas, 318 x 276 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Composition & style

In keeping with the refined gentility of the subject, the composition has been carefully ordered, reflecting gender attitudes of the time: the women—grounded and passive—are mostly pictured seated, while the men—mobile and active—stand. The iron chairs in the foreground help set up this structure, introducing a color scheme repeated in the curvy female forms of the composition: the ladies' golden and corn-coloured hats and dresses. The gentlemen meanwhile are largely dressed in blacks, echoing the dark vertical lines created by the trees, their top hats and frock coats merging with the trunks. This gendering of space is far from radical and can be found in the works of any number of nineteenth century artists. What is it about then that provoked such outrage?



Figure **13.8.5.34**: Two women (detail), Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, 1862, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 118.1 cm (The National Gallery, London)

There are certainly some stylistically interesting decisions, such as the reduction of the sky to a paltry triangle of blue, or the insistence of that tree trunk, off-center, that slices through the picture plane, as one finds in Japanese prints, disrupting the horizontal axis and in turn the illusion of depth. The technique too is startling, the extraordinarily sketchy handling of paint with dabs of color that in places barely suggest discernible forms. All this would certainly have jarred exhibition visitors of the day.

Baudelaire and “The Painter of Modern Life”

What was probably most shocking though was the subject matter itself. We have grown so used to scenes of contemporary life in art that it is hard to imagine that in 1862, while acceptable in print illustrations for journals and newspapers, the depiction of modern urban life was not considered, certainly by the French Academy, a fitting subject for high art. By exhibiting it as such, Manet was taking a radical stance, one that would have been fully supported by his friend Charles Baudelaire.

In the early 1860s, Manet and the poet and critic Baudelaire met daily at the Tuileries. Baudelaire’s early essay “The Salon of 1846: On the Heroism of Modern Life” argued that modern life was as heroic and as worthy a subject as any taken from the classical world, that men in frock coats were as brave in their own way as gladiators were in Roman times. He developed and refined this idea in his 1863 essay “The Painter of Modern Life.”

A key concept in this essay is that not only should modern life be the artist’s favored subject, but that painting, rather than, for example, literature, is the ideal medium to express modernity. The visual experience of the city, the spectacle of the city, conveyed its essence, and integral to this is the crowd. After all, people made the city and set its pace, and with a population explosion unprecedented in history, life in Paris in the mid-Nineteenth Century had never been faster nor more crowded.

The flâneur

Not surprisingly, given their close association at the time, critics have been keen to draw links between Manet’s *Music* and Baudelaire’s essays. One observation that is cited relates to Baudelaire’s idea of the flâneur.



Figures, including a self-portrait (detail), Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, 1862, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 118.1 cm (The National Gallery, London)

An artist wishing to record the hustle and bustle of this new city life, according to Baudelaire, needed to be at once a part of its crowds and possessed with the means, both intellectual and financial, to remain aloof from them; this artistic type he christened the *flâneur*, meaning “stroller” or “loafer.” By placing himself in the extreme left of the painting, critics have argued, Manet is deliberately identifying himself as a *flâneur*, the gentleman-dandy situated both within and removed from the crowd.

Baudelaire’s painter of modern life should capture, with just a few brush strokes, the carriage, expression and gesture of an individual, suggesting that to do so he would have to work at speed, mastering a sort of visual short-hand, simplifying forms to something not unlike caricature. This is certainly true of the loose, spontaneous brushwork used to render *Music*.

Modernity is the fleeting

The painting’s concern with modernity is distinctly Baudelairean. “Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent,” he famously wrote and capturing the fleeting moment is surely one of the main features of *Music*.

Light flickers between the trees, conjuring up chord progressions and the music referenced in the title. The treatment of space is even more intriguing. We notice, for instance, that some figures are more clearly defined than others, not in an orderly way such as

in the Renaissance technique, aerial perspective where colors and form lose their clarity the further they are from us. Instead, Manet applies an arbitrary or “contingent” system that flouts these conventions.



Figure 13.8.5.36: Children (detail), Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, 1862, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 118.1 cm (The National Gallery, London)

Notice how sketchy the children closest to us are when compared to others in the composition such as the Realist painter Henri Fantin-Latour shown with the beard and top hat to the left of the tree (pictured below). In doing this, Manet, it seems, attempted to capture or rather reconstruct not simply a crowd but the optical experience of looking at a crowd.

The figure to the right of Fantin-Latour, whose face has become a mere blur of a profile, is Baudelaire himself. We might expect him to be more clearly depicted. That he isn’t suggests the depth of the affinity between these two men. By chance it is Fantin-Latour who has caught our eye and not Baudelaire. A moment later, it might have been different.



Figure 13.8.5.37: The artist Fantin-Latour (far left) and Baudelaire in profile with other figures (detail), Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, 1862, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 118.1 cm (The National Gallery, London)

The transient, the fleeting and the contingent, these are the elements that Manet delights in—and by doing so, he willingly discards image-making techniques that had dominated Western art since the time of Leonardo.

New perspective

This new form of perspective, both focused and fuzzy, may be likened to the way a camera mirrors the way the eye works. It is thought that Manet used portrait photographs as visual aids when composing the painting in his studio. Rather than slavishly

copying these photographs, however, Manet has analyzed and abstracted the principles that underpin this new technology, creating what, as yet, only painting can achieve, an effective visual rendering of the passing of time.

“Almost all our originality comes from the stamp that ‘time’ imprints upon our feelings”, wrote Baudelaire and herein lies *Music’s* greatness, a painting that has been somewhat overshadowed by the success of the scandal of *Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* and *Olympia*, but which nevertheless has a fair claim to being the first modern painting in Western art.

Additional resources:

This painting in the National Gallery, London

Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life” (1863)

Édouard Manet, *Olympia*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND



Video 13.8.5.7: Édouard Manet, *Olympia,* oil on canvas, 1863,130 x 190 cm (Musée d’Orsay, Paris) (Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker)



Figure 13.8.5.38: Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm (Musée d’Orsay, Paris)

“They are raining insults upon me!”

Manet’s complaint—”They are raining insults upon me!” to his friend Charles Baudelaire pointed to the overwhelming negative response his painting *Olympia* received from critics in 1865. Baudelaire (an art critic and poet) had advocated for an art that could capture the “gait, glance, and gesture” of modern life, and, although Manet’s painting had perhaps done just that, its debut at the salon only served to bewilder and scandalize the Parisian public.

Mocking the classical past



Figure **13.8.5.39**: Cat (detail), Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm (Musée d’Orsay, Paris)

Olympia features a nude woman reclining upon a chaise lounge, with a small black cat at her feet (image above), and a black female servant behind her brandishing a bouquet of flowers (image below). It struck viewers—who flocked to see the painting—as a great insult to the academic tradition. And of course it was. One could say that the artist had thrown down a gauntlet. The subject was modern—maybe *too* modern, since it failed to properly elevate the woman’s nakedness to the lofty ideals of **nudity found in art of antiquity** —she was no goddess or mythological figure. As the art historian Eunice Lipton described it, Manet had “robbed,” the art historical genre of nudes of “their mythic scaffolding…”[1] Nineteenth-century French salon painting (sometimes also called academic painting—the art advocated by the Royal Academy) was supposed to perpetually return to the classical past to retrieve and reinvent its forms and ideals, making them relevant for the present moment. In using a contemporary subject (and not Venus), Manet mocked that tradition and, moreover, dared to suggest that the classical past held no relevance for the modern industrial present.

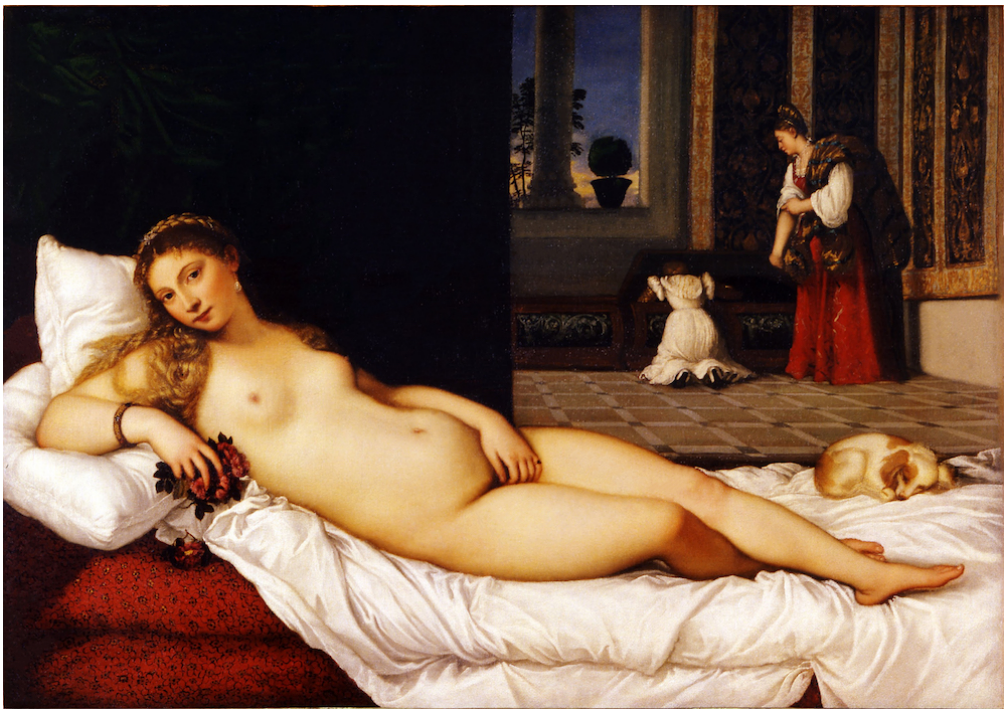


Figure 13.8.5.40: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

As if to underscore his rejection of the past, Manet used as his source a well-known painting in the collection of the Louvre—*Venus of Urbino*, a 1538 painting by the Venetian Renaissance artist Titian (image above)—and he then stripped it of meaning. To an eye trained in the classical style, *Olympia* was clearly no respectful homage to Titian's masterpiece; the artist offered instead an impoverished copy. In place of the seamlessly contoured voluptuous figure of Venus, set within a richly atmospheric and imaginary world, *Olympia* was flatly painted, poorly contoured, lacked depth, and seemed to inhabit the seamy, contemporary world of Parisian prostitution.

Why, critics asked, was the figure so flat and washed out, the background so dark? Why had the artist abandoned the centuries-old practice of leading the eye towards an imagined vanishing point that would establish the fiction of a believable space for the figures to inhabit? For Manet's artistic contemporaries, however, the loose, fluid brushwork and the seeming rapidity of execution were much more than a hoax. In one stroke, the artist had dissolved classical illusionism and re-invented painting as something that spoke to its own condition of being a painted representation.

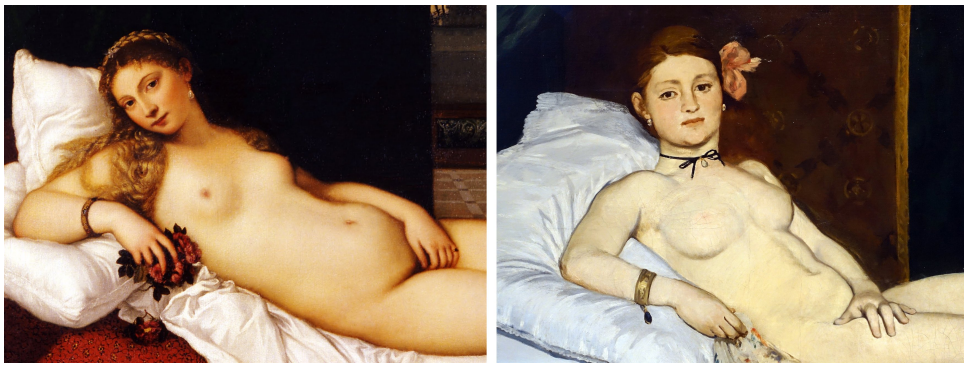


Figure 13.8.5.41: Left: Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence); right: Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The birth of modernist painting

It was for this reason Manet is often referred to as the father of Impressionism. The Impressionists, who formed as a group around 1871, took on the mantle of Manet's rebel status (going so far as to arrange their own exhibitions instead of submitting to the Salon juries), and they pushed his expressive brushwork to the point where everything dissolved into the shimmering movement of light

and formlessness. The 20th century art critic Clement Greenberg would later declare Manet's paintings to be the first truly modernist works because of the "frankness with which they declared the flat surfaces on which they were painted."[2]



Figure **13.8.5.42**: Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans*, begun late summer 1849, completed 1850, exhibited at the Salon of 1850-51, 124 x 260 inches, oil on canvas (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Manet had an immediate predecessor in the Realist paintings of **Gustave Courbet**, who had himself scandalized the Salons during the 1840s and '50s with roughly worked images of the rural French countryside and its inhabitants. In rejecting a tightly controlled application of paint and seamless illusionism—what the Impressionists called the "licked surfaces" of the paintings of the French Academy—Manet also drew inspiration from Spanish artists **Velasquez** and **Goya**, as well as 17th century Dutch painters like **Frans Hals**, whose loosely executed portraits seem as equally frank about the medium as Manet's some 200 years later. But Manet's modernity is not just a function of how he painted, but also what he painted. His paintings were pictures of modernity, of the often-marginalized figures that existed on the outskirts of bourgeois normalcy. Many viewers believed the woman at the center of *Olympia* to be an actual prostitute, coldly staring at them while receiving a gift of flowers from an assumed client, who hovers just out of sight (Manet here puns on the way French prostitutes often borrowed names of classical goddesses). The model for the painting was actually a salon painter in her own right, a certain Victorine Meurent, who appears again in **Manet's *The Railway* (1873)** and **Auguste Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette*** (1876).

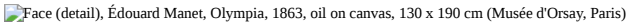


Figure **13.8.5.43**: Face (detail), Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Disturbingly familiar but startlingly new

Manet had created an artistic revolution: a contemporary subject depicted in a modern manner. It is hard from a present-day perspective to see what all the fuss was about. Nevertheless, the painting elicited much unease and it is important to remember—in the absence of the profusion of media imagery that exists today—that painting and sculpture in nineteenth-century France served to consolidate identity on both a national and individual level. And here is where the *Olympia's* subversive role resides. Manet chose not to mollify anxiety about this new modern world of which **Paris** had become a symbol. For those anxious about class status (many had recently moved to Paris from the countryside), the naked woman in *Olympia* coldly stared back at the new urban bourgeoisie looking to art to solidify their own sense of identity. Aside from the reference to prostitution—itself a dangerous sign of the emerging margins in the modern city—the painting's inclusion of a black woman tapped into the French colonialist mindset while providing a stark contrast for the whiteness of Olympia. The black woman also served as a powerful emblem of "primitive" sexuality, one of many fictions that aimed to justify **colonial views** of non-Western societies.



Figure **13.8.5.43**: Servant (detail), Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

If Manet rejected an established approach to painting that valued the timeless and eternal, *Olympia* served to further embody, for his scandalized viewers, a sense of the modern world as one brimming with uncertainty and newness. *Olympia* occupies a pivotal moment in art history. Situated on the threshold of the shift from the classical tradition to an industrialized modernity, it is a perfect metaphor of an irretrievably disappearing past and an as yet unknowable future.

[1] Eunice Lipton, "Manet: A Radicalized Female Imagery," *Artforum* (March, 1975)

[2] Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 86.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

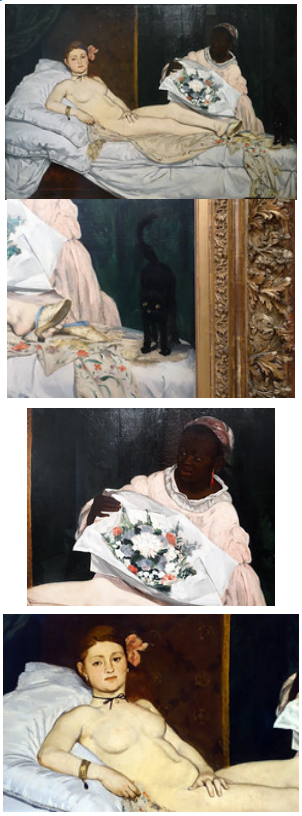


Figure **13.8.5.44**: More Smarthistory images…

Additional resources:

The painting at the Musée d'Orsay

Édouard Manet on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Olympia (zoomable) at the Google Cultural Institute

Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," 1863.

Eunice Lipton, "Manet: A Radicalized Female Imagery," *Artforum* (March 1975).

T. J Clark, *The Painter of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton University Press, 1999, revised).

Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 1961 in Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-1990* (Oxford University Press, 1982).

Édouard Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.5.8: Édouard Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass)*, oil on canvas, 1863 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Additional resources:

This painting at the Musée d'Orsay

Manet on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"London version of Manet's Le déjeuner sur l'herbe predates the bigger picture in Paris," *The Art Newspaper* (November 25, 2016)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.5.45: More Smarthistory images…

Édouard Manet, *The Railway*

by BEN POLLITT



Video 13.8.5.9: Édouard Manet, *The Railway*, 1872-73, oil on canvas (National Gallery of Art)

The railway

The Railway, also known as *Gare Saint-Lazare*, is surely one of the most inscrutable paintings of the nineteenth century. Manet began work on it in the autumn of 1872, the year of Victor Hugo's *L'Année Terrible*, a collection of poems outlining the catastrophic events of 1870-1: France's defeat by the Prussians, Bismarck's devastating siege of Paris, and the violence that saw out the Paris Commune in the summer of 1871; a truly terrible year in which, all told, through combat, starvation or civil strife, almost 200,000 French lost their lives.



Figure 13.8.5.46: Édouard Manet, *The Railway*, 1872-3, oil on canvas, 111.5 x 93.3cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

The painting, Manet's first major canvas since the outbreak of war, went on show in the Paris Salon of 1874, the year of the first Impressionist exhibition, heralding the ascendancy of a style of art that stood for leisure, pleasure, spontaneity, freedom and nature. Situated between these two historical moments, Manet's work stands on the crossroads: both serious and playful, unfettered and restrained.

The people

The painting shows two figures, a seated woman and a standing child, in front of a set of iron railings; behind them are railway tracks, a barely perceptible group of workers next to a shed, an iron bridge and, furthest away, the facades of residential houses. The woman's cropped dress and the subtle diagonals of the structural setting create a sense of uncertainty, as though chance has had a hand in framing the scene, as though we have somehow stumbled upon it? Her reading interrupted, by us or by her own thoughts, a finger placed to mark her page, the woman looks at us directly. Who is she and who are we to her?



Figure **13.8.5.47**: Torii Kiyonaga, "The Ninth Month" from the series *The Twelve Months in the Southern District*, 1784, woodblock print

The model is Victorine Meurent, Manet's muse of the 1860's who posed for both *Olympia* and the nude figure in *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*. Here she exudes a sense of middle-class propriety, fashionably dressed in a deep blue dress with large, light blue buttons, wide cuffs and collars. In her lap a puppy doses, the child's pet perhaps, the red fan behind it finding echoes in the flowers in her hat, the girl's pendant earring and the rail worker's shirt to the left. The black hat is a clever device, tilted forwards as was the fashion and held in place with a tie-back bow. Not only does it elevate the figure to a level slightly higher than the girl, it also neatly emphasizes the flatness of the picture plane, an effect enhanced further of course by the iron railings. The interplay of flatness and depth is one of Manet's most daring innovations, inspired perhaps by his growing familiarity with Japanese woodblock prints.

Used expertly here, the technique sets off perfectly the ambiguous relationships between the two principle figures. Both connected and oddly detached, we sense they belong together, the matching colours of their dresses suggesting the fact, but quite how remains unclear. Is she her daughter, her niece, her sister? Is she a governess and the girl her ward?

To confound us further, the child – who was in fact the daughter of Manet's painter friend Alphonse Hirsch—has her back turned to us, a compositional device known as the *Rückenfigur*. Just as we cannot see her face, whatever has grabbed her attention, a departing train we might imagine, is obstructed from view.

The Place



Figure **13.8.5.48**: Manet's studio in 1874 is the building on the right, 4 rue de St. Petersbourg (photo: **Phil Beard**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

One thing we can be certain of is the location it depicts, an area in and around the Place de l'Europe, a sort of grandiose traffic island next to the Gare Saint-Lazarre from which a network of streets radiate, each named after a European capital, the rue de Rome, the rue de Madrid and so on. The iron gridwork and large masonry pillars of the bridge to the right belong to the Pont de l'Europe, the orthogonals of which lead the eye into the background creating an area of interest to counter the dominance of the seated woman to the left. Behind her on the other side of the tracks two doorways are visible, the one in clear view being the entrance to 4 rue de St Pétersbourg, which served as Manet's studio from 1871 to 1877.



Figure 13.8.5.49: Female figure (detail), Édouard Manet, *The Railway*, 1872-3, oil on canvas, 111.5 x 93.3cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

For some art historians, Manet's choice in depicting this new quarter of Paris, built according to the utilitarian principles of logic, order and efficiency that underpinned Baron Haussmann's major renovation of Paris in the 1850's and 60's, would suggest that the artist was very much at home in the modern world. The constant commotion of rail transport was, according to contemporary accounts, a part of the artist's daily life; visitors to his new studio commented on how the floor would tremble as the trains passed beneath.

An aerial view of the Place de l'Europe illustrates the complex network of roads running through it and tracks running under it. Painted at the hub of this frenetic intersection and with his studio proudly featured in it, *The Railway* then might reasonably stand as a homage to the wonders of modern transport, capturing something of the optimism of Paris in the Third Republic.



Figure 13.8.5.50: Aerial view of the Europe District (4 rue de St-Pétersburg is on the upper right hand road, leading off from the Place de L'Europe)

Others have seen the painting more as an examination of the impact of industrialization. The fracture between the foreground figures and background setting being the focus of many such discussions of the work, particularly the cage-like quality of the railings. A contemporary cartoonist re-titled the work: “The Railway. Two madwomen, gripped by incurable mono-manet-ia, watch the rail cars through the bars of their cell.” The prison or asylum analogy, played on comically here, has been adopted by other, more serious-minded critics.

Robert L. Herbert[1], for instance, notes how the middle-class figures are artificially caged off from the railway workers, reflecting the rigid divisions of labor brought about by industrialization. The railings in this sense suggest an artificial imposition of order, both in terms of the organization of pictorial space and the social relations operating within it. The sense of fracture and dislocation is felt in the title itself, for the railway seems surprisingly peripheral – marked by a few shadowy streaks of paint – as compared to the solid bulk of the railings. Nor for that matter is the train actually made visible, its presence only suggested by the steam.

The steam

Describing *The Railway* as an “as essay on consciousness,” the critic Harry Rand[2] argues that the psychological complexity of the painting owes much to the friendship Manet struck up during this period with the symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, one of the greatest literary figures of his age. A fellow resident of the rue de Saint-Pétersburg, the two met daily for almost a decade.



Figure **13.8.5.51**: Édouard Manet, *Stéphan Mallarmé*, 1876, oil on canvas, 27.5 x 36cm (Musée d’Orsay)

Rand likens Mallarmé’s poetic concerns, his love of the playful and the dreamlike, of finding beauty in uncertainty and chance, to Manet’s painterly concerns in *The Railway*. That hazy plume of steam, for instance, set against the metallic bulk of the railings, is quintessentially symbolist, the insubstantiality and intangibility of the steam standing, ironically perhaps, as a symbol for the powerfully solid train, while at the same time the steam obscures the background we imagine lies beyond it, blurring the space between foreground and background. Like so much else in the painting, therefore, it serves both to reveal and to conceal. In fact, the more one looks at it, the more essential it becomes, to the point where, with T.J. Clark[3], we might reasonably declare that it is less the railway or *chemin de fer* (road of iron), but the steam itself that is the painting’s “great subject”.



Figure 13.8.5.52: Claude Monet, *Boulevard des Capucines*, 1873-4, oil on canvas, 80.3 x 60.3cm (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri)

The painting is famously open to interpretation. I have touched on just a narrow selection of readings here. Broadly speaking, each highlights the fact that in the world of the painting, though localized and particular, nothing is fixed and certain. It is a theme that would be taken up by the Impressionists. Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines*, for instance, presents a view from the window of Nadar's studio where that first exhibition took place in 1874. Visitors would look at the painting hanging on the wall, then step to the balcony to inspect the scene for themselves. However, the correlation between the two was not a literal or mimetic one, a fact that provoked consternation at the time. Though we have may grown accustomed to such distortions in art, they still seem remarkably fresh and resonant, these great works, our continued love for them explained no doubt by how effectively they evoke our relationship with this strange world in which we live and which strangely lives in us.

1. Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society*, 1988, Yale University Press: 29
2. Harry Rand, *Manet's Contemplation at the Gare Saint-Lazarre*, 1987, Berkeley, California: 763.
3. T.J. Clark, "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Steam," *October*, vol. 100 (Spring 2002): 158-9

Additional resources:

This painting at the National Gallery of Art

Web feature at the National Gallery of Art

Introduction to a Painting: Manet's The Railway from the National Gallery of Art

Video from the National Gallery of Art's Children's Tour

Manet from An Introduction to Nineteenth Century Art at Routledge

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

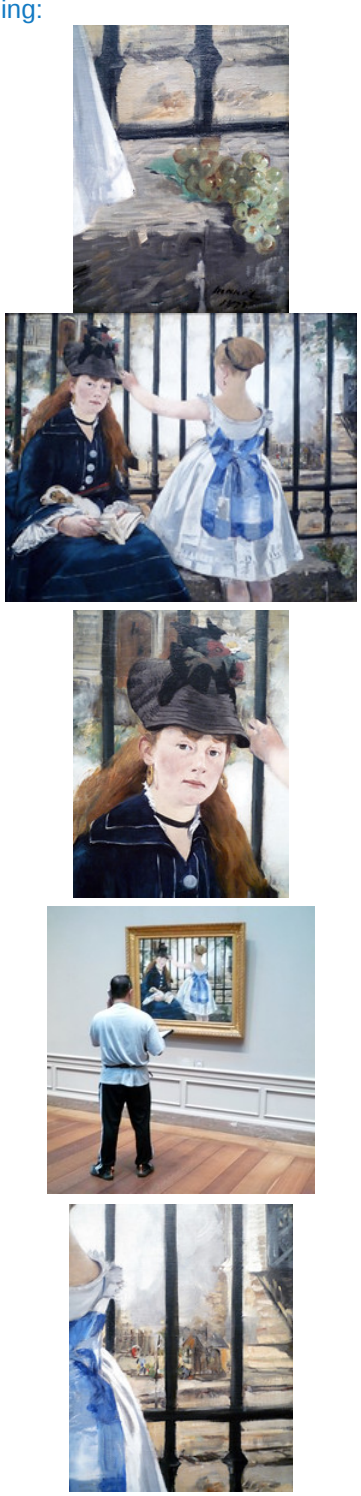


Figure 13.8.5.53: More Smarthistory images…

Édouard Manet, *Émile Zola*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

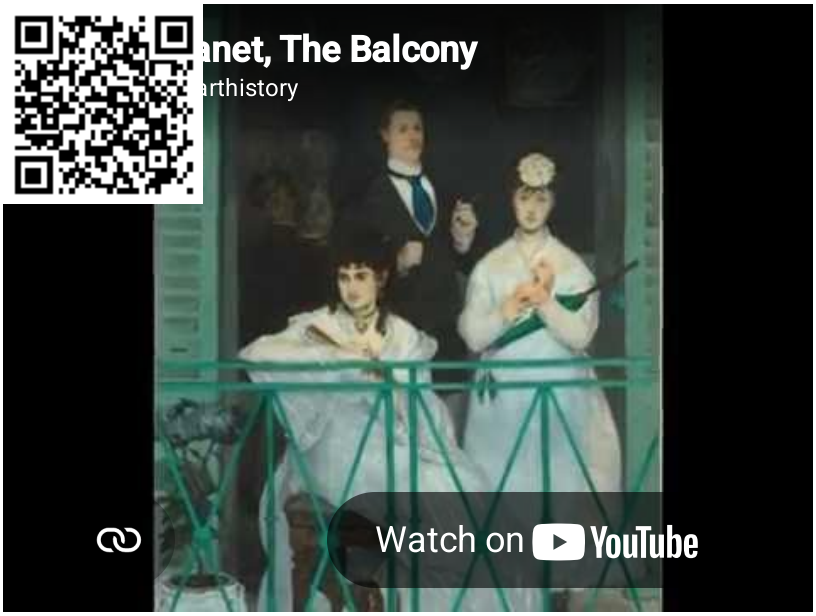


Video **13.8.5.10**: Édouard Manet, *Émile Zola*, 1868, oil on canvas, 57 x 45″ / 146.5 x 114 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

This portrait was painted in appreciation for the support Zola gave to Manet in his 1866 essay in *La Revue du XXe siècle* and during Manet's independent exhibition held alongside the Universal Exposition in 1867.

Édouard Manet, *The Balcony*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.5.11**: Édouard Manet, *The Balcony*, 1868-69, oil on canvas, 66-1/2 x 44-1/4″ (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The three principal figures depicted are each friends of the artist. From left to right they are: the painters Berthe Morisot and Jean Baptiste Antoine Guillemet, and Fanny Claus, a violinist. Some have suggested that the fourth figure, barely visible in the shadows, is the young Leon Leenhoff, the son of Manet's wife.

Édouard Manet, *Plum Brandy*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.5.12**: Édouard Manet, *Plum Brandy*, c. 1877, oil on canvas (National Gallery of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.5.54**: More Smarthistory images…

Édouard Manet, *In the Conservatory*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.5.13: Édouard Manet, *In the Conservatory*, 1878-1879, oil on canvas, 115 x 150 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

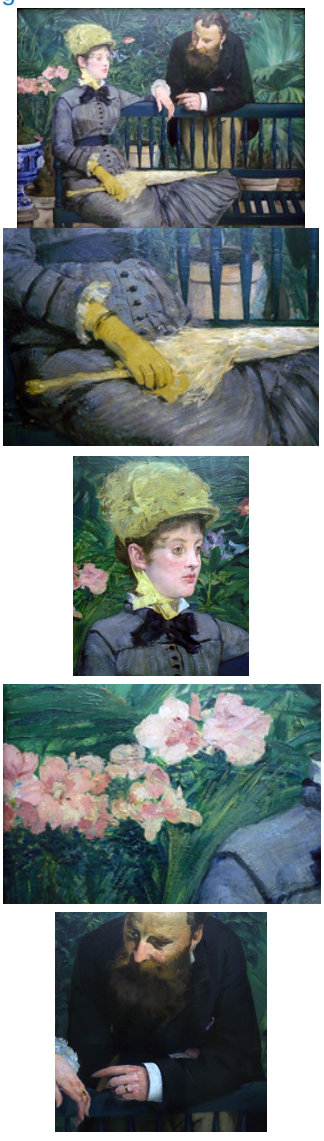


Figure 13.8.5.55: More Smarthistory images…

Édouard Manet, *Corner of a Café-Concert*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.5.14**: Édouard Manet, *Corner of a Café-Concert*, 1878-80, 97.1 x 77.5 cm (National Gallery, London)

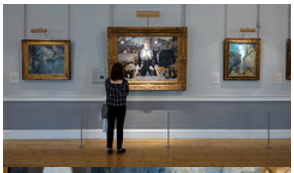
Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.5.15**: Edouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm (Courtauld Gallery, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











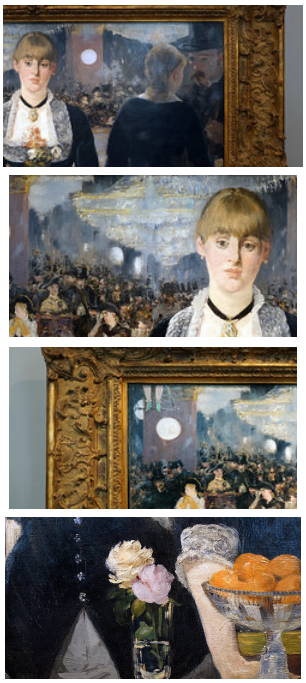



Figure 13.8.5.56: More Smarthistory images…

Better Know: Manet's Bar

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video 13.8.5.16: You've likely seen this glassy-eyed late 19th Century barmaid before, but what can we make of this painting today?

Sorry

Because of its privacy settings, this video cannot be played here.

Learn More

The Modern Woman: Manet's A Bar at the Folies-Bergère from HENI Talks on Vimeo.

Griselda Pollock unpacks some of the questions raised by Manet's enigmatic last masterpiece.

Eva Gonzàles, *A Loge at the Théâtre des Italiens*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.8.5.57**: Eva Gonzàles, A Loge at the Théâtre des Italiens, 1874, (first exhibited 1879), oil on canvas, 98 x 130 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

A garland of flowers

Eva Gonzàles must have captivated Manet, at that time the most controversial artist of his day. They met in 1869, introduced by the English artist Alfred Stephens, shortly after which Manet accepted her as his first and only student. He was approaching forty and with her admiration and eagerness to learn from him, it would have been hard for him to resist. Just as appealing, though, were her family connections. Her father Emmanuel Gonzàles, a noted journalist and writer was president of the Société des Gens de Lettres and Manet, who was still struggling to gain Salon recognition might have felt he needed the protection and support of just such an establishment figure. And then, of course, she was also Spanish and Manet was one of Paris's most notable Hispanophiles.

After her apprenticeship, the two remained friends and correspondents for the rest of their lives. Sadly, they died within three days of each other; first Manet from syphilis and then Gonzàles aged 34 after childbirth. It is said that when news reached her sickbed of her old master's death, she sat up and weaved a garland of flowers for his grave. Despite, or perhaps partly because of this touching tale of devotion, much of what has been written about her as an artist and indeed as a character seems somewhat dismissive. The problem, it seems, is that she was just too good a student. But then what about Artemisia Ghentilleschi? The first great woman artist, also known as *La Donna Caravaggista* (the woman follower of Caravaggio). To follow a master is not necessarily a bad

thing. More to the point, perhaps, is who she was up against at the time; this was, after all, the age of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, beside whom Gonzàles's work does seem somewhat tame.

Still, while it is true to say that she is not an artist of the first rank, her few surviving works are nevertheless both beautiful and intriguing and in the case of her most famous, *A Loge at the Théâtre des Italiens*, offer an alternative view on a world that has largely been colored by our encounters with more famous, largely male artists.

A Loge at the Théâtre des Italiens

Framed by the lush red velvet and gold rope tassels of the curtain and a slightly curving hand rest, the artist's sister Jeanne Gonzàles sits accompanied by the standing figure of Henri Guérard, the man whom Eva would later marry in a box at the Théâtre des Italiens, the venue for the grandest of opera productions by the likes of Mozart, Rossini and Verdi. A lithograph of the theatre from 1843 shows not just the popularity of these performances, but also how close the curtained boxes, such as the one the painting shows, were to the stage as well as how exposed those that occupied them were to the gaze of the public.

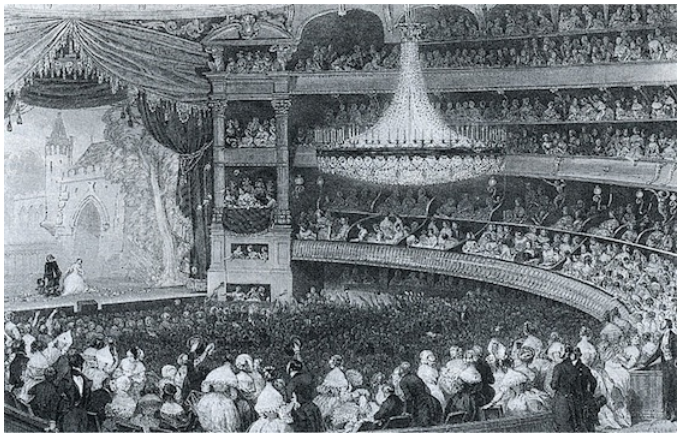


Figure **13.8.5.58**: C. Mottram after Eugene Lami, *A Performance by the Théâtre des Italiens*, published 1843, lithograph

The couple appear detached, the man in profile, the woman posed frontally staring ahead of her, a large pair of opera glasses in one hand. Her expression seems at once alert and relaxed, suggesting that sort of entranced look one has when watching an opera. A particularly spine-tingling aria is being sung perhaps and Jeanne, her hands lowered, simply listens. Perpendicular to her, the man leans back, his elbow resting on the velvet covered rest, his body language expressive of the poise and detachment of the *flâneur*.

The vogue for the loge

The subject of the loge, or theatre box, was one that was favored by the Impressionists. Aside from the natural frame the box supplies, it also offers opportunities to explore some interesting themes such as the relationship between artifice and nature, appearance and reality and of course the near universal concern of Impressionist artists, the spectacle of modern life. In a space at once public and private, the sitter is conscious of both watching and of being watched, a phenomenon that was a key feature of nineteenth-century Parisian life in which the streets themselves became like a stage and the passers-by actors on it. In the loge, however, one is removed from the chaos of the crowd and taken to a far more privileged space. Given these associations with wealth and status, the subject might well have appealed to the aspiring bourgeoisie and a canny artist would certainly have had a sale in view when producing such an image.

Another feature of the loge is its ability to imply metapictorial narratives—events that are taking place outside of the picture frame. The directions of the gazes of two figures is in this sense certainly curious. Imagining the loge to be slightly to the left of the stage, Jeanne's eyes are clearly leveled at the performance, while Guérard's, on the other hand, follows the opposite direction. What is it that he is looking at? The audience perhaps, or possibly, given that it was common for the doors to these theatre boxes to be opened, even during a performance, and for social activity to take place in the corridor outside them, perhaps some event or spectacle taking place there, off-offstage as it were, has captured his attention.

Whatever solutions we may come up with, however, these conflicting gazes still remain puzzling. Do they reflect their personal relationship, that the two of them are somehow heading in different directions, or can one draw from it more general comments about gender roles within Parisian society, the man looking out, engaged in the world about him, the woman taking a more

unworldly, reflective stance? Certainly, unlike Guérard, Jeanne is no *flâneur*, or *flâneuse* to use the feminine term, begging the question whether it was possible at a time when women were so socially constrained for such a phenomenon to exist. (For a discussion of the *flâneur*, read this essay on **Manet's Music in the Tuileries Gardens**.)

Knowing who the models are is useful. Guérard being Eva's beau and not Jeanne's, we can reasonably discount the possibility that they are romantically involved. It is also useful to note that at this time a woman of Jeanne's class would not be seen out alone. Instead, so as not to compromise her respectability, a member of the family or a trusted friend would accompany her, acting as her chaperone. Perhaps it is for this reason Guérard remains aloof, keeping his distance from perhaps the underlying purpose of Jeanne's presence in the theatre, namely, as a young woman of marriageable age, a débutante, she is formally presenting herself to society. Though very much in her element, as one would expect from the daughter of a celebrated writer, clearly a great deal of thought has been taken in how best she can offer the image of herself to the public. The flowers that face us and which offer a perfect match to the dress and accessories she wears suggest this sense of ritualized display while the chair next to her is empty, signaling perhaps her availability.

What a contrast then to Renoir's *La Loge*, painted in the same year. Here the model, a working-class girl called Nini, has been dressed up by the artist in a far more lavish fashion. Dripping ermine and pearls, she is placed conspicuously in the front of the box, her purpose it seems being little other than decorative—a trophy or adornment for the man behind her who looks up with almost grotesquely large binoculars.



Figure **13.8.5.59**: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *La Loge*, 1874, oil on canvas, 80 x 63.5 cm (Courtauld Institute Galleries, London)

The understatement of Gonzàles's work, on the other hand, with its Manet-esque economy of expression, exudes elegance and refinement and, indeed, just the sort of poise and detachment that characterize the dispassionate gaze of the *flâneur*. In it we discover a slice of Parisian life that is presented in ways that record in a more sensitive and nuanced way than Renoir, I think, the manners and mores of the time.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Musée d'Orsay

Manet's painting of the artist at The National Gallery

13.8.5: Realism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.5: Realism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.6: Second Empire

Haussmann the Demolisher and the creation of modern Paris

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.6.1**: Charles Marville, *Rue St. Nicolas du Chardonnet*, ca. 1853–70, one of the narrow medieval streets near the Pantheon

Paris: Narrow streets and barricades

During each of the previous political revolts (1789, 1830, 1848, and again in 1871), sections of Paris had succumbed to the revolutionaries. These successes were due in part to the political sympathies of the citizens of Paris, but the crooked narrow lanes of the medieval city also played a role. During times of conflict, urban mobs would blockade the maze that was the streets of Paris. Such barricades (makeshift barriers erected across streets to prevent the movement of opposing forces) proved very effective and made Paris all but uncontrollable at times. Think back to Eugène Delacroix's painting of the revolution of 1830, *Liberty Leading the People*—Marianne (Liberty) is shown rising over a barricade of just this sort.

Napoleon III and the Second Empire

During the period known as the Second Empire (1852-70), Napoleon III, the great-nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte (emperor of France in the early nineteenth century), ruled France. He asked an administrator, Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann, to modernize Paris—to bring clean water and modern sewers to the fast growing city, to light the streets with gas lanterns, to construct a central market (Les Halles), and to build parks, schools, hospitals, asylums, prisons, and administrative buildings. But the most ambitious aspect of Haussmann's plan was to literally reshape the city.



Figure 13.8.6.2: Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris

For his role in changing the Paris cityscape, Haussmann would acquire the nickname "the demolisher." He plowed over the ancient, winding streets of the city (the same narrow streets that had proved so useful to revolutionaries). In their place, he created broad straight boulevards that were impervious to the barricade—and, equally important, they could better accommodate the free movement of troops.

The avenues also allowed for the easy flow of commerce and so were a boon for business. Napoleon III had dreamed of a new imperial city whose very streets spoke of the glory of the French empire. Haussmann delivered.



Figure 13.8.6.3: Camille Pissarro, *The Boulevard Montmartre on a Winter Morning*, 1897, oil on canvas, 64.8 x 81.3 cm (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

As with nearly every urban renovation, a percentage of the population was displaced. Haussmann forced citizens from their homes as these buildings were torn down to make way for the clean lines of the new city. The wealthy were quickly accommodated. The new boulevards were lined with fashionable apartment houses. It was, as usual, the poor that really suffered.

Additional resources:

Baron Haussmann from the New York Times

Impressionism: Art and Modernity from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Charles Garnier, The Paris Opéra

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.6.1**: Charles Garnier, The Paris Opéra, 1860-75

The Paris Opéra (1860-75), designed by Charles Garnier, is one of the jewels of Napoleon III's newly reconstructed city. Frequented by Degas and the source for much of his ballet imagery, the Paris Opéra is key to understanding the somewhat perverse culture of voyeurism and spectacle among the prosperous classes of the Second Empire.



Figure **13.8.6.4**: Charles Garnier, Paris Opéra, 1860-75, masonry walls with concealed iron floors (photo: **Juanedc**, CC BY 2.0)

Marvin Trachtenberg & Isabel Hyman have called the huge Opéra house,

> ***the new cathedral of bourgeois [middle, really upper-middle class] Paris…. The glittering centerpiece of the new Paris….was meant to be much more than a theater in the ordinary sense. For Charles Garnier, an architect of the Ecole des beaux-arts, it was a setting for a ritual in which the spectators were also actors, participants in the rite of social encounter, seeing and being seen.***

The division of the structure supports his vision.

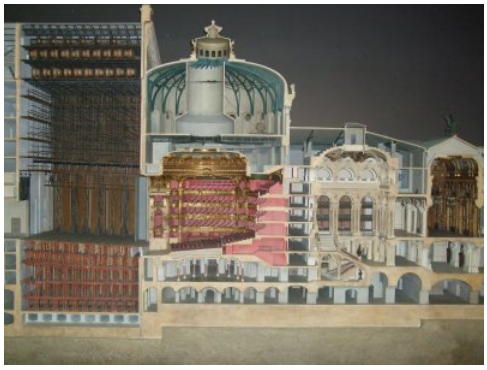


Figure 13.8.6.5: Cross-section diagram of the Paris Opéra

Look at the cross-section. The dome sits above the audience and orchestra, the high roof over the stage. Behind the stage are the rehearsal rooms where Degas often sketched.

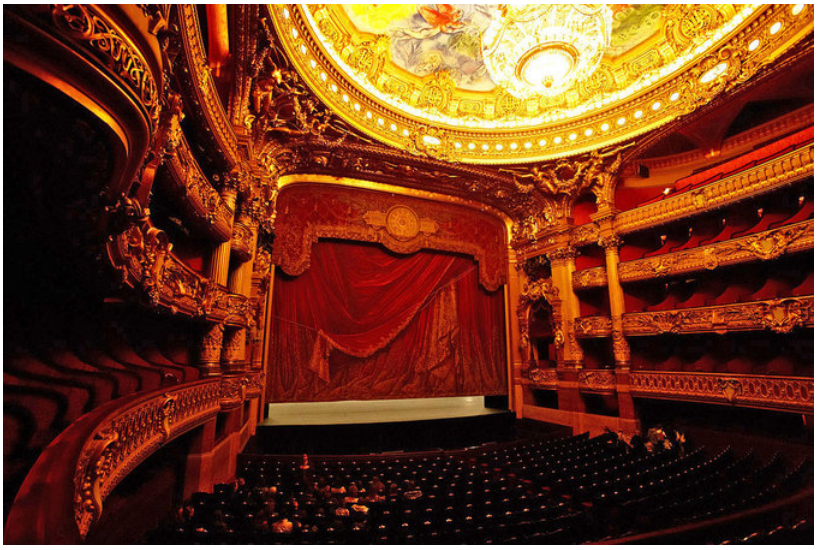


Figure 13.8.6.6: Charles Garnier, the auditorium and stage of the Paris Opéra, 1860-75 (photo (shadows reduced): Naoya Ikeda, CC BY-SA 3.0)

But the single largest area, from the front facade to the seats below the dome, is reserved for the foyers and the grand stair hall. This area was, in essence, a second stage. Far more ornate then the performance stage, the lobbies of the Paris Opéra were where the social dramas of the rich were enacted.

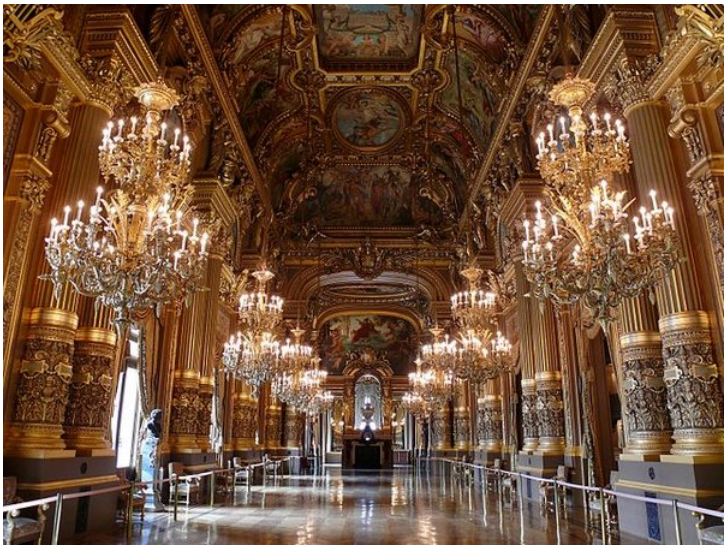


Figure 13.8.6.7: Charles Garnier, The Grand Foyer of the Paris Opéra, 1860-75 (photo: **Degrémont Anthony**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Strolling along the new boulevards or posing in the opera's grand foyers, the ruling classes paraded their wealth. The *flâneur*, a new denizen of the city, was a man of leisure (itself a by-product of the capital generated by industrialization). Walking the streets not for work or need, but for the pleasures of observation, the *flâneur* was at home in the Opéra.

Additional resources:

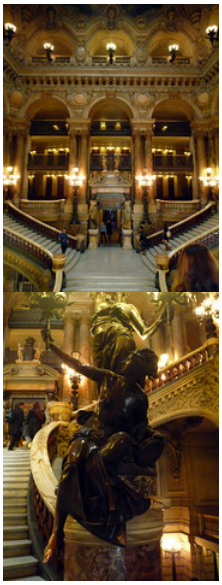
Virtual visit to the Paris Opéra from Google Cultural Institute

Khan Academy on Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Dance, 1865-69, commissioned by Charles Garnier for the facade of L'Opéra.

Garnier's Paris Opéra in Google's Streetview

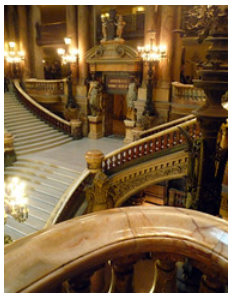
Charles Garnier biography from Great Buildings

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

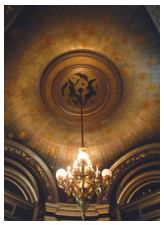


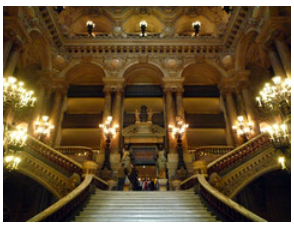


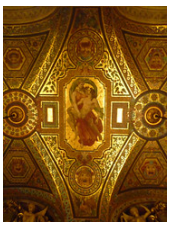


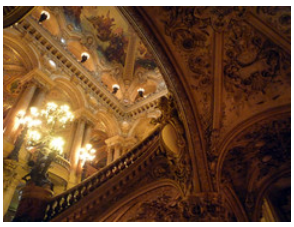


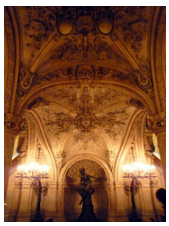














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88742

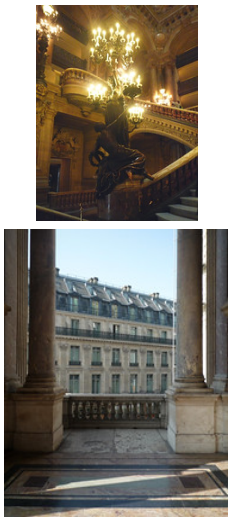


Figure 13.8.6.8: More Smarthistory images…

Thomas Couture, *Romans of the Decadence*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.6.2: Thomas Couture, *Romans of the Decadence*, 1847 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

13.8.6: Second Empire is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.6: Second Empire** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.7: Impressionism

Impressionism

These artists broke new ground with sketchy, light-filled canvases shown in independent exhibitions.

c. 1874 - 1886

Impressionism: A beginner's guide

The Impressionists are now widely appreciated, but they originally struggled for recognition.

c. 1874 - 1886

Impressionism, an introduction

by DR. BETH GERSH-NESIC

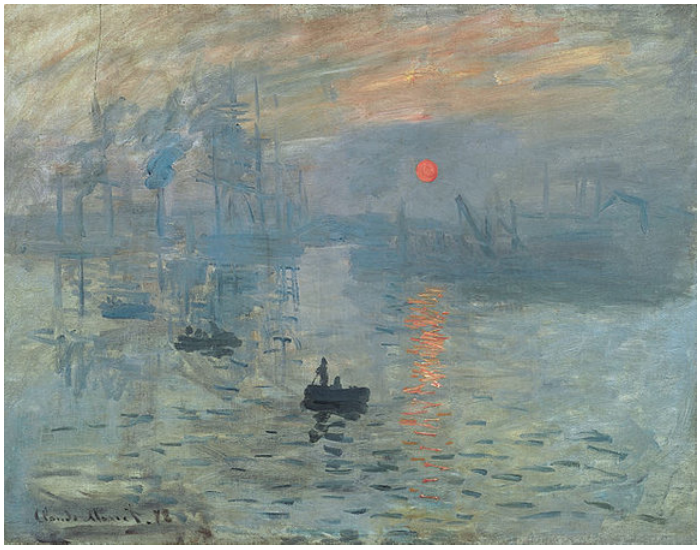


Figure **13.8.7.1**: Claude Monet, *Impression Sunrise*, 1872, oil on canvas, 48 x 63 cm (Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris). This painting was exhibited at the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874.

Apart from the salon

The group of artists who became known as the Impressionists did something ground-breaking in addition to painting their sketchy, light-filled canvases: they established their own exhibition. This may not seem like much in an era like ours, when art galleries are everywhere in major cities, but in Paris at this time, there was one official, state-sponsored exhibition—called the Salon—and very few art galleries devoted to the work of living artists. For most of the nineteenth century then, the Salon was the only way to exhibit your work (and therefore the only way to establish your reputation and make a living as an artist). The works exhibited at the Salon were chosen by a jury—which could often be quite arbitrary. The artists we know today as Impressionists—Claude Monet, August Renoir, Edgar Degas, Berthe Morisot, Alfred Sisley (and several others)—could not afford to wait for France to accept their work. They all had experienced rejection by the Salon jury in recent years and felt that waiting an entire year between exhibitions was too long. They needed to show their work and they wanted to sell it.



Figure 13.8.7.2: Edgar Degas, *The Ballet Class*, 1871-1874, oil on canvas, 75 x 85 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The artists pooled their money, rented a studio that belonged to the photographer Nadar, and set a date for their first collective exhibition. They called themselves the Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, and Printmakers and their first show opened at about the same time as the annual Salon in May 1874. The Impressionists held eight exhibitions from 1874 through 1886.



Figure 13.8.7.3: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Bal du moulin de la Galette*, 1876, oil on canvas, 131 x 175 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The impressionists regarded Manet as their inspiration and leader in their spirit of revolution, but Manet had no desire to join their cooperative venture into independent exhibitions. Manet had set up his own pavilion during the 1867 World's Fair, but he was not interested in giving up on the Salon jury. He wanted Paris to come to him and accept him—even if he had to endure their ridicule in the process.

Lack of finish

Monet, Renoir, Degas, and Sisley had met through classes. Berthe Morisot was a friend of both Degas and Manet (she would marry Édouard Manet's brother Eugène by the end of 1874). She had been accepted to the Salon, but her work had become more experimental since then. Degas invited Morisot to join their risky effort. The first exhibition did not repay the artists monetarily but it did draw the critics, some of whom decided their art was abominable. What they saw wasn't finished in their eyes; these were mere "impressions." This was not a compliment.



Figure 13.8.7.4: Berte Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1872, oil on canvas, 56 x 46 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The paintings of Neoclassical and Romantic artists had a finished appearance. The Impressionists' completed works looked like sketches, fast and preliminary "impressions" that artists would dash off to preserve an idea of what to paint more carefully at a later date. Normally, an artist's "impressions" were not meant to be sold, but were meant to be aids for the memory—to take these ideas back to the studio for the masterpiece on canvas. The critics thought it was absurd to sell paintings that looked like slap-dash impressions and to present these paintings as finished works.

Landscape and contemporary life

Courbet, Manet and the Impressionists also challenged the Academy's category codes. The Academy deemed that only "history painting" was great painting. These young Realists and Impressionists questioned the long established hierarchy of subject matter. They believed that landscapes and genres scenes (scenes of contemporary life) were worthy and important.



Figure 13.8.7.5: Claude Monet, *Coquelicots, La promenade (Poppies)*, 1873, 50 x 65 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Light and color

In their landscapes and genre scenes, the Impressionist tried to arrest a particular moment in time by pinpointing specific atmospheric conditions—light flickering on water, moving clouds, a burst of rain. Their technique tried to capture what they saw. They painted small commas of pure color one next to another. When viewer stood at a reasonable distance their eyes would see a mix of individual marks; colors that had blended optically. This method created more vibrant colors than colors mixed as physical paint on a palette.



Figure 13.8.7.6: Claude Monet, *La Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877, oil on canvas, 75 x 104 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

An important aspect of the Impressionist painting was the appearance of quickly shifting light on the surface of forms and the representation changing atmospheric conditions. The Impressionists wanted to create an art that was modern by capturing the rapid pace of contemporary life and the fleeting conditions of light. They painted outdoors (*en plein air*) to capture the appearance of the light as it flickered and faded while they worked.

Reception

By the 1880s, the Impressionists accepted the name the critics gave them, though their reception in France did not improve quickly. Other artists, such as Mary Cassatt, recognized the value of the Impressionist movement and were invited to join. American and other non-French collectors purchased numerous works by the Impressionists. Today, a large share of Impressionist work remains outside French collections.

Additional resources:

Art Institute of Chicago's Exploring Impressionism at the Google Art Project

Impressionism: Art and Modernity at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

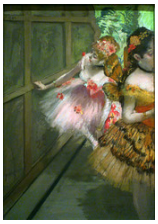
Guide to Impressionism from The National Gallery, London

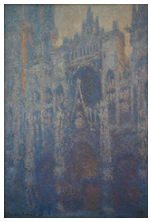
The salon of 1874

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88743

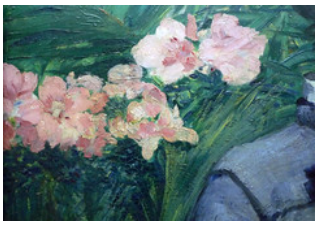








Figure 13.8.7.7: More Smarthistory images…

What does “Impressionism” mean?

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT

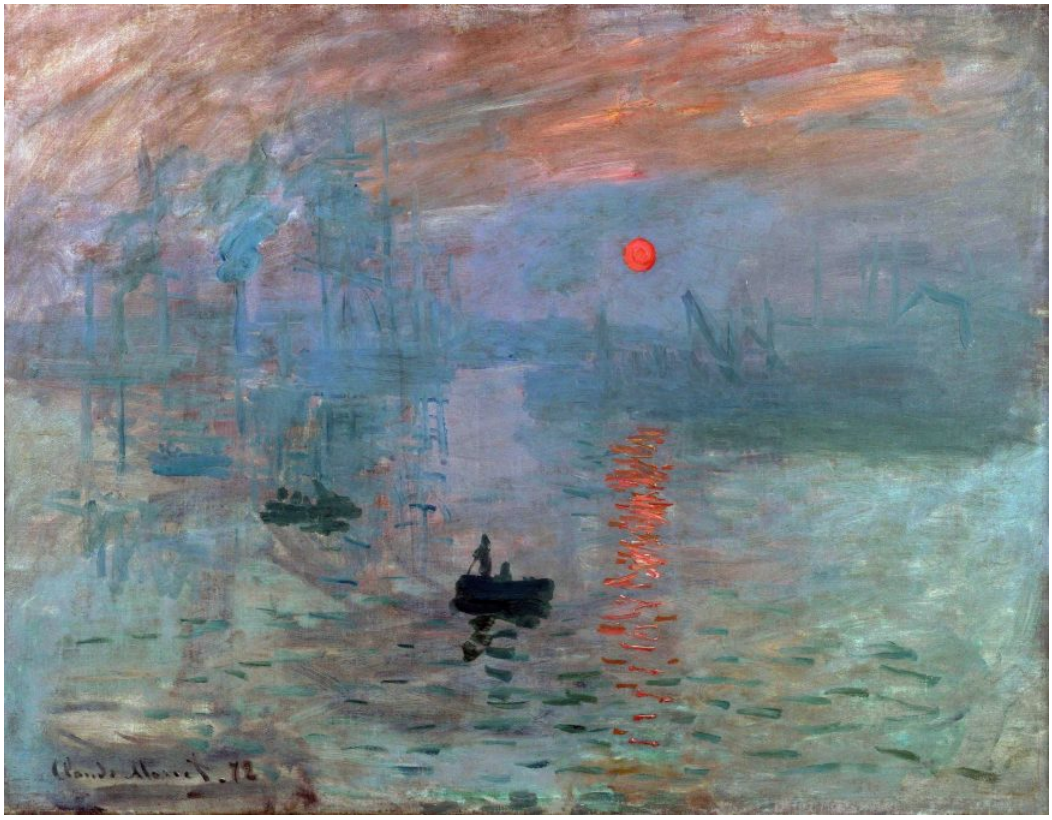


Figure 13.8.7.8: Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise*, 1874, oil on canvas, 50 × 65 cm (Musée Marmottan, Paris)

Brushwork, light, and atmosphere

Claude Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* is an exemplary Impressionist painting in several ways, not least of which is its title. It depicts a misty harbor scene at Le Havre (a port city in Northern France) in which boats and figures are reduced to flat, shadowy silhouettes, while the red light of the sun reflected on the water takes on tangible form in highly visible brushstrokes.

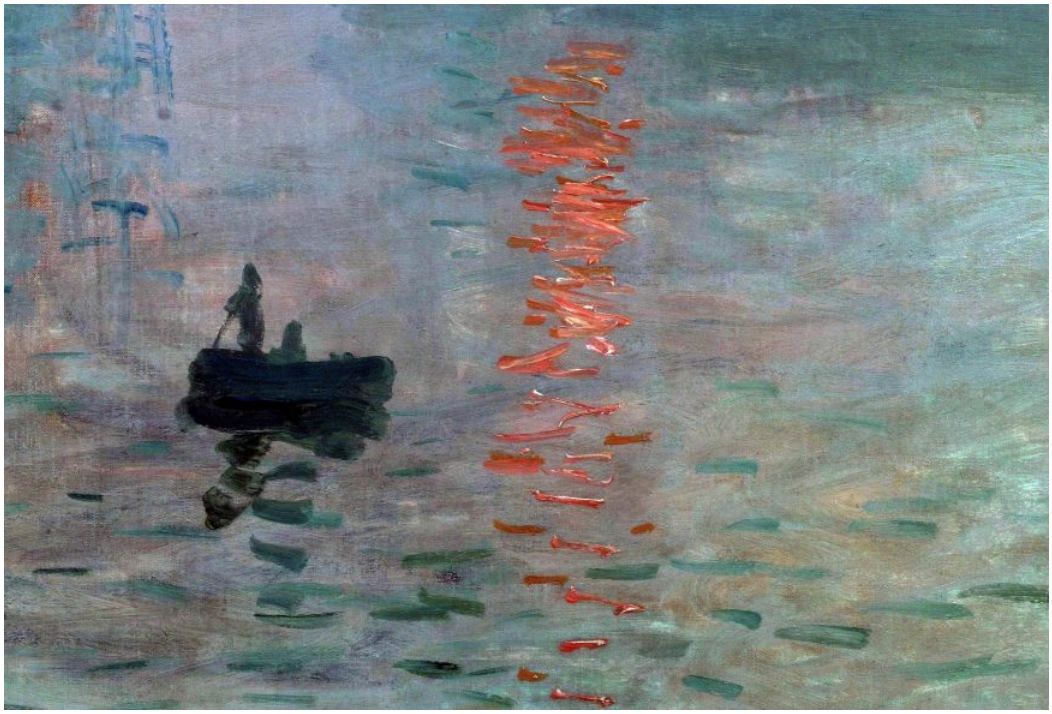


Figure 13.8.7.9: Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise* (detail), 1874, oil on canvas, 50 × 65 cm (Musée Marmottan, Paris)

What we see when we look at the painting is unquestionably *painted*; Monet made no effort to develop his suggestive image into a more detailed and finished rendering of the scene. The loosely sketched silhouettes of boats exemplify the difficulty of seeing objects in the mist with the sun rising behind them. Monet embraced this difficulty, using it as an occasion to display a painterly rendering that says more about the momentary light and atmospheric conditions than it does about the objects in the scene.

Ask yourself: is there anything in the painting that tells you this is Le Havre? In an interview Monet acknowledged the failure of the painting to depict a recognizable place. When he was asked for the title of the painting for the catalog of what later became known as the first Impressionist exhibition he said: "I couldn't very well call it a view of Le Havre. So I said: 'Put *Impression*." With this decision Monet unwittingly named an art movement, and this work's emphasis on brushwork, light, and atmosphere at the expense of the clear representation of objects became a hallmark of the Impressionist style.

Impressionism was not always so well-loved

It may be surprising to know that an art movement so well-loved today—highly successful at auction, the subject of numerous blockbuster exhibits, and a vast number of popular publications—was subjected to a good deal of scorn and ridicule in its early years. Even the term "Impressionism" was first used pejoratively in relation to the new art first exhibited in 1874 by the *Société anonyme cooperative d'artistes peintres, sculpteurs, etc.* (Anonymous cooperative society of artists, painters, sculptors, etc.). These artists used the term "anonymous" quite intentionally—they wanted to avoid imposing a restrictive label or common agenda on their group, whose members employed a variety of styles and painting techniques. Ultimately, they staged eight exhibitions between 1874 and 1886.

The group included a number of artists who became the most famous Impressionists: Gustave Caillebotte, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Pierre Renoir, and Alfred Sisley, as well as many other artists (some of whom are now associated with later modern art movements such as Post-Impressionism or Symbolism). Despite their eclecticism, contemporary viewers and the critics who reviewed the Société anonyme's exhibitions expected the group to share common goals and characteristics, and the label "Impressionism" soon came to identify a new artistic movement, with some of the artists of the Société anonyme at its core.

A mere impression



Figure **13.8.7.10**: Camille Pissarro: *Hoarfrost (White Frost)*, 1873, oil on canvas, 65 s 93 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The critic Louis Leroy was the first to emphasize the term "impression" in relation to the new painting, adopting it from Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* in a satirical dialogue entitled "Exhibition of the Impressionists" that was published in the popular illustrated

magazine *Le Charivari*. Leroy found Monet's use of "Impression" in his painting's title particularly appropriate because it suggested that the work was unfinished according to Academic conventions of representation; that is, it represented a mere impression of the scene, rather than a fully structured and completed work of art. Leroy repeatedly emphasized the term "impression" in the dialogue and described many of the paintings by Monet and his fellow exhibitors as sloppy and slapdash, going so far as to compare Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* to embryonic wallpaper and Pissarro's *Hoarfrost* to paint scraped off of a dirty palette.

Despite this prominent early critical association of the term "impression" with sloppiness, two years later "Impressionism" and "Impressionist" were being widely used to label the new art by its supporters as well as its detractors. It was undoubtedly the flexibility of the term that allowed it to be so widely adopted, but with that flexibility came a certain amount of confusion about the aims of the movement.

Leroy's usage suggests a hasty and inaccurate "first impression," but the term also has a very precise and technical connotation as a scientific word designating the stimulation of the optical or other sensory nerves. This scientific definition implies a project of careful observation and objective documentation, but the term is also used for a more subjective and individual response, as when one gives one's own "impressions" of a person, place, or thing. Hasty generalization or precise observation? Objective documentation or subjective interpretation? All of these contradictory qualities have been associated with the Impressionist movement.

How useful is the term "Impressionism"?

The complex significance of Impressionism expands further when we examine the characteristics emphasized in scholarly and popular writings about the movement. Two quite different artistic projects and sets of characteristics are commonly associated with Impressionism:

First, a painting is called Impressionist if it exhibits a certain style, consisting of patchy brushwork and a light pastel color scheme that aims to capture transient effects of atmospheric lighting, as can be seen in Sisley's *Autumn: Banks of the Seine near Bougival*.



Figure **13.8.7.11**: Alfred Sisley, *Autumn: Banks of the Seine near Bougival*, 1873, oil on canvas, 46.3 x 61.8 cm (The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)

Second, a painting is called Impressionist if it exhibits a certain type of subject matter, typically *plein-air* (painted out-of-doors) scenes of middle-class men and women at leisure: drinking in cafés, boating, swimming, attending horse races, promenading in gardens, and similar activities.

Berthe Morisot's painting*The Harbor at Lorient*, which was shown in the first exhibition of the Société anonyme, exemplifies this second characteristic. We see a very well-dressed bourgeoise woman resting while out for a stroll in the town of Lorient in France. The figure's white dress and parasol appear somewhat incongruous on the dirty stone wall overlooking a working harbor.



Figure **13.8.7.12**: Berthe Morisot, *The Harbor at Lorient*, 1869, oil on canvas, 43.5 x 73 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

However, not all of the art works shown by members of the Société anonyme exhibit both of these characteristics; in fact, some exhibited neither. The works of Camille Pissarro are typically in the Impressionist style, but as his painting *Hoarfrost* indicates, he frequently painted the working class at labor rather than the middle classes at leisure. Edgar Degas and Gustave Caillebotte frequently painted the middle classes at leisure, but did not employ the characteristic Impressionist style.

This terminological confusion has led some historians to wish to discard the term Impressionism altogether, but whatever label or labels are attached to them, these two projects—capturing the evanescent effects of atmospheric lighting, and depicting scenes of contemporary middle-class leisure—were significant artistic tendencies in Paris and, slightly later, in the wider Euro-American scene starting in the 1860s and 70s. Rather than attempt to limit the definition of the Impressionist project, we embrace the flexibility of the term.

Additional resources:

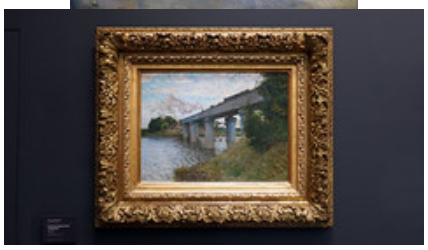
Impressionism: Art and Modernity on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Primary source: Louis Leroy, "Exhibition of the Impressionists, *Le Charivari* (April 25, 1874)

"About Impressionism," from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88743









Figure **13.8.7.13**: More Smarthistory images…

How the Impressionists got their name

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

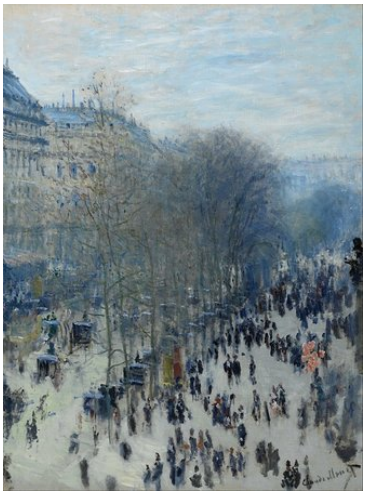


Figure **13.8.7.14**: Claude Monet, *Boulevard des Capucines*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 80.3 x 60.3 cm (Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri)

The First Impressionist Exhibition, 1874

Although the idea originated with Claude Monet, Degas is largely responsible for organizing the very first Impressionist exhibition. After much debate, the artists—including Degas, Monet, Renoir, Morisot, Pissarro, Sisley, Boudin, and even the young Cézanne—along with many other lesser-known figures, chose to call themselves the Société Anonyme des Artistes. This group included painters, sculptors, printmakers, and others.

The exhibition opened in Paris on April 15, 1874. It was held at 35 Boulevard des Capucines, on the top floor and former studio of the photographer, Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, better known as Nadar. He was a friend of several of the artists and well-known for his portraits of the Parisian literati.



Figure **13.8.7.15**: 35 Boulevard des Capucines, workshop of Nadar and location of the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874

Serious criticism or tongue-in-cheek?

Although the first Impressionist exhibition was well attended, the critics were merciless. Trained to expect the polished illusions of the Salon painters, they were shocked by the raw, unblended, ill-defined paint used by Degas, Renoir, Monet and company. The satirical magazine, *Le Charivari* published an account of a visit with Joseph Vincent, an accomplished and conservative painter:

> ***Upon entering the first room, Joseph Vincent received an initial shock in front of the Dancer by M. Renoir.***

> ***'What a pity,' he said to me, 'that the painter, who has a certain understanding of color, doesn't draw better; his dancer's legs are as cottony as the gauze of her skirts.'…***
>
> ***Unfortunately, I was imprudent enough to leave him [Joseph Vincent] in front of the "Boulevard des Capucines," by [Monet].***
>
> ***'Ah-ha! he sneered…. Is that brilliant enough, now!' 'There's impression, or I don't know what it means.' 'Only be so good as to tell me what those innumerable black tongue-lickings in the lower part of the picture represent?'***
>
> ***'Why, those are people walking along,' I replied.***
>
> ***'Then do I look like that when I'm walking along the Boulevard Capucines?' 'Blood and Thunder!' 'So you're making fun of me!' '…What does that painting depict?' 'Look at the Catalogue.' 'Impression Sunrise.' 'Impression–I was certain of it. I was just telling myself that, since I was impressed, there had to be some impression in it… and what freedom, what ease of workmanship! Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape!'"[1]***



Figure **13.8.7.16**: Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, oil on canvas, 48 x 63 cm (Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris)

And on it goes, ever more sarcastically. The article was titled, "Exhibition of the Impressionists," and the term stuck. From then on, these artists were called Impressionists.

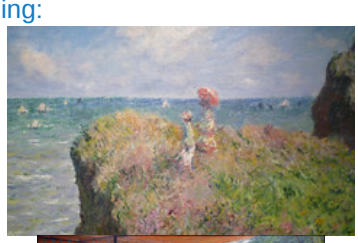
1. Linda Nochlin, *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, 1874-1904: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 10-13.

Additional resources:

Impressionism: Art and Modernity from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Martha Ward, "Impressionist Installations andn Private Exhibitions," Art Bulletin, vol. 73 no. 4 (1991) pp. 599-622 (JSTOR)

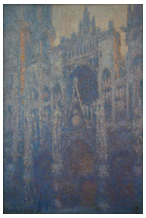
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

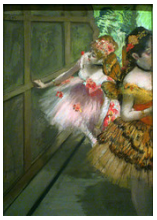














https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88743









Figure 13.8.7.17: More Smarthistory images…

Impressionism: painting modern life

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure **13.8.7.18**: Claude Monet, *The Railroad Bridge in Argenteuil (Le pont du chemin de fer à Argenteuil)*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 54 x 71 cm (**Musée d'Orsay, Paris**)

Aggressively modern

This is one of many paintings by Monet of the railroad bridge leading to Argenteuil, a small town on the outskirts of Paris where the artist lived in the 1870s. The painting demonstrates the Impressionists' well-known interest in depicting nature and the effects of weather and light, seen here in the expanse of white clouds in blue sky and the reflections in the rippling surface of the river. Highly textured dark green bushes and grass are built up with visible brushstrokes and anchor the painting's composition on left and right. The subject of the painting, however, is not a timeless rural scene (these were popular with the public — see, for example, **this painting** by Corot), but an aggressively modern one of a railroad bridge with a train heading over the river.

The bridge was rebuilt at the beginning of the decade after its predecessor was destroyed in the Franco-Prussian war, and its parts were forged at the local ironworks. The steam engine racing across the bridge creates its own billowing gray steam clouds, competing with the natural ones. The sweeping perspective of the bridge suggests the speed and dynamism of modern transportation technology, but Monet also shows that technology as integrally connected to the natural world. The rickety wooden fence in the foreground creates a contrast between old construction materials and the massive concrete and iron pylons supporting the new bridge. Old and new strain to integrate in the modern landscape.



Figure **13.8.7.19**: Claude Monet, *Boulevard des Capucines*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 80.3 x 60.3 cm (**Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City**)

Subjects that matter

Until the last decades of the twentieth century the scholarship on Impressionism paid relatively little attention to the subject matter chosen by the artists. Before then, art historians mostly concentrated on the style of the works and the way Impressionist innovations in form heralded or consolidated what seemed to them to be the most significant feature of modern art: the liberation of the artist from the constraints of convention, and the "evolution" of art toward flatness and abstraction. In recent decades, however, art historians have seriously considered the subject matter represented in Impressionist paintings and how this subject matter would have been understood by contemporary viewers.

Painting modern life

The Impressionist style can, of course, be applied to any subject matter, but Impressionist artists concentrated on a surprisingly limited range of subjects: typically, middle-class leisure in modern urban or suburban environments such as the Paris boulevard depicted in Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* or *Railroad Bridge at Argenteuil*. In one sense, the Impressionists continued the tradition of earlier nineteenth-century **Realists** like Jean-François Millet (for example in his painting *L'Angélus*) in their insistence on painting scenes from contemporary life. They rejected historical, mythological, and other exotic subjects and took as their dictum, "*Il faut être de son temps*," "one must be of one's own time."



Figure 13.8.7.20: Jean-François Millet, *L'Angélus*, c. 1857-1859, oil on canvas, 21 x 26 (53.3 × 66.0 cm) (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

However, for the Impressionists, unlike the Realists, contemporary subjects typically did not mean rural or provincial scenes, which often suggested timeless forms of life and labor (as in Millet's *L'Angélus*), but rather urban and suburban subjects that were changing rapidly. In this they are among the first artists to examine an important change in human geography that had significantly transformed the human experience: the shift of populations from primarily rural to urban areas that accompanied the Industrial Revolution and its large-scale economic shift from agricultural to industrial production.

In 1863, the poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire wrote an influential essay titled "The Painter of Modern Life" that called for an artist who would stroll through the new spaces of the city, keenly observing the actions of its inhabitants and viewing the streets and crowds as though they constituted a sort of improvised theater put on for his observation. Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* presents a characteristically modern scene of the **broad, tree-lined boulevards** that were cut across the older, less regular streets and alleys of Paris, offering a sweeping perspective that was not previously available in the city.



Figure **13.8.7.21**: Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, oil on canvas, 1882 (Courtauld Gallery, London)

Although they did not insist upon technological subjects as much as later modern art movements such as **Italian Futurism** or **American Precisionism** did, the Impressionists had a recognizable predilection for painting the spaces of Paris as it had been transformed within the past few decades. Along with the more stereotypical *plein-air* garden and landscape subjects, the Impressionists also frequently turned to scenes of contemporary urban experience. They painted Parisian cafés and beer halls; they painted the large theaters, opera houses, and cabarets of the city's night-life, illuminated by the eerie green glow of the new gas lighting; they painted the bridges and grand boulevards of modern urban planning; they painted the new train stations, glass-and-iron cathedrals to modern technology and its promise of rapid movement of goods and ease of travel; and they painted the suburban restaurants, racetracks, beach resorts, and parks where the rising middle classes spent their leisure hours. These subjects may appear charmingly quaint to our eyes, but at the time they were as aggressively contemporary as paintings of skyscrapers, airports, highway rest areas, and office parks would be today.



Figure 13.8.7.22: Gustave Caillebotte, *Paris Street; Rainy Day*, 1877, oil on canvas, 212.2 x 276.2 cm (**The Art Institute of Chicago**)

Middle-class leisure

Also unlike the Realists, the Impressionists tended to paint *middle class leisure* rather than *lower class labor*. This is a somewhat surprising limitation. Living alongside affluent urban professionals and moving through the same streets were thousands of poor manual laborers. But when we examine a panoramic street scene such as Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris Street; Rainy Day*—another view of a modern boulevard—it is surprising to note there is only one person on the street whose dress marks him as lower class and whose occupation signals active labor: a distant man carrying a ladder, easily overlooked just to the right of the foreground man's head. The exceptions to this general rule that the Impressionists painted bourgeois leisure rather than lower-class labor actually help to prove the rule. Impressionist paintings that show lower-class labor tend to depict the support industries of middle-class leisure: café waiters, beer-hall waitresses, cabaret singers, ballet dancers, laundresses, milliners, and prostitutes (and not the labor necessary to maintain the infrastructure of the city and the basic needs of its inhabitants). Even the paintings of lower class labor are fundamentally about middle class leisure.

Additional resources:

Margaret Samu, "Impressionism: Art and Modernity" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

Robert Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (Yale University Press, 1991).

Impressionist color

by DR. KIM GRANT and DR. CHARLES CRAMER

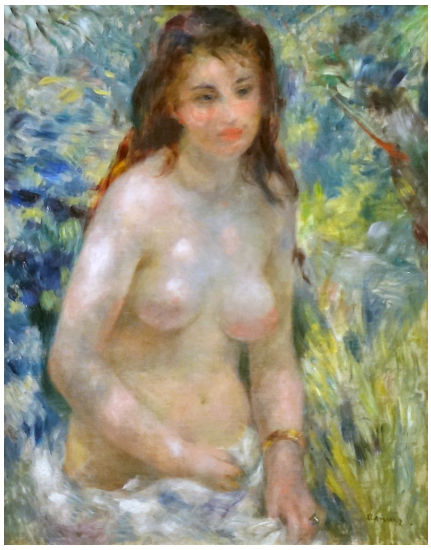


Figure 13.8.7.23: Pierre Auguste Renoir, *Study: Torso, effect of sun*, 1875-76, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Yellow, blue-gray, and violet skin

Renoir's *Study: Torso, effect of sun* depicts a relatively traditional subject in a conventional three-quarters pose, but the color and brushwork is highly unusual by the standards of traditional naturalism. In addition to flesh tones, the model's skin exhibits a striking range of colors, from peaches and yellows to pinks, blue-grays, and even violets; and the bit of white drapery covering her lap includes hastily brushed passages of blue and rose.

The critic Albert Wolff disparaged the use of color in this painting in graphic terms: "Try to explain to Renoir that a woman's torso is not a mass of decomposing flesh with the purplish-green splotches that denote the final stages of putrefaction in a corpse!"

Wolff's criticism stems from a common assumption that the use of color in painting can only be "local"—the actual color of the object as it would appear in neutral white light. Local color is the approach to color used in traditional art since the Renaissance.

Local color versus the color we perceive

In an earlier work of much the same subject (*Bather with a Griffon Dog*), Renoir's approach to color is more in line with this tradition. The flesh of this nude is rendered in the peachy-orange flesh tones characteristic of ethnic Europeans, modeled in a smoothly gradated chiaroscuro from light to dark in order to define the volumes of the torso, limbs, and head. The other objects in the painting are also rendered in what we easily recognize as their local colors: the grass is green, the water is blue, the dress is white with dark stripes. All the objects are modeled in lighter and darker tones of their local colors in order to show volume and the direction and intensity of the light illuminating the scene.



Figure **13.8.7.24**: Pierre Auguste Renoir, *Bather with a Griffon Dog – Lise on the Bank of the Seine*, 1870, oil on canvas, 111.5 x 183.5 cm (Museu de Arte de São Paulo)

Renoir's radical change in color usage in the later painting is related to the Impressionists' interest in the divergence between the local color of the object and the color actually perceived by the eye under specific lighting and atmospheric conditions. Compare two identical pieces of white paper, one lit by a "soft white" light bulb (2700 Kelvin) and the other by a "daylight" light bulb (5000-6000K). The local color of the two pieces of paper is the same, but the perceived color is very different: the first will appear much more warm and yellow and the second more cool and blue-green because what is called the "color temperature" of the two sources of light is different. Newer LED lightbulbs are often labeled with how "warm" or "cool" (yellow-orange or blue-green) the light is, but this is not a novel technological phenomenon. The color temperature of light coming from the sun changes constantly during the day, in different seasons, and in different weather conditions, because of the angle of the sun and the amount and quality of atmosphere that the light is passing through.

The effect of lighting on the color of objects is sometimes very counter-intuitive. We would expect the shadow cast on a white object to be rendered in a shade of gray, since gray is a darker tone of the local color white. Renoir adheres to this expectation in rendering the shadows in the folds and pleats of the woman's dress in his earlier painting. But in fact shadows cast on white objects are frequently blue.

This effect is particularly noticeable when we observe fresh snow on a sunny day, but it is also clearly evident in Renoir's *The Swing* (1876). Not only are the shadows on the woman's white dress distinctly bluish in hue, but the path behind her in the dappled sunlight is rendered in hues of blue and orange so intense that you wouldn't believe they could work. But they do because, in fact, our eyes are used to perceiving such odd effects: it is just that our brains typically ignore them. Once such variations come to our attention, it is easy to see them, and it would be inaccurate to suggest that the Impressionists were the first to notice these effects. However, where most previous artists had muted or rejected the effects of lighting on the color of objects as trivial accidents that did not contribute anything significant to the painting, many of the Impressionists—Monet and Renoir foremost among them—chose to seek out and emphasize such phenomena.



Figure **13.8.7.25**: Pierre Auguste Renoir, *The Swing (La balançoire)*, 1876, oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

New techniques

This attention to the counter-intuitive, but observable, effects of different qualities of light on objects led the Impressionists to some novel technical practices that are clearly visible in their paintings:

First, they tended to paint *en plein air*, in the open air, rather than in the studio, because they needed to be able to observe colors outside the artificial setting of the studio. While earlier nineteenth-century landscape artists had established a practice of making sketches and even color studies outdoors, the Impressionists made this practice central to their work. Monet even famously asserted that he had no studio at all.

Second, where Academic artists tended to begin their paintings by covering the entire canvas with a medium-dark reddish-brown undercoating or "ground," against which they would work up to lighter tones and down to darker ones, the Impressionists tended to paint on a light-colored ground. Because oil paint is semi-transparent, this light underpainting helped to intensify the brightness of the colors, allowing the Impressionists to produce works that look saturated in light.

Third, although color usage varies considerably among the Impressionists, it is generally true that they tended to avoid the dark earth colors such as umbers, siennas, and lamp black that had dominated the color palettes of traditional painting. They chose instead to render entire scenes in hues closer to the colors of the light spectrum: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red, mixed with generous amounts of white. Walking chronologically through a museum, it is surprising how much more intense and colorful paintings become with Impressionism, after the very earthy colors found in so much Renaissance and Baroque art.

Fourth, the Impressionists tended to use what are called "complementary colors" next to one another, rather than mixing them. Complementary colors are opposite one another on a color wheel, such as red and green, violet and yellow, and blue and orange. If two complementary colors are mixed, they produce a dull brown or gray color. If, however, they are placed adjacent, they have the effect of intensifying one another: next to orange, blue appears brighter and more intense, and vice-versa. In his *Autumn Effect at Argenteuil*, Monet relies heavily on a complementary color scheme to create the intense luminosity of a clear fall day. Like painting on a light-colored ground, the use of complementary colors helped the Impressionists to increase the apparent brightness of their paintings.



Figure 13.8.7.26: Claude Monet, *Autumn Effect at Argenteuil*, 1873, oil on canvas, 55 × 74.5 cm (The Courtauld Gallery, London)

These technical innovations made Impressionist paintings look significantly different from the traditional naturalistic representations to which the public and critics were accustomed, hence the great suspicion with which the works were greeted when they were first exhibited. Nevertheless, contemporary art critics sympathetic to the Impressionists justified the artists' use of color, like their rendering of space (see "**Impressionist Pictorial Space**"), as a more accurate representation of reality than the conventional naturalistic style that had hitherto been understood as objectively correct.

If it's different, then it's bad

In a salute to the realism of the new art, Theodore Duret castigated the public and critics of his day for clinging to false conventions, and praised the Impressionists for their meticulous and truthful observation of colors under specific lighting and atmospheric conditions:

> ***The Impressionist sits on the river bank and depending on the condition of the sky, the angle of vision, the hour of the day, the calm or agitation of the atmosphere, the water takes on all colors. Unhesitatingly, he paints water with all these colors. . .the sun sets and darts its rays into the water, to fix these effects the Impressionist covers his canvas with yellow and red. Then the public starts to laugh.***
>
> ***Winter comes, the Impressionist paints snow. He sees that in sunlight the shadows cast on the snow are blue; unhesitatingly, he paints blue shadows. Now the public laughs harder. . . .Under the summer sun, in the reflections of green foliage, skin and clothing take on a violet hue, the Impressionist paints people under violet woods. Then the public flies into a complete rage; the critics shake their fists and call the painter "communist" and villain.***
>
> ***The poor Impressionist vainly protests his complete sincerity, declares that he only reproduces what he sees, that he remains faithful to nature; the public and critics condemn him. . . .For them only one thing matters: what the Impressionists put on their***

> ***canvases does not correspond to what is on the canvases of previous painters. If it's different, then it's bad. [1]***

In this passage, Duret refers to "blue" snow and "violet" tinted flesh, which sounds ridiculous when we think of the local color of those things. He justifies the Impressionists' use of those seemingly inappropriate colors by asserting that the specific lighting conditions at the time transformed their appearances. It is not the Impressionists but the traditional critics and public who are at fault, for they have mistaken the conventions of past paintings for the truth of nature.

Notes:

[1] As quoted in Joel Isaacson, Claude Monet, observation and reflection (Phaidon, 1978), p. 11.

Additional resources:

Laura Anne Kalba, *Color in the Age of Impressionism: Commerce, Technology, and Art* (Penn State University Press, 2017)

Impressionist pictorial space

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure 13.8.7.27: Monet, *Boulevard des Capucines*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 80.3 x 60.3 cm, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Modern Paris

Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* depicts one of the grand boulevards of Paris. The boulevard was designed by **Baron Haussmann** in the mid-19th century to cut through the tightly packed medieval center of the city. The unusually high viewpoint of the painting is taken from one of the new multistory, mixed-use commercial and apartment buildings that lined these boulevards. The painting is modern in the very simple sense that its subject would not have been possible fifty years earlier.



Figure 13.8.7.28: Edgar Degas, *Café-Concert at Les Ambassadeurs*, pastel on monotype, 37 x 26 cm (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon)

Similarly, Degas's *Café-Concert aux Ambassadeurs* shows a scene in one of the new nightclubs for which Paris became famous in the late nineteenth century. Starting as occasional musical acts in what were called *café-concerts*, these nightclubs quickly evolved into massive cabarets, often with multiple stages, that included dance revues and acrobatics as well as large orchestras. Degas situates us in the crowded pit of one of these cabarets, looking through a forest of fancy hats and musical instruments at the performers on stage, who glow in the modern gas footlights. Both of these works typify the Impressionists' exploration of the new spaces of Paris, as well as the new vantage points and ways of seeing that these spaces allowed.

A change in pictorial space

The Impressionists' treatment of pictorial space was also often unusual. Traditional Academic artists tended to favor centered, closed, and balanced compositions such as David's *Oath of the Horatii*, in which the action is carefully staged for the viewer at a measured distance back from the picture plane.



Figure **13.8.7.29**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

Although we can infer our viewpoint in Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines*, it is unusual in that the artist gives us no clear place to stand in the work, and the orthogonal lines of the boulevard sweep off the right-hand side of the canvas, as though we were leaning perilously out a window or over a balcony railing. Similarly, Degas's *Le Café-Concert aux Ambassadeurs* is remarkable for its failure to use any perspectival techniques to create space for its thicket of bodies, which emphasizes the sense of being jostled in the middle of a crowd.



Figure **13.8.7.30**: Edgar Degas, *At the Races in the Countryside* (detail), 1869, oil on canvas, 36.5 x 55.9 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Even more unusual is Degas's treatment of pictorial space in his painting *At the Races in the Countryside*, a scene set at one of the racetracks situated on the outskirts of Paris. The main focus of the work is obvious: the wet nurse and child, who are framed by the

carriage door below and by a yellow parasol above, and who are the focus of attention of the child's mother, the driver of the carriage (Paul Valpinçon, the child's father), and their dog. This focal point is placed at the exact horizontal center of the canvas, as we might expect, but Degas appears to have achieved this placement at considerable cost to the rest of the composition. The work is egregiously unbalanced, the right hand side being crowded with heavy, dark shapes and the left hand side relatively light and empty. Furthermore, one of the horses is cropped awkwardly at the nose; the legs of both horses and the wheels of the carriage are abruptly truncated; and the carriage on the left, which is already leaning perilously to the right, has had its left supporting wheel cut off by the edge of the canvas. The work has the appearance of an amateur photographic snapshot, where subjects are frequently centered but little attention is paid to what is happening at the edges of the composition.



Figure **13.8.7.31**: Edgar Degas, *At the Races in the Countryside* (detail), 1869, oil on canvas, 36.5 x 55.9 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Unlike a photograph, however, a painting cannot be executed in a fraction of a second, and it would have been remarkably careless if Degas had trapped himself into this unbalanced composition and these odd truncations of the figures by beginning his work in the wrong place or at the wrong scale—or if, when he saw what was happening, he did not correct it. We must conclude that Degas actively sought the effects of imbalance and seemingly arbitrary cropping, no matter how unusual or awkward they may seem. Why? In a review of the second exhibition of the **Société anonyme** (1876), the critic Edmond Duranty justified these and similar violations of conventional pictorial space and carefully organized compositions by asserting their greater truth to lived visual experience:

> ***People and things have a thousand ways of being unexpected in reality. Our point of view is not always in the middle of a room with two side walls receding toward the back wall; it does not always arrange the lines and angles of cornices with mathematical symmetry. . . .[One's viewpoint] is sometimes very high, sometimes very low, sometimes it misses the ceiling, views objects from their undersides, unexpectedly cuts off the furniture. . . .***
>
> ***A man in a room or on a street is not always standing in a straight line at an equal distance from two parallel objects; he is likely to be situated on one side of the space.***

> ***He is never in the center of the canvas or in the center of the setting. He is not always shown as a whole; sometimes he appears cut off at mid-leg, or half-length, or sliced longitudinally. Sometimes, one sees him very close-up, at full size, while very tiny, far back in the the distance appears a crowd in the street or groups assembled in a public place. [1]***

Old systems fall apart and new ones take their place

Notice that Duranty justified the radical spatial and compositional effects of Impressionism by describing the new artists' paintings as more accurate than the established conventions of academic painting. Our views as we move through the world are not always centered and balanced; nor does space always recede with the mathematical regularity typical of traditional academic paintings. The systematic perspectival techniques that had dominated Western art since the Italian Renaissance, and which had been formulated to help make paintings look more true to life, are revealed to be mere artifices. The type of argument Duranty employed becomes a commonplace not only of Impressionism but of other movements as well: surprising new pictorial effects, which at first sight appear to be errors, are justified as being more accurate than the established conventions of past art. In this way modern art can sometimes remind us that what we think of as "realistic" or "natural" really only describes the social and artistic conventions to which we are so habituated that we accept them without question.

Notes:

[1] As quoted in Linda Nochlin, *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, 1874-1904: Sources and Documents* (Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 6.

Additional resources:

Margaret Samu, "Impressionism: Art and Modernity" on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

Robert Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (Yale University Press, 1991).

Mary Tompkins Lewis, ed., *Critical Readings in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: An Anthology* (University of California Press, 2007).

Japonisme

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure **13.8.7.32**: Left: James McNeil Whistler, *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen*, 1864, oil on wood, 50.1 x 68.5 cm (**National Museum of Asian Art**, Washington, DC); Right: Utagawa Hiroshige, *Osumi Sakurajima*, from *Famous Views of Sixty-odd Provinces*, 1856, woodblock print, 36.8 x 23.5 cm (**The Art Institute of Chicago**)

James McNeill Whistler's *Caprice in Purple and Gold* is an early example of Japonisme, a term coined by the French art critic Philippe Burty in 1872. It refers to the fashion for Japanese art in the West and the Japanese influence on Western art and design following the opening of formerly isolated Japan to world trade in 1853. In Whistler's painting, a European woman sits on the floor wearing richly embroidered silks like those of a Japanese courtesan while she studies a set of woodblock prints by the Japanese artist Hiroshige. Decorative objects from both Japan and China surround her, including a large gold Japanese folding screen.

A decorative art fashion



Figure **13.8.7.33**: Cover of *Le Japon Artistique*, July 1888

The late-nineteenth century Western fascination with Japanese art directly followed earlier European fashions for Chinese and Middle Eastern decorative arts, known respectively as Chinoiserie and Turquerie. The art dealer Siegfried Bing was one of the earliest importers of Japanese decorative arts in Paris. He sold them in his shop La Porte Chinoise, as well as promoting them in his

lavish magazine *Le Japon Artistique*, published from 1888-1891. Bing was also a major supporter of **Art Nouveau**, a fin-de-siècle decorative style greatly influenced by Japonisme.



Figure **13.8.7.34**: Left: Edouard Manet, *Emile Zola*, 1868, oil on canvas, 146.5 x 115 cm (**Musée d'Orsay**, Paris); Right: Claude Monet, *La Japonaise*, 1876, oil on canvas, 91 1/4 x 56 inches (**Museum of Fine Arts**, Boston)

Works by prominent artists associated with Impressionism and Post-Impressionism bear witness to the late 19th-century fashion for Japanese art and decorative objects. In Manet's portrait of Emile Zola the novelist and art critic sits at his overflowing desk. Immediately noticeable among the artworks surrounding him are a Japanese woodblock print of a wrestler and a Japanese gold screen. Monet portrayed his wife Camille dressed in a Japanese kimono surrounded by Japanese fans, and his water garden at Giverny was inspired by Japanese gardens depicted in prints and included a Japanese-style wooden bridge. In addition to painting copies of several Japanese woodblock prints, such as *Bridge in the Rain (After Hiroshige)*, **Vincent van Gogh** depicted them in the background of several portraits.

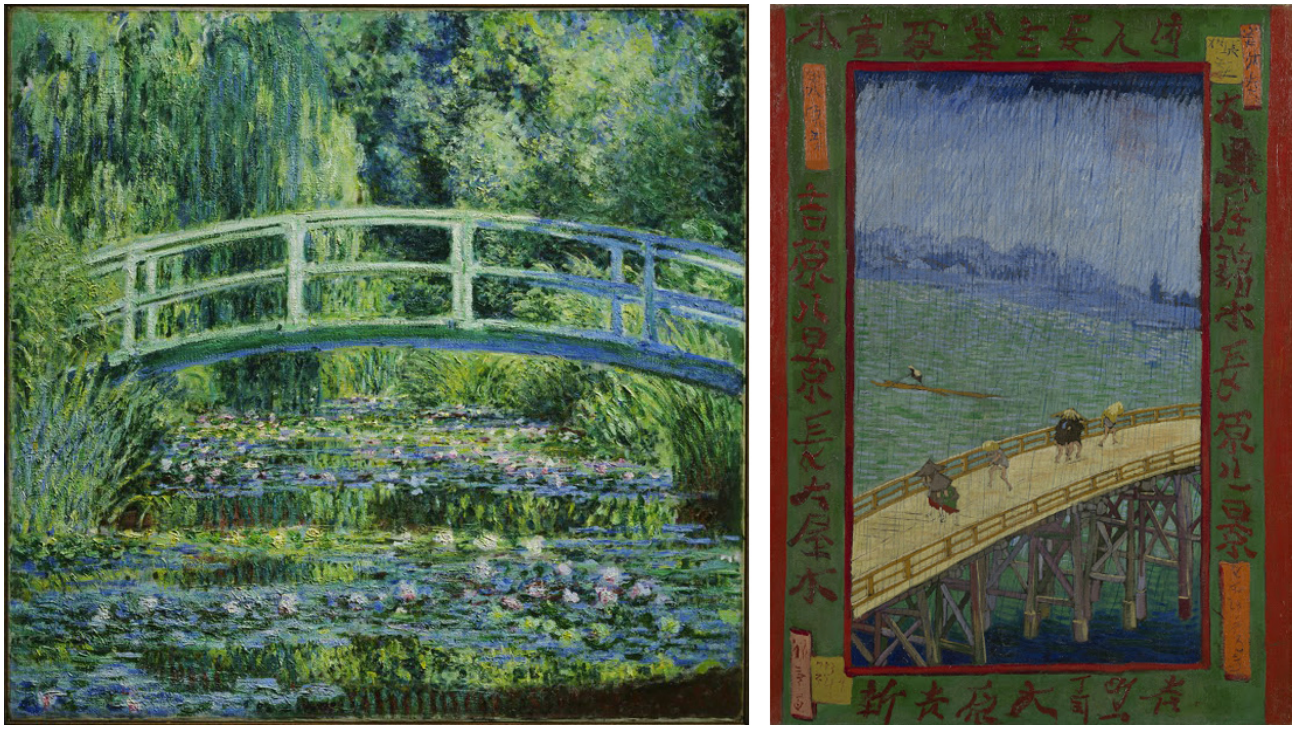


Figure 13.8.7.35: Left: Claude Monet, *Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge*, 1899, oil on canvas, 90.5 x 89.7 cm (**Princeton Art Museum**); Right: Vincent van Gogh, *Bridge in the Rain (After Hiroshige)*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.3. x 53.8 cm (**Van Gogh Museum**, Amsterdam)

A source for modern artists

Japonisme coincided with modern art's radical upending of the Western artistic tradition and had significant effects on Western painting and printmaking. In this regard, Japanese art affected modern art in much the same way that **encounters with African and Oceanic art** and artifacts did a few decades later. Many late-19th century modern artists not only admired and collected Japanese prints, they derived and adopted both compositional and stylistic approaches from them.

Japanese woodblock prints called **ukiyo-e**, or "pictures of the floating world," were a cheap popular art form in Japan during the **Edo Period** (1615-1868). They were associated with urban entertainment districts (the so-called floating world) in Japan and typically portrayed famous actors, courtesans, and wrestlers, as well as landscape views of well-known sites. Ukiyo-e prints first appeared in Europe as packaging material used to protect valuable imported porcelain objects, but they attracted the interest of European artists and art collectors and were soon imported for their own sake.



Figure **13.8.7.36**: Left: James McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge*, 1872-5, oil on canvas, 68.3 x 51.2 cm (**Tate Britain**, London); Right: Utagawa Hiroshige, *Bamboo Yards, Kyobashi Bridge* from *One Hundred Views of Edo*, 1857, woodblock print, 36 x 23.5 cm (**Brooklyn Museum**)

In addition to depicting Japanese decorative objects, Whistler used both subjects and compositional strategies derived from Hiroshige's prints of notable views in Japan. One of his most innovative and well-known paintings, *Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Battersea Bridge*, echoes Hiroshige's *Kyobashi Bridge* in both its nighttime subject and the abruptly cropped view of the bridge in the foreground. The large areas of flat colors typical of Japanese woodblock prints may also have influenced Whistler's simplified forms and reduced color range.



Figure **13.8.7.37**: Left: Mary Cassatt, *The Letter*, 1890-91, drypoint and aquatint on paper (**National Gallery of Art**, Washington DC); Right: Kitagawa Utamaro, *Seyama of the Matsubaya, Kamuro Iroka and Kukari*, from *Six Jewel Rivers*, 1793, woodblock print, 15 ¼ x 9 15/16 inches (**Museum of Fine Arts**, Boston)

The Impressionists were also interested in Japanese prints. After visiting an 1890 exhibition of ukiyo-e prints in Paris, Mary Cassatt employed similar decorative patterns, flattened spaces and simplified figures in a series of color **etchings** that includes *The Letter*. Cassatt's favored subjects, women in domestic interiors playing with children or grooming themselves, were common in ukiyo-e prints, a fact that undoubtedly contributed to her interest in them.

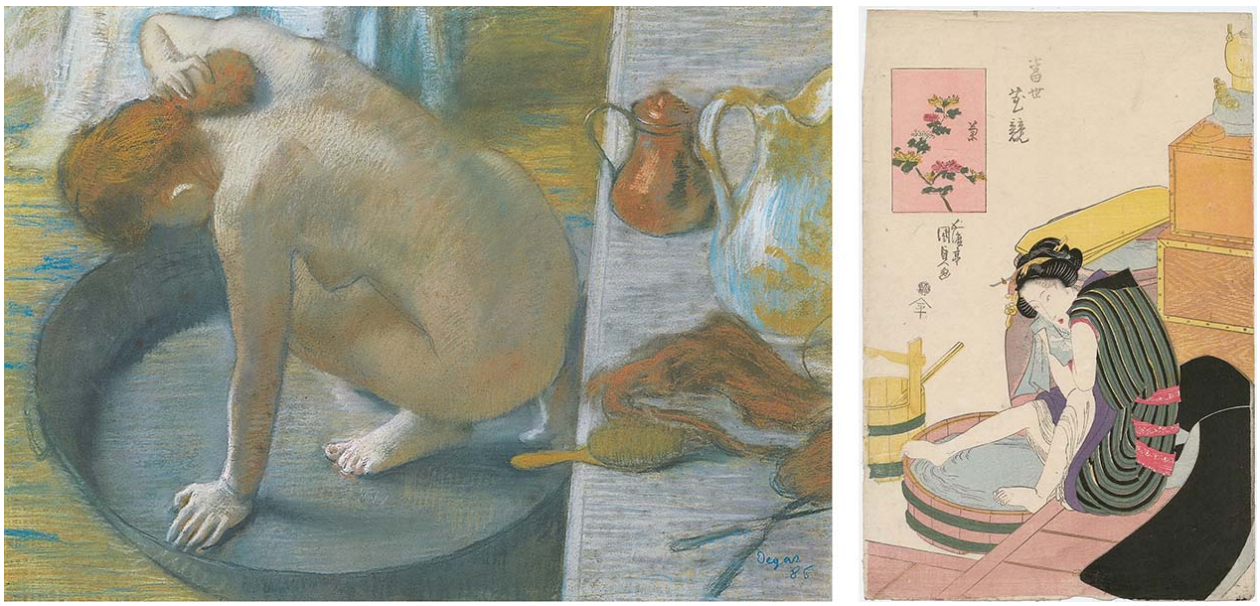


Figure **13.8.7.38**: Left: Edgar Degas, *The Tub*, 1886, pastel on card, 60 x 83 cm (**Musée d'Orsay**, Paris); Right: Utagawa Kunisada I, *Chrysanthemum* from *Contest of Modern Flowers*, c. 1820, woodblock print, 39.2 x 26 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts**, Boston)

Cassatt's friend Edgar Degas used Japanese compositional devices to depict women bathing. In *The Tub* a woman sponging her neck is shown from an elevated vantage point that emphasizes the flat shapes and patterns created by her body and the surrounding objects. The curve of the tub is continued in the woman's back, while the vertical of her left arm parallels the edge of the shelf on

the right side of the painting. Thus, although Degas uses traditional chiaroscuro shading to define three-dimensional forms, abstract pattern and surface design dominate the image, flattening the space and rendering it ambiguous.

Like Degas' *The Tub*, Kunisada's *Chrysanthemum* shows a bathing woman surrounded by ordinary household objects — note the water heater and scrub brush in the upper right corner. Although the viewing angle is not as high as that in Degas' work, we see the woman from above, and Kunisada uses the space and objects surrounding her to construct a visual frame for the figure rather than clearly defining an interior space. The repetition of colors and simplified shapes creates a strong surface pattern, as does the lack of chiaroscuro shading.

Post-Impressionism

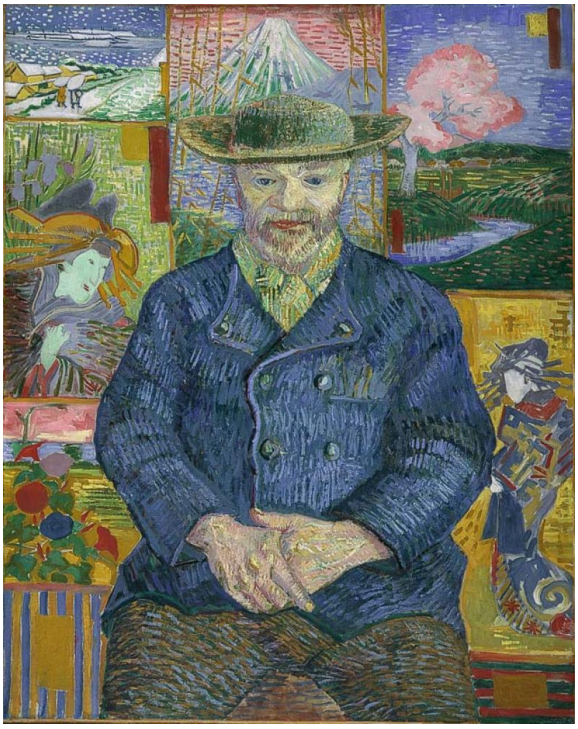


Figure **13.8.7.39**: Vincent van Gogh, *Portrait of Père Tanguy*, 1887, oil on canvas, 65 x 51 cm (**Musée Rodin**, Paris)

Among the Post-Impressionists, van Gogh was especially passionate about Japanese art and traditions, although his understanding of Japanese culture was limited and often **more personal fantasy** than based on real knowledge. He amassed a collection of hundreds of Japanese prints, and they influenced the development of his style, notably his vivid colors, simplified planar forms, and use of decorative surface patterns. In 1888 he wrote his brother Theo, "All my work is based to some extent on Japanese art . . .."



Figure 13.8.7.40: Paul Gauguin, *Vision after the Sermon (or Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 72.20 x 91.00 cm (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh)

Gauguin borrowed directly from Japanese art early in his eclectic and wide-ranging embrace of non-Western cultures and art forms. The bright colors and flat forms of his **cloisonnist paintings** were greatly indebted to Japanese prints. In ***Vision after the Sermon*** Gauguin used two specific Japanese sources. The figures of Jacob and the angel in the upper right are derived from Hokusai's prints of sumo wrestlers, while the overall composition with its flat red ground and abruptly arcing tree branch echoes Hiroshige's woodblock print of a blossoming plum tree, a print van Gogh also copied.



Figure 13.8.7.41: Right: Katsushika Hokusai, *Hokusai Manga*, 1817, woodblock print (Pulverer Collection, Smithsonian Institution); Left: Utagawa Hiroshige, *Plum Garden at Kameido*, 1857, woodblock print, 36 x 23.5 cm (Brooklyn Museum)

Decorative approaches

Like many artists associated with Art Nouveau, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was greatly affected by Japanese art and design. His posters, such as the one for a café-concert club called Divan Japonais, show the strong influence of Japanese prints of Kabuki

actors in their flat forms, powerful contour design, and dramatic use of black shapes. Unlike the paintings we have looked at thus far in this essay, Toulouse-Lautrec's posters served a similar role to that of the Japanese woodblock prints; they were a cheap, mass-produced form of publicity for the entertainment industry.



Figure **13.8.7.42**: Left: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Divan Japonais*,1892-3, color lithograph, 80.8 x 60.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York); Right: Toshusai Sharaku, *Kabuki Actor Otani Oniji*, 1794, woodblock print, 38.1 x 35.1 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

The Nabis, a group of French Post-Impressionist artists affiliated with both **Pont-Aven** and Symbolism, were great admirers of Japanese art. They were dedicated to the decorative arts and closely associated with Siegfried Bing's gallery Maison de l'Art Nouveau. In addition to creating paintings, they designed many decorative objects including folding screens and stained glass windows.



Figure **13.8.7.43**: Pierre Bonnard, *Women in the Garden*, 1891, distemper on canvas, 160 x 48 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Pierre Bonnard, the most Japanese-influenced of the group, painted a set of four narrow vertical panels, initially intended to be part of a Japanese-style folding screen, showing women in stylized garden settings. The subject as well as the detailed patterns and flat decorative forms were directly inspired by Japanese prints and painted screens. His later paper lithograph screen, *Nannies' Promenade*, is even more noticeably influenced by Japanese design in its diagonal composition and its use of a restricted color range and patterned silhouettes on an expanse of white paper.



Figure **13.8.7.44**: Pierre Bonnard, *Nannies' Promenade, Frieze of Carriages*, 1899, color lithograph, each panel 137.2 x 47.6 cm (**MoMA**)

Japanese art had significant effects on both Western decorative arts and the evolution of new artistic styles associated with Modern art. The distinctive qualities of Japanese art — decorative use of color, surface patterning, and asymmetrical compositions — offered striking new approaches to modern artists developing alternatives to the Western tradition of naturalistic representation.

Additional resources:

Read more about Monet and Japanese prints

Read more about van Gogh and Japanese art

Looking east: how Japan inspired Monet, Van Gogh and other Western artists

by ASIAN ART MUSEUM



Video **13.8.7.1**: Video from the **Asian Art Museum**.

Edgar Degas

Edgar Degas, *The Bellelli Family*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.7.2**: Edgar Degas, *The Bellelli Family*, 1858-67, oil on canvas, 78-3/4 x 98-1/2″, 200 x 250 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Degas was in his mid-twenties when he painted this canvas. It depicts, from left to right, the ten-year-old Giovanna; her mother (and the artist's paternal aunt) Laura; her younger daughter, Giula, age 7; and the Baron Gennaro Bellelli. Preperatory sketches for

the painting may have been made in Florence where the family was living—the Baron had been exiled from Naples. The picture may have been completed in Paris.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:











https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88743



Figure 13.8.7.45: More Smarthistory images…

Edgar Degas, *At the Races in the Countryside*

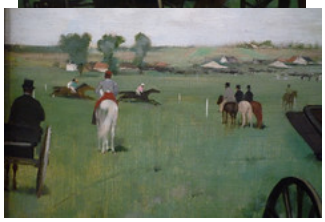
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.3: Edgar Degas, *At the Races in the Countryside*, 1869, oil on canvas, 36.5 x 55.9 cm / 14-3/8 x 22 inches (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

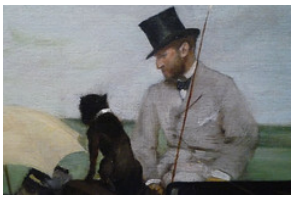
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88743



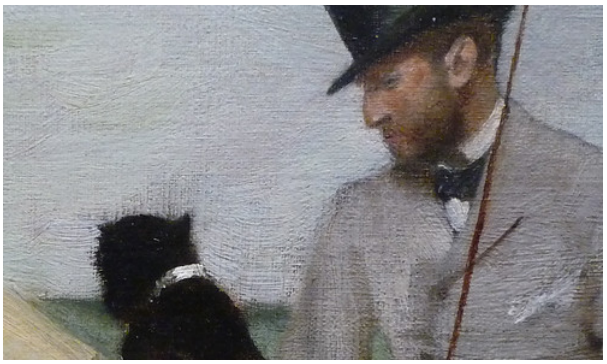


Figure **13.8.7.46**: More Smarthistory images…

Edgar Degas, *The Dance Class*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.7.4**: Edgar Degas, *The Dance Class*,, 1874, oil on canvas, (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.7.47**: More Smarthistory images…

Edgar Degas, *Visit to a Museum*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.5: Edgar Degas, *Visit to a Museum*, c. 1879–90, oil on canvas, 91.8 x 68 cm / 36-1/8 x 26-3/4″ (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

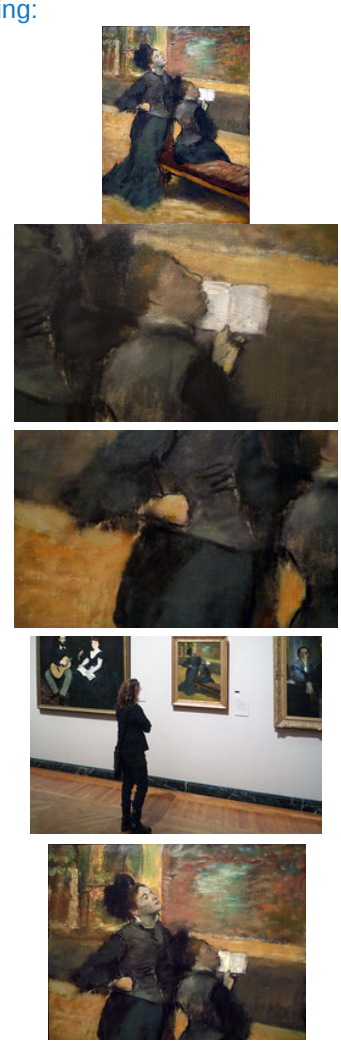


Figure 13.8.7.48: More Smarthistory images…

Gustave Caillebotte

Gustave Caillebotte, *The Floor Scrapers (Les raboteurs de parquet)*

by DR. PARME GIUNTINI and DR. ROBERT SUMMERS



Video **13.8.7.6**: Gustave Caillebotte, *The Floor Scrapers (Les raboteurs de parquet)*, 1875, oil on canvas, 102 x 146.5 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). This video was made in cooperation with Otis College of Art and Design.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.7.49**: More Smarthistory images…

Gustave Caillebotte, *Paris Street; Rainy Day*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.7.7**: Gustave Caillebotte, *Paris Street; Rainy Day*, 1877, oil on canvas 83-1/2 x 108-3/4 inches (212.2 x 276.2 cm) (The Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:















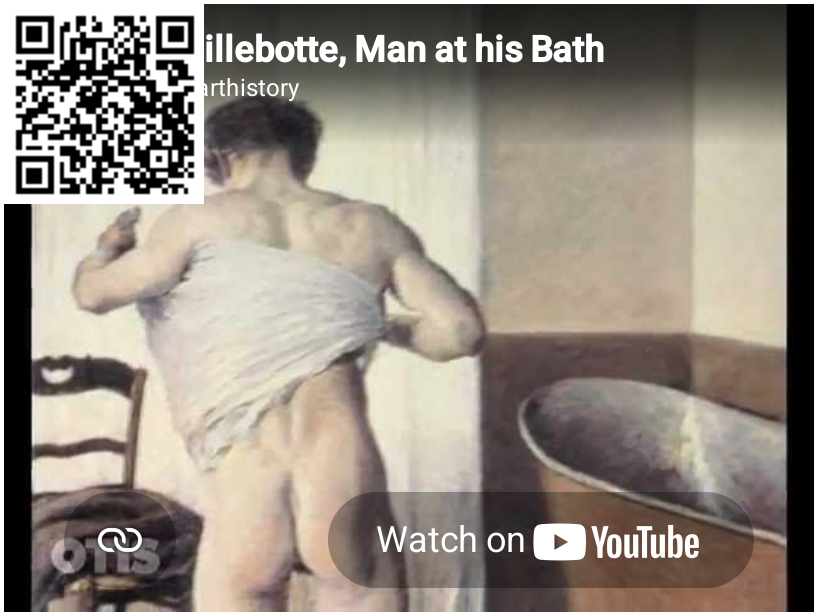




Figure **13.8.7.50**: More Smarthistory images…

Gustave Caillebotte, *Man at his Bath*

by DR. PARME GIUNTINI and DR. ROBERT SUMMERS

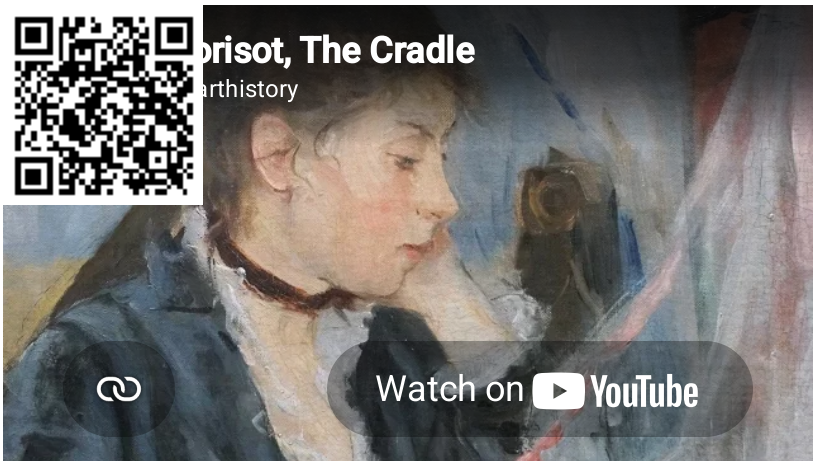


Video **13.8.7.8**: Gustave Caillebotte, *Man at his Bath*, 1884, oil on canvas, 57 x 45″ / 144.8 x 114.3 cm, (Private Collection, on loan to the National Gallery, London). This video was produced in cooperation with Otis College of Art and Design.

Berthe Morisot

Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.7.9: Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1872, oil on canvas, 56 x 46 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

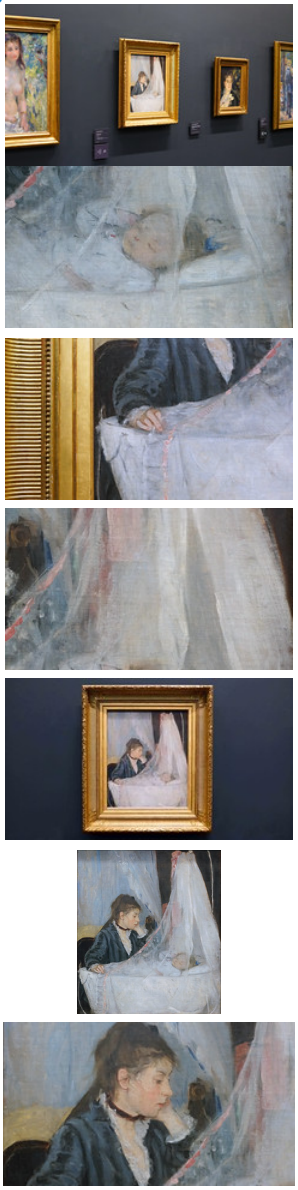
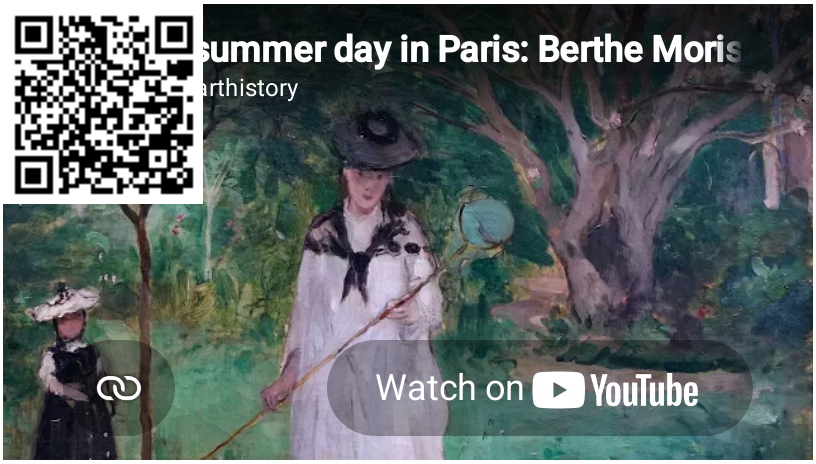


Figure 13.8.7.51: More Smarthistory images…

A summer day in Paris: Berthe Morisot's *Hunting Butterflies*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.7.10**: Berthe Morisot, *Hunting Butterflies*, 1874, oil on canvas, 46 x 56 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

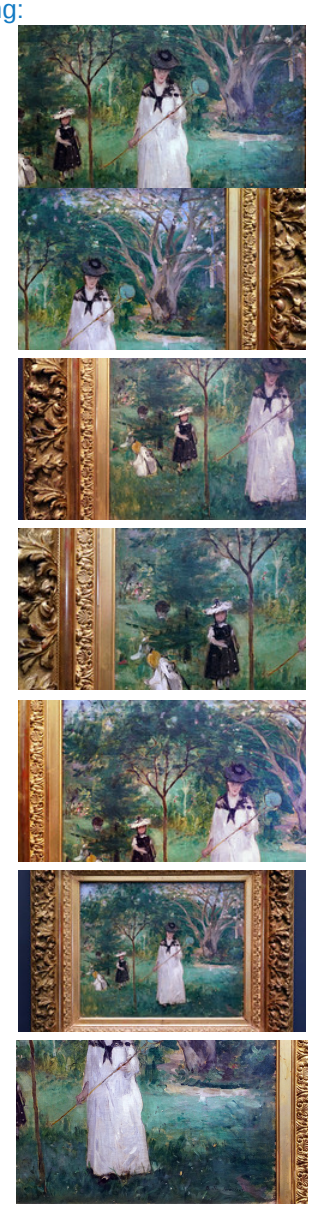
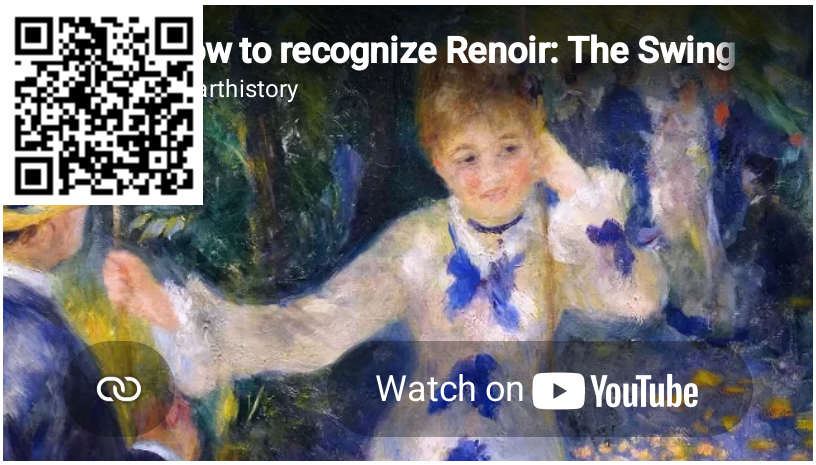


Figure 13.8.7.52: More Smarthistory images…

Pierre-Auguste Renoir

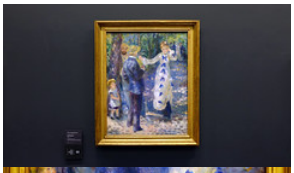
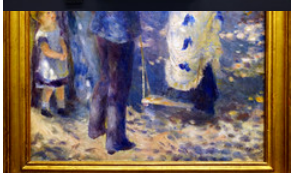
How to recognize Renoir: *The Swing*

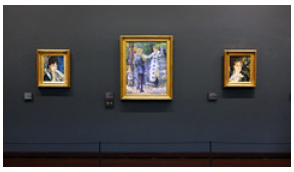
by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

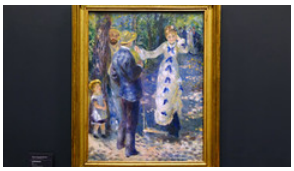


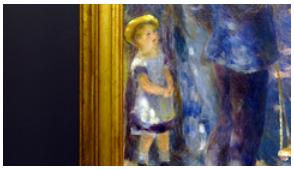
Video 13.8.7.11: Pierre Auguste Renoir, *The Swing (La balançoire)*, 1876, oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)
Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









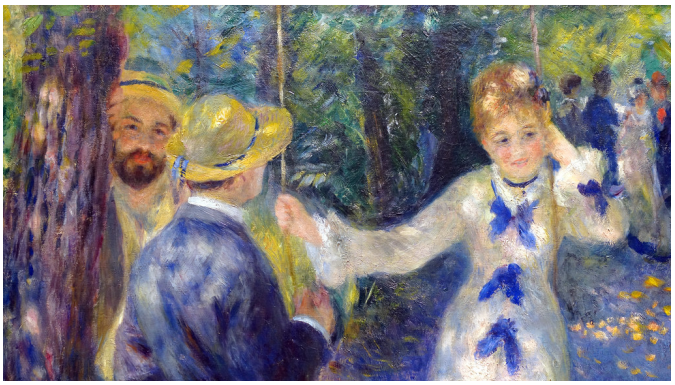


Figure **13.8.7.53**: More Smarthistory images…

Auguste Renoir, *La Loge*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and RACHEL ROPEIK



Video **13.8.7.12**: Auguste Renoir, *La Loge*, 1874, oil on canvas, 31 1/2 x 24 5/8″ / 80 x 63.5 cm (Courtauld Gallery, London)

This painting was exhibited by Renoir at the first Impressionist exhibition in Paris (1874).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

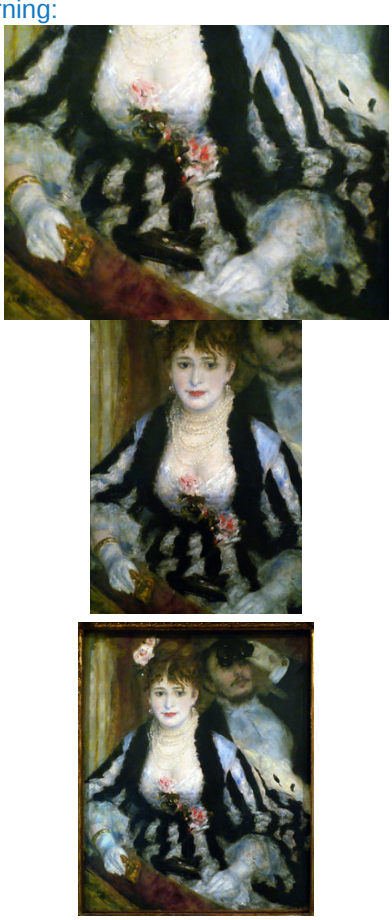


Figure 13.8.7.54: More Smarthistory images…

Auguste Renoir, *The Grands Boulevards*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.13: Auguste Renoir, *The Grands Boulevards*, 1875, oil on canvas, 20-1/2 x 25″ / 52.1 x 63.5 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

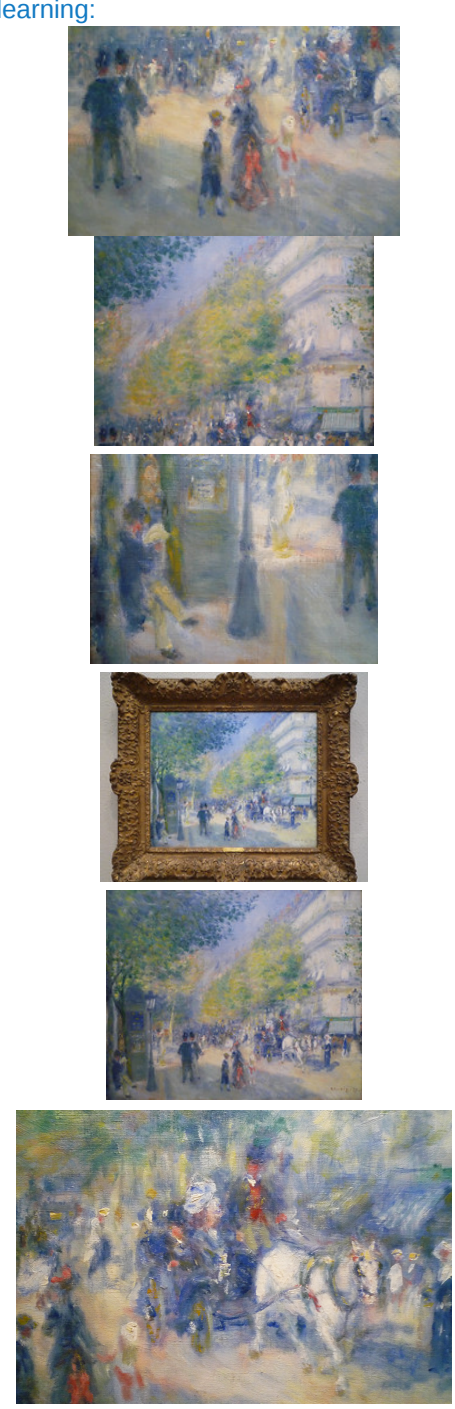
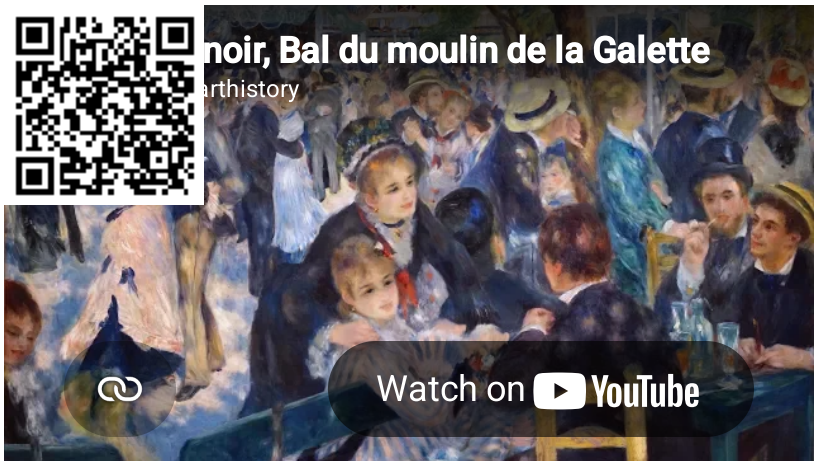


Figure 13.8.7.55: More Smarthistory images…

Auguste Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.14: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette*, 1876, oil on canvas, 51 1/2 x 68 7/8 in. (131 x 175 cm), (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

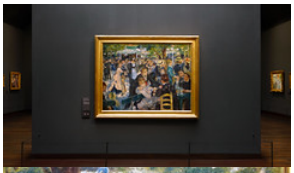
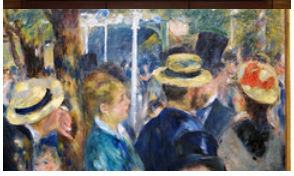













Figure 13.8.7.56: More Smarthistory images…

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Portrait of Madame Charpentier and Her Children*

by DR. INGRID E. MIDA



Figure 13.8.7.57: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Madame Georges Charpentier (Marguérite-Louise Lemonnier) and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe and Paul-Émile-Charles*, 1878, oil on canvas (153.7 x 190.2 cm) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

What do clothes reveal about the wearer?

When artists like Pierre-Auguste Renoir painted portraits of real people, their work became embedded with clues about cultural beliefs at a particular moment in time — including notions of beauty, propriety, status, and gender. In this portrait by Renoir, the

artist captured the likeness of Madame Charpentier with her two children in an intimate setting within the family's elegant Parisian townhouse.

This work is one of several commissioned by Georges Charpentier, an influential publisher and an early collector of Renoir's work. In this portrait, Renoir depicts Marguérite Charpentier seated on a richly patterned settee alongside her two children and the family's large Newfoundland dog in a small room filled with precious objects including Japanese screens, crystal and porcelain. Renoir's palette is lush and his brushwork confident; the careful composition with its strong diagonals invites the viewer into this private space.

Gender and status

This large-scale work received favorable reviews when it was exhibited in a prominent position at the Salon of 1879 in Paris, and Renoir later acknowledged the efforts of Madame Charpentier in helping him gain subsequent portrait commissions. However, in the decades after its initial reception, viewers have often been surprised to learn that one of the children is a boy, since both children are dressed alike. This essay analyzes the garments and accessories worn by Madame Charpentier and her children as markers of status and gender at that time in history. Gender —the cultural construction of identity that distinguishes man from woman and boy from girl —is typically represented through the fashioning of the body, including the clothing and accessories, the styling of the hair and the wearing of makeup or other body modifications.

The fashionable Parisienne



Figure **13.8.7.58**: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, detail, *Madame Georges Charpentier (Marguérite-Louise Lemonnier) and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe and Paul-Émile-Charles*, 1878

In this portrait, Madame Charpentier is dressed in a long-sleeved black silk afternoon dress expansively trimmed with lace. Each element of her dress is indicative of her stature as the wife of a wealthy man.

Her close-fitting dress is floor length, with a train that pools on the floor beside her to reveal her white ruffled underskirt. The dress has no bustle, but rather is flat-backed; this style of dress was in fashion for a brief interval of two or three years towards the end of this decade, and this small detail marks the wearer as a close follower of fashion.

Marguerite has added several pieces of jewelry to her ensemble to signal the family's wealth, including pearl earrings, a daisy brooch pinned to her left shoulder, two heavy gold bangles on both wrists, and several rings on her fingers.

The color of the dress signals chic, rather than mourning; black was a fashionable color for an elegant afternoon dress that would be worn to receive visitors or go visiting in one's social circle. Madame Charpentier was known for her sophisticated literary salons in which she entertained writers like Flaubert and Zola, and this formal daywear dress would be suitable for just such a gathering. Similar dresses from 1878 can be found in museum collections, and an example is shown below.



Figure 13.8.7.59: Afternoon dress, 1876–78 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Dressing children in the nineteenth century

In Renoir's portrait, the children — Georgette, age six, and Paul, age three — are dressed in identical sleeveless, open-neckline, dropped-waist short dresses made of pale blue moiré silk trimmed with white silk. Both children have similar hairstyles with shoulder-length wavy hair. The only discernible difference in their attire is their footwear; Georgette wears shoes with a small heel, while Paul wears flat shoes with a mid-foot strap. These children, dressed alike in their expensive and elegantly trimmed silk frocks, are fashionable accessories for their elegant mother.



Figure 13.8.7.60: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, detail, *Madame Georges Charpentier (Marguérite-Louise Lemonnier) and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe and Paul-Émile-Charles*, 1878

The identical dresses worn by the Charpentier children in this painting reveal a little-known aspect of nineteenth-century western dress codes in which infants and young children were dressed alike in dresses or petticoats until about age four or five. At this time in history, when doing laundry was a tedious and lengthy process, having young children wear petticoats or frocks until they were toilet-trained made sense from a practical standpoint. As well, infants and young children were seen as asexual beings and for this reason were dressed alike. For example, in the fashion plate shown below, the child is dressed in a jacket and skirt that could be worn by either boy or girl.



Figure 13.8.7.61: Fashion Plate, *Journal Des Demoiselles*, 1878 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Photographs from the time also capture many young boys dressed in petticoats or a tunic and skirt, including this undated photo of two young boys. The younger boy is wearing a checked ensemble consisting of a tunic and a skirt trimmed in velvet while his older brother wears a wool suit consisting of a jacket worn with knickerbockers.



Figure 13.8.7.62: Carte de visite photograph of two young boys, c. 1870s (photographer M.E. Robb, author's collection)

The transition from petticoats and dresses into short pants and then trousers took on symbolic importance as a rite of passage for a boy, but the age at which this occurred was a matter of individual choice,

> ***…as every mother is desirous that her little ones should be seen at their best, it will be her pride and pleasure to exercise her taste and judgement in this direction.As quoted by Clare Rose, "Age-related clothing codes for boys in Britain, 1850-1900," Critical Studies in Men's Fashion, vol. 2 (2015), pp.139.***

Tailoring guides from this time reveal an age-related progression of attire for boys from petticoats indicated before age 3; jackets with skirts suggested for ages 3 to 6; tunic over trousers for boys aged 6-12; short wool jackets and trousers for ages 12-15; and suits for boys over age 15.

With the emergence of department stores and mass-production methods for clothing in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the options for boys expanded, but there was also a significant shift in ideals of masculinity that resulted in a marked restriction in the types of clothing and the colors available for boys. As historians including Jo Paoletti have observed, by about 1920, it was seen as highly inappropriate for boys to wear dresses, lace, ruffles, and other feminine-coded garments details or colors.

Our own biases

Renoir's portrait of the Charpentier family reminds us that the dress codes that signal gender are linked to culture as well as a specific time and place in history. The idea that boys do not wear dresses dates back only about a century. Gender is a culturally specific notion — something that is learned rather than innate. Interpreting a painting such as this one by Renoir requires careful observation and reflection of the inherent biases of our own standpoint in culture.

Additional resources:

Colin B. Bailey, *Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London in association with National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1997).

Anne Buck, *Clothes and the Child* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996).

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007 [1990]).

Ingrid E. Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming 2020).

Jo B. Paoletti, *Pink and Blue: Telling the Boys from the Girls in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

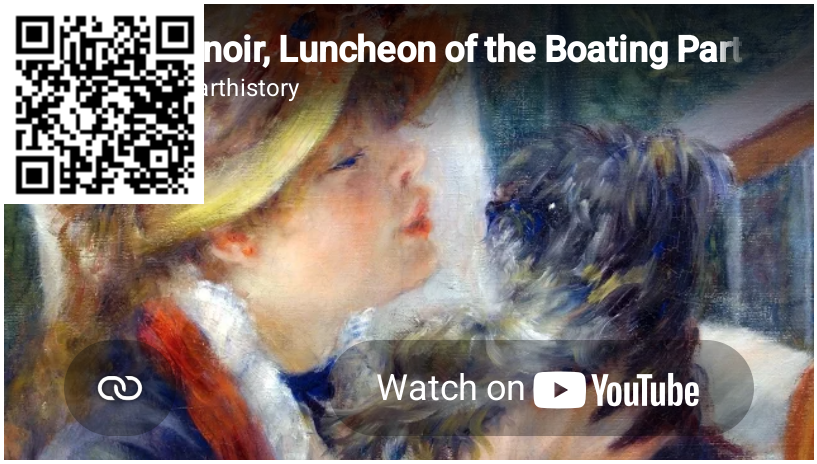
Clare Rose, “Age-related clothing codes for boys in Britain, 1850-1900.” *Critical Studies in Men’s Fashion*, vol. 2 (2015), pp.127-142.

Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).

Barbara Ehrlich White, *Renoir: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2017).

Auguste Renoir, *Luncheon of the Boating Party*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.7.15**: Auguste Renoir, *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, 1880-81, oil on canvas, 130.2 x 175.6 cm (Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

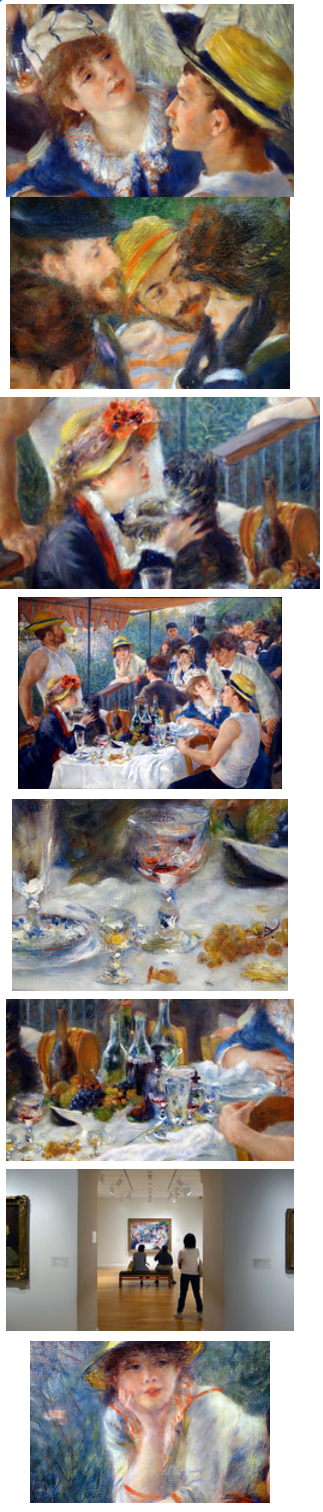
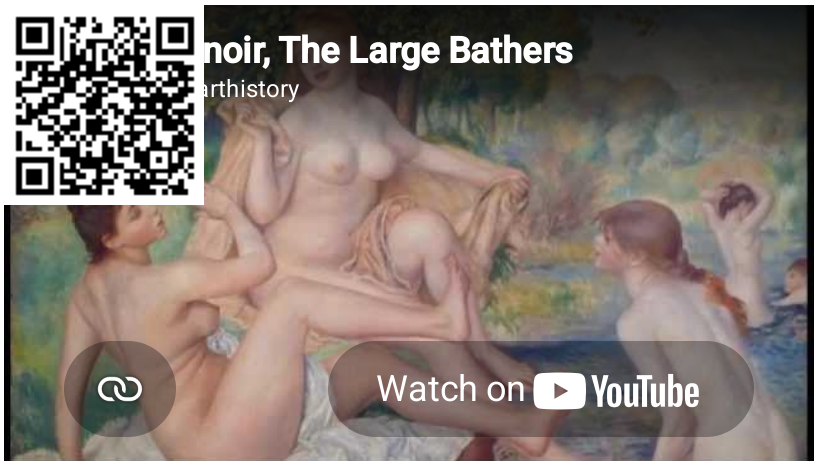


Figure **13.8.7.63**: More Smarthistory images…

Auguste Renoir, *The Large Bathers*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.16: Auguste Renoir, *The Large Bathers*, 1884-87, oil on canvas, 46-3/8 x 67-1/4″ / 117.8 x 170.8 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.7.64**: More Smarthistory images…

Claude Monet

Impressionism as optical realism: Monet

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT

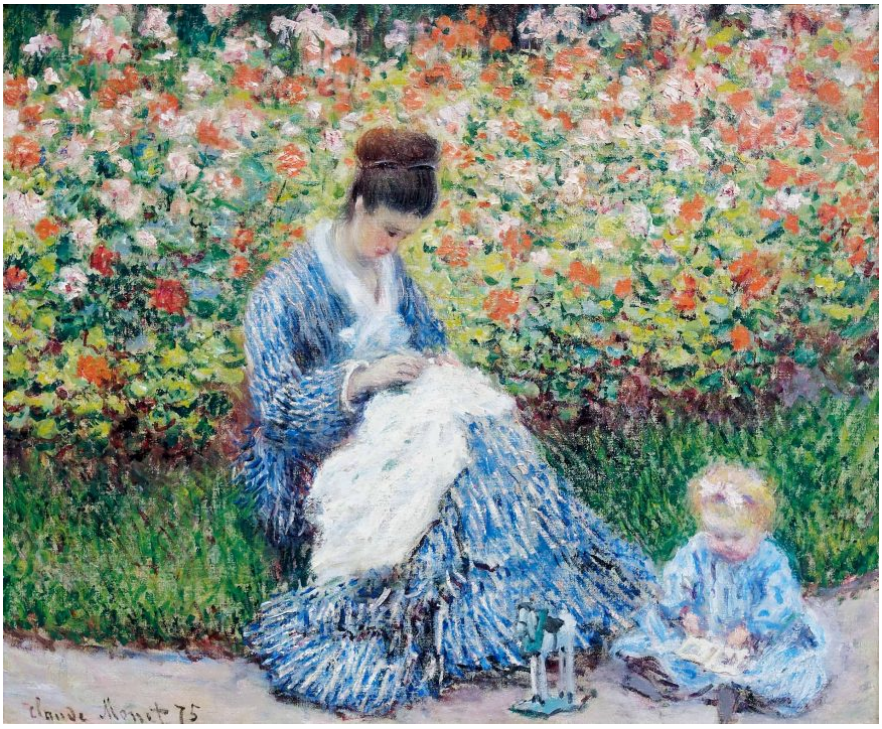


Figure **13.8.7.65**: Claude Monet, *Camille Monet and a Child in the Artist's Garden at Argenteuil*, 1875, oil on canvas, 55.3 x 64.7 cm (**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**)

More realistic?

The subject of Monet's 1875 painting of his wife *Camille Monet and a Child in the Artist's Garden at Argenteuil* is immediately recognizable. Both figures are clad in blue striped garments and are absorbed by an activity: Camille sews, the child gazes down at a book. A toy horse stands in the foreground, and a virtual wall of green foliage and blooming red and pink flowers rises behind them.

The viewer is given enough visual information to recognize the main components of the scene, but rather than supplying fine details that would provide more specifics, Monet emphasizes his brightly colored brushstrokes. If we want to know what kind of fabric the garments depicted are made of, what kind of flowers are blooming, or even the texture of the figures' skin, we can't find out by looking closely. Close study of the painting will only teach us more about Monet's brushwork, not more about the depicted scene.

As a result, if we evaluate the painting's truth to nature in terms of the careful representation of details, it is not very realistic. However, Impressionist paintings like this one were often described by sympathetic critics as realistic representations, and sometimes even as *more* realistic than traditional academic paintings with meticulously detailed figures and scenes. How so?

Truth to reality

Impressionism raises complex and interesting questions about realistic representation. Although we tend to have powerful reflexive judgments about what is realistic in art and what is not, the basis for such judgments is frequently unclear. Supporters of Impressionist painting subtly but substantially shifted the criteria for judging truth to reality in painting. In traditional Renaissance and Academic naturalism, truth to reality entailed the inclusion not only of what we *see*, but also prominent visible evidence of properties of *touch* and *space*: the mass of objects, their textures, and the three-dimensional terrain in which they are located. Because paintings cannot literally reproduce space, mass, and texture, they must give an illusion of those qualities—and they frequently exaggerate the visual evidence that contributes to that illusion.



Figure **13.8.7.66**: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, oil on canvas, 3.3 x 4.25 m, painted in Rome, exhibited at the salon of 1785 (Musée du Louvre)

The more **orthogonal lines** are included in a painting, the more convincingly the ground in a painting appears to recede like a floor, rather than standing upright like a wall—hence the French Academic painter Jacques-Louis David includes a tile floor and masonry walls with many orthogonal lines in ***The Oath of the Horatii***. Effects of **chiaroscuro** in traditional naturalism are also frequently exaggerated relative to what we actually see in order to assert the tangible volume of what are actually only two-dimensional renderings. The dramatic contrast created by the starkly lit figures against the very dark shadows and background in David's painting heightens the illusion of three dimensional forms in space.

Only what we see, not what we know

The relation of figures to space in Monet's *Camille Monet and a Child in the Artist's Garden* is markedly different. There is no use of chiaroscuro to define the forms of the figures or linear perspective to define the space in which they are situated. The figures sit directly in front of the foliage, creating a very shallow space, which is further flattened by the prominent textured brushstrokes throughout the entire painting. The light source is diffused, and there is very little modeling of the figures, only a few dark areas in the clothing that distinguish the arms from the torsos.

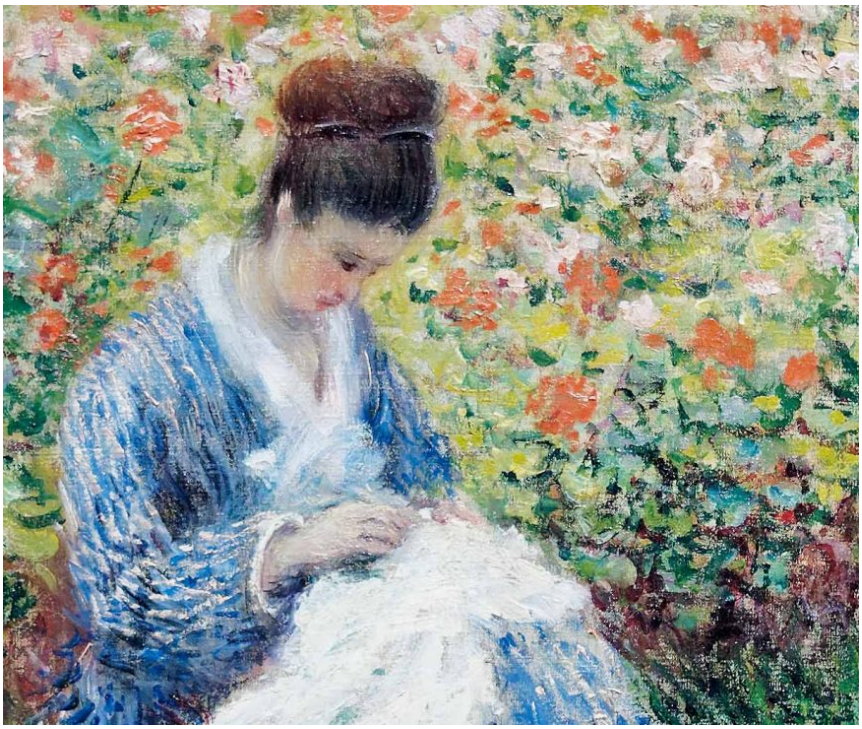


Figure 13.8.7.67: Claude Monet, *Camille Monet and a Child in the Artist's Garden at Argenteuil* (detail), 1875, oil on canvas, 55.3 x 64.7 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

The Impressionist style as exemplified here by Monet consists in rendering *only optical* data, reproducing only what we see, not what we know about space, mass, and the other physical details of the world. In 1883, the critic Jules Laforgue suggested, "The Impressionist sees and renders nature as it is—that is, wholly in terms of color vibrations. No drawing, no light, no modeling, no perspective, no chiaroscuro, none of those puerile classifications: all these become vibrations of color and must be represented on the canvas by means of color vibrations." There is some sleight-of-hand in this appeal to the greater truth of Impressionism, of course. Laforgue states that the Impressionist "renders nature *as it is* [telle qu'elle est]," but he should perhaps more accurately say that the Impressionist concentrates on rendering nature as it *appears to the eyes*. In this sense, the Impressionists both limited the project of painting to a narrower goal than that pursued by traditional naturalism, and increased its accuracy with regard to that goal.



Figure 13.8.7.68: Lilla Cabot Perry, *A Stream Beneath Poplars*, c. 1890-1900, oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.3 cm (**Hunter Museum of American Art**)

Shifting patterns of color

The full import of this notion for the Impressionist approach to painting is clear in the American artist Lilla Cabot Perry's recollection of Monet's advice to her:

> ***"When you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have before you—a tree, a house, a field, or whatever. Merely think, Here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact color and shape, until it gives your own naïve impression of the scene before you…." [Monet] said he wished he had been born blind and then had suddenly gained his sight so that he could have begun to paint in this way without knowing what the objects were that he saw before him.***
>
> ***Lilla Cabot Perry, "Reminiscences of Claude Monet from 1889 -1909," The American Magazine of Art, vol. 18, no. 3 (1927), p. 120.***

Monet here expresses a desire for an impossible separation of the immediate sensation of his vision from the subsequent processing of visual data by his mind. Imagine a baby's first visual experience. She does not know that the color patterns she is experiencing correspond to substantial objects out there in a tangible world; nor does she know where one object ends and another begins; nor the distinction between near or far. An infant or a blind person suddenly gaining their sight would see only a *shifting pattern of color*. Accordingly, Monet advises Perry not to think about the objects that she is painting, but to see only a pattern of color: a "square of blue," an "oblong of pink," a "streak of yellow."



Figure 13.8.7.69: Claude Monet, *Haystacks, Midday*, 1890, oil on canvas, 65.6 x 100.6 cm (National Gallery of Australia, Canberra)

Painting light

Monet's advice to Perry also begins to account for the radical brushwork of the Impressionists, which disturbed many critics. Impressionist artists constructed their paintings in color patches in the way Monet described, as though painting the optical world as they experienced it on the surface of their retinas, rather than attempting to create an illusion of the space, mass, and textures of the tactile world. Critics also observed that the patchy brushwork of the Impressionist style simulated flickering patterns of light and color. The apparent rapidity of the brushwork indicated the rapidly shifting lighting conditions, which changed before the artist had time to smooth the surface of the work with a traditional Academic finish.



Figure 13.8.7.70: Claude Monet, *Poplars*, 1891, oil on canvas, 93 x 74.1 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Monet's series paintings of the 1880s and 1890s represent the culmination of this optical-scientific aspect of Impressionism. In these series Monet recorded the changing appearance of a single subject—haystacks in Giverny, **Rouen cathedral**, a **bank of poplars**—at different times of day, in different weather, and in different seasons. Since the quality of light changed rapidly, Monet could work on a given canvas for a limited time, taking it up again only when lighting conditions were similar. Perry reported that one particular light effect in the *Poplars* series lasted only seven minutes, until the sunlight hit a certain leaf.



Figure **13.8.7.71**: Left: Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral (The Portal and the Tour d'Albane in full Sunlight)* also called *Harmony in Blue and Gold*, 1893 (dated 1894), oil on canvas, 107 x 73 cm (**Musée d'Orsay**); Right: Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, Portal, Morning Sun*, 1893, oil on canvas, 92.2 x 63.0 (**Musée d'Orsay**)

Although the subject matter is identical, the radically different colors used in the approximately thirty views that Monet painted of Rouen Cathedral in 1893-94 demonstrate the changes in the appearance of the scene over the course of time. Within the nominally grayish-tan local color of the masonry, Monet finds a surprising variety of colors. The first work records a painting time around noon on a sunny day, and the dominant color is bright yellow, with flickers of blue for the shadows around the carved façade. The second records an early morning observation, with the entire façade cast in shade and rendered in blues, violets, and pinks. In both works reflected light bounces up from the ground in front of the cathedral onto the underside of the deeply-carved arches of the portals, which are rendered in bright orange—very far indeed from the local color of the stone. (For an explanation of the terms "local color'" and "perceived color," see **Impressionist color.**)

Living up to its name

For supporters of the movement, the name Impressionism is singularly apt, even though it was **originally applied as a term of derision**. "Impression" can be used as a scientific term for the stimulation of the sensory nerves, as for example the effect on the retinal nerves of light reflecting off objects. Strictly speaking, the term isolates this purely physical stimulus from any subsequent mental or emotional reaction to it. The retinal impression consists only of a pattern of colors, before the mind interprets what it is seeing and deduces information about mass, space, and texture, and before the viewer reacts emotionally. For some of its critics and practitioners, Impressionism had the aura of an objective scientific project, informed by and contributing to a wealth of contemporary discoveries in the science of light and color.

Additional resources:

"The Transformation of Landscape Painting in France" from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

How to recognize Monet: *The Basin at Argenteuil*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.7.17**: Claude Monet, *The Basin at Argenteuil*, c. 1872, oil on canvas, 60 x 80.5 cm (Musee d'Orsay, Paris). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

> ***The town of Argenteuil lies on the banks of the Seine eleven kilometers to the northwest of Paris, a fifteen-minute train ride from the capital's Gare Saint-Lazare. With its railway line and factories, residences and river walks, it is in many ways typical of the suburban towns on the outskirts of Paris. Yet the contribution it made to the evolution of modern French painting sets it apart from neighboring villages. During the 1870s and 1880s Argenteuil became an important source of inspiration for the impressionist artists, who immortalized its river views, bridges, streets, and gardens in their groundbreaking paintings.***
>
> ***(from The National Gallery of Art)***

Additional resources:

Claude Monet on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet at Argenteuil* (Yale University Press, 1984)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.7.72: More Smarthistory images…

Claude Monet, *The Argenteuil Bridge*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.7.18**: Claude Monet, *The Argenteuil Bridge*, 1874, oil on canvas, 60.5 x 80 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Please note that there is significant background chatter in this video. The Musée d'Orsay is happily a very busy museum and this painting is hung in a relatively small room.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

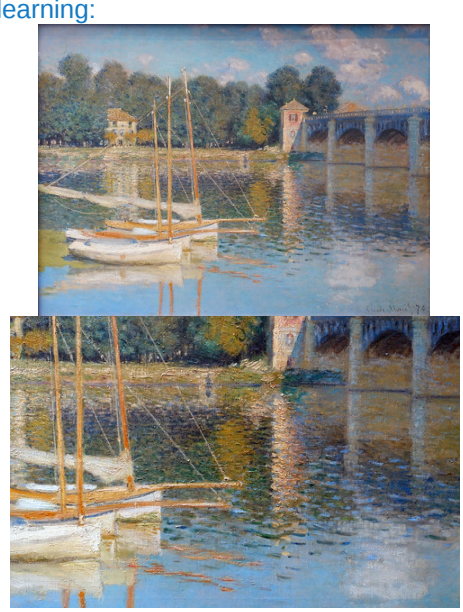


Figure **13.8.7.73**: More Smarthistory images…

Monet, *The Gare Saint-Lazare*

by DR. TYLER E. OSTERGAARD



Video 13.8.7.19: Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris



Figure 13.8.7.74: Claude Monet, *The Gare Saint-Lazare* (or *Interior View of the Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line*), 1877, oil on canvas, 75 x 104 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Monet's painting, *The Gare Saint-Lazare*, overwhelms the viewer not though its scale (a modest 29 ½ by 41 inches), but through the deep sea of steam and smoke that envelops the canvas. Indeed, as one contemporary reviewer remarked somewhat sarcastically, "Unfortunately thick smoke escaping from the canvas prevented our seeing the six paintings dedicated to this study."[1]

The Gare Saint-Lazare (also known as *Interior View of the Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line*), depicts one of the passenger platforms of the Gare Saint-Lazare, one of Paris's largest and busiest train terminals. The painting is not so much a single view of a train platform, it is rather a component in larger project of a dozen canvases which attempts to portray all facets of the Gare Saint-Lazare. The paintings all have similar themes—including the play of light filtered through the smoke of the train shed, the billowing clouds of steam, and the locomotives that dominate the site. Of these twelve linked paintings, Monet exhibited between six and eight of them at the third Impressionist exhibition of 1877, where they were among the most discussed paintings exhibited by any of the artists.



Figure 13.8.7.75: Claude Monet, *The Gare Saint-Lazare: Arrival of a Train*, 1877, oil on canvas, 83 x 101.3 cm (Harvard Art Museums)

Light and steam

Light—the dominant formal element in so many Impressionist paintings—is given particularly close attention in *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line*. Here, as in many of the Impressionists' most celebrated paintings, Monet shows a bright day and labors to reproduce the closely observed effects of pure sunlight. The billowing clouds of steam add to the effect, creating layers of light that fill the canvas. Here however, we must pause as *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line* is an exception within the full group—it is one of only two paintings of the train station shown on a bright bright, sunny, day. In contrast, the other ten paintings (for example the one at the Harvard Art Museums, above) show dark, hazy views of the Gare Saint-Lazare. Though an exception and anomaly in terms of its interest in sunlight, *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line* shares a great deal in common with the other paintings at least in terms of subject and view.



Figure 13.8.7.76: Apartment buildings in the distance (detail), Claude Monet, *The Gare Saint-Lazare* (or *Interior View of the Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line*), 1877, oil on canvas, 75 x 104 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Monet's achievement is extraordinary, and *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line* has rightfully been singled out as among the most impressive paintings of Impressionism. Monet renders the steam with a range of blues, pinks, violets, tans, grays, whites, blacks, and yellows. He depicts not just the steam and light—which fill the canvas—but also their effect on the site—the large distant apartments, the Pont de l'Europe (a bridge that overlooked the train station), and the many locomotives—all of which peak through, and dematerialize into a thick industrial haze.

Train and shed as subject

Against the bright background, Monet represents the station's vast iron roof in copper and tan tones that stand out against *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line's* low key palette, with its swirling blue, gray and purple background. The trains—here represented by no less than three locomotives and a large box car—are shown as both the source of the steam and distinct from it. However, in 1877, a number of critics were worried the smoke would completely engulf them. Gorges Maillard, writing in the conservative journal *Le Pays*, made just this point, describing the paintings as "the rails, lanterns, switchers, wagons, above all, always these flakes, these mists, clouds of white steam, are so thick they sometimes hide everything else."[2]

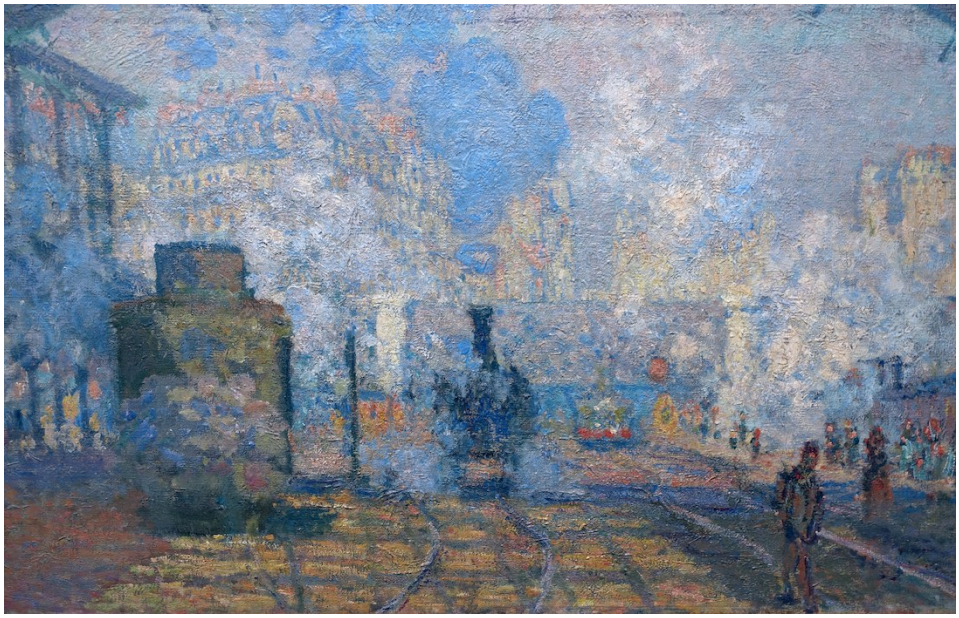


Figure **13.8.7.77**: Locomotives and tracks (detail), Claude Monet, *The Gare Saint-Lazare* (or *Interior View of the Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line*), 1877, oil on canvas, 75 x 104 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line and the other paintings of the Gare Saint-Lazare by Monet are hardly an isolated moment in the artist's oeuvre. In the 1870s Monet—along with most of the other major Impressionists including, Caillebotte, Pissarro, Renoir, Degas, Guillaumin, Raffaëlli, and even Manet—had shown a steady interest in the railroad as a subject within their paintings of modern of life. In fact, the six to eight paintings Monet exhibited at the Third Impressionist Exhibition were shown along with Caillebotte's monumental *Le Pont de l'Europe* (below) that likewise shows the train yards of the Gare Saint-Lazare. Caillebotte's painting though shows the site from the great iron bridge that crossed over the yards—the Pont de l'Europe. Interestingly, Caillebotte's painting of genteel strollers set in the bourgeois world of Paris's grand boulevards drew praise, while Monet's paintings of trains, steam and industrial activity were severely criticized.



Figure 13.8.7.78: Gustave Caillebotte, *Le pont de l'Europe*, c. 1876, oil on canvas (Musée du Petit Palais, Geneva)

Perhaps the criticism is due to the fact that Monet shows the locomotives as the main subject, rather than as background elements. He shows them unapologetically, in their natural element, among the steam, workers and activity of the bustling train station. Four paintings in the set of twelve, including *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line,* show the large and distinctive cast iron spans that covered the platforms. However, the other paintings show the exterior, the yards, workers, tunnels, switches, sheds, and engines of the station. Indeed, even in *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line* and the other so-called interiors of the of the train shed, Monet includes workers, steam, and industrial machines. In fact, what he does not show is the grand hotel, lavish entrance or sculpture of the station's impressive façade. Even in the interiors, the paintings are very much the business end of the station.

A series?

These common subjects—train, steam, and industrial activity—raise the question of whether the works should be regarded as series. Though scholars have frequently discussed the works, and particularly the four interiors, as part of series, only two of the works show a repeated (or serial) view. When taken as a whole the group does not seem to be the manifestation of an interest in serial painting or an exploration of subtle changes only evident in repeated views (as Monet will later do with his series of grain stacks) bur rather as an effort to capture the varied aspects of the station by rendering its many faces in paint.

In *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line* Monet shows his keen interest in light, color, and paint handling, yet *The Gare Saint-Lazare, the Auteuil Line* cannot be divorced from its subject—the locomotives, the steam, and the yard of the Gare Saint-Lazare. In this bright scene Monet gives us a new vision of modern life that does not shy away from its industrial side.

[1] Descubes, A. "L'Exposition des impressionnistes" *Gazette des lettres, des sciences et des arts*, vol. 1, no. 12 (20 April 1877), pp. 185-188.

[2] Maillard, "Chronique: Les Impressionnistes" *Le Pays* (April 9, 1877), pp. 2-3.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Musée d'Orsay

Monet, *Gare St. Lazare* at the Harvard Art Museums

Monet, *Gare St. Lazare* at the Art Institute of Chicago

Monet, *Gare St. Lazare* at The National Gallery

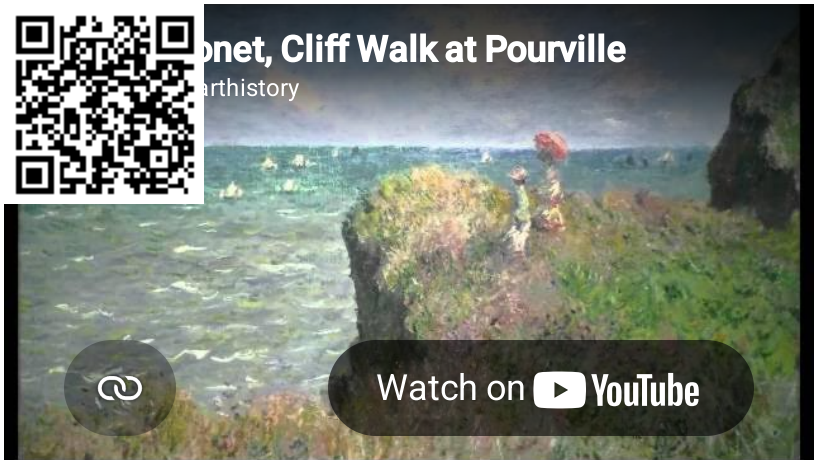
Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.7.79

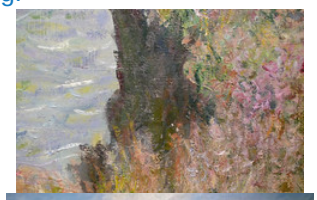
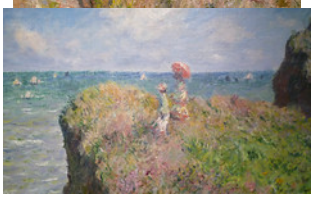
Claude Monet, *Cliff Walk at Pourville*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.20: Claude Monet, *Cliff Walk at Pourville*, 1882, oil on canvas, 26-1/8 x 32-7/16 inches (66.5 x 82.3 cm) (Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

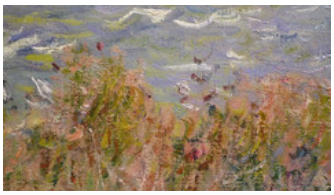







Figure 13.8.7.80: More Smarthistory images…

Claude Monet, *Poplars*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.7.21**: Claude Monet, *Poplars*, 1891, oil on canvas, 36-5/8 x 29-3/16″ / 93 x 74.1 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

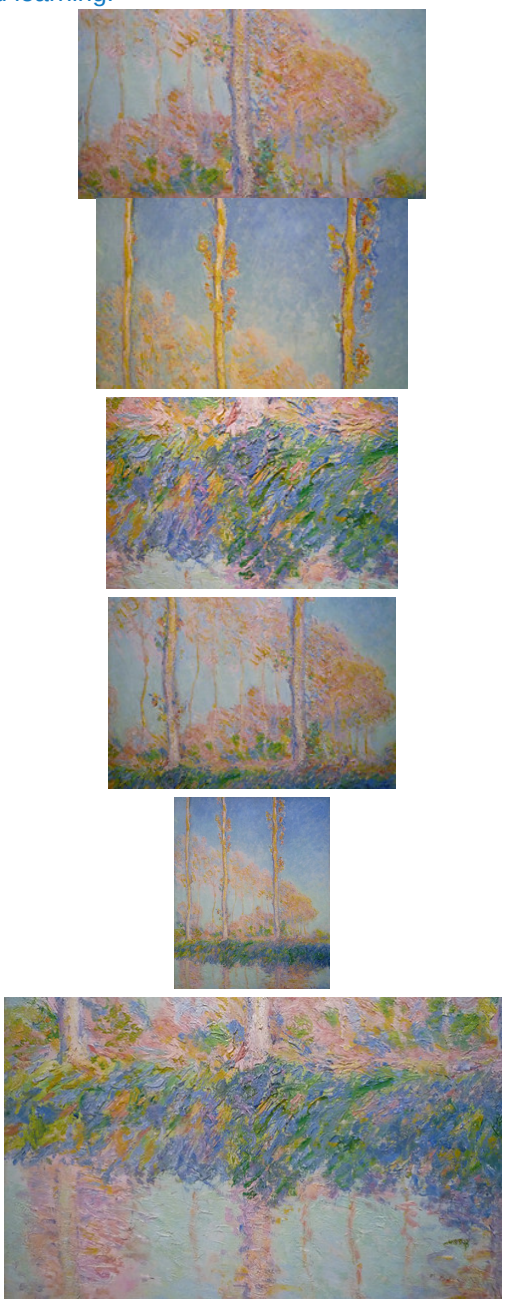


Figure **13.8.7.81**: More Smarthistory images…

Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral* Series

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.7.22: Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral (The Portal, Grey Weather)*, 1894, oil on canvas, 100 x 65 cm; *Rouen Cathedral (The Portal and the Tour d'Albane, Morning Effect)*, 1894, oil on canvas, 106 x 73 cm; *Rouen Cathedral (The Portal, Harmony in Blue)*, 1894, oil on canvas, 91 x 63 cm ; *Rouen Cathedral (The Portal and the Tour d'Albane in the Sunlight)*, 1894, oil on canvas, 107 x 73 cm (Musée D'Orsay, Paris)

Claude Monet painted more than 30 canvases depicting Rouen cathedral between 1892 and 1894. This video discusses four paintings in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

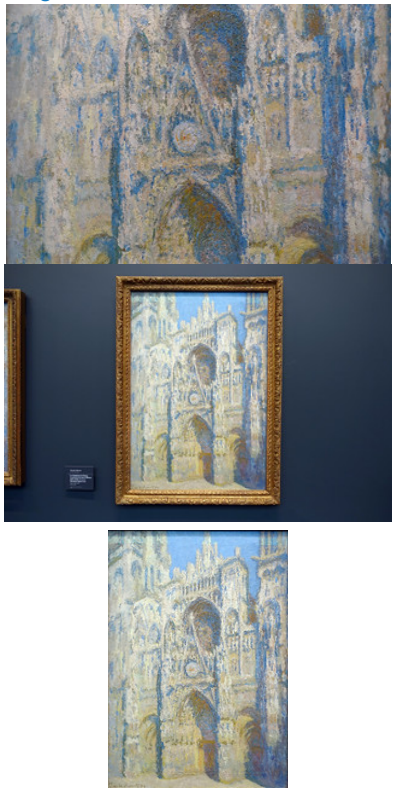


Figure 13.8.7.82: More Smarthistory images…

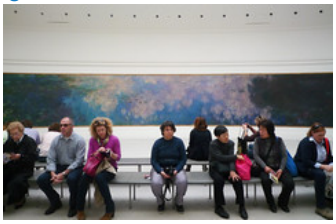
Claude Monet, *Les Nymphéas (The Water Lilies)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Clouds, oil on three canvas panels, 200 x 1275 cm, c. 1918-26 *Green Highlights*, oil on two canvas panels, 200 x 850 cm, c. 1918-26 *Sunset*, oil on canvas, 200 x 600 cm, c. 1918-26 Room 2: *Reflection of Trees*, oil on two canvas panels, 200 x 850 cm, c. 1918-26 *The Morning Light, the Willows*, oil on three canvas panels, 200 x 1275 cm, c. 1918-26 *The Morning Willows*, oil on three canvas panels, 200 x 1275 cm, c. 1918-26 *The Two Willows*, oil on four canvas panels, 200 x 1700 cm, c. 1918-26

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:







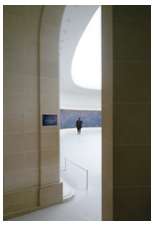








https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88743











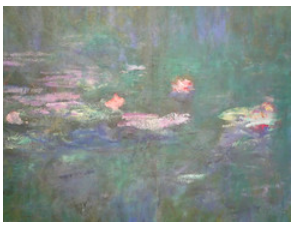
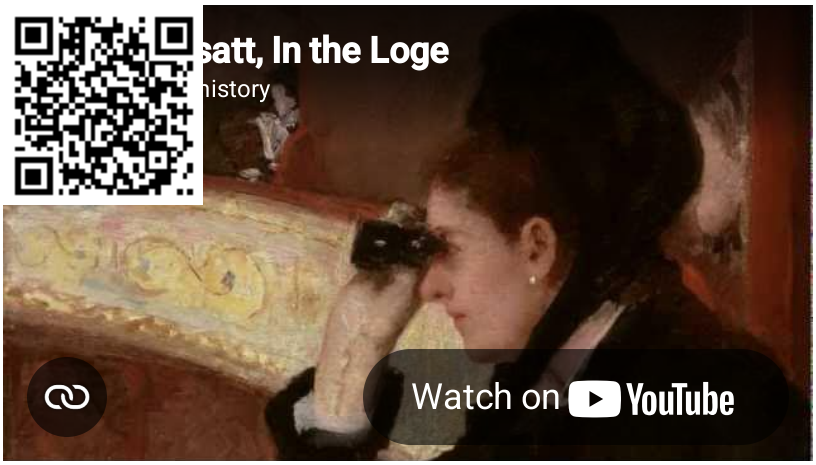


Figure **13.8.7.83**: More Smarthistory images…

Mary Cassatt

Mary Cassatt, *In the Loge*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.7.24: Mary Cassatt, *In the Loge*, 1878, oil on canvas, 81.28 x 66.04 cm (32 x 26 inches) (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

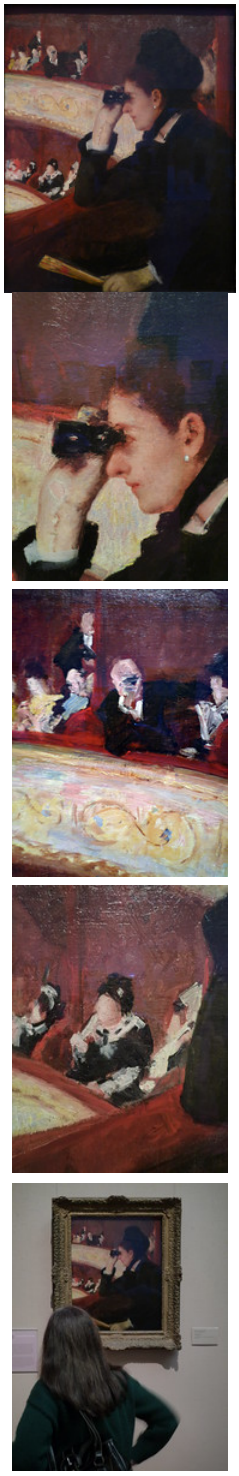


Figure 13.8.7.84: More Smarthistory images…

Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.7.85: Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 129.8 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

A citizen of the world

If, as one art historian[1] recently stated, Camille Pissarro was the glue that held Impressionism together, then Mary Stevenson Cassatt had similarly adhesive qualities. Giving the lie to the stereotype that Americans were provincial—even barbarous—in their artistic tastes, Cassatt was anything but that; a cultured woman, educated in London, Paris and Berlin and fluent in French and German, she spent four years at the Pennsylvanian Academy of the Fine Arts before studying in France under Jean-Leon Gérôme, Thomas Couture and others.



Figure 13.8.7.86: Dog (detail), Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 129.8 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

After the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war she continued her travels, spending time in Italy and Spain, before settling in Paris once again in 1874, the year of the first Impressionist Exhibition. In the Salon of that year she exhibited a work that Degas, for one, admired. Over the following years, though, Salon success eluded her, largely, or so she judged, due to the prejudices of the all male selection jury.

It is understandable then that by 1877, when Degas invited her to join them, Cassatt would be drawn to this group of artists who were exhibiting independently and for whom gender did not appear to be a barrier for inclusion; certainly the quantity and quality of Berthe Morisot's works in the first exhibitions were a match to those of the men. The same too can be said for the eleven

paintings that Cassatt would exhibit in the fourth Impressionist Exhibition—included among them are some of her most celebrated paintings, notably *Reading Le Figaro*, *Woman in a Loge*, *In the Loge* and *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*.

Little Girl in a Blue Armchair

Produced in 1878, it shows a girl sprawled on a blue armchair in a room with three other chairs of a matching design. She stares at the floor unaware or unconcerned about the portrait that is being painted of her. On the chair opposite her a lapdog dozes, a dark patch that neatly balances the dark tones of her clothing. There are no tables or ornaments, nothing to offer the viewer or the girl, who appears tired and bored, any distractions, only two large windows that are closed and heavily cropped by the upper edge of the canvas.



Figure **13.8.7.87**: Girl sprawled on blue armchair (detail), Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 129.8 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

The dominance of the overstuffed furniture with its vibrant blue upholstery captures an odd sense of restlessness and languorousness, both matched by the girl's pose. A parent would tell her to sit up properly and there is a rebellious, devil-may-care attitude in her comfortably lounging form. She has been dressed with due observance to fashion, the tartan shawl matching her socks and the bow in her carefully arranged hair; her shoes are spotless and the buckles sparkle; literally dolled up. All this primness however is of absolutely no concern to the girl whose unselfconscious pose presents as Petra Chu puts it: "a radically new image of childhood."



Figure **13.8.7.88**: Chair (detail), Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 129.8 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

That a woman produced the image is, of course, no coincidence. The nursery in middle class homes was a space that was rarely if ever visited by men; child-rearing being an exclusively female occupation, little wonder then that few male artists painted babies or young children. But, of course, it is not in a nursery that we find ourselves, but a drawing room, clean to the point of sanitized, a room in which, just like her costume, the girl seems out of place, swamped by the massive abundance of chairs, a point emphasized compositionally in that each overlaps the other. The upshot of all this is to create a feeling—if not so extreme as alienation—then certainly a sense of disorientation, one that seems to capture, as subtly and incisively as any artist before her, the huffing and puffing tiresomeness a child feels within the social constraints of an adult's world, a world that seems almost oppressively gendered.

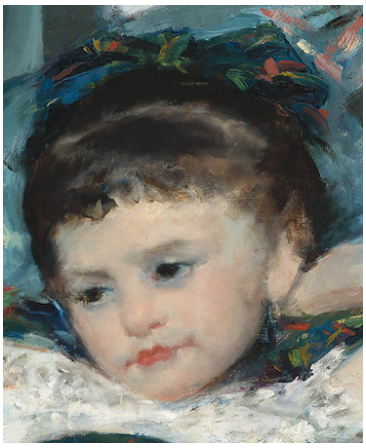


Figure **13.8.7.89**: Girl (detail), Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 129.8 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

The girl herself was the daughter of a friend of Degas's and the painting is often cited as an example of Degas's influence on Cassatt. The two certainly had much in common, if only in terms of their backgrounds. Both were born into the upper-middle-class, the children of bankers, and both had strong connections to America, Degas's mother and grandmother were American and he had stayed with his family in New Orleans in 1872-3.

The similarities in their work, certainly in this period, are also striking. In its asymmetrical composition, the casual, unposed treatment of the sitter, the weightiness and solidity of its forms in contrast to that grey mercurial dollop of negative space, its use of cropping and loose brushwork, as well as the interest in the private moment that we find so often in his pastels, the hallmarks of Degas's work can clearly be found in *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*.

Japanese prints

The influence of Japanese prints is also a shared feature. Notice how in Degas's famous *L'Absinthe* our eye is led in and up through the opposing diagonals of the marble-topped tables which seem almost to be floating. A similar effect is created by Cassatt in the blue furniture, to such an extent that we are left uncertain whose point of view we are looking from—a child's at eye level or an adult's from above. The composition, however, still coheres, the space and its various junctures having been carefully conceived to create a balanced whole.



Figure 13.8.7.90: Edgar Degas, *L'Absinthe*, 1876, oil on canvas, 92 x 68 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

These startling similarities may be accounted for by the fact that Degas had a hand in painting the background, a practice that seems shocking today. Cassatt seemed not to mind, though, writing several years later of how Degas "advised me on the background, *he even worked on the background*." The last part she underlined suggesting that she even considered it a privilege. It was common practice for male artists to take a patronizing approach to their female counterparts. "Manet sermonizes me", Berthe Morisot complained to her sister Edma. It is inconceivable, however, to think that either Degas or Manet, whose influence is certainly in evidence in Cassatt's lavish use of cobalt blue and in the tonal treatment of the girl's legs, would or could have painted such an image.

The splendid legacy

Like Manet and Degas, Cassatt spent time in Italy copying the great works there, including, in her case, those of Correggio. Perhaps there is something of that old master's dreamy bambini in the pose of the little girl too. Either way, running alongside her distinctly modern artistic vision, the classical tradition she was trained in is never far away. She could be quite snobby about it in fact. She thought little of Paul Durand-Ruel, for instance, the greatest of the Impressionist dealers, for knowing next to nothing about Italian art. This did not put her off providing him with contacts when he traveled to New York with Impressionist works, including two of her own, which he exhibited in the spring of 1886. "Had it not been for Durand-Ruel, caviar would have been a good deal rarer," Renoir once said to his son.

Yet, in the international success story of Impressionism, Cassatt is also owed her due. For among the contacts she gave Durand-Ruel was the sugar magnate Henry O. Havemeyer, whose wife Lousine was a close friend of hers, having studied art together in Paris. As the couple's artistic consultant for the rest of her life Cassatt played a central role in the development of one of the greatest private collections ever amassed in America. Today New York's Metropolitan holds hundreds of paintings bequeathed by the Havemeyer family, including, the Museum claims, "the most complete group of Degas's works ever assembled" and twenty works by Mary Cassatt, a woman remarkable not only for helping shape contemporary tastes in American connoisseurship, but also, over the course of her long artistic career, for producing work of extraordinary quality that helped transform American art itself into a world-class enterprise.

1. Waldemar Januszcak

Additional resources:

This painting at the National Gallery

Mary Cassatt on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Susan Fillin Yeh, Mary Cassatt's Images of Women, Art Journal (1976)

Norma Broude, Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?, Woman's Art Journal (2000)

Mary Cassatt, *Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.7.25**: Mary Cassatt, *Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge*, 1879, oil on canvas, 32 x 23-1/2 inches or 81.3 x 59.7 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

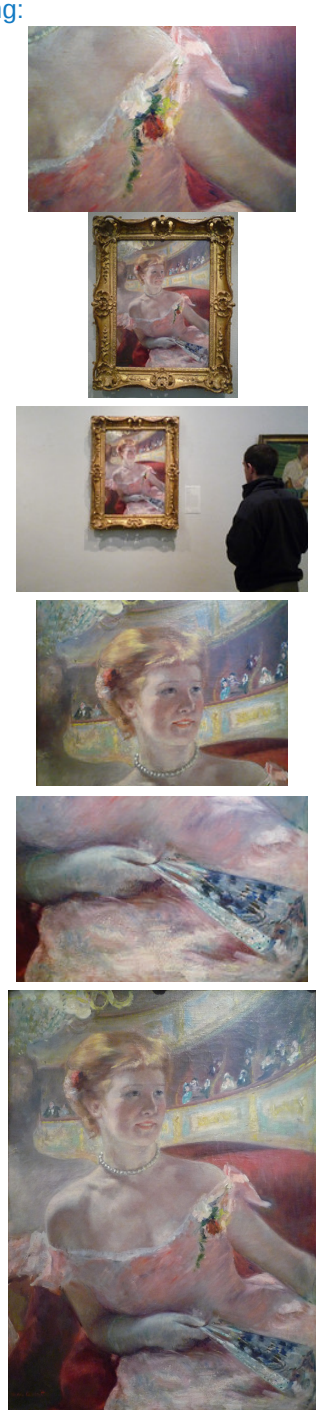


Figure **13.8.7.91**: More Smarthistory images…

Mary Cassatt, *The Child's Bath*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.7.26: Mary Cassatt, *The Child's Bath*, 1893, oil on canvas, 39-1/2 x 26 inches (100.3 x 66.1 cm) (Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **13.8.7.92**: More Smarthistory images…



Figure **13.8.7.93**: Mary Cassatt, *The Coiffure*, 1890-1891, drypoint and aquatint on laid paper, sheet: 43.2 x 30.7 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)



Figure **13.8.7.94**: Kitagawa Utamaro, *Takashima Ohisa Using Two Mirrors to Observe Her Coiffure*, c. 1795, woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 36.3 x 25 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

In April of 1890, the École des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts) in Paris showcased an exhibition of Japanese woodblock prints. These *ukiyo-e* images, "pictures of the floating world," as they were evocatively called, were comprised mostly of scenes of urban bourgeois pleasure—geishas, beautiful women, sumo wrestlers, kabuki actors—and pictures of the natural beauty around Edo (present day Tokyo)—the mists of Mount Fuji, cherry blossoms, rain showers, and surging waves along the port of Kanagawa.

Ever since Commodore Matthew C. Perry helped to open imperial Japan to Western trade in 1853, Europe had become fascinated with Japanese culture. Artists like Edgar Degas, Camille Pissaro, Claude Monet (recall Monet's Japanese bridge in his gardens at his estate in Giverny), Vincent van Gogh, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, were among the many who incorporated elements of Japanese design into their work. Some of them also frequented the bustling antique shop on the Rue de Rivoli, La Porte Chinoise, that specialized in Japanese woodblock prints, jades, lacquers, and porcelains. The craze of Japonisme went to such heights that in 1885, the English opera team of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan staged their most popular show, a comic opera set entirely in imperial Japan, *The Mikado*.



Figure **13.8.7.95**: Kitagawa Utamaro, *Two Young Women Kneeling Back to Back, Dressing Their Hair in Mirrors*, woodblock print (Lieber Collection, East Hampton, New York)

Among the audience at the exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts that April was the American expatriate painter, Mary Cassatt. Cassatt's close friend, Edgar Degas, was a great admirer of Japanese art and had recently seen the exhibition with Camille Pissaro. Cassatt was spellbound. In a letter written that week to her friend, the painter Berthe Morisot, she wrote, "You who want to make color prints wouldn't dream of anything more beautiful. I dream of doing it myself and can't think of anything else but color on copper…P.S. You must see the Japanese—come as soon as you can."[1]

This drypoint etching, *The Coiffure*, of a woman adjusting her hair is one of the hundreds that Mary Cassatt made in her in-home studio in the summer and fall of 1890 and in the winter of 1891. It was inspired in part by a woodblock print in her personal collection, Kitagawa Utamaro's boudoir image of the daughter of a prosperous Edo businessman, *Takashima Ohisa Using Two Mirrors to Observe Her Coiffure* (above). *La Coiffure* also has its art historical roots in Old Master paintings of women bathing and the odalisque though it departs from those conventional models to become a tightly crafted exercise in form and composition.

The word "la coiffure" evokes a precise image, one of wealthy women in glamorous settings. The ritual of grooming, dressing, and preparing one's hair from the seventeenth and eighteenth century court days of Anne of Austria and Marie Antoinette was passed down to nineteenth-century ideals of femininity and beauty.



Figure **13.8.7.96**: Georges Girard, "La Coiffure Française Illustrée," c. 1900

To wear an elaborate hairstyle such as those depicted in this magazine illustration by George Girard, one needed to have a maid to help with one's hair. "La coiffure" was part of a specific lifestyle. Yet the woman in Cassatt's print is tending to her hair alone.

Perhaps what we are seeing is a working woman getting ready to start her day. The counterpoint of the print's title and the reality of its subject matter characterizes the ironic tension within the image.

The woman in Cassatt's *La Coiffure* sits in a plush armchair in front of mirror, her head focused downward, her back arched, as she adjusts her bun. The voyeuristic element to the scene is drawn from precedents in works by Rembrandt (*Bathsheba at Her Bath*, 1654) and Ingres (*La Grand Odalisque*, 1814), which Cassatt studied at the Louvre when she was a young student in the mid 1860s.

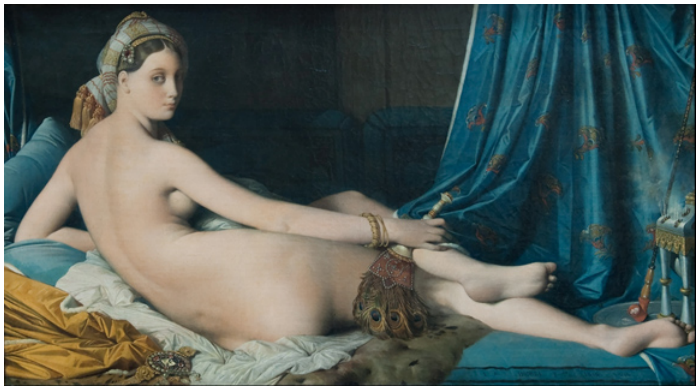


Figure **13.8.7.97**: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 36″ x 63″ / 91 x 162 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

The woman in *La Coiffure*, unlike Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* or Ingres' *Odalisque*, is not sexualized. Though her breasts are exposed, her chest and the details of her body are deliberately muted into an overall structure of curves and crisp lines. This is an exercise in clarity and tone where the subject, the woman's body, is a compositional element in the picture—as vividly realized as the other significant patterns of the room—the wallpaper, the fabric of the armchair, and the carpet.

As the viewer, we are placed at a slight leftward angle from the woman in the chair so that we see her through her reflection in the mirror while she is looking away from it. The downward gaze is similar to that of the model in the Utamaro, is done partly in homage to the modesty of the female subject in the *ukiyo-e* prints (artists were always aware that their works were made for a male-dominated market and designed them to be enticing) and partly as a study of shape and line, so that the viewer, realizing that he or she is not looking at a psychological portrait, could focus more intently on the compositional elements of the work. The prints provided artists with an opportunity to showcase their skill in concision—using no more than is necessary to convey an idea—the way a haiku poet showcases similar skill within the three lines and seventeen syllables of the poem

The curve of the woman's sloping back and neck echoes the curves of the chair which stand in contrast to the vertical lines of the mirror—a compositional counterpoint that further enhances the tension within the tight composition. The limited color palette of shades of rose, brown, and white, enables us to focus closely on the form and clarity of line. It also mimics the quality of pastels, which Cassatt, like her friend Edgar Degas, often liked to use. Through the process of the drypoint and aquatint etching, *La Coiffure* combines Cassatt's propensity for hazy shading and soft tones with a bold sharpness in line allowing the artist to integrate the qualities of two disparate media.



Figure 13.8.7.98: Edgar Degas, *At the Mirror*, 1885-86, pastel (San Diego Museum of Art)

Her desire to emulate the haziness, sensual, and suggestive possibilities of pastels is what motivated Cassatt not to use woodblock printing but intaglio. First, Cassatt carved her designs onto a smooth copper plate with a fine metal needle. Then the plate would be dusted with a powdered resin and heated until the resin melted in tiny mounds that hardened as they cooled. Acid was then added on to the metal plate biting the channels along the resin droplets. The deeper penetration of acid produced richer, darker tones, while a lighter application of acid produced lighter shades of color and a variety of nuanced gradients could be generated within a single print. Once Cassatt had replicated a certain number of images from a plate, she would incise the plate with a needle so that no one could use the same image again.



Figure 13.8.7.99: Mary Cassatt, *Woman Bathing*, 1890-91, color aquatint, with drypoint from three plates, on off-white laid paper, sheet: 43.2 x 30.5 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

The companion piece to *La Coiffure* is *Woman Bathing*, another image of a woman, bare-chested and half-dressed, grooming before a mirror.

Cassatt was inspired in part by some of Degas' pastels of women grooming. In Cassatt's prints, the time-honored boudoir scenes we see in Titian and Bellini become de-eroticized and re-appropriated as skilled exercises in form, shading, and line. In the spirit of *ukiyo-e* and Impressionism, these prints capture fugitive, fleeting moments of the busy lives of the Parisian bourgeois and working class.

Cassatt's motivation in making the prints was to make her art more accessible for a large audience. She believed that everyone, regardless of income or social position, should be able to experience art and to own works they enjoy:

> ***I believe [nothing] will inspire a taste for art more than the possibility of having it in the home. I should like to feel that amateurs in America could have an example of my***

> ***work, a print or an etching, for a few dollars. That is what they do in France. It is not left to the rich alone to buy art; the people—even the poor—have taste and buy according to their means, and here they can always find something they can afford.[2]***

This philosophy of art for the masses wasn't always popular with Mary Cassatt's contemporaries, like John Singer Sargent and the art historian Vernon Lee (Violet Paget), who viewed Cassatt's printmaking as a dilution of her precious talent. Yet Cassatt understood that as the world was changing with the twentieth century's new industries and technology, more and more people would have the income, education, and ability to experience art in ways they hadn't been able to before. The proliferative possibilities of the print and its evocative potential to convey so much in such a small space was just the art form to reach a wider audience.

[1] As quoted in ***Introduction: Cassatt's Influence from Japanese Art***

[2] As quoted in Nancy Mowll Mathews, *Mary Cassatt: A Life*, Yale University Press, 1998, p. 234.

Additional resources:

This work at the National Gallery of Art

Mary Cassatt on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Mary Cassatt at the National Gallery of Art

Mary Cassatt on the Google Art Project

13.8.7: Impressionism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.7: Impressionism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.8: Post-Impressionism

Post-Impressionism

Cézanne, Seurat, Van Gogh, and Gauguin are all Post-Impressionists, though their styles vary widely.

c. 1880 - 1900

A beginner's guide

Introduction to Neo-Impressionism, Part I

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure 13.8.8.1: Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, 1884-86, oil on canvas, 207.5 x 308.1 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

Just a dozen years after the debut of Impressionism, the art critic Félix Fénéon christened Georges Seurat as the leader of a new group of “Neo-Impressionists.” He did not mean to suggest the revival of a defunct style — Impressionism was still going strong in the mid-1880s — but rather a significant modification of Impressionist techniques that demanded a new label.

Fénéon identified greater scientific rigor as the key difference between Neo-Impressionism and its predecessor. Where the Impressionists were “arbitrary” in their techniques, the Neo-Impressionists had developed a “conscious and scientific” method through a careful study of contemporary color theorists such as Michel Chevreul and Ogden Rood. [1]



Figure **13.8.8.2**: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Bal du Moulin de la Galette*, 1876, oil on canvas, 131 x 175 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

This greater scientific rigor is immediately visible if we compare Seurat's Neo-Impressionist ***Grande Jatte*** with Renoir's Impressionist ***Moulin de la Galette***. The subject matter is similar: an outdoor scene of people at leisure, lounging in a park by a river or dancing and drinking on a café terrace. The overall goal is similar as well. Both artists are trying to capture the effect of dappled light on a sunny afternoon. However, Renoir's scene appears to have been composed and painted spontaneously, with the figures captured in mid-gesture. Renoir's loose, painterly technique reinforces this effect, giving the impression that the scene was painted quickly, before the light changed.

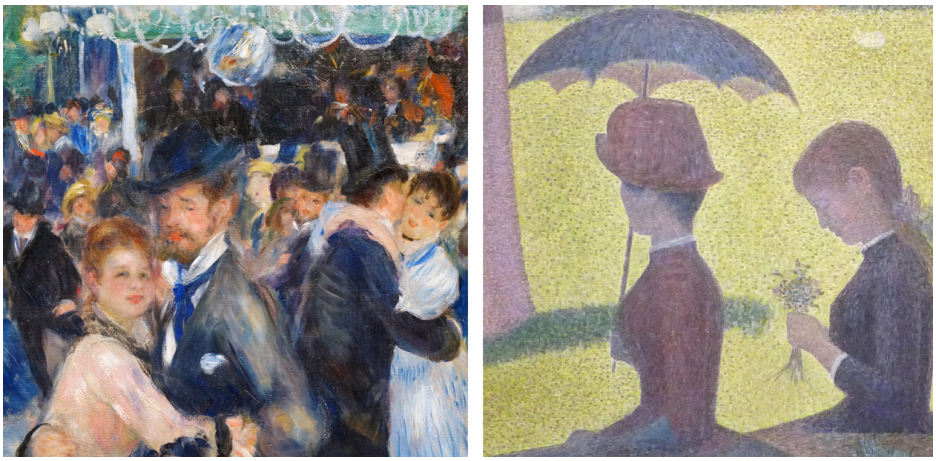


Figure **13.8.8.3**: Left: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Bal du Moulin de la Galette*, detail, 1876, oil on canvas, 131 x 175 cm (Musée d'Orsay); Right: Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, detail, 1884-86, oil on canvas, 207.5 x 308.1 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

By contrast, the figures in La Grande Jatte are preternaturally still, and the brushwork has also been systematized into a painstaking mosaic of tiny dots and dashes, unlike Renoir's haphazard strokes and smears. Neo-Impressionist painters employed rules and a method, unlike the Impressionists, who tended to rely on "instinct and the inspiration of the moment." [2]



Figure **13.8.8.4**: The color wheel

One of these rules was to use only the “pure” colors of the spectrum: violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. These colors could be mixed only with white or with a color adjacent on the color wheel (called “analogous colors”), for example to make lighter, yellower greens or darker, redder violets. Above all, the Neo-Impressionists would not mix colors opposite on the color wheel (“complementary colors”), because doing so results in muddy browns and dull grays.

More subtle color variations were produced by “optical mixture” rather than mixing paint on the palette. For example, examine the grass in the sun. Seurat intersperses the overall field of yellow greens with flecks of warm cream, olive greens, and yellow ochre (actually discolored chrome yellow). Viewed from a distance these flecks blend together to help lighten and warm the green, as we would expect when grass is struck by the yellow-orange light of the afternoon sun. It was this technique of painting in tiny dots (“points” in French) that gave Neo-Impressionism the popular nickname”Pointillism” although the artists generally avoided that term since it suggested a stylistic gimmick.



Figure **13.8.8.5**: Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, detail, 1884-86, oil on canvas, 207.5 x 308.1 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

For the grass in the shadows, Seurat uses darker greens intermixed with flecks of pure blue and even some orange and maroon. These are very unexpected colors for grass, but when we stand back the colors blend optically, resulting in a cooler, darker, and duller green in the shadows. This green is, however, more vibrant than if Seurat had mixed those colors on the palette and applied them in a uniform swath.

Similarly, look at the number of colors that make up the little girl’s legs! They include not only the expected pinks and oranges of Caucasian flesh, but also creams, blues, maroons, and even greens. Stand back again, though, and “optical mixture” blends them into a convincing and luminous flesh color, modeled in warm light and shaded by her white dress. (For more technical information on this topic, see **Neo-Impressionist color theory**).



Figure **13.8.8.6**: Georges Seurat, Study for *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, 1884, oil on canvas, 70.5 x 104.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The Neo-Impressionists also applied scientific rigor to composition and design. Seurat's friend and fellow painter Paul Signac asserted,

> ***The Neo-Impressionist … will not begin a canvas before he has determined the layout … Guided by tradition and science, he will … adopt the lines (directions and angles), the chiaroscuro (tones), [and] the colors (tints) to the expression he wishes to make dominant.Paul Signac, Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism, in Nochlin, ed., p. 121.***

Numerous studies for *La Grande Jatte* testify to how carefully Seurat decided on each figure's pose and arranged them to create a rhythmic recession into the background. This practice is very different from the Impressionists, who emphasized momentary views (impressions) by creating intentionally haphazard-seeming compositions, such as Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette*.



Figure 13.8.8.7: Georges Seurat, *Parade de cirque*, 1887-88, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 149.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Seurat's *Parade de cirque* is even more rigorously geometrical. It is dominated by horizontal and vertical lines, and the just slightly off-rhythmic spacing of the figures and architectural structure creates a syncopated grid. Scholars have debated whether the composition is based on the Golden Section, a geometric ratio that was identified by ancient Greek mathematicians as being inherently harmonious.

Systematized expression

The Neo-Impressionists also attempted to systematize the emotional qualities conveyed by their paintings. Seurat defined three main expressive tools at the painter's disposal: color (the hues of the spectrum, from warm to cool), tone (the value of those colors, from light to dark), and line (horizontal, vertical, ascending, or descending). Each has a specific emotional effect:

> ***Gaiety of tone is given by the dominance of light; of color, by the dominance of warmth; of line, by lines above the horizontal. Calmness of tone is given by an equivalence of light and dark; of color by an equivalence of warm and cold; and of line, by horizontals. Sadness of tone is given by the dominance of dark; of color, by the dominance of cold colors; and of line, by downward directions.***
>
> ***Georges Seurat, Letter to Maurice Beaubourg, August 28, 1890, in Nochlin, ed., p. 114 (translation modified for clarity).***

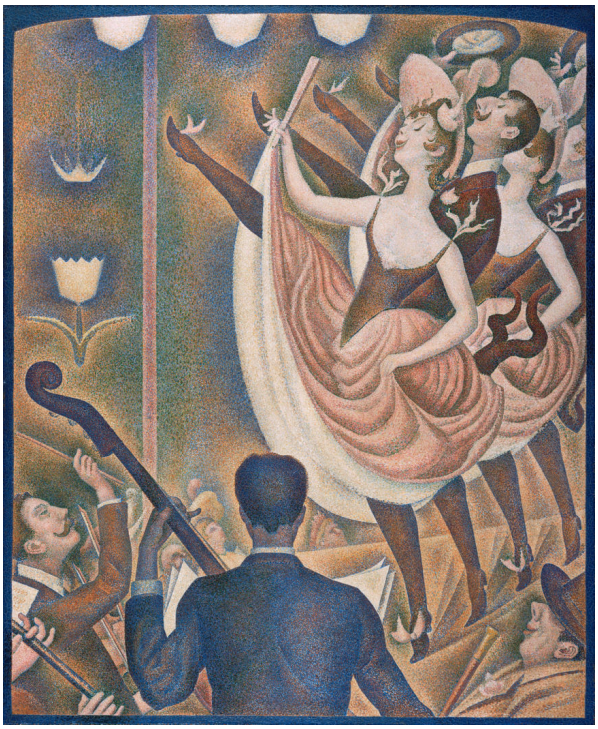


Figure 13.8.8.8: Georges Seurat, *Le Chahut*, 1889-90, oil on canvas, 170 x 141 cm (Kröller-Müller Museum)

Seurat's *Chahut* (Can-Can) seems designed to exemplify these rules, employing mostly warm, light colors and ascending lines to convey a mood of gaiety appropriate to the dance.

The Neo-Impressionist style had a relatively brief heyday; very few artists carried on the project into the 20th century. However, a great many artists experimented with it and took portions of its method into their own practice, from van Gogh to Henri Matisse. More broadly, the Neo-Impressionist desire to conform art-making to universal laws of perception, color, and expression echoes throughout Modernism, in movements as diverse as Symbolism, **Purism**, **De Stijl**, and the **Bauhaus**.

So far we have concentrated on the style of Neo-Impressionism. In **Part 2**, we will examine the subject matter favored by the artists, and discuss its relation to the social and political context of the late-nineteenth century.

Notes:

1. Félix Fénéon, "Les Impressionnistes en 1886," as translated in Linda Nochlin, ed., *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, 1874-1904: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 108.
2. Paul Signac, *From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism* (1899), as translated in Nochlin, ed., p. 122.

Introduction to Neo-Impressionism, Part II

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT

In **Part 1** of this introduction to Neo-Impressionism we examine the style of the movement, concentrating on the artists' attempt to systematize a method for painting according to scientific laws of perception, color, composition, and expression. Here, we will turn to the kind of subject matter typically chosen by the Neo-Impressionists and discuss its relation to late-nineteenth century social and political history.



Figure **13.8.8.9**: Georges Seurat, *The Circus*, 1890-91, oil on canvas, 186 x 152 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

For the most part, the Neo-Impressionists continued to depict the kinds of subjects preferred by the Impressionists: landscapes and leisure scenes. In addition to his famous painting of people lounging in the park on the island of La Grande Jatte, many of Georges Seurat's paintings portrayed entertainments such as the circuses and music halls that contributed to Paris's reputation for mass spectacles in the late nineteenth century.

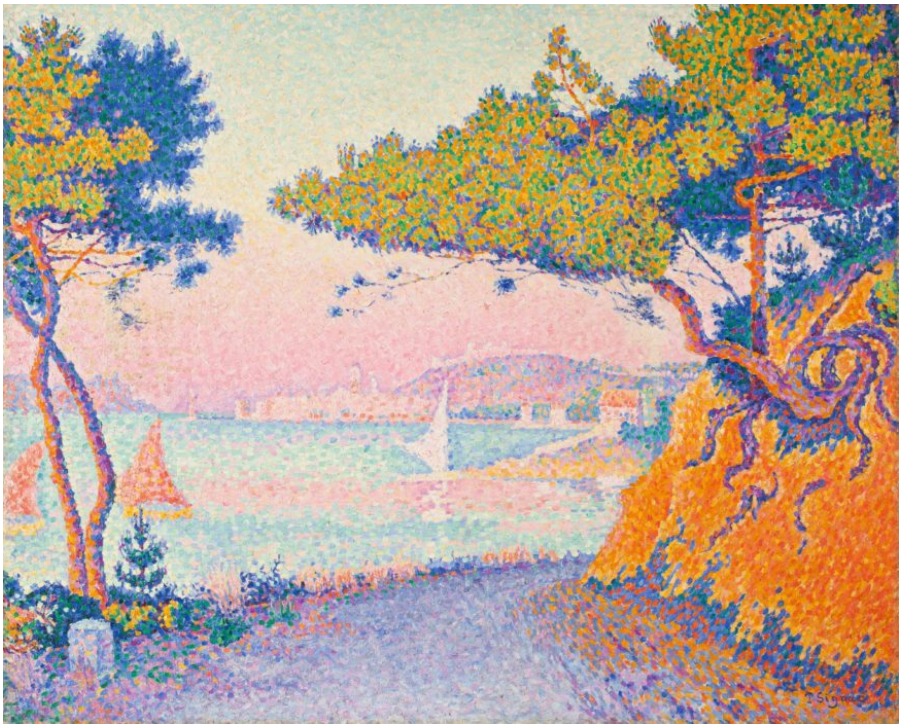


Figure **13.8.8.10**: Paul Signac, *Golfe Juan*, 1896, oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.3 cm (Worcester Art Museum)

Paul Signac's landscape paintings similarly reveal a concentration on leisure scenes. A sailor himself, Signac painted dozens of harbor scenes dominated by the sails and masts of small pleasure craft. The Mediterranean coast of France, where Signac spent his

summers, had a reputation both for the quality of its light — a **key interest** of the Neo-Impressionists generally — and for a laid-back, sun-filled lifestyle. In Signac's canvases, the bright colors favored by the Neo-Impressionists perfectly complement this reputation.

Social inequality

Although these subjects suggest carefree pleasure, there are undertones of social criticism in some Neo-Impressionist paintings. Seurat's *Circus* shows the strict class distinctions in Paris both by location, with the wealthier patrons seated in the lower tiers, and by dress and posture, which gets markedly more casual the further the spectators are from ringside.



Figure **13.8.8.11**: Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, 1884-86, oil on canvas, 207.5 x 308.1 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

One contemporary critic also remarked that the rigidity of the poses in Seurat's *La Grande Jatte* reminded him of "the stiffness of Parisian leisure, prim and exhausted, where even recreation is a matter of striking poses." [1] As we examine the characters in *La Grande Jatte* in detail, there are some surprising inclusions and juxtapositions. In the left foreground, a working-class man in shirtsleeves overlaps a much more formally-dressed middle-class gentleman in a top hat holding a cane. A trumpet player in the middle-ground plays directly into the ears of two soldiers standing at attention in the background. A woman with an ostentatiously eccentric pet monkey on the right and another fishing on the left have been interpreted as prostitutes, one of whom is casting out lures for clients. Between them, a toy lap-dog with a pink ribbon leaps toward a rangy hound whose coat is as black as that of the bourgeois gentleman with the cane.

Despite these provocative juxtapositions and overlaps, very few of the figures actually seem to be interacting with each other; each is lost in their own world. Unlike the mood of convivial good-fellowship between the classes and sexes in Auguste Renoir's ***Moulin de la Galette***, Seurat's *Grande Jatte* sets up a dynamic of alienation and tension.



Figure 13.8.8.12: Georges Seurat, *Bathers at Asnières*, 1884, oil on canvas, 201 x 300 cm (National Gallery of Art, London) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

La Grande Jatte forms an implicit pair with an earlier painting of the same size by Seurat, *Bathers at Asnières*. Asnières was an industrial suburb of Paris, just across the river Seine from La Grande Jatte. Unlike that island's largely middle-class patrons in their top hats and bustle skirts, here we see more working-class and lower-middle-class figures in shirtsleeves and straw hats or bowlers. In the background the smokestacks of the factories at Clichy serve as a reminder of labor, even during the men's leisure time.

As in the painting of La Grande Jatte, all of the figures are isolated in their own world, but a sense of implicit tension is raised by their insistent gaze across the river at their wealthier compatriots. A middle-class couple being rowed by a hired oarsman in a boat with a prominent French flag further adds to the class tensions raised by the work.

Political revolutionaries?

Perhaps it was this odd sense of unresolved class tensions that caused Signac to suggest that even Seurat's paintings of "the pleasures of decadence" are about exposing "the degradation of our era" and bearing witness to "the great social struggle that is now taking place between workers and capital." [2] Seurat's own politics were unclear, but Signac was a social anarchist, as were several other Neo-Impressionists, including Camille Pissarro and his son Lucien, as well as Maximilian Luce, Theodore van Rysselberghe, Henri Cross, and the critic Felix Fénéon. Social anarchists reject a strong centralized government in which the state owns the means of production and guides the economy; they believe that social ownership and cooperation will emerge naturally in a stateless society.



Figure **13.8.8.13**: Paul Signac, *In the Time of Harmony*, 1893-95, oil on canvas, 297 x 396 cm (Hôtel de Ville, Montreuil, France)

Signac's *In the Time of Harmony* was originally titled *In the Time of Anarchy*, but political controversy forced a change. Between 1892 and 1894 there were eleven bombings in France by anarchists, and a very public trial of suspected anarchists that included Fénéon and Luce.

Signac's painting was intended to show that, despite its current revolutionary tactics, the aim of anarchism was a peaceful utopia. In the foreground, workers lay down their tools for a picnic of figs and champagne while others play at boules. A couple in the center contemplates a posy, while behind them a man sows and women hang laundry. Although the mood is timeless — with different clothing, this painting could be a Classical pastoral scene — in the distance modern mechanical farm equipment reinforces the painting's subtitle, "The Golden Age is Not in the Past, it is in the Future."

Relatively few Neo-Impressionist paintings are so overtly allegorical and political. Signac argued that it was the Neo-Impressionists' technique, not any directly socialist or anarchist subject matter, that was most in tune with the political revolutionaries. The Neo-Impressionists' rigorous appeal to hard science, rather than dead conventions, along with their uncompromising will to "paint what they see, as they feel it," will help "give a hard blow of the pick-axe to the old social structure" and promote a corresponding social revolution. [3]

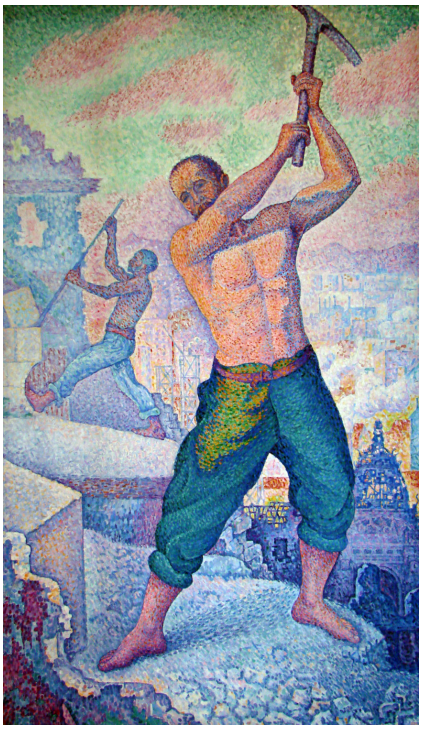


Figure **13.8.8.14**: Paul Signac, *The Demolition Worker*, 1887-89, oil on canvas, 250 x 152 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Notes:

1. Henri Fèvre, "L'Exposition des Impressionnistes," in *Étude sur le Salon de 1886 et sur l'exposition des impressionnistes* (Paris, 1886), p. 43 (our translation).
2. Paul Signac, "Impressionists and Revolutionaries," *La Révolte*, June 13-19, 1891, as translated in Nochlin, ed., p. 124.
3. ibid., p. 124.

Neo-Impressionist Color Theory

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT

In 1899, the artist Paul Signac rejected the "Pointillist" label and asserted, "The Neo-Impressionist does not *dot*, he *divides*." He laid out a four-part argument outlining how division achieves the goals of "luminosity" and "harmony" by means of:

1. The optical mixture of solely pure pigments (all the tints of the prism and all their tones);
2. The separation of the different elements (local color, color of the lighting, their interactions, etc.);
3. The equilibration of these elements and their proportions (according to the laws of contrast, of gradation, and of irradiation);
4. The choice of a brushstroke commensurate with the dimensions of the painting. [1]

Signac's argument is dense with the technical vocabulary of late-nineteenth century color theory. The Neo-Impressionists prided themselves on bringing scientific rigor to the hitherto largely intuitive Impressionist project. By understanding the contemporary meanings of Signac's terms, we can trace how scientific color theory affected Neo-Impressionist practice.

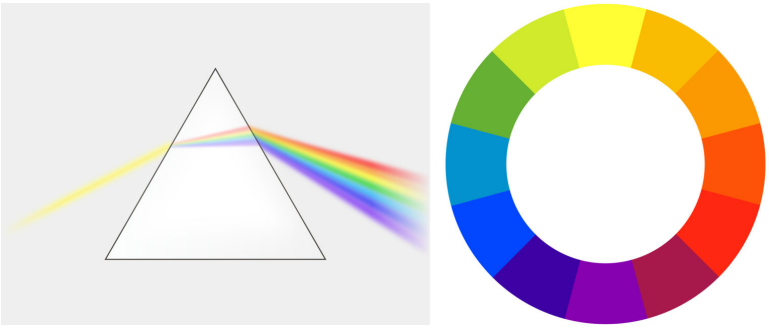


Figure **13.8.8.15**: Left: a prism breaking visible light into the color spectrum; right: the color wheel

The Neo-Impressionist uses “solely pure pigments,” which Signac specifies as the colors of the “prism.” This wording already suggests a scientific basis for Neo-Impressionist color usage. In the seventeenth century the English physicist Sir Isaac Newton used a glass prism to separate white light into a rainbow. In painters’ terms, the colors of the prism correspond to the primary colors red, yellow, and blue, the secondary colors orange, green, and violet, and the tertiary colors blue-violet, blue-green, yellow-green, etc.

The Neo-Impressionists would mix these hues or “tints” only with white to produce different values or “tones” (all the gradations of blue from light to dark, for example). Above all, they avoided the muddy earth colors that dominated European painters’ palettes before the late-nineteenth century.

In their quest for pure, bright colors, the Neo-Impressionists were aided by new pigments created through chemical synthesis, as opposed to the ground-up minerals or organic matter of traditional pigments. Analysis has shown that Seurat’s palette of 1889-90 consisted of many colors that were not available before the 19th century, including chrome yellow (invented 1797), cobalt blue (1803-04), cadmium orange (1820s), french ultramarine (1826), and manganese violet (1860s).



Figure **13.8.8.16**: Samples of Lefranc & Company’s oil paints from 1891, painted onto a printed diagram

Brushstroke and optical mixture

The nickname “Pointillism” was given to the movement because of the artists’ tendency to paint in small dots (*points* in French). Signac objected to the term because it suggests a stylistic gimmick, but executing paintings in small, discrete brushstrokes was crucial to another key concept of the movement that he mentions above: optical mixture.

As any painter quickly realizes, whenever you blend two pigments, the resulting mixture is duller than either of the original pigments. This dulling effect is magnified the farther apart the colors are on the color wheel. Mixing blue and green results in a fairly bright blue-green, but mixing blue and orange creates dull grays and muddy browns.



Figure **13.8.8.17**: Mixing complementary colors (image: **Munsell Color Blog**)

Rather than mixing colors on the palette, the Neo-Impressionists would juxtapose them on the canvas in small dots. Seen from a suitable distance, these dots mix in the eye, and achieve the intended effects without losing the chromatic intensity of the original pigments.

For example, the flesh of the women in Seurat's *The Models* is made up of thousands of tiny dots of colors ranging from the expected light yellows, peaches, and pinks, to surprising blues, violets, and greens. Viewed from a sufficient distance, these colors blend in the eye to create a convincing and very luminous representation of the play of light and shadow across the models' bodies.



Figure **13.8.8.18**: Georges Seurat, *Models (Poseuses)*, 1886-88, oil on canvas, 200 x 250 cm (Barnes Foundation)

The dots of color must be quite small in order for optical mixture to occur, although as Signac notes, their size could vary relative to the size of the painting. A mural meant to be read from a distance of several meters could use larger dots than a small landscape meant to be viewed up close.

Local color vs. perceived color

Signac's preferred term "division" refers to the way the artist isolates all the component influences that contribute to a given perceived color. In the excerpt above, he lists the two main components: local color and the color of the light, along with "their interactions, etc." Local color is what we think of as the actual color of the object itself: a *yellow* bus, a *red* apple, a *white* shirt. But simply painting an object in its local color ignores the effects of light on the object.



Figure **13.8.8.19**: Camille Corot, *The Bridge at Narni*, 1826, oil on paper mounted on canvas, 34 x 48 cm (Musée du Louvre)

One of the effects of light is of course chiaroscuro: parts of the object struck by light are lighter than the parts in shadow. Camille Corot's *Bridge at Narni* is a good example of a traditional landscape painted in local color and chiaroscuro. The bulk of the painting is in three basic colors: the green of the grass, the reddish tan of the dirt and bridge (and muddy water), and the blue of the sky and distant mountains. Corot has mixed darker and lighter values of each of these colors to show how the scene is affected by light coming from the sun in the upper right.

What Corot doesn't emphasize, however, is what is called the color temperature of the light itself. A white shirt seen in a warm light will appear to be yellowish-orange, while viewed under cool light it will be tinted blue-violet.



Figure **13.8.8.20**: Left: Paul Signac, *Morning Calm, Concarneau, Opus 219 (Larghetto)*, 1891, oil on canvas, 65.7 x 81.6 cm (private collection); right: Paul Signac, *Evening Calm, Concarneau, Opus 220 (Allegro Maestoso)*, 1891, oil on canvas, 64.9 x 81.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The color temperature of outdoor light is affected by the time of day, the season, and the weather. In these two paintings executed in the French coastal town of Concarneau, Signac pays close attention not just to the local colors of the objects, but also to their perceived colors — the colors that we actually see as they are affected by the temperature of the light. A palette based on orange and light blue depicts the bright, clear qualities of morning light, while a pinkish-yellow atmosphere with heavy, violet shadows conveys the effect of twilight.

Divisionism

The perceived color of any given object is the result of multiple factors, including the local color of the object, the color temperature of the light striking that object, possible reflected color from nearby objects, atmospheric perspective (which makes distant objects appear more blue-gray) and, as we shall see, the effect of "simultaneous contrast" with adjacent colors. Instead of blending all of these factors together, divisionism keeps them separate. The foreground grass in Signac's *Evening Calm* includes dots of yellow and orange — the color of the light— to show how the greens are warmed by the light of the evening sun.

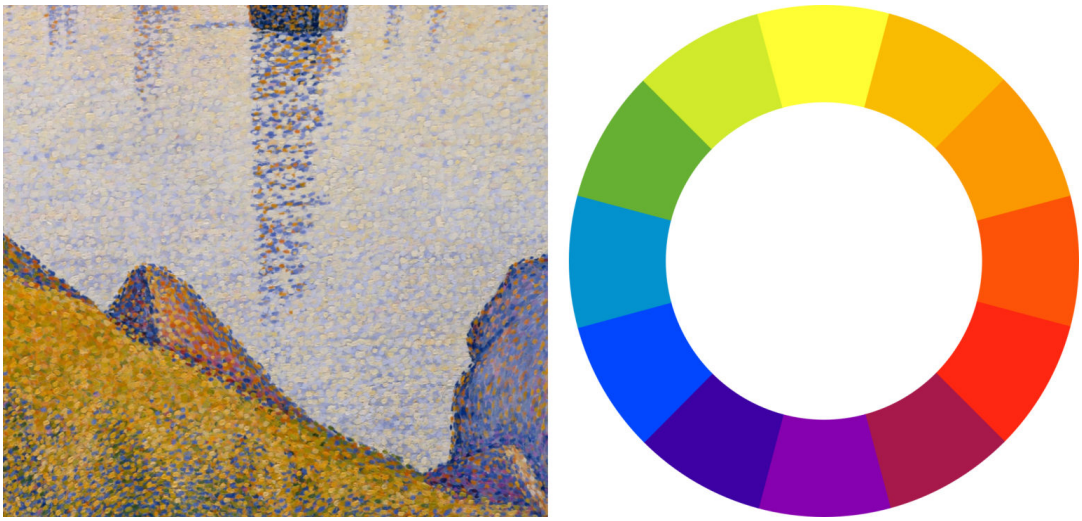


Figure **13.8.8.21**: Left: Paul Signac, *Evening Calm, Concarneau, Opus 220 (Allegro Maestoso)*, detail, 1891, oil on canvas, 64.9 x 81.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); Right: The color wheel

In the shadowed portions of the grass, Signac intersperses the greens with dots of cerulean and ultramarine blue. This is because shadow colors are the "complement" of the color of the light. Complementary colors are colors opposite one another on the color wheel, so the yellow-orange evening light produces violet-blue shadows.

This effect is even more strongly marked in the triangular rock jutting up from the center foreground, the lit side of which is shown glowing in the sunset through dots of orange, yellow, and rose. The shadowed side is dotted with mostly dark ultramarine blue, the complement of orange, although some interspersed oranges and even crimsons show the warm reflected light received from the grass. Rather than blending these complementary colors together, which would produce a dull muddy gray, Signac keeps them separate or divided, maintaining an overall intensity of color. Despite the improbable component colors, viewed from a proper distance, optical mixture produces a very convincing overall illusion of a rock bathed in warm evening light.

The law of contrast

Signac also mentions the artist's need to take into account "the laws of contrast, of gradation, and of irradiation." These "laws" refer to principles of color interaction discovered by nineteenth-century theorists such as Michel Chevreul, Ogden Rood, and Charles Henry, which seemed to promise that the entirety of art could be subsumed to rigorous scientific principles.

Chevreul's most famous contribution to color theory is the "law of simultaneous contrast," which takes account of how our perception of color changes relative to adjacent colors. Look at how different the same color swatch of blue appears against a field of bright green versus a field of dull orange, for example.

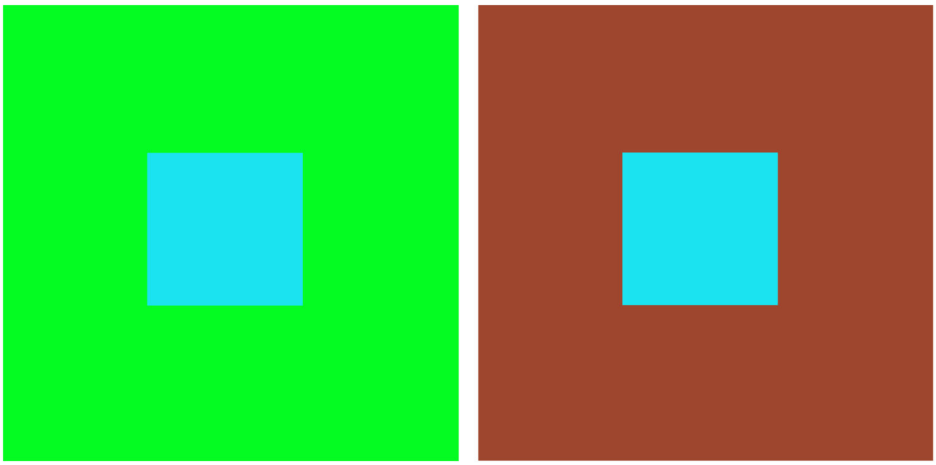


Figure **13.8.8.22**: Demonstration of the effect of simultaneous contrast

The general form of the law of simultaneous contrast is that two juxtaposed colors will appear maximally different from one another. Thus the blue appears both darker and duller when it is seen in a field of light, high-chroma yellow-green on the left, and it appears lighter and higher in chromatic intensity when seen against a field of dark, dull orange on the right.

Viewed against a white field, a swatch of color will actually gain a "halo" of its complementary color as a result of this effect. For example, if you gaze at the green swatch without focusing for several seconds, you will begin to see magenta edges emerge around it.



Figure **13.8.8.23**: Georges Seurat, *Models (Poseuses)*, 1886-88, oil on canvas, 200 x 250 cm (Barnes Foundation)

Seurat records this effect in his painting *The Models*. Notice how the seated model on the right has a dark, violet-blue halo around the light orange flesh of her back, and a light halo against the dark blue-violet shadowed side of her stomach and upper arm. This natural "irradiation" effect is exaggerated by Seurat in order to help intensify colors and values by juxtaposition with their opposites through simultaneous contrast.

Color perception, color harmony, color expression

We have concentrated here on how the Neo-Impressionists used color theory to help duplicate perceptual effects. They employed divisionism to keep their paintings as luminous as possible while recording how perceived color is affected by factors such as the temperature of the light, reflected color, and simultaneous contrast with adjacent colors.

The aims of the Neo-Impressionists went beyond perceptual accuracy to also include the purely aesthetic effects of color: how they can be used to create pleasing color harmonies based on certain principles. Signac's "laws of contrast and gradation" evokes two of these principles: "gradation" is the aesthetic harmony produced by gentle transitions between largely analogous colors, and "contrast" is produced by the sharper juxtaposition of opposites. Later works by Signac seem more concerned with such harmonies than with perceptual accuracy.

The Neo-Impressionists also recognized that color has expressive effects. Signac claimed that "joy" is evoked by paintings with dominant warm and light tones, while "sorrow" is evoked by dominant cool and dark colors. [2] Ideally, a Neo-Impressionist painting will take into account all three qualities: perceptual accuracy, formal harmony, and emotional expression. The artists believed that all of these were susceptible to rigorous scientific laws that were just being recognized and systematized in their period.

Notes:

1. Paul Signac, *From Eugene Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*, as translated in Linda Nochlin, ed., *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism*, 1874-1904: Sources and Documents (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 118. This passage is very close to Georges Seurat's own formulation of his method in a letter to Maurice Beaubourg of August 28, 1890: "The means of expression is the optical mixture of tones and colors (both of local color and of the illuminating color–sun, oil lamp, gas lamp, etc.), i.e., of the lights and their reactions (shadows) according to the laws of contrast, gradation, and irradiation" (in Nochlin, ed., p. 114).
2. Ibid., p. 121.

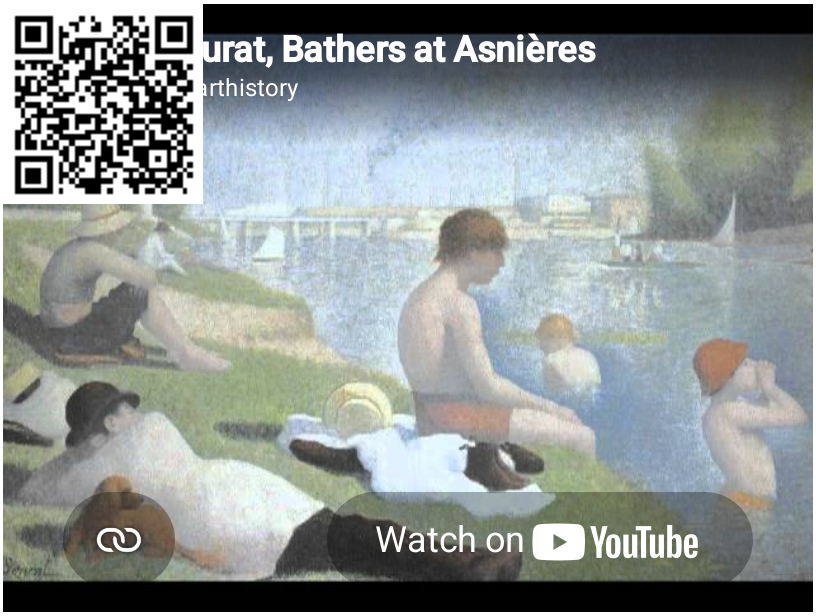
Additional resources:

The history of pigments

Georges Seurat

Georges Seurat, *Bathers at Asnières*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.8.1: Georges Seurat, *Bathers at Asnières*, 1884, oil on canvas, 6.6 x 9.8 ft (National Gallery, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

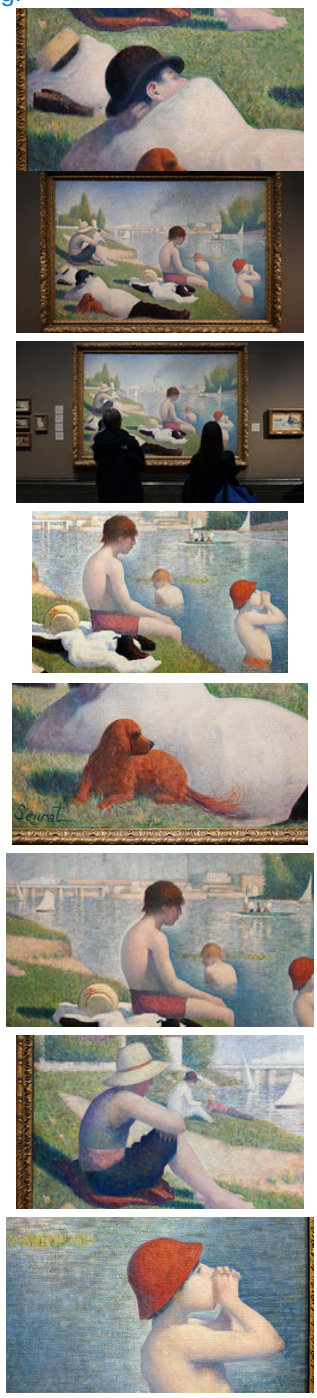


Figure 13.8.8.24: More Smarthistory images…

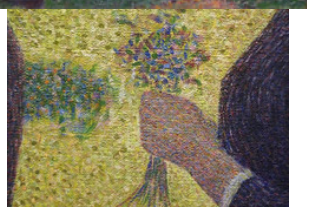
Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte – 1884*

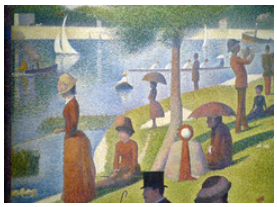
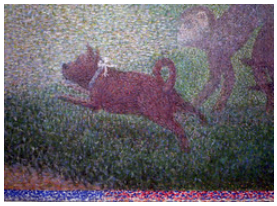
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.2: Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte – 1884*, 1884-86, oil on canvas, 81-3/4 x 121-1/4 inches (207.5 x 308.1 cm) (The Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

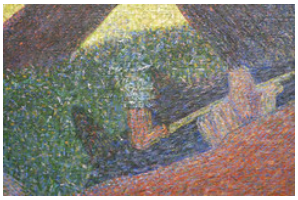





Figure 13.8.8.25: More Smarthistory images…

Vincent van Gogh

The Potato Eaters

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

What should a peasant painting smell like? Van Gogh has an opinion…



Video 13.8.8.3: Vincent van Gogh, *The Potato Eaters*, 1885, oil on canvas, 82 x 114 cm (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Vincent van Gogh Foundation). A conversation with Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker.

Additional resources:

This painting at the museum

Another version of this painting at the Kröller-Müller Museum

Van Gogh as a peasant painter — from the Van Gogh Museum

Nineteenth-Century French Realism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

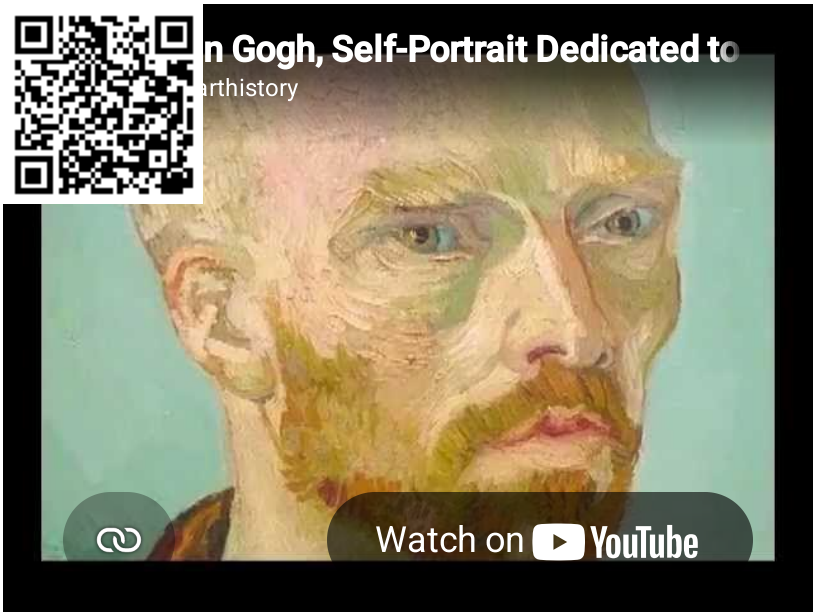
French Paintings of the 19th Century from The National Gallery of Art

Linda Nochlin and Dan Karlholm, "Misery, Beauty, and Other Issues: Linda Nochlin in Conversation with Dan Karlholm"

Art Term: Academy (from Tate)

Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gauguin*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.8.4: Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gauguin*, 1888, oil on canvas, 24 x 19-11/16″ (Fogg, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

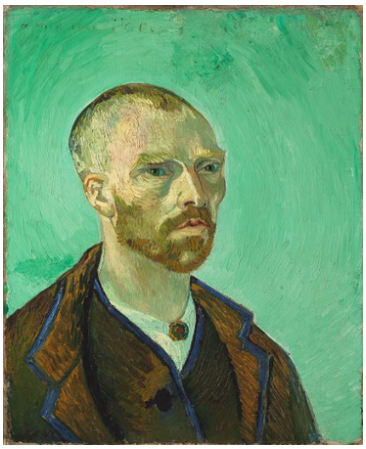


Figure **13.8.8.26**: Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gauguin*, 1888, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 50.3 cm (Fogg, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA)

This self portrait was painted for Paul Gauguin as part of swap between the artists. Van Gogh chose to represent himself with monastic severity. The other painting is Paul Gauguin's *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Vincent van Gogh (Les Misérables)*. Gauguin's title is a reference to the heroic fugitive, Jean Valjean, in Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables*. Gauguin's painting also contains a portrait of Emile Bernard that was painted not by Gauguin but by Bernard within Gauguin's painting.



Figure **13.8.8.27**: Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Vincent van Gogh (Les Misérables)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 44.5 x 50.3 cm (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam)

The following is a letter by Van Gogh to his brother Theo about the painting exchange with Gauguin dated October 7, 1888:

> ***My dear Theo,***
>
> ***Many thanks for your letter. How glad I am for Gauguin; I shall not try to find words to tell you – let's be of good heart.***
>
> ***I have just received the portrait of Gauguin by himself and the portrait of Bernard by Bernard and in the background of the portrait of Gauguin there is Bernard's on the wall, and vice versa.***
>
> ***The Gauguin is of course remarkable, but I very much like Bernard's picture. It is just the inner vision of a painter, a few abrupt tones, a few dark lines, but it has the distinction of a real, real Manet.***

The Gauguin is more studied, carried further. That, along with what he says in his letter, gave me absolutely the impression of its representing a prisoner. Not a shadow of gaiety. Absolutely nothing of the flesh, but one can confidently put that down to his determination to make a melancholy effect, the flesh in the shadows has gone a dismal blue.

So now at last I have a chance to compare my painting with what the comrades are doing. My portrait, which I am sending to Gauguin in exchange, holds its own, I am sure of that. I have written to Gauguin in reply to his letter that if I might be allowed to stress my own personality in a portrait, I had done so in trying to convey in my portrait not only myself but an impressionist in general, had conceived it as the portrait of a bonze, a simple worshiper of the eternal Buddha.

And when I put Gauguin's conception and my own side by side, mine is as grave, but less despairing. What Gauguin's portrait says to me before all things is that he must not go on like this, he must become again the richer Gauguin of the "Negresses."

I am very glad to have these two portraits, for they finally represent the comrades at this stage; they will not remain like that, they will come back to a more serene life.

And I see clearly that the duty laid upon me is to do everything I can to lessen our poverty.

No good comes the way in this painter's job. I feel that he is more Millet than I, but I am more Diaz then he, and like Diaz I am going to try to please the public, so that a few pennies may come into our community. I have spent more than they, but I do not care a bit now that I see their painting—they have worked in too much poverty to succeed.

Mind you, I have better and more saleable stuff than what I have sent you, and I feel that I can go on doing it. I have confidence in it at last. I know that it will do some people's hearts good to find poetic subjects again, "The Starry Sky," "The Vines in Leaf," "The Furrows," the "Poet's Garden."

So then I believe that it is your duty and mine to demand comparative wealth just because we have very great artists to keep alive. But at the moment you are as fortunate, or at least fortunate in the same way, as Sensier if you have Gauguin and I hope he will be with us heart and soul. There is no hurry, but in any case I think that he will like the house so much as a studio that he will agree to being its head. Give us half a year and see what that will mean.

Bernard has again sent me a collection of ten drawings with a daring poem – the whole is called At the Brothel.

You will soon see these things, but I shall send you the portraits when I have had them to look at for some time.

I hope you will write soon, I am very hard up because of the stretchers and frames that I ordered.

What you told me of Freret gave me pleasure, but I venture to think that I shall do things which will please him better, and you too.

Yesterday I painted a sunset.

Gauguin looks ill and tormented in his portrait!! You wait, that will not last, and it will be very interesting to compare this portrait with the one he will do of himself in six months' time.

Someday you will also see my self-portrait, which I am sending to Gauguin, because he will keep it, I hope.

It is all ashen gray against pale veronese (no yellow). The clothes are this brown coat with a blue border, but I have exaggerated the brown into purple, and the width of the blue borders.

The head is modeled in light colours painted in a thick impasto against the light background with hardly any shadows. Only I have made the eyes slightly slanting like the Japanese.

Write me soon and the best of luck. How happy old Gauguin will be.

A good handshake, and thank Freret for the pleasure he has given me. Good-by for now.

Ever yours,

Vincent.

Letter courtesy of Web Exhibits

Additional resources:

This painting at the Harvard Museums

Paul Gauiguin's Self Portrait with Portrait of Émile Bernard at the Van Gogh Museum

Michael Kimmelman's New York Times exhibition review that discusses the relationship between Van Gogh and Gauguin

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

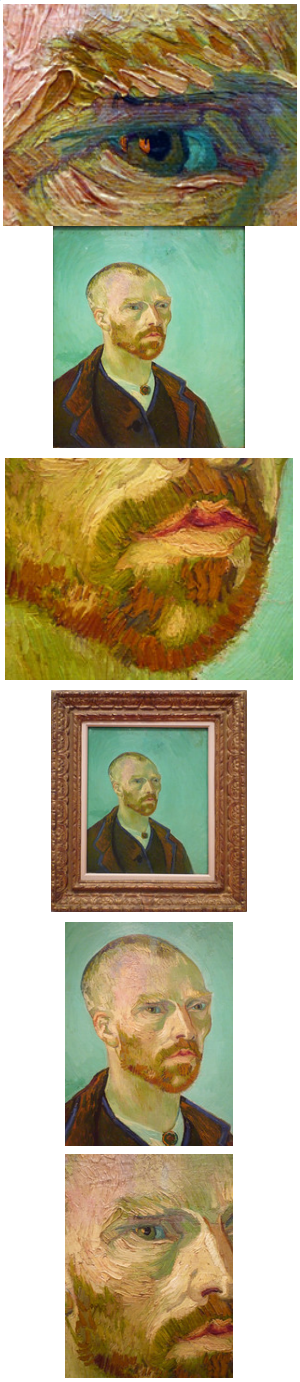


Figure 13.8.8.28: More Smarthistory images…

Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.8.29: The artist's face and bandaged ear (detail), Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*, 1889, oil on canvas, 60 x 49 cm (Courtauld Galleries, London)

The unfortunate man

The following report appeared in the Arles journal *Le Forum Republicain* on December 30, 1888:

> ***Last Sunday, at 11:30 in the evening, Vincent Vaugogh [sic], a painter of Dutch origin, called at the Brothel No. 1, asked for a woman called Rachel and handed her … his ear, saying: 'Guard this object with your life'. Then he disappeared. When informed of the action, which could only be that of a pitiful madman, the police went the next day to his house and discovered him lying on his bed apparently at the point of death. The unfortunate man has been rushed to hospital.***

Accounts of what took place that night vary. Whatever the exact circumstances, though, whatever underlying motivations could have compelled van Gogh to do it, the episode effectively put an end to one of the most famous working relationships in the history of art, as Paul Gauguin boarded the train to Paris the next day.

For nine weeks they had lived together sharing lodgings in the Yellow House, just outside the old town walls of Arles in the South of France, spurring each other on as collaborators and as rivals too. The dream had been to set up "a studio in the South," as van Gogh put it, a community of artists, with himself and Gauguin, the founding fathers, all working in harmony with nature and, as he hoped, with each other.

A brave face?

The painting, completed two weeks after the event, is often read as a farewell to that dream. For Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, the most recent biographers of the artist, however, the portrait was first and foremost a plea to van Gogh's doctors.



Figure 13.8.8.30: Vincent van Gogh, Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear, 1889, oil on canvas, 60 x 49 cm (Courtauld Galleries, London)

It shows the artist in three-quarter profile standing in a room in the Yellow House wearing a closed coat and a fur cap. His right ear is bandaged. It was in fact his left ear that was bandaged, the painting being a mirror image. To his right is an easel with a canvas on it. Barely visible, a faint outline underneath reveals what looks to be a still-life which appears to have been painted over. The top of the easel has been cropped by the edge of the canvas and the sitter's hat so as to form a fork-like shape. To his left is a blue framed window, and partly obscured by the gaunt ridge of his cheek, a Japanese woodblock print shows two geishas in a landscape with Mount Fuji in the background.

Naifeh and White Smith argue that van Gogh, following his release from hospital, was anxious to persuade his doctors that he was indeed perfectly fit and able to take care of himself and that, despite his momentary lapse, it would not be necessary for them to have him committed, as had been suggested, to one of the local insane asylums; hence the winter coat and hat, to keep warm as they had advised, and with the window ajar still getting that much-needed fresh air into his system. The bandage too, which would have been soaked in camphor, suggests that he both accepts what has happened and is happy, literally, to take his medicine. The same note of stoic optimism, if one wishes to read the painting this way, is also found in the letters to his brother Theo, in which van Gogh, far from abandoning his dream of a "studio in the South," talks of continuing the project, expressing the desire for more artists to come to Arles, even proposing that Gauguin and he could "start afresh."

Yet, of course, whether or not van Gogh was willing to admit to it, the project had most definitely reached its end. And though for a short time he did get to carry on living in the Yellow House, within a few weeks, acting on a petition handed in to the local authorities and signed by 30 of his neighbors, he was forcefully removed and taken to Arles Hospital where he was locked in an isolation cell. In May van Gogh committed himself to the private asylum in Saint-Remy a small town north of Arles and in a little over a year he was dead.

An obsession with Japanese Art

Though Naifeh and White Smith's argument is convincing, how the artist accounts for himself in his letters and how he expresses himself in paint, are different things. For my own part, what is most interesting about the image is what it reveals about van Gogh's artistic practice and particularly his obsession with Japanese art: "All my work to some extent is based on Japanese art," he wrote in July, 1888.

Three years earlier, while in the port city of Antwerp in Belgium, he would wander through the markets there where woodblock prints of the Ukiyo-e school, the so-called "artists of the floating world" were readily available and could be bought for just a few centimes. These first glimpses into the art of Japan came at a pivotal moment in the artist's career: half way between his native Holland where he had schooled himself in the Realist tradition of artists such as Jozef Israëls, with his dark, earthy palette and sympathy for the rural poor, and Paris where he would encounter the colorful urbanity of the Impressionists.

For van Gogh, the artists of Japan offered the perfect meeting-point of theory and practice. The most famous of them was Hokusai, “the Dickens of Japan,” who shared the Dutchman’s passion for depicting the lives of the poor. It was this compassionate dimension of Japanese art that van Gogh hoped to bring to Impressionism, a movement that—by the time he arrived in Paris in 1886—had already absorbed the visual inventiveness of the Ukiyo-e school.

As time went on, the links went still further. In his two-year sojourn in Paris, the city of strangers, it was fellowship above all else that he yearned for, and so he came to imagine the Impressionists, among whose ranks he claimed to belong, to be as he imagined the Japanese, a united body of artists, sharing the same goals and ideals. It was this that prompted the journey south. On arriving in Arles he wrote to his brother, declaring his hope that “other artists will rise up in this lively country and do for it what the Japanese have done for theirs.” And again, while decorating his new house with paintings of sunflowers, he wrote to Theo: “Come now, isn’t it almost a true religion which the simple Japanese teach us, who live in nature as though they themselves were flowers.”



Figure 13.8.8.31: Vincent van Gogh, Self-Portrait (Dedicated to Gauguin), 1888, 65 x 52 cm (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge)

It was in Arles that he read Pierre Loti’s novel *Madame Chrysanthème*, best known today as the literary source for Puccini’s opera *Madame Butterfly*. While its self-sacrificing heroine worked her graceful way into van Gogh Orientalist fantasies, Loti’s description of Buddhist priests inspired his own *Self-Portrait (Dedicated to Paul Gauguin)*, a painting that draws out the direction he hoped the two artists would follow.

How very different *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* is to this earlier portrait. With its formal setting; the repeated triangles, for example, in the form of his coat, the top of the easel and the view offered of Mount Fuji itself, lending the painting it’s aspirational quality, its upward thrust. And yet the dominant feeling is surely conveyed by the internal frames: the window, the canvas and print, each of which appears condensed and somewhat forced into the painting, as though hemming the sitter in.



Figure 13.8.8.32: Sato Torakiyo (publisher), *Geishas in a Landscape*, c 1870-80, colored woodblock print, 60 x 43 cm (Courtauld Museum, London)

The Japanese print as van Gogh painted it in *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* differs from the original. Comparing them we see how van Gogh shifted the composition to the right, deliberately discarding one of the figures in favour of the heron, whose razor-sharp beak rears up as if to stab at the artist's ear. Opposite it, the canvas squeezed in to the left with its ghostly imprint of flowers surmounted by the fork of the easel sets up a formally satisfying but psychologically unsettling parallel. Is there a hint in all this, albeit unconsciously expressed, that the dream of an artist's community in Arles has turned against him?

Perhaps, but then of course there is always van Gogh's color—the joyous application of pigment onto canvas, the glorious use of impasto, thick and swift; that fabulous hatching technique, in places evoking the textures it depicts, the weave of the coat, the threads of the bandage, the fur of the hat. And note the tonal array of strokes that make up the face: violet, green, red, brown, orange, straw yellow; the blacks centered in those piercing pupils.



Figure 13.8.8.33: André Derain, *Henri Matisse*, 1905, oil on canvas, 71 x 60 cm (Tate Modern, London)

A yearning to be proved sane or a heartfelt cry of anguish, whatever we may read in the image about van Gogh the man, from a purely art historical point of view, it is here in his brushwork and in his palette that one discovers the source of André Derain's "deliberate disharmonies." How fitting then that it was while on holiday in the South of France, a favorite haunt of that early Modernist movement to which he belonged—the Fauves—that Derain painted his friend and fellow artist Matisse; enough perhaps to say that Van Gogh's hope and prediction that "other artists will rise up in this lively country" was not so wildly off the mark after all.

Additional resources:

This painting featured on the Courtauld Gallery's website

This painting in *The Guardian*

Vincent van Gogh on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Japonisme on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Japonaiserie (van Gogh) in Wikipedia

Japonism in Wikipedia

Vincent van Gogh, *The Bedroom*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.5: Vincent van Gogh, *The Bedroom*, 1889, oil on canvas, 29 x 36-5/8 inches (73.6 x 92.3 cm) (Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.8.34: More Smarthistory images…

Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*

by DR. NOELLE PAULSON



Figure **13.8.8.35**: Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

A rare night landscape

The curving, swirling lines of hills, mountains, and sky, the brilliantly contrasting blues and yellows, the large, flame-like cypress trees, and the thickly layered brushstrokes of Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* are ingrained in the minds of many as an expression of the artist's turbulent state-of-mind. Van Gogh's canvas is indeed an exceptional work of art, not only in terms of its quality but also within the artist's oeuvre, since in comparison to favored subjects like irises, sunflowers, or wheat fields, night landscapes are rare. Nevertheless, it is surprising that *The Starry Night* has become so well known. Van Gogh mentioned it briefly in his letters as a simple "study of night" or "night effect."

His brother Theo, manager of a Parisian art gallery and a gifted connoisseur of contemporary art, was unimpressed, telling Vincent, "I clearly sense what preoccupies you in the new canvases like the village in the moonlight… but I feel that the search for style takes away the real sentiment of things" (813, 22 October 1889). Although Theo van Gogh felt that the painting ultimately pushed style too far at the expense of true emotive substance, the work has become iconic of individualized expression in modern landscape painting.



Figure **13.8.8.36**: Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night over the Rhone*, 1888, oil on canvas, 72 x 92 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Technical challenges

Van Gogh had had the subject of a blue night sky dotted with yellow stars in mind for many months before he painted *The Starry Night* in late June or early July of 1889. It presented a few technical challenges he wished to confront—namely the use of contrasting color and the complications of painting en plein air (outdoors) at night—and he referenced it repeatedly in letters to family and friends as a promising if problematic theme. "A starry sky, for example, well – it's a thing that I'd like to try to do," Van Gogh confessed to the painter Emile Bernard in the spring of 1888, "but how to arrive at that unless I decide to work at home and from the imagination?" (596, 12 April 1888).

As an artist devoted to working whenever possible from prints and illustrations or outside in front of the landscape he was depicting, the idea of painting an invented scene from imagination troubled Van Gogh. When he did paint a first example of the full night sky in *Starry Night over the Rhône* (1888, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 92 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), an image of the French city of Arles at night, the work was completed outdoors with the help of gas lamplight, but evidence suggests that his second Starry Night was created largely if not exclusively in the studio.



Figure **13.8.8.37**: Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

Location

Following the dramatic end to his short-lived collaboration with the painter Paul Gauguin in Arles in 1888 and the infamous breakdown during which he mutilated part of his own ear, Van Gogh was ultimately hospitalized at Saint-Paul-de-Mausole, an asylum and clinic for the mentally ill near the village of Saint-Rémy. During his convalescence there, Van Gogh was encouraged to paint, though he rarely ventured more than a few hundred yards from the asylum's walls.



Figure **13.8.8.38**: Saint-Paul-de-Mausole near Saint-Rémy, France (photo: **Emdee**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure 13.8.8.39: Church (detail), Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Besides his private room, from which he had a sweeping view of the mountain range of the Alpilles, he was also given a small studio for painting. Since this room did not look out upon the mountains but rather had a view of the asylum's garden, it is assumed that Van Gogh composed *The Starry Night* using elements of a few previously completed works still stored in his studio, as well as aspects from imagination and memory. It has even been argued that the church's spire in the village is somehow more Dutch in character and must have been painted as an amalgamation of several different church spires that van Gogh had depicted years earlier while living in the Netherlands.

Van Gogh also understood the painting to be an exercise in deliberate stylization, telling his brother, "These are exaggerations from the point of view of arrangement, their lines are contorted like those of ancient woodcuts" (805, c. 20 September 1889). Similar to his friends Bernard and Gauguin, van Gogh was experimenting with a style inspired in part by medieval woodcuts, with their thick outlines and simplified forms.



Figure 13.8.8.40: Stars (detail), Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

The colors of the night sky

On the other hand, *The Starry Night* evidences Van Gogh's extended observation of the night sky. After leaving Paris for more rural areas in southern France, Van Gogh was able to spend hours contemplating the stars without interference from gas or electric city street lights, which were increasingly in use by the late nineteenth century. "This morning I saw the countryside from my window a long time before sunrise, with nothing but the morning star, which looked very big" 777, c. 31 May – 6 June 1889). As he wrote to his sister Willemien van Gogh from Arles,

> ***It often seems to me that the night is even more richly colored than the day, colored with the most intense violets, blues and greens. If you look carefully, you'll see that some stars are lemony, others have a pink, green, forget-me-not blue glow. And without***

> ***laboring the point, it's clear to paint a starry sky it's not nearly enough to put white spots on blue-black.***
>
> ***(678, 14 September 1888)***

Van Gogh followed his own advice, and his canvas demonstrates the wide variety of colors he perceived on clear nights.

Invention, remembrance and observation

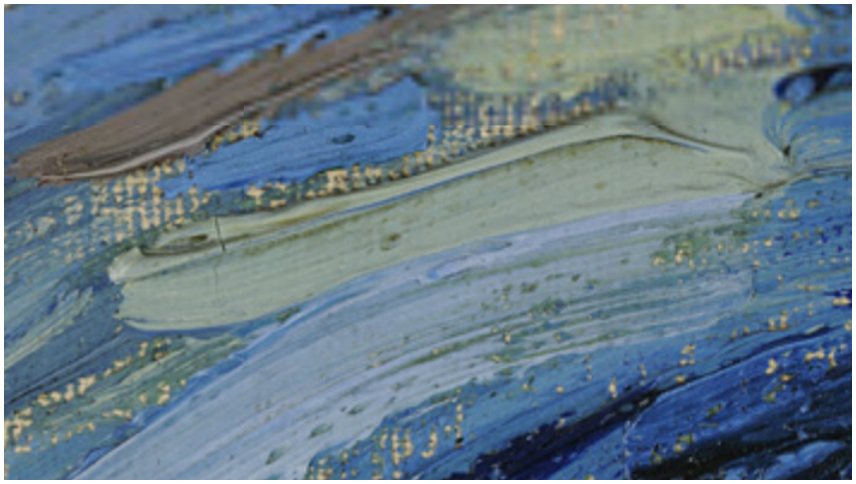


Figure **13.8.8.41**: Impasto and brush strokes (detail), Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Arguably, it is this rich mixture of invention, remembrance, and observation combined with Van Gogh's use of simplified forms, thick impasto, and boldly contrasting colors that has made the work so compelling to subsequent generations of viewers as well as to other artists. Inspiring and encouraging others is precisely what Van Gogh sought to achieve with his night scenes. When *Starry Night over the Rhône* was exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, an important and influential venue for vanguard artists in Paris, in 1889, Vincent told Theo he hoped that it "might give others the idea of doing night effects better than I do." *The Starry Night*, his own subsequent "night effect," became a foundational image for Expressionism as well as perhaps the most famous painting in Van Gogh's oeuvre.

Additional resources:

This painting at MoMA

This painting at the Google Art Project

The Starry Night from MoMA Multimedia

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

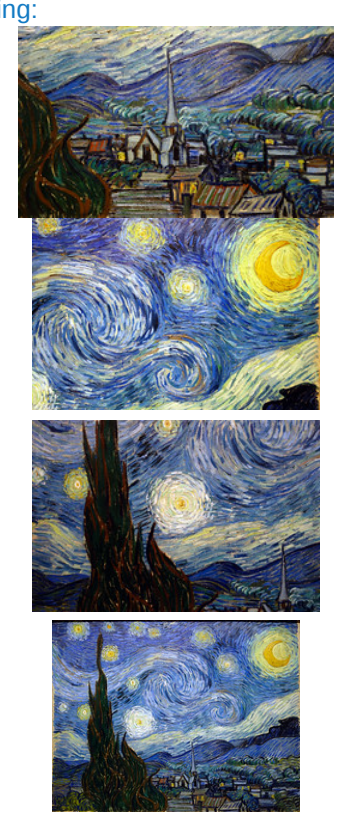


Figure 13.8.8.42: More Smarthistory images…

The Pont-Aven School and Synthetism

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure 13.8.8.43: Poster for the Exhibition at the Café des Arts, 1889, lithograph; 28 x 39.7 cm (Pennsylvania State University Libraries, Rare Books and Manuscripts Special Collection)



Figure **13.8.8.44**

When the mirrors intended to decorate the walls of the Café des Arts in Paris did not arrive in time for its opening in 1889, the owner agreed to an improvised art exhibition instead. The artists, including **Paul Gauguin**, Emile Bernard, Charles Laval, and Emile Schuffenecker, called themselves the "Groupe Impressioniste et Synthétiste," but they are better known today as the Pont-Aven School, after a town in the French province of Brittany where many of the artists painted.

At the exhibition Gauguin showed a painting of three Breton girls dancing in a meadow outside of Pont-Aven, with the steeple of St. Joseph's church in the background. This painting exhibits two key characteristics of the Pont-Aven School: "primitivist" themes featuring rural and peasant subject matter, and a "synthetist" style consisting of simplified drawing, clearly-defined contours, intensified colors, and flattened space.


Figure **13.8.8.45**: Paul Gauguin, *Breton Girls Dancing*, 1888, oil on canvas, 73 x 92.7 cm (**National Gallery Washington DC**)

"The land of the painter"

Brittany had been a popular destination for tourists since the first railway line from Paris was completed in the 1860s. It was famous not only for its rugged landscape but also for its picturesque inhabitants, especially the Breton peasant women in their starched white caps. A popular English guidebook of the time titled *Breton Folk* described Brittany as "the land of the painter," and it commended the region's particular attraction for artists "in search of picturesque costume and scenes of pastoral life." [1]



Figure **13.8.8.46**: Randolph Caldecott, "Potato-Getting Near St. Pol de Léon", from *Breton Folk* (1881), p. 74

Rustic and peasant subjects were popular with French artists and patrons starting with the **Barbizon School** and **French Realist** painters of the mid-nineteenth century. Such "timeless" rural scenes offered a reassuring sense of tradition and continuity during a time marked by rapid industrialization and urbanization.



Figure **13.8.8.47**: Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret, *Breton Women at a Pardon*, 1887, oil on canvas, 125.1 x 141.1 cm (Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon)

Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret's *Breton Women at a Pardon*, shown in the French Salon of 1889, demonstrates the popularity of Breton subjects in a conventional Academic style. It shows a group of Breton peasants gathered in the foreground listening to a woman read. The background depicts a characteristic Breton ritual called a Pardon, in which penitents process barefoot or on their knees

around the church to earn absolution for their sins. To a middle-class urban viewer, the Breton peasants would have seemed quaint and old-fashioned, but also admirable for their piety and authenticity.

Synthetism



Figure 13.8.8.48: Paul Gauguin, *Vision after the Sermon (or Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 72.20 x 91.00 cm (**National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh**)

Like Dagnan-Bouveret's painting of the previous year, Gauguin's famous ***Vision after the Sermon*** also depicts the profound religious faith of the Breton people. A group of women in the foreground file out of church, having just heard a sermon on Jacob wrestling an angel (Genesis 32:24-32). So great is their faith that they literally "see" the Biblical scene in front of the church, right next to a prosaically grazing cow.

The style of the two works is very different, however. Gauguin's color is bright and unnatural compared to Dagnan-Bouveret's muted grays and earth tones, and next to the Academic artist's meticulous naturalism Gauguin's technique appears downright incompetent. The drawing is crude, the anatomy of the women's faces is almost childish, the flat planes of their clothing utterly fail to convey a sense of the bodies underneath, and the red ground stands up like a wall rather than receding into space.

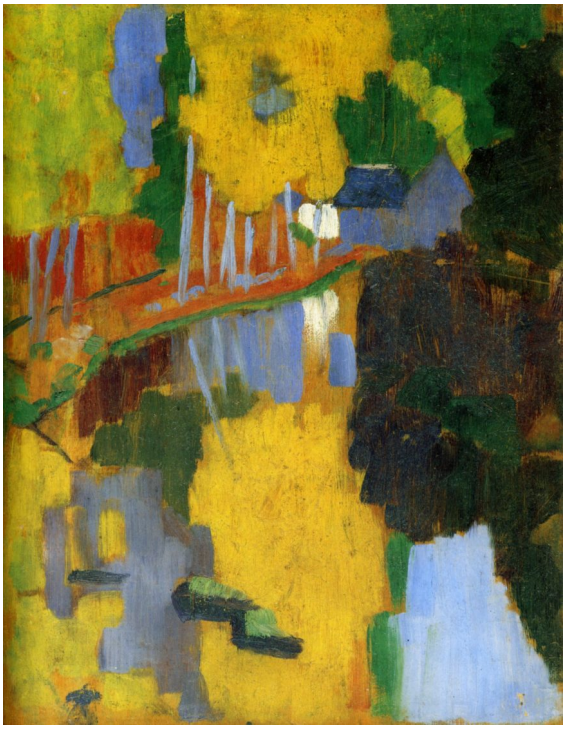


Figure 13.8.8.49: Paul Sérusier, *The Talisman*, 1888, oil on panel, 27 x 21 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Far from incompetent, however, Gauguin's simplified, even somewhat crude, technique was a conscious choice. A young artist named Paul Sérusier who studied with Gauguin recounted the older artist's advice while they were out painting together on the bank of a river near Pont-Aven:

> ***How do you see these trees? They're yellow; so put some yellow. This shadow, it's rather blue, paint it with pure ultramarine. Those red leaves? Put vermillion. [2]***

Gauguin tells Sérusier to both simplify and intensify what he is seeing. Rather than seeking subtle nuances of color and tone within the yellowish autumn leaves, Sérusier paints them in pure, unmodulated yellow. The cool gray trunks of the trees are similarly rendered as strokes of ultramarine mixed with white, against a background of vermilion red. Each color is intensified, and the drawing and composition are simplified into a flat pattern. Elsewhere, Gauguin advised artists to paint from memory rather than directly from nature, because memory automatically discards extraneous detail and distills perceptions down to their essence.

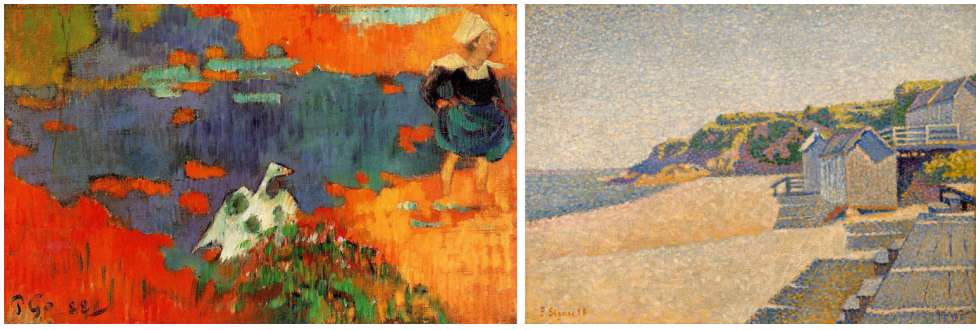


Figure 13.8.8.50: Left: Paul Gauguin, *Breton Girl and Goose by the Water*, 1888, oil on canvas, 25.1 x 39.4 cm (private collection); right: Paul Signac, *The Bathing Cabins, Opus 185 (Beach of the Countess)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 33.3 x 46.4 cm (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art)

This process of distilling multiple, complex elements into a simplified whole is what the group meant when they called themselves "Synthetists" at the Café des Arts exhibition. Insisting on the process of synthesis was a deliberate contrast to the highly scientific and analytic process of Neo-Impressionism. The two paintings above were executed in the same year just a few miles apart in Brittany. Whereas the Neo-Impressionists worked to analyze or carefully break down all the separate components that make up

complex color sensations and then rendered them in innumerable tiny dots, the Synthetists distilled them into broad areas of pure color.



Figure 13.8.8.51: Left: Emile Bernard, *Breton Women in the Meadow*, 1888, oil on canvas, 74 x 92 cm (private collection); Right: Louis Anquetin, *Avenue de Clichy, le soir, cinq heurs*, 1887, watercolor and gouache on paper (private collection)

The Synthetist style was sometimes called "Cloisonnism," after the **cloisonné technique** used to decorate objects by melting colored enamel between wire outlines. It also has similarities to Japanese prints, which were popular at the time, as well as Medieval colored woodcuts and stained glass. Synthetism was somewhat antithetically associated with both sensual/decorative qualities and religious/spiritual qualities, but whatever its genesis or purpose, it forms a sharp contrast to both the Academic naturalist style of Dagnan-Bouveret and the Neo-Impressionist style of Signac.

Primitivism

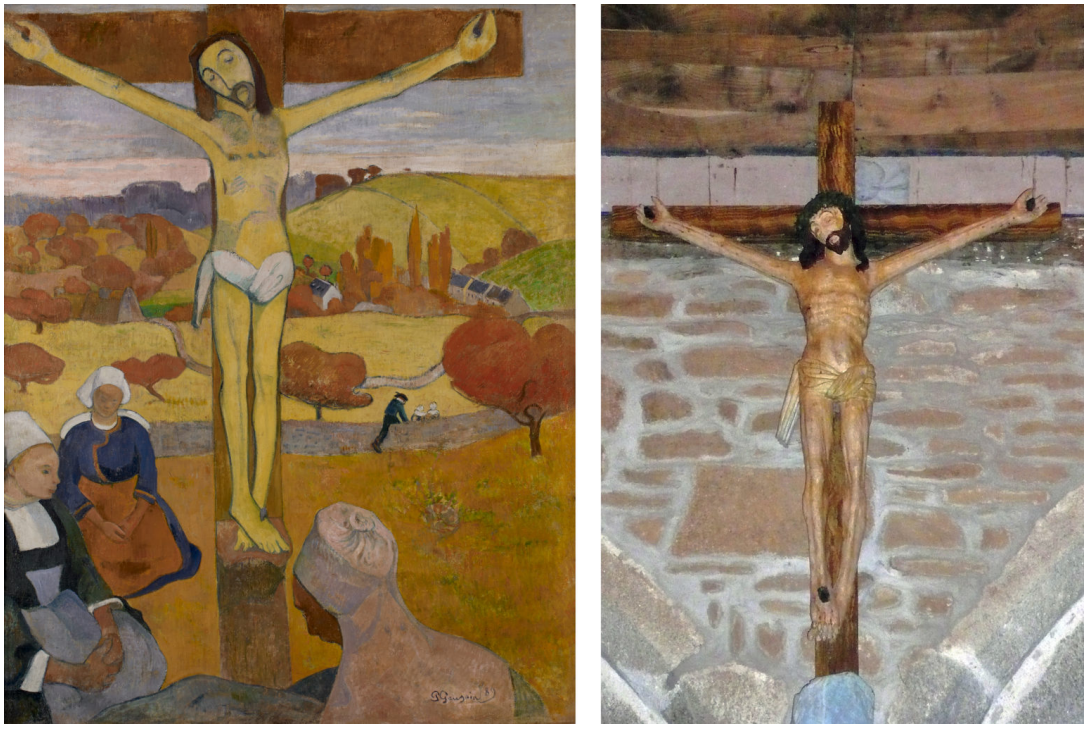


Figure 13.8.8.52: Left: Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ*, 1889, oil on canvas, 91.1 x 73.4 cm (Albright-Knox Art Gallery); Right: Anonymous, Crucifix, Notre-Dame de Trémalo Chapel, Pont-Aven, 17th century, wood and polychrome (photo: © Yann Gwilhoù, CC-BY-SA 3.0)

There is a logic in depicting peasant life with this simplified style. The bright colors and crude drawing of Synthetism have much in common with rural folk art. Gauguin implicitly acknowledges this similarity of style in his painting *The Yellow Christ* of 1889,

which shows a group of Breton women kneeling in prayer around a wooden crucifix in a field. The crucifix is a representation of one by an anonymous seventeenth-century artist that Gauguin saw a small chapel set in the fields outside of Pont-Aven. Although the work's crude carving and stiff anatomy do not demonstrate technical facility, they seem to guarantee the simple and sincere faith of the anonymous sculptor who created it.

Instead of setting the crucifix in the chapel, Gauguin transports it into a field to further connect Christ's life to the timeless cycles of nature that drive the traditional lives of Breton peasants. The light in the sky marks the time as early evening, and the color of the foliage denotes fall. Both suggest an ending, but an ending that holds promise of a new beginning. Christ, just like the sun and the fall harvest grains, will rise again.

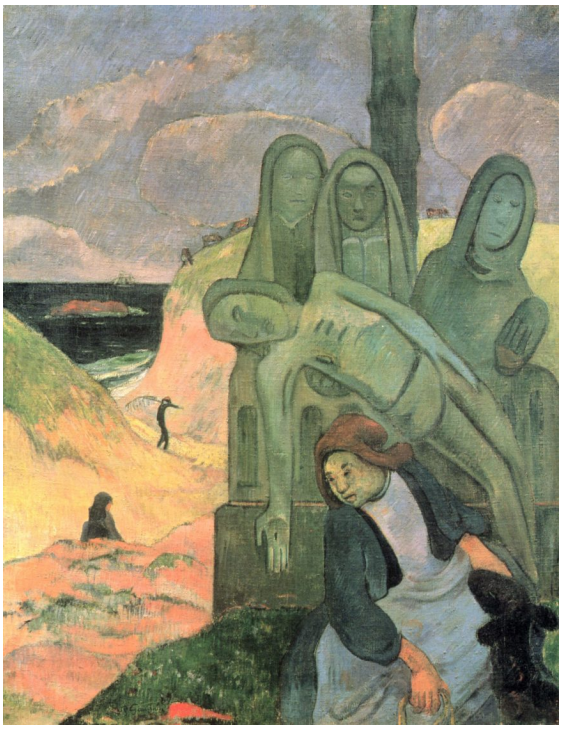


Figure 13.8.8.54: Paul Gauguin, *The Green Christ or Breton Calvary*, 1889, oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium)

Both the simplified folk style and the peasant subject matter exemplify **primitivism**, a turning backwards to an earlier way of life (pre-industrial, pre-scientific, and pre-urban) as a way of seeking greater authenticity and a higher purpose in life. Gauguin wrote in a letter to his friend Emile Schuffenecker, "I love Brittany. I find a certain wildness and primitiveness here. When my clogs resound on this granite soil, I hear the dull, matte, powerful tone I seek in my painting." [3] Unlike Dagnan-Bouveret, who represented Breton folk life with the sophisticated technique and scientific eye of a thoroughly modern Parisian, Gauguin aspired to "go primitive," as exemplified by his adoption of peasant clogs (*sabots*) as well as the simple folk-art style of his paintings.

Authenticity or fantasy?

It is easy to romanticize the Pont-Aven School's project of celebrating the simple rural life and folk traditions of the Breton peasants. Many tellings of Gauguin's biography eulogize his act of giving up a career as a stockbroker, along with all of the pleasures and conveniences of modern life, in order to live as poor painter among the peasants of Brittany and later on the South Sea island of Tahiti.

More recent scholarship has problematized both that biography and that project, however. The vision of Pont-Aven in Gauguin's paintings is largely a romantic fantasy. Brittany was rapidly modernizing, and the folk traditions and costumes that Gauguin admired were vanishing or put on display only for holidays and tourists. The 1880 guidebook already notes that

> ***In the shops and on the promenades [of Brittany] the majority of women are dressed as in Paris … Every year more white caps are thrown aside … and each year the markets of St. Malo and St. Servan have less individuality of costume. [4]***

Gauguin's paintings of Brittany are, in the end, more fantasies than accurate images of an authentic peasant culture.



Figure **13.8.8.55**: Paul Gauguin, *Vision after the Sermon (or Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 72.20 x 91.00 cm (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh)

It is also worth asking why the main protagonists of Gauguin's paintings are women, both in Brittany and later in Tahiti. In *Vision after the Sermon* as in *The Yellow Christ* and *The Green Christ*, it is women whose quaint costumes provide the antithesis to modern fashionability, women whose profound religious faith provides the antidote to modern science and skepticism, and women whose adherence to tradition provides a respite from the constant, disruptive innovations of modern life. While this does elevate women to a place of honor, it also reinforces commonplace stereotypes, suggesting that women preserve the faith and folk traditions simply because they are less suited than men to the new world of science, technology, and constant change.

Notes:

1. Henry Blackburn and Randolph Caldecott, *Breton Folk: An Artistic Tour in Brittany* (Boston, 1881), p. 3.
2. Gauguin's advice to Sérusier was recorded by his friend Maurice Denis, "Paul Sérusier, sa vie, son oeuvre," in *Sérusier, L'ABC de la peinture* (Paris: Floury, 1942), p. 42.
3. Letter, Gauguin to Schuffenecker, February 1888, in M. Malingue, ed, *Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis* (Paris, 1946), p. 322 (our translation).
4. Blackburn, *Breton Folk*, p. 10.

Paul Gauguin

Gauguin, *Self-Portrait with Portrait of Émile Bernard (Les misérables)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.8.6**: Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait with Portrait of Émile Bernard (Les misérables)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 44.5 x 50.3 cm (Van Gogh Museum). Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

This portrait at the Van Gogh Museum

Post-Impressionism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Van Gogh and Gauguin: The Studio of the South (from the Art Institute of Chicago)

Paul Gauguin, *Vision after the Sermon* (or *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*)

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.8.7**: Paul Gauguin, *Vision after the Sermon* (or *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*), 1888, oil on canvas, 2′ 4 3/4″ x 3′ 1/2″ (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh)

Paul Gauguin, *Nevermore*

by RACHEL ROPEIK, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.8.8**: Paul Gauguin, *Nevermore*, 1897, oil on canvas (Courtauld Gallery, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

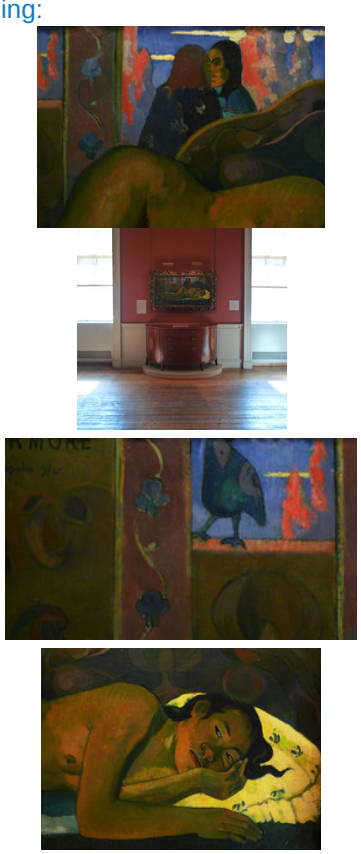


Figure 13.8.8.56: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Gauguin, *The Red Cow*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.9: Paul Gauguin, *The Red Cow*, 1889, oil on canvas (LACMA)

Note: though the video states that the cypress trees suggest this canvas may have been painted in the south, it was painted in Le Pouldu near Pont-Aven in Brittany.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

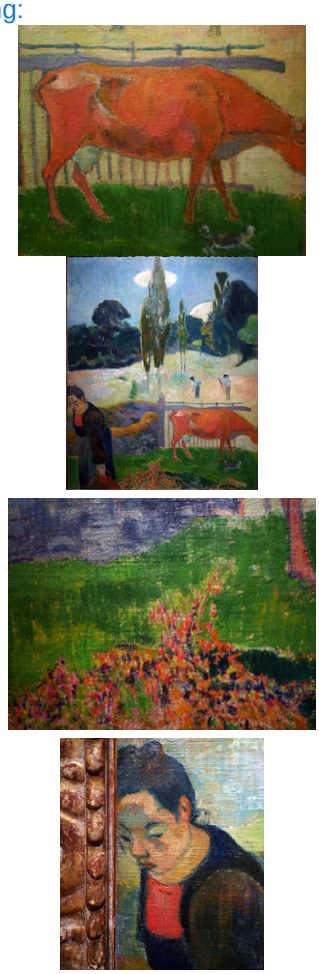


Figure 13.8.8.57: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Gauguin, *Spirit of the Dead Watching*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.8.58: Paul Gauguin, *Spirit of the Dead Watching*, 1892, oil on burlap mounted on canvas, 116.05 x 134.62 x 13.34 cm (Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY)

Be mysterious

"*Soyez mysterieuses*," (be mysterious), Gauguin said. Perhaps he had this command in mind when he produced the most significant painting—by his own reckoning—to come out of his first stay in Tahiti, *The Spirit of the Dead Watching*. Few critics would doubt the importance of this work. Its mysteriousness and openness to interpretation has secured for it a position among Gauguin's key works.

Gauguin made his first visit to Tahiti (a French colony) in March 1891, returning to Paris in May 1893. It was a hugely productive period in Gauguin's career. "In the two years I have spent here," he wrote, "with only a few months lost, I have produced sixty-six more or less fine canvases and a number of ultra-primitive sculptures. That is enough for any one man."

A background of terror

To herald his return to Europe and also to rescue his family from penury, with the help of his Danish wife, Mette, Gauguin organized an exhibition of his work in Copenhagen. Among the nine canvases he sent from Tahiti was *The Spirit of the Dead Watching*, carrying with it an asking price—the most expensive in the sale—of between 1,500 and 2,000 francs. Clearly highly prized by Gauguin, the best of two years' worth of "fine" canvases, the painting depicts an adolescent girl (the model was Gauguin's Tahitian girlfriend Tehura, who was only fourteen years old), lying belly down on a bed, her face staring out at the viewer with a fearful expression. The bed is covered with a blue pareo (a wraparound skirt worn by Tahitians) and a light chrome-yellow sheet. Behind the bed, silhouetted and in profile, a woman watches over the child.

Gauguin created a haunting, supernatural quality by exploiting what he considered to be the emotional potential of color. When describing the painting to Mette, he points out how the shades of purple on the wall create "a background of terror" and how the sheet "must be yellow, because, in this color, it arouses something unexpected for the spectator." Using colors to arouse feelings was very much in line with the work of other Post-Impressionist artists, such as Gauguin's contemporary and friend, Vincent van Gogh.

The spirit of the dead

Aside from color, the composition is itself unsettling, particularly the relationship between the girl and the old woman behind her whose simplified form and disproportionate scale suggest Tahitian statuary or tiki. If she is a carved statue of wood, though, what or who does it signify? If not, then is she real or otherworldly? Is this the spirit of the dead watching that the title refers to? And if she is imagined, then by whom? Is all that surrounds the girl the conjurings of her own haunted imagination? Or is it what she looks out at—the space we ourselves inhabit—that is the source of her terror? Could it be, then, that we are the spirit of the dead watching? The Tahitian language certainly allows for such ambiguities. The expression, manao tupapau means either watching the spirit of the dead or the spirit of the dead watching.

Other formal features of the painting seem to enhance this ambivalence. Notice, for example, the complex vantage point we hold. Our gaze is level with the luminous eyes of the old woman, while at the same time, we look down at the figure of the young woman.



Figure 13.8.8.59: Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 190 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

A slightly indecent study of a nude

We can also consider this painting within the tradition of the female nude and recall Manet's *Olympia* (1865). Manet's work provided a template for younger artists, one that rejected long-established conventions in the representation of the nude and challenged the moral values of the bourgeoisie. Gauguin, for one, admired *Olympia* enough to have produced a copy of it in 1891.

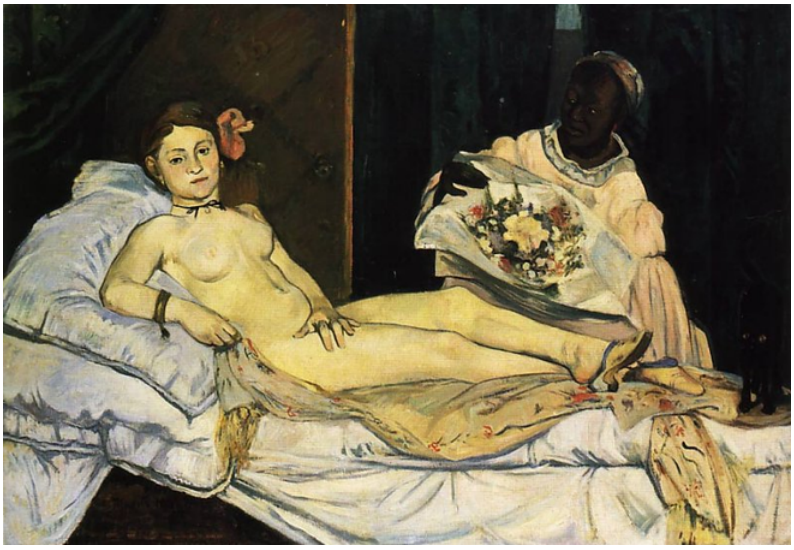


Figure 13.8.8.60: Paul Gauguin, *Copy of Manet's Olympia*, 1891, oil on canvas, 89 x 130 cm (Private collection)

He was keen to shock the bourgeoisie and certainly his own nude in *The Spirit of the Dead Watching*—"a slightly indecent study" as he described it—is in many ways as radical as Manet's. The body is awkwardly positioned and disproportionate. The feet overhang the bed and the hands are larger than the feet. And most shocking of all, is the age of the model.

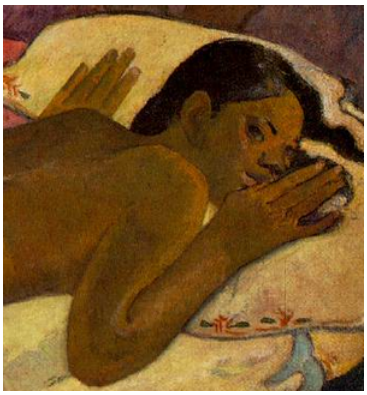


Figure **13.8.8.61**: Female figure (detail), Paul Gauguin, *Spirit of the Dead Watching*, 1892, oil on burlap mounted on canvas, 116.05 x 134.62 x 13.34 cm (Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY)

Equally disturbing is the fear she exhibits. Gauguin described this in letters to his wife, Mette. Having walked that day to a neighboring village, Gauguin didn't return to his house until the early morning. On entering, he found Tehura naked on the bed staring at him in terror. The reason for her fear, according to Gauguin, was that Tehura believed in *tupapaus*, the spirits of the dead who in Tahitian mythology inhabit the interior of the island and whose presence illuminates the forest at night.



Figure in background (detail), Paul Gauguin, *Spirit of the Dead Watching*, 1892, oil on burlap mounted on canvas, 116.05 x 134.62 x 13.34 cm (Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY)

Gauguin was skeptical about this belief, holding that these phosphorescent night glows that Tahitians took for spirits were in fact a type of fungus that grows on dead trees. Either way, for Tehura, to walk through the interior after sundown risked disturbing the *tupapaus* with potentially disastrous consequences; hence her fear and so too those glimmering spectral forms that feature in the background of the painting and that Gauguin stated stood for the tupapaus themselves.

Critical readings

Given his construction of Tahitian culture as "primitive," Gauguin's version of these events has been scrutinized by art historians who have cast doubt on whether Tehura would have actually held these beliefs (since she was a practicing Christian). Gauguin is thus accused of projecting his own primitivist preconceptions onto his subject.

Another critique comes from the art historian, Nancy Mowll Mathews, who argues that it was not the spirits that Tehura was frightened of, but Gauguin himself, the middle-aged, white, male colonialist against whom, as a sexual predator, she had little power to resist. This reading gives a disturbing twist to the image with Gauguin taking sadistic pleasure in depicting the fear that he himself caused. It's worth noting that in Gauguin's account, seeing her in this state moved him to declare that she never looked so beautiful, and that he was drawn to comfort her, promising never to leave her again.

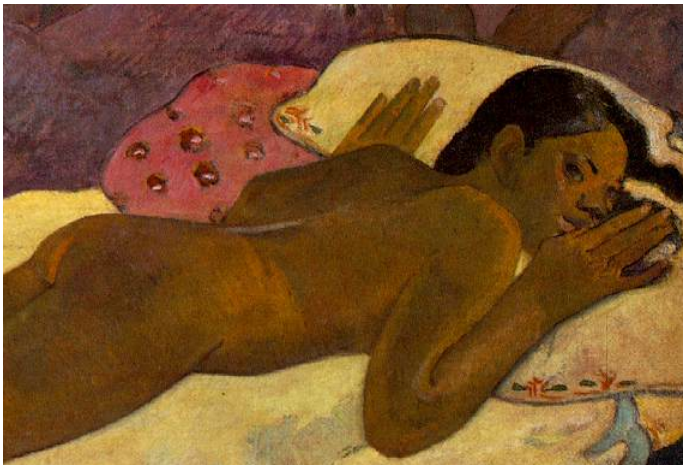


Figure **13.8.8.63**: Nude (detail), Paul Gauguin, *Spirit of the Dead Watching*, 1892, oil on burlap mounted on canvas, 116.05 x 134.62 x 13.34 cm (Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY)

The critic Stephen Eisenman takes a different line of argument, describing the painting as "an assault upon the tradition of the European nude." Of particular interest for Eisenman is the viewer's uncertainty regarding the sex of the figure, the large hands and narrow hips suggesting a male rather than a female form. "The posture and anatomy of Tehura, which emphasizes her boyishness, is derived from various androgynous and hermaphroditic prototypes," Eisenman argues, citing the *Borghese Hermaphrodite* as one of them. Seen in this light, the painting, far from being an image of patriarchal dominion over the colonized body, is instead a subversive attack on that patriarchy and all the gendered values that it maintains.

However we choose to look at the painting, it provokes endless questioning, in which we are forced to encounter the other, whether that be in terms of age, faith, gender, spirituality, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, whatever you will, it is a painting that explores the heterogeneous nature of identity, asking profound questions as to who and what we are.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Amelia Hill, "Gauguin's erotic Tahiti idyll exposed as a sham," The Guardian, October 7, 2001.

Post-Impressionism on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.8.8.64**: Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*, 1894, Stoneware, 75 x 19 x 27 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Gauguin's return to Paris from his first stay in Tahiti in August 1893 did not go quite as he had hoped: no fanfare, no hero's welcome, and most disappointingly of all no sales.

Gauguin and "art pottery"

Despite some critical interest in his work, success still seemed to elude him. What was more, after years of support, his wife Mette cut off any ties with him. Broke and without a family, he went to Brittany where living costs were cheaper, but readjusting to life in "civilized" France proved a challenge. A drunken brawl with a bunch of Breton sailors shattered his ankle, an injury from which he would never completely recover. Enough was enough, apparently. In June 1895 he departed for Tahiti never to return. It is in this tempestuous period that he produced arguably his masterpiece in the medium of ceramics: *Oviri*.

From wood-carvings and ceramics to highly finished marble works, sculpture was integral to Gauguin's artistic practice. His works in clay, all produced in Paris in the mid-80's to the mid-90's, owe much to the great ceramist Ernest Chaplet who offered Gauguin assistance in firing and glazing as well as access to his kiln in Rue Blomet, Montparnasse. *Oviri* was the largest and the last of these series.

Ceramics appealed to him for several reasons; the first was financial, not only is clay cheap, but given its practical usages, Gauguin hoped, misguidedly as it turned out, that his pottery would attract more buyers than his painting. Then there was his famous love of non-European art, such as the Inca and pre-Columbian pottery he encountered in his Peruvian childhood. Gauguin viewed such works—both decorative and utilitarian—as capable of expressing profound emotions as much so-called high art, hence the term "art pottery" he used to describe them.

Gauguin was not entirely alone in wishing to elevate this humble medium. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a noticeable crumbling of the hierarchies that had separated the fine artist from the craftsman, the distinction say between the liberal and the mechanical artist which had held sway since the Renaissance. In Tahitian culture there were no such fine distinctions, instead, the craftsman/artist was defined quite differently, as Gauguin came to discover, being neither warrior/hunter nor homemaker/carer, over there he was neither fully male nor fully female but occupied, socially speaking, an androgynous middle ground somewhere between the two. This ambiguous sense of gendered identity appealed to Gauguin's subversive spirit. Certainly the creative potential of androgyny intrigued him and is often commented on in discussions of *Oviri*.

Oviri

A shortened form of *Oviri-moe-aihere* (the savage who sleeps in the wild forest), the Tahitian goddess of death and mourning, the name itself fascinated Gauguin: savage, brutal, bloodthirsty. He used it, like a *nom de guerre*, to refer to himself, as though taking on the goddess's terrible aspects.



Figure 13.8.8.65: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*, 1894, Stoneware, 75 x 19 x 27 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)



Figure 13.8.8.66: Eugène Delacroix, *Medea About to Kill Her Children*, 1838, Oil on canvas, 122 x 84 cm (Musée du Louvre, Paris)

Here she stands, then: under her feet a dead she-wolf; in her hands the crushed form of its cub; the red glaze suggestive of the trickling flow of their blood. There is no known source for the episode, which was probably Gauguin's invention. This left the way open for various interpretations: that the wolves represent the savagery of the goddess herself; that by killing them she is somehow absorbing their violent capabilities; even that they are Gauguin himself. In a number of letters he draws the comparison, recalling, for instance, how Degas once described him as "the hungry wolf without a collar." Others see a veiled allusion to the practice of infanticide, outlawed by the time of Gauguin's arrival, that was carried out by the Areoi, Tahiti's priestly elite. The image evokes notions of sacrifice or perhaps stories of the vengeful mother archetype, drawing connections between *Oviri* and Delacroix's *Medea About to Kill Her Children* of 1838.



Figure 13.8.8.67: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*, 1894, Stoneware, 75 x 19 x 27 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

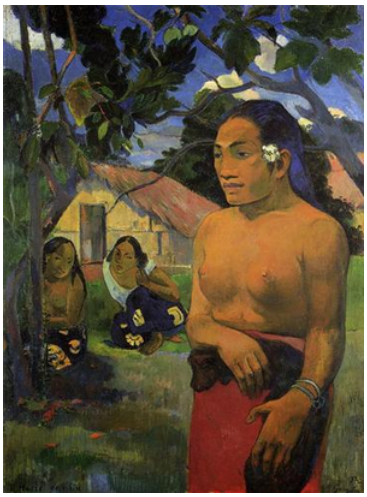


Figure **13.8.8.68**: Paul Gauguin, *E Haere O I Hia? (Where are you going?)*, 1892, oil on canvas, 96 x 69 cm (Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart)

Whatever story it tells, its earliest manifestations in terms of design can be traced to a work produced two years earlier during his first stay in Tahiti, *Where Are You Going?* It is here, in the stocky, sculptural and distinctly androgynous frame of the foreground figure, carrying in her arms a wolf-cub that we get our first glimpse of Oviri.

How different the ceramic is to the painting, though. Perhaps due to the personal crisis that he experienced on his return to Paris or perhaps due to the medium itself with its direct contact between hand and clay. *Oviri* is a far more radical departure, an atavistic assault on the canons of grace, harmony and beauty. Ugly seems hardly adequate to describe this twisted and condensed avatar of primal, destructive forces, the huge goggle eyes floating inhumanly around her disproportioned head.

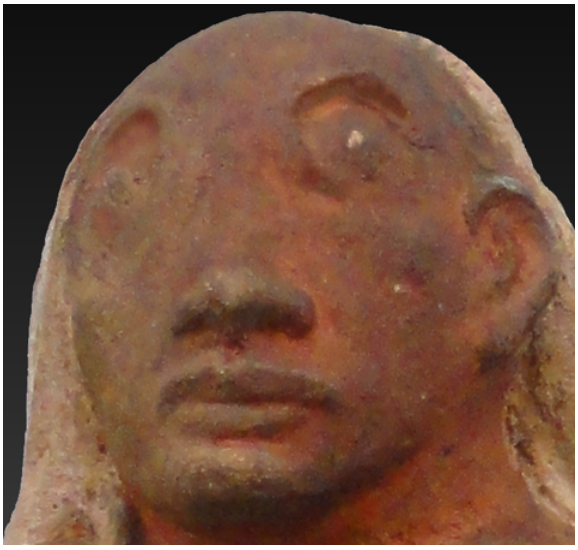


Figure **13.8.8.69**: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*, 1894, Stoneware, 75 x 19 x 27 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The block-like figure, lacking any piercings or projecting parts, like Egyptian statuary, commands a frontal view. When seen from the back, though, we are presented with a wholly different image, another work of art almost. What had looked from the front to be hair appears now as a cocoon-like covering, the chrysalis underneath, incipient, on the point of breaking out. The contrast with *Oviri*, the murderess, is striking.

From this angle, the work also bears a striking likeness to Rodin's *Balzac*, a sculpture he had been working on since 1891. Although not exhibited publicly until 1898, Gauguin certainly knew of the commission and perhaps was aware of the direction Rodin was taking with it. In both works we find the same dramatic reduction of form, rejecting any reference to the classical past, tapping instead into a more primordial impulse, in *Oviri's* case a force at once female and male, in which the destructive, death-wielding act of crushing the wolf-cub finds its creative, life-giving antithesis in the organic, bud-like form of its reverse.

A grave marker

It was this confounding of the ultimate boundary, that between death and life, that might well have prompted Gauguin in 1900, knowing that he had not long to live, to ask a friend to send him his *Oviri* from Paris intending it for his tombstone. His friend never got round to it; a merciful oversight given the stoneware would not have weathered well in that tropical climate. Instead it went on to feature in the artist's retrospective of 1906, an exhibition Picasso saw and most probably drew inspiration from when composing his *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.

In 1978, a bronze cast was made of the sculpture, which was placed before Gauguin's grave in the Marquesas. Acknowledged as a masterpiece, in 1987 the original entered the collection of the Musée d'Orsay.

Additional resources:

This sculpture at the Musée d'Orsay

Barbara Landy, "The Meaning of Gauguin's 'Oviri' Ceramic," Burlington Magazine, vol. 109 (1967), pp. 242, 244-246. (JSTOR)

Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*

by DR. NOELLE PAULSON

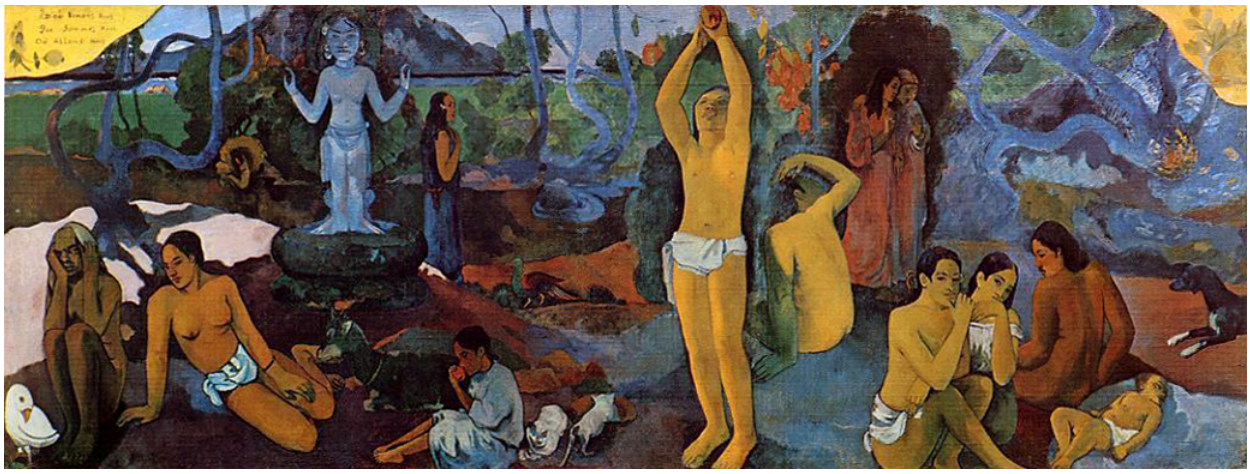


Figure **13.8.8.70**: Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-98, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? is a huge, brilliantly colored but enigmatic work painted on rough, heavy sackcloth. It contains numerous human, animal, and symbolic figures arranged across an island landscape. The sea and Tahiti's volcanic mountains are visible in the background. It is Paul Gauguin's largest painting, and he understood it to be his finest work.

Where are we going? represents the artist's painted manifesto created while he was living on the island of Tahiti. The French artist transitioned from being a "Sunday painter" (someone who paints for his or her own enjoyment) to becoming a professional after his career as a stockbroker failed in the early 1880s. He visited the Pacific island Tahiti in French Polynesia staying from 1891 to 1893. He then returned to Polynesia in 1895, painted this massive canvas there in 1897, and eventually died in 1903, on Hiva Oa in the Marquesas islands.

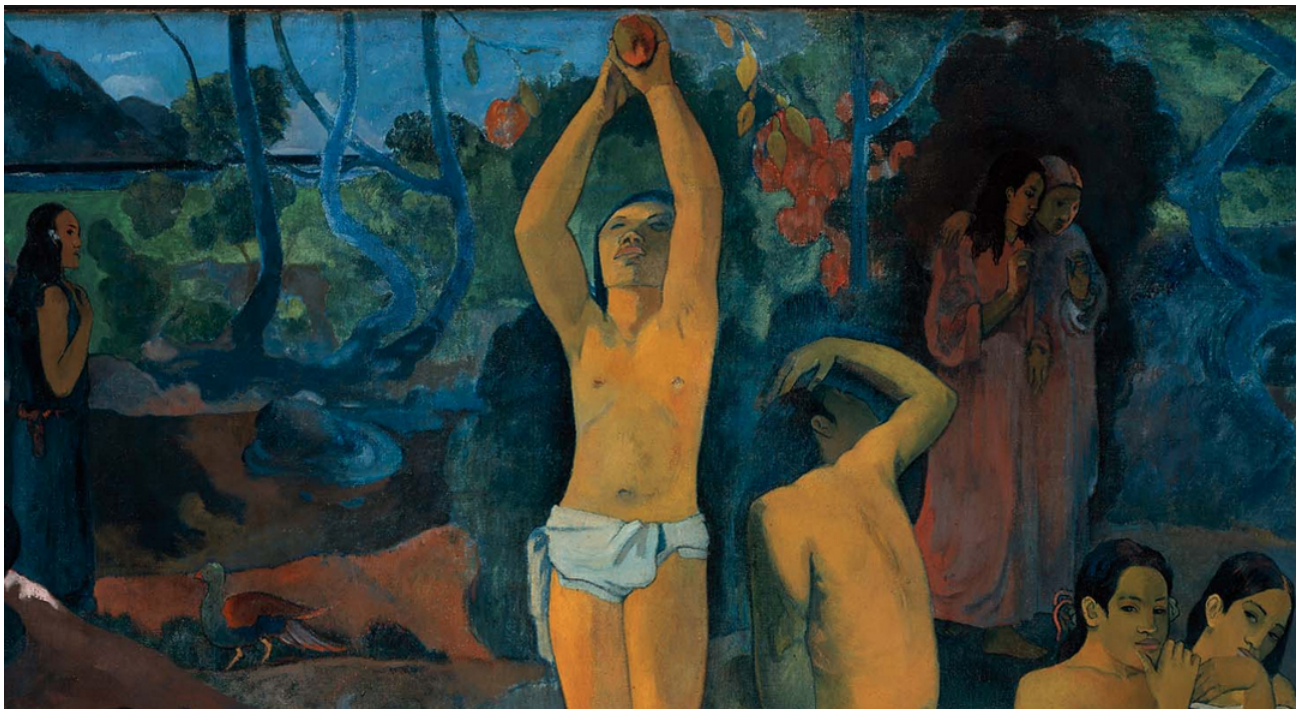


Figure **13.8.8.71**: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-98, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Gauguin wrote to his friend Daniel de Monfried, who managed Gauguin's career in Paris while the artist remained in the South Pacific, "I believe that this canvas not only surpasses all my preceding ones, but [also] that I shall never do anything better, or even like it." Gauguin completed *Where are we going?* at a feverish rate, allegedly within one month's time, and even claimed to de Monfried that he went into the mountains to attempt suicide after the work was finished. Gauguin—ever the master of self-promotion and highly conscious of his image as a vanguard artist—may or may not have actually poisoned himself with arsenic as he alleged, but this legend was quite pointedly in line with the painting's themes of life, death, poetry, and symbolic meaning.

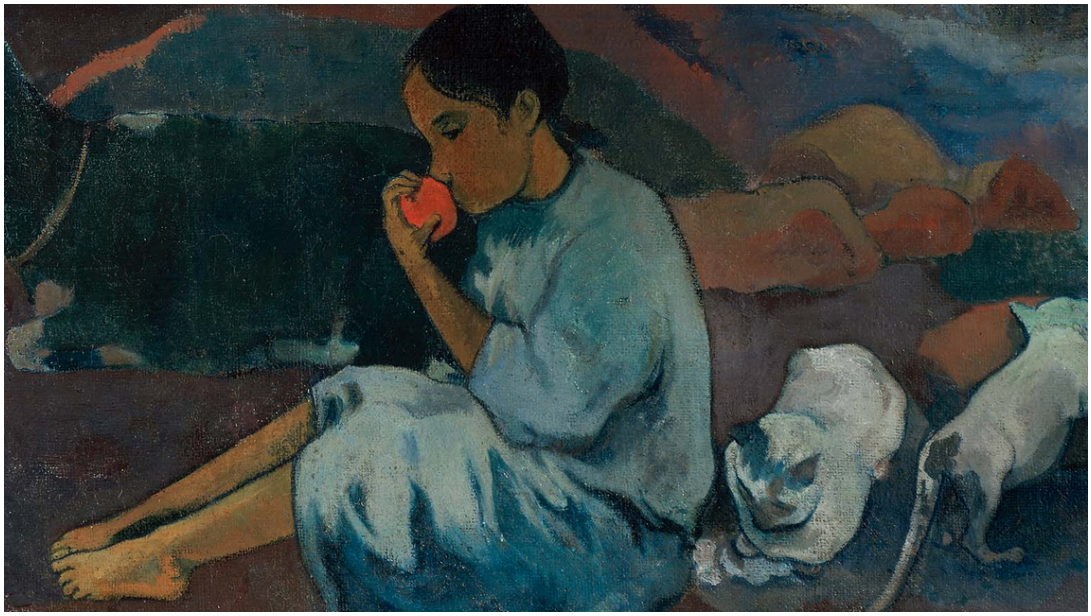


Figure **13.8.8.72**: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-98, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Gauguin himself provided a telling description of the painting's esoteric imagery in the same letter to de Monfried, written in February 1898:

> ***It is a canvas four meters fifty in width, by one meter seventy in height. The two upper corners are chrome yellow, with an inscription on the left and my name on the right, like a fresco whose corners are spoiled with age, and which is appliquéd upon a golden wall. To the right at the lower end, a sleeping child and three crouching women. Two figures dressed in purple confide their thoughts to one another. An enormous crouching figure, out of all proportion and intentionally so, raises its arms and stares in astonishment upon these two, who dare to think of their destiny. A figure in the center is picking fruit. Two cats near a child. A white goat. An idol, its arms mysteriously raised in a sort of rhythm, seems to indicate the Beyond. Then lastly, an old woman nearing death appears to accept everything, to resign herself to her thoughts. She completes the story! At her feet a strange white bird, holding a lizard in its claws, represents the futility of words….So I have finished a philosophical work on a theme comparable to that of the Gospel.[1]***

Not only does Gauguin's text clarify some of the painting's abstruse, idiosyncratic iconography, it also invites us to "read" the image. Gauguin suggests that the figures have mysterious symbolic meanings and that they might answer the questions posed by the work's title. And, in the manner of a sacred scroll written in an ancient language, the painting is to be read from right to left: from the sleeping infant—where we come from—to the standing figure in the middle—what we are—and ending at the left with the crouching old woman—where we are going.



Figure **13.8.8.73**: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-98, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Stylistically, the composition is designed and painted to recall frescoes or icons painted on a gold ground. The upper corners have been painted with a bright yellow to contribute to this effect, and the figures appear out of proportion to one another—"deliberately so" as Gauguin wrote—as if they were floating in space rather than resting firmly upon the earth.

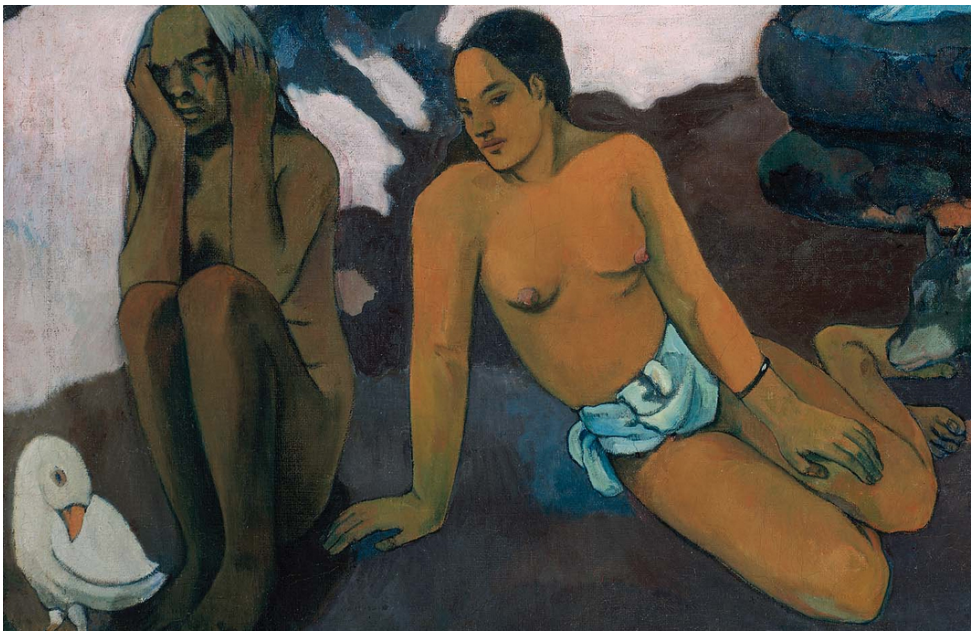


Figure **13.8.8.74**: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-98, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

These stylistic features, along with Gauguin's enigmatic subject contribute to the painting's "philosophical" quality. And as is common with other Symbolist works of this period, precise, complete interpretations of *Where do we come from?* remain out of reach. The painting is a deliberate mixture of universal meaning—the questions asked in the title are fundamental ones that address the very root of human existence—and esoteric mystery. Although *Where do we come from?* is painted on a large scale similar to the decorative public panels created by the French artist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (an artist Gauguin admired), *Where do we come from?* is essentially a private work whose meaning was likely known only to Gauguin himself.

A few months after completing the painting, Gauguin sent it to Paris along with several other works of art, intending that they should be exhibited together in a gallery or an artist's studio. He sent de Monfried careful instructions about how *Where do we come from?* should be framed ("a plain strip of wood, 10 centimeters wide, and white-washed to resemble a mural") and who should be invited to the exhibition ("in this way, instead of crowds one can have whom one wants, and thus gain connections that cannot harm you.") The concern Gauguin reveals in the details indicates his continued awareness of the Parisian art market, which remained a central focus even as he exiled himself on a small tropical island on the other side of the globe.

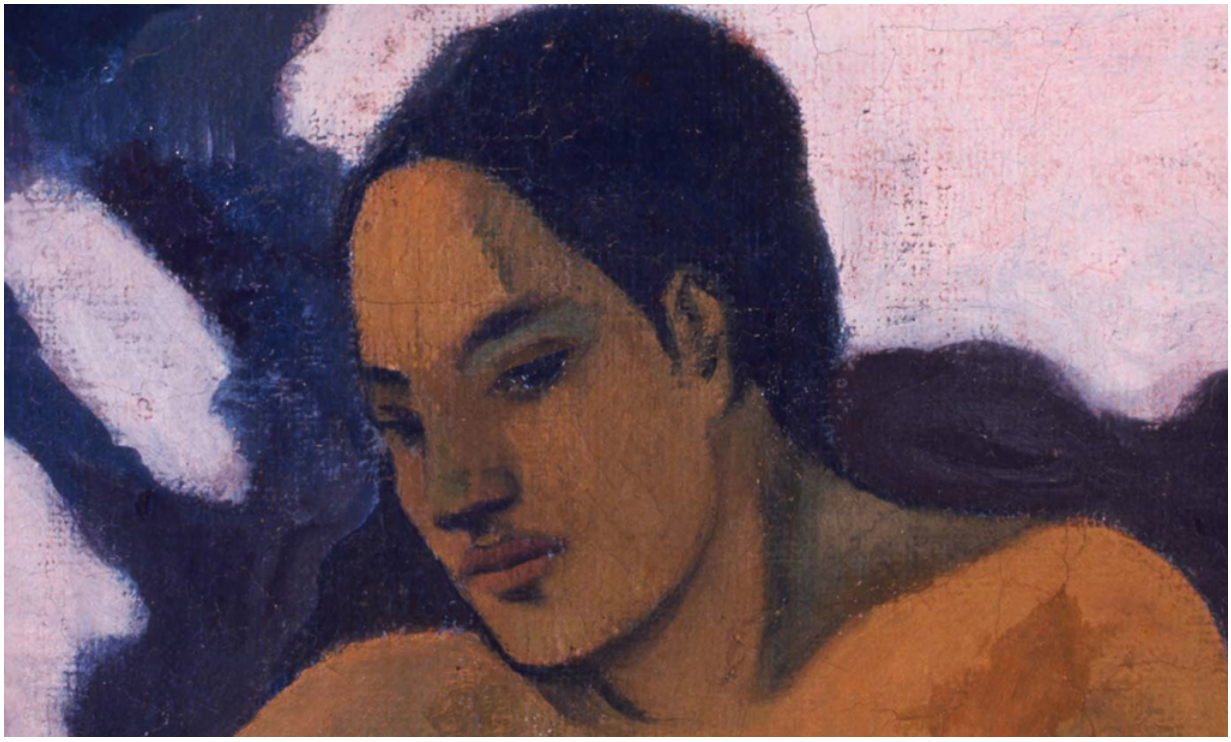


Figure 13.8.8.75: Detail, Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, 1897-98, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

In November and December 1898, the group of Tahitian paintings was displayed at the gallery of Ambroise Vollard, a former law student turned art dealer who specialized in vanguard artists. Vollard seems to have had difficulty selling the "large picture," as Gauguin called it. Efforts by the artist's Parisian friends to collectively acquire the painting and donate it to the French state were never realized. *Where do we come from?* shuttled between galleries and private collections in France and Norway until the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, purchased it in 1936.

1. "The Wisdom of Paul Gauguin—Artist," *International Studio*, volume 73, number 291, 69.

Gauguin and Laval in Martinique

by REMI POINDEXTER

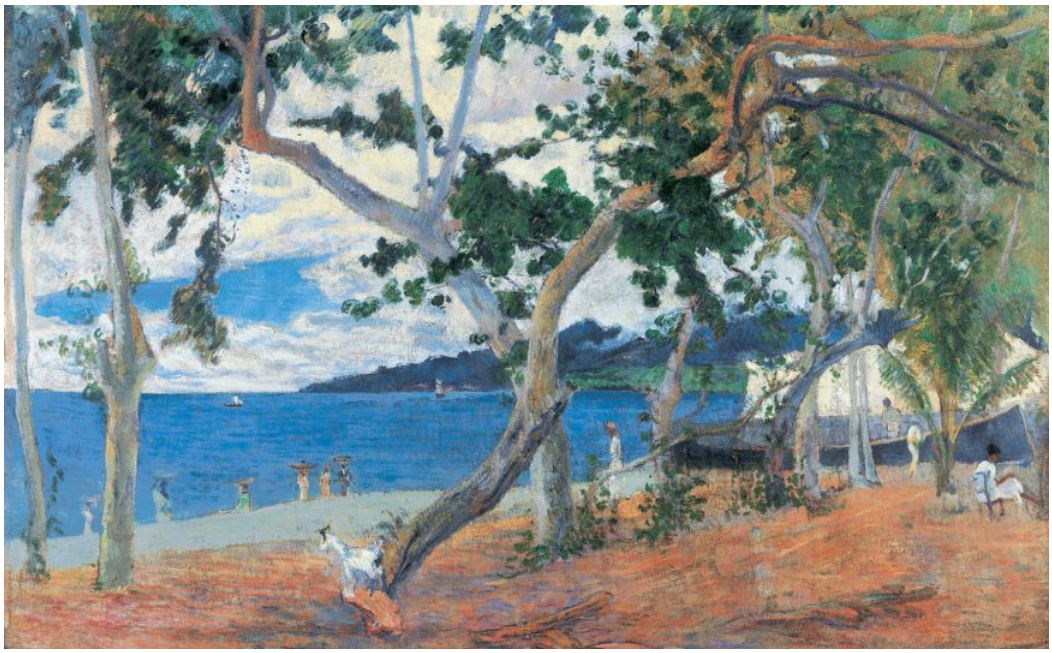


Figure 13.8.8.76: Paul Gauguin, *Coastal Landscape From Martinique (The Bay of St.-Pierre, Martinique)*, 1887, oil on canvas, 50 × 90 cm (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen)

When you think of Paul Gauguin, you probably think of exoticized visions of the South Pacific or colorful scenes of the Breton countryside. What you most likely do not immediately think of is the Caribbean. However, before he painted famous works like ***Vision after the Sermon*** and ***Spirit of the Dead Watching***, the artist spent several months in Martinique, a French possession in the Lesser Antilles. While on the island, Gauguin painted numerous works that portray Martinique as a lush landscape filled with local women and tropical fruits. These colorful works provide an unexpected link to Caribbean art and can serve as a case study in the history of travel and depictions of Martinique in the nineteenth century.

From Panama to Martinique

Gauguin's journey began on April 10, 1887, when he and his friend Charles Laval boarded the steamship Canada heading for Panama. Both were artists searching for something new, beyond what they viewed as the constraints of modern life in France. Gauguin—whose finances were running low—was particularly fed up with life in Paris, which he called "a desert for a poor man."[1]



Figure 13.8.8.77

In Panama, the pair hoped to find employment that would offer them new horizons in which to create. Unfortunately, Panama did not match their idealistic expectations: the landscape had been drastically altered by the construction of the Panama Canal, disease was rampant, and stable work was hard to find. After many difficult weeks, Gauguin and Laval left Panama for Martinique hoping to find more ideal conditions. They arrived on June 11, 1887 and rented a hut on a sugar plantation, near the island's cultural and economic capital of Saint-Pierre.

People, Fruits, and Landscapes

Although they were close to the city, the two artists focused on the tropical landscape, as seen in Gauguin's *The Mango Trees, Martinique*. Here, Gauguin depicts a group of women picking fruit in a grove of trees. Gauguin uses short strokes and varying shades of green and orange to paint the tropical vegetation which includes a recognizable papaya tree in the left foreground. The women wear traditional clothing: long, loose dresses or skirts, beaded necklaces, and madras headscarves.



Figure **13.8.8.78**: Paul Gauguin, *The Mango Trees*, *Martinique*, 1887, oil on canvas, 86 × 116 cm (**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**)

All of the figures in the scene are of African descent, reflecting a major demographic on the island. Like many Caribbean islands, Martinique was shaped by a plantation economy fueled by the forced labor of people who were kidnapped and transported from Africa during the transatlantic slave trade. Although slavery was abolished in 1848, descendants of enslaved people formed a large part of the island's working class, including plantation workers, who worked alongside new arrivals from Africa and Asia in often wretched conditions.

Near the center of the composition, a woman balances a basket on her head, a practice that fascinated those visiting the Caribbean. In Martinique, the women who carried goods from the countryside to markets this way were known as *porteuses*. These women were a popular subject for artists and writers traveling to Martinique—including Gauguin and Laval. Because of where they lived, the artists would have seen many local women picking fruits or passing through on their way to Saint-Pierre.



Figure **13.8.8.79**: Charles Laval, *Women by the Sea*, 1887–89, oil on canvas, 65 × 91.5 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Charles Laval's *Women by the Sea* also shows a group of *porteuses* walking along the coast. As in *The Mango Trees*, the women in the scene wear traditional dresses, skirts, and headscarves. Rather than a grove of trees, Laval provides a clear view of the Bay of

Saint-Pierre with the Mount Pelée volcano rising in the distance. Laval also builds his composition using directional strokes of paint, but animates his figures in a more dramatic way. The *porteuse* on the left extends her forearm and fingers, while her tray of fruits bends under its own weight—a contrast to Gauguin's peaceful figures.

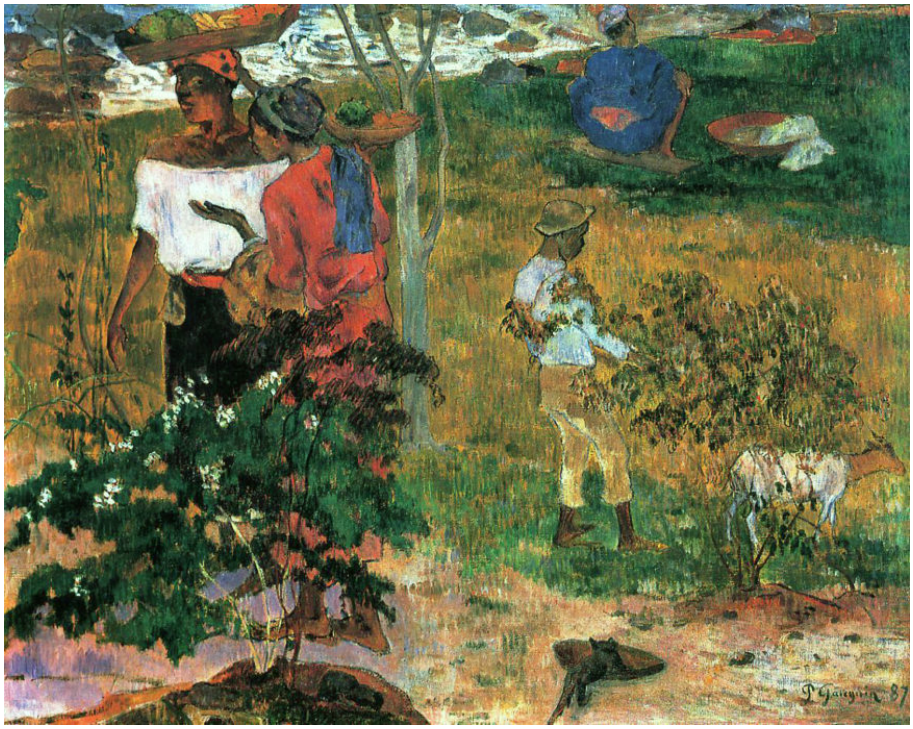


Figure **13.8.8.80**: Paul Gauguin, *Tropical Conversation*, 1887, oil on canvas, 61 × 76 cm (private collection)



Figure **13.8.8.81**: "'Ti Marie," engraving in Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890), p. 107.

Idealized Caribbean Labor

A common element in Gauguin and Laval's work in Martinique is the depiction of working Afro-Caribbean women—notably *porteuse*s. Although they certainly were a part of contemporary Martinique, both artists overwhelmingly favored them in their paintings. A recent exhibition catalogue noted that the artists created a vision of an island inhabited almost entirely by *porteuses*.[2]

Images of these figures were popular well before Gauguin and Laval arrived. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painters depicted *porteuses* in bustling cityscapes and as staffage (small figures included in landscape paintings, often to mark scale) in picturesque views for elite local patrons and audiences in France. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Caribbean travel books and magazines featured images of *porteuses* in their illustrations, which were seen by thousands of readers in France and the United States. *Two Years in the French West Indies* (published in 1890) by American travel writer Lafcadio Hearn included an entire chapter on *porteuses*, which featured an engraved illustration. Like the figures depicted by Gauguin and Laval, the barefoot woman wears a loose, long dress, madras turban, and balances a tray on her head.

The popularity of *porteuses* may be due to the unfamiliar and seemingly idealized nature of their labor. Although in reality they travelled dozens of miles along mountainous paths with heavy loads on their heads, *porteuses* could be viewed as independent workers in harmony with nature—arguably heightened by the animals in the compositions. Compared to depictions of work on sugar plantations—which incidentally are largely absent from images depicting Martinique—the *porteuses* offered a female subject that would please audiences and cast the island as an exotic idyll.

Gauguin, Laval, and the Conventions of Depicting Martinique

Although Gauguin and Laval adhered to certain conventions of depicting Martinique, their work also stands out. The artists' chose to focus exclusively on Afro-Martiniquan people. Many paintings, photographs, and engravings emphasized the ethnic diversity on the island, especially varying shades of skin tone. Illustrated books often featured images of different (mostly female) "ethnic types," from dark-skinned *negresses* to light-skinned *mulâtresses* (note that these terms have derogatory connotations in English, but are more descriptive—if still problematic—in a French Caribbean context). In contrast, Gauguin and Laval largely avoided the depiction of different racial "types" and depicted an exclusively dark-skinned population. Whether this was a conscious choice or for another reason, the artists' figures go beyond the tradition of the ethnic showcase.

While Gauguin's choice to focus on women is hardly surprising, the fact that the figures are not blatantly eroticized is also significant, given the artist's reputation. Unlike the lounging, nude figures Gauguin later painted in Tahiti, the Martiniquan figures are fully clothed, working women. In the Martinique landscape paintings, they seem to inhabit a tropical Arcadia that are also genre scenes depicting work and rest.



Figure **13.8.8.82**: Paul Gauguin, *Coming and Going, Martinique*, 1887, oil on canvas, 72.5 × 92 cm (Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection on loan at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid)

Conclusion

Gauguin and Laval's journey to Martinique is a lesser-known chapter in the history of nineteenth-century French painting that connects to the country's Caribbean colonies. Like many artists who travelled to Martinique, the two artists depicted *porteuses* and lush tropical landscapes. However, the unique style of their works, as well as their nearly exclusive focus on Afro-Caribbean figures stands out. While Gauguin will likely continue to be remembered for his colorful (and increasingly problematized) views of the Pacific, maybe next time you hear his name you'll think of a small French island in the Caribbean.

Notes:

1. Paul Gauguin, *Letters to His Wife and Friends*, ed. Maurice Malingue, trans. Henry J. Stenning (Boston: MFA Publications, 2003), p. 75.
2. Joost van der Hoeven, "Martinique Experienced," *Gauguin and Laval in Martinique* (Bussum: Thoth Publishers, 2018), p. 68.

Additional Resources

"Gauguin and Laval in Martinique," Van Gogh Museum

Maite van Dijk, Joost van der Hoeven, et al. *Gauguin and Laval in Martinique* (Bussum: Thoth Publishers, 2018).

Paul Gauguin, *Letters to His Wife and Friends*, ed. Maurice Malingue, trans. Henry J. Stenning (Boston: MFA Publications, 2003).

Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890).

Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Joost van der Hoeven, "Martinique Experienced," *Gauguin and Laval in Martinique* (Bussum: Thoth Publishers, 2018), pp. 58–75.

Paul Cézanne

An introduction to the painting of Paul Cézanne

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.8.83**: Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Apples*, 1895-98, oil on canvas, 68.6 x 92.7 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Categorizing the style of Paul Cézanne's (Say-zahn) artwork is problematic. As a young man he left his home in Provence in the south of France in order to join with the avant-garde in Paris. He was successful, too. He fell in with the circle of young painters that surrounded Manet, he had been a childhood friend of the novelist, Emile Zola, who championed Manet, and he even showed at the first Impressionist exhibition, held at Nadar's studio in 1874.



Figure 13.8.8.84: Paul Cézanne, *Paul Alexis reading to Émile Zola*, 1869-1870, oil on canvas (São Paulo Museum of Art)

Out of place in Paris

However, Cézanne didn't quite fit in with the group. Whereas many other painters in this circle were concerned primarily with the effects of light and reflected color, Cézanne remained deeply committed to form. Feeling out of place in Paris, he left after a relatively short period and returned to his home in Aix-en-Provence. He would remain in his native Provence for most of the rest of his life. He worked in the semi-isolation afforded by the country, but was never really out of touch with the breakthroughs of the avant-garde.



Figure 13.8.8.85: Paul Cézanne, *Madame Cézanne (Hortense Fiquet*, 1850–1922) in a Red Dress, 1888-90, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 89.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Working outdoors, but with a different purpose

Like the Impressionists, he often worked outdoors directly before his subjects. But unlike the Impressionists, Cézanne used color, not as an end in itself, but rather like line, as a tool with which to construct form and space. Ironically, it is the Parisian avant-garde that would eventually seek him out. In the first years of the 20th century, just at the end of Cézanne's life, young artists would make a pilgrimage to Aix, to see the man who would change painting.



Figure 13.8.8.86: Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, c. 1887, oil on canvas, 66.8 x 92.3 cm (Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

Influence

Paul Cézanne is often considered to be one of the most influential painter of the late 19th century. Pablo Picasso readily admitted his great debt to the elder master. Similarly, Henri Matisse once called Cézanne, "…the father of us all." For many years The Museum of Modern Art in New York organized its permanent collection so as to begin with an entire room devoted to Cézanne's painting. The Metropolitan Museum of Art also gives over an entire large room to him. Clearly, many artists and curators consider him enormously important.

Additional resources:

Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples* at the MoMA

Biography of the artist from Grove Art on MoMA.org

Cézanne in Provence

Meyer Shapiro on Cézanne from Artchive

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



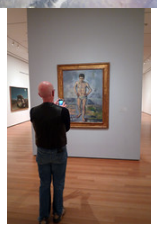






Figure **13.8.8.87**: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Cézanne, *The Bather*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure **13.8.8.98**: Paul Cézanne, *The Bather*, 1885-86, oil on canvas, 127 x 96.8 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

A figure in space

The picture is of a single male in an ambiguous landscape. The figure is pushed up to the front of the canvas and he fills it almost from top to bottom. Behind him, deep space is defined, but there is something of a visual tug-of-war going on. Cézanne has, as is traditional, defined both the near and distant ground planes. Unusually though, he leaves out the middle plane, which intensifies the distance between the fore and back-grounds. The trouble begins when he collapses the two.

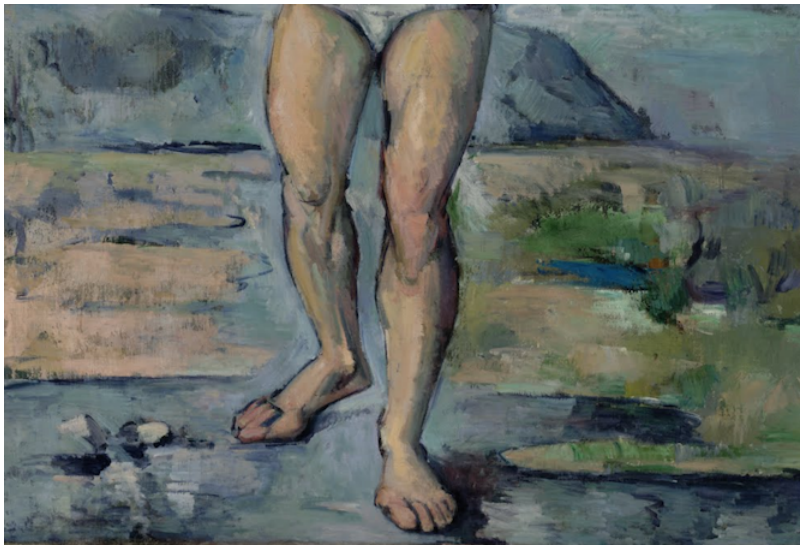


Figure 13.8.8.99: Legs (detail), Paul Cézanne, *The Bather*, 1885-86, oil on canvas, 127 x 96.8 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

Look closely at the contour that defines the edge of the figure. Don't look inside the line that defines the edges of his body, look just outside (see especially beside the right leg). Cézanne has changed the brushwork and color just slightly. It appears that after the background and the figure were finished, he went back and reworked the part of the atmosphere surrounding the bather. The result is an odd shift in distance.

Rupturing illusion

The illusion of depth that allows our eye to travel back in space is ruptured as the reworked paint seems to cling to the foreground figure. It is as if the background is lifted forward, attaching itself to the edge of the man like a frame.

Why would Cézanne want to destroy the spacial relationships that he has carefully rendered? This sounds like something Edouard Manet might do. Like Manet, it is as if Cézanne wants the viewer to try to account for this distortion—and to engage actively in the picture and its construction.

Asymmetry

Such questions becomes even more insistent if we look at the rendering of the figure. Clearly this is not the work of Raphael nor of the refined academic technicians associated with the 19th-century Salon. It fact, the figure is a mess. Beyond being generalized, the parts do not seem to belong together. Look at the arms, for instance. The left doesn't pair with the one on the right. The same is true of the chest and even the face. The legs are particularly awkward. Although one is forward, it is nevertheless far too long in relation to the other.

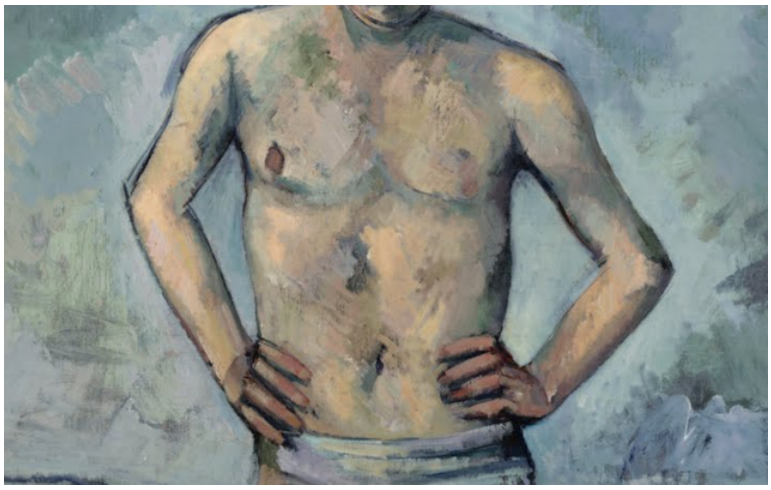


Figure 13.8.8.100: Arms and torso (detail), Paul Cézanne, *The Bather*, 1885-86, oil on canvas, 127 x 96.8 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

What is the careful observer to think? Has The Museum of Modern Art made a terrible mistake? Have museums around the world given over precious wall space to a charlatan? Cézanne could draw accurately when he chose, but in this instance he consciously chose to disregard tradition and represent space in a manner that invites the viewer to acknowledge both the illusion of depth and the dismantling of that illusion.

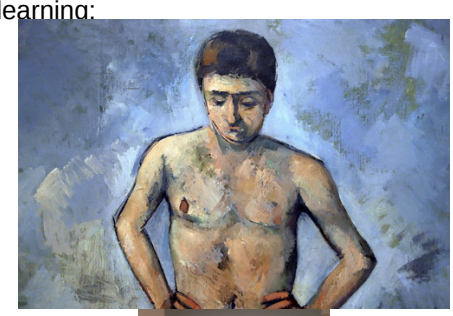
Additional resources:

This painting at MoMA

Paul Cézanne from The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Michael Kimmelman, "Cezanne, in All His Magnificent Mystery," *New York Times*, 6/9/96

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



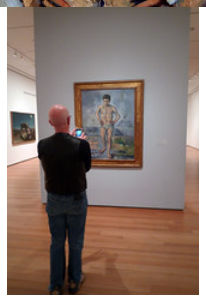




Figure **13.8.8.101**: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Cézanne, *The Basket of Apples*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure 13.8.8.102: Paul Cézanne, *The Basket of Apples*, c. 1893, oil on canvas, 65 x 80 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

In David's Neo-Classical era, still life was considered the least important subject type. Only minor artists bothered with what was then seen as the most purely decorative and trivial of painting subjects. The hierarchy of subjects went roughly from the most important—historical and religious themes (often very large in scale); to important—portraiture (usually of moderate scale); less important—landscape & genre (themes of common life, usually of modest scale); to least important— still life (generally small canvases).



Figure 13.8.8.103: Willem Kalf, *Still Life with Ewer, Vessels, and Pomegranate*, mid 1640s, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 103.5 cm (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA)

A hopeless subject

There had been one significant historical exception. In the 17th century in Northern Europe and particularly in the Netherlands, still life blossomed. But this period was brief and had little impact in France other than in the work of Chardin. So why would Cézanne turn so often to this discredited subject?

It was the very fact that still life was so neglected that seems to have attracted Cézanne to it. So outmoded was the iconography (symbolic forms and references) in still life that this rather hopeless subject was freed of virtually all convention. Here was a subject that offered extraordinary freedom, a blank slate that gave Cézanne the opportunity to invent meaning unfettered by tradition. And Cézanne would almost single-handedly revive the subject of still life making it an important subject for Picasso, Matisse, and others in the 20th century.



Figure 13.8.8.104: Pablo Picasso, *Nature morte au compotier (Still Life with Compote and Glass)*, 1914-15, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 78.7 (Columbus Museum of Art)

The image at the top of this page looks simple enough, a wine bottle, a basket tipped up to expose a bounty of fruit inside, a plate of what are perhaps stacked cookies or small rolls, and a tablecloth both gathered and draped. Nothing remarkable, at least not until one begins to notice the odd errors in drawing. Look, for instance, at the lines that represent the close and far edge of the table. I remember an old student of mine remarking to the class, "I would never hire him as a carpenter!" What she had noticed was the odd stepping of a line that we expect to be straight.

Purposeful errors

But that is not all that is wrong. The table seems to be too steeply tipped at the left, so much so that the fruit is in danger of rolling off it. The bottle looks tipsy and the cookies are very odd indeed. The cookies stacked below the top layer seem as if they are viewed from the side, but at the same moment, the two on top seem to pop upward as if we were looking down at them. This is an important key to understanding the questions that we've raised about Cézanne's pictures so far.



Figure 13.8.8.105: Cookies (detail), Paul Cézanne, *The Basket of Apples*, c. 1893, oil on canvas, 65 x 80 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

Like Edouard Manet, from whom he borrowed so much, Cézanne was prompted to rethink the value of the various illusionistic techniques that he had inherited from the masters of the Renaissance and Baroque eras. This was due in part to the growing impact of photography and its transformation of modern representation. While Degas and Monet borrowed from the camera the fragmenting of time, Cézanne saw this mechanized segmentation of time as artificial and at odds with the perception of the human

eye. By Cézanne's era, the camera did shatter time into fragments as do non-digital cameras that can be set so that the shutter is open to light for only 1/1000 of a second.

Sight and memory

Cézanne pushed this distinction between the vision of the camera and of human vision. He reasoned that the same issues applied to the illusionism of the old masters, of Raphael, Leonardo, Caravaggio, etc. For instance, think about how linear perspective works. Since the Early Renaissance, constructing the illusion of space required that the artist remain frozen in a single point in space in order maintain consistent recession among all receding orthogonals. This frozen vantage point belongs to both the artist and then the viewer. But is it a full description of the the experience of human sight? Cézanne's still life suggests that it is not.

If a Renaissance painter set out to render Cézanne's still life objects (not that they would, mind you), that artist would have placed himself in a specific point before the table and taken great pains to render the collection of tabletop objects only from that original perspective. Every orthogonal line would remain consistent (and straight). But this is clearly not what Cézanne had in mind. His perspective seems jumbled. When we first look carefully, it may appear as if he was simply unable to draw, but if you spend more time, it may occur to you that Cézanne is, in fact, drawing carefully, although according to a new set of rules.

Seemingly simple, Cézanne's concern with representing the true experience of sight had enormous implications for 20th century visual culture. Cézanne realized that unlike the fairly simple and static Renaissance vision of space, people actually see in a fashion that is more complex, we see through both time and space. In other words, we move as we see. In contemporary terms, one might say that human vision is less like the frozen vision of a still camera and more akin to the continuous vision of a video camera except that he worked with oil on canvas which dries and becomes static.



Figure 13.8.8.106: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *The Basket of Apples*, c. 1893, oil on canvas, 65 x 80 cm (Art Institute of Chicago)

Purposeful destruction

So very tentatively, Cézanne began the purposeful destruction of the unified image. Look again at the cookies, or whatever they are, stacked upon the plate in the upper right. Is it possible that the gentle disagreements that we noted result from the representation of two slightly different view points? These are not large ruptures, but rather, they suggest careful and tentative discovery. It is as if Cézanne had simply depicted the bottom cookies as he looked across at them and then as he looked more slightly down at the top cookies after shifting his weight to his forward leg. Furthermore, I'm not sure that he was all that proud of these breaks that allow for more than a single perspective. Look, for instance, at the points where the table must break to express these multiple perspectives and you will notice that they are each hidden from view. Nevertheless, in doing this, Cézanne changed the direction of painting.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Art Institute of Chicago

Still Life tour from the National Gallery of Art

Selection on The Basket of Apples from Richard Brettell, *Post-Impressionists.* Chicago (1987, p. 67

Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Plaster Cupid*

by RACHEL ROPEIK, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.8.10**: Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Plaster Cupid*, c.1895, oil on canvas (Courtauld Gallery, London)



Figure **13.8.8.107**: Frans Hals, *Portrait of Rene Descartes*, 1649, oil on canvas, 19 x 14 cm (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen)

René Descartes

I want to raise Cartesian philosophy here. The word is capitalized because it refers to the philosophy of the proto-Enlightenment thinker René Descartes. Even if you have never heard of this great rationalist, it is likely that you will recognize one of his phrases such as “I think, therefore, I am.” This odd sentence is the result of his effort to find irrefutable proof that he actually existed. Philosophers often ask questions that are meant to reveal fundamental truths. Can you imagine for a moment asking yourself this very question–How can I actually prove that I exist? Descartes realized an elegant solution, his very ability to ask the question was the proof of independent consciousness and therefore, of his existence.

With such questions, Descartes raised many considerations that would shape the modern world. Sometimes these questions raised, in turn, conclusions seemingly at odds with each other, such as his skepticism of both perception and of self-evident assumption

Objective and subjective knowledge

Ironically, such thoughts would eventually lead to a reappraisal of our confidence in society's scientific empiricism. Empiricism relies upon objectivity. You will remember that the word "objective" means a truth that is beyond personal experience. In contrast, the word "subjective" is directly linked to personal experience.

Here is an example. Imagine a minor accident between a taxi and a city bus. A patrolman comes along to reconstruct the event. Does he only ask the cab driver what took place or does he also ask the passenger in the back of the cab and the bus driver and the riders on the bus? The cop's goal is the reconstruct what "actually" happened. But if we take a post-Cartesian position we might ask whether there really was a single actual (objective) event or whether there were actually multiple (subjective) truths, each the result of each witness's perspective. Let's take a more directly applicable example. Look about the room that you are currently in. It probably has six sides: four walls, a floor, and a ceiling. When an architect drew a diagram of your room, he/she would have conceptually stepped outside of the space so that it could be understood in total.

But is this objective view a false one? Now in the built room, you cannot see its totality in a single moment. We can only see bits and pieces of the room at any one time and must rely upon memory to understand the room as a whole. Your more subjective experience has historically been considered less important than the architect's objective conception even though you experience directly and the architect knows the room only theoretically.

Cézanne and subjective experience

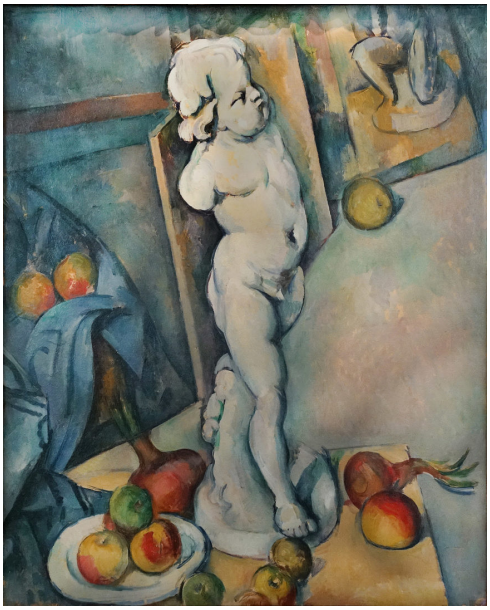


Figure 13.8.8.108: Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Plaster Cupid*, c. 1894 oil on canvas, 70.6 x 57.3 cm (Courtauld Gallery, London) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Regarding the traditional hierarchical relationship between objective and subjective, Cézanne seems to ask, "which is more true?" and his conclusion mirrors an important development of modernism. In *Still Life with Plaster Cupid*, it is the subjective view that constructs the space. Cézanne has placed a plaster cast (copy) of an ancient Roman sculpture of a cupid (the son of Venus) on a tabletop so that it dominates the composition.

To an artist of the 19th century such classical sculpture would refer to the great humanist triumph of the Greeks and Romans and the birth of naturalism. In fact, one of the most prominent features of such sculpture would be its contrapposto (you remember this: axial shifts responding to weight borne by one leg). Actually, Cézanne's li'l god-ling is also twisting at the waist, creating a subtle spiral torsion. Again, the space is odd, the floor especially, seems to rise up too steeply with the stacked canvases forming its uneven perimeter. Have you noticed that the canvases that line the floor, shape the space of the room and that this "shaping" is related to the twisting of the cupid? Let do this point by point. The right foot of the sculpture points roughly towards us and aligns, more or less, with the receding orthogonal of the table. The figure's hips have turned. They are aligned with the plane of the canvas at the extreme left that is partly hidden behind the blue tablecloth. The Cupid's shoulders are turned even further and align with the canvas that rests behind the godling's torso.



Figure **13.8.8.109**: Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Plaster Cupid* (detail), c. 1894 oil on canvas, 70.6 x 57.3 cm (Courtauld Gallery, London) (photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

This is clearly not the objective space of the architect. Cézanne has clearly sought to match the perception of space to the movement of the the body. But isn't that what we really experience? When you walk into a room, do you see the room as an objective whole? No. We can only see a fragment at a time. But as we've already established, we don't actually see in fragments; we see continuously and space is shaped by our continuous movement through it. Try it. Focus on any straight line in the room you are now in. Lean forward, and as you might expect, the angles of the room shift. In *Still Life with Plaster Cupid*, we see Cézanne's attempt to render true human vision, vision that is subjective, continuous, and informed by memory.

Additional resources:

This painting at the Courtauld Gallery

John House (video) on Still Life with Plaster Cupid

Brice Marden (video) on Cezanne and his own painting

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

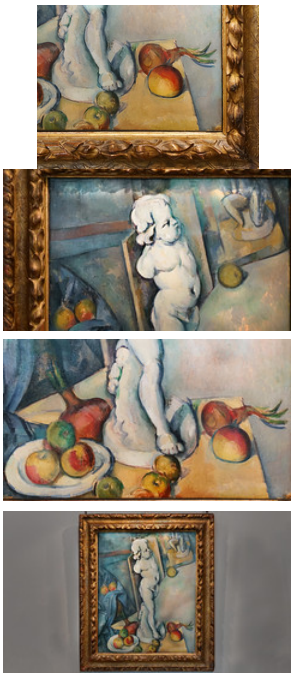
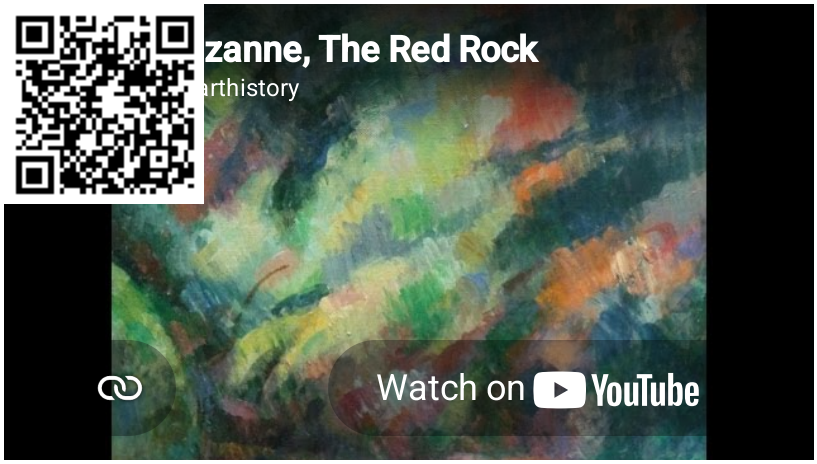


Figure 13.8.8.110: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Cézanne, *The Red Rock*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.11: Paul Cézanne, *The Red Rock*, c. 1895, oil on canvas, 91 x 66 cm (Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

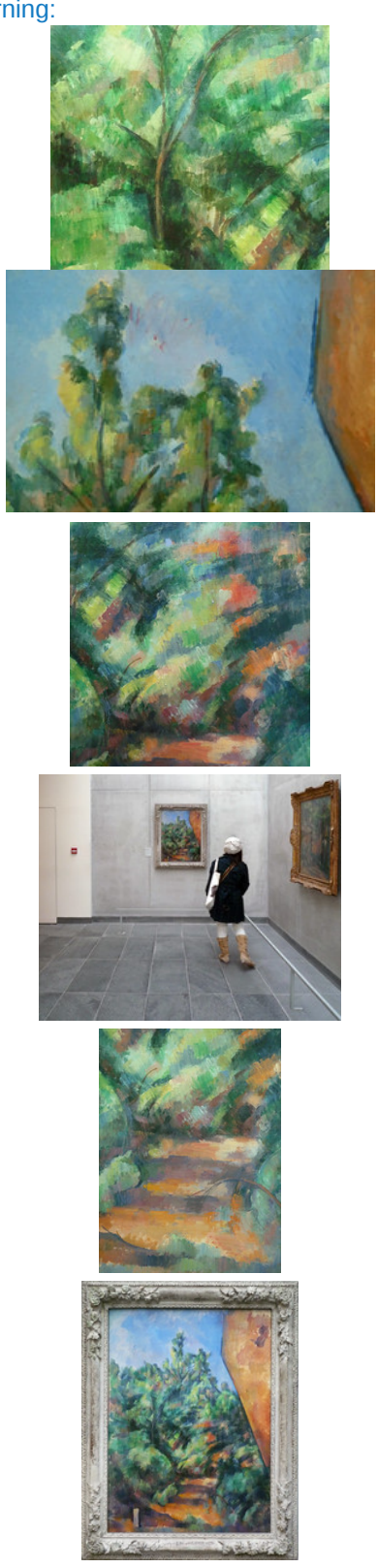


Figure 13.8.8.111: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Cézanne, *Turning Road at Montgeroult*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Figure 13.8.8.112: Paul Cézanne, *Turning Road at Montgeroult*, 1898, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 65.7 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Recently acquired

Here is a painting recently acquired by The Museum of Modern Art. It was considered one of the few great canvases by Cézanne still in a private collection. It was given to the museum by Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney along with six other masterpieces by van Gogh, Matisse, and Picasso. Some gift. Still, the painting is a bit difficult to understand. At first, the structure of space is straight-forward. As expected, there is a foreground (the green foliage at the bottom), a middleground (the road and houses) and an area of deep recession (the sky).

Spatial distortion

Each of these zones are largely defined by color; green for the bushes in front, a warm ocher for the middle plane (road and houses), and blue for the sky. It is here that Cézanne begins to play tricks. Having rejected clear linear or atmospheric perspective as a means of constructing recessionary illusion, Cézanne relies on the clues afforded by scale, overlapping, and color. Yet for all this, the space in *Turning Road at Montgeroult* seems awkward.



Figure 13.8.8.113: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *Turning Road at Montgeroult*, 1898, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 65.7 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Even as we see the three zones of space in relation to each other, the painting seems oddly flat, as if the sky were pulled forward and the foreground were pushed back. Of course we still see the illusion, but even as we see the space that Cézanne's line insists upon, the painting looks too much like three flat planes resting atop each other and the painting begins to remind us that it is, in fact, a vertical curtain.



Figure 13.8.8.114: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *Turning Road at Montgeroult*, 1898, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 65.7 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

There are two means by which Cézanne has sabotaged the space of this canvas (unfortunately the effect is muted in reproduction and even more so on the computer screen–so trust me on this). The first is brushwork. In an Old Master landscape, the greatest detail and the most delicate brushwork exist in the foreground. The movements of the brush get broader and more generalized as space moves back. Here, however, the artist has treated the entire canvas with a consistent level of clarity, or lack there of, leveling the sense of near and far.



Figure 13.8.8.115: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *Turning Road at Montgeroult*, 1898, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 65.7 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Secondly, Cézanne has understood the potential of color, as opposed to chiaroscuro and linear perspective to structure or destabilize space. Have you noticed that in the middle of the sky, just to the left of the church steeple and the tree, there is a small smudge of brown paint. It is the same ocher used to render the shadows in the road and on the roofs. What is this? Have you ever seen a dense brown smudge just floating in the sky? I don't think so.

Mistakes on purpose

So what are we as the viewer to make of it? Is it a mistake? Was Cézanne a dottering old man by 1898, who accidentally hit the canvas as his arms flailed about and then was too lazy to wipe it out and repaint that section? No. So what is it then? Well, when you look at the ochre smudge, what happens to the deep space of the sky? Do you notice how the ochre smudge refuses to sit back in deep space but instead pushes forward toward the middle plane of the houses?

When seen in person, the brown paint that hangs in the sky actually brings the sky with it, denying the illusion of deep space entirely. Also, note the bright sky blues in the foreground bushes. Just as the ochre spot in the sky forces the sky forward, so the clear blues that oddly appear within the viewer's reach, punch holes in the solidity of the foreground. The brown in the back pushes forward and the blue in the front pushes back. The result is a flattening of space or perhaps a more honest expression of the true flatness of the canvas.

Additional resources:

This painting at MoMA

This painting at the Google Art Project

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.8.116: More Smarthistory images…

Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*

by DR. BEN HARVEY



Video 13.8.8.12: Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1902-04, oil on canvas, 73 x 91.9 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)
Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

It can be difficult to estimate, by eye, just how far away a mountain lies. A peak can dominate a landscape and command our attention, filling our eyes and mind. Yet it can come as something of a shock to discover that such a prominent natural feature can still be a long distance from us.



Figure 13.8.8.117: Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1902-04, oil on canvas, 73 x 91.9 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

A mountain

At 3317 feet (1011 meters) high, the limestone peak of Mont Sainte-Victoire is a pigmy compared to the giants of, say, Mount Fuji and Mount Rainier. But, like them, it still exercises a commanding presence over the country around it and, in particular, over Aix-en-Provence, the hometown of Paul Cézanne. Thanks to his many oil paintings and watercolors of the mountain, the painter has become indelibly associated with it. Think of Cézanne and his still-lifes and landscapes come to mind, his apples and his depictions of Mont Sainte-Victoire.



Figure **13.8.8.118**: Paul Cézanne, *Bathers at Rest*, 1876-77, oil on canvas, 82 x 101 cm (The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia)

Steeped in centuries of history and folklore, both classical and Christian, the mountain—or, more accurately, mountain range—only gradually emerged as a major theme in Cézanne's work. In the 1870s, he included it in a landscape called *The Railway Cutting*, 1870 (Neue Pinakothek, Munich) and a few years later it appeared behind the monumental figures of his *Bathers at Rest*, 1876-77 (The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia), which was included in the Third Impressionist Exhibition of 1877. But it wasn't until the beginning of the next decade, well after his adoption of Impressionism, that he began consistently featuring the mountain in his landscapes. Writing in 1885, Paul Gauguin was probably thinking of Mont Sainte-Victoire when he imagined Cézanne spending "entire days in the mountains reading Virgil and looking at the sky." "Therefore," Gauguin continued, "his horizons are high, his blues very intense, and the red in his work has an astounding vibrancy." Cézanne's legend was beginning to emerge and a mountain ran through it.

A series

Cézanne would return to the motif of Mont Sainte-Victoire throughout the rest of his career, resulting in an incredibly varied series of works. They show the mountain from many different points of view and often in relationship to a constantly changing cast of other elements (foreground trees and bushes, buildings and bridges, fields and quarries). From this series we can extract a subgroup of over two-dozen paintings and watercolors. Dating from the very last years of the artist's life, these landscapes feature a heightened lyricism and, more prosaically, a consistent viewpoint. They show the mountain as it can be seen from the hill of Les Lauves, located just to the north of Aix.



Figure **13.8.8.119**: Mont Sainte-Victoire (photo: **Bob Leckridge**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

A walk from the studio

Cézanne bought an acre of land on this hill in 1901 and by the end of the following year he had built a studio on it. From here, he would walk further uphill to a spot that offered a sweeping view of Mont Sainte-Victoire and the land before it. The painter Emile Bernard recalled accompanying Cézanne on this very walk:

> ***Cézanne picked up a box in the hall [of his studio] and took me to his motif. It was two kilometers away with a view over a valley at the foot of Sainte-Victoire, the craggy mountain which he never ceased to paint[…]. He was filled with admiration for this mountain.***

Cézanne consciously cultivated his association with the mountain and perhaps even wanted to be documented painting it. When they visited Aix in 1906, the artists Maurice Denis and Ker-Xavier Roussel found themselves being led to the same location. In an oil painting by Denis and in some of Roussel's photographs, we see Cézanne standing before his easel and painting the mountain. Again! It was the view we can see in most of Cézanne's late views of Mont Sainte-Victoire, including the painting that concerns us here, which is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The painting in Philadelphia

In this work, Cézanne divides his composition into three roughly equal horizontal sections, which extend across the three-foot wide canvas. Our viewpoint is elevated. Closest to us lies a band of foliage and houses; next, rough patches of yellow ochre, emerald, and viridian green suggest the patchwork of an expansive plain and extend the foreground's color scheme into the middleground; and above, in contrasting blues, violets and greys, we see the "craggy mountain" surrounded by sky. The blues seen in this section also accent the rest of the work while, conversely, touches of green enliven the sky and mountain.

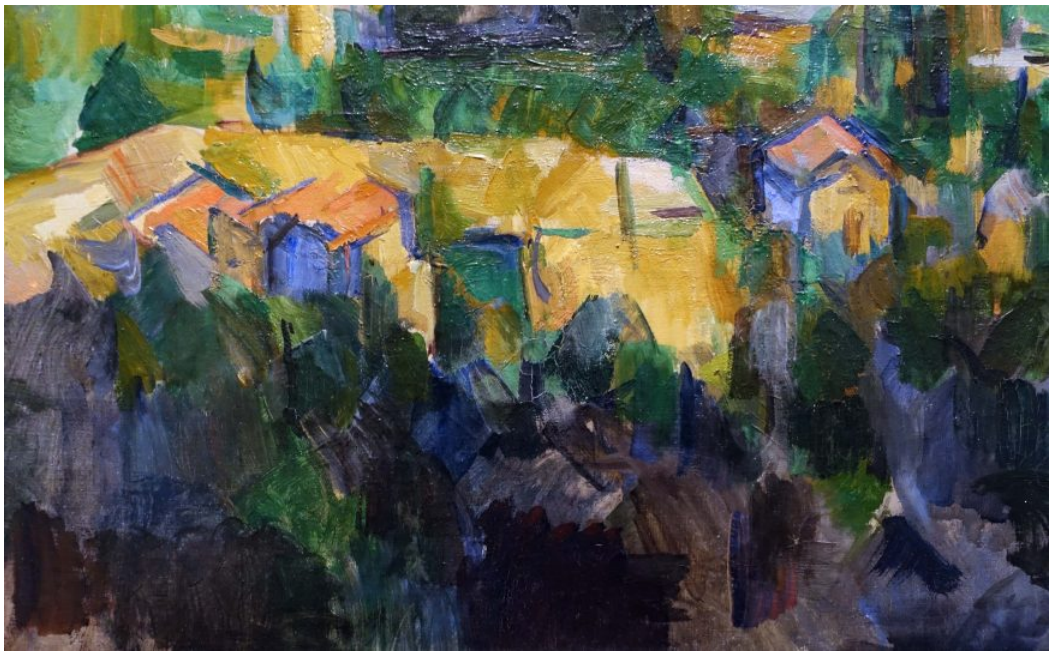


Figure **13.8.8.120**: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902-04, oil on canvas, 73 x 91.9 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Subtle adjustments

In other words, Cézanne introduced subtle adjustments in order to avoid too simple a scheme. So the peak of the mountain is pushed just to the right of center, and the horizon line inclines gently upwards from left to right. In fact, a complicated counterpoint of diagonals can be found in each of the work's bands, in the roofs of the houses, in the lines of the mountain, and in the arrangement of the patches in the plain, which connect foreground to background and lead the eye back.

Flatness and depth

Cézanne evokes a deep, panoramic scene and the atmosphere that fills and unifies this space. But it is absolutely characteristic of his art that we also remain acutely aware of the painting as a fairly rough, if deftly, worked surface. Flatness coexists with depth and we find ourselves caught between these two poles—now more aware of one, now the other. The mountainous landscape is both within our reach, yet far away.

A comparison



Figure **13.8.8.121**: Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire with Large Pine*, c. 1887, oil on canvas, 66.8 c 92.3 (The Courtauld Gallery, London)

Comparing the Philadelphia canvas with some of Cézanne's other views of Mont Sainte-Victoire and with photos of the area can help us to grasp some of the perceptual subtleties and challenges of the work. Take the left side of the mountain. Though the outermost contour is immediately apparent, inside of it one can also discern a second line (or, more accurately, a series of lines and edges). The two converge just shy of the mountaintop. The area between this outer contour and the interior line or ridge demarcates a distinctive spatial plane; this slope recedes away from us and connects to the larger mountain range lying behind the sheer face. Attend to this area, and the mountain seems to gain volume. It becomes less of an irregular triangle and more of a complicated pyramid.



Figure **13.8.8.122**: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902-04, oil on canvas, 73 x 91.9 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Or look again at the painting's most obvious focus of interest, the top of the mountain. Cézanne's other works show that the mountain has a kind of double peak, with a slightly higher point to the left side and a lower one to the right. At first glance, the Philadelphia canvas seems to contradict this: the mountain's truncated apex appears to rise slightly from left to right. But a closer look reveals that Cézanne does respect topography. The small triangular patch of light gray—actually the priming of the canvas—can be read as belonging to the space immediately above the mountain or perhaps as a cloud behind it. Thus it is the gray and light blue brushstrokes immediately below this patch that describe the downward slant of the mountain top.

Curiously, in one respect, our point-of-view is actually a little misleading. At an elevation of 3104 feet (946 meters), the left peak is not the highest point, but merely appears to so from Les Lauves. A huge iron cross—la croix de Provence—was erected on this spot in the early 1870s, the fourth to be placed there. Though visible from afar, the cross appears in none of Cézanne's depictions of the mountain.

Cézanne had presumably stood on this summit, or these summits, several times. He had thoroughly explored the countryside around Aix, first during youthful rambles with his friends and later as a plein-air artist in search of motifs. And we know for certain that he had climbed to the top of the mountain as recently as 1895. Armed with these experiences, he could have estimated the distance from Les Lauves to the top of Mont Sainte-Victoire with some accuracy—it's about ten miles (16 kilometers) as the crow flies.



Figure **13.8.8.123**: Detail, Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902-04, oil on canvas, 73 x 91.9 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

When he stood on the mountain in 1895 Cézanne had, so to speak, entered into one of his own landscapes. As he stood there, perhaps he paused to recall some of the paintings of Mont Sainte-Victoire he had already made. But, to return to Gauguin's language, could he possibly have dreamt of the works he would go on to paint in the following decade—works like the Philadelphia landscape, with its high horizon, intense blues, and astounding vibrancy?

Additional resources:

This painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Another painting of Mont Saint-Victoire at The Courtauld Gallery

Another painting of Mont Saint-Victoire at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Cézanne at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*

by DR. BEN HARVEY



Figure **13.8.8.124**: Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1890-92, oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

A new direction

Writing near the end of his life, Paul Cézanne told an art critic that “one does not put oneself in place of the past, one only adds a new link.” [1] In other words, through his art he wanted to engage with art history but also to modify it and take it in a new direction. It is a sentiment beautifully exemplified in the artist’s five paintings of card players, which he had worked on about a decade earlier, in the early-to-mid 1890s.



Figure **13.8.8.125**: Caravaggio, *The Cardsharps*, c. 1594, oil on canvas (Kimbell Art Myuseum, Fort Worth)

In terms of its subject matter, the series owes a clear debt to earlier depictions of card and game players by Baroque and Rococo artists such as Caravaggio (above), **de la Tour**, **the Le Nain brothers**, and **Chardin**; within Cézanne's own lifetime, the theme had been taken up anew by Daumier, **Meissonier**, Degas, and Caillebotte.

Cézanne's "new link" lies in the way he steers the subject away from its obvious symbolic and dramatic potential: clubs and hearts, winners and losers, the cheaters and the cheated. All of this had been thoroughly explored already. Instead, Cézanne attends to other aspects of the activity. He stresses the shared social space of the card game, intimate and familiar, and the attention and concentration the game demands. Not coincidentally, these are the same psychological states demanded by the acts of making and looking at art.

The version at the Met

The version of the card players at Metropolitan Museum of Art (image at the top of the page) is now generally thought to be the earliest of the five paintings in the series. It depicts somewhat eccentrically-proportioned figures surrounding a table: three play cards and a fourth merely observes the game, his pipe indicative of his contemplative attitude. These are rural laborers quietly and sociably passing the time in a tavern or room. Like the other works in the series, the setting in the Met's canvas is sparse. We see a table and three chairs (two of them more implied than fully described); a full pipe rack and a swag of yellow fabric hang from the room's rear wall. The tabletop creates a clear focus of attention within the larger work. It supports the players' arms and hands, which, in turn, provide a frame for some objects: a pipe, cards, and a prominent grey rectangle—perhaps a tobacco pouch or another card.

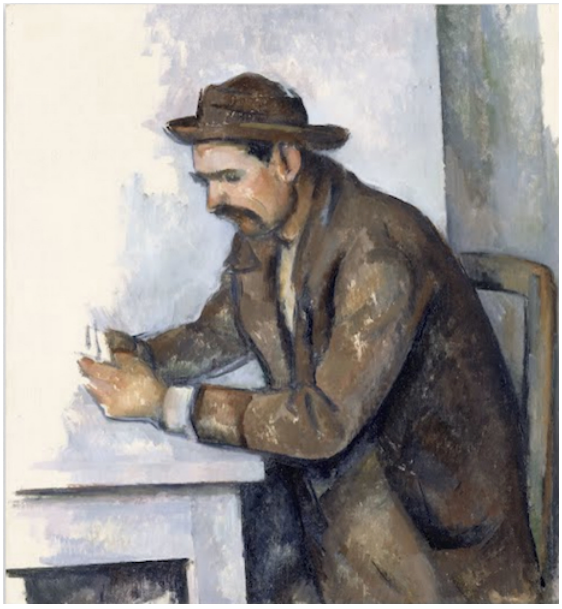


Figure **13.8.8.126**: Paul Cézanne, *The Cardplayer*, 1890-92, oil on canvas, 46 x 50 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). This study "shows a card player who features in the two largest versions, but in a reversed position (Philadelphia, Barnes Foundation; New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)" (**source**)

Although this would have been a familiar scene to Cézanne, we should not imagine him setting up his easel in front of an actual card game. Instead, the artist's surviving preparatory works indicate that he studied his figures independently, one by one, and then incorporated these studies into his multi-figure compositions. Cézanne made oil studies for two of the figures in the Met's painting (see above for one example), and both models have been identified as farm hands who worked at the Cézanne family's estate near Aix-en-Provence, the Jas de Bouffan. Even while they share the same space, Cézanne's figures retain a sense of independence and self-containment. They are engaged, as one art historian aptly put it, in a game of "collective solitaire."

And yet one detail in the Met's painting points, albeit subtly, to a sequence of events and thus to the logic of an actual game. The figure on the left of the work (modelled by one Paulin Paulet) appears to be on the verge of extending his index finger (see detail below), as though about to pick up a card from the table. It's a gesture that connects thought to action, the contemplation of a hand of cards to the movement of a hand. Similar actions, although more emphatically rendered, can be found in an earlier depiction of

card players by Gustave Caillebotte (below), who was both Cézanne's colleague in the impressionist group and a collector of his work.



Figure **13.8.8.127**: Gustave Caillebotte, *Game of Bezique*, 1881 (Louvre Abu Dhabi)

Formal elements trump narrative considerations

The particular logic of any card game determines the value of any given card within it, and so Caillebotte provides us an important clue in his title (*The Bezique Game*) and even allows his viewer to discern the colors and ranks of a few cards in his painting (a red ace, a black seven). In contrast, Cézanne's instinct is to withhold all such information—to keep his cards close to his chest. On his table, there is an upturned card holding three roughly rectangular patches of red pigment (see detail below). But these patches do not closely resemble diamonds and, as though to lessen any resemblance, the card also contains similar patches of white and bluish paint.



Figure 13.8.8.128: Table and hands with cards (detail), Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1890-92, oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 13.8.8.129: Standing figure (detail), Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1890-92, oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The tricolor of colors is picked up elsewhere in the composition, in the blue of the workers' clothes, the white of their pipes and shirts, and in the red of the standing man's cravat (left). With their vivid color combinations and flat forms, playing cards may even have had aesthetic significance to Cézanne, suggesting a model for his own practice. As early as 1876, he told Camille Pissarro about a landscape motif he was working on: "It's like a playing-card," he wrote. "Red roofs over the blue sea." [2]

For Cézanne, the formal elements (color, shape, texture, composition) ultimately trumped narrative considerations. The marks we see on the card create a grid of compositional elements, and this places the card in relationship to two analogous grids. The first consists of the larger collection of objects on the table, where the objects and the spaces between them form a kind of tic-tac-toe pattern. The second is made up of the four figures themselves, each of whom occupies one of three distinct spatial zones (foreground, middle-ground, background) as well as one of three different lateral positions (left, center, right).

This connection between objects and figures is even more evident in the largest work in the series of card players now at the Barnes Collection in Philadelphia (see below), which Cézanne probably made soon after the Met's painting. By adding a fifth figure at the back right, the figures now repeat the X schema formed by the objects on the table.



Figure 13.8.8.130: Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players (Les Joueurs de cartes)*, 1890-92, oil on canvas, 135.3 x 181.9 cm (The Barnes Foundation)

Other works in this series

The three remaining works in the series (Courtauld Gallery—see below, **Musée d'Orsay**, and a private collection) contain just two card players confronting each other in strict profile, a compositional idea that first appeared in the two foreground figures in the Met's work. In these later paintings, the table is narrower and cleared of all objects, with the exception of a centrally placed wine bottle. The two men study their cards intently, but no movement or move appears imminent. The details of the game have receded still further and life has been stilled. Cézanne's card players, like many of his figures, occupy a space somewhere between the painting of figures and the painting of objects. They drift between different genres.



Figure 13.8.8.131: Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, c. 1892-95, oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm (The Courtauld Gallery, London)

A New Yorker cartoon exploits this drift to humorous effect. In it, Robert Mankoff lets still-life elements and game-playing details flood back into one of the artist's two-figure works. He fills up the card players' arms and table with piles of apples, reminding us of Cézanne's close association with the fruit. "I see your Granny Smith," runs the caption, "and I raise you a Golden Delicious" **(view image here)** Cézanne's famous apples are now a specific type, as though straight from a supermarket. His figures are now not merely poker-faced: they are poker players.

Though no money seems to be at stake in Cézanne's card games, commerce was certainly involved in the creation of the piece. By the 1890s, Cézanne was independently wealthy; he could comfortably afford to pay his models to pose and the resulting works were made out of industrially produced pigments usually applied to commercially manufactured, standard-size canvases (a "no. 25" in the case of the Met's work). Around the same time he finished the series, the artist struck up a relationship with a Parisian picture dealer, Ambroise Vollard, who then became the first owner of the Met's canvas. Vollard's business ledgers record that he made a tidy profit from the work, buying it for 250 francs and, in early 1900, selling it for 4,500. The enduring appeal of Cézanne's card players, though, may owe something to the way the five paintings provide a distinct contrast to the modern capitalism that surrounded their creation. If life can seem increasingly fast, superficial, and mercenary, then perhaps some consolation can be found here—in our prolonged engagement with handmade canvases showing a timeless, rooted, and sociable pastime.

[1] Letter to Roger Marx, January 23, 1905, as quoted in John Reward (editor), *Paul Cézanne*, *Letters*(Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 313.

[2] Letter to Camille Pissarro, July 2, 1876, as quoted in John Reward (editor), *Paul Cézanne*, *Letters*(Da Capo Press, 1995), p.146.

Additional resources:

Cézanne's *Card Players* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery on Cézanne's Card Players—includes three videos

Peter Schjeldahl, "Game Change: Cézanne, card players, and the birth of modernism," The New Yorker (February 28, 2011)

Paul Cézanne, *Bathers (Les Grandes Baigneuses)*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.13: Paul Cézanne, *Bathers (Les Grandes Baigneuses)*, c. 1894-1905, oil on canvas, 127.2 x 196.1 cm (The National Gallery, London)

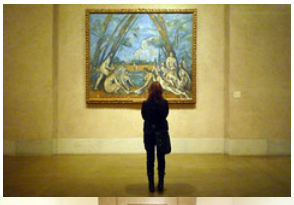
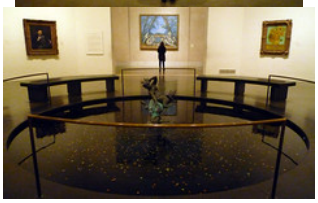
Paul Cézanne, *The Large Bathers*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.14: Paul Cézanne, *The Large Bathers*, 1906, oil on canvas, 82-7/8 x 98-3/4″ / 210.5 x 250.8 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



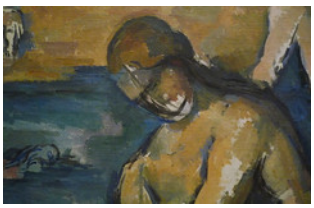
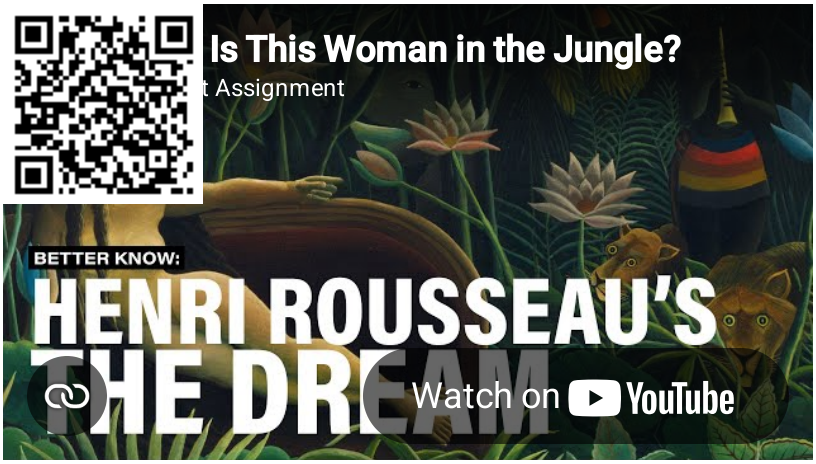






Figure 13.8.8.132: More Smarthistory images…

Why Is This Woman in the Jungle? Henri Rousseau's *The Dream*

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video 13.8.8.15

Artist Henri Rousseau painted *The Dream* in 1910, and it's imagery of a woman lounging on a sofa in the middle of a jungle was as surreal then as it is today. What is it about this artwork that captivated audiences then and now?

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *At the Moulin Rouge*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.8.16: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *At the Moulin Rouge*, 1893-95, oil on canvas, 48-1/2 x 55-1/2 inches (123 x 141 cm) (Art Institute of Chicago)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

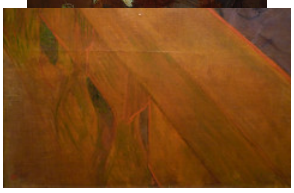











Figure 13.8.8.133: More Smarthistory images…

13.8.8: Post-Impressionism is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.8: Post-Impressionism** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.9: Sculpture

Sculpture

In the nineteenth century, sculptors rethought the representation of the body, finding new ways to express emotion.

c. 1865 - 1900

Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Dance*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.9.1: Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Dance*, 1865-69, marble, 420 x 298 cm. (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Commissioned by Charles Garnier for the facade of L'Opéra. In 1964 it was replaced by a copy executed by Paul Belmondo.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

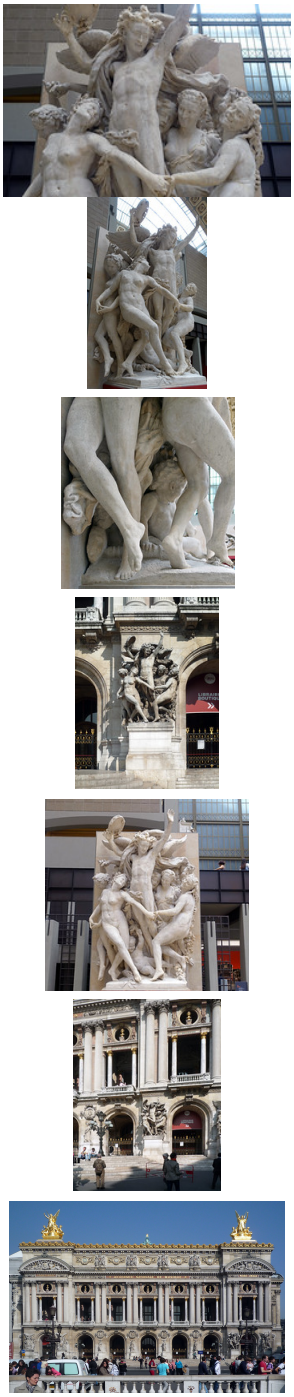


Figure **13.8.9.1**: More Smarthistory images…

Auguste Rodin

Auguste Rodin, The Walking Man

by ELISABETH ROWNEY



Figure 13.8.9.2: Auguste Rodin, *The Walking Man*, c. 1877, bronze (cast 7 of 12), 224 x 75 x 135 cm, Stanford University (photo: Rocor CC BY-NC 2)

Who decides when a work of art is finished? An initial reaction may have you saying that the answer is the artist, but what happens when the artist's painting or sculpture goes against preconceived notions of what constitutes a "completed" work of art? Auguste Rodin, a French artist who worked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was more interested in rough, blemished representations of the human body than idealized forms. He painstakingly immersed himself in his projects, sometimes spending years in order to develop a work of art, regardless of the public's response. His sculpture was often judged harshly by the public and by critics (sculpture was in some ways a more conservative tradition than was painting).

Reuse

Like a painter who reworked an old canvas, Rodin had a penchant for reusing old molds and reworking his earlier ideas. While this was not uncommon among artists, Rodin would continue to alter an existing form until it developed a new identity and a new narrative. Rodin transformed a major work, a bronze sculpture—over the course of two decades—and titled it, *The Walking Man*.



Figure **13.8.9.3**: Auguste Rodin, *Saint John the Baptist Preaching*, 1878, bronze, 204 x 63 x 113 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

The Walking Man, started with his c. 1877 life-sized sculpture *Saint John the Baptist Preaching* (above), considered by many to be Rodin's first life-sized masterpiece. The figure of Saint John is the embodiment of determination, with his head held high and his feet securely planted into the earthen bronze; his body balanced with the right arm extended as a counterweight to the contrapposto turn of his hips. Rodin was clearly interested in representing movement in this statue and continued to explore ways to perfect his "walking man."

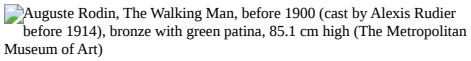


Figure **13.8.9.4**: Auguste Rodin, *The Walking Man*, before 1900 (cast by Alexis Rudier before 1914), bronze with green patina, 85.1 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Power and movement

Rodin reused the widely-spread triangle-shaped stance from *Saint John the Baptist Preaching* and paired it with, what is thought to be, the torso mold from another earlier project. What resulted was a fragmented figure expressing power and movement. That Rodin was able to accomplish this without including a head and arms is remarkable and startling. The rough, fragmented body nevertheless achieves a solid stance and caused critics to complain that *The Walking Man* failed doubly; it could not possibly depict a man, and it was not walking.

This criticism missed the brilliant risk Rodin had taken. The male figure is posed in a wide stance, with the back foot turned to the side while the front weight-bearing foot is pointed straight ahead. The hips and torso are forward ready to take that much needed next step. The movement and motion is all right there in the arching torso, strong legs, and widely-spaced feet. Including additional appendages was unnecessary and would distract from the powerful combination of mass and movement.



Figure **13.8.9.5**: Antoine-Louis Barye, *Theseus and the Minotaur* (second version), bronze, 50.5 x 34 x 20.3 cm (**The Walters Art Museum**)

Rodin sculpted a jagged, textured surface instead of the traditionally smooth, unblemished skin that was preferred in the classically-inspired statues of that time (see the Barye sculpture, right). This uneven “skin” enhances the curvature of the calf and abdominal muscles as they tense and twist in preparation for the implied next stride.

The rough surface texture creates a continuous line of movement for the viewer’s eyes to follow. Motion is constant as light and shadow play across the surface. Unlike a sculpture with a smooth surface, light that reflects off of the uneven surfaces highlight its

imperfections. Divots become darker and high crests become brighter. As the viewer moves around the statue, the light and dark areas change, appearing to undulate like the swells of the ocean.



Figure **13.8.9.6**: Auguste Rodin, *The Walking Man* (detail), before 1900 (cast by Alexis Rudier before 1914), bronze with green patina, 85.1 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Rodin may not have created an overtly twisting and contorting figure, but the impression and implication of movement is very much present. He conveys motion and strength in a figure that is fragmented and seemingly unfinished. Does a statue need to include arms or a head in order for it to be declared complete? Do all limbs need to be present to depict movement? Rodin's answer is no.

Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*

by ELISABETH ROWNEY



Figure **13.8.9.7**: Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, bronze, 1884-95 (Musée Rodin, Paris)

Six men, one purpose

Have you ever been at a gathering surrounded by people and yet, felt completely and utterly alone? If you are familiar with those emotions – abandonment, loneliness, devastation— remember what it feels like and then take another look at the above sculpture by Auguste Rodin.

In 1885, Rodin was commissioned by the French city of Calais to create a sculpture that commemorated the heroism of Eustache de Saint-Pierre, a prominent citizen of Calais, during the dreadful Hundred Years' War between England and France (begun in 1337).

We see six men covered only in simple layers of tattered sackcloth; their bodies appearing thin and malnourished with bones and joints clearly visible. Each man is a burgher, or city councilmen, of Calais, and each has their own stance and identifiable features.

However, while they may stand together with a sense of familiarity, none of them are making eye contact with the men beside them. Some figures have their heads bowed or their faces obscured by raised hands, while others try to stand tall with their eyes gazing into the distance. They are drawn together not through physical or verbal contact, but by their slumped shoulders, bare feet, and an expression of utter anguish.



Figure **13.8.9.8**: Detail of Eustache de Saint-Pierre, Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, bronze, 1884-95 (Musée Rodin, Paris) (photo: **Jeff Kubina**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Rodin followed the recounting of Jean Froissart, a fourteenth-century French chronicler, who wrote of the war. According to Froissart, King Edward III made a deal with the citizens of Calais: if they wished to save their lives and their beloved city, then not only must they surrender the keys to the city, but six prominent members of the city council must volunteer to give up their lives. The leader of the group was Eustache de Saint-Pierre, who Rodin depicted with a bowed head and bearded face towards the middle of the gathering. To Saint-Pierre's left, with his mouth closed in a tight line and carrying a giant set of keys, is Jean d'Aire. The remaining men are identified as Andrieu d'Andres, Jean de Fiennes, and Pierre and Jacques de Wissant.

Unbeknownst to the six burghers, at the time of their departure, their lives would eventually be spared. However, here Rodin made the decision to capture these men not when they were finally released, but in the moment that they gathered to leave the city to go to their deaths. Instead of depicting the elation of victory, the threat of death is very real. Furthermore, Rodin stretched his composition into a circle causing no one man to be the focal point which allows the sculpture to be viewed in-the-round from multiple perspectives with no clear leader.



Figure **13.8.9.9**: Detail of Jean d'Aire, Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, bronze, 1884-95 (Musée Rodin, Paris) (photo: **Jeremy Yoder**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The commission

Rodin spent most of his young life looking for approval and recognition. He was denied entry into the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris three times, and yet he continued to push forward until he could finally gain professional recognition. So, imagine his delight in 1885, when he was asked to create a monument for Calais. The only problem was he wanted to do it his own way.



Figure **13.8.9.10**: Auguste Rodin, *Monument to Balzac*, bronze, 1891-97 (Musée Rodin, Paris) (photo: **Jeff Kubina**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

It was common in the nineteenth-century to depict an event with a single heroic figure. For example, Rodin's later sculpture *Monument to Balzac* (1891-97), where the French playwright and novelist, Honoré de Balzac, is shown standing tall and alone with his head held high. This is similar to what the city of Calais was inevitably expecting from Rodin. As a result, they were displeased with Rodin's concept—they wanted only one statue; the one of Eustache de Saint-Pierre. Instead, Rodin included all six men from Froissart's account.

A closer look

While these six men, at first glance, may look fragile, the heavy, rhythmic drapery that hangs from their shoulders falls to the ground like lead weights, anchoring them and creating a mass of strong, unyielding bodies.



Figure **13.8.9.11**: Detail, Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, bronze, 1884-95 (Musée Rodin, Paris) (photo: Elisabeth Rowney)

In fact, the fabric appears to almost fused to the ground—conveying the conflict between the men's desire to live and the need to save their city. Rodin included raised portions of the floor under the men's feet which would have, ultimately, made some of the men appear higher than others, yet they are all sculpted to be around the same height, that of an adult male. The burghers were not meant to be viewed in the form of a hierarchal pyramid with Eustache de Saint-Pierre at the top, which would have been typical in a multi-figure statue, but as a group equal in status. By bringing these men down to 'street level,' Rodin allowed the viewer to easily look up into the men's faces mere inches from his/her own; enhancing the personal connection between the viewer and the six men.

The outcome

Because the patrons wanted a heroic quality, with a raised pedestal that would place the figures in a God-like status high above the viewers, Rodin presented the city of Calais with *The Burghers of Calais* complete with a pedestal. However, the raised pedestal did not allow an audience to view the work of art as Rodin had intended. Therefore, he created a second version, one lacking a pedestal, to be placed at the Musée Rodin at the Hôtel Biron in Paris. Rodin's goal was to bring the audience into his sculpture of *The Burghers of Calais*, and he accomplished this by not only positioning each figure in a different stance with the men's heads facing separate directions, but he lowered them down to street level so a viewer could easily walk around the sculpture and see each man and each facial expression and feel as if they were a part of the group, personally experiencing the tragic event.



Figure **13.8.9.12**: Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, bronze, 1884-95 (Musée Rodin, Paris) (photo: **Jeremy Yoder**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Throughout his career, Rodin took risks and created his works of art in his own, albeit unconventional, way. As a result, Rodin set a standard for artists who came after him and his *Burghers of Calais* became one of his most well-known and studied works.

Additional resources:

Chronology of Rodin's life from the Musée Rodin

The Burghers of Calais on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History

Plaster cast at the Musée Rodin

First maquette at the Musée Rodin

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

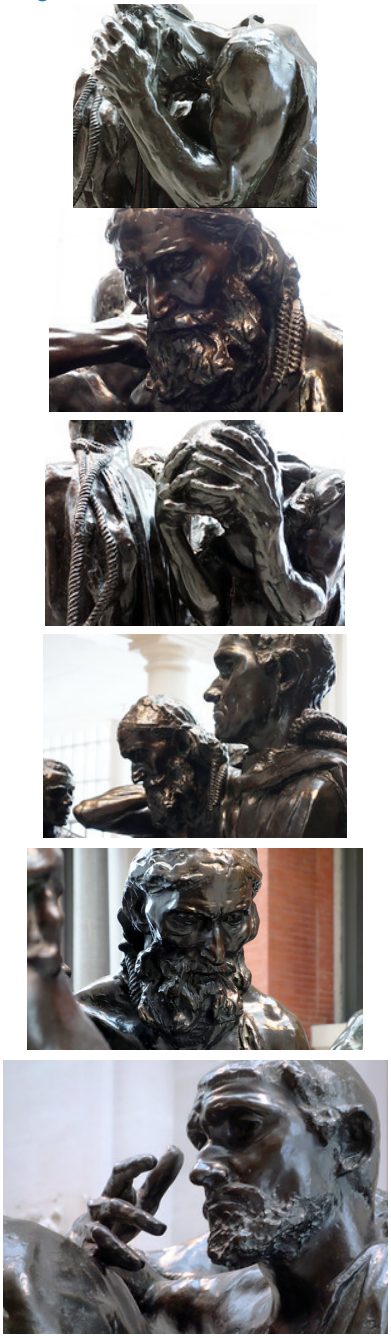
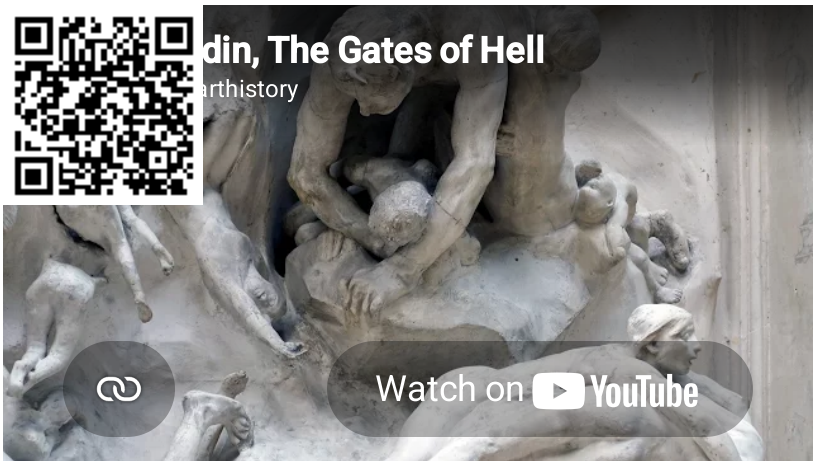


Figure **13.8.9.13**: More Smarthistory images…

Auguste Rodin, *The Gates of Hell*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.9.2: Auguste Rodin, *The Gates of Hell*, 1880-1917, plaster (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

When the building that stood on what is now the site of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris was destroyed by fire during the Commune in 1871, plans were drawn up to replace it with a museum of decorative arts. Rodin won the competition to design a great set of doors for its entryway. Although the museum was never built, Rodin continued to work on the doors. They became an ongoing project; a grand stage for his sculptural ideas. It's fitting that the plaster of this great unfinished sculpture, *The Gates of Hell*, is now on display at the d'Orsay, the former railway terminal that was built on this site instead of the museum of decorative arts and that, by lovely coincidence, was converted into one of the world's great art museums.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

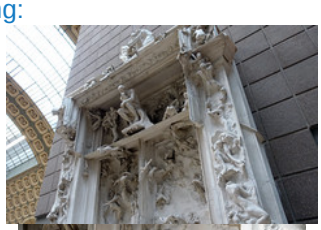
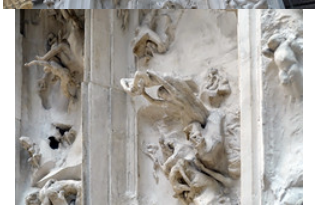











Figure **13.8.9.14**: More Smarthistory images…

Camille Claudel, *The Age of Maturity*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure **13.8.9.15**: Camille Claudel, *The Age of Maturity* or *Destiny*, c. 1902, bronze group in three parts, 114 x 163 x .72 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Her masterpiece

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, we find an increasing number of women taking their place among the most progressive artists of their age. It would be hard though to find one whose works are so radical in style and execution as Camille Claudel. The breadth and seriousness of her achievement have left a lasting legacy, one that particularly in recent years has secured Claudel's reputation as one of the eminent sculptors of her age. Rather than Rodin's lover/muse, who also happened to sculpt, Claudel is now universally acknowledged as a great sculptor in her own right.

Her masterpiece, *The Age of Maturity*, was exhibited in plaster in 1899, before being cast in bronze in 1902. The original work, commissioned by the French state in 1895, is believed to have been destroyed by the artist after the second casting in 1913.

The subject presents us with three naked figures, a young woman on her knees whose outstretched hands appear to have just released from their grip the hand of an older man, who is held in the arms of another, older woman, who appears to be compelling the man forward and away from the young woman. The title points to an allegory of aging, in which the man, the protagonist of the piece, is leaving his youth and moving towards old age and death.



Figure **13.8.9.16**: Camille Claudel, The Age of Maturity (first version), 1894-5, plaster (Musée Rodin, Paris)

Claudel's first version of the work, made in plaster in 1894-5, depicts a kneeling figure who connects physically with the man. The male figure seems passive, to the point of near collapse, his right arm hanging limply over the shoulders of the old woman, who leans in, glaring at the kneeling figure, evidently conscious of her as a rival. This interaction between the figures representing youth and old age is later rejected in favor of the more arresting dynamic in which the figures lurch forward in the same direction, as though compelled by the inescapable force of time.

In the final version, the futility of youth to halt its progress toward old age is captured sharply in the small but significant gap that isolates her from the other figures and in her relatively low level. Unlike the first version, in which the figures stand naked on a flat plinth, the final version makes expressive use of organic forms, notably the billowing drapery that unites the man and older woman and the three levels of rock which end in a wave-like curve, reminding us not only of the influence of Art Nouveau aesthetics on Claudel's work in the late 1890's, but also perhaps of the theatricality of Baroque sculpture.

The Vanished God



Figure **13.8.9.17**: Camille Claudel, *The Vanished God*, 1894, bronze, 15.5 x 11cm (Private Collection)

A year after the first version was exhibited, Claudel reworked the female figure in a piece entitled *The Vanished God*; a work remarkable for its expressive qualities; its head of matted locks, coiling ropelike around the smooth and rounded forms of the body; the face an image of anguish, the lips parted slightly, the eyebrows raised, the intensity of the gaze leveled toward the space between the cupped hands. The void itself is highly suggestive, raising the question, what is this god that has vanished? Is it a lover, perhaps, to whom her head tilts to kiss? (Claudel and Rodin had ended their relationship shortly before the work was made.) Is it love itself? Or faith? Is it, as some commentators maintain, a baby? This last, much disputed reading, citing the slight sag in the belly, links the anguish of the figure to Claudel's own sense of despair having—it is said—terminated a pregnancy in 1892, the child being Rodin's. The evidence for this though is scant. For the artist's brother, the Catholic poet Paul Claudel, who certainly read the work autobiographically, what has vanished is something wholly intangible: "…my sister Camille, imploring, humiliated, on her knees, that superb, proud creature, …what is being wrenched from her, right there before your very eyes, is her soul."



Figure 13.8.9.18: Camille Claudel, Clotho, 1893, plaster, 90 x 49.3 x 43 cm (Musée Rodin, Paris) (photo: Clapagaré, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Precedence for the other female figure can be found in works such as *Clotho*.

As in Rodin's poignant depiction of old age, *She Who Was the Helmet Maker's Once-Beautiful Wife*, Claudel unflinchingly presents the impact of time on the human body in *Clotho*. There are notable differences, though. Whereas Rodin's once-beautiful wife looks down seemingly ashamed of her aged body, *Clotho*'s haunting figure strides actively forward.



Figure 13.8.9.19: Auguste Rodin, She Who Was the Helmet Maker's Once-Beautiful Wife, 1885-87, bronze, cast 1969, 50.2 x 33.0 x 24.8 cm (Brooklyn Museum)

Like *The Vanished God*, she too sports a head of matted hair, though thicker and gnarlier, like the roots or branches of an old tree, reminding us perhaps of the Roman poet Ovid, whose Metamorphoses describes the mythological transformation of humans into natural phenomena, such as flowers, trees and constellations, a process in which the individual at the point of death is subsumed into the organic whole of the universe. Here, of course, that masterpiece of Baroque sculpture, Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne*, the most famous sculptural interpretation of Ovid, might also come to mind.

The mythological reading

The connection is more than merely visual, but reveals something of the mythological intent not only of *Clotho*, but of *The Age of Maturity* itself. Clotho, after all, is a figure from Greco-Roman mythology, the youngest of the three sister Fates, who decided human destiny. Indeed, an alternative title to *The Age of Maturity* is *Destiny*, a theme, central to Ovid's narrative, that Claudel was clear to identify in a letter to Paul, written while working on her first version of this major work, stating that she intended to include

in it a tree. Aside from Greco-Roman mythology, the tree motif is linked with destiny in many other cultural belief systems, the cross on which Christ was crucified, the Bodhi tree under which Buddha achieved enlightenment, the world tree Yggdrasil in old Norse that Odin sacrificed himself upon, a story illustrated by Danish artist, Lorenz Frolich.



Figure **13.8.9.20**: Lorenz Frolich, *Odin sacrifices himself to himself by hanging from the world tree Yggdrasil*, 1895

Deciding against such a literal representation, however, in the final version of *The Age of Maturity* Claudel opts instead for the biomorphic form of that huge, twisting drapery, which when seen from the rear, takes on a distinctly arboreal character.

The love triangle reading

That the work is a symbolic representation of destiny was certainly the prevailing view of contemporary critics. In later times, however, informed by the tragic circumstances of Claudel's life, *The Age of Maturity* has been read in more autobiographical terms, telling the tale of Claudel's turbulent relationship with Rodin, a man twenty-four years her senior.

Claudel joined Rodin's studio in 1884, assisting him in the completion of some of his most important works, including *The Gates of Hell*. The two became lovers, until in 1893 Rodin made the decision to leave Paris to settle in Meudon with his long-term mistress and the mother of his son, Rose Beuret, an episode most commonly cited as the inspiration for *The Age of Maturity*. With this in mind, rather than the inevitable passage of time, the theme of the work shifts somewhat to one of choice and how one's choices come to define us. Claudel's own feelings about Rodin's decision seem clear enough. The almost diabolical *Clotho* figure is hardly flattering as a portrait of Rose, while the way the man's groin is covered by drapery suggests a decision made less for the sake of modesty than to suggest the fact that Rodin's rejection of passionate love in favor of security and domestic equilibrium has effectively emasculated him.

Fortunately, like all great works of art, *The Age of Maturity* withstands these alternative readings. Rather than cancelling each other out, instead they intersect and nurture more possible approaches to understanding what must stand as a key moment in the career of a female artist no longer confined in her choice of medium or of subject matter.

Additional resources:

Claudel and Rodin from the Musée Rodin

Claudel on Wikipedia

Rodin on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

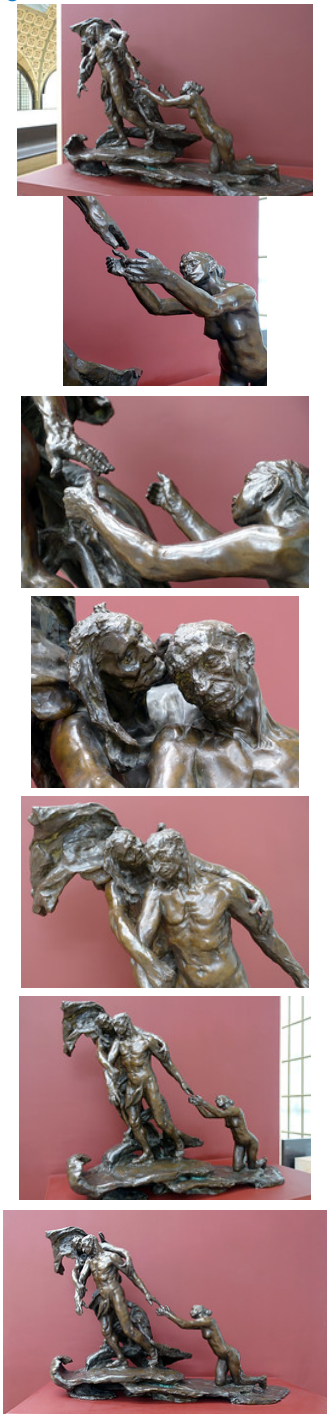


Figure 13.8.9.21: More Smarthistory images…

13.8.9: Sculpture is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.9: Sculpture** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau

Symbolism and Art Nouveau

Many artists in the late 19th century broke from naturalistic representation and sought visual equivalents to poetry and music.

c. 1880 - 1910

Art Nouveau

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure 13.8.10.1: Victor Horta, Tassel House, Brussels, 1893 (photo: **Henry Townsend**, CC0)

Victor Horta's Tassel House in Brussels is one of the earliest examples of the Art Nouveau style. Horta designed the building's architecture and every detail of the interior decoration and furnishings, making the house into a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total art work in multiple media. The repeated use of organically curved, undulating lines — often called whiplash lines — unifies the design, repeating in the floor tiles, wall painting, ironwork, and even in the structure of the spiraling staircase and surging entryways.

A modern style using modern materials

Art Nouveau artists and designers created a completely new style of decoration, rejecting the widespread nineteenth-century practice of copying historical, and especially Classical and Medieval, forms. While each designer invented their own decorative motifs, organic, often plant-based, forms and the whiplash line became hallmarks of Art Nouveau design, appearing in multiple media and contexts.



Figure 13.8.10.2: Victor Horta, Horta House, detail of column (photo: public domain)

Art Nouveau architects and designers also embraced modern building materials, notably cast iron. Cast iron is both stronger and more flexible than traditional wood or stone and allows for much thinner supports, like the slender columns in Horta's own house. Iron support structures also made it possible to create curved facades with large windows, which became prominent elements in many Art Nouveau buildings, including Horta's Maison du Peuple.

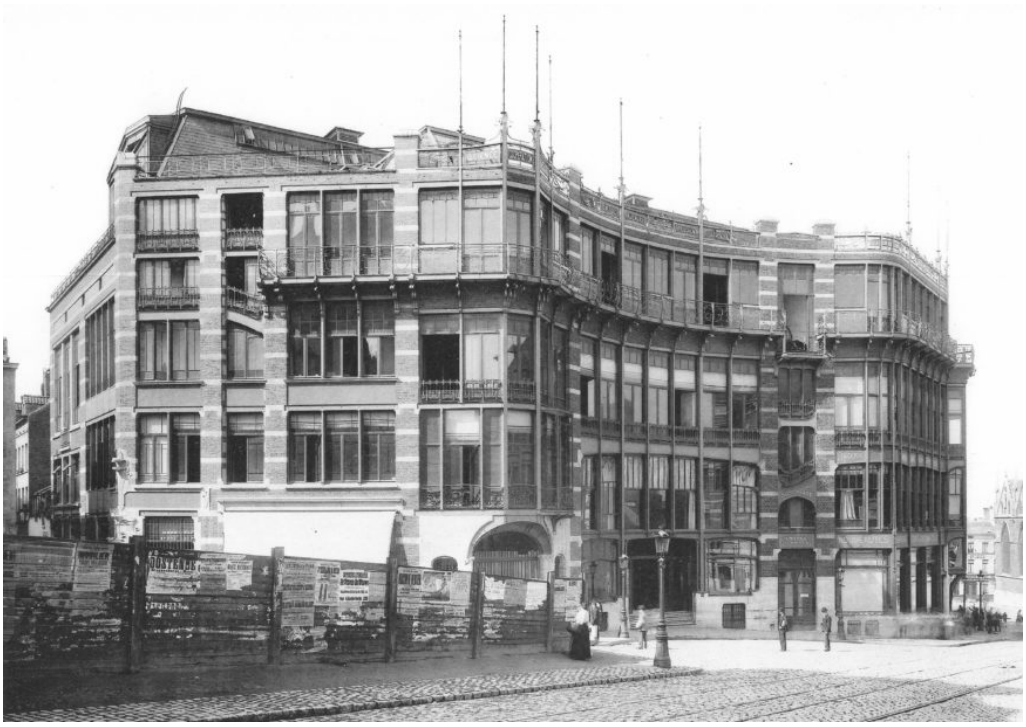


Figure 13.8.10.3: Victor Horta, Maison du Peuple, Brussels, 1899 (demolished)

An international style

Art Nouveau is only one of many names given to this international fin-de-siècle style, which had many regional variations. The term (French for "New Art") derives from La Maison de L'Art Nouveau, the Paris art gallery run by Siegfried Bing, who was a major promoter of the new style, as well as of **Japonisme** and the **Nabis**. In addition to marketing individual objects, Bing commissioned artists and designers to create model rooms in his gallery to display Art Nouveau ensembles that included furniture, wallpaper, carpets, and paintings.

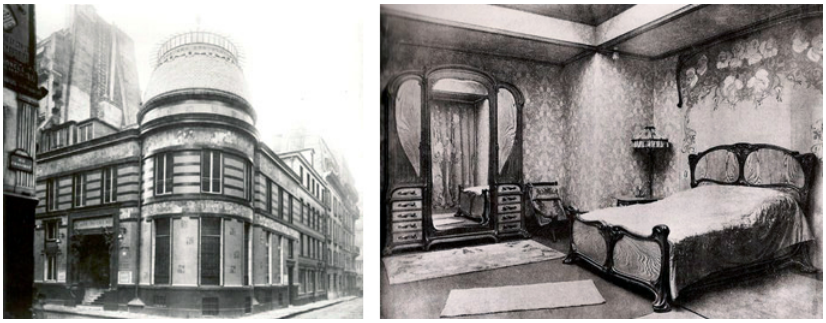


Figure **13.8.10.4**: Left: Siegfried Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau, Paris (demolished); right: Eugène Gaillard, Bedroom for the Pavillion de l'Art Nouveau Bing, 1900

In addition to Paris, major centers of the modern fin-de-siècle style included Brussels, Glasgow, Munich (where it was known as Jugendstil or Youth Style), and Vienna (where it was called Secession Style). Barcelona's Catalan Modernism, especially **Antoní Gaudí**'s architecture and decorative designs, is also closely related to Art Nouveau.

Luxury design for the masses



Figure **13.8.10.5**: Left: Emile Gallé, "Ombellifères" Cabinet, c. 1900, various woods, 40 x 49 ½ x 12 inches (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York); Right: Emile Gallé, Autumn Crocus Vase, c. 1900, glass, 17 3/8 x 3 ¾ inches (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York)

French Art Nouveau was linked to government-supported efforts to expand the decorative arts and associated craft industries. Private residences and luxury objects were the focus for many Art Nouveau designers, including Emile Gallé, who made both decorative glass and furniture. Despite the close association of Art Nouveau with luxury items, the style is also apparent in urban design, public buildings, and art for the masses. Horta's Maison du Peuple was the center for the socialist Belgian Workers' Party, and among the most famous examples of Art Nouveau style are **Hector Guimard's entrances to the Paris Metro**, the city's new public transportation system.



Figure **13.8.10.6**: Left: Hector Guimard, Porte Dauphine, Metro entrance, 1900, Paris (photo: **Chabe01**, CC BY-SA 4.0); Right: Hector Guimard, Metro ironwork, detail (photo: **Jean-Pierre Dalbéra**, (CC BY 2.0)

Like Horta's designs for the Tassel House, Guimard used cast iron and invented stylized motifs based on plant forms. Industrially fabricated in modular units, the cast iron was relatively cheap, but it was painted green to resemble oxidized copper, a much more expensive material that adds a sense of luxury to the elaborate entrances. The use of modules made it possible to individualize each station while maintaining stylistic unity throughout the city.



Figure **13.8.10.7**: Left: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril*, 1893, lithograph, 129.1 x 93.5 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York); Center: Alphonse Mucha, *La Dame aux Camelias*, 1896, lithograph, 207.3 x 72.2 cm (**Library of Congress**); Right: Jules Chéret, *La Loïe Fuller*, 1893, lithograph, 123.2 x 87.6 cm (**MoMA**)

Art Nouveau designs were also widely visible in the advertising posters that decorated Paris. **Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**, Alphonse Mucha, and Jules Chéret depicted famous fin-de-siècle performers such as Jane Avril, Sarah Bernhardt, and Loïe Fuller. Their posters stylized the female body and used sinuous whiplash lines, decorative plant forms, and flattened abstract shapes to create vivid decorative images.



Figure **13.8.10.8**: Henry van de Velde, Tropon poster, 1899, lithograph, 44 x 30 3/8 inches, (MoMA)

In a poster for the nutritional supplement Tropon, Henry van de Velde explored the decorative and suggestive potential of non-representational forms, using the whiplash line to create an abstract design of organic shapes that suggest both plant-like growth and dancing figures in the rising diagonal of repeated forms.

A holistic approach



Figure **13.8.10.9**: Henry van de Velde, Continental Havana Company interior, Berlin, 1899 (demolished)

Van de Velde worked in many different media, designing buildings, interiors, furniture, and decorative objects as well as posters. In the Continental Havana Company building in Berlin he used sinuous curves to integrate the shelving, doorways, alcoves, furniture,

and walls into a unified organic whole.



Figure **13.8.10.10**: Henry van de Velde, Desk, c. 1899, oak, gilded bronze, copper and leather,128 x 268 x 122 cm (Musée d'Orsay, photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

The English designer **William Morris** and the English Arts and Crafts Movement that he initiated were a key influence on van de Velde and many other designers associated with Art Nouveau. Morris promoted a holistic approach to interior decoration as well as advocating for the social importance of design and high quality craftwork. In 1907 van de Velde founded the School of Arts and Crafts in Weimar, Germany, which promoted similar values. It later became the famous modern art and design school, the **Bauhaus**, which maintained the tradition of integrating art, craft, and design for the improvement of society.

Glasgow style



Figure **13.8.10.11**: Left: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Room de Luxe, Willow Tea Room, Glasgow, 1903; right: Margaret Macdonald, *O ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood*, decorative panel for Willow Tea Room, 1903, gesso and beads on burlap, 164 x58 cm (Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow)

Curving whiplash lines are a common characteristic of French and Belgian Art Nouveau, but architects and artists working in Glasgow developed a more rectilinear style exemplified by the Willow Tea Room. Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald designed every component of the tea room, including the architecture, stained glass, decorative panels, furniture, cutlery, and staff uniforms. In keeping with Art Nouveau artists elsewhere they developed original stylized design motifs based on plant forms, but theirs were rigidly contained within elongated rectangles rather than expanding into supple curves.

Vienna Secession style



Figure **13.8.10.12**: Otto Wagner, Karlsplatz Station, Vienna, 1899 (photo: **Böhringer Friedrich**, CC BY-SA 3.0 AT)

The Viennese Secession style also combined strict geometric forms with stylized organic decoration. Like Guimard's entrances to the Paris Metro, **Otto Wagner**'s stations for Vienna's public transportation system displayed the city's modernity and wealth in their iron construction and their luxurious gold sunflower-motif decoration.



Figure **13.8.10.13**: Joseph Maria Olbrich, Secession Building, Vienna, 1898 (photo: **Thomas Steiner**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Joseph Maria Olbrich's Secession Building proclaimed the goals of the rebellious group of artists who seceded from the Austrian art establishment in order to embrace avant-garde modern art. They displayed their work inside Olbrich's building as well as hosting international exhibitions of modern art. The stylized decoration of the building is based on plant forms, while the structure emphasizes the harmonious balance of basic geometric shapes.



Figure **13.8.10.14**: Gustav Klimt, *Choir of Angels* from the *Beethoven Frieze*, 1902, casein, stucco, gold, and semi-precious stones on plaster (Secession Building, Vienna)

The leader of the Vienna Secession, Gustav Klimt, decorated the interior walls of the main exhibition hall with a long decorative mural dedicated to Ludwig von Beethoven. The ***Beethoven Frieze*** combines naturalistic representation of the human body, stylized figures, and complex abstract patterns in a variety of materials. Gold leaf and semi-precious stones enhance the decorative quality of the surface, making it a dramatic union of luxurious ornament and figurative painting.

Art Nouveau was fashionable for only a brief period around the year 1900, but the movement was part of a long-term modern trend that rejected historicism and Academicism and embraced new materials and original forms. In the modern period artists and designers increasingly recognized that the health and well-being of society and all its members were supported and enhanced by well-designed objects, buildings, and spaces. The unified designs of Art Nouveau presaged the innovations of the Bauhaus as well as architects such as **Frank Lloyd Wright** and **Le Corbusier**.

The Nabis and Symbolism

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT

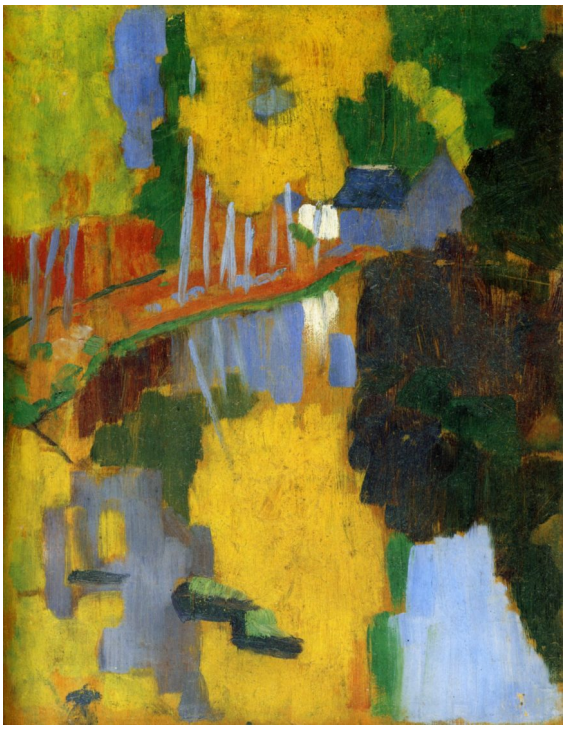


Figure **13.8.10.15**: Paul Sérusier, *The Talisman*, 1888, oil on panel, 27 x 21 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

In the fall of 1888 Paul Sérusier spent an afternoon with Paul Gauguin in Brittany painting a small landscape on a cigar box lid. He followed **Gauguin's instructions** to emphasize the colors he saw by using paint directly from the tube with little or no mixing. The result was a patchwork design of vivid colors only vaguely suggestive of its subject, trees on a riverbank.

Later in Paris Sérusier showed the landscape to fellow art students at the Académie Julian who saw it as an artistic revelation. They named the painting "The Talisman" and formed a group called the Nabis, after the Hebrew word for prophet. In addition to Sérusier the group included Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Maurice Denis, Paul Ranson, and Ker-Xavier Roussel, as well as others. In the 1890s the Nabis were one of the most innovative Post-Impressionist groups working in Paris.

Spiritual concerns



Figure **13.8.10.16**: Paul Sérusier, *Portrait of Paul Ranson in Nabi costume*, 1890, oil on canvas, 61 x 46.5 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Like Gauguin and many other artists of the period, the Nabis were engaged with the spiritual and mystical concerns associated with fin-de-siècle Symbolism. Sérusier's *Portrait of Paul Ranson in Nabi Costume* documents their early **interest in esoterica and occult ceremonies**. The simplified style Sérusier used derived from Gauguin's Synthetism but was only one of the styles associated with Symbolism. It forms a marked contrast to the academic naturalism used by many fin-de-siècle Symbolist painters such as Jean Delville, who depicted the Symbolist writer Joséphin Péladan in robes and accompanied by ceremonial objects and symbols, much as Sérusier portrayed Paul Ranson.



Figure **13.8.10.17**: Jean Delville, *Portrait of the Grand Master of the Rosicrucians in Choir Dress*, 1895, oil on canvas (Musée des Beaux Arts, Nîmes)

A widespread attitude

Symbolism began as a literary movement with the 1886 publication of Jean Moréas' Symbolist manifesto in the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. It quickly became a kind of catch-all term for a widespread fin-de-siècle aesthetic attitude that embraced the spiritual significance of art while rejecting science and objectivity. Symbolist artists favored idealism over realism, suggestion over specificity, and subjective expression over objective representation. They employed a variety of styles and approaches, including both traditional naturalism and modern techniques associated with Post-Impressionism. Many of the painters who exhibited at the popular Symbolist Salon of the Rose + Cross organized by Péladan in the 1890s favored a highly-detailed naturalism. These included Delville and **Fernand Khnopff**, whose dream-like images became prominent examples of Symbolist art.

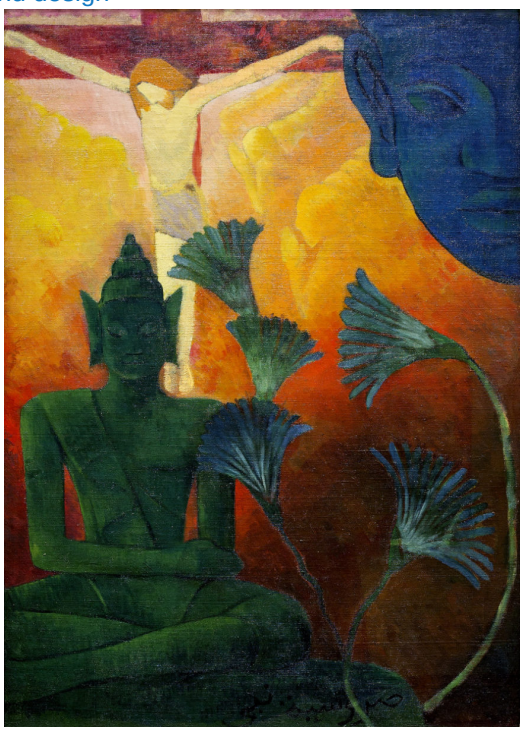


Figure **13.8.10.18**: Paul Ranson, *Christ and Buddha*, 1890, oil on canvas, 66.7 x 51.4 cm (Private collection)

Nabi painters used the modern Synthetist style of Gauguin, which emphasized abstract form, to convey spiritual meaning as well as a means of suggestion and personal expression. Maurice Denis was the most prominent art theorist associated with the Nabis, and one of his early statements became a famous touchstone of **formalist modernism**: "A painting — before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote — is essentially a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a certain order."[1] Emphasis on color and surface design is a primary characteristic of Nabi painting, which conveys emotion and meaning through abstract formal relations.



Figure **13.8.10.19**: Maurice Denis, *Climbing to Calvary*, 1889, oil on canvas, 41 x 32.5 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

In Denis' *Climbing to Calvary* the simple dark shapes of black-robed nuns rise diagonally towards a large cross carried by a barely-defined red Christ. One nun reaches out to embrace Christ at the top of the hill, and a strip of bright sky tops off the scene. The

basic forms convey the combination of mourning and hope that Christians associate with Christ's death and resurrection. The scene is timeless, containing elements of the present (the nuns) and the past (Mary embracing Christ on the way to the Crucifixion, the dark silhouette of a crowd of Roman soldiers over the hill). The figure of Christ suggests both the nuns' spiritual vision of Christ carrying the cross, similar to Gauguin's ***Vision after the Sermon***, and a Good Friday procession re-enacting the Crucifixion.

Different approaches



Figure **13.8.10.20**: Carlos Schwabe, *Death and the Gravedigger*, c. 1895, watercolor and gouache on paper, 75 x 55.5 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

A comparison of Denis' painting with Carlos Schwabe's *Death and the Gravedigger* shows two very different approaches to Symbolist painting. In Denis' work, the forms are reduced and simplified to mostly flat color areas. Basic symbols, shapes and their relationships convey meaning: the Christian cross, black for mourning, red for the blood of sacrifice, the upward movement towards light and resurrection.

Schwabe uses similar compositional devices to convey the theme of death and resurrection; both paintings show darkness and symbolic death at the bottom of the painting, light and resurrection rise above. Unlike Denis, however, Schwabe employs a traditional naturalistic technique that records many details based on careful observation. The figures and location are so specific that they suggest the illustration of a particular scene in a story. Denis by contrast depicts a more generalized, anonymous image of death and Christian resurrection.



Figure 13.8.10.21: Paul Gauguin, *Vision after the Sermon*, 1888, oil on canvas, 72.2 x 91 cm (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh)

Symbolism is perhaps easiest to recognize in artworks that present known symbols, such as the Christian cross, or overtly symbolic meanings through recognizable themes such as youth, old age, love, death, etc. In addition to Denis' *Climbing to Calvary*, many well-known Post-Impressionist works use conventional symbolism in this way, including Gauguin's *Vision after the Sermon*. Symbolism was also, however, associated with both a conception of art as subjective expression and the capacity of art to suggest profound meanings indirectly. As a result, many artworks that lack obvious symbols or clear symbolic significance are also associated with Symbolism.



Figure **13.8.10.22**: Pierre Bonnard, *Twilight (Game of Croquet)*, 1892, oil on canvas, 130 x 162.5 cm (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Pierre Bonnard was one of the founding members of the Nabi group. His painting *Twilight (Game of Croquet)* depicts men and women playing croquet surrounded by richly varied foliage. In the distance, women in long white dresses dance on the grass. The style is typical of Nabi painting with its flat simplified forms and emphasis on surface design. The leaves of the various plants, the printed fabrics of the women's dresses, the man's plaid jacket, and the dog's white and brown fur create a decorative surface of multiple textures and patterns.

A Symbolist mood

Although *Twilight* depicts an ordinary leisure activity (a typical subject of Impressionist painting), the mood is melancholy and dream-like, in keeping with Symbolist attitudes. The foreground figures are introspective and almost lost in the foliage, while the women in the background are otherworldly white figures dancing in the dusky light. The mysterious dream-like quality is typical of much Symbolist painting regardless of its style.



Figure **13.8.10.23**: Fernand Khnopff, *Memories (Lawn Tennis)*, 1889, pastel on paper mounted on canvas, 127 x 200 cm (**Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels**)

A comparable Symbolist work in a more traditional naturalistic style is Fernand Khnopff's *Memories*, in which several women holding racquets stand on a lawn seemingly lost in thought. Both Bonnard and Khnopff turn an ordinary modern subject into an image that suggests greater depth and significance without specifying any particular meaning.

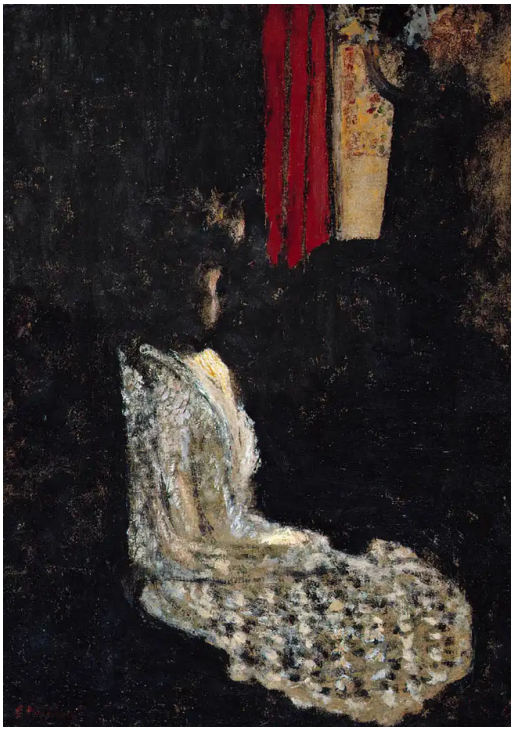


Figure **13.8.10.24**: Édouard Vuillard, *Seated Woman in a Dark Room*, c. 1895, oil on cardboard mounted on panel, 36.7 x 26.3 cm (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)

The subjects of Nabi paintings varied from the overt, often religious, symbolism of Maurice Denis to scenes of contemporary urban and suburban life depicted by Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard. Whatever their subject, though, the Nabis relied on the formal

qualities of color, pattern, and surface design to enhance the dreamy moods and profound meanings of Symbolist art. Their emphasis on the capacity of formal elements to convey meaning and emotion was an early contribution to the developments that led to abstract art.

Notes:

1. Maurice Denis, “Definition of neo-traditionism” (1890), in Jean-Paul Bouillon, ed., *Le Ciel et l’arcadie* (Paris: Hermann, 1993), p. 5 (authors’ translation).

Additional resources:

Mystical Symbolism: The Salon de la Rose+Croix in Paris, 1892–1897 at the Guggenheim Museum

Review of *Mystical Symbolism: The Salon de la Rose+Croix in Paris, 1892–1897* at *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*

Read more about Symbolism at The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn timeline of Art History

The Nabis and Decorative Art

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure **13.8.10.25**: Édouard Vuillard, *Public Gardens*, 1894, distemper on canvas, 213.5 x 308 cm (**Musée d’Orsay, Paris**)

In 1894 the **Nabi** painter Édouard Vuillard decorated the living room of a Paris mansion with nine paintings depicting children and their nannies in the park. The three panels shown here form a symmetrical group in the traditional triptych format of an altarpiece, with two tall vertical panels framing a wider central panel. They present a single continuous view connected by a horizontal fence and distant forest.

In the foreground the composition is strongly asymmetrical, with most of the figures crammed into the left panel. Diagonals created by the painted patterns of light and shade on the ground enhance the dynamic asymmetry of the painting. The people form points of interest surrounding the empty expanse of sandy gravel in the center. Variegated patterns of foliage, clothing, and clouds are scattered across the paintings’ surfaces, while patches of flat color punctuate the composition and serve as visual anchors.



Figure **13.8.10.26**: Maurice Denis, *September Evening*, 1891, oil on canvas, 38 x 62 cm (Musée d'Orsay)

Vuillard's emphasis on flat patterns and design is typical of Nabi painters, who embraced the implications of Maurice Denis' statement: "A painting — before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote — is essentially a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a certain order."[1] Nabi paintings do not allow viewers to get lost in the represented scene and forget that they are looking at colors applied to a surface. Instead, they display the tension between the represented scene and the paint that creates it by emphasizing abstract decorative forms over naturalistic details.



Figure **13.8.10.27**: Maurice Denis, *April (Panel for a young girl's room)*, 1892, oil on canvas, 38 x 61.3 cm (**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**)

In Maurice Denis' *April* the landscape and figures are reduced to simple shapes, and the colors are flat and unmodulated. Denis further emphasizes the surface of the picture plane by depicting the distant hills in red tones rather than fading blues to represent the effect of **atmospheric perspective**.

A decorative arts tradition

April was made specifically to decorate a young girl's room, and many Nabi paintings were designed as ensembles for specific locations. The seven-foot-tall panels of Vuillard's *Public Gardens* created a wallpaper-like backdrop for a family's living room. This integration of representational paintings into the decorative scheme of a room was markedly different from the conventional manner of framing paintings as if they were windows onto another world.



Figure 13.8.10.28: Germaine Boffrand, Salon de la Princesse, Hotel de Soubise, Paris, 1735 (photo: NonOmnisMoriar, CC BY-SA 3.0)

In embracing decorative painting the Nabis were participating in a well-established French tradition of decorative arts and luxurious artisanal production. During the eighteenth century Rococo paintings were designed as components of multi-media decorative ensembles for aristocratic salons, such as the Salon de la Princesse in the Hôtel de Soubise. In the nineteenth century the most prominent decorative paintings were murals in public buildings. The classicizing public murals of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes were admired by the Nabis as well as by many other Post-Impressionist and **Symbolist artists**.



Figure **13.8.10.29**: Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *The Sacred Wood*, mural in the Grand Amphitheater of the Sorbonne, Paris (photo: **Sigoise**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

They appreciated the suggestive qualities of Puvis' dream-like images of introspective figures as well as his simplified forms and colors. Puvis' limited range of muted pastel colors imitated the qualities of Italian Renaissance frescoes, and enhanced the flat decorative qualities of his paintings by softening contrasts and eliminating details. The Nabi painters adapted Puvis' decorative approach to modern subject matter and used painting techniques that reflected the innovations of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in their bright colors, visible brushwork, and surface patterns.

The influence of Japanese art



Figure **13.8.10.30**: Kano Koi, *Blossoming Plum and Camellia in a Garden Landscape*, Edo Period, ink, color and gold on paper, 167.9 x 382 cm (**National Museum of Asian Art**, Washington)

The Nabis were also greatly influenced by **Japanese art and design** in their compositions as well as in their engagement with the decorative arts. Pierre Bonnard used the popular Japanese format of multi-panel folding screens for a number of works, including *Nannies' Promenade*.



Figure 13.8.10.31: Pierre Bonnard, *Nannies' Promenade, Frieze of Carriages*, 1899, color lithograph, each panel 137.2 x 47.6 cm (MoMA)

Like Vuillard's *Public Gardens*, Bonnard's screen is both representational and decorative. The subject of the works is similar, a modern scene of nannies and children, and in both works the asymmetrical composition spreads across several panels with the overall emphasis on flat patterns and ornamental design.

Designing for life



Figure 13.8.10.32: Paul Ranson, *Rabbits*, c. 1893, distemper on paper, design for wall paper, 23 5/8 x 29 ½ inches (Phillips Collection, Washington)

The Nabis' embrace of the decorative arts was wide-ranging and included designs for wallpaper, tapestries, stained glass, and ceramics. They illustrated books, created posters, and designed costumes and sets for Symbolist theatrical productions. Pierre Bonnard's poster for the Symbolist literary journal *La Revue Blanche* adapts the Nabi style of flat patterns and decorative design to the print medium of color lithography.



Figure 13.8.10.33: Pierre Bonnard, *La Revue Blanche*, 1894, lithograph, 80.7 x 61.9 cm (MoMA)

Through their many forms of artistic production the Nabis expanded art into all areas of life. This was a widely-shared goal among fin-de-siècle artists and designers, particularly those involved with the international movement known in France as **Art Nouveau**.



Figure 13.8.10.34: Ker-Xavier Roussel, *The Garden*, 1894, stained glass executed by Tiffany and Co., 48 7/8 x 36 5/8 inches (Phillips Collection, Washington)

The Nabis were closely associated with Art Nouveau through the art dealer Siegfried Bing, a leading promoter of both Art Nouveau and Japonisme. Bing exhibited Nabi art in his Paris gallery and commissioned work from them, including designs for stained glass windows to be made by **Louis Comfort Tiffany**'s American company.



Figure 13.8.10.35: Édouard Vuillard, *The Chestnut Trees*, 1895, distemper on cardboard, 110 x 70 cm (**Dallas Museum of Art**) Design for Tiffany window

The Nabis exhibited as a group through the 1890s. Their **formalist** approach to painting influenced many later modern painters, most notably the **Fauves** in the early 1900s. The Nabis also contributed to modernism's breakdown of the traditional value distinctions between the fine and decorative arts. Their wide-ranging work in a variety of media was part of a trend in art and design that encompasses the **Arts and Crafts Movement** and Art Nouveau in the nineteenth century and **Russian Constructivism** and the **Bauhaus** in the twentieth century.

Notes:

1. Maurice Denis, "Definition of neo-traditionism" (1890), in Jean-Paul Bouillon, ed., *Le Ciel et l'arcadie* (Paris: Hermann, 1993), p. 5 (authors' translation).

Additional resources:

"The Nabis and Decoration," 2019 exhibition at the Grand Palais, Paris (video in French with English subtitles available)

Gustave Moreau, *Salome*

by DR. VASILE-OVIDIU PREJMEREAN

Salome dancing before Herod, with its bewildering subject matter and lush colors, is without a doubt one of the most remarkable paintings of the nineteenth century.

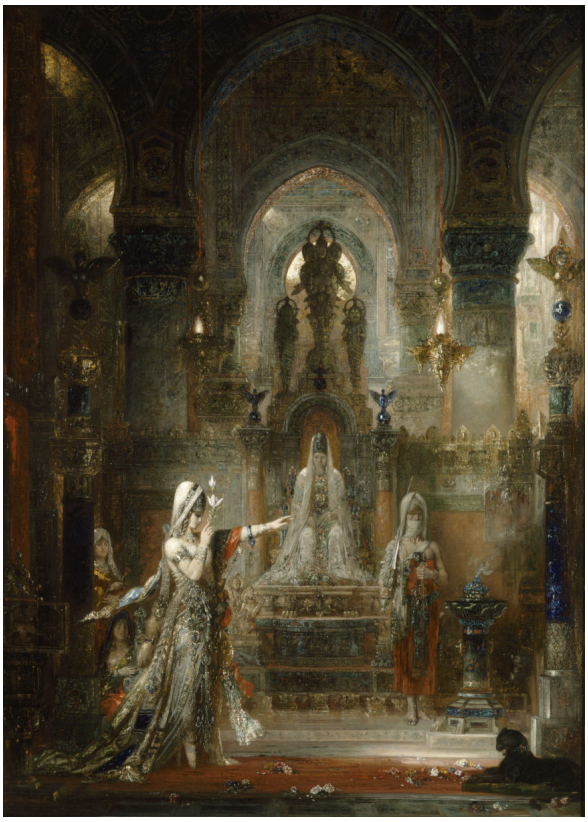


Figure **13.8.10.36**: Gustave Moreau, *Salome Dancing before Herod*, 1874-76, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 104.3 cm (**Hammer Museum, Los Angeles**)

The painting was first exhibited at the 1876 Salon (and shortly thereafter at the 1878 World's Fair), along with ***The Apparition***, ***Hercules and the Lernaean Hydra*** and ***Saint Sebastian Baptized a Martyr*** — all works by the French **symbolist** and history painter Gustave Moreau.



Figure **13.8.10.37**: Gustave Moreau, *The Apparition*, 1876-77, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 3/8 inches (Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum)

Alongside these other paintings, *Salome* shows not only Moreau's preference for religious, literary, and mythological subjects, but also his desire to picture the struggle between "spirit" and "matter"—a subject Moreau pursued his entire career.

The theme of Salome is one that Moreau returned to time and again. The artist explored the subject in more than one hundred sketches and drawings as well as in numerous paintings—ranging from highly elaborate to sketchily rendered—and even in sculpture (both *Salome* and *The Apparition* figured in Moreau's waxworks). Moreau was not alone in his passion for the theme of Salome, as other famous artists — **Lucas Cranach**, **Caravaggio**, **Titian**, **Guido Reni**, **Artemisia Gentileschi**, **Aubrey Beardsley**,

and Nabil Kanso, to name just a few — shared this interest. Salome is the woman whose dance led to the demise of John the Baptist.

In the New Testament, both Matthew (14:1-11) and Mark (6:14-29) tell of the famous banquet story in which Herodias, having grown angry at John the Baptist for saying she could not marry her ex-husband's brother, asks her daughter to request John's head from her half-uncle as payment for her dance. Although neither of these sources mention Salome by name, we can learn of her from Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* of the year 93-94 (Book XVIII, Chapter 5, 4).

Given the scarcity of texts, and the fact that Salome seems not to know what to ask her uncle for until instructed by her mother, it is unclear if Salome is truly the evil temptress she is supposed to embody, or just an unwitting instrument in her mother's hands.



Figure **13.8.10.38**: Henri Regnault, *Salome*, 1870, oil on canvas, 160 x 102.9 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

Salome's complex and ambiguous story offered vast artistic freedom [1]. It is no wonder that Moreau refers to her as "My Salome." [2] In his writings, Moreau underlines the sacredness of the scene, but also warns of the proverbial power of the *femme fatale* (a seductive woman who lures men into dangerous situations—a popular subject among **Symbolist artists**) as one who can be fatal to any man—even saints. [3] Moreau's contemporaneous viewers also focused on Salome as "femme fatale" (perhaps most famously, the Symbolist novelist and art critic J. K. Huysmans in his novel *À rebours).*

This skewed interpretation shaped painters' imagination for generations. Moreau makes clear that his goal in turning to Salome as subject, was to reinvigorate high art through beauty and idealism [4]. Of course, not every painter had the same lofty goals, as Henri Regnault's version makes plain, given its **orientalist** depiction and lush representation of Salome and her surroundings. Regnault's 1870 *Salome* played an important role in Moreau's decision to tackle the subject, as he wanted to show the world a different rendering of the subject, rooted not in orientalism and the straightforward depiction of a *femme fatale*, but in mystery, eclecticism, and the "archeology of sentiment and imagination," which he attributed to **Rembrandt**. [5]



Figure **13.8.10.39**: Left: Detail of Eugene Delacroix, *Jewish Wedding in Morocco*, 1839 (Louvre); right: detail of Moreau, *Salome*, 1876 (Hammer Museum)

Given the interest Moreau paid to the Dutch master's subjects and technique during the 1870s, it is no wonder that much of Remdrandt's treatment of light and darkness as well as his rich colors find new life in Moreau's painting.

As scholars Peter Cooke and Julius Kaplan pointed out, Moreau had multiple sources from which he could have drawn inspiration, such as Rembrandt's ***Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple*** and Ingres' ***Antiochus and Stratonice*** for the architectural structuring of the painting's composition; **Jacques Louis David's *The Oath of the Horatii*** for Salome's uncharacteristically theatrical gesture of her left hand; **Giovanni Bellini's *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*** for the character's self-absorbed pose; and Delacroix's ***Jewish Wedding in Morocco***, where we encounter a dance pose similar to that of Moreau's Salome. Anti-theatricality constituted a constant in Moreau's oeuvre as he preferred immobile, somnolent figures to vividly animated ones.

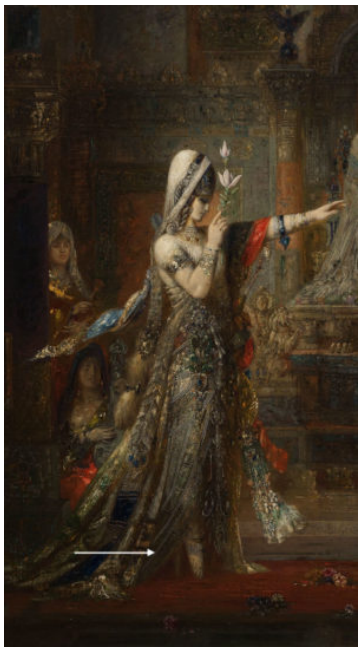


Figure **13.8.10.40**: Moreau, *Salome*, 1876, Hammer Museum, detail. Her feet appear to hover above ground.

If we look closely, we notice that Salome doesn't really dance [6]; instead, she appears to hover, as though she belonged to a magical realm. The dissonance between her "inward" gaze and the unnatural position of her arms further enhances this perception, as does the lotus flower she holds upright. Its symbolism is ambiguous. Does it signal lust, or is it a symbol of purity? Moreau's typically enigmatic approach made him a target for the promoters of Naturalism, most notably Émile Zola, who accused him of retreating into his dreams and offering an artistic response to the challenge posed by science—one that couldn't possibly have value in the modern age. Such criticism hurt him deeply and only fueled Moreau's purposeful cultivation of ambiguity.

As viewers, we are aligned to mirror Herod as he sits, seemingly transfixed, his passivity underlined by the majestic statue of Diana of Ephesus—an ancient goddess of fertility —that towers above him. It is not only Herod who mirrors the voyeuristic role of the viewer; the musician on the left, Herodias behind him, glance towards Salome's face or her upraised left arm. Only the executioner looks elsewhere.

The black panther in the foreground, a symbol of lust and cruelty, looks down forward and implicitly submits to the otherworldly will of the dancing Salome. If Salome the woman dazzles the viewer through her beauty and pose, Moreau's depiction of Salome does so not only through the glittering colors, but also through the marvelous abundance of detail, that scatter our gaze and prompts us to admire the. wealth of carefully crafted minutia we are offered. Some critics, contemporaneous with Moreau, like Georges Lafenestre, were enchanted and baffled by the sheer abundance of details in his paintings.

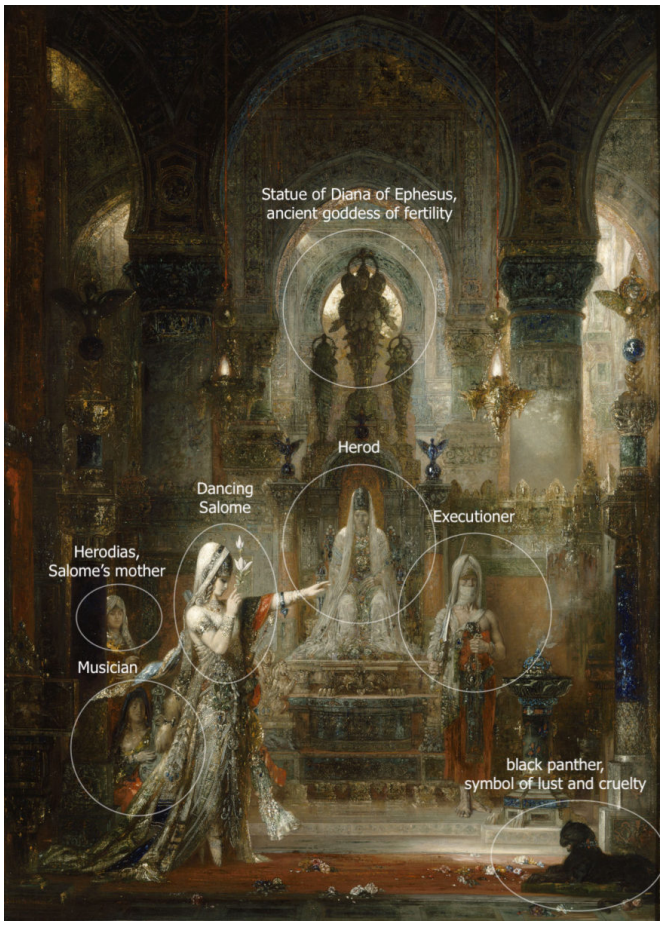


Figure **13.8.10.41**: Gustave Moreau, *Salome Dancing before Herod*, 1874-76, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 104.3 cm (**Hammer Museum, Los Angeles**) (annotated)

Another version of the subject further illustrating Moreau's love for detail and complexity is the so-called *Tattooed Salome*.

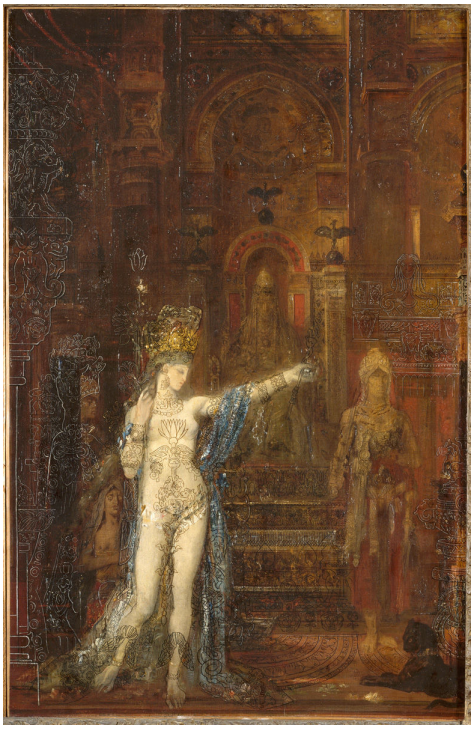


Figure **13.8.10.42**: Gustave Moreau, *Salome Dancing*, known as *Salome Tattooed*, 1874, oil on canvas, 92 x 60 cm (Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris)

The viewer here is left wondering whether we are to understand the markings as imprinted on Salome or if they instead form part of a decorative pattern on the canvas that are more apparent against the light tones of her body.

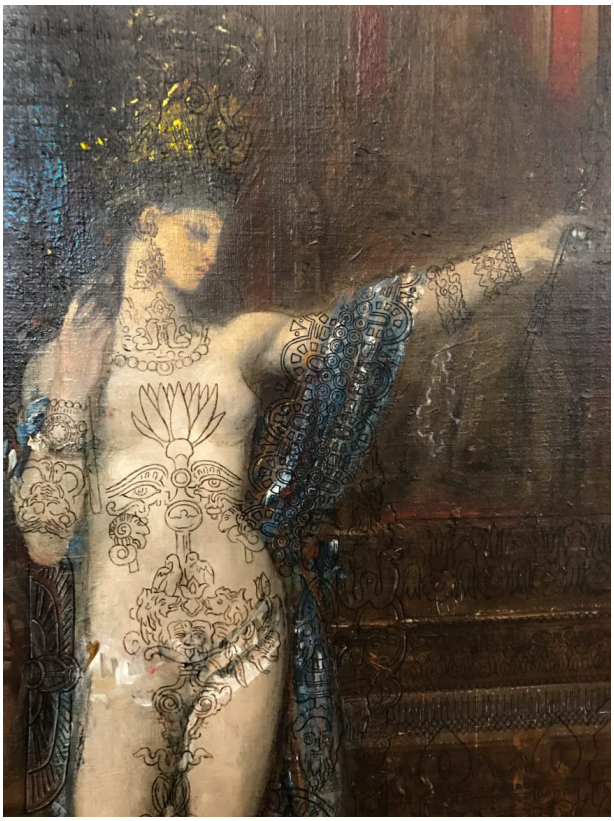


Figure **13.8.10.43**: Detail, Gustave Moreau, *Salome Dancing*, known as *Salome Tattooed*, 1874, oil on canvas, 92 x 60 cm (Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris)

On each side of the lotus “tattoo,” there are two giant eyes staring at the viewer. These “tattooed” eyes, complete with a pair of eyebrow decorations, reveal a mirroring face, whilst Salome’s “real” eyes are lowered. The “tattooed” gaze catch the viewer’s and block him or her, as it were, from exploring the woman’s body, acting as an additional layer of protection against our voyeurism. Further down, we see a “tattooed” Gorgon-like creature, with her tongue sticking out, and reptilian figures undulating around Salome’s inner thighs.

Matter and spirit appear woven together in another image by Moreau, known as *Salome Entering the Banquet Hall*, in which the temptress raises the platter with Saint John’s head towards the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit. In this drawing, Salome holds the platter with the saint’s head close to the level of her own, while she peers intently into his eyes. Above them both, but clearly closer to Saint John, the Holy Spirit reigns supreme, while the executioner exists the scene, blade on his shoulder. Another painting by Moreau, *Apparition*, marks another confrontation of sorts between Salome and the head of Saint John.



Figure **13.8.10.44**: Left: Moreau, *Salome with the Head of St. John the Baptist*, drawing, Musée Gustave Moreau, object no. 2003. Right: Detail of Moreau, *Apparition*, 1876-77, oil on canvas, Harvard Art Museums/ Fogg Museum.

Moreau’s long standing interest in the story of Salome and its many interpretations is made apparent through the artist’s varied approaches to the theme and in his desire to transcend to the symbolism Salome traditionally enacts—as a warning against temptation. Instead, Moreau looks to Salome as link between matter and spirit. So intertwined are Moreau’s artistic agenda and Salome’s symbolic content that one could credibly assert that even as Moreau created images of Salome, Salome shaped him.

Footnotes

[1] Salome was taken up as a theme numerous times in literature as in the visual arts. If we are to consider the 19th century only, Heine’s *Atta Troll*, Flaubert’s *Three Stories* (the third, *Hérodias*, possibly influenced by Moreau’s painting), Massenet’s *Hérodiade* and Wilde’s *Salome* come to mind. Furthermore, it is quite possible that Moreau was acquainted with Flaubert’s 1862 *Salammbô* and with Mallarmé’s 1864 *Hérodiade*, which would have influenced his approach. See Julius Kaplan’s “Salome” subchapter in *Gustave Moreau. Theory, Style and Content* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI, 1982).

[2] “Thus, in my Salomé, I wanted to depict a figure of a sibyl and religious enchantress having a mysterious character. So then I designed the costume that is like a reliquary.” See *Écrits sur l’art par Gustave Moreau. Textes établis, présentés et annotés par Peter Cooke*. A Fontfroide, Bibliothèque artistique et littéraire, MMII, p. 99. See also Peter Cooke, *Gustave Moreau: History Painting, Spirituality and Symbolism* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2014), pp. 81-93.

[3]“This woman who represents the eternal woman, flimsy bird, often fatal, walking through life with a flower in hand, in search of her vague ideal, often terrible, and always walking, trampling everything under her feet, even geniuses and saints. This dance is

executed, this mysterious walk takes place before the death who looks at her incessantly, gaping and attentive, and before the executioner whose sword strikes… A saint, a decapitated head are at the end of her path which will be strewn with flowers. Everything happens in a sanctuary that elevates the spirit towards the gravity and the idea of higher things." See *Écrits*, pp. 97-8.

[4] When speaking of another of his artworks, *Jupiter and Europa*, Moreau makes his goal clear: "I want, when I address materialist and anti-spiritual youth without respect for art or religion, I want, I'd say, to bring them through the spectacle of the eyes to comprehend the beautiful, which will make them understand the good." See *Écrits*, p.79 and Scott C. Allan, "Gustave Moreau and the Afterlife of French History Painting", PhD thesis, Princeton, pp. 48-54.

[5] *Écrits*, p. 344. His eclecticism became proverbial as he used a vast variety of sources — Egyptian, Indian, Roman, Etruscan, Persian, Chinese, Moorish, Turkish, etc. — for the costumes and the architectural settings in his paintings.

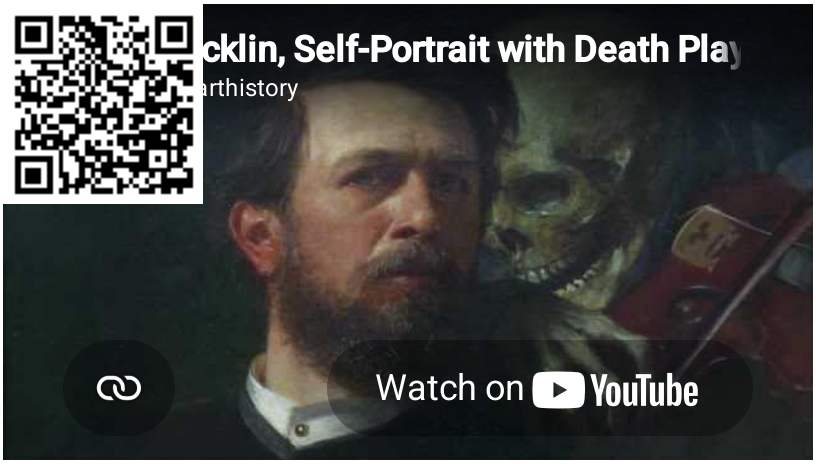
[6] See Peter Cooke, "It isn't a Dance: Gustave Moreau's 'Salome' and 'The Apparition'" in *Dance Research*, vol. 29, no. 2 (winter 2011).

Additional resources

Musée National Gustave Moreau

Arnold Böcklin, *Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.10.1: Arnold Böcklin, *Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle*, 1872, oil on canvas, 75 x 61 cm (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.10.45: More Smarthistory images…

Antoni Gaudí, Sagrada Família

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.10.2**



Figure **13.8.10.46**: View of construction in February 2014, Antoni Gaudí, Church of the Sagrada Família or Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, 1882- (consecrated 2010, but still under construction), Barcelona, Spain (photo: **Karl432**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

120 years and counting

Although Antoni Gaudí was influenced by John Ruskin's analysis of the Gothic early in his career, he sought an authentic Catalan style at a time, the late 19th century, when this region (currently mostly in northern Spain) was experiencing a resurgence of cultural and political pride. Ruskin, an English critic, rejected ancient classical forms in favor of the Gothic's expressive, even grotesesque qualities. This interest in the value of medieval architecture resulted in Gaudi being put in charge of the design of *Sagrada Família (Sacred Family)* shortly after construction had begun.

Gaudí was a deeply religious Catholic whose ecstatic and brilliantly complex fantasies of organic geometry are given concrete form throughout the church. Historians have identified numerous influences especially within the northeast façade, the only part of the church he directly supervised. The remainder of the church, including three of the southwest transept's four spires, are based on his design but were completed after Gaudí's death in 1926. These include African mud architecture, Gothic, Expressionist, of course a variant of Art Nouveau that emphasizes marine forms.

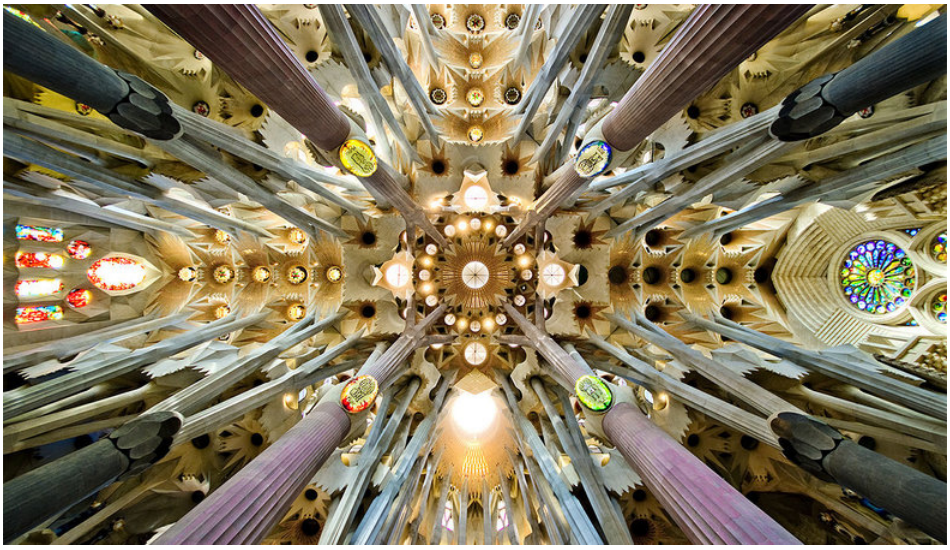


Figure 13.8.10.47: Nave ceiling, Antoni Gaudí, Church of the Sagrada Família or Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, 1882- (consecrated 2010, but still under construction), Barcelona, Spain (photo: SBA73, CC BY-SA 2.0)



Figure 13.8.10.48: View of the Passion Façade, Josep Maria Subirachs (sculptor), Antoni Gaudí, Church of the Sagrada Família or Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, 1882- (consecrated 2010, but still under construction), Barcelona, Spain (photo: Mstyslav Chernov, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The iconographic and structural programs of the church are complex but its plan is based on the traditional basilica cruciform found in nearly all medieval cathedrals. However, unlike many these churches, Sagrada Familia is not built on an east-west axis. Instead, the church follows the diagonal orientation that defines so much of Barcelona, placing the church on a southeast-northwest axis.

The Glory Façade (southeast):

This will eventually be church's main façade and entrance. As with the transcept entrances, it holds a triple portal dedicated to charity, faith, and hope. The façade itself is dedicated to mankind in relation to the divine order.

The Passion Façade (southwest):

Dedicated to the Passion of Christ, its four existing belltowers are between 98 and 112 meters tall and are dedicated to the apostles James the Lesser, Bartholomew, Thomas and Philip (left to right). Josep Maria Subirachs is responsible for the façade sculpture.



Figure 13.8.10.49: Detail of the Passion Façade, Josep Maria Subirachs (sculptor), Antoni Gaudí, Church of the Sagrada Família or Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, 1882- (consecrated 2010, but still under construction), Barcelona, Spain (photo: **Mstyslav Chernov**, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Figure 13.8.10.50: View of the Nativity Façade, Antoni Gaudí, Church of the Sagrada Família or Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, 1882- (consecrated 2010, but still under construction), Barcelona, Spain (photo: **Canaan**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Nativity Façade (northeast):

Depicts the birth of Christ and is the only façade to be completed during Gaudi's lifetime. its four existing belltowers are between 98 and 112 meters tall and are dedicated to the saints Barnabas, Jude, Simon and Matthew (left to right).

Ten additional belltowers (98-112 meters high) are planned though these will be overwhelmed by six towers that will be significantly taller. Four of these towers will be dedicated to the Evangelists, one to the Virgin Mary, and the grandest, rising to 170 meters, to Jesus Christ.



Figure 13.8.10.51: Detail of the Nativity Façade, Antoni Gaudí, Church of the Sagrada Família or Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, 1882- (consecrated 2010, but still under construction), Barcelona, Spain



Video 13.8.10.3: What Sagrada Familia will look like when construction is complete

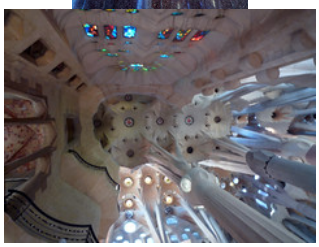
Additional resources:

Official site of Sagrada Família

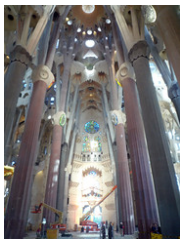
God's Architect: Antoni Gaudi's glorious vision, CBS documentary

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:









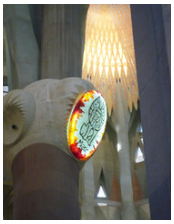






https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88746







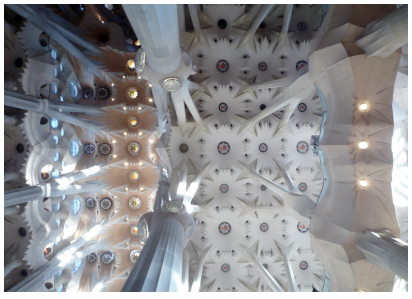


Figure 13.8.10.52: More Smarthistory images…

James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT



Figure **13.8.10.53**: James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (**J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles**)

James Ensor's *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889* is one of the largest and most ambitious modern paintings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over eight feet high and fourteen feet wide, it depicts a huge parade flooding down a wide street toward the viewer. The deep central space framed by reviewing stands and balconies suggests the stage of a proscenium theater. The lurid colors used to paint people, signs, and banners clash, and dozens of grotesque theatrical faces in the crowd, many wearing masks, compete for our attention. In the foreground the raucous mob threatens to spill out of the canvas and sweep us up into the chaos.



Figure **13.8.10.54**: Crowds and banners (detail), James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, detail, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)

The painting's style and technique are as aggressive as its subject. The paint is applied in crude heavy strokes and slabs to create a rough, heavily-textured surface. Bright red dominates, and it is accompanied by its complement, green, as well as the other primaries blue and yellow. There is no shading, and the overall effect is flat and poster-like. The colors are brighter and lighter in the background, which sparkles with patterns of dots representing the distant crowds and rays of light that criss-cross the waving banners.

Humanity mocked

The painting's title refers to the **traditional subject** of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, here transposed to contemporary Belgium. The painting is also reminiscent of the carnival parades of Mardi Gras, the Christian festival that precedes Lent. The small gold-haloed figure of Christ rides a donkey in the center of the painting's upper portion behind the marching band. He is surrounded by a small group of masked figures whose long noses point up at him, and he raises his arm in a gesture of blessing. Most of the crowd, however, pays no attention to Christ.



Figure **13.8.10.55**: Christ (detail), James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, detail, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)

Christ's Entry into Brussels is far from being a conventional religious image of Christ as the savior of humanity. The painting mocks humanity, as well as human beliefs and institutions, both civic and religious. The grotesque parade is led by a bishop dressed in red with a gold miter who is marching out of the painting in the middle of the foreground.



Figure **13.8.10.56**: Bishop (detail) James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)

The sea of masks and faces behind him includes priests, government officials, soldiers, a military band preceded by a heavily-decorated leader, and caricatures of many types of ordinary citizens. A masked man dressed in the blue coat and white sash of the city's mayor watches the parade from a reviewing stand on the right, accompanied by a group of elaborately-costumed masked figures. Ensor himself appears in profile as the yellow-clad figure in the tall conical red hat on the left.



Figure **13.8.10.57**: Left: Self-portrait (detail), James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles); Right: Mayor on viewing stand (detail), James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)

Political critique or personal expression?

A red banner inscribed with the slogan "Vive la sociale" or "Long live the social [revolution]" stretches across the top of the painting and refers to contemporary politics and social reformers. Ensor's sources for the painting included newspaper photos of an enormous socialist demonstration held in Brussels in 1886. The image of Christ had direct political significance as well; socialist politicians and writers in nineteenth-century France and Belgium frequently portrayed Christ as an exemplary social reformer who worked to improve the condition of the impoverished masses. Ensor is known to have been supportive of liberal social reforms and highly critical of powerful conservative institutions in Belgium, but *Christ's Entry into Brussels* does not clearly support any particular political position. On the contrary, it seems to be a wholesale condemnation of both humanity and human ideologies.

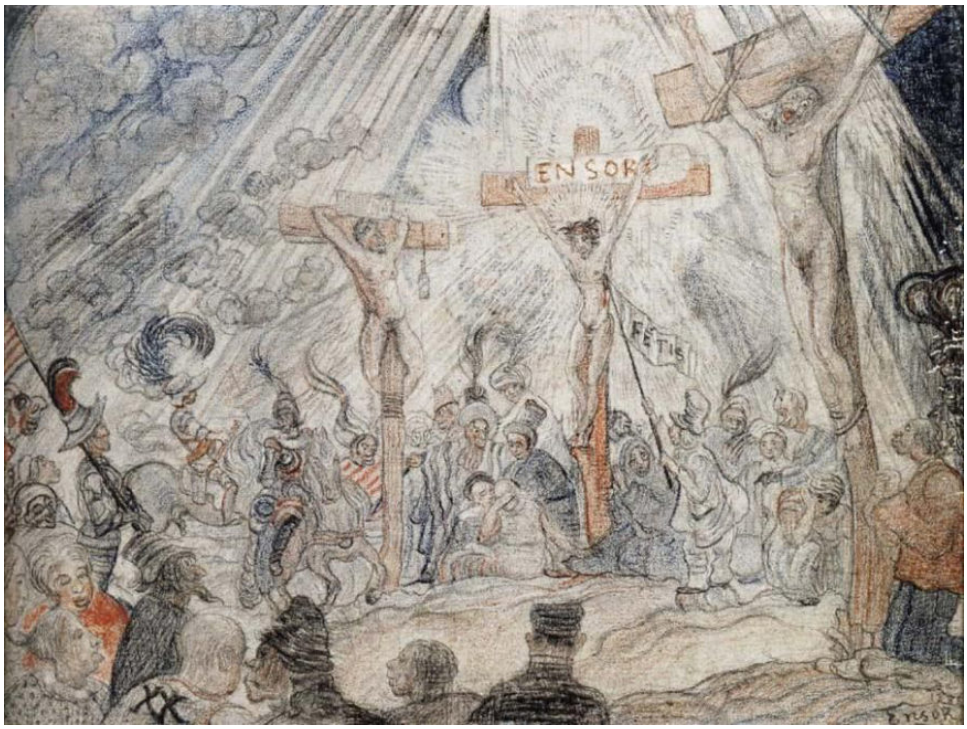


Figure **13.8.10.58**: James Ensor, *Calvary*, 1886, pencil, crayon and oil on paper, 6 ¾ x 8 ¾ inches (private collection)

Ensor created many works depicting scenes from the life of Christ, some of which were images of suffering in which he portrayed himself as Christ. These self-portraits display Ensor's sense of persecution as an artist. Although he was a recognized leader among the Belgian avant-garde in the 1880s, he felt unfairly treated by critics and fellow artists. Some of his works were refused by Les XX, the Belgian avant-garde exhibition society he helped to found, and his anger and resentment are evident in many works.

In Christ's Entry into Brussels, a figure vomits on Les XX's emblem painted in red on the green balcony above Ensor's self-portrait.. Thus, among the many topics it addresses, the huge painting expresses Ensor's personal bitterness toward the art world. It is also often interpreted as symbolically portraying the avant-garde artist as a Christ-like prophet misunderstood by the public.



Figure vomiting on the emblem of Les XX (detail), James Ensor, Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889, detail, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)



Figure 13.8.10.60: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Procession to Calvary*, 1564, oil on wood, 124.3 x 120.6 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Ensor painted *Christ's Entry into Brussels* when he was twenty-eight. His earliest paintings were Realist and Impressionist in style and subject matter, but in the mid-1880s his work became increasingly idiosyncratic. He adopted subjects associated with prominent artists of the Northern Renaissance and Baroque tradition, including **Bosch**, **Bruegel**, **Rembrandt,** and **Rubens**. *Christ's Entry into Brussels* echoes Bruegel's *Procession to Calvary*, a painting in which Christ is also lost in a largely oblivious crowd.



Figure 13.8.10.61: Left: Owl (detail), James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles); Center: Owl (detail) Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools*, 1490-1500, oil on wood, 23 x 13 inches (Louvre, Paris) Right: Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools*, 1490-1500, oil on wood, 23 x 13 inches (Louvre, Paris)

Ensor frequently borrowed fantastic figures and grotesque motifs from Northern Renaissance art, and like Bosch and Bruegel he reveled in the exposure of human folly. In his self-portrait in *Christ's Entry into Brussels* Ensor extends his arm down towards the face of an owl, one of many faces in the crowd. While we now associate owls with wisdom, the owl is also a traditional symbol of foolishness. It appears often in this guise in Bosch's paintings, including his *Ship of Fools*, where it peers out of the top of the tree.

Masks

The masks that are so prominent in *Christ's Entry into Brussels* became a central subject for Ensor in the 1880s. His family owned a curiosity shop that sold papier-mâché Carnival masks in the seaside town of Ostend, making masks both personal and highly symbolic objects in Ensor's work. *Self Portrait with Masks* shows him surrounded by a terrifying array of blindly staring masks, but his own portrait is also a sort of mask; it is directly modeled after self-portraits of the great Flemish Baroque painter Peter-Paul Rubens.



Figure **13.8.10.62**: Left: James Ensor, *Self Portrait with Masks*, 1899, oil on canvas, 117 x 82 cm (Menard Art Museum, Komaki); Right: Peter Paul Rubens, *Self Portrait*, 1623, oil on panel, 85.7 x 62.2 cm (Buckingham Palace, Royal Collection, London)

In *Christ's Entry into Brussels* even apparently unmasked figures have mask-like, caricatured faces suggesting that everyone wears some sort of mask. Ensor's masked figures represent humanity as superficial, hypocritical, and grotesque. Masks also confer anonymity and allow people to act outside social laws without fear of being recognized and punished.

In *Christ's Entry into Brussels* the theme of personal irresponsibility and freedom is enhanced by the association to a Carnival parade. During Carnival, society's rules are dropped, and the usual social order is turned upside down; rich and poor switch roles, the beggar becomes king or queen for the day. Carnival is often described as serving as a sort of relief valve for the ordinary pressures of society, as well as a moment when underlying truths are exposed. In *Christ's Entry into Brussels* the masks can be understood as revealing rather than hiding the true nature of humanity and human society.



Figure **13.8.10.63**: Skeleton (detail), James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, detail, 1888, oil on canvas, 99 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)

Skeletons

Skeletons were another central subject in Ensor's art, and a skeleton figure wearing a top hat appears prominently in the lower left of *Christ's Entry into Brussels*. It adds a macabre reminder of death's presence in the midst of life, a traditional artistic theme known as memento mori that was very popular in Northern Baroque painting. In numerous works Ensor portrayed skeletons and masked figures in enigmatic scenes that mock the foolishness and cruelty of human behavior. Ensor's skeletons frequently represent art critics persecuting him.

In *Skeletons Fighting over a Hanged Man* two skeletons wearing elaborate costumes duel over mannequins using a mop and broom for weapons. Masked figures carrying knives push through the doorways and seem to menace the duelists on both sides. In the left foreground, a third skeleton watches the combat with paintbrush in hand and a palette on his lap, reminding us that for Ensor his paintbrush was both his weapon and his claim to immortality.



Figure **13.8.10.64**: James Ensor, *Skeletons Fighting over a Hanged Man*, 1891, oil on canvas mounted on panel, 23 ¼ x 29 1/8 inches (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp)

Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889 is an ambitious and idiosyncratic painting that enlists multiple historical and contemporary artistic sources to address topics that range from the personal to broad social concerns. It was not publicly exhibited until 1929, but prints of it were widely circulated, and Ensor's highly individualized art influenced many later modern artists, most notably those associated with Expressionism.



Figure **13.8.10.65**: James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1898, etching, 30.3 × 45.8 cm (National Gallery of Art)

Additional resources:

This painting at the Getty

"Who Was James Ensor?" at the Getty Iris blog

Fernand Khnopff

Fernand Khnopff, *Jeanne Kéfer*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **13.8.10.4**: Fernand Khnopff, *Jeanne Kéfer*, 1885, oil on canvas (The Getty Center, Los Angeles)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

No photos

Figure 13.8.10.66: More Smarthistory images…

Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.10.5: Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock My Door Upon Myself*, 1891 (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

> ***The essential aim of our art is to objectify the subjective (the externalization of the Idea) instead of subjectifying the objective (nature seen through the eyes of a temperament.[1]***



Figure 13.8.10.67: Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself*, 1891, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 141 cm (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

Painting and poetry

The aim of the Symbolists was to turn away from what they saw as the materialism of Impressionism. Instead, they sought to be evocative, to suggest a mood, or an abstract idea—to make their work analogous to poetry and music (neither of which depict the external world in a literal way). So perhaps it should come as no surprise that Khnopff's painting, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself* (1891), takes its title and inspiration from a poem, "Who Shall Deliver Me?" by Christina Rossetti (the sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a Pre-Raphaelite painter who was an important influence on Khnopff).

A bastion against the vulgar world?



Figure 13.8.10.68: Female figure (detail), Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself*, 1891, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 141 cm (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

The poem's title clearly recalls a biblical passage, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24)—and the subject is an internal conflict from which only God can deliver us. In Khnopff's hands though, Rossetti's poem becomes a more general and secular meditation on inner conflict or mood. Yet the female figure, with her otherworldly stare, shows no sign of struggle.

Given the title and the stanza of the poem the title is taken from, are we to read the objects that surround the figure as "symbols" (in a personal, not literal, sense) of an inner struggle? Or perhaps we are not meant to look to the poem at all for the painting's meaning—since Khnopff only took one line from it, "I Lock my Door Upon Myself." If the latter is the case, then perhaps (as Michelle Facos suggests in her book, *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century Art*) the painting is about turning away from the world, similar to what Khnopff did in his personal life when he built a "fortress-like home" for himself in Brussels "as a bastion against the vulgar, outside world."



Figure 13.8.10.69: Background (detail), Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself*, 1891, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 141 cm (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

In the foreground of the painting are the three distinct sets of withering, orange irises which punctuate the three-part composition. Aside from the curvilinear form of the woman locked behind a table of some sort (or is it an altar, or a tomb?), the painting is dominated by circles, squares and rectangles, and everything—including the woman herself—is painted in muted tones. It is as though Khnopff is suggesting that the "reality" we see isn't very real at all.

What we see

In the first segment, reading from left to right, we see part of a circle, a truncated rectangle with a decorative floral pattern, another circle that may be a mirror, and the shallow recess of a doorway that doesn't seem to open onto anything, with a window it that similarly looks out onto nothing.



Figure 13.8.10.70: Bust of Hypnos, the Greek god of sleep and a red poppy (detail), Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself*, 1891, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 141 cm (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

The next segment is divided into three horizontal bands framed by wide vertical planks. At the top is a shelf that holds a bust of Hypnos, the Greek god of sleep (brother of Thanatos, the god of death), and a red poppy. The bust is among the most sharply defined forms in the painting and its blue wing subtly echoes the red hair of the woman who sits below. In the right most segment, we see a lone figure in a desolate townscape reminiscent of Caspar David Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea* (1809).



Figure 13.8.10.71: Landscape with figure (detail), Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock my Door Upon Myself*, 1891, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 141 cm (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

There are other objects in the painting that are even more mysterious, a small, crown-like charm dangles from above on a silver chain, a face perhaps, within two circles, on the lower right. And what is the long object on the table in front of the woman? And is that a spear beside her?

Of course we want to be able to read the painting, but so much of it is ambiguous and undecipherable. What we are left with is a mysterious and haunting image that speaks to the anti-materialist and inward-looking interests of so much art of the late nineteenth century.



Figure 13.8.10.72: Auguste Renoir, *Pont Neuf, Paris*, 1872, oil on canvas, 75.3 x 93.7 cm (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

This shift from modern life, to the inner psyche had many causes. It was, at least in part, a reaction against the rapid industrialization and urbanization that occurred in much of Europe in the nineteenth century. And similarly, it was a reaction against the art that had celebrated this new urban reality (see, for example, Impressionist paintings of the city such as Auguste Renoir's *Pont Neuf, Paris*).

One response to the rapid intrusion of modernity—a response favored by many late-nineteenth century artists—was to turn inward, "whereas Naturalists, Realists and Impressionists concentrated on the appearance of modernity, Symbolists explored its emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects and searched for a pictorial language that could convey the experience of modernity."[2]

WHO SHALL DELIVER ME? (by Christina Rossetti)

God strengthen me to bear myself;
That heaviest weight of all to bear,
Inalienable weight of care.
All others are outside myself;
I lock my door and bar them out
The turmoil, tedium, gad-about.
I lock my door upon myself,
And bar them out; but who shall wall
Self from myself, most loathed of all?
If I could once lay down myself,
And start self-purged upon the race
That all must run ! Death runs apace.
If I could set aside myself,
And start with lightened heart upon
The road by all men overgone!
God harden me against myself,
This coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease and rest and joys
Myself, arch-traitor to myself ;
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me
Break off the yoke and set me free

1. Gustave Kahn, “Response of the Symbolists” (1886) as quoted in Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory*, 1815-1900, p. 1017

2. As quoted in Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context*, p. 61

Additional resources:

J. Paul Getty Museum biography of the artist

Fernand Khnopff: Inner Visions and Landscapes exhibition at the Mcmullen Museum of Art, September 9 – December 5, 2004

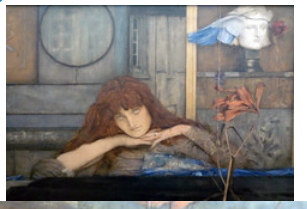
Jeffrey Howe, “Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921): Belgian Symbolist”, essay for *Fernand Khnopff: Inner Visions and Landscapes* exhibition at the Mcmullen Museum of Art, September 9 – Decembe 5, 2004

The Symbolist Movement: To Make the Invisible Visible (Radford University)

Michelle Facos, “Fernand Khnopff”, *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century Art* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group)

James Panero, “The secret history of modern art: An exploration of the symbolist origins of Modern Art,” *The New Criterion* (December 2006)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

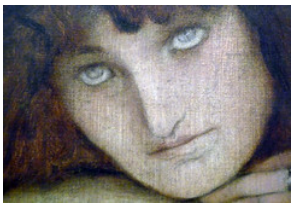
















https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/88746








Figure 13.8.10.73: More Smarthistory images…

Franz von Stuck, *The Sin*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 13.8.10.6: Franz von Stuck, *The Sin*, 1893, 94.5 x 59.5cm (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 13.8.10.74: More Smarthistory images…

Hector Guimard, Cité entrance, Métropolitain, Paris

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **13.8.10.7**: Hector Guimard, Cité entrance, Métropolitain, c.1900, painted cast iron, glazed lava, and glass, roughly 14 x 18′, Île de la Cité, Paris

Gustav Klimt

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

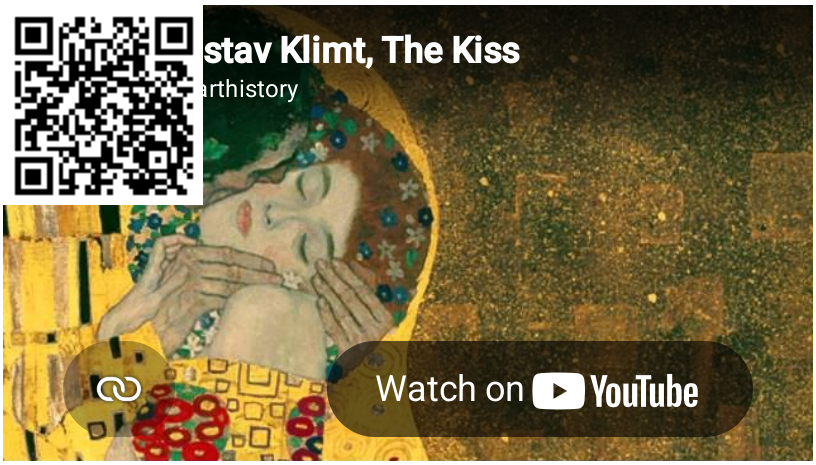


Video **13.8.10.8**: Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*, 1902, Vienna Secession Hall

The heirs of the Austrian Jewish collector who owned this work before World War II lost their case to recover it in 2015. Learn more in the **March 7, 2015 New York Times article**.

Gustav Klimt, *The Kiss*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 13.8.10.9: Gustav Klimt, *The Kiss*, 1907-8, oil and gold leaf on canvas, 180 x 180 cm (Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna)

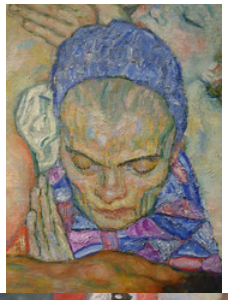
Gustav Klimt, *Death and Life*

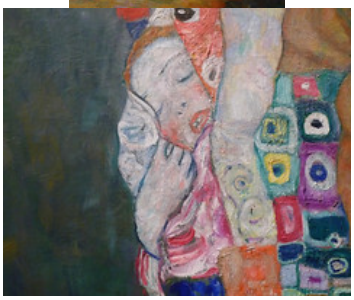
by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS

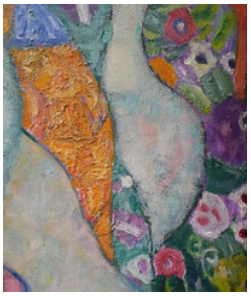


Video 13.8.10.10: Gustav Klimt, *Death and Life*, 1910, reworked 1915, oil on canvas, 178 x 198 cm (Leopold Museum, Vienna)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:





















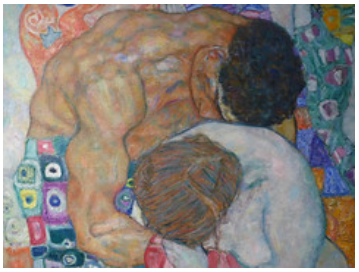


Figure 13.8.10.75: More Smarthistory images…

Edvard Munch

Edvard Munch, *The Storm*

by DR. JULIANA KREINIK and DR. AMY HAMLIN



Video **13.8.10.11**: Edvard Munch, *The Storm*, 1893, oil on canvas, 36 1/8 x 51 1/2″ / 91.8 x 130.8 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

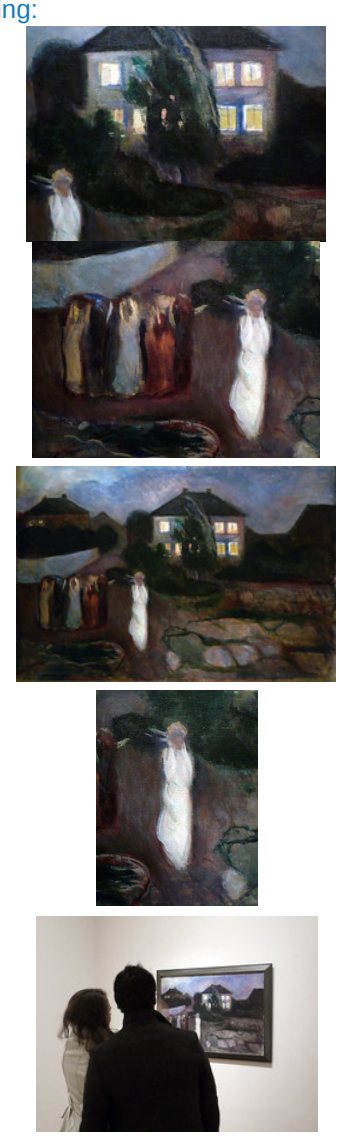


Figure 13.8.10.76: More Smarthistory images…

Edvard Munch, *The Scream*

by DR. NOELLE PAULSON



Figure 13.8.10.77: Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1910, tempera on board, 66 x 83 cm (The Munch Museum, Oslo)

Second only to Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Edvard Munch's *The Scream* may be the most iconic human figure in the history of Western art. Its androgynous, skull-shaped head, elongated hands, wide eyes, flaring nostrils and ovoid mouth have been engrained in our collective cultural consciousness; the swirling blue landscape and especially the fiery orange and yellow sky have engendered numerous theories regarding the scene that is depicted. Like the *Mona Lisa*, *The Scream* has been the target of dramatic thefts and recoveries, and in 2012 a version created with pastel on cardboard sold to a private collector for nearly $120,000,000 making it the second highest price achieved at that time by a painting at auction.

Conceived as part of Munch's semi-autobiographical cycle "The Frieze of Life," *The Scream*'s composition exists in four forms: the first painting, done in oil, tempera, and pastel on cardboard (1893, National Gallery of Art, Oslo), two pastel examples (1893, Munch Museum, Oslo and 1895, private collection), and a final tempera painting (1910, National Gallery of Art, Oslo). Munch also created a lithographic version in 1895. The various renditions show the artist's creativity and his interest in experimenting with the possibilities to be obtained across an array of media, while the work's subject matter fits with Munch's interest at the time in themes of relationships, life, death, and dread.

For all its notoriety, *The Scream* is in fact a surprisingly simple work, in which the artist utilized a minimum of forms to achieve maximum expressiveness. It consists of three main areas: the bridge, which extends at a steep angle from the middle distance at the left to fill the foreground; a landscape of shoreline, lake or fjord, and hills; and the sky, which is activated with curving lines in tones of orange, yellow, red, and blue-green. Foreground and background blend into one another, and the lyrical lines of the hills ripple through the sky as well. The human figures are starkly separated from this landscape by the bridge. Its strict linearity provides a contrast with the shapes of the landscape and the sky. The two faceless upright figures in the background belong to the geometric precision of the bridge, while the lines of the foreground figure's body, hands, and head take up the same curving shapes that dominate the background landscape.

The screaming figure is thus linked through these formal means to the natural realm, which was apparently Munch's intention. A passage in Munch's diary dated January 22, 1892, and written in Nice, contains the probable inspiration for this scene as the artist remembered it: "I was walking along the road with two friends—the sun went down—I felt a gust of melancholy—suddenly the sky turned a bloody red. I stopped, leaned against the railing, tired to death—as the flaming skies hung like blood and sword over the blue-black fjord and the city—My friends went on—I stood there trembling with anxiety—and I felt a vast infinite scream [tear] through nature." The figure on the bridge—who may even be symbolic of Munch himself—feels the cry of nature, a sound that is sensed internally rather than heard with the ears. Yet, how can this sensation be conveyed in visual terms?

Munch's approach to the experience of synesthesia, or the union of senses (for example the belief that one might taste a color or smell a musical note), results in the visual depiction of sound and emotion. As such, *The Scream* represents a key work for the Symbolist movement as well as an important inspiration for the Expressionist movement of the early twentieth century. Symbolist artists of diverse international backgrounds confronted questions regarding the nature of subjectivity and its visual depiction. As

Munch himself put it succinctly in a notebook entry on subjective vision written in 1889, “It is not the chair which is to be painted but what the human being has felt in relation to it.”

Since *The Scream*’s first appearance, many critics and scholars have attempted to determine the exact scene depicted, as well as inspirations for the screaming figure. For example, it has been asserted that the unnaturally harsh colors of the sky may have been due to volcanic dust from the eruption of Krakatoa in Indonesia, which produced spectacular sunsets around the world for months afterwards. This event occurred in 1883, ten years before Munch painted the first version of *The Scream*. However, as Munch’s journal entry—written in the south of France but recalling an evening by Norway’s fjords also demonstrates—*The Scream* is a work of remembered sensation rather than perceived reality. Art historians have also noted the figure’s resemblance to a Peruvian mummy that had been exhibited at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1889 (an artifact that also inspired the Symbolist painter Paul Gauguin) or to another mummy displayed in Florence. While such events and objects are visually plausible, the work’s effect on the viewer does not depend on one’s familiarity with a precise list of historical, naturalistic, or formal sources. Rather, Munch sought to express internal emotions through external forms and thereby provide a visual image for a universal human experience.

Additional resources:

This painting on the Google Art Project

Art through Time: *The Scream*

Munch Museum, Oslo

Short biography of the artist from the J. Paul Getty Museum

Walter Gibbs, “Stolen Munch Paintings are Recovered,” NYTimes, September 1, 2006

Edvard Munch, NYTimes Topics page

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

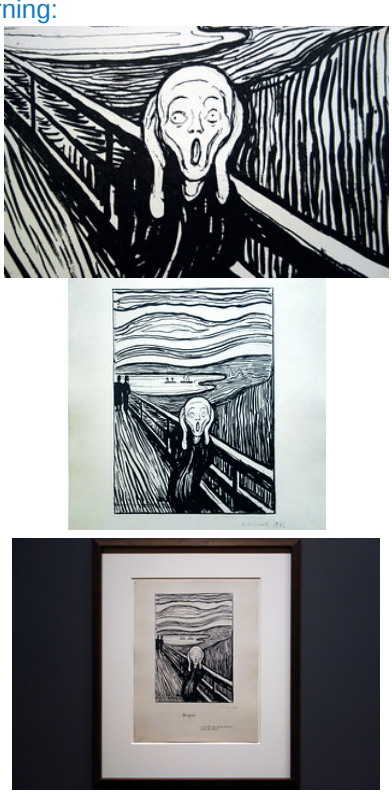


Figure **13.8.10.78:** More Smarthistory images…

Léon Bakst, “Costume design for the ballet The Firebird”

by THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

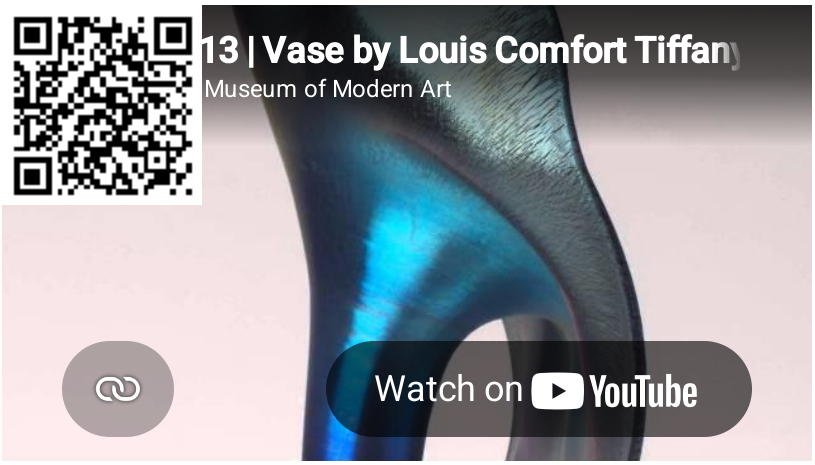


Video 13.8.10.12: Video from The Museum of Modern Art.

Louis Comfort Tiffany

Louis Comfort Tiffany, Vase

by THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



Video 13.8.10.13: Video from The Museum of Modern Art.

Additional resources:

View this work in MoMA's collection.

Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Hair Ornament*

by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Video 13.8.10.14: Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Hair Ornament*, c. 1904, gold, silver, platinum, black opals, boulder opals, demantoid garnets, rubies, enamel, H. 3 1/4″ / 8.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Video from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Additional resources:

View this work on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website

13.8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.8.11: Peredvizhniki

An Introduction to The Peredvizhniki (The Wanderers)

by DR. KRISTEN M. HARKNESS

Rejecting the Academy

Russia experienced tremendous sociocultural conflict in the early 1860s. In 1861, serfs were liberated and the resulting economic shifts radicalized a number of Russia's younger intellectuals. In 1863, fourteen students at the Russian Imperial Academy of Arts refused to participate in the annual gold medal competition because they felt the required subject, "The Entry of Odin into Valhalla," and the Academy's continued insistence on the supremacy of history painting was completely irrelevant to contemporary Russian life. Rejecting the Academy had consequences; it meant rejecting the major patron in Russia—the tsarist government. As a result, a number of these artists were compelled to create their own exhibitions, when they could gain permission, in order to produce the income necessary to pursue their careers.



Figure **13.8.11.1**: Members of the Peredvizhniki, 1885 (photo: **Wikipedia**, public domain)

An unvarnished representation of contemporary life

In 1870, a number of like-minded artists formed The Society for Traveling Exhibitions (Obshchestvo peredvizhnykh vystavok), and became known as the Peredvizhniki or Передви́жники (sometimes called The Wanderers or Itinerants in English). This society had as its goals not only to create art that presented an unvarnished representation of contemporary life in Russia, but also to bring art out of the capitals and into the countryside—to the people—to create an art for the nation.

The first Peredvizhniki exhibition opened in St. Petersburg in November 1871 and then traveled to Moscow in early 1872. It was met with immediate acclaim by powerful critics such as Vladimir Vasilevich Stasov, who proclaimed it the dawn of a new day for Russian art. The early Peredvizhnki's exhibitions were a curiosity—the first exhibition traveled to only four cities, but had a total of 30,527 visitors—but by 1877, the exhibitions were genuinely popular, attracting over 40,000 visitors a year and traveling to eight or more cities.

Some Peredvizhniki canvases were overtly political, such as Ilia Repin's monumental, *Volga Barge Haulers*, which portrayed the inhumane conditions under which these men worked, but most were not.



Figure **13.8.11.2**: Ilia Efimovich Repin, *Volga Barge Haulers (Burlaki na Volge)*, 1870-1873, oil on canvas, 131.5 × 281 cm (State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg)

Land & identity



Figure **13.8.11.3**: Aleksei Kondratievich Savrasov, *The Rooks Have Returned*, 1871

Many of the Peredvizhniki gained fame for their depiction of the Russian land. The concept of the native land, rodina, had always been a significant factor in the conception of Russian national identity, but was rarely depicted in the fine arts. Aleksei Savrasov's *The Rooks Have Returned (Grachi prileteli)*, 1871 caused a sensation for its sensitive portrayal of the Russian countryside. In addition, Ivan Ivanovich Shishkin's depictions of the Russian forest and Arkhip Ivanovich Kuindzhi's dazzling images of moonlit nights in Ukraine celebrated the beauty of the diverse regions of the Russian Empire.

Despite the popularity of landscape subjects with the art-buying public, critics charged that landscape painting could not advance progressive political agendas and that it was an elitist art for a leisured class. Stasov and other critics demanded that landscapes include social commentary and put on view the hardships of life in the country. Isaak Levitan's *Vladimirka Road* is one example of an attempt to respond to these charges by infusing landscape painting with political content. This seemingly unassuming landscape would have been recognized by the majority of Russian viewers as the road along which prisoners were marched to exile in Siberia.



Figure **13.8.11.4**: Isaak Ilyich Levitan, *Vladimirka Road (Vladimirka)*, 1892, oil on canvas, 79 x 123 cm (The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, © 2011)

No longer an opposition group

During the second half of the 1880s, the Peredvizhniki gradually lost their status as a progressive opposition group. The tsar's family began attending exhibitions and purchasing pictures and members of the Peredvizhniki, such as Repin and Vasilii Dmitrievich Polenov, were even invited to join the Imperial Academy of Arts, the very institution against whom many of the Peredvizhniki had rebelled just 20 years prior. Younger Russian artists were put off by the Peredvizhniki's increasingly restrictive membership policies and turned to both indigenous art traditions and contemporary Western art practice to forge a path for modern Russian art.

In spite of this institutional acceptance, the Peredvizhniki continued to exist as an organization until 1923. Some members then joined the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (Assotsiatsiia khudozhnikov revoliutsionnoi Rossii). Subsequently, Soviet critics recast the Peredvizhniki as politically progressive, hailing them as precursors to Socialist Realism.

Additional Resources:

Peredvizhniki exhibition video, National Museum, Sweden (English subtitles)

Russian School of Painting at the State Russian Museum

Jennifer R. Tischler, "Nineteeth-Century Russian Art: "Ideological Realism"", Dartmouth College Department of Russian (September 2003)

Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*

by BEN POLLITT



Figure 13.8.11.5: Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*, 1880-83, oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

From Gogol to Google

If you're a fan of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy or Gogol, then chances are you've probably seen a painting, or at least a detail of a painting, by Ilya Repin, the most celebrated Russian artist of the nineteenth century. Unlike his great literary contemporaries, Repin is not a household name in the English-speaking world, his work perhaps best known to us through the covers of our Penguin Classics. Things are changing though. Major exhibitions and publications have been bringing Repin and Russian visual art of the nineteenth century to our attention. Now, with rooms from the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow uploaded onto the Google Art Project, we can examine in remarkable detail, some of the greatest examples of 19th century Russian Realism.



Figure 13.8.11.6: Shrine carried in procession (detail), Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*, 1880-83, oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Repin's work is often mentioned in connection with the Wanderers (Peredvizhniki, in Russian), a band of artists who exhibited their work, all distinctively Russian in character, across the country. Repin, however, only joined the movement in 1878, eight years after its founding, when his reputation as one of the leading artists of his generation was firmly established.

The most probable reason for this delay was Repin's deep-seated anxiety about poverty. Born in penury to a peasant family in the Ukraine, at twelve he became an apprentice of a local icon painter. Later he went to the Imperial Academy at Saint Petersburg. The formal completion of his studies required that he find sponsorship to finance himself or else be forced into an impoverished life of a unqualified artist, who, working for his landowner, would be little better off than a bonded labourer. Desperate to avoid this fate, Repin eventually found a wealthy St Petersburg general to sponsor him. He fell to his knees and kissed the hem of the man's dressing gown. As he stood up he noticed that he had never seen hands so smooth and soft, just the sort of person, in fact, that later in life he would refuse to paint for, declaring: 'The peasant is the judge now and we must reproduce his interests."

The Procession



Figure 13.8.11.7: Pious women carrying empty box (detail), Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*, 1880-83, oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Depicted is a panoramic view of a religious procession carrying the icon of Our Lady of Kursk in a gilded shrine. Behind the shrine two women with somber downcast faces carry the empty box, which would normally house the shrine. Their pious humility contrasts with the bloated and lumbering figures of the landowner and his wife who holds a shimmering golden icon.



Figure 13.8.11.8: Landowner's wife holding shimmering, gaudy icon (detail), Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*, 1880-83, oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)



Figure 13.8.11.9: Priest in gold vestments (detail), Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*, 1880-83, oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

The irony is apparent in the anything-but-holy looking figure of the priest, dressed in golden vestments, running a hand through his yellow hair. He alone engages with the viewer drawing attention our to the vanity of the proceedings.

To the left the mounted Cossack militia and priest stewards that preside over the procession, separate the poorest of the poor from the main body, one raises his whip in a menacing gesture. They are headed by a hunchbacked boy, the most positive figure in the painting.

He moves resolutely forward, while a man, perhaps his father, cruelly compels him on, his whip casting a shadow in the sand that divides the boy from the religious icon. What motivates him seems to otherwise than the gaudy display of vanities.



Figure 13.8.11.10: Hunchbacked boy at the front of the impoverished in procession (detail), Ilya Repin, *Krestny Khod (Religious Procession) in Kursk Gubernia*, 1880-83, oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Unlike that other peasant artist, Millet, Repin takes pains to paint individual portraits of the people in the procession. Nowhere is this is more beautifully achieved than in the figure of the hunchback, for which several preparatory sketches exist, including a finely worked oil painting. The young man is shown as sensitive, dignified and without sentimentality. In the last half of the nineteenth century, peasants were frequently sentimentalized, but Repin clearly disdained this trend, which he found to his annoyance in the writings of the elderly Tolstoy. Speaking of the peasant, Repin wrote, “To descend for one minute into this darkness and to say ‘I am with you,’ is hypocrisy. To wallow with them forever is a senseless sacrifice. To elevate them! To elevate them to one’s own level, to give life—this is a heroic deed!’”

Mad Russia



Figure 13.8.11.11: Ilya Repin, *Hunchback*, 1881, oil on canvas, 64.5 x 53.5 cm (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Repin began his first version of the procession in 1876, shortly after his return from a three-year stay in France and Italy. Perhaps these experiences of other cultures sharpened his sense of the injustice in his own. The choice of subject was certainly rooted in a profound sense of personal hurt: “I am applying all my insignificant forces to try to give incarnation to my ideas; life around me disturbs me a great deal and gives me no peace—it begs to be captured on canvas,” he wrote.

By 1883 the subject had developed into a harsh record of contemporary life, incorporating various strata of Russian society. Though following a shared path, the crowd seems propelled by a heartless authority. The mounted police and the clergy who glower over the poor or stare out oblivious to their suffering, are presented as bullying and vainglorious.

Memories of Repin's own childhood shaped the composition. As a young icon painter he would have regularly handled objects that inspired veneration in the hearts of the faithful and he would have witnessed many religious processions in the village where he grew up. Nevertheless, this is not a religious painting. Rather than creating an image of exultation, Repin is more concerned with the psychology of the individual and of the crowd itself, influenced no doubt by the crowd scenes of Courbet and Manet, too, whose work he greatly admired.

The complex social caste system of rural Russia is a world away from that of Courbet's Ornans or Manet's Paris though. Aside from the church, the state and the military, the average peasant was also liable to be oppressed within his own social ranks, the peasant class being divided into several subsections: those that could read and those that could not, those that had livestock and those with none, and so on, and so forth. Repin masterfully delineates these tensions within the painting.

Reception

The painting was purchased by Pavel Mikhaylovich Tretyakov, a textile magnate, who suggested changing the maids carrying the icon to "a beautiful young girl, exuding spiritual rapture"; a suggestion Repin did not follow up.

Some criticized the painting on the grounds of its depiction of drunkenness at a religious procession. Another, more nuanced criticism came from the artist Mikhail Vrubel who challenged Repin's desire to "let the peasant be the judge now." For Vrubel, it is the artist who should define taste, not the audience, accusing Repin of debasing art "to the level of a public statement."

Vrubel's criticism has held firm, reflecting the importance of modernism in defining twentieth century tastes. Stalin held Repin up as the master of Russian socialist art, a commendation that perhaps understandably has, for some art historians, placed him in conflict with the avant-garde. This, however, is to underplay Repin's radical painterly style as well as the importance of the social message of his painting, a message that took great courage and even a greater sense of humanity to create.

Additional Resources:

Repin on the Google Art Project

Nineteenth Century Russian Art: "Ideological Realism" (Dartmouth College)

Eastern Europe and Scandinavia 1800-1900 on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

---

13.8.11: Peredvizhniki is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **8.11: Peredvizhniki** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SECTION OVERVIEW

13.9: Oceania

Oceania

The Pacific Ocean is seen to connect rather than separate the many islands of Oceania.

c. 1500 B.C.E. - present

13.9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people

13.9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook's voyages?

13.9: Oceania is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people

Terracotta fragments, Lapita people

by DR. JANE HORAN



Figure **13.9.1.1**: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people, c. 1000 B.C.E., red-slip earthenware, Santa Cruz Islands, south-east of Solomon Islands (**Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland**, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0)

Archaeologists get very excited when they find pieces of Lapita pottery. Why? Because the sequential depositing of potsherds (fragments of pottery) in an easterly direction across the island groups of the Pacific has become the pivotal evidence that tells the extraordinary story of the peopling of the vast Pacific Ocean. Pieces of the distinctive red-slipped pottery of the Lapita people have been recovered from sites spanning thousands of miles across the Pacific from the outer reaches of Southeast Asia, through the island groups often referred to as Micronesia and Melanesia, and into the central Pacific and Polynesia.

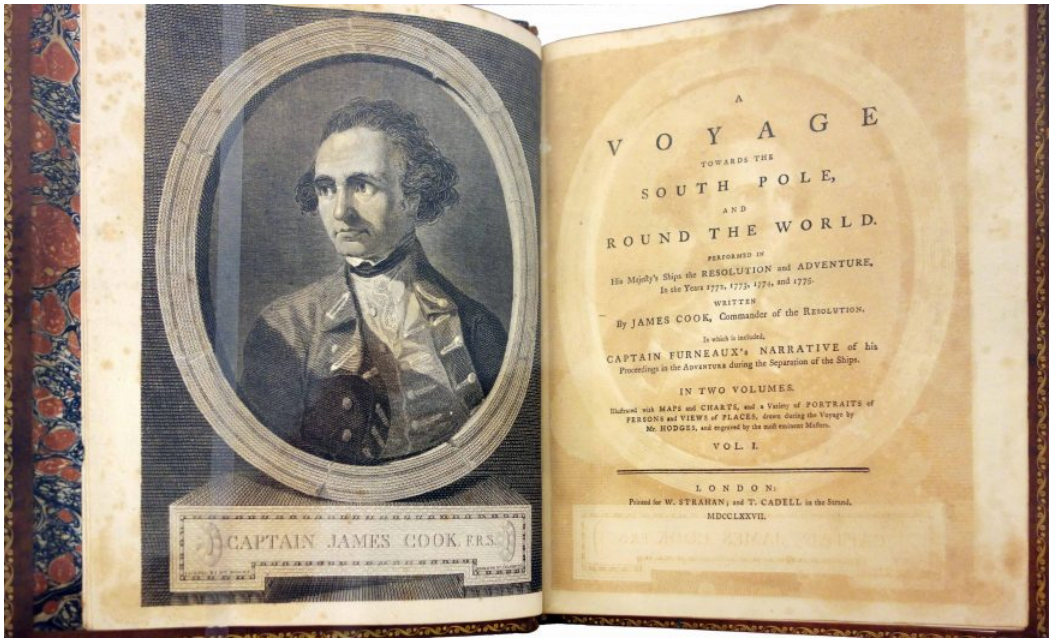


Figure **13.9.1.2**: Captain James Cook, *A voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World. Performed in His Majesty's ships the Resolution and Adventure, in the years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775* (London: Printed for W. Strahan; and T. Cadell in the Strand. 1777) (photo: **Daderot** CC0 1.0)

An archaeological puzzle

Though Pacific Islanders have their own richly detailed historical accounts of the exploration of their "sea of islands," European speculation about how and when the Pacific was populated began with James Cook and other European voyagers of the Enlightenment era (1700s).[1] Theories based on thin historical conjecture proliferated in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, often at odds with Islanders' own knowledge systems. At first it was thought that the inhabitants of what is now known as Near Oceania colonized the islands southeast of the Solomon group, now referred to as Remote Oceania (see map below). It was not until archaeologists began to undertake stratigraphic archaeology in the Pacific from the 1950s onwards that this idea was debunked—mostly due to evidence provided by the multiple archaeological sites where Lapita pottery has been found.

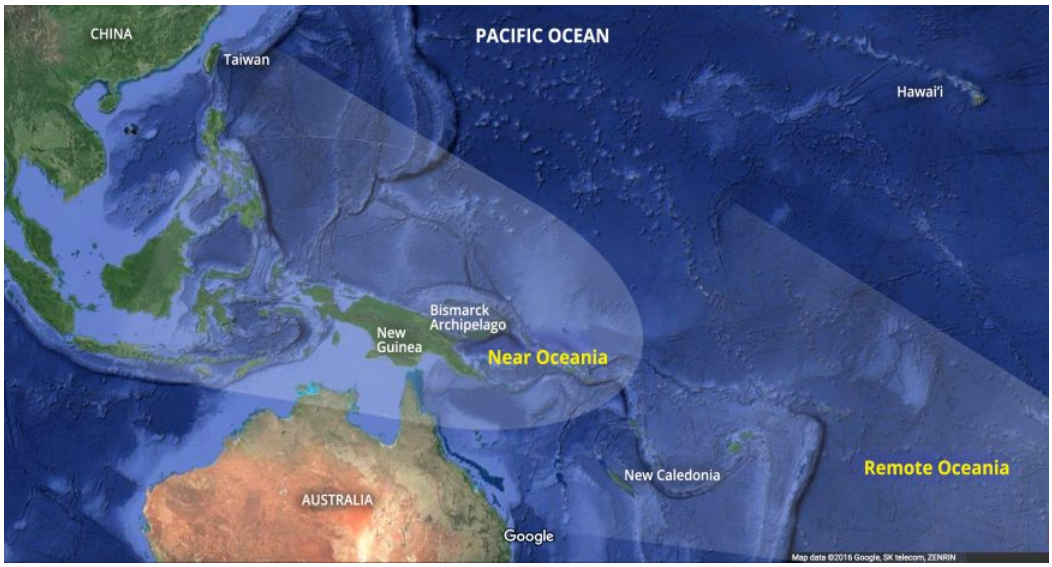


Figure **13.9.1.3**

Archaeologists now believe that, somewhere between 4,000 and 3,500 years ago, a group of people who had sailed from the area around Taiwan in Southeast Asia arrived by canoe to the beaches of the Bismarck Archipelago. The new arrivals, who we now know as the Lapita people (named for the beach on the island of New Caledonia where a large number of pottery sherds were found), spoke a different language than the people they would have encountered there. These local people had been living on the large island now known as New Guinea and the surrounding islands for between 60,000 and 40,000 years.[2] Aside from their language and different genetic stock, the Lapita were different to those they encountered because they had sophisticated seafaring and navigation capability—and they manufactured and decorated ceramics in very particular ways. We can only theorize about the political and environmental pressures that drove these people to set out to sea in search of new places to live. Nevertheless, the pieces of broken but stylistically related potsherds distributed across thousands of miles of islands, laid down in datable stratigraphic layers, have revealed important information about the ancestors of the contemporary peoples of the central Pacific.



Figure **13.9.1.4**: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people, red-slip earthenware, Watom Island, Bismarck Archipelago (photo: **Merryjack** CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Travel and trade

Lapita pottery was shaped by hand, and perhaps using a paddle-and-anvil technique to thin the walls, but without the aid of a potter's wheel. It is low-fire earthenware (no evidence of Lapita kilns have been found). This means that the dry clay pots would likely have been placed in open fires to harden—the descendants of the Lapita people in Fiji and other areas still make pottery in this way. There is some geographical variation in the shapes and sizes of the pottery but most were simple bowls, some had pedestal feet, and others were flat-bottomed vessels. We know that the pottery was generally not used for cooking because carbon residues are not normally found on the potsherds. Rather, the evidence suggests that much of the pottery was used for serving food, while larger vessels were likely used for storage.

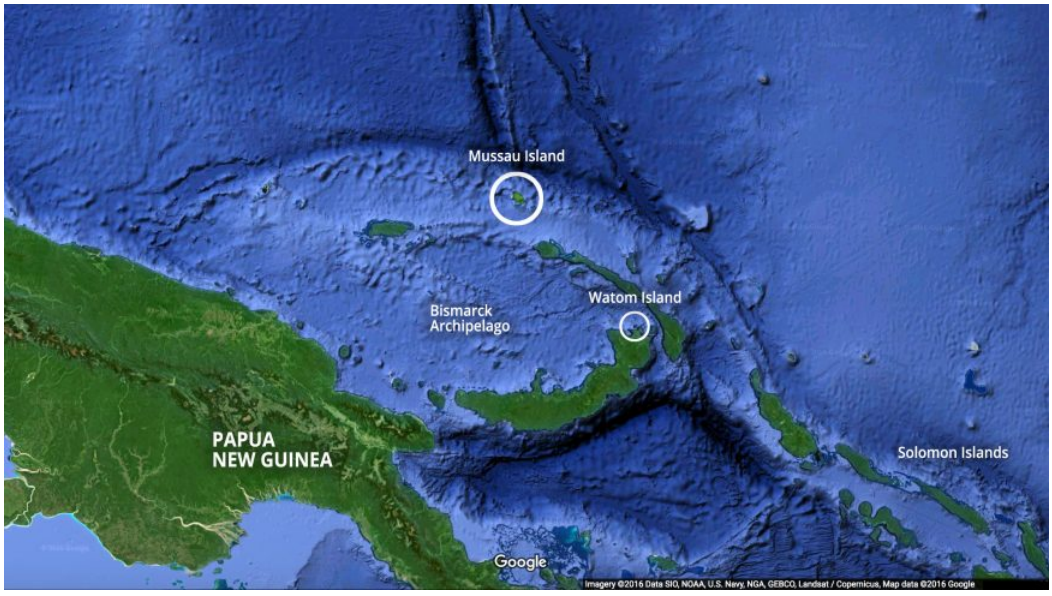


Figure **13.9.1.5**

The makers of the Lapita pottery blended clay with a particular type of sand. The sand was needed as a temper to make the vessels more durable during firing. Both the clay and sand are only found in certain areas of the Pacific. The islands in Remote Oceania are far less diverse in terms of geology than those in Near Oceania, and only a limited number of island locations had deposits of the clay used to make the pottery.

Analysis of the composition of the sherds has revealed valuable information about where the raw materials came from. The archaeologist Terry Hunt has analyzed a large number of potsherds found by the archaeologist Patrick Kirch at Talepakemalai and other Mussau Lapita sites (see map above). The Mussau islands, which are mostly limestone, are one of the island groups with very little clay. Hunt showed that a large number of the potsherds found there had been made from materials brought from other places, indicating that either the raw materials or perhaps the pots themselves had been imported. This reveals that the Lapita people had the means and the need to travel and trade across significant ocean stretches—their "sea of islands." Perhaps, the most remarkable thing about the Lapita pottery sherds is that despite the remaining sherds being found thousands of miles apart, they share a formal and discernible design grammar that archaeologists can analyze. In fact, it is the decoration of Lapita pottery that holds the greatest amount of information for archaeologists.



Figure **13.9.1.6**: Terracotta fragments, n.d., Lapita people, red-slip earthenware (**Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland**, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0)

A design grammar

The decoration of the pottery consists of stamped and incised motifs that adhere to a very regular, structured, and repeated set of specific patterns. The motifs were applied to the surface of the vessel with a small dentate (tooth-like) stamp and/or drawn free-hand with a sharp edge of some sort. The pattern stamps used included both linear and curved shapes of various lengths, as well as round forms. Once a pot was decorated, a paste of white coral lime was applied to the pattern which had the effect of making the delicate patterning stand out against the reddish-brown clay. Types of patterns range from simple to complex geometric forms, and include anthropomorphic face designs (image, top of page) found on Talepakemalai in the Mussau island group (see map above). The anthropomorphic pattern was a characteristic of early Lapita pottery, and is not present on pottery found in the upper (and therefore newer) archaeological layers of sites further east in Polynesia.

Archaeologists contend that those responsible for decorating the pots used a very restricted range of motifs and combined these in specific ways on particular areas of the pots. In other words, the ancient people who decorated the pots followed the rules of a defined design system. As Kirch notes "although we may never know what was in the minds of those potters and design-makers, we can understand in a more formal or structural sense their system of art and design, and use this as a tool for tracing the history of Lapita pottery in time and space."[3]



Figure **13.9.1.7**: Painted Barkcloth (*Masi kesa*), late 19th–early 20th century, Lau Islands, Fiji, 85.1 x 419.1 cm (**Metropolitan Museum of Art**) "The repeating geometric motifs of many tapa cloths at times resemble those seen on pottery produced by the Lapita peoples, who were the ancestors of present-day Polynesians." (**object page**)

A major breakthrough in the analysis of the Lapita design system came in the 1970s when Māori archaeologist Sydney Moko Mead developed a coherent formal system to categorize the design elements and motifs found on Lapita pottery. Mead's system drew inspiration from linguistic analysis and has a set of components that form the building blocks of the "grammar" of the Lapita design system. These include: design elements, motifs, zone markers, and design fields. Even though the design system changed incrementally through time and within specific geographical areas as people moved across the Pacific, the underlying structural patterns and rules of the system remained the same. From an analytical point of view, the systemized grammar of design has meant that potsherds found in one site can be categorized and compared with others found in multiple other sites to provide evidence of the movement of the Lapita people in particular timeframes. What's more, vestiges of the design motifs and the grammar of the system are apparent in contemporary tattooing, barkcloth decoration and other art forms throughout contemporary Remote Oceania (image above).

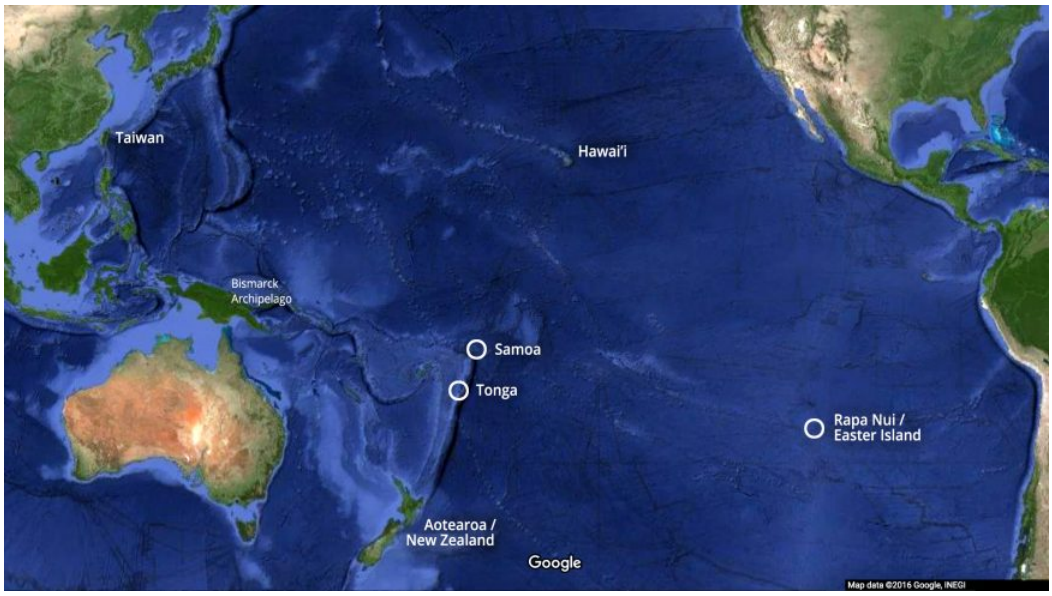


Figure **13.9.1.8**

An extraordinary story

As the Lapita people moved east past the Bismarck archipelago they likely reached the Samoan and Tongan Island groups around 800 B.C.E. They then paused for 1200 years when another phase of colonization began, and people headed toward the most distant reaches of the Polynesian triangle. People arrived in Hawai‘i by c. 1000 C.E., and Rapa Nui/Easter Island and Aotearoa/New Zealand by about 1200 C.E. For the most part, the further east the Lapita people headed, the simpler their patterns became. The most recent potsherds, found in the most easterly and south westerly locales, are minimally decorated. It seems that within a couple of hundred years of arriving in what are now Samoa and Tonga (see map above), Lapita pottery and its distinctive design decoration had all but disappeared. When Europeans arrived in the Pacific in the 1700s and 1800s, the ocean going long-distance seafaring canoes were gone, but the knowledge of distant islands and oral histories of voyaging remained. Archaeologists are still actively working to untangle the history of this early pottery, and with each successive discovery, to add to the extraordinary story of the Lapita people.

[1] In his seminal essay “**Our Sea of Islands**,” Tongan scholar Epeli Hau’ofa asserted “There is a gulf of difference between viewing the Pacific Islands as ‘islands in a far sea” (as has been historically constructed by Europeans) to “a sea of islands.” Whereas the former emphasizes remoteness, the latter reinstates the ocean as a connector between all the people and islands of the Pacific; an oceanic highway in a region rich in resources. Epeli Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands* (Suva, Fiji: The University of the South Pacific, 1993), pp, 2-16.
[2] Kirch 2010.
[3] Kirch 1997, p. 126.

Additional Resources:

Patrick Vinton Kirch, “Peopling of the Pacific: A Holistic Anthropological Perspective,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39 (2010), pp. 131-148.

Patrick Vinton Kirch, *On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific Islands before European Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

Patrick Vinton Kirch, *The Lapita Peoples: Ancestors of the Oceanic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997).

Lapita pottery with a human face

Lapita pottery on Metropolitan Museum of Art Timeline of Art History

Pottery making Fiji style

13.9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13.9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages?

What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages?

by THE BRITISH LIBRARY



Video **13.9.2.1**: In this film, historians, artists, anthropologists and members of the indigenous communities in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, consider contemporary perspectives on Cook’s voyages and examine their legacy.

13.9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages? is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages?** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Index

A

Aeneid (Virgil)
- 5.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.)

E

Etruscans
- 13.2.7: Etruscan

H

homer
- 3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad

M

Metamorphoses
- 5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.)

Miasma
- 3.8.22: Miasma

minotaur
- 3.8.23: The Minotaur

O

ovid
- 5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.)

T

The Book of Songs
- 6.3: The Book of Songs

The Epic of Gilgamesh
- 2.1: The Epic of Gilgamesh

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

Detailed Licensing

Overview

Title: Hum 115: World Mythology (Stafinbil)

Webpages: 281

Applicable Restrictions: Noncommercial

All licenses found:

- CC BY-NC-SA 4.0: 89% (250 pages)
- Undeclared: 11% (31 pages)

By Page

- Hum 115: World Mythology (Stafinbil) - *Undeclared*
  - Front Matter - *Undeclared*
    - TitlePage - *Undeclared*
    - InfoPage - *Undeclared*
    - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
    - Licensing - *Undeclared*
  - 1: Introduction to World Mythology - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1.1: 2-2 Religion in the Ancient World - *Undeclared*
  - 2: Mesopotamia, Middle East and Near East - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 2.1: The Epic of Gilgamesh - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 2.2: Hebrew Bible, “Genesis” And “Exodus” - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 2.3: Mesopotamia - *Undeclared*
    - 2.4: Enuma Elish - The Babylonian Epic of Creation - *Undeclared*
  - 3: Classical Greece and Rome - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.1: What is a myth? - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.2: The Three Types of Myth - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.3: Historical Myths - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.4: Psychological Myths - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.5: Story Pattern of the Greek Hero - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.6: Why are there so many versions of Greek myths? - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.7: Map - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.8: Names and Key Concepts - *Undeclared*
      - 3.8.1: Agamemnon and Iphigenia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.2: Aphrodite - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.3: Apollo - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.4: Ares - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.5: The Argonauts - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.6: Artemis - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.7: Athena - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.8: Bacchus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.9: Caduceus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.10: Centaurs - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.11: Chthonian Deities - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.12: The Delphic Oracle - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.13: Demeter - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.14: Dionysus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.15: Hades - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.16: Hephaestus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.17: Hera - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.18: Heracles - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.19: Hermes - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.20: Hestia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.21: Jason - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.22: Miasma - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.23: The Minotaur - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.24: Origins - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.25: Orpheus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.26: Persephone - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.27: Perseus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.28: Poseidon - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.29: Prometheus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.30: Sphinx - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.31: Theseus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.32: The Twelve Labors of Heracles - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.33: Xenia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.8.34: Zeus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.9: The Iliad And The Odyssey - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.10: The Iliad - An Introduction - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.11: Homer, The Iliad - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.11.1: Homer, The Iliad - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.12: Book- The Illiad (Homer) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 3.12.1: Books - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 3.12.1.1: Book I - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.2: Book II - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.3: Book III - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.4: Book IV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.5: Book V - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.6: Book VI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.7: Book VII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.8: Book VIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.9: Book IX - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.10: Book X - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.11: Book XI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.12: Book XII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.13: Book XIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.14: Book XIV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.15: Book XV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.16: Book XVI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.17: Book XVII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.18: Book XVIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.19: Book XIX - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.20: Book XX - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.21: Book XXI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.22: Book XXII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.23: Book XXIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.12.1.24: Book XXIV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 3.13: The Odyssey - An Introduction - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.14: Book- The Odyssey (Homer) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 3.14.1: Books - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.1: Book I - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.2: Book II - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.3: Book III - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.4: Book IV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.5: Book V - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.6: Book VI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.7: Book VII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.8: Book VIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.9: Book IX - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.10: Book X - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.11: Book XI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.12: Book XII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.13: Book XIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.14: Book XIV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.15: Book XV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.16: Book XVI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.17: Book XVII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.18: Book XVIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.19: Book XIX - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.20: Book XX - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.21: Book XXI - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.22: Book XXII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.23: Book XXIII - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.14.1.24: Book XXIV - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.15: Oedipus The King - Sophocles (ca. 496-ca. 406 B.C.E.) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.16: The Oresteia - An Introduction - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.17: MEDEA - Euripides (ca. 484-ca.407 B.C.E.) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 3.18: Book- Lysistrata (Aristophanes) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 3.18.1: Sections - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.18.1.1: Section 1 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.18.1.2: Section 2 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.18.1.3: Section 3 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.18.1.4: Section 4 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.18.1.5: Section 5 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3.18.1.6: Section 6 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 4: Homer, The Odyssey and Virgil, The Aeneid - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 4.1: Introduction - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 4.2: The Odyssey - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 4.3: The Aeneid - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5: Rome - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 5.1: The Aeneid Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 5.2: Metamorphoses - Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 5.3: Book- Metamorphoses, 3.511–733 (Ovid) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 5.3.1: 1. Introduction - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.1.1: Ovid and His Times - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.1.2: Ovid's Literary Progression- Elegy to Epic - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.1.3: The Metamorphoses- A Literary Monstrum - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.1.4: Ovid's Theban Narrative - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.1.5: The Set Text- Pentheus and Bacchus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.1.6: The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 5.3.2: 2. Text - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.2.1: 3.511–18 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.2.2: 3.519–26 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
      - 5.3.2.3: 3.527–37 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 5.3.2.4: 3.538–50 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.5: 3.551–61 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.6: 3.562–71 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.7: 3.572–81 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.8: 3.582–91 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.9: 3.592–99 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.10: 3.600–10 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.11: 3.611–20 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.12: 3.621–33 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.13: 3.634–43 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.14: 3.644–55 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.15: 3.656–65 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.16: 3.666–75 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.17: 3.676–86 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.18: 3.687–95 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.19: 3.696–707 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.20: 3.708–18 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.21: 3.719–28 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 5.3.2.22: 2.22 3.729–33 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 5.3.3: 3. Commentary - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 5.3.3.1: 511–26 Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 5.3.3.2: 527–71 Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 5.4: Prelude - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 6: China and Japan - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 6.1: The Analects-Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 6.2: The Art of War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 6.3: The Book of Songs - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 6.4: The Mother of Mencius - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 6.5: The Zhuangzi - Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 B.C.E.) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 7: India - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 7.1: The Bhagavad Gita - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 7.2: The Mahabharata - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 7.3: The Râmâyana - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 8: Ancient Egypt - *Undeclared*
  - 8.1: Ancient Egyptian Mythology - *Undeclared*
- 9: Africa (excluding Egypt) - *Undeclared*
  - 9.1: Nok Culture of Ancient Africa - *Undeclared*
  - 9.2: Mali Empire - *Undeclared*
- 10: Icelandic/Norse - *Undeclared*
  - 10.1: Norse Mythology - *Undeclared*
    - 10.1.1: Edda- Definition - *Undeclared*
  - 10.2: Edda- Definition - *Undeclared*
  - 10.3: Prose Edda - *Undeclared*
- 11: Americas (North, Meso-, South) - *Undeclared*
  - 11.1: Maya Civilization - *Undeclared*
  - 11.2: Popol Vuh - Ancient Maya Story of Creation - *Undeclared*
  - 11.3: Aztec Civilization - *Undeclared*
- 12: Australia, New Zealand, and Polynesia - *Undeclared*
  - 12.1: Ancient Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia - *Undeclared*
- 13: SmartHistory - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.1: Prehistoric - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.1.1: Paleolithic - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.1.2: Neolithic - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.2: Ancient Mediterranean - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.1: Palmyra - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.2: Ancient Near East - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.3: Ancient Egypt - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.4: Ancient Aegean - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.5: Ancient Greece - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.6: Nabataean - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.7: Etruscan - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.8: Ancient Rome I - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.9: Ancient Rome II - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.2.10: Ancient Rome III - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.3: The Islamic World - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.3.1: A beginner's guide - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.3.2: Early period - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.3.3: Medieval period - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.3.4: Later period - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.4: Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.4.1: A beginner's guide - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.4.2: East Africa and the Horn of Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.4.3: West Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.4.4: Central Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.4.5: North Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.4.6: Southern Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.5: Asia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.1: A brief history of the cultures of Asia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.2: Hinduism + Buddhism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.3: China - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.4: Japan - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.5: Korea - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.6: Afghanistan - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.7: South Asia (I) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.8: South Asia (II) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 13.5.9: Southeast Asia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 13.5.10: The Himalayas - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 13.6: Medieval Europe + Byzantine - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.1: A beginner's guide - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.2: Christianity and art - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.3: Judaism and art - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.4: Books in Medieval Europe - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.5: Early Christian - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.6: Byzantine - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.7: Early Medieval - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.8: Carolingian - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.9: Ottonian - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.10: Viking Age - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.11: Romanesque - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.12: Gothic - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.6.13: The Crusades - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 13.7: Europe 1300 - 1800 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.1: A beginner's guide to the Renaissance - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.2: Italy and Spain in the 14th century- Late Gothic - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.3: Printmaking in Europe, c. 1400–1800 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.4: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (I) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.5: Italy in the 15th century- Early Renaissance (II) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.6: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (I) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.7: Italy in the 16th century- High Renaissance and Mannerism (II) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.8: Northern Europe in the 15th century- Northern Renaissance - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.9: Northern Europe in the 16th century- Renaissance and Mannerism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.10: Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries- Renaissance - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.11: Reformation and Counter-Reformation - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.12: 17th century- Baroque (I) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.13: 17th century- Baroque (II) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.14: c. 1700 - 1775- Rococo - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.15: Late 18th century- Neoclassicism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.7.16: Britain in the 18th century - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 13.8: Europe 1800 - 1900 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.1: Becoming Modern, an introduction - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.2: Romanticism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.3: Early photography - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.4: Victorian art - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.5: Realism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.6: Second Empire - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.7: Impressionism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.8: Post-Impressionism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.9: Sculpture - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.10: Symbolism / Art Nouveau - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.8.11: Peredvizhniki - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 13.9: Oceania - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.9.1: Terracotta fragments, Lapita people - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - 13.9.2: What is the impact and legacy of Cook’s voyages? - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- Back Matter - *Undeclared*
  - Index - *Undeclared*
  - Glossary - *Undeclared*
  - Glossary - *Undeclared*
  - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*